

The island of Monte Cristo

Luckily Dantès was carrying a knife in his hand, and he managed to cut the sack open. But the stones tied to his feet were still pulling him downwards, so he searched for the rope and cut it. Then he swam powerfully upwards, and his head came up out of the water. He went down again at once, and swam under the water for fifty metres. When he came up again, he saw a black cloudy sky above the black stormy sea around him. Behind him, blacker than the sky or sea, stood the castle on its rock. And on the castle walls he could see the shapes of two men, looking down over the sea.

'Perhaps they've realized it wasn't a dead body that they threw over the walls!' Dantès thought. He swam underwater a long way, and when he came up again, he could not see the guards any more. He went on swimming in the darkness, and when his foot hit a rock, he realized he was on land. Although a strong wind was blowing and rain was falling, he was very tired and he fell asleep on the beach.

When he woke up, he realized he was on Tiboulén, a small island where no one lived. He noticed a small fishing boat in the water, near the rocks. He tried to warn the sailors, but clearly they could not **steer** their boat away from the danger. There was a terrible crash as their boat hit the rocks, and as Edmond watched in horror, four sailors fell into the water and were not seen again.

Little by little the wind died away and the sea became calm. Blue sky appeared between the clouds, and it was morning.

'Soon the guards will know that I've escaped!' thought Dantès. 'Then the police and **customs officers** will search the coast and all the islands! Where can I hide? Oh God, help me!'

Just then he saw a small ship coming towards Tiboulén.

'They're probably **smugglers**,' he thought. 'I'll pretend to be one of the sailors from the fishing boat, then I'll be safe with them for a while.'

He jumped into the sea and swam powerfully towards the ship. The captain saw him in the water, and ordered his men to help Edmond into the ship. They gave him food, water and dry clothes.

'Where do you come from?' asked the captain.

'I'm a Maltese sailor,' replied Dantès in Italian. 'Our boat broke up in the storm last night. My poor friends are all dead.'

'Do you know the coast and the ports round here?'

'Yes, I've been sailing these seas all my life.'

'Well, perhaps you'd like to stay with us and work for me on this ship. I need someone like you.'

Just then, they heard a loud bang from the Château d'If.

'What's going on there?' cried the captain.

'A prisoner probably escaped last night,' said Dantès, smiling. 'That's the warning gun.' The captain looked quickly at Dantès, but the young man seemed very calm, and the captain did not think he could possibly be the escaped prisoner.

'I'd like to work with you, captain,' continued Dantès. 'By the way, what's the date – the year?'

'You don't know what year it is?'

'I was so frightened by last night's storm – I nearly went mad!' replied Dantès, laughing. 'I've almost forgotten my own name!'

'Well, today's date is February 28th, 1829.'

Fourteen years before, to the day, the police had arrested Dantès. He had entered the Château d'If at nineteen and left it at thirty-three. Sadly he wondered what had become of Mercedes. Then, with the light of hatred in his eyes, he thought of the revenge that he would take on his enemies, Danglars, Fernand, and Villefort.

steer to move a boat left or right

customs officer a person whose job is to catch people who take things, like wine and cigarettes, into a country secretly

smuggler a person who takes things, like wine and cigarettes, into a country secretly

For the next three months he worked with the smugglers, helping them sail in and out of the ports along the coast, with a cargo of gold, **jewels**, **tobacco**, and other expensive things. They kept away from the customs officers, who often followed them and shot at them.

One day the captain said to Dantès, 'Well, my Maltese friend,' (Edmond had not told them his name, so that is what they called him) 'tomorrow we're taking on a cargo of silver and tobacco from another ship, at the island of Monte Cristo.'

Edmond tried to stay calm. 'How long will we stay there?' he asked. He hoped he would have time to search for the treasure.

'Only a few hours,' said the captain.

It was an exciting moment for Edmond when the ship arrived at Monte Cristo that evening. It was a hilly island, and its rocks were turning pink and then blue in the light of the dying sun. As the smugglers jumped on to the beach, Edmond took a gun, telling them he was going to shoot a wild **goat** for supper.

He managed to shoot a goat and gave it to the sailors to cook over a fire on the beach. But as he walked away, he seemed to catch his foot on a rock, and fell heavily, with a loud cry of pain. The sailors came running to help him. But he told them he was too badly hurt to walk; they would have to leave him on the island for the night, and return to pick him up the next day. They agreed, and in an hour's time, they sailed away with their new cargo.

As soon as they had gone, he jumped up and, on a flat stone near the fire, put together the two pieces of paper that the priest had given him.

You will find gold coins, jewels and silver in the caves on the island of Monte Cristo.

Go eastwards from the beach in a straight line and up the hill.

Lift the twentieth rock from the small tree.

jewel a valuable stone

tobacco dried leaves used for making cigarettes

goat an animal which lives in the mountains and can jump from rock to rock

cave a large hole in the side of a mountain

Taking a burning stick from the fire, he went up the hill and found the twentieth rock. Under it there was a large stone with a ring in it. Before he tried to lift it, he looked all around, but no one was watching. He pulled the ring as hard as he could, and very slowly the heavy stone moved, uncovering a hole in the ground. 'The caves!' he thought in delight. He climbed down into the hole and found himself in a kind of underground room, and there, in the darkest corner, was a large wooden box. He hurried to open it, and fell back when he saw what was inside. It was full of shining gold coins, bright jewels and valuable silver – it was indeed treasure!

The next morning he was ready, with his pockets full of gold, when the smugglers came to pick him up. He asked them to leave him at the port of Marseille. Here he bought a fast sailing boat and returned to the island, alone, to fetch the rest of his treasure. And when he sailed back to Marseille again, he was one of the richest men in the world.

It was indeed treasure.



READING CHECK

Correct eight more mistakes in the chapter summary.

Edmond ^{swims} sails to the island of Tiboulén. He sees a police boat hit the rocks and the four sailors on it die. Later a small ship comes towards Tiboulén and Edmond swims to it. The sailors on the ship help Edmond out of the sea and give him money, water and dry clothes. Edmond tells them he is from Malta. The captain gives him a job as a sailor. There is a warning gun from the Château d'If to say that a prisoner has died. Edmond learns from the ship's captain that he has been in prison for four years. After three years of working on the ship, Edmond arrives on the island of Tiboulén. He pretends to fall and says that he is too badly hurt to swim with the others. He stays on the island for the night, and, with Napoleon's papers to help him, he finds the old man's treasure. Edmond Dantès becomes a very rich man!

WORD WORK

Match the words with the correct pictures.



a jewels-
steer



b goat



c cave



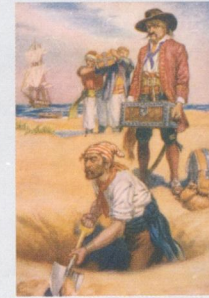
d steer



e smugglers



f tobacco



g customs officers

GUESS WHAT

What do you think happens in the next chapter? Tick the boxes.

- a Edmond Villefort finds that his father is dead.
- b Fernand Danglars has made lots of money as a banker.
- c Fernand Danglars has become famous as a French army officer.
- d Mercedes has married Fernand Danglars and now has a son.
- e Edmond helps Monsieur Morrel by lending him money. being the captain of the *Pharaon*.