

An English gentleman

Dantès bought himself an English passport in the name of **Lord** Wilmore. He dressed in expensive clothes, and put on a grey **wig**. When he saw himself in a mirror, he knew that nobody would recognize him.

He went immediately to the house where his father had lived, but it was empty. So he bought it for 25,000 **francs**. That evening, he visited a fishing village near Marseille. He stayed for an hour at a poor sailor's house, asking for news of several people who had disappeared about fourteen years earlier. The next day, the man got a new fishing boat – a present from Lord Wilmore.

Now Edmond had found out what he wanted to know. His poor father had died soon after hearing that his son was in prison, still confident that Edmond was innocent. Villefort, Danglars and Fernand were all now living in Paris. Danglars had made a lot of money as a banker in Madrid, and was now a **baron**. Fernand had also done well as an army officer in France and Greece; he was now a rich **gentleman**, and called himself Monsieur de Morcerf. Mercedes had waited over a year for Edmond to return, and then, miserable and lonely, she had agreed to marry Fernand; she was now **Madame** de Morcerf, with a son called Albert. It was painful for Edmond to think of her in Fernand's arms.

Lord Wilmore's next visit was to an important banker in Marseille. 'Monsieur,' he explained, 'I work for the Thomson and French company in Rome. Morrel and Son of Marseille **owe** us 100,000 francs, and we've heard they're in serious difficulties.'

The banker was glad to help. 'I think the best person to give you information is Monsieur Boville, the prison inspector. Morrel owes him money, too. He lives opposite the church.'

When Lord Wilmore arrived at Boville's house, he recognized the inspector as the man who had visited him in his cell in the Château d'If. But his English **disguise** worked well and the inspector did not recognize him at all.

'Ah, monsieur!' said Boville, when he was asked about Morrel and Son. 'You're right to be worried! Morrel owes me 200,000 francs, and if the *Pharaon* does not return in a week's time, he'll be unable to pay me back!'

'I'll pay the **debt** for Morrel,' offered the Englishman. 'My company doesn't like bad debts.'

There was a look of delight on Boville's face, as Lord Wilmore paid him. 'Is there anything I can do for you, Monsieur?'

'Just tell me – you're the prison inspector, I understand – I used to know an old priest in Rome, who died in the Château d'If.'

'Oh yes, Father Faria! He was mad. Poor man!'

'Was there a young man in the prison at the same time?'

'Yes, Edmond Dantès – he died while trying to escape.'

'I see. Thank you, Monsieur.'

The next day Lord Wilmore went to see Morrel. He found the ship-owner at his desk, looking grey and old.

disguise
something that you wear so people cannot recognize you

debt the money that you owe

Lord Wilmore went to see Morrel.

lord an important man, from a good English family

wig false hair

franc money that was used in France

baron an important man, from a good French family

gentleman a man from a good, usually rich, family

Madame /mɑːdəm/ the French word for 'Mrs'

owe to have to pay back money that you have borrowed from someone



'Monsieur, I come from the Thomson and French company. I'd like to inform you that I've paid off some of your debts.'

'How – how much do I owe your company?' asked Morrel, white-faced. He had no idea that he was in fact talking to his old friend Edmond Dantès.

'300,000 francs. I don't think you'll be able to repay me,' said Wilmore.

'No, Monsieur, I haven't got the money—'

Just then a beautiful sixteen-year-old girl ran in, crying. 'Father! Bad news! The *Pharaon* is lost!'

Morrel looked at her in horror. 'And the captain, Julie? The men? Are they all safe?'

'Yes, all safe, but the ship was **wrecked** in a storm and the cargo is lost!'

Morrel put his head in his hands. 'Thank God the men are safe! But I'm **ruined!**'

The Englishman stepped forward. 'Let me give you three months to find the money, Monsieur,' he said. 'I'll be back here at 11 o'clock on September 5th, for you to pay me what you owe me.'

'You're very kind, Monsieur,' said Morrel.

On his way out, the stranger met Julie on the stairs, and said to her, 'You'll get a message from someone called Sinbad the Sailor. Do what the message tells you. Promise me.'

'I promise, Monsieur,' said Julie, wonderingly.

The three months passed, and Morrel had found no way of paying the Englishman. His wife had written to their son Maximilien, asking him to come home from the army for a few days, because she was so worried about her husband. On September 5th, Morrel ate no breakfast and went to sit in his office alone. Julie feared the worst – she knew her father kept a gun in his desk.

When Maximilien arrived, he went to see his father.

'Father, what has happened?' he asked.

'You're an honest man, my son, so you'll understand. I owe money that I can never repay. I cannot go on living!'

'Father, let me die with you!'

'Then who will take care of your mother and sister? Promise me that you will not kill yourself!'

'I promise, Father.' He put his arms round his father to say goodbye, and then ran out of the room.

Morrel, alone again, looked at the clock. Two minutes to eleven.

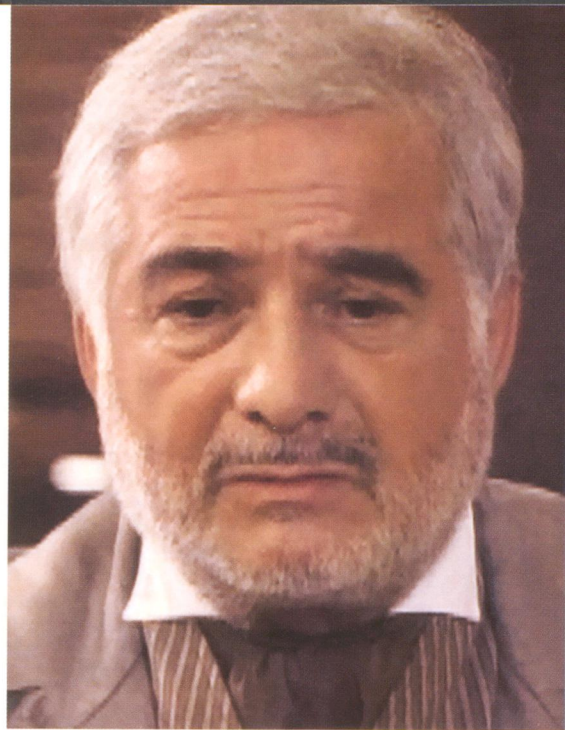
He picked up his gun and put it to his head. Just then Julie ran in, waving a red **purse** and some papers.

'Father! Stop!' she cried. 'I got a message from someone called Sinbad the Sailor, asking me to fetch this purse from his house. And inside, look! Here are your debts, all paid! You owe nothing!'

Suddenly they heard shouting outside in the street. 'The *Pharaon*! The *Pharaon* is arriving!' Morrel and Julie ran out of the house and down to the port, where they found a large crowd, all watching a beautiful new ship sailing in. On her decks were the men from the old *Pharaon*, and on her side was her name in bright newly-painted letters.

'But I don't understand. I thought the *Pharaon* was wrecked. This is wonderful!' said Morrel, crying openly.

A tall man wearing a grey wig smiled as he watched from behind a building. 'Be happy, Morrel,' he whispered, unheard. 'Now I've repaid you for your goodness in the past.'



Morrell sat in his office alone.

wrecked of a ship, broken at sea by a storm or by crashing onto rocks

ruined of a businessman, with no more money

purse a small bag, like a wallet, to keep money in

READING CHECK

Match the sentences with the people.

1 *Danglars*

2 *Monsieur Morrel*

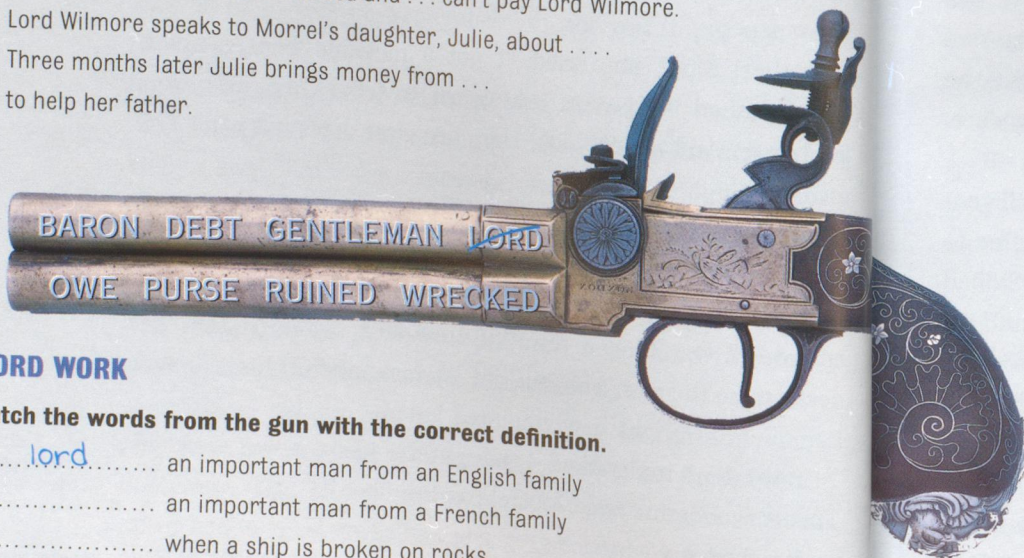
3 *Lord Wilmore*

4 *Monsieur Beville*
(the prison inspector)

5 *Fernand*

6 *Sinbad the Sailor*

- a 3. is Edmond in the disguise of a rich Englishman.
- b ... is now Monsieur de Morcerf and is married to Mercedes.
- c ... has made lots of money in Madrid.
- d ... talks to Lord Wilmore about money that Morrel must pay him.
- e Lord Wilmore gives ... the money that Morrel should pay him.
- f Lord Wilmore visits ... and asks him for money.
- g His ship the *Pharaon* is lost at sea and ... can't pay Lord Wilmore.
- h Lord Wilmore speaks to Morrel's daughter, Julie, about ...
- i Three months later Julie brings money from ... to help her father.



WORD WORK

Match the words from the gun with the correct definition.

- a lord an important man from an English family
- b an important man from a French family
- c when a ship is broken on rocks
- d when a businessman has no more money and his business is finished

- e a bag for putting money in
- f money that you must pay to someone
- g to have to give money that you borrowed back to someone
- h a man from a good family

GUESS WHAT

In the next chapter we meet the Count of Monte Cristo. Tick three boxes.

- a The Count of Monte Cristo is Edmond's new disguise.
- b The count meets Sinbad the Sailor.
- c The count is friendly with criminals.
- d The count marries Mercedes de Morcerf.
- e The count takes his revenge on Baron Danglars.
- f The count saves Albert de Morcerf's life.
- g The count loses all his money.

