

Sinbad the Sailor

In early 1838, two young men who lived in Paris, Monsieur Albert de Morcerf and his friend Baron Franz d'Epinaÿ, decided to spend that year's **carnival** in Rome. Before the start of the carnival, Franz travelled to Livorno because he had heard of an island near there that was a good place to shoot wild goats. It was not difficult to find a small boat and pay the captain to take him to this island, which was called Monte Cristo.

But when they arrived at the island, they saw there was already a group of men on the beach, sitting round a fire.

'Smugglers, **Excellency**,' said the captain. 'Or **bandits**. They can be dangerous.'

In fact he was welcomed by the men on the beach, and he was even invited to have dinner with their chief. They tied an old shirt over his eyes, so he could not see anything, and took him into a deep cave. When they uncovered his eyes, he looked round in delight. It was like an underground palace, with thick carpets and rich wall-hangings.

The chief was a good-looking man, with bright, intelligent eyes, black hair and beard, and very white skin. 'Welcome to my home,' he said in French to Franz. 'You can call me Sinbad the Sailor. My **servants** will get you anything you want.'

For Franz, it was like being in a dream. He spent the evening in pleasant conversation with the man who called himself Sinbad, drinking wine and eating some of the best food he had ever tasted. He fell asleep on one of the thick carpets.

When he woke up next morning, he found he was lying just outside the cave. He went to join the captain and sailors of his boat, who were having breakfast on the beach.

'**Signor** Sinbad had to leave early,' explained the captain.

'See the white sail over there? That's his ship. He's on his way to Malaga.'

'But from the way he's sailing he's going to Corsica, not Malaga!' said Franz.

'Ah!' said the captain, smiling. 'He's got two friends with him – bandits, you could call them – so he's taking them there first.'

'Bandits? Isn't Sinbad afraid that the police will catch him?'

'Not him!' laughed the captain. 'His ship's faster than any police boat.'

Franz no longer had any interest in shooting goats. He decided to return to Livorno, leaving the mysterious island behind him.

The next day Franz arrived in Rome and met Albert at their hotel. They asked the hotel-owner, Signor Pastrini, to find them a **carriage**, but he explained he only had a very old one to offer them.

'But remember, Excellencies,' he warned them, 'don't drive outside the **city** walls at night! There are bandits!'

'Franz, this is exciting!' said Albert. 'An adventure, at last!'

'Be serious, Excellencies. Luigi Vampa is the bandits' chief. He **kidnaps** people and sometimes kills them!' explained Signor Pastrini.

They drove off, to see the Colosseum in the moonlight. Albert sat dreaming on a stone seat, while Franz walked a little further away. As he stood in the shadow of a wall, he realized that he could hear two men on the other side of the wall, having a secret conversation.

'What have you discovered, Luigi?' asked one. To his surprise Franz recognized the voice of Sinbad the Sailor.

'There'll be two **executions** on Tuesday, Excellency, and one of the men to die is my poor friend Peppino.'

'Don't worry. I'll make sure he gets a **pardon**.'

carnival a time when many people come together in the streets to dance, sing, and wear fantastic clothes

Excellency a very polite way of talking to someone important

bandit a robber who attacks travellers

servant a person who works for someone rich

Signor /sim'jɔ:ɪ/ the Italian word for 'Mr'

carriage an old kind of car that horses pull

city (*plural cities*) a big and important town

kidnap to take someone away as your prisoner

execution when someone is punished for a crime by being killed

pardon when someone decides not to punish someone for a crime

'If you can save him, Excellency, I'll do anything for you.'
And the two men disappeared into the shadows.

After Franz and Albert had returned to the hotel and gone to bed, Franz spent a sleepless night, wondering what kind of man Sinbad the Sailor was – rich, powerful, and friendly with bandits.

The next evening Franz and Albert went to the theatre. As they were young men with a greater interest in women than in the actors, they spent most of their time looking round at the other theatre-goers. Suddenly Franz saw a beautiful young woman in Greek clothes, and next to her was the man he knew as Sinbad! There was something hard about the line of his mouth that made Franz **shudder**. The young man promised himself he would find out more about Sinbad.

When he and Albert returned to the hotel, Signor Pastrini came to their room with a message. 'The **Count** of Monte Cristo is staying here in the hotel, Excellencies, and has heard that you gentlemen need a better carriage. So he's offering you seats in his carriage, and places at the windows of another hotel. You can watch the carnival from there. He also invites you to visit him tomorrow morning.'

So the next morning the two young men were shown into the count's rooms by a richly-dressed servant.

When the Count of Monte Cristo came in, Franz saw through his disguise and recognized him at once as Sinbad the Sailor, but he said nothing. He and Albert found many interesting things to discuss with the count, and soon they started talking about the next day's executions.

'It's terrible to think of putting two men to death, in cold blood,' said Franz. 'Were the poor men's crimes really so bad?'

'Listen,' said the count, his eyes suddenly full of hatred, 'if a man hurts or murders your father, mother, or lover, is prison enough? Is even execution enough? Isn't revenge much, much sweeter?'

shudder to shake because you are afraid, or because you think someone or something is unpleasant

count a man who is more important than a lord or a baron



'Surely,' said Franz, 'if you take revenge, the police will arrest you and you'll have to pay, perhaps with your life.'

'Not if you're rich, powerful, and intelligent! But gentlemen, why are we talking about this at carnival time? I see my servants have got lunch ready. Why don't you join me?'

During the excellent lunch, Franz tried to discover what Albert thought of the count. But his friend was too interested in the count's food and conversation to worry about anything else. Franz noticed that the count was also looking closely at Albert, and he could not understand why.

In the afternoon, all three went in the count's carriage to watch the executions from the windows of the Hotel Rospoli. A large crowd filled the square, as the two prisoners were brought to the foot of the **guillotine**. At the last moment a soldier ran up waving a piece of paper. Peppino was free to go, and the guillotine fell on only one prisoner that day.

The next day Franz and Albert lost themselves in the excitement of carnival. The count had kindly lent them his carriage. So, wearing **masks**, they drove up and down the streets

Albert found many interesting things to discuss with the count.

guillotine a machine that was used at that time in France to execute people (by cutting off their heads)

mask a cover that you put over your face to hide it

of Rome, waving and throwing flowers to any pretty girls in the other carriages. Albert felt sure that a beautiful woman in a green mask was interested in him, and when he got a note from her, he read it out excitedly to Franz.

'Tomorrow at seven o'clock, get out of your carriage at the church of San Giacomo and meet me on the steps.'

And the following evening, Franz watched Albert meet the lady at the church, and go off into the crowd, arm in arm with her.

But later that night Franz began to worry about his friend. Rome could be a dangerous city during carnival, especially at night.

Suddenly there was a knock on his door, and Signor Pastrini brought in a man with a letter in his hand. Franz thought that he recognized Peppino, but he was more interested in the letter. It said:

Franz, bandits have kidnapped me. Give all the money in my travelling bag to the man who brings you this note.

Albert

And under this message, it said in Italian:

If I don't have 20,000 francs in my hands by 6 o'clock in the morning, Monsieur Albert will die.

Luigi Vampa

Franz read the note in horror. He knew that he and Albert did not have 20,000 francs. Suddenly he had an idea, and went along to the count's rooms. The count listened with interest to Franz's story.

'Don't you think,' said Franz, 'that if we go together to meet Luigi Vampa, he'll let Albert go free?'

'But what power have I got over this bandit?'

'Didn't you save Peppino's life two days ago? And isn't Luigi Vampa very grateful to you?'

The count wondered how Franz knew about that, but he agreed to help. He, Franz and Peppino drove beyond the city walls, and then Peppino took them through a number of underground caves and tunnels to where the bandits were. Their chief, Luigi Vampa, was surprised to see the count, and very angry with his men when he realized that Albert was a friend of the count's. He refused to take any money from Franz.

So Albert was a free man again, and when they arrived back at the hotel, he said, 'You saved my life, Count. I'm very grateful!' He held out his hand, and Franz noticed the count shudder as he shook it. 'I hope, one day, I'll see you in Paris, Count, where my parents will be able to thank you themselves.'

'I have some business there in three months' time,' said the count. 'May I visit you then? Say, 21st May? At half past ten in the morning? I'm leaving Rome tomorrow, so goodbye for now, my friends.'

Luigi Vampa was surprised.



READING CHECK

Tick the boxes to complete the sentences.

- a The Count of Monte Cristo Franz d'Epina y visits Italy with Albert de Morcerf to see the carnival.
- b Albert Franz meets Sinbad the Sailor on the island of Monte Cristo.
- c Back in Rome, Franz hears the count Luigi Vampa talking secretly with Sinbad.
- d The next evening Franz sees the count Luigi Vampa at the theatre.
- e Franz notices that the count is very interested in Albert. Peppino.
- f Albert The count disappears with a woman during carnival.
- g Albert sends a note to Franz the count asking him for money.
- h Franz goes with the count to speak to Peppino. Luigi Vampa.
- i Luigi Vampa lets Albert go free when he realizes that he is a friend of Franz's. the count's.

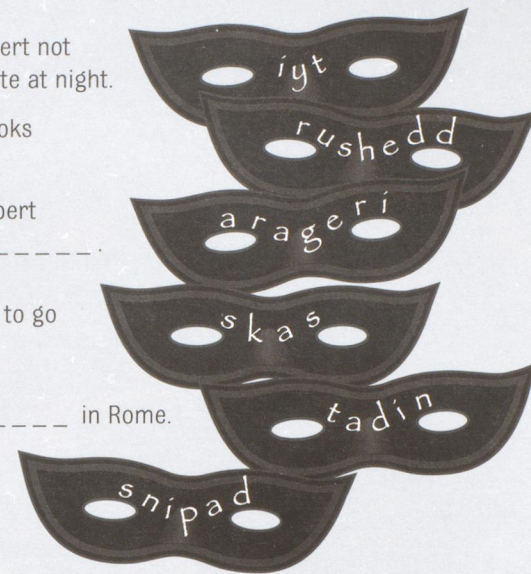
WORD WORK

Find words in the masks to complete the sentences.

- a Albert and Franz want to visit Italy during c arnival time.
- b Sinbad the Sailor's s _____ look after Franz on the island of Monte Cristo.
- c Albert and Franz go to see the e _____ of two criminals one day.
- d At the last minute one of the criminals gets a p _____ and can go free.



- e Signor Pastrini tells Franz and Albert not to go outside the c _____ walls late at night.
- f Franz s _____ when he looks carefully at Sinbad in the theatre.
- g The Count of Monte Cristo says Albert and Franz can travel in his c _____.
- h Albert and Franz wear m _____ to go to the carnival.
- i Luigi Vampa is a well-known b _____ in Rome.
- j Luigi Vampa k _____ Albert.



GUESS WHAT

What do you think happens in the next chapter? Write **Yes** or **No**.



- a The Count meets Albert's family in Paris.
- b Baron Danglars becomes the Count's banker.
- c The Count tries to kill Villefort.
- d The Count meets and falls in love with Julie.