

The count in Paris

Three months later, in the house in Paris where Albert and his parents lived, everything was ready for the Count of Monte Cristo's visit. At ten o'clock in the morning Albert's friends started arriving – Monsieur Lucien Debray, Monsieur Beauchamp, Baron Château-Renaud, and Maximilien Morrel, who was wearing his army officer's uniform.

Half an hour later, a servant threw open the door of Albert's dining room and said, 'His Excellency the Count of Monte Cristo!' All the young men turned to look at the count, who entered, dressed in the most **elegant** clothes. He came forward, smiling, and was introduced to Albert's friends. When he heard the name of Morrel, his eyes shone and he shook Maximilien's hand, saying, 'Monsieur is clearly a brave soldier!'

This surprised everyone, but Château-Renaud said, 'You're right, Count. He saved my life in the last battle that we were in.'

'I was there at the right time, that's all,' said Maximilien.

'Talking of saving lives,' said Albert, 'it was the count who saved mine when I was in Rome for the carnival with Franz d'Epinau.'

'Come, come, Albert!' laughed Debray. 'You'll tell us you were kidnapped by bandits next!'

'Debray, you've guessed it!' said Albert. 'Now please sit down, and I'll tell you all the story of a dangerous bandit called Luigi Vampa and a poor Frenchman called Albert de Morcerf.'

The story **impressed** all Albert's friends, and they turned once more to look at the count with even greater interest. But he clearly wanted to talk about something else. 'Did I hear,' he asked, turning to Albert, 'that you are planning to marry very soon?'

elegant expensive and fashionable

impress to stay in your thoughts because it is interesting



'Well, Count, it's true that my father wants me to marry Baron Danglars' daughter Eugénie,' replied Albert.

'She'll bring two million francs with her!' said Beauchamp.

'Baron Danglars?' said the count. 'Ah, yes, I have **letters of credit** for him – he'll be my banker while I'm in Paris.'

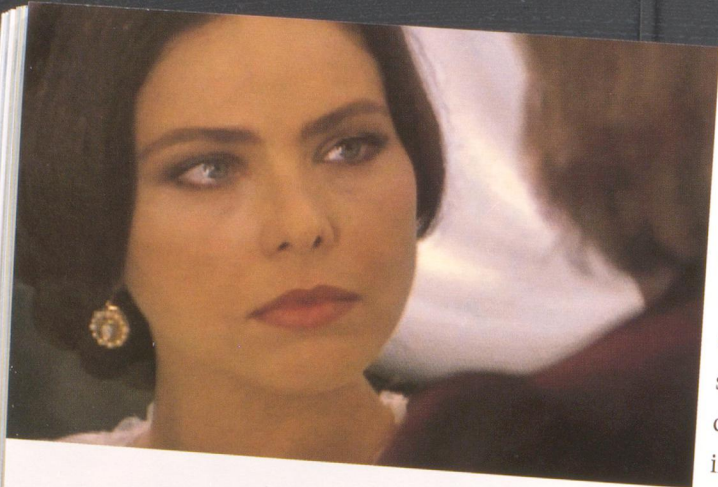
The conversation moved on, and an hour or so later, Albert's friends said goodbye and left the house. Albert took the count to his parents' sitting room, and sent a servant to find them. Monsieur de Morcerf was the first to arrive. Fernand did not recognize the count, who kept his face half hidden.

'Welcome to my house!' de Morcerf said. 'I shall always be grateful to you for saving the life of my only son.'

Before the count could reply, another door opened, and a woman entered. 'Here is my mother!' Albert said.

Albert's friends were impressed by the count.

letter of credit a letter asking a banker to give money to someone; another bank will pay back the money to the banker later



'Let me thank you, Count,' said Mercedes.

'Are you ill, mother?' asked Albert, hurrying towards her. 'No,' she said, smiling. 'I was just thinking how much I owe to this gentleman.' She moved towards the count, walking like a queen. 'Let me thank you, Count, with all a mother's feeling. Albert is safe and well because you helped him when he was in danger.'

She went on to invite the count to spend the rest of the day at their house, but he politely refused, and left soon afterwards.

Later, when Albert found his mother alone, they started talking about their guest.

'Does he really have the **title** of 'count'?' asked Mercedes.

'Yes, mother. He owns an island called Monte Cristo, and the title comes with it.'

'How old do you think he is?' she asked.

'Between thirty-five and thirty-six, I suppose.'

'So young? It's impossible!' Mercedes whispered. She shuddered. 'Albert, be very careful. Is this man really your friend?'

'I think so, mother. I like him. And he saved my life!'

His mother did not reply to this, and their conversation ended.

The count's **steward**, Bertuccio, had found an elegant house in an expensive part of Paris for Monte Cristo to live in. There was also a house in **Auteuil**, a village just outside Paris, which

Monte Cristo, turning quickly, saw Madame de Morcerf standing in the doorway. Mercedes shuddered as the count stood up and **bowed** deeply. She bowed too, in silence. Had she seen through his disguise?

the count was interested in. So Bertuccio had bought it for him. That evening the count ordered Bertuccio to go with him to see the house in Auteuil. But as they were coming closer to the house, the count noticed how worried Bertuccio seemed to be. And when they entered the house, the steward could not hide his feelings, and cried out, 'Excellency, something terrible happened here! This was Monsieur Villefort's house, you see—'

'The crown prosecutor, who married Renée Saint-Méran?'

'Yes, he's a wicked criminal, and the crime happened here!'

'Bertuccio, tell me all about it.'

And there in the moonlight, the steward told his story:

'In 1815 my brother was murdered, but when Villefort refused to punish the murderers, I promised that I would take revenge on him. In the next few years I followed Villefort secretly, and discovered that, although he was married to Renée Saint-Méran, the crown prosecutor was keeping a **mistress** in a house in Auteuil. That was this house which now belongs to you, Excellency.'

The count smiled and Bertuccio went on.

'One night I hid in the garden, hoping to kill Villefort. Suddenly the crown prosecutor hurried out of the house with a small wooden box in his hands, and dug a hole in the ground, where he hid the box. At that moment I jumped out from behind a tree and pushed a knife deep into the prosecutor's chest. I did not wait to see if he was dead, but took the box out of the hole and ran out of the garden.'

'Go on, Bertuccio,' said the count, his eyes shining with interest.

'Well, when I heard a cry come from the box, I opened it and found a newborn baby boy inside. I took the baby to one of the city's **orphanages**. But a few

mistress a married man's lover

orphanage a home for children whose parents are dead

Bertuccio told his story.



bow to put down your head in front of someone important

title a word like Lord, Baron or Count that you add to your name because you are important

steward a personal servant

Auteuil /əʊ'tɔɪ/

years later, I and my dead brother's wife, Assunta, decided to take care of the boy ourselves, so we went to fetch him from the orphanage. We called him Benedetto and made him one of the family. Sadly, he was naturally wicked, and one night, when he was fourteen, he stole all our money while I was away from home, set fire to the house and ran away. And poor Assunta was found dead the next morning.'

When Bertuccio finished speaking, the count said kindly, 'No one will punish you for what you've done. You didn't kill Villefort, and he'll pay for his crimes, don't worry. We will return to Paris now.'

Since his arrival, the ladies and gentlemen of Paris could talk about nothing except the count. He sent Bertuccio to buy Madame Danglars' horses at twice their price, and then gave them back to her as a present. Then he sent his letters of credit to Baron Danglars, so the banker had to give him 500,000 francs at once, and worry about finding another five million by the end of the year. With his houses, servants, carriages and horses, the Count of Monte Cristo lived more elegantly and expensively than anyone else in Paris.

The count found out that Maximilien Morrel had left Marseille after the death of his father. He now lived with his sister Julie and her husband Emmanuel, in a pleasant house in a quiet part of Paris. He went to visit them, and realized at once how much these three people loved each other. In their sitting room he noticed a small red purse on a table, and asked Maximilien about it.

The young man picked up the purse and **kissed** it. 'This purse, Count, was touched by the hand of a man who saved our father from death – a stranger who called himself Sinbad the Sailor.'

'I haven't yet lost hope,' said Julie, 'that one day I may find him and kiss his hand.' She was looking closely at the count. Did she recognize something of Lord Wilmore in him?

kiss to touch lovingly with your mouth

'I do know an Englishman, called Lord Wilmore,' said the count, hurriedly turning his face away from her, 'who has very often helped people.'

'Oh Monsieur, if you cannot bring him to us, tell us where he is! We'll show him how deeply grateful we are to him!'

The count had **tears** in his eyes as he turned back to her and watched her lovely face carefully. 'Madame, I fear Lord Wilmore may no longer be alive.'

'Oh Monsieur!' whispered Julie, tears running down her face.

'Dear sister,' said Maximilien, 'remember what our good father often told us – it was not an Englishman who saved him.'

The count shuddered. 'Your father said what, Monsieur?'

'My father thought the man was someone who had come back from the dead – a dear, dear friend whom he had lost. When he was about to die, his last words were, "It was Edmond Dantès."'

For a moment the count could not say a word. Then he picked up his hat and said to Julie, 'Madame, I'm grateful to you for the peace that I find here – it's the first time for many years that I've been able to forget my troubles.' And he hurried away down the street.

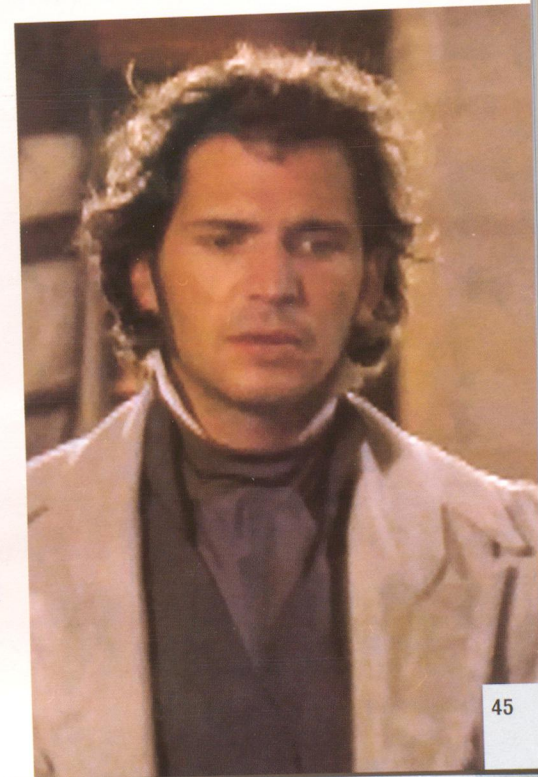
'He's a strange man, this count,' said Emmanuel.

'Yes,' replied Maximilien, 'but he has a good heart.'

'His voice touched me deeply,' said Julie, 'and two or three times I thought it wasn't the first time I'd heard it.'

tear the water that comes from your eye when you cry

Maximilien repeats his father's dying words.



READING CHECK

What do they say?
Complete the sentences.

1 Baron Danglars will be my banker.

2 His voice touched me deeply.

3 I shall always be grateful to you for saving the life of my only son.

4 Is this man really your friend?

5 Let me thank you, Count, with all a mother's feeling.

6 My father wants me to marry Baron Danglars' daughter.

7 This purse was touched by the hand of a man who saved our father from death.

8 This was Monsieur Villefort's house.

- a 'My father wants me to marry Baron Danglars' daughter,' says Albert.
- b answers the Count of Monte Cristo.
- c says Fernand de Morcerf to the count.
- d says Mercedes to the Count.
- e Mercedes asks Albert.
- f Bertuccio tells the count.
- g Maximilien tells the count.
- h says Julie about the count.

WORD WORK

Use words from Chapter 7 in the correct form to complete the Count of Monte Cristo's diary.

I arrived in Paris with (a) letters of credit for Baron Danglars and went to visit Albert at once in my most (b) clothes. Albert's story of my meeting with Luigi Vampa (c) his friends. Then Albert's parents thanked me. Mercedes (d) when she met me but I wonder if she really believes my (e) of Count. A week or two later Bertuccio, my (f) bought a house for me in Auteuil. But when we went to see it, Bertuccio told me that it had been Villefort's house in the past and that the crown prosecutor had met his (g) there. He told me that in secret, in that same house, this woman had Villefort's son - a boy who later went into an (h) Not long after this I visited Maximilien Morrel and his sister, Julie. Maximilien (i) Sinbad the Sailor's red purse in front of me and told me how the money from it had once saved his father. Maximilien told me that his father's last words were 'It was Edmond Dantès'.

GUESS WHAT

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

- a The Count of Monte Cristo marries Villefort's daughter.
- b The Count of Monte Cristo goes to the theatre with Fernand de Morcerf.
- c Benedetto, Villefort's lost son, returns in disguise.
- d The Count invites the Villeforts and the Danglars to his house in Auteuil.

Yes	No
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