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Revenge!

Villefort was **determined** to marry his daughter Valentine to Franz d'Epinau, so he invited the young man home with him after Madame Saint-Méran's funeral, in order to sign the wedding contract. But when they were all in the sitting room, ready to sign, a servant hurried in, saying, 'Monsieur Noirtier wants to see Baron d'Epinau at once!'

Villefort, Franz and Valentine went up to the bedroom of the paralysed old man. He could only move his eyes, but over the years Valentine had learnt how to understand his wishes. He now made it clear to her that there was a paper in his desk, which he wanted Franz to read.

The young man read the paper aloud. Now, for the first time, he discovered what had happened to his own father, a **royalist**. In 1815, Monsieur Noirtier was with a group of men who wanted Napoleon to return to France. They had kidnapped Franz's father, because he was a royalist, and then Monsieur Noirtier himself had killed him! There were tears in Franz's eyes as he read the words.

The next day he wrote to Villefort, saying that he no longer felt able to marry Valentine. She was very grateful to her grandfather for stopping a wedding that she really did not want to happen.

At the same time, Baron Danglars, whose business was not doing well, was becoming more and more impressed with young Andrea Cavalcanti. 'It would be useful to have a lot more money in the family!' he thought. 'And now that I've heard about the terrible things that Albert's father did in the Greek war, I don't think that I want his son to marry my daughter. Not good for business!' So when Andrea asked the baron if he could marry Eugénie, Danglars was happy to agree.

determined having decided to do something

royalist someone who loves and fights for their king or queen

The next day Albert was reading a newspaper when he noticed, to his horror, a short **article** which said:

'We have just discovered that, in the Greek war, a French officer took money from the enemy to help them kidnap and murder Ali Pasha, a friend of the French. The officer's first name was Fernand.'

Albert hurried round to the newspaper offices at once, to speak to his friend Beauchamp, who worked there.

'Beauchamp,' he cried. 'Look at this article! My father's first name is Fernand. Everyone will think that he did this terrible thing!'

'Don't worry, Albert. I'll find out if it's true.'

Three weeks later, Beauchamp visited Albert at home. 'Bad news, my friend,' he said. 'I've been to Greece, and I have these papers for you. They show that the article in the newspaper was true. Your father was indeed a **traitor**. I'm sorry.'

Albert looked at him with staring eyes.

'But as you're my friend,' said Beauchamp kindly, 'let me burn these papers now, and people will soon forget the story.'

They burnt the papers there and then.

But the story reappeared in other newspapers, and soon even the gentlemen of the **Upper House** were talking about it. When Monsieur de Morcerf arrived there one day, he found that everyone was looking angrily at him, and he was asked to explain what had happened between him and Ali Pasha in the Greek war. Silence fell as the Upper House waited for his answer. His face was white and his hands were shaking as he spoke.

'I'm no traitor, gentlemen,' he said. 'I was a friend of Ali Pasha, and I tried to save him, but I arrived too late.'

'No, traitor!' cried a woman's voice from the **public** seats. 'You're lying! You accepted the enemy's gold for the head of

article a piece of writing in a newspaper

traitor a person who goes against his allies or country

Upper House a group of important people, like lords, barons and counts, who meet to make laws for the country

public open to everyone; all the people



'I am Haydée.'

Ali Pasha! That's why you're rich today! I know, because I was there and saw it all! I am Haydée, Ali Pasha's daughter!

All eyes turned to the public part of the House, where the Greek girl was standing. Then they looked back at Monsieur de Morcerf. He bowed his head and said nothing. The Upper House took only a few minutes to decide that he was a traitor, and should no longer sit in the House. De Morcerf went home alone.

Albert had heard from Beauchamp that it was Baron Danglars who had sent the information about his father's past to the newspaper. So he went to call on the banker.

'It wasn't my idea, young man,' explained Danglars. 'It came from the Count of Monte Cristo.'

'The count!' cried Albert in horror. 'But I thought he was my friend!'

He went straight to the theatre, where the count was in his usual box, with Maximilien Morrel.

'Count!' said Albert, throwing open the door of the box. 'You must give me an explanation!'

'I do not accept "must" from anyone,' said the count icily.

'But you will accept my invitation to fight, perhaps?'

'Shall we say tomorrow at ten in the morning?'

Albert bowed and left the box, and the count smiled.

But when Monte Cristo returned home that night, he found

a woman waiting to see him. It was Madame de Morcerf. Mercedes had not wanted to recognize Edmond openly in front of her husband, but it was clear now that she knew who the Count of Monte Cristo really was.

'Oh, Edmond!' she cried. 'Please do not kill my son!'

'I have promised to take my revenge, Madame, not on Albert, but on his father Fernand, who married my fiancée, as you know.'

'Oh Edmond! You should punish me! I wasn't strong enough to wait for you. I

thought you were dead. Edmond, I may not be as beautiful as I was, but I love you still! Don't let me see the man I love become the murderer of my son!'

'What is it that you want?' he asked. 'Your son's life? Well then, he shall live.'

Mercedes gave a cry that brought tears to his eyes. 'Oh Edmond! Thank you, thank you! You are so good!'

'But your poor Edmond won't live long. Tomorrow he must die, if Albert is to live,' replied the count.

Her beautiful eyes were wet with tears, as she offered him her hand. 'Don't say that, Edmond. There is always hope. God will not let you die.' And with that, she left the room.

The count sat there in the darkness, thinking miserably of his plans of revenge, which his promise to Albert's mother had destroyed. Now he seemed to have nothing left to live for.

But the next morning, at the meeting-place, he was surprised



'Please do not kill my son!'



'I'm sorry,'
said Albert to
the count.

to see Albert coming towards him in a friendly way.

'Monsieur,' said Albert as calmly as he could, 'I'd like to say I'm sorry, not because my father was a traitor to Ali Pasha, but because he was a traitor to you, his friend, when you were both young men in Marseille. My mother has told me everything. You were right to take revenge on my father, and I, his son, say so!'

Mercedes had bravely told Albert her painful secret, in order to keep both him and the count alive. With a tear in his eyes, the count shook hands warmly with Albert. There was no fight that day. Some of Albert's friends looked coldly at him the next time they met, and whispered that he had not been brave enough to fight the count.

When Fernand de Morcerf saw his son return home unhurt, he could not understand what had happened, and ordered his servant to drive him straight to the count's house. He was shown in at once.

'Count, my son had good reason to fight you today.'

'You think so, Monsieur?' replied the count coldly. 'In fact, he said he was sorry, so the fight didn't take place.'

'He said he was sorry? He didn't fight you?'

'No, he realized his father had committed terrible crimes.'

'Why do you say that? Who are you? What's your real name?'

'You know me very well. You married my fiancée, after all!' Monsieur de Morcerf gave a cry of horror. 'Edmond Dantès!' With shaking legs he ran out of the room and returned home in the carriage. While Albert and Mercedes were packing their clothes and getting ready to leave the house that they both now hated, because they knew that it was paid for with a traitor's money, Fernand went to his bedroom. There he took a small gun from his desk, and as the carriage that was taking away his wife and son left the house, a shot rang out.

News of Monsieur de Morcerf's death had only just reached his neighbours, when they heard another piece of interesting news. Andrea Cavalcanti was supposed to sign the contract to marry Eugénie Danglars at nine that evening. But just as the banker was about to sign, the police entered the house and arrested Andrea. It appeared that he had escaped from prison and had since committed a murder. In the excitement, no one noticed Mademoiselle Eugénie quietly leave the house. She had decided to stay unmarried, and was going off to travel round Spain and Italy with a woman friend.

The count was pleased with the success of his plans so far. Fernand was dead, Danglars would soon be **bankrupt**, and there was a poisoner at work in Villefort's house. But when Maximilien, whom the count loved like a son, told him that Valentine was his fiancée, the count realized he could not let her die, along with the rest of Villefort's family. Maximilien felt sure someone was giving her poison, but the count promised the young man that he would protect her from danger.

That night the count visited Valentine in her room, by using some secret stairs that led from the house next door. He explained that it was her stepmother who was trying to poison her, and gave her a special **sleeping potion**, which would make her appear to be dead.

bankrupt having
no money and a
large debt

sleeping potion
medicine that
makes you go to
sleep

The next morning, the servants found Valentine silent and cold in her bed. The doctor saw Madame Villefort with a glass of poison in her hand, and felt sure that she must be the murderer, so he told her husband. But poor Maximilien heard the news with horror – he had Monte Cristo's promise that Valentine would not die – and now he felt that his life had ended.

Villefort decided the funeral would be on the following day. That night the count, again using the secret stairs, visited Valentine's bedroom, where her body lay in its **coffin**. He had something important to do before that coffin left for the graveyard.

Valentine's body lay in its coffin.



The next day, Maximilien's sadness, as he watched his fiancée's coffin going into the ground, was great. But the count was watching him, and followed him back to his sister's house. Here he found the young man writing a letter, with his gun on the desk.

coffin a box that you put a dead person's body in

'My dear young friend, you mustn't kill yourself!'

'But the woman who meant everything to me is dead! Who are you to give me orders?'

'The man who saved your father! I am Edmond Dantès!'

Maximilien jumped up and called to his sister and her husband. They came running to throw themselves at the count's feet and kiss his hand. But the count knew that Maximilien was still thinking of death, so he asked them to leave him alone with Maximilien again.

'Keep your hope alive, my friend,' he said. 'Come and stay with me for a month. And if at the end of that time, you still want to kill yourself, I'll put a gun in your hands myself.' Maximilien agreed to this.

A week later, Andrea Cavalcanti appeared in **court** to answer for his crimes. But when the crown prosecutor asked what his real name was, the young man explained that he was Villefort's own son, left to die in a box in the Auteuil garden. To the horror of everyone in court, Villefort bowed his head and said it was all true. Then he left the court and hurried home.

There, in this house of death, he found the bodies of his wife and son, both poisoned by her hand. As he was looking at them, he heard a voice behind him say, 'Monsieur, you've finally paid your debt to me!'

He turned to find the Count of Monte Cristo standing there. 'What debt?' he asked.

'I am Edmond Dantès!' said the count.

'Well, Edmond Dantès, look!' screamed Villefort, showing him the two bodies. 'Have you had your revenge now?' He ran wildly out into the garden, and started digging. 'I'll find him soon!' he cried. 'The box must be here somewhere!'

'He's gone mad!' thought the count. 'Perhaps I've done too much! Enough is enough.'

court the place where people decide if someone is innocent of a crime or not

READING CHECK

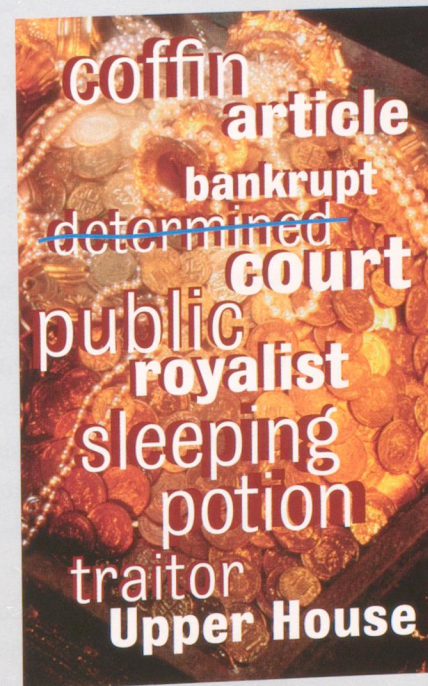
Tick the boxes to complete these sentences.

- a Franz d'Epinaÿ doesn't talks to him
 want to marry Valentine makes him read
 after Monsieur Noirtier lies to him about his father's death.
- b Albert learns from the Count of Monte Cristo
 Haydée that his father helped to kill
 the newspaper Ali Pasha.
- c Haydée
 the Count of Monte Cristo tells everyone that Monsieur de Morcerf took gold
 Beauchamp for Ali Pasha's head.
- d Albert decides he must fight Danglars.
 the count.
 Beauchamp.
- e Mercedes
 Monsieur de Morcerf goes to see the count the night before the fight to stop it.
 Albert
- f Fernand
 Albert kills himself when the fight doesn't happen.
 The Count of Monte Cristo
- g Andrea Cavalcanti
 Maximilien Morrel wants to marry Eugénie Danglars.
 Beauchamp
- h Andrea Cavalcanti
 Madame Villefort is arrested for murder.
 Valentine
- i Cavalcanti explains to the crown prosecutor that he is Villefort's
 Mercedes' son.
 Major Cavalcanti's

WORD WORK

Find words in the treasure to complete the sentences.

- a Villefort is determined that Valentine should marry Franz d'Epinaÿ.
- b Franz comes from a family.
- c Albert reads an about his father in the newspaper.
- d The newspapers say that Fernand was a
- e People in the ask questions about Monsieur de Morcerf's past.
- f Haydée's voice comes from the seats and she tells her story.
- g Baron Danglars loses all his money and will soon be
- h Andrea Cavalcanti tells everyone in that Villefort is his father.
- i The Count of Monte Cristo gives Valentine a to make her seem dead.
- j Maximilien is sad when he sees Valentine's go into the ground.



GUESS WHAT

Who do you think is happy in the last chapter? Tick four boxes.

- a Albert de Morcerf
- b Mercedes
- c Valentine
- d Haydée
- e The Count of Monte Cristo
- f Baron Danglars
- g Maximilien
- h Luigi Vampa