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No. 158 15¢

The CONSPIRATORS

ALEXANDRE DUMAS



COMING NEXT



THE RAILROAD opened the western United States to rapid settlement, but it was not all a blessing. To the ranchers who had to pay the prices demanded for the shipment of wheat, the railroad seemed to be an iron monster, an octopus whose tentacles would engulf them all in ruin. Bribery and corruption prevented them from getting justice in the courts. The ranchers had no choice. They took the law into their own hands.

Be sure to read

THE OCTOPUS

by Frank Norris

NEXT IN

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WHO AM I?

I am a famous literary character. Can you guess my name from the clues below? Rate your familiarity with me as follows: If you can identify me from CLUE I, your score is superior; from CLUE II—excellent; from CLUE III—very good; from CLUE IV—good; from CLUE V—fair. If after CLUE V you still cannot identify me, I suggest you read the exciting story in which I appear.

CLUE I: One day I went to live with my cousin in a large house that had seven peaked gables.

CLUE II: My cousin was very poor. Together we ran a small shop. Soon after my arrival, I met a young daguerrotype artist who was a lodger in the house. We spent many pleasant hours together and became good friends.

CLUE III: It was not long before I discovered that the house and those who dwelled within had a curse upon them. Although I did not really believe in such things, it was true that many members of my family had died mysteriously.

CLUE IV: One day my cousin Clifford arrived. He was a kind old man who had been imprisoned many years for a crime he did not commit. He was convicted on the false testimony of an evil cousin named Jeffrey.


CLUE V: Shortly after Clifford returned home, we had a visitor. It was Jeffrey, demanding to see his cousin. But Clifford was nowhere in sight, and while Jeffrey waited, he had another, more dreadful caller. The exciting climax of my story can be found in the novel, *The House of the Seven Gables* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

NONHOLA INBONA

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The CONSPIRATORS

Alexandra Dumas



When Louis XIV died in 1715, his great-grandson came to the throne of the age of five. A battle over who should be regent and rule the country until the king was old enough developed between two parties—one led by Philippe, Duc d'Orleans, and the other by the Duc de Mairi. The Duc d'Orleans successfully seized power, and the Duc de Mairi and his followers were forced to retreat into the shade and wait for their chance to strike again.

One morning in 1718, a young cavalier of high bearing was waiting at the end of the Port Neuf in Paris. After about half an hour, his glance appeared to rest with satisfaction upon an individual who advanced towards him.



I believe this is my man.

The cavalier rode straight up to the newcomer.



Sir, I think I may conclude that you are a gentleman.

No, although I am delighted that my appearance speaks so well for me. You may call me Captain.

I am the Baron Rene de Volat. One of my friends, Chevalier Royal d'Harmant, last night picked up a quarrel which will finish this morning by a meeting. Our adversaries were three, and we but two, so I intreated myself here with the intention of addressing the first gentleman who passed.



I am your man. What hour is fixed for the meeting?

Half-past nine this morning at the Port Maillot.



There is no time to lose.

Then do me the honour of mouing behind me.

With a single bound the Captain sprang on to the crop, and they went off at a swinging trot.



May I, without indiscretion, ask why we are going to fight?

Last night I supped with d'Hormentail at La Fillon's. A merry party entered the room next to ours and spoke slightly of Sophie d'Averne, the woman Rosal loves.



Ah, d'Hormentail got angry?

Exactly. He became very pale, told them they lied, and arranged this rendezvous.



They had reached the Port Malliat, where they were joined by d'Hormentail.

My dear Chevalier, permit me to present a friend who has offered to help us.

I am grateful to you, monsieur. I hope you will afford me one day an opportunity to return your kindness.



Well said, Chevalier. Where are our adversaries?

At the end of the avenue, I believe. Let us go.



The six men met at the turn of the alley and bowed with elegant politeness. Raoul spoke to one of them.

It is with you that my business lies, Monsieur de Lafore.

Nothing could give me more honour or more pain.



Baron de Volfe addressed himself to the Comte de Fergy, and the Captain turned to the Chevalier de Ravanne.

What a charming sword you have there! It reminds me of the great split in my mother's kitchen.

Your mother is a worthy woman. I should be grieved to take you from her.



Enraged by the Captain's coolness, Ravanne attacked with fury.



Fie, fie, young man, are you trying to blind me? You will force me to disarm you!



With a sudden twist, the Captain whipped Ravanne's sword out of his hand and bent it flying.



Ravenne plucked up his sword and came back quietly.

You are a brave young man, but you should change your fencing master. Take Bois-Robert, and in six months you will be as good as I.

Thanks for your lesson. I hope it will profit me.



Then they cast their eyes on their companions. The combat was over. Lafare had been run through the body by d'Hermental, who was on his knees before him endeavouring to staunch the blood.



Forgy and Volef had wounded each other at the same moment—one in the thigh and the other in the arm.

My apologies, Count.

We shall be friends now, my dear fellow.



Look, young man, there is the blood of three brave gentlemen flowing—probably for a folly.

Faith, Captain, I believe you are right.



Rouot d'Hermental called for a surgeon to attend to Lafare, and the three victors took their leave.

Captain, please accept one of my horses in return for the assistance you have rendered me.

I do not know how to refuse you. If you ever have need of me, go to La Fillaire's and ask for Captain Roqueferte.



The men parted, and Roxel of Hermonia returned to his home, where he found two letters waiting for him. He opened the first, with a hand whose shaking betrayed the importance he attached to it, and read it through.

He began to walk backwards and forwards. After two or three turns, he saw the other letter lying on the floor. He picked it up and opened it.



Chambier, someone is ready to offer you an enterprise worthy of you, and the result of which will be to conduct you to a goal more brilliant than you can have hoped for. The great genius who will lead you whether will expect you this evening at ten o'clock at the Opera Ball. You will know her by the violet ribbons which she will wear on her left shoulder.



Thus diverted from his grief over the first letter, Rousol went to the ball. Soon a sweet and flute-like voice whispered in his ear...



Chevalier, I am grateful to you for having come.

Rousol threw a rapid glance at the woman who accosted him and was satisfied on seeing a violet ribbon on the left shoulder.



Will you choose a future which will make you one of the colors in a game which, whether you gain or lose, will leave you the renown of a great player?

I am your man.



Then you must allow your eyes to be bandaged, and let me lead you where I like.

I am ready.



The woman led Rousol to a carriage. She placed a bandkerchief over his eyes, and the carriage set off at a gallop.



At length it stopped, and d'Hermontal was led into a room. Then there appeared a woman with a small and delicate figure.



Madame de Moinel

It is an honour to serve to great and noble a princess.

I see the Baron de Volaf did not deceive me, and you are such as he described. Come, I will present you to our friends.

The Duchess conducted him to a room where four new personages awaited him.

The Cardinal de Polignac, the Marquis de Pompadour, Monsieur de Malesieux and the Abbe Brigaoud.



Gentlemen, I beg your confidence and ask to prove myself worthy of it.

Well said. The matter at hand, Chevalier, is a conspiracy against the Regent—a conspiracy which numbers the King of Spain, the Duc de Maine, all of us here, and which will include half of Parliament and three parts of France.



At this moment a tall, grave man entered. Royal recognized the Spanish ambassador, Prince de Callamere.

Well, Prince, what news you to tell us?

The cardinal of Toledo and the fortress of Saragossa are at your service. Find the means of making the Regent enter there, and their Spanish majesties will close the door on him securely.





The men took their leave. The next day Raoul set out towards La Fite's to find Captain Roguesvive.

He is an adventurer who will be ready to sell his blood for a good price.



D'Hermental found the Captain having dinner in a private room.

Welcome, Chevalier. Sit down and eat and drink as if you were at home.

No, Captain, I come on business.



Then it will have to wait. I have enough money to last till tomorrow. Then, after tomorrow, business.

Very well, I will send you word where to come.



Raoul returned home. The next day the Abbe Brigoud came to see him.

Here are your clothes as become the codet of a bourgeois family. I have engaged a room for you at Number 5, Rue du Temps Perdu.



Later that day, d'Harmontal went to take possession of his new lodging. He found it was on the fourth floor and looked out onto a narrow street.

The apartment opposite must be occupied by a woman.



Feeling very solitary in his retreat, d'Harmontal took to watching for his neighbor. Finally a young girl appeared on the terrace.

What a lovely vision!



He was called out of his ecstasy by the arrival of Captain Roqueflette.

Enter quickly. It is important that my neighbors should not notice you.



So, my dear Chevalier, we conspire. It seems, and in order to succeed we have need of poor Captain Roqueflette.



Does a conspiracy frighten you?

Frighten me! Who says anything on earth can frighten Captain Roqueflette?



Roual told him of the plan to abduct the Regent.

Ah! And why not? The Regent is but a man, after all. Give me six thousand livres, and I will find a dozen determined men to help us.



And those twelve men, do you think you may trust them?

There is no need for them to know what we are doing. They shall think they are only carrying out a wager.



When is the affair to be?

I do not know yet, Captain. But if you will breakfast with me every day, I will keep you informed.



No, no, the less we see of one another the better. Here, take this ribbon. The day you want me, tie it to a nail outside your window.



Very well. Here is two thousand crowns on account.

Adieu, Chevalier. I go to look after our business.



Rosol remained alone, plunged in reflection. On passing and re-passing his window, he noticed his neighbour.



The young girl was seated near her window, working at some kind of embroidery.

Ah, she is as beautiful as an angel.



All at once she raised her head and saw the pensive figure of the Chevalier through the glass.



She rose, took a few turns around her room, returned and shut the window.



Rosol remained where he was, and soon a man came to the window and pressed his fat, good-natured face against the glass.

Can this be her father? It is like a rose flowering on a cabbage stalk.



The next day Raoul had the opportunity to bow to his fair neighbour whose name he had learned was Bathilde, but he did not dare risk speaking to her. The following morning Abbe Brisquet came to see him.



The Regent will sup tonight with Madame de Sabran. Her house is in the Rue des Bons Enfants, a street which is usually gloomy and deserted.

The Chevalier drew from his drawer a crimson ribbon and nailed it to the outer wall.

What the devil does that mean?

You may tell the Duchess de Malme that I hope this evening to fulfil my promise to her.



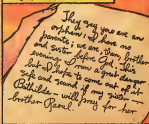
The abbe left, and twenty minutes later, Captain Roguelinette entered. After a long conference he also took his leave, and Raoul went to his window.



He quickly wrote a note and threw it into the opposite window.



The temptation was too strong to resist. The girl picked up the note.



They say you are an orphan; I have no parents; we are, then, brother and sister before God. This evening I run a great danger but I hope to come out of it safe and sound if my sister - Bathilde - will pray for her brother Raoul.

Rosal could not have written a better letter. Bathilde was, indeed, an orphan. Her mother was an Englishwoman and her father, Albert du Rocher, fought with the Duc d'Orleans. One day, when Bathilde was three years old...

Clarice, we march to Spain in a few days. But I am uneasy about you. The doctor fears you may have tuberculosis.

Think not of me, but of your honour.



Albert marched away. A month later Clarice received a letter.



Madame
 Your husband has died
 for France and for me. Neither
 France nor I can give you back
 your husband, but remember that
 if ever you are in want of
 anything we are both your debtors.
Philippe d'Orleans

The poor widow was grief-stricken. As her illness and poverty increased, she was forced to go to the minister-at-war with the letter.

With such a letter you cannot fail in obtaining what you want. But his Highness is away, and you must wait for his return.



Wait! God knows if I shall have the time!



Soon after that Clarice died, leaving Bathilde nothing but the letter from the Duc d'Orléans. Another tenant in the building, Jean Buvat, carried the child to his room.



Buvat was a copyist at the government library, so he arranged for a woman to take care of little Bathilde during the hours he spent at work.



As she grew older, Buvat resolved to give her an education proper not to her present situation, but to the name she bore.



In order to pay for this, Buvat worked from morning till night, but making sacrifices for Bathilde was entirely a pleasure to him.



So the years went by, and Bathilde passed from a charming child into the beautiful woman that Raoul had seen from his window, and who was now praying for him.



Meanwhile, Rasoul was in the Rue des Bons Enfants mingling with a considerable group assembled around a street singer.



Rasoul then went straight to a coal-beaver with a face the colour of ash.

Well, Captain, did you see them?

As plainly as I see you. It was Ravanne, Simons, and the Regent.



A strange fluctuation then began to take place in the crowd. A great many men left the circle, some by the Rue de Volois, some by the Cour des Fontaines, some by the Palais Royal, thus surrounding the Rue des Bons Enfants.



Where is the carriage?

It is waiting at the corner.



A lthough the street became almost deserted:

It is understood, Captain? You and your people are drunk. You push me. I fall between the Regent and whoever has his arm. You seize the Regent and gag him, and at a whistle the carriage arrives.



A quarter of an hour passed, and the center windows of the house they were watching opened. They heard the Regent's voice.

Simiane, what kind of weather is it?

I think it snows. Or rains. But after all, I am not sure that anything is falling.



He is dead drunk.

Ah, well, I bet you a hundred louis that, Regent of France as you are, you will not do what I do.

I accept.

Then follow me. I am going to the Palais Royal by the roofs.



And seizing a kind of iron fan that supported the windows, Simiane began to climb up on top.



As the Regent seized the iron bars, climbing behind Simone, Captain Roquefiette and Raoul uttered an exclamation of astonishment which was repeated along the street as if every door had an echo.



Ah, what is that?

It is the watch.



No, monseigneur, that is not the watch. Not a mask! -- not a jester. I continue my escort, and invite you to follow me.



Holding out his hand to the Regent, Simone began to scale the roof, drawing the Regent after him. Ravanne brought up the rear.



At this sight, Raoul uttered a cry of rage.

Ah! Ah! What the devil is that? A plot?

No joking, monseigneur. Let us go on.





The Regent and his men rapidly descended a staircase and opened the garden door. There they heard the blows of their pursuers against the iron gates.

Quickly, let us gain the Palais Royal!



The young man led the Regent down a passage of the Palais Royal.



Behind them the door of the passage fell and the whole band of pursuers rushed at the palace gate at the moment the three men closed it behind them.



The conspirators were left leaning against the gate at the head of their breathless companions.

We have lost the bet, my friends, but we do not dismiss you yet-- it is only postponed. Come to the rendezvous tomorrow for the rest of the sum I promised you. Good evening.



All the people disappeared, and Raoul returned to his room. The next morning his first look was for his neighbour's window.

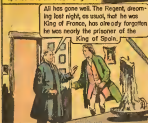


Then, Bothide, you prayed for me?

All night!



Just then someone knocked at Raoul's door. He opened it to the Abbe Brigaud.



Now we must begin again. It was decided last night that you should leave for Brittany this morning. When you are there you will unroll this letter and find your instructions.



When must I go?

This instant.



Raoul quickly wrote a letter telling Bothide he had to be absent for a time. Then he fastened on his sword and followed the Abbe Brigaud.

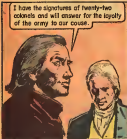


Six weeks later, Roclet, returning from Brittany, was at a council in the palace of the Duchess de Mols.



Gentlemen, let everyone tell quickly what he has done.

I have the signatures of twenty-two colonels and will answer for the loyalty of the army to our cause.



The Cardinal here answers for the clergy.



And I bring the protestation signed by thirty-eight of the nobility.

And you, Chevaller?

I have promises that as soon as Spain shows a squadron in sight of the coasts, Brittany will rise.



And now, Valet, it is your turn.

Here is a letter from the King of Spain to the King of France, asking him to assemble the States-General.



Then, sure as we are of the three orders, we depose the Regent and name the King of Spain in his place.

And as the King of Spain cannot leave Madrid, he gives us full powers, and we govern France in his stead.



But to convulse the States-General you must have an order from the King.

Villeroy will get that order for us. And now, I think we should adjourn.



I must keep you an instant longer, Madame, to tell you the trouble I am in. We have been having protestations printed on a press in the cellar of a house behind the Val-de-Grace by workmen who cannot read.



Yesterday the police made a descent on the house. Fortunately there was time to roll a bed over the trap door, so they discovered nothing. But we cannot continue to work there.



My advice is to employ some intelligent copyist.

I know the man you want.



As a greater precaution, we might put the most important papers into Spanish.

Very good. Then there is nothing to keep us any longer.



The man withdrew, and Raoul was brought back to his little attic by the Abbe Elrigaud. At once Raoul saw that Balthazar's window was closed.



Why don't you go to her room?



To her room! Have I been introduced to her? Do I know her?



Well, make a pretext. You remember that I undertook to find a copyist?

I do.



Well, this copyist I promised to discover is no other than Guenet, the guardian of Balthazar.



I give you full powers. You go to his house, you offer him gold, and the door is opened to you on the instant!

My dear abbe, you have saved my life!

Racot darted towards the door and descended the stairs four at a time.



He reached the door of Bathilde's house just as Bathilde opened it.



He went with her to her rooms, where each told the other the history of his life. Two hours passed like two seconds, and they were still there when someone rang the bell.



Bathilde opened the door to her guardian, who fixed his astonished eyes on the young man.



Is it to Monsieur Buvot that I have the honour of speaking?



To myself, sir.

You know the Abbe Brigaud, I believe? Well, he has found an excellent customer for you.

Pray take a seat, monsieur.



It is a Spaniard, and all the dispatches are in Spanish. Do you know that language?

No, monsieur.



Never mind, one need not know a language to copy it. You are to go to the Rue de laoc, 110, at five o'clock.



Now, adieu. And you, mademoiselle, receive my thanks for keeping me company while I waited for Monsieur Buvat.



Racoul took his leave. Meanwhile, events which were to rouse our lovers from their happy idleness were preparing in silence. One day *La Fille* made a call upon Archbishop *Dubois*, a loyal follower of the Regent.

I come to make a revelation.

And what about?



First promise me one thing— that as it is about an old friend, he shall come to no harm.

I promise



My Captain *Roquefinette* lately has become as rich as Croesus. Doubloons run from his pockets like a stream.



And when did he begin to sweat gold?

The day after the Regent was nearly carried off in the Rue des Bons Enfants.



Then I must know what your Captain does — day by day.

You shall.



As Filon was going toward the door when an usher entered.

Monsieur, here is a man who wishes to speak to your Excellency.



And who is he?

An employee of the royal library, who, in his spare time, makes copies. He says he has an important revelation to make to your Excellency.



Send him in.



An instant afterwards, the usher announced Monsieur Jean Duval.

You have some revelations to make to me?



I make copies sir, and...

Yes, I understand. Someone has given you suspicious papers to copy, so you have brought them to me.



In this roll, monseigneur. All are in Spanish, which I cannot read, except for this one in French, which appears to have slipped in by mistake. It tells of a conspiracy against the person of the Regent.



Dubois made a single bound from his chair to Buval, took the roll and found the papers in question.

My dear Monsieur Buval, who gave you these?



A Prince de Liffroy, monseigneur, who lives at Number 110, Rue du Bac.

Ah, yes. Well, you must make me copies of all these papers, then return them to him.



When the copies had been made, Dubois set off to tell the Regent all he had discovered.

The conspirators plan for Villeroy to get an order from the King tomorrow to convoke the States-General.

Then we must take Villeroy in the act.



The next morning Villeroy was arrested, and the conspiracy seemed doomed. Yet for Bathilde and Raoul all fear, past or future, was lost in the happiness of the present.



The following day the conspirators met at Rossi's lodgings.

We have, at this very moment, a sword hanging over each of our heads. Do not let us wolf tamely fill the thread which suspends it snaps. Let us seize it, and strike!



Strike! How? Have we a plot made out?



The best plot was the first. Let us return to it.

I understand the Regent goes through the wood of Vincennes every Wednesday, without guards. I will wait for him there tomorrow and carry him off!



An instant, my dear Baron. This undertaking belongs to me of right.



You are right, my dear d'Hormental. I trust entirely to your devotion and courage. To you, all the honour, and all the peril.



The conspirators took their leave, and Raoul hurried to La Fille's to find Captain Roquesflette.

Are you the gentleman who inquired for him two months ago?

I am.



Raoul was conducted to the Captain's room.

I now come to ask your assistance. Without preamble --

What? Why do you stop?



I thought I heard steps -- a sort of creaking in the wall.

There are not a few rats in this establishment, I can tell you!



That must be it. Well, we wish to profit by the Regent's riding unguarded through the wood of Vincennes tomorrow to carry him off and take him to Spain.



It is agreed, Chevalier, but do not be astonished if I am a little exacting in the matter of payment.

Come to my house tomorrow at two o'clock.



D'Hermont let himself out, as La Filon was not there, and went to see Botilde.

Tell me, Botilde, are you disposed to share my good and evil fortunes? It may be a happy and brilliant life; it may be exile; it may be that you will be a widow before you are a wife.



Good, your life shall be my life, and your death my death; both are in the hands of God.



The next day Roquesfelle arrived punctually, his face grave and determined.

Have you been able to meet the men who are to help us?

Yes, they are in the horse-market dressed as peasants.



I will put myself at the head of my squadron and go to work—supposing that you and I agree on conditions.



What are they?



I should like a rank in Spain—a colonel, I think. And I wish to change positions with you.



What the devil are you talking about?

I shall take the Regent to Spain myself, I, alone.



Are you mad?

You asked my conditions. They do not suit you. Good evening.



But if you go alone you will be free to release the Regent in France if he should offer you twice as much as I offer you for taking him to Spain.

Perhaps.



No, that cannot be. You must do as I say. Take care, it is more dangerous for you now, with the terrible secrets which you know, to refuse than to accept.

And what will happen, then, if I refuse?

You will not leave this room.



Rocoul drew his sword, a thin ribbon of steel set in a gold handle. Roquefleur threw himself on guard.



There began a duel, terrible, hidden, silent. Roquefleur managed Rocoul with his long sword, but the frail rapier followed it, twisting and spinning round it like a viper.



At last Rocoul felt the point of his adversary's sword at his breast, and a red spot spread from his shirt to his lace frill.



He sprang of the Captain so that their hits almost touched.



The Captain made a spring backwards. Rocoul lunged, and his sword pierced the Captain's chest.



Roguellette fell at full length on the floor, and died.
Leaning against the door, Raoul was thunderstruck:

Now how will I find the men who
are to help carry off the Regent?



Then, as he had nothing more to do in
that room, he closed the door, descend-
ed the stairs rapidly, and left at a
gallop.



He went to a little room where the conspirators
waited, and related everything.

I appeal to you, Lovel, Pompadour,
Volef, and d'Avanches, to help me.

We will follow you
to the end of the
earth!



The men went to the wood of Vincennes and waited. At nine
o'clock they heard the rolling of a carriage. Each put on a
mask and took the place assigned to him.



D', who was in the middle of the road pretending to be drunk, sprang up, seized the bridle of the outrider, and extinguished his torch.



Pompadour and **Lovel** sprang upon the jockeys, pistols in hand.



Rosal and **Violet** presented themselves at the doors of the carriage, extinguished the lanterns, and told the **Regent** that if he made no resistance, his life would be spared.

Do not harm me. I will go wherever you wish.



Pompadour and **d'Aranches** rode into the wood with the outriders, the jockeys and two of the carriage horses.



Then **Rosal** mounted the horse of the first postilion. **Lovel** and **Violet** placed themselves before the doors, and the carriage set off at a gallop.



They reached a cross road, and Raoul, for an instant, thought he distinguished men in the darkness before him.



But this vision disappeared like a mist, and he continued with the same swiftness, the same silence, and in the midst of the same darkness.



But, having reached the cross road, Raoul noticed a sort of wall seemed to close all the routes.

We are surrounded!
Save yourself!



Valuf and Level left the coach, leaping their horses over the ditch, and darted into the forest.



Rocul tried to break through the living wall which he recognized as a regiment of musketeers, but a musket ball entered the head of his horse.



He fell, entangling Flaxot's leg, and instantly eight or ten cavaliers sprang upon him.



The pretended Fagot descended from the carriage and turned out to be a valet in disguise.

Someone discovered our plot. Perhaps it was not a rat in the Captain's wall, after all.



Rocul was placed in the carriage. It moved forward, and before long it passed under the sombre gateway of the Bastille.





Do you remember the name of any of the conspirators? Did you see the name of--Chevalier--Rosal d'Harment?



That I did. He will be arrested, if he has not already been.

Oh, you have killed the man I love!



Thinking she might still be in time to warn Flooz of danger, she rushed to his room. Finding the body of the Captain on the floor, she fainted, and her head, in falling against the door, was badly wounded.



When she opened her eyes she found herself in bed.

My darling child! I ought to have known that young man loved you. But you told me nothing. You will never forgive me. Oh, how shall I live?



Both she grew rapidly worse. Brain fever declared itself and brought her to death's door. But at last youth and vigor triumphed, and she began to improve. One morning...



In heaven's name, what has become of Flooz?

He is a prisoner in the Bastille.

I have heard that he has been interrogated, and that he has taken everything on himself. He will not denounce his accomplices.



I will be firm. I will have courage. But when he dies, I will die.



A fortnight passed. One day news came that Raoul was to be executed the following morning.

I must go out.

Go out? You will kill yourself!



What are you going to do, child?

Perhaps I have a means of saving him.



Balthise opened a little cupboard and drew out a letter.

You are right, my child. I had forgotten the letter.



I remembered it, for it was the sole inheritance my mother left me.



Balthise got into a coach and went to see the Duchess de Malne.

I ask your help for Raoul d'Harmental and myself, Madame. Through some of your friends or acquaintances may I gain admission to the Regent? The rest lies with me.

I will do all I can for you.



Bathilde finally found herself being led through a passage in the Palais Royal to the Regent's room.

Enter, fall at his feet. God and his own heart will do the rest.



Bathilde entered, fell on her knees, drew out her letter and held it towards the Regent.



What is the matter, mademoiselle? What can I do for you?

See first who I am, monseigneur, and then I may dare to speak.



The Regent took the letter and read it.

Your husband is dead for France and for me. Neither France nor I can give you back your husband, but remember that if ever you are in want of anything, we are both your debtors.



I recognize this letter perfectly as being my own. How did it fall into your hands, mademoiselle?

I am the daughter of Albert and Clarice du Rocher.



Your father saved my life once. If it is a boon you ask, speak boldly. I listen to you.

I desire the life of a man I love-- the Chevalier d'Harmental.



At this very hour I have had a letter from him asking that before he dies he be allowed to marry so that he may leave you the safeguard of his name and fortune.

Ah, monseigneur, you see while I thought of him, he thought of me.



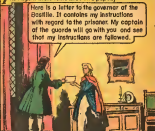
Yes, and I grant his request.

Is that all you grant him?



The King wrote some lines on a paper.

Here is a letter to the governor of the Bastille. It contains my instructions with regard to the prisoner. My captain of the guards will go with you and see that my instructions are followed.



Monsieur de Laforce was summoned, and he escorted the almost fainting girl to the Bastille.

The church is prepared, and the priest is ready.



Bathide and Froul entered by separate doors and met before the altar. Both fell on their knees.



The priest commenced the ceremony. When it was finished, the governor of the Bastille appeared.



They were taken to the courtyard and helped into a carriage.

They have perhaps changed your sentence to perpetual imprisonment. And they are not going to separate us!



The carriage passed out of the Bastille and then stopped. The position opened the door.



Froul jumped out of the carriage and looked around him anxiously. Then he and Bathide uttered together a cry of joy and thankfulness. They were free as the air they breathed.



Four years after this event, Bathide had the satisfaction of placing a pen in the hand of a fine boy of three—the son of Froul and Bathide. One of the first names the child wrote was Philippe d'Orleans, Regent of France.



THE END

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ALEXANDRE DUMAS

WHEN Alexandre Dumas submitted his first play for criticism, he was asked, "Have you any other means of existence?" When he replied that he was a clerk, he was told, "Go back to your desk, young man. Go back to your desk."

But Dumas did not follow this advice. He went on to become a very successful dramatist and author. As a result of his writings, he became so famous that the street in a small town outside of Paris where he was born in 1802, was renamed after him.

Life was not easy for Dumas when he was a child. His father, who was a general in Napoleon's army, died when Dumas was only four. Dumas and his mother were left with little more than the land they lived on. They had to struggle to get along and Dumas received very little education. When he grew older, he worked as a lawyer's messenger and later became a clerk in Paris.

Dumas had always been interested in the theater and while he was doing his clerking, he began writing plays. When the idea for the plot of a play came to him, he would recite the lines bit by bit to himself and his friends. When the play was finally clear and complete in his mind, he wrote it all down.

In 1833, the committee of the Theatre Francaise accepted one of his plays, *Henri III*, for presentation. It was an immediate success. On the morning after the play opened, Dumas was seized by the editor of an illustrated paper and led to the studio of an artist who then and there made a drawing of him for the paper. Dumas' appearance soon became a very familiar one around Paris. He later wrote, "My success, if not the best deserved, was at any rate one of the most sensational of the time."



In 1839, Dumas met Auguste Maquet who was a student of history, a lecturer and a writer. Maquet became Dumas' collaborator on many books. He supplied the historical research and Dumas, with his boundless imagination, expanded the research into stories like *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Dumas got the idea for his novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, after taking a trip to the island of Elba. After the trip, he and a companion were on board their ship traveling to an island near Elba for hunting, when they saw in the distance a rock jutting out of the sea. When Dumas asked what it was, he was told that it was the island of Monte Cristo. The name caught Dumas' fancy. Although he never visited the island because it was under quarantine, he never forgot it.

Dumas became a very wealthy man through his writings. But he lived extravagantly, like a character out of his own books, and his activities led him into debt. His downfall began with the building of a magnificent house called Monte Cristo. The day the house was finished, Dumas invited 600 guests to see it.

The house had many guest rooms and when people came to visit, they usually stayed on and on, spending Dumas' money as fast as he earned it. Occasionally, some of the guests would try to make themselves useful in return for their keep. For one man, Dumas invented the duty of going every day to check what the thermometer registered and report it to him.

During all of this time, Dumas continued to write, with the aid of several collaborators, and he made much money. But high living and high spending wore him out. He was near poverty when he died in 1870, at the age of sixty-eight.

THE GRAND MONARCH

KING LOUIS XIV of France was one of the most extravagant rulers Europe has ever seen. People called him the Grand Monarch, and the Sun King. Kings of smaller countries tried to imitate the brilliance of his court and the splendor of his palace at Versailles.

Everything about Louis was done with ceremony. Every morning, when the King got up and got dressed, an elaborate ritual called the *lever* (pronounced *lo-vay*) was performed. Only the King's sons and the princes of Conde were allowed into the royal bedroom while the King was still in bed. They had the privilege of Family Entry.

After them came the Grand Entry—the noblemen of the household, successful generals and distinguished courtiers — who were allowed to see the King pop out of bed and get into his dressing gown. While Louis said his prayers, they all had to leave, but when they came back, they brought with them the First Entry — the lower nobility. All of these gentlemen could see the King shave and put on his wig. Then came the Entry — courtiers, clergymen and military leaders of lower rank. These gentlemen had the honor of standing by while his Majesty was helped into his breeches and stockings by the valets of the wardrobe.

After the royal breeches were on, the First Valet of the Wardrobe gave the King's shirt to the Grand Master of the Wardrobe (a very high nobleman) who in turn presented the splendid garment to the

Dauphin, the heir to the French throne. He alone was of sufficiently noble blood to pass the shirt on to the King.

Sitting in his shirt and breeches, Louis broke his fast on some bread, wine and water. There was a special ceremony in the presentation of the gold and porcelain goblet from which the King drank, to be sure that there was no poison in the cup. After the King ate, valets brought in his vest and coat, the blue ribbon of the *Saint Esprit*, the King's hat, *cravat*, sword and cane. His Highness actually tied his own cravat, but the Grand Master of the Wardrobe had to help him don the royal coat, vest and sword. The Grand Master was also responsible for arranging the blue ribbon. After the King selected his handkerchiefs from a tray, he was finally dressed for the day.

The number of people who surrounded the King every morning of the year for most of the years of his long reign was not small. On some days, nearly three hundred nobles were crowded into the King's bedroom to watch his Majesty step into his breeches. Those who were there considered themselves very fortunate. It was a high honor to be allowed to watch the King dress, and it was bitterly fought for among Louis' courtiers. If a noble was promoted to the privilege of seeing his Highness shave as well as put on his breeches, if he was graduated from mere Entry to First Entry, he was delighted beyond measure at this great display of the King's pleasure.



THE FORTRESS AT EAGLE'S NEST

CRUSADIERS returning from Palestine told of a band of Saracens who struck terror into the hearts of their enemies by killing with frightening boldness in broad daylight. These killers were called Assassins. Their ruler was known as the Old Man of the Mountains.

The Assassins controlled a strong fortress hidden away in the mountains of Persia. It was called Alah Amut—the Eagle's Nest. From it, men would go, two or three at a time, to destroy their victims. In the latter half of the year 1191, two Assassin disguised as monks went to live in the Christian camp in Palestine. They lived there for six months, unsuspected, until their opportunity came. Their target was Conrad of Montferrat. Afterward they were found and killed, but their mission had been successful. Conrad was dead.

In 1273, Marco Polo visited the stronghold of the Assassins, some twenty years after it had finally fallen to the Mongols. Arab guides told him that the Old Man of the Mountains had a garden built in a valley next to the fortress. In the garden there were beautiful trees and flowers, and lovely maidens playing music. Whenever any traveler came by, the Old Man would receive him with great hospitality and give him a potion which put him into a deep sleep. Then the traveler was carried into the garden. When he awoke, he was given whatever he desired.

If the Old Man had an enemy to be killed, the man would be drugged again and brought back from the garden. This time he woke up in the fortress. He was told that he had been dead and in Paradise. If he died, he would return immediately to the Paradise he had just left. Then, fearless of death, the man would leave the fortress ready to commit any crime the Old Man had commanded.

Although the legends Marco Polo learned from the Arabs were not quite true, the Assassins really did exist. They were originally an off-shoot of the Ismaili sect of Moslems. In the tenth century, Ismaili Moslems were persecuted for their beliefs. They were too few in number to revolt openly against the hostile government, but certain fanatic members of the sect turned to political murder as a means of punishing their persecutors. The founder of the order of the Assassins, the original Old Man of the Mountains was a man named Hassan-i-Sabbah.

What made the Assassins so frightening was the swiftness and daring of their attacks. One never knew where they would strike. The murders always occurred in some public place where the killer could have no chance of escape. People could not understand what drove the men on. The name Assassin comes from *ashshah*, the Arabic word for opium. This name was given to the Assassins because some people thought that they had been drugged. But many of the murders they committed required careful planning and great patience. No one knows what gave the Assassins their furious courage, but it was probably not opium.

The story the Arabs told to Marco Polo about the beautiful garden probably grew out of Sabbah's practice of cultivating the land around Alah Amut to make the fortress self-sufficient in case of invasion or siege.

Although the Assassins were not superhuman, as some people thought, they made such a strong impression on people's minds that their name passed into the language of Europe. To assassinate someone means to kill him the way an Assassin would.



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