

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
"EPISODE FIVE" TRANSCRIPT

Written by

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Adapted from the novel
"The Count of Monte Cristo" by Alexandre Dumas

A Little Lucky Production

"The Count of Monte Cristo" contains mature content, including violence, suicide, discriminatory language, and other traumatic themes. Listener discretion is advised."

INT. MORREL HOUSE - PARLOR

1

MAXIMILIAN HUSTLES AROUND THE ROOM:
ADJUSTING PILLOWS, HOW ART PIECES HANG,
ETC. AUDIBLY NERVOUS.

MAXIMILIAN: JULIE!

JULIE ENTERS.

JULIE: MAXIMILIAN! You could always just walk into the other room.

MAXIMILIAN: No, no. I could not. Everything needs to be perfect.

JULIE: He's just a man.

MAXIMILIAN: Not just a man. The Count is incredibly busy and has many important friends. It is an honor that he is calling upon us.

JULIE PICKS UP A PILLOW, EXAMINES IT.

JULIE: Perhaps we could invest in new decorations.

MAXIMILIAN: Don't touch that! Please, I arranged it all very carefully.

JULIE: It's a pillow.

MAXIMILIAN: Can you just -- please. Just don't touch anything.

JULIE: I'll put it back.

SHE DOES.

MAXIMILIAN: But now it's crooked --

HE RUSHES OVER TO FIX IT.

MAXIMILIAN: You are going to be the death of me.

JULIE: If not me, the pillow.

FOOTSTEPS ECHO IN FROM THE HALLWAY.

EMMANUEL (OS): Julie! Maximilian!

MAXIMILIAN: In the parlor!

JULIE: Yes, we're very busy in here prepping for our most esteemed guest.

EMMANUEL (OS): I know, he's here.

MAXIMILIAN: What?!

MAXIMILIAN STOPS WHAT HE'S DOING, RUNS TOWARD A MIRROR, ADJUSTS HIS CLOTHES.

MAXIMILIAN: (angry whisper) I asked Emmanuel to announce the Count --

JULIE: Patience, little brother. Here.

SHE ADJUSTS HIS COLLAR FOR HIM.

JULIE: If the Count does not appreciate you as you are, then he does not deserve a friend as loyal as you.

EMMANUEL LEADS THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO INTO THE ROOM.

EMMANUEL: -- and here they are.

MAXIMILIAN: (overtly formal) Good afternoon! Monsieur le Comte du Monte Cristo, may I present my sister, Julie. And her husband, Emmanuel.

A BEAT. JULIE STARTS GIGGLING.

JULIE: Who talks like that?

MAXIMILIAN: Julie!

EMMANUEL: It was good.

JULIE: Like a town crier.

EMMANUEL: Very official.

MAXIMILIAN: A crier? Can it at least be something more masculine.

EMMANUEL: You could be a knocker-up.

JULIE: Ooh, or a badger.

THEY LAUGH TOGETHER. MAXIMILIAN RELUCTANTLY JOINS IN.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: *Enchantée, Madame Morrel.*

JULIE: Please, call me Julie. I'll be back with the tea.

MAXIMILIAN: Sit anywhere you choose, Count. How was your trip here?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Pleasant. I have not been to this part of Paris in some time.

THE MEN SIT.

MAXIMILIAN: I am surprised you have been to this part of Paris at all.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I -- perhaps I am mistaken.

EMMANUEL: Maximilian and Julie's father always found himself more comfortable amongst the working class.

JULIE ENTERS WITH TEA, PLACES IT ON THE TABLE, JOINS THEM.

MAXIMILIAN: Our father had a shipping business in Marseilles when I was young.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: He sounds like an honorable man.

JULIE: He was. I miss him everyday. But I like to think he lives on through what he instilled in us: regardless of means, we have much within each other.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I admit, Madame Morr -- Julie. Your father's sentiment pervades all I have seen so far.

JULIE: He would be very pleased to hear that.

MAXIMILIAN: Thank you, Count.

MAXIMILIAN STANDS, SUDDENLY.

MAXIMILIAN: Are you interested in seeing the rest of the house? I know you have a keen eye for art, but we do have a few items from our father's travels that may interest you.

JULIE: And we have the purse.

EMMANUEL: That is a good story.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: What purse is this?

MAXIMILIAN: Ah, here.

HE PICKS UP A SMALL PURSE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM. PLACES IT ON THE TABLE.

MAXIMILIAN: Julie, perhaps you would tell this story best.

JULIE: You know it as well as I do. Mostly from father's retelling.

MAXIMILIAN: Still, you should tell it.

JULIE: Why not you?

MAXIMILIAN: Why not you?

JULIE: You.

MAXIMILIAN: You.

EMMANUEL: Well, I worked with their father from a young age. It is how I met both Julie and Maximilian.

JULIE: Father treated Emmanuel like a son.

EMMANUEL: He was like that with most of his employees.

JULIE: Not really, just the one other.

EMMANUEL: Regardless. Monsieur Morrel was very successful for most of his years.

MAXIMILIAN: But in shipping, one bad storm can destroy everything.

JULIE: Over two years. Father suffered many terrible storms. He lost ships, lost merchandise. It put him on the brink of losing everything.

MAXIMILIAN: Our accounts were near default. Our name would have been disparaged. We were simultaneously at risk of bankruptcy with no way to reclaim what we had lost.

EMMANUEL: We knew he was making his best efforts, but --

JULIE: Father was terribly ashamed. He was so afraid that his misfortunes would ruin all of us, not just him. Then the final day came. Father did not tell us directly, but it was the day he was to repay everything. Yet we had no money. We didn't know what to do.

MAXIMILIAN: But then! At night, it is almost time to retire. And there is a knock on the door. Julie goes to open it...

JULIE: And this purse was on our doorstep, addressed to our father. With a note:

EMMANUEL: "From one debtor to another. Sincerely."

EMMANUEL/
JULIE/
MAXIMILIAN: "Sinbad the Sailor."

MAXIMILIAN: So Julie runs it to father immediately. Father opens it and unfolds the paperwork for every single loan he had taken to support the business.

JULIE: They were paid. Full and complete.

MAXIMILIAN: And the next day, Father's final ship - one he thought was lost at sea - pulls into the harbor with a completely new crew. It had all of the deliveries that were expected, but after further inspection --

EMMANUEL: An entirely new ship.

MAXIMILIAN: It was not the same boat at all!

EMMANUEL: An exact replica of what had been lost.

MAXIMILIAN: And so, we were saved. By Sinbad the Sailor.

JULIE: So we thought.

MAXIMILIAN: Oh, come now.

EMMANUEL: I hold the line at ghosts, Julie.

JULIE: I don't think it was a ghost. Father did. He always said that Sinbad the Sailor didn't save him. It was divine intervention.

MAXIMILIAN: Father had a protegee. While Emmanuel was learning how to run the business, Father mentored a sailor who eventually would have overseen everything on the sea.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: And... what, what happened to that man?

MAXIMILIAN: He died.

JULIE: It was a terrible ordeal.

MAXIMILIAN: But. That is who Father thought saved him. Not a man named Sinbad the Sailor. But the ghost of Edmond Dantès.

THE COUNT SQUEEZES HIS TEA CUP. IT CRACKS.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Apologies, Madame. I shall send a replacement at once.

JULIE: There is no need for that.

THE COUNT STANDS.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: (flustered) Thank you for hosting me, in your home. I have overstayed my welcome. And must leave. Please know I am grateful for your hospitality.

MAXIMILIAN: But --

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I shall call again. Soon.

THE COUNT HASTILY LEAVES, JULIE,
EMMANUEL, AND MAXIMILIAN SIT IN SILENCE.

MAXIMILIAN: Did I say something wrong?

THE THEME PLAYS.**INT. VILLEFORT HOME**

2

VILLEFORT, MADAME DE VILLEFORT,
VALENTINE, AND EDUARD STAND IN THE FOYER.
THEY WATCH SERVANT LUG IN THE MARQUIS AND
MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN'S LUGGAGE.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Don't drag that! It will scuff!

SERVANT: Oui, Monsieur de Marquis.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: One cannot find good help these days.

THE MARQUIS SHAKES VILLEFORT'S HAND.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: How is my favorite son-in-law?

VILLEFORT: As justice continues to prevail, all remains well in the house of Villefort.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Ha! And how is my favorite granddaughter?

VALENTINE: I am well, grandfather.

SERVANT: Shall I bring this upstairs?

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Yes.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: (overlapping) No. We agreed that you shall stay on the first floor. Towards the back of the house. There's a wonderful garden view.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Madame de Villefort. Always a pleasure.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Please, call me Héloïse. Eduard, would you like to say hello?

EDUARD: They're old.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Eduard!

VALENTINE: *Grand-mère!*

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Oh, Valentine!

THEY EMBRACE.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: You look more like your mother each time I visit.

VALENTINE: I miss her very much.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: As do I.

VALENTINE: And how are you, grandmother?

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Oh, *cherie*. I am dying.

VALENTINE: What?

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: No! No, she's not.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: It is true.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Ignore her!

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: I can feel it in my bones.

MARQUIS DE SAINT-MÉRAN: (to Villefort) Perhaps we should start with revising the will?

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: You're revising your will? Why?

VILLEFORT: It doesn't concern you, Héloïse.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Does it concern Eduard?

VILLEFORT: It concerns not you, Héloïse!

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Perhaps we should shift somewhere more private.

SHE LINKS HER ARM WITH VALENTINE, GUIDES HER AWAY.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: More space for us to chat.

VALENTINE: Are you truly unwell, Grandmother?

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: No, but a woman knows these things. I have lived long and well with no regrets. All one can ask for in the eyes of the Lord. It pleases me that my final joy will be watching my granddaughter sign her marriage contract.

VALENTINE: Oh.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: Tell me, are you not excited?

VALENTINE: I... am so very glad you are here, grandmother.

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: I was nervous too, at your age.

VALENTINE: I --

MARQUISE DE SAINT-MÉRAN: But I had faith that my family would guide me to a successful marriage and that faith was not in vain. It is an exciting prospect. You and the Baron d'Epinay. And we shall celebrate accordingly.

EXT. THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO'S HOME

3

ALBERT KNOCKS ON THE COUNT'S DOOR, BERTUCCIO OPENS IT.

BERTUCCIO: *Bonne journée, Monsieur Albert.*

ALBERT DE MORCERF: *Bonne journée! I am here to see the Count of Monte Cristo.*

BERTUCCIO: He is not in.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Really? Or is this one of those 'he is here but busy' versions of not in?

BERTUCCIO: He is not in.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Well, perhaps you could -- ah, Haydeé!

HAYDEÉ ENTERS THE DOORFRAME FROM BEHIND BERTUCCIO.

HAYDEÉ: Greetings, Vicomte de Morcerf.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: For you. Well, for the Count. But for you as well.

ALBERT EXTENDS AN INVITATION. HAYDEÉ
GINGERLY TAKES IT.

HAYDEÉ: What is this.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: An invitation, of course! My mother is to host a ball and we would be most honored if you and Monte Cristo would attend. It has been some time since we have thrown a party, and I assure you that Mother throws the most elegant of affairs.

HAYDEÉ: Hmm. Bertuccio, here.

SHE HANDS THE INVITATION TO BERTUCCIO.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Aren't you even going to open it?

HAYDEÉ: I do not know if I am available.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: It is Saturday.

HAYDEÉ: Perhaps I am busy.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I understand, but --

HAYDEÉ: Goodbye, Monsieur Albert.

SHE SHUTS THE DOOR IN HIS FACE.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: (sotto) Well, that was odd.

INT. MORREL HOUSE - PARLOR

4

MAXIMILIAN PACES THROUGHOUT THE ROOM,
JULIE AND EMMANUEL WATCH.

MAXIMILIAN: Why would he just leave like that?

JULIE: Perhaps the Count forgot a prior appointment.

MAXIMILIAN: It was just so odd.

JULIE: I do not think he would lie to you. You said yourself, the Count is incredibly busy.

A KNOCK ON THE FRONT DOOR.

EMMANUEL: I'll get it.

EMMANUEL LEAVES, MAXIMILIAN CONTINUES TO PACE.

MAXIMILIAN: Maybe I should have replaced the pillows.

JULIE: I assure you the pillows are fine.

EMMANUEL RETURNS, WAVING AN ENVELOPE.

EMMANUEL: Somebody has a secret admirer!

EMMANUEL HANDS HIM THE ENVELOPE.

MAXIMILIAN: (flustered) No, I don't. If I do, it's a secret from me as well. But I guess I'll open it...

HE TEARS OPEN THE ENVELOPE. GASPS.

JULIE: What is it?

MAXIMILIAN: It's, um. It's...

THE SOUND SEGUES INTO...**EXT. VILLEFORT HOME - GARDEN**

5

THAT EVENING. MAXIMILIAN RUSHES THROUGH THE GARDEN TO GET TO...

MAXIMILIAN: Valentine!

VALENTINE: Maximilian!

THEY CLASP HANDS.

VALENTINE: It is dreadful. My grandmother intends to have me sign the marriage contract as soon as possible.

MAXIMILIAN: When?

VALENTINE: Next week? After the Morcerf ball. Will you be there?

MAXIMILIAN: I can be. Yes. I was invited.

VALENTINE: As was I. So I will see you there?

MAXIMILIAN: Yes, of course. But why --

VALENTINE: Run away with me. Please. After the ball. (off his silence) Would you? Run away with me?

BEAT.

MAXIMILIAN: Of course.

ACT BREAK

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM

6

MERCÉDÈS PACES THE ROOM, FOLLOWED BY
SERVANT.

MERCÉDÈS: Have the wild roses arrived?

SERVANT: *Oui*, Madame de Morcerf. They are being pruned in the garden.

MERCÉDÈS: How many times have I asked? Please, call me Mercédès.

SERVANT: I do not think le Comte would approve.

MERCÉDÈS: I do not care what le Comte would or would not approve of. Please.

SERVANT: Very well... Mercédès. You did ask me to remind you about a gift for the musicians as well.

MERCÉDÈS: Yes! Thank you. Bouquets, from the roses that just arrived.

FERNAND ENTERS.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: A gift on top of their fee?

MERCÉDÈS: It is a gesture.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: A quartet is expensive enough as it is.

MERCÉDÈS: It is kind.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: It is foolish. (to Servant) You are dismissed.

SERVANT: *Oui*, Comte.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: And Madame.

SERVANT: And, and *madame*.

SERVANT LEAVES.

MERCÉDÈS: Must you crush every effort I expend?

FERNAND DE MORCERF: Only when you consistently make foolish choices.

MERCÉDÈS: Do not take your anger at Baron Danglars out on me.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: Do not speak to me as if you are the one who built this house.

MERCÉDÈS: We both built this life. We are both to blame.

FERNAND IGNORES THIS. PACES THE ROOM.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: What of the responses?

MERCÉDÈS: Good. Strong. Most are excited we are hosting.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: And there are prospects for Albert?

MERCÉDÈS: Yes.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: And what of the Count of Monte Cristo? Is he attending?

MERCÉDÈS THINKS, WEIGHS HER RESPONSE.

MERCÉDÈS: Albert elected to deliver that invitation personally.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: Fine. (descending into a mutter) I don't care what he does. It is Paris who obsesses over that man...

MERCÉDÈS CLEARS HER THROAT. FERNAND STOPS MUTTERING.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: You will need to keep an eye on Baron Danglars.

MERCÉDÈS: Why?

FERNAND DE MORCERF: Because I am telling you to.

MERCÉDÈS: Help me help you, Fernand.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: I worry that he will act against us.

MERCÉDÈS: Because he did not want the engagement?

FERNAND DE MORCERF: (no) Yes.

SHE KNOWS HE'S LYING. THIS IS THEIR NORM.

MERCÉDÈS: I cannot help us if you push me away. God, what happened? We are so different than how we used to be.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: Are you not grateful for this life?

MERCÉDÈS: I am, but --

FERNAND DE MORCERF: But what? It is not enough? This house, my fortune, Albert?

MERCÉDÈS: Albert has nothing to do with this. I just... sometimes, I think of when we were younger. Before... everything. We were so much...

FERNAND DE MORCERF: (scornful) Happier?

MERCÉDÈS: Lighter.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: If you are so entranced with your past, you know the cemetery it lies in.

MERCÉDÈS: That was cruel. And not what I meant.

FERNAND DE MORCERF: It does not matter. I leave preparations to you.

FERNAND BEGINS TO WALK OUT.

MERCÉDÈS: Fernand --

THE DOOR SHUTS BEHIND HIM. MERCÉDÈS IS LEFT BY HERSELF, STIFLING RISING SOBS.

THE SOUND FADES INTO THAT OF THE WAVES, CRASHING AGAINST ROCK.

FOR A MOMENT, WE ARE TRANSPORTED OUT OF PARIS, ALMOST OUT OF FRANCE ALTOGETHER. IT IS US AND THE WATER, WASHING US AWAY.

GLASSES CLINK. AND WE ARE BACK AT...

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM - LATER

7

THE BALL IS IN FULL SWING, WITH THE UPPER ECHELONS OF PARIS MINGLING HAPPILY.

WOMAN 2: Will the Count of Monte Cristo be here?

WOMAN 1: He's the only reason I came.

MAN 2: Perhaps he'll have that slave girl with him.

MAN 3: She's not a slave.

MAN 4: She's a concubine. I think.

WOMAN 3: Can you believe he bought another house?

MAN 1: On the Champs-Elysées?

WOMAN 1: I heard it was on the edge of Paris.

MAN 1: How mysterious.

MAN 2: Perhaps I shall purchase there too.

MERCÉDÈS AND ALBERT STAND AT THE FRONT OF
THE ROOM, GREETING GUESTS.

MERCÉDÈS: Baron, how good of you to come. My husband will be pleased to see you.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: As am I, Baron.

DANGLARS: Yes, well. Where is your father?

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: With the other delegates, towards the windows.

DANGLARS: I shall require a drink.

HE WALKS OFF.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: The windows are the other way --

MADAME
DANGLARS: Please excuse him. My husband is not himself tonight.

MERCÉDÈS: Baroness, I believe that Monsieur Debray was looking for you.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Oh, I -- how peculiar. I suppose I will go and find him.

SHE DOES.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Did they not bring Eugénie with them?

MERCÉDÈS: She may arrive later, darling.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: But if she is to be my fiancé --

MAXIMILIAN ENTERS.

MAXIMILIAN: Albert! I mean, Vicomte de Morcerf.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: It is alright, Maximilian. We are all friends here.

MERCÉDÈS: Provided you extend me the same courtesy.

MAXIMILIAN: Madame de -- Mercédès. You are, as always, too generous with me.

MERCÉDÈS: Nonsense. A friend of Albert's is a friend of mine.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT AND VALENTINE ENTER.

MERCÉDÈS: Welcome, Madame.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Thank you both for joining us.

MAXIMILIAN: Madame de Villefort, it is wonderful to see you again.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Have we met?

MAXIMILIAN: I -- yes. Many times. But we were in Auteuil together? The Count of Monte Cristo's?

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Ah, Monte Cristo. Has he arrived?

MAXIMILIAN: May I escort you to the drinks, Mademoiselle Villefort?

VALENTINE: I --

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: No, we must find Hermine. Countess, I will return.

MERCÉDÈS: I look forward to it.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT WALKS AWAY. VALENTINE QUICKLY LEANS INTO MAXIMILIAN:

VALENTINE: I will find you later.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Valentine!

VALENTINE: Coming!

SHE SPEEDS OFF.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: What was that about?

MAXIMILIAN: I, uh, I couldn't, I don't --

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Monsieur le Comte!

THE COUNT ENTERS WITH HAYDEÉ. THEY STOP DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF ALBERT AND MERCÉDÈS. IT IS SILENT.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I am so very glad you've come.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I could not decline an invitation from you, Albert.

THE COUNT CLEAR HIS THROAT. THE BUZZING OF THE BALL PICKS UP AGAIN.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: And Mademoiselle Haydeé. I am so glad you have joined us. May I offer either of you a drink?

HAYDEÉ: No.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: What Haydeé means to say is thank you, but I must pay respects to your other guests. If you will excuse us.

HE LEAVES. HAYDEÉ STARTS TO, BUT --

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Mademoiselle, wait --

SHE DOES.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: If I -- whatever I have done to offend you, I am sorry for it.

HAYDEÉ: It is your being that offends me.

SHE WALKS AWAY.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I must say, she confounds me. Mother? *Maman*, are you alright?

MERCÉDÈS: Hmm?

ALBERT DE MORCERF: You have gone pale, *maman*. Please, sit.

MERCÉDÈS: No, no need. I am quite well. I promise. I feel excellent.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PARTY...

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Baron Danglars.

DANGLARS TURNS TOWARDS THE COUNT. HE IS A LIL' TIPSY.

DANGLARS: Monsieur le Comte. You are the talk of the party. Again. Have you tried the wine?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I have not.

DANGLARS: The Count de Morcerf insists that Spanish wine is superior to French. He is, as usual, mistaken.

DANGLARS TAKES A LARGE SIP.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Prince Cavalcanti came to see me.

DANGLARS: Did he?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: He speaks highly of you. And of your daughter.

DANGLARS: I look forward to welcoming the Prince further into the fold.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: So the rumors of your daughter's engagement to Vicomte de Morcerf --

DANGLARS: False. His father knows that that is not happening.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: My mistake. Because you are both men of high standing, I assumed all rumors came from a strong foundation.

DANGLARS SNORTS, REALIZES HE HAS RELAXED TOO MUCH.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: You may ease, Baron. It is a party, is it not? I will do my best to assuage the concerns from Prince Cavalcanti.

DANGLARS: (sobering) What concerns?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Of the alleged engagement. Cavalcanti is noble in name and likeness. He would not dare claim a prize won by another.

DANGLARS: They are rumors. There is no engagement.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: If only Paris was as knowledgeable as you.

DANGLARS: Hmm. Perhaps you are aware, Count, of how the Count de Morcerf attained his wealth?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I am familiar with various rumors.

DANGLARS: Perhaps they are not rumors at all.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: An interesting idea, if the subject of said rumors were not of high standing after all. (beat) I shall continue my rounds. Enjoy the party, Baron.

DANGLARS: Count.

HE SLUGS HIS DRINK. WALKS TO FIND...

DANGLARS: Hermine.

MADAME DANGLARS: Baron! What -- are you drunk already?

DANGLARS: I am leaving.

MADAME DANGLARS: Now?

DANGLARS: Yes, I -- I have an inquiry to write.

BACK TO ALBERT, WHO TENDS TO MERCÉDÈS...

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Mother, will you please sit.

MERCÉDÈS: I am fine, Albert.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I am sure, but you can entrust your hosting duties to me for a moment. Guests are having a fantastic time.

MERCÉDÈS: And what of Monte Cristo?

ALBERT DE MORCERF: He... neither he nor Mademoiselle Haydeé have drank anything. But they are chatting with others quite pleasantly.

MERCÉDÈS: Are they eating?

ALBERT DE MORCERF: They... no, it does not look like it.

MERCÉDÈS: Albert, perhaps you could ask Mademoiselle Haydeé to dance.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: But she hates me --

MERCÉDÈS: I shall attend to the Count. This has gone on long enough.

MERCÉDÈS GOES TO FIND THE COUNT, A NEW VIGOR IN HER STEP.

ALBERT TAPS HIS FOOT IMPATIENTLY, GIVES A BEGRUDING SIGH, GOES TO FIND HAYDEÉ.

MERCÉDÈS STRIDES ACROSS THE BALLROOM, FINDS HER MARK, TALKING.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: (in conversation) -- it is the second mineral spring of this quality I have come across --

MERCÉDÈS: Monsieur le Comte.

THE COUNT STOPS, TURNS TO HER.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Madame de Morcerf.

MERCÉDÈS: I feel as though we will have much to discuss. Perhaps you would walk with me in the garden?

BEAT.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I would be honored.

ACT BREAK

EXT. MORCERF HOME - GARDEN

8

MERCÉDÈS LEADS THE COUNT THROUGH THE GARDEN. ECHOES OF THE BALL WAFT THROUGH THE CALMER, OUTDOOR AIR.

MERCÉDÈS: When we purchased this house, this garden was in the English style. It was beautiful, but it lacked life. I replaced the plants myself and still do. Here, grapes. Would you like some, Count?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: No, thank you, Madame.

MERCÉDÈS: Then here. Strawberries, perfectly ripe.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Again, Madame. I must decline.

MERCÉDÈS: These are my favorite. Peaches. They are hard to grow, but.

SHE TAKES ONE OFF THE TREE, TAKES A BITE.

MERCÉDÈS: They are delicious.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: You are most gracious, Madame, but I shall leave the fruits of your labor to you.

MERCÉDÈS TOSSES THE PEACH ONTO THE GROUND.

MERCÉDÈS: Monsieur le Comte de Monte Cristo.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Madame de Morcerf.

MERCÉDÈS: Albert has told me that you follow a variety of global customs from your travels to Arabia and elsewhere. Surely, you would not assume that your hostess would be unfamiliar with these customs. Particularly the ones of friendship.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I do not know what you imply.

MERCÉDÈS: Is it not true that in Arabia, one only eats under the roof of those they consider friends?

THE COUNT SAYS NOTHING.

MERCÉDÈS: You have declined everything I have offered you. So I wonder, then, why we are not friends?

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM

9

ALBERT FINDS HAYDEÉ.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Ahem. Pardon. Mademoiselle Haydeé.

HAYDEÉ: What.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I wonder if you would be so inclined to join me for a dance?

HAYDEÉ SCOFFS.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I would be most grateful. And, it is my party.

HAYDEÉ: So it is.

HAYDEÉ PUTS DOWN HER DRINK, TAKES ALBERT'S HAND. HE GUIDES HER TO THE CENTER OF THE BALLROOM.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: What is your preferred style?

HAYDEÉ: I am versed in all, Albert de Morcerf.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Very well. We shall go with one of my favorites.

ALBERT JOGS TOWARDS THE QUARTET.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: (whispering) Could you play one of the Spanish pieces in your repertoire?

THE QUARTET MURMURS AGREEMENT, TUNE THEIR INSTRUMENTS.

THEY PLAY.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Allow me to lead.

IN PERFECT SYNC WITH THE MUSIC, HE DOES.

EXT. MORCERF HOME - GARDEN

10

IN A CONVERSATIONAL TANGO OF THEIR OWN,
MERCÉDÈS AND THE COUNT CONTINUE.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I disagree with your assumption, Madame de Morcerf.

MERCÉDÈS: Do not call me by that name.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I was not aware that you had another name. Madame.

MERCÉDÈS: I am not my title. You of all people should know that.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I am still new to Paris --

MERCÉDÈS: Where are you from, Monsieur le Comte?

HE DOES NOT RESPOND.

MERCÉDÈS: Where specifically have you traveled? What business are you in? Do you have confidants? Family? A wife?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: (almost losing it) I --

HE STOPS HIMSELF.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I was in love. Once. Engaged to be married. She forgot me. And moved on. Women can be very fickle.

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM

11

THE MUSIC CONTINUES. ALBERT AND HAYDEÉ
CONTINUE DANCING.

HAYDEÉ: You dance as well as you speak.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: I thank you for the compliment.

HAYDEÉ: That is not what I meant.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: I know.

THEY CONTINUE. HAYDEÉ TRIES TO TAKE OVER LEADING, STEPS ON ALBERT'S FOOT.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Ouch!

HAYDEÉ: Perhaps if you would let me lead.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Perhaps if you would tell me what I have done to offend you so gravely.

HAYDEÉ: I have already told you. It --

ALBERT DE MORCERF: -- "is my being that offends you." Yes, yes. But if you would trust me with the truth --

HAYDEÉ: A princess sold into slavery is not one who trusts easily, Vicomte.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: So you are a slave.

HAYDEÉ: I used to be.

EXT. MORCERF HOME - GARDEN 12

MERCÉDÈS: Lovers do not just move on from each other.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Realities of the world disagree with you. Madame.

MERCÉDÈS: Stop calling me that!

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Why? You speak to me as if you were ever my friend, my closest friend. Yet I do not see her here. I only see you.

MERCÉDÈS: Perhaps we are one and the same.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: You could not possibly be, Madame de Morcerf.

BEAT.

MERCÉDÈS: I tried. I begged anyone who would listen but nobody would help me --

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: How very noble of you. To say you did something difficult amidst all your spoils.

MERCÉDÈS: Spoils? They are rotten. This life is rotten. I am trapped in this house, with these people, in these clothes. I am miserable!

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I have never seen a prison with sunlight and a hand-planted garden. Madame.

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM

13

THE DANCE CONTINUES.ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

I do not understand.

HAYDEÉ:

Are you familiar with Janina?

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

My father was stationed there.

HAYDEÉ:

I was a princess. My father a king. When he was murdered, my mother and I were sold into slavery.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

I am so sorry. I did not think --

HAYDEÉ:

Of course you did not think. Who would ever consider one's past tragedies to be a present concern?

EXT. MORCERF HOME - GARDEN

14

MERCÉDÈS:

You are not the only person to suffer. You are not the only one who lost a life.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

An utter inaccuracy. On every level.

MERCÉDÈS:

Then tell me. Tell me I am right. Tell me my suspicions are valid. Tell me that I am who you know me to be, and that I know who you are.

HER WORDS HANG IN THE AIR, DESPERATE.THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

You could not possibly know me, Madame de Morcerf.

THE MUSIC, OUR PAS DE DEUX BACKDROP,
FINALLY COMES TO A CLOSE.THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

However. I remain your most respectful servant. Until next time, Madame.

MERCÉDÈS:

And will there? Be a next time?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

I could not avoid it if I tried.

THE COUNT WALKS AWAY, LEAVING MERCÉDÈS IN
THE GARDEN, ALONE.

INT. MORCERF HOME - BALLROOM

15

THE DANCING CONTINUES WITH A NEW SONG,
NEW PARTNERS. ALBERT AND HAYDEÉ LEAVE THE
DANCE FLOOR.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

Haydeé, wait!

HE REACHES HER.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

I know you think I do not mean it, but had I known, I would not have pushed. I swear.

HAYDEÉ:

I do not think you cruel. Just ignorant.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

Enlighten me, then.

HAYDEÉ:

What I said holds. I am from Janina. I was its princess. My mother, its Queen. And when my father, the King, was betrayed by his closest confidant, I was sold.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

What of your mother?

HAYDEÉ:

She saw my father's head on a spike and died. It was the better fate. I was sold from owner to owner to owner.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

And then to the Count of Monte Cristo.

HAYDEÉ:

Who freed me immediately. The life I live now, I chose.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

Why?

HAYDEÉ:

The Count and I share the same goal.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

What goal is that?

THE COUNT WALKS UP TO THEM.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

I am finished, Haydeé.

HAYDEÉ:

As am I.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF:

You are leaving, Count?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

Not from a lack of hospitality. Which has been most gracious.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Have -- did my mother find you?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: She did.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Excellent. She was rather hoping that you both would remain friends.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Remain?

THE DOORS TO THE BALLROOM BURST OPEN.

VILLEFORT: Let me in. My daughter is inside --

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Crown Prosecutor? (to a servant) It is alright, he was invited. (to Villefort) How can I be of service?

VILLEFORT: I need to speak with my daughter --

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Yes, she -- they are here.

VALENTINE: Father?

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Gérard?

SHE AND VALENTINE RUSH OVER.

VALENTINE: You are pale.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: And late.

VILLEFORT: Valentine. I must escort you home. Now.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: The ball is ongoing, husband. You are making a scene.

VILLEFORT: Then stay. Your carriage will wait.

VALENTINE: Father, what is wrong?

VILLEFORT: When we are outside --

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Why? What is happening?

VILLEFORT: Just come to the carriage.

VALENTINE: Of course --

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: This is ridiculous! Nobody is leaving until you explain yourself.

VILLEFORT: (hissing) The Marquise is dead.

BEAT.

VALENTINE: Grandmother?

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What? How?

VILLEFORT: I will speak to you in the carriage.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Was it natural causes? Is Eduard safe?

VILLEFORT: Not. Here.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Do not toy with me --

VILLEFORT: (exploding) I refuse to discuss the Marquise's poisoning in somebody's ballroom!

THE BALL FALLS SILENT.VALENTINE FAINTS.

MAXIMILIAN: Valentine!

HE RUSHES OVER TO HER, FANS HER.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Well done, Gérard. Look what you've wrought.

VILLEFORT: What I've wrought? You are lucky I came to fetch Valentine when I did. Because if I hadn't, you could have been next.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What are you saying?

VILLEFORT: The Marquise has not left our house upon arriving and does not publicize her travels. She could not have been an intended target. Therefore, the poisoner's target is obviously our entire house.

END OF EPISODE.