

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO
"EPISODE THREE" 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."

EXT. VILLEFORT HOME - GARDEN

1

A BEAUTIFUL AFTERNOON.

MAXIMILIAN APPROACHES THE FENCE OF THE VILLEFORT GARDEN, UNATHLETICALLY CLIMBS OVER IT.

HE REACHES THE TOP, JUMPS DOWN, MORE OR LESS STICKS THE LANDING.

SERVANT: Who's there?

MAXIMILIAN HIDES IN THE GREENERY. THE SERVANT WALKS THROUGH, LOOKING FOR THE DISTURBANCE. DOES NOT FIND IT. LEAVES.

MAXIMILIAN SIGHS WITH RELIEF. REMAINING IN THE PLANTS, HE PUSHES TOWARDS HIS DESTINATION (IN THE BACK OF THE GARDEN), FINDS VALENTINE.

MAXIMILIAN: Valentine!

SHE YELPS.

MAXIMILIAN: Wait, wait! It's me! It's Maximilian.

VALENTINE: You startled me.

MAXIMILIAN: Forgive me. There was a guard so I thought it best to stay concealed.

VALENTINE: How I wish I could see you.

MAXIMILIAN REACHES TO HER THROUGH THE BUSHES.

MAXIMILIAN: I wish I could kiss you.

VALENTINE: I wish we did not have to hide. Stepmother has asked much of me lately, it was difficult to leave without being noticed.

MAXIMILIAN: Are you still taking care of your grandfather?

VALENTINE: And my brother and whatever needs Stepmother has in the moment. I am barely allowed to leave the house! Seeing you is the only thing I look forward to.

MAXIMILIAN: Have you spoken with your father about your engagement?

VALENTINE: No, I... I have not found the courage to ask. Father is busy with work but he wants the engagement to proceed as planned. Franz d'Epinay is a good man. I just don't want to marry him.

MAXIMILIAN: Franz does not want to marry you either. Nothing to do with you, of course. You are perfect.

VALENTINE: Stop.

MAXIMILIAN: I mean it. Valentine, you are the kindest, most open-hearted, beautiful woman in all of Paris.

VALENTINE: And I have made you hide in a shrub to see me.

MAXIMILIAN: I would hide in a hundred shrubs for five minutes alone with you.

VALENTINE GIGGLES, SHE'S CHEERING UP.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT (OS): Valentine? Are you out there?

VALENTINE: I wish I had the answer to our prayers.

MAXIMILIAN: I need time but I will think of something.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT (OS): Guests are arriving! Valentine!

VALENTINE: Time is what we do not have.

MAXIMILIAN: Who would deny two lovers their eternal happiness? When can I see you again?

MAXIMILIAN: When can I see you again?

VALENTINE: I --

MADAME DE VILLEFORT (OS): VALENTINE! HE IS HERE!

MAXIMILIAN: Is it Franz?

VALENTINE STANDS.

VALENTINE: It's not for me. They are here for Stepmother. I believe he is the Count of Monte Cristo.

THE THEME PLAYS.

INT. VILLEFORT HOME - PARLOR

2

VALENTINE ENTERS, JOINS MADAME DE VILLEFORT, EDUARD, NOIRTIER, AND THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.

VALENTINE: Good afternoon --

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: There you are. I apologize, Count. My stepdaughter is not usually loafing in the garden.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: It is no trouble at all, Madame de Villefort. Time spent outdoors provides an imperative clarity to one's mind and spirit.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Yes, well. Formally, may I present my stepdaughter, Valentine. You have already met my son, Eduard. And this is Monsieur Noirtier de Villefort. As you may have noticed from his chair --

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Paralysis.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Precisely. Though he is completely immobile, he can communicate minimally --

NOIRTIER GRUNTS.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: -- much to our joy.

A GLASS SHATTERS.

EDUARD DE VILLEFORT: I didn't do it.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Of course you didn't, sweetheart. (to the Count) I know he did, but we have so many more teacups it barely matters. Refreshment?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Thank you. But no, I am here to present you and your husband with this.

HE HANDS HER AN INVITATION.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: How thoughtful. What is it?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: An invitation. As I have recently finalized my newest property, I thought I would perhaps entertain.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: This is your house on the Champs-Elysées?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: A second property across the river.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: How quaint. I do love the country.

VALENTINE: Is across the river not still Paris, Stepmother?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Well said, mademoiselle. Though not in the heart of Paris, I assure you the property is excellently equipped.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: I cannot wait to see it. We will of course attend.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I look forward to your attendance.

THE COUNT STANDS.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Will you not stay, Count?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Alas, I must complete my calls. It is an intimate affair, and courtesy requires I invite the rest of the guests myself.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: We shall not keep you. Thank you for visiting, and we shall see you soon.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Indeed.

THE COUNT LEAVES. THE ROOM REMAINS SILENT AS WE HEAR THE FRONT DOOR OPEN, THEN CLOSE BEHIND THE COUNT.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: What a pity. (to Valentine) Had he shown any interest in you, we could have revised your engagement.

NOIRTIER GRUNTS. MADAME DE VILLEFORT RINGS A BELL. THEIR **SERVANT** APPROACHES.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: This tea is too cold. Provide something warmer.

SERVANT: *Oui, Madame.*

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: And do not growl at me, Noirtier. Franz d'Epinay is an excellent match for Valentine, whether you agree or no.

VALENTINE: It's alright, Grandfather. I am simply happy to be of use to my family.

SILENCE BETWEEN THEM, BECAUSE...

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What, what is that? What is he doing?

VALENTINE: He is blinking, Stepmother. It is one of his ways to communicate.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Is this a language, this blinking?

VALENTINE: No. Though I believe he and Barrois have a system of some kind.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: BARROIS!

BARROIS, NOIRTIER'S AIDE, JOINS THEM.

BARROIS: *Oui, Madame.*

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Translate this. What is it, what is it that he is saying?

BARROIS: He appears to be frustrated.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: *Yes, I know that. Thank you. Anything else? Anything else about Valentine, her engagement, his will... something?*

BARROIS: No?

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Ugh, very well. Remove him.

BARROIS: Yes, Madame.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Bring him to the garden or something. You too, Valentine. Go back to your plants.

VALENTINE: Yes, Stepmother.

EDUARD BREAKS ANOTHER TEACUP, GIGGLES.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Oh, *mon choux.*

INT. MORCEF HOME - GAME ROOM

3

ALBERT AND LUCIEN PLAY BILLIARDS.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: I am telling you, Lucien. It's going to be dreadful.

LUCIEN SHOOTS. THE GAME IS PLAYED
THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THEIR
CONVERSATION.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Well done.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: I have been practicing. And I doubt the engagement will be as bad as you say.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Maybe if I had a choice in the matter, but I do not. Father has his eye on Eugénie Danglars.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: More like his eyes on her purse strings. What does your mother say?

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Nothing. I know she doesn't like her, but she refuses to say anything not neutral.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: How so?

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: If I were to ask again, '*maman*, what do you think of Eugénie Danglars?' She would say that her hair is brown, or that she is the daughter of a family friend.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Or that she could easily pass as a man?

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Lucien!

LUCIEN DEBRAY: What, Albert? She'll hear me with her gigantic ears?

A SERVANT LEADS THE COUNT INTO THE ROOM.

SERVANT: Messieurs, may I present --

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: Monte Cristo! What an excellent surprise.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Tell us, Count, are you any good at billiards? I am in need of a better partner.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: I'm not that bad.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Debatable.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Apologies, gentlemen. I cannot stay for a full game. I am here to deliver these.

THE COUNT HANDS THEM THEIR INVITATIONS.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Though I admit, Monsieur Debray, I expected to find you with the Danglars instead of here.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: (flustered) I am not there that often.

ALBERT DE
MORCERF: A dinner party! I am honored, Count.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I have left an invitation for your parents as well.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Oh, no! This is for Saturday!

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: It is.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: We are traveling, Count! Oh, I am devastated that I cannot attend.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: I'm still available.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Good.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: You shall have to host again so I can attend. Lucien, you must tell me everything that happens and what everything looks like.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: We will see plenty of each other, Vicomte. You need not worry about that.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Tell me, who else is attending? Is it everyone in Paris except for me?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Not at all. The property is smaller than my primary residence --

LUCIEN DEBRAY: But no less grand, I imagine.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I would hope not.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Albert, do you remember that time Maximilian Morrel tried to host us?

ALBERT LAUGHS.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: It was dreadful. We know that he doesn't have money but he could have put in some effort.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: His sister made the food. Herself.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: And the rooms are so small. Barely any space for hosting.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: You would think he would have learned something from us by this point. But no.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Poor Morrel.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Literally and figuratively.

LUCIEN LANDS A SHOT.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Perhaps I shall invite him as well.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Yes! Teach him something. Please.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: You know he once asked me how to play the financial markets?

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Awkward.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: It wouldn't have been, had I been sure he could understand it.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: You are familiar with the stock exchanges, then.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Oh yes. Lucien tells me all of the good gossip that he gets through work.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Albert!

ALBERT DE MORCERF: (not picking up the cue) Though the really good stuff gets to his lovers first --

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Albert, I will stake you with this cue stick.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: I am joking! Joking. We are all friends, are we not? What's a secret or two between friends. How about a drink? As friends?

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Yes, let us drink to your engagement.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Please no.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: (to the Count) Albert's father wishes him to marry Eugénie Danglars.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: And this is not ideal?

LUCIEN DEBRAY: She looks like a page boy.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: My mother does not like her. But, she is quite wealthy.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Astonishingly so.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: As long as Madame Danglars continues to trade with her inside information --

LUCIEN THROWS HIS CUE AT ALBERT. BUT
HORIZONTALLY. IT'S KIND OF SAD.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: You almost hit me!

LUCIEN DEBRAY: I gave you fair warning I would throw it at you. Apologies, Count. You are collateral damage.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I have been missed by a hair.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Excellent. Now then, drinks?

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

ALBERT DE MORCERF: Right, right. More invitations to the party I cannot attend.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: We will probably still be here once you have finished.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Even then I will have matters to attend to.

ALBERT DE MORCERF: You are no fun, Count. No fun at all.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: So long as you're doing something interesting.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Always, Monsieur Debray. Always.

ACT BREAK

INT. VILLEFORT HOME - FOYER

4

MADAME DE VILLEFORT TAPS HER FOOT
IMPATIENTLY.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: We are going to be late. You there!

SERVANT: *Oui, Madame?*

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Where is my husband?

SERVANT: I believe he is dressing, Madame.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: You believe. Hmph.

EDUARD TOTTERS IN.

EDUARD DE VILLEFORT: *Maman*, I want to go too.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: No, my pet. You must stay here with Grandfather.

EDUARD DE VILLEFORT: Grandfather is boring.

It is very important that you spend time with him and that he likes you. Do you understand?

EDUARD BEGINS TO CRY. VILLEFORT APPROACHES.

EDUARD DE VILLEFORT: I want to go to the party!

VILLEFORT: Stop wailing, Eduard. Is the carriage here?

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: For ages.

VILLEFORT: There is no benefit to arriving early.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT BLOWS A KISS TO EDUARD.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: *Adieu, mon choux.*

THE VILLEFORTS HEADS TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: (to Villefort) You would be wise to endear yourself to the Count.

VILLEFORT: He would be wise to endear himself to me.

EXT. VILLEFORT HOME - CONT.

5

THEY WALK TOWARDS THEIR CARRIAGE.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: I'm not implying that we grovel. Rather we should always maintain our central positions within our social circles.

VILLEFORT: I do not have time for that.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Which is why I'm in charge. Leave the flattery and endearment to me. Just be yourself. Or something. Everyone who warms to us is an asset to Eduard's future.

VILLEFORT: And Valentine's.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Naturally.

BARROIS RUNS UP BEHIND THEM.

BARROIS: Monsieur Villefort!

VILLEFORT: What is it?

BARROIS EXTENDS A PIECE OF PAPER TO
VILLEFORT.

BARROIS: Your father asked me to relay this message.

VILLEFORT SNATCHES IT.

VILLEFORT: Has his mind gone?

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What is that? What does it say?

VILLEFORT: My father does not approve of Valentine's engagement to Franz d'Epainay and is threatening to write her out of his will.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Just Valentine?

VILLEFORT: He will redistribute his wealth to charity.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: WHAT?!

MADAME DE VILLEFORT GRABS THE PAPER,
READS IT.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What about Eduard?

VILLEFORT: (sotto) Everything I have done for my father. Yet he continues to threaten my livelihood.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Absolutely preposterous.

VILLEFORT: It is my generosity that keeps him alive!

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: A complete barbarian.

VILLEFORT: Do you need something, Barrois?

AND SUDDENLY, WE REMEMBER - BARROIS IS
STILL STANDING THERE.

BARROIS: Would you like me to relay a response?

VILLEFORT: No.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: You windbag of a man.

BARROIS: *Bon voyage.*

BARROIS LEAVES. MADAME DE VILLEFORT OPENS
THE CARRIAGE DOOR, BEGINS TO CLIMB IN.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: An absolute swine, how dare he.

VILLEFORT: The man can't control his own faculties yet attempts to control his only son? I am the Crown Prosecutor to His Majesty! I direct his will. Not bend to others'.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: This cannot stand. But really, darling. We must be going. Auteuil is not a long ride, but it is not short either.

VILLEFORT: Auteuil?

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Yes?

VILLEFORT: Why are we going to Auteuil?

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Because that is where the Count is hosting us. His estate. In Auteuil.

VILLEFORT IS SILENT.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: We can discuss your father on the way.

VILLEFORT: My father is irrelevant here. I simply was not aware the Count was hosting us in Auteuil.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Is there an issue?

VILLEFORT: No! No, of course not. No issue at all.

HE STEPS INTO THE CARRIAGE.

VILLEFORT: We are ready. To go to Auteuil.

HE SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT. IT ROLLS AWAY.

THE SOUNDS OF THE CARRIAGE GROW INTO A
MUSICAL INTERLUDE, CARRYING US THROUGH
FROM THE VILLEFORT HOME THROUGH THE
STREETS OF PARIS AND INTO...

EXT. AUTEUIL - THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME

6

PARIS, STILL. BUT IT FEELS MORE
PROVINCIAL.

IN A WORSE, LESS EXTRAVAGANT CARRIAGE,
MAXIMILIAN ROLLS UP. IT STOPS, HE EXITS
AND GAWKS AT THE RESIDENCE.

MAXIMILIAN: Astounding. (to driver) Thank you.

THE DRIVER STEERS THE CARRIAGE AWAY.

MAXIMILIAN REACHES THE DOOR, PULLS
HIMSELF TOGETHER. IS ABOUT TO KNOCK -

BERTUCCIO OPENS THE DOOR.

BERTUCCIO: Good evening, Monsieur Morrel.

MAXIMILIAN: Good evening. Bertuccio, was it? Thank you, or, thank the Count, for having me.

BERTUCCIO: Come in.

HE DOES.

INT. THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME - FOYER

7

BERTUCCIO CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.

MAXIMILIAN: Am I the first one here?

BERTUCCIO: Indeed.

MAXIMILIAN: Oh wow.

MAXIMILIAN GAPES AT THE INTERIOR OF THE
HOUSE.

MAXIMILIAN: It's splendid.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Thank you.

THE COUNT AND HAYDEÉ ENTER FROM ANOTHER
ROOM.

HAYDEÉ: We are fortunate all arrived in time.

MAXIMILIAN: Monsieur le Comte. Mademoiselle, um.

HAYDEÉ: Haydeé.

MAXIMILIAN: Yes, of course. My apologies. Thank you both for the invitation.

HAYDEÉ: I did not choose the guest list. Excuse me.

HAYDEÉ LEAVES.

MAXIMILIAN: Have I offended her?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: No more than any other Parisian.

MAXIMILIAN: That is unfortunate. I should hope we could become friends.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: A friend of Albert de Morcerf is a friend of mine.

MAXIMILIAN: I will hope to be friends in our own right, Monsieur le Comte.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Time will tell.

AN AWKWARD BEAT. MAXIMILIAN SCANS THE ROOM FOR SOMETHING, ANYTHING TO TALK ABOUT.

MAXIMILIAN: Is this... the painting. The March on Versailles?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: It is.

MAXIMILIAN: I have heard of this piece, but never seen it in person.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Does it offend you?

MAXIMILIAN: Because of His Majesty? No. I admit I am not particularly involved in politics. It is just that October 5th is an important day to me. My father was on the brink of losing everything when I was young. And on October 5th, he was saved. It was anonymous, so we never could thank our benefactor. But I try to do a kind deed every October 5th to balance out the scales. So to speak.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: (pensive) It appears your father raised you well.

MAXIMILIAN: Both of us! Julie, my sister. And I. Our father passed a few years ago, but we do our best to live up to his name. You are most welcome to visit, though I am sure you are highly engaged. Julie and I do not have much. But we do have a happy home, which matters. I think.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I would be honored to call upon you both.

BERTUCCIO OPENS THE DOOR, LEADS THE
DANGLARS AND LUCIEN INTO THE FOYER.

MADAME
DANGLARS: (whispering) It is just a temporary dip in the market.

DANGLARS: I said enough.

MADAME
DANGLARS: This always happens. We act on information, there is a slight dip and then the price increases and so do our profits.

DANGLARS: I do not want to talk about this here. And I do not want to talk about this with you.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: (ending the conversation) Maximilian! So good to see you!

LUCIEN STRIDES OVER TO MAXIMILIAN AND THE
COUNT.

MAXIMILIAN: Lucien! I did not know you were coming.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I see you have arrived with Madame Danglars.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Yes, well. I was nearby so sharing a carriage was easier.

DANGLARS: Monsieur le Comte. Your taste is as opulent as expected.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: *Merci*, Baron. Madame Danglars, you appear at home already.

MADAME
DANGLARS: I... this house does seem familiar.

THE DOORS OPEN AGAIN. MADAME DE VILLEFORT
LEADS HERSELF AND HER HUSBAND IN. HE
LINGERS IN THE DOORWAY, SHE DOES NOT.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: We are here, we are here! Terrible bumps along the road. Our carriage nearly lost a wheel. But we have arrived. And exactly on time, it seems. Gérard, what are you doing? Come inside. Gérard.

VILLEFORT: (anxious) Yes, of course.

HE JOINS HIS WIFE AND THE REST OF THE
PARTY.

VILLEFORT: Greetings. Monsieur le Comte, Debray, Baron Danglars, and, uh.

MAXIMILIAN: Maximilian Morrel, Crown Prosecutor. I am an avid fan of your work.

VILLEFORT: Quite. Madame Danglars, you seem pale. May I escort you to a chair?

MADAME
DANGLARS: I... yes, thank you.

AS THEY WALK AWAY, WE STAY WITH THEM.

VILLEFORT: (whispering) Explain this.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Explain what?

VILLEFORT: What is the motive here? Why are we in this house?

MADAME
DANGLARS: This house? (thinks, gasps) *This* is the house? But he couldn't, who could have possibly --

VILLEFORT: That is unclear. We shall have to wait.

BACK TO THE LARGER PARTY.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Are we to dine soon, Count?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: There is a final guest to arrive. A newer introduction, but one with much in common with myself.

THE DOORS BURST OPEN. FANCY HEELS CLACK
ON THE GROUND AS ANDREA CAVALCANTI
STRIDES IN.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: (heavy Italian accent) At last! The Count of Monte Cristo!

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Prince Andrea Cavalcanti.

DANGLARS: Prince?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Everyone, I present to you Andrea Cavalcanti, an Italian prince I am taking under my wing whilst we are both in Paris.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: *Grazie, grazie.* I look forward to getting to know you all.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Prince Cavalcanti has come to Paris in search of a wife.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: Among other things. Paris is full of opportunity for those willing to seize it, *si?*

DANGLARS: Prince Andrea Cavalcanti, I am Baron Danglars. I would be honored to assist you with your efforts.

A BELL RINGS, THE ROOM QUIETS.

BERTUCCIO: Dinner is ready.

INT. THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME - DINING ROOM 8THE CLINKING OF PLATES, GLASSES, AND SILVERWARE.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Monsieur le Comte, this is absolutely delicious.

MAXIMILIAN: It is like "Arabian Nights" come to life in France.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: An excellent observation, Monsieur Morrel. Having limited knowledge of current Parisian trends, I thought my recent travels should serve as inspiration for tonight.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI: Never have I had sturgeon so fresh.

DANGLARS: It is lamprey, Prince. Sturgeon are only caught in the Volga. They would never survive the journey here.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: You are both correct. It is sturgeon, and it is also fresh from the Volga.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: But how...?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I purchased a fish tank and had Bertuccio ship it to the Volga so the sturgeons could return within it.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI: I shall have to get myself a fish tank.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: I shall have to get myself a Bertuccio.

VILLEFORT: Monsieur le Comte.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Crown Prosecutor.

VILLEFORT: Auteuil is a creative choice for someone of your station. There are more fashionable parts of Paris. Why here?

MADAME DANGLARS: Yes, why this house?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Initially, I sought only a primary residence. Which I found and settled into on the Champs-Élysées.
(MORE)

However, a confidant informed me of this property and upon viewing, I knew I must acquire it as well.

VILLEFORT: You are a man of discerning tastes. Something specific must have caught your attention.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: (to Villefort) What game is this?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: All valid questions. The property holds its own promise, but I admit I was romanced with the story of the house.

MADAME DANGLARS: Story?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Indeed.

HE TAKES A DEEP SIP OF WINE.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Perhaps it is easiest if I walk you through it. Literally.

ACT BREAK

INT. THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME - SECOND FLOOR 9

THE COUNT LEADS THE PARTY UP THE MAIN STAIRCASE.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: This tale is best accompanied by a tour of the house.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Such an eye for art, Monsieur le Comte.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Thank you.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI: Even in *Italia*, our schools of art have less majesty than the *belle case* of Paris.

DANGLARS: My of-age daughter has made the same observation.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI: Ah, you have a daughter, Baron?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I host you all tonight because the designs and decoration of my property are complete. But there is one room I have left utterly untouched.

HE OPENS A CREAKY DOOR.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Follow me.

HE ENTERS THE MYSTERIOUS ROOM. THE PARTY
HESITANTLY FOLLOWS.

INT. THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME - NURSERY 10

AN IMMEDIATE SHIFT IN TONE. THE PARTY
SHUFFLES IN, SQUEEZES TOGETHER
UNCOMFORTABLY.

HAYDEÉ SLAMS THE DOOR SHUT BEHIND THEM
ALL. THE PARTY JUMPS, MADAME DE VILLEFORT
SQUEALS IN FEAR.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Thank you, Haydeé.

SHE JOINS THE REST OF THE PARTY.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Of all places in this house, this room carries the most secrets. What happened here is unimaginable. I cannot bear to dwell on it.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What happened here?

THE COUNT CLEARS HIS THROAT.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Prior to my purchase, this house belonged to a young man. A rising noble who purchased this house after a substantial influx of wealth. Though he initially intended it as a respite from Parisian society, it soon became something else.

AS THE COUNT NARRATES THE STORY,
ACCOMPANYING SOUNDS JOIN THE SOUNDSCAPE.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The man met a woman. Another noble, already married. Her second and current husband was inattentive, and she hungered for more than he offered. The husband did not notice when his wife became a lover.

TWO LOVERS GIGGLE, GIDDY WITH EACH
OTHER'S COMPANY.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Their careful nature morphed into carelessness. And soon, they discovered the consequences of their actions. The woman was with child.

THE PARTY GASPS. MADAME DE VILLEFORT THE
MOST DRAMATIC OF ALL.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Shameful.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: *Una tragedia.*

MAXIMILIAN: What happened next?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The lovers were not fools. They knew what would befall them should they be discovered. And so the wife convinces her husband that she is not well. That she must spend time away from Paris to find herself. The husband, oblivious, agrees. And the wife returns to Auteuil in secret. She remains for months.

THE SOUNDSCAPE CHILLS, BECOMES TENSER.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The noble visits when he can but he rarely stays. They are no longer lovers. They are plotters, schemers. Desperate to return to the comfort of their earlier lives. They agree on a singular goal. When the baby comes, it must be disposed.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: You don't mean --

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: Shh, Madame. Let us find out together.

WITHIN THE STORY, A STORM APPEARS.
THUNDER CRACKLES. IT BEGINS TO RAIN.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The night the wife gives birth, it storms. The birth is long, difficult, draining. Yet both wife and child survive. And both wife and noble are devastated.

THE LOVERS BICKER, EACH'S ANGER WITH THE
OTHER RISING.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: Neither wants to handle the child. Neither wants the responsibility of confronting the consequences of their actions. They agree, the child must go. But who does it and when and where and how. They cannot agree.

AMIDST THE FIGHTING, THE BABY CRIES. THE
LOVERS QUIET AT THIS.

THE WIFE SCOFFS, DISGUSTED.

WIFE: Take it. Take it away.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The noble consents. He leaves the wife alone. In this very room. In the bed you stand next to. And despite the bassinet on your other side, it is never used. The noble takes the child out of the room, and the wife never sees it again.

THE NOBLE'S HEAVY FOOTSTEPS THUMP OUT OF
THE ROOM. THE BABY CONTINUES TO CRY.

NOBLE: Quiet. Quiet, now.

THE COUNT PAUSES FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: What of the child?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The child, carried in his father's arms, is brought outside. Look out the window.

THE PARTY SHUFFLES OVER.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The noble brings him there, to the base of that tree. And in the rain, he grabs a shovel and digs.

THE SHOVEL HITS THE WET SOIL. AGAIN,
AGAIN, AND AGAIN.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The child cries. Its father cannot bear to look. And all the wife knows is that the child is gone, not what its father is about to do.

THE NOBLE STOPS DIGGING, PICKS UP THE
CRYING BABY.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: The noble picks up the still-wailing child. Sees it a final time yet sees only a threat to him and his lover. He does not think twice as he places the child at the bottom of the pit.

THE PARTY GASPS AGAIN.

IN THE STORY, THE NOBLE PUTS THE SOIL
BACK INTO THE EARTH. THE CHILD'S CRIES
BECOME MORE AND MORE MUFFLED.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: And soon, much too soon. The child stops crying. And no sounds emerge from the depths of the earth.

MADAME DANGLARS FAINTS.

DANGLARS/
LUCIEN DEBRAY:

Hermine!

MAXIMILIAN:

Madame Danglars!

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT:

What a terrible story.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI:

You say this is true?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO:

It is.

LUCIEN DEBRAY:

It's a ghost story.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Ghost stories do not have evidence, Monsieur Debray.

VILLEFORT: And what evidence is that?

HAYDEÉ: The child.

THE PARTY TURNS TO HAYDEÉ.

HAYDEÉ: How else would he know where the child lie if he did not find the skeleton?

A HORRIFIED PAUSE.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Is this true.

BEAT.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: It is.

AGAIN, THE PARTY GASPS IN HORROR.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: I think I might faint as well. Catch me, Gérard.

MAXIMILIAN: Please, take my arm, Madame. Allow me to escort you downstairs.

DANGLARS: Yes, we've had enough stories this evening.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Haydeé, if you would lead us to coffee in the parlor.

HAYDEÉ: This way.

HAYDEÉ LEADS THE PARTY OUT OF THE ROOM, SAVE MADAME DANGLARS, DANGLARS, LUCIEN, AND VILLEFORT.

VILLEFORT: Baron, Monsieur Debray. Allow me to assist the Baroness. Surely, a coffee will settle you both. We shall be down momentarily.

DANGLARS: Normally, I would decline. But...

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Perhaps a brandy instead?

THEY MURMUR AGREEMENT, LEAVE. MADAME DANGLARS BEGINS TO STIR.

MADAME DANGLARS: Gérard.

VILLEFORT: Can you stand, Hermine?

MADAME
DANGLARS: Yes.

SHE DOES.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Did you really bury --

VILLEFORT: Shh! Not here. (whispering) Call upon me tomorrow.

MADAME
DANGLARS: I will.

A MUSIC TRANSITION TAKES US FROM THE
CONSPIRATORS AND TO...

INT. THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME - FOYER

11

THE END OF THE PARTY. THE COUNT AND
HAYDEÉ STAND NEAR THE ENTRANCE AS EACH
GUEST LEAVES FOR THEIR CARRIAGE.

DANGLARS: Thank you, Count. For your hospitality.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I trust your wife shall be attended to.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Just a small fainting spell, Monsieur le Comte.

LUCIEN DEBRAY: Unnecessary frights have a tendency to do that.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: More persons are drawn to the macabre than not,
Monsieur Debray. Even though we all claim disdain of
it.

HAYDEÉ: Safe travels, all of you.

THE DANGLARS AND LUCIEN EXIT.

THE VILLEFORTS APPROACH, FOLLOWED BY
MAXIMILIAN.

MAXIMILIAN: Madame de Villefort. May I escort you to your
carriage?

VILLEFORT: She is perfectly fine.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Despite that dreadful story. Any chance you know who
the noble is? Or worse, who the wife is?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: I do not.

MADAME DE
VILLEFORT: Well, there's no fun in that.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Madame, if I do find out, I vow I will not keep the information to myself.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: I am so glad to have you in my counsel, Count. Will you call upon us soon?

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: Assuredly.

MADAME DE VILLEFORT: Marvelous. Good night to you all.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: And to you, Crown Prosecutor.

VILLEFORT: (distracted) Yes. Quite. Good night.

THEY LEAVE.

MAXIMILIAN: Monsieur le Comte, you know how to throw a party.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I look at hosting as I do the rest of my obligations. I set out with a singular purpose, and achieve it.

HAYDEÉ: It is less impressive than it sounds.

MAXIMILIAN: I am not sure I agree.

HAYDEÉ: With time, you will.

MAXIMILIAN LAUGHS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE FEELS ACCEPTED BY BOTH THE COUNT AND HAYDEÉ.

MAXIMILIAN: Will you keep your word? Earlier, you mentioned calling...

THE COUNT LINGERS ON THIS.

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO: I will.

MAXIMILIAN: Excellent! Julie will be so pleased. But, there is no rush. We can absolutely work around your schedule, obligations, priorities, whichever.

HAYDEÉ: Good night, Monsieur Morrel.

MAXIMILIAN: Yes, good night. Thank you. I shall, I will see you soon!

HE LEAVES, EXCITED.

ANDREA, AGAIN, STRIDES UP THEATRICALY.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: A marvelous evening! *Grazie, grazie per la meravigliosa accoglienza.*

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: *La tua presenza è un dono per entrambi.*

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: Flawless Italian. *Eccellente.* I am grateful that Lord Wilmore corresponded to introduce us.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: As am I. Let us lunch this week, and we shall plan for you to build roots here.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: I look forward to it. (to Haydeé) *Buona notte, bella signora.*

HE KISSES HAYDEÉ'S HAND.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: Into the night we go.

HE LEAVES. THE DOOR CLOSSES BEHIND HIM.
HAYDEÉ SCOFFS.

HAYDEÉ: He is preposterous.

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: He is necessary.

HAYDEÉ: Are all of them? Really?

THE COUNT OF
MONTE CRISTO: If everything goes according to plan, yes. Every single one.

EXT. AUTEUIL - THE COUNT'S SECOND HOME 12

ANDREA HUMS TO HIMSELF AS HE WALKS
TOWARDS HIS CARRIAGE.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: To Paris, *signore!*

HE HOPS INSIDE, SHUTS THE DOOR.

INT. CARRIAGE 13

THE CARRIAGE BEGINS TO MOVE. ANDREA LEANS
BACK, SIGHS.

CADEROUSSE: *Buona serata.*

ANDREA YELPS, NOW REALIZING THAT
CADEROUSSE IS IN THE CARRIAGE WITH HIM.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: (accent faltering) What the -- ? hat are you doing here?

CADEROUSSE: Come now, have you forgotten your old friend Caderousse? Well. Maybe now that you're a prince.

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: Get out of this carriage immediately.

CADEROUSSE: You'd throw your old friend out of a moving carriage? After all the history we have? *Prince* Cavalcanti? Or can an old friend call you by your actual name?

ANDREA
CAVALCANTI: What do you want?

CADEROUSSE: I'm just here for a chat. It's a long ride back to Paris, plenty of time to tell me what you've been up to. And, how you're going to cut Caderousse in.

THE CARRIAGE ROLLS ON.

INT. OFFICE

14

THE NEXT DAY. VILLEFORT SITS AT HIS DESK, REVIEWING PAPERS.

A RAPID KNOCKING ON THE DOOR.

VILLEFORT: What?

THE DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES IN THE SAME BREATH. MADAME DANGLARS BREATHES HEAVILY, LEANING ON IT.

VILLEFORT: Were you seen?

MADAME
DANGLARS: Not by anybody that matters.

VILLEFORT: That's not good enough. We must be more careful than that.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Not good enough? I am not the one who is accused of infanticide!

VILLEFORT: Keep your voice down! You are overreacting.

MADAME
DANGLARS: I am appropriately reacting! This is not a moment to stay calm. Somebody knows our secret. Somebody knows what we did.

VILLEFORT: I know that.

MADAME
DANGLARS: Then why are you not panicking?

VILLEFORT: Because we already know who knows our secret. The more important question is, who wants to use it against us. And why?

END OF EPISODE