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THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

By Alexandre Dumas

Adapted by
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EXCERPT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ALBERT:	A young nobleman from Paris
BENEDETTO:	A scam artist, thief, and murderer
CADEROUSSE:	A petty criminal
DANGLARS:	A rich, corrupt baron and banker
FARIA:	An intellectual priest, imprisoned for heretical ideas
FERNAND:	A respected general
FRANZ:	A young nobleman from Paris
EDMOND:	A wealthy and mysterious nobleman
EUGENIE:	A young noblewoman and artist
HAYDEE:	A slave; once a Greek princess
HERMINE:	A baroness
LUIGI VAMPA:	An Italian bandit
MERCEDES:	A countess
VILLEFORT:	A powerful magistrate

CHAIRMAN

JAILERS 1 & 2

OTHERS: Various servants, revelers, bandits, gendarmes, Peers, etc.

CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

MAN 1:	Edmond
MAN 2:	Albert, Gendarme
MAN 3:	Caderousse, Abbe Faria, Chairman, Servant
MAN 4:	Danglars, Jailer 1, Peer
MAN 5:	Fernand, Luigi Vampa, Jailer 2
MAN 6:	Villefort, Peer
MAN 7:	Franz, Benedetto, Gendarme
WOMAN 1:	Mercedes
WOMAN 2:	Hermine
WOMAN 3:	Haydee
WOMAN 4:	Eugenie

ACT I

THE SEA.

Lights up. Moonlight wavers on the sea floor. The calm hum of the current is punctuated by the faint sound of waves crashing against rocks, high above. The waves increase in intensity as voices are heard, muffled, under water. The voices overlap, coming from everywhere, gradually become clearer.

MERCEDES

Edmond?

FARIA

Edmond, do you know what Providence is?

VILLEFORT

Who and what are you?

EDMOND

My name is Edmond Dantes.

VILLEFORT

Do you know what Providence is?

EDMOND

Mercedes?

MERCEDES

Edmond.

VILLEFORT

Edmond Dantes, you are under arrest.

FARIA

Fourteen years.

VILLEFORT

I am unable to restore you to liberty.

FARIA

Now there is a look I know well.

EDMOND

I was about to be married.

FARIA

It has instilled a new passion in your heart.

VILLEFORT

Do you know what Providence is?

FARIA

Vengeance.

MERCEDES

Edmond?

EDMOND

Her name is Mercedes.

FARIA

Do you know what Providence is?

VILLEFORT

Edmond Dantes, do you know what Providence is?

FARIA

Vengeance.

EDMOND

It is the will of God, sir.

FARIA

Providence.

VILLEFORT

You must avoid dwelling on what might be.

EDMOND

Her name is Mercedes. You must tell her.

VILLEFORT

You will surely go mad.

EDMOND

Mercedes. Mercedes!

There is a great crash as a body wrapped in a shroud lands in the water.

FARIA

Do you know what Providence is?

The body falls slowly at first, then with a sudden violent movement it writhes and twists, trying to free itself from the shroud. At last the shroud rips open and EDMOND emerges. He fights free from the shroud and swims away. Lights shift to a cave, revealing a heavy, ancient chest. An exhausted, bedraggled Edmond enters. With great effort, he pries open the lid of the chest. He stares inside. Slowly, he reaches in and pulls out a handful of gems. There are so many they rain through his fingers. He picks one out and holds it up.

EDMOND

Danglars, my old friend and shipmate.

(Edmond throws the jewel away. He holds up another one.)

Fernand, dearest friend to my beloved.

(Edmond throws the jewel away and takes another.)

Monsieur Gerard de Villefort, honorable deputy prosecutor.

(He throws the jewel away and takes another.)

Gaspard Caderousse, who saw it all and said nothing.

(He throws the jewel away and takes up another, this one bigger and brighter than all the rest.)

Mercedes.

(Edmond wraps his hands around the jewel and squeezes it tight.)

Yes. I know what Providence is. It is the will of God.

Edmond slams the chest closed and exits.

THE CARNIVAL OF ROME.

Lights shift to a street in Rome at the height of a festival. Revelers in masks run everywhere. ALBERT enters, also masked, and joins the party. He sees HAYDEE, also masked. She waves at him and then runs off. FRANZ enters. He and Albert remove their masks as they greet each other.

FRANZ

Albert!

ALBERT

Franz, my dear fellow! Did you see? I am convinced of the charms of Roman women.

FRANZ

How unfortunate that you were masked, Albert; here was an opportunity for you.

Haydee, still masked, enters with several other revelers. She tosses a bouquet of violets to Albert before exiting.

FRANZ

Well, there is the beginning of an adventure.

ALBERT

Laugh if you will; I have decided to be in love.

Albert exits, following Haydee. Franz exits in another direction. Albert re-enters, searching for Haydee. She enters behind Albert and surprises him. She starts to leave again, but Albert catches her hand and pulls her to him.

Unseen by Albert, LUIGI VAMPA enters. As Albert reaches for Haydee's mask, Luigi Vampa aims a pistol at him.

LUIGI VAMPA

Sir.

Albert turns to find himself surrounded by BANDITS. He turns back to Haydee, who smiles and waves, then exits.

LUIGI VAMPA

You see, sir, the streets are not safe at night.

ALBERT

So I've heard. And by whom do I have the honor of being kidnapped?

LUIGI VAMPA

Luigi Vampa, at your service. If you would be kind enough to follow me?

Luigi signals to one of the bandits, who approaches Albert. Albert surprises the bandit by attacking him. A brief melee breaks out, ending with Albert captured.

LUIGI VAMPA

This is not some romantic adventure, my friend. You have heard what happens here in Italy? You will sign a letter. This letter demands a ransom, to be delivered by six o'clock tomorrow morning.

ALBERT

And if the money is not delivered?

LUIGI VAMPA

I think you know, my friend.

LUIGI VAMPA'S HIDEOUT.

Lights shift to the catacombs of an ancient Roman cemetery. Albert sleeps soundly. Luigi Vampa enters, followed by Edmond, now dressed as the Count of Monte Cristo.

LUIGI VAMPA

Here he is, Excellency, as you requested. He signed the ransom note and promptly went to sleep. Not bad for a man who was told he'd be shot first thing in the morning.

(To Albert:)

Awaken, sir!

ALBERT

Why? What time is it?

LUIGI VAMPA

Half past one, sir.

ALBERT

Has Franz come already?

LUIGI VAMPA

He has not.

ALBERT

Then what is it?

LUIGI VAMPA

A person to whom I can refuse nothing has come to demand you. May I present to you his excellency, the Count of Monte Cristo.

SAMPLE ONLY. CONTACT THE AUTHOR TO READ THE ENTIRE PLAY.

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