

THE COUNT'S REVENGE - J.H. WALSH

INTRODUCTION: 'The Count's Revenge' is a One-Act play. It has been adapted from "The Count of Monte Cristo", a famous novel of the 19th century by the French writer Alexander Dumas. The play has three scenes.

FIRST SCENE: The Countess of Morcerf and her son Albert are talking. The Count of Morcerf has been disgraced. The courts have tried him and found him guilty. When his son Albert hears the news he cuts short his vacation with his friend the Count of Monte Cristo and hurries back to Paris. Albert wants to find out who is responsible for this disgrace and punish them. He requests his friend Beauchamp to help him and decides that if he fails, he will ask the Count of Monte Cristo for help. Albert is only determined to protect the family's honour. He is not bothered about doing the right thing.

The Count of Monte Cristo comes to pay his respects to the Countess and to support his young friend Albert. Albert asks him to be his second. Monte Cristo mysteriously tells him that he will not need his help once he learns the identity of the person responsible for his father's disgrace. He reminds Albert about his view of duels. According to him, if someone has done you wrong the best way of taking revenge, is by doing exactly as they did to you.

Albert's friend Beauchamp is a newspaper editor. His newspaper has carried the information relating to the Count's disgrace. He finds out the person responsible for this and tells Albert. Albert is shocked to learn that it is his friend and well-wisher the Count of Monte Cristo. He tells his mother he is going to challenge him to a duel to defend his father's honour. He says that the Count must either fight him or apologize to him.

SECOND SCENE: The scene opens with the Count of Monte Cristo telling his good friend Morrel that he has been challenged to a duel by his young friend Albert. Morrel asks the reason for the duel. As the Count is about to answer him, his servant Bertuccio announces that there is a veiled lady who wants to meet him. Though curious about the lady, Morrel clarifies that Albert's second is the newspaper editor Beauchamp. He then adds that he would go to his house and discuss the details of the duel. He promises to return and inform the Count about the outcome.

The veiled lady happens to be the Countess of Morcerf. On learning about the proposed duel, she approaches Monte Cristo and asks him to spare her son. She tells him she knew who he was, right from the moment he came to Paris. He was Edmond Dantes, who was engaged to her a long time back. She tells him that Albert wants to fight him only to defend the family name. He replies he has no quarrel with Albert or her.

Citing the happy times they had spent together many years before, she begs him to spare her son's life. She then accuses Monte Cristo of provoking her son by bringing disgrace to their family. Having saved him once, she wonders why he wants to kill Albert now. This causes him to reveal the true motive for his revenge. Fernand Mondego who later became the Count of Morcerf had produced false evidence to show that Edmond Dantes, a sailor was a spy. He had given false papers which proved that Edmond Dantes was an agent of the exiled

Napoleon Bonaparte. The poor sailor was found guilty and put in a dungeon. When he came out of prison, after serving a sentence for fourteen years, he was determined to have his revenge. She says she was unaware of these happenings and in fact she had been told by all his friends that he was dead.

The countess says that Monte Cristo was right in taking his revenge on Morcerf. However, as a mother she begs for her son's life. Finally, he promises to spare Albert's life. He adds that he would let Albert shoot him and he would die. The Countess is extremely upset on hearing this. She pleads with him but Monte Cristo tells his servant to show the Countess to her carriage. He then prepares his will and asks his servant Bertuccio and friend Morrel who has returned to be his witnesses. Morrel questions him why it is necessary as he is an expert gunman. He also begs him to spare Albert if possible. Monte Cristo says he has already decided to do so. He says he would fire in the air and not shoot Albert. However, Albert would shoot him and he would die.

THIRD SCENE: The Count and Countess of Morcerf are discussing about the duel. The count is tense and asks his wife if she is not concerned about their son. As she has made sure of his safety, she is not worried about him. But, she tells the Count that once the duel is over she plans to leave Paris along with Albert. The Count is shocked and says he had expected the family to be supportive of him at that time but in reality they are not.

Beauchamp comes in. The count who is anxiously waiting for the news of the duel asks him about Albert. Beauchamp tells them they would know the details shortly. Then, Albert comes in and his parents are happy to see him alive and well. His father is happy that he has defended the family honour and tries to embrace him. Albert stops him and adds that he needs to know what had happened that morning. Morcerf is not interested and says he is happy that his son has killed Monte Cristo and defended the family name.

Albert stops him once again and narrates the events of the previous night. He tells him that his mother had gone to Monte Cristo's home to beg for his life. There, the Count had not only promised to spare his life but revealed the reason for his enmity with their family. He had clarified that his enmity was only against Count Morcerf.

Count Morcerf is surprised to hear this. He says Monte Cristo is a stranger to him and he has never met him before he came to Paris. It is then that Albert tells him that the last thing that Monte Cristo had done the previous night was to make his will. The Countess is shocked. Count Morcerf thinks that it was the most sensible thing that a man could have done. Albert adds that he came to know of these things and early that morning he had apologized to the Count for his hasty action. He had begged the Count's forgiveness. He had also hoped that their friendship would continue. Morcerf is angry and shouts at him. But the Countess is happy that the Count is alive and praises her son for acting nobly. Albert adds that not only had he and the Count breakfasted together but the Count had also accompanied him to their house.

Monte Cristo comes into the room. Morcerf tells him he is puzzled by his son's story. Monte Cristo says he will tell him a stranger one. He then accuses him of treachery. The charges against Morcerf were that, in the year 1823, when he was captain in the French Army, he had received bribes from the enemy and surrendered the fortress of Yanina to them. It is

then that Morcerf understands that he is responsible for sending Monte Cristo to prison. He had made people believe that Edmond Dantes was dead. He laughs wildly and threatens to send him back to his grave.

Morcerf picks up a pistol and tries to shoot Monte Cristo. Albert and Beauchamp try to stop him. But the trigger is pressed and Morcerf kills himself with his own pistol. He ultimately pays for his wickedness. Albert turns his father's body over and says the Count of Monte Cristo is avenged. As the Countess faints, the Count of Monte Cristo catches her before she falls on the ground.

CONCLUSION: What this play reveals is, Justice always prevails. No one escapes the Divine Law of Retribution or revenge. If you harm someone, you will definitely pay the price for it.