

from a distance. They were taking him to the Chateau d'If! It was a dark fortress, a prison for political prisoners, a place from where no one returned!

Dantes was desperate; he needed answers, but nobody would give them to him. Suddenly they reached a landing, and the guards forced him to rise. A prison guard led him to a dark room underground.

'There is bread and water and fresh straw to sleep on. Goodnight,' said the guard and left, taking the lamp with him and leaving Dantes in the dark.

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Meanwhile, Villefort travelled to Paris, where he asked to see the king. He told the king everything he knew from the sealed letter, but he did not reveal all the facts about it; instead, he blamed Dantes as a conspirator. The king was grateful for his loyalty.

Not long after his return to his hotel, Villefort had an unexpected visitor.

'My dear boy Gerard, you never seem pleased to see me. What has brought you to Paris?' his father asked. Noirtier extended his hand to his son, who was standing at a distance with a cold look in his eyes.

'I have come to warn you,' said Villefort.

'Warn me... about what?' said his father.

'Do you know anything about a Bonapartist club?'

Noirtier laughed ironically. 'Do I know about a Bonapartist club...? I am its vice president!'

'Father, do you not fear anything? You will destroy us both,' said Villefort.

'No one will be destroyed. The Emperor Napoleon has left Corsica, where he was exiled. He is back in France.'

Villefort was shocked at this news.

'I know this puts your career in danger. I know you are a great supporter of the king, as is your new family, I hear. But you must know that King Louis' days will soon be over. The people of France want Napoleon back. The south is ready to fight on his side.'

