

CHAPTER 3

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, THE KING WAS DEFEATED AND Napoleon was back as ruler. Villefort, although he was a royalist, kept his position as a prosecutor because of his father's involvement with the Bonapartists. Monsieur Morrel kept visiting Villefort to ask him to set Dantes free, but the prosecutor kept making up many excuses and causing delays to make sure that this would never happen. Dantes' mouth had to remain shut forever.

One hundred days later, Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and the king returned to the throne; Dantes continued to suffer in his prison cell.

Dantes passed six long years in the cold and the darkness, living on one piece of bread each morning and evening and on the occasional meat or fish soup they brought him. Dantes could feel the madness of despair closer to him every day. He started thinking about death and decided not to eat so as to starve himself completely. But then, one day, he heard a strange sound coming from the wall.

The wall was over fifty feet thick and on the other side there was another cell where a madman was kept. Dantes had heard the guards talk about him. They said that the man believed he had a treasure which he promised to anyone who would help him get out of prison.

Dantes soon realised that the man from the other side was digging through the wall, trying to reach his cell. He moved his bed to the wall and looked for something that would allow him to hit the wall, but he saw nothing. He had neither a knife nor any other sharp instrument. All his furniture consisted of was a chair, a table, a bed, a bucket with no handle on it and a jug. He decided to break the jug and use one of the sharp pieces to attack the wall.

He too began working at nights, but it was too dark to see anything, so he waited for day to come. The guard would come every morning to bring him his bread and water and would only return again in the evening. Dantes waited to hear the gate lock and footsteps dying away in the distance before continuing with his work. He had found hope again.

Finally, he managed to open up a passage wide enough for him



to go through. There was still wall in front of him, but it seemed thinner. Suddenly, Dantes heard a voice from the other side.

'Who are you?' said the voice.

'An unhappy prisoner: number 34,' Dantes replied.

'Where are you from and what is your profession?'

'I am a Frenchman and I am a sailor.'

'How long have you been here and what is your crime?'

'I have been here since the 28th of February, 1815, and I am innocent. They accused me of conspiracy against the king,' said Dantes.

'I am prisoner 27,' said the man from the other side. 'I have been here four years longer than you. How do you hide the hole on the wall?'

'I have moved the bed close to it, and I throw the broken stone out of the window of my cell, that looks out over the sea,' said Dantes.

'To the sea?' the man said in an enthusiastic voice. 'And there is a window? That is how we will escape!'

'But how? The iron bars on the window are strong,' Dantes said. 'And I cannot work on them without the guard seeing me.'

Just then, a mass of stones and earth were pushed towards him, opening up a hole in front of him. Dantes saw two hands coming through the wall. On his knees, Dantes moved back inside the narrow passage. And then he saw a head and two thin shoulders coming through the hole. A thin old man with a white beard had entered Dantes' passage. The two prisoners stared at each other. 'Move back - I am coming into your cell,' the old man said. Soon they were standing together in Dantes' damp cell.

'We will plan our escape together,' the old man said.

Prisoner 27 was the Abbe Faria, an Italian man in his sixties, who was in prison for his political beliefs. On every encounter Dantes had with the man his heart was filled with joy. They talked endlessly. The man's education was unbelievable: there was nothing he did not know. As time went by, the two men became great friends.

'Nothing is more powerful than education,' the Abbe would say. 'I will teach you everything you need to know to stand among the very best.'

During daytime, the two men worked on opening up a tunnel



under Dantes' bed. The tunnel would go under the floor until it reached the wall that looked onto the sea. There were huge rocks below in the water and great danger for them, but they had no other choice.

At night, they used the light the Abbe Faria would make by separating the fat from meat and melting it to make oil that he put on a cloth. They wrote with a pen the Abbe made out of fish bone and ink made out of mixing water and soot from the old fireplace in his cell. They wrote on pieces of cloth which they tore off the sheets on their beds. Dantes was a good student and picked everything up easily.

Five years went by like that. But only a few nights before their escape, something happened that would change their plans. As Dantes went into the Abbe's cell, he found him on the floor, pale as death. Sweat ran down his face and his body was shaking violently. Dantes tried to raise his friend from the ground.

'No,' said the Abbe in a weak voice. 'I am dying... You will go alone. Take this...' He gave Dantes the map he held in his shaking hand. 'They thought I was mad. But there is a huge treasure on the island of Monte Cristo. Go and find it, or else it will be lost forever.'

Those were his last words.

Dantes was devastated. However, his mind was set to work immediately, and soon he had a plan of escape.

When the guards found the body the next morning, they placed it in a sack; they were going to return in the evening and take the body away. Dantes entered through the secret passage, removed the body from the sack and took it to his room. He placed the body under his bed covers, making it seem like he was sleeping there, and then went back into the room and got into the sack himself.

He stayed there until the guards came and took him away. From the inside of the sack, he could smell the sea. His heart was beating fast, but he could not stir because he would be found out. He soon realised that they were not taking him somewhere to be buried. They then put him down and tied a heavy rock around his feet; only minutes later they threw him into the water!

Dantes was shocked, but he acted fast. Under the water, he quickly



used a knife he had managed to make and always carried with him to cut open the sack and remove the rope with the rock from his feet; not long after, he was up on the surface. The sea was rough and the waves hit him one after the other, but he didn't give up. He swam hard and managed to reach the shores of a small island.



CHAPTER 4

DANTES PULLED HIMSELF ONTO SOME ROCKS, RIGHT BEFORE a wild storm broke out. From the shore, he could see a small fishing boat pushed by the huge waves towards the rocks, and it was not long before it crashed on them. Dantes heard the cries of men, then all the voices suddenly stopped and only the wind was heard howling.

The young man spent the rest of the night wondering how he would be able to leave. Just then, as he looked out to sea, he saw a small ship coming his way. He quickly jumped into the sea, pretending he was shipwrecked. The ship picked him up.

'Who are you?' asked the captain.

'I am a sailor. My boat was destroyed in the storm last night. I am the only survivor,' Dantes said.

'A prisoner escaped Chateau d'If this morning. How do I know you're not him?' the captain asked again.

'Let me sail your ship, so I can prove to you that I am not lying,' Dantes said.

The captain was so impressed by Dantes' skills that he offered him a place among his crew. Dantes accepted with relief, but, on the very same day, he realised that they were smugglers.

He then started thinking of a way to make the ship land at the



CHAPTER 3

Comprehension

1 Answer the following questions.

1. When Napoleon returned as ruler, how did Villefort keep his position as a prosecutor?
2. What happened one hundred days after Napoleon's return to power?
3. What first gave Dantes hope again?
4. How were Dantes and Abbe Faria able to write?
5. How did Dantes use the Abbe's death to escape from the prison?

2 Read Chapter 3 and match the two halves of the sentences.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Monsieur Morrel continued | a. the Abbe's dead body in the morning. |
| 2. The guards threw | b. a light from meat fat. |
| 3. Dantes found | c. trying to persuade Villefort. |
| 4. Abbe Faria made | d. the sack into the water. |
| 5. The guards discovered | e. a way to hide the hole in the wall. |

Vocabulary

3 Complete the following sentences using the correct form of the words in the box.

act pick up beard shake bucket tear

1. Ted! It's you! I didn't recognise you without your _____!
2. The young boy was so cold he was _____.
3. Once he had read it, Finlay _____ the letter into tiny pieces.
4. We're sorry about what happened; we _____ without thinking.
5. It didn't take him long to _____ the French language.
6. I'll need to find a _____ to carry the water.

4 What do the following words from Chapter 3 mean? Choose the correct option and match 1-8 with a-h.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. excuses | a. a large cloth bag without handles |
| 2. escape | b. a secret plan to commit a (usually political) crime |
| 3. devastated | c. with a point or edge that can cut |
| 4. sharp | d. to get away from someone or something bad |
| 5. damp | e. reasons someone gives for not doing something |
| 6. dying away | f. slightly wet in an uncomfortable way |
| 7. sack | g. extremely upset |
| 8. conspiracy | h. getting less and less |

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

1. Villefort manages to keep his position as a prosecutor, despite the political changes. What does this show about him?
2. Dantes finds hope again after thinking about death. What gives you hope when you feel bad?
3. Dantes finds great joy from his meetings with Abbe Faria. Have you experienced something similar with a friend, teacher or member of your family? What kind of people do you prefer to spend time with?
4. Dantes and Abbe Faria spent five years preparing their escape. How do you think they were able to keep going for so long?
5. What do you think Dantes will try to do now he has reached a small island?

6 You are one of the guards. Write a report explaining how you lost the prisoner Dantes. (120-140 words)