

'You look like you want to throw yourself into the sea,' Caderousse called out to Fernand. 'You had not expected Dantes to return so suddenly, is that not right? Come and sit with us.'

'He has come to marry her, to take her from me forever! How can I stop him?' said the young man in despair.

Danglars pulled a piece of paper out of his coat.

'What is that?' Caderousse asked.

'It is a letter to Monsieur Villefort, the prosecutor of Marseilles, informing him that Dantes is a Bonapartist. I have written to him about Dantes' trip to the island of Elba and about the letter he had to deliver to the Bonapartists of Paris. This information is enough to send Dantes to prison forever,' said Danglars, who wanted to become captain of the *Pharaoh* instead of Edmond Dantes.

'Why?' Caderousse asked, 'Dantes is a good man. He has harmed no one. Get rid of this letter!'

Fernand eagerly stared at the letter.

'All right then. If that is what you wish.' Danglars crumpled the letter and threw it on the ground.

'Let us go then,' he said, and took Caderousse by the arm, leading him away from the table.

As they walked away, Danglars turned around and saw Fernand picking up the crumpled letter. He smiled with satisfaction, knowing that nothing would stop the evil that would soon fall upon Edmond Dantes.



CHAPTER 2

THE NEXT DAY, MANY PEOPLE HAD GATHERED AT THE LA RESERVE for Edmond and Mercedes' marriage celebration. The guests were Dantes' favourite members of the *Pharaoh* crew and old friends of the bride and the groom.

Danglars and Caderousse watched the young couple moving happily among the crowd with Dantes' father at their side. A few steps behind them followed Fernand, with an evil smile on his face.

Minutes later Monsieur Morrel walked into the room. The crew began to applaud enthusiastically, knowing that Morrel's arrival was a sign that Dantes would become captain.

But that joy did not last long. Loud and angry voices were heard, and the door was pushed open. It was the police.

'Who is Edmond Dantes?' they asked.

'I am,' Dantes said, 'What's this? What have I done?'

'I arrest you in the name of the law; you will soon find out why,' said the officer.

Monsieur Morrel was shocked, while Dantes' father begged them not to take his son away.

'Adieu, adieu, my dearest Edmond!' Mercedes cried.

'Goodbye, dear Mercedes – we will soon meet again!' said the young man as he entered the carriage to Marseilles.

Caderousse turned to Danglars. 'You deceived me!' he exclaimed.

'Be quiet, you fool!' said Danglars.

'He is an innocent man. I cannot let this happen to him,' insisted Caderousse.

'But the ship did go to the island of Elba, and it did pass the whole day there. If you try to defend him, they will believe you are a Bonapartist too. Do you want to go to prison with him?' threatened Danglars, and Caderousse fell silent.

Just then, a worried Morrel approached them.

'Who will take care of the ship's matters now?' he asked.

'I will, sir,' Danglars quickly said. 'I am as capable as anyone else of taking care of the ship's matters and I am at your service, sir.'

'Thank you, Danglars. That makes things so much better,' said Morrel and left.

Dantes was taken to the house of the deputy prosecutor, Gerard Villefort, a man who held life and death in his hands. At the same time, Villefort was in the Rue du Grand Cours, while his engagement to Renee de Saint-Meran was taking place. All the important people of Marseilles were at the celebration.

Villefort's engagement to the daughter of the Marquis de Saint-Meran would help him with his very high ambitions. Most of all, it would make people forget that his father, Noirtier, a very powerful Bonapartist in Paris, had been one of those who had thrown King Louis from his throne; it was a dark past and Villefort needed everyone to forget so that his life could move on.

As Villefort entered his house, he met the head of police at the door. The man's face looked serious.

'I know, I know,' Villefort said to him. 'I have read the letter. What do you know about his connection with the Bonapartists?'

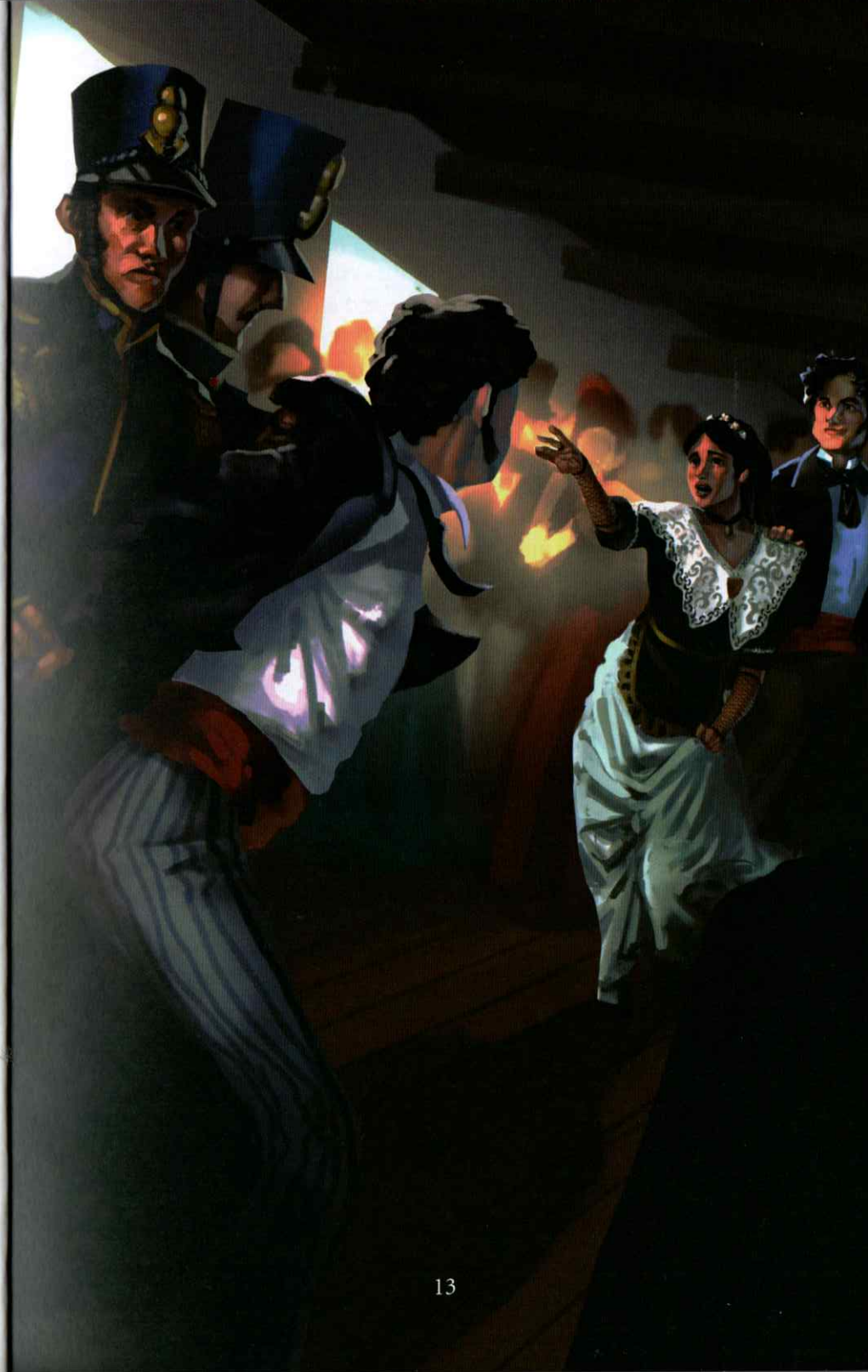
'Not much yet, other than this letter, sir, but we are still searching,' the officer replied.

'Bring him to me,' said Villefort as he walked into his office.

Standing in front of Villefort, Dantes heard the prosecutor asking him: 'Who and what are you?'

'I am Edmond Dantes and I am a sailor,' Dantes said, pale but calm.

'Have you ever served under Napoleon Bonaparte? What are your political beliefs?'



'No, sir, never. And I have no political beliefs. I am hardly nineteen. I know nothing about politics.'

'I see. Then do you have any enemies?' Villefort asked.

'Not that I know of,' replied Dantes.

'Is there somebody you know who may be jealous of you, somebody who may want to harm you?' Villefort said pulling a letter out of his pocket. 'Here, read this,' he said and gave it to Dantes.

After carefully reading the letter, Dantes raised worried eyes to Villefort.

'I stopped at the island of Elba, sir, because I was following the orders of a dying man. Captain Leclere made me promise that I would deliver a letter to a man on the island of Elba. Then the man would give me another letter, which I had to take to a man in Paris. That is my story, sir,' said Dantes.

'You look like an honest man,' Villefort said, who seemed to believe Dantes' story.

'So can I leave now, sir? I have something very important to return to.'

Before letting Dantes go, Villefort asked him one more question.

'Who is the letter they gave you for?'

'For a gentleman called Noirtier, in Paris,' was the answer.

Villefort, who till then had intended to let Dantes go, was in shock; he tried hard to stop his panic at the sound of his father's name.

'Noirtier? Where is the letter?' he asked.

'It is on your desk, sir,' Dantes said. 'The sealed letter.'

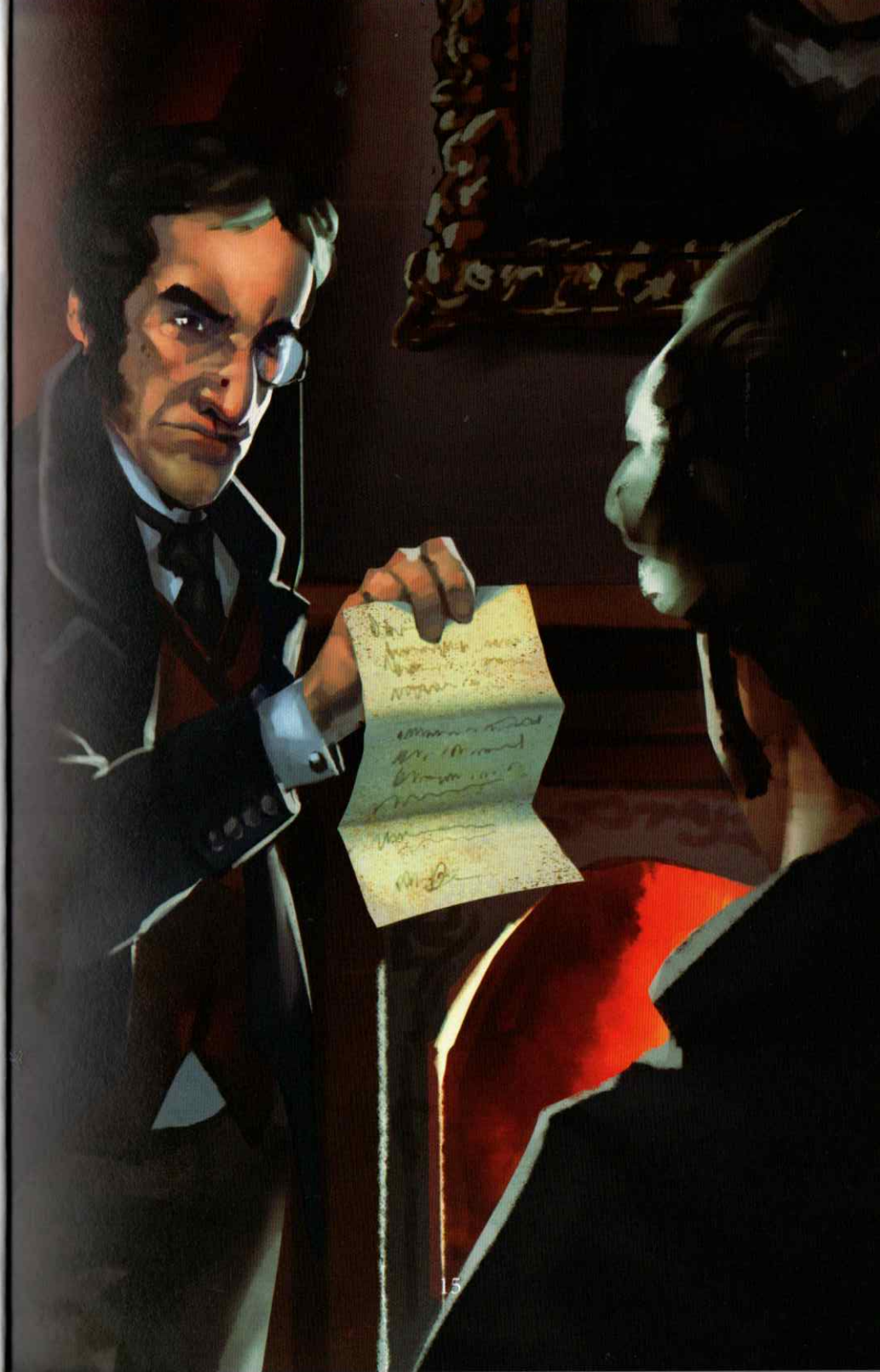
Villefort took it in his hand. 'This is all we have against you,' he said and approached the fireplace. He threw the letter into the fire and watched it burn. Villefort knew well that if anyone found out about it, his career would be destroyed forever.

'I will only keep you a little longer. You must not say a word to anyone about this letter,' he said.

'I swear that I will not,' Dantes said.

Villefort rang a bell and a police officer came into the office. Villefort said something to him in secret. The policeman exited the room, but soon returned with more men, who led Dantes into a carriage.

The carriage travelled in the night and then to the harbour, where he was put on a boat. Soon Dantes could see the lights of Marseilles



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.

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.'



CHAPTER 2

Comprehension

1 Decide if the following statements are True or False. Write T or F in the boxes.

- The crew of the *Pharaoh* were shocked at the arrival of Monsieur Morrel. ☐
- Mercedes begged the police not to take Dantes. ☐
- Caderousse stopped defending Dantes after Danglars' threat. ☐
- The deputy prosecutor's father was involved in removing King Louis from the throne. ☐
- Villefort believed that Dantes was telling the truth. ☐
- Villefort's father visited him while he was in Paris. ☐

2 Complete the sentences with the correct word(s).

- Dantes was taken away from his marriage celebration in a _____.
- At Rue du Grand Cours, Villefort's _____ was taking place.
- Villefort wanted to know if Dantes had any _____ who wanted to harm him.
- From the boat, Dantes could see the _____ of _____ shining away.
- In prison, there was no bed for Dantes, just _____ that he could sleep on.

Vocabulary

3 Choose the correct word to complete the sentences.

- The audience **applauded** / **gathered** wildly at the end of the concert.
- The **groom** / **bride** was dressed in a long white dress and had flowers in her hair.
- The man is **silent** / **innocent**. He should not be in prison!
- I am sure she will achieve her **ambition** / **service** to become a writer.
- Jemima was **honest** / **jealous** of the attention her younger sister got.
- Kate, you have to **destroy** / **warn** the children that it's not safe to swim there!

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

- You did not have to speak to James so _____. IRONY
- His sudden departure from the company was totally _____. EXPECT
- Linda demands complete _____ from her friends. LOYAL
- We are not _____ of the same team, but we are still best friends. SUPPORT

Follow-up activities

5 Discuss.

- Do you think any of Dantes' friends or family could have done more to stop him being taken away? Why? / Why not?
- What do you think of Morrel's response to Dantes' arrest and Danglars' offer to take care of the ship?
- Villefort's engagement will help his position in society. What reasons do you think people should have for marrying? Discuss.
- Dantes is locked up in a dark prison cell. What effect do you think this can have on someone? Why?
- In what ways does Villefort use the information he got from Dantes? What does this show about him?

6 Imagine that you are Mercedes and have just had your future husband taken away. Write him a letter, hoping that someone can get it to him. (120-140 words)