**Th****e Red and the Black**(Le Rouge et le Noir)

Stendhal

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MarieHenri Beyle (January 23, 1783 – March 23, 1842), better known by his penname Stendhal, was a 19th century French writer. Known for his acute analysis of his characters' psychology, he is considered one of the earliest and foremost practitioners of the realism in his two novels Le Rouge et le Noir (The Red and the Black, 1830) and La Chartreuse de Parme (The Charterhouse of Parma, 1839). Source: Wikipedia

**Part 2**

**She is not pretty, she is not wearing rouge.**

**SAINTBEUVE**

chapter 31

**Making Her Afraid**

So this is the fine miracle of your civilisation! You have turned love into an ordinary matter.

BARNAVE

Julien hurried to Madame de La Mole's box. His eyes met first the tearful eyes of Mathilde; she was weeping without restraint, there was no one present but people of minor importance, the friend who had lent them the box and some men of her acquaintance. Mathilde laid her hand upon Julien's; she seemed to have forgotten all fear of her mother. Almost stifled by her sobs, she said nothing to him but the single word:

'Guarantees!'

'Whatever I do, I must not speak to her,' thought Julien, greatly moved himself, and covering his eyes as best he could with his hand, ostensibly to avoid the lustre that was blazing into the boxes on the third tier. 'If I speak, she can no longer doubt the intensity of my emotion, the sound of my voice will betray me, all may be lost once more.'

His struggles were far more painful than in the morning, his spirit had had time to grow disturbed. He was afraid of seeing Mathilde's vanity wounded. Frantic with love and passion, he pledged himself not to speak to her.

This is, to my mind, one of the finest traits of his character; a person capable of such an effort to control himself may go far, si fata sinant.

Mademoiselle de La Mole insisted upon taking Julien home. Fortunately it was raining in torrents. But the Marquise made him sit facing herself, talked to him continuously, and prevented his saying a word to her daughter. One would have thought that the Marquise was concerned for Julien's happiness; no longer afraid of destroying everything by the intensity of his emotion, he abandoned himself to it with frenzy.

Dare I say that on entering his own room Julien threw himself on his knees and covered with kisses the love letters given him by Prince Korasoff?

'Oh, you great man! What do I not owe to you?' he cried in his frenzy.

Gradually a little coolness returned to him. He compared himself to a general who had just won the first half of a great battle. 'The advantage is certain, immense,' he said to himself; 'but what is going to happen to morrow? An instant may ruin everything.'

He opened with a passionate impulse the Memoirs dictated at Saint Helena by Napoleon, and for two solid hours forced himself to read them;his eyes alone read the words, no matter, he forced himself to the task.

During this strange occupation, his head and heart, rising to the level of everything that is most great, were at work without his knowledge. 'This is a very different heart from Madame de Renal's,' he said to himself, but he went no farther.

'Make her afraid,' he cried of a sudden, flinging the book from him.

'The enemy will obey me only so long as I make him fear me, then he will not dare to despise me.'

He paced up and down his little room, wild with joy. To be frank, this happiness was due to pride rather than love.

'Make her afraid!' he repeated proudly to himself, and he had reason to be proud. 'Even in her happiest moments, Madame de Renal always doubted whether my love were equal to hers. Here, it is a demon that I am conquering, I must therefore conquer.'

He knew well that next morning, by eight o'clock, Mathilde would be in the library; he did not appear there until nine, burning with love, but his head controlled his heart. Not a single minute passed, perhaps, without his repeating to himself: 'Always keep her mind occupied with the great uncertainty: "Does he love me?" Her privileged position, the flattery she receives from all who speak to her make her a little too much inclined to self-assurance.'

He found her pale, calm, seated upon the divan, but incapable, apparently, of making any movement. She offered him her hand.

'Dear, I have offended you, it is true; you are perhaps vexed with me?'

Julien was not expecting so simple a tone. He was on the point of betraying himself.

'You wish for guarantees, dear,' she went on after a silence which she had hoped to see broken; 'that is only fair. Carry me off, let us start for London. I shall be ruined for ever, disgraced… ' She found the courage to withdraw her hand from Julien so as to hide her eyes with it. All the sentiments of modesty and feminine virtue had returned to her heart…

'Very well! Disgrace me,' she said at length with a sigh, 'it is a guarantee.'

'Yesterday I was happy, because I had the courage to be severe with myself,' thought Julien. After a brief interval of silence, he gained sufficient mastery over his heart to say in an icy tone:

'Once we are on the road to London, once you are disgraced, to use your own words, who can promise me that you will love me? That my company in the postchaise will not seem to you an annoyance? I am not a monster, to have ruined your reputation will be to me only an additional grief. It is not your position in society that is the obstacle, it is unfortunately your own nature. Can you promise yourself that you will love me for a week? '(Ah! Let her love me for a week, for a week only,' Julien murmured to himself, 'and I shall die of joy. What do I care for the future, what do I care for life itself? And this divine happiness may begin at this moment if I choose, it depends entirely upon myself!)' Mathilde saw him turn pensive.

'So I am altogether unworthy of you,' she said, clasping his hand.

Julien embraced her, but at once the iron hand of duty gripped his heart. 'If she sees how I adore her, then I lose her.' And, before with drawing himself from her arms, he had resumed all the dignity that befits a man.

On that day and the days that followed, he managed to conceal the intensity of his bliss; there were moments in which he denied himself even the pleasure of clasping her in his arms.

At other moments, the frenzy of happiness swept aside all the counsels of prudence. It was beside a bower of honeysuckle arranged so as to hide the ladder, in the garden, that he was accustomed to take his stand in order to gaze at the distant shutters of Mathilde's window and lament her inconstancy. An oak of great size stood close by, and the trunk of this tree prevented him from being seen by indiscreet persons.

As he passed with Mathilde by this spot which recalled to him so vividly the intensity of his grief, the contrast between past despair and present bliss was too strong for him; tears flooded his eyes, and, carrying to his lips the hand of his mistress: 'Here I lived while I thought of you; from here I gazed at that shutter, I awaited for hours on end the fortunate moment when I should see this hand open it… '

He gave way completely. He portrayed to her, in those true colours which one does not invent, the intensity of his despair at that time. In spasmodic utterances he spoke of his present happiness which had put an end to that cruel suffering…

'What am I doing, Great God!' said Julien, coming suddenly to his senses. 'I am destroying everything.'

In the height of his alarm he thought he already saw less love in the eyes of Mademoiselle de La Mole. This was an illusion; but Julien's face changed rapidly and was flooded with a deathly pallor. His eyes grew dull for a moment, and an expression of arrogance not devoid of malice succeeded that of the most sincere, the most wholehearted love.

'Why, what is the matter with you, dear?' Mathilde tenderly, anxiously inquired.

'I am lying,' said Julien savagely, 'and I am lying to you. I reproach myself for it, and yet God knows that I respect you sufficiently not to lie.

You love me, you are devoted to me, and I have no need to make fine speeches in order to please you.'

'Great God! They were only fine speeches, all the exquisite things you have been saying to me for the last ten minutes?'

'And I reproach myself for them strongly, dear friend. I made them up long ago for a woman who loved me and used to bore me… That is the weak spot in my character, I denounce myself to you, forgive me.'

Bitter tears streamed down Mathilde's cheeks.

'Whenever some trifle that has shocked me sets me dreaming for a moment,' Julien went on, 'my execrable memory, which I could curse at this moment, offers me a way of escape, and I abuse it.'

'So I have unconsciously done something that has displeased you?' said Mathilde with a charming simplicity.

'One day, I remember, as you passed by these honeysuckles, you plucked a flower, M. de Luz took it from you, and you let him keep it. I was close beside you.'

'M. de Luz? It is impossible,' replied Mathilde with the dignity that came so naturally to her: 'I never behave like that.'

'I am certain of it,' Julien at once rejoined.

'Ah, well! Then it must be true, dear,' said Mathilde, lowering her eyes sadly. She was positive that for many months past she had never allowed M. de Luz to take any such liberty.

Julien gazed at her with an inexpressible tenderness:

'No,' he said to himself, 'she does not love me any the less.'

She rebuked him that evening, with a laugh, for his fondness for Madame de Fervaques: a bourgeois in love with a parvenue. 'Hearts of that class are perhaps the only ones that my Julien cannot inflame. She has turned you into a regular dandy,' she said, playing with his hair.

During the period in which he supposed himself to be scorned by Mathilde, Julien had become one of the best-dressed men in Paris. But he had an additional advantage over the other men of this sort; once his toilet was performed, he never gave it another thought.

One thing still vexed Mathilde. Julien continued to copy out the Russian letters, and to send them to the Marechale.

chapter 32

**The Tiger**

Alas! why these things and not others!

BEAUMARCHAIS

An English traveller relates how he lived upon intimate terms with a tiger; he had reared it and used to play with it, but always kept a loaded pistol on the table.

Julien abandoned himself to the full force of his happiness only at those moments when Mathilde could not read the expression of it in his eyes. He was punctilious in his performance of the duty of addressing a few harsh words to her from time to time.

When Mathilde's meekness, which he observed with astonishment,and the intensity of her devotion came near to destroying all his self-control, he had the courage to leave her abruptly.

For the first time Mathilde was in love.

Life, which had always crawled for her at a snail's pace, now flew.

As it was essential, nevertheless, that her pride should find some outlet, she sought to expose herself with temerity to all the risks that her love could make her run. It was Julien who showed prudence; and it was only when there was any question of danger that she did not comply with his wishes; but, submissive, and almost humble towards him, she showed all the more arrogance towards anyone else who came near her in the house, relatives and servants alike.

In the evenings in the drawing-room, she would summon Julien, and would hold long conversations with him in private.

Little Tanbeau took his place one evening beside them; she asked him to go to the library and fetch her the volume of Smollett which dealt with the Revolution of 1688; and as he seemed to hesitate: There is no need to hurry,' she went on with an expression of insulting arrogance, which was balm to Julien's spirit.

'Did you notice the look in that little monster's eyes?' he asked her.

'His uncle has done ten or twelve years of service in this drawing-room, otherwise I should have him shown the door this instant.'

Her behaviour towards MM. de Croisenois, de Luz, and the rest, perfectly polite in form, was scarcely less provoking in substance. Mathilde blamed herself severely for all the confidences she had made to Julien in the past, especially as she did not dare confess to him that she had exaggerated the almost wholly innocent marks of interest of which those gentlemen had been the object.

In spite of the most admirable resolutions, her womanly pride prevented her every day from saying to Julien: 'It was because I was speaking to you that I found pleasure in the thought of my weakness in not withdrawing my hand when M. de Croisenois laid his hand on a marble table beside mine, and managed to touch it.'

Nowadays, whenever one of these gentlemen had spoken to her for a few moments, she found that she had a question to ask Julien, and this was a pretext for keeping him by her side.

She found that she was pregnant, and told the news joyfully to Julien.

'Now will you doubt me? Is not this a guarantee? I am your wife for ever.'

This announcement filled Julien with profound astonishment. He was on the point of forgetting his principle of conduct. 'How can I be deliberately cold and offensive to this poor girl who is ruining herself for me?'

Did she appear at all unwell, even on the days on which wisdom made her dread accents heard, he no longer found the courage to address to her one of those cruel speeches, so indispensable, in his experience, to the continuance of their love.

'I mean to write to my father,' Mathilde said to him one day; 'he is more than a father to me; he is a friend; and so I should feel it unworthy of you and of myself to seek to deceive him, were it only for a moment.'

'Great God! What are you going to do?' said Julien in alarm.

'My duty,' she replied, her eyes sparkling with joy.

She felt herself to be more magnanimous than her lover.

'But he will turn me from the house in disgrace!'

'He is within his rights, we must respect them. I shall give you my arm, and we shall go out by the front door, in the full light of day.'

Julien in astonishment begged her to wait for a week.

'I cannot,' she replied, 'the voice of honour speaks. I have seen what is my duty, I must obey, and at once.'

'Very well! I order you to wait,' said Julien at length. 'Your honour is covered, I am your husband. This drastic step is going to alter both our positions. I also am within my rights. Today is Tuesday; next Tuesday is the day of the Duc de Retz's party; that evening, when M. de La Mole comes home, the porter shall hand him the fatal letter… He thinks only of making you a Duchess, of that I am certain; think of his grief!'

'Do you mean by that: think of his revenge?'

'I may feel pity for my benefactor, distress at the thought of injuring him; but I do not and never shall fear any man.'

Mathilde submitted. Since she had told Julien of her condition, this was the first time that he had spoken to her with authority; never had he loved her so dearly. It was with gladness that the softer side of his heart seized the pretext of Mathilde's condition to forgo the duty of saying a few cruel words. The idea of a confession to M. de La Mole disturbed him greatly. Was he going to be parted from Mathilde? And, however keen the distress with which she saw him go, a month after his departure would she give him a thought?

He felt almost as great a horror of the reproaches which the Marquis might justly heap upon him.

That evening, he admitted to Mathilde this second cause of his distress, and then, carried away by love, admitted the other also.

She changed colour.

'Indeed,' she said, 'six months spent out of my company would be a grief to you!'

'Immense, the only one in the world on which I look with terror.'

Mathilde was delighted. Julien had played his part with such thoroughness that he had succeeded in making her think that of the two she was the more in love.

The fatal Tuesday came. At midnight, on returning home, the Marquis found a letter with the form of address which indicated that he was to open it himself, and only when he was unobserved.

'MY FATHER,'Every social tie that binds us is broken, there remain only the ties of nature. After my husband, you are and will ever be the dearest person in the world to me. My eyes fill with tears, I think of the distress that I am causing you, but, that my shame may not be made public, to give you time to deliberate and act, I have been unable to postpone any further the confession that I owe you. If your affection for me, which I know to be extreme, chooses to allow me a small pension, I shall go and settle myself where you please, in Switzerland, for instance, with my husband.

His name is so obscure that no one will recognise your daughter in Madame Sorel, daughter-in-law of a carpenter of Verrieres. There you have the name I have found it so hard to write. I dread, for Julien, your anger,apparently so righteous. I shall not be a Duchess, Father; but I knew it when I fell in love with him; for it was I that fell in love first, it was I who seduced him. I inherit from you a spirit too exalted to let my attention be arrested by what is or seems to me vulgar. It is in vain that with the idea of pleasing you I have thought of M. de Croisenois. Why did you place real merit before my eyes? You told me yourself on my return from Hyeres: "This young Sorel is the only person who amuses me"; the poor boy is as greatly distressed as myself, if it be possible, by the pain which this letter must cause you. I cannot prevent your being angry with me as a father; but care for me still as a friend.

'Julien respected me. If he spoke to me now and again, it was solely because of his profound gratitude to you: for the natural pride of his character leads him never to reply save officially to anyone who is placed so far above him. He has a strong and inborn sense of the differences of social position. It was I, I admit, with a blush, to my best friend, and never shall such an admission be made to any other, it was I who one day in the garden pressed his arm.

'In twenty-four hours from now, why should you be angry with him?My fault is irreparable. If you require it, I shall be the channel to convey to you the assurances of his profound respect and of his distress at displeasing you. You will not set eyes on him; but I shall go and join him wherever he may choose. It is his right, it is my duty, he is the father of my child. If in your generosity you are pleased to allow us six thousand francs upon which to live, I shall accept them with gratitude: otherwise,Julien intends to settle at Besancon where he will take up the profession of teacher of Latin and Literature. However low the degree from which he springs, I am certain that he will rise. With him, I have no fear of obscurity. If there be a Revolution, I am sure of a leading part for him.

Could you say as much for any of those who have sought my hand? They have fine estates? I cannot find in that single circumstance a reason for admiration. My Julien would attain to a high position even under the present form of government, if he had a million and were protected by my father … '

Mathilde, who knew that the Marquis was a man entirely governed by first impressions, had written eight pages.

'What is to be done?' Julien said to himself while M. de La Mole was reading this letter; 'where do, first of all, my duty, secondly, my interest lie? The debt that I owe him is immense: I should have been, but for him,a rascally under-strapper, and not rascal enough to be hated and persecuted by the rest. He has made me a man of the world. My necessary rascalities will be, first of all, rarer, and secondly, less ignoble. That is more than if he had given me a million. I owe to him this Cross and the record of so-called diplomatic services which have raised me above my rank.

'If he were to take his pen to prescribe my conduct, what would he write?'

Julien was sharply interrupted by M. de La Mole's old valet.

'The Marquis wishes to see you this moment, dressed or undressed.'

The valet added in an undertone as they were side by side: 'He is furious, beware.'

chapter 33

T**he Torment of the Weak**

In cutting this diamond, a clumsy jeweller removed some of its brightest sparkles. In the Middle Ages, what am I saying? Even under Richelieu, a Frenchman still had the power to desire.

MIRABEAU

Julien found the Marquis furious: for the first time in his life, perhaps,this gentleman was guilty of bad taste; he heaped on Julien all the insults that came to his lips. Our hero was astonished, irritated, but his sense of gratitude was not shaken. 'How many fine projects long cherished in his secret thoughts, the poor man sees crumble in an instant. But I owe it to him to answer him, my silence would increase his rage.' His answer was furnished for him from the part of Tartuffe.

'I am no angel… I have served you well, you have rewarded me generously … I was grateful, but I am twenty-two years old … In this household, my thoughts were intelligible only to yourself, and to that obliging person … '

'Monster!' cried the Marquis. 'Obliging! Obliging! On the day when you found her obliging, you ought to have fled.'

'I made an attempt; I asked you if I might go to Languedoc.'

Tired of pacing the room in fury, the Marquis, broken by grief, threw himself into an armchair; Julien heard him murmur to himself: 'This is no scoundrel.'

'No, I am not one to you,' cried Julien, falling at his feet. But he felt extremely ashamed of this impulse and rose quickly.

The Marquis was really out of his mind. On seeing this movement he began again to shower upon Julien atrocious insults worthy of a cab-river. The novelty of these oaths was perhaps a distraction.

What? My daughter is to be called Madame Sorel! What! My daughter is not to be a Duchess!' Whenever these two ideas presented themselves in such clear terms, the Marquis was in torment, and his impulses were uncontrolled. Julien began to fear a thrashing.

In his lucid intervals, and when the Marquis began to grow accustomed to his disgrace, his reproaches became quite reasonable.

You ought to have gone, Sir,' he said. 'It was your duty to go … You are the meanest of mankind… '

Julien went to the table and wrote:

For a long time my life has been insupportable, I am putting an end to it. I beg Monsieur le Marquis to accept, with my expression of a gratitude that knows no bounds, my apologies for the trouble which my death in his house may ause.'

Will Monsieur le Marquis deign to peruse this paper… Kill me,' said Julien, 'or have me killed by your valet. It is one o'clock in the morning, I am going to stroll in the garden towards the wall at the far end.'

Go to the devil,' the Marquis shouted after him as he left the room.

I unerstand,' thought Julien; 'he would not be sorry to see me spare his valet the responsibility for my death… Let him kill me, well and good, it is a satisfaction that I am offering him … But, by Jove, I am in love with life … I owe myself to my child.'

his idea, which for the first time appeared thus clearly before his imagination, completely absorbed him after the first few minutes of his stroll had been devoted to the sense of danger.

his entirely novel interest made a prudent creature of him. 'I need advice to guide me in dealing with that fiery man… He has no judgment,he is capable of anything. Fouque is too far off, besides he would not understand the sentiments of a heart like the Marquis's.

Conte Altamira… Can I be sure of eternal silence? My request for advice must not be a definite action, nor complicate my position. Alas! There is no one left but the sombre abbe Pirard … His mind is narrowed by Jansenism … A rascally Jesuit would know the world better, and would be more to my purpose… M. Pirard is capable of beating me, at the mere mention of my crime.'

The genius of Tartuffe came to Julien's aid: 'Very well, I shall go and confess to him.' This was the resolution to which he finally came in the garden, after pacing it for fully two hours. He no longer thought that he might be surprised by a gunshot; sleep was overpowering him.

Next morning, before daybreak, Julien was several leagues from Paris,knocking at the door of the stern Jansenist. He found, greatly to his astonishment, that the other was not unduly surprised at his confession.

'I ought perhaps to blame myself,' the abbe said to himself, more anxious than angry. 'I had thought that I detected this love affair. My affection for yourself, you little wretch, restrained me from warning her father… '

'What will he do?' Julien asked him boldly.

(At that moment, he loved the abbe and a scene would have been most

painful to him.)

'I can see three courses of action,' Julien continued: 'First of all, M. de La Mole may have me put to death'; and he told the abbe of the letter announcing his suicide which he had left with the Marquis; 'secondly, he may have me shot down by Comte Norbert, who will challenge me to a duel.'

'You would accept?' said the abbe in a fury, rising to his feet.

'You do not allow me to finish. Certainly I should never fire at the son of my benefactor.

'Thirdly, he may send me away. If he says to me: "Go to Edinburgh, to New York," I shall obey. Then they can conceal Mademoiselle de La Mole's condition; but I shall never allow them to destroy my child.'

'That, you may be sure, will be the first idea to occur to that corrupt man… '

In Paris, Mathilde was in despair. She had seen her father about seven o'clock. He had shown her Julien's letter, she trembled lest he should have deemed it noble to put an end to his life: 'And without my permission?' she said to herself with an agony which partook of anger.

'If he is dead, I shall die,' she said to her father. 'It is you that will be the cause of my death… You will rejoice at it, perhaps … But I swear to his ghost that I shall at once put on mourning, and shall be publicly Madame veuve Sorel [the widow of M. Sorel], I shall send out the usual announcements, you may count on that… You will not find me pusillanimous nor a coward.'

Her love rose to the pitch of madness. It was now M. de La Mole's turn to be left speechless.

He began to look upon what had happened more reasonably. At luncheon Mathilde did not put in an appearance. The Marquis was relieved of an immense burden, and flattered as well, when he discovered that she had said nothing to her mother.

Julien dismounted from his horse. Mathilde sent for him, and flung herself into his arms almost in the sight of her maid. Julien was not unduly grateful for this transport, he had come away most diplomatic and most calculating from his long conference with the abbe Pirard. His imagination was extinguished by the calculation of possibilities. Mathilde,with tears in her eyes, informed him that she had seen the letter announcing his suicide.

'My father may change his mind; oblige me by setting off instantly for Villequier. Mount your horse, leave the premises before they rise from table.'

As Julien did not in any way alter his air of cold astonishment, she burst into a flood of tears.

'Allow me to manage our affairs,' she cried to him with a transport,clasping him in her arms. 'You know very well that it is not of my own free will that I part from you. Write under cover to my maid, let the address be in a strange hand; as for me, I shall write you volumes.

Farewell! Fly.'

This last word wounded Julien, he obeyed nevertheless. 'It is fated,' he thought, 'that even in their best moments, these people must find a way of hurting me.'

Mathilde put up a firm resistance to all her father's prudent plans. She steadfastly refused to set the negotiation upon any other basis than this: She was to be Madame Sorel, and would live in poverty with her husband in Switzerland, or with her father in Paris. She thrust from her the suggestion of a clandestine confinement. 'That would pave the way to the possibility of calumny and dishonour. Two months after our marriage, I shall travel abroad with my husband, and it will be easy for us to pretend that my child was born at a suitable date.'

Received at first with transports of rage, this firmness ended by inspiring the Marquis with doubts.

In a weak moment: 'Here,' he said to his daughter, 'is a transfer of ten thousand livres a year in the Funds, send it to your Julien, and let him speedily make it impossible for me to reclaim it.'

To obey Mathilde, whose love of giving orders he knew, Julien had made an unnecessary journey of forty leagues: he was at Villequier, examining the accounts of the agents; this generosity on the part of the Marquis was the occasion of his return.

He went to seek asylum with the abbe Pirard, who, during his absence, had become Mathilde's most effective ally. As often as he was interrogated by the Marquis, he proved to him that any other course than a public marriage would be a crime in the sight of God.

'And happily,' the abbe added, 'the wisdom of the world is here in accordance with religion. Could you reckon for an instant, knowing the fiery character of Mademoiselle de La Mole, upon a secrecy which she had not imposed on herself? If you do not allow the frank course of a public marriage, society will occupy itself for far longer with this strange misalliance. Everything must be stated at one time, without the least mystery, apparent or real.'

'It is true,' said the Marquis, growing pensive. 'By this method, to talk of the marriage after three days becomes the chatter of a man who lacks ideas. We ought to profit by some great anti-Jacobin measure by the Government to slip in unobserved in its wake.'

Two or three of M. de La Mole's friends shared the abbe Pirard's view.

The great obstacle, in their eyes, was Mathilde's decided nature. But in spite of all these specious arguments, the Marquis could not grow reconciled to abandoning the hope of a tabouret for his daughter. His memory and his imagination were full of all sorts of trickeries and pretences which had still been possible in his younger days. To yield to necessity, to go in fear of the law seemed to him an absurd thing and dishonouring to a man of his rank. He was paying dearly for those enchanting dreams in which he had indulged for the last ten years as to the future of his beloved daughter.

'Who could have foreseen it?' he said to himself. 'A girl of so haughty a character, so elevated a mind, prouder than myself of the name she bears! One whose hand had been asked of me in advance by all the most illustratious blood in France!

'We must abandon all prudence. This age is destined to bring everything to confusion! We are marching towards chaos.'

**chapter 34**

**A Man of Spirit**

The prefect riding along on his horse thought to himself, Why should I not be a minister, head of the Cabinet, a duke? This is how I would wage war… In that way I would have innovators put in chains.

Le Globe

No argument is sufficient to destroy the mastery acquired by ten years of pleasant fancies. The Marquis thought it unreasonable to be angry, but could not bring himself to forgive. 'If this Julien could die by accident,' he said to himself at times… Thus it was that his sorrowful imagination found some relief in pursuing the most absurd chimeras. They paralysed the influence of the wise counsels of the abbe Pirard. A month passed in this way without the slightest advance in the negotiations.

In this family affair, as in affairs of politics, the Marquis had brilliant flashes of insight which would leave him enthusiastic for three days on end. At such times a plan of conduct would not please him because it was backed by sound reasons; the reasons found favour in his sight only in so far as they supported his favourite plan. For three days, he would labour with all the ardour and enthusiasm of a poet, to bring matters to a certain position; on the fourth, he no longer gave it a thought.

At first Julien was disconcerted by the dilatoriness of the Marquis; but,after some weeks, he began to discern that M. de La Mole had, in dealing with this affair, no definite plan.

Madame de La Mole and the rest of the household thought that Julien had gone into the country to look after the estates; he was in hiding in the abbe Pirard's presbytery, and saw Mathilde almost every day; she,each morning, went to spend an hour with her father, but sometimes they remained for weeks on end without mentioning the matter that was occupying all their thoughts.

'I do not wish to know where that man is,' the Marquis said to her one day; 'send him this letter.' Mathilde read:

'The estates in Languedoc bring in 20,600 francs. I give 10,600 francs to my daughter, and 10,000 francs to M. Julien Sorel. I make over the estates themselves, that is to say. Tell the lawyer to draft two separate deeds of gift, and to bring me them tomorrow; after which, no further relations between us. Ah! Sir, how was I to expect such a thing as this?

'LE MARQUIS DE LA MOLE'

'I thank you very much,' said Mathilde gaily. 'We are going to settle in the Chateau d'Aiguillon, between Agen and Marmande. They say that the country there is as beautiful as Italy.'

This donation came as a great surprise to Julien. He was no longer the severe, cold man that we have known. The destiny of his child absorbed all his thoughts in anticipation. This unexpected fortune, quite considerable for so poor a man, made him ambitious. He now saw, settled on his wife or himself, an income of 30,600 francs. As for Mathilde, all her sentiments were absorbed in one of adoration of her husband, for thus it was that her pride always named Julien. Her great, her sole ambition was to have her marriage recognised. She spent her time in exaggerating the high degree of prudence that she had shown in uniting her destiny with that of a superior man. Personal merit was in fashion in her brain.

Their almost continuous separation, the multiplicity of business, the little time that they had to talk of love, now completed the good effect of the wise policy adopted by Julien in the past.

Finally Mathilde grew impatient at seeing so little of the man whom she had now come to love sincerely.

In a moment of ill humour she wrote to her father, and began her letter like Othello:

'That I have preferred Julien to the attractions which society offered to the daughter of M. le Marquis de La Mole, my choice of him sufficiently proves. These pleasures of reputation and petty vanity are nothing to me. It will soon be six weeks that I have lived apart from my husband.

That is enough to prove my respect for you. Before next Thursday, I shall leave the paternal roof. Your generosity has made us rich. No one knows my secret save the estimable abbe Pirard. I shall go to him; he will marry us, and an hour after the ceremony we shall be on our way to Langue doc, and shall never appear again in Paris save by your order. But what pierces me to the heart is that all this will furnish a savoury anecdote at my expense, and at yours. May not the epigrams of a foolish public oblige our excellent Norbert to seek a quarrel with Julien? In that event, I know him, I should have no control over him. We should find in his heart the plebeian in revolt. I implore you on my knees, O my father,come and attend our wedding, in M. Pirard's church, next Thursday. The point of the malicious anecdote will be blunted, and the life of your only son, my husband's life will be made safe,' etc., etc.

This letter plunged the Marquis in a strange embarrassment. He must now at length make up his mind. AH his little habits, all his common place friends had lost their influence.

In these strange circumstances, the salient features of his character,stamped upon it by the events of his younger days, resumed their full sway. The troubles of the Emigration had made him a man of imagination. After he had enjoyed for two years an immense fortune and all the distinctions of the Court, 1790 had cast him into the fearful hardships of the Emigration. This hard school had changed the heart of a man of two and twenty. Actually he was encamped amid his present wealth rather than dominated by it. But this same imagination which had preserved his soul from the gangrene of gold, had left him a prey to an insane passion for seeing his daughter adorned with a fine sounding title.

During the six weeks that had just elapsed, urged at one moment by a caprice, the Marquis had decided to enrich Julien; poverty seemed to him ignoble, dishonouring to himself, M. de La Mole, impossible in the husband of his daughter; he showered money upon him. Next day, his imagination taking another direction, it seemed to him that Julien would hear the silent voice of this generosity in the matter of money, change his name, retire to America, write to Mathilde that he was dead to her. M. De La Mole imagined this letter as written, and traced its effect on his daughter's character…

On the day on which he was awakened from these youthful dreams by Mathilde's real letter, after having long thought of killing Julien or of making him disappear, he was dreaming of building up for him a brilliant future. He was making him take the name of one of his properties;and why should he not secure the transmission of his peerage to him? M.le Duc de Chaulnes, his father-in-law, had spoken to him several times,since his only son had been killed in Spain, of wishing to hand on his title to Norbert …

'One cannot deny that Julien shows a singular aptitude for business,audacity, perhaps even brilliance,' the Marquis said to himself… 'But at the back of that character, I find something alarming. It is the impression that he produces on everyone, therefore there must be something real in it' (the more difficult this reality was to grasp, the more it alarmed the imaginative spirit of the old Marquis).

'My daughter expressed it to me very cleverly the other day' (in a letter which we have suppressed): '"Julien belongs to no drawing-room, to no set." He has not contrived to find any support against me, not the slightest resource if I abandon him… But is that due to ignorance of the actual state of society? Two or three times I have said to him: "There is no real and profitable candidature save that of the drawing-rooms … "

'No, he has not the adroit and cautious spirit of a pettifogger who never loses a minute or an opportunity… It is not at all the character of a Louis XI. On the other hand, I see in him the most ungenerous maxims … I lose track of him… Does he repeat those maxims to himself, to serve as a dam to his passions?

'Anyhow, one thing is clear: he cannot endure contempt, in that way I hold him.

'He has not the religious feeling for high birth, it is true, he does not respect us by instinct … That is bad; but, after all, the heart of a seminarist should be impatient only of the want of pleasure and money. He is very different; he cannot endure contempt at any price.'

Forced by his daughter's letter, M. de La Mole saw the necessity of making up his mind: 'Well, here is the great question: has Julien's audacity gone the length of setting him to make love to my daughter, because he knows that I love her more than anything in the world, and that I have an income of a hundred thousand crowns?

'Mathilde protests the opposite… No, master Julien, that is a point upon which I wish to be under no illusion.

'Has there been genuine, unpremeditated love? Or rather a vulgar desire to raise himself to a good position? Mathilde is perspicacious, she felt from the first that this suspicion might ruin him with me; hence that admission: it was she who thought first of loving him…

'That a girl of so lofty a character should so far have forgotten herself as to make tangible advances! … Press his arm in the garden, one evening, how horrible! As though she had not had a hundred less indelicate ways of letting him know that she favoured him.

'To excuse is to accuse; I distrust Mathilde… ' That day, the Marquis's arguments were more conclusive than usual. Habit, however, prevailed;he resolved to gain time and to write to his daughter; for they communicated by letter between different parts of the house. M. de La Mole dared not discuss matters with Mathilde and hold out against her. He was afraid of bringing everything to an end by a sudden concession.

'Take care not to commit any fresh act of folly; here is a commission as Lieutenant of Hussars for M. le Chevalier Julien Sorel de La Vernaye.

You see what I am doing for him. Do not cross me, do not question me.

He shall start within twenty-four hours, and report himself at Strasbourg, where his regiment is quartered. Here is a draft upon my banker;I expect obedience.'

Mathilde's love and joy knew no bounds; she sought to profit by her victory and replied at once:

'M. de La Vernaye would be at your feet, speechless with gratitude, if he knew all that you are deigning to do for him. But, in the midst of this generosity, my father has forgotten me; your daughter's honour is in danger. A single indiscretion may leave an everlasting blot, which an income of twenty thousand crowns would not efface. I shall send this commission to M. de La Vernaye only if you give me your word that, in the course of the next month, my marriage shall be celebrated in public, at Villequier. Soon after that period, which I beg you not to prolong, your daughter will be unable to appear in public save with the name of Ma dame de La Vernaye. How I thank you, dear Papa, for having saved me from the name of Sorel,' etc., etc.

The reply was unexpected.

'Obey or I retract all. Tremble, rash girl, I do not yet know what your Julien is, and you yourself know even less than I. Let him start for Strasbourg, and put his best foot foremost. I shall make my wishes known in a fortnight's time.'

The firmness of this reply astonished Mathilde. 'I do not know Julien';these words plunged her in a daydream which presently ended in the most enchanting suppositions; but she believed them to be the truth. 'My Julien's mind has not donned the tawdry little uniform of the drawing rooms, and my father disbelieves in his superiority because of the very fact which proves it …

'Anyhow, if I do not obey this sudden impulse, I foresee the possibility of a public scene; a scandal lowers my position in society, and may make me less attractive in Julien's eyes. After the scandal… ten years of poverty; and the folly of choosing a husband on account of his merit can only be saved from ridicule by the most brilliant opulence. If I live apart from my father, at his age, he may forget me … Norbert will marry some attractive, clever woman: the old Louis XIV was beguiled by the Duchesse de Bourgogne … '

She decided to obey, but refrained from communicating her father's letter to Julien; his unaccountable nature might lead him to commit some act of folly.

That evening, when she informed Julien that he was a Lieutenant of Hussars, his joy knew no bounds. We may form an idea of it from the ambition that marked his whole life, and from the passionate love that he now felt for his child. The change of name filled him with astonishment.

'At last,' he thought, 'the tale of my adventures is finished, and the credit is all mine. I have contrived to make myself loved by this monster of pride,' he added, looking at Mathilde; 'her father cannot live without her, nor she without me.'

**chapter 35**

**A Storm**

My God, give me mediocrity!

MIRABEAU

He was completely absorbed; he made only a halfhearted response to the keen affection that she showed for him. He remained taciturn and sombre. Never had he appeared so great, so adorable in the eyes of Mathilde. She feared some subtle refinement of his pride which would presently upset the whole position.

Almost every morning, she saw the abbe Pirard come to the Hotel.

Through his agency might not Julien have penetrated to some extent into her father's intentions? Might not the Marquis himself, in a moment of caprice, have written to him? After so great a happiness, how was she to account for Julien's air of severity? She dared not question him.

Dared not! She, Mathilde! There was, from that moment, in her feeling for Julien, something vague, unaccountable, almost akin to terror. That sere heart felt all the passion that is possible in one brought up amid all that excess of civilisation which Paris admires.

Early next morning, Julien was in the abbe Pirard's presbytery. A pair of posthorses arrived in the courtyard drawing a dilapidated chaise,hired at the nearest post.

'Such an equipage is no longer in keeping,' the stern abbe told him,with a cantankerous air. 'Here are twenty thousand francs, of which M.de La Mole makes you a present; he expects you to spend them within the year, but to try and make yourself as little ridiculous as possible.' (In so large a sum, bestowed on a young man, the priest saw only an occasion of sin.)

'The Marquis adds: "M. Julien de La Vernaye will have received this money from his father, whom there is no use in my identifying more precisely. M. de La Vernaye will doubtless think it proper to make a present to M. Sorel, carpenter at Verrieres, who looked after him in his childhood … " I will undertake this part of the commission,' the abbe went on;'I have at last made M. de La Mole decide to compromise with that abbe de Frilair, who is such a Jesuit. His position is unquestionably too strong for us. The implicit recognition of your noble birth by that man who governs Besancon will be one of the implied conditions of the arrangement.'

Julien was no longer able to control his enthusiasm, he embraced the abbe, he saw himself recognised.

'Fie!' said M. Pirard, and thrust him away; 'what is the meaning of this worldly vanity? As for Sorel and his sons, I shall offer them, in my name,an annual pension of five hundred francs, which will be paid to each of them separately, so long as I am satisfied with them.'

Julien was by this time cold and stiff. He thanked the abbe, but in the vaguest terms and without binding himself to anything. 'Can it indeed be possible,' he asked himself, 'that I am the natural son of some great nobleman, banished among our mountains by the terrible Napoleon?'

Every moment this idea seemed to him less improbable … 'My hatred for my father would be a proof … I should no longer be a monster!'

A few days after this monologue, the Fifteenth Regiment of Hussars,one of the smartest in the Army, was drawn up in order of battle on the parade ground of Strasbourg. M. le Chevalier de La Vernaye was mounted upon the finest horse in Alsace, which had cost him six thousand francs. He had joined as Lieutenant, without having ever been a Second Lieutenant, save on the musterroll of a Regiment of which he had never even heard.

His impassive air, his severe and almost cruel eyes, his pallor, his unalterable coolness won him a reputation from the first day. In a short time, his perfect and entirely measured courtesy, his skill with the pistol and sabre, which he made known without undue affectation, removed all temptation to joke audibly at his expense. After five or six days of hesitation, the general opinion of the Regiment declared itself in his favour. 'This young man has everything,' said the older officers who were inclined to banter, 'except youth.'

From Strasbourg, Julien wrote to M. Chelan, the former cure of Verrieres, who was now reaching the extreme limits of old age:

'You will have learned with a joy, of which I have no doubt, of the events that have led my family to make me rich. Here are five hundred francs which I beg you to distribute without display, and with no mention of my name, among the needy, who are poor now as I was once, and whom you are doubtless assisting as in the past you assisted me.'

Julien was intoxicated with ambition and not with vanity; he still applied a great deal of his attention to his outward appearance. His horses,his uniforms, the liveries of his servants were kept up with a nicety which would have done credit to the punctiliousness of a great English nobleman. Though only just a Lieutenant, promoted by favour and after two days' service, he was already calculating that, in order to be Commander in Chief at thirty, at latest, like all the great Generals, he would need at three and twenty to be something more than Lieutenant. He could think of nothing but glory and his son.

It was in the midst of the transports of the most frenzied ambition that he was interrupted by a young footman from the Hotel de La Mole, who arrived with a letter.

'All is lost,' Mathilde wrote to him; 'hasten here as quickly as possible,sacrifice everything, desert if need be. As soon as you arrive, wait for me in a cab, outside the little gate of the garden, No.— Rue ——. I shall come out to speak to you; perhaps I may be able to let you into the garden. All is lost, and, I fear, beyond hope of repair; count upon me,you will find me devoted and steadfast in adversity. I love you.'

In a few minutes, Julien obtained leave from his Colonel, and left Strasbourg at a gallop; but the fearful anxiety which was devouring him did not allow him to continue this method of travel farther than Metz.

He flung himself into a post-chaise; and it was with an almost incredible rapidity that he arrived at the appointed place, outside the little gate of the garden of the Hotel de La Mole. The gate was flung open, and in a moment, Mathilde, forgetting all self-respect, threw herself into his arms.

Fortunately, it was but five o'clock in the morning and the street was still deserted.

'All is lost; my father, dreading my tears, went away on Thursday night. Where? No one knows. Here is his letter; read it.' And she got into the cab with Julien.

'I could forgive everything, except the plan of seducing you because you are rich. That, unhappy girl, is the appalling truth. I give you my word of honour that I will never consent to a marriage with that man. I promise him an income of ten thousand livres if he consents to live abroad, beyond the frontiers of France, or better still in America. Read the letter which I have received in reply to a request for information. The shameless scoundrel had himself invited me to write to Madame de Renal. Never will I read a line from you about the man. I have a horror of Paris and of you. I request you to cloak with the greatest secrecy what must shortly happen. Renounce honestly a vile fellow, and you will regain a father.'

'Where is Madame de Renal's letter?' said Julien coldly. 'Here it is. I did not wish to show it to you until you were prepared.'

LETTER

'What I owe to the sacred cause of religion and morals obliges me, Sir,to the painful step which I take in addressing you; a rule, which admits of no relaxation, orders me at this moment to do harm to my neighbour,but in order to avoid a greater scandal. The grief which I feel must be overborne by a sense of duty. It is only too true, Sir, the conduct of the person with regard to whom you ask me to tell the whole truth may have seemed inexplicable or indeed honourable. It may have been thought expedient to conceal or to disguise a part of the truth, prudence required this as well as religion. But that conduct, which you desire to know, has been in fact extremely reprehensible, and more so than I can say. Poor and avaricious, it is by the aid of the most consummate hypocrisy, and by the seduction of a weak and unhappy woman, that this man has sought to make a position for himself and to become somebody.

It is a part of my painful duty to add that I am obliged to believe that M.J—— has no religious principles. I am bound in conscience to think that one of his avenues to success in a household is to seek to seduce the woman who has most influence there. Cloaked by a show of disinterestedness and by phrases from novels, his great and sole object is to contrive to secure control over the master of the house and over his fortune. He leaves in his wake misery and undying regret,' etc., etc., etc.

This letter, extremely long and half obliterated by tears, was certainly in the hand of Madame de Renal; it was even written with greater care than usual.

'I cannot blame M. de La Mole,' said Julien when he had finished reading it; 'he is just and prudent. What father would give his beloved daughter to such a man! Farewell!'

Julien sprang out of the cab, and ran to his postchaise which had drawn up at the end of the street. Mathilde, whom he seemed to have forgotten, followed him for a little way; but the sight of the tradesmen who were coming to the doors of their shops, and to whom she was known, forced her to retire in haste into the garden.

Julien had set off for Verrieres. On this rapid journey, he was unable to write to Mathilde as he had intended, his hand traced nothing more than an illegible scrawl on the paper.

He arrived at Verrieres on a Sunday morning. He entered the shop of the local gunsmith, who congratulated him effusively on his recent access to fortune. It was the talk of the town.

Julien had some difficulty in making him understand that he required a brace of pistols. The gunsmith, at his request, loaded the pistols.

The three bells sounded; this is a signal well known in French villages,which, after the various peals of the morning, announces that mass is just about to begin.

Julien entered the new church of Verrieres. All the tall windows of the building were screened by crimson curtains. He found himself standing a few yards behind Madame de Renal's bench. He had the impression that she was praying with fervour. The sight of this woman who had loved him so dearly made Julien's arm tremble so violently that he could not at first carry out his design. 'I cannot,' he said to himself; 'I am physically incapable of it.'

At that moment, the young clerk who was serving mass rang the bell for the Elevation. Madame de Renal bowed her head which for a moment was almost entirely concealed by the folds of her shawl. Her aspect was less familiar to Julien; he fired a shot at her with one pistol and missed her, he fired a second shot; she fell.

**chapter 36**

**Painful Details**

Do not look for any weakness on my part. I have avenged myself.I have deserved death, and here I am. Pray for my soul.

SCHILLER

Julien remained motionless, seeing nothing. When he came to himself a little, he noticed the whole congregation rushing from the church; the priest had left the altar. Julien set off at a leisurely pace in the wake of some women who were screaming as they went. One woman, who was trying to escape faster than the rest, gave him a violent push; he fell. His feet were caught in a chair overturned by the crowd; as he rose, he felt himself gripped by the collar; it was a gendarme in full uniform who was arresting him. Mechanically Julien's hand went to his pocket pistols; but a second gendarme seized him by the arms.

He was led away to prison. They took him into a room, put irons on his wrists, and left him by himself; the door was shut on him and double-locked; all this was carried out quickly, and he remained unconscious of it.

'Faith, all is over,' he said aloud on coming to himself… 'Yes, in a fortnight the guillotine … or suicide between now and then.'

His reasoning went no farther; he felt a pain in his head as though it had been gripped with violence. He looked round to see if anyone was holding it. A few moments later, he fell into a deep slumber.

Madame de Renal was not mortally wounded. The first bullet had passed through her hat; as she turned round, the second shot had been fired. This bullet had struck her in the shoulder, and, what was surprising, had glanced back from the shoulderblade, which nevertheless it shattered, against a gothic pillar, from which it broke off a huge splinter of stone.

When, after a long and painful examination, the surgeon, a grave man,said to Madame de Renal: 'I answer for your life as for my own,' she was deeply affected.

For a long time she had sincerely longed for death. The letter which she had been ordered to write by her confessor of the moment, and had written to M. de La Mole, had dealt the final blow to this creature weakened by an everpresent sorrow. This sorrow was Julien's absence;she herself called it remorse. Her director, a young cleric, virtuous and fervent, recently arrived from Dijon, was under no illusion.

'To die thus, but not by my own hand, is not a sin,' thought Madame de Renal. 'God will pardon me perhaps for rejoicing in my death.' She dared not add: 'And to die by the hand of Julien is the acme of bliss.'

As soon as she was rid of the presence of the surgeon, and of all her friends who had come crowding round her, she sent for Elisa, her maid.

'The gaoler,' she said to her, blushing deeply, 'is a cruel man. Doubtless he intends to maltreat him, thinking that by so doing he will be pleasing me … The thought of such a thing is unendurable. Could you not go, as though on your own behalf, and give the gaoler this packet which contains a few louis? You will tell him that religion does not permit his maltreating him … But on no account must he mention this gift of money.'

It was to this circumstance that Julien was indebted for the humanity of the gaoler of Verrieres; he was still that M. Noiroud, the loyal supporter of the government, whom we have seen thrown into such a panic by the arrival of M. Appert.

A magistrate appeared in the prison. 'I have taken life with premeditation,' Julien said to him; 'I bought the pistols and had them loaded by Soandso, the gunsmith. Article 1342. of the Penal Code is quite clear, I deserve death and await it.' The magistrate, surprised by the character of this reply, sought to multiply his questions so that the accused might contradict himself in his answers.

'But don't you see,' Julien said to him with a smile, 'that I am making myself out as guilty as you can wish? Go, Sir, you shall not lack the quarry that you are pursuing. You shall have the pleasure of passing sentence. Spare me your presence.

'I have still a tiresome duty to perform,' thought Julien, 'I must write to Mademoiselle de La Mole.

'I have avenged myself,' he told her. 'Unfortunately, my name will appear in the newspapers, and I cannot escape from this world incognito. I shall die within two months. My revenge has been terrible, like the grief of being parted from you. From this moment, I forbid myself to write and to utter your name. Never speak of me, even to my son: silence is the only way of honouring me. To the average man I shall be a common murderer … Allow me to tell the truth in this supreme moment: you will forget me. This great catastrophe, as to which I recommend you never to open your lips to a living soul, will suppress for some years all the romantic and unduly adventurous element that I saw in your character.

You were made to live among the heroes of the Middle Ages; show in this crisis their firmness of character. Let what is bound to happen be accomplished in secret and without compromising you. You will take a false name and dispense with a confidant. If you must absolutely have the assistance of a friend, I bequeath to you the abbe Pirard.

'Do not speak to anyone else, especially to men of your own class; de Luz or Caylus.

'A year after my death, marry M. de Croisenois; I order you as your husband. Do not write to me at all, I should not answer you. Though farless of a villain than Iago, or so it seems to me, I shall say like him: From this time forth I never will speak word.

'No one shall see me either speak or write; you will have had my last words, with my last adoration.

'J. S.'

It was after he had sent off this letter that for the first time, Julien, having slightly recovered himself, became extremely unhappy. One by one,each of the hopes of his ambition must be wrenched from his heart by those solemn words: 'I am to die.' Death, in itself, was not horrible in his eyes. His whole life had been merely a long preparation for misfortune,and he had certainly never forgotten what is reckoned the greatest misfortune of all.

'Why!' he said to himself, 'if in sixty days I had to fight a duel with a man who was a champion fencer, should I be so weak as to think of it incessantly and with terror in my soul?'

He spent more than an hour in seeking to discover his exact sentiments in this connection.

When he had seen clearly into his soul, and the truth appeared before his eyes as sharply defined as one of the pillars of his prison, he thought of remorse.

'Why should I feel any? I have been outraged in a terrible manner; I have taken life, I deserve death, but that is all. I die after having paid my reckoning with humanity. I leave behind me no unfulfilled obligation, I owe nothing to anyone; there is nothing shameful in my death but the instrument of it: that by itself, it is true, will amply suffice to shame me in the eyes of the townsfolk of Verrieres; but, from an intellectual point of view, what could be more contemptible? There remains one way of acquiring distinction in their eyes: namely, by scattering gold coins among the crowd on my way to the scaffold. My memory, linked with the thought of gold, will then be resplendent to them.'

After this consideration, which at the end of a minute seemed to him conclusive: 'I have nothing more to do on earth,' Julien said to himself and fell into a deep slumber.

About nine o'clock in the evening, the gaoler awakened him by bringing in his supper.

'What are they saying in Verrieres?'

'Monsieur Julien, the oath that I took before the Crucifix, in the King's court, the day I was installed in my post, compels me to keep silence.'

He was silent, but remained in the room. The spectacle of this vulgar hypocrisy amused Julien. 'I must,' he thought, 'keep him waiting a long time for the five francs which he wants as the price of his conscience.'

When the gaoler saw the meal come to an end without any attempt at corruption:

'The friendship that I feel for you, Monsieur Julien,' he began, with a false, winning air, 'obliges me to speak; although they may say that it is against the interests of justice, because it may help you to arrange your defence … Monsieur Julien, who has a good heart, will be glad if I tell him that Madame de Renal is going on well.'

'What! She is not dead?' cried Julien, beside himself with amazement.

'What! Didn't you know?' said the gaoler with an air of stupidity which presently turned to one of joyful greed. 'It would only be right for Monsieur to give something to the surgeon who, according to law and justice, ought not to speak. But, to oblige Monsieur, I went to his house,and he told me everything… '

'In short, the injury is not mortal,' said Julien, losing patience, 'you answer for that with your life?'

The gaoler, a giant six feet in stature, took fright and retreated towards the door. Julien saw that he was going the wrong way to reach the truth,he sat down again and tossed a napoleon to M. Noiroud.

As the man's story began to convince Julien that Madame de Renal's injury was not mortal, he felt himself overcome by tears. 'Leave me!' he said suddenly.

The gaoler obeyed. As soon as the door was shut: 'Great God! She is not dead!' exclaimed Julien; and he fell on his knees, weeping hot tears.

In this supreme moment he was a believer. What matter the hypocrisies of the priests? Can they destroy anything of the truth and sublimity of the idea of God?

Only then did Julien begin to repent of the crime that he had committed. By a coincidence which saved him from despair, at that moment only had passed away the state of irritation and semi-insanity in which he had been plunged since leaving Paris for Verrieres.

His tears sprang from a generous source, he had no doubt as to the sentence that was in store for him.

'And so she will live!' he said to himself… 'She will live to pardon me and to love me.'

Late next morning, when the gaoler awakened him:

'You must have a wonderful heart, Monsieur Julien,' the man said to him. 'Twice I have come in and did not want to wake you. Here are two bottles of excellent wine which M. Maslon, our cure, sends you.'

'What? Is that rascal here still?' said Julien.

'Yes, Sir,' replied the gaoler, lowering his voice, 'but do not speak so loud, it may damage you.'

Julien laughed heartily.

'At the stage I have reached, my friend, you alone could damage me, if you ceased to be gentle and human … You shall be well paid,' Julien broke off, resuming his imperious air. This air was immediately justified by the gift of a small coin.

M. Noiroud told him once more, going into the fullest detail, all that he had heard about Madame de Renal, but he did not mention Miss Elisa's visit.

This man was as menial and submissive as possible. An idea came into Julien's head: 'This sort of ungainly giant may earn three or four hundred francs, for his prison is never crowded; I can guarantee him ten thousand francs, if he cares to escape to Switzerland with me… The difficulty will be to persuade him of my sincerity.' The thought of the long colloquy that he would have to hold with so vile a creature filled Julien with disgust, he turned his mind to other things.

That evening, there was no longer time. A postchaise came to fetch him at midnight. He was charmed with the gendarmes, his travelling companions. In the morning, when he arrived at the prison of Besancon,they were so kind as to lodge him on the upper floor of a gothic dungeon. He guessed the architecture to date from the beginning of the fourteenth century; he admired its grace and pointed airiness. Through a narrow gap between two walls on the farther side of a deep courtyard, there was a glimpse of a superb view.

Next day he was examined, after which, for several days, he was left to himself. His spirit was calm. He could find nothing that was not quite simple in his case: 'I sought to kill, I must be killed.'

His thoughts did not linger to consider this argument. The trial, the annoyance of appearing in public, the defence, he regarded as so many trifling embarrassments, tiresome ceremonies of which it would be time to think when the day came. The prospect of death detained him almost as little: 'I shall think of that after the sentence.' Life was by no means tedious to him, he looked at everything in a fresh light. He had no ambition left. He thought rarely of Mademoiselle de La Mole. His remorse occupied him a great deal and often called up before him the image of Madame de Renal, especially in the silence of the night, disturbed only, in this lofty dungeon, by the cry of the osprey!

He thanked heaven for not having let him wound her mortally. 'An astonishing thing!' he said to himself, 'I thought that by her letter to M. De La Mole she had destroyed my future happiness for all time, and, in less than a fortnight after the date of that letter, I no longer think of all that was occupying my mind… Two or three thousand livres a year to live quietly in a mountain village like Vergy… I was happy then … I did not recognise my own happiness!'

At other moments, he would rise with a bound from his chair. 'If I had wounded Madame de Renal mortally, I should have killed myself … I require that certainty to make me feel a horror of myself. 'Kill myself! That is the great question,' he said to himself. Those judges so steeped in formalities, so thirsty for the blood of the wretched prisoner, who would have the best of citizens hanged in order to hang a Cross from their own buttonholes… I should remove myself from their power, from their insults in bad French, which the local newspaper will proceed to call eloquence.

'I may live for five or six weeks still, more or less … Kill myself! Faith,no,' he said to himself after a few days, 'Napoleon lived…

'Besides, life is pleasant to me; this is a quiet spot to stay in; I have no worries,' he added, laughing, and set to work to make a list of the books which he wished to have sent to him from Paris.

**chapter 37**

**A Dungeon**

The tomb of a friend.

STERNE

He heard a great din in the corridor; it was not the hour for visiting his cell; the osprey flew away screaming, the door opened, and the venerable cure Chelan, trembling all over and leaning upon his cane, flung himself into Julien's arms.

'Ah, great God! Is it possible, my child… Monster, I ought to say.'

And the good old man could not add another word. Julien was afraid of his falling. He was obliged to lead him to a chair. The hand of time had fallen heavily upon this man, so vigorous in days gone by. He appeared to Julien to be only the ghost of his former self.

When he had recovered his breath: 'Only the day before yesterday, I received your letter from Strasbourg, with your five hundred francs for the poor of Verrieres; it was brought to me up in the mountains at Liveru, where I have gone to live with my nephew Jean. Yesterday, I learned of the catastrophe… Oh, heavens! Is it possible?' The old man's tears ceased to flow, he seemed incapable of thought and added mechanically: 'You will need your five hundred francs, I have brought them back to you.'

'I need to see you, Father!' Julien exclaimed with emotion. 'I have plenty of money.'

But he could not extract any coherent answer. From time to time, M.Chelan shed a few tears which rolled in silence down his cheeks; then he gazed at Julien, and was almost stupefied at seeing him take his hands and raise them to his lips. That countenance, once so lively, and so vigorous in its expression of the noblest sentiments, was no longer to be aroused from a state of apathy. A sort of peasant came presently to fetch the old man. 'It does not do to tire him,' he said to Julien, who realised that this was the nephew. This visit left Julien plunged in bitter grief which stopped his tears. Everything seemed to him sad and comfortless;he felt his heart freeze in his bosom.

This was the most cruel moment that he had experienced since the crime. He had seen death face to face, and in all its ugliness. All the illusions of greatness of soul and generosity had been scattered like a cloud before the storm.

This fearful situation lasted for some hours. After moral poisoning,one requires physical remedies and a bottle of champagne. Julien would have deemed himself a coward had he had recourse to them. Towards the end of a horrible day, the whole of which he had spent in pacing the floor of his narrow dungeon: 'What a fool I am!' he exclaimed. 'It would be if I expected to die in my bed that the sight of that poor old man ought to make me so utterly wretched; but a swift death in the springtide of life is the very thing to save me from that miserable decrepitude.'

Whatever arguments he might thus advance, Julien found that he was moved like any pusillanimous creature and made wretched in consequence by this visit.

There was no longer any trace of rugged grandeur in him, any Roman virtue; death appeared to him on a higher plane, and as a thing less easily to be won.

'This shall be my thermometer,' he said to himself. This evening I am ten degrees below the level of courage that must lead me to the guillotine. This morning, I had that courage. What does it matter, after all?

Provided that it returns to me at the right moment.' This idea of a thermometer amused him and succeeded finally in distracting him.

Next morning, on waking, he was ashamed of his behaviour the day before. 'My happiness, my tranquillity are at stake.' He almost made up his mind to write to the Attorney-General to ask that nobody should be admitted to his cell. 'And Fouque?' he thought. 'If he can manage to come to Besancon, how distressed he will be.'

It was perhaps two months since he had given Fouque a thought. 'I was an utter fool at Strasbourg, my thoughts never went beyond my coat collar.' Memories of Fouque kept recurring to his mind and left him in a more tender mood. He paced the floor with agitation. 'Now I am certainly twenty degrees below the level of death … If this weakness increases, it will pay me better to kill myself. What a joy for the abbe Maslons and the Valenods if I die here like a rat!'

Fouque arrived; the simple, honest fellow was shattered by grief. His sole idea, if he had one at all, was to sell all that he possessed in order to corrupt the gaoler and so save Julien's life. He spoke to him for hours of the escape of M. de Lavalette.

'You distress me,' Julien said to him; 'M. de Lavalette was innocent, I am guilty. Without meaning to do so, you make me realise the difference…

'But is it true? What! You would sell all that you have?' said Julien,suddenly becoming observant and suspicious once more.

Fouque, delighted to see his friend at last responsive to his dominant idea, explained to him in full detail, and to within a hundred francs or so, what he expected to receive for each of his properties.

'What a sublime effort in a small landowner!' thought Julien. 'How many savings, how many little cheeseparings, which made me blush so when I saw him make them, he is willing to sacrifice for me! None of those fine young fellows whom I used to see at the Hotel de La Mole,who read Rene, would have any of his absurdities; but apart from those of them who are very young and have inherited fortunes, as well, and know nothing of the value of money, which of those fine Parisians would be capable of such a sacrifice?'

All Fouque's mistakes in grammer, all his vulgar mannerisms vanished, he flung himself into his arms. Never have the provinces, when contrasted with Paris, received a nobler homage. Fouque, delighted by the enthusiasm which he read in his friend's eyes, mistook it for consent to an escape.

This glimpse of the sublime restored to Julien all the strength of which M. Chelan's visit had robbed him. He was still very young; but, to my mind, he was a fine plant. Instead of his advancing from tenderness to cunning, like the majority of men, age would have given him an easy access to emotion, he would have been cured of an insane distrust … But what good is there in these vain predictions?

The examinations became more frequent, in spite of the efforts of Julien, whose answers were all aimed at cutting the whole business short. 'I have taken life, or at least I have sought to take life, and with premeditation,' he repeated day after day. But the magistrate was a formalist first and foremost. Julien's statements in no way cut short the examinations;the magistrate's feelings were hurt. Julien did not know that they had proposed to remove him to a horrible cellar, and that it was thanks to Fouque's intervention that he was allowed to remain in his charming room one hundred and eighty steps from the ground.

M. l'abbe de Frilair was one of the important persons who contracted with Fouque for the supply of their firewood. The honest merchant had access even to the all-powerful Vicar-General. To his inexpressible delight, M. de Frilair informed him that, touched by the good qualities of Julien and by the services which he had rendered in the past to the Seminary, he intended to intervene on his behalf with the judges. Fouque saw a hope of saving his friend, and on leaving his presence, bowing to the ground, begged the Vicar-General to expend upon masses, to pray for the acquittal of the prisoner, a sum of ten louis.

Fouque was strangely in error. M. de Frilair was by no means a Valenod. He refused, and even tried to make the worthy peasant understand that he would do better to keep his money in his pocket. Seeing that it was impossible to make his meaning clear without indiscretion, he advised him to distribute the sum in alms, for the poor prisoners, who, as a matter of fact, were in need of everything.

'This Julien is a strange creature, his action is inexplicable,' thought M.de Frilair, 'and nothing ought to be inexplicable to me… Perhaps it will be possible to make a martyr of him … In any case, I shall get to the true inwardness of this business and may perhaps find an opportunity of inspiring fear in that Madame de Renal, who has no respect for us, and detests me in her heart… Perhaps I may even discover in all this some sensational means of reconciliation with M. de La Mole, who has a weakness for this little Seminarist.'

The settlement of the lawsuit had been signed some weeks earlier, and the abbe Pirard had left Besancon, not without having spoken of the mystery of Julien's birth, on the very day on which the wretched fellow tried to kill Madame de Renal in the church of Verrieres.

Julien saw only one disagreeable incident in store for him before his death, namely a visit from his father. He consulted Fouque as to his idea of writing to the Attorney-General, asking to be excused any further visitors. This horror at the sight of a father, at such a moment, shocked the honest and respectable heart of the timber-merchant profoundly.

He thought he understood why so many people felt a passionate hatred of his friend. Out of respect for another's grief, he concealed his feelings.

'In any case,' he replied coldly, 'an order for solitary confinement would not apply to your father.'

**chapter 38**

**A Man of Power**

But there is such mystery in her movements, such elegance in her form. Who can she be?

SCHILLER

The doors of the dungeon were thrown open at a very early hour the next morning. Julien awoke with a start.

'Oh, good God,' he thought, 'here comes my father. What a disagreeable scene!'

At that moment, a woman dressed as a peasant flung herself into his arms; he had difficulty in recognising her. It was Mademoiselle de La Mole.

'Miscreant, it was only from your letter that I learned where you were.

What you call your crime, though it is nothing but a noble revenge which shows me all the loftiness of the heart that beats in your bosom, I learned only at Verrieres … '

Notwithstanding his prejudices against Mademoiselle de La Mole, prejudices of which, moreover, he had not himself formed any definite idea,Julien found her extremely good-looking. How could he fail to see in all this manner of speech and action a noble, disinterested sentiment, far above anything that a petty, vulgar spirit would have dared? He imagined once again that he was in love with a queen, and after a few moments it was with a rare nobility of speech and thought that he said to her:

'The future was tracing itself quite clearly before my eyes. After my death, I married you to Croisenois, who would be marrying a widow.

The noble but slightly romantic spirit of this charming widow, startled and converted to the service of common prudence by an event at once singular, tragic and for her momentous, would have deigned to appreciate the quite genuine merit of the young Marquis. You would have resigned yourself to enjoying the happiness of the rest of the world: esteem, riches, high rank … But, dear Mathilde, your coming to Besancon,if it is suspected, is going to be a mortal blow to M. de La Mole, and that is what I will never forgive myself. I have already caused him so much sorrow! The Academician will say that he has been warming a serpent in his bosom.'

'I must confess that I hardly expected so much cold reasoning, so much thought for the future,' said Mademoiselle de La Mole, half annoyed. 'My maid, who is almost as prudent as yourself, procured a passport for herself, and it is in the name of Madame Michelet that I have travelled post.'

'And Madame Michelet found it so easy to make her way in to me?'

'Ah! You are still the superior man, the man of my choice! First of all, I offered a hundred francs to a magistrate's secretary, who assured me that it was impossible for me to enter this dungeon. But after taking the money, this honest man made me wait, raised objections, I thought that he meant to rob me … ' She broke off.

'Well?' asked Julien.

'Do not be angry with me, my little Julien,' she said, embracing him, 'I was obliged to give my name to this secretary, who took me for a young milliner from Paris, enamoured of the handsome Julien… Indeed, those are his very words. I swore to him that I was your wife, and I am to have permission to see you every day.'

'That finishes everything,' thought Julien; 'I could not prevent it. After all, M. de La Mole is so great a nobleman that public opinion will easily find an excuse for the young Colonel who will wed this charming widow. My approaching death will cover everything'; and he abandoned himself with ecstasy to Mathilde's love; there followed madness, magnanimity, everything that was most strange. She seriously proposed to him that she should die with him.

After these first transports, and when she had grown used to the happiness of seeing Julien, a keen curiosity suddenly took possession of her soul. She examined her lover, and found him far superior to what she had imagined. Boniface de La Mole seemed to her reincarnate in him,but in a more heroic mould.Mathilde saw the leading counsel of the place, whom she insulted by offering them gold too crudely; but they ended by accepting.

She speedily came to the conclusion that in doubtful matters of high import, everything in Besancon depended upon M. l'abbe de Frilair.

Under the obscure name of Madame Michelet, she at first found insuperable obstacles in the way to the presence of the all-powerful leader of the Congregation. But the rumour of the beauty of a young milliner,madly in love, who had come from Paris to Besancon to comfort the young abbe Julien Sorel, began to spread through the town.

Mathilde went alone and on foot through the streets of Besancon; she hoped that she might not be recognised. In any event, she thought that it must help her cause to create a strong impression upon the populace. In her folly she thought of making them revolt, to save Julien on his way to the scaffold. Mademoiselle de La Mole imagined herself to be dressed simply and in a manner becoming a woman stricken with grief; she was dressed in such a fashion as to attract every eye.

She was the sole object of attention in Besancon, when, after a week of solicitation, she obtained an audience of M. Frilair.

Great as her courage might be, the idea of an influential head of the Congregation and that of a profound and cautious rascality were so closely associated in her mind that she trembled as she rang the bell at the door of the Bishop's palace. She could barely stand when she had to climb the stair that led to the First Vicar-General's apartment. The loneliness of the episcopal palace chilled her with fear. 'I may sit down in an armchair, and the armchair grip me by the arms, I shall have vanished.

Of whom can my maid ask for news of me? The Captain of Police will decline to interfere… I am all alone in this great town!'

Her first sight of the apartment set Mademoiselle de La Mole's heart at rest. First of all, it was a footman in the most elegant livery that had opened the door to her. The parlour in which she was asked to wait displayed that refined and delicate luxury, so different from vulgar magnificence, which one finds in Paris only in the best houses. As soon as she caught sight of M. de Frilair, who came towards her with a fatherly air,all thoughts of a dastardly crime vanished. She did not even find on his handsome countenance the imprint of that energetic, that almost wild virtue, so antipathetic to Parisian society. The halfsmile that animated the features of the priest who was in supreme control of everything at Besancon, betokened the man used to good society, the cultured prelate,the able administrator. Mathilde imagined herself in Paris.

It needed only a few minutes for M. de Frilair to lead Mathilde on to admit to him that she was the daughter of his powerful adversary, the Marquis de La Mole.

'I am not, as a matter of fact, Madame Michelet,' she said, resuming all the loftiness of her bearing, 'and this admission costs me little, for I have come to consult you, Sir, as to the possibility of procuring the escape of M. de La Vernaye. In the first place he is guilty of nothing worse than a piece of stupidity; the woman at whom he fired is doing well. In the second place, to corrupt the subordinates, I can put down here and now fifty thousand francs, and bind myself to pay double that sum. Lastly,my gratitude and the gratitude of my family will consider no request impossible from the person who has saved M. de La Vernaye.'

M. de Frilair appeared to be surprised at this name. Mathilde showed him a number of letters from the Ministry of War, addressed to M. Julien Sorel de La Vernaye.

'You see, Sir, that my father undertook to provide for his future. I married him secretly, my father wished him to be a senior officer before making public this marriage, which is a little odd for a La Mole.'

Mathilde remarked that the expression of benevolence and of a mild gaiety speedily vanished as M. de Frilair began to arrive at important discoveries. A subtlety blended with profound insincerity was portrayed on his features.

The abbe had his doubts, he perused the official documents once more slowly.

'What advantage can I gain from these strange confidences?' he asked himself. 'Here I am suddenly brought into close personal contact with a friend of the famous Marechale de Fervaques, the all-powerful niece of the Lord Bishop of ——, through whom one becomes a Bishop in France.

'What I have always regarded as hidden in the future suddenly presents itself. This may lead me to the goal of all my ambition.'

At first Mathilde was alarmed by the rapid change in the physiognomy of this powerful man, with whom she found herself shut up alone in a remote part of the building. 'But why!' she said to herself presently, 'would it not have been worse to have made no impression upon the cold egoism of a priest sated with the enjoyment of power?'

Dazzled by this rapid and unexpected avenue to the episcopate that was opening before his eyes, astonished at Mathilde's intelligence, for a moment M. de Frilair was off his guard. Mademoiselle de La Mole saw him almost at her feet, trembling nervously with the intensity of his ambition.

'Everything becomes clear,' she thought, 'nothing will be impossible here for a friend of Madame de Fervaques.' Despite a sense of jealousy that was still most painful, she found courage to explain that Julien was an intimate friend of the Marechale, and almost every evening used to meet, in her house, the Lord Bishop of ——.

'If you were to draw by lot four or five times in succession a list of thirty-six jurymen from among the principal inhabitants of this Department,' said the Vicar-General with the harsh glare of ambition, dwelling upon each of his words, 'I should consider myself most unfortunate if in each list I did not find eight or nine friends, and those the most intelligent of the lot. Almost invariably I should have a majority, more than that, even for a verdict of guilty; you see, Mademoiselle, with what ease I can secure an acquittal… "

The abbe broke off suddenly, as though startled by the sound of his words; he was admitting things which are never uttered to the profane.

But Mathilde in turn was stupefied when he informed her that what was most astonishing and interesting to Besancon society in Julien's strange adventure, was that in the past he had inspired a grand passion in Madame de Renal, which he had long reciprocated. M. de Frilair had no difficulty in perceiving the extreme distress which his story produced.

'I have my revenge!' he thought. 'Here, at last, is a way of controlling this decided young person; I was trembling lest I should not succeed in finding one.' Her distinguished air, as of one not easily led, intensified in his eyes the charm of the rare beauty which he saw almost suppliant before him. He recovered all his selfpossession and had no hesitation in turning the knife in the wound.

'I should not be surprised after all,' he said to her lightly, 'were we to learn that it was from jealousy that M. Sorel fired two shots at this woman whom once he loved so dearly. She must have had some relaxation,and for some time past she had been seeing a great deal of a certain abbe Marquinot of Dijon, a sort of Jansenist, utterly without morals, like all of them.'

M. de Frilair went on torturing with voluptuous relish and at his leisure the heart of this beautiful girl, whose weak spot he had discovered.

'Why,' he said, fixing a pair of burning eyes on Mathilde, 'should M.Sorel have chosen the church, if not because at that very moment his rival was celebrating mass there? Everyone agrees in ascribing boundless intelligence and even more prudence to the man who is so fortunate as to enjoy your protection. What more simple than to conceal himself in M.de Renal's gardens, which he knows so well? There, with almost a certainty of not being seen, nor caught, nor suspected, he could have inflicted death on the woman of whom he was jealous.'

These arguments, apparently so well founded, reduced Mathilde to utter despair. Her spirit, haughty enough but saturated with all that dry prudence which passes in society as a faithful portrayal of the human heart, was not made to understand in a moment the joy of defying all prudence which can be so keen a joy to an ardent soul. In the upper classes of Parisian society, in which Mathilde had lived, passion can only very rarely divest itself of prudence, and it is from the attics on the fifth floor that girls throw themselves out of windows.

At last the abbe de Frilair was sure of his control. He gave Mathilde to understand (he was probably lying) that he could influence as he chose the Crown Counsel, who would have to support the charge against Julien.

After the names of the thirty-six jurors for the assize had been drawn by lot, he would make a direct and personal appeal to at least thirty of them.

If M. de Frilair had not thought Mathilde so good-looking, he would not have spoken to her in such plain terms until their fifth or sixth interview.

**chapter 39**

**Intrigue**

Castres, 1676.—He that endeavoured to kill his sister in our house, had before killed a man, and it had cost his father five hundred ecus to get him off; by their secret distribution, gaining the favour of the counsellors.

LOCKE, Travels in France 17

On leaving the Bishop's palace, Mathilde did not hesitate to send a messenger to Madame de Fervaques; the fear of compromising herself did not restrain her for a second. She implored her rival to obtain a letter for M. de Frilair, written throughout in the hand of the Lord Bishop of ——. She even went the length of beseeching the other to hasten, herself,to Besancon. This was a heroic measure on the part of a proud and jealous spirit.

On the advice of Fouque, she had taken the precaution of saying nothing about what she was doing to Julien. Her presence was disturbing enough in itself. A more honourable man at the approach of death than he had been during his life, he now felt compunction at the thought not only of M. de La Mole, but also of Mathilde.

'What is this?' he asked himself, 'I experience in her company moments of abstraction and even of boredom. She is ruining herself for me, and it is thus that I reward her. Can I indeed be wicked?' This question would have troubled him little when he was ambitious; then, not to succeed in life was the only disgrace in his eyes.

His moral uneasiness, in Mathilde's presence, was all the more marked, in that he inspired in her at that moment the most extraordinary. I am indebted to the patience and ingenuity of Mr. Vyvyan Holland, who has traced the original text of this motto in The Life of John Locke, with extracts from his Correspondence, Journals and Commonplace Books by Lord King (new edition, 1830) C. K. S. M. and insensate passion. She could speak of nothing but the strange sacrifices which she was anxious to make to save him.

Carried away by a sentiment of which she was proud and which completely overbore her pride, she would have liked not to allow a moment of her life to pass that was not filled with some extraordinary action. The strangest plans, the most perilous to herself, formed the theme of her long conversations with Julien. His gaolers, well rewarded, allowed her to have her way in the prison. Mathilde's ideas were not confined to the sacrifice of her reputation; it mattered nothing to her though she made her condition known to the whole of society. To fling herself on her knees to crave pardon for Julien, in front of the King's carriage as it came by at a gallop, to attract the royal attention, at the risk of a thousand deaths, was one of the tamest fancies of this exalted and courageous imagination. Through her friends who held posts at court, she could count upon being admitted to the reserved parts of the park of SaintCloud.

Julien felt himself to be hardly worthy of such devotion, to tell the truth he was tired of heroism. It would have required a simple, artless,almost timid affection to appeal to him, whereas on the contrary,Mathilde's proud spirit must always entertain the idea of a public, of what people would say.

In the midst of all her anguish, of all her fears for the life of this lover,whom she was determined not to outlive, she had a secret longing to astonish the public by the intensity of her love and the sublimity of her actions.

He resented the discovery that he was unable to feel at all touched by all this heroism. What would his resentment have been, had he known of all the follies with which Mathilde overpowered the devoted, but eminently reasonable and limited mind of the good Fouque?

The latter could scarcely find fault with Mathilde's devotion; for he,too, would have sacrificed his whole fortune and exposed his life to the greatest risks to save Julien. He was stupefied by the quantity of gold which Mathilde scattered abroad. At first, the sums thus spent impressed Fouque, who had for money all the veneration of a provincial.

Later, he discovered that Mademoiselle de La Mole's plans often varied, and, to his great relief, found a word with which to reproach this character which was so exhausting to him: she was changeable. To this epithet, that of wrong-headed, the direst anathema in the provinces, is the immediate sequel.

'It is strange,' Julien said to himself one day as Mathilde was leaving his prison, 'that so warm a passion, and one of which I am the object,leaves me so unmoved! And I worshipped her two months ago! I have indeed read that at the approach of death we lose interest in everything;but it is frightful to feel oneself ungrateful and to be unable to change.

Can I be an egoist?' He heaped on himself, in this connection, the most humiliating reproaches.

Ambition was dead in his heart, another passion had risen from its ashes; he called it remorse for having murdered Madame de Renal.

As a matter of fact, he was hopelessly in love with her. He found a strange happiness when, left absolutely alone and without any fear of being disturbed, he could abandon himself entirely to the memory of the happy days which he had spent in the past at Verrieres or at Vergy. The most trifling incidents of that time, too swiftly flown, had for him a freshness and a charm that were irresistible. He never gave a thought to his Parisian successes; they bored him.

This tendency, which grew rapidly stronger, was not entirely hidden from the jealous Mathilde. She saw quite plainly that she had to contend with the love of solitude. Now and again, she uttered with terror in her heart the name of Madame de Renal. She saw Julien shudder. From that moment, her passion knew no bounds nor measure.

'If he dies, I die after him,' she said to herself with absolute sincerity.

'What would the drawing-rooms of Paris say, to see a girl of my rank carry to such a point her adoration of a lover condemned to death? To find such sentiments, we must go back to the days of the heroes; it was love of this nature that set hearts throbbing in the age of Charles IX and Henri III.'

Amid the most impassioned transports, when she pressed Julien's head to her heart: 'What!' she said to herself with horror, 'can this precious head be doomed to fall? Very well!' she added, inflamed by a heroism that was not devoid of happiness, 'my lips, which are now pressed against these dear locks, will be frozen within twenty-four hours after.'

Memories of these moments of heroism and fearful ecstasy seized her in an ineluctable grip. The thought of suicide, so absorbing in itself, and hitherto so remote from that proud spirit, penetrated its defences and soon reigned there with an absolute sway. 'No, the blood of my ancestors has not grown lukewarm in its descent to me,' Mathilde told herself proudly.

I have a favour to ask you,' her lover said to her one day: Put your child out to nurse at Verrieres, Madame de Renal will look after the nurse.'

'That is a very harsh saying… ' Mathilde turned pale.

'True, and I ask a thousand pardons,' cried Julien, awakening from his dream and pressing her to his bosom.

Having dried her tears, he returned to the subject of his thoughts, but with more subtlety. He had given the conversation a turn of melancholy philosophy. He spoke of that future which was soon to close for him.

'You must agree, my dear friend, that the passions are an accident in life,but this accident is to be found only in superior beings … The death of my son would be in reality a relief to the pride of your family, so much the subordinate agents will perceive. Neglect will be the lot of that child of misery and shame… I hope that at a date which I do not wish to specify, which however I have the courage to anticipate, you will obey my final behest: You will marry the Marquis de Croisenois.'

'What, dishonoured!'

'Dishonour can have no hold over such a name as yours. You will be a widow, and the widow of a madman, that is all. I shall go farther: my crime, being free from any pecuniary motive, will be in no way dishonouring. Perhaps by that time some philosophical legislator will have secured, from the prejudices of his contemporaries, the suppression of capital punishment. Then, some friendly voice will cite as an instance: "Why,Mademoiselle de La Mole's first husband was mad, but not a wicked man, he was no criminal. It was absurd to cut his head off … " Then my memory will cease to be infamous; at least, after a certain time… Your position in society, your fortune, and, let me say, your genius will enable M. de Croisenois to play a part, once he is your husband, to which by himself he could not hope to attain.

He has only his birth and his gallantry, and those qualities by themselves, which made a man accomplished in 1729, are an anachronism a hundred years later, and only give rise to pretensions. A man must have other things besides if he is to place himself at the head of the youth of France.

'You will bring the support of a firm and adventurous character to the political party in which you will place your husband. You may succeed the Chevreuses and Longuevilles of the Fronde… But by then, my dear friend, the heavenly fire which animates you at this moment will have cooled a little.

'Allow me to tell you,' he went on, after many other preliminary phrases, 'in fifteen years from now you will regard as an act of folly, pardonable but still an act of folly, the love that you have felt for me … '

He broke off abruptly and returned to his dreams. He found himself once again confronted by that idea, so shocking to Mathilde: 'In fifteen years Madame de Renal will adore my son, and you will have forgotten him.'

**chapter 40**

**Tranquillity**

It is because I was foolish then that I am now wise. O philosopher who see nothing save in a flash, how short is your vision! Your eye is not made to follow the underground working of the passions.

FRAU VON GOETHE

This conversation was interrupted by a judicial examination, followed by a conference with the lawyer retained for the defence. These were the only absolutely disagreeable moments in a heedless existence full of tender fantasies.

'It was murder, and premeditated murder,' said Julien to magistrate and counsel alike. 'I am sorry, gentlemen,' he added, smiling; 'but this reduces your task to a very small matter.

'After all,' thought Julien, when he had succeeded in ridding himself of these two persons, 'I must be brave, and braver, evidently, than these two men. They regard as the worst of evils, as the king of terrors, this duel to a fatal issue, of which I shall begin to think seriously only upon the day itself.

'That is because I have known a greater evil,' Julien continued, philosophising to himself. 'I suffered far more keenly on my first journey to Strasbourg, when I thought that I had been abandoned by Mathilde…

And to think that I longed with such passion for this perfect intimacy which today leaves me so unmoved! Indeed, I am happier by myself than when that lovely girl shares my solitude … '

The lawyer, a man of rules and formalities, thought him mad, and supposed, with the rest of the public, that it was jealousy that had put the pistol in his hand. One day, he ventured to suggest to Julien that this allegation, whether true or false, would be an excellent line of defence. But the prisoner became in a flash passionate and incisive.

'On your life, Sir,' cried Julien beside himself with rage, 'bear in mind never again to utter that abominable falsehood.' The prudent advocate was afraid for a moment of being murdered himself.

He prepared his defence, because the decisive moment was rapidly approaching. Besancon and the whole Department could talk of nothing but this cause celebre. Julien was in ignorance of this, he had begged that no one should ever speak to him of such matters.

That very day, Fouque and Mathilde having sought to inform him of certain public rumours, which seemed to them to furnish grounds for hope, Julien had cut them short at the first word.

'Leave me to enjoy my ideal life. Your petty bickerings, your details of real life, all more or less irritating to me, would bring me down from heaven. One dies as best one can; as for me, I wish to think of death only in my own way. What do I care for other people? My relations with other people are soon to be cut short. For pity's sake, do not speak to me of them again: it is quite enough to have to see the magistrate and my counsel.

'Indeed,' he said to himself, 'it appears to be my destiny to die in a dream. An obscure creature, like myself, sure of being forgotten within a fortnight, would indeed be foolish, one must admit, were he to play a part …

'It is strange, all the same, that I have learned the art of enjoying life only now that I see its term draw so near.'

He spent these last days in pacing the narrow terrace on the roof of his dungeon, smoking some excellent cigars for which Mathilde had sent a courier to Holland, and with no suspicion that his appearance was daily awaited by all the telescopes in the town. His thoughts were at Vergy.

Never did he speak of Madame de Renal to Fouque, but on two or three occasions this friend told him that she was recovering rapidly, and these words echoed in his heart.

While Julien's spirit was almost always completely lost in the world of ideas, Mathilde, occupied with realities, as becomes an aristocratic heart,had contrived to increase the intimacy of the direct correspondence between Madame de Fervaques and M. de Frilair to such a point that already the mighty word Bishopric had been uttered.

The venerable prelate, in whose hands was the list of benefices, added as a postscript to one of his niece's letters: 'That poor Sorel is nothing worse than a fool, I hope that he will be restored to us.'

At the sight of these lines, M. de Frilair was almost out of his mind. He had no doubt of his ability to save Julien.

'But for that Jacobinical law which prescribes the registration of an endless list of jurors, and has no other real object than to take away all influence from wellborn people,' he said to Mathilde, on the eve of the drawing by lot of the thirty-six jurors for the assize, 'I could have answered for the verdict. Did I not secure the acquittal of the cure N—— ?'

It was with pleasure that, on the following day, among the names drawn from the urn, M. de Frilair found those of five members of the Congregation of Besancon, and, among those who were strangers to the town, the names of MM. Valenod, de Moirod and de Cholin. 'I can answer at once for these eight jurors,' he told Mathilde. 'The first five are machines. Valenod is my agent, Moirod owes all he has to me, Cholin is an imbecile, who is afraid of everything.'

The newspaper published throughout the Department the names of the jurors, and Madame de Renal, to the inexpressible terror of her husband, decided to come to Besancon. All that M. de Renal could obtain from her was that she would not leave her bed, so that she might not be exposed to the nuisance of being summoned to give evidence. 'You do not understand my position,' said the former Mayor of Verrieres. 'I am now a Liberal of the defection, as they call it; no doubt but that rascal Valenod and M. de Frilair will easily persuade the Attorney General and the Judges to anything that can be unpleasant for me.'

Madame de Renal yielded without protest to her husband's orders, '?f I were to appear at the Assize Court,' she told herself, 'I should seem to be demanding vengeance.'

Notwithstanding all the promises of prudence made to her spiritual director and to her husband, no sooner had she arrived in Besancon than she wrote with her own hand to each of the thirty-six jurors:

'I shall not appear in Court upon the day of the trial, Sir, because my presence might prejudice M. Sorel's case. I desire but one thing in the world, and that passionately, namely his acquittal. Be assured of this, the terrible thought that on my account an innocent man has been sent to his death would poison the remainder of my life, and would doubtless shorten it. How could you sentence him to death, while I still live? No,beyond question, society has not the right to take life, especially from such a man as Julien Sorel. Everyone at Verrieres has seen him in moments of distraction. This poor young man has powerful enemies; but, even among his enemies (and how many they are!) who is there that has any doubt of his admirable talents and his profound learning? It is not an ordinary person that you are about to judge, Sir. For nearly eighteen months we have all known him to be pious, wise, studious; but, two or three times in the year, he was seized by fits of melancholy which bordered on insanity. The whole town of Verrieres, all our neighbours at Vergy where we go in the fine weather, all my family, the Sub-Prefect himself, will bear testimony to his exemplary piety; he knows by heart the whole of the Holy Bible. Would an unbeliever have applied himself for years on end to learning the Holy Scriptures? My sons will have the honour to present this letter to you: they are children. Deign to question them, Sir, they will furnish you with all the details relative to this poor young man that may still be necessary to convince you of the barbarity of condemning him. Far from avenging me, you would be sentencing me to death.

'What is there that his enemies can advance in rebuttal of the following fact? The injury that ensued from one of those moments of insanity which my children themselves used to remark in their tutor was so far from dangerous that within less than two months, it has allowed me to post from Verrieres to Besancon. If I learn, Sir, that you have even the slightest hesitation in saving from the barbarity of our laws a person who is so little guilty, I shall leave my bed, to which I am confined solely by my husband's orders, and shall come to throw myself at your feet.

'Declare, Sir, that the premeditation is not proven, and you will not have to reproach yourself with the blood of an innocent man,' etc., etc.

**chapter 41**

**The Trial**

The country will remember this celebrated trial for a long time to come. Interest in the accused reached fever pitch; this was because his crime was astonishing and yet not atrocious. Even if it had been, the young man was so handsome! His great destiny abruptly cut short heightened the pity felt for him. Will he be condemned? the women would ask the men of their acquaintance and one could see them grow pale as they awaited the reply.

SAINTEBEUVE

At length the day dawned so dreaded by Madame de Renal and Mathilde.The strange appearance of the town increased their terror, and did not leave even Fouque's stout heart unmoved. The whole Province had swarmed into Besancon to witness the trial of this romantic case.

For some days past there had not been a bed to be had in the inns. The President of the Assize Court was assailed with requests for cards of admission; all the ladies of the town wished to be present at the trial; Julien's portrait was hawked through the streets, etc., etc.

Mathilde was keeping in reserve for this supreme moment a letter written throughout in the hand of the Lord Bishop of ——. This Prelate, who controlled the Church in France and appointed Bishops, deigned to ask for the acquittal of Julien. On the eve of the trial, Mathilde took this letter to the all-powerful Vicar-General.

At the close of the interview, as she was leaving the room in a flood of tears: 'I answer for the verdict of the jury,' M. de Frilair told her, emerging at length from his diplomatic reserve, and almost showing signs of emotion himself. 'Among the twelve persons charged with the duty of finding whether your protege's crime is proven, and especially whether there was premeditation, I number six friends devoted to my welfare, and I have given them to understand that it rested with them to raise me to the episcopate. Baron de Valenod, whom I have made Mayor of Verrieres, has entire control over two of his subordinates, MM. de Moirod and de Cholin. To tell the truth, chance has given us, for dealing with this affair, two jurors who are extremely disaffected; but, although Ultra-Liberals, they loyally obey my orders on great occasions, and I have sent word asking them to vote with M. Valenod. I learn that a sixth juror of the industrial class, an immensely rich and garrulous Liberal, is secretly hoping for a contract from the Ministry of War, and no doubt he would not wish to vex me. I have let him know that M. Valenod has my last word.'

'And who is this M. Valenod?' said Mathilde, anxiously.

'If you knew him, you would have no doubt of our success. He is a bold speaker, impudent, coarse, a man made to be the leader of fools.1814 raised him from penury, and I am going to make him a Prefect. He is capable of thrashing the other jurors if they refuse to vote as he wishes.'

Mathilde was somewhat reassured.

There was another discussion in store for her that evening. In order not to prolong a painful scene, the outcome of which appeared to him certain, Julien was determined not to open his mouth.

'My counsel will speak, that is quite sufficient,' he said to Mathilde. 'As it is, I shall be all too long exposed as a spectacle to my enemies. These provincials are shocked by the rapid advancement which I owe to you,and, believe me, there is not one of them that does not wish for my conviction, except that he will cry like a fool when I am led to the scaffold.'

'They wish to see you humiliated, it is only too true,' replied Mathilde,'but I do not believe that they are cruel. My presence in Besancon and the spectacle of my grief have interested all the women; your handsome face will do the rest. If you say but one word before your judges, the whole court will be on your side,' etc., etc.

The following morning at nine o'clock, when Julien came down from his prison to enter the great hall of the Law Courts, it was with the utmost difficulty that the gendarmes succeeded in clearing a passage through the immense crowd that packed the courtyard. Julien had slept well, he was quite calm, and felt no other sentiment than one of philosophical piety towards this crowd of envious persons who, without cruelty, were ready to applaud his sentence of death. He was quite surprised when, having been detained for more than a quarter of an hour among the crowd, he was obliged to admit that his presence was inspiring a tender pity in the assembly. He did not hear a single unpleasant remark. 'These provincials are less evil-minded than I supposed,' he said to himself.

On entering the court, he was struck by the elegance of the architecture. It was pure gothic, with a number of charming little pillars carved in stone with the most perfect finish. He imagined himself in England.

But presently his whole attention was absorbed in twelve or fifteen pretty women who, seated opposite the dock, filled the three galleries above the bench and the jurybox. On turning round towards the public seats, he saw that the circular gallery which overhung the well of the court was filled with women; most of them were young and seemed to him extremely pretty; their eyes were bright and full of interest. In the rest of the court, the crowd was enormous; people were struggling at the doors, and the sentries were unable to preserve silence.

When all the eyes that were looking for Julien became aware of his presence, on seeing him take his place on the slightly raised bench reserved for the prisoner, he was greeted with a murmur of astonishment and tender interest.

One would have said that morning that he was not yet twenty; he was dressed quite simply, but with a perfect grace; his hair and brow were charming; Mathilde had insisted on presiding in person over his toilet.

His pallor was intense. As soon as he had taken his seat on the bench, he heard people say on all sides: 'Lord, how young he is! … ' 'But he is a boy.' 'He is far better looking than his portrait.'

'Prisoner,' said the gendarme seated on his right, 'do you see those six ladies who are on that balcony?' The gendarme pointed to a little gallery which jutted out above the amphitheatre in which the jury was placed.

'That is the Prefect's lady,' the gendarme continued; 'next to her, Madame la Marquise de M ——; that one loves you dearly. I heard her speak to the examining magistrate. Next to her is Madame Derville.' 'Madame Derville,' exclaimed Julien, and a vivid blush suffused his brow. 'When she leaves the court,' he thought, 'she will write to Madame de Renal.' He knew nothing of Madame de Renal's arrival at Besancon.

The witnesses were quickly heard. At the first words of the speech for the prosecution made by the counsel for the prosecution, two of the ladies seated on the little balcony burst into tears. 'Madame Derville is not so easily moved,' thought Julien. He noticed, however, that she was extremely flushed.

The counsel for the prosecution was labouring an emotional point in bad French about the barbarity of the crime that had been committed; Julien noticed that Madame Derville's neighbours showed signs of strong disapproval. Several of the jury, evidently friends of these ladies, spoke to them and seemed to reassure them. 'That can only be a good sign,' thought Julien.

Until then he had felt himself penetrated by an unmixed contempt for all the men who were taking part in this trial. The insipid eloquence of the counsel for the prosecution increased this sense of disgust. But gradually the sereneness of Julien's heart melted before the marks of interest of which he was plainly the object.

He was pleased with the firm expression of his counsel. 'No fine language,' he murmured to him as he stood up to speak.

'All the emphasis stolen from Bossuet, which has been displayed against you, has helped your case,' said the counsel. And indeed, he had not been speaking for five minutes before almost all the ladies had their handkerchiefs in their hands. The counsel, encouraged by this, addressed the jury in extremely strong language. Julien shuddered, he felt that he was on the point of bursting into tears. 'Great God! What will my enemies say?'

He was about to yield to the emotion that was overpowering him,when, fortunately for himself, he caught an insolent glance from M.Valenod.

'That wretch's eyes are ablaze,' he said to himself; 'what a triumph for that vile nature! Had my crime led to this alone, I should be bound to abhor it. Heaven knows what he will say of me to Madame de Renal!'

This thought obliterated all the rest. Shortly afterwards, Julien was recalled to himself by sounds of approval from the public. His counsel had just concluded his speech. Julien remembered that it was the correct thing to shake hands with him. The time had passed quickly.

Refreshments were brought to counsel and prisoner. It was only then that Julien was struck by a curious circumstance: none of the women had left the court for dinner.

'Faith, I am dying of hunger,' said his counsel, 'and you?'

'I am also,' replied Julien.

'Look, there is the Prefect's lady getting her dinner, too,' his counsel said to him, pointing to the little balcony. 'Cheer up, everything is going well.' The trial was resumed.

As the President was summing up, midnight struck. He was obliged to pause; amid the silence of the universal anxiety, the echoing notes of the clock filled the court.

'Here begins the last day of my life,' thought Julien. Presently he felt himself inflamed by the idea of duty. He had kept his emotion in check until then, and maintained his determination not to speak; but when the President of the Assizes asked him if he had anything to say, he rose. He saw in front of him the eyes of Madame Derville, which, in the lamp light, seemed to shine with a strange brilliance. 'Can she be crying, by any chance,' he wondered.

'Gentlemen of the Jury,'My horror of the contempt which I believed that I could endure at the moment of my death, impels me to speak. Gentlemen, I have not the honour to belong to your class, you see in me a peasant who has risen in revolt against the lowliness of his station.

'I ask you for no mercy,' Julien went on, his voice growing stronger. 'I am under no illusion; death is in store for me; it will be a just punishment. I have been guilty of attempting the life of the woman most worthy of all respect, of all devotion. Madame de Renal had been like a mother to me. My crime is atrocious, and it was premeditated. I have, therefore, deserved death, Gentlemen of the Jury. But, even were I less-guilty, I see before me men who, without pausing to consider what pity may be due to my youth, will seek to punish in me and to discourage forever that class of young men who, born in an inferior station and in a sense burdened with poverty, have the good fortune to secure a sound education, and the audacity to mingle with what the pride of rich people calls society.

'That is my crime, Gentlemen, and it will be punished with all the more severity inasmuch as actually I am not being tried by my peers. I do not see, anywhere among the jury, a peasant who has grown rich, but only indignant bourgeois… '

For twenty minutes Julien continued to speak in this strain; he said everything that was in his heart; the counsel for the prosecution, who aspired to the favour of the aristocracy, kept springing from his seat; but in spite of the somewhat abstract turn which Julien had given the debate,all the women were dissolved in tears. Madame Derville herself had her handkerchief pressed to her eyes. Before concluding, Julien returned to the question of premeditation, to his repentance, to the respect, the filial and unbounded adoration which, in happier times, he had felt for Madame de Renal … Madame Derville uttered a cry and fainted.

One o'clock struck as the jury retired to their waiting-room. None of the women had left their seats; several of the men had tears in their eyes.

The general conversation was at first most lively; but gradually, as the jury delayed their verdict, the feeling of weariness spread a calm over the assembly. It was a solemn moment; the lamps burned more dimly.

Julien, who was dead tired, heard them discussing round him whether this delay augured well or ill. He noticed with pleasure that everyone was on his side; the jury did not return, and still not a woman left the court.

Just as two o'clock had struck, a general stir was audible. The little door of the juryroom opened. M. le Baron de Valenod advanced with a grave, theatrical step, followed by the rest of the jury. He coughed, then declared that on his soul and conscience the unanimous opinion of the jury was that Julien Sorel was guilty of murder, and of murder with premeditation: this verdict inferred a sentence of death; it was pronounced a moment later. Julien looked at his watch, and remembered M. de Lavalette; it was a quarter past two. Today is Friday,' he thought.

'Yes, but this is a lucky day for Valenod, who is sentencing me… I am too closely guarded for Mathilde to be able to effect my escape, like Madame de Lavalette … And so, in three days, at this same hour, I shall know what to think of the great hereafter.'

At that moment, he heard a cry and was recalled to the things of this world. The women round him were sobbing; he saw that every face was turned towards a little gallery concealed by the capital of a gothic pilaster. He learned afterwards that Mathilde had been hidden there. As the cry was not repeated, everyone turned back to look at Julien, for whom the gendarmes were trying to clear a passage through the crowd.

'Let us try not to give that rascal Valenod any food for laughter,' thought Julien. 'With what a contrite and coaxing air he uttered the verdict that involved the death penalty! Whereas that poor president, even though he has been a judge for all these years, had tears in his eyes when he sentenced me. What a joy for Valenod to have his revenge for our old rivalry for Madame de Renal! And so I shall never see her any more! It is all finished… A last farewell is impossible between us, I feel it… How happy I should have been to express to her all the horror I feel for my crime!

'These words only: I feel that I am justly condemned.'

**chapter 42**

**In the Prison**

When Julien was left back to prison he had been put in a cell reserved for those under sentence of death. He, who, as a rule, observed the most trifling details, had never noticed that he was not being taken up to his old dungeon. He was thinking of what he would say to Madame de Renal, if, before the fatal moment, he should have the good fortune to see her. He felt that she would not allow him to speak, and was seeking a way of expressing his repentance in the first words he would utter. 'After such an action, how am I to convince her that I love her and her only? For after all I sought to kill her either out of ambition or for love of Mathilde.'

On getting into bed he found himself between sheets of a coarse cloth.

The scales fell from his eyes. 'Ah! I am in the condemned cell,' he said to himself, 'awaiting my sentence. It is right …

'Conte Altamira told me once that, on the eve of his death, Danton said in his loud voice: "It is strange, the verb to guillotine cannot be conjugated in all its tenses; one can say: I shall be guillotined, thou shalt be guillotined, but one does not say: I have been guillotined."

'Why not,' Julien went on, 'if there is another life? Faith, if I meet the Christian Deity, I am lost: He is a tyrant, and, as such, is full of ideas of vengeance; His Bible speaks of nothing but fearful punishments. I never loved Him! I could never even believe that anyone did love Him sincerely. He is devoid of pity.' (Here Julien recalled several passages from the Bible.) 'He will punish me in some abominable manner…

'But if I meet the God of Fenelon! He will say to me perhaps: "Much shall be pardoned thee, because thou hast loved much … "

'Have I loved much? Ah! I did love Madame de Renal, but my conduct has been atrocious. There, as elsewhere, I abandoned a simple and modest merit for what was brilliant…

'But then, what a prospect! Colonel of Hussars, should we go to war; Secretary of Legation in time of peace; after that, Ambassador … for I should soon have learned the business… and had I been a mere fool,need the son-in-law of the Marquis de La Mole fear any rival? All my foolish actions would have been forgiven me, or rather counted to me as merits. A man of distinction, enjoying the most splendid existence in Vienna or London …

'Not precisely that, Sir, to be guillotined in three days' time.'

Julien laughed heartily at this sally of his own wit. 'Indeed, man has two different beings inside him,' he reflected. 'What devil thought of that malicious touch?

'Very well, yes, my friend, guillotined in three days' time,' he replied to the interrupter. 'M. de Cholin will hire a window, sharing the expense with the abbe Maslon. Well, for the cost of hiring that window, which of those two worthies will rob the other?'

A passage from Rotrou's Venceslas entered his head suddenly.

Ladislas: My soul is well prepared. The King (his father): So is the scaffold; lay your head thereon.

'A good answer,' he thought, and fell asleep. Someone awakened him in the morning by shaking him violently.

'What, already!' said Julien, opening a haggard eye. He imagined himself to be in the headsman's hands.

It was Mathilde. 'Fortunately, she did not understand.' This reflection restored all his presence of mind. He found Mathilde changed as though after six months of illness: she was positively unrecognisable.

'That wretch Frilair has betrayed me,' she said to him, wringing her hands; rage prevented her from speaking.

'Was I not fine yesterday when I rose to speak?' replied Julien. 'I was improvising, and for the first time in my life! It is true that there is reason to fear it may also be the last.'

At this moment Julien was playing upon Mathilde's nature with all the calm of a skilled pianist touching the keys of a piano… 'The advantage of noble birth I lack, it is true,' he went on, 'but the great heart of Mathilde has raised her lover to her own level. Do you suppose that Boniface de La Mole cut a better figure before his judges?'

Mathilde, that morning, was tender without affectation, like any poor girl dwelling in an attic; but she could not win from him any simpler speech. He paid her back, unconsciously, the torment that she had often inflicted on him.

'We do not know the source of the Nile,' Julien said to himself; 'it has not been granted to the eye of man to behold the King of Rivers in the form of a simple rivulet: similarly no human eye shall ever see Julien weak, if only because he is not weak. But I have a heart that is easily moved; the most commonplace words, if they are uttered with an accent of truth, may soften my voice and even make my tears begin to flow.

How often have not the sere hearts despised me for this defect! They believed that I was begging for mercy: that is what I cannot endure.

'They say that the thought of his wife overcame Danton at the foot of the scaffold; but Danton had given strength to a nation of coxcombs, and prevented the enemy from reaching Paris . . I alone know what I might have managed to do… To others, I am at best only a might-have-been.

'If Madame de Renal had been here, in my cell, instead of Mathilde,should I have been able to control myself? The intensity of my despair and of my repentance would have appeared in the eyes of the Valenods,and of all the patricians of the neighbourhood, a craven fear of death;they are so proud, those feeble hearts, whom their financial position places out of reach of temptation! "You see what it is," M. de Moirod and M. de Cholin, who have just sentenced me to death, would have said, "to be born the son of a carpenter! One may become learned, clever, but courage!… Courage is not taught at school." Even this poor Mathilde, who is now weeping, or rather who can no longer weep,' he said, looking at her red eyes … and he took her in his arms: the sight of genuine grief made him forget his syllogism. 'She has been weeping all night,perhaps,' he said to himself: 'but one day how ashamed she will be when she remembers! She will regard herself as having been led astray, in early youth, by the low opinions of a plebeian… Croisenois is weak enough to marry her, and, i' faith, he will do well for himself. She will make him play a part,"By that right Which a firm spirit planning vast designs Has o'er the loutish minds of common men."

'Ah, now; here is a pleasant thing: now that I am to die, all the poetry I ever learned in my life comes back to me. It must be a sign of decadence … '

Mathilde kept on saying to him in a faint voice: 'He is there, in the next room.' At length he began to pay attention to her words. 'Her voice is feeble,' he thought, 'but all her imperious nature is still in its accents. She lowers her voice in order not to lose her temper.

'Who is there?' he asked her gently.

'The lawyer, to make you sign your appeal.'

'I shall not appeal.'

'What! You will not appeal,' she said, rising to her feet, her eyes ablaze with anger, 'and why not, if you please?'

'Because at this moment I feel that I have the courage to die without exciting undue derision. And who can say that in two months' time, after a long confinement in this damp cell, I shall be so well prepared? I foresee interviews with priests, with my father … I can imagine nothing so unpleasant. Let us die.'

This unexpected obstinacy awoke all the latent pride in Mathilde's nature. She had not been able to see the abbe de Frilair before the hour at which the cells in the prison of Besancon were opened; her anger fell upon Julien. She adored him, and for the next quarter of an hour he was reminded by her imprecations against his character, her regrets that she had ever loved him, of that proud spirit which in the past had heaped such poignant insults upon him, in the library of the Hotel de La Mole.

'Heaven owed it to the glory of your race to bring you into the world a man,' he told her.

'But as for myself,' he thought, 'I should be a rare fool to live two months longer in this disgusting abode, the butt of all the infamous and humiliating lies that the patrician faction is capable of inventing,my sole comfort the imprecations of this mad-woman… Well, the day after tomorrow, I shall be fighting a duel in the morning with a man well known for his coolness and for his remarkable skill… Very remarkable,' whispered Mephistopheles, 'he never misses his stroke.

'Very well, so be it, all's well that ends well.' (Mathilde's eloquence continued to flow.) 'Begad, no,' he said to himself, 'I shall not appeal.'

Having made this decision, he relapsed into his dreams … 'The postman on his rounds will bring the newspaper at six o'clock, as usual; at eight, after M. de Renal has read it, Elisa, entering the room on tiptoe,will lay it down on her bed. Later, she will awake: suddenly, as she reads, she will grow troubled; her lovely hand will tremble; she will come to the words: At five minutes past ten he had ceased to live.

'She will shed hot tears, I know her; in vain did I seek to murder her,all will be forgotten, and the person whose life I sought to take will be the only one who will weep sincerely for my death.

'Ah, this is a paradox!' he thought, and, for the next quarter of an hour, while Mathilde continued to make a scene, he thought only of Madame de Renal. In spite of himself, and albeit frequently replying to what Mathilde said to him, he could not free his mind from the memory of that bedroom at Verrieres. He saw the Gazette de Besancon lying on the counterpane of orange taffeta. He saw that snowy hand clutching it with a convulsive movement; he saw Madame de Renal weep … He followed the course of each tear over that charming face. Mademoiselle de La Mole, having failed to get anything out of Julien, made the lawyer come in. He was fortunately an old Captain of the Army of Italy, of 1796, when he had served with Manuel.

For the sake of form, he opposed the condemned man's decision. Julien, wishing to treat him with respect, explained all his reasons to him.

'Faith, one may think as you do,' M. Felix Vaneau (this was the lawyer's name) said to him at length. 'But you have three clear days in which to appeal, and it is my duty to come back each day. If a volcano opened beneath the prison, in the next two months, you would be saved.

You may die a natural death,' he said, looking at Julien.

Julien shook his hand. 'I thank you, you are an honest man. I shall think it over.' And when Mathilde left him, finally, with the lawyer, he felt far more affection for the lawyer than for her.

c**hapter 43**

**Last Adieux**

An hour later, when he was fast asleep, he was awakened by the tears which he felt trickling over his hand. 'Ah! Mathilde again,' he thought to himself, half awake. 'She has come, faithful to her theory, to attack my resolve by force of tender sentiments.' Irritated by the prospect of this fresh scene in the pathetic manner, he did not open his eyes. The lines of Belphegor flying from his wife came into his mind.

He heard a strange sigh; he opened his eyes; it was Madame de Renal.

'Ah! Do I see you again before my death? Is it a phantom?' he cried, as he flung himself at her feet.

'But forgive me, Madame, I am nothing but a murderer in your eyes,' he at once added, regaining his composure.

'Sir, … I have come to implore you to appeal, I know that you do not wish to… ' She was choked by her sobs; she was unable to speak.

'Deign to forgive me.'

'If you wish me to forgive you,' she said to him, rising and throwing herself into his arms, 'appeal at once from the sentence of death.'

Julien covered her with kisses.

'Will you come and see me every day during the next two months?'

'I swear it to you. Every day, unless my husband forbids me.'

'Then I sign!' cried Julien. 'What! You forgive me! Is it possible?'

He clasped her in his arms; he was mad. She uttered a faint cry.

'It is nothing,' she told him, 'you hurt me.'

'In your shoulder,' cried Julien, bursting into tears. He stepped back from her, and covered her hand with burning kisses. 'Who would ever have said, last time I saw you, in your bedroom, at Verrieres … ?'

'Who would ever have said then that I should write M. de La Mole that infamous letter… ?'

'Know that I have always loved you, that I have never loved anyone but you.'

'Is it really possible?' cried Madame de Renal, equally enraptured. She bowed herself over Julien, who was kneeling at her feet, and for a long time they wept in silence.

At no time in his life had Julien experienced such a moment.

After a long interval, when they were able to speak:

'And that young Madame Michele!' said Madame de Renal, 'or rather that Mademoiselle de La Mole; for I am beginning really to believe this strange tale!'

'It is true only in appearance,' replied Julien. 'She is my wife, but she is not my mistress… '

And, each interrupting the other a hundred times, they managed with difficulty, each of them, to tell what the other did not know. The letter sent to M. de La Mole had been written by the young priest who directed Madame de Renal's conscience, and then copied out by her. 'What a terrible crime religion has made me commit!' she said to him; 'though I did modify the worst passages in the letter… .'

Julien's transports of joy proved to her how completely he forgave her.

Never had he been so madly in love.

'And yet I regard myself as pious,' Madame de Renal told him in the course of their conversation. 'I believe sincerely in God; I believe equally, indeed it has been proved to me, that the crime I am committing is fearful, and yet, as soon as I set eyes on you, even after you have fired at me twice with a pistol… ' Here, in spite of her resistance, Julien covered her with kisses.

'Let me alone,' she went on, 'I wish to argue with you, before I forget… As soon as I set eyes on you, all sense of duty vanishes, there is nothing left of me but love for you, or rather love is too feeble a word. I feel for you what I ought to feel only for God: a blend of respect, love, obedience … In truth, I do not know what feeling you inspire in me.

Were you to bid me thrust a knife into your gaoler, the crime would be committed before I had had time to think. Explain this to me in simple terms before I leave you, I wish to see clearly into my own heart; for in two months we must part … For that matter, need we part?' she said, with a smile.

'I take back my word,' cried Julien, springing to his feet; 'I shall not appeal from the sentence of death, if by poison, knife, pistol, charcoal or any other means whatsoever, you seek to put an end to, or to endanger your life.'

Madame de Renal's expression altered suddenly; the warmest affection gave place to a profound abstraction.

'If we were to die at once?' she said to him at length.

'Who knows what we shall find in our next life?' replied Julien;'torments perhaps, perhaps nothing at all. Can we not spend two months together in a delicious manner? Two months, that is ever so many days.

Never shall I have been so happy.'

'You will never have been so happy?'

'Never,' replied Julien with rapture, 'and I am speaking to you as I speak to myself. Heaven preserve me from exaggeration.'

'To speak so is to command me,' she said with a timid and melancholy smile.

'Very well! You swear, by the love that you bear me, not to attempt your life by any direct means, or indirect means… Remember,' he added, 'that you are compelled to live for my son, whom Mathilde will abandon to the care of servants as soon as she is Marquise de Croisenois.'

'I swear,' she replied coldly, 'but I mean to take away with me your appeal written and signed by your hand. I shall go myself to the Attorney General.'

'Take care, you will compromise yourself.'

'After coming publicly to see you in prison, I am for ever, for Besancon and the whole of the Franche-Comte, a heroine of anecdotes,' she said with an air of profound distress. 'I have gone beyond the last limits of modesty… I am a woman who has forfeited her honour; it is true that it was for your sake … '

Her tone was so melancholy that Julien embraced her with a happiness that was quite new to him. It was no longer the intoxication of love, it was extreme gratitude. He had just realised, for the first time, the full extent of the sacrifice that she had made for him.

Some charitable soul doubtless informed M. de Renal of the long visits which his wife was paying to Julien's prison; for, after three days, he sent his carriage for her, with express orders that she was to return immediately to Verrieres.

This cruel parting had begun the day ill for Julien. He was informed, two or three hours later, that a certain intriguing priest, who for all that had not succeeded in making any headway among the Jesuits of Besancon, had taken his stand that morning outside the gate of the prison, in the street. It was raining hard, and outside there the man was trying to pose as a martyr. Julien was out of temper, this piece of foolishness moved him profoundly.

That morning he had already refused a visit from the priest, but the man had made up his mind to hear Julien's confession, and to make a name for himself among the young women of Besancon, on the strength of all the confidences which he would pretend to have received.

He declared in a loud voice that he was going to remain day and night at the gate of the prison: 'God has sent me to touch the heart of this other apostate.' And the lower orders, always curious spectators of a scene,began to assemble in crowds.

'Yes, my brethren,' he said to them, 'I shall spend the day here, and the night, and every day and night from now onwards. The Holy Spirit has spoken to me. I have a mission from on high; it is I that am to save the soul of young Sorel. Join with me in my prayers,' etc., etc.

Julien had a horror of scandal, and of anything that might attract attention to himself. He thought of seizing the opportunity to escape from the world unknown; but he had still some hope of seeing Madame de Renal again, and was desperately in love.

The gate of the prison was situated in one of the most frequented streets. The thought of that mud-be-spattered priest, drawing a crowd and creating a scandal, was torture to his soul. 'And, without a doubt, at every instant he is repeating my name!' This moment was more painful than death itself.

He called two or three times, at intervals of an hour, for a turnkey who was devoted to him, to send him out to see whether the priest were still at the gate of the prison.

'Sir, he is on both his knees in the mud,' was the turnkey's invariable answer; 'he is praying aloud, and repeating Litanies for your soul.' 'The impertinent fellow!' thought Julien. At that moment, indeed, he heard a dull roar, it was the crowd responding to the Litany. To increase his impatience, he saw the turnkey move his lips as he repeated the Latin words. 'They are beginning to say,' the turnkey added, 'that your heart must indeed be hardened if you refuse the succour of this holy man.'

'O my country! How barbarous you still are!' cried Julien in a frenzy of rage. And he continued his reasoning aloud, without a thought of the turnkey's presence.

'The man wants an article in the paper, and now he is certain of obtaining it.

'Oh, cursed provincials! In Paris, I should not have been subjected to all these vexations. They are more adept there in charlatanism.

'Let this holy priest come in,' he said at length to the turnkey, and the sweat trickled in great drops from his brow. The turnkey made the sign of the Cross, and left the cell radiant.

The holy priest proved to be hideously ugly, and was even more foul with mud. The cold rain outside intensified the darkness and dampness of the cell. The priest tried to embrace Julien, and began to show emotion as he spoke to him. The vilest hypocrisy was all too evident; never in his life had Julien been in such a rage.

A quarter of an hour after the priest had entered, Julien found himself a complete coward. For the first time death appeared to him horrible. He thought of the state of putrefaction in which his body would be two days after his execution, etc., etc.

He was on the point of betraying himself by some sign of weakness, or of flinging himself upon the priest and strangling him with his chain, when it occurred to him to beg the holy man to go and say a good forty franc mass for him, that very day.

As it was almost midday, the priest decamped.

c**hapter 44**

**The Shadow of the Guillotine**

As soon as he had gone, Julien began to weep copiously, at the thought of dying. After a while he said to himself that, if Madame de Renal had been at Besancon, he would have confessed his weakness to her… .

At the moment when he most regretted the absence of that beloved woman, he heard Mathilde's step.

'The worst drawback of a prison,' he thought, 'is that one can never close one's door.' All that Mathilde had to say served only to irritate him.

She informed him that, on the day of the trial, M. de Valenod, having in his pocket his appointment as Prefect, had ventured to defy M. de Frilair and indulge himself in the pleasure of condemning Julien to death.

'"Whatever induced your friend," M. de Frilair said to me just now, "to go and arouse and attack the petty vanity of that middleclass aristocracy? Why speak of caste? He showed them what they ought to do in their own political interest: the fools had never thought of it, and were ready to cry. This caste interest blinded their eyes to the horror of condemning a man to death. You must admit that M. Sorel shows great in experience. If we do not succeed in saving him by an appeal to clemency, his death will be a sort of suicide … "'

Mathilde did not, of course, mention to Julien a thing which she herself did not yet suspect; namely, that the Abbe de Frilair, seeing Julien irremediably lost, thought that it would serve his own ambition to aspire to become his successor.

Almost out of his mind with helpless rage and vexation: 'Go and hear a mass for me,' he said to Mathilde, 'and leave me a moment's peace.'

Mathilde, who was extremely jealous already at Madame de Renal's visits and had just heard of her departure, realised the cause of Julien's ill-humour and burst into tears.

Her grief was genuine, Julien saw this and was all the more irritated.

He felt a compelling need of solitude, and how was he to secure it?

Finally Mathilde, having tried every argument to soften him, left him to himself, but almost at that moment Fouque appeared.

'I want to be alone,' he said to this faithful friend. And, as he saw him hesitate: 'I am composing a memorial for my appeal to clemency … but anyhow… do me a favour, never to speak to me of death. If I want any special services on the day, let me be the first to mention them.'

When Julien had at length secured solitude, he found himself more crushed and more of a coward than before. What little strength remained to his enfeebled spirit had been used up in the effort to conceal his condition from Mademoiselle de La Mole and Fouque.

Towards evening, a comforting thought came to him:

'If this morning, at the moment when death seemed so ugly, I had been warned to prepare for execution, the eye of the public would have been the incentive to glory; my gait might perhaps have been a little heavy, like that of a timid fop on entering a drawing-room. A few perspicacious people, if there be any such among these provincials, might have guessed my weakness… but no one would have seen it.'

And he felt himself relieved of part of his load of misery. 'I am a coward at this moment,' he chanted to himself, 'but no one will know of it.'

An almost more disagreeable incident was in store for him on the morrow. For a long time past, his father had been threatening a visit; that morning, before Julien was awake, the whitehaired old carpenter appeared in his cell.

Julien felt utterly weak, he expected the most unpleasant reproaches.

To complete his painful sensation, that morning he felt a keen remorse at not loving his father.

'Chance has placed us together on this earth,' he said to himself while the turnkey was making the cell a little tidy, 'and we have done one an other almost all the harm imaginable. He comes in the hour of my death to deal me his final blow.'

The old man's severe reproaches began as soon as they were left without a witness. Julien could not restrain his tears. 'What unworthy weakness!' he said to himself angrily. 'He will go about everywhere exaggerating my want of courage; what a triumph for Valenod and for all the dull hypocrites who reign at Verrieres! They are very great people in France, they combine all the social advantages. Until now I could at least say to myself:

They receive money, it is true, all the honours are heaped upon them,but I have nobility at heart.

'And here is a witness whom they will all believe, and who will assure the whole of Verrieres, exaggerating the facts, that I have been weak in the face of death! I shall be said to have turned coward in this trial which they can all understand!'

Julien was almost in despair. He did not know how to get rid of his father. And to make believe in such a way as to deceive this sharp-witted old man was, for the moment, utterly beyond his power.

His mind ran swiftly over all the possible ways of escape. 'I have saved money!' he exclaimed suddenly.

This inspired utterance altered the old man's expression and Julien's own position.

'How ought I to dispose of it?' he continued, with more calm: the effect produced by his words had rid him of all sense of inferiority.

The old carpenter was burning with a desire not to allow any of this money to escape, a part of which Julien seemed to wish to leave to his brothers. He spoke at great length and with heat. Julien managed to tease him.

'Well, the Lord has given me inspiration for making my testament. I shall give a thousand francs to each of my brothers, and the remainder to you.'

'Very good,' said the old man, 'that remainder is my due; but since God has been graciously pleased to touch your heart, if you wish to die like a good Christian, you ought first to pay your debts. There is still the cost of your maintenance and education, which I advanced, and which you have forgotten… '

'So that is a father's love!' Julien repeated to himself with despair in his heart, when at length he was alone. Soon the gaoler appeared.

'Sir, after a visit from the family, I always bring my lodgers a bottle of good champagne. It is a trifle dear, six francs the bottle, but it rejoices the heart.'

'Bring three glasses,' Julien told him with boyish glee, 'and send in two of the prisoners whom I hear walking in the corridor.'

The gaoler brought him in two gaolbirds who had repeated their of fence and were waiting to be sent back to penal servitude. They were a merry pair of scoundrels and really quite remarkable for cunning, courage and coolness.

'If you give me twenty francs,' one of them said to Julien, 'I will tell you the whole story of my life. It is as good as a play.'

'But you will tell me lies?' said Julien.

'Not at all,' was the answer; 'my friend here, who wants my twenty francs, will give me away if I don't tell the truth.'

His history was abominable. It revealed a courageous heart, in which there survived but a single passion, the lust for money.

After they had left him, Julien was no longer the same man. All his an

ger with himself had vanished. The piercing grief, envenomed by cowardice, to which he had been a prey since the departure of Madame de Renal, had turned to melancholy.

'If I had only been less taken in by appearance,' he told himself, 'I should have seen that the drawing-rooms of Paris are inhabited by honest people like my father, or by able rascals like these gaolbirds. They are right, the men in the drawing-rooms never rise in the morning with that poignant thought: "How am I to dine today?" And they boast of their probity! And, when summoned to a jury, they proudly condemn the man who has stolen a silver fork because he felt faint with hunger!

'But when there is a Court, when it is a question of securing or losing a Portfolio, my honest men of the drawing-rooms fall into crimes precisely similar to those which the want of food has inspired in this pair of gaolbirds …

'There is no such thing as natural law: the expression is merely a hoary piece of stupidity well worthy of the Advocate General who hunted me down the other day, and whose ancestor was made rich by one of Louis XIV's confiscations. There is no law, save when there is a statute to prevent one from doing something, on pain of punishment. Before the statute, there is nothing natural save the strength of the lion, or the wants of the creature who suffers from hunger, or cold; in a word, necessity …

No, the men whom we honour are merely rascals who have had the good fortune not to be caught redhanded. The accuser whom society sets at my heels has been made rich by a scandalous injustice … I have committed a murderous assault, and I am rightly condemned, but, short of murder only, the Valenod who condemned me is a hundred times more injurious to society.

'Ah, well,' Julien added sorrowfully, but without anger, 'for all his avarice, my father is worth more than any of those men. He has never loved me. I am now going to fill his cup to overflowing, in dishonouring him by a shameful death. That fear of being in want of money, that exag

gerated view of the wickedness of mankind which we call avarice, makes him see a prodigious source of consolation and security in a sum of three or four hundred louis which I may leave to him. On Sunday afternoons he will display his gold to all his envious neighbours in Verrieres. "To this tune," his glance will say to them, "which of you would not be charmed to have a son guillotined?"'

This philosophy might be true, but it was of a nature to make a man long for death. In this way passed five endless days. He was polite and gentle to Mathilde, whom he saw to be exasperated by the most violent jealousy. One evening Julien thought seriously of taking his life. His spirit was exhausted by the profound dejection into which the departure of Madame de Renal had cast him. Nothing pleased him any more, either in real life or in imagination. Want of exercise was beginning to affect his health and to give him the weak and excitable character of a young German student. He was losing that manly pride which repels with a forcible oath certain degrading ideas by which the miserable are assailed.

'I have loved the Truth… Where is it to be found?… Everywhere hypocrisy, or at least charlatanism, even among the most virtuous, even among the greatest'; and his lips curled in disgust … 'No, man cannot place any trust in man.

'Madame de ——, when she was making a collection for her poor orphans, told me that some Prince had just given her ten louis; a lie. But what am I saying? Napoleon at Saint Helena!… Pure charlatanism, a proclamation in favour of the King of Rome.

'Great God! If such a man as he, at a time, too, when misfortune ought to recall him sternly to a sense of duty, stoops to charlatanism, what is one to expect of the rest of the species?

'Where is Truth? In religion… Yes,' he added with a bitter smile of the most intense scorn, 'in the mouths of the Maslons, the Frilairs, the Castanedes … Perhaps in true Christianity, whose priests would be no more paid than were the Apostles? But Saint Paul was paid with the pleasure of commanding, of speaking, of hearing himself spoken of…

'Ah! If there were a true religion… Idiot that I am! I see a gothic cathedral, storied windows; my feeble heart imagines the priest from those windows … My soul would understand him, my soul has need of him. I find only a fop with greasy hair … little different, in fact, from the Chevalier de Beauvoisis.

'But a true priest, a Massillon, a Fenelon… . Massillon consecrated Dubois. The Memoires de SaintSimon have spoiled Fenelon for me; but still, a true priest… Then the tender hearts would have a meetingplace in this world … We should not remain isolated… This good priest would speak to us of God. But what God? Not the God of the Bible, a petty despot, cruel and filled with a thirst for vengeance… but the God of Voltaire, just, good, infinite … '

He was disturbed by all his memories of that Bible which he knew by heart … 'But how, whenever three are gathered together, how is one to believe in that great name of GOD, after the frightful abuse that our priests make of it?

'To live in isolation! … What torture! …

'I am becoming foolish and unjust,' said Julien, beating his brow. 'I am isolated here in this cell; but I have not lived in isolation on this earth; I had always the compelling idea of duty. The duty that I had laid down for myself, rightly or wrongly, was like the trunk of a strong tree against which I leaned during the storm; I tottered, I was shaken. After all, I was only a man… but I was not carried away.

'It is the damp air of this cell that makes me think of isolation… 'And why be a hypocrite still when I am cursing hypocrisy? It is not death, nor the cell, nor the damp air, it is the absence of Madame de Renal that is crushing me. If I were at Verrieres, and, in order to see her, were obliged to live for weeks on end hidden in the cellars of her house,should I complain?

'The influence of my contemporaries is too strong for me,' he said aloud and with a bitter laugh. 'Talking alone to myself, within an inch of death, I am still a hypocrite … Oh, nineteenth century! 'A hunter fires his gun in a forest, his quarry falls, he runs forward to seize it. His boot strikes an anthill two feet high, destroys the habitation of the ants, scatters the ants and their eggs to the four winds … The most philosophical among the ants will never understand that black, enormous, fearful body—the hunter's boot which all of a sudden has burst into their dwelling with incredible speed, preceded by a terrifying noise, accompanied by a flash of reddish flame …

'So it is with death, life, eternity, things that would be quite simple to anyone who had organs vast enough to conceive them …

'An ephemeral fly is born at nine o'clock in the morning, on one of the long days of summer, to die at five o'clock in the afternoon; how should it understand the word night?

'Grant it five hours more of existence, it sees and understands what night is. 'And so with myself, I am to die at three and twenty. Grant me five years more of life, to live with Madame de Renal.'

Here he gave a satanic laugh. What folly to discuss these great problems! 'Imprimis: I am a hypocrite just as much as if there was someone in the cell to hear me. 'Item: I am forgetting to live and love, when I have so few days left of life … Alas! Madame de Renal is absent; perhaps her husband will not allow her to come to Besancon again, and disgrace herself further.

'That is what is isolating me, that and not the absence of a just, good, all-powerful God, who is not wicked, not hungry for vengeance…

'Ah! If He existed … Alas! I should fall at His feet. I have deserved death, I should say to him; but, great God, good God, indulgent God, restore to me her whom I love!'

The night was by now far advanced. After an hour or two of peaceful slumber, Fouque arrived.

Julien felt himself to be strong and resolute like a man who sees clearly into his own heart.

**chapter 45**

**Exit Julien**

'I will not play that poor abbe Chas Bernard the unkind trick of sending for him,' he said to Fouque; 'he would not be able to eat his dinner for three days afterwards. But try to find me a Jansenist, a friend of M. Pirard and beyond the reach of intrigue.'

Fouque had been awaiting this development with impatience. Julien acquitted himself in a decent fashion of everything that is due to public opinion in the provinces. Thanks to M. l'abbe de Frilair, and in spite of his unfortunate choice of a confessor, Julien, in his cell, was under the protection of the Congregation; with a little more of the spirit of action, he might have made his escape. But, as the bad air of the cell produced its effect, his mental powers dwindled. This made him all the happier on the return of Madame de Renal.

'My first duty is towards you,' she said to him as she embraced him; 'I have fled from Verrieres … '

Julien had no petty vanity in his relations with her, he told her of all his weak moments. She was kind and charming to him.

That evening, immediately upon leaving the prison, she summoned to her aunt's house the priest who had attached himself to Julien as to a prey; as he wished only to acquire a reputation among the young women belonging to the best society of Besancon, Madame de Renal easily persuaded him to go and offer a novena at the abbey of BrayleHaut.

No words could express the intensity and recklessness of Julien's love.

By spending money freely, and by using and abusing the reputation of her aunt, well known for her piety and riches, Madame de Renal obtained permission to see him twice daily.

On hearing this, Mathilde's jealousy rose to the pitch of insanity. M. de Frilair had assured her that in spite of his position he dared not flout all the conventions so far as to permit her to see her friend more than once daily. Mathilde had Madame de Renal followed, so as to be kept informed of her most trivial actions. M. de Frilair exhausted every resource of a most cunning mind, in trying to prove to her that Julien was unworthy of her.

In the midst of all these torments, she loved him all the more, and, almost every day, created a horrible scene in his cell.

Julien wished at all costs to behave like an honourable man until the end towards this poor girl whom he had so seriously compromised; but,at every moment, the unbridled passion that he felt for Madame de Renal overcame him. When, through some flaw in his argument, he failed to convince Mathilde of the innocence of her rival's visits: 'At this stage, the end of the play must be very near,' he said to himself; 'that is some excuse for me if I cannot act better.'

Mademoiselle de La Mole learned of the death of M. de Croisenois. M. de Thaler, that man of boundless wealth, had taken the liberty of saying unpleasant things about Mathilde's disappearance; M. de Croisenois called on him with a request that he would withdraw them: M. de Thaler showed him certain anonymous letters addressed to himself, and full of details so skilfully put together that it was impossible for the poor Marquis not to discern the true facts.

M. de Thaler indulged in pleasantries that were distinctly broad. Mad with rage and misery, M. de Croisenois insisted upon reparations so drastic that the millionaire preferred a duel. Folly proved triumphant;and one of the men in Paris most worthy of a woman's love met his death in his twenty-fourth year.

This death made a strange and morbid impression on Julien'sweakened spirits. 'Poor Croisenois,' he said to Mathilde, 'did really behave quite reasonably and honourably towards us; he had every right to hate me after your imprudent behaviour in your mother's drawing-room, and to seek a quarrel with me; for the hatred that follows on contempt is generally furious.'

The death of M. de Croisenois altered all Julien's ideas with regard to Mathilde's future; he devoted several days to proving to her that she ought to accept the hand of M. de Luz. 'He is a shy man, not too much of a Jesuit,' he told her, 'and a man who no doubt intends to climb. With a more sober and persistent ambition than poor Croisenois, and with no dukedom in his family, he will make no difficulty about marrying Julien Sorel's widow.'

'And a widow who scorns grand passions,' replied Mathilde coldly;'for she has lived long enough to see, after six months, her lover prefer another woman, and a woman who was the origin of all their troubles.'

'You are unjust; Madame de Renal's visits will furnish the barrister from Paris, who has been engaged to conduct my appeal, with some striking phrases; he will describe the murderer honoured by the attentions of his victim. That may create an effect, and perhaps one day you will see me the hero of some melodrama,' etc., etc.

A furious jealousy and one that was incapable of wreaking vengeance,the prolongation of a hopeless misery (for, even supposing Julien to be saved, how was she to recapture his heart?), the shame and grief of loving more than ever this faithless lover, had plunged Mademoiselle de La Mole in a grim silence from which the zealous attentions of M. de Frilair were no more capable than the rude frankness of Fouque, of making her emerge.

As for Julien, except during the moments usurped by the presence of Mathilde, he was living upon love and with hardly a thought of the future. A curious effect of this passion, in its extreme form and free from all pretence, was that Madame de Renal almost shared his indifference and mild gaiety.

'In the past,' Julien said to her, 'when I might have been so happy during our walks in the woods of Vergy, a burning ambition led my soul into imaginary tracts. Instead of my pressing to my heart this lovely arm which was so near to my lips, the thought of my future tore me away from you; I was occupied with the countless battles which I should have to fight in order to build up a colossal fortune… No, I should have died without knowing what happiness meant, had you not come to visit me in this prison.'

Two incidents occurred to disturb this tranquil existence. Julien's confessor, for all that he was a Jansenist, was not immune from an intrigue by the Jesuits, and quite unawares became their instrument.

He came one day to inform him that if he were not to fall into the mortal sin of suicide, he must take every possible step to obtain a reprieve.

Now, the clergy having considerable influence at the Ministry of Justice in Paris, an easy method offered itself: he must undergo a sensational conversion…

'Sensational!' Julien repeated. 'Ah! I have caught you at the same game,Father, play-acting like any missionary … '

'Your tender age,' the Jansenist went or gravely, 'the interesting appearance with which Providence has blessed you, the motive itself of your crime, which remains inexplicable, the heroic measures of which Mademoiselle de La Mole is unsparing on your behalf, everything, in-short, including the astonishing affection that your victim shows for you,all these have combined to make you the hero of the young women of Besancon. They have forgotten everything for you, even politics …

'Your conversion would strike an echo in their hearts, and would leave a profound impression there. You can be of the greatest service to religion, and am I to hesitate for the frivolous reason that the Jesuits would adopt the same course in similar circumstances! And so, even in this particular case which has escaped their rapacity, they would still be doing harm! Let such a thing never be said… The tears which will flow at your conversion will annul the corrosive effect of ten editions of the impious works of Voltaire.'

'And what shall I have left,' replied Julien coldly, 'if I despise myself? I have been ambitious, I have no wish to reproach myself; I acted then according to the expediency of the moment. Now, I am living from day today. But, generally speaking, I should be making myself extremely unhappy, if I gave way to any cowardly temptation … '

The other incident, which affected Julien far more keenly, arose from Madame de Renal. Some intriguing friend or other had managed to persuade this simple, timid soul that it was her duty to go to Saint-Cloud, and to throw herself at the feet of King Charles X.

She had made the sacrifice of parting from Julien, and after such an effort, the unpleasantness of making a public spectacle of herself, which at any other time would have seemed to her worse than death, was no longer anything in her eyes.

'I shall go to the King, I shall confess proudly that you are my lover: the life of a man, and of such a man as Julien, must outweigh all other considerations. I shall say that it was out of jealousy that you attempted my life. There are endless examples of poor young men who have been saved in such cases by the humanity of a jury, or by that of the King … '

'I shall cease to see you, I shall bar the door of my prison against you,' cried Julien, 'and most certainly I shall kill myself in despair, the day after, unless you swear to me that you will take no step that will make us both a public spectacle. This idea of going to Paris is not yours. Tell me the name of the intriguing woman who suggested it to you …

'Let us be happy throughout the few remaining days of this brief life.

Let us conceal our existence; my crime is only too plain. Mademoiselle de La Mole has unbounded influence in Paris, you may be sure that she is doing all that is humanly possible. Here in the provinces, I have all the wealthy and respectable people against me. Your action would embitter still further these wealthy and above all moderate men, for whom life is such an easy matter … Let us not give food for laughter to the Maslons,the Valenods, and a thousand people better worth than they.'

The bad air of the cell became insupportable to Julien. Fortunately on the day on which he was told that he must die, a bright sun was gladdening the earth, and he himself was in a courageous mood. To walk in the open air was a delicious sensation to him, as is treading solid earth to A mariner who has long been at sea. 'There, all is well,' he said to himself, 'I am not lacking in courage.'

Never had that head been so poetic as at the moment when it was about to fall. The most precious moments that he had known in the past in the woods of Vergy came crowding into his mind with an extreme vividness.

Everything passed simply, decorously, and without affectation on his part.

Two days earlier, he had said to Fouque: 'For my emotions I cannot answer; this damp and hideous cell gives me moments of fever in which I am not myself; but fear, no; no one shall see me blench.'

He had made arrangements in advance that on the morning of the last day, Fouque should carry off Mathilde and Madame de Renal.

'Take them in the same carriage,' he had told him. 'Arrange that the post-horses shall gallop all the time. They will fall into one another's arms, or else will show a deadly hatred for one another. In either case, the poor women will have some slight distraction from their terrible grief.'

Julien had made Madame de Renal swear that she would live to look after Mathilde's child.

'Who knows? Perhaps we continue to have sensation after our death,' he said one day to Fouque. 'I should dearly like to repose, since repose is the word, in that little cave in the high mountain that overlooks Verrieres. Many a time, as I have told you, retiring by night to that cave, and casting my gaze afar over the richest provinces of France, I have felt my heart ablaze with ambition: it was my passion then … Anyhow, that cave is precious to me, and no one can deny that it is situated in a spot that a philosopher's heart might envy… Very well! These worthy members of the Congregation of Besancon make money out of everything; if you know how to set about it, they will sell you my mortal remains … '

Fouque was successful in this grim transaction. He was spending the night alone in his room, by the body of his friend, when to his great surprise, he saw Mathilde appear. A few hours earlier, he had left her ten leagues from Besancon. There was a wild look in her eyes.

'I wish to see him,' she said to him.

Fouque had not the courage to speak or to rise. He pointed with his finger to a great blue cloak on the floor; in it was wrapped all that remained of Julien.

She fell upon her knees. The memory of Boniface de La Mole and of Marguerite de Navarre gave her, no doubt, a super-human courage. Her trembling hands unfolded the cloak. Fouque turned away his eyes.

He heard Mathilde walking rapidly about the room. She lighted a number of candles. When Fouque had summoned up the strength to look at her, she had placed Julien's head upon a little marble table, in front of her, and was kissing his brow …

Mathilde followed her lover to the tomb which he had chosen for himself. A great number of priests escorted the coffin and, unknown to all, alone in her draped carriage, she carried upon her knees the head of the man whom she had so dearly loved.

Coming thus near to the summit of one of the high mountains of the Jura, in the middle of the night, in that little cave magnificently illuminated with countless candles, a score of priests celebrated the Office of the Dead. All the inhabitants of the little mountain villages, through which the procession passed, had followed it, drawn by the singularity of this strange ceremony.

Mathilde appeared in their midst in a flowing garb of mourning, and,at the end of the service, had several thousands of five franc pieces scattered among them.

Left alone with Fouque, she insisted upon burying her lover's head with her own hands. Fouque almost went mad with grief.

By Mathilde's orders, this savage grot was adorned with marbles sculptured at great cost, in Italy.

Madame de Renal was faithful to her promise. She did not seek in any way to take her own life; but, three days after Julien, died while embracing her children.