

# Monte Cristo

Alexandre Dumas



# MONTE CRISTO

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Simplified by Michael West

Michael West

*Illustrated by Terence Freeman*

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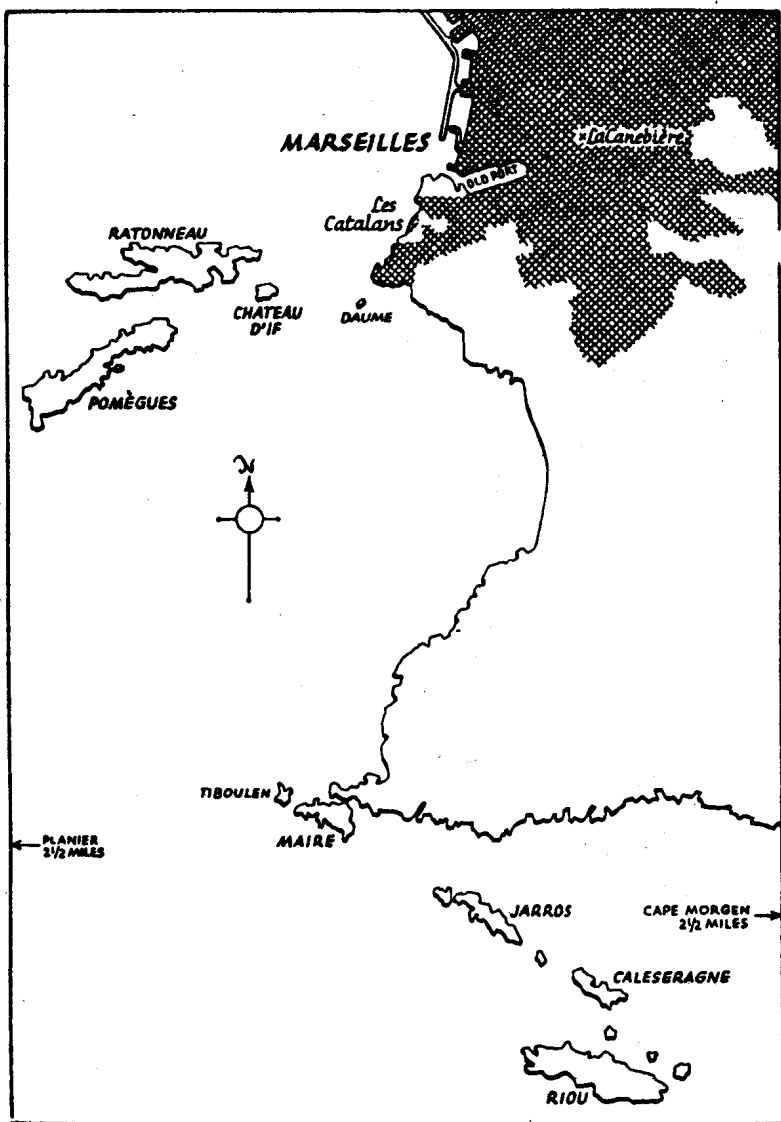
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## CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
1. THE SHIP COMES HOME	5
2. FATHER AND SON	12
3. THE CATALANS	17
4. DANGER	24
5. THE MARRIAGE	26
6. THE JUDGE	30
7. THE PRISON	36
8. UNDERGROUND	45
9. NUMBER 34 AND NUMBER 27	54
10. A LEARNED GENTLEMAN FROM ITALY	65
11. FARIA'S ROOM	76
12. THE STORY OF THE TREASURE	87
13. THE DEATH OF FARIA	100
14. THE GRAVES OF THE CHATEAU D'IF	108
15. THE ISLAND OF TIBOULEN	116
16. "THE YOUNG AMELIA"	126
17. MONTE CRISTO	130
18. TREASURE-SEEKING	137
19. AT MARSEILLES	143



## One

### THE SHIP COMES HOME

ON May 24, 1815,<sup>1</sup> the good ship *Pharaoh* was seen drawing near to Marseilles. As she came closer to the land, those watching her noticed that she was sailing very slowly, and in an unusual manner.

"Something must have happened on board," said one to another; "what can it be?"

A gentleman was standing near. He was unable to wait for the ship to reach the land; he jumped into a boat and ordered it to take him to meet the ship.

As the boat drew near, a young man came to the side of the ship. He seemed to be the Captain. He was about twenty years of age. His eyes and his hair were black. He had the quiet manner of one who is used to meeting danger.

"Oh! Is it you, Dantes?" cried the man in the boat. "What has happened?"

"A very sad thing has happened, Mr. Morrel," replied the young man. "When our ship was near Civita-vecchia,<sup>2</sup> we lost our brave Captain Leclerc."

Turning to his men, he gave a quick order. Then he turned again to Mr. Morrel.

The *Pharaoh* was Mr. Morrel's ship, and Edmond

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<sup>1</sup> Just before Napoleon escaped from Elba to fight the battle of Waterloo.

<sup>2</sup> See map on page 147.

Dantes had been First Officer after the Captain.

"Why, you see, Edmond," replied Mr. Morrel, "we must all die some time, and the old must make way for the young. And as to the goods which the ship carries——?"

"They are all quite safe, Mr. Morrel, and they are worth a lot of money. Now, if you will come on board, here is Mr. Danglars who does all the buying and selling. I must go and see to my ship."

Mr. Morrel quickly climbed up and came on board. He was met by Mr. Danglars.

Mr. Danglars was a man of about twenty-five years of age. Both his face and his manner were unpleasing. None of the men on board the *Pharaoh* liked Danglars. "Well, Mr. Morrel," said Danglars, "you have heard of the sad death of Captain Leclerc?"

"Yes, he was a brave and good man."

"And a good seaman, grown old between sea and sky, as a man should be who serves the business-house of Morrel & Son," replied Danglars.

"But," replied Mr. Morrel, looking at Dantes who was busy with his ship, "a man need not always be old in order to understand his work. Our friend Edmond seems to know his work well and to need no help from anyone."

"Yes," said Danglars, giving a look at Edmond which showed that he had little love for him and would gladly have made himself captain in Edmond's place. "Yes—he is young, and he is

very sure of himself. As soon as the Captain was dead, he took command of the ship without asking anyone. And he caused us to lose a day and a half at the Island of Elba, instead of coming straight to Marseilles."

"As to taking command of the ship," replied Mr. Morrel, "that was his duty, for he was First Officer. As to losing a day and a half at Elba, he was wrong, if the ship was safe and did not need any work done on it."

"The ship was in perfect condition, and this time was lost just for the pleasure of going on shore."

"Dantes!" said the ship-master, turning towards the young man, "come this way."

"In a minute, Mr. Morrel," answered Dantes. He gave an order to his men. The ship stopped, and was safely tied up. When all was ready, Dantes came towards Mr. Morrel.

"The ship is now all ready," he said, "and I am at your service. You called me, I think?"

Danglars took a few steps back.

"I wished to ask why you stopped at the Island of Elba," said Mr. Morrel.

"I do not know, Mr. Morrel. It was the last order which Captain Leclerc gave me. When he was near his death, he gave me a letter for Marshal Bertrand."

Mr. Morrel looked around him. Then he drew Dantes to one side, and said suddenly, "And how is Napoleon?"

"Very well, so far as I could judge from my eyes."



" You spoke to him? "

" No, it was he who spoke to me," said Dantes. " He asked me about the ship, and the time when it left Marseilles, the course it had followed, and what goods it had on board. If the ship had had nothing on board and I had been the master, I believe he would have bought her. But I told him that I was only First Officer, and that Morrel & Son were master. ' Ah ha,' he said, ' I know them. The Morrels have been ship-masters for many years; but there was a Morrel who was a soldier with me in the same company at Valence.' "

" True! " cried the master, greatly delighted. " That was Policar Morrel, my uncle, later a captain in the army. Dantes, you must tell my uncle that Napoleon remembered him, and you will see it bring fire into the old soldier's eyes. Come, come," he said, putting his hand kindly on Edmond's arm, " you did very right, Dantes, to do as Captain Leclerc asked. But, if it were known that you had taken a letter to Marshal Bertrand, and had talked with Napoleon, it might get you into trouble."

" How? " asked Dantes; " for I did not even know what I was carrying; and Napoleon only asked me such questions as he would have asked anyone. But I must go on with my work." And he went away.

Danglars came back and said:

" Well, it seems that he has given you good enough reasons for stopping at Elba? "

" Very good reasons, my dear Danglars."

"That is good," said Danglars, "for it is always sad to see a man who does not do his duty."

"Dantes has done his," replied the master, "and there is no more to be said. It was Captain Leclerc who gave orders for this visit to Elba."

"Talking of Captain Leclerc, has not Dantes given his letter to you?"

"To me? No. Was there one?"

"I believe that Captain Leclerc gave him a letter for you as well as that other letter."

"How do you know that he had another letter?"

Danglars became very red in the face.

"I was passing close to the door of the Captain's room, which was half open, and I saw him give two letters to Dantes."

"He did not speak of it," replied the master. "If there is any letter, he will give it to me."

Just then Dantes returned, and Danglars went away as before.

"Well, my dear Dantes, are you now free?" asked the master.

"Yes, Mr. Morrel."

"Then you can come and have dinner with me?"

"I thank you, Mr. Morrel, but my first visit must be made to my father. Do you know how my father is?"

"I believe he is well, though I have not seen him lately."

"Yes, he likes to keep himself shut up in his little room."

"That shows at least that he has wanted for nothing while you have been away."

"No," replied Dantes; "my father is proud; and, if he had not a meal left, he would not have asked anything except from God."

"Well then, after this first visit has been made, I hope to see you."

"I thank you again, Mr. Morrel; but after this first visit has been made, there is yet another person whom I must see."

"True, Dantes. I forgot that. Of course there is among the Catalans<sup>1</sup> one who is waiting for you and will meet you with no less delight than will your father. It is the beautiful Mercedes. She has come to me three times asking if anything had been heard of the *Pharaoh*. Edmond, you have a very beautiful lady-love."

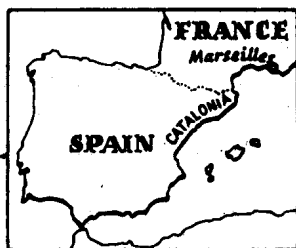
"She is more than my lady-love, now," replied the young seaman. "She has promised to marry me."

"Well, well, my dear Edmond," said the master, "I must not waste your time. Do you want any money?"

"No, I have all my pay to take, three months of it."

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<sup>1</sup> People from Catalonia, in Spain, who had settled in Marseilles. See Chapter Three. For Les Catalans, the village in which they settled near Marseilles, see the Map of Marseilles.



" You are a careful fellow, Edmond."

" Say that I have a poor father, Mr. Morrel."

" Yes, yes, I know how good a son you are. Now hurry away to see your father. I have a son too, and I should be very angry with anyone who kept him away from me after a three months' journey. Oh—did not Captain Leclerc, before he died, give you a letter for me? "

" He was not able to write, Mr. Morrel. May I be allowed to leave my work for fourteen days? "

" To get married? "

" Yes, first; and then to go to Paris."

" Yes, of course; take what time you need, Dantes. But you must be back again in three months, for the *Pharaoh* cannot sail without her captain."

" Without her captain! " cried Dantes, his eyes bright with joy. " Do you really mean to make me captain of the *Pharaoh*? Oh, Mr. Morrel! " he cried, with tears in his eyes, seizing the master's hand, " I thank you, both for my father and for Mercedes."

" Good, good! Edmond. Go to your father: go and see Mercedes: and come to me after."

" Shall I take you to the shore with me? "

" No, I thank you. I shall remain to do some work with Danglars. Have you been pleased with him on this journey? "

" Do you mean, ' Is he a good friend? ' No, for I think he has never liked me since we had a quarrel one day, and I asked him to come on shore with me on the Island of Monte Cristo and have a fight

in order to settle it. If you mean, ' Did he do his work well? '—there is nothing against him."

" But tell me, Dantes, if you were captain of the *Pharaoh*, would you like to keep Danglars? "

" If his work pleases my master, it pleases me also."

" Good! good! Dantes. I see you are a really fine fellow."

" May I have the use of your boat? "

" Of course."

" Well, again, Mr. Morrel, a thousand thanks."

" I hope to see you soon, my dear Edmond."

The young seaman jumped into the boat, telling the boatman to go to the end of the Canebière, a wide road running through the centre of the town.

The ship-master followed him with his eyes until he saw him reach the shore and mix with the crowd. Danglars stood behind, also watching the young man as he went away, but with a very different look.

## Two

### FATHER AND SON

DANTES crossed the Canebière, and went along Noailles Road. He then turned into a narrow street and entered a small house on the left-hand side. He waited for a minute outside the half-opened door of his father's room.

The old man had not yet heard that the *Pharaoh* had arrived. He was standing on a chair, fixing in

place the flowers which grew up round his window. Suddenly a well-known voice behind him cried, "Father, dear father!" The old man gave a cry, and turned; then, seeing his son, he fell into his arms.

"What is the matter?" asked Dantes. "Are you ill?"

"No, no, my dear Edmond, my boy—my son! But I did not expect you, and the joy, the surprise of seeing you so suddenly—oh, I seem as if I were going to die."

"Come, dear father, they say joy never kills. Here I am; and now we will be happy."

"Tell me all that has happened to you."

"The good Captain Leclerc is dead; for that I am very sad. Mr. Morrel tells me that I shall be captain in his place. Do you understand, father? Just think! A captain at twenty years of age, with fine big pay—and I get a part of the gains also. Is that not more than a poor seaman like me could have hoped for?"

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the old man, "and much more than you could have expected."

"With the first money I get, you shall have a new house. What is the matter, father? Are you not well?"

"It is nothing. It will soon pass away."

"You need food, or something to drink. Where shall I find it for you?"

"There is nothing in the house," answered the old man; "but I need nothing, now you are here."

"I gave you plenty of money when I left, three months ago."

"Yes, that is true; but you forget that we had to pay something back to our friend Caderousse. He asked me for it, saying that if I did not pay, he would get the money from Mr. Morrel. So—I gave it to him."

"But it was more than half the money that I gave you! So you have lived for three months on half what I gave you. Why did you do that? Here, father, take this; take it, and send out for some food at once."

He put all the money he had with him on the table, twelve pieces of gold, five or six silver pieces, and some others.

"Gently, gently," said the old man, "I shall not need all that. But here comes someone."

Dantes' father looked out of the window. "It is Caderousse," he said. "He has heard of your return, and has come to tell you how pleased he is."

"Ah! His voice says one thing, while his heart thinks another. But he is a neighbour, and he once did us a service, so we are pleased to see him."

There appeared at the door the black head of Caderousse. He was a man of about twenty-five years of age, and he held in his hand a small piece of cloth. (For he was a maker of men's clothing.)

"What! Is it you, Edmond, returned?" said Caderousse.

"Yes, as you see, neighbour Caderousse; and

ready to help you in any way," replied Dantes, trying to hide his real feelings.

"You have come back rich," said Caderousse, fixing a hungry look upon the gold lying on the table.

"Oh, that," said Dantes, seeing the look, "that is my father's money. Come, father, put your money back in the box. But, of course, if our neighbour wants any of it, it is at his service."

"Thanks, thanks. But I do not need anything. I met my friend Danglars, and he told me that you had returned. So I came to have the pleasure of meeting you."

"Good Caderousse!" said the old man. "He is such a friend to us."

"Well, it seems that Mr. Morrel is pleased with you. You are hoping to be the next captain, perhaps?" said Caderousse with a rather ugly look.

"Yes. I have reason to believe that I am to be the next captain. But, dear father, now that I have seen you, and know that you have all you need, I must go and pay a visit to the Catalans."

"Go, my dear boy," said old Dantes; "and may God bless your wife, as He has blessed me in my son."

"His wife!" said Caderousse. "She is not his wife yet. Mercedes is a fine girl, and fine girls are not without plenty of young fellows. But, as you will be captain——"

"No," answered Dantes. "I think better than you do of women—and of Mercedes. I am certain



that, captain or not, she will remain ever true to me."

Edmond left the room. Caderousse waited for a short time. Then he went away also—to join Danglars who was waiting for him at the corner.

"I've just left him," Caderousse said.

"Did he talk about his hope of being captain?"

"Mr. Morrel has promised it to him."

"So he is quite delighted about it?"

"Ho! He offered to 'help' me, as if he were the rich man, and I the poor neighbour!"

"He is not captain yet," said Danglars quietly. "If we wish, he will remain what he is—and perhaps become even less than he is. Is he still in love with the Catalan girl?"

"Yes. But I think there may be a storm there. Every time I have seen Mercedes come into the city of late she has been with Fernand, a tall, strong, black-eyed Catalan, with a red face, brown skin and a wild manner. She says that he is the son of her father's brother."

"You say Dantes has gone to the Catalans?"

"He went before I left the room."

"Let us go the same way. We will stop at La Reserve and drink a glass there, while we wait to hear—what we shall hear."

"Come along," said Caderousse; "but *you* must pay for the drink."