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Not Doomed For Life. "I was treated for three years by good doctors," writes W. A. Greer... "I can make allowance for Mue, Danville's anger," returned Trudaine...



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Before Lomaque could look up from the paper to observe the impression which the news produced, Rose had gained her brother's side and was kissing him in a flutter of delight. "Dear Louis," she cried, clapping her hands, "let me be the first to congratulate you! How proud and glad I am! You accept the professorship, of course?"

"I have not made up my mind, Rose; at least, not yet." Danville, without the slightest appearance of interest in Lomaque's news, asked what the paper said about the murmurings of the people. "What are the last accounts from Paris? Any more symptoms of a general revolt?"

"I advise you not to be too sure of that," said her son. "There are rather too many people in Paris for the Swiss guards to shoot conveniently. Don't hold your head too aristocratically high, mother, till we are quite certain which way the wind really does blow. Who knows if I may not have to bow as low one of these days to King Mue as ever you courted in your youth to King Louis XV.?"

He laughed complacently as he ended and opened his snuffbox. His mother rose from her chair, her face crimson with indignation. "I won't hear you talk so! It shocks me! It horrifies me!" she exclaimed, with vehement gesticulation. "No, no! I decline to hear another word! I decline to sit by patiently while my son jests at the most sacred principles and sneers at the memory of an anointed king. This is my reward for having yielded and having come here against all laws of etiquette the night before the marriage! I comply no longer. I resume my own will and my own way. I order you, Charles, to accompany me back to Rouen. We are the bridegroom's party, and we have no business over night at the house of the bride. You need no more till you meet at the church. Justin, my carriage! Lomaque, pick up my hood! My, I shall hope to return it the first time you are in our neighborhood. Mademoiselle, put on your best looks tomorrow. Remember that my son's bride must do honor to my son's taste. Justin, the carriage! Idiot, where is my carriage?"

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When you sit down here, I had no thought of making this appeal, no idea of talking to you... "My words have escaped me unawares. You must make allowances for them and forgive me. I cannot expect others to understand my feelings for Rose. We two have lived alone in the world together; father, mother, kindred, all died years ago. I am so much older than my sister that I feel toward her more as a father than as a brother. My life, my dearest hopes, my highest expectations, have been centered in her.



An awkward pause followed. I was past the period of my boyhood when my mother put my little sister's hand in mine and said to me on her deathbed, 'Louis, be all to her that I have been, for she has no one left to look to but you.' Since then the loves and ambitions of other men have not been my loves and ambitions. Rose has been the one aim of my life.

"Suppose," answered Lomaque, "I told you that you wronged him, would my testimony really be strong enough to shake opinions which have taken such firm root? Suppose, on the other hand, that my matter had his little sister's name, would my little indignation be any more so, and suppose I have observed them and was willing to condole them to you, what purpose would such a confidence answer now, with the marriage fixed for tomorrow? No, no! Trust me!"

"I thank you, M. Lomaque," broke in Trudaine, "for reminding me that it is too late to make inquiries. My sister has chosen, and on the subject of that choice my lips shall henceforth be sealed. I apologize, M. Lomaque, for having thoughtlessly embarrassed you by questions which I had no right to put. Let us return to the house. I will show you the way."

Trudaine led the way back to the house in silence, the land steward following slowly at a distance of several paces and talking in whispers to himself. "His father was the saving of me," muttered Lomaque. "That is the truth, and there is no getting over that. His father was the saving of me, and yet here am I—no, it's too late—too late to speak, too late to do anything!"

CHAPTER III. NEAR the house they were met by the old servant. "My young lady had sent me to call you in to coffee, monsieur," said Guillaume, "she has kept a cup hot for M. Lomaque."

"For me?" exclaimed Lomaque. "Mademoiselle has troubled herself to keep a cup of coffee hot for me?" "What is there so very surprising?" Trudaine asked, "in such an ordinary act of politeness on my sister's part?"

"Excuse me, M. Trudaine," answered Lomaque. "You have not passed such an existence as mine; you are not a friendless old man; you have a settled position in the world and are used to being treated with consideration. I am not. This is the first time I have ever been an object for the attention of a young lady, and it takes me by surprise."

CHAPTER II. "DON'T you go and take some coffee," asked Trudaine, touching the hand stewed on the arm.

Lomaque started a little and left his cane sticking in the grass. "A thin hand thanks, monsieur," he said. "May I be allowed to follow you?" "I confess the beauty of the evening makes me a little unwilling to leave this place."

"Ah, the beauties of nature! I feel them with you, M. Trudaine. I feel them here," Lomaque laid one hand on his heart and with the other pulled his cane out of the grass. He had looked as little at the landscape or the setting sun as had the valet Justin.

They sat on the bench vacated by the other three. A backward glance followed. Lomaque was too discreet to forget his place and did not venture to start a new topic. Trudaine was disinclined to talk, but it was necessary, in common politeness, to say something. Hardly attending himself to his own words, he said, "I regret, M. Lomaque, that we have not had more opportunities of bettering our acquaintance."

"I feel deeply indebted," rejoined the land steward, "to the admirable Mue, Danville for having chosen me as her escort; but I have not time to say more. I regret, M. Lomaque, that we have not had more opportunities of bettering our acquaintance."

"I heard you mention my late father's name in terms of high respect," continued Trudaine, keeping up the conversation. "Were you well acquainted with him?" "An indirectly indebted to your excellent father," answered Lomaque, "for the situation which I now hold. At a time when the good word of a man of substance and reputation was needed to save me from poverty and ruin your father spoke in my behalf. Since then I have, in my own small way, succeeded in life until I have risen to the honor of superintending the estate of M. Danville."

"Your father, I believe, was a merchant. The only difference between them was that one failed and the other realized a large fortune. Why should you speak of yourself as honored by holding your present place?" "Have you never heard," exclaimed Lomaque, "of an you have heard and forgotten, Mue, Danville is descended from one of the noble houses of France? Has she never told you, as she has often told me, that she descended when she married her late husband and that her great object in life is to get the title of her family (years since extinct in the male line) settled on her son?"

"Yes," replied Trudaine, "I remember to have heard something of this, but I paid no attention to it, having little sympathy with such aspirations. You have lived many years in Danville's service, M. Lomaque. Have you not seen Mue, Danville? Have you not from the beginning of my sister's engagement with Danville made it my duty not to conceal my own feelings. My conscience and my affection for Rose conspired to be gaudy to the last, even though my candor should distress or offend others. When I first discovered that M. Danville's attentions to Rose were not unfavorably received, though it cost me a hard effort, I did not conceal my astonishment from my sister."

"Astonishment, did I hear you say?" asked Mue, Danville, that the attention of a young gentleman possessed of all the graces and accomplishments of a highly bred Frenchman should be favorably received by a young lady! Astonished that such a dancer, such a singer, such a fencer, such a notoriously fascinating ladies' man as M. Danville should succeed in making some impression on the heart of Mue, Danville? Lomaque's eyes grew weaker than ever and winked incessantly. "When in the course of time," continued Trudaine, paying no attention to the interruption, "when the offer of marriage was made and when I knew that Rose had in her own heart accepted of it, I did not conceal my objections."

SISTER ROSE By Wilkie Collins

CHAPTER I.

WELL, Guillaume, what is the news this evening? "None that I know of, Justin, except that Mue, Danville is to be married tomorrow."

"Much obliged, my respectable old friend, for so interesting a reply to my question. Considering that I am the valet of M. Danville, who plays the distinguished part of bridegroom in the little wedding comedy to which you refer, I think I may assure you, without offense, that your news is of the staidest possible kind. Take a pinch of snuff, Guillaume, and excuse me if I inform you that my question referred to public news and not to the private affairs of the two families whose household interests we have the pleasure of promoting."

"I don't understand what you mean by promoting household interests, Justin. I am the servant of M. Louis Trudaine, who lives here with his sister, Mue, Danville. You are M. Danville's servant, whose excellent mother has made up the match for him with my young lady. As servants, both of us, the latest news we can have any concern with is that connected with the happiness of our employers. I have nothing to do with public affairs. I make it my main object in life to mind my own business. If my homely domestic affairs have no interest for you, allow me to express my regrets and to wish you a very good evening."

"Pardon me, my dear sir. I have not the least sympathy with people who only mind their own business. However, I accept your expressions of respect. I reciprocate your good evening, and I trust to find you improved in temper, dress, manners and appearance the next time I have the honor of meeting you. Good-by, M. Guillaume."

These scraps of dialogue were interchanged on a lovely summer evening in the year 1780 before the back door of a house which stood on the banks of the Seine about three miles westward of the city of Rouen. The one speaker was lean, old, crabbed and slovenly; the other was plump, young, oily-nosed and dressed in the most gorgeous and costly costume of the period. The last days of genuine dandyism were then rapidly approaching in France. Valet Justin was in his own way dressed to perfection, a living illustration of the expiring glories of his epoch.

After the old servant had gone the valet occupied himself for a few minutes in superciliously contemplating the back view of the house before which he stood. Judging by the windows, it did not contain more than six or eight rooms. Instead of stables and outbuildings there was a conservatory attached to the building on one side and a long, low room, built of wood, gaily painted on the other. One of the windows of this room was left uncurtained, and through it could be seen on a sort of dresser inside bottles of strangely colored liquids, oddly shaped utensils of brass and copper, one end of a furnace and other objects, which proclaimed that the apartment was used as a laboratory.

"Think of our bride's brother amusing himself in such a place as that with cooking drugs in saucers," muttered Justin, peering into the room. "I am the least particular man in the world, but I must say I wish we were not going to be connected by marriage with an amateur apothecary. Bah! I can smell the place through the window!"

With these words the valet turned from the laboratory in disgust and sauntered toward the cliffs overlooking the river. Arrived at the summit, the whole view of the Seine with its lovely green islands, its banks fringed with trees, its glistening boats and little scattered waterside cottages, opened before him. Westward, where the level country appeared beyond the farther banks of the river, the landscape was aglow with the crimson of the setting sun. Eastward the long shadows and yellow intervening lights, the red glory that quivered on the rippling water, the steady ruby fire glowing on the cottage windows that reflected the level sunlight, led the eye onward and onward along the winding of the Seine until it rested upon the spires, towers and broadly massed houses of Rouen, with the wooded hills rising beyond them for background. Lovely to look upon at any time, the view was most beautiful now under the gorgeous evening light.

At a little hollow, beyond which the ground sloped smoothly to the brink of the cliff, three persons—an elderly lady, a gentleman and a young girl—were seated on a bench watching the sunset. Near them stood two gentlemen.



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