

SISTER ROSE

By Wilkie Collins



As he spoke he pointed to Trudaine. "Do you assert," exclaimed the president, "that at the time when you denounced Trudaine you knew him to be intriguing to aid your mother's escape?"

"I assert it," answered Danville. "Monster, monster!" cried a woman in the audience, and the word was echoed again and again. The fiercest woman republican on the benches joined cause with the laughing woman orator on the prisoners' platform. Even in that age of sharpest enmities the



"Yonder stands the enemy of his country."

one touch of nature preserved its old eternal virtue and roused the mother instinct which makes the whole world kin.

"They are lost!" Lomaque uttered. "Lost! The lie which has saved the villain's head leaves them without the shadow of a hope. No need to stop for the sentence. Danville's infamous presence of mind has given them up to the gallotine!" He then went out by a door which led to the prisoners' waiting room.

Rose's head sank again on her brother's shoulder. She shuddered and leaned back faintly on the arm which he extended to support her. The consummation of her husband's perjury seemed to have paralyzed her. She whispered to her brother: "Louis, I am resigned to die. Nothing but death is left for me after the degradation of having loved that man."

"One other question," resumed the president, addressing Danville. "Were you cognizant of your wife's connection with her brother's conspiracy?"

"I was not aware of it," Testimony in my favor can be called which will prove that when my wife's complicity was discovered I was absent from Paris."

Heartlessly self-possessed as he was, the public reception of his other reply had shaken his nerve. He now spoke in low tones, turning his back on the spectators and fixing his eyes again on the green baize of the table.

"Prisoners, have you any objection to make or evidence to call in validation of the statement by which Citizen Danville has cleared himself of suspicion?" inquired the president.

"He has cleared himself by the most execrable of all lies," answered Trudaine. "If his mother could be traced *au rougeur* here, her testimony would prove it."

"Can you produce any other evidence in support of your allegation?"

"I cannot."

"Citizen Superintendent Danville, you are at liberty to retire. Your statement will be laid before the proper authority to whom you are officially responsible."

Danville left the court immediately, going out again by the public door. He was followed by murmurs from the women's benches.

After consulting with the persons behind him the president rose and pronounced sentence.

"Louis Trudaine and Rose Danville, the revolutionary tribunal, having heard the charge against you and having weighed the value of what you have said in answer to it, decides that you are both guilty and condemns you to death."

A mark was placed against the two first condemned names on the list of prisoners, and the next case was called.

CHAPTER VIII.

The waiting room of the revolutionary tribunal was a grim, bare place, with a dirty stone floor and benches running round the walls. The windows were high and barred, and at the outer door leading into the street two sentinels kept watch. On entering this comfortable retreat from the court Lomaque found it empty. Solitude was welcome to him. He remained in the room, walking slowly from end to end, talking to himself. After awhile the door communicating with the tribunal opened, and the hunchbacked turnkey led to Trudaine and Rose.

"You will have to wait here," said the little man, "till all the rest have been tried and sentenced, and you will all go back to prison in a lump. Ha, citizen!" he exclaimed, observing Lomaque. "Here still, eh? If you were going to stop much longer, I should ask a favor of you."

"I am in no hurry."

"Good! I am parched with thirst and dying to moisten my throat at the wine-shop over the way. Mind that man and woman while I am gone, will you? It's the merest form. There's a guard outside, the windows are barred, the tribunal is within hail. Do you mind obliging me?"

"On the contrary, I am glad of the opportunity."

"That's a good fellow. If I am asked for, say I was obliged to quit the court for a few minutes and left you in charge."

With these words the hunchback ran

to the wine-shop. When he had disappeared, Trudaine caught Lomaque by the arm.

"Save her," he whispered. "There is an opportunity—save her! Remember what you said to me yourself on the night of the arrest. If I die alone, I can die as a man should. If she goes to the scaffold by my side, my heart will fail me—I shall die the death of a coward!"

"There are two armed sentinels outside. The windows are barred. You are without weapons, and even if you had them there is a guardhouse on one side of you and the tribunal on the other. Escape from this room is impossible," answered Lomaque. "Try to compose yourself and listen to me. I have something important to say. When I left the tribunal and entered this room, there was no thought in my mind that could be turned to good account either for your sister or for you. I was fit for nothing but to deplore the failure of the confession which I came to St. Lazare to suggest to you as your best plan of defense. Since then an idea has struck me which may be useful. Its successful execution depends on the merest chance, and I will not confide it to you except on one condition."

"Mention the condition."

"Give me your word of honor that you will not mention it to your sister until I grant you permission to speak. Promise me that when you see her shrinking before the terrors of death tonight you will have self-restraint enough to abstain from breathing a word of hope to her. I ask this because there are fifty chances to one that there is no hope."

"I promise."

"You have been a great experimenter in chemistry. Is there any liquid or powder or combination known which will remove writing from paper and leave no stain behind?"

"Certainly! Is there no other greater difficulty?"

"None. Write the prescription on that leaf"—producing a notebook. "Write it down with plain directions for use."

Trudaine obeyed.

"This is the first step. I am going to put my own head in danger for the chance of saving yours and your sister's by tampering with the death list. Don't interrupt me! Our time is short."

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for the new reign must be a reign of mercy. If he rules, I have only put off the date of your death and your sister's and have laid my own neck under the ax. Those are your chances."

Trudaine endeavored to speak.

"I will listen to no expression of gratitude. You want to glorify me to my face for risking my life for you. I won't hear you because my risk is of the patient kind. I am weary of my life. I can't look back to it with pleasure. I am too old to look forward to what is left of it with hope. I have sickened at the very thought of my slavery, subjection, duplicity and extortion. I am no master, then, under another. I have longed to look back at my life and comfort myself with the memory of some good action, as a fragrant mark on the wall of the night of his little savings laid by in an old drawer. My life? Hah! I've let it out on hire, to be kicked about by rascals from one place to another. It's my whim to give it a last kick myself. Don't thank me for that!" He snatched his fingers contemptuously and walked to the outer door to receive the turnkey, who returned at that moment.

CHAPTER IX.

"WELL," said the hunchback, "has anybody asked for me?"

"No; not a soul has entered the room. What sort of wine did you get?"

"So-so. Good at a pinch, friend; good at a pinch."

"Ah, you should go to my shop and try my favorite vintage."

"What shop? Which vintage?"

"I can't stop to tell you now, but we shall meet again likely today. I expect to be at the prison this afternoon. Shall I ask for you? Good. I won't forget."

With those farewell words he went out. Trudaine returned to his sister. That spirit of resignation which is the courage of women in all great emergencies seemed now to be the one animating spirit that fed the flame of life within her. When her brother sat down by her, she took his hand gently and said:

"Let us stop together like this, Louis, till the time comes. I am not afraid of it, for I have nothing but you to make me love life, and you, too, must die. Do you remember when I used to grieve that I had no child to comfort me? I was just thinking how terrible it would be now if my wish had been granted. It is a blessing that I am childless. Let us talk of the old days, Louis, as long as we can—of the old times, before I was a burden and a trouble to you."

The day wore on. One and two and three at a time, the condemned prisoners came from the tribunal to the waiting room. At 2 o'clock the death list was read and verified by an officer of the court, and the hunchback took his prisoners back to St. Lazare.

Evening came. The prisoners' meal had been served; the duplicate of the death list had been read at the grate; the cell doors were locked. From the day of their arrest Rose and Louis, partly by bribery and partly through Lomaque's intercession, had occupied the same cell, and together they awaited the morrow. To Rose it meant death—death, to which she was resigned. To her brother it meant that uncertainty which is worse than death. Through the long agony of that dreadful night but one relief came to him, when Rose laid her head on his shoulder, and let the angel of slumber take her for a little while.

The morning came and with it the hot summer sun. It was drawing near the hour when the turnbills were to come for the victims. Trudaine, listening near the door, heard voices disputing on the other side of it. Suddenly the bolts were drawn, the key turned in the lock, and he found himself standing face to face with the hunchback and one of the subordinate attendants.

"Look!" exclaimed the attendant. "There they are, safe in their cell, just as I said; but I tell you again they are

power of ten thousand presidents, who now and then condemn and pardon in private. You can guess who. I say no more except that I recommend you to keep your head on your shoulders by troubling it about nothing but the list there in your hand. Stick to that list, and nobody can blame you. Make a few about-mysteries that don't concern you, and—"

The hunchback stared perplexedly at Lomaque, uttered a word or two of rough apology to his subordinate, and rolling his misshapen head portentously, walked away with the death list crumpled up in his hand.

"I should like to see if they really are the same man and woman whom I looked after in the waiting room," said Lomaque, putting his hand on the cell door as the deputy turnkey was about to close it.

"Look at them," said the man. "No doubt you will find that drunken booby as wrong in what he told you about them as he is about everything else."

Lomaque saw Trudaine sitting with his sister in the corner of the cell farthest from the door. Lomaque beckoned to Trudaine to leave her and whispered to him:

"The prescription has worked well. You are safe today. Break the news to your sister as gently as you can. Danville, after having mixed with the people outside the grate yesterday and hearing your name read, was arrested by secret order of Robespierre and sent to the Temple. What charge will be laid to him or when he will be brought to trial is impossible to say. I only know that he is arrested. Hush! Don't talk now. My friend outside is coming back. Keep quiet. Hope everything from the chances and changes of public affairs, and comfort yourself with the thought that you are safe for today."

"And tomorrow?"

"Don't think of tomorrow. Let tomorrow take care of itself. And Lomaque withdrew."

CHAPTER X.

On a spring morning in the year 1798 the public conveyance running between Châlons-sur-Marne and Paris set down one of its outside passengers at the first post station beyond Meaux. The traveler, an old man, after looking about him hesitatingly betook himself to a little inn opposite the posthouse known by the sign of the Pichard Horse and kept by the Widow Duval, a woman who enjoyed and deserved the reputation of being the fastest talker and the best maker of gibelette in the locality.

Although the traveler was carelessly noticed by the village idlers and received without ceremony by the Widow Duval, he was by no means so ordinary and uninteresting a stranger as the rustics of the place were pleased to consider him. The time had been when this quiet, unobtrusive applicant for refreshment at the Pichard Horse was trusted with the darkest secrets of the Reign of Terror and was admitted to all times and seasons to speak face to face with Maximilien Robespierre himself. The Widow Duval and the hangers on in front of the posthouse would have been astonished to know that the modest traveler with the shabby little carpetbag was an ex-chief agent of the secret police of Paris!

Between three and four years had elapsed since Lomaque had exercised his official functions under the Reign of Terror. His shoulders had contracted an extra stoop, and except at the sides and back of his head his hair had fallen off. In other respects, however, advancing age seemed to have improved his personal appearance. His complexion looked healthier, his expression more cheerful, his eyes brighter. He walked, too, with a brisker step than of old. His dress was neater than in the days of his political employment at Paris.

While his hostess had gone to fetch the half bottle of wine that he ordered he examined an old card which he extracted from a mass of papers in his pocketbook. On the card was written: "When the troubles are over, do not forget those who remember you with eternal gratitude. Whenever you wish to see us or to hear of us again, stop at the first post station beyond Meaux on the highway to Paris, and ask at the inn for Citizen Maurice."

When the Widow Duval brought in the wine, Lomaque asked, "Can you inform me whether a person named Maurice lives in this neighborhood?"

"Of course I can! Citizen Maurice and the citoyenne, his amiable sister—who is not to be passed over because you don't mention her, my honest man—live within ten minutes' walk of my house."

After getting directions and finishing his wine, Lomaque walked as fast as he could until he stood in front of a cottage, a rough, simple building, with a strip of garden in front. He observed the graceful arrangement of the flower beds and the delicate whiteness of the curtains that hung behind the badly glazed, narrow windows. "This must be the place," and he knocked at the door with his stick. "I can see the traces of her hand before I cross the threshold."

The door was opened. "Pray, does the Citizen Maurice?" Lomaque began.

Before he could say any more his hand was grasped, his carpetbag was taken from him, and a well-known voice cried: "Welcome! A thousand times welcome! At last! Citizen Maurice is not at home, but Louis Trudaine takes his place and is overjoyed to see once more the best and dearest of his friends!"

"I hardly knew you! How you are changed for the better!" exclaimed Lomaque as they entered the parlor.

"Remember that you see me after a long freedom from anxiety. Since I have lived here I have gone to rest at night and have not been afraid of the morning," replied Trudaine. "Rose! Come down. The friend whom you most wished to see has arrived at last!"

She answered the summons immediately. The frank, friendly warmth of her greeting confused and delighted Lomaque.

"Do you bring any news from Paris?" asked Trudaine.

"None," he replied, "but excellent news instead from Rome. I heard a night and night, the employer whom I have been serving since we parted, that your old house by the river is to rent again."

Rose started from her chair.

"Oh, Louis, if we could only live there once more! My flower garden"—"Has been well looked after," inter-

rupted Lomaque, "by the late proprietor."

"And the laboratory?" added Louis.

"Left standing. Here is a letter with all the particulars. You may depend on

of the woman, and it was a cousin of mine whom I met in my youth. I threw myself on this man's mercy. He took me into his house. I worked for what he pleased to give me, traveled for him in Switzerland, won his confidence. Till within the last few months I remained with him and only left his employ to enter, by his own desire, the house of one of his sons, also a silk mercer, at Châlons-sur-Marne. In the counting house of this merchant I met a corresponding clerk and am only able to come and see you now by offering to undertake for him a special business mission at Paris. My work is hard, but I am not obliged to cringe for every franc I put in my pocket. I am happier than I used to be and am not ashamed when I look people like you in the face."

"Hush, hush!" interrupted Rose, laying her hand on his arm. "I cannot allow you to talk in that way, even in jest."

"I was speaking in earnest, but I won't worry you with any more about myself. My story is told."

"All?" asked Trudaine. He looked searchingly at Lomaque. "Yours is a short story, indeed, my good friend! Perhaps you have forgotten some of it?"

Lomaque fidgeted and hesitated.

"He will not tell all till we are alone," thought Trudaine.

"Before I begin with my story," said the brother, turning to Rose, "let me suggest that if you have any household matters to settle upstairs."

"I know what you mean," she interrupted, "but I am stronger than you think. I can face the worst of our recollections composedly. Go on, Louis; I am quite fit to stay and hear you."

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It will be good news to the mothers of small children to learn that croup can be prevented. The first sign of croup is hoarseness. A day or two before the attack the child becomes hoarse. This is soon followed by a peculiar rough cough. Give Chamberlain's Cough Remedy freely as soon as the child becomes hoarse, or even after the rough cough appears, and it will dispel all symptoms of croup. In this way all danger and anxiety may be avoided. This remedy is used by many thousands of mothers and has never been known to fail. It is, in fact, the only remedy that can always be depended upon for relief and is pleasant and safe to take. For sale by Delta Drug Store.

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The friendly warmth of her greeting confused Lomaque.

Trudaine looked over the letter eagerly.

"The price is not beyond our means," he said. "After our three years' exile here we can afford to give something for a great pleasure."

"Oh, what a day of happiness it will be when we go home again!" cried Rose. "Pray say to your friend at once and say we will take the house."

Lomaque nodded and folding up the letter mechanically made a note of it in the old official manner.

"And is this good news really all the news of importance you have to tell us?" asked Louis.

"What other news I have will well bear keeping. There are many questions I should like to ask—first about your sister and yourself. May I refer for a moment to the time when we last met?"

"Do you mean your sudden disappearance at the very crisis of that terrible time of danger? The one short note which you left behind helped me to guess at what had happened rather than to understand it."

"I can easily explain it now. The sudden overthrow of the Reign of Terror, which was salutation to you, was destruction to me. The new republican reign was one of mercy, except for the trait of Robespierre, as the saying is. Every one who had been so wicked or so unfortunate as to be involved, even in the meanest capacity, with the machinery of the government of Terror was threatened with the fate of Robespierre. I among others fell under this menace of death. From the course taken by public events I knew you would be saved, and although your safety was the work of circumstances, still I had a hand in rendering it possible, and a yearning came over me to behold you both free again with my own eyes—a selfish yearning to see in you a living, breathing result of the one good impulse of my heart which I could look back on with satisfaction. This desire gave me a new interest in life. For ten days I lay hidden in Paris. After that, thanks to certain knowledge which my experience in the office of secret police had given me, I succeeded in making my way safely to Switzerland. My story is soon told. The one relation I knew

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Wheat—Walla Walla, 71c; binstem, 70c; valley, 75c.

Flour—best grades, \$3.35 to \$3.50 per barrel; Graham, \$3.20 to \$3.40.

Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.15 to \$1.17; grey, \$1.12 to \$1.15 per cental.

Barley—Feed, \$2.30 to \$2.40; malting, \$2.40 to \$2.50; shorts, \$1.90 to \$2.00; chop, \$1.80.

Hay—Timothy, \$16.00 to \$17.00; clover, \$15.00 to \$16.00; alfalfa, \$14.00 to \$15.00.

Butter—Fancy creamery, 30c to 32c; dairy, 28c to 30c; store, 15c to 18c per pound.

Eggs—Fresh, 20c to 22c.

Cheese—Full cream, 15c to 16c; Young American, 16c to 17c per pound.

Poultry—Chicken, mixed, \$3.00 to \$3.25; hens, \$4.00 to \$4.50; dressed, 10c per pound; springs, \$2.00 to \$2.50 per dozen; ducks, \$5.00 to \$6.00; geese, 60c to 70c per pound; live, 13c to 15c.

Mutton—Lamb, \$4.00 to \$4.50; dressed, 6c to 8c per pound; sheep, \$3.00 to \$3.50; dressed, 5c to 6c per pound.

Hog—Fresh, heavy, \$10.00 to \$11.00; light, \$8.00 to \$9.00; dressed, 7c to 8c per pound.

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LETTER BOXES ON CARS.

Labor organizations are preparing to make a protest against the plans of the post office department for using the street cars for collecting the mails. A Washington dispatch of the 7th inst. A committee of experts have been examining a patent mail box attached to street cars, and have recommended that the system be given a thorough test in that city. The device is a simple one, consisting of a metal box inside the car, under the seat, with a slot in the side of the car similar to those now used in railway postal cars. The opening for the letters is so protected that rain and snow will not fall into the box. The plan proposed provides that a person desiring to deposit a letter shall step to the street car, just as though he were to board the car. When the mailman brings the car to a standstill the letter is deposited in the slot through the side of the car, and is on its way to the post office. It is argued that the plan will do great favor, particularly in residence districts, where the collections are made at infrequent intervals. It is also proposed to readjust the routes of carriers whose duty it is to collect the letters from the street corner boxes. These carriers, according to the plan proposed, will work between the car lines, and as rapidly as the street boxes are emptied will deposit the mail from them into the street cars.

The post office department has already received a number of protests from labor organizations throughout the country, and it is expected that an organized fight will be made against the adoption of the plan. It is asserted by labor leaders who watch such matters very closely that the adoption of the system is simply a scheme to throw the protection of the United States around the operation of the street cars. In the case of a strike, federal troops could be called out to secure the unobstructed operation of cars carrying United States mail. If the system is adopted by the post office department the labor leaders assert that the street railway companies of the country would cheerfully equip each of their cars with the letter boxes, and so make it impossible for the striking employees to secure an adjustment of their grievances through the customary method of interfering with the operation of the cars.

An officer of the American federation of labor stated to-day that his organization had been asked to thoroughly investigate the proposed plan.

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