THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO by Alexandre Dumas, Pere Chapter 1. Marseilles--The Arrival. On the 24th of February, 1815, the look-out at Notre-Dame de la Garde signalled the three-master, the Pharaon from Smyrna, Trieste, and Naples. As usual, a pilot put off immediately, and rounding the Chateau d'If, got on board the vessel between Cape Morgion and Rion island. Immediately, and according to custom, the ramparts of Fort Saint-Jean were covered with spectators; it is always an event at Marseilles for a ship to come into port, especially when this ship, like the Pharaon, has been built, rigged, and laden at the old Phocee docks, and belongs to an owner of the city. The ship drew on and had safely passed the strait, which some volcanic shock has made between the Calasareigne and Jaros islands; had doubled Pomegue, and approached the harbor under topsails, jib, and spanker, but so slowly and sedately that the lifeless, with that instinct which is the forerunner of evil, asked one another what misfortune could have happened on board. However, those experienced in navigation saw plainly that if any accident had occurred, it was not to the vessel herself, for she bore down with all the evidence of being skilfully handled, the anchor a-cockbill, the jib-boom guys already eased off, and standing by the side of the pilot, who was steering the Pharaon towards the narrow entrance of the inner port, was a young man, who, with activity and vigilant eye, watched every motion of the ship, and repeated each direction of the pilot. The vague disquietude which prevailed among the spectators had so much affected one of the crowd that he did not await the arrival of the vessel in harbor, but jumping into a small skiff, desired to be pulled alongside the Pharaon, which he reached as she rounded into La Reserve basin. When the young man on board saw this man approaching, his face lost its stamp of anxiety, and leaning over the balustrade, with a sad smile on his lips, he watched the movements of the boat and its occupant with a kind of gloomy impatience. "What has happened, Edmond? Why this appearance of mourning? Where is your captain?" "Alas, sir, he died on the way, in the violent fever which we had to contend with from the Gulf of Lyons to the Straits of Bonifacio." "And your cargo?" "Safe and sound, Monsieur Morrel, as my hope and my life, I hope, will be when I shall see my father." "But why have you hoisted your flag half-mast?" "We have lost a passenger who died of his wounds." "Of what?" "I don't know, sir; he was a great malcontent, they say, and he had a long fever before he died." "Was he a Frenchman?" "No, he was a native of Rome." "Why, then, do you hoist your flag half-mast?" "We buried his body in the island of Giaglio." "Buried his body in the island of Giaglio! We bring to his widow his sword and cross of honor. It was worth while, truly," added the young man with a melancholy smile, "to make war against the English for ten years, and to die in his bed at last, like everybody else." "Why, you see, Edmond," replied the owner, who appeared more comforted at every moment, "we are all mortal, and the old must make way for the young. If not, why, there would be no promotion; and since you assure me that the cargo--" "Is all safe and sound, M. Morrel, take my word for it; and I advise you not to take 25,000 francs for the profits of the voyage." Then, as they were just passing the Round Tower, the young man shouted: "Stand by there to lower the topsails and jib; brail up the spanker!" The order was executed as promptly as it would have been on board a man-of-war. "Let go--and clue up!" At this last command all the sails were lowered, and the vessel moved almost imperceptibly beneath the shadow of the Marine Fortress. "Will you not, M. Morrel, speak to your pilot?" said Dantes, approaching the owner with a certain degree of respectfulness in his manner, but without any servility in his speech or bearing. The owner, without replying, addressed the pilot in question, who, leaving the helm in charge of one of the ship, while the young man, going to his task, left the conversation to Danglars, who now came towards the owner. He was a man of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, of unprepossessing countenance, obsequious to his superiors, insolent to his subordinates; and this, in addition to his position as responsible agent on board, which is always obnoxious to the sailors, made him as much disliked by the crew as Edmond Dantes was beloved by them. "We shall, M. Morrel," said Danglars, "you have heard of the misfortune that has befallen us?" "Yes--yes: poor Captain Leclere! He was a brave and an honest man." "And a first-rate seaman, one who had seen long and honorable service, as became a man charged with the interests of a house so important as that of Morrel & Son," replied Danglars. "But," replied the owner, glancing after Dantes, who was watching the anchoring of his vessel, "it seems to me that a sailor needs not be so old as you say, Danglars, to understand his business, for our friend Edmond seems to understand it thoroughly, and not to require instruction from any one." "Yes," said Danglars, darting at Edmond a look gleaming with hate. "Yes, he is young, and youth is invariably self-confident. Scarcely was the captain's breath out of his body when he assumed the command without consulting any one, and he caused us to lose a day and a half at the Island of Elba, instead of making for Marseilles direct." "As to taking command of the vessel," replied Morrel, "that was his duty as captain's mate; as to losing a day and a half off the Island of Elba, he was wrong, unless the vessel needed repairs." "The vessel was in as good condition as I am, and as, I hope you are, M. Morrel, and this day and a half was lost from pure whim, for the pleasure of going ashore, and nothing else." "Dantes," said the shipowner, turning towards the young man, "come this way!" "In a moment, sir," answered Dantes, "and I am with you." Then calling to the crew, he said--"Let go!" The anchor was instantly dropped, and the chain ran rattling through the port-hole. Dantes continued at his post in spite of the presence of the pilot, until this manoeuvre was completed, and then he added, "Half-mast the colors, and square the yards!" "You see," said Danglars, "he fancies himself captain already, upon my word." "And he is almost so," replied the owner, "since he only awaits your signature to be captain." "Or that of M. Morrel," replied the young man, with a slight tinge of haughtiness in his manner, but still with the same mildness of disposition and firmness of character. "Why, Dantes, why do you say that?" "Why, I thought, when I left you, that I had your command from your father, and from you." "Yes, but you stopped at the Island of Elba?" "I do not know, sir; it was to fulfil the last instructions of Captain Leclere, who, when dying, gave me a packet for Marshal Bertrand." "Then did you see him, Edmond?" "Who?" "The marshal." "Yes." Morrel looked around him, and then, drawing Dantes on one side, he said suddenly--"And how is the emperor?" "Very well, as far as I could judge from the sight of him." "You saw the emperor, then?" "He entered the marshal's apartment while I was there." "And you spoke to him?" "Why, it was he who spoke to me, sir," said Dantes, with a smile. "And what did he say to you?" "Asked me questions about the vessel, the time she left Marseilles, the course she had taken, and what was her cargo. I believe, if she had not been laden, and I had been her master, he would have bought her. But I told him I was only mate, and that she belonged to the firm of Morrel & Son. 'Ah, yes,' he said, 'I know the name. The Morrels have been shipowners from father to son; and there was a Morrel who served in the same regiment with me when I was in garrison at Valence.'" "Pardieu, and that is true!" cried the owner, greatly delighted. "And that was Policar Morrel, my uncle, who was afterwards a captain. Dantes, you must tell my uncle that the emperor remembered him, and you will see it will bring tears into the old soldier's eyes. Come, come," continued he, patting Edmond's shoulder kindly, "you did very right, Dantes, to follow Captain Leclere's instructions, and touch at Elba, although if it were known that you had conveyed a packet to the marshal, and had conversed with the emperor, it might bring you into trouble." "How could that bring me into trouble, sir?" asked Dantes; "for I did not even know of what I was the bearer; and the emperor merely made such inquiries as he would of the first comer. But, pardon me, here are the health officers and the customs inspectors coming alongside." And the young man went to the gangway. As he departed, Danglars approached, and said,--"Well, it appears that he has given you satisfactory reasons for his landing at Porto-Ferrajo?" "Yes, most satisfactory, my dear Danglars." "Well, so much the better," said the supercargo; "for it is not pleasant to think that a comrade has not done his duty." "Dantes has done his," replied the owner, "and that is no one's business but his own." "Is Dantes, then, so reserved, that we may not hope to learn the reasons of this sudden visit to Elba?" "Why, he went ashore to see his father, I suppose," replied the young man, who had overheard the last words of the supercargo, and who, with a smile, added, "Perhaps he also went to see a mistress." "Poor fellow, he has no mistress, I fear," said Danglars, with a smile of a peculiar character. "Why, if he has, we shall be obliged to send for him," said the owner, laughing in his turn. "Dantes is a lad who does not let the grass grow under his feet, and I shall be much mistaken if, wherever he may have passed the night since his arrival, it has not been with some pretty girl who is not his mistress." "Well, well, my dear Edmond," continued the owner, "don't let me detain you. You have managed my affairs so well that I ought to allow you all the time you require for your own." "I shall be at your service, however, when your pleasure brings you back to the port." "Thanks, thanks! I know you are an active and a zealous friend." "And now, Dantes, what happened besides?" "Everything has prospered with us since we left Rome except the death of poor Captain Leclere." "Where is the worthy captain?" "He died." "Fell into the sea?" "No, sir, he died of brain-fever in dreadful agony." Then turning to the crew, he said, "Bear a hand there, to take in sail!" All hands obeyed, and at once the eight or ten seamen who composed the crew, sprang to their respective stations at the spanker brails and outhaul, topsail sheets and halyards, the jib downhaul, and the topsail clewlines and buntlines. The young sailor gave a look to see that his orders were promptly and accurately obeyed, and then turned again to the owner. "And how did this misfortune occur?" inquired the latter, resuming the interrupted conversation. "Alas, sir, in the most unexpected manner. After a long talk with the harbor-master, Captain Leclere left Naples greatly disturbed in mind. In twenty-four hours he was attacked by a fever, and died three days afterwards. We performed the usual burial service, and he is at his rest, sewn up in his hammock with a thirty-six pound shot at his head and his heels, off Elba." "Giglio island.