

## Chapter 79

### A VISIT TO THE HOUSE AT LES TOURNELLES.

The duke became more and more in love with Diana, as she seemed always to escape him, and with his love for her, his hatred of Monsoreau increased. On the other side he had not renounced his political hopes, but had recommenced his underhand machinations. The moment was favorable, for many wavering conspirators had been encouraged by the kind of triumph which the weakness of thy king, and the cunning of Catherine, had given to the duke; however, he no longer confided his projects to Bussy, and showed him only a hypocritical friendship. He was vaguely uneasy at seeing him at Monsoreau's house, and envious of the confidence that Monsoreau, so suspicious of himself, placed in him. He was frightened also at the joy and happiness which shone in Diana's face. He knew that flowers only bloom in the light of the sun, and women in that of love. She was visibly happy, and this annoyed him. Determined to use his power, both for love and vengeance, he thought it would be absurd to be stayed in this purpose by such ridiculous obstacles as the jealousy of a husband, and the repugnance of a wife. One day he ordered his equipages, intending to visit Monsoreau. He was told that he had moved to his house in the Rue St. Antoine.

"Let us go there," said he to Bussy. Soon the place was in commotion at the arrival of the twenty-four handsome cavaliers, each with two lackeys, who formed the prince's suite. Both Bussy and the prince knew the house well; they both went in, but while the prince entered the room, Bussy remained on the staircase. It resulted from this arrangement that the duke was received by Monsoreau alone, while Bussy was received by Diana, while Gertrude kept watch. Monsoreau, always pale, grew livid at sight of the prince.

"Monseigneur, here! really it is too much honor for my poor house!" cried he, with a visible irony.

The prince smiled. "Wherever a suffering friend goes, I follow him," replied he. "How are you?"

"Oh, much better; I can already walk about, and in a week I shall be quite well."

"Was it your doctor who prescribed for you the air of the Bastile?" asked the prince, with the most innocent air possible.

"Yes, monseigneur."

"Did you not like the Rue des Petits-Pères?"

"No, monseigneur; I had too much company there--they made too much noise."

"But you have no garden here."

"I did not like the garden."

The prince bit his lips. "Do you know, comte," said he, "that many people are asking the king for your place?"

"On what pretext, monseigneur?"

"They say you are dead."

"Monseigneur, you can answer for it that I am not."

"I answer for nothing; you bury yourself as though you were dead."

It was Monsoreau's turn to bite his lips.

"Well, then, I must lose my place," said he.

"Really?"

"Yes; there are things I prefer to it."

"You are very disinterested."

"It is my character, monseigneur."

"Then of course you will not mind the king's knowing your character?"

"Who will tell him?"

"Diable! if he asks me about you, I must repeat our conversation."

"Ma foi! monseigneur, if all they say in Paris were reported to the king, his two ears would not be enough to listen with."

"What do they say at Paris, monsieur?" asked the prince sharply.

Monsoreau tried to calm himself. "How should a poor invalid, as I am, know?" said he. "If the king is angry at seeing his work badly done, he is wrong."

"How so?"

"Because, doubtless, my accident proceeds, to some extent, from him."

"Explain yourself."

"M. de St. Luc, who wounded me, is a dear friend of the king's. It was the king who taught him the thrust by which he wounded me, and it might have been the king who prompted him."

"You are right; but still the king is the king."

"Until he is so no longer."

The duke trembled. "Is not Madame de Monsoreau here?" said he.

"Monseigneur, she is ill, or she would have come to present her respects to you."

"Ill! poor woman! it must be grief at seeing you suffer."

"Yes, and the fatigue of moving."

"Let us hope it will be a short indisposition. You have so skilful a doctor."

"Yes, that dear Rémy----"

"Why, he is Bussy's doctor."

"He has lent him to me."

"You are, then, great friends?"

"He is my best, I might say my only, friend."

"Adieu, come!"

As the duke raised the tapestry, he fancied he saw the skirt of a dress disappear into the next room, and immediately Bussy appeared at his post in the middle of the corridor. Suspicion grew stronger with the duke.

"We are going," said he to Bussy, who ran down-stairs without replying; while the duke, left alone, tried to penetrate the corridor where he had seen the silk dress vanish. But, turning, he saw that Monsoreau had followed, and was standing at the door.

"Your highness mistakes your way," said he.

"True," said the duke, "thank you." And he went down with rage in his heart. When he returned home, Aurilly glided into his room.

"Well," said the duke, "I am baffled by the husband!"

"And, perhaps, also by the lover, monseigneur."

"What do you say?"

"The truth."

"Speak, then."

"I hope your highness will pardon me--it was in your service."

"I pardon you in advance. Go on."

"After your highness had gone up-stairs, I watched under a shed in the courtyard."

"Ah! What did you see?"

"I saw a woman's dress; I saw this woman lean forward, and then I heard the sound of a long and tender kiss."

"But who was the man?"

"I cannot recognize arms."

"No, but you might gloves."

"Indeed, it seemed to me----"

"That you recognized them?"

"It was only a guess."

"Never mind."

"Well, monseigneur, they looked like the gloves of M. de Bussy."

"Buff, embroidered with gold, were they not?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"Ah! Bussy! yes, it was Bussy. Oh, I was blind and yet not blind; but I could not believe in so much audacity."

"But your highness must not believe it too lightly; might there not have been a man hidden in her room?"

"Yes, doubtless, but Bussy, who was in the corridor, would have seen him."

"That is true."

"And then the gloves----"

"Yes, and besides the kiss, I heard----"

"What?"

"Three words, 'Till to-morrow evening."

"Oh! mon Dieu!"

"So that, if you like, we can make sure."

"Aurilly, we will go."

"Your highness knows I am at your orders."

"Ah! Bussy, a traitor! Bussy, the honest man--Bussy, who does not wish me to be King of France;" and the duke, smiling with an infernal joy, dismissed Aurilly.