

# The Count of Monte Cristo

novel by Dumas

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**Alternative Title:** “Le Comte de Monte-Cristo”

**The Count of Monte Cristo**, French **Le Comte de Monte-Cristo**, [Romantic novel](#) by French author [Alexandre Dumas père](#) (possibly in collaboration with Auguste Maquet), published serially in 1844–46 and in book form in 1844–45. The work, which is set during the time of the [Bourbon Restoration](#) in [France](#), tells the story of an unjustly incarcerated man who escapes to find revenge.



***Count of Monte Cristo, The***

The count of Monte Cristo, from a 2003 French stamp.

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BRITANNICA QUIZ

Name the Novelist

Every answer in this quiz is the name of a novelist. How many do you know?

## Summary

The novel opens in 1815 as the *Pharaon* arrives in [Marseille](#). The ship's owner, Monsieur Morrel, learns from the young first mate, [Edmond Dantès](#), that the captain died on the journey and that Dantès took over. The ship's accountant, Danglars, is bothered that the *Pharaon* stopped at [Elba](#), but Dantès explains that the captain left a package to be delivered to one of [Napoleon](#)'s marshals who is in exile with Napoleon on the island. Morrel makes Dantès captain of the ship, to Danglars's displeasure. On visiting his father, Dantès learns that a neighbour, Gaspard Caderousse, took most of his father's resources in payment of a debt. Dantès then goes to see his fiancée, Mercédès, and finds her in the company of Fernand Mondego, who is in love with her. After leaving, Mondego encounters Danglars and Caderousse, and a decision is made to falsely accuse Dantès of treason. In a letter to the crown [prosecutor](#), Danglars alleges that Dantès is a [Bonapartist](#) and is carrying a letter from Napoleon to the Bonapartist committee in [Paris](#).

Dantès is arrested, but the assistant prosecutor, Gérard de Villefort, discovers that Dantès is not a Bonapartist agent and is prepared to release him. However, after learning that the young captain has a letter from Napoleon to de Villefort's father, who is a Bonapartist, he sends Dantès to the Château d'If, an island prison where he remains for many years. One day another inmate, Abbé Faria, arrives in Dantès's cell through a tunnel he has been digging in an attempt to escape. Faria deduces that Danglars and Mondego framed Dantès as well as why de Villefort keeps Dantès imprisoned. He spends a few years teaching Dantès, and they plan another escape attempt. Faria tells Dantès about a treasure hidden on the uninhabited island of Monte Cristo and then dies. Dantès sews himself inside Faria's burial shroud and is flung into the sea. He frees himself and is rescued by a crew of smugglers. Later he finds the treasure on Monte Cristo.

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Dantès then sets about gaining revenge for his long unjust imprisonment. He disguises himself as an Italian priest and visits Caderousse, who divulges that Danglars and Mondego are both wealthy and that the latter has married Mercédès. Upon hearing that Morrel has fallen on hard times, Dantès secretly solves his financial problems.

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Ten years later, in [Rome](#), Dantès, now calling himself the count of Monte Cristo, contrives to meet Albert, the son of Mondego (now the count of Morcerf) and Mercédès. Albert is unhappily engaged to Danglars's daughter. Dantès subsequently buys a house in Auteuil, outside Paris. Later he tells Haydée, a Greek slave whom he has purchased, that she is now free but must keep the details of her birth a secret. After Dantès arranges for Danglars to lose his fortune, he hosts a dinner party for the Danglarses and the de Villeforts; Maximilian Morrel (the son of Monsieur Morrel) and two convicts hired to play wealthy Italians are also present. It is revealed that Mrs. Danglars was once the mistress of de Villefort and that the younger convict is the son born of that union, whom de Villefort thought he had disposed of as a baby.

Later the count of Morcerf's secret is also made public: he had made himself right-hand man to Haydée's father, Ali Pasha, and then betrayed him. He stole Ali Pasha's fortune and sold Haydée and her mother into slavery. With this news, Mercédès and Albert abandon Morcerf, and he kills himself. De Villefort orders his wife, who has been poisoning family members in order to secure an inheritance for her son from a previous marriage, to poison herself. She kills both herself and her son, while de Villefort's attempt to kill his infant son is revealed in court, and he loses his mind. On Dantès's orders, bandits capture Danglars and hold him for several days until he repents. Dantès, his revenge complete, arranges for Valentine de Villefort and Maximilian Morrel to be together (they have been in love, but

Valentine's parents forbade their union), and Haydée declares her love for Dantès, to his great joy.

## Legacy

The ingenious plot involves concealment and revelation, use of poisonous herbs, and all manner of other things. Beyond the exciting narrative, Dumas focused on the corrupt financial, political, and judicial world of France at the time of the Bourbon Restoration as well as on the marginal figures, such as convicts, who inhabited it. Unfolding gradually, *The Count of Monte Cristo* offers an unusual reflection on happiness and justice, omnipotence, and the sometimes fatal haunting return of the past.



### Dumas, Alexandre

Alexandre Dumas père.

*Ann Ronan Picture Library/Heritage-Images*

*The Count of Monte Cristo*, originally published serially, enthralled its readers, and Dumas adapted it for the stage shortly after its publication as a book. Numerous film and television miniseries

versions of the adventure story appeared, among them a highly acclaimed 1964 British miniseries, a 1998 French miniseries starring [Gérard Depardieu](#), a 1922 silent film with [John Gilbert](#) in the lead role, a 1954 French film featuring [Jean Marais](#), and a 2002 American film with Jim Caviezel playing Dantès.



***The Count of Monte Cristo***

Jim Caviezel (left) as Dantès and Guy Pearce as Fernand Mondego in *The Count of Monte Cristo* (2002).

*KPA/Heritage-Images*

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## Alexandre Dumas, père

...especially for such works as **The Count of Monte Cristo** and *The Three Musketeers*. His memoirs, which, with a mixture of candour, mendacity, and boastfulness, recount the events of his extraordinary life, also provide a unique insight into French literary life during the Romantic period. He was the father (père)...

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## Montecristo Island

...made famous by the novel **The Count of Monte Cristo** (1844) by Alexandre Dumas père....

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## If

...the settings in his novel **The Count of Monte Cristo** (1844–45)....

Edmond Dantès, a handsome, promising young sailor, skillfully docks the three-masted French ship, the *Pharaon*, in Marseilles after its captain died en route home. As a reward, Dantès is promised a captainship, but before he can claim his new post and be married to his fiancée, Mercédès', a conspiracy of four jealous and unsavory men arrange for him to be seized and secretly imprisoned in solitary confinement in the infamous Chateau d'If, a prison from which no one has ever escaped. The four men responsible are:

1. Fernand Mondego, who is jealous of Mercédès' love for Dantès;
2. Danglars, the purser of the *Pharaon*, who covets Dantès' promised captainship;
3. Caderousse, an unprincipled neighbor; and
4. Villefort, a prosecutor who knows that Dantès is carrying a letter addressed to Villefort's father; the old man is a Bonapartist who would probably be imprisoned by the present royalist regime were it not for his son's, Villefort's, influence. Villefort fears, however, that this letter might damage his own position, and so he makes sure, he thinks, that no one ever hears about either Dantès or the letter again.

For many years, Dantès barely exists in his tiny, isolated cell; he almost loses his mind and his will to live until one day he hears a fellow prisoner burrowing nearby. He too begins digging, and soon he meets an old Abbé who knows the whereabouts of an immense fortune, one that used to belong to an immensely wealthy Italian family.

Dantès and the Abbé continue digging for several years, and from the Abbé, Dantès learns history, literature, science, and languages, but when at last they are almost free, the Abbé dies. Dantès hides his body, then sews himself in the Abbé's burial sack. The guards arrive, carry the sack outside, and heave the body far out to sea.

Dantès manages to escape and is picked up by a shipful of smugglers, whom he joins until he can locate the island where the treasure is hidden. When he finally discovers it, he is staggered by the immensity of its wealth. And when he emerges into society again, he is the very rich and very handsome Count of Monte Cristo.

Monte Cristo has two goals — to reward those who were kind to him and his aging father, and to punish those responsible for his imprisonment. For the latter, he plans slow and painful punishment. To have spent fourteen years barely subsisting in a dungeon demands cruel and prolonged punishment.

As Monte Cristo, Dantès ingeniously manages to be introduced to the cream of Parisian society, among whom he goes unrecognized. But Monte Cristo, in contrast, recognizes *all* of his enemies — all now wealthy and influential men.

Fernand has married Mercédès and is now known as Count de Morcerf. Monte Cristo releases information to the press that proves that Morcerf is a traitor, and Morcerf is ruined socially. Then Monte Cristo destroys Morcerf's relationship with his family, whom he adores. When they leave him, he is so distraught that he shoots himself.



To revenge himself on Danglars, who loves money more than anything else, Monte Cristo ruins him financially.

To revenge himself on Caderousse, Monte Cristo easily traps Caderousse because of his insatiable greed, then watches as one of Caderousse's cohorts murders him.

To revenge himself on Villefort, Monte Cristo slowly reveals to Villefort that he knows about a love affair that Villefort had long ago with the present Madame Danglars. He also reveals to him, by hints, that he knows about an illegitimate child whom he fathered, a child whom Villefort believed that he buried alive. The child lived, however, and is now engaged to Danglars' daughter, who is the illegitimate young man's half-sister.

Ironically, Villefort's wife proves to be even more villainous than her husband, for she poisons the parents of Villefort's first wife; then she believes that she has successfully poisoned her husband's daughter by his first marriage. With those people dead, her own son is in line for an enormous inheritance. Villefort, however, discovers his wife's plottings and threatens her, and so she poisons herself and their son. At this point, Dantès is half-fearful that his revenge has been too thorough, but because he is able to unite two young people who are very much in love and unite them on the Isle of Monte Cristo, he sails away, happy and satisfied, never to be seen again.

***The Count of Monte Cristo*** ([French](#): *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*) is an [adventure novel](#) written by French author [Alexandre Dumas \(père\)](#) completed in 1844. It is one of the author's more popular works, along with [The Three Musketeers](#). Like many of his novels, it was expanded from plot outlines suggested by his collaborating [ghostwriter Auguste Maquet](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

The story takes place in France, Italy, and islands in the [Mediterranean](#) during the historical events of 1815–1839: the era of the [Bourbon Restoration](#) through the reign of [Louis-Philippe of France](#). It begins on the day that [Napoleon](#) left his first island of exile, Elba, beginning the [Hundred Days](#) period when Napoleon returned to power. The historical setting is a fundamental element of the book, an adventure story centrally concerned with themes of hope, justice, vengeance, mercy, and forgiveness. It centers on a man who is wrongfully imprisoned, escapes from jail, acquires a fortune, and sets about exacting revenge on those responsible for his imprisonment.

Before he can marry his fiancée Mercédès, [Edmond Dantès](#), first mate of the *Pharaon*, is falsely accused of treason, arrested, and imprisoned without trial in the [Château d'If](#), a grim island fortress off [Marseille](#). A fellow prisoner, Abbé Faria, correctly deduces that his jealous rival Fernand Mondego, envious crewmate Danglars, and double-dealing magistrate De Villefort turned him in. Faria inspires his escape and guides him to a fortune in [treasure](#). As the powerful and mysterious Count of [Monte Cristo \(Italy\)](#), he arrives from the Orient to enter the fashionable Parisian world of the 1830s and avenge himself on the men who conspired to destroy him.

The book is considered a [literary classic](#) today. According to [Luc Sante](#), "*The Count of Monte Cristo* has become a fixture of Western civilization's literature, as inescapable and immediately identifiable as [Mickey Mouse](#), [Noah's flood](#), and the story of [Little Red Riding Hood](#)."<sup>[2]</sup>



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**Plot**[\[edit\]](#)

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## Marseilles and Chateau d'If [\[edit\]](#)

The main character Edmond Dantès was a merchant sailor before his imprisonment. (Illustration by [Pierre-Gustave Staal](#))

In 1815, Edmond Dantès, a young [merchant sailor](#) returns to [Marseille](#) to marry his [Catalan](#) fiancée Mercédès. He brings in the ship *Pharaon* to the owner, M Morrel, as his captain Leclère died on the passage; Morrel will make Dantès the next captain. His return is the same day that Napoleon has escaped his exile on the island of Elba, unknown to Edmond Dantès, which leads to Napoleon's 100 days restored as emperor. Leclère, a supporter of the exiled [Napoleon](#), was dying at sea and charged Dantès to deliver two objects: a package to [General Bertrand](#) (exiled with Napoleon on [Elba](#)), and a letter from Elba to an unknown man in Paris. On the eve of Dantès' wedding to Mercédès, Fernand Mondego, Mercédès' cousin and a rival for her affections, is given advice by Dantès' colleague Danglars, who is jealous of Dantès' rapid rise to captain, to send an anonymous note accusing Dantès of being a [Bonapartist traitor](#). Caderousse, Dantès' cowardly and selfish neighbor, is drunk while the two conspirators set the trap for Dantès and stays quiet as Dantès is arrested, then sentenced. Villefort, the deputy crown prosecutor in Marseille, destroys the letter from Elba when he discovers that it is addressed to his own father, Noirtier who is a Bonapartist. If this letter came into official hands, it would destroy Villefort's ambitions and reputation as a staunch [Royalist](#). To silence Dantès, he condemns him without trial to life imprisonment. Villefort resists all appeals by Morrel to release him, during the Hundred Days and once the king is restored to rule France.

Château d'If (Marseille)

After six years of solitary imprisonment in the Château d'If, Dantès is on the verge of suicide when he befriends the Abbé Faria ("The Mad Priest"), an Italian fellow prisoner who had dug an escape tunnel that ended up in Dantès' cell. Over the next eight years, Faria gives Dantès an extensive education in languages, culture, mathematics, chemistry, medicine, and science. Knowing himself to be close to death, Faria tells Dantès the location of a treasure on the small island of Monte Cristo, which is his own inheritance from his work for the last of the Spado family. He bequeaths it to Dantès. When Faria dies, Dantès takes his place in the burial sack, holding the knife that Faria had made. When the guards throw the sack into the sea, Dantès breaks through using the knife and swims to a nearby island. He is rescued by a [smuggling](#) ship that passes Monte Cristo. Fearing the members of the ship will find him and his treasure, he uses the excuse of hunting goats while he goes to hunt the treasure. To stay on the island (to find his treasure, not yet found), Dantès pretends he has broken ribs. Six days later, the smuggling ship comes back for him and he boards it carrying with him a few carefully hidden diamonds.

In port, Dantès trades these diamonds for a yacht and then sails to Monte Cristo again to claim the rest of his treasure. After recovering the treasure, Dantès returns to Marseille. He later purchases the island of Monte Cristo and the title of [Count](#) from the Tuscan government.

Traveling as the Abbé Busoni, Dantès meets Caderousse, now married and living in poverty, who regrets not intervening and possibly saving Dantès from prison. Caderousse tells him about the two who wrote the letter against him, about his father's death, and about Mercédès. He gives Caderousse a diamond that can be either a chance to redeem himself or a trap that will lead to his ruin.

Learning that his old employer Morrel is on the verge of bankruptcy, Dantès, as clerk of Thompson and French, buys Morrel's debts and gives Morrel three months to fulfill his obligations. At the end of the three months and with no way to repay his debts, Morrel is about to commit suicide when he learns that his debts have been mysteriously paid and that one of his lost ships has returned with a full cargo, secretly rebuilt and laden by Dantès.

## Revenge [\[edit\]](#)

Reappearing nine years later after travelling in the East to continue the education he received from Abbé Faria, as the rich Count of Monte Cristo, Dantès begins the revenge he planned during his travels. The three men responsible for his unjust imprisonment were Fernand, now Count de Morcerf and husband of Mercédès; Danglars, now a baron and a wealthy banker; and Villefort, now [procureur du roi](#) (prosecutor for the king).

The Count appears first in Rome, at the time of [Carnival](#) before Lent, where he becomes acquainted with the Baron Franz d'Épinay, and Viscount Albert de Morcerf, the son of Mercédès and Fernand. Dantès arranges for the young Morcerf to be captured by the bandit Luigi Vampa and then seemingly rescues him from Vampa's gang. Albert, feeling a debt of gratitude to the Count for his rescue, agrees to introduce the Count into Parisian society. The Count then moves to Paris and dazzles Danglars with his wealth, persuading him to extend him a credit of six million francs. The Count manipulates the bond market and quickly destroys a large portion of Danglars' fortune. The rest of it begins to rapidly disappear through mysterious bankruptcies, suspensions of payment, and more bad luck in the Stock Exchange.

Actor [James O'Neill](#) as the Abbé Busoni

Bertuccio is the Count's servant who informs the Count of past events in his life, intertwined with Villefort's life. Bertuccio's older brother was killed for being a Bonapartist, in [Nîmes](#) where Villefort rules; Bertuccio declares a vendetta on him. He tracks Villefort to a house in [Auteuil](#), finding him on the day when Madame Danglars, then a widow, delivered their child in the house that the Count has now purchased from the father-in-law of Villefort. To cover up the affair, Villefort told Madame Danglars that the infant was stillborn, smothered the child and buried him in the garden. Bertuccio stabs Villefort after this burial. Bertuccio unearths the child and resuscitates him. Bertuccio's sister-in-law brought the child up, giving him the name "Benedetto", her blessing. Benedetto takes up a life of crime by age 11. He robs his adoptive mother (Bertuccio's sister-in-law) and kills her, then runs away. His older brother and sister-in-law now dead, Bertuccio has no family in Corsica, so he takes Abbé Busoni's advice to work for the Count.

Benedetto is [sentenced to the galleys](#) with Caderousse, who had sold the diamond, then killed both his wife and the buyer out of greed. After Benedetto and Caderousse are freed by Dantès, using the alias "Lord Wilmore," the Count induces Benedetto to take the identity of "Viscount Andrea Cavalcanti" and introduces him into Parisian society. Andrea ingratiates himself to Danglars, who betroths his daughter Eugénie to Andrea, not knowing they are half-siblings, after cancelling her engagement to Albert. Meanwhile, Caderousse blackmails Andrea, threatening to reveal his past if he does not share his new-found wealth. Cornered by "Abbé Busoni" while attempting to rob the Count's house, Caderousse begs to be given another chance. Dantès forces him to write a letter to Danglars exposing Cavalcanti as an impostor and allows Caderousse to leave the house. The moment Caderousse leaves the estate, he is stabbed by Andrea. Caderousse dictates a deathbed statement identifying his killer, and the Count reveals his true identity to Caderousse moments before he dies.

Wanting information on how Albert's father made his fortune in Greece years earlier, Danglars researches the events, and the information is published in a French newspaper while Albert and the Count are in Normandy. Albert's friend Beauchamps sends the news article to Albert who returns to Paris. His father has been tried in a court of the French aristocrats and is found guilty based on the testimony of Haydée, who reads the newspapers. Years before, Fernand had betrayed [Ali Pasha of Janina](#) to the Turks. After Ali's death, Fernand sold Ali's wife [Vasiliki](#) and his 4-year-old daughter Haydée into slavery, thus earning his fortune. While Vasiliki died shortly thereafter, Dantès purchased Haydée seven years later when she was 11 years old. Fernand has a defense against the newspaper's story but no defense against Haydée's testimony. He rides away from the court in his disgrace. Albert blames the Count for his father's downfall, as Danglars says that the Count encouraged him to do the research on the father of the man engaged to his daughter. Albert

challenges him to a duel. Mercédès, having already recognized Monte Cristo as Dantès, goes to the Count, now in Paris, and begs him to spare her son. During this interview, she learns the truth of arrest and imprisonment of Dantès but still convinces the Count not to kill her son. Realizing that Edmond Dantès now intends to let Albert kill him, she reveals the truth to Albert, which causes Albert to make a public apology to the Count. Albert and Mercédès disown Fernand and leave his house. Fernand then confronts the Count of Monte Cristo, who reveals his identity as Edmond Dantès; returning home in time to see his wife and son leave, Fernand shoots himself. Albert and Mercédès renounce their titles and wealth and depart to begin new lives, starting in Marseilles, at the house where Dantès and his father once lived. Dantès told them of the 3,000 francs he had buried there, to start life once he married, before all his misfortunes. Albert enlists as a soldier.

Valentine, Villefort's daughter by his first wife, stands to inherit the fortune of her grandfather Noirtier and of her mother's parents, the Saint-Mérans, while Villefort's second wife Héloïse seeks the fortune for her son Édouard. The Count is aware of Héloïse's intentions and introduces her to the techniques of poison. Héloïse fatally poisons the Saint-Mérans, so that Valentine inherits their fortune. Valentine is briefly disinherited by Noirtier in an attempt to prevent Valentine's impending marriage with Franz d'Épinay, whom she does not love; however, the marriage is cancelled when d'Épinay learns from Noirtier that his father, whom he believed was assassinated by Bonapartists, was killed by Noirtier in a fair duel. After a failed attempt on Noirtier's life, which leaves Noirtier's servant Barrois dead, Héloïse targets Valentine so that Édouard, his other grandchild, will get the fortune. However, Valentine is the prime suspect in her father's eyes in the deaths of the Saint-Mérans and Barrois. On learning that Morrel's son Maximilien is in love with Valentine, the Count saves her by making it appear as though Héloïse's plan to poison Valentine has succeeded and that Valentine is dead. Villefort learns from Noirtier that Héloïse is the real murderer and confronts her, giving her the choice of a public execution or committing suicide.

Fleeing after Caderousse's letter exposes him and frees Danglars' daughter from any marriage, Andrea is arrested and returned to Paris. Eugénie Danglars flees as well. Villefort prosecutes Andrea. Bertuccio visits Andrea who is in prison awaiting trial, to tell him the truth about his father. At his trial, Andrea reveals that he is Villefort's son and was rescued after Villefort buried him alive. Villefort admits his guilt and flees the court. He rushes home to stop his wife's suicide but is too late; she has poisoned her son as well. The Count confronts Villefort, revealing his true identity as Dantès, which drives Villefort insane. Dantès tries but fails to resuscitate Édouard, causing him to question if he has gone too far.

After the Count's manipulation of the bond market, Danglars is left with a destroyed reputation and 5,000,000 francs he has been holding in deposit for hospitals. The Count demands this sum to fulfil their credit agreement, and Danglars embezzles the hospital fund. He abandoned his wife, whom he blames for his losses in stock investments. She is abandoned by her partner in investing, whom she hoped to marry. Danglars flees to Italy with the Count's receipt for the cash he requested from the banker Danglars, and 50,000 francs. While leaving Rome, he is kidnapped by the Count's agent Luigi Vampa and is imprisoned. Forced to pay exorbitant prices for food and nearly starved to death, Danglars signs away his ill-gotten gains. Dantès anonymously returns the money to the hospitals, as Danglars had given their cash to the Count. Danglars finally repents his crimes, and a softened Dantès forgives him and allows him to leave with his freedom and 50,000 francs.

## **Resolution and return to the Orient**[\[edit\]](#)

Maximilien Morrel, believing Valentine to be dead, contemplates suicide after her funeral. Dantès reveals his true identity and explains that he rescued Morrel's father from bankruptcy years earlier; he then tells Maximilien to reconsider his suicide, and Maximilien is saved.

On the island of Monte Cristo, Dantès presents Valentine to Maximilien and reveals the true sequence of events. Having found peace in reviewing his vengeance and deciding he has not played God, Dantès leaves the newly reunited couple part of his fortune on the island and departs for the East to find comfort and begin a new life with Haydée, who has declared her love for him. The

reader is left with a final thought: "l'humaine sagesse était tout entière dans ces deux mots: attendre et espérer!" ("all human wisdom is contained in these two words, 'Wait and Hope").

Character relationships in *The Count of Monte Cristo*

## Characters[\[edit\]](#)

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### Edmond Dantès and his aliases[\[edit\]](#)

- [Edmond Dantès](#) (born 1796): A sailor with good prospects, engaged to Mercédès. After his transformation into the Count of Monte Cristo, he reveals his true name to his enemies as each revenge is completed. During the course of the novel, he falls in love with Haydée.
- The Count of Monte Cristo: The identity Dantès assumes when he emerges from prison and acquires his vast fortune. As a result, the Count of Monte Cristo is usually associated with a coldness and bitterness that comes from an existence based solely on revenge.
- Chief Clerk of the banking firm Thomson & French, an Englishman.
- Lord Wilmore: An Englishman, and the persona in which Dantès performs random acts of generosity.
- Sinbad the Sailor: The persona that Dantès assumes when he saves the Morrel family and assumes while mixing with [smugglers](#) and [brigands](#).
- Abbé Busoni: The persona of an Italian priest with religious authority.
- Monsieur Zaccone: Dantès, in the guise of the Abbé Busoni, and again as Lord Wilmore, tells an investigator that this is the Count of Monte Cristo's true name.
- Number 34: The name given to him by the new governor of Château d'If. Finding it too tedious to learn Dantès' real name, he was called by the number of his cell.
- The Maltese Sailor: The name he was known by after his rescue by smugglers from the island of Tiboulén.

### Allies of Dantès[\[edit\]](#)

- Abbé Faria: Italian priest and sage. Imprisoned in the Château d'If. Edmond's dearest friend and his mentor and teacher while in prison. On his deathbed, reveals to Edmond the secret treasure hidden on Monte Cristo. Partially based on the historical [Abbé Faria](#).
- Giovanni Bertuccio: The Count of Monte Cristo's steward and very loyal servant. The Count first meets him in his role as Abbé Busoni, the confessor to Bertuccio, whose past is tied with M de Villefort. Bertuccio's sister-in-law Assunta was the adoptive mother of Benedetto.
- Luigi Vampa: Celebrated Italian bandit and fugitive.
- Peppino: Formerly a shepherd, becomes a member of Vampa's gang. The Count arranges for his public execution in Rome to be commuted, causing him to be loyal to the Count.
- Ali: Monte Cristo's mute Nubian slave.

- Baptistin: Monte Cristo's valet-de-chambre.
- Jacopo: A poor smuggler who helps Dantès survive after he escapes prison. When Jacopo proves his selfless loyalty, Dantès rewards him with his own ship and crew. (Jacopo Manfredi is a separate character, the "bankrupt of Trieste", whose financial failure contributes to the depletion of Danglars' fortune.)
- Haydée (sometimes spelled as Haidee): Monte Cristo's young, beautiful slave. She is the daughter of [Ali Tebelen](#). Buying her, enslaved because her father was killed, is part of Dantès' plan to get revenge on Fernand. At the end, she and Monte Cristo become lovers.

### Morcerf family[\[edit\]](#)

- Mercédès Mondego (née Herrera): A Catalan girl, Edmond Dantès' fiancée at the beginning of the story. She later marries Fernand and they have a son named Albert. She is consumed with guilt over Edmond's disappearance and is able to recognize him when she meets him again. In the end, she returns to Marseilles, living in the house that belonged to father Dantès, given to her by Monte-Cristo himself (to allow the woman a safe and stable place to spend in quietness the rest of her days, with a little financial support: the same francs the young Dantès, before the arrest, used to keep aside in view of their wedding, in a little bag remained hidden in the house's garden for all that time), praying for Albert, who left France for Africa as a soldier to start a new and more honorable life. Left all alone, she and Edmond talked for the last time: once young and in love, they choose to take different paths, saying farewell to each other. While the Count went away to complete his plan, Mercédès decides to stay in her hometown, with only her memories left of the happiest years, waiting for Albert's return, wishing for Edmond to find peace for his wounded heart and praying on her husband's grave for his soul. She is portrayed as a compassionate, kind and caring woman who prefers to think of her beloved ones than of herself.
- Fernand Mondego: Count de Morcerf (former Catalan fisherman in the Spanish village near Marseilles), Dantès' rival and cousin of Mercédès, for whom he swore undying love and the person he eventually marries. Fernand helped frame Edmond (by sending the accusation letter) in an ultimate desperate attempt to not lose Mercédès forever. He would later achieve the high rank of general in the French army and become a peer of France in the Chambre des Pairs, keeping secret his betrayal of the Pasha Ali Tebelen, and the selling into slavery of both his daughter Haydée and her mother Vasiliki. With the money earned he bought the title of "Count de Morcerf" to bring wealth and a more pleasant life for himself and his family. Through the book he shows a deep affection and care for his wife and son. He would meet his tragic end in the last chapters, by committing suicide, in the despair of having lost Mercédès and Albert, disowned by them when they discovered his hidden crimes.
- Albert de Morcerf: Son of Mercédès and Fernand. He is described as a very kind-hearted, joyful and carefree young man, and fond of Monte Cristo, whom he sees as a friend. After acknowledging the truth of his father's war crimes and the false accusation towards the sailor Edmond Dantès, he decides to leave his home with Mercédès and start a new life as a soldier under the name of "Herrera" (his mother's maiden name), leaving for Africa in search of fortune and to bring new honor to his family name.

### Danglars family[\[edit\]](#)

- Baron Danglars: Dantès' jealous junior officer and mastermind behind his imprisonment, later a wealthy banker.
- Madame Hermine Danglars (formerly Baroness Hermine de Nargonne née de Servieux): Once a widow, she had an affair with Gérard de Villefort, a married man. They had an illegitimate son, Benedetto.
- Eugénie Danglars: Daughter of Baron Danglars and Hermine Danglars. She is free-spirited and aspires to become an independent artist.

### Villefort family[\[edit\]](#)

- Gérard de Villefort: Chief deputy prosecutor who imprisons Dantès, later becoming acquaintances as Dantès enacts his revenge.
- Renée de Villefort, Renée de Saint-Méran: Gérard de Villefort's first wife, mother of Valentine.
- The Marquis and Marquise de Saint-Méran: Renée's parents.



- Valentine de Villefort: The daughter of Gérard de Villefort and his first wife, Renée. In love with Maximilien Morrel. Engaged to Baron Franz d'Épinay. She is 19 years old with chestnut hair, dark blue eyes, and "long white hands".
- Monsieur Noirtier de Villefort: The father of Gérard de Villefort and grandfather of Valentine, Édouard (and, without knowing it, Benedetto). A committed anti-royalist. He is paralysed and only able to communicate with his eyes, but retains his mental faculties and acts as protector to Valentine.
- Héloïse de Villefort: The murderous second wife of Gérard de Villefort, mother of Édouard.
- Édouard de Villefort (Edward): The only legitimate son of Villefort.
- Benedetto: The illegitimate son of de Villefort and Baroness Hermine Danglars (Hermine de Nargonne), raised by Bertuccio and his sister-in-law, Assunta, in Rogliano. Becomes "Andrea Cavalcanti" in Paris.

### Morrel family[\[edit\]](#)

- Pierre Morrel: Dantès' employer, owner of Morrel & Son.
- Maximilian Morrel: Son of Pierre Morrel, an army captain who becomes a friend of Dantès. In love with Valentine de Villefort.
- Julie Herbault: Daughter of Pierre Morrel, wife of Emmanuel Herbault.
- Emmanuel Herbault: An employee of Morrel & Son, who marries Julie Morrel and succeeds to the business.

### Other characters[\[edit\]](#)

- Gaspard Caderousse: Originally a tailor and later the owner of an inn, he was a neighbour and friend of Dantès who fails to protect him at the beginning of the story. The Count first rewards Caderousse with a valuable diamond. Caderousse then turns to serious crimes of murder, spends time in prison, and ends up being murdered by Andrea Cavalcanti.
- Madeleine Caderousse, née Radelle: Wife of Caderousse, who, according to the court, is responsible for the murder of a Jewish jeweller. She also dies in the incident.
- Louis Dantès: Edmond Dantès' father, who dies from starvation during his son's imprisonment.
- Baron Franz d'Épinay: A friend of Albert de Morcerf, first fiancé of Valentine de Villefort. Originally, Dumas wrote part of the story, including the events in Rome and the return of Albert de Morcerf and Franz d'Épinay to Paris, in the first person from Franz d'Épinay's point of view.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Lucien Debray: Secretary to the Minister of the Interior, a friend of Albert de Morcerf, and a lover of Madame Danglars, whom he provides with inside investment information, which she then passes on to her husband.
- Beauchamp: Journalist and Chief Editor of *l'Impartial*, and friend of Albert de Morcerf.
- Raoul, Baron de Château-Renaud: Member of a noble family and friend of Albert de Morcerf.
- Louise d'Armilly: Eugénie Danglars' music instructor and her intimate friend.
- Monsieur de Boville: Originally an inspector of prisons, later a detective in the Paris force, and still later the Receiver-General of the charities.
- Barrois: Old, trusted servant of Monsieur de Noirtier.
- Monsieur d'Avrigny: Family doctor treating the Villefort family.
- Major (also Marquis) Bartolomeo Cavalcanti: Old man who plays the role of Prince Andrea Cavalcanti's father.
- [Ali Tebelen](#) (Ali Tepelini in some versions): An Albanian nationalist leader, Pasha of Yanina, whom Fernand Mondego betrays, leading to Ali Pasha's murder at the hands of the Turks and the seizure of his kingdom. His wife Vasiliki and daughter Haydée are sold into slavery by Fernand.
- [Countess Teresa Guiccioli](#): Her name is not actually stated in the novel. She is referred to as "Countess G—".

### Themes[\[edit\]](#)

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The historical setting is a fundamental element of the book, an adventure story primarily concerned with themes of hope, justice, vengeance, mercy, and forgiveness. It centers on a man who is wrongfully imprisoned, escapes from jail, acquires a fortune, and sets about exacting revenge on those responsible for his imprisonment.

## Background to elements of the plot<sup>[edit]</sup>

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A short novel titled *Georges* by Dumas was published in 1843, before *The Count of Monte Cristo* was written. This novel is of particular interest to scholars because Dumas reused many of the ideas and [plot devices](#) in *The Count of Monte Cristo*.<sup>[4]</sup>

Dumas wrote that the germ of the idea of revenge as one theme in his novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* came from an anecdote (*Le Diamant et la Vengeance*<sup>[5]</sup>) published in a memoir of incidents in France in 1838, written by an archivist of the Paris police.<sup>[6][7]</sup> The archivist was [Jacques Peuchet](#), and the multi-volume book was called *Memoirs from the Archives of the Paris Police* in English.<sup>[8]</sup> Dumas included this essay in one of the editions of his novel published in 1846.<sup>[9]</sup>

Peuchet related the tale of a shoemaker, [Pierre Picaud](#), living in [Nîmes](#) in 1807, who was engaged to marry a rich woman when three jealous friends falsely accused him of being a spy on behalf of England in a period of wars between France and England. Picaud was placed under a form of house arrest in the [Fenestrelle Fort](#), where he served as a servant to a rich Italian cleric. When the cleric died, he left his fortune to Picaud, whom he had begun to treat as a son. Picaud then spent years plotting his revenge on the three men who were responsible for his misfortune. He stabbed the first with a dagger on which the words "Number One" were printed, and then he poisoned the second. The third man's son he lured into crime and his daughter into prostitution, finally stabbing the man himself. This third man, named Loupian, had married Picaud's fiancée while Picaud was under arrest.<sup>[5]</sup>

In another of the true stories reported by Ashton-Wolfe, Peuchet describes a poisoning in a family.<sup>[9]</sup> This story is also mentioned in the Pléiade edition of this novel,<sup>[7]</sup> and it probably served as a model for the chapter of the murders inside the Villefort family. The introduction to the Pléiade edition mentions other sources from real life: a man named [Abbé Faria](#) existed, was imprisoned but did not die in prison; he died in 1819 and left no large legacy to anyone.<sup>[7]</sup> As for Dantès, his fate is quite different from his model in Peuchet's book, since that model is murdered by the "Caderousse" of the plot.

## Publication<sup>[edit]</sup>

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*The Count of Monte Cristo* was originally published in the [Journal des Débats](#) in eighteen parts. Serialization ran from 28 August 1844 to 15 January 1846. The first edition in book form was published in Paris by *Pétion* in 18 volumes with the first two issued in 1844 and the remaining sixteen in 1845.<sup>[10]</sup> Most of the Belgian pirated editions, the first Paris edition and many others up to the *Lécrivain et Toubon* illustrated edition of 1860 feature a misspelling of the title with "Christo" used instead of "Cristo". The first edition to feature the correct spelling was the *L'Écho des Feuilletons* illustrated edition, Paris 1846. This edition featured plates by [Paul Gavarni](#) and [Tony Johannot](#) and was said to be "revised" and "corrected", although only the chapter structure appears to have been altered with an additional chapter entitled *La Maison des Allées de Meilhan* having been created by splitting *Le Départ* into two.<sup>[11]</sup>

## English translations<sup>[edit]</sup>

The first appearance of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in English was the first part of a serialization by W. Francis Ainsworth in volume VII of *Ainsworth's Magazine* published in 1845, although this was an abridged summary of the first part of the novel only and was entitled *The Prisoner of If*. Ainsworth translated the remaining chapters of the novel, again in abridged form, and issued these in volumes

VIII and IX of the magazine in 1845 and 1846 respectively.<sup>[11]</sup> Another abridged serialization appeared in [The London Journal](#) between 1846 and 1847.

The first single volume translation in English was an abridged edition with woodcuts published by Geo Pierce in January 1846 entitled *The Prisoner of If or The Revenge of Monte Christo*.<sup>[11]</sup>

In April 1846, volume three of the *Parlour Novelist*, Belfast, Ireland: Simms and M'Intyre, London: W S Orr and Company, featured the first part of an unabridged translation of the novel by [Emma Hardy](#). The remaining two parts would be issued as the Count of Monte Christo volumes I and II in volumes 8 and 9 of the *Parlour Novelist* respectively.<sup>[11]</sup>

The most common English translation is an anonymous one originally published in 1846 by [Chapman and Hall](#). This was originally released in ten weekly installments from March 1846 with six pages of letterpress and two illustrations by M Valentin.<sup>[12]</sup> The translation was released in book form with all twenty illustrations in two volumes in May 1846, a month after the release of the first part of the above-mentioned translation by Emma Hardy.<sup>[11]</sup> The translation follows the revised French edition of 1846, with the correct spelling of "Cristo" and the extra chapter *The House on the Allées de Meilhan*.

Most English editions of the novel follow the anonymous translation. In 1889, two of the major American publishers *Little Brown* and *T.Y. Crowell* updated the translation, correcting mistakes and revising the text to reflect the original serialized version. This resulted in the removal of the chapter *The House on the Allées de Meilhan*, with the text restored to the end of the chapter called *The Departure*.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

In 1955, [Collins](#) published an updated version of the anonymous translation which cut several passages, including a whole chapter entitled *The Past*, and renamed others.<sup>[15]</sup> This abridgment was republished by many Collins imprints and other publishers including the [Modern Library](#), [Vintage](#), and the 1998 [Oxford World's Classics](#) edition (later editions restored the text). In 2008 Oxford released a revised edition with translation by David Coward. The 2009 [Everyman's Library](#) edition reprints the original anonymous English translation that first appeared in 1846, with revisions by Peter Washington and an introduction by Umberto Eco.

In 1996, [Penguin Classics](#) published a new translation by Robin Buss. Buss' translation updated the language, making the text more accessible to modern readers, and restored content that was modified in the 1846 translation because of Victorian English social restrictions (for example, references to Eugénie's lesbian traits and behavior) to reflect Dumas' original version.

In addition to the above, there have also been many abridged translations such as an 1892 edition published by F.M. Lupton, translated by Henry L. Williams (this translation was also released by M.J. Ivers in 1892 with Williams using the pseudonym of Professor William Thiese).<sup>[11]</sup> A more recent abridgment is the translation by Lowell Bair for *Bantam Classics* in 1956.

Many abridged translations omit the Count's enthusiasm for [hashish](#). When serving a hashish jam to the young Frenchman Franz d'Épinay, the Count (calling himself [Sinbad the Sailor](#)), calls it, "nothing less than the ambrosia which [Hebe](#) served at the table of Jupiter." When he arrives in Paris, the Count brandishes an emerald box in which he carries small green pills compounded of hashish and opium which he uses for sleeplessness. (Source: Chapters 31, 32, 38, 40, 53 & 77 in the 117-chapter unabridged Pocket Books edition.) Dumas was a member of the [Club des Hashischins](#).

In June 2017, Manga Classics, an imprint of UDON Entertainment, published *The Count of Monte Cristo* as a faithfully adapted Manga edition of the classic novel.<sup>[16]</sup>

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