

ACT II

Scene 1 - The Carnival

Public Court, Paris (February 1831, two years later)

(There is a brief musical introduction, as we see the curtain rise on the chorus of actors in masks in a choreographed dance.)

{Song: The Carnival At Paris}

Male Revelers *When gentlemen come and call upon a lady.
Spring's in the air it's a heart they try to win.
When pretty ladies accept the invitation
Time for the dance and the party to begin.*

All *When gentlemen come and call upon a lady.
Spring's in the air it's a heart they try to win.
When pretty ladies accept the invitation.
Time of the dance and the party to begin.*

Female Revelers *Sometime a lady accepts an invitation.
Just to examine a gentleman by night.
Sometimes a lady accepts an invitation.
Just for some fun, for some dancing and delight.*

All *Hey! When gentlemen come and call upon a lady.
Spring's in the air it a heart they try to win.
When pretty ladies accept the invitation.
Time for the dance and the party to begin.*

(Party revelers drift on and off, and Albert Mondego appears with Franz in masks. He spies a beautiful young lady who lifts her mask in an expression of invitation. Albert lifts his mask in response as she runs off. Albert looks at Franz and rushes off to pursue her. They exit.)

The music changes, as lights fade to a dark, less festive atmosphere, and the revelers dissipate. We see the woman, laughing, run on stage turning to look back, as Albert enters in pursuit. Laughing, she runs off. Albert attempts to follow, but stops as a large, dirty-looking thug appears from the shadows in front of him. He turns around, and begins to run off in the opposite direction, where he stops again, as another brute appears from a dark place in the path of his retreat. Others begin to enter and he is quickly surrounded at all exit points on the stage. They begin to converge, taunting him, coming closer.

Out of the dark comes Dantes with his sword in hand. A fight ensues and Dantes, with Albert's help, intimidates the group of bandits with his quick work, and each bandit retreats.)

Albert My dear sir, thank you for your good assistance.

Dantes It was nothing, Monsieur. You should be careful roaming these streets at night.

Albert Pray, let me repay you. I insist that you dine with me this evening at my villa.

Dantes Oh, I am sorry, but that is out of the question. My plans make it necessary that I decline your kind offer. And even so, I am delayed as it is. (He begins to leave)

Albert But wait. Then you must come to my home in Marseilles, where my family will host a dinner in your honor.

Dantes That is hardly necessary.

Albert Please sir, forgive me. But I shall never forget the important service you have rendered me; and also that to you I am indebted even for my life.

Dantes You are indebted to me for nothing. The worst of the loss would have been a small sum of money, by the looks of them. These bandits were more interested in your father's pocketbook than your life.

Albert You know my father?

Dantes No, but I can only assume that he has the funds to pay a good son's ransom.

Albert This is true. I am Viscount Albert de Morcerf, and my father is Count Fernand de Morcerf, the most respected merchant in Marseilles.

Dantes I am the Count of Monte Cristo, and humbly make your acquaintance.

Albert Good Count, I humbly ask that you accept my invitation, as it will due me the honor of demonstrating my gratitude for your kind intercession.

Dantes Very well, Viscount. I will accept your offer with the same sincerity in which it is made. In fact, I will go farther, and ask for your assistance.

Albert Oh pray, name it.

Dantes You say you are from Marseilles.

Albert Indeed, good sir.

Dantes I am wholly a stranger to Marseilles, and have for some time, resolved to begin a small enterprise there. In fact, I have already found a villa and hope to be there soon.

Albert My father possesses considerable influence, both at the court of France and Madrid, and I place my best services at your disposal.

Dantes I am most grateful.

Albert Here is my card. You shall come to our home within two weeks time, if that is suitable.

Dantes I have much to do in two weeks, but I will call on you within the month, Viscount. In fact, if you are willing, you can help me organize a great celebration I have wanted to have for an honored friend. It would be a terrific way to introduce him to the town's elite.

Albert Count, I am at your service.

Dantes But come. This is no place to remain. You must move to a more familiar place, and I must be off as I am behind my schedule.

Albert Until we see each other again. Good night, good sir.

(Albert exits as Dantes moves stage right, as to leave. He is quietly joined by Louis and Jaco. He hands them each a bag of money as they exit together.)

Dantes And so it begins.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 2 – The "Coming Out" Party
The Count of Monte Cristo's Home, Marseilles (Two months later)

(Curtain opens on the Count's lavish home, where participants at a party are dancing. At the end of the dance, all move toward servants who are distributing champagne. Albert enters with servant. Music is Playing – **The Party Underscore 1**)

Albert You are sure everything is in order. The Mayor's carriage is to be received at a quarter past, and his Excellency, the King's prosecutor will arrive shortly.

Caderousse Yes, Viscount. We are ready.

Albert Has the Count arrived?

Caderousse No, monsieur. He will be arriving late, but he has asked that you not concern yourself. He promises to arrive in time to ensure his guests are well provided for.

Announcer The Countess de Morcerf.

(Mercedes enters.)

Albert Mother.

Mercedes My good son.

(He kisses her hand. She embraces him.)

Albert Father has not yet arrived.

Mercedes Your father is often detained.

Albert And the Count has not yet arrived, but I look forward to introducing you, Mother.

Mercedes Who is this Count, Albert?

Albert Seventeen!

Mercedes Why, what do you mean?

Albert You are the seventeenth person who has asked me that question, this evening. The Count is in fashion; I congratulate him for that.

Mercedes Is that your answer?

Albert Worry not, Mother. I assure you, he is a very honorable man.

Mercedes Any gentleman that saves the life of my son is honorable. But there is much to learn before you know a man's heart.

Announcer The Baron and Baroness Danglars.

(Danglars and his wife enter. They are followed by Jaco, who is now Danglars' servant, He waits at the entrance.)

Albert Monsieur and Baroness Danglars, welcome.

M Danglars (Very excited) Then it's true, young sir. You and the Count are as close as thieves. I am dying to know who he is.

Mercedes Good evening, Baron and Baroness.

M Danglars Good evening, Countess. Have you heard? I am told this is a Venetian, the son of a highly decorated officer.

Announcer Monsieur and Madame de Villefort.

(Villefort and his wife enter. Albert goes to welcome the Procureur and his wife.)

M Danglars And his wealth comes from a family gold mine.

Mercedes Indeed.

M Danglars You must convince your son to give me all the particulars. I must be the first to know, as it will make me the most popular woman here tonight.

Danglars Good evening, Procureur. Madame de Villefort.

M Villefort (to Albert) Well, has he arrived? Where is the good Count?

Albert He has not yet arrived, Madame.

M Villefort Indeed. No doubt wishing to be fashionably late. How rude to arrive after your honored guests.

M Danglars I am on pins and needles! I have been unable to get Albert to move; perhaps you will have better luck.

Albert Excuse me, as I have matters to attend to. Mother, will you assist me?

Announcer Major and Madame Cavalcanti.

(Albert and Mercedes exit.)

M Villefort I have my own sources, Baroness. (Quietly, in confidence) I have heard he has another name besides Monte Cristo.

M Danglars I have not heard it.

M Villefort You see, my information is better than yours. His name is Zaccone; he is Maltese and the son of a ship owner.

Villefort Really, my dear. Perhaps you should relate all this aloud; you would have the greatest success.

M Villefort (Ignoring him) I have heard he served in India, discovered a platinum mine in Thessaly, and came to France to establish a mineral water cure at Auteuil.

Announcer The Count de Morcerf.

(Fernand enters.)

M Danglars (she pulls M Villefort aside) Well, this is indeed news! Am I allowed to repeat it?

M Villefort (quietly) Yes, but cautiously, and do not say I told you.

(They continue to chat quietly.)

Fernand Good evening, Danglars, Procureur. Splendid evening isn't it.

Danglars A good evening to you, Count.

Villefort (quietly) Well, this is a chance gathering, is it not?

Fernand How so?

Danglars That the three of us should receive invitations to the same gathering, by a foreigner we know little of.

Fernand As usual, you worry unnecessarily. Albert was responsible for putting together the list. He is so entrapped by this Count's visage, that every dignitary in Marseilles and neighboring town has been invited.

Villefort You sound ungrateful, my good Count. He did, after all, save him from kidnapers and you from paying a sizeable ransom. Excuse me.

(Villefort turns to chat with other guests)

Fernand (to himself) Yes, fortunate.

Danglars Let us find a more secluded spot, shall we?

Announcer Monsieur and Madame Chateau-Renaud.

(Fernand and Danglars move to the side, as guests continue to move and mingle.)

Danglars (Quietly) I am troubled by your recent outing. My informers tell me you have been taking risks that are completely unnecessary.

Fernand And how have you learned this?

Danglars Don't be foolish, Fernand. I know everything that happens on these docks. You should know that by now. Or have you forgotten my scrupulous tendencies.

Fernand As usual, you worry over nothing.

Villefort (rejoining them) So who do you think this Count is? It's a shame we cannot arrest him as a vagabond, on the pretext that he is too rich.

Fernand We will know soon enough. If you will excuse me.

(Fernand exits. Villefort joins Danglars.)

Danglars He is becoming more and more a liability.

Villefort You said you could manage it.

Danglars I am managing it. But we may have to find a different solution if matters get worse.

Villefort Excuse me.

Danglars Jaco!

Jaco Yes, Monsieur.

Danglars If I know our friend, Count Mondego, he will leave the party early. When he leaves, follow him. I want to know every step he takes between here and when he arrives home.

Jaco Yes, Monsieur.

(Jaco returns to his position by the door as trumpets sound. Several liveried servants, including Caderousse enter and stand at the ready, as the next announcement is made)

Announcer Honor guests, The Count of Monte Cristo!

(Music begins as servants strew rose petals in front of the entrance as two women enter in Persian attire dancing. The music sets the rhythm for the dance, and it swells to a climactic crescendo as Dantes enters. There is great “Ahhhh” from the guests and much murmuring as he enters with a beautifully dressed, young Persian woman, Haydee, on his arm. She is adorned in a traditional dress from her country, though elaborately so, and she has a magnificent diamond necklace hanging around her neck. Dantes presents her to the guests, and she lightly descends the steps to Caderousse, who is waiting for her. She takes his arm.)

Dantes (to the crowd) Welcome to my home. It is with great humility and gratitude that I share my modest rooms with such dignitaries and honored guests. I apologize for my delay, but look forward to making up for my tardiness with a rich bounty that should satisfy and delight. Our honored guest, the new Mayor of Marseilles, will be joining us before the evening’s end, and I look forward to making his first evening with us a memorable one. Until then, please eat, drink and share in each other’s good company.

(The crowd applauds, and returns to conversation, as Dantes descends the stairs. Jaco escorts Haydee off stage.)

Ah, you must be the Baron and Baroness (kisses her hand).

M Danglars (giggling) What a delight, Count. Your rooms are absolutely delicious.

Danglars Yes, Count, it is a pleasure to be here. But you may call me Monsieur. I care little for titles.

Dantes Of course, for without it, you would still be a millionaire.

Danglars A title I well prefer.

Dantes (to Villefort) Forgive me, Procureur. Welcome. I am honored that you and your wife have responded favorably to our meager invitation.

(Madame Villefort joins Villefort.)

Villefort Meager indeed. I have never received a more appropriate extension of hospitality. It should be us welcoming you, good Count. Allow me to introduce my wife, Madame de Villefort.

Dantes It is indeed an enormous pleasure (kissing her hand).

M Villefort (Clearly charmed) Well, Count. The pleasure is mine. I have yet to meet the Countess. Will she be joining us?

Dantes There is no Countess, Madame. Alas, I am an unfortunate bachelor, and must confess have had little luck in love.

M Danglars Good sir, you need not worry about that. There is a host of reputable, young ladies. I am known particularly for my assistance in this area, if you are inclined...

Danglars Yes, dear. There will be plenty of time for that. Perhaps you and Madame de Villefort would like to see the toilette.

Villefort Yes, I am sure the Count has adequate rooms that you would insist on exploring.

(They exit, not at all pleased. Albert enters.)

Albert Count! You have arrived. I fear we have been sadly lacking without you. But everything is in order, now that you are here.

Dantes Yes, forgive my delay, but it was unavoidable.

Albert Ah, here is my mother. Mother, I would like you to meet the Count of Monte Cristo.

(Mercedes has entered and stopped, clearly seeing him from across the room. She is in shock, and doesn't move. She remains looking at Dantes. Albert moves to her side.)

Mother?

Villefort (remains where he is) Good heavens, Countess, are you ill, or is it the heat of the room that affects you?

Albert Are you ill, mother?

Mercedes (Recovering) No, but I feel some emotion on seeing, for the first time, the man who has saved me from tears and desolation.

Dantes Forgive me Countess. These flowers throw out such violent perfumes when first cut, at least until one is used to them.

Mercedes Of course. Monsieur, I owe to you the life of my son, and for this may you be blessed.

Dantes Madame, to save a man, to spare a father's feelings or a mother's sensibility, is not to do a good action, but a simple deed of humanity.

Mercedes It is very fortunate for my son, Monsieur that he found such a friend, and I thank God for it.

(Fernand enters.)

Albert And of course, you have heard of my father, as I have spoken of him often. Here he is. Father, I have the honor of presenting to you the Count of Monte Cristo.

Fernand (without hesitation) Welcome to Marseilles, Count. In protecting our only heir, you have earned our eternal gratitude.

Dantes It is a great honor to meet a man whose merit equals his reputation, and to whom fortune has for once been equitable.

Fernand (pauses) Could it be that our paths have crossed, Count? Though not plain, you strike me as familiar.

Dantes Perhaps, but it has been years since I've been in Marseilles. Among many places in Asia, Italy and Spain, I've kept mainly to the islands off France.

Fernand Is that so? (A pause) Well, good Count, I must retire.

Albert Must you leave, father.

Fernand Forgive me, for I have early morning business, and we must return to our rooms.

Mercedes No, I will stay. Go, if you must, and we will do our best to bear your absence.

Fernand Good night, my dear (kisses her cheek). Count?

(Dantes nods in response. Fernand exits and Jaco follows shortly after.)

Mercedes Count, will you oblige me with your arm?

Dantes Of course.

(Hesitantly, he extends his arm. She takes it and they begin to walk.)

Mercedes You are married then?

Dantes I, married? Who has told you such a thing?

Mercedes I am told you entered with a beautiful young lady on your arm. You have created quite a stir.

Dantes She is a slave whom I bought at Constantinople, Countess. I have adopted her as my daughter, having no one else to love in the world.

Mercedes You live alone, then?

Dantes I do.

Mercedes You have no sister - no son - no mother?

Dantes I have no one.

Mercedes How can you exist without any one to attach you to life?

Dantes It is not my fault, Madame. At Malta, I loved a young girl, was at the point of marrying her, when war came and carried me away. I thought she loved me well enough to wait for me, and even to remain faithful to my memory. When I returned she was married.

Mercedes Yes, and you have preserved this love in your heart still. One can only truly love once. Did you ever see her again?

Dantes Never.

(Looking at each other. There is a pause)

Albert Count, the Mayor has arrived.

Dantes Thank you, Madame. As you can see, I must go.

Mercedes (holding on to him) We shall have the pleasure another time. You promise that?

(Dantes does not appear to respond, and then exits)

Albert Mother, are you all right?

Mercedes I am fine, my son. What is this name of Monte Cristo? Is it a family name, the name of the estate, or a simple title?

Albert I believe it is merely a title, although the general opinion is that the Count is a man of very high distinction.

Mercedes Be careful, my son.

Albert Yes, of course, Mother. You look pale. Let me get you something.

(Albert exits)

{Song: Ears Don't Lie}

Mercedes *Steady now dear Mercedes,
This vision from year's gone by,*

*It's hard to trust your eyes,
But there is one sense that never lies.*

*Sure, reliable
Undeniable
The sound of your sweet voice,
Warm and sincere.*

*True, your voice is rough and worn,
Changed by the years,
But you cannot hide,
The voice of the
One inside.
Just one reply,
Memory provides,
Time cannot hide,
For ears don't lie.*

*Life, reflection past
Why does your life last?
Life, from prison born,
Dark and unclear.*

*True, your clothes are rich and grand,
Tall, poised, refined.
But it cannot fool,
This feeling for the
Man inside.
Your aging bride,
Love that never died,
Hiding inside,
For ears don't lie.*

*I have changed with time,
Worn by the years,
What was fresh and fair,
Plagued with care,
Formed by despair.*

*Me, worn by the years
Drawn, fading veneer
Rings beneath my eyes
Cares on every line.*

*It is true, my face is drawn
Weary with remorse
But it cannot hide the
Love denied*

*For the man inside
On faith rely
Your aging bride
Just one reply
For ears don't lie*

*You cannot hide
Though you have tried
Just one reply
You can't deny
For ears don't lie
For ears don't lie
For ears don't lie.*

(Albert enters with a beverage for Mercedes, which she accepts graciously. The guests come on from all sides, in anticipation of the Mayor's arrival. Music is playing: **The Part Underscore 2**).

Announcer Dukes and Duchesses, Counts and Countesses, honored guests; The Mayor of Marseilles.

(Louis Vampa enters with much pomp and ceremony. He is clearly having a good time).

Louis (with a great deal of flare and an incredible lisp.) It is with great satisfaction and pleasure that I see you all. Thank you sincerely for your kind hospitality.

Dantes Welcome, good mayor.

(Louis smiles and winks, as the lights blackout. Music for Scene Change: **2D Scene Change**)

Scene 3 – The Bait
A dock in Marseilles (later that evening)

(As lights come up, a couple of dockworkers are loading a shipment onto a cart. As the music begins, four prostitutes enter.)

{Song: How ‘Bout a Lay Dear?}

Prostitutes

*How ‘bout a lay dear?
Have it your way dear?
Come steal a sip.
Come take a dip.*

*I’ll be your date, sweet.
For the right rate, sweet.
No need for shame,
Come quench the flame.*

*Why wait for virtue to bend its will?
Come share your need and apply your skill,
Take your fill.*

*How ‘bout a poke dear?
One little stoke dear?
You’re overdue
It’s just a sou or two.*

Prostitute #1

*You know life is hard and lonely,
Come and taste its wares.
I can comfort and console,
Wrap you in my tender folds.*

Prostitute #2

*I am warm and satisfying
Fiery, sleek and gratifying
I will cede your gentle probes,
Nestle in my velvet globes.*

All

*How ‘bout a lay dear?
Have it your way dear?
Come test a nip,
It’s worth the trip.*

*Come find the nook, love.
You bring the hook, love.
I’ll be the nurse
You bring the purse.*

I’ll be your guide for a penny,

*Help you to conquer the gate of plenty,
Once or many.*

*Please don't delay, dear
I am your prey, dear
You're overdue
It's just a sou or two.*

*It's late
Why wait
One date
One rate
It's just a sou or two.*

(As the song ends, three men have entered with pistols drawn. The prostitutes quickly move to a safe place on stage. The pistols are trained on the two dockworkers carrying a crate.)

Caderousse Monsieur, this is strange happening to be delivering a cargo so late at night.

Dockworker #1 Pardon, Monsieur, I only do what I am told.

Caderousse Then I will offer you three hundred sou to leave your work and tell no one of our faces.

Dockworker #2 But Monsieur...

Caderousse (Aiming his pistol) This is a fixed price, unless you wish to pay with your lives.

(Both dockworkers walk off with one of the smugglers, and Fernand enters)

Fernand Well done. You were correct about the timing on the shipment. We will see whether you were correct about its contents.

(Fernand opens a casement and is rewarded with a handful of gold coins.)

Spanish gold. Almost too good to be true. You are Louis' man, no?

Caderousse Yes, Monsieur.

Fernand (pulls a knife). So, how does a sailor of a cheap smuggler come to know so much about a shipment as rich as this one? Curious, wouldn't you agree?

Caderousse This shipment is little to him. I assure you, the Count would not have been so careless if this was a cargo of great worth.

Fernand (becomes less threatening with the knife as he slowly steps away from Caderousse) And how did you come to know so much about this Count of Monte Cristo?

Caderousse Louis and the Count were taught by priests from the same Spanish order. I don't believe he is a Count at all. He was in rags when we met him: calls himself Zarccone. However, he is truly a rich man, and this is just a small part of his wealth.

Fernand (thinking) Your name is Caderousse?

Caderousse Yes, Monsieur.

Fernand For a smuggler, you are certainly taking a great chance. You must hate your master mightily to keep such a valuable cargo from his coffers.

Caderousse I am not a peasant, Monsieur. Everyone knows you control everyone and everything that comes in and out of Marseilles. I can be of great assistance, if I am rewarded. And then I will have no need of Louis Vampa.

Fernand We will soon see what you can do. But tonight, we will celebrate our good fortune.

(Several prostitutes drift onto stage, and one joins Fernand's as a couple of others join Caderousse.)

It's important to celebrate good fortune, yes?

Prostitute #3 Of course, Monsieur.

Fernand Yes, of course.

{Reprise: How 'Bout a Lay Dear?}

Prostitutes *It's late*
Why wait
One date
One rate
It's just a sou or two.

(As the song ends, Fernand, Caderousse and entourage follow. The music changes as Jaco steps out of the shadows and then lights fade.)

Scene 4 - The Confrontation

The Count of Monte Cristo's bedroom (same evening)

(The curtain opens on Dantes' bedroom. It is late, and he is preparing to retire, but in deep contemplation with his lost parents, the Abbe and Camille, who are ghost-like figures up and above Dantes.)

{Song: 4A Bedroom Underscore}

Dantes *I thought my heart was dead,
But it was only sleeping.
Touched by a woman's voice,
A voice like sorrow weeping.*

(Mercedes enters.)

Mercedes Forgive me for the intrusion, Count. I found myself lost within your rooms, and have seemed to wander into your closet, again forgive me. I know the hour is late, and I have little excuse for this disruption other than to thank you again for your kind hospitality this evening.

Dantes It was mine to give.

Mercedes Edmond? Is it you, Edmond?

Dantes Forgive me, Madame? What name do you use?

Mercedes Yours, Edmond, which I have not forgotten.

Dantes I am sorry, but you are deceived. I am not who you wish me to be, Madame de Morcerf.

Mercedes Edmond, it is not Madame de Morcerf who comes to you, it is Mercedes.

Dantes Mercedes is dead!

Mercedes Mercedes lives, sir, and she remembers. For she alone recognized you. Even before she saw you - by your voice, Edmond - by the simple sound of your voice.

Dantes My voice?

Mercedes And from that moment she has watched you, feared you – loved you.

Dantes Mercedes? I have uttered that name with the groan of sorrow, with the effort of despair -- Mercedes. There is a stool upon which I used to sit; a mark of blood made where I dashed my head against the wall; drawings I made in hopes that I would someday find my mother living and my Mercedes still free. I did not reckon upon hunger and infidelity!

Mercedes And what was I supposed to do, Edmond?

Dantes Wait!

Mercedes Wait? Wait for death? I do not blame you, Edmond, for hating me. But I too, Edmond – oh, believe me - guilty as I am - I, too, have suffered much! To lose you was anguish, but to know so little of your fate was worse...

Dantes True, Madame, you know little, even now. I remained for fourteen years within a quarter of a league of you, in a dungeon in the Chateau d'If. You do not know that every day of those fourteen years I renewed my vow of love and vengeance; and yet I was not aware that you had married Fernand, my betrayer, and that my mother had died of hunger!

Mercedes I am sorry, Edmond.

Dantes And that is why, I have sworn to revenge myself...

Mercedes Edmond, since that day I have adored your name, have respected your memory. If you knew all the prayers I have addressed to God for you while I thought you were living -- and since when I was told of your death. Yes, your death! I imagined your body buried at the foot of some gloomy tower, or cast to the bottom of a pit by hateful jailers, and I wept! What could I do for you, Edmond, besides pray and weep?

Dantes Words, just words.

Mercedes They are all I have, Edmond. I have but one desire left in this world - the happiness of my son. He possesses a noble heart, and he is innocent of the sins of his father.

Dantes Is he?

Mercedes Had you more time to know him, Edmond, you would understand his worth to the world. But, don't do it for that. Do it because his mother was once a woman who loved you, and promised to make your world sublime – no matter how much I have failed. Recognize the goodness that once was in me that lives in him – and let that goodness live on.

Dantes But have you no request to make for yourself, Mercedes?

Mercedes For myself I want nothing. I live, between two graves: one that is Edmond Dantes, lost to me; the other of the man self-seeking, who most likely will die by the hand of Edmond Dantes.

Dantes Have you lost all hope?

Mercedes (removing her cowl) See, misfortune has silvered my hair, my eyes have shed so many tears that they are encircled by a rim of purple, and my brow is wrinkled. But you, Edmond - you are still young, handsome, dignified; it is because you have had faith. But as for me, I have been a coward.

Dantes (going to her) No, Mercedes, I am the wretch. I taught my arm to slay, my eyes to see keenly, and my mouth to speak the words of hate. I became cunning, and wicked. Then I launched out into the path and I overcame every obstacle, to reach my goal. All, but one.

Mercedes What obstacle?

Dantes You, Mercedes. You, who have softened a hardened heart; you, who remind me of what I have been -- who can still shake my being with your every word. You, who I could never stop loving.

(He touches her.)

{Song: It Must Be You}

Dantes *Oh, can this really be your face?
Oh, can this really be your eyes?
How can I satisfy my mind?
Convince it that you're not a lie.*

*A strong wind on a listless sea,
A shower on a summer night.
You stir my heart to pump and beat again.
You rouse my soul to dream and leap again.*

*Can you be real?
Can it be true?
Can this be you?*

*Your face, your nose, your mouth,
The eyes that grip me now,
It must be you!*

Mercedes *Oh, can this really be your arms?
Oh, can this really be your hands?
How can this truly be your touch?
It's hard for me to comprehend.*

*A bell chime in the chapel keep,
A signal from the harbor watch,
You stir my heart to yearn for love again,
You rouse my soul to long for faith again.*

*Can you be real?
Can this be true?
Can it be you?*

*The tenderness revealed,
The way you make me feel,
It must be you.*

Both *I begin to see once more
Lost at sea and finding shore
You appear like a fervent light
Your day has pierced my night*

Dantes *In darkness, I could feel you near.*
Mercedes *I prayed for you amidst the tears.*
Dantes *It gave me faith throughout the years.*
Mercedes *I prayed that you would conquer fear.*

Mercedes *How can we bridge the gorge of time?*
Dantes *Is this the price of time?*
Mercedes *Can I pretend to make you mine?*
Dantes *Can hope begin to shine?*

Dantes *It's like a blinding, clear blue sky.*
Mercedes *Is there a chance that shame will die?*
Dantes *You know that love can never lie*
Mercedes *Love can heal if you will try.*

Dantes *All that I know is that you're here again.*
Mercedes *You're at my side and in my arms again.*

(They dance to a waltz)

Both *Only loneliness, only pain
Then you appear like a gentle rain
Like the promise of the morning dew
Is there hope to start anew?*

*Can this be real?
Can this be true?
You standing there?*

Mercedes *Your voice...*
Dantes *Your face...*
Mercedes *Your brow...*
Both *The way I feel right now – it must be you.*

(They kiss, as lights fade. Music for Scene Change: **4C Scene Change Underscore**)

Scene 5 - The Lift
Office of the Chief Prosecutor (the next morning)

(Villefort is sitting at his desk. He is quiet and seems to be in contemplation. His lieutenant enters and interrupts his quiet repose.)

Lieutenant Procureur, forgive me...

Villefort I believe I said I did not want to be disturbed.

Lieutenant Yes please forgive me, Procureur. Baron Danglars wishes an audience. He says it's a very urgent manner.

Villefort Hmm. Yes, yes of course.

(Villefort finishes song. Danglars enters.)

Danglars Well, did you hear? He has taken a shipment from this Count of Monte Cristo.

Villefort And how do you know it was Fernand?

Danglars Don't be an idiot. I know everything that happens on these docks. You know that - every activity meticulously documented (pulls out a key on a string that he twirls around his finger). Even activities that I should know little about, my dear Procureur.

Villefort You're threats are lost on me, Baron.

Danglars The Count introduced the new Mayor to the entire society last night. How do you know whether or not he has connections to the King or his office? He may have spies in this very place?

Villefort I assure you, Baron, that is impossible. I presume you have already gathered reports, yes?

Danglars Monte Cristo is the name of an island, not a family name. That he is the son of a rich shipbuilder in Malta.

Villefort Do you know this Island of Monte Cristo?

Danglars It is a rock - an island without inhabitants or garrison, the resort of smugglers of all nations, and pirates of every flag.

Villefort And why has the Count bought a rock?

Danglars For the sake of being a Count. In Italy one must have territorial possessions to be one.

Villefort I have heard similar stories, but as you are aware, I am not content with vague reports.

Danglars Regardless, lifting his goods is no small matter. What are we going to do?

(There is a knock.)

Villefort Enter.

(Lieutenant enters.)

Lieutenant Forgive me, Procureur. (Hands card to Villefort)

Villefort What do you suggest I do? (Reads card) The Count of Monte Cristo. Please, show him in.

Danglars Fernand is a menace. I believe it is time to sever this blemish.

Villefort This blemish could be a vital organ, bringing death to the entire remains.

(Dantes enters with Caderousse.)

Good morning, Count.

Dantes Procureur. Baron Danglars. (Back to Villefort) I am sorry to have to report an unfortunate circumstance.

Villefort Yes, I have heard.

Dantes I was told that your docks were safe.

Villefort I assure you, Count, if I had some knowledge of your shipment, I would have been able to offer you the assistance you required. Unhappily, bringing it ashore in the dead of night was no assurance of its safety. Though our docks are safe, there is always a need for precautions. I assure you that we can deliver safe passage of future shipments as needed.

Dantes The shipment was a trifle, but future shipments may not be as insignificant.

Danglars I must confess to you, Count, that I am acquainted with most of the great fortunes of Europe. May I presume to ask whether you have long possessed yours?

Dantes It has been in the family a very long while, a treasure of sorts untouched for many years, during which the accumulated interest has doubled the capital.

Danglars Please know that I am here to be of service, if needed.

Dantes Yes, thank you, Baron. In fact, I am starting a small business venture in precious metals, and will require a small advance. My bankers, Thomas & French, have given me a letter of credit. I am told you can honor it.

Danglars Yes, of course, Count.

(Caderousse hands him the letter.)

I have many dealings with Thomas & French, and am prepared to accept their letter. (Reading the letter) But I confess I do not quite comprehend its meaning.

Dantes Indeed?

Danglars Well, this letter gives the Count of Monte Cristo unlimited credit on our house.

Dantes Is it possible that Thomas & French are not looked upon as safe and solvent bankers?

Danglars Thomas & French is perfectly solvent, but the word unlimited, in financial affairs, is so extremely vague.

Dantes So, Thomas & French set no bounds to their engagements while those of M. Danglars have their limits?

Danglars (drawing himself up) Monsieur, the extent of my resources has never yet been questioned.

Dantes Very well, I am pleased to hear it.

Danglars What sum do you propose to draw upon me? Let me beg of you not to hesitate in naming your wishes; even if were you to require a million.

Dantes I beg your pardon? A million? Excuse my smiling when you speak of a sum I am in the habit of carrying in my pocket book or dressing-case.

(Dantes draws out two bank notes of 500,000 each. He hands the notes to Danglars who begins to tremble.)

Danglars Well, suggest a sum and it shall be done.

Dantes May I suggest six millions...

Danglars Six millions?

Dantes Yes, as I do not intend to be in Marseilles for longer than a few months. However, if more is needed, my steward will call upon you.

(Danglars' legs become weak, and he begins to shrink.)

Caderousse Are you well, sir?

(Caderousse grabs him to steady him. In the process, he lifts the key.)

Danglars Huh? Oh yes, quite.

Dantes Unhand him, rogue.

(He pulls Caderousse away and cuffs him across the face.)

This man is a Baron and you will not forget your place, slave! I am heartily sorry for his forwardness, Monsieur.

Danglars It was nothing.

Dantes Indeed, but a servant should know his place. I can guarantee that swift reprisals are forthcoming. Well, I must be off. I have a riding appointment with the Viscount. Baron, my servant will remain to arrange a convenient time to come to your offices for the funds I require. I trust that you will notify me of any misconduct. Good day, Procureur.

Villefort Of course. Good day, Count.

(Dantes exits. Danglars and Villefort exchange a glance.)

Please forgive me, Baron. I am already behind my time for a meeting with the new Mayor. (He grabs his hat and cloak.)

Danglars Good morning, Procureur.

(Villefort exits, leaving Danglars and Caderousse on the stage)

Danglars Well, it sounds as if your fate has been left in my hands.

Caderousse Sir?

Danglars We will know shortly whether you have the facilities to be of any assistance. Pity for you if you are not. Well, we will see. First, you will do a little favor for me, and then we will determine how valuable you can be.

(Lights fade. Music for Scene Change: **5A Scene Change Underscore**)

Scene 6 – The Trap

The home of Fernand Mondego (later that morning)

(Fernand enters.)

Male Servant #1 Good morning, Count.

Fernand I will breakfast in my rooms. Please tell the Countess to join me.

Male Servant #1 I am sorry, Monsieur. The Countess is not home. I thought she was with you.

Fernand Thought? (cuffs him). That will teach you to think, idiot. Find her – now! Notify me when do.

(Fernand exits.)

(Song: Duty with a Smile)

Male Servant #1 *'Take my horse, fiend
Clean my boots
Breakfast in my rooms'*

Male Servant #2 *Horses have a better life*
Male Servant #3 *They get brushed and groomed*

Female Servant #1 *'Get my hat and cape, you witch,'
Without a pat or please*

Female Servant #2 *Don't look good at dressing time
Or you'll be on your knees.*

House Steward *Master gets his way dear
Calls til gratified.*

Female Servant #1 *Whips you till your black and blue*
Male Servant #2 *Til he's pacified*

House Steward *While he beats you
Don't complain
He won't be denied.*

All Servants *Hurry servant
Master calls
Mind it, don't delay*

*Don't be slow oh don't be proud
Or there'll be hell to pay*

Female Servant #2	<i>Will guests arrive today?</i>
Female Servant #1	<i>Tea without delay</i>
Male Servant #2	<i>Table set for ten</i>
Male Servant #1	<i>Spilled the wine again, oh</i>
All servants	<i>In the study, beat you bloody, All comply cause We perform our duties for one Dark and vile</i>
House Steward	<i>You want more, so Do your chore, with</i>
All Servants	<i>Grace and style cause We perform our duties with a smile.</i>
Female Servant #1	<i>Never leave the nasty bastard waiting This rat will have his meat o' pace We can never please the ugly villain This cutpurse, bore and vicious nave.</i>
All Servants	<i>Never speak to master dung heap loudly Give way as he descends the stairs You must not see any calling suitors</i>
Female Servant #2	<i>But bear the bastard's lustful stares</i>
House Steward	<i>Hurry servant Master calls Mind it, now be quick.</i>
	<i>Don't you pause when he is drunk Or plan to take a kick</i>
Female Servant #1	<i>Putting on the airs</i>
Female Servant #2	<i>Nothing noble there</i>
Male Servant #3	<i>Blood as hot as swine though</i>
Male Servant #4	<i>No more blue then mine</i>
All Servants	<i>He is viscous We're propitious All the while for We perform our duties without Hate or guile</i>
	<i>No complaints and No restraints we're Versatile in How we do our duties with a smile.</i>

*We don't grouse de-
Spite the louse so
Full of bile cause
We perform our duties with a smile*

(Fernand reenters. Servants scurry.)

Fernand Have you found her?

Male Servant #1 No sir, but we have everyone searching...

Mercedes enters with Man Servant #4. He takes her hat and cape, and exits.)

Fernand Ah, I see you have already ventured out this morning, Madame. Out for an early morning ride?

Mercedes Yes, the dawning light is beautiful, and I wished to see the dew shining on the morning blossoms.

Fernand (to the servant.) That is all.

Male Servant #1 Monsieur.

(Servant leaves)

Fernand (grabs her) Then why is it that you are not wearing your riding attire, my dear?

Mercedes Please let me go.

Fernand I have no doubt that you were riding, but where you were riding is a question.

Mercedes (quietly) Stop, you are hurting me.

Fernand You are stupid to be so casual with your affections. You must know that I am aware of your comings and goings.

Mercedes And I of yours.

(Fernand strikes her. Mercedes falls.)

Fernand You forget yourself, Madame. A man's lust is just that – a need brought on by a wife's virtue. A women's itch is disgusting, and you are in danger of losing your righteous glow.

Mercedes My sins are none of your concern.

Fernand The sins of the mother may become the sins of the son.

Mercedes (getting up with strength) Do not threaten me. You made an oath. You promised that you would protect Albert from your disgraceful dealings.

Fernand Scorn does not aid your lovely, but aging face, Madame.

(Albert from off stage.)

Albert Father?

Fernand (quietly) Talk of the devil and...

(Albert enters.)

Albert Oh, there you are. Good morning, Mother. The Count of Monte Cristo and I are going riding this morning. He has two marvelous Dappled Grays which he purchased from Calvalcante. Incredible. He says he does not even remember how much he paid for them. He is truly a man of high distinction. Is he not, Mother?

Mercedes He is a man of faith, my son.

Fernand Your Mother holds the Count in very high regard.

(Servant enters.)

Servant Monsieur, excuse me but I was asked to deliver this message immediately.

(Fernand takes message and Servant exits.)

Mercedes I will retire.

Fernand Yes, dear, you look tired. You should return to your rooms and rest.

Albert Yes, Mother. You do look tired. Do you wish me to escort you?

Mercedes Please. Thank you, Albert.

Albert Father, you will let me know when the Count arrives?

Fernand Yes, of course.

(Fernand reads message.)

Fernand Hmm.

(Servant reenters with Dantes in tow, who is dressed in riding attire.)

Servant The Count of Monte Cristo.

(Servant exits.)

Dantes Forgive me for this intrusion. I am expected I think. Albert has graciously offered companionship on a morning ride. I trust he is here.

Fernand Yes, Count. He is helping his Mother and will return soon.

(There is silence. Fernand remains quiet, but continues to look at Dantes as they wait)

Dantes You have lovely rooms, Count. Have you had them long?

Fernand A year or two.

Dantes They appear to be adequate and very comfortable.

(A pause. Dantes, not at all uncomfortable, begins to move about the room.)

You have a very nice collection of weapons.

Fernand Blades, mostly.

Dantes Impressive.

Fernand I have a great interest in many different kinds of weapons. Do you like sword work?

Dantes Yes, I have a great appreciation for those who can handle a blade. But I fear that I am no master.

Fernand I am a good teacher, if you want to improve your skills.

Dantes Indeed?

Fernand (Taking two swords out of the holder.) Do you have an interest?

Dantes Perhaps.

Fernand How about now? (He throws sword to Dantes.)

Dantes (catching the sword). Forgive me, but I am in riding attire and not suitably dressed.

Fernand You never know when you will need to defend your life.

(Fernand attacks Dantes; there are several strokes and parries. The two battle in spurts within and between the following dialogue. Fernand is aggressive, but appears to be testing Dantes skill rather than causing serious harm.)

Dantes I see. Is that part of the lesson?

Fernand Attire is just an obstacle. You must be able to defend yourself in any situation, even after falling off your horse.

Dantes True. I guess I should learn.

Fernand How to fight?

Dantes How to fall off my horse.

Fernand You are doing well. But you drop your shoulder, and this can leave you open.

Dante Is this better?

Fernand Better. But now you are leading with your head. No need to overextend yourself.

Dantes Like this?

(Dantes lightly strikes Fernand, who is surprised by the touch.)

Fernand Yes...better. But that is just the beginning.

(Fernand is angered by the touch, and is more aggressive during the following dialogue.)

Strength, balance and finding a weakness will give you the advantage you desire.

(Fernand strikes Dantes and cuts his arm. The cut draws blood and Dantes stops. Dantes quickly draws a kerchief and staunches the cut.)

Forgive me Count. I will be more careful during the next lesson.

Dantes Will there be a next lesson?

Fernand Oh, most certainly.

Dantes Well then, at that time I hope to be better prepared and in more proper attire.

(Albert enters.)

Albert Count, you are here. Father, I thought I asked that you call when the Count arrived.

Fernand I am sorry, my son. I fear that our time together has been more exciting than I would have thought. Count, would you agree?

Dantes Yes, of course.

Albert (to Dantes) Are you bleeding?

Dantes Yes, it is but a scratch. Today, I have learned a valuable lesson worth many more. Thank you for the session, Count.

Fernand It was an honor and pleasure to assist you, good sir. Until our next meeting.

Albert Good day, father.

(As Dantes and Albert exit, Caderousse appears behind Fernand.)

Fernand Well, good Caderousse, you were right. The Count does drop his shoulder when he fights. But even more importantly, you were right about our friend the Baron. His note insists that I join him and our Procureur, de Villefort, at the Pont du Guard this evening – alone. He expects that I will fall into his trap. Well, we cannot allow that to happen, can we?

Caderousse No, Monsieur.

Fernand Did you get it?

Caderousse Of course. (he reveals the key) I lifted it as he was about to wet himself.

Fernand A regular occurrence.

(Caderousse throws him the key.)

Now that he no longer has his key to the black book, it will be a true pleasure to give him the cut he deserves.

Caderousse Yes, Monsieur.

Fernand You have more then proved your worth, Caderousse. Now then, we must be ready. We must be ready when we arrive at the Pont du Guard.

(Fernand and Caderousse exit. Mercedes is hiding in the shadows, and we see her as lights fade. Music for Scene Change: **6B Duty with A Smile Underscore**)

Scene 7 – The Drop
La Reserve, a tavern (the same evening)

(Curtain rises on the street, outside La Reserve, a tavern. Dantes enters with Louis, disguised. They both have robes and hoods. After a moment, they pull back their hoods.)

Louis Well, my friend. We are finally here. After two long years of planning and working, tonight is the beginning of the end.

Dantes Don't be overconfident. So many things could go wrong.

Louis Nonsense. You have mapped everything down to the very detail. Nothing can change what you have set in motion.

Dantes Nothing?

Louis Trust, my friend. You will see. But are you ready for the consequences?

(Abbe appears.)

Abbe Yes, Edmond, are you ready?

Dantes Of course I am ready. I have worked for nothing else.

Louis I know and understand your obsession. But sometimes it can blind a person from what is real. Believe me, after this nothing will be the same.

Dantes What are you saying?

Louis Do you think it is easy to destroy a man? Killing changes you forever.

Abbe Is that what you want, Edmond?

Dantes Are you saying turn back?

Louis No. Calm down, my friend. I am only saying that it will not give you the satisfaction you expect. I have killed many men, and there is little joy in it.

Dantes We will see.

Louis Yes, you are right. Is there anything else I can do for you?

(Dantes hesitates, then responds by shaking his head.)

God speed and good luck, Monsieur.

(Louis pulls the robe over his head and exits.)

{Song: It's Destiny}

Abbe (sings) *Do you see the darkness that surrounds you?
Can you feel the kindness turn to stone?*

Dantes (spoken) How can you speak of kindness?

Camille *Can you find the path to make things right,
In freedom, can you feel alone?*

Dantes (spoken) I have a purpose!

Abbe *Can vengeance quench the thirst that overcomes you?
Can hatred warm a heart to gratitude?*

Dantes (spoken) Do not speak of gratitude!

Camille *Can justice served begin to make things right?
Can vengeance fill the hole of solitude?*

Dantes Justice is my only reward.

Abbe Can you determine their fate, Edmond? Are you God?

Dantes I am God's hand, and their punishment is of their making.

Camille Is there no other way?

(Abbe disappears.)

Dantes *Can you stop a raging fire?
Can you quell love's deep desire?
Can you halt a charging horse?
Can you change fate's tireless course?*

*No, no lock to bar the way
Resolve will seize the day
Like storm winds stirring, then raging*

*One, just one deliberate stride
Begins a vengeful ride.
Like cliff birds clinging, then leaping.*

*How can you say hold fast,
And spoil anticipation
How can you say forgive,
And squander faith's redemption.
Moments set in motion,*

*Each villain marked as prey.
Who can rest and ponder
Till vengeance has its day.*

(Music ends. Dantes exits. The scene shifts to inside La Reserve. Danglars is seated at the same table and chair as in Act I, Scene 2. Fernand arrives alone.)

Fernand Good evening, Danglars.

Danglars Count. It appears as if the good Procureur is behind his time.

Fernand Not surprising.

(Fernand sits. During the following dialogue, several men intermittently enter the tavern and sit.)

Danglars It seems somewhat melancholy to be sitting here this evening.

Fernand What do you mean?

Danglars Does it not strike you as remarkable? This is where it all began. The pen, the letter, the conversation that set our course for success.

Fernand You place too much meaning in memories.

Danglars A man is the sum parts of the decisions he makes in life. That day, we decided to sacrifice a young sailor so that you could attain your feminine prize, I could become rich and affluent and our friend Villefort could gain his ambitions for authority and power.

Fernand You ramble.

Danglars Perhaps. Or perhaps there is something more than melancholy? Melancholy is strictly about the past. Perhaps there is premonition as well.

Fernand You speak in riddles, Danglars. Be plain.

Danglars (laughs) Even today, you are as dense and naïve as you were sixteen years ago. Does it not seem possible that the place that marked the beginning could mark the end?

(Fernand stops and looks at Danglars. By now, there are eight men on stage who have entered and are sitting at tables. Jaco enters.)

Ah, Jaco. Welcome. You did not know this fellow before he become an aristocrat. He was but a child when I found him weeping over unrequited love. Young, stupid and unable to cope.

(Jaco sits at a nearby table.)

Fernand I take it that de Villefort is not joining us.

Danglars You have become more opportunistic, certainly, but still naïve – like a lamb led to slaughter. Appropriate analogy, I must say. Funny how some things do not change.

Fernand You are testing my patience.

Danglars If it were not for me, you would still be crying into your incompetence.

Fernand Finished?

(Caderousse enters from the shadows. He is carrying a rope with a noose.)

Danglars Oh, not quite. I believe you know the Count's servant, Caderousse? Ambitious fellow. He has agreed to help me with a little problem. Come Caderousse, it is time to prove your part.

(Caderousse doesn't move, but stares at Danglars.)

Caderousse. Finish this!

(He doesn't move, but the rest of the men circle Danglars.)

Jaco?

(Jaco remains seated and doesn't move.)

Jaco, come here this instant!

(Jaco still doesn't move and looks at Fernand who stands and moves toward Danglars, whose desperation grows.)

Fernand As I have said, you are far too trusting of your own information. I agree one of us has been a nuisance. For sixteen years, I have lived with your arrogance.

Danglars You are such an idiot. Do you think I am not prepared for this? (He reaches for the key, but doesn't find it. He is quite alarmed)

Fernand What is wrong my friend?

Danglars I have...misplaced...

Fernand What, this? (pulls out the key) I am surprised that you would let this out of your sight. The key to the famous black book – a log of every counterfeit, every activity and illegal network we have to evade the King's men. This key unlocks all of its secrets.

Danglars It will do you no good.

Fernand It is only a matter of time before we find the lock and its contents.

Danglars Again, naive.

Fernand In exchange for your life, Villefort gets the key to his safety. Everything hidden away as before, with one less person aware of its secrets.

(Jaco ties Danglars hands behind his back.)

Danglars How can you do this? I have made you a wealthy man.

(Caderousse throws the rope over a beam.)

Fernand Jaco, come to me when it is done, and you will receive your reward. Caderousse, find the lock to this key.

(Fernand throws him the key, and Caderousse exits.)

Good night, Baron.

(Fernand exits, following Caderousse with several of his men. One remaining man places the noose over Danglars head, while Jaco circles him.)

Danglars Jaco, you know that I am a very rich man. I can give you much more than you have been offered here.

Jaco I am not interested in your money.

Danglars How about you, fellow. Surely, you are willing to negotiate? I will double your payment in exchange for my life. I care not for the amount.

The Man How much can you offer?

Danglars Anything you wish.

Dantes Can you return a man from the dead?

Danglars What?

Dantes Can you return fourteen years to a man who lost his life in the Chateau d'If? His spouse, his youth, his hope?

Danglars You make little sense. I know not of what you speak.

Dantes Do you not remember the man?

(Dantes removes his hood)

Danglars Count? Is it you?

Dantes Look deeper. Look at the eyes. Look beyond the lines and years of despair. Look past the loathing and hate.

Danglars Dantes? Edmond Dantes?

Dantes Yes, Edmond Dantes, who now delivers divine retribution!

Danglars (screams) No!

(Jaco pulls the rope and hoists Danglars off the ground as the lights blackout. Lights come up just on Dantes.)

Danglars *Done, there's no more reason left,
I took the wretched step.
Too late to change my destiny.*

(Lights fade.)

Scene 8 – The Arrest
Office of the Chief Prosecutor (the next day)

Lieutenant Procureur.

Villefort Yes, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Procureur, I am sorry, but I have urgent news. It appears Baron Danglars is dead!

Villefort What?

Lieutenant The morning watch found his blood stained cloak and boots on the southern docks early this morning. The Baroness says he did not return home last night.

Villefort Good Lord!

Lieutenant We also found some personal effects.

Villefort Did you find a key?

Lieutenant Forgive me, sir. A key?

Villefort Yes, with his personal effects? Did you find a key?

Lieutenant No sir. We found no key.

Villefort Blast!

Lieutenant Sir?

Villefort Lieutenant, have your men find and arrest the Count de Morcerf immediately.

Lieutenant The Count de Morcerf?

Villefort Yes. I am afraid I have information that may link Morcerf to the Baron's disappearance. You must find him immediately, and bring him directly to me.

Lieutenant Yes, Procureur.

(The Lieutenant exits.)

Villefort (after a thought) Damnation!

(Villefort begins rushing through his office. He begins collecting some papers and personal items and placing them into a carrying bag. He stops.)

Think. What must be done?

(There is a knock on the door, and the Lieutenant enters.)

Lieutenant Forgive me, Procureur, but the Count of Monte Cristo wishes an audience.

Villefort Not now, Lieutenant. Tell him I am extremely busy, and will see him at a later time.

Lieutenant Forgive me, Procureur, but he has already predicted this response, and tells me to relate that he has information regarding Baron Danglars and a personal possession that may be of interest.

Villefort I see. Please, show him in.

Lieutenant Yes, sir.

Villefort (stopping him) But, after doing so, I will require that you and six guards are at the ready. You will need to be armed and prepared for my call.

Lieutenant Yes, sir. We will be ready as you have directed.

(The Lieutenant exits and quickly Dantes enters.)

Dantes Forgive me, Procureur, for this intrusion.

Villefort Count, it is good to see you. How may I be of service?

Dantes Forgive me, but you must have heard that Baron Danglars is missing, and presumed dead.

Villefort Yes, I heard the news this morning. I can assure you, Count, if the Baron has been murdered, his death will not go unpunished. The Lieutenant says that you have news of a personal possession.

Dantes Yes, troubling really. It appears that the Baron was careless and has lost a key.

(Dantes pulls from his coat a key.)

Villefort A key?

Dantes Yes, a special key, I suspect. I found it on the floor of my study, as it must have been dropped there during the Baron's last visit.

Villefort I see.

Dantes It may have some significance. As a financier, it may provide access to some valuable hold which could find itself in the wrong hands.

Villefort Very true. Thank you, Count. It is good that you brought this to me, as an authority that can ensure its protection.

Dantes Yes, of course. (Begins to hand it over, then hesitates) However, there is one thing that troubles me.

Villefort Yes?

Dantes It may be that this key unlocks some treachery linked to the Baron's disappearance.

Villefort What do you mean?

Dantes My sources say that the Baron was on to a conspiracy. I fear he was about to uncover this deception and was betrayed before he could reveal it to the authorities.

Villefort Very good, Count. This is true, but only partly so. The Baron was on to a smuggling ring, and was already working closely with my office to reveal its members. However, I am sorry to inform you that I believe the Count de Morcerf may be one of them.

Dantes Morcerf?

Villefort Yes, it appears he may have been using his influence and position to organize and protect this ring. You should know I have ordered his immediate arrest.

Dantes I am sorry to hear it.

Villefort Yes, I understand his son is your good friend. I will protect him if I can. I believe this key may help reveal the remaining members. May I have it?

Dantes (looking at the key) Will it truly unveil all of these traitors?

Villefort I suspect it will.

Dantes (turns towards him) Including the son of a Bonapartist traitor who put an innocent man in prison?

Villefort I beg your pardon?

Dantes The man who burned a letter to destroy any evidence to this effect...

Villefort Letter?

Dantes ...and a pact that was formed to cover up this conspiracy while stealing the King and his subjects' riches to support your own power and lavish tastes?

Villefort What are you saying? Who are you?

Dantes Do you not recognize me?

Villefort You are the Count of Monte Cristo!

Dantes You are not exactly right, M. Procureur; you must go farther back.

Villefort That voice! Where did I first hear it?

Dantes You heard it for the first time sixteen years ago, the day you fashioned your pact with Danglars and Morcerf.

Villefort Have I wronged you in some way?

Dantes You condemned me to a horrible, tedious death; you killed my mother; you deprived me of liberty, of love, and happiness. I am the specter of a wretch you buried in the dungeons of the Chateau d'If...

Villefort You are....

Dantes Edmond Dantes!

Villefort Edmond Dantes. No, it cannot be.

Dantes I assure you, you will soon repay your debt.

Villefort (recovering quickly) We will see. You have escaped, though how I cannot guess. It is too bad that you will need to return shortly to the Chateau d'If. Lieutenant!

(Almost immediately, the doors open and the Lieutenant and six guards enter the room.)

Lieutenant, this man is an imposter. He is an escaped convict named Edmond Dantes. Arrest him.

Lieutenant But, Procureur?

Villefort Arrest him, I say. Immediately!

Dantes Yes, Lieutenant, arrest me.

Lieutenant But sir, I cannot.

Villefort You will do as I say, or lose your post.

Lieutenant But I have strict orders not to touch this man.

Villefort From whom, idiot?

(At that moment, Mayor Louis enters. He is followed by four guards, and is in good form.)

Louis Good morning, Procureur.

Villefort Your Grace?

Louis I have spent many hours this morning discussing your situation with the Count. Could it be that I have such a villain in my employ?

Villefort Your Grace, forgive me. I have no idea what this fellow has told you, but I must warn you, this man is a liar, a traitor and a prisoner.

Louis This cannot be. The Count is a respected member of the Kings subjects.

Villefort You are mistaken, your grace.

Louis Mistaken? It appears as if I have been mistaken about you, dear Procureur. (He pulls out and begins to reference a black book.) It appears as if you have been very busy, and not with protecting the King's interests – but your own. If half the items in this book are correct, you are an enemy of the King – and must be removed before you can create greater treachery.

(Louis walks up to Villefort and slaps him in the face).

Arrest this man, Lieutenant, in the name of Louis, our Lord and King.

Villefort I do not know where you received this, but I can explain my actions in any court.

Louis Oh, there will be plenty of time for that. There will be plenty of time to make your case to the vermin you find in the Chateau d'If. Take him away.

(Two of the guards take Villefort by the arms and he is led off.)

Let this be a lesson to us all, Monsieurs. For we are to be diligent in exposing deceit, treachery and treason. Yes, Lieutenant?

Lieutenant (snaps to attention) Sir!

Louis (handing him the black book) Please return this to the good Abbott, and thank him for allowing me to borrow it. His concern for my soul is not unfounded, eh Count?

Dantes Indeed.

(Lights fade. Music for Scene Change: **8A Scene Change Underscore**)

Scene 9 -The Betrayal
The home of Fernand Mondego (that same day)

(Fernand is frantically putting things into trunks, as Mercedes enters.)

Mercedes What are you doing?

Fernand Pack your things. We are leaving for Paris. With the help of some business associates and some luck, I will be able to regain our standing in some other coastal city in the North.

Mercedes What has happened?

Fernand Ah, you haven't heard. De Villefort has called for my arrest. I am to be carted off to prison to save his skin.

Mercedes So your dealings have finally caught up with you.

Fernand This is not a time to be righteous, my dear. We need to move and move quickly. Damnation! Where are people when you need them? (he yells off as he exits) Caderousse?

(Fernand exits)

{Song: No One Left to Blame}

Mercedes *No one left to blame
Only dusk remains
Nothing left to compromise
No one left to pacify.*

*Has the moment come?
To faith and hope succumb?
A lonely heart buried deep
Is raised from its fitful sleep.*

*Nothing left to keep me here
No more ties to bind
No more fear to mask the tears
Nothing soft or kind
Time for dread and hate to cease
Time to shed the past
Tenderness and joy released
Let hope and courage last.*

(Fernand reenters.)

Fernand Caderousse is missing. Where are your cases?

Mercedes I have packed none.

Fernand Never mind. We will purchase new clothes in Paris when we arrive.

Mercedes I am not leaving.

Fernand (still packing) What do you mean you are not leaving?

Mercedes I am not leaving with you.

Fernand I have no time for this foolishness.

Mercedes I have no more time for you.

Fernand Oh, I see. You intend to whore it with your new found love? Are you mad? You will be branded and ostracized by every town in France.

Mercedes I care nothing for that.

Fernand Do you plan to sacrifice your son as well? It is his reputation you are forfeiting.

Mercedes My son will come with me.

Fernand So, he can become the son of a harlot and a make-believe Count?

Mercedes No, so he can become the son he was meant to be, the son of Edmond Dantes.

Fernand Edmond Dantes?

Mercedes Yes, Edmond Dantes, who escaped from the Chateau d'If where you helped put him.

Fernand Impossible. Edmond Dantes is dead.

Mercedes Edmond Dantes has come home to seek revenge on those who betrayed him.

Fernand I have no time for this nonsense.

Mercedes Is it so hard to believe? Danglars dead, Villefort arrested. Do you believe all of this to be some coincidence?

Fernand Dantes? The Count of Monte Cristo?

Mercedes He has come for all of you, my dear Fernand. His revenge may already be complete.

Fernand And it appears that Albert has become quite fond of him.

Mercedes What does Albert have to do with this?

Fernand Is he aware of what this man is...?

Mercedes My son is innocent in this.

Fernand ...that his mother is whoring with a criminal and escaped convict? Perhaps Dantes' revenge is not on me alone.

Mercedes He would never hurt my son.

Fernand Oh, I was not talking about Albert, my dear.

(Two servants enter.)

Servant #1 Forgive me, Count. I am afraid Caderousse cannot be found on the estate. Would you like us to move these to the coach?

Fernand No. Find my son. (he begins to leave) We will see what mischief we can make. Good bye, my dear. May you be truly happy with the decision you have made.

(Fernand grabs his sword and exits.)

House Steward Can I get your something, Countess?

Mercedes Yes, find Albert quickly, and bring him to me.

House Steward I am sorry, Countess. The Viscount departed earlier this morning and has not yet returned.

Mercedes Did he say where he was going?

House Steward No, I am sorry, Countess. He did not.

Mercedes Prepare my carriage. I will need to depart immediately.

House Steward Yes, Countess. (he leaves)

{Song: No One Left to Blame REPRISE}

Mercedes

*One thing left so filled with fear
Take your cape and run
Spare his heart and hold him near
Please guard and keep my son.*

(She exits as lights fade. Music for Scene Change: **9C Scene Change Underscore**)

Scene 10 - The Duel

The home of the Count of Monte Cristo (that evening)

Louis Did you see the face of that dog?

Jaco Like the guillotine coming home!

Louis (acts out his part) "You ingrate, you disgraceful man. How could you betray the King's trust?" Beautifully portrayed if I do say so myself.

Caderousse Well done, Monsieur Mayor...

(They all laugh, then pause to see Dantes in thought)

Louis What is wrong, my friend? Why aren't you celebrating? You have destroyed all of your enemies.

Caderousse Danglars, thought dead, is now bound for the new world in some ship's cargo hold...

Jaco Villefort is rotting in the Chateau d'If...

Louis ...and Fernand Mondego will live his life in disgrace and desperation for the rest of his days. You have destroyed your enemies without taking one life. You should be happy.

Dantes I will celebrate when I am far from here.

(Mercedes enters)

Mercedes Edmond...

Dantes Mercedes...My good Mayor. Will you please leave us for a moment?

Louis Yes, of course. Pardon me, Madame. I will take my leave. Jaco, my cape. Caderousse, my cane.

(Louis exits with bravado and Jaco and Caderousse follow.)

Mercedes Edmond, save my son!

Dantes Albert? What has happened?

(Albert enters with a dueling pistol.)

Albert Then it is true what I have heard. That, not only have you condoned the destruction of our family honor, but you have shared the bed of the man who planned and executed it?

Mercedes No, Albert.

Albert Then what are you doing here, Mother? Is it not true that you are in love with this man? Then deny it.

(Mercedes says nothing)

Albert You are not capable of lying, mother. (Aims the gun at Dantes) My father has told me everything. This man is a criminal. And still, you are drawn to him to the disgrace of your family. Why, Mother?

Mercedes Things are not as they seem, Albert.

Albert No, they are not. You taught me what it is to be noble. And you have become a whore with this fiend.

Mercedes (moves to touch him) Albert...

Albert Do not touch me. A man who I thought was my friend, but now I find that he has used all of his wealth and power to destroy us. Why have you deceived us?

(Fernand enters)

Fernand Because his whole life has been a lie. Yes, Edmond? Edmond Dantes? The Count of Monte Cristo is a lie. Did you tell Danglars before you killed him? Yes Albert, your friend the Count is a murderer too, or did he forget to tell you that as well.

Dantes His greed was his end.

Fernand Danglars was an idiot. His high and mighty airs made him think he was better than the rest of us. And poor Villefort put his trust in him - that was his mistake.

Dantes Villefort's crime was his thirst for power.

Fernand Now forever imprisoned in the Chateau d'If. Interesting twist of fortune. But what of you, Edmond? I heard you were dead. How did you escape? From a prisoner to aristocrat. -- it sounds as if there is much to tell. It is sad you will not have time to do so, since you will not live to see daybreak.

(He draws his sword)

Mercedes (goes to stop him) Fernand, please don't do this...

Fernand Quiet woman! You never knew when to keep your mouth shut!

(Fernand shoves Mercedes to the ground)

Albert (Moves to stop him) Father, no.

(Fernand cuffs Albert)

Fernand And you, you merde. I always wondered whether you were mine, the way your mother runs around.

Dantes Enough, Fernand.

(Albert goes to his mother's side)

Fernand You see. I always knew that she could never truly love me as she did you. I have always lived in your shadow. But possessing her was enough. Somehow knowing that she will finally have her precious Edmond is more punishment than I can take.

{Song: The Final Dual}

Fernand *Death's enough for me
But one quick thrust will seal your place
An everlasting prison of the damned*

(He lunges and Dantes parries)

Dantes *I can feel, hear, sense fate at my fingers*

Fernand *I can see, sense, hear death at your door.*

Dantes *Is it fate?*

Fernand *We will see.*

Dantes *Oh, have faith!*

Fernand *Why believe?*

Dantes *Am I good?*

Fernand *Maybe so
Though you'll bleed!*

(Fernand lunges again. After several passes, Fernand draws first blood with a strike to the arm)

(spoken) Knowing you were rotting away in a prison is almost as satisfying as seeing you on the end of my sword, Dantes.

(They duel. Edmond runs Fernand through with his sword.)

Dantes (to Fernand) *Oh sweet God, now it's done
Feel my blade, let sweet death come
There's no place to run, oh but now it's done
And I have won!! (removes blade with a pull)*

(Mercedes runs to Edmond embracing him.)

Albert No!!!!

(Albert runs to his father, who is still alive. Fernand takes Albert's gun, aims and fires. The music stops. Fernand dies. Dantes slowly sinks to the ground holding Mercedes as she collapses.)

Dantes Mercedes!

Mercedes (hanging on to him) Edmond?

{Song: Finale}

Dantes

*No,
I longed for you each day
And by my side you'll stay.
Like comfort sleeping,
sweet dreaming.*

*Stay,
My love forever more,
Don't leave like years before.
Like daytime breaking,
Dawn waking.*

Mercedes

*Oh please be at peace, my love,
Have hope and trust the One above.
We'll live to see another day,
Have faith,
I pray.*

*Now, you're here.
We'll love forever more,
so much more.
Like meeting on the shore,
Like dawn, morning waking.*

*Quiet, now sweet lover
You need no longer fear
We'll always be together
Safe, secure and near.*

*Feel your love surround me,
Find comfort in your arms.
To hold, to keep, to cherish,
For now, forget life's harms.*

*God in Heaven,
Will answer each and every prayer
Love forever,*

*Care and grace be with us here.
Gentle, secure
Our love will endure,
Our love will be the cure.*

(Mercedes dies)

Dantes (screams) NO!!

(Dantes sobs as the following is sung in unison.)

Camille	Dantes	FVD	Abbe	Chorus
<i>Now do you see the end? Now you know...</i>	<i>Like the breeze, that gently stirs the trees. In my arms...</i>	<i>The end is set.</i>	<i>Oh, now you see the grace-filled life you've lived. Oh, in the end, that you are to see...</i>	<i>AH...</i>

ALL (Including Chorus) *Revenge gives birth to tragedy.*

Camille	Dantes	FVD	Abbe	Chorus
<i>Now do you see His plan? And that hate's...</i>	<i>Left for me, There's nothing left for me. In my arms...</i>	<i>Just left, regret...</i>	<i>Do not fear the darkness that surrounds you. There is no longer reason to deny...</i>	<i>AH.....</i>

ALL (Including Chorus) *Revenge gives birth to tragedy.*

Final Curtain