

~~VILLEFORT:
Edmond Dantes?~~

~~MAGISTRATE:
That's him - he claims his innocence. Don't they all?~~

~~VILLEFORT:
That will be all, Alec. You may go.~~

~~MAGISTRATE exits.~~

VILLEFORT:
I am Monsieur de Villefort, you will likely have heard of me?

DANTES:
Indeed M'sieur. I have heard you are a decent man. Please - it is my wedding night, I would like to assure you of my innocence. If there is any way that we can begin the process to clear my name-

VILLEFORT:
I am hosting a very important affair upstairs, M'sieur Dantes - I would like this cleared up just as quickly as you. Let us get straight to the point. You were given a letter by the disgraced and fallen Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte - correct?

DANTES:
I don't deny it. Are you in the business of shooting the messenger, M'sieur?

VILLEFORT:
That depends on what the messenger knows.

DANTES:
Nothing, M'sieur - I never opened the letter. Tell me, how could I turn down the Grand Marshal's order - even if he is deposed? A mere Captain's mate refusing a man of such standing. I think the guards at Elba would have shot me just for the insult of it.

VILLEFORT:
Why were you on the Island of Elba? Your ship had no intention of stopping there.

DANTES:
We needed medical aid for the Captain and he set the course while he could still talk - he fell ill and died while we were anchored.

VILLEFORT:

And the letter was to be delivered to?

DANTES:

A Monsieur Noirtier, Rue Coq-Heron Number-

VILLEFORT:

(*paling*) -Thirteen.

DANTES:

You know him?

VILLEFORT:

A faithful servant of the King does not know filthy conspirators!

DANTES:

My apologies - I say again, I am ignorant of the letter's contents. I give you my word of honour. What is the matter? Are you ill? Should I call for assistance?

VILLEFORT:

It is not for you to give orders in this house.
(*scanning the content of the letter*) M'sieur Dantes, I am no longer able to, as I- we had hoped, to restore your liberty-

DANTES:

but- M'sieur, if I have somehow brought some offence to you-

VILLEFORT:

I must detain you some time longer - but I will strive to make it as short as possible.

DANTES:

Please, M'sieur Villefort - I have done no wrong. You're a good man.

VILLEFORT:

Yes... well, the principal charge against you lies with this letter - d'accord? Which I now destroy. See?

VILLEFORT burns it.

DANTES:

You are goodness itself. Thank you, thank you!