

Pauline

Dion Boucicault Theatre Collection, 1843-1847

January 1866

Pauline: a drama in three acts [Transcript]

Dion Boucicault

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Pauline by Dion Boucicault, 1866

ACT I

SCENE I—House of Madame de Nerval. A pavilion opening upon a park. Rich furniture. Doors L. 3. E. and R. 1. E. French window R. 3. E. On the right a canapé or guerdon on the left a play table, chairs, fauteuils etc. Carpet down. At the rise of the curtain Lucian is seated L.C., absorbed in the contemplation of a portrait. Gabrielle enters C. with a bouquet. At the sight of Lucien she appears surprised, then approaches softly behind him, and looks at the picture over his shoulder.

GAB: (R.C.) Ah! Ah! I have found you out.

LUC: (Quickly concealing portrait) Gabrielle!

GAB: Very well, sir: it is no use concealing it. I have seen—

LUC: What!

GAB: A portrait! I have long suspected something, now I am certain. Brother, you love Pauline.

LUC: In the name of Heaven be silent. If you are overheard—

GAB: Pooh! There's no danger. The gentlemen are gone hunting, Mamma and Pauline are still at breakfast, and we are alone—you may confide all to me.

LUC: Well, yes, you have guessed aright. I love my cousin, Pauline.

GAB: Go on.

LUC: Since she has been in France, and has resided with us, every day she has become more dear to me.

GAB: My poor brother: why do you not declare yourself? Why do you not tell her that you love her?

LUC: Alas! You forget that Pauline is rich and we are poor. She might think that in asking her hand, my inclination was less directed to her person than her fortune.

GAB: Ah, what an idea. I am quite sure Pauline (Horns distant)

LUC: (Crosses R.) Silence, here she is coming with our mother.

(Enter Madame de Nerval and Pauline L.3.E.)

MAD: Come, Pauline, come; The gentlemen are hunting in the park, and from this pavilion we may see them rouse the wild boar.

(Gabrielle looks off at window R.)

LUC: Good morning, dear mother; good morning, Pauline.

MAD: Ah, Lucien, my son, I thought you were in the park with the sportsmen.

PAUL: My cousin Lucien prefers the company of his books to the rough perils of the chase; and he would rather encounter the smile of a pretty face, than the tusks of a wild boar.

LUC: (Aside) Does she think I am a coward? (Horns and shouts)

GAB: Hark! The animal is aroused; I see the hunters on his track.

LUC: (Taking his gun and crossing to C.) Mother, I will join them. And Pauline, I will bring you one of those tusks you think I fear so much.

MAD: Be prudent, my dear son; these boar hunts always alarm me.

LUC: Don't be afraid; were we in India now, from whence Pauline has just come, you might indeed feel anxious, there they hunt the tiger. (Exit Lucien L. R. E.)

PAUL: The tiger!

MAD: You turn pale, Pauline.

GAB: (Down L.) You are agitated.

PAUL: (Up to C.) It is nothing, but I never hear a tiger hunt mentioned without a pang of terror.

GAB: Were you ever in danger from one?

PAUL: Yes, I will tell you. I was travelling from Singapore to Madras, on my road home, when our party encamped for the night on the bank of a small stream; we had been followed by a gentleman and his Arab servant—his name was Count Horace de Beaupré.

MAD: A Frenchman!

PAUL: I had seen him frequently, in society, and the silent pertinacity with which he followed me attracted my attention; he camped near us that night, while strolling near my tent, a tiger sprang upon me. I fell back; the tiger had only succeeded in seizing a handkerchief which I had bound over my head. I escaped.

GAB: I should have died of terror.

PAUL: That night, after relating my adventure, I laughingly proposed to the gentlemen of our escort to seek the tiger and regain my handkerchief, playfully offering my hand to the gallant knight who would volunteer.

MAD: None were so mad as to venture.

PAUL: I thought so; but from his tent Count Horace had overheard my proposal, and arming himself with a knife, he sought and found the animal in its lair. The howls of the brute, and the cries of the Arab slave brought us to the spot, and there we found two mangled bodies, the tiger dead, the man bleeding from a hundred wounds.

GAB: Did he die!

PAUL: I know not; I was obliged to leave India before his fate was decided. But the strangeness of his manner, that courage of which he gave so fatal a proof, and that end so terrible and sad—altogether it made such an impression on me that the scene will never be effaced from my memory.

(Enter Francois L.C)

MAD: Well, what is it Francois?

FRAN: There is a gentleman, a stranger, who has just alighted at the Park Gate, and desires to see you.

MAD: Did the gentleman tell you his name?

FRAN: He said you were not acquainted with him. “Only tell Madame de Nerval” he added, “that I have something to restore to a member of her family.”

MAD: This is singular! What sort of a person is he!

FRAN: He is a young man, of from 20 to 5 and 20, and he came on horseback followed by an attendant.

MAD: Well, request him to walk in. (Exit Francois C.) Something to restore to a member of my family. (Horns and shouts R.U.E)

GAB: Mamma; mamma; the hunt; the hunt. Come and see, Pauline.

MAD: The hunt! Oh, yes, there is the boar coming up out of the copse—ah! The dogs are close upon him.

GAB: (Runs L. 3. E.) Monsieur de Montlouis, come and see; the huntsmen have driven the boar into our field: come quick. (Crosses back to C.) (Leon enters L.3.E. Pauline to the L. of Leon. Leon crosses to window R. H.)

LEON: well he holds the dogs at bay.

GAB: Oh, there are the gentlemen and Lucien, Lucien!

MAD: He must be mad to advance so close, Lucien, Lucien!

GAB: My brother, my brother, take care! (Shot fired R.U.E. Pauline crosses up R.C.)

LEON: Hit! Hit! Bravo, Lucien.

GAB: Oh, good heavens! (Falls back and covers her face with her hands)

PAUL: The boar turns upon him.

LEON: Don't be afraid, he has his other barrel. (Shot fired) Ah, he has missed him! Wait a moment! (Takes gun and raises it to his shoulder. The three ladies retreat to L.H. and Horace appears at C. Goes up to Leon and takes his gun)

HOR: Give me your gun, sir, your hand is not steady. (He takes aim and fires. Shouts outside)

GAB: Saved! Saved! (Falls on her knees)

PAUL: (Recognizing Horace) It is he!

HOR: (Returning gun) You have an excellent gun there.

PAUL: (Aside) Oh, intolerable coolness, always the same.

MAD AND GAB: Saved! Saved!

(Enter Montlouis, Briesac, Lucien and Sportsmen C.R.)

GAB: My brother, are you hurt?

LUC: I had indeed a narrow escape—but who fired that shot which saved my life?

HOR: (Advancing) It was I, sir.

MAD: Yes, dearest Lucien, this gentleman did indeed preserve your life—oh, sir, accept a mother's heartfelt thanks.

GAB: And let his sister also thank you.

HOR: Madame, I hope this trifling service will serve to excuse my intrusion here.

MAD: Ah, true sir; I recollect that you desired I should be told that you had something to restore to a member of my family.

HOR: In good truth, Madame, it is nothing but a simple handkerchief, which Mademoiselle Pauline lost about a year ago in India; will Mademoiselle permit me? (Crosses to L. C.)

PAUL: Sir! (The rest speak apart looking at Pauline)

HOR: (In a low voice) I could have wished to have kept it all my life, but this restitution was the only means I had of seeing you.

PAUL: (Much agitated) Sir!

MAD: It was in India you knew my niece—your name, sir.

HOR: Count Horace de Beaupré.

LEON: (Coming down R. of Horace) Horace! Horace de Beaupré, why so it is.

HOR: Leon!

LEON: (Holds out hand) Why can it be you? Everybody in Paris thought you were dead.

HOR: For six months I was, of everybody's opinion, but at last, you see, according to appearances, we were deceived.

MAD: Monsieur de Beaupré, I can scarcely overcome my surprise. But you are not a stranger to us—my niece has often spoken to us of you, sir. This morning even, a few minutes before your arrival, we were talking of you.

LUC: (Crosses to R. corner aside) Pauline is agitated. What means this emotion?

MAD: We were far from thinking then, that we should so soon have the honor of seeing you.

HOR: Madame, your pardon. Now that the end of my visit is accomplished, nothing remains to me but to take my leave.

MAD: Now, sir, you wish to leave us already? Oh, no, that I cannot allow. You must spend the day with us.

LUC: (Aside) There is something about this man which fills me with a foreboding of misfortune.

HOR: Really, I fear to abuse—

MAD: Remain, I beg of you, we all beg of you, do we not, Lucien?

LUC: Certainly, dear Mother. (Speaks with Gabrielle R.)

HOR: I yield to your kindness, Madame. Only allow me to give some orders to my servant. Not reckoning upon the honor you do me, I had made an engagement with some friends to dine with them at Paris.

MAD: I beg, sir, you will be under no restraint.

HOR: (Going up and calling) Ali! Ali! (Ali appears at C. D. from L)

ALI: Master.

LEON: (Turning around) Lord, what a curious costume!

HOR: He is an Indian, who attempted to rob and murder me at Bhurtpore. I disarmed him and spared his life, which he since has devoted to my service—he never leaves me, night or day. (Speaks aside to Ali)

LEON: What a character to receive with a servant.

PAUL: (To Leon) Have you known Count Horace long, Monsieur Leon?

LEON: We met in society at Paris frequently before his voyage to India.

MAD: A strange, mysterious fellow.

LEON: With an appearance of debility and languor, Count Horace is a man of iron; resisting all fatigue, overcoming all emotions, subduing all wants. I have seen him pass whole nights at play, and on the morrow whilst his companions were sleeping, set out without taking an hour's repose on a hunting party without the least manifestation of fatigue on his part, except by an increased paleness, which is habitual to him.

MAD: Is he rich?

LEON: That is a mystery. He lavished money, but from what source he obtained his fortune no one could tell. His estate in Normandy is small, but I believe he went to India to obtain a great fortune left him by an uncle. So I presume he returns wealthy.

HOR: (After dismissing Ali with a gesture, overhearing) You are wrong there; I brought back nothing.

ALL: How!

HOR: Two of my cousins disputed the inheritance.

PAUL: Did you abandon it to them?

HOR: In order to spare ourselves the expenses of a heavy law suit, I proposed to take chance as our arbitrator. We played for the inheritance, and I lost the game—that's the whole of it.

ALL: Is it possible?

MAD: The Count will pardon us if we absent ourselves awhile. We have to visit the poor of our village, and the curate was to meet us at this hour for that purpose. (Goes up C. towards the door. Paulinine is lost in abstraction)

GAB: My brother Lucien will do the honors of the Chateau during our absence. (Joining her mother)

MAD: Come, Pauline. (This rouses Pauline, starts up to Madame and Gabrielle, they exit. Pauline turns at door is going to look at Horace bends down her head, curtsies very slowly. Gentlemen all bow. Exit Pauline. Horace immediately takes a few steps toward door L.H)

LUC: (Advancing to table) Gentlemen, my mother has charged me to sustain the duties of hospitality—I place myself entirely at your disposal. How will you amuse yourselves?

LEON: Well, come, let us try if we can't make up a lansquenet.

ALL: Yes, yes, that will do: a lansquenet. (They seat themselves at table L. Montlouis sits R.H. and reads newspaper which he takes from his pocket)

LEON: (Dealing cards) So then my dear Horace, you have just returned from India.

HOR: Not exactly so; it is about two months since I returned to France. But on my arrival I went to spend some time in Vendée.

LEON: In Vendée!

HOR: Yes, at the country house of one of my friends. There are three of us, who each have a Chateau, one in the Pyrenees, another in Vendée, and the third, your humble servant, on the coast of Normandy. Each year during the hunting season, we successively visit each other. On landing at Rochelle, I recollected that it was Max's turn, and I went directly to require his hospitality. What are your stakes, gentlemen?

LEON: Five Louis, if agreeable.

ALL PLAYERS: So be it!

LEON: The deal is yours, Count.

HOR: As you please. (They play)

LEON: You win! Come, this begins well, you have better luck in France than in India. (They put down fresh stakes and play)

LUC: (Rises and goes to C) I know not why, but it appears to me as if the presence of this man were fatal to me.

MONT: (Who is reading paper) Here is a singular circumstance.

ALL: What is that?

MONT: Still more crimes; fresh assassinations.

ALL: Assassinations!

MONT: Really, we might fancy ourselves rather in Spain, or Italy.

LEON: Let us hear—what is it all about?

MONT: (Reads) Atrocious robberies, committed a few days since near Nantes.

LEON: What the devil's that to us? Don't you see you are making me lose my money.

MONT: Monsieur de Beaupré, did you not say you were just come from La Vendée?

HOR: Yes, from a Chateau between Bourgeneauf and LaJaunaye.

MONT: Near Bourgeneauf! Why that's exactly the spot, and you must be in possession of the latest reports.

HOR: Really, sir, I concern myself very little with such things. I pass again, gentlemen. The stake remains a thousand francs. I think I have heard of assassinations being committed; by the bye, they don't assassinate badly. (Re-enter Madame, Pauline and Gabrielle attired for walking)

MAD: Well, we have made our toilette and are going.

HOR: (To players) May I be permitted to retire, gentlemen.

LEON: That's very pretty! You win two thousand francs of us, and send us a substitute who will stake ten Louis—no, no.

HOR: Well, go on.

LEON: Banco, for another thousand.

HOR: I hold it. (They lay down their cards, Horace throws up his hand) I have lost. (Pushes the money from him) You will permit me to withdraw now.

LEON: (Looking at Horace's cards) No, you win; so that is three thousand francs you win instead of two. (Horace returns to table, takes money)

HOR: (To Madame) Madame, you said you were about to visit the poor of your village. Will you permit me to offer my tribute. (Offers money)

MAD: Really, I don't know whether I ought to accept; the amount is so considerable.

HOR: These gentlemen have contributed to it; it is them rather than me you ought to thank.

MAD: Sir.

LEON: (In a low voice) Now that's just like de Beaupré—reckless and extravagant in good or evil.

HOR: (Approaching Pauline) Will you allow me, Mademoiselle, to offer you my arm as far as the village.

PAUL: Thank you, sir, but feeling a little indisposed I shall request my aunt's permission to remain at home.

MAD: What, will you not come with us?

PAUL: Have the kindness, my dear aunt, to excuse me—indeed I am not well.

MAD: And you, Lucien, do you remain at home?

LUC: No, I follow you, Mother.

ALL: We will accompany you.

MAD: Come then, gentlemen. (All but Pauline exit)

PAUL: I am alone at last. Whence comes the empire that this man appears to have assumed over my very existence. Whence comes it that during a whole year, the remembrance of him has pursued me unceasingly? Whence comes it that on his arrival here but now I feel myself so deeply agitated? Good heaven: can it be possible that I love him? A strange, eccentric man, whom I have seen risk his life for a wild challenge, his fortune on the cast of the dice, a man

whose impenetrability freezes me. But now when he had saved Lucien's life, when the tears and blessings of a grateful family were poured at his feet, I observed him well. He was cold, impassible. (Re-enter Horace) And is it such a man, that I would entrust with the happiness of my life! No, no, never! He believes in nothing. Oh, I never wish to think of him again. I would shun him, would fly from him. (Turns, sees him) Ah, he is here.

HOR: Listen to me, Pauline, for they will shortly return, and we have but a few moments to remain together.

PAUL: Sir, I beseech you.

HOR: Listen to me. In vain would you seek to fly me: there are destinies, which having once met, can never be disunited. When first I met you in India my heart marked you out for its mate; from that hour, my life has been but one thought—yourself.

PAUL: Sir, I beseech you.

HOR: I followed you by day, by night I heard you offer to bestow your hand on him who would rescue your handkerchief from the tiger—you spoke in jest—but I listened in terrible earnest. I fell mortally wounded in that encounter, but I struggled back to life that I might offer that life to you.

PAUL: Sir, you forget you are almost a stranger.

HOR: No, for my image has haunted you for more than a year; it has seared itself like a brand upon your existence; it has pursued you like a destiny. Pauline, I have laid waste my youth in mad excesses, I knew not that I had any human feeling left in me until I beheld you—then loved as I have never loved before. I loved you with all the terrible intensity of a passionless man. The whole world faded out of my sight, and left two beings together and alone!

PAUL: You terrify me!

HOR: Your trembling form confesses it: destiny has made us one. Pauline, you may reject but you cannot forget me.

PAUL: Leave me, oh, leave me for mercy's sake.

(Exit Horace. Re-enter Madame, Lucien and Gabrielle)

MAD: Pauline, you are agitated!

PAUL: Are we alone, oh, how can I confess it?

MAD: The Count loves you, I know it. He told me so on our road to the village. I replied that you were your own mistress, and that your heart was free. Was I right?

PAUL: Do I love him? Can this terrible agony in my breast be that passion! (Music) (Re-enter Horace L.H)

LUC: (R.) Mother, for heaven's sake, save Pauline from that man.

MAD: (R.C.) You are pale, Lucien, you tremble.

PAUL: (L.) No, no, he was right. I might reject him but I cannot forget him! (Turns, sees him)
Ah!

HOR: Pauline! (She falls in his arms)

GAB: (Over Lucien's chair and R. of it, aside) Mother, Lucien loved Pauline.

MAD: My son!

LUC: (Points to Horace and Pauline) It is too late.

(Re-enter Leon, Montlouis and gentlemen C.)

HOR: (After placing Pauline in chair R. of table) Madame de Nerval, I am permitted to announce that in one month hence Pauline will bestow upon me her hand in marriage.

ACT II

SCENE I—A room in a country inn. Door in Flat R.H. Set doors R and L. 2. E. Max discovered R. in the dress of a sportsman, drinking punch. Hostess seated at a table L.H. Cyrille standing near her. Register, pen and ink on L. table)

CYR: Come, Dame Lorient.

HOST: I tell you again your fish are too dear.

CYR: Too dear. Two full baskets of fish and all for twelve francs.

HOST: There is no business stirring now, since nothing is heard of in the neighborhood but robberies and assassinations. We have no longer any travelers.

CYR: No travelers! Come, that won't do. Your house is still the best in all Lourville. (Enter Lucien L.1.E) Good morning, Master Lucien.

LUC: I come to say good bye, my good comrade. I have received a letter from my mother which calls me home. I have been absent nearly a year.

CYR: I am sorry you are going to leave us, sir.

LUC: I will walk as far as Burcy, and, if you will give me a lift in your boat across the bay, you can land me on the other shore under the ruins of Grandpré. I should like to visit them.

HOST: You can't. The present owner of the estate has forbidden all visitors to the old ruins.

LUC: Ah! And who is the present owner?

HOST: (Down L.) Count Horace de Beaupré.

LUC: Horace de Beaupré!

HOST: You know him?

LUC: No, not exactly. That is, about a year ago he married a cousin of mine. But is he in the neighborhood now?

HOST: The Count is here. He always comes about this season, and brings with him two gentlemen, his friends.

LUC: But Pauline—I mean, the Countess. Is she here also?

CYR: No, there is no lady at the Chateau, as I ever heard of.

MAX: Let me advise you, sir: if you are taking the road to Paris to start at once, and reach Burcy before nightfall—especially if you have any property about you of value.

LUC: I have none, but thank you for your advice. (Music.) Farewell, hostess; come, Cyrille. (Exit with Cyrille L.1.E)

MAX: Many guests in your hotel today.

HOST: Only one family, sir, a rich Englishman and his young wife.

MAX: I saw their carriage in the yard.

HOST: They start for Havre tonight, that is, if money will buy a postillion to drive them thro' the forest of Grandpré after dark.

MAX: (Rising R.C., aside) Tonight—road to Havre—that's well.

HOST: Is monsieur going?

MAX: Yes, how much do I owe you?

HOST: A half bowl of punch—two francs.

MAX: (Throwing a five franc piece on the table R) Pay yourself. (Lights cigar) Perhaps two young men dressed as sportsmen will ask for me this evening.

HOST: Two of Monsieur's friends.

MAX: You may tell them I am gone to smoke a cigar on the beach. (Exit R.1.E)

HOST: There is something about that man I don't like. He often comes hanging about here. But let me enter the name of this Englishman and his wife in my book. (Does so) The police are so particular. Mr. Yellowcash of Bombay and his wife Miss Harriet Wellsley going to London. (Bells. Noise of carriage R.U.E) What's this? (Looks off) More arrivals. A lady in a carriage—she alights.

(Enter Pauline R.D. in flat in travelling dress)

PAUL: Pardon me, Madame, are you the Mistress of this hotel?

HOST: Yes, Madame, at your service.

PAUL: I come from Paris, and am going to the Chateau de Burcy. This is, I am told, the last stage.

HOST: Yes, Madame.

PAUL: Can I have horses?

HOST: Why, horses, yes, we have plenty in our stable; but still, unfortunately Madame, there is another difficulty.

PAUL: And what is that?

HOST: You will find no postillions.

PAUL: How is that?

HOST: Because after nightfall it is impossible to prevail upon one to stir a step on the road.

PAUL: Then the reports I have heard in Paris are true.

HOST: Every day, fresh crimes spread terror throughout the whole neighborhood. Last month a post-chaise was attacked at three leagues from hence. The next morning the post boy was found tied to a tree with his eyes bandaged; the traveler, an Englishman pierced with three dagger wounds, had been left in the chaise.

PAUL: This is horrible.

HOST: A fortnight since, whilst the receiver general was at dinner with Count Horace de Beaupré, two men burst into the room, murdered the receiver, wounded the Count, leaving him for dead, and robbed the house of eighty thousand francs.

PAUL: Horace did not wish to inform me of this catastrophe, this is the cause of his silence and his absence!

HOST: Let me advise you, Madame, to pass the night at this hotel. Tomorrow you will have broad daylight, and then can resume your journey without running any risk.

PAUL: So be it. If I must remain I must.

HOST: I will go and give orders that a suitable chamber be prepared for Madame. In the meantime, will it please you to enter your name in my book of visitors?

PAUL: (Looking at register) Harriet Wellsley! Is it possible, have I read correctly? (Comes down) Madame.

HOST: Did you call me, Madame?

PAUL: Yes, tell me I pray you—that name I have just read in your register.

HOST: Is that of a lady who arrived here this evening.

PAUL: This evening! Is she then gone again?

HOST: No, she leaves tomorrow morning.

PAUL: Then be so kind I pray you and go instantly to this young lady and tell her that an old friend whom she knew in India would be happy to see her. Tell her that it is Pauline—Pauline, she will recognize that name.

HOST: Very well, Madame. (Exit L.2.E)

PAUL: Harriet, she in France? Here? I can scarcely believe it true. (Looking at book) But this other name—oh, she must be married. Married! Oh, that dear, good Harriet, how I long to see her. (Enter Harriet L.2.E. Running to meet her) Harriet!

HARR: Pauline! Can it be truly you? Oh, let me embrace you! But this meeting—how strange!

PAUL: (Embracing her) Dear, dear Harriet!

HARR: Harriet indeed! No, Madame Yellowcash, if you please.

PAUL: You are married then.

HARR: (Laughingly) Ay, really married, my dear.

PAUL: What do you mean?

HARR: Well, I have caught a nabob.

PAUL: A nabob.

HARR: Very old, very withered, very yellow—a nabob in perfection. Nothing wanting, not even the gout.

PAUL: My poor Harriet!

HARR: But you, now let us speak of you. What have you been doing since we separated in India?

PAUL: Why, I also am married!

HARR: And your husband, is he young, is he handsome, is he rich?

PAUL: You know him—you saw him in India.

HARR: I! Who can he be, then?

PAUL: Count Horace de Beaupré.

HARR: What—the pale man with the dark eyes?

PAUL: We met again in Paris, and for the last year I have been his wife.

HARR: Are you happy?

PAUL: Yes, Harriet, I could be happy if I thought that he was so, but there is in the existence of Horace, in all that surrounds him, something mysterious for which I cannot account, and which terrifies me.

HARR: (They sit) Something mysterious?

PAUL: Sometimes at night, terrible dreams agitate his sleep, and then this man so cool, so firm, when I awake him, trembles like a child. He has likewise a custom wherever he may be, to place before he goes to rest, a pair of loaded pistols within the reach of his hand.

HARR: Good heavens!

PAUL: Another still more strange custom is that he always has a horse kept saddled and ready to set out.

HARR: This is really all very strange.

PAUL: A few days after our marriage, he introduced to me two of his friends, Messieurs Max and Henri. I do not know why—this intimacy was very disagreeable to me. Max and Henri were lodged in chambers almost adjoining to ours, and then my husband ordered that there should be three horses kept saddled instead of one.

HARR: You have never heard him speak of a duel or any unfortunate affair for which he apprehended being pursued?

PAUL: Never!

HARR: My dear soul, don't be alarmed. Men are odd creature, and if I could exchange my odd husband for a young one, I wouldn't care if he slept with a barrel of gunpowder under his pillow, and mine too. (Bell rings L) There's my nabob—but a propos of your husband—where is he? Do you not travel together? Is he not with you?

PAUL: (Rising) No. I am going to join him at his Chateau de Burcy where he has been living the last six weeks with the two young men I mentioned to you.

HARR: (Rising) Six weeks! Why did he not take you with him?

PAUL: He said that the Chateau was nothing more than a hunting rendezvous—badly kept up, badly furnished. Good enough for sportsmen who don't mind living roughly, but not for a lady accustomed to all the comforts and luxuries of life. (Bell again L.)

HARR: There is my nabob; I must leave you.

PAUL: But we shall meet again, shall we not?

HARR: Yes, at Paris this winter, if I prevail upon my nabob to take me there. (Bell rings violently. Exit Harriet L. Re-enter Hostess L.D. Flat)

HOST: (Setting back chairs) Madame's chamber is ready when agreeable.

PAUL: (Goes to take her bonnet) I will follow you! (Enter Horace and Henri R.2.E. or R.H.D. in flat)

HOR: (To Henri) We must wait here for Max—come in.

HOST: (Turning) What do you want, gentlemen?

PAUL: (L.) Horace!

HOR: (C. Stupified) Pauline! You here, Madame?

HEN: (R. Aside) The Countess, the devil!

PAUL: Pardon me, my love. I read in the newspapers of your wound, and I felt terrified at the account. I could remain no longer absent from you. I was too uneasy, too unhappy. I have disobeyed you.

HOR: And you have done wrong.

PAUL: Oh, heavens, what looks! But, if you desire it, I will return at once, this very instant. I have seen you again, my dear Horace, that was all I wanted.

HOR: No, Pauline, no. Since you are here, remain and be welcome. I will endeavor to make your residence at the Chateau as little disagreeable as I can.

PAUL: Oh, I will put up with anything. With you, Horace, everything pleases me, everything suits me, for I am happy.

HOR: You are an angel, Pauline! Pardon me the expression of anger that escaped me—I was wrong and I regret it.

PAUL: Dear Horace.

HOR: (To Hostess) Order horses to be put instantly to Madame's carriage—we will go.

HOST: What, so late? Will you go so late as it is? But you will find no postilion willing to undertake—

HOR: Never mind, I will drive myself.

HOST: But the roads are not safe.

HOR: Oh, with us Madame the Countess has nothing to fear.

HOST: That is sufficient, sir. (Exit R.D.H. Re-enter Max R.2.E)

MAX: Ah, here you are! You have waited for me. (Seeing Pauline) The Countess!

HOR: Yes, the Countess who was anxious to join me. Present your respects to her, my dear friend.

MAX: (Bowing) Madame! (Aside to Horace) But—

HOR: Get ready, my dear Pauline. (Aside to Max) Well! What is there fresh?

MAX: (Aside to Horace) Tonight a rich Englishman and his wife—they go by the forest to Havre.

HOR: That's well.

MAX: But the Countess!

HOR: That's my concern!

HENRI: Nothing is changed in our plans?

HOR: Nothing! (Re-enter Hostess R.D.H)

HOST: The horses are put to.

HOR: Now, Countess, come and do the honors of your Chateau de Burecy. (Exit Horace, Pauline, Max, and Henri R.D.H)

SCENE II—A road near Louville. Enter Cyrille and Lucien R.H)

CYR: Well, Master Lucien, I am very sorry to be obliged to say farewell to you. So you must be off to Paris.

LUC: Yes, my good comrade. A year ago I lost a very dear friend. I came down here to banish the gloom of that loss from my mind; I find that time does not make me forget, so I may as well go back to my family once more.

CYR: Ay! That's how it is, sir. Well, luck go with you for you are a brave heart. But if you will take a friend's advice, instead of going by the forest road to Havre, you will take my boat and let me pull you across the bay.

LUC: No, a storm is rising and it might impede your return.

CYR: I'd only catch a wet jacket.

LUC: No, I will take to the wood. I do not fear the robbers as much as you do. They will hardly attack a poor pedestrian like me; and besides, I think you exaggerate the peril of the road.

CYR: I hope so. But in any case stick this knife in your belt; it can't do any harm and may do some good. (Gives Lucian knife)

LUC: Well there, I accept your weapon as a keepsake. I shall never part with it.

CYR: Yes, do. If you meet with any rascal in the forest, give it him.

LUC: Farewell, old friend.

CYR: Good bye, Master Lucien. (Exit R. Lucien L.)

SCENE III—The bed chamber of Pauline. Chateau de Burcy. Furnished in the style Louis XV and divided in compartments. At the back a vast alcove furnished with red silk damask curtains in which is the bed. R.H. in flat is a library or large book case. Window L.2.E. with curtains like bed. Candle on table. Pauline discovered reading at table L.H. Clock strikes 10.

PAUL: Ten o'clock! Is it only 10 o'clock? How long and sad does this evening appear to me. (Enter Ali R.D.2.E with a silver teapot, cup and saucer on a salver. Crosses silently behind Pauline to back of table, lays down tray. Pauline starts)

ALI: Here is the tea that your ladyship ordered.

PAUL: How you frightened me, Ali. That is well, put it on the table.

ALI: (After doing so) Does Madame the Countess, desire me to wait?

PAUL: No, I will pour it out myself. (Aside) I know not what oppresses me, but alone in this odd castle with that sinister visaged man. (Looks at Ali, who has gone to window and opened it) Well, what are you doing there? Why do you shut the outer shutters?

ALI: (Turning) There is a storm arising and I feared the thunder would frighten you, Madame.

PAUL: Do you think there will be a storm, Ali?

ALI: Madame may be certain there will.

PAUL: (Rising and going to window) Yes, it is dark indeed; the air is heavy and stifling. I can hear afar the noise of the waves which dash upon the coast. Oh, I pity those who will be on the sea tonight. You do not think your master is at sea, Ali?

ALI: Madame knows that on leaving here he only spoke of going hunting.

PAUL: That's true, I had forgotten it. Besides, his absence can be but short—he promised to come back tomorrow, did he not?

ALI: Tomorrow--yes, Madame.

PAUL: That will do, you may go.

ALI: (Crosses to R.) Has Madame no other orders?

PAUL: No—go, leave me. (Ali bows and exits R.D. Goes to table and pours out tea) How strange is the conduct of my husband! Four hours ago I arrived at the Chateau and scarcely had we dined when he left me, saying that a previous engagement obliged him to pass the night at a neighboring Chateau. And this is my reception after an absence of two months. Oh, if he loved me as he once did; would he have left me alone, abandoned, in this isolated Chateau, in the midst of a country, the theatre of such horrible events. It appears as if some great misfortune threatened me; it appears as if the night which is now beginning would never end. (Rising) Let me endeavor to shake off these thoughts. (Looks at clock) It is late. I will endeavor to sleep—sleep will calm me, will bring forgetfulness. (She unfastens her dress and is about to take it off when pistol fired. Terrified, she stops) What was that? It seemed like the report of firearms! Still another crime, perhaps. (Listens) I hear nothing more. (Goes to window, pushes back shutters) Nothing but the growling of the tempest; nothing but the wind whistling through the ruins of the abbey. (Flash of lightning and thunder) What a night, good heavens. (Closes window) I cannot go to bed, I will sit up till morning. (Sits by table) But what shall I do—how shall I divert my thoughts? (Takes up book, reads) There must be some work more cheering, more consoling than this in the bookcase. I will try to find one. (Rises, goes to bookcase, puts book on shelf, takes another, reads title) English India—it was there I first met Horace. In speaking to me of that country this work will recall the days of past happiness. (Takes a few steps, opens book) I have taken the second volume instead of the first. (Returns to replace book, hesitates) What do I see at the back of the case? (Reflecting) A door. No, that cannot be. This chamber if I mistake not is the angle of the Chateau. Where can a door placed there lead to? Yet this button must be placed there for some purpose—I will see. (Her hand in bookcase) I cannot turn it. Ah, perhaps by pressing—yes, yes, I fancy it begins to yield. (Uttering a cry) Ah! (She starts back, the panel turns slowly, and discovers an opening worked in the thickness of the wall) A staircase in the wall. Whither can it lead? I dare not advance, and yet—(Approaches and places her foot on the step, holding the candle before her. A gust of wind blows it out. Stage very dark) The cold air from the passage has blown out the light. Hark! What was that? I hear steps in the garden. (Goes to window L.H) How dark it is. There are the ruins of the Abbey de Grandpré, but gloomy as the night. (Lightning) Ah, yes, now I begin to distinguish. (Lightning) Three men, three men in blouses. They appear to be carrying something—what is it? (Lightning) Oh, heavens! It seems like a human body enveloped in a mantle—yes, the mantle moves. (Lightning) It opens and an arm issues from it. I can just perceive a white sleeve—it is a woman! What is going on here? Oh, heaven have mercy on me—protect me—assist me—(Lightning) They carry their burden into the ruins of the Abbey. But that woman, that poor woman. What are they about to do with her? Oh, I must not hesitate; I will fly and inform Ali—he must have firearms and I may still be in time to prevent a crime. (Runs to door) But they have fastened me in—the door is locked. What does this mean? Hark! I hear someone walking behind the panel—they ascend the stairs—they are coming here! (Music. She closes the bookcase with effort and slowly feels her way to the bed and throws herself on it, head towards the window, drags the clothes over her) I will remain still as death; perhaps, thinking I am asleep, these men will spare me. (Feigns to sleep. After a pause the secret panel slowly opens and Horace appears dressed in blouse, gaiters etc. He stops and listens.)

HOR: Pauline! Pauline! (Lightning) No answer—she sleeps. (Approaches the bed. A vivid flash of lightning as he passes the window shows his face)

PAUL: Horace!

HOR: (Starting) My name. (Listens and calls in slow, soft voice) Pauline! (Pause) She sleeps, she has seen nothing. (Stealthily returns to the opening, retires and closes panel slowly)

PAUL: (Rising slowly) Horace! It was he who advanced towards me. Oh, I know him well, it is no illusion. It was he who opened that door, he whose face so pale the lightning revealed to me. Oh, heaven, what a horrid suspicion! Those three men I saw pass under my window—they were Horace and his friends! And that woman, that woman whom they bore—oh, I understand it all now. That woman is the mistress of Horace! This is why the Count would not allow me to come to the Chateau. Horace loves me no longer. (She weeps in agony then all at once walks firmly to the chimneypiece and rings the bell) I will send for him instantly that he may know I am not his dupe. (Rings bell again) Is it possible they cannot hear me? Will they not come when I call? (Rings violently, breaks rope) Oh, they come at last.

(Enter Ali R.D. A lamp lights up)

ALI: I am here; did Madame ring?

PAUL: (Subduing her emotion) Light that candle.

ALI: (Crosses to L.H. Pauline watches him with her eyes as he lights candle) Madame the Countess has no other commands for me?

PAUL: (C.) None, but tell your master that I desire to speak with him instantly.

ALI: (Astonished) My master!

PAUL: Well, do you not understand me?

ALI: Yes, I understand perfectly. But Madame knows that my master the Count is not in the Chateau!

PAUL: (Pause, fixing him) He is not in the Chateau.

ALI: No.

PAUL: (Fixing him) He is not returned.

ALI: No.

PAUL: (Advancing a step still fixing him) Are you certain?

ALI: I am certain.

PAUL: (Pause) It is well. I was mistaken. You may go. (Exit Ali R.D. Noise of bolt. Pauline throws down book, takes the light, touches the spring on the bookcase—the door opens) I will soon know whether he is in the Chateau or not. (She descends. Lights down)

SCENE IV—A front wood. Stage dark. Thunder and lightning. Enter Lucien L.H)

LUC: What a fearful night. It is so dark I can scarcely distinguish the road. (Lightning) I thought I saw a light in this direction—there again, yonder! I shouted but the howling of the storm rendered my voice inaudible. I will wait for a lull. (Thunder) Yonder is the light again. (A distant cry) Hark! What was that? It seemed like a cry of distress! A woman's voice too—can I have been mistaken? (Cry again) No, there it is again—it is the sharp cry of fear and terror. (Pistol shot) There, I heard the report of a pistol. It came from that direction. Oh, some dreadful crime is being perpetrated here, and I am unarmed. Stay, the knife Cyrille gave me. Heaven inspired him to press this weapon upon my acceptance. (Draws knife) Stay, the light seems to move this way. There are two figures; they come this way. (Conceals himself R. Enter Horace and Max R.1.E)

HOR: Where is Henri?

MAX: He has gone to the vaults beneath the ruins.

HOR: Come on, let us see that no trace remains to lead anyone from the carriage to our retreat.

MAX: And let us make certain that the postilion and the old Englishman are quite dead.

HOR: Has Henri taken the woman to the vault?

MAX: We carried her between us.

HOR: Come then. (Exit with Max L.1.E)

LUC: (Advancing) They spoke in an undertone, but surely I overheard two men murdered and a woman conveyed to some vaults beneath the ruins. What ruins? Ha, the Abbey of Grandpré! I am on the track of a terrible deed. I will follow these men. Perhaps I may save this unfortunate woman and bring these ruffians to justice. Heaven aid and protect me! (Music. Exit L.)

SCENE V—A subterranean apartment in the Abbey of Grandpré. At the back L. is a door, the upper part of which is glazed, thro' which is seen staircase. A rude bench R.U.E. on which Harriet is stretched, her hands bound. C. trap hinged. Steps below. A practical staircase R.3.E. Horace, Max, Henri seated at L. table on which is lamp, alight, bottles, cups, and remains of a supper. Each wears a blue blouse, hunting knife and pair of pistols.

MAX: (Raising cup) Come, here's your health.

HENRI: Here's to yours. (They drink. Enter Ali R. staircase)

HOR: (Rising and going to him) Well, what did she want?

ALI: She believes you to be in the Chateau, and insists upon seeing you.

HOR: And you said to her—

ALI: I denied it.

HOR: That's well. (Returns to table) 'Till tomorrow. (Exit Ali) Gentlemen, I leave you.

HENRI: Already?

MAX: (Jeeringly) What, you are going to your wife?

HOR: (Advancing) Please to remember I do not allow the name of my wife to be mentioned here.

MAX: Well, be cool. We will say no more about her. But why do you go so soon?

HOR: Gentlemen, five years ago, three young men—gentlemen of ancient lineage, ruined and rendered desperate—made a compact to regain their fortunes as their ancestors did, by robbery and murder. I have to announce to you that one of the three is weary of the partnership, and that tonight is my last enterprise of this kind.

MAX: How?

HOR: During our first year or two it was a new excitement to me—to sleep in dread of the gallows. I never felt terror ‘till then, and it amused me. But that feeling is past, and I am sick of the bloodshed.

MAX: And you have married a rich wife and want to turn respectable. Well, in that case, you claim no share in our prize yonder, I suppose, so she falls to me.

HOR: As you please.

HENRI: Stop a minute. It appears to me that I have rights as well as you.

MAX: You have?

HENRI: Yes! Who killed her husband?

HOR: Faith, that certainly entitles you to her consideration.

HARR: Gentlemen, have pity on me.

MAX: (To Henri) Ay, that may be, but who was it that waited a whole day at Tourville and informed you of the route their carriage would take?

HOR: A man ought to be a King Solomon in person to decide which has the greatest right—the spy or the assassin.

MAX: Let her choose which she likes best.

HOR: (Approaches bench) My lady, here are two brigand friends of mine, whom I have the honor to present to you. Both of excellent families, they figure as most honorable men in the salons of Paris. They supplicate you very humbly to choose one of them.

HARR: (Rising) Ah, if there remain any feeling of mercy in your heart, instead of insulting—kill me I implore you. (Raising her eyes) Monsieur de Beaupré!

HOR: You know me?

HARR: The Count de Beaupré—husband of Pauline! (Pauline with candle is seen through holes in door on steps L.H)

HOR: Miss Harriet Wellsley.

HARR: Save me, Count, save me for your wife's sake—we were children together. Oh. For mercy's sake, save me!

HOR: She knows me. (Pauline descends and disappears) She has condemned herself.

MAX: What does she answer? Come!

HOR: She answers that it is infamous and that we are three ruffians deserving the gallows. I confess that I am somewhat of her opinion. (Music. Pauline's face appears at the hole in door, her hands clinging to the orifices)

MAX & HENRI: Well, what then?

HOR: (Sitting down) What then, why, do as you like and leave me alone.

MAX: (To Henri) You will not yield her to me?

HENRI: No!

MAX: (Rises and crosses R) Well then, I'll take her.

HENRI: (Rises and crosses L) We'll see about that. (Both draw their knives)

HARR: (On bed R.H) For pity's sake, for mercy's sake, in the name of heaven kill me!

HOR: (Rising) What did you say, gentlemen?

MAX: I said that woman should be mine!

HENRI: And I said she shall not be his but mine!

HOR: Well, you have both lied, for neither of you shall have her. (Fires. Harriet utters a scream and falls dead on bed. Pauline shrieks)

ALL: What was that!

MAX & HENRI: There is someone behind that door.

HOR: Someone! (He runs and opens the door. Pauline, who has fainted, is discovered clinging to the panel. She falls backwards into his arms)

ALL: A woman!

HOR: (Laying her down) Pauline!

MAX & HENRI: The Countess!

HENRI: We are betrayed.

HOR: (Bestriding her body coldly) Fear nothing, gentlemen, I will take charge of her.

LUC: (Below) Help! Help!

MAX: (Over the trap C.) Hush! Someone is in the passage below that leads from the forest.

HOR: Extinguish that light. (Henri blows out candle) Close the lantern (Max closes dark lantern. Lucien appears at trap C)

LUC: (Half up, groping his way) The cry came from here. (Pauline recovering, on her knees, arms extended, recognizes the voice of Lucien, is going to speak. Horace places his hand over her mouth. . Max and Henri feel for Lucien. At this moment Lucien is seized and stabbed by Max in breast and Henri in back. He falls with a stifled cry, legs down trap. Max opens the lantern and throws the light on his face)

HOR: (Dropping Pauline) Lucien. (Pauline falls back, fainting)

ACT III

SCENE I—Same as Act I Scene I. On the R. a large table covered with cloth, sofa L.H. Table against flat R.H. Gabrielle discovered in full dress.

GAB: (At window) It will soon be 5 o'clock. In an hour the contract is to be signed and he is not yet arrived. Can it be possible that he has not received my letter; I informed him of the very day, the hour. (Enter Madame de Nerval in full dress L)

MAD: I was seeking you, my child—what are you doing there?

GAB: Dear mother, I was looking down the road.

MAD: The road; why we are waiting for nobody but you.

GAB: Is everyone arrived then?

MAD: Yes, Gabrielle, all the persons invited to witness your marriage have arrived; yet the only one who should have been here is absent.

GAB: My brother Lucien.

MAD: For more than a year he has never written to us. We might have believed him dead, but last month he drew from his bankers a large sum of money. From this I learned that he was in England.

GAB: And you forbade my writing to inform him of my marriage with Count Horace de Beaupré. Had he known of this event, I am sure he would have come to affix his name to the contract. (Noise of carriage) Hark! There are carriage wheels.

MAD: Well!

GAB: (Turns to window) I believed—I hoped—but no, it is only Messieurs de Montlouis and Beachamp who have arrived.

MAD: Whom did you expect then?

GAB: Oh, my mother, in spite of your prohibition—

MAD: Well!

GAB: I could not resist the desire I had to see my brother and—

MAD: You have written to him.

GAB: Pardon me for having disobeyed you, my dear mother.

MAD: And you told him of your marriage with Count Horace.

GAB: Yes!

MAD: You told him the hour, the day—

GAB: I told him that on the 11th of May I was to become the bride of Count Horace de Beaupré and I begged him to be present that he might give me away.

MAD: Oh, you must plainly perceive that he has more completely forgotten us than you believed.

(Enter Lucien L.C)

LUC: You are unjust to me, mother. The contract was to be signed on the 11th of May at six o'clock—it is the 11th of May and only half-past five.

MAD: Lucien!

GAB: My brother!

MAD: Lucien, I had resolved to be angry with you, but I cannot help forgiving you since you are here.

GAB: Ah, my dearest Lucien, I knew quite well that you would come to me.

LUC: (C.) On receiving your letter and learning the name of him to whom you were about to be married, I did not hesitate a moment. But now let us speak of yourself, Gabrielle.

GAB: Of me?

LUC: Or rather of the Count. Tell me frankly, honestly, setting aside all the little timidities of a young girl—is this marriage of yours with Count Horace a marriage of love?

GAB: Why yes, brother, he appears to love me very much.

LUC: Do you love him likewise very much?

GAB: I think him very agreeable; I think that a woman without loving very ardently might be happy with him.

LUC: And that is all?

GAB: That is all!

HOR: (Outside C.) What do I hear?

LUC: Hush, here he is. (Enter Horace in full dress. Madame and Gabrielle get up R.)

HOR: What do they tell me? Dear Monsieur de Nerval, this is an unhopèd-for pleasure. You will permit me to welcome you most sincerely. (Lucien bows coldly, not taking Horace's extended hand. Aside) Ah, what's the matter here?

LUC: I believe, sir, that I am here in my own house, where it is rather my privilege to welcome you.

GAB: (Aside) Oh, heavens! In what a tone he speaks to him. And why does he look at him thus?

HOR: Pardon me, sir. I know that I am almost a stranger to you. But since the death of Pauline, I have resided with your family. Thus I learned to esteem your mother and sister as my own. Had I known your address, I would have written respecting my fortune, and the sentiments with which your sister has inspired me.

LUC: For what end, sir? Your fortune is well known—perhaps less in its source it is true than in the way you employ it. As to your sentiments with regard to my sister, after having rendered your first wife so perfectly happy, no doubt you would make the second equally so.

HOR: (Aside) He has evidently learned something. Whence will the storm come? (Music. Enter Leon, Montlouis and gentlemen)

MAD: Walk in, gentlemen, I beg. Monsieur de Montlouis, Monsieur Beauchamp, here is Lucien.

LEON & MONT: Ah, my dear Lucien!

LUC: (Between them L) Thanks, my dear friends. (Aside to them) Under no pretext leave the Chateau.

MONT: Shall you want us?

LUC: Perhaps.

HOR: (Aside) He whispers to them—the storm is rising.

LUC: Yes, my friend, I will reserve the history of my adventures for another time. But you must know that eighteen months ago, while on my road homeward, I met with an accident. I was assassinated.

ALL: Assassinated!

LUC: Left for dead, yes. But it served an important purpose—my murderers should believe they had killed me.

HOR: Allow me to congratulate you on your escape.

LUC: But come; the notary awaits us.

NOT: (At table R.) Be so kind as to take your places gentlemen. I am going to read the contract: “Before William Beauvillairs, Notary of Paris, the undersigned have appeared. Monsieur the Count de Beapré and Mademoiselle Gabrielle de Nerval, on the other part, which parties in contemplation of the marriage proposed between them and the celebration of which will take place immediately, according to law, have agreed to the civil clauses and conditions of this union.” Now, Mademoiselle, have the goodness to sign. (Gabrielle led by her bridesmaids crosses and signs then returns to L.H) Now the husband.

LUC: Will he dare? (Horace signs) He has signed!

NOT: Now the relations, Madame. (Madame signs) Monsieur? (Lucien goes up to table and tears up contract)

ALL: Ah!

NOT: What are you doing?

MAD: What means—

LUC: It means this, mother, that this marriage cannot take place; this marriage is impossible.

ALL: Impossible?

MAD: Lucien—

LUC: Mother, I tell you if this marriage had taken place in my absence, my father had risen from his tomb to prevent it.

MAD: Explain yourself.

LUC: (In an undertone) It is not the moment, nor am I permitted to reveal the terrible secret which forbids this union. But I beseech you, my dearest mother, be satisfied that I do not act without due cause and good reason.

MAD: Enough, Lucien. I will await patiently the explanation you will render hereafter. (To the company) My friends, my son has satisfied me that this marriage cannot proceed.

HOR: Pardon me, Madame, but your son has not satisfied me; and the cause for this strange resolution which he has confided to you in secret, I have a right to demand shall be given here and now, aloud, to our assembled friends.

LUC: You demand it?

HOR: Unless indeed, it touches the honor of your family so closely that you cannot avow it.

LUC: You demand of me to avow the impediment which exists to your marriage with my sister.

HOR: I claim it publicly.

LUC: For your own sake, Count, do not press me.

HOR: You have said the marriage was impossible; I demand the reason why.

LUC: Why? You ask me why?

HOR: Yes. Why, sir. (Pauline, pale and dying appears C. She wears a plain dress and cloak, which falls off as she advances)

PAUL: Why? I come to tell you why. It is because the law forbids the taking of a second wife when the first is not dead—and I am living, sir.

ALL: Pauline!

HOR: Pauline!

LUC: You here, Madame.

HOR: (Aside) So the thunderbolt has fallen.

MAD: But, Count, if Pauline was living—

PAUL: Oh, do not accuse him, let no one accuse him. The Count had reason to believe that I was dead.

MAD: But how comes it since you are living, that you left your husband to think you were dead? And us, why should you condemn us to eternal regret?

PAUL: I will tell you. One night when Horace was absent from the Chateau, I was aroused by a distant cry for help. Hurriedly, and goaded by curiosity, I left my room and found my way to the ruins of an Abbey from whence the cries proceeded. There I became a witness to a most horrible murder.

ALL: A murder!

PAUL: I uttered an involuntary cry which discovered me, and I was dragged from my concealment by the three assassins.

HOR: Proceed, Madame. (Aside) Will she dare to speak?

PAUL: Over my body they held a terrible council—two were disposed to put me to death, the third—

ALL: The third?

PAUL: The third, more cruel than his comrades, proposed that I should be imprisoned in their den. It was so resolved. On the fourth day my reason fled, and I became mad. In this state I was carried over to England and consigned to an obscure lunatic asylum. Months elapsed before I recovered my senses, and then I found means to elude the vigilance of my keepers and to send a letter to Lucien.

LUC: The jailers of Pauline were well paid; but by threats and bribes they were induced to send their assassins, their employers, a certificate of her death.

MAD: But these wretches—these murderers—you know them?

LUC: Yes, I saw them.

GAB: And if you met one of them, you would recognize his person, would you not?

PAUL: If I—no—no—I—I could not know him. (Faints)

LUC: She faints, she is weak. This scene has overcome her. Bear her into the next room, dear mother. (The ladies bear off Pauline C.D. When they are off drop curtains) My friends, you will pardon this scene, I beg you to receive my excuses. (The gentlemen exit L.3.E. Montlouis and Beauchamp are going with Lucien)

HOR: Stay, sir—a word with you. (They exit at a sign from Lucien)

LUC: Now, sir, I am here! What would you with me?

HOR: It appears that you know me.

LUC: I do. But an oath exacted by Pauline keeps me silent as to your true character. Begone—you are safe with me.

HOR: Aye, indeed! And what portion of my character induces you to believe that Count Horace de Beaupré will permit any man to say that he is safe with them?

LUC: What do you mean? I offer you escape. Pauline is dying. In a few months, a few days, perhaps, she will be in her grave. And since she absolves you, I perforce must keep your secret.

HOR: And you imagine that I will permit you to live with that secret hanging on your lips? That I would live by your kind permission? I see you do not know me yet.

LUC: What would you have?

HOR: I would have your life. And with that life your silence. Go, proclaim my crime, and deliver me to the scaffold; or, if you have the heart of a man in you, meet me in a combat, face to face. A combat where one of us must fall.

LUC: Why should I oppose my life to yours?

HOR: For three reasons: First because you love Pauline and you could not with a free conscience accuse her husband! Second, because I saved your life, and you dare not before the world sacrifice that of your preserver. And third, because if you refuse to fight me, you will be assassinated either by me or my confederate tonight.

LUC: I promised Pauline to avoid this encounter, but you leave me no alternative. I accept your challenge. Where shall we meet?

HOR: In this room—now.

LUC: Well, be it so. I cannot carry this accursed secret any longer. (Goes L.H)

HOR: And if I fall you may speak out.

LUC: I will go for the weapons.

HOR: Save yourself the trouble, sir. I always keep them ready. Here are pistols—they are already loaded. (Producing them) But let us see; I am a dead shot—you know that by experience.

LUC: Well, sir?

HOR: Let us make the chances even for you. Withdraw the bullet from one of the weapons, and then face to face meet me, and let this table be the only space between us.

LUC: Agreed! (Goes to table L.H. of flat, back to audience and draws bullet) It is done. (Advances and throws bullet on stage)

HOR: Now place them under the cloth of that table. And as it was you who took out the ball, I will choose first. (R. of table)

LUC: (Placing pistols under cloth) Be it so!

HOR: If we fight without witnesses, there may be grounds for an accusation of assassination.

LUC: (L. of table) I have Messieurs Beauchamp and Montlouis here—will they satisfy you?

HOR: Perfectly! It only remains to know if they will consent.

LUC: (Opening door) Come in, gentlemen. (Enter Beauchamp and Montlouis L.3.E) Gentlemen, from motives which it is unnecessary to explain to you—but which are insuperable—a duel between Monsieur de Beaupr which are insuperable—a duel between Monsieur de Beaupré and

myself cannot be avoided, but we have resolved to fight in such a manner that one of us must die.

MONT: What do you say?

LUC: Be silent, I beseech you, and render evidence of what you see. (Horace deliberately takes a pistol from under the cloth; Lucien takes the other) Count three, Beauchamp. At the word "three" we fire together. Shall it be so?

HOR: As you please.

LEON: One—two—three—(They fire. Horace remains erect a few seconds changing only in countenance. He then sinks forward on the table, but recovers himself, rises, and speaks)

HOR: You have the best of it Monsieur Lucien. Thank you, you have saved me from the executioner. (Music. Puts his handkerchief to his mouth and falls dead R.H. Lights down. The curtain at back slowly opens and discover Pauline on couch. Madame de Nerval and a group around her. Curate behind with his hand elevated to heaven)

PAUL: Oh, my father in heaven! Forgive my husband. Let thy mercy to him be greater than his mercy to me. Oh, listen to the dying prayer of Pauline! (Music. Very piano and religious character. White fire tableau and very slow curtain)