

lieutenant of the guard, paced slowly up and down the full length of the passage, twisting his dark moustache, and turning abruptly when he came within a few feet of the entrance to the anteroom.

I was so dull and wearied that it would have been something even to talk to M. de Lorgnac, bear though he was, but he took no more notice of me than if I were a stick or a stone, and yet there were, I do not know how many, who would have given their ears for a tête-à-tête with Denise de Mieux.

I ought not to have been surprised, for the lieutenant showed no more favour to any one else than he did to me, and during the year or more I had been here, enjoying for the first time in my life the gaieties of the Court, after my days in apron-strings at Lespaille, my uncle de Tavannes' seat, I had not, nor had a soul as far as I knew, seen M. de Lorgnac exchange more than a formal bow and a half-dozen words with any woman. He was poor as a homeless cat, his patrimony, as we heard, being but a sword and a ruined tower somewhere in the Corrèze. So, as he had nothing to recommend him except a tall, straight figure, and a reputation for bravery—qualities that were shared by a hundred others with more agreeable manners, we left Monsieur L'Ours, as we nicknamed him, to himself, and, to say the truth, he did not seem much discomposed by our neglect.

As for me I hardly noticed his existence, sometimes barely returning his bow; but often have I caught him observing me gravely with a troubled look in his grey eyes, and as ill-luck would have it, this was ever when I was engaged in some foolish diversion, and I used to feel furious, as I thought he was playing the spy on

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