

AZOLAN & VALMONT 1

Valmont: So, he grasped what was going on, did he?

Azolan: Oh yes, sir. I was watching him and he was watching you. He knew what you were doing and after you'd gone, he talked to the family.

Valmont: I must say, the family was very well chosen.

Azolan: Thank you, sir.

Valmont: Solidly respectable, gratifyingly tearful, no suspiciously pretty girls. Well done.

Azolan: I do my best for you, sir.

Valmont: And not even unduly expensive. Fifty-six livres to save an entire family from ruin seems a genuine bargain.

Azolan: These days, my lord, you can find half a dozen like that in any village in the country.

Valmont: Really? I must say, it's no longer a mystery to me why people fall so easily into the habit of charitable enterprises. All that humble gratitude. It was most affecting.

Azolan: Certainly brought a tear to my eye, sir.

Valmont: How are you getting on with the maid?

Azolan: Julie? Tell you the truth, it's been a bit boring. If I wasn't so anxious to keep your lordship abreast, I think I'd only have bothered the once. I'm not sure she doesn't feel the same, but, you know, what else is there to do in the country?

Valmont: Yes. It wasn't so much the details of your intimacy I was after, it was whether she's agreed to bring me Madame de Tourvel's letters and do you think she'll keep her mouth shut?

Azolan: She won't steal the letters, sir.

Valmont: She won't?

Azolan: You know better than me, sir; it's easy enough making them do what they want to do; it's trying to get them to do what you want to do. That's what gives you a headache. As for keeping her mouth shut, I haven't asked her to keep her mouth shut because that's the one thing most likely to give her the idea of opening it.

Valmont: You may well be right. But look, Madame de Tourvel told me she'd been warned about me: that means some officious friend must have written to her about me. I need to know who.

Azolan: I shouldn't worry about all that if I were you, sir. If she's interested enough to have you followed, I'd say it was only a matter of time.

Valmont: Do you think so?

Azolan: Anyway, apparently, she keeps her letters in her pockets.

Valmont: I wish I knew how to pick pockets. Why don't our parents ever teach us anything useful? Where do you and Julie meet?

Azolan: In my room, sir.

Valmont: And is she coming tonight?

Azolan: Afraid so.

Valmont: Then I think I may have to burst in on you. See if blackmail will succeed better than bribery. About 2 o'clock suit you? I don't want to embarrass you. Will that give you enough time?

Azolan: Ample, sir. Then you won't have to pay her, will you, sir?

Valmont: Oh, I think if she delivers, we can afford to be generous, don't you? Don't worry, I shan't overlook your contribution.

Azolan: Well, that's very decent of you, sir.

Valmont: Off you go, then. See you at two.

Azolan: Right, sir. I'll be sure to arrange her so she can't say she's there to borrow a clothes brush.

END

