

CECILE & VALMONT

(Valmont escorts Cecile into the room. Cecile is slightly apprehensive)

Valmont: Much the same as your room, you see, but here, you'll be able to make as much noise as you like. And the mattress is a little harder.

Cecile: Is that good?

Valmont: Yes, that's very good.

Cecile: *(convinced. diving in)* Come on.

Valmont: The first thing you must learn is that there is no necessity whatsoever for haste. Now, as with every other science, the first principle is to make sure you call everything by its proper name.

Cecile: I don't see why you have to talk at all.

Valmont: Without the correct polite vocabulary, how can you indicate what you would like me to do or make me an offer of something I might find agreeable?

Cecile: Surely you just say –

Valmont: You see, if I do my work adequately, I would like to think you'll be able to surprise Monsieur de Gercourt on your wedding night.

Cecile: Would he be pleased?

Valmont: Well, of course, he'll merely assume your mama has done her duty and fully briefed you.

Cecile: Maman couldn't possibly talk about anything of the sort.

Valmont: I can't think why. She was, after all, at one time, one of the most notorious young women in Paris.

Cecile: Maman??

Valmont: Certainly. More noted for her enthusiasm than her ability if I remember rightly, but nonetheless renowned. There was a famous occasion before you were born when she went to stay with the

Comtesse de Beaulieu, who tactfully gave her a room between your father's and that of a Monsieur de Vressac, who was her acknowledged lover at the time. Yet, despite these careful arrangements, she contrived to spend the night with a third party.

Cecile: I can't believe that. It's just gossip.

Valmont: No, no, I assure you it's true.

Cecile: How do you know?

Valmont: The third party was myself. *(beat)* Now I think we might begin with one or two Latin terms.

END