

Aline & Valcour

VOL.
1

or, the Philosophical Journal

Sad

Encomiums

"Sade's neglected masterpiece... can be considered not only a decisive turning point in the author's development, but also a significant milestone in the history of the philosophy of emotion."

— Marco Menin, University of Turin

"For those of us who have been waiting a lifetime for a translation, *Aline and Valcour* is the final piece of the puzzle that is Sade, and a key work in French literature."

— Steven Moore, author of *The Novel: An Alternative History*

"Sade may be diabolical, but he is also devilishly adroit."

— Beatrice C. Fink, University of Maryland

"*Aline and Valcour* shows an epistolary novel that is very much in and of the Revolutionary moment, which only enhances its appeal. That Sade produced a book this good is an occasion for surprise and pleasure. *Aline and Valcour* has the capacity to not only deepen the popular conception of Sade but the popular-academic conception of him as influenced by Barthes and Foucault. I also greatly admire the translation, which is kept in period but is not at all a pastiche. It is both formal & direct."

— Prof. Nicholas Birns, New York University

"Jocelyne Geneviève Barque and John Galbraith Simmons have triumphantly met the manifold challenges of this fascinating, often prolix novel, rendering Sade's words into a sparkling English that never lapses into faux-'modern' anachronism or pedantic literalism."

— Christopher Winks, Professor of Comparative Literature, Queens College

Aline and Valcour will force readers on this side of the Atlantic to re-think everything they've ever learned, heard, or read about the Marquis de Sade. The translation of this formidable novel... is accurate, clear, loses nothing of the Sadean voice, and makes for compelling reading.

— Alyson Waters, PhD, managing editor of *Yale French Studies*

"This remarkable translation of this extraordinary novel, done into English with such talent and devotion, will be a landmark contribution to French studies in the English-speaking world."

— Donald Nicholson-Smith, translator, Chevalier des Arts et Lettres

afin que... les traces de ma tombe disparaissent
comme je me flatte que ma mémoire s'efface

“so that ... all traces of my grave may disappear from the surface
of the earth, just as I like to think my memory will be effaced
from the minds of men ...”

*ent de dessus de la surface de la terre,
era de l'esprit des hommes... D.A.F. SADE*



Hans Bellmer, *Aline et Valcour* (1968).

ALINE AND VALCOUR
or, the Philosophical Novel

by
Marquis de Sade

Vol. I

Translated by
Jocelyne Geneviève Barque
&
John Galbraith Simmons



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Turbulence, Terror, and Creating *Aline and Valcour*

The dank and dour prison cell occupied by the Marquis de Sade was not without amenities. True, he complained loudly and endlessly about his confinement to Liberty, the darkest and most austere of the eight towers that indelibly identified the Bastille. The 14th-century fortress was built to protect Paris during the Hundred Years' War and later repurposed as a jail. But books lined Sade's octagonal cell, measuring about fourteen by fifteen feet; he took solace in tapestries and family portraits that covered the immensely thick stone walls. Iron bars on a lone window impeded his view but in lighter moments, in letters to friends, he called the cell his "country house." Yearly the prisoner paid handsomely for his meals, composing the menus himself. He had table and chair, and a much-needed horsehair cushion for his rump. In this space, by autumn of 1786, Sade had begun to create *Aline and Valcour*. It would take him three years and stands effectively as the first of his fully realized novels.

Unlike his extreme *Juliette, or the Prosperities of Vice* and *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue*, *Aline and Valcour* would not be pornographic. But like those works, its scope and themes were so ambitious that the author could subtitle it *The Philosophical Novel*. Ostensibly, it was a novel in letters, like Richardson's *Pamela*, or Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. But its epistolary form served primarily as a frame for several interconnected narratives that weave social satire, black humor, picaresque adventure, and mystery and detection. Indeed, as to the latter, Sade clearly predates and prefigures Edgar Allan Poe. For characters he drew not just upon beleaguered families of the old French aristocracy and emergent

bourgeoisie, but from strange counterparts in exotic lands, including a cruel African tribal king and an enlightened despot on a remote island in the South Pacific. The supporting cast includes vile libertines, scheming wet nurses, Viennese pirates, Romanian gypsies, officers of the Spanish Inquisition and the Grand Inquisitor himself.

Today, *Aline and Valcour* is part of the prestigious Pléiade edition of Sade's works, although until now only a few pages of the novel have been put into English. It deserves not only translation, but rescue from its comparatively inconspicuous place in Sade's work, and in world literature more generally. Unlike Sade's lightly shaped pornographic works, *Aline and Valcour* is tightly constructed with carefully drawn characters and a persistent subtext of social injustice. The novel shows the author mingling genres to investigate the larger societal fabric while fashioning a lively new discourse about the roles and inner lives of individuals in the expanding world of European imperialism, in ways that today seem far-sighted and remarkably contemporary.

Although long neglected in favor of his sexually explicit works, *Aline and Valcour* has gained greater recognition and won wider readership in France in recent years. Today, in addition to the bible-paper Pléiade edition of the collected works, a new mass market edition was published in 1994. A literary anthology devoted to the novel, *Sade en toutes lettres*, appeared in 2004.* Critical views attest to the shift. Annie Le Brun points to the extreme use Sade makes "of the adventure and the philosophical novel alike," and how he "cheerfully confuses the two, exploiting the qualities of one to overcome the limitations of the other, and vice versa."†

* Michel Delon and Catriona Seth, eds, *Sade en toutes lettres, autour d'Aline et Valcour* (Paris: Editions Desjonquères, 2004).

† Annie Le Brun, *Sade: A Sudden Abyss* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1990).

Jean M. Goulement notes that the work cannot be described as merely a novel in letters or libertine tale, nor a roman noir, nor a coming-of-age story. "It is all those things, and yet more — the unveiling, perhaps, of literature forged by rage."* These remarks echo Gilbert Lely, Sade's first biographer, who wrote that, "on many a page [the novel] adumbrates the sensibility of our age.... Were it not [for] the notoriety of the author's four-letter name... this novel, which throughout, despite the daring nature of the feelings described, never ceases to be decent, would long since have been listed among those works of imagination of universal significance which, like *Don Quixote*, *The Decameron*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, have opened new realms to man's imagination."

Aline and Valcour is indeed not just, or only, a novel but, on a social and political plane, a surprisingly prescient work that, far more than anything found in Voltaire or Diderot, forecasts the world we inhabit today.

While imprisoned in the 1780s, Sade was known to the French public not as a writer but as an outrageous libertine. He was infamous for his sexual excesses and blasphemous acts. Born in 1740, he had fomented disgraceful scandals beginning in his early twenties. He not only whipped prostitutes; more outrageously, for the times, he literally spat upon the crucifix, trampled it underfoot, and made raw insulting statements about religion and the clergy — crimes punishable by death. All this became rock-starlike fodder for gossip and low news of the day. After convicting him of sodomy and poisoning, jurists in Provence condemned Sade to public execution *in absentia* and in 1772 he was hanged in effigy, strangled, and

* Jean M. Goulement, Introduction to *Aline and Valcour* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994).

† Gilbert Lely, *The Marquis de Sade: A Biography* (London: Elek Books, 1961).

burnt, his ashes scattered to the winds. (The verdict was later overturned.) Finally, after long evasion and more outrages to contemporary morals, police arrested and imprisoned him in 1777 at the instigation of his mother-in-law, who won from King Louis XVI a notorious *lettre de cachet* — an arbitrary warrant for confinement from which there was no appeal.

The distress that the Marquis caused both his own aristocratic family and that of his long-suffering wife, Renée-Pélagie de Montreuil, owns an impressive social context. As France stumbled along in a state of incipient political and economic chaos in the years before the revolution, Sade's marriage represented a solution for old nobility in need of money. For his wife's petty aristocratic family, the union was good business that bought connection to genuine royalty. But the shifting nature and growing complexity of human relationships, crucial aspects of the Enlightenment, created a thicket of contradictions. Sade, all apart from his sexual excesses, not really uncommon for aristocrats, treated his wife badly — indeed, outlandishly even by contemporary standards. Yet the couple nurtured a close alliance, the depths of which have perplexed, fascinated, and eluded biographers for two centuries. From prison, when not upbraiding and insulting her in their correspondence, he called Renée-Pélagie his “turtle dove” and “little mother” and “fresh pork of my thoughts” — among many other endearments. Yet, when she came to visit him, bearing some of the many books that enabled him to write *Aline and Valcour*, he would fly into jealous rages. She became the novel's first reader and critic — and, indeed, her written comments coincided with a decisive change in their relationship. It is not implausible that her reaction to *Aline and Valcour*, a novel that provides explicit and radical critiques of society and religion, once committed to paper, helped foster a clear and unbridgeable gulf between the two. After little more than

a year, by the time Sade was a free man, they had parted ways, never to see each other again.

For all Sade's complaints, prison discipline had a salutary effect upon him as author. When he was not incensed with his jailers or bewailing a clutch of injustices, enforced solitude instilled a reflective frame of mind and freed his imagination from its unruly obsessions, enabling him to produce highly crafted fiction, sometimes at an astounding rate. Before his incarceration in 1777, Sade had published nothing — not unusual for a nobleman who amused himself as a writer. Before and during his years of royal imprisonment, Sade composed mainly plays and light poetry for friends, as well as a travelogue, *Voyage in Italy*, based upon a yearlong expedition in 1775-6. But a turning point came in 1785, when over a matter of several weeks the prisoner furiously created the most virulent literary pornographic text ever penned, *120 Days of Sodom*. The manuscript for that novel — about 250,000 words — he concealed somewhere in his cell. In minuscule handwriting on a scroll 40 feet long, it would be lost to its author and not published until the twentieth century. But its cathartic impact may be guessed at because, shortly thereafter, Sade began *Aline and Valcour*.

How *Aline and Valcour* came to be published is almost a novel in itself. The days and months between its completion (around early 1789) and appearance in the summer of 1795 were some of the most remarkable in the history of Europe, and both Sade's own life and his novel testify to the chaos and violence of the French Revolution. Sade's proximity to events can be gleaned from the fate of his jailer. When an unruly crowd stormed the Bastille on July 14, 1789, Sade had been evacuated days before. But the seething mob captured, tortured, and eviscerated the prison's commander, Bernard de Launay. His head, stuck on a pike, was paraded through the

INTRODUCTION

streets. Then the Bastille itself, arch symbol of royal tyranny located in the heart of Paris, was pillaged and destroyed. Rioters sacked Sade's cell and carted away his belongings.

Translators' Note

In accordance with recent editions in French, our translation is based on the third state or printing of the novel in 1795. The text in English is complete and integral. Footnotes are Sade's own, added at the time of publication. At the end of each volume we provide contextual endnotes that gloss historic and unfamiliar events, names, and places.

ALINE AND VALCOUR
or, the Philosophical Novel

Written in the Bastille a year before the Revolution in France
by Citizen S***

Nam veluti pueri trepidant atque omnia cæcis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
interdum, nilo quæ sunt metuenda magis quam
quæ pueri in tenebris pavitant finguntque futura.
hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necessest
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei
discutiant sed naturæ species ratioque.

*Just as children in the night tremble & fear everything,
so we in the light sometimes fear
what is no more to be feared than the things
children shudder at in the dark
and imagine will come true. This terror,
this darkness of the mind's eye must be scattered,
not by the rays of the sun & glistening shafts of daylight,
but by a dispassionate view of the inner laws of Nature.*

— Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, Book III

A Word from the Publisher

We may rightly regard these letters as constituting one of the most pungent and incisive works to appear in recent memory, and even venture to say that never have contrasts so utterly bright been painted by a single brush. If virtue makes itself loved by means of its true and interesting manner of representation, so clearly, too, the colors employed to portray vice must be striking; and it would be difficult to present features more frightful and intense than in the work at hand. Offering such a great variety of characters in constant conflict perforce engenders incredible and unanticipated adventures surely unmatched in any true account, memoir, or novel; none could be more singular and intriguing, or sustained by such skill and ardor. This work will satisfy those who love travel and we assure them that nothing could be more authentic than the two journeys around the world, undertaken in opposite directions by Sainville and Léonore. No one has yet ventured upon the royal realm of *Butua*, situated in the center of Africa; our author alone has penetrated those barbarous climes such that here we have less a novel than the careful notes of a voyager who knows whereof he speaks and tells only what he has seen. And if, after reporting the cruel truths to be found on *Butua*, he hopes to console his readers with the more pleasant fictions of *Tamoé*, who can blame him? We see only one possible drawback, namely, that everything most horrible may be found in Nature while only in a country of which dreams are made can we find what's good and just. At all events the contrast between the two governments seems certain to please and we are wholly convinced of its interest. The same effect arises from the connections among characters and of their relationships, artfully established despite their great dissimilarity. Features and underlying principles alike must be presented in clear opposition and, if powerfully established, they can render visible what

is clearly ascendant and show with what alacrity the language of virtue always crushes the sophisms of libertinage and impiety. Undertones of speech and color might have been mellowed here and there, but could we have done that without weakening the whole? Of vice, however pronounced, only its partisans have anything to fear; if it triumphs, it is only to virtue's horror. Nothing is so dangerous as to soften the palette: to do so is to paint like a libertine and lose sight of the moral aims to which every honest man must subscribe.

What makes this work still more singular is that it was composed in the Bastille. The manner by which our author, crushed beneath the heel of ministerial despotism, foresaw the Revolution is altogether extraordinary, and should confer upon his work a distinction of great interest. With so much to excite the public's curiosity, and written in a style that is pure, lively, and always original, it unites three genres in the same work: comic-dramatic, romantic, and erotic. We know that this first edition, everywhere in demand, will be soon be exhausted; the name of the author is well-known, and, with stocks in Paris already depleted, we are sorry for not having printed more copies. We beseech those who have been unable to procure one to have patience; the second edition is already in press.

For all that, we fully expect critics, naysayers, & enemies; of that we've no doubt.

*It is a danger to love men,
And a mistake to enlighten them.*

So much the worse for those who condemn this work, and who will not take to it in the spirit in which it is offered: slaves to prejudice and habit, they will make it clear that for them nothing counts except public opinion. In their gaze there never shall gleam the flame of philosophy.

Important Note to the Reader

The author must inform the reader that, having sold and submitted his manuscript at the time he left the Bastille, there was consequently no question of his being able to revise it. How then can this work, written seven years ago, remain fully current with the order of the day? He asks his readers to think back and recall the very extraordinary circumstances of that time; and he invites them to form a judgment only after reading from beginning to end. For a book of this sort, it is not the appearance of one or another character, or of some isolated system of thought, upon which an opinion may be based. One who is just and impartial will only ever pronounce upon the whole.

Principal Characters

<i>Monsieur de Blamont</i>	“The President,” a magistrate judge and libertine
<i>Monsieur Dolbourg</i>	a banker, best friend & Blamont’s companion in crime
<i>Madame de Blamont</i>	“The President,” Blamont’s wife
<i>Aline</i>	daughter of Monsieur & Madame de Blamont
<i>Valcour</i>	Aline’s young suitor
<i>Monsieur Déterville</i>	friend to Aline, Madame de Blamont, & Valcour
<i>Eugénie</i>	fiancée then wife to Déterville
<i>Madame de Senneval</i>	mother-in-law to Déterville
<i>Sophie</i>	spurned mistress to Dolbourg
<i>Sainville</i>	young man & world voyager
<i>Léonore</i>	Sainville’s wife & lover
<i>Clémentine</i>	Léonore’s companion
<i>Ben Mâacoro</i>	King of Butua (a dystopia)
<i>Zamé</i>	Chief of Tamoé (a utopia)
<i>Brigandos</i>	Leader of Bohemian Gypsies

o **Letter XV**

Déterville to Valcour

Vertfeuille, 26 August

5 You guessed right after all, my dear Valcour. Some kind of
adventure was bound to happen during the far-flung prom-
enades that Madame de Blamont so enjoys yet of which you so
prudently disapproved. But don't worry, we've no fewer guests
and no one was hurt. We only made one new recruit — some-
10 one quite singular. Don't let your imagination, which I know
to be impatient and impetuous, make conjectures about what
happened, or turn it into some awful disaster. Read on but
don't anticipate.

15 As the days grow shorter we dine earlier at Vertfeuille to
keep nearly the same number of hours for our promenades.
As a consequence, and despite extreme heat, we left yesterday
at three-thirty in order to take a shortcut through the for-
est, behind which lies a charming hamlet where Aline has a
good friend, Colette, who always serves excellent milk. For a
20 taste of it we had to hurry because we did not want to come
back through the forest after dark. And we were apprehensive
because night would spread its gloomy veils at about seven
o'clock. From Vertfeuille to Colette's is two leagues; therefore,
no time to waste. Everything went exceptionally well until
25 we reached the hamlet. Half past five we arrived at the pretty
milkmaid's; we drank her milk. Aline, whose pockets were full
of trinkets she had made for Colette, was welcomed as you can
imagine; but as the clock showed 6, we had to leave straight-
away. We left amid grumbling amongst the group, that they'd
30 hardly enough time to catch their breath — also, that I was
more fearful than the women, and a thousand other pleasant-
ries that failed to change my mind because, as the dear ladies

ought to have realized, it was only for them that I was alarmed and held fast to my insistence that we leave. 0

Then, just as we came to the path in the woods leading to the tree-lined avenues of Vertfeuille, we heard shrill screams that seemed to come from one of the roads that disappear into the forest. Everybody stopped. Night had already fallen; astonishment gave way to fear and our heroines were all so scared that one of them, Eugénie, fainted in my arms while the legs of the other three failed and they collapsed at the foot of a tree. 5

I had preferred we not find ourselves in the middle of such a road at night, just because I well knew what might happen come the least little accident and the trouble it would cause me. To reassure, find out more, and protect — such were my duties; the first two caused me more trouble than the third. I calmed them as best I could; then, without wasting a moment, I rushed off in the direction of the screams. It was not easy to find their source. The unfortunate woman who was screaming was situated somewhere off the road, apparently entangled in the bushes; and despite the noise I was making and my calling out, she was too preoccupied by pain to respond. However, I started to see more clearly in the darkness, left the road, and made my way. 10 15 20

Finally, on a mat of ferns at the foot of a huge oak tree, I discovered a young woman who'd just given birth to a poor tiny creature, at the sight of which, adding to the physical pain she'd just suffered, this desolate mother was weeping abundantly while uttering pitiful screams. As you may imagine, my appearance, sword in hand, frightened her; but, hiding it beneath my coat as soon as it became clear I was only dealing with a woman, I approached. To reassure her I spoke softly and quickly: 25 30

0 “Pardon me, Mademoiselle. I’ve no time either to listen to
you or to rescue you. I must rejoin some ladies waiting nearby,
whom I cannot leave alone at nightfall, and who were just now
frightened by your screams. Your situation seems to me most
awkward and embarrassing. Follow me. Bring with you that
5 little creature. Take my arm and let us go.”

“Whoever you are,” said the stranger, “I appreciate your
concern but wouldn’t dare take advantage of it. I would like to
go to the village of Berseuil. Kindly show me the way. There
I’m certain to find help.”

10 “I know of no village named Berseuil hereabouts. For the
present I can only offer what I just said. Accept it, believe me,
or I shall be forced to leave you.”

The poor young woman picked up her child and kissed it.

15 “Unfortunate creature,” she wailed while wrapping it in
a kerchief and placing it in her skirts, “the fruit of my shame
and dishonor. How could I ever imagine you’d be deprived of
shelter the moment you saw the light of day!”

Then she took my arm, and in pain and with difficulty,
walking as fast as she could, accompanied me back to the
20 place where I’d left the ladies. We soon found them — but in
what a state! The two young ladies were in the arms of their
mothers who, despite themselves being prodigiously agitated,
were trying to reassure them. You can judge the effect of my
return: at the sight of someone of their own sex and my open
25 and tranquil air, they calmed down immediately and hastened
around us. What had happened I summarized in a few words.
The young woman, extremely confused, showed such respect
as she could muster. The infant was examined and caressed.
Madame de Blamont wanted to give the mother at least a short
30 rest, as much out of compassion as to learn in greater detail
what might explain such a singular occurrence. But indicating
that night was growing thick and we had still three quarters

of a league yet to walk, I decided upon our immediate departure. Aline wanted to carry the child to ease the burden on its mother, to whom I gave my arm, Eugénie lent hers to help the ladies, and we quickly left the forest. 0

“No explanations before we arrive at the chateau,” I said to Madame de Blamont, who still wished to ask questions. “It would delay us and exhaust this young woman, who is already much weakened. For this evening, let us just rescue and return.” 5

My advice accepted, at last we reached our destination. None too soon because the poor mademoiselle, whom I assisted, could barely drag herself along — which was why Madame de Blamont said that she would most certainly have died had she persisted in her plan to go to the village of Berseuil, whose location I did not know, and which in fact lay six long leagues distant from the place where we found her. The first order of business for the lady of the house was to settle this unfortunate young woman with her infant in one of the best bedrooms; then, two hours after being served a cup of broth, a *rôti au vin de Bourgogne*; after that we left her to rest. 10 15

As we did not seek clarification last night to avoid exhausting her, we interpreted what must have happened, as you might imagine, in all sorts of ways. Each of us had his say, speculative to be sure and, as usually happens in such cases, no one even came close to the truth, which has proved far more significant than any of us imagined. 20

Next morning, or rather today, as soon as we believed the lovely adventuress to be awake, we went to her room to learn her story, provided that the midwife, whom we had fetched straightaway, found her well enough to tell her tale. This account will be the subject of my next letter. The post is ready to leave. Madame de Blamont hurries me along. I embrace you. 25 30

o **Letter XVI**

Déterville to Valcour

Vertfeuille, 28 August

5 As the mail did not go out yesterday, only today can I continue recounting our adventure.

O! my friend, all sorts of ideas may occur to you, and indeed such singular suspicions arise in the minds of everyone here! Could chance have placed in our hands the first link in
10 a chain which, in the end, could bring about explanations so fervently sought! But, as nothing is yet sure, be content with me to tell the story, leaving you to suspect, make conjectures, and delve as deeply as you wish.

Yesterday morning the midwife, shortly after she'd been
15 let into the young person's bedroom, informed us that the previous night she had been agitated, with some fever, but in her state such troubles were not unusual. We might enter if we liked and learn what we could; she'd agreed to tell us all. Madame de Senneval, Madame de Blamont, and I were the
20 only ones who went in; we thought it would not be decent to include Aline. What a happy disposition in which duty shapes desire! The privation did not annoy her; curiosity did not overcome modesty. Eugénie kept her company. After exchanging civilities, we entered the bedroom. Such to follow,
25 my dear Valcour, are the words expressed by our adventuress.

The Story of Sophie

30 My name is Sophie, Madame, *she said to Madame de Blamont*, but I can tell you hardly anything about my birth or the circumstances surrounding it. I only know my father. I was raised in

the village of Berseuil by a vine-grower's wife, Isabeau. When
 you found me I was on the way to see her as, she had been my
 nursemaid. As soon as I was old enough to understand, she
 told me that she was not my mother, and that I was living in
 a *pension*. Until the age of 13 I had no visitors save one man
 from Paris — the same, according to Isabeau, who had placed
 me with her. She secretly assured me he was my father. Noth-
 ing could be simpler or more monotonous than the story of
 my first years up until the fatal moment at which I was torn
 from that shelter of innocence and forced, against my will,
 into an abyss of vice and debauchery.

I was about to reach my 13th birthday when the man I
 mentioned came to see me with a friend, who, like him, was
 about 50 years old. They made Isabeau leave the room and
 both examined me with the utmost attention. The friend of
 the man I was to take to be my father praised me highly. He
 said I was charming and fit to paint. Alas! It was the first time
 I ever heard such a thing said of me and could not imagine
 that these gifts of Nature were fated to become the cause of
 my ruin, the fount of my misfortunes. With the two friends'
 examination came light caresses, sometimes even in places
 where decency ought and must be respected. Then they talk-
 ed in low voices. I even saw them laughing. Can it be? Good
 cheer while hatching a crime? Can the soul prosper amidst
 conspiracies against innocence? Sorry effects of corruption!
 Yet I was far from foreseeing the inevitable and bitter conse-
 quences. Isabeau was summoned back.

"We are going to take away your young pupil," said Mon-
 sieur Delcour (such was the name of the man I was told to
 regard as my father). "She pleases Monsieur de Mirville," he
 said, indicating his friend. "He will bring her to his wife, who
 will treat and care for her like a daughter."

0 Isabeau began to cry. Throwing myself in her arms, as filled with chagrin as she, together we shed tears and shared regret.

 “Ah! Monsieur,” Isabeau said to Monsieur de Mirville, “she is pure innocence and candor; I find no fault with her
5 whatsoever. I recommend her to you, Monsieur. I would be in despair should disaster befall her.”

 “Disaster!” interrupted Mirville. “I take her from you only to make her fortune.”

Isabeau: “But for heaven’s sake not at the cost of her honor.”

10 *Mirville*: “Such wisdom in this good nursemaid!”

Isabeau (to Monsieur Delcour): “During your last visit, Monsieur, I thought you told me she would remain with me until after her first communion.”

Delcour: “What’s this? Religion?”

15 *Isabeau*: “Yes, Monsieur.”

Delcour: “And this hasn’t yet been done?”

Isabeau: “No, Monsieur, she’s not yet been sufficiently instructed. The parish priest put it off until next year.”

20 *Mirville*: “Indeed! We shan’t wait until then. I promised her to my wife for tomorrow and so I want — can’t we take care of this foolishness anyplace?”

Delcour: “Anywhere — and as well at home as here. Isabeau, don’t you think that in the capital there are those who can instruct young ladies quite as well as here in the village
25 of Berseuil?” Then, turning to me: “Sophie, would you place obstacles in the way of your fortune? When it is a question of finalizing the matter, the least delay —”

 “Alas! Monsieur,” I naively interrupted, “now that you talk of my fortune, I would rather you give it to Isabeau and
30 allow me never to leave her.”

 And again I threw myself in the arms of my tender mother and flooded her with tears.

“Go, my child, go,” she said pressing me to her breast: 0
 “I thank you for your good will but you do not belong to me.
 Obey those upon whom you depend and never let your inno-
 cence desert you. If you fall into disgrace, Sophie, remember
 your good mother Isabeau. In her home you’ll always find a
 crust of bread, even if you have to earn it, and at least you’ll 5
 consume it simple and pure, not soaked with tears of regret
 and despair.”

“Good woman, I think that’s quite enough,” said Delcour,
 tearing me from my nursemaid’s arms. “This tearful scene,
 pathetic as it is, is delaying us and our plans. Let’s be off.” 10

I was taken away and hurried into a carriage that sped off
 and the same evening brought us to Paris.

Had I a little more experience, all that I saw, heard, and
 felt would have convinced me before we arrived at our des-
 tination that my designated duties were to be very different 15
 from those I fulfilled at Berseuil, and that they included plans
 quite different from serving a lady. In a word, my innocence,
 forcefully attested to by my good nursemaid, was about to be
 lost. Monsieur de Mirville, next to whom I was seated in the
 carriage, put me in a position where I could no longer doubt 20
 his horrible intentions. Darkness facilitated his advances;
 my naivety encouraged them. With Monsieur Delcour enter-
 tained by it all, indecency reached its peak. My tears flowed
 profusely.

“Damn this child,” said Mirville. “Everything was going 25
 so well and I thought that before we arrived — but I simply
 cannot put up with this bawling.”

“Well, now,” answered Delcour, “does a warrior fear the
 clamor of victory? The other day, when we fetched your daugh-
 ter near Chartres, did you see me as vexed and upset as you are 30
 now? There too we beheld a tearful scene. Despite which, be-
 fore reaching Paris, I had the honor to become your son-in-law.”

0 “It’s the same with all you who wear the robes of justice,”
replied Monsieur de Mirville. “Lamentations excite you; you’re
like veritable hounds on the chase. You never eat the shin of
the stag with as much gusto as when you’ve forced the beast.
Never have I met souls as hard as the acolytes of Bartole. Not
5 for nothing are you are accused of eating venison raw to enjoy
the feeling of flesh palpitating between your teeth.”

 “’Tis so true,” said Delcour. “Men of finance are suspected
of being far more sensitive souls.”

10 “My word,” said Mirville, “at least we kill nobody. Although
we pluck the bird, at least we don’t slit its throat. Our reputa-
tion is better established than yours and everyone in the end
calls us good people.”

 Such platitudes and other remarks were made that I did
not understand in the least, never having heard such before;
15 but they seemed to me even more awful, both by the expres-
sions interlaced and by the indignity of Mirville’s movements
punctuating them — by such horrors, I say, we were driven
to Paris.

20 The house we came to was not quite in the center of Paris.
I did not know where it was. More informed today, I can say
that it was located close to the *Barrière des Gobelins*. It was
about ten o’clock at night when we stopped in the courtyard.
We stepped out and the carriage went off. We entered a room
where supper was ready. An older woman and a young girl
25 my age were the only persons awaiting us; we sat down with
them to table. During dinner I quickly came to understand
that the young girl, Rose, belonged to Monsieur Delcour; and
it seemed that Monsieur de Mirville intended to bring about
the same kind of relationship with me. The older woman was
30 said to be our governess. I was immediately informed both of
her role and about the house in which I was to be staying with
my young companion, who was none other than the daughter

of Monsieur de Mirville. He and Monsieur Delcour, as they mentioned, had recently brought her from someplace near Chartres — which goes to prove, Madame, that the each of the two gentlemen has had his daughter become the other's mistress, without either unhappy creature knowing anything of her maternal provenance.

Permit me, Madame, to pass over in silence the indecent details of this supper and the awful night that followed; another room, smaller and furnished more stylishly, was reserved for shameful happenings. Rose and Monsieur Delcour came in with us. The former, already an initiate, was set forth as a good example to soften me and show the futility of any objections. They threatened me with force if I dared persist. What could I say, Madame? I trembled and wept — but nothing stopped these monsters — and my innocence was ruined.

At about three in the morning, the two friends separated. Each repaired to his own apartment to spend the rest of the night, and we went with the one to whom we were assigned. Monsieur de Mirville ended by revealing my fate.

"Rest assured," he said harshly, "that I took you in to provide for you. Your situation has just been clarified in such a way as ought to expel any doubt from your mind. Expect neither a great fortune nor a life of frivolity. The social rank occupied by Monsieur and myself obliges us to take precautions that demand your dutiful solitude. The old woman who sat next to Rose will also take care of you; she answers to us for your conduct. Any indiscretion or effort to escape will be severely punished, I warn you. Furthermore, be honest with me, persevering and sweet; and if our difference in age prevents you from having for me a feeling of which I am scarcely desirous, yet, for the good I shall do you, I expect at least to count on full obedience as if you were my legitimate wife. You'll be provided with food and clothes and all the rest; and you will

0 have one hundred francs allowance each month for yourself
— not a lot, I know, but what would you do with more in this
isolated place? Besides, other affairs are ruining me. You're
not my only pensioner. Consequently, I will be able to see you
only three nights a week. You will be left in peace the rest of
5 the time; you will distract yourself with Rose and old Dubois.
Each in her own way possesses qualities that will help you
lead a comfortable life and, without thinking about it, my dear,
you will end up happy."

Once this lovely harangue had ended, Monsieur de Mir-
10 ville went to bed and ordered me to take my place beside him.
I draw a curtain on the rest, Madame, with enough said to
show you what was to be my frightful fate. I was all the un-
happier as such a destiny was inescapable, because the only
human being with authority over me — my own father —
15 forced me to submit and he set as example his own debauchery.

The two friends left at noon. I started to get to know
my keeper and my companion. The story of Rose's life was no
different from mine; she was six months older. Like me, she'd
been raised by a village nursemaid and had been in Paris for
20 just three days. But an enormous abyss separated this girl's
disposition from mine and was always to be an obstacle to our
becoming friends. She was irresponsible, heartless, indelicate,
entirely without principles; the candor and modesty that I re-
ceived from Nature could not put up with such indecency and
25 vivacity. Bonds of misfortune but never friendship united us
while I was constrained to live with her.

As to Dubois, she had the vices of her position and her
age. Imperious, cantankerous, mean, she was much fonder of
my companion than of me. As you can see, nothing in this
30 made for strong attachments, and during the time I spent
in that house, I stayed almost entirely in my bedroom. I so
much enjoyed reading that I readily made it my sole pastime,

inasmuch as Monsieur de Mirville ordered that I should never be without books. 0

Nothing could have been more regulated than our life. We took walks inside a very beautiful garden — but never outside its walls. The two friends came just three times a week, never more nor less, dined together with us, delivered themselves to their pleasures in front of each other two or three hours later, then ended the night, each with his own, in the apartments that were ours the rest of the time. 5

“Such indecency!” interrupted Madame de Blamont. “How can this be! Fathers in front of their daughters!” 10

“My dear friend,” said Madame de Senneval, “let us not go deeper into this abyss of horrors. This unfortunate girl might yet tell us of some other kind of atrocity.” 15

“How do you know what we must not be told?” continued Madame de Blamont, honest and respectable — albeit blushing: “Mademoiselle, I do not know how to formulate my question — but did anything worse happen?” 20

And seeing that Sophie did not understand, she charged me with explaining in a low voice what she was thinking. 20

“A kind of jealousy, dominating both men, was perhaps the only thing that restrained them from doing what you imply, Madame,” resumed Sophie. “At least, I must guess such a sentiment incited restraint. Such souls never make virtue a principle. It is wrong to judge someone in this way without proof, I know, but such deviance — so many *turpitudes* — so thoroughly convinced me of the depraved morals of these two friends that, in regard to what you might suggest, I certainly attribute their discretion only to a more imperious sentiment than debauchery; however, I saw nothing that prevailed over jealousy.” 25 30

0 “Difficult to understand, given the community of pleasures shared as you describe,” said Madame de Senneval.

“Especially when one thinks of the other pensioners acknowledged by Monsieur de Mirville,” added Madame de Blamont.

5 “I confess, *Mesdames*,” continued Sophie, “that perhaps this is one of those situations in which, with the violent clash of two passions, only the more intense triumphs. But what is certain is that the desire — doubtless born of jealousy — to hang onto his own goods always won out in each of their
10 hearts, and it stopped them from executing horrors — which, I know, might only make my young companion Rose laugh but would seem to me even more terrible than death itself.”

“Go on,” said Madame de Blamont, “and don’t be troubled that the concern you inspire in me makes me tremble for you.”

15
Until the event that brought me under your protection, *Sophie continued, still addressing Madame de Blamont*, few details remain to be told. After I arrived at the house my wages were paid with extreme punctuality, and having no occasion to spend them, I saved the money in hopes of sending
20 it to my good Isabeau, who was always in my thoughts. I dared inform Monsieur de Mirville as to my intentions, thinking he himself would make it possible for me to execute my plan. How naive! How could I have expected compassion? Is it ever
25 found amidst vice and dissolution?

“You must forget about all such old-fashioned village sentiment,” replied Monsieur de Mirville harshly. “That woman was paid too much for the little care she provided; you owe
30 her nothing.”

“But gratitude, Monsieur — that sentiment so tender to nourish within oneself and delightful to express?”

“Enough, enough! Chimeric, all such things. I never saw
how one could gain from it. I prefer to nourish only such sen-
timents as can turn a profit. Enough. Since you have too much
money, I’ll give you no more.”

Rejected by one, I sought help from the other. I informed
Monsieur Delcour of my project. He disapproved still more
harshly. He told me that if he were Monsieur de Mirville, he’d
give me not one penny since I was thinking of throwing my
money out the window. I had to renounce my benevolent
intentions.

But before entering into the circumstances of my cata-
strophic misfortune, you must know, Madame, that in our
presence, and more than once, each father reciprocally ceded
authority over his daughter to the other, each begging the
other to in no way spare her misconduct, to better inspire
us with the circumspection, submission, and fear with which
they hoped to forge our chains. I leave you to imagine how
each abused his respective authority. Monsieur de Mirville,
uncommonly brutal with me, delivered himself to unbeliev-
able harshness at the slightest imagined caprice. Although
he did so in front of Monsieur Delcour, my father never took
my side, just as Mirville never took his daughter’s side when
Delcour mistreated her in the same way, as often happened.
Nevertheless, Madame, I must confess to be a wholly guilty
accomplice in the unfortunate trade I’d been dragged into.

For Nature, treasonous of both my duty and feelings, in
order to punish me still more severely, saw fit to plant within
my womb proof of my dishonor.

At the same time my companion, impatient with her exis-
tence, confided to me that she was planning to escape.

“I don’t want to go it alone,” Rose told me. “I’ve managed
to attract the gardener’s son — he’s my lover — and he’s of-
fering to help me escape. You are the mistress of your fate and

o may wish to share ours. Maybe better wait until after the child is born. In any case, I'd arrange for your freedom and find you a paramour. He'd take you away from here and we could be reunited, if you want."

5 The last part of the plan did not suit me at all. If I wanted my freedom, it was to lead a life much different from the one that my companion was about to embrace. However, I accepted her offer. Agreeing it would be best to escape only after I gave birth, I begged her not to forget me and to make preparations when the time came. Although she herself was in a great
10 hurry, her arrangements required delays and everything only fell into place about two months before the end of my pregnancy. At last the hour struck. But on the eve of her planned departure, and the day before I had the good fortune to meet you, she went up to her bedroom to fetch money for the gardener whom she'd entrusted with taking her away and finding
15 a place to stay. As the young man seemed in a hurry to be off, she asked me to stay with him and entice him to wait. Fatal moment of my misfortune! Or — rather — good luck, because that very circumstance saved me from the abyss. Fate decreed an event that had never happened in three years: Monsieur de
20 Mirville arrived, alone. He came upon me before I had time to put the young man out of sight; he ran off but not without first having been seen. Nothing can describe Mirville's instantaneous fit of rage. His walking stick was the first weapon to
25 hand. Without regard for my condition or questioning further whether I was guilty, he overwhelmed me with insults, dragged me across the room by my hair, and threatened to stomp on the fruit in my womb, which he would henceforth consider only as evidence of his shame. I would have died of
30 the blows from which I still suffer had not Dubois rushed in to tear me from his grasp.

Then his rage turned to ice.

"I shall punish her no less cruelly," he said. "Shut the doors. Let nobody in. This prostitute must go directly to her room."

Rose, who'd heard everything and was only too happy to be spared what she deserved from this misunderstanding, said not a word, and fury burst upon me alone. My tyrant followed me, eyes sparkling with a multitude of sentiments, among which I could perceive some more terrible than anger and which, by distorting the muscles of his horrible physiognomy, made him look even more awful and frightening.

Oh! Madame, how can I recount the new infamies! They outraged both Nature and decency. I will never be able to describe them. He ordered me to take off my clothes. I threw myself at his feet and swore twenty times my innocence. I prayed he take pity upon me with the tragic fruit of his shameful love; and the unfortunate child, palpitating within my womb, seemed already on his knees before his father as if begging pardon on my behalf. My condition touched Mirville not at all; he considered it further proof of my infidelity. All that I alleged was nothing but imposture. He was sure on the facts; he had seen it, nothing could change his mind. I put myself in the attitude he demanded. Bestial knots roped me tight.

I was treated with the kind of scandalous ignominy that pedantry practices upon children. But with such cruelty and rigor that at last I grew pale, staggered under my bonds, shut my eyes to his savagery. I only recovered my senses in the arms of old Dubois. My tormentor was pacing the bedroom in long strides, impatient of the care I was receiving. He was not to pity me, the monster, but to be rid of me faster.

"Well, then!" he screamed. "Is she ready?" And seeing me still as naked as he'd made me: "Dress her, dress her at once, Madame. She must disappear."

He demanded my keys, took back everything I'd received from him, and gave me two écus.

0 “Here, take these,” he said, “more than you need to betake
yourself to one of those brothel-keepers the city is filled with,
who will receive you with open arms as a creature capable of
acting as you did in my home.”

5 “Oh! Monsieur,” I replied, in tears, unable to countenance
this final degradation, “I’ve made but a single mistake, com-
mitted because you forced me. Judge my repentance by my
pain and don’t humiliate me in my misfortune.”

10 Upon these words intended to soften him — if the soul of
tyrants be open to pity, as if crime that corrupts the soul does
not close it to cries of innocence — he seized me by the arm,
dragged me to the back of the house, and cast me into the pas-
sageway that led past the garden gates. Would that your sensi-
15 tive soul grasp my situation, Madame: alone at nightfall near
a city unknown to me, in my condition, having hardly enough
money to be driven anyplace, torn and tormented, wounded
everywhere, unable to weep more, incapable even of shedding
tears — *alas!*

20 Not knowing where to go, I threw myself down on the
threshold in front of the door just slammed shut in my face,
amidst the stains of my own blood, and resolved to spend the
night there. “The monster,” I told myself, “would not covet the
air I still breathe. He would not refuse me the shelter afforded
animals; upon my pain heaven will take pity and let me die
in peace.” I believed at one juncture that the end had come: I
25 heard somebody pass close by — was he having me sought?
Did he want to finish his crime and take what was left of the
life I so detested? Or did remorse stir at last in his filthy soul
and give rise to a moment of pity? Whatever it was went away
quickly. Come daybreak I got up and decided to go straight-
30 away to my dear Isabeau. She would surely not deny me shel-
ter. Thus, I left, and on the fourth day, dragging myself along
as best I could, ground down by the painful blows, trembling

with fear, fatigued by the weight within my womb, eating next
to nothing for fear that the little money I had wouldn't take
me to Berseuil. I believed myself to be close when I got lost —
and then the pains made me stop.

◦

Aline & Valcour

VOL.

2

on the Philosophical Novel

Sadé

ALINE AND VALCOUR
or, the Philosophical Novel

by
Marquis de Sade

Vol. II

Translated by
Jocelyne Geneviève Barque
&
John Galbraith Simmons



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In the convent where Léonore had days before been locked away, I had a religious aunt. This piece of luck allowed me to formulate the boldest of plans: I recounted my misfortunes to this relation and was happy to find her compassionate. But how could she help?

15

“Love can find a way,” I said, “and I’ll tell you how. I’ll disguise myself. I’d fare not badly, as you can imagine, dressed as a young woman. You’ll introduce me as a visiting relative from a distant province. Request authorization for me to stay a few days in the convent. It shall be granted. I’ll see Léonore and be the happiest of men.”

20

To my aunt, this daring plan seemed at first impossible; she foresaw a hundred obstacles. But her head could not dictate a single one my heart did not eliminate immediately, and I managed to convince her.

25

Once we agreed upon the scheme and swore secrecy, I announced to my father that I was exiling myself to the army, as he demanded and, however difficult it was to obey his order, I preferred it to marrying Mademoiselle de Vitri. I endured further reprimands; every effort was made to persuade me,

30

0 but as my resolve was unshakeable, Father embraced me and we parted.

So I went away but no intention of obeying his wishes. Knowing that he had previously deposited in a Paris bank a considerable sum that he intended to settle upon me, I did
5 not regard it as theft to obtain an advance upon such funds as would one day be mine. Furnished with a letter ostensibly from him, forged with my own reprehensible skill, from the bank I received the sum of one hundred thousand écus. Immediately thereafter, dressed like a young woman, I hired a
10 clever soubrette and left for the city and convent where my dear aunt, inclined in favor of my love, awaited me.

The démarche that I'd just brought off was too serious to risk telling her about in any way. I indicated my sole desire was to see Léonore, with her present and, after a few days,
15 to obey my father's orders. But because he believed me to be already in exile, I explained that we must be doubly careful. Learning he'd just gone to visit his estates, we felt more at ease and began our ruse straightaway.

My aunt received me first in the common room and astutely introduced me to some of her friends among the nuns.
20 She made known her desire to have me stay at least a few days, and asked for and obtained permission. So I entered and found myself under the same roof as Léonore. One must be in love to understand the euphoria of it; my heart alone could
25 feel what my head cannot describe.

The first day I did not see her; to rush things would have raised suspicion. We had to be cautious. But next morning, the charming young woman, invited by my aunt to come for hot chocolate, found herself sitting beside but not recognizing
30 me; she breakfasted with other companions without suspecting, realizing her mistake only afterwards when my aunt kept her behind and, laughing, told her and introduced me.

“Here, my beautiful cousin, is a relative of mine I want you to meet. Please, look closely and tell me if it’s true that, as she claims, you’ve seen her before.” 0

As Léonore stared, she grew confused. Throwing myself at her feet, I asked forgiveness — and we gave ourselves over to the delightful prospect of spending at least a few days together. 5

My aunt believed she must be strict and refused to leave us alone. But I cajoled nicely, telling her a multitude of tender things that women, and nuns above all, so love to hear, and soon she allowed me to be alone with the object of my heart’s desire. 10

“Léonore,” I said to my beloved. “I come ready to urge you to fulfill the promises that we made to each other. I’ve enough money to last us both for the rest of our lives. Let’s not waste an instant. Let us flee.”

“Climb the walls!” said Léonore, frightened. “We’ll never succeed.” 15

“With love, nothing is impossible,” I exclaimed, “Let it be your guide and tomorrow we’ll be reunited.”

The gentle young woman raised still more objections and made me aware of the difficulties, but I begged her to surrender, like me, to the feelings that inflamed us. She trembled — yet promised. We agreed to avoid each other’s company and meet again only just before we started to execute our plan. 20

“Which deserves some thought,” I said. “My aunt will pass you a note. You will follow its instructions to the letter. We’ll see each other once more to arrange it, then we’ll be gone.” 25

I did not want to confide our plans to my aunt. Would she agree to help? Or betray us? Those considerations stopped me. But we had to act. Alone, disguised, knowing nothing of the place, neither its nooks and crannies nor its environs — all this made for great difficulty. But nothing stopped me — so let me tell you how I proceeded. 30

0 After spending 24 hours scrutinizing the situation, I came to understand that a sculptor came daily to a chapel inside the convent. There he worked to repair a large statue of Ultrogote, the patron saint of the place, whom the nuns, having witnessed her miracles and the way she granted their
5 every wish, worshipped with profound veneration. A few simple paternosters devoutly recited at her altar and one could be sure of heavenly bliss.

 Resolved to try everything, I approached the sculptor and, after preliminary genuflections, asked if he was as faithful
10 and devoted, like the nuns, to the saint he was restoring.

 “I’m a stranger here,” I told him, “and would like to learn from you about some of the extraordinary deeds of this blessed lady.”

 “Well,” the sculptor laughed, confident from my tone that he could speak more frankly, “Don’t you see that these
15 silly smitten sisters believe anything they’re told? How can a simple piece of wood do such amazing things? The first of all miracles would be self-preservation and you can see it can’t even do that because I’ve got to put her back together. Don’t tell me you believe in all this nonsense, Mademoiselle!”

 “Well, of course not,” I replied; “but one must conform like the others.”

 Thinking that sufficed as an overture, I stopped there. But the next day, during our talk, once again in the same spirit, I went further, so playfully and solicitously that he became excited and I began to think that, if I kept it up, the very altar of the miraculous statue might become a throne of pleasure. When I saw he was in such a state, I seized his hand.

 “Good man,” I said, “look upon me not as a woman — but as an unfortunate man in love, to whom you can bring happiness.”

 “Heaven forbid! Monsieur! You’ll get us both in trouble.”

“No: listen to me. Do me this favor, help me, and you’ll
make a fortune.” 0

In saying this, to lend my words force, I gave him a roll of
some 25 louis, assuring him more if he agreed to help.

“Well, what do you want?”

“There’s a young woman here I adore. She loves me, con- 5
sents to all. I want to take her away with me and marry her.
But I need your help.”

“What can I do?”

“Nothing could be simpler. We’ll crack the arms of this
statue. You then tell them that its terrible condition caused 10
it to break when you started repairs, that it would be impos-
sible to fix here and absolutely must be taken to your studio.
Being so attached to it, they’ll do anything to save it, and so
will consent. Tonight I’ll come alone to finish the job, get rid
of the pieces and envelop my love in the robes of the statue. 15
You’ll drape her with a large cloth and, with the help of one
of your apprentices, early in the morning you’ll take her to
your studio. There a woman will be waiting; you’ll place under
her care the object of my vows; when I arrive two hours later,
you’ll receive more proof of my gratitude. Later, you’ll tell the 20
nuns that the statue crumbled to dust when you applied the
chisel, and that you’ll sculpt them a new one.”

The fellow, not infatuated like me and infinitely more
clear-headed, foresaw problems galore. I listened to none of
them but sought only to convince him. Two more sheaves of 25
bills accomplished as much and we started work straightaway.
Both arms of the statue were mercilessly shattered. Calling
the nuns, they approved the plan to move the statue, which
left only one thing to do — to act.

As agreed, I sent a note to Léonore advising her to meet 30
me that very evening at the entrance to the chapel, dressed
most scantily because I had some saintly garments for her

0 that could magically make her disappear from the convent. She understood none of it and immediately came to see me at my aunt's. As we had carefully limited our meetings, no one was surprised. The moment we were left alone, I explained the whole affair.

5 Laughter was Léonore's first reaction. Unsullied by narrow-minded dogmatism, she saw nothing but an amusing plan to change places with a miraculous statue. But reflection soon cooled delight. She must spend the night there — she might be heard. The nuns — at least those sleeping near the
10 chapel — might take any noise as a manifestation of the damaged Saint's rage at the suite of events. All they need do would be to come, inquire, and discover — and we should be lost. How could she be sure to stay motionless while being moved? What if someone lifted the sheet under which she was hid-
15 den? What if? To her thousand objections, each one more reasonable than the last, I met them all by assuring Léonore that there exists a God for lovers and if we implored Him on our behalf, He would unfailingly accomplish our wishes — no matter the obstacle.

Léonore surrendered. Quite fortunately, no one shared her bedroom. I wrote the soubrette whom I'd engaged in Paris, sent her the sculptor's address, and requested she go to his studio early the next morning and bring decent clothes for a young lady who would be nearly naked; she was to take her immediately to the inn where we were to be lodged and call for a post-coach for nine o'clock sharp. I would be back without fail at that hour, and we'd depart just afterwards.

With all going so marvelously well on the outside, I was left only to deal with the interior plans — certainly the most difficult.

Feigning a headache, Léonore obtained permission to retire early, and as soon as everybody thought she was abed,

she came to the chapel, where I pretended to be engaged in meditation. She joined me in ersatz contemplation. We waited for the nuns to retire to their holy couches, and once sure they were held fast in sleep's embrace, we started to break down and reduce the miraculous statue to dust — not difficult considering its condition. I had at hand a large bag, in the bottom of which were some heavy stones. We put the Saint's rubble inside and I quickly dropped the whole thing down a well. Léonore was barely clothed, dressed in the attire of Saint Ultrogote, and I helped her assume the same position as the sculptor had placed the statue in order to repair it. I bound her arms to her sides while attaching the wooden ones we had broken off the previous day, and after having kissed her — a delicious kiss whose effect on me was more powerful than all the miracles of all the saints in heaven — I left the temple of my goddess and retired, overcome with adoration.

Early next morning, the sculptor arrived, followed by an apprentice, carrying a sheet that they threw over Léonore with such swiftness and dexterity that the nun providing the light saw nothing. They all went away and Léonore was received by the woman awaiting her at the inn as planned, with no further obstacle to her escape.

To no one's surprise, I'd announced my own departure. Amongst the nuns I pretended to be puzzled by Léonore's absence; I was told she was sick. Fully at ease by such indisposition, I showed hardly any interest. My aunt, quite convinced we had exchanged our farewells in secrecy the day before, was not surprised by my indifference, while my only thought was to fly to the object of my every desire.

The dear young woman had passed a difficult night. Amidst fear and hope, she was beset by extreme anxiety. Most worrisome was the arrival of an old nun to bid the Saint *adieu*. She had mumbled away for more than an hour, which all but

0 kept Léonore from breathing; and at the end of the paternoster,
in tears, the old prude wanted to kiss the statue's face. But in
the dim light, forgetting the statue's position was altered, her
tender act of affection landed on the absolute opposite side of
the one intended. Feeling that part covered and realizing her
5 mistake, the old woman patted the place to better convince
herself of her error while Léonore, extremely sensitive to be
titillated on a part of her body that no hand had ever touched,
could not avoid quivering — a movement the nun took for
a miracle. She dropped to her knees, fervor redoubled; now
10 better informed in her groping, she succeeded in planting a
tender kiss on the forehead of the object of her idolatry, and
at last retired.

After a hearty laugh around this adventure, we all of us left:
Léonore, the woman I brought from Paris, a lackey, & myself.

15 But the first day nearly ended in calamity.

The Story of Zamé

25 At the end of the reign of Louis XIV — *so began Zamé* — a
French warship seeking passage from China to America dis-
covered this island, unknown to any navigator then or since.
For nearly a month officers and crew took advantage of the
state of weakness and innocence in which they found the
30 people, and they caused much trouble and disorder. As they
sailed off, one of the ship's young officers, hopelessly in love
with a woman of the island, hid away and let his shipmates
leave without him. As soon as they were gone he gathered

the nation's chiefs, and with the woman he loved (with whom he'd made himself understood) speaking on his behalf, he declared that he remained on the island only because of his great attachment to the people. He wanted to protect them from certain misfortunes presaged by the discovery of the island, and he showed the assembled chiefs a place on the island that was, sadly enough, a gold mine.

"My friends," he told them, "here is what arouses the rapacity of men from my country. This cursed metal, the uses of which you are wholly ignorant, that on this island you trample underfoot, is the most cherished object of their desires. To claw gold from the bowels of the earth, they will return in force. They will subjugate you and put you in chains; they will exterminate you or perhaps, what's worse, enslave you as their neighbors the Spanish do every day on a continent hundreds of leagues distant, about which you know nothing, and which abounds in these sorts of riches. I believe I might save you from their rapacity by living amongst you. Knowing how they invade and take hold of an island, I might be able to prevent it; knowing how they do battle, I could teach you how to defend yourselves. Perhaps at least I can save you from their greed. Furnish me the means to act and, as my only compensation, let me have the woman I love."

The response was unanimous. Accorded his mistress, he was also provided all the help he might need to carry out his plans.

Exploring the island on foot, he found it to be circular in shape, about 50 leagues in circumference, entirely surrounded by rocks, except along the coast where you managed to land. He therefore judged that to be the only part requiring fortification. Perhaps you've not observed how he made the port inaccessible. We will visit it this afternoon. There I will convince you that, had we not judged you were weak and your

0 difficulty was the sole cause of your arrival on our island, you
wouldn't have landed so easily. This part of the island, the only
gateway to Tamoé, he thus fortified in the European style. He
brought batteries that I alone keep furnished and maintained.
He also raised a militia and established a garrison constructed
5 at the entrance to the bay.

So pleased was the nation by the wisdom of his care and
superiority of his ideas that, after the death of his father-in-
law, one of the main chiefs, he was unanimously elected sover-
10 eign of the island. He thereafter changed the constitution be-
cause, he explained, the perfection of his enterprise required
that the government become hereditary in order that he
could pass on his designs to his successor, who could be made
to follow and improve them. To this the people consented.

About this time I was born, the fruit of the marriage of
15 this man, so dear to the nation; and it was to me that he con-
fided his plans. I am happy to have fulfilled them.

I shall say nothing about his administration; he could
only make a start to what I finished. In detailing my opera-
tions, you will become familiar with his. Let us return to what
20 preceded them.

After I turned 15, my father spent five years teaching me
history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, drawing, and
the art of navigation. At last he brought me to the gold mine
he feared so attractive to his European compatriots.

25 "We will take from here all we need," he told me, "for you
to travel with both pomp and practicality. You cannot leave
here, unfortunately, without this metal. But regard it with
mistrust, for debasement would follow if our simple and
happy nation began to set store by it. Don't suppose that gold
30 has any but a fictive value. It means nothing in the eyes of
people wise enough to reject its extravagance."

After filling several chests with the metal, he had the site closed and the land cultivated in order to obliterate any trace of it. Aboard a large ship constructed according to his own specifications and with my journey as its sole aim, he embraced me with tears in his eyes:

“You, my son, whom I perhaps shall never see again and sacrifice to the happiness of the nation that has adopted me — go out and discover the universe. Learn from the world over everything that seems most advantageous to the happiness of your people. Buzz among the flowers and return home with the honey. You’ll find among men much foolishness and little wisdom, a few good principles mixed with frightful absurdities. Grow learned, come to know your fellows before attempting to govern them. Don’t be dazzled by the royal crimson of kings, and disdain the pomp concealing their mediocrity, despotism, and indolence. I’ve always detested kings and your destiny is not to occupy a throne. I wish you to become father and friend to our adoptive nation. I want you to be its legislator and guide. The people need, in a word, not chains but virtues.

“Distrust entirely the tyrants that Europe will set before your eyes. You’ll find them everywhere surrounded by slavish sorts who keep the truth from them, for those in favor have too much to lose in revealing it. Kings do not like it; they nearly always make themselves feared. The only way not to be afraid of the truth is to be virtuous; he who hides nothing, whose conscience is pure, is unafraid. But as for the one whose heart is soiled, he listens only to his passions and likes illusion and flattery because they conceal from him his wrongdoings and make light of the yoke with which he afflicts his subjects, showing them to be filled with joy whilst they’re drowning in their own tears. In trying to understand why courtiers engage in flattery that makes them veil the eyes of their master, you’ll

o discover the vices of government. Study them to avoid them. The obligation to make the people happy is essential and it is quite as sweet to succeed as it is terrible to fail. Legislators must live for moments when their efforts bear fruit.

5 “The diversity of cults will surprise you. Everywhere you’ll see men infatuated by their own religion, imagining this one to be good or that one alone to come from God — who never uttered a word about one or the other. Examining them all philosophically, you’ll see that religion is useful to man only inasmuch as it lends force to morality and curbs perversity. 10 For this it must be pure and simple. If a cult offers your eyes nothing but empty ceremonies, monstrous dogmas, and imbecilic mysteries, flee from it, for it is false and dangerous, and for your nation it would prove to be nothing but an endless source of crime and murder. You would be just as guilty for bringing it to this corner of the world as the vile charlatans 15 who spread it across the earth. Flee all such, my son; detest the deceitful handiwork of some and the stupidity of others. It will not improve the people. But if one presents itself, simple in doctrine, virtuous in morality, distrustful of pomp, reject- 20 ing puerile fairy tales, and that has as its sole objective the worship of a single God — seize upon it. For it is good. Not by antics — here revered, there despised — may we please the Eternal One, but by goodness and purity of heart. If there be a God, here are the virtues that shaped Him, the only ones that 25 men ought to imitate.

“You will be also astonished at the diversity of laws. Examine them all with equal attention just as with religion. Consider that their only useful purpose is to make men happy and regard as false and atrocious all that deviate from this 30 principle.

“The life of one man is too short to reach my stated aim. I can only prepare your way; it will be up to you to finish what

I started. Bequeath our principles to your children and two or three generations will bring our good people the greatest happiness. Go then, be off.” 0

So saying, he embraced me once more and I set out across the waves. I traveled the world over. Twenty years I was gone from my native land. Those years I spent learning about my fellows, mingling with them in vesture of every kind, be- 5 times like the famous emperor of Russia. Companion to artists and artisans, I learned both to build ships and to transmit cherished features to canvas, to model stone and marble, to erect a palace, to direct manufactures. At the side of a farmer 10 I acquired knowledge of the soil and learned to sow seeds and cultivate plants, to graft and trim them, to tend to striplings and make them strong, to harvest the grain and use it to nourish my fellow man. On a still higher plane the poet embellished my ideas, gave them color and intensity, and taught me the art 15 of portraying them; the historian showed me how to transmit facts to posterity and make known the customs of all nations. With help from a minister of the altar, I learned about the unintelligible science of the gods while law’s henchmen showed me a science still more imaginary, by which a man is put in 20 chains to improve him. The financier instructed me in raising taxes and explained the atrocious system of fattening oneself at the expense of the unfortunate and reducing people to poverty yet not allowing the state to flourish. The merchant, still more costly to the state, taught me how to value products all 25 over the world in the denominated currencies of nations, to exchange them based upon the indestructible bond that links all peoples of the world, to become friend and brother to the Christian as well as the Arab, to those who worship Fo-Hi and the adepts of Ali alike; he doubles his money by rendering 30 himself useful to compatriots, and enriches himself and his people with all the gifts of art and Nature, resplendent with

0 the luxury of all the earth's inhabitants, content with their
great joys without having ventured beyond the walls of his
own offices. More adaptable, the negotiator initiated me into
the affairs of kings. His eye pierced the thick veil and looked
centuries into the future, and he calculated and appreciated
5 with me, in consequence of their present state, customs and
doctrines, and the revolutions to come. Introducing me to the
offices of kings, he brought tears to my eyes. He showed me
how, in all of them, pride and greed sacrificed the people at
altars of wealth; the throne of graspers was everywhere raised
10 on rivers of blood. Finally, the courtier, lighter and more de-
ceitful, taught me to how to beguile monarchs, for they alone
showed me the despair of being born to become a king.

Everywhere I saw much vice and little virtue; every-
where I found the vanity, envy, avarice, and intemperance that
15 enslaved the weak to the whims of the strong; everywhere I
could divide man into two classes, to be pitied equally. In one,
the rich man was a slave to his pleasures; in the other, the poor
man a victim of fate — yet I never perceived in one the urge to
do better nor in the other the possibility of becoming better,
20 as if both cultivated their common unhappiness and sought
only to add shackles to shackles. The wealthiest among them
invariably tightened his chains by doubling his desires while
the poorest, insulted and mistrusted by the other, received
not the slightest encouragement necessary to bear his burden.

25 I asked for equality and was called a dreamer. Soon I per-
ceived that those who rejected it ought to lose it and — what
am I saying? — from that very moment I believed equality
alone could make people happy.* From the hands of Nature all
men are born equal. To view them as not of the same kind is

* Let us never forget that this work was written a year before the French Revolution.

false. Wherever equal they can also be happy whilst that is im-
possible where distinctions exist. Such differences can render
at most one part of the nation happy but the legislator must
work to make all so equally. Don't object to the difficulties in
bridging the gap; it is only a question of silencing certain doc-
trines and equalizing fortunes, operations no more difficult
than establishing a new tax.

In truth it was not as hard for me as for others. I worked
to build a nation that remained too close to the state of Nature
to be corrupted by that false system of distinctions. Success
came to me more easily.

Convinced of the need to plan for equality, I studied the
second cause of man's unhappiness, which I located in his
passions. Forever torn between the latter and the law, I con-
vinced myself that the only way to make him less unhappy in
this respect was for there to be less passion and fewer laws.

Another operation proved simpler than might be imag-
ined. By abolishing luxury and introducing equality, I annihi-
lated pride, cupidity, avarice, and ambition. On what can one
pride oneself when, except for talents and virtues, everything
is equal? What is there to covet, what riches to conceal, what
rank to aspire to, when every fortune is like every other and
when everyone possesses more than enough to satisfy his
wants? Men's needs are all the same. Although Apicius* did
not have a larger stomach than Diogenes, the former never-
theless required 20 cooks while the latter dined on a single
nut. Both occupy the same level. Diogenes would not lose,
for he had nothing but the simple things to make him happy,

* The most gluttonous and debauched of Romans; intemperate in everything, he long kept Sejanus as a mistress. He wasted 15 million in debauchery alone at table and in bed; in the end he was ruined. When his accounts were done and he had not more than 100,000 livres in rents, he poisoned himself in despair.

0 while Apicius, who would never have put up with the necessities alone, would suffer in his imagination.

If you wish to live according to Nature, said Epicurus, you will never be poor. If you wish to live by following public opinion, you will never be rich. Nature demands little; public
5 *opinion, much.*

From the first, I told myself, I shall have fewer vices; and in this way a great number of laws will become unnecessary. For crime necessitates laws: diminish their number, provided what you regard as criminal is simple, and the law is rendered
10 useless. How many follies and how many foolish actions entail no injury to society and therefore, justly appreciated by a legislator-philosopher, might no longer be viewed as dangerous and still less as criminal? Suppress the laws made by tyrants that only prove their authority and more fully subjugate man
15 to their whims; you will find, when all is said and done, that with the number of restraints reduced to a few, the man who suffers their weight is vastly relieved. The great art would be to combine law and crime in such a way that any crime would but lightly offend the law while the law, less rigid, would weigh
20 heavily only on a very few crimes. Again, it is not difficult, and here is where I believe I succeeded. To this we shall return.

By establishing divorce, I destroyed nearly all the vices of intemperance; there would no longer remain anything of the sort were I to tolerate incest, as is done among the Brahmins,
25 or pederasty, as in Japan; but I saw they could be troublesome, not so much concerning the acts themselves, and not to say that alliances within families do not provide an infinity of good results whilst pederasty poses no danger, aside from decreasing the population and that by itself it is a wrong of
30 little importance.

Real happiness for a nation clearly consists not so much in the size of the population as in the perfect balance between

the people and its resources.* If I believed those vices harmful, it was only relative to my plan of governance inasmuch as the first destroys equality, which I wanted to establish, by enlarging but insulating families; and the second, by forming a separate class of men self-sufficient unto itself, which would necessarily destabilize the equilibrium I deemed essential. But just because I wished to annihilate these deviations, I was wary of punishing them. The Spanish Inquisition with its auto-da-fé and the Place de Grève with its gibbets were proof enough that the best way to propagate aberrations is to erect a gallows. I made use of public opinion which, as you know, rules the world. I spread disgust concerning the first of these vices; the second I covered with ridicule. Twenty years have put an end to them. I would be saddled with them forever were I to make use of prisons or call on the executioner.

Religion gives birth to a multitude of new crimes — that much I knew. As I traveled through France, I came across the still-smoldering massacres at Mérindol and Cabrières. I saw the gallows raised at the Chateau d'Amboise; in the capital I could still hear the frightful bells of Saint Bartholomew's. Points of doctrine drenched Ireland in blood and, in England there were the terrible conflicts between Puritans and Nonconformists. In Spain the unfortunate ancestors of your religion, the Jews, were burned alive while reciting the same prayers as the people who tore them to pieces. In Italy they talked to me of the Crusades of Innocent VI and, as I passed through Scotland, Bohemia, and Germany, I was daily shown battlefields on which men had charitably slit their brothers' throats to teach them to love the Lord.†

* Large empires and large populations (so says Monsieur Raynal) have two great problems. Rather, few people, but happy; small but well-governed.

Aline & Valcour

VOL.
3

on, the Philosophical Novel

Sad

ALINE AND VALCOUR
or, the Philosophical Novel

by
Marquis de Sade

Vol. III

Translated by
Jocelyne Geneviève Barque
&
John Galbraith Simmons



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The Story of Sainville and Léonore (continued)

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Letter XXXVIII

Déterville to Valcour

Vertfeuille, 16 November

5

Part Two — Léonore

“If anything,” said the lovely young woman to Madame de Blamont, “might excuse the hazardous course Monsieur de Karmeil made me take (permit me, in recounting our adventures, to call him Sainville, as he’s better known) — if anything. I say, would make me worthy of your indulgence, I dare lay claim to such consideration in light of the odious treatment I regularly received from Madame de Kerneuil. Weak justification, to be sure; a daughter must endure everything from her parents. That I know, but when nothing compensates for such harshness, when the woman you take to be your mother repeatedly tells you she’s not related to you in any way, that she’d been duped, that her infant had been exchanged while under a wet nurse’s care, and that the child returned to her was assuredly only the daughter of a peasant, and that such comments rained down with threats and blows, you may understand that my patience wore thin; and when, after all this, you’re torn away from the man you adore to be sacrificed to someone you hate, at 15 years old, at least with my disposition, you’re liable to behave foolishly.”

10

15

20

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“Your disposition?” asked Madame de Blamont.

“Yes, Madame,” returned Léonore. “I am about to reveal too many proofs of its vivacity not to forewarn you and ask that you forgive its many faults.”

30

0 I shall not repeat, Madame, *our heroine continued*, what you already know of the beginning of my story. I can see how anxious you are to learn about the awful event that separated me from Sainville in Venice and so immediately pass onto the
5 issue of that catastrophe.

Foolish caution, for which I've often since blamed myself, was the only cause of my awful separation from Sainville.

A noble named Fallieri was the man who so cruelly afflicted our union. He didn't conceal his plans from me; I learned
10 of them in a signed letter delivered by one of our gondoliers. I simply told this emissary to inform his employer that he was wasting his time and energy. To avoid arguments and justifications, I tore up the note and said not a word to Sainville; then, without revealing my reasons, I made him discharge our
15 people because now they were all suspect. He complied, but it was useless; the plot was too far advanced. Fallieri was rich and had too many people working for him; his prey would not escape. And what sort of man? What kind of monster intended to steal me from my love? I don't know how possibly to describe him without disgust and can't remember him
20 without horror. All the twisted features Nature can unite she wove together to create the appearance of this terrifying man; and the only thing worse was that dedicated libertine's heart and mind. Don't imagine love played a role in the awful man's scheme; he proudly avowed he'd never known it. Guided by
25 intemperance and aspiring only to satisfy it, anybody with a few charms was the same to him. The letter I'd received simply put me on notice. If it didn't get results, he had other means.

It was four days after my unpleasant response to Fallieri's
30 impudent letter that Sainville made plans that would leave me alone in the fig tree garden on Malamocco Island. Disturbed by dark premonitions I could not comprehend, I tried to stop

him a dozen times; I considered telling him everything, then
 tried arousing his jealousy without saying a thing about the
 real cause. I vacillated, mumbled a few words, and could not
 hold back a flood of tears. His virtuous trust heard nothing
 and I couldn't find the courage to reveal my dark secret before
 he left. No sooner was he gone the whole horror of my situa-
 tion came all too clear with a sudden warning. 5

The garden's miserable owner, whom we believed honest,
 had disclosed the most reliable information about our activi-
 ties to Fallieri, and she alone convinced him that capturing me
 in her yard, whether my husband was there or not, would be
 the easiest thing in the world. 10

She approached me just after Sainville left to tell me, as
 I'd requested she do, that others were coming to visit her gar-
 den. But dropping the respectful tone she'd always taken until
 then, she rudely told me either to leave or come inside her
 house if I didn't want to be seen. 15

What she said, her tone of voice, and the way she ad-
 dressed me all made me tremble with anger — and fear.

"How is that, Madame?" I said to the arrogant creature,
 "Don't you remember our agreement? Only a short while and
 my husband will be back." 20

"Oh! Your husband! You little wh--e" she replied. "The
 likes of him can be found anywhere. The one I'm going to get
 for you is worth far more."

At those cruel words I broke into a cold sweat. Feeling
 lost and helpless, I fell on my knees and clasped my hands. 25

"Dear lady!" I exclaimed "Are you abandoning me? You're
 going to hand me over? I dare implore you as my protector —
 don't sacrifice innocence —"

But it was too late. She vanished. Immediately six men
 surrounded me and brought me almost fainting into a gondola 30

0 that rapidly departed the island, reaching the Brenta Canal,*
and about four hours later docked at a remote palace where
my abductor was waiting.

They brought me before him more dead than alive.
Whatever the extent of his debauchery, some little sensitivity
5 remained in his coarse soul — such that he clearly understood
my condition would not permit him to fulfill his desires just
then. For satisfaction, it was wiser to wait a few hours, the
better to give rise to at least some sensation in the unfortunate
object he planned to sacrifice for the sake of his own.

10 Here Léonore flushed deeply and began to stammer.

“Madame,” she continued, embarrassed, *still addressing*
the President: “You enjoined me to hide nothing from you,
15 and I shall dare tell all. I guarded my virtue as best I could and
hope at least you won’t condemn me for the transgressions
that shame the assailants of my modesty even without, on my
part, the least weakening.”

“Indeed! Who does not know of such things,” exclaimed
20 the old general. “We all know that a lost young woman cannot
protect herself from a man’s recklessness; in all this there is
no suspicion that you committed even a venial sin. A woman
is never guilty but by her own free will; everything taken from
her by force is at the charge of her abductor and forever a stain
25 upon his conscience. But there are scoundrels who care not a
whit about one misdeed more or less; so long as they get what
they want, they’re unconcerned about how they obtain it.”

“Alas! This libertine would be counted among them, Mon-
sieur,” continued Léonore. “He ordered me be put to bed. He had
30 a woman do it in his presence, and permitted his eyes devour all.

* The channel links Padua and Venice; superb country estates of Venetian nobility line its banks.

"Were you undressed?" asked the Count. 0

Léonore reddened. "Monsieur!"

"She may spare us the details," said Madame de Senneval.
 "Truly, Count, you are too curious. You can see that this Venetian was an impudent man who permitted himself every liberty except the one that he believed he ought to put off for a time in the interest of his own pleasure. Is that not the case, lovely girl?" 5

"Yes, Madame," Léonore replied. "Your deft honesty tells all and spares me the shame; it is the height of thoughtful sensitivity." 10

"Something I would like to know —" said the Count.

"That you will not, however," Madame de Blamont interrupted. "You see how you make these young ladies blush. Continue, Léonore, continue. You've already described this person and we can imagine what he might do." 15

The turmoil I experienced, *resumed our beautiful adventuress*, the intense grief that consumed me, the endless tears, soon rendered my condition even more serious than Fallieri could have imagined; and when he came the next day to enjoy the success of his criminal doings, he found me in such agitation and so tormented by a raging fever that it became impossible for him to do with me as he wanted. My state raised more bile than interest; he went away grumbling and fulminating against French women who, prettier and more delicate than others, he said, always made for such scenes. He would have no more of them. He added: "I cannot stand these prudes who faint away for a thing that would make others come running." And he went off, leaving orders to be informed when my health improved. 20 25 30

It is said that when fate torments us at the height of misfortune, the gods are sure to help. To that I trusted and shall never repent of it.

0 Dolcini — such was the name of the surgeon who treated
me — was about 30 years old, handsome, with a sweet and
honest nature. As soon as I realized his soul was open to me,
that he not only sympathized with my plight but felt moved
by the evils intended to befall me once I recovered, I showed
5 my gratitude with vivid expressions that both touched him
deeply and inflamed his heart. Soon I could see that Dolcini
had fallen in love. I let him talk about it and did everything
possible to make him believe I was not indifferent. The fact
was that escape from imminent danger, no matter the price,
10 was clearly essential. If Providence spared me this time, I told
myself, it would not abandon me the next. She'd help me es-
cape from the weaker man just as she helped me with one
more powerful, so I'd find the means to get away from the one
as from the other.

15
“Kindly take a moment to consider my line of reasoning,” said
Léonore to the *assembled*. “False though it might appear, it
served as my dependable guide: to never be afraid of putting
20 myself in danger a second time to escape the fate of the first.”

25 Indeed, when Dolcini saw I approved his passion, he sought
to help me in every way. Eagerly he told me one day: “The
essential thing is to take you out of this place.”

“That’s all I want.”

30 “It’s not as easy as you think or as I would like. We’re sur-
rounded by spies. Among them, the woman who attends you
— we must not even think of dismissing her. As for myself,
whether the thing succeeds or not I shall be left ruined and
penniless. The safest choice, in consequence, if you really care
anything for me, is to agree to accompany me to Sicily, my

native land. There — I give you my word — I'll marry you
as soon as we arrive. But how to proceed?" 0

"And if you really love me, need you ask? Can't your affection overcome every obstacle?"

"Ah! Believe me, only the insurmountable would stop me for even a moment." Then, after a brief reflection: "I see only
one way out: we take advantage of your illness to escape." 5

"How do you imagine that could help?"

"Listen to me, and above all, have no fear. 'Tis frightful to be sure but it's all we have."

"Explain yourself." 10

"My reports will change concerning your health and symptoms. I'll say you're in great danger, at death's door. Little by little you will seem to worsen and finally pretend to die. I'll be the only witness to your last breath. I'm quite sure your abductor will allow no one else versed in the medical arts to attend, nor even let a priest offer absolution. We only must keep your caretaker in the dark; we can't shut her out but we'll mislead her. The plan shall work. I alone will attend to your burial in the parish near the chateau. The gravedigger is a commoner and indebted to me. He will place you in a vault to which I alone have access. The same night I'll come to take you away and we'll promptly depart for Sicily. Tell me: do you find this plan too frightening?" 15 20

"'Tis extreme. If the least bit goes awry or were anything neglected —" 25

"Great heavens! With the love you inspire, how can you doubt? Would I try anything like this only to abandon you? I'm taking you away in the face of all possible peril."

"Certainly — but there must be attention to every detail. Once I'm locked inside the vault, what if something happens to you? Misfortune always threatens and can strike at any time. If you alone know the secret, imagine the risk." 30

0 “The gravedigger shall be in my confidence. How could he not? If something were to happen to me, would he not save you?”

 “All right! I put myself in your hands. My trust dispels all fear.”

5 “But, my beautiful Léonore,” continued Dolcini, kneeling beside me, “will you agree at least to repay such love and zeal?”

 I gave him my hand and looked away for fear I might reveal my true feelings. Over and over he caressed my hand, then left straightaway to prepare.

10 He returned the same evening.

 “I’ve just come from the city,” he told me, “where I ordered a coffin. It will be cushioned with three inches of horse-hair and feathers, and lined with white satin. In one corner two drawers will be made, one to contain salts and spirituous
15 waters, the other dried jams, biscuits, and Spanish wine. You will easily be able to breathe and have everything you need at hand to sustain you for 24 hours; you will be as comfortable as if you were in a chaise lounge. The coffin, to be made by a worker employed by friends of mine, will be shipped to a
20 relative in Padua, where I shall pick it up. I’ll bring it here by night, in order to divert spies and evade discovery. Does your courage hold? Do you waiver?”

 “No,” I said. “Your careful attention so convinces me of your true feelings that I put myself entirely in your hands.
25 Count on my gratitude.”

 Inflamed by these words, Dolcini thanked me a thousand times twice over and declared he would always be worthy of my feelings for him.

30 “I’m only a poor surgeon,” he told me, “but an honest man — confused, humiliated, full of remorse for serving the gross and vulgar fantasies of such a master, who’s in charge of my fate. I’m only too happy to find a way to quit him forever.

O Léonore, what a change of fortune! Yesterday I was the slave and agent of vice; today, I become avenger and brace of virtue!"

From that moment the daily reports to Fallieri changed completely. My illness became dangerous and might turn for the worse; it was impossible to guarantee my recovery; and Dolcini, certain that the request would be denied, asked for assistance from another physician.

"None of that," answered cruel Fallieri — truly, debauchery smothers all natural feelings.* "Bury her secretly when she dies. You'll tell the priest that he'd better keep quiet, take his money, and recite paternosters for the soul of the poor creature — whom I didn't have the pleasure of sending to hell."

"Look — what a soul," Dolcini told me, showing me the awful note. "He would have obtained your last favors and thought nothing of it. But in the end you've got permission to die — not bad for such a monster."

Now it became a matter of deceiving the guardian, who was sharp, clever, and dangerous; but I played my part with skill, trembling, agonizing, simulating faints and swoons. I completely succeeded in making her my dupe. A final crisis seemed to do me in. Dolcini told her I was dead and therefore he was going to execute his master's orders. He advised her to keep quiet; the bier was brought. Together they laid me upon it.

"Go and rest," Dolcini said to the guardian. "You've done your duty. They'll come for her tonight and we'll bury her. To assure secrecy it will be only myself and one other man. Go."

* Libertinage does not stifle Nature's sentiments but it fosters selfishness. The libertine's desires, located in his soul, are almost always in contradiction with, and more powerful than, social conventions, annihilating them in accord with principles infinitely more powerful; he does not throttle Nature but only makes her cede to egotism. This general axiom, however, does not hold in this case, for in words and actions Fallieri speaks with gratuitous bleakness.

0 The woman wanted nothing more than to take her leave;
and once delivered of her presence, Dolcini helped me settle
into the casket.

 If it weren't for the suffering such a situation can inflict
upon the mind, it would have been impossible to be more
5 comfortable. The body, certainly, was shielded from harm.
I lay nicely within, breathing marvelously well — in spite of
which I was plunged into a lugubrious state that made my
plight seem frightful.

 The time for our departure arrived. Dolcini, who had yet
10 to make final preparations, wanted to be absolutely sure I was
willing, and then he required 16 hours to make ready. We set
our watches to the same time. I was to be taken away at four
o'clock Monday morning, to be delivered the same day at
eight o'clock in the evening. One keeps track of the minutes
15 in situations like these. The gravedigger was to make sure I
was alive and I made him promise to release me exactly 16
hours later, whether Dolcini was back or not. He took one key
to the casket; my lover, the other. I was taken away. The priest,
as ordered, was waiting without ceremony at the door of the
20 church. The prepared vault opened, I was placed inside. The
door shut. There I was, alive in the abyss of the dead.

 Inconspicuous openings in the vault allowed air to circu-
late through the holes of the coffin and let me breathe; but then
I grew cold. Dolcini had made sure I was dressed warmly but
25 not completely and I was gripped by irrepressible and violent
shivering. Fear sprang forth and my imagination darkened. I
felt on the verge of losing consciousness when, remembering
the liqueurs, I opened one of the drawers as Dolcini had
shown me. But I was astonished — my cold hand, instead of
30 finding relief, wrapped around a dagger!

 If I ever believed myself at death's door, it was now. *Be-
trayed & abandoned*, I told myself. *The weapon is yours to use,*

another favor from the barbarous monster. He doesn't want you to die from despair. Don't hesitate. Anything else would be more dreadful still.

But a little reflection brought me back from the brink. Such deliberate care had been taken. Was it possible they could have done all that for someone they planned to sacrifice? The coffin so skillfully organized, small vents so carefully made — could all that fit with a plan of prompting me to so miserably take my own life? The fright from the awful discovery dissipated and put an end to the breakdown from such dark thoughts. With strength recovered, I undertook another inspection. Feeling about the sides of coffin once more, I came across the drawer of supplies Dolcini had told me about. I was so relieved and told myself: *More proofs of attention, the more I'll be certain nobody wants me to die.* But why the dagger, evidently forgotten? From a small flask of Spanish wine, I drank few drops and felt calm enough to await the hour fixed by my abductor.

But the hour arrived and nothing happened.

"Great heavens!" I thought. "Doubt no longer — this is my final resting place. I'm about to meet a dreadful end in death's own temple, prey to repentant creatures within this awful vault intending to eat me alive. Ah! Let me avoid such a terrible end. Hasten the moment. I must die."

Grabbing the dagger, I tested its point and put it on my heart. I shed a flood of bitter tears.

O Sainville! Disconsolate: How young was she who was taken from you! So many years she could have made you happy! Yet here she is, lost to you. Detestable trust, traitorous state — but the misfortune is my own, I've only myself to blame.

Such awful thoughts engulfed me when suddenly I heard the stone being lifted.

Nothing can describe the profusion that assailed me — hope, worry, joy, fear, all those conflicting feelings overcame

0 me, though which was the most powerful I couldn't say. The coffin was drawn from the vault and Dolcini appeared.

"We must hurry," he said. "Your guardian suspects something and she's warned Fallieri. We're lost if we don't move quickly. Everything's ready; the felucca awaits at a hundred
5 paces. The gravedigger and I will transport you in the coffin and you'll remain confined to it during the voyage. Covered with an oilcloth, it will pass for a trunk full of merchandise. Our plan cannot but succeed."

10 "No, cruel man! Explain the dagger. Why was it here? For what reason?"

"Good god! It scared you. A foolish mistake — why didn't I tell you? My first idea had been to disguise you as a man, so a weapon was called for. Foolish — forgive me! But we must leave, Léonore; there's no time. Every wasted moment could
15 cost our lives. Your life is in my hands and I took an oath to save it. No useless delays. Don't make me break my heart's promise."

20 They carried me off again. The coffin was loaded onto the felucca and placed in a corner covered again with the oilcloth. We sailed immediately.

Three times daily, under the pretext of retrieving something from one of the crates, Dolcini opened the coffin to give me air, a little food, and provide a few tender words. His fear that we were being followed obliged him to make me suffer.

25 On the fourth day a violent storm rose along the coast of Malta. It was the same that battered Sainville. But the roiling sea pitched the felucca to one side and it sailed like that for more than 80 leagues, so utterly exhausting that I lost consciousness. That explains the moment Sainville described,
30 when he saw a coffin brought into a room at the inn — and witnessed both Dolcini's sorrow when he opened it and first feared he'd found only a corpse, then his joy in perceiving I

was still alive. He was getting ready to bring me around when Sainville left me behind — in order to search for me. 0

After Dolcini bled me, I quickly recovered. The same wind that decided Sainville to leave also prompted us to set sail. My suitor, meanwhile, now convinced there was nothing more to fear, finally allowed me out of my funereal dwelling. 5

For us just as for Sainville, the favorable weather that made us sail further than Catania, as we'd planned, turned out to be deceptive. Soon an eastern wind pushed us furiously off course and sent us into the African ocean. There a privateer out of Tripoli perceived our distress and in a few fatal moments his vessel swept impetuously down upon us. Far too weak to think of putting up even token resistance, we were forced to choose between death and capture. Dolcini, inflamed by love, dared dispute the conquest. He lost his life defending me — slaughtered. 10 15

His decapitated head tumbled beside me.

And on we sailed along the African coast.

Letter XLIV

President Blamont to Dolbourg*

0

Paris, 10 January 1779

Sophie is ours. The business was carried out with nimblest
dispatch. The Abbess clamored for Madame de Blamont but
there was a *lettre de cachet* and she was forced to give way.
Now that I think about it, such injunctions can be quite convenient. What a variety of passions they serve! Love, hate, vengeance, ambition, cruelty, jealousy, avarice, tyranny, adultery,
libertinage, incest — these charming missives satisfy them all.
Rid yourself of an annoying spouse, feared rival, mistress no longer desired, an inconvenient relation. I'll never finish if I detail all the uses to which they might be put. I've yet to understand how my colleagues can possibly complain about them,
and I'm perplexed when they dare assert that they contravene the laws of the State, as if the State ought to have anything more sacred than the happiness of its lords and masters, as if there existed anything sweeter this side of the Asiatic method of strangulation. To be sure, I know those who oppose such
delicious use of it treat the thing like some sort of tyrannical *abuse*. To bolster their case, they claim it weakens the sovereign by diluting his power, diminishing while seeming to expand it through despotism, and debasing it by concealing crimes — a dangerous tool that might be used judiciously
once or twice a century but when used 500 times corrupts

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* There were two more letters from Valcour but as they reflected no change we pass immediately to this one, which however frightful it is, seemed to us too useful to suppress but, rather, essential, both for its depiction of character and understanding the impending catastrophe. But many readers, women especially, will do well to not read it. *Editor's note*.

30

0 the roots of the tree by hacking off its branches. But that's all
 sophistry from those who've suffered from it. The weak com-
 plain from time immemorial; that's their lot in life, just as it's
 ours not to listen to them. I ask you: What would authority
 5 come to if its beneficent beams did not lend support to the
 throne? Only tyrants carry their own swords; good and just
 kings share the weight. Why carry one at all if you're not going
 to use it from time to time?

Was it not indecent that your mistress and my daughter*
 — just because it pleased her to escape from us by forcing us
 10 to throw her out — went off to live at my wife's expense? But,
 indeed, shouldn't she be paying for these sorts of things? For
 myself, I like propriety — amazing how I insist on it. Yes, I
 want honesty to reign even in the heart of chaos. When as to
 Sophie all this comes out, Madame will sulk. God knows but
 15 my attentions — *my so very close attentions* — will surprise
 her. “Is it not frightful,” I shall be told, “to seek pleasures with
 the self-same one you have so burdened with grief?” My wife
 can't conceive the connection in that. She can't understand
 how grief and sorrow can shock the nerves with an immedi-
 20 ate effect upon voluptuousness via the atoms of the electric
 fluid, and that a woman is never more desirable than when
 captive to tears. That alone would make it excusable for an
 old husband like myself, with his tender spouse, to use every
 possible conceivable way to attain what vigor alone can no
 25 longer provide. That is the physical side of things. But a little
 malice aimed at causing sorrow has its moral pleasures as
 well. And that your sluggish mind does not comprehend. Tell
 me — confess. Do you understand what you're really saying
 to a woman when subjecting her to these fires? It's like this:

* We must not forget that the President still believes himself to be Sophie's father.

If you only knew how your misapprehension and simple nature 0
nourish the piquant charm of deception and the pleasure I seek,
not to mention the way I finally make you my dupe. In those
fiery salts I find the voluptuousness that intoxicates — and it
would be nothing for me without darts of perfidy. Well, Dol-
 bourg: is that all Greek to you? Are you like some ass grazing 5
 in the green meadow without distinguishing the *wild rushes*
 from the *precious herbs*, but devouring indifferently all that
 finds its way to your mouth, without analyzing or examin-
 ing it, without forming or acting upon principles? Am I not
 happier than thou in refining *everything* the way I do, never 10
 giving into *physical* pleasure without some little *moral* dis-
 order? Whatever variety I may put in play in my love for the
 President, however pretty she is still, however *bizarre* might
 be my pleasures — what would become of them, I ask you, if
 to inflame them I did not have ideas born of my well-known 15
 treacherous *intentions*? And to *them* we must return, for our
 plan at Lyon worked no success. Then, too, since formulating
 those *intentions* — now that they're foolproof — the sensa-
 tions are those of violence! What amuses me is that the fine
 lady supposes it's all due to her good looks. She ought to know 20
 that looks no longer count for anything with respect to my
 intoxication. It seems impossible that she fails to see that I
 have something else in mind. Sometimes I am not even mas-
 ter of my own words. During those moments of babble and
 claptrap — he who talks the most nonsense is nearly always 25
 the one with the liveliest mind — there escape from my lips
 some very telling things. When there used to be a little more
 honesty on my part, there was far less enthusiasm; she ought
 to remember. What then the source of this new delirium? The
 indecency of the act? I've long engaged in *singularities* — as 30
 she must know. Seeing that's not the sort of thing setting me
 afire now, she ought to ask herself what's going on, begin to

0 wonder and even tremble. But a woman's sense of security is a strange thing.

You fancy yourself a bit of a *naturalist* and so should be able to tell me: is there not some kind of ferocious animal that with a female never roars but when it's ready to *devour*?
 5 I just mentioned security — how it astonishes me —, but now it's their pride I don't understand. They have it when they get back the one they've lost and always imagine it's thanks to their art and magic — they've effected a miracle! Innocents, deceived by the cult of self-sacrifice, they place themselves
 10 on the altar as *goddesses* when in fact they're only *victims*.

In any event, Sophie has been snatched by order of the King from the convent of the Ursulines of Orléans. She was spirited off to the Chateau de Blamont, where my concierge received her and shut her away in a safe and secluded apart-
 15 ment; he will guard her with his life. I have been told that the dear little person wept prodigiously; she has more tears yet to shed. With the way she toyed with us, we deserve to make sure of it. But as she is indeed safely put away and we have much to do at present, I shall be content just to stop down
 20 in order to prepare her to receive us in the spring. Until then, other affairs keep us too busy in Paris.

Nothing meanwhile has worked so well as the rehabilitation of our young lady, Augustine. I was witness to it and occasionally allowed my eyes to brim with tears, to make it
 25 seem I have a heart — I was believed. Once more, my friend, what goodness these women possess! Here is this young girl, beautifully placed; and you may well understand how sure of that we had to be, for it's essential not to lose sight of the very soul of our plan. You must admit: I'm a fine physiognomist.
 30 As soon as I espied her at Vertfeuille, I knew it was so *in every way*: She's what we need. Here's what fate put in our hands to execute its caprices. And you see how after fulfilling our first

requests with docile compliance, to our second she cooperates with intelligence. 0

In truth, we needed something like her to compensate us for the very real loss of Léonore. Ah! That charming little woman is worthy of us, my friend! This Count de Beaulé, who's been getting in the way for some time, is beginning to try my patience. If he were not in such favor, I and some of my friends would soon have him in criminal court. I know the dear fellow dines occasionally with young women — so, in times like ours, all the more necessary he be sent directly to the gallows. It is only a question of suspicion and invention — of bribing a few complainants, a few spies and arresting officers — and then you have a broken man. For 30 years we've seen this sort of thing, over and over. I'd almost like it better today* if I were accused of conspiracy against the government rather than irregularities with dirty whores. And in truth this manner of going about things is respectable — it does honor to the nation. If we had to wait for a man to commit a crime against the state in order to get rid of him, there would be no end to it; but there are few mortals alive who don't break bread with prostitutes. So we've done well to set traps. This kind of inquisition with respect to the practices of a citizen who closes himself with a young woman, together with the obligation by which we make these creatures render an exact account of the fellow's lustful acts, is assuredly one of our country's most beautiful institutions. It immortalizes forever the illustrious *archon* who put it to use in Paris.† And see that these laws, gentle yet prudent, must never be allowed to fall into disuse; 25

* No, not today, happily for humanity. Wiser laws shall govern in France; and the atrocities described by this rascal exist no longer. 30

†. An *archon* was a Greek magistrate — though it must be said Sire Sartine was no Greek. See the relevant note on p. 474.

0 we cannot do enough to encourage denunciations by these
 priestesses of Venus; it is extremely useful to government and
 society to know how a man conducts himself in such circum-
 stances. A thousand conclusions, each more certain than the
 next, may be drawn concerning his character; the result, I'm
 5 happy to say, is a collection of impurities that tickles the ears
 of a judge. It does not serve morality — so say the system's
 enemies — to spy on the libertine actions of Pierre in order
 to stimulate the intemperance of Jacques, but these are chains
 upon the citizen, the means to subjugate and do away with
 10 him when one wants — and that's what's essential.

Adieu. My better half the wears me out; no one has ever
 treated his wife so diligently. I'll charge you see to my plea-
 sures whilst I sacrifice myself for yours. For the repast you're
 preparing, recall I must have hot and tasty dishes; so warn
 15 love's children that they'll need to reawaken sensations made
 extinct by the holy disorders of matrimony.

Endnotes

Our translation, in accord with the 1990 Pléiade publication, takes the third state of the 1795 edition of the novel as the canonical text, into which Sade had introduced a small number of significant changes after the novel's first printing. Modern French editions, beginning with Jean-Jacques Pauvert's 1966 edition for *Cercle du Livre Précieux*, include useful contextual information, and we are indebted to the work of Michel Delon, editor of the Pléiade edition, and to Jean-Marie Goulemont for his notes to the 1994 Livre de Poche edition. Our own endnotes and brief explanations, which bear witness to Sade's encyclopedic mind, are designed explicitly for an Anglophone audience.

- 115 381.27: "*He bore the titles ...*": The system of justice at the end of the ancien régime was thoroughly disorganized, as Sade implies.
- 116 382.25: Brigand Louis Mandrin (1725–1755) was a highwayman who challenged the hated tax farmers and is often cited as the Robin Hood of France.
- 117 383.32: Île Sainte-Marguerite: an island off the shore of Cannes, site of the Fort Royal prison. The famed "Man in the Iron Mask" was imprisoned there.
- 118 385.14: Alguazil, a borrowing from Spanish, refers pejoratively to a constable or minor minister.
- 119 388.3: Combat in Germany refers to the Seven Years War (1756–63); the mention of Corsica alludes to the French conquest of that island country, 1768–69.
- 120 388.20: Versailles: the King's Court; the city of Rennes was the administrative center of Brittany.
- 121 392.13: Aspasia (c. 470–400 BC) was a lover of Pericles and played an influential but somewhat obscure role in political life in ancient Greece. She was rumored to have spent part of her life as a prostitute.

accused by historian Procopius in his famous *Secret History*. Messalina (c. 17–48) was the third wife of Emperor Claudius, said to be ruthless and sexually promiscuous (see also p. 545).

- 200 638.28: “*An excess of sensitivity...*”: Encyclopedist Jean-François Marmontel (1723–1799).
- 201 639.29: Marquise de Brinvilliers (1630–1676), accused of conspiring to murder her father and two brothers, was tortured and executed after a sensational trial. Her alleged crimes led to the “Affair of the Poisons” in which La Voisin (Catherine Monvoisin), a fortune teller, was accused and executed for witchcraft in 1680.
- 202 639.30: *Le Père de famille*, see p. 634; *Lucile*, a comic opera by André Grétry with a French text by Jean-François Marmontel, first performed in 1769.
- 203 661.19: “Asiatic method of strangulation”: Strangulation with a handkerchief, such as employed by the Thugs of India.
- 204 663.30: Blamont’s use of the term *singularities*, which resonates with Léonore’s usage of the term, which we translate for her as *most singular impressions* (p.644.11), alludes to highly refined properties of perception and imagination and, at one and the same time, to “bizarre” sexual acts; it may also be translated as “eccentricities.”
- 205 665.32: Another reference to Sade’s nemesis, Antoine de Sartine, who reported to the king concerning the sexual extravagances the police collected concerning various nobles.
- 206 670.25: “*the wife of the Marquis de Karmeil*”: Here we correct all earlier editions, including the Pléiade, which give “Kerneuil” in place of Karmeil.
- 207 687.30: Paolo Veronese (1528–1588), Italian Renaissance painter.
- 208 693.4: “*Sister of the Shears*”: The Parcae of Roman myth were the three goddess sisters of fate, and Daughters of the



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For the equivalent of merely 2–3 coffees a week, you can help sustain CMP and contribute to the future of kulchur. To participate in our patronage program we are asking individuals to donate \$500 per year, which amounts to \$42/month, or \$10/week. Larger donations are of course welcome and beneficial. All donations are tax-deductible through our fiscal sponsor Fractured Atlas. If preferred, donations can be made in two installments. We are seeking a minimum of 300 patrons per year and would like for them to commit to giving the above amount for a period of three years.

WHAT WE OFFER

Part tax-deductible donation, part exchange, for your contribution you will receive every CMP book published during the patronage period as well as 20 books from our back catalog. When possible, signed or limited editions of books will be offered as well.

WHAT WILL CMP DO WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS?

Your contribution will help with basic general operating expenses, yearly production expenses (book printing, warehouse & catalog fees, etc.), advertising & outreach, and editorial, proofreading, translation, typography, design and copyright fees. Funds may also be used for participating in book fairs and staging events. Additionally, we hope to rebuild the *Hyperion* section of the website in order to modernize it.

From Pericles to Mæcenās & the Renaissance patrons, it is the magnanimity of such individuals that have helped the arts to flourish. Be a part of helping your kulchur flourish; be a part of history.

HOW

To lend your support & become a patron, please visit the subscription page of our website: contramundum.net/subscription

For any questions, write us at: info@contramundum.net



Set against the impending riptide of the French Revolution and composed while Sade was imprisoned in the Bastille, *Aline and Valcour* embodies the multiple themes that would become the hallmark of his far more sulfurous works.

This epistolary work combines genres, interweaving the adventure story with the libertine novel and the novel of feelings to create a compelling, unitary tale. Turbulence disrupts virtuous lives when corrupt schemers work incestuous designs upon them that don't stop with abduction and seduction — as crime imposes tragic obstacles to love and delivers harsh threats to morality and religion.

Embedded within *Aline and Valcour* are sojourns in unknown lands in Africa and the South Seas: Butua, a cannibalistic dystopia, and Tamocé, a utopian paradise headed by a philosopher-king. In Butua, a lustful chief and callous priesthood rule over a doomed people, with atrocious crimes committed in broad daylight, while in Tamocé happiness and prosperity reign amidst benevolent anarchy.

Although not sexually explicit, *Aline and Valcour* shared the fate of Sade's other novels — banned in 1815 and later classified a prohibited work by the French government. Published clandestinely, it did not appear in bookstores until after WWII. Continuously in print in France ever since, today it occupies the first volume of the Pléiade edition of the author's collected works.

This is the very first rendering of the book into English since its publication in 1795.

Translated by Jocelyne Geneviève Barque
& John Galbraith Simmons

