

# **THE ADOPTIVE SON**

By Jules Verne and Charles Wallut

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Etext by Dagny

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Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2003

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## CHARACTERS:

**BARON d'ENTREMOUILLETES, aged 50**

**CESARINE, his niece**

**DUMORTIER, his friend, aged 50**

**ISIDORE BARBILLON, Dumortier's nephew**

**IPHARAGHERRE, A BASQUE GUARD**

**LAURENT, the Baron's house servant**

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The action takes place in Dumortier's park in Navarre. A pavilion to the right. At the back a wooden bridge thrown up over a small stream. Rustic chairs.

**DUMORTIER:** (to Isidore) And Miss Cesarine?

**ISIDORE:** I just met her taking her usual stroll through the park.

**DUMORTIER:** The fact is she's as early a riser as her uncle the Baron is a late one. Since my noble friend accepted hospitality in the pavilion in my park he's been rising so late that he's been obliged to lunch alone. We are in that case deprived of the honor

**ISIDORE:** Why the honor?

**DUMORTIER:** You don't know that the d'Entremouillettes are the principal nobility of Sologne?

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**ISIDORE:** Well? And so what?

**DUMORTIER:** So what! So what! As for you Heavens, you will never understand anything about these things.

**ISIDORE:** It's quite possible.

**DUMORTIER:** (to Ipharagherre) And you, Ipharagherre?

**IPHARAGHERRE:** I was telling you, Mr. Dumortier, that this reminds me of the story of Lampourdan and D'Etcheverry.

**DUMORTIER:** Ipharagherre, my friend, keep for another time your Basque stories and tell us what you've discovered?

**ISIDORE:** If he's found something

**IPHARAGHERRE:** As to that, Mr. Dumortier, according to your instructions, after one day and two nights, it's not for us to boast, we beat a path, but with Basque legs, we would go to the end of the world headfirst.

**ISIDORE:** Uncle, the tales of this guard distress me. (sitting down)

**DUMORTIER:** (to Ipharagherre) For once in your life, can't you go straight to the point when you're telling something?

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Ah! Sir, it's difficult to go straight in mountainous country; it's easy for you to talk like that if Etcheverry and Lampourdan were here

**ISIDORE:** If they were here we'd have to go because the place would be untenable. Set three Basques to tell a story! The devil

**DUMORTIER:** For the last time, Ipharagherre, will you tell me, yes or no, if my instructions were followed, if you discovered?

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Well, yes, Mr. Dumortier, we discovered! by dint of running through the mountain, by excavating the woods, by ferreting through the dens We discovered a bear

**DUMORTIER:** A bear!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** A magnificent bear! with tracks as long as this I will show you when you like.

**DUMORTIER:** But

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Oh! It's very close by; we even succeeded with Lampourdan.

**ISIDORE:** And Etcheverry

**IPHARAGHERRE:** And Etcheverry in bringing the beast quite near you, and at this time, it's prowling in the environs. It already ate two calves and I swear to you that it wouldn't be wise to stroll there without being armed to the teeth.

**DUMORTIER:** Two calves! What a bruiser! Certainly I'd like a bear, a little bear.

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**ISIDORE:** A fanciful, whimsical bear, a chimera. Ah, really, uncle, what the devil do you want to do with a bear! Are you going to become a hunter now?

**DUMORTIER:** Me! hunter! me mingle with dogs, grapple by trickery with a partridge, or outsmart a jack rabbit.

**ISIDORE:** Or the malice of a bear.

**DUMORTIER:** Like you say, a bear! Never; no, that's not me; that's for my worthy friend, the Baron Gulistan d'Entremouillettes.

**ISIDORE:** Ah! ah! ah! It's for the Baron!

**DUMORTIER:** In his high caste, the taste for the hunt is traditional; so I didn't want him to leave Navarre without having had the pleasure of killing a bear in the open mountains.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** And if he kills this one, he'll be killing a beauty, for, saving your respect, Mr. Dumortier, if it caught you, it wouldn't even make a mouthful of you.

**DUMORTIER:** Oh! a mouthful or two, if he gets me The thing is not to be gotten.

**ISIDORE:** That's it.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** But you, Mr. Barbillion, you have the air of spitting on it.

**ISIDORE:** Me! spit on a bear If it was a bear rug, I don't say.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Because it's a nasty beast, believe me, and despite all your science, your study of law, your rubrics of the code, it would know well enough how to put you down!

**ISIDORE:** Yes! down in its stomach! I don't doubt it, that's why I will avoid making it my habitual companion. I don't know if the Baron will be very flattered

**DUMORTIER:** I hope so, but my noble friend's really late putting in an appearance; could he have spent a bad night? It's my duty to inform myself.

(Dumortier rings at the pavilion door. Laurent enters.)

**DUMORTIER:** The Baron ?

**LAURENT:** (razor in hand) I have the honor of doing the Baron's beard. (goes back in)

**ISIDORE:** With the razor of his ancestors!

**DUMORTIER:** Fine! He won't delay emerging to take his chocolate in the fall air. You know that by a delicacy quite worthy of his race he has himself accompanied by his silverware when he's travelling, and never eats except with settings bearing his monogram. (to Ipharagherre) Therefore, Ipharagherre, prepare yourself, warn your friends.

**ISIDORE:** Etcheverry and Lampourdan! Take careful precautions so that no harm comes to this especially worthy

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**IPHARAGHERRE:** But at what time will the Baron d'Entremouillettes deign to set forth on the hunt?

**DUMORTIER:** You're right, we need to know. (rings) The Baron

**LAURENT:** (appearing, dressing gown in hand) I have the honor of combing the Baron's wig (he goes back in)

**DUMORTIER:** Well, my friend, I cannot allow myself to persist and to tear my noble friend from his grave occupation. Hold yourself ready, that's all that I can tell you.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** We'll be ready.

**ISIDORE:** And advise your bear, if sometimes he takes you in his confidence, not to make a nasty rush at the Baron who is to have the honor of killing him.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Laugh! Laugh! Mr. Isidore, if you only knew the adventure that happened to Lampourdan and Etcheverry the night of

**ISIDORE:** No! I don't wish to know it.

**DUMORTIER:** Go! Ipharagherre, go! Everything happens suitably.

(Ipharagherre leaves.)

**ISIDORE:** Since I find myself alone with you, uncle, I must confess a secret to you and request a service of you.

**DUMORTIER:** At your ease, my dear boy, I'm listening to you.

**ISIDORE:** The thing is, I don't know where to begin.

**DUMORTIER:** At the end!

**ISIDORE:** Well, in that case ! I love

**DUMORTIER:** Hang on a sec! I am thinking if the Baron's not a hunter (goes to the pavilion and rings) The Baron

**LAURENT:** (appearing, horn in hand) I have the honor of shoeing the Baron. (goes back in)

**ISIDORE:** With the horn of his fathers!

**DUMORTIER:** Have you noticed how respectful his servants are. No, I'm with you You were saying before?

**ISIDORE:** I was saying before, uncle, beginning at the end that I love Miss Cesarine.

**DUMORTIER:** (stupefied) Miss Cesarine?

**ISIDORE:** Miss Cesarine.

**DUMORTIER:** Miss Cesarine d'Entremouillettes?

**ISIDORE:** Herself!

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**DUMORTIER:** What's this! She loves you?

**ISIDORE:** Excuse me! I didn't say she loves me; I said herself in person.

**DUMORTIER:** The niece and ward of Baron Gulistan d'Entremouillettes?

**ISIDORE:** His own niece and ward.

**DUMORTIER:** You! Isidore Barbillon?

**ISIDORE:** My very self.

**DUMORTIER:** Son of Jean Barbillon and Claudine Tournecerf.

**ISIDORE:** As you say

**DUMORTIER:** A lawyer with no causes?

**ISIDORE:** With no causes, but not without effect.

**DUMORTIER:** But have you considered, wretch, the distance which separates you? And first off, Miss Cesarine is the sole heir of her uncle, two or three times a millionaire, while from my succession, your only fortune is small enough, but that's not all.

**ISIDORE:** I know it.

**DUMORTIER:** Were you ten times richer and a hundred times more celebrated the Baron would never consent to such a mesalliance. Think of it! A Barbillon.

**ISIDORE:** All this is true, uncle, and I said it to myself. But what do you want? I love Miss Cesarine.

**DUMORTIER:** And how did this catastrophe occur?

**ISIDORE:** In a quite simple way. How does love happen! Does anyone know? Here it is a month that the Baron's been installed in this park with his charming niece! Here it is a month that I met her strolling, book in hand, picking flowers by nature less fresh and charming than she. We talked, we laughed: I offered her my hand to cross over a stream, she leaned on my arm so as not to wet her charming little feet; I pulled back the branches which could hurt her sweet face, and I got myself scratched in her place; which proves I am ready to shed all my blood for her! So goes love, uncle, we first met by chance, now we meet on purpose, without the time of the rendez-vous having been agreed between us. Miss Cesarine clings little, I think, to her noble lineage; her mother was as plebian as you and I, something the Baron never forgave in his brother. In short, what can I tell you? I began my story at the end, and I will even end it there. Miss Cesarine is twenty, I'm twenty-five; we are alone, find a better reason for a brave lad to love a pretty girl, and that's why I love Miss Cesarine!

**DUMORTIER:** The fact is that it's very original! But you are going to ruin me in the mind of my noble friend: he will think I am embroiled in aiding this conspiracy. He will never consent to kill a bear that I am offering him under conditions like this!

**ISIDORE:** I am counting on you, my dear uncle, to make my demand!

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**DUMORTIER:** That's all that was lacking! Don't think of it, wretch, don't think of it. But, at least, Miss Cesarine loves you?

**CESARINE:** (entering) What is it that one calls love, Mr. Dumortier?

**DUMORTIER:** Ah! Miss!

**ISIDORE:** Miss Cesarine!

**DUMORTIER:** What is it one calls love? My word, I don't know. To tell the truth, the nature of my preoccupations not having permitted me to fathom it delve into it I don't know.

**CESARINE:** Well, Mr. Dumortier, if a man, reflective, intelligent, and wise like you, doesn't know the word to love, how do you expect that a poor young girl can ever know it?

**DUMORTIER:** Miss, the word to love is a verb.

**ISIDORE:** A verb of the first conjugation, the first that one learns to conjugate in all languages, phidero in Greek, amo in Latin, I love in French. It's an active verb that governs a direct object. When we get out of college, if we want to profit from the Humanities, we have nothing more to do in this world than to seek out this charming direct object, to attach ourselves to it with eternal fetters. Uncle, I've met this direct object, here it is, it's Miss Cesarine and in seeing her so beautiful, so sweet, so perfect, no one will dare say I didn't do well at my studies.

**CESARINE:** Oh! Mr. Isidore, you make me confused! Happily, your uncle is here to reply to you and to tell you how much you exaggerate.

**DUMORTIER:** I didn't say that. Only my nephew is completely unworthy of you, under all accounts, of you and of your uncle and tutor, Baron D'Entremouillettes.

**CESARINE:** My uncle loves me, Mr. Dumortier, and when he sees that it is my dearest wish, perhaps he will sacrifice his haughtiness to my happiness.

**DUMORTIER:** I don't wish to make you despair Miss, but

**ISIDORE:** If the Baron refuses, we will see what has to be done! or if necessary to begin with that, made to refuse immediately.

**DUMORTIER:** What, you are going abruptly without preparation?

**ISIDORE:** Abruptly! From what I can see the opportunity is favorable.

**CESARINE:** Courage, Mr. Isidore.

**DUMORTIER:** Wait, at least until he's killed my bear!

**ISIDORE:** Thanks, I will die a bachelor waiting for that.

**DUMORTIER:** The door's opening. I'm getting out of here.

**ISIDORE:** No, stay there! I will speak publicly.

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**LAURENT:** (announcing from the doorway) Monsieur Le Baron Gulistan d'Entremouillettes.

**DUMORTIER:** Ah! Milord Baron

**BARON:** What's this? My dear Dumortier, I think.

**DUMORTIER:** (aside to Isidore) He said: My dear Dumortier.

**ISIDORE:** (aloud) Sir

**BARON:** Ah! Mr. Isidore, I imagine

**ISIDORE:** (aside) He imagines all the time! what a man.

**BARON:** Ah! It's you, Cesarine.

**CESARINE:** Did you sleep well, uncle?

**BARON:** Slept nobly, Cesarine. And you?

**CESARINE:** Just fine, uncle.

**BARON:** I love to think that your dreams have been worthy of your birth, and that our family has nothing to blush for.

**CESARINE:** Nothing! (low to Isidore) I was thinking of you, Mr. Isidore.

**ISIDORE:** Dear Cesarine.

**LAURENT:** Will the Baron honor these trees by lunching in their shade?

**BARON:** Yes! Laurent, have me served here. I feel my self in appetite this morning.

(Laurent sets up a small table on which he places settings that he takes from the pavilion.)

**DUMORTIER:** I am delighted that the air of our mountains is favorable to you, Baron.

**BARON:** Yes! It's nice enough air, and it agrees perfectly with the lungs of the rest of us; does it agree with you, too?

**ISIDORE:** Yes, indeed, Baron; it's not our fault if we breathe the same air as you, but

**BARON:** Breathe, gentlemen, breathe, I allow you to!

**ISIDORE:** You are quite good, sir.

**LAURENT:** If the Baron will honor this table by his presence?

**DUMORTIER:** Does the Baron find these eggs cooked sufficiently?

**BARON:** Yes. These are eggs from the parish chicken?

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**DUMORTIER:** Alas! I don't have thoroughbred chickens in my farm yard; may the Baron excuse me. But as for the eggs, I can attest to the Baron that they have been cared for in a special manner and laid according to his wishes.

**BARON:** Fine, Dumortier. At home, I'm accustomed to paint my coat of arms on the eggs I eat, but here

**DUMORTIER:** I regret it If I'd known . . . If the Baron

**ISIDORE:** (to Dumortier) Uncle, don't speak to him in the third person, you sound like his servant.

**DUMORTIER:** As for me I (wants to serve the Baron something to drink)

**BARON:** Excuse me, you know outside my home, I drink only water!

**DUMORTIER:** Still, it's from the Hermitage of 1834.

**BARON:** Let's see! Yes, not too bad.

**ISIDORE:** You must have curious arms on your coat of arms, Baron.

**BARON:** Certainly! Do you know something of the art of Heraldry Mr. Isidore.

**ISIDORE:** We lawyers are actually forced to know a little bit of everything.

**BARON:** Well, we bear arms, the left hand an ermine banner, bearing these terrible words for a device: Save yourself if you can.

**DUMORTIER:** Marvellous! splendid!

**ISIDORE:** (aside) Idiot! brute!

**LAURENT:** If the Baron wishes to do these snipe the honor

**BARON:** Willingly. Mr. Dumortier you will say on our behalf to your chef that the Baron d'Entremouillettes is satisfied with him.

**DUMORTIER:** He will be very much honored, Baron.

**BARON:** You've got nice enough hunting country here.

**DUMORTIER:** Excellent! Small game, big game, birds and animals.

**BARON:** Hunting is a noble amusement; it recalls the rough traditions of war; we used to be a great hunter.

**DUMORTIER:** Well, Baron, that encourages me to speak to you of an excursion I set up with the object of being pleasant for you.

**BARON:** Speak, Dumortier. I am listening to you.

**DUMORTIER:** It's a question of a bear hunt.

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**BARON:** A bear hunt. Zounds, that suits me.

**DUMORTIER:** My huntsman has beat up one of these magnificent animals in the Baron's honor.

**BARON:** (rising) Fine, Dumortier. We will thank you for your efforts in rendering our stay agreeable! A bear! By Jove he'll be well received; it's truly a royal game, with which our great King Henry more than once battled in these mountains. A bear. Laurent, you are to go immediately to prepare my outfit for the hunt. Go, and don't keep me waiting.

(Laurent leaves.)

**DUMORTIER:** Baron, I'm enchanted that you are taking the matter to heart.

**BARON:** Will you accompany us?

**DUMORTIER:** I am not in a very bellicose mood, but perhaps, my nephew?

**BARON:** The gentleman will be welcome in our suite.

**CESARINE:** Uncle, you won't expose yourself.

**BARON:** Don't worry, niece, we know these sports, and we ourselves will bring you one of the monster's paws.

**CESARINE:** (to Isidore) He seems well disposed. Try.

**DUMORTIER:** (to Isidore) I beg you, nephew, don't say a thing! You're going to ruin my hunt.

**CESARINE:** Go on.

**ISIDORE:** It's not easy.

**CESARINE:** Courage, I'm here!

**ISIDORE** Baron, I have a request to make you; but above all I beg you to excuse the boldness of it.

**BARON:** Speak, sir, we don't abhor bold things.

**DUMORTIER:** I don't have any idea where this will lead.

**ISIDORE:** Baron, I love Miss Cesarine, your niece, and I have the honor of requesting her hand.

**BARON:** Huh!

**DUMORTIER:** Believe, indeed

**BARON:** Sir, above all I recognize the frankness of your request; you used the phrase exactly as it is customarily used in such circumstances.

**ISIDORE:** Baron!

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**BARON:** Mr. Barbillon I will reply as uncles always reply to the aforesaid phrase: I am very honored by your request, but

**CESARINE:** Uncle, dear uncle

**BARON:** Cesarine, you will immediately go to your room, where you will await my supreme instructions. (Cesarine leaves, making a sign of friendship to Isidore) You, gentlemen, kindly listen to me.

**DUMORTIER:** But the bear that has the honor of awaiting the Baron

**BARON:** He shall wait, sir, and I don't think he will be dishonored by waiting. Gentlemen, in the ninth century, one of my ancestors, Renaud d'Entremouillettes, was the Senechal of King Louis the Meek that means supervisor of the Royal Mansion.

**ISIDORE:** (aside) My great–great grandfather was a servant in an honorable family, which is similar.

**BARON:** In the tenth century, Godefroy d'Entremouillettes was Constable to King Robert, meaning charged with his stables.

**ISIDORE:** (aside) My grandfather was a groom which is almost the same thing.

**BARON:** During the Crusade, the Lords d'Entremouillettes accompanied their king into the holy land, and were more or less killed there while bequeathing to their grandsons an imperishable glory and nobility. Do you insist on marrying a d'Entremouillettes, sir?

**ISIDORE:** I insist, Baron.

**DUMORTIER:** (aside) How's this going to turn out?

**BARON:** I haven't spoken to you of the actual and future fortune of Cesarine, my heir, because you know the case I make from money, but you will understand, without need to persist a long while, that a d'Entremouillettes cannot be called Madame Barbillon.

**ISIDORE:** Still

**BARON:** I have the honor of telling you that nine d'Entremouillettes took part in nine crusades.

**ISIDORE:** Ah! sir, there were thousands of Barbillons at the time of the flood.

**BARON:** We never had relations with any of them, sir. As to the rest, you don't displease me, Mr. Isidore, on the contrary, you're a very fine lad.

**ISIDORE:** (modestly) Oh! oh!

**BARON:** I don't say that you have the great appearance of Anne d'Entremouillettes, my ancestor, but you are a fine lad, you have wit, but for God's sake, why have you such a disagreeable label. Just call yourself de Luynes or Montmorency and my niece is yours.

**ISIDORE:** You are really good. Would you like to read in the Monitor tomorrow: Mr. Isidore Barbillon requests to bear the name Montmorency under which he's never been known.

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**DUMORTIER:** What a joke!

**BARON:** Dumortier, do you feel the need to know what would have been my life's dream?

**DUMORTIER:** I feel the need, Baron.

**BARON:** To have a son, bearing my name and to marry him to my niece! I am, as you know, the last offshoot of the great race of Entremouillettes, after me the name goes out like a lamp.

**ISIDORE:** Needing oil.

**DUMORTIER:** Why didn't you marry, Baron?

**BARON:** I married nine times.

**ISIDORE:** As many women as crusades, that was your way of crusading.

**DUMORTIER:** And you never had children?

**BARON:** Never! I beg you to believe it wasn't my fault.

**DUMORTIER:** Why, then, Baron, why haven't you adopted some young lad who would have borne you name and perpetuated your line?

**BARON:** Eh, Dumortier, was it to be supposed that a d'Entremouillettes would marry nine times without being able to obtain an offspring?

**DUMORTIER:** That was contrary to all supposition.

**BARON:** Besides, I had thought of it, but to adopt, it would have been necessary to give to a child during his minority the cares foreseen by the code, but I am not in the situation

**DUMORTIER:** My! my! Why, I, who raised Isidore if the name Dumortier agrees with you more than that of Barbillon.

**BARON:** One's as good as the other.

**ISIDORE:** You can also

**BARON:** Nothing, sir, and my name will expire! (rising) I think I've made you sufficiently comprehend my intentions. I won't hide from you that Mr. Barbillon's request has painfully affected me and I prefer to believe, Dumortier, that you were not an accomplice in his boldness.

**DUMORTIER:** Milord Baron

**BARON:** I must separate myself immediately with my niece, but above all, I want to kill this bear you offered me. I'll leave tonight because Miss Cesarine d'Entremouillettes must not stay any longer beneath this roof.

**ISIDORE:** Baron

**BARON:** Sir, I have spoken.

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(Enter Ipharagherre.)

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Mr. Dumortier, Milord Baron

**BARON:** What's the matter? Speak my lad.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Saving your respect, Etcheverry and Lampourdan just noticed the bear a quarter of an hour from here; if you want to, there's just time enough!

**BARON:** I am running to put on my hunting equipment. I will rejoin you my friend, take your best precautions and don't lose sight of the beast.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** I'll watch for you, Milord.

(Ipharagherre leaves and the Baron goes into the pavilion.)

**DUMORTIER:** Well, wretch, you didn't want to listen to me, not only have you been roughly thanked, but you are making me lose the company of the Baron.

**ISIDORE:** (joyous) Don't worry, uncle. I'm more determined than ever.

**DUMORTIER:** What do you mean?

**ISIDORE:** You spoke with the Baron of adoption, and he himself was already thinking of it; but do you know what the consequences of adoption are?

**DUMORTIER:** Almost.

**ISIDORE:** The adoptee becomes the true child of the adopter to the point that he is constituted hic et nunc his legitimate heir and he takes his name.

**DUMORTIER:** Well?

**ISIDORE:** Well, I will be delighted that Cesarine is not called Madame Barbillon, but the Baroness d'Entremouillettes.

**DUMORTIER:** I don't see how the Baron could adopt you, my poor Isidore, supposing he were to agree to it, since he did not render to you during your minority the required care.

**ISIDORE:** First of all, it's completely agreed, isn't it, that the Baron will be adopting no matter who in order that his name can be perpetuated to future ages?

**DUMORTIER:** It's one of the prejudices of his class, and I think if one furnished him the means

**ISIDORE:** Well! I will furnish him the means.

**DUMORTIER:** You!

**ISIDORE:** You recall your legal training?

**DUMORTIER:** No! Perhaps it contains something I've never known about.

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**ISIDORE:** Well, listen article 345. The capacity to adopt cannot be exercised except towards an individual to whom one has, in his minority and for at least six years furnished assistance and given uninterrupted care.

**DUMORTIER:** Well?

**ISIDORE:** Hold on! (continuing) Or instead, someone who has saved the life of the adopter, be it in combat or by saving him from fire or drowning. Do you get it?

**DUMORTIER:** Great God! What do you intend to do?

**ISIDORE:** To sew perils beneath the feet of the Baron, and to save him from them despite him.

**DUMORTIER:** But the opportunity! He intends to leave tonight.

**ISIDORE:** The opportunity's been found.

**DUMORTIER:** Huh! What?

**ISIDORE:** The combat, the battle do you think that if I snatch him from the claws of the bear, that won't count for combat?

**DUMORTIER:** Doubtless, but

**ISIDORE:** That's my business.

**CESARINE:** (entering) Well?

**ISIDORE:** Victory, Miss, victory!

**CESARINE:** My uncle

**ISIDORE:** Absolutely refused.

**CESARINE:** But in that case?

**ISIDORE:** I've got it! Be confident and prepare all your thanks for Ipharagherre's bear!

**CESARINE:** The bear!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** (entering) The bear you can hear him roaring!

**ISIDORE:** Your uncle! Silence.

**BARON:** (entering dressed in hunting costume) Are we leaving?

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Let's be on our way, Milord Baron.

**BARON:** You are not going to accompany us, Dumortier?

**ISIDORE:** No, my uncle prefers to stay, but as for me, I will accompany you, Baron.

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**BARON:** Let's leave then!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** The bear isn't a hundred feet from the park.

**ISIDORE:** On our way and good hunting.

**BARON:** Aren't you going to take a rifle?

**ISIDORE:** Go on! to kill a wretched bear! Besides, Baron, I will let you do it.

**BARON:** Zounds, on our way!

(Exit the Baron, Isidore and Ipharagherre.)

**DUMORTIER:** There's nothing to say, I must follow them.

**CESARINE:** But what's wrong with you, Mr. Dumortier, why, what's wrong with you? What's got into Isidore? What's he intend to do with that bear?

**DUMORTIER:** He's mad!

**CESARINE:** The bear is mad! Ah! My God!

**DUMORTIER:** No! my nephew! Not to mention he's perfectly capable of devouring your uncle.

**CESARINE:** Mr. Isidore? Devour my uncle?

**DUMORTIER:** No! The bear. And with his bold, adventurous, brave character he is capable of confronting him, hand to hand.

**CESARINE:** The bear?

**DUMORTIER:** No! your uncle.

**CESARINE:** Explain yourself, I beg you, because I don't understand a thing, Mr. Dumortier, and I am asking myself who is crazy here.

**DUMORTIER:** Ah! pardon me, Miss. How do you expect me to explain! All this is swirling in my brain! The bear, my nephew, your uncle! The first has unparalleled audacity, the other a mad plan, the third formidable claws. All this is mixing together, I no longer understand anything, and I am asking myself if your uncle isn't the bear's nephew or if the bear isn't the uncle of my nephew!

**CESARINE:** Mr. Dumortier, calm down! Mercy, put me au courant of the situation; you know I am brave, too; don't hide the truth from me what happened between my uncle and Isidore?

**DUMORTIER:** Nothing! They reciprocated very pleasant words and then they brought up The Law: it appears that the Baron has not fulfilled the formalities. My nephew is very learned in the law: he passed all his exams with high grades, interesting research and a magnificent thesis on adoption.

**CESARINE:** But still they left together. Mr. Isidore seemed to be beside himself, could he have provoked my uncle?

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**DUMORTIER:** Come on! he would throw himself in the fire for your uncle, I'll answer for that! Wait, Miss, if you must tremble I cannot hide it from you any longer

**CESARINE:** Speak, speak!

**DUMORTIER:** Moreover, I don't wish to make myself accomplice to a crime!

**CESARINE:** To a crime!

**DUMORTIER:** Well, my nephew went

**CESARINE:** Mercy

**DUMORTIER:** To apply article 345 of the Code Napoleon (shouts and a rifle shot are heard in the distance)  
What's that?

**CESARINE:** Shouting! Uproar!

**DUMORTIER:** It's coming this way.

**CESARINE:** The clamor's increasing.

**DUMORTIER:** Ah! the wretch!

**CESARINE:** What wretch?

**DUMORTIER:** My nephew! he must not have arrived in time.

**CESARINE:** In time!

**DUMORTIER:** And he must have let your uncle escape.

**CESARINE:** My uncle! Help!

(Ipharagherre enters.)

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Ah! what a misfortune! such a brave man!

**CESARINE:** Why, speak!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Miss

**DUMORTIER:** Well go on!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Such a brave young man, Mr. Isidore.

**CESARINE:** Isidore wounded.

(They bring Isidore in on a stretcher. The Baron follows him.)

**DUMORTIER:** My nephew.

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**BARON:** Place him there on that chair; it will be all right, a glass of water, quick.

(Cesarine brings a glass of water.)

**DUMORTIER:** But, what happened?

**ISIDORE:** (coming to) Where am I?

**CESARINE:** Isidore!

**DUMORTIER:** He's breathing! He's alive!

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Ah! Milord Baron, it's indeed to you that he owes still being of this world.

**ISIDORE:** What happened?

**DUMORTIER:** Isidore, the Baron is your savior.

**ISIDORE:** My savior! I'm ruined!

**BARON:** What's he say?

**DUMORTIER:** Nothing! Delirium!

**ISIDORE:** Fate! Got to start over!

**CESARINE:** But what happened?

**BARON:** Oh! Not much.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Not much! Why the Baron is quite simply an admirable shot.

**BARON:** Oh! When one has been used to arms for thirteen centuries!

**DUMORTIER:** But still, explain yourself.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** It was like this. When the bear came to charge us, Lampourdan and Etcheverry were saying to me Ipharagherre

**ISIDORE:** Enough, my friend, enough.

**BARON:** My God, nothing could be simpler; it must be thought that at the sight of our bear advancing on us, Mr. Isidore Barbillon lost his head, he rushed toward the beast. Your nephew rushed at him as if he had planned to attract it towards us. It was no use shouting at him Stop! Stop! Ipharagherre

**IPHARAGHERRE:** And Lampourdan?

**DUMORTIER:** And Etcheverry?

**BARON:** Vainly wore out their lungs telling him: Don't advance! He kept going and throwing stones at the animal which sets off in pursuit of him. Mr. Isidore Barbillon turned back toward us but in his flight a root made

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him fall, then we shouted at him: Don't budge! Play dead!

**DUMORTIER:** Why, that's evident, it's very well known. When pursued by a bear the only thing to do is play dead.

**ISIDORE:** That was indeed my intention, uncle. I was stretched out there, holding my breath. The bear got there, sniffed me, turned me over, I didn't budge when suddenly

**CESARINE My God!**

**ISIDORE:** Judge the fatality. I fell with my nose in a tobacco plant and atchoo I sneezed.

**BARON:** He sneezes! A dead man!

**ISIDORE:** The astonished bear first recoiled then came back at me. I lost my head and

**IPHARAGHERRE:** And Milord Baron, who had come closer meanwhile, put a bullet in the heart of the animal which fell thunderstruck! Ah! what a shot.

**ISIDORE:** Baron, believe

**DUMORTIER:** Believe, I beg you.

**BARON:** It was nothing! We thank you for your gratitude. But nothing is simpler. I see with pleasure that Mr. Barbillon is on his feet. I am enchanted to have done him this little service, and I am going to take leave of you, Dumortier.

**DUMORTIER:** But

**BARON:** You know what I told you; Cesarine, prepare everything for your departure.

**DUMORTIER:** After all that's happened!

**BARON:** My decision is irrevocable.

**ISIDORE:** (to Cesarine) I have to speak to you, Miss.

**BARON:** I'm going back to my apartment while my valet is making the last preparations. Follow us, Cesarine.

**LAURENT:** (opening the door to the pavilion) The Baron Gulistan d'Entremouillettes.

**DUMORTIER:** I shan't leave him. (he follows the Baron)

**ISIDORE:** Miss Cesarine, I must tell you everything! What I did, it was for you, to force the Baron to adopt me, to give me his name, to share it with you!

**CESARINE:** That has really worked!

**ISIDORE:** It's worked very badly.

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**CESARINE:** What, by getting yourself devoured by a bear you had the idea of obliging my uncle to give you my hand?

**ISIDORE:** It seems bizarre at first appearance: that's because I haven't explained to you I wanted to rescue the Baron, but all is not lost.

**CESARINE:** My uncle's going to leave! He's taking me away.

**ISIDORE:** Oh! I've still got time.

**ISIDORE:** You've got time to do what?

**ISIDORE:** Whatever happens, don't be frightened.

**CESARINE:** Still!

**ISIDORE:** If they tell you I'm a criminal, a murderer, don't believe it.

**CESARINE:** Huh?

**ISIDORE:** There's only one thing true in all this it's that I love you.

**BARON'S VOICE:** Cesarine!

**CESARINE:** My uncle's calling me!

**ISIDORE:** Just another second!

**CESARINE:** Why, here! (she gives him her hand)

**DUMORTIER:** (entering from the pavilion) Impossible to keep him. What a devil of a man! Ah! Miss, the Baron is asking for you.

**ISIDORE:** One more word, that's all.

**CESARINE:** I can't, but here. (gives him her hand again)

**ISIDORE:** (kissing it) Thanks.

**BARON'S VOICE:** Cesarine!

**CESARINE:** I'm coming, I'm coming. (goes into the pavilion)

**DUMORTIER:** Ah, indeed, what do you intend to do?

**ISIDORE:** What I must, come what may.

**DUMORTIER:** And don't imagine that I am going to murder the Baron so you can come to his rescue!

**ISIDORE:** Uncle, do you love me?

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**DUMORTIER:** Sure!

**ISIDORE:** And are you ready to second me, to assist in my marriage with Miss Cesarine?

**DUMORTIER:** Yes! In anything that is reasonable.

**ISIDORE:** Well, my plan is logical and I will follow it to the very end!

**DUMORTIER:** You are going to start attempting to draw the Baron into extraordinary perils again! Happily, I say happily now, he's leaving, and if he weren't leaving I would be ready to make him leave!

**ISIDORE:** Uncle, I failed the first time, I will succeed the second.

**DUMORTIER:** Ah, indeed! You're not going to start attracting bears

**ISIDORE:** Don't worry! But I've sworn that Cesarine will be mine, and she will belong to me.

**DUMORTIER:** By Jove, don't get excited! You'll be doing stupid things again What's your plan?

**ISIDORE:** Battle didn't succeed for me. We will see if water will be more favorable to me. Article 345

**DUMORTIER:** What, you're going to drown the Baron?

**ISIDORE:** The law authorizes me to do it! On the condition that I save him.

**DUMORTIER:** Oh! These lawyers!

**ISIDORE:** It's necessary that I save him at all cost or that he die! What's the depth of this river here?

**DUMORTIER:** Why, seven or eight feet at least.

**ISIDORE:** The devil!

**DUMORTIER:** And it runs very rapidly.

**ISIDORE:** Shoot! All the same, the die is cast!

**DUMORTIER:** Ah, indeed! Would you be planning to throw the Baron in the water?

**ISIDORE:** Don't worry: he will fall all alone, a board placed wrong, a false step, and there you go.

**DUMORTIER:** Why, wretch! That's quite simply a murder.

**ISIDORE:** Let it be whatever you like, but it's going to happen!

**DUMORTIER:** Ah! My dear nephew, in the end

**ISIDORE:** Besides, if you oppose it, if you warn the Baron, I will blow my brains out.

**DUMORTIER:** There's not much to blow out. But sonofabitch! I will no longer live in the midst of crimes, rifle shots, ferocious beasts, drownings

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**ISIDORE:** For this to end, let me act. Besides, once the Baron's in the water, you understand plainly, that I am throwing myself after him.

**DUMORTIER:** But, do you know how to swim?

**ISIDORE:** Not the least bit.

**DUMORTIER:** Why, then

**ISIDORE:** Then you will loan me your safety belt, with which you spent fine days at Biarritz during the last season.

**DUMORTIER:** He has an answer for everything!

**ISIDORE:** And I warn you of one thing: You don't have a minute to lose.

**DUMORTIER:** But my poor Isidore, my dear nephew, have you considered?

**ISIDORE:** I've considered too much! Will you, yes or no, get me that safety belt?

**DUMORTIER:** I will do it! What the devil! but explain to me how you count on using it. And be especially careful that the traps you are setting for the Baron don't fall on someone else me for example.

**ISIDORE:** But get going! The belt or death! The Baron may leave from one moment to the next.

**DUMORTIER:** I'm going! I'm going.

**ISIDORE:** It's not a question of going. It's a question of running. But run! Run, will you!

(Dumortier leaves running.)

**ISIDORE:** (alone) (If need be the scene on the bridge can take place in the wings) And now to work! All I see here is a bit crazy, but only follies succeed. Let's see, the Baron to reach the park gate will necessarily proceed by this bridge. Now, what is this bridge? A simple plank resting on one shore of the river to the other. (he moves it) Well, that'll work by itself! If ever a bridge was destined to fold up under the feet of a passerby, this is really it. Fine. The balustrade is worm-eaten and won't withstand a shock. Couldn't do better! The step of a child would collapse this scaffolding just like life one sets foot on The devil, the Baron.

(Baron enters with Laurent and Cesarine.)

**LAURENT:** To what carriage will the Baron confer the honor of transporting him?

**BARON:** The first coach we meet.

**LAURENT:** The Baron is not accustomed to travel in such dilapidated carriages.

**BARON:** It's necessary. I will wait in the next town for my horses to come get me.

**ISIDORE:** (aside) And my cursed uncle doesn't return!

**CESARINE:** Well, Mr. Isidore!

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**ISIDORE:** Don't worry about a thing. (aside) I am in mortal anxiety.

**LAURENT:** At what time will the Baron have honor of leaving?

**BARON:** Immediately, my bags are packed.

**LAURENT:** The trunks with the arms of the Baron d'Entremouillettes are completely locked. I will have them transported myself to the highway.

**ISIDORE:** And my uncle! My uncle!

**BARON:** (to Laurent) You will distribute this purse to the servants of Mr. Dumortier.

**LAURENT:** The Baron need not worry! I shall take care of the flunkeys.

(Laurent puts the purse in his pocket.)

**BARON:** And now, let's leave.

**ISIDORE:** My God!

**BARON:** (heading towards the bridge) Come –Cesarine.

**ISIDORE:** (placing himself before the bridge) Never!

**BARON:** Ah! Mr. Barbillion, I didn't see you. Are you well?

**ISIDORE:** Not bad! And you?

**BARON:** I am enchanted to meet you to pay you a last goodbye!

**ISIDORE:** Milord Baron, it is I, who after the service you rendered me I couldn't let you leave without (aside) And my uncle doesn't come.

**BARON:** Truce with gratitude; I only did what I must. You know the motto of our family: Save yourself if you can!

**ISIDORE:** (aside) Would it would please heaven that it were mine!

**BARON:** Come on, Cesarine.

**ISIDORE:** (interposing) A moment more. (low to Cesarine) Miss, prevent your uncle from going on the bridge!

**CESARINE:** Huh!

**BARON:** Well, Laurent, precede us!

**ISIDORE:** (retaining him) Laurent, my good, Laurent, mercy!

**LAURENT:** Sir, march before or behind the Baron, as your choose; it's an honor that I don't allow to just anyone.

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**ISIDORE:** Laurent! don't move!

**BARON:** Why, you are mad, sir!

**ISIDORE:** And my belt! My belt!

**CESARINE:** Why, uncle, shouldn't we wait for Mr. Dumortier to pay him our goodbyes?

**BARON:** Niece, if this house is well run, we will find the master of it at the gate of honor.

**ISIDORE:** No, indeed! He won't be there.

**BARON:** Well, so much the worse for him, sir. Let's be going, Laurent!

**ISIDORE:** (beside himself) No, Laurent. You shall not pass.

**BARON:** Well, we will see, Mr. Barbillon, if you will dare to oppose passage to Baron d'Entremouillettes.

(Laurent comes to Isidore.)

**ISIDORE:** Don't come any further! Don't come any further!

**CESARINE:** Uncle!

**BARON:** A d'Entremouillettes has never recoiled!

**ISIDORE:** (struggling) Help me!

(The Baron reaches the middle of the bridge and somersaults in.)

**BARON:** Ah!

**LAURENT:** Milord Baron!

**ISIDORE:** What did I tell you? Come what may.

(Hurls himself in the river.)

**CESARINE:** My uncle! Help! Run!

(Laurent leaves by the shore.)

**DUMORTIER:** (Running in, belt in hand) What's the matter?

**CESARINE:** My uncle! Isidore threw himself in after him.

**DUMORTIER:** He doesn't know how to swim.

**CESARINE:** Ah! (she falls on a bench)

**DUMORTIER:** The wretch! The wretches! They're struggling; they're fighting; the current's got them! Help!

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(Enter Ipharagherre.)

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Ah! Two men in the water! Lampourdan, Etcheverry! Help!

**DUMORTIER:** (looking) Ah! They've reached the bank. They've caught a tree they are saved! Ah! What a misfortune, what a shocking catastrophe.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Here they are! Here they are!

(The Baron enters carrying Isidore in his arms.)

**DUMORTIER:** Saved! My God!

**BARON:** It's no reproach to him, but this is the second time I've saved this young man.

**CESARINE:** Ah! Uncle! He risked his life to save you.

**DUMORTIER:** Moreover, he doesn't know how to swim; but how did this happen?

**BARON:** Nothing could be simpler, as I was crossing over this bridge, behold one of the planks collapsed and I pitched head first into the river.

**CESARINE:** Ah! My God!

**BARON:** Relax! The misfortune wasn't great, I swim like a whale. But suddenly I felt myself seized by the collar; it was Mr. Barbillon.

**DUMORTIER:** Who was trying to pull you out of the water.

**BARON:** And who was pulling me to the bottom. I gave him a punch.

**LAURENT:** What an honor!

**BARON:** I stunned him and I pushed him in front of me toward the shore. There he is.

**ISIDORE:** Saved by him again. Always fate.

**CESARINE:** Mr. Isidore! I understand you! You intended

**ISIDORE:** You see how it succeeded.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** Look, a glass of wine will set you up.

**BARON:** Laurent, bring back my trunks and come change me. (goes into the pavilion)

**LAURENT:** It's an honor for me, Milord. (he follows him)

**DUMORTIER** As for you, Ipharagherre, follow me to prepare reviving cordials. (he leaves)

**CESARINE:** In the final reckoning, he still threw himself in the water to save my uncle. It's not his fault if the Baron knows how to swim. I'm going to fill my uncle in. (she goes into the pavilion)

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**ISIDORE:** (alone) Fate's mixing in it. Ah! In the same day, I just missed being devoured by a bear and getting myself drowned! Well, still I will triumph! I am capable of everything, even great crimes! They will see what an unemployed lawyer is, and how he can eradicate an article of the Code when he has nothing to do! Brr! I'm soaked to the bone. I wasn't able to save this Baron from battle, nor from the waves, well, I will save him from the flames; this will warm me up in any case! To work. (pulling matches from his pockets) Fine! One won't light! (trying another) Two! It's always like this! Three! Nothing! Four! Nothing! Ah! How stupid I am. They are wet.

**BARON:** (entering and striking him on the shoulder) Enough, Mr. Isidore! You have so much luck today that I am still capable of saving you from flames.

**ISIDORE:** Huh?

**DUMORTIER:** (entering) What! What did he do?

**ISIDORE:** Damn! The third and last application of Article 345, uncle.

**BARON:** Hush.

**ISIDORE:** What's the matter?

(Isidore continues to strike the matches.)

**BARON:** (to Dumortier) Sir, I have the honor of presenting to you my adoptive son.

**DUMORTIER:** What are you saying?

**ISIDORE AND CESARINE:** Ah! Bah!

**BARON:** And the husband of my niece. It's the second time this young man saved my life.

**IPHARAGHERRE:** What about the bear?

**BARON:** He was the one who killed it.

**ISIDORE:** You think Brr! I'm freezing.

**DUMORTIER:** What about the river?

**BARON:** He's the one who saved me.

**ISIDORE:** Again!

**BARON:** Weren't you present when he brought me back fainting in his arms?

**CESARINE:** Why, uncle, explain to me!

**BARON:** (low) Don't you understand this character will end by playing me a nasty trick, and since I have the opportunity to adopt him! (aloud) Mr. Isidore d'Entremouillettes, embrace your wife.

**ISIDORE:** Oh! Papa! (to Dumortier) Well! What do you say about the Civil Code?

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**DUMORTIER:** I'm an uncle of a d'Entremouillettes. But, still, it really would have seemed to me

**BARON:** What?

**LAURENT:** If the Baron does us the honor of telling us something

**IPHARAGHERRE:** It's as if Lampourdan and Etcheverry were gone.

**ISIDORE:** Dear Cesarine!

**BARON:** My name will not perish! (to Isidore) Boys, have as many boys as possible!

**ISIDORE:** I have a secret. We never make anything else in my family.

**CURTAIN**