

The Wedding

pride, not after the things I have done. Poor Justine was as innocent as I was, she died for it, but I was the one who caused her death, I murdered her. William, Justine, Henry – their deaths were all my fault.’

During my time in prison in Ireland, my father had heard me say this type of thing many times. Sometimes he wanted to find out why I said that their deaths were my fault, other times he thought that during my illness, the time of my insanity, that my imagination had made me believe that I was guilty. Poor man! I could not tell him why I said these things. I did not tell him about the monster I had created. I kept it all a secret mostly because he would think I was completely mad, but also because he would have been horrified and frightened to death. Many times I was tempted* to tell him everything, but each time I stopped myself.

Eventually, my father became convinced that I had lost my mind*. He did not talk about what had happened in Ireland, tried to make me think about other things. And so, as the weeks passed I did become calmer, but do not think that I became happier. I still blamed myself for the deaths of my brother, Justine, and my dear friend, Clerval. A few days before leaving Paris, I received a letter from Elizabeth.



*My dear Victor,
I was so happy to hear from your father that you are now in Paris. If all goes well, then maybe I will see you again in only two weeks. The winter has been miserable. I was so worried about you. I hope with all my heart that you are beginning to find some peace.*

► 5 My father and I arrived in Paris. It quickly became clear that I needed to rest. The sea journey from Ireland had tired me. My father looked after me well, did everything for me that he could, but, he did not know why I was suffering like this. How could he? I had not told him anything about what had happened.

My father thought that I should go out, enjoy myself, meet people. The problem was that I hated being with people. I hated the people I met. No, that is not true, I did not hate them, it was more complicated* than that. In reality I felt I did not deserve* to spend time with them. I had created a monster who would happily kill any of them, who had promised he would make my life a living hell. The people I met did not know that I had done this terrible thing.

In the end, my father stopped trying to get me to go out and meet people, but he still did not understand why I was so depressed. He thought that I had been upset about being charged* with the murder of my friend, Clerval. He thought that my time in prison had damaged* me, that my pride* had been hurt.

‘You do not know me well, dear Father,’ I said to him. ‘I do not feel

complicated not simple, more difficult to explain
deserve feel that you don't have a right to something which
is good

charged accused of a crime
damaged not complete, broken
pride feeling of honour and self-respect

tempted wanted (when you know you shouldn't)

lost my mind gone insane or mad

I wanted to write to you before you returned to Geneva, because there is something important that I have to ask you.

Since we were children your parents always said that one day we would be married and I believe we did love each other as children do, but perhaps your feelings have changed now. Perhaps you do not want to marry me but you feel you have no choice because it is what your father wishes*. Perhaps you feel that you have a duty* to marry me. I think that this might be one of the reasons* that you have been so ill. Tell me, Victor, truthfully, have you fallen in love* with someone else? You have been away for so long, studying, travelling, that perhaps you do not love me.

I have to tell you though, that I love you. I have always dreamed of marrying you, but your happiness is more important to me than anything else. If you married me and did not love me, then I would be the unhappiest person alive. If you are happy, my friend, then I will be happy too, whatever your decision.

I hope that this letter has not upset you. I do not need a reply before you come back, I simply hope that when I see you in Geneva, I will see a smile on your lips. That will make me as happy as I can be.

Elizabeth Lavenza

Geneva, May 18th 17—

While I read this letter I suddenly remembered what the monster had said to me that night in Scotland when I had destroyed the second creature. I will be with you on your wedding night. The monster had promised to destroy every possibility of happiness that I had. He had

wishes (formal) wants
duty something you have to do and do not have a choice about

reasons causes, why something has happened
fallen in love in love with

promised to kill me on my wedding night. Well, I thought, let* him come and attack me, let him try to kill me. I will defend myself. If he kills me then at last I will be at peace, my sufferings will end and if I kill him, then I will be a free man.

Sweet and beloved Elizabeth! I read and reread* her letter and I began to hope that I could once again feel love and joy, but I knew in my heart that this could never be. The sooner I married her, the sooner the monster would try to kill me. I might have only a few minutes of happiness and then die. If I delayed the wedding however, the monster might start killing again, just as he had killed Clerval. This would have been too terrible and so I decided to get married as soon as possible. I might die but at least no one else would.

I wrote back to Elizabeth.

I do not expect to feel happy ever again, but you must believe that you are my only hope of happiness. Please stop worrying, I want above all to dedicate* my life to you, to be with you always.

I, too, have something I have to tell you, I continued. It is so shocking and terrible that I am afraid to tell you, but when we get married I do not want there to be any secrets between us. So, even though what I will say to you will horrify you, I must tell you.

Until that time, my dear Elizabeth, be calm. I will be home soon.



A week later we left Paris and we were home in a few days. Elizabeth greeted me with love and affection, but there were tears in her eyes when she saw how thin I was, and how much I had suffered. She too

let allow
reread read again

dedicate give (your life) to someone completely

was thinner and quieter than I remembered and she had lost some of the happy innocence of her youth, but she was still as gentle and kind. It was wonderful to see her, but when I thought about the events* of the past years, I became insane with grief. I felt a mad rage, other times I was so depressed that I could do nothing. I would sit for hours not looking at anyone or anything, not talking to anyone.

Elizabeth was the only person who was able to help me. My behaviour was very difficult and it made her suffer too. Poor Elizabeth. My father hoped that time would heal* me, and that, once married, the arrival of children would make me forget the things that had happened.

I could not tell anyone the words that I heard in my head every minute, every day. *I will be with you on your wedding night.*

I was not afraid of dying. In fact, if I died it would be a good thing because then I would be free from this torture, this life which was so painful to me. And so, Elizabeth and I arranged to be married in ten days.

If I had known the real intentions of the monster, if I had known that instead of making my death come more quickly, I was hastening* the death of someone I loved dearly, then I would have left my home immediately. I would have moved away from everyone I loved. I would never have married my dear Elizabeth.



As the day of our wedding got nearer, I began to lose all hope. I did my best not to show my true feelings, but Elizabeth could see that

events things that happen
heal make me better

hastening (archaic, formal English) making something
happen more quickly



I was not happy. We spent all our time preparing for the wedding. Friends and relations came to visit us to congratulate* us on our happiness. Everyone who visited us looked so happy for us, how far they were from the truth.



Before they died, Elizabeth's parents had bought a small house on the shores of Lake Como, in Italy, which she had inherited*. We decided that after the wedding we would go and spend a few days there in the peace and beauty of that lovely lake. In the meantime, I bought as many weapons* as I could, so that I could defend myself if the monster attacked me. I had pistols* and a dagger* with me at all times and was well prepared for an attack. This all helped me feel a little calmer and I began to look forward to the wedding.

After the wedding ceremony*, there was a big party at my father's house. Elizabeth and I then set off by boat to spend our first night as husband and wife in a hotel at Evian. It was a lovely day, the wind was gentle, the sun was shining. Everything seemed perfect as we sailed towards Evian.

Believe me, when I tell you that those were the last moments of happiness I ever felt in my life.

I took Elizabeth's hand in mine and said,

'You are sad, my love, but if you knew what has happened to me and what I fear will happen in the future, you would see how precious* this one day of happiness is for me.'

'I am worried about you, Victor, this is true,' she replied, 'but I will try my best to be happy. I will try not to listen to that little voice inside

me which that tells me something terrible is going to happen. Look! Mont Blanc looks so beautiful and here, look at the fish in the lake. The water is so clear you can see right to the bottom. Everything around us is perfect.'

Elizabeth tried so hard to be happy. She would find something to distract* her for a few minutes, but I saw how quickly the worry returned to her face.



We arrived at Evian when it was getting dark and, as we landed, I felt again the fears and worries which I would feel for the rest of my life.

We walked for a time along the shore of the lake, enjoying the evening light. We watched the colours change on the mountains and the lake and, as the light went, we could still see the shapes of the mountains above us in the moonlight.

We went back to the inn where we were staying that night. The wind started to blow violently from the west and it began to rain heavily.

I had been calm during the day, but as soon as it was dark, I became very nervous. I thought I saw things moving in the shadows and reached for* my pistol many times. Every sound made me jump in fright, but I was determined* to defend myself, to do everything I could to kill the monster.

Elizabeth also became afraid. 'What is it Victor? What are you afraid of?'

congratulate show someone how pleased you are for them

inherited came to you when someone dies

weapons things used in fighting, eg gun etc
pistols guns

dagger short, narrow knife

ceremony ritual celebration

precious valuable, important

distract forget what you are doing or thinking about
reached for went to take (the pistol) with my hand

determined when you have decided something and nothing will make you change your mind

I answered, 'Do not worry, my love, all will be well after tonight, we just have to get through* tonight.'

I felt that the hour of my death was getting closer and closer. I did not want Elizabeth to see me die and so I sent her to bed, telling her I would join her soon. I wanted to find out where my enemy was before going to bed myself.



She left me and went to our room. I spent some time walking around the inn, looking for any place where the monster could hide. There was no sign of him and I had started to hope that he was not there, when I heard a terrible scream. It seemed to come from the room where Elizabeth was sleeping.

I heard a second scream and rushed into the room.

There lying lifeless on the bed, her arms and legs twisted*, was my beloved Elizabeth. Since that moment all I can see in my mind is her pale skin, her hair covering her face, her lifeless body lying in front of me. I was in a state of terrible shock and fell down unconscious onto the floor.



When I recovered, I found myself in a different room surrounded by people from the inn. They looked horrified. I went back to the room where the body of the person who had been my dear wife now lay.

She had been moved, her body straightened* and a scarf had been

get through survive
twisted bent, not straight

straightened made straight

put over her face and neck. She looked peaceful, as though she was asleep, but when I held her, I felt how cold she was, I knew beyond all doubt that she was dead. On her neck, I saw the marks that the monster had made as he had strangled her until she had stopped breathing.

With a feeling of horror that I cannot describe, I saw the monster looking at me from the window. He had an evil grin on his face as he pointed at the body of my dead wife.

I ran over to the window, and taking my pistol I fired* into the night, but he had gone. He had dived into the lake. Several boats went out onto the lake, they used fishing nets to see if they could find him in the water, but after several hours, we returned to the inn. All hope had gone.



fired shot (of a gun), made it go off