

The image is a composite. The top half is dominated by a large, close-up portrait of a woman's face. She has striking green eyes with silver eyeshadow, dark, arched eyebrows, and full, bright red lips. Her forehead is adorned with a traditional Indian-style gold jewelry piece, featuring several circular medallions with intricate designs and small bells hanging from them. The background behind her face is a dramatic, fiery sunset or sunrise sky with orange, red, and yellow clouds. In the lower portion of the image, there is a smaller, semi-transparent scene of a man and a woman. The man, with dark hair and a serious expression, is wearing a black shirt and has his hands on the woman's shoulders. The woman, with long blonde hair, is looking up at him. The background of this smaller scene is a dark blue sea under a dark sky. The overall composition is layered and visually rich.

Captive mistress

Elaine Neksli

Элайн Нексли

**Captive mistress.
English-language novels**

«Издательские решения»

Нексли Э.

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France, XVII century. Young Arabella, not knowing that such wealth and luxury, gets an invitation to the ball. Drugged to flatter the monarch, an innocent girl not notice that he is in the Royal bed. But the fee for the title mistress of the king is too high. The girl will have to visit the intoxicating harem of the East, the flight to sit down on the bed of a hated Sultan, to appear before himself with the Sacred court. And this is only the beginning of a difficult road leading to true love.

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Prologue

The Duke Edward de Frase languished near the bedroom, which gave birth to his wife. All this time, he heard the cries and groans of the beloved. And Edward could only pray that Juliet gave birth to a healthy child and herself alive, because the man knew that his wife could not become pregnant. Soon came the midwife. Her face was terribly sad, and in the eyes of fear had settled. She bowed, weak voice said:

– Mr. Duke...

– My wife gave birth to?

The old wife nodded.

– Yes sir, gave birth to a healthy baby girl, – alas, her voice was not of celebration and joy. But Edward's eyes lit up with happiness.

And... Juliet? As my beloved wife? asked the Duke.

The old woman looked down and said: "Sir...Madam Juliet failed to save. The birth was very difficult. The poor woman could not survive and went away...to another world. My condolences.

Edward recoiled. It seemed to him that the fire of hell penetrated to the heart: – No,...no,... what are you saying? the Duke darted to the room, beloved. But Juliet was lying with closed eyelids forever. The man was unable to keep back the tears. He staggered, went to his late wife and took her cold hand.

– Juliet! Favorite! Don't leave me! Please! «moaned Edward. But suddenly he heard quiet weeping of a newborn baby. It was a small little woman with pink cheeks and still closed eyes.

– Monsieur, "came a voice entered midwives: – before the death of Madame has asked that the girl called Arabella, in honor of her late mother.

The Duke took her hand and walked with her in the main gallery of the Palace. There stood the little governess, Antonia, lit by the rays of the setting sun. The girl sat down in a deep curtsy.

– Antonia, I need to talk to you.

– Mr. Duke, I sympathize with Your grief, You have died the wife... But she gave life to Your daughter, sacrificed her for the sake of the child, impulsively sighed the maid, with downcast eyes.

– That the fate of the girl I care about. My wife died, I go on a long military campaign and not know if alive. I don't want to leave baby Arabella to the care of older nurses, because in case of my death give to the shelter. So, Antonia, please, take the girl yourself. The Lord God gave you your children, let this little angel will become the Apple of your life. Adopt Arabella. But I want to know who fathered her and who is she really daughter asked Edward de Frase.

Antonia looked shocked at his master:

– But I... How can?..

– Do not mind, please. The child needs loving and gentle mother, imploringly said the man.

«I...I don't know... Oh... Well, the woman took his new daughter in his arms and slowly went to the nursery.

Edward sadly watched the passing of Antonia, and it seemed to him that he sees his daughter one last time.

Part I “Green rose”

Chapter 1

After sixteen years... France, Bern.

Young Arabella walked in the garden, collecting herbs. She was smart and obedient, and the beauty represented has not opened yet, the delicate rosebud of a precious flower. The girl grew up with the poor girl, Antonia, but she knew that she was born in the family of the glorious and rich Duke.

The sense of foreboding wouldn't leave her father, Edward. He with a strange shudder, afraid to go into a military campaign. And concerns men confirmed. Monsieur de Frase never came back. The camp was attacked by enemy troops, but the Duke fought to the last and died like a true hero of his country. Unfortunately, Antonia could not boast of strength of mind and almost parted with life, learning about the tragic death of the owner. Now she had to raise Arabella, not having any help and support.

They lived on the outskirts of the city, in a nice mansion, but the money was never enough. The Duke left this world unexpectedly and left his daughter even a small part of the inheritance. All the property passed to the eldest son, which was born from the first wife of Duke Edward. But, in spite of poverty, Arabella remained to be considered a respected aristocrat, because she was born rich mistress. And the only reason she was accepted into the noble boarding school for a short training. Arabella got a good education, but «out in the highest light» are unable. Poor aristocrat for the past sixteen years of his life remained at the «bottom of society». And her foster mother was worried about the future of their pupils. The old woman often said to his daughter: «Arabella, my dear, before I die, marry some rich gentleman. This is the only opportunity to gain a respected position,» but the girl refused

In the Villa all considered it a provincial lady and said that no one will go to Woo poor commoner. Of course, Arabella knew that girls just jealous of her grace and heavenly beauty. In the village the French were in the same Golden curls that trailed on the back, like a graceful snake, and the blue eyes were like precious sapphires. Arabella was dressed simply. Her outfits were sewn from coarse cloth, and jewelry were forbidden. Even a simple ruby ring was a luxury for the commoner.

One day, Antonia came down completely. She started having fever, nausea, and dizziness. Arabella never for a moment did not depart from the adoptive mother. She cooked, cleaned the house and followed the procedure in a small estate. From birth, the young woman asserted that the beauty of any girl is her hard work, the ability to create the comfort of home and not allow it to die a fiery hearth.

In the early morning, when the sun barely risen, someone knocked at the gate. On the threshold stood Rossellini, holding some sheet of Royal, a huge seal.

– You Mademoiselle de Frase? "asked a fragile young man of fourteen.

«Yes,» nodded Arabella surprised: – And what You need in this hour?

– His Majesty the young king Louis XIII¹ gave You this letter.

This discovery shocked the girl. She has never received from the king no message. Yes, and that should be the great monarch from the provincial Arabella?

Taking the letter, she returned to the room where Antonia was laying.

¹ Fair Louis XIII (27 September 1601, Fontainebleau, France may 14, 1643, Saint—Germain—EN—Laye, France) – king of France and Navarre from 14 may 1610 of the Bourbon dynasty.

Who was that letter from? – calmly handed the old lady.

– From king Louis..., – perplexedly responded the daughter of the late Duke.

The old woman merely grinned innocently: «what wants my Lord?

Arabella, having read the letter, whispered: – He invites me to his Palace, to the ball.

«Fine,» Antonia replied, rising on one elbow: – Not everybody gets such an honor. Learn to use the chosen ability and to benefit from it, my girl.

– Mom, look, I don't want to go. I'm only a poor country girl. What do I do at the ball, which will bring together the Royal family aristocrats? sighed the Frenchwoman.

Her mother told her to sit down: «Arabella,» she began: – do Not forget that you were born in the family of the Duke, which is particularly important at the court of his Majesty the king. And don't you dare call yourself a commoner, even thinking about this I forbid you. And to the ball you go.

– But I have nothing to wear – sadly shrugged the young Mademoiselle.

– Pick up dress from mistress of Bandung. It is visited by rich sites and has hundreds of different outfits.

In the hot afternoon Arabella went to the estate ladies Bandung. The girl took her modest dress, sewn from rough satin and gold earrings in the form of elongated drops. French not felt joy, going to the Palace of the king. Perhaps the witty intriguer will laugh because of modesty, Arabella.

The next night, the Duke's daughter, North road in Berlin, ordered the coachman to drive to the Palace of his Majesty the king of France.

Chapter 2

The court of Louis XIII was in the center of Paris. It was a huge, marble estate, surrounded on all sides by parks. Near the gate was a crowd of dozens of people. Quietly played with the court orchestra consisting of the best musicians of France.

The Butler bowed and took Arabella to the throne room, where he welcomed their guests at the king.

The girl saw standing in a row, pairs. Men dressed in glittering uniforms and trimmed with Golden ribbons, trousers tucked into high boots. Their clothes could not be called simple, but it attracted universal attention, as women looked defiantly expensive, silk dresses with plunging necklines and bare backs looked far not starchy. Unlike the ladies, Arabella was dressed in a fully closed dress, whose only ornament was stamped belt, tight thin waist. The young woman quietly mingled in the crowd.

The Herald, knocking three times on the drum, solemnly proclaimed: His Majesty the king!

Everyone bowed in deep curtses and low bows. The hall majestically entered himself Louis. His resignation was accompanied by several squires of the noble, foreign families. The monarch never looked, stood along the wall, the crowd, but this time he cast an attentive gaze to Arabella, though she was barely visible from the last row. Having sat on a gilded throne, Louis loudly said: «Dear guests! I with great joy welcome you to their outdated Palace! I'm pleased to announce that the ball will be held in honor of the construction of new estates in the heart of Paris! The will of God, our Creator, I am allowed to start the celebration!

All the couples swirled in a waltz, but only Arabella stood by indifferently and watched. She loved to dance, and who will invite the «gray mouse» at such a delicate dance? She decided to go to the Palace gallery. There on the walls hung hundreds of paintings depicting members of the Bourbon dynasty. But the young woman drew attention to the portrait of Henrietta Maria of France, the younger sister of the king. The artist accurately depicted her elegant beauty and fragility.

More admiring the portraits, the young woman did not notice that she was approached by Louis. Shuddering from his touch, Arabella hastily made a curtsy, bending in the squat and slightly raising the hem of the dress.

– Your Majesty, – timidly said the girl, "I'm Sorry, I didn't see You.

«Nothing terrible,» the king held it to her face chandelier: – Your beauty has eclipsed my mind, my dear Mademoiselle. I've never seen such fiery hair. It seems that the hot fire melted the gold, and adorned them with these lovely locks. And Your eyes have no equal. They settled delight and playfulness. If I had my way, I would have concluded myself in Your sweet captivity.

Blushing to the roots of the hair, the girl shyly lowered her eyes.

– I'm sorry, I didn't mean to embarrass You. I rarely had a chance to meet with You, but in those precious minutes, as a boy, I admired You, but was silent. And now I had become a slave of love. Have mercy on the poor in love, fallen from the arrows of Your unforgettable eyes, the king wanted to touch Arabella's lips, but suddenly moved away from her and with a commanding view said: – Follow me – young woman with downcast eyes, went behind the king. He made a guest in his luxurious, huge room. Dropping into a chair, the king motioned Arabella to sit down.

– Mademoiselle, "he began: – I would like to know where You live and who You raised. Because I know that Your mother died in childbirth and his father died in the war. Who was lucky enough to adopt You?

The girl lowered her, flushed with sudden tears the eyes. She remembered his mother, who sacrificed his life for her, and Arabella's heart clenched in pain. She never went to the cemetery to see his parents, never talked about them, his mother believed Antonia, although the light made the girl Juliet.

Wiping his tears, Arabella said: «I was brought up by the maid Antonia, the girl could not say: «My mother was a noble woman.» It would have been an insult to the dead Juliet. But Louis did not listen to the words of their guest. He was struck by the idea that the Duke's daughter, lived under the care of the housemaid whose business was the management of the household and inconspicuous existence in the house of lords.

– What?! You, noble lady, brought up some pathetic girl with dirty streets?! – roared the enraged and shocked by Louis: – And You, my lady, without shame, say about this? These words You desecrate the memory of their deceased parents! A sudden burst of anger filled the heart of Arabella de Frase. The girl screamed and jumped up: – I have not defiled the memory of parents! And do not dare to call Antonia a girl with dirty streets! Yes, I agree that she is poor and no title could not give me, but she is a woman, due to that I live in this world. Mother many years ago, received very risky, adopt me. You still did not exist in this world... So do not judge her... If its about the act of the learned justice, it would be executed, and I was sent to a shelter. In fact the law forbade and forbids the commoner to take under his wing a girl from a rich family. But Antonia did!

The king, smiling, drank crimson wine poured into a crystal glass, and with a furrowed look said: – you Know, Mademoiselle, You are still too young and do not know much about. Yeah, I'm not older than You, but thanks to the title of king, I know a lot about the past... Your mother. It still holds the stigma of sin, which turned a woman's life is turned on its head. Youth can be silly, but not to this extent.

Arabella could not understand. What sin could make this a chaste woman?

– Tell me about her faults before God. Please – humbly asked the girl.

– No, it's a long story and a young lady her need to know.

– Do not forget, sire, that Antonia became my mother, and I have the right to know everything about her.

Unable to restrain himself in front of brilliantly blue eyes, Louis XIII sighed: – well, Well, You asked for it. Now listen, pause, the young man began his story: «Your foster mother was an ordinary girl from a poor family. She had everything for full happiness: loving but strict parents, younger sister and brother. But in fifteen years the mother has decided to give his daughter in marriage to a wealthy Baron. Of course, such an age unsuitable for marriage, but Antonia was raised in a constant obedience, not knowing the word «no». Of course, she didn't want this marriage, but, fearing the wrath of parents, agreed. Held modestly engagement and Antonia expected a quick wedding. But one day near the river, she met the son of a blacksmith. It was a tall, handsome young man. It also attracted the young woman. So Your mother was secretly go out with that guy. They have long sat by the river, talked, laughed, swam in the cool water, caressing the body. But suddenly their friendship turned into a blazing passion of love. Antonia left the house late at night and returned at dawn. Parents are either fast asleep after a hard working day, or away on business.

Of course, love is fine, but the woman found out that is under the heart of a child. Again the night Antonia went to a meeting with her beloved, but she tracked down an old friend. The traitor told all Celeto Mr. and Mrs. Sineer. The girl's father was infuriated by this news. And with the said Antonia: «you Decide is wrong, either you get rid of the baby and will marry the Baron, or I'll kill you with my own hands, like the apostate from the parent of the decision and a woman and a disgrace to your family and trample on the part of the family. So what do you choose? But know, your bastard will never appear in this world, because death will befall you before.» Parents Your foster mother, miss, were originally from Iraq, and raised my daughter under Muslim laws. Antonia became a Christian only because of the desire of her grandmother, living in France and who served as the maid of honor of my mother. The woman told her son to move to Paris and to baptize Antonia according to all the commandments of the Bible. Kilat, respecting his mother agreed, but after her death they hated this country and his own family: Sineer, Antonia, and two children.

It is time to make the decision. She wanted the child growing in her womb, was born alive and healthy, but the cruel customs and manners of the country were forbidden to maintain the fragile life.

– How will you look people in the eyes if you have this child? – whispering a resident of the village: – What do you give this kid? Huh? This child is the son of a blacksmith. He was his father. And this shame is known to all the inhabitants of the area. Flush with yourself and with your family is a stain.

Antonia agreed to get rid of the child, fearing the wrath of parents. But with abortion, something was broken, and the midwife told Your mother that she will never be able to have children. Sorrow did not give Antonia the rest. But shortly before the wedding, the Baron learned that his bride was pregnant from the poor boys and had shamed the family. The man refused to marry the girl, the parents chased her out of the house. Your mother wandered in the mountains and lived with poor people, ate one dry bread, wheat porridge and water. Soon the city was attacked by the Tartars and was taken prisoner by Antony. In the slave market it was bought by a slaver, and gave as a gift to Your father – the Duke of Eduardo de Frase. Antonia served in his house for several years, and after the death of Madame Juliette, the Duke gave You to her. It was a real fortune. But Antonia is not worthy of happiness woman. I knew that she adopted You, and so wondered how You feel about it. Unfortunately, You didn't know anything about the past of his foster mother...

Chapter 3

Arabella was sitting in a deep daze. She couldn't believe heard! As Antonia dared to get rid of the baby, which he wore under the heart?! These burning like fire, words do not reach the consciousness of Arabella. Of course, the truth was too bitter to accept it.

– You're lying! – desperately cried the girl.

Louis jumped up from the chair, came up to Arabella: – Calm down, please, "the man tried to take the Frenchwoman's hand, but the Duke's daughter resolutely moved aside: – No,... You're lying! My mother could not do that!

– Remember, Arabella, Your mother is Juliet – Louis gently stroked her cheek: «I understand Your pain. But You must not close your lovely eyes to the truth, – the monarch moved away from her and uttered, "Leave the house, leave Bern. I want You to become the lady of the court, lived in the Palace. I beg You, do it for me, for my respect for You.

His voice sounded neither like an order of the king, but as a human please. Such a proposal shocked the young woman, but of course, she was forced to refuse: «No, I can't, my house is not here. Excuse Me, Your Majesty...

«Arabella, please, agree.

– This is out of the question, sire. I grew up in other traditions and laws. All sixteen years of my life, I didn't see anything apart from his village. I don't know how to dance at balls, flirt with men with dignity wear precious jewelry, to put on expensive dresses, sheathed in gold and silver, do not know how to apply makeup on face, to have maids. I can't learn to live in this lavish Royal residence. My life is there, in Bern, together with the foster mother, "sighed the Frenchwoman.

The king looked at her with tenderness and timidity: «Oh, God, this touching creation hides a strong character, common sense and unstoppable willpower. She is like an angel, innocent creature with heavenly eyes, silky hair and with a timid smile. Oh, God, do not deprive me of this lovely vision. Even if it would stop beating my heart, but my eyes looking to Arabella, never goes out,» thought the ruler of France.

– Arabella – gently he said: – You like the rays of the sun, illuminated my heart. Your light will also light up this Palace, and the heat will warm up the ice wall. For Pete's sake, stay, agree to become a court lady.

Charming beauty could no longer resist the order of the son of Maria de Medici and Henry IV. Still Arabella agreed.

The maid took Mademoiselle de Frase in a spacious room on the second floor. It was luxurious, comfortable quarters, containing a large bed, crisp white sheets and covered from prying eyes silk, airy four-poster bed and several pieces of furniture. Near the window there was a fireplace of Medieval times, painted with exquisite drawings. On a small table mahogany rested a platter of juicy, exotic fruit. The walls are made of pure marble, ceiling – gypsum... Arabella sighed dreamily. If she hadn't lost her parents, everything would be different...

Suddenly the girl noticed a huge chest with gold buckles:

– What's in it? curiosity asked the French have a brittle, gray-eyed maid Jesse.

The maid, with downcast eyes, replied: – the Books of king Henry IV. After the death of her husband, Marie de Medici ordered to collect all his most precious belongings in this trunk. These were the books, still remembered in its pages a tender touch of his Majesty's... For many years Louis XIII did not allow anyone to touch the chest, but today his order, he gave it to You, Mademoiselle, "the Duke's daughter said nothing, but deep down she felt surprise, and also fear.

At sunset, a dinner, the girl was going to sleep. Jessie lit a night lamp and asked politely: «Mademoiselle, can I help You to undress?

– No, thank you. I myself. You’ve already come, the day was hard, good rest, refused Arabella, removing hair with gold studs. The young maid wished him good night, quietly withdrew to his tiny room.

In the morning Arabella threw up. In the room «was» unbearable heat. The girl opened the window. Fresh air wave rolled across the room. Court lady wanted to change the bed, but suddenly saw a bouquet of white roses, standing in a Golden vase on the table. But Arabella did not attach any importance to this. She thought that yesterday because of fatigue are simply not noticed the flowers.

Early morning in the French quarters came the maid Jesse. The young maid looked tired and exhausted. Always burning gleam in his eyes went out, like stars at dawn: «Good morning, Madam.

– Good... What’s wrong with you? You’re so pale.

– Nothing, my lady. It’s all good. You liked the bouquet of white roses, presented today at dawn our monarch?

Arabella by surprise, dropped a Golden comb. A young woman and could not think that the flowers from Louis. It turns out, Jessie is jealous of her Louis. Still, after the sovereign – first the handsome of France and the most eligible bachelor. But despite this, Arabella suddenly felt the pinching of his pride and honor.

– The king has presented? – the girl’s voice wavered when she saw the affirmative opinion of a servant.

Quickly got up from the chair, Arabella instantly rushed to the king’s chamber. On the threshold of the irate lady was stopped by two high guards: – Wait, Mademoiselle, his Majesty the king opacified. Please come back at noon, then the monarch will receive You.

– No, I need to talk to him immediately! I’m not going to wait until the king deigned to give me an audience! Miss, otherwise heads will roll! – exclaimed the dear daughter of the Duke.

– My lady, wait! You can’t... the guards wanted to stop the Arabella, but she was able to slip into the bedchamber.

Bursting, the young woman saw the king. He stood in one night gown, with a conical cap on his head and in his Slippers. The expression on the face of the monarch was far from friendly. Gray eyes narrowed, as fiery arrows flying in the far, misty distance. Watching the master, it seemed that he’s about to reveal his sharp sword whose blade glittered in the sun, as rays of clear light spring foliage, and will destroy anyone who stands in his majestic way.

Frowning, the king spoke his thin lips: «Arabella! What are You doing?! Who let You in here without my permission?!

Is what are You doing?!

– What’s the matter, dear lady? – anger of Louis gave way to some corny, cheesy softness.

Arabella threw it on the carved table a bouquet of roses, convulsively compressed in its cold hand: – What is it?

Louis walked over to the young woman and, taking her hand, gently murmured: – You do not like the donated roses?

Arabella de Frase tore one fragile white petal and held it to her left breast: – not the Problem, sire. Just... everyone in the Palace were whispering behind my back. Some believe that I came here to escape from provincial life and change the destiny of a beggar. Other – to become Queen of the throne of Your heart. But I am not going to tolerate! I already call Your favorite! Rumor has it that I allegedly threw adoptive mother in the lurch and I share a love bed! But it’s a lie! I don’t...

The young woman did not have time to finish. Her lips joined in a long, sweet kiss with the king of France. The girl it seemed that the whole world has bed at their feet. Sweet obsession was maddening, as if, were lifted up to heaven, and then with a flourish threw in a covering of water. Arabella closed her beautiful eyes. His lips were quivering. Skin glowed. Body stiffening. But just a few moments, the girl came to herself. Her heart, most recently breaking out from love and passion, was like a stone emotionless, icy cold from hell. The French wanted to escape, but Louis squeezed

her with force. Unable to withstand such a blatant disgrace, the young woman slipped out of the unwelcome embrace of the king and painted his cheek with his slap. Do not resist, Louis fell on the stool. Frightened, she instantly ran out of his chambers. Fortunately, the guards were not at his post.

Chapter 4

Night came on. The rain continued to make noise. Dark clouds covered all the sky. Fallen leaves swirled like a whirlwind. The furious wind sweeps away everything in its path.

Arabella de Frase sat in the armchair facing the fireplace. All day she stayed in her room for fear of meeting with the king of France. Beauty well knew the Rules: if someone will cause harm to the monarch, he was sentenced to death.

Asleep, one lady-in-waiting did not notice that in her room someone came in, squeezing the cold fingers a small chandelier. An unknown hand touched the shoulder of a sleeping Arabella. The young woman by surprise, abruptly opened his amazing eyes. Before her stood... Louis XIII!

– You?! – cried the girl and frantically pulled on woolen cloth. She was in a nightgown, and, of course, Louis couldn't see an amazing, slender body, barely concealed under the silk shirt.

The king eagerly approached the frightened Arabella. The young woman could not move, out of fear and shame engulfed everything inside. But the monarch used to take whatever they want. Of course, the young girl was his only toy, fun for one night.

Louis once again forcibly kissed Arabella. But this time the kiss was not so tender, lyrical and touching, as in the morning. On the contrary, now the touch was like molten steel and searing fire, the flames escaping from the bowels of the earth. The man wrapped his hands around the waist of a young woman and, pressing her lips to his lips, whispered: – darling, incomparable beauty...

Arabella didn't understand what was happening. This closeness was driving her crazy, having lost the power of speech, wrapped up, and the power of his enduring power.

«Let me go,» moaned the girl, R in the strong gentle hands of a rapist.

But the king seemed not to hear his «victim». Hugged the girl into her body, the monarch dragged her to the bed where stared passionately on the lips quivering flesh.

Making sure that Louis was asleep, she quietly got out of bed, and throwing on a cold shouldered gown, went to the window. The French cheeks flowed burning tears, my heart cried from the unbearable pain. Poor girl didn't want to become a woman of Louis, didn't want to lose my virginity to his rough embrace. The king took possession of it by force, ignoring the rebellious desire of the body. Deep down, she felt a strange satisfaction, but, remembering the caressing touches and playful kisses, slip back into your routine broken flaming heart.

The daughter of the Duke de Frase knew in orders French court: any woman who once shared a bed with the Emperor, becomes his mistress—lover, and she is obliged to live in the king's realm, every night, at the request of the monarch to come to his chambers, to give an unforgettable pleasure, to give his body unloved for the sake of wealth and title. Marie de ' Medici always said, «the laws of the state is our bread and water. We live and rule only through ancient traditions. Nobody can resist them.» Unfortunately, Arabella has become a hostage of these orders.

Lost in thought, the young woman did not notice that awoke the monarch:

«Arabella,» somebody said behind her. The girl forced herself to turn around. Louis XIII stared at his beloved. His eyes, always so overbearing and strict, it seemed to Arabella, a surprisingly gentle and sympathetic.

– Sire, – with a pause beginning French: – I'm sorry about what happened. But... I want, that You have forgotten about it. I will never become Your mistress. Your arms turned for me in steel chains. Let me go to my foster mother's home, otherwise I'll be forced to run away. Such a shame I'm not going to tolerate. I'm not a prostitute woman and I'm sorry that the ruler of France was a gross rapist. I have long vowed to give her virginity to someone I love with all my body, heart and soul. Alas, You have me first...

«Arabella, do you not? How could you think I leave you in the lurch immediately after our first night? No, darling, far from it!.. Yeah, you're not my first woman, but the last. And I...

– No, sire, "interrupted the king girl: – I'm not Yours and never will be. Farewell, – with these words the French woman came to the door, clutching her torn dress.

– If you leave now, you'll regret it. For insubordination, I'm severely punished, kindness is gone from the voice of Louis. He did not ask, but demanded. Arabella suddenly realized that the king tend to change. Sometimes Louis can be tender, passionate and loving and sometimes cruel tyrant, giving orders to execute even those whom he loves.

– Your Majesty, if you wish, kill me right here and now. Whatever You say, I just couldn't stay in this Palace.

Collecting things, «mistress» was ordered to prepare the carriage, my Lady, what happened? Where do You go? – distractedly asked Jessie excitedly.

– It doesn't matter. I was determined to leave this place.

– But why? You only the day before yesterday accepted the position of lady-in-waiting. We were great. What has changed during this night? – the maid said a confident tone, and Arabella seemed that all her secrets were exposed in front of this blond girl with grey, thoughtful eyes: «Your anxiety is linked with the king? Am I right?

– Yes... Jesse, I have doubts. My pain, like a fiery arrow that pierced to the heart.

– I know the cause of Your doubt, – timidly said the maid, with a trembling hand removing the stray curl.

– How do you know? – innocently smiled Arabella.

– His Majesty divulged the news throughout the residence, and a sheet with... Your blood hung in front of the entrance to the premises of the favorites. Always did the monarchs, wanting to show that in their bed, there was another, – seeing the pale, feverish look companion, Jesse apologetically shook his head: – I'm Sorry, I didn't mean to offend You. When I found out You were gone, I even could not imagine the cause of this action. I thought You wanted this closeness, and now all radiate happiness. So would any woman. But not You...

Without saying anything, Arabella literally flew out of the lobby. This discovery was the last straw of patience, Mademoiselle de Frase. Arabella young footman went out into the yard, trying not to raise his eyes to the Royal terrace. Sitting in the carriage, the young woman gave way to tears. The last time she looked back at the Palace, who became her everything: joy, sadness, happiness, anger, a rapid rise and a low fall. In this building Arabella knew, a true sense of passion, feelings that burned her heart like fire.

The crew drove past green foliage, shining in the bright sun as the sunset at dusk. The picturesque beach was struck by their naturalness, freshness, they seemed like living. Arabella looked reverently on the silver surface of the river. On hot afternoons these waters always seemed like a pure diamond with a Golden hue, but winter blankets the river, colorless, gray crust that remained until mid-April.

But the girl did not please the beauty of the landscape. Her heart was hard like stone loomed over the unfortunate beauty. It seemed that way to Bern to last forever. A few hours Arabella was Napping, but a strong jolt from its beginning to feel sick.

– Will we be there soon? The sky was already painted by the sunset. Can you hurry up? – the girl peppered the coachman's issues, looking out the window of the carriage.

– Don't worry, Milady, we drove up to the town – a few minutes seemed massive gates of Bern. The gendarmes began to close the door, stopping unhappy peasant carts and ordering them to return. After seven o'clock in the evening in the city no one is allowed, people slept on the street, for the coachman road Berlin returned to their posts, leaving passengers under the open sky.

– Wait! The name of the king, do not close the gate! – cried the excited driver, urging the tired horses.

Soldiers dissatisfied snorted, but, seeing that on the road going the Golden coach with the national emblem, respectfully retreated. Arabella mentally thanked God for the fact that they managed to enter the city, otherwise the young woman would have to sleep in the crew.

Smell of the native village, the girl sighed with relief. She looked out of the window of the carriage, I saw a beautiful, drowning in the twilight, landscape. They passed rivers in which Arabella loved to swim. At sunset, the foliage was no longer bright green, and from it emanated a Golden—crimson hue. And the water... She and Manila to his rapid murmur.

– Stop the carriage! «ordered Mademoiselle. The coachman, by submitting the daughter of the Duke, politely inquired: «are You feeling okay? What happened, Madam?

– Nothing, it's all right. I just wanted to walk along the shore all alone.

– Sorry, but I was ordered not to leave You alone, besides, it's almost night.

– Don't forget that I'm not Your slave and You can't tell me. Moreover, I am native to the area. No one here will hurt me. Stay here. I'll be back soon – with these words Arabella climbed into the plain. Passing through the dense foliage of the trees, a young woman appeared on the coast. Pebbles slithered underfoot, and she almost fell. Crouching, the Frenchwoman put her chin on her knees, hugging them with wet hands. Arabella's hand instinctively touched the warm spray of refreshing water.

She wanted to swim in the river again feel the gentle touch of the waves that slid over every curve. Rising, the young woman slowly began to remove my dress. Clothing wave rolled across the feet like a silky snake. Stepping over the outfit lying on the ground, she dived into the arms of the water. Cool river swallowed her body, began to caress, to stroke, to bring every bit a fragile, slender body. His feet barely touched the sandy day, the current was pretty strong, but the Duke's daughter, was not afraid to drown, because swimming was not her equal.

Immersed in water even deeper, the young woman for the first time in my life pondered his fate. What is the human share? The decision of the most high, Scroll of the life of His servants, the angels ' Message? Or the way of man, which he chose with my ears, eyes, speech, actions and feelings? Can a mere mortal to change the order set by the ancestors, to change age-old traditions and laws? Can the triumph of justice, to exist a love between a normal girl and by the king of France?

These questions, as the fire raged in the heart of Arabella, as ice, emptied her soul, and, like arrows, pierced the mind.

Turning his head to the horizon, the girl looked at the water. On the radiance of the sunset it seemed the crimson—scarlet, like fresh blood, and gold, as pure gold. «Perhaps the God of Water gave me this sign. Gold in the blood... What does this mean?» thought blue-eyed beauty.

Arabella remembered childhood, a time when she was still a little girl bathed in that river with your friends. Then life seemed the Frenchwoman serene, calm, full of colors and hopes. But that time, happiness, serenity gone...and will never happen again.

The sky grew darker, the sun disappeared over the horizon, blew an icy wind, on the earth, like a coverlet, hand-stitched darkness, descended a velvety, pearlescent dusk. The first time Arabella felt fear of this suffocating darkness. Usually the young woman loved to swim in the river late at night when the moon glow has dimmed the sparkle of the stars, and the water resembled the abyss, which, like snakes, were absorbing and gave pleasure. The girl suddenly realized how things have changed after the first a lavish ball, after the first night of love...

The water went cold. It was similar to an impenetrable, sharp ice. Daughter of the Duke seemed that the waves, like a dagger, caused intolerable pain. Emerging «mistress» frantically pulled the dusty clothes. Descending from the plains, the young woman stopped. Behind the bushes strutted excited Kucher. Seeing his mistress, the man happily ran to her, trying to hold back the surging mine: Lady, where were You? I., " the young man finished, as the Arabella with a hoarse cry he staggered, clutching the outstretched hand of the servant. The girl's Breasts, carefully hidden under the thick cloth of the dress, nervously quivering, and from the lips escaped a sort of cough. Holding the French

for chilled shoulders, the coachman helped her climb into the carriage and excitedly said, "You're shivering, and so pale..."

Thanks, but I'm fine. I'm just chilling. Let's quickly head out of here, "the coachman instantly took his place, and spurred his horses, and Arabella continued to sit motionless, listening to the frantic beating heart.

After half an hour in front of the eyes of putnici rose native village, shrouded in a fragile veil of silence. The young woman sighed sweetly. Here the air was filled with the scent of flowers that bloomed, like juicy fruits, clean streets and alleys were drowned in the sprawling greenery, the fresh wild rose bushes adorned the long alley of the village.

French came to his own home. A huge moon, like a bright lamp, was illuminated by its radiance the yard. Arabella de Frase quietly opened the old door. The corridor into darkness, and only on the second floor barely rattled the light of a single candle. The girl looked around the hall thoughtfully: with straw mattresses, old chests with numerous knick-knacks, stacks of wood, pieces of cloth...all of it was covered by a tiny lobby, it smelled like a rustic, heavy but so dear life, not polished like a precious stone, a existence of luxury and wealth. Walking up the stairs, a young woman walked into a small room. In his wicker chair, snorting, Antonia was sleeping, covered with a ragged shawl. Candle lit yellowed old woman's face and Arabella knew that an unknown disease poor eating inside, though she tries to hide it. Approaching the adoptive mother almost closely, the girl said softly, touching her shoulder: – Mommy, sweetheart, Wake up.

The old lady reluctantly opened his eyes: «Arabella, sweetheart, is that you?

– Yes, mother, I'm here. How do You feel?

– I slowly languished without you, my child, but you came and lit everything like the sun, embraced his ward: – Where have you been for two days?

Arabella lowered her eyes. Anger at Antonia passed, but the French did not dare to tell my mother and mistress that knows about her past. The lady brought up the daughter of a Duke in severity and obedience, did not allow the girl to touch upon sensitive themes of love and togetherness, even at this age.

– Mom, you shouldn't have to worry about me. I..., " stammered blue-eyed beauty: – I stayed in the Palace of the king. The dance lasted for a long time, and I decided to visit the master. Yes, and his Majesty asked me to stay. How could I refuse him? Besides, You wanted me to I went there.

– Yes, I wanted to, but you could at least warn me. Okay, go to your room. I'll bring dinner, you must be hungry, tired, the road was far. Eat and rest, "meekly nodding, Arabella slowly walked into his modest quarters. She almost cried, remembering Louis. If he loves her or not? This question haunted the young girl? It is one thing to acquire the body, quite another to run it in your heart to love.

Chapter 5

By late evening the mood Arabella quite spoiled. Saluti's flow of tears, poor woman sitting near the window and gazed into the impenetrable darkness. Only a small lantern hanging on the porch, covered yard. But sometimes it seems that there is no rest for the innocent souls. Everywhere just wandering pain, suffering and loneliness.

The room slowly came Antonia. Hearing the steps of his mother, Arabella quickly brushed eyelashes with tears. Approaching the daughter, the woman handed her a glass of hot milk with honey: For dinner you haven't even touched your food. At least drink it, the young woman merely shook her head: «Arabella, I'm sure that in the way in your mouth and crumbs are not the same, you're so pale. Don't torture yourself, have a drink, – with a trembling hand he took the Cup, the Duke's daughter from her emptied, feeling the warmth spreads throughout the body. Putting the pot on the table, the French did not dare to look at her mother, feeling the tears burn your eyes.

– What is it, daughter? Are you crying?

– No, mom. With me everything is in order.

– Don't lie to me. I can see it. Just a few hours ago you came back from Paris and already closed and sad. What is the cause of your bitter sufferings?

The girl could not resist. Sobbing, she clung to the foster mother: it's very hard, mom.

«Arabella, it comes to love? – the young woman nodded frantically, clutching icy fingers in the palm of his wrinkled mother.

– Listen to what I tell you and remember my words. They will be useful to you in the future: men can never truly love. Their hearts like rocks, in which there is no place of tenderness and passion. All the words flying from their mouths is a false phrase. Never trust men, my daughter, especially monarchs. They are able to enter an innocent girl into a whirlpool of intrigue, and no one even curve will not say a word, not dare. Arabella, at the time, I also loved, but was refused and a complete disappointment in this alluring feeling called love. Then I realized: life is like a feather: released – fly away, will keep – will remain. Therefore it is always necessary for yourself and not becoming a toy in the hands of men.

– Mom – he tried to smile, the French woman: – I'm very tired. You may have to go. Good night. Antonia wanted to protest, but seeing the convicted daughter's gaze, silently, left the room.

Mademoiselle de Frase spent the whole night in tears. Her unbearably burned the fire of hopelessness and doubt. She knew that I loved Louis, but how could she be with him? The throne and crown will never pass to a normal commoner, of whatever kind it didn't happen. Power and position will possess another woman, became the wife of the Queen rulers of France. Then Arabella will become a mere mistress, nothing more. Is this ever dreamed the daughter of the Duke de Frase? And is it the fate most charming lady all over Europe?

Early morning over the estate there was a deafening crackle and roar. Arabella, dressed in the same nightgown, ran out into the yard. The girl's eyes widened from fear and shame. The body ran shivers, heart pounding in his chest. Before Belle stood six tall men in national dress to the French gendarmes. One of them threw to the feet of the young woman's Bathrobe. The daughter of the Duke frantically covered his half-naked shoulders and chest.

– Who are you?! Why are you here?!

Is You Mademoiselle Arabella de Frase? – scornfully threw the fat man already middle-aged years.

– Yes, and who are you? How dare you intrude on the territory of a single woman?!

«Madam, we personal the gendarmes of our great monarch!

The young woman smiled sarcastically at him: – what want from me the king

Six of the guards took a step forward: – By order of his Majesty, we must arrest you!

Arabella backed away. The cold wind was choppy obvestil her face and ruffled the Golden, hot like fire, hair. Do this way Louis decided to get rid of unwanted mistress?

– Arrest? But what rights? I'm a free woman, and you have no right to detain me. In such cases, please present the charges. What did I do wrong? – continued to fend off the girl. Of course, she knew that for making a Royal judgment the accusations are not needed. The monarch wanted all sang and nobody even dares to open his mouth contradictory, otherwise they will be deprived not only of language but also of the head.

– We don't know, ma'am, «Arabella snatched the brooding tall, handsome young man, the head of this case:" We are only following orders of his Majesty the king. Please, no noise, quiet, follow us.

The frightened girl took a step back. Under her feet rustled the grass. Arabella clung to the thick trunk of a tree: – do Not you dare come near me! Do not approach!

The brown policeman, dressed in a suede tunic and the same material of the knickers, and took the young woman by the hand: – Calm yourself, lady Arabella. Nobody will hurt you. We'll just take You to where it should be.

– I'm not going to waste time on accusations not relating to me! – blurted out of the blue-eyed beauty.

Lady! Don't test our patience! Come on! – gendarmes put at the hands of captive iron chains.

– Let me go! You have no right! I will complain to the justice! Release!

– Mademoiselle de FRASE, shut up! And humbly follow the crew! «the men who brought the slave to the carriage. No sooner had the girl knew it, her eyes flew black patch. Arabella felt someone's strong hands forced her on something hard and uncomfortable. The gendarmes, tying their prisoner's eyes started to wrists. Hard fast hands of a young woman with a rope, the guards dropped on the face of Arabella's heavy, black bag. Being blind, mute and bound, the French stopped struggling. The soldiers, armed with swords, sat down to one side, like a helpless, weak woman could resist six trained, strong men. The carriage has silently moved from a place. The girl tried to act calm, but it is poorly managed. Shackled to the blood scratched wrists from the ropes, sucking on the tender skin, swollen fingers and palm, the bandage rubbed his eyes, under a heavy bag breathing was difficult.

Arabella froze, the thin robe that barely kept the heat on the fragile body in a freezing carriage. The young woman softly groaned. Due to the dense matter surrounding the lips, she couldn't say anything. The policeman gently removed the bag from the head of his prisoner, watching the mass of tangled hair hides his skinny shoulders: – if you are going to sit back, this uncouth, rough fabric touches you're the pretty, innocent face. Quite the one bandage that covers your eyes, the crew stopped abruptly. The daughter of the Duke felt a sudden chill seize the body: for the shoulders, then falls to a small girl's chest, sliding over flawless, flat stomach, wraps around the waist and thigh tickles. Arabella flinched. She could not forget the sensitive, stimulating touch of the king in their first night, could not forget his daring movements. And even frost, sliding on the leather reminded the girl about it.

The head of the hull almost kicked Arabella out of the carriage, and tying her even tighter eyes took on the sharp stones that pierce into the suede fabric of the shoes. The young woman tried to understand where she is, but the constant aftershocks kept her focus: Where am I? Where are you taking me? – frightened girl asked.

– Calm down, will soon find out.

The young woman felt under my feet, something began to stir:

– Come, – she heard the order, who could not bear objections, – the policeman took the prisoner by the arm, helped her down the old stairs. Arabella slipped, grabbed the same Chapter: «be Careful, my lady, steps are slippery.

The girl, shuddering with fear, clung to the body of the soldier: – what is your name?

– Albert de Germont, the head of the Royal corps of gendarmes.

You're a kind man. Thank you for Your concern, but... I'm afraid to die in captivity, by the swords of the king's men.

– Fear not, lady, because our fears don't always matter. We are afraid or not, if some event should happen and so it happens, fear will not stop him.

– Sir, why are we stopping? «came the impatient voice of another policeman.

«Not so fast, Nick. Death not in a hurry – sadly, but with a smile replied the commander-in-chief.

Arabella did not see the face Alberda, when he spoke those awful words, but she distinctly heard his voice, filled with strange regret, despair, coldness and indifference. The first time the French felt on his neck the icy breath of the terrible, impending death.

Someone pushed the girl forward, so much so that she fell with loose steps to the barn. The policeman yanked untied the captive's eyes. Mademoiselle de Frase frantically looked around. The young woman was in the basement, looking like a prison for recalcitrant prisoners. In all the corners hung with cobwebs, through the bars were not penetrated by a single ray of light and in the shade on top of a terrible machine for waterboarding. The victim before torture were not given food for several days and then lowered to the bottom of the building so that as much as possible bulging belly (although, after the fast it was hard to do) and started to pour water in the mouth. Unfortunate either choked or liquid filled inside, the stomach could not withstand and exploded. Arabella, barely holding himself in nausea, turned away from the car and stared at the leaving silhouettes of the gendarmes.

The time dragged terribly slowly and painfully. The girl then walked around the dungeon, then sat in the hayloft, peering into the blackness of the night. Whatever it was, but fatigue quickly overcame the young woman and she huddled in a corner, dozed off.

There was a creaking door. Harsh light illuminated the dark basement. Arabella terrified opened his eyes. At the door, in the shadows, stood a man, which goes on the wood, swaying the cane. French, barely breathing from fear, pressed her back to the dirty wall. The old man approached her, quietly, barely moving his feet.

«Who Are You? What do You need? – asked fearfully provincial.

– Don't be afraid, "came the unknown voice. It sounded like from far away, from the impenetrable darkness.

– Why are You here? I am the innocent.

– Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you. I am an ordinary person, trying to show the right path those who have strayed from the true path and goes where the one light burning, surrounded by a sinister, impenetrable forest, but skips the road at the end of which light, joy, happiness, and the hot flames who burned the troubles. Remember, a small candle, which had lit one hand to put out easier than the fire burning thanks to a few touches. Therefore, look for a mutual, happy love, let it not even be sprinkled with gold, and with rural, poor hay. But unrequited passion, even made of diamonds and purple, will not bring peace, enjoyment and tranquility, but only to empty the soul, break the heart and, like an arrow, vague thoughts fill with memories of the past.

Arabella, scarcely breathing, listened to these precious, wise speech. The old man looked like a simple poor man, but he spoke true words of the philosopher.

– What do You mean? I am clean before God, "slowly drawled the girl.

Is now you clean and pure, but will take a little time, and you will be dressed in gold and diamonds. Proudly will wear silk and gold brocade, on his head – a crown of precious stones, silver tiaras, and delicate, like the petals of a flower ripe pomegranate, veils. On the neck of your hundreds of expensive pendants will hang at the hands of the machined ring and the bracelets jingle. But... your hands dirty in the red blood... With fingers dripping red liquid, which eclipsed the radiance of luxury. And pride... It will stifle the voice of conscience and justice.

– I'll never shed the blood of innocent people. Nothing can drown out my conscience, proudly threw the young woman. Her voice sounded sad, but undisguised arrogance.

The old man with a sad half-smile whispered: «Look around. What do you see? It will happen to your soul.

The girl stared. Around her, on the floor, on the walls, on the hay lay jewelry, gold, silver, precious stones, gold coins. But Arabella, looking closely, saw in all this drops of fresh, red blood. She shone like autumn leaves in the afternoon sun, sparkled like stars in the night sky. Suddenly there was a deafening rumble, so strong that everything around trembled. The Duke's daughter, saw a fire-breathing dragon that rises out of the ground. Because of the fear that breeds in the entire body, the girl couldn't move. She had to consider only the old man who went into the shade, then filled all Hellfire...

Arabella de Frase squealing woke up. The old guy, the gold, the words, the dragon – it's only a nightmare, a horrible dream. Young beauty with horror looked around. She was still in that dirty, damp dungeon. The Frenchwoman sighed. The girl didn't know how much time you've been here, because the camera was always dominated by impenetrable darkness.

Again there was a deafening, obnoxious creak of the door and to jail someone silently entered. But it was not a dream but a harsh reality. In the shadows stood silent policeman, holding a copper bowl and a water bottle. Arabella stood up. She was no longer afraid that guards might kill her for disobedience. The worst thing is to stay in this chamber for a long time.

– How much time I will still be here? It is a prison ever end?

I'm just a guard and I know nothing. Only sir Albert de Germond can let You go. In the meantime, You just have to wait! "the man nodded.

– What to expect?

Or release or penalty, – with these words the policeman put a bowl of soup and slice of bread on a fresh haystack.

The day passed, the second... The guards wore Arabella food, basins for washing, but the girl couldn't stand this confinement. No one except a few guards came to her. Unfortunately, those were silent, and only occasionally cast a glance at the Frenchwoman, like a criminal.

Early one morning in the prison he heard a commanding voice, and on the threshold appeared a young, gallant man, an aristocrat, dressed in the latest elegant French fashion. Everything in it seemed so harmonious and even a little corny, but this threatening sword, resting on the belt... Arabella shuddered from the silver Shine of a sharp blade.

– Miss Arabella, politely handed it to the stranger, removing his hat and bowing low.

«Who are You? – roughly threw the girl, turning away from the newcomer.

– Oh, Milady, you see, a courtesy You have not learned. Well, to do re-education of the rebellious maidens I'm not going. Therefore the answer to Your question: my name is Mr. Mocenigo, I am the chief Advisor and close friend of his Majesty the king of France Louis XIII. Great monarch gave the order to visit You before his arrival.

– To visit or to kill? – laughed the daughter of the Duke.

– Kill? I was just wondering, what have You done that are on death row?

– I and itself do not know, for what sins I now have to suffer. I didn't do anything to lose his life. Kindly tell me when I can get out of here?

– When the king comes. Only the Lord has the right to release You, because on his initiative You languishing here.

– You know he's gonna kill me..., – resignedly nodded the girl. Sir, said nothing, silently left the basement.

By evening, the young woman heard noises behind the wall. Leaning against the icy stone, she managed to overhear the conversation of two guards:

– Now comes the Louis. He was very angry, seeing his captive like this. Get her a new dress and a tub for bathing. Let them get cleaned up, "ordered the commander of the corps.

The girl sat on the floor. The mind didn't want to see Louis but heart... After that fateful night, enough time has passed, but the wound is still bleeding.

Dressed in clean linen gown, a young woman nervously walked around the dungeon, nibbling, and so the cracked lip. Arabella with trepidation expecting that the camera will go silent executioners and blow her head off. The Duke's daughter, heard distinct footsteps behind the door, Louis.

– Is she there?

– Yes, Your Majesty.

«Come with me, Albert.

The girl squared her dress and lightly combed hair. Anyway, the charming beauty wanted to look irresistible to monarch of France. The door, as if by magic, easily opened, and the camera proudly walked the son of Mary de Medici, whose face was carefully covered wide-brimmed hat.

– How dare you?! Who dared to put her in the hands of these terrible chains?! – suddenly furious cried the king.

– I'm sorry, sire, I now immediately withdraw, "the woman exclaimed quietly when her wrists snapped a little lock, and rough iron crashed down on the floor. Arabella rubbed his swollen wrist, removed the ginger, the stray lock of hair from the face, and when they were alone with the Lord, dared to speak proudly, not bothering to bow: – What happens sir? Your people attacked my house, tied me up, put on the face of the bag and threw it into the carriage. Then they brought in some kind of basement and who knows how long I languished in this barn. Please tell me why You were ordered to take me to this village?

Louis heartily laughed. But the young woman only grinned arrogantly. First time in her life she felt a real, unusual sympathy, even more, to a man of such high birth. Louis was a handsome, attractive man still quite young years. Slender body, brown eyes, curly, dark hair... The girl was crazy and scary that this handsome man had once possessed her, and she was in his bed. The French now saw before him a completely different person. Not authoritative, heartless king and a gentleman, capable of tender touches and gentle, kind words. This might be a strange feeling, such a timid, touching, sweet and bore the name of «Love».

Arabella smiled at his own thoughts and looked directly in Louis ' eyes that it was unlawful for any woman. But it did not offend the king, on the contrary, he came still closer to his captive, and quiet, smooth whispered, "You are an amazing girl, Arabella, just think that my men brought You in some backwater village. Actually You are in Paris, in the basement of my house. I was ordered to take You through the shortest path, so that Your brilliant mind did not understand, Mademoiselle.

– I'm in Paris? Oh, I think I understand. This here must be my death penalty?

– I'm not going to kill You, my lady. I love You...

– Love?... weakly stammered the Duke's daughter. The Bishop leaned over his slave, so close that their lips almost touched each other. The girl was afraid of this intimacy, but what could she do, if there is a fire of passion blazed in the soul stronger? The frail body went limp in the strong arms of a young man, Arabella had felt on his thin waist his stimulating touch.

– No need..., " said the pale lips of Arabella, trying to turn away from Louis broke out his face: – do Not need to do what then we both will regret...

– Oh, my beloved flower, why fight fate, if she wished to unite our hearts and give us blissful love? Beautiful...unique...my...

Young beauty closed her eyes and quietly mumbled: «Oh Almighty Lord, I have committed the sin, but he's so sweet.» The Frenchwoman did not notice, as it appeared in the strong arms of the Lord. The man, slightly raising the girl, put her in the barn and was exciting to untie the laces on the corset. A hot shiver ran through the body of Arabella, and his head was spinning. Clasp his trembling hands to the neck of Louis, the young woman felt like drowning in a whirlpool of passion.

Chapter 6

Arabella and the king lay in the hayloft, staring out at the night studded with stars, the sky. Young woman felt in the soul of the mortal smell of love, which was interpreted by the poets in their verses and singing the medieval troubadours. The mistress of the young man smiled, thinking that her ordinary commoner, fell in love with the monarch of France.

– Why did you chose me? I was a simple poor girl who came in a luxury ball, hosted by the charming Lord of these lands. I used to think that no hobo will not want to touch me, and then I know the world of eternity in the arms of the nobles. Really they say, God works in mysterious ways...

– You're not like everyone else. You are special, tender, but also playful, passionate and daring. Your brilliant mind and dazzling charm, has no equal. When I saw you that day, in a gloomy gallery in my head flashed the thought «If I don't possess the heart and soul of this virgin, I'm not king of France». Sire hugged his lover and gently slid lips over her cheek.

– How do we do now? the joy disappeared from the voices of the lovely ladies: I'm only your lover, but I'll never be... his wife.

Arabella looked at her master and noticed how he paled. Louis ' eyes seemed to have frozen, but the smile was forever wiped from his face.

– What's wrong with you? – thoughtfully asked the girl, touching her soft palm the cheeks of the beloved. The king, with downcast eyes, rose from the hayloft and began to quickly pull his white shirt: – get Dressed. We got to go.

Young woman a small smile, shook his head: – are You going to answer, the monarch turned so sharply that it felt like it suddenly burned a fire. Brown eyes narrowed and face flushed crimson. Girl for the first time really startled by the anger this man. The French wanted to protest, but Louis interrupted her with an angry cry: – Mademoiselle, I'm not going to expect You! Quickly get dressed and follow me!

The young woman rose, and coming to the Lord, put his hand on his shoulder: – are You mad at me... But why?

Louis took Arabella by the wrist and gently kissed her fingers: – How can I be angry with you, Oh, my lovely angel? You're everything to me: food, drink, air, earth, water, the sun and the moon. Without you I am nothing, nor the king, neither man nor man. Your hair, your eyes and mouth – for me the most beautiful in this world. Do not worry for nothing, my love, – the Lord has his hand to his lush lips of Mademoiselle de Frase.

– Then tell me, what will I be for you: wife or concubine?

– We'll talk about it then, the king leaned over and handed Arabella her dress: – now, come on.

The girl, wearing the outfit that went after the Governor. He brought the French out of the basement and calling the footman, said: «While my lady settled in her old room. Later I'll have to find the best apartments with terrace and maids room. And yet, call me in my chambers Mrs. Mocenigo.

The king went to his bedchamber. In his heart raged a strange feeling, both pleasurable and frightening. «Arabella murmured the monarch. This name seemed to the king bittersweet. It was in harmony, peace, but worry, fear. Louis walked over to the fireplace, watching the fire that consumes the dry branches. So needless to experience and destroyed in the soul Louie, everything is fine.

A knock at the door interrupted the thinking of the sovereign. In the nearly silent office came a gentleman.

– Your Majesty, You wished to see me?

– Meet Mocenigo, – the Lord sat at the table: – Declare all that now, miss Arabella de Frase is my legitimate favorite, bring her in the highest rank of lady-in-waiting and best mark chambers in this Palace. I increase her monthly salary to four times.

The gentleman raised his eyes. The Italian knew his master, imperious and severe, which no one really disliked, and now he's with passionate fervor was talking about a beautiful French woman.

– Mocenigo, I have found happiness and peace near Arabella. Her lips, eyes and voice became my Paradise. But you... when you find your love? – with a smile asked forces.

The young man flushed, but his eyes went cold and went out: «Your Majesty, my beloved wife Clarissa was everything to me. You know, her dying is still in my ears. As much as I tried, I can't forget her.

«My friend, your wife was very good woman. But, dying, she wanted for you was happiness. May she live forever in your memory but in your heart needs to appear different.

Wound, aching for many years, will not be delayed for another moment. And I am proud that this bloody scar, like a fragrant rose, reminds me of Clarissa, wishing to translate the conversation in a more pleasant direction, a gentleman told: – Sir, today there arrived a messenger, he brought a letter from her Majesty Marie de Medici.

– Well, call him. Let's see what wishes, mother, "Signor several times clapped his hands, ordering rascaldom to enter. The young man bowed respectfully, and held out a neatly folded sheet of paper, stapled heavy, the Royal seal.

– Hey, man, how the Queen mother? I hope in good health?

– With the Queen-mother well, it is night and day prays for your well-being meters. The wedding planning is in full swing, my Lord.

In the office silence. Mocenigo was embarrassed, dropped his eyes, sympathetically glancing at the king. The Italian knew perfectly well that his master does not want this marriage, but not dared to oppose his majestic mother. And miss Arabella would not stand such a blow.

– Tell the Queen that let the Infanta is not yet come. I'm too busy to meet the Princess bride. The rest I personally write my mother, and you'll give the letter. The audience was over.

When the messenger left the chambers, Signor, at the behest of the king, began to read:

«Oh, my great son, the ruler and brave warrior, the Lord Almighty grant you good health and happiness! I've heard rumors about blessed be your glorious deeds. The whole nation admires you, and not cease to say that the mighty monarch gave homes to poor people, widows and the elderly, orphans ordered to write to the local guest houses and monasteries, built new estates! Now no one is hungry and begging. I hope that soon, with the permission of the Almighty, take grandchildren on hand, and our glorious dynasty will continue. Bless you, my Lord.

The Queen mother Marie de Medici»

– Write the lady that if her desire to marry me is so great, I will submit to him and will wait for her wedding day. You can go.

– As you command, Your Majesty, – bowed, nobleman departed.

Jesse diligently combed the hair of Arabella, because the young mistress was preparing for the upcoming night with the king.

«Today I am going with Louis, – sweetly handed it to the girl, meticulously examining his face in a small, gold mirror.

You were very lucky, mA'am. Not everyone has the opportunity to become the lover of the monarch, thoughtfully, "replied the maid.

– Are you jealous? – smiled beauty.

– What Are You? I'm just proud of You, my lady, rising from the couch, the girl was put on the scarlet lips and the brilliant lipstick: is My outfit ready?

– Of course, Mademoiselle. The seamstress was able to create out of the ordinary piece of fabric a real work of art.

Dressed in a white dress made of smooth silk and decorated with pearl beads, a young woman went into the bedchamber of the Lord.

– The king awaits me, "said the guards Arabella. Bowing, the guards missed the favorite.

Once inside the chambers, the girl with a smile bowed in reverence. The king ordered his mistress to come: – Oh, my beloved, come you lit up these gloomy walls.

The daughter of the Duke sat down opposite Louis and wrapped her arms about his strong shoulders, gently muttering: «I'm so over you missed. My Lord, Lord of my heart, without you, not nice to me nor days, nor nights, for you are my sun and moon.

– I've been thinking all day about you, my beautiful maiden. Your eyes, like stars, illuminate my true path. I swear, I've never felt my heart, soul, body and mind belong to the most beautiful woman.

– This is what I dream of. For me the most important thing is to be your place of happiness and peace. Because only with me you will gain it all, "Arabella de Frase lowered his blue, beautiful eyes.

– You doubt my love? – in the voice of Syrah came the rebuke, and she regretted that he had spoken these words.

– What are you? I have no doubt, and just want to hear it with my own ears. To hear what I am to you only, and no other, and never will be!

– Then listen, – the ruler touched the lips of Arabella's lips and whispered: – You are the one, special, unique. In the whole world no other, because you're my fiancée, mistress, lover. Those lips, eyes, hair. Don't doubt me, rose. My loyalty and love for you is boundless, Louis gently put his arm around Arabella.

The following days stretched with a constant serenity. A young woman has entered the rank of lady-in-waiting, and now she can with ease and dignity attend balls and feasts. The king showered his young lover with all sorts of gifts: he was giving me expensive jeweler, luxurious dresses and Slavic fur, which was famous throughout Europe. Of course, she felt that in addition to monarch, Jesse and Mrs. Mocenigo her no one else loved in the Palace. Aristocrat saw the young mistress only rival, and he was angry on themselves because of the impossibility of even Flirty take a look in the direction of the adorable women.

But carefree life in a moment just collapsed. Louis began to move away from Arabella, coming up with pretexts and excuses. All night the girl waited for the Lord in the hope that he would come to her, will embrace, will kiss, but the young woman's bed remained cold and empty.

– The Lord didn't love her anymore, "he whispered to the court beauties.

Of course, Mademoiselle de Frase continued to believe in the love of his Majesty, but unless she could assume, what is actually the reason?

Once Arabella was out walking with Jesse in the garden. Cool wind developed the sparkling, red hair women in the wind, caressed the face, as if trying to comfort him, but pensive lady just aimlessly walked down the alley.

«Something the matter, Milady? You are so sad, "came the voice of a maid peeling off your face lace veil: – You don't listen to gossip, walking around the Palace.

– I don't listen to gossip, I listen to my heart. It feels the approach of trouble. I'm afraid of. Inside some nasty com, ' replied the lady, sadly contemplating the drops of dew on the green grass.

– Be calm, Mademoiselle. Rely on the mercy of the Lord, "smiled the maid, crossing himself three times, fending off misfortune.

Arabella turned to leave, but suddenly heard the cry of a Herald: His Majesty king Louis XIII! – the two girls sat down in a low curtsy. The Emperor came up to Arabella: What are you doing here so early?

– Lord, I went out, pale lips spoke Parisian.

Noticing the sadness on the face of the concubines, Louis gently raised her chin and looked into clouded unclear pain of the eye: – why are you so sad? Did something happen?

– Sir, – a young woman's voice trembled and broke, and the eyes were full of tears:

– Why are you avoiding me? What did I do wrong? Don't you love me? The ruler of France smiled, but abruptly withdrew his hand, as if sensing the touch of fire: – Silly, where in your head

these thoughts? Dry your tears, don't cry. The mistress of the king do not go to these silver tracks on her cheeks, suddenly in the voice, Louis felt the icy steel, and his eyes flashed a ruthless spark of hatred and anger: – You have to be obedient and quiet, to do everything that I say. Trust me, it's for your own good. If I several times rejected your «invitation» for the night, so I had to. Tonight come to me tonight.

When the monarch had gone, Mademoiselle continued to stand motionless. It seemed to her that inside, everything is enveloped in fire. She didn't understand why tears are still flowing cheeks, and the heart continues to race wildly inside. This wind that develops in the air the leaves and her hair, did not Bode well. Excitement choked Arabella. Sudden rain washed away from the face of Parisian beauties salty drops, but also sowed confusion in the minds of girls. With the first clap of thunder the young woman realized that the king was suspected of treason and infidelity. But this thought pierced by a fiery arrow don't mind the French, and her heart. To through not to get wet, the lady went briskly up the marble staircase, flooded with rain.

On the evening of the sad beauty was sitting in front of the fire and reading an ancient book. She wasn't going to night with Louis, because I knew deep down that this night will not. Jesse, bringing her mistress a glass of water, asked in surprise: «are You ready? The hour is getting late.

– I think the monarch will not call me.

– Madam, but he himself said that he wants today to see You in his chambers.

– It's only words...

– Milady, what is wrong with You? There something you hiding from me?

– Poor me, Jesse, very badly. I don't understand why in the eyes of the Lord was the cold, the indifference, contempt. I've never noticed. Can be seen, there is some terrible secret.

– Here comes the footman, and say that his Majesty wants to take his beautiful, beloved mistress. Then You have dispelled doubt.

– God forbid, "sighed Arabella de Frase.

Suddenly there came a persistent knocking at the door and on the threshold appeared a servant.

– The monarch is calling me? – anxiously asked the young woman.

– No, Mademoiselle, his Majesty said that today's don't want You to see, and told them to cancel the preparations for the night.

Get out! – screamed the girl.

«Madam,» the confused footman made a hesitant step forward.

– Get out! Get out of my face! – the girl frantically got out of bed. Staggering, the unhappy went to the door, through which came the sound of steps moving away the frightened servants. The young mistress knew that it was time for the truth, no matter how bitter it was.

– My lady, please don't do this! Don't go there! The king even more angry! A woman can't...

– I know, Jesse, that woman has nothing, she has no right to someone to disobey, to raise his eyes, to Express their opinion, has no right to be happy! But I will not be silent just because I am a woman! – the girl, like a storm, ran out from her chamber and ran down the corridor to the bedchamber of Louis. Arabella knew that will no longer tolerate the deceit and contempt on the part of the monarch. Either he loves her and will never betray or let openly about the affair. Fortunately, the guards were not at their posts and a young woman, suppressing his fear and uncertainty, came to the door, hearing the conversation perfectly, Signora Mocenigo and Louis.

– Your Majesty, it's the message from king Philip III. Anne of Austria is on the way and will arrive soon to the Palace.

– Oh, if I could not take her marriage... This unwelcome marriage, like fetters, binds me with a Princess.

– But, sire, this is the wedding, the formality, the signature on the documents. You know what really will be nothing...

– No, my friend, will... Will be a real marriage. Not only the merging of two dynasties, but also the fusion of bodies. I had also thought, why did the kings survive, oppress themselves, suffer, marrying unloved, I thought, so easy to say: «You are only my Queen, but not his wife». It turns out that these words very difficult to pronounce. Mother wants to hold her grandchildren, how could I resist her will? This woman will lie down in my bed pure and undefiled virgin, and get up full consort to the monarch of France. The orders were not created to be broken, Mocenigo, – wanting to translate a Frank conversation in an official shape, the Archbishop said: – See that my bride was given the most luxurious room and the most industrious servants, and met, according to our tradition. Declare to all Europe that soon at the foot of the throne of the Bourbons sit Princess—the Princess of the Habsburg dynasty – Austrian Anna!

«As you wish, Your great Majesty! – bowed to the Italian.

Arabella swayed. On her forehead a cold sweat, my chest tightened, not allowing to breathe freely. The girl frantically grabbed the ledge of the wall, trying to stand on trembling legs. Honest monarch, worthy lover, a strong man, could not be so despicable to do that to my minion! Whatever it was, Arabella didn't want to believe it. But this harsh reality forced myself to accept. Merciless fate decided to permanently separate the two lovers. Though perhaps it was not the share, and whimsy of Louis. The young woman closed her beautiful face ALGID hands. Now Mademoiselle de Frase had no strength even to tears and sobs. Inside was nothing but the emptiness so cold, barren, but at the same time and pour all-consuming fire. The pain seemed endless without the point touching the mind. The Duke's daughter, did not dare to raise his eyes as the whole world seemed mired in hatred and suffering, and the walls squeezed on all sides.

Beauty with a trembling hand opened the door of the room master. The king, seeing the mistress, with displeasure looked at each other with their senior Advisor: – What is she doing here? – muttered the Royal son of Marie de Medici – Who let her in here without my permission?

– I'll find everything out. Don't worry, sir, "the nobleman quickly walked over to Arabella, ready to put her out the door like a common peasant, but suddenly the French woman swayed, and only through strong hands, Mocenigo managed to stand on the legs give way: – That with You?

The young woman raised his blank, red eyes, and, pushing the Italian, approached the table of the king: «You betrayed me, – the miserable voice came through the pain and regret.

Frowning, Louis has pretended that does not understand what he is talking about his mistress: – What do you mean? How dare you...

– Don't deny it. I know that the Spanish Princess is your bride, future woman. But why?.. Do I deserve such treatment? What did I do wrong? That was loyal and obedient fool, fulfill all your whims? That for the sake of your false promises have left home, the mother, have forgotten their past? «Arabella felt like with every minute her eyes filled with salty drops, and the body trembles. Now the lovely mouth girls talked about everything that was on her broken heart. But even hundreds of truthful speeches and dialects could not tell that unbearable pain that felt abandoned woman. This fire burned a Frenchwoman from the inside, turned into raging flames, and even an ocean of tears could not put out, only revenge could overcome this awful feeling of emotional pain and torture harsh fate.

Rough and loud voice of the king brought the girl from sad thoughts: – who are You, that I have reported to you before?! The Queen, or my wife think you are?! Get out and don't ever that to me to arrange! – Lord nodded, Mocenigo, that he brought a daring lover. But Arabella de Frase began to scream and to escape: – Kill me! Penalty! Do what you want! You've ruined me without butchers and without a sword, even when the first time had been deceived and betrayed! Even the most terrible blows of the whip is nothing compared to the wound that's in my heart! But nobody, will never see, and will not understand what suffering can cause as it seems the most wonderful feeling on Earth. You know, love is sweet only in look but bitter to the taste. What do you say?! Needless to say, king?! Or did you realize what you've done?!

The monarch so abruptly jumped up from the table, a crystal decanter, filled with aromatic, dense wine, with a crash fell on the carpet and smashed to pieces. Louis angrily walked over to his mistress, and seizing her hand, hissed like a wild, enraged beast: – Immediately shut up. Otherwise...

– Otherwise what? haughtily asked the charming French.

Male jerk took from his belt a dagger with a Golden handle, and held a blade to the neck of a young woman: – Otherwise you will lose life, unworthy slave! I'll kill you right here, on this spot, to deliver thee, like you said, from the love that lived in your heart! the king stared into the eyes of Arabella, anticipating what a feeling raging in her soul. Tears dripped from the eyes of the girl, but the monarch, in a region filled with rage, slashed her blade. The blade nicked his neck not shocked the French, and the lower part of the left cheek. Blood, like bloody flowers blossomed on the dagger. But Arabella had not even cried from the pain because this wound is nothing compared to the one that bleeds in the shower.

Mr. Mocenigo ran up to Louis and grabbed his wrist, anxiously said: «Not necessary, Your Majesty! Let go of the knife, please!

Monarch sharply pushed a young woman and hit him in the face so violently that the poor thing fell on the floor: Get rid of her. Don't let this snake catches my eye! the nobleman gently lifted the French woman quietly, almost silently whispered, "for God's Sake, shut up. Do not argue with the Lord.

The daughter of the Duke boldly grabbed his hand at the man.

– This sin will remain on you, king! – quickly having sat down in a curtsy, Arabella ran out of the chambers of the beloved.

The girl, once in the hallway, did not hold back their tears. She, sobbing, weeping, frantically turned to the Advisor of the Lord: – Why You didn't tell me? You knew about it! As You is able to hide from me?!

– Mademoiselle, calm yourself. I don't wish You harm. I just feared that, on learning of the wedding, You decide to prevent the arrival of the Infanta, and it will be the beginning of a bloody feud between the two dynasties. Look, I didn't mean to say it, but I will: this marriage is a very important political move, a Union of States. The king can not because of love for a simple girl to disobey orders of the Queen mother, to go against the whole of Spain. The monarchs never married for love, and our Lord, a supporter of the laws and traditions that do not violate this rule. If You really love, then accept, otherwise everything will only get worse. Marriage and love never walked together under this roof. In these palaces, a hundred mistresses of the ancestors of the Bourbons, and each waited patiently for his sovereign, silent, obedient, got what I expected: property, honor and a rare night of love. Having embarked on a minion You from the very beginning agreed with such rules, without even knowing it. Arabella, You are still a concubine of the king, so it was to be. You belong to him, and he occasionally will belong to You.

French woman, swallowing her tears, replied, proudly raised his head: – the fact of the matter is that I remain only a concubine and not..., – the girl suddenly cried from a sharp pain. Fresh wound on his cheek continued to bleed.

My lady, You have a deep cut. You need to handle it immediately, "observed the gentleman, touching the bloody cheek of Mademoiselle de Frase.

Madam, moving away from the lady, suddenly hissed an evil voice, "Get off of me! Don't touch me! – a young Parisian woman, sobbing, ran down the hallway. Nobleman a sad look accompanied Arabella. The man didn't even try to catch up with the mistress of his master, to calm, to give friendly advice, for he knew perfectly well that if a woman has decided to revenge, she can't get in the way because it will destroy any obstacles, however challenging they may be.

The girl fell to her knees and cried out, bringing the eye to the ceiling: – why, God?! For that you have taken me away from my life, with my beloved king?! What ushered in the love astray?! What did I do to You?! For what sins am I paying?! Have mercy, o Lord, your unworthy servant,

that succumbed to the filthy Vice! Do not punish me more for this blow is the worst! Ice froze my heart, and the relentless fire burnt up the soul! This feeling, like an arrow, plunged into me, haunts me. Why he did it?! Why forced to suffer?! Is this the fee for my love and loyalty? Tell me, Oh, Heavens, what is more important: love in poverty, or loneliness in luxury? My eyes that devoured beautiful form of the beloved, drowning in tears, and in them, except the aching emptiness, nothing more. Why so harsh?

Arabella sat in the corner of the hallway and pulled his knees to his chin, clasping their trembling, bloody hands. Now she already did not cry, but it is a feeling of detachment from the world itself was terrible. It seemed that she was slowly drowning in the ocean of pain and those red, cold eyes never see a ray of sunshine.

He heard the steps... In the light of the dim lamps seemed vague, dark silhouette Jesse. A young maid with a cry fell back, seeing sitting in the shade Mademoiselle de Frase. Fresh blood ran down his cheek rejected mistress, but the French did not pay the slightest attention. The lady's maid, frantically clutching a candle, went to his lady, and, quietly kneeling down, put his hand on the cold wrist Arabella: «What's wrong, Milady? – Jesse's voice was as dull and colorless as the voice of the daughter of the Duke.

The king's mistress, her head turned away and groaned, but so softly that the maid was barely able to decipher the following words: – Take me to my room...

– Madam, where did You get this wound? Who dared You to do this?

– Do not dare to ask. Just do what I ordered, in the girl's voice was heard commanding tone. Not for the first time Jesse felt only the jerk in front of mistress. Gently lifting my lady, the maid led her down the deserted, frightening corridors. English repeatedly asked Arabella, what is it that happened, but the Parisienne was silent, not taking his eyes from the extinct one dead point. It was clear that the king still struck a terrible blow to the one that recently called the beloved, the only rose in the spring garden.

Finally we saw the doors of the bedchamber Mademoiselle de Frase. The maid put Arabella on a soft bed, removing the top lady dress.

– Ma'am, tell me what happened? You're scaring me with his silence and aloofness.

– Irreparable happened! "said the girl.

Jesse sighed and walked over to the cupboard and took the ointment of wild herbs, carefully prepared, rustic old wife is a Gypsy. The lady's maid gently struck liquid, foul—smelling medicine on Arabella's cheek. French woman suddenly exclaimed. This pain led her out of the shock. Just now young beauty felt a chin dripping crimson, like rose buds, a drop of blood.

– Mademoiselle, – asked the mistress English: – Your wound may again start bleeding. And it is unlikely that this ointment will have the desired effect. It might be better to fetch the healer? Let's examine, properly washed, will impose seams.

– No, not necessary. I don't want anyone to know about this... incident. According to the Palace gossip spread faster than the autumn wind. You have to be silent. Understand?

Arabella spoke these words strongly and firmly. Hearing common speech of his lady, the servant girl smiled: – something else?

– I'm tired. Help me go to sleep, "ordered the Parisian, adjusting the folds of the lace negligee. Blue-eyed girl, placing Arabella in bed and extinguish the lamp, departed quietly.

When the door closed behind the maid, the young woman began to sob again. When lady's maid she didn't want to show weakness, but now the French woman was alone, alone with my tears and grief.

Jesse, making sure that Mademoiselle was asleep, decided to investigate Signor, Mocenigo. The maid knew that such a skilled schemer, as chief Advisor, known to all the blazing passion in the Palace.

The maid briskly walked in the dark corridors. Everywhere was dim, only near the blue salon, where he was a Cabinet Minister and important government officials, was burning a small flame. Its dim flame shimmered shades of red blood and the hot sun. The maid frantically clutched in a trembling hand the candle. Night gallery seemed frightening, impenetrable maze. Despite desperate bravery, the girl exclaimed, seeing a shadow moving near the wall. It was rumored that at night the Palace man penetrates, hunting for one of honor, once tarnished his honor. Jessie shuddered when she remembered that recently in the Laundry room was found murdered woman, maid of honor, Madame de Rua. She said that a few years ago at the behest of the eldest brother married a cruel and ruthless count who abused her, screamed, belittled, even beaten. Unable to withstand the violence of Madame de Rua decided to go, so in love with her groom. The fugitives soon found that the boy was killed, and the woman managed to escape in the French court. But that didn't stop the enraged, insulted the man and he began to retaliate. Anyone who got in his way, fell with a slit throat.

Maid extinguished the candle, and pressed his whole body against the wall, hoping her wouldn't notice. But instead shadows seemed even—contoured silhouette, clearly belonged to the man: broad shoulders, oval face, small beard. Jesse closed his mouth, quietly whispered: «Oh, Holy virgin, protect me». The man was coming closer and closer. Hearing his breath, the young woman screamed. But... it was only Mr. Mocenigo.

– You?! – did not keep the exclamation English.

– What are you doing here at midnight? – rudely asked the gentleman.

– Your Excellency, I'm sorry, I didn't recognize You, "hastily curtsied maid.

– Why at such a time you're wandering around the corridors? Haven't you heard the stories about the ruthless killer, prowling here in search of a rebellious wife? Want to become a victim? And who now with Mademoiselle de Frase? How dare you leave her alone?

– I wanted to see You, my Lord. Don't worry, how could I leave my lady? With MS now Fitness.

– I listen to what you need?

– Sir, the last time miss Arabella was continually sad, thinking that his Majesty had changed her. Then they met in the garden. After hearing the speech of the poor ladies, the king asked her to come to him tonight, but then came the footman, and said that the sire changed his mind and does not want to see their favorite. This really angered my lady. She rushed off, most likely in the chambers of the Lord. I tried to stop her, but she wouldn't listen. For a long time it was not. I got worried and went looking. Mademoiselle was sitting on the floor in the gallery in tears and blood... What happened to her? Did the king still struck Arabella is such a horrible, vile attack? Yes how dare he play the feelings of an innocent girl? – Jesse spoke, not watching their threat, treacherous words. The maid had no right to even have a bad word to say about his sovereign, and if these speeches were heard by someone else, then it would be a stupid head flew to the scaffold steps.

The Advisor listened carefully to his companion, but when he had finished, the man threw her to the wall, clutching her throat, through clenched teeth: – who are You, woman, to condemn the decision of the Emperor himself?! You can't even think, dishonorable slave!

The frightened maid was trembling. Her eyes filled with tears of fear. Hand the lady clutched her throat with such force that it was hard to breathe: I'm not guilty..., " the voice of a servant shuddered.

Suddenly, Jessie and the nobleman fell silent. They looked at each other with a strange passion. The maid touched ALGID fingers of the palm, Mocenigo. A friend of the king bent over the girl and their lips connected in a searing kiss. Jesse closed his eyes. Now it seemed to her that the stars are falling from the skies, and nice cool wind wraps around the whole body. The young woman felt his breath, his hot lips and eyes. But it's a love daze lasted only a moment. The maid freed from the sudden embrace, she ran down the hall to his room. Closing the latch on the door, an Englishwoman, breathing heavily, walked over to the mirror. Now she looked worried and scared. Always pale cheeks flamed red color, the eyes glowed with playful lights. Jesse didn't understand what was happening

to her: his heart heaved, his forehead a cold sweat. Why Mr. Mocenigo kissed her? He then felt a slight tug, or a true feeling? The maid admired the chief counselor to the French court for a long time, but now she felt something else – love. But like her usual maid of lower birth could rely on the attention of the most influential schemer Paris?

A dream girl heard a quiet moaning. Getting up from the bed, Jesse came out of his room and walked over to the bed mistress. Arabella, squirming in bed, moaned softly. Leaning over the lady, the maid whispered, trying to reassure her: «Hush, my lady, calm down. It's all good.

But the young woman continued to mumble slurred speech. From her lips escaped the words:– Louis... darling... don't leave me..., Madame screeched awake. Panting, she looked around: – What's wrong with me? Where am I?

– All right. You had a nightmare.

Arabella leaned back on the silk pillows. – Bring me some water.

The maid, by submitting a glass, sat down beside me. After a few SIPS, young mistress, he set his Cup on the crystal table.

The sight of the girl stiffened, and his face became deadly pale.

– Mademoiselle, You are bad. I'll call the doctor, "hastily decided English.

The daughter of the Duke, seizing the maid by the hand, replied sternly: «No, it is not necessary to call the doctor. I just had a horrible dream, "Arabella, never saying a word, got out of bed and headed for the door.

– Where are You, lady? – frightened maid.

I will go out in the garden.

– But now the night – puzzled said Jesse.

– So what? – Arabella, opening the door wide open, went down the stairs. Walking through the passages of the Palace, she went to the garden, separated by glass door. Opening the shutters, she went out to the patio ladies of the manor.

On the street «there was» a deep, impenetrable night. A huge moon, like a white, sparkling ball, filled his moon face of the sky. In the garden was not dark, even despite the fact that there were no burning torches or oil lamps. Yellowed leaves circling in a whirlwind of ruthless, icy wind. Early autumn seemed not beautiful, but harsh and cold.

Arabella motioned Jesse standing in the doorway, to leave.

– But, Madam, You freeze.

– To immediately leave me alone! Get out of here! – shouted a young woman.

Bowing, the maid rushed out.

The daughter of the Duke, falling on the marble bench, summed up his eyes to heaven. Bright star, like a fiery arrow, and disappeared over the horizon. At this time, from the lips of Arabella blurted out the words: – I will not rest until revenge on those who made me suffer...

Early in the morning when everything is still asleep, a lady's maid was quietly embroidering in the alcove of the window. Suddenly appeared in the doorway personal maid Advisor: Jessie Higgins, wishes to see You, his grace Mr. Mocenigo, – notified it.

The maid, turning pale, went to the girl, "Me? What you need sir is the counselor?

– I do not know. But You have to come to him immediately.

– I can't leave Mademoiselle de Frase itself. Fitness and went to the port to the dying father, "protested the maid.

– Don't worry. Until Your return I'll stay with mistress. Yes and she is asleep.

Nodding, the English lady took from a chest made of ivory, a veil and covered her hair. According to the laws of decency, woman, before meeting a man for the position above it, was hiding her hair under a cloak. Only a married lady, aged more than forty years, could not cover the head.

French yard was huge and consisted of several castles. In one of these palaces lived the ladies of the court, concubines, ladies-in-waiting and maids. Of course, the Queen was his estate, separated

by corridors. In another castle was located advisers, ambassadors and all the men of the Royal court. And the possession of the king were everywhere. He also had his Palace, but most often was in the men's yard. To get there, needed to pass all the estate.

Every step Jesse was constrained and the cowardly. Her movements were present timidity. Inside, everything was burning. This feeling seemed like a lovely girl, but nasty. Pulses were beating in his heart escaped from the breast, the whole body trembling like a leaf in the wind. The maid was now in a daze unusual, even though he knew that her lover, Mocenigo can punish. But even a death sentence from the lips of the noble English woman seemed sweet and unforgettable. A whirlwind of feelings prevailed mind and confidence. Anyway, the maid couldn't forget the passionate kiss, beautiful, love. Jesse suddenly caught myself thinking that I'd give everything for one such touch.

Deeply immersed in their dreams, the maid did not notice how came to the study adviser. Now she had to knock and with a bow to enter the chambers of the Lord. But the place of this young girl, yielding to love the Vice, it went into a niche of the wall, and without knocking came in front of the Signor. He looked at the strange newcomer. But in his simple view was no surprise, no love, no anger, only indifference.

– Jesse – a little rough voice, Mocenigo brought the maid from the meditation.

– Your Excellency, I'm sorry, I was thinking, bowed in reverence the young maid.

«Hello, Jesse,» the Italian said in a calm tone, as if between them nothing happened last night.

– Sir, You wished to see me.

The nobleman stood up from the table, made from mahogany, and walked over to the maid: «Young lady, I would like to talk to You on a very important subject, – the face of the EA was so close to Jesse that the young woman closed her eyes, imagining how Mocenigo, takes her in his arms. Now she wanted again to feel that great feeling.

Jessie, moonlight, do not dream of what will never be.

A shiver ran over the body of an English woman. She shyly lifted up his gray eyes. – What are You?

– Do not pretend you do not understand what I'm talking about, girl. That kiss didn't mean anything. It was only a gust. But You made a very big mistake. And for each mistake you need to be able to pay. And for your You'll pay too.

– ... What should I do? You'll kill me? – not even fear, but a surprise has struck the heart of Jesse.

Signor, smiling, took the maid by the hand and led him to the window. His touch was not gentle, but the lady's maid dreamed that this moment lasted an eternity.

– See? «asked the gentleman, pointing to the Bank of the river Seine.

Jesse cried. Ugly sight appeared before her eyes...

The sight of a maid was chained to the coast, where two strong men dressed in the garb of cops, dragged over the rocks woman. From the mouth of the unfortunate tried to escape the terrible screaming. The poor thing was down to the river and put him on his knees. As if she had not escaped, two strangers threw her on the neck with silk cord and tightened it up. After a few minutes the woman was already dead. Her lifeless body was put in a bag and thrown into the cold waters of the Seine.

From the mouth of a lady's maid once again cry, but this time he's muffled and quiet. From what I have seen of nightmare from an English girl felt dizzy, dark eyes. As she staggered, she raised her gaze to the nobleman: – why kill her?

– This girl was a highly respected special, the daughter of a Norman nobleman. The last years she lived at court, and was engaged with the count Bekinski. Once in the hallway the maid saw her in the arms of the Viscount of Anjou, my best friend. That is what the poor thing was executed, strangled and drowned in the water.

– What happened with the Viscount?

– He was sent into exile in Milan. From now on, there he is in the estate of Risoy.

– Why did You call me? – the tears gushed from his eyes, Jesse.

– I wanted You to look like ladies punish the guilty.

The young woman's lips twisted in a sarcastic smile: – And You kill me so naturally, like just did that the heartless gendarmes?

– It was not me, and the king. And on Your m the shame will be known all over France. I will be nothing. I am the chief Advisor of our master, I – man, You're just a pathetic woman, "Mr. ran her hand across the cheek of the maid.

Mocenigo, spoke these words threateningly and viciously. From his words, gaze and touch, she felt fear. With downcast eyes, she depressed voice said: – What do You want from me?

– Jesse, my moonlight, you know you're about to get a penalty, maybe a link, or marriage. Are you ready for it?

– I'll do anything you want. Just please, don't tell anyone about this shame – whatever it was, the British feared for his life.

«That's better, – a nobleman squeezed the wrist Jesse with such force that she cried. «Now listen to me carefully, girl. Miss Arabella trusts you fully. You know all its mysteries and secrets. Now you're going to follow her every move and report to me.

Jesse froze. In her eyes there were tears shining: – what do You take me: a traitor or a spy? I'll never spy on his mistress!

– Jesse, if you forgot, I'm not only a loyal friend, my lady, but also a subject of our king. Now she's in a terrible condition and I fear that in anger she might commit some mistake. I want to know about every act, to prevent trouble. If you disagree, then you expect a penalty.

The young woman meekly nodded, trying to smile in agreement. But inside raged a storm. Grey eyes were blank and bottomless.

– Your smile is a sign of consent?

Jesse closed his eyes, trying to hold back tears: – I do not have the right to oppose Your instructions, my Lord.

Signor, leaning close to the girl, he ran his fingers over her cheek. – But be careful. At every step You can trap the trap.

– I understood everything. Don't worry. I... I will be loyal to You until the end of his days. Do not doubt my loyalty to You, sir.

Hearing desirable, the Advisor nodded at the door, ordering the maid to leave the bedchamber. Quickly bowing, Jesse hurried off. In the eyes of she «stood» tears, heart unpleasantly pricked. The maid had a feeling like she needs to betray the whole world. Now she was between two fires. All the way the lady's maid, with downcast eyes, pressed her hands to his chest...

Chapter 7

Entering the room, the Englishwoman saw Arabella. A young woman sat at a glass table and combing her brown hair and her face froze.

Fear gripped Jesse. The maid bowed in reverence, trying to hide his excitement. Mistress walked over to the lady and examined her from head to toe. From her gaze on the back of the pallet just got a chill.

– Where have you been? – the voice of the rejected mistress sounded like thunder from a clear sky.

– Mademoiselle... I...

– Immediately answer my questions! cried Mademoiselle de Frase.

«Madam... I... in the garden was walking, "said Jesse, lowering his eyes shamefully.

– Don't lie to me, girl! I see what you're up to bad things! Speak! I listen to your excuses!

– Madam, what are You? You doubt my loyalty?

– I have enough evidence, "said Arabella.

– Mademoiselle, if You do not believe in my devotion, then listen up: I was called Mr. Mocenigo.

– And what did he want?

– Told you... I ...followed You. And all reported to him. I had no other choice and I agreed. But know this, I'm true to only You.

With a heavy sigh, Arabella walked over to the table and laid a Golden comb, and said: – You're very smart, Jesse. But be attentive and extremely careful. Our enemies have already begun to act. It's time for us to defend.

– What kind of enemies You say, my lady?

– Maybe Anne of Austria already learned that in the Palace of her bridegroom lives a certain mistress at the time who had power over him. Of course, my powerful rival has already started to take action. And her first step was shadowing me through Mocenigo. And he, as you know, is too cowardly to rebel or to disobey the Infanta of Habsburg. Now one thing is clear, sir betrayed me and sided with the Spanish flu.

I don't think so, my lady. As You said, his grace is too fearful. He did not dare to organize a conspiracy against You. Because he knows and feels Your strength and superiority. I think it is better not to quarrel with him. Don't forget that Mocenigo is the best friend of his Majesty and the chief adviser to the high post. Gentleman knows all the Affairs of state. Besides, he recently held talks with the ambassadors of the Spanish king Philip III. Please note the fact that Anna's father is Portuguese and the Lord. Have you ever thought of becoming the ruler of the French lands? Theoretically, You have that right. After all, Your late father, the Duke de Frase Renski was Lord Marcel, Leon and Bern. You, as his legitimate daughter, could control those cities, to establish County and to become master of those estates.

Arabella was struck by the witty maid. She was an expert in political matters no worse than the miss. – That may be so, but I'm not Duchess are Lanskoj. All my inheritance went to my older brother Geoffroy Overseas. And he, as you know, the husband of lady Martinez de Hired, awnings Worswick, the most influential and rich woman in Western Europe. Yes, and I don't know where he is now. When I was little, and lived in Bern, Geoffroy often came to me, gave expensive gifts, together we walked throughout the province. I remember I'd sit on his lap, listening to his fascinating stories. But he treated me like a poor orphan who in his eyes was pity. And I hated that feeling. I wanted to be his sister, but not trust. When I was growing up, our relationship became cold. Proud of my brother dared to tell me to be rude and sometimes even raised a hand to me. We fought a lot. But

after he left, my foster mother scolded me, saying that I implicitly obeyed my «kindred master.» I was a naughty girl.

On the cheeks of a young woman tears flowed. She sighed and said: «After the incident, I realized that even the people you think are closest and family, any minute can bring, to change, to cause pain and suffering. It's been too many years. Unfortunately, my proud brother had forgotten me, your poor sister, terrified of all the forces in the fire. Now I really need it, but reality doesn't change, and not to return to the past, to live it in a new way with old knowledge.

Arabella, brushing with eyelash salty drops, stood up and walked over to a carved chest made of ivory. Opening the Golden lid, the girl pulled out some parchment. Putting it in his waistband, Mademoiselle, going to the door, Jessie said: «Come with me.

On the maid's face there was surprise and curiosity, but an Englishwoman, was silent, nodded, and went after his mistress. Arabella de Frase briskly walked down the hallway. Downstairs, the girl turned to the transition of the male estate.

– Mademoiselle, where are we going? To the king?

– Don't ask questions, just follow me.

Bowing, the maid dutifully continued on. Before the girls thought the office door Mrs. Mocenigo. At the threshold stood a gentleman himself. Seeing the young lady, his face appeared frightened and bewildered. Perhaps he was expecting to see a tortured, tear-stained lady Arabella. But this pitiful sight, before his eyes appeared strong, beautiful lady. As required by the rules of decency, counselor politely bowed and stepped towards Mademoiselle. The woman smiled and bent in a low curtsy, and said: – Your Excellency, I salute You. How Are You? I hope in good health? in Arabella's voice sounded false and selfish notes. Noticing this, the Italian replied: «Mademoiselle, I thought after last night You did not make a step out of your room. But You smile. Or Your tears were dried up, and the pain is gone? Does not fit, fair mistress with high altitude head, to endure all the blows of fate... and the king. Aren't you, lady Jessie?

The young maid winced and exchanged glances with the lady.

– Leave us, "ordered the girl. The maid quickly disappeared in the Central niche of the wall.

– Mr. Mocenigo! «cried Arabella. – What are You doing?!

– Calm down, my lady. Why this aggression?

– I know everything is fine. And about what You ordered Jesse to follow me and report to You, I also know!

The gentleman wagged her head, pretending not to understand what was going on with me, what kind of nonsense are You talking about?

– Don't lie to me! Enough! I'm fed up with Your truthful words! – sarcastically chuckled French. One young woman movements took from his corset of white paper and handed it to the man: – Take. Maybe it's You.

Glancing askance at his companion, Mocenigo, taking the sheet, started to read it. From reading the EA eyes widened. But Arabella had suddenly become funny from his facial expressions. – What... what is it? – haltingly, asked the Italian.

– You know better. Because Your lordship wrote to Anne of Austria that at the Palace of her future husband has some problem preventing it to easily occupy the French court and the bed of the king. This is me – Spanish problem for her Highness?

– Madame...

– Sir, You betrayed me! And so began my enemy! And when they shall fall, and You shall know defeat!

The next morning the young woman woke up from the noise. Outside the door of her room was heard loud talking and constant steps. The French girl heard the words: «If we don't make it to the evening, we head cut off!

In these speeches, she felt the threat and evil. Getting up, she went down to the gallery. There the maids were busy decorating the walls and the ceiling with garlands and flowers. Huge candle holders and torches set in the corners of the corridor, flooded with light. From the kitchen wafted a pleasant smell of fresh food, high in carafes poured the wine.

– What’s going on here? – In this noise no one heard the question, Mademoiselle. Favorite saw among the maids, mistress Adele Wake. This lady was the main housekeeper of the women’s yard. Only this kind old woman the daughter of the Duke could be trusted: – Miss Wake, please come.

– Listening to You, Elise beauty – Adel was very fond of Arabella, said she has replaced her daughter. But, alas, the mellowness does not always help in life. This woman hardly knew what a mother’s love and father’s attention, didn’t know how to play it on a Sunny day in the yard with my friends, like to enjoy every single day. In childhood she had a very stern parents, who gave his only daughter in a remote, dilapidated monastery.

At nineteen the girl was preparing to take the veil. But shortly before the ceremony, the abbess received a letter from mother to miss the Wake. She wrote that recently her husband died and left no inheritance. Mistress, Margaret was left without money, and the only way was to give her daughter to marry an old but wealthy blacksmith. Adele all the forces opposed to this unwanted marriage. She never wanted to give himself as a sacrifice to the old man. When the Prelate was allowed ladies Wake to meet my mother in the chapel, Margarita didn’t even hug the daughter, although not seen her in over ten years. But Adele did not know his mother. She vaguely remembered her: fragile, dark-haired, with green, like cat eyes. Now before her stood a fat, gray, with dull eyes, a foreign woman. There was nothing familiar. Margaret always dressed brightly and tastefully, but now her mourning black attire evoked tears from young novices.

Anyway, the girl no what persuasion did not yield. When the mother superior of Haring called to his ward and asked why she did not want to get married, Adele said they would only be the Bride of the Lord. In fact, the inhabitant of the monastery did not want to make vows, but it is better to become a nun, cut off from the world, what the wife of the old man. On this mother rudely told that it was necessary to think earlier. After all, a rules, all had become Brides of the Lord in sixteen years, not later, but Adele refused, deciding to think about before you make a confident step in a different future. If then she obeyed the Holy sister, she would not have the right to take a young woman from the convent. The Prelate urged the novice to accept the marriage, saying, «you chose this road. Gave in to my desires. You always wanted to be free. Now you are free bird in the hands of the husband of this». Adele realized that the Holy mother will not help her and will only push into an unwanted marriage.

A few days sister – the Deputy called the girl in the garden, and gave her a linen dress and gold earrings. The young woman was surprised at first, but then dressed in a unique toilet, went to the gazebo. On embroidered pillows sat, sulky man, age fifty-five. His clothes immediately became clear that it is a respected and rich man: a velvet tunic with fur and processed starch, dark blue cloak waves falls to the floor, a gray-haired, wavy hair suede covers the hood. But even this luxurious robe could not decorate. Adele didn’t like the exterior of this gentleman. Huge beard, spiky, blue eyes, thin lips, slim body, sharp nose. His gaze at the girl dizzy. She didn’t understand why the presence of some old – timer negatively affects it.

Beside him sat two women. One was very beautiful: a slender, tall, with brown hair, braided in a thick braid. A thin waist was a tight fit brown dress, sewn from wolf skins, and his belt could be seen a few gold keys. Another, by contrast, was a fat, stout woman no longer young years, dressed in a shapeless bag.

Nearby stood the mother superior, and miss Margaret. Holy mother whispered something to her sister, the Queen of both, and she ordered the novice to collect rose and bowed to present them to the slender woman. Adele did. Then the girl learned that the man was her fiance, and it turns out he’s a Dane and those two, my lady – his «Danish wife.» The pretty lady was his first, lawful wife,

whom he married and laid in marriage. Her name was Mrs. Dorse (gift of God). A woman became a favorite of sir Eringa, his mistress every night, carrying the keys to the house. And the old lady was just a concubine, whose passion cooled long ago, but to kick the woman the old man could not because of old Danish customs.

Defiant and rebellious Adele was not going to put up with such a fate. She decided to run away. Better to die in wandering, than in the house of a libertine. But the monastery is very well guarded. The novice was forced to ask for help from Dorsa. The woman at first refused, saying that he will not commit sin, helping the bride to escape from the upcoming wedding. And then she saw no threat in ugly dweller of the monastery.

But Adele started to hang out with her future husband, laughing, said that looking forward to the upcoming wedding. Legal wife began to notice that her lover was interested in his bride. In Dorse awakened jealousy. She decided to help Adele to escape, knowing that the way to get rid of a dangerous rival.

At night, when the convent all asleep, women, wrapped in dark cloaks, came to the slippery Bank of the Seine. In the dark waters could be seen the wooden boat. At dusk the girl could not understand, who in it sits. The lady said that the man – mute boatman, and besides a faithful servant. Adele always feared water, but, overcoming his fear, sank to the bottom of the old boat.

The city fell dawn. A young woman, her head bowed, praying. She felt like a sinner, but deep down even rejoiced that were able to gain long-awaited freedom. The boat quietly floated down the gentle current. When they sailed to the opposite shore, Adele climbed on the slippery plain, and looked into the distance. Everywhere was still dark, only the faint light of dawn illuminated the overgrown with moss road. There was nowhere to go. Ahead the dense forest. As already ended in October, the air was filled with a sharp chill. Whole days were torrential rains, the wind broke the branches. The fugitive knew that in such weather conditions cannot survive. It was necessary to find some house in which to spend the winter and spring to continue the path. In Hungary, lived close friend Adele. That, too, three years ago was in the monastery, but soon married a Hungarian and moved to his homeland. But in the fall and the journey was dangerous. Because of the constant storms and hurricanes Galera could drown, and the fugitive had no money.

The whole day a young woman wandered through the forest. Her thin cloak was completely soaked, feet stuck in the mud, was horribly hungry. When evening came, Adele was forced to sleep under a tree, but was unable to close his eyes. Hearing a sound, the girl shuddered. Night in the forest, all seemed to her suspicious and scary. The young woman spent wandering two days. She ate wild berries and a few times killed hares. But more so could not continue. The first snow fell... From cold Adele just fell in the snow and fell asleep. Once the fugitive is quite exhausted. It is the last effort was to not lose consciousness. Before it seemed the rider... The girl wanted to rush to him, ask for help, but her strength ebbed. Unhappy fell under capita horse...

The novice of the monastery came to some room. She was lying on the couch, surrounded by warm, comes from the fireplace. The French could not understand where she is. Adele barely got out. Opening the heavy door, she descended the stairs. But suddenly heard footsteps. It was a man. It was he who saved her lying unconscious. Adele was grateful to this young handsome man. But after learning that her Savior is the Marquis Bonaparte – confused. Yes, and this gentleman without shame said that can't keep it in his castle another woman. Adele was silent. She did not dare to tell sir William, that is a runaway nun. For then a noble aristocrat would have returned his guest to the parents and future husband. But the Marquis agreed to adopt the girl to a full recovery. Adele was very pleased with the decision. Her master was very generous and honest sir. He identified his guest, a separate bedchamber, hired the best doctor. The fugitive was happy. She lived in the warmth and luxury, had his servants, ate delicious food. This carefree life lasted only two weeks. After that, Mr. Boyar sky told the young woman that he knew about her past life. About how she escaped from the Holy walls of the monastery, breaking the commandments of the Lord.

The frightened girl dropped to her knees, begging the Marquis to return her to the convent. He angrily answered, so she obediently returned to my room and waited for his decision. Adele waited. But she soon learned that William had spared his ward and decided not to give her parents. The place that he, as a loyal servant of Marie de Medici, had a talk with my lady and asked to take Adele to the Palace. She agreed. Two years, the noblewoman were taught everything they should know about lady of the French court. And, when the teaching was over, the Queen made her an enemy alien by the assistant chief housekeeper of the women's yard. Adele Vila calculations, followed by the servants. When the housekeeper died, the girl began to take her place. This position taught «not held on a nun» be firm and persistent. But all her life, she rules in the service of the Bourbon dynasty.

Arabella was distracted by miss Wijk from the memories.

– Excuse me, Mademoiselle. I just thought. You wanted something?

– Mistress, You're the only person I can trust entirely. Please tell me what's going on? What is this commotion in broad daylight?

The woman frowned. She, stooping to the ear of Mademoiselle de FRASE, whispered: – And You do not know, my poor child? «Arabella didn't understand why the housekeeper called her so. But the woman's voice sounded sad tone and on the face flashed a shadow of confusion.

– What do You miss the Wake? I don't know anything.

– Oh, my girl, I'm so sorry You and Your young, broken heart. But... to keep silent I dare not. Tomorrow morning the Palace will come to Her Majesty Anne of Austria.

Arabella turned pale. Shrinking back, she grabbed the hand carved chest: – tomorrow? – her question was stifled and quiet: – no problem. I will survive all these attacks. My heart already broke into pieces. And this pain that suffocates me, will soon become dull. I'm going to feel it, but... get used to it, – Adele hugged the mistress of the king and, wiping her tears, gently said: «On m Your beautiful face will still Shine bright smile, and Anna, may God punish her for what she became Your rival, sooner or later you will feel all what You feel now.

– Amen! – in the girl's voice sounded sarcastic and spiteful touch: «I have to go, suddenly Arabella found it hard to breathe, chest tight. She wanted to get some fresh air.

Quick step, up the marble steps, the girl, passing through the Central corridor, climbed to the tower. It was dark and damp. Huge, the fireplace wall, hung a wolf pelt kept out the cold. On marble slabs lying fur. The young woman hid her face in the palm of your hand. The cold pierced through the girl's body. But in the cold it was easier for her to breathe. Wrapped in a shawl, daughter of the Duke walked over to the railing, looking out.

The weather was terrible. The storm destroyed everything in its path, broke branches and bushes. But in a Blizzard the mistress wanted to ride.

Wearing warm coat with fur and hat, Belle hurried to the stables. The grooms were horrified to learn that her ladyship decided to jump on the Mare in this weather. But Mademoiselle insisted on horseback. Riding his horse Hurricane, docile and intelligent horse, Arabella, leaping into the saddle, rushed to the field. It was covering her eyes, frost bound the body, but the girl was not afraid to fall from a horse, knowing that is a smart rider. The daughter of the Duke rode past the long avenues and thickets. Arabella looked back. Frost softened a bit, the wind died down. The hurricane began to ride slower and safer. The king's mistress, tied the animal to a tree trunk, jumped to the ground. She came to the river Seine, which is now covered with a crust of ice. The woman sat down on the snow, touching the hand on ice water. Madam closed her eyes, listening to the peaceful flow of the river.

Over the city were doing the sunset. The gray sky covered with red clouds, through which could be seen the dim rays of the sun. The water became purple-blue. It swam away shards of ice. The young woman did not notice, as held on the Bank a lot of time. Twilight, like a dark veil, crowned with a bygone day. The girl was about to leave, but heard a strange rustle. Behind the bushes flashed someone's silhouettes. Mademoiselle de FRASE felt the danger approaching. Her hand, clad in a white glove, lay on the Golden hilt of a dagger, ornamented with precious stones. The French girl

came closer to the cliff, climbed up, turned on the plain. Hiding behind branches, aristocrat saw two peasants. Old men slung over his shoulders firewood homeward. Arabella heard their conversation: «did You hear about what happens at court?

– I have enough of his Affairs. But our king and his Palace do not interest me, "said another.

– Even though we the commoners, but their owners must be judged. After all, we are old, many are told in his life, and the young gentlemen, how many bugs do. And the ruler of our...

What do you mean?

– I heard that the Spanish Infanta Anna, daughter of Philip III, is to marry Louis XIII. Is this right?! As a Catholic, bears the title of defender of Habsburg, who can become Queen of the Huguenots and Protestants. This is unacceptable! Wife of Lord should be someone from the dynasty.

– What can we do, brother? Our duty is to serve the monarch. We cannot forbid the king to marry the Princess. May the Lord himself will decide who will be the Queen of Bourbon.

Arabella smiled. She was glad that the people against the marriage of Louis with Anne of Austria. All felt it was a religious misunderstanding. Perhaps the Lord will listen to the words of his subjects, and not married with a Spaniard. And I dreamed of the lady? If the Princess will not marry the Lord, then there is another...

Sad and depressed, my lady returned to the Palace. Know already rested in his chambers. Only the servants worked, decorating the house and preparing festive dishes for tomorrow's celebration.

Arabella saw Jesse. The maid, clutching to his blanket, slept in the alcove of the window. Usually the mistress insisted that the maid spent the night in her chambers. But today a young woman wanted to be alone, alone with my thoughts, pain and tears. Bowing, the maid left. The girl, having thrown off a dress, settled on the bed. Night has already covered the earth with its possessions, but the Duke's daughter did not want to sleep. Sad thoughts, like arrows, pierced the mind of a young woman.

The room was dark. Only the dim light of the moon illuminated the ceiling. Arabella watched in the darkness, as if looking for there is something precious and valuable. Tomorrow will forever put an end to love Mademoiselle de Frase. Anna...this Spanish girl, forever you part the Frenchwoman and her lover. Such was the fate of... First gives hope, and then mercilessly takes away, leaving a deep scar in his heart and emptiness in his soul. The young woman threw back his head and cried. Bitter tears ran down her cheeks as the salty spray.

All night Arabella sobbed. From her lips involuntarily pulled out the words" My beloved king, do not abandon your unfortunate slave, which is sinking in the ocean of unrequited love.»

Dawn... Frost began to recede, the snow had stopped. With first light came the joyful cries of the people. The people, following the decorum, shouted that now comes Anne of Austria, the flower of the Spanish Kingdom, a beautiful and mysterious Princess.

Arabella, like all the ladies of the court, was to come into the throne room to greet the bride of the French king. But, before obediently to return to the hall, she first decided to look at the Spanish flu, about whose beauty and modest demeanour was legendary throughout Europe.

Rising to the floor above, she went into the Secret garden. It was an open gallery enclosed by glass doors. With glove snow, a young woman sat on a marble bench and stared at the alley, which must pass by the carriage of the bride of the monarch. In a few minutes we heard the sounds of a musical instrument. The guards solemnly opened the gate. Into the garden entered Berlin gold, made of pure gold, decorated with the coat of arms of Habsburg and precious stones. The carriage was accompanied by armed horsemen with swords. They rode on their white horses. About the coaches gathered the people. Commoners were just crazy with curiosity and interest.

Arabella drew attention to one of the guards. He went ahead of Berlin. His proud posture was struck by its grace. He was dressed in a tunic embroidered with gold, silver belt could be seen the hilt of the sword. And only having looked narrowly, she learned this young man. It was Heraldo, Myung – Buso, Norman, whose family was of ancient Saxon dynasty. This glorious soldier, smart and strong, perfectly practised with sword and saber, irresistible metal knives and shooting arrows.

Chapter 8

But behind this humble and courageous man hiding cocky, greedy, cynical rogue and a schemer. He always helped her mistress to build intrigues against those who tried to stop her. The young Princess, brought up in the harsh austerity, she could not to stand up for themselves, because of excessive obedience and meekness in the way in life. And her father, who owned his own States, could not give a different raise a daughter. Heraldo, was for my lady not only the servants, but and support.

View Arabella instantly rushed to the woman in front of which Norman sat down on one knee, and by hand, helped to alight. How was this beautiful stranger! Her brown hair was visible from under a large hat, decorated with rubies and sapphires. Luxurious decoration struck by its elegance. A fur coat was a tight fit Golden belt embroidered with silver, the sleeves touched the ground. On her wrists jingled a variety of precious bracelets, the neck was decorated with luxurious pendants. This young lady was slender as a cypress, soft as the petal of a spring rose, as proud as the goddess Aphrodite and beautiful as the night star.

Looking at this dressed in purple and gold girl, the Frenchwoman felt like my heart breaks into small pieces. How would Mademoiselle didn't object to it, the reality of change was impossible. Of course, that this lady is Anne of Austria...

The Duke's daughter bit her lip, trying not to scream in frustration. She could not think that the bride of her beloved would be such a gorgeous beauty. Of course, the king's mistress was irresistible, and with her could not be matched by no one. But she remembered the words of the Lord" do Not think that you're the only one in this world. Even though you are beautiful, intelligent and graceful, still there is another. And this «another» has. My future wife is not worse than you.» Unfortunately, these horrible words were true.

The woman stood up. Spreading the folds of her dress, she walked to the front beam of the terrace. Suddenly a gust of wind shook the girl. Fur Cape fell from her shoulders and hair disheveled. As if through a veil Mademoiselle de Frase looked at Anna, hear her laugh, watched her majestic movements. How much was it pride and arrogance. Of course, the Spaniard was delighted with his position. Not every Princess has the good fortune to become the wife of the monarch of the whole of France. The French saw the coach standing near Capitalino de Lucia. She was a lady-in-waiting to the Infanta, but was known as a slut. All were known shameless novels Horvath. The first man became Viscount Balonarski, then Senor Tomaso and Marquis-kun. But not one of these noblemen did not want to take marriage with Milady de Lucia. But even this shamelessness could not match with the fact that once Kapitalina lured into his web the lovers of Marie de Medici. For this, the Queen kicked her out of his Suite. But it soon appeared that the Croat pregnant. Having connections with almost all men in France the girl could not understand, whose baby had. And Regent of Louis XIII declared that «the Croatian shameless» dares to carry the baby of her own favorite! For this the Queen ordered the execution of the maid of honor. Kapitalina was ready to go to the scaffold, but then she was saved by Anna...

Being then twelve-year-old Princess, Infanta Austrian came with his father to France, to his future mother-in-law. It was then that the head of the Croatian had to fly from his shoulders. When it Kapitalina was raised in the area of Punishment, the Spanish girl ran to the dais and ordered the executioner to stop, turned to the crowd of people, saying that no one has the right to decide the life of a pregnant woman without special circumstances.

Of course, Marie de Medici full cursed future daughter-in-law, Philip III and daughter locked in the room. After this unpleasant incident, Anne took Milady de Lucia to Spain, and was soon introduced to his retinue of ladies-in-waiting. The king did not approve the decision of the Princess. In the last months of pregnancy Kapitalina began to feel a sharp pain and nausea. Midwife said that

the baby is malformed and could be disabled. I went into labor prematurely. Three days Mademoiselle de Lucia suffered, but on the fourth... were able to give birth to a stillborn child. It turned out that the fetus was not viable from the beginning. The death threatened, and to the Croat. For a week the woman was recovering, slowly burn in a fever. Physician lady... insisted that she could die. But after a few days my lady could get on his feet. But even after the death of the infant, the maid has not ceased communication with notable aristocrats. So much so, that the Spanish court lady became known as a courtesan. In those days it was considered a terrible shame. The woman who received this «title», could not appear in district. Knowing that in his own Palace lives a dishonest girl who received a scandalous reputation, Philip ordered to beat her with a whip, and lock him in the dungeon. And again he was saved by Anne of Austria.

Arabella did not take my gaze from the new arrivals. People crowded around the gate. All were crying with joy, welcoming lady. Anne, as if felt something, threw his head up. Seeing a closer look, the Frenchwoman shuddered. The king's daughter looked at her surprised, but angry eyes. The Princess had expected the mysterious stranger humbly bow down in reverence. But Arabella was not going to be humiliated in front of the Spaniard. The Deputy of Habsburg whispered something to the dark-skinned woman, dressed in a long tunic. Her head was a tight fit headband embroidered with gold. Mademoiselle de Frase first time I saw this lady. But her toilet was a mixture of men's, military clothing and bright, women's jewelry

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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