

#2 Valmont & AZOLAN

VALMONT. How are you getting on with the maid?

AZOLAN. Julie? Tell you the truth, it's been a bit boring. If I wasn't so anxious to keep your lordship abreast, I think I'd only have bothered that once. I'm not sure she doesn't feel the same, but, you know, what else is there to do in the country?

VALMONT. Yes, it wasn't so much the details of your intimacy I was after, it was whether she's agreed to bring me Madame de Tourvel's letters and do you think she'll keep her mouth shut?

AZOLAN. She won't steal the letters, sir.

VALMONT. She won't?

AZOLAN. You know better than me, sir, it's easy enough making them do what they want to do; it's trying to get them to do what you want them to do, that's what gives you a headache.

VALMONT. And them, as often as not.

AZOLAN. As for keeping her mouth shut, I haven't asked her to keep her mouth shut, because that's the one thing most likely to give her the idea of opening it.

VALMONT. You may well be right. But look, Madame de Tourvel told me she'd been warned about me: that means some officious friend must have written to her about me. I need to know who.

AZOLAN. I shouldn't worry about all that, if I was you, sir. If she's interested enough to have you followed, I'd say it was only a matter of time.

VALMONT. Do you think so?

AZOLAN. Anyway, apparently she keeps her letters in her pockets.

VALMONT. I wish I knew how to pick pockets. Why don't our parents ever teach us anything useful? *(Pause, as he considers.)* Where do you and Julie meet?

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AZOLAN. Oh, in my room, sir.

VALMONT. And is she coming tonight?

AZOLAN. Afraid so.

VALMONT. Then I think I may have to burst in on you. See if blackmail will succeed better than bribery. About two o'clock suit you? I don't want to embarrass you, will that give you enough time?

AZOLAN. Ample time, sir.

VALMONT. Good.

AZOLAN. Then you won't have to pay her, sir, will you?

VALMONT. Oh, I think if she delivers, we can afford to be generous, don't you?

AZOLAN. It's your money, sir.

VALMONT. Don't worry, I shan't overlook your contribution.

AZOLAN. Well, that's very decent of you, sir.

(VALMONT looks up at the sound of approaching female voices. He turns back to AZOLAN.)

VALMONT. Off you go, then. See you at two.

AZOLAN. Right, sir. I'll be sure to arrange her so she can't say she's there to borrow a clothes brush.