

The Romance of the Forest Study Guide

The Romance of the Forest by Ann Radcliffe

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Plot Summary

Ann Radcliffe's novel *The Romance of the Forest* is a Gothic romance with a fairy tale ending. Distressed heroine Adeline is introduced as an unloved and unwanted orphan. As she is forced to run from those who would have her killed, Adeline meets and loses the love of her life. All is well at the end of the story, however, as Adeline learns she is indeed the daughter of a wealthy marquis. She uses her influence to save Theodore, her true love, from a death sentence, and the two are reunited and married at the conclusion of the novel.

La Motte "adopts" Adeline when he is told by some bandits he must either take her off their hands or die. La Motte, his family and Adeline take refuge in a deserted abbey because the La Mottes are running from creditors in Paris. The abbey is owned by the Marquis, who takes a liking to Adeline. He uses information against La Motte to ensure Adeline will be his. With the help of her true suitor, Theodore, Adeline runs away from the Marquis. When the Marquis sees the seal Adeline put on a letter to Theodore, he realizes she is his half niece. At this point the Marquis has Theodore thrown into jail for leaving his regiment of the army. The Marquis then attempts to convince La Motte to murder Adeline.

In the last section of the novel, Adeline learns her true identity. She is the daughter of the Marquis's half-brother, whom the Marquis paid to have killed. As a result, Adeline becomes the heiress of a large amount of money. At this point Adeline begs for a total pardon for Theodore. She also manages to have La Motte's sentence reduced from a death sentence to banishment. In the end of the novel Adeline and Theodore are married, and the two live happily.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Ann Radcliffe's novel *The Romance of the Forest* is a Gothic romance with a fairy tale ending. Distressed heroine Adeline is introduced as an unloved and unwanted orphan. As she is forced to run from those who would have her killed, Adeline meets and loses the love of her life. All is well at the end of the story, however, as Adeline learns she is indeed the daughter of a wealthy marquis. She uses her influence to save Theodore, her true love, from a death sentence, and the two are reunited and married at the conclusion of the novel.

The novel opens with Advocate Nemours bidding farewell to La Motte and his wife as they leave Paris in secret. Although the La Mottes are running from creditors, Nemours has assisted the couple in their escape. Madame de La Motte is saddened not only because she is leaving her native town of Paris but also because she has had no time to tell her son that she is leaving. Peter, the La Motte's servant, drives the carriage about three leagues from Paris, when he becomes unsure of the way. The group sees the light from a house, to which La Motte walks in hopes of getting directions. La Motte is locked in a room of the house and held prisoner for several hours. He is granted his freedom and his life only when he promises the men he will take with him a young lady who they have in their custody and not return her to them.

La Motte agrees to take the lady with him. He is relieved when his captors take him and the lady back to his carriage, where he is reunited with his wife. As La Motte tells his wife what has happened to him, she begins to feel sympathetically toward the young lady, named Adeline. As day breaks, La Motte determines they have not been followed from Paris. When they stop for breakfast, La Motte questions Adeline about her situation. These questions cause Adeline to cry and beg not to have to speak about it yet. They travel all day, and finally stop at Monville to spend the night. The next morning, Adeline is ill and the entire group is forced to stay in the town several days while she recovers. When Adeline becomes better, the group travels on and enters the Forrest of Fontanville. They are still deep in the forest when darkness falls. La Motte spies some towers from his carriage window and orders Peter to drive toward these structures in the belief they may find a place to stay the night there.

Upon reaching the monastery in chapter two, La Motte finds the structure in ruins and uninhabited. After exploring the abbey for a few moments, La Motte returns to the carriage and tells Peter to drive on. In the dark, Peter drives the carriage over a stump, overturning the carriage and breaking a wheel. La Motte directs his group to return to the abbey, where they spend the night. Adeline wakes before the others and says a prayer to God as she watches the sun rise. When the others wake, Peter and La Motte discuss the possibility of staying permanently at the abbey. Madame La Motte, however, is against the idea of staying there.



Peter is sent to find a town where they can buy food. La Motte, meanwhile, explores the abbey further. When Peter has still not returned by nightfall, La Motte walks out to try to meet him. La Motte learns that Peter has gotten into a fight with the wheel mender because the man tried to charge a high rate for the wheel repair. Instead, Peter has brought nails with him to fix the wheel himself. La Motte decides to send Peter to town again the next day to procure information about the abbey. If it seems reasonable the family can stay there, La Motte tells Peter to buy supplies to repair the structure as well as some furniture. Peter tells them the abbey belongs to a rich nobleman. It is rumored a man was imprisoned in the abbey of whom nobody knew what had become. After this rumor, the nobleman removed the furniture from the abbey and never returned again. La Motte decides this abbey is a suitable place for the group to stay without fear of being found. They soon make the lower rooms and one upstairs room suitable for living quarters.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Although both the La Mottes come from rich and influential families, their fortunes are ruined because La Motte wastes their riches on drink and women. He then ruins the rest of their fortunes in his attempt to get back on track with gaming and gambling. Because of these actions on the part of La Motte, he and his wife are forced to leave Paris and live in seclusion in order to escape the laws of the time concerning bankruptcy.

As is the tradition of the Gothic novel, the story has a very dark and dismal tone. The setting of a decaying, broken down abbey that the locals claim is haunted is an appropriate backdrop for the tale of the ill-fated Adeline. Adeline appears as a persecuted female heroine. Although her background is still uncertain, it is indicated that her history is not a happy one. As La Motte and his wife run from Paris in the dead of night, they are

fugitives from the law. Soon after their departure from Paris, the La Mottes fall into the hands of bandits who insist they take with them the unfortunate Adeline.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

As the La Mottes try to adjust to life in the deserted abbey, Adeline becomes a source of comfort to them. Madame La Motte takes a fancy to Adeline and takes it upon herself to teach and form the young lady. When Adeline becomes more comfortable with the La Mottes, she tells them the details of her past years. Adeline's father, Louis de St. Pierre, boarded Adeline in a convent when her mother died. At this point, Adeline was only seven years old. At twelve, Adeline is moved from the first convent to another. It is at this point Adeline learns that her father wants her to become a nun. Adeline has no desire to be a nun and the cruelty of the Lady Abbess at this convent simply strengthens Adeline's distaste for this type of life. Adeline's father does not visit her often and when he does, he tells her he has no way to support her. When Adeline continues to refuse to take her vows, her father sets a date on which he will take her from the convent. Adeline is delighted with this news until she realizes her father wishes she had not wanted to leave the convent. He then takes Adeline to the house on the heath where La Motte was held hostage. After supper, Adeline is taken to a room where she tries to sleep. She dreams that she hears a voice telling her that the house she is currently in is dangerous and that she must leave it immediately. Two days later, Adeline is locked in her room while her father goes to Paris. As she is made to stay in that room for several days, Adeline's fear of her father's plans for her and her fear of the other men that live in the house increases. Finally, the men remove her from the room and take her before La Motte.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

As the group settles into the abbey, interpersonal relationships become strained. Although La Motte at first seems happy and relaxed in their hiding place, he once again becomes depressed and moody after about a month. Madame La Motte is unable to find any other explanation for his behavior and believes he may be in love with another woman. Since there are no other women but Adeline anywhere near them, Madame La Motte takes out her frustrations on the innocent Adeline. Adeline is distressed by her friend's cold treatment of her. Although she tries to talk to Madame La Motte about her strange behavior, Madame La Motte is not truthful about what is bothering her.

In true Gothic fashion, the tone of the story becomes more and more dismal as La Motte fears that the king's men have found his hiding spot. La Motte moves his family into the dark, dank lower levels of the abbey, where they hope to hide from their pursuers. The mystery of La Motte's suddenly depressed attitude adds a hint of suspense to the novel. This suspense grows when La Motte discovers a human skeleton in the lower parts of the abbey.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

After an eventless night, La Motte wakes the next morning to discover a person sitting in the upstairs chambers of the abbey. La Motte runs back through the trap door, but before he is out of hearing range, he hears the person call his name. The La Mottes stay in their hiding place until they run short on food and decide to send Peter for supplies. Adeline volunteers to make sure the chambers of the abbey are free of soldiers before Peter is sent to town. There is a man in the abbey who tells Adeline he must see La Motte. Adeline refuses to tell the man where La Motte is hiding, but the man goes to the room that contains the trap door. Adeline is surprised to see La Motte come out of the trap door and embrace the strange man, who turns out to be La Motte's son.

As Adeline sings in the woods one day, she notices a man in hunting clothing watching her. She runs quickly back to the abbey without being followed. During a squabble at breakfast this same morning, Louis notices his mother's unfounded anger at Adeline. Madame La Motte and Louis argue about Adeline's honor until La Motte orders them not to argue any longer. Meanwhile, Madame La Motte tells Louis about La Motte's strange behavior. When Louis tries to follow his father into the woods he, like Peter, loses sight of him. Louis later tries to talk to his father about the negative way La Motte's behavior is affecting the entire family. La Motte commands his son not to speak to him about his behavior again. In the conclusion of chapter five, Louis apologizes to Adeline for his mother's behavior and asks her to allow him to intercede on her part, a request she will not allow.

In chapter six the family is surprised when they hear hoofbeats at the gate of the abbey one stormy night. The strangers beat so heavily on the old gates that they break, allowing them into the abbey. One of the men in the group of strangers is the man who heard Adeline singing in the woods one morning. Another man introduces himself as the Marquis de Montalt, the owner of the abbey. Both the Marquis and La Motte are uncomfortable when they see each other. La Motte requests private conversation with the Marquis. Madame La Motte overhears snatches of this conversation and later questions her husband about it. He tells her not to question him about this topic. The Marquis returns the next day and La Motte goes off with him into the forest. The chevalier from the day before, named Theodore, stays with Adeline and Madame La Motte in the abbey. Adeline finds she enjoys the conversation with Theodore and is sad when he must go.

Louis's leave with his regiment has expired and he is forced to leave his family again. Before he goes, he asks his father once again what is bothering him. La Motte again tells his son he won't answer any questions on that topic. In the conclusion of chapter six, Adeline considers the strange new kindness of Madame La Motte. She also thinks



about how the new relationship between the Marquis and La Motte might affect her and her living arrangements.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

In this section, La Motte continues to be distressed even though his son has discovered his whereabouts and joined them in hiding. Louis tries to talk to his father about what is bothering him but La Motte refuses to speak about it. Meanwhile, Louis notices how unjustifiably mean his mother is to Adeline. Louis challenges his mother's behavior, then later in private apologizes to Adeline for the treatment she has been receiving.

One of the most important aspects in this section to note is the extreme distress shared by both the Marquis and La Motte when they first see each other in the abbey. La Motte grows weak and the Marquis reaches for his sword, almost as if he expects La Motte to attack him. Later, La Motte's wife questions him about the secret conversation he shared with the Marquis. As she questions him, La Motte slips up and allows his wife to know the cause of his depression is associated with the Marquis. This knowledge leaves Madame La Motte in a quandary, because she now knows her husband's depression is not caused by anything having to do with Adeline. Because she is embarrassed that she ever thought there was an improper relationship with Adeline, Madame La Motte is unable to apologize or explain her past behavior to Adeline. However, she does once again treat Adeline with kindness. Although Adeline appreciates this kindness, she still does not trust Madame La Motte the way she did when they first met.

Madame La Motte also feels she must make up a story about a past relationship between the Marquis and her husband in order to explain the events of the first meeting between the men to Adeline. Adeline, however, does not buy the story that Madame La Motte makes up about the uncomfortable meeting and private conversation between La Motte and the Marquis. Adeline's chief concern, however, is what will happen to her now that the owner of the abbey has learned they are living there. She wonders if she will still be allowed to take refuge with the La Mottes or if the situation will change.

Also notice the love triangle developing in this section of the book. Louis is becoming very interested in Adeline and is charmed by her manners. Meanwhile, however, Adeline is growing fond of Theodore, the man who first saw her in the woods as she sang a song to herself one morning. It turns out this chevalier works for the Marquis. Adeline sees him again the night the men first come to the abbey, then again the next day. Theodore stays at the abbey with the women while the other men go with La Motte. It is during this time that Adeline converses with the chevalier and discovers they have much in common.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

As the Marquis is expected to dine at the abbey with the La Mottes, Adeline asks La Motte if he believes there is any truth to the rumor that the Marquis kept a man as a prisoner at the abbey. La Motte tells Adeline that if she had good sense, she would not believe that sort of rumor. Although Adeline at first dreads the coming dinner, she actually finds it a pleasant experience. However, the pleasure discovered at the dinner table disappears when the Marquis leaves. Feeling the sadness, Adeline takes a walk in the forest. As she talks to herself about her problems, she hears a rustling in the leaves and discovers Theodore has been listening to her. Theodore questions Adeline about her circumstances, and then tells her he is speaking to her only because of his interest in her happiness and safety. Theodore tells Adeline that he fears she is in danger. He is unable to tell her more because La Motte meets them on the trail. Adeline agrees to meet with Theodore the next day so that he can explain his fears more clearly.

The next day Louis is scheduled to rejoin his regiment. After breakfast, Adeline attempts to leave the family alone, but Louis follows her onto the lawn where he tries to solicit from her a promise of affection stronger than friendship. Adeline insists she will always see Louis as a friend and nothing more. Later that day, Adeline arrives early at the spot Theodore has proposed for their meeting. He, however, does not come. Adeline is first offended by his absence, then alarmed at the idea that there might really be something wrong. That night Adeline dreams a man dying in the abbey calls to her, then sinks from her view. In a second dream, Adeline follows a man dressed in black through the abbey. When she becomes afraid to follow him any longer and turns back, the man runs after her. In her third dream she sees a man in a casket, and blood runs from his side and fills the room in which Adeline is standing.

In chapter eight the Marquis visits the La Mottes again on the day following Adeline's night of dreams. Although she wants to stay in her room, Adeline is called to join the group. Adeline is afraid she will miss the opportunity to try to meet with Theodore again when the Marquis mentions that Theodore left for his regiment that morning. This news causes Adeline to feel ill and she goes to her room. A storm approaches and the Marquis agrees to stay the night at the abbey. As a result, Adeline sleeps in a room located adjacent to her regular room. As she tries to become sleepy, Adeline discovers a door hidden behind one of the tapestries. As she explores the rooms behind this door, Adeline enters one exactly like the room she dreamed about the night before. Adeline finds an old, rusty dagger and a roll of paper in this room. Adeline takes the paper, which turns out to be the manuscript of a journal, to her room to read it more closely.

Before she begins to read the manuscript, Adeline discovers the La Mottes and the Marquis are still awake and talking downstairs. She hears the mention of her name and her father in the conversation. Adeline fears her father has discovered her hiding place and now wants to do further harm to her. As she is just going to sleep, Adeline is



awakened by knocking at La Motte's bedroom door. It is the Marquis telling La Motte that the Marquis and his men have a meeting and must leave the abbey immediately.

Fearing for her safety, Adeline approaches La Motte the next morning and begs protection. La Motte tells Adeline her father has discovered her, but tells her he cannot promise her safety. Later that day, the Marquis comes back to the abbey and declares his love for Adeline. Although Adeline refuses his offer, the Marquis tells her she should reconsider since he can offer her protection from her father. Adeline again refuses and goes to her room. Madame La Motte later joins Adeline in Adeline's room and hears about the Marquis' proposal. Although Adeline wishes to avoid the Marquis from then on, Madame La Motte encourages her to be amiable to the Marquis when he is present, since their ability to stay in the abbey depends on the Marquis's permission. La Motte later meets with Adeline and also requests that Adeline treat the Marquis in a friendly manner. He, however, makes it appear the proposal was a jest instead of a serious proposal. When Adeline suggests they move from the abbey to a different hiding place, La Motte tells her he would do so if he had the money.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

In this section, Adeline's situation seems to go from bad to worse. Although she at first suffered only the unkindness of Madame La Motte, she is now accosted by unwelcome suitors, warned of a threat against her safety, plagued by terrible nightmares and threatened by the return of her cruel, unloving father. One of the more interesting aspects of Adeline's trouble are the dreams that she has. These dreams both hint at actions that took place within the abbey in the past as well as foreshadow the idea that these past actions may become important to Adeline's future. There has been rumor that a man was killed in an unfair manner by the Marquis in the abbey. Adeline's discovery of the rusty dagger along with the room in which her dreams were set seems to ingrain in her mind that the Marquis was really responsible for the murder of the man she sees in her dreams. In addition to the dagger, she also discovers a roll of paper covered with old, faded writing. Adeline takes the manuscript, hoping that it may contain some hints as to what happened in the abbey.

Also in this section, Adeline overhears bits of conversation between the Marquis and La Motte. From what she has heard, she believes her father has discovered her location and wants to come and get her. Although she begs La Motte for protection, La Motte tells Adeline that he can no longer give her the protection she wants. In a move apparently intended to push Adeline toward the Marquis, La Motte tells her that the only person who can protect her from her father is the Marquis. From La Motte's surprised reaction to Adeline's plea for protection from her father, one has to wonder if her father has actually been inquiring after her or not. It is suspected this may just be a plot on La Motte's part to make Adeline respect the wishes of and be kind to the Marquis.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Before going to bed, Adeline finally has an opportunity to read some of the manuscript she discovered the night before. It tells the story of the man who was held captive in the abbey. However, Adeline is not able to finish her reading before her light goes out. The next day, the Marquis comes to visit again. Although Adeline tries to leave the room, the Marquis requests to speak to her in private. The Marquis again intends to propose to Adeline. However, Adeline will not even listen to his offer. She instead leaves him and goes to her room. In respect for her promise to La Motte, Adeline does attend supper with the La Mottes and the Marquis; however, she retreats back to her room as soon as supper is finished.

That evening Adeline reads more of the manuscript. She becomes distressed as the writer makes an appeal to her pity and cries for the writer. As Adeline reads the manuscript, she believes she hears a voice calling to her, then believes she sees a figure in the room with her. The Marquis is at breakfast the next morning. He has become a frequent visitor at the abbey. Although Adeline begs La Motte to allow her to return to her father and not force her to marry the Marquis, he continues to push the idea of the marriage.

In chapter ten, Peter, who tried on one occasion to get Adeline's attention, finally is able to talk to her in private. However, Peter only gives Adeline information that some danger to Adeline was mentioned in a conversation between the Marquis and La Motte. Before he is able to tell Adeline the whole story, he sees La Motte and leaves Adeline alone, promising to tell her about the danger another time. Meanwhile, Adeline continues to read the manuscript she has found. One night as Adeline reads, she is frightened by a voice calling her name. She is so distressed that she wakes the La Mottes and tells them about her discovery. La Motte insists on seeing the manuscript, dagger and rooms that Adeline describes to him. As they enter the second chamber, La Motte suddenly calls of their exploration of the area and they return to their living quarters.

Later the next day, Peter tells Adeline that it was he who called her name the night before and caused her such distress. Peter tells Adeline that the danger she is in has nothing to do with her father. As far as Peter knows, her father is unaware of where she is. Adeline learns the Marquis is planning to marry her even though Adeline does not want to marry him and his current wife is still alive. La Motte is assisting the Marquis in putting this plan into action. The Marquis is to come after her tonight. Adeline persuades Peter to help her escape from the abbey and the forest. They plan to hide Adeline in the forest. Later, when everyone is looking for her, Peter will slip out and they will make their getaway.



Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

There are two important developments in chapters nine and ten. First, Adeline reads a good deal of the manuscript she found in the hidden rooms of the abbey and learns that a man was actually killed in the abbey. Second, Adeline learns that despite the fact she does not want to marry the Marquis, La Motte has helped the Marquis arrange a kidnapping and marriage. In addition, Adeline battles with her conflicting feeling concerning the way the La Mottes are treating her.

First, Adeline finally has an opportunity to read the manuscript. She discovers that the rumor that a person was held in the abbey and killed was indeed true. According to the writer, he knew his captor and had never done anything to deserve the treatment he is given. His plea that the reader of the manuscript avenge his death makes Adeline feel pity and remorse for the unknown captive.

Next, Peter tells Adeline about the Marquis's plan to marry her even though his wife is still alive. Adeline is shocked at the knowledge that La Motte lied to her about her father coming after her and that he is actually assisting the Marquis in his plan. Although she notices a marked nervousness in La Motte and extreme sadness in Madame La Motte, Adeline feels as if she has been betrayed by these people whom she once esteemed as both friends and parent figures. Peter shares Adeline's disgust at La Motte's behavior. His loyalty has been so shaken that Peter agrees to assist Adeline in leaving the abbey and reaching safety.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

A man whom she believes is Peter picks Adeline up at the tomb as planned. As she listens to this man talk, however, she realizes it is not Peter who is riding on the horse with her. The man takes her to the Marquis's chalet, where she is locked into a room. The Marquis enters the room and Adeline faints. When Adeline faints a second time, the Marquis sends in two women to help prepare Adeline for the Marquis's return. These two women tell Adeline it is her own fault if she is not happy. The Marquis returns again and once again proposes to Adeline. Adeline tells him that if he wishes to have her esteem he must deserve it. In order to do this, Adeline asks that he release her from confinement in the house. The Marquis refuses to release her and insists that they will be married the next day.

The Marquis and Adeline attend a banquet in their honor, in which Adeline is uncomfortable and distressed. She will eat only a peach. The Marquis tries again to propose his love to Adeline, but she begs to be allowed to go to her room where she can rest. When she is alone in her room, Adeline searches again for some way to escape. She finds an unlocked window in a dressing room in her apartment. Adeline is happy that she is able to easily jump from this window to the garden below. She wanders through the garden for some time trying to find a way out, when she notices a figure in the garden with her. Adeline faints with terror and when she awakes, she finds herself in the arms of Theodore. Although she at first doubts his trustworthiness, Theodore escorts Adeline to a carriage that will take her to safety. After they are on their way in the carriage, Theodore explains to Adeline that the Marquis had suspected Theodore was going to warn Adeline of the Marquis's plans. For this reason, the Marquis had sent Theodore to join his regiment and had occupied Theodore's time up until that point so that he had no way to see Adeline. Although Theodore was unable to get a leave of absence from his regiment, he had sneaked out without permission to try to save Adeline. As they travel, Theodore professes his love for Adeline.

In chapter twelve, Adeline and Theodore both think about their separate worries as they travel away from the Marquis. Theodore is concerned with his action of leaving his regiment without permission and wondering whether or not Adeline loves him. Meanwhile, Adeline is concerned that once again she will be relying on the compassion of strangers for her livelihood. Suddenly, the carriage driver tells Theodore there are men on horses chasing after them. Although they flee from the men, the men catch up with them at an inn in a small village where Theodore and Adeline stop to rest. Adeline hears the sounds of a disagreement in a room below her. She listens as the officers attempt to arrest Theodore and he resists, saying he first needs to speak to a friend housed in the inn. The men finally agree to his request and Theodore goes to Adeline. She faints when he enters the room. The men follow him and insist that Theodore must leave. Theodore pulls his sword on the men and declares he will not leave until Adeline is better. A sword fight ensues and Theodore receives a head wound.



A doctor on the scene orders Theodore be put to bed. He tells Adeline he is afraid that Theodore will die. Adeline calls for the hostess of the inn. Adeline asks the hostess if there is any other doctor in the area. Adeline receives a note from Theodore requesting to see her. He encourages her not to try to contact his family as he believes he will be well before they would be able to arrive. Adeline is able to discover the identity of another doctor close to the inn where she and Theodore are staying. She asks Theodore for permission to contact this other doctor, a request that Theodore happily grants. The new doctor, however, lives very far away and Theodore becomes much worse before he is able to arrive. With a new doctor and a new treatment, Theodore soon recovers to the point he can talk with Adeline.

In response to their troubles, Theodore suggests they get married before he is taken away. Adeline, however, does not feel right getting married so quickly. Adeline decides she will instead stay at a nearby convent that allows boarders. As they are talking, a carriage bearing the Marquis drives up to the inn. The Marquis discovers Adeline and Theodore in the inn. The Marquis locks Adeline into her room. As she paces in her room, Adeline hears a dispute between the Marquis and Theodore. The hostess of the inn enters her room but will not give her any information. Finally, three of the Marquis's men come and take Adeline from the room. She is so insistent upon knowing what happened that the innkeeper finally tells her that Theodore took a sword from one of the Marquis's men and attacked the Marquis. Shortly after she learns this information, Adeline is put in a carriage by the Marquis's men and taken away from the inn.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

Much happens in these two chapters. As Adeline makes her escape from the Marquis, the tone of the actions moves from dismal to hopeful, then back to dismal again as she is once again captured by her prospective husband. Adeline does learn that Theodore did not lead her on when he tried to tell her about the danger in her future. He instead was deterred by the Marquis, and had no chance to meet with her again and warn her of the plans the Marquis and La Motte had for her. Theodore proves his devotion for Adeline when he leaves his regiment without permission, the equivalent of being absent without leave in today's military, and tries to rescue her from the Marquis. Theodore again puts himself in jeopardy when he refuses to leave the inn without first speaking to Adeline. However, it is when Theodore takes these risks for Adeline as well as the time Adeline spends caring for Theodore during his illness that causes Adeline to realize how much Theodore really does care for her and how much she cares for him in return.

When one considers Adeline's past experiences with people who claimed to care about her, it makes sense that a man would have to go to such extreme measures to prove his devotion. Even from her childhood, Adeline has been betrayed by people who were supposed to care about her. Her father shut her up in a convent then turned her over to the mercy of strangers. Although La Motte and his wife at first seemed trustworthy friends, La Motte has arranged to give Adeline to the Marquis in marriage even though Adeline is not really La Motte's to give. Although the Marquis claims to love Adeline, his actions say otherwise. Even Peter, the servant who tried to help Adeline escape the first



time, betrays Adeline by telling the Marquis and his men where Adeline was hidden. Even Theodore at first seems untrustworthy because he promises to meet Adeline and tell her of possible dangers, but does not show up at their appointed meeting time. As he explains to her what happened, however, Adeline begins to realize Theodore is in fact worthy of her love and devotion.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Despite his wound and his surgeon's suggestion that he stay in bed, the Marquis makes plans to travel back to his villa. Theodore, meanwhile, tells his physician the details of his relationship with the Marquis and the reasons why he left his regiment. The physician tries to help Theodore by telling the Marquis his wound is serious. Instead of eliciting the remorse the physician had hoped the Marquis would show for Theodore's condition, the Marquis instead is angrier at the young man. As promised, the Marquis has Theodore taken into custody and removed from the inn that night.

In chapter fourteen, Adeline is taken back to the abbey. Although La Motte tells Adeline that he pities her, he says that it is out of his power to help her. Adeline is then locked into her room in the abbey. The valet who accompanied Adeline to the abbey returns to the Marquis at the inn. He gives the Marquis a letter Adeline dropped in the carriage. The letter was intended for Theodore. The Marquis is at first angered by the contents of the letter, but then becomes transfixed by the seal on the letter.

The Marquis visits the abbey to see that Adeline is well guarded. He then returns to his villa. The Marquis continues to visit the abbey occasionally. On one of his visits, he requests a walk with La Motte in the woods. During their walk, the Marquis first flatters La Motte, then tells La Motte he will return the next day to propose a plan which he expects a yes or no answer from La Motte.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

In this section, things remain dismal for Adeline as she is taken back to the abbey where she is locked into her room and held as a prisoner. Adeline is uncertain what her future might hold and also does not know what has become of Theodore. It appears in chapter fourteen that the Marquis has another plan for La Motte and Adeline as he reminds La Motte of the many ways that La Motte is indebted to the Marquis. The Marquis promises La Motte he will return and expects La Motte to be prepared to answer either yes or no to the Marquis's plan.

Notice that when the Marquis sees the seal on Adeline's letter to Theodore, he has a highly unusual reaction. It appears that he recognizes the seal, though he does not indicate where he has seen it before. After he sees this seal, however, the Marquis's attitude toward Adeline seems to change. Although he was once concerned only about getting Adeline back to his villa, he now seems content to allow her to stay at the abbey. His only concern now seems to be that Adeline not be allowed to escape. It is suspected that the Marquis's plan that he wants to propose to La Motte has something to do with Adeline.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

In chapter fifteen, the Marquis returns for his appointment with La Motte. La Motte, however, refuses to give the Marquis an answer until he fully understands what it is the Marquis wants him to do. La Motte still believes the Marquis wants to marry Adeline. The Marquis, however, wants to kill Adeline. The Marquis wants the murder to take place that night. La Motte is torn between his affection for Adeline and the promise of freedom the Marquis has promised him if he does as requested. La Motte tells the Marquis he will do as requested and they plan the murder.

Adeline is contemplating Theodore and the desolation of her situation as she watches the Marquis ride away from the abbey. She cries herself to sleep. La Motte, meanwhile, is restless as the time draws near for him to kill Adeline. La Motte enters Adeline's room and she awakes to find him standing over her. Adeline begs him to save her from the Marquis. La Motte tells her to get dressed, and then leads her to the woods so she can escape. Peter is waiting with a horse to take her to his hometown of Savoy.

As Peter and Adeline make their escape, La Motte decides to wait at the abbey and tell the Marquis that Adeline escaped before he could kill her. After the Marquis hears La Motte's story, he has La Motte arrested and brought to him. The Marquis promises La Motte if he tells him where Adeline has gone, he will release La Motte. La Motte will not tell where Adeline has gone, so the Marquis has him arrested.

In chapter sixteen, Peter and Adeline arrive in Savoy. Although Adeline is sick with the lack of sleep, she is unable to rest and becomes worse. Despite medical attention, Adeline contracts a fever and become delirious, When Adeline finally wakes, she finds herself in a beautiful apartment, in the care of a lovely nurse. Adeline finds she has been taken into the care of Arnaud La Luc, the minister of the village of Savoy.

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

In chapter fifteen, La Motte faces a challenge of honor. For reasons unknown, the Marquis has a hold on La Motte's actions. It is understood that the Marquis is allowing La Motte to use the abbey as a place of refuge and that he has not turned La Motte over to the men who are looking for him. However, this information does not seem to be enough to blackmail La Motte into committing murder. La Motte realizes that the outcome of the rest of his life may be determined by the decision that he makes about Adeline. If he chooses to murder her, the Marquis promises to grant him his freedom. At the same time, La Motte realizes the knowledge and guilt of his actions would haunt him all of his life. If he chooses not to murder Adeline, the Marquis will most likely turn La Motte over to his creditors. Either way, La Motte will suffer. Luckily for Adeline, La Motte decides to put his own life on the line and save Adeline.



In chapter sixteen, the tone of the novel changes from dark Gothic to a more hopeful tone. Adeline wakes to find herself in the La Luc home. This family has taken her in and has taken care of her during her illness. This illness was caused by exhaustion from the stress of her escape from the abbey and her trip to Savoy. The setting turns from one of a dark and desolate broken down abbey to a clean home by the mountains. She is no longer surrounded by people who are running from the law, but instead good Christian people who want to take care of her. They welcome her into their home as one of the family.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

After about a week, Adeline is well enough to leave her room and meet her new friends. La Luc tells Adeline he considers her his daughter, with all the rights of Clara, his biological daughter. Even as she is happy in her new surroundings, Adeline is still distressed by the trouble and punishment which she believes is in store for Theodore. One day the entire family takes a trip to the Glacier of Montanvert. On their way home, thunder from an approaching storm startles Clara's horse. A stranger grabs the horse's bridle, and although Clara is thrown to the ground, she is not badly hurt. The horse, however, dashes into the lake and is killed. The stranger's arm is jerked so badly by the horse that La Luc begs him to come home with them to recuperate. As they talk that night, La Luc and the chevalier, M. Verneuil, find they have a great deal in common. They converse late into the night.

In chapter eighteen, Clara is much better the next day. La Luc asks the chevalier to stay with them at the chateau until his shoulder has healed. Verneuil accepts the invitation. On the following day, La Luc and Verneuil walk to a spot where La Luc has erected a memorial to his late wife. La Luc tells Verneuil that it is proof of how much that he likes him that he brought Verneuil to this spot. Although La Luc has enjoyed the chevalier's visit, La Luc's sister sees how the effort to entertain the young man has weakened La Luc, who was already not well. A doctor suggests La Luc try visiting in Nice for awhile to see if the air there might improve his health. As directed, La Luc, accompanied by Adeline, Clara and Peter, travel to Nice. While in Nice, La Luc befriends a French chevalier. M. Amand soon becomes a regular visitor in the family's rented apartment and often accompanies them on outings.

One day Amand hears Adeline playing the lute. The song reminds Amand of his late wife and causes him to cry. Amand tells Adeline her physical features even remind him of his wife. The two strike up a friendship based on their similar sorrows. La Luc's health does not improve in Nice, however, and his doctor suggests a sea voyage. There is much sorrow when La Luc and his family depart on their voyage and leave Amand behind.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

Adeline's luck improves greatly when she leaves the abbey and travels to Savoy. Although she is not well upon her arrival in Peter's hometown, there are good people there who take care of her. After she is well, she is basically adopted by La Luc, the minister of the area. Now the only sadness in the story is that caused by Theodore's predicament. Adeline, however, is unable to inquire after or write to Theodore because by doing so she might disclose her location to the Marquis. It is Adeline's sorrow concerning Theodore that allows her to bond so closely with the French chevalier who

has recently lost his wife. Note that Amand mentions that Adeline is physically similar to his late wife, as this information is important later in the novel.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

The first night on the ship Adeline hears a familiar strain of music. She cannot locate the source of the music, nor can she remember where she originally heard it. A few days later, the ship stops at a small town and the La Luc family stays in a small inn overnight. That evening, Adeline walks alone around the town. As darkness falls and she tries to return to the inn, Adeline again hears the familiar melody. She also hears the voices of men. As she moves more quickly, a voice calls for her to stop. Adeline runs toward two of the men, seeking protection from the man chasing her. She is surprised to find one of the men is M. Verneuil. Verneuil takes her back to the safety of the inn.

At the inn, a messenger tells Adeline there is a chevalier who wishes to speak to her. Adeline is afraid it might be one of the Marquis' men. La Luc agrees to allow the man to come to their room. Adeline is surprised to find the man is Louis de La Motte. After visiting with the family several moments, Louis requests five minutes alone with Adeline. While they are alone, Louis tells Adeline that Theodore is still alive but that he has been condemned to die. Louis tells Adeline that he must now go to Leloncourt to see a M. La Luc. At this point, Adeline wonders out loud if Theodore is related to La Luc. It is at this point she learns that Theodore is La Luc's son. After hearing the story of Theodore's arrest, La Luc calls for a carriage to carry him to his son.

In chapter twenty, the action returns to the Marquis. He had sent men after Adeline, who were unable to locate her. He then went to Vaceau where he had Theodore condemned to death. It is at this point that Louis de La Motte hears of the story of Theodore. Louis visits Theodore hoping to hear some news of his parents. Even though Theodore is his rival for the love of Adeline, Louis strikes up a friendship with Theodore. Finally, Theodore asks Louis to try to contact Theodore's father and tell him about his situation. It is at this point that the story returns to the La Luc family. They have arrived in Vaceau but La Luc is too ill to see Theodore right away. Louis tells Theodore his father is in town as well as Adeline. After his visit with Theodore, Louis returns to the inn where he accompanies La Luc to Theodore's cell. After their visit, La Luc decides to go to London to try to get Theodore's execution temporarily delayed. He leaves the following day.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

In an unbelievable twist of fate, Adeline learns that the man with whom she has found solace is actually Theodore's father. Her unwillingness to speak of her troubled suitor to Clara and her father had actually delayed the process of finding Theodore. The novel once again takes on a dismal tone as La Luc goes to visit his son in jail. Although Theodore has many who sympathize with his case, it is unlikely he will be able to avoid being put to death because the Marquis's dislike for him is so strong. Remember, the

root of this dislike comes from the reality that Adeline loves Theodore but will never love the Marquis.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, the reader learns exactly what it was that the Marquis was holding against La Motte. During his first days at the abbey, La Motte had come upon the Marquis riding in the forest and had robbed him. When La Motte and the Marquis met again in the abbey, the Marquis told La Motte he would not turn him over to authorities only if La Motte would give Adeline to him. During La Motte's trial, the Marquis is questioned concerning why he waited so late to charge La Motte with the theft. The trial is postponed because the Marquis has two more witnesses who have not yet arrived in Paris.

Meanwhile, La Luc has arrived in Paris to present his son's case before the king. He returns to his family with no good news. Since he is worn out from his journey, La Luc sends Louis to tell Theodore that La Luc will visit him the next morning. On the day scheduled for Theodore's execution La Luc, Clara and Adeline all go to the prison to visit him one last time. Just as the family is ending their painful goodbyes, Louis enters the cell and announces that he has obtained a stay of execution for Theodore because of some information about the Marquis that surfaced in the trial of La Motte. As a result of this information, Louis and Adeline must travel to Paris.

The narration of the novel returns to La Motte. On the day of his trial, a man spotted La Motte and asked to visit La Motte in jail. This man turns out to be the man who first gave Adeline to La Motte. The man claims he knows that the Marquis is a villain. The man, who is identified as Du Bosse, is also in trouble for debt. Although he has called upon the Marquis for help, the Marquis has given him none so Du Bosse feels he is no longer compelled to keep the Marquis' secret.

When Du Bosse appears in court in chapter twenty-two with La Motte, the Marquis is visibly confused. Du Bosse testifies he joined a man named Jean d'Aunoy in a scheme to take Adeline from her convent. Du Bosse said he understood Adeline was the daughter of the Marquis de Montalt and a nun. However, when she was born, the girl was given to Jean d'Aunoy and his wife to raise. When d'Aunoy's wife died, Adeline was put into a convent and intended to take vows. However, when Adeline refused to take these vows, the Marquis wanted her removed from the convent and gotten rid of by any means necessary. If Adeline's existence was discovered, her birth mother would be condemned to die. Du Bosse testifies that he and his brother were hired to kill the girl, but instead they gave her to La Motte.

After he hears Du Bosse's statement as well as La Motte's testimony that the Marquis asked him also to kill Adeline, the judge orders that Adeline and d'Aunoy should be brought to court. In the meantime, the Marquis is arrested. It is also as a result of Du Bosse's testimony against the Marquis that Theodore is given a stay of execution.



Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

As Radcliffe works toward the end of her novel, the mysteries of the beginning of the story begin to unravel. La Motte's unusual behavior when he and his family first moved into the abbey is explained by his attack on the Marquis. La Motte becomes moody and depressed not only because he attacked and stole from the Marquis but also because he fears that he killed the man. La Motte's unusual reaction when he sees the Marquis in the abbey comes not only from the fear that the Marquis will retaliate against him but also because he is surprised to see the man alive. La Motte's attack on the Marquis also explains why the Marquis reaches for his weapon when he first sees La Motte. The Marquis has been attacked by La Motte before and doesn't want to give him a second chance.

La Motte's attack of and theft from the Marquis also explains why La Motte allows the Marquis to have such control over him and his actions. Although La Motte could move from the abbey and find solace elsewhere, he would always be afraid that the Marquis would send officers to arrest him on grounds of the attack. However, the Marquis promises not to turn La Motte over to the officers as long as he does as the Marquis wishes. At first La Motte does not find it difficult to promise Adeline to the Marquis, but as the things that the Marquis asks of La Motte become more and more criminal, La Motte starts to balk, even with the strong hold the Marquis has on him.



Chapters 23 and 24

Chapters 23 and 24 Summary

Adeline, along with Louis and Peter, leave immediately for Paris. The Marquis, meanwhile, is making friends with his prison guards. He has sent out bribes to d'Aunoy to respect the Marquis's interests if he is called to testify. The only regret the Marquis has is that his desire for revenge caused him to persecute La Motte, which in turn shone light on the Marquis's own guilt. When Adeline arrives in Paris, she takes residence with Madame La Motte in her lodgings. Adeline then goes to visit La Motte. They talk about what will be expected of Adeline at the trial.

In the conclusion of the court proceedings, La Motte is sentenced to death. Attention is quickly distracted from La Motte, however, when d'Aunoy enters the court room. D'Aunoy testifies that he and two other men were hired to kidnap and kill Henry Marquis de Montalt, Phillippe's half brother by Phillippe Marquis de Montalt. A few months later Phillippe Marquis de Montalt had given d'Aunoy the infant daughter of Henry to raise as his own child. D'Aunoy tells the court he had given Du Bosse false information about Adeline's birth and heritage in order to trick him into helping with the scheme. As a result of this new information, the Marquis is to stand trial for the murder of his brother.

Information in the remainder of this chapter relates that the Marquis's reason for killing his brother was so that he could inherit his brother's riches, left to him by the death of Adeline's mother. It was the seal on the letter that Adeline had intended for Theodore that revealed her identity to the Marquis. Adeline believed this seal had belonged to her mother. In reality, however, it had once belonged to the Marquis himself. The seal was stolen by Jean d'Aunoy and kept by his wife, the woman who had raise Adeline until she passed away.

In chapter twenty-four, Adeline learns that she is a distant relative of M. Verneuil, who gives her a picture of her mother. Verneuil has also brought Adeline a packet from Clara. In this packet is a letter from Theodore. In the letter Theodore tries to downplay his father's illness while he writes hopefully that he expects to receive a pardon soon.

Chapters 23 and 24 Analysis

It is at this point that the novel begins to seem more like a fairy tale than a Gothic romance. Adeline learns she is a wealthy heiress, the daughter of the half brother of the Marquis. Adeline's uncle kills her father in an attempt to get his brother's wealth. When the Marquis learned that Adeline was still alive, he knew that she must also be killed or she could give away his secret. In addition to Adeline, other people from the Marquis' past, such as Du Bosse and d'Aunoy, appear miraculously and tell the story of the Marquis's past actions. The Marquis had not only killed Adeline's father, but also



planned to have Adeline killed when she was an infant. Because of his past actions, the Marquis is put on trial for murder.

Consider also the use of fate and providence in the novel. For instance, it is believed that Adeline survived the rage of the Marquis and was not killed in either of his murder attempts for the single purpose of bringing the Marquis to justice. Adeline also believes that she had the dreams about her father's death and found his manuscript as the result of fate. She believes it is fate that she be the one to avenge her father's untimely and unfair death.

Notice also how Adeline's personality is developed in this section. Even after all of the things that the Marquis has done to her, she still does not want to be the one whose testimony will condemn him to death. In addition, although La Motte and his wife have treated Adeline terribly, she returns this bad treatment with love and fairness. In many ways, Adeline seems almost too good to be true.



Chapters 25 and 26

Chapters 25 and 26 Summary

On the day of the Marquis's trial, Adeline is both pitied and admired by those gathered to watch the proceedings. The Marquis has not arrived at the trial yet. Soon there is a rumor circulating the court room that the Marquis is dying. Adeline sends M. Verneuil, who has accompanied her to court, to find out what is happening to the Marquis. Verneuil goes to the jail, where he learns that the Marquis is dying. By the time Verneuil reaches the Marquis's room, the Marquis is dead. Verneuil learns that the Marquis took a dose of poison because he saw no hope for himself in the upcoming trial.

After he took the poison, the Marquis sent for a confessor to take a full narration of his guilt. The Marquis also tries to make amends for his actions by stating that the details of Adeline's birth were correct. This statement allowed the estates that had passed to her father after her mother died to pass on the Adeline. Adeline uses her newly found status to plead for the lives of Theodore and La Motte. Theodore is not only pardoned, but is also given a large raise in rank in the army. La Motte, however, does not receive a full pardon. His sentence is lightened to banishment and Adeline gives him enough money to live comfortably wherever he chooses.

Adeline's first act is to have her father's remains taken from the abbey and buried in the family vault. Meanwhile, D'Aunoy is found guilty of and killed for the Marquis's murder. The manuscript written by her father is located at the abbey and given to Adeline. When she returns to Paris from her father's burial, Adeline is met by Theodore. They agree to be married as soon as Adeline's time of mourning for her father is finished. M. Verneuil, meanwhile, proposes to Clara. La Luc, who has traveled to Montpellier, is in the process of recovering his health.

In chapter twenty-six, La Luc officiates at the wedding ceremonies of both his children, which are held on the same day at Adeline's estate of St. Maur. After the weddings, La Luc wants to return to his parishioners in Savoy. Since Theodore and Adeline cannot convince him to stay in France with them, they decide to return to Savoy with him. When the group arrives in Savoy, they find the villagers are having a party, which becomes even more joyous when the people see that La Luc has returned. Theodore and Adeline buy a villa in Savoy. They soon invite Louis de La Motte to visit them. As time passes, Louis also marries and settles near Theodore and Adeline's villa.

Chapters 25 and 26 Analysis

One could not ask for a better ending to a novel. The Marquis takes a dose of poison so he is killed and Adeline is spared the stress of having to testify in court against him. Upon his death, the Marquis becomes remorseful, a feeling that one almost believes the Marquis is immune to, and he restores Adeline's birth rites to her. With Adeline's newly



found stature as an heiress, she pleads with the king for Theodore and La Motte's pardon. Theodore is completely pardoned and proposes to Adeline. Although La Motte's sentence is only softened to banishment, he receives a generous gift from Adeline of enough money to live comfortably on in a foreign country. Meanwhile, La Luc regains his full health. The novel closes with the villain dead and all others happy and healthy.



Characters

Adeline

Adeline is the daughter of Henry Marquis de Montalt and an unnamed French woman. Adeline is described as being beautiful, about the age of eighteen. Adeline at first believes she is the daughter of a mother who died when Adeline was seven and a father who didn't want her. Adeline was taken to a convent when her "mother" died. It was the intent of Phillipe the Marquis de Montalt that his niece should take her vows at the convent. In this way, the Marquis thought that no one would even know she existed. The Marquis also had Adeline's father killed so that he would inherit the money that Adeline's father was left when Adeline's mother died.

Adeline, however, disrupts the Marquis' plans when she refuses to take her vows. For this reason, the Marquis has her removed from the convent and pays two men to kill her. Instead of killing her, however, they give her to La Motte, who is running from creditors in Paris. La Motte and his family, including Adeline, settle into an abandoned abbey owned by the Marquis. The Marquis does not realize Adeline is his niece and first tries to marry her. Adeline refuses to marry the Marquis as she does not love or respect him and she is in love with another. With the help of the servant Peter, Adeline attempts to run away from the abbey, but her plan is thwarted by the Marquis and she is taken to his villa where he plans to force her to marry him.

Adeline manages to escape from the Marquis' villa and finds Theodore waiting for her, prepared to take her away. However, he has left his regiment without permission and is now wanted by officers of the law. The Marquis's men catch up with Adeline and Theodore at an inn where they have stopped to stay the night. Theodore is injured during a fight with the officers of the law and Adeline takes loving care of him. However, the Marquis has the couple separated and Adeline is taken back to the abbey. The Marquis recognizes the seal Adeline had placed on one of her letters to Theodore and realizes she is his niece. At this point, the Marquis tries to bribe La Motte into killing the girl, who is being held captive at the abbey. Instead, La Motte helps Adeline escape. This time Adeline reaches safety in the city of Savoy. In a twist of fate, she is taken in by Theodore's father and sister. Adeline lives with them until La Motte's son, who has befriended Theodore, comes looking for Theodore's relatives to tell them Theodore is about to be executed.

During the trial of Theodore and the trial of La Motte, information comes to light that allows Adeline to be acquainted with her true heritage. This information, as well as a plea from Adeline, also allows Theodore to be acquitted of his crimes. Adeline, who is now a rich heiress, marries Theodore. They buy a house near that of Theodore's father and live happily.



Theodore La Luc Peyrou

Theodore is the son of La Luc, the minister of the town of Savoy. Although it was intended he become clergy also, Theodore decides to join the army. Theodore's last name is different from his father's because he received an inheritance that required he take the last name of Peyrou. Once in the army, Theodore is assigned to a regiment lead by Phillipe Marquis de Montalt.

Theodore meets Adeline when he visits the abbey with the Marquis. He learns of the Marquis's plans to marry Adeline and tries to warn her, but is impeded by the Marquis. Theodore then leaves his regiment without permission in order to help Adeline escape from the Marquis' villa. At an inn where they stop to spend the night, Theodore attacks one of the officers who tries to carry him off without letting him speak to Adeline first. Theodore also is wounded during this brawl. Later when the Marquis himself comes to the inn, Theodore attacks the Marquis. This action gives the Marquis an opening through which to attain his revenge on Theodore. Theodore is then thrown in jail and awaits his sentence of death. Once information comes out in the La Motte trial that the Marquis did indeed want Adeline dead and Theodore was trying to save her, Theodore's death sentence is pardoned. He marries Adeline and they live happily.

Pierre de la Motte

After living a rich and indulgent life in Paris, La Motte and his wife are forced to go into hiding to save themselves from creditors. On their way out of town, La Motte meets with strange men who threaten to kill him if he refuses to take Adeline with him. La Motte does as requested. His family and Adeline set up residence in an abandoned abbey owned by the Marquis. Ironically, during the first few weeks they live at the abbey, La Motte robs the Marquis, an action which leaves him doubly indebted to the Marquis. In exchange for clemency from his crimes, the Marquis wants La Motte to give him Adeline as his wife. La Motte agrees to this arrangement; however, Adeline is uncooperative. When the Marquis learns that Adeline is his niece, he again attempts to employ La Motte, this time to murder Adeline. Although La Motte stooped to the proposition of marrying Adeline against her wishes, he finds he cannot murder her, so he helps her to escape. As a way of thanking him Adeline pleads for La Motte's life at his trial for the robbery of the Marquis. Although Adeline cannot have him pardoned, the judge does reduce La Motte's punishment to banishment. Adeline gives La Motte and his wife enough money to live comfortably where ever they choose.

Phillipe Marquis de Montalt

Phillipe Marquis de Montalt is the owner of the abbey in which La Motte and his family seek refuge. Several years prior, the Marquis had Adeline's father imprisoned and murdered in this same abbey. For this reason, the Marquis is unable to spend the night in the building. The Marquis decides to use his power over La Motte to make him give Adeline to the Marquis as his wife. Later, when the Marquis realizes Adeline is his niece,



he tries to use this same power to persuade La Motte to murder Adeline. When La Motte does not commit the murder but instead helps Adeline escape, the Marquis has La Motte put into jail because La Motte had robbed the Marquis in the past.

In La Motte's trial, however, incriminating information comes forward about the Marquis and he is called to stand trial for the murder of his brother. La Motte also tells the judge about the Marquis's plan to murder Adeline. On the day of his trial, the Marquis takes a lethal dose of poison because he does not believe the trial will have a positive outcome for him. Luckily for Adeline, the Marquis does testify that she is the daughter of his brother. This statement allows Adeline to become the uncontested heir of her mother's estate.

Constance Valentia de la Motte

Madame La Motte is originally considered a friend by Adeline. The two spend much time talking and working together at the abbey. After her husband begins acting strangely, however, Madame La Motte decides he is in love with Adeline. For this reason, Madame La Motte begins treating Adeline badly. Once Madame La Motte realizes she was wrong in her assumptions about Adeline, she is too embarrassed to explain her actions to Adeline but does begin to treat her better. Later, when Adeline arrives in Paris to attend La Motte's trial, Madame La Motte offers to allow Adeline to stay with her.

Arnaud La Luc

La Luc is Clara and Theodore's father. He is the minister of the town of Savoy to which Adeline runs when La Motte helps her escape from the abbey. La Luc and his family take in Adeline and nurse her to health. After she is healthy, La Luc "adopts" Adeline and treats her as one of his own children. During Theodore's prison stay and his trial, La Luc's already poor health becomes worse and worse. After Theodore is pardoned, La Luc is able to travel to Montpellier, where his health is restored.

Clara La Luc

Clara La Luc is La Luc's daughter and Theodore's sister. She acts as a sister and friend to Adeline after Adeline joins the family. At the end of the novel, Clara marries M. Verneuil, a distant relative of Adeline and the chevalier who saved Clara's life when her horse ran away.

Louis de la Motte

Louis de la Motte is the son of La Motte. He discovers his father's hiding place in the abbey and stays with his family there for awhile. During this time he falls in love with Adeline; however, Adeline tells him that she can not love him in return. Later, it is Louis who finds Adeline and La Luc to tell them that Theodore is in jail. Although he still feels



love for Adeline and is jealous of Theodore, Louis is able to put these feelings aside to help the man who has become his friend get out of prison.

Peter

Peter is the servant who leaves Paris with the La Mottes. Peter learns of the plans that La Motte and the Marquis have for Adeline. He helps Adeline devise an escape plan that is discovered by the Marquis. Later, it is Peter who La Motte employs to take Adeline away from the abbey when the Marquis suggests that La Motte kill the girl. Peter takes Adeline to his hometown of Savoy.

Du Bosse

Du Bosse is one of the men hired by the Marquis to help murder Adeline when she was originally taken from the convent. He spots La Motte while La Motte is jailed in Paris. When Du Bosse learns what the Marquis has accused La Motte of, Du Bosse provides incriminating evidence about the Marquis that helps to free Theodore and has the Marquis put on trial for the murder of his own brother.

Jean d'Aunoy

Jean d'Aunoy was the man who Adeline believed to be her father. In reality, however, he kidnapped and murdered her real father, pretended to be Adeline's father until his wife died, then put her in a convent. He is later hired by the Marquis to take Adeline from the convent and kill her when she refused to take her vows.

Henry Marquis de Montalt

Henry Marquis de Montalt was the half brother of Phillippe Marquis de Montalt. He was the birth father of Adeline. Henry was kidnapped by men hired by his brother on October 12, 1642 while on the road to Caux. He was held as a prisoner at least three weeks at the abbey, and then killed. While captive, he wrote the manuscript which is discovered by Adeline in the abbey. La Motte also discovers Henry's skeleton in the basement of the abbey.



Objects/Places

League

A league is a unit of measurement consisting of about three miles.

Monville

Monville is the city where La Motte stops so that his family and Adeline may spend the night.

Forrest of Fontanville

The Forest of Fontanville is the forest in which the abbey is located.

Lyons

Lyons is the town in which La Motte hopes he will be able to seek concealment.

Auboine

Auboine is the town close to the deserted abbey in which the La Mottes stay. It is from this town that Peter brings supplies and furniture.

The River

It is on the banks of this river, which winds through the forest that surrounds the abbey, that Adeline often takes books to read.

St. Clair's Abbey

St. Clair's Abbey is the abbey in which the La Mottes set up residence after they are forced to leave Paris.

Ruins of a Tomb

The ruins of a tomb are located in the forest surrounding the abbey. It is in this tomb that La Motte hides the loot he has stolen from the marquis.



Rusty Dagger

Adeline finds this rusty dagger in a room in the abbey. She later believes it is the dagger that killed her father.

Small Roll of Paper Tied with a String

This small roll of paper contains the manuscript of a journal kept by Adeline's father while he was held prisoner in the abbey.

Inn at Baux

The inn at Baux is the inn where the Marquis catches up with Adeline and Theodore after they run away from him.

Adeline's Seal

When the Marquis sees this seal on a letter from Adeline to Theodore, he realizes that Adeline is the daughter of his half-brother.

Savoy

Savoy is the town to which Peter takes Adeline.

Glacier of Montanvert

The Glacier of Montanvert is the location where La Luc and his family travel during one of their outings.



Themes

Adeline as Damsel in Distress

One of the requirements of the Gothic novel is a female character that acts as a damsel in distress. Adeline, the heroine of *Romance of the Forest*, fits the description of this damsel in distress. At the end of the novel, however, Adeline transforms from this typical damsel in distress as she gains affluence. In the conclusion of the novel, she uses her new found affluence to save Theodore, the hero who intended to save her, from a sentence of death.

Adeline first appears as an unwanted, miserable but beautiful young lady who refuses even to talk about her history to the people who have agreed to take her in. Even with the La Mottes Adeline again finds herself in a distressing situation. La Motte has promised Adeline in marriage to a man she does not love. Both Theodore and Peter attempt to save Adeline but with no success. Finally, however, Theodore manages to rescue Adeline from the Marquis only to have the Marquis catch up with them and take Adeline back.

It is at this point in Adeline's story that she turns from the description of the typical damsel in distress. Theodore, the hero who is supposed to run in and save her, ends up in jail, charged with leaving his regiment without permission and attacking the Marquis. In a twist of fate, Adeline turns out to be the daughter of a wealthy French woman. With her newly found affluence and wealth, it is Adeline who helps to save Theodore. As soon as she is able, she goes before the king and begs Theodore's sentence be pardoned.

Gothic Novel Gone Awry

In order for a novel to be classified as a Gothic novel, there are certain elements that it should contain. For instance, a Gothic novel generally has a story line that contains both a blossoming romance as well as elements of fear and horror. The romance in the novel *The Romance of the Forest* is the one developing between Theodore and Adeline. The horror comes from the horrible exploits of the Marquis in his attempt first to own Adeline, then to achieve revenge on those who have kept him from obtaining his goals.

Gothic novels are also generally set in a landscape of horror and decay. In the case of this novel, the majority of the action is set in an abandoned monastery, located in a dark and dismal forest. The characters include a damsel in distress, Adeline; a hero, Theodore; and a villain, the Marquis. The discovery of the skeleton of Adeline's father in the lower levels of the abbey fits the bill as another characteristic of a Gothic novel. Adeline's dreams about the death of her father in the abbey also add to the tone of horror in the novel.



When Adeline escapes from the abbey and goes to live in Savoy, however, the tone of the novel changes. The landscape of the novel is much less dark and dismal, and the characters of the damsel in distress and the hero seem to change places. Theodore, whose intent was to save Adeline, finds himself in jail awaiting a sentence of death. It is Adeline, formerly the helpless damsel who needed rescuing, who ends up being a major factor in the salvation of Theodore. The helpless Adeline learns she is the heiress of a rich French Marchioness. She uses her newly found affluence to beg for Theodore's life. As Theodore and Adeline are married and live happily ever after, this Gothic novel concludes more as a fairy tale than a Gothic novel.

Portrayal of Religious Figures

Although this theme is understated, it is interesting to look at the way the Radcliffe portrays religion and religious characters in her novel. The Lady Abbess of the second convent in which Adeline stays is deceitful and even cruel to Adeline. Because of this nun's deception when trying to convince Adeline to take her vows, Adeline's time in the convent is very unhappy. As a result of this treatment, one would think that Adeline would have a bad attitude toward religion. Adeline, however, often prays to God for guidance and protection. She seems to have retained her faith in God despite her bad experiences in the convent.

Notice that when Adeline goes to live with the La Luc family, religion is portrayed in a completely different light. Just as the tone of the novel as a whole changes from Gothic to fairy tale, the view of religion turns from that of a confining institution to an establishment based on love and caring. La Luc is the minister of his town of Savoy. He is well loved and admired by all who meet him. In turn, La Luc loves all of the people that he shepherds. Instead of attempting to get his people to follow the faith by deceit, he lives a life that makes other people want to follow him. As La Luc tells Adeline, he enjoys his duties as a priest and does not find them distasteful or inflexible.



Style

Point of View

This novel is told in the third person, omniscient point of view. Although the writer gives insight into the thoughts and actions of some of the other characters, the action of the novel centers on Adeline. Since the major story line of the novel deals with the Adeline's suffering and her transformation to a rich heiress, it is imperative that the action stay closely focused on Adeline. Only in the last third of the novel, when the court appearance of La Motte and the Marquis determine the way in which Adeline's story is completed, does the focus shift from Adeline to these other characters.

The majority of the story is told through exposition with only patches of dialogue. Instead of recording what each character said to another verbatim, the author is more interested in getting the main point of the conversation across to the reader. Therefore, large portions of the story are told in a way that describes the conversations instead of replicating them.

Setting

The setting of this novel is seventeenth century France. Cities in which the action of the novel takes place include Paris and Savoy. The majority of the action, however, does not occur in a city at all. The majority of the action takes place in St. Clair's abbey located in the Forest of Fontanville. The closest city to this deserted abbey is the town of Aubeoin. The reason the majority of the novel is set in this abbey is because the La Motte family, with whom Adeline takes refuge, is running from creditors in Paris. They do not believe anyone will look for them in the old abbey.

Important sections of the abbey include the room which Adeline is given as her room. She is later held captive in this room after the Marquis discovers her identity. Other important rooms are the hidden rooms that Adeline first dreams about and in which later finds her father's manuscript as well as the rusty dagger that killed him. A final important setting that is located in the abbey are the downstairs rooms where La Motte and his family hide when they believe the officers of the law are after them. It is also in these downstairs rooms where Adeline's father's skeleton is discovered.

Other settings for the novel include the house on the heath where La Motte first sees Adeline. La Luc's home in Savoy is another important setting in the novel. It is in this home that Adeline is first loved unconditionally. The prison in which Theodore is held captive is another important setting in the novel. Other settings for the novel include Peter's sister's house, various roadside inns as well as a courtroom in Paris.



Language and Meaning

Since this is a Gothic novel, the language of the novel, especially at its beginning, is intended to present a dark and dismal tone. The language of the novel could not be properly described as overly stiff or relaxed. However, the sentences do tend to be long and convey much information in a single sentence.

The language of the novel does portray the culture of seventeenth century France. It also portrays the distress of Adeline as well as the dismal quality of her situation. The language the writer chooses to use is also flexible enough to portray a happier, lighter tone at the end of the novel. This lighter language is particularly noticeable in the sections that involve the La Luc family.

Structure

This novel is divided into three volumes with seven chapters in the first volume, seven chapters in the second section and twelve chapters in the third volume. Each chapter begins with an excerpt of poetry that carries some significance to the text in the following chapter. Some of these excerpts are taken from works by authors such as Shakespeare, Julius Caesar and Walpole. Works of poetry are often interspersed in the text of each chapter also. In several instances, this poetry is composed by Adeline as she sits on the banks of the river located near the abbey.

The novel seems to be divided into two sections with the beginning, and longest section, being written in the style of the Gothic novel. The tone of the novel seems to change in the sixteenth chapter into a lighter and much less depressing tone. The tone becomes so light and the ending so perfect that it does not seem an appropriate conclusion for a Gothic novel.

Finally, the first two-thirds of the novel are written in a continuous timeline with the action centered on Adeline and the La Mottes. After La Motte assists Adeline in leaving the abbey, however, the action of the novel switches between the different characters, namely Adeline, the La Mottes and the Marquis. There are also sections that include flashbacks to actions that occurred earlier in the novel.



Quotes

"If you wish to save your life, swear that you will convey this girl where I may never see her more; or rather consent to take her with you, for your oath I would not believe, and I can take care you will not find me again." Chap. 1, p. 5

"He approached, and perceived the Gothic remains of an abbey: it stood on a kind of rude lawn, overshadowed by high and spreading trees, which seemed coeval with the building, and diffused a romantic gloom around." Chap. 2, p. 15

"La Motte sighed. The comparison between himself and the gradation of decay, which these columns exhibited, was but too obvious and affecting." Chap. 2, p. 16

"Among the rest, it was said, that strange appearances had been observed at the abbey, and uncommon noises heard; and through this report had been ridiculed by sensible persons as the idle superstition of ignorance, it had fastened so strongly upon the minds of the common people, that for the last seventeen years none of the peasantry had ventured to approach the spot. The abbey was now, therefore, abandoned to decay." Chap. 2, p. 31

"La Motte stood motionless as he gazed; the object before him seemed to confirm the report that some person had formerly been murdered in the abbey." Chap. 4, p. 54

"'Besides,' resumed Louis, 'this abbey is protected by a supernatural power, and none of the country people dare approach it.'" Chap. 5, p. 69

"Self-love may be the center, round which the human affections move, for whatever motive conduces to self-gratification may be resolved into self-love; yet some of these affections are in their nature so refined - that though we cannot deny their origin, they almost deserve the name of virtue." Chap. 5, p. 82

"To discover depravity in those whom we have loved, is one of the most exquisite tortures to a virtuous mind, and the conviction is often rejected before it is finally admitted." Chap. 8, p. 118

"But you well know our asylum in this abbey depends upon the good-will of the Marquis, which we must not wantonly loose; and surely such a conduct as you propose would endanger this." Chap. 8, p. 123

"But these ghosts that haunt the abbey, I am no more a coward than other men, but I don't like them: and then there is so many strange reports abroad; and my master - I thought I could have served him to the end of the world, but now I care not how soon I leave him, for his behavior to you, Ma'amselle." Chap. 10, p. 140

"Thus ended Adeline's share of an adventure, begun with a prospect not only of security, but of happiness; an adventure, which had attached her more closely to Theodore, and shewn him to be more worthy of her love; but which at the same time,



had distressed her by new disappointment, produced the imprisonment of her generous and new-adorned lover, and delivered both himself and her into the power of a rival, irritated by delay, contempt, and opposition." Chap. 12, p. 198

"He had been led on by passion to dissipation - and from dissipation to vice; but having once touched the borders of infamy, the progressive steps followed each other fast, and he now saw himself the pander of a villain, and the betrayer of an innocent girl, whom every plea of justice and humanity called upon him to protect." Chap. 14, p. 208

"We may never meet again, but I hope you will be happy; and remember, when you think of me, that I am not quite so bad as I have been tempted to be." Chap. 16, p. 232

"Near a fortnight had elapsed since her removal to the chateau, when one morning La Luc desired to speak with her alone. She followed him into his study, and then in a manner the most delicate he told her, that, as he found she was so unfortunate in her father, he desired she would henceforth consider him as her parent, and his house as her home." Chap. 17, p. 258

"I thank God that my duty and my pleasures are generally in unison." Chap. 17, p. 259

"It seemed as if a destiny had hung over the life of Theodore, for it is probable that the king might have granted the petition of the unhappy father, had it not happened that the Marquis de Montalt was present at court when the paper was presented." Chap. 21, p. 324.

"The feelings of the Marquis, who, in a prosecution stimulated by revenge, had thus unexpectedly exposed his crimes to the public eye, and betrayed himself to justice, can only be imagined." Chap. 23, p. 342

"As the history of the seal which revealed the birth of Adeline is rather remarkable, it may not be amiss to mention that it was stolen from the Marquis, together with a gold watch, by Jean d'Aunoy: the watch was soon disposed of, but the seal had been kept as a pretty trinket by his wife, and at her death went with Adeline among her cloths to the convent." Chap. 23, p. 345

"From an orphan, subsisting on the bounty of others, without family, with few friends, and pursued by a cruel and powerful enemy, she saw herself suddenly transformed to the daughter of an illustrious house, and the Heiress of immense wealth. But she learned also that her father had been murdered - murdered in the prime of his days - murdered by means of his brother, against whom she must now appear, and in punishing the destroyer of her parent doom her uncle to death." Chap. 24, p. 346

"The circumstances attending the discovery of these papers no longer appeared to be a work of chance, but of a Power whose designs are great and just." Chap. 24, p. 346

"It appeared that convinced he had nothing to hope from his trial, he had taken this method of avoiding an ignominious death." Chap. 25, p. 353



"This kindness operated so powerfully upon his heart, which had been betrayed through weakness rather than natural depravity, and awakened so keen a remorse for the injuries he had once meditated against a benefactress so noble, that his former habits became odious to him, and his character gradually recovered the hue which it would probably always have worn had he never been exposed to the tempting dissipations of Paris." Chap. 25, p. 354



Topics for Discussion

Do you believe the novel *Romance of the Forest* qualifies as a Gothic novel? Why or why not?

Consider the idea of debtor's prison as it is portrayed in the novel. Do you believe prison terms for debtors are a good idea? Why or why not?

Consider the importance of Adeline's dreams. What do these dreams signify and why are they significant to the remainder of the novel?

Explore the aspect of fate as it is presented in the novel. Do you believe things happen for a reason or is life a matter of chance? Do you believe the result of Adeline's life was the result of fate, or just being in the right place at the right time?

Consider the scene in which La Motte helps Adeline escape from the abbey. What does La Motte mean when he tells Adeline to remember he was not as bad as he'd been tempted to be?

Discuss the use of poetry in this novel. How does the use of poetry add to the novel?

Compare and contrast the personalities of the Marquis and Theodore. In what ways are they different? Are there any ways they are similar?

Consider the ways in which Theodore, La Motte and the Marquis all handled their jail terms and impending death sentences. Compare and contrast the way they react to the situations in which they find themselves.