

# THE CONFIDENCES OF ARSÈNE LUPIN V: THE MARRIAGE OF LUPIN By MAURICE LEBLANC ILLUSTRATIONS by ADRIEN MACHEFERT



MONSIEUR ARSENE LUPIN has the honor to inform you of his approaching marriage with Mademoiselle Angélique de Sarzeau-Vendôme, Princesse de Bourbon-Condé, and to request the pleasure of your company at the wedding, which will take place at the church of Sainte-Clotilde. . ."

"The Duc de Sarzeau-Vendôme has the honor to inform you of the approaching marriage of his daughter Angélique, Princesse de Bourbon-Condé, with Monsieur Arsène Lupin and to request . . ."

Jean, Duc de Sarzeau-Vendôme, could not finish reading the invitations that he held in his trembling hand. He was pale with anger, his long, lean body shaking with tremors.

"There!" he gasped, handing the two communications to his daughter. "This is what our friends have received. This has been the talk of Paris since yesterday! What do you say to that dastardly insult, Angélique? What would your poor mother say to it, if she were alive?"

Angélique was tall and thin like her father, skinny and angular like him. She was thirty-three years of age, always dressed in black stuff, shy and retiring in manner, with a head too small in proportion to her height and narrowed on either side until the nose seemed to jut forth as if in protest against such parsimony. And yet, it would be impossible to say that she was ugly; for her eyes were extremely beautiful, soft and grave, proud and a little sad—pathetic eyes that one who saw them once would not readily forget.

She flushed with shame, at first, on hearing her father's words, informing her of the scandal of which she was the victim. But, as she loved him, notwithstanding his harshness to her, his injustice and despotic manner, she said:

"Oh, I think it must be meant for a joke, father, to which we need not pay any attention!"

"A joke? Why, every one is gossiping about it! A dozen papers have printed the confounded notice this morning, with satirical comments. They quote our pedigree, our ancestors, our illustrious dead. They pretend to take the thing seriously. . ."

"Still, no one could believe . . ."

"Of course not. But that does not prevent us from being the by-word of Paris."

"It will all be forgotten by tomorrow."

"Tomorrow, my girl, people will remember that the name of Angélique de Sarzeau-Vendôme has been bandied about as it should not be. Oh, if I could find out the name of the scoundrel who has dared! . . ."

At that moment, Hyacinthe, the duke's valet, came in to say that *monsieur le duc* was wanted on the telephone. Still fuming, he took down the receiver and growled.

"Well? Who is it? Yes, it's the Duc de Sarzeau-Vendôme speaking."

A voice replied:

"I want to apologize to you, *monsieur le duc*, and to Mlle. Angélique. It's my secretary's fault."

"Your secretary?"

"Yes, the invitations were only a rough draft that I meant to submit to you. Unfortunately, my secretary thought . . ."

"But, tell me, *monsieur*, who are you?"

"What, *monsieur le duc*, don't you know my voice? The voice of your future son-in-law?"

"What!"

"Arsène Lupin."

The duke dropped into a chair. His face was livid.

"Arsène Lupin . . . It's he . . . Arsène Lupin . . ."

Angélique gave a smile:

"You see, father, it's only a joke, a hoax . . ."

But the duke's rage broke out afresh, and he began

to walk up and down the room, swinging his arms:

"I shall go to the police! . . . The fellow can't be allowed to make a fool of me in this way! . . . If there's any law left in the land, it must be stopped!"

Hyacinthe entered the room again. He brought two visiting-cards.

"Chotois? Lepetit? Don't know them."

"They are both journalists, *monsieur le duc*."

"What do they want?"

"They would like to speak to *monsieur le duc* with regard to . . . the marriage. . ."

"Turn them out!" exclaimed the duke. "Keep them out and tell the porter not to admit scum of that sort to my house in future."

"Please, father . . ." Angélique ventured to say.

"As for you, shut up! If you had consented to marry one of your cousins when I wanted you to, this would not have happened."

The same evening, one of the two reporters printed, on the front page of his paper, a somewhat fanciful account of his expedition to the old mansion of the Sarzeau-Vendômes in the Rue de Varennes, and expatiated pleasantly upon the old nobleman's wrathful protests.

The next morning, another newspaper published an interview with Arsène Lupin that was supposed to have taken place in a lobby at the Opera. Arsène Lupin retorted in a letter to the editor:

I share my prospective father-in-law's indignation to the full. The sending out of the invitations was a gross breach of etiquette for which I am not responsible, but for which I want to make a public apology. Why, sir, the date of the marriage is not yet fixed! The father of my bride-to-be suggests early in May. She and I think that six weeks is really too long to wait . . .

That which gave a special piquancy to the affair and added immensely to the enjoyment of the friends of the family was the duke's well-known character;



"I rely on you, my three nephews, to help us to get away"

his pride and the uncompromising nature of his ideas and principles. Duc Jean was the last descendant of the Barons de Sarzeau, the most ancient family in Brittany; he was the lineal descendant of that Sarzeau who, upon marrying a Vendôme, refused to bear the new title that Louis XV forced upon him until after he had been imprisoned for ten years in the Bastille; and he had abandoned none of the prejudices of the old régime. In his youth, he followed the Comte de Chambord into exile. In his old age, he refused a seat in the Chamber on the pretext that



D'Emboise was standing before him, dressed as a Breton fisherman

a Sarzeau could sit with none other than his peers. The incident stung him to the quick. Nothing could pacify him. He cursed Lupin with resounding epithets, threatened him with every sort of punishment, and rounded on his daughter:

"There, if you had only married! . . . After all, you had plenty of chances. Your three cousins, Mussy, d'Emboise and Caoreches, are noblemen of good descent, allied to the best families, fairly well-off; and they are still anxious to marry you. Why do you refuse them? Ah, because you are a dreamer, a sentimentalist! And because your cousins are too fat, or too thin, or too coarse for you . . ."

She was, in fact, a dreamer. Left to her own devices from childhood, she had read all the books of chivalry, all the colorless romances of olden-time that littered the ancestral book shelves; and she looked upon life as a fairy tale in which the beautiful maidens are always happy, while the others wait till death for the bridegroom who does not come. Why should she marry one of her cousins, when they were only after her money—the millions that she had inherited from her mother? She might as well remain an old maid and go on dreaming . . .

She answered, gently:

"You will end by making yourself ill, father. Forget this silly business."

But how could he forget it? Every morning, some pinprick renewed his wound. Three days running, Angélique received a wonderful sheaf of flowers, with Arsène Lupin's card peeping from it. Her father could not go to his club, but a friend accosted him:

"That was a good one today!"

"What was?"

"Why, your son-in-law's latest! Have n't you seen it? Here, read it for yourself: 'M. Arsène Lupin is petitioning the Council of State for permission to add his wife's name to his own, and to be known henceforth as Lupin de Sarzeau-Vendôme.'"

And, the next day, he read:

As the young bride bears, by virtue of an unrepealed decree of Charles X, the title and arms of the Bourbon-Condés, of whom she is the heiress-of-line, the eldest son of the Lupins de Sarzeau-Vendôme will be styled Prince de Bourbon-Condé.

And, the day after, an advertisement:

Exhibition of Mlle. de Sarzeau-Vendôme's trousseau at Messrs. ———'s Great Linen Warehouse. Each article marked with initials L. S. V.

Then, an illustrated paper published a photographic scene; the duke, his daughter and his son-in-law sitting at a table playing cut-throat auction-bridge.

The date, also, was announced with a great flourish of trumpets: the 4th of May.

Next, particulars were given of the marriage-set-