Scaramouche: A Romance of the French Revolution

Rafael Sabatini · *1921 · original English text*

In Brittany in 1788, a young lawyer, Andre-Louis Moreau, sees his friend killed in a duel by a nobleman the law will not touch. He takes up his friend's cause, flees as an agitator, and joins a troupe of strolling players as Scaramouche. He then becomes a fencing master and a deputy of the Third Estate. In the end he faces the Marquis, and learns who his father is.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What does a man do when the law will not give justice, and is vengeance or mercy the answer?

Sabatini's answer is mercy that has been paid for by a long anger. Andre-Louis's cause is justice for the poor and for his friend, and he learns the sword and the stage to pursue it. When the Revolution turns the nobles into hunted men, he gives his own father a safe-conduct and lets him go. The book is a comedy of masks, with a hero who is sceptical of everything, and the gift of life is the last word.

KEY CHARACTERS

Andre-Louis Moreau
A young lawyer, then Scaramouche, then a fencing master and deputy.

Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr
A nobleman and a master swordsman.

M. de Kercadiou
The Seigneur of Gavrillac and Andre-Louis's godfather.

Aline de Kercadiou
Kercadiou's niece.

Philippe de Vilmorin
Andre-Louis's friend, killed in a duel.

Binet
The manager of the strolling troupe.

Climene
Binet's daughter.

Le Chapelier
A Breton deputy who befriends Andre-Louis.

Madame de Plougastel
A countess of Meudon and cousin of M. de Kercadiou.

Grades 8–12

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01

The Death of Philippe

BOOK I, CHAPTERS I–VII

In Brittany in 1788, Andre-Louis Moreau sees his friend Philippe de Vilmorin killed in a duel by the Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr, after Philippe speaks for the people.

- Andre-Louis is a young lawyer and the godson of M. de Kercadiou.
- Philippe de Vilmorin speaks for the Third Estate.
- The Marquis de La Tour d'Azyr kills him in a duel.
- The law will not touch the Marquis.
- Andre-Louis vows to carry on Philippe's cause.

02

Omnes Omnibus

BOOK I, CHAPTERS VIII–IX

At Rennes and Nantes Andre-Louis stirs the people to protest. He must flee, and the road leads to a company of strolling players.

- He speaks to the crowd.
- He is hunted by the law.
- He takes the name Omnes Omnibus.
- He escapes to a troupe of players.

03

Scaramouche

BOOK II, CHAPTERS I–XI

Andre-Louis joins M. Binet's troupe as Scaramouche, writes comedy, and falls in love with the manager's daughter Climene. A riot at the theatre in Nantes drives him to Paris.

- He joins the troupe as Scaramouche.
- He writes comedy for the stage.
- He falls in love with Climene.
- Binet tries to sell Climene to the Marquis.
- A riot at the theatre in Nantes drives him away.

04

The Sword

BOOK III, CHAPTERS I–VIII

In Paris Andre-Louis becomes the assistant of a fencing master, Bertrand des Amis, then takes over his academy and learns the sword. He joins the Assembly as deputy for Ancenis.

- He becomes the assistant of Bertrand des Amis.
- He takes over the academy.
- He learns the sword.
- He is deputy for Ancenis.
- He fights the swordsmen who murder deputies of the Third Estate.

05

The Marquis

BOOK III, CHAPTERS IX–XIV

As the Revolution turns against the nobility, the Marquis and his family at Meudon need Andre-Louis's safe-conducts. He confronts the Marquis and learns that he is his father.

- The Revolution turns against the nobles.
- The family at Meudon needs safe-conducts.
- Andre-Louis meets the Marquis face to face.
- He learns that the Marquis is his father.

06

The Gift of Life

BOOK III, CHAPTERS XV–XVI

Andre-Louis gives his father a safe-conduct and lets him go. The Marquis leaves France, and Andre-Louis and Aline are reconciled.

- He gives the safe-conduct.
- The Marquis leaves France.
- Andre-Louis and Aline are reconciled.

Justice and vengeance | Masks and roles | The sword | Revolution | Mercy

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 8–12

1. How Philippe dies and why the law will not act.
2. How Andre-Louis becomes Scaramouche.
3. How he learns the sword.
4. What he learns about the Marquis and what he does.

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