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# Vatel

By Jeanne Labrune

**LAUZUN:**

M. Le Prince de Cond

his Majesty gives me reasons to believe that he would accept an invitation to visit you at Chantilly.

The visit will last 3 days.

The King instructs me to say that he wants no fuss.

Merely the simple pleasures of life in the country.

In other words,

if you value his Majesty's favor,

you will set no limit...

to the extravagance and ingenuity of the festivities.

I will present myself beforehand to approve the arrangements.

Marquis de Lauzun,

in the service of his Majesty, Louis XIV of France.

[Footsteps approaching]

On that table!

- Good morning, Monsieur.

- Good morning, Monsieur.

Good morning.

**COND:**

Naturally I shall place mine at the disposal of his Majesty.

From the King's anti-chambre, we pass through the music room.

And next,

to the apartments of the Queen.

**COND:**

drawing room,

and a further bedroom beyond for her Majesty's lady-in-waiting.

Lady-in-waiting. Madame de Montausier.

Madame de Montausier.

Anne de Montausier.

**COND:**

and convenient.

**LAUZUN:**

ago.

Remarkably well informed.

The Queen confesses the morning after...

- When was it?

**- VALET:**

**COND:**

**COND:**

the King's bedroom.

And a second bedroom through here,  
with access also from the private corridor.

And this of course,  
we have allocated to the Duchesse de la Valliere.

No.

No.

This room is for the Marquise de Montespan.

**COND:**

**LAUZUN:**

I prefer it, M. Le Prince, if my rooms were north facing.

- I don't like the sun coming in.

- **COND:**

I myself will manage with only one room for three days...

as well as the Princess.

Every corner and cupboard is spoken for.

Even so to accommodate the Court we have to use every farmhouse...  
for miles around.

**VATEL:**

No. I won't have you disturbed, Vatel.

**Cond:**

Have that cleaned!

**VATEL:**

Trees, birds, butterflies,  
fruits and flowers.

**VATEL:**

fireworks. The sun banishes the night.

The lamps are on their way from Paris now.

For Friday, the fish banquet will be presented on a sea of ice.

Neptune's tribute to Helios, the Sun God.

The King will catch cold.

No, my prince. The braziers will be lit one hour before the banquet.

Then the ice will melt.

I have forbidden it to melt, my Prince.  
Ha ha ha. Well, our fate is in your hands.  
The first day, noon.  
Good day to you.

**GOURVILLE:**

**ALCALET:**

else.  
I regret his Majesty is busy at this moment.  
His host, the Prince de Cond likewise.  
Not them.  
The man in charge,  
the Master of Pleasures and Festivities: Vatel.  
Oh, Vatel.  
Slightly more difficult.  
Yeah. I'll see what I can do. Please follow.  
- How many geese?  
- 60, Monsieur.

**ALCALET:**

Monsieur Vatel.  
You're trespassing here, M. Alcalet.  
All of us are owed money.  
Yes.  
We've come to tell you. From this moment, nothing on credit.

**MAN:**

**ALCALET:**

or a table napkin, nothing, until our bills are paid!  
- Exactly.  
- Pay up!

**ALCALET:**

- When will we get what we're owed?

**- VATEL:**

As things stand, we cannot honor our debts.  
Not for the months and years gone by, still less for these festivities.  
We cannot pay you a single sou,  
nor will we ever.  
You have only one chance of getting your money.  
By giving me everything I ask for, instantly.

And of the very best quality and then more of the same.

This visit is a reconciliation.

If the King is pleased by the festivities,  
then the royal coffers will open.

It's up to you.

If we give you more credit, will we get our money back?

The Prince has said so.

My master is a man of honor.

On that I stake my life. You will be paid.

Excellent. Excellent.

Good morning.

Monsieur.

- Monsieur Vatel.

- Hello, monsieur.

**MAN:**

Are you going down, Madame? I'm going up.

Oh.

**QUEEN:**

Explain to her the Queen does not wait on her lady-in-waiting!

Forgive me, Madame. Oh, please.

Let me...

Allow me.

I hope your birds will be happy with us.

**WOMAN:**

- That's good.

- Oui, Monsieur.

What do you think, your Highness?

Effiat, Monsieur has chosen the boy already.

Here we are!

Ah, yes. Put him in with the fruit...

**MAN:**

**MAN:**

Effiat, get in! Get in with...

with him.

Monsieur, the King's brother wants him for his page.

He chose me.

Get him dressed and put him to work.

And...

What would you have me tell his Highness,

the King's brother?

Tell him I don't get my boys from his boudoir.

And he won't get his from my kitchen.

Yes.

Indeed, I will.

It's not very wise upsetting...

the King's brother, you know.

He could make things go badly for us if he chooses.

Monsieur Vatel.

The Princess...

has been bitten... by a monkey!

Master Steward, you've filled my garden with savage beasts!

I've been badly bitten. Where were you?

Busy, your Highness. We have some unwelcome visitors.

Beggars?

Creditors.

Creditors!

Doctor Bourdelot!

I've been badly bitten...

on the arm.

They told me a poultice made of rose petals.

What's your name?

Francois Vatel, Madame.

**ANNE:**

**ANNE:**

Yes, Madame. I was steward to Nicolas Fouquet.

His Majesty's Minister of Finance.

You mean his Majesty's prisoner for life in the fortress of Pignerol.

That is so.

That was my first banquet.

Six thousand guests to meet the King.

Diamonds and saddle horses given away as prizes in childish games.

That was overdoing it, don't you think?

It showed how much Fouquet had been stealing.

**VATEL:**

Revenge.

The King will never forget that Cond fought against him in the civil war.

That was a long time ago. The King was a child.

If there's a war with the Dutch, the King will need Cond...

so your part in this, my dear Vatel, is to show the King...

we bow the head and bend the knee.

I'm passing red hot stones.

**- LOUIS:**

- Your Majesty.

**LOUIS:**

The better to serve France, your Majesty.

**LOUIS:**

Not yet, your Majesty.

**LOUIS:**

How many tulips do we have at Versailles?

Two million, Sire.

And my gardener hates flowers.

He would love a war with the Dutch.

**COLBERT:**

But, would your Majesty please recall...

that you have offered your daughter in marriage to William of Orange?

An invasion would not look well following a betrothal.

**LOUIS:**

No, we must secure our eastern frontier.

Four days ride from Paris, we have a country of Republicans, Protestants...  
and printers of seditious pamphlets.

We have no better soldier than Cond...

If there is a war, we'll need him.

He's expensive.

But if there's peace...

What do I say in the meantime?

Why Say anything?

Your Majesty was invited here to enjoy yourself.

Not for business.

**MAN:**

**COND:**

Yes, my Prince.

The king didn't utter one civil word to me during council.

He kept muttering to Lauzun.

Bastard!

My son has died...

working your machines at Versailles!

He died so you can have fountains at Versailles!  
Have you no control over your people?  
His Majesty wants her flogged at once.  
See to it, Master Steward.  
I'm not your Master of flogging madwomen, Prince.  
A hundred lashes.  
You know what's at stake. Don't weaken!

**WOMAN:**

so the King can have his fountains!  
Monsieur Vatel.  
I am short of a page at my household at Saint Cloud.  
You have a boy who might do apparently.  
Send him to my appartement and I'll have a look at him.  
Come, Lauzun, we have been promised music.

**DUKE:**

The madwoman has been flogged, your Majesty.  
I ask your pardon.  
Madwoman?  
Don't concern yourself, Prince. I recall no madwoman.  
There's no sign of them. How long are they going to be?  
You can't hurry a King.  
Well, you can't slow down a sunset!  
Madame...  
Monsieur le Marquis?  
The King sends you his compliments...  
and he begs the favour of taking a cup of chocolate with you...  
in your room at midnight.  
With me?  
May I offer you my congratulations?  
Although, as you can imagine,  
this came as a great blow to me.  
After tonight, I cannot hope for deliverance...  
from the pain of my own desires.  
May I Suggest...  
my rooms at ten?  
Alas, Monsieur,  
at ten o'clock I have an even more attractive offer.  
Her Majesty has asked me to de-louse her spaniel.  
[Whispering] Madame.

**BOY:**



**GIRL:**

He's coming! Thank God.

**MAN:**

Quicker!

Table one.

Shh!

With your King, eat, drink...

and enjoy yourselves!

We have to be perfect. Go, go. Go, go!

The Prince's gout is bad. Tell Dr. Bourdelot.

Madame de Courbe needs a new napkin.

Le Marquis d'Effiat wants his dish without coriander.

**MONTESPAN:**

Change Montespan for Montausier.

You look pale, Prince. Are you ill?

Your Majesty is gracious to enquire...

Yes, indeed.

I see we share the same taste.

Taste?

In women.

There is a lady who has been rejecting my advances...

in a way which I find quite stimulating.

Her world is about to change.

The King has asked for her tonight.

I suggest we mark the event.

I want you to make a masterpiece.

Spun sugar, almond paste...

fruit, flowers. I'll leave it to you.

I'm not a patissier, Marquis.

You were apprenticed at Eberhardt's on the Ile Saint Louis.

I'll be too busy.

Ask someone else, Marquis.

Fruit and flowers in the colour of flesh and blood.

**LAUZUN:**

and blood.

I'll send my valet in the morning.

Ha ha ha ha! [Glass breaking]

**VATEL:**

- **BOY:**

- I do not have the honor.  
I am the Vicomte d'Amboise.  
And when I grow up, I'll be the Duc de la Tremoille!

**ANNE:**

like the Duc de la Tremoille.  
In truth, the Duc de la Tremoille behaves like a pig.  
I thank you, Madame.  
The poorest of the poor picked those flowers,  
just for a few sous,  
to make the trees pretty for his Majesty...  
and those sous were on credit.  
But the poor are happy to be the King's creditors.  
It's an honor they never dreamed of.  
Of course.  
Both my parents were so honored they died of it.

**DOCTOR:**

Oh, God! I cannot believe this.  
Where are my birds?

**MAN:**

**DOCTOR:**

**MAN:**

**DOCTOR:**

**MAN:**

**DOCTOR:**

What am I going to do?  
I mean, it's a disaster!  
I specially ordered those thrushes and larks for the Prince's gout.  
His gout is giving him agony today! What will I do?  
Use something else.

**DOCTOR:**

Use something else? Ha-ha!  
Use something else!  
The heart torn from the living bird is the only treatment for gout.  
Everyone knows that!  
- Why not chickens?

**- DOCTOR:**

He's a Prince!  
Chicken hearts wouldn't even cure a peasant!  
Monsieur Vatel. Monsieur Vatel.  
The King is bored.  
It's a disaster for Cond.  
Are you trying to ruin me?  
Your Highness?  
First that madwoman.  
Now Marquis de Lauzun tells me you have been insolent.  
Insolent?  
You refused to be of service to him.  
I refused to be his patissier.  
What is the matter with you? Lauzun has the King's ear.  
For the next few clays, do what he asks.

**LOUIS:**

Gourville! Have they put you to spy on me?  
If they had, you'd be in the Bastille by now.  
You despise them, don't you?  
I don't despise anyone who does his duty.  
Tell me, Gourville, who is Anne de Montausier?  
Why?  
How many times have I bitten my tongue?  
Now I snap at the only one who is humane to me.  
She's the tastiest morceau at court many have tasted, or so they say.  
Where are we going?  
Good.  
Yes, it'd better be perfect.  
Colbert is not in our camp.  
He's hostile to our Prince gaining influence at Court.  
The Prince made a remark tonight about war...  
Well, there are rumours.

**- VATEL:**

**- GOURVILLE:**

So he is.  
But he's equally sick of being in debt.

**ANNE:**

Madame de Montausier.  
I'm concerned about the fish.

I've sent to Dieppe for an extra cartload,  
in case of storms off Le Havre.

You are my general.

The battle plan is yours to decide.

What else?

Nothing, unless it rains.

The carving squires will have to sleep in a stable,  
but they're Germans.

The lanterns arrive in the morning.

**COND:**

Well, I'll leave it to you.

Go to bed, my friend.

Vatel.

You did well.

The second day.

**COLIN:**

Over there.

You sent for me, Monsieur Vatel?

Food for cattle.

**VATEL:**

instead of slaughtering them every year.

How many varieties of pear are there?

**COLIN:**

This is the best one.

Its name is?

Bon Chrtien d'Hiver.

**VATEL:**

**COLIN:**

**VATEL:**

**COLIN:**

**VATEL:**

Bravo, Colin. You made a good choice.

The King will be pleased.

Colin, don't leave the kitchen without my order.

**Vatel:**

**MAN:**

**MAN:**

I am the valet of the Marquis de Lauzun.

My commiserations.

Thank you.

Good.

Now a real flower. Give me the blue one.

Harmony and contrast.

All beauty comes from those two things.

You see, Colin, few objects are beautiful or ugly in themselves.

To know that is the beginning of being an artist.

Now, I'll show you a real masterpiece.

**VALET:**

**LOUISE:**

**LOUISE:**

Send it back.

She doesn't want it.

Will you keep me with you when you are a Duchess?

Let's wait and see if I am to be a Duchess...

or just a night's divertissement to keep Mme de Montespan on her toes.

Or on her knees.

Know Phedre then, and all her wild desires.

**MAN:**

**SECOND MAN:**

Monsieur le Marquis.

Monsieur le Marquis.

What?

She refused it. Monsieur le Marquis.

That's rather beautiful.

Send it to...

the Duchesse de Longueville.

**VALET:**

Of course!

There's far too much waste in this country.

Madame.

Do not suppose that loving you, I think myself innocent...  
or approve myself.  
I am the victim of Celestium Vengeance...  
and hate myself still more than you detest me.  
Civilize, Madame, civilize...  
There still won't be enough meat. Not with the extra guests.  
Monsieur, I'm worried about the meat.  
We have scarcely enough.  
Monsieur Vatel.

**MAN:**

Monsieur Vatel.  
Monsieur, the King's brother has got the whale!  
This is, lover, death...  
The frightful monster must not get away!  
Here is my heart.  
It is there your hand should strike.  
Already I cannot face that I may prick it.  
Strike now!  
Or if you think me not worth a blow...  
Your men are so careless. They've quite spoiled our pleasure.  
My men had orders to wait for me.  
The whale was intended for the King's pleasure.  
The King! That's a shame. We, Bourbons, are...  
unpredictable when deprived of our...  
pleasure.  
You are a stubborn man, Master Steward.  
Admirable!  
Horse racing!  
Get that carcass out of the water.

**MAN:**

For your mistress.  
It must be from the King! There's a note.  
It's sugar.

**ANNE:**

It's all right.

**VATEL:**

you were kind to one who turned aside kindness.  
Such gifts as I have, I employ for your forgiveness.  
Franois Vatel.  
Gourville, help me.

The table lanterns I orderd were all smashed on the journey.  
If the wind gets up, it will blow out the candles.  
Torches would be dangerous.  
Fires of Bengal burn better then tallow,  
but the scent will ruin the taste of the food.  
The banquet will be a failure.  
It's just a hot meal on its way to the commode.  
No, no, Gourville.  
It's the future of the House of Cond.  
Well, if you were a gambler,  
you'd appreciate a whole new human pleasure.  
The risk of losing everything.

**My advice is:**

But don't ever stake your soul.  
I'd sell it today for the weather to hold, Gourville.  
Master Steward, do you promise us sport?  
Yes, Princess, there will be sport.  
I smell blood.  
I promise you blood.  
Montausier's stock is rising.  
She spent the night in his Majesty's bed.  
Does everybody know who sleeps with the King?  
Every footman knows.  
Sometimes, you can be quite ridiculous, my dear Vatel.  
You find the day more exciting than the night, Madame?  
You sent back my gift and my note.  
Do you think the King intends to keep you?  
Perhaps not, Lauzun,  
but from the King's bed to yours is a long fall.  
I am not contemplating it in this life.  
Madame de Longueville.  
Monsieur Vatel.  
They're waiting for the sauces!  
Pick this up. Someone help him!  
M. Vatel, the pies!  
There is really not enough meat! We're two tables short.  
They gave us the wrong numbers.  
Give me this. Bring me some mushrooms!  
Antoine, Antoine, mushrooms!  
Are you all right?  
It's nothing!  
Monsieur.  
GO! Go!

Cond has won 40,000 pistols from the King.  
Colbert must be furious.  
By losing a little, you might have won more.  
By winning a little, you might lose everything.  
Is the Prince losing his chateau?  
Not if he plays his cards wrong.  
Your Majesty.  
He'd better lose, Cond.  
Look, Madame Montausier.  
Cond's demands are excessive.  
Outrageous.  
You mean he knows his price.  
Of course, if there were to be a war...  
I'm sure my good friend M. De Turenne...  
would forgive the monies he loaned his Majesty last year.  
Condis a better leader. As yet, there is no war.  
Our envoys from Holland may well bring acceptable terms.  
I would prefer that.  
It is not rational for two rich countries...  
to make war.  
My dear Colbert,  
our destinies are not ruled by reason.  
Lust for power, like any lust, is seated,  
according to latest medical knowledge, in the liver.

**LAUZUN:**

it hasn't been my experience.  
Madame?  
Madame?  
Madame, please.

**VATEL:**

**VATEL:**

I wanted the wind to stop blowing.  
I made it stop.  
I thought it was God.  
Then perhaps God provided me.  
Is it so important?  
It is no small thing to please a King, Madame.  
To please a King is easily clone...  
and of no importance.  
But as a steward, I have it in my power...  
to save the house of the Prince of Cond.



What power do you have?  
To create.  
To astonish.  
The visit of his Majesty is the supreme test.  
If I please him,  
his benevolence will restore my master to his position...  
in the destiny of France.  
So the destiny of France is in your hands, Monsieur.  
That will be a great surprise to the King's minister Colbert.  
I must go back.  
You really believe Lauzun has enough influence...  
Trust me, my dearest.  
I've never let you down... have I?  
I will stay late after dinner. I'll need the room.  
I don't feel like ruining my gown in the corner of some stable.  
Is this what the Court has brought us to?

**DEMAURY:**

What kind of meat is this?  
Unicorn. Laurent!  
Monsieur Demaury.  
Hurry up! Hurry up!  
For God's sake.  
There's no news about the lanterns.  
More than half the eggs are addled. We can't make the custard.  
Watch.  
Come.  
The sugar will come up like beaten egg whites.  
- Don't forget the apricot!  
- No, monsieur.  
- No, monsieur.  
If they ask you what it is,  
tell them it's an old recipe from Chantilly.  
- Don't cut any more melons.  
- Yes, Monsieur.

**LOUISE:**

Who is it?  
Louise. Monsieur Vatel.  
Don't be afraid. Come on.  
My mistress...  
She asked me to stay until I have seen you read it.  
This is so pretty!  
What a strange idea!

- A custom from India.

- India?

Please thank your mistress.

My clock has stopped.

Does it matter?

All the other clocks in this chateau are working perfectly.

By the way,

the King stopped to examine the sun clock and admired it.

It means something.

I stink from head to toe.

This is good. I don't know it.

**VATEL:**

What did you want?

Monsieur sent me... uh,

It's not an easy embassy.

Your name's on everybody's lips, you know.

**GOURVILLE:**

Your genius is... [Chuckles]

Get to the point.

Monsieur wants you for his friend.

He admires...

Well, he admires you and to speak quite frankly,  
everything about you, so...

What he wants from you is, uh,  
everything.

Do I hear you right?

- What do you hear?

- That Monsieur has sent you...

to ask me to join the long line of stableboys and princes...

who he has honoured so...

intimately?

Yes, your hearing is very good.

**VATEL:**

and I quote Descartes, who I once knew:

"There is no soul so weak that it cannot acquire...

"an absolute power over the passions."

**GOURVILLE:**

He only wants a few moments of your time.

Then I'll send him a message...

which reveals more of me...

than he would ever see if I were to submit.

**Tell him:**

We both of us live with a terrible thing,  
a desire for the absolute,  
the sublime, the perfect.

That's why he flits from person to person...  
and that's why I give myself to no one.

And the Prince?

How long do you think it will take before this reaches the Prince?  
Not long if you hurry.

My dear Vatel.

We all go round together like a celestial machine.

The Sun King is at the center.

Cond is one of his planets and I am Conds moon.

Do you think there is a place to stand where we are free?

**GOURVILLE:**

Not to do so would be...

self-important.

More fruit on table six.

Bourdelot!

Why have you got Mme de Montausier's birds?

I got them from Madame de Montausier.

Huh?

- I'm saving them for the banquet.

- For the banquet?

Ha ha ha. No. In case the Prince requires them for his gout.

But Why?

Ah. The Princess asked La Montausier to sacrifice her canaries.

She refused.

So the Princess told her Majesty...

and she commanded La Montausier to give them to me.

Her Majesty.

But canaries,

Oh, uh. they are so small, I don't think their hearts will be enough...  
to ease the Prince's pain.

You see, this rich food is very bad for his gout.

I can't serve him an omelette...

to celebrate the visit of the King of France.

It's not your fault.

I just wish I had some better birds, that's all.

I have my parrots.

But surely, Vatel, you would not sacrifice...

If the Prince's pain gets too great to bear...  
then send to me for my parrots.  
Tell the Princess canaries are too small.  
Demaury!

**VATEL:**

The Duc de Longueville is drinking too heavily,  
serve him a lighter wine.  
A candle has gone out on table six.  
Angel drops!  
Oh,

**MARQUIS:**

Who is this Vatel? Where does he come from?  
Nowhere. The slums of Paris.  
He was apprenticed at Eberhardt's, I believe.  
Eberhardt's? On the Ile Saint Louis?  
My mother swore by Eberhardt's.  
So did your father, I believe,  
although I don't think he went there for the pastries.  
Vatel! I was just telling the Duchess here...  
about your boyhood days in the brothels of the Ile Saint Louis.  
It's quite true.  
No one knows more about the brothels of the Ile Saint Louis...  
than the Marquis de Lauzun.  
Oh, ho ho.  
Ha ha ha ha.  
I think he's just insulted you, but it's hard to tell.  
That's a rare gift.  
If you punish him for it, I'll tell everyone your favorite perversion.  
Oh, but Duchesse, you will be the last to know.  
Monsieur, you let us taste flavors one shall never forget.  
As a rule I don't allow the King to be served vinegar.  
It makes him irritable,  
particularly around his anus.  
Fetch Bourdelot!  
From India?  
How beautiful, ingenious.  
I have learned something today, which is rare.  
- I need something...  
- Are you in pain?  
No, I'm in the grip of some anxiety.  
Ha ha. Anxiety? I have nothing for anxiety. I am a doctor.

**MONSIEUR:**

GO, go, go, go!

Vatel.

**MONSIEUR:**

And one and two and three and four, and more and more.

I am the Steward of the Fish.

**MONSIEUR:**

Can you tell us why?

Yes, why? Tell us, tell us why?

They have thick lips for kissing the stone banks.

We raise them to keep down the weeds.

Weedy weedy weed! Ha ha ha!

Gourville gave me your message.

You understand me like none of my friends understand me.

I hope you find your perfection.

I know I'm looking in the wrong place,

but when I despair...

I shall remember there was a man who looked into my soul.

**MAN:**

Sport... I demand there shall be a race...

**MAN:**

**MONSIEUR:**

- Yes!

- and the carp!

- Effiat, now!

- In!

It's clouding over.

I'm worried about the salvos from up here.

There's a lot of humidity coming up off the canal.

It may even rain.

It wouldn't dare. He's not called the Sun King for nothing.

Bravo, sir, but save your voice for the King.

His ear, as we know, is perfect,

as of course, is his nose, his navel and his big toe.

Monsieur.

Monsieur Vatel, they are ready.

Monsieur Vatel, the horses are ready.

Come on.

What a wonderful spectacle.

Cond, who is responsible for these marvels?

My Steward, your Majesty.

And what is his name?

Francois Vatel.

Bring me this Vatel.

I would like to congratulate him.

**VATEL:**

smoke...

to kill a groom.

Monsieur, the King wishes to speak to you.

Not now, please.

Does he think all this happens by itself?

I want everything cleared up by dawn. Understand?

- Is it Friday already?

- Yes, nearly.

I must send Demaury to look out for the fish.

The roads are bad.

- **VATEL:**

- **DEMAURY:**

**VATEL:**

**DEMAURY:**

Monsieur, the Queen is asking for crystalized fruits.

**VATEL:**

For her Majesty.

Her Majesty.

**MONSIEUR:**

The King has called for Vatel.

He's refused to come. He claims he's too busy.

Do you know the story of...

the Marquis de Cufevent?

Everybody does, Monsieur.

Tell it to me, clear Lauzun.

Yes. Tell us, tell it, Lauzun.

It seems, as the Marquis bowed for the King,

he let out a tremendous fart...

And so his Majesty made him Master of the King's Music.

And what moral do you see in that story, Lauzun?

That if you don't give a fart for music,  
you'll never rise at Court.

Monsieur.

**MONSIEUR:**

**MONSIEUR:**

Monsieur.

**GUARD:**

- What is your business?

- The King's business!

Envoys from Holland!

Let me go. Let me pass.

The black queen loses, Colbert.

**LOUIS:**

**COLBERT:**

**LOUIS:**

Versailles.

Monsieur, are you alright?

**LOUIS:**

**LOUIS:**

**COLBERT:**

And one hundred in silver tubs.

Versailles is my favorite mistress.

That's why she costs you so much.

What are you staking, Prince?

Ten Louis.

Ten Louis!

How many fountains do we have, Colbert?

One and a half thousand, your Majesty.

Forfait.

For Versailles if I lose.

For something of yours if I win...

A glove, perhaps, mon frere.

But one glove is no good to anybody.

Well, Prince.

I have nothing to add to the glory of Versailles, your Majesty.

But that's not true.  
You have something rarer than diamonds.  
You have your Master of Pleasures.  
Your Majesty.  
Vatel is worthy of a larger stage,  
and Versailles could use a man of his gifts.  
You're asking me to stake my Master Steward on a card game?  
Do you have any objections? Look what you might win.  
We'll take the bet!  
Are we playing or not?  
Very well.

**LOUIS:**

Your Majesty, the envoys from Holland have arrived.  
Then they come at an interesting moment.  
This is true.

**MONSIEUR:**

It's between you two.  
Prince?  
Black queen.  
Bad luck.  
The envoys...  
Monsieur,  
the Queen wants garlic.  
- Garlic?  
- She said she likes it.  
Well, run to the kitchen...  
Garlic!  
If his Majesty comes out smiling,  
it will be peace with Holland.  
No, if he returns smiling, it will be war.  
War!  
What do you think, Monsieur?  
Oh, Certainly one or the other.  
Also if he returns frowning.  
Your wife is looking so beautiful tonight, Longueville...  
But where is she?  
Your majesty?  
Cond.  
What's your opinion of war?  
I have seen too much destruction, Majesty.

**COLBERT:**



of the daughter of the Duchesse de La Valliere.  
Gallantly telling us that his family only marry...  
the legitimate daughters of Kings,  
not their bastards.  
I see.

**COLBERT:**

has minted coins with the image of the Sun.  
That is impertinent.

**LOUIS:**

an oil painting of one of my flagships sinking.  
With your permission,  
I will drown him in one of his dykes, Majesty.

**COLBERT:**

- It is between you and Turenne.  
- Turenne?  
I'm sure all will be alright.  
After all, you have the King under your roof.  
Tomorrow will be decisive.  
No, no, just leave me this one.  
The Prince is grateful. He would like to see you.  
Her Majesty?  
Asleep, Madame.  
They were brought back, orders of Monsieur Vatel.  
Would you like me to undress you, Madame?  
No.  
Fortune seems to be with us. War with Holland.  
Turenne is scheming to get Colbert's backing.  
The King favors me, I think.  
He will make an announcement at the banquet tomorrow.  
Everything must be perfect.  
Everything will be perfect, my Prince.  
We've always understood each other.  
You're a great man, Vatel.  
You will end up as a Vicomte.  
You have heard?  
Heard?  
The King wants you at Versailles.  
Versailles?  
- Gently, gently, gently, gently...

**- COND:**

**COND:**

**COND:**

Gently now... Breathe in.

We have a present for you. From the Marquis de Lauzun.

This will teach you to step above your station.

**EFFIAT:**

What do you want, Monsieur?

Surprise!

Preparation!

Cut...

and lunge!

Excellent. Lesson continues. Ready?

Edouard, calf!

Louis, back!

Charles, wrist!

Bravo!

And now... open...

Thrust!

Thigh!

Tell Lauzun, enough.

His Highness the King's brother presents his compliments, Monsieur Vatel.

He requests us to escort you to your apartments.

It won't be necessary.

**VATEL:**

I wanted to thank you.

If the King knew you were here.

The King is busy with Madame de Montespan.

No one has seen me.

So you are coming to Versailles, Monsieur.

Or haven't you heard?

One of my people was killed today.

Who was it?

**VATEL:**

Jean-Marie Benoud.

28 years old, from the village of St. Crose.

His father is the miller there.

His mother died of the sweating sickness two years ago.

He had two brothers, one a priest.

He came here as a stable boy...

and was senior groom for three years.  
Three years...

**ANNE:**

No. Not particularly.  
He was one of my people.  
He was fortunate in that.  
Why did you save my birds, Monsieur?  
Because they were too small to do any good, Madame.  
And because...  
And because...  
Because they were yours.  
Madame!  
Madame!

**LOUISE:**

Anne!

**- LOUISE:**

- Go!  
I'm ruined.  
It's the King.  
I'm a fool.  
Yesterday you were a fool.

**VATEL:**

If you think I can do that,  
you have lived among farmers too long.  
Cond gave you away at the card table.  
To please the King, he gave you away like a hound from his kennels.

**LAUZUN:**

**LAUZUN:**

Alone.  
- We searched high and low.  
- I... I was...  
I know where you were.  
But I would never betray you.

**LAUZUN:**

friend,  
the Duc de Longueville.  
I mean, the way his wife puts herself about is disgraceful,

don't you think?  
You are a true friend.  
Excuse me!

**LAUZUN:**

**LAUZUN:**

Would you do me the honor of sharing a cup of chocolate...  
with me...  
even at this late hour?

**LAUZUN:**

myself.  
And it would be tragic, would it not,  
if Vatel were to be sent back to his former master...  
in the prison of Pignerol?  
The last day, dawn.  
My lord! Is there any news?  
News?  
Of the money. The money from the King!  
Money?  
Oh, yes, monsieur. The news is very good.  
The King is well pleased with us.  
Now, please! Where is Vatel?  
I'm looking for him myself.  
- Is everything alright?  
- Oh, yes, indeed.  
There will be turbot, sole, pike, halibut, mullet.  
Presented in heaps, as beautiful as an engraving.  
Trout and salmon will seem to be swimming in broth.  
On his Majesty's table will be a sea monster,  
a great cod, baked whole, glazed, decorated,  
holding a mackerel in its mouth.  
The ice feast will be like nothing seen before.  
Monsieur.  
Is that all?  
Yes, sir.  
Have you seen other fish carts on the road?  
No, sir. There were storms all along the coast.  
Few boats put to sea at all, and they came back empty.  
[WHISPER] Empty!  
- Come back tomorrow to be paid.

- **FISHMONGER:**

Monsieur. Monsieur Vatel! May I have a word?  
Not now, Thibault, not now.

**MAN:**

Monsieur Vatel.  
From his Majesty.  
It's your commission for Versailles.  
The King commands that you leave with the Court tomorrow.  
There will be a wagon for your personal baggage.  
You'll have a horse.  
We await your answer.  
Monsieur!  
Are you there?  
It's your turn.  
Poor little things.  
My prisoners.  
Madame.  
What is it?  
Vatel...  
This is for you.

**VATEL:**

when you read this,  
I shall have left this world with only one regret,  
that I cannot be with you.  
Madame, they will tell you...  
it was the failure of the feast...  
But between the opening...  
and the closing of your heart, I saw...  
that I was not the master of these festivities,  
but their slave.  
May you escape by a better road.  
Your home is, I think, in the south.  
If so, remember that there is a place...  
not far away in the Vaucluse,  
where they plant cherry trees among the vines.  
The taste of the cherries...  
comes through in the wine.  
Your servant, Francois Vatel.  
Gourville, however, tried to make up for the loss of Vatel.  
It was done.  
The meal was excellent.  
People walked and others were hunting.  
The scent of daffodils was everywhere, a true enchantment.