

# I was Cagliostro

## PREFACE to the Cagliostro - Novel - Film

A few years ago, in Paris, I went to see Mme. de Thebes. The drawing room of the great sibyl was like a pilgrims' sanctuary. From all corners of the world men and women came to consult her.

We had a long conversation, interesting enough. Mme. de Thebes regarded me, observed me in a determined manner, studied my hands, touched my head, half closed her eyes and spoke to me of my past and future with an extraordinary surety. She opened her eyes again, and I felt her glance penetrate me like an electric fluid.

Suddenly she became silent, threw back her head in an attitude of prophecy, and said:

"In another incarnation you were a great and curious personage who belonged to a strange occult sect and possessed a clear vision of the future united with super-natural forces."

I thought it a nice speech, such as she gave everybody more or less, to leave an agreeable impression, and I was ready to say good-bye without thinking more about it.

A bit later, I visited a medium who had worked with the famous magician Papus, who was then already dead, and, after going into a trance, with my hands in hers, she said:

"In another incarnation you were Cagliostro."

The flat affirmation of that pale and slender medium who spoke like a sleep walker impressed me, but after a while it became dim in my memory and at last I ceased to think of it. But <sup>in</sup> my leaning toward the Kabala and occult sciences -- in so far as they have to do with marvels -- that key that opens the windows of imagination

and entices the spirit for the daily platitude to lift it into purer and rarer spaces, I began to meet from time to time the name of Cagliostro in books and manuscripts, and each time the name appeared before me, I could not help but be invaded by a shiver.

Years passed.

Toward the middle of 1921 all Paris rushed to the salon of the Geographic Society, to hear the lectures of a woman who affirmed with simple audacity that she had lived several successive lives and that she possessed the gift of seeing the past lives of others as well.

This woman was Marguerite Wolf.

I was led, like so many others, to listen to her out of curiosity, later to become her friend, and one day I asked her about myself.

Marguerite asked me to leave some object of personal use with her that I had had recently on my person. I left her a large neck-tie. The following day when I went for an answer, what was my surprise at the first words she uttered:

"You were Cagliostro!"

Then she added: "You must impose upon yourself the task of studying seriously the Great Science so that you may help me in my work. I need good collaborators, since the work is torturous and difficult. In 1938 I shall make the first interplanetary voyage and I shall take with me those who are able to follow from the earth to Mars in a vehicle as yet unknown that is now being studied in silence.

On leaving the house of Marguerite Wolf, my eyes must have been starting from ~~xxxxxx~~ their sockets, since the people in the street

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looked at me strangely.

"And so," I said to myself, "I was Cagliostro."

Remembering the three declarations, I no longer doubted:

"What a surprising coincidence!"

I was Cagliostro.

From that time I set myself to study the life and works of the great thaumaturge.

Months later I gave a lecture on Cagliostro at a small gathering of initiates. When the lecture was over, a tall and delicately built old man with extraordinarily bright eyes, presented himself to me and asked me to set aside an hour to talk with him.

On the appointed day, the old man came and opening a little box, which he had taken from his pocket, said:

"Accept this; this was Cagliostro's ring. Your lecture was very interesting, dear brother, and you merit this present; how profoundly you have understood the soul of this person!"

It was a silver ring with an Egyptian carnelian in the form of a triangle, from which I have never been separated. Although without monetary value, it was for me more precious <sup>h</sup> than the crown of the Izars.

Unfortunately it was stolen here in New York not long since, to my great sorrow, but above all to the sorrow of <sup>him</sup> ~~he~~ who stole it, since that ring is possessed of curious curses and enchantments, like the tombs of the Pharoahs, and misfortune alone will fall to the lot of the guilty until it is returned to its owner. And what is worse, if he be frightened by the evil which the ring attracts, or gets rid of it, throws it aside, or breaks <sup>k</sup> it, he will die within ten months.

These phrases are for whom it may concern, and may this book fall

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into his hands while there is yet time.

Through a year I thought only of Cagliostro. This book is the result of my studies of myself, since I am Cagliostro, that is, I was Cagliostro.

Here are more rarities for my readers: As I wrote this work marvellous things were happening in my house. At night sounds of footsteps were heard in the rooms, the furniture was moved about, books fell from the shelves without reason, and once even the falling of stones on my writing table was heard. The neighbors protested and some friends came to sleep in the haunted house to see what would happen. Twice I lost writings concerning Cagliostro <sup>which</sup> and as far as could be learned were not to his taste.

I am sure the magician came in the night to read the days work, and approved or disapproved when my fancy led me too far astray. In reality the magician did not come, but quit my own body and manifested himself powerfully. If it were not himself it was surely a kindred spirit of his.

One morning I found a line written on the margin of my manuscript. This line read: "False and without grace," referring to a passage in the work. The writing was not mine, and certain experts that I consulted declared, after having compared the hands, that it was that of Cagliostro, the type of each letter being exactly his.

I have kept that page and it is at the disposition of those who wish to be convinced of the truth herein set down.

The life of Cagliostro is a novel, or a marvellous film. But it is not for that reason that I call this work a film-novel, but because it is written as if it were a film. I wished the scenes to unfold themselves to the reader as the scenes in a moving picture. I have selected the most ~~xx~~ visual words, I have tried to give the

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characters the greatest possible amount of life without the aid of long commentaries, or heavy descriptions, as on the screen.

I have followed a movie technic throughout, because I believe the picture-going public of today cannot only understand it, but would prefer novels of this kind.

And so I present you with my old life, made flesh and blood and dressed in <sup>the</sup> linen of the screen.

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