



La Morte Amoureuse

Théophile Gautier

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He ceased to speak and commenced to regard me more attentively than ever, as though to observe the effect of his words on me. I could not refrain from starting when I heard him utter the name of Clarimonde, and this news of her death, in addition to the pain it caused me by reason of its coincidence with the nocturnal scenes I had witnessed, filled me with an agony and terror which my face betrayed.

A terrifying tale by Gautier written in first person. It narrates the story of a young priest, Romuald, who falls in love with a mysterious woman called Clarimonde. He goes through strange experiences after meeting her and she haunts him in his dreams. The author has captured the desires, emotions and feelings of the priest brilliantly. Spine-chilling!

La Morte Amoureuse Details

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From Reader Review La Morte Amoureuse for online ebook

Lilaia Moreli says

La Morte Amoureuse is the tale of love between a young priest, Romuald, and a beautiful vampiress, Clarimonde. Gautier's short story offers plenty of food for symbolism and analysis as it functions on multiple levels. As it happens with most gothic fiction of that kind, Clarimonde blurs the boundaries between life and death. As a vampiress, she comes and goes, travelling between the two worlds while not fully belonging to either. However, the same applies to Romuald. Dead during his duties as a priest, alive while being Clarimonde's lover.

La Morte Amoureuse shares a common trait with Edgar Allan Poe's *Ligeia* as it plays heavily with the idea that love can break the confines of death. In a scene of incomparable beauty and profound romanticism, Romuald brings Clarimonde back from the dead with a single kiss. Both have to fight against obstacles. Romuald against God and the Church and Clarimonde against Satan and the carnal pleasures. Nonetheless, their love is able to transcend both the physical and the metaphysical.

The night advanced, and feeling the moment of eternal separation approach, I could not deny myself the last sad sweet pleasure of imprinting a kiss upon the dead lips of her who had been my only love. . . . Oh, miracle! A faint breath mingled itself with my breath, and the mouth of Clarimonde responded to the passionate pressure of mine. Her eyes unclosed, and lighted up with something of their former brilliancy; she uttered a long sigh, and uncrossing her arms, passed them around my neck with a look of ineffable delight. 'Ah, it is thou, Romuald!' she murmured in a voice languishingly sweet as the last vibrations of a harp. 'What ailed thee, dearest? I waited so long for thee that I am dead; but we are now betrothed: I can see thee and visit thee. Adieu, Romuald, adieu! I love thee. That is all I wished to tell thee, and I give thee back the life which thy kiss for a moment recalled. We shall soon meet again.'

Her head fell back, but her arms yet encircled me, as though to retain me still. A furious whirlwind suddenly burst in the window, and entered the chamber. The last remaining leaf of the white rose for a moment palpitated at the extremity of the stalk like a butterfly's wing, then it detached itself and flew forth through the open casement, bearing with it the soul of Clarimonde. The lamp was extinguished, and I fell insensible upon the bosom of the beautiful dead.

La Morte Amoureuse employs one of the oldest tropes, that of the femme fatale. Brimming with eroticism and sensuality, it reads as a tale of repressed passions and frustrated sexual desires. Romuald, through his dreams, enters into a realm where reality melts into fantasy and the boundaries that separate each are extremely foggy. Clarimonde becomes "the other", the Devil incarnate that sets out to seduce the young priest and make him stray from God's path. Romuald answers her call, gaining the life his vocation deprives him of.

And that's where *La Morte Amoureuse*'s originality stems from. The vampiress is not presented as a lifeless, soulless corpse but rather a red-blooded (no pun intended) creature full of life and vitality which she passes on to her bloodless (again no pun intended) lover along with pleasure and hedonism.

The story ends once again with one of the most common tropes in gothic literature: those involved with the supernatural are unable to go on with their life the way they did before the incident. What they lived haunts them forever. Romuald once again represses his desires and stifles his sexual wishes with the death of Clarimonde. However, the vampiress holds a place in Romuald's mind for all eternity as her final words to

him turn out prophetic.

But once only, the following night, I saw Clarimonde. She said to me, as she had said the first time at the portals of the church: 'Unhappy man! Unhappy man! What hast thou done? Wherefore have hearkened to that imbecile priest? Wert thou not happy? And what harm had I ever done thee that thou shouldst violate my poor tomb, and lay bare the miseries of my nothingness? All communication between our souls and our bodies is henceforth for ever broken. Adieu! Thou wilt yet regret me!' She vanished in air as smoke, and I never saw her more.

Alas! she spoke truly indeed. I have regretted her more than once, and I regret her still. My soul's peace has been very dearly bought. The love of God was not too much to replace such a love as hers. And this, brother, is the story of my youth.

Gabrielle Dubois says

I read CLarimonde *La Morte Amoureuse* in French (The Lover Dead), because there's nothing better than Théophile Gautier in French... sorry for you, dear friend readers!

As soon as the first sentence: "You ask me, brother, if I have loved? I have." we have only one desire: to read all the others! It's simple, concise and intriguing. And we aren't disappointed! Théophile Gautier's prose is the most beautiful of the world, of all languages, of all eras ... Yes, I am a fan, so what? I love him and I am not ashamed: only those who don't love should be ashamed of not loving.

But let's come back to our Morte Amoureuse.

Romuald, who has always wanted to be a priest, knowing nothing of the world, men or women, looks up on the day of his ordination on the superb Clarimonde.

"A single glance too full of complacency on a woman caused the loss of my soul."

And Romuald becomes aware of the existence of sensual love, awakening of the senses, awarness that another world exists outside the priesthood, a world of physical love, of human beauty, which is opposed to the world of divine beauty, of spiritual love.

We'll see that it's not only the struggle of a priest torn between love of God, chastity, self-denial on one side, and love of the woman, control of his own life on the other hand.

The priesthood in this short story represents the social shackles. Our young Romuald doesn't want to become a priest anymore; he could say no and leave the church as a free man. But, like the girl walking towards the altar with the firm resolve to refuse a husband she hasn't chose, as the poor novice girl ready to tear the veil before becoming a nun contrary to her wishes, Romuald says yes to the priesthood, crushed by the heavy silent looks and wills that have chosen his life for him; to avoid scandal.

Although this short story is fantastic, and constantly balancing between night and day, the reality of the life of the young women and men of the author's time is constantly underlining the story. When Romuald realizes that he has made a huge mistake by becoming a priest, he thinks of running away. But as the girl locked up in the paternal house or the marital house: how to escape, how to gain freedom when one knows nothing of the world, when one is not adapted to the practical life, and one is without money? So we resign ourselves. But when life swells in you and makes your heart beat, resignation can't last forever. The black of the cassock, for Romuald, is the mourning of life that he touched, for a moment, in Clarimonde's eyes.

Romuald is assigned to a church, in a village and seems to accept his life ... until one year later, Clarimonde, dead, come back to haunt his dreams. Night after night, she makes Romuald a Venetian prince and becomes

his lover. So, for Romuald, the reality is reversed: the dreams of his nights as a prince and lover become his reality, and his priest days become his nightmares.

But Clarimonde is slowly dying again. Her only way to remain alive is to drink Romuald's blood; but she loves him, so she drinks as little as possible to keep him alive too. The two lovers are in a vicious circle: Clarimonde doesn't want to die so as not to hurt Romuald who loves her; on the other hand, she exists only because he dreams of her: "I will not die because all what I am comes from you," she said to him.

We find, in this story, the themes dear to my dear Théophile Gautier:

The statuary:

Clarimonde, on her deathbed, wrapped in white linen, looks like a white marble statue that will come back to life with the power of love. More than painting, which the author had practiced and knew so well, sculpture is a sensual pleasure for Gautier, a pleasure that will be found in many of his novels such as *Arria Marcella*, for example.

The costumes also:

When Romuald puts on a prince's costume, he becomes a prince not only in appearance, but also in character, in qualities as well as in defects, for Gautier is not fooled by the weakness of the character of men!

The costumes also:

Gautier loved the picturesque costumes of the countries where he traveled: he dressed like a Spanish in Spain and like a Russian in Russia. He regretted a lot, already in his time, the standardization of costumes in the world. What would he say today?

But this is another story, let's go back to our poor and tortured Romuald: how is he going to get out of it?

Read the book!

And ... take care:

"One minute is enough to lose eternity."

I will dare to add after my venerable great poet: isn't sometimes a minute worth an eternity?

Eadweard says

Pretty good gothic short story. For some reason I pictured Clarimonde looking either like Isabelle Adjani or Monica Belluci.

"She was rather tall, with a form and bearing of a goddess. Her hair, of a soft blonde hue, was parted in the midst and flowed back over her temples in two rivers of rippling gold; she seemed a diademed queen. Her forehead, bluish-white in its transparency, extended its calm breadth above the arches of her eyebrows, which by a strange singularity were almost black, and admirably relieved the effect of sea-green eyes of unsustainable vivacity and brilliancy. What eyes! With a single flash they could have decided a man's destiny. They had a life, a limpidity, an ardour, a humid light which I have never seen in human eyes; they shot forth rays like arrows, which I could distinctly see enter my heart. I know not if the fire which illumined them came from heaven or from hell, but assuredly it came from one or the other."

"She seemed conscious of the martyrdom I was undergoing, and, as though to encourage me, she gave me a look replete with divinest promise. Her eyes were a poem; their every glance was a song."

"A prie-dieu stood at the foot of the bed; a bluish flame flickering in a bronze patern filled all the room with a wan, deceptive light, here and there bringing out in the darkness at intervals some projection of furniture or cornice. In a chiselled urn upon the table there was a faded white rose, whose leaves—excepting one that still held—had all fallen, like odorous tears, to the foot of the vase. A broken black mask, a fan, and disguises of every variety, which were lying on the armchairs, bore witness that death had entered suddenly and unannounced into that sumptuous dwelling."

"The red damask curtains, decorated with large flowers worked in embroidery and looped up with gold bullion, permitted me to behold the fair dead, lying at full length, with hands joined upon her bosom. She was covered with a linen wrapping of dazzling whiteness, which formed a strong contrast with the gloomy purple of the hangings, and was of so fine a texture that it concealed nothing of her body's charming form, and allowed the eye to follow those beautiful outlines—undulating like the neck of a swan—which even death had not robbed of their supple grace. She seemed an alabaster statue executed by some skilful sculptor to place upon the tomb of a queen, or rather, perhaps, like a slumbering maiden over whom the silent snow had woven a spotless veil."

Liz Hopps (Elizabeth) says

Theophile Gautier

Nunca me cansas de leer este relato tanto que he perdido la cuanta de las veces que lo he hecho. Para mi es el paradigma del cuento de vampiras. Siempre que pregunto sobre este tipo de cuentos, me nombran Carmilla y me detallan por qué les fascina. Si, "Carmilla" es un buen cuento , pero este es

Adoro su ambiente exótico y onírico, el relato sensual y como reescribe el pacto satánico a través de un amor tenebroso con visos de locura.

¡Simplemente Genial!

LEANLO

Resi says

Un relato gótico sobre vampiras, es bastante romántico y la verdad es que me ha dejado un buen sabor de boca!

Para leer mi reseña completa:

<http://scarywhispers.blogspot.com/201...>

Draven says

Gothic writing at its finest!!! What an unexpected treasure found inside the pages of a vampire anthology!

Loved every word. So descriptive, each phrase brimming with passion and enthusiasm. I fell in love with Clarimonde and Romualdo as they fell in love with each other. Sparkling and ingenious...she was both beauty and the beast!

Linda says

This collection includes four horror stories with gothic elements. *La Morte Amoureuse*, *Le Chevalier double*, *Le Pied de momie* and *Deux acteurs pour un rôle*. *La Morte Amoureuse* – Clarimonde – is the first and the most interesting.

The story centers around a priest, Romuald, and his meeting with a young, beautiful woman, Clarimonde. He is incapable of restraining himself and falls into a peculiar situation. The gothic segments are profound, and the story includes everything from death to vampires. Although, it's a rather nice vampire and a victim that prefers to be with her instead of living his chaste life.

The novel alternates between Romuald's two conditions and he is not aware of which is his real life. Is he dreaming when meeting Clarimonde, or when he is a priest? What is reality and what is illusion? Another question is whether it could all be a dream about seduction considering his newly taken wows?

Gautier was one of the initial French authors in the romantic period. According to Gautier, art is eternal, while everything else perishes. The phrase "l'art pour l'art" - art for art's sake – is credited to him, even if not made up entirely by him. He claimed that art didn't need moral justification and was allowed to be neutral. Gautier was highly influential in the early romantic era.

Fernando says

Junto con las cuatro mujeres de Poe (Ligeia, Morella, Eleonora y Berenice), Vera es el típico ejemplo de la fème fatale del Romanticismo, con la muerte como mediadora entre los amantes.

Strangerealms says

I love Théophile Gautier, he is one of my favorite french author and poet. He wrote so beautifully with such rich vocabulary and his stories are all so beautiful as well. In this book are a few of his dark fantasy short stories and one of them involves a vampire, a tragic love story. The French saw the vampire and ghost more positive than the rest of the world by making them nicer, the type who loved so much someone they had to come back from the grave to be with the person they love, and the short story La morte amoureuse here is a good example of that.

Elko Vázquez Omar says

Junto con Carmilla, de Sheridan Le Fanu y Drácula, de Bram Stoker, uno de los mejores relatos de vampiros que se ha escrito en todos los tiempos.

Desde mi punto de vista es el más bello por su prosa delicada. Théophile Gautier, viajero, poeta exquisito, ha merecido los elogios de gente tan exigente como el maestro Friederich Nietzsche.
Un libro que no debe faltar en la biblioteca de los amantes del vampirismo.

Silvana Berreta says

3,5

Isa Cantos (Crónicas de una Merodeadora) says

Una historia que refleja la naturaleza de seducción de los vampiros que, con una mirada, pueden corromper hasta al sacerdote más entregado.

Lo que me parece curiosa es la medida de la vampira a la hora de alimentarse del sacerdote. Vamos, que uno pensaría que no van gotita a gotita sino que se lo zampan entero, jajaja.

Mattia Ravasi says

An awesomely aged vampire tales that can afford being hilariously exaggerated, considering its age; and a mighty fine example of erotic fiction.

sabisteb aka callisto says

Am Tag seiner Priesterweihe verliebt sich Romuald in die wunderschöne Clarimonde. Sie kann ihn nicht

vergessen und bittet ihn zu sich. Romuald gerät in Gewissenskonflikte. Hin und her gerissen zwischen seiner Liebe zu Gott und seiner Liebe zu Clarimonde leidet er Seelenqualen. Sein Mentor erkennt die Lage und verschafft ihm eine Stelle als Landpfarrer um ihn von Clarimonde zu befreien, nicht ahnend, dass diese Pfarrei ganz in der Nähe von Clarimondes Landgut liegt.

Romuald verfällt der schönen Frau, verlässt mit ihr heimlich seine Pfarrei und verrät für sie seinen Glauben, nicht ahnend, dass Clarimonde ein Vampir ist, ein Geschöpf der Dunkelheit.

Théophile Gautier (1811 -1872) war ein französischer Schriftsteller. Er veröffentlichte diese Geschichte 1836 unter dem Titel *La Morte Amoureuse* in *La Chronique de Paris*. Die Geschichte ist auch unter dem Namen „Die tote Geliebte“, „Die liebende Tote“, „Clarimonda“ und „Die verliebte Tote“ bekannt.

Diese Geschichte ist eine sehr frühe Vampirgeschichte, die noch nicht von Dracula beeinflusst ist und daher einige auch heute wieder in den Vampirgeschichten auftauchende Abweichungen vom Archetyp Dacula aufweist. In gewisser Weise ist Clarimonde ein durchaus moderner Vampir. Sie scheint tagaktiv zu sein, sie tötet ihre Opfer nicht, sondern braucht nur minimal Blut und sie liebt Romuald wirklich. Die beiden sind glücklich miteinander, in gewisser Weise ist diese Geschichte eine Mischung aus Dornenvögeln mit Edward und Bella.

Zusätzlich zu dieser Liebesgeschichte gegen den Widerstand der Gesellschaft kommt noch die Ebene der Moral hinzu. Clarimonde ist eine Courtisane, eine schöne, begehrswerte, sexuell sehr aktive und somit frivole Frau die einen Priester verführt. Auch wenn er sich durchaus gerne verführen lässt und Clarimonde liebt, ist die Frau wieder einmal das böse Geschöpf und Abbé Serapion, Romualds Mentor hat es sich zur Aufgabe gemacht, die Seele seines Schützlings vor der Verderbtheit des Weibes zu retten.

Eine wunderbare, tragische Liebesgeschichte zwischen einem Vampir und einem Priester. Gegensätzlicher geht es wirklich nicht mehr.

Die Umsetzung ist gelungen wie immer. Die Sprecher sind durchweg allesamt hervorragend und die akustische Untermalung ist stimmig und unterstützend. Wie immer in der Reihe Gruselkabinett wird Wert auf die Geschichte und die Dialoge gelegt und nicht auf Effekthascherei und sinnlose Aktion. Ein Hörspielkleinod. Es ist schon erstaunlich wie Marc Gruppe und Stephan Bosenius es immer wieder schaffen solch wunderbare und doch zeitlose Schauergeschichten zu finden, die kaum einer mehr kennt.

Xfi says

Pequeño relato, pionero del vampirismo. Con una trama muy simple y moralizante, aunque con una cosa interesante, no se juzga severamente a la vampira, que al fin de cuentas actuaba por amor. Ricas descripciones y una ambientación lograda.
