

*XXX – When Resistance Is Only a Pretense*

I was delighted to learn before my departure for the country, that your mind was more at rest. I feel free to say, that if the Countess had persevered in treating you with the same severity, I should have suspected, not that she was insensible to your love, but that you had a fortunate rival. The resistance manifested by her would have been beyond her strength in a single combat. For you should be well advised, Marquis, that a woman is never more intractable than when she assumes a haughtiness toward all other men, for the sake of her favorite lover.

I see in everything you have told me, proofs that you are loved, and that you are the only one. I will be able to give you constant news on that score, for I am going to investigate the Countess for myself. This will surprise you, no doubt. Your astonishment will cease, however, when you call to mind that Madame de la Sablière's house, where I am going to spend a week, adjoins the grounds of your amiable widow. You told me that she was at home, and, add to the neighborhood, the unmeasured longing I have to make her acquaintance, you will not be surprised at the promise I have just made you.

I have not the time to finish this letter, nor the opportunity to send it. I must depart imme-

diately, and my traveling companion is teasing me in a strange fashion, pretending that I am writing a love letter. I am letting her think what she pleases, and carry the letter with me to the country.

Adieu. What! Madame de Grignan's illness will not permit you to visit us in our solitude?

Du Château de ---.

I am writing you from the country house of the Countess, my dear Marquis, this is the third day I have been with her, which will enable you to understand that I am not in bad favor with the mistress of the house. She is an adorable woman; I am delighted with her. I sometimes doubt whether you deserve a heart like hers. Here I am her confidante. She has told me all she thinks about you, and I do not despair of discovering, before I return to the city, the reasons, for the change in her character, which you have remarked. I dare not write you more now, I may be interrupted, and I do not wish any one to know that I am writing you from this place. Adieu.