



# The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo

*Tom Reiss*

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Here is the remarkable true story of the real Count of Monte Cristo – a stunning feat of historical sleuthing that brings to life the forgotten hero who inspired such classics as *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*.

The real-life protagonist of *The Black Count*, General Alex Dumas, is a man almost unknown today yet with a story that is strikingly familiar, because his son, the novelist Alexandre Dumas, used it to create some of the best loved heroes of literature.

Yet, hidden behind these swashbuckling adventures was an even more incredible secret: the real hero was the son of a black slave -- who rose higher in the white world than any man of his race would before our own time.

Born in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), Alex Dumas was briefly sold into bondage but made his way to Paris where he was schooled as a sword-fighting member of the French aristocracy. Enlisting as a private, he rose to command armies at the height of the Revolution, in an audacious campaign across Europe and the Middle East – until he met an implacable enemy he could not defeat.

The Black Count is simultaneously a riveting adventure story, a lushly textured evocation of 18th-century France, and a window into the modern world's first multi-racial society. But it is also a heartbreaking story of the enduring bonds of love between a father and son.

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