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Introduction

by Douglas Langworthy

This adaptation was created for the acting company of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, where it premiered in 1999 on their outdoor Elizabethan Stage. The play's adapters were Penny Metropulos, then OSF Associate Artistic Director, Linda Alper, writer and OSF actor, and myself, Douglas Langworthy, who was then OSF's Director of Literary Development and Dramaturgy.

As the three of us set about adapting the sprawling story, we soon realized that we needed a clear focus to keep us on track. We read and reread the novel, trying to distill Dumas' intentions, and came up with two guiding principles. First and foremost, we found in *The Three Musketeers* a classic tale of the hero's journey. So our job was to keep the adaptation centered on D'Artagnan's evolution from a young, impetuous country boy to a mature man who has learned some hard lessons and found himself in the ranks of France's power-elite. The three Musketeers of the title take part in D'Artagnan's journey by mentoring the youth on his rite of passage.

The second organizing principle we found was thematic. It seemed to us that Dumas' adventure is set against a larger historical moment: the end of the age of romance and chivalry and the rise of the age of reason and the all-powerful nation state. This helped us make sense of the sober ending of the story and put the narrative in a broader perspective. As Athos says to D'Artagnan in the second scene of our play:

By my faith, this is the proposition of a perfect knight. In the days of Charlemagne, every man of honor spoke as you do. Unfortunately, young man, we do not live in the times of that great emperor, but in those of Cardinal Richelieu.

Writing for an Elizabethan theatre, we knew the stage itself was ideally suited to the story's many scenes, multiple locations and numerous thrilling sword fights. Because of the fact that casting was completed by the time we sat down to work, we could create the roles with specific actors in mind. We were also clear that we wanted our adaptation to be set in the period of Dumas' tale, roughly 1625, and that the style would be unapologetically romantic.

We started working from the novel, breaking down the play into individual scenes, deciding what was essential and what we needed to let go of. As we worked our way through the story, we continually found ways to compress—eliminating plot lines, streamlining over-written dialogue or compacting several scenes into one. For example,

Milady's seduction of Felton takes up a full five chapters in the novel, but we eventually boiled it down to one brief scene.

Along the way, many ideas we loved early on were tossed aside as we found better solutions. For instance, the adaptation initially relied heavily on narration. We tried to use the character of Tréville as a narrator who set up each scene and kept our focus on the development of D'Artagnan. About mid-way through the process, we found it was far more economical and interesting to weave whatever exposition was needed into the dialogue, and let the overall shape of the play keep the focus where it needed to be.

As a structure began to emerge, Penny, our director, began to foresee staging problems with the transitions from scene to scene, since in many instances the same character would end a scene and begin the next one. In Shakespearean drama, the playwright usually brings on a new set of characters every time the scene is changed, indicating clearly change of time and place without the use of blackouts or curtains.

We found we needed a buffer between scenes, and so we began to experiment with using actual found text from the period of the play—which we affectionately termed “nuggets”—at these transition points. By choosing just the right material to present at each strategic juncture, we found we could help set the stage for the next scene. And by choosing just the right character to present the material, the nuggets began to function on many levels, not only solving the problem of transitions, but also helping to anchor the play in its historical moment and highlight particular plot points and themes.

Hours of research went into this hunt for literary gold, and a variety of veins were mined. Tréville's text for the swordplay drill at the top of the play was drawn from two sources: the writings of George Silver and Giacomo di Grassi, sword masters from the end of the 16th century. Felton's Act II speech that begins “We of the Puritan Community must never be lax in our vigil against sin...” is taken from the writings of Robert Cawdway, an early 17th century English Puritan. Cardinal Richelieu's little speech at the beginning of Act II, Scene 15 that concludes “it is far better to be feared than loved” is borrowed from Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

And, of course, no discussion of our process would be complete without acknowledging the various film versions of the novel, from which we learned important lessons about the art of compression. Our favorites were the 1921 Douglas Fairbanks silent film version, the 1948 Gene Kelly version which tells the entire story in two hours, and the 1973

two-part version directed by Richard Lester, an opulent treatment that includes an outdoor chess game with real dogs as chessmen.

Since then, this adaptation has been produced by major Shakespeare companies and toured the country with The Acting Company. Audiences still respond enthusiastically to this classic story's romance and adventure and always find themselves cheering when the Musketeers cry out "All for one and one for all."

Cast of Characters

Men

TRÉVILLE: A born leader and the Captain of the Musketeers, Tréville commands with wisdom and bravery as well as authority. The Musketeers have great respect for him.

PORTHOS: More than a little vain, Porthos is always ready to keep the Musketeers entertained with tales of his exploits. He loves food and fashion and should be a bit portly.

ATHOS: Eldest of the Three Musketeers, Athos holds honor in highest esteem. He has a dark secret and is D'Artagnan's most important mentor.

ARAMIS: A poet with a romantic soul, Aramis is a ladies' man. He once wanted to be a priest.

D'ARTAGNAN: Bold, daring and resolute, young D'Artagnan has come to Paris from the country to seek honor and adventure. A true romantic hero, he blossoms under the tutelage of the Musketeers.

ROCHEFORT: Attractive and ruthless, he is the Cardinal's right-hand man. He has been involved romantically with Milady.

JUSSAC: A strapping man and excellent fighter, he is the strong arm of Rochefort and loyalist to the Cardinal.

PLANCHET: A loyal and good-natured serving man to D'Artagnan. Very resourceful and brave, willing to stand by D'Artagnan in the face of danger.

BONACIEUX: Elderly husband of Constance. His marriage is a burden. A ridiculous man—a fool and a coward.

KING: Young and spoiled. An ineffectual ruler, Louis is willing to be manipulated by the Cardinal. His foolish behavior is amusing and dangerous.

CARDINAL: Devious and power hungry, he uses his proximity to the King to rule France. He is a highly dangerous man, determined to undermine the Queen.

BUCKINGHAM: The dashing, handsome and irrationally romantic English Duke. Although he is madly in love with the Queen of France, he is susceptible to Milady's charms.

FELTON: Intense and self-righteous, he is a young and fanatical Puritan in service to Buckingham's court.

Ensemble Men

COUNT DE WARDES: An arrogant and handsome young aristocrat

LUBIN: servant to de Wardes

INNKEEPERS: Grimaud, Bazin, Biscarrat

REILLY: Buckingham's goldsmith

PATRICK: A servant at Buckingham's court

MUSKETEERS and CARDINAL'S GUARDS, VALETS, COURTIERS

Women

CONSTANCE: A dressmaker. She is a young and courageous romantic heroine. Devoted to the Queen.

QUEEN: Intelligent, brave and beautiful, she is trapped in a politically convenient marriage. She is much more able to navigate court intrigue and state politics than is her husband. Loathes the Cardinal. Holds a dangerous and secret love for the Duke of Buckingham.

MILADY: Devious and beautiful, she uses her considerable feminine wiles to benefit herself and the Cardinal. Ruthless if need be.

KITTY: In service to Milady, Kitty is a straightforward and likeable young lady.

D'ASTREE: One of the Queen's ladies in waiting, she actually serves the Cardinal. A spy.

MADAME DE CHEVREUSE: A gentlewoman in service to the Queen, loved by Aramis.

MADAME COCQUENARD: Aging and unattractive, Mme. Cocquenard is Porthos' mysterious lady. A comic character infatuated with Porthos. [*This female character can be played by a man.*]

AN ABBESS

Character Notes

The Three Musketeers and D'Artagnan must be excellent swordsmen.

In the original production at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the cast numbered 24. Most supporting roles doubled as Guards and Musketeers and in some cases women played men to increase the number of fighters.

The original set had two levels, although the play can be performed on one level.

A reduced-cast script for 14 actors (10M, 4W) and multiple doubling was first performed by The Acting Company. That script is available by contacting the authors' agent.

Scene

France and England, 1625.

Acknowledgments

This adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* had its world premiere at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival on June 20, 1999 on the Elizabethan Stage. Created for the company, this adaptation was directed by Penny Metropulos, with the following cast and crew:

Soldiers and Citizens

CAPTAIN DE TRÉVILLE	Ken Albers
ATHOS	Richard Howard
PORTHOS	David Kelly
ARAMIS	U. Jonathan Toppo
D'ARTAGNAN	John Hansen
PLANCHET	Tyrone Wilson
M. BONACIEUX	Dennis Robertson
MME. BONACIEUX	Jodi Somers
MME. DE COQUENARD	Elizabeth Norment
JUSSAC	James J. Peck
BISCARRAT	Thom Rivera
GRIMAUD	Brad Whitmore
BAZIN	James Oliver
ABBESS	Elizabeth Norment
MUSKETEERS & CARDINAL'S GUARDS	Leith Burke, Christopher Duval, Charlie Kimball, James Oliver, James J. Peck, Jeff A. Pierce, Thom Rivera, Timothy Rush, Brad Whitmore, Tyrone Wilson

The Court in France

KING LOUIS XIII	Dan Donohue
QUEEN ANNE	Wilma Silva
CARDINAL RICHELIEU	James Edmondson
MLLE. D'ASTREE	Carolyn Hitt
MME. DE CHEVREUSE	Christine Williams
ATTENDANTS	James Oliver, Jeff A. Pierce

In England

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM	Jonathan Adams
PATRICK	Brad Whitmore
JOHN FELTON	Leith Burke
REILLY	Christopher Duval

Parisian Society

THE COUNT DE ROCHEFORT John Pribyl
MILADY, THE COUNTESS DE WINTER . . . Linda Alper
KITTY Catherine Lynn Davis
THE COUNT DE WARDES Charlie Kimball
LUBIN Jeff A. Pierce
FRENCH CITIZENRY Christopher Duval,
Carolyn Hitt, Elizabeth Norment,
Timothy Rush, Brad Whitmore

Associate Director &
Fight Choreographer John Sipes
Scenic Designer William Bloodgood
Costume Designer Deborah M. Dryden
Lighting Designer Robert Peterson
Composer and Music Director Todd Barton
Dramaturg Douglas Langworthy
Assistant Fight Choreographer U. Jonathan Toppo
Voice and Text Director Scott Kaiser
Dance Choreographer David Hochoy
Dramaturgical Assistant Robert J. McComish.
Stage Manager David W. Wieken
Assistant Stage Manager &
Assistant Director Bruce Wallace Hostetler
Production Assistant Heather Beckett
Production Assistant Intern Sioux Trett

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

adapted by Linda Alper, Douglas Langworthy,
and Penny Metropulos

FROM THE NOVEL BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

ACT I

Scene 1

(Paris. The Musketeer Academy. The corps of MUSKETEERS begin to arrive. They are greeting one another and warming up for the morning's drill. CAPTAIN DE TRÉVILLE is seen in a separate light. As he recites the "Paradoxes of Defense" the MUSKETEERS begin to demonstrate a rigorous and impressive series of formalized fencing exercises.)

TRÉVILLE. The exercising of weapons puts away aches and griefs and diseases, it increases strength and sharpens the wits.

It gives a perfect judgment, it expels melancholy, choleric and evil conceits, it keeps a man in breath, perfect health and long life.

It is unto him that has the perfection thereof, a most friendly and comfortable companion when he is alone, having only his weapon about him.

MUSKETEER. *En garde. Commence!* *(The MUSKETEERS execute the move.)*

TRÉVILLE. In the wars and places of most danger, it puts him out of fear, and makes him bold, hardy and valiant.

MUSKETEER. *Commence!* *(Another move.)*

TRÉVILLE. Moreover because this art is a principal member of the military profession, therefore it ought not to be exercised in brawls and frays, but practiced by honorable men and reserved for the advantage of their country, the honor of women and the conquering of hostile armies.

(The drill ends with a flourish as the MUSKETEERS break into the daily regime of the courtyard. PORTHOS, ARAMIS, and a wounded ATHOS enter. The MUSKETEERS greet them. ARAMIS helps ATHOS exit, while PORTHOS grandstands for a group of lively MUSKETEERS.)

PORTHOS. Only then, gentlemen, only when we turned to assist our wounded friend, did the Guards threaten us with arrest. 'Are

not these back street brawls against the Cardinal's law?', they demanded. 'Cowards!' I spat back. 'Asses! Cardinal's dupes...' That got their attention!

(D'ARTAGNAN enters. He is from a different milieu, as shown by his rustic attire and clumsy eagerness. He begins to attract attention as he shoulders his way into the crowd, muttering 'pardon me, pardon me.')

PORTHOS. And then they took in my figure, my fine figure, my magnificent new attire, and they knew they faced an Olympian Jupiter, a Colossus, a Pompey...a...

(PORTHOS has lost the spotlight.)

Have you something to add, peasant?

D'ARTAGNAN. No, no. Please go on.

PORTHOS. Are you sure I am not disturbing you?

D'ARTAGNAN. Oh, no sir, on the contrary. You may continue.

(MUSKETEERS laugh.)

PORTHOS. See here, boy, do you not know who I am?

D'ARTAGNAN. No, Monsieur. I have only this hour arrived in Paris. I must...

PORTHOS. Then that explains your rudeness, oaf. I am known as M. Porthos. As I was saying, gentlemen...they took in my figure, my imposing profile, my magnificent apparel...

D'ARTAGNAN. Excuse me M. Porthos, I do not wish to interrupt, but I need to know if this is where I may find...

PORTHOS. Take care, peasant, or your first day in Paris will turn out to be your last. *(Trying to resume his story:)* Imagine my magnificent apparel, recently purchased...

D'ARTAGNAN. Be that as it may, Monsieur, I need to see Captain de Tréville immediately. I must speak to the commander of the King's Musketeers.

PORTHOS. You must, must you? Well, in that case gentlemen, let us give way. This most important personage must approach Captain de Tréville.

MUSKETEER 1. Porthos, the Captain is in a foul humor.

PORTHOS. Just the humor to receive this foul fellow. *(PORTHOS passes by D'ARTAGNAN.)* Do I smell Andalusian goat?

D'ARTAGNAN. Your words are indelicate, Monsieur.

PORTHOS. I am indelicate, such as becomes a soldier who faces down his enemies. Monsieur, you may go this way.

(PORTHOS flourishes his cape, as D'ARTAGNAN tries to walk past him, accidentally getting tangled in the cape. He tears it off of PORTHOS, revealing his magnificent attire to be a sham. The MUSKETEERS laugh.)

D'ARTAGNAN. I can see now why you would not turn your back on them!

PORTHOS. Boy, you have insulted me! You will meet me later to-day. At one o'clock. Behind the Luxembourg.

D'ARTAGNAN. Behind the Luxembourg? One o'clock?

(D'ARTAGNAN bows. PORTHOS exits. TRÉVILLE enters his office above with a report.)

MUSKETEER 1. Welcome to Paris, goat.

MUSKETEER 2. You are a clever oaf.

MUSKETEER 3. Follow me. I will take you to Captain de Tréville.

TRÉVILLE. Athos! Porthos! Aramis!

(They push D'ARTAGNAN towards Tréville's office.)

MUSKETEER 4. *(To a MUSKETEER:)* This rustic fellow should lift the captain's spirits.

MUSKETEER 3. Captain! A young 'cavalier' to see you.

(Both MUSKETEERS urge D'ARTAGNAN to speak.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Monsieur...uh, Captain de Tre...

TRÉVILLE. *(Ignoring D'ARTAGNAN, shouting down into the courtyard:)* Porthos! Athos! Aramis! My three best men wreaking havoc in a public place? If Richelieu doesn't arrest them, they will answer to me! Mon dieu! Where the devil are they? Find them!

MUSKETEER 3. *(Escaping:)* Right away, Monsieur.

(MUSKETEER 4 stands paralyzed. TRÉVILLE glares at him.)

MUSKETEER 4. I will go, too, Captain.

TRÉVILLE. Next thing I know, they'll be dueling down the Rue de Royale.

D'ARTAGNAN. Pardon me, Captain de Tréville, but I am waiting to speak with you...

TRÉVILLE. Good. Go away.

D'ARTAGNAN. I cannot go away, Monsieur. I have traveled a very long distance.

TRÉVILLE. Well, you may return a very long distance.

D'ARTAGNAN. I insist, Monsieur.

TRÉVILLE. So do I. ARAMIS! PORTHOS! ATHOS!

(Voices from the courtyard:)

MUSKETEER 3. ARAMIS!

MUSKETEER 4. PORTHOS!

MUSKETEER 3. ATHOS!

TRÉVILLE. *(Shouting downstairs:)* Is no one bold enough to come and speak to me!

D'ARTAGNAN. I am bold, Monsieur. May I speak!

TRÉVILLE. What? You again. Speak. But speak quickly. I am not in a patient mood.

D'ARTAGNAN. So I see. I will act quickly, too. I will quickly prove to you that I am brave. At least I ought to be. For two reasons. The first is that I am a Gascon; and the second is that I am my father's son.

(TRÉVILLE stares him down.)

D'ARTAGNAN. My father taught me to handle a sword, and I fight for honor whenever I can. My father...

TRÉVILLE. Who is your father, young man?

D'ARTAGNAN. D'Artagnan of Gascony, Captain. I, too, am called D'Artagnan. *(He bows.)*

TRÉVILLE. Young D'Artagnan! Of course I remember your father. We grew up together and fought side by side in the religious wars. D'Artagnan's son! *(He embraces him.)* What can I do for you?

D'ARTAGNAN. I wish to ask a great favor. I have come to request the uniform of a Musketeer.

TRÉVILLE. That is a great favor indeed, D'Artagnan. But I'm afraid one does not simply arrive in Paris and receive a place in the Musketeers.

D'ARTAGNAN. But Monsieur, you cannot say no, it is my destiny. *(TRÉVILLE does not respond.)* Captain de Tréville!

TRÉVILLE. *(Writing:)* Enough, enough, enough. I loved your father. Of course I will assist you. How could I not? I will write a letter of introduction which will secure a position for you in our Academy.

The rest is up to you. Hone your skills with a sword and a musket. But more importantly, carve yourself a niche in Parisian society. I have no doubt that you will prove yourself, D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. Captain de Tréville, I am grateful for your help. I shall begin my training immediately. *(He bows and starts to run out of the room.)*

TRÉVILLE. Monsieur!

D'ARTAGNAN. *(Turning back:)* Captain?

TRÉVILLE. Your letter of introduction?

D'ARTAGNAN. Right. Thank you, Captain.

(TRÉVILLE offers the letter, which D'ARTAGNAN takes with a bow as he begins to rush off again.)

TRÉVILLE. D'Artagnan!

D'ARTAGNAN. Captain?

TRÉVILLE. Is that all you have brought with you?

D'ARTAGNAN. I have only one possession of value, Monsieur, my father's sword. That will be all I need.

TRÉVILLE. Perhaps. But you might find these 50 pistoles useful, too. *(He gives him a small bag of money.)* Work hard. Report to me often.

D'ARTAGNAN. Oh Monsieur, thank you, thank you! I will not fail. You will not regret that you have assisted me.

TRÉVILLE. Go, go. On your way. Adieu. Adieu.

D'ARTAGNAN. Adieu, Monsieur.

(TRÉVILLE watches him go, then...)

TRÉVILLE. Aramis! Athos! Porthos!

(TRÉVILLE exits. ATHOS enters below, slowly heading towards Tréville's office. Overly excited, reading his letter as he runs, D'ARTAGNAN smacks into ATHOS's wounded shoulder.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Excuse me.

ATHOS. You say 'excuse me,' and think that is sufficient.

D'ARTAGNAN. I did not run against you on purpose, Monsieur.

ATHOS. Boy, you are by no means polite. It is evident that you come from...a distance.

D'ARTAGNAN. From whatever distance I may come, I assure you that you are not the man to give me a lesson in good manners.

ATHOS. Perhaps I am. My name, young man, is M. Athos.

D'ARTAGNAN. M. D'Artagnan. *(They both bow.)* I am a Gascon.

TRÉVILLE. ATHOS! PORTHOS! ARAMIS!

D'ARTAGNAN. Were we not in the courtyard of Captain de Tréville, I would show you just what that means.

ATHOS. Then let us meet elsewhere, and you may explain yourself. Do you understand?

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, I do. Where may it please you?

ATHOS. Behind the Luxembourg. Today. Twelve o'clock.

D'ARTAGNAN. Twelve? Very well. I will be there.

(As ATHOS exits, TRÉVILLE finds him at last.)

TRÉVILLE. Athos!

(ATHOS and TRÉVILLE exit together.)

D'ARTAGNAN. My first day in Paris and I shall be run through. Twice.

MUSKETEERS. *(Off:)* Aramis! Aramis!

D'ARTAGNAN. What an idiot! D'Artagnan, you must practice courtesy in the future.

(ARAMIS and MME. DE CHEVREUSE appear.)

DE CHEVREUSE. M. Aramis!

ARAMIS. Mme. de Chevreuse!

(They whisper. She starts to give him her handkerchief as a love token. Three MUSKETEERS enter looking for ARAMIS.)

MUSKETEER 2. Aramis!

MUSKETEER 1. There he is!

MUSKETEER 2. Aramis, Captain de Tréville has been looking for you...

(DE CHEVREUSE panics, drops her handkerchief, and flees. ARAMIS starts to pick it up but drops it again as the MUSKETEERS approach.)

ARAMIS. Tell the Captain I will be there.

(D'ARTAGNAN gallantly tries to retrieve the handkerchief, but ARAMIS puts his foot on it.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Excuse me, M. Aramis? I believe you would be sorry to lose this handkerchief.

ARAMIS. What? Were you speaking to me?

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Tugging at the handkerchief:*) Yes, Monsieur, your handkerchief—

ARAMIS. That handkerchief is not mine.

(*ARAMIS walks away as D'ARTAGNAN pulls the handkerchief.*)

MUSKETEER 1. Oh Aramis! Do you deny that that beautiful lady just gave you her handkerchief!

MUSKETEER 2. Of course it is not his. We all know Aramis has forsaken women. He is determined to become a priest!

(*They laugh.*)

MUSKETEER 3. Do you still insist that you and Mme. de Chevreuse are on bad terms again?

ARAMIS. Gentlemen, Captain de Tréville is waiting for me.

MUSKETEER 3. (*Taking the handkerchief from ARAMIS:*) Then I shall take possession of this handkerchief, since her husband is a friend of mine.

ARAMIS. (*Taking it back:*) Monsieur!

MUSKETEER 1. It is bad manners, Aramis, to display a love token given by another's man's wife. *Adieu.*

MUSKETEER 2. Farewell, Father Aramis.

(*They exit.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Forgive me, M. Aramis. I...

ARAMIS. Although you are from the country, you must be aware that no one would walk upon a handkerchief without sufficient reason for doing so. Paris is not paved with linen! Why did you perpetrate such a stupid blunder as to give it to me?

D'ARTAGNAN. Why were you so stupid as to let it fall?!

ARAMIS. I am no bully, Monsieur. I never fight unless compelled. But this is a serious affair. Because of you, a lady's honor has been compromised!

TRÉVILLE. ARAMIS!

ARAMIS. At two o'clock I shall have the pleasure of awaiting you...

D'ARTAGNAN. Behind the Luxembourg?

ARAMIS. Just so.

D'ARTAGNAN. I will be there.

(ARAMIS exits up to Tréville's office. Another MUSKETEER crosses the stage.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Pardon me, Monsieur. Could you tell me, where exactly is the Luxembourg?

(The MUSKETEER laughs and exits. D'ARTAGNAN exits as PORTHOS crosses the stage. TRÉVILLE appears.)

TRÉVILLE. PORTHOS!

(PORTHOS runs off the other way.)

Scene 2

(Behind the Luxembourg. ROCHEFORT enters with two men who post the Cardinal's edict against dueling.)

ROCHEFORT. *(Reading the edict:)* "Whereas it has become too frequent that persons of quality take upon them to be the revengers of their private quarrels by dueling, out of our pious care we do, by this royal proclamation, strictly charge and command all of our loving subjects that they do not challenge any person or persons to fight in combat or single duels upon pain of our highest displeasure."

—Signed his Eminence, Cardinal Richelieu

(They exit.)

(ATHOS enters and has a moment alone before D'ARTAGNAN races on.)

ATHOS. Welcome, young man. I appreciate your promptness.

D'ARTAGNAN. Thank you, Monsieur.

ATHOS. We will begin momentarily. I am awaiting two friends who will act as my seconds.

D'ARTAGNAN. I understand. Unfortunately, I have no second, nor any acquaintances.

ATHOS. Not a single friend, and yet you keep our appointment. I am honored.

D'ARTAGNAN. Not so, Monsieur, since you do me the honor to challenge me whilst suffering from a wound.

ATHOS. It is of no consequence. I will use my left hand, as is my custom in such a case. And do not imagine I do you a favor, as I fight equally well with both hands. *(He winces from his wounded shoulder.)* Ah!

D'ARTAGNAN. If you would permit me, I have a salve which my mother gave me, which I have tried upon myself with great success. *(Gives him the salve.)* In less than three days this salve would cure your wound. At the end of that time, it would still be a great honor for me to cross swords with you.

ATHOS. *(Takes the salve.)* By my faith, this is the proposition of a perfect knight. In the days of Charlemagne, every man of honor spoke as you do. Unfortunately, young man, we do not live in the times of that great emperor, but in those of Cardinal Richelieu. If we delayed for three days, it would be known that we were going to fight and we would be prevented.

D'ARTAGNAN. If time is truly of the essence, you may dispense with your seconds and dispose of me right now. *(He prepares for the duel.)*

ATHOS. You please me more and more. It seems you lack neither head nor heart. If one of us does not kill the other, I shall hope hereafter to have the pleasure of your acquaintance.

ARAMIS. Athos!

ATHOS. Ah! Here come my men.

PORTHOS. What have we here?

D'ARTAGNAN. Monsieur Porthos?

ARAMIS. Athos, what are you doing with this man?

D'ARTAGNAN. Monsieur Aramis?

PORTHOS. Athos, this is the Gascon peasant I am going to fight this afternoon.

D'ARTAGNAN. Not until one o'clock.

ARAMIS. I, too have an arrangement with this man, Athos.

D'ARTAGNAN. But our appointment, you remember, is for two.

ATHOS. How curious. What were you going to fight about, Aramis?

ARAMIS. I fight on account of a theological dispute. *(Looks to D'ARTAGNAN, who doesn't give him away.)* What about you, Athos?

ATHOS. I do not truly remember. Oh yes, he hurt my shoulder.

ARAMIS. Porthos?

PORTHOS. I fight...because I fight.

D'ARTAGNAN. Gentlemen, the cause of your injuries will not matter, as it is unlikely that I shall live long enough to pay my debt to all three. Nevertheless—

ARAMIS. *En garde!*

(ATHOS and D'ARTAGNAN begin to duel. CARDINAL'S GUARDS appear.)

JUSSAC. Put up your swords.

PORTHOS. Jussac! Ah, I see you've brought your friends.

JUSSAC. Well, Musketeers!

ARAMIS. Sheathe your sword, young man. You will be arrested.

JUSSAC. Fighting again, are you? The Cardinal's edicts, are they all forgot?

ATHOS. Come Jussac. We would not interfere had we found your men in similar circumstances. Be a gentleman. Leave us be.

JUSSAC. Surrender or we will charge you.

PORTHOS. Charge us, will you? On what authority?

JUSSAC. On the highest authority, wine-sack! *(The GUARDS draw.)*

PORTHOS. Ah, that authority. *(Returning to ARAMIS and ATHOS:)* They insist on provoking us.

ARAMIS. We must be clever. They are six and we are only three, and Athos is wounded.

ATHOS. My friends, that should not deter us... All for one...

ARAMIS & PORTHOS. *(Joining ATHOS:)* ...and one for all.

(They start to draw, but are interrupted.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Gentlemen, it appears to me that we are four.

PORTHOS. You are not one of us.

JUSSAC. What will you do, gentlemen?

D'ARTAGNAN. I have not the uniform, but I have the heart and soul of a Musketeer.

(The MUSKETEERS look to one another.)

ATHOS. Here is your answer Jussac. *(All four draw swords.)* Athos, Porthos, Aramis...and D'Artagnan. Forward!

(FIGHT. D'ARTAGNAN proves himself. GUARDS are injured.)

GUARD 1. The Count de Rochefort! Put up your swords.

GUARD 2. We will *all* be arrested.

(The fight is finally broken up by the appearance of ROCHEFORT, who has GUARDS with him.)

ROCHEFORT. *(To the other GUARDS:)* Yield at once.

ATHOS. Porthos, Aramis, sheathe your swords!

ROCHEFORT. Get these men to a surgeon. Jussac, I'll speak to you later! *(The GUARDS exit.)* Well, well. What a spectacle you Musketeers make of yourselves. Athos, Porthos, Aramis. And who is this? What do you call yourself, boy?

D'ARTAGNAN. My name is D'Artagnan. I am a Gascon.

ROCHEFORT. You are a fool. These men are ruffians and you are no better. Do not let me see you in Paris again. *(Starts to exit.)*

D'ARTAGNAN. Monsieur, I will not tolerate insults to myself or my friends.

ROCHEFORT. I not only insult you, boy, I disarm you, and with full protection of the law. *(Seizes D'Artagnan's sword.)* I may confiscate the weapon of any civilian caught rioting in the street. Although I doubt this ancient piece of junk is worth the trouble. *(D'ARTAGNAN lunges at ROCHEFORT but is restrained by ATHOS.)* Make no mistake, the Cardinal will know of this.

(ROCHEFORT and his men exit. D'ARTAGNAN is in a fury.)

D'ARTAGNAN. My father's sword! Villain! Fiend! I will have my revenge on that man!

ATHOS. Peace, D'Artagnan. That is no ordinary fellow.

PORTHOS. That is the Count de Rochefort, the supreme agent of the Cardinal.

ARAMIS. Rochefort not only has the ear of the Cardinal, he has the authority to send us all to the Bastille.

D'ARTAGNAN. He has insulted me! I have not even my sword. What am I to do?

(ATHOS offers his sword to D'ARTAGNAN.)

D'ARTAGNAN. I cannot accept...

ATHOS. Did you not say that we were four?

(D'ARTAGNAN accepts Athos' sword.)

D'ARTAGNAN. It seems that I am no longer without friends.

(Music as the scene begins to shift.)

Have you any advice for me? What must I do next? How shall I begin my life in Paris?

PORTHOS. Life in Paris is impossible, my boy, without the proper attire. I will introduce you to my tailor. *(Exits.)*

ARAMIS. Paris is the city of love, D'Artagnan. Open your heart to the charms of all her beautiful women. *(Exits.)*

ATHOS. Find a decent lodging. Hire a loyal serving man. *(Exits.)*

(D'ARTAGNAN takes in this advice, then exits as lights come up on PLANCHET.)

Scene 3

PLANCHET. *(Reading from a book:)* "If your gentleman lies in a strange place, see his sheets be clean, avoid the dogs and shut all the doors. Give him good attendance. Thus doing, with diligence, God will prefer you to honor and good fortune."

(Lights come up on D'Artagnan's new lodging, an attic room in the house of MONSIEUR BONACIEUX. BONACIEUX enters with D'ARTAGNAN.)

BONACIEUX. This room should suit you perfectly, young man. My attic lodging is one of the finest abodes in all of Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN. I should hate to see the shabby ones.

BONACIEUX. Considering that you are securing your domestic arrangements on credit, I'm sure you won't mind a vermin or two.

D'ARTAGNAN. I do not bring a large fortune, Monsieur Bonacieux, but I intend to make my way...

BONACIEUX. As I intend to trust you for the balance of the rent... with interest. I am a businessman. I am in the linen drapery line.

(BONACIEUX notices PLANCHET.)

BONACIEUX. And who is that?

D'ARTAGNAN. This is Planchet, my servingman. I engaged his services only this morning.

BONACIEUX. Well, I suppose there may be room for two. Now, if you will excuse me, I have business to attend to. *(Exits.)*

(There is an awkward moment. D'ARTAGNAN has never had a serving man. PLANCHET offers to take D'Artagnan's hat and cape.)

PLANCHET. If you will allow me.

D'ARTAGNAN. Of course. (*Gives PLANCHET money.*) Planchet, take this. It's all I have left. It seems more honorable to give my money to you than to pay off our landlord. Do you agree?

PLANCHET. Absolutely, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. I've never had my own serving man, Planchet. I'm not quite sure how this works.

PLANCHET. Well, what kind of service do you require, Monsieur?

D'ARTAGNAN. I do not know—I should like you to be brave and resourceful. And tidy, too.

PLANCHET. I'll see what I can do, Monsieur. (*He begins to clean the room.*)

(BONACIEUX enters the room below with JUSSAC and two GUARDS, whom he hides. BONACIEUX exits. PLANCHET discovers a hole in the flooring. D'ARTAGNAN who is practicing fencing does not see this discovery. PLANCHET peeks down through the hole and sees only an empty room that is of no particular interest.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet, if you observe anything of note, you will inform me, will you not?

PLANCHET. Yes, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. Good man.

(PLANCHET looks through the peephole again as CONSTANCE enters downstairs. She is noteworthy, a lovely, romantic figure.)

PLANCHET. Pardon me... Uhh... Monsieur...

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet! Whatever are you doing?

PLANCHET. Pardon me, Monsieur, but I found a tear in the carpet which revealed a hole in the flooring, and since you asked me to be resourceful...

(He reveals the trap. D'ARTAGNAN watches CONSTANCE.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet! You and I shall get along quite well together. (*He returns to the table.*)

(In the meantime, the CARDINAL'S GUARDS sneak up behind CONSTANCE.)

CONSTANCE. What are you doing here? What do you want from me!

GUARD 1. You will come with us!

GUARD 2. And you will come quietly!

CONSTANCE. I will not do anything quietly, and I certainly will not go with you. Get out of this house!

GUARD 2. We have orders. If you do not come peacefully, we will take you by force.

CONSTANCE. Who gave those orders? Do you always take orders to abduct innocent women?

GUARD 1. Someone merely wishes to speak to you.

GUARD 2. And this someone insists on a private meeting. We do not wish to attract attention, Madame.

CONSTANCE. You may tell your someone that I will never be disloyal to my mistress. I serve an illustrious lady, and I will never do her harm! Now you get out!

GUARD 1. Take her!

CONSTANCE. NO!

D'ARTAGNAN. I must help her!

PLANCHET. Monsieur! Wait. But please, do be careful!

(They go downstairs.)

(They go to CONSTANCE's defense. FIGHT. D'ARTAGNAN is brave, but not terribly resourceful. PLANCHET is resourceful, but not terribly brave. CONSTANCE, though no expert fighter, has moments where she is both. With the help of CONSTANCE and PLANCHET, D'ARTAGNAN drives the GUARDS away. D'ARTAGNAN disarms JUSSAC.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Yield!

CONSTANCE. Now leave my house at once.

D'ARTAGNAN. Jussac!

(D'ARTAGNAN throws JUSSAC his sword. JUSSAC and the GUARDS exit. CONSTANCE and D'ARTAGNAN look at one another.)

Are you all right?

CONSTANCE. Where did you come from?

D'ARTAGNAN. I am honored to come to your aid.

CONSTANCE. I am very grateful to you.

D'ARTAGNAN. You owe me no thanks.

CONSTANCE. Yes, Monsieur, I do.

(They stare, quite taken with one another. PLANCHET stares, too.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet. Guard the door.

PLANCHET. Oh. Right. Yes, Monsieur.

(PLANCHET goes out.)

D'ARTAGNAN. What did those men want from you?

CONSTANCE. *(Covering:)* I am sure I do not know.

D'ARTAGNAN. They are Guards of the Cardinal.

CONSTANCE. Are they?

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, and you must have secrets which they wish you to betray.

CONSTANCE. Secrets?

D'ARTAGNAN. You are in service to a lady?

CONSTANCE. To the Queen.

D'ARTAGNAN. The Queen!

CONSTANCE. I am her dressmaker. And who, may I ask, are you?

D'ARTAGNAN. I am a King's Musketeer...almost. As such, I also serve her Majesty, and oppose the Cardinal's men. My name is D'Artagnan.

CONSTANCE. M. D'Artagnan, I am very grateful for your assistance. But I must ask you not to interfere any further with things that are not your concern.

(BONACIEUX reenters, and on seeing CONSTANCE is much annoyed.)

BONACIEUX. My dear Constance, you are here! Yes, yes. Well, well. My, my. Here you are.

CONSTANCE. Here I am indeed! And why should I not be here?

BONACIEUX. And you, young man. What are you doing here?

CONSTANCE. I thank God someone was here to assist me. Why were you not here when I returned home, my dear husband?

D'ARTAGNAN. Dear husband?

BONACIEUX. I expected you...later, that is all, my dear wife.

D'ARTAGNAN. Dear wife?

BONACIEUX. Madame, let us not discuss our affairs in front of our new lodger.

CONSTANCE. New lodger!

BONACIEUX. Come, come, my dear, let us not quarrel. You may go, young man. You may go.

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, of course, Monsieur. Madame Bonacieux. *(He exits the house as the BONACIEUXS exit to their rooms. Outside D'ARTAGNAN, blinded by love, bumps into PLANCHET.)*

(Lights isolate the two men as the transition begins.)

Oh Planchet, that woman is a most beautiful and mysterious creature!

PLANCHET. Yes, Monsieur. *(They exit.)*

Scene 4

(Light up on KING LOUIS as he addresses the audience.)

KING. The game is called 'La Bête.' The value of the cards is such: Knaves are worth but one point. Cavaliers two. Kings and Magicians four, and the Fool is counted for five. The Fool is not played like other cards, but has a quality all its own. To control the Fool gives the player a great advantage.

(A private room in the Louvre. The KING and QUEEN ANNE are playing cards while CARDINAL RICHELIEU watches. MLE. D'ASTREE and other servants are in attendance. The KING is struggling with his game. The CARDINAL tries to gain the KING's attention.)

CARDINAL. Your Majesty—

KING. Shhh! Shhh!

CARDINAL. If I may have your ear, my dear King.

(The QUEEN plays a card, winning the hand.)

KING. Cardinal Richelieu, you are forever interrupting me!

CARDINAL. Forgive me, Sire, but I must inform you that there has been another clash between the King's Musketeers and Cardinal's Guard.

KING. Cardinal, you never allow me a moment's pleasure. Be it a game of chance, or a chase with my falcons and my hounds. No, no. You will return me to the doldrums of politics and order.

CARDINAL. I am sorry, your Majesty, but this matter can be easily resolved. Though my Guards and your Musketeers indulge their rivalries, you and I are always of a single mind.

KING. Are we? Yes, yes, I suppose we are. It would be a sad thing to see my realm divided, as it were, two heads under one crown.

CARDINAL. Which is why we must enforce our edict against dueling, your Majesty. Rebellion is contagious. Think of La Rochelle. Put an end to dueling or lose control of France.

QUEEN. (*Playing a card.*) Your play, your Majesty.

KING. Yes, of course. (*He studies his cards.*)

CARDINAL. I merely wish you to be master in your own house, Sire, and that is why we must swiftly punish any unruliness...

QUEEN. ...so that you may subdue anyone who stands in opposition to you, your Eminence?

CARDINAL. I am always honored to hear her Majesty's opinions, but may I remind the Queen that I only wish to ensure the proper place in history for the age of her King, who is so rightfully referred to as Louis the Just...

KING. ...and the Chaste.

CARDINAL. History will record the stability and unity that was achieved for France during the great reign of King Louis the Thirteenth...

KING. ...and his Queen.

CARDINAL. And his Queen.

KING. And their heir, whenever he may choose to appear... (*He gives a look towards the QUEEN.*)

QUEEN. Your Majesty, we were discussing the duel behind the Luxembourg.

KING. Oh yes, of course.

QUEEN. If you are to be a fair judge, Sire, must you not discover which of the parties initiated this duel? Captain de Tréville is waiting outside with the Count de Rochefort. At least allow the captain the opportunity to present his case.

KING. Indeed, justice above all. Admit the Captain. (*A valet goes for TRÉVILLE.*) My Queen is clever, is she not, Cardinal? There are times when I suspect she is nearly as clever as you.

(TRÉVILLE and ROCHEFORT enter.)

TRÉVILLE. Your Majesties.

KING. Captain de Tréville, I am very angry with you. What have you to say about this nasty tête-à-tête behind the Luxembourg?

TRÉVILLE. Your Majesty, I confess that three of my best men, Athos, Porthos and Aramis, made a party of pleasure with a young Gascon. They were introducing the young man to the worldly ways of Paris.

ROCHEFORT. Your Majesty, this was the second brawl in less than a week. Admit that your men were gathered for the express purpose of dueling!

TRÉVILLE. The Luxembourg affair was strictly among Musketeers, your Majesty. But then six of his Eminence's Guards arrived, with Jussac at the lead, and proceeded to indulge their personal hatred on my corps.

ROCHEFORT. Your men were just as eager to clash swords, Captain.

TRÉVILLE. It was six against four, your Majesty. And one was a mere boy, a Gascon recruit.

KING. My men are perfect devils! A mere boy, do you say?

ROCHEFORT. He is a country savage—

TRÉVILLE. His name is D'Artagnan, your Majesty. His father fought for your father.

ROCHEFORT. Your Highness, the edict clearly states—

KING. I have decided. It seems that in this case, Count, the Cardinal's Guards are at fault. However, since your men have already suffered so terribly, I will be lenient and refrain from sending them to the Bastille.

ROCHEFORT. Your Majesty!

CARDINAL. (*Stopping ROCHEFORT:*) Thank you, your Majesty. You are as wise as you are just. (*He bows.*) Your Majesties. Captain. (*He bows and looks to ROCHEFORT.*)

(*ROCHEFORT bows as well. The CARDINAL and ROCHEFORT withdraw.*)

KING. Poor Cardinal. He is furious, but I do not care. I should scold you, Captain. Three of the Guard laid low. It is too many, too many. At this rate, he'll have to renew his regiments in a month. A young Gascon boy you say?

TRÉVILLE. Yes, your Majesty. D'Artagnan.

KING. The Gascon are always poor are they not? Here. *(He gathers up some of the wagers from the table.)* Give this to the young man.

TRÉVILLE. Your Majesty is more than generous.

(The KING gives the money to TRÉVILLE.)

KING. Thank you for your devotion, Captain.

TRÉVILLE. Sire, my men would allow themselves to be cut to pieces for you.

KING. They are to do nothing of the sort. They are far more useful to me whole!

(The KING exits, all bow. The QUEEN looks to TRÉVILLE and smiles, TRÉVILLE bows to her.)

(As they exit we see The CARDINAL and ROCHEFORT in a separate area.)

ROCHEFORT. Why did you not object, your Eminence? Are you not outraged?

CARDINAL. It is not in my interest to be outraged, Rochefort. And it is not in your interest to make me look the fool.

(The CARDINAL and ROCHEFORT exit.)

Scene 5

(PORTHOS, ATHOS, ARAMIS, and D'ARTAGNAN enter singing as The Pineapple Inn is set.)

ALL. *(Singing:)*

WE BE SOLDIERS THREE.

PARDONNEZ-MOI, JE VOUS EN PRIE.

LATELY COME FORTH OF THE LOW COUNTRY

WITH NEVER A PENNY OF MONEY.

HERE GOOD FELLOW, I DRINK TO THEE,

PARDONNEZ-MOI, JE VOUS EN PRIE.

TO ALL GOOD FELLOWS WHERE EVER THEY BE,

WITH NEVER A PENNY OF MONEY.

(The Pineapple Inn. PLANCHET watches the reveling skeptically. The tavern keeper, GRIMAUD, hovers near their table. Several customers are at another table)

GRIMAUD. I hope our humble fare has given you pleasure.

PORTHOS. A fine fricassée, Grimaud, my good man. A delight to the olfactory nerves.

ARAMIS. A magnificent mutton.

ATHOS. And a superb vintage. Grimaud, another bottle!

GRIMAUD. Right away, M. Athos.

ALL. To Grimaud!

ARAMIS. And to his tavern, the finest in all of Paris! The Pineapple!

PORTHOS, D'ARTAGNAN, & ATHOS. To the Pineapple!

ATHOS. And to our new friend, D'Artagnan!

ATHOS, PORTHOS, & ARAMIS. To D'Artagnan!

ATHOS. One week in Paris, and he's already been singled out by his Majesty!

PORTHOS. To the King's gold!

D'ARTAGNAN, ATHOS, ARAMIS, & PORTHOS. The King's gold!

(All drink.)

GRIMAUD. *(Delivers more wine.)* Here you are, gentlemen.

ALL. To Grimaud!

(Pause.)

D'ARTAGNAN. What shall we drink to now?

ARAMIS. To love!

"Whose lips, to which when we are come,
We anchor there and think ourselves at home."

D'ARTAGNAN & PORTHOS. To love!

(They drink.)

D'ARTAGNAN. You astound me, Aramis. A man of your passions must never really become a priest.

ATHOS. D'Artagnan, people are not always what they appear. One day, Aramis will embrace his holy order...

PORTHOS. Or rather his lovely lady. Aramis, isn't it time for a late night rendezvous?

ARAMIS. Porthos, I do not rendezvous.

PORTHOS. Call it what you like.

ARAMIS. If I do go out later, Porthos, it will be to attend midnight mass. But since you wish to talk of women, what of your duchess? Why is it we've never met this young beauty of yours?

PORTHOS. An inn such as the Pineapple would not be fine enough for her serving wench. No offense, Grimaud. I am the offspring of an illustrious family...

ATHOS. Porthos, you are the bastard son of Narcissus.

PORTHOS. And you, my friend, are—

ATHOS. Porthos! Perhaps you could hold your tongue long enough for us to hear from D'Artagnan.

ARAMIS. Yes, D'Artagnan. Talk to us.

ATHOS. Come, D'Artagnan, tell us something of your new life in Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN. You know most everything already...except...I've met a lady...

PORTHOS. A lady?

ATHOS. Take care, D'Artagnan, women were created for our destruction—

ATHOS & PORTHOS. —and from her all our miseries arise.

ARAMIS. *Varium et mutabile semper femina.*

ATHOS. (*Correcting his pronunciation*) *Femina.*

D'ARTAGNAN. She is a dressmaker. A married dressmaker.

PORTHOS. I knew it.

D'ARTAGNAN. Her name is Madame Bonacieux, and I only mention her because I need your advice.

ATHOS. People only ask for advice that they may not follow it.

ARAMIS. Beware married women, D'Artagnan.

ATHOS. Or if they do follow it, that they may blame someone for having given it.

PORTHOS. I would never get near a married woman, no matter what, even if she adored me, showered me with...

ATHOS. Porthos.

PORTHOS. Never mind.

ATHOS. Forgive our rudeness, D'Artagnan. Please, go on.

D'ARTAGNAN. I think Madame Bonacieux may need my help. I suspect she is in danger because of her fidelity to the Queen.

ARAMIS. The Queen!

PORTHOS. I hear that the Queen is not one for fidelity herself. Those inside the court speak only of her infidelity.

D'ARTAGNAN. What do you mean?

(Some of the customers leave The Pineapple.)

ARAMIS. *(Attempting to steer the conversation off of this delicate subject in a public place:)* Porthos merely refers to her Majesty's natural affection for Spain.

PORTHOS. And England.

ARAMIS. Porthos.

D'ARTAGNAN. Spain and England? Why would our Queen love what France most detests?

ATHOS. Spain is the Queen's birthplace.

D'ARTAGNAN. But why should she love England?

PORTHOS. Not England, but an Englishman. The Duke of Buckingham.

D'ARTAGNAN. Buckingham!

PORTHOS. A man who rules England as Richelieu rules France.

ARAMIS. Porthos. You are indiscreet.

PORTHOS. Buckingham is indiscretion personified. He is a lover much like our Aramis. Consider the perfect style in which he dresses. I was at the Louvre the day he dropped his pearls, and I picked up two, which I sold for 20 pistoles...

ATHOS & ARAMIS. We know, Porthos, we know.

D'ARTAGNAN. But are you saying that the Duke of Buckingham has—

PORTHOS. He has and he will. That's why the King has banished Buckingham from France. I happen to have heard that Buckingham is in Paris at this very moment—urged here by a letter forged in the Queen's hand.

D'ARTAGNAN. But who would forge such a letter?

ARAMIS. D'Artagnan, you must understand, there are those who would go to any lengths to destroy the Queen's honor.

PORTHOS. Speak plainly, Aramis, the forged letter was certainly sent by Richelieu. *(To D'ARTAGNAN:)* And you must know, this situation could seriously compromise the Queen.

ARAMIS. We have spoken too freely. Keep this to yourself, D'Artagnan! Gentlemen, I will find you all tomorrow. *(Exits.)*

D'ARTAGNAN. Porthos, do you think it's possible that Madame Bonacieux is involved in this intrigue?

ATHOS. Take care, my friend, you may have too great an interest in this Madame Bonacieux. Porthos, let us go.

(ATHOS and PORTHOS leave the tavern.)

(D'ARTAGNAN and PLANCHET start to exit, but GRIMAUD intercepts them.)

GRIMAUD. Monsieur, it seems your friends have left you the honor of paying for the bill. Sixty pistoles.

D'ARTAGNAN. Sixty pistoles!

PLANCHET. If I may be so bold, Monsieur, you have the King's reward.

D'ARTAGNAN. So I do, Planchet. Here you are, Grimaud. *(He pays GRIMAUD.)*

(GRIMAUD and the tavern disappear as PLANCHET and D'ARTAGNAN move into a street.)

PLANCHET. Do you remember your way home, Monsieur?

D'ARTAGNAN. Of course I do. *(He doesn't.)*

PLANCHET. If you don't mind, may I suggest that you go this way.

(CONSTANCE enters, cloaked and secretive, darting between the shadows.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Thank you, Planchet. You are proving to be most indispensable. *(Seeing CONSTANCE:)* It is Madame Bonacieux!

PLANCHET. I know it is not my business to intrude, Monsieur, but if I may offer some simple words of wisdom—go straight home. Monsieur...

D'ARTAGNAN. Surely you can make it home without me, Planchet. Must I accompany you everywhere!

PLANCHET. Whatever you say, Monsieur. *(He reluctantly exits.)*

(CONSTANCE starts towards a door as D'ARTAGNAN surprises her.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Madame!

CONSTANCE. Leave me alone, you villain! I do not fear you. Tell that to your Cardinal.

D'ARTAGNAN. Madame Bonacieux, it is I. D'Artagnan.

(She recognizes him.)

CONSTANCE. You! Oh. M. D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. I apologize for frightening you. Why are you alone here at this time of night? I only wish to make sure that you are safe.

CONSTANCE. Thank you, but I cannot accept your protection. *(She starts to go. He follows.)* You must not follow me!

D'ARTAGNAN. If you could see into my heart, Madame, you would know that I would never do anything to cause you harm.

CONSTANCE. By the courtesy of a gentleman, I implore you to let me continue on my way. Alone.

D'ARTAGNAN. I can refuse nothing solicited in those terms. Madame.

(D'ARTAGNAN withdraws, but watches as CONSTANCE goes to a door and knocks. She is met by MADAME DE CHEVREUSE and ARAMIS, who bring out the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, disguised in a Musketeer tabard.)

D'ARTAGNAN. That is Aramis!

(BUCKINGHAM joins CONSTANCE, and takes her arm. DE CHEVREUSE and ARAMIS exit.)

She is meeting a lover! This woman may think her husband an idiot, but she will not find me one.

(BUCKINGHAM and CONSTANCE start to sneak away. D'ARTAGNAN leaps out.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Hold! Madame, do you take me for a fool?

CONSTANCE. Monsieur!

BUCKINGHAM. What do you want, sir?

D'ARTAGNAN. I have no business with you. What I have to settle is with this lady.

CONSTANCE. Monsieur, you will destroy us all!

BUCKINGHAM. Take my arm, Madame, and let us proceed.

(BUCKINGHAM pushes past D'ARTAGNAN. D'ARTAGNAN draws his sword.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Monsieur, *en garde!* *(The Duke draws.)*

CONSTANCE. *(To D'ARTAGNAN:)* In God's name, put up your sword. This is the Duke of Buckingham!

D'ARTAGNAN. Buckingham? My Lord...Madame...pardon me...a thousand pardons. I was jealous...I thought you were her lover—

CONSTANCE. Monsieur!

D'ARTAGNAN. —forgive me, my Lord...you know what it is to love. So many things are not what they seem. (*Falling to his knees:*) Tell me how I may die in your Grace's cause.

BUCKINGHAM. It seems, Madame, that you have a gallant. Sir, I beg you to trust your lady in the future. But now, sir, you will do us the service to follow us, at the distance of twenty paces, to the Louvre. And if any one dogs our steps...kill him.

D'ARTAGNAN. I am your servant, my Lord.

(*JUSSAC and two GUARDS enter.*)

JUSSAC. Hold, you Musketeer!

(*FIGHT. BUCKINGHAM and D'ARTAGNAN turn to face JUSSAC and the two GUARDS. CONSTANCE urges BUCKINGHAM to flee with her as D'ARTAGNAN continues the fight alone.*)

JUSSAC. Out of my way, Gascon. (*Running after BUCKINGHAM.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Chasing them off stage:*) Cowards, turn and fight!

Scene 6

(*The Louvre. Queen Anne's apartment. The QUEEN enters with MLE. D'ASTREE as CONSTANCE discreetly leads BUCKINGHAM in. CONSTANCE exits. The QUEEN dismisses D'ASTREE.*)

BUCKINGHAM. Your Majesty.

QUEEN. My Lord, you know it was not I who sent for you from England.

BUCKINGHAM. I know. You have refused my every attempt to see you since I have arrived in Paris. I have been deceived, but I do not care.

QUEEN. I do. Richelieu has manipulated both of us. I only arranged this meeting because you persist in remaining in Paris where your presence puts my honor in jeopardy. The Cardinal risks the future of our monarchy in the hopes of increasing his own power. I face you solely to tell you that I will never see you again.

BUCKINGHAM. Your words are cold, but I see something different in your eyes.

QUEEN. My Lord, I will not be compromised.

BUCKINGHAM. I will tell you of compromise. Compromise is throwing yourself away on a fool you do not love.

QUEEN. You are too bold.

BUCKINGHAM. Compromise is allowing your beauty to wither without ever knowing a man who truly loves you! My beloved Anne, at our last meeting, in the Garden at Amiens...

QUEEN. You must never mention that night.

BUCKINGHAM. ...we dared not speak of love, but we were together long enough for you to reveal to me the loneliness of your life. On that night, I swear, you loved me.

QUEEN. I can no longer afford to be so reckless.

BUCKINGHAM. Then you can no longer afford to be alive.

QUEEN. I have never said that I loved you.

BUCKINGHAM. Oh Anne. I have risked favor and my life to see you.

QUEEN. And now, my Lord, we are both in danger. The King himself has banished you.

BUCKINGHAM. Yes, and France will pay for that offense. I will do anything to be near you. That is why I have allied myself with the Protestant rebels at La Rochelle. Let our countries go to war. That war will force reconciliations. I will be called upon to negotiate the peace. They will not dare to banish me from Paris then.

QUEEN. My Lord! Thousands of lives could be lost!

BUCKINGHAM. What are their lives to me provided my eyes are blessed once more by seeing you?

QUEEN. This is more than I can bear. In the name of heaven, go now.

BUCKINGHAM. I will not, until you say you love me, Anne.

QUEEN. I cannot.

BUCKINGHAM. Let Richelieu take both of us. Let me die in your arms.

QUEEN. Have pity on me.

BUCKINGHAM. Give me some pledge of your love.

QUEEN. What can I give you?

(BUCKINGHAM kisses her. She starts to give in for a moment, but then pulls away.)

QUEEN. My Lord, you must leave France immediately.

BUCKINGHAM. I cannot leave without some memory, some token...

QUEEN. If I oblige you, will you leave at once?

BUCKINGHAM. If that is what you desire...

QUEEN. (*Calling:*) Mademoiselle d'Astrée!

(D'ASTRÉE enters.)

QUEEN. Near my bed there is a small wooden casket. Bring it to me.

(D'ASTRÉE exits.)

QUEEN. My Lord, I do not know if I love you or not. But if you should die in France...if I thought I was the cause of your death, I could never...

(BUCKINGHAM starts toward her as D'ASTRÉE reenters.)

D'ASTRÉE. I beg your pardon, your Majesty. Here is the casket.

QUEEN. Take these twelve diamonds. One for each month. When a full year has passed, you may think of me again. (*He takes the jewels and tries to kiss her hands. She pulls away.*) You promised to go.

BUCKINGHAM. My Queen. I cannot wait a year. If I am not dead, I swear I will see you before then, even if I turn the world upside down to accomplish it. Farewell.

(BUCKINGHAM is met by CONSTANCE who leads him away. ANNE exits. D'ASTRÉE remains alone for a moment, then exits in a different direction.)

Scene 7

(Cardinal Richelieu's chambers. ROCHEFORT and JUSSAC drag on a screaming BONACIEUX. The CARDINAL enters, unseen by the others.)

BONACIEUX. Mercy, mercy! I did my best, Monsieur! Please do not torture me. My bones are brittle, with crippling pains that shoot up and down...

JUSSAC. Silence, you fool.

ROCHEFORT. You and I had an agreement. You promised that when my Guards arrived at your house, your wife would be alone.

BONACIEUX. I thought she would be, Monsieur. I did everything you asked.

ROCHEFORT. Where is your wife now?

BONACIEUX. Find my wife and yell at her. I am just a poor draper!

ROCHEFORT. You are an idiot!

CARDINAL. (*Moving into the scene:*) Patience, Rochefort.

(*Sees the CARDINAL and falls to his knees.*)

BONACIEUX. The Cardinal!

CARDINAL. M. Bonacieux, please get up. (*BONACIEUX remains kneeling.*) Have no fear.

(*BONACIEUX reluctantly rises.*)

CARDINAL. I know that your wife has been involved in royal intrigue.

BONACIEUX. I don't know what to tell your Eminence. But I can tell you this: there is a young Gascon who lives in my house and still owes me my rent.

CARDINAL. Yes, and...

BONACIEUX. He is the one who prevented your Guards from bringing my wife to you. His name is D'Artagnan and I believe he associates with the King's Musketeers.

CARDINAL. D'Artagnan? (*To ROCHEFORT:*) It is plain that we must keep an eye on this young man.

BONACIEUX. (*Falls to his knees again:*) As it is plain that you are the great Cardinal Richelieu.

CARDINAL. Rise, my friend.

(*The CARDINAL assists and BONACIEUX rises, in awe.*)

BONACIEUX. The Cardinal has taken my hand! The great man has called me his friend!

CARDINAL. Yes, good man, you have been unjustly treated. Take this bag of a hundred pistoles. I would not want you to go away disenchanté.

BONACIEUX. Oh, your Eminence, I go away perfectly enchanted!

CARDINAL. Farewell, until our next meeting...

BONACIEUX. Long live his Eminence! Long live the Cardinal! Long live France! (*BONACIEUX backs out of the room, bowing and scraping, escorted by JUSSAC.*) He touched me!

ROCHEFORT. Whatever have you done, your Grace?

CARDINAL. (*Wiping his hands;*) I have created a man who would henceforth die for me. And I have sent him to spy upon his wife.

ROCHEFORT. I apologize your Eminence for my unsuccessful effort to question Madame Bonacieux.

CARDINAL. You should apologize. The young woman will now be on her guard.

ROCHEFORT. Perhaps the husband will prove useful.

CARDINAL. That somehow seems unlikely.

ROCHEFORT. You despise me your Eminence do you not?

CARDINAL. I do not despise you, faithful servant. Nor do I bear you love.

(*Mlle. D'ASTREE rushes in.*)

D'ASTRÉE. (*Bowing to the CARDINAL;*) Pardon me, your Eminence. (*To ROCHEFORT;*) I must return to the Queen at once or I will be missed.

ROCHEFORT. Mademoiselle d'Astree, your Eminence.

CARDINAL. Speak directly, my dear, do not be afraid.

D'ASTREE. The Queen granted a private audience to the Duke of Buckingham. She insisted he return to England, but she gave him a parting gift...twelve diamond studs, which I believe the King had given her Majesty as a birthday present.

CARDINAL. Your loyalty will be rewarded. You may go, my dear.

(*She kisses his hand and exits.*)

ROCHEFORT. I do not know how Buckingham manages to enter the palace.

CARDINAL. Rochefort, there is much that seems to get past you of late. First Madame Bonacieux and then Buckingham. My guards saw him escape with the aid of this D'Artagnan. Rochefort, this will be your final chance to do me service. The Duke has returned to England with the diamond studs. Being susceptible to vanity, the Duke will not be able to resist showing them off. Being susceptible to women, he will not be able to resist the charms of your Countess de Winter.

(*At the mention of her name, lights up on MILADY. The two men exit.*)

Scene 8

(The foyer of Milady's apartment. KITTY is in attendance.)

MILADY. Kitty! Where are my gloves?!

KITTY. Mon dieu. Forgive me, Milady. I will fetch them at once.

(KITTY exits. DE WARDES and his servant, LUBIN, enter and intercept MILADY.)

MILADY. Count de Wardes!

DE WARDES. Countess de Winter.

MILADY. Whatever are you doing here at this time of day?

DE WARDES. I hoped to find you alone for once.

MILADY. Did you? Why Count, I am shocked.

DE WARDES. Oh Countess, I suspect that is not true, though I would give much to discover what would shock you.

MILADY. I am afraid you shall have to wait, my dear Count. I am going out just now. But I will see you tonight at Madame de Rambouillet's salon, will I not?

DE WARDES. As you wish. Perhaps afterwards, you will allow me to escort you home?

MILADY. It would give me great pleasure, Count. Till then?

DE WARDES. Bon jour, Milady.

(KITTY has entered with the gloves. DE WARDES and LUBIN pass ROCHEFORT as they exit.)

KITTY. Here are your gloves, Milady.

MILADY. Well, bring them to... *(Sees ROCHEFORT.)*

ROCHEFORT. The dim-witted Count de Wardes. Oh, Milady!

MILADY. He has an enormous... estate.

ROCHEFORT. I am always interested in your love life, Milady, but I am here to discuss business. Or are they one and the same to you?

MILADY. Kitty, you may go. *(KITTY exits.)* What does the Cardinal want now?

ROCHEFORT. You will sail to England tomorrow. Here are your travel papers. His Eminence wishes you to seek out the favor of the Duke of Buckingham.

MILADY. The Duke of Buckingham? From what I hear, his favors are only given to the French Queen.

ROCHFORT. Don't underestimate yourself, Milady. And don't overestimate the Duke. You are invited to the first ball of the London season, where Buckingham will certainly be wearing twelve rare and exquisite diamonds. You must steal at least two of these jewels and bring them immediately back to me.

MILADY. If these diamonds are so valuable, how am I to steal them?

ROCHFORT. That is up to you, Milady. But from what I remember, you always find a way.

(ROCHFORT exits. MILADY is left with her orders.)

Scene 9

(The Louvre. The Queen's apartment.)

(MME. DE CHEVREUSE sings as the QUEEN is being fitted for a gown by CONSTANCE. MME. D'ASTREE is in attendance.)

(The KING and CARDINAL are deep in conversation outside the Queen's chamber.)

DE CHEVREUSE. *(Sings:)*

BELLE QUI TIENS MA VIE
CAPTIVE DANS TES YEUX,
QUI M'AS L'ÂME RAVIÉ
D'UN SOURIS GRACIEUX,
VIENS TÔT ME SECOURIR
OU ME FAUDRA MOURIR.

(The KING enters the chamber, interrupting the song. The QUEEN is in a minor state of undress. He is embarrassed to look at her.)

KING. Excuse me, Madame. Oh my. Oh dear. Forgive my intrusion, but I have some news which I hope will please you.

QUEEN. Any news from his Majesty is of great interest to me.

KING. I am going to hold a masquerade ball in your honor at the Hotel de Ville. I wish you to dance with me—the Merlaison. This will be a perfect opportunity for you to display those twelve diamond studs I gave you for your birthday.

(The QUEEN doesn't respond. He looks briefly, but turns away again.)

KING. Did you hear me?

QUEEN. The twelve diamonds?

KING. Yes.

QUEEN. And when exactly will this ball take place?

KING. I think it will be in ten days, but I do not remember exactly. I must ask the Cardinal.

QUEEN. The Cardinal?

KING. Yes. Well, there you are. There you have it. Farewell.

(The KING exits.)

QUEEN. I am lost. I am lost! Richelieu knows all.

DE CHEVREUSE. Oh, your Majesty.

(The QUEEN notices D'ASTREE.)

QUEEN. Mademoiselle, have you not something to attend to?

D'ASTRÉE. Of course. Allow me to take my leave, your Majesty.
(Exits.)

QUEEN. *(As if to herself:)* That woman has betrayed me, I am sure of it. What am I to do?

DE CHEVREUSE. We must find someone to bring the diamonds back again. But I fear she suspects me and will have me followed.

QUEEN. Then I will be destroyed...

CONSTANCE. If I may speak, your Majesty...

QUEEN. Yes, of course.

CONSTANCE. Is there any way in which I can be of service to your Majesty?

QUEEN. You, my dear?

CONSTANCE. *(Kneeling:)* I would give my life to keep your honor safe.

(DE CHEVREUSE nods her approval to the QUEEN. The QUEEN lifts CONSTANCE's face, looking intently at her.)

QUEEN. I believe you would. Come with me.

(The three women exit.)

Scene 10

(The Bonacieux household. BONACIEUX enters, reading his marriage contract.)

BONACIEUX. "In law, the husband and wife are one person and the husband is that person. Under his wing, protection and cover his wife shall find refuge.

ITEM: Madame Bonacieux shall graciously perform her wifely duty at least once a week."

(He sits, laying in wait for his wife. In D'Artagnan's upstairs apartment, PLANCHET is cleaning while D'ARTAGNAN practices fencing moves. CONSTANCE enters downstairs. As PLANCHET exits, D'ARTAGNAN overhears the conversation below. He tries to ignore it, but finally peeks through the hole in the floor.)

BONACIEUX. Here you are! Yes, yes. Well. I've missed you, my dear. Where have you been?

CONSTANCE. I have been staying at the Louvre while serving the Queen. I have only come home because I have something vitally important to ask of you.

BONACIEUX. Yes?

CONSTANCE. There is a sacred action that needs to be performed, and since you are my husband, I must appeal to you.

BONACIEUX. I am ready.

CONSTANCE. You must travel to London and deliver this letter to an illustrious person.

BONACIEUX. Ah! Intrigues again! Nothing but intrigues!

CONSTANCE. What are you saying?

BONACIEUX. Secrets! Letters! The Cardinal has enlightened me on this subject.

CONSTANCE. The Cardinal.

BONACIEUX. He sent for me.

CONSTANCE. Did he treat you ill?

BONACIEUX. He gave me his hand and called me his friend.

CONSTANCE. So you are useless to me...

BONACIEUX. But not to his Eminence... *(He shows off the money.)*

CONSTANCE. From the Cardinal?

BONACIEUX. My friend...

CONSTANCE. You, sir, are a fool!

BONACIEUX. And you—you are a...woman! A miserable, ungrateful, disobedient woman!

(BONACIEUX conspicuously locks the money in a cupboard, then storms off.)

CONSTANCE. M. Bonacieux, I never loved you much, but now, I swear, I hate you!

(She is at a loss when D'ARTAGNAN rushes downstairs to her.)

D'ARTAGNAN. *(Cautiously.)* Madame Bonacieux.

CONSTANCE. M. D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. Pardon me, Madame, but you have a sorry husband.

CONSTANCE. I know. You overheard our conversation.

(D'ARTAGNAN nods.)

CONSTANCE. I should never have told him anything.

D'ARTAGNAN. Madame, if I heard correctly, you need a brave, devoted and intelligent man to deliver a letter to London for you. I am brave and devoted...two of the three qualifications. More importantly, I am willing to throw myself into the fire for you.

CONSTANCE. For me? *(Beat.)* But how can I know that you are worthy of my trust?

D'ARTAGNAN. You cannot distrust those who truly love you.

CONSTANCE. You come quickly to love, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. That is because love has come quickly to me. And for the first time.

CONSTANCE. Monsieur...

D'ARTAGNAN. Command me. Tell me exactly what I need to do.

CONSTANCE. You must deliver this letter to the Duke of Buckingham. Then bring back the parcel he will give you in return. The Queen must receive this parcel before ten days have passed. Her honor is at stake.

D'ARTAGNAN. I am off! *(He starts off.)*

CONSTANCE. Wait! *(She gives him the letter. He takes it, smiles, then starts off again.)* Monsieur! *(He stops again.)* Perhaps you have no money?

D'ARTAGNAN. Take away the "perhaps."

CONSTANCE. (*Using a hairpin she handily unlocks the cupboard, taking out her husband's money bag:*) Take this. It was a gift of the Cardinal to my husband.

D'ARTAGNAN. It will be doubly gratifying to save the Queen with the Cardinal's money.

CONSTANCE. Be brave. But, above all, be prudent and remember that you serve the Queen.

D'ARTAGNAN. The Queen, and you.

CONSTANCE. Preserve the Queen, and you preserve me.

(She gives him her hand to kiss, then exits.)

(D'ARTAGNAN races upstairs and begins to ready himself for departure.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet. Planchet! You must help me pack immediately.

PLANCHET. (*Entering:*) Monsieur, I am in the midst of cleaning out your pantry. If you are going somewhere, may I suggest that you purchase a mousetrap or two...

D'ARTAGNAN. Hang the pantry, Planchet. I must travel to London. I have sworn myself to a lady. Planchet, I have my first quest.

PLANCHET. A quest! (*Beat.*) I wonder if I shouldn't accompany you.

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Stopping and looking at his man:*) Planchet, would you be willing to undertake such a dangerous journey?

PLANCHET. I suppose you might need me, Monsieur, if only to help you find your way.

D'ARTAGNAN. England is an island, Planchet. If we take the proper vessel, we should have no trouble running into it.

(PLANCHET heads downstairs, where he encounters ATHOS, PORTHOS, and ARAMIS who have been drinking and have brought a bottle with them.)

ALL THREE. D'Artagnan! Are you there?

ATHOS. Ah, Planchet! Is M. D'Artagnan at home?

PLANCHET. He is upstairs, Monsieurs! But you must excuse me, I have much to do! (*He rushes past them and exits.*)

(The THREE MUSKETEERS enter D'Artagnan's room and make themselves at home in the small space.)

ARAMIS. D'Artagnan, your serving man needs a lesson in deportment!

PORTHOS. D'Artagnan! What's the matter? Why were you not at The Pineapple, you puppy?

ARAMIS. Come, D'Artagnan. Do not leave me alone with these two wastrels. Athos just lost 200 pistoles in a wager over a bulldog and a bottle of Beaujolais.

ATHOS. There are so few diversions at this point in one's life. Come, have a drink! Lift my spirits!

D'ARTAGNAN. I cannot, Athos. I must go to London at once.

ATHOS. To London?

ARAMIS. Whatever for?

D'ARTAGNAN. I am not entirely certain.

ATHOS. Come, come D'Artagnan. Enough of this intrigue. Tell us everything.

D'ARTAGNAN. I only know that the honor and perhaps the life of the Queen is at stake.

ARAMIS. The Queen? The Queen is in danger?

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, and I must deliver this letter to the Duke of Buckingham and return within ten days.

ATHOS. Are you planning to go alone?

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet will accompany me.

PORTHOS. Is anyone committed to preventing your success?

D'ARTAGNAN. The Cardinal, I believe, stands fully against me.

ATHOS. Then it is unlikely you will succeed.

D'ARTAGNAN. I must succeed!

ARAMIS. You will be assassinated by the Cardinal's men.

D'ARTAGNAN. Then I shall die in the service of her Majesty.

ARAMIS. But then your mission will not be performed.

ATHOS. D'Artagnan, you must not be rash. In any enterprise of this kind, there ought to be four at least. *(To PORTHOS and ARAMIS:)* Should not the three of us join him in this noble charge? Aramis, what do you say?

ARAMIS. If one is killed on the road, another will be needed to deliver the letter. Porthos?

PORTHOS. If he is killed, it will be another's turn, and so on.

ATHOS. Provided only one succeed, that is all that is necessary. (*Beat.*) I say we embrace D'Artagnan's cause. And as the bearer of the letter, he is naturally the leader of this enterprise.

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Truly stunned.*) I am overwhelmed, gentlemen. What can I say?

ATHOS. All for one... (*A beat as they look to D'ARTAGNAN.*)

ALL FOUR. And one for all.

D'ARTAGNAN. To England!

ALL. To England.

(*They exit.*)

Scene 11

(*As the set changes, lights up on a crossover. BUCKINGHAM who is wearing the diamonds, greets MILADY who has arrived in London. She teasingly seduces him to kiss her cheek rather than her hand. They exit together.*)

(*Calais. The Golden Lily Inn. Two drunken men [CARDINAL'S GUARDS in disguise] sit at a table and an Innkeeper, BAZIN, stands behind the bar. D'ARTAGNAN, ATHOS, PORTHOS, ARAMIS, and PLANCHET enter.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Let us hope we reach the coast as easily as we've come to Calais. We must refresh ourselves quickly and board the next boat.

BAZIN. *Bon soir*, gentlemen. Welcome to the Golden Lily! Bazin, at your service! What can I fetch for you? I have the finest wine, the finest beds, the finest fare in all of France.

PORTHOS. (*Noticing the two suspicious men.*) Bring us a bottle of your best Bordeaux, Bazin! So this is the Golden Lily! I've heard it has the best roasted pig outside of Paris. (*Addressing the two men.*) Perhaps you gentlemen have already sampled it— (*Grabbing their wine and drinking.*) mmm, a fine wine indeed. Gentlemen! A toast! To the King!

CARDINAL'S MAN 1. And shall we also toast his Eminence, Cardinal Richelieu?

PORTHOS. The Cardinal? I'd sooner toast his scullery maid.

CARDINAL'S MAN 1. I'd take that back if I were you.

PORTHOS. His scullery maid? I'd gladly take her 'round back.

CARDINAL'S MAN 1. You Monsieur, are an overbearing rogue!

PORTHOS. And you, my friend, are an ignorant, stinking swine!

D'ARTAGNAN. Has Porthos gone mad?

ATHOS. Merely clever. He recognized those men from Paris. They serve the Cardinal.

CARDINAL'S MAN 2. You, clown, are a dead man.

ATHOS. Kill the men and join us as soon as you can.

PORTHOS. Come at me, varmints! I'll cut off your heads and roast them for my supper!

(FIGHT. They draw and begin to fight. This is the most ferocious and dangerous fight of the play. It continues through the end of the scene. One must feel the true peril the THREE MUSKETEERS are facing and the struggle of D'ARTAGNAN's decision to leave them.)

(As the boat horn sounds, PORTHOS is in peril. ATHOS and ARAMIS grab D'ARTAGNAN.)

ATHOS. We must head for the boat.

D'ARTAGNAN. We cannot leave Porthos.

ARAMIS. He is the strongest of us four. He'll catch up when he can.

(They start to exit, but they are met by three more GUARDS. ARAMIS takes them on.)

D'ARTAGNAN. I'll take this one, Aramis.

ATHOS. Aramis can handle both. Come, D'Artagnan! Planchet!

(ARAMIS, in peril, continues to fight with the Guards. ATHOS, D'ARTAGNAN, and PLANCHET aren't sure where to go. BAZIN appears.)

BAZIN. You may go this way, Monsieurs.

(BAZIN points upstairs. PLANCHET, D'ARTAGNAN, and ATHOS discover that they have been led into a trap. They are ambushed again. D'ARTAGNAN and ATHOS fight.)

ATHOS. *(Fighting off the GUARDS:)* Go, D'Artagnan! Go to England. Get on that boat.

D'ARTAGNAN. I will not leave you! I will not leave any of you here.

ATHOS. If you stay, your mission will fail. You must go to London. GO!

(PLANCHET *pulls* D'ARATGNAN *away* as ATHOS *is struck and falls.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos!

PLANCHET. Come, Monsieur. Come!

(PLANCHET *and* D'ARTAGNAN *exit.*)

Scene 12

(*Dock sounds. LUBIN enters.*)

LUBIN. (*Reading:*) "Do not disturb yourself with unpleasant thoughts of what may happen to ships crossing the English Channel. Remember, rather, that of the thousands of voyages that have been made across the channel, only a few dozen have met with fatal disaster or were never heard from again."

(*The port of Calais. DE WARDES is seen.*)

DE WARDES. Hurry, Lubin, the ship is about to depart. Where are my travel papers? Some tedious blockade has suddenly been announced and not even I may cross the Channel without permission from the Cardinal. Well, where are they, boy? If you don't find them immediately, I will... (*Checks his coat pocket.*) Oh, here they are.

(D'ARTAGNAN *and* PLANCHET, *who have been hidden in the shadows, come forward.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Ominously:*) Monsieur, I must ask that you hand over your travel papers to me at once. I need to cross the Channel ahead of you.

DE WARDES. Outrageous! I am the Count de Wardes! I intend to surprise a lady tomorrow at the first ball of the London season.

D'ARTAGNAN. I am sorry, Count, but you will have to change your plans.

DE WARDES. I presume you are joking.

D'ARTAGNAN. This is no joking matter.

DE WARDES. I will blow out your brains. Lubin, my pistol.

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet. (*Pointing to LUBIN.*)

PLANCHET. Monsieur?

(PLANCHET *realizes his duty and to his own astonishment, he subdues LUBIN with one blow.*)

PLANCHET. Do your business. I have settled mine.

(DE WARDES, a little stunned, musters his dignity and turns to D'ARTAGNAN.)

DE WARDES. (*Drawing:*) Prepare to die, you rogue.

D'ARTAGNAN. Better men than I have already fallen for my cause.

(*FIGHT. As D'ARTAGNAN fights he is more vicious than he intends. DE WARDES is overwhelmed, and falls. D'ARTAGNAN continues to strike him.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. One for Porthos! One for Aramis! One for Athos! And one for me!

PLANCHET. (*Stopping D'ARTAGNAN:*) Monsieur. He is no match for you. (*D'ARTAGNAN collapses from physical and emotional exhaustion, as PLANCHET searches DE WARDES.*) Here is the letter of permission.

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Shaken:*) Planchet. Have I killed him?

(*Silence.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet, this young man could be me. A moment ago, I'd never met him, and now I've cut him to pieces. And he will never know why.

(*PLANCHET looks at the two of them. The boat horn sounds. He helps D'ARTAGNAN to his feet.*)

PLANCHET. This is not the moment to contemplate, Monsieur. There is the boat that will take us to England. We must board.

(*They exit.*)

Scene 13

(*London. Buckingham's estate. BUCKINGHAM enters with PATRICK, who reads the DUKE his daily itinerary.*)

PATRICK. Today, my Lord, the ambassador from Sweden wishes to meet with you in order to finalize trade agreements. Later this afternoon, the King has extended an invitation to go hunting with him, should you so desire. Also, the cook would like to know what you would like to have prepared for dinner this evening. We have a choice of roast venison or conies made from the finest hedgehogs in Ipswich, and... (*JOHN FELTON enters.*) Yes, Mr Felton?

FELTON. There is a visitor to see you, my Lord. A Frenchman.

BUCKINGHAM. Let him come in, Mr. Felton. (D'ARTAGNAN *enters with* PLANCHET.) Ah! The overzealous gallant! Sir, we meet again. Why have you come all the way to London? No misfortune has befallen the Queen?

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Handing him the Queen's letter:*) I believe she is in great danger, from which your Grace alone can rescue her.

BUCKINGHAM. (*Reading:*) Ah, my dear Anne. I would render you any service. How could I refuse this request? (*He removes the diamonds.*) You may tell your Queen that these jewels have not left my person since she gave them to me. (*He examines the diamonds.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. What is the matter, my Lord?

BUCKINGHAM. Two of the diamonds are missing. There are but ten! The diamonds have never left my person, except...the evening of the ball...a certain Countess. I should have known. We must act quickly. Mr. Felton, my jeweler! If we prevail here, you will have very little time to deliver the jewels back to Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN. I will do anything humanly possible to succeed in this affair.

BUCKINGHAM. I believe you will. If you do succeed, how will I ever repay my debt to you?

D'ARTAGNAN. Let us understand one another, my Lord. I am not doing this for you, or for any reward that you may offer. I do this for my Queen.

(REILLY, *Buckingham's jeweler, enters.*)

BUCKINGHAM. Reilly, look at these diamonds and tell me what they are worth apiece.

REILLY. Hmmm. Hmmm. Fifteen hundred pounds each, my Lord.

BUCKINGHAM. How many days would be required to make two new jewels exactly like those?

REILLY. Hmmm. Hmmm. At the very least, a week my Lord.

BUCKINGHAM. I will pay you six thousand pounds, and I must have them the day after tomorrow.

REILLY. Nothing easier. (*Exits.*)

BUCKINGHAM. Come, good sir. If you will take no reward, at least let me lodge you in splendor for the two days until your journey back.

(*They exit.*)

Scene 14

(The Hotel de Ville. Music of the court is heard. Preparations for the ball. The QUEEN waits nervously in her room. MME. DE CHEVREUSE enters from the ballroom, CONSTANCE from the outside.)

CONSTANCE. *(Bowing:)* Your Majesty.

DE CHEVREUSE. *(Rushing to her:)* Have you any word from Monsieur D'Artagnan?

CONSTANCE. No Madame. I am beginning to doubt that he has survived his journey.

QUEEN. Constance, we must have faith.

DE CHEVREUSE. The King has arrived, your Majesty, and has sent for you.

CONSTANCE. Forgive me, my Queen, I fear I have failed you.

QUEEN. Go my dear and continue to watch for Monsieur D'Artagnan. *(CONSTANCE exits.)* Mme. de Chevreuse, find a way to delay the King a little longer.

(The QUEEN and DE CHEVREUSE exit as the KING and the CARDINAL appear in the ballroom.)

KING. Here I am, all dressed up and ready to dance the Merlaison, but it seems I have no partner! *(Beat.)* And I am the King of France!

CARDINAL. Be patient, your Majesty.

(MME. DE CHEVREUSE enters.)

DE CHEVREUSE. Your Majesty.

KING. You. Again. Well? Where is my Queen?

DE CHEVREUSE. Her Majesty apologizes, Sire. She is attending to her costume.

KING. Is she? Well, well. Should she ever wish to attend me, tell her I am impatiently waiting.

DE CHEVREUSE. Yes, your Majesty.

(DE CHEVREUSE exits.)

KING. Well Cardinal, what shall we do now? Believe me, I shall be most disappointed to spend the rest of the evening with you.

CARDINAL. I understand, your Majesty. But perhaps I can offer a diversion. I have a gift for you, which you will find most amusing. *(He hands the KING a small jewel box.)*

KING. Are you sure? (*Opening the box:*) Two diamonds? These are very like the jewels you insisted I insist appear upon my Queen. Whatever does this mean?

CARDINAL. Nothing, Sire. I only wonder why such valuable jewels have left your wife's possession. If your Queen arrives wearing her diamonds, which I doubt she will, I advise you to count them. When you find but ten, ask her Majesty what she might have done with the other two.

KING. You are most mysterious, Cardinal. No doubt you have your reasons. Come, you may watch me practice my steps while we wait. (*They exit.*)

(We hear the Music for the dance. The GUESTS begin to appear. D'ARTAGNAN enters carrying a mask. Two or three GUARDS pass him. He evades them by using the mask. CONSTANCE, also masked, enters and sees him. She watches the GUARDS pass, then comes forward.)

CONSTANCE. D'Artagnan!

D'ARTAGNAN. Forgive my delay, it was a difficult journey. (*He presents the jewels.*) For the Queen.

CONSTANCE. Her Majesty will be forever grateful. And so am I.

(CONSTANCE rushes off. ROCHEFORT and MILADY enter, joining the other guests as well as the CARDINAL. The masked D'ARTAGNAN stands to the side. The KING enters to fanfare.)

(There is an uncomfortable pause as they all await the Queen's entrance. The KING is beginning to lose patience when the QUEEN finally enters, splendid in her costume, the diamonds quite visible. DE CHEVREUSE follows the QUEEN.)

(The KING and QUEEN dance, with everyone watching. As they dance, the KING is less than graceful as he tries to count the jewels. Every time he almost has it, the QUEEN moves or twirls.)

KING. Madame, please, must you be so wild?

QUEEN. Forgive me, your Majesty.

(They continue the dance until the KING, thinking he has counted only ten, petulantly stops the dance mid-music.)

KING. Stop! I thank you, Madame, for the deference you have paid me by wearing your diamonds. But I announce that you have lost two of your jewels. Allow me to return them to you. (*He gives her the diamonds.*)

QUEEN. My dear Sire, why do you give me these two diamonds? Your gift is most generous, for now I have fourteen! *(She clearly reveals all the jewels.)*

(The KING is bewildered. He counts the jewels again.)

KING. Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit, neuf, dix, onze, douze. *(Looks to the CARDINAL.)* Onze. Douze. What does this mean, Cardinal?

CARDINAL. It means...Sire...that I wished to give her Majesty two beautiful jewels, but not daring to offer them myself, I have adopted this indirect method instead.

QUEEN. I am always grateful for the Cardinal's devotion. And I am certain that these two diamonds have cost you much more than the other twelve cost his Majesty. Come, your Majesty, let us go in to dinner.

(The guests, bewildered, laugh at the "joke." The CARDINAL stews. The KING, who is still confused, exits with the QUEEN, followed by all. The CARDINAL stops ROCHEFORT from exiting.)

CARDINAL. Rochefort! Explain yourself!

ROCHEFORT. Your Eminence, it was D'Artagnan, that young Gascon, who brought the diamonds back from Buckingham.

CARDINAL. We have been beaten. Let us have our revenge.

ROCHEFORT. Shall I have my men arrest him?

CARDINAL. No. He is resourceful. France has need for men like that. But seize the dressmaker. The boy is in love with her. Her disappearance will teach him the consequence of provoking my displeasure. *(Exits.)*

(As ROCHEFORT is about to leave, he sees D'ARTAGNAN and CONSTANCE enter. Hidden, he overhears the following conversation:)

CONSTANCE. D'Artagnan. You have saved the Queen! She wishes you to accept this gift. *(She gives him a ring.)*

D'ARTAGNAN. But I have done this not only for the Queen.

CONSTANCE. I know. I must go. But if you will, meet me here, when the clock strikes two. Then we may be alone.

D'ARTAGNAN. I am the happiest of men!

(CONSTANCE exits. ROCHEFORT follows her off.)

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Alone, contemplating his fortune:*) I have performed my brilliant action. I have saved the Queen. I am soon to meet with my love. I *should* be the happiest of men. But, what has become of my friends! I owe my life to them. It was I who drew them into this affair, of which they knew neither origin nor aim. And now they lie beaten, senseless, perhaps dead...

(*He sits looking sadly at the ring. ATHOS, PORTHOS, and ARAMIS enter, seemingly from out of nowhere.*)

ATHOS. Beaten senseless, perhaps, but certainly not dead.

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos!

ARAMIS. Why so dour, D'Artagnan? Have you lost your best friends?

PORTHOS. Did you desert them on the road, leave them bleeding like slabs of old mutton?

D'ARTAGNAN. Porthos! Aramis!

ARAMIS. You may have thought you were rid of us, D'Artagnan, but we are not that easily dislodged.

D'ARTAGNAN. I am overjoyed to see you. You are alive!

ATHOS. Unfortunately, I am.

D'ARTAGNAN. How did you all survive?

PORTHOS. Aramis hid five nights in a monastery, surviving on nothing but legumes.

ARAMIS. Porthos ate every last scrap of food in the Golden Lily, then lounged in bed and was waited upon like a pasha.

D'ARTAGNAN. And you, Athos?

ATHOS. I do not truly remember. Oh yes... (*Changing the subject:*) And how about you? Did your cause meet with success?

D'ARTAGNAN. I did not fail.

ARAMIS. You saved the honor of her Majesty!

ATHOS. My young friend, this is the kind of brilliant action that will admit you to the Musketeers.

D'ARTAGNAN. Is that true? This is extraordinary! I have done everything a man could want! My friends are safely home again! And now I wait to meet my lady, the first lady I have ever loved.

(*Bell strikes two. ROCHEFORT enters.*)

ROCHEFORT. Good evening, gentlemen. I can see you are celebrating. Unfortunately, I need to inform you that your lady will not be keeping her appointment tonight. I'm afraid she has other plans.

D'ARTAGNAN. What do you mean? What have you done?

ROCHEFORT. Let us say that the Cardinal will be finding her a new lodging. You have underestimated the wrath of a very powerful man.

D'ARTAGNAN. I will kill you, Rochefort! *(He tries to get at him, but the other MUSKETEERS hold him back.)*

PORTHOS. D'Artagnan.

ATHOS. My friend.

ARAMIS. This is not the time.

(ROCHEFORT and his men exit. D'ARTAGNAN falls to his knees.)

D'ARTAGNAN. My heart! My soul! Constance!

(The MUSKETEERS look to one another and then to their young friend as the lights fade to black.)

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene 1

(Music and lights reveal a brief, formal ceremony. PORTHOS, ARAMIS, and ATHOS watch as D'ARTAGNAN becomes a Musketeer, receiving his tabard and plumed hat from TRÉVILLE. They exit.)

(Milady's apartment. MILADY is at her dressing table. ROCHEFORT finishes dressing. She restores a dagger to the sheath concealed in her corset.)

ROCHEFORT. Such terrible weapons for such a tender soul.

MILADY. What else do you want from me?

ROCHEFORT. His Eminence is displeased. Our task of retrieving the Queen's diamonds had a rather pathetic outcome.

MILADY. That was not my fault.

ROCHEFORT. No. You were outwitted by a dressmaker and her Musketeer.

MILADY. As were you. What more does the Cardinal want from me? If the great man is disappointed, let him take care of this himself.

ROCHEFORT. Richelieu has already imprisoned Constance Bonacieux, but he will not move against the boy. He would rather keep an eye on him. His Eminence requests that you become involved.

MILADY. With a Musketeer?

ROCHEFORT. His name is D'Artagnan. Find out what he knows. Turn his head. He fancies himself a hero. He should have an easy head to turn.

MILADY. And what about the dressmaker?

ROCHEFORT. There is no need to worry about Madame Bonacieux. So, shall I tell his Eminence that you wish to restore your credit with him?

MILADY. Will the Cardinal ever be satisfied? This is not a convenient time, Rochefort.

ROCHEFORT. Ah yes, the Count de Wardes. Marriage to a rich dimwit would solve all your problems.

MILADY. How long must I stay in service to the Cardinal? Even I have only so many lives.

ROCHEFORT. Is it wise to bet your next one on de Wardes? I haven't seen the Count lately. I think he has forgotten you. Or perhaps he has found out...

(KITTY enters.)

KITTY. Madame? I'm sorry to disturb. May I enter?

MILADY. Of course, Kitty. How else to you expect to wait on me?

KITTY. I'm sorry. I thought you might not...forgive me, Milady.

MILADY. Speak, girl!

KITTY. It's a letter. Pardon me. I'm so sorry...

(ROCHEFORT grabs the letter.)

ROCHEFORT. It is from your Count de Wardes. Perhaps he's not so dimwitted after all. (*He opens the letter.*) He's indisposed this afternoon, but he's available at night if you wish to offer something more.

MILADY. (*To KITTY:*) Get out, you idiot.

(KITTY exits.)

ROCHEFORT. (*Exiting:*) I shall tell his Eminence how delighted you are to remain in his service. As always, it is a pleasure doing business with you.

(MILADY exits.)

Scene 2

(*The Musketeer Academy. The restless MUSKETEERS amuse themselves with reading, cards, etc. ATHOS is drinking. PORTHOS is eating. D'ARTAGNAN is agitated. ARAMIS is missing.*)

MUSKETEER 1. It has been three weeks now and still no word if we shall go to war. If we are forced to wait much longer, the enemy need not fear—boredom will have ravaged us.

MUSKETEER 2. What do you say, Athos?

MUSKETEER 1. Yes, what is your wager Athos? I'll bet you fifty pistoles that we will be sent to war.

PORTHOS. Everyone knows we will march as soon as Buckingham enters the fray.

ATHOS. I'll wager fifty pistoles we will not be sent to war.

MUSKETEER 1. Athos, I have only ten...

MUSKETEER 2. I will loan you the rest. This is a wager you cannot lose.

ATHOS. Gentlemen?

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos, why would you make such a bet? It is almost certain that we will go to war.

ATHOS. War has nothing to do with it. I enjoy the probability.

D'ARTAGNAN. I cannot bear this waiting. The woman I love is in trouble. I have tried at least a dozen times to find her. Constance is lost.

ATHOS. If your mistress is lost, so much the worse for her. Let her get herself found again.

PORTHOS. To lose your lady is one thing, D'Artagnan, but to have her carted off like an overflowing basket, that is quite a different story.

D'ARTAGNAN. Where is Aramis? I need a man who appreciates my heart.

PORTHOS. I think Aramis is off writing poetry. He has published several volumes, one inspired by my bravery...

ATHOS. Inspired by your gluttony...

D'ARTAGNAN. Aramis must return soon. Who could stay away, knowing that we may soon engage in war.

PORTHOS. I shall dazzle the enemy. Very shortly, I shall have five hundred pistoles and a Spanish charger with plumes.

D'ARTAGNAN. How will you manage, Porthos?

PORTHOS. I have a patroness, my young fellow. My duchess has promised to furnish me in splendor.

D'ARTAGNAN. Is she young and beautiful?

PORTHOS. She is a delicate flower. And she loves me.

(TRÉVILLE enters. The MUSKETEERS gather.)

TRÉVILLE. Gentlemen. I've just received word that the Duke of Buckingham has sent aid to the Protestant rebels at La Rochelle. In response, the King orders us to lay siege. Both Musketeers and Cardinal's Guards will be fighting against the rebels, so you will lay aside your former rivalries. You have fourteen days to outfit yourselves for war!

PORTHOS. Fourteen days? How am I to furnish myself in so short a time?

D'ARTAGNAN. What about your duchess?

(TRÉVILLE *moves towards D'ARTAGNAN and PORTHOS.*)

TRÉVILLE. D'Artagnan, Aramis is in the prayer chapel in the Church of St. Augustine. Go and tell him news of the campaign. The Queen has assured me the crown depends on every man. Give him this letter.

D'ARTAGNAN. The Queen? Did you go to the Louvre? Did the Queen tell you anything about Constance?

TRÉVILLE. Her Majesty knows where Madame Bonacieux is being held. Keep your head. The Queen will free your lady and send her away from Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN. Why did you not tell me before? Who will rescue her? Why cannot I...

TRÉVILLE. The Cardinal has his eye on you, D'Artagnan. You are not to interfere. That is an order! Find Aramis. Go!

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, Captain. (TRÉVILLE *exits.*) Athos, are you not coming with us?

ATHOS. I am not in a church-going mood.

D'ARTAGNAN. Shall I find you later?

ATHOS. Who knows? Perhaps I can still seek out one last quarrel with a dozen Cardinal's Guards. Then I would die in the King's service, without having to furnish myself for this war.

D'ARTAGNAN. My dear friend...

PORTHOS. There's no talking to him when he's like this. Let us go.

(PORTHOS *and D'ARTAGNAN look after ATHOS as he leaves them. PORTHOS and D'ARTAGNAN exit as ARAMIS enters with a prayer book.*)

Scene 3

(*Lights up on ARAMIS crossing the stage.*)

ARAMIS. Misereatur nostri omnipotens Deus et, dimissis peccatis nostris, perducatur nos ad vitam aeternam. Amen.* (He *exits.*)

* Translation: May Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

(A church. MILADY and KITTY enter. They stop to cross themselves with holy water. D'ARTAGNAN, PORTHOS, and PLANCHET enter. The ladies admire D'ARTAGNAN, but he does not see them and exits looking for ARAMIS. PORTHOS believes the ladies are admiring him. He bows. MILADY and KITTY quickly go into a chapel.)

(MADAME COQUENARD, Porthos's middle-class mistress, enters. She is older and far less glamorous than we have been led to believe. She waves to PORTHOS as D'ARTAGNAN re-enters.)

COQUENARD. *(Waving:)* Porthos! Porthos!

D'ARTAGNAN. Porthos, I think that lady is a friend of yours.

PORTHOS. What lady? No, no. She's a stranger, admiring my figure from afar, no doubt. Women flock to me, boy.

D'ARTAGNAN. Take care, Porthos. She's flocking to you now. This way, Planchet.

(D'ARTAGNAN and PLANCHET exit to continue their search as COQUENARD intercepts PORTHOS. PORTHOS makes certain his friends are gone.)

COQUENARD. Porthos, my angel! How I have missed you, my love!

PORTHOS. Madame Coquenard? Is it you?

COQUENARD. Of course it's me. Porthos! Are you angry with me?

PORTHOS. I appealed to you, Madame, and you have abandoned me. You scorned my request for 500 pistoles. Go home to your husband, the attorney.

COQUENARD. Oh Porthos!

PORTHOS. You do not care that I will soon be off to war.

COQUENARD. You are going off to war?

PORTHOS. It is likely I will not survive. And you will never know for certain.

COQUENARD. Why is that?

PORTHOS. In my pitiful apparel, they shall take my corpse for that of a bellows maker.

COQUENARD. Do not talk of corpses, darling.

PORTHOS. I must speak of such things, since we may never see one another again. Take your farewell, my love. Think of me in a pauper's grave at La Rochelle.

COQUENARD. Porthos, my knight, my happiness, I will not send you to the front like a beggar! One of my husband's clients owns a tannery. I'm sure I can get a good bargain.

PORTHOS. She talks of bargains for a magnificent soldier like me. What shall I do?

COQUENARD. You could come to my house and talk it over. My husband is engaged, and perhaps I could open the strong-box.

PORTHOS. Could you, my angel? Shall we go right now?

COQUENARD. Come, light of my life. Oh Porthos, I could never exist without you.

(D'ARTAGNAN and PLANCHET have re-entered and observed part of this scene. Embarrassed, PORTHOS hurries off. PLANCHET and D'ARTAGNAN look at one another.)

D'ARTAGNAN. *(Referring to COQUENARD:)* This is something we must keep to ourselves.

PLANCHET. Absolutely, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. Search for Aramis in the far chapel. I'll look here.

(PLANCHET exits. As D'ARTAGNAN starts off, ARAMIS enters, still reading scriptures.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Aramis?

ARAMIS. D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. Aramis, are you all right? You look pale.

ARAMIS. I have been fasting. I live on nothing but bread and water. *(He prays.)*

D'ARTAGNAN. I come from M. de Tréville with important news. In two weeks time we fight the Huguenot rebels at La Rochelle.

ARAMIS. Vanitas vanitatum. At one time I may have been carried away by such folly, but now, with the help of God, I am to become a Jesuit.

D'ARTAGNAN. Aramis. You cannot enter the church now!

ARAMIS. I do not enter the church, I reenter it!

D'ARTAGNAN. I do not understand.

ARAMIS. Once I was set to join the Jesuit order, but Fate intervened.

D'ARTAGNAN. What happened?

ARAMIS. When I was at seminary I tutored a lady, a beautiful lady. One night her suitor, a jealous captain, lay in wait for me as I left her

house. He caught me by the arm and threatened, "Never return to this place, you pious altar boy. If you do, I will whip you, precisely the way I whip my dog." He laughed, then turned and walked away.

D'ARTAGAN. What did you do?

ARAMIS. I was so overcome by this insult, I left the seminary, abandoned my studies, and moved to Paris where I trained with the best fencing masters. On the anniversary of that insult, I sought the captain out and challenged him. I said, "Remember me? Would you still like to whip me like you whip your dog?" We drew our swords and, with the first pass, I struck him dead. *(Pause.)* Passion and vanity betrayed me, D'Artagnan. I gave up the cassock. But now, I am determined to return to the bosom of the church.

D'ARTAGNAN. Forgive me, Aramis, I meant no disrespect. Oh, before I forget, I have a letter for you.

ARAMIS. A letter?

D'ARTAGNAN. I suppose it arrived in your absence.

ARAMIS. Who is it from?

D'ARTAGNAN. I only know it comes from the Louvre.

ARAMIS. D'Artagnan, let me see the letter!

D'ARTAGNAN. If only I can find it.

ARAMIS. Have you misplaced it?

D'ARTAGNAN. I had it right here.

ARAMIS. D'ARTAGNAN! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE LETTER!

D'ARTAGNAN. Here it is.

(ARAMIS reads.)

ARAMIS. Oh. Divine dreams! Ohhhh! She has forgiven me at last. She puts no trust in gossip. She won't believe what other women say. My happiness suffocates me! *(Pause.)* I'm starving! Let's go to The Pineapple. We will ask for a larded hare, fat spiced sausages, a rack of mutton.

(They start to leave as MILADY and KITTY enter. MILADY pauses, watching D'ARTAGNAN.)

Come, my friend, tell me what has been going on in the world!

D'ARTAGNAN. Furnish our table. I will find Planchet and join you very soon.

(ARAMIS exits. MILADY swoons as D'ARTAGNAN begins to exit. He and KITTY rush to help her. D'Artagnan's hat falls off.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Madame! Take my arm!

MILADY. Thank you. Thank you, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. Are you all right?

MILADY. I am still a little faint.

D'ARTAGNAN. Lean on me. What may I do to offer you assistance?

MILADY. It would be helpful if you would remain here for just a moment. Kitty, I will be all right.

(KITTY moves aside and picks up D'Artagnan's hat, holding it admiringly.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Of course. I will not leave your side until you are completely recovered.

MILADY. You are very kind. I had been praying for someone... someone who is gone.

D'ARTAGNAN. You have lost someone?

MILADY. Someone I love.

D'ARTAGNAN. How remarkable. I suffer the same kind of loss.

MILADY. Yes. I can see the grief in your eyes. It is a lonely plight, is it not?

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes it is.

MILADY. I am so grateful to you, Monsieur. If I might repay your kindness with an invitation, I entertain society most every evening—Number 6, the Place Royale. Do come and visit me.

D'ARTAGNAN. That would be an honor.

MILADY. I thank you again. Come, Kitty, let us go. (*Exit.*)

(KITTY is as taken with D'ARTAGNAN as he is with MILADY.)

KITTY. (*She returns the hat.*) Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. Your name is Kitty?

KITTY. Yes Monsieur...

D'ARTAGNAN. (*Bows.*) D'Artagnan. Would you kindly tell me the name of your lady, Kitty?

KITTY. The Countess de Winter, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. A Countess no less.

KITTY. You may accept her invitation, Monsieur. (*Shyly, but invitingly:*) However, should you arrive earlier in the day, you may be admitted by me, around the side, at the pantry door.

(KITTY exits. PLANCHET, who has overheard the end of the scene, joins D'ARTAGNAN.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet, how does one find one's way to the Place Royale?

PLANCHET. (*Questioning the implications:*) What exactly are you asking?

(D'ARTAGNAN exits and PLANCHET follows.)

Oh Monsieur!

Scene 4

(*As the set changes, lights up on MME. DE CHEVREUSE singing to ARAMIS.*)

DE CHEVREUSE.

BEAUTY THAT HAS MY LIFE
HELD CAPTIVE IN YOUR EYES.
YOU HAVE REVIVED MY SOUL
WITH SMILING GRACIOUS SIGHS.
COME SOON, COME TO ME SOON,
HELP ME OR I MUST DIE.

(DE CHEVREUSE and ARAMIS exit.)

(*Outside Athos' rooms. PLANCHET and D'ARTAGNAN enter. D'ARTAGNAN seems different. He has begun to see himself as a man of the world.*)

PLANCHET. If I may speak, Monsieur, you have less than eight days left to gather your military wares, not to mention the needs of your most resourceful servant...

D'ARTAGNAN. I have been busy with other matters.

PLANCHET. I know. You have visited the Countess every evening. If you don't mind my saying so, Monsieur, a Musketeer should be a man of action, not a man of pleasure.

D'ARTAGNAN. I think he may be both, Planchet. (*Calling out:*) Athos! Athos, where have you been? Open up.

(ATHOS shows himself. He is very drunk and stumbles out to greet D'ARTAGNAN. He carries a bottle and a glass.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos! Are you wounded?

ATHOS. I'm drunk. (*Pouring more wine;*) Planchet, go down to my cellar. (*Giving him a key;*) Bring us each a bottle.

PLANCHET. I'll see if there is anything left.

ATHOS. Good man!

(*PLANCHET exits.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos, my philosopher! I need some advice.

ATHOS. My advice is never clearer than when I am in my cups. Are you still in despair over the Queen's dressmaker? Or is it now a Countess? Porthos is not the man to tell your secrets to, my boy.

D'ARTAGNAN. I still wish to rescue Constance.

ATHOS. To rescue one woman, you make love to another. It is the longest way, but by far the most amusing.

D'ARTAGNAN. I have not made love to the Countess. But I am... fascinated, Athos. She is a woman of great beauty and wit. She invites me to her apartments, alongside counts and lords—amidst all these well-heeled gentlemen, she singles me out for conversation. I think she is beginning to admire me!

ATHOS. There is not a man who does not think his mistress admires him, and there is not a man who has not been deceived by his mistress!

D'ARTAGNAN. Except you, who never had one.

ATHOS. I wonder what you would say if I were to tell you a love story.

D'ARTAGNAN. About yourself?

(*Pause.*)

ATHOS. Or a friend...what matters?

D'ARTAGNAN. Tell me, Athos.

ATHOS. This is a story of a friend, a nobleman, who lived in my province. A nobleman who, when young, became enamored of a girl. Her soul seemed not to belong to any earthly creature, but to an angel. She was far beneath his station, and my friend, as the Lord of the estate, might have chosen to seduce her or even seize upon her by force. But he was a man of honor, so against all advice he married her. He gave her his title, his lands, his love. Oh, how he loved her. They had only been married three days when, while hunting together, she fell from her horse and fainted. The count flew to her

side and loosened her clothes so that she might breathe more easily. He was struck by the beauty of her shoulder he had never seen bare in the daylight. And then he saw, in sharp contrast to the white of her skin, a mark—a mark branded only on the most despicable criminals: a fleur-de-lis!

D'ARTAGNAN. What did he do?

ATHOS. I do not remember. Let us only hope that she is lucky enough to be dead. *(Pause.)* That story cured me of loving women. May God grant as much to you! *(He offers more wine.)*

D'ARTAGNAN. Forgive me, Athos. I cannot drink anymore.

ATHOS. Young men nowadays do not know how to stand their drink. Planchet, more wine!

(ATHOS passes out as PLANCHET enters. He and D'ARTAGNAN assist ATHOS as they exit.)

Scene 5

(Lights up on MILADY alone, completing a letter she has written. She is dressed for bed.)

MILADY. *(Reading:)* Dear Count de Wardes: You sent no answer to my previous inquiries and I fear all is not well. Take this last opportunity, Count. If your intentions are honorable, you may come to my darkened rooms tonight. My curtains will be drawn, but my maid will admit you. *(Calling:)* Kitty!

(The light opens to reveal KITTY standing near by.)

Deliver this to the Count at once, and when he arrives darken the chambers.

(KITTY and MILADY exit separately.)

(A room outside Milady's chambers. D'ARTAGNAN enters and looks about for someone. A nervous KITTY enters. She is shocked to find D'ARTAGNAN.)

KITTY. Monsieur D'Artagnan!!!

D'ARTAGNAN. Good evening, Kitty, my beauty. How is your lady this evening?

KITTY. D'Artagnan, you must go. Milady is not receiving tonight.

D'ARTAGNAN. She will see me. She has to see me. Tell her I am here.

KITTY. You leave with the regiments tomorrow, do you not?

D'ARTAGNAN. That is why I must see your lady tonight!

KITTY. Then I am resolved to tell you the truth. My mistress does not care for you at all.

D'ARTAGNAN. Did she ask you to tell me so?

KITTY. No, but this morning she sent me to deliver a letter inviting the Count de Wardes to her darkened chambers. Tonight. That is why she is not receiving. She awaits his arrival even now.

D'ARTAGNAN. The Count de Wardes?

KITTY. I took the letter to the Count but he has made no reply. (*She looks anxiously towards the chamber door.*) I am afraid to tell her so. She... dislikes disappointment.

D'ARTAGNAN. The Count de Wardes! That is the man I cut to pieces at Calais. No wonder he has not sent an answer. (*Furious:*) She limits me to mere conversation, while she invites this invalid to her darkened bedchamber!

KITTY. You must take care.

D'ARTAGNAN. Help me, Kitty.

KITTY. I cannot.

D'ARTAGNAN. But you must.

KITTY. No, Monsieur. In love, we must all help ourselves.

D'ARTAGNAN. So I shall. Her room is completely dark?

KITTY. (*Bewildered:*) Yes, Monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN. Go tell your lady that the Count de Wardes is here.

KITTY. But he is not... Oh, my mistress will destroy me.

D'ARTAGNAN. Your mistress will reward you.

MILADY. (*Offstage:*) Kitty? Is someone there?

D'ARTAGNAN. Tell her it's the Count.

KITTY. I will not!

MILADY. Kitty? Has the Count arrived?

D'ARTAGNAN. Tell her. Send me in.

KITTY. Do not do this. She will have a terrible revenge.

D'ARTAGNAN. I would be a fool to turn back now.

KITTY. (*Reluctantly goes to the door and knocks.*) Madame...the Count de Wardes.

D'ARTAGNAN. All gray cats look alike in the dark.

(D'ARTAGNAN enters Milady's chamber.)

(The lights shift and focus on KITTY alone. She sits.)

KITTY. Men are such fools. A man willingly blinds himself to a woman's faults, provided she wears expensive gowns. And yet if the same man were to encounter a woman of lower status who was modest, humble and intelligent, he would regard her as completely unworthy of his attentions. (She exits.)

(Dawn. The lights come up as D'ARTAGNAN is sneaking out of Milady's chambers, quickly dressing.)

MILADY. (Offstage:) Kitty? Are you awake? Come help me dress, girl... (Enters in a dressing gown.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Milady...

MILADY. M. D'Artagnan. Where is Kitty? Have you let yourself in? Why are you here?

D'ARTAGNAN. Well, I...

MILADY. Never mind. I'm delighted to see you. (Calling:) Kitty!

D'ARTAGNAN. Why thank you, Milady, but I see... (He indicates her robe, bows and tries to leave.)

MILADY. Oh. Excuse my state of dress... and stay. Come, sit down. (They sit.) D'Artagnan. I've so enjoyed your company over the last two weeks. I shall miss you when you go to La Rochelle.

D'ARTAGNAN. You are in fine spirits, Milady.

MILADY. Yes, I am. (Pause.) Now why have you called so early? I assume you have something to say to me before you leave.

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes. Yes, I do. (Haltingly:) There is a question I must ask you before I leave Paris. (Beat.) Could you, Countess, though I am only a soldier, one day find me deserving of your love?

MILADY. Your presence here has been proof of that.

D'ARTAGNAN. Yes, of course. (Pause.) But what about the Count de Wardes?

MILADY. Why do you speak of him? He is a gentleman.

D'ARTAGNAN. You had a visit from the Count last night, did you not?

MILADY. How would you know that?

D'ARTAGNAN. I know more than you could possibly imagine.

MILADY. This is no business of yours.

D'ARTAGNAN. But it is! I have to tell you the truth and make things right. The de Wardes of last night and the D'Artagnan of today are one and the same person.

(He touches her. She realizes he is telling the truth.)

MILADY. You dishonorable wretch!

(She slaps him and starts to leave. He grabs her, accidentally pulling the gown off her shoulder. He sees the brand.)

D'ARTAGNAN. A fleur-de-lis!

MILADY. You villain. You will die for this! *(She pulls out her dagger.)*

(FIGHT. MILADY is fierce and takes advantage of D'ARTAGNAN's reluctance to fight a lady.)

(KITTY suddenly appears and goes to the aid of D'ARTAGNAN. They manage to seize MILADY and lock her in her room.)

MILADY. *(Offstage:)* I will destroy you, D'Artagnan!

KITTY. She will kill me, too, Monsieur. What shall I do?

D'ARTAGNAN. You must never return to this place. I will help you escape. I fear she will kill us all.

(D'ARTAGNAN and KITTY exit.)

Scene 6

(The Musketeer Academy. Preparing for war. TRÉVILLE and two MUSKETEERS stand in a light executing the musket-firing drill.)

(The drill is a background throughout the scene with music or sound accompanying the commands. The drill builds to the final moment of the scene.)

TRÉVILLE. Order your musket! Port your musket! Prime your musket!

(Lights out on TRÉVILLE and up on ATHOS and D'ARTAGNAN.)

D'ARTAGNAN. She calls herself the Countess de Winter, but I do not know if that is her real name.

ATHOS. She cannot be alive! Are you sure it is the same woman?

D'ARTAGNAN. I saw the fleur-de-lis on her left shoulder.

ATHOS. She has returned to haunt me. I must see her. (*He starts to go, D'ARTAGNAN stops him.*)

D'ARTAGNAN. Why? What will you do?

ATHOS. Let me go!

D'ARTAGNAN. Athos, take care. You once wished to kill her; she is a woman who would willingly pay you back.

ATHOS. Do you suppose for an instant that I am anxious to live?

D'ARTAGNAN. Oh Athos, let her vent her hatred on me alone.

ATHOS. No, D'Artagnan. There is more to this than you know.

D'ARTAGNAN. Happily we march today for La Rochelle.

ATHOS. For your sake, D'Artagnan, I will not leave you. And upon my life, she will not do you harm.

D'ARTAGNAN. At least when we are at war we shall only have men to fear.

(Lights up on TRÉVILLE.)

TRÉVILLE. Cast about your musket! Place the charge! Set the wadding! Remove your scouring stick!

(Lights out on TRÉVILLE and up on PORTHOS and COQUENARD.)

COQUENARD. You make a handsome impression, my angel. I have brought you a capon.

PORTHOS. It smells most alluring.

COQUENARD. One of our clients is a poultry dealer. (*She wails.*) Oh Porthos, my love.

PORTHOS. Now, now, my dear Madame. You too must be brave. If your courage should waver, just think of me, riding high on my fine Spanish charger, majestically plumed.

(Lights out on PORTHOS and COQUENARD and up on TRÉVILLE.)

TRÉVILLE. Order your musket! Port you musket! Blow upon the coals!

(Lights out on TRÉVILLE as ARAMIS and DE CHEVREUSE escort a hooded CONSTANCE to D'ARTAGNAN.)

CONSTANCE. D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. Constance.

CONSTANCE. My friend.

D'ARTAGNAN. Forgive me.

CONSTANCE. Forgive you, D'Artagnan?

D'ARTAGNAN. Constance. How did you get here?

DE CHEVREUSE. (*Stepping forward:*) She has been secreted out of the Cardinal's jail near Chartres. There is still much danger.

D'ARTAGNAN. Where will you take her?

DE CHEVREUSE. She will be kept safe in a Carmelite convent at Bethune, near the border of Flanders. When the war is over, come for her.

D'ARTAGNAN. I promise to be worthy.

CONSTANCE. Of course you will.

DE CHEVREUSE. There is no more time, Madame. We must go.

CONSTANCE. Protect yourself, D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. Farewell, my soul.

(CONSTANCE and DE CHEVREUSE exit. Lights up on TRÉVILLE. D'ARTAGNAN is joined by his three friends. The four MUSKETEERS join TRÉVILLE and the company of MUSKETEERS as the music swells.)

TRÉVILLE. Open your pan! Prepare to give fire! Take aim! GIVE FIRE!

(The MUSKETEERS charge forward, swords drawn as we hear the sound of cannon fire. They all exit.)

Scene 7

(La Rochelle. The CARDINAL is with the KING, who is looking through a spy glass.)

CARDINAL. Enjoy your first taste of victory, your Majesty. Both my Guards and your Musketeers fighting to fortify France. History will celebrate your reputation as a brilliant military strategist.

KING. Just so. And what, my field marshal, shall be my next course of action?

CARDINAL. I think it would be prudent for you to return to Paris.

KING. And you?

CARDINAL. I will remain here, lodged at the Dove Cot. I will see to it that La Rochelle is surrounded and blockaded. The Duke of Buckingham must be taught a lesson, don't you agree, for meddling in French affairs.

KING. Oh, absolutely.

CARDINAL. While Buckingham musters reinforcements, I will starve the Huguenots into submission.

KING. Starve them? My own people?

CARDINAL. I beg you to remember they are rebels, Sire. What else would you have me do?

(They exit.)

Scene 8

(The Dove-Cot Inn, near La Rochelle. Two rooms: a public tavern and the private chamber above it. There is a stovepipe descending from the upper chamber into the tavern below.)

(Lights up on a barmaid serving TRÉVILLE, the MUSKETEERS, and GUARDSMEN. United by war, the men drink together. A very drunk PORTHOS launches into a drinking song.)

ALL. *(Singing:)*

TOSS THE POT AGAIN, BOYS!

TOSS THE POT AGAIN!

WE'LL FILL THE CUP TILL WE BE DRUNK

AND THEN WE'LL DRINK SOME MORE. *(Repeat.)*

TRÉVILLE. Musketeers! Guards! Let us all drink a toast to D'Artagnan! This morning, he led four men behind enemy lines to the bastion of St. Gervais. They shoved a barrel of gunpowder under the battlement and sent a dozen rebels somersaulting through the air. To D'Artagnan!

GUARDS. To D'Artagnan!

D'ARTAGNAN. To Captain de Tréville!

GUARDS. Long live the Musketeers!

MUSKETEERS. Long live the Cardinal's Guard!

ATHOS. More wine! Drink for all!

BISCARRAT. *(A CARDINAL'S GUARD, sloppy drunk:)* To the honorable Porthos, to whom I owe my life. There was an entire English regiment... Dare I tell the story, Porthos.

PORTHOS. Seize your moment! Speak!

BISCARRAT. There were twenty—

PORTHOS. (*Seizing the story from BISCARRAT:*) Thirty English and twelve Huguenot rebels advanced against fifteen of the Cardinal's Guards! I witnessed this genius, this valiant giant, single-handedly holding off four of Buckingham's boys. Like Pompey the Great, he entered the fray. He cocked his musket...

GUARD 1. And that was when Porthos arrived! Had he not assisted us, we would have met our makers.

ALL. To Porthos!

BISCARRAT. You saved my life, Porthos.

PORTHOS. 'Twas nothing.

BISCARRAT. You saved the life of my servant!

PORTHOS. 'Twas nothing.

BISCARRAT. You saved the life of my horse.

PORTHOS. 'Twas nothing.

BISCARRAT. And to think, I once thought you a buffoon.

PORTHOS. 'Twas...how's that?

GUARD 2. A great buffoon. How we once mocked you, Porthos!

PORTHOS. Mocked me?

GUARD 1. Admit it, Porthos. You are an over-inflated rogue.

PORTHOS. A what?

BISCARRAT. A roaring, ale-swilling, corpulent bag of wind.

PORTHOS. (*Calmly:*) And what are you, you Cardinal's dupe, you rank-smelling ruffian, you lily-livered coward!

BISCARRAT. What did you call me?

PORTHOS. Coward! I called you a coward!

BISCARRAT. You have gone too far. Remove yourself from the Dove-Cot...this is the Cardinal's tavern...you...you...Musketeer!

PORTHOS. Now you have insulted me!

(They threaten to fight. TRÉVILLE is torn between defending the MUSKETEERS and keeping the peace.)

TRÉVILLE. Porthos, keep your head!

PORTHOS. If you insist, Captain.

TRÉVILLE. I do.

(FIGHT. This is a humorous drunken brawl. PORTHOS throws his drink at BISCARRAT and suddenly everyone in the inn, including TRÉVILLE and the barmaid, are involved. Just before the fight threatens to get out of hand D'ARTAGNAN and TRÉVILLE, with the help of PLANCHET, break it up.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Enough, men.

TRÉVILLE. HOLD! The next man to draw will answer to me. Out into the air, gentlemen. Clear your heads.

(GUARDS and MUSKETEERS exit.)

TRÉVILLE. On your way. Out you go!

(The barroom is cleared. TRÉVILLE, D'ARTAGNAN, ARAMIS, ATHOS, and PLANCHET remain. PORTHOS has passed out.)

TRÉVILLE. Take care of Porthos. Do not leave him like that. *(Pulling himself together:)* Good night, gentlemen.

(He starts to exit, then stops and turns to D'ARTAGNAN.)

D'Artagnan, you are becoming a soldier of insight as well as courage. Your father will be proud.

D'ARTAGNAN. Thank you, Captain.

(TRÉVILLE exits.)

PLANCHET. Should we not escort M. Porthos on a stroll around the Dove-Cot?

D'ARTAGNAN. We would not want the Cardinal to discover him over breakfast.

ARAMIS. Definitely not.

(PORTHOS mutters incoherently as D'ARTAGNAN and PLANCHET take PORTHOS out. MILADY and CARDINAL RICHELIEU enter above. They stand near the stovepipe. ATHOS, who is near the stovepipe below, overhears their conversation.)

CARDINAL. My dear lady, I know you have had a long journey. I am grateful for your willingness to travel amidst difficulty and danger.

ARAMIS. Who is that?

ATHOS. *(Whispering:)* The Cardinal. It's coming from the stovepipe... Upstairs.

MILADY. Thank you, your Eminence. Have I not always shown fortitude when the Cardinal was in need?

CARDINAL. And have I not always shown appreciation for your diligence, Countess de Winter?

ATHOS. Countess de Winter!

CARDINAL. I want you to set sail for England. I wish to settle this affair with the Duke of Buckingham immediately. You will leave for London tonight. When you arrive, you will seek out the Duke.

MILADY. May I remind your Eminence, that since the affair of the Queen's diamonds, Buckingham detests me. How am I to regain his trust?

CARDINAL. This time, you will present yourself to him as a messenger from the Queen. Tell him the Queen depends on him. He must withdraw all support for the rebels at once.

MILADY. If he will not?

CARDINAL. Then I put my hopes in one of those violent events which change the course of nations.

MILADY. To what exactly does your Eminence allude?

CARDINAL. I merely suggest that some clever, ambitious lady may wish to advance herself while eliminating an enemy. And the Duke is an enemy of France. Do you understand?

MILADY. I do. But now that we have discussed our country's enemies, might the lady be permitted to say a few words concerning hers?

CARDINAL. The lady has enemies?

MILADY. One. Your Eminence knows him. His name is D'Artagnan. Life for life, man for man. Give me the one, and I will give you the other.

CARDINAL. I do not understand what you mean, nor do I wish to do so. (*MILADY turns away.*) However, he is an insignificant creature and I have no objection to giving you the order you demand. (*He writes the carte blanche.*)

ARAMIS. What are they doing?

(*ATHOS gestures for quiet.*)

CARDINAL. If you succeed with Buckingham, you may have D'Artagnan to do with as you please. Here is a carte blanche. It will assist you in your...endeavors. (*He gives her the Carte Blanche.*) Contact

the Count de Rochefort as soon as you return to France. I have no other need of your services. Leave immediately. Farewell. (*He exits.*)

ATHOS. I must see her.

ARAMIS. Athos, what do you intend to do?

(*ATHOS finds his pistol. ARAMIS tries to disarm him.*)

ARAMIS. Be prudent, man!

ATHOS. Leave me be.

(*ARAMIS withdraws but remains in the room. Laying the pistol on the table, ATHOS sits calmly as MILADY comes downstairs.*)

ATHOS. (*Revealing himself to her:*) Do you recognize me, Madame? (*She stops, frozen.*) I can see that you do.

MILADY. Count de la Fère.

ATHOS. Yes, my lady. The Count de la Fère in person, returned from the other world expressly to have the pleasure of seeing you again. I thought I had crushed you, but either I deceived myself or the devil has given you new life.

MILADY. What do you want?

ATHOS. Assassinate the Duke, or cause him to be assassinated—that is of no consequence to me. But if you harm D'Artagnan, that crime will be your last.

MILADY. That boy has cruelly insulted me, and he will die.

ATHOS. Can a creature such as you be insulted? (*Taking up the pistol:*) Madame, you will immediately give me the paper the Cardinal wrote just now, or upon my soul, I will put a bullet in your head. (*He increases the threat.*) You know I will do it.

(*She gives him the letter.*)

MILADY. Take it and be damned. (*She exits.*)

(*PORTHOS reenters with D'ARTAGNAN and PLANCHET. He is sober and alert.*)

PORTHOS. Good morning, gentlemen. I feel like a new babe. Did I miss anything?

(*ATHOS hands the paper to D'ARTAGNAN.*)

ATHOS. Read this, D'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN. "It is by my order, and for the good of the state, that the bearer of this has done what he has done. Signed, Richelieu." What is this?

ATHOS. Your death warrant.

D'ARTAGNAN. What?

ATHOS. She was here.

D'ARTAGNAN. Who?

ATHOS. The Countess de Winter. The Cardinal has sent her to assassinate Buckingham. She bargained with him—the life of the Duke for the right to murder you. That letter is a *carte blanche*, by which she may get rid of you, and perhaps all of us, with impunity.

D'ARTAGNAN. Why did you let her go?

ARAMIS. She is protected by his Eminence.

ATHOS. By taking this paper, I have stolen at least some of her venom.

D'ARTAGNAN. We must destroy this.

ATHOS. On the contrary, it must be scrupulously preserved.

D'ARTAGNAN. I cannot sanction the murder of Buckingham. We must protect anyone that the Queen holds dear. We are Musketeers, are we not?

(They all look to one another.)

D'ARTAGNAN. Aramis, compose a letter warning the Duke of Buckingham. Tell him he must place this woman under arrest so she cannot commit further injury.

ARAMIS. How will this letter make its way to England?

D'ARTAGNAN. Someone must carry it and personally hand it to the Duke.

(PLANCHET steps forward.)

PLANCHET. If you would permit me, *Monsieurs*, I would carry this letter in the lining of my coat...and swallow it if I were taken.

D'ARTAGNAN. No, Planchet. I must be the one to undertake this charge.

ARAMIS. D'Artagnan, you cannot leave the front.

ATHOS. You would risk insubordination. Send Planchet. He is a capable man. *(Giving PLANCHET money:)* Take this, and good luck.

D'ARTAGNAN. Planchet. Be discreet. Be brave.

PLANCHET. I will, you may rely on me.

(The MUSKETEERS exit and the lights focus on PLANCHET alone.)

For if I fail and am taken, I will be quartered; and even if I am quartered, not one piece of me will speak.

Scene 9

(London. Buckingham's palace. FELTON attends. MILADY follows BUCKINGHAM.)

BUCKINGHAM. You may tell your Cardinal that I will not desert the Huguenots at La Rochelle. Should Richelieu wish to negotiate, he must meet with me at the Louvre.

MILADY. My Lord I know that you mistrust me. But perhaps if we could speak alone, as old friends, I could persuade you with a plea from someone closer to your heart.

BUCKINGHAM. What are you trying to say? That the Queen of France trusts her honor to you?

MILADY. Women trust where they have need, my Lord. Dismiss your servant and let us talk in private. *(She places her arm in his.)* The Queen...

(She leans in to whisper to him and there is a moment when he seems once again seduced by her. He embraces her, then takes her firmly by the arm.)

BUCKINGHAM. Felton, take her.

(FELTON holds her.)

MILADY. How dare you!

BUCKINGHAM. Madame, I have been warned that you come here as an assassin. I may do anything I like with you, and what pleases me is to ship you to one of our colonies in America. You will depart in five days. *(MILADY collapses.)* I leave you in the charge of this good man, John Felton. Believe me, Mr. Felton is a devout Puritan. Milady, your charms will have no effect on him.

(MILADY remains with FELTON as BUCKINGHAM starts off. We see PLANCHET who has been concealed throughout the scene. BUCKINGHAM approaches him.)

BUCKINGHAM. You risked your life to save mine, Planchet, and I am indebted to you.

(Offering a ring which PLANCHET reluctantly accepts.)

PLANCHET. I have only performed my duty, my Lord.

BUCKINGHAM. You must return to La Rochelle at once. Tell the young D'Artagnan that all is well.

(They exit as FELTON assists MILADY to her feet.)

FELTON. Countess de Winter. Since you are a woman, I will treat you with the utmost respect. I owe it to myself, if not to you. This way.

MILADY. I am grateful to you, Mr. Felton.

(FELTON begins to lead MILADY off. She turns to him.)

MILADY. Before we go, do you think you would be so good as to find me a bible?

FELTON. *(Bows.)* I will give you mine.

MILADY. *(She falls to her knees and kisses his hand.)* Thank you, good sir.

(FELTON ushers her towards her room. She exits. He remains outside.)

Scene 10

(The lights up on FELTON alone.)

FELTON. We of the Puritan Community must never be lax in our vigil against sin. We must guard against temptation, for the nature of sin is as the nature of a canker or gangrene. It runs from toe to the foot, from foot to the leg, from leg to the thigh till it has wasted and destroyed the life of the body. Even so, if we give sin an entrance it will soon spread over the whole man.

(Buckingham's estate. Milady's room. MILADY is pacing. On hearing FELTON's approach, she falls to her knees praying. FELTON enters.)

MILADY. O Lord, forgive me! Do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For thou, O Lord, art the God of those who repent.

FELTON. I do not wish to disturb one in prayer, Lady de Winter, but you set sail tomorrow. You have hardly taken any nourishment. I insist that you strengthen yourself for the journey.

MILADY. I do not wish to live.

FELTON. God himself condemns suicide.

MILADY. My God has forsaken me!

FELTON. It is blasphemy to blame your faith. I have overheard your prayers and know you are a Huguenot. The Duke of Buckingham has loyally supported our brethren at La Rochelle.

MILADY. Do you think Buckingham truly supports anyone of faith? He merely wants a way to Paris, so that can satisfy his lust for the French Queen.

FELTON. I will not hear your slander.

MILADY. It is not slander. I was one of his first victims. But that was long ago. I would not give up my God. I do not seek justice for myself, but for my brethren. It is they who suffer persecution now. All because of Buckingham.

FELTON. I know you are my sister in faith, but what can I do?

MILADY. What can either of us do? As you are bound by duty, so I am bound by shame.

FELTON. It is no shame to be a victim.

MILADY. I was faithful and innocent and your Duke ruined me. Afterwards, he boasted that I was to continue as his whore. I tried to kill him. In revenge, he called an executioner and had him brand a mark of shame upon my flesh. Look, John Felton. This is what he did to me. *(She reveals the fleur-de-lis.)*

FELTON. *(FELTON covers her shoulder, but continues to hold her.)* I cannot bear this.

MILADY. But what can we do?

FELTON. The Duke must suffer for what he has done. I will secure passage for your safe return to France. Then I will take you to the pier, but I must leave you for a time. I will revenge your shame. Do not fear. God is with us.

MILADY. How can I feel fear, my beloved Felton, with you as my protector.

(They kiss. MILADY and FELTON exit.)

Scene 11

(Paris. Lights up on ROCHEFORT and the CARDINAL.)

ROCHEFORT. Your Grace. From the Countess de Winter. *(Gives him a letter.)*

CARDINAL. "Assure his Eminence that the Duke of Buckingham will no longer trouble France." Can you confirm this?

ROCHEFORT. My spies assure me that the Duke of Buckingham is dead.

CARDINAL. Well, well. "I have left England and am at Calais awaiting further instructions." (*To ROCHEFORT:*) Send word immediately to the Countess that you will meet her at the Carmelite Convent at Bethune, from which you will escort her across the border into Flanders.

ROCHEFORT. Milady—at a convent?

CARDINAL. Oh yes. Express my gratitude to the Countess and make it clear I do not wish to hear from her again.

(Light fades.)

(Bethune. Lights up on CONSTANCE reading a letter.)

CONSTANCE. "My dearest Constance: I pray this letter finds you safe among the Carmelites. The English troops have withdrawn and there are rumors of complete surrender. As soon as this surrender is verified, my friends and I will travel to Bethune to find you.

I promise to see you soon. My love.

—D'Artagnan."

(Light fades.)

(Paris. The KING and QUEEN are listening to a concert. The CARDINAL enters.)

CARDINAL. Pardon me, your majesties, but I have news from England.

KING. Yes, yes, what is it?

CARDINAL. I am afraid there has been a violent attack against the Duke of Buckingham.

KING. Oh?

CARDINAL. A religious fanatic has chosen to take a personal revenge.

(Pause.)

QUEEN. And has the Duke survived this terrible assault?

CARDINAL. He has not, you Majesty. I am sorry to report that the English Duke is dead.

KING. Oh my. Oh dear.

CARDINAL. Yes. It is shocking news. And how fares our Queen? Your Majesty, I hope you are not unwell?

QUEEN. I am perfectly well, your Grace. I thank you for this information. As always, you are our faithful servant.

(The QUEEN suddenly exits. The KING follows with a look to the CARDINAL.)

Scene 12

(The Convent at Bethune. The ABBESS leads MILADY into the main hall. Above are Constance's rooms.)

ABBESS. We are, of course quite secluded here, Countess de Winter, but we are not ignorant of the intrigues at Court. Bethune has always offered sanctuary to women in need.

MILADY. I am grateful for your protection, Holy Mother. I seek a safe place to await the arrival of my brother, the honorable Count de Rochefort.

ABBESS. Be of good cheer, Countess, you will find friends here. There is a poor creature with us who has sought refuge from the Cardinal. It is hard to imagine her a criminal, though, as she has the aspect of an angel. I suspect her only crime is loyalty to the Queen. She was dressmaker to her Majesty.

MILADY. What is her name, Holy Mother?

ABBESS. Constance Bonacieux. Constance, Constance are you there? May we come in, sweet girl? *(They enter Constance's room.)* Constance this is the Countess de Winter. Perhaps her company will help to ease your confinement. Pardon me, Countess, but my duties call me away from your most charming company.

MILADY & CONSTANCE. *(Bowing:)* Holy Mother. *(ABBESS exits.)*

MILADY. Madame Bonacieux.

CONSTANCE. I am overjoyed to meet you, Countess de Winter. Please sit down. I am starved for news. Can you tell me anything of the Siege of La Rochelle?

MILADY. The war is over. The English have surrendered. I have heard that the Duke of Buckingham is dead.

CONSTANCE. That is sad news indeed. I believe he was once a friend to France and our dear Queen.

MILADY. Yes, and I have often feared that friendship would endanger her Majesty. I, of course, wish only for the Queen's well-being.

CONSTANCE. I am glad that we share that sympathy.

MILADY. If I am not mistaken, we share more than our sympathies. I too fear revenge from the Cardinal.

CONSTANCE. Do not be afraid, Countess. I have friends who are also in the service of her Majesty. They have promised to come for me and take me where I may live beyond the reach of the Cardinal. Perhaps we can help you.

(A commotion is heard.)

ABBESS. *(Reentering:)* The Cardinal's Guards have broken into the convent. You must both hide at once!

(She exits but is intercepted by GUARDS.)

ABBESS. *(To ROCHEFORT:)* You violate our sanctuary!

(The ABBESS is carried away. ROCHEFORT enters and goes upstairs.)

MILADY. We must hide together.

CONSTANCE. Come with me.

(ROCHEFORT enters.)

CONSTANCE. *(To MILADY:)* The Count de Rochefort!

ROCHEFORT. Madame Bonacieux!

(MILADY grabs CONSTANCE.)

CONSTANCE. *(Struggling:)* Let me go!

MILADY. I hold in my hands the life of D'Artagnan. More than his life.

(CONSTANCE and MILADY struggle, MILADY trying to force CONSTANCE to leave with her. We hear the sounds of fighting. ROCHEFORT stands watching.)

D'ARTAGNAN. *(Off:)* CONSTANCE, RUN! FLEE IF YOU CAN.

MILADY. D'Artagnan!

CONSTANCE. D'Artagnan! HELP!

D'ARTAGNAN. *(Off:)* Constance!

(MILADY, in a panic, stabs CONSTANCE, who falls. MILADY and ROCHEFORT are momentarily stunned.)

ROCHEFORT. What have you done?

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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