



D'ARTAGNAN

Adaptation and dialogue

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Based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas

A film by Martin Bourboulon

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PRESENTATION

After a few years of a fragile peace, the kingdom of France is once again on the verge of a war of religion.

King Louis XIII, who still has no heir, is the leader of a country divided.

On the one side are protestant forces with the support of England and, on the other, the great Catholic realms looking to expand their power.

The King is counting on his most powerful minister, Cardinal de Richelieu, to restore the authority of the crown. But many suspect that the ambitious Cardinal is seeking power for himself.

In a climate of revolt and conspiracies, no one knows what may happen.

BLACK

In darkness, horses' hooves pound the snow-covered ground.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Snow swirls around the bay coat of a powerful horse. A leather satchel seemingly about to burst and clothing rolled around what looks like a sword, are hanging from the saddle.

The rider comes into view. Obviously exhausted from a long journey, he gently spurs his mount. His hair over his shoulders, he has a few days' growth of beard and he's wearing a sun-faded doublet under an oft-mended frock coat and a pair of old leather boots. He's 25 years old and his name is D'ARTAGNAN.

Torches light up the night in the distance.

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - NIGHT

D'Artagnan rides up to an inn, its roof piled high with snow. Candles flicker in the wind inside the lanterns. A large carriage archway opens on to the courtyard. A sign outside reads "FLECHE D'OR INN - Rider's supper 12 sols. Rider's lodgings, 20 sols."

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - COURTYARD - NIGHT

D'Artagnan rides through the archway, entering the courtyard. There, near the entrance to the Inn, is a two-horse carriage and three horsemen wearing gray capes.

D'Artagnan rides past the carriage, heading for the stables. An young blond woman wearing a felt hood, and ruby earrings (Countess Isabelle DE VALCOUR) comes out of the building. A lackey holds the hem of her green silk dress so it won't be dragged in the snow. As Isabelle climbs into the carriage she looks through the window and briefly meets eyes with d'Artagnan.

He smiles at the stranger's perfect face and she quickly lowers her eyes.

With a shake of his head, one of the horsemen accompanying her (Count Tancrede de Valcour) tells d'Artagnan to beat it. He puts his gloves back on. On his right hand, a signet ring. After a small provocative frown at the horseman, d'Artagnan continues on to the stables.

The horse-drawn carriage can be heard pulling away on the road.

INT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - STABLES - NIGHT

In the shadows of the stable, d'Artagnan unbridles his horse. Just then...

BANG!!!

A gunshot. Then another. He turns quickly. From outside, excited whinnying and a clash of swords can be heard.

Without hesitation, d'Artagnan unrolls the clothing on his saddle, removes the sword and rushes outside.

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - COURTYARD - NIGHT

The Innkeeper rushes out to his doorstep, as best he can with one wooden leg.

D'Artagnan passes him, running over the snow to the archway, where he immediately leaps into the fray.

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - NIGHT

Chaos. Under the falling snow, men are dueling all around the carriage. Isabelle de Valcour's cries mingle with the clank of blades and the riderless horses rearing up all around. Through the gun smoke, d'Artagnan can see Tancrède de Valcour fallen on the ground. A man in a three-corner hat, his face hidden by a leather mask, is leaning over him, finishes him off with one thrust of his sword.

D'Artagnan lets out a cry as he charges him. Ignoring all the rules, like a tiger in a fury, d'Artagnan hits his adversary with all he's got. The Three-Corner Hat falls into the mud, tries to slash his opponent, but it's no use. D'Artagnan's blade goes straight through him, cutting short his yell.

BANG!!!

A rain of lead whooshes past d'Artagnan's shoulder and he backs up to the carriage. He can hear his assailant's footsteps in the mud, coming closer. D'Artagnan rips the lantern off the carriage and smashes it into the face of a second masked Three-Corner Hat. The man cries out, his nose broken. He falls on to the ground, and his hat rolls away. His shock of red hair plunks down on to the wet ground.

D'Artagnan rushes him, but from out of nowhere a blade tears through his sleeve, forcing him back. The third Three-Corner Hat is a fencing master (ROCHEFORT). D'Artagnan parries a rush of thrusts and, with a full-out lunge, manages to disarm the man. But he steps into a hole and falls in the snow.

Rochefort leaps upon him and tries to strangle him. Their faces are practically touching. Over the mask, a scar splits his right eyebrow and slithers up his forehead. D'Artagnan can't breathe - he is saved only by a horse that kicks and sends the man with a scar flying. D'Artagnan gets up.

ISABELLE DE VALCOUR (O.S.)
 (terrified)
 Ah!!! Mercy!!!

The carriage door flaps in the wind. An assailant is trying to get inside. The young woman is screaming. D'Artagnan rushes over and grabs the man by the collar, yanking him back. He polishes him off with one thrust of his sword.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

D'Artagnan literally leaps up into the carriage. There in the shadows is Isabelle de Valcour, wearing her green silk dress, cowering in a corner, terrified.

D'ARTAGNAN
 (out of breath)
 Don't be afraid, ma'am, I am here.

But suddenly, even before d'Artagnan can move, Isabelle raises her hand and points a gun at him. D'Artagnan barely has time to glimpse the pistol - a silver wolf's head mounted on the barrel - when the fatal shot is fired, directly at d'Artagnan's heart.

Her eyes wide open, Isabelle de Valcour watches d'Artagnan falls backward into the snow.

A closer view reveals that the arm holding the pistol is not hers. It is that of an assailant who, dressed in black, has been holding the young noblewoman closely, with the blade of a dagger in the other hand, close to her throat.

The assailant sits up, abruptly tossing the frightened Isabelle to one side, and emerges from the shadow.

Eyes of silver. Brown curls flow out from under a Three-Corner hat. A mouth as perfect as it is merciless.

She is a young woman of 35. MILADY DE WINTER.

Milady rifles through Isabelle de Valcour's blouse and removes a letter sealed with wax.

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - NIGHT

Milady alights from the carriage, using d'Artagnan's body as a step stool. There is no more sound. The gray-caped guards are lying dead on the ground. Milady holds the letter over a lantern on the coach and lets the paper catch fire.

Rochefort struggles to his feet, brushing the snow off his leather doublet. Milady, holding the flaming letter, walks to the Innkeeper. He is standing on the doorstep, terrified. Milady takes out a gold coin and tosses it to him.

MILADY

Bury them all.

The letter is nearly all burned. Milady watches it a moment then drops it on the ground. CAMERA IN on the red wax seal (bearing a coat of arms) as it melts in the snow.

EXT. CLEARING AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST - NIGHT

In a clearing near the forest. One last stroke of a shovel and the Innkeeper moves off.

Under a willow tree, the grave has been hastily dug. The freshly turned earth is glowing in the moonlight.

Silence. Then, suddenly d'Artagnan's hand springs out from the earth.

Title up:

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Part One

- D'ARTAGNAN -

EXT. PARIS - PONT NEUF - DAWN (MAIN TITLES)

A young woman's threads her way quickly through the passers-by. She looks around now and then to make sure she isn't being followed. She's wearing a riding vest over a silk petticoat. Her unkempt curls overflow from under her little white bonnet. She is Constance BONACIEUX.

EXT. VALCOUR HOUSE - DAWN (MAIN TITLES)

Constance crosses through the courtyard of a private residence.

Constance walks up to the door and knocks. Three times. Then two. Like an oft-repeated code. The man who opens the door is the redheaded man (seen during the attack). Constance hesitates a moment - she has obviously never seen him.

REDHEAD
Miss Bonacieux?

Constance nods. The redhead hands her a wax-sealed letter (identical to the one that burned).

REDHEAD (CONT'D)
Countess de Valcour expects an answer before tonight. The ship sails at dawn tomorrow.

EXT. LOUVRE COUR CARRÉE - DAY (MAIN TITLES)

Constance crosses the Cour Carrée of the Louvre.

INT. LOUVRE - CORRIDORS - DAY (END MAIN TITLES)

Constance walks through the Palais Royal corridors. She halts in deference a moment, here and there, when she passes an aristocratic lady.

INT. LOUVRE ROYAL PALACE - QUEEN'S CHAMBER

Queen Anne of Austria's hand trembles as she takes the letter.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
(reading out loud)
This Saturday, as every holy Saturday, you shall confess at the Val de Grâce Abbey. I shall be there as well, confessing that I think only of you. In six days' time, lest I be dead, I shall see you again, dear Lady, even if I must turn the world upside down. Your poor servant, Duke of Buckingham."

Despite her haughty posture and her magnificent brocade dress, anguish is showing in Anne of Austria's face.

CONSTANCE
Your Majesty did ask him to...

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

He insists on coming to a city
where his life is in peril, and
risks my honor in so doing.

INT. LOUVRE - KING'S COUNCIL - DAY

The doors open on Anne of Austria. Everyone bows. She walks to the middle of the Court and joins King Louis XIII (30), who welcomes her with a smile.

ABBÉ ROUGON (O.S.)

With the approval of emissaries of
His Holiness the Pope, Arthus
d'Épinay de Saint Luc, bishop of
Marseille, shall be seated to Your
Majesty's right. Brother...

Leaning over a model of the Saint-Germain L'Auxerrois church, a monk, Abbé Rougon, points to miniatures representing the parishioners.

ABBÉ ROUGON (CONT'D)

Brother François de Loménie, of the
order of Saint Dominique...

To one side, a young man of 25 (GASTON DE FRANCE), with a pencil mustache and a doublet embroidered with silver thread, is speaking with two officers, obviously interrupting the Abbé's presentation.

LOUIS XIII

What is it, brother?

Silence. Noble eyes turn to Gaston.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)

Your marriage to the Duchesse de
Montpensier is of no interest to
you?

GASTON

We're preparing a wedding when we
should be preparing for war.

LOUIS XIII

War? War against whom?

GASTON

Protestants.

A murmur in the room. An old man (DE MONFORT) steps forward.

DE MONFORT

Sire... La Rochelle has been making ready for weeks, recruiting men and weapons.

Another man, 50, with a decidedly military countenance, stares straight at the King as he takes the floor. This is COMTE DE CHALAIS.

CHALAIS

They're bent on secession! Unless we act they will soon be a state within a state. And a French foothold for the English.

LOUIS XIII

Monsieur le Comte, do you suggest I make war on the protestants AND on England?

GASTON

The protestants take their orders from the English.

CHALAIS

Saint-Blancard, their leader, is in London and has been received by Buckingham himself. Why else but war should move the British Minister of War to receive La Rochelle's protestants?

At the mention of Buckingham, the Queen lowers her eyes for a moment. Next to her, the eagle-eyed and haughty Cardinal de RICHELIEU, 50, wearing a red satin cape, has not missed this.

DE MONFORT

We must rid our land of these heretics!

LOUIS XIII

Then it is not so much a war you favor as a crusade!

GASTON

One God! One Land! One religion!

Exasperated, the King bangs on the table. The model trembles.

LOUIS XIII

Enough! I shall not order another Saint Barthélémy massacre!

A heavy silence falls.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)

The bells of Saint-Germain
L'Auxerrois shall ring this time
for your betrothal, and not for the
slaughter of protestants. You speak
of God, my brother, but need I
remind you that our father, and his
father before him, were felled by
Catholic hands? You should be wary
of your pious companions.

CHALAIS

If Your Majesty is insinuating
that...

LOUIS XIII

I am the King. I do not insinuate.

CHALAIS

The court wants nothing more than
to fight for you, Sire. We are your
true friends, and...

Richelieu cuts him off.

RICHELIEU

(to Chalais)

The King has no friends. He has
only subjects and enemies. It is
time to show that we here are all
his subjects. Wouldn't you say?

Chalais, hiding his fury, turns to an old woman of regal
bearing, standing in the shadows (MARIE DE MÉDICIS - mother
of Louis XIII and Gaston).

CHALAIS

Madame, I beg you to make him
hear...

MARIE DE MEDICIS

(curtly)

Cardinal de Richelieu is right. The
King is born of God. He and he
alone decides the destiny of our
faith and that of France.

CUT TO:

There is contempt in Gaston's eyes as he watches his brother
leave Council, followed by the Cardinal.

GASTON

He fancies himself Louis the Just.
He's merely Louis the Weak.

MARIE DE MEDICIS

My son... You think you're speaking
of your brother, but you are
speaking of the King.

GASTON

(startled)

You were present, mother? Yet I
never heard the sound of your
voice!

MARIE DE MEDICIS

You've learned to speak loudly?
Learn to hold your tongue and
perhaps people will listen.

EXT. LOUVRE - CHAPEL - DAY

The King exits the Council chamber into the neighboring
chapel, followed by Richelieu.

LOUIS XIII

I'm fed up with that nasty dog
Chalais. You did well to put him in
his place.

RICHELIEU

I did so for you, sire. But I share
his fears.

The King stops in his tracks and turns to Richelieu, uneasy.

LOUIS XIII

...

RICHELIEU

You are a great King. Faithful and
sparing with the blood of your
subjects...

LOUIS XIII

But?

RICHELIEU

Your enemies do not share your
goodness. One cannot keep a snake
close for very long and not get
bitten.

LOUIS XIII
I promised the Queen I wouldn't
start a war.

RICHELIEU
But war is already lurking in
shadow.

LOUIS XIII
Then shed light upon it. Show it to
me if you would like me to wage it!

INT. COACH - DAY

Richelieu, seated in the carriage bears a stern expression as he rides through the streets of Paris.

INT. RICHELIEU'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Richelieu enters his office.

Standing at the window, a woman with her back turned seems to be admiring the view. She turns around - it's Milady. She lowers her head in deference.

MILADY
Your Eminence.

RICHELIEU
Milady... Well?

MILADY
Thanks to you, Buckingham and the
Queen shall finally meet.

Richelieu nods, satisfied.

RICHELIEU
Any trouble?

Milady looks bemused.

MILADY
All dead and buried.

EXT. MUSKETEERS TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Perched upon his tired horse, hair and face still streaked with earth, a hole in his frock coat near his heart, d'Artagnan beholds the imposing façade of a town house.

It is wedged between two narrow streets and its high exterior walls are guarded by Musketeers on sentry duty.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan, in awe, approaches the guards... They cast a suspicious eye upon his sorry state.

D'ARTAGNAN

I am... I... I would like to meet with Captain de Tréville.

MUSKETEER SENTRY

Do you have an appointment?

D'ARTAGNAN

No. But I have a recommendation!

MUSKETEER SENTRY

Then you want that line over there.

D'Artagnan turns. A group of several dozen men of various sorts is waiting.

D'ARTAGNAN

That could take two days!

MUSKETEER SENTRY

Three. The man in green there arrived from Carcassonne last Thursday.

D'Artagnan, thrown, looks up at the front wall. He fakes walking away, then dashes inside.

MUSKETEER SENTRY (CONT'D)

Hey!!!

EXT. MUSKETEER TOWNHOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

D'Artagnan dashes on to the grounds of the townhouse. He threads his way between the soldiers and horses... hiding in the shadows of a recess.

The sentry passes without seeing him. D'Artagnan catches his breath. Then he slides along the wall, arriving...

EXT. MUSKETEERS TOWN HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY

...in the large courtyard, where sixty soldiers, with their backs to him, are being roundly berated by their leader.

Fifty years old, with fire in his black eyes, he is CAPITAINE DE TRÉVILLE.

DE TRÉVILLE

Yesterday at dawn, not far from here, the Cardinal's soldiers ran into a bunch of sots, drunk as skunks and making merry in the street! But that's not all! These sots challenged them to a duel and then got themselves chased off like a bunch of scared rabbits! So who were these ne'er-do-wells? They were King's Musketeers!

(pointing at Aramis:)

You should know, you were recognized.

D'Artagnan walks along the wall, discovering the celebrated company little by little.

ARAMIS

(in outrage:)

Capitaine!

DE TRÉVILLE

I will not have you be a laughing stock for the Cardinal's guards! I'm sure they'd rather die where they stand than take one step backward!

D'Artagnan catches a few profiles, some glances. Another Musketeer steps forward, PORTHOS.

PORTHOS

Capitaine, this is a tall tale you've been told. The truth is we fell into a trap. If Athos survives after Jussac stabbed in the back with his dagger, he can attest to that.

Tréville is destabilized, takes another look at his men.

DE TRÉVILLE

(incredulous)

Athos, wounded?

ARAMIS

He tried to get up, twice. Twice he fell back down. If it weren't for Porthos, he might have remained on the battlefield.

VENTADOUR

We took flight, but only to save his life.

DE TRÉVILLE

I didn't know this. Where is he?

PORTHOS

At this very moment, he is in the care of a garrison doctor.

INT. MUSKETEER TOWN HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tréville walks quickly down a hallway. d'Artagnan catches up to him.

D'ARTAGNAN

Sir. I am Charles d'Artagnan. My father gave me this letter for you.

DE TRÉVILLE

D'Artagnan... you're Horace's son?

D'Artagnan nods and takes his little bible out of his pocket. There is a hole in it, made by Milady's bullet. He takes out a letter, with a hole in it as well, and hands it to him.

DE TRÉVILLE (CONT'D)

(looking at the hole)

What happened to your letter?

D'ARTAGNAN

Both it and I were struck by musket fire. Mercifully, my Bible stopped the bullet.

DE TRÉVILLE

That makes you the first one saved by religion this year.

D'Artagnan and Tréville walk side by side.

DE TRÉVILLE (CONT'D)

I knew your father well. What can I do for his son? Be brief, my time is not my own.

D'ARTAGNAN

Leaving Gascony, I dreamed of following in his footsteps and wearing the colors of the King. As far back as I can remember, I have always wanted to be a Musketeer.

Tréville looks at d'Artagnan with a certain tenderness.

DE TRÉVILLE

I shall write to the Director of the Royal Academy today. I cannot do better. You'll join the cadets and perhaps one day you'll be a Musketeer.

D'ARTAGNAN

You're waiting, Monsieur, for me to show myself worthy! Well fear not, you shall not wait long!

Tréville walks away.

D'Artagnan walks to a window looking out on the street. Proud of himself, he can't help smiling as he looks out at the long line of men desperate to meet Tréville.

But suddenly, his eyes stop on a man wearing a leather cape and a three-corner hat. The man mingles with the crowd, stops, then walks away. D'Artagnan takes pause. That man, that figure... He's the man with the scar from the Flèche d'Or (ROCHEFORT).

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

...!

INT. MUSKETEER TOWNHOUSE - STAIRS - DAY

D'Artagnan runs down the stairs... bustles past musketeers as best he can. But he bumps into one of them very hard and the man cries out. This is Athos.

D'ARTAGNAN

Excuse me.

D'Artagnan doesn't stop, but an iron grip detains him.

ATHOS

Is that all? You think that's enough?

D'ARTAGNAN

I said excuse me. If you didn't hear me, I'll repeat it: Excuse me, but I'm in a hurry.

ATHOS

You're rude, that's for sure.

D'ARTAGNAN

When a Gascon has apologized, he considers that he's done his duty and half as much again.

ATHOS

I can see you've come a long way.

D'ARTAGNAN

(exasperated at being held
by the collar)

Monsieur, though I may have come a long way, I will have no lessons in manners from the likes of you, I warn you.

ATHOS

Man in a hurry, come to find me when you like for that lesson.

D'ARTAGNAN

And where would I do that?

ATHOS

At the calvary in Saint Sulpice wood. At eleven o'clock.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll be there.

EXT. MUSKETEER TOWNHOUSE - DINING HALL - DAY

D'Artagnan runs as fast as he can through a dining hall. He is nearing the door. D'Artagnan runs around a group of musketeers huddled together, one massive and imposing musketer in the center, holding forth.

PORTHOS

As I was drunk, I was seeing double, so my fist only landed half the time. But that was plenty!

Porthos illustrates his story with a huge swing of his fist - which strikes d'Artagnan, sending him to the ground as if he had run into a tree trunk. Porthos helps him up.

PORTHOS (CONT'D)

By Jupiter! Do you leave your eyes behind when you run?

Porthos is holding him by the collar, like a bundle of dirty laundry.

D'ARTAGNAN

Excuse me, but I'm in a hurry. I'm chasing someone...

PORTHOS

Who are you chasing?

(winks to the other
Musketeers)

If he had a little more meat on him, I'd put him on a spit!

The other Musketeers laugh.

D'ARTAGNAN

Tell me what you're laughing at so we can laugh together.

PORTHOS

I laugh often, and whenever I like.

D'ARTAGNAN

Well I won't be laughed at.

PORTHOS

I wasn't speaking to you, monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN

Well I'm speaking to you.

PORTHOS

Well if I can't make you laugh, I can certainly shut you up.

D'ARTAGNAN

And where would you do that?

PORTHOS

Behind Luxembourg Gardens, at noon.
It will give me an appetite.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

D'Artagnan comes out of the musketeer building like a shot, then freezes, scanning the crowd. Bingo! He spots the man with three-corner hat in the distance. He starts running again, dodges merchants and carts. He gets closer to the man. No doubt about it - it is Rochefort! D'Artagnan hides behind a group of Musketeers in conversation.

He sees a handkerchief at the feet of one of them... Aramis. He bends down, picks it up, and hands it to him.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Monsieur, I believe the loss of
 this handkerchief might cause you
 some regret.

Aramis looks at him contemptuously.

ARAMIS
 You're mistaken. That handkerchief
 is not mine.

The Musketeer across from Aramis, Rubin De Martessac,
 suddenly spots the initials embroidered on the handkerchief.

DE MARTESSAC
 But... that belongs to my wife!

Aramis looks daggers at d'Artagnan.

ARAMIS
 (to De Martessac)
 You must have dropped it.

D'ARTAGNAN
 (trying to set things
 right)
 I saw the handkerchief at your
 feet. I thought it was yours. But
 it was at your feet too. I made a
 mistake.

DE MARTESSAC
 I think I did, too.

De Martessac, furious, rips the handkerchief out of Aramis'
 hand and turns to go.

ARAMIS
 (to d'Artagnan)
 You have put me in a very awkward
 position.

D'ARTAGNAN
 I'm sorry. I have no quarrel with
 you.

ARAMIS
 Naturally you don't.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Why? You think I'm afraid?

ARAMIS

Perhaps you're not an idiot. It would be intelligent to be afraid.

D'ARTAGNAN

Then I'm an idiot.

ARAMIS

I thought so.

D'ARTAGNAN

Monsieur, you are wrong to try to humiliate me.

ARAMIS

I only fight when I have to and always despite my distaste. But this time the matter is grave. A woman has been compromised by your fault.

D'ARTAGNAN

My fault?

ARAMIS

Monsieur, though I doubt I could teach you how to live, I do hope to teach you to die.

In the distance, d'Artagnan sees Rochefort start to go.

D'ARTAGNAN

And where would you do that?

ARAMIS

Rue des Carmes at noon.

D'ARTAGNAN

As you wish.

D'Artagnan is about to walk away, but stops.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

And is one o'clock possible?

Aramis agrees with an ambiguous smile.

ARAMIS

Make use of the hour to get washed. I don't want to sully my sword.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - LITTLE SQUARE - DAY

D'Artagnan runs up to a small and very crowded square. He sees Rochefort disappearing into a courtyard.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - STAIRWAY - TERRACE - DAY

D'Artagnan comes into the courtyard. Fabric is drying. It's like a maze of material. Suddenly, behind the sheets, he makes out the shadow of a man. He draws his sword and follows the silhouette. He loses it, steps forward, pulling up the fabrics.

The shadow again! D'Artagnan rips the sheet down and finds himself looking at a woman. D'Artagnan freezes. Then he is struck with a stick, hard, in the chin.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan, leaning over the railing, is spitting blood as he comes around. Standing next to him, the woman who struck him is terribly sorry about the mistake. It's Constance Bonacieux.

CONSTANCE

I thought I'd killed you.

D'ARTAGNAN

Don't worry, I'm used to that.

CONSTANCE

I'm terribly sorry, monsieur. I thought you were someone else. A man who's been following me.

D'Artagnan turns to her and sees her gorgeous face.

D'ARTAGNAN

One could hardly blame him.

Constance smiles. She awkwardly puts out her hand and d'Artagnan takes it.

CONSTANCE

My name is Constance. Constance Bonacieux.

D'ARTAGNAN

D'Artagnan. Charmed.

CONSTANCE

You're here about the notice I gather?

D'ARTAGNAN
Yes, of course. What notice?

CONSTANCE
The room to let.

D'ARTAGNAN
I'll take it!

CONSTANCE
Wouldn't you like to see it first?

D'ARTAGNAN
(smiling)
I've seen enough.

CONSTANCE
It's one livre per week.

D'Artagnan takes some coins out of his purse.

D'ARTAGNAN
Here's enough for four weeks or
four boards for my coffin.

CONSTANCE
Did I cause you so much harm?

D'ARTAGNAN
You did me more good than anyone
has in a long time. But in an
hour's time I must face off with
three men.

CONSTANCE
But you'll be killed.

He walks off.

D'ARTAGNAN
I know. But by a Musketeer.

POV Rochefort: D'Artagnan makes his goodbyes, with an amused little bow. Standing next to Rochefort is a man of about 50 with sneaky eyes (Monsieur Bonacieux).

EXT. EX QUAI DES BERNARDINS - SAINT SULPICE WOOD - DAY

The sun casts shadows through the trees in a wood.

D'Artagnan finds Athos, calmly sitting on a rock in an old calvary. He rises and greets him.

D'ARTAGNAN
What a lovely spot to die.

ATHOS
I've often thought so.

They exchange a glance, almost amused.

ATHOS (CONT'D)
We haven't been introduced. I'm
Athos de Sillègue d'Hauteville,
Comte de la Fère.

D'ARTAGNAN
Charles d'Artagnan. Of Gascony.

He gives him a sort of awkward bow.

ATHOS
My God... If I kill you I'll seem
like a child eater.

D'ARTAGNAN
And I like a murderer of old men.

Athos laughs.

ATHOS
Do I look that weary?

D'ARTAGNAN
Not at all, monsieur. But I gather
you honor me with this duel despite
a grave wound.

ATHOS
Never fear, I'll use my left hand
to kill you.

Horses are heard far-off.

ATHOS (CONT'D)
I've summoned two friends as my
witnesses. Here they are.

D'ARTAGNAN
I came alone. I know no one.

ATHOS
I'll lend you one of mine.

Suddenly, upon his horse near the edge of the bridge, the
huge figure of Porthos appears.

D'ARTAGNAN
 (stunned)
 What? Your witness is this
 gentleman?

ATHOS
 Yes. He's Porthos. And here is the
 second. Aramis.

Arriving from the other side on a thoroughbred, is Aramis.

D'ARTAGNAN
 But...

Porthos gets off his horse and walks to them, looking
 perplexed.

PORTHOS
 What's he doing here?

ATHOS
 This is the man I must duel.
 Monsieur d'Artagnan.

PORTHOS
 I have a duel with him as well!

D'ARTAGNAN
 At noon!

Aramis joins them.

ARAMIS
 I'm supposed to kill him at one
 o'clock.

The three Musketeers look at one another. Athos worried,
 Porthos, annoyed, Aramis amused.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Monsieur Athos has the right to
 kill me first, Monsieur Porthos
 second, and Monsieur Aramis last. I
 apologize in advance, in case I'm
 unable to give you all
 satisfaction.

ATHOS
 How long have you been in Paris,
 d'Artagnan?

D'ARTAGNAN
 I arrived this morning.

ATHOS

Three duels in three hours, with three Musketeers. If I weren't obliged to kill you, I'd buy you a drink.

D'ARTAGNAN

You can drink to my health.

D'Artagnan salutes him, and draws his sword.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

And now, en garde!

Athos draws his sword as well, then...

PORTHOS

Athos...

Arriving from the north, a squadron of Richelieu's men. There are six of them, with JUSSAC in the lead.

ARAMIS

Jussac... He followed us.

ATHOS

He's come to finish the job.

Jussac gets off his horse, then so do his men.

JUSSAC

Is there a duel here? That's prohibited.

ATHOS

What duel? We're training this young cadet, at the request of Captain de Tréville.

JUSSAC

Put down your swords. And follow us.

ARAMIS

My sword doesn't like the dust, Jussac. If you want it, you'll have to take it from me.

PORTHOS

(in a low voice)

Easy, old man. There are six of them and only three of us. And Athos has one foot in the grave.

ATHOS
I've got another to kick your ass.

PORTHOS
Please do!

Jussac's men draw their swords.

D'ARTAGNAN
(to the Musketeers)
Far be it from me to interrupt your conversation, but I would like to correct one small error.

ARAMIS
(to Athos)
Would you kill him already, please? He's exasperating.

D'ARTAGNAN
You said there were only three of you, yet it seems to me there are four of us.

ATHOS
He's quite daring, isn't he?

D'ARTAGNAN
A Gascon is daring, that's how you recognize him!

The musketeers smile.

JUSSAC
Well gentlemen? Have you made up your minds about making up your minds?

A shadow darkens Athos' face.

ATHOS
Well, Porthos, Aramis and d'Artagnan, let's go!

The ten combatants come at one another with incredible fury. Neither elegance nor principle prevail here. It's a dance with death where quick merciless blows rain down hard.

Two men - Biscarat and Cahusac - come at Athos. Pale and wounded, fighting with his left hand, he nevertheless won't give an inch. Cahusac, sword in his right hand and dagger in the left, tries to take him from behind but Athos dekes him, leans back and Biscarat gets stuck through his shoulder.

Surprised, Cahusac has no time to regain his footing and Athos' blade cuts through his throat. He buckles. The battle with Biscarat goes on.

Porthos, distracted by the screaming nuns, never sees Grandval's blade coming and gets stabbed in the thigh. He lets loose a howl and instead of getting it loose, runs toward his adversary with the sword stuck in his leg. In a few strides he catches up to Grandval, grabs him by the hair, yanks him back and smashes his head into a tree trunk.

Aramis clinks swords with Maupin, a guard with tentative fencing skills who is out of breath. He rushes, tries to deal a mortal blow each time, and Aramis parries them all, irritated.

ARAMIS

Tell me. Would you be the brother
of Lucie de Maupin?

MAUPIN

Leave my sister out of this!

Maupin, feelings hurt, rushes him. But he slips and falls. Before he can get to his feet, the tip of Aramis' sword is at his throat. Maupin expects to die, looks at Aramis with crazy eyes. But Aramis sighs.

ARAMIS

Get out of here. I can't break her
heart again.

Maupin doesn't get it.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

Are you deaf? Get away before I
change my mind!

Maupin leaps to his feet and runs away, leaving his sword behind. He comes up to Biscarat just as Athos is stabbing him with his dagger and Porthos grimaces as he removes the piece of metal from his thigh.

The three Musketeers, now freed up, turn to the two last men waging battle. D'Artagnan and Jussac. The Richelieu man has the elegant style of a professional swordsman. The young Gascon has his own unique style. He walks around him, rocking from one foot to the other, constantly calling to him, shouting a stream of vivid insults.

Aramis wants to help him, but Athos holds him back.

ATHOS

Let him.

D'Artagnan and Jussac are out of breath. They size each other up.

JUSSAC
Are you tired, kid?

D'ARTAGNAN
(loud, to the others)
What day is this? I want this man
to know the date of his death.

ARAMIS
It's Sainte Roxanne today! The 7th!

D'Artagnan, satisfied, starts to count.

D'ARTAGNAN
Fine, the 7th!
(leaps forward, forcing
Jussac back)
Six!
(slashes off his epaulet)
Five!
(he struts, forcing Jussac
sideways)
Four!
(he bows)
Three.
(he parries a counter from
Jussac, who is exhausted
and no longer knows
what's going on)
Two!
(he switches lines and
walks around his
adversary)
One!

The point of d'Artagnan's sword stops a fraction of an inch from Jussac's heart - he is beaten, but still alive.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Remember that on Saint Roxane's
Day, we never kill an ass.

The three Musketeers applaud the demonstration. D'Artagnan turns and bows to his audience. Humiliated, Jussac gets to his feet behind his back... And comes charging at him with his dagger, about to stab him.

ATHOS
(screaming)
D'Artagnan!

D'Artagnan wheels around, sword deployed. Jussac runs straight into the blade with incredible force. Then he falls as the others look on, flabbergasted.

Time stands still a moment. The three Musketeers walk over to d'Artagnan. They are alone among the dust, the bodies and the blood. Athos, with a strange broken smile on his face, puts his hand on d'Artagnan's shoulder.

ATHOS (CONT'D)
(in a low voice)
One for all, all for one!

From the musketeers' celebration, we move...

INT. KING'S COUNCIL - DAY

...to Richelieu's icy stare.

RICHELIEU
This rivalry between our troops is ridiculous and loathsome. We cannot allow gentlemen to kill one another as war draws closer.

DE TRÉVILLE
Restrain your soldiers, I'll restrain mine.

The doors fly open and Louis XIII enters. All bow in respect. The King approaches.

LOUIS XIII
These are the devils I am to scold?

DE TRÉVILLE
Here they are, contrite and repentant. They have come to apologize.

The King walks to the Musketeers.

LOUIS XIII
One cannot make his own justice. That right belongs to me and to me alone.

ATHOS
We beg your pardon, sire.

The King frowns, a little condescendingly. He stops before d'Artagnan, eyeing his beggar's garb.

LOUIS XIII
Who is this child?

DE TRÉVILLE
D'Artagnan, Your Majesty.

LOUIS XIII
(to d'Artagnan)
So it was you who gave Jussac that
harsh thrust of your sword?

Richelieu's eyes are full of spite as he watches d'Artagnan raise his eyes to the King.

D'ARTAGNAN
(who can't help himself)
Yes, Your Highness. Well... not
really "give". It was supposed to
be a loan but he couldn't return
it.

Tréville is dismayed by the young Gason's impudence. But a smile flashes for an instant on the King's face.

LOUIS XIII
You seem like a very arrogant young
man.

D'ARTAGNAN
That is my only wealth, and I
deploy it entirely in His Majesty's
service.

LOUIS XIII
Then keep it for me, instead of
spending it every place you go.
Seven men in two days - that's too
much. At that rate, His Eminence
the Cardinal will have to renew his
entire company in three weeks.

The Musketeers bow.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
Take leave. D'Artagnan, you can use
this to acquire appropriate
garments.

The King tosses a purse to d'Artagnan.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
I warn you, Kings' feet do not go
backward. The next dueler wastes
away in the galley.

(MORE)

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
 I've never been there, but I'm told
 it's worse than England.

INT. LOUVRE CORRIDORS - DAY

Tréville walks his Musketeers down a Louvre corridor. As they go, the guards tap their halberds on the floor in tacit applause. The four men are proud to have come through this so well, though they try not to show it too much.

Crowds of servants gather to watch them go. Suddenly, d'Artagnan freezes. He has just spotted Constance Bonacieux. They look at one another for a moment, stunned.

CONSTANCE
 You're not dead then?

D'ARTAGNAN
 No, sorry. You'll have to put me
 up.

CONSTANCE
 What a shame... I already ordered
 the boards for your coffin.

Porthos pulls d'Artagnan by the arm.

PORTHOS
 Keep them in a safe place, madame.
 This young man may not survive the
 night.

D'Artagnan is led away, but keeps looking back at Constance.

INT. COMPAS D'OR TAVERN - NIGHT

The sound of the halberds is drowned in the sound of voices inside a crowded, smoky, noisy tavern.

Porthos and d'Artagnan are leaning on the bar, waiting for their drinks. D'Artagnan is holding the King's purse in his hand.

PORTHOS
 Well you're rich now.

D'ARTAGNAN
 My father always taught me that
 money is a good servant but a lousy
 master.

The tavern keeper puts their drinks down in front of them.

PORTHOS

I agree with your father. It's your round.

D'Artagnan pays, with a smile. The toast. Further on, Aramis is approached by a slightly tipsy demimondaine, unsteady on her heels.

PORTHOS (CONT'D)

Poor dear, she has no chance.

He downs his drink. D'Artagnan waits for an explanation.

PORTHOS (CONT'D)

Aramis is a man of principles.

D'ARTAGNAN

She's married?

PORTHOS

No, that's the point.

D'Artagnan doesn't get it.

PORTHOS (CONT'D)

Aramis is a Jesuit, torn between the Church and the Army. Every morning he wants to be a general and every night a bishop! With married women, both are possible.

D'Artagnan smiles. The demimondaine, dismissed by Aramis, is trying her luck with Athos, who is sprawled at a table. But he hardly looks at her. He stares at his bottle, looking lost.

D'ARTAGNAN

We shouldn't leave Athos all alone. He looks sad as silence after a song.

PORTHOS

Athos is never alone. He's with his demons. He tries to drown them in alcohol, but over time they've learned to swim.

Aramis joins them.

ARAMIS

Whatever this man has told you, it's a lie.

D'ARTAGNAN

He told me you were a gentleman.

ARAMIS

You see! I am anything but gentle.
Careful d'Artagnan, if Porthos
takes you under his wing it's
because he wants to put you in his
nest!

D'Artagnan turns to Porthos, afraid he understands.

D'ARTAGNAN

(blushing, to Porthos)

You... You like...

PORTHOS

Why not? I like both hair and
feathers. I like anything I can put
in my bed or in my plate.

D'ARTAGNAN

Must get crowded.

PORTHOS

True. The only ones I never screw
nor eat are twits.

ARAMIS

Shame. You'd never go hungry.

They laugh, as a song comes up in the Tavern.

MAN (O.S.)

Bold Cadets of Gascony, Of Carbon
de Castel-Jaloux! Brawling and
swaggering boastfully, The bold
cadets of Gascony!

Porthos suddenly stands up and leads the others, as if
possessed. He gets up on a table as the others cheer. Porthos
is holding Aramis and d'Artagnan close.

PORTHOS

(singing loudly)

Eagle-eyed and stork-like feet,
Cat's mustache and wolf-like teeth,
Slashing rascals for their meat!
Eagle-eyed and stork-like feet,
sporting hats worn altogether,
hiding the holes with a feather!!!

EXT. PARIS - DAWN

Paris awakens. Simple people begin their work day.

INT. PRIVATE HOME - DAY

Aramis puts on his frock coat. A young woman has dozed off on the bed. He walks toward the window, stops at a wardrobe where some jewelry is put away. He chooses a necklace with a figure of the Virgin, kisses it, then walks back to the young woman before slipping it on. REVEAL: he already has a collection of trophies!

INT. PORTHOS' HOUSE - DAY

Porthos is still fast asleep in his bed. A young woman sleeps next to him, her head resting on his right shoulder. On his left shoulder, the head of a young man.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - DAY

D'Artagnan is at the window of his spartan room. Below in the courtyard, Constance Bonacieux. Wearing a wide-brimmed hat she gives instructions to servants, among them an aging servant (PLANCHET), who is doing laundry at the fountain. All three laugh together. D'Artagnan's eyes are drinking in every charming detail of the young woman. Her smile, her hands, her delicate neck.

Planchet picks up the laundry beetle and smashes it...

INT. ATHOS' HOUSE - DAY

...Athos awakes with a start. He is in his own bed. His expression is weary, his head heavy. A ray of sunlight makes him frown. He rubs his face.

Blood.

Athos looks down at the dark red spots in his hand, in disbelief. He slowly turns his head and picks up the sheet. A dagger. Indignant, he picks it up and tears off the covers.

A dead woman is on the bed next to him.

Athos jumps up, screaming. At the same time, the door to his room flies open. The Cardinal's guards storm into the room.

Facing them, Athos, wearing a night shirt and bleeding from his face, holding the dagger, standing over the corpse.

The guards seize him.

INT. COURTHOUSE - TRIBUNAL - DAY

The tribunal is filled to the rafters. On a raised platform, a judge officiates, an office lit by candles at his back. On the next level down are men dressed in black, white collars and black hats.

In the first row, flanked by guards, is Athos. Behind him in the noisy courtroom, Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan are in the audience.

Capitaine de Tréville is standing before the judge.

DE TRÉVILLE

Your honor, Athos d'Hauteville, Comte de la Fère, fought in Flanders against the united provinces, in Bavaria against the Holy Empire. In the Palatinate, in Savoie and Lombardy. He fought more battles than there are onlookers present here today. He doesn't belong here, he belongs on a pedestal.

Everyone applauds. Yelling, confusion. The judge bangs his gavel to restore order.

JUDGE

Thank you, Capitaine, but I judge men, not statues.

The judge turns to Athos. With his bloodied shirt, his hair in a mess, the shackles on his feet, he indeed looks like a wild beast.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Count... You are from one of France's greatest families. But your blood and your acts of valor are of no use to you here. On the contrary, he who is born noble must spend his life proving he's worthy.

The judge and Athos meet eyes.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Your brother, Benjamin de la Fère, is well-known as an advocate of the La Rochelle cause. Are you protestant as well?

A shiver goes through the crowd.

ATHOS
Yes, sir.

JUDGE
And you believe in God?

ATHOS
I believe in God, in the King and
in France.

A smattering of applause quickly dies.

JUDGE
In the Gospel according to Saint
John, when Jesus meets Pilate, he
tells him, "I am in this world to
bear witness unto the truth." To
which Pilate responds...

ATHOS
"What is truth?"

JUDGE
Exactly.

Athos and the judge look at one another.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
You were arrested this morning.
Drunk. Covered in blood. A dagger
in your hand. An unknown woman
horribly stabbed in your bed. So
let me ask you what is the truth?
Did you kill that woman?

A moment of silence. All eyes turn to Athos.

ATHOS
I don't know.

The assembly is stunned. The Musketeers are dismayed.

ARAMIS
(in a hushed voice:)
Couldn't he just lie like everybody
else?

JUDGE
You don't know?

ATHOS

No. And I won't lie to save my skin. Life is not dear enough to me for that.

D'Artagnan can't get over it. Aramis raises his eyes to heaven and Porthos covers his face with his hands.

JUDGE

Count... The greatest riches a knight may bequeath is his example. Your life has been a great example, your death shall be an even greater one.

Applause, but also cries of protest in the gallery. Panic takes hold of the Musketeers and d'Artagnan.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

When a crime calls for a death sentence, the commoner is hanged but the nobleman is decapitated. Sir Athos d'Hauteville, Comte de la Fère, this tribunal sentences you to have your head cut off by a sword in La Grève on Monday at noon.

Cries grow louder. Tréville bolts to his feet.

DE TRÉVILLE

We appeal this verdict!

JUDGE

Fine. You have five days to bring proof of innocence and beg royal clemency.

(with a sardonic smile)

Go with God.

Complete confusion. Athos is dragged off.

Tréville walks up to the Musketeers.

DE TRÉVILLE

If Athos refuses to defend himself, we'll do it for him. Find out who that woman was and what she was doing in Athos' bed. That's our only hope.

In the crowd of people leaving the courtroom, we notice a woman who walks around behind them without seeing them. She is wearing a hood on her head and a strange smile.

It's Milady de Winter.

INT. PARIS MORGUE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The three men walk down a damp corridor. A pallid light seeps through the basement windows. An old man, all bent over and wearing spectacles, leads the way, holding a lantern.

On the ground here and there are corpses. Men, women, children, waiting to be identified. D'Artagnan covers his nose against the stench.

INT. PARIS MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

CORONER

No ring, no necklace, nothing. All we found on her person were stab wounds.

On the black marble table, a corpse, on her stomach, still lying in Athos' blood-soaked sheets.

PORTHOS

Prostitute?

The coroner shakes his head.

CORONER

Look how delicate her hand is. This woman never worked a day in her life. A bourgeoisie or a noble.

Aramis and Porthos look at one another, puzzled.

ARAMIS

Can I see her face?

CORONER

(to d'Artagnan)

Give me a hand, young man.

Despite his repugnance, d'Artagnan walks over and helps the coroner to turn the corpse over. The woman's long hair still hides her face.

CORONER (CONT'D)

(gathering up her hair)

Here.

They discover the face of the young woman, still beautiful in death.

D'Artagnan freezes.

It's the young woman from the Flèche d'Or Inn - Comtesse Isabelle DE VALCOUR).

CUT TO:
FLASHBACK

Isabelle steps up into the carriage. Through the window on the door, she meets eyes with d'Artagnan.

CUT TO:
FLASHBACK

D'Artagnan leaps up into the carriage, sees the terrified Isabelle.

D'ARTAGNAN
(out of breath)
Don't be afraid, ma'am, I am here.

A hand is raised - d'Artagnan thinks it is Isabelle's - holding a pistol. The shot is fired, right in D'Artagnan's heart.

CUT TO:

Back to scene, autopsy room.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
(stupefied)
She's the woman who tried to kill me.

EXT. PATH IN COUNTRY - DAWN

Dawn. All three are riding along a path in the country, d'Artagnan leading the way.

At the bottom of a hill is the Flèche d'Or Inn.

EXT. FLÈCHE D'OR INN - STABLE - AUBE

The innkeeper is coming out of the stable. When he sees d'Artagnan, he goes pale and backs away, not believing his eyes. His wooden leg slides through the snow.

INNKEEPER
(terrorized)
I didn't do anything! I didn't do anything. She gave me a Louis to bury you! I thought you were dead!

EXT. CLEARING NEAR THE EDGE OF THE FOREST - DAY

Under the willow tree, the innkeeper quickly digs where he had buried the bodies.

INNKEEPER

I swear I never saw them before,
I...

D'ARTAGNAN

Shut up and dig.

The innkeeper digs even faster. His shovel digs into the earth and strikes the first body.

CUT TO:

The corpses have all been dug up. The coachman and the two horsemen who were with the carriage are now white as snow.

Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan, scarves over their noses, inspect the bodies in the ditch, as the innkeeper looks on. They empty their pockets - nothing.

Aramis searches the rider's body, the one who had called to d'Artagnan (Comte Tancredè de Valcour). He feels around on his frock, moves down along his arm to his right hand.

A finger has been sliced off. The ring finger of the left hand. Aramis, poker-faced, turns toward the terrified innkeeper.

ARAMIS

He was wearing a signet ring?

Suddenly, the innkeeper starts to flee on his wooden leg in the opposite direction. D'Artagnan is about to chase after him but Porthos motions for him to stop.

Aramis walks calmly back to his horse and grabs his rifle. He cocks it and aims. In his crosshairs, the innkeeper runs off limping into the distance.

BANG!

The bullet shatters the innkeeper's wooden leg; he goes down.

D'Artagnan whistles admiringly. But Aramis frowns in disappointment.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

I was aiming for the other leg.

INT. FLECHE D'OR INN - DAY

The innkeeper is on the ground, terrified. Aramis is standing in front of him, taking off his riding coat.

ARAMIS
You should not have taken that
signet ring.

Aramis looks at his own ring as he rolls up his sleeves.

INNKEEPER
(terrified)
I didn't take anything.

ARAMIS
Of course you took it. But that's
not why you won't talk to me,
right? A man who would fleece the
dead would also fleece the living.
You steal from your guests, don't
you?

The innkeeper watches Aramis as he draws a knife.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)
Are you afraid I'll discover your
haul or are you afraid I'll take it
from you?

INNKEEPER
I didn't do anything!!!

Aramis takes a wooden crucifix hanging on the wall.

INNKEEPER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ARAMIS
I hate to sully my blades.

Aramis begins whittling the crucifix with his dagger.

INNKEEPER
You'll go to hell!!!

The innkeeper starts murmuring a prayer.

ARAMIS
You fear God? You should fear me
instead.

Aramis steps forward with the crucifix now in the shape of a knife. The innkeeper crawls to the window, where a ray of sunshine is shining.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

If God were above me and he didn't want me to do this, he would strike me down with a lightning bolt. Just look how clear the sky is today.

INNKEEPER

Please! Have pity!

ARAMIS

Pity is the virtue of the weak. Do you think I'm weak? Come here. Come closer so I can tell you what I'm going to do to you.

Aramis whispers in the innkeeper's ear.

EXT. FLECHE D'OR INN - DAY

The Musketeers are waiting outside. D'Artagnan, uneasy, is pacing around.

D'ARTAGNAN

I hate torture.

PORTHOS

Everyone hates it! Otherwise no one would talk.

D'Artagnan here's a yell.

D'ARTAGNAN

What is he doing to him?!

PORTHOS

He's talking to him.

D'ARTAGNAN

And?

PORTHOS

And that's all. Aramis' words are worse than daggers.

The door of the inn opens and Aramis appears. He casually strolls over to them. He opens his hand, showing three signet rings.

ARAMIS

That idiot can't remember which one it was. Three silver heaumes trimmed with gold - the Brissac d'Argis family? A crowned lion, three roses - Dardel de Luzinai family? An eagle with two crossed swords - the Valcour family? We're three fingers away from finding our man.

PORTHOS

And the woman who was with him.

Aramis distributes the rings at random, one to each.

ARAMIS

Tomorrow at dawn we'll knock on their doors. With the Lord's help, we'll save Athos' neck.

INT. CHATELET PRISON - COLLECTIVE CELL - NIGHT

Moonlight barely filters through a high narrow window. A crowd of men in rags are sleeping on the ground inside the cell. Some are moaning in their sleep, others snore loudly, a veritable desolation row.

Only Athos is awake. Leaning against the wall, one knee up to his chest, the Musketeer is lost in somber thought.

EXT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - NIGHT

In the darkness, d'Artagnan has his felt hat in his hand as he walks up the street toward the Bonacieux house.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - HALLWAY - D'ARTAGNAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

D'Artagnan is about to enter his room when but he sees light under the door. He slowly draws his sword.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - D'ARTAGNAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

By the light of a candle, Mr. Bonacieux is rifling through d'Artagnan's personal items. Then the door flies open behind him. Bonacieux wheels around - the blade of d'Artagnan's sword is under his nose.

D'ARTAGNAN

Have we lost something?

BONACIEUX
Please, sir, I...

D'ARTAGNAN
Tell me your name so I know whom
I've killed.

Constance suddenly enters.

CONSTANCE
He's my husband! Monsieur
Bonacieux!

D'Artagnan is stunned.

D'ARTAGNAN
You have a husband?

Constance nods, apologetic.

BONACIEUX
I only came to bring you some clean
things, Monsieur. I didn't mean to
alarm you.

There is indeed a pile of clean laundry on the bed.

D'Artagnan, suspicious, sheathes his sword.

D'ARTAGNAN
Never fear, I was not alarmed.

Bonacieux bows to d'Artagnan as he leaves. But Constance
lingers at the door.

CONSTANCE
I'm sorry about the
misunderstanding.

D'ARTAGNAN
This mistake gave me the chance to
see you again. Do not be sorry,
Madame.

Cosntance can't help but smile.

CONSTANCE
Good night, Monsieur.

She leaves. D'Artagnan, thrown, looks around at the mess in
his room.

INT. CATACOMBS - CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Two men with torches walk down a corridor in the catacombs. They come to the base of a ladder.

The man in the lead climbs up into the darkness. At the top is a closed trap door. He bangs on it with his fist.

The trap door opens...

INT. SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS CHURCH - NIGHT

...on a priest wearing a soutane, Abbé Rougon.

The man climbs up through the trap door and helps the other one up. This is Chalais. They rub the dust off their hands.

ABBÉ ROUGON

This way, gentlemen.

The three men walk around a pillar at the middle of the Saint Germain l'Auxerrois Church. Chalais hands a sealed envelope to the Abbé. He opens it. It's a coded letter (composed of letters and numbers).

ABBÉ ROUGON (CONT'D)

Please thank our friend.

Chalais looks - the nave, the chancel, the organ.

CHALAIS

The Lord indeed works in mysterious ways.

EXT. CAP BLANC NEZ BEACH - DAWN

Daybreak on the Cap Blanc Nez beach.

A vessel with about a dozen men aboard is moving toward the coast. There are four horsemen and rested horses waiting for it on the beach.

The vessel comes ashore with a spray of seawater. Three men step off into the water. The first of them, with a lace collar and a black steel breastplate, is handsome as a god. This is the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

One of the horsemen comes to greet him. With glasses and his pale expression, the man looks like a professor. This is BENJAMIN. He greets the Duke with much deference.

BENJAMIN
 (in poor English)
 Welcome in France My Lord... Was
 the crossing good?

BUCKINGHAM
 (in perfect French)
 Almost too good.

The two men smile.

BENJAMIN
 I didn't think I'd see you before
 La Rochelle.

BUCKINGHAM
 Neither did I. But certain
 invitations cannot be refused.

The men mount their horses.

CUT TO:

Far off, from the top of a cliff, a man is watching the scene
 through a spy glass. It is the man with the scar (ROCHEFORT).

EXT. KING'S GARDENS - HUNTING GROUND - DAY

Anne of Austria and Louis XIII are hunting. Muskets in hand,
 they stroll along a pond.

A flock of partridge takes off. The Queen shoots but the King
 never budes. He looks preoccupied.

ANNE OF AUTRICHE
 What's happened, Sire? You are here
 but I can tell your thoughts are
 elsewhere.

The King smiles apologetically.

LOUIS XIII
 Gaston received a letter from his
 fiancée, Mademoiselle de
 Montpensier, yesterday. He read it
 to his men, having a laugh at the
 expense of words of love authored
 by a 16-year-old girl.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
 She had better grow thick skin.
 Gaston is hardly tender.

LOUIS XIII

I did hope this union would settle him, but his impatience seems to have doubled.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

I fear your brother desires something that no marriage can afford him.

LOUIS XIII

Isn't it awful when one cannot trust his own family?

The Queen nods. Now she appears preoccupied.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Gaston is young. He'll come around.

LOUIS XIII

At times I would not be King, that he may be it in my stead.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Louis! You are King by the will of God.

LOUIS XIII

(sighs)

I should go with you later to Val de Grâce... Père Arnoux has always been of good counsel. He'll know how to soothe me.

The Queen blanches, but betrays nothing. She grips her dress.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

If Your Majesty desires, I'd be thrilled.

LOUIS XIII

Another time perhaps. I must be present at the Council. With Gaston, as it happens. I hope you'll join me quickly after your confession. Madame...

The King leaves her. HOLD on the Queen's face.

EXT. PARIS - OUTSIDE PARIS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

In parallel, Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan ride separately, on horseback, to the various houses designated by the coats-of-arms.

- Aramis rides up to a house in the hills of Paris.

- Porthos, in the countryside, rides along a magnificent lane of hundred-year-old oak trees, toward an impressive domain.

- D'Artagnan rides up a Paris street to a private residence. On the gate, the armorial with the eagle and two crossed swords. This is the de Valcour home.

EXT. VALCOUR HOME - DAY

The residence appears to be closed. Nothing stirring behind the gate. D'Artagnan calls out, no answer. He is about to leave when he hears a horse whinny in the stables.

On the second floor, a curtain is parted slightly and d'Artagnan spots someone glancing furtively at him.

A door opens. A footman approaches, looking suspicious.

FOOTMAN

What is it?

D'ARTAGNAN

I'd like to see the owner, Count de Valcour.

FOOTMAN

He isn't here.

D'ARTAGNAN

I have something that belongs to him.

D'Artagnan shows him the ring - the footman hesitates.

FOOTMAN

I'll go and ask if the Countess will receive you.

INT. VALCOUR HOME - ANTECHAMBRE - DAY

D'Artagnan is waiting, hat in hand. From the top of the stairs, a high-angle view of the splendid residence. A strange silence reigns. On the wall in front of him the mark where a large painting has been removed.

A door opens. D'Artagnan turns and finds a very beautiful young woman in a brocade dress and ruby earrings. She walks to him, smiling. It's MILADY!

MILADY

Isabelle de Valcour, pleased to meet you. Please come in.

D'Artagnan walks before her into a small sitting room. When his back is turned Milady's smile vanishes in an instant. She has obviously recognized him.

INT. VALCOUR HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm sorry to disturb you, madame.

MILADY

Don't be. I bless any who disturb my solitude. Please sit down.

D'Artagnan, a little awkward, sits on a small armchair. Milady sits down as well. They are very close to one another.

MILADY (CONT'D)

Your face looks familiar. Perhaps we have met?

D'Artagnan smiles.

D'ARTAGNAN

Madame, had I met you I'm certain I could not have forgotten. My name is d'Artagnan and I have just arrived from Gascony.

Now Milady smiles back at him.

MILADY

Please pardon my tactlessness. I've been cooped up here for months, recovering from a fever. I've forgotten my manners.

D'ARTAGNAN

I hope with all my heart that you're now over it, madame.

MILADY

They say I'll survive. What can I do for you?

D'ARTAGNAN
It happens that I have just come
into possession of this.

D'Artagnan takes the signet ring out of his pocket.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
I need to know who owns it - it's
very important.

MILADY
Let me see.

D'Artagnan hands her the signet ring.

MILADY (CONT'D)
(exclaims)
Why... That's Tancredi's ring!

D'ARTAGNAN
Tancredi?

MILADY
My brother.

D'Artagnan tenses up slightly.

D'ARTAGNAN
And where is he?

MILADY
In the country, buying horses.
He'll be thrilled! It was stolen
from him last month and he was
heartsick.

D'Artagnan's disappointment is obvious.

MILADY (CONT'D)
You seem crestfallen, monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN
It's nothing. I'm glad for your
brother, but disappointed that my
lead ends here.

MILADY
How very mysterious.

D'Artagnan rises.

D'ARTAGNAN

I must leave you now. My companions are waiting. Perhaps they'll have had better luck.

MILADY

Thank you so much for coming all this way. You have done me a great service.

D'ARTAGNAN

My pleasure.

MILADY

I assure you, the pleasure is mutual.

D'Artagnan bows.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll find my way out. Be well, Madame.

INT. VALCOUR HOME - DAY

D'Artagnan walks toward the exit, lost in thought. He is about to leave when he spots, in a mirror, a redheaded man coming down the service entrance across from the entranceway. D'Artagnan freezes.

That broken nose. That red hair.

CUT TO:
FLASHBACK

D'Artagnan rips the lantern off the carriage and smashes it into the face of his assailant. The man cries out, his nose broken. He falls. His shock of red hair plunks down on to the wet ground.

BACK TO SCENE:

D'Artagnan hesitates. Did he dream it? He walks back the way he came.

INT. VALCOUR HOME - PANTRY - DAY

D'Artagnan slips quietly into a shed. No one there. Only a few odd pieces of furniture and some bottles in the shadows. In the back there is another door. Could the redhead have gone out that way?

D'Artagnan crosses through the shed. A painting, covered with a sheet and leaning against the wall, catches his eye. He removes the sheet.

A lovely portrait. A young man and a young woman decked out in full regalia.

The face is that of the dead woman found in Athos' bed. The Beaugency Noblewoman. The man's face is the one who had reprimanded d'Artagnan. He's wearing the signet ring on his finger. At the bottom of the painting we read "Isabelle and Tancrède de Valcour".

D'Artagnan straightens up - sudden realization. Something crackles behind him.

MILADY (O.S.)
(sweetly:)
Sir?

He turns around. At the entrance to the shed, Milady has him covered, a pistol in each hand. D'Artagnan barely has time to see the barrels, each with a silver wolf's head mounted on it.

BANG!!!

The bullet catches him in the upper arm. He dives behind the crates. Another bullet shatters a bottle right next to his head.

D'Artagnan gets up and dashes out the back door.

EXT. VALCOUR HOME - COURTYARD - DAY

D'Artagnan runs to the gate, but it's locked! He runs to the outer wall and starts to climb. A bullet strikes the wall right next to his hand. He jumps over to the other side.

Milady runs to the gate. D'Artagnan gallops away down the street and turns the corner.

She looks hatefully at the man she, once again, has failed to kill.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - DAY

The door of the Bonacieux house flies open. Constance turns around - it's d'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN

Good evening, Madame. I'm in need
of your sewing expertise.

CONSTANCE

What needs mending?

D'ARTAGNAN

I do.

D'Artagnan staggers as he enters. There is blood on his arm. He uses the sheet he had taken from the painting and winds it around his wound.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan is on an armchair. He has regained his composure. Constance cleans his wound and tries to stitch it up.

CONSTANCE

You're lucky. A few inches to the
left and you'd have a hole through
your heart.

D'ARTAGNAN

My heart already has a hole through
it.

Constance raises her eyes to heaven.

CONSTANCE

You've lost a lot of blood. You're
not thinking clearly.

D'ARTAGNAN

I haven't had a clear thought since
the day I first saw you.

CONSTANCE

You weren't pierced by Cupid's
arrow, merely bonked on the noggin
with a beetle.

They smile at one another.

D'ARTAGNAN

I've been hit many times in my life
but no other blow made me want to
love.

CONSTANCE

You speak very quickly of love,
monsieur.

D'ARTAGNAN

Well love has come very quickly to me and for the first time.

He takes her hand. She gently pushes his away.

CONSTANCE

Please stop moving. How am I to...

Constance freezes. On the bloody sheet which wrapped d'Artagnan's wound, she sees the embroidered eagle with crossed swords - the De Valcour coat of arms.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Where did you find this sheet?

D'ARTAGNAN

At Isabelle de Valcour's domain.

CONSTANCE

Do you... do you know her?

D'ARTAGNAN

She was assassinated a few days ago. A woman has taken her place. She's the one who tried to kill me!

CONSTANCE

(going white)

My God...

D'ARTAGNAN

Constance. What's going on?

CONSTANCE

We must warn the Queen.

D'ARTAGNAN

The Queen?!

CONSTANCE

Isabelle de Valcour was the Duke of Buckingham's messenger. It's a trap. They're going to assassinate him.

EXT. STREET BEHIND THE ABBAYE DU VAL DE GRACE - DAY

A carriage halts outside the discreet entrance to an abbaye. The Duke of Buckingham steps out, accompanied by two guards. They are welcomed by a priest, Père ARNOUX.

BUCKINGHAM

Father.

PÈRE ARNOUX

It's an honor to welcome you, My
Lord.

Buckingham turns to his men.

BUCKINGHAM

Wait for me here.

EXT. ABBAYE DU VAL DE GRACE - CLOISTER AND GARDEN - DAY

Buckingham and the priest walk along the cloister. The Abbé shows the Duke to a door. He opens it and the Duke walks into...

INT. ABBAYE DU VAL DE GRACE - PILLAR ROOM - DAY

...a small room with a fireplace with a fire burning amid four pillars. The Queen is waiting for him. She turns around upon hearing him. He quickly gets to his knees.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Duke. What madness has brought you
here? You've put us both in peril.

The Duke rises. Obviously surprised.

BUCKINGHAM

I'd risk my life and honor for you
in a second. But I answered your
invitation.

Anne of Austria steps back. There is fear in her eyes now.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

My invitation?

Buckingham freezes - he understands.

BUCKINGHAM

Where are your men?!

Shots are heard from outside, echoing through the cloister. The Queen stifles a scream.

Buckingham takes the Queen's hand and leads her outside.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

Follow me!

EXT. ABBAYE DU VAL DE GRACE - CLOISTER - DAY

More shots ring out in the alcoves. Buckingham stops - he and the Queen turn around and run the other way.

BUCKINGHAM

This way!

Running in the other directions, they approach two masked men with three-corner hats, swords drawn, running at them. The Queen screams in terror.

Buckingham stands in front of her and draws his sword. The men engage him in combat. Buckingham retreats, fighting for all he's worth. He kills one man. He backs up, the Queen standing behind him.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Duke!

Buckingham turns around. Rochefort and his henchman appear behind them.

Trapped between them, the Duke and the Queen back up toward the cloister garden. The second man in a three-corner hat rushes Buckingham, but the latter kills him by stabbing him through the throat.

Rochefort's accomplice uses the opportunity to come at Buckingham, and hits him in the back. The Duke falls to the ground. The Queen screams. The henchman comes forward to finish him off but the Duke throws himself forward and puts his sword through him.

Buckingham rises, wounded. He turns around. Rochefort is holding the Queen hostage. A dagger at her throat.

ROCHEFORT

Put down your weapon or I'll kill her.

The two men stare each other down.

BUCKINGHAM

Never fear, Madame. It's my life they want. I hope you can forgive me for loving you.

Buckingham then plants his sword in the ground and kneels to surrender. A shot rings out.

It's Aramis! He has fired in the air. Followed by Porthos and d'Artagnan, he rushes into the cloister, muskets at the ready.

Their barrels aimed at Rochefort, they slowly come toward him.

ARAMIS

Drop your weapon. Now.

Surrounded, Rochefort drops the dagger. The Queen steps away, trembling. D'Artagnan recognizes Rochefort.

D'ARTAGNAN

It's him! The man who kidnapped the Countess de Valcour!

Buckingham seizes his sword, and stabs Rochefort through the heart - he collapses. Dead.

BUCKINGHAM

(in English)

That'll teach you to pick on women.

INT. ABBAYE DU VAL DE GRACE - CHAPEL - DAY

Buckingham is saying his farewells to the Queen.

BUCKINGHAM

I read the fear of losing me in your eyes.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

If your love for me had caused your death, I would never get over it. Leave. And never come back.

BUCKINGHAM

If you weep for me, then you do love me.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

I am the King's wife and I will not betray him. Forget me. Forget this love which may never be.

BUCKINGHAM

Ask me never to return and I shall obey. But do not ask me to stop loving you. I couldn't live anymore.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Then let your leaving be a token of your love for me.

BUCKINGHAM

If you will give me some token, so
I can be sure I wasn't dreaming.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Will you leave if I give you what
you ask?

BUCKINGHAM

Immediately.

The Queen removes her diamond-studded necklace and hands it
to him.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Now leave, and never come back. I
implore you.

The Duke exits. The Queen walks to the Musketeers.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA (CONT'D)

We are now bound by a secret.

The Musketeers nod respectfully.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA (CONT'D)

I shall not live long enough to
repay you. If you ever need the
Queen of France, rest assured she
shall be there for you.

Aramis coughs softly.

ARAMIS

Your Majesty, I'm afraid that day
may come sooner than you think.

The Queen looks at him, puzzled.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

There was another victim in last
night's plot. A Musketeer who is to
be decapitated tomorrow for a crime
he did not commit.

EXT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - NIGHT

D'Artagnan, exhausted, rides his horse up the street toward
the Bonacieux house.

INT. COURTYARD BONACIEUX HOUSE - NIGHT

D'Artagnan rides into the yard and up to the house. All seems to be sleeping. Suddenly, the door opens. It's Constance! Up all night, her face is weary and imploring.

D'ARTAGNAN
The Queen is safe.

Constance breathes a heavy sigh of relief.

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - COURTYARD - NIGHT

D'Artagnan and Constance stand side by side in the courtyard. Behind them, the sun is setting. Sheets are billowing in the wind on the line nearby.

D'ARTAGNAN
The Queen said, "Give me some token of your love," and she gave him the diamond studs. Before leaving, the Duke said "I'm leaving but I shall keep you close to my heart."

Constance is moved.

CONSTANCE
It's so sad.

D'ARTAGNAN
Quite right. She should have kissed him.

CONSTANCE
That's not what I meant!

P.O.V. REVEAL: there is a man hiding behind the sheets, spying on them. It's Monsieur Bonacieux.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Her life is not her own. She's Queen of France.

D'ARTAGNAN
But you are not.

They lock eyes.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
I can see I've touched your heart. You're blushing.

CONSTANCE

You're mistaken about my flush cheeks. It's merely modesty, with respect to your compliments.

Monsieur Bonacieux has seen enough. He slinks away in silence.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

Bootsteps on the wooden floor. The King marches briskly down a corridor in the royal palace. Everyone makes way.

INT. LOUVRE - QUEEN'S QUARTERS - DAY

The Queen is in her room, is being dressed by Constance.

The door flies open and the King barges in. The Queen turns around, alarmed.

The King dismisses Constance, who rushes out.

LOUIS XIII

What were you doing last night at Val de Grâce?

La Reine tenses up.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

I was with Abbé Arnoux.

LOUIS XIII

Is that right? Or was it Buckingham under that soutane?!

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

What?! Whatever do you mean?

LOUIS XIII

What everyone in Paris is saying!

The King tosses the lampoon to the Queen. A bawdy caricature of Buckingham and the Queen in the throes of lovemaking.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Was it the Cardinal who brought you this disgraceful tripe?

LOUIS XIII

What does that matter? Answer me, madame!

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
I thought so. And what does that
snake accuse me of?

LOUIS XIII
Of giving diamond studs to the
Englishman!

The Queen rises, walks to a desk drawer, pulls out a jewelry box and, trembling, hands it to the King.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
Here you are! Open this box if you
have so little trust in me!

The King is caught up short, hesitates.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Make your verification,
and by so doing show how little you
respect me! Apparently your wife's
word is less to you than anyone who
comes along!

The King is daunted, takes a step backward, refusing to take the box.

LOUIS XIII
Very well. But these rumors must be
squelched. At Gaston's marriage
next Saturday, please appear
wearing your diamond studs.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
Very well, sire. If that is your
will.

LOUIS XIII
As for your Musketeer, he killed a
comtesse and he will be
decapitated. That, too, is my will.

The King leaves the room.

Constance enters just as the Queen breaks down, suddenly not well.

At her feet, the box is open. Empty.

EXT. PLACE DE GRÈVE - EVENING

Sundown in Paris. At the Place de Grève, workers busily build a scaffold.

Hammering echoes all around.

INT. BUREAU DE RICHELIEU - NIGHT

Richelieu is at his desk, writing. Milady is there with him.

RICHELIEU

You leave for London tonight. Be at the first ball the Duke is to attend. He'll have the diamond studs.

MILADY

He's one of England's most protected men.

RICHELIEU

And so it will be a very costly mission.

Richelieu rises and hands Milady a treasury bond.

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

See my treasurer and he will pay you. You'll be paid as much again if you're back before Saturday, Gaston's wedding.

Milady looks at the bond, and the amount. Richelieu walks to the window, glances at the scaffold.

MILADY

The King has not pardoned the Musketeer.

RICHELIEU

He's more concerned with his own fate than that of his men. As am I. Don't disappoint me.

MILADY

I'm sorry I can't attend that execution.

RICHELIEU

Fetch me back those diamond studs and you'll attend the Queen's.

INT. CHATELET PRISON - CELL - DAWN

Alone in his cell, Athos is writing a letter. His plume scratches the parchment.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 Dear friends, don't be sad. This is
 a good day to die.

CUT TO:

Athos' hair is being cut to expose his neck.

INT. CHATELET PRISON - CORRIDORS - DAY

Athos is escorted along the corridors inside the prison.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 I gave all I had during my
 lifetime. Death can take nothing
 more from me.

INT. CHATELET PRISON - CHAPEL - DAY

Athos is praying with a pastor.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 Aramis, I leave you my crucifix. I
 never knew how to use it properly.
 I'm sure you'll make good use of
 it.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

Athos, hands tied behind his back, is loaded on to a cart
 making its way through the streets of Paris.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 Porthos, you are always late, I
 leave you my watch. I'm sure you'll
 make good use of it.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - PLACE DE GRÈVE - DAY

The cart enters the Place de Grève. A crowd has gathered. It
 passes in front of the Musketeers, who doff their hats.

Athos looks at his friends. Tréville, Aramis, Porthos and
 d'Artagnan are there.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 D'Artagnan, though I wasn't lucky
 enough to know you well, I leave
 you my sword. I'm sure you too will
 make good use of it.

Athos is led off the cart. Men escort him to the scaffold.

ATHOS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 We used to be the three Musketeers.
 Now that you're here, you will
 still be three.

The executioner is waiting. Athos looks out at the crowd. His whole company is there. The executioner blindfolds him.

ATHOS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 My friends. I leave lighthearted,
 head held high and a smile at my
 lips. Drink to my health. I'll make
 good use of it. Long live the King
 and long live France.

POV Athos: only the white cloth is visible. The sound of his breathing. The executioner's footsteps. The noise in the crowd.

The executioner lowers Athos' head on the block. Desperation in the eyes of Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan.

The executioner raises his sword over Athos. Total silence.

BANG!!!

Struck by a bullet to the forehead, the executioner reels. The sword clatters to the ground.

It's chaos in the square. Everyone is shouting. The musketeers look on, in shock, amidst the shouting and the confusion.

POV Athos: All is white. The sound of the executioner's body landing with a thud. Yelling and screaming in the crowd. Whinnying is heard. More shots ring out.

A hand lands on Athos' shoulder.

MAN (O.S.)
 Put your head down and walk.

POV Athos: he is led through the crowd. The white cloth. Cobblestones, feet. Screaming. Yelling. Suddenly, a trap door in the ground. A black hole. He's shoved down into it.

INT. CATACOMBS - CORRIDORS - DAY

POV Athos: Athos stumbles in the darkness. Steps, feet, heavy breathing. He is stood back up.

MAN (O.S.)
On your feet.

POV Athos: He is led blindly down a dark, damp narrow passage. Muffled footsteps. In the light of a torch, rows of skulls.

ATHOS
Who are you?

POV Athos: He is led into a room.

INT. CATACOMBS - ROOM - DAY

He is seated on a chair. He can see a few torches flickering. The ground is damp. It's cold.

Voices are echoing far-off. A Gregorian chant, in Latin. (Psalm 115)

VOICES SINGING (O.S.)
*Vota mea Domino reddam in confectu
omnis populi ejus, in atriis domûs
Domini...*

EXT. MUSKETEER HOUSE - DAY

The Musketeers are all gathered in the yard. It's a mess. Everyone is telling what they saw. Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan are there among the others.

Finally, De Tréville arrives. They stand aside to let him through. He stops in front of Porthos and Aramis.

DE TRÉVILLE
This is sedition! I forbade you!

ARAMIS
I swear, Capitaine. On my head and that of my fellow Musketeers, we had no part in this.

Tréville looks at his men. Everyone is in shock. He turns to Aramis, a question in his eyes.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)
I know only one man in this land who can hit his target from six hundred feet.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Athos' blindfold is taken off. The bright light of a torch blinds him for a moment.

The man who has taken the blindfold off, holding a musket, bushy beard and the right ear missing (Achille BRANDICOURT), steps away. Several men approach. Among them, a huge man with the eyes of a hawk (Horace SAINT-BLANCARD).

SAINT-BLANCARD

Your brother convinced us you were worth saving.

ATHOS

Benjamin?

Athos turns and discovers BENJAMIN DE LA FÈRE. He rises, a little wobbly on his feet, throws his arms around him.

BENJAMIN

I told you we'd meet again in hell.

ATHOS

I guess I'm supposed to say thank you.

Athos looks at the two other men.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

Saint-Blancard, Brandicourt... I never thought I'd have the pleasure of seeing you again.

The men laugh. Athos pauses a moment, listening to the Gregorian chant, which is more present now that the door is open.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

A Catholic chant. Have you converted?

Brandicourt raises his musket.

BRANDICOURT

To battle an enemy, you must know him well.

ARAMIS (O.S.)

Achille Brandicourt. The only man who's a better shot than I.

EXT. MUSKETEER HOUSE - DAY

PORTHOS
 (to d'Artagnan)
 He's Horace Saint-Blancard's right-
 hand man.

A noise comes up behind. Some Musketeers have drawn their swords at the entrance to the building. Raised voices. De Tréville makes his way over.

Behind him are Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Who is Saint-Blancard?

ARAMIS
 The head of the protestant rebels
 in La Rochelle.

Tréville gets to the door. Musketeers are facing the Cardinal's guard.

MUSKETEER
 One more step and I'll stick you!!!

DE TRÉVILLE
 That's enough!

Tréville moves in front of his men, who lower their swords. He faces off with the leader of the Cardinal's guard. A dozen men in arms are behind him.

The guard commander hands him an edict.

GUARD COMMANDER
 Capitaine. An edict from Cardinal
 de Richelieu.

Tréville reads the paper. He goes blank.

DE TRÉVILLE
 (to his men)
 Close the gates.

INT. CATACOMBS - DAY

Athos is with Benjamin and Horace Saint-Blancard.

SAINT-BLANCARD
 Having failed to make a Catholic
 head, they decided on taking a
 Protestant one.

ATHOS

In La Rochelle they don't execute murderers?

SAINT-BLANCARD

In La Rochelle we only punish guilty men!

BENJAMIN

Tréville couldn't help you. Neither could your King. Richelieu alone governs this country.

Pause. The two men look each other over.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

We're going to create an autonomous protestant republic. Join us. Join your own people.

ATHOS

My people?

SAINT-BLANCARD

War is coming. You must choose sides, Armand.

INT. MUSKETEER HOUSE - DAY

Tréville has his back to the closed door. He is holding the paper.

DE TRÉVILLE

We've been accused of freeing Athos. No one is allowed to leave!

The Musketeers all react angrily.

DE TRÉVILLE (CONT'D)

Silence! I'm going to the King to plead our cause. Aramis, Porthos, Quillac and Bercquet: anybody lifts an eyebrow, shoot him down.

The men whose names were called get into position.

DE TRÉVILLE (CONT'D)

Uzan and Ventadour, you're with me.

Tréville walks toward his horse. He stops in front of d'Artagnan.

DE TRÉVILLE (CONT'D)
 Only Musketeers are quarantined. Go
 home, d'Artagnan.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

D'Artagnan, alone and disheartened, threads his way through
 the passers-by.

A woman, her face hidden by a hood, walks along behind him.
 She catches up to him.

WOMAN
 Don't stop walking.

D'Artagnan turns. He recognizes Constance.

CONSTANCE
 Walk to Rue Saint-Jacques. Take a
 right and meet me at the Fontaine
 du Haut-Pas.

Constance veers off. D'Artagnan keeps walking straight.

EXT. PARIS STREETS - FONTAINE DU HAUT PAS - DAY

Planchet is standing to one side, holding a horse's bridle.
 Further on, d'Artagnan and Constance are in conversation.

D'ARTAGNAN
 London?!

CONSTANCE
 I belong to her Majesty, body and
 soul. Though I'm far inferior to
 her in station, I am now her last
 hope. As you are mine.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Your hopes are my orders. I'll
 leave right away.

Constance hands him a purse.

CONSTANCE
 For the journey. You're a kind and
 courageous young man. Her Majesty
 will show her gratitude.

D'ARTAGNAN
 I've received handsome compensation
 already.

(MORE)

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
 If I make it, you'll kiss me.
 That's more happiness than I ever
 dared aspire to.

CONSTANCE
 I never said I would...

D'ARTAGNAN
 Your eyes have just told me so.
 Don't contradict them.
 (he stops, listens)
 Did you hear?!

CONSTANCE
 What?

D'ARTAGNAN
 Your eyes!

D'Artagnan leans over.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
 They just told me, "My hand is
 spoken for, but my heart shall soon
 be yours."

D'Artagnan walks to Planchet and climbs up on the horse.

CONSTANCE
 Be brave, but please be careful.
 The Queen's honor is in your hands.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Relax, fair Constance. I shall
 return with her diamonds, worthy of
 her trust and your love.

After a last one last look, he turns away from Constance and
 spurs his horse, rides off at a gallop.

EXT. STREET IN BONACIEUX NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Constance marches briskly toward home. She turns down a side
 street. Suddenly, somebody steps out of the shadows. She is
 startled for a moment. It's Athos.

ATHOS
 Don't worry, Madame. I'm a friend
 of d'Artagnan.

EXT. JOURNEY PARIS TO CALAIS - NIGHT / DAY

- D'Artagnan gallops through the rain. At night, he stops at an inn, changes horses, and rides on.

- D'Artagnan crosses through a wood. He rests a moment on the banks of a river, has a bite to eat.

- Daybreak: another inn, another horse. D'Artagnan passes Saint Omer, practically falling asleep on his horse.

EXT. CALAIS HARBORMASTER'S OFFICE - HARBOR - DAY

A mist covers the port, making the silhouettes of sailboats moored there look ghostly.

D'Artagnan walks toward the harbormaster's office. Through the windows, he sees a gentleman in a wig (Lord de Wardes), accompanied by a footman, standing with the harbormaster, who stamps a document and hands it to them.

EXT. CALAIS HARBOR MASTER'S OFFICE - NARROW STREET - EVENING

Lord de Wardes and his footman walk briskly toward the dock. D'Artagnan joins them on a narrow street.

D'ARTAGNAN

Gentlemen, I need you to give me your pass, because I don't have one and I require it.

LORD DE WARDES

Excuse me?

D'ARTAGNAN

(to the footman:)
Translate that, please.

THE FOOTMAN

(to De Wardes:)
He wants me to give him your consular pass to England.

LORD DE WARDES

Are you joking?

D'Artagnan draws his sword.

D'ARTAGNAN

Gentlemen. I have no desire to leave your wives without a husband and your children without a father.

(MORE)

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
 But I must be in London tomorrow
 and I have no time for a long
 conversation. Come on. The letter.

The Lord and the footman raise their hands. D'Artagnan is about to seize the letter when...

DE WARDES' GUARD (O.S.)
 Some difficulty, my Lord?

D'Artagnan turns around - two men, each with his sword drawn.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Who are they?

THE FOOTMAN
 Lord De Wardes' personal guard.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Ah.

LORD DE WARDES
 (to his men)
 Kill him.

The two men pounce on d'Artagnan, who blocks their blows without trying to attack.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Please! I told you, I don't want to
 kill anyone! Tell them!

THE FOOTMAN
 (translating, in English:)
 He doesn't want to kill you.

D'ARTAGNAN
 No kill! No kill!

DE WARDES' GUARD
 Shut your mouth when you're about
 to die.

D'ARTAGNAN
 What did he say?

D'Artagnan, fighting off the blows, doesn't see Lord de Wardes take out a pistol and point it at his back. But just as he's about to fire, the point of a sword blade pierces his throat!

Everyone turns around at the new assailant. Face hidden by a scarf, the stranger is quick as lightning, strikes down the first guard, then the second. They both fall dead, practically at the same time.

Flabbergasted, d'Artagnan hasn't even had time to react. The stranger turns to the footman, who hands him the letter.

STRANGER

Please.

The footman hands him the letter. The stranger turns to d'Artagnan. He takes off his scarf. It's Athos!

ATHOS

I thought I heard you say you were in a hurry.

D'ARTAGNAN

ATHOS!!!

He rushes over and embraces him. It's quite a sight - two men hugging amid the corpses.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

I watched you die and now you've saved me.

Athos smiles.

ATHOS

I have a thousand things to tell you. But I think we have a boat to catch.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Night. A ship sailing the Channel.

INT. SHIP - CABINS - HOLD - NIGHT

Athos and d'Artagnan come down a narrow staircase leading to the cabins. Athos opens the door to the hold - dozens of wine casks are lined up. He looks them over like holy relics.

ATHOS

These casks would be offended if we didn't pay them homage.

D'ARTAGNAN

Don't you think we...

ATHOS

We're French. We have an awful reputation to uphold.

Athos pops the top off a cask.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

My thoughts are never so clear as when there's wine. So tell me the whole story.

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

Night. The ship is sailing over the Channel.

INT. SHIP - HOLD - NIGHT

Athos and d'Artagnan are leaning against a cask.

ATHOS

(a little drunk)

Careful, d'Artagnan, careful. The women of Paris are worse than rifles!

D'ARTAGNAN

You'll change your mind when you get to know Constance like I do.

ATHOS

Woman was created to be our undoing. All our suffering is owed to them.

D'ARTAGNAN

You always speak of "suffering," my dear Athos. That does not become you. Haven't you ever loved anyone?

Athos' eyes suddenly flash with fire, but it's over in an instant. He is once again muted and vague.

ATHOS

Every man has thought, like you do, that he was loved. And every single one was mistaken.

D'ARTAGNAN

I can hardly believe that love always leads us down the wrong path.

Athos laughs bitterly. He downs his wine.

ATHOS

Let me tell you a story.

D'ARTAGNAN

One that happened to you?

ATHOS

To a friend of mine, a long time ago. A young Comte. He had fought in the war, but his heart remained noble and sincere.

FLASHBACK: The image is partially hidden, veiled, altered, like a memory that's been partially erased. Details, flashes. The faces of the characters are never seen.

ATHOS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

One day, as he was riding over his estate, he met a young woman. She wasn't just pleasing, she was inebriating. Seeing her there, so beautiful, so pure, he didn't even ask where she came from.

FLASHBACK: The figure of the Comte and the young woman on horseback. Her smile. Her hair. Her hands.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

My friend might have seduced her, or taken her by force. But he was an honest man and, consumed by love, he married her.

FLASHBACK: A wedding. The joined hands of the bride and groom. A dance at night. They embrace.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

She hated crowds and worldly things. They married in secret, without their families. They lived together a year. Withdrawn. Alone together. Refusing every invitation. They were happy, a happiness that cannot last...

D'ARTAGNAN

What happened?

ATHOS

The young Comte had a brother. An attorney in Bordeaux, who got married as well.

(MORE)

ATHOS (CONT'D)

For the Comte, it was impossible not to attend the ceremony. For once, his young wife agreed to go with him. When he introduced her to his brother, he went white. The beautiful girl reminded him of someone he'd known in Paris. The Marquise de Bois d'Arcy. The Comte thought his brother was jealous, thrown by her beauty. But that evening, she admitted it. She was, indeed, the woman his brother had known. But... She was no longer that woman. She had run away, because she had killed her husband.

D'Artagnan stiffens.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

Married to the Marquis at 15, he was constantly vile and base. One evening, when he was trying to take what she wouldn't give him, she defended herself.

FLASHBACK: The partially hidden Marquis is attacking his wife. She falls. Gets back up. He is upon her. There is a knife on a table...

ATHOS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

In the end she killed him. Terrified, sure she would be convicted, she ran away and assumed another identity. She began a life of lies. The angel was therefore a demon.

D'ARTAGNAN

But... What did the Comte do then?

ATHOS

(choked up)

He was a great lord. He was fond of his rank and his heritage, and his title, but mostly wounded in his pride that he'd been betrayed. He turned the fugitive over to her judges.

D'ARTAGNAN

No!

FLASHBACK: The Comte's young wife is branded with an iron - a fleur de lis on her shoulder. She screams.

ATHOS (O.S.)
 She was tried and sentenced to be
 branded and then hanged.

FLASHBACK: The Comte attends the hanging of his wife. A hood
 over her face, the trap door suddenly opens under her feet.

CUT TO:

The two men sit in silence. D'Artagnan seems troubled by this
 terrifying story.

D'ARTAGNAN
 So she died?

Athos nods.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
 And the Comte?

ATHOS
 Racked with guilt, he felt he'd
 betrayed much more than he had been
 betrayed. He abandoned his life as
 a lord, and he went to war again.
 Death is small consolation for
 having loved.

EXT. SHIP - DECK - AUBE

The sun rises on the coast of England.

At the bow of the ship, Athos and d'Artagnan see the cliffs
 of Dover appearing in the mist.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Finally, here we are!

EXT. DOVER - COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Athos and d'Artagnan are galloping briskly on fresh horses.
 They exit Dover and ride into a lush green countryside.

A sign says "*ROYAL CITY OF LONDON, 80 Miles*"

EXT. GROVE - DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - NIGHT

POV: Carriages arrive at the gates of a palace. The
passengers, English nobles, are all wearing theatrical
costumes and masks.

Each presents an invitation, which are being meticulously checked by two armed guards stationed at the entrance.

D'ARTAGNAN

Well?

ATHOS

(in dismay)

Well there are enough soldiers here for a crusade to Jerusalem.

Hiding in the shadows, Athos watches through a spy glass. Behind its high gates, Aперthorpe Palace is an immense Tudor-style mansion. Armed soldiers are stationed everywhere.

D'ARTAGNAN

"Please" probably won't be enough, right?

Athos looks at d'Artagnan, almost amused. He takes out his dagger.

ATHOS

Along with this, it ought to suffice.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - COURTYARD (BALL) - NIGHT

At the same time, a young woman walks into a huge courtyard. Everywhere are masks, laughter and noise. Behind her Arlequin mask, her eyes are recognizable. It's MILADY.

Before an orchestra, guests are dancing a very lively chaconne. Among the group, wearing a splendid silverthread Neptune costume, behind a Trident mask is the Duke of Buckingham. Judging from his laughter and his awkward footwork, there can be no doubt - he's very nearly drunk.

Milady joins the dancers. Her Harlequin costume shows off her attractive figure. The men present take notice, thrilled and the women are jealous. Milady approaches the Duke, they brush up against one another. They dance. Finally, they meet eyes.

MILADY

I see some irony in your choice of costume, sir.

BUCKINGHAM

Really?

MILADY

It would be convenient to be God of the Sea, when invading France.

Buckingham laughs out loud.

BUCKINGHAM
Do I know you, Arlequino?

MILADY
Perhaps.

Milady observes the Duke. Under the collar of his costume, she spots the chain he's wearing around his neck - the Queen's diamond-studded necklace.

BUCKINGHAM
I hear a hint of an accent.
Italiano?

MILADY
Sono innamorata dell'Italia, ma no.
(I'm in love with Italy - but no.)

BUCKINGHAM
A Lady of Spain then?

MILADY
El viento cambia todos los días, la mujer cada hora y cambio cada segundo, pero no soy española.
(The wind changes every day, women change every hour, I change every second but I'm not Spanish.)

The Duke smiles, charmed.

BUCKINGHAM
Sie sind viel gereist.
(You are well-traveled)

MILADY
I do love to discover new places,
dear Prince.

Through their masks, they exchange a glance.

BUCKINGHAM
I need a drink. Would you join me,
Arlequino.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A carriage rolls up to the entrance. Athos has taken the place of the coachman. A door opens and d'Artagnan gets out, still pulling on a Venetian costume.

Athos rides on toward a clearing further on, where the coaches are parked and the coachmen wait, while d'Artagnan puts on his mask and walks confidently toward the entrance.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - PRIVATE COURT - NIGHT

Buckingham ushers Milady into a private drawing room adjacent to the ballroom. The muffled sound of the orchestra can be heard.

BUCKINGHAM
The calm after the storm.
(smiling)
Or before it, as the case may be.

Buckingham serves Milady a glass of champagne, then drinks straight from the bottle.

MILADY
(laughing)
Well! You drink like someone who
has something to forget, Neptune.

Buckingham smiles.

BUCKINGHAM
So true.

They are alone. A pregnant pause.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)
You're not afraid to be alone with
me?

MILADY
You're the one who should be
afraid.

Buckingham then grabs Milady by the waist and pulls her close to kiss her.

EXT. PALACE - CLEARING - NIGHT

In the clearing, the carriages are waiting. The coachmen are gathered in small groups, talking.

Among them, Athos.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - COURTYARD (BALL) - NIGHT

Music. Crowd. Laughter. D'Artagnan is getting dizzy. How can he recognize Buckingham among hundreds of masks? Helpless, shoved by dancers, he looks around in vain at all the dancing men, exploding in peels of laughter, seducing the ladies, drinking.

D'Artagnan's eyes stop on the raised platform where the musicians are. A sudden idea.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - PRIVATE COURTYARD - NIGHT

Buckingham's face is buried in Milady's cleavage, kissing her passionately.

Milady moans in pleasure but her eyes reflect a very different sentiment. Her left hand caresses the back of the Duke's neck. The diamond studded necklace is gleaming there.

Milady slips her other hand slips under her cape, producing a dagger, which she expertly slips under the clasp of the necklace.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - COURTYARD (BALL) - NIGHT

D'Artagnan takes a deep breath, tears off his mask, cuts through the crowd and hops up on the orchestra platform. Knocked off balance, one of them falls. Startled eyes turn toward the orchestra which has suddenly stopped playing. D'Artagnan draws his sword and holds it out in front of him. To the absolute shock of the hundreds of guests... he starts singing at the top of his lungs.

D'ARTAGNAN

Bold Cadets of Gascony, Of Carbon
de Castel-Jaloux! Brawling and
swaggering boastfully, The bold
cadets of Gascony!!

MAN

My God! A Frenchman!

Every man present draws his sword.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - PRIVATE COURTYARD - NIGHT

D'ARTAGNAN (O.S.)

Eagle-eyed and stork-like feet,
Cat's mustache and wolf-like
teeth...

Hearing the song, Buckingham suddenly comes to attention.

BUCKINGHAM
What in the...?!

Milady barely has time to hide the dagger.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)
Sorry. I must...

Buckingham runs out, leaving her there. Milady watches him go.

In her hand is the diamond-studded necklace.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - COURTYARD (BALL) - NIGHT

D'Artagnan is being attacked from every quarter. He defends himself as well as he can, from up on the platform, then a musket shot rings out in the room.

Sudden silence. All eyes turn to Buckingham, who has just fired into the air. He hands the gun back to a soldier and walks slowly to d'Artagnan on the platform. They look each other up and down.

BUCKINGHAM
What the hell are you doing here?

He signals d'Artagnan to follow him. Buckingham claps his hands and the musicians ease back into their playing.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)
Has something happened to the Queen?

D'ARTAGNAN
No, milord. But she is in great danger and only you can help her.

BUCKINGHAM
Me?

D'ARTAGNAN
On orders from the King, this Saturday she must attend the wedding of Gaston de France, wearing a certain diamond studded necklace, which you know about.

Buckingham exhales, reassured.

BUCKINGHAM

The Queen gave it to me, the Queen
can have it back. Her will be done.

Buckingham puts his hand on his neck and...

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

...!

The necklace is gone. The Duke lets loose a cry of rage.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

I'm so stupid.

The party is once again in full swing.

BUCKINGHAM (CONT'D)

A woman. Ravishing. Brown hair with
light eyes. An Arlequin costume.

After hesitating a moment, d'Artagnan rushes into the fray.

D'Artagnan elbows his way among the guests. There are masks
everywhere, Harlequins everywhere. With no warning, he tears
masks off, searching for the culprit.

HARLEQUIN MAN

What the...

But d'Artagnan has already moved on. He looks in every
direction. It's like searching for a needle in a haystack. He
jumps up on a table and looks all around. He can see
Buckingham talking to some guards who make their way through
the crowd as well, trying to find Milady.

Suddenly d'Artagnan's gaze stops on a Harlequin making haste
for the exit. Feeling the eyes on her back, the Harlequin
turns around for a moment.

It's her.

EXT. PALACE - CLEARING - NIGHT

Athos' eyes are drawn to the woman with the Venetian mask
(Milady) rushing out of the service entrance, shoving people
aside. When he sees d'Artagnan racing after her, he rushes
over to intercept her.

ATHOS

Hey!

They are toe-to-toe.

They meet eyes for a fraction of a second, which seems to last a lifetime. Milady freezes behind her mask. As if seeing a ghost. And Athos also seems to somehow lose his bearing.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

Don't move...

Athos can't finish his sentence. Milady stabs him with her dagger.

EXT. DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S PALACE - NIGHT

D'Artagnan rushes to Athos.

D'ARTAGNAN

ATHOS!!!

He runs over and leans over his friend.

ATHOS

(holding his side and
wincing)

Catch her!

But Milady is already galloping away.

EXT. CITY OF LONDON - NIGHT

D'Artagnan gallops through the night like a madman. He spurs the horse to go faster than he's ever gone.

He gets up to the top of a slope. He pulls up sharply, tries to quiet his breathing so he can hear.

Below, in the distance, the sound of horses' hooves.

EXT. ENGLISH PORT - NIGHT

Milady gets to the banks of the Thames. She rides along the banks.

Hunkered down practically flat on his breathless horse, d'Artagnan appears behind her at a turn in the bank. He's caught up with her.

He's very close.

Milady turns her horse, pistol in hand. She aims and fires. The bullet takes out the epaulette off d'Artagnan's jacket.

The gunshot has spooked the horses. They both rear up.

Milady spurs her horse, but too late. D'Artagnan is upon her. He jumps on to Milady's horse, pressed to her back. He tries to grab the reins!

MILADY

...!

Milady struggles. Her horse rears and whinnies furiously, turning around in a circle. D'Artagnan and Milady are thrown on to the riverbank.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan, knocked half-unconscious, pushes himself up by the elbow, his ears ringing. The horses are whinnying wildly in the night like frightened cattle. A little further on, Milady, also shaken up, crawls toward the pistol which is spinning on the bank.

D'Artagnan leaps to his feet, staggers up to her, sword first.

D'ARTAGNAN

(out of breath)

Don't even think about it.

Milady starts to make a move but the blade of d'Artagnan's sword is at her throat. They look at one another. Buckingham and his squadron ride up along the bank.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

The diamonds. Now.

Milady takes off the diamond studs she is wearing around her neck and slips them around d'Artagnan's sword. He takes them. Milady rises. They catch their breath, staring intently at one another.

MILADY

I keep running into you. Do you find me so attractive?

Milady takes a step back. She is at the edge of the riverbank. The black water of the Thames is at her back.

D'ARTAGNAN

For whom do you work, madame?

MILADY

Probably the devil.

Buckingham is a mere thirty feet away.

MILADY (CONT'D)
 If you want to kill me, you'd
 better do it now.

D'ARTAGNAN
 I never kill an unarmed man.
 Especially if he's a woman.

Milady smiles.

MILADY
 There is a light in your eyes,
 d'Artagnan. And from that light
 I'll make a blaze to devour you.

Suddenly: Milady crosses her arms and lets herself fall
 backward.

D'ARTAGNAN
 NO!!!

Milady's body hits the black water of the Thames. D'Artagnan
 is about to rush in after her but Buckingham's firm hand
 holds him back.

BUCKINGHAM
 Let her die.

Dragged like Ophelia in her heavy gown, Milady sinks into the
 river. A swirl of water in the dark, then nothing.

Milady has disappeared.

EXT. PARIS - SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS - DAY

The sun is reflecting on the stained glass windows of the
 Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois church.

The crowd has gathered already.

The bells of the central tower chime. It's noon.

INT. LOUVRE - CORRIDORS - DAY

Richelieu strides down a hallway in the Louvre. He is joined
 by a soldier of his guard - the redhead with the broken nose
 (seen in the attack at the Valcour home).

REDHEAD SOLDIER
 Your Eminence.

Richelieu gives him an inquiring look.

REDHEAD SOLDIER (CONT'D)
The boat arrived at Calais, but she
was not on board.

Dissatisfied, Richelieu walks out, followed by his second.

INT. LOUVRE - CORRIDORS - DAY

The groom, Gaston de France, golden doublet and breastplate, exits his quarters, along with his escort.

In a perfectly timed ballet, they make their way to Marie de Médicis' quarters.

Mother and son now walk side by side.

MARIE DE MEDICIS
Are you ready for the most
important moment of your life?

Gaston's only answer is an enigmatic smile.

EXT. LOUVRE - ROYAL COURT - DAY

Gaston and his mother come down the majestic stairway toward the interior court of the Louvre. Richelieu awaits them.

Though Marie de Médicis hardly looks at the Cardinal, the two men exchange a chilly greeting.

GASTON
Your Eminence...

RICHELIEU
Monsieur.

Gaston and his mother walk toward a waiting coach.

At the top of the steps, the doors open once again. Halberds pound the ground.

COURT ATTENDANT
The King!

INT. LOUVRE - ANNE OF AUSTRIA'S QUARTERS - DAY

The Queen, in a splendid gown for the wedding, is flanked by her ladies in waiting.

But she is more wan than ever. On the table of her boudoir table, the empty box for the diamond studded necklace.

A knock on the door. A servant appears.

CHAMBER VALET
The King is about, Your Majesty.

The servant withdraws.

The Queen turns slowly toward Constance Bonacieux. She is keeping watch at the window. But the courtyard below is desperately empty. Constance lowers her eyes. The Queen rises, defeated.

CONSTANCE
I am so very sorry, Madame.

EXT. PARIS - BANKS OF THE SEINE - DAY

Hoofbeats come to an abrupt halt in a cloud of dust. D'Artagnan and Athos can see the Louvre in the distance.

D'ARTAGNAN
We're here!

Athos winces, holding his side. He is in more and more pain from his wound.

ATHOS
(exhausted)
Go on without me. I'm slowing you down.

D'Artagnan hesitates.

ATHOS (CONT'D)
Hurry! The Queen is waiting!

D'Artagnan spurs his horse and gallops away.

EXT. LOUVRE - ROYAL COURT - DAY

Louis XIII joins Richelieu at the base of the stairway.

RICHELIEU
Sire.

LOUIS XIII
Eminence. Have you seen my brother?

Richelieu nods.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
Does he appear to have pardoned me
for marrying him?

RICHELIEU
He appeared to be leaving for the
front.

LOUIS XIII
He'll learn that marriage is a war
with no victor.

RICHELIEU
Because everyone triumphs.

COURT ATTENDANT (O.S.)
The Queen!

The Queen appears at the top of the stairs. She is wearing a magnificent pearl necklace. Seeing it, the King goes white and Richelieu smiles, barely concealing his relief.

RICHELIEU
Your Highness is absolutely
ravishing.

The King walks to his wife.

LOUIS XIII
(icy cold)
Madame, why are you not wearing
your diamond studs?

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
I thought I'd wear them at the ball
tonight.

LOUIS XIII
What a foul thought. Go and fetch
them.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
But... your brother is waiting.

LOUIS XIII
He'll wait.

The Queen curtsies and withdraws. Her ladies-in-waiting,
including Constance, follow her.

EXT. PARIS - STREET - DAY

Lots of activity. A thick crowd is blocking the street. D'Artagnan has a world of trouble getting through.

D'ARTAGNAN
Let me by! Let me by!

But his horse rears. D'Artagnan hesitates a moment, then jumps down and leaves his horse behind, elbowing his way through the crowd as quickly as he can.

INT. LOUVRE - QUEEN'S CHAMBER - DAY

The Queen is pacing around, trying to keep up appearances. But she is dizzy and nearly falls. The ladies-in-waiting rush to hold her up. They seat her on a little bench.

Hurried footsteps are heard outside. A servant runs up and leans over to Constance.

SERVANT
(low voice)
Madame, there is a young man who wants to come in. He seems in a great hurry. He nearly stabbed two guards with his sword.

Constance stands up, turns to the Queen.

CONSTANCE
He's here.

INT. LOUVRE - CORRIDORS - DAY

Constance runs down the corridors of the Louvre.

INT. LOUVRE - ENTRANCE - DAY

Constance comes to the door of the Louvre and finds d'Artagnan. She literally rushes him.

CONSTANCE
(out of breath)
Tell me you have it! Tell me or kill me! I couldn't survive, if...

D'ARTAGNAN
I have it.

He hands her the pouch. She clutches it tightly.

CONSTANCE
Thank you. Thank you, my God.

D'ARTAGNAN
"My God" is a little much. "My
love" will do.

They look at one another.

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)
Tell me you love me. Tell me or
kill me! I couldn't survive if...

She interrupts him by kissing him, then dashes off.

CONSTANCE
(without turning around)
See you soon!

D'Artagnan watches her disappear into the shadows of the
Louvre.

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY

Athos walks along the Paris streets. The crowd is teeming. He
leaves his horse with a man.

EXT. LOUVRE - ROYAL COURT - DAY

Louis XIII, tension showing in his face, waits at the bottom
of the stairs.

COURT ATTENDANT
The Queen!

The Queen once again arrives. She is now wearing the diamond-
studded necklace.

Richelieu conceals his reaction when the King, his face all
lit up, turns toward him.

LOUIS XIII
You were right, Eminence! It was
only slander. The Queen deserved
not my wrath but my trust.

He offers his hand to his wife.

EXT. PARIS - SQUARE NEAR LOUVRE - DAY

The King's Musketeers are close by. Aramis suddenly spots d'Artagnan making his way through the crowd.

ARAMIS
D'Artagnan!!!

The Musketeers greet him.

ARAMIS (CONT'D)
Let him through!

They all embrace enthusiastically.

PORTHOS
We thought you were dead. Where were you?

D'ARTAGNAN
In London. With Athos.

PORTHOS
What?!

Drum roll. The King and the Queen emerge from the Louvre. The men stand at attention.

CUT TO:

INT. SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS - DAY

The chorus of monks starts to sing. Everyone looks around. The bride now makes her entrance in the church, filled to overflowing. She walks down the central aisle.

From above the entrance, the huge organ plays in time with her footsteps.

In the first row, Marie de Médicis and Gaston. Behind him, a man leans over and whispers in his ear. It's CHALAIS. Gaston smiles.

At the other side of the choir, the King, the Queen and Richelieu. Behind them in the shadows are their various escorts. Among them are Aramis, Porthos and d'Artagnan.

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

Athos walks on. His hat screwed down on his head and his collar raised, he approaches the church as one of the onlookers.

INT. SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS - NAVE - DAY

Access to the organ is guarded by two armed guards. Emerging from the shadows, monks slit their throats.

The bodies are dragged off among the columns. One of the monks straightens up. We recognize ACHILLE BRANDICOURT.

ABBÉ ROUGON tells the bride and groom to kneel.

The organ begins the melody to Psalm 115. The chorus breaks into that chant.

VOICES SINGING (O.S.)
*Vota mea Domino reddam in confectu
 omnis populi ejus, in atriis domûs
 Domini...*

EXT. SAINT GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS- DAY

Athos is in the street outside the church. The crowd waits patiently for the end of the ceremony. The music and singing can be heard faintly from inside.

Athos suddenly freezes. He has just recognized the psalm he heard in the catacombs...

INT. SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS - DAY

The psalm rings out in the church.

They are saying their vows.

ABBÉ ROUGON
 Gaston de France, Duke of Orléans,
 of Valais and of Anjou, do you take
 Marie de Bourbon, Duchess of
 Montpensier, as your wife?

GASTON
 I do.

CAMERA IN on monks singing the Latin psalm. Among them, under the hood of his habit, is HORACE SAINT-BLANCART!

EXT. SAINT-GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS - DAY

Athos shoves his way through the crowd of onlookers. He walks straight up to the guards.

Among them, Athos recognizes a Musketeer tabard. It's VENTADOUR! (Seen in Sc. 22).

INT. SAINT GERMAIN L'AUXERROIS- DAY

Inside the church, the ceremony continues. Seated in the first row, along with the King, the Queen and Richelieu. Count Chalais is there as well. Abbé Rougon, in his finery, performs the ceremony.

ABBÉ ROUGON

Marie de Bourbon, Duchesse de Montpensier, do you take Gaston de France, Duke of Orleans, of Valois and Anjou as your husband?

DUCHESS DE MONTPENSIER

I do.

The door of the church flies open. A man storms down the aisle. He is wearing the Musketeer tabard and his hat over his eyes. It's Athos.

The Abbé has seen him, but he continues.

ABBÉ ROUGON

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

The crowd rises. The organ starts playing again. The chorus sings.

Athos starts running down the central aisle. Heads turn. Saint-Blancard, in the chorus of monks, notices him. He looks around in desperation. Athos looks up toward the organ. That's when he spots Brandicourt, pointing his rifle at the crowd below.

ATHOS

(yelling:)

Shooter!!! Shooter!!!

POV Brandicourt's rifle: The King snaps his head around toward Athos.

The unknown musketeer's behavior draws the attention of the guards, who rush toward him.

A first shot is fired. A nobleman next to the King goes down. Screams. In the confusion, Athos hurries to the King and knocks him to the ground. Richelieu loses his balance, falls backward. Another shot is fired. Athos is hit.

The Musketeers rush to the King and to Athos. Louis XIII is drenched in blood - but it's Athos', not his own.

ATHOS (CONT'D)

The chorus.

D'Artagnan looks up. He sees a monk coming at them, dagger in hand. He jumps on him before he can get to the Queen.

Chalais, in shock, watches all this happen as if in slow motion.

The Musketeers form a human barrier to protect the King, the Queen and Richelieu. Assailant monks are killed by Aramis. One of the monks (ARDANZA) kills a nobleman with his dagger, then runs off.

Brandicourt comes running from the staircase. He kills a guard, but a host of Musketeers is quickly upon him. Brandicourt is about to slit his own throat when Porthos pins him down.

In the confusion, Saint-Blancard and Ardanza make for the nave. They disappear through a trap door toward the catacombs.

CUT TO:

Athos is wounded, on the ground. His vision is blurring.

He sees Aramis' face, in soft focus, leaning over him.

ARAMIS

Athos?!... Athos?!

BLACK

INT. LOUVRE - KING'S COUNCIL - DAY

Louis XIII is pale. His expression is blank and his eyes are dark. Surrounding him are Richelieu, the young Gaston, Count Chalais, Abbé Rougon, and Captain Tréville.

The King turns to Richelieu.

LOUIS XIII

Comte Montecler d'Auvigné?

RICHELIEU

Died two days ago, sire.

LOUIS XIII

And Beaulieu de Véricourt?

RICHELIEU

Wounded in the head. He won't survive.

LOUIS XIII

Any prisoners?

RICHELIEU

Achille Brandicourt and Nicolas Beaumont. Protestant extremists from La Rochelle. They were in possession of some coded letters which we will decipher. I shall question them myself. They'll give me the names of their accomplices.

Louis XIII rises.

LOUIS XIII

I'm counting on your talents as confessor, Eminence. In the meanwhile, prepare the troops to march on La Rochelle.

A shiver runs through the assembly. Chalais is there, and nods in assent.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)

They don't want my peace. Let's see if they prefer my war.

The King walks toward the exit. Everyone makes way.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)

I am expected.

EXT. LOUVRE - ROYAL COURT - LATE AFTERNOON

D'Artagnan and Athos both have one knee on the ground. Athos looks like the walking dead, but he is holding on.

All around them is the entire company of Musketeers, Tréville at their lead - who can hardly hide his emotion.

Louis XIII and Anne of Austria are standing before them.

LOUIS XIII

In recognition of exceptional service to the Crown of France, I hereby name you, Charles d'Artagnan, Lieutenant in the Company of Musketeers.

A sword is handed to Louis XIII, who places it on d'Artagnan's shoulder.

D'ARTAGNAN
I shall be worthy of this honor,
Your Majesty.

Louis XIII turns to Athos.

LOUIS XIII
Armand de Sillègue d'Athos
d'Hauteville, Comte de la Fère...

Athos looks up at the King.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
I owe you my life, Monsieur.

He places the sword on Athos' shoulder.

LOUIS XIII (CONT'D)
I give you yours back. You are
hereby pardoned and immediately
restored to the corps of
Musketeers.

ATHOS
The life you give me, sire, I shall
gladly give again for you.

The King smiles.

LOUIS XIII
All for one and one for all, right?

The Musketeers applaud loudly.

CUT TO:

The Queen breaks away from her guard and approaches d'Artagnan. They are allowed their privacy.

D'ARTAGNAN
(bowing)
Your Majesty...

The Queen motions for him to rise.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA
I have neither title nor medal to
bestow, d'Artagnan. Only my eternal
gratitude.

D'ARTAGNAN

I could receive no greater present.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

No.

D'Artagnan looks back at her, puzzled.

ANNE D'AUTRICHE

Risking her life, Constance Bonacieux has acted as my messenger. Taking no risk at all, it's my turn to deliver a letter. And it's for you.

The Queen opens her hand - there is a folded letter in her palm. D'Artagnan blushes a little as he takes it and unfolds it. *"Be at the Chapeau Rouge Inn tonight around ten. We have thanks to bestow upon you."*

The Queen smiles as she takes leave of him.

D'Artagnan looks up to the façade of the Louvre. The servants are at their windows, cheering the Musketeers. One of them, brown hair framing her sweet face, is Constance, smiling.

D'Artagnan smiles back at her, and places the letter over his heart.

INT. LOUVRE - CORRIDORS - LATE AFTERNOON

Constance, wearing a smile, withdraws from the window. A laundry basket in her hands, she walks back up the corridor and through a narrow door.

She walks down a service hallway, enters the laundry room.

INT. LOUVRE - LAUNDRY ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The room is dark. As Constance puts down the basket, the faint sound of voices gets her attention.

They are coming from the next room.

There is a faint light filtering through a crack in the wall.

Constance pads silently toward the crack and peeks through it.

POV CONSTANCE: Count Chalais and a man with a menacing, venal air (ARDANZA, seen in sc. 148) are speaking with a third person, whom she cannot see.

CHALAIS
 (deferential)
 You have your war. You will soon
 have the country.

MAN (O.S.)
 The prisoners?

ARDANZA
 They won't talk.

MAN (O.S.)
 May the Lord be with us.

Constance turns to see the man who has just spoken. She takes a step back, her eyes go wide open like she'd just seen the devil himself. Constance backs away, knocks over a box of buttons which scatter on the ground.

EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT

Night. The rumble of a brewing storm. Constance, wearing her ample coat, walks along a street. in a rough section of Paris. Breathless, she keeps glancing around behind her.

REVEAL: A man is following her - it's ARDANZA.

EXT. BONACIEUX HOUSE - COURTYARD - NIGHT

The storm breaks. It starts to rain. Constance is about to open her front door when a leather-gloved hand covers her face. Constance screams.

CONSTANCE
 D'Artagnan!!!

INT. D'ARTAGNAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

D'Artagnan, who has been getting ready, hears her call. He freezes. He grabs his sword and rushes outside.

EXT. BONACIEUX HOUSE & STREET - NIGHT

D'Artagnan bursts out of the house and into the pouring rain. Constance is nowhere to be seen. He doesn't know which way to run.

D'ARTAGNAN
 (yelling)
 Constance?!!!

He hears something behind him, wheels around, but is suddenly struck, very hard, in the head.

He collapses, unconscious on the ground. CAMERA UP on D'Artagnan lying motionless in the driving rain.

THE END

To Be Continued:

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Chapter 2

- MILADY -

PATHE 2021