

# The Three Musketeers



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Alexandre Dumas was the son of Marie Louis Labouret and General Thomas-Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie. Dumas's father—and, in turn, Dumas himself—was of mixed race because Dumas's grandfather had a child out of wedlock with an enslaved Haitian woman. Although racism against Black people was ubiquitous in France, Dumas's father still managed to achieve a high rank in the European Army, partially because of his father's status and partially because of his own accomplishments. Because Dumas's father was an aristocrat, he was able to help his son become a writer by apprenticing him to Louis-Phillipe, Duke of Orléans, who was a writer himself. By age 27, Dumas had already published his first play *Henry III and His Court*, which was a great success. After writing a number of plays, Dumas eventually tried his hand at the novel. Eventually, in 1836, he published his first novel *The Countess of Salisbury*, in serial form; he published it as a single volume later in 1839. Throughout his life, Alexandre Dumas would prove to be highly prolific; he wrote over 100,000 pages that made it to print. Those 100,000 pages spanned many genres, from travel books to magazine articles to short stories to novels. However, his literary legacy is primarily due to *The Three Musketeers* (1844) and its sequels, as well as [The Count of Monte Cristo](#) (1844–1845). Dumas died in 1870 due to natural causes. At the time of his death, he had lost some of his popularity, but in subsequent years he became one of France's most beloved and recognizable authors.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The major historical set piece in *The Three Musketeers* is the Siege of La Rochelle, a real event that occurred during the reign of King Louis XIII. Many of the characters in the novel are either real people—including King Louis XIII, the Duke of Buckingham, and Cardinal Richelieu—or based on real people such as d'Artagnan and the musketeers. However, the novel depicts the war between the English and the French as the result of petty romantic drama between King Louis XIII, the Duke of Buckingham, and Queen Anne, which is not true. In reality, the war was the result of France's increasing power and its refusal to ally itself with England. As an act of war, England encouraged the Huguenots (French Protestants) of La Rochelle to rebel against the French government, which was primarily Catholic. These actions resulted in the famous Siege of La Rochelle, which lasted over a year (from September 1627 to October 1628). Tens of thousands of people died because of the siege, mostly due to starvation. The population of La Rochelle

decreased from 27,000 to 5,000 as a result of the event.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

*The Three Musketeers* is a work of Romanticism. Romanticism is a literary period that lasted from the end of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. Its key works include Emily Bronte's [Wuthering Heights](#), Mary Shelley's [Frankenstein](#), and Nathaniel Hawthorne's [The Scarlet Letter](#). Novels in the Romantic tradition often were set in the past and generally focus in on a key historical event. In the case of *The Three Musketeers*, that historical event is the Siege of La Rochelle. Additionally, romantic novels often focused on their protagonists' emotional states and love lives. Certainly, these qualities are found in *The Three Musketeers* as well. *The Three Musketeers* is also the most famous swashbuckling novel of all time. The swashbuckler is primarily a European phenomenon. As a genre, swashbucklers tend to focus on gentlemanly male protagonists who are experts at combat and seduction. Usually, they undergo some sort of quest to save a damsel in distress or for revenge. Certainly, all of these qualities exist in *The Three Musketeers*. In fact, *The Three Musketeers* is one of the founding works of the genre, and many of the books that came after are indebted to it. Some of the most famous works in the genre are Robert Louis Stevenson's [Treasure Island](#) (1882), Rafael Sabatini's [Captain Blood](#) (1922), and Anthony Hope's [The Prisoner of Zenda](#) (1894).

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Three Musketeers
- **When Written:** 1844
- **Where Written:** France
- **When Published:** 1836
- **Literary Period:** Romanticism
- **Genre:** Swashbuckler, Historical Novel
- **Setting:** Paris, France and London, England; 1625–1628
- **Climax:** The four musketeers, Lord de Winter, and an executioner track down Milady. Together, they hold a trial, declare her guilty, and execute her.
- **Antagonist:** Milady de Winter, Rochefort, and Cardinal Richelieu
- **Point of View:** Third Person

### EXTRA CREDIT

**Part of a Series.** Dumas wrote two sequels to *The Three Musketeers*: *Twenty Years After* and *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later*. The latter is roughly five times the length of the

original novel.

**Film Adaptations.** *The Three Musketeers* is one of the most filmed novels of all time. At this point, it's been adapted to the big screen over 50 times.



## PLOT SUMMARY

*The Three Musketeers* is the story of d'Artagnan, a young man from Gascony who dreams of becoming a musketeer (a soldier who carries a rifle). At the beginning of the novel, he sets off from his hometown and makes his way to Paris where he plans to introduce himself to M. de Tréville, the king's righthand man and the leader of the musketeers. On his way to Paris, he picks a fight with a Rochefort, one of the cardinal's best men, although d'Artagnan doesn't know who he is at the time. Upon arriving in Paris, he makes his way to M. de Tréville, who gets him started on the path to becoming a musketeer.

Shortly after his meeting with M. de Tréville, d'Artagnan challenges three different musketeers—Athos, Porthos, and Aramis—to a duel, not realizing any of them are friends. When d'Artagnan shows up to his duel with Athos, he is surprised to see that Athos brought Porthos and Aramis as his seconds. However, before their duel can begin, the cardinal's men interrupt them and pick a fight with the musketeers. Realizing that his issues with the musketeers are silly, d'Artagnan decides to ally himself with them against the cardinal's men. D'Artagnan and the musketeers easily win the battle against the cardinal's men and from that moment on, the four men become great friends.

Shortly after his battle with the cardinal's men, d'Artagnan becomes embroiled in a plot to save the queen from one of the cardinal's schemes. Simultaneously, he falls in love with a woman named Madame Bonacieux who works for the queen. She asks d'Artagnan to deliver a letter to the Duke of Buckingham in England. Although d'Artagnan doesn't know it, the queen gave the Duke of Buckingham some diamond tags (jewelry) as a token of her affection, but now, the queen needs them back—otherwise, the cardinal plans to humiliate her in front of the king by revealing her affair with the duke. Wanting to win Madame Bonacieux's favor, d'Artagnan heads to London with Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and their servants by his side. On the way to London, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis stay behind at various points in the journey to deal with the cardinal's traps. D'Artagnan makes it to London and gives the duke the letter. The duke returns the tags to d'Artagnan, who swiftly takes them back to Paris and gives them to the queen. Although this is a great success for d'Artagnan, it puts him on the cardinal's radar. Because of this, M. de Tréville tells d'Artagnan that he must watch his back.

Not long after d'Artagnan returns from Paris, the cardinal

kidnaps Madame Bonacieux, who now loves d'Artagnan in return. M. de Tréville promises to help d'Artagnan find her, but in the meantime, d'Artagnan must find out what happened to the musketeers. As quickly as he can, d'Artagnan sets off to find each of his friends. He does so without too much trouble, although each of his friends is in a terrible emotional state that d'Artagnan must snap them out of. Athos, in particular, is in a bad mood and drinks a lot. One night while drunk, Athos tells d'Artagnan a story about his "friend" (who is clearly Athos himself). This friend apparently married a beautiful woman and then killed her after he found out she was branded with a **fleur-de-lis**. This story horrifies d'Artagnan, though he doesn't know what to make of it.

Eventually, the musketeers make their way back to Paris. For the next few weeks, they prepare for the upcoming war against the English. Additionally, d'Artagnan becomes acquainted with Milady de Winter, a woman who he knows is friendly with Rochefort. At this point, d'Artagnan thinks Rochefort had something to do with Madame Bonacieux's kidnapping and wants to find out more details. Although he initially plans to use Milady to get to Rochefort, d'Artagnan quickly finds himself falling in love with Milady. Eventually, d'Artagnan goes to bed with Milady after promising to fight a duel on her behalf. While in bed with Milady, d'Artagnan admits he's been dishonest with her, and she gets angry with him. As he tries to calm her down, d'Artagnan rips Milady's nightgown, revealing a **fleur-de-lis** on her shoulder. This revelation causes Milady to go berserk; she tries to stab d'Artagnan, who barely escapes with his life. He tells Athos about the encounter and though neither man says it out loud, both know that Milady is Athos's wife.

Not long after this incident, d'Artagnan and the musketeers ride off to war. Because d'Artagnan is not a musketeer himself, he doesn't fight alongside his friends. While at war, d'Artagnan feels isolated and afraid. He knows Milady might try to take revenge on him and indeed she does. She sends several assassins his way as well as some poison wine. Luckily, d'Artagnan foils her plans and is eventually reunited with his friends.

Not long after d'Artagnan and his friends are reunited, the musketeers overhear a conversation between the cardinal and Milady. The cardinal tells Milady that he will allow her to kill d'Artagnan with impunity if she assassinates the Duke of Buckingham. The musketeers tell d'Artagnan about Milady's plan and the four of them decide to write one letter to the queen and one letter to Lord de Winter, Milady's brother-in-law, warning them about Milady's plan. Lord de Winter is d'Artagnan's friend as well as a close confidant of the Duke of Buckingham. D'Artagnan knows Lord de Winter doesn't like Milady and suspects that she wants him dead so that she can steal his money.

Milady sails to London, where she is promptly abducted by one of Lord de Winter's men, John Felton, and taken to a castle.

There, Lord de Winter explains that he plans to send Milady to a penal colony as soon as he can get a letter from the duke granting him permission. Until then, Milady must wait in captivity. During that time, John Felton, a highly religious man, watches over her. Slowly, Milady seduces Felton and wins him over to her side. She tells him an elaborate (and false) story about how the Duke of Buckingham raped and unfairly branded her, which makes Felton, who already despises the duke because of his religious beliefs, hate him even more. Just before Milady can be sent away, Felton breaks her out of her cell and takes her to London on a boat. While in London, Felton goes by himself to find the duke and kills him. He is captured in the process.

Milady makes her way back to France and eventually ends up in a convent. There, she meets Madame Bonacieux, who managed to escape the cardinal and has been hiding in the convent for some time. When Milady learns that Madame Bonacieux is d'Artagnan's mistress and that d'Artagnan is coming to rescue her, she poisons her as an act of revenge. D'Artagnan finds Madame Bonacieux just in time to watch her die. Realizing what happened, d'Artagnan, who is now a musketeer himself, tracks down Milady with his friends' help. They also bring along a local executioner who Milady wronged in the past. Together, the group holds a trial for Milady and declares her guilty. The executioner then beheads her.

Everyone heads back to Paris. The war is over for the time being and the cardinal makes d'Artagnan a lieutenant of the musketeers for his service. Although the cardinal does not like that d'Artagnan foiled some of his plans, he still got what he wanted, and he has great respect for d'Artagnan. He also introduces d'Artagnan to Rochefort and forces the two men to promise to get along. D'Artagnan and Rochefort comply, although clearly a rivalry still exists between the two of them. In the years after, d'Artagnan serves as a lieutenant for the musketeers. Gradually, all of his friends retire to marry and explore their passions.

revenge on Milady. However, for much of the novel, d'Artagnan is a classic hero and his trials and tribulations eventually earn him the title of musketeer. Like his fellow musketeers, love is constantly on d'Artagnan's mind, and he eventually finds love with Madame Bonacieux. After performing a daring feat on Madame Bonacieux's behalf, d'Artagnan starts a formal romance with her, although the two of them are separated for the majority of the novel. Eventually, d'Artagnan is reunited with his love, but he arrives a moment too late: Milady has already poisoned Madame Bonacieux and she dies. As such, d'Artagnan's narrative arc ends on a depressing note; unlike most heroes he does not save the damsel in distress, and in the story's closing pages, he is left feeling isolated.

**Athos** – Athos is a musketeer whose real name is Comte de la Fère. Despite his aristocratic origins, Athos obscures his identity and refuses to tell anyone about his past. Of the musketeers, Athos is the dourest and there are often stretches of times where he drinks nonstop. Despite his occasional bouts of alcoholism, Athos is the wisest member of the group and is the most likely of the friends to act as a leader along with d'Artagnan. During one of Athos's binge drinking sessions, he accidentally reveals to d'Artagnan that he used to be married to a woman who he killed after he saw a **fleur-de-lis** on her shoulder. Evidently, Athos's attempt to murder his former wife failed because she is still alive, and in the present she's known as Milady de Winter. Although Athos usually keeps his emotions under control, he nurses a deep hatred for Milady and is the only one who seems genuinely happy after her death. Additionally, Athos is the best swordsman in the group, and he has the best military mind. He is often the musketeer who is matched up with more than one enemy at once in combat and he always manages to come out unscathed.

**Aramis** – Aramis is a musketeer whose real name is René d'Herblay. He is said to be an attractive man, although he largely avoids discussing women. Aramis is constantly torn between his life as a musketeer and his desire to join the church. Although the other members of the group are skeptical Aramis will ever leave the musketeers, he proves them wrong by becoming an abbé at the end of the novel. However, for much the story, Aramis is far from the perfect priest. Like the other musketeers, he is interested in drinking, gambling, and women. His mistress is Madame de Chevreuse, although he largely manages to keep their relationship a secret. Though his friends suspect he has a mistress, only d'Artagnan suspects her true identity. Additionally, Aramis is a skilled writer, and his talent gets the musketeers out of several binds. In particular, Aramis's writing comes in handy when the musketeers need to write secret letters, which must be worded perfectly so they cannot be understood by the enemy should they be intercepted.

**Porthos** – Porthos is a musketeer whose real name is M. du Vallon. Of the musketeers, Porthos is the most concerned with



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**D'Artagnan** – D'Artagnan is a young man from Gascony who leaves his childhood home for Paris to become a musketeer. D'Artagnan is handsome, intelligent, and brave, which makes him a perfect candidate for M. de Tréville's musketeers. However, before he can become a musketeer, he must prove himself worthy. Before long, d'Artagnan gets entangled with all manner of political intrigue along with Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Despite his young age, d'Artagnan often acts as the leader of the group. Although he's largely a heroic character, d'Artagnan is not without his faults. He can be selfish and manipulative, as when he uses Kitty's affection for him to get

his looks; he dresses fancifully and orders his servant, Mousqueton, to do the same. Porthos also acts as the novel's comic relief. He is always the last one to catch on to a plan and he often needs things overtly explained to him. Additionally, Porthos is the easiest musketeer to read. Although he attempts to conceal secrets, such as his affair with Madame Coquenard, he fails to do so effectively. Unlike the other musketeers, Porthos doesn't have a dramatic arc that stretches across the novel. Instead, the chapters that focus on him largely deal with his comical relationship with Madame Coquenard and his propensity for gambling. A great lover of money, Porthos finally gains his fortune at the end of the novel by marrying Madame Coquenard after her husband dies.

**Milady de Winter** – Milady de Winter is an agent of the cardinal, as well as Athos's former wife. As a young woman, she was branded with a **fleur-de-lis** because she stole sacred objects from a church. Later, she married Athos and did not disclose her criminal status. When Athos found out, he tried to kill her. Eventually, she also married Lord de Winter's brother-in-law while still she was still technically married Athos. Shortly after their marriage, Lord de Winter's brother-in-law died, and Lord de Winter suspects foul play may have been involved. Milady is very beautiful, and she successfully seduces many characters throughout the novel and gets them to do her bidding. This includes John Felton, a stoic and religious man who she eventually convinces to kill the Duke of Buckingham. The only person who gets the better of Milady is d'Artagnan, who tricks her into thinking that he is the Comte de Wardes. D'Artagnan's betrayal fuels Milady's desire for revenge and ultimately leads to the deaths of both the Duke of Buckingham and Madame Bonacieux (whom she poisons). Throughout the novel, Milady relies on her intelligence and beauty to get by. Although she has allies in high places who she tries to please, her actions are entirely self-serving. Ultimately, her selfishness leads to her downfall. In the climax of the novel, the musketeers and Lord de Winter sentence her death and then execute her.

**Cardinal Richelieu** – Cardinal Richelieu is the religious leader of France who wields enormous power. He is a cunning man who will go outside the bounds of traditional morality to get his way. However, he is not wholly evil, and he has great respect for d'Artagnan and the musketeers. Additionally, he treats both the king and M. de Tréville as his rivals, and many of his schemes are attempts to gain power over them.

**Lord de Winter** – Lord de Winter is Milady's brother-in-law. After fighting a duel with d'Artagnan, the two become friends and allies. D'Artagnan writes to Lord de Winter to warn him that Milady wants him and the duke dead. In response, Lord de Winter imprisons Milady, though he fails to save the duke's life.

**King Louis XIII** – King Louis XIII is the king of France. He is a jealous man who is difficult to please. Although the cardinal and M. de Tréville often try to manipulate him, the king is often more astute than either of them expects. Although he is cruel

to his wife, Queen Anne, the king appreciates the musketeers, especially when they win victories over the cardinal's men.

**Queen Anne** – Queen Anne is the wife of King Louis XIII. She is a lonely woman whom her husband treats harshly. Although she loves the Duke of Buckingham, she refuses to be with him because she is worried about the scandal it will cause. Additionally, she is fiercely against the war between the French and the English, and she urges the duke to put an end to it.

**The Duke of Buckingham** – The Duke of Buckingham is the leader of England who is in love with Queen Anne. Although he is a handsome, charismatic, and generally kind man, he is also selfish and starts a war with France because he is angry that Louis XIII is keeping him away from Queen Anne. At the end of the novel, John Felton assassinates him.

**Madame Bonacieux** – Madame Bonacieux is one of the queen's servants and d'Artagnan's mistress. At the beginning of the novel, she remains loyal to her husband until Monsieur Bonacieux becomes an agent of the cardinal. Realizing her husband has betrayed her, Madame Bonacieux turns to d'Artagnan for help and eventually falls in love with him. Because she is loyal to the queen, Madame Bonacieux is regularly persecuted by the cardinal and eventually has to hide in a convent outside of Paris. Just before she and d'Artagnan are reunited, Milady poisons Madame Bonacieux. She dies in d'Artagnan's arms.

**Rochefort** – Rochefort is one of the cardinal's best men. D'Artagnan meets him at the beginning of the novel and challenges him to a duel, not realizing who he is. Although he is allied with the cardinal and in love with Milady, Rochefort is generally good-hearted. At the end of the novel, he and d'Artagnan develop a mutual respect for each other.

**M. de Tréville** – M. de Tréville is the leader of the musketeers and the cardinal's rival. He acts as a father figure for his men and does whatever he can to get them out of a bind. He is cunning and often two steps ahead of the cardinal. Toward the end of the novel, he makes d'Artagnan a musketeer.

**John Felton** – John Felton is one of Lord de Winter's soldiers. Lord de Winter chooses him to guard Milady, thinking he is incorruptible. However, Milady manages to seduce Felton by playing off of his religious beliefs. Not only does Milady get Felton to help her escape from Lord de Winter, but she also convinces him to assassinate the Duke of Buckingham.

**Monsieur Bonacieux** Monsieur Bonacieux, a middle-aged merchant, is D'Artagnan's landlord and approaches D'Artagnan for help when he believes his wife, Madame Bonacieux, has been abducted. When he is arrested by Cardinal Richelieu's men for alleged treason, he proves to be cowardly and willing to say whatever will please the authorities, even when it eventually means betraying his wife by spying for the cardinal.

## MINOR CHARACTERS



**Planchet** – Planchet is d'Artagnan's servant. He is an intelligent man who deeply respects d'Artagnan and does his best to keep him safe.

**Grimaud** – Grimaud is Athos's servant. Though loyal, Grimaud barely speaks.

**Mousqueton** – Mousqueton is Porthos's servant. He acts and dresses similar to his master.

**Bazin** – Bazin is Aramis's fiercely loyal servant. He is determined to ensure that Aramis becomes a member of the church.

**Kitty** – Kitty is one of Milady's servants who is in love with d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan knows Kitty loves him and uses her to get revenge on Milady.

**The Executioner** – The executioner is the brother of a man Milady drove to criminal behavior and eventually suicide. He wears a red cloak and carries out Milady's death sentence.

**D'Artagnan's father** – D'Artagnan's father is a poor man with rich connections. He sends d'Artagnan off to join M. de Tréville's musketeers because Tréville is an old friend, and he wants his son to make something of himself.

**D'Artagnan's mother** – D'Artagnan's mother is a kind woman who cares deeply for her son. Before he leaves home, she presents him with a potent healing salve.

**Jussac** – Jussac is a prominent member of the cardinal's guards. He and his men fight d'Artagnan and the three musketeers to stop them from dueling. D'Artagnan takes on Jussac, who is a talented swordsman, by himself and wins.

**Monsieur Bernajoux** – Monsieur Bernajoux is a talented swordsman who picks a fight with d'Artagnan and loses.

**Monsieur de La Trémouille** – Monsieur de La Trémouille is a relative of Monsieur Bernajoux. He witnesses the fight between Bernajoux and d'Artagnan and later reports on it to the king.

**Monsieur des Essart** – Monsieur des Essart is the leader of d'Artagnan's company before he becomes a musketeer.

**Madame de Chevreuse** – Madame de Chevreuse is Queen Anne's best friend, as well as Aramis's lover. Early in the novel, the king has her sent away from Paris. Later, she regularly serves as the secret go-between for the musketeers and the queen.

**Monsieur de Séquier** – Monsieur de Séquier is one of the king's righthand men. He gets put in charge of frisking the queen when the king suspects she is having an affair.

**Comte de Wardes** – Comte de Wardes is sent by the cardinal to thwart d'Artagnan's trip to London to help the queen. Later, d'Artagnan impersonates the Comte to get revenge on Milady.

**Madame Coquenard** – Madame Coquenard is Porthos's mistress. Although she can be stingy, Porthos gets her to help him when he's in a financial bind.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



### FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY

D'Artagnan befriends his fellow musketeers by siding with them against the cardinal's men in a battle. Together the men succeed in combat and their experience forms the basis of their friendship. It is a friendship based on the group's mutual loyalty, which in turn is characterized by their ability to compromise their individual needs and desires for the good of their group. This attitude is summed up in the famous motto of D'Artagnan and his friends: "All for one, one for all!" This phrase doesn't sacrifice the individuality of the members of the group, but it does demand a sort of collective accountability. It does not expect group members to act selflessly at all times, but it does require sacrifices on occasion.

There are many examples of this mentality on display throughout the novel. For instance, the musketeers always back up one another in battle. Throughout the novel, d'Artagnan and his friends often get themselves involved in duels. Any time an individual member accepts a duel, the rest of the groups act as seconds and fight alongside their friend. Because of their ability to coordinate and work together, the musketeers win all of their duels. Additionally, this group dynamic is exemplified by the manner in which the musketeers handle their finances. Whenever one of the musketeers or D'Artagnan receives a hefty sum of money, it is always dispersed among the other members of the group in accordance with their individual needs. Likewise, should a member of the group fall on hard times, the other members do their best to support him. For instance, the musketeers often buy one another meals. However, in doing so, they are not merely acting selflessly. One musketeer supports the others because he knows he will need their support in return sometime in the future.



### HONOR

Honor is a concept that is central to the musketeers' way of life. The musketeers only act in ways that they believe are honorable and do their best to never bring dishonor on themselves or their friends. However, it is sometimes difficult to know what counts as an honorable action and what counts as a dishonorable action. Clearly, one way for the musketeers to act honorably is to fight well in battle. This is exemplified in the scene where d'Artagnan

and his friends eat breakfast while holding off several waves of English soldiers who attack the bastion they are sitting in. Each time d'Artagnan and his friends are victorious, they are hailed with cries of approval from the watching French army, confirming that their actions are honorable from their countrymen's perspective. After the battle is over, the cardinal is so impressed by d'Artagnan's courage that he suggests to Monsieur de Tréville that d'Artagnan be promoted.

Battle is a straightforward example of how the musketeers bring honor upon themselves. However, the novel often complicates the notion of what counts as an honorable action. The notion of honor is defined by the musketeers' cultural context, meaning that some degree of social agreement is necessary—especially from people in power—to make the concept of honor meaningful. For example, the musketeers only manage to receive honor from battle because those around them agree that what they are doing is valuable. However, honor gets more complicated when thinking about issues such as d'Artagnan's relationship with the Duke of Buckingham. The Duke of Buckingham is the leader of England, which makes him an enemy of France. Nonetheless, d'Artagnan does what he can to save the duke's life. However, in the eyes of his countrymen, it is not clear that this is an honorable action. In fact, it could very well be considered dishonorable and treasonous. In this case, honor and morality feel quite far apart from one another. D'Artagnan does what he thinks is right, rather than what he thinks is honorable. Although the novel speaks highly of honor, it is careful never to confuse honor with morality.



### CLASS AND POWER

Class is a notable factor throughout *The Three Musketeers*. Class divides can clearly be seen when examining the relationships between the

musketeers and their servants, and even among the musketeers themselves. However, the largest class divides in the novel—those between monarchs and their subjects—prove to be the most important. *The Three Musketeers* depicts the ruling powers as rather selfish entities who plunge their entire kingdoms into war and strife because of their own whims and desires. For instance, the Duke of Buckingham declares war on France largely because he is angry that Louis XIII won't let him see Queen Anne. Similarly, Louis XIII knows the true reason for the war and does nothing to stop it. The cardinal is no better. He, too, wants to kill the Duke of Buckingham because he was once rejected by Queen Anne and wants to see her suffer.

While the royals play out their petty romantic drama, the people actually involved in the war suffer. Many thousands die because of the romantic rivalry between the Duke of Buckingham and Louis XIII. In particular, many of the citizens of La Rochelle are forced to die of starvation because of a siege that is part of the war effort. At several points throughout the novel, d'Artagnan stops and thinks about how his life and the

lives of his friends are largely determined by the whims of two or three powerful individuals. As such, the novel emerges as a harsh critique of powerful monarchical systems and their excesses, often caused by the most trivial of matters.



### THE SECRETS OF THE PAST

In *The Three Musketeers*, the past never stays buried. Several prominent characters carry the secrets of the past around with them. By the end of the novel, these secrets are exposed and the characters who keep them are worse off for having done so in the first place. This especially applies to Lady de Winter and Athos, whose secrets are inextricably linked to one another. Eventually, d'Artagnan and the other musketeers learn that Lady de Winter and Athos were once married. Athos married Lady de Winter because he thought she was a respectable girl, albeit from a modest background. However, one day he learns that she has a *fleur-de-lis* branded on her back. The *fleur-de-lis* marks Lady de Winter as a criminal and so, feeling betrayed, Athos tries (and fails) to kill her.

Of course, these events themselves are bad enough, but matters become even worse because both parties try to keep their true identities and pasts a secret. For Athos, this results in a lifetime of heavy drinking and regular bouts of depression. Meanwhile, Lady de Winter hides her true identity from everyone and this works against her later in the novel, especially when Lord de Winter discovers her true identity anyway and imprisons her. Although the novel doesn't disavow keeping secrets altogether—after all, certain political secrets are necessarily kept throughout the novel—it does demonstrate the chaos that can ensue if one keeps one's true identity a secret. Among other things, *The Three Musketeers* is a novel about putting one's trust in others; those who resist doing so until the bitter end—such as Lady de Winter—do not receive a happy ending.



### SEDUCTION AND ROMANCE

Seduction and romance appear throughout *The Three Musketeers*, as nearly all of the major characters are involved or were involved in a romantic relationship that affects the plot. Most notably, the Duke of Buckingham and Queen Anne are romantically interested in one another, and their interest leads to a war between England and France. Likewise, d'Artagnan's love for Madame Bonacieux, one of the queen's servants, leads him on several quests that take him all over France and even into England. Notably, although the novel's characters value romantic love—and the novel's intended audience would've as well—on the whole, it does not lead to positive outcomes. In addition to the war that begins due to Queen Anne and the Duke of Buckingham's romantic interest, d'Artagnan's romance

ends in his lover's death after Milady poisons her. Similarly, Athos's marriage to Milady ends tragically because Athos discovers she is branded with a **fleur-de-lis** and tries to kill her.

Seduction, meanwhile, proves temporarily useful, but also ends in disaster. For instance, D'Artagnan successfully seduces Milady only to be attacked by her moments later after he sees the *fleur-de-lis* brand. Milady herself is the primary seductress in the book and using her abilities, she convinces John Felton to assassinate the Duke of Buckingham. In addition, she manages to secure successful marriages with two noblemen, although neither marriage ends happily. Although seduction provides Milady a chance to advance her social and political goals, all of her successes are only temporary, and she is eventually killed for her transgressions.

Ultimately, the novel's view of romantic and sexual relationships is quite pessimistic. The only main character who ends the novel married is Porthos and he only marries Madame Coquenard because of her money, not for romance. Meanwhile, the relationships that come about as a result of seduction end almost as soon as they begin. As such, the novel suggests that love is an impossibility for an active musketeer, while lust is a dangerous distraction.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### FLEUR-DE-LIS

The *fleur-de-lis* is a brand given to criminals that represents their removal from polite society. In *The Three Musketeers*, Milady has a brand on her shoulder as a result of her criminal actions. Because of its implication, Milady does everything she can to hide it. She even manages to marry Athos, a nobleman and one of the story's heroes, without revealing the *fleur-de-lis*. Despite her efforts, Athos eventually finds out about the brand and attempts to kill her for it. The symbol is so volatile in French society that Athos knows it would ruin him if someone discovered it on his wife's body. Because others know Milady's secret, the *fleur-de-lis* is a constant burden that other people constantly use as leverage against her, which is, for instance, why Milady attempts to kill d'Artagnan when he learns about it.

It is only at the end of the novel that Milady is able to use the *fleur-de-lis* to her advantage. While seducing John Felton, Milady makes up a story about how she received the brand. In the story, Milady endures barbaric treatment, and she receives the brand as an act of cruelty rather than because of her personal wrongdoing. Here, Milady alters the brand's meaning to suggest that it represents an abuse of power. Still, she

ultimately finds that it's impossible to escape the *fleur-de-lis*'s true meaning, and Milady is executed for her own abuses of power, many of which were connected to her attempts to obscure the *fleur-de-lis* from others.




## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Bantam Classics edition of *The Three Musketeers* published in 1984.

### Chapter 1 Quotes

☛ Panics were frequent in those times, and few days went by when an event of this kind was not recorded in the archives of one town or another. Noblemen fought among themselves; the king was at war with the cardinal; the Spanish were at war with the king. And then, besides all this secret or open warfare, there were robbers, beggars, Huguenots, wolves, and lackeys, who were at war with everyone. The townsmen always took up arms against robbers, wolves, and lackeys, often against noblemen and Huguenots, sometimes against the king, but never against the cardinal or the Spanish.

**Related Characters:** Cardinal Richelieu, King Louis XIII

**Related Themes:**  


**Page Number:** 1

### Explanation and Analysis

This passage comes from the beginning of Chapter One and sets up the historical backdrop of the novel. In 1625, France was ruled by both King Louis XIII and Cardinal Richelieu. Although King Louis XIII was technically in charge, Cardinal Richelieu had just as many people loyal to him as the king, and a similar amount of political influence. This dual leadership made for a messy political situation, which is what this passage seeks to convey. It is important to know that the Huguenots were French Protestants who revolted against the crown in the first half of the 17th century. One such revolt is depicted in the novel and results in the Siege of La Rochelle, a true historical event that is dramatized in the second half of the story. Additionally, the Huguenots' rebellion was historically supported by the English, which is why England and France went to war.

☛ Fight duels at the drop of a hat, especially since duels are forbidden: that means it takes twice as much courage to fight one.

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan's father (speaker), D'Artagnan, Rochefort

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 3



### Explanation and Analysis

This passage comes from a conversation between d'Artagnan and his father. D'Artagnan is about to leave for Paris because his father wants him to become a musketeer. However, before d'Artagnan departs, his father gives him this advice to fight often. As d'Artagnan leaves his hometown, his father's advice never leaves his mind; he constantly acts as though he is looking for a fight. Eventually, when he reaches Meung, he finds someone who will comply: Rochefort. This early confrontation sets the stage for the rest of the novel, as d'Artagnan immediately makes a nemesis out of Rochefort. Although d'Artagnan continues to heed his father's advice upon arriving in Paris, he eventually develops into a more thoughtful person. Even though fighting makes d'Artagnan some friends, it also makes him a lot of unnecessary enemies. He quickly realizes that to fight constantly is to throw one's life away, especially in a dangerous city like Paris.

## Chapter 3 Quotes

●● Athos's arrival had caused a sensation in the anteroom, for his wound was known to everyone despite all efforts to keep it a secret. The door had remained ajar, and Tréville's words were greeted by a joyous hubbub. Two or three musketeers, carried away by enthusiasm, drew back the door curtain and looked into the study. Tréville was about to rebuke them sharply when he felt Athos's hand tighten in his own and saw that he was about to faint.

**Related Characters:** Athos, Aramis, Porthos, Cardinal Richelieu, M. de Tréville

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 29

### Explanation and Analysis


This quote comes from a scene where M. de Tréville is in the middle of scolding Aramis and Porthos for fighting with the cardinal's men. Just as M. de Tréville realizes Athos isn't present, the third musketeer arrives, brandishing a wound. This moment is an important bit of characterization for both M. de Tréville and Athos. Although Athos is embarrassed by

his wound (not to mention he is in great pain), he still answers M. de Tréville's summons because he respects him so highly. The "hubbub" when Athos walks into the room occurs because everyone is impressed by his loyalty and bravery. This is true not just of the onlookers, but also M. de Tréville. Just as Athos deeply respects M. de Tréville, M. de Tréville respects and cares for Athos. Rather than be overcome by anger, M. de Tréville is moved by Athos's presence and realizes that he cannot be angry with his men because of their sacrifices.

## Chapter 6 Quotes

●● And, as His Majesty had predicted, the cardinal was furious, so furious that for a week he did not come to the king's card game. This did not prevent the king from greeting him graciously whenever they met, and saying in his most sympathetic tone, "Tell me about those two poor guards of yours, Bernajoux and Jussac. How are they doing?"

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan, Cardinal Richelieu, King Louis XIII

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 71

### Explanation and Analysis



This passage comes from the end of Chapter Six, after King Louis XIII rewards d'Artagnan and the musketeers for their service. Although the king is not happy that the musketeers made a scene in public, he finds reliable witnesses to blame the circumstances of the disturbance on the cardinal's men. Because the musketeers are not at fault, King Louis XIII can take pride in the fact that they injured Bernajoux and Jussac, two of the cardinal's best men. This quotation epitomizes the king's relationship to the cardinal. Although they are supposedly political allies, they do not like one another and will do anything to irritate each other. The king purposely goes out of his way to speak to the cardinal because he knows it will annoy him. Thus, his query is sarcastic rather than genuine. The king's behavior only makes the cardinal hate him more, which sets up much of the drama in the first half of the novel.



## Chapter 7 Quotes

☹️ Unfortunately, Porthos knew no more about Athos's life than what hearsay told him. It was said that he had suffered great afflictions in his love affairs and that a monstrous betrayal had poisoned his life forever. What that betrayal had been, no one knew.

**Related Characters:** Athos, Porthos, Milady de Winter

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 75

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from the middle of Chapter Seven, where d'Artagnan is going around to each one of the musketeers to try to learn about their respective pasts. Because none of them are open about their lives, d'Artagnan has to ask each of the musketeers about the others. In this case, he asks Porthos about Athos's life and gets a mysterious response. Later in the novel, it is revealed that Athos was married to Milady, whom he tried to kill after discovering she was a criminal. However, this quotation and Athos's behavior throughout the novel suggest that there is more to the story than is explicitly revealed. For instance, this quotation mentions "great afflictions"—plural—suggesting that Milady betrayed him in more ways than one. However, in the story he tells d'Artagnan, her only betrayal is the obscuring of her identity. Additionally, Athos's story does not add up. He claims to have hung Milady from a tree, and yet she still lives. As such, even though more information is revealed about Milady and Athos later, the nature of their relationship can be summed up by this quote, as far the reader is concerned.

## Chapter 8 Quotes

☹️ They were so closely united that they shared whatever they had and each was always ready to help the others, even at the risk of death. They made plans together and carried them out either individually or as a group; they were like four arms that sometimes joined in a single attack and sometimes separated to ward off danger from any direction. Four men like that could surely overcome all obstacles in their path, using either force or guile, and reach any goal they chose, no matter how distant or well defended it might be.

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan, Athos, Aramis, Porthos

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 81

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from a description of how the musketeers work together to achieve their goals. One of the themes of the novel is the importance of friendship and loyalty, which this quote addresses directly. The musketeers do not act as solitary individuals who look out for their own needs. Instead, their individual needs are always set aside for the good of the group, or they find a way to make their individual needs match the needs of the group. This mentality is the key to their success and the reason why they are able to survive in the city even when they have no money. Additionally, this quote emphasizes the multifaceted nature of a group as opposed to an individual. Typically, individuals have limited methods they can use to solve their problems because they are restricted by their abilities and resources. However, groups have a variety of strengths because they have the combined force of their individual members.

## Chapter 9 Quotes

☹️ "All for one, one for all."

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan (speaker), Athos, Aramis, Porthos

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 94


### Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from the end of Chapter Nine as d'Artagnan provides the musketeers with their group motto. It is the most famous line in the book, as well as one of the most quoted lines in all of English literature. At its core, the phrase is a representation of the musketeers' values. Although it acknowledges the individuality of the group members, the phrase makes it clear that the individual members are expected to set their own needs, wants, desires, and biases aside for the purpose of the greater good. Additionally, the phrase establishes that the group does not have a leader. Although different characters will act as the temporary leader of the group throughout the novel, no one character takes precedence over another. Everyone values the input and skills of each individual and no one lets their ego get in the way. This attitude is sharply contrasted with the behavior of a character like Milady, who acts solely out of self-preservation and eventually meets her demise because it.

## Chapter 11 Quotes

☝☝ He was thinking about Madame Bonacieux. For an apprentice musketeer, she was almost an amorous ideal: besides being young, pretty, and mysterious, she knew nearly all the secrets of the court, which gave her face a charming look of gravity, and she was suspected of not being insensitive to masculine attentions, which is an irresistible attraction for young men with little experience in love. Furthermore, d'Artagnan had rescued her from the demons who wanted to search her and mistreat her, and this had given her one of those feelings of gratitude that can easily develop into something more tender.

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan, Madame Bonacieux

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 105

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from the beginning of Chapter 11, as d'Artagnan finds himself in love for the first time. When he first arrives in Paris, d'Artagnan has no experience with women. However, he quickly becomes fascinated with Madame Bonacieux for the reasons provided in this quotation. Notably, d'Artagnan is not interested in Madame Bonacieux because of who she is as a person—in fact, he knows very little about her personality. Instead, he is interested in what Madame Bonacieux can do for him in terms of social advancement. Although such an attitude might appear callous by modern standards, it would be considered quite normal at the time of the book's publication (and certainly at the time the story is set) for both men and women to consider such matters. However, d'Artagnan doesn't only care about social advancement. His love for Madame Bonacieux is also based on her beauty and her relationship to him. D'Artagnan likes the idea of becoming romantically involved with the damsel he rescued from distress; to him, such a relationship matches up perfectly with the stories he's heard about noblemen and noblewomen. Such an attitude demonstrates d'Artagnan's immaturity as well as his idealism, both of which will slowly fade away over the course of the story.

## Chapter 12 Quotes

☝☝ Yes, but you know why I'm seeing you, Duke: I'm seeing you out of pity; I'm seeing you because you've stubbornly insisted on remaining in a city where you're risking your life and making me risk my honor; I'm seeing you to tell you that everything separates us: the depths of the sea, the enmity of kingdoms, the sanctity of vows. It's sacrilegious to struggle against all those things. And finally, I'm seeing you to tell you that we must never see each other again.

**Related Characters:** Queen Anne (speaker), The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 124-125

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from the secret meeting between Queen Anne and the Duke of Buckingham in the Louvre. Although Queen Anne loves the duke, she is angry at him for risking both of their lives and the welfare of their respective kingdoms by coming to visit her. In this little speech she gives to the Duke of Buckingham, she tries to emphasize his selfishness. By coming to see her, he's put her honor on the line without consulting her and risked the possibility of war between France and England. Additionally, the queen attempts to demonstrate the impossibility of their current situation. Everything is working against their love, including their social circumstances and even their relative physical locations. It is an impressive speech, which demonstrates the queen's rhetorical mastery. Additionally, it creates a sharp contrast between the queen and the duke. Although the duke is a likeable character, he acts in his own interests rather than for the good of his kingdom. Meanwhile, the queen acts selflessly; she knows that her relationship with the duke will not end well for her or for France.

## Chapter 14 Quotes

☝☝ Although his triumph over such a mediocre man as Bonacieux could scarcely be counted as a great victory, the cardinal savored it for a moment; then, as if a new thought had just occurred to him, he smiled, held out his hand to the draper, and said, "Stand up, my friend. You're a good man."

**Related Characters:** Cardinal Richelieu (speaker), Milady de Winter, Madame Bonacieux

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 146

### Explanation and Analysis


This quotation comes toward the end of the cardinal's engagement with Monsieur Bonacieux. The cardinal captures Monsieur Bonacieux and has him brought to his study so that he can question him about Madame Bonacieux's escape. Although Monsieur Bonacieux initially appears useless, the cardinal eventually realizes that he is full of useful information, he just doesn't know it because he is too daft to realize the significance of his wife's activities. This quotation demonstrates the difference between the cardinal's inner thoughts and his public persona. Inside, he has no respect for Monsieur Bonacieux; he thinks he is an idiot and a fool who is all too easy to take advantage of. However, on the outside, he maintains a friendly face because he knows Monsieur Bonacieux could be useful to him. Similar behavior is expressed by the cardinal throughout the novel; he rarely states his true intentions. Instead, he does his best to manipulate people so that he can achieve his goals. In this way, he is similar to Lady de Winter.

Louis XIII might be smarter than the cardinal gives him credit for, he is not a savvy political player. The cardinal manipulates him with ease and never has to worry about the king fooling him in return.

## Chapter 21 Quotes

☞ “Yes, Your Grace, because now that there's talk of war, I must admit that I see you only as an Englishman and therefore as an enemy whom I'd rather meet on a battlefield than in Windsor Park or the halls of the Louvre. That won't prevent me from doing everything in my power to carry out my mission; I'm prepared to die for it if necessary. But you have no more reason to feel grateful to me for what I'm doing now than for what I did the first time we met.”

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan (speaker), The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 214


### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from a conversation between d'Artagnan and the Duke of Buckingham. The duke wants to reward d'Artagnan for his difficult journey to London, but d'Artagnan does not feel comfortable accepting anything. D'Artagnan's reasoning is complicated; on the one hand, he knows he's helping the duke, but on the other, he knows that doing so is not his primary motivation. D'Artagnan undertakes the quest to London as a way of gaining Madame Bonacieux's favor, while simultaneously serving the queen. Because his motivations are partly selfish and partly for the good of France, he feels strange accepting a reward from the leader of England. D'Artagnan's explanation demonstrates that he seeks to act honorably in accordance with the mores of his nation; he feels that accepting a reward from the duke would corrupt his honor. Meanwhile, the Duke of Buckingham is working under a completely different set of cultural assumptions. He sees no problem with rewarding d'Artagnan and eventually does so regardless of d'Artagnan's protests.

## Chapter 15 Quotes

☞ The king's animosity against the queen was deftly nurtured by the cardinal, who was much warier of women than of men in matters of intrigue.

**Related Characters:** Cardinal Richelieu, King Louis XIII, Queen Anne, The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 150

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation appears during a lengthy aside, which discusses the social politics of the French court. The king in question is King Louis XIII, who is jealous of his wife, Queen Anne, because he suspects she is having an affair with the Duke of Buckingham. The cardinal knows that the king is right and does his best to fan the flames of his jealousy. One notable element of this quote is the cardinal's suspicion of women. A similar suspicion will appear later in the novel when the cardinal worries about whether Milady betrayed him. Indeed, the cardinal is right to be more wary of characters like Queen Anne and Milady than of someone like the king. Both Queen Anne and Milady prove themselves to be intelligent political players who know how to trick the men around them. Meanwhile, although King

## Chapter 27 Quotes

☛☛ Athos was thus an extraordinary man. And yet, despite his distinction and refinement, he sometimes sank into sluggish apathy, as old men sink into physical and mental debility. In his periods of lethargy, and they were many, the radiant side of his nature disappeared, although engulfed in darkness. Then, when the demigod had vanished, what remained was scarcely a man.

**Related Characters:** Athos

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 281



### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation is a description of Athos that is given just before d'Artagnan finds him in the basement of an inn, drunk out of his mind. Before this moment in the story, Athos always presented himself as the most mature of the musketeers. However, as this quote suggests, Athos has a dark side. Unlike the other musketeers who are prone to indulging in their vices but are ultimately good and happy people, Athos bumps right up against evil. His bouts of drinking lead him into a “darkness” where he is “scarcely a man.” Eventually it is revealed that Athos acts this way because of his relationship with Lady de Winter. After the tragic ending of their marriage—or, at least, what they thought was the end—Athos was never the same. Because he loves and hates Lady de Winter simultaneously, Athos can never find genuine peace. Instead, he lets his anger and resentment continue to build. Although he gets some relief from Lady de Winter’s death at the end of the novel, Athos remains the most tortured and morally complicated musketeer.

## Chapter 33 Quotes

☛☛ But now he suddenly realized the advantages he could gain from the love that Kitty had candidly confessed to him: he would be able to intercept letters addressed to Count de Wardes, get useful information from Kitty, and have access at any time to her bedroom, which adjoined Milady’s. The treacherous young man was already planning to sacrifice Kitty in order to make Milady give in to him, willingly or unwillingly.

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan, Kitty

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 344

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote comes from the beginning of the chapter, when d'Artagnan realizes that he can exploit Kitty’s love for him to get to Lady de Winter. Although he doesn’t want to admit it, d'Artagnan is slowly falling in love with Lady de Winter, even as he wants to get revenge on her. His desire for sex and revenge is so strong that he is willing to “sacrifice” Kitty—a kind and innocent woman—to get what he wants. This is a point in the novel where d'Artagnan’s moral code comes into question. Although d'Artagnan always strives to act honorably, he fails to do so in this case. He knows his treatment of Kitty is wrong, but he chooses to do it anyway. Such behavior is common among the many men who fall in love with Lady de Winter. Her beauty blinds them and then they act in irrational and immoral ways.

## Chapter 41 Quotes

☛☛ The cardinal, as is well known, had been in love with the queen. We cannot say whether his love had a simple political goal or whether it was one of the deep passions that Anne of Austria aroused in those around her, but in any case we know that the duke of Buckingham had won out over him before the beginning of this story and that in later circumstances [...] the duke had outwitted him.

**Related Characters:** Cardinal Richelieu, Queen Anne, The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 406

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from the beginning of the chapter as the narrator explains the circumstances that led to the Siege of La Rochelle. Although the Siege of La Rochelle is a real historical event, it is important to mention that the contents of this quote do not match the historical record. Although Cardinal Richelieu, Queen Anne, and the Duke of Buckingham were all real people, their love lives had nothing to do with the Siege of La Rochelle and the Huguenot rebellions. Nonetheless, this quote represents a significant moment for the plot of the novel. In Dumas’s story, the cardinal’s motivation for winning the war with the English is to gain a victory over the Duke of Buckingham. In this way, he can get revenge for Buckingham’s romance with Queen Anne. Such an attitude reflects the pettiness that is common among several of the royal characters in the novel.



They start wars simply as a result of their complicated personal lives, rather than for the good of the country.

☞ And since every good deed has its reward, d'Artagnan's leniency had the effect of giving him back the peace of mind he had lost. He felt there was no longer any need for him to worry, because one of his two attackers was dead and the other was now devoted to him.

His serenity proved one thing: he did not yet know Milady.

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 416


### Explanation and Analysis

These lines mark the end of Chapter 41, as d'Artagnan finally begins to feel safe after his near brush with death. Throughout the chapter, d'Artagnan feared that his death was imminent; he knew that Milady's assassins were after him and that it was only a matter of time before they struck. However, after besting them, d'Artagnan once again feels safe. Unfortunately, the narrator suggests that d'Artagnan's peace of mind is not warranted and that he is underestimating Milady. Even though he's gained a devoted follower, Milady remains d'Artagnan's enemy and she will stop at nothing in her quest for revenge. Throughout the novel, characters constantly underestimate Milady, and they always pay for their mistake. This is even true of Lord de Winter who does his best to not underestimate Milady and still comes up short. However, at the point of the narrative where this quote appears, the full extent of Milady's abilities is not yet apparent. As such, it is not only d'Artagnan who does not yet know Milady; it is the reader as well.

## Chapter 44 Quotes

☞ "Monseigneur," Milady interrupted, "I'll trade you a life for a life, a man for a man; rid me of this one and I'll rid you of the other."

**Related Characters:** D'Artagnan, Athos, Cardinal Richelieu, The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 438

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from Lady de Winter's conversation with Cardinal Richelieu that is overheard by Athos. Here, Lady de Winter is asking the cardinal to let her kill d'Artagnan. In return, she promises to kill the Duke of Buckingham. This moment is a major turning point for both characters involved in the conversation. It is here that the extent of Milady's thirst for revenge is revealed as well as her confidence in her own abilities. She seems to think that she can have the Duke of Buckingham killed with little to no problem. Meanwhile, Lady de Winter's offer is a test of the cardinal's character. Although the cardinal is often diabolical, he has yet to openly encourage something so bold as the assassination of his political enemies. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the cardinal accepts Lady Winter's offer, which she eventually carries out. Despite his position as a religious figurehead, the cardinal appears to have no problem with resorting to such drastic measures.

## Chapter 47 Quotes

☞ "The bearer of this letter has acted under my orders and for the good of the state. Richelieu"

**Related Characters:** Cardinal Richelieu (speaker), D'Artagnan, Athos

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 457

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from the moment where Athos hands d'Artagnan the letter he stole from Lady de Winter. The letter was written by Cardinal Richelieu and d'Artagnan reads it to himself. The letter is significant for a number of reasons. First, it is proof that the cardinal authorized the deaths of both the Duke of Buckingham and d'Artagnan. Although there is nothing in the letter that could prove such assertions in a court of law, d'Artagnan trusts his friends and knows that the letter is meant to be his death warrant. Additionally, the letter is an opportunity for the musketeers. D'Artagnan knows he can use it to get away with something illegal because the act will be performed in the name of the cardinal. Eventually, d'Artagnan does utilize the letter to get revenge on Lady de Winter, which is ironic because it was initially meant to be used by Lady de Winter to get revenge on d'Artagnan.

## Chapter 50 Quotes

“Look at this woman,” said de Winter. “She’s young and beautiful, and she has every kind of charm imaginable; yet she’s a monster who, at the age of twenty-five, has already committed as many crimes as you’ll find in the records of our law courts for a year. Her body speaks in her favor, her beauty lures her victims, and I must say in all fairness that her body pays what she’s promised. She’ll try to seduce you, she may even try to kill you.”

**Related Characters:** Lord de Winter (speaker), John Felton

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 495



### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from the end of Chapter 50, as Lord de Winter attempts to explain to John Felton why Lady de Winter is dangerous. In his explanation, Lord de Winter juxtaposes Lady de Winter’s beautiful outside—that is, her material body—with her corrupted soul. The danger of the Lady de Winter is that she is not what she seems. Her looks and demeanor allow her to get away with crime after crime and deceive even those who considered themselves incorruptible. Notably, everything Lord de Winter mentions in this paragraph comes to pass. Indeed, Lady de Winter does seduce John Felton and when she is done with him, she sends him to his death without a second thought. It is a testament to Lady de Winter’s seductive powers that Lord de Winter can warn John Felton—a stoic and religious man—about her and yet she still manages to succeed.

## Chapter 51 Quotes

“We are conspirators, Monseigneur,” said Athos, “but as you saw the other morning, we conspire against the enemy.”

**Related Characters:** Athos (speaker), D’Artagnan, Cardinal Richelieu

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 502

### Explanation and Analysis

This quotation comes from a conversation between the cardinal and the four musketeers. The cardinal suspects that the musketeers’ mirth is related to the same thing that is causing his unhappiness and so he accuses them of conspiring. Athos’s response to the cardinal is telling

because he never clarifies who “the enemy” is. While the enemy could refer to the English, whom they are at war with, it could also refer to the cardinal himself. However, the cardinal has no way of knowing because he does not know where he stands in the eyes of the musketeers. The care Athos takes with his words in this response is not unlike how the cardinal himself would speak. Often, because the cardinal does not want to explicitly state a fact or a threat, he only implies it. For instance, when he meets with d’Artagnan, he warns him that he has a lot of enemies, implying that d’Artagnan will end up dead if he does not join forces with the cardinal. Here, Athos uses the cardinal’s manner of speaking against him, which causes the cardinal great frustration.

## Chapter 52 Quotes

She sat motionless, her eyes glowing with murderous hatred. Now and then an angry sound like the low growl of a tigress rose from deep inside her and mingled with the roar of the waves breaking against the cliff on which the forbidding castle stood.

**Related Characters:** D’Artagnan, Lord de Winter

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 508

### Explanation and Analysis


This quotation comes from early on in Lady de Winter’s first day as Lord de Winter’s captive. The glow of hatred in Lady de Winter’s eyes is directed toward both her captor, Lord de Winter, and the people who landed her in captivity, especially d’Artagnan. Here, Lady de Winter is compared directly to a caged animal, and a dangerous one at that. Her “low growl” is a physical response, which suggests that she is something less (or more) than human. In fact, the mingling of her growl with the continuous crashing of the waves positions Lady de Winter as a force of nature that cannot be stopped; her actions and her ability to escape are as natural as the waves crashing on the shore. No matter how one might try, she cannot be resisted. This description suggests that although Lady de Winter’s position seems impossible, she refuses to be denied her revenge.

## Chapter 57 Quotes

“He’s the man who’s ravaged England, persecuted true believers, and destroyed the honor of countless women, the man who’s plunged two kingdoms into bloody war to satisfy a whim of his depraved heart, the man who protects the Protestants today and will betray them tomorrow.”

“Buckingham!” Felton said furiously. “Yes, it’s Buckingham!”

**Related Characters:** John Felton (speaker), The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 550

### Explanation and Analysis


This quotation marks the end of Lady de Winter’s made-up story about the Duke of Buckingham. In order to gain John Felton’s sympathy, Lady de Winter tells him a story about how the duke kidnapped her, raped her, and branded her. However, she purposely leaves out his identity until the very end of the story to build tension. Additionally, when she finally does reveal the duke as her abuser, she makes sure not to actually say his name. Instead, she gets Felton to say his name for her because she knows it will have a more powerful psychological effect if Felton reaches the conclusion himself.

Although Lady de Winter’s story is terrible enough, it is not the only way she manipulates Felton. She also uses his religious beliefs against him by reminding him of the Catholic duke’s persecution of “true believers” (the Puritans). From this moment on, Lady de Winter knows that John Felton will remain loyal to her and help her assassinate the duke.

## Chapter 59 Quotes

“It was God’s will,” Felton said with a fanatic’s resignation. But he could not take his eyes off the sloop, and he imagined that he could see a woman on its deck, the woman to whom he had sacrificed his life.

**Related Characters:** John Felton (speaker), Lord de Winter, The Duke of Buckingham

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 572

### Explanation and Analysis

This moment comes at the end of Chapter 59, as Felton

realizes that Lady de Winter betrayed him. Felton is speaking to Lord de Winter after assassinating the Duke of Buckingham. Although he tries to convince himself that his actions were done to serve “God’s will,” he knows that, in reality, the only person he served was Lady de Winter. Additionally, this passage describes Felton as a “fanatic,” the same term the cardinal and Lady de Winter used earlier in the novel when discussing the Duke of Buckingham’s assassination. Felton cannot take his eyes off of the boat because he knows that Lady de Winter is on it, sailing away well before the time they had agreed upon. Because Felton cannot see Lady de Winter, he has to imagine her, though it is not clear why he wants to do so. Perhaps he wants to see the face that deceived him and try to understand where he went wrong. Or, alternatively, he might want one last glimpse of Lady de Winter’s beauty. After all, he is going to die on her behalf.

## Chapter 66 Quotes

Perhaps she was struck by a superstitious idea and took her fall as a sign that fate was against her; in any case, she remained as she had fallen, on her knees, with her head bowed and her hands still tied.

The silent witnesses on the other side of the river saw the executioner raise his arms. Moonlight glittered on the broad blade of this sword. There was a scream as he swiftly brought down his arms, then a truncated mass collapsed beneath the blow.

**Related Characters:** Lord de Winter, The Executioner

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 624

### Explanation and Analysis



This passage comes from the end of Chapter 66, and it describes Lady de Winter’s death. Together, the four musketeers, Lord de Winter, and the executioner sentenced Lady de Winter to death for her actions and, here, her sentence is being carried out. It is a disturbing sequence because finally, after so much scheming and struggling, Lady de Winter decides to remain perfectly still and accept death. Although Lady de Winter was a beautiful woman in life, her dead body is nothing more than “a truncated mass”; whatever beauty was once present is no longer there. The scene is a difficult read because even after all of Lady de Winter’s cruel behavior, there is still something about her that is deserving of sympathy. Although she abused the heroes of the story, they abused her in return. Lady de

Winter is far from an innocent figure, but she is not wholly evil, either. In her final moments, she becomes a human being like any other, which makes her scream and subsequent death upsetting, even though it feels justified.

## Chapter 67 Quotes

💬 “You’re young,” said Athos. “Your bitter memories still have time to turn to sweet ones.”

**Related Characters:** Athos (speaker), D’Artagnan

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 634

### Explanation and Analysis

This statement from Athos is the final line of the novel, not

including the brief epilogue, which describes the lives of the characters in the years following the primary events of the novel. Here, Athos is talking to d’Artagnan, who worries that he will end up lonely; he no longer has Madame Bonacieux to love, and all of his friends are planning to leave the musketeers and move on to different phases of their lives. For a novel that is all about the bonds of friendship and working together to overcome trials and tribulations, this is indeed a strange ending. Furthermore, it is difficult to know what to make of Athos’s advice to d’Artagnan. While it is true that d’Artagnan could outgrow the “bitter memories” of his youth, he could also end up like Athos who has never managed to move on from his past. Because Dumas puts this final line in the mouth of Athos, it ultimately remains ambiguous, and the reader is denied the more commonplace happy ending that is often associated with adventure novels.





## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## CHAPTER 1

On the first Monday of April, 1625, there is an uproar in the town of Meung, as though a revolution is about to begin. The townsfolk of Meung are all making their way toward the Jolly Miller, the local inn. Such commotions are common in Meung, partly because the populace is easily excitable, but mostly because so many wars have gone on as of late. When the townsfolk arrive at the inn, they find the source of the excitement: an unknown young man. The man is like a young Don Quixote; he has the apparel of a knight but looks like a farm boy. He's ridden into town on an old and weary-looking horse that repulses the crowd.

The rider—whose name is d'Artagnan—knows that the townsfolk already do not like him or his horse. He didn't want to bring the horse, but felt he had to because it was a gift from his father. Before leaving home, d'Artagnan's father gave him three gifts: the horse, 15 crowns, and a letter for Monsieur de Tréville. In a flashback to d'Artagnan's departure, his father also gives him some advice. He tells d'Artagnan to act bravely, fight often, and to live happily according to his own whims. With that, he sends d'Artagnan on his way to go and meet M. de Tréville, a rich noble who fought many battles, and was once d'Artagnan the Elder's neighbor. Before d'Artagnan leaves, he also says goodbye to his mother, who gives him a recipe for a salve that is said to cure "any wounds that do not reach the heart."

Because of his father's advice, d'Artagnan is always on edge and assumes everyone wants to fight him, even if they are smiling at him. It doesn't help that he gets a lot of smiles and strange looks because of the condition of his horse. Nonetheless, he manages to make it all the way to Meung without fighting anyone. Yet, when he arrives at the Jolly Miller, problems immediately arise. D'Artagnan hears a stranger inside the inn making fun of his horse and is immediately enraged. D'Artagnan orders the man to come outside and repeat what he said to d'Artagnan's face. The man does so, but in a mocking fashion, which only generates more laughter from his cohort.

*The opening paragraphs of the story help set the historical backdrop for the novel. Meung-sur-Loire (or just Meung) is a town in central France, south of Paris. As this passage suggests, France was fighting nonstop wars and quashing rebellions throughout the early 1600s in the name of religion. Additionally, this is the first description the novel provides for its protagonist, and it's not exactly flattering. In essence, the description suggests that this young man wants to be a knight but comes off looking like a buffoon. He is similar to Don Quixote, the famous literary character from the novel of the same name, who thinks he is a knight but is actually just insane.*



*Although d'Artagnan's parents do their best to help him achieve a better life, his origins are quite humble. In addition to the sickly-looking horse, 15 crowns is a paltry sum that is unlikely to get d'Artagnan far. That said, both the healing salve and the letter for M. de Tréville are valuable items that will play important roles as the novel moves forward. Equally important is the advice of d'Artagnan the Elder. As his father suggests, early in his adventure d'Artagnan will fight often and according to his own whims. However, as d'Artagnan matures, he will begin to curb this impulse.*



*The beginning of the novel is similar in tone to [Don Quixote](#). In other words, it is comical on a level that approaches parody. D'Artagnan acts like a madman and tries to fight the first man who shows him any disrespect. The stranger's mockery suggests that he is likely a soldier himself who probably has much more experience than d'Artagnan. As such, d'Artagnan's challenge is ill-advised, especially considering he is alone.*



Furious, d'Artagnan pulls out his sword to initiate a duel. Exasperated, the man does the same. He also mutters under his breath that d'Artagnan would be perfect for the King, who is currently recruiting for his musketeers. Before d'Artagnan and the stranger can fight, the stranger's friends come out and start hitting d'Artagnan with makeshift weapons such as shovels and sticks. D'Artagnan moves to fight them off, while the stranger sheathes his sword. After a moment, the stranger tells his friends to stop fighting as well, but d'Artagnan insists that the fight must go on. Back in the present, it is this spectacle that attracts all of the townsfolk to the inn. When they arrive, they see d'Artagnan take a whack to the head with a stick, which causes him to bleed and pass out.

To avoid further trouble, the innkeeper takes d'Artagnan inside to attend to his wounds. While d'Artagnan is passed out, the stranger asks the innkeeper about him. The innkeeper—who refers to the stranger as “your Excellency”—tells him that d'Artagnan promised to fight the stranger again as soon as he regained his strength. The innkeeper also says that d'Artagnan invoked the name M. de Tréville, which catches the stranger's attention. Evidently, the stranger knows Monsieur de Tréville and wonders whether Tréville sent d'Artagnan after him. In order to avoid further trouble, the stranger decides to leave the inn to go meet a woman he only refers to as “Milady.” Before he goes, however, he wants to take a look at the letter relating to Tréville.

In the meantime, the innkeeper rushes to d'Artagnan and tells him to leave. He assumes the stranger is leaving because d'Artagnan is still present and thinks he might stay if he kicks out the young troublemaker. D'Artagnan does as he is told, but almost immediately runs into the stranger. The stranger is talking to a beautiful woman in her early 20s. The stranger gives her a box and tells her to immediately return to England and then says that he will return to Paris. Immediately, d'Artagnan interrupts their conversation and once again tries to start a fight with the stranger. Not wanting more trouble, both the stranger and the beautiful woman flee in opposite directions. As they depart, the woman tells the stranger, “the least delay may ruin everything.” As the stranger flees, d'Artagnan yells at him and calls him a coward, but does not have the strength to chase after him.

*The stranger's comment is odd because it is said in earnest. Although d'Artagnan's behavior is off kilter, to put it mildly, the stranger nonetheless thinks he would make a good musketeer. His remark is part of the novel's commentary on the absurdity of the era. Although the musketeers are the heroes of the story, they are also somewhat absurd figures who are just as petty as they are noble. The fight itself is farcical rather than exciting and engaging. Although d'Artagnan initiates the fight to protect his honor, it quickly devolves into slapstick comedy.*



*Clearly, the stranger is a man of high status; the innkeeper calls him “your Excellency” and he is familiar with M. de Tréville. Meanwhile, it seems as though d'Artagnan took his father's words to heart; he wants to fight again, even as he is still recovering from his last encounter.*



*Presumably, the woman who the stranger talks to is Milady (which is used as a proper name in this context). Together, they seem to be working out some sort of scheme, although it is not clear if they are heroes, villains, or something in between. At this point, all that's clear is that they position themselves against M. de Tréville, although d'Artagnan doesn't even know that when he attempts to fight the stranger yet again.*



Because the stranger is gone anyway, the innkeeper allows d'Artagnan to stay at the inn for a crown per night. Because d'Artagnan is injured, the innkeeper assumes he will get all of the money that remains in d'Artagnan's possession. However, the morning after the brawl, d'Artagnan uses his mother's salve recipe to cure his wounds and is almost back to normal by the following day. As d'Artagnan is getting ready to depart, he realizes that his letter for M. de Tréville is missing and goes into another rage. Not wanting to risk another incident or get in trouble with Tréville, the innkeeper tells d'Artagnan that he thinks the stranger likely stole his letter. This satisfies d'Artagnan, who vows to complain to Tréville, who will in turn complain to the king.

*Above all, the innkeeper cares about making money, a fact that will carry over to the other innkeepers in the novel. However, the innkeeper's plan to make money is foiled because d'Artagnan's mother's salve is as good as advertised, and he doesn't need to recuperate for long. As d'Artagnan leaves the inn, he expresses a high opinion of himself. Evidently, he believes his letter is important enough to warrant serious regal punishment for whoever stole it.*



D'Artagnan leaves the inn and makes his way to Paris. Once in Paris, he sells his horse, despite his father's wishes, and gets three crowns in return. Next, he walks around Paris until he can find lodging he can afford, which ends up being a dingy garret. He spends the rest of the day completing miscellaneous errands before going to bed, satisfied with his journey thus far and hopeful for the future. The next day, d'Artagnan wakes up and makes his way to the home of M. de Tréville.

*Although d'Artagnan follows his father's advice in some areas, he shows complete disregard for it in others. Such behavior isn't disrespectful so much as it is necessary; D'Artagnan's come to Paris with little to no money, and his horse is a necessary sacrifice if he wants to get by.*



## CHAPTER 2

Like d'Artagnan, M. de Tréville grew up poor. He made his way to the top of the social hierarchy through a mix of hard work, bravery, stubbornness, and intelligence. However, although he was poor, M. de Tréville's father was friends with Henry IV, the predecessor and father of the current king, Louis XIII. Because of his family connections, M. de Tréville became friends with Louis XIII at a young age, and the two of them learned to fight together. Louis XIII always liked M. de Tréville and sought to keep him close because M. de Tréville is both strong and faithful. Eventually, Louis XIII made M. de Tréville the captain of the musketeers, his most faithful group of soldiers.

*Although there are characters like M. de Tréville who started near the bottom and then rose to the top of the social hierarchy, the world of the novel is primarily characterized by a rigid class system. With only a few notable exceptions, most of the noblemen and -women d'Artagnan will meet in Paris were born into their respective classes. Those who manage to work their way up are able to do so because they have connections in high places.*



The musketeers are so impressive that Cardinal Richelieu, who is at least as powerful as Louis XIII, decided to form a band of his own. His group of musketeers are informal rivals to the group formed by Louis XIII. Louis XIII and the cardinal compete against one another to scour the land to find the most talented and loyal men to join their respective groups. Though talented, Louis XIII's musketeers are a recalcitrant and often drunk group of men who regularly start brawls in public with the cardinal's guards. The only authorities the musketeers are willing to listen to are their leader, M. de Tréville, and Louis XIII himself.

*Here, it is revealed that division exists within the French court between its two most powerful members. Since d'Artagnan has his heart set on becoming a musketeer, that means he will be setting himself against the cardinal and his guards. Meanwhile, M. de Tréville and Louis XIII will be his allies. Also, this passage provides a first glimpse at the life of a musketeer, which is less glamorous and refined than one might assume given the importance of the position.*



M. de Tréville is a respected, loved, and feared man. Although the Musketeers are at his command, he does not abuse that power for personal gain. Instead, he only uses the musketeers to advance the interests of the king. M. de Tréville is an honest man of good fortune who is loved by both his men and a great number of women.

Every day, M. de Tréville participates in a levee where hundreds of people come before him to seek favors. On the day d'Artagnan arrives to see him, his residence is especially chaotic. D'Artagnan makes his way through the crowd and eventually arrives at some stairs, where he sees several musketeers fencing with one another to pass the time. D'Artagnan is shocked to see that the men are using sharpened blades and cutting each other as part of this casual exercise.

As d'Artagnan continues on his way to M. de Tréville, he runs into more musketeers who are bragging about their exploits with women and openly mocking the cardinal. Such behavior is scandalous to d'Artagnan, who reveres the cardinal and is bashful when it comes to women. Eventually, d'Artagnan comes across one of M. de Tréville's servants and asks for a meeting with him. The servant departs to give M. de Tréville the message and d'Artagnan is left with three musketeers who are having a spirited conversation.

D'Artagnan's eye is first drawn to Porthos, the largest of the musketeers and the most elaborately dressed. Together, the three musketeers are discussing his fancy baldric, which is apparently new. One of Porthos's companions teases him by telling him that he likely came to possess the baldric via questionable means. Porthos, hurt by the comment, tells his other companion, Aramis, to assure the musketeer that he purchased the baldric under normal circumstances.

After, the musketeers return to discussing and openly mocking heads of state. Aramis even jokes about the queen having an affair, although the others tell him that he's gone too far. After he is done being a musketeer, Aramis claims that he wants to be an abbé. The others tell him that he's unlikely to achieve that dream if he continues speaking in such a crude manner. The conversation between the musketeers ends when M. de Tréville's servant returns and quiets them down. Then, the servant takes d'Artagnan to see M. de Tréville.

*M. de Tréville is a good man who is deserving of his position. This raises the question: why would the stranger from Meung fear him?*



*A levee is an assembly where individuals can come before a king (or other high-ranking official) to ask for help. M. de Tréville's levee is particularly lively because the musketeers are present. Here, both the musketeers' fearlessness and hubris are on display as they use their real blades for mock fighting.*



*Paris is much different than d'Artagnan's humble upbringing led him to expect. Evidently, d'Artagnan expected that the musketeers would act like saints. In reality, they can be crude and disrespectful. Additionally, it is notable that d'Artagnan had no knowledge of the rivalry between the musketeers and the cardinal's men. As such, this is his first introduction to the messiness of French politics.*



*This passage provides a first glimpse at Porthos, who functions as the novel's comic relief. As seen here, Porthos is the vainest of the musketeers. However, he also has the fewest resources, which is why his companion thinks he likely procured the baldric in a questionable manner. A baldric is a holster for a sword that runs diagonally from shoulder to hip.*



*Although the musketeers like to joke, even they have a line, and Aramis appears to have crossed it. Nonetheless, there is some truth to Aramis's words, even if the musketeers disapprove of them.*





## CHAPTER 3

When d'Artagnan enters M. de Tréville's antechamber, the leader of the musketeers is in a bad mood. Before even bothering to speak with d'Artagnan, M. de Tréville angrily orders Athos, Porthos, and Aramis into the room. Only Porthos and Aramis, the two whom d'Artagnan is already familiar with, enter. At first, M. de Tréville doesn't seem to realize that Athos is absent. He begins berating Porthos and Aramis because the king recently told M. de Tréville that he should start recruiting musketeers from the cardinal's guard. The king and, in turn, M. de Tréville are angry with the musketeers because they won't stop causing problems in public.

M. de Tréville knows that Athos, Porthos, and Aramis were involved in a brawl with the cardinal's men just the other day, which resulted in multiple deaths and arrests. As he relates this information to Porthos and Aramis, he suddenly realizes that Athos isn't present. He asks the other two musketeers where he is. At first, Porthos lies and says that Athos has smallpox. M. de Tréville knows this is a lie and pushes for the real answer. Porthos then reveals that Athos was grievously wounded during the brawl with the cardinal's men. At hearing this news, M. de Tréville softens his tone. Aramis asks M. de Tréville not to relate the news of Athos's injury to the king, but before their conversation can continue further, Athos enters the room.

Astonished that such a severely wounded man would bother answering his summons, M. de Tréville rushes to Athos and aggressively shakes his hand. This sudden action causes Athos a great deal of pain (it is his shoulder that is injured) and he falls to the floor. M. de Tréville calls for a surgeon, who takes Athos into a side room and examines him. Eventually the surgeon emerges and says that Athos will be fine; he's just lost a lot of blood and needs time to recover. After he knows that Athos is okay, M. de Tréville dismisses the other two musketeers, leaving him alone with d'Artagnan.

While all of the drama with the three musketeers went on, d'Artagnan simply stood still and watched, embarrassed that he was privy to these seemingly personal events. However, M. de Tréville now gives d'Artagnan his full attention. Excited to finally get the audience he requested, d'Artagnan introduces himself and states his purpose: he wants M. de Tréville to make him a musketeer. M. de Tréville appreciates d'Artagnan's boldness and respects his father very much, but he tells him that he cannot personally make him a musketeer. Musketeers are chosen by the king and qualified candidates must have much more experience than d'Artagnan currently possesses.

*At first, M. de Tréville's anger suggests that he is not in the mood to help d'Artagnan. Instead, he is preoccupied with the aforementioned rivalry between the musketeers and the cardinal's men, which has boiled over into the public. M. de Tréville knows that such behavior is a bad look for himself and the king, both of whom need to remain on the public's good side.*



*Although M. de Tréville is angry, he does not let his anger override his compassion for his men. Athos's wound is more serious to him than anything the musketeers could've done to offend the king or the cardinal. Meanwhile, Porthos's and Aramis's responses indicate that they are trying to protect their friend's honor. While the previous chapter shows the musketeers at their most irreverent, this scene shows them at their most vulnerable. Although he is not the focus of this scene, d'Artagnan witnesses it, and it informs his idea of what it means to be a musketeer.*



*This scene is more comical than it is dramatic, as M. de Tréville's concern and respect for Athos ironically only causes him more pain. There is never any fear that Athos's life is actually in danger. In all the chaos, d'Artagnan is completely forgotten, although M. de Tréville finally remembers him at the end of this section.*



*Although d'Artagnan is respectful, his request is rather absurd. He wants to be one of the highest-ranking soldiers in France only one day after arriving in Paris. However, M. de Tréville recognizes that d'Artagnan is acting from a place of excitement and youthful ignorance rather than one of hubris or disrespect, which is why he agrees to help him.*



However, M. de Tréville offers to help d'Artagnan in other ways. Namely, he promises to give him a letter, which will allow him to attend the Royal Academy for free. At the Royal Academy, d'Artagnan will learn all of the skills befitting a gentleman, including horsemanship, dancing, and swordsmanship. At first d'Artagnan is skeptical—he does not want to accept charity—but M. de Tréville insists.

Charitable though he is, M. de Tréville does note that he is surprised d'Artagnan didn't come bearing a letter from his father. D'Artagnan then relates the story of what happened in Meung. Upon hearing the story, M. de Tréville recognizes the stranger and seems to value the information that d'Artagnan provides. However, he also briefly becomes skeptical of whether d'Artagnan is telling the truth. He entertains the idea that d'Artagnan might be a spy for the cardinal. Quickly, he sets this idea aside because d'Artagnan's behavior suggests that he is telling the truth.

Before d'Artagnan leaves, M. de Tréville presents d'Artagnan with his letter for the Royal Academy. As d'Artagnan takes hold of the letter, he suddenly becomes enraged once again at the thought of the stranger stealing the letter meant for M. de Tréville and he openly swears vengeance before departing. M. de Tréville is taken aback by this sudden change of mood but allows d'Artagnan to go on his way.

## CHAPTER 4

D'Artagnan departs M. de Tréville's antechamber angry and determined to find the stranger who stole his letter. In his rage, he accidentally collides with Athos and hits the musketeer in the shoulder. Athos howls in pain and chastises d'Artagnan for his behavior. Never one to back down from a challenge, d'Artagnan provides an angry retort. Incensed, Athos challenges d'Artagnan to a duel at noon by the Carmes-Deschaux monastery. D'Artagnan accepts the challenge and continues on his way.

Before d'Artagnan can leave M. de Tréville's residence, he collides with another musketeer. This time it is Porthos; d'Artagnan attempts to get by him, but the wind blows Porthos's cape up into d'Artagnan's face and the two get tangled with each other. Once again, a shouting match starts up, the result of which is a duel. This time, the two agree to meet at 1 p.m. behind the Luxembourg.

*M. de Tréville knows that d'Artagnan cannot become a musketeer without the proper training. D'Artagnan is ambitious, but he has no idea how to behave in Parisian society. D'Artagnan initially rejects M. de Tréville's offer because he doesn't think accepting charity is honorable. However, he trusts that M. de Tréville knows better than him and decides to do what he says.*



*The identity of the stranger remains a mystery throughout the early part of the novel. Clearly, he is an important person, and he evidently has ties to the cardinal, hence M. de Tréville's reaction. Here, M. de Tréville demonstrates that he is a good judge of character; after only a moment's thought, he realizes that d'Artagnan cannot be the stranger's ally.*



*D'Artagnan's rage comes out of nowhere and is almost comical in nature. Although the rage is entertaining, it is also a character flaw in d'Artagnan that is sure to get him in trouble if he doesn't learn how to tame it and access it appropriately.*



*It is unclear why d'Artagnan expects that he'll be able to find the stranger. He acts entirely based on emotion and without logic. In d'Artagnan's blind rage, he makes an enemy out of Athos, one of the very people he should be trying to win over. Instead, following his father's advice, d'Artagnan gets into his second fight in the last 24 hours.*



*Never one to take half-measures, d'Artagnan ends up in a second duel that is meant to take place just one hour after his duel with Athos. What d'Artagnan fails to realize as he continues challenging people to duels is that the musketeers are some of the best swordsmen around. While d'Artagnan could possibly defeat Athos (given his injury), it seems unlikely that he'll be able to defeat two musketeers in one day.*



Still eager to find the stranger, d'Artagnan begins asking around town whether anyone has seen him. However, he has no luck. Eventually, d'Artagnan calms down and realizes what he's done. He's made not one, but two musketeers angry at him; he knows both are likely capable of killing him three times over. Realizing his mistake, d'Artagnan starts to think about how to get on the musketeers' good side. While pondering the matter, he spots Aramis talking to three of the king's guards. As Aramis talks, a handkerchief falls out of his pocket. D'Artagnan sees the handkerchief fall and realizes that this is his moment to start to make amends with the musketeers.

D'Artagnan approaches the four men and immediately realizes that he is not welcome. Nonetheless, he bends down and picks up the handkerchief, which is under Aramis's foot. As he does so, he notices that Aramis does not move his foot to help him. Still, he proceeds with the task and then politely hands the handkerchief to Aramis. Immediately, the other men begin to make fun of Aramis because the handkerchief belongs to Madame de Bois-Tracy, a married woman.

Aramis tries to convince the other guards that the handkerchief is not his, but they don't believe him. Soon afterward, their conversation ends, and Aramis goes off on his own. D'Artagnan follows him and tries to make amends. However, Aramis is still annoyed and so he chastises d'Artagnan. At first, d'Artagnan remains amiable, but before long he becomes angry once again. Unsurprisingly, their argument ends when Aramis proposes a duel and d'Artagnan accepts. This one is set to take place near Monsieur de Tréville's residence at 2 p.m. As he walks away from this encounter, d'Artagnan thinks to himself that if he is to be killed, at least it will be by a musketeer.

## CHAPTER 5

D'Artagnan makes his way to the Carmes-Deschaux monastery for his first duel with Athos. He doesn't bring anyone with him as a second because he just arrived in Paris and doesn't know anyone yet. On his way to the duel, he thinks about ways to get himself out of his current predicament. D'Artagnan thinks that he might be able to apologize to Athos, make Porthos see that their duel looks ridiculous, and then simply fight and win against Aramis.

*Here, d'Artagnan recognizes his mistake and decides to make amends. He knows that even if he wins the duels, he'll have to answer to M. de Tréville, who cares deeply about his men. However, despite his change of heart, d'Artagnan's rage can erupt at any moment, meaning that this interaction with Aramis needs to go smoothly to succeed.*



*Aramis's refusal to remove his foot is not a good sign for d'Artagnan. It suggests that Aramis either doesn't want the handkerchief moved or is purposely being rude to d'Artagnan. Both options are likely to cause a fight. Although it appears to be a trivial object, the handkerchief will be important to keep an eye on as the novel progresses. The insinuation, in this case, is that Aramis is having an affair with Madame de Bois-Tracy.*



*Although it is socially acceptable for the musketeers to partake in love affairs—often with married women—they are expected to keep them a secret. It would be considered rude to talk openly about one's love affairs because of the dishonor it would bring to the woman involved. That said, some of the musketeers are not as good at keeping their affairs secret as they think they are. Unsurprisingly, the conversation between d'Artagnan and Aramis does not go well, and yet another duel is proposed—d'Artagnan's third of the day.*



*Historically, duels included "seconds." A second was someone who came along with the primary dueler to make sure everything was on the level. At least, that was supposed to be their job. In reality, seconds often showed up intending to join the fight. Because d'Artagnan doesn't have a second, his position is especially dire.*



D'Artagnan arrives exactly on time at the monastery, where he finds Athos. Athos tells him that they will need to wait a few minutes for his seconds to arrive. While they wait, d'Artagnan offers Athos some of his mother's salve to treat Athos's injury. D'Artagnan suggests that Athos apply the salve and then the men can meet again to fight in a few days. Athos appreciates the offer but declines it. He knows that if they wait a few days, the cardinal's men will find out about the duel and put a stop to it.

Eventually, Athos's seconds arrive. As it turns out, his seconds are Porthos and Aramis. All three musketeers are surprised to learn that they each have a duel scheduled with d'Artagnan. As they sort out the details of what happened, d'Artagnan is polite and doesn't reveal the exact circumstances that led to the duels because he knows they would embarrass Porthos and Aramis.

At a quarter past noon, d'Artagnan and Athos are about to begin their duel when they are stopped by the cardinal's men. The cardinal's men are led by Monsieur de Jussac, who tells the musketeers to lay down their arms. The musketeers are tempted to do so because they are outnumbered three to five against the cardinal's men. However, d'Artagnan seizes the moment and allies himself with the musketeers. He promises to fight on their side, even though it might mean losing his life.

A fight breaks out between the cardinal's men, d'Artagnan, and the musketeers. Everyone fights one on one except Aramis, who fights two men at once. D'Artagnan is paired up with Jussac, who he eventually manages to severely wound after Jussac becomes impatient. Having dispatched his man, d'Artagnan moves to help the injured Athos. Together they manage to get the best of Athos's combatant. In the end, the musketeers and d'Artagnan are victorious; they dispatch most of the cardinal's men and force the rest to surrender. Happy with their victory, d'Artagnan and the musketeers make their way back to M. de Tréville's home. At this point, d'Artagnan feels that he is well on his way to becoming a musketeer.

*D'Artagnan does his best to make amends, but it is already too late. Ironically, both d'Artagnan and Athos conduct themselves appropriately under such circumstances; if they could've done the same earlier, there would be no need for the duel. Additionally, it is essential to mention that dueling was outlawed in Paris during this period, which is why Athos doesn't want to postpone the duel.*



*Again, d'Artagnan acts like a gentleman and does not reveal the exact circumstances of each encounter. This honorable behavior is undoubtedly recognized by Porthos and Aramis, although they do not say anything so as not to give themselves away. If d'Artagnan had conducted himself similarly earlier in the day, all of this drama could've been avoided.*



*The cardinal's men act as though they are superior, but they have no more power than the musketeers. Although they pretend they are upholding the law, the cardinal's men are just trying to start a fight because they know the musketeers won't back down. This scene is significant for d'Artagnan because he chooses a side in the rivalry between the king and the cardinal. At the same time, he also redeems himself in the eyes of the musketeers.*



*D'Artagnan proves he is a capable fighter by wounding Jussac and helping Athos. The only more impressive fighter is Aramis, who manages to handle two men at once. The fight bonds d'Artagnan to the musketeers, and from this moment forward, they become good friends. As it turns out, d'Artagnan's father's advice to fight all the time had some merit. Every time d'Artagnan had the opportunity, he chose to fight rather than run, and as a result, he is now on the path to becoming a musketeer.*



## CHAPTER 6

M. de Tréville publicly denounces the actions of the musketeers and privately congratulates them on a job well done. However, it is not just the public that M. de Tréville needs to appease; he also needs to defend the actions of his men to the king. As such, he heads to the Louvre to meet with Louis XIII and explain his position. When M. de Tréville finds the king, he is playing cards and is in a jolly mood because he is winning. However, when Louis XIII sees Tréville, he berates him because of the trouble his men have been causing.

M. de Tréville assures the king that his musketeers were not at fault for the incident. Instead, he insists that the cardinal's men started the fight. According to M. de Tréville, d'Artagnan and his friends simply went to the Carmes-Deschaux to have a picnic when they were rudely interrupted by Jussac and his men. The king seems as though he believes M. de Tréville's story and even acts excited when he learns that the musketeers were victorious over the cardinal's men. Because the king is pleased, M. de Tréville makes sure to slip in d'Artagnan's name and says that he fought well and wounded Jussac. Impressed, Louis XIII asks M. de Tréville to bring him d'Artagnan and the musketeers the following day.

When the musketeers learn that they will be received by the king, they are not that excited. They've been in the king's guard for a long time, and this is nothing new for them. However, d'Artagnan is overjoyed and sees this moment as a life-changing event. The morning before they are meant to meet with the king, d'Artagnan and the musketeers decide to kill time by playing tennis. Realizing that he is more likely to hurt himself than anything else, d'Artagnan decides to sit and watch the others play.

D'Artagnan sits among other tennis spectators, one of which is a guard for the cardinal. Angered by what the musketeers did the day before, the cardinal's guard begins taunting d'Artagnan. As always, d'Artagnan lets his temper get the best of him and the situation quickly rises to the two men challenging one another to a duel. The guard tells d'Artagnan that his name is Monsieur Bernajoux, and he expects that it will inspire fear in d'Artagnan. However, because d'Artagnan is new to Paris, he has no idea who the man is, and the name doesn't scare him at all.

*M. de Tréville is a savvy political figure who knows that he must act one way publicly and another way privately. He knows that the musketeers' behavior reflects poorly on the king. However, he also despises the cardinal and is happy for any victory over him.*



*M. de Tréville's story probably sounds unlikely to the king, but he acts like he believes it. Perhaps Louis XIII simply trusts M. de Tréville, or perhaps he is showing his own bias against the cardinal. Either way, the result of the conversation is excellent news for d'Artagnan, who has already made a name for himself after only a day in Paris.*



*The musketeers get to see the king regularly, and their status is unlikely to change as a result of the upcoming audience. Meanwhile, d'Artagnan knows that his meeting with the king could decide his future; perhaps it could even land him on the fast track to becoming a musketeer.*



*D'Artagnan can afford to be brave because he is ignorant of Parisian society. Monsieur Bernajoux is presumably an intimidating figure to most people, but to d'Artagnan, he is just another one of the cardinal's men. Because fighting has worked out for d'Artagnan thus far, he has no problem with doing it again.*





D'Artagnan and Bernajoux leave the tennis courts and begin their duel. Before long, d'Artagnan manages to wound his opponent, who calls out for help, knowing that one of his relatives lives nearby. Hearing the fight, two guards arrive to back up Bernajoux. However, their arrival is met by the sudden appearance of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis who come to d'Artagnan's aid. Soon, the duel grows into a full brawl as more and more of the musketeers and the cardinal's guards join in. Eventually, the musketeers are victorious and d'Artagnan realizes it is time for his meeting with the king.

Together with his three friends, d'Artagnan heads for the Louvre to see Louis XIII. However, when they arrive, the king is not in. Apparently, he decided to go on a hunt and is not yet back. M. de Tréville, who is also present, asks if the king has talked to the cardinal lately and is told that he probably has. This darkens M. de Tréville's mood, and he warns the musketeers to stay away from the king for the time being.

Disappointed, d'Artagnan and the musketeers go home. Meanwhile, M. de Tréville decides it would be best to get control over the latest situation his musketeers have become embroiled in. He visits Monsieur de La Trémouille, the relative Bernajoux yelled to for help, and asks him about what happened. La Trémouille is not happy and assumes that the fault lies with the musketeers. However, M. de Tréville correctly assumes that the situation is more complicated than that; he tells Trémouille that they should ask Bernajoux. At this point, Bernajoux is close to death, and has no reason to lie. Trémouille agrees to accept whatever Bernajoux says as the truth. As Tréville predicts, Bernajoux admits to starting the fight and Trémouille instantly forgives Tréville and his men.

The same evening M. de Tréville tells d'Artagnan and the three musketeers to return to the Louvre. M. de Tréville meets them there and then goes in for a private audience with the king because he wants to make sure that the king is not angry at the musketeers. M. de Tréville finds Louis XIII in a bad mood. Apparently, his hunt didn't go well, and he claims he is bored. Additionally, he's spoken to the cardinal and heard about the morning's events. Like Trémouille, the king assumes that the musketeers are at fault. However, M. de Tréville assures him that his men are innocent and that he only needs to talk to Trémouille for proof. Meanwhile, the musketeers realize that they will not receive their reward that night and decide to go home.

*Again, d'Artagnan defeats an impressive swordsman in one-on-one combat, suggesting that he has the skill to back up his talk. However, before long, a small duel becomes a huge brawl, which is unlikely to go over well with the cardinal and the king. After all, this is the second significant public disturbance the cardinal's men and the musketeers have caused in only two days.*



*Louis XIII acts according to his whims and does not care about keeping appointments. Because he is the king, everyone, including M. de Tréville, must adapt to his behavior. M. de Tréville knows that it won't be easy to convince the king that his men are free of blame for the incidents over the past few days, which is why he warns d'Artagnan and the musketeers to stay away from the king.*



*M. de Tréville immediately jumps into action. He wants to do his best to defend himself and his men to the king. Because M. de Tréville acts honorably, Monsieur de La Trémouille does so in return, allowing M. de Tréville to get the information he needs. He trusts that his men are telling him the truth, and his trust pays off as Bernajoux admits his guilt.*



*M. de Tréville correctly predicted Louis XIII's mood. Although the king does not like the cardinal, he is not stupid, and he knows that the musketeers likely share some blame for what's happened in the past few days. While this assumption is correct, the current incident in question was started by one of the cardinal's men, and luckily, M. de Tréville has proof. However, that proof won't arrive until the following day, meaning d'Artagnan's life-changing meeting will have to wait.*



The next day, Trémouille arrives and explains what happened the day before. His report pleases the king, who finally grants d'Artagnan and the three musketeers an audience. He is particularly impressed with d'Artagnan, who managed to dispatch both Bernajoux and Jussac, both of whom are excellent swordsmen. As a reward, the king gives d'Artagnan forty pistoles and thanks him for his service. D'Artagnan is elated and he swears his undying loyalty to the king before departing. Over the next week, the cardinal does his best to avoid the king because he's angry at him. However, sometimes, he still runs into him in passing, and the king smugly asks about the condition of his injured men.

*The king's reward solves d'Artagnan's money problems for the time being. Even more importantly, d'Artagnan is on the king's radar, meaning he is on his way to becoming a musketeer. However, d'Artagnan is also now known to the cardinal, who presumably does not share the king's high opinion of him.*



## CHAPTER 7

D'Artagnan asks the musketeers what he should do with his money. Athos suggests that they spend some of it on a good meal, and d'Artagnan agrees. Someone also recommends that d'Artagnan use his money to buy a servant. D'Artagnan, through Porthos, hires a man named Planchet to be his servant. Planchet assumes that d'Artagnan is quite wealthy and is happy to take the position. All three of d'Artagnan's friends also have servants. Athos's servant is named Grimaud, and like Athos he is a quiet man. Porthos's servant is called Mousqueton and he, too, is similar to his master. Although he is not as loud as Porthos, he dresses elaborately and is not afraid to stick up for himself. Meanwhile, Aramis's servant is named Bazin. Bazin is a churchman who dresses all in black and is incredibly loyal to his master.

*The strict social hierarchy of 17th-century Paris is on display throughout the novel, with the musketeers' servants sitting on the bottom. All of the servants share characteristics with their respective masters. In some cases, this is by design (as with Bazin) and in others it is due to forced assimilation (as with Mousqueton). For the most part, the servants hang out in the background of the novel, but they are occasionally called upon to play an important role. This is especially true of Planchet, who becomes the most vocal of the servants.*



Both Athos and Porthos live in rather elaborate apartments, while Aramis lives in a relatively modest space on the ground-floor. D'Artagnan knows that his friends are all aristocrats and that Athos, Porthos, and Aramis aren't their real names. In particular, he is sure that Athos is a great nobleman. He tries to ask each of the musketeers about the other members of the group to learn more about their respective backgrounds. Porthos tells him that Athos "had suffered great afflictions in his love affairs and that a monstrous betrayal had poisoned his life forever." However, he doesn't know any details. Meanwhile, Porthos himself isn't too hard to read. Everything he tries to hide is quite obvious to his friends. In sharp contrast, Aramis is a complete mystery to everyone.

*For the most part, people who become musketeers are born into high class families, which means d'Artagnan's path is an unusual one. Although all three musketeers keep their identities secret, only Athos's true identity is important to the plot of the novel. The "monstrous betrayal" that Porthos mentions is the dramatic lynchpin for the second half of the novel. It also provides this otherwise straightforward swashbuckling adventure novel with a gothic flair.*



Wanting to learn more about Aramis, d'Artagnan asks him about himself. Aramis refuses to give up any information and so d'Artagnan brings up the handkerchief incident. Aramis insists that the handkerchief belonged to a friend of his and not his mistress. He then reiterates that he hopes to become a man of the church one day and therefore has no mistress. Realizing he isn't going to get anything more out of his friend, d'Artagnan leave him alone.

*D'Artagnan knows that Aramis is not telling him the full truth. Aramis is better at hiding his personal matters from the other musketeers, although d'Artagnan will eventually discover the significance of the handkerchief.*



In the following days, d'Artagnan and his three new friends enjoy spending time together. Porthos and Athos also spend time gambling. Athos always loses but doesn't seem to mind. Meanwhile, Porthos's mood is entirely dependent on whether he wins or loses. Aramis doesn't gamble at all and is not very social. Often, in the middle of dinner, he will suddenly get up and leave, insisting that he has an appointment with a theologian.

In the meantime, Planchet enjoys being d'Artagnan's servant; that is, he does until d'Artagnan's money starts to run out. When there is no money involved, Planchet starts to act disrespectfully toward d'Artagnan, and it is clear he is not happy. The other musketeers tell d'Artagnan that he needs to set Planchet straight if he wants to keep him in the long run. D'Artagnan thinks about it and then decides to give his servant "a thrashing" to keep him in line. This stops Planchet from complaining. Shortly after this incident, d'Artagnan is put into Monsieur des Essart's company of guards because of the influence of M. de Tréville. This is d'Artagnan's first real step toward becoming a musketeer. Whenever they can, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis spend their time with d'Artagnan while he is on guard duty, making Monsieur des Essart feel as though he gained four guards for the price of one.

## CHAPTER 8

Because the money from the king eventually runs dry, the three musketeers do what they can to scrape some money together. Eventually, they run out of ideas and have to ask M. de Tréville for an advance on their pay. When that money is almost gone, Porthos uses what is left to gamble with and loses all of it. Desperate, the musketeers do their best to get themselves invited to dinners—often by people for whom they've done favors in the past—and then bring along the rest of the group. D'Artagnan appreciates his friends' efforts and is embarrassed that he cannot do more himself because he does not yet have connections in the city.

*Gambling is a recurring activity in the story. Because of its nature, gambling will both help and harm the musketeers as the novel continues. Additionally, this passage includes some odd behavior from Aramis. His abrupt departures from dinner suggests that he is lying about who he is going to meet.*



*There are a few sequences in the novel where the musketeers are cruel but effective and Planchet's "thrashing" is the first example. Although Planchet was likely born into a similar social class as d'Artagnan, d'Artagnan already feels superior to him. Evidently, the thrashing is not off-putting to the musketeers, but it is the first moment in the novel where one of the four friends behaves in a manner that is far from heroic or noble. Although it is never in doubt that the musketeers and d'Artagnan are the heroes of the story, they occasionally display reprehensible behavior.*



*The musketeers are not responsible with their money and are broke more often than not. However, their ability to work together and their commitment to sharing with one another allows them to get by. Luckily, they have a lot of connections around town who owe them favors or are willing to take pity on them. If nothing else, the number of people willing to feed them shows how much the musketeers are liked.*



One night, while sitting in his room and thinking about how to get more money, d'Artagnan receives a knock on his door. Outside is a man who says he has an urgent secret to tell d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan invites him inside. After the door is closed, the man tells d'Artagnan that his wife has been abducted and needs saving. However, the man is reticent with the details of the situation. D'Artagnan repeatedly has to remind the man that it was he who came to d'Artagnan and if he wants his help, then he needs to tell the full story. Eventually the man complies and tells d'Artagnan that his wife works for the queen. He also implies that she has something to do with the alleged affair between the queen and the Duke of Buckingham. It is for this reason that the man suspects his wife was kidnapped.

The man believes that his wife is being persecuted by the cardinal. He describes the man who he believes is responsible for the kidnapping and d'Artagnan recognizes the description as the stranger from Meung. This excites d'Artagnan, who becomes more eager than ever to help the man. Finally, d'Artagnan gets the man to tell him his name: Monsieur Bonacieux. He also informs d'Artagnan that he is his landlord and believes that d'Artagnan should help him because he's been so lenient in allowing d'Artagnan to skip paying rent.

Additionally, Monsieur Bonacieux shows d'Artagnan a threatening letter he received urging him not to look for his wife. The letter suggests that there will be dire consequences if he does. Despite the danger, d'Artagnan eagerly accepts the job. In addition to free rent, Monsieur Bonacieux also offers him a decent sum of money as a reward for his services. Just as they strike a deal, d'Artagnan looks outside and spots the stranger from Meung. Excited, he jumps up and runs outside to track him down. However, he ultimately has no luck. While looking for the man, d'Artagnan runs into Athos and Porthos. Not wanting to get in d'Artagnan's way, Athos and Porthos decide to wait in d'Artagnan's room until he returns.

*Now that he is settled in Paris, d'Artagnan finally gets a mission that is fitting for a traditional hero. There is a damsel in distress who needs rescuing. Not only that, but she is connected to the queen. Apparently, there is some merit to the joke Aramis made earlier in the novel about the love life of the queen and the missing woman has something to do with it.*



*Monsieur Bonacieux didn't knock on d'Artagnan's door out of pure coincidence. He knows d'Artagnan is connected with the musketeers who are enemies of the cardinal. This opportunity will allow d'Artagnan to kill two birds with one stone; not only can he undertake his first heroic mission, but he can also find the man from Meung.*



*Monsieur Bonacieux's letter explains why he came to d'Artagnan rather than any formal authority. The job becomes especially sweet for d'Artagnan when he learns that it could solve his money problem as well. The sudden reappearance of the man from Meung makes d'Artagnan think that his task might be much more straightforward than he initially thought. However, as usual, d'Artagnan loses the stranger, who continues his evasive streak.*



## CHAPTER 9

After searching for the man from Meung for a half hour, d'Artagnan returns to his apartment where his friends are waiting, including Aramis, who made his way to the apartment while d'Artagnan was out searching. Upon returning, d'Artagnan sends Planchet downstairs to get some wine from Monsieur Bonacieux and then starts to tell his friends about his new mission. Together, they discuss the queen's affair with the Duke of Buckingham, who has apparently arrived in Paris recently. The musketeers believe that the cardinal is attempting to trap the duke and that the stranger from Meung is somehow involved. Aramis relates an incident that occurred the day before where he escorted a woman to her carriage and was approached by a group of men who thought he was the duke. The group was led by the stranger from Meung.

As d'Artagnan and his friends attempt to figure out what happened to Madame Bonacieux, they are interrupted by Monsieur Bonacieux, who yells for help. Several of the cardinal's men have arrived to arrest him. D'Artagnan runs to Monsieur Bonacieux and tells him to be quiet and go willingly. D'Artagnan knows that he and the musketeers will have no chance to rescue Madame Bonacieux if they attempt to fight the cardinal's guards. Monsieur Bonacieux doesn't like this plan, but he goes along with it, partially because he has no other choice.

When the guards leave, Porthos chastises d'Artagnan for not fighting back. However, Aramis tells Porthos that he's an idiot and that d'Artagnan was in the right. Athos congratulates d'Artagnan on his quick thinking as well. In response, d'Artagnan coins a motto for the group: "All for one, one for all." After, the musketeers retire to their individual residences to rest up for their fight against the cardinal.

## CHAPTER 10

After Monsieur Bonacieux is arrested, his house is turned into a mousetrap. This means that several members of the police wait inside at all times and arrest and question whoever comes to the door. D'Artagnan is not affected by the mousetrap because he has his own entrance to the building. However, he does keep a close eye on the interrogations. From his window, he can see everyone who enters the house. Additionally, he's removed a floorboard from his apartment so that he can hear everything that is said by the police and those they interrogate.

*D'Artagnan immediately takes advantage of his new acquaintance by getting Planchet to fetch him some wine. Upon talking to the musketeers, d'Artagnan quickly realizes that Monsieur Bonacieux's version of events has merit. Indeed, the cardinal and the man from Meung are involved in some type of scheme against the queen and the Duke of Buckingham. Although the cardinal is the king's rival, the two of them still share political goals and generally act in unison. However, here, the cardinal is taking serious steps to undermine the queen. At this point, his motivation is unclear, although it is revealed later in the novel.*



*Evidently, Monsieur Bonacieux's attempts to shield himself from trouble have failed. Although Monsieur Bonacieux expects d'Artagnan to help him, d'Artagnan does not because he knows that doing so will only create more problems. This is a big step for d'Artagnan's character and shows that he's already matured since arriving in Paris. Previously, d'Artagnan couldn't wait to get into a fight, but now he knows that fighting isn't always the answer.*



*"All for one, one for all" is the most famous quote from the novel and is likely known even by those who've never read the story before. The meaning of the phrase is that d'Artagnan and his friends pledge to act for the good of the group. In return, the group will do its best to support its individual members.*



*Although the cardinal's men don't know it, d'Artagnan is in the perfect spot to observe and investigate their actions. The floorboard he removes proves to be useful throughout his investigation because the cardinal's men speak openly as though no one can hear them.*





The night after Monsieur Bonacieux is arrested, d'Artagnan hears a knock on the downstairs door and he quickly moves to listen in on what is happening. He hears the screams of a woman who identifies herself as Madame Bonacieux and says she is acting in the queen's service. Realizing that the guards are attempting to gag Madame Bonacieux and take her away, d'Artagnan leaps into action. He grabs his sword and rushes downstairs. D'Artagnan easily handles all four guards; only one of them is armed and they are quickly forced to flee. This leaves him alone with a half-conscious Madame Bonacieux.

When d'Artagnan looks at Madame Bonacieux, he is immediately struck by her beauty. Beside her, he notices a handkerchief on the floor that contains the same symbol as the handkerchief he previously picked up for Aramis. As d'Artagnan examines the handkerchief, Madame Bonacieux regains her senses and is startled to see him standing there. However, she quickly calms down when she recognizes him as her savior. D'Artagnan explains to Madame Bonacieux that her husband employed him to save her and that he has since been taken to jail.

D'Artagnan asks Madame Bonacieux who abducted her, and she describes a figure whom d'Artagnan instantly recognizes as the stranger from Meung. He asks for the stranger's name, but Madame Bonacieux does not know it. Madame Bonacieux then tells d'Artagnan that she managed to escape her captors by tying some sheets together and lowering herself from a window. She then returns home in hopes of finding her husband.

D'Artagnan suggests that they leave Madame Bonacieux's house before the guards he scared off return with more men and weapons. However, Madame Bonacieux doesn't know where to go because she isn't sure what is safe for her at the moment. D'Artagnan suggests that she hide at Athos's house while he gathers information for her. Madame Bonacieux agrees to this suggestion and gives d'Artagnan a location and a password he can use to get information.

Athos is not home, but d'Artagnan knows where he hides his key. He lets Madame Bonacieux inside and then goes in search of information. Madame Bonacieux tells him to go to the gate of the Louvre, say the words "Tours and Brussels" to a man named Germain, and then ask him to send for Monsieur de La Porte. Once Monsieur de La Porte arrives, d'Artagnan must take him to Madame Bonacieux. D'Artagnan does exactly as she asks and gets the intended result all within a half hour.

*Madame Bonacieux's presence comes as a surprise considering she had supposedly been kidnapped. Nonetheless, d'Artagnan immediately jumps into action and heroically dispatches the cardinal's guards. Apparently, d'Artagnan is more willing to oppose the cardinal's guards if a woman is involved rather than a man. He rescues Madame Bonacieux, whereas he allows Monsieur Bonacieux to go to prison.*



*Again, handkerchiefs play an important role in the mystery. Evidently, Madam Bonacieux is connected to Aramis in some fashion, although it is unclear whether either one of them knows it. This moment is also the beginning of d'Artagnan's romantic interest in Madame Bonacieux. He knows she is married but cannot help noticing her beauty.*



*So far, it seems as though Monsieur Bonacieux's version of events is checking out. However, he was unaware that his wife managed to escape from the cardinal. This explains why the cardinal's men came to arrest him.*



*D'Artagnan knows that the cardinal's men will never think to look at Athos's house because Athos has nothing to do with Madame Bonacieux as far as they know. Of course, they don't know d'Artagnan is involved in the situation either, but because he lives right above the Bonacieuxes', he cannot hide Madame Bonacieux in his apartment.*



*Clearly, Madame Bonacieux is involved in an important plot of some sort, hence all of the secrecy. As such, it is significant that she decides to trust d'Artagnan; after only knowing her for a few minutes, d'Artagnan is already privy to more information than Monsieur Bonacieux.*



Before going to meet Madame Bonacieux, Monsieur de La Porte tells d'Artagnan to go and find a friend whose clock is slow so that he can create an alibi for himself. In response, d'Artagnan heads to M. de Tréville's house and sneaks into his study to change the hands of his clock. He then asks to see M. de Tréville. When M. de Tréville arrives, he is surprised by the time, but does not think much about it. D'Artagnan tells M. de Tréville that he fears that the cardinal is planning to do something to the queen. M. de Tréville thanks him for the information and then d'Artagnan leaves, knowing he has an alibi.

*D'Artagnan once again demonstrates his resourcefulness. Rather than find a friend whose clock is slow, he slows down M. de Tréville's clock to make an alibi for himself. D'Artagnan knows that M. de Tréville is the best person to have on his side because of his relationship with the king. Additionally, d'Artagnan's visit to M. de Tréville allows him to catch his mentor up to speed.*



## CHAPTER 11

On the way home from M. de Tréville's residence, d'Artagnan thinks about making Madame Bonacieux his mistress. D'Artagnan is not only struck by Madame Bonacieux's beauty, but also by her wealth and her connections to important people. While thinking about Madame Bonacieux, d'Artagnan completely forgets about her husband and his current predicament.

*Like the musketeers, d'Artagnan doesn't care that Madame Bonacieux is married—he wants to start a romance with her anyway. However, his interest isn't purely romantic; he also sees in Madame Bonacieux a chance to advance his social position.*



Wanting to talk more about Madame Bonacieux, d'Artagnan heads to Aramis's house. On the way there he sees a woman wrapped in a cloak who looks lost. Before long, d'Artagnan realizes she is looking for Aramis's house, so he decides to watch and see what happens. When the woman arrives at Aramis's house, she taps on one of his shutters. The shutter opens and d'Artagnan sees that she is talking to whoever is inside. However, d'Artagnan cannot see who it is.

*Here, d'Artagnan sees an opportunity to learn more about Aramis. Although Aramis claims that he does not have a mistress, a woman secretly arriving at his house in the middle of the night would suggest otherwise.*



Hoping to get a glance at who he assumes is Aramis, d'Artagnan shifts his position. However, he is shocked to find that the mysterious woman is talking to another woman who d'Artagnan doesn't recognize. D'Artagnan watches as the two women exchange handkerchiefs, at least one of which looks like the handkerchief he picked up for Aramis. After the conversation between the two women ends, the shutter closes and the woman in the cloak turns around. As she does so, d'Artagnan realizes that the woman is none other than Madame Bonacieux.

*To d'Artagnan's great surprise, not one, but two women are actually present at Aramis's house. Once again, the handkerchiefs appear, suggesting that they are central to the mystery at hand. Furthermore, the presence of the handkerchiefs in this secret meeting suggests that Aramis might know more than he is letting on.*



D'Artagnan follows Madame Bonacieux, partially out of curiosity and partially out of jealousy. However, Madame Bonacieux quickly realizes she is being followed and starts to run. Eventually d'Artagnan catches her and she realizes who he is. D'Artagnan then asks her why she was at Aramis's house, and she responds by telling him that she doesn't know who Aramis is. Furthermore, she refuses to identify the woman she was talking to, though she does claim her as a friend.

*Although he barely knows her, d'Artagnan is already jealous of Madame Bonacieux's relationship with Aramis; he wonders whether Madame Bonacieux is secretly Aramis's mistress. However, d'Artagnan's jealousy doesn't allow him to think clearly. If anything, it seems that the woman inside Aramis's home would be his mistress, not Madame Bonacieux.*



Although Madame Bonacieux refuses to tell d'Artagnan anything of significance, she asks him to escort her to her next destination. D'Artagnan agrees to do so. Once they arrive, Madame Bonacieux sends d'Artagnan away and makes him promise not to follow her anymore, both for her safety and his. D'Artagnan begrudgingly agrees to her conditions, though he makes his romantic interest in her clear in the process.

As he walks away from where he left Madame Bonacieux, d'Artagnan runs into Planchet who tells him that Athos was just arrested. Apparently, Athos went to d'Artagnan's apartment to find him and was arrested because the police assumed he was d'Artagnan. Athos purposely did not correct the police so that d'Artagnan would have a few days to settle their current predicament without being pursued by law enforcement. This pleases d'Artagnan, who heads back to M. de Tréville's place to update him on what is going on.

When d'Artagnan arrives at M. de Tréville's house, he finds that he is not home. While returning to his own home, d'Artagnan walks near the Louvre where he sees someone who looks suspiciously like Madame Bonacieux. This person is walking with a man who looks like he might be Aramis. Jealous, d'Artagnan confronts the couple and finds out that he was only half correct. The woman is indeed Madame Bonacieux, but the man she is walking with is the Duke of Buckingham. Realizing his mistake, d'Artagnan apologizes. The duke quickly accepts the apology and asks d'Artagnan to trail behind them to see if they are being followed. D'Artagnan does as he is told. Eventually, the duke and Madame Bonacieux reach their destination, which is the Louvre, and d'Artagnan leaves to meet his friends at an inn.

## CHAPTER 12

After entering the Louvre, Madame Bonacieux escorts the duke through a variety of corridors, before finally leaving him in a locked room. The duke is eager to see Queen Anne. He's discovered that the letter he received from her was only meant to trap him, but he does not care. The duke is a passionate and attractive man who is confident in his powers of seduction. He is sure that he can convince the queen to continue their affair.

*Because d'Artagnan is romantically interested in Madame Bonacieux, he decides to do what she says, even though it goes against his better judgement. Although Madame Bonacieux places some trust in d'Artagnan, she does not yet trust him completely.*



*Athos proves that he is a loyal friend to d'Artagnan by getting arrested on his behalf. Evidently, the cardinal's men have realized that d'Artagnan is involved in Madame Bonacieux's plot, meaning that he is in danger—or, at least, he would have been if Athos didn't go to jail in his place. Athos's decision is a good example of the musketeers' motto ("all for one, one for all") in action.*



*Even though he promised Madame Bonacieux that he would stop following her, d'Artagnan just cannot help himself. The reveal of the Duke of Buckingham was foreshadowed in an earlier scene where it is mentioned that Aramis was stopped by the man from Meung because he looks like the duke. Despite his rash behavior, d'Artagnan still manages to be helpful although he's also broken Madame Bonacieux's trust; from her perspective, it looks as though d'Artagnan continued following her after he promised not to, even though that is only partially true.*



*For just the second time, the novel shifts its perspective away from d'Artagnan and the musketeers. Instead, the relationship between the duke and Queen Anne—which exists after all—takes center stage. The duke doesn't care that the letter from the queen is fake; he loves her and wants to see her anyway.*



Queen Anne enters the room, and the duke is overwhelmed by her beauty. He drops to the floor and kisses her feet as well as her dress. Despite his show of affection, Queen Anne tells him that they must break off their relationship. Not only is it difficult because they are never together, but it is dangerous as well. However, the duke is not convinced, and he implores her to reconsider. He knows that the queen loves him and wants to be with him. He reminds her of the various nights they've spent together and how much she enjoyed them.

However, as Queen Anne is well aware, their time together was not without its consequences. Initially, the duke was on track to become the ambassador of France. However, King Louis XIII quickly put a stop to that because he didn't want the duke around his wife anymore; like many others in the court, the king heard rumors that the two of them were having an affair. In response, the duke began a war with France. He claims that the war will continue until he is allowed to be the ambassador of France.

Though she loves the duke, the queen doesn't want a war on her conscience. She thinks that their love is immoral if it must continue on such terms. Realizing that Queen Anne will not come around to his way of seeing things, the duke finally gives in and promises he won't come to see her anymore. However, before he leaves, he asks if he can have something to remember her by. In response, the queen gives him an ornate box with her initials on it and tells him to leave. The duke does as he is asked, and Madame Bonacieux escorts him out of the Louvre.

## CHAPTER 13

Shortly after he is arrested, Monsieur Bonacieux is thrown in jail and taken to an interrogation room. He is then questioned by a police officer who gathers some general information. Monsieur Bonacieux tells him that he is a 51-year-old retired merchant and gives his address. The officer then begins to lecture Monsieur Bonacieux about how he should pay more respect to those in power. Eager to please, Monsieur Bonacieux begins complimenting the cardinal. However, this does nothing to appease the officer, who tells him that he is accused of treason. The officer then tells Monsieur Bonacieux to tell him about his wife's abduction. Monsieur Bonacieux tells him everything he knows, which is not much.

*Evidently, Queen Anne is not as bold as the duke. She knows that their relationship is dangerous not just for themselves, but for their respective kingdoms. It is not that Queen Anne does not love the duke; she just doesn't want to act selfishly.*



*Again, King Louis XIII proves that he is not unaware of what goes on in his court. Although he acts callously, he is not wrong; the queen and the duke are romantically interested in one another. Although the dynamic between these three characters is an important part of the novel, it is important to know that it is not historically accurate. France and England did go to war during this period, but not because of a love affair.*



*Queen Anne holds her own against the duke and lets her morals prevail. However, she does give the duke an ornate box, which is an important object for the first third of the novel. At this point, the contents of the box are not revealed, but they will be shortly.*



*Unlike his wife, Monsieur Bonacieux is quite cowardly. He gives away any and all information as soon as he is asked, without any thought for how it could impact himself or his wife. Although he previously considered the cardinal his enemy, Monsieur Bonacieux immediately flips his position to satisfy his captors. Luckily, Monsieur Bonacieux knows very little of his wife's activities, so he can't be much help to the cardinal's men.*



After he is interrogated, Monsieur Bonacieux is thrown into a cell by himself. He is terrified and convinced that he will die. Despite his cries and protests, he ends up spending the night in the cell. The next morning, Monsieur Bonacieux is brought in for more questioning. The police officer tells him that his wife escaped her abductors and that he thinks Monsieur Bonacieux had something to do with it. Scared, Monsieur Bonacieux tells the truth about hiring d'Artagnan.

After Monsieur Bonacieux is done confessing, the officer instructs some nearby guards to bring d'Artagnan into the room. The guards do as they are asked, though unbeknownst to them, the man they lead into the room is actually Athos. Monsieur Bonacieux tells the officer that he's never seen Athos before, which is true. At first the officer is confused, but Athos eventually reveals that he is not, in fact, d'Artagnan. This frustrates the officer, who throws Monsieur Bonacieux and Athos back in their respective cells.

That night, Monsieur Bonacieux is escorted to a carriage by some guards. He begs them for mercy, but no one listens to him. Monsieur Bonacieux assumes that he is to be executed and he gets nervous every time the carriage passes a famous execution site. Eventually, the carriage stops at a spot where executions are commonly performed, and Bonacieux passes out from fright.

## CHAPTER 14

Despite Monsieur Bonacieux's fears, he is not taken to be executed. Instead, his carriage is parked and then he is led inside a nearby building and taken up some stairs. He is then taken to an elaborately furnished room. At this point, Monsieur Bonacieux realizes that his captors are not planning to kill him. He is then moved into yet another room where he sees a map of La Rochelle and a man he does not recognize. The man is Cardinal de Richelieu and when Monsieur Bonacieux learns his identity, he is both afraid and in awe.

The cardinal begins asking Monsieur Bonacieux about his wife's activities. Monsieur Bonacieux tells him that he knows about the cardinal's plan to trap the Duke of Buckingham with a fake letter from the queen. This upsets the cardinal, who insults Monsieur Bonacieux for even suggesting he could be responsible for such a thing. The cardinal then tells Monsieur Bonacieux that his wife is currently missing, but that he plans to catch her soon.

*Monsieur Bonacieux's terror is understandable, even if he doesn't conduct himself in the most honorable manner. However, his terror doesn't bode well for d'Artagnan and Madame Bonacieux. The cardinal's guards know that they can likely get more information out of Monsieur Bonacieux by holding him overnight; as it turns out, this prediction is correct.*



*Athos's plan worked. Because the guards thought they already had d'Artagnan, nobody bothered looking for him; this allowed d'Artagnan to continue aiding Madame Bonacieux. Athos's actions are the complete opposite of Monsieur Bonacieux's. He is calm and collected, even in the face of serious charges. In fairness to Monsieur Bonacieux, Athos does have M. de Tréville on his side, whereas Monsieur Bonacieux has no one.*



*Again, Monsieur Bonacieux's terror is reasonable, but it is over the top. Although the chapter ends on a cliffhanger, there is no reason to assume Monsieur Bonacieux will be killed for his actions. He hasn't done anything, nor has he had a formal trial. Although the cardinal and his men don't always act strictly within the bounds of the law, it is unlikely that they would kill someone like Monsieur Bonacieux, who has barely done anything wrong.*



*Monsieur Bonacieux's complete ignorance of his situation is emphasized by the fact that he does not recognize the cardinal—one of the two most important people in France.*



*Again, Monsieur Bonacieux does not hesitate to betray his wife. However, his newfound loyalty to the cardinal does not pay off; the cardinal insults him and treats him disrespectfully. Despite his tone, the cardinal is careful with his words; he wants to appear as a moral actor in Monsieur Bonacieux's eyes.*





Next, the cardinal questions Monsieur Bonacieux about some of the locations his wife often frequents. In response, Monsieur Bonacieux mentions the addresses of two linen drapers that she often visits while working for the queen. The cardinal is pleased with this information, and he asks his guards to go and get Count Rochefort. Shortly after, a man walks into the room and Monsieur Bonacieux realizes that it is the same man who kidnapped his wife. He relates this information to the cardinal, who promptly orders his guards to lock up Rochefort. Realizing the power of his actions, Monsieur Bonacieux quickly corrects himself and says that he was mistaken, and that Rochefort didn't kidnap his wife.

Because he wants to speak to his soldiers in private, the cardinal sends Monsieur Bonacieux out of the room. One of his guards then informs him that the duke and the queen met with one another at the Louvre. This information was gathered by one of the queen's attendants who is secretly a spy for the cardinal. The cardinal is also told that the queen gave the duke a box, which contains diamond tags that were originally gifted to the queen by the king. This makes the cardinal happy because he knows he will be able to use this information against the queen. He thanks his guard for the information and then tells him to send Monsieur Bonacieux back in.

When Monsieur Bonacieux returns, the cardinal mocks him for thinking that his wife was actually visiting linen drapers when in reality she was involved in some sort of plot. Monsieur Bonacieux apologizes to the cardinal for his mistake and then proceeds to suck up to him. This pleases the cardinal, who knows he will be able to use Monsieur Bonacieux in the future, although he does find him pathetic. To keep Monsieur Bonacieux on his good side, the cardinal gives him a hundred pistoles. Monsieur Bonacieux is ecstatic at this sudden turn of events, and he swears his loyalty to the cardinal. Monsieur Bonacieux is then dismissed and allowed to return home.

After Monsieur Bonacieux leaves, the cardinal finally turns his attention to Rochefort. Rochefort tells the cardinal that he's confirmed the information Monsieur Bonacieux gave the cardinal, but that he's yet to locate Madame Bonacieux. In response, the cardinal tells Rochefort that they now have a new ally on their side: Monsieur Bonacieux. Both men agree that he will prove useful.

*Monsieur Bonacieux consistently makes himself out to be the least intelligent person in the room. As it turns out, he does have information about Madame Bonacieux's activities, he just didn't know he did. Additionally, this scene clears up one of the major mysteries of the first third of the novel. The man who kidnapped Madame Bonacieux, Count Rochefort, is also the man from Meung. Finally, d'Artagnan's nemesis gets a proper name.*



*Here, the contents of the queen's box are revealed. She gave the duke diamond tags, which are studs that would be worn as part of an elaborate outfit. The cardinal knows that the king would be hurt if he learned this information because it feels like a double betrayal of his trust. Not only did the queen give the duke a gift; she gave the duke a gift that was first given to her by the king. If this information were to get out, it would create exactly the scandal that the queen was trying to avoid.*



*Here, the cardinal catches Monsieur Bonacieux up to speed. The linen drapers Madame Bonacieux visited are almost certainly agents of the queen, and the cardinal knows it right away. Although the cardinal has no respect for Monsieur Bonacieux, he realizes that he's found a man who has no problem with betraying his wife.*



*Like the cardinal, Rochefort is an intelligent and resourceful man. The two men are almost exact replicas of one another, although Rochefort is not quite as diabolical, and he does not share the cardinal's social standing. Their relationship is similar to M. de Tréville's treatment of d'Artagnan and the musketeers.*



Later, after Rochefort leaves the cardinal's residence, the cardinal calls for one of his servants. He gives the man a letter to bring to Milady. The letter contains instructions for a job that the cardinal wants done. He tells Milady to find the Duke of Buckingham and cut off two of the diamond studs that he is sure to be wearing.

*This moment marks the first reappearance of Milady since the beginning of the novel. Like Rochefort, Milady is evidently an agent of the cardinal, which explains their meeting in the first chapter of the novel. In just a matter of minutes, the cardinal already has a scheme to punish the queen for giving the duke her diamond tags.*



## CHAPTER 15

After several days go by and Athos still hasn't been seen, d'Artagnan and Porthos decide to inform M. de Tréville that Athos is likely being held unjustly in prison. Immediately, M. de Tréville springs into action. He heads to the Louvre to talk to the king and the cardinal. Meanwhile, Athos is imprisoned at the Fort l'Eveque, where he is repeatedly interrogated. The interrogations don't bother Athos because he knows he is innocent and will be released soon.

*D'Artagnan knows that Athos has suffered enough on his behalf, which is why he plans to get him out of jail. Luckily, with M. de Tréville on his side, doing so shouldn't prove difficult. Meanwhile, Athos doesn't act like he's suffered much at all; if anything, jail seems to have been a nice break for him.*



M. de Tréville arrives at the Louvre agitated and ready to fight tooth and nail for Athos. As it turns out, the Louvre is a complicated place full of secrets and conspiracies. The king is jealous regarding Queen Anne who he suspects is having an affair. The cardinal knows about this and uses it to his advantage. Additionally, the cardinal himself was once romantically interested in the queen and now thinks of her as his enemy because she rejected his advances. Additionally, the queen is angry with the king because he had her best friend, Madame de Chevreuse, sent away. The cardinal is interested in the relationship between the queen and Madame de Chevreuse because he thinks they know one another's secrets. The cardinal thinks that Madame Bonacieux is the go-between for these two women.

*Here, the cardinal's motivations come into full view. Not only is the queen a political traitor because of her relationship with the duke, but she also turned down the cardinal. The cardinal has a large ego and cannot stand the fact that the duke won the queen over when he couldn't. This passage also introduces the character of Madame de Chevreuse, someone who never utters a line of dialogue, but is nonetheless crucial to the overall narrative. Among other things, Madame de Chevreuse does act as the queen's messenger, as the cardinal suspects.*



When M. de Tréville arrives, the king is angry because the cardinal recently informed him that he failed to catch the woman transporting secret messages for the queen because a musketeer interfered. However, the king's anger does not stop M. de Tréville, who immediately demands to know why Athos was thrown in jail. This begins an argument between M. de Tréville and the cardinal, both of whom swear that their men are in the right. Eventually, M. de Tréville prevails when he stakes his personal honor on the fact that d'Artagnan was with him at the time he was allegedly involved in helping Madame de Chevreuse. He also swears to the king that Athos isn't guilty of any wrongdoing. The cardinal demands a trial, but M. de Tréville's word is all the king needs. He declares that Athos should be released immediately.

*Once again, M. de Tréville easily prevails over the cardinal, not just because the king likes him more, but because the cardinal has some of his facts wrong. Actually, M. de Tréville has some of his facts wrong as well because d'Artagnan changed his clock, but this helps rather than hurts him because he can swear by his men with sincerity. Additionally, it is the case that the cardinal's men are holding Athos unjustly and have been for some time. The cardinal has no argument for continuing to hold Athos, which means that the musketeer can go free.*



Athos is released from prison and reunited with his friends. He warns d'Artagnan that the cardinal is sure to be unhappy with what has transpired and will likely retaliate. Around the same time, the cardinal is at the palace telling the king that the Duke of Buckingham was recently in Paris.

*If d'Artagnan wasn't on the cardinal's radar before, he certainly is now. Going forward, d'Artagnan must carefully plan out his every move for his safety.*



## CHAPTER 16

Unsurprisingly, the king is angry to hear that the Duke of Buckingham was in Paris. The cardinal knows this and intentionally tells the king this information to make him angry. He then lies and tells the king that the duke was likely only in town because of politics and not because of the queen. He assures the king that the queen would never be unfaithful to him, knowing that his saying so will only enrage the king further.

*Although he acts like he is the king's friend, the cardinal purposely manipulates the king's emotions to get what he wants. The king is aware that the cardinal has motivations of his own, but he is angered by his wife's infidelity, nonetheless.*



The king responds by saying that he is sure that the queen is having an affair. At this point, the cardinal begins to drop the façade; he tells the king that the queen has been writing a lot lately and implies that her letters could be going to a lover. This is exactly what the king expected to hear, and it sends him into a rage. He demands to know why someone didn't arrest the duke while he was in Paris. The cardinal reminds him that doing so would be political suicide; after all, the duke is the leader of England.

*Although the king is correct, he acts like a petulant child, which makes him hard to sympathize with. Meanwhile, the cardinal continues to play him like a fiddle; each of the cardinal's statements provokes the exact reaction he was hoping for.*



The king once again asks the cardinal if he thinks the duke met up with the queen. The cardinal says that he thinks the queen would never do such a thing, all while knowing perfectly well that she did. Still not satisfied, the king demands to see the queen's letters. The cardinal tells him that he should send Monsieur de Sequier to fetch them on the king's behalf. The king does as the cardinal suggests.

*The cardinal is not above directly lying, even to the king, if it allows him to get his way. Meanwhile, the king appears to have no problem with violating the queen's privacy. Even though the king's anger is understandable, it is difficult to see him as a sympathetic character because he acts so childish.*



Meanwhile, the queen is in her room, surrounded by her ladies in waiting. She is thinking about her terrible marriage and her lack of allies and friends. Before long, the king walks in and tells her that Monsieur de Sequier will be in to see her soon and that he will be acting under his orders. This confuses the queen, who wants to know why the king can't just carry out the request by himself. The king doesn't answer her and instead leaves the room, just as Monsieur de Sequier walks in.

*The queen feels entirely isolated; the king sent her best friend away and she's just severed herself from her lover for the good of their respective kingdoms. In addition, the king treats her callously and cannot even own up to his actions. He sends Monsieur de Sequier to obtain the letters in his stead.*



Monsieur de Sequier, who primarily works for the cardinal, tells the queen that he wants to see her letters. She is offended by the request, but eventually tells one of her ladies in waiting to open up her desk so Monsieur de Sequier can examine it. He does but does not find anything incriminating. Annoyed, he tells the queen that he'll need to frisk her to make sure she doesn't have a letter on her person. This suggestion is revolting to the queen, who insists that she won't comply. Monsieur de Sequier does not like the situation himself but insists that he must carry out the orders of the king.

Eventually, the queen gives in and hands over the letter that she does, in fact, have on her person. This satisfies Monsieur de Sequier who promptly delivers the letter to the king. The letter is addressed to the queen's brother, the leader of Austria, and it asks him to declare war on France and get rid of the cardinal. However, because it does not mention anything about the duke, the letter makes the king happy. He tells the cardinal that he believes his wife is still faithful to him.

The king also tells the cardinal that the letter contains some disparaging comments about him. The king says he will punish the queen for the cardinal, but the cardinal responds by telling him to let it go. Instead, the cardinal suggests that the king should throw a ball on the queen's behalf to win back her favor after the incident with the letter. He also suggests that the king tell the queen to wear her diamond tags.

## CHAPTER 17

The cardinal mentions the diamond tags to the king twice, which makes him suspicious. He thinks the cardinal is likely up to something, but he's not sure what. Nonetheless, he decides to tell the queen to wear the tags to the ball. When he does so, the queen gets an alarmed look on her face. This makes the king think that he was right to assume that something is afoot, though he doesn't say so out loud.

After the king leaves her chambers, the queen prays for someone to lend her a hand. She feels she is alone and has no one to trust. Just that moment, Madame Bonacieux comes in and offers her services to the queen. She promises to get a letter from the queen to the Duke of Buckingham so that he can send back the tags before the ball. The queen writes the letter and gives Madame Bonacieux a fancy ring as payment. Madame Bonacieux thanks the queen and leaves right away. She plans to have her husband deliver the letter and returns the tags. She hasn't seen Monsieur Bonacieux since he was released from prison and doesn't know about his newfound love for the cardinal.

*Even though she is the queen, Anne has no power over Monsieur de Sequier because he is acting in accordance with the king's orders. Although Monsieur de Sequier is uncomfortable with his orders, he carries them out effectively; like the king, he knows the queen is hiding something and is right to assume that she's kept a letter on her person.*



*After an upsetting scene in the queen's chambers, the moment when the king reads the letter provides a nice bit of comic relief. Although the queen is plotting against some of France's political goals, the king doesn't care because he doesn't think she is having an affair. This is a humorous moment, and it also reveals that the king, like the Duke of Buckingham, cares more about his personal life than he does his kingdom.*



*Of course, the cardinal is not actually interested in the reparation of the royal marriage. In fact, if anything, he is trying to make their marriage fall apart. He knows the queen doesn't have her diamond tags and therefore will not be able to wear them to the ball.*



*Again, although he can be childish, the king is not stupid. He knows the cardinal is up to something and wants to figure out if he is being played. After talking to the queen, he knows that someone is keeping a secret that he is not privy to.*



*Despite her infidelity, the queen continues to inspire more sympathy than the king because of her difficult situation and lack of power. In the queen's lowest moment, a savior appears in the form of Madame Bonacieux. Madame Bonacieux has no doubt that she can help the queen, but only because she doesn't know about Monsieur Bonacieux's betrayal. Luckily, Madame Bonacieux knows another adventurous man who has fallen in love with her and would be eager to help.*



When Madame Bonacieux arrives home, she tells her husband that she has a job for him to do. However, Monsieur Bonacieux is angry that his wife doesn't seem to care much about his return or where he's been. Additionally, he quickly becomes suspicious that the task she wants him to carry out is something related to the queen. Madame Bonacieux tries to convince her husband that the job is important, and though he considers taking it, he ultimately decides that his new alliance with the cardinal is more important.

Realizing that her husband is more likely to betray her than help her, Madame Bonacieux purposely doesn't reveal any information about the mission itself. Indeed, she is right to be suspicious because in the middle of their conversation, Monsieur Bonacieux excuses himself because he claims to have a meeting with a friend. In reality, he is going to report what he's just heard to the cardinal. Just after Monsieur Bonacieux leaves, d'Artagnan arrives and asks to be let in.

## CHAPTER 18

D'Artagnan immediately insults Monsieur Bonacieux and tells Madame Bonacieux that her husband is not trustworthy. In sharp contrast, d'Artagnan is prepared to do whatever she needs. Madame Bonacieux believes d'Artagnan and decides to tell him about the queen's predicament. As she does, she realizes she is falling in love with d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan agrees to the job, though he'll need to make sure that M. de Tréville will give him the proper time off. He also requests funding. Luckily, that turns out to be no problem; Madame Bonacieux gives d'Artagnan the pistoles that the cardinal presented to her husband. D'Artagnan is delighted and once again declares his love for Madame Bonacieux.

Outside, Madame Bonacieux hears her husband talking to someone and realizes that they need to hide. D'Artagnan suggests that they use his apartment. As they head upstairs, d'Artagnan sees that the man Monsieur Bonacieux is talking to is Rochefort, though d'Artagnan doesn't yet know his name. D'Artagnan thinks about attacking Rochefort on the spot, but Madame Bonacieux insists that they hide upstairs instead. Once they are upstairs, d'Artagnan shows her the hole he's made in his floor that allows him to hear whatever goes on down below. Together, the two of them listen to the conversation between Rochefort and Monsieur Bonacieux.

*Although Monsieur Bonacieux is not the most sympathetic character, his anger toward Madame Bonacieux is understandable. After all, he was imprisoned and questioned on her behalf, yet she appears to have no concern for his safety and wellbeing. However, whatever sympathy Monsieur Bonacieux gains for such treatment is quickly washed away because of his cowardice and his willingness to betray his wife.*



*Luckily, Madame Bonacieux is sharp and she realizes before it is too late that she cannot trust her husband. Furthermore, although one door closes, another one immediately opens in the form of d'Artagnan, who is eager to prove his love and devotion.*



*D'Artagnan does not mince words when talking about Monsieur Bonacieux because he has so little respect for him. Of course, it doesn't help that Monsieur Bonacieux is married to the woman he loves. Luckily, d'Artagnan gets the chance to prove his love to Madame Bonacieux and embark on his first real adventure. D'Artagnan believes that if his mission is successful, it is likely that Madame Bonacieux will fall in love with him.*



*Although the reader now knows the name Rochefort, d'Artagnan is still in the dark. He only knows him as "the man from Meung." As usual, just the sight of Rochefort angers d'Artagnan, but Madame Bonacieux's good sense prevails and the two of them hide upstairs instead of facing Rochefort head on.*





Rochefort asks Monsieur Bonacieux if his wife knows that he is acting as a spy. Monsieur Bonacieux assures him that she does not. Rochefort also asks him where his wife is now, and he tells him that she is at the Louvre. This seems to satisfy Rochefort, but he is angry that Monsieur Bonacieux didn't just accept his wife's mission and immediately turn over the letter. Monsieur Bonacieux tells him that he can just go to the Louvre and tell his wife that he will take on the mission. This angers Madame Bonacieux, who curses at her husband. D'Artagnan urges her to be quiet so that they are not caught spying. After Rochefort leaves, Monsieur Bonacieux realizes that his money is missing, and he starts screaming bloody murder. This amuses Madame Bonacieux and d'Artagnan.

*This scene is filled with irony as Monsieur Bonacieux once again demonstrates his utter ignorance. Meanwhile, Madame Bonacieux now knows for sure that her husband betrayed her. This is a bad sign for their marriage, but a good sign for d'Artagnan, who is hoping she will fall in love with him. Monsieur Bonacieux's betrayal means that d'Artagnan must be the mature one for once to make sure that Madame Bonacieux doesn't give them away out of anger. The chapter ends on a satisfying note as Monsieur Bonacieux is symbolically punished for his betrayal because Madame Bonacieux stole his money and gave it to d'Artagnan.*



## CHAPTER 19

Excited for his new mission, d'Artagnan heads to M. de Tréville's house. D'Artagnan tells M. de Tréville that he is on a secret mission for the queen. M. de Tréville insists that d'Artagnan keep the details of the mission secret and promises to give him as much time off as he needs. M. de Tréville also tells d'Artagnan that he should bring people with him on his journey. Otherwise, he is likely to be killed. D'Artagnan agrees and so M. de Tréville writes four letters excusing d'Artagnan, Athos, Aramis, and Porthos from their duties for the next 15 days.

*M. de Tréville trusts d'Artagnan completely, which is why he does not press him for details. He knows that learning more information about the situation would put himself and the queen in more danger rather than less. As usual, M. de Tréville goes above and beyond; he knows d'Artagnan cannot pull off such an important mission on his own, so he sends the three musketeers with him.*



Next, d'Artagnan goes to Aramis's apartment. Just a few minutes after d'Artagnan arrives, a servant delivers Aramis his leave of absence letter. When d'Artagnan tells Aramis about the mission, he is hesitant. D'Artagnan quickly realizes that Aramis is worried about the woman he saw in Aramis's house while spying on Madame Bonacieux. D'Artagnan tells Aramis not to worry about the woman because she went to Tours to avoid persecution by the cardinal. This satisfies Aramis and together the two of them make their way to Athos's house, with Bazin trailing closely behind.

*The rest of this chapter shares its structure with the earlier sequence where d'Artagnan challenges each of the musketeers to a duel. However, in this case, d'Artagnan must explain to each of the three musketeers that they are going on an important mission without explicitly stating the mission's purpose. Luckily, d'Artagnan and his friends now share a deep sense of loyalty, which makes his job easy.*



When they get to Athos's place, Athos has already received his letter. D'Artagnan explains that they are going on a mission for the queen but does not get more specific than that. In the middle of the explanation, Porthos arrives, also bearing a letter. D'Artagnan tells everyone that they've received 300 pistoles for their mission. He then gives 75 to everyone so that the wealth is equally spread around. The musketeers are concerned that they don't know more about the nature of what sounds like a dangerous task, but they trust d'Artagnan and agree to join him.

*Whatever skepticism the musketeers might have about the nature of the mission is immediately wiped away by the sight of money. As always, the money is divided equally. D'Artagnan's dispersal of the funds is entirely selfless. Even though he could give more to himself than everyone else, he chooses not to. Such selflessness allows the musketeers and d'Artagnan to work together effectively, and it exemplifies their "all for one, one for all" motto.*



D'Artagnan and the musketeers all get their servants together and tell them how to prepare for the mission. D'Artagnan also tells his friends about the letter he possesses. In case he dies on the journey, he expects his friends to take the letter off of his body and keep going. Everyone agrees to D'Artagnan's plan, and they begin their journey.

*Even though they don't know the nature of the mission, the musketeers are willing to lay their lives on the line because they trust d'Artagnan. Trust is foundational to the four friends' relationship and without it, this mission could not go forward.*



## CHAPTER 20

By 8 a.m., d'Artagnan and his friends have made it to Chantilly where they stop at an inn for breakfast. While they are eating, a man tries to interact with d'Artagnan and the musketeers. The man proposes a toast to the cardinal and Porthos tells him that they will only toast to the cardinal if he will toast to the king in return. This starts a fight and both the stranger and Porthos pull out their swords. Fearing more trouble is on the way, the other two musketeers and d'Artagnan flee, along with their respective servants.

*Although there is a lot of setup for the journey to London, the journey itself takes place in a single chapter. Almost immediately, the musketeers and d'Artagnan run into trouble. They assume that the man who wants them to toast the cardinal is one of the cardinal's agents who was sent after them. Regardless of whether this is true, Porthos selflessly stays behind to fight the man while everyone else flees to ensure that the mission is a success.*



After they are on the road for a while, the musketeers and d'Artagnan stop and wait to see if Porthos will rejoin them. However, he doesn't, so they have to keep moving. After traveling a bit further, the group comes upon several men working on the road. Their work causes Aramis's boots to get dirty and so he curses at them. In response, the men grab guns and start shooting at the musketeers. Aramis and Mousqueton are shot, and the latter falls off of his horse. Aramis manages to stay upright and make it to the next city. However, he has to stay behind so that he can recover. Bazin stays back with him.

*Here, the chapter settles into a predictable pattern. The musketeers fall into what seems like a trap set by the cardinal. However, once again, one member sacrifices for the good of the group, and d'Artagnan is able to continue on. Both the group's steadfast loyalty and the importance of honor are displayed here.*



By midnight, the remaining members of the group reach Amiens. They decide to spend the night at a hotel but become suspicious when their host acts excessively nice. Because they are suspicious, d'Artagnan and Athos insist on sleeping in the same room and they ask Grimaud and Planchet to guard them and their horses. At 4 a.m., Planchet goes outside to find that Grimaud's been knocked unconscious. He also sees that the horses have been sabotaged. Then, when Athos and d'Artagnan go to pay the bill, the innkeeper picks a fight with them and yells that they need to be arrested. Suddenly, a number of men show up and attack Athos and d'Artagnan. Athos stays behind to fight the men, while d'Artagnan and Planchet grab horses that belong to someone else and flee.

*D'Artagnan and Athos think the host is likely trying to lure them into a trap on the orders of the cardinal. As it turns out, they are right. However, because of their loyal servants, and his own great instincts, d'Artagnan manages to escape with Planchet. Although the plan has worked so far, d'Artagnan and Planchet are now on their own. If they run into another one of the cardinal's traps, there will be no one left to help them.*



Planchet and d'Artagnan ride the horses all the way to Calais, a seaside city where they can find safe passage to England. Together, d'Artagnan and Planchet head to the docks where they see a man eager to sail to England. However, when the man tells the captain of a ship that he is traveling to England on the cardinal's orders, the captain tells him that no ships are allowed to leave the docks without the cardinal's permission. The man has a letter granting him permission to travel, but the captain says he'll need to get it signed by the governor of the port before the ship can go anywhere.

D'Artagnan suspects that the man was likely sent to interfere with his mission, so he follows him and then encourages him to fight. Annoyed, the man fights d'Artagnan, but quickly loses. Meanwhile, Planchet handles the man's servant. After the fight, d'Artagnan takes the man's letter and ties him to a tree. He then travels to the governor's office to get the letter signed. When he enters the office, d'Artagnan presents himself as Comte de Wardes to match the name he sees on the letter. He also tells the governor that he ran into a man named d'Artagnan on his way to Calais and then gives him a description that matches Comte de Wardes's appearance.

The next day, d'Artagnan finally makes it to London and immediately heads to find the duke. When he arrives at the duke's home, he is told that the duke is out hunting. However, d'Artagnan gets one of the duke's servants to take him to his master. When the duke sees d'Artagnan, he immediately recognizes him and wonders if something has happened to the queen. D'Artagnan tells him that the queen needs his help and then hands him the letter. After reading the letter, the duke heads back to London with d'Artagnan.

## CHAPTER 21

The Duke of Buckingham is impressed that d'Artagnan managed to thwart the cardinal's attempts to stop him from reaching England. D'Artagnan tells him that he couldn't have done it without the help of his friends. When the two men reach the duke's house, he takes d'Artagnan into a room that he's converted into a shrine for the queen. Among other precious objects, the room contains the diamond tags that the queen gifted him. When the duke looks at the tags, he sees that two of them are missing. He believes they were likely stolen by Lady de Winter (Milady) on behalf of the cardinal.

*If the man with the letter is traveling on the cardinal's orders, it is likely that he is after d'Artagnan. Luckily, he doesn't appear to know what d'Artagnan looks like, which allows the aspiring musketeer to listen in on his conversation with the captain without seeming suspicious. Their conversation tells d'Artagnan that he's run into a problem—he cannot get to London without a ship.*



*Once again, d'Artagnan demonstrates his quick wit. Not only does he correctly suspect Comte de Wardes's reason for traveling, but he uses it to advantage. Not only does he secure safe passage to London, but he also sends the cardinal's men off on a wild goose chase where they are likely to find the Comte de Wardes and not d'Artagnan.*



*As it turns out, d'Artagnan's familiarity with the duke—which he gained via questionable behavior—comes in handy. The duke knows he is an agent of the queen and does not doubt the urgency of his presence. Because of his friends' sacrifices, d'Artagnan's mission is a success.*



*It is not clear whether the Duke of Buckingham knows about the cardinal's relationship with the queen. However, the duke makes it clear that he doesn't like the cardinal, and he is glad d'Artagnan thwarted his plans. Although the duke treats d'Artagnan with kindness and gratitude, he remains a man of questionable morals and motivations. Although he's obeyed Queen Anne's orders, he clearly has plans to win her back, and he's even dedicated a whole room into a shrine for her. Additionally, this passage also sees the return of Milady, who was apparently successful in her undertaking for the cardinal.*



However, since there are still several days before the ball, the duke asks his jeweler to fix the diamond tags. The jeweler manages to complete the task in two days by working non-stop and the duke rewards him handsomely. When the studs are finished, the duke thanks d'Artagnan and offers to reward him. However, D'Artagnan feels uncomfortable accepting a reward since France is at war with England. The duke understands d'Artagnan's reasoning. Nonetheless he insists on helping d'Artagnan get back to Paris as soon as possible. With the duke's help, d'Artagnan manages to return to Paris quickly. Along the way he is gifted four horses as a present from the duke. The duke expects that he will gift one of the horses to each of his companions and keep the remaining one for himself. As soon as d'Artagnan arrives in Paris, he pays a visit to M. de Tréville who sends him to the Louvre where he can rejoin his company.

*Because he is powerful, the duke manages to pull some strings and get the diamond tags fixed in the appropriate amount of time. As long as d'Artagnan can quickly return to London, he should be able to get the queen her tags in time. Even though the duke promises not to give d'Artagnan a gift, he does anyway. His generosity demonstrates that although he can be selfish, he still cares for d'Artagnan and appreciates what he's done on the queen's behalf. Of course, the horses are a significant upgrade from the horse d'Artagnan rode to Paris on in the beginning of the story.*



## CHAPTER 22

It is the day of the ball, and the king and queen are expected to perform La Merlaison, the king's favorite dance. Throughout the day, many people work hard to make sure everything is ready for the ball. When night arrives, the king shows up, looking tired. Soon after, the queen arrives, and she looks tired as well. The crowd is perplexed and assumes something must be wrong. Both the king and the queen go into their dressing rooms to get ready. As soon as the cardinal arrives, he finds the queen and gets excited when she doesn't have her diamond tags. He reports this information to the king who, in turn, finds the queen and berates her for not doing what he asked.

*"La Merlaison" is the name of a ballet written in part by Louis XIII, although the extent of his contribution to the piece is debatable. Regardless, the ball is obviously an important event, but something is clearly wrong with the king and the queen. Evidently, the king doesn't have a problem with chastising the queen in public, which is not a good look for the crown. Apparently, the queen has yet to get her hands on the diamond tags, and the king knows that some sort of plot is afoot.*



In response, the queen promises to send someone to fetch the tags. While the queen returns to her dressing room, the cardinal approaches the king and shows him the two diamonds that he stole from the tags. He tells the king that if the queen does come back with the tags on—which he doubts—then two will be missing. When the queen comes back, she is wearing the tags, although neither the cardinal nor the king can tell whether they are completely intact.

*Finally, the cardinal reveals the importance of the tags to the king, although he is immediately undermined as the queen emerges from her dressing room. Apparently, d'Artagnan managed to return the tags just in time because the queen is wearing them. Although the king and the cardinal cannot see them yet, the tags are presumably intact.*



Eventually, the king makes his way to the queen and shows her the missing tags. The queen thanks the king because rather than 12, she will now have 14. This confuses the king who asks the cardinal to explain himself. The cardinal makes up an excuse and acts happy, but he is clearly annoyed that his plan was ruined.

*This moment is a major triumph for the queen and a major blow to the cardinal's credibility. The king knows that something must have happened between the two of them, but he has no idea what.*



Nearby, d'Artagnan watches all of the interactions between the king, the queen, and the cardinal. He is one of the few people who understands what is going on. Satisfied, d'Artagnan turns to leave, but before he can he spots a woman dressed all in black who gestures for him to follow her. D'Artagnan does so and is eventually led to a room where a number of women are chanting, including the queen herself. After the chanting stops, the queen stands up and gives d'Artagnan a diamond ring as payment for his services. After, Madame Bonacieux returns (she was the woman in black) and tells d'Artagnan to return to his apartment. D'Artagnan insists on meeting up with Madame Bonacieux and she tells him that she's left him a note in his apartment.

*The interaction between the king, queen, and cardinal, is also satisfying for d'Artagnan because of all the work he went through to obtain the tags. He knows that he's performed a favor that will have both negative and positive consequences for him. Although he's gained an ally in the queen, he's made even more of an enemy out of the cardinal. However, for the moment, the most important thing to D'Artagnan is the love of Madame Bonacieux, which he has finally earned.*



## CHAPTER 23

D'Artagnan arrives home at 3 a.m. on the night of the ball. When he goes to his room, Planchet gives him a letter that mysteriously showed up when Planchet was in the other room. He does not know how the letter arrived because the door was locked, and the window was shut. Planchet is suspicious of the letter and believes it contains evil tidings. However, d'Artagnan completely ignores his servant and opens the letter as quickly as he can. Inside is a note asking him to go to a bungalow at 10 p.m. the next day. D'Artagnan is excited by the note, but Planchet is still nervous.

*It is never revealed how Madame Bonacieux managed to get the letter into d'Artagnan's room. However, she likely slid it in through the hole in d'Artagnan's floor. Although Planchet is incorrect about the contents of the letter, his superstitions are not entirely without merit, as will be seen as the chapter progresses.*



The next morning, d'Artagnan tells Planchet to ready two horses for when he returns in the evening. This makes Planchet even more nervous because he assumes d'Artagnan has another dangerous mission in mind. On his way out the door, d'Artagnan runs into Monsieur Bonacieux who immediately starts telling d'Artagnan about his time in jail. Additionally, D'Artagnan tells Monsieur Bonacieux that he will likely be out late so he should not worry if he comes back late or even not at all. When Monsieur Bonacieux receives this information, he looks shocked. However, he does not say why. Instead, he tells d'Artagnan that Madame Bonacieux is spending her night at the Louvre.

*For the moment, d'Artagnan appears to have completely forgotten about his friends. Instead, all of his attention is aimed toward Madame Bonacieux. Additionally, d'Artagnan has let down his guard, as he doesn't notice Monsieur Bonacieux's look of shock. Presumably, Madame Bonacieux told her husband that she would be out all night and he's just realized that she is going to meet d'Artagnan.*



D'Artagnan is too distracted by thoughts of his planned meeting with Madame Bonacieux to even notice that something is wrong with Monsieur Bonacieux. As such, he continues on his way without thinking anything is wrong. Eventually, d'Artagnan arrives at M. de Tréville's residence and they talk about the previous night, although d'Artagnan doesn't go into detail. M. de Tréville is proud of d'Artagnan's work but warns him to stay clear of the cardinal. He also warns d'Artagnan to stay away from women because they will likely betray him.

*Signs of trouble continue to appear all around d'Artagnan, but he barely notices. Both M. de Tréville and Planchet offer him warnings, but they do nothing to stop his plans to meet Madame Bonacieux. This sequence of events suggests that romance is a dangerous distraction in the life of a would-be musketeer.*





Additionally, M. de Tréville inquires after Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. D'Artagnan tells him that he isn't sure what's happened to his three friends. M. de Tréville recommends that d'Artagnan go and find them. This would get d'Artagnan out of the city and away from the cardinal. Plus, someone needs to find out what happened to the three musketeers. D'Artagnan promises M. de Tréville that he will go find his friends after his meeting in the evening.

D'Artagnan heads to the homes of his friends, hoping to find some hint of what's happened to them. However, he ultimately learns nothing new. Eventually, he returns home to Planchet who once again warns him about the danger of their late-night meeting. Again, d'Artagnan ignores his servant and tells him to be ready by 9 p.m. Then, he goes to eat dinner with a priest because he worries that one of his enemies might come after him if he stays at home.

## CHAPTER 24

At 9 p.m., d'Artagnan and Planchet head to the bungalow where d'Artagnan expects to meet Madame Bonacieux. Although he is excited, d'Artagnan is still cautious and he arms himself with two pistols and a sword. During their ride, Planchet repeatedly expresses his nervousness at their current situation. Eventually, they come to a spot where d'Artagnan thinks it is safe to leave Planchet behind. He tells his servant to find an inn where he can eat, drink, and stay warm. Planchet does as he is told, and the two men plan to meet again at 6 a.m. the following day.

D'Artagnan continues on to the pavilion where he expects to meet Madame Bonacieux. However, she does not show up. After an hour, d'Artagnan is convinced that something is wrong. He sees that there is a window that is lit up nearby and decides to climb a tree and look into it. The room is trashed and it looks like a violent struggle took place. He climbs into the room and finds a torn glove that belonged to a woman.

D'Artagnan scouts out the area around the building with the lit window. He eventually finds a ferryman who tells him that he transported Madame Bonacieux at 7 p.m. Now, d'Artagnan knows for sure that something is wrong. He heads to a nearby cottage and asks the old man who lives there about what happened. At first, the old man is hesitant to say anything. However, eventually he reveals to d'Artagnan that the woman he is looking for was kidnapped by a group of men. This upsets d'Artagnan so the old man tries to cheer him up by assuring him that the woman was still alive when the men left.

*Finally, d'Artagnan is reminded of his three friends who sacrificed themselves for the good of his mission. Although he does plan to go find them, d'Artagnan does not place the importance of this task higher than his meeting with Madame Bonacieux. At this moment in the novel, d'Artagnan is not following the musketeers' motto. Instead, he is looking out for his own desires.*



*No matter how many warnings come d'Artagnan's way, he still plans to meet Madame Bonacieux. At this point, enough foreshadowing has occurred in this chapter to alert the reader that their meeting will not go as smoothly as d'Artagnan hopes.*



*Although he is excited, d'Artagnan still exercises some caution. He has not completely lost his wits. Nonetheless, his actions are dangerous. He goes to meet Madame Bonacieux on his own after leaving Planchet behind. If he is accosted by the cardinal's men, he will have no one to back him up. Acting without his friends' backup is a risky step for a musketeer.*



*Unsurprisingly, d'Artagnan's meeting does not go as he hoped. Although it seems like Madame Bonacieux may have come to their meeting place at some point, she is not there any longer. It seems d'Artagnan's dreams of romance must once again be delayed.*



*Just as d'Artagnan feared, Madame Bonacieux was kidnapped again, presumably by the cardinal's men. Although Madame Bonacieux is still alive, d'Artagnan has no way of getting her and he worries for her safety.*



D'Artagnan asks what the men who kidnapped Madame Bonacieux looked like. The old man describes their leader, who d'Artagnan immediately recognizes as his man from Meung (Rochefort). Additionally, another one of the men has an appearance that closely matches Monsieur Bonacieux's, although d'Artagnan has yet to figure that out. It is now midnight so d'Artagnan tries to find Planchet but has no luck. Instead, he goes to an inn and sleeps until morning. At 6 a.m. the next morning, he quickly locates Planchet.

*Indeed, it looks as though the cardinal was involved in Madame Bonacieux's kidnapping, although it is unclear how he knew where she was going to be. Most likely, Monsieur Bonacieux ratted out his wife to the cardinal and then helped the cardinal's men capture her. Although Monsieur Bonacieux was never a likeable character, this is a new low even for him.*



## CHAPTER 25

D'Artagnan returns to M. de Tréville and tells him about his current predicament. M. de Tréville thinks that the cardinal is likely responsible for what's happened. He tells d'Artagnan that he will look into it, but that for now d'Artagnan needs to leave the city and go find his friends. D'Artagnan agrees and heads home to prepare for his journey. When d'Artagnan returns home he sees Monsieur Bonacieux and realizes that he was one of the men responsible for his wife's kidnapping. Monsieur Bonacieux quickly realizes that d'Artagnan is on to him and gets scared.

*M. de Tréville's instincts are correct, which means there is nothing that d'Artagnan can do immediately. Instead, d'Artagnan finally gets around to another pressing question; what happened to the rest of the musketeers? Just before he leaves town, d'Artagnan figures out the truth about Monsieur Bonacieux and loses what little respect he had left for him.*



D'Artagnan returns to his apartment where Planchet is waiting for him. Planchet tells d'Artagnan that the captain of the cardinal's guards came by earlier and gave d'Artagnan an invite to come and speak with the cardinal. Luckily, Planchet lied to the captain and told him that d'Artagnan was on his way to Champagne, a city in the opposite direction of where they'll soon be traveling.

*D'Artagnan doesn't know what the cardinal wants, but he is sure that it cannot be good. Luckily for him, Planchet has taken on some of his master's better qualities and tricked the cardinal's men into searching in the wrong direction.*



Planchet and d'Artagnan take off to find Porthos in Chantilly. They take all four horses the duke gave to d'Artagnan with them. When they arrive in Chantilly, they find that Porthos is still at the inn where they last saw him. However, the innkeeper is angry with Porthos because he's been running up a tab and not paying for anything. D'Artagnan promises the innkeeper that Porthos's bill will be settled by a wealthy woman named Madame Coquenard, his wealthy mistress. What d'Artagnan doesn't know is that Madame Coquenard is currently angry with Porthos and doesn't plan to help him out of his current bind.

*This segment of the novel introduces a new character: Madame Coquenard. Although Porthos thinks that he's kept Madame Coquenard a secret, he's failed miserably, which is why d'Artagnan knows her name. Importantly, Madame Coquenard is not as rich as d'Artagnan thinks. Furthermore, her anger with Porthos ensures that his bill is unlikely to get paid in the manner d'Artagnan promises. Of course, d'Artagnan doesn't know he is lying, but that doesn't help Porthos. If anything, it gives the innkeeper high expectations.*



D'Artagnan goes and finds Porthos who is still wounded, although he pretends to be fine. Porthos's room is a mess and full of wine bottles. When d'Artagnan arrives, Porthos is gambling with his servant, Mousqueton. Porthos is glad to see d'Artagnan, who tells him that their mission was ultimately a success. D'Artagnan also tells Porthos about the horse outside, which has been gifted to him by the duke. Now that he knows his friend is alright, d'Artagnan leaves the inn in search of Aramis and Athos.

*Evidently, Porthos has been engaging in all of his vices while waiting for d'Artagnan to return. As usual, Porthos acts as the comic relief for the novel. Although the innkeeper is angry with him, his situation is not serious, nor is it a source of dramatic tension in the novel. Porthos is in a predicament, but not one that is likely to place him in much danger.*



## CHAPTER 26

D'Artagnan continues on to the inn where he last saw Aramis. When he arrives, D'Artagnan learns that Aramis has spent the past several days with some men of the cloth and is planning to become a priest. This is bad news for d'Artagnan, so he heads to his friend's room to figure out what is going on. On the way there, he is blocked by Bazin who doesn't want d'Artagnan to see his master. Bazin has always dreamed of being a man of the church and doesn't want d'Artagnan to ruin his chance. However, d'Artagnan completely ignores Bazin and pushes him aside.

*Again, the novel falls into a predictable pattern. In this case, one chapter is devoted to each musketeer as d'Artagnan discovers what has become of them. Although it's mostly been played for laughs up to this point, it seems that Aramis is finally taking his commitment to the Catholic Church seriously. However, d'Artagnan's presence is sure to throw a wrench in his plan, much to Bazin's dismay.*



When d'Artagnan enters Aramis's room, he sees his friend with two priests. Together, the men are discussing Aramis's thesis, a document he must write to become a priest himself. The two priests and Aramis have a lengthy discussion about the thesis, which confuses d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan has no idea what the men are talking about and much of what they say is in Latin, which d'Artagnan does not know.

*Unlike many of the musketeers who were born noblemen, d'Artagnan has little formal education. D'Artagnan is only slightly embarrassed by this fact; he finds the priests more annoying and pretentious than anything else. Meanwhile, Aramis proves that he is an intelligent man who is at least somewhat serious about his desire to be a priest.*



When the priests leave them alone, d'Artagnan asks Aramis why he's abandoning his life as a musketeer. Aramis responds by saying that his wound has made him reevaluate his life and that he now desires a life in the church. D'Artagnan is skeptical of this claim and suggests that he is actually just upset because of a woman. At first Aramis protests, but then d'Artagnan produces a letter that he found at Aramis's house before he left Paris. The letter is perfumed and clearly from a woman. When Aramis sees the letter, his mood instantly changes and he completely changes his mind about becoming a priest, much to Bazin's chagrin.

*The woman in Aramis's life is presumably the same person who d'Artagnan saw Madame Bonacieux talking to earlier in the novel, which means she is connected to the queen. Although d'Artagnan does not know who the woman is, he is confident that she exists and is affecting Aramis's mindset. As it turns out, d'Artagnan is correct and in mere moments he deflates Aramis's desire to convert. It's another example of the disruptive power of romance in a musketeer's life.*



## CHAPTER 27

Now that d'Artagnan's managed to secure two of his friends, he goes off in search of the third. On his way to Athos, d'Artagnan thinks about how mysterious Athos is compared to the other musketeers. He wonders about what happened in Athos's past to make him the way he is. There is a certain sadness to Athos that d'Artagnan cannot pin down.

D'Artagnan reaches the inn where he expects to locate Athos and finds it in utter chaos. Evidently, Athos and Grimaud have locked themselves in the basement of the inn and refused to come out. Instead, they are eating all of the food and drinking all of the wine in the basement. If anyone tries to enter the basement, Athos fires his weapon at them. Of course, the innkeeper is very upset by all of this, but D'Artagnan doesn't feel that bad for him. After all, this is the innkeeper that betrayed the musketeers and yelled for them to be arrested. The innkeeper explains that he was only acting on the cardinal's orders.

During d'Artagnan's conversation with the innkeeper, two Englishmen arrive and learn about the situation in the basement. Annoyed, they plan to go down and get Athos out themselves. Realizing how poorly that is likely to go, d'Artagnan steps in and promises to retrieve Athos from the basement himself. D'Artagnan is ultimately successful, though Athos and Grimaud are still incredibly drunk. As payment, d'Artagnan gives the innkeeper Athos's horse since d'Artagnan has a better one for him anyway.

In his drunken state, Athos tells d'Artagnan a story, which he claims happened to a friend of his. It is clear to d'Artagnan that Athos's "friend" is actually Athos himself. This "friend" once fell in love with a beautiful girl and decided to marry her. He didn't know the girl's background and married her purely out of love rather than anything to do with her social status. However, one day, after the two were married, the woman fell from her horse and Athos's "friend" saw that the woman was branded with a **fleur-de-lis**, the mark of a criminal. Apparently, she received the mark for stealing sacred items from a church. Enraged, Athos's "friend" murdered his wife by hanging her from a tree. This story shocks d'Artagnan, who pretends to pass out from drinking too much.

*The pattern of threes continues as d'Artagnan makes his way to Athos. Although the novel keeps its comic tone in this chapter, some darkness creeps in. Unlike Porthos and Aramis, Athos isn't merely in a temporary crisis; whatever secret is eating away at him has been doing so for a long time.*



*D'Artagnan enters the third and final inn to find that Athos and Grimaud have gotten revenge on the innkeeper who betrayed them. Although d'Artagnan doesn't feel bad for the innkeeper, he is deserving of some sympathy. After all, he was simply acting on the cardinal's orders and did not think he was doing anything wrong. Now, in consequence, his business is being destroyed.*



*D'Artagnan knows that Athos will easily kill the Englishmen if he doesn't step in and do something. Luckily, despite Athos's drunken state, he recognizes d'Artagnan and comes out of the basement before he can do any further damage.*



*Finally, d'Artagnan learns more about Athos's background and it is shocking. Although Athos's wife is not entirely innocent, Athos's response is barbaric. The novel's original readership may have been more sympathetic to Athos than the modern reader, but even from a contemporary perspective, his actions are excessive. This is a major shift in Athos's character. Previously, although flawed, the musketeers were all likeable and generally moral people. However, Athos's past adds layers of grey into the mix and the line between hero and villain becomes blurred.*



## CHAPTER 28

The next morning, Athos apologizes to d'Artagnan for whatever crazy stories he told the night before, implying that whatever he said was false. At first, d'Artagnan pretends not to know what his friend is talking about. However, he then pretends to slowly recall some of the details of the story so that he can study Athos's reaction. By the look on Athos's face, d'Artagnan can tell that the story was true, and that Athos's friend was, in fact, Athos himself.

Athos switches the topic by telling d'Artagnan that he lost two of the horses the duke gave them because of gambling. This enrages d'Artagnan, who loved the horses and now isn't sure how they will be able to travel. Athos suggests that d'Artagnan win back his horse by gambling with the man who won them. At first, d'Artagnan resists the idea, but quickly realizes he has no other choice. D'Artagnan approaches the man and offers him his terms. If d'Artagnan wins, he gets one horse or 100 pistoles. The man accepts the deal. D'Artagnan gets lucky and wins a game of dice, much to his excitement. Rather than take back the horse, Athos urges him to accept the 100 pistoles instead. He believes they will be more useful. Also, Athos doesn't want to feel out of place if d'Artagnan has a horse and he doesn't.

Although he's not happy about it, d'Artagnan takes the 100 pistoles. After, he and Athos depart along with their servants. D'Artagnan and Athos ride their servants' horses, while the servants themselves follow behind. Eventually they make it to Aramis who is also without a horse because he sold it to a dealer. Aramis laughs when he realizes that his friends have also lost their horses. The three friends continue on to Porthos, only to find that he, too, is without his horse. Porthos had to sell his horse to pay for the extensive tab he racked up at the inn. Eventually, all four friends arrive back in Paris where they learn that they will soon be going to war. This is an issue because going to war is expensive and they are now without their horses and much of their equipment.

*Athos's attempts to shield the reality of his past from d'Artagnan are useless. D'Artagnan knows what Athos said is likely true and confirms it by examining his friend's face. Although he is not as obvious as Porthos, Athos cannot hide his past from d'Artagnan. In fact, d'Artagnan has proved quite successful at digging into the personal lives of all his friends. The passage suggests that keeping secrets not only weighs on a person, but might easily turn out to be pointless.*



*Although Athos is generally the wisest member of the group, his slip into depression appears to have affected his judgement. Additionally, although the man d'Artagnan gambles against appears to be a minor character, he will come back later in the novel with a greater significance.*



*Once again, the novel falls into a predictable comic pattern as it is slowly revealed that the musketeers lost all four horses given to them by the duke. Additionally, they've created a problem for themselves that will serve as an important plot point for the next stage of the novel; that is, they are expected to go to war soon, and they have no equipment with which to do so.*





## CHAPTER 29

When d'Artagnan returns to Paris, he is upset to find that there is still no update on Madame Bonacieux. Meanwhile, it is only 15 days before the musketeers and d'Artagnan must ride off to war and they are still without their equipment. However, Porthos has a plan. Realizing this, d'Artagnan follows him to see what he is up to. Porthos goes to a church where he looks in on a beautiful woman. As he does so, d'Artagnan notices another woman looking in Porthos's direction, who Porthos pretends not to notice. When church ends, the beautiful lady leaves and d'Artagnan recognizes her as Milady.

Porthos attempts to offer holy water to Milady as she exits the church, knowing that doing so will enrage the woman who has had her eye on him. As it turns out, the other woman is Madame Coquenard, Porthos's mistress. When Madame Coquenard starts to chastise Porthos for eyeballing another woman, Porthos shames her for not sending him money in his time of need. Eventually, he gets Madame Coquenard to apologize, and she promises to make it up to him. Madame Coquenard asks Porthos to come by her house the following day. She wants him to pretend to be her cousin so that her husband won't get jealous. Porthos happily agrees to do so and feels that he is well on his way to getting money for his equipment.

## CHAPTER 30

After d'Artagnan sees Milady at the church, he decides to follow her. However, he loses her when she gets in a carriage that is headed to St. Germain. Eager to find out where she is going, d'Artagnan finds Planchet and asks him to secure two horses from M. de Tréville. Next, d'Artagnan goes to Athos's house. Athos is at home, drinking wine. D'Artagnan tells Athos about Porthos's plan to get equipment. In response, Athos promises d'Artagnan that he has a plan of his own that has nothing to do with women.

While Athos and d'Artagnan are talking, Planchet arrives with the horses from M. de Tréville. D'Artagnan tells Athos that he and Planchet are going to take the horses in search of Milady. Athos wonders aloud whether d'Artagnan has fallen in love with Milady and forgotten about Madame Bonacieux. D'Artagnan assures Athos that he is still in love with Madame Bonacieux, he simply doesn't know where she is. D'Artagnan claims to be going after Milady as a way of finding Madame Bonacieux.

*Milady's presence in the church is purely coincidental and has nothing to do with Porthos's plan. Although he looks at Milady because she is beautiful, he does not know her. However, Porthos realizes that Milady is the perfect person to make Madame Coquenard (the woman looking at Porthos) jealous. Porthos's plan is somewhat cruel, but effective.*



*The relationship between Porthos and Madame Coquenard is played mostly for laughs. Both characters like to manipulate and tell half-truths to one another, which often creates unexpected results, none of which have any significant impact on the overarching plot of the novel.*



*Porthos's meeting with Madame Coquenard allows d'Artagnan to get his second glimpse at Milady, who he knows is an agent of the cardinal. Hoping he can find out more about Madame Bonacieux, d'Artagnan decides to follow her. Meanwhile, Athos's plan to get equipment remains a mystery for the next few chapters of the novel.*



*It is unclear whether the reader should believe that d'Artagnan's interest in Milady is as innocent as he claims. Although he does want to find Madame Bonacieux, he also knows that Milady is a rich and powerful woman who could provide him the funds necessary to secure his equipment for war.*



While searching for Milady, d'Artagnan and Planchet comes across Lubin, the servant of Comte de Wardes. D'Artagnan asks Planchet to go and talk to the servant to figure out if the count is still alive. While Planchet talks to Lubin, Milady's carriage pulls up and stops in front of a nearby house. While still in her carriage, Milady gives orders to a maid who then goes and gives a note to Planchet under the impression that he is Lubin.

Planchet gives the note to d'Artagnan. The note is from Milady and is addressed to Comte de Wardes. Apparently, Milady is trying to set up a romantic tryst with the Comte. Additionally, Planchet informs d'Artagnan that the Comte is alive, but is still recovering from his injuries. D'Artagnan realizes that he can use the note and Comte de Wardes's condition to his advantage and so he compliments Planchet on a job well done.

D'Artagnan and Planchet continue to follow Milady. At one point, they witness her having an argument with a man on a horse, though they cannot tell what she is saying because much of the conversation is in English. Always one to seize the moment, d'Artagnan decides to go and defend Milady's honor against the man who is arguing with her. As it turns out, the man is Milady's brother-in-law, Lord de Winter. Additionally, it is the same man who took d'Artagnan's horses because Athos lost them while gambling. As always, the argument escalates to the point of a duel. Lord de Winter tells d'Artagnan that he will bring three of his friends to fight. D'Artagnan promises to do the same.

## CHAPTER 31

Everyone shows up for the duel behind the Luxembourg at the appointed time. The Englishmen are annoyed by the manners of the Frenchmen because Athos, Porthos, and Aramis refuse to give their real names. Eventually, all three Frenchmen whisper their real names in their respective opponent's ear. After Athos whispers his real name, he warns his opponent that he'll have to kill him.

The duel starts and the musketeers quickly take the upper hand. D'Artagnan disarms his opponent, Porthos wounds his, Aramis's runs away, and Athos kills his as promised. At the end of the duel, D'Artagnan spares Lord de Winter's life because of his interest in Milady. Lord de Winter is impressed with the musketeers and so he gives them some money that belonged to his dead soldier. Although d'Artagnan is willing to accept the money, Athos insists that they cannot keep it because to do so would be dishonorable. Instead, he gives the money to the Englishmen's servants.

*Here, d'Artagnan gets lucky on multiple counts. First, he spots Lubin, who he knows will be a source of information. Then, Milady's maid gives Planchet a note, which d'Artagnan can use to his advantage. This comedy of errors sets up the next stage of d'Artagnan's narrative.*



*D'Artagnan seems prepared to play a dangerous game. Because he is privy to more information than Milady, he knows he can use his knowledge against her. However, if he is not careful, he could make himself yet another enemy.*



*Yet another coincidence proves fortuitous for d'Artagnan. By challenging Lord de Winter to a duel, d'Artagnan has the opportunity to simultaneously get revenge and get on Milady's good side. Notably, the relationship between Lord de Winter and Milady is not a happy one. Although this detail seems unimportant for the moment, it will grow in significance as the novel progresses.*



*Historically, it was important for people to know the identities of the men they were dueling so they would know if the duel was worth their time. This is why the Englishmen are annoyed by their French counterparts. However, they should've left the issue alone because, as it turns out, they've only made matters worse for themselves.*



*Once again, the musketeers win the duel handily, suggesting that Lord de Winter and his men are not close to their skill level. The duel marks a change in Lord de Winter's attitude toward d'Artagnan. Before he thought d'Artagnan was a disrespectful youth, but now he sees him as a full-fledged man who is worthy of respect.*



While conversing with Lord de Winter, d'Artagnan manages to secure an invite to Milady's residence. Lord de Winter tells him to stop by later in the evening. This excites d'Artagnan who is eager to get closer to Milady, even though he realizes that she works for the cardinal. As planned, Lord de Winter and d'Artagnan arrive at Milady's residence in the evening and she welcomes them in. However, Milady appears upset when she learns that d'Artagnan spared Lord de Winter's life during their duel. D'Artagnan takes note of her odd reaction.

*D'Artagnan gets even more than he bargained for out of the duel. He now knows where Milady lives, which is sure to come in handy. However, Milady's response to the result of the duel is troubling. Although she may not like her brother-in-law, her reaction to his continued existence suggests something much more sinister than d'Artagnan ever imagined.*



When d'Artagnan gets Milady alone, he tries to learn everything he can about her and flirts with her constantly. He learns that she married Lord de Winter's younger brother and had a child with him. However, her husband is now dead. At the end of the night, d'Artagnan leaves. On his way out, he is ogled by a maid who is clearly interested in him. However, d'Artagnan is too blinded by Milady to notice. Over the next several nights, d'Artagnan continues to visit Milady. Each time, the result is the same. Milady doesn't appear to be interested in d'Artagnan, but her maid certainly does.

*Although d'Artagnan has not lost sight of his true mission, there is no doubt that he is infatuated with Milady. Meanwhile, he fails to notice that yet another woman—one who could provide him with a bevy of information—is interested in him. Romance, then, can blind a man to his own best interests.*



## CHAPTER 32

Porthos goes to Madame Coquenard's house where he is expected for dinner. He is excited for the dinner not only because he expects a great meal, but also because he thinks he'll get a look inside a chest owned by Madame Coquenard's husband that is said to contain a great deal of money and valuable objects. However, when Porthos arrives at Madame Coquenard's house, things do not go as expected. The house itself is unimpressive and the meal that is served is incredibly lackluster. Although Porthos is repulsed by the meal, Madame Coquenard's husband acts as though he is being spoiled.

*Here, Porthos begins to doubt that the Coquenards are as rich as he thought they were. Although the Coquenard chest is said to contain a great fortune, their living conditions and food suggest otherwise. Porthos is unsure whether this is because their wealth has been exaggerated or they are stingy. Regardless, he has a difficult time sitting through the meal. This is in sharp contrast to Madame Coquenard's husband, and their competing reactions are played for comic effect.*



After dinner, Madame Coquenard invites Porthos to a private room so they can talk. Porthos tells Madame Coquenard that he needs money so that he can go to war. Madame Coquenard doesn't want to give him too much money and would rather obtain the supplies he needs herself. However, she eventually agrees to give Porthos 800 livres. Additionally, she plans to obtain a horse and a mule for him. Porthos is satisfied with this deal and so he returns home, still starving.

*Although the sum Porthos requests is not insignificant, it shouldn't prove a huge challenge for someone like Madame Coquenard, assuming she is as rich as she says she is. The deal the two of them strike seems unlikely to turn out in Porthos's favor. After all, thus far Madame Coquenard's promises have not come to fruition.*



## CHAPTER 33

D'Artagnan continues his nightly visits to Milady and continues to fall in love with her. One night, while d'Artagnan is leaving, Milady's maid, Kitty, grabs him and takes him into another room. Kitty tells d'Artagnan that Milady doesn't love him; she is interested in Comte de Wardes instead. When d'Artagnan asks for proof, Kitty shows him a note she is supposed to bring to Comte de Wardes. The note angers d'Artagnan and he asks Kitty to help him get revenge.

Kitty tells d'Artagnan that she doesn't want to help him because she doesn't think Milady will ever love d'Artagnan. Additionally, she admits to being in love with d'Artagnan herself and therefore doesn't want to help him go to bed with Milady. Seeing an opportunity, d'Artagnan kisses Kitty and tells her that he loves her. Right afterward, Milady calls for Kitty. Rather than leave, d'Artagnan hides in Kitty's closet. Kitty is unhappy with this, but there is nothing she can do.

Milady enters the room next to Kitty's and d'Artagnan hears her say that she thinks she has him wrapped around her finger. She feels that d'Artagnan made the cardinal dislike her (because of the incident with the diamond tags) and she admits to being angry with him because he didn't kill Lord de Winter when he had the chance. When d'Artagnan hears this, he realizes that Milady is terrifying and does not love him at all. Before Milady leaves, she tells Kitty to make sure that Comte de Wardes responds when she delivers Milady's latest letter.

When he knows that Milady is gone, d'Artagnan steps out of the closet and kisses Kitty again. Although d'Artagnan does like Kitty, he is much more interested in getting revenge on Milady. D'Artagnan asks Kitty for the letter that Milady wrote for Comte de Wardes, and she gives it to him. D'Artagnan reads it and then writes a reply where he pretends to be Comte de Wardes. He then gives the note to Kitty and tells her to deliver it to Milady. Kitty agrees to do as d'Artagnan asks, although she is not happy about it. As payment, d'Artagnan promises to spend more time than usual with Kitty the following day.

*Because d'Artagnan is blinded by Milady, Kitty has to take him aside and explain to him the truth of the matter. Of course, Kitty's actions are partially done out of self-interest; she is interested in d'Artagnan and doesn't want him to continue pursuing Milady.*



*Here, d'Artagnan's character takes a dark turn. Although he's acted more or less heroically so far, his actions here are far from honorable. He is manipulating Kitty's emotions to get what he wants; even worse, Kitty suspects the truth, but goes along with him anyway because she feels she has no other choice.*



*Here, Milady reveals that she knows exactly who d'Artagnan is and what he's done. Additionally, d'Artagnan realizes that he correctly analyzed Milady's reaction to his duel with Lord de Winter. However, the reason why Milady wants Lord de Winter dead is still unclear. Regardless, Milady is clearly not the softspoken and timid woman who she sometimes pretends to be.*



*D'Artagnan convinces himself that the ends justify the means and that therefore his treatment of Kitty is acceptable. Furthermore, he plans to use Kitty to lie to Milady, putting both his life and Kitty's in danger. This is an example of D'Artagnan's sense of what is honorable clashing with what's moral.*



## CHAPTER 34

Because d'Artagnan and his musketeer friends have been busy finding ways to obtain equipment, they haven't spent as much time with one another as of late. When they finally do get together, only Porthos and d'Artagnan seem happy. Meanwhile, Aramis is concerned, and Athos appears entirely indifferent to their current circumstances. While the four friends are conversing together, Mousqueton fetches Porthos and tells him to come and look at his new equipment. Right after, Bazin enters and tells Aramis that there is a beggar at his door who claims to hail from Tours. Upon hearing this, Aramis gets excited and leaves. D'Artagnan is left alone with Aramis and tells him about his plan to rescue Madame Bonacieux.

Meanwhile, Aramis heads home to the beggar who summoned him. When he arrives, the beggar tells him to show him a handkerchief. Aramis does as he asks and is rewarded with a large sum of money and a letter from his mistress. Aramis is ecstatic. As he is jumping with joy, d'Artagnan comes in and asks him what all the fuss is about. Aramis lies and says he just received a great deal of money because one of his poems was recently published. D'Artagnan doesn't believe his friend's story but decides to let it go. Together, the two of them head to Athos's place to eat.

On their way to Athos's residence, d'Artagnan and Aramis run into Porthos, who has a mule and d'Artagnan's old horse that he used to travel to Paris after leaving home for the first time. Porthos is furious because these are the animals that Madame Coquenard sent to him. Mousqueton thinks the animals might just be some form of a joke. Regardless, Porthos has them returned to Madame Coquenard's home. He then yells at Madame Coquenard and tells her he will find a mistress who is less stingy. This hurts Madame Coquenard, who promises to talk to him about his circumstances later that night.

## CHAPTER 35

The next day, D'Artagnan goes to Milady's and finds his hostess in a good mood. As Kitty serves them food, d'Artagnan thinks about how she is a much better person than Milady. Meanwhile, Kitty is worried that d'Artagnan is still in love with Milady, despite what he says to the contrary. At 10 p.m., Milady tells d'Artagnan to leave because she is expecting Comte de Wardes. Instead, d'Artagnan goes and hides in Kitty's room. Kitty tries to talk d'Artagnan out of his plan, but it is already too late.

*Porthos and d'Artagnan are happy because of their relationships with Madame Coquenard and Milady, respectively. Meanwhile, Aramis's distress indicates that he is having relationship trouble, while Athos's indifference indicates that there is no woman in his life at all. Aramis's reaction to the news about the beggar suggests the beggar is not who he or she claims to be.*



*Once again, a handkerchief is used to communicate a message—one that Athos apparently understands. Clearly, Aramis's mistress is rich, as she's sent him a lot of money without apparent difficulty. Despite d'Artagnan's suspicions, Aramis refuses to tell him the truth about the origin of the money. He trusts d'Artagnan, but not enough to tell him the identity of his mistress.*



*Predictably, Porthos's deal with Madame Coquenard did not go as planned. As such, the end of the chapter sees Porthos and Aramis switch places—the former is now upset, while the latter is overjoyed. Porthos takes his anger out on Madame Coquenard and is particularly unkind. Of course, in his mind, this is the second time in a matter of weeks that Madame Coquenard has failed him, despite her promises to the contrary.*



*Clearly, Milady is in a good mood because she thinks Comte de Wardes is coming; her attitude has nothing to do with d'Artagnan's presence. Even though d'Artagnan recognizes that Milady doesn't love him and that she is not a good person, he cannot help but love her anyway. Her beauty overpowers everything else from his point of view.*





Milady tells Kitty to shut off all of the lights in the house. Kitty does as she is told. Once all of the lights are off and the time is right, d'Artagnan enters Milady's room and pretends to be the Comte de Wardes. Apparently, Milady is fooled by his disguise and talks to him as though he is, indeed, the Comte de Wardes. To express her love to the man who she believes is the Comte, Milady gives d'Artagnan a sapphire ring. She also tells him to visit her again in one week's time.

*Here, the novel appropriates a conceit that was popular in Renaissance drama, and which requires some suspension of disbelief. Improbable though it may be, d'Artagnan gets away with his impression of Comte de Wardes and is rewarded handsomely. Although he doesn't yet know it, Milady's sapphire ring will be an important item moving forward.*



D'Artagnan relates these events to Athos and shows him the ring Milady gave him. When Athos sees the ring, he becomes pale. He tells d'Artagnan that the ring looks exactly like one that was once in his family. It even has a scratch in the same place. Once again, Athos urges d'Artagnan to give up his plan; he is sure that something will go wrong. D'Artagnan thinks Athos is right and agrees to do so.

*Here, d'Artagnan gets his first hint at Milady's true identity. Athos's reaction to the sapphire ring suggests that Milady might be his former wife, who is somehow back from the dead.*



After leaving Athos, d'Artagnan returns home to find Kitty, who gives him a letter for the Comte de Wardes. Milady wants to know when she can see him again. D'Artagnan responds with a nasty letter that says he has many other women to see and that he will come back for her eventually. The letter makes Kitty happy because she thinks it means that d'Artagnan is not really in love with Milady. However, unsurprisingly, Milady is furious when she receives the letter, and she swears revenge.

*D'Artagnan's trick is cruel on multiple fronts. Not only does he manipulate Kitty's emotions, but he plays with Milady's feelings as well. D'Artagnan claims to care for both women, but he acts according to his own needs, wants, and desires. In doing so, he seems to have made an enemy out of Milady, although neither one of them knows it yet.*



## CHAPTER 36

Milady is surprised when d'Artagnan stops visiting her. Confused, she sends him a note telling him that he shouldn't neglect his friends. D'Artagnan assumes that he now seems more appealing to Milady because the Comte de Wardes is no longer in the picture. Against his better judgment, d'Artagnan decides to pay Milady a visit. When he arrives, Kitty is immediately worried. However, d'Artagnan assures her that she has nothing to worry about; he does not plan to fall in love with Milady.

*The nature of d'Artagnan's intentions upon entering Milady's home are unclear. Perhaps he doesn't realize how infatuated he is with Milady. Regardless, the reality of the situation is that he is romantically interested in her whether or not he is willing to admit it. Kitty knows the truth, but she is helpless to do anything about it.*



However, when d'Artagnan sees Milady, he is immediately entranced by her beauty. He also notices that she's been crying. Almost immediately, d'Artagnan declares his love for her and asks for her love in return. Milady promises to grant him her love if he will kill the Comte de Wardes for her. D'Artagnan promises that he will do just that. However, he wants to know what he will get in return. Milady tells him to return to her at night to find out. D'Artagnan plans to meet up with her later in the evening, and he promises himself that he will be careful.

*Although d'Artagnan's actions are cruel, Milady is no different. She doesn't actually care for d'Artagnan; she simply wants to use him as a tool for revenge. However, d'Artagnan cannot think rationally because he is too blinded by his love for Milady.*



## CHAPTER 37

D'Artagnan heads home to think about what to do in regard to Milady. He knows he is in love with her, but he doesn't think that she cares about him. Furthermore, he still wants to get revenge on her. Eventually, the evening arrives and d'Artagnan heads back to Milady's residence. When he arrives, Milady immediately invites him into her bedroom. Kitty bears witness to this invitation and is deeply upset by it. Almost immediately, d'Artagnan and Milady have sex. As soon as they are done, Milady starts asking questions about d'Artagnan's duel with the Comte de Wardes.

D'Artagnan tries to ignore the issue for the time being, but Milady won't let it go. Eventually, convinced that Milady has some feelings for him, d'Artagnan decides to tell her the truth. He lets her know that he's been acting as the Comte de Wardes. This enrages Milady, who begins punching d'Artagnan. When d'Artagnan tries to stop her, he accidentally rips her dress and spots a **fleur-de-lis** on her shoulder.

In response, Milady picks up a dagger and tries to kill d'Artagnan. Shocked, d'Artagnan grabs his sword so that he can defend himself. He moves the blade to Milady's throat so that she will calm down and then he makes his escape to Kitty's room. Milady chases after him, but to no avail. D'Artagnan asks Kitty to help him out of the building. Kitty tells him that it would be better if he put on some clothes first. Because d'Artagnan's clothes are in Milady's room, he is forced to leave wearing women's clothing.

## CHAPTER 38

D'Artagnan heads to Athos's house while still dressed in women's clothes. Although Athos is confused, he quickly recognizes that the person appearing before him is, in fact, d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan tells Athos about what just happened and asks him if he is sure that his ex-wife is actually dead. Athos asks d'Artagnan to describe Milady. The woman d'Artagnan describes sounds exactly like Athos's former wife. Neither Athos nor d'Artagnan know what to do with this information, but they plan to stay away from Milady.

*When he is not in Milady's presence, d'Artagnan is better at thinking critically about his situation. However, he does not think clearly enough, because only a few hours later he heads right back to Milady's home. Essentially, Milady utilizes sex to get d'Artagnan to do her bidding. Of course, she doesn't yet know that there will be no duel with the Comte de Wardes and is unlikely to be happy when she finds that out.*



*D'Artagnan tricks himself into thinking Milady loves him when nothing could be further from the truth. As Milady attacks d'Artagnan in a fit of rage, d'Artagnan discovers her true identity; she is indeed Athos's wife, as the fleur-de-lis on her shoulder would indicate.*



*Now that d'Artagnan knows Milady's secret, she wants him dead. Milady doesn't realize d'Artagnan knows Athos—which makes matters even worse; just his knowledge of the fleur-de-lis alone is dangerous because he could ruin her if the right people found out about it.*



*Though this passage has a comical edge to it, with d'Artagnan showing up in women's clothes, it's also significant for the plot, as d'Artagnan and Athos move closer to figuring out Milady's real identity.*



D'Artagnan gives Athos the sapphire ring gifted to him by Milady. The two men decide that they will sell it and use it to buy their equipment for the upcoming campaign. After, d'Artagnan returns home to find Kitty standing outside of his apartment. Kitty asks d'Artagnan to find her new employment outside of Paris; otherwise, she will be subjected to Milady's wrath. D'Artagnan doesn't have connections of his own, so he sends Planchet to go and find Aramis. In the meantime, d'Artagnan attempts to console Kitty by telling her that he still cares for her and has no interest in any other women, including Madame Bonacieux.

Before long, Aramis shows up and d'Artagnan asks him if he knows a place where Kitty can work as a maid. Aramis tells her to go to Tours because of his connections there. Before Kitty leaves, she once again reiterates her love for d'Artagnan. Once she is gone, d'Artagnan and his musketeer friends make plans to meet at 4 p.m. at Athos's place. Afterwards, Athos and d'Artagnan sell Milady's ring and use the funds to buy new horses and their equipment for war.

## CHAPTER 39

As planned, Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and d'Artagnan meet up at 4 p.m. Planchet shows up and hands d'Artagnan two letters. The first is from a woman that might be Madame Bonacieux who wants d'Artagnan to meet her on a nearby road. The second is a letter from the cardinal, which strongly encourages d'Artagnan to come and visit him. Both letters are suspicious to d'Artagnan and his friends, but they decide that they must follow both leads, even if they turn out to be traps.

Together with his friends, d'Artagnan rides to the spot where he hopes to see Madame Bonacieux. Indeed, at the time stated in the letter, a carriage passes by d'Artagnan, and he thinks he catches a glimpse of the woman he loves. However, because the letter asked d'Artagnan not to interfere with the carriage, a glimpse is all he can get for now. He wonders whether the carriage is transporting Madame Bonacieux between prisons.

Up next, d'Artagnan heads to his meeting with the cardinal. Once again, his friends ride along with him. They also bring a number of other musketeers to back them up in case a real fight breaks out. When d'Artagnan arrives at the cardinal's residence, he is taken to a library. Once there, d'Artagnan sees a man who he recognizes as the cardinal.

*The sapphire ring Milady gifted to d'Artagnan comes in useful here. Meanwhile, d'Artagnan's romantic dalliances come back to haunt him, as Kitty finds herself in need, yet d'Artagnan isn't in a good position to help her. It's yet another example of how romance can be a harmful distraction rather than a positive thing.*



*Kitty's situation is thoroughly unfortunate—because of her lower class and lack of power, she's basically at the mercy of men who don't actually care that much about what happens to her. D'Artagnan and the musketeers just carry on with their lives, happy that they've gotten what they needed for the time being.*



*After learning nothing about Madame Bonacieux during his time with Milady, d'Artagnan suddenly gets some information out of nowhere. He is right to worry that the letter might be a trap. However, if it is a trap set by the cardinal, then it is odd that it would arrive on the same day as a summons from the cardinal.*



*This scene is an ambiguous moment in the narrative that doesn't definitively provide an update on Madame Bonacieux's status. For now, both d'Artagnan and the reader must content themselves with not knowing. After all, even if the woman was Madame Bonacieux, the nature of her carriage ride is unknown. She could be free of the cardinal, or she could be on the way to a different prison.*



*D'Artagnan knows that the letter from the cardinal is not something he can simply ignore. Regardless of whether they will be effective, the musketeers stay as close to d'Artagnan as they can as a show of solidarity.*



## CHAPTER 40

The cardinal asks d'Artagnan personal questions about his background and his family. He also tells d'Artagnan that he knows about his fight with Rochefort in Meung. D'Artagnan is wary about how well-informed the cardinal is and does his best not to give away any crucial information, even though it seems like the cardinal already knows everything anyway.

After reciting d'Artagnan's many adventures back to him, including his mission to England for the diamond tags, the cardinal scolds d'Artagnan for not coming to see him sooner. D'Artagnan apologizes and explains that he assumed the cardinal was mad at him. The cardinal ignores d'Artagnan's point and instead chooses to compliment him for his conduct. He even offers d'Artagnan a position in his guards if he performs well at La Rochelle.

D'Artagnan thanks the cardinal for his offer but he cannot accept it. He likes his current position and he knows he would be alienated from all of his friends if he accepted a spot with the cardinal. The cardinal cannot believe that d'Artagnan is willing to turn him down. The cardinal warns d'Artagnan that he's already made a lot of enemies in Paris. The cardinal also says that he is one of the few people who can actually protect d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan is skeptical of this claim, although he doesn't say so out loud. Despite the cardinal's arguments, d'Artagnan still turns down the position.

After his meeting with the cardinal, d'Artagnan returns to his friends and assures them that everything is fine. He also tells them about his strange interaction with the cardinal. Privately, d'Artagnan wonders if he made the right choice. The next day, everyone goes to the Louvre and reports for duty. All of the musketeers are excited and ready to go, as is d'Artagnan. However, as d'Artagnan gets ready to leave, Milady plots her revenge. She pays two men to join D'Artagnan's company. Although the exact nature of her plot is not yet clear, it is obvious that these men have been sent to kill d'Artagnan.

## CHAPTER 41

La Rochelle has a complicated religious and political history that has often led to civic unrest. The citizens of La Rochelle are Huguenots and during the war between England and France, they found themselves allied with the English. Currently, La Rochelle has risen up to fight the French and so it is the musketeers' job to end their revolt.

*The cardinal is an intelligent man and d'Artagnan immediately realizes that he is out of his league. Not only does the cardinal seem to have eyes everywhere, but he also knows almost everything about d'Artagnan without needing to ask questions.*



*Although the cardinal is far from forthcoming, his compliments toward d'Artagnan are not disingenuous. The cardinal respects d'Artagnan's intelligence and bravery, even though it's been used against him at every turn.*



*The cardinal's ego is hurt by d'Artagnan's refusal to join his guards. However, d'Artagnan makes the only rational choice. After all, he does not trust the cardinal, and joining him would be a complete betrayal of everything d'Artagnan stands for. Unfortunately, d'Artagnan's decision is not without consequences. Both the cardinal and d'Artagnan know that d'Artagnan's list of enemies continues to grow by the day.*



*If it was not already clear, Milady proves herself to be a vengeful woman, capable of vicious actions. Although d'Artagnan is the hero of the novel, Milady is not an entirely unsympathetic character. After all, d'Artagnan already betrayed her trust once and could do so again by exposing her secret.*



*Huguenots are French Protestants, a persecuted minority in France, who staged numerous rebellions throughout the 17th century. La Rochelle is a city that is home to many Huguenots, who have allied themselves with England in an attempt to overthrow the French government.*



Meanwhile, because he is not a musketeer, d'Artagnan is separated from his friends. One day, not long into the campaign, d'Artagnan is walking near his camp when he spots two guns pointed directly at him. As soon as he sees the guns, he drops to the ground. Moments later, bullets fly and barely miss him. Because he is nimble, d'Artagnan manages to run back to camp without being hit. D'Artagnan wonders why the men tried to kill him. He knows that they cannot be enemy soldiers, so he assumes they were probably sent by Milady.

The following day, d'Artagnan offers to go on a dangerous recon mission. He takes four other volunteers with him. D'Artagnan's job is to take the men and scope out a nearby bastion. Halfway there, d'Artagnan notices that two of his men are missing. He wonders what happened to them. Eventually, he reaches the bastion where he sees enemy soldiers. Suddenly, bullets start flying and they hit one of d'Artagnan's men. Almost immediately, d'Artagnan realizes that the bullets are not coming from enemy soldiers. Instead, they are coming from the two men who went missing earlier in their journey.

To trick his attackers, d'Artagnan pretends to get hit by a bullet and he falls to the ground. In response, the men let their guard down and approach d'Artagnan. When they get close enough, d'Artagnan attacks them. One of the men runs directly into enemy fire and d'Artagnan quickly gets the other one on the ground. D'Artagnan asks the cornered man why he wants to kill him. As d'Artagnan suspected, the man was sent to kill him on Milady's behalf.

The assassin also tells d'Artagnan that his companion possesses a letter that states Milady's intent. D'Artagnan carefully gets the letter from the corpse and keeps it as evidence. He also decides to spare the life of the other man and together the two head back to camp. When d'Artagnan gets back to camp he feels like he can rest easy for a moment. However, he only does so because he doesn't realize what Milady is capable of.

## CHAPTER 42

D'Artagnan spends much of his time wondering about the safety of his friends. One day, not too long after he was almost killed, d'Artagnan receives a letter along with 12 bottles of wine. The letter claims that the wine is a gift from d'Artagnan's musketeer friends. D'Artagnan is overjoyed with the gift. He assumes it means that his friends are okay and wishing him well. D'Artagnan gathers up a few of his new friends, one of whom is the man whose life he spared, and tells them to join him for dinner a few nights later.

*Milady's assassins strike fast, although d'Artagnan is immediately on to them. D'Artagnan's biggest problem is that his friends are no longer around so he doesn't know who to trust. Anyone could be one of Milady's assassins and they could come after him at any time. His situation illustrates how crucial loyal friends are to his wellbeing.*



*Again, it seems that Milady's men are after d'Artagnan. Unfortunately, d'Artagnan gave them the perfect opportunity to come after him while he was virtually alone. While this is somewhat careless of d'Artagnan, showing how important his friends' support is, it also showcases his bravery.*



*As usual, d'Artagnan outsmarts his opponents and eventually proves victorious over them. His dedication to fighting honorably ultimately saves him, even though he's at a disadvantage without his friends.*



*D'Artagnan was right to suspect Milady and now he has proof that he can use against her. Additionally, he proves himself to be a merciful person; rather than kill his would-be assassin, d'Artagnan saves him. Despite his moral shortcomings in previous chapters, d'Artagnan's actions in this scene demonstrate that he is not as malicious and vindictive as Milady.*



*Although the narrator suggests that d'Artagnan should be suspicious of the wine, he seems to have let his guard down. Apparently, d'Artagnan assumes that Milady would stop trying to kill him after two failed attempts. However, the sudden arrival of the wine suggests otherwise. Although d'Artagnan is trying to be nice to his men, he is leading them into one of Milady's traps.*





When the night of the dinner arrives, the servants help set things up while the soldiers prepare the food. Just before everyone starts drinking their wine, a cannon shot is heard. Everyone rushes outside to see what is going on. Apparently, the cannon shot was meant to announce the arrival of the king. This puts everyone in good spirits. Along with the king, d'Artagnan finds his musketeer friends and M. de Tréville.

*The cannon shot saves d'Artagnan's life because it gives him a chance to talk to his friends before drinking the mysterious wine. If not for luck, Milady would've succeeded in killing d'Artagnan.*



As soon as he sees Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, d'Artagnan thanks them for the wine. However, his friends have no idea what he is talking about. Realizing this might be Milady's second attempt at revenge, d'Artagnan heads back inside to see one of the men who drank the wine on the floor, dying. From this moment on, d'Artagnan accepts that he is in danger at all times.

*Finally, d'Artagnan realizes the truth, but not soon enough to save one of his fellow soldiers. It is only at this point that d'Artagnan realizes the extent of Milady's capabilities.*



The next day, d'Artagnan talks to his friends about the letter he found on one of Milady's assassins. Among other things, the letter implies that Madame Bonacieux was transported to a convent. D'Artagnan asks his friends if they could help him locate which convent she is in. Aramis offers to help by writing to his connection in Tours.

*If Madame Bonacieux is in a convent, that suggests that she's managed to escape the cardinal. Meanwhile, although Aramis does not say so explicitly, his connection in Tours is his mistress. Earlier in the novel, it is stated that Madame de Chevreuse, the queen's best friend, is also in Tours. Therefore, it is implied that Madame de Chevreuse and Aramis's mistress are one and the same.*



## CHAPTER 43

As the war rages on, more and more countries begin to ally themselves with England over France. This is a bad look for the cardinal who is blamed for such results. In fact, it is rumored that the cardinal's many political enemies regularly try to assassinate him. Nonetheless, he often goes out alone at night without worrying about such matters.

*France refused to ally themselves with other European countries throughout the late 16th and early 17th centuries, meaning they had few allies they could count on in their war with the English. In essence, everything that Dumas communicates here about the cardinal's position is historically accurate.*



One evening, the three musketeers are returning from a nearby inn, and they hear horses coming in their direction. Eventually, they spot two riders and demand to know their identities. The riders refuse to offer up their names, but their aura makes Athos think that he is in the presence of an important figure. Eventually, Athos realizes he is speaking to none other than the cardinal himself.

*Despite their rivalry with the cardinal while in Paris, the musketeers know they must respect him and his men during wartime for the good of the country. Nevertheless, it is odd that he would be traveling with so little company at night and the musketeers are right to be suspicious.*



Because the cardinal is traveling with only a single guard, he asks the musketeers to escort him to the inn they recently came from. Partially out of a sense of duty and partially out of curiosity, the musketeers agree to escort the cardinal to the inn. There, the cardinal is planning to meet a visitor—a woman—although he does not give a name. When the cardinal arrives, he is told that his visitor is waiting for him in a room upstairs.

*Here, the musketeers sense an opportunity to get information that they would not otherwise be privy to. Additionally, the cardinal does not seem to recognize them as d'Artagnan's friends, meaning that they do not stand out in his eyes.*



## CHAPTER 44

The three musketeers are sure that the cardinal is speaking to someone of great importance. However, they have no idea who that someone is. Bored, Porthos and Aramis get some dice from the innkeeper and begin to play with one another. Meanwhile, Athos paces back and forth, thinking. As he paces, he notices a broken stovepipe that goes in the direction of the room where the cardinal is speaking with his mysterious companion. Athos puts his ear to the broken pipe and realizes he can hear the cardinal speaking. He signals to Porthos and Aramis to be quiet and waves them over so they can hear the conversation.

*Resourceful as always, Athos quickly manages to figure out a way to eavesdrop on the cardinal. This scene echoes earlier ones in which d'Artagnan spied on the cardinal's men via a hole he made in his floor. However, this scene is almost comical in its construction, as the method of spying is slightly absurd.*



As it turns out, the cardinal is speaking to Milady, who he is sending to England on a mission. Her job is to speak with the Duke of Buckingham and convince him to end the war. The cardinal tells Milady to inform the duke that he has several pieces of evidence that will expose the affair between the duke and the queen. The cardinal seems to know all about the various meetings between the duke and the queen and gives Milady all of the necessary information, including what the duke was wearing during each instance.

*Although the cardinal's plans run counter to the interests of the queen, they are arguably for the good of the country. Although the cardinal is one of the novel's villains, he is a nuanced figure who does try to serve his country well. However, because he opposes the queen, the cardinal will never be an ally in the eyes of d'Artagnan and his friends.*



The cardinal is sure that the duke will surrender once he learns that the queen's reputation is in danger. After all, the war only started in the first place because of the duke's love for the queen. However, Milady also wants to know what happens if the duke declines to surrender. In that case, the cardinal instructs Milady to find a religious fanatic who will assassinate the duke. However, he doesn't think things will go that far.

*Here, the cardinal shows his less honorable side. Although he wants to end the war in a manner that is relatively free of bloodshed, he is not afraid to get his hands dirty. Like France, England is a country that was in constant political turmoil because of religious conflict in the early 17th century. As such, a political assassination by a religious fanatic would not seem out of place.*



Milady promises to settle this matter for the cardinal if he will allow her to kill d'Artagnan. The cardinal says he will send d'Artagnan to the Bastille if Milady can provide proof that d'Artagnan conspired with the Duke of Buckingham. However, this isn't good enough for Milady. She tells the cardinal that she will trade him a life for a life. The cardinal replies that he doesn't want to know what she means but agrees to the terms. Having heard enough, Athos decides to leave the inn immediately. He tells his companions to stay behind and inform the cardinal that he left to scout out the roads.

*The cardinal's deal with Milady cements him as the novel's villain. While it is understandable that he would use questionable means to dispatch his political enemies, it is less forgivable that he would allow Milady to kill one of his own men. Of course, the cardinal doesn't realize that he is being spied on and that his words will get back to d'Artagnan almost immediately.*



## CHAPTER 45

After his meeting with Milady, the cardinal returns to the common room of the inn where he finds Porthos and Aramis playing dice. He asks the two musketeers what happened to Athos, and they tell him that he went to scout the road. This appears to satisfy the cardinal and he tells the remaining musketeers that it is time to leave. Porthos and Aramis get up and join the cardinal as he departs.

As the cardinal, Porthos, and Aramis ride away from the inn, Athos makes his way back to it. He tells the cardinal's guards who are standing watch that he has a message to deliver to Milady from the cardinal. The guards allow Athos to proceed, and he makes his way to Milady's room. When Athos enters the room, he locks the door so Milady cannot escape. Milady is shocked to see Athos because she thought he was dead. Milady refers to Athos as Count de La Fère when addressing him and he refers to her as Anne de Breuil.

Athos tells Milady that he knows all about what she's been up to since allying herself with the cardinal, including her relationship with D'Artagnan. Athos also tells her that if she tries to kill D'Artagnan, then he will kill her. This threat doesn't seem to register; Milady responds by saying that she will kill D'Artagnan "after she has died." Milady doesn't specify who "she" is. This enrages Athos, who pulls out his pistol and points it directly at Milady's face. He then forces her to give him the letter that the cardinal wrote on her behalf, which she is meant to use to deal with the Duke of Buckingham.

Having obtained the letter, Athos leaves and makes his way back to his companions who are with the cardinal. The cardinal thanks the three of them for their service and then departs. After, Athos tells his friends that he got ahold of the letter. Meanwhile, Milady makes her way to the ship that will take her to England. Although she no longer possesses the cardinal's letter, she still thinks she can handle the duke. She knows that she cannot tell the cardinal about what happened with Athos because if she does, Athos will tell the cardinal about her brand.

*Porthos and Aramis lie to the cardinal without blinking, but because their lie is reasonable enough, the cardinal assumes it is the truth. In reality, it is not clear to anyone, including Porthos and Aramis, what Athos plans to do.*



*This passage is a major moment in the narrative, as it is the first time that Athos is reunited with his former wife. It is never made clear how Milady is still alive after her trip to the woods with Athos, but that is of little importance. What matters is that both Athos and Milady know scandalous details about one another's past, and this is the first time where they are meeting face to face in many years.*



*Presumably, the "she" Milady refers to is Madame Bonacieux, although it is not clear whether Athos knows this. Athos's rage is sparked by Milady's defiance, which he finds infuriating. It seems likely that there was more to their marriage that Athos never disclosed to d'Artagnan, and that the reader never finds out. Although he would like to rid himself of Milady once and for all, Athos acts with his brain rather than his emotions and dooms Milady's mission by stealing her letter from the cardinal.*



*Athos now possesses a letter from the cardinal, which essentially gives its owner carte blanche. Unfortunately for d'Artagnan and his friends, Athos's victory is far from the last nail in the coffin for Milady. If anything, Milady is more determined than ever to succeed.*



## CHAPTER 46

As soon as he can, d'Artagnan meets up with his friends who notified him that they had something important to talk to him about. Athos suggests that the four of them head to the Parpaillot inn to have their discussion because their current lodgings have thin walls and he's worried someone will overhear them. The four friends make their way to the inn, only to find it swarmed with soldiers. Hoping it will calm down later, Athos asks d'Artagnan to tell them about his night first. d'Artagnan begins talking about how he and some other men managed to take the Saint-Gervais bastion.

This conversation attracts the attention of other soldiers nearby who come over to hear the story. Realizing that they will never have time alone at this rate, Athos proposes a bet to the men who join in on the conversation. He bets the men that he and his companions will be able to have breakfast at the Saint-Gervais bastion without being killed by English soldiers (who are likely planning to take the spot back). The other men agree to the bet. When he is out of earshot of the other soldiers, Athos explains to his companions that he made the bet so they could have time to be alone and talk about their current situation.

At first, everyone else is taken aback by Athos's plan. They think that it is dangerous and that they will likely be attacked by enemy soldiers. Their concern doesn't bother Athos. He thinks, if anything, they will be able to kill two birds with one stone; not only can they have their meeting, but they can also gain honor in battle in the process. He also points out that there are plenty of weapons and resources scattered around Saint-Gervais from the night before because no one has yet looted the battlefield. Eventually, everyone agrees to Athos's plan, and they all make their way to the Saint-Gervais bastion.

## CHAPTER 47

At the Saint-Gervais Bastion d'Artagnan and the musketeers find 12 guns they can use to defend themselves. While Grimaud prepares breakfast, they begin loading the weapons. D'Artagnan is also told that Milady and the cardinal are conspiring to kill him. Before they can get any further in their conversation, Grimaud warns them that some men are approaching. The musketeers take a look and see that most of the men are civilians. Rather than shoot at them, Athos stands up and tells them not to come any further. His request is not granted, as the few soldiers in the group begin firing at the musketeers. In response, d'Artagnan and his friends fire back, killing three of the gunmen and wounding a civilian. Because the enemy soldiers still don't retreat, the musketeers fire again, killing more people and causing the rest to flee.

*The world of The Three Musketeers is full of places where one's secrets can be overheard, so the musketeers struggle to find a good place to talk. Even the inn does not prove useful and so they are forced to talk about d'Artagnan's heroics in battle rather than the business at hand.*



*Because the Saint-Gervais bastion was just taken by the French, Athos knows that no one will be there. As such the musketeers and d'Artagnan will be able to have a conversation out of earshot from anyone who is a potential spy for the cardinal. Additionally, it is an opportunity for the musketeers and d'Artagnan to fight side by side for the first time during a war, should it come to that.*



*Athos's plan is somewhat absurd, but it sets up one of the most entertaining and famous sequences in the entire novel. Additionally, Athos knows that d'Artagnan has yet to prove himself in battle in a manner that would stand out to high-ranking officials. If a battle does take place at Saint-Gervais, Athos knows that it could be d'Artagnan's chance to elevate himself to the rank of musketeer.*



*Like several other sequences in the novel, this chapter is divided into three distinct parts, each of which contains a conversation between the four friends and a battle. The first wave of enemies that comes near the bastion is surprised by the presence of the musketeers; after all, their presence is absurd. Despite Athos's attempt to remain peaceful, the four friends eventually have to open fire, marking their first success of the day. Throughout the entire process, they work together and communicate effectively to achieve success.*



When the coast is clear, the musketeers leave their fort and grab the weapons dropped by the men they killed. The French soldiers who are watching them from afar cheer them on. As they eat, the four men return to their conversation and discuss Milady's plan to kill the duke. Athos promises d'Artagnan that it won't be that easy for Milady to succeed and then gives him the letter that he stole.

Together, the group brainstorms ideas on how to handle their current situation. Porthos thinks that they should kill Milady before she can kill anyone else. D'Artagnan has a different idea, but before he can share it, more enemy soldiers come for the fort. This time, there are around two dozen men, all of whom are armed. Aramis quickly comes up with a plan to dispatch them. They will fire their weapons until the men are up close and then they can drop a barricade on whoever remains. Aramis's plan works perfectly. No one gets injured except the enemy soldiers and so the friends can return to their meetings.

By this time, their hour in the bastion is up, but they decide to stay anyway so they can iron out a plan. Eventually, they decide that Aramis will write a letter to his contact in Tours who can warn the queen about the threat to the duke's life. Meanwhile, d'Artagnan can send a letter to Lord de Winter explaining that Milady is dangerous to both the duke and Lord de Winter himself.

As the meeting concludes, more enemy soldiers show up. This time there are too many for the musketeers to dispatch on their own. Together, they head back to camp and discuss how they will get the money to carry out their mission. Eventually, they decide to sell d'Artagnan's diamond ring. When the group returns to camp, everyone treats them like war heroes. The story gets passed around everywhere; even the cardinal and M. de Tréville hear about it. The cardinal tells M. de Tréville that he should make d'Artagnan a musketeer for his performance, and M. de Tréville agrees. M. de Tréville tells d'Artagnan about his promotion the first chance he gets and d'Artagnan is thrilled. Additionally, d'Artagnan manages to sell his diamond rings for 7,000 livres.

*The musketeers continue to use the spoils of their enemies to their advantage. Additionally, the letter Athos gives d'Artagnan is an important object that will become important at a later stage of the novel.*



*Here, Aramis demonstrates that he possesses a capable militaristic mind, as his plan is carried out to perfection without any of the musketeers or d'Artagnan getting hurt.*



*Even though they've already completed the bet, the musketeers decide to stay as long as they can. Although they have a practical reason for doing so, their actions either look incredibly brave or incredibly stupid to their onlookers. Regardless, their plan is effective, as they successfully figure out what to do moving forward.*



*The end of this chapter is a major moment for d'Artagnan's character because he finally achieves the goal he's been chasing since the first pages of the story. Additionally, now that he's sold his ring, d'Artagnan has more than enough resources to carry out his plan. D'Artagnan's decision to sell the ring is another primary example of the fundamental ethos of the group; he sacrifices something he loves for the greater good of everyone.*





## CHAPTER 48

The night of their victory in the bastion, the musketeers meet to write the letters and decide who will carry them. D'Artagnan attempts to write the letter meant for Lord de Winter, but quickly realizes that he doesn't have the skill. Instead, he turns the writing over to Aramis who composes a brilliantly subtle letter. The letter tells Lord de Winter that Milady wants him dead, and it makes a reference to the brand on her shoulder. Because Aramis is writing the letter, Athos and d'Artagnan are forced to admit that they've both seen the brand, a fact that is surprising to Porthos and Aramis.

The next letter is addressed to a woman who Aramis refers to only as his cousin. His friends see through the lie and tease him, but Aramis refuses to divulge any other information. The letter itself says that Aramis recently had a concerning dream about the duke being killed. He suspects that its recipient will understand its meaning and report it to the queen.

Next, the group decides that Bazin should take the letter to Aramis's "cousin" because the two of them are already acquainted. Additionally, it is determined that Planchet will carry the letter meant to go to England. D'Artagnan tells Planchet that he must go to England and back in 16 days if he wants to receive pay for the journey. Planchet promises him that he will complete the trip in the allotted amount of time. D'Artagnan also tells Planchet that he should openly inform Lord de Winter that the duke's life is in danger. Planchet agrees to do so.

Both Planchet and Bazin go off on their respective missions and the musketeers can only wait. After eight days, Bazin returns; his mission was a success, and he has a response from Aramis's "cousin" that suggests she understood the contents of the letter. For the next eight days, the friends nervously await Planchet's return. They are worried that Milady could strike at any moment and the sooner Planchet gets back, the better. Planchet returns with not a minute to spare and hands d'Artagnan a note from Lord de Winter. The note promises d'Artagnan that Lord de Winter will take care of Milady. Athos takes the note and burns it so that there is no proof of their scheme. Exhausted, everyone goes to bed. They are relieved to know that the situation is under control for the time being.

*The musketeers need to be careful with how they compose the letters because of what might happen if they are intercepted. They don't want to put the duke, the queen, or the entire kingdom into further danger. Additionally, d'Artagnan and Athos both admit to the other members of the group that they slept with Milady. Although they do not say this explicitly, it is implied in the fact that they've both seen her brand. Despite this admission, neither Porthos nor Aramis suspects that Milady is Athos's wife.*



*The musketeers tease Aramis because it is obvious to them that his "cousin" is actually his mistress. Because the letter is actually addressed to Madame de Chevreuse, Aramis assumes that she will have no problem putting his message together.*



*The musketeers' decision to give the letters to their servants shows how much trust they have in them. In particular, Planchet is given a daunting task, but one he promises to complete expeditiously. Although the musketeers have confidence in their servants, they are uncomfortable with the prospect that their futures are entirely out of their own hands.*



*As it turns out, the musketeers were right to put their trust in Planchet and Bazin. Both servants completed their task as quickly as possible, meaning that there is a good chance they have disrupted Milady and the cardinal's plans. The only mystery now is how Lord de Winter will handle Milady. Although he is d'Artagnan's ally, d'Artagnan does not know him well enough to suspect what he might have in mind for his sister-in-law.*



## CHAPTER 49

Milady is still furious because of her encounter with Athos. As quickly as she can, she makes her way to England, although she is briefly delayed by bad weather. When she arrives in England, Milady is interrogated by an officer; he is a man she does not recognize who seems to be sizing her up. When Milady gets off the ship, the man tells her that he is her escort. However, he does not say where he is escorting her to. Milady quickly realizes that she is this man's hostage.

The man takes Milady to a carriage and implores her to get in. He then takes her way out into the country, far away from her intended destination of London. At one point, Milady thinks about throwing herself from the carriage, but her driver warns her against it. No matter how much Milady speaks to her captor, she cannot manage to get any information out of him.

Eventually, the carriage comes to a castle that sits on a cliff. Milady is then removed from the carriage, taken into the castle, and thrown into a jail cell. This terrifies Milady, who still has no idea what is going on. Moments later, Lord de Winter enters the room. He tells her that this whole thing was his doing and that he brought her to his castle because the two of them need to have a talk.

## CHAPTER 50

Milady still doesn't know what is going on. She assumes it has something to do with d'Artagnan and his friends, but she doesn't understand how they could have acted so quickly. She is also surprised by Lord de Winter's resourcefulness; she always took him to be a bit of an oaf. Lord de Winter asks Milady why she came to England. In response, Milady lies and tells him that she came for his sake. Lord de Winter doesn't believe her; he always knew she was a liar and now he has d'Artagnan's letter on his side as well.

Before long, Milady realizes that d'Artagnan told Lord de Winter that she wants to kill him for his money. This scares her because she knows Lord de Winter will not let her go if this is truly the case. Sensing Milady's anxiety, Lord de Winter promises her that her stay will be a comfortable one; or, at least as comfortable as a stay can be when one is behind bars. Angry, Milady tries to hit Lord de Winter. As she does so, he grabs her arm and refers to the brand that he now knows is on her back. This, too, stuns Milady. She realizes that Lord de Winter now has the complete upper hand.

*Milady's delays mean that Planchet was able to go to England ahead of her and deliver the musketeers' letter to Lord de Winter. Of course, Milady does not know this, so she has no idea why an English officer would be after her. Evidently, Lord de Winter quickly put a plan into action and captured Milady before she could do any further damage or escape his grasp.*



*This scene creates dramatic tension as Milady is slowly taken to an unknown destination. Additionally, it provides characterization for Milady's captor, who will become an important character as the novel reaches its climax.*



*Clearly, Lord de Winter trusts d'Artagnan much more than he does his own sister-in-law. After all, a single letter led him to take such drastic measures. Evidently, the musketeers' letter confirmed much of what Lord de Winter suspected all along about Milady.*



*Milady underestimates Lord de Winter and the extent of his knowledge. After all, how could Milady know that he knows she wants him dead? This is information that he only came to possess because d'Artagnan overheard it while hiding it in Kitty's closet. On the flip side, Lord de Winter does not underestimate Milady. He knows exactly what she is capable of and takes every possible precaution to ensure that she cannot escape.*



*Although Lord de Winter despises his sister-in-law, he doesn't plan to treat her cruelly. However, he also knows that he cannot make her stay too comfortable; if he does, she will undoubtedly find a way to escape. Meanwhile, Milady starts coming to terms with the fact that she is dealing with a much more formidable adversary than she previously thought.*



Before he leaves, Lord de Winter warns Milady that her jail cell is impossible to escape from. He also lets her know that she will be guarded by John Felton, the same stoic man who transported her to the castle in the first place. Lord de Winter assures Milady that Felton is fiercely loyal and will not give into her seductive ways. Even so, he takes the time to warn Felton that Milady will lie and attempt to seduce him at any chance she gets. Felton tells Lord de Winter that he understands his task and swears to protect him at all costs. Finally, Lord de Winter leaves and Milady is left to ponder her current circumstances.

*John Felton is a real historical figure, although his historical significance will not be apparent until later. Here, he is depicted as a statuesque man who appears immune to Milady's charm. Additionally, he is fiercely loyal to Lord de Winter. Felton's personality makes Milady's circumstances seem impossible to escape.*



## CHAPTER 51

Back in France, the siege of La Rochelle is still going on. The citizens of La Rochelle are all praying for the Duke of Buckingham to come and save them. However, the cardinal has other plans. He expects that the duke will be killed any day now. However, he is starting to get concerned that it hasn't happened yet. He wonders what has happened to Milady.

*The cardinal knows that the siege will end as soon as the English aren't around to support the citizens of La Rochelle. Of course, he doesn't know that Milady has been detained by Lord de Winter and that his plan is unlikely to come to fruition.*



One day, the cardinal walks near the beach and spots the four musketeer friends. Immediately, he is suspicious of them because they are so happy. In an attempt to learn what the musketeers are talking about, the cardinal tries to sneak up on them. However, before he can get too close, Grimaud points him out to the musketeers. When the musketeers see the cardinal, they stand up and show him respect. The cardinal behaves aggressively toward the musketeers because he is angry at being seen and is convinced that they are causing trouble.

*The cardinal assumes that whatever is making the musketeers happy is likely not good for him. Although his intuition is correct, he never learns the truth because the musketeers take the proper precautions. The musketeers treat the cardinal with respect even in the face of his insults because they do not want to reveal the nature of their meeting.*



When the musketeers feign ignorance, the cardinal asks them about a letter they were reading before he arrived. Rather than show the cardinal the letter, Athos hurls an insult about the cardinal and his alleged affairs. Because he doesn't want to pick a fight with the musketeers, the cardinal decides to continue on his way, although he is furious.

*Athos realizes that the musketeers' tactic of acting polite will not work. As such, he goes the complete opposite direction and says something to the cardinal, which no one has ever said before and lived. However, because the cardinal is on his own, there is nothing he can do about it.*



Once the cardinal is gone, Athos explains to his companions that his reaction was the only way to keep the cardinal from seeing the letter other than killing him. They then return to their conversation. Apparently, the letter contains the location of Madame de Bonacieux. She is currently living in a town called Bethune. To ensure that the cardinal cannot get his hands on the letter, the musketeers make Grimaud eat it. Meanwhile, the cardinal rides away from the beach and thinks about how he could get the four musketeers to work for him one day.

*As it turns out, Athos's reaction was the only way to protect Madame de Bonacieux, who is apparently alive and doing well. Her current location suggests that she was indeed the person in the carriage who d'Artagnan rode out to meet earlier in the story. As the musketeers celebrate, the cardinal reacts in a surprising fashion. Although he is angry, his anger is not because of Athos's insult; rather, he is annoyed that the musketeers are better men than his guards.*



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## CHAPTER 52

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Throughout the early part of her first day in captivity, Milady sits and stewes in her anger. However, eventually she pulls herself together and reminds herself of how beautiful and capable she is. Immediately, she starts scheming. When she hears footsteps coming in her direction, she purposely splays herself out on an armchair to pretend as though she's fainted. When Felton comes in to give her dinner, he is not sure what to do. Instead of deciding himself, he goes and fetches Lord de Winter.

Lord de Winter comes to look at Milady's performance and immediately starts laughing. He tells Felton that this is the first of many performances he can expect out of Milady. Lord de Winter then asks Felton if he finds Milady attractive. Felton says no, which Lord de Winter likes. If Felton is not attracted to Milady, then it will be even more difficult for her to corrupt him.

After Lord de Winter leaves, Milady angrily grabs the knife that came with her dinner. She is disappointed when she learns that its edges are rounded so that it cannot be used as a weapon. As she makes this discovery, Lord de Winter reopens her cell door and exposes her actions to Felton. Apparently, Felton wanted to give Milady a real knife and Lord de Winter wanted to demonstrate why that was a bad idea. Milady feels foolish and she is angry that she's been repeatedly outwitted by Lord de Winter. However, she still thinks she will be able to turn Felton against his master. This thought gives her hope as she goes to sleep.

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## CHAPTER 53

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Milady dreams about d'Artagnan's death before she is woken up by Felton. Early in the day, Milady pretends to act sick, hoping that she'll get some sympathy from Felton. However, her ploy does not work. Later, Felton brings Milady a book used for Catholic mass. Realizing that Felton is probably a Puritan, Milady rejects the book and says that it does not reflect her religious views. She can tell that Felton is affected by her statement and thinks that she's finally found a way to win him over.

*At this point, the novel takes a sustained departure from the point of view of d'Artagnan and his friends. Instead, its focus turns to Milady and her dealings with Lord de Winter. Despite her dire circumstances, Milady never stops scheming. Although her situation seems impossible, she never gives up hope. In these chapters, Milady doesn't become a wholly sympathetic character, but she is not wholly evil, either.*



*Again, Milady underestimates Lord de Winter. Although her performance partially fools Felton, it does not come close to tricking Lord de Winter. To make matters worse for Milady, Felton claims he is not attracted to her, meaning that she will not be able to use her greatest asset (her beauty) if he is telling the truth.*



*Lord de Winter reopens the cell door to show Felton that Milady is the exact opposite of the person she pretends to be. Although Lord de Winter continues to outsmart Milady, he is only fueling the rage inside of her.*



*Milady realizes that if she cannot win Felton over by seducing him, then she can use religion instead. Although the elites in England were largely Catholic in the early 1600s, many English citizens were Puritans who were unhappy with the ruling class. Milady identifies Felton as an example of this type of person, a clever observation that she can use to her advantage.*



Later in the day, Lord de Winter visits Milady and mocks her for her supposed religious views. Felton hears this conversation but says nothing. That night, Milady audibly prays and loudly sings hymns in a sensual tone. Eventually, Felton cannot resist, and he comes to talk to Milady. He's never heard anything like Milady's voice before. Nonetheless, he tells her that she needs to be quieter the next time she wants to sing. Milady agrees to do as Felton says, knowing she is starting to win him over.

*As Lord de Winter correctly states, Milady is not a Puritan. In fact, she doesn't seem to subscribe to any religion at all. However, she knows that she needs to act the part if she has any hope of escaping Lord de Winter's castle. Apparently, despite Lord de Winter's warnings, Milady's charms are starting to work on Felton. All of the sudden, her situation is not hopeless.*



## CHAPTER 54

Now that she has his attention, Milady schemes up ways to get Felton alone. She even starts to enjoy Lord de Winter's harsh treatment of her because she knows it pits Felton against him. During her third day in the cell, Lord de Winter tells her that she only has four more days and then she's being sent to work in a penal colony. After Lord de Winter leaves, Milady drops to her knees in prayer. For a moment, she is even genuine; she is deathly afraid of ending up in a penal colony.

*Milady enjoys playing psychological games with Felton and she uses every opportunity she has to slowly win him over to her side. Despite her successes, Milady's plan hits a snag when she learns that she is on a tight timeline. She has to complete her corruption of Felton in only a few short days; otherwise, she will be forever out of reach of d'Artagnan and the Duke of Buckingham.*



Milady continues her prayers because she hears Felton approaching. When Felton reaches her, she asks him if he knows what Lord de Winter has planned for her. Felton claims that he does not. Milady implies that Lord de Winter's plans are horrific and asks Felton to bring her a knife. She promises that she only wants to use it to kill herself. Felton says he will not bring her a knife because suicide is a sin. Before their conversation can go any further, Felton is forced to leave because he hears Lord de Winter returning.

*Milady continues to play up her image as a sad and desperate woman who is facing a fate worse than death. In response, Felton is slowly beginning to let his guard down.*



That night, Lord de Winter comes to Milady and asks her what penal colony she would like to go to. In the process, Milady realizes that Lord de Winter has yet to receive a signed authorization from the Duke of Buckingham, which would allow him to send her away. Lord de Winter assures her that getting the authorization will not be a problem. Milady believes him and uses his warning as motivation to get Felton on her side. That night after dinner, Milady performs another round of loud prayers that she knows Felton hears. At one point, she even turns around and spots him looking at her through the door of her cell.

*Lord de Winter offers Milady some small amount of control over her fate in an attempt to show her an ounce of humanity that she would never give to him in return. However, Milady has a very different future in mind. Lord de Winter's visit only provides her with more motivation as she slowly moves closer to breaking Felton.*





## CHAPTER 55

The next day, when Felton goes to check on Milady, he finds her making a noose. Genuinely concerned, Felton urges her not to take her own life. Milady tells Felton that she doesn't see what other choice she has. Milady continues to tempt Felton with a secret about her that she's yet to reveal to him. He asks her to tell him about herself, but before she can, Lord de Winter comes into the cell. He looks at Felton and wonders whether Milady's managed to corrupt him after all.

Lord de Winter asks Felton what Milady was asking for and he replies honestly and says that she wants a knife. Although Lord de Winter is concerned for Felton, he tells him to stay strong for just a few more days. Meanwhile, Milady is more than pleased with her progress. Later, Felton returns and tells Milady that he wants to hear what happened to her in the past. He promises to return at midnight with a knife if she will tell him the truth. Milady agrees to the deal. She is ecstatic because she has Felton right where she wants him.

## CHAPTER 56

With only a few days left before she is sent to a penal colony, Milady realizes that she has to put every ounce of her talent into her upcoming meeting with Felton. As usual, Lord de Winter comes by to make sure that everything is up to his approval. When he is satisfied, he leaves. Several hours later, just after midnight, Felton arrives. Milady asks Felton if he brought a knife. At first, Felton protests, but then he quickly gives in and puts the knife on the table.

Now that Felton has fulfilled his side of the deal, it is time for Milady to fulfill hers. Milady starts telling Felton a story that she's made up. It is a horrible story about how she was once kidnapped, drugged, and then sexually assaulted by a man. In the story, the man claims he is in love with Milady and repeatedly asks her to marry him. However, Milady continually rejects his proposal. In response, the man grows angry and assaults her again. In an attempt to avoid being drugged, Milady stops eating the food her captor brings her. At one point, she even tries to kill him by stabbing him in the chest, but she fails because he is wearing chain mail. The whole time Milady tells her story, Felton is completely engrossed; it is clear that he believes every word.

*Milady's actions are entirely calculated. She never considers using the noose; she only wants Felton to see her with it so that he thinks her death wish is genuine. Of course, Felton falls right into her trap. However, before she can do anything too sinister, Lord de Winter arrives and cuts off any further conversation between the two of them.*



*Despite what his mind is telling him, Lord de Winter chooses to trust Felton. Unfortunately, he is wrong to do so. It appears that Felton is almost completely under Milady's spell after only a few short days.*



*Although Lord de Winter did not think it was possible, it seems Milady still managed to outfox him. Felton's willingness to bring her a knife suggests that he is no longer someone who can be trusted.*



*Milady's story is horrible, and it demonstrates how terribly she is willing to distort reality to get what she wants. By telling Felton such a terrible tale, she is corrupting his sympathy to turn him against Lord de Winter. Additionally, Milady purposely saves the name of the man who supposedly did all of these terrible things until the end of her story.*



## CHAPTER 57

Milady ends her story by telling Felton that her kidnapper branded her so that her reputation would be forever tarnished. Felton sobs at the conclusion of the story; he's fallen completely in love with Milady and demands to know who could've done such a thing. Eventually, Milady tells him that it was the Duke of Buckingham. Felton—who already doesn't like the duke because of his religious views—swears to avenge Milady.

Milady also tells Felton that Lord de Winter's brother, her former husband, had planned to kill the duke himself, but he never got a chance. Now that her story is over, Milady once again asks Felton to give her the knife. Felton will not give in. He promises that he will avenge Milady and keep her safe. He then kisses her.

Some of Lord de Winter's guards hear voices coming from Milady's cell so they decide to check up on what's been happening. The guards knock on the door and Felton opens it. At the same time, Milady runs, grabs the knife, and claims she is going to kill herself with it. At the same time, Lord de Winter comes in and tells Felton that there is no way that she will actually commit suicide. In response, Milady stabs herself, but at an angle that she knows will only graze her. However, Felton is entirely taken in by the performance and he calls for a doctor. Lord de Winter, fearing Felton has been corrupted after all, sends him to fetch a doctor.

## CHAPTER 58

Just as Lord de Winter assumed, Milady's wound is minor. Milady is satisfied with herself; she knows she's done what is necessary to win Felton over to her. However, Lord de Winter informs her that he has sent Felton away because he can no longer trust him. Additionally, Lord de Winter has nailed a piece of wood over her door so that she cannot talk to anyone outside of her cell. This doesn't bother Milady at all because it gives her more privacy.

The same night, a storm rages. At some point in the evening, Milady hears someone at her window. She gets up and finds Felton. He promises to rescue her, but she has to give him time. Over the next few hours, he files away the bars on the window and then gets Milady to crawl outside. Slowly but surely, they descend a rope ladder that Felton brought with him. During this process, Milady pretends to be less capable than she actually is because she needs to keep up the façade that she is suffering from an injury.

*To cover all of her bases, Milady even provides an excuse for the origin of her brand. Then, finally, she reveals her supposed abuser—the Duke of Buckingham. Milady knows that Felton is already prejudiced against the duke because he is a Catholic. In Felton, it appears that Milady has found the religious zealot that she promised the cardinal.*



*As it turns out, Felton was not being entirely truthful when he told Lord de Winter that he wasn't attracted to Milady. Although her beauty alone didn't win Felton over, it certainly played a role, as is evidenced by the kiss he gives her.*



*Milady's clever use of the knife ends her impressive performance and wins Felton over to her side once and for all. However, Lord de Winter's return suggests that even with Felton on her side, it might be difficult for Milady to escape.*



*Lord de Winter takes extra precautions because he knows what Milady is capable of. Even her voice is too dangerous to be heard. However, the boards on Milady's cell come at a cost because they ensure that she cannot be observed.*



*Despite all of Lord de Winter's precautions, Milady still manages to escape with the help of Felton. Lord de Winter was clever, but not clever enough. Even Felton, his most loyal soldier, could not withstand Milady's intelligence and beauty. Of course, just because she's out of her cell, Milady is not in the clear yet, which is why she keeps up her performance.*



Eventually, Milady and Felton reach the ground. Felton then takes Milady to a boat he chartered to bring him to Portsmouth. He tells Milady that when he gets to Portsmouth, he plans to kill the Duke of Buckingham. Milady is overjoyed; not only has she escaped, but she also managed to find someone to kill the duke after all. On the way to Portsmouth, Milady realizes that Felton needs no further encouragement. He is already more than prepared to kill the duke. If anything, Milady wonders if he is too eager. Before Felton leaves their boat, he tells Milady to wait for him until 10 a.m. If he is not back by that time, Milady is free to leave without him. Externally, Milady swears that she won't leave without him, but internally she knows that she'll do whatever it takes to save her own skin.

## CHAPTER 59

After arriving in Portsmouth, Felton heads to the palace to find the Duke of Buckingham. At this point, he's worked himself up into a frenzy and is nearly ready to kill the duke on sight. When Felton arrives at the palace, he sees another man who also demands to see the duke. However, because the guard at the palace already knows Felton, he gives him preferential treatment and allows him to go first.

When Felton sees the duke, he gives him the order that is meant to exile Milady to a penal colony. Felton doesn't care about the order itself; he only wants to see if the duke will actually sign it. Of course, the duke moves to sign it right away. In response, Felton begins arguing with the duke and asking him how he could sign such an order given what he's done to Milady in the past. Confused, the duke tells Felton to leave and place himself under arrest. However, by this point, it is too late. Felton pulls out a knife and stabs the duke. The duke cries for help and many people rush to his aid, including Lord de Winter, who realizes immediately what's happened.

As the duke is dying, Lord de Winter apologizes to him for his grave error. Once he realized that Felton and Milady had escaped, he rushed to the duke as quickly as he could. However, he was too late. Before the duke dies, he asks a messenger to read him a letter that just arrived from the queen. The letter warns the duke to be careful because his life is likely in danger. Additionally, it calls upon him to end the war. As he dies, the duke asks that all of the queen's things be sent back to her, along with the knife that killed him.

*Milady's escape from Lord de Winter's castle is especially impressive because she manages to kill two birds with one stone. Not only does she regain her freedom, but she also found someone to assassinate the duke as well. Even better, she managed to stick to roughly the same time frame that the cardinal initially expected. She is a diabolical force whose actions are impressive, even if they are immoral. Her actions are also a great example of the use of seduction as a weapon.*



*Ironically, because Felton is Lord de Winter's man, he gets special treatment; after all, Lord de Winter is one of the duke's best friends and he has no reason to suspect that Felton has come to hurt him.*



*Felton gives the order to the duke as a test. He assumes that if the duke signs it, then he is guilty of all of the crimes Milady has accused him of. Of course, the duke has no idea that he is being tested and so he immediately fails. Even worse, no one is around to help the duke, which means he cannot do anything to prevent Felton's sudden attack. Although the historical circumstances of this attack are different than what is presented in the novel, John Felton is the name of the real person who killed the Duke of Buckingham.*



*There is dark irony present as the duke takes his final breath. If he had just made Felton wait and let the other messenger in instead, the duke's life could have spared. Instead, he spends his final moments realizing that Queen Anne was right and that his life could have been spared if the two of them had just stayed away from one another.*



The duke dies and no one knows what to do. Lord de Winter angrily insults Felton for his foolishness. Felton tells Lord de Winter that he killed the duke as an act of revenge for Milady. Lord de Winter tells Felton that he is a fool. The next moment, all of Felton's conviction fades away as he spots Milady sailing away without him an hour and a half before they were supposed to leave. Felton is crushed and Lord de Winter can only shake his head.

*As Milady sails away, Felton realizes that he's fallen into the trap that Lord de Winter warned him about. Milady's early departure signals that she never cared for Felton and knowingly sent him to his death.*



## CHAPTER 60

Sick of taking part in the siege, King Louis XIII decides to return to Paris. When he leaves, he brings a group of musketeers with him, including d'Artagnan, Athos, Aramis, and Porthos. During the return to Paris, Aramis gets a letter from his contact that will allow them to get Madame Bonacieux from her convent. This is very exciting for all four of the musketeers, as it is finally a piece of good news.

*Finally, the novel's perspective returns to its protagonists. Although the musketeers failed to protect the duke, they are still in a good mood because d'Artagnan is on the brink of finally being reunited with his love.*



After returning to Paris, the musketeers take a leave of absence so they can go and find Madame Bonacieux. Just as d'Artagnan is finally feeling good, he sees Rochefort ride by. This scares d'Artagnan; wherever Rochefort is, bad luck is sure to follow. He tries to chase after Rochefort, but his friends hold him back. Moments later, a man runs out of a nearby inn and begins calling for Rochefort. Evidently, the man has found a note that Rochefort dropped and wants to give it back to him. Knowing that Rochefort is long gone, d'Artagnan pays the man for the note, which reads "Armentières." D'Artagnan recognizes the handwriting as Milady's and worries about what it could mean. Not wanting to waste any more time, the musketeers depart for Bethune to find Madame Bonacieux.

*As d'Artagnan suggests, Rochefort's presence is never a good sign. At this point, Rochefort's note is meaningless. However, in the following chapter, the novel will go back in time and explain its significance. Whatever the note means, d'Artagnan knows it cannot be good because the handwriting signals that Milady is alive and likely looking to get revenge.*



## CHAPTER 61

Milady arrives at the convent in Béthune where she meets an abbess who welcomes her warmly. Milady is kind to the abbess and tells her lots of stories about the outside world. Clearly, the abbess likes Milady's stories, and so she continues to tell them. In particular, Milady is trying to gauge whether or not the woman likes the cardinal. Eventually, Milady figures out that the woman doesn't like the cardinal, and so she uses that fact to her advantage. She tells the abbess that she is actually being hunted by the cardinal and needs somewhere safe to hide. The abbess responds by telling her that she is welcome to stay at the convent; after all, they are already hiding another woman from the cardinal.

*Milady is a chameleon who blends into her environment in order to survive. She immediately develops a psychological profile of the abbess and uses her to get information. When the abbess mentions there is another woman hiding at the convent, the reader's mind should go directly to Madame Bonacieux, even though Milady does not yet know that she's stumbled upon the location of d'Artagnan's lover.*



Milady asks for the identity of the other woman, but the abbess doesn't give a name. She simply tells her that the other woman will come and talk to her after she gets some rest. Milady does as she is told and then awakens to find Madame Bonacieux at the foot of her bed. Madame Bonacieux introduces herself to Milady and then vaguely explains her circumstances. She also mentions that she doesn't plan to be in the convent for much longer. Additionally, when she gets out, she promises to put in a good word to the queen on Milady's behalf.

When Madame Bonacieux realizes that Milady has connections in Paris, she starts asking her about who she knows. Among other names, Milady lists d'Artagnan. Upon hearing the name of her beloved, Madame Bonacieux grows jealous and asks Milady if she was ever d'Artagnan's mistress. Milady says that she wasn't but admits to being his friend. Ultimately, Madame Bonacieux is happy to have Milady around because of their shared experience and shared friends. Meanwhile, Milady is happy to have found Madame Bonacieux because now she can finally get revenge on d'Artagnan.

Madame Bonacieux tells Milady that she thinks d'Artagnan and his friends will be coming soon. This worries Milady; she doesn't want to get caught before she can carry out her revenge plan and protect herself. While the women are talking, they hear horses coming their way. They look out the window to see who is coming. Milady sees that it is Rochefort and gets excited.

## CHAPTER 62

Milady goes outside to speak with Rochefort. There, she tells him that Madame Bonacieux is in the convent. Additionally, she tells him that d'Artagnan and the other musketeers are on their way to rescue her. Milady is sick of d'Artagnan and his friends and doesn't understand why the cardinal hasn't sent them to the Bastille by now. Together, Rochefort and Milady scheme. Milady plans to use the next 24 hours to handle Madame Bonacieux. In the meantime, she wants Rochefort to send her a carriage that she can use to escape. After, they plan to meet up at Armentières. Because Rochefort isn't familiar with the town, he decides to write its name down on a slip of paper.

*This section of the chapter is built around dramatic irony; that is, the reader knows that Madame Bonacieux is the woman Milady is looking for, but Milady has yet to figure that out for herself. However, given Milady's capacity to quickly get information out of almost anybody, especially someone who doesn't suspect her of malice, Madame Bonacieux's relationship to d'Artagnan is sure to come out sooner or later.*



*Unwittingly, Madame Bonacieux gives herself away. Milady wants to hurt d'Artagnan just as badly as he hurt her, and Madame Bonacieux is the perfect opportunity. Of course, Milady doesn't share the details of her relationship with d'Artagnan because she wants to keep Madame Bonacieux on her good side and make sure her identity stays a secret.*



*Just like her stay with Lord de Winter, Milady only has a limited amount of time to deal with Madame Bonacieux. Luckily for her, the horses she hears belong to Rochefort rather than the musketeers, allowing her more time to think and scheme.*



*This chapter reveals that Milady's arrival at the convent occurs prior to d'Artagnan's spotting of Rochefort. After all, Rochefort already possessed the note that said "Armentières" when d'Artagnan saw him. This chapter is also notable because it is the only extended look at the relationship between Rochefort and Milady. Evidently, the two are comfortable with one another, but their relationship is not romantic in nature.*





## CHAPTER 63

After Rochefort leaves, Madame Bonacieux returns to Milady's room to speak with her. Milady tells Madame Bonacieux that Rochefort is actually Milady's brother who is only pretending to work on behalf of the cardinal. She also tells Madame Bonacieux that the letter she received from d'Artagnan is fake; he is not actually on his way, she says. Milady claims to have received this information from her brother. This information is worrying to Madame Bonacieux.

Pretending to be helpful, Milady tells Madame Bonacieux that she should leave along with her when her carriage arrives. Afraid and unsure of what to think, Madame Bonacieux agrees to go along with Milady's plan. However, before Milady can carry out her plot, d'Artagnan and his friends arrive. Milady sees them first and tells Madame Bonacieux that they need to escape immediately because the cardinal's guards are outside. This frightens Madame Bonacieux, who freezes up and doesn't know what to do. In a last-ditch effort, Milady takes some poison, puts it in Madame Bonacieux's glass, and tells her to drink it so that she will have the energy to escape. Not realizing what is in the glass, Madame Bonacieux drinks it without a second thought.

D'Artagnan walks through the door and for a moment he is reunited with his love. However, after a few moments, Madame Bonacieux becomes weary, and she falls to the floor. She tells d'Artagnan and his friends about a woman she recently met who just left. To his horror, d'Artagnan comprehends what's happened and knows that Madame Bonacieux is going to die. Moments later, his worst fear comes true.

Shortly after Madame Bonacieux's death, Lord de Winter arrives on the scene. They explain to him what happened and together all five men swear to track Milady down and seek vengeance. Although everyone agrees that they should go after Milady, Athos urges everyone to wait until the next day so that preparations can be made. No one is exactly sure what Athos means, but it is clear that he has something in mind.

*The story Milady tells Madame Bonacieux is similar to the one she told Felton; that is, it is completely fake. Milady knows Madame Bonacieux will believe her because she has no reason not to. Indeed, Madame Bonacieux is completely fooled and immediately put under Milady's spell.*



*Because the musketeers ruin Milady's plan, she has to think on the fly. Rather than overcomplicate the matter, Milady returns to one of her favorite methods of murder: poison. Because Madame Bonacieux trusts Milady, she drinks the poison willingly, ensuring that her reunion with d'Artagnan will not be a happy one.*



*Milady turns d'Artagnan's moment of triumph into a scene of horror. In this pivotal moment, the novel reveals that it is not a typical adventure story; the heroes do not prevail, nor are they granted a happy ending. Instead, d'Artagnan is left to examine the failures that led to death of his beloved.*



*Lord de Winter's sudden arrival at the convent begins the novel's steady rise toward its climax. Now that Madame Bonacieux is dead, all that is left is for the musketeers to take revenge.*



## CHAPTER 64

Athos finds a map and sends each of the musketeers' servants down a different road in search of Milady. While the servants complete their search, Athos grabs his sword and then goes looking for a particular house. Eventually he finds the house he is looking for. Inside is a man whom Athos asks to come along on the musketeers' mission. At first, the man refuses, but ultimately assents after Athos threatens violence. When Athos returns to the convent, Planchet tells him that he's found Milady in Armentières. Everyone prepares to depart for Armentières. However, just before they are ready to leave, Athos goes and gets the man he talked to previously, who is now wearing a red cloak. No one except Athos seems to know who the man is.

*Here, the novel approaches its endgame. Many of the key players come together for one final showdown against Milady, who has gone to Armentières to meet Rochefort. The man in the red cloak is obviously someone of significance, but Athos decides to keep the others in the dark as to his identity. However, his red cloak is an overt symbol of death and vengeance, suggesting that he will have something to do with Milady's death if it does, in fact, come to pass.*



## CHAPTER 65

Together, the group rides off in search of Milady. It is a stormy night, which makes travel more difficult than it would be otherwise. At several points, the musketeers try to engage Athos's mystery man in conversation. However, he remains stoic. Eventually the group reaches the inn where Milady was last spotted. Grimaud, who's been keeping an eye on Milady, tells the musketeers that she is no longer there. Grimaud then leads the musketeers to Milady's current position. Milady is in a small house by herself. No one else is around except the musketeers, their servants, Lord de Winter, and the man in red.

*Here, the novel once again takes on a Gothic tone. The storm clouds suggest something ominous is about to happen and the presence of the man in red implies that a mystery will soon be solved. Although she is resourceful, Milady is surrounded on all sides, and to make matters worse, she doesn't even know it. This time, it doesn't look like she'll be able to escape.*



Athos peers in the window of the house and spots Milady. Milady sees Athos and screams. Before she can escape, Athos smashes the window of the house and makes his way into the room. Milady tries to escape out the door, but instead she comes face to face with d'Artagnan's gun. Athos tells everyone to lower their weapons and they do. Everyone else, except the servants, enter the house to bear witness to what is about to happen.

*This scene is effective because it makes Milady a sympathetic character even after everything she's done. Her terror is genuine as she comes face to face with all of the people who she's wronged, some of whom have also wronged her.*



Together, the musketeers hold a trial for Milady. Everyone goes around and lists the crimes Milady has committed. Even Athos talks about his history with Milady and for the first time Porthos and Aramis learn the truth about their friend's past. Even the man in the red cloak has been wronged by Milady. As it turns out, the man in the red cloak is the brother of a priest who Milady corrupted. Together, Milady and the priest stole sacred objects from a church. Although the priest ended up in jail, Milady managed to avoid trouble by marrying Athos. Ashamed of himself and his actions, the priest took his own life. Additionally, the man in the red cloak acts as the town's executioner. After the trial is over, the men go around and state their belief that Milady deserves the death penalty.

*Finally, the truth comes out and all of the novel's primary characters learn the full extent of Milady's transgressions. As it turns out, she is responsible for many deaths, none of which she seems to feel bad about. In addition to his history with Milady, the executioner is present because he is the one who will carry out Milady's death sentence.*



## CHAPTER 66

The musketeers' servants drag Milady to the spot where she will be executed. On her way there, Milady begs for her life and promises to handsomely reward the servants if they will set her free. The musketeers make sure to rotate which servants are in charge of dragging Milady so that she doesn't have time to corrupt them. Eventually, the group comes to a river. Here, Milady's hands and feet are bound and she is placed in a boat. Throughout this entire process Milady mocks her captors and pleads for her life. At one point, d'Artagnan considers letting her go free, but Athos quickly steps in and shuts that idea down.

Once she is in the boat, d'Artagnan, Athos, and Lord De Winter all offer her their respective pardons. The executioner gets in the boat and takes it across to the other side of the river. The musketeers all get on their knees and pray. When Milady reaches the other side of the river she tries to run away, as she's managed to undo the bind on her feet. However, she quickly slips and falls. The executioner quickly catches up to her and chops off her head. He then throws her corpse in the river. Several days later, the musketeers end up back in Paris talking to M. de Tréville. When M. de Tréville asks if they enjoyed their leave, only Athos is able to speak up and say that he did.

## CHAPTER 67

The siege of La Rochelle ends, and the king begrudgingly returns to La Rochelle after his long tenure in Paris. Though he doesn't want to leave Paris, he is happy that the duke is dead, and he brags about it to the queen. While escorting the king, the musketeers are depressed because of recent events. While on their journey, the four friends stop at an inn where d'Artagnan spots Rochefort. For once, Rochefort is happy to see d'Artagnan because he's come to arrest him in the name of the cardinal.

Rather than let their friend be arrested, the musketeers swear on their honor that they will make sure d'Artagnan goes to the cardinal as soon as he can. Realizing he will have a fight on his hands if he tries to protest, Rochefort gives in to these demands. Additionally, Rochefort is happy with the agreement because he can now continue with an errand of his own. He expresses this fact to the musketeers who warn him that there is no use going after Milady. This warning is concerning to Rochefort, who asks what happened. Athos tells him that he will soon find out.

*This chapter is a difficult one to stomach, both for the characters and the reader. Although Milady is evil, her death is a gruesome scene that even her executioners do not want to go through with. Undoubtedly, Milady's feminine beauty contributes to the tragedy of the scene in the eyes of the characters. They have a difficult time seeing through her outer layer to the evil that hides within her.*



*Milady fights until her last breath, but even she cannot escape imminent death. In just a few moments, the life of a woman who brought about great suffering is ended. Even so, the musketeers do not feel triumphant. In a moment of dark humor, only Athos admits to enjoying Milady's death. Athos's reaction suggests that there is more to his relationship with Milady than what he told d'Artagnan. However, the reader never finds out for sure if this is the case.*



*Finally, the siege ends because the English are no longer supporting La Rochelle after the Duke of Buckingham's death. As the novel comes to a close, the musketeers struggle to find happiness. They failed nearly all of their primary objectives and even Milady's death didn't bring them closure. To make matters worse, it looks like Rochefort is about to get the last laugh over d'Artagnan.*



*Despite their sadness, d'Artagnan and the musketeers still have one another, which makes their position better than it would be otherwise. At the very least, d'Artagnan gets one minor victory over Rochefort; Milady is dead and there is nothing he can do about it.*



Eventually, d'Artagnan and his friends cross paths with the cardinal in Surgères. When he sees him, the cardinal asks d'Artagnan to come to him and then tells him that he is under arrest. D'Artagnan responds that he is not guilty of any crimes. As proof, he gives the cardinal the letter that the cardinal initially gave to Milady, which states that any crimes committed by the person who holds the letter are committed in the name of the cardinal. Additionally, d'Artagnan tells the cardinal the truth about Milady. The cardinal takes the letter from d'Artagnan and burns it.

However, the cardinal decides to let d'Artagnan go free. He is impressed with d'Artagnan's resourcefulness and thinks he could be a valuable ally in the future. Additionally, he is somewhat relieved to be rid of Milady because she is so unpredictable and untrustworthy. Instead of punishing d'Artagnan, the cardinal promotes him to lieutenant; or, at least, he gives him a blank paper promoting someone to lieutenant—d'Artagnan is welcome to write in any name he would like. Next the cardinal calls Rochefort over and makes him settle his differences with d'Artagnan. The two act appropriately so that the cardinal will be pleased, although clearly a rivalry still exists between them. As the two men walk away from the cardinal, they promise to duel one another at some point in the future.

The same night, d'Artagnan goes around to each of his friends and offers them the promotion. He feels that they all deserve it more than him. However, each one of them rejects it and insists that d'Artagnan take the promotion instead. Eventually, d'Artagnan returns to Athos, who writes d'Artagnan's name in the blank, and he officially becomes a lieutenant of the musketeers. D'Artagnan worries about what will become of their group and Athos promises him that all will be well in the long run.

## EPILOGUE

After a year-long siege, La Rochelle surrenders on October 28th, 1628. When the siege ends, the king returns to Paris and D'Artagnan accepts his promotion in the musketeers. One year later, Porthos leaves the musketeers, marries Madame Coquenard, and finally gets his hand on her strongbox, which contains a great sum of money. Meanwhile, Aramis leaves the musketeers to become a monk and Bazin becomes a lay brother. Athos continues on as a musketeer until 1633, only retiring after receiving an inheritance.

*The cardinal's letter is the last card d'Artagnan has to play against Richelieu. However, perhaps foolishly, he hands it over to the cardinal who can do whatever he wants with it. When the cardinal burns the letter, it seems that all hope is lost for d'Artagnan.*



*Unlike Milady, the cardinal is not a purely evil or vindictive character. He respects d'Artagnan and his friends for what they've done, especially since they didn't end up ruining his plans anyway. At least for now, d'Artagnan appears to have settled his differences with the cardinal and Rochefort, although their alliance is uneasy.*



*D'Artagnan is disheartened to find that no one wants to take the promotion. He doesn't consider himself worthy; if anything, he feels like a failure. This final scene is indicative of the tone for the end of the novel; although its plot threads are resolved, its characters remain troubled.*



*The novel's epilogue quickly moves around to all of the major players in the novel and explains their circumstances in the years following the main narrative's conclusion. Although they remain friends, the musketeers slowly disband as each of the members move on to different stages of their life. By 1633, only d'Artagnan remains in the service of the king.*



D'Artagnan and Rochefort go on to duel one another three times, though both men are always left standing at the end. Eventually, they become genuine friends and Rochefort even makes Planchet a sergeant in the guards. Meanwhile, Monsieur Bonacieux never figures out what happened to his wife, nor does he plan to. One day, he writes to the cardinal to remind him of their friendship. The next day, he is invited to the Louvre, but never returns.

*Surprisingly, d'Artagnan and Rochefort are eventually able to let go of the past and become friends. Additionally, despite its somber closing chapters, the novel does end on a comical note, as Monsieur Bonacieux finally gets the punishment he deserves.*







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