

The Three Musketeers

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THE THREE MUSKETEERS

OPEN ON:

1 EXT. GASCONY - DAWN 1

Dawn. A verdant field in Gascony. BIRDS CALL from tree-tops. The WIND RUSTLES through green leaves. A fox darts into a thick hedge. And last, anti-pastoral, out of place -- the sound of CLASHING STEEL.

SUPERIMPOSE: France, 1625.

Suddenly, two young men burst INTO VIEW, sword points cutting brilliant arcs through the morning air. The first is GIRARD, bearded, nearly thirty, a man in every facet. The second, D'ARTAGNAN. Younger in appearance and attitude. Exuberant, handsome. And at just this moment, bounding over a low stone wall with a boisterous cry.

They battle across an expanse of turf thick with dew. Girard is the more polished combatant. But d'Artagnan is nearly a force of nature. He whips his sword through the air with wild-hearted abandon. He tumbles and somersaults. This is fun.

Girard and d'Artagnan cross the field, pass over a wooden fence, struggle toward a stable and hayloft. As they fight, both men utilize a variety of props. Handfuls of hay, a wooden spar, quick kicks from heavy boots. Anything goes as the swords cut through the air. D'Artagnan, gaining increasing advantage, forces Girard up against a peaceful country manor. Girard, seemingly cornered, executes a gymnastic flip onto the roof, fights from this high angle. D'Artagnan merely smiles... and follows.

2 ANGLE ON ROOFTOP 2

Seen briefly in silhouette against the rising sun, Girard and d'Artagnan scramble up the v-shaped rooftop, pause to exchange swipes at the peak, then slide down the other side, attacking, defending, as they go.

3 INCLUDE INTERIOR 3

Inside the manor house, a HANDSOME WOMAN of forty glances up from her writing table, hears FOOTSTEPS on the roof. She reacts -- curious, not afraid -- and steps to an open window. As if to follow the footsteps to the other side.

Girard leaps to the ground first -- landing in an enclosure filled with SQUAWKING GEESE. D'Artagnan flies after. The geese scatter, d'Artagnan -- whose wild progress frequently resembles that of a young colt -- stumbles briefly. Girard seeks advantage, thrusts his sword toward the young man's heart. But d'Artagnan parries the blow with a heavy gloved hand, rolls over the offending goose -- glances deadpan apology -- and rises to fight again.

The epic battle continues. Girard's modest success devolves into desperate flight. D'Artagnan's seemingly endless reserves are wearing him down. Then, at the last possible moment, Girard spies escape: a slow-moving HAYCART RUIMBLING up the country road. He runs toward the cart, leaps upon it, turns back to d'Artagnan with a confident smirk -- an expression that vanishes when the young Gascon executes a nearly impossible leap to join him.

And still they battle, the clash of swords a kind of music by now, the men, their exuberance, the bright morning all combined into a dazzlingly heroic display. Just then: The haycart crosses a wooden plank bridge. Girard backs from d'Artagnan's sword, weak from exhaustion, he stumbles. D'Artagnan has his man and he knows it. He prepares one last blow --

-- And the haycart shifts, deposits both men over the side and down to the small muddy creek below. A comical antidote to all this glorious swordplay.

Girard lands flat on his back, stunned, his sword out of reach. D'Artagnan lands similarly, but recovers with grace, or rather, as much grace as the muddy situation will allow. He rolls toward Girard, sword in hand, and lightly places the sharp gleaming tip against his adam's apple.

A long beat. Then a surprise. Girard begins to laugh, long and loud. D'Artagnan responds with a charmed smile.

D'ARTAGNAN

Had enough?

GIRARD

(breathless
deadpan)

I believe now would be a good time to end your, uhm, formal training. Well done.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

D'ARTAGNAN

Thank you, sir.

D'Artagnan leaps to his feet, races off without another word. Girard struggles upward, peers at the shape of his clothing -- cut to ribbons, muddy and soaked.

GIRARD

And god have mercy on whomever
you meet next.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. GASCONY - HANDSOME WOMAN'S POV - DAY

6

D'Artagnan races across the green fields, triumphant.

7 ANOTHER ANGLE

7

She stands at the open window, watches his coltish high steps with love. Sadness too.

CUT TO:

8 INT. D'ARTAGNAN'S HOME - DAY

8

D'Artagnan steps through the country manor, calls out:

D'ARTAGNAN

Mother...?

But he does not see her. D'Artagnan continues, chattering proudly as he goes.

D'ARTAGNAN

Did you see us? You heard us,
I'll bet. Girard finally
surrendered a compliment...
though I almost had to kill him
to get it... Mother...?

D'Artagnan comes upon an open door, a small room beyond. He pauses, then steps inside.

9 INCLUDE FATHER'S STUDY

9

A Spartan interior. Heraldic emblems upon the wall, souvenirs from battles won and lost.

(CONTINUED)

A piece of parchment, on it the words: "All For One, and One For All." And, in a place of honor, a worn blue and gold tunic. Below it, the Handsome Woman, d'Artagnan's mother, kneels at an open chest. She turns back to him.

MOTHER (HANDSOME WOMAN)

Sit down.

D'ARTAGNAN

Didn't you hear me? Girard --

MOTHER

Sit.

D'Artagnan sighs, sits in a large wooden chair. A beat. His mother speaks quietly, eyes turned back to the open chest.

MOTHER

Your father was a proud man. And he had a right to be. I never knew one as brave or as kind. He knew that his strength was a gift to be given in the service of honor. That is why he dedicated his life to his country and his King. That is why he gave his life, for both.

She reaches into the chest, carefully extracts a beautiful saber.

MOTHER

I watched you this morning and saw someone I knew. You have your father's heart, his will to fight, his courage. But these gifts have no value unless they are given.

She rises, holds the sword out to him.

MOTHER

It's time for you find your fortune with men as brave and as bold as you are. In Paris. With the King's Musketeers.

(re: sword)

You'll need this.

D'ARTAGNAN

(quiet, moved)

Father's sword.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

MOTHER

Forged in the Crusades, handed
from generation to generation.

D'ARTAGNAN

And now to me.

D'Artagnan can't help it, his eager reply leavens the nobility of the moment with warm humor, youthful innocence. His mother smiles as she repeats.

MOTHER

Yes, son. And now to you.

With that, she holds out the beautiful saber. D'Artagnan takes it firmly into his hands.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. GASCONY - DAY

10

A huge and beautiful field appropriate to the moment. Mother and son stand in the vast expanse. D'Artagnan holds a restless horse by the reins, his traveling satchel attached to the saddle.

MOTHER

I'm not your mother now. I'm speaking for your father. And this is what he would have told you. Never forget the code of the d'Artagnans. It is your special heritage.

(beat)

Always seek out adventure...

D'ARTAGNAN

I will.

MOTHER

Never run from a fight...

D'ARTAGNAN

I won't.

MOTHER

Never submit to insults. Except from the King.

D'ARTAGNAN

Never.

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER

And be wary of Cardinal Richelieu
for he rules France through the
King.

A bittersweet moment. D'Artagnan posed before his first
great adventure. But not completely certain that he
wishes to leave home.

D'ARTAGNAN

Mother. Maybe I should wait.
Until after harvest.

D'Artagnan's mother smiles, understands. And speaks
gently to urge him forward.

MOTHER

You've heard that every man in
the Musketeers is on the run from
someone or something?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes. But what am I running from?

MOGHER

(gentle humor)

A shrew of a mother, and a drafty
old house. Now go.

And in this fashion, she releases him. D'Artagnan sweeps
his Mother into an embrace, now turns, heroic, and leaps
into the saddle. The horse reacts with a start, skitters
in a half-circle. D'Artagnan struggles to gain control,
finally brings the horse to rein. He manages a charmed
grin. His mother smiles, scolds:

MOTHER

And for heaven's sake, practice
your horsemanship.

D'ARTAGNAN

Horsemanship. Got it.

D'Artagnan digs his heels into the horse's flanks, shoots
off across bright green fields. His Mother shields her
eyes from the sun, feels a gathering of tears, and
watches him ride into the distance.

D'Artagnan's flight toward a new world.

DISSOLVE TO:

12 EMBLEM OF KING'S MUSKETEERS 12

It FILLS the SCREEN, serves as background for the MAIN TITLES. As the FINAL CREDIT APPEARS, and the MUSIC ENDS, the blade of a sword ENTERS FRAME. It slides beneath the emblem, pries it off the wall. The emblem falls to the floor with an undignified thud. A fire blazes in a huge hearth behind it.

13 INCLUDE MUSKETEERS' HEADQUARTERS 13

A room in the Musketeers Headquarters. The fallen emblem is retrieved by JUSSAC, an officer who wears the bright red tunic of the Cardinal's Guards.

JUSSAC

What should I do with this?

Jussac offers the emblem to a tall, elegant wraith in black finery, a patch covers one eye. This is the COUNT DE ROCHEFORT, Richelieu's right hand, one of the deadliest swordsmen in all of France.

ROCHEFORT

Throw it on the fire with everything else.

JUSSAC

But this is the emblem of the Musketeers...

ROCHEFORT

The Musketeers no longer exist.
Or haven't you heard?
(cold command)
Throw it on the fire.

Jussac hastily adds the emblem to the fiery blaze, it is instantly consumed. Rochefort watches it burn, then walks to a balcony overlooking a vast courtyard.

14 INCLUDE COURTYARD 14

Grim, funereal silence as a hundred Musketeers remove their blue and gold tunics, drop them into a pile that already contains their swords and muskets. The Musketeers remain stoic throughout, unwilling to reveal the depth of their despair. The latter is supervised by the Cardinal's Guards, who view their hated enemies' plight with satisfaction. This is a sad day for the Musketeers, the end of an era.

MONSIEUR DE TREVILLE forces a salute toward the captain of the Cardinal's Guards, hands over his own musket.

(CONTINUED)

Treville is the respected leader of the Musketeers. This is the saddest moment of all.

Rochefort watches from above, a cruel smile twists his lips. He steps to the railing, addresses the men below.

ROCHEFORT

Musketeers...

A hundred faces turn upward to regard him. And on each the same expression -- absolute loathing for the man in black. Rochefort is not intimidated by this sea of contempt. He revels in it.

ROCHEFORT

By joint edict of His Majesty King Louis XIII and His Eminence Cardinal Richelieu, the Musketeers are officially disbanded. In preparation for the coming war with England, your ranks and commissions are hereby transferred to the Infantry. You will be contacted and told where to report. Until that time, you are instructed to return to your homes.

DE TREVILLE

(shouting to
Rochefort)

And who will protect the King?

ROCHEFORT

The Cardinal's Guards are more than capable of assuming that... responsibility.

Muttered curses and dissent throughout. Rochefort raises his voice to be heard:

ROCHEFORT

You are hereby ordered to disperse. Should even one of you resist... the entire corps will be arrested and imprisoned.

(with pleasure
and disdain)

'All for one, and one for all.'

As Rochefort intended, the Musketeers explode. But before they can attack the Guards, de Treville's commanding voice calls out above the clamor.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

DE TREVILLE

Musketeers!

And with that, the Musketeers freeze. Their eyes go to de Treville. There is a moment of silence as de Treville chooses his words carefully. Even in defeat, de Treville is stoic.

DE TREVILLE

Go to your homes. Wait. Our day will come again.

De Treville shoots a defiant look at Rochefort who smiles in a patronizing manner. Then, de Treville leads his Musketeers out of the courtyard.

15 ROCHEFORT

15

He returns to the adjoining room where Jussac stands by. Rochefort has enjoyed himself immensely. He goes to a mirror and preens, adjusting his eye patch to a more rakish angle. That's when he catches a glimpse of something behind him. Something red. Rochefort turns.

a tall, powerfully built MAN stands in the shadows of the room, a spectre in red.

ROCHEFORT

Your Eminence.

Rochefort and Jussac instantly fall to their knees.

ARMAND DU PLEISS THE CARDINAL RICHELIEU steps out of the darkness and into the light, his long crimson robes swirling about him like clouds of blood. His face is long, shrewd and intelligent. His eyes are penetrating. He smiles his crocodile smile.

Richelieu observes a duty roster on one of the walls. It contains the names of all the Musketeers, past and present.

RICHELIEU

Have they all been accounted for?

ROCHEFORT

(hedging)

All but... three.

On Richelieu's face, a flicker of irritation.

RICHELIEU

Three?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

JUSSAC

(speaking up)

I sent a patrol to find them but
it hasn't returned yet.

RICHELIEU

I want those Musketeers, not
excuses. Bring them in at once.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. BOULEVARD OF CRIME - DAY

16

Jussac leads a regiment of the Cardinal's Guards down Paris' most colorful and notorious street. They react to SHOUTING and VIOLENT NOISES coming from a tavern ahead. The one called... The Dead Rat.

The tavern door flies open, and two of the Cardinal's Guards are flung into the street, bruised and bloody. Just then: A window on the second floor bursts open, and a big Musketeer dangles a struggling Guard by his feet, threatening to drop him into the street. The Musketeer, a man of enormous appetites -- wine, women, song -- is called PORTHOS. Jussac shouts:

JUSSAC

Release that man!!

Happy to comply, Porthos lets go of the Guard who plunges to the street with a dull thud. Then, with a wink and a piratical grin, Porthos ducks inside. Jussac darkens, signals his men, and they rush toward the tavern.

17 INT. TAVERN

17

Jussac and his company burst in and discover the room in a shambles, the aftermath of a violent fight. But for now, all is calm.

A group of the Cardinal's Guards is seated around a big table littered with flagons and bottles. On the floor around them are their swords and rifles. It appears the Guards are celebrating a victory. But wait. There's something wrong with this picture. On closer inspection, we see that the Guards have been stripped to their underclothes and tied to their chairs with ropes. They are all bruised and bloody. Some are unconscious.

Presiding over the "celebration" are two Musketeers. They sit at the head of the table, relaxing with their boots up.

(CONTINUED)

One of them casually cleans his sword with a lace handkerchief. He is ARAMIS, the most handsome and dashing of the Musketeers -- a poet and idealist -- a gentleman of great personal charm and style.

His companion is ATHOS, the Musketeers' deadliest and most charismatic member -- also its most mysterious and tortured. Athos is the unofficial leader of the Three Musketeers, their planner and strategist. At the moment, he's sewing up a nasty gash on his right arm.

JUSSAC

(approaching)

What is this?

Athos greets him with a dark smile.

ATHOS

A private party. Go away.

ARAMIS

Athos -- is that any way to greet our guests?

Aramis leaps to his feet and bows graciously. He is the epitome of politeness.

ARAMIS

Don't be shy, gentlemen. Come in. Your friends have been expecting you.

Jussac is not amused.

JUSSAC

Your presence is requested at Musketeer Headquarters by Captain Rochefort.

Athos and Aramis exchange looks.

ATHOS

The Cyclops is a Captain? He must've made a pact with the Devil.

ARAMIS

Or the Cardinal.

ATHOS

What's the difference?

(CONTINUED)

ARAMIS
(with an edge
of contempt)
The Devil is more ethical than
the Cardinal.

Jussac takes a step forward, fingering his saber.

JUSSAC
You're instructed to come with
me and surrender your tunics.

With a sweeping gesture, Athos indicates the bloody
Guards around him.

ATHOS
These gentlemen made a similar
request.

JUSSAC
Are you refusing to come
peaceably?

ATHOS
Probably. But I'll leave it up
to my companions. Aramis?

ARAMIS
We can't refuse Rochefort's
invitation. It would be
impolite.

Athos tips back in his chair and gazes upward.

ATHOS
And what do you say, Porthos?

To the Guards' surprise, Porthos is balancing on the
balcony rail above, just about even with a large wagon
wheel chandelier.

PORTHOS
I'll be right down!

With the grace of an aerialist, Porthos jumps from the
balcony and lands atop the chandelier. His weight causes
the chains suspending it to break. With a whoop of
pleasure, Porthos rides the chandelier down as it lands
squarely atop Jussac's Guards, squashing them.

When the dust clears, only Jussac has been spared. He
looks on in disbelief as Porthos extricates himself from
the wreckage and calmly brushes his clothes off.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

PORTHOS
 (to Athos and
 Aramis; cheerful)
 Ready when you are.

Athos and Aramis sheathe their swords, put on their hats, wrap their capes around them and cross the room to join Porthos.

ARAMIS
 Congratulations, Porthos. You brought down the house.

PORTHOS
 My aim was off. I was trying to hit Jussac.

Athos fixes Jussac with a dark, threatening look.

ATHOS
 Now. About those tunics...

Jussac turns to watch Athos, Porthos, and Aramis step to the street. He mutters as if to curse:

JUSSAC
 Musketeers.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. HIGH ROAD TO PARIS - DAY

18

D'Artagnan, on horseback, pauses on a bluff overlooking the magnificent city on the Seine. What he beholds is Paris as it looked in the early part of the Seventeenth Century, its steeples and towers rising to meet the sky. For a country boy like d'Artagnan, Paris is a magical place where the wildest of dreams can come true.

D'Artagnan's reverie is broken by the sound of THUNDERING HOOFBEATS coming from behind. He turns in response and what he sees is this:

Two women on horseback are riding for all they're worth pursued by two men on horseback.

19 D'ARTAGNAN

19

His heroic blood stirs. Women in danger! As the women GALLOP past, d'Artagnan leaps from his horse. Quickly formulating a plan, he clambers up the trunk of a nearby tree and climbs out on a branch that overhangs the road.

As the two riders pass underneath, d'Artagnan leaps into space and tackles one of them, knocking him out of the saddle. The rider hits the ground and is knocked senseless. One down.

D'Artagnan scrambles to his feet as the second rider reverses direction and GALLOPS back, charging d'Artagnan. The rider draws his saber.

D'Artagnan dodges the horse and the sword. He catches the second rider's arm and yanks him right out of the saddle. The man lands with a painful thud at d'Artagnan's feet. Before he can recover, d'Artagnan is upon him with flying fists. One swift punch -- and the second rider is senseless. Two down.

D'Artagnan stands over his two victims, out of breath, but greatly pleased with his performance. He looks up as the two women ride back to see what's happened.

The first woman is of noble breeding, a beautiful dark-haired girl in her late teens. Her name is ANNE. Her companion is roughly the same age, titan-haired and equally beautiful. Her name is CONSTANCE.

Anne regards the two men on the ground, then d'Artagnan. She shakes her head, laughs with delight and rides off. Constance remains. She smiles down at d'Artagnan from atop her horse.

CONSTANCE

Do you have any idea what you've done?

D'ARTAGNAN

I've saved you and your friend from these bandits.

CONSTANCE

These 'bandits' are the Queen's own bodyguards.

D'Artagnan is stunned.

D'ARTAGNAN

The Queen?

Constance points a finger in Anne's direction.

CONSTANCE

If I were you, I'd make myself scarce. These men are going to be very angry when they wake up.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

D'Artagnan looks at the two bodyguards who are beginning to recover. Then he looks up at Constance, feeling like a prize idiot.

D'ARTAGNAN
I didn't know. I thought...

Constance smiles at him, her eyes twinkling.

CONSTANCE
Do you have a name?

D'ARTAGNAN
D'Artagnan.

CONSTANCE
You're a very foolish boy,
d'Artagnan... but a very handsome
one. Good-bye.

Constance spurs her horse and rides off to catch up with Anne.

D'ARTAGNAN
(calling after her)
Wait! You didn't tell me your
name!

But Constance is gone.

D'Artagnan stands in the middle of the road, feeling foolish and oddly thrilled at the same time. The two bodyguards groan and grumble.

A bright reflection catches d'Artagnan's eye. He looks down and sees a gleaming bracelet. He picks it up and...

D'ARTAGNAN
The man who attacked you...
(pointing in the
opposite direction)
... went that way.

With a guilty smile, d'Artagnan spurs his horse and rides like Hell.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

21

D'Artagnan rides to the top of the ridge, stops suddenly, sees something that takes his breath away.

22 D'ARTAGNAN'S POV

22

Paris laid out for him like a jewel, cloaked in mystery, promising adventure and romance. D'Artagnan watches the women as they ride into the fabled city in the distance. He follows.

CUT TO:

23 INT. MUSKETEER HEADQUARTERS - DAY

23

Athos, Aramis, and Porthos sweep into the now deserted courtyard. Silence -- the last thing they expected -- stops them in their tracks. The place is a cemetery, haunted by the ghosts of generations of Musketeers. Porthos is visibly distraught. Rochefort enters from behind an archway.

ROCHEFORT

I'll take those tunics,
Musketeers.

PORTHOS

(to Aramis)

What did he say?

ARAMIS

He said he'll take those tunics.

PORTHOS

Tunics? Coming right up.

Porthos reaches inside his cloak and takes out a crumpled red tunic he took from one of the Cardinal's guards. He drops it on the ground, digs into a pocket and takes out another. He finds another in his boot and another up his sleeve. There's one in his hat. Like a magician, he keeps pulling red tunics out of the most bizarre places.

Athos and Aramis have a few guard tunics themselves. They pull them out and drop them into the growing pile.

ATHOS

I was trying to remember the last
time I saw you here. I know. It
was the day you were kicked out of
the Musketeers.

ARAMIS

Conduct Unbecoming a Musketeer.
Wasn't that the charge?

ROCHEFORT

You ought to know. Three witnesses
stood against me.

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS

It was the least we could do.

The bitter memory hangs in the air for a moment.

ROCHEFORT

You are hereby ordered to surrender your commissions and make yourselves available for reassignment in the King's Army.

ATHOS

And if we refuse?

ROCHEFORT

You will become outlaws. Hunted men.

PORTHOS

It doesn't matter where I go or what I do. Sooner or later somebody's calling me 'outlaw.'

Athos cuts him off with a look. He's familiar with Porthos' propensity for tall tales. But not here, not now. Athos turns back to the balcony. Rochefort lobs a taunt.

ROCHEFORT

Are you refusing to serve your King?

ARAMIS

We are refusing to serve the Cardinal.

PORTHOS

Same thing, these days.

ARAMIS

France has one King too many.

ROCHEFORT

I'll tell him you said that.

Athos, who has remained silent, speaks with quiet power:

ATHOS

Do that, Rochefort. Tell his Eminence the Cardinal that we will continue to perform our sworn duty to protect the King. From enemies across the sea.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS (CONT'D)

From traitors who sit at his right hand. And tell him that he can take away our tunics, our muskets, even our swords. But he cannot stop us from being what we are. Musketeers.

The gauntlet has been thrown. Rochefort picks it up with glee.

ROCHEFORT

I'll make sure His Eminence the Cardinal gets the message. But I can't promise he'll be pleased.

Rochefort steps back, disappears into the shadows. A beat. The Musketeers regard each other.

PORTHOS

Well, if we're going to be outlaws, I suppose we'll have to get our affairs in order.

ARAMIS

Are you going to visit them alphabetically or in order of preference?

PORTHOS

Alphabetically seems... fair.

ARAMIS

When it comes to you and women, fairness rarely applies.

ATHOS

(interrupts)

We'll meet at the Columbiere-Rouge at sundown.

(off their looks)

To celebrate. And to plan our new lives.

PORTHOS

Outlaws.

ARAMIS

Citizens of France.

ATHOS

The three Musketeers.

And that is all that remains.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (3) 23

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis step in different directions.

CUT TO:

24 EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY 24

D'Artagnan rides through the streets of Paris. A country boy happily stunned by the sights, sounds, and smells of the city. Merchants gossip and call to each other from shop doors. Colorful vendors and pedestrians move along the crowded boulevard. Acrobats, puppeteers, and jugglers perform on street corners. LAUGHTER and MUSIC drift from taverns and public houses.

D'Artagnan views it all with great enthusiasm. He sees the exterior of the Musketeer Headquarters... wow! The future belongs to him.

25 ATHOS 25

He crosses the courtyard to a large wooden door. But as he reaches for the handle, the door flies open and smacks him in his injured arm.

D'ARTAGNAN

(as he enters)

Look out!

ATHOS

(wincing in pain)

Aaarrgghh...

D'ARTAGNAN

(in a panic; looking around)

Where are they? Where are the Musketeers? I'm in the right place, aren't I?

ATHOS

(through gritted teeth)

Not as far as I'm concerned.

Athos is wearing his cape in such a way that it hides his Musketeer tunic. D'Artagnan has no idea who he's dealing with.

D'ARTAGNAN

But this is Musketeer Headquarters...

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS

No. This was Musketeer Headquarters.

D'ARTAGNAN

You mean it's been moved?

ATHOS

I mean the Musketeers have been disbanded. Feel free to poke around for souvenirs.

D'ARTAGNAN

What do you mean 'disbanded'?

ATHOS

Some nonsense about being needed in the army. Now if you'll excuse me...

D'Artagnan blocks Athos' path.

D'ARTAGNAN

But I just got here. How can I become a Musketeer if they've been disbanded?

ATHOS

I'd say you've got a problem.

D'Artagnan grabs Athos by his injured arm. Athos, stifling pain, fixes d'Artagnan with a deadly look.

ATHOS

You could use a lesson in manners.

D'Artagnan touches his sword, eyes flashing at the possibility of a duel.

D'ARTAGNAN

Any time.

ATHOS

I'm in a hurry now -- but I'll meet you at the Carmes-Deshaux monastery at noon.

Athos exits.

D'ARTAGNAN

(calling after him)

I'll be there ten minutes early.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

An hour in Paris, and I already
have my first duel!

Just then, d'Artagnan spies two familiar figures on horseback, distinctive cloaks hiding their faces. Anne and Constance, though he does not yet know their names. D'Artagnan hurries after.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

26

START CLOSE ON Porthos, his rogue's grin, the twinkle in his eye.

PORTHOS

But, Catherine, don't you see? As an outlaw I'll be constantly on the run from the Cardinal's guards, a refugee. Think of all the places you can hide me. I'm thinking of them now.

27 ANOTHER ANGLE

27

reveals Porthos leaning against an open window, speaking amiably to a pretty woman on the other side. She dabs a tear from her eye, manages a nod.

28 ANGLE ON D'ARTAGNAN

28

Meanwhile, d'Artagnan races around another corner, down a narrow lane, and speeds after the ladies on horseback. He dashes through a muddy puddle -- spraying foul water all over Porthos where he stands. D'Artagnan doesn't notice, a huge cart loaded with wine barrels has rolled INTO VIEW, blocking the lane. Fellow travelers shout complaints, the cart driver shakes his head, makes an obscene gesture. It's a Seventeenth Century traffic jam.

D'Artagnan sees Anne and Constance dismount in the distance, tie their horses, and step into an alley. A man waits in the shadows to escort them. D'Artagnan leaps off his horse, he means to continue his pursuit on foot. But he takes two quick steps, and... runs directly into Porthos' outstretched hand.

(CONTINUED)

D'Artagnan looks up -- literally, given Porthos' impressive stature -- and sees the Musketeer's muddied tunic, and worse, a unique and expensive sash, now thoroughly soiled.

PORTHOS
(not a glimmer of a
grin)
Do you know where this sash comes
from?

D'ARTAGNAN
No.

PORTHOS
It is a gift from the Queen of
America.

Porthos' righteous indignation is more impressive than his knowledge of current affairs. D'Artagnan corrects.

D'ARTAGNAN
There is no Queen of America.

PORTHOS
(to pretty woman)
Madame Augustine, would you excuse
me for a moment, I'm going to kill
him.
(back to d'Artagnan;
ever the gentleman)
Now, where were we?

D'ARTAGNAN
(glancing at the
ladies; the alley)
I rode through a puddle, muddied
your sash, the Queen of America
except there isn't one, I'm in a
hurry, and you were about to
challenge me to a duel.

PORTHOS
(amused)
I was?

D'ARTAGNAN
That seems to be the local custom.

Porthos lets out a weary sigh. He shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

PORTHOS

Everywhere I go, it's always the same. There's always some kid who thinks he's hot with a sword... some itchy punk who wants to go up against the great Porthos...

D'ARTAGNAN

The great who?

PORTHOS

The great Porthos.

(when d'Artagnan
isn't impressed)

Me, you idiot.

D'Artagnan gives him a blank look.

PORTHOS

Don't you know who I am?

D'ARTAGNAN

The world's greatest talker?

Porthos couldn't be more insulted. He sputters with rage.

PORTHOS

All right, you little puke! You want to die? So be it! One o'clock behind the Luxembourg! And bring a coffin!

D'ARTAGNAN

Bring your own!

D'Artagnan thinks he sees Anne and Constance, races down the alley, turns a corner, down a short street, makes a hasty decision, runs down yet another alley... and tumbles into a shadowy lane. He stops, looks left and right. And does see them.

The ladies enter a chapel's back door, close the door behind them. D'Artagnan flies after, skids across cobblestones, rips the door open... and finds himself face to face with the man who has escorted Anne and Constance this far.

D'ARTAGNAN

Let me pass.

(CONTINUED)

CARDINAL'S GUARD
I'm afraid that's not possible.

D'ARTAGNAN
I must speak to those young women.

CARDINAL'S GUARD
The young women do not wish to be spoken to.

D'ARTAGNAN
I have something that belongs to the Queen.

GUARD
(alert)
What?

D'ARTAGNAN
A bracelet.

GUARD
I'll deliver it for you.

D'ARTAGNAN
No, you've been enough help already. Would you be so kind as to point out the Carmes-Deshaux Monastery?

The Guard points to a large building in the distance with a large cross.

CUT TO:

PAN ACROSS the Virgin Mary and many lit candles to a BEAUTIFUL DAMSEL sharing a love seat with the third Musketeer, the dashing Aramis. Aramis has a book open and is reading from it.

The Damsel suddenly grabs Aramis and kisses him on the mouth. Aramis politely extricates himself. He's not the least bit embarrassed, only slightly amused.

ARAMIS
Madam, I'm flattered but I thought you wanted me to tutor you in theology.

(CONTINUED)

DAMSEL

Excuse me, Monsieur Aramis. But when you started talking about Original Sin, I lost control and became impassioned. It won't happen again.

ARAMIS

There's nothing unholy about expressing one's emotions. On the contrary. Religion should be experienced in a passionate, all-embracing way. We should feel free to express our spirituality.

DAMSEL

Yes, darling!

The Damsel attacks him again. Suddenly, a pounding on the door.

MAN (O.S.)

Open up!

DAMSEL

(a gasp of fear)
My husband!

ARAMIS

Your husband!?

DAMSEL

Aramis -- run!

But Aramis' heart is too noble. He gets down on his knees.

ARAMIS

First we must pray to God for forgiveness.

That's when the door bursts open and the lady's husband, an irate MARQUIS enters with a pistol. His eyes blaze with madness. He aims the pistol at Aramis' head.

ARAMIS

On second thought, God's often busy.

Aramis leaps to his feet and sprints for the open window.

As the Marquis aims and FIRES, Aramis puts one foot on the ledge and leaps into space. The shot misses him by inches.

As d'Artagnan runs past. Aramis lands on top of him and they go crashing to the cobblestones. As they untangle themselves and get up...

ARAMIS

Thanks. You broke my fall perfectly. But I do apologize for the inconvenience...

D'ARTAGNAN

(angry)

Get off me!

D'Artagnan pushes Aramis aside. Aramis grabs d'Artagnan by the scruff of his neck and pulls him back.

ARAMIS

If there's one thing I can't abide, it's rudeness.

D'ARTAGNAN

You fell on me!

ARAMIS

And I apologized for it.

D'ARTAGNAN

I suppose you'd like to teach me a lesson in manners, too.

ARAMIS

I'd be honored.

D'Artagnan brightens. Another duel!

D'ARTAGNAN

How's two o'clock behind the Luxembourg?

Aramis bows politely.

ARAMIS

If that's where you wish to die, I won't disappoint you. Until then...

Aramis takes off. d'Artagnan swells with pride.

D'ARTAGNAN

Three duels in one day. I love this town.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. LOUVRE - DAY

32

The Royal Palace of Louis XIII.

ANNE (V.O.)

Have you seen the King?

SENESCHAL (V.O.)

No, Your Majesty.

33 INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

33

Anne, or rather, Queen Anne, steps into the throne room, a massive cathedral-like chamber. Twin thrones occupy a raised dais. An entire wall is covered with a spectacular map of the world. The map contains every known country and continent, including the New World. The SENESCHAL exits, closing the doors with a resounding boom.

Anne pauses, all alone in the big, drafty chamber. And for the first time, she looks and acts her age. Barely a woman, chilled by the ghosts of all the French kings and queens who came before her. And a long way from home. Anne steps to the great map of the world. She reaches out to touch her own country, Austria, feels a pang of separation. We hear:

MAN (O.S.)

Your Majesty...

Anne reacts with a start. A tall, powerfully built man stands in the shadows, a spectre in red.

ANNE

Cardinal Richelieu, you surprised me.

Cardinal Richelieu steps out of the darkness. He smiles.

RICHELIEU

How was your ride?

Richelieu's question takes her by surprise. He bows before Anne. Considering a reply, she extends her hand. The Cardinal kisses it.

ANNE

My ride...? Well, I... I'm not sure...

RICHELIEU

(rising up)

Forgive me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

But your welfare is more than a matter of personal interest. It is a matter of State. But rest assured, your secret is safe with me.

His manner is both charming and paternal. Anne, smart enough to exercise caution in all her palace dealings, is nonetheless touched by his concern.

ANNE

Thank you.

Richelieu turns to the great map, speaks gently.

RICHELIEU

You're homesick.

ANNE

(after a beat)

Lonely. Is that the same thing?

RICHELIEU

Sometimes.

Richelieu brings his eyes back to Anne, continues:

RICHELIEU

Austria's loss is France's gain.

ANNE

I'm not sure my new husband shares your opinion.

RICHELIEU

Nonsense. He's young, not blind.

ANNE

Mostly, he is absent. I've barely seen His Majesty since our wedding, and that was three months ago. Whenever he's around me, he has nothing to say.

RICHELIEU

Arranged marriages can be difficult. Your father and I thought yours would bring Austria and France closer together.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Countries align more swiftly than people, I'm afraid. Louis and I remain... far apart.

RICHELIEU

May I advise you?

He says it with seeming humility, not condescension. Anne nods assent.

RICHELIEU

Louis was only nine years old when his father was assassinated. He lost his childhood forever that day. I have watched him grow toward manhood, seen the toll his life demands. A boy who is not allowed to be a boy sometimes has difficulty becoming a man. He is shy, yet boastful. Giving, yet stubborn. But most of all, he is not yet sure exactly who he is. The boy who lost his father. Or the King of France.

ANNE

But how can I...?

RICHELIEU

Flatter him. Make the boy feel like a King. So that the King may be your husband.

Anne considers his eloquent advice, formulates a reply... when the huge doors to the throne room open with a dull boom, the Seneschal chants:

SENESCHAL

His Majesty, the King.

The Seneschal steps aside as LOUIS XIII enters. He is surprisingly young, no older than d'Artagnan. His face is handsome and intelligent.

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty.

LOUIS

Cardinal Richelieu, I've been looking for you.

As Louis strides toward them, Richelieu and Anne bow.

(CONTINUED)

When Louis sees Anne, he reacts with an almost imperceptible start. Her presence catches him off guard.

LOUIS

Oh. Anne. Hello. I didn't know
you were here.

Louis hides his nervousness, not to mention his love, behind a formal veneer. Anne, emboldened by Richelieu's confidences, replies:

ANNE

Would you like me to go?

Louis suddenly remembers the reason he's here. Determination breeds a more capable attitude.

LOUIS

No. Please, stay.
(to Richelieu, aware
that she is watching
him)
Your Eminence, I demand an answer.

RICHELIEU

(hiding his amusement)
Perhaps if I knew the question...

LOUIS

I've just been told that you went
ahead and disbanded my Musketeers.

RICHELIEU

You approved the decision.

LOUIS

But not the timing of the matter.
I intended to address them myself,
explain the situation...

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty, France is on the
brink of war. We dare not
hesitate.

LOUIS

But these men are my personal
guards...

RICHELIEU

They are the bravest fighters in
France.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

We'll need them in the field if we're to win this war with England. Buckingham plans to invade La Rochelle within the month. I thought it best to act quickly --

LOUIS

I will be the judge of what is best. For me, and for France.

He says it with newfound resolve. Richelieu receives the rebuke with quiet grace. Anne watches the latter closely, suppresses a smile. The boy is nearer to King than Richelieu imagined.

RICHELIEU

Of course. Forgive me.

A tense beat. Anne, feeling out of place, steps toward the door.

LOUIS

Anne? Are you all right?

ANNE

You two should continue this discussion in private.

LOUIS

(hesitates, seeks a reason for her to stay)

Your thoughts on the matter interest me. They might... help.

ANNE

It seems to me that... you're doing very well on your own.

She means it. Anne smiles, exits. A beat. Louis sighs.

LOUIS

She's beautiful.

RICHELIEU

Extremely.

LOUIS

Intelligent.

RICHELIEU

Very.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
 (after a beat)
 Sometimes she scares me half to
 death.

RICHELIEU
 May I advise you?

Repetition reveals calculation. Louis nods. And the
 Cardinal surprises with quiet humor:

RICHELIEU
 She scares me too. As do all
 women who join beauty to
 intelligence. What's a man to
 do?

LOUIS
 (enjoying the Cardinal's
 humor)
 I have no idea.

RICHELIEU
 The course of love is full of
 frightful turns. But, no matter
 how you feel, no matter how
 hopelessly afraid... never let
 her know that you are anything
 other than the bravest and most
 confident man in France. Make
 that your starting point, and
 everything else will fall... into
 place.

LOUIS
 The bravest man in France...

RICHELIEU
 Good advice for a shopkeeper.
 Let alone a King.

A beat. Richelieu acting as the lost father. And Louis
 appreciating it, speaking as a son:

LOUIS
 Your Eminence, I'm sorry that I
 was sharp with you. It's just
 that the Musketeers... well, they're
 not just my guards. They're my
 friends too.

RICHELIEU
 I know. But don't worry.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (6)

33

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

From now on, I'll take complete responsibility for your welfare.

Indeed he will.

CUT TO:

34 INT./EXT. THRONE ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

34

Richelieu bursts out of the Throne Room and is joined by Rochefort. Walking quickly down a long hallway.

ROCHEFORT

He's a foolish boy. And barely that.

RICHELIEU

That foolish boy is about to become a man.

(off Rochefort's look)

Which is all the more reason for us to act... quickly.

ROCHEFORT

(reacts, knows what this portends)

And the Queen...?

RICHELIEU

(he smiles, lewd)

She will receive me in ways she never thought possible. Privately.

HOLD ON the Cardinal and Rochefort, watching the King and Queen below.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY

35

D'Artagnan walks proudly toward the Carmes-Deschaux monastery, bold and brave, his future at hand. Suddenly.

COACH DRIVER (O.S.)

Get out of the way, idiot!!

A speeding carriage bears down on him. D'Artagnan leaps from its path, stumbles. He looks up in time to see the passenger inside, and for a moment, time seems to stop.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

She is a noblewoman of remarkable beauty, her face framed by the carriage window. Long blonde curly hair that cascades in ringlets to her shoulders, languid blue eyes, and skin as white as alabaster. She is known as MILADY DE WINTER. She is to sex, what Constance is to innocence.

D'Artagnan watches as if in a dream. The carriage, the beautiful woman inside it. Paris wraps its arms around the young man's heart. Suddenly: a second face enters the carriage window, replacing hers, jarring by contrast. It is the fierce visage of Milady's Indo-Chinese Bodyguard, PARKER. The bodyguard glares, pulls at the carriage window curtains, taking Milady, the dream, from view.

HOLD ON d'Artagnan, bewitched, as the CARRIAGE RUMBLES off into the city.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - SEINE - POV SHOT - DAY

36

A beautiful house situated near the Seine. Milady's carriage stops before it. She steps to the street, Parker follows. After a brief spoken exchange, the bodyguard departs on some errand. HENRI, the driver, a brutal-looking fellow, incongruous in his elegant coachman's uniform, snaps the reins, and guides the carriage away. Milady steps inside.

37 ANOTHER ANGLE - POV

37

REVEALS this to have been the POV of two men standing in the shadows across the street. COUNT DE WINTER, forty-five, a kind face etched with sadness, and ARMAND DE WINTER, twenty-five, his son. They are well-dressed. But their manner and appearance suggests that they have traveled a long distance to find her.

COUNT DE WINTER

Wait here.

ARMAND

But, Father...

COUNT DE WINTER

Wait.

He will not consider otherwise. Armand sighs, stands in the shadows, and watches his father cross toward Milady's house.

CUT TO:

38 INT. MILADY'S HOUSE - DAY

38

Milady stands before a mirror, reaches for one of the many ivory combs that adorn her hair. As she places the comb we notice a small flower-like tattoo on her arm. She pauses to admire her beauty, then to see the image of Count de Winter, now standing behind her, his eyes dark and cold. Milady does not move from the reflecting glass, she smiles.

MILADY

Count de Winter.

COUNT DE WINTER

(as much happiness as
the thought allows)

We found you.

MILADY

(eyes on the mirror)

Yes. Now that you have, what
will you do?

COUNT DE WINTER

Bring you back. To pay for what
you did to my son.

MILADY

And if I resist...?

COUNT DE WINTER

(voice breaking with
emotion)

I will kill you with my bare
hands.

The Count steps closer, close enough to touch. Milady, eyes bright with excitement, the smile still playing about her lips, replies:

MILADY

Well if that's the case, I'd
better start packing. But first,
my hair...

Milady, who has been removing combs throughout, reaches for the next, and...

CUT TO:

39 EXT. MILADY'S HOUSE - DAY

39

Armand keeps his eyes on Milady's house opposite. No sign of his father. He looks about, impatient... and steps across the street to enter.

CUT TO:

40 INT. MILADY'S HOUSE - DAY

40

Armand climbs a flight of stairs. Still no sign of his father, or Milady. He calls out:

ARMAND

Father?

Worry makes him hurry. Armand takes hasty steps into Milady's bedroom. The first thing he sees is his own face in the mirror. The second is his father's inert body below it. Armand gasps, races to his side. A thin trail of bright blood is seen briefly at the older man's ear. Armand gathers his father up into his arms, and begins to weep.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. CARMES-DESCHAUX MONASTERY - DAY

41

The monastery is a windowless building bordered by a barren field, a dueling ground for men who have little time to waste. Athos sits on a stone bench, waits for his adversary to arrive. His horse is hobbled nearby. D'Artagnan rides INTO VIEW, dismounts.

ATHOS

Ten minutes early.

D'ARTAGNAN

I have another appointment at one.

ATHOS

You'll miss it, I'm afraid.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll try my best to be on time.

Athos appreciates the young man's retort, takes a closer look. Then he rises to his feet, the pain in his arm makes him wince.

ATHOS

I asked two of my friends to act as seconds, but they are not as punctual.

D'Artagnan notices Athos' pained expression, the blood on his sleeve.

D'ARTAGNAN

But you're wounded.

ATHOS

Don't worry. I fight just as well with my left hand.

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

If you'd rather kill me another time...

ATHOS

Thanks, but I see my seconds coming now.

Porthos and Aramis arrive on horseback. They dismount, view d'Artagnan with amazement. D'Artagnan reacts with similar surprise, smiles sheepishly.

PORTHOS

(to Athos)

What're you doing? You can't fight this man.

ATHOS

Why not?

PORTHOS

Because I'm fighting him.

D'ARTAGNAN

Excuse me, monsieur. But not until one o'clock.

ARAMIS

(amused)

Wait a minute. I've got a duel with him, too.

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes, sir. But not until two.

ATHOS

(to d'Artagnan)

How long have you been in Paris?

D'ARTAGNAN

I arrived this morning.

ATHOS

You've been... busy.

D'ARTAGNAN

I've also fallen in love.

ATHOS

(gruff to a fault)

Better to die for love than to live for it. Gentlemen?

(CONTINUED)

Athos gestures for Aramis and Porthos to stand aside. He draws his saber, ready to fight. A beat. And in that moment, d'Artagnan's face reveals an emotion he has never felt before in his young life. Fear. Athos sees it, allows him a moment to withdraw his saber. D'Artagnan does so, they square off, touch sabers, and...

... Jussac leads a patrol of the Cardinal's Guards INTO VIEW.

JUSSAC

There they are!!

Athos and d'Artagnan separate as Jussac and his four swordsmen stride towards them.

ARAMIS

Jussac. Again.

Athos steps forward to meet him.

ATHOS

I told you the next time we met I'd want an answer. But I didn't expect you so soon.

JUSSAC

The three of you are under arrest. The boy's of no interest to me and is free to go. Do you intend to resist?

PORTHOS

Oh, don't be stupid. Of course we intend to resist. Just give us a second.

Porthos huddles with Athos and Aramis.

PORTHOS

Interesting odds. Five of them and three of us.

ARAMIS

It hardly seems fair. Let's give them the chance to surrender.

D'ARTAGNAN

(interrupting)

Excuse me, but there are four of us.

They turn and regard d'Artagnan.

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS

This is not your fight. You're not a Musketeer.

D'ARTAGNAN

I may not wear the uniform, but I believe I have the heart of a Musketeer.

The three Muskettiers exchange smiles. D'Artagnan's youthful bravado manages a small dent in their cynicism.

PORTHOS

Bold and brave.

ARAMIS

A poet.

ATHOS

Have you got a name, boy?

D'ARTAGNAN

D'Artagnan.

PORTHOS

(startled)

D'Artagnan?

The name has meaning for all of them. The Musketeers look at each other, deadpan, shake their heads.

ARAMIS

Impossible.

PORTHOS

It couldn't be.

Athos knows that it is. He steps forward, extends a hand. The others follow, shake as well. Athos introduces each in turn.

ATHOS

Athos... Porthos... Aramis.

D'ARTAGNAN

Pleased to meet you... How do you do?... Good to see you again...

Meanwhile, Jussac and his Guards look on with increasing impatience. He clears his throat, draws his saber. The Musketeers turn toward the Guards, d'Artagnan standing among them.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (4)

41

PORTHOS

Well. Now that we're all
acquainted...

ATHOS

The Cardinal's Guards.

D'Artagnan and the Musketeers draw their swords... and
charge.

42 FIGHT

42

Suddenly: nine men are locked in mortal combat. Athos
takes a Guard named Cahusac, Porthos battles BISCARAT,
and Aramis battles with two adversaries at once.
D'Artagnan looks for an opponent... and finds himself
face to face with Jussac.

The fighting style of the Musketeers is an exuberant mix-
ture of styles and techniques. Athos is a brutal swords-
man, his strokes overpowering and savage. His repertoire
also includes swift kicks, solid punches, the occasional
elbow when necessary. Aramis is a seamless and graceful
technician, he handles his two opponents with balletic
ease, an artist working with steel and flesh, rather than
paint and canvas.

And last, and perhaps the most entertaining of all,
Porthos. He is a walking arsenal, carrying a variety of
bizarre weapons on his body -- a crossbow, daggers, bolo,
nunchucks -- all of which he uses with the polished skill
of a master. Add this funhouse of armaments to his
already impressive size and strength, and you have a one-
man wrecking crew of epic proportions.

D'Artagnan's youthful energy is by now familiar. He
bounds about like a newborn tiger, encircles his adver-
sary, changing stance and shifting his ground with alac-
rity. Jussac is having a hard time defending himself
against his opponent who seems to be attacking from all
directions at once.

JUSSAC

(losing patience)

Stand still! How do you expect
me to kill you if you keep jumping
around!!

43 MONASTERY

43

A monk watches from the bell tower, incensed by the battle
raging on the field below. He grabs the BELL rope, gives
it a mighty pull... and sounds a clamorous ALARM.

Porthos reacts to the interruption with irritation. He produces a pair of nunchucks. Biscarat looks at the odd weapon with professional curiosity, slight confusion... and Porthos whacks him on the side of the head, knocks him to the ground.

PORTHOS
 (eyes on the tower)
 Damn monks. Always spoiling
 everybody's fun.

Aramis replies while shifting from one foe to the next.

ARAMIS
 They are nearer to God...

PORTHOS
 They're about to get a little
 nearer to the hilt of my sword.

ARAMIS
 Pagan.

PORTHOS
 Papist.

Porthos slides over to handle one of Aramis' opponents. He'd rather bicker from close range. But Biscarat struggles to his feet, grabs his saber. Porthos sees him, sighs.

PORTHOS
 (to Aramis)
 Excuse me?

ARAMIS
 I'm fine, thank you.

And Porthos returns to his original foe. Meanwhile, Athos' heavy strokes take their toll. Cahusac staggers, wounded in arm, shoulder, grazed at the head -- and falls to the ground with a thud. Aramis calls out to him, indicates d'Artagnan:

ARAMIS
 Take a look at our young friend.

ATHOS
 You mean he's still alive?

Not only is d'Artagnan alive, but he's making a fool out of Jussac. Frustrated, enraged, Jussac makes a full lunge at him, but d'Artagnan ducks, then slips under Jussac's sword like a snake and runs him through.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

Jussac falls to the ground, lies still. He is dead.

Athos and Aramis react, impressed. Then turn their full attention on weakening foes. They disarm and disable them with swift strokes. Meanwhile, Porthos chases Biscarat into a grove of trees. The Guard has discovered the better part of valor, now runs for his life. Porthos -- who is at play as much as he is war -- takes a Spanish bolo from his cloak, and whips the balls over his head. Biscarat hears the odd WHIZZING sound, turns to face him. The color drains from his face.

BISCARAT

Now what...?

Porthos lets the bolo fly -- it catches Biscarat about the neck, the balls slam into his head. The Guard drops to the ground without a sound.

PORTHOS

God, I love my work.

45 AFTERMATH

45

A sudden silence, save for the occasional dull groan. D'Artagnan scans the battlefield, sees Aramis bending over Jussac's body, speaking in solemn tones under his breath.

D'ARTAGNAN

(to Athos)

What's he doing?

ATHOS

Last rites. Aramis takes death very seriously.

Porthos returns in high spirits, stashes the bolo in a pouch under his cloak. D'Artagnan sees the other weapons there, including a boomerang. Maybe next time.

PORTHOS

(re: the bolo)

Do you know where this bolo comes from?

D'ARTAGNAN

(a bold jest, given the circumstances)

The Queen of America?

PORTHOS

Spain.

(CONTINUED)

Porthos deadpans, then grins acceptance. All for one, and one for all. D'Artagnan beams.

ARAMIS

Don't encourage him. By killing Jussac, the boy's made himself an outlaw too.

ATHOS

Not if he leaves Paris. Which is exactly what he's going to do.

D'ARTAGNAN

I can't leave. I just got here.

PORTHOS

Go home, find a wench, live long and prosper.

D'ARTAGNAN

Why can't I stay with you?

Aramis and Porthos look to Athos. As always, he will decide.

ATHOS

Because I do not want you to.

It's hard to say whether he's acting out of concern for the boy... or he simply doesn't give a damn. Whatever the case, d'Artagnan is crestfallen. The Musketeers mount their horses, Porthos and Aramis adopt a friendlier tone.

ARAMIS

I know Athos may seem cold and unfriendly, but don't let that fool you.

PORTHOS

He really is cold and unfriendly.

ARAMIS

But he's also right. This is our fight, not yours. Go on, get out of here.

D'ARTAGNAN

Whatever happened to the motto of the Musketeers? 'All for one, and one for all.'

ATHOS

Wake up, boy. The Musketeers are just a dream.

(CONTINUED)

Athos spurs his horse, rides away. Aramis and Porthos follow. HOLD ON d'Artagnan as he watches the Musketeers grow small in the distance. Then, sadly, he steps to his horse, climbs into the saddle. It has been both the best and the worst day of his young life.

That's when a group of horsemen come riding around the corner of the monastery -- five Cardinal's Guards led by Rochefort himself. They see their wounded comrades, Jussac dead, and the three Musketeers escaping in the distance.

ROCHEFORT

(pointing)

There they go! After them!

But before Rochefort and the Guards can give chase, d'Artagnan rides into the middle of the field to challenge them, as if to further prove himself worthy of the blue and gold.

D'ARTAGNAN

(defiant)

Long live the Musketeers.

And d'Artagnan draws his saber.

AT DISTANCE

The three Muskeeters rein their horses, look back to d'Artagnan's bold charge.

PORTHOS

(with admiration)

Do you believe this kid.

D'Artagnan gallops toward the Guards to engage them. He races through PISTOL SHOTS like a demon possessed. Rochefort rides to the lead, draws his sword.

ROCHEFORT

(shouts to the
others)

Fall back! I'll take him myself!

And like two jousting knights, d'Artagnan and Rochefort meet in the middle of the field. Their BLADES connect with a resounding CLASH, d'Artagnan is knocked clear of his saddle. He hits the ground with a painful thud. Rochefort's Guards leap towards him.

46 ANGLE TO INCLUDE MUSKEERS

46

Porthos and Aramis are greatly moved by d'Artagnan's courage.

PORTHOS
Rocheport's got the boy.

ATHOS
(seemingly unmoved)
Too bad.

ARAMIS
You can't just leave him.

Athos spurs his horse, rides away. Aramis and Porthos exchange sad looks and hopeful comments.

ARAMIS
He has a plan.

PORTHOS
Definitely. A plan.

And with that, they gallop after.

47 BACK TO SCENE

47

Meanwhile, d'Artagnan is soon outnumbered, and quickly subdued.

GUARD
This boy fights like a wildcat.

D'ARTAGNAN
(exhausted)
Thank you.

The Guard clobbers d'Artagnan with the scabbard of his sword. The last thing d'Artagnan sees is the three Musketeers riding into the distance. Then the WORLD TILTS, GOES SUDDENLY BLACK.

FADE IN:

48 EXT. BASTILLE - NIGHT

48

The walls and towers of France's most infamous prison rise to meet a starless sky. The portcullis is raised by men-at-arms, admitting a spectacular crimson carriage pulled by a team of snow-white stallions. The emblem of the Cardinal of France is emblazoned on the carriage door, and THROUGH its WINDOW we see the profile of Richelieu.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

Lovingly, he fingers the upholstery of his extravagant carriage.

CUT TO:

49 INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

49

A chamber in hell. Spiders the size of rats, rats the size of small dogs. A foul stench in the air. D'Artagnan is sprawled in a corner, unconscious, on a filthy matted floor. The sharp tip of a sword pokes him in the chest. D'Artagnan wakes with a start, springs back into action. As if he was still battling Jussac at the Carmes-Deschaux. He slaps the sword away, leaps to his feet, and reaches for his own. But it is gone.

D'ARTAGNAN

My sword --

ROCHEFORT

It's magnificent. Where did you get it?

Rochefort steps INTO VIEW, the familiar eyepatch, admiring d'Artagnan's sword in his hands.

D'ARTAGNAN

(after a beat)

It belonged to my father.

ROCHEFORT

Your father...

Rochefort studies d'Artagnan for a long moment, then...

ROCHEFORT

Well now it belongs to me. I collect swords. I take them from the men I kill.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm not dead yet.

D'Artagnan starts forward. But Rochefort raises the sword, points it at his throat. D'Artagnan freezes, feels the sharp tip of the blade.

ROCHEFORT

Soon enough.

Rochefort shoves d'Artagnan back to the floor with a heavy boot. A beat. D'Artagnan peers at his dismal surroundings.

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

Where am I?

ROCHEFORT

I'll give you a hint. It's not the Louvre.

D'ARTAGNAN

(realizing)

The Bastille! I'm in the Bastille!

ROCHEFORT

Well, you're the first person who was ever happy to be here. Unfortunately, your visit will be a short one.

D'ARTAGNAN

What do you mean?

ROCHEFORT

You killed one of the Cardinal's Guards. An offense punishable by death.

D'ARTAGNAN

He interrupted a duel I was fighting.

ROCHEFORT

Also punishable by death.

D'ARTAGNAN

It was a long day.

ROCHEFORT

You know them?

D'ARTAGNAN

Who?

ROCHEFORT

The Musketeers.

D'Artagnan says nothing. He will not betray them. Rochefort leans close.

ROCHEFORT

Tell me where they are, and I will be lenient.

D'ARTAGNAN

How?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

ROCHEFORT
 (after a beat)
 I will give you your father's
 sword.

A long beat. D'Artagnan eyes the gleaming saber, forged in the Crusades. He nods, gestures for Rochefort to come closer. As if to impart a secret. Rochefort tilts downward, d'Artagnan rises up... and whispers.

D'ARTAGNAN
 Give me my father's sword, and
 I'll cut out your heart.

Bold words, bad timing. Rochefort snarls, slams the hilt of the sword into d'Artagnan's head. The youth slumps from the wooden stool to the floor, unconscious.

ROCHEFORT
 Fool. Like your father.

Rochefort storms from the cell. He nods at a grizzled jailer on his way out, indicates the chains and manacles on the cell wall. The jailer scurries over to d'Artagnan, inert in a shallow puddle of foul water. He lifts, drags him toward the chains -- but d'Artagnan's eyes pop open, the jailer reacts with surprise, and...

CUT TO:

50 INT. BASTILLE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

50

The jailer exits from d'Artagnan's cell, closes the heavy door behind him. A CLOSER look reveals d'Artagnan in the jailer's soiled tunic, eyes bright with adventure. He looks left and right -- dank corridors, darkness, the OCCASIONAL GROAN. And steps lightly into the shadows.

51 ON D'ARTAGNAN

51

He seeks exit, finds only a labyrinth. Two jailers converse, step towards him. D'Artagnan leaps into a cell doorway, allows them to pass. Suddenly: scabrous hands reach from inside the cell, grab d'Artagnan by the throat. He shudders, leaps free. And continues.

D'Artagnan steps deeper in the labyrinth. Frustrated, no way out. Just then: more FOOTSTEPS heading toward him. D'Artagnan seeks refuge, watches as a cloaked figure steps INTO VIEW, accompanied by a retinue of sullen jailers.

D'Artagnan thinks fast... and joins them.

CUT TO:

52 INT. BASTILLE - NIGHT 52

D'Artagnan keeps step with the cloaked figure, the retinue. He keeps his head down, glances at the corridor ahead, looking for a way out. But the cloaked figure is escorted up a long stairway, into another hall, and toward a pristine wooden door. D'Artagnan watches as the door opens, revealing... Cardinal Richelieu, a fearsome apparition in red, the most powerful man in France.

D'Artagnan's jaw drops. The cloaked figure steps inside. The jailers disperse. D'Artagnan takes steps as if to join them... then turns back, eyes the door, the Cardinal and the cloaked figure now behind it.

53 ANGLE TO INCLUDE INTERIOR 53

The cloaked figure bows to the Cardinal. Richelieu smiles, concupiscent. Rochefort stands in a corner, ignored for the moment.

RICHELIEU

I have an errand that requires
your singular talents.

The figure rises. The hood falls back... revealing the unforgettable features of Milady de Winter. She answers the Cardinal's smile with a seductive expression.

MILADY

I was beginning to think you'd
forgotten me.

RICHELIEU

Forget you? Impossible.

Richelieu and Milady share a look of intimacy, two vipers from the same pit.

54 OUTSIDE DOOR 54

D'Artagnan slips closer, reaches for the handle, finds it unlocked. He opens the door a fraction, holds an ear close...

55 BACK TO SCENE 55

Richelieu produces a sealed document from his sleeve, and hands it to Milady.

RICHELIEU

Carry this to the Duke of
Buckingham.

(CONTINUED)

MILADY

(impressed)

You did it. An alliance with Buckingham.

RICHELIEU

The King left me no choice. Now that he's come of age, the boy believes he should rule France. Instead of me.

Rochefort knows what this portends. He steps from the corner.

ROCHEFORT

You're going to go through with ... everything?

RICHELIEU

(silences him with a glance)

Yes. Everything.

(to Milady)

You're to leave for Calais at once. A ship called the Persephone will carry you to England. It sails Tuesday, midnight. I want Buckingham's signature next to mine before the King's birthday. Friday.

MILADY

Consider it done.

RICHELIEU

And doing so, shall earn you the gratitude of... a King.

Richelieu's not talking about Louis. He's talking about himself.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan leaps back from the door as it opens, head down, shuffles to join the retinue of jailers as they RETURN TO VIEW. Milady, unrecognizable behind her cloak, steps into the corridor, the retinue escorts her forward. D'Artagnan falls into place, eyes down, eager for escape. Just then: a hand slams down upon his shoulder. D'Artagnan looks up into the face of Captain Rochefort.

57 EXT. BASTILLE - MILADY'S COACH 57

Exiting.

CUT TO:

58 INT. BASTILLE - NIGHT 58

D'Artagnan lands with a thud at Richelieu's feet.
Rochefort hisses:

ROCHEFORT

On your knees.

When d'Artagnan fails to respond, Rochefort gives him a mighty kick. D'Artagnan scrambles into the correct posture of supplication. Rochefort continues:

ROCHEFORT

This is the boy who killed
Jussac.

D'ARTAGNAN

I can explain that --

ROCHEFORT

Silence!

Rochefort punches d'Artagnan in the head, knocking him to the floor. The Cardinal frowns.

RICHELIEU

Rochefort. Violence solves
nothing. Leave him to me.

D'Artagnan reacts to the Cardinal's reasonable tone.
Rochefort makes a sullen exit. The Cardinal smiles.

RICHELIEU

Please. Sit down.

D'Artagnan reacts with perceptible awe, as if seeing his first movie star. He sits in a finely brocaded chair, looks at the Cardinal, an apparition in red. The Cardinal speaks, his manner casual, friendly.

RICHELIEU

How much did you hear?

D'ARTAGNAN

(busted)

Not a word, Your Eminence. I stepped from my cell for a breath of air, and became lost in the corridors, it's dark as you know, but then I saw a light up ahead, the light over your door, I...

(CONTINUED)

Richelieu smiles, dismisses d'Artagnan's tale with a wave of his hand.

RICHELIEU

You may have many talents, my young friend. But guile is not one of them. Do you have a name?

D'ARTAGNAN

D'Artagnan.

RICHELIEU

I've heard that name before. Are you a Gascon?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes, Your Eminence.

RICHELIEU

Tell me. What brought you to Paris. And don't say 'a horse.'

D'ARTAGNAN

I came to join the King's Musketeers.

RICHELIEU

Bad timing.

D'ARTAGNAN

So I've heard.

RICHELIEU

D'Artagnan, I like you. I could use a capable young man like you in my Guards.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm honored, Your Eminence, but I don't think I would be very popular with the other men. Not after today.

RICHELIEU

I suppose not. Your heart is set on being a Musketeer.

(off his look)

When I was your age, I too had dreams of joining the Musketeers.

D'ARTAGNAN

(surprised)

You, Your Eminence?

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU

Why not? Becoming a Musketeer is the fantasy of every young Frenchman. Or should I say it was...

(with seeming kindness, reason)

Like the Knights of the Round Table, the Musketeers have outlived their usefulness. They are a thing of the past.

(beat)

And so have your three friends. Tell me where they are, d'Artagnan, and I will spare your life.

Richelieu's seeming kindness conceals a heart of ice. D'Artagnan sees it now, replies quietly. No longer in awe, but in opposition.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm sorry. But I can't tell you what I do not know.

RICHELIEU

In that case, give my regards to the headsman.

D'ARTAGNAN

What about my trial?

RICHELIEU

You've just had it.

Richelieu turns for the door, means to dismiss him. D'Artagnan calls after.

D'ARTAGNAN

Wait --

RICHELIEU

Why? Do you object to losing your head?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes. I like it where it is.

RICHELIEU

Then tell me what I want to know, and perhaps you will keep it there a few years longer.

(beat)

Where are the three Musketeers?

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (3)

58

D'ARTAGNAN

I don't know.

RICHELIEU

And if you did?

D'ARTAGNAN

(after a beat)

I wouldn't tell you.

RICHELIEU

I admire your courage, young man.
You might have made a fine
Musketeer after all.

Richelieu opens the door. Rochefort waits on the other side.

RICHELIEU

But we'll never know, will we?

Rochefort steps into the room, grabs d'Artagnan roughly by the arm, hurls him from the chair to the floor. This time Richelieu does not utter protest. Instead, he turns to the Captain, commands:

RICHELIEU

Find the three Musketeers and kill them.

ROCHEFORT

They'll be dead by dawn.

RICHELIEU

A comforting thought. Good night,
d'Artagnan. Enjoy it. Morning
comes quickly.

With that, Cardinal Richelieu sweeps into the dark. HOLD ON d'Artagnan for a beat. History's pawn.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. BASTILLE - MARKET SQUARE - DAY

59

BELLS TOLL. A motley crowd gathers around the execution scaffold, held back by men-at-arms. A hooded executioner mounts the steps of the scaffold in the company of a PRIEST. The Priest wears a black cassock and a broad black sombrero. The executioner, a large man, raises his axe and touches the end of the blade, cutting his finger. Razor-sharp. The executioner holds up his bloody thumb.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

The crowd roars approval. And turns to regard the day's victim as he is rolled INTO VIEW.

D'Artagnan stands, half-naked, his hands bound behind him, in a horse-drawn cart. The driver turns the cart, begins a circuit of the square. The blood-thirsty crowd cheers and jeers at d'Artagnan. But d'Artagnan keeps his head high. If he must die, he will die with dignity.

60 TOWER OF BASTILLE 60

Rochefort watches from a tower overlooking the square. Richelieu appears beside him.

ROCHEFORT

Milady left at midnight. By private coach.

RICHELIEU

A remarkable woman. The most beautiful I've ever known. And the deadliest. Which would explain my attraction.

(peering down at
the scene)

How is our young daredevil holding up?

ROCHEFORT

He's wishing he'd never heard of the Musketeers.

Down below, the horse cart reaches the scaffold. A man-at-arms drops the tailgate, d'Artagnan steps down. He is taken into the custody of a CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS, and several men-at-arms carrying muskets.

61 ANOTHER ANGLE 61

The Cardinal's familiar carriage is parked a safe distance from the square. The Guards who attend it have wandered off to watch the festivities. The coachman remains, seated on top, braiding his whip. Suddenly, a gloved hand grabs the coachman, yanks him from his seat.

62 SCAFFOLD 62

D'Artagnan is led by the Captain of the Guards up the stairs to the execution platform. The executioner and the Priest wait patiently above. D'Artagnan sees the bloodstained block where his neck will soon lie; pales. The Priest mutters comfort:

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

Fear not, my son...

D'Artagnan regards the Priest whose face is hidden beneath the brim of his broad black hat. He holds a large Bible in his hands.

PRIEST

For we are with you, always.

The Priest raises his face, reveals it... and winks. It is Aramis. He whispers:

ARAMIS

All for one, and one for all...

D'Artagnan's heart soars. He turns to face the executioner. Porthos grins beneath the hood's overhang.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS

Prepare the prisoner.

Porthos lays his axe aside, approaches d'Artagnan in a threatening manner. He takes him by the scruff of the neck, and forces his head upon the chopping block. The crowd goes wild.

PORTHOS

(whispers into his
ear)

Don't worry, boy. You won't
feel a thing.

The Captain of the Guards gives Aramis a suspicious look.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS

Where is Father Rostand today?

ARAMIS

The good father is... all tied up.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARDS

Very well. Proceed.

Porthos nods.

Meanwhile, on the perimeter of the square, two figures ride on horseback, they wear familiar cloaks. A CLOSER look reveals Queen Anne and Constance. They ride through the city, towards the countryside beyond. But their progress has led them here. Anne frowns at the spectacle.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

ANNE

Barbarism.

CONSTANCE

Men call it justice.

ANNE

Are you surprised?

She replies with contempt, reins her horse away from the square, the crowd, the executioner's axe. But Constance freezes in place, eyes wide. As d'Artagnan, upon the cart, rolls INTO VIEW.

CONSTANCE

It's him.

For just a moment, their eyes lock. Inestimable space between. Constance's eyes fill with tears, she watches d'Artagnan. Porthos steps back from d'Artagnan, raises his axe. D'Artagnan shuts his eyes, wonders, mutters a silent prayer. That's when screams of panic erupt from the crowd. D'Artagnan raises his head to see the source of this mayhem.

64 MARKET SQUARE

64

The Cardinal's crimson carriage races toward the scaffold, scattering the crowd in all directions. Men shout, women scream, all leaping to avoid the stallion's sharp hooves, the coach's THUNDEROUS spinning WHEELS. In the driver's seat, clutching the reins in one hand and CRACKING a WHIP in the other... is Athos.

Porthos uses the heavy blunt end of the axe to topple the closest men-at-arms. Aramis opens his Bible, pulls out a PISTOL, and BLASTS the saber from the hand of the Captain of the Guards. A man-at-arms raises his musket to shoot the false priest, but d'Artagnan leaps out of nowhere, lands on him with both feet, knocking the man-at-arms off the scaffold.

65 CARRIAGE

65

Athos pulls up alongside the scaffold.

ATHOS

(the usual dour
expression, but a
hint of levity)

Gentlemen, your carriage.
Compliments of the Cardinal.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: 65

D'Artagnan rushes to the edge of the scaffold, springs into the air, landing on the seat beside him. Aramis and Porthos shed their disguises, jump after, light upon the carriage. The roof fabric tears, they drop into the plush interior below. Athos CRACKS the WHIP... and the stallions race off through the crowd, towards freedom.

66 SQUARE 66

Constance watches the escape, transfixed, delighted. As the carriage barrels from the scaffold, she thrusts a gloved fist into the air, triumphant.

CONSTANCE

Yes!

67 TOWER 67

But the Cardinal looks on with horror.

RICHELIEU

My carriage.

68 CARRIAGE 68

Athos produces a dagger, cuts the leather ties that bind d'Artagnan's wrists.

ATHOS

Hold on!

Athos cracks the whip, driving the horses onward.

CUT TO:

69 INT. CARRIAGE - DAY 69

Aramis and Porthos have settled in comfortably. Porthos spies a wicker hamper on the floor.

PORTHOS

Well, what have we here?

Porthos lifts the lid. Inside: bottles of wine, champagne, and a wide assortment of foods.

PORTHOS

How considerate of the Cardinal to provide us with a snack.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

Porthos extracts a bottle of wine, grabs a turkey leg. Aramis looks about the interior, spies a small ornate box.

ARAMIS

Hello.

Aramis opens the box, reacts. It is filled with gold coins, jewelry.

ARAMIS

How is it that a man of God becomes a man of gold?

PORTHOS

(looks on, grins)

Trinkets for the ladies.

ARAMIS

Let's share.

70 STREETS OF PARIS - CARRIAGE

70

Aramis sticks his head through the hole in the fabric roof, hands the ornate box to d'Artagnan.

ARAMIS

Would you be so good as to distribute these? Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.

D'ARTAGNAN

(open the box, reacts)

But...?

ARAMIS

(to the point)

Throw the coins, boy. The people are hungry.

D'Artagnan grabs a handful of coins, and tosses them into the air. Aramis smiles approval, drops back to the carriage interior. Pedestrians see the gold, shout, and leap after. Their hurried steps impede the Guards' progress, horses rear up, soldiers tumble. But several of the Guards manage to avoid the obstacle, pursue the carriage with renewed determination. D'Artagnan hears a LOUD POPPING sound, ducks.

D'ARTAGNAN

They're firing at us!

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

Porthos sticks his head INTO VIEW, offers them a bubbling bottle of champagne, the source of the popping sound.

PORTHOS

Champagne?

ATHOS

You know I prefer wine.

PORTHOS

Don't go away.

Porthos ducks down, returns with a new bottle.

PORTHOS

May I recommend this find
Cabernet?

Porthos hands the bottle to Athos. Athos hands the reins to d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan struggles with the reins, tries to control the horses. And beams, taking delight from every instant of adventure. Athos SMASHES the top of the BOTTLE, drinks deeply, settles back to enjoy himself.

ATHOS

Turn right at the next street.

D'ARTAGNAN

The next right...?

ATHOS

Turn.

Athos growls, d'Artagnan jerks at the reins. The carriage careens around the corner, tipping on two wheels.

71 INCLUDE INTERIOR

71

Porthos looks up from his chest, champagne spilled all over his tunic... and a brand new sash.

PORTHOS

(to Aramis)

That's it. Next time, you drive.

CUT TO:

72 EXT. STREET - DAY

72

The carriage charges up a steep hill. At the summit, Athos tosses aside his bottle, takes the reins from d'Artagnan.

(CONTINUED)

D'Artagnan sighs with relief. Athos yanks the brake lever, brings the horses to a halt, and leaps down from the driver's seat. D'Artagnan follows. Athos pulls the passenger door open, revealing Porthos and Aramis inside. Gold coins on the carpet at their feet, food and drink between them.

ATHOS

Gentlemen, this is the end of the line. I hope you had a pleasant ride.

(to d'Artagnan)

Unhitch the horses.

D'ARTAGNAN

But the Guards.

D'Artagnan points to the bottom of the hill. The mounted Guards chase after, begin their ascent.

ATHOS

Do as I say.

D'Artagnan hurries to the horses. Porthos and Aramis climb from the cab. Porthos emits a contented belch.

ATHOS

(to Aramis)

Your pistol and powder, please.

Aramis hands Athos a sack of powder, and his pistol. Athos tosses the sack into the carriage, takes aim with the PISTOL, and SHOOTs it -- igniting the powder inside.

ATHOS

Stand back.

The interior of the Cardinal's carriage bursts into flames.

D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers mount the Cardinal's white stallions, race off into the distance. Porthos shouts, laughing.

PORTHOS

I'd give five years of your life just to see the Cardinal's face!

ARAMIS

Ten!

CUT TO:

74 RICHELIEU'S FACE

74

The Cardinal's face is contorted in fury. He steps out of a horse cart, approaches the charred remains of his beloved carriage. He stares at the smouldering ruin for a long beat. Rochefort and a company of Guards stand nearby, wait for him to speak. When he does, his tone is measured and calm.

RICHELIEU

One thousand pistoles on each of their heads, dead or alive. The boy knows our plans.

Rochefort reacts with surprise.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. WOODS - DAY

75

D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers rest against tree trunks in a hidden glade, polish off the last of the Cardinal's food and drink. Their usual cynicism replaced by something approaching camaraderie. Aramis smiles as d'Artagnan attacks a turkey wing.

D'ARTAGNAN

I haven't eaten in three days.
I guess with all the excitement,
I forgot.

ARAMIS

Your trip from home has been an
eventful one.

D'ARTAGNAN

(he can't quite
believe it)

Three days.

PORTHOS

I heard of a d'Artagnan once. He
was a captain in the Musketeers
when we were just recruits.

D'ARTAGNAN

He was my father.

ARAMIS

A good man, I'm told.

PORTHOS

I knew there was something
familiar about this boy.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

D'ARTAGNAN

(sadly)

He died when I was nine.

The mention of the elder d'Artagnan's death casts a pall. D'Artagnan continues, tentative, the memory still hurts.

D'ARTAGNAN

All my mother would tell me is that he died in the service of the King.

An uncomfortable silence. It is Athos who finally speaks:

ATHOS

D'Artagnan, your father and another Musketeer were ambushed and murdered outside the Louvre.

D'Artagnan pales, stunned and silent. He manages a broken whisper:

D'ARTAGNAN

This other Musketeer -- is he still alive? I'd like to talk to him.

Athos shakes his head. Porthos adds:

PORTHOS

You already have. His name is the Count De Rochefort.

D'Artagnan isn't listening. He stands suddenly, turns, and walks away. He doesn't want the Musketeers to see the tears forming in his eyes. Aramis shouts after:

ARAMIS

D'Artagnan.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. WOODS - DAY

76

D'Artagnan stands at a flowing stream, wipes the tears from his eyes. Aramis appears at his side, offers silent comfort, a hand on d'Artagnan's shoulder.

D'ARTAGNAN

(quietly)

I imagined his death a hundred time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN (CONT'D)

On a battlefield, defending his King. Fighting bravely for France. And now... I will find the man who murdered my father and kill him where he stands.

ARAMIS

A man is better measured by his life than by his death. Your father was bold, and brave.

D'ARTAGNAN

But you never knew him...

ARAMIS

He lives in you.

That's all the evidence Aramis requires. D'Artagnan pauses to reflect. Then wonders:

D'ARTAGNAN

And your father?

ARAMIS

I was orphaned at a young age. The church took me in.

D'ARTAGNAN

You didn't have one.

ARAMIS

But I did. He was a great man, a leader of the church. And his example inspired me to dedicate my life to God's service.

Aramis opens his cloak, reveals a priestly cloth. A secret he carries near to his heart.

D'ARTAGNAN

You were a priest...

ARAMIS

I was a fool.

(eyes on the cool
water)

This great man, this father, betrayed the church, and turned his back on God. To worship power and gold.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

(quietly)

It broke my heart to see it.

D'ARTAGNAN

And you became a Musketeer.

ARAMIS

I joined the Musketeers and a strange thing happened. I got my faith back.

D'ARTAGNAN

But who was that man...

ARAMIS

(turns to face him)

All of France knows him. His Eminence, the Cardinal Richelieu.

D'Artagnan nearly jumps from his boots.

CUT TO:

Richelieu stands on the roof of the Palais, lost in thought. He looks down and sees, through the smoke and mist, the silent rooftops of Paris, pointed, innumerable. Richelieu turns, and crosses to an elaborate pigeon coop. Servants attach messages to the legs of carrier pigeons.

Rocheftort steps INTO VIEW, anxious, out of breath.

ROCHEFORT

(bowing)

Your Eminence. The Musketeers have been sighted riding north on the road to Calais.

Richelieu nods, he already knows. He picks up one of the pigeons, strokes it gently.

RICHELIEU

Don't worry. Thanks to our winged friends, every mercenary and bounty hunter in France will be waiting for them.

(with a smile)

Isn't modern communication a wonderful thing?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

Richelieu releases the bird, and watches it streak skyward, flying across the sky.

CUT TO:

78 EXT. WOODS - DAY

78

The three Musketeers gather around d'Artagnan, listen to his story. In mid-telling:

D'ARTAGNAN

... I couldn't hear it clearly, I was standing by the door, the voices were low --

PORTHOS

Go on.

D'ARTAGNAN

The Cardinal sent someone to England. With a secret treaty.

ARAMIS

What?

D'ARTAGNAN

He's made an alliance with a man named, Bucking... Buckingham.

The Musketeers look at each other with alarm.

PORTHOS

The Duke of Buckingham?

D'ARTAGNAN

(nodding)

Do you know him?

ARAMIS

He rules England the way Richelieu rules France.

D'ARTAGNANj

A ship called the Persephone waits for the Cardinal's agent at Calais. To take him to England. Tuesday, midnight.

ARAMIS

(figuring)

Calais is over two hundred leagues from here...

(CONTINUED)

PORTHOS

This messenger and the treaty will prove the Cardinal a traitor. If we can get our hands on them.

D'ARTAGNAN

What are we waiting for, let's go.

ATHOS

Wait.

Athos stops their exuberant plots and plans with a single word. All turn, wonder.

ATHOS

(as always, the
bottom line)

Does the Cardinal know you have this information?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes.

ATHOS

Then he knows we have it too. And he'll do everything in his power to stop us.

PORTHOS

But with three men trying, one of us might be able to make it.

D'ARTAGNAN

Four.

Bold words. D'Artagnan matures by leaps and bounds. Athos almost smiles.

Fog drifts across a lonely stretch of road. Suddenly: pounding HOOFBEATS come over the scene. MUSIC SWELLS. And galloping out of the fog come d'Artagnan and the three Musketeers, riding hell-for-leather. HOLD ON this heroic tableau for a long beat.

Four rough-looking MERCENARIES crouch on a low bridge spanning a shallow stream. They are armed with muskets and swords. The Mercenaries wait in the darkness, whisper eagerly among themselves.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

One of them hisses for silence, all conversation ends. And the sound of HOOFBEATS is heard in the distance. Faint, but growing closer.

MERCENARY

Shoot low. We'll need their heads for identification.

The Mercenaries raise their muskets, take aim. Right on cue, four horsemen come THUNDERING out of the mist. But just before they reach the bridge, the four horsemen break in half -- one pair rides to the left, the other to the right. Before the Mercenaries realize what's happened, the horsemen ride on either side, splashing through the shallow stream. In a flash, they return to the road, and race away. Having avoided the bridge completely.

Cursing, the angry Mercenaries whirl about, FIRE at d'Artagnan and the three Musketeers as they ride into the night. Porthos' merry laugh drifts back to mock them.

CUT TO:

81 EXT. ROAD TO CALAIS - NIGHT

81

An overturned wagon lies in the ditch. Beer kegs litter the roadway. The wagon's driver, an old FARMER, sits on one of the kegs, holding his head. D'Artagnan and the Musketeers gallop INTO VIEW, rein their horses to a stop.

FARMER

(with relief)

Thank God for a friendly face. My horse broke loose. Can you help me move these kegs out of the road?

D'Artagnan starts to dismount.

ATHOS

Stay on your horse.

D'ARTAGNAN

He needs our help.

ATHOS

Don't worry. We'll help him.

Suddenly: two other men step before the wagon, pointing muskets. The ragged Farmer reaches inside his coat, pulls out a pistol, makes a smirking request:

(CONTINUED)

FARMER

Won't you step down... Musketeers?

ARAMIS

Gentlemen, I beg you. Please put away your weapons and remove these kegs from the road. We'd prefer to ride on without having to kill you.

D'Artagnan and the "Farmers" gape at Aramis in surprise.

FARMER

You're threatening us?

PORTHOS

It's not a threat, it's a fact. If you don't haul those kegs away, you're dead where you stand.

The Farmer laughs, contemptuously. He raises his pistol and aims it at Porthos' head. But before he can pull the trigger, THREE EXPLOSIONS ERUPT from under the cloaks of Athos, Porthos and Aramis.

When the smoke clears, d'Artagnan is startled to see the three dead "Farmers" sprawled in the road and the three pistols emerging from beneath the cloaks of the Musketeers.

PORTHOS

Mine hit the ground first.

ATHOS

Mine was taller.

Aramis swings out of the saddle and begins to perform last rites over the bodies. D'Artagnan still can't believe what just happened. He turns to Porthos. Porthos raises the barrel to his lips and blows away the gunsmoke.

PORTHOS

There's only one rule, d'Artagnan -- stay alive.

THUNDER RUMBLES and RAINS begins to fall.

CUT TO:

A large warm tavern with a ROARING FIRE.

(CONTINUED)

Present are the INNKEEPER, his wife, a few benighted travelers and THREE BARMAIDS. They turn as the door flies open and the Musketeers and d'Artagnan enter from a RAGING STORM. They keep their cloaks drawn about them and wear the brims of their hats pulled low to cover their faces.

The occupants of the inn regard the new arrivals with suspicion. Outside, the STORM BLOWS. D'Artagnan closes the heavy door. Fearful, the Innkeeper comes forward to meet the four ominous travelers.

INNKEEPER

Good evening.

ATHOS

See to our horses and bring us some food.

INNKEEPER

(apologetic)

I'm sorry but we have little to spare. The Cardinal's Guards were here today. They helped themselves to our food and then refused to pay.

ARAMIS

(bitter)

In the name of God, I'm sure.

Porthos is on the lookout for danger. He reaches inside his cloak for a weapon and, in doing so, accidentally exposes his Musketeer tunic.

BARMAID #1

(crying out)

Musketeers!

The sound of SLIDING STEEL as Athos, Porthos, Aramis and d'Artagnan draw their swords, ready to fight. They stand back to back in a circle, ready for attack.

But there is no attack. Quite the contrary. The people here are thrilled to see them.

INNKEEPER

(honored)

Musketeers in my house! Gentlemen, put away your swords and come in. Anyone who fights the Cardinal is welcome here.

The Musketeers lower their swords.

(CONTINUED)

ARAMIS

I think we've found a home.

The Musketeers return their swords to their sheathes and take off their dripping hats and capes. The pretty Barmaids crowd around them to collect their gear and carry it to the fire.

INNKEEPER

We don't have much but what we have is yours.

Porthos rubs his hands together, eager to indulge himself. He follows the Barmaids, booming in his loud, friendly voice.

PORTHOS

Ladies, you're in for a treat tonight. Allow me to introduce myself. I'm the Musketeer they call Porthos.

Porthos beams, waiting for a big response but nothing happens. The Barmaids look at each other.

PORTHOS

(repeating; louder)

Porthos.

Still no response. Aramis and d'Artagnan hide smiles.

ARAMIS

It's hard to believe they haven't heard of the great Porthos.

PORTHOS

Oh, shut up, Aramis.

The three Barmaids perk up.

BARMAIDS

(with excitement)

Aramis? Did you say Aramis?

And with that, the three Barmaids desert Porthos and scurry across the room to attach themselves to Aramis. Porthos shakes his head and flops down in a chair.

PORTHOS

I don't get it. I just don't get it.

CUT TO:

Moments later. Porthos regales the Barmaids with a tale.

PORTHOS

I said, 'A Queen is no different than a barmaid in the dark. Though less... practiced in the arts of pleasure...'

The Barmaids accept his leering compliment with glee. But d'Artagnan isn't so sure. Porthos, with two Barmaids, bellows a reply.

PORTHOS

If you're going to be a proper Musketeer, you'll have to learn the manly art of wenching. Right, ladies?

The Barmaids heartily concur. D'Artagnan looks over Porthos' shoulder, to the dark-haired Barmaid seen previously. Porthos follows his gaze, grins.

PORTHOS

Ahh, very good. Your first subject. But you'll need instruction. Watch closely.

Porthos pulls one of the Barmaids to his chest, brings her lips toward his.

PORTHOS

The secret to wenching is the first kiss. For in that kiss, a lasting impression is made. If it is weak, she will think you are weak. And if it is comical, she will think you are a clown. With me?

D'ARTAGNAN

Weak... weak. Comical... clown.

PORTHOS

Very good. And as a Musketeer is never weak, and only rarely a clown, your first kiss must be all the things that you are. Like this...

Porthos gives the Barmaid a powerful kiss. He breaks it, turns to d'Artagnan with a grin.

(CONTINUED)

PORTHOS

You may speak first if you like, your name, her name, an endearment or two. But words are usually a waste of time.

ARAMIS

Only if you don't know which words to say.

All turn to regard Aramis. He'll play along too. Porthos reacts with delight. D'Artagnan with interest. Aramis continues:

ARAMIS

Words may make a more lasting impression than a thousand of Porthos' kisses.

BARMAID

(still reeling)

Not likely.

ARAMIS

I'll demonstrate. Please. Sit beside me.

Aramis' courtly behavior is as out of place in these environs as it is persuasive. The Barmaid slips from Porthos' lap, sits down on the bench beside him. Aramis does not touch her. He simply looks into her eyes... and begins to speak.

ARAMIS

'Shall I compare thee to a
summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more
temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling
buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too
short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven
shines,
And often is his gold complexion
dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometimes
declines,
By chance, or nature's changing
course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not
fade.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARAMIS (CONT'D)

Nor lose possession of that fair
 thou owest,
 Nor shall death brag thou
 wanderest in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou
 growest;
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes
 can see.
 So long lives this, and this gives
 life to thee.'

The Barmaid, once skeptical, sits silently. Her face covered with tears. Aramis pauses, almost embarrassed by the outcome. He turns to d'Artagnan, cites:

ARAMIS

Shakespeare.

PORTHOS

That's cheating.

The Barmaid on his lap disagrees.

BARMAID

It's beautiful.

D'Artagnan looks at the dark-haired Barmaid across the room. Porthos urges him on.

PORTHOS

Come on, d'Artagnan. We haven't
 got all night.

D'Artagnan steps forward. The dark-haired Barmaid sees him coming and smiles. D'Artagnan stands before her, hesitates, not sure where to start. Then, remembering as best he can:

D'ARTAGNAN

'Shall I compare thee to a summer's
 day?
 Thou art more lovely and more
 temperate, er, more tempered...'
 (beat)
 Ahh, to hell with it --

D'Artagnan takes the Barmaid into his arms, delivers a powerful kiss. As previously demonstrated. Porthos and Aramis smile proudly. The Barmaids cheer.

PORTHOS

The boy's a natural.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: (3)

83

ARAMIS

So little time, so much to learn.

D'Artagnan drains his flagon, indicates Athos sitting at a table by himself, scowling, working on his third bottle of Burgundy.

ARAMIS

In all the years I've know him...
I have never seen Athos smile.

D'ARTAGNAN

Why is he sitting by himself?

PORTHOS

Athos takes his drinking seriously.
Ignore him. He'll be his usual
warm, charming self by morning.
(calls out)
Service! My lap is cold!

A Barmaid scurries INTO VIEW. Porthos grabs her by the waist, adds the Barmaid to the one already sitting on his lap. The chair breaks beneath them, and all three go sprawling on the floor, laughing heartily.

84 ATHOS

84

He remains lost in drink. D'Artagnan appears beside him. He hides his concern behind a cheerful attitude.

D'ARTAGNAN

Come join us.

Athos pulls d'Artagnan down with a dark smile. He fills his flagon for him.

ATHOS

You fight like a Musketeer. Let's
see if you can drink like one.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll drink anything you put in
front of me.

ATHOS

Famous last words.
(raising his flagon)
What shall we drink to?

D'Artagnan notices the dark-haired Barmaid eyeing him across the room.

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

Love?

The word nearly makes Athos grimace. He stares at d'Artagnan for a long beat, then beyond. As if to look into another time and place. Finally:

ATHOS

Love.

(beat)

Would you like to hear a story, d'Artagnan? A love story?

Athos' voice reveals unexpected vulnerability, the pain he keeps inside. D'Artagnan is fascinated, moved. He nearly whispers:

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes.

Athos takes a long pull from the bottle of burgundy, wipes the blood red wine from his lips.

ATHOS

I once knew a man... one of the Counts of Berry. My native province. When the good Count was about your age, he fell in love with a visitor from Paris. A breathtaking girl of seventeen. She was more than beautiful, d'Artagnan. She was... intoxicating. And this man, the poor idiot, he married her.

D'ARTAGNAN

Isn't that what people do when they fall in love?

ATHOS

(sharply)

Be quiet and listen.

(beat)

The Count took her to his castle and made her the first lady of the province. They were happy for a time, as happy as a man and a woman can be. Then one day, while riding in the woods, the girl was thrown from her horse, and knocked unconscious. The Count hurried to help her. Her dress was torn.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS (CONT'D)

On her her arm, the woman wore a gold band in the shape of a serpent. It was the only article of clothing she refused to remove. The Count's curiosity got the best of him. He reached over and slid down the gold band. He saw something on her arm... something she'd kept hidden 'til then...

D'ARTAGNAN

What?

ATHOS

The fleur d'lis. She'd been branded...

D'Artagnan reacts with shock.

ATHOS

The Count's angel turned out to be a murderess who escaped the Executioner's blade. She swore that she loved him. Swore that she had changed. And if he would just keep her secret, they would live a long life together.

Athos pauses, imagines that life. The Count and his angel.

ATHOS

But the Count was young and he was stupid. He was tormented by the ridicule of his social class. And so he rejected her. For her lies and for her past.

(beat)

And turned her over to the authorities to be executed for the crime.

Athos now turns his unflinching gaze on d'Artagnan.

ATHOS

But you see... his heart did not agree. The Count soon realized what she had meant to him. And what he had done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ATHOS (CONT'D)

That his... betrayal was far greater than her own.

(beat)

Soon after he foreswore the society that shaped him. Gave up his title. And was never seen again.

D'ARTAGNAN

He loved her.

ATHOS

He killed her. It seemed like the same thing after a while.

HOLD ON Athos for a long time. As he gathers up his pain, and puts it back again.

Athos SMASHES open another BOTTLE. But the story has made d'Artagnan quite sober and a little sick to his stomach. He refuses another drink.

ATHOS

Good. More for me.

PORTHOS

Aramis -- play something with some blood in it! I feel like dancing!

Aramis launches into something appropriate. Porthos and a Barmaid get up and begin a festive folk dance. Porthos is damned good. His joie de vivre is infectious and soon everyone in the inn is clapping and encouraging him. Every once in awhile, another WEAPON -- a dagger or something -- drops out of Porthos' clothing and hits the floor with a CLATTER.

That's when Porthos, dancing with abandon, spins out of control, trips and falls on Athos' table, crushing it to the floor.

Porthos lies in the wreckage, staring up. Athos, totally unperturbed, looks down and offers him the bottle.

PORTHOS

Care to dance, Athos?

ATHOS

Only if I can lead.

Porthos blinks in amazement at Athos' grim face, then breaks out laughing.

PORTHOS

Aramis! Athos made a joke!

The Innkeeper comes down the stairs wearing a nightshirt and a sleepy expression.

INNKEEPER

Excuse me, gentlemen.

D'ARTAGNAN

Were we making too much noise?

INNKEEPER

You told me to wake you at dawn.

ATHOS

Well?

INNKEEPER

It's dawn.

They turn in disbelief to the shuttered windows. Sure enough. Sunlight is peeking in through the cracks.

CUT TO:

The sun rises, casts long shadows across a sparkling dew-wet field. D'Artagnan and the Musketeers ride INTO FRAME, continuing their journey to Calais. D'Artagnan squints ahead, wincing with every bump. Porthos grins.

PORTHOS

Beautiful morning, eh, d'Artagnan?

D'Artagnan is terribly hung-over from the night's carousing. He looks like he could puke at any moment. So that's exactly why Porthos shouts to him and says...

PORTHOS

You know, d'Artagnan, it's not a good idea to travel on an empty stomach. You really should have had a big portion of those sheep's brains...

D'Artagnan covers his mouth. Porthos laughs good-naturedly.

D'ARTAGNAN

My head feels like it's filled with the King's marching band. Would you please stop whistling?

(CONTINUED)

PORTHOS
Whistling? I'm not whistling.

D'ARTAGNAN
Well someone is.

PORTHOS
(to others)
The Barmaid's kiss left him dizzy.

ARAMIS
I hear it too. It sounds like...

ATHOS
(knows immediatley)
A connon ball.

Athos is cut off by an EAR-PIERCING WHISTLE as a CANNON BALL drops out of the sky and STRIKES the ground nearby, sending up a tremendous EXPLOSION.

PORTHOS
I hate cannon balls.

Another BALL EXPLODES into the ground in front of them. Their horses rear up in fear, threatening to dump them out of their saddles. As the Musketeers and d'Artagnan struggle to control their horses, they look back and see an old castle atop a distant hill.

A group of men operate two rusted cannons, left over from some long-forgotten war.

The Musketeers barely calm their horses, when another BALL comes SCREAMING their way, IMPACTING a few feet away. As dirt rains upon them:

ARAMIS
(to d'Artagnan)
How's your head now?

D'ARTAGNAN
I'm beginning to wish the Cardinal had chopped if off.

ATHOS
Stay with us, and you just might get your wish.

Athos spurs his horse across the field, d'Artagnan and the Musketeers follow. But they discover crude battlements in their path. Athos changes direction, sees six horsemen waiting for them in the near distance. He changes direction again, as the horsemen charge after.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

87

They ride as fast their mounts will carry them. A cross-roads up ahead. Athos sizes up the situation, shouts command.

ATHOS

Split in half! D'Artagnan rides with me!

D'Artagnan nods, thrilled to go with Athos.

ARAMIS

We'll see you in Calais!

ATHOS

Or hell!

Athos and d'Artagnan take off in one direction, Porthos and Aramis in the other. The pursuing horsemen soon race INTO VIEW, break in half to give chase.

CUT TO:

88 INT. QUEEN'S BATH - DAY

88

A room heavy with mist and steam. Behind a maze of gauze screens, we discover Anne reclining in a large tiled bath, Constance attending. Constance replenishes the bath with pitchers of hot water drawn from a boiling cauldron. In mid-conversation, as confidantes and friends:

CONSTANCE

But how, your Majesty? How can you tell if you're really in love?

ANNE

Do you think about him all the time?

CONSTANCE

(considers; replies)

Yes.

ANNE

And when he's around, do your knees feel as weak as water?

CONSTANCE

Yes.

ANNE

And when he looks at you, do you suddenly forget how to breathe?

(CONTINUED)

CONSTANCE

Yes.

ANNE

Then you're in love.

CONSTANCE

(thrilled by the
knowledge; knew it
all alone)

I am.

Anne turns to Constance, soap and water swirl about her naked body. She wonders:

ANNE

Who is he?

CONSTANCE

You'll never believe it.

ANNE

Of course I will.

CONSTANCE

You won't.

ANNE

Who?

CONSTANCE

The young man who rescued us from
the bandit.

ANNE

The young man on the scaffold?

CONSTANCE

Yes.

ANNE

(turns back in the
water, peers ahead)

You're right. I don't believe it.

A warm beat. Anne and Constance are friends as much as they are Queen and subject.

CONSTANCE

Are you in love, Your Majesty?

ANNE

What an impertinent question.

(CONTINUED)

CONSTANCE

Are you?

Anne pauses. If only her life, her emotions, were as simple.

ANNE

My love... is a matter of state.
It's complicated.

A sad beat. Constance teases:

CONSTANCE

Do you think about him all the
time?

ANNE

(playing along)
As Queen, my mind touches on many
subjects.

CONSTANCE

Do your knees feel as weak as
water?

ANNE

Never.

CONSTANCE

When he looks at you, do you
forget how to breathe?

A beat. And Anne is a girl of eighteen again, not Queen. Wistful, she replies:

ANNE

I hope he will someday. I hope
I will too.

HOLD ON Anne for a beat.

CUT TO:

Anne steps to a dressing chamber, wearing a long robe, arranging her thick wet hair into braids.

ANNE

Constance, have you seen my...?

Anne stops short. Cardinal Richelieu waits for her in the dressing chamber, now bows, assumes a supplicant air.

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty, forgive me.

ANNE

Cardinal.

RICHELIEU

I need your help. And could not
in good conscience wait another
minute.

ANNE

You want my help?

RICHELIEU

Yes.

ANNE

On what matter?

RICHELIEU

Your... husband.

ANNE

(remembering
Richelieu's last
encounter with Louis)

Your King.

Richelieu allows the jest, remains silent, watchful.
Anne resumes, chooses her words with care.

ANNE

Of course. As Your Eminence has
been kind enough to advise me...

(nods assent)

It's the least I can do.

Richelieu reacts with quiet pleasure. He steps closer.

RICHELIEU

I am worried about the King's...
happiness.

ANNE

What do you mean?

RICHELIEU

The Huguenot rebellion, occupation
in the Antilles and Cayenne. The
coming war with France. These are
not the usual hobbies of youth.

ANNE

No.

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU

And now he wishes to postpone his birthday celebration.

ANNE

Why?

RICHELIEU

He feels it is not... appropriate.

ANNE

It sounds as though he is concerned with more important matters.

RICHELIEU

Which is exactly why we must celebrate.

(off her look)

To show the world that the King of France is strong enough to face any enemy on any field. To show France... that he is King.

(beat)

He will listen to you. If you will speak.

Richelieu makes his case with forceful eloquence, seeming loyalty. Anne considers, replies, noncommittal:

ANNE

I will speak to him.

Anne senses hidden agenda, intrigues below the surface. The conversation's conspiratorial tone begins to disturb her.

ANNE

Now, if you'll excuse me, I...

RICHELIEU

Of course.

Anne nods, turns back toward the chambers. Richelieu calls after.

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty?

(off her look)

Please understand that I do not underestimate the value of your assistance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3)

89

RICHELIEU (CONT'D)

And that I wish for you to
consider -- in fact, to know --
all that you and I might
accomplish. Together.

(quietly, as if
to justify)

For France.

Richelieu steps away, his red cape swirling behind him.
Anne feels a chill, pulls her robe more tightly about
her body.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. LOUVRE (PARIS) - DAY

90

Infantry troops drill outside the King's palace, prac-
ticing muskets and sabers.

CUT TO:

91 INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

91

Louis watches from a balcony. Richelieu appears, fresh
from his encounter with the Queen. Louis looks up,
greeted him with displeasure.

92 INT. THRONE ROOM AND GREAT HALL

92

Louis watches from a balcony. Richelieu appears, fresh
from his encounter with the Queen.

RICHELIEU

I'm sorry to be late, Your
Majesty, but I was wrestling with
an important matter of state.

Richelieu never allows the mask to slip. Even for an
instant. Louis glances at the throne room, the increasing
number of Cardinal's Guards on duty. They make him feel
uncomfortable. Louis speaks with renewed determination.

LOUIS

Why is it I don't see any of my
Musketeers?

RICHELIEU

I'm afraid... that's impossible.

LOUIS

Why?

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU

They have become outlaws. They are terrorizing the countryside, robbing and killing innocent people.

Louis can't believe it.

LOUIS

There must be some mistake.

RICHELIEU

No mistake. I have reports from the local constables involved.

Richelieu, ever prepared, produces a sheaf of papers. No doubt counterfeit. But Louis has no way of knowing. He takes the papers into his hands, reacts with sadness.

LOUIS

Musketeers...

RICHELIEU

They are better off disbanded.

Louis turns back to the balcony, the soldiers marching below. His mood glum and lonely. He sighs, moves on to another matter of business.

LOUIS

Your Eminence, I've been hearing some very troubling rumors about you.

Richelieu nods, not the least bit concerned.

RICHELIEU

There are so many to choose from. Is it the one about my alleged alliance with Buckingham? Let's see if I remember it correctly. While the English attack from without, I'll undermine the throne from within -- depose you -- and become sovereign of France myself. That rumor, Your Majesty?

Richelieu smiles, his face a mask of innocence.

LOUIS

It does seem rather farfetched.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (2)

92

RICHELIEU

If there are any doubts of my loyalty, they'll be put to rest when we appear together at your birthday celebration.

LOUIS

I've been thinking about that. A birthday celebration when we're on the brink of war...

RICHELIEU

(alert, ready for
this as well)

Your subjects are eager to celebrate the birth of their King at a time like this.

LOUIS

I'm not so eager.

RICHELIEU

I have an idea. Why don't you discuss the matter with your Queen?

Louis looks up, wonders. As Richelieu draws him deeper into his spider's strategems.

CUT TO:

93 EXT. FRENCH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

93

Porthos and Aramis ride hard, look back over their shoulders. They crest the top of a bluff, rein their horses to a stop. They can afford to rest for a moment. Their pursuit is at least a mile behind them.

ARAMIS

My horse will not survive another league.

PORTHOS

And you?

ARAMIS

(in kind)

Ten, twenty at the most.

Porthos looks into the near distance, manages a weary smile.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

PORTHOS

Here's just the thing. A nice,
relaxing boat ride.

At the bottom of the hill: a crude ferry lands at the
bank of a swift, choppy river.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. RIVER AND FERRY LANDING - DAY

94

The ferry is an open flatboat -- a wooden platform, about
fifteen-by-twenty feet. It travels from one shore to the
other by means of a ferry rope. Transport is slow, the
trip to the other shore takes nearly five minutes.

As Porthos and Aramis arrive, the flatboat is just re-
turning, piloted by its FERRYMAN, a hunched and weather-
beaten gnome. Four passengers wait to be carried across
-- TWO GENTLEMAN CAVALIERS on horseback, and a country
WOMAN and her child. As the flatboat enters its slip,
the two Cavaliers urge their horses on board, rudely
jostling the Woman and her child to the rear.

The Ferryman, an experienced boot-licker, bows and
scrapes to the Cavaliers, collects the coins they toss
to his way.

FERRYMAN

A privilege to carry you on my
humble boat...

The Ferryman turns a greedy eye on the Woman and child.

FERRYMAN

Two pistoles.

WOMAN

But I only have one. Couldn't
my child ride free? She's so
small...

FERRYMAN

(hand outstretched,
demanding)

Two pistoles.

A courtly voice intervenes.

ARAMIS

Put away your money, madame. You
and your child will cross the
river under our protection. For
free.

(CONTINUED)

All turn to regard Aramis on horseback, Porthos at his side. The Woman reacts with grateful surprise. The Ferryman is outraged, spittle flies as he curses and protests.

FERRYMAN

Nobody rides for free! Under your protection bloody well indeed! I'll teach you a thing or two about protection! Apple-cheeked young fools!! -- Just who do you think you are!!

ARAMIS

(waits for the tirade to cease; simply)

Musketeers.

Two two Cavaliers react to the word. The Ferryman does, too -- into cringing, obedient servant.

FERRYMAN

Musketeers? Well, why didn't you say so? Of course you'll ride for free. I insist on it. This way, pretty madame. My what a lovely little girl...

ARAMIS

Porthos!

PORTHOS

What?

Aramis takes Porthos by the shoulder and turns him so he can see their pursuers pouring over the top of the hill on their horses.

PORTHOS

We sail!

And with that, Porthos takes the sharp edge of his boomerang and brings it down on the dock rope. The rope splits and the ferryboat lurches away from the dock.

The pursuers charge down the hill and ride to the end of the dock but they're too late. Porthos and Aramis have gotten away.

Porthos laughs and taunts the angry pursuers. Aramis ties scarves around the horses' eyes to blindfold them for the crossing. Then he turns around and sees what Aramis is already seeing -- the two Cavaliers watch them with keen interest.

FIRST CAVALIER

You're those Musketeers everyone's been looking for.

PORTHOS

Popularity has its price.

The First Cavalier smiles, produces a flask.

FIRST CAVALIER

I have some excellent brandy here. Would you gentlemen care to drink a toast with us to the Cardinal?

PORTHOS

We'd be happy to.

Porthos produces a bottle from under his cloak.

PORTHOS

If you'll drink one with us to the King.

SECOND CAVALIER

But the only King we recognize... is the Cardinal.

ARAMIS

There are those who would call that treason.

FIRST CAVALIER

Happily, no such objections have been raised... here.

PORTHOS

All right. I'll object.

SECOND CAVALIER

I'm listening.

PORTHOS

Let's see. You are, by your dress and by your manner, members of a bone-lazy class of servile ninnyhammers whose slavish allegiance to His Eminence the Cardinal is as that of a dog who likes nothing better than to sniff today where he has peed the day before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PORTHOS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Piss is piss, no matter what robes surround it.

ARAMIS

Well said. I'm impressed.
Ninnyhammers.

PORTHOS

I was momentarily inspired.

The Cavaliers are not amused. The first replies in measured tones, his lips white with fury.

FIRST CAVALIER

May I reply?

ARAMIS

(courtly)

By all means.

FIRST CAVALIER

Better to be a dog in the service of a great master, than a beef-witted moron so dazzled by the throne that he does not see the true nature of the foolish boy who wobbles atop it. Which is to say, that most muddy-brained of all men... a Musketeer.

The Cavaliers have already pulled out their swords. Porthos and Aramis now reach for their own. Porthos deadpans:

PORTHOS

Maybe there's something about us that just pisses people off. At least I'd like to think so. It's too bad we can only kill them once.

The middle of a river on a rocking flatboat is not the best place for a duel. But the combatants make the most of it. Slipping, sliding, and falling. They attack with everything they've got. The Cavaliers are excellent swordsmen. And, as if that were not enough, the Musketeers have an additional disadvantage -- they must keep the Woman and child clear of the flashing blades.

(CONTINUED)

Porthos drives his opponent about the flatboat with a devilish grin, chases him between -- and at one point, over -- blindfolded horses.

Aramis duels with the expected artistry, gradually reducing his opponent to tatters. At one juncture, the child loses her footing, slides toward the low end of the flatboat, the deep river beyond. Aramis executes a neat sidestep, stops the child's desperate progress with one arm while continuing to do battle with the other. He returns child to Mother with a grin, continues.

The two Cavaliers are soon vanquished, groaning on the flatboat deck. Porthos and Aramis meet at the middle, breathless. Porthos complains:

PORTHOS

I've been called a lot of things
in my time...

ARAMIS

(eyes on the
opposite shore)

Porthos...

PORTHOS

But beef-witted is a little more
than I can stand, not to mention
unfair...

ARAMIS

Porthos...

PORTHOS

What?

Aramis indicates the opposite shore as the flatboat approaches it. There, waiting patiently, swords and muskets already drawn... is a patrol of Cardinal's Guards.

ARAMIS

Can you swim?

PORTHOS

(doesn't like the
sound of this)

No. My horse can.

ARAMIS

That'll do.

PORTHOS

But...?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

97

Aramis hurries to his horse, takes off the blindfold. Porthos grumbles after, follows suit. They leap atop their mounts, the horses slip upon the wet deck as they guide them to the edge.

ARAMIS

You go first and I'll watch your progress.

PORTHOS

No, no. Please. After you.

Stalemate. Then, they can't help it, Aramis and Porthos grin. Life is an adventure, lived to the fullest. They count...

ARAMIS AND PORTHOS

One, two -- three!

And with that, as the Woman and child, the Ferryman look on, Aramis and Porthos guide their horses into the raging river. The Woman whispers after:

WOMAN

Thank you. God speed.

Porthos manages a wink as he floats into the distance.

98 ON SHORE

98

The Cardinal's Guards react with anger and disbelief.

99 RIVER

99

A wild ride down the ROARING RIVER. Porthos clinging to his horse for dear life. Aramis keeping an eye on his fellow Musketeer... and the deep rapids up ahead.

Through twists and turns, walls of white water, huge boulders, and gyrating whirlpools... Aramis and Porthos finally reach a quiet pool, a leafy shore beyond. They lead their horses from the water, step toward dry land... and see yet another (or perhaps the same) patrol of Cardinal's Guards. Waiting, swords drawn, for their arrival.

Porthos looks down at his latest sash -- destroyed like the others. Aramis draws his saber, mutters.

ARAMIS

A nice relaxing boat ride...

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

And with that, Aramis and Porthos charge towards the Guards.

CUT TO:

100 EXT. DENSE FOREST - DAY

100

Cool, clear water. WIDEN to reveal d'Artagnan and Athos at a shallow pond, watering their horses. The forest around them is dark and primeval.

D'ARTAGNAN

Do you think we've lost them?

ATHOS

They'll catch up eventually.

To the point, as always. D'Artagnan pauses to look at their beautiful surroundings, remembers:

D'ARTAGNAN

My father used to hunt in a forest like this. He promised to take me on my tenth birthday. I don't know why he picked that year. Something about a boy becoming a man. I'd lay in bed at night and imagine it, just the two of us. But he died before I could go with him.

Athos is unmoved, or so it would seem. He replies with quiet cynicism:

ATHOS

Well. You have your boyhood wish at last. The dark forest. The thrill of the hunt. The nearness of death.

Only d'Artagnan is the hunted, not the hunter.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'd be proud to die for my King.

ATHOS

I just wanted to save you from the life of a Musketeer. You don't have to go looking for experience, d'Artagnan. It'll find you soon enough. And when it does -- it will mark you forever.

Athos rides into the forest. D'Artagnan hurries to follow.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. FOREST - DAY

101

Athos leads d'Artagnan through the forest. Sunbeams shoot down through thick branches like golden bars. A pastoral setting, almost peaceful. And then: THUNDERING HOOFBEATS. Athos and d'Artagnan turn in surprise, see SIX HORSEMEN CRASHING through the glade.

102 ANOTHER ANGLE

102

Athos and d'Artagnan GALLOP through the dense forest. The horesmen FIRE PISTOLS as they ride. A SHOT grazes d'Artagnan's shoulder, he staggers, retains his mount. Athos leads them up a hillside, a series of boulders at the top. The climb is fast and treacherous, GUNFIRE all around them. Athos' horse is struck by a bullet, staggers forward... and collapses just as they reach the crest. D'Artagnan leaps off his horse, takes cover with Athos behind the boulders. Athos takes aim, FIRES a SHOT, and kills one of the horsemen below. The others curse, leap from their mounts, seek cover. SHOTS WHIZ back and forth like angry hornets.

Stalemate, but not for long. They are badly outnumbered. The horsemen creep slowly up the hillside, from tree to tree. Athos turns to d'Artagnan as he reloads:

ATHOS

I'll hold them off for as long as I can. Go on without me.

D'ARTAGNAN

I can't leave you here. Not like this.

ATHOS

Ride to Calais and stop the Cardinal's agent.

D'ARTAGNAN

Athos... I can't.

Athos points his pistol at d'Artagnan.

ATHOS

Go, or I'll kill you myself.

A few days ago, d'Artagnan would have obeyed without question. Fearful, if nothing else. But not here, not now.

D'ARTAGNAN

A duel then.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

ATHOS

You're insane.

D'ARTAGNAN

We never finished the first.

ATHOS

All right. I'll toss a coin.
Tails I stay, heads you remain.
Agreed?

D'Artagnan nods. Athos FIRES off another SHOT. He produces a gold coin, flips, slams it between palm and hand. And looks between.

103 ATHOS AND HIS POV

103

Heads. D'Artagnan is to remain. Athos looks up without missing a beat.

ATHOS

Tails. I stay.

Athos returns the coin to his doublet without giving d'Artagnan a chance to see.

D'ARTAGNAN

But...?

Athos reloads, FIRES below. D'Artagnan recognizes the kindness he has received. That Athos cannot fully express it. And that there is no use arguing with him.

D'ARTAGNAN

At least take my pistol.

He gives it to Athos. They clasp hands.

ATHOS

(gruff; yet proud)
Don't let us down... Musketeer.

There are tears in d'Artagnan's eyes. He knows Athos hasn't got a chance.

D'ARTAGNAN

(a choke of emotion)
I'll never forget you.

ATHOS

Go!

Athos turns away, SHOOTS at another horseman. D'Artagnan runs to his MOUNT, GALLOPS away.

104 D'ARTAGNAN

104

He rides, straining to hear the sounds of GUNFIRE. As long as the SHOTS continue, he knows Athos is alive. Abruptly... the SHOTS CEASE.

D'Artagnan swallows his heart, and rides.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. ROAD TO CALAIS - NIGHT

105

A lonely stretch of road, illuminated by moonlight. A signpost announces: CALAI 15 LEAGUES. An exhausted HORSE CLOPS INTO VIEW, its rider half-conscious in the saddle. It is d'Artagnan. He can barely keep his eyes open. Suddenly, d'Artagnan passes out, tumbles from his saddle, and lands in the middle of the road. He opens his eyes once -- a sky filled with stars -- then closes them.

We hear HORSES, and the CREAK of a CARRIAGE APPROACHING. The DRIVER brakes, and the horses are brought to a halt just short of trampling d'Artagnan. In the darkness, we can make out other shapes, rugged men on horseback, bodyguards to the carriage's passenger. Milady de Winter.

MILADY (O.S.)

What is it, Henri?

HENRI (DRIVER)

There's a body in the road, Milady.

MILADY (O.S.)

Be careful.

Pistols are cocked. Henri's shadow falls across d'Artagnan's body.

HENRI

It's a young man. He appears to be injured.

We hear the CARRIAGE DOOR OPEN. FOOTSTEPS to d'Artagnan's side.

MILADY (O.S.)

My, what a handsome boy. Put him inside with me.

Strong hands grasp d'Artagnan and lift him from the cold ground.

CUT TO:

106 D'ARTAGNAN'S POV - BLACK SCREEN

106

Out of the darkness, a face appears, BLURRY and OBSCURED. It FILLS the SCREEN, slowly swimming INTO FOCUS. It is Milady de Winter, even more beautiful in CLOSEUP. Familiar, and no doubt deadly, ivory combs gleam in her hair. She smiles warmly.

MILADY

Welcome back. Did you dream?

107 ANOTHER ANGLE

107

reveals the interior of a bed chamber at a roadside inn. D'Artagnan, regaining his senses, finds himself propped up in a large bed. He blinks into the face of Milady who sits at the edge. His eyes widen with recognition, faint awe.

D'ARTAGNAN

You.

MILADY

Have we met?

D'ARTAGNAN

I... saw you in Paris.

D'Artagnan notices that his shoulder has been bandaged. He looks around the large room. A FIRE ROARS in the grate. Food and drink have been set upon a table. D'Artagnan continues, still groggy, uncertain:

D'ARTAGNAN

Where am I...?

MILADY

This is Calais.

D'ARTAGNAN

(with a jolt)

Calais!

(muttered; to self)

The ship... Tuesday at midnight...

D'Artagnan leaps out of bed. Then realizes he is stark naked. Milady smiles. D'Artagnan gathers a bedsheet around him.

D'ARTAGNAN

(frantic)

Where are my clothes?

(CONTINUED)

MILADY

Filthy. I'm having them cleaned.
Is something wrong?

D'ARTAGNAN

What day is it? What time?!

D'Artagnan runs to a window, and throws open the shutters.
Beyond: the harbor lights of the Port of Calais.

MILADY

It's Tuesday, near nine.

D'ARTAGNAN

Nine? Are you sure?

Somewhere in the night, a BELL TOLLS the HOUR. Milady smiles.

MILADY

Quite sure.

D'Artagnan relaxes slightly. Milady rises from the bed. She wears a sky blue dressing gown, something soft and silken beneath it. D'Artagnan reacts perceptibly. Enjoying his discomfort, Milady crosses the room, joins him at the window.

MILADY

Are you in a hurry?

D'ARTAGNAN

(after a beat)

How did I... get here?

MILADY

I found you in the road.
Discarded. Like an unwanted
kitten. Do you have a name or
shall I make one up for you?

D'ARTAGNAN

(nervous)

My name is d'Artagnan.

MILADY

D'Artagnan. I like that. I am
the Countess de Winter. Milady.

D'ARTAGNAN

Countess?

MILADY

My husband's dead.

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm sorry.

MILADY

I have learned to live with death.

She manages to combine sympathy, seduction, and just a hint of danger. All in a single reply. D'Artagnan hesitates, he is not immune to her charms, then:

D'ARTAGNAN

Countess, I'm very grateful for what you've done, but I can't stay here. I've got...

MILADY

What...?

D'ARTAGNAN

Important business.

MILADY

How mysterious. A handsome young man with 'important business' in the still of night. Does it involve a young lady?

D'ARTAGNAN

No.

MILADY

Does it require clothes?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes. I need my clothes.

MILADY

They won't be ready for at least an hour.

D'ARTAGNAN

An hour?

MILADY

I told the innkeeper to bring them when they are dry. Until then, I'm afraid you are my prisoner. Would the prisoner care for a drink?

Milady crosses to the table, food and drink upon it. As she passes by the fire, her dressing gown seems to disappear, revealing a silhouette that makes d'Artagnan's heart stop.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED: (3)

107

D'ARTAGNAN
 (always innocent;
 never coy)
 I am... thirsty.

Milady pours wine into glasses, turns to face him. And offers a smile that dazzles and burns.

MILADY
 Good. Then we will sit by the fire, and eat and drink, and you may impress, perhaps even move me, with the story of how you came to lie unconscious, in the middle of the night, on the road to Calais.
 (soft seductively)
 I love a good adventure.

D'Artagnan hesitates, then steps to her.

CUT TO:

108 EXT. ROOF OF PALAIS CARDINAL (PARIS) - NIGHT

108

A CARRIER PIGEON FLUTTERS out of the dark sky, and enters its box. The little door on the other side opens. A hand reaches in and removes the bird. Richelieu unpeels the message on its leg.

CUT TO:

109 INT. CARDINAL'S PRIVATE CHAMBER - NIGHT

109

A room as cold as the man who owns it. Behind Richelieu's desk, there is a life-sized portrait of the King. Rochefort occupies a window seat, cleaning d'Artagnan's sword. He lifts it to the light, and slashes the air. He stands, duels with an imaginary opponent. Richelieu enters with the message.

RICHELIEU
 (dry; re: Rochefort's
 fencing)
 The wonderful thing about an imaginary opponent is that he is always greatly skilled, and always easily defeated. The pride of victory, without the risk of loss. If only life were like that.

Richelieu sits at his desk, peers at the message. He looks up, pleased.

(CONTINUED)

RICHELIEU

Milady has reached Calais.

ROCHEFORT

I told you not to worry about the Musketeers. They are dead by now.

RICHELIEU

Buckingham's signature will be on the treaty by morning.

ROCHEFORT

The King's birthday celebration...?

RICHELIEU

Will proceed as planned. Thanks to the kind intercession of Queen Anne.

Rochefort steps closer, speaks quietly.

ROCHEFORT

And our plans...?

RICHELIEU

(knowingly)

Will proceed as well.

Richelieu pours two glasses of port, offers one to Rochefort. They turn, raise their glasses to the King's portrait. And drink.

CUT TO:

D'Artagnan and Milady face each other on a rug in front of the roaring fire. The plate of food between them is empty. They drink wine from goblets. D'Artagnan drains his cup, and stares into the burning embers. Milady speaks quietly, with seeming compassion:

MILADY

You are sad.

D'ARTAGNAN

I was thinking about my friends.

Milady knows when to speak, and when to listen. She looks at d'Artagnan with gentle expression, allows him to continue. The warm room, the wine, her kindness. All conspire to loosen his tongue. D'Artagnan speaks quietly, from the heart:

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

The three best friends a man could have. We were separated on our way to Calais. I'm afraid I'll never see them again.

MILADY

What brings you here?

D'ARTAGNAN

I'd like to tell you. But I can't.

MILADY

'Important business.'

D'Artagnan nods. He wants to impress her. He wants her to know how brave he is. And Milady is well aware of it. She looks down, assumes a more vulnerable pose.

MILADY

I understand. Men make bold plans in secret. And women wait... to mourn, or to celebrate the outcome. I know from experience, it's a lonely vigil.

D'ARTAGNAN

(after a beat)

All I can tell you is... I'm on a mission for the King.

MILADY

(looks up; laughs lightly)

I've heard that one before.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm serious.

MILADY

You are a young man. And young men are given to exaggeration. However, if you would like to entertain me with a story, I'm eager to hear it. And please, make it very brave, filled with handsome knights and beautiful ladies. I know, a dragon --

There is nothing a man is more loathe to experience than a woman who does not take him seriously. D'Artagnan acts accordingly, and reveals:

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

I came to Calais to stop a spy
from sailing to England.

MILADY

(alert; though
d'Artagnan doesn't
see it)

A spy...?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes.

MILADY

I believe you...

(beat)

Aren't you afraid?

D'ARTAGNAN

Musketeers are not afraid of
anything.

MILADY

I knew it. I knew you were a
Musketeer the moment I saw you.

D'ARTAGNAN

You did?

MILADY

Of course.

(with sudden concern)

But, d'Artagnan, if this spy was
to find out you are here, your
life could be in grave danger.

D'ARTAGNAN

A Musketeer is not afraid of
danger.

MILADY

I'm dangerous. You're not afraid
of me?

Her tone heralds a sudden shift. D'Artagnan sees the
look in her eyes, can almost feel her lips upon him.
But he resists. There is Constance's memory to consider.
And midnight as it approaches.

D'ARTAGNAN

You're not dangerous.

MILADY

Then what am I?

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (3)

110

D'ARTAGNAN

You're... beautiful.

Milady covers him with caresses. D'Artagnan resists slightly, but she presses closer, she will not be denied.

Milady leans close, runs a fingertip along the line of his jaw. Her dressing gown falls open at the top, enough for d'Artagnan to see her breasts as they press against the silk beneath it. Milady speaks as her finger traces.

MILADY

Beauty, danger. They are the same.

And with that, she reaches up to her hair, an ivory comb...

111 ON D'ARTAGNAN

111

He cannot continue. Constance, the hour, a confusion he cannot deny.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm sorry --

D'Artagnan pulls back -- just as Milady's arm arcs down toward his neck, holding a long sharp stick pin, almost a dagger, attached to an ivory comb. D'Artagnan sees it in the nick of time, parries with his free hand, knocking the dagger to the rug. Milady leaps after it, hands outstretched. D'Artagnan follows, battles for the dagger, stunned with fear and surprise:

D'ARTAGNAN

What're you doing?! Have you lost your mind?!

MILADY

You came to Calais to stop a spy from sailing to England.

D'Artagnan nearly chokes on the knowledge. Milady is the messenger he is seeking. He grabs the dagger, rolls to the side. Milady staggers after, the shoulder of her negligee rips open. D'Artagnan sees the soft white flesh, reacts with shock, recognition -- she bears the brand of the fleur de lis. The infamous mark of the murderess.

Just as Athos told it to him. Not so long ago.

D'ARTAGNAN

My God...

(CONTINUED)

MILADY
 (crying out)
 Parker!!

The chamber door flies open. Henri and Parker, the Indo-Chinese bodyguard, appear. Parker faces d'Artagnan with a half-smile. He holds out his hands, both empty. And steps toward him. D'Artagnan looks at the dagger in his right hand. Then, unwilling to fight the man with an unfair advantage, he tosses the dagger to the side, steps forward to meet him.

Parker disposes of d'Artagnan with lightning speed. A series of unexpected kicks, brutally efficient blows. The young man is unfamiliar with, and no match for, the martial arts. Parker hoists d'Artagnan to his feet, dazed. Henri picks up the dagger with bad intentions. Milady straightens her dressing gown, adjusts her hair, and commands:

MILADY
 Kill him.

Parker holds him fast. Henri steps forward. And d'Artagnan thinks fast.

D'ARTAGNAN
 You can kill me. But a surprise waits for you in England. That even Buckingham can't prevent.

MILADY
 (stops Henri with
 a gesture)
 What... surprise?

D'ARTAGNAN
 That's one thing I'll never tell you.

MILADY
 D'Artagnan. You are young, vain, and foolish. But I do not know if you are clever.

D'Artagnan's expression reveals nothing. Except to suggest the existence of a secret he is bravely keeping. Duly deceived, though she doesn't know it, Milady changes her mind.

MILADY
 We'll take him with us.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

MILADY (CONT'D)
 (to d'Artagnan,
 with a nod at
 Parker)

Parker will devise ways to
 convince you to share your final
 secret with me. It is a long
 voyage.

Milady's eyes show nothing but cold cruelty.

CUT TO:

112 INT. INN - UPPER HALL AND LANDING - NEAR DAWN

112

Milady emerges from her room, dressed for travel. She is followed by d'Artagnan, now clothed. He is flanked by Henri and Parker. Henri presses the blade of a knife against d'Artagnan's side.

HENRI
 The bodyguards are waiting outside.

Milady leads them down the hall. But when she reaches the landing, and looks at the tavern below... she draws back with surprise.

113 ANGLE TO INCLUDE MILADY AND HER POV

113

The innkeeper, roused from sleep, and wearing a night-shirt, is engaged in urgent conversation with Armand de Winter -- the son of the man Milady killed in Paris. The innkeeper shakes his head. Armand grabs him by the collar.

D'Artagnan sees Milady's reaction -- surprise, impatience, and just a hint of fear. Milady commands:

MILADY
 The back stairs. Hurry!

They change directions. As he is pulled away, d'Artagnan catches a glimpse of Armand de Winter below.

CUT TO:

114 EXT. INN - NIGHT

114

Milady's coach emerges from the carriage house, speeds away in the direction of the harbor. In the driver's seat, Henri whips the horses, driving them onward. Milady's seven bodyguards follow on horseback.

CUT TO:

115 INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

115

D'Artagnan and Parker sit across from Milady. Her face betrays faint doubt, apprehension. Emotions she is not used to feeling, let alone displaying to the world around her. D'Artagnan sees his opening... and speaks:

D'ARTAGNAN

The man at the inn... what did he want?

MILADY

(hollow laugh)
Justice. Honor. Revenge.

D'ARTAGNAN

Why?

MILADY

He is the brother of my late husband, Lord de Winter. He blames me for de Winter's death. He thinks I murdered him.

D'ARTAGNAN

Did you murder your husband, Milady?

MILADY

What do you think?

A beat. D'Artagnan studies her pale, beautiful face. Remembers Athos' tale of love and loss.

D'ARTAGNAN

I think he's not the first husband you killed.

(off her look)

I once knew a man, one of the Counts of Berry. He told me a story... of beauty and danger. He was the bravest man I've ever known. And the saddest.

MILADY

I know...

The truth strikes home. Milady cannot conceal it. But she does not react with anger or scorn. D'Artagnan has reminded her of the one thing in the world that still touches her heart. D'Artagnan looks at her with a steady gaze. Milady cannot hold it, she turns to the carriage window.

CUT TO:

116 EXT. CALAIS - NIGHT

116

Milady's carriage turns down a steep lane that leads to the harbor. The fog is so thick that only the masts of the schooners can be seen, poking out of the gloom. Their lanterns glow gloomily. The carriage comes to a stop.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. HARBOR OF CALAIS - NIGHT

117

The lights of the harbor are muted by low-hanging fog. We see the outline of a ship waiting at the pier. Henri helps Milady out of the carriage. D'Artagnan follows. Milady's bodyguards dismount, six of them. A motley bunch of sinister killers. They look around the pier, ready for any encounter.

D'Artagnan takes in his surroundings. There is a melancholy air about him.

MILADY

What's the matter, d'Artagnan?
Still hoping for your friends to
ride to the rescue?

D'ARTAGNAN

My friends are dead.

MILADY

Well. If it's any consolation,
you'll soon be joining them.

Milady's return to form does not surprise. Parker shoves d'Artagnan toward the fog-enshrouded ship. A name can be made out on her barnacled hull. Persephone.

CUT TO:

118 EXT. PIER - NIGHT

118

Henri calls out to the ship, which is little more than an outline in the fog, her boarding gangplank leading to the soupy darkness of her deck.

HENRI

We are the Countess de Winter's
party, arrived from Paris.
Permission to come aboard.

There is no reply. Closely guarded by Parker, d'Artagnan strains to see.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

VOICE (O.S.)
Permission granted.

Milady nods to Henri. He steps up the narrow gangplank, followed by Milady, d'Artagnan, Parker, and the six bodyguards.

CUT TO:

119 EXT. DECK OF THE PERSEPHONE - NIGHT

119

The deck is filled with swirling fog. Henri peers into the gloom as he climbs aboard, followed by the others. He addresses one of the crew, a tall figure standing nearby.

HENRI
Take us to your captain.

The tall figure does not reply, nor does he move. Henri demands:

HENRI
What are you, deaf?

Henri goes to shake the man. He grabs his arm, and the man pitches forward, falling face first on the deck. Henri jumps back in alarm. Milady and the others react.

BODYGUARD
What is this?

Milady's Bodyguards rush around the deck, confront the other silent silhouettes. They, like the tall figure... are dead. The limp bodies topple at their touch. The Bodyguards shout alarm and panic:

BODYGUARDS
Dead! They're all dead!

PORTHOS (O.S.)
Well I certainly hope so. After
all that hard work.

That's when Porthos, and Aramis -- come swooping down from above like avenging angels. They swing on the ends of ropes, slicing through the air, then dropping feet first on top of Milady's Bodyguards. D'Artagnan stands open-mouthed, as his three friends draw their swords.

ARAMIS
(calling to him)
You look like you've seen a ghost.

(CONTINUED)

D'ARTAGNAN

Two of them.

PORTHOS

Remind me to tell you the story of horses that could fly above raging waters. A heroic tale of love, death, and Musketeers. Suitable for the general public.

Porthos wades into the Bodyguards, at play, shouting as he goes.

PORTHOS

All right then. All those who wish to die, raise your hands! Don't be shy, there's plenty to go around!

D'Artagnan grabs a sword from the deck, turns to join the fray. And finds himself face to face with Parker, the Indo-Chinese bodyguard. Parker has two Oriental swords spinning in his hands. One knocks d'Artagnan's sword out of his hand. D'Artagnan does a back flip but falls on the slippery deck. As Parker is about to chop d'Artagnan's head off, his face grimaces as he is lifted on a sword OUT OF FRAME. In the mist Athos is revealed!

ATHOS

Sorry I'm late. Did I miss anything?

D'Artagnan almost cries with happiness. He leaps to his feet and embraces Athos.

D'ARTAGNAN

I thought you were dead.

ATHOS

Keep your mind on the mission, d'Artagnan.

He winks at d'Artagnan, returns to the fray. D'Artagnan follows. The Musketeers confront Milady's evil Bodyguards in the night and fog. Athos with brutal perfection. Porthos with strange weapons and a healthy sense of the absurd. And Aramis with familiar grace and artistry -- and a marked determination to disable, not kill, his opponents.

Milady views the latter with alarm. As the battle rages around her, she retreats into the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: (2)

119

Athos and d'Artagnan find themselves fighting side by side. Athos observes d'Artagnan's technique -- the usual frenetic windmill of feint and thrust -- with a frown.

ATHOS

Boy, it's a miracle you're still alive fighting like that.

D'ARTAGNAN

What do you mean?

ATHOS

First, always find your enemy's weakness. Second, take advantage of it. Watch me.

One of the Bodyguards, who wears a wooden leg, attacks Athos. Athos kicks the false leg out from under him, knocks him to the deck. D'Artagnan repeats, even as he disables his own foe.

D'ARTAGNAN

Find the weakness. Take advantage. Got it.

Aramis kneels at a dying man, delivers muttered last rites. A Bodyguard races INTO VIEW, means to kill him where he kneels. Aramis doesn't miss a beat -- he shifts, rises, delivers a punch and kick, knocking the man off the ship to the water below. A SPLASH is heard. And Aramis resumes a priestly pose, continues the litany.

CUT TO:

120 EXT. PIER - NIGHT

120

Two SAILORS, crew members of the Persephone, return to the ship after a night's drunk. They see and hear the mayhem ahead.

SAILOR

That's our ship...

The two Sailors pull out daggers, and bound up the gangplank.

CUT TO:

121 EXT. DECK OF PERSEPHONE - NIGHT

121

The two Sailors find themselves in the middle of a wild battle. They look around for someone to assault, see a large Musketeer with his back turned. They charge.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

Porthos hears them coming, spins. The two Sailors stop in their tracks, eyes popping with horrified recognition.

BOTH SAILORS
Porthos the Pirate!!

With a collective "yah!" the two Sailors drop their daggers, and flee into the foggy night. Porthos looks about to see if anyone noticed their exit. D'Artagnan grins nearby.

PORTHOS
I told you I was famous.

D'ARTAGNAN
Porthos the Pirate?

PORTHOS
Privateer. There's a difference.

Every Musketeer is running from something or someone. D'Artagnan deadpans:

D'ARTAGNAN
I love a good sea story. Do tell me sometime.

Porthos reacts to d'Artagnan's jest. But before he can reply, the youth has bolted back to the fray.

122 HIGH ANGLE

122

The battle raging aboard the Persephone, sabers flash, PISTOLS EXPLODE.

123 BACK TO SCENE

123

Athos drives several Bodyguards back with his sword, notices d'Artagnan working his way towards him.

ATHOS
Did you find the Cardinal's spy?

D'ARTAGNAN
Yes.

ATHOS
Did you kill him?

D'ARTAGNAN
Athos. The spy... is a woman.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

ATHOS

What?

Athos turns to d'Artagnan, wonders. And at that moment, sees a figure at the gangplank, swathed in fog and diffuse light. Milady. Time stops as they regard each other across the deck, the battle between.

ATHOS

No.

Milady turns and runs into the night. Athos races after.

CUT TO:

124 EXT. PIER - NIGHT

124

With the speed and grace of a panther, Milady runs down the gangplank, climbs into the saddle of one of her Bodyguard's horses, and gallops off. Athos appears moments later, leaps into the saddle of another horse. And gives chase.

CUT TO:

125 EXT. HARBOR ROAD - NIGHT

125

Milady whips her horse, drives it onward. But Athos overtakes, leaps from his saddle, takes her into his arms. They fall to the ground with a crash. Milady grabs the deadly comb from her hair, grips the dagger's handle. Athos, stunned from breaking their fall, rolls to his side. Milady peers at his face, vulnerable in the half-light. And lowers the dagger. She will not kill him.

Milady scrambles to her feet, runs toward a dark forest. But Athos stands and shouts:

ATHOS

Stop!!

Milady takes a halting step, then turns to face him. Athos holds his musket in a steady hand. A very long beat. Milady takes a step closer. Finally, she whispers, with love, with hate:

MILADY

Athos.

ATHOS

How did you do it, Sabine? How did you come back from the dead?

(CONTINUED)

MILADY

A kind gentleman took pity on me.

ATHOS

I did not.

MILADY

No, Count. You were too proud to listen to the truth. I learned the value of lies soon after.

Athos grips the pistol tighter, as if to ward off the past and what it brings.

ATHOS

Give me the Cardinal's treaty.

MILADY

No.

ATHOS

Then I will shoot.

Athos cocks the trigger. Milady whispers:

MILADY

Be kind. And aim for my heart.

Athos' face is a mask of contradiction. He tries to pull the trigger, but it is not in him. Milady recognizes his pain with a nod. She feels it, too. Then, briefly, before she leaves him, Milady speaks softly. The past, their love, and where it led them.

MILADY

I remember... everything.

She turns and runs away... directly into the arms of Armand de Winter. He has ridden, and he has followed, and he has finally found her here.

ARMAND

Countess de Winter...

As d'Artagnan, Porthos, and Aramis arrive on the scene...

CUT TO:

The public room is empty, save for d'Artagnan and the three Musketeers. They gather around a table. Aramis holds the treaty in his gloved hand. The mood is somber and tense.

(CONTINUED)

ARAMIS

The treaty outlines Richelieu's plan to forge an alliance with Buckingham.

PORTHOS

What about the King?

ARAMIS

He is not mentioned directly. But the agreement is contingent on a 'demonstration' of the Cardinal's power.

D'ARTAGNAN

A demonstration? What does that mean?

ARAMIS

I don't know.

Athos' face grows dark. He has been silent throughout. Now he rises to his feet.

ATHOS

I know someone who does.

D'Artagnan, Aramis, and Porthos watch in grim silence as Athos crosses the room to an imposing door.

CUT TO:

A fire burns in the grate. Milady sits beside it in a chair, staring into the glowing embers. Their hot reflection dances in her pale blue eyes. There is a KNOCK at the door. Armand de Winter emerges from a dark corner of the room where he has been standing guard with an impassive executioner. He crosses to the door, opens it. And Athos steps inside.

ATHOS

I'd like a word with your prisoner.

ARMAND

(a beat, he nods)

She dies at dawn.

Athos nods, and steps to Milady, stands before her. Milady stares at the fire, speaks softly, her eyes on the flames.

(CONTINUED)

MILADY
 (quietly sardonic)
 Did you come to offer me
 consolation?

ATHOS
 No.

Milady turns, looks up to face him.

MILADY
 There was a time when I would've
 given my life for a kind word.

ATHOS
 I could not give it, Sabine.
 I was... a fool.

Milady hears the regret in his voice, holds his gaze.
 Athos indicates Armand in the corner.

ATHOS
 Did you kill his brother and his
 father as he says?

MILADY
 (a long beat,
 honest at the
 last)
 I have become... the nightmare
 you once thought me to be.

ATHOS
 But not before. Not us.

MILADY
 No. The memory will keep me
 company.

Athos kneels at her side, near to pleading:

ATHOS
 Do you know the Cardinal's plans?

MILADY
 Yes.

ATHOS
 Tell me.

MILADY
 Will you spare my life?

ATHOS
 I can't.

(CONTINUED)

MILADY
 (remembering another
 time, another place)
 Society demands swift justice.
 (off his look)
 I'll take the secret to my grave.

ATHOS
 Sabine. You'll die for your
 crimes. Nothing can stop that.
 But how you leave this world is
 up to you.

Milady offers a half-smile, takes his hand in hers.

MILADY
 What did the world ever do for me?

HOLD ON Athos. Milady's hand in his. All that he is
 feeling.

CUT TO:

A hundred feet below, waves crash on a rocky shore. On
 the jagged cliff above, a black mass of trees is outlined
 against a stormy sky filled with copper-colored clouds,
 surreal in effect. A sinister procession approaches the
 cliff.

Porthos leads Milady. She wears a simple white shift,
 her hair pulled back into a long braid. She looks years
 younger, the girl she used to be. The Executioner walks
 behind them. Followed by Armand de Winter, Aramis,
 d'Artagnan. And Athos. He watches every step.

The procession stops at the cliff's edge.

THUNDER RUMBLES. Lightning slashes the sky. The
 Executioner ties Milady's hands behind her. The
 Executioner removes a bright scimitar from beneath his
 cloak. Milady catches Athos' eye. He holds her gaze.

He stares at Milady unflinchingly, as if to burn her
 image into his eyes, so that he might keep it there until
 the day he dies.

Aramis reaches inside his cloak, removes the sacred
 priestly cloth he carries.

(CONTINUED)

The Executioner delivers the formal litany:

EXECUTIONER

I forgive you for your crimes.
Die in peace.

Athos repeats, whispers:

ATHOS

Die in peace.

Aramis comes forward, intones:

ARAMIS

I am the resurrection and the
life, sayeth the Lord. He that
believeth in me, though he were
dead, yet shall he live; and
whosoever liveth and believeth
in me shall never die...

The Executioner's sharp blade shines in the light of
dawn.

EXECUTIONER

On your knees.

Milady kneels, the Executioner steps closer. The tableau
silhouetted against a reddish glow on the horizon. The
Executioner brushes Milady's braid from her neck,
exposing the soft white skin beneath. He raises the
scimitar overhead, and just as he is about to bring it
down... a cry is heard, torn from the heart:

ATHOS

No.

Athos grabs the Executioner's wrist, and twists the
scimitar loose. It falls to the ground.

EXECUTIONER

What's this...?

Porthos leaps forward, locks his great arms around Athos.

PORTHOS

Athos --

But Athos breaks free. Milady rises to her feet. Athos
rushes to her.

ATHOS

Forgive me, Sabine. Please
forgive.

(CONTINUED)

MILADY

I do.

The words he could never say, finally spoken. Milady locks eyes with him. Athos' desperate act, the pure feeling it signifies, has given her a kind of release. And the strength to face her fate.

MILADY

The Cardinal intends to assassinate the King at his birthday celebration on Friday.

And with that, Milady reaches forward, offers a gentle kiss. Then, as Athos and the others look on, stunned, uncertain... she takes a backward step, finds the cliff's edge... and steps over it. The Executioner rushes to look after. The others follow. Except for Athos, who remains rooted in place, eyes on the distant horizon. A long silence. THUNDER RUMBLES.

EXECUTIONER

God's justice be done.

D'Artagnan sadly lowers his head. Porthos puts a consoling hand on his shoulder. Aramis stands to the other side, mutters:

ARAMIS

Amen.

ATHOS

Musketeers.

D'Artagnan, Porthos, and Aramis turn. Athos has regained his former self. Stoic, in command. And hiding a broken heart.

ATHOS

The King's life in danger. We have work to do.

START CLOSE ON the now familiar portrait of King Louis XIII, usually found hanging behind Richelieu's desk. A SHOT RINGS OUT -- and a blast tears through the painting, leaving a smoking hole where the King's heart should be.

130 ANOTHER ANGLE

130

REVEALS Richelieu and Rochefort as they walk across the roof to the painting, appraise the damage. Thie Cardinal pokes a long finger into the hole.

RICHELIEU

Impressive.

ROCHEFORT

He can do it every time.

Rochefort signals approval to a solitary marksman positioned far away on one of the roof parapets. The marksman rises from a shooter's crouch, bows curtly, and begins to reload his musket.

RICHELIEU

And he has no qualms about...

ROCHEFORT

None. He believes that man should honor no Kings before God.

RICHELIEU

A man of faith. How delightful.

(turns back to
the painting)

Whatever you're paying him, double it. I want the King's birthday to be a memorable event. And rehang this painting in my chamber. Just as it is.

HOLD ON Richelieu for a beat. Framed by a sky filled with stars. His evil intent.

CUT TO:

131 DAWN

131

breaks. MUSIC UP, and...

CUT TO:

132 EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE - DAY

132

D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers thunder through on horseback. Pedestrians scurry to get out of their way. As they ride past, Porthos raises a crossbow and fires it. The arrow slices through the air with a terrible hum and imbeds itself on the public wall. Attached to the arrow is a piece of parchment, like the one in d'Artagnan's father's study. It reads: All For One, And One For All.

CUT TO:

133 EXT. ANOTHER VILLAGE - DAY 133

A CAPTAIN in the Cardinal's Guard makes a public pronouncement from horseback outside a cathedral. Townspeople are gathered around.

CAPTAIN

... the aforementioned Musketeers are declared outlaws and are sentenced to death. Any person sheltering or aiding them will be hanged --

HOOFBEATS interrupt. The Captain turns in irritation. And Porthos and Aramis ride to either side, snatch the man up by the arms, drag him briefly through the air, and deposit him with a thud against a hitching post. The Captain, stunned, looks down at the piece of parchment now attached to his chest. All For One, And One For All.

CUT TO:

134 INT./EXT. VARIOUS SCENES - DAY 134

As the word is passed to Musketeers in homes and pastures, brothels and gaming casinos. Galvanizing them into action. All For One, And One For All.

CUT TO:

135 EXT. PARIS - DAY 135

The city as SEEN FROM the hills. A glorious sunny day.

CUT TO:

136 EXT. LOUVRE - DAY 136

The citizens of Paris move through the streets. They share a common destination, the Palace. A festive mood is in the air. And why not, it is the King's birthday.

CUT TO:

137 INT. LOUVRE - GREAT HALL AND THRONE ROOM - DAY 137

A gathering of nobles and ladies, all in full ceremonial dress. Rochefort is there as well, the familiar eye patch, in command of the Cardinal's Guards. A Seneschal waits at the door with two flanking lines of trumpeteers. The trumpeteers raise their instruments and blow a royal blast.

138 ENTRANCE DOORS

138

Louis, Queen Anne, and their retinue enter from a corridor, proceed slowly across the room toward the balcony that overlooks the waiting crowd outside. Noblemen bow, and their ladies curtsy as the King and Queen pass. Constance, dressed for the occasion, looks on from the sidelines, smiles. The King and Queen proceed, two teenagers with the world at the feet.

 LOUIS
They look... happy.

 ANNE
Hungry, more likely.

 LOUIS
Still, you were right about the celebration. And when the Cardinal told me how much it meant to you...

 ANNE
I said nothing.

 LOUIS
But... ?

 ANNE
The Cardinal expressed in confidence how much the celebration would mean to you...

Both pause to consider the manipulation.

139 INT. ANTEROOM - DAY

139

Richelieu stands in an anteroom just off the procession, he watches the King and Queen as they walk, speaks quietly, to himself:

 RICHELIEU
I'm not sure which is sadder... to die so young. Or to die a King.

Richelieu turns from the procession. Speaks to Rochefort who pauses in the shadowy alcove behind him.

 RICHELIEU
France will not go wanting. A new King will sit on the throne. The true King after all...

He says it quiet fervor, the dream at long last within reach. Then, as if to reassure:

(CONTINUED)

139 CONTINUED:

139

RICHELIEU

Is everything ready?

ROCHEFORT

Yes, Your Eminence.

RICHELIEU

Are you sure?

ROCHEFORT

I'd stake my life on it, Your
Eminence.

RICHELIEU

(a dark beat)

Rest assured, Captain. You have.

CUT TO:

140 EXT. GROUNDS OUTSIDE LOUVRE - DAY

140

The balcony has been colorfully decorated. The crowd focuses its attention on the empty space where the King will soon appear. Below, the entrance to the Palace is protected by a double line of the Cardinal's Guards, resplendent in their crimson tunics. It would take an army to get past them.

CUT TO:

141 EXT. NEAR LOUVRE - DAY

141

The streets leading to the Palace are clogged with people, all pushing and straining to get closer. D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers arrive on horseback, are forced to dismount. They push through the crowd, trying to reach the Palace, afraid that they will be too late. Athos barks orders as they struggle forward:

ATHOS

(to d'Artagnan)

Look through the surrounding area.
We'll try to reach the King...

D'ARTAGNAN

But...?

ATHOS

Go!

Athos and the others press on. D'Artagnan, a little disappointed to be left behind, pauses, checks the buildings that loom overhead. Then he starts, reacts with shock and surprise.

142 D'ARTAGNAN'S POV 142

The bell tower of the Carmes-Deschaux monastery. A figure moving about, dimly-viewed, but this much is clear. The man is not a monk. And he is carrying a musket in his hands.

143 BACK TO SCENE 143

D'Artagnan turns to alert the Musketeers. Too late, they have already vanished into the throng. D'Artagnan takes off running for the monastery.

144 BELL TOWER 144

HIGH ABOVE the swelling scene. The marksman assumes a crouching position, raises his musket, and trains it on the empty balcony where the King is soon to appear.

CUT TO:

145 INT. LOUVRE - GREAT HALL AND THRONE ROOM - DAY 145

Louis and Anne continue toward the balcony. Richelieu trails the royal couple. He nods to Rochefort in passing. They exchange significant smiles. Anne spots the smirk on Rochefort's face. He resumes a supplicant pose. Anne glances back, Richelieu behind them.

ANNE

I do not trust him.

LOUIS

I'm not sure who to trust.

ANNE

Then we will discover the truth together.

Louis likes the sound of that. They step side by side toward the balcony.

CUT TO:

146 INT. STEEPLE - DAY 146

Bell ropes, hundreds of feet long, dangle down the vertiginous shaft. D'Artagnan races up the narrow, circular stairs. Above him is the open trap to the bell tower. He catches a glimpse of the marksman, back turned, taking aim.

CUT TO:

147 IN CROWD BELOW 147

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis push their way through the crowd, trying desperately to reach the Palace entrance. But the throng is impenetrable. Athos turns, wonders. And shoots a worried look at the bell tower of the Carmes-Deschaux, looming against the sky, as if to intuit the danger lurking there.

CUT TO:

148 EXT. LOUVRE - BALCONY - DAY 148

Louis and Anne lead the procession to the doors of the balcony. The crowd roars and the TRUMPETS BLARE. The King steps into the sunlight. The Queen follows, then Richelieu. The three most important people in France stand together, acknowledging the clamoring multitudes.

149 EXT. BELL TOWER - DAY 149

The marksman takes careful aim. The cheering down below is like a faint whisper at this altitude. The marksman cocks the hammer of his flinklock.

CUT TO:

150 INT. STEEPLE - DAY 150

D'Artagnan hears the click of the musket's hammer, and knows he must act now. He looks around and sees his chance. D'Artagnan leaps off the stairs and grabs a handful of rope, using his weight to RING the BELL overhead.

CUT TO:

151 EXT. BELL TOWER - DAY 151

The BIG BELL makes a resounding, ear-splitting CLANG -- causing the marksman's SHOT to go wild.

CUT TO:

152 EXT. LOUVRE - BALCONY - DAY 152

The SHOT misses the King and EXPLODES INTO the WALL an inch from his head. Louis turns to Richelieu -- sees anger and disappointment flash on the Cardinal's face. Just for an instant... but it is enough.

CUT TO:

153 INT./EXT. LOUVRE - DAY

153

Pandemonium, inside and outside the Palace. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis emerge from the crowd at the entrance, draw their swords, and prepare to rush the long line of Guards protecting the doors. The Guards cannot believe what they are seeing. Three men against a hundred. It's ridiculous. But then... the looks on Guards' faces begin to change, subtly at first, from amusement to horror.

154 THEIR POV

154

Behind Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, something incredible happens. Musketeers appear from every direction. Some from the surrounding crowd. Some from buildings, rooftops. Others appear on horseback, a few disguised as monks. And all defiantly wearing their blue and gold tunics.

The murmur of the crowd becomes an excited roar. The corps of Musketeers line up behind Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Porthos and Aramis exchange a smile. Athos keeps his usually dour expression. But his eyes are charged with excitement. They raise their arms, and face the long line of Guards. A hundred sabers flash in the sunlight.

ATHOS

Save the King!!

The Musketeers charge. It is a glorious sight.

CUT TO:

155 EXT. BELL TOWER - DAY

155

D'Artagnan scrambles up through the trapdoor, and tackles the marksman. As the BELL CONTINUES TO CLANG, they fight hand-to-hand. The marksman forces d'Artagnan toward the edge of the tower. Two hundred feet to the ground below. They remain deadlocked for a beat, the marksman inching d'Artagnan backward, certain death behind him. And at the last moment, d'Artagnan summons up the strength of three -- and shoves the marksman backward with a resounding kick.

The marksman stumbles, falls through the open trapdoor, and plunges to his death.

D'Artagnan peers down the shaft. There's a faint CRASH as the marksman hits bottom. Utilizing the bell ropes like a fireman's pole, d'Artagnan grabs hold and slides down into the abyss.

CUT TO:

156 INT. GREAT HALL AND THRONE ROOM - DAY

156

Pandemonium reigns. Rochefort instructs his Guards to close the huge door to the great hall. The members of the King's royal court run in panicked circles, convinced the palace is under seige. Constance pauses amid the riot, seeks the Queen.

But Richelieu has found her first. He steps to Anne, assumes an air of priestly innocence.

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty...

But Louis steps INTO VIEW, puts a protecting arm around his wife, speaks stern command:

LOUIS

Leave us... alone.

That's when a loud BOOM rocks the room.

157 ANOTHER ANGLE

157

The great door shudders under the impact of a terrific blow. Another BOOM and the great hall is plunged into further chaos. The regiment of Guards rush forward, press their bodies against the door to secure it.

BOOM -- the great door threatens to split in half.

Richelieu huddles with Rochefort amid the rising panic. His eyes narrow to mean slits, he gestures toward Louis and Anne across the room.

RICHELIEU

(a cold whisper)

Kill him. Kill her, too.

Rochefort draws d'Artagnan's sword from its sheath. He advances on Louis and Anne. Louis has witnessed the latter, treason confirmed. He raises his own sword, prepared to protect his Queen. To die for her if necessary.

LOUIS

(to Anne)

Get behind me.

Rochefort takes confident steps toward the King. But one last BOOM and the great DOOR comes CRASHING down on the Guards, revealing a tide of Musketeers on the other side. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis at the lead.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

Louis breaks into a wide grin. The Musketeers wade into the Guards, and the great hall is transformed into a battlefield. Rochefort turns, sees Athos charging at him.

ATHOS

Greetings, Monsieur Cyclops. Are we interrupting?

ROCHEFORT

Not for long.

Athos and Rochefort lock swords and duel.

158 BATTLE

158

Musketeers surround Louis and Anne to ward off attack. But the young King has no intention of being protected. He wades to the fore, fights side by side with his Musketeers. Anne watches him with a host of emotions. Respect, admiration... love. Louis pauses to return her gaze, then returns to battle.

Constance dashes through the fray. She sees a Guard slip behind a curtain, approach the Queen. She grabs a heavy goblet, shouts:

CONSTANCE

Look out!

Anne looks up. Constance tosses the goblet to her. Anne catches it neatly, brings it down on the head of the hapless Guard. Constance smiles, leaps forward.

Aramis cuts down a Guard. As another man comes at him from behind, Porthos intervenes, runs the man through. The two Musketeers pause to exchange deadpan thanks, and continue.

Athos and Rochefort slash at each other. It is a mighty confrontation. But Athos soon gains the upper hand. Rochefort shouts to a nearby Guard for help. Now it's two on one. Athos receives a wound in the shoulder, he staggers... and the treaty falls from his tunic to the floor. Rochefort reacts with a start, he grabs the treaty, stuffs it into his doublet. Athos shakes off the sudden pain, disposes of the Guard. Rochefort and Athos face each other a second time. Athos wounded, Rochefort confident he can finish the injured Musketeer.

But Athos merely changes sword hands. Rochefort reacts. Their SABERS CLASH as they draw together. Rochefort grabs a dagger from his belt with his free hand. But Athos sees it coming, and smashes Rochefort across the face with his fist.

(CONTINUED)

Rochefort goes sprawling. He loses his sword, it slides across the floor until someone's foot stops it. Rochefort looks up... and sees d'Artagnan standing on the blade.

D'ARTAGNAN

This sword belongs to me.

D'Artagnan stoops to pick up his long-lost sword. He tosses his other saber to Rochefort, who catches it neatly. Athos watches from a short distance, knows this moment belongs to d'Artagnan. He will not intervene. But he shouts:

ARAMIS

D'Artagnan. Kill him where he stands.

These are d'Artagnan's words. A son vowing to avenge the death of his father. D'Artagnan wonders. Rochefort confirms.

ROCHEFORT

By all means. Let's discover if you are as brave a man as your father was. And as foolish.

D'ARTAGNAN

(stunned by the revelation as it unfolds)

What...?

ROCHEFORT

He died for his King and for France. But most of all... he died on the end of my sword.

(the final curse)

As will you.

Rochefort smiles a taunt. D'Artagnan raises his sword, whispers to heaven.

D'ARTAGNAN

This is for you, Father.

Then, eyes blazing, d'Artagnan attacks Rochefort with everything he's got, driving him into an adjoining chamber.

A FIRE ROARS in a great stone hearth. Its light projects giant shadows on the wall as d'Artagnan and Rochefort duel, slashing at each other.

160 GREAT HALL

160

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis take the fight to the Cardinal's Guards. Each with his by-now familiar trademarks. King Louis fighting beside them.

161 D'ARTAGNAN AND ROCHEFORT

161

They battle before the blazing fire, sweat covers their faces. Rochefort wears a wolfish grin. But d'Artagnan has learned his lessons well. He attacks with gusto. Rochefort's grin soon turns toward desperation. He cannot match the boy's vengeful steel. So he drives a knee into d'Artagnan's groin. D'Artagnan falls to the floor. Rochefort means to finish him there. But d'Artagnan rolls away from the blade, leaps back to his feet. Undaunted, he hurls himself at his hated opponent.

Rochefort sidesteps, throws d'Artagnan against a wall. He pins him there, stunning the youth. And hisses with superior disdain:

ROCHEFORT

One thing's certain. You're no
Musketeer.

But d'Artagnan remembers Athos' advice. "Always find your enemy's weakness." He shoves a thumb into Rochefort's good eye. Rochefort stumbles backward. D'Artagnan plunges his sword into Monsieur Cyclops's heart.

D'ARTAGNAN

Take it back...?

ROCHEFORT

I might... have been... mistaken.

Rochefort crumples to the floor, dead. D'Artagnan looks at Rochefort's blood on his sword. His father's death finally avenged. That's when he hears the RUSTLE of a SILKEN ROBE. D'Artagnan pivots, sees Richelieu kneeling at Rochefort's body... extracting the treaty from his doublet.

D'ARTAGNAN

No!!

Richelieu smiles, hurls the treaty into the blazing fireplace. As the flames begin to lick at the parchment paper, d'Artagnan flies past the Cardinal, and dives after to retrieve it.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

Athos, Porthos, and Aramis enter the room. D'Artagnan stumbles out of the fireplace, covered with soot, clutching the treaty. He grins. ON d'Artagnan's look of triumph...

CUT TO:

162 INT. GREAT HALL AND THRONE ROOM - DAY

162

A short time later. The battle is over. The Musketeers have won. On the dais, Louis and Anne confront Richelieu who is a prisoner now, guarded by several Musketeers. Louis holds the recovered treaty in his hands.

D'Artagnan and the three Musketeers stand nearby.

RICHELIEU

Your Majesty, that document is an obvious forgery. I am clearly the victim of a conspiracy designed and perpetuated by these three Musketeers.

Richelieu assumes a trustworthy pose, one familiar to both King and Queen.

LOUIS

This is a complicated matter, Your Eminence, affecting both France and the crown...

A beat. As all wonder if Richelieu will manage to elude blame after all. But Louis continues with quiet authority, just a trace of humor. As King, and as a man.

LOUIS

And so, until such time as I and my advisors --
 (gestures toward
 Anne; the
 Musketeers)
 -- can determine the whole truth of the matter. I invite you to await our decision in the comfort of... the Bastille.

Musketeers close in around the Cardinal. He fumes, protests.

RICHELIEU

You can't do this to me. I'm the Cardinal of France.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIS
 (never more certain)
 And I am its King.

Shouts of "Long live the King! Long live the King!"

LOUIS
 And as King... I hereby reinstate
 the Musketeers.

A tremendous cheer is heard from all. Richelieu is led from the room. He pauses in front of d'Artagnan.

RICHELIEU
 Congratulations, Monsieur
 d'Artagnan. I'll be keeping an
 eye on you.

D'ARTAGNAN
 (unphased)
 Thank you, Your Eminence. I'll
 be watching you, too.

Richelieu smiles his crocodile smile. Followed by guards, he turns and strides away, hands clasped behind his back, scarlet robes billowing behind him.

Louis turns to the Musketeers. He indicates d'Artagnan.

LOUIS
 Is this the young man who saved
 my life?

Porthos puts a hand on d'Artagnan's shoulder.

PORTHOS
 His name's d'Artagnan, Sire.

LOUIS
 Approach, d'Artagnan.

D'Artagnan's heart pounds as he draws closer to King and Queen. Then he remembers, reaches into his doublet. And turns to the Queen.

D'ARTAGNAN
 I have something that belongs to
 ... Your Majesty...

D'Artagnan produces the bracelet he found on the country road. He holds it out to her. The King wonders, the Queen smiles.

(CONTINUED)

ANNE

Thank you, d'Artagnan. But the bracelet does not belong to me.

(off his look)

It belongs to her.

Anne indicates Constance, who steps forward, INTO VIEW. D'Artagnan and Constance lock eyes for the third time. The thrill of recognition, the promise of romance, charges between. D'Artagnan slips the bracelet around her wrist. Constance kisses him on the cheek. Louis continues:

LOUIS

D'Artagnan, I am in your debt. What can I do to repay the courage you've shown me? Anything, D'Artagnan. Whatever your heart desires...

D'Artagnan knows what he wants. But he is tongue-tied, unable to ask for it. Athos asks for him.

ATHOS

Majesty, his heart has only one desire. To become a Musketeer.

D'Artagnan looks at Athos, thankful for the intercession. Louis answers with pleasure.

LOUIS

Then kneel, d'Artagnan.

D'Artagnan drops to his knees. Louis lays the blade of his sword on each of his shoulders.

LOUIS

The world is an uncertain realm, filled with danger. Truth despoiled by broken promises. Honor undermined by the pursuit of gold. Freedom sacrificed when the weak are oppressed by the strong. But there are those who oppose these powerful forces. Those who dedicate their lives to truth, honor, and freedom. They are a constant reminder to all of us. That such a life is not just possible, but necessary to our continued survival. As a country, as a King. These men are known as the Musketeers...

(CONTINUED)

As Louis speaks, D'Artagnan closes his eyes; countless images rush through his mind. His home in Gascony, Constance and Queen Anne on the country road, his first encounters with Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, their adventures together, the face of Milady. It's been a busy week.

LOUIS

Rise, d'Artagnan. And join them.
Musketeer.

D'Artagnan stands, transformed from boy to man. BELLS RING in the distance. Constance smiles brightly, tears gleam in her eyes. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis surround their young friend, and happily present him with the bright blue tunic of the Musketeers. They slip the tunic over d'Artagnan's head, react with a cheer. D'Artagnan hugs each of the three. For each has given him gifts more valuable than gold.

Porthos, Aramis, and last... Athos. Who, to the surprise of all who know him... smiles.

PORTHOS

Do my eyes deceive me?

ARAMIS

I find it hard to believe myself.

PORTHOS

His lips, unused as they are to such a contortion, twisted and stretched... into a smile.

ARAMIS

It was spectacular. And what teeth.

D'Artagnan basks in their company, wonders aloud.

D'ARTAGNAN

I know this is a stupid question.
But what exactly does a Musketeer do?

Porthos and Aramis exchange a glance. They're not so sure themselves.

PORTHOS

Truth... honor...

ARAMIS

(helpfully suggests
a third)

And freedom.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: (4)

162

PORTHOS
Weren't you listening?

163 HIGH ANGLE

163

The Three Musketeers -- no, make that the four
Musketeers -- raise their swords, and clash blades
together, causing them to give off sparks.

D'ARTAGNAN
All for one...

OTHERS
... And one for all!!

MUSIC SOARS. The curtain falls.

FADE OUT.

THE END