

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

by Alexandre Dumas



THE AUTHOR

Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870) was born in a small French village northeast of Paris. His father had been a general under Napoleon, and his paternal grandfather had lived in Haiti and had married a former slave woman there, thus making Dumas what was called a quadroon. Napoleon and his father had parted on bad terms, with Dumas' father being owed a large sum of money; the failure to pay this debt left the family poor and struggling, though the younger Dumas remained an admirer of the French emperor. Young Dumas moved to Paris in 1823 and took a job as a clerk to the Duke of Orleans (later to become King Louis Philippe), but soon began writing plays. Though his plays were successful and he made quite a handsome living from them, his profligate lifestyle (both financially and sexually) kept him constantly on the edge of bankruptcy. He played an active role in the revolution of 1830, and then turned to writing novels. As was the case with Dickens in England, his books were published in cheap newspapers in serial form. Dumas proved able to crank out popular stories at an amazing rate, and soon became the most famous writer in France. Among his works are *The Three Musketeers* (1844), *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1845), and *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1850). Dumas' novels tend to be long and full of flowery description (some cynics suggest that this is because he was paid by the word), and for this reason often appear today in the form of abridged translations (if you ever doubt the value of such an approach, take a look at the *unabridged* version of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* sometime). Dumas continued to churn out novels until 1867. In 1870, he suffered a stroke and died, having spent or given away almost all the millions of francs he had earned throughout a fabulous life that in many ways equaled the adventures in the stories he generated from his imagination. His illegitimate son Alexandre Dumas *fils* also became a famous writer, though he did not follow his father's exorbitant lifestyle.

Dumas was part of the French Romantic movement, which involved a reaction against the conservatism and orderliness of the Age of Reason. His stories are full of adventure and passion, and show a real love for the unique characteristics of French society. He favored democracy and hated despots. As an author, much like Shakespeare, Dumas tended to draw his plots from history (to which he did not adhere very carefully) and from the writings of others. The basic plot for *The Three Musketeers* was taken from *The Memoirs of Monsieur d'Artagnan*, a picaresque novel

written by Courtilz de Sandras in 1701. While Dumas borrows most of his characters and plot elements both large and small from Sandras, he tells the story in his unique style, engrossing readers from his own day to the present. The story itself takes place in the early seventeenth century, during the time when Cardinal Richelieu was the power behind the throne in France, and one of the historical centerpieces of the novel is the siege of the Huguenot fortress of La Rochelle in 1628. Most of the characters are, of course, fictional, but draw the reader in with the lifelike strokes used by the master storyteller in bringing them to life.

PLOT SUMMARY

The story begins with the young D'Artagnan leaving his home in Gascony to seek his fortune. His father had sent him off to Paris with three gifts - a yellow nag, fifteen crowns, and a letter of introduction to M. de Tréville, the Captain of the King's Musketeers. His mother had given him a secret formula for a balsam that was able to cure all wounds that have not reached the heart. In the town of Meung, the young man encounters an arrogant nobleman who insults his horse and then himself. D'Artagnan challenges him to a duel, but gains nothing but a broken sword and a beating from the man's friends, in the course of which his letter is stolen. D'Artagnan does discover that the nobleman is meeting a woman he addresses as Milady, who is told to return to England and keep an eye on the Duke of Buckingham.

Somewhat chastened, D'Artagnan continues to Paris, rents a small room, and pays a visit to M. de Tréville. There he encounters a boisterous group of musketeers, including a flamboyant giant named Porthos and a scholarly aspiring priest named Aramis. He quickly discovers that, while the musketeers revere King Louis XIII, they loathe Cardinal Richelieu and mock him at every opportunity; the two are, in fact, rivals for power in the realm, with Richelieu holding the upper hand. D'Artagnan is admitted to the office of M. de Tréville, but before he has a chance to speak, the captain of the musketeers summons Athos, Porthos, and Aramis into his presence to chastise them for a brawl the previous evening - not so much because they were brawling, but because they had lost to the cardinal's guards. Athos, who was seriously wounded, is not present, but soon appears, trying his best not to show his pain. After the three leave the office, Tréville tells D'Artagnan that he cannot enroll him in the musketeers because he has no military experience, but offers to get him into the Royal Military Academy and keep his eye on him in the future. Tréville fears D'Artagnan may be a spy planted by Richelieu and tries to test the young man, but finds him open and honest.

As the interview comes to a close, D'Artagnan spies the nobleman who had abused him in Meung outside the office window. He rushes out of Tréville's office in pursuit, but on the way inadvertently bumps into Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, all of whom take offense and challenge him to duels. Meanwhile, he loses the mysterious nobleman. Assuming he is about to meet his demise, he fulfills his appointment with Athos, only to find that Porthos and Aramis are his seconds. He prepares to do battle, but the group is assaulted by the Cardinal's guards, and D'Artagnan joins the musketeers in the fray, which they win handily, with the young man felling two of the Cardinal's best swordsmen. As a result, the three musketeers take D'Artagnan under their wing and the four become fast friends. The next day, before they are to be presented to the King, D'Artagnan is again attacked by one of the Cardinal's guards. A riot ensues, during which the musketeers are again victorious. They are honored by an audience with Louis XIII, but Richelieu is furious with them and determined to get even.

Having been rewarded by the King, the musketeers enjoy a banquet together, then hire a lackey for D'Artagnan, a young man named Planchet. In the days that follow, D'Artagnan becomes familiar with the establishments of his friends, their homes and their servants. What he never discovers, however, are their real names, for Athos, Porthos, and Aramis are pseudonyms. As a result of M. de Tréville's favor, D'Artagnan is soon admitted into the guards as a cadet. One day D'Artagnan's landlord, M. Bonacieux, pays him a visit to inform him that his wife Constance, who was the Queen's seamstress, has been kidnaped. D'Artagnan soon discovers that the abductor is the same nobleman for whom he had been seeking since his arrival in Paris. Constance has been taken by this agent of the Cardinal in an attempt to find out from her when the Duke of Buckingham, who is in love with the Queen, will be visiting Paris so that he may be apprehended. Bonacieux offers D'Artagnan free rent if he will help him recover his wife. They again spot the culprit in the street, but are unable to follow him successfully. Later, four bailiffs arrive to arrest M. Bonacieux, and the musketeers do nothing to stop them, realizing a trap is being set. In the days that follow, they watch the house and discover that everyone who enters it is being interrogated by the Cardinal's agents. One day Constance herself arrives, and D'Artagnan immediately intervenes and rescues her, then sees her to safety, meanwhile falling madly in love with her. Deciding to visit Aramis, D'Artagnan is amazed to find Constance approaching his house, then speaking to a woman within. He approaches her, and she insists she does not know Aramis, and asks him to conduct her to her next appointment. When he returns home, he finds that Athos has been arrested by guards who thought he was D'Artagnan. He then goes to find Porthos and Aramis, and on the way again meets Constance, this time on the arm of a strange "musketeer" who turns out to be George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham. Constance then conducts Buckingham to a secret meeting with the Queen, where he professes his love for her and she gives him a small rosewood casket containing two diamond studs given her by the King.

In prison, Bonacieux is frightened by the Cardinal's agents into telling all he knows of his wife's behavior, in the process giving important information to Richelieu and being coaxed into becoming his informant. Athos is subjected to the same treatment, but of course reveals nothing. During the interrogation, we discover that the mysterious nobleman who insulted D'Artagnan and kidnaped Constance is the Comte de Rochefort, one of Richelieu's most trusted agents. Later, a messenger is given a letter for Milady in England, telling her to cut two diamond studs from the doublet of the Duke of Buckingham. Meanwhile, D'Artagnan has told Tréville about Athos' arrest, and the Captain of the Musketeers immediately goes to the King and secures his release over the Cardinal's strenuous objections. After Tréville leaves, Richelieu informs the King that Buckingham had been in Paris for the last five days. Louis XIII is furious, certain that his Queen has betrayed him; Richelieu assures him that she has not besmirched his honor, but has instead been plotting with the enemies of France. Richelieu encourages the King to have the Queen's chambers and person searched to obtain any incriminating correspondence, and the search indeed reveals plotting with the King of Spain, Anne's brother; Louis is actually comforted, because the thought of infidelity bothers him much more than any fears of treason, which he believes can never come to fruition. He is so happy that he plans to throw a ball for the Queen, and Richelieu hints that he should encourage the Queen to wear the diamond studs he had given her for her birthday (which, of course, unbeknownst to the King but known by Richelieu, she had given to Buckingham). When Louis tells the Queen about the ball and the diamond studs, she almost panics, but Constance Bonacieux, who overheard the conversation, offers to send her husband with a message to Buckingham in London in order to retrieve the studs. When she goes to her

husband, however, she discovers that he is now in league with Richelieu, and thus cannot be trusted with such an embassy. D'Artagnan, however, overhears the conversation from his apartment above hers, and immediately offers his services. Constance accepts his offer and gives him the money her husband had received from Richelieu, but they soon hear her husband speaking with Rochefort and plotting to betray her and the Queen.

D'Artagnan, realizing that he must leave for London immediately, goes to M. de Tréville and requests a two-week leave. The Captain of Musketeers agrees, but insists that he should take Athos, Porthos, and Aramis with him. The four friends are soon underway. En route to the coast, the three musketeers are all sidetracked by various mishaps. On reaching Calais, D'Artagnan steals a travel permit from the Comte de Vardes, crosses the Channel, and locates Buckingham soon after. At the Duke's palace, D'Artagnan tells his news and Buckingham discovers that two of the diamond studs have been stolen. He immediately seals all English ports to prevent the studs from leaving the country, then commissions his goldsmith to produce unidentifiable duplicates and gives them to D'Artagnan to take to the Queen, providing him with swift horses intended as gifts for him and his musketeer comrades, and a secure route that brings him safely to Paris.

At the ball, the Queen appears without the two diamond studs, and Richelieu grins wickedly as his plot unfolds. But after Anne retires to dress, she returns with the full complement of twelve studs on her costume, foiling the Cardinal, who hoped to trap her by giving the King the two that had been given to Buckingham, then stolen from him by Milady. D'Artagnan, who is the hero of the affair, is rewarded by being conducted by Constance through the Hotel de Ville and being allowed to kiss the hand of the Queen in the anteroom of her bedchamber, where she gives him a valuable ring. He hopes that Constance will return his affection for her, but she puts him off until a later time. When he arrives home, he finds a letter from Constance asking him to meet her at an isolated place that evening. He is overjoyed, but when he relates the tale to Tréville, the Captain warns him to beware of treachery and advises him to leave the city and search out the fates of his three friends. D'Artagnan insists on keeping the rendezvous first, but his lackey Planchet tells him that, when D'Artagnan had been speaking to M. Bonacieux that morning, the landlord had had a sly look on his face, and he warns his master to expect a trap. The two set out for the rendezvous, but before arriving D'Artagnan leaves Planchet at a tavern. He moves on alone to the designated place, but finds only a ransacked room. After questioning a neighbor, he concludes that Constance was kidnaped again by Rochefort, with the assistance of her treacherous husband.

The next morning he set out to find what has become of his friends. He finds Porthos convalescing from a wound received in a duel in the tavern where he had left him. While he had been recovering, he had accumulated a substantial bill, which he was unable to pay because he had gambled away all his money, and because his mistress, revealed as the middle-aged wife of a lawyer named Coquenard, was unwilling to send him further funds. Meanwhile, his lackey Mousqueton has been keeping them both well-fed by stealing food and wine. D'Artagnan settles his bill for him, then goes in search of Aramis. He finds him at the inn where he left him, also recovering from his wounds, and in deep conversation with two clerics who are preparing him to enter the priesthood. After the clergymen depart, D'Artagnan gives Aramis a letter from his mistress, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, and the heartsick young man quickly revives and abandons all thoughts of leaving the musketeers for the ministry. Our hero then moves on to find Athos, who has barricaded himself in the cellar of the inn in which the two of them had been assaulted.

The innkeeper has realized his mistake and had begged Athos to come out, but the musketeer refused and was eating the publican out of house and home. D'Artagnan persuades him to come out, after which Athos tells the sad tale of his marriage - as a young man, he had married a beautiful girl of sixteen, the brother of a curate, but had discovered by chance one day that she bore a fleur-de-lis on her shoulder - the brand of the Royal Executioner. Furious at the discovery that his wife was a criminal, he hanged her from the nearest tree. The false curate, meanwhile, had escaped.

On the way back to Paris, all four young men gamble away or sell the magnificent horses that had been given them by Buckingham. Upon returning home, they find that D'Artagnan would soon be promoted to the King's Musketeers, and that the King is planning a military campaign against La Rochelle. Needing money to equip themselves adequately, they remember the diamond that D'Artagnan wears - his present from the Queen. They scatter searching for funds, and Porthos entreats his mistress by first making her jealous in church by flirting with a beautiful woman he does not know; D'Artagnan, who is spying on him from behind a pillar, recognizes her as Milady and follows her out of the church. When he finds her, he discovers that she is in correspondence with the Comte de Vardes, from whom D'Artagnan had stolen a travel permit, and is the sister-in-law of Lord Winter, Baron of Sheffield, the Englishman to whom Athos had gambled away his and D'Artagnan's horses. After some unpleasant conversation, D'Artagnan challenges Winter to a duel that evening. During the duel, D'Artagnan and his friends rout Lord Winter and his English companions, with Athos killing his opponent because he forced him to reveal his true identity. D'Artagnan has Lord Winter at his mercy but spares him, and Winter invites D'Artagnan to dinner at the home of Lady Clark (Milady). She receives him courteously, but he observes venomous expressions on her face when she thinks he is not looking. He continues to visit each day, but fails to notice the adoring glances he receives from Lady Clark's maid Kitty. Porthos, meanwhile, goes to dinner at the home of his mistress and her husband, but finds them exceedingly stingy; he is fed a meager meal and she promises to help outfit him for the wars by getting him bargains on the things he needs, in addition to giving him 800 livres. D'Artagnan continues to visit Milady daily and quickly falls in love with her, but one day Kitty, her maid, draws him aside and warns him that Milady hates him and seeks some terrible revenge for an unknown affront. Kitty is in love with the dashing young soldier, and D'Artagnan decides to use her affection to win Milady, but after overhearing a conversation between mistress and maid, he changes his mind and decides to use his flirtation, which has by this time become an affair with Kitty, to gain his own revenge. After intercepting several love letters from Milady to the Comte de Vardes, he plots to wreak his vengeance by substituting himself for the Count in Milady's bedchamber. As D'Artagnan anticipates the evening's adventure, we find that Aramis has received a large sum of money from his mistress in Tours, while Porthos has gotten nothing from Madame Coquenard but D'Artagnan's old yellow nag and a pathetic mule for his lackey (he returns both of these, and soundly chastises his embarrassed mistress).

That night, D'Artagnan carries out his plan and, pretending to be the Comte de Vardes, makes love to Milady in her darkened bedchamber. She is overjoyed, and gives him a valuable sapphire ring as a love token, but at the same time swears vengeance on the Gascon who has dared to wound her lover. Kitty, the maid, is heartbroken, but soon recovers when she brings D'Artagnan a letter from her mistress to de Vardes asking for another rendezvous and D'Artagnan forges an answer in which he tells her she will have to wait until he makes the rounds of his other lovers. D'Artagnan then seeks advice from Athos, who warns him to avoid Milady. When

D'Artagnan shows him the ring he received from her, he blanches, recognizing it as a family heirloom he had given to his young wife. For two days D'Artagnan avoids Milady, but on the third day she summons him. When he arrives, she flirts with him and promises him her love if he will avenge her by killing de Vardes. D'Artagnan agrees, simultaneously overcome with love and telling himself that this is the most dangerous woman he has ever known. He spends that night with Lady Clark, and after making love admits to her that he had duped her, sleeping with her earlier in the guise of the Comte de Vardes. Milady, furious, leaps from the bed, but D'Artagnan grabs her nightgown; it tears, revealing the fleur de lis engraved on her shoulder by the Royal Executioner. Because D'Artagnan now knows her secret, Milady is determined to kill him. She seizes a dagger and lunges at him, but he protects himself with his sword and flees through Kitty's apartment. He then goes to Athos and tells him the story - they are now certain that Milady is the same woman as the criminal wife hanged by Athos. The two decide to sell the ring she gave D'Artagnan to supply themselves for the coming war, and Aramis arranges for Kitty to leave Paris and become a handmaid for his mistress. Now all the musketeers are fully equipped for the coming war, but before they embark, D'Artagnan receives two messages - one from Constance telling him that he may get a glimpse of her if he appears at a certain time on a certain road (he goes, accompanied by his friends and their lackeys, and does indeed see her), and the other from Cardinal Richelieu himself. When D'Artagnan visits the Cardinal, Richelieu treats him kindly and offers him a position in his own guard. D'Artagnan politely refuses because his friends are all in the King's Musketeers and his enemies all coincidentally happen to work for the Cardinal, and Richelieu warns him that he will no longer enjoy his protection if he continues to pursue his present course.

D'Artagnan then heads to La Rochelle with the Guards, while his three friends remain behind until the musketeers are summoned to the front. Shortly after his arrival, D'Artagnan escapes two attempts on his life; the second time he captures one of the assassins and finds that he had been paid by Milady. D'Artagnan spares the man and thus wins him to his side, and from him learns that Milady had also hired him to kidnap Constance, who is by now hiding in a convent. While nothing happens with the siege, D'Artagnan longs for his companions. One day he receives a letter from them, accompanied by a case of wine. He invites several of his fellow guardsmen to imbibe with him, and entrusts the arrangements to Planchet and Brisemont, the man who had tried to kill him a short time before. As the party is about to indulge, cannon fire announcing the arrival of the King. D'Artagnan goes to meet his friends, but they insist they sent him no wine. When the group returns to the party, they find Brisemont dying - the wine had been poisoned, and Milady is the obvious suspect. One night Athos, Porthos, and Aramis are out carousing and on the way home meet Richelieu himself. He asks them to escort him to the inn where they had been drinking (and fighting), and while there he meets with Milady, who had been escorted to the inn by Rochefort. The three musketeers, waiting below, overhear the conversation through a broken stovepipe. Richelieu is sending Milady to England to meet Buckingham and tell him that, if he persists in his war against France, the Cardinal has enough information in his keeping to disgrace the Queen forever. If the ploy fails, Milady agrees to arrange Buckingham's assassination and asks for a blanket endorsement of her actions signed by Richelieu. She also asks the Cardinal to help her avenge herself on her enemies - to find where the Queen has hidden Constance Bonacieux and to imprison D'Artagnan in the Bastille and there execute him. Athos quickly leaves the inn, supposedly to ride ahead as an advance guard on the way back to camp, but circles around and reenters the inn after the Cardinal leaves. He confronts his former wife,

threatens to shoot her on the spot if she does not relinquish the letter she received from Richelieu, then warns her that if she touches D'Artagnan she will surely die.

When the three musketeers return to D'Artagnan, the four decide to exchange news, but are unable to find a safe and quiet place to do so. They make a bet with another group of soldiers that they can remain in the fort at Saint-Gervais in full sight of the enemy for at least an hour. When they arrive at the bastion, they find dead soldiers, strip them of their arms and ammunition, and settle down for breakfast. They easily turn aside two sorties by the enemy, meanwhile acquainting D'Artagnan of Milady's conversation with Richelieu and ensuing meeting with Athos. After discussing various proposals, they decide to send two of the lackeys, Bazin and Planchet, with letters warning Lord Winter and the Queen of the assassination plots hatched by Milady and the Cardinal. They then calmly return to camp through a hail of bullets, to the cheers of two thousand watching French troops. Richelieu, despite his frustration with the four friends, rewards D'Artagnan for his bravery by promoting him to the corps of musketeers. D'Artagnan then sells the diamond he received from the Queen in order to finance the lackeys' journey, and the two safely complete their assigned missions. Meanwhile, Milady arrives in England after Planchet delivers his message, and is promptly arrested by order of Lord Winter, who by now knows that her marriage to his brother was illegal because she already had a husband in France. Winter reveals his knowledge to Milady and informs her that she is to be held incommunicado for three weeks, then be sent into exile in the southern colonies, never to return to England or Europe. He leaves her in the care of John Felton, a loyal lieutenant and a staunch Puritan thought immune to Lady Clark's wiles. Back at La Rochelle, the siege continues unabated. One day, Richelieu finds the four companions and their lackeys lounging on the beach and tries to pry some information from them, but is unsuccessful, though Aramis had just received a letter from his mistress informing them that Constance was safely hidden in a convent in Bethune.

In England, Milady is desperately trying to scheme her way out of captivity. Day by day, she works on the sensitivities of the young Puritan officer who is her jailer, convincing him that she herself is a Puritan being persecuted for her faith by the scoundrel Buckingham, who supposedly stole her virginity after drugging her then branded her so no one would believe her story of his perfidy, and Lord Winter, Buckingham's dupe. The naive Lieutenant Felton believes her story, and she convinces him to effect her release and assassinate Buckingham. Lord Winter sends Felton away, but he returns that night and sees the bars of Milady's prison window, allowing her to escape. He then goes to Portsmouth, where he murders Buckingham; after his capture, he sees her ship far out at sea and realizes that he has been duped. When the King becomes bored with the siege of La Rochelle, he requests an escort of musketeers to take him back to Paris, and the four comrades are among them. After seeing the King safely back to the capital, they immediately head for Bethune to rescue Constance, realizing that Milady is on the way there to seek her revenge. On the way, D'Artagnan again glimpses Rochefort, but is unable to pursue him.

Within a few days Milady arrives at the convent in Bethune. Sensing that the Mother Superior is a royalist, she convinces her that she is the victim of persecution at the hands of Richelieu, and the Mother Superior then introduces her to a fellow-sufferer, whom Milady soon realizes is Constance Bonacieux. She easily convinces Constance that she is a friend of D'Artagnan and his companions, and Constance confides in her the exciting news that D'Artagnan is arriving that very evening. Soon a horseman arrives at the convent, but it is not D'Artagnan - it is the Comte de Rochefort. After receiving Milady's news, he goes to convey it to the Cardinal,

and she arranges to have his valet pick her up and convey her from the convent to Armentieres. She easily convinces Constance to go with her, but before they can depart, they hear the sound of the musketeers' horses. Milady prepares to flee through the convent garden, but Constance refuses to go with her. She poisons Constance's drink, then goes out the back way.

When D'Artagnan and his friends arrive, they find Constance beyond help, and she expires shortly thereafter. Soon Lord Winter arrives, and the five men go in search of Lady Clark. Athos reveals that she is his wife, and is determined to undertake the task alone after finding a note dropped by Rochefort's valet indicating that Armentieres was her destination. He sends the four valets to Armentieres by different roads to ascertain Milady's whereabouts while he visits a mysterious man in a red cloak. The next day, the four musketeers, Lord Winter, and the man in the red cloak set out for Armentieres together. They catch up with Milady at an isolated cottage, where they stage a short trial during which her many crimes are recounted. The man in the red cloak turns out to be the executioner of Lille, whose brother as a young priest had been seduced by Milady, had then stolen from a church, had been branded for his theft, but had fled with Milady to the Comte de La Fère's estate, where he had masqueraded as her brother. After she had married Athos, he returned to find that his brother had been imprisoned in his stead. He turned himself in, then committed suicide that night. The executioner had finally caught up to Milady and had branded her as he had been forced to brand his own brother. On the basis of all this damning evidence, the impromptu court sentences Milady to death. After she is forgiven by her accusers, the executioner takes Milady to the far shore of the river Lys, in Switzerland, where he beheads her, then drops her remains in the river as he returns to the French shore.

On returning to the siege of La Rochelle, D'Artagnan is arrested by Rochefort and taken to the Cardinal. Richelieu accuses him of crimes against the state, not even knowing of the death of Milady. D'Artagnan informs him of that incident, then produces the carte blanche that Athos had taken from Milady proving that his deeds had been done in the power of the Cardinal. Richelieu, who had by then grown to admire the young man, drops all charges and gives him a blank lieutenant's commission in the musketeers. D'Artagnan offers it to each of his friends in turn, but all refuse - Athos because he has no desire for advancement, Porthos because he intends to marry his recently-widowed mistress, and Aramis because he at long last is leaving the musketeers to enter a monastery. D'Artagnan then accepts the commission and serves honorably for many years. During that time, he fights Rochefort three times and wounds him each time, and the two eventually become fast friends. La Rochelle falls after a year-long siege.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- D'Artagnan - A young aspiring musketeer from Gascony who is at the center of the narrative.
- Athos (formerly the Comte de La Fère) - A noble elder statesman among the musketeers, though not yet thirty, he is the voice of reason among the protagonists; he constantly struggles with bouts of drinking and depression.
- Porthos - A flamboyant giant of a musketeer who is hotheaded, always ready for a fight.
- Aramis - A scholarly young musketeer who is serving his country only while awaiting an opportunity to enter the priesthood.

- Monsieur de Tréville - The captain of the King's Musketeers, he becomes a mentor to the young D'Artagnan, whose father had been his friend for many years.
- Louis XIII - A shallow and weak monarch, he nonetheless enjoys the loyalty of the King's Musketeers.
- Anne of Austria - Queen of France, beloved of the Duke of Buckingham.
- Cardinal Richelieu - The power behind the throne and the true ruler of France, his Guards are perpetually in conflict with the King's Musketeers.
- Joseph-Michel Bonacieux - D'Artagnan's landlord, a wealthy haberdasher and a coward who becomes a pawn of Cardinal Richelieu.
- Constance Bonacieux - M. Bonacieux's wife and the Queen's seamstress, she is a pawn in the intrigues between King and Cardinal, and a vital link between the Duke of Buckingham and the Queen; she is also D'Artagnan's first love, but is poisoned by Milady.
- George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham - The Queen's lover and the chief minister of King Charles I of England, assassinated by John Felton at the instigation of Milady.
- Comte de Rochefort - Agent of Richelieu and fellow-conspirator of Milady, he is the nobleman who insults D'Artagnan at the beginning of the story and is sought by the young man to gain his revenge.
- Lady Clark (Milady) - A beautiful young woman, formerly known as Anne de Bueil, who is the Cardinal's chief agent; she is also Athos' wife, a criminal whom he had hanged and left for dead upon discovering her perfidy, as D'Artagnan discovers when having an affair with her. She is the chief villain in the story, and is executed for her treacheries at the end of the book.
- Lord Winter, Baron of Sheffield - Milady's brother-in-law, defeated in a duel but pardoned by D'Artagnan. Milady tries to murder him to obtain his fortune, but he has her arrested when she returns to England.
- Comte de Vardes - A young nobleman wounded by D'Artagnan when he stole his travel permit, he is also the lover of Lady Clark.
- Kitty - Milady's maid, in love with D'Artagnan; he conducts an affair with her to gain access to Milady for the purpose of revenge.
- Planchet - D'Artagnan's lackey.
- Grimaud - Athos' lackey; more silent than his master, he takes orders from the merest gestures of the noble Athos.

- Mousqueton - Porthos' lackey, an accomplished thief.
- Madame Coquenard - Porthos' mistress, a lawyer's wife in her fifties.
- Bazin - Aramis' lackey, who longs to serve a churchman.
- Duchess of Chevreuse - Aramis' mistress who has been exiled to Tours; a confidant of the Queen.
- John Felton - A lieutenant under Lord Winter, he is entrusted with the custody of Milady, but she convinces him that she is a persecuted fellow-Puritan and he helps her escape, then assassinates Buckingham.
- Executioner of Lille - His brother, a young priest, had been seduced by Milady, then a young nun, and had stolen from a church, resulted in his being branded by the Executioner. The young man ran away with her and was then abandoned, leaving the Executioner to serve his jail sentence. He finally returned and turned himself in, then committed suicide. The Executioner tracked down Milady and branded her, and eventually executes her at the end of the story.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“All for One and One for All!” (ch.9, p.110)

“Anne of Austria is my true Queen. At one word from her, I would betray my country, my sovereign and my God.” (Buckingham, ch.21, p.233)

“People in general ask for advice only in order not to follow it, or if they do follow it, it is to have someone to blame for having given it.” (Athos, ch.34, p.395)

“It is by my order and for the service of the State that the bearer of this note has done what he has done. Signed by my hand at the Camp of La Rochelle.” (Richelieu, ch.45, p.497)

“Ah well, nothing is lost! I am still beautiful!” (Milady, ch.52, p.568)

“O God, what an insane fanatic! Did I say God? I am my own God, vengeance is mine, I will repay. And that young Puritan fool will help me do so.” (Milady, ch.55, p.598)

“Great criminals bear a kind of predestination which enables them to overcome all obstacles and to escape all perils until a wearied Providence sets up a pitfall to mark the end of their impious fortunes.” (ch.61, p.647)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Discuss the moral standards of D'Artagnan in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. In what ways are his morals admirable, and in what ways is he not to be emulated? Do you think the author shares your assessment of his protagonist? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the morals of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Which is the most admirable? Which the least? Support your assessment with details from the novel.
3. Discuss the extent to which Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* reflects the thought of the Romantic era. What characteristics of Romanticism are present in the novel? Use specific examples to support your explanation.
4. Evaluate the picture of the Huguenots presented in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Based on your knowledge of French Protestant history, do you consider his portrayal accurate? In what ways does he appear to be biased? Why do you think this may be so?
5. Evaluate the character of Cardinal Richelieu as it is presented in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Would you classify him as a *politique*? Why or why not? In what ways is his character admirable, and in what ways is he pictured as despicable? Be specific.
6. What would you consider to be the three greatest virtues highlighted in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*? Why do you choose these three rather than others? In what ways are they demonstrated repeatedly in the story? Be specific in the examples you choose.
7. The relationships among the four leading characters of Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* are defined by the famous phrase, "All for one, and one for all." What is the meaning of the phrase as it is worked out through the narrative? Give specific examples to support your explanation.
8. Analyze the concept of romantic love as it is presented in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Is such love realistic? Is it intended to be? Compare and contrast the love presented here with that found in the medieval tradition of chivalry.
9. Discuss the loyalty of D'Artagnan and his three friends to the King and Queen in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Is the royal couple worthy of their followers' devotion? Why do the musketeers defend the King against the Cardinal and defend the Queen against the King?

10. In Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, Milady may be the arch-villain, but she is also treated in questionable ways by those she deceives and abuses. Evaluate the morality of three incidents - the branding of Milady by the Executioner of Lille, the behavior of the Comte de La Fère when he discovers his wife is branded, and the execution of the villainess at the River Lys. Support your assessments from Scripture.
11. In Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, discuss the skill of the author in character development. Choose a single major character and show how the character changes over the course of the story, highlighting the techniques used by the author in communicating those changes.
12. Evaluate the section of Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* in which Milady seduces John Felton. Is this section credible? Given the descriptions of the characters, can you believe that the strict young Puritan would succumb to Milady's wiles? Use details from the novel to support your argument.
13. Discuss the role played by revenge in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Choose three characters in the story who are driven by the desire for revenge, and evaluate the justice of their claims. Are their motives legitimate? What about their methods?
14. Would you consider Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* to be a moral book? Why or why not?
15. Would you consider D'Artagnan and his three friends in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* to be honorable men? Why or why not? Upon what definition of *honor* do you base your conclusions? Use specific incidents to support your arguments.
16. Two great French swashbucklers, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, are set during the reign of Louis XIII in the first half of the seventeenth century, when Cardinal Richelieu dominated French politics. Compare and contrast the two stories, considering the portrayals of the courage of the musketeers, the views of love and romance, and the use of humor in the tales. To what extent did Rostand, who wrote his play fifty years after Dumas' novel, borrow from his famous predecessor?
17. Compare and contrast the scene at the siege of Arras in Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and the one at the siege of La Rochelle in Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. How do both scenes serve to bring out important qualities in the central characters in the two stories? How do they contribute to later developments in the two plots?