

1 **EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. GASCONY. DAY.**

1

OPEN on rolling countryside in the ancient province of Gascony, near the Spanish border. A small party of MUSKETEERS ride their horses at walking pace. Their uniforms are distinctive though dirty from the road. The men - five of them in all - look weary. At the head of them is ATHOS (30s), a handsome man of striking aristocratic features. We know a hero when we see one, but we also might sense a hidden melancholy he is too proud to show to the world at large.

At his side rides CORNET. He is still young but has an air of authority. He leads a mule with a rope tied to his saddle; the patient creature is laden with heavy saddle bags. Athos reins in his horse and turns to him.

ATHOS

This is as far as I go. The road is safe enough from here.

Cornet extends his hand. Athos shakes it.

ATHOS

Go on to Bayonne and wait.

Cornet nods and glances at the saddle-bags.

CORNET

Athos? Don't you wonder what's in there?

ATHOS

We're not paid to be curious.
(Pause) When we're paid at all.

He smiles and spurs his horse, turning back in the direction they've come. Cornet's smile fades. We sense a tension in the tight line of his mouth and the way his gaze flicks restlessly around the hills. He darts a glance at his men laughing and joking a few yards behind him. His face clouds. Something is wrong here. But what?

CUT TO:

2 **EXT. D'ARTAGNAN FARM. MEUNG. GASCONY DAY.**

2

The day is fading towards evening. An old farmhouse stands amidst peaceful fields. A lamp stands in the window, a beacon cutting through the dying light.

CUT TO:

3 **INT. D'ARTAGNAN FARM. MEUNG. GASCONY. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.**

3

ALEXANDRE D'ARTAGNAN picks up the same lamp and closes the shutters. He is a well-built man in his 50s.

A group of men sit around the dining table. They include BROUSSARD a burly farmer, and FOURNIER an aristocrat.

ALEXANDRE

The King's taxes are a burden on every honest man in Gascony. While he spends our money on foreign wars, we watch our children starve.

FOURNIER

But what can we do about it?

Alexandre looks around with a troubled expression.

ALEXANDRE

His father was a man of the people. For his sake, the young King must give us justice.

BROUSSARD

He's not the man his father was. He's weak and foolish and the country's going to hell.

ALEXANDRE

It's too soon to lose faith. Give him time.

FOURNIER

He doesn't care about any of us. Gascony should break with Paris. We should take our future in our hands...

ALEXANDRE

Independence isn't the answer. Our cause is justice not rebellion...

Before he can continue, the door crashes open and FOUR MASKED MUSKETEERS burst in. Their uniforms are identical to those we saw on the men on the road. We can still see the dust and dirt on them. The soldiers' leader steps forward. We assume it is Cornet. (It is actually GAUDET - for the sake of the drama both actors should be of similar look and build).

GAUDET

Where is Alexandre d'Artagnan?

ALEXANDRE

I am d'Artagnan. What do you want here?

GAUDET

Didn't you write to the King, calling his ministers criminals and his tax collectors parasites?

ALEXANDRE

I did. And I would say it again to his face.

GAUDET

No need. Here is the King's answer.

He plunges his sword into Alexandre's stomach. The older man gasps and sinks to his knees. There are cries of fear from the others as the masked men raise their pistols. A beat, then the leader looks at them and nods.

The sound of shots is thunderous in the shuttered room. Glasses shatter and chunks of splintered wood fly from the walls. As the smoke clears bodies litter the floor. Gaudet steps over the dying Alexandre and raises his pistol in the direction of the only survivor, the terrified Fournier.

GAUDET

Tell your friends what happened here. Tell them I, Athos of the Musketeers, will do the same to anyone who defies the King.

Fournier looks around in horror. Alexandre D'Artagnan stares back at him, eyes fixed and unmoving in death.

TITLES: THE MUSKETEERS

4 **EXT. PARIS. STREETS. DAY.**

4

OPEN on the streets of seventeenth century Paris. We follow ATHOS as he hurries through the bustling crowd. We see a caption on screen OVER: **PARIS 1625.**

CUT TO:

5 **INT. PARIS. WINE SHOP. DAY.**

5

Tense silence. Two men sit opposite each other, a pack of playing cards scattered in front of them. A nervous crowd stand at the bar. It is like something from a western. One of the men at the table is PORTHOS. In his early 30s, he is a brutal street fighter with raw good looks. He is of mixed race, calm and composed but intensely aware of any movement around him. His angry opponent DUJON wears the distinctive uniform of the Red Guards. ATHOS hurries in and pauses.

ATHOS

What's going on?

PORTHOS

Dujon and I are having a discussion about personal integrity.

DUJON

He's a cheat. He had the Ace of Hearts up his sleeve.

PORTHOS

That's a very hurtful accusation. I could sue.

Dujon brings the pistol he's been hiding under the table out into plain view. Athos looks at him calmly.

ATHOS

Easy now. Shoot him and it's murder.

DUJON

One less Musketeer. Who cares?

ATHOS

There's only one way to resolve this. A duel between gentlemen, supervised according to the strict code of honour and chivalry.

Dujon reluctantly eases down the hammer of his pistol.

DUJON

Very well. Porthos might be one of the greatest swordsmen in France, but I'm better.

ATHOS

Confidence. I like that in a man.

Dujon kicks his chair back, draws his sword and adopts the classic duelling position, his rapier extended. Porthos responds in kind. The two men circle each other. It looks like we're in for a really classic duel...

... And then Athos simply picks up a chair and crashes it over Dujon's head. He collapses like a demolished chimney stack. There is a startled silence.

PORTHOS

What happened to the strict code of honour and chivalry?

ATHOS

Who has time? Treville wants to see us.

Porthos grins. As he grabs his money from the table the Ace of Hearts slips out of his sleeve. ATHOS looks at him wryly.

PORTHOS

I need to work on that.

ATHOS
Where's Aramis?

Porthos looks at him awkwardly. Athos can't believe it.

ATHOS
Tell me he's not that stupid.

Porthos's expression gives him his answer. As they hurry out we CHANGE ANGLE to a man standing at the bar. He is in his 20s, attractive, with an athletic build. He finishes his drink then turns quietly to follow the Musketeers. His name is D'ARTAGNAN.

CUT TO:

6 INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. SITTING ROOM. DAY.

6

A luxuriously appointed sitting room. ARAMIS and the lovely ADELE BESSETTE lie in each other's arms on a chaise longue. Aramis's sword and belt, with his beautifully decorated pistol, hang over the back of a chair. Aramis is in his late 20s. All our key Musketeers are attractive but Aramis is the one who makes women - and men, probably - stop in their tracks. Frankly, he's sexy and he knows it.

ARAMIS
We could go to your bedroom.

ADELE
Armand will be here in an hour.

ARAMIS
He doesn't love you as I do.

ADELE
But he pays for all this.

She smiles and they kiss... and then there is a sudden banging on the door.

ADELE
My God! He's early. He can't find you here.

ARAMIS hurls himself off the chaise longue and hurries to the window. He looks out but it is a sheer drop to the ground.

ARAMIS
Is there another way out?

ADELE
There's no time. I'll say you were an intruder.

ARAMIS
He'll never believe that.

She looks down at her dress, thinking quickly.

ADELE
Rip my bodice.

He understands and grabs the dress over her breasts, struggling with it briefly.

ARAMIS
This is very good material.

ADELE
It should be. It cost a fortune.

The dress finally gives with a tearing sound as it is ripped in two, exposing a generous amount of her lovely bosom.

ADELE
Now slap me.

ARAMIS
What?

ADELE
We have to make it look convincing.

He draws back his hand but falters.

ARAMIS
I can't strike a woman. Not even to save my life.

ADELE
It's mine I'm worried about.

But she kisses him anyway. He gives her one last look, then ties his handkerchief around his face and dashes to the door.

ADELE
(Screams)
You brute! You animal! Don't touch me!

Aramis grabs his belt and sword but as he goes his ornate pistol falls unnoticed to the carpet under a chair.

CUT TO:

7

INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. STAIRCASE/HALL. DAY.

7

As ARAMIS dashes out two RED GUARDS are climbing up the stairs. He crashes past, sending them tumbling.

CUT TO:

8

EXT. BESSETTE HOUSE. DAY.

8

ARAMIS dashes outside. A fine CARRIAGE stands in the road. The shutter opens and Aramis locks eyes briefly with whoever is inside but then just in time another carriage comes rattling past. The door flies open and ATHOS leans out.

ATHOS

Get in!

Aramis grabs his hand and jumps. The carriage - driven by PORTHOS - rattles away at high speed.

CUT TO:

9

INT. CARRIAGE. DAY.

9

ARAMIS leans back against the seat, breathing heavily as he removes his disguise. ATHOS gives him a sceptical look.

ATHOS

Adele Bessette? Really?

ARAMIS

Why not Adele?

ATHOS

Oh, I don't know, let's think.
Because she's the mistress of the
most powerful man in France?

ARAMIS

I love her.

ATHOS

You love her? Or you love stealing
what belongs to the Cardinal?

Aramis considers this, then grins. A little of both.

CUT TO:

10

EXT. BESSETTE HOUSE. DAY.

10

ARMAND JEAN DU PLESSIS, known to history as CARDINAL RICHELIEU emerges from his carriage. He is in his 40s, elegantly dressed, with only the heavy gold cross around his neck to indicate his position within the church hierarchy. A good-looking and outwardly affable man, he has an intimidating aura of power.

CUT TO:

Captain of the Musketeers, Treville is a battle-scarred veteran of countless campaigns, and also a self-taught thinker and philosopher. His room is covered in books, maps and scientific instruments. Now in his 50s, his strength and charisma remain undimmed.

TREVILLE

I've had complaints. Allegations you've been duelling with the Cardinal's Red Guards. For money. Is it true?

ATHOS

That would be illegal.

His expression is deadpan. The others look equally bland.

TREVILLE

Two of his men were wounded.

PORTHOS

Wounded? We barely scratched them.

The others sigh. He grimaces. Treville gives them a dry look.

TREVILLE

Be careful, boys. The Cardinal is threatening to hang anyone convicted of duelling.

ARAMIS

He wouldn't dare touch a King's Musketeer.

TREVILLE

Go ahead. Stake your life on that.

Aramis looks chastened. Treville glances at them, then looks uneasily at Athos.

TREVILLE

Have you heard from Cornet and his men? He should be back by now.

ATHOS

It's a long journey. They're probably just delayed on the road.

TREVILLE

His cargo was valuable.

ATHOS

Cornet's not a thief, if that's what you're thinking.

Treville considers this, then looks at him.

TREVILLE
Make enquiries. Be discreet.

He tosses a pile of papers from his chair and sits down.

TREVILLE
These duels you didn't fight. How much money didn't you make?

ATHOS
Not 20 livres.

Treville holds out his hand. Athos digs into his pocket, finds a gold coin and puts it in Treville's hand. He clicks his fingers and Athos resignedly adds two more.

CUT TO:

14 **EXT. PARIS. INN. DAY** 14

D'ARTAGNAN comes to an inn in a shabby part of town. The place is dreary and down at heel.

CUT TO:

15 **INT. INN. NIGHT.** 15

A dirty, down at heel place. D'ARTAGNAN talks to the LANDLADY, an old woman of sour disposition.

LANDLADY
Five Sous for the bed, three if you share. Any lice or crabs?

D'ARTAGNAN
Are you asking or offering?

She looks at him. A cockroach wanders across the counter and she splatters it with her fist.

LANDLADY
This is a very clean house. Dinner, bath and hot water are all extra. Use of the communal towel is free.

D'ARTAGNAN
Good to know. Soap?

LANDLADY
Extra.

She picks up a quill pen and opens the dusty register.

LANDLADY
Name?

D'ARTAGNAN
That's my business.

LANDLADY
No name, no bed.

D'ARTAGNAN
(Beat)
Athos. Of the King's Musketeers.

He tosses a handful of coins on the counter.

CUT TO:

16 INT. INN. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

16

D'Artagnan glances up as a man and woman come in. RENARD is about 40, with beautiful clothes and a haughty look; his female companion is simply ravishing, with a regal beauty that quickens the pulse and numbs the senses. This is MILADY. She locks eyes briefly with d'Artagnan and we see a flicker of interest. RENARD summons the now fawning LANDLADY.

RENARD
We'll have your best room. And if
the bed has fleas you'll be
whipped.

Milady flicks her an imperious glance.

MILADY
Draw me a bath. Be sure the water's
clean. I don't want to bathe in
someone else's scum.

D'ARTAGNAN
(Smiles)
Clean water is extra, Madame. And
don't even ask about the towel.

RENARD turns to him in contemptuous surprise.

RENARD
Are you addressing me, sir?

D'ARTAGNAN
Not unless your name is "Madame".

Milady laughs. Humiliated, Renard reaches for his sword, but d'Artagnan instantly has a pistol aimed at his head.

D'ARTAGNAN
Put it back or I'll blow your head
off.

RENARD
You are not a gentleman.

D'ARTAGNAN

Ouch. That really stings.

There are smirks amongst the other guests. Renard is red-faced with anger. Milady intervenes softly.

MILADY

He's just some drunken thug, Paul.
Put your sword away before he kills
you.

The blustering Renard is glad of the excuse to back down.

RENARD

We'll settle this at breakfast.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll be in the courtyard at eight.
You bring the coffee.

Milady glances at d'Artagnan. The chemistry between them is instant. D'Artagnan looks up at the furious Landlady.

LANDLADY

You get any blood on the floor, you
mop it up yourself.

She bangs down a plate on the table. He examines the congealed mess of unidentifiable slop with disgust.

D'ARTAGNAN

This looks like a badger's
intestines.

LANDLADY

Speciality of the house. Enjoy.

CUT TO:

17 INT. INN. HALL. NIGHT.

17

D'Artagnan makes his way to his room. A door opens and MILADY appears like a ghost. She kisses him. His surprise quickly gives way to passion.

CUT TO:

18 INT. INN. D'ARTAGNAN'S ROOM. NIGHT.

18

D'ARTAGNAN and MILADY tumble into his room, tearing at each other's clothes.

D'ARTAGNAN

What of your companion?

MILADY

Trust me. He won't wake up.

CUT TO:

19

INT. INN. D'ARTAGNAN'S ROOM. NIGHT.

19

The candle throws flickering shadows on the wall. D'ARTAGNAN and MILADY lie naked under the sheet, except in her case for a simple ribboned choker around her neck.

D'ARTAGNAN

Is that pompous idiot your husband?

MILADY

Do you see a ring on my finger?

D'ARTAGNAN

(Smiles)

If you're trying to make him
jealous a little light flirtation
would have sufficed.

MILADY

I take what I want. And I want you.

He grasps her wrists and pins her down fiercely on her back.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm not here to be taken.

She gazes at him, submissive yet cool and confident. He relaxes his grip and she folds him in her arms, rolling on top of him. He reaches up and touches the lace choker, moving it to see a pink scar running around her neck.

D'ARTAGNAN

What happened?

MILADY

A man I loved tried to strangle me.

D'ARTAGNAN

Say the word and I'll kill him for
you.

MILADY

I might hold you to that one day.

She leans down to kiss him, slowly but with growing passion.

CUT TO:

Glancing up to see the LANDLADY turning the corner in pursuit, he grabs Constance's arm.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'll give you five livres to kiss me.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her. Taken completely by surprise she submits for just long enough for the oblivious Landlady to walk straight past and disappear into the crowd.

A second later the outraged Constance frees herself and stabs d'Artagnan in the hand with a small pen knife.

CONSTANCE

Let me go, you pervert!

D'ARTAGNAN

Owww! That hurt.

CONSTANCE

Touch me again and I'll gut you like a fish. Do I look like a working girl?

D'Artagnan nurses his hand and looks her up and down.

D'ARTAGNAN

Well...

CONSTANCE

This is my best dress! It's the height of fashion. How does this say prostitute to you?

He looks around. The coast is clear.

D'ARTAGNAN

My apologies, Madame. I won't trouble you any further.

He walks a few steps but then staggers, clutching his ribs.

CONSTANCE

(Despite herself)
Are you all right?

D'ARTAGNAN

Do you know what fainting feels like?

CONSTANCE

A sort of woozy feeling, mild sickness and then loss of consciousness.

D'ARTAGNAN

Ah. That would explain it.

LOUIS

There. Could any of your Musketeers do better?

Treville tries to answer politely but leaves too long a pause. The king gives him a wry look.

LOUIS

You should try flattery sometime, Treville. It plays very well around here.

He indicates his fawning COURTIERS with scorn.

LOUIS

I could shoot any one of them now and they'd say the wound was no worse than a wasp sting.

He loads an arrow in his bow and turns it on the crowd, who scatter in alarm. He smiles gleefully, enjoying their reaction, then notices Treville's grave expression.

LOUIS

What is it?

TREVILLE

Bad news, Your Majesty. Cornet has gone missing.

Louis's face reddens with surprise and anger.

LOUIS

What do you mean, missing? Did he complete his mission?

TREVILLE

I don't know.

LOUIS

You assured me he was trustworthy. Do you realise what is at stake?

TREVILLE

There's no need for panic yet...

LOUIS

I'M NOT PANICKING!

The courtiers look up and Louis lowers his voice.

LOUIS

The Cardinal must not know about this. Do you understand? *He must not know.*

Treville bows. Louis looks at him bitterly.

LOUIS

You have disappointed me, Treville.
And King Louis doesn't like
disappointment. It makes him very
unhappy.

He tosses his crossbow to a servant and stalks away. Treville
sighs. It could have been worse. Just.

CUT TO:

30

EXT. PARIS. STREETS. DAY.

30

CLOSE on a carriage as it rolls to a stop in a narrow street.
DUBOIS, a bourgeois figure in fine clothes, opens the door.
He looks up to see his DRIVER with his hands in the air. TWO
MASKED MEN in Musketeer livery hold their pistols on him.

GAUDET

Your purse, please.

DUBOIS

This is outrageous. You're a King's
Musketeer...

The Musketeer shoots him and he goes down, screaming.

GAUDET

I asked for your purse, not your
opinion.

CUT TO:

31

INT. PARIS. WINE SHOP. DAY.

31

A group of LOCALS drinking at the bar. Suddenly the MASKED
MUSKETEERS smash their way in, pistols raised.

GAUDET

Empty the till!

WINE SHOP OWNER

Please. I'm a poor man...

GAUDET

Who isn't?

He pushes him aside and grabs the money. The owner reaches
for a hidden pistol, but Gaudet grabs his hand and impales it
on the counter with a brutal thrust of his dagger. As the man
screams in agony -

CUT TO:

32

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

32

D'ARTAGNAN slowly comes to his senses, hearing urgent whispering over his head.

BONACIEUX

Why did you bring him here?

CONSTANCE

I couldn't just leave him in the gutter. Where is your Christian charity, Bonacieux?

BONACIEUX

Charity begins at home.

CONSTANCE is on one side of the bed and BONACIEUX on the other. He is 20 years older than her, not handsome but dignified and rather stiff. He is also jealously in love with his much younger wife. He sees that d'Artagnan is awake.

D'ARTAGNAN

Where am I?

BONACIEUX

In my house. My wife had you carried here in the mistaken belief it is a hospital. (Pause) Jacques-Michel Bonacieux at your service. Merchant in high quality ladies undergarments. Perhaps you've heard of me?

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm afraid not.

Bonacieux looks mildly offended.

BONACIEUX

How did you come by these injuries, Monsieur?

D'ARTAGNAN

I fell off my horse. Or he fell on me. I forget which.

Changing the subject quickly he smiles at Constance.

D'ARTAGNAN

Might I enquire the name of my saviour?

CONSTANCE

Constance. Constance Bonacieux. Rest now and I'll bring you some soup later.

CUT TO:

33

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

33

BONACIEUX follows CONSTANCE into the comfortable room with a look of intense disapproval.

BONACIEUX

Soup? What next? Dinner and a fine new set of clothes? Why not set him up in his own house with servants and a carriage? (Pause) We know nothing about him.

CONSTANCE

Look at his clothes. He's obviously a gentleman.

BONACIEUX

And a very handsome one, which of course had no bearing on your decision to bring him here!

CONSTANCE

I am your faithful wife. You have no cause to attack my honour.

Bonacieux stares at her angrily then abruptly his mood changes and he sighs in apology.

BONACIEUX

You're right my love. Forgive me. I am a foolish and jealous man.

He kisses her briefly on the forehead.

BONACIEUX

It's just I can't stand the thought of another man touching you. You understand?

He smiles. We see Constance's very mixed reactions to his mildly threatening possessiveness.

CUT TO:

34

INT. LOUVRE. KING'S APARTMENTS. NIGHT.

34

LOUIS sits with his queen, ANNE OF AUSTRIA. Anne is in her 20s, an attractive, serious woman of strong character with a faint air of sadness. LOUIS is in a dark mood as he listens to the Cardinal. TREVILLE is also present.

CARDINAL

Reports are coming in with disturbing frequency. A group of Musketeers on the rampage, robbing, looting and abusing the good citizens of Paris.

TREVILLE

My men are not thieves and bandits.

CARDINAL

You can vouch for them all? There have been no recent desertions, no absences, no one unaccounted for?

Treville looks deeply uncomfortable. Queen Anne intervenes.

ANNE

I know the loyalty of Captain Treville's men. I don't believe a word of this.

CARDINAL

The Queen is as wise as she is beautiful. But the people are unhappy and the king must be seen to act.

He turns back to Louis, who wriggles uncomfortably.

LOUIS

(Finally)

Very well. We shall hear the evidence in the morning.

Anne gives him the Cardinal a cool look. He bows as she goes out. Louis dismisses Treville with a wave and he follows her. Louis and the Cardinal are left alone.

LOUIS

Is this inquiry really necessary?

CARDINAL

A great king must be seen to be fair. He cannot have favourites.

Louis looks at him a little helplessly.

LOUIS

People have no idea how difficult it is being king. Decisions, decisions all day long. It's very hard to get them all right.

CARDINAL

Your Majesty's judgement is infallible. It is those who serve you who make mistakes.

LOUIS

True. But being King Louis is very lonely sometimes.

CARDINAL

I am always by your side.

LOUIS

Oh, yes. Every since I was a little boy, there you were, guiding me, telling me what to do, steering the great ship of State while I lounged on the deck.

He looks resentful but the Cardinal only smiles politely.

CARDINAL

Is there anything Your Majesty wishes to discuss?

LOUIS

No, why?

CARDINAL

No affair of state you might wish to share with your First Minister?

LOUIS

(Awkward)

I leave all that to you, Armand.

The Cardinal bows his head in humble gratitude.

CARDINAL

I am deeply honoured. (Pause) Will Your Majesty be attending on the Queen tonight?

LOUIS

(Furious)

Good God, are you coming into the bedroom with me now? Some things are private, even to you.

CARDINAL

The succession is not a private matter. France needs an heir.

LOUIS

All right! I'll sleep with her. Come and watch if you like!

CARDINAL

That won't be necessary.

Louis looks at him and sighs, out-manoeuvred on all fronts.

LOUIS

I don't like her, Armand. She scolds me about duty all the time. She's just like mother. And who wants to be reminded of their mother in bed?

CUT TO:

35

INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

35

The CARDINAL, less guarded in private, sits opposite his mistress ADELE, who looks very pretty in the candlelight.

CARDINAL

The Musketeers are a mob of hooligans who think of nothing but honour and glory. An ungovernable faction at the heart of the state.

ADELE

Is that why you hate them? Because they are beyond your control?

CARDINAL

Nothing is beyond my control.

Adele is about to answer, when something suddenly catches her eye. Beneath the Cardinal's chair, almost touching his foot, is Aramis's pistol. She pales, then, thinking fast, goes to sit at his knees.

ADELE

My poor Armand. You look so tired.

CARDINAL

I'm not in the least tired.

But he strokes her hair affectionately. At the same time she nudges the pistol further under his chair.

ADELE

Let's go to bed.

CARDINAL

I have work to do.

Taking advantage of his distracted mood, Adele shoves the pistol out of sight.

CUT TO:

36

INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. HALL. NIGHT.

36

As ADELE makes her way up the stairs, the CARDINAL suddenly appears in the doorway behind her.

CARDINAL

Adele? I'm glad to see you so recovered from your ordeal. Your courage does you credit.

She nods her thanks then goes up the stairs. The Cardinal watches her. He is smiling, but his eyes are sharp and alert.

CUT TO:

37

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

37

As CONSTANCE comes in, D'ARTAGNAN is already dressed and putting on his sword.

CONSTANCE
Where are you going?

D'ARTAGNAN
I have business to attend to.

CONSTANCE
You're in no shape to fight, if that's what you have in mind.

He looks at her in surprise.

CONSTANCE
I have three older brothers. I know the look in a man's eye when he has a score to settle.

She takes his hand and checks the bandage around his wound.

CONSTANCE
Next time, ask before you kiss a woman.

He smiles. There is a moment of awkward intimacy between them. She looks up at him tentatively.

CONSTANCE
This business of yours. You're going to kill someone, aren't you?

D'ARTAGNAN
With respect, that's none of your concern.

CONSTANCE
You made yourself my concern when you fell at my feet.

D'ARTAGNAN
You're a beautiful woman. I'm sure you're used to it.

CONSTANCE
I'm serious.

D'ARTAGNAN
So am I.

He leans forward and kisses her, softly this time. She is too surprised to resist or perhaps she simply doesn't want to; finally she pushes him away gently. He smiles.

D'ARTAGNAN

Our relationship is improving. You didn't stab me this time.

He goes to the door. She doesn't move.

D'ARTAGNAN

At least if I die I'll take the memory of your lips to the grave.

He leaves. Constance looks confused. She touches her lips with her fingers. She hears the front door slam and dashes to the window. She sees d'Artagnan going down the street (off-screen) and, on an impulse, suddenly rushes out of the door.

CUT TO:

38

INT. PARIS. MUSKETEER'S GARRISON/HOTEL. DAY.

38

ATHOS, ARAMIS and PORTHOS walk through the garrison together.

ATHOS

We leave for Gascony immediately.

PORTHOS

You think Cornet has deserted?

ATHOS

Deserted, robbed. I don't know. But he's my responsibility. I should have seen him safely to Bayonne.

Before his friends can reply a loud challenge echoes through the hotel.

D'ARTAGNAN

Athos!

D'ARTAGNAN stands in the doorway, his pistol levelled.

D'ARTAGNAN

Give me one good reason why I shouldn't shoot you where you stand.

ATHOS

(Beat)

Because I have no idea who you are?

D'ARTAGNAN

My name is d'Artagnan. You murdered my father. I've come to kill you.

ARAMIS

You have to admit, that's a terrific introduction.

D'Artagnan puts up his pistol and draws his sword.

D'ARTAGNAN

Unlike you I don't kill people in cold blood. Draw your sword.

ATHOS

You've made a mistake. I'm not the man you're looking for.

D'Artagnan makes a run at him and ATHOS only just draws his sword in time to defend himself.

D'ARTAGNAN

Do you deny you killed Alexandre d'Artagnan, of Meung in Gascony?

PORTHOS

Gascony? Why's everything happening in Gascony all of a sudden?

ARAMIS

I've *been* to Gascony. Nothing ever happens.

Athos circles d'Artagnan warily.

ATHOS

I usually remember the men I kill. And that name doesn't ring a bell.

D'ARTAGNAN

Then you're a liar as well as a murderer.

As D'Artagnan attacks him Athos realises he is in a battle for his life. The fight rages over the lower floor of the garrison, sending chairs and tables flying. D'Artagnan gets through Athos's defence, nicking his arm.

Porthos and Aramis watch with an air of impartiality.

PORTHOS

He's pretty good.

ARAMIS

Considering he's from Gascony.

The contest is intensely physical; both men are quickly soaked in sweat, their hair flying, their breath rasping. D'Artagnan is forced back and jumps up on a table. The effort costs him - he holds his damaged ribs in pain - but he hurls himself into a counter-attack.

ARAMIS

Incredible. Athos is losing.

PORTHOS

Rubbish. He just doesn't want to hurt the lunatic.

D'Artagnan is caught off-balance; for a second he is at Athos's mercy but he grabs a stool and throws it in his face. Neither man is above using fists and anything else that comes to hand to gain an advantage.

ATHOS

Don't make me kill you over a mistake.

D'Artagnan ducks away from a thrust, and Athos trips and loses his balance. His sword is swept out of his hand. D'Artagnan raises his own sword - but Aramis beats it away.

ARAMIS

Enough.

There is a pause. D'Artagnan calmly picks up Athos's sword and tosses it back to him.

D'ARTAGNAN

Very well. I'll fight both of you.

PORTHOS

Three of us. Now for God's sake, put up your sword.

D'ARTAGNAN

You'll have to kill me for it.

PORTHOS

You're a stubborn little bugger, aren't you?

D'Artagnan fends off their attacks in an exhilarating contest. But it can end only one way. Finally he is cornered. Three swords converge on him. It looks like the end. Then -

CONSTANCE

Stop fighting! All of you!

They turn. CONSTANCE stands in the doorway, looking ferocious. She walks protectively in front of d'Artagnan.

CONSTANCE

Is three against one fair?

ATHOS

We weren't going to kill him.

ARAMIS

Weren't we? Next time, let me know.

D'Artagnan looks at Constance incredulously.

D'ARTAGNAN

Madame Bonacieux. What are you doing here?

CONSTANCE

I followed you because I knew you were going to do something stupid.

D'ARTAGNAN

I don't need a woman to protect me.

CONSTANCE

Don't say another word. If only men would think instead of fight, there might be more good ones left.

Aramis looks at Constance appreciatively.

ARAMIS

Him, I'm not sure about. Her, I like.

PORTHOS

Is she going to fight us as well?

ARAMIS

Who knows? It's that kind of day.

TREVILLE

(Off)

What's going on here?

TREVILLE looks around in disbelief at the wreckage of the garrison. But before anyone can reply he holds up his hand.

TREVILLE

Later. You're to attend on the King now. All of you.

ATHOS

Why?

TREVILLE

You'll find out soon enough.

Athos turns to the frustrated and confused d'Artagnan.

ATHOS

I'm sorry. I'm not the man you're looking for.

D'ARTAGNAN

Then who is? And why did he use your name?

Athos has no answer. He turns to leave with the others. D'Artagnan watches them go in bitter frustration. Constance regards him in sceptical silence.

CONSTANCE
Aren't you going to thank me?

D'ARTAGNAN
I was well on top.

CONSTANCE
(Sighs)
Why is it the handsome ones are
always stupid? (Pause) How are your
ribs?

D'ARTAGNAN
Fine.

She pokes him hard and he doubles over in agony.

CONSTANCE
Obviously. (Pause) You're coming
home with me. My husband has a room
to let. You can have it.

D'ARTAGNAN
What if I don't want it?

CONSTANCE
Well, if you have somewhere else to
go..?

He looks at her. He doesn't.

CUT TO:

39 **INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. SITTING ROOM. DAY.** 39

ADELE hurries over to the chair, hurling herself to her knees to retrieve the pistol. It isn't there. She feels around desperately. But the reality is unavoidable. It has gone.

CUT TO:

40 **INT. LOUVRE PALACE. STATE ROOMS. DAY.** 40

The sumptuous state room is packed with COURTIERS and MUSKETEERS. RED GUARDS line the walls. ATHOS, ARAMIS and PORTHOS stand behind TREVILLE while LOUIS sits with QUEEN ANNE at his side as the Cardinal addresses them.

CARDINAL
These Musketeers think they are
above the law. Captain Treville has
lost control. While he looks the
other way his men riot in the
streets.

Treville rejects the allegation with terse contempt.

TREVILLE

The charges are false.

The Cardinal looks at him with silky charm.

CARDINAL

Do you deny their involvement in the pernicious and illegal practice of duelling?

TREVILLE

There might have been one or two trivial incidents.

Aramis leans over to whisper to Porthos.

ARAMIS

I don't like where this is going.

CARDINAL

(Hard)

There is nothing trivial about duelling. It is gang violence by another name, street warfare that leaves too many of our best young men dead or wounded every year.

TREVILLE

I will remind my men of their responsibilities.

Louis, thinking the formalities are over, looks relieved.

LOUIS

If that's everything, Cardinal..?

CARDINAL

Not quite, Your Majesty. (Pause)
Captain Gaudet?

GAUDET emerges from the crowd. He is a captain in the Red Guards, a handsome man with a dashing manner.

CARDINAL

Tell His Majesty of the report you received from Gascony this morning.

Athos looks up sharply. Gascony?

GAUDET

Your Majesty's servant Alexandre D'Artagnan has been murdered.

LOUIS

D'Artagnan? The name is familiar.

CARDINAL

A prominent local landowner.
Slaughtered in his own house by the
Musketeer named Athos.

There is a stir of shock. Athos reacts with bewilderment.

ATHOS

It's a lie!

CARDINAL

Call Fournier!

FOURNIER, the only survivor of the farmhouse murders, is escorted into the room. He looks haggard. The Cardinal indicates that he should speak.

FOURNIER

The Musketeers arrived just after dinner. They stabbed Alexandre in cold blood, then turned their pistols on us. The one called Athos said it was a warning to anyone who defied the King.

Athos listens in disbelief. Louis points at him.

LOUIS

Is this the man?

FOURNIER

He was masked. But he is the same height and build...

CARDINAL

(To Athos)

Where were you on this day one week ago?

ATHOS

(Pause)

In Gascony.

There are cries of shock and a buzz of conversation.

CARDINAL

What were you doing there?

Athos looks at Treville, who shakes his head minutely.

ATHOS

I'm not at liberty to say.

CARDINAL

You refuse to answer?

ATHOS

I cannot.

Louis fidgets nervously, sliding anxious looks between the Cardinal and Treville.

CARDINAL

Athos must be confined to the Bastille until his guilt or innocence can be established.

Treville looks at Louis, hoping for his support, but the King is trapped and doesn't like it at all. After a nervous moment he gestures sharply.

LOUIS

Yes, arrest him. And if he's guilty he'll be hanged.

The Red Guards grab hold of Athos and he is marched out in stunned silence. As the doors close Louis jerks his head to Treville who comes to his side. Lowering his voice so that no one else can hear Louis hisses at him.

LOUIS

Your man must say nothing of his true purpose in Gascony.

TREVILLE

But how can he defend himself?

LOUIS

King Louis's good name is at stake!
If Athos must die to preserve it,
then so be it.

CUT TO:

41 INT. LOUVRE. HALLS. DAY.

41

TREVILLE finds the bewildered ARAMIS and PORTHOS.

TREVILLE

Go to Gascony. Find Cornet. Only he has the answer to this riddle.

ARAMIS

What if he's back in Paris? He wouldn't be the first soldier to turn bandit.

TREVILLE

Leave Paris to me.

PORTHOS

Why can't Athos just say what he was doing?

TREVILLE

(Hesitates)

He is bound to secrecy by a sacred oath. And so am I.

ARAMIS

How do you expects us to solve the puzzle if you won't give us all the pieces?

Treville looks at them, badly torn.

TREVILLE

(Beat)

If you want to save Athos find out what happened to Cornet. Fast.

CUT TO:

42

INT. BONACIEUX HOUSE. SITTING. DAY.

42

D'ARTAGNAN sits by the fire, stripped to the waist. His chest and side are purple with bruising. CONSTANCE wraps a fresh bandage around him, an unavoidably intimate act.

D'ARTAGNAN

I was away selling livestock at market. If I'd been home I might have saved my father's life.

CONSTANCE

Or died with him.

D'ARTAGNAN

He was a good man. A soldier. In a fair fight he was a match for anyone.

He pauses, overcome by emotion. Constance is touched.

CONSTANCE

You loved him.

D'ARTAGNAN

(Beat)

I came to Paris to kill this Athos who boasted of murdering him. But all I've found are more questions. I have nothing.

Constance winds the bandage tightly around his chest, both of them conscious of her hands grazing his skin. They look into each other's eyes, their faces a few inches apart.

CONSTANCE

You're alive. That's something.

D'ARTAGNAN

I can't rest. Not until I know the truth.

ARAMIS

(Off)

That's lucky, because rest is off the agenda. You're coming to Gascony with us.

They look up to see PORTHOS and ARAMIS in the doorway.

ARAMIS

Athos is in prison charged with your father's murder. He didn't do it.

PORTHOS

But another Musketeer went missing at the same time, in the same place. There must be a connection. If you want to know what it is, saddle up. We're leaving now.

D'Artagnan leaps to his feet, instantly unravelling all Constance's intricate bandage work. He grabs his sword and puts on his shirt. She looks at him in disbelief.

CONSTANCE

This morning they tried to kill you and now you're best friends?

D'ARTAGNAN

I have to trust them. I have no choice.

CONSTANCE

Well, don't come crying to me if you wind up dead!

He smiles, then hurries out. She sighs in exasperation and tosses the ball of bandages into the fire.

CUT TO:

43

INT. BASTILLE. DUNGEON. DAY.

43

ATHOS languishes deep within the bowels of the fearsome Bastille prison, pacing the dingy room like a caged tiger.

CUT TO:

He allows himself a smile then returns briskly to business.

CARDINAL

What of the Spanish spy, Renard?

MILADY

When Cornet missed their rendezvous he rushed back to Paris with me. Sadly he met an unhappy end in a depressing little coaching inn.

CARDINAL

He would have been more useful alive.

MILADY

He was a bad lover and a terrible bore. He deserved to die for that alone.

The Cardinal gazes at her appreciatively.

CARDINAL

The more cruel you are, the more attractive I find you. What does that say about me, I wonder?

MILADY

We are better friends than we would be lovers, Cardinal. Let's not confuse the issue.

CARDINAL

I could make you the most powerful woman in France.

MILADY

I have all the power I need.

CARDINAL

Power I could remove in an instant.

She looks at him steadily. There is a heat between them, a moment infused with sexuality, threat and tension. He opens a drawer and takes out the pistol Aramis left at Adele's. He points it at Milady and we see a flicker of doubt in her eyes. But after a moment he puts the gun up and laughs, placing it on the desk in front of her.

CARDINAL

Find out who owns this pistol. Return it to me when you have the name.

She picks up the gun as he glances at her mildly.

CARDINAL

Don't forget who created you,
Milady. After all, what were you
when I found you?

CUT TO:

46

EXT. GASCONY. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY.

46

D'ARTAGNAN, PORTHOS and ARAMIS ride along a rural track.

ARAMIS

This is the only road to Bayonne.
They had to come this way after
Athos left them.

PORTHOS

I asked around. Cornet gambles.
Money owed all over Paris. Suppose
he knew his cargo was valuable and
stole it?

D'ARTAGNAN

Why would his men go along with it?

PORTHOS

(Shrugs)
They were all in it together.

D'ARTAGNAN

That doesn't explain why they would
ride forty miles out of their way
to kill a complete stranger.

ARAMIS

Maybe those were Cornet's orders.
Did your father have any enemies?

D'ARTAGNAN

He spoke against the King's taxes
and defied the Cardinal over Gascon
rights.

ARAMIS

So just the two most powerful men
in France. No one significant.

D'Artagnan turns on him angrily.

D'ARTAGNAN

He wasn't a traitor.

ARAMIS

Maybe that's not how they saw it in
Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN

Then why not just arrest him and put him on trial? And why blame it on Athos?

They have no answer. D'Artagnan looks around.

D'ARTAGNAN

There's a wood ahead. A notorious local spot for thieves and bandits. Athos couldn't have known about it. After that the road to Bayonne is clear.

CUT TO:

47

EXT. WOODS/ROAD. DAY.

47

The Musketeers ride at a walk, looking around. And then D'ARTAGNAN sees something.

D'ARTAGNAN

Wait!

He dismounts and walks to a nearby tree. A low branch hangs limply where it has been shattered. Aramis looks at it.

CUT IN:

A pistol fires in SLOW MOTION. We see the charge explode and the ball spinning from the barrel. It whistles through the air and crashes into the tree branch, sending sap exploding...

CUT BACK TO:

D'Artagnan takes out his dagger and digs in the trunk of a nearby tree. He turns to the others holding something small in the palm of his hand. It is squashed and flattened but unmistakably a pistol ball.

PORTHOS

A pistol ball. They were ambushed.

Aramis sees broken vegetation and marks on the ground where something heavy has been dragged through the undergrowth.

ARAMIS

Over here...

They follow the trail to a clearing. The earth has been freshly dug and hastily covered with leaves. Porthos gets to his knees and clears away the top layer of soil. He stops abruptly. A dead face stares up at him from a shallow grave.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. WOODS. DAY.

48

Three bodies have been uncovered. All of them are in their underclothes, with their hands tied behind their backs. There is dried blood on their faces. PORTHOS gazes down at them, seething with anger and disgust.

PORTHOS

All of them tied up and shot in the head. It was an execution.

ARAMIS

They never even had a chance to draw their swords. Where's Cornet?

PORTHOS

Maybe he got away.

D'ARTAGNAN

Or they took him with them.

ARAMIS

They wouldn't do this and then leave a witness. If he's still alive there's only one explanation. (Pause) He betrayed his own men.

They look at each other, considering the options.

PORTHOS

You've just sold out your men and stolen the King's gold. What do you do next?

D'ARTAGNAN

Slip over the border to Spain and start a new life.

ARAMIS

How do you know it was gold he was carrying?

PORTHOS

What else would make him do something like this?

It's hard to argue with this but Aramis looks uncertain.

ARAMIS

The one thing Athos was told is that Cornet was supposed to make contact with someone in Bayonne. We don't know who, but we do know where. We'll start there.

CUT TO:

49

INT. INN. BAYONNE. DAY.

49

ARAMIS, PORTHOS and D'ARTAGNAN stand with the INN KEEPER, a rough and taciturn figure in his 40s. A few half-cut locals stand watching the visitors from the bar.

INN KEEPER

The Musketeer Cornet? Yes he was here.

ARAMIS

You're sure?

INN KEEPER

I never forget a man who runs out on his bill.

ARAMIS

He didn't pay? Why not?

INN KEEPER

Because of the fight. One minute he's talking quietly to his friend, the next they're at each other's throats.

D'ARTAGNAN

What happened then?

INN KEEPER

I told them to take it outside.

PORTHOS

Was this other man a Musketeer as well?

INN KEEPER

(Shakes his head)
Different uniform. Red markings.

ARAMIS

The Cardinal's Red Guard.

PORTHOS

You didn't catch his name?

INN KEEPER

I heard Cornet shouting at him. Began with a "D". Dejean, Dajarnatte, something like that.

Porthos looks up in sudden shock.

PORTHOS

Dujon?

INN KEEPER

That's it. Dujon.

LOUIS

Is there another one?

He smiles hopefully but the Cardinal only looks back gravely.

CARDINAL

These proposals could engulf all Europe in a new war. (Pause) If Your Majesty isn't satisfied with my advice, I shall have to resign.

LOUIS

(Horried)

Let's not be hasty...

CARDINAL

This undermines years of careful foreign policy... my position has been fatally damaged... I can't possibly remain in office...

LOUIS

(Panic)

I'll give you anything you want. Just get me out of this mess.

The Cardinal looks at him doubtfully. Louis struggles with a mixture of pride, anger and humiliation.

LOUIS

I need you. France needs you. Just tell me what to do to make you stay.

CARDINAL

(Long pause)

The Musketeer Athos...

LOUIS

Gone. I'll have him hanged in the morning. I'll disband the whole damn regiment if that's what it takes.

CARDINAL

Well... in due course perhaps.

Louis looks startled at this but can't exactly take it back.

LOUIS

Then you'll stay? No more talk of resigning?

CARDINAL

(Beat)

I am Your Majesty's humble servant.

Louis's relief is intense.

LOUIS

You won't regret it. I'll never do anything again without talking to you first.

His humiliation is total but the Cardinal is too smart to gloat. Instead he simply bows humbly. Louis goes out with a spring in his step. As his door closes, the Cardinal opens a drawer of his vast desk. He takes out the king's bundle of letters, allowing himself a smile of satisfaction.

CUT TO:

54

INT. PARIS. INN. DAY.

54

A few hardened DRINKERS sit around the room. It is a rough dive with a low counter and shelves full of dusty bottles. As PORTHOS walks in, the room falls silent. He looks around.

PORTHOS

I hate it when that happens.

He walks slowly to the counter. The hostility is tangible. The OWNER gazes at him, stone-faced.

PORTHOS

Nice crowd. Very chatty.

OWNER

We don't get many of your type in here.

PORTHOS

Musketeers, you mean?

He doesn't. He means black, and Porthos knows it.

PORTHOS

A glass of your best wine.

The OWNER reaches for a dirty glass, spits in it, wipes it with a rag, then bangs it down and fills it with nearly black liquid. Porthos sniffs the wine delicately.

PORTHOS

I've smelled vinegars with a softer bouquet.

He takes a swig and winces, but then finishes the glass.

PORTHOS

Utterly repulsive but there's something about it I like. (Pause)
I'm looking for Dujon.

OWNER

Never heard of him.

CHANGE ANGLE to a seat on the other side of the room. Hidden from view is the Red Guard DUJON, Porthos's old opponent. He draws his sword and gets up silently. PORTHOS has his back to him and seems oblivious to the threat.

PORTHOS
I was told he drinks here.

OWNER
You were told wrong.

Dujon creeps up behind Porthos until he is almost on him - and then, in one fluent, brutal motion PORTHOS rams back his elbow into his face and crashes his head against the bar, knocking him cold. As he slides to the floor, Porthos looks down at the unconscious body.

PORTHOS
Would you believe it? Here he is.

CUT TO:

55 **EXT. STREET. DAY.**

55

DUJON comes round to see three faces looming over him - D'ARTAGNAN, PORTHOS and ARAMIS. Porthos has his sword at his throat.

D'ARTAGNAN
Where's Cornet?

Dujon says nothing. Aramis leans over him, his tone affable but his eyes steely.

ARAMIS
Take us to him or die here. Your choice.

CUT TO:

56 **INT. WAREHOUSE. DAY.**

56

The Musketeers enter an old warehouse. DUJON walks ahead of them. We expect an ambush at every step but as they turn the corner into the main chamber, there is no one there.

PORTHOS
Where is he, then?

Dujon points to a room at the end of the hall. D'Artagnan and Porthos advance cautiously while Aramis keeps a dagger at Dujon's throat. They glance at each other then take up a position at each side of the door. Porthos nods silently, then kicks open the door and rushes in, his pistol raised. Immediately he stops, reeling back.

We catch a glimpse of a body on the floor in blood-stained underclothes. Dujon sneers at them.

DUJON

You said you wanted to see him.

Aramis pushes his dagger into Dujon's throat, drawing blood.

ARAMIS

What happened?

CUT TO:

57 **INT. BAYONNE. INN. DAY.**

57

CORNET and DUJON sit at a corner table, their conversation animated and volatile.

DUJON

(Over)

We bribed Cornet to betray his mission and sell out his men. He left them and rode on ahead and we just sat and waited for them to ride past. They weren't expecting a thing. It was easy.

Cornet hands over the pouches containing the vital letters. Dujon takes them out to check, then throws a purse in Cornet's direction. We see Cornet ask a question and then look up in shock at Dujon's answer.

DUJON

We told him his men wouldn't be harmed. Maybe he actually believed that. I don't know. Either way, when we told him his men were dead, he took it badly.

Cornet hurls himself across the table, dragging Dujon to the floor. As the two men roll and punch at each other the INN KEEPER hurries across to separate them -

CUT BACK TO:

58 **INT. WAREHOUSE. DAY.**

58

ARAMIS, D'ARTAGNAN and PORTHOS listen as DUJON finishes.

DUJON

He could have crossed the border to Spain and disappeared with his blood money. But he couldn't live with what he'd done. He wanted to go to Treville. So I brought him back to Paris and held him here.

PORTHOS
And then murdered him.

DUJON
I was just following orders.

PORTHOS
Whose orders?

Dujon only looks at him contemptuously. Porthos grabs him savagely and crashes him back against the wall.

PORTHOS
You murdering bastard. I'll see you hang for this.

Dujon grins, cocky and defiant.

DUJON
Go on, then. Arrest me. It'll never even get to trial. The Cardinal looks after his own.

PORTHOS
Who said anything about a trial?

A flicker of doubt registers in Dujon's eyes as Aramis sees a rope lying on a crate, picks it up and throws it over a beam.

DUJON
You can't... that's murder...

PORTHOS
I won't tell if you won't.

He manhandles the now terrified Dujon towards the rope where Aramis is briskly tying a noose. They force his head into it and tighten the knot. Porthos goes to the other end of the rope and grabs it with both hands.

DUJON
No... wait...

Even D'Artagnan is shocked. He looks at Aramis and Porthos but their faces are hard and determined. Porthos yanks on the rope and Dujon's feet lift onto tip-toe. He screams in terror.

DUJON
Wait... wait... I'll tell you everything...

Porthos pauses and looks at Aramis, who nods. Porthos relaxes the rope minutely as Dujon babbles out his confession.

DUJON
My orders came from Captain Gaudet.

Porthos yanks on the rope so that Dujon's toes are scrabbling at the floor again as the noose tightens around his neck.

ARAMIS

What else do you know?

DUJON

(Screams)

The Queen intends to visit her cousin tonight. Gaudet will kidnap and rob her. The King's fury at the insult to his wife will ensure the Musketeer regiment is disbanded.

His breath comes in rasping sobs. Porthos finally lets go of the rope and he falls to his knees, all his arrogance utterly gone. D'Artagnan kneels at his side.

D'ARTAGNAN

Did you kill Alexandre D'Artagnan?

DUJON

(Pause)

I wasn't there. It was Gaudet.

D'ARTAGNAN

Why did he die?

DUJON

They said he was a traitor. That's all I know.

D'Artagnan shoves him aside as Porthos grabs his hands roughly and binds them behind him.

D'Artagnan moves to one side with Aramis, looking at him dubiously.

D'ARTAGNAN

Were you really going to hang him?

ARAMIS

You think we're savages?

D'ARTAGNAN

I don't know yet.

ARAMIS

He thought we were. That's what matters.

D'ARTAGNAN

That's not what I asked.

Aramis looks at him, considering the question carefully.

ARAMIS

Who knows?

We feel he is not even sure himself. Charming and urbane as he may be, we see the potential for brutality in him - as it is, perhaps, in all of them.

CUT TO:

59

INT. PARIS. MUSKETEERS GARRISON. DAY.

59

PORTHOS, D'ARTAGNAN and ARAMIS talk urgently with TREVILLE.

TREVILLE

We must warn the Queen.

D'ARTAGNAN

Saving her won't get Athos out of prison.

ARAMIS

Then we'll make Gaudet confess.

TREVILLE

It's his word against Dujon's. Without his confession we have no proof.

D'ARTAGNAN

(Pause)

Can you arrange a private audience with the Queen? I have a plan.

TREVILLE

What plan?

D'ARTAGNAN

One that ends either in triumph or with our heads on the block.

The others all look at each other.

ARAMIS

I like his style.

TREVILLE

I like my head. He's not even a Musketeer. All right. What is this wonderful plan?

D'ARTAGNAN

We let the attack on the Queen go ahead.

TREVILLE

(Dry)

Hopefully it gets better as it goes along.

CUT TO:

60

INT. LOUVRE. QUEEN'S APARTMENTS. NIGHT.

60

The QUEEN gazes at PORTHOS, ARAMIS and TREVILLE.

TREVILLE

This is a conspiracy against the honour of the Musketeers. A threat to the regiment's very existence. But we can't prove it without Your Majesty's help. If you truly believe me to be the King's loyal servant, I beg you to help us.

ANNE looks at them, her decision hanging in the balance...

CUT TO:

61

INT. BESSETTE HOUSE. SITTING ROOM. DAY.

61

ADELE BESSETTE is with ARAMIS. She looks at him in panic.

ADELE

I can't do it. I daren't.

ARAMIS

Adele, we need you. *I* need you. Don't worry. You'll be quite safe.

ADELE

You don't understand. The Cardinal knows about us. (Pause) Your pistol. You dropped it when you left. If he found it, he knows.

ARAMIS

Has he said anything?

She shakes her head.

ARAMIS

Then probably one of the servants took it and sold it.

ADELE

He knows *everything*, Aramis. He sees into my heart.

ARAMIS

The Cardinal's not God, Adele, whatever he might think.

ADELE looks at him, her resolve weakening. He smiles in reassurance.

ARAMIS

I love you. I'll never let anything
happen to you.

CUT TO:

62

EXT. PARIS. STREETS. NIGHT.

62

A gilded coach rattles through the streets. The DRIVER and FOOTMAN wear hooded cloaks. Inside the carriage we catch a brief, silhouetted glimpse of the Queen, dressed in lavish jewels and a beautiful dress. As the coach nears a turning it slows - and suddenly a GANG of FOUR MASKED MUSKETEERS materialise from the shadows, pistols levelled.

GAUDET

Step down from the carriage, Your
Majesty and you won't be harmed.

We see the Queen's face in shadow. GAUDET lifts his pistol to the window and the "Queen" turns to look at him -

- it is ADELE, who in this light could be the Queen's double. In the same second CONSTANCE, disguised as the Queen's maid, rams the door in GAUDET'S face, sending him sprawling and allowing the hidden D'ARTAGNAN to spring out from his hiding place inside the carriage.

Now PORTHOS and ARAMIS - the driver and his footman - throw off their cloaks and level their pistols. The report of the guns is shattering in the night - one of the false Musketeers is killed.

GAUDET aims his pistol but D'ARTAGNAN kicks it out of his hand. D'ARTAGNAN fights like a demon but slips and falls; for a second he is at GAUDET'S mercy but then ARAMIS flicks up his sword with his foot and tosses it back to him. D'ARTAGNAN catches it and launches himself back into the fight in one fluid movement.

Distracted, ARAMIS doesn't see a fake Musketeer level his gun and fire. The bullet catches him a glancing blow on the forehead and sends him spinning to the ground.

D'ARTAGNAN is pushed back against the coach, fighting two men on his own. CONSTANCE suddenly leans out of the carriage and grabs one of them around the neck. He struggles and drags her out of the carriage, clawing at her and ripping her blouse, but CONSTANCE ducks inside a deadly thrust of his sword and trips him up, sending him sprawling, then grabs his own sword and stabs him with it. She looks deeply shocked as she watches his blood seeping darkly onto the cobbles.

At the same moment PORTHOS finishes off his own opponent and pauses to glance admiringly at CONSTANCE, who looks quite something with her shirt torn to the waist, bosom heaving and the sword clutched in her hand.

PORTHOS

If there's one thing I love it's a
half-dressed woman with a sword.

With his men down, GAUDET can see the fight is hopeless and abruptly throws down his own sword. D'ARTAGNAN plunges his sword towards his stomach but ARAMIS knocks it away.

ARAMIS

If you kill him now who will speak
for Athos?

A beat, then D'ARTAGNAN lowers his sword. PORTHOS grabs GAUDET and pushes him away. ARAMIS goes to the carriage and kisses ADELE fondly.

ARAMIS

You were magnificent. A queen in
all but name.

ADELE

I was scared.

ARAMIS

I'll comfort you. Tomorrow night.
After dinner.

ADELE

What if the Cardinal is with me?

ARAMIS

I have a feeling he'll be otherwise
engaged.

Elsewhere, D'ARTAGNAN goes to CONSTANCE.

D'ARTAGNAN

Who taught you to fight like that?

CONSTANCE

I told you. I have three brothers.

He sees she is shaking with shock and covers her with his jacket. She looks at him a little helplessly.

CONSTANCE

I killed him.

D'ARTAGNAN

You had no choice.

CONSTANCE

One moment he was alive and the
next... gone. I did that to him.

She is shivering violently. He takes her in his arms and holds her tightly.

D'ARTAGNAN

You risked your life for me. If there's any way I can ever repay the debt, you only have to say the word.

She looks up at him, hardly taking this in.

CONSTANCE

Take me home. My husband will be back soon. He can't know about any of this.

She removes herself gently from his arms with a last anguished glance at the dead body in the gutter.

CUT TO:

63

INT. LOUVRE PALACE. STATE ROOMS. DAY.

63

An excited court has assembled to hear GAUDET'S testimony. LOUIS sits with ANNE at his side. A bewildered ATHOS, still under guard, stands nearby. TREVILLE, ARAMIS, PORTHOS and D'ARTAGNAN are amongst the crowd.

LOUIS

(To Gaudet)

There is some deep conspiracy here. Speak the truth and you might yet save yourself. Who ordered you to commit these heinous crimes?

GAUDET glances at the CARDINAL, whose manner is superbly calm.

GAUDET

(Finally)

I acted on my own initiative. The Musketeers humiliated my men and received no punishment for it. I thought I could discredit them in Your Majesty's eyes.

LOUIS

Why did you impersonate Athos?

GAUDET

If a great man like him was thought to be a criminal, the Musketeers' disgrace would be that much greater.

ANNE leans forward, clearly not convinced.

ANNE

I think you are lying, Captain. I believe you were acting under instruction.

GAUDET

I am facing death. I have no more reason to lie. My actions were for the good of France.

LOUIS leaps to his feet in fury.

LOUIS

I *am* France! How dare you tell me what is good for me!

ANNE

(Beat)

Why did you murder Alexandre d'Artagnan?

In the crowd D'Artagnan leans forward in anticipation.

GAUDET

I heard the Cardinal call him a traitor. I thought it was my duty to kill him.

LOUIS

Yet you still say the Cardinal knew nothing of any of this?

Gaudet pauses, then shakes his head. In the crowd d'Artagnan is white with anger. The Cardinal, impassive up to now, suddenly stands up in a convincing fury.

CARDINAL

Take him away immediately and break every bone in his body. Let all Paris watch his execution.

Gaudet pales but marches away proudly under guard. Louis gestures to Athos to come forward.

LOUIS

You are a free man, Athos. Personally I always thought you were innocent.

Louis turns to Treville with a friendly smile.

LOUIS

Good work, Treville. Your men have done France an invaluable service. (Pause) Haven't they, Cardinal?

The Cardinal forces a smile.

CARDINAL

Invaluable.

Louis claps Treville on the back and walks out, followed by the court. The Musketeers rush to greet their friend. He shakes hands with all of them, and Treville in particular.

ATHOS

I owe you my life.

TREVILLE

D'Artagnan deserves the credit.

Athos smiles at d'Artagnan.

ATHOS

You come to Paris to kill me and end up saving my life. After a few drinks I'm sure I'll appreciate the irony.

D'Artagnan smiles but stares bitterly at the Cardinal.

D'ARTAGNAN

Does anyone seriously believe Gaudet would act without his master's blessing?

TREVILLE

Let it go, d'Artagnan.

D'ARTAGNAN

The Cardinal killed my father. He deserves to die.

TREVILLE

You have no proof. And even if you did, a strike against the Cardinal is a strike against the King. There's nothing you can do.

While this is taking place we see a sudden glimpse of MILADY. She watches ATHOS with a bitter intensity so fierce it burns. He senses her gaze on him and looks up but in the same moment she melts into the crowd and he thinks nothing of it.

CUT TO:

64

INT. LOUVRE. HALLS. DAY.

64

As the CARDINAL walks away he finds himself confronted by a gleeful LOUIS, who has ANNE at his side.

LOUIS

It seems you can't even control your own men, Cardinal.

The Cardinal only smiles stiffly in response.

LOUIS

You must be careful. Any more incidents like this and I might think I can manage without you after all.

He laughs and the Cardinal is forced to enjoy the "joke". But as the King turns away we see the fury in his eyes. The balance of power is even again, at least for now.

CUT TO:

65

INT. BASTILLE. DUNGEON. DAY.

65

GAUDET sits in his cell - the same one previously occupied by Athos. He looks up as the CARDINAL comes in.

CARDINAL

I'm grateful for your loyalty.

GAUDET

I am just a soldier. There are many more like me. But none like Cardinal Richelieu. France needs you. The King needs you.

The Cardinal inclines his head in thanks.

GAUDET

If I had revealed it was you who stole the King's letters, your hand behind the whole plot, the country would have been plunged into chaos. Better I should die than you should fall. (Pause, hopefully) Unless perhaps, you can still save me?

CARDINAL

Sadly not. But I'll see your family well provided for.

GAUDET swallows hard but tries to take the news calmly.

GAUDET

To be broken on the wheel. Every limb smashed to pieces. It's an agonising death.

The Cardinal looks at him thoughtfully.

CARDINAL

Why did you kill Alexandre D'Artagnan? That wasn't part of your orders.

GAUDET

I heard you curse him when you read his letters. I thought you'd be pleased if I disposed of him for you.

CARDINAL

He was an irritation, not a traitor. But I appreciate the sentiment.

He reaches into his pocket and brings out a small bottle.

CARDINAL

A few drops of this and you will be dead within seconds. I'm told the process is relatively painless.

He places the bottle on the table then offers his hand for Gaudet to kiss. Gaudet sinks to his knees.

GAUDET

Long live the King!

CARDINAL

Indeed.

CUT TO:

66 **INT. PARIS. MUSKETEER'S GARRISON/TREVILLE'S OFFICE. DAY.** 66

TREVILLE stands behind his desk with ATHOS, PORTHOS and ARAMIS. He looks at d'Artagnan.

TREVILLE

What will you do now?

D'ARTAGNAN

Go home.

PORTHOS

You're not a farmer. You're a soldier. Anyone can see that.

ATHOS

And face it. There's nothing there for you anymore.

ARAMIS

So why not stay with us?

TREVILLE

Report for duty tomorrow and we'll take a look at you.

D'ARTAGNAN thinks about it, then offers TREVILLE his hand.

CUT TO:

67

INT. PARIS. MUSKETEER'S GARRISON/HOTEL. DAY.

67

D'ARTAGNAN walks out with ATHOS, PORTHOS and ARAMIS.

ATHOS

Join us for dinner tomorrow. My
rooms at eight. Do you need
somewhere to stay?

D'ARTAGNAN

I have a place.

ARAMIS

In the arms of Madame Bonacieux.

D'ARTAGNAN

She's a married woman.

ARAMIS

You really are from Gascony, aren't
you?

D'ARTAGNAN

And besides, there's someone else.

PORTHOS

A sweetheart?

D'ARTAGNAN

Not exactly. A woman I've only met
once. The most beautiful I've ever
seen. We have unfinished business.

ATHOS

She sounds lively.

D'ARTAGNAN

You have no idea.

He grins and holds out his hand to them all. One by one they
add their hands until they are all intertwined.

D'ARTAGNAN

All for one...

They all stare back at him blankly. He shrugs.

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm still trying to decide how the
rest of it goes.

CUT TO:

ADELE

You pious hypocrite! You'll burn in hell.

CARDINAL

Perhaps. But I have work to do here first. The Devil may have his share of me later.

He nods to the Guard, who drags Adele away. She shouts back at him, terrified but defiant.

ADELE

I love Aramis. I'll love him with my last breath.

We see anger ripple across the Cardinal's studiously benign expression. He nods sharply to the Guard, then closes the door of the carriage. He picks up some papers and begins to study them.

We hear a scuffle and a scream. A second later there is the loud explosion of the pistol, followed by a terrible silence.

A beat, then there is a knock on the carriage door. The Cardinal opens it and the Guard offers him the pistol. The barrel is still warm and smoking.

CUT TO:

71

EXT. BESSETTE HOUSE. DAY.

71

ARAMIS knocks on the door. No notices that all the shutters are closed. He knocks again. After a long moment a SERVANT opens the door a few inches and looks out at him.

ARAMIS

I have an appointment with Mademoiselle Bessette.

SERVANT

She's gone to the country.

The Servant hands him an ornate wooden case.

SERVANT

A gift for you. From the Cardinal.

Aramis stares in astonishment at the beautiful case. He suddenly has a sick sense of what it will contain. He opens it and inside is his own pistol. He looks up in horror at the shuttered house.

ARAMIS

Adele! Adele!

HOLD on his mounting desperation, then -

CUT TO:

72 **INT. ATHOS'S ROOMS. DAY.**

72

ATHOS sits on his bed. He stares at a cameo brooch in his hand. He opens it and inside are two matching miniature portraits. One is of himself, smiling and dignified, dressed in fine clothes. The other is of MILADY. She too smiles. ATHOS stares at the pictures, lost in his thoughts.

CUT TO:

73 **EXT. PARIS. STREETS. DAY.**

73

D'ARTAGNAN walks the crowded street. He hears shouts and looks back to see a carriage hurtling at speed towards him. He throws himself out of the way.

D'ARTAGNAN
Hey! Watch out!

He races along beside it, banging on the door.

D'ARTAGNAN
Who do you think you are?

The shutter opens and a head emerges from the window. It is MILADY. Her blonde hair is piled up and her neck is decorated with a magnificent jewelled choker. She smiles and blows him a kiss. A second later the carriage accelerates and disappears into the distance.

HOLD on D'ARTAGNAN, transfixed by the vision of MILADY's enigmatic beauty, and then, slowly -

**FADE TO BLACK.
END OF EPISODE
ONE.**