

ACT I

SETTING: *Various locations in Paris and London, 1628.*

AT RISE: *The stage is dark. Music under – from the sound of it, we can tell we are in for an adventure! Suddenly we hear the sound of an angry mob then...*

SOLDIER #1 (O.S.)

Get him! Get him! Stop that man!

(CRIMINAL runs on, and stops, panting for breath. looking back from whence he came. A moment later MOB #1 enters, sees him, and points.)

MOB #1

There he is!

(MOB #2, MOB #3, MOB #4, and SOLDIER #1 enter. CRIMINAL starts to run off opposite when his way is blocked by MOB #5, MOB #6, MOB #7 and SOLDIER #2. CRIMINAL starts to back up as the MOB begins to close in on him.)

CRIMINAL

No... no... I am innocent, I swear... I am innocent!

(He falls to his knees. As if by magic, D'ARTAGNAN appears beside him, sword in hand. He threatens the mob with it.)

D'ARTGNAN

Stay back, all of you – stay back! One more step and you shall taste my steel – this I swear by the sword of D'Artagnan!

SOLDIER #2

You are making a mistake, monsieur. This man is a criminal. He must be punished.

(The MOB surges forward once more. Once more D'ARTAGNAN threatens them with his sword.)

D'ARTAGNAN

This man claims he is innocent. Who among you has proof to the contrary?

(ROCHEFORT enters.)

ROCHEFORT

I do.

(The MOB murmurs as ROCHEFORT approaches D'ARTAGNAN.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Who are you?

ROCHEFORT

You don't know? You must be new to Paris.

D'ARTAGNAN

I have only just arrived from the country.

ROCHEFORT

As evidenced by your boorish dress and unrefined manner.

D'ARTAGNAN

I will not stand here and be insulted!

ROCHEFORT

Then by all means... take a seat.

(The MOB laughs. D'ARTAGNAN whips his sword around and places the point against ROCHEFORT's chest.)

D'ARTAGNAN

You will pay for that remark, monsieur.

ROCHEFORT

Put your sword away, boy – before I am forced to kill you.

(All eyes are on D'ARTAGNAN and ROCHEFORT. Suddenly the CRIMINAL tries to run for it.)

MOB

There he goes!/Get him!/Don't let him get away!

(The MOB catches the CRIMINAL.)

ROCHEFORT

Bring him here.

(The MOB drags the CRIMINAL to ROCHEFORT. ROCHEFORT turns to D'ARTAGNAN.)

ROCHEFORT (cont.)

You said you wanted proof – here it is.

(ROCHEFORT grabs CRIMINAL's left sleeve near the shoulder and rips it away, revealing a fleur-de-lis branded on his upper arm.)

You see the fleur-de-lis, branded here upon his skin?

D'ARTAGNAN

Yes.

ROCHEFORT

This man has been tried and found guilty of murder most foul. In a drunken rage, he slit the throats of his wife and child. This fleur-de-lis marks him for execution – death by hanging.

(The CRIMINAL tries to squirm away.)

CRIMINAL

No! No, please!

ROCHEFORT

(To the SOLDIERS)

Take him away.

(The SOLDIERS drags the protesting CRIMINAL off. The MOB follows. ROCHEFORT turns back to D'ARTAGNAN.)

Now be off with you.

D'ARTAGNAN

Not so fast, Monsieur. I have not yet answered your insults.

(D'ARTAGNAN draws his sword.)

ROCHEFORT

You try my patience, boy.

D'ARTAGNAN

I am no *boy*, as you shall soon see! Now, en garde!

(Annoyed, ROCHEFORT draws his sword.)

ROCHEFORT

I am already late for an appointment...

D'ARTAGNAN

As am I, but Monsieur de Treville will have to wait.

(D'ARTAGNAN lunges. ROCHEFORT parries.)

ROCHEFORT

Monsieur de Treville? Of the King's Musketeers?

D'ARTAGNAN

The very one.

(D'ARTAGNAN lunges again. ROCHEFORT parries.)

ROCHEFORT

What business does a boy like you have with the great Monsieur de Treville?

(ROCHEFORT lunges. D'ARTAGNAN parries.)

D'ARTAGNAN

I wish to join his musketeers.

ROCHEFORT

So does every boy in France. But Monsieur de Treville will see no one unless he has a letter of introduction.

(ROCHEFORT lunges again. D'ARTAGNAN parries.)

D'ARTAGNAN

It so happens that I carry such a letter in my wallet. A letter written by my father.

ROCHEFORT

Your father...?

(ROCHEFORT lunges again. D'ARTAGNAN parries.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Monsieur de Treville and my father were childhood friends.

(D'ARTAGNAN lunges. ROCHEFORT parries.)

ROCHEFORT

And your father's name?

D'ARTAGNAN

The same as mine – D'Artagnan.

(D'ARTAGNAN lunges again. ROCHEFORT parries.)

ROCHEFORT

So, Monsieur D'Artagnan wishes to fight for the King.

(ROCHEFORT lunges. D'ARTAGNAN parries.)

D'ARTAGNAN

That is correct. Which I shall do as soon as I dispatch you from this earth.

(MILADY DE WINTER enters behind D'ARTAGNAN's back, clutching a heavy purse. Upon seeing her, ROCHEFORT places his sword upon the ground.)

ROCHEFORT

Surely you wouldn't kill an unarmed man in the presence of a lady.

D'ARTAGNAN

What lady?

MILADY

Hello.

(D'ARTAGAN turns and is stunned by her beauty.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Mon Dieu! You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

MILADY

Why, thank you, Monsieur...?

D'ARTAGNAN

D'Artagnan. Monsieur D'Artagnan, at your service.

(D'ARTAGNAN sweeps into a low bow. MILADY bludgeons him with the heavy purse. He falls like a rock. ROCHEFORT crouches next to him.)

ROCHEFORT

He'll have a headache when he wakes up. What do you keep in that bag?

MILADY

Heavy things. You were supposed to meet me ten minutes ago, Rochefort.

ROCHEFORT

My apologies, Milady. This young rascal insisted on fighting.

MILADY

Dueling is outlawed in Paris. The last thing we need is unwanted attention...

ROCHEFORT

He started it!

(MILADY looks down at D'ARTAGNAN.)

MILADY

Who is he?

ROCHEFORT

Another farmer yearning to be a musketeer.

MILADY

Boys and their foolish dreams.

ROCHEFORT

This boy is different. He has a connection to Monsieur de Treville.

MILADY

Treville?! My God, Rochefort – what are you waiting for? Kill him! Kill him!

(She pulls a knife and starts for D'ARTAGNAN. ROCHEFORT stays her hand.)

ROCHEFORT

Milady, this boy is unable to defend himself.

MILADY

What does that matter? He knows Treville! And if Treville finds out that you and I met today, he'll go straight to the King...

ROCHEFORT

Treville won't find out.

MILADY

How can you be certain?

ROCHEFORT

The boy doesn't know who we are – he just arrived in Paris today. And he hasn't actually met Treville. Not yet, anyway.

(ROCHEFORT crouches down and starts searching D'ARTAGNAN's pockets.)

MILADY

But you said...

ROCHEFORT

I spoke hastily. What I meant was, he carries a letter of introduction to Monsieur de Treville.

(ROCHEFORT pulls D'ARTAGNAN's wallet out of his pocket, opens it and removes a letter. He shows it to MILADY.)

Which he will never deliver. And you know as well as I do that Treville won't see anyone without an introduction. So you see, Lady de Winter – there is no need for spilt blood. We are quite safe. Now as to the purpose of our meeting – Cardinal Richelieu has orders. You are to return to England without delay, and notify him immediately if the Duke of Buckingham leaves London.

MILADY

Any other instructions?

ROCHEFORT

Yes. In here. But you are not to read them until you cross the Channel.

(He pulls out a sealed envelope and hands it to her.)

MILADY

Very well. And where will you be?

ROCHEFORT

I am to stay here in Paris and keep an eye on Her Majesty. Remember now, the moment Buckingham makes a move...

MILADY

Yes, yes – have I ever failed you before?

(D'ARTAGNAN groans.)

ROCHEFORT

Then away with you – before we're seen!

(MILADY exits one way, ROCHEFORT the other. D'ARTAGNAN comes to, rubbing the back of his head. Suddenly he notices his empty wallet on the ground.)

D'ARTAGNAN

My letter! Where is my letter?!

(He pats his other pockets in a panic then quickly searches the ground)

That devil with the eye patch – he must have taken it! So you mean to outwit me, eh, monsieur? You shall soon find out that nothing can stop me. I shall find Monsieur de Treville, with or without my letter...

(He raises his sword.)

This I swear by the sword of D'Artagnan!

(Music under as D'ARTAGNAN exits. The scene shifts to the Headquarters of the King's musketeers. MONSIEUR DE TREVILLE is working at his desk. PLANCHET, his servant, enters.)

PLANCHET

Monsieur de Treville...

(DE TREVILLE doesn't look up from his papers.)

TREVILLE

I thought I told you I was not to be disturbed, Planchet.

PLANCHET

Oui, monsieur, but...

(CARDINAL RICHELIEU enters, unseen by TREVILLE.)

TREVILLE

No "buts," Planchet. I don't care if the Devil himself wants an appointment – or for that matter, his henchman, Cardinal Richelieu...

PLANCHET

(Horried)

Monsieur!

RICHELIEU

So I am the Devil's henchman, eh, Treville?

TREVILLE

(Standing up)

Your Eminence!

PLANCHET

Cardinal Richelieu is here to see you, monsieur.

TREVILLE

Yes, Planchet – thank you. That will be all.

(PLANCHET bows to both men and exits.)

I wasn't expecting you, Your Grace.

RICHELIEU

I never make appointments. When looking for answers, I find surprise works best.

TREVILLE

Answers...?

RICHELIEU

To the question of why your Three Musketeers were dueling in public last night.

TREVILLE

My *three* musketeers? Your Eminence, I have several hundred musketeers under my command.

RICHELIEU

Don't be coy with me, Treville. I'm referring to Athos, Aramis and Porthos, that inseparable band of troublemakers who refuse to follow the law. Dueling in public *is* against the law.

TREVILLE

Yes, Your Eminence, I am aware...

RICHELIEU

Last night they started a brawl at a tavern on the Rue Férou and when my guards tried to arrest them, your musketeers challenged them to a duel. Two of my men were killed. This does not make me happy. Nor does it make the King happy.

TREVILLE

You told the King?

RICHELIEU

It slipped out over breakfast. I assured His Majesty that it would never happen again. I certainly hope he won't be disappointed again – for if he is...

(He crosses to TREVILLE and stands nose to nose with him.)

... I shall not only arrest your Three Musketeers, but you as well. All four of you shall be thrown into the Bastille. And you know what they say about the Bastille, monsieur – once you go in, you never come out. Do I make myself clear?

TREVILLE

Yes, Your Eminence.

(RICHELIEU holds out his hand. TREVILLE genuflects in front of him and kisses his ring. RICHELIEU turns and exits. TREVILLE stands up, crosses to his desk, considering all he's heard. He slams his fist on the desk in frustration and calls off.)

Planchet!

(PLANCHET hurries in.)

PLANCHET

Monsieur, there is a farm lad here who insists on seeing you.

TREVILLE

Never mind that. Go find Athos, Porthos and Aramis. Tell them I want them here on the double. Hurry man!

(PLANCHET starts to exit but runs into D'ARTAGNAN, who is entering. D'ARTAGNAN takes off his hat and bows.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Monsieur de Treville, it is an honor.

TREVILLE

Who are you?

PLANCHET

This is the farm lad...

TREVILLE

(Interrupting)

I was asking him! You go find those Three Musketeers!