

'At all events, man or devil, body or shadow, illusion or reality, this man is born for my damnation; for his flight has caused us to miss a glorious affair, gentlemen—an affair by which there were a hundred pistoles, and perhaps more, to be gained.'

'How is that?' cried Porthos and Aramis in a breath.

As to Athos, faithful to his system of reticence, he contented himself with interrogating d'Artagnan by a look.

'Planchet,' said d'Artagnan to his domestic, who just then insinuated his head through the half-open door in order to catch some fragments of the conversation, 'go down to my landlord, Monsieur Bonacieux, and ask him to send me half a dozen bottles of Beaugency wine; I prefer that.'

'Ah, ah! You have credit with your landlord, then?' asked Porthos.

'Yes,' replied d'Artagnan, 'from this very day; and mind, if the wine is bad, we will send him to find better.'

'We must use, and not abuse,' said Aramis, sententiously.

'I always said that d'Artagnan had the longest head of the four,' said Athos, who, having uttered his opinion, to which d'Artagnan replied with a bow, immediately resumed his accustomed silence.

'But come, what is this about?' asked Porthos.

'Yes,' said Aramis, 'impart it to us, my dear friend, unless the honour of any lady be hazarded by this confidence; in that case you would do better to keep it to yourself.'

'Be satisfied,' replied d'Artagnan; 'the honour of no one will have cause to complain of what I have to tell.'

He then related to his friends, word for word, all that had passed between him and his host, and how the man who had abducted the wife of his worthy landlord was the same with whom he had had the difference at the hostelry of the Jolly Miller.

'Your affair is not bad,' said Athos, after having tasted like a connoisseur and indicated by a nod of his head that he thought the wine good; 'and one may draw fifty or sixty pistoles from this good man. Then there only remains to ascertain whether these fifty or sixty pistoles are worth the risk of four heads.'

'But observe,' cried d'Artagnan, 'that there is a woman in the affair—a woman carried off, a woman who is doubtless threatened, tortured perhaps, and all because she is faithful to her mistress.'

'Beware, d'Artagnan, beware,' said Aramis. 'You grow a little too warm, in my opinion, about the fate of Madame Bonacieux. Woman was created for our destruction, and it is from her we inherit all our miseries.'

At this speech of Aramis, the brow of Athos became clouded and he bit his lips.

'It is not Madame Bonacieux about whom I am anxious,' cried d'Artagnan, 'but the queen, whom the king abandons, whom the cardinal persecutes, and who sees the heads of all her friends fall, one after the other.'

'Why does she love what we hate most in the world, the Spaniards and the English?'

'Spain is her country,' replied d'Artagnan; 'and it is very natural that she should love the Spanish, who are the children of the same soil as herself. As to the second reproach, I have heard it said that she does not love the English, but an Englishman.'

'Well, and by my faith,' said Athos, 'it must be acknowledged that this Englishman is worthy of being loved. I never saw a man with a nobler air than his.'

'Without reckoning that he dresses as nobody else can,' said Porthos. 'I was at the Louvre on the day when he scattered his pearls; and, *pardieu*, I picked up two that I sold for ten pistoles each. Do you know him, Aramis?'

'As well as you do, gentlemen; for I was among those who seized him in the garden at Amiens, into which Monsieur Putange, the queen's equerry, introduced me. I was at school at the time, and the adventure appeared to me to be cruel for the king.'

'Which would not prevent me,' said d'Artagnan, 'if I knew where the Duke of Buckingham was, from taking him by the hand and conducting him to the queen, were it only to enrage the cardinal, and if we could find means to play him a sharp turn, I vow that I would voluntarily risk my head in doing it.'

'And did the mercer¹,' rejoined Athos, 'tell you, d'Artagnan, that the queen thought that Buckingham had been brought over by a forged letter?'

'She is afraid so.'

'Wait a minute, then,' said Aramis.

'What for?' demanded Porthos.

¹ Haberdasher

‘Go on, while I endeavour to recall circumstances.’

‘And now I am convinced,’ said d’Artagnan, ‘that this abduction of the queen’s woman is connected with the events of which we are speaking, and perhaps with the presence of Buckingham in Paris.’

‘The Gascon is full of ideas,’ said Porthos, with admiration.

‘I like to hear him talk,’ said Athos, ‘his dialect amuses me.’

‘Gentlemen,’ cried Aramis, ‘listen to this.’

‘Listen to Aramis,’ said his three friends.

‘Yesterday I was at the house of a doctor of theology, whom I sometimes consult about my studies.’

Athos smiled.

‘He resides in a quiet quarter,’ continued Aramis, ‘his tastes and his profession require it. Now, at the moment when I left his house—’

Here Aramis paused.

‘Well,’ cried his auditors, ‘at the moment you left his house?’

Aramis appeared to make a strong inward effort, like a man who, in the full relation of a falsehood, finds himself stopped by some unforeseen obstacle; but the eyes of his three companions were fixed upon him, their ears were wide open, and there were no means of retreat.

‘This doctor has a niece,’ continued Aramis.

‘Ah, he has a niece!’ interrupted Porthos.

‘A very respectable lady,’ said Aramis.

The three friends burst into laughter.

‘Ah, if you laugh, if you doubt me,’ replied Aramis, ‘you shall know nothing.’

‘We believe like Mohammedans, and are as mute as tombstones,’ said Athos.

‘I will continue, then,’ resumed Aramis. ‘This niece comes sometimes to see her uncle; and by chance was there yesterday at the same time that I was, and it was my duty to offer to conduct her to her carriage.’

‘Ah! She has a carriage, then, this niece of the doctor?’ interrupted Porthos, one of whose faults was a great looseness of tongue. ‘A nice acquaintance, my friend!’

‘Porthos,’ replied Aramis, ‘I have had the occasion to observe to you more than once that you are very indiscreet; and that is injurious to you among the women.’

Chapter IX

D’Artagnan Shows Himself



Athos and Porthos had foreseen, at the expiration of a half hour, d’Artagnan returned. He had again missed his man, who had disappeared as if by enchantment. D’Artagnan had run, sword in hand, through all the neighbouring streets, but had found nobody resembling the man he sought for. Then he came back to the point where, perhaps, he ought to have begun, and that was to knock at the door against which the stranger had leaned; but this proved useless—for though he knocked ten or twelve times in succession, no one answered, and some of the neighbours, who put their noses out of their windows or were brought to their doors by the noise, had assured him that that house, all the openings of which were tightly closed, had not been inhabited for six months.

While d’Artagnan was running through the streets and knocking at doors, Aramis had joined his companions; so that on returning home d’Artagnan found the reunion complete.

‘Well!’ cried the three Musketeers all together, on seeing d’Artagnan enter with his brow covered with perspiration and his countenance upset with anger.

‘Well!’ cried he, throwing his sword upon the bed, ‘this man must be the devil in person; he has disappeared like a phantom, like a shade, like a spectre.’

‘Do you believe in apparitions?’ asked Athos of Porthos.

‘I never believe in anything I have not seen, and as I never have seen apparitions, I don’t believe in them.’

‘The Bible,’ said Aramis, ‘makes our belief in them a law; the ghost of Samuel appeared to Saul, and it is an article of faith that I should be very sorry to see any doubt thrown upon, Porthos.’

Chapter 9: D'Artagnan Shows Himself

'Gentlemen, gentlemen,' cried d'Artagnan, who began to get a glimpse of the result of the adventure, 'the thing is serious. Let us try not to jest, if we can. Go on Aramis, go on.'

'All at once, a tall, dark gentleman—just like yours, d'Artagnan.'

'The same, perhaps,' said he.

'Possibly,' continued Aramis, 'came toward me, accompanied by five or six men who followed about ten paces behind him; and in the politest tone, "Monseigneur Duke," said he to me, "and you madame," continued he, addressing the lady on my arm—'

'The doctor's niece?'

'Hold your tongue, Porthos,' said Athos; 'you are insupportable.'

'"—will you enter this carriage, and that without offering the least resistance, without making the least noise?"'

'He took you for Buckingham!' cried d'Artagnan.

'I believe so,' replied Aramis.

'But the lady?' asked Porthos.

'He took her for the queen!' said d'Artagnan.

'Just so,' replied Aramis.

'The Gascon is the devil!' cried Athos; 'nothing escapes him.'

'The fact is,' said Porthos, 'Aramis is of the same height, and something of the shape of the duke; but it nevertheless appears to me that the dress of a Musketeer—'

'I wore an enormous cloak,' said Aramis.

'In the month of July? The devil!' said Porthos. 'Is the doctor afraid that you may be recognized?'

'I can comprehend that the spy may have been deceived by the person; but the face—'

'I had a large hat,' said Aramis.

'Oh, good lord,' cried Porthos, 'what precautions for the study of theology!'

'Gentlemen, gentlemen,' said d'Artagnan, 'do not let us lose our time in jesting. Let us separate, and let us seek the mercer's wife—that is the key of the intrigue.'

'A woman of such inferior condition! Can you believe so?' said Porthos, protruding his lips with contempt.

‘She is goddaughter to Laporte, the confidential valet of the queen. Have I not told you so, gentlemen? Besides, it has perhaps been her Majesty’s calculation to seek on this occasion for support so lowly. High heads expose themselves from afar, and the cardinal is long-sighted.’

‘Well,’ said Porthos, ‘in the first place make a bargain with the mercer, and a good bargain.’

‘That’s useless,’ said d’Aragnan; ‘for I believe if he does not pay us, we shall be well enough paid by another party.’

At this moment a sudden noise of footsteps was heard upon the stairs; the door was thrown violently open, and the unfortunate mercer rushed into the chamber in which the council was held.

‘Save me, gentlemen, for the love of heaven, save me!’ cried he. ‘There are four men come to arrest me. Save me! Save me!’

Porthos and Aramis arose.

‘A moment,’ cried d’Aragnan, making them a sign to replace in the scabbard their half-drawn swords. ‘It is not courage that is needed; it is prudence.’

‘And yet,’ cried Porthos, ‘we will not leave—’

‘You will leave d’Aragnan to act as he thinks proper,’ said Athos. ‘He has, I repeat, the longest head of the four, and for my part I declare that I will obey him. Do as you think best, d’Aragnan.’

At this moment the four Guards appeared at the door of the antechamber, but seeing four Musketeers standing, and their swords by their sides, they hesitated about going farther.

‘Come in, gentlemen, come in,’ called d’Aragnan; ‘you are here in my apartment, and we are all faithful servants of the king and cardinal.’

‘Then, gentlemen, you will not oppose our executing the orders we have received?’ asked one who appeared to be the leader of the party.

‘On the contrary, gentlemen, we would assist you if it were necessary.’

‘What does he say?’ grumbled Porthos.

‘You are a simpleton,’ said Athos. ‘Silence!’

‘But you promised me—’ whispered the poor mercer.

‘We can only save you by being free ourselves,’ replied d’Aragnan, in a rapid, low tone; ‘and if we appear inclined to defend you, they will arrest us with you.’

‘It seems, nevertheless—’

They understood, then, from the few words which escaped from d’Aragnan, what affair was in hand, and as they thought that overtaking his man, or losing sight of him, d’Aragnan would return to his rooms, they kept on their way.

When they entered d’Aragnan’s chamber, it was empty; the landlord, dreading the consequences of the encounter which was doubtless about to take place between the young man and the stranger, had, consistent with the character he had given himself, judged it prudent to decamp.

'And adding to this, if there be need of it, meaning to offer you fifty pistoles, if, against all probability, you should be short at the present moment.'

'Admirable! You are rich then, my dear Monsieur Bonacieux?'

'I am comfortably off, monsieur, that's all; I have scraped together some such things as an income of two or three thousand crowns in the haberdashery business, but more particularly in venturing some funds in the last voyage of the celebrated navigator Jean Moquet; so that you understand, monsieur—But!—' cried the citizen.

'What?' demanded d'Artagnan.

'Whom do I see yonder?'

'Where?'

'In the street, facing your window, in the embrasure of that door—a man wrapped in a cloak.'

'It is he!' cried d'Artagnan and the citizen at the same time, each having recognized his man.

'Ah, this time,' cried d'Artagnan, springing to his sword, 'this time he will not escape me!'

Drawing his sword from its scabbard, he rushed out of the apartment. On the staircase he met Athos and Porthos, who were coming to see him. They separated, and d'Artagnan rushed between them like a dart.

'Pah! Where are you going?' cried the two Musketeers in a breath.

'The man of Meung!' replied d'Artagnan, and disappeared.

D'Artagnan had more than once related to his friends his adventure with the stranger, as well as the apparition of the beautiful foreigner, to whom this man had confided some important missive.

The opinion of Athos was that d'Artagnan had lost his letter in the skirmish. A gentleman, in his opinion—and according to d'Artagnan's portrait of him, the stranger must be a gentleman—would be incapable of the baseness of stealing a letter.

Porthos saw nothing in all this but a love meeting, given by a lady to a cavalier, or by a cavalier to a lady, which had been disturbed by the presence of d'Artagnan and his yellow horse.

Aramis said that as these sorts of affairs were mysterious, it was better not to fathom them.

'Come, gentlemen, come!' said d'Artagnan, aloud; 'I have no motive for defending Monsieur. I saw him today for the first time, and he can tell you on what occasion; he came to demand the rent of my lodging. Is that not true, Monsieur Bonacieux? Answer!'

'That is the very truth,' cried the mercer; 'but Monsieur does not tell you—'

'Silence, with respect to me, silence, with respect to my friends; silence about the queen, above all, or you will ruin everybody without saving yourself! Come, come, gentlemen, remove the fellow.' And d'Artagnan pushed the half-stupefied mercer among the Guards, saying to him, 'You are a shabby old fellow, my dear. You come to demand money of me—of a Musketeer! To prison with him! Gentlemen, once more, take him to prison, and keep him under key as long as possible; that will give me time to pay him.'

The officers were full of thanks, and took away their prey. As they were going down d'Artagnan laid his hand on the shoulder of their leader.

'May I not drink to your health, and you to mine?' said d'Artagnan, filling two glasses with the Beaugency wine which he had obtained from the liberality of M. Bonacieux.

'That will do me great honour,' said the leader of the posse, 'and I accept thankfully.'

'Then to yours, monsieur—what is your name?'

'Boisrenard.'

'Monsieur Boisrenard.'

'To yours, my gentlemen! What is your name, in your turn, if you please?'

'D'Artagnan.'

'To yours, monsieur.'

'And above all others,' cried d'Artagnan, as if carried away by his enthusiasm, 'to that of the king and the cardinal.'

The leader of the posse would perhaps have doubted the sincerity of d'Artagnan if the wine had been bad; but the wine was good, and he was convinced.

'What diabolical villainy you have performed here,' said Porthos, when the officer had rejoined his companions and the four friends found themselves alone. 'Shame, shame, for four Musketeers to allow an unfortunate fellow who cried for help to be arrested in their midst! And a gentleman to hobnob with a bailiff!'

'Porthos,' said Aramis, 'Athos has already told you that you are a simpleton, and I am quite of his opinion. D'Artagnan, you are a great man; and when you occupy Monsieur de Tréville's place, I will come and ask your influence to secure me an abbey.'

'Well, I am in a maze,' said Porthos; 'do *you* approve of what d'Artagnan has done?'

'*Parbleu!* Indeed I do,' said Athos; 'I not only approve of what he has done, but I congratulate him upon it.'

'And now, gentlemen,' said d'Artagnan, without stopping to explain his conduct to Porthos, 'All for one, one for all—that is our motto, is it not?'

'And yet—' said Porthos.

'Hold out your hand and swear!' cried Athos and Aramis at once.

Overcome by example, grumbling to himself, nevertheless, Porthos stretched out his hand, and the four friends repeated with one voice the formula dictated by d'Artagnan:

'All for one, one for all.'

'That's well! Now let us everyone retire to his own home,' said d'Artagnan, as if he had done nothing but command all his life; 'and attention! For from this moment we are at feud with the cardinal.'

'How can it be otherwise, my dear Bonacieux?' replied d'Artagnan; 'trust me, I am fully grateful for such unparalleled conduct, and if, as I told you, I can be of any service to you—'

'I believe you, monsieur, I believe you; and as I was about to say, by the word of Bonacieux, I have confidence in you.'

'Finish, then, what you were about to say.'

The citizen took a paper from his pocket, and presented it to d'Artagnan.

'A letter?' said the young man.

'Which I received this morning.'

D'Artagnan opened it, and as the day was beginning to decline, he approached the window to read it. The citizen followed him.

"Do not seek your wife," read d'Artagnan; "'she will be restored to you when there is no longer occasion for her. If you make a single step to find her you are lost.'"

'That's pretty positive,' continued d'Artagnan; 'but after all, it is but a menace.'

'Yes; but that menace terrifies me. I am not a fighting man at all, monsieur, and I am afraid of the Bastille.'

'Hum!' said d'Artagnan. 'I have no greater regard for the Bastille than you. If it were nothing but a sword thrust, why then—'

'I have counted upon you on this occasion, monsieur.'

'Yes?'

'Seeing you constantly surrounded by Musketeers of a very superb appearance, and knowing that these Musketeers belong to Monsieur de Tréville, and were consequently enemies of the cardinal, I thought that you and your friends, while rendering justice to your poor queen, would be pleased to play his Eminence an ill turn.'

'Without doubt.'

'And then I have thought that considering three months' lodging, about which I have said nothing—'

'Yes, yes; you have already given me that reason, and I find it excellent.'

'Reckoning still further, that as long as you do me the honour to remain in my house I shall never speak to you about rent—'

'Very kind!'

'A scar on his temple!' cried d'Arragnan; 'and with that, white teeth, a piercing eye, dark complexion, black hair, and haughty carriage—why, that's my man of Meung.'

'He is your man, do you say?'

'Yes, yes; but that has nothing to do with it. No, I am wrong. On the contrary, that simplifies the matter greatly. If your man is mine, with one blow I shall obtain two revenges, that's all; but where to find this man?'

'I know not.'

'Have you no information as to his abiding place?'

'None. One day, as I was conveying my wife back to the Louvre, he was coming out as she was going in, and she showed him to me.'

'The devil! The devil!' murmured d'Arragnan; 'all this is vague enough. From whom have you learned of the abduction of your wife?'

'From Monsieur Laporte.'

'Did he give you any details?'

'He knew none himself.'

'And you have learned nothing from any other quarter?'

'Yes, I have received—'

'What?'

'I fear I am committing a great imprudence.'

'You always come back to that; but I must make you see this time that it is too late to retreat.'

'I do not retreat, *mordieu!*' cried the citizen, swearing in order to rouse his courage. 'Besides, by the faith of Bonacieux—'

'You call yourself Bonacieux?' interrupted d'Arragnan.

'Yes, that is my name.'

'You said, then, by the word of Bonacieux. Pardon me for interrupting you, but it appears to me that that name is familiar to me.'

'Possibly, monsieur. I am your landlord.'

'Ah, ah!' said d'Arragnan, half rising and bowing; 'you are my landlord?'

'Yes, monsieur, yes. And as it is three months since you have been here, and though, distracted as you must be in your important occupations, you have forgotten to pay me my rent—as, I say, I have not tormented you a single instant, I thought you would appreciate my delicacy.'

Chapter X A Mousetrap in the Seventeenth Century



HE invention of the mousetrap does not date from our days; as soon as societies, in forming, had invented any kind of police, that police invented mousetraps.

As perhaps our readers are not familiar with the slang of the Rue de Jerusalem, and as it is fifteen years since we applied this word for the first time to this thing, allow us to explain to them what is a mousetrap.

When in a house, of whatever kind it may be, an individual suspected of any crime is arrested, the arrest is held secret. Four or five men are placed in ambuscade in the first room. The door is opened to all who knock. It is closed after them, and they are arrested; so that at the end of two or three days they have in their power almost all the *habitués* of the establishment. And that is a mousetrap.

The apartment of M. Bonacieux, then, became a mousetrap; and whoever appeared there was taken and interrogated by the cardinal's people. It must be observed that as a separate passage led to the first floor, in which d'Arragnan lodged, those who called on him were exempted from this detention.

Besides, nobody came thither but the three Musketeers; they had all been engaged in earnest search and inquiries, but had discovered nothing. Athos had even gone so far as to question M. de Tréville—a thing which, considering the habitual reticence of the worthy Musketeer, had very much astonished his captain. But M. de Tréville knew nothing, except that the last time he had seen the cardinal, the king, and the queen, the cardinal looked very thoughtful, the

king uneasy, and the redness of the queen's eyes donated that she had been sleepless or tearful. But this last circumstance was not striking, as the queen since her marriage had slept badly and wept much.

M. de Tréville requested Athos, whatever might happen, to be observant of his duty to the king, but particularly to the queen, begging him to convey his desires to his comrades.

As to d'Aragnan, he did not budge from his apartment. He converted his chamber into an observatory. From his windows he saw all the visitors who were caught. Then, having removed a plank from his floor, and nothing remaining but a simple ceiling between him and the room beneath, in which the interrogatories were made, he heard all that passed between the inquisitors and the accused.

The interrogatories, preceded by a minute search operated upon the persons arrested, were almost always framed thus: 'Has Madame Bonacieux sent anything to you for her husband, or any other person? Has Monsieur Bonacieux sent anything to you for his wife, or for any other person? Has either of them confided anything to you by word of mouth?'

'If they knew anything, they would not question people in this manner,' said d'Aragnan to himself. 'Now, what is it they want to know? Why, they want to know if the Duke of Buckingham is in Paris, and if he has had, or is likely to have, an interview with the queen.'

D'Aragnan held onto this idea, which, from what he had heard, was not wanting in probability.

In the meantime, the mousetrap continued in operation, and likewise d'Aragnan's vigilance.

On the evening of the day after the arrest of poor Bonacieux, as Athos had just left d'Aragnan to report at M. de Tréville's, as nine o'clock had just struck, and as Planchet, who had not yet made the bed, was beginning his task, a knocking was heard at the street door. The door was instantly opened and shut; someone was taken in the mousetrap.

D'Aragnan flew to his hole, laid himself down on the floor at full length, and listened.

Cries were soon heard, and then moans, which someone appeared to be endeavouring to stifle. There were no questions.

'Now, my wife came home four days ago, monsieur. One of her conditions was that she should come and see me twice a week; for, as I had the honour to tell you, my wife loves me dearly—my wife, then, came and confided to me that the queen at that very moment entertained great fears.'

'Truly?'

'Yes. The cardinal, as it appears, pursues her and persecutes her more than ever. He cannot pardon her the history of the Saraband. You know the history of the Saraband?'

'*Pardieu!* Know it?' replied d'Aragnan, who knew nothing about it, but who wished to appear to know everything that was going on.

'So that now it is no longer hatred, but vengeance.'

'Indeed!'

'And the queen believes—'

'Well, what does the queen believe?'

'She believes that someone has written to the Duke of Buckingham in her name.'

'In the queen's name?'

'Yes, to make him come to Paris; and when once come to Paris, to draw him into some snare.'

'The devil! But your wife, monsieur, what has she to do with all this?'

'Her devotion to the queen is known; and they wish either to remove her from her mistress, or to intimidate her, in order to obtain her Majesty's secrets, or to seduce her and make use of her as a spy.'

'That is likely,' said d'Aragnan; 'but the man who has abducted her—do you know him?'

'I have told you that I believe I know him.'

'His name?'

'I do not know that; what I do know is that he is a creature of the cardinal, his evil genius.'

'But you have seen him?'

'Yes, my wife pointed him out to me one day.'

'Has he anything remarkable about him by which one may recognize him?'

'Oh, certainly; he is a noble of very lofty carriage, black hair, swarthy complexion, piercing eye, white teeth, and has a scar on his temple.'