

'Why, I think there were not many intruders. Yes, Athos, I know what you mean: we shall do very well at the Parpailot.'

'Let us go to the Parpailot, then, for here the walls are like sheets of paper.' D'Arragnan, who was accustomed to his friend's manner of acting, and who perceived immediately, by a word, a gesture, or a sign from him, that the circumstances were serious, took Athos's arm, and went out without saying anything. Porthos followed, chatting with Aramis.

On their way they met Grimaud. Athos made him a sign to come with them. Grimaud, according to custom, obeyed in silence; the poor lad had nearly come to the pass of forgetting how to speak.

They arrived at the drinking room of the Parpailot. It was seven o'clock in the morning, and daylight began to appear. The three friends ordered breakfast, and went into a room in which the host said they would not be disturbed.

Unfortunately, the hour was badly chosen for a private conference. The morning drum had just been beaten; everyone shook off the drowsiness of night, and to dispel the humid morning air, came to take a drop at the inn. Dragons, Swiss, Guardsmen, Musketeers, light-horsemen, succeeded one another with a rapidity which might answer the purpose of the host very well, but agreed badly with the views of the four friends. Thus they applied very curtsy to the salutations, healths, and jokes of their companions.

'I see how it will be,' said Athos: 'we shall get into some pretty quarrel or other, and we have no need of one just now. D'Arragnan, tell us what sort of a night you have had, and we will describe ours afterward.'

'Ah, yes,' said a light-horseman, with a glass of brandy in his hand, which he sipped slowly. 'I hear you gentlemen of the Guards have been in the trenches tonight, and that you did not get much the best of the Rochellais.'

D'Arragnan looked at Athos to know if he ought to reply to this intruder who thus mixed unasked in their conversation.

'Well,' said Athos, 'don't you hear Monsieur de Busigny, who does you the honour to ask you a question? Relate what has passed during the night, since these gentlemen desire to know it.'

'Have you not taken a bastion?' said a Swiss, who was drinking rum out of a beer glass.

'Yes, monsieur,' said d'Arragnan, bowing, 'we have had that honour. We even have, as you may have heard, introduced a barrel of powder under one of the angles, which in blowing up made a very pretty breach. Without reckoning that as the bastion was not built yesterday all the rest of the building was badly shaken.'

'And what bastion is it?' asked a dragoon, with his saber run through a goose which he was taking to be cooked.

'The bastion St. Gervais,' replied d'Arragnan, 'from behind which the Rochellais annoyed our workmen.'

'Was that affair hot?'

'Yes, moderately so. We lost five men, and the Rochellais eight or ten.'

'*Balzenphen!*' said the Swiss, who, notwithstanding the admirable collection of oaths possessed by the German language, had acquired a habit of swearing in French.

'But it is probable,' said the light-horseman, 'that they will send pioneers this morning to repair the bastion.'

'Yes, that's probable,' said d'Arragnan.

'Gentlemen,' said Athos, 'a wager!'

'Ah, *woo!*, a wager!' cried the Swiss.

'What is it?' said the light-horseman.

'Stop a bit,' said the dragoon, placing his saber like a spit upon the two large iron dogs which held the firebrands in the chimney, 'stop a bit, I am in it. You cursed host! a dripping pan immediately, that I may not lose a drop of the fat of this estimable bird.'

'You was right,' said the Swiss; 'goose grease is good with basdy.'

'There!' said the dragoon. 'Now for the wager! We listen, Monsieur Athos.'

'Yes, the wager!' said the light-horseman.

'Well, Monsieur de Busigny, I will bet you,' said Athos, 'that my three companions, Messieurs Porthos, Aramis, and d'Arragnan, and myself, will go and breakfast in the bastion St. Gervais, and we will remain there an hour, by the watch, whatever the enemy may do to dislodge us.'

Porthos and Aramis looked at each other; they began to comprehend.

'But,' said d'Arragnan, in the ear of Athos, 'you are going to get us all killed without mercy.'

'We are much more likely to be killed,' said Athos, 'if we do not go.'

‘My faith, gentlemen,’ said Porthos, turning round upon his chair and twisting his moustache, ‘that’s a fair bet, I hope.’

‘I take it,’ said M. de Busigny, ‘so let us fix the stake.’

‘You are four gentlemen,’ said Athos, ‘and we are four; an unlimited dinner for eight. Will that do?’

‘Capitally,’ replied M. de Busigny.

‘Perfectly,’ said the dragon.

‘That shoots me,’ said the Swiss.

The fourth auditor, who during all this conversation had played a mute part, made a sign of the head in proof that he acquiesced in the proposition.

‘The breakfast for these gentlemen is ready,’ said the host.

‘Well, bring it,’ said Athos.

The host obeyed. Athos called Grimaud, pointed to a large basket which lay in a corner, and made a sign to him to wrap the viands up in the napkins. Grimaud understood that it was to be a breakfast on the grass, took the basket, packed up the viands, added the bottles, and then took the basket on his arm.

‘But where are you going to eat my breakfast?’ asked the host.

‘What matter, if you are paid for it?’ said Athos, and he threw two pistols majestically on the table.

‘Shall I give you the change, my officer?’ said the host.

‘No, only add two bottles of champagne, and the difference will be for the napkins.’

The host had not quite so good a bargain as he at first hoped for, but he made amends by slipping in two bottles of Anjou wine instead of two bottles of champagne.

‘Monsieur de Busigny,’ said Athos, ‘will you be so kind as to set your watch with mine, or permit me to regulate mine by yours?’

‘Which you please, monsieur!’ said the light-horseman, drawing from his fob a very handsome watch, studded with diamonds; ‘half past seven.’

‘Thirty-five minutes after seven,’ said Athos, ‘by which you perceive I am five minutes faster than you.’

And bowing to all the astonished persons present, the young men took the road to the bastion St. Gervais, followed by Grimaud, who carried the basket,

Chapter XLVI

The Bastion Saint-Gervais



ON arriving at the lodgings of his three friends, d’Arragnan found them assembled in the same chamber. Athos was meditating; Porthos was twisting his moustache; Aramis was saying his prayers in a charming little Book of Hours, bound in blue velvet.

‘*Parliën*, gentlemen,’ said he. ‘I hope what you have to tell me is worth the trouble, or else, I warn you, I will not pardon you for making me come here instead of getting a little rest after a night spent in taking and dismantling a bastion. Ah, why were you not there, gentlemen? It was warm work.’

‘We were in a place where it was not very cold,’ replied Porthos, giving his moustache a twist which was peculiar to him.

‘Hush!’ said Athos.

‘Oh, oh!’ said d’Arragnan, comprehending the slight frown of the Musketeer. ‘It appears there is something fresh aboard.’

‘Aramis,’ said Athos, ‘you went to breakfast the day before yesterday at the inn of the Parpailiot, I believe?’

‘Yes.’

‘How did you fare?’

‘For my part, I ate but little. The day before yesterday was a fish day, and they had nothing but meat.’

‘What,’ said Athos, ‘no fish at a seaport?’

‘They say,’ said Aramis, resuming his pious reading, ‘that the dyke which the cardinal is making drives them all out into the open sea.’

‘But that is not quite what I mean to ask you, Aramis,’ replied Athos. ‘I want to know if you were left alone, and nobody interrupted you.’

Saying these words, the cardinal saluted the three friends with an inclination of his head, and took the right hand, followed by his attendant—for that night he himself slept in the camp.

‘Well!’ said Porthos and Aramis together, as soon as the cardinal was out of hearing, ‘well, he signed the paper she required!’

‘I know it,’ said Athos, coolly, ‘since here it is.’

And the three friends did not exchange another word till they reached their quarters, except to give the watchword to the sentinels. Only they sent Mousqueton to tell Planchet that his master was requested, the instant that he left the trenches, to come to the quarters of the Musketeers.

Milady, as Athos had foreseen, on finding the two men that awaited her, made no difficulty in following them. She had had for an instant an inclination to be reconducted to the cardinal, and relate everything to him; but a revelation on her part would bring about a revelation on the part of Athos. She might say that Athos had hanged her; but then Athos would tell that she was branded. She thought it was best to preserve silence, to discreetly set off to accomplish her difficult mission with her usual skill; and then, all things being accomplished to the satisfaction of the cardinal, to come to him and claim her vengeance.

In consequence, after having travelled all night, at seven o’clock she was at the fort of the Point; at eight o’clock she had embarked; and at nine, the vessel, which with letters of marque from the cardinal was supposed to be sailing for Bayonne, raised anchor, and steered its course toward England.

ignorant of where he was going but in the passive obedience which Athos had taught him not even thinking of asking.

As long as they were within the circle of the camp, the four friends did not exchange one word; besides, they were followed by the curious, who, hearing of the wager, were anxious to know how they would come out of it. But when once they passed the line of circumvallation and found themselves in the open plain, d’Arragnan, who was completely ignorant of what was going forward, thought it was time to demand an explanation.

‘And now, my dear Athos,’ said he, ‘do me the kindness to tell me where we are going?’

‘Why, you see plainly enough we are going to the bastion.’

‘But what are we going to do there?’

‘You know well that we go to breakfast there.’

‘But why did we not breakfast at the Parpaillo?’

‘Because we have very important matters to communicate to one another, and it was impossible to talk five minutes in that inn without being annoyed by all those importunate fellows, who keep coming in, saluting you, and addressing you. Here at least,’ said Athos, pointing to the bastion, ‘they will not come and disturb us.’

‘It appears to me,’ said d’Arragnan, with that prudence which allied itself in him so naturally with excessive bravery, ‘that we could have found some retired place on the downs or the seashore.’

‘Where we should have been seen all four conferring together, so that at the end of a quarter of an hour the cardinal would have been informed by his spies that we were holding a council.’

‘Yes,’ said Aramis, ‘Athos is right: *Animadvertuntur in desertis*.’

‘A desert would not have been amiss,’ said Porthos, ‘but it behooved us to find it.’

‘There is no desert where a bird cannot pass over one’s head, where a fish cannot leap out of the water, where a rabbit cannot come out of its burrow, and I believe that bird, fish, and rabbit each becomes a spy of the cardinal. Better, then, pursue our enterprise; from which, besides, we cannot retreat without shame. We have made a wager—a wager which could not have been foreseen, and of which I defy anyone to divine the true cause. We are going, in order to win it, to remain an hour in the bastion. Either we shall be attacked,

or not. If we are not, we shall have all the time to talk, and nobody will hear us—for I guarantee the walls of the bastion have no ears; if we are, we will talk of our affairs just the same. Moreover, in defending ourselves, we shall cover ourselves with glory. You see that everything is to our advantage.'

'Yes,' said d'Arragnan; 'but we shall indubitably attract a ball.'

'Well, my dear,' replied Athos, 'you know well that the balls most to be dreaded are not from the enemy.'

'But for such an expedition we surely ought to have brought our muskets.' You are stupid, friend Porthos. Why should we load ourselves with a useless burden?'

'I don't find a good musket, twelve cartridges, and a powder flask very useless in the face of an enemy.'

'Well,' replied Athos, 'have you not heard what d'Arragnan said?'

'What did he say?' demanded Porthos.

'D'Arragnan said that in the attack of last night eight or ten Frenchmen were killed, and as many Rochellais.'

'What then?'

'The bodies were not plundered, were they? It appears the conquerors had something else to do.'

'Well?'

'Well, we shall find their muskets, their cartridges, and their flasks; and instead of four musketoons and twelve balls, we shall have fifteen guns and a hundred charges to fire.'

'Oh, Athos!' said Aramis, 'truly you are a great man.'

Porthos nodded in sign of agreement. D'Arragnan alone did not seem convinced.

Grimaud no doubt shared the misgivings of the young man, for seeing that they continued to advance toward the bastion—something he had till then doubted—he pulled his master by the skirt of his coat.

'Where are we going?' asked he, by a gesture.

Athos pointed to the bastion.

'But,' said Grimaud, in the same silent dialect, 'we shall leave our skins there.'

Athos raised his eyes and his finger toward heaven.

Milady saw by the contraction of his countenance that the trigger was about to be pulled; she reached her hand quickly to her bosom, drew out a paper, and held it toward Athos.

'Take it,' said she, 'and be accursed!'

Athos took the paper, returned the pistol to his belt, approached the lamp to be assured that it was the paper, unfolded it, and read:

Dec. 3, 1627

It is by my order and for the good of the state that the bearer of this has done what he has done.

RICHELIEU

'And now,' said Athos, resuming his cloak and putting on his hat, 'now that I have drawn your teeth, viper, bite if you can.'

And he left the chamber without once looking behind him.

At the door he found the two men and the spare horse which they held.

'Gentlemen,' said he, 'Monseigneur's order is, you know, to conduct that woman, without losing time, to Fort La Pointe, and never to leave her till she is on board.'

As these words agreed wholly with the order they had received, they bowed their heads in sign of assent.

With regard to Athos, he leaped lightly into the saddle and set out at full gallop; only instead of following the road, he went across the fields, urging his horse to the utmost and stopping occasionally to listen.

In one of those halts he heard the steps of several horses on the road. He had no doubt it was the cardinal and his escort. He immediately made a new point in advance, rubbed his horse down with some heath and leaves of trees, and placed himself across the road, about two hundred paces from the camp.

'Who goes there?' cried he, as soon as he perceived the horsemen.

'That is our brave Musketeer, I think,' said the cardinal.

'Yes, monseigneur,' said Porthos, 'it is he.'

'Monsieur Athos,' said Richelieu, 'receive my thanks for the good guard you have kept. Gentlemen, we are arrived; take the gate on the left. The watchword is, 'King and Ré.''

Buckingham to be assassinated, in exchange for the promise he has made you to allow you to assassinate d'Aragnan.'

Milady was livid.

'You must be Satan!' cried she.

'Perhaps,' said Athos; 'But at all events listen well to this. Assassinate the Duke of Buckingham, or cause him to be assassinated—I care very little about that! I don't know him. Besides, he is an Englishman. But do not touch with the tip of your finger a single hair of d'Aragnan, who is a faithful friend whom I love and defend, or I swear to you by the head of my father the crime which you shall have endeavoured to commit, or shall have committed, shall be the last.'

'Monsieur d'Aragnan has cruelly insulted me,' said Milady, in a hollow tone; 'Monsieur d'Aragnan shall die!'

'Indeed! Is it possible to insult you, madame?' said Athos, laughing; 'he has insulted you, and he shall die!'

'He shall die!' replied Milady; 'she first, and he afterward.'

Athos was seized with a kind of vertigo. The sight of this creature, who had nothing of the woman about her, recalled awful remembrances. He thought how one day, in a less dangerous situation than the one in which he was now placed, he had already endeavoured to sacrifice her to his honour. His desire for blood returned, burning his brain and pervading his frame like a raging fever; he arose in his turn, reached his hand to his belt, drew forth a pistol, and cocked it.

Milady, pale as a corpse, endeavoured to cry out; but her swollen tongue could utter no more than a hoarse sound which had nothing human in it and resembled the rattle of a wild beast. Motionless against the dark tapestry, with her hair in disorder, she appeared like a horrid image of terror.

Athos slowly raised his pistol, stretched out his arm so that the weapon almost touched Milady's forehead, and then, in a voice the more terrible from having the supreme calmness of a fixed resolution, 'Madame,' said he, 'you will this instant deliver to me the paper the cardinal signed; or upon my soul, I will blow your brains out.'

With another man, Milady might have preserved some doubt; but she knew Athos. Nevertheless, she remained motionless.

'You have one second to decide,' said he.

Grimaud put his basket on the ground and sat down with a shake of the head.

Athos took a pistol from his belt, looked to see if it was properly primed, cocked it, and placed the muzzle close to Grimaud's ear.

Grimaud was on his legs again as if by a spring. Athos then made him a sign to take up his basket and to walk on first. Grimaud obeyed. All that Grimaud gained by this momentary pantomime was to pass from the rear guard to the vanguard.

Arrived at the bastion, the four friends turned round.

More than three hundred soldiers of all kinds were assembled at the gate of the camp; and in a separate group might be distinguished M. de Busigny, the dragoon, the Swiss, and the fourth bettor.

Athos took off his hat, placed it on the end of his sword, and waved it in the air.

All the spectators returned him his salute, accompanying this courtesy with a loud hurrah which was audible to the four; after which all four disappeared in the bastion, whither Grimaud had preceded them.

in my path. I thought I had crushed you, madame; but either I was deceived or hell has resuscitated you!’

Milady at these words, which recalled frightful remembrances, hung down her head with a suppressed groan.

‘Yes, hell has resuscitated you,’ continued Athos. ‘Hell has made you rich, hell has given you another name, hell has almost made you another face; but it has neither effaced the stains from your soul nor the brand from your body.’

Milady arose as if moved by a powerful spring, and her eyes flashed lightning. Athos remained sitting.

‘You believed me to be dead, did you not, as I believed you to be? And the name of Athos as well concealed the Comte de la Fère, as the name Milady Clarik concealed Anne de Breuil. Was it not so you were called when your honoured brother married us? Our position is truly a strange one,’ continued Athos, laughing. ‘We have only lived up to the present time because we believed each other dead, and because a remembrance is less oppressive than a living creature, though a remembrance is sometimes devouring.’

‘But,’ said Milady, in a hollow, faint voice, ‘what brings you back to me, and what do you want with me?’

‘I wish to tell you that though remaining invisible to your eyes, I have not lost sight of you.’

‘You know what I have done?’

‘I can relate to you, day by day, your actions from your entrance to the service of the cardinal to this evening.’

A smile of incredulity passed over the pale lips of Milady.

‘Listen! It was you who cut off the two diamond studs from the shoulder of the Duke of Buckingham; it was you who had Madame Bonacieux carried off; it was you who, in love with De Wardes and thinking to pass the night with him, opened the door to Monsieur d’Aragnan; it was you who, believing that De Wardes had deceived you, wished to have him killed by his rival; it was you who, when this rival had discovered your infamous secret, wished to have him killed in his turn by two assassins, whom you sent in pursuit of him; it was you who, finding the balls had missed their mark, sent poisoned wine with a forged letter, to make your victim believe that the wine came from his friends. In short, it was you who have but now in this chamber, seated in this chair I now fill, made an engagement with Cardinal Richelieu to cause the Duke of

within twenty paces of a high hedge to watch the passage of the little troop. Having recognized the laced hats of his companions and the golden fringe of the cardinal's cloak, he waited till the horsemen had turned the angle of the road, and having lost sight of them, he returned at a gallop to the inn, which was opened to him without hesitation.

The host recognized him.

'My officer,' said Athos, 'has forgotten to give a piece of very important information to the lady, and has sent me back to repair his forgetfulness.'

'Go up,' said the host; 'she is still in her chamber.'

Athos availed himself of the permission, ascended the stairs with his lightest step, gained the landing, and through the open door perceived Milady putting on her hat.

He entered the chamber and closed the door behind him. At the noise he made in pushing the bolt, Milady turned round.

Athos was standing before the door, enveloped in his cloak, with his hat pulled down over his eyes. On seeing this figure, mute and immovable as a statue, Milady was frightened.

'Who are you, and what do you want?' cried she.

'Humph,' murmured Athos, 'it is certainly she!'

And letting fall his cloak and raising his hat, he advanced toward Milady.

'Do you know me, madame?' said he.

Milady made one step forward, and then drew back as if she had seen a serpent.

'So far, well,' said Athos, 'I perceive you know me.'

'The Comte de la Fère!' murmured Milady, becoming exceedingly pale, and drawing back till the wall prevented her from going any farther.

'Yes, Milady,' replied Athos, 'the Comte de la Fère in person, who comes expressly from the other world to have the pleasure of paying you a visit. Sit down, madame, and let us talk, as the cardinal said.'

Milady, under the influence of inexpressible terror, sat down without uttering a word.

'You certainly are a demon sent upon the earth!' said Athos. 'Your power is great, I know; but you also know that with the help of God men have often conquered the most terrible demons. You have once before thrown yourself

Chapter XLVII

The Council of the Musketeers



As Athos had foreseen, the bastion was only occupied by a dozen corpses, French and Rochellais.

'Gentlemen,' said Athos, who had assumed the command of the expedition, 'while Grimaud spreads the table, let us begin by collecting the guns and cartridges together. We can talk while performing that necessary task. These gentlemen,' added he, pointing to the bodies, 'cannot hear us.'

'But we could throw them into the ditch,' said Porthos, 'after having assured ourselves they have nothing in their pockets.'

'Yes,' said Athos, 'that's Grimaud's business.'

'Well, then,' cried d'Arragnan, 'pray let Grimaud search them and throw them over the walls.'

'Heaven forbid!' said Athos; 'they may serve us.'

'These bodies serve us?' said Porthos. 'You are mad, dear friend.'

'Judge not rashly, say the gospel and the cardinal,' replied Athos. 'How many guns, gentlemen?'

'Twelve,' replied Aramis.

'How many shots?'

'A hundred.'

'That's quite as many as we shall want. Let us load the guns.'

The four Musketeers went to work; and as they were loading the last musket Grimaud announced that the breakfast was ready.

Athos replied, always by gestures, that that was well, and indicated to Grimaud, by pointing to a turret that resembled a pepper caster, that he was to

stand as sentinel. Only, to alleviate the tediousness of the duty, Athos allowed him to take a loaf, two cutlers, and a bottle of wine.

‘And now to table,’ said Athos.

The four friends seated themselves on the ground with their legs crossed like Turks, or even tailors.

‘And now,’ said d’Arragnan, ‘as there is no longer any fear of being overheard, I hope you are going to let me into your secret.’

‘I hope at the same time to procure you amusement and glory, gentlemen,’ said Athos. ‘I have induced you to take a charming promenade; here is a delicious breakfast; and yonder are five hundred persons, as you may see through the loopholes, taking us for heroes or madmen—two classes of imbeciles greatly resembling each other.’

‘But the secret!’ said d’Arragnan.

‘The secret is,’ said Athos, ‘that I saw Milady last night.’

D’Arragnan was lifting a glass to his lips; but at the name of Milady, his hand trembled so, that he was obliged to put the glass on the ground again for fear of spilling the contents.”

‘You saw your wi—’

‘Hush!’ interrupted Athos. ‘You forget, my dear, you forget that these gentlemen are not initiated into my family affairs like yourself. I have seen Milady.’

‘Where?’ demanded d’Arragnan.

‘Within two leagues of this place, at the inn of the Red Dovecot.’

‘In that case I am lost,’ said d’Arragnan.

‘Not so bad yet,’ replied Athos; ‘for by this time she must have quit the shores of France.’

D’Arragnan breathed again.

‘But after all,’ asked Porthos, ‘who is Milady?’

‘A charming woman!’ said Athos, sipping a glass of sparkling wine. ‘Villainous host!’ cried he, ‘he has given us Anjou wine instead of champagne, and fancies we know no better! Yes,’ continued he, ‘a charming woman, who entertained kind views toward our friend d’Arragnan, who, on his part, has given her some offence for which she tried to revenge herself a month ago by having him killed by two musket shots, a week ago by trying to poison him, and yesterday by demanding his head of the cardinal.’

Chapter XLV A Conjugal Scene



As Athos had foreseen, it was not long before the cardinal came down. He opened the door of the room in which the Musketeers were, and found Porthos playing an earnest game of dice with Aramis. He cast a rapid glance around the room, and perceived that one of his men was missing.

‘What has become of Monseigneur Athos?’ asked he.

‘Monseigneur,’ replied Porthos, ‘he has gone as a scout, on account of some words of our host, which made him believe the road was not safe.’

‘And you, what have you done, Monsieur Porthos?’

‘I have won five pistoles of Aramis.’

‘Well; now will you return with me?’

‘We are at your Eminence’s orders.’

‘To horse, then, gentlemen; for it is getting late.’

The attendant was at the door, holding the cardinal’s horse by the bridle. At a short distance a group of two men and three horses appeared in the shade. These were the two men who were to conduct Milady to Fort La Pointe, and superintend her embarkation.

The attendant confirmed to the cardinal what the two Musketeers had already said with respect to Athos. The cardinal made an approving gesture, and retraced his route with the same precautions he had used in coming.

Let us leave him to follow the road to the camp protected by his esquire and the two Musketeers, and return to Athos.

For a hundred paces he maintained the speed at which he started; but when out of sight he turned his horse to the right, made a circuit, and came back