

The young woman only replied by the beautiful glow which mounted to her cheeks. A few seconds afterward d'Artagnan also went out enveloped in a large cloak, which ill-concealed the sheath of a long sword.

Mme. Bonacieux followed him with her eyes, with that long, fond look with which he had turned the angle of the street, she fell on her knees, and clasping her hands, 'Oh, my God,' cried she, 'protect the queen, protect me!'

Chapter XIX

Plan of Campaign



D'ARTAGNAN went straight to M. de Tréville's. He had reflected that in a few minutes the cardinal would be warned by this cursed stranger, who appeared to be his agent, and he judged, with reason, he had not a moment to lose.

The heart of the young man overflowed with joy. An opportunity presented itself to him in which there would be at the same time glory to be acquired, and money to be gained; and as a far higher encouragement, it brought him into close intimacy with a woman he adored. This chance did, then, for him at once more than he would have dared to ask of Providence.

M. de Tréville was in his saloon with his habitual court of gentlemen. D'Artagnan, who was known as a familiar of the house, went straight to his office, and sent word that he wished to see him on something of importance.

D'Artagnan had been there scarcely five minutes when M. de Tréville entered. At the first glance, and by the joy which was painted on his countenance, the worthy captain plainly perceived that something new was on foot.

All the way along d'Artagnan had been consulting with himself whether he should place confidence in M. de Tréville, or whether he should only ask him to give him *carte blanche* for some secret affair. But M. de Tréville had always been so thoroughly his friend, had always been so devoted to the king and queen, and hated the cardinal so cordially, that the young man resolved to tell him everything.

'Did you ask for me, my good friend?' said M. de Tréville.

'Yes, monsieur,' said d'Arragnan, lowering his voice, 'and you will pardon me, I hope, for having disturbed you when you know the importance of my business.'

'Speak, then, I am all attention.'

'It concerns nothing less,' said d'Arragnan, 'than the honour, perhaps the life of the queen.'

'What did you say?' asked M. de Tréville, glancing round to see if they were surely alone, and then fixing his questioning look upon d'Arragnan.

'I say, monsieur, that chance has rendered me master of a secret—'

'Which you will guard, I hope, young man, as your life.'

'But which I must impart to you, monsieur, for you alone can assist me in the mission I have just received from her Majesty.'

'Is this secret your own?'

'No, monsieur; it is her Majesty's.'

'Are you authorized by her Majesty to communicate it to me?'

'No, monsieur, for, on the contrary, I am desired to preserve the profoundest mystery.'

'Why, then, are you about to betray it to me?'

'Because, as I said, without you I can do nothing; and I am afraid you will refuse me the favour I come to ask if you do not know to what end I ask it.'

'Keep your secret, young man, and tell me what you wish.'

'I wish you to obtain for me, from Monsieur Dessessart, leave of absence for fifteen days.'

'When?'

'This very night.'

'You leave Paris?'

'I am going on a mission.'

'May you tell me whither?'

'To London.'

'Has anyone an interest in preventing your arrival there?'

'The cardinal, I believe, would give the world to prevent my success.'

'And you are going alone?'

'I am going alone.'

'In that case you will not get beyond Bondy. I tell you so, by the faith of de Tréville.'

possession of the letter. The state, which is now threatened, would be safe, and you—'

'And I?'

'Well you—the cardinal would have given you letters of nobility.'

'Did he tell you so?'

'Yes, I know that he meant to afford you that agreeable surprise.'

'Be satisfied,' replied Bonacieux; 'my wife adores me, and there is yet time.'

'The ninny!' murmured Mme. Bonacieux.

'Silence!' said d'Arragnan, pressing her hand more closely.

'How is there still time?' asked the man in the cloak.

'I go to the Louvre; I ask for Mme. Bonacieux; I say that I have reflected; I renew the affair; I obtain the letter, and I run directly to the cardinal.'

'Well, go quickly! I will return soon to learn the result of your trip.'

The stranger went out.

'Infamous!' said Mme. Bonacieux, addressing this epithet to her husband.

'Silence!' said d'Arragnan, pressing her hand still more warmly.

A terrible howling interrupted these reflections of d'Arragnan and Mme. Bonacieux. It was her husband, who had discovered the disappearance of the moneybag, and was crying 'Thieves!'

'Oh, my God!' cried Mme. Bonacieux, 'he will rouse the whole quarter.'

Bonacieux called a long time; but as such cries, on account of their frequency, brought nobody in the Rue des Fossoyeurs, and as lately the mercer's house had a bad name, finding that nobody came, he went out continuing to call, his voice being heard fainter and fainter as he went in the direction of the Rue du Bac.

'Now he is gone, it is your turn to get out,' said Mme. Bonacieux. 'Courage, my friend, but above all, prudence, and think what you owe to the queen.'

'To her and to you!' cried d'Arragnan. 'Be satisfied, beautiful Constance. I shall become worthy of her gratitude; but shall I likewise return worthy of your love?'

The moment the hand of Bonacieux sounded on the door, the two young people felt their hearts bound within them.

'There is nobody within,' said Bonacieux.

'Never mind. Let us return to your apartment. We shall be safer there than in the doorway.'

'Ah, my God!' whispered Mme. Bonacieux, 'we shall hear no more.'

'On the contrary,' said d'Artagnan, 'we shall hear better.'

D'Artagnan raised the three or four boards which made his chamber another ear of Dionysius, spread a carpet on the floor, went upon his knees, and made a sign to Mme. Bonacieux to stoop as he did toward the opening.

'You are sure there is nobody there?' said the stranger.

'I will answer for it,' said Bonacieux.

'And you think that your wife—'

'Has returned to the Louvre.'

'Without speaking to anyone but yourself?'

'I am sure of it.'

'That is an important point, do you understand?'

'Then the news I brought you is of value?'

'The greatest, my dear Bonacieux; I don't conceal this from you.'

'Then the cardinal will be pleased with me?'

'I have no doubt of it.'

'The great cardinal!'

'Are you sure, in her conversation with you, that your wife mentioned no names?'

'I think not.'

'She did not name Madame de Chevreuse, the Duke of Buckingham, or Madame de Vernet?'

'No; she only told me she wished to send me to London to serve the interests of an illustrious personage.'

'The traitor!' murmured Mme. Bonacieux.

'Silence!' said d'Artagnan, taking her hand, which, without thinking of it, she abandoned to him.

'Never mind,' continued the man in the cloak; 'you were a fool not to have pretended to accept the mission. You would then be in present

'How so?'

'You will be assassinated.'

'And I shall die in the performance of my duty.'

'But your mission will not be accomplished.'

'That is true,' replied d'Artagnan.

'Believe me,' continued Tréville, 'in enterprises of this kind, in order that one may arrive, four must set out.'

'Ah, you are right, monsieur,' said d'Artagnan; 'but you know Athos, Porthos, and Aramis, and you know if I can dispose of them.'

'Without confiding to them the secret which I am not willing to know?'

'We are sworn, once for all, to implicit confidence and devotedness against all proof. Besides, you can tell them that you have full confidence in me, and they will not be more incredulous than you.'

'I can send to each of them leave of absence for fifteen days, that is all—to Athos, whose wound still makes him suffer, to go to the waters of Forges; to Porthos and Aramis to accompany their friend, whom they are not willing to abandon in such a painful condition. Sending their leave of absence will be proof enough that I authorize their journey.'

'Thanks, monsieur. You are a hundred times too good.'

'Begone, then, find them instantly, and let all be done tonight! Ha! But first write your request to Dessessart. Perhaps you had a spy at your heels; and your visit, if it should ever be known to the cardinal, will thus seem legitimate.'

D'Artagnan drew up his request, and M. de Tréville, on receiving it, assured him that by two o'clock in the morning the four leaves of absence should be at the respective domiciles of the travellers.

'Have the goodness to send mine to Athos's residence. I should dread some disagreeable encounter if I were to go home.'

'Be easy. Adieu, and a prosperous voyage. *A propos*,' said M. de Tréville, calling him back.

D'Artagnan returned.

'Have you any money?'

D'Artagnan tapped the bag he had in his pocket.

'Enough?' asked M. de Tréville.

'Three hundred pistoles.'

'Oh, plenty! That would carry you to the end of the world. Begone, then!'

D'Arragnan saluted M. de Tréville, who held out his hand to him; d'Arragnan pressed it with a respect mixed with gratitude. Since his first arrival at Paris, he had had constant occasion to honour this excellent man, whom he had always found worthy, loyal, and great.

His first visit was to Aramis, at whose residence he had not been since the famous evening on which he had followed Mme. Bonacieux. Still further, he had seldom seen the young Musketeer; but every time he had seen him, he had remarked a deep sadness imprinted on his countenance.

This evening, especially, Aramis was melancholy and thoughtful. D'Arragnan asked some questions about this prolonged melancholy. Aramis pleaded as his excuse a commentary upon the eighteenth chapter of St. Augustine, which he was forced to write in Latin for the following week, and which preoccupied him a good deal.

After the two friends had been chatting a few moments, a servant from M. de Tréville entered, bringing a sealed packet.

'What is that?' asked Aramis.

'The leave of absence Monsieur has asked for,' replied the lackey.

'For me! I have asked for no leave of absence.'

'Hold your tongue and take it!' said d'Arragnan. 'And you, my friend, there is a demipistole for your trouble; you will tell Monsieur de Tréville that Monsieur Aramis is very much obliged to him. Go.'

The lackey bowed to the ground and departed.

'What does all this mean?' asked Aramis.

'Pack up all you want for a journey of a fortnight, and follow me.'

'But I cannot leave Paris just now without knowing—'

Aramis stopped.

'What is become of her? I suppose you mean—' continued d'Arragnan.

'Become of whom?' replied Aramis.

'The woman who was here—the woman with the embroidered handkerchief.'

'Who told you there was a woman here?' replied Aramis, becoming as pale as death.

'I saw her.'

'And you know who she is?'

Once there, for greater security, the young man barricaded the door. They both approached the window, and through a slit in the shutter they saw Bonacieux talking with a man in a cloak.

At sight of this man, d'Arragnan started, and half drawing his sword, sprang toward the door.

It was the man of Meung.

'What are you going to do?' cried Mme. Bonacieux; 'you will ruin us all!'

'But I have sworn to kill that man!' said d'Arragnan.

'Your life is devoted from this moment, and does not belong to you. In the name of the queen I forbid you to throw yourself into any peril which is foreign to that of your journey.'

'And do you command nothing in your own name?'

'In my name,' said Mme. Bonacieux, with great emotion, 'in my name I beg you! But listen; they appear to be speaking of me.'

D'Arragnan drew near the window, and lent his ear.

M. Bonacieux had opened his door, and seeing the apartment, had returned to the man in the cloak, whom he had left alone for an instant.

'She is gone,' said he; 'she must have returned to the Louvre.'

'You are sure,' replied the stranger, 'that she did not suspect the intentions with which you went out?'

'No,' replied Bonacieux, with a self-sufficient air, 'she is too superficial a woman.'

'Is the young Guardsman at home?'

'I do not think he is; as you see, his shutter is closed, and you can see no light shine through the chinks of the shutters.'

'All the same, it is well to be certain.'

'How so?'

'By knocking at his door. Go.'

'I will ask his servant.'

Bonacieux re-entered the house, passed through the same door that had afforded a passage for the two fugitives, went up to d'Arragnan's door, and knocked.

No one answered. Porthos, in order to make a greater display, had that evening borrowed Planchet. As to d'Arragnan, he took care not to give the least sign of existence.

'The cardinal's?' cried d'Artagnan, breaking into a loud laugh, he having heard, as may be remembered, thanks to the broken boards, every syllable of the conversation between the mercer and his wife.

'The cardinal's,' replied Mme. Bonacieux. 'You see it makes a very respectable appearance.'

'*Parbleu*,' cried d'Artagnan, 'it will be a double amusing affair to save the queen with the cardinal's money!'

'You are an amiable and charming young man,' said Mme. Bonacieux. 'Be assured you will not find her Majesty ungrateful.'

'Oh, I am already grandly recompensed!' cried d'Artagnan. 'I love you; you permit me to tell you that I do—that is already more happiness than I dared to hope.'

'Silence!' said Mme. Bonacieux, starting.

'What?'

'Someone is talking in the street.'

'It is the voice of—'

'Of my husband! Yes, I recognize it!'

D'Artagnan ran to the door and pushed the bolt.

'He shall not come in before I am gone,' said he; 'and when I am gone, you can open to him.'

'But I ought to be gone, too. And the disappearance of his money; how am I to justify it if I am here?'

'You are right; we must go out.'

'Go out? How? He will see us if we go out.'

'Then you must come up into my room.'

'Ah,' said Mme. Bonacieux, 'you speak that in a tone that frightens me!'

Mme. Bonacieux pronounced these words with tears in her eyes. D'Artagnan saw those tears, and much disturbed, softened, he threw himself at her feet.

'With me you will be as safe as in a temple; I give you my word of a gentleman.'

'Let us go,' said she, 'I place full confidence in you, my friend!'

D'Artagnan drew back the bolt with precaution, and both, light as shadows, glided through the interior door into the passage, ascended the stairs as quietly as possible, and entered d'Artagnan's chambers.

'I believe I can guess, at least.'

'Listen!' said Aramis. 'Since you appear to know so many things, can you tell me what is become of that woman?'

'I presume that she has returned to Tours.'

'To Tours? Yes, that may be. You evidently know her. But why did she return to Tours without telling me anything?'

'Because she was in fear of being arrested.'

'Why has she not written to me, then?'

'Because she was afraid of compromising you.'

'D'Artagnan, you restore me to life!' cried Aramis. 'I fancied myself despised, betrayed. I was so delighted to see her again! I could not have believed she would risk her liberty for me, and yet for what other cause could she have returned to Paris?'

'For the cause which today takes us to England.'

'And what is this cause?' demanded Aramis.

'Oh, you'll know it someday, Aramis; but at present I must imitate the discretion of the doctor's niece.'

Aramis smiled, as he remembered the tale he had told his friends on a certain evening. 'Well, then, since she has left Paris, and you are sure of it, d'Artagnan, nothing prevents me, and I am ready to follow you. You say we are going—'

'To see Athos now, and if you will come thither, I beg you to make haste, for we have lost much time already. *A propos*, inform Bazin.'

'Will Bazin go with us?' asked Aramis.

'Perhaps so. At all events, it is best that he should follow us to Athos's.'

Aramis called Bazin, and, after having ordered him to join them at Athos's residence, said 'Let us go then,' at the same time taking his cloak, sword, and three pistols, opening uselessly two or three drawers to see if he could not find stray coin. When well assured this search was superfluous, he followed d'Artagnan, wondering to himself how this young Guardsman should know so well who the lady was to whom he had given hospitality, and that he should know better than himself what had become of her.

Only as they went out Aramis placed his hand upon the arm of d'Artagnan, and looking at him earnestly, 'You have not spoken of this lady?' said he.

'To nobody in the world.'

'Not even to Athos or Porthos?'
'I have not breathed a syllable to them.'
'Good enough!'

Tranquil on this important point, Aramis continued his way with d'Aragnan, and both soon arrived at Athos's dwelling. They found him holding his leave of absence in one hand, and M. de Tréville's note in the other.

'Can you explain to me what signify this leave of absence and this letter, which I have just received?' said the astonished Athos.

My dear Athos,

I wish, as your health absolutely requires it, that you should rest for a fortnight. Go, then, and take the waters of Forges, or any that may be more agreeable to you, and recuperate yourself as quickly as possible.

Yours affectionate,

DETRÉVILLE

'Well, this leave of absence and that letter mean that you must follow me, Athos.'

'To the waters of Forges?'

'There or elsewhere.'

'In the king's service?'

'Either the king's or the queen's. Are we not their Majesties' servants?' At that moment Porthos entered. '*Pardieu!*' said he, 'here is a strange thing! Since when, I wonder, in the Musketeers, did they grant men leave of absence without their asking for it?'

'Since,' said d'Aragnan, 'they have friends who ask it for them.'

'Ah, ah!' said Porthos, 'it appears there's something fresh here.'

'Yes, we are going—' said Aramis.

'To what country?' demanded Porthos.

'My faith! I don't know much about it,' said Athos. 'Ask d'Aragnan.'
'To London, gentlemen,' said d'Aragnan.

much reticence as by too much confidence; and—let us admit it!—the involuntary sentiment which she felt for her young protector decided her to speak.

'Listen,' said she; 'I yield to your protestations, I yield to your assurances. But I swear to you, before God who hears us, that if you betray me, and my enemies pardon me, I will kill myself, while accusing you of my death.'

'And I—I swear to you before God, madame,' said d'Aragnan, 'that if I am taken while accomplishing the orders you give me, I will die sooner than do anything that may compromise anyone.'

Then the young woman confided in him the terrible secret of which chance had already communicated to him a part in front of the Samartaine. This was their mutual declaration of love.

D'Aragnan was radiant with joy and pride. This secret which he possessed, this woman whom he loved! Confidence and love made him a giant.

'I go,' said he; 'I go at once.'

'How, you will go?' said Mme. Bonacieux; 'and your regiment, your captain?'

'By my soul, you had made me forget all that, dear Constance! Yes, you are right; a furlough is needful.'

'Still another obstacle,' murmured Mme. Bonacieux, sorrowfully.

'As to that,' cried d'Aragnan, after a moment of reflection, 'I shall surmount it, be assured.'

'How so?'

'I will go this very evening to Tréville, whom I will request to ask this favour for me of his brother-in-law, Monsieur Dessessart.'

'But another thing.'

'What?' asked d'Aragnan, seeing that Mme. Bonacieux hesitated to continue.

'You have, perhaps, no money?'

'*Perhaps* is too much,' said d'Aragnan, smiling.

'Then,' replied Mme. Bonacieux, opening a cupboard and taking from it the very bag which a half hour before her husband had caressed so affectionately, 'take this bag.'

'I see that you require someone to answer for me?'

'I admit that would reassure me greatly.'

'Do you know Athos?'

'No.'

'Porthos?'

'No.'

'Aramis?'

'No. Who are these gentlemen?'

'Three of the king's Musketeers. Do you know Monsieur de Tréville, their captain?'

'Oh, yes, him! I know him; not personally, but from having heard the queen speak of him more than once as a brave and loyal gentleman.'

'You do not fear lest he should betray you to the cardinal?'

'Oh, no, certainly not!'

'Well, reveal your secret to him, and ask him whether, however important, however valuable, however terrible it may be, you may not confide it to me.'

'But this secret is not mine, and I cannot reveal it in this manner.'

'You were about to confide it to Monsieur Bonacieux,' said d'Arragnan, with chagrin.

'As one confides a letter to the hollow of a tree, to the wing of a pigeon, to the collar of a dog.'

'And yet, me—you see plainly that I love you.'

'You say so.'

'I am an honourable man.'

'You say so.'

'I am a gallant fellow.'

'I believe it.'

'I am brave.'

'Oh, I am sure of that!'

'Then, put me to the proof.'

Mme. Bonacieux looked at the young man, restrained for a minute by a last hesitation; but there was such an ardour in his eyes, such persuasion in his voice, that she felt herself constrained to confide in him. Besides, she found herself in circumstances where everything must be risked for the sake of everything. The queen might be as much injured by too

'To London!' cried Porthos, 'and what the devil are we going to do in London?'

'That is what I am not at liberty to tell you, gentlemen; you must trust to me.'

'But in order to go to London,' added Porthos, 'money is needed, and I have none.'

'Nor I,' said Aramis.

'Nor I,' said Athos.

'I have,' replied d'Arragnan, pulling out his treasure from his pocket, and placing it on the table. 'There are in this bag three hundred pistols. Let each take seventy-five; that is enough to take us to London and back. Besides, make yourselves easy; we shall not all arrive at London.'

'Why so?'

'Because, in all probability, some one of us will be left on the road.'

'Is this, then, a campaign upon which we are now entering?'

'One of a most dangerous kind, I give you notice.'

'Ah! But if we do risk being killed,' said Porthos, 'at least I should like to know what for.'

'You would be all the wiser,' said Athos.

'And yet,' said Aramis, 'I am somewhat of Porthos's opinion.'

'Is the king accustomed to give you such reasons? No. He says to you jauntily, "Gentlemen, there is fighting going on in Gascony or in Flanders; go and fight," and you go there. Why? You need give yourselves no more uneasiness about this.'

'D'Arragnan is right,' said Athos, 'here are our three leaves of absence which came from Monsieur de Tréville, and here are three hundred pistols which came from I don't know where. So let us go and get killed where we are told to go. Is life worth the trouble of so many questions? D'Arragnan, I am ready to follow you.'

'And I also,' said Porthos.

'And I also,' said Aramis. 'And, indeed, I am not sorry to quit Paris; I had need of distraction.'

'Well, you will have distractions enough, gentlemen, be assured,' said d'Arragnan.

'And, now, when are we to go?' asked Athos.

'Immediately,' replied d'Arragnan; 'we have not a minute to lose.'

'Hello, Grimaud! Planchet! Mousqueton! Bazin!' cried the four young men, calling their lackeys, 'clean my boots, and fetch the horses from the hôtel.'

Each Musketeer was accustomed to leave at the general hôtel, as at a barrack, his own horse and that of his lackey. Planchet, Grimaud, Mousqueton, and Bazin set off at full speed.

'Now let us lay down the plan of campaign,' said Porthos. 'Where do we go first?'

'To Calais,' said d'Arragnan; 'that is the most direct line to London.'

'Well,' said Porthos, 'this is my advice—'

'Speak!'

'Four men travelling together would be suspected. D'Arragnan will give each of us his instructions. I will go by the way of Boulogne to clear the way; Athos will set out two hours after, by that of Amiens; Aramis will follow us by that of Noyon; as to d'Arragnan, he will go by what route he thinks is best, in Planchet's clothes, while Planchet will follow us like d'Arragnan, in the uniform of the Guards.'

'Gentlemen,' said Athos, 'my opinion is that it is not proper to allow lackeys to have anything to do in such an affair. A secret may, by chance, be betrayed by gentlemen; but it is almost always sold by lackeys.'

'Porthos's plan appears to me to be impracticable,' said d'Arragnan, 'inasmuch as I am myself ignorant of what instructions I can give you. I am the bearer of a letter, that is all. I have not, and I cannot make three copies of that letter, because it is sealed. We must, then, as it appears to me, travel in company. This letter is here, in this pocket,' and he pointed to the pocket which contained the letter. 'If I should be killed, one of you must take it, and continue the route; if he be killed, it will be another's turn, and so on—provided a single one arrives, that is all that is required.'

'Bravo, d'Arragnan, your opinion is mine,' cried Athos, 'Besides, we must be consistent; I am going to take the waters, you will accompany me. Instead of taking the waters of Forges, I go and take sea waters; I am free to do so. If anyone wishes to stop us, I will show Monsieur de Tréville's letter, and you will show your leaves of absence. If we are attacked, we will defend ourselves; if we are tried, we will stoutly maintain that we were only anxious to dip ourselves a certain number of times in the sea. They would have an easy bargain of four isolated men; whereas four men

Chapter XVIII

Lover and Husband



H, Madame,' said d'Arragnan, entering by the door which the young woman opened for him, 'allow me to tell you that you have a bad sort of a husband.'

'You have, then, overheard our conversation?' asked Mme. Bonacieux, eagerly, and looking at d'Arragnan with disquiet.

'The whole.'

'But how, my God?'

'By a mode of proceeding known to myself, and by which I likewise overheard the more animated conversation which he had with the cardinal's police.'

'And what did you understand by what we said?'

'A thousand things. In the first place, that, unfortunately, your husband is a simpleton and a fool; in the next place, you are in trouble, of which I am very glad, as it gives me an opportunity of placing myself at your service, and God knows I am ready to throw myself into the fire for you; finally, that the queen wants a brave, intelligent, devoted man to make a journey to London for her. I have at least two of the three qualities you stand in need of, and here I am.'

Mme. Bonacieux made no reply; but her heart beat with joy and secret hope shone in her eyes.

'And what guarantee will you give me,' asked she, 'if I consent to confide this message to you?'

'My love for you. Speak! Command! What is to be done?'

'My God, my God!' murmured the young woman, 'ought I to confide such a secret to you, monsieur? You are almost a boy.'