



外国文学经典

The Three
Musketeers



三个
火枪手
(下)

Alexandre Dumas père (法) 著

外语教学与研究出版社

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'My Lady'

ARTAGNAN had followed the other lady from the church without being observed by her. He saw her enter her carriage, and heard the orders given to her coachman to drive to St. Germain.* It was useless to attempt to follow, on foot, a carriage which was drawn by two vigorous trotting horses; and d'Artagnan therefore returned to the Rue Ferou. In the Rue de Seine* he met Planchet, who had stopped before a pastry cook's shop, and appeared to be in perfect ecstasy at the sight of a cake, of most tempting form. D'Artagnan ordered him to go and saddle two horses at M. de Treville's stable, one for each of them, and to come to him at Athos's lodgings. M. de Treville had given d'Artagnan a general permission to avail himself of his stable. Planchet took his way towards the Rue de Columbier, and d'Artagnan to Rue Ferou. Athos was at home, gloomily emptying one of the bottles of that famous Spanish wine which he had brought with him from Picardy. He gave Grimaud a sign to bring a glass for d'Artagnan; and Grimaud obeyed with his habitual silence.

D'Artagnan related to Athos all that had occurred at the church between the attorney's wife and Porthos, and how their companion was already in a fair way of obtaining

his equipments.

‘For my part,’ said Athos, in answer to this recital, ‘I am sure enough that it will not be women who will be at the expense of my outfit.’

‘And yet, my dear Athos, handsome, and refined, and noble as you are, neither princesses, nor queens even, are beyond what you might seek to win.’

At this moment Planchet modestly thrust his head through the half-open door, and announced that the horses were there.

‘What horses?’ asked Athos.

‘Two which M. de Treville lends me, with which I am going to St. Germain.’

‘And what are you going to do at St. Germain?’ inquired Athos.

D’Artagnan then proceeded to inform him of his having seen at the church, that lady, who, in conjunction with the gentleman in the black cloak and with the scar upon his forehead, had been the subject of his thoughts.

‘That is to say, that you are in love with this one now, as you were with Madame Bonancieux,’ ejaculated Athos, shrugging his shoulders, as if in contempt of human weakness.

‘Not at all!’ exclaimed d’Artagnan. ‘I am only curious to penetrate the mystery with which she surrounds herself. I know not why, but I fancy that this woman, unknown as she is to me, and I am to her, has hitherto exercised some influence on my life.’

'You are right, in fact,' said Athos. 'I am not acquainted with any woman who is worth the trouble of being sought after when she is once lost. Madame Bonancieux is lost: so much the worse for her; let her get herself found again.'

'No, Athos, no; you deceive yourself,' said d'Artagnan. 'I love poor Constance more fondly than ever; and if I only knew the place where she now is, were it even at the extremity of the world, I would set out to drag her from her enemies. But I know it not; and all my efforts to discover it have been in vain. What would you expect? One must seek some diversion.'

'Divert yourself with my lady then, my dear d'Artagnan; I recommend it with all my heart, if that will amuse you.'

'But, Athos,' said d'Artagnan, 'instead of keeping yourself here, secluded like a suspect, get upon a horse, and ride with me to St. Germain.'

'My friend,' said Athos, 'I ride on horseback if I have a horse; if I have not, I walk on foot.'

'Well, for my part,' said d'Artagnan, smiling at that misanthropy in Athos, which, in another, would have offended him, 'I am not so proud as you are: I ride whatever I can find. So farewell, my dear Athos.'

'Farewell,' said the musketeer, as he made a sign to Grimaud to uncork the bottle he had brought.

D'Artagnan and Planchet got into their saddles, and took the road to St. Germain.

As they went along, d'Artagnan could not help thinking of all that Athos had said to him about Madame Bonancieux. Although he was not of a very sentimental nature,

yet the pretty seamstress had made a real impression on his heart. In the meantime he tried to find out who this lady was. She had talked to the man in the dark cloak, and, therefore, she was certainly acquainted with him. Now the man with the dark cloak had, in d'Artagnan's opinion, certainly carried off Madame Bonancieux the second time, as well as the first. D'Artagnan, therefore, was only telling half a lie, which is not much of one, when he said that, by his pursuit of this lady, he was in a way to discover Constance. Thus meditating, and touching his horse occasionally with the spur, d'Artagnan had gone over the distance, and reached St. Germain. He went skirting the pavilion, where, ten years afterwards, Louis XIV.* was born. He was passing through a very solitary street, looking right and left to see if he could not discover some vestige of his beautiful Englishwoman, when, on the ground-floor of a pretty house, which, according to the custom of the time, had no window towards the street, he recognised a countenance he knew. The person in question was walking on a sort of terrace ornamented with flowers. Planchet was the first to recognise him.

'Eh, sir,' said he, 'do you not remember that face, which is now gaping at yonder plant?'

'No,' said d'Artagnan; 'and yet I am convinced it is not the first time that I have seen it.'

'Vive Dieu! I believe you,' said Planchet; 'it is that poor Lubin, the valet of the Count de Wardes, whom you settled so thoroughly a month ago, at Calais, on the way to the governor's house.'

'Oh! yes,' said d'Artagnan, 'I remember him now. Do you

believe that he would recognise you?’

‘Faith, sir, he was in such a fright, that I doubt whether he could have a very clear recollection of me.’

‘Well, then,’ said d’Artagnan, ‘go and chat with him, and ascertain whether his master is dead.’

Planchet dismounted, and went up to Lubin, who, in reality, did not recognise him; and the two valets began to converse together with the utmost good fellowship; whilst d’Artagnan backed the horses down a lane, and turning behind a house, returned to assist at the conference, concealed by a hedge of hazel bushes. After a minute’s observation from behind the hedge, he heard the sound of wheels, and saw the carriage of the unknown lady stop in front of him. There could be no doubt about it, for the lady was inside. D’Artagnan bent down over his horse’s neck, that he might see everything, without being himself seen. The lady put her charming fair head out of the door, and gave some orders to her maid. This latter, a pretty girl, of from twenty to two-and-twenty years of age, alert and animated, the fit abigail* of a woman of fashion, jumped down the steps, over which she had been seated, according to the custom of the time, and went towards the terrace where d’Artagnan had seen Lubin. D’Artagnan followed the waiting woman with his eyes and saw her going towards the terrace. But, as it happened, an order from the house had called away Lubin, so that Planchet remained alone, looking to see in what direction his master had concealed himself. The waiting-woman approached Planchet, whom she mistook for Lubin, and handed him a small note.

‘For your master,’ said she.

'For my master?' said Planchet in astonishment.

'Yes, and in great haste; take it quickly then.'

She then hastened towards the carriage, which had already turned in the direction whence it had come, and jumped on the steps; the vehicle moved away. Planchet turned the note over and over again, and then, accustomed to passive obedience, he went along the lane, and, at twenty paces distance, met his master, who having seen all the proceedings, was hurrying towards him.

'For you, sir,' said Planchet, handing the note to the young man.

'For me?' said d'Artagnan: 'are you quite sure?'

'Vive Dieu! I am quite sure of it; for the maid said, 'for your master,' and I have no other master than you; so——A pretty slip of a girl that maid is, too, upon my word.'

D'Artagnan opened the letter, and read:

'A person who interests herself about you more than she can tell, would be glad to know on what day you will be able to walk out in forest. A valet, in black and red, will be waiting to-morrow, at the hotel of the Field of Cloth of Gold, for your reply.'

'Oh, oh!' said d'Artagnan, 'this is somewhat ardent. It seems that my lady and I are anxious about the health of the same person. Well! Planchet, how is this good M. de Wardes? He is not dead then?'

'No, sir; he is as well as a man can be with four sword wounds in his body—for you made four in that dear gentleman—and he is yet weak, having lost almost all his

blood. As I told you, sir, Lubin did not recognise me, and he related to me the whole of our adventure.'

'Well done, Planchet! You are the very king of valets; and now mount your horse again, and let us overtake the carriage.'

This did not take them a long time. In about five minutes they saw the carriage standing in the road, and a richly-dressed cavalier waiting at its door. The conversation between the lady and this cavalier was so animated, that d'Artagnan drew up on the other side of the carriage, without being observed by any one but the pretty waitingmaid. The conversation was in English, which d'Artagnan did not understand; but, by the accent, the young man thought he could perceive that the beautiful Englishwoman was very angry. She concluded by a gesture which left no doubt about the nature of the conversation: it was a blow with her fan, applied with such force that the little feminine toy flew into a thousand pieces. The cavalier burst into a roar of laughter, which appeared to exasperate the lady. D'Artagnan thought that now was the time to interpose: he therefore approached the other door, and taking his hat off respectfully said—

'Madame, will you permit me to offer my services? It appears to me that this gentleman has offended you. Say one word, madame, and I will immediately punish him for his want of courtesy.'

At the first words the lady turned, and looked at the young man with astonishment; and, when he had ended, 'Sir,' said she, in very good French, 'I would put myself under your protection with the greatest pleasure, if the person

with whom I have quarrelled were not my brother.'

'Ah, excuse me then,' said d'Artagnan; 'I was not aware of that, madame.'

'What is that presumptuous fellow interfering about?' exclaimed the gentleman whom the lady had claimed as her relation, lowering his head to the top of the door: 'why does he not go on about his business?'

'Presumptuous fellow, yourself!' said d'Artagnan, bending on the neck of his horse, and answering through the other door. 'I do not go, because I choose to remain here.'

The gentleman spoke a few words in English to his sister.

'I speak in French to you, sir,' said d'Artagnan; 'do me the favour then, I beseech you, to answer in the same language. You are the lady's brother; but, happily, you are *not mine*.'

It might have been imagined that the lady, timid as women generally are, would interpose at the commencement of this quarrel, to prevent its proceeding further: but, on the contrary, she threw herself back in her carriage, and coolly ordered the coachman to drive to the hotel. The pretty waiting-maid threw a glance of anxiety at d'Artagnan, whose good looks seemed not to have been lost upon her. The carriage hurried on, and left the two men face to face. No material obstacle now intervened between them. The cavalier made as if to follow the carriage; but d'Artagnan—whose already boiling anger was still further increased by recognising in him the Englishman, who, at Amiens, had won his horse, and was very near winning his diamond from Athos—seized him by the horse's bridle, and stopped him.

'Ah, sir,' said he, 'you appear to be even a more presumptuous fellow than I am; for you pretend to forget that there is already a little quarrel begun between us.'

'Ah, ah!' cried the Englishman, 'is it you, my master? Then one must always play one game or other with you.'

'Yes; and that reminds me that I have a revenge to take. We will see, my dear sir, whether you are as skilful with the sword as with the dice box.'

'You perceive,' said the Englishman, 'that I have no sword with me. Would you show off your courage against an unarmed man?'

'I hope that you have got one at home,' said d'Artagnan; 'if not, I have two, and will play you for one.'

'Quite unnecessary,' said the Englishman; 'I am sufficiently provided with that kind of tool.'

'Well then, sir,' replied d'Artagnan, 'choose the largest, and come and show it me this evening.'

'Oh, certainly, if you please.'

'Behind the Luxembourg, there is a charming spot for promenades of the sort to which I am inviting you.'

'Very well; I will be there.'

'Your hour?'

'Six o'clock.'

'Apropos, you have probably one or two friends?'

'I have three, who will consider it an honour to play the same game as myself.'

'Three—capital! how well it fits in,' said d'Artagnan; 'it is precisely my number.'

'And now, who are you?' demanded the Englishman.

'I am M. d'Artagnan, a Gascon gentleman, serving in the Guards, in the company of M. des Essarts: and pray, who are you?'

'I am Lord de Winter,* Baron of Sheffield.'

'Well, then, I am your humble servant, my lord,' said d'Artagnan, 'although you have names which are rather hard to remember.'

And pricking his horse, he put him to the gallop, and took the road to Paris. As he was accustomed to do under similar circumstances, d'Artagnan went straight to Athos's lodging. He found the musketeer stretched upon a large couch, where he was waiting, as he said, for his equipment to come to him. He told Athos all that had occurred, omitting only the letter to M. de Wardes. Athos was quite enchanted when he heard he was going to fight an Englishman. We have said that to do so was his dream. They sent their servants instantly to look for Aramis and Porthos, and to let them know what was in the wind. Porthos drew his sword from the scabbard, and began to lunge at the wall, drawing back from time to time, and capering about like a dancer. Aramis, who was working hard at his poem, shut himself up in Athos's closet, and begged that he might not be disturbed again until it was time to draw his sword. Athos, by a signal to Grimaud, demanded another bottle. D'Artagnan arranged a little plan in his own mind, of which we shall hereafter see the execution; and which promised him an agreeable

adventure, as might be seen by the smiles which, from time to time, dashed across his face, and lighted up its thoughtfulness.