

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

Retold by Pauline Francis





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Introduction

Alexandre Dumas was born in 1802, in France. His father died when he was only four years old, and he received a poor education.

The Three Musketeers was published as a newspaper serial in 1844. It tells the story of d'Artagnan, a country boy who travels to Paris to seek his fortune and, hopefully, to join the musketeers – the bodyguards of the King of France. He meets three musketeers; Athos, Porthos and Aramis. Together, they foil a dangerous plot against King Louis and his Queen, Anne – and against their own lives.

It is a tale of great adventure and daring, with enormous twists and turns in the plot. Some of the characters and events are true. The story is set in the reign of King Louis XIII of France (1601-43), who allowed Cardinal richelieu to make most of the decisions in running the country. France was a roman Catholic country, and the story also tells of the time when French Protestants (called Huguenots) were holding out against the King's army in La Rochelle: the siege of La Rochelle. Charles I was on the throne of england. The Duke of Buckingham was very unpopular in england because he supported the Huguenots.

Alexandre Dumas is also well known as the author of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which appeared as a newspaper serial during 1844 and 1845.

Dumas built a house called Chateau de Monte Cristo, which he had to sell when he was short of money. In the last years of his life, Dumas travelled widely in Europe. He died in 1870, at the age of 68, in Dieppe in northern France.

CHAPTER ONE

The Three Musketeers

One fine April morning, in 1625, a young man had just arrived in a small town to the south of Paris. He was eighteen years old, tall and thin, and shabbily dressed. He had an honest face with a hooked nose and a jutting jaw. A long sword hung from his shoulder strap. This young man, who had no money to his name, was called d'Artagnan and he was making his way to Paris to seek his fortune.

Unfortunately, a crowd had gathered to make fun of his horse, a slow and yellow-coloured creature. It had been a parting gift from d'Artagnan's father. His father had also given him this advice: 'Stand no nonsense from anyone except the King or his Cardinal; show courage, for that is the only way to succeed in life; and if you see a good opportunity, take it.'

In his pocket, d'Artagnan carried a letter of introduction to Monsieur de Treville, the captain of the musketeers – the men who guarded King Louis of France. D'Artagnan wanted one thing more than anything else: to become a musketeer himself.

As d'Artagnan dismounted at the inn, he saw a gentleman standing at a half-open window. He was about