

## Synopsis for The Three Musketeers at Synetic Theater

In 17<sup>th</sup> century Paris, during the reign of King Louis XIII, the King's personal guard—the Musketeers—have been reduced to a drunken carousing rabble. Their once noble leaders—Athos, Porthos and Aramis—are routinely beaten and humiliated by the personal guard of the powerful and scheming Cardinal Richelieu, led by the Cardinal's sinister henchman Rochefort.

Meanwhile, King Louis' wife, Queen Anne, has been having a secret affair with the prime minister of England, the Duke of Buckingham. The Queen gives Buckingham a diamond necklace as a token of her love and, with the aid of Anne's loyal handmaid Constance, Buckingham sneaks out of Paris as the young D'Artagnan arrives with ambitions to join the Musketeers. He encounters the mysterious Milady DeWinter, then meets Constance. An instant attraction develops between the two, but D'Artagnan manages to get challenged to three duels—one each with Athos, Aramis, and Porthos—before he himself challenges Rochefort to a duel for mocking him. After quickly rendering D'Artagnan unconscious, Rochefort informs Milady that Cardinal Richelieu wishes to see her.

The Cardinal instructs Rochefort to “remove” Constance, the Queen's trusted confidant, and tells his agent, Milady, to secure the diamonds the Queen gave to Buckingham. In exchange, the Cardinal will grant Milady a pardon for unnamed crimes in her past. The Cardinal then speaks with King Louis, convincing him to throw a magnificent ball at which the Queen will wear her diamonds as a symbol of her love for her husband the King—the diamonds the Cardinal knows she cannot wear since she has given them to her lover Buckingham—all as part of the Cardinal's grand plan to discredit the Queen and bring about her downfall so he will then have absolute control over the weak and childish Louis.

The next day, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis arrive on the Field of Honor to meet D'Artagnan for their scheduled duels, but Rochefort steps in with his men and stops them. The Musketeers fight Rochefort's men and, with D'Artagnan's help, are victorious. The Musketeers are impressed with D'Artagnan's abilities, but Athos tells D'Artagnan to leave Paris and live a quiet, peaceful life.

King Louis then goes to Queen Anne, informing her of his plans for the ball and instructing her to wear her diamonds. With the Queen now thrown into a panic, Constance volunteers to get word to Buckingham that the diamonds must be returned. Rochefort and his men attempt to abduct Constance and stop her, but D'Artagnan fights them off. Constance and D'Artagnan confess their love for each other, D'Artagnan vowing to help Constance in any way he can. She entrusts him with the Queen's letter to Buckingham and D'Artagnan goes to the Musketeers, convincing them to ride with him to Calais to meet Buckingham's ship, retrieve the Queen's diamonds and save her from disgrace and death.

En route to Calais, they stop at an inn. Aramis and Porthos give D'Artagnan advice on women, before Athos tells D'Artagnan of "an old friend" of his who was once happily married, deeply in love with his wife, who he ultimately had to kill because he discovered she was a wanted criminal. The Cardinal's men ambush the Musketeers at the inn. Athos, Porthos, and Aramis keep them at bay as D'Artagnan races ahead to Calais.

He meets Buckingham, convincing him to return the Queen's diamonds. Buckingham agrees but is murdered by Milady DeWinter, who has arrived in Calais ahead of D'Artagnan. She returns to Paris with the diamonds, presenting them to Cardinal Richelieu. The Cardinal's men then capture Athos and D'Artagnan, throwing them into the Bastille.

The Cardinal goes to D'Artagnan, offering him a position in his own guard. D'Artagnan refuses; he came to Paris to be a Musketeer, not to serve a scheming traitor like the Cardinal, who promptly condemns D'Artagnan to death. Milady visits Athos, revealing Athos as the "old friend" in his story to D'Artagnan: Milady was once Athos' wife. She survived her execution at Athos' hands and is now hell-bent on revenge, on seeing Athos and the Musketeers destroyed.

After she leaves, Porthos and Aramis break into the Bastille, freeing D'Artagnan and Athos. They devise a plan to sneak into the ball and recapture the diamonds from Milady before the Queen can be exposed. As the ball commences, King Louis is furious that the Queen is not wearing her diamonds. D'Artagnan manages to get them from Milady, but she then makes it seem as if D'Artagnan is attempting to assassinate the King. In the ensuing melee, D'Artagnan fights and kills Rochefort. Meanwhile, the Cardinal, his scheme falling apart, sends Milady to murder the Queen. In her attempts to fight Milady off and defend Queen Anne, Constance is killed. Athos then corners and kills Milady.

King Louis is outraged that his ball has been ruined. As the Cardinal attempts to calm him, the Queen appears, radiant in the diamonds D'Artagnan has retrieved for her. The Cardinal's plot is on the verge of exposure, but, rather than do so and disgrace the Queen, D'Artagnan decides to keep silent. Since nothing he can do will bring Constance back—and since any action he takes against the Cardinal will only bring about the Queen's downfall—D'Artagnan accepts the Cardinal's offer to become a Musketeer and fulfill his lifelong dream.