

The Man in the Iron Mask Study Guide

The Man in the Iron Mask by Alexandre Dumas, père

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Plot Summary

"The Man in the Iron Mask" is a historical fiction novel, written by Alexandre Dumas, that takes place in the 1600s in France. Aramis, one of the former musketeers and a bishop, goes to the Bastille to visit Philippe, the imprisoned twin brother of the current king, Louis XIV. He tells Philippe that he can put him on the throne, switching him with his brother. Philippe is apprehensive at first, but Aramis insists the two men can do great things together. At a party in Vaux, thrown by Fouquet, one of the king's advisors, Aramis plans to make the switch. The king is not pleased with the party's lavishness, and uses missing money from the treasury as a reason to arrest Fouquet. He tells D'Artagnan, the captain of the musketeers and friend of Athos, Porthos, and Athos, to watch over Fouquet during the night until the king makes a final decision. Aramis kidnaps Louis XIV and puts Philippe in his place. Philippe, as king, says he will not arrest Fouquet. Aramis, overjoyed that his plan has worked and his friend is free, tells Fouquet about the switch of kings, but Fouquet quickly goes to free the king and set things right. Aramis and another former musketeer, Porthos, are forced to flee to Belle-Isle, one of Fouquet's islands. The king does not immediately arrest Fouquet, taking all his money before finally doing so. D'Artagnan chases after Fouquet on horseback and brings him in for the king.

Athos, another former musketeer, is living with his son, Raoul. Raoul is in love with Louise la Vallerie, his former lover, but she is the mistress of the king. To escape his anguish, Raoul goes to Africa, where he hopes to die in battle since he knows he will soon die of a broken heart anyway. D'Artagnan is ordered by the king to capture Porthos and Aramis, after taking Philippe to a new prison on St. Marguerite. D'Artagnan pursues them, but resigns instead of capturing his friends, unable to betray them. Aramis and Porthos try to defend themselves, but Porthos dies in the battle. Aramis escapes to Spain, where he becomes a duke. King Louis XIV convinces D'Artagnan not to resign, but cooperate with the king's will. Louis XIV pardons Aramis. Raoul is killed in action in Africa, and Athos dies as soon as he hears of his son's death. D'Artagnan eventually leads the king's army in an attack against Holland. He is soon promoted to marshall for his dedication to his country, but is killed by a cannonball right after learning of his promotion.



Chapter 1, The Prisoner, and Chapter 2, How Mouston had become fatter without informing Porthos, and the troubles which consequently befell that worthy gentleman

Chapter 1, The Prisoner, and Chapter 2, How Mouston had become fatter without informing Porthos, and the troubles which consequently befell that worthy gentleman Summary

Aramis, a former musketeer and a bishop, goes to the Bastille to visit a prisoner. He asks the prison warden, Governor Baisemeaux, to let him see the prisoner alone to hear his confession. Aramis talks to the prisoner, Philippe. Aramis asks Philippe about his younger years, which are spent confined in an estate home in the countryside with a maid, Perronnette, and his master. Philippe is visited at the home frequently by a woman, whom he later learns is Anne of Austria, the Queen Mother. Eight years ago, Philippe overhears a conversation between Perronnette and his master about a letter from Anne of Austria that had fallen into the well. The master is determined to get the letter back safely. They leave to find a deaf and dumb man to send down the well. Philippe uses the well bucket and rope to get the letter, which he accidentally rips in two. However, he reads the letter and realizes he is a noble. When Perronnette and the master return, they realize what has happened and report it to the Queen. Philippe is imprisoned in the Bastille, and his guardians are killed.

Aramis tells Philippe that he is the brother of the current king, Louis XIV. Their father, Louis XIII, is overjoyed when he learns he has a son, but when he finds out there are two of them, he panicks. Louis XIII decides to hide away his other son, Philippe. Otherwise, he fears, his sons will fight with each other for the throne when they get older. Aramis convinces Philippe to go along with his plan to switch the brothers and put Philippe on the throne. Aramis returns to Baisemeaux and gives him a large sum of money.

Chapter 2, How Mouston had become fatter without informing Porthos, and the troubles which consequently befell that worthy gentleman

Porthos, a former musketeer, is visited by D'Artagnan, captain of the musketeers. Porthos hates being fitted for clothes, so has sent his servant, Mouston, to get fitted in his place. Mouston had grown to be the size of Porthos, but lately has grown even



fatter, meaning the recently made suits are too big for Porthos. Porthos must attend a party given by Fouquet at Vaux, at which the king will be present.

Chapter 1, The Prisoner, and Chapter 2, How Mouston had become fatter without informing Porthos, and the troubles which consequently befell that worthy gentleman Analysis

Aramis, a former musketeer, is an ambitious man. When he learns about Philippe, he plans to put the boy on the throne, so that Philippe will be in his debt. He informs Philippe of how his family has imprisoned him and tries to whet his appetite for revenge. Philippe can never see the light of day and be free, since he looks exactly like King Louis XIV. Aramis' plan makes Philippe long for a life on the outside. He tries to convince Philippe that he will be a much better king than his brother and tells him that his brother knows all about his imprisonment. They discuss Philippe's younger years, when he lives with a master and a maid. Aramis tells him that the master and maid are both killed to protect the secret of his existence, showing the lengths the royal family will go to as long as they can keep Philippe under wraps. At this point, it is impossible to tell how much of what Aramis says is true. It seems he has the best interest of Philippe at heart, but it is clear he also has his own ambitions. D'Artagnan, captain of the musketeers, is an old friend of Porthos and Aramis. He is the only one still in the service of the king. Porthos, another former musketeer, is introduced as a lovable buffoon. He is primarily concerned with trivial matters, such as the fit of his clothes, but is also loyal to his friends.



Chapter 3, Who M. Jean Percerin was, Chapter 4, The Samples, and Chapter 5, Where, probably, Moliere formed his first idea of the bourgeois gentilhomme

Chapter 3, Who M. Jean Percerin was, Chapter 4, The Samples, and Chapter 5, Where, probably, Moliere formed his first idea of the bourgeois gentilhomme Summary

King Louis XIV's tailor, M. Jean Percerin, is from a long line of tailors to the king of France. He also works for some of the noblemen and women of France, but is very particular when choosing his clients. D'Artagnan brings Porthos to see Percerin. Porthos remembers that Percerin once turned him away. The tailor's servants wait at the shop, turning away customers for Percerin is engaged in making several suits for the king. D'Artagnan recognizes one of the servants as Moliere, a poet and playwright is who pretending to be a tailor's apprentice.

Chapter 4, The Samples

Moliere takes D'Artagnan and Porthos to see Percerin, who tells them he is very busy making five suits for the king. He says he needs plenty of time to finish them, so cannot take on any other orders at this time. D'Artagnan says he has time and asks him to make a suit for Porthos. Percerin says he cannot say no to D'Arthanan, but time constraints make it impossible.

D'Artagnan continues to argue when they are interrupted by Aramis, who tells Percerin his is also asking him to make the suit for Porthos. Aramis says it will please Fouquet, and Percerin acquieses and tells Porthos to get measured. D'Artagnan tells Percerin that Porthos does not like to get measured, and Moliere volunteers to take him so they measure him without touching him. D'Artagnan remains behind with Aramis, who seems a little apprehensive but insists he is pleased that D'Artagnan is there. Aramis asks Percerin for samples of fabric that will be made into the king's suits. He says that Fouquet is having a portrait of the king done. D'Artagnan's suspicions are raised by this, but he does not act against Aramis. The artist, Le Brun, sketches the clothing so as to have the right details.

Chapter 5, Where, probably, Moliere formed his first idea of the bourgeois gentilhomme
Porthos delights in the method used to measure him, which utilizes the measuring of a man's reflection.



Chapter 3, Who M. Jean Percerin was, Chapter 4, The Samples, and Chapter 5, Where, probably, Moliere formed his first idea of the bourgeois gentilhomme Analysis

Porthos is sensitive about being touched by another man, finding the process of measuring to be intruding and embarrassing. He is pleased to learn of the tailor's new method using reflection. Porthos seems to be a kind man, although a little vain.

D'Artagnan unwittingly stumbles on Aramis' plotting. While he is suspicious of Aramis' behavior, he trusts his friend and hopes that he is doing the right thing. Aramis has the artist Le Brun sketch the king's outfit, and also takes samples of the fabric. It is implied that he will use this to create doubles of the king's clothes for Philippe's use. However, Aramis knows he cannot trust D'Artagnan with the secret of his plot, since D'Artagnan is an honorable man and will be forced to reveal it to the king. Aramis is vague with D'Artagnan, and tries as best he can to keep him from discovering the plot. Moliere is an artist and a friend of Aramis. It seems plausible that he was planted by Aramis to watch the crowd and ensure no one disturbs them, under the pretense of gathering material for his writing.



Chapter 6, The Beehive, the Bees, and the Honey, Chapter 7, Another supper at the Bastille, and Chapter 8, The General of the Order

Chapter 6, The Beehive, the Bees, and the Honey, Chapter 7, Another supper at the Bastille, and Chapter 8, The General of the Order Summary

Aramis and Moliere go to St. Mande's, where several writers are working at their craft. Aramis stops by and gives the men their invitations to the party. He asks if anyone wishes to go to Paris with him, and Moliere agrees. He stops to see Fouquet and tell him about a portrait of King Louis XIV that they have planned. Fouquet is pleased. Aramis asks him for a letter requesting the release of a prisoner named Seldon from the Bastille.

Chapter 7, Another supper at the Bastille

Aramis goes to the Bastille to have supper with Governor Baisemeaux. Aramis is very friendly and tells bawdy stories during dinner, and the Governor gets quite drunk. He asks the servant to close the window so he does not hear the sound of couriers, but Aramis says it is too hot. Soon a courier arrives, and Baisemeaux tries to ignore it and continue eating and drinking. However, Aramis gets him to eventually read the message.

The message regards the release of the prisoner Seldon. Baisemeaux says the man has been in prison ten years, so a few hours longer will not hurt. However, Aramis convinces him to release the prisoner immediately. While he is not looking, Aramis exchanges the release order for another.

Chapter 8, The General of the Order

Baisemeaux tells Aramis that he should wait to release the prisoner, since the prisoner will have nowhere to go. However, Aramis says he will take the prisoner wherever he wants to go. Baisemeaux orders Seldon's release, but Aramis tells him he must mean Marchiali. The Governor looks at the order again, and swears that it said Seldon. However, Aramis is able to convince him, even though Baisemeaux wants to wait to doublecheck the veracity of the order. Aramis signs another order that instructs Baisemeaux to follow the release order immediately. The Governor complies, and Aramis leaves with Marchiali, actually Philippe. They stop in the middle of the forest to talk over their plans.



Chapter 6, The Beehive, the Bees, and the Honey, Chapter 7, Another supper at the Bastille, and Chapter 8, The General of the Order Analysis

The warden of the Bastille, Governor Baisemeaux, is well acquainted with Aramis' prestigious position. This makes it all the easier for Aramis to bend the warden to his will. Aramis allows Baisemeaux to get quite drunk before putting his plan into action. When the courier, who Aramis has sent, arrives, Aramis insists that Baisemeaux see him immediately, and that he act on the orders immediately. Aramis switches the orders, which confuses Baisemeaux. He knows he has seen another name on the order, but Aramis insists that he must be wrong and the name was always Marchiali. While Baisemeaux makes a concerted effort to clarify what he has seen, he is no match for Aramis' will. Aramis gives the governor a way out by giving him an order requiring him to perform the release at once. Baisemeaux complies and the first part of Aramis' plan is complete. He has released Philippe, the prisoner imprisoned under the name, Marchiali, and they have escaped the Bastille.



Chapter 9, The Tempter, Chapter 10, Crown and Tiara, and Chapter 11, The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte

Chapter 9, The Tempter, Chapter 10, Crown and Tiara, and Chapter 11, The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte Summary

Aramis tells Philippe that the current King Louis XIV, his brother, is not doing a very good job ruling the country. Aramis suggests that Philippe would be a much better king, because he has his background to humble him. Aramis believes God wants him to use Philippe to replace Louis XIV. He tells Philippe, however, that it is his choice. He tells Philippe of a little-known fisherman's village called Poitou, where Philippe can go to live out his days in obscurity. He tells Philippe that he and his brother will switch places, and Louis XIV will be imprisoned in the Bastille. He tells Philippe that he can do great good in the world. Philippe says that his conscience will help him make the right decision. He asks Aramis to leave him alone for ten minutes so he can contemplate the best course of action.

Chapter 10, Crown and Tiara

Philippe returns and tells an eager Aramis that he is willing to go ahead with his plan and become the king of France. He asks Aramis what he will get out of Philippe's ascension to the throne, but Aramis elects not to answer at the moment.

Aramis tests Philippe, who proves that he has been studying the notes Aramis left him on the noblemen and women in the king's court. He tells Aramis what he has learned about Louise La Valliere, the woman that King Louis XIV is in love with. However, Raoul, the son of Athos, a former musketeer, is also in love with Louise. Philippe says he will do what he can to ensure Louise returns Raoul's love. Aramis indicates that he eventually wants to become pope and guide the spiritual lives of all men and women. He tells Philippe that Louis XIV will be removed from his bed while he sleeps, and Philippe will replace him.

Chapter 11, The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte

At Vaux, Fouquet is making sure everything is set for the king's arrival. Aramis shows Fouquet the portrait of Louis XIV that La Brun is finishing, and Fouquet is quite pleased. He receives word that the king is approaching. Aramis goes to his room, right above where the king will stay, to change clothes. Porthos has the room immediately next door to Aramis.



Chapter 9, The Tempter, Chapter 10, Crown and Tiara, and Chapter 11, The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte Analysis

Aramis' plan hinges on being able to convince Philippe that he will make a better king than his brother, King Louis XIV. However, Philippe has no way of determining if this is true, besides what Aramis says. Aramis could be trying to convince Philippe to replace a good king, just because he has a personal vendetta against Louis XIV. However, Philippe must decide immediately if he wishes to pursue the throne. Aramis gives him the choice of becoming king, or living free in a little-known village. Philippe chooses the most dangerous path, and decides to become king. He seems to be motivated by a wish to stand up for himself and govern the people of France justly and fairly. However, it is understandable that he may feel greedy for power and prestige after spending all of his life in captivity. Philippe promises to help Aramis once in his new position, as well as Aramis' friends like Raoul. His planned treatment of Raoul and Louise do suggest that Philippe will be a just king, at least initially. Aramis also reveals his ultimate motivation for putting Philippe on the throne. Aramis tells Philippe that he wishes to be pope, and rule over the church. Aramis professes his love and caring for Philippe, but it seems that in the end, he is primarily concerned with his own ambitions.



Chapter 12, The Wine of Melun, Chapter 13, Nectar and Ambrosia, and Chapter 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half

Chapter 12, The Wine of Melun, Chapter 13, Nectar and Ambrosia, and Chapter 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half Summary

King Louis XIV's party stops in Melun, however, the king is anxious to continue onto Vaux so he can see Louise la Valliere. D'Artagnan believes Aramis may be plotting to ruin Colbert, and while he would not be displeased with this plan, D'Artagnan wants to get to Vaux early so he can question Aramis. The king and D'Artagnan reach Vaux, where they are greeted by Fouquet.

Chapter 13, Nectar and Ambrosia

The rest of the king's entourage, including the two queens, arrive at Vaux. Fouquet has pulled out all the stops in order to impress the king. However, the king only gets jealous because his parties and his palace are not as grand as Fouquet's. King Louis XIV, for all his distaste of Fouquet, cannot turn his nose up at the delicious food served during the banquet. Once the meal is done, however, the king begins to sulk again. He goes to the garden to see Louise La Valliere and confess his love to her. The king goes to his bedchamber, but asks to see Colbert before he goes to sleep.

Chapter 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half

D'Artagnan goes to see Aramis in hope of discovering what he is plotting. He finds Porthos in Aramis' room, asleep in a chair. D'Artagnan cannot understand why Fouquet would throw such a lavish party and ruin his reputation with the king. D'Artagnan asks Aramis what he is hiding, but Aramis plays dumb. D'Artagnan says he believes Aramis is plotting against the king, but Aramis swears on their friendship that he is not. When D'Artagnan leaves, Philippe comes out of hiding. They eavesdrop on the king's room. Louis XIV ask Colbert how Fouquet has so much money, and Colbert shows him a report that says Fouquet borrowed thirteen million from the government and has not yet paid it back. Louis XIV says he will decide in the morning whether or not Fouquet should be arrested. Colbert leaves, and Philippe watches the king get ready for bed.



Chapter 12, The Wine of Melun, Chapter 13, Nectar and Ambrosia, and Chapter 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half Analysis

As first glance, King Louis XIV seems to be a disgruntled, dissatisfied man, used to getting his way. He is upset while the court is stopped at Melun because he cannot see his mistress, Louise la Valliere. The king is not used to not being able to have what he wants, and searches out someone to blame. D'Artagnan sees the king's anger, and uses this to ensure the king is upset with Colbert, his advisor, while he is pleased with D'Artagnan himself for coming up with a solution. The king arrives at Vaux in a timely manner, and is able to see his mistress. Louise is the former love of Raoul, son of Athos. However, she left him because she loves the king, although whether it is a true love or a love of power remains to be seen. The king also becomes upset with Fouquet, who has thrown a lavish party for him, too lavish, in fact. The king is angered because his affairs are not as fancy and detailed. When the king sees a reason to arrest Fouquet, he seriously considers it, even though Fouquet's crime is not that great. D'Artagnan also has an ulterior motive for arriving at Vaux early. He is not satisfied with the actions of Aramis, and wants to find out more about what his friend is obviously plotting. However, Aramis will not reveal anything, and swears he is not plotting. D'Artagnan is not satisfied completely, but cannot argue with his friend.



Chapter 15, Colbert, Chapter 16, Jealousy, and Chapter 17, High Treason

Chapter 15, Colbert, Chapter 16, Jealousy, and Chapter 17, High Treason Summary

The next day, the celebration continues at Vaux. During a game of cards, King Louis XIV manages to win money while Fouquet loses, making the king very happy. The king sneaks away to see Louise La Valliere again. Louis tells her the plans to arrest Fouquet for stealing money from the government. Louise says that it is in incredibly bad taste to arrest Fouquet in his own house. The group hears others coming, and Louise flees. Seeing his chance, Colbert drops a paper and tells the king that Louise must have left it behind. The king picks it up as several torchbearers enter the clearing.

Chapter 16, Jealousy

Louis XIV reads the paper, which is supposedly a letter from Fouquet to Louise, telling her how much he loves her. This angers Louis XIV, who assumes that Louise is having an affair with Fouquet and that is why she defended him. Fouquet asks why the king is upset, but Louis will not say anything and returns to the palace. Fouquet believes the king has fought with Louise. The king sends for D'Artagnan.

When D'Artagnan arrives, King Louis XIV orders him to arrest Fouquet. He requests a written order, in case the king changes his mind later. The king tells D'Artagnan to arrest Fouquet without alarming the other members of the household. D'Artagnan says that is a near impossible task, since there are so many people present and Fouquet is the master of the palace. The king asks D'Artagnan to guard Fouquet until the morning.

Chapter 17, High Treason

The king falls asleep, and in the middle of the night thinks he has a dream that his bed is sinking and his bedroom, called the chamber of Morpheus, has begun to disappear. He realizes he is awake when two masked, armed men appear before him. The men take him to the Bastille. Aramis, one of the masked men, sends for Governor Baisemeaux and tells him that Seldon was the prisoner to be released, not Marchiali. He says he has brought Marchiali back and shows Baisemeaux the original release order. Aramis convinces him to make the switch. Aramis tells the warden that Marchiali pretended to be the king of France while free, and is probably still deluded. Aramis and Porthos, the other masked man, return to Vaux.



Chapter 15, Colbert, Chapter 16, Jealousy, and Chapter 17, High Treason Analysis

King Louis XIV finds another reason to arrest Fouquet when he finds a note to Louise that is supposedly from the advisor, although it is not a very valid one. The king is taking revenge against Fouquet for unjust reasons. The king is jealous of Fouquet, because he suspects Fouquet is having an affair with Louise, and because Fouquet has an elaborate home and can throw lavish parties. The king plans on using the missing money from the treasury as a reason to arrest him. Louise and D'Artagnan both try to reason with the king, and inform him that arresting Fouquet in his own home, during a party for the king, will make the king look very bad. The king promises to think on his decision. This shows that, while Louis XIV may be a rash and vindictive man, he is still able to reconsider courses of action to determine what is best. It is still hard to determine what the people of France think of their king, or whether he is as bad as Aramis would lead Philippe to believe. Aramis begins the second part of his plan, switching Philippe with Louis XIV. He again uses Baisemeaux for his own means, getting the warden to lock up the king, and convincing him that the rantings that are soon to be coming are because he is delusional. Aramis' plan looks like it is successful.



Chapter 18, A Night at the Bastille, Chapter 19, The Shadow of M. Fouquet, Chapter 20, The Morning

Chapter 18, A Night at the Bastille, Chapter 19, The Shadow of M. Fouquet, Chapter 20, The Morning Summary

King Louis XIV comes to terms with his situation when he sees a giant rat. He realizes he is a prisoner in the Bastille, and believes it is Fouquet's fault. He shouts for the guards and the governor, but the guards only tell him to be quiet. When a guard comes in to feed him, Louis demands again to see Governour Baisemeaux, but the guard laughs at how mad the prisoner has become. Louis XIV is very angry at his situation, and has become a madman. Baisemeaux, hearing the noise, is very annoyed as he sits down to his own meal.

Chapter 19, The Shadow of M. Fouquet

Back at Vaux, D'Artagnan debates how he can arrest Fouquet in the most diplomatic manner. He visits Fouquet. D'Artagnan ignores Fouquet's hints that he wants to go to bed, and asks if he can spend the night in his room. Fouquet realizes that something is up, and asks if D'Artagnan has come from the king. D'Artagnan says yes.

Fouquet continues to draw information out of D'Artagnan. He realizes that he is to be arrested tomorrow after D'Artagnan admits he will not be arrested this evening. He wants to speak with Aramis, but D'Artagnan will not allow him to speak to anyone. However, D'Artagnan agrees to get Aramis if Fouquet agrees not to try and escape while he is gone. Fouquet opens several hidden compartments and burns some incriminating papers. When D'Artagnan returns, he realizes what Fouquet has done, but does not push the issue. D'Artagnan says that he was unable to find Aramis.

Chapter 20, The Morning

Philippe slips into the king's bed, feeling guilty. Aramis goes to find D'Artagnan and prevent his morning meeting with the king. D'Artagnan goes to the king's room, and is shocked to see Aramis there. D'Artagnan insists that he has a morning meeting, but the king calls out that he does not wish to be disturbed. Aramis gives D'Artagnan an order issuing the release of Fouquet. D'Artagnan believes that is why Aramis came to see the king. The two men go to see Fouquet.



Chapter 18, A Night at the Bastille, Chapter 19, The Shadow of M. Fouquet, Chapter 20, The Morning Analysis

King Louis XIV realizes he is not dreaming and is really locked in the Bastille. As Aramis predicted, the king begins to rant and demand to be let free. The guards, pre-warned of this madness, do their best to ignore it. The narrator makes a point to say how quickly Louis XIV becomes a madman in prison, highlighting the king's negative personality attributes as evidence why Philippe should become king. At Vaux, D'Artagnan has been ordered to stay with Fouquet while the king decides if he is to be arrested or not. This act seems foolhardy, since the king is notifying Fouquet that he is on his bad side. Fouquet is warned of the king's anger, and is therefore able to take an opportunity to get rid of any documents that would condemn him. It is unclear if the king realizes this was a consequence of his actions. However, when D'Artagnan leaves, it is clear he knows he is giving Fouquet a chance to destroy evidence. D'Artagnan believes Fouquet is a good, innocent man, and while he will not help him outright, will do what he can to assist the man through passive means. When D'Artagnan sees Aramis with the king, he is shocked. He cannot believe Aramis is so close to the king, when D'Artagnan has never seen the two of them together. D'Artagnan knows that his friend is up to something, but chooses not to believe ill of him.



Chapter 21, The King's Friend, Chapter 22, Showing how orders were respected at the Bastille, and Chapter 23, The King's Gratitude

Chapter 21, The King's Friend, Chapter 22, Showing how orders were respected at the Bastille, and Chapter 23, The King's Gratitude Summary

Fouquet is embarrassed to learn that Aramis intervened with King Louis XIV to prevent his arrest. D'Artagnan asks Aramis how he became such good friends with the king so quickly. However, Aramis says he has met with the king secretly many times before. D'Artagnan believes him, and is embarrassed he has never known this. Aramis gets D'Artagnan to leave, and tells Fouquet that the king wanted to arrest him for stealing money from the treasury and his love for Louise de Valliere, the king's mistress. Aramis reveals the entire plot to Fouquet. However, Fouquet is horrified at his actions, and that Aramis had the audacity to make the switch in his home. Fouquet tells Aramis he has four hours to get out of Vaux and out of France. He gives Aramis and Porthos his permission to go to his fortress at Belle-Isle. Aramis leaves Philippe behind, but takes Porthos. They see D'Artagnan on the way out, and Aramis tells him they are on a mission.

Chapter 22, Showing how orders were respected at the Bastille

Fouquet goes to the Bastille. When Fouquet arrives at the Bastille, the guards do not want to listen to him. He causes a ruckus until Governor Baisemeaux comes out. He refuses to release the prisoner without an order from the king. The governor eventually takes him to the cell, where Fouquet can hear Louis XIV crying out. Fouquet takes the key to the cell.

Chapter 23, The King's Gratitude

When Fouquet enters the cell, the king believes he is there to assassinate him. However, Fouquet says he is there to free the king, and he tells Louis XIV how the switch was done. Louis does not want to believe he has a twin brother, and plans to kill his brother, Aramis, and Porthos. Fouquet begs for forgiveness on Aramis and Porthos' behalf. Louis XIV refuses to pardon them. Fouquet gives Baisemeaux an order to release the king, signed by the king, confusing Baisemeaux even more.



Chapter 21, The King's Friend, Chapter 22, Showing how orders were respected at the Bastille, and Chapter 23, The King's Gratitude Analysis

D'Artagnan tries to discover why King Louis XIV was with Aramis, even though the two had not been close as far as he knew. Aramis uses D'Artagnan's pride against him, and convinces him that the king and Aramis have met many times in secrecy. D'Artagnan is too embarrassed to ever admit to someone else that he did not know this. When Aramis speaks with Fouquet, he makes a fatal mistake. Aramis lets his pride get the better of him, and he cannot help telling his friend how he has saved him. He details his plan to switch kings, all the while assuming Fouquet will be impressed and happy that he was able to get away without being charged. However, Fouquet is a noble man, and is therefore horrified at his friend's actions. Aramis believes that Fouquet should be grateful, and proud to be part of the conspiracy. Fouquet, instead, warns Aramis to get out of France as quickly as possible, because he intends to free the king. Aramis warns him that doing so will probably end badly for him, since the king has a vendetta against Fouquet. The real king, Louis XIV, believes that Fouquet is the one who had him imprisoned, showing how much he hates his advisor. Fouquet, though, cannot be disloyal to his sovereign. Aramis realizes he has made a critical mistake and flees with Porthos. He believes it will be too much trouble to extricate Philippe as well, so leaves the false king there to be discovered and arrested again.



Chapter 24, The False King, Chapter 25, In Which Porthos thinks he is pursuing a dukedom, and Chapter 26, The Last Adieus

Chapter 24, The False King, Chapter 25, In Which Porthos thinks he is pursuing a dukedom, and Chapter 26, The Last Adieus Summary

Philippe keeps expecting Aramis to come to him, but continues acting like the king in his absence. His mother, Anne of Austria, comes to see him with other members of the court. D'Artagnan arrives, and Philippe asks where Aramis is. D'Artagnan is confused, because he believes the king has sent Aramis on a mission. Anne says something to Philippe in Spanish, which he does not understand. However, the real Louis XIV arrives at that moment with Fouquet. Everyone is shocked. D'Artagnan is eventually moved to action and arrests Philippe. Philippe stares at his mother and brother, trying to make them feel guilt for what they have done to him. Colbert gives D'Artagnan an order to cover Philippe's head with an iron mask and take him to the island of St. Marguerite. D'Artagnan admits to Fouquet that Philippe probably would have made a better king than his brother.

Chapter 25, In Which Porthos thinks he is pursuing a dukedom

Aramis and Porthos flee from Vaux. Porthos believes he is getting a dukedom for his part in the plot. As they travel, they stop to switch their horses for fresh ones. However, they reach a post where there is no horses available. Aramis believes the king is behind it, but then remembers their friend and fellow musketeer, Athos, lives nearby. They travel to his house, where Athos lives with his son, Raoul. Athos and Raoul are talking about Louis XIV and his mistress, Louise de Valliere, whom Raoul still loves. (Chapter 26, The Last Adieus) Aramis and Porthos are admitted to Athos' home. Porthos still does not realize the dire position they are in. Aramis tells Athos the whole story in private, and believes he can work with his allies in Spain to fix the situation. He invites Athos to join them, but Athos refuses and gives them horses. They say their goodbyes, and Athos tells Raoul he believes it is the last time he will see his two old friends. Raoul agrees, and the men have a moment of regret. Athos' friend, the Duke de Beaufort, comes to visit.



Chapter 24, The False King, Chapter 25, In Which Porthos thinks he is pursuing a dukedom, and Chapter 26, The Last Adieus Analysis

Philippe, now left high and dry by Aramis, must fend for himself in his masquerade as the king of France. He is able to muddle through for some time, but his reign is cut very short when Fouquet returns with the real king, Louis XIV. The real king is shocked to see his twin brother, since he knew nothing about his brother's imprisonment. Nevertheless, he is not going to relinquish his throne, and he knows his brother is one of the ones responsible for kidnapping him. D'Artagnan, still faithful to his duty and the true king, arrests Philippe. However, he is able to admit to Fouquet that Philippe probably would have been a better king. This again shows that a sense of honor is most important to D'Artagnan, and he believes it is more important to do what is honorable than what may be best for the country. Aramis and Porthos are fleeing from the king's reach. Aramis has not told Porthos the reason for their flight, and Porthos is content to trust Aramis and go along with him. However, when they reach the home of Athos, Aramis immediately tells Athos what has happened. It seems Aramis does not have as much faith in Porthos as his other friends. He seems to believe that Porthos will leave him if he knows the truth about the plot being discovered.



Chapter 27, M. de Beaufort, Chapter 28, Preparations for Departure, and Chapter 29, Planchet's Inventory

Chapter 27, M. de Beaufort, Chapter 28, Preparations for Departure, and Chapter 29, Planchet's Inventory Summary

The Duke de Beaufort asks to speak with Athos privately, but lets Raoul join in. He tells them he is on his way to Africa to fight the Arabs, and sends Raoul for wine. Beaufort asks Athos about Raoul's future, and they discuss Louis La Valliere. Athos says he wants Raoul to stay with him. Raoul returns with Grimaud, Athos' servant. They drink the wine, and Raoul tells Beaufort that he wishes to go to Africa with him. Athos is upset, but will not stand in his son's way. Beaufort says he will take care of Raoul for Athos, and treat him as his own son. Beaufort makes arrangements to meet Athos in Paris and leaves. Raoul says he knows he is going to die soon, and he might as well do something with himself. Athos says Raoul is free to make his own decision.

Chapter 28, Preparations for Departure

Raoul and Athos prepare for Raoul's departure to Africa. Athos and Raoul head to Paris to meet with Beaufort. Raoul is apprehensive about going to the capital city, since so much there reminds him of the love he has for Louise de Valliere.

In Paris, Athos and Raoul go to see Monsieur de Guiche, one of Raoul's friends. Raoul runs into a friend of Louise de Valliere, Mademoiselle de Montalais. She takes him to her apartment so they can talk, and sends word to de Guiche that Raoul is there. They talk about Raoul's love for Louise. The king's younger brother's wife walks into the room through a secret door, as well as de Guiche. The two are apparently having an affair, and Raoul swears to keep this a secret. Raoul talks with de Guiche about his trip to France. Raoul and Athos visit Planchet, D'Artagnan's former valet, to find D'Artagnan.

Chapter 29, Planchet's Inventory

Athos and Raoul go to see Planchet at his grocery store. He reluctantly tells them that D'Artagnan did visit the store to look at a map. Athos and Raoul examine the map and determine D'Artagnan is going to Cannes.



Chapter 27, M. de Beaufort, Chapter 28, Preparations for Departure, and Chapter 29, Planchet's Inventory Analysis

Raoul is heartbroken over the loss of Louise la Valliere, who left him to become the mistress of King Louis XIV. Raoul cannot find anything else to live for, and cannot get his mind off of Louise. He decides that the best course of action is to die in combat in Africa, rather than at home of a broken heart. Athos does not want to see his son leave, for the two are very close. However, Athos realizes that his son is a grown man and can make his own choices. Raoul is almost deterred by the thought of serving the king, since he hates Louis XIV for taking the woman he loves. However, he plans to serve God instead, allowing him to fight in Africa with a clear conscience. While in Paris, Raoul learns that the king's younger brother's wife is having an affair with his friend, Monsieur de Guiche. The prevalence of affairs in the court indicates that it is a common occurrence, and practically an accepted practice. For nobility, marriage is a tool used to gain power, and those from noble families do not necessarily marry those that they love. This practice would heighten the amount of affairs conducted among members of the court, as evidenced here.



Chapter 30, The Inventory of M. de Beaufort, Chapter 31, The Silver Dish, and Chapter 32, Captives and Jailers

Chapter 30, The Inventory of M. de Beaufort, Chapter 31, The Silver Dish, and Chapter 32, Captives and Jailers Summary

Athos and Raoul go to see Monsieur de Beaufort, who is inventorying his belongings. He is selling as much as possible to finance the trip to Africa. He gives Raoul a commission, and sends him on ahead to recruit soldiers. Athos and Raoul leave, believing the expedition is mostly a vanity project for the duke.

Chapter 31, The Silver Dish

Athos and Raoul reach Toulon, but they have not heard anything about D'Artagnan and believe he is traveling in disguise. Raoul tries to assemble a fleet of ships, but a fisherman says his ship needs repairs. Athos gets him to admit a man came in to hire a boat to take him to the island of St. Honorat. The man had a huge case with him, but halfway to the island, he asked to go to St. Marguerite. The fisherman disagreed, but the man drew his sword. The case opened, and a man with his head covered by a black helmet came out and threatened the fisherman, who jumped overboard. Athos and Raoul believe the man with the case was D'Artagnan, and go to St. Marguerite.

Athos and Raoul discover a fort on the island, but no one seems to be around. They see a guard come from serving dinner to a prisoner. Someone shouts and throws an inscribed plate out the window, it is from Philippe and describes his imprisonment. A guard fires at Athos and Raoul, but D'Artagnan orders the firing to halt. D'Artagnan erases the inscription before taking them to see the governor.

Chapter 32, Captives and Jailers

Athos reveals he knows the story behind Philippe's imprisonment. Athos tells D'Artagnan that Raoul is leaving. D'Artagnan tries to help, and tells Raoul that Louise la Valliere was following her heart when she became Louis XIV's mistress. He tells Raoul to see her once more, because he will realize she will never be his. Raoul prefers to live with the hope of loving her one day. He shows D'Artagnan a letter for Louise, which says instead of cursing her, he loves her, and must die. D'Artagnan promises to deliver it after Raoul is dead. On the way back, they pass Philippe, who is clothed in black and wears a iron mask.



Chapter 30, The Inventory of M. de Beaufort, Chapter 31, The Silver Dish, and Chapter 32, Captives and Jailers Analysis

Athos and Raoul are still on the trail of D'Artagnan, who is likely on some mission from King Louis XIV. The father and son hear of strange occurrences during their pursuit. They learn about a man who used a boat to get to St. Marguerite, carrying a long black case. The man clearly scared the fishermen who were taking him to the island. The fishermen were prompted to attack, but the man in the case, most likely Philippe, came out to assist D'Artagnan. Athos and Raoul go to the island of St. Marguerite to find D'Artagnan. They are almost killed when Philippe tries to send them a message about his imprisonment. D'Artagnan saves them, and protects them from the governor of the isle. Athos reveals he knows all about Philippe, but he does not intend to do anything about it. He is much more concerned with the eminent departure of his son. D'Artagnan sees how this affects his friend. He tries to console Raoul and convince him that he will eventually get over Louise la Valliere. However, Raoul will not hear of it, and would rather have the hope of having her than to see her and hate her. He gives D'Artagnan a letter for Louise, one that will let her know exactly how distraught he is over the loss of her.



Chapter 33, Promises, Chapter 34, Among Women, and Chapter 35, The Last Supper

Chapter 33, Promises, Chapter 34, Among Women, and Chapter 35, The Last Supper Summary

King Louis XIV orders D'Artagnan back to Paris, and he leaves St. Marguerite with Athos and Raoul. Athos and Raoul spend his last evening home talking and Athos gives his son military advice. Grimaud finds them, and Athos sends the servant with Raoul. Athos watches Raoul's ship depart.

Chapter 34, Among Women

D'Artagnan arrives back in Paris and learns that Colbert is doing well, but Fouquet is sick. King Louis XIV has been accommodating to Fouquet, but will not let him out of his sight. He is also getting along very well with Louise la Valliere, and D'Artagnan plans to talk with her. Louise is sitting with other women of the court, who ask who is going to Africa. D'Artagnan mentions Raoul's name, and Louise goes pale. One of Louise's friends, Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente, pushes the issue, saying all the men who have gone to Africa are those who are unlucky in love back home. Mademoiselle de Montalais comes to her defense, but de Tonnay-Charente accuses Louise of killing Raoul if he dies in Africa.

D'Artagnan takes Louise la Valliere for a private walk, and tells her that what he came to say was exactly what Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente said to her. Louise is upset, and leaves. King Louis XIV returns and spots D'Artagnan. The king tells D'Artagnan to place a guard at the door of his advisers, mainly Fouquet, when they get to Nantes. A clerk gives D'Artagnan a request for money from Fouquet.

Chapter 35, The Last Supper

D'Artagnan comes, and Fouquet thinks he is getting arrested. D'Artagnan says he has only come to request money. Fouquet's friends suggest he flee the country, but Fouquet wants to stay in France, near his fortress, Belle-Isle. A courier comes to the door, saying the king has taken the last of Fouquet's money to prepare for the trip to Nantes. Fouquet's friends give him jewelry so he has some money.



Chapter 33, Promises, Chapter 34, Among Women, and Chapter 35, The Last Supper Analysis

Athos and Raoul have their own heart-breaking moment, when Raoul leaves for Africa. Although Raoul cannot bear to live without Louise la Valliere, it seems that his trip to Africa will only make his emotions more turbulent, as he will also miss his father. Athos, for his part, has only had his son in his life for so long. It is clear that he will suffer without him. Louise does believe she loves the king, Louis XIV. However, when the other ladies at court and D'Artagnan chide her for her harsh treatment of Raoul, she is clearly affected. It appears that Louise is a simple, good-hearted girl, who became wrapped up in the mystique of being the king's lover. She obviously still has feelings for Raoul, and will be forced to live with her choice if he is killed in Africa. King Louis XIV is also continuing his torture of Fouquet. The king cannot act outright too soon against Fouquet, since Fouquet has rescued him from the Bastille. Instead, the king prefers to chip away at Fouquet's pride and sanity. Louis XIV takes his money away, little by little, and sends D'Artagnan on simple missions to make Fouquet think he is being arrested. Fouquet still tries to look on the bright side and act nobly. He loves his country and would rather stay in France than flee, as his friends recommend.



Chapter 36, In the Carriage of M. Colbert, Chapter, 37, The Two Lighters, and Chapter 38, Friendly Advice

Chapter 36, In the Carriage of M. Colbert, Chapter, 37, The Two Lighters, and Chapter 38, Friendly Advice Summary

D'Artagnan rides at the head of the group going to Nantes. He sees Colbert get in a carriage with two women, the Madame Vanel, his mistress, and Madame de Chevreuse. After Madame Vanel is left at her husband's home, Madame de Chevreuse talks to Colbert about her alliance with him. The papers that incriminated Fouquet in the theft from the treasury initially came from Madame de Chevreuse. Anne of Austria will not come to Fouquet's defense, since he knows about Philippe, and she is furious at Aramis and wants him killed. Colbert says he cannot promise to make it happen.

Chapter 37, The Two Lighters

Fouquet is traveling to Nantes. He hires a boat to row him across the river, and is surprised to see a second boat following them. They realize that Colbert is on the boat, and has many armed men with him. Fouquet gets the rowers to row close to shore and pretends to disembark. Colbert also stops and lets several men off the boat. The boats continue down the river and eventually reach Nantes.

Fouquet asks Colbert while he did not join him or pass him, and Colbert says it was out of respect. Fouquet goes to Nantes, where D'Artagnan asks to speak with him when he arrives.

Chapter 38, Friendly Advice

Fouquet asks if it is now time for him to be arrested, but D'Artagnan says he will announce it loudly when that time comes. Fouquet tells D'Artagnan about the incident with the boats. D'Artagnan tells Fouquet that King Louis XIV forbids anyone from leaving Nantes without his permission, but only once the king has arrived. D'Artagnan implies that Fouquet should leave immediately for his fortress at Belle-Isle. Fouquet tries to flee but the king arrives too quickly. D'Artagnan comes back to Fouquet, saying the king wanted to check in on his health. D'Artagnan reminds him that no one can leave now that the king is in Nantes.



Chapter 36, In the Carriage of M. Colbert, Chapter, 37, The Two Lighters, and Chapter 38, Friendly Advice Analysis

D'Artagnan sees that Colbert has a mistress, and has made an alliance with another woman, Madame de Chevreuse, in the court. This gives a glimpse into the true power of the monarchy, and how alliances are made. Through the web of friends and lovers, political allies are made. Madame de Chevreuse, who is Anne of Austria's friend, tries to bend Colbert to her will. The court is all going to Nantes, and Fouquet hopes to gain favor with the king by arriving there first. He hires a boat to take him, but realizes he is being followed by Colbert. He tricks Colbert into disembarking some armed men. This shows Fouquet that the king does not trust him, and he is being watched. Fouquet talks with D'Artagnan, who he knows will speak freely with him. D'Artagnan hints that Fouquet can escape before the king arrives, but it is too late. D'Artagnan shows that he is not afraid to look for loopholes in the king's orders, if it can help out an innocent man. However, his sense of duty demands that he follow the king's orders to the letter of the law. This sets up a future conflict for D'Artagnan, who may not be able to act the same way when his friends are in danger.



Chapter 39, How King Louis XIV played his little part, Chapter 40, The White Horse and the Black Horse, and Chapter 41, In Which the Squirrel Falls— In Which the Adder Flies

Chapter 39, How King Louis XIV played his little part, Chapter 40, The White Horse and the Black Horse, and Chapter 41, In Which the Squirrel Falls— In Which the Adder Flies Summary

Fouquet goes to see King Louis XIV. A man gives him a letter that says a white horse is prepared to help him escape. Fouquet reads the note while the king is talking to D'Artagnan, then destroys it. Fouquet tries to defend himself to the king. When he leaves, D'Artagnan is ordered to follow him. King Louis XIV tells D'Artagnan to arrest Fouquet, and transport him in a special carriage that will prevent him from throwing notes out the window. D'Artagnan admits to trying to save Fouquet, but promises to carry out the king's orders.

Chapter 40, The White Horse and the Black Horse

As D'Artagnan continues to Fouquet's lodgings, he notices a white horse in the distance, traveling very fast. He does not think this is odd until he finds a fragment of the note from Gourville that outlines Fouquet's escape plan. D'Artagnan gets his horse and follows Fouquet. Fouquet realizes he is being followed. D'Artagnan's horse starts to show signs of fatigue, while Fouquet's horse is still relatively fresh.

D'Artagnan pulls out his firearm and orders Fouquet to stop. Fouquet continues riding, saying he would rather be shot. D'Artagnan's horse falls down dead, and he is forced to pursue Fouquet on foot. Fouquet's horse also begins to falter, and D'Artagnan is able to catch him and arrest him. Fouquet throws away his guns, and waits by D'Artagnan, who has fainted. The two men try to ride the white horse back to Nantes, but it also dies and they have to walk back.

Chapter 41, In Which the Squirrel Falls— In Which the Adder Flies

D'Artagnan tells the king about the arrest. Colbert and D'Artagnan leave, and Colbert tells D'Artagnan he acted towards Fouquet because the man was holding him back from greatness. Fouquet is going to the Bastille, and the king orders D'Artagnan to take



possession of Belle-Isle. Colbert tells D'Artagnan he will be promoted for this, but will have to kill Aramis and Porthos. D'Artagnan is determined not to hurt his friends.

Chapter 39, How King Louis XIV played his little part, Chapter 40, The White Horse and the Black Horse, and Chapter 41, In Which the Squirrel Falls— In Which the Adder Flies Analysis

Fouquet's friends are trying to help him escape, but they do not take D'Artagnan into account. Fouquet manages to get to the horse and leave Nantes, but he is seen by D'Artagnan, who has just been ordered to arrest Fouquet. When D'Artagnan realizes that Fouquet is escaping, his sense of duty requires him to give chase. D'Artagnan does not give Fouquet any leeway, even though he hoped for the man to escape. When he eventually catches Fouquet, practically killing himself in the process, he ends up fainting. However, Fouquet also has an overdeveloped sense of honor, and waits near D'Artagnan until he recovers. The two men are very alike in this regard; they cannot bring themselves to do anything that goes against their sense of honor and duty. Back at Nantes, the king is pleased that Fouquet is finally arrested. D'Artagnan will now face one of the biggest tests of his career, as the king has ordered him to attack Belle-Isle and arrest his friends. D'Artagnan knows that Aramis and Porthos, two of his dearest friends, have fled there after their plot to switch kings was discovered. D'Artagnan will have to compromise his attachment to his friends because of his will to follow the king's orders to the letter.



Chapter 42, Belle-Isle-En-Mer, Chapter 43, The Explanations of Aramis, Chapter 44, Result of the Ideas of the King and the Ideas of D'Artagnan, and Chapter 45, The Ancestors of Porthos

Chapter 42, Belle-Isle-En-Mer, Chapter 43, The Explanations of Aramis, Chapter 44, Result of the Ideas of the King and the Ideas of D'Artagnan, and Chapter 45, The Ancestors of Porthos Summary

Aramis and Porthos are at Belle-Isle, disturbed to learn all the fishing boats have disappeared. Aramis is angry that Porthos sent the last two boats to find the others. Porthos wants to return to France, and Aramis says they could have if he had not sent out the last two boats. Aramis has told Porthos that they are at the fortress to hold it against a false king who wants to sell the island to England. A fleet appears, bearing the royal colors of France. Aramis asks Porthos to sound the alarm for battle, and tells him that the fleet belongs to the false king of France. That night, one of the fishermen comes to see Aramis, and tells him that all the fishing boats have been captured by the royal fleet, which is under D'Artagnan's command. Aramis asks the fisherman to tell D'Artagnan to come to the island.

Chapter 43, The Explanations of Aramis

Aramis admits to Porthos that he has been lying for him, but says it is for his own good. He says he has been working for the false king, which upsets Porthos.

Porthos is shocked to learn they may have to defend the isle against D'Artagnan. The three men makes plans, Aramis hoping to stay and fight. D'Artagnan comes up with an idea and heads back to the ship. He tells the men on his ship that Aramis and Porthos will come aboard for a meeting. An officer, however, gives him an order from King Louis XIV prohibiting such meetings.

Chapter 44, Result of the Ideas of the King and the Ideas of D'Artagnan

He decides to resign, so the fleet has to return to Nantes with him. An officer hands him another order that makes D'Artagnan a prisoner if he tries to resign. D'Artagnan allows himself to be taken prisoner.

Chapter 45, The Ancestors of Porthos



In his family, Porthos tells Aramis, the men usually die on the day their legs feel weak, and he feels tired today. The fighting begins, and Porthos and Aramis lead the charge.

Chapter 42, Belle-Isle-En-Mer, Chapter 43, The Explanations of Aramis, Chapter 44, Result of the Ideas of the King and the Ideas of D'Artagnan, and Chapter 45, The Ancestors of Porthos Analysis

Aramis and Porthos are first tipped off the the possible attack of Belle-Isle when they learn the fishing boats are missing and have not returned to harbor. Aramis' inability to tell Porthos the truth about why they are there only hurts them, since Porthos suspects nothing is wrong with sending out the last two boats to find the others. Porthos seems always ready to believe with Aramis says without question, even when Aramis pretends the royal fleet coming towards them belongs to the false king. It is unclear how much of the original plot to switch kings was actually relayed to Porthos. When the attack is about to begin, Porthos finally learns the truth. However, he is not disturbed by Aramis' lie, only assuming his friend had not told him the truth for his own good. D'Artagnan comes to speak with his friends, and it is clear that his loyalty lies with them, not with the king. He tries to foil the attack by first ordering a meeting with Aramis and Porthos, and then by resigning as captain of the musketeers. However, Louis XIV has predicted that D'Artagnan would be more loyal to his friends than to the crown, and has issued orders to combat D'Artagnan's machinations. D'Artagnan allows himself to be taken prison, while back at the island, Aramis and Porthos prepare to fight with some of the servants. Porthos begins to feel his legs getting weak, a sign in his family that a person is about to die.



Chapter 46, The Son of Biscarrat, Chapter 47, The Grotto of Locmaria, Chapter 48, The Grotto, and Chapter 49, A Homeric Song

Chapter 46, The Son of Biscarrat, Chapter 47, The Grotto of Locmaria, Chapter 48, The Grotto, and Chapter 49, A Homeric Song Summary

Aramis and Porthos question their prisoner, plying the man with wine. The prisoner tells them that they are to be killed during the fighting, or hanged afterwards if taken alive. He says he is the son of Biscarrat, a man who attacked the musketeers on the first day of their friendship, when they met D'Artagnan. Aramis remembers Biscarrat, and says they did not wound him. Aramis and Porthos are pleased to meet their prisoner, and Aramis hopes to put their new friendship to use. The battle begins anew. Aramis releases Biscarrat, and he and Porthos make for the grotto of Locmaria and hope to escape.

Chapter 47, The Grotto of Locmari

Aramis and Porthos go to the grotto. At the entrance, Porthos' legs again feel weak. Servants help them get the boat ready to flee, but a pack of dogs chasing a fox enters the grotto. The king's guards are hunting. Aramis orders the dogs killed, but they still have to deal with the men. Porthos asks what they should do if they see Biscarrat, and Aramis says to shoot him first, since he can recognize them.

Chapter 48, The Grotto

Biscarrat and his hunting companions stop at the grotto. Biscarrat says he will go into the grotto alone to investigate. When he enters, one of the servants holds a gun to him while another tries to cut his throat. Porthos stops him, and Aramis grabs Biscarrat and tells him to be quiet. Biscarrat says he will not tell his companions what is in the grotto. He tries to stop them from entering, but his companions will not listen. Aramis and Porthos are forced to attack. One of the men tries to kill him, but dies before he can. Biscarrat tells the captain of the men that two of the men in the grotto are famous musketeers. The soldiers are shocked to learn that it is Porthos and Aramis, and Biscarrat pleads with the captain to let them go. The captain refuses, and the men prepare to enter the grotto. Biscarrat says he will lead them, and refuses to take his sword.

Chapter 49, A Homeric Song



Athos and Porthos cannot escape because of the attacks. Several men, led by Biscarrat, enter the cave, and Aramis signals Porthos to strike the men with an iron bar. Biscarrat dies first, and Porthos is able to put down all of the remaining men in the first attack. The captain comes into the grotto, leading the some of the men. Porthos strangles the captain, who drops his torch. The men panic and begin shooting as the rest of the men enter the cavern.

Chapter 46, The Son of Biscarrat, Chapter 47, The Grotto of Locmaria, Chapter 48, The Grotto, and Chapter 49, A Homeric Song Analysis

By chance, Aramis and Porthos capture the son of a man they once knew, Biscarrat. His father, also called Biscarrat, fought with Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan on the day the musketeers met, recounted in Dumas' novel "The Three Musketeers." Aramis, always the plotter, sees he can use this connection to stir up feelings of loyalty in Biscarrat. They give Biscarrat plenty of alcohol to gain information from him. He knows that having a spy on the other side would be greatly valuable. When Aramis and Porthos hide in the grotto, however, Aramis shows that he views Biscarrat as disposable, someone to use and then get rid of when their use is over. He commands Porthos to kill Biscarrat first. However, Porthos feels for the boy and cannot comply with Aramis' order. The two former musketeers use Biscarrat again to try and deter the other men from entering the cavern, but the ploy does not work. However, Aramis and Porthos are able to put down most of the men who have entered. Biscarrat feels he has betrayed his fellow musketeers and caused their deaths by helping Aramis and Porthos. He feels he is no longer worthy to leave, and therefore leads a group into the grotto so he will be the first killed. This again shows the sense of honor that men at the time period have, and how they will comply with it even if it leads them to death.



Chapter 50, The Death of a Titan, Chapter 51, The Epitaph of Porthos, Chapter 52, The Round of M. de Gesvres, and Chapter 53, King Louis XIV

Chapter 50, The Death of a Titan, Chapter 51, The Epitaph of Porthos, Chapter 52, The Round of M. de Gesvres, and Chapter 53, King Louis XIV Summary

Aramis shows Porthos a gunpowder barrel he has rigged with a fuse. Aramis prepares the boat to leave, as Porthos is meant to hurl the barrel towards the men. They light the fuse, and Porthos throws the barrel. Porthos runs to the boat, but his legs fail him and rocks begin to fall from the ceiling, crushing Porthos. Aramis and a few of the servants try to free him, but the rocks pin him to the ground and keep crushing him. Porthos eventually dies.

Chapter 51, The Epitaph of Porthos

Aramis is greatly saddened by his friend Porthos' death. He gets in the boat as the men row towards Spain. They are pursued. The ship keeps coming, and Aramis tells the men to stop rowing. He surrenders, after ensuring the servants' lives will be spared. Aramis shows the captain a ring, as proof of his identity, and the captain follows his orders. Aramis spends the night crying for his friend on deck, and the narrator says that they are probably the first tears that Aramis ever shed.

Chapter 52, The Round of M. de Gesvres

D'Artagnan goes back to Nantes as a prisoner.

D'Artagnan goes to find Colbert, who is with the king. D'Artagnan sends a message to the king that he is resigning, and the king accepts. He goes to the stable, planning to leave for Belle-Isle. De Gesvres comes to tell him the king wants to speak with him.

Chapter 53, King Louis XIV

D'Artagnan is brought in to see the king. The king wants D'Artagnan to remind him of his orders at Belle-Isle. D'Artagnan says it was not right for the king to give differing orders to his men and not reveal them to D'Artagnan. The king says he was not sure of D'Artagnan's faithfulness. He says he found D'Artagnan was not able to fight the king's enemies, and D'Artagnan says Aramis and Porthos are two of his best friends. The king tells D'Artagnan he refuses to be manipulated by those who serve him, but he will forgive D'Artagnan this one time. A courier tells the king that Aramis and Porthos are



believed to have escaped. D'Artagnan feels hope for his friends, while the king is sure the rebels will be captured by the blockade of ships around the island. D'Artagnan finally agrees to cooperate and not resign his post. Louis XIV agrees to grant pardons to Aramis and Porthos, giving D'Artagnan permission to seek them out.

Chapter 50, The Death of a Titan, Chapter 51, The Epitaph of Porthos, Chapter 52, The Round of M. de Gesvres, and Chapter 53, King Louis XIV Analysis

Porthos is the first of the four friends to die, as predicted by the weakness in his legs that Porthos felt earlier. Porthos is referred to many times as the strongest of his friends and a giant. However, as he has gotten older, his strength has left him and he is no match for the rocks falling from the cavern ceiling. Aramis shows that he truly cares for his friend by doing everything he can to free him. When they are forced to flee, Aramis spends the night grieving for his friend. Since Aramis typically seems to get close to people, only to use them and discard them when no longer needed, his tears shed for Porthos speak to how much Porthos' friendship meant to him. As this is the death of one of the main characters, the narrator also takes the time to give a lengthy eulogy about Porthos. This shows how much the characters have come to mean to both the author and the reader throughout the series of novels. Aramis gets on to another ship, but the fact that he gives the captain orders indicate that he is not a prisoner here. D'Artagnan goes back to face King Louis XIV after resigning as captain of the musketeers. However, the king does not want to let him go; rather, the king wants D'Artagnan to bend to his will and do what he wants without question. D'Artagnan knows the king is trying to break him, but his nature to obey gets the best of him and he agrees to stay at his post. The king appears to be trying to consolidate power through his court, and ensure that all his underlings will do exactly what he tells them. King Louis XIV rewards D'Artagnan for his faithfulness by agreeing to pardon Aramis and Porthos, and letting D'Artagnan be the one to find them and tell them.



Chapter 54, The Friends of M. Fouquet, Chapter 55, Porthos' Will, Chapter 56, The Old Age of Athos, Chapter 57, The Vision of Athos, and Chapter 58, The Angel of Death

Chapter 54, The Friends of M. Fouquet, Chapter 55, Porthos' Will, Chapter 56, The Old Age of Athos, Chapter 57, The Vision of Athos, and Chapter 58, The Angel of Death Summary

D'Artagnan has found no traces of Porthos or Aramis on Belle-Isle, and returns to Paris empty-handed. He learns of Porthos' death, and that King Louis XIV knew about it. The king says he did not tell D'Artagnan because he wanted him to find out himself. The king says he could have Aramis, who is hiding in Spain, killed easily, but won't do it. He reveals Colbert advised the king to spare Aramis' life.

Chapter 55, Porthos' Will

Porthos' funeral is about to take place. Several of his friends arrive to hear his will read, including D'Artagnan. D'Artagnan offers to take Mouston, who is very upset at his master's demise, to Athos' home. D'Artagnan is the last to leave. He hears a noise from an upper floor of the house. He goes upstairs and sees Mouston lying on a pile of suits, dead.

Chapter 56, The Old Age of Athos

Athos has been preparing for his death in his son Raoul's absence. He has stopped taking care of himself, and seems to find no joy in life. His servants get a doctor to examine him in secret.

The doctor sees how badly Athos is doing and confronts him. Athos says he will remain alive as long as Raoul is alive. One night, Athos has a vision of his son. Raoul says he is sad to hear that Porthos has died. As the dream dissipates, Athos' servants arrive with a letter from Aramis that describes Porthos' death. Athos faints.

Chapter 57, The Vision of Athos

Athos gets sicker, and dreams he sees a battle in Africa. He goes on looking, and sees a white figure coming towards him. It is Raoul, who beckons to Athos to follow him.



Athos complies, and follows his son to the top of a hill. Raoul ascends into the air, and continues to beckon for his father to follow.

Chapter 58, The Angel of Death

Athos is awoken by a loud noise. Grimaud comes into the room, and Athos asks him if his son is dead. Grimaud confirms this, and Athos dies. D'Artagnan arrives and Grimaud points out Athos' body. D'Artagnan and the other servants begin to cry in grief.

Chapter 54, The Friends of M. Fouquet, Chapter 55, Porthos' Will, Chapter 56, The Old Age of Athos, Chapter 57, The Vision of Athos, and Chapter 58, The Angel of Death Analysis

While King Louis XIV will still not relent and pardon Fouquet, he does give permission for his friends to give Fouquet's wife some money, since she is now destitute. This again shows that while the king is a hard, rash man, he may not be as unreasonable as some believe. The character of the king is very complicated, and only glimpses of his effect on France as a whole are shown through this novel. D'Artagnan is the next to learn of Porthos' death, and is also very distraught. King Louis XIV knew about his death from reading D'Artagnan's mail. However, he wanted D'Artagnan to find out for himself, perhaps feeling that D'Artagnan would associate the death of his friend with the king if Louis XIV had been the one to tell him. The king tells D'Artagnan that he has decided to be merciful to Aramis and spare his life. D'Artagnan is shocked to realize that Colbert is the one who advised this, since he has previously viewed Colbert as a person only out for his own gain. Colbert now seems to be portrayed as a man who is ambitious, but not one who will hurt others needlessly. D'Artagnan goes to see Athos, who has been preparing for his own death. Athos cannot bring himself to enjoy life without his son, and so prepares to die as soon as he learns of his son's death. Athos has supernatural visions that serve to alert him of his son's death. He only needs confirmation, which he gets from Grimaud, and he promptly dies, reuniting with his son in death. D'Artagnan arrives right after his death, and his grief is now doubled. He has lost two of his dearest friends in a short time, as well as Raoul.



Chapter 59, The Bulletin, Chapter 60, The Last Canto of the Poem, Epilogue, and The Death of D'Artagnan

Chapter 59, The Bulletin, Chapter 60, The Last Canto of the Poem, Epilogue, and The Death of D'Artagnan Summary

Beaufort writes a letter to Athos that describes Raoul's death. A morning attack rouses the encampment, and Beaufort at first keeps Raoul close to him. However, someone needs to send a message. Raoul volunteers, even though he would be exposed to the gunfire. Beaufort refuses, and the man who does it is killed. The enemies come out of their fort, and Raoul rides towards it. The others yell for him to stop. Raoul is struck and goes down. The Arabs and Beaufort's men fight over who will get Raoul's body. When the French retrieve it, they learn that Raoul is still alive. A doctor says he will survive if he does not move, but later Raoul is found dead with a lock of hair clutched to his breast.

Chapter 60, The Last Canto of the Poem

Athos and Raoul are buried in a chapel on Athos' estate. D'Artagnan goes to visit the graves before he leaves, and finds Louise la Valliere there. She is very distraught, and D'Artagnan tells her it is her fault both men are dead. Louise says she could not help but love Louis XIV, but will always regret she could not love Raoul.

Epilogue

Four years later, King Louis XIV is hunting on Athos' land. D'Artagnan is present, and has now achieved the rank of count. Colbert says he will meet Aramis, now the Duc d'Almeda, at dinner. Aramis tells D'Artagnan that the king's new mistress is the former Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente. The two men go to visit D'Artagnan's grave. They see the king flirting with his new mistress, as does Louise. D'Artagnan realizes she is there as he points out they are near Raoul's tomb. At dinner, the king talks with his sister-in-law about forming an alliance with England. Aramis and D'Artagnan talk to Colbert. Aramis has come as an ambassador from Spain. King Louis XIV wants to wage war with Holland. D'Artagnan will be the one to lead out the attack on Holland, which he agrees to do if he will receive a promotion.

The Death of D'Artagnan



When the English and French armies attack Holland, D'Artagnan is indeed in control of the army. He learns he has been made a marshal seconds before a cannonball hits him in the chest. He dies.

Chapter 59, The Bulletin, Chapter 60, The Last Canto of the Poem, Epilogue, and The Death of D'Artagnan Analysis

The letter describing Raoul's death reaches Athos too late. Raoul, committed to his plan to die in combat, walks towards the enemy even though he knows he will be wounded or killed. Beaufort and the other French fighters try to stop him, but Raoul will not be dissuaded. Although he is still alive when retrieved from the battlefield, the doctor says only if he does not move, will he live. However, that is not Raoul's goal, and so he effectively kills himself by reaching for the lock of hair, presumably from Louise de Valliere. D'Artagnan sees Louise at the funeral for Athos and Raoul. He chides her again for her lack of compassion towards Raoul, but Louise says she knows she has to live with her choice and will always regret that she could not love Raoul enough. Louise is in even more pain four years later, when King Louis XIV has moved onto a new mistress and discarded Louise. D'Artagnan sees Louise crying at Raoul's grave, and begins to finally take pity on her, realizing she is also a victim. D'Artagnan's death is unique, as it is set apart at the end of the novel, following the epilogue. D'Artagnan was the main character that started the saga of the musketeers. D'Artagnan is killed in battle, right after achieving his largest goal, to become a marshal. By letting D'Artagnan die at one of the happiest moments in his life, Dumas apparently wanted to give his primary character a proper send off to end the series. Aramis is the only one of the four friends who survives at the end of the novel, primarily due to the differences in his character. Of the four friends, Aramis is the one who is always scheming and planning a way to come out on top. He survives his friends, who conducted their lives much more nobly, although now he is left alone to contemplate what his life has meant to him.



Characters

Aramis

Aramis, Abbe d'Herblay, a former musketeer, is friends with Athos, Porthos, and D'Artagnan. He is a religious man, although this does not stop him from toying with the destiny of others. He is the first to discover that Philippe is actually the twin brother of Louis XIV, the current King of France. He goes to see Philippe in the Bastille, and plots to have Philippe released and replace the true king. Aramis tells Philippe that he loves him, and together they will rule France. Aramis is hoping to eventually become the pope after he installs Philippe on the throne. Aramis' plan works, but he tells his friend Fouquet of the plan. Fouquet is shocked and gives Aramis enough time to escape before the king is freed. Leaving Philippe behind, Aramis flees with Porthos to Fouquet's fort on Belle-Isle, still trying to determine how he can get out of the situation and into a position of power. He does not tell Porthos the true reason they are fleeing and hiding at the fort until the royal navy arrives to capture them. When the fort is attacked, Aramis is able to escape and flees to Spain. He returns to France as an ambassador and is pardoned by the king of France. He becomes a duke in Spain, and is the only one of the four friends to survive at the end of the novel.

D'Artagnan

D'Artagnan is the captain of the musketeers, and a friend of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. He is the only one who remains in the service of King Louis XIV. Aramis is careful not to let D'Artagnan know of his plan to replace the king with his twin brother, Philippe, since D'Artagnan's sense of honor will force him to reveal the plot. When the switch is revealed, D'Artagnan immediately arrests Philippe, proving his loyalty to the true king. The king continually tests D'Artagnan's loyalty throughout the novel. Once the plot is uncovered, D'Artagnan is ordered to capture his two friends, Aramis and Porthos. He resigns rather than to do this. D'Artagnan is also sympathetic to the plight of Fouquet, who has the misfortune to be on the king's bad side. D'Artagnan tries to give Fouquet an opportunity to escape, but when ordered to arrest the man, does everything in his power to ensure it is done. The king eventually agrees to pardon Aramis and Porthos, after D'Artagnan agrees to be faithful to the king and not resign. D'Artagnan is distraught when he learns of the deaths of Porthos, Athos and Athos' son, Raoul. At the end of the novel, D'Artagnan is leading France's army in an attack against Holland. He learns he has been promoted to marshall, seconds before being hit by a cannonball and dying.

Porthos

Porthos, le Baron du Vallon, a former musketeer, is friends with Athos, D'Artagnan, and Aramis. He helps Aramis with his plan to put Philippe on the throne, and is forced to flee



with Aramis when the plot is discovered. When he and Aramis are attacked by the king's men at Grotto Locmaria, he dies after a barrel of gunpowder explodes and the cavern collapses on him.

Athos

Athos, a former musketeer, is friends with Aramis, Porthos, and D'Artagnan. He is the father of Raoul, and is very close to his son. When his son goes to Africa to fight the Arabs, Athos begins to fall ill, heartsick at the loss of his son. He dies as soon as he receives word of his son's death in Africa.

Fouquet

Fouquet is an advisor to King Louis XIV. He throws a party at his home called Vaux, but the king is angry because his own parties are not as lavish as Fouquet's. The king plans to arrest Fouquet because money is missing from the treasury. However, the king is kidnapped by Aramis and Porthos. Fouquet learns of the plot from Aramis and frees the king from the Bastille. However, the king eventually has Fouquet arrested because of the missing money.

Philippe

Philippe is the twin brother of King Louis XIV of France. He has been imprisoned in the Bastille for most of his life, but Aramis breaks him out with the intent of switching him with his brother. The plan fails, and Philippe is imprisoned on the isle of St. Marguerite, made to wear an iron mask for the rest of his days.

Louis XIV

Louis XIV is the king of France during the time period of the novel. He is the twin brother of Philippe and is briefly imprisoned in the Bastille when Aramis tries to switch the brothers. However, he is freed by Fouquet and returns to his throne.

Louise La Valliere

Louise La Valliere is a woman who is loved by both King Louis XIV and Raoul, son of Athos. She is the mistress of the king, but is distraught when Raoul dies.

Colbert

Colbert is the financial administrator for King Louis XIV. He conspires to have Fouquet, one of the other advisors to the king, imprisoned.



Seldon

Seldon is a prisoner in the Bastille. Aramis gets a release order for him, than changes it for one that will allow Philippe to be released. Seldon is later released when Aramis brings Louis XIV to the prison and tells the warden there has been a mistake, Seldon should have been released after all.

Raoul

Raoul is the son of Athos, who is hopelessly in love with Louise La Valliere. He dies in Africa, preferring to die in battle rather than of a broken heart.

Governor Baisemeaux

Governor Baisemeaux is the warden at the Bastille. Aramis tricks him into releasing Philippe, however briefly.

Anne of Austria

Anne of Austria is the mother of King Louis XIV and the queen mother of France.

Biscarrat

Biscarrat is the son of Biscarrat, an acquaintance of Athos, Porthos, Aramis and D'Artagnan.

The Duke de Beaufort

The Duke de Beaufort is a friend of Athos. He goes to Africa with Raoul, and dies there.

Grimaud

Grimaud is Athos' valet. He retrieves Raoul's body from Africa.

M. Jean Percerin

M. Jean Percerin is the king's tailor, and a highly sought after clothes-maker among the nobility of France.



Maria Theresa

Maria Theresa is the wife of King Louis XIV and the queen of France.

King Louis XIII

King Louis XIII is the father of Louis XIV and Philippe, as well as the husband of Anne of Austria.

Mouston

Mouston is a servant of Porthos. For some time, he stood in for Porthos at the tailor's, since Porthos hated getting measured for clothes. However, he eventually exceeds Porthos in girth.

Moliere

Moliere is a poet and playwright in France, who pretends to be a tailor's apprentice when he encounters D'Artagnan.

Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente

Mademoiselle de Tonnay-Charente is a friend of Louise de Valliere. She later becomes the mistress of King Louis XIV.

Monsieur le Duc Gesvres

Monsieur le Duc Gesvres is the captain of the king's guard.

Gaston

Gaston is the brother of Louis XIII, and conspires to win the throne of France. However, he fails several times.

Le Brun

Le Brun is an artist hired by Fouquet to paint a portrait of the king.

Madame de Chevreuse

Madame de Chevreuse is a friend of Anne of Austria's.



Mademoiselle de Montalais

Mademoiselle de Montalais is a friend of Louise de Valliere.

Monsieur de Guiche

Monsieur de Guiche is a friend of Raoul.

Cardinal Richelieu

Cardinal Richelieu is an adviser to King Louis XIII.

Marazin

Marazin is the prime minister of France.

Gourville

Gourville is a friend of Fouquet.

Planchet

Planchet once worked as D'Artagnan's valet, but is now a grocer.

Pelisson

Pelisson is a French writer at St. Mande.

La Fontaine

La Fontaine is a French writer at St. Mande.

Madame Vanel

Madame Vanel is Colbert's mistress.



Objects/Places

France

France is a country in Europe, and the setting for the novel "The Man in the Iron Mask."

Paris

Paris is the capital city of France.

The Bastille

The Bastille is a prison in Paris, France. Philippe, the king of France's twin brother, is imprisoned there.

Luxembourg Palace

Luxembourg Palace is a palace owned by the royal family of France.

The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte

The Chateau de Vaux-le-Vicomte is a palace in France. It was built and is owned by Fouquet. King Louis XIV dines here and is kidnapped, while his brother, Philippe, takes his place for a brief time.

Belle-Isle

Belle-Isle is a fort owned by Fouquet. He sends Aramis and Porthos there after their plot to switch the king of France with his twin brother is discovered.

St. Mandé

St. Mandé is a home in France where several writers live.

Rue St. Honoré

Rue St. Honoré is a street in Paris, where M. Jean Percerin, the king's tailor, lives.



Bas-Poitou

Bas-Poitou is a small fisherman's village in France, of which hardly anyone knows about. Aramis offers Philippe the chance to live there instead of trying to take the place of King Louis XIV.

The Chamber of Morpheus

The chamber of Morpheus is the bedchamber where King Louis XIV stays when visiting Vaux.

St. Marguerite

St. Marguerite is an island where Philippe is banished after masquerading as the king of France.

The Grotto of Locmaria

The grotto of Locmaria is a place on Belle-Isle. Porthos and Athos mount a defense there when they are attacked, and Porthos dies after the cavern collapses.

St. Honorat

St. Honorat is a French island.



Themes

Honor

In France during the 1660s, when "The Man in the Iron Mask" takes place, honor is a primary concern for many of the characters in the novel. Honor demands that each character do what they know is right, despite what their feelings and emotions tell them to do. For example, King Louis XIV plans to arrest Fouquet on trumped up charges. However, the switch of Philippe for the king negates these charges. Aramis, pleased with his work, informs Fouquet. However, Fouquet is an honorable man, and to him, there is no choice but to free the king, even if it means he will later go to prison. Fouquet also later proves his honor by not escaping after D'Artagnan faints when he captures Fouquet. D'Artagnan also acts honorably to the advisor, since he informs him that he can escape before the king arrives at Nante. However, honor does not let D'Artagnan circumvent the king's orders. When the king does arrive at Nantes, D'Artagnan informs Fouquet that the king's order for no one to leave is now in effect, and he plans to enforce it. Aramis, the only one of the musketeers living at the end of the novel, is arguably the one with the least honor. Aramis is quick to betray those around them if it means he can get ahead, even Philippe, whom he professed to love as a true monarch. Aramis' lack of honor seems to tie in with his survival instinct, meaning he always has a plan to escape when things get too hairy.

Justice

In the kingdom of France in the 1660s, the rulers are considered absolute monarchs, meaning that their word is law. In "The Man in the Iron Mask," it is King Louis XIV who has the power to make the laws, and during the course of the novel he comes into his own. Louis XIV became king as a boy, and during this time period referenced in the novel is just beginning to make his own decisions without the help of his advisors. Therefore, what the king wants, others have to do, without question. Fouquet is caught up in the king's plans, when the king plans to arrest him on trumped up charges even though Louise la Valliere and D'Artagnan caution him against it. Although Fouquet does what is right for him and frees the king from imprisonment, the king does not return the favor. The king is so biased against Fouquet, that he still imprisons the man after taking all his money. The people of France are at the will of the ruling monarch, which means people are limited in their means of revolt against the king. Aramis tries to tell Philippe that he believes he will be a more just king than Louis XIV, which may be true. Philippe clearly intends to pardon Fouquet, but that may only be because Aramis suggested it. If Philippe had stayed on the throne and gotten a taste of the absolute power it holds, it is possible he may have become more corrupt than his brother.



Relationships in Conflict

Throughout the novel, there are continuous conflicts between friends, lovers, family members, and rulers and their underlings. The primary conflict that D'Artagnan faces is the treachery of his friends, Aramis and Porthos. D'Artagnan loves his friends, and cannot bring himself to hurt them, yet he has a duty to King Louis XIV. D'Artagnan must struggle to reconcile his feeling for his friends with what honor requires him to do. The musketeers' motto, "All for one, one for all," prevails for D'Artagnan, who refuses to lift a finger against his friends. The king also has a conflict with his family members, primarily Philippe, his twin brother who has been locked away in the Bastille. Philippe, with Aramis' help, attempts to take the throne from his brother, but fails. Philippe is conflicted in his feelings for his brother and for his mother, Anne of Austria, who knows that her son is locked away and will not help him. The king is also involved in a love triangle with his mistress, Louise la Valliere, and her former lover, Raoul. Raoul still loves Louise, and would rather die than be without her. When he dies in battle, Louise is distraught and knows she drove him to it, even though she believes she truly loves the king. The many relationships in conflict throughout the novel are responsible for creating the primary plot of the novel, as characters struggle against what they want and what they believe they should do.

Style

Point of View

"The Man in the Iron Mask" is told through a third-person narrator that follows several characters' points of view. While primarily following D'Artagnan, the narrator also follows other main characters, like King Louis XIV, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. This gives the reader a fuller sense of what motivates each of the characters, and what drives them to commit the deeds they do. In the beginning, the narrator frequently follows Aramis, but as the kidnapping plot is foiled, the focus shifts more to D'Artagnan and his work as captain of the musketeers. The narrator also addresses the reader directly at times, revealing things that none of the characters know, or offering advice or an opinion on the events of the novel. For example, when Porthos dies, the narrator takes time to lament his passing and note his accomplishments in a eulogy. This technique makes the narrator seem more forthcoming and approachable to the reader. The narrator is also objective through the novel. While he follows several characters, he does not reveal their thoughts and feelings. Instead, he uses their actions and utterances to show the reasons behind their behavior and emotions.

Setting

"The Man in the Iron Mask," takes place in and around France in the 1600s, during the reign of King Louis XIV. The novel was written in the 1800's by Alexandre Dumas, who drew heavily on historical fact as he created the world of the novel. Dumas uses actual characters from the court of King Louis XIV, as well as actual historical events, to frame the fictional tale involving his musketeers, Athos, Porthos, Aramis and D'Artagnan. During this time, King Louis XIV was transitioning from a young king, who had to rely on his advisers heavily, to a man who could make his own decisions and orders. Dumas centers his tale on a factual man who was imprisoned and forced to wear an mask. Dumas imagines that the man is actually a brother of the king, setting the stage for his novel. The legend of the man in the iron mask was quite popular during the 18th century; however, no one has ever discovered the man's identity. Historical fiction allows an author to use their research of a certain time period to embroider a fictional tale that would fit into that time period. Characters may be fictional or based on real people, and Dumas uses both in his musketeer sagas. By using historical fact as the basis for his novel, Dumas is able to create a realistic world for his characters, with motivations and dreams that were very similar to the common man at the time. He is also able to pay more attention to the action rather than the setting throughout the novel, as many of the people of his country would be familiar with the historical references.



Language and Meaning

Alexandre Dumas' novel, "The Man in the Iron Mask," is the final volume telling the stories of the musketeers, Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan. It details the end of their lives, as they become older and have one last adventure. As such, the primary tone of the novel is dark and depressing. Although there are moments of levity, such as Porthos' predicament over the fitting of his suits, the plot of the novel is very dramatic. The novel ends with the death of three of the four friends, and it is obvious Dumas intended this to document the end of his heroes' lives. Although the novel is titled, "The Man in the Iron Mask," Dumas only spares a little time for Philippe, instead concentrating on the actions and relationships of the four musketeers. The speech and language used by the characters are also typical of that time in history, France in the mid- to late-1600s. The characters use their language as a tool to convey meaning. For the most part, the characters are nobly born, and have been educated in the ways of etiquette and proper speech and this shows through their words. As a work of historical fiction, Dumas has an obligation to be faithful to that time period, which includes language used, as well as his descriptions of people and places.

Structure

The story-telling in Alexandre Dumas' novel, "The Man in the Iron Mask," is extremely fast-paced and action-packed, probably a result of how the novel was originally distributed. "The Man in the Iron Mask" was first made available to the people of France as a serial novel, meaning it was released a chapter or chapters at a time in a French magazine. In the 1800s, novels were the primary form of entertainment, so long sagas with plenty of action were always a hit with readers. Therefore, "The Man in the Iron Mask" is made up of sixty chapters, most relatively short, followed by an epilogue and a special section called The Death of D'Artagnan. Regarding the main sixty chapters, each is titled to give a hint as to what takes place within that part of the story. These titles were probably used to tell magazine readers what each section was going to be about. The epilogue details what happens to D'Artagnan four years after the main action, and would probably be a fitting place for D'Artagnan's death scene. However, Dumas showcases that scene in a section called "The Death of D'Artagnan." This seems to be a way for Dumas to say a proper good-bye to his main character, who first appeared in "The Three Musketeers."



Quotes

"'And you,' returned the prisoner, 'who bid me to ask to see you; you, who when I did ask to see you, came here promising a whole world of revelations; how is it that, nevertheless, it is you who are silent, and it is I who speak? Since, then, we both wear masks, either let us both retain them or put them aside together.'" Ch. 1, The Prisoner, pg. 12.

"'Monseigneur,' answered Aramis, with a respect he had not yet shown, 'do realize that the king, will, if you desire it, be he who, leaving his dungeon, shall sit upon the throne on which his friends will place him.'" Ch. 1, The Prisoner, pg. 27.

"Great geniuses of every kind live upon unseen, intangible ideas; they act without themselves knowing why." Ch. 3, Who M. Jean Percerin was, pg. 43.

"'Yes' said D'Artagnan aloud; then, in a low voice, 'If I am your dupe, double Jesuit that you are, I will not be your accomplice; and to prevent it, it's time I left this place.'" Ch. 4, The Samples, pg. 56.

"'I beg your pardon, monsieur,' I said. 'I have not fought you because you were my wife's lover, but because I was told I ought to fight. So, as I have never known any peace except since you made her acquaintance, do me the pleasure to continue your visits as before, or morbleu! let us set to again.' 'And so,' continued La Fontaine, 'he was compelled to remain my wife's lover, and I continued to be the happiest of husbands.'" Ch. 6, The Beehive, the Bees, and the Honey, pg. 66.

"We sometimes allow such injustices on earth that I understand why there are wretches who don't trust us." Ch. 6, The Beehive, the Bees, and the Honey, pg. 72.

"Seven o'clock was striking from the great clock of the Bastille, that famous clock, which, like all accessories of the state prison, the very use of which is a torture, recalled to the prisoners' minds the destination of every hour of their punishment." Ch. 7, Another supper at the Bastille, pg. 72.

"It is to tell you that he has drawn you from the abyss for a great purpose, and that he wishes, for this sublime purpose, to raise you above the powers of the earth— above himself." Ch. 9, The Tempter, pg. 90.

"Would you prefer a more humble life, a life more suited to your strength? God is my witness that I wish your happiness to be the result of the trial to which I have exposed you." Ch. 9, The Tempter, pg. 94.

"In Poitou you risk nothing, except the chance of catching the fevers prevalent there; and even of them the so-called wizards of the country may cure you, in exchange for your pistoles. If you play the other game, you run the chance of being assassinated on a



throne, or of being strangled in a prison. Upon my soul, now that I compare them, I should hesitate which of the two I should accept." Ch. 9, The Tempter, pg. 95.

"The sky he was contemplating, the murmuring waters, the moving creatures; was not this reality? Was not Aramis a madman to suppose that there was something else to dream of in this world?" Ch. 10, Crown and Tiara, pg. 96.

"Aramis, a voice speaks within me, and seems to enlighten my darkness; it is a voice which has never deceived me. It is the king you are conspiring against." Ch. 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half, pg. 122.

"And the future king and the future pope listened eagerly to the simple mortals whom they held under their feet, ready to crush them if they had liked." Ch. 14, A Gascon and a gascon and a half, pg. 125.

"When the sun rises, having no rival but me, that man shall fall so low that when people look at the utter ruin which my anger will have caused, they will be forced to admit at last that I am indeed greater than he." Ch. 16, Jealousy, pg. 141.

"A prisoner!" he cried. "I, I am a prisoner!" Ch. 18, A Night at the Bastille, pg. 152.

"Alone, in the presence of all the luxury which surrounded him; alone, in the presence of his power; alone, with the part he was about to be forced to act, Philippe for the first time felt his hear, and mind, and soul expand to the thousand varied emotions who are the vital throbs of a king's heart." Ch. 20, The Morning, pg. 172.

"On any other occasion," thought the Gascon, "I would say that those gentlemen were escaping; but in these days politics seem so changed that it is called going on a mission." Ch. 21, The King's Friend, pg. 195.

"The king was almost exhausted; he could hardly articulate distinctly, as he shouted: 'Death to Fouquet! Death to the traitor Fouquet!'" Ch. 22, Showing how orders were respected at the Bastille, pg. 203.

"He took her hand and kissed it tenderly; she did not realize that in that kiss, given in spite of repulsions and bitterness of the heart, there was a pardon for eight years of horrible suffering." Ch. 24, The False King, pg. 215.

"The queen mother, who saw Louis XIV, and who was holding the hand of Philippe, uttered the cry of which we have spoken, as if she had beheld a phantom." Ch. 24, The False King, pg. 218.

"War is a distraction; we gain everything by it; we can only lose one thing by it, life; then so much the worse." Ch. 27, M. de Beaufort, pg. 235.



"From Louis XI, that terrible mower down of the great, to Richelieu, how many families had raised their heads! How many from Richelieu to Louis XIV had bowed their heads, never to raise them again!" Ch. 30, The Inventory of M. de Beaufort, pg. 252.

"'We love each other too dearly,' said the count, 'that from this moment when we part, a portion of both our souls should not travel with one and the other of us, and should not dwell wherever we may dwell. When you are sad, Raoul, I feel that my heart will be drowned in sadness; and when you smile thinking of me, be assured you will send me, from over there, a ray of your joy.'" Ch. 33, Promises, pg. 282.

"Fouquet, you are out of luck! The game is not a fair one, fortune is against you. The star of Louis XIV obscures yours; the adder is stronger and more cunning than the squirrel." Ch. 40, The White Horse and the Black Horse, pg. 331.

"No, no, Porthos, I beg you, let me act. No false generosity! No inopportune devotion! You knew nothing of my projects. You have done nothing on your own. With me it is different. I am alone the author of the plot. I stood in need of my inseparable companion; I called upon you, and you came to me, in remembrance of our ancient motto. 'All for one, one for all.' My crime was being selfish." Ch. 43, The Explanations of Aramis, pg. 358.

"Then, breathless, his brow covered with sweat, Aramis listened, his chest oppressed, his heart ready to break. Nothing more! The giant slept the eternal sleep, in the grave which God had made to his measure." Ch. 50, pg. 404.

"'Something,' said Athos, 'wills that I should go no further.'" Ch. 57, The Vision of Athos, pg. 441.

"What is there left for man after youth, after love, after glory, after friendship, after strength, after riches? That rock, under which sleeps Porthos, who possessed all I have named; this moss, under which rest Athos and Raoul, who possessed still more!" Ch. 60, The Last Canto of the Poem, pg. 461.

"Here lie people I have known." Epilogue, pg. 467.

"'And you will, perhaps, never see me again, dear D'Artagnan,' said Aramis; 'if you knew how I have loved you! I am old, I am word, I am dead.'" Epilogue, pg. 479.

"'Athos—Porthos, farewell till we meet again! Aramis, adieu forever!' Of the four valiant men whose history we have told, only one body was left. God had taken back three souls." The Death of D'Artagnan, pg. 484.



Topics for Discussion

Many of the men in the novel are concerned with acting with honor, even giving themselves up when they have a chance to escape. Why does society at the time demand this of them? How is this different or similar from the actions of people in current times?

If Philippe had remained as king of France, how might the last half of the novel been different? What evidence is there to suggest that Philippe would have been a better or worse king? Explain.

Aramis is determined to switch Philippe with King Louis XIV. What is his motivation for this? Does he truly believe that Philippe would be a better king, or is he primarily concerned with his own ambitions?

The bond between the former musketeers, Aramis, Athos, and Porthos, and D'Artagnan, is very strong. How does their friendship affect D'Artagnan's actions throughout the novel? Is their bond stronger than D'Artagnan's sense of duty? At what point, if ever, does he begin to disregard the king's orders to save his friends?

Fouquet tries to act honorably towards King Louis XIV, even freeing him from imprisonment, but he is still punished. Why does the king bear a grudge against Fouquet? How much of his disdain for the man is fostered by Colbert's machinations? Explain.

Aramis is the only one of the four musketeers who survives at the end of the novel. How is his character different from the other three, and what about his nature allows him to survive?

Like many novels of the time, "The Man in the Iron Mask" was published in serial form, meaning readers only got a chapter at a time. Is this evident throughout the novel? How does this strengthen or detract from the overall story?

The final chapter of the book, after the epilogue, is simply called the Death of D'Artagnan. Why do you suppose Dumas chose to do this? Does setting apart his death bring a fitting end to the musketeers' saga? Why or why not?