

The Vicomte de Bragelonne Study Guide

The Vicomte de Bragelonne by Alexandre Dumas, père

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Plot Summary

"The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas is a work of fiction that takes place during 1660 in France. The structure of "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" can often be somewhat confusing to the reader. "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" is actually part of a longer body of work involving the Three Musketeers. The books are as follows: Part One: "The Vicomte of Bragelonne," Part Two: "Louise de la Vallière," and Part Three: "The Man in the Iron Mask." There are sometimes conflicts regarding where one book should end and another should begin although in most accepted circles such as Project Gutenberg, "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" is comprised of the first 75 chapters. The original stories also are serialized, which may explain the confusion of the separation of the books.

The Vicomte de Bragelonne is Raoul, the son of the Comte de la Fere. The Comte de la Fere is famous for his pursuits as Athos, one of the famous Three Musketeers.

Raoul arrives at Blois to inform Gaston of the arrival of King Louis XIV, Gaston's nephew. In Blois, Raoul meets and instantly falls in love with a young lady in the court, Louise de la Vallière.

Raoul goes to la Fere to visit his father before returning to Blois to await the king's arrival. While Louis is at Blois, he is approached by Charles II, the recently deposed King of England. Charles asks for Louis' help in regaining the throne. Louis, who lacks any type of power as a king, asks Mazarin, his finance minister, for one million livres to assist Charles. Mazarin refuses and Charles is sent away.

Later, Charles happens to meet Athos at la Fere. Athos agrees to help Charles by retrieving a fortune he had buried in Newcastle. Athos is successful in his quest. Meanwhile, d'Artagnan has been dispensed to kidnap the powerful General Monk. D'Artagnan takes Monk to meet with Charles. Monk is uncommunicative but decides to help Charles regain his throne. Both Athos and d'Artagnan are handsomely rewarded.

Cardinal Mazarin dies. At this point Louis decides that it is time that he steps up to the task of running the government rather than leaving the job to his ministers. The ministers have no intention of giving up their power, particularly the wealthy and corrupt Fouquet. M. Colbert is assigned to be a councilor to Louis. Fouquet and Colbert enter into a battle to take control of the crown.

Aramis, Porthos, Athos and d'Artagnan take on different roles in attempting to keep the power in the right hands. D'Artagnan is beseeched to go to Belle-Isle to learn about the state of the island. If the land is being fortified with fortresses and soldiers, then it will be clear to Louis that Fouquet is planning to take over. Colbert is behind the scheme to discredit Fouquet and to claim the crown for his own.

D'Artagnan learns that Belle-Isle is being fortified. He also learns that his old friend Porthos is on the island, supposedly studying topography.



Porthos and d'Artagnan venture to visit Aramis, the Bishop of Vanne. Aramis figures out d'Artagnan's mission and immediately sends Porthos to Paris. Aramis soon follows with the intention of warning Fouquet of Colbert's plan.

D'Artagnan is sent on a wild goose chase just long enough for Porthos and Aramis to reach Paris. Aramis warns Fouquet about Colbert's plans. Fouquet goes to the king to explain the fortification of Belle-Isle while Colbert sits nearby, watching his plan fall apart.



Chapters 1-12

Chapters 1-12 Summary

In Chapter 1, it is May 1660 at the Castle of Blois. The monsieur has returned from hunting. The watchers wonder why the Monsieur bothers with such amusements. One of the watchers makes his opinions plain, saying, "The light-hearted boy shrugged his shoulders with a gesture which said as clear as day: 'In that case I would rather be plain Jack than a prince'" (Chapter 1, p. 7).

No one quite understands the prince who seems to be filled with melancholy. The prince is the greatest nobleman in the country, perhaps even more noble than his father, the king, Henry V. The prince seems to be worn down by his public duties. All in all the prince believes his life is quite dull.

The prince dismounts and goes to his room to take a nap.

The sound of laughter from two young girls wakes the guards. One of the girls is writing to Monsieur Raoul while the other objects.

The Madame rings for service so that she may get ready for breakfast. The girls bicker over their duties. Montalais seems to be bored with her tedious duties while Louise is much more devoted to Madame. The girls continue to pen a letter to Raoul.

Louise is afraid to be too forward but Montalais entreats Louise to show Parisians that Blois is a city of fine language. The girls continue to discuss what should go in the letter when there is a noise from outside. Raoul has arrived.

In Chapter 2, Raoul is introduced. He is 24 to 25 years of age and well-dressed. His demeanor is somewhat nervous. He asks to be taken to his Royal Highness immediately, even though the King is at breakfast. M. de Saint-Remy, the maître d' hotel greets Raoul warmly.

Raoul's presence causes a stir among the members of the household. Dumas explains, "The pages, valets and officers, assembled in the office which led up to the refectory, welcomed the newcomer with the proverbial politeness of the country; some of them were acquainted with Raoul, and all knew that he came from Paris" (Chapter 2, p. 17).

Gaston is annoyed at being interrupted during breakfast until he learns the messenger is M. de Bragelonne, representing M. le Prince.

Gaston is civil but cold, which annoys Raoul. Raoul's message is to announce the arrival of the king, who is also Gaston's nephew. Gaston seems to be happy about the arrival, although it is very sudden.

Raoul prepares to leave to visit his father when he is approached by one of the girls.



In Chapter 3, Montalais approaches Raoul. She entreats him to return to the tower with her. Raoul does as he is asked. In the tower Montalais introduced Raoul to Louise. Louise is shocked that Montalais brought Raoul to the room. Montalais says that Raoul must read Louise's letter. Louise is embarrassed. The group hears a noise on the stairs. Montalais thinks it is only her lover, Malicorne. It turns out to be Madame. Raoul is told to hide. After speaking with Madame, Raoul leaves the tower and is on his way to visit his father, M. le Comte de la Fere.

In Chapter 4, Dumas begins by saying that he finds no need to describe the home of the Comte de la Fere as it has been described before.

Raoul arrives at the country home of the Comte de la Fere, formerly known as Athos. Athos is thrilled to see Raoul, whom he has not seen in a year. During that year, Raoul had been at the court of M. le Prince. Athos is happy to learn that Raoul has no plans for the day to spend it with his father.

Chapter 5: In which Something will be said of Cropoli - of Cropoli and of a Great Unknown Painter

After Raoul spends the day with his father, he returns to Blois. Preparations are underway for the arrival of Louis XIV. Servants scramble to find proper provisions and lodging for the king's entourage.

An abandoned house, taken over by a former servant names Cropoli had become a hostelry that eventually made a name for itself in Blois, particularly after Queen Catherine had arrived there and may or may not have strangled the councilor in residence. Cropoli's son took over the hostelry and determined to make it fit for royalty, ordered his painter-in-ordinary, Pittrino, to paint a sign.

In Chapter 6, an unknown gentleman comes to stay at the hostelry. The man will not reveal his identity. He informs Master Cropole of the arrival of Louis XIV and says he intends to stay. It becomes clear to Cropole that the man may not be able to pay. Cropole, sensing a way to make even more money, is eager to be rid of the man to make room for the king's entourage if they are in need of lodging.

In Chapter 7, the stranger had given Cropole a diamond to sell in order to pay for his room. Cropole agrees to sell the diamond and keep the money safe to pay for the room.

A flurry of noise arises in the street. The king and his entourage have arrived. Following a troop of musketeers is the carriage of the Cardinal, one bearing the Queen-mother, and finally, King Louis XIV. Dumas explains, "By the side of the king, though a little in the rear, the Prince de Conde, M. Dangeau, and twenty other courtiers, followed by their people and their baggage, closed this veritably triumphant march. The pomp was of a military character" (Chapter 7, p. 48).

Parry arrives at the hostelry. There is much talk of Parry being refused by the general. Parry is noticeably uneasy by the arrival of Louis.



In Chapter 8, Louis' arrival at the Castle of States is recounted: "On arriving beneath the porch of the Castle of the States, the king met, surrounded by his guards and gentlemen, with S. A. R. the duke, Gaston of Orleans, whose physiognomy, naturally rather majestic, had borrowed on this solemn occasion a fresh luster and a fresh dignity. On her part, Madame, dressed in her robes of ceremony, awaited, in the interior balcony, the entrance of her nephew" (Chapter 8, p. 53).

The castle seems to have taken on a new life with its windows well lit. The king's physical presence is discussed, including his height, which is only 5 foot and 2 inches. The group sits down to eat. The Queen-mother, Anne of Austria, has been quite ill with cancer and eats little.

The conversation at dinner does little to satisfy or amuse Louis. His attention is drawn to a group of ladies in waiting. The one that garners most of the King's attention is Louise.

In Chapter 9, the unknown man from the hostelry approaches the castle and asks to speak to Louis. The guards think the man must be mad to make such a request. After a lengthy exchange, it is learned that the unknown man is Charles II, King of England. Louis receives Charles.

Charles explains his plight to the ignorant Louis. Louis considers Charles request for money and excuses himself to go to the Cardinal to present Louis' case.

In Chapter 10, Cardinal Mazarin sits in his chambers doing his ciphers regarding the wealth of the kingdom. He is surprised when Louis is announced. Louis explains Charles' ordeal to the Cardinal. Mazarin says none of this would have happened to Charles if he had a version of the cardinal in his court. After a long discussion, the cardinal all but refuses the king's plea for money for Charles.

In Chapter 11, the argument between Louis and Mazarin continues. Mazarin explains politics to Louis, including the fact that France has a treaty with England. Under the circumstances, that treaty is with Cromwell, not Charles. Louis says he is not worried about such things. Mazarin points out that Louis would be confronted with General Monk, who is far more dangerous.

Louis, exasperated and melancholy, leaves Mazarin's chambers. He delivers the bad news to Charles. Charles says he will now pray for a miracle. Charles leaves Louis' chambers.

In Chapter 12, Louis and his lieutenant discuss the travel arrangements. The lieutenant explains to Louis that out of 120 men, only 20 or 30 are available to protect the king. The lieutenant says the duty is much too important to leave to the brigadier.

Later, the lieutenant makes comments about Louis' ineffectiveness as king and how Mazarin will take any advantage he can to usurp more power.



Chapters 1-12 Analysis

The reader is introduced to Raoul, the Vicomte de Bragelonne. Raoul, the son of the Comte de la Fere, also known as the famous Musketeer Athos, is received well by Gaston and his people. Raoul's announcement regarding the arrival of Louis is met with mixed emotions from Gaston and Madame. Naturally, they cannot refuse the visit although it is short notice and a great deal of scrambling will have to take place to make the king's stay appropriate to his status.

Montalais is extremely bold in her actions toward Raoul. Raoul surprisingly follows Montalais and is instantly enamored of the fair Louise.

Raoul's visit to Athos is bitter sweet. Athos is old and spends his days writing his memoir and tending to his garden. His love for Raoul is clear and absolute.

Dumas sees no need to repeat certain facts and descriptions as they have been mentioned in earlier tomes or stories.

Instead he writes, "The reader will dispense with a second description of that habitation: he, perhaps, has been with us there before, and knows it. Only, since our last journey thither, the walls had taken on a grayer tint, and the brick-work assumed a more harmonious copper tone; the trees had grown, and many that then only stretched their slender branches along the tops of the hedges, now, bushy, strong, and luxuriant, cast around, beneath boughs swollen with sap, great shadows of blossoms or fruit for the benefit of the traveler" (Chapter 4, p. 3).

Note that in chapter five, the hostelry's owner is first named Cropoli. His son, however, is referred to as Master Cropole. Charles II arrives at Blois. He prefers to remain unknown to anyone but Louis and hides his face as the entourage passes by the hostelry. Charles must swallow his pride to ask for help from Louis, his brother in arms.

This section shows Louis' complete ignorance regarding politics, history, and basically anything involving his station or the level of power he should have attained when he assumed the throne. Louis is nothing more than Mazarin's puppet. Mazarin is well suited to control Louis and the kingdom at large, including the finances. The concept that the king must ask permission from his minister of finance is absurd, however, Louis bows to Mazarin's every wish and whim. Mazarin also intends to continue to take advantage of Louis' weaknesses and to usurp as much power as possible.

Louis is apologetic and embarrassed when he returns to Charles. Charles is surprised at the refusal but also gracious, saying that he will now pray for a miracle so that he might return to the throne. The reader can surmise that Charles will seek and find his miracle.



Chapters 13-21

Chapters 13-21 Summary

In Chapter 13, Louis and his lieutenant set out to meet Mary de Mancini on the road from Blois. Louis explains to Mary (Marie) that the cardinal has informed him that their marriage will have no validity and will be annulled by the Holy Father. Marie is despondent and tells Louis that he does not love her. If Louis understood that she is being exiled and will be buried alive, he would do something about the cardinal's mandate. The pair parts company.

In Chapter 14, the lieutenant of the musketeers approaches Louis to ask for discharge from service. Louis is stunned. The lieutenant states that he is old, having served the king for 35 years. Louis and the lieutenant recount the man's service. It is learned that the lieutenant is d'Artagnan.

In Chapter 15, Louis stops d'Artagnan as he is leaving and says he has a commission for him. D'Artagnan is told to take a letter to the cardinal. Along the way, d'Artagnan and an officer discuss Louis' great love for Marie. The officer says that they will not marry and that it will surely cause a war with Spain which will please the nobles.

Cardinal Mazarin accepts the letter. He sends a letter to the Queen-mother, saying, "Thus in a few instants was unraveled an intrigue which had covertly occupied all the diplomacies of Europe. It had nothing, however, very clear as a result, but to make a poor lieutenant of musketeers lose his commission and his fortune. It is true, that in exchange he gained his liberty. We shall soon know how M. d'Artagnan profited by this" (Chapter 15, p. 112).

The story returns to the hostelry. Charles settles his bill with Cropole, who has been less than forthcoming and honest to the unidentified king. Charles, despondent over the meeting with Louis, heads for Paris, his servant Parry at his side.

Chapter 16: "Remember!"

Charles is on his way to Paris when he happens to meet Grimaud, the servant to the Comte de la Fere. Parry recognizes Grimaud and the men exchange regards. Parry informs Charles of Grimaud's identity and says that he is the servant to the Comte de la Fere. Charles recognizes the name and remembers that Athos was at his father's side until the end. Charles asks to meet with Athos.

Athos welcomes Charles with open arms. Athos insists on telling Charles of his father's last moments. Although Charles has heard the story many times, Athos gives Charles private information.

Charles explains his plight to Athos. Athos is not surprised that Charles was refused by Mazarin. Charles explains that he has one million in gold but cannot retrieve it for fear of



being caught. Athos offers to retrieve the gold for Charles so that he might regain the throne. The group heads for England.

In Chapter 17, D'Artagnan goes to see Athos and learns that he has gone to Paris. D'Artagnan then goes to see Aramis but finds only Bazrin. Aramis is also gone. D'Artagnan learns that Aramis is now a bishop. D'Artagnan sees the entourage of M. Fouquet pass by.

In Chapter 18, D'Artagnan seeks Porthos and only finds Mousqueton. D'Artagnan rides on for three days with the hopes of finding Porthos. He is informed that Porthos has gone to Paris. D'Artagnan laments having missed all three of his friends and sets off for Paris.

In Chapter 19, D'Artagnan is greeted by his servant, Planchet. Planchet has not seen d'Artagnan in a year and is pleased at the presence of his master. D'Artagnan tells Planchet that he will go to England to restore the monuments and Whitehall.

In Chapter 20, Planchet and d'Artagnan discuss the plan to restore Charles to the throne. They create a formal plan.

In Chapter 21, D'Artagnan deliberates about his plan. He says he must employ violence and will not tell Athos of the plan. D'Artagnan refines the plan and sets out for England. He arrives in Calais.

Chapters 13-21 Analysis

Louis is love sick and it shows in his every action. Cardinal Mazarin hopes to take advantage of it - and anything else he can - to gain more power. Louis takes another blow when D'Artagnan asks for a discharge. D'Artagnan's resignation is not easily received by Louis who honors his lieutenant's service and abilities. Louis arranges for a commission for d'Artagnan which is not revealed in its entirety but rather alluded to - d'Artagnan will go to England to restore Charles to the throne.

D'Artagnan seeks out the Three Musketeers for help and advice. He feels alone when none are at home. D'Artagnan does not know of their plans at this time.

D'Artagnan relies heavily upon the wise Planchet to help him with his plans. Planchet is invaluable to d'Artagnan and points out various issues with the plan. Planchet also gives d'Artagnan funds for the mission without expecting a return.



Chapters 22-30

Chapters 22-30 Summary

In Chapter 22, D'Artagnan meets with his hired soldiers and a fight ensues. The fight is settled and D'Artagnan prepares to leave for England.

In Chapter 23, Dumas threads his story with major events in French history. Dumas is not incredibly fond of the dry facts of history but finds it necessary to include them in the book. In Chapter 23, Dumas states: "In which the Author, very unwillingly, is forced to write a Little History" (Chapter 23, p. 168). The majority of this chapter is focused on the power of General Monk and his activities.

In Chapter 24, Athos is introduced to monk. He tells Monk about his service to Charles and Queen Anne. Athos tells Monk about the treasure buried near the Abbey, claiming it is his and that he wishes to retrieve it. Monk is suspicious and curious at the same time. He agrees to let Athos retrieve the gold.

In Chapter 25, Athos and Monk travel to the Abbey to find the treasure. They encounter several people along the way. Finally, Athos is able to open the vault but needs more assistance.

In Chapter 26, Athos finds it necessary to confess to Monk.

"My lord," said the Comte de la Fere, "you are an noble Englishman, you are a loyal man; you are speaking to a noble Frenchman, to a man of heart. The gold contained in these two casks before us, I have told you was mine. I was wrong - it is the first lie I have pronounced in my life, a temporary lie, it is true. This gold is the property of King Charles II., exiled from his country, driven from his palaces, the orphan at once of his father and his throne, and deprived of everything, even of the melancholy happiness of kissing on his knees the stone upon which the hands of his murderers have written that simple epitaph which will eternally cry out for vengeance upon them: -'HERE LIES CHARLES I'" (Chapter 26, p. 196).

Athos learns that Monk is not in favor of returning Charles to the throne. Moreover, Monk thinks that Charles cannot succeed. However, Monk will not stop Athos.

In Chapter 27, Athos is questioned in the disappearance of Monk. Athos tells the guards that no one but Monk is his equal so he shall not answer questions. Athos is put under house arrest. Athos assures the guards that they will have to answer for their actions when Monk returns.

In Chapter 28, days have passed and Monk has not returned.



D'Artagnan arrives to see Charles II. There is a long discussion about the appropriateness of the visit. D'Artagnan reveals to Charles that Monk has been kidnapped and brought to him.

In Chapter 29, Monk refuses to speak to Charles under any circumstance. D'Artagnan begins to think that he and Planchet have made a grave error in their plan.

In Chapter 30, Monk returns to camp. D'Artagnan is happy to see Athos, albeit under house arrest. Monk asks Athos why he stayed when he could have left. Athos is set free and D'Artagnan is taken to Newcastle.

Chapters 22-30 Analysis

Dumas gives some background on the history of the period, much of which contains information about the powerful General Monk and his service to Cromwell.

The plan to save Charles and return him to the throne commences. It is learned that Athos and d'Artagnan are of the same mindset, unbeknownst to each other. Athos feels a great kinship for Charles because of his father.

The plans of Athos and d'Artagnan cross paths at the camp. Monk is highly suspicious of Athos, who eventually comes clean with the truth about the gold. Monk could easily have arrested Athos, had him killed, and/or taken the gold for his own. Athos calls upon Monk's chivalry and honor to go the right thing.

D'Artagnan's plan is more dramatic and drastic. The kidnapping of Monk backfires when Monk refuses to acknowledge or speak to Charles. D'Artagnan will have to answer for his actions while Athos is set free. The reader may surmise that Athos will find a way to help his friend.



Chapters 31-42

Chapters 31-42 Summary

In Chapter 31, Monk returns to camp at the great relief of his people. D'Artagnan thinks about his failed plan. It is learned that Charles has left the Hague. Monk claims he is going to meet the legitimate king.

In Chapter 32, Athos and D'Artagnan meet once more at the Hostelry of the Corne du Cerf. Charles returns with great fanfare to London. He explains, "The king of England made his entree into Dover with great pomp, as he afterwards did in London. He had sent for his brothers; he had brought over his mother and sister. England had been for so long a time given up to herself - that is to say, to tyranny, mediocrity and nonsense - that this return of Charles II, whom the English only knew as the son of the man whose head they had cut off, was a festival for three kingdoms" (Chapter 32, p. 235).

Athos and d'Artagnan meet again. Athos chides d'Artagnan for his judgment and melancholy at the return of Charles. D'Artagnan is upset because he unknowingly sabotaged Charles and almost lost the chance to regain the throne.

In Chapter 33, D'Artagnan shows Athos the letter asking for an audience with the king. The king will also meet with Monk, who is turning over his power to Charles.

Charles expresses his gratitude toward d'Artagnan for his efforts. Charles wants to buy d'Artagnan's sword but d'Artagnan refuses. D'Artagnan and Athos leave the palace.

In Chapter 34, D'Artagnan asks for Monk's sword in return for his chivalry. He then sells it to Charles for 300,000 livres. D'Artagnan is now a rich man.

D'Artagnan is told to return home. D'Artagnan suddenly remembers the loyal Planchet. D'Artagnan appears melancholy and forlorn to Planchet. After a period of teasing, d'Artagnan tells Planchet of their great success in returning Charles to the throne and pays Planchet a hefty sum.

In Chapter 35, Lady Henrietta Stuart is introduced. On the canal, she meets d'Artagnan.

In Chapter 36, D'Artagnan leaves Calais. Along the way, he decides that he must meet with Monk to ensure that Monk holds no ill will toward him for the abduction.

In Chapter 37, D'Artagnan thinks about his new wealth and decides how best to use it.

"Decidedly," said D'Artagnan to himself, "I have struck a good vein. That star which shines once in the life of every man, which shone for Job and Iris, the most unfortunate of the Jews and the poorest of the Greeks, is come at last to shine on me. I will commit no folly, I will take advantage of it; it comes quite late enough to find me reasonable" (Chapter 37, p. 274).



D'Artagnan leaves Athos. Along the way d'Artagnan warns Menneville to be afraid of him.

Chapter 38: In which it is seen that the French Grocer had already been established in the Seventeenth Century

Athos and d'Artagnan part company. D'Artagnan plans to go to Paris while Athos is eager to return to la Fere. Planchet asks d'Artagnan to tell him the entire story. D'Artagnan says he no longer regrets making such a large payment to Planchet the grocer.

Chapter 39: Mazarin's Gaming Party

Louis, Anne of Austria, Mazarin and others recount the return of Charles.

Chapter 40: An Affair of State

Athos meets with Mazarin. Mazarin takes in Athos' awards that only a king or player would dare to exhibit all at once. Athos tells Mazarin that he has been sent as an ambassador by Charles to announce Charles' return to the throne.

Chapter 41: The Recital

Athos is introduced to the queen-mother. He delivers the news about Charles. Mazarin's contempt of Athos does not go unnoticed.

Chapter 42: In which Mazarin becomes Prodigal

Mazarin is shocked to see the meeting between Athos and Raoul. M. le Price is in attendance. The members of the court respect and fear M. le Prince. M. le Prince is introduced to Athos. The pair talks with Raoul. When Athos and Raoul are alone, Athos says he wishes to speak to his son alone, but that they are observed. Raoul is asked to go to la Fere when possible.

Mazarin becomes ill and believes he is dying.

Chapters 31-42 Analysis

A great deal of this section deals with General Monk and his power. It would seem that Monk was resistant to having Charles returned to the throne. However, Monk is in support of Charles. In return for his assistance, Monk is awarded with a new title. D'Artagnan wins Charles' admiration, as does Athos. D'Artagnan is now a rich man and he believes that he has finally achieved the station for which he was meant and never received under the French crown.

Louis, Anne, and Mazarin, among others, are surprised at the return of Charles. It is to be certain that the dismissal of Charles in his time of need will not be forgotten.



The interaction between Athos and M. le Prince is interesting. M. le Prince is one of the few people to whom Athos feels even remotely equal. Athos bows before no one unless he is a worthy man or royalty. It is clear that the people in the court are intimidated by M. le Prince, to the point of fear. This is quite unlike their reaction to their king, who is nothing more than a figurehead for Mazarin.

Mazarin maintains a great deal of power and continues to lord it over Louis. It is clear to Anne that Louis is unfit to be king. Louis is sure to go into a panic when and if Mazarin dies.



Chapters 43-52

Chapters 43-52 Summary

In Chapter 43, Guenaud is called to attend to the ailing Mazarin. Mazarin is sure that he suffers from gout and nothing more. Guenaud informs Mazarin that there have been complications; that the Cardinal is in fact very ill. Mazarin argues with Guenaud about his age. Mazarin is convinced that he is 52 years old. It is true that Richelieu died seventeen months earlier than that age but he had contracted a mortal disease. Guenaud recounts events that prove Mazarin to be 72 years old, not 52 years old.

Guenaud tells Mazarin that he has consulted every royal physician about Mazarin's mortal disease and nothing seems to be helping the cardinal's ailments. Guenaud declares that Mazarin has only 2 weeks to live. Mazarin immediately sends for Colbert, the clerk.

In Chapter 44, Colbert is nearby. Dumas gives details of Colbert's entrance into the court. Although Colbert was of low birth, he had learned how to be a good accountant and thereby gained grace. Mazarin speaks to Colbert of his impending death. Colbert makes it clear that he knows every detail of Mazarin's activities, particularly in regards to his great wealth.

Mazarin gives Colbert letters to be sent to Letellier, the queen-mother and others. Colbert leaves Mazarin.

In Chapter 45, a Theatin responds to Mazarin's request to give a confession. The Theatin tells Mazarin to be careful not to wear himself out by a long recitation. Mazarin questions the comment to which the Theatin says that Mazarin has lived life completely and therefore is likely to have a lot to say.

Mazarin details many of his sins, omitting thievery of the millions of livres. The Theatin tells Mazarin that he will absolve him of all of his sins except the theft. Mazarin must make restitution before he is absolved. Mazarin is distraught and says he cannot do it.

In Chapter 46, Colbert was nearby when the Theatin made his pronouncement. Mazarin asks Colbert if the Theatin could be right about the ill-gotten gains.

Colbert replies, "A Theatin, monseigneur, is a bad judge in matters of finance and yet it is very possible that, according to his theological views, your eminence has been, in a certain degree, in the wrong. People generally find they have been so, - when they die" (Chapter 46, p. 319).

Colbert and Mazarin discuss at length what should be done with the thirteen million livres. Although Mazarin believes he has earned and therefore deserves the money, he writes in his will that the money should be donated to the king upon his death. Mazarin believes that the king will not accept the money.



In Chapter 47, the news of Mazarin's illness garners as much attention as the news of Philippe and Henrietta's engagement. Anne finds Louis in his chambers, moping and given to melancholy as is his habit during times of stress. Anne chastises Louis for his behavior.

An usher brings Louis the letter from Mazarin. Fouquet waits nearby. Louis comments that there is not one king of France, but two. Anne says it is not so, that Louis has allowed Fouquet to become rich while in his service.

Fouquet tells Louis that he has returned from Vaux upon hearing about Mazarin's illness. Fouquet attempts to sell his fast horses to Louis. Anne is incensed and speaks her mind.

Fouquet talks of how kings deserve only the best. He says, "Luxury is the virtue of kings, sire: it is luxury which makes them resemble God; it is by luxury they are more than other men. With luxury a king nourishes his subjects, and honors them. Under the mild heat of this luxury of kings springs the luxury of individuals, a source of riches for the people" (Chapter 47, p. 329).

Anne learns of Mazarin's will and intention to give all of his wealth to the king. Anne insists that Louis accept immediately. Fouquet openly mocks Anne and tells Louis not to accept. Louis says he will take their advice under advisement.

In Chapter 48, Mazarin is transported to Vincennes. He awaits word from Louis regarding the money in the will. Mazarin believes the risk is slight and worth a gamble just in case he has a soul. Oddly enough, the cardinal is not a spiritual man by any means and devotes himself to materialism.

Mazarin complains to Colbert that he has not received word from Louis regarding the will. Colbert tells Mazarin to be patient. Mazarin has little time. Guenaud has kept his promise to say nothing of Mazarin's condition, only to say that he is young and full of vigor. At last Louis and Anne visit Mazarin after being apart for two days while Mazarin was moved. Mazarin seems surprised that the royals would travel to Vincennes to be with him.

Although Anne tries desperately to prevent it, Louis refuses the money, promising to give it to Mazarin's family.

As Mazarin lay dying, he gives Louis a last piece of advice - to never have a prime minister. Mazarin recommends to Louis that he should trust Colbert.

In Chapter 49, Mazarin, who will surely die soon, is determined to make one last entrance. He says, "An hour after leaving the chamber of the cardinal, he learned that the dying man, recovering a little strength, had insisted upon being dressed, adorned and painted, and seeing the ambassadors. Like Augustus, he no doubt considered the world a great stage, and was desirous of playing out the last act of the comedy" (Chapter 49, p. 341).



Mazarin dies in the night. Colbert is sent to inform Louis. Louis employs Colbert after learning that he is a financier. Colbert tells Louis of Mazarin's plan regarding the will the monies that Louis refused.

In Chapter 50, the news of Mazarin's death spreads fast. Louis calls several of his ministers into council including Fouquet. Louis informs the ministers that since Mazarin has died, he intends to rule France. Louis says he will ask for advice when it is needed.

Louis is quite pleased with himself after making the announcement and feels that it necessary to tell his valet that he is the king.

In Chapter 51, Raoul and Athos meet at a hotel. They discuss current events. Raoul speaks of his passion for Louise. It has been two years since he has seen her. The men speak for a while. Raoul worries that Louise may have lost interest in him. Athos tells Raoul to go to her. Raoul leaves.

In Chapter 52, Raoul does not meet d'Artagnan the next day. The following day the men meet. They journey on foot to have a meeting. D'Artagnan talks to Raoul about the death of Mazarin and how it is clear to him that Fouquet will now act as the king. Raoul is surprised by this announcement. The men discuss matters of the court.

Athos sends a letter to d'Artagnan, beseeching him to meet the king at the Louvre immediately.

Chapters 43-52 Analysis

Even with all of his wealth and power, Mazarin cannot escape disease and death. Guenaud informs Mazarin that there is nothing to be done, that only God can grant him grace now. Mazarin is panicked and immediately sends for Colbert so that his affairs may be tended to and his wishes carried out.

Colbert may too wise for his post. He accuses Mazarin of squandering nearly thirteen million livres that have been unaccounted for in addition to the forty million livres in Mazarin's account. Colbert is insubordinate and unapologetic for his actions, which includes examining the packet of letters written by Mazarin.

Mazarin's confession to the Theatin is not satisfying to the cardinal. The confession begins with a passage that cannot be translated as stated by the translator.

Anne is impressive in her role as the queen-mother. She does not mince words when it comes to her son, the king. Anne knows that Louis is immature and unsuited to the throne. Anne also knows that Fouquet is not to be trusted and resents his impertinence. It is frustrating for Anne to see how her son ignores her well placed advice.

Fouquet openly resents Anne and does not try to hide it. He openly mocks the queen-mother and is not berated by Louis. While Louis claims to take their advice under advisement, it is clear that it is Fouquet's opinion he cherishes.



Mazarin dies but has the last laugh when Louis refuses the money and then learns of the origin of the 13 million.

Louis declares that he will be the one running the kingdom now that Mazarin is dead. This brings about many issues. For one, Louis is completely ignorant of how the government works and is also incompetent. It can be surmised that Fouquet and Colbert will do everything in their power to take over. Any advice given by the wise queen-mother will surely be discounted or totally ignored. Louis is unprepared for the throne and will certainly make a mockery of the monarchy.

Now that Raoul's commission has ended, he is eager to return to his betrothed, Louise. However, Raoul is unsure of Louise's state of mind.

Raoul is upset by d'Artagnan's comments about the king and Fouquet. However, it is Raoul that is naïve and not d'Artagnan.



Chapters 53-60

Chapters 53-60 Summary

In Chapter 53, D'Artagnan jokes with Raoul about his appointment with the king. Raoul is confused. D'Artagnan says he must remind himself that Raoul is too young to understand many things. He says, "You are young, you are a boy, you are admirable. Oh, how I should like to be as you are! To be but twenty-four, with an unfurrowed brow, under which the brain is void of everything but women, love, and good intentions" (Chapter 53, p. 366).

D'Artagnan explains that the king surely wants to imprison him in the Bastille for a comment he made to the king at Blois.

D'Artagnan arrives at the Louvre and is taken to the king's cabinet. Louis takes a long time to tell d'Artagnan what is on his mind and d can barely hide his annoyance at the delay. D'Artagnan is introduced to Colbert.

After a long period of time, Louis tells d'Artagnan that he has assumed the role of the king after Mazarin's death. D'Artagnan tells Louis that the kingdom is now in the hands of the financiers and that Louis will see little, if any, of the money in the coffers.

Louis eventually gets to the point. He has a commission for d'Artagnan. Should d'Artagnan accept, he will resume his duties and be paid 20,000 livres. D'Artagnan will be named Captain of the Musketeers. After the mission is complete, d'Artagnan will be made a knight of the order. D'Artagnan is eager to know the details of the commission. Louis tells d'Artagnan that he wants him to go to Bretagne to view the country's fortifications. Louis wants to know if the fortresses are new or old. Afterward, d'Artagnan is to go to Belle-Isle with the same task. D'Artagnan accepts the secret commission.

In Chapter 54, M. Fouquet returns to his country house. Once inside, he locks himself inside his chambers to work. There is no real reason for the secrecy with which Fouquet works and uses a secret passage except to please himself and to ensure that he is not disturbed. There is a knock at Fouquet's door. This is unusual because Fouquet has ordered that he should not be disturbed and who would dare to disobey? At long last, Fouquet opens the door to find Madame la Marquise de Belliere. The Marquise declares that she has waited a year for the return of Fouquet's love and it has not been returned. Fouquet is married and there is no hope for the couple, yet they yearn for one another.

However, the Marquise has come to bring news. She has learned of Colbert's appointment as intendant. She warns Fouquet to watch out that Colbert is an ambitious man that has hatred for Fouquet.

In Chapter 55, Fouquet returns to his apartment by the secret passage. Gourville arrives to tell Fouquet that two of his friends are going to be sentenced to death. Fouquet refuses to believe that Louis would sign the warrant.



Gourville assures Fouquet that the gibbets have been purchased from Paris. Fouquet must rush to find out if they have arrived. Their arrival ensures that Louis has signed the warrant. Gourville also says that Fouquet must watch out, that Colbert is part of the secret council that ordered the executions.

On the way from the apartment Fouquet meets with the abbe who has many household issues to address.

In Chapter 56, Fouquet confronts Vatel in a pub regarding the condition of the wine cellar at his country house. Gourville pulls Fouquet away after the matter is settled. Fouquet begins to worry about Colbert. Gourville reassures Fouquet and says that conflict should be avoided.

In Chapter 57, fifty people await Fouquet at Saint-Mande. Fouquet attempts to keep from talking of matters of the court but talk of Colbert is unavoidable. Fouquet talks about the upcoming executions. He is implored to go to Paris and speak to Louis.

In Chapter 58, the party at Saint-Mande continues. Fouquet is urged to leave at once to see Louis. Fouquet leaves his guests to be attended by Gourville.

In Chapter 59, Fouquet is not as down-hearted as one might expect. He and his principal clerk, Pelisson, set off for the Louvre. Pelisson says he wish he was not ugly. If he were a pretty woman, he would seduce the concierge and the two prisoners would be able to escape.

Pelisson tells Fouquet that they must hurry but it will be too late to see Louis that night. Fouquet and Pelisson arrive at the door of Madame de Belliere. Fouquet is warned that they are not alone. Fouquet tells Madame that he wishes to speak to her about business. Fouquet says he intends to bribe the governor. Madame offers her assistance but nothing more.

"Monseigneur, no more such words, they bewilder me; I have been culpable in trying to serve you, without calculating the extent of what I was doing. I love you in reality, as a tender friend; and as a friend, I am grateful for your delicate attentions - but, alas! - alas! you will never find a mistress in me." Chap. 60, p. 417

Fouquet learns that Madame Vanel left the Madame's house and surely went to report to Colbert. Fouquet intends to return to Paris, knowing that his friends are lost.

Chapters 53-60 Analysis

Louis seems to be somewhat clever when it comes to rehiring d'Artagnan. D'Artagnan had long desired to become a knight and to be the Captain of the Musketeers. Louis reminds d'Artagnan that without his resignation from the court, d'Artagnan would not have had the opportunity to become rich. In Louis' mind, d'Artagnan owes him this duty. D'Artagnan does not argue.



Louis wants to ensure that Fouquet and others are not plotting against him. Fouquet owns Belle-Isle, so it would be a natural place to fortify in case of a coup.

The relationship between Madame la Marquise de Belliere and Fouquet is unclear except that they remain devoted to each other. Fouquet laughs at the news about Colbert yet knows that the Marquise is serious and has risked her reputation to bring him the news.

Fouquet learns about the warrant of execution for his two friends. Once again, Colbert's name is mentioned. Fouquet begins to believe that Colbert means to take over and perhaps ruin him in the process. Fouquet is prepared to fight Colbert, certain that the new intendant will be no match for him. Gourville also convinces Fouquet not to confront Colbert at this time.

Fouquet is convinced that he must speak to Louis as soon as possible about the executions.

Fouquet's plans are falling apart. His plan to bribe the governor into releasing his friends is ruined by Madame Vanel. Additionally, Madame de Belliere has no intention of becoming his mistress. Fouquet leaves Madame de Belliere's house disappointed on all counts.

Fouquet is not ready to admit defeat and plans to rescue his friends from the executioners. Although the abbe swears that it can be done, he worries for Fouquet's future and potential punishment for the riot.



Chapters 61-69

Chapters 61-69 Summary

In Chapter 61, the next afternoon people gather in Paris to watch the execution of the two thieves. Town criers walk through the crowds while people wait anxiously to see the excitement. Nearly 50,000 people have arrived.

"Consequently, the faubourg and the Rue Saint Antoine were crowded; for the population of Paris in those days of great executions was divided into two categories: those who came to see the condemned pass - these were of timid and mild hearts, but philosophically curious - and those who wished to see the condemned die - these had hearts that hungered for sensation" (Chapter 61, p. 424).

D'Artagnan prepares to go on his mission, his farewells given to the lone Planchet. D'Artagnan visits Athos. He and Raoul attend the execution.

In Chapter 62, the crowd becomes blood thirsty. As the condemned approach, d'Artagnan sets fire to his house. D'Artagnan and Raoul leave unscathed.

In Chapter 63, D'Artagnan and Raoul get away. D'Artagnan wipes the blood from his sword. He finds Fouquet standing with his comrades, grief stricken. D'Artagnan explains to Fouquet that he is to be paid 5,000 livres for a quarter's pay on behalf of Louis. Fouquet gives the diamond to d'Artagnan, explaining that it belonged to his recently dead friend.

In Chapter 64, D'Artagnan leaves Fouquet and goes to meet with Colbert. There is a throng of people there to wish Colbert well in his new post. Colbert learns of the riot. Colbert deduces that the riot was created by Fouquet. Colbert is suspicious of d'Artagnan's motives. D'Artagnan explains that King Louis told him to see Colbert. Colbert offers money to d'Artagnan to pay for the commission. D'Artagnan explains that Fouquet has already paid the commission.

In Chapter 65, D'Artagnan returns home. He informs Planchet that he will leave early in the morning. Planchet assures d'Artagnan that everything is ready. Planchet tries to learn about d'Artagnan's mission and offers money against its success. D'Artagnan merely says that the mission is not his so he refuses the money.

D'Artagnan arises early and leaves for his commission. He is in high spirits, thinking that his job will be easy.

In Chapter 66, Dumas speaks of d'Artagnan as a long suffering hero with muscles of steel and a heart made of bronze. D'Artagnan is a man that is not afraid of death or torture and yet he lives; he has only recently made an alliance with wealth.



D'Artagnan spends the journey thinking about his past deeds and spoils. He also analyzes his philosophies.

In Chapter 67, D'Artagnan stops at an inn for the night. He sees several other travelers including a meager man. D'Artagnan thinks that the meager traveler might make a good partner. D'Artagnan asks to dine with the man. The man reveals that he is a poet and because of his laziness, has devised a way of printing his verse rather than writing them.

In Chapter 68, D'Artagnan prepares to leave for Belle-Isle. However, it is clear that his ruse will not be sufficient to fool the host of the inn. D'Artagnan's quest would quickly be revealed to Fouquet.

D'Artagnan manages to arrange for a fisherman to take him to Belle-Isle. When the shoreline comes into view, D'Artagnan sees that the island has been fortified heavily with 1,700 men.

In Chapter 69, there is a flurry of activity as the boat lands. D'Artagnan spots a giant man with great strength and knows it must be Porthos. At the same time, Porthos spots d'Artagnan. The men greet each other warmly and talk about how they came to be at Belle-Isle. D'Artagnan is surprised that he did not know Porthos' whereabouts. Porthos explains that he came disguised as a miller and affected the behavior of a commoner.

The men were open about their friendship but instantly knew that their real names should not be revealed.

Chapters 61-69 Analysis

The riot is prepared to happen. Although it is not written, the reader can surmise that d'Artagnan and Raoul have a job to do at the Cathedral and are not present to witness the deaths.

D'Artagnan admits to Colbert that he was the one to kill Menneville. From that information, Colbert gathers that it was Fouquet that arranged for the riot.

D'Artagnan takes great delight in openly making fun of Colbert and amuses himself the entire way home. Ordinarily this would be unthinkable but it shows d'Artagnan's lack of regard for the man.

D'Artagnan is eager to begin his adventure and plans what he will do with his leisure time. It may be assumed that the commission will not be as easy as d'Artagnan expects.

D'Artagnan is wise to be cautious at this point in the story although he expects the trip to Belle-Isle to be all but fruitless. D'Artagnan must arrange for a way to get to Belle-Isle without being noticed. He is shocked to see that Louis was right and that Fouquet clearly has plans against the crown if he is fortifying Belle-Isle with an infantry.

D'Artagnan is shocked and thrilled to see Porthos, the only man strong enough to commit certain feats. The old friends embrace and question each other briefly while avoiding listening ears. It is certain that each has secrets which may or may not be revealed in the remaining five chapters.



Chapters 70-75

Chapters 70-75 Summary

In Chapter 70, it does not take long for Porthos to learn what d'Artagnan's mission is on Belle-Isle. D'Artagnan, however, is still mystified at Porthos' presence. It is strange to see the noble covered in dirt and mud. Porthos says he came to show people what a real man is and how to lift stones. Porthos says that he has come to Belle-Isle to study topography.

Porthos asks d'Artagnan why he is dressed as a commoner. D'Artagnan explains that he has quit the Musketeers. Mazarin had disgusted him and Louis displeased him. D'Artagnan tells Porthos that he has retired and has come to visit for a fortnight. Porthos offers money to d'Artagnan, who refuses and then talks about his fortune. Porthos informs d'Artagnan that he plans to visit Aramis in Vannes the next day. D'Artagnan asks to go along. The men set sail.

In Chapter 71, Porthos and d'Artagnan make the six hour journey. D'Artagnan tries to learn more about Belle-Isle but suspects that Porthos has no information. D'Artagnan hopes to learn more at Vannes. Along the way Porthos tells d'Artagnan that Aramis is a changed man, that the Bishop of Vannes has been touched by grace. There is a large procession. Porthos and d'Artagnan see Aramis, who is surprised to see them.

In Chapter 72, Porthos and d'Artagnan enter Aramis' chambers by a private entrance. Porthos guides d'Artagnan while d'Artagnan takes in the extravagance of Aramis' residence. Aramis greets his old friends with open arms. Aramis has some suspicions about d'Artagnan's dress and newly acquired fortune. D'Artagnan brings Aramis and Porthos up to date on his resignation, the return of Charles and the happenings at the court.

In Chapter 73, Aramis wakes Porthos from a sound sleep and tells him that he must leave for Paris immediately. It is clear to Aramis that d'Artagnan has learned of all the plans at Belle-Isle. Porthos groans at the thought of the thirty hours' ride but departs quickly.

In the morning d'Artagnan questions Porthos' absence. Aramis says that Porthos has gone fishing and suggests that d'Artagnan join him. D'Artagnan does. Upon his return d'Artagnan receives a letter from Aramis saying that he was called away suddenly. D'Artagnan chides himself for being duped.

In Chapter 74, Aramis makes his way to Saint-Mande to speak with Fouquet. Aramis informs Fouquet about d'Artagnan's mission. Aramis urges Fouquet to go to the Louvre immediately.



In Chapter 75, Louis meets with Colbert to discuss his affairs. He asks Colbert's opinion about Fouquet. Colbert believes that Fouquet is a criminal and should be arrested, tried and convicted.

Fouquet arrives to see Louis. Fouquet reports the activity on Belle-Isle, explaining that he had it fortified at his own expense to prevent intrusions by Londoners and to protect the land from the Dutch and other possible interlopers.

Chapters 70-75 Analysis

D'Artagnan is pleased to arrive at Belle-Isle, supposedly undetected. He is stunned to see Porthos who seems to be on the island under some ruse. Porthos tells d'Artagnan that he is there to study topography but d'Artagnan doubts Porthos' true mission, even after seeing plans for a fortress.

Porthos seems to have no qualms about taking d'Artagnan to see Aramis. It would seem that Aramis is the least fond of d'Artagnan, or perhaps the most suspicious. Neither man finds it easy to believe that d'Artagnan has resigned his commission as a musketeer. Moreover, d'Artagnan's new-found wealth is a cause for speculation, particularly on the part of Aramis.

D'Artagnan is angry with himself for being so easily duped by his friends. It is immediately apparent that Porthos and Aramis have gone to Paris to warn Fouquet of his mission.

Colbert puts himself in a good position with Louis. Louis is well on his way of being convinced that Fouquet has betrayed him and is planning some type of coup against the throne. Aramis' arrival at Saint-Mande is very timely. Fouquet has just enough time to get to the Louvre to explain his plans before d'Artagnan arrives with the news of the fortification on Belle-Isle.

Fouquet manages to explain himself in such a way that Louis applauds his actions. Meanwhile, Colbert sees his entire plan falling apart before his very eyes. Colbert will have to develop another scheme to discredit the powerful Fouquet, who clearly, has been underestimated.

This portion of the book ends at this stage.



Characters

Vicomte de Bragelonne

Raoul is the Vicomte de Bragelonne. He is also the son of the famous musketeer, Athos, who has been named the comte de la Fère. It was believed early on that Raoul was adopted by Athos. Later, it is learned that Athos is Raoul's biological father.

The three Musketeers have gone on to live separate lives and often use Raoul as a common thread that ties them together. Raoul does not often see his father, which brings him heartache, but he does as Athos wishes and stays at the conde's court.

Raoul is first introduced when he arrives in Blois on behalf of M. le Prince to inform Gaston of the King's arrival. Raoul is greatly admired by Montalais and Louise, the latter of which becomes his love. Raoul is 24 to 25 years old, well-dressed, and attractive. He is, in many ways, less formidable than his father and is referred to as somewhat nervous and delicate. Raoul also suffers from melancholia, particularly after he loses Louise to Louis XIV. Raoul, raised with the morals and chivalry of the Musketeers, cannot adapt to the ways of Louis XIV. Raoul often interferes, albeit unsuccessfully, in various government matters.

Raoul, distraught over losing Louise, goes to war in Africa and is killed.

Louise de la Vallière

Louise de la Vallière is one of the main characters in Alexandre Dumas' "The Vicomte de Bragelonne." She is also featured in a separate tome titled "Louise de la Vallière." Louise's official title is Mademoiselle Louise Francoise de la Beaume le Blanc, daughter of the Marquis de la Vallière. She is considered to be a great dark haired beauty.

Raoul, the Vicomte de Bragelonne, meets Louise when he arrives at the castle in Blois to inform Gaston of the king's arrival. Louise and her friend, Montalais, are practicing their penmanship in the tower and Louise is trying to decide how and what to write to the handsome prince Raoul. Raoul is an eligible bachelor with an interesting history. He would make a good husband for Louise. Louise is spurred on by the vivacious Montalais.

Louise de la Vallière approaches Raoul, which is extremely bold and inappropriate. The pair eventually becomes romantically involved. Louise, however, becomes a mistress to Louis XIV. Raoul cannot abide by this betrayal and becomes melancholy to the point of despondency over the loss of his lady love.



Mademoiselle Aure de Montalais

Mademoiselle Aure de Montalais is the maid of honor to the lady of the house and Louise de la Vallière's best friend and confidant. It is Montalais that encourages Louise to pursue Raoul. Montalais is one of the people plotting to have Louis XIV removed from the throne.

Louis XIV

Louis XIV is the King of France. He is a controversial figure in the novel and the cause of many plots to overthrow the monarchy. Louis eventually becomes the lover of Louise de la Vallière.

Athos

Athos, The comte de la Fère is a former Musketeer and the father of Raoul, the Vicomte de Bragelonne. Athos has become old and an alcoholic. He used his power to help Charles regain the monarchy in England. Athos dies when he learns of Raoul's death.

Charles II

Charles II was the king of England until he lost the throne during Cromwell's reign. Charles remained in exile in France until regaining the throne with the help of Athos and others.

Porthos

Porthos, a former member of the Three Musketeers, is now referred to as Monsieur du Vallon. Porthos is one of the people plotting against Louis XIV. Porthos is killed during a battle at Belle-Isle.

Aramis

Aramis, a former member of the Three Musketeers, is now referred to as the Bishop of Vannes or D'Herblay. Aramis also plots against the king but receives a pardon through intervention by D'Artagnan.

D'Artagnan

D'Artagnan is one of the famous Musketeers and the only one still in service. Unlike the others, D'Artagnan has not reached his preferred status in life. Also unlike the others, he



is loyal to Louis XIV. D'Artagnan dies just after reading a proclamation that he has been named a marshal of France.

Fouquet

Fouquet is the finance minister to Louis XIV. He works alongside Aramis to have Louis dethroned.

General Monk

General Monk is an official leader of England's Parliamentary forces. Monk is captured by D'Artagnan who makes the Monk promise to return Charles II to the English throne.



Objects/Places

France

The main setting in "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas is France. The year is 1660. Dumas claims in his book that he does not like to write about history yet it is known that Dumas was a great lover of history, particularly four periods in French history, including the sixteenth century, the 17th century during the reign of Louis XIV and Richelieu, the early 18th century, and the period just before the French Revolution. During the period of Louis' reign, France had become a nation-state.

Many major events had taken place during the story, most of which have at least some historical accuracy. Gaston did die in 1660, although the month may have been inaccurate. One of the main events during this time was the Treaty of the Pyrenees, which was solidified by the marriage of Louis XIV to Marie, the Spanish Infanta.

Cardinal Mazarin did live during this time and wielded a great deal of power in Louis' court. Likewise, Charles II was dethroned and England was run by Oliver Cromwell.

Despite what other authors were saying about this period in France, Dumas was quick to remind people that there was a sense of nobility and chivalry during this time that had been unmatched.

When it comes to descriptions of the country itself or its hamlets and cities, Dumas says little in the way of description. He refers to its people as being polite and courtly, its countryside as being beautiful and enchanting, unmatched in the eyes of its residents.

History

Dumas threads his story with major events in French history. Dumas is not incredibly fond of the dry facts of history but finds it necessary to include them in the book. In Chapter 23, Dumas states, "In which the Author, very unwillingly, is forced to write a Little History" (Chapter 23, p. 168).

The majority of the history in the book is in relation to France; more specifically, the reign of King Louis XIV and his servants Cardinal Mazarin and Fouquet. Louis XIV was a controversial monarch and clearly did not receive praise from many of the people in his country, many of which are mentioned in the story. The conflicts with Louis XIV cause him to be kidnapped and thrown into the Bastille so that his brother, Philippe, could take the throne. The plot is discovered and Louis is freed. There are notes about Louis' marriage to Marie as well as his tendency to take on many mistresses, including Raoul's love, Louise.

There are also many historical facts about England's monarchy and Parliament. Charles II has been dethroned and Cromwell has taken over England. In the story, Charles goes



to France for help. Upon being refused by Mazarin and Louis, Charles goes to the three Musketeers for help. The Musketeers had fought beside Charles' father and are eager to help the son of their comrade. Charles is eventually returned to the throne.

Blois

Blois is the home to Louise de la Vallière, who lives in the court of Gaston d'Orleans. Blois is in a relatively rural area. It is also home to the retired Athos.

Belle-Isle

Belle-Isle is the island that is under fortification against the king. The project is under the direction of Aramis.

Paris

Paris is the home to the French court, including the Palace of Louis XIV. It is also the new home to Louise de la Vallière.

Africa

Raoul, the Vicomte de Bragelonne, goes to war in Africa. During this time Raoul is shot and killed.

Bastille

The Bastille is a famous prison in Paris. It is the location where Louis XIV is held after being kidnapped.

England

England is the home country to Charles II, who has been removed from the throne. Charles is eventually returned to England and his right position as monarch.

London

London is the home to the English government, including Parliament.



Castle of the States

Castle of the States is an ancient castle in Blois. It is the home to Gaston and Madame, as well as maids Louise and Montalais. It is at this location that Raoul meets Louise. King Louis XIV also visits the castle on his way to wed Marie.



Themes

Betrayal

Betrayal is one of the main themes in "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas. Betrayal comes in many forms throughout the story from personal relationships to politics. One of the main forms of betrayal can be seen in the relationship between Raoul and Louise. Louise sets her sights on Raoul and the couple becomes betrothed. When the young Louis XIV meets Louise, he becomes enamored of the girl. Louise becomes Louis' mistress, betraying Raoul and breaking his heart. Raoul, who is distraught, goes off to war as a form of suicide. He dies in Africa.

In the realm of politics, betrayal occurs when there is a coup planned against Louis XIV. Many of the people in the king's court do not like Louis and are eager to take part in an effort to remove the young king from the throne. Among these people is Fouquet, Louis' finance minister. However, Fouquet, in hopes of receiving favor from Louis, betrays others involved in the plot.

Although there is tension between the Musketeers as they do not agree on the topic of the coup, D'Artagnan comes to the aid of Athos when Athos denounces Louis over the duel.

There are other examples of betrayal in government, including several events that take place in the English Parliament. There is a plot to return Charles to the throne of England using borrowed funds from French supporters. The plan, albeit fraught with difficulties and more betrayals, succeeds.

The Musketeers

Three of the famous Musketeers have since retired. Only D'Artagnan, now in his fifties, remains in service to the king. Unlike the other Musketeers, D'Artagnan is a supporter of Louis XIV, although it is clear that his loyalties also extend to his dear friends.

By this time, the Vicomte de Bragelonne steps in as a main character. Raoul, the Vicomte, is the son of Athos. It is believed that Raoul is adopted by Athos, and likewise his friends in arms, but in reality Athos is Raoul's biological father. Athos, now known as the Comte de la Fere, has retired to Blois where he is writing his memoirs. Athos is not completely retired, it seems, as he is eager to help Charles II regain the English throne in honor of Charles' father, a former comrade in arms.

Porthos, now known as Monsieur du Vallon, is also a retired Musketeer. However, he works at Belle-Isle with hopes of fortifying the island. Also at Belle-Isle is Aramis, now referred to as the Bishop of Vannes and/or Monsieur D'Herblay. Like Porthos, Aramis hopes to fortify Belle-Isle and is working with Fouquet to dethrone Louis XIV.



The plot and relationships between the Musketeers seems to be somewhat complex and conflicted. However, it is clear that the friends will remain loyal to one another until the end.

History

Dumas threads his story with major events in French history. Dumas is not incredibly fond of the dry facts of history but finds it necessary to include them in the book. In Chapter 23 Dumas states: "In which the Author, very unwillingly, is forced to write a Little History" (Chapter 23, p. 168).

The majority of the history in the book is in relation to France; more specifically, the reign of King Louis XIV and his servants Cardinal Mazarin and Fouquet. Louis XIV was a controversial monarch and clearly did not receive praise from many of the people in his country, many of which are mentioned in the story. The conflicts with Louis XIV cause him to be kidnapped and thrown into the Bastille so that his brother, Philippe, could take the thrown. The plot is discovered and Louis is freed. There are notes about Louis' marriage to Marie as well as his tendency to take on many mistresses, including Raoul's love, Louise.

There are also many historical facts about England's monarchy and Parliament. Charles II has been dethroned and Cromwell has taken over England. In the story, Charles goes to France for help. Upon being refused by Mazarin and Louis, Charles goes to the three Musketeers for help. The Musketeers had fought beside Charles' father and are eager to help the son of their comrade. Charles is eventually returned to the throne.

Style

Point of View

The point of view used in "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas is the third-person and omniscient perspective. This point of view works well throughout the book as there are several components and underlying factors that would not be revealed otherwise. The story itself is rather complex and only third person omniscient would allow the reader to follow and understand the activities of all of the characters as well as the dangerous and deadly events of the coup against Louis XIV, and the events that took place regarding the actions involving Charles II, and the complicated relationship between Louise, Raoul and Louis XIV. It also allows for the reader to follow and understand actions and thoughts of other characters in the book as well as those events of which one single character has no knowledge.

While the first person point of view might have been interesting when coming from the characters in their time of confusion, third person conveys the entire story and not just the subjective opinions of the characters. It also permits the reader to take part in the journey and development of each character in the story.

Setting

The main setting in "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas is France. The year is 1660. Dumas claims in his book that he does not like to write about history yet it is known that Dumas was a great lover of history, particularly four periods in French history, including the sixteenth century, the 17th century during the reign of Louis XIV and Richelieu, the early 18th century, and the period just before the French Revolution. During the period of Louis' reign, France had become a nation-state.

Many major events had taken place during the story, most of which have at least some historical accuracy. Gaston did die in 1660, although the month may have been inaccurate. One of the main events during this time was the Treaty of the Pyrenees, which was solidified by the marriage of Louis XIV to Marie, the Spanish Infanta.

Cardinal Mazarin did live during this time and wielded a great deal of power in Louis' court. Likewise, Charles II was dethroned and England was run by Oliver Cromwell.

Despite what other authors were saying about this period in France, Dumas was quick to remind people that there was a sense of nobility and chivalry during this time that had been unmatched.

When it comes to descriptions of the country itself or its hamlets and cities, Dumas says little in the way of description. He refers to its people as being polite and courtly, its countryside as being beautiful and enchanting, unmatched in the eyes of its residents.



Language and Meaning

"The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas was originally written in French and has been translated many times since it was first published and circulated. The original work was serialized and has since been collected into a series of works regarding the Musketeers.

The reader might find that some of the translations, while seemingly accurate, use a language with a consistently modern flair. That is, while there are many metaphors and euphemisms, particularly when the story involves sex, some of the language seems out of place when considering the time period in which it was written. If the reader can overlook the presumed modernization of the text, the stories hold up well and are undoubtedly as entertaining as they were in the original form.

The meaning of *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* may be deciphered in one of two ways. The reader may take the stories at face value and enjoy the tales that involve many adventures, complicated relationships and the themes involving politics and conspiracy.

If one chooses to delve deeper into the meaning of the book, it is possible to do so. For those who prefer to deconstruct the story, there are several underlying reasons for the characters' actions. Dumas includes an extensive section of notes on historical characters as well as a timeline of actual events that took place during the story. One can easily see the correlation between the prose and historical events, which makes reading even more entertaining.

Structure

"The Vicomte de Bragelonne" by Alexandre Dumas is a work of fiction that takes place during 1660 in France. The structure of "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" can often be somewhat confusing to the reader. "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" is actually part of a longer body of work involving the Three Musketeers. The books are as follows: Part One: "The Vicomte of Bragelonne;" Part Two: "Louise de la Vallière;" and Part Three: "The Man in the Iron Mask." There are sometimes conflicts regarding where one book should end and another should begin although in most accepted circles, e.g., Project Gutenberg, "The Vicomte de Bragelonne" is comprised of the first 75 chapters.

The work is chronological in nature. It is comprised of 651 pages, broken into 75 chapters. The shortest chapter is 4 pages in length; the longest chapter is 18 pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is 9 pages.

The story begins with the arrival of Raoul, the Vicomte de Bragelonne, arriving at Blois to inform Gaston of the arrival of the king. The story continues through a plot to dethrone Louis, the end of the relationship between Raoul and Louise, and the deaths of the legendary Musketeers Porthos, Athos, and D'Artagnan.



Quotes

"The light-hearted boy shrugged his shoulders with a gesture which said as clear as day: 'In that case I would rather be plain Jack than a prince'" (Chapter 1, p. 7).

"The pages, valets and officers, assembled in the office which led up to the refectory, welcomed the newcomer with the proverbial politeness of the country; some of them were acquainted with Raoul, and all knew that he came from Paris" (Chapter 2, p. 17).

"All eyes, after having admired the young king, so handsome and so agreeable, sought for that other king of France, much otherwise king than the former, and so old, so pale, so bent, that people called the Cardinal Mazarin" (Chapter 8, p. 53).

"My Lord Cardinal - Thanks to your good counsels, and, above all, thanks to your firmness, I have succeeded in overcoming a weakness unworthy of a king. You have too ably arranged my destiny to allow gratitude not to stop me at the moment when I was about to destroy your work" (Chapter 15, p. 109).

"After a moment's silence, in which D'Artagnan appeared to be collecting, not one idea but all his ideas, - 'It cannot be, my dear Planchet,' said he, 'that you have not heard of his majesty Charles I. of England'" (Chapter 20, p. 145).

"While kings and men were thus occupied with England, which governed itself quite alone, and which, it must be said in its praise, had never been so badly governed, a man upon whom God had fixed his eye, and placed his finger, a man predestined to write his name in brilliant letters upon the page of history, was pursuing in the face of the world a work full of mystery and audacity" (Chapter 23, p. 168).

"D'Artagnan, although he flattered himself with better success, had, nevertheless, not too well comprehended his situation. It was a strange and grave subject for him to reflect upon - this voyage of Athos into England; this league of the king with Athos, and that extraordinary combination of his design with that of the Comte de la Fere" (Chapter 31, p. 231).

"Mazarin rummaged a long time in his somewhat troubled memory to recall the name he ought to give to this icy figure, but he did not succeed. 'I am told,' said he, at length, 'you have a message from England for me.' Chap 40, p. 291

"Mazarin, in his character of cardinal and prime minister, was almost an atheist, and quite a materialist" (Chapter 48, p. 332).



"Fouquet, on leaving his house for the second time that day, felt himself less heavy and less disturbed than might have been expected" (Chapter 59, p. 413).

"If D'Artagnan had been a poet, it was a beautiful spectacle: the immense strand of a league or more, the sea covers at high tide, and which, at the reflux, appears gray and desolate, strewn with polypi and seaweed, with pebbles sparse and white, like bones in some vast old cemetery. But the soldier, the politician, and the ambitious man, had no longer the sweet consolation of looking towards heaven to read there a hope or a warning" (Chapter 68, p. 469).

"Louis began to float, undetermined between the hatred which this so powerful man inspired him with, and the pity he felt for the other, so cast down, who seemed to him the counterfeit of the former. But the consciousness of his kingly duty prevailed over the feelings of the man, and he stretched out his finger to the paper" (Chapter 75, p. 652).



Topics for Discussion

Discuss how the relationship has changed between Athos, Porthos, Aramis and D'Artagnan.

Explain which characters are in support of Louis XIV. Why? Which characters are against the king?

Explain why it is important for Charles II to be returned to the English throne. Who is involved in the coup?

Examine Fouquet's ambitions and reasons for plotting against Louis XIV.

Discuss the relationship between Raoul and Louise. What causes the relationship to end?

Discuss the friendship between Louise and Montalais. Are the women truly friends or are they confidants because of their circumstances and positions at Blois?

Discuss Raoul's reaction to the end of the relationship with Louise. What does Raoul do to ease his broken heart? What happens to Raoul?