

The Three Musketeers, All Swash and No Buckle

By Pat Cook

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STORY OF THE PLAY

(Loosely based on the work by Alexander Dumas...REALLY loosely based...you can't get the two of them in the same room together!)

Ever wonder if chivalry is dead? Wonder who killed it? Witness yet another telling of the Dumas classic of derring-do, dastardly deeds and dainty costumes. Young D'Artagnan seeks to become a musketeer or, at least see if that brochure about Paris was true or not. He is not in the City of Lights for more than ten minutes when he finds himself dueling all three of the musketeers. "I can take you and you right now, and then you," he tells Porthos, "can be my 10:00."

Before he can begin, he and his group are charged by Rochefort and the Cardinal's Guards. What follows are many scenes of swordplay and swashbuckling, with swords flying and swashes buckling.

This spoof of 17th century France pulls out all the stops, and is full of outrageous characters from a lying Cardinal who's into magic, to Milady DeWinter who cannot get rid of her mother. "You try to go to Paris without your mom tagging along!" she bemoans. Throw in a narrator, several star-crossed lovers, a race on stick horses, and a fundraising telethon, and your audience won't know what hit them. Full of fast-paced dialogue and action, this just could be the real story behind *The Three Musketeers*.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(7 M, 8 W, Plus Extras)

- COOKIE:** A rather stuffy hostess of Mastercraft Theater.
- DAR (D'ARTAGNAN):** A spirited young man, off to become a musketeer.
- MOTHER:** Dar's mother, a long-suffering woman who just cannot let go.
- ATHOS:** The more mature of the three musketeers, he is the brains of the outfit.
- PORTHOS:** A rather portly musketeer, he is never without his wit or his curiosity.
- ARAMIS:** The most dashing of the trio, he is gallant and probably the best swordsman.
- CONSTANCE:** A ravishing lady, seamstress to the Queen.
- ROCHFORT:** The Cardinal's "Sheriff," he is a villain who's very good with a rapier.
- CARDINAL RICHELIEU:** A conniving man, always in red, who plans to take over France.
- THE QUEEN:** The Queen of France, she is something of a conniver herself.
- MILADY DeWINTER:** A charming villainess who can beguile her way out of almost anything.
- MOM:** Milady's man-hungry mother.
- BUCK (BUCKINGHAM):** A handsome Prime Minister of England.
- LADY:** A host of a public access telethon.
- SALLY FORTH:** A serving "wench."

Also several EXTRAS who act as PALACE GUARDS (and generally do most of the sword fighting), TELETHON WORKERS, CHEERLEADERS, and other members of crowd scenes and battles as per the director's inclination.

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SETTING

The setting for this historical tale is, at best, a fragmentary one. Since the musketeers' travels take them to all parts of France and England, only a slight representation of each scene is needed. The base set contains two arches. On SL is a large stone facade, facing CS at an angle. In its center is a large portal with a paneless window DS of the entrance. On SR is another facade, also made of stone and also with a center arch and accompanying window. UPS is a long stone wall, about three feet high, which runs behind the two facades from one to the other.

PROPS

COOKIE: book, globe.
DAR: cloth bag, sword, cut-out horse, pouch of beans.
ATHOS: sword, mug, cut-out horse, pouch with necklace.
PORTHOS: sword, cut-out horse.
ARAMIS: sword, horse.
CONSTANCE: detachable sleeve.
ROCHEFORT: sword.
GUARDS: swords.
CARDINAL: deck of cards, box with a cloth, feathers.
LADY: microphone, plastic case.
BUCK: sword, cut-out horse, string of pearls.
DAR'S MOTHER: broom, kerchief.
QUEEN: gem-encrusted necklace, handkerchief.
SALLY: tray.
SET PROPS: 3 phones.

SOUND EFFECTS

Bang (sound of night falling)
Galloping horses
Phones ringing

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**ACT I
Scene 1**

(AT RISE: LIGHT comes up DSL to reveal a large chair. COOKIE walks into the light, carrying a large book.)

COOKIE: Good evening and welcome to Mastercraft Theater. I am your host, Cookie Alistaire. Don't ask me how I got that name. Tonight, we're going to seventeenth century France, and what else do you have to do? *(S/HE sits and opens the book.)* The story of *The Three Musketeers* has been told time and time again, and believe it or not, we've found some stuff you've missed. You know the book, the same one you had to read in high school and make book reports on, and you never read it, but you remember seeing a part of the movie so you made up the rest? That's the one. And those book reports, remember those? Several teachers wrote us and showed that you came up with some unusual results. *(SHE pulls out a page.)* For instance, here's one that listed the characters of Athos, Porthos and Aramis, stating... *(SHE reads.)* ..."Athos is a place on top of your house, Porthos is a hole in the side of a boat used like a window, and Aramis is the third member of the MOUSEketeers who smells really nice." *(SHE puts the page back.)* Well, tonight, producers Myron Ocre and Gerald Medi have put together a play to end ALL plays. So sit back and enjoy a Medi-Ocre production, *The Three Musketeers, All Swash and No Buckle.* *(SHE closes the book.)* Our story opens as D'Artagnan is about to begin his quest to become a musketeer. He is saying good-bye to his mother....

(LIGHTS fade on COOKIE and come up SR to reveal D'ARTAGNAN standing still while his MOTHER adjusts his clothes.)

MOTHER: Now you be sure and mind your manners, young man. I can't be there to pick up after you after every sword fight, you know.

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DAR: Yes, Mother.

MOTHER: And don't you go looking for a fight, but don't walk away from one.

DAR: But the captain of the musketeers said I can only join after I have distinguished myself in a battle.

MOTHER: OK, go looking for one. *(SHE steps back and looks at HIM.)* My, my, you remind me of your father.

DAR: But you've always said I'm such a dolt.

MOTHER: Hey! You want me to paint you a picture?

(DAR picks up his cloth bag.)

DAR: I know, you think him such a mule.

MOTHER: Oh, mule, is it? Listen, that'd be an insult to the mule.

DAR: Yes, Mother.

MOTHER: Your dad, a mule! It would be a promotion.

DAR: Well, I'm off.

MOTHER: Haven't I just been saying that?

DAR: I mean, I am on my way. Will you miss me? This is only the second time I've journeyed from home, you know.

MOTHER: Yeah, and the last time you brought back those magic beans, you remember that? And we had that THING grow beside the house...

DAR: Adieu, Mama.

MOTHER: Hah?

DAR: That's French.

MOTHER: Oh, yeah!

DAR: We're in France, you know.

MOTHER: Yeah, yeah. No postcards, OK? *(SHE waves a kerchief.)* Bye, Son.

DAR: I shall return a musketeer! *(HE moves SL.)*

MOTHER: Fine, sure, bye! *(DAR exits.)* Say hello to Annette and Cubby! *(To HERSELF)* I should've had puppies!

(SHE exits through the arch as the lights BLACKOUT.)

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COOKIE'S VOICE: And so our hero set out in search of his fortune in the King's Musketeers. And it wasn't long, because we have to get this thing finished in one night, before he found himself in downtown Paris.

(LIGHTS come up SR. There is now a sign on the facade wall proclaiming "The Musketeers' Headquarters, wipe lefitte." DAR enters from behind the facade. He moves to a bench and sits.)

DAR: Finally, here I am in downtown Paris. Mon Dieu, did that brochure lie to me or what? Well? *(HE rises and bends over, looking in his bag.)*

(ATHOS backs out of the doorway, yelling back.)

ATHOS: I wasn't cheating, I tell you. Those weren't my dice! *(HE backs over DAR and falls to the ground.)*

DAR: Pardonnez-mois?

ATHOS: Hah?

DAR: That's French.

ATHOS: Is that an excuse for your clumsiness, sir? *(HE tries to get up. DAR lends a hand to help him.)* Hey, hey, hey! I'm not like so much fallen laundry!

DAR: Could've fooled me from here.

ATHOS: Sir, I will not be made sport of, I...*(HE is halfway up and slips down again. He tries again and again fails. He reaches out a hand.)* You want to give me a hand there, boy?

DAR: But you advised me not to render aid.

ATHOS: Hey, don't do what I said, do what I say! *(DAR helps HIM to his feet.)* That's like irony.

DAR: I don't understand.

ATHOS: Well, it's the seventeenth century, you know. And you, sir, shall be taught a lesson!

DAR: *(Pulls his sword and readies himself.)* Whenever you say, sir. I am at the ready, as you can see!

ATHOS: Ah, but I am not. As you see, I am unarmed.

End of Freeview

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