CONSTANCE

It must be delivered tonight.

BONACIEUX

No, my child – it’s too dangerous! Rochefort’s men are all about, watching my every move. This afternoon, two of them followed me to the market.

D’ARTAGNAN

Rochefort…?

CONSTANCE

But Papa…!

BONACIEUX

What good will it do your friend if I am caught with this note? I will be thrown in the Bastille… and God knows what would happen to her.

D’ARTAGNAN

Pardon me, monsieur – this Rochefort character you speak of – does he wear an eye patch over his left eye?

BONACIEUX

(Suspicious)

Why? Do you know him? Is he a friend of yours?

D’ARTAGNAN

A friend? No! I only met him today. But that rogue took advantage of me and robbed me of a valuable possession.

(He turns to CONSTANCE.)

Mam’selle, you need a message delivered. Let me help you.

Why would you help me?

CONSTANCE

Because I’m in love with you.

D’ARTAGNAN

What?!?

BONACIEUX

But you’ve just met me.
D’ARTAGNAN
Nevertheless it’s true. My heart belongs to you. I am your servant – let me do your bidding.

(He sweeps into a bow. CONSTANCE looks to BONACIEUX. BONACIEUX holds up Treville’s introduction.)

BONACIEUX
Monsieur D’Artagnan comes highly recommended by Monsieur de Treville.

CONSTANCE
Monsieur D’Artagnan, you must understand – this undertaking is fraught with peril, not only for you, but for our Queen.

D’ARTAGNAN
The Queen?!

CONSTANCE
Oui. Should you be caught, it could mean your death.

D’ARTAGNAN
I am not afraid, mam’selle – and I promise you, I shall not fail.

(CONSTANCE and BONACIEUX exchange a look then...)

CONSTANCE
This message must be delivered to Number 75 Rue de la Harpe…

(She hands D’ARTAGNAN the note. Lights up on the front door to No. 75 Rue de la Harpe. D’ARTAGNAN slowly crosses to it.)

When you get there, knock twice.

(D’ARTAGNAN does so.)

After a moment, you will hear three knocks in response.

(We hear three knocks.)

The door will open – give the message to the man inside.

(The door creaks open slowly. BUCKINGHAM is revealed wearing a cape with a hood. D’ARTAGNAN gives him the note then turns back to CONSTANCE.)
Then what?

D'ARTAGNAN

CONSTANCE

Then leave and never look back.

(D'ARTAGNAN takes a few steps away from the door. Behind him, BUCKINGHAM comes through the door and reads the message. D'ARTAGNAN looks back at him.)

D'ARTAGNAN

This gentleman to whom I delivered the message – who is he?

his identity must remain a secret.

CONSTANCE

D'ARTAGNAN

Mam'selle – I swear by the sword of D'Artagnan, your secret is safe with me. I would rather die than betray it – or you.

BONACIEUX

D'Artagnan is risking his life, daughter – and we may need his help in the future. It's best that he know the whole truth.

CONSTANCE

Very well. The man to whom you delivered the message is his lordship, the Duke of Buckingham...

(BUCKINGHAM removes his hood and we see his face for the first time.)

England's Prime Minister. The message was a request to meet my friend in a secret location.

And your friend? Who is she?

D'ARTAGNAN

CONSTANCE

Her Majesty, the Queen of France.

(A special comes up on ANNE OF AUSTRIA, the Queen of France. Lights down on D'ARTAGNAN, CONSTANCE and BONACIEUX as the scene shifts to a secret chamber in the Palais du Louvre. BUCKINGHAM takes another step closer to ANNE.)
In fact, she is our dear Queen's protégée.

How delightful! Any friend of Her Majesty's is a friend of mine. I look forward to meeting her.

I will send her along directly.

(The ABBESS exits.)

Constance Bonacieux! It has to be! So you have escaped and are hiding here, eh? I wonder if your lover knows. Oh, D'Artagnan... vengeance will soon be mine.

(CONSTANCE enters behind her carrying a tray with a simple decanter of wine, a glass, and a small loaf of bread.)

Lady de Winter?

Come in my dear – come in.

The Abbess said you were hungry.

(CONSTANCE sets the tray on the table.)

Yes, I am. Thank you.

Is there anything else you need?

Just your company, if you have the time.

My company...?

I don't mean to presume. You no doubt have duties to attend to. It's just that I dine alone so often.
CONSTANCE
Have you no friends, madame?

MILADY
I've never stay in one place long enough to make any. A woman in my position must constantly be on the move. My very life depends on it.

CONSTANCE
I don’t understand.

MILADY
I have made an enemy of a very powerful man. If Cardinal Richelieu knew where I was...

CONSTANCE
Richelieu?! Oh, Madame, never say that you are in his bad graces as well? How awful!

MILADY
I'm afraid it's true – but tell me, dear child, what have you done to earn the Cardinal's ill favor?

CONSTANCE
Nothing but remain loyal to the Queen. Do you know her, Lady de Winter?

MILADY
I have never had the pleasure, personally – but I hear she is kind and good.

CONSTANCE
She is all that and more! Why, if it wasn't for Her Majesty, I would still be rotting in the Bastille. Instead, I am here and will soon be rescued by my one true love.

MILADY
One true love...? Sister – I'm shocked!

CONSTANCE
Oh, I am not really a Carmelite...

*(She removes her veil.)*

This is just a disguise to keep me safe.

MILADY
What a relief – especially for your one true love. What's he like?

CONSTANCE
D'Artagnan is the most handsome, the most brave and good.
He loves you?

MILADY

With all his heart. And I him.

CONSTANCE

MILADY

Lovely. When do you expect to see this Monsieur D’Artagnan again?

Any day now.

CONSTANCE

MILADY

That soon? Well, we must drink a toast to celebrate.

(She turns her back on CONSTANCE and pours a glass of wine.)

CONSTANCE

But there is only one glass, Madame.

MILADY

Then we will share – but you must take the first drink.

Oh no, Madame...

CONSTANCE

I insist...

(During the following, she removes the vial of poison from her pocket and pours a few drops into the wine.)

You have taken the time to spare a few words with a lonely old woman. It’s the least I can do.

(She turns back to CONSTANCE with the glass of wine.)

To Monsieur D’Artagnan’s future happiness.

(Suddenly we hear the sound of four galloping horses approaching from a distance.)

CONSTANCE

Listen! Someone’s coming!
(CONSTANCE runs to the window and peers out.)

CONSTANCE (cont.)
It's D'Artagnan! D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers! They've come for me!

(She starts to run for the door. MILADY steps in front of her.)

MILADY
You forgot our toast, Constance, dear.

CONSTANCE
There's no time for that -- D'Artagnan's here!

(She tries to move past but MILADY blocks her way. MILADY pulls a knife, placing the wine back on the table.)

MILADY
I'm afraid I must insist.

CONSTANCE
I don't understand...

MILADY
Did you think for a moment that the Cardinal would ever escape let you escape? After all you did to betray your country, giving aid to the enemy...

CONSTANCE
Enemy...?

MILADY
The Duke of Buckingham is an enemy to France!

CONSTANCE
Wait, wait... You! I know who you are. You are the woman working for Rochefort, the one who stole the diamonds from Lord Buckingham! You are the woman...

MILADY
(Interrupting)
...who is going to end your life.

(MILADY starts for CONSTANCE.)

CONSTANCE
No!