It must be delivered tonight.

CONSTANCE

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.

D’ARTAGNAN

(He turns to CONSTANCE)

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

CONSTANCE

Why would you help me?

D’ARTAGNAN

Because I’m in love with you.

BONACIEUX

What?!

CONSTANCE

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.

(CONSTANCE looks at 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.)
D’ARTAGNAN

Then what?

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.

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

Her Majesty, the Queen of France.

(CONSTANCE looks down; her face is replaced by Anne of Austria, whose expression is of determination and resolve. The scene shifts to a secret chamber in the Palais du Louvre. BUCKINGHAM takes another step closer to ANNE.)
ARAMIS
Athos, I beg you to reconsider this, at least until your shoulder has healed...

ATHOS
My shoulder is fine!

(He turns to exit and collides with D'ARTAGNAN, who has entered at a run. He grabs his shoulder, screaming in agony.)

D'ARTAGNAN
Oh. Excusez-moi, monsieur — I didn’t see you there. I’m in a bit of a hurry...

(D'ARTAGNAN starts to leave.)

ATHOS
You’re in a hurry, are you? And because of that you shove me, say “excusez-moi” and you think that’s enough?

D'ARTAGNAN
I did not shove you intentionally. It was an accident, and I have apologized for it. That is enough.

(D'ARTAGNAN starts off again.)

(Loudly)
Such boorish manners. No doubt he’s from the country.

(D'ARTAGNAN stops and turns back.)

D'ARTAGNAN
Do you mean to insult me, monsieur?

ATHOS
If you find insult in the truth.

D'ARTAGNAN
The truth? I shall tell you the truth. The truth is I accidentally jostled your wounded shoulder and now you are in pain. The truth is your shoulder is wounded because you did not parry in time...

ATHOS
What?!
How do you know this, boy?

ARAMIS

Are you a spy?

D'ARTAGNAN

I'm no spy. I was in Monsieur de Treville's office and heard the whole story.

PORTHOS

Lurking in Treville's office, were you? He is a spy!

D'ARTAGNAN

I wasn't lurking. I was there to ask Monsieur de Treville for a position in the King's Musketeers.

ATHOS

You? A musketeer? Ho! That's a joke.

D'ARTAGNAN

I assure you, monsieur that were we to duel, it is I who would have the last laugh, not you.

ATHOS

We shall see about that...

(ATHOS draws his sword, though it pains his shoulder to do so.)

D'ARTAGNAN

I will not fight you — not yet.

ATHOS

Aha! Afraid, are you?

D'ARTAGNAN

Not afraid, no — but you are wounded. I won't take unfair advantage. We shall fight when your shoulder is healed.

That could take days!

PORTHOS

He is afraid.

(D'ARTAGNAN pulls the vial of healing potion from around his neck and holds it up to ATHOS.)