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?

CONSTANCE

Any day now.

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.

CONSTANCE

Oh no, Madame…

MILADY

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!

END
I thought you were dead.

And I you.

What are you doing here? What do you want?

First things first. How did you manage to survive the hanging? Or did the devil resurrect you for his own purposes?

(MILADY runs for the door. ATHOS stops her.)

We'll have none of that. Answer the question. Answer me!

You forgot to bind my hands.

You were unconscious.

I woke up. I was able to reach my hunting knife...

And you cut yourself down. Tsk, tsk – how clumsy of me. Next time I'll know better.

(He pushes her away then turns and bolts the door.)

And then you swam to England and married the Baron de Winter – even though you were still married to me.

By all reports, you were dead.

No, not dead. Just disappeared. I wanted to leave the past behind me.

Because I hurt you... You loved me that much. I loved you, too.
How dare you say that to me?

I dare because it's true!

And I am to believe you? A liar? A murderer!

An innocent falsely accused...

You were convicted! You were branded with the fleur-de-lis!

They were mistaken! You are a man of the world. Surely you understand that mistakes sometimes happen?

I married you, didn't I?

(She remains silent. Beat.)

If you were truly innocent, why didn't you tell me?

I was afraid you wouldn't believe me. And I was right... wasn't I?

So this was all one big misunderstanding.

Yes.

(She approaches him slowly.)

And the diamonds you stole from the Duke of Buckingham? Was that a misunderstanding as well?

(She stops.)
How do you know about that?

Answer the question!

Yes, I stole those diamonds. And I would do it again.

I see.

Are you faulting my loyalty to the King?

To the King or to the Cardinal?

Is there a difference?

And how will His Eminence react when he learns you poisoned a young woman? Or does the Church now sanction murder?

My, my – it seems nothing I do is secret for long.

That poor woman was an innocent pawn...

That woman was the Queen’s lackey and therefore a traitor to the King! And as for the Cardinal...

(She pulls Richelieu’s note from her pocket and reads aloud.)

“It is by my order and for the benefit of the State that the bearer of this note has done what has been done.” Signed by Richelieu himself.

(She puts the note back in her pocket.)

So you see, husband, my actions were completely within the law.
ATHOS

You amaze me.

MILADY

I did what I had to do to survive.

(She takes a step closer to him.)

But I never meant to hurt you. I'm sorry for that.

(Another step closer. They are face to face.)

So, so, sorry...

(She leans in and kisses him softly. At the same time she reaches into the pocket of her cloak and pulls out her knife. As the kiss deepens she raises the knife, preparing to plunge it into him. ATHOS's hand suddenly reaches up and grips her wrist. He breaks the kiss and watches her. As his grip tightens she is forced to drop the knife. ATHOS places a hand on either side of her head and looks deeply into her eyes.)

ATHOS

You are so beautiful. I would have loved you forever.

(He twists her head suddenly. We hear a loud snap as her neck breaks. She falls to the floor, dead. ATHOS crouches next to her body, and removes the note from her pocket. There is a knock on the door.)

INNKEEPER (O.S.)

Madame? Madame, it is I, the Innkeeper.

(ATHOS crosses to the door, unbolts it and opens it. The INNKEEPER steps into the room, carrying a tray.)

INNKEEPER

I have brought you food and drink...

(He looks at ATHOS, surprised, then spies MILADY on the floor.)

ATHOS

She's not hungry.
MILADY

Rochefort! What a lovely surprise.

(D’ARTAGNAN turns around slowly, his face in shadow.)

I thought you were meeting with the Cardinal, darling. Or was last night so wonderful you couldn’t wait any longer? It was wonderful for me. The way you held me in your arms — you made me feel young again. I have a gift for you.

(She pulls a medallion from around her neck.)

This medallion was a gift from someone who once loved me. He’s gone now, so I am free to give it to the one I love.

(She places it around his neck.)

You’ll think of me when you wear it, won’t you, darling…?

(She moves to kiss him. D’ARTAGNAN avoids it.)

You’re not Rochefort! Who are you?! Let me see your face.

(D’ARTAGNAN removes his hood.)

It’s you! What are you doing here? How did you get in?! Help! Help!

(She runs for the door. D’ARTAGNAN runs and intercepts her. He grabs her arms and shakes her. Her left shoulder faces downstage.)

D’ARTAGNAN

Where is she? What have you done with Constance Bonacieux? Tell me!

MILADY

Never!

(She pulls away from him, inadvertently tearing the left sleeve off her gown. We see a fleur-de-lis branded on her shoulder.)

D’ARTAGNAN

God in Heaven. The fleur-de-lis…

(She looks down, sees that she has been exposed, and pulls a knife from within her cloak.)
MILADY

You fiend from hell! I'll kill you!!

(She leaps on him and stabs him. D'ARTAGNAN grabs his abdomen. She tries again. He grabs the hand with the knife and they struggle back and forth. D'ARTAGNAN succeeds in pushing her away. She comes at him again like a hellcat. He blocks the knife with one hand and punches her in the stomach with the other. She falls to the floor. D'ARTAGNAN straddles her and puts his hands around her throat.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Where is she, damn you — where is she!

(MILADY stabs him in the thigh.)

Aaggh!

(He rolls off her, grabbing his leg in agony. She rolls with him and strikes once more. He moves his head at the last minute and the knife sticks in the floor. He punches her in the face and she falls backward. D'ARTAGNAN staggers to his feet, bleeding. He starts off. MILADY scrambles to pull her knife out of the floor. D'ARTAGNAN is gone.)

MILADY

Come back, you coward! I'll kill you, if it's the last thing I do! Come back!

(She screams in despair and collapses to the floor. Black out on Milady's Chambers. Music under as the scene shifts to the Cardinal's Headquarters. Lights up on RICHELIEU and ROCHEFORT. RICHELIEU is pacing.)

RICHELIEU

You mean they're gone? All four of them? Disappeared, without a trace?

Well...

RICHELIEU

First Buckingham, now this. What sort of spy are you, Rochefort?! I pay you to keep track of people!

ROCHEFORT

I promise you, Your Grace, that D'Artagnan and the Three Musketeers will be found.