(D'ARTAGNAN does so. ATHOS finishes his toast.)

ATHOS (cont.)
To a long life, and to those who, unfortunately, won't live to see it...

(ATHOS, PORTHOS, and ARAMIS each throw their drink in the face of their closest enemy. D'ARTAGNAN follows suit. Music under as the THREE MUSKETEERS and D'ARTAGNAN jump on their enemies. Flintlocks misfire, chairs are broken over heads. SAILOR #1 accidentally shoots SAILOR #2 – in other words, it's a big brawl! ATHOS shoves D'ARTAGNAN towards the door.)

ATHOS
Go on! Get out of here!

D'ARTAGNAN
But what about “all for one and one for all?!”

ATHOS
No time for that! That boat sails in a few minutes – to England!

(ATHOS pushes him off then turns back to the fight. It is obvious that the THREE MUSKETEERS are gaining the upper hand as the scene shifts to Lord Buckingham's study. BUCKINGHAM is sitting at his desk working. BRADDOCK, his butler, enters.)

BRADDOCK
Lord Buckingham.

BUCKINGHAM
What is it, Braddock?

BRADDOCK
A man is here to see you, m'lord. A Frenchman.

A Frenchman?!

BUCKINGHAM

BRADDOCK
Yes, m'lord. He has a letter for you.

(Braddock is holding out his hand)

BUCKINGHAM
Let's see it.
BRADOCK
I'm afraid he insists on giving it to you himself, m'lord.

BUCKINGHAM
Very well. Send him in.

(BRADOCK gestures off. D'ARTAGNAN enters and bows.)

D'ARTAGNAN
Lord Buckingham. My name is D'Artagnan. I bring you a letter from my Queen.

BUCKINGHAM
Queen?!

(He turns to BRADOCK.)

That will be all, Braddock.

(BRADOCK bows and leaves.)

All right, then, Monsieur D'Artagnan – let's see it.

(D'ARTAGNAN hands it to him. BUCKINGHAM opens it and reads silently. He finishes then considers a moment before turning back to D'ARTAGNAN.)

Are you aware of the contents of this letter?

D'ARTAGNAN
Though I never read it, I know the gist of it, monsieur.

BUCKINGHAM
You are here to retrieve the diamond set.

D'ARTAGNAN
And return it to Her Majesty as quickly as possible. We have just a few days left before the King's ball.

BUCKINGHAM
Of course.

(He crosses to his desk, opens a drawer and pulls out the box. He studies it for a long moment.)