

## CARDINAL RICHELIEU SIDES

77.

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.)*

**START**

RICHELIEU

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

ROCHEFORT

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.

*(MILADY enters. She wears a cape over her torn dress.)*

MILADY

I have seen one of them tonight.

RICHELIEU

What?

ROCHEFORT

Milady! What happened?

MILADY

D'Artagnan attacked me in my chambers.

RICHELIEU

How did he get in your chambers?

MILADY

He was in disguise.

*(To ROCHEFORT)*

I thought he was you.

RICHELIEU

Why would Rochefort be in your chambers?

*(MILADY and ROCHEFORT just stare at him.)*

Ohhhh...

ROCHEFORT

I will find him and I will kill him.

MILADY

There is no need.

ROCHEFORT

Why? Did *you* kill him?

MILADY

Not yet, but Your Eminence, with your permission, I shall track down this fiend and exact my revenge.

RICHELIEU

Permission denied.

MILADY

Your Eminence...

RICHELIEU

I have no time to spare on petty retribution. We have more important matters that require your attention.

MILADY

Such as?

RICHELIEU

The Duke of Buckingham. I want him assassinated.

MILADY

Oh.

RICHELIEU

That man has humiliated me – humiliated *France* – long enough. He needs to die.

MILADY

How?

RICHELIEU

In every age and in every country, there are fanatics who long for the martyr's crown. The Puritans in England hate Buckingham – they preach that he is the anti-Christ.

MILADY

Go on.

RICHELIEU

I need a woman – a handsome, intelligent woman – to inspire such a fanatic to take action against the Duke. This woman would be the savior of France. Do you know any such woman, Milady?

MILADY

I believe I do.

RICHELIEU

Excellent. You will sail for England on the next tide. Once Buckingham's demise has been arranged, return to this country. The sisters at Carmelite Convent in Bethune will be expecting you.

MILADY

I am to hide in a convent?

RICHELIEU

Until you receive further instructions, yes. Now, if you have no more questions...

MILADY

One moment, Your Eminence. I have agreed to help you deal with your enemies. I should now like your help in dealing with mine.

RICHELIEU

You are referring to Monsieur D'Artagnan, of course.

MILADY

I want him dead.

ROCHEFORT

Your Eminence, I should be only too happy to oblige Milady...

MILADY

No. Thank you. I want him for myself.

*(To RICHELIEU)*

I need not remind you that it was D'Artagnan who returned the diamonds to the Queen. That makes him as much an enemy of France as Buckingham.

*(RICHELIEU considers.)*

RICHELIEU

When you return from England, go to the convent at Bethune. Rochefort will find Monsieur D'Artagnan and bring him to you there. After that, you may do with him what you will.

MILADY

Thank you, Your Eminence.

*(RICHELIEU nods then turns away.)*

One more thing. If I am caught, I would like proof that I acted on your authority. As a safeguard.

RICHELIEU

What kind of proof?

MILADY

A written order ratifying in advance everything I might feel compelled to do in the interests of France.

*(RICHELIEU considers for a moment, then crosses to his desk, picks up a quill and scratches out the note. He picks up the paper, blows on the ink then hands it to MILADY.)*

RICHELIEU

Will this do?

*(She reads it quickly.)*

MILADY

Perfect.

*(She folds it and tucks it into her bosom.)*

RICHELIEU

That note won't help you should you be caught in England.

MILADY

I won't be caught in England.

RICHELIEU

Buckingham knows you stole the two diamonds. If word gets out you're on English soil, he'll hunt you down and lock you up in Newgate Prison. Then you'll be hanged.

MILADY

I won't hang.

RICHELIEU

There's no escaping Newgate.

MILADY

Yes there is...

*(She pulls a vial of poison from a pocket in her cloak and holds it up.)*

RICHELIEU

What's that?

MILADY

Poison. I will not hang, Monseigneur – I will not hang.

*(She returns the vial to her pocket and starts to exit.)*

Lady de Winter? RICHELIEU

Yes? MILADY

You forgot something. RICHELIEU

*(RICHELIEU holds out his hand. MILADY crosses back to him, genuflects, kisses his ring then exits. ROCHEFORT takes a few steps after her then turns back to RICHELIEU.)*

What are you waiting for? Find them! Find those Three Musketeers! **END**

*(ROCHEFORT hurries off. Music under as the scene shifts to a room in Amiens, two weeks later. During the following, ATHOS is practicing his fencing moves.)*

D'Artagnan is dead, I tell you. ARAMIS

He's not dead! ATHOS

Then how do you explain it, Athos? We've been here two weeks now... PORTHOS

Two excruciatingly long weeks. ARAMIS

And we've not seen him, we've not heard from him... PORTHOS

Nor have we heard from Monsieur de Treville in all this time. Are we to presume he is dead as well? ATHOS

You're missing the point. ARAMIS