

CONSTANCE SIDES

90.

ABBESS

In fact, she is our dear Queen's protégée.

MILADY

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

ABBESS

I will send her along directly.

(The ABBESS exits.)

MILADY

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.

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

CONSTANCE

Lady de Winter?

MILADY

Come in my dear – come in.

CONSTANCE

The Abbess said you were hungry.

(CONSTANCE sets the tray on the table.)

MILADY

Yes, I am. Thank you.

CONSTANCE

Is there anything else you need?

MILADY

Just your company, if you have the time.

CONSTANCE

My company...?

MILADY

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.

MILADY

He loves you?

CONSTANCE

With all his heart. And I him.

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