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Alexandre Dumas

The Three Musketeers

Read by **Bill Homewood**



CD 1

1	Chapter 1	7:00
2	'Your mother will add to them a recipe for a certain balsam...'	7:13
3	Now, as at the moment in which...	6:49
4	As to the gentleman...	5:30
5	His interlocutor, whose head appeared...	5:49
6	Unfortunately, there was one circumstance...	6:24
7	Chapter 2	6:37
8	M. de Treville employed this powerful weapon for the king...	6:29
9	On the landing they were no longer fighting...	6:47
10	'What do you think of the story Chalais's esquire relates?'	5:44
11	Chapter 3	7:09
12	'Well, my Captain,' said Porthos...	7:30

Total time on CD 1: 79:05

CD 2

1	D'Artagnan bowed without replying...	6:21
2	'My friend,' said he, slowly...	5:53
3	Chapter 4	6:54
4	The outlook was sad.	5:28
5	This time d'Artagnan was not hasty.	6:02
6	Chapter 5	4:39
7	'You confuse me,' replied Athos...	6:20
8	It was a quarter past midday.	6:42
9	This contest at length exhausted Jussac's patience.	6:04
10	Chapter 6	6:05
11	'Yes, sire; as complete as that of the Bridge of Ce.'	6:00
12	'And as since that which you have said...'	5:47
13	D'Artagnan and his companions remembered their audience...	6:40

Total Time on CD 2: 79:01

CD 3

1	Toward six o'clock M. de Treville announced...	6:50
2	'Your Majesty probably refers to God,'...	5:41
3	'Thanks, sire, thanks,' said the duke...	6:55
4	Chapter 7	7:03
5	And now that we are acquainted...	6:43
6	'Not at all; it interests me very much,'...	7:22
7	Chapter 8	5:17
8	'I have heard Monsieur d'Artagnan spoken of...'	5:51
9	'He is your man, do you say?'	6:35
10	Chapter 9	5:23
11	'Well, and by my faith,' said Athos...	5:56
12	'She is goddaughter to Laporte...'	5:56
13	Chapter 10	2:50

Total time on CD 3: 78:29

CD 4

1	The interrogatories, preceded by a minute search...	5:30
2	On being left alone with Mme. Bonacieux...	6:56
3	'Stop,' said d'Artagnan...	5:41
4	Chapter 11	7:36
5	Paris for two hours past had been dark...	7:17
6	But was it on her own account...	7:53
7	'All this will be cleared up at a later period,' ...	7:29
8	Very well, monsieur,' said Planchet.	7:19
9	Chapter 12	6:37
10	Anne of Austria took two steps forward.	7:39
11	'What object, think you...'	7:44

Total time on CD 4: 77:45

CD 5

1	Chapter 13	6:48
2	M. Bonacieux was in the greatest perplexity possible.	6:26
3	'But that is not a man's name...'	7:17
4	Chapter 14	8:00
5	'In that case, monseigneur...'	6:39
6	The cardinal being left alone...	6:42
7	Chapter 15	5:37
8	'I have the honour to inform your Majesty,'...	6:12
9	'That concerns your Majesty more than me,' said the cardinal.	6:02
10	Chapter 16	6:32
11	The queen was in the midst of her women...	6:23
12	'To make, madame, in the name of the king...'	5:46

Total time on CD 5: 78:30

CD 6

1	The chancellor carried the letter to the king...	8:28
2	Chapter 17	7:31
3	This expression sprang from the very bottom of the heart...	7:59
4	The couple, then, although they had not seen each...	7:29
5	'Madame,' replied Bonacieux...	7:13
6	Chapter 18	7:25
7	D'Artagnan drew back the bolt with precaution...	7:00
8	Chapter 19	5:56
9	His first visit was to Aramis...	5:48
10	'To London, gentlemen,' said d'Artagnan.	6:01
11	Chapter 20	7:50

Total time on CD 6: 78:45

CD 7

1	The night was quiet enough...	4:59
2	D'Artagnan and Planchet followed the gentleman...	5:27
3	'We will keep a sharp lookout for them...'	5:46
4	Chapter 21	7:30
5	'We are safe on that side,' said Buckingham...	7:26
6	'You have said, my Lord...'	6:42
7	Chapter 22	5:08
8	The king made his way through the crowd without a mask...	5:53
9	The attention which we have been obliged to give...	5:45
10	Chapter 23	5:52
11	M. Bonacieux was at his door.	5:54
12	'Now,' said Treville, lowering his voice...	6:33
13	D'Artagnan thought of the appointment...	5:57

Total time on CD 7: 78:58

CD 8

1	Chapter 24	5:46
2	There was something melancholy in this brazen voice...	5:58
3	About seven o'clock in the evening...	5:25
4	'After shutting the gate behind them...'	6:30
5	Chapter 25	6:55
6	'Pardon, my dear Monsieur Bonacieux...'	6:55
7	The host, on seeing a young man followed by a lackey...	6:54
8	'Nevertheless, while acknowledging the truth of what he said...'	7:02
9	'Never mind; if his mistress abandons him...'	6:28
10	'As it was a time of war between the Catholics and the Huguenots...'	7:27
11	Chapter 26	5:38
12	Bazin was then at the height of joy.	6:05

Total time on CD 8: 77:08

CD 9

1	'Now,' continued Aramis...	7:26
2	'How will you prove,' continued the Jesuit...	6:47
3	When left alone, the two friends at first kept an embarrassed silence.	7:42
4	'And why today, rather than yesterday or tomorrow?'	6:55
5	Chapter 27	6:53
6	Indeed, when placed beside M. de Treville...	7:06
7	D'Artagnan had often meditated against the perfidious host...	6:54
8	'Then he is there? I shall find him there?'	7:54
9	In the meantime the host and his wife...	7:38
10	'That's true,' said Athos, after a moment's silence...	6:48
11	Chapter 28	7:12

Total time on CD 9: 79:20

CD 10

1	'This diamond!' said d'Artagnan...	7:52
2	'I am much attached to that horse, Athos.'	7:31
3	'Do you know what we are eating here?'	7:48
4	Chapter 29	6:57
5	D'Artagnan, without losing sight of the lady...	6:45
6	The procurator's wife uttered a groan.	6:13
7	Chapter 30	7:50
8	The maid approached Planchet...	8:08
9	Chapter 31	6:23
10	Porthos shrugged his shoulders...	5:34
11	Milady listened with the greatest attention...	5:12

Total time on CD 10: 76:19

CD 11

1	Chapter 32	7:40
2	M. Coquenard did not carry his genealogical investigations any further...	7:31
3	This silence and this interruption in serving...	7:44
4	Chapter 33	6:44
5	Then only d'Artagnan remembered...	6:31
6	It was a movement of vengeance upon Milady.	7:34
7	Chapter 34	6:41
8	Bazin gone, the mendicant cast a rapid glance around him...	6:36
9	'How is that, Mousqueton?'	6:32
10	Chapter 35	7:01
11	The first movement of d'Artagnan was to return it...	7:03

Total time on CD 11: 77:42

CD 12

1	On reaching home d'Artagnan found Kitty waiting for him.	4:11
2	Chapter 36	5:52
3	Milady smiled with a strange smile.	5:10
4	'So much the better! Come, tell me his name!'	6:08
5	Chapter 37	8:09
6	'You?' asked Milady.	7:55
7	Chapter 38	6:40
8	'Fortunately,' said d'Artagnan...	6:25
9	'Where the devil will constancy niche itself next?'	6:41
10	Chapter 39	6:36
11	'Well, my dear Aramis, you don't want three horses?'	6:36
12	D'Artagnan remained fixed to the spot...	7:06

Total time on CD 12: 77:33

CD 13

1	Chapter 40	6:40
2	'Ah, monseigneur.'	5:54
3	D'Artagnan descended by the staircase...	6:22
4	Chapter 41	7:24
5	The Guards, under the command of M. Dessessart...	7:21
6	'Monsieur is about to ask for some men of good will...'	7:56
7	'You see, then,' said d'Artagnan...	6:42
8	Chapter 42	6:31
9	'On our account?' said the three Musketeers.	5:53
10	The host gave them another chamber...	5:33
11	Chapter 43	6:38
12	It is true that the enemies of the cardinal said...	6:16

Total time on CD 13: 79:15

CD 14

1	'A quarrel, and what for, gentlemen?'	6:30
2	Chapter 44	6:37
3	'Then add that his Grace has...'	6:37
4	'Your Eminence is right,' replied Milady...	7:18
5	Chapter 45	7:44
6	Milady was livid.	7:08
7	Chapter 46	7:24
8	'The breakfast for these gentlemen is ready,' said the host.	7:37
9	Chapter 47	7:22
10	But Athos heeded not his advice.	7:15
11	'I say I am entirely of Porthos's opinion,' replied Aramis.	7:39

Total time on CD 14: 79:18

CD 15

1	'Ah, ah! But what's going on in the city yonder?'	7:11
2	Grimaud and his basket were far in advance...	8:15
3	Chapter 48	7:13
4	'The devil!' said d'Artagnan...	7:05
5	'Oh, that's simple enough!' replied Athos.	7:31
6	D'Artagnan took his hand.	6:45
7	On the sixteenth day, in particular...	6:46
8	Chapter 49	6:05
9	The officer who had stopped in front of her...	7:26
10	The carriage passed under two arched gateways...	5:48
11	Chapter 50	4:38
12	'I do not understand, my Lord,' said she...	4:17

Total time on CD 15: 79:05

CD 16

1	'I insult you!' said Lord de Winter, with contempt.	3:54
2	Milady listened with an attention that dilated her inflamed eyes.	7:09
3	Chapter 51	6:58
4	These notes had all the effect...	7:35
5	'It does not signify, gentlemen,' continued the cardinal...	6:38
6	'My dear Athos, I admire you...'	6:25
7	Chapter 52	5:57
8	It was then nearly eight o'clock in the evening.	4:43
9	Felton made a slight bow...	7:04
10	Chapter 53	4:59
11	By that plain arrangement of the hair...	6:25
12	Milady knew she might be watched...	6:14
13	Chapter 54	4:37

Total time on CD 16: 78:43

CD 17

1	The door opened gently...	6:41
2	Felton no doubt felt within himself...	5:49
3	““Order to conduct to – the person named Charlotte Backson...””	6:52
4	Chapter 55	7:52
5	‘Let this victim to Baal be sent...’	7:33
6	The baron entered slowly...	7:22
7	Chapter 56	7:35
8	‘Listen,’ said the young man to the sentinel.	8:01
9	‘I dressed myself as quickly as possible...’	6:55
10	‘I took the precaution to half empty the carafe...’	7:42
11	‘Several times, even...’	7:00

Total time on CD 17: 79:28

CD 18

1	'The second night the door opened...'	3:28
2	Chapter 57	5:31
3	When this crisis was past...	6:45
4	And at these words...	5:26
5	Chapter 58	6:41
6	All at once she heard a tap at her window...	6:40
7	Milady breathed a sigh, and opened her eyes.	5:24
8	Chapter 59	6:31
9	And taking it from Felton...	6:48
10	At the cry uttered by the duke...	6:21
11	'Patrick,' said the duke...	6:21
12	Chapter 60	6:51
13	At length the escort passed through Paris...	6:32

Total time on CD 18: 79:25

CD 19

1	Chapter 61	6:20
2	This confirmed Milady in her opinion...	6:45
3	One thing alone frightened her...	5:46
4	'Trust me, madame...'	6:48
5	These two women held each other...	6:37
6	Chapter 62	5:27
7	'Return instantly.'	5:18
8	Chapter 63	7:23
9	'Tell your good superior...'	7:05
10	Milady made her a sign to sit down opposite...	7:00
11	'She! What she?' asked d'Artagnan.	6:58
12	'Gentlemen,' continued the stranger...	6:23

Total time on CD 19: 77:55

CD 20

1	Chapter 64	7:05
2	The tall man had scarcely read these lines...	6:59
3	Chapter 65	7:17
4	'We want,' said Athos...	7:36
5	All eyes were turned towards this man...	6:46
6	Chapter 66	6:32
7	'Oh, I cannot behold this frightful spectacle!' said he.	6:39
8	Chapter 67	7:18
9	D'Artagnan entered after the cardinal...	7:32
10	Richelieu slowly tore the paper...	7:49
11	Epilogue	3:39

Total time on CD 20: 75:16

Total time on CDs 1–20: 26:07:00

Alexandre Dumas

(1802–1870)

The Three Musketeers

Years ago I recorded a cut version of *The Three Musketeers* for Naxos AudioBooks, abridging the book myself. It has been a privilege to return to this thrilling adventure of travel, war, love and intrigue, and record the whole masterpiece, unabridged. If you do not know the book already, you are in for a treat.

If you are looking for escape, the intrepid d'Artagnan and his three heroic friends Athos, Porthos and Aramis make the best companions! The four are invincible in combat, and irresistible in society. D'Artagnan, of course, is the young lion. He is a great horseman, handsome, brave, impulsive and proud. At the very beginning of the book, Dumas describes his hero with tremendous affection:

A young man – we can sketch his portrait at a dash. Imagine to yourself a Don Quixote of eighteen... face

long and brown; high cheek bones, a sign of sagacity; the maxillary muscles enormously developed... the eye open and intelligent; the nose hooked, but finely chiselled. Too big for a youth, too small for a grown man, an experienced eye might have taken him for a farmer's son upon a journey had it not been for the long sword...

D'Artagnan's over-riding ambition is to join the King's Musketeers, and it only takes a couple of daredevil escapades for him to be accepted as an equal by the three finest. Of these, Athos is the doyen, but early in the book we are not allowed much of a description. The first one we meet properly is the vain Porthos:

...[A] Musketeer of great height and handsome countenance, dressed in

a costume so peculiar as to attract general attention... A long cloak of crimson velvet fell in graceful folds from his shoulders, disclosing in front the splendid baldric, from which was suspended a gigantic rapier... he spoke with a lofty air and twisted his moustache disdainfully; all admired his embroidered baldric, and d'Artagnan more than anyone.

Soon after, we meet the delicate Aramis:

He was a stout man, of about two- or three-and-twenty, with an open, ingenuous countenance, a black, mild eye, and cheeks rosy and downy as an autumn peach. His delicate moustache marked a perfectly straight line upon his upper lip; he appeared to dread to lower his hands lest their veins should swell, and he pinched the tips of his ears from time to time to preserve their delicate pink transparency...

As for the worthy Athos, when we finally meet him he has been injured on the field of battle:

At this instant the tapestry was raised and a noble and handsome head, but frightfully pale, appeared under the fringe...

And that is all we get. However, as the story unfolds, Dumas skilfully builds up a clear image of this most interesting of heroes – layer by layer, more by mystique than by information: aristocratic yet humble, a man of huge integrity and a soldier of great judgement and indomitable courage, Athos is a true leader, and an example to the younger musketeers. His wisdom tempers the impetuosity of d'Artagnan, the vanity of Porthos and the insecurity of Aramis. Athos's fascinating past becomes more and more integral to the plot and provides one of the most exciting dénouements in literary drama.

Throughout the book, Dumas endears himself by personally escorting the reader in a chatty, self-deprecating style:

Meanwhile, carried away as we are by our narrative, we must leave our three friends to themselves, and follow the Duke of Buckingham and his guide through the labyrinths of the Louvre...

Dumas' way of describing his leading characters is all the more convincing for the blemishes he mentions:

Anne of Austria was then twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age; that is to say, she was in the full splendour of her beauty... Her mouth was small and rosy; and although her underlip, like that of all princes of the House of Austria, protruded slightly beyond the other, it was eminently lovely in its smile, but as profoundly disdainful in its contempt... her hair... admirably set off her face, in which the most rigid critic could only have desired a little less rouge, and the most fastidious sculptor a little more fineness in the nose.

The book is set in early 17th-century Paris. Of course we love the courtly gossip, the comedy and scandal, the well-researched historical background and the brilliantly-described pageantry of both French and English courts, in this greatest of romantic novels – but above all it is the fighting and the loving which set the book apart. If there is a flaw our heroes share, it is their profligate excess of affection for the opposite sex. D'Artagnan is as valiant a lover as he is a fighter, and among dramatic heroes shares as much with Henry Fielding's Tom Jones, as with Shakespeare's Henry V (both works available on Naxos AudioBooks).

We are privy not only to their philandering, but also to the shameless subtext:

'Do not overwhelm me with happiness,' cried d'Artagnan, throwing himself on his knees, and covering with kisses the hands abandoned to him. 'Avenge me of that infamous de Wardes,' said Milady, between her teeth, 'and I shall soon know how to get rid of you – you double

idiot...!’ ‘Fall voluntarily into my arms, hypocritical and dangerous woman,’ said d’Artagnan, likewise to himself, ‘...and afterward I will laugh at you...’

‘The Four’ become embroiled in the furious rivalry between King Louis XIII and the sly Cardinal Richelieu. Their swashbuckling interventions in the romantic affairs of the Royal household actually affect the outcome of the bloody struggle for supremacy between England and France, culminating in the Siege of La Rochelle. Only their quick thinking and skill with the sword save them time and again from the sinister schemes of Richelieu and his friend, the beautiful and dangerous Milady Clarik. The tale sweeps inexorably towards the final chapters of the book, when, in scenes as thrilling as they are horrifying, revenges are taken and justice is seen to be done.

Alexandre Dumas wrote or collaborated on nearly 100 plays and many novels, including *The Three Musketeers*, *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. He was born in 1802, the son of a general in Napoleon’s army and

the grandson of a French Marquis and a Saint Domingo Negress. As a child he lived through the upheavals of the Napoleonic Revolution and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy of France. He received his private education from a priest (like Monte Cristo). He was politically active and, though he is thought to have rather embellished the actions in his *Mémoires*, was involved heroically in skirmishes during the 1830 revolution. He was the father of author Alexandre Dumas (fils), most famous for his *La Dame aux Camélias*. Alexandre Dumas (père) ran his career as an industry. It is thought that he would sketch the outline of a story to an assistant who would write it up; then Dumas himself would take the story by the throat and wrestle it into a masterpiece. He was a generous, idiosyncratic and fun-loving man. He cooked brilliantly, gave a lot of money away, and spent prodigiously on his private life – most notoriously on various highly publicised *affaires* and the construction of a monstrous folly of a house at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He died, just solvent, in 1870.

Notes by Bill Homewood



Bill Homewood's West End credits include leads in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Grand Hotel*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Boys From Syracuse*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Hollow Crown* (Royal Shakespeare Company). His innumerable television series include *The Professionals*, *Berkeley Square*, *A Wing and a Prayer*, *The Renford Rejects*, *London's Burning*, *Casualty*, *Coronation Street*, *Crocodile Shoes*, *The Bill* and *Spy Trap*. Bill also directs theatre in the USA, the UK, and France, where he runs a ranch with his wife Estelle Kohler. His other recordings for Naxos AudioBooks include *She*, *Tom Jones*, *Alan Quatermain*, *The Red & the Black* and the *Four Just Men* series.

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