

The Three Musketeers by Terry Kroenung; iuniverse  
M/M R&D, SS, SmS

22 • The Three Musketeers

credit at the grocer's with it, D'Artagnan felt that he might soon need an assumed name. Planchet, at least, was a simple man."

PLANCHET

When do we eat, master? My belly rumbles.

D'ARTAGNAN (*boxing his ear*)

Ingrate! Have I not brought you into my house where your soul shall be bur-nished by the example of my friends?

*(Musketeers raise their glasses and shout, 'Here! Here!' while gambling with cards and dice)*

PLANCHET

Yes, master. I see that my soul will soon be as clean as the inside of my stomach.

DUMAS

"A few days after the affair with the Cardinal's Guards, D'Artagnan and his friends were at tennis. Porthos and Aramis played while the wounded Athos and his young friend observed. He would have done well to also observe the tall man behind him."

*(Aramis and Porthos swing rackets lustily; the ball is pantomimed; townsfolk, courtiers, etc. are watching with Gallic enthusiasm and commentary; D'Artagnan dodges a badly-hit ball from Porthos)*

BERNAJOUX (*standing behind D'Artagnan*)

Not surprising that the young man would be afraid of the ball. I would expect nothing less from a Musketeer lapdog.

*(D'Artagnan jumps up as the crowd quiets; Athos grabs his arm)*

ATHOS

Careful. That's Bernajoux. One of the Cardinal's pet blades. He is not here by accident. You have come to the attention of His Eminence, my friend. Look out.

D'ARTAGNAN

Thank you for your observation of my character, Monsieur. (*sits*) Your serve, Aramis.

BERNAJOUX

I observe that this lapdog dares not stray far from his moody master.

D'ARTAGNAN *(as Athos shakes his head)*

Again I thank you...sir.

BERNAJOUX

I also observe that you seem to have the sour stench for which Gascon yokels are notorious.

D'ARTAGNAN *(to Athos)*

I'm sorry. Now he slanders my people, not just me. *(rising, facing Bernajoux)*  
Do I know you, Monsieur?

BERNAJOUX

No, but you are about to, to your cost. My name is Bernajoux.

*(an 'Oooh!' from the crowd, which makes a semi-circle around them)*

D'ARTAGNAN

I apologize for my stench, sir. *(draws sword and dagger)* But the smell of death in your nostrils will make it less noticeable.

*(Bernajoux draws rapier and dagger and attacks furiously; the fight is a frenzied one and rambles all over the stage; Bernajoux's dagger suddenly becomes a trick one, springing into a trident that traps D'Artagnan's blade and disarms him; D'Artagnan snatches Porthos' tennis racket; Bernajoux's sword blade is trapped by it in turn; D'Artagnan dispatches him with his own weapon)*

ARAMIS

That's the only point Porthos has ever scored with that racket. *(fade out)*

CHARLOTTE

You don't think that line is too clever?

DUMAS

Too clever? This is a French novel, Milady. "The friends hurried to Monsieur Treville to explain the incident. He used his influence with the King to protect them from the dueling laws. But again, the Cardinal was not pleased."