

## Chapter 66

### In Which Porthos Is Convinced without Having Understood Anything.

The good and worthy Porthos, faithful to all the laws of ancient chivalry, had determined to wait for M. de Saint-Aignan until sunset; and as Saint-Aignan did not come, as Raoul had forgotten to communicate with his second, and as he found that waiting so long was very wearisome, Porthos had desired one of the gate-keepers to fetch him a few bottles of good wine and a good joint of meat, - so that, at least, he might pass away the time by means of a glass or two and a mouthful of something to eat. He had just finished when Raoul arrived, escorted by Grimaud, both of them riding at full speed. As soon as Porthos saw the two cavaliers riding at such a pace along the road, he did not for a moment doubt but that they were the men he was expecting, and he rose from the grass upon which he had been indolently reclining and began to stretch his legs and arms, saying, "See what it is to have good habits. The fellow has finished by coming, after all. If I had gone away he would have found no one here and would have taken advantage of that." He then threw himself into a martial attitude, and drew himself up to the full height of his gigantic stature. But instead of Saint-Aignan, he only saw Raoul, who, with the most despairing gestures, accosted him by crying out, "Pray forgive me, my dear friend, I am most wretched."

"Raoul!" cried Porthos, surprised.

"You have been angry with me?" said Raoul, embracing Porthos.

"I? What for?"

"For having forgotten you. But I assure you my head seems utterly lost.  
If you only knew!"

"You have killed him?"

"Who?"

"Saint-Aignan; or, if that is not the case, what is the matter?"

"The matter is, that Monsieur le Comte de la Fere has by this time been  
arrested."

Porthos gave a start that would have thrown down a wall.

"Arrested!" he cried out; "by whom?"

"By D'Artagnan."

"It is impossible," said Porthos.

"My dear friend, it is perfectly true."

Porthos turned towards Grimaud, as if he needed a second confirmation of

the intelligence.

Grimaud nodded his head. "And where have they taken him?"

"Probably to the Bastile."

"What makes you think that?"

"As we came along we questioned some persons, who saw the carriage pass; and others who saw it enter the Bastile."

"Oh!" muttered Porthos.

"What do you intend to do?" inquired Raoul.

"I? Nothing; only I will not have Athos remain at the Bastile."

"Do you know," said Raoul, advancing nearer to Porthos, "that the arrest was made by order of the king?"

Porthos looked at the young man, as if to say, "What does that matter to me?" This dumb language seemed so eloquent of meaning to Raoul that he did not ask any other question. He mounted his horse again; and Porthos, assisted by Grimaud, had already done the same.

"Let us arrange our plan of action," said Raoul.

"Yes," returned Porthos, "that is the best thing we can do."

Raoul sighed deeply, and then paused suddenly.

"What is the matter?" asked Porthos; "are you faint?"

"No, only I feel how utterly helpless our position is. Can we three pretend to go and take the Bastille?"

"Well, if D'Artagnan were only here," replied Porthos, "I am not so very certain we would fail."

Raoul could not resist a feeling of admiration at the sight of such perfect confidence, heroic in its simplicity. These were truly the celebrated men who, by three or four, attacked armies and assaulted castles! Men who had terrified death itself, who had survived the wrecks of a tempestuous age, and still stood, stronger than the most robust of the young.

"Monsieur," said he to Porthos, "you have just given me an idea; we absolutely must see M. d'Artagnan."

"Undoubtedly."

"He ought by this time to have returned home, after having taken my

father to the Bastile. Let us go to his house."

"First inquire at the Bastile," said Grimaud, who was in the habit of speaking little, but that to the purpose.

Accordingly, they hastened towards the fortress, when one of those chances which Heaven bestows on men of strong will caused Grimaud suddenly to perceive the carriage, which was entering by the great gate of the drawbridge. This was the moment that D'Artagnan was, as we have seen, returning from his visit to the king. In vain was it that Raoul urged on his horse in order to join the carriage, and to see whom it contained. The horses had already gained the other side of the great gate, which again closed, while one of the sentries struck the nose of Raoul's horse with his musket; Raoul turned about, only too happy to find he had ascertained something respecting the carriage which had contained his father.

"We have him," said Grimaud.

"If we wait a little it is certain he will leave; don't you think so, my friend?"

"Unless, indeed, D'Artagnan also be a prisoner," replied Porthos, "in which case everything is lost."

Raoul returned no answer, for any hypothesis was admissible. He

instructed Grimaud to lead the horses to the little street Jean-Beausire, so as to give rise to less suspicion, and himself with his piercing gaze watched for the exit either of D'Artagnan or the carriage. Nor had he decided wrongly; for twenty minutes had not elapsed before the gate reopened and the carriage reappeared. A dazzling of the eyes prevented Raoul from distinguishing what figures occupied the interior. Grimaud averred that he had seen two persons, and that one of them was his master. Porthos kept looking at Raoul and Grimaud by turns, in the hope of understanding their idea.

"It is clear," said Grimaud, "that if the comte is in the carriage, either he is set at liberty or they are taking him to another prison."

"We shall soon see that by the road he takes," answered Porthos.

"If he is set at liberty," said Grimaud, "they will conduct him home."

"True," rejoined Porthos.

"The carriage does not take that way," cried Raoul; and indeed the horses were just disappearing down the Faubourg St. Antoine.

"Let us hasten," said Porthos; "we will attack the carriage on the road and tell Athos to flee."

"Rebellion," murmured Raoul.

Porthos darted a second glance at Raoul, quite worthy of the first. Raoul replied only by spurring the flanks of his steed. In a few moments the three cavaliers had overtaken the carriage, and followed it so closely that their horses' breath moistened the back of it. D'Artagnan, whose senses were ever on the alert, heard the trot of the horses, at the moment when Raoul was telling Porthos to pass the chariot, so as to see who was the person accompanying Athos. Porthos complied, but could not see anything, for the blinds were lowered. Rage and impatience were gaining mastery over Raoul. He had just noticed the mystery preserved by Athos's companion, and determined on proceeding to extremities. On his part D'Artagnan had perfectly recognized Porthos, and Raoul also, from under the blinds, and had communicated to the comte the result of his observation. They were desirous only of seeing whether Raoul and Porthos would push the affair to the uttermost. And this they speedily did, for Raoul, presenting his pistol, threw himself on the leader, commanding the coachmen to stop. Porthos seized the coachman, and dragged him from his seat. Grimaud already had hold of the carriage door. Raoul threw open his arms, exclaiming, "M. le comte! M. le comte!"

"Ah! is it you, Raoul?" said Athos, intoxicated with joy.

"Not bad, indeed!" added D'Artagnan, with a burst of laughter, and they both embraced the young man and Porthos, who had taken possession of them.

"My brave Porthos! best of friends," cried Athos, "it is still the same old way with you."

"He is still only twenty," said D'Artagnan, "brave Porthos!"

"Confound it," answered Porthos, slightly confused, "we thought that you were being arrested."

"While," rejoined Athos, "the matter in question was nothing but my taking a drive in M. d'Artagnan's carriage."

"But we followed you from the Bastile," returned Raoul, with a tone of suspicion and reproach.

"Where we had been to take supper with our friend M. Baisemeaux. Do you recollect Baisemeaux, Porthos?"

"Very well, indeed."

"And there we saw Aramis."

"In the Bastile?"

"At supper."

"Ah!" said Porthos, again breathing freely.



"He gave us a thousand messages to you."

"And where is M. le comte going?" asked Grimaud, already recompensed by a smile from his master.

"We were going home to Blois."

"How can that be?"

"At once?" said Raoul.

"Yes, right forward."

"Without any luggage?"

"Oh! Raoul would have been instructed to forward me mine, or to bring it with him on his return, if he returns."

"If nothing detains him longer in Paris," said D'Artagnan, with a glance firm and cutting as steel, and as painful (for it reopened the poor young fellow's wounds), "he will do well to follow you, Athos."

"There is nothing to keep me any longer in Paris," said Raoul.

"Then we will go immediately."

"And M. d'Artagnan?"

"Oh! as for me, I was only accompanying Athos as far as the barrier, and I return with Porthos."

"Very good," said the latter.

"Come, my son," added the comte, gently passing his arm around Raoul's neck to draw him into the carriage, and again embracing him. "Grimaud," continued the comte, "you will return quietly to Paris with your horse and M. du Vallon's, for Raoul and I will mount here and give up the carriage to these two gentlemen to return to Paris in; and then, as soon as you arrive, you will take my clothes and letters and forward the whole to me at home."

"But," observed Raoul, who was anxious to make the comte converse, "when you return to Paris, there will not be a single thing there for you – which will be very inconvenient."

"I think it will be a very long time, Raoul, ere I return to Paris. The last sojourn we have made there has not been of a nature to encourage me to repeat it."

Raoul hung down his head and said not a word more. Athos descended from

the carriage and mounted the horse which had brought Porthos, and which seemed no little pleased at the exchange. Then they embraced, and clasped each other's hands, and interchanged a thousand pledges of eternal friendship. Porthos promised to spend a month with Athos at the first opportunity. D'Artagnan engaged to take advantage of his first leave of absence; and then, having embraced Raoul for the last time: "To you, my boy," said he, "I will write." Coming from D'Artagnan, who he knew wrote very seldom, these words expressed everything. Raoul was moved even to tears. He tore himself away from the musketeer and departed.

D'Artagnan rejoined Porthos in the carriage: "Well," said he, "my dear friend, what a day we have had!"

"Indeed we have," answered Porthos.

"You must be quite worn out."

"Not quite; however, I shall retire early to rest, so as to be ready for to-morrow."

"And wherefore?"

"Why! to complete what I have begun."

"You make me shudder, my friend, you seem to me quite angry. What the

devil \_have\_ you begun which is not finished?"

"Listen; Raoul has not fought, but \_I\_ must fight!"

"With whom? with the king?"

"How!" exclaimed Porthos, astounded, "with the king?"

"Yes, I say, you great baby, with the king."

"I assure you it is with M. Saint-Aignan."

"Look now, this is what I mean; you draw your sword against the king in fighting with this gentleman."

"Ah!" said Porthos, staring; "are you sure of it?"

"Indeed I am."

"What in the world are we to do, then?"

"We must try and make a good supper, Porthos. The captain of the musketeers keeps a tolerable table. There you will see the handsome Saint-Aignan, and will drink his health."

"I?" cried Porthos, horrified.

"What!" said D'Artagnan, "you refuse to drink the king's health?"

"But, body alive! I am not talking to you about the king at all; I am speaking of M. de Saint-Aignan."

"But when I repeat that it is the same thing?"

"Ah, well, well!" said Porthos, overcome.

"You understand, don't you?"

"No," answered Porthos, "but 'tis all the same."