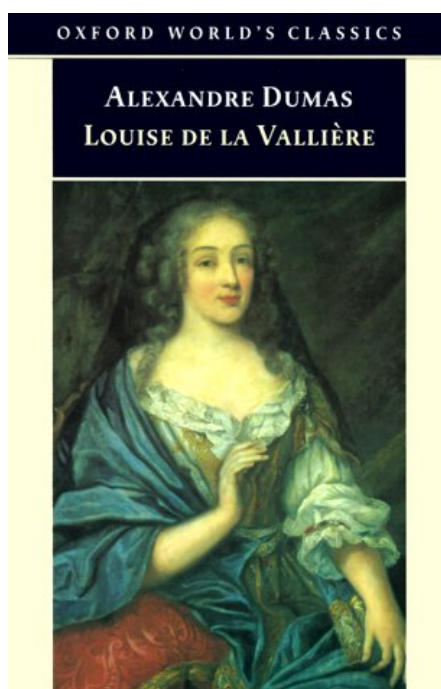




Louise de La Vallière

Alexandre Dumas

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It is early summer, 1661, and the royal court of France is in turmoil. Can it be true that the King is in love with the Duchess d'Orleans? Or has his eye been caught by the sweet and gentle Louise de la Valliere? No one is more anxious to know the answer than Raoul, son of Athos, who loves Louise more than life itself. Behind the scenes, dark intrigues are afoot. Louis XIV is intent on making himself absolute master of France. Imminent crisis shakes the now ageing Musketeers and d'Artagnan out of their complacent retirement, but is the cause just?

Louise de La Vallière Details

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From Reader Review Louise de La Vallière for online ebook

Elsa K says

This was probably my least favorite in the series of the D'Artagnan Romances. I didn't like any of the main characters. They mostly got on my nerves with all their gossip and selfish lifestyles. The main musketeers are almost completely unmentioned. I've never liked Raoul that much so even his part in the novel didn't move me the way it was probably meant to. I think it is necessary to read this one to enjoy "The Man in the Iron Mask" fully, but I wish I could've skimmed this one. All that being said, it still sucked me in and was a pretty quick, enjoyable read on the whole.

Phil says

Book Four (of five) in the Musketeers Saga and this really does have the feel of the middle section of a trilogy. The pace is lower than the other sections and there's less of an over-riding plot - this one deals with Louise XIV's seduction of the eponymous Louise de la Valliere (after getting rid of Raoul to England) and while the lack of the excitement of Vicomte de Bragalonne's reinstatement of Charles II or the last volume's Man in the Iron Mask makes it drag a little, the change of pace is probably a good thing. I would never recommend reading this novel on its own (in fact, reading The Man in the Iron Mask on its own - which people usually do, as VdB and LdlV are hard to get hold of - is a bit like reading The Return of the King and none of the rest of the Lord of the Rings) but in context with the rest it's a nice little set up for the finale. So ... all in all, the worst volume so far, but still a very good read.

Ensiform says

The Oxford World's Classics Edition, edited, introduced, annotated, etc., by David Coward. The fourth installment of the Three Musketeers saga does not really feature those heroes. Athos is all but unmentioned; Porthos and Aramis play important roles but briefly, and d'Artagnan is seen sporadically. The story, or stories intertwined, center mainly around the loves and intrigues of the court of Louis XIV. For 670 pages (!) Dumas subtly outlines the devious schemes and romances that occur in the Sun King's realm.

At first I was impatient with this (comparing it with the original's swashbuckling adventures), but then grew to admire the delicate skill of his plotting, the complicated way in which the psychologies of Madame, the king, and the courtiers are demonstrated and brought into play. There is less action here than in the others, although two duels are excitingly and dramatically described. There is also the humor and wit that marks the whole series. (There are, too, the odd lapses of Dumas', possibly stemming from the book's original serialization, the most grievous of which is the appearance of a character twice said to be dead.) Perhaps the highest praise I can give this excellent, entertaining and even noble epic is that I shall not miss its final part.

Reni says

Huh, I didn't rate or review this before moving on to the final volume, so here's my making up for this neglect: Although I cannot actually add a lot I haven't already written about the first two parts. I simply can't bring myself to care about all that romance business, and Louise's undecidedness as well as Louis' fickleness

don't endear them to me as characters either.

This whole book (not just this volume) is simply too long without me being able to say that any of the parts are actually completely superfluous. Not all scenes move the plot along, but they add to the characters, to the significance of the locations chosen, or help immerse the reader in the period. Still, it is simply too much to not end up overwhelming the reader with detail to the detriment to any suspense built up.

I am however very excited about the power struggle between Fouquet and Colbert, and even more so about Aramis' machinations. I am already dreading the finale (on behalf of the poor characters!) when all of this will come apart.

Guðjón T. says

Apart from a few chapters this book is excruciatingly dull. I'm a big fan of *The Three Musketeers*, and although the musketeers themselves are present here the author has shifted his focus from them to the nobility of 17th century France. Don't get me wrong, the affairs of the king and the queen were crucial to the plot of *The Three Musketeers*, but they were just the supporting cast. In *Louise de la Valliere* we have to endure chapter after chapter of "clever" conversation between varyingly boring characters instead of Dumas' typical story-line twists. If it wasn't just a part of a longer novel I would have given up a few chapters in, but unfortunately, it isn't all bad, so an ardent reader wishing to make sense of *The Man in the Iron Mask* probably should give it a go.

The only saving graces I can think of are Aramis' few chapters, which are important to the main plot of the later book, apart from being very mysterious and exciting, and a midnight duel which is probably the coolest I have ever seen, heard or read about. Great stuff, but it's far from managing to interest the casual reader.

Bill Kerwin says

I sometimes feel sorry for the second book of a trilogy, for it is often treated more like a bridge, and less like a destination. The *deuxième* volume is neither the thatched cottage that begins the tale, nor the ancestral mansion that ends it. Instead, it is more like a *road*, and, however diverting the scenery and people of this road may be, it is—after all—more of a *means* than an *end*.

This is doubly true of *Louise de la Valliere*, the middle volume of the final D'Artagnan romance, sandwiched between *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. It is not strictly the second volume of an authentic trilogy, but instead an arbitrary 700 page hunk of narrative prose, the smackdab middle of a 2,000 page serial novel, at least twice the length of Dickens' *Bleak House*. If it possesses qualities which distinguish it from the reamaining two-thirds, they are to some degree accidental.

Roughly speaking, *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* is about the quest to re-establish an absolute monarchy abroad (Charles II of England) while strengthening one at home (Louis XIV), and *The Man in the Iron Mask* is about a conspiracy to subvert that same domestic monarchy. *Louis de Valliere* is the portion of the book which describes the social and amatory world of the Sun King near the zenith of its power, and shows how the absolute dominance of one man and his whims can circumscribe the quests for truth and adventure into a

taste for gossip and a predilection for conspiracy. We observe the grand political impulse as it operates in the court of Versailles, how it is compelled to fix on the king's personal dislikes and ephemeral loves, and we sense that what we see before us—though ostentatious, even magnificent in its pageantry—is a reduced and decadent world.

Nevertheless, we find people here to root for: the amiable upstart Malicorne, with a lover to impress and a fortune to earn ; Louise de Valliere, the sweetest and most honorable of royal mistresses; Raoul Count de Bragelonne, the noble son of Athos, a young man who loves Louise hopelessly and sincerely; the veteran D'Artagnan, ever willing to serve his king (and the means to enrich himself along the way); and the Sun King himself, an intelligent young man with generous impulses, who has the power to do anything—anything except to escape from the net of absolute monarchy itself.

Louise de la Valliere, although it seemed a long road at times, never led me to lose confidence in Dumas' narrative art. It entertained me, and made me look forward to my destination : *The Man in the Iron Mask*.

Abeerr Shiihab says

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Andrea Ika says

Louise de la Valliere is the middle section of *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, or, *Ten Years After*. Against a tender love story, Dumas continues the suspense which began with *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* and will end with *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Set during the reign of Louis XIV and filled with behind-the-scenes intrigue, the novel brings the aging Musketeers and d'Artagnan out of retirement to face an impending crisis within the royal court of France. This new edition of the classic English translation is richly annotated and places Dumas's invigorating tale in its historical and cultural context.

My thought

Raoul has persuaded his father, Athos, to ask King Louis XIV to grant permission for him to marry his childhood sweetheart, Louise de la Valliere. However, the King, perceiving Athos' reluctance at the match, does not forbid the marriage, but instead says it must be deferred. Meanwhile, also at the palace, D'Artagnan apologises to de Wardes for killing his father in front of witnesses, but also dresses de Wardes down for continually insulting others. Buckingham, who is about to leave for England, having been asked by Anne of Austria to depart, takes advantage of de Wardes' humiliated anger to challenge him to a duel. They duel on the sands at Calais, and Buckingham is the victor, seriously wounding de Wardes, although he ensures de Wardes receives medical care before returning to England.

Aramis visits la Bastille to talk with the governor, Baisemeaux who is having financial difficulties due to his kind-hearted treatment of the prisoners. Aramis visits a mysterious prisoner whose name and origins are unknown. The man is in prison for his striking resemblance to the king.

Madame de Belliere finally acknowledges her love for Fouquet, who is also experiencing financial difficulties. Colbert is plotting to overtake Fouquet as minister of finance by ruining him through large requests for money for the king. Madame de Belliere sells many of her jewellery and ornaments to raise money so that Fouquet is not humiliated by being unable to finance the king's planned festivities at Fontainebleau.

At court, Phillippe's new wife Henrietta is making him jealous again, this time due to her flirtations with de Guiche. Anne of Austria asks the king to intercede with Henrietta who she fears is a coquette. The king goes to Henrietta's apartments, planning to admonish her, but instead finds himself taken in by her charms, and falls in love with her himself, an affection which Henrietta returns. Fearing that Phillippe's jealousy will make problems for them, the two lovers decide that Louis should act as though he is in love with one of the maids of honour to put his brother off the scent. Henrietta selects Louise for this role.

A ballet is performed by the court, where Henrietta and Louis are the stars of the show. De Guiche is devastated that Henrietta has transferred her affections to the king. Montalais, Louise and Athenais have a conversation about love under a tree in the park. They believe they are alone. Montalais declares her love for Malicorne, Athenais her preference for Saint-Aignan, and Louise declares innocently and vehemently that she has been in love with the king since she first set eyes on him. Unbeknownst to the three maids of honour, the king and Saint-Aignan are listening behind a bush.

When the girls find out that they were overheard Louise faints and is revived by the king, who is trying to act like he is interested in her. However, in the process of caring for her, he finds himself feeling more attached to her innocence than to Henrietta's coquetry. Henrietta becomes worried as she suspects that Louis may have fallen for Louise after hearing her declare her love. She humiliates the king and Saint-Aignan by telling them that the three maids of honour knew they were overheard and had made a joke of the two men by saying what they thought would please their vanity most. Louise is unhappy to lie, but is forced to do so by Henrietta. She requests an audience from the king to explain herself. Initially he does not believe she was sincere in her declaration of love for him, but her vehemence to the point of fainting with shame convinces him, and he tells her that he loves her too. At this point, Raoul has been sent away by the king to deliver a message in England.

Meanwhile, Aramis has been made the director general of the Jesuits, putting him in a position of extreme power and influence. He half-shares some of his plans with Fouquet which focus on the mysterious prisoner, and replacing Louis IX and Colbert with a king who is more disposed to Fouquet, whose ideals of freedom and chivalry are more inline with Aramis' views.

This is more of a summary for myself than a review. I can now see why Dumas is known as writer of historical romance. This is pure romance. The musketeers rarely appear and the entire story is Louis XIV's very chaste courtship of Louise. She faints a lot, not a very interesting heroine. Raoul Vicomte de Bragelonne is in love with her so also story of unrequited love. The most feisty female characters are "Madame", Louis' sister-in-law and Charles II's sister, they also share the same great/grandfather (I'm not sure) Henri IV of France and friend of Louise, Montalais. There are 2 characters called Manicamp and Malicorne, Madame is sometimes the Duchess of Orleans and I found the Le Fouquet bits quite confusing but Man in the Iron Mask follows straight on and its introduction explains it. This will feature Porthos a great deal. D'Artagnan and Aramis have bit parts in Louise. Lovely writing again, court intrigue/love affairs just not enough musketeers.

Maricarmen Estrada M says

This is the fifth delivery of the Three Musketeers saga. Masterly written. Much of the story has to do with the romance of Louise. Athos, Porthos, Aramis and of course the brave and bold D'Artagnan come and go

throughout all the book. The end is a cliffhanger, so I'll just start *The Man in the Iron Mask* as soon as I can. Loved this book.

Judy says

Loved this story! I liked this book second best in the series, 3M, being my favorite, of course. The reason, I think, is because one gets a close look at French court life and Dumas does a wonderful job of keeping the story quite historically correct. One more book to go in the series, *The Man in the Iron Mask*.

Justin Dillehay says

This novel is the middle volume of a trilogy that was actually one book in Dumas's original French version--a single book that would have run more than 2,000 pages, making even his *Count of Monte Cristo* look slim by comparison. It's my least favorite of the Musketeer saga so far; a lot more romantic court intrigue and less of D'Artagnan and Athos. But still fun reading. It's also fun because despite reading the entire series aloud with my brother Caleb 15 years ago, I remember basically nothing of the plot. On to the conclusion: *The Man in the Iron Mask*!

Paul says

Wow, this was bad. The theme of the work shifted from the selfish and reasonably petty ambitions of soldiers and courtiers to the awful and soul-destroyingly petty concerns of emotional adolescents trapped in the world of sub-medieval romance. The neverending protestations of eternal love between people whose affairs would end within a few years...so glad it's over and I'm on to *Man in the Iron Mask*.

Kinksrock says

This was my least favorite of the novels in the D'Artagnan Romances so far. I browsed the introduction to the Oxford World's Classics edition, which advised that this was the least "swashbuckling" of the series. Apparently, Dumas thought that the prior entries lacked "romance". Well, he went overboard in this one. This novel consists of hundreds of pages of flirtations. It's like a junior high school novel. The King is like the popular kid -- maybe the captain of the football team. And the novel basically goes on and on about who 'likes' whom, and who is pretending to 'like' whom, blah, blah, blah. I was bored by much of this nonsense. Meanwhile, the Musketeers (D'Artagnan, Athos, Aramis, and Porthos) are less than supporting characters; they disappear for much of it. I'm not even sure where Athos went, and Porthos shows up hundreds of pages in.

"*The Man in the Iron Mask*" is one of the better known novels in the series, and I'm looking forward to moving on to it.

Diana Tr?nc?u says

Credeam c? povestea de dragoste dintre Louise ?i Raoul va fi minunat?, plin? de puritate ?i inocen??. ca s? descop?r mai apoi c? numai sufletul nobil al tân?rului p?streaz? aceast? iubire de neînchipuit, pe când ea sfâr?e?te prin a-?i d?rui inima Regelui Soare. Dumas m-a f?cut s? simt durerea vicontelui, s? îmi par? asemenea unui cântec sfâ?ietor ce-?i provoac? lacrimi.

“Oh, Louise, te iubesc în a?a chip, încât a? fi în stare s?-mi dau sângele pentru dumneata pic?tur? cu pictur?, carnea mea fâ?ie cu fâ?ie, toat? ve?nicia f?pturii mele pentru o singur? clip?.”

Caitlin Mininger says

After finishing this book, I am struck by how much I miss Milady. There was by far too much fainting going on in *Louise de la Valliere* for me not to recall one of my favorite lines of Milady's: "I faint? I? Do you take me for some weak woman? When I am insulted I do not faint, I avenge myself!" Louise is a poor heroine who never seems to be able to make her mind about anything. Louis is not much better- I suppose for a king it is nothing to send away a woman's fiancé for the purpose of seducing her, but it seemed to me that all Louis's actions are rather reprehensible. It's hard to feel at all interested in a love story when even the love of the two parties condemns them. I confess, I only forced myself to finish *Louise de la Valliere* for the sake of the preceding books I had loved so well and the concluding part for which I still have high hopes. ...And also for the sake of Montalais and Malicorne; those two are awesome.

Kost As says

Π?ση ?ντριγκα να αντ?ξω πια ο χριστιαν?ς;;; Ο βασιλι?ς χαλβαδι?ζει τη Λου?ζ, η γυνά?κα του αδερφο? του βασιλι? ζηλε?ει το βασιλι?, δε γουστ?ρει, ?μως, το βασιλι?, απλ? ζηλε?ει ?τσι, για το ιβ?ντ, ρε παιδ? μου, ο αρραβωνιαστικ?ς της Λου?ζ π?ρα βρ?χει, ο κ?σμος το ?χει το?μπανο και αυτο? κρυφ? καμ?ρι!! Οι Τρεις Σωματοφ?λακες σκ?νε μ?τη κ?που κ?που και τ?τε ε?ναι που αποκτ? ενδιαφ?ρον το βιβλ?ο... Αλλι?ς...

Στα θετικ?, β?βαια, ο π?ντα ευκολοδι?βαστος τρ?πος γραφ?ς του Δουμ? κ?τι το οπο?ο βοηθ? να φε?γουν πιο ε?κολα οι σελ?δες! Ελπ?ζω στο επ?μενο να ?χουν πιο ενεργ? ρ?λο οι Σωματοφ?λακες, γιατ? χαν?μαστε...

Α, και να μην το ξεχ?σω! Π?σο παπ?ρας ο βασιλι?ς!! Εντ?ξει, βασιλι?ς ε?σαι, αλλ? ?χι και να μας πα?ρνεις ?τσι τις γυνά?κες! Ξεφτ?λα!! Καλ? του τ? ?πανε ο D'Artagnan και ο Αθως!!!

Krystal says

This is easily the weakest book of the series, but it still gets four stars from me because this series stole my heart and will keep it eternally.

Unlike its predecessor, this book is aptly titled because the focus moves away from our beloved musketeers and onto court intrigues, particularly surrounding the titular Louise, who has been (un)lucky enough to

capture the attention of King Louis XIV. This is the main aspect that makes this book drag so much, as we're inundated with lovers' quarrels and meetings and plots etc. There are still some fantastic characters, but the action is less and the politics more.

The story opens with Athos asking the King's approval for Raoul to marry Louise (on Raoul's behalf). Sadly, that's the last we hear of Athos for the rest of the book. Ah, how I missed him and his invaluable sense of honour! I can just imagine him hearing about all of the drama that follows and thinking, 'I am way too old for this sh*t'. We get a little of Raoul as a consolation prize, but even he's sent away for the latter half of the novel. Thank god for de Guiche, who compensates a little for the loss of these two illustrious figures, even if he loses his own head to love.

D'Artagnan appears to face down the smack-talking de Wardes, who is the son of the dude d'Artagnan pretended to be back in *The Three Musketeers* in order to bed Milady. It kinda makes sense that de Wardes is a little angry but he talks so much crap about everyone that it's nice to see him get served so elegantly by d'Artagnan. Also great that Raoul is surrounded by supportive friends in de Guiche and Buckingham, who back him up and threaten to rumble with de Wardes if he doesn't reign in his mouth. I loved the interactions between these young fellas. You can kind of see a shadow of our musketeers in their friendship.

Having made his peace with de Wardes, d'Artagnan then sadly disappears for the next 400-odd pages, leaving us to deal with all the drama at court. And **man, is there drama.**

There's the jealous Gaston d'Orleans, brother to the king, married to the sister of England's new king. The sister is Henrietta, who is loved by basically every male who meets her, causing all kinds of drama. Buckingham, de Guiche, and even the king, who is her brother-in-law. She, in turn, seems to love all of them until she decides she's over it, and basically rampages around stomping on people's hearts, or stamping her foot petulantly if they remove their heart from her range, first. She wasn't my favourite, but she sure makes things interesting!

Louis is quite a fascinating character, as he's trying to be responsible and run a country, but he's kind of being carried away by his heart. Everyone in this book seems to do stupid things in the name of love. Boys were so much more romantic back in the day. *sigh*

Louise herself is my least favourite character because I'm completely devastated by her disloyalty to Raoul. That boy loves her with his whole heart and Louise gets carried off by a fancy for the king? These hoes ain't loyal! It made me so mad that she barely stops to consider him. Raoul totally deserves better.

Aramis, the sly fox - or master spider, rather - is tangled up in his own little webs, manipulating everyone in favour of Focquet. He's always up to something, and appears the most of our favourite four musketeers, albeit still too infrequently for my liking. I have enough loyalty to love him no matter what, but I really question his actions. He's certainly nowhere near as noble as Athos and I cringe at some of the decisions he makes! I'm so glad that d'Artagnan is there to love and yet still suspect him on my behalf. It's such a twisted relationship, and they lie to each other *constantly*, but at their core they're still bffs so it's all good?

Then poor old Porthos is stuck in the middle, unaware! I have so much respect for our friendly giant. I mean, he's kind of savage, and I get a malicious glee when he destroys things accidentally because he's misjudged his size or strength, but he's so caring and loyal and naive and never suspects any of his friends of wrongdoing or deceit. I love when d'Artagnan wins him over to his own side, but in my mind I suppose Porthos will always be Aramis's right-hand man. His sword-arm, really.

There are some seriously interesting dynamics between that constantly evolving friendship of our four musketeers.

There are still some great moments in this book, and de Guiche had a few at the end that had me pretty anxious and biting my lip! Even all the plots are so twisted that they keep things interesting.

When I originally read *The Man in the Iron Mask*, I skipped this book in my impatience to get to it. Now that I have a better understanding of all this drama that's happened, I'm really looking forward to having a better understanding of what comes next. I don't think it's particularly necessary to read this one, but it certainly adds a lot more meat to the story, and gives some fascinating history, too.

Misfit says

It's 1661 and Louis the XIV is taking over the reign of government from his ministers. D'Artagnan is captain of the Musketeers, Aramis is now a bishop, Porthos is as big, strong and hungry as ever and Raoul, the son of Athos, is still madly in love with Louise De La Valliere. What we do see of Aramis he is plotting and scheming and has a strong interest in a mysterious prisoner in the Bastille.

Louis' effeminate brother Philippe (Monsieur) has just married Henrietta (Madame) of England, but Henrietta only has eyes for Louis (well, maybe the Duke of Buckingham and the Comte de Guiche also), an attraction that Louis returns. In order to allay suspicion of Louis' jealous brother, Louis feigns an attraction to Louise (who is one of Madame's ladies in waiting), but finds himself trapped by his own schemes when he falls in love with her. LOL, some of the antics involved in trying to be alone with Louise that are constantly hampered by Madame's efforts to keep them apart.

This book is different from the preceding novels of the Musketeers -- there is little if any of the swashbuckling, sword fights and derring do that the other books contained. This book focuses on the love story of Louis and Louise, along with the pomp, intrigues and scandals of Louis XIV's court. Although some readers will be disappointed at the virtual absence of the Musketeers in this book, I was fascinated at the glimpses of French history and court life which was beautifully sprinkled with laugh out loud humor reading the antics of the French court, most especially the "revolving" confessions at the Royal Oak tree.

If you've come this far, you've already read *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After* and *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*. *The Vicomte De Bragelonne* was originally published in French as one large novel, but is broken into three by English publishers, *The Vicomte De Bragelonne*, *Louise De La Valliere* and finally culminating in *The Man in the Iron Mask* (Oxford World's Classics). As other reviewers have noted, this book is more palace intrigue and less of the Musketeers and not everyone will enjoy it as thoroughly as I did, I loved the antics of the French court and had many a good laugh. Dumas is just brilliant (as always) and his dialogue (as always) is among the finest I've ever come across. Highly recommended.

K. says

An excess of melodrama. Sighing. Fainting. Raging. Perspiring (I know what you think I mean, but no. Only in vexation, anger or fear). Riding horses to death. Star-crossed lovers. Ill-fated lovers. Trap-doors. Witchy women. Brave men. Fair damsels. All in a PG format.

Didn't enjoy this one even 1/2 as much as the others. Probably because of the subject matter, which is that the King is in love with the Vicomte's affianced. Said King sends Vicomte to England to get him out of the way. Said King (who is married, by the by) does his very best and succeeds in seducing fair maiden. Leaving

Vicomte, of course, in a sighing, near-fainting, raging, perspiring mess.

In the world of the 17th century it seemed that if one was of consequence enough to be made to marry for policy, one was then left to look for love everywhere else but home--and that was accepted, expected and, well, accepted. Nobody blinked an eye. But it was fun to talk about it. When one is heavily over-dressed and abysmally under-occupied gossiping takes on a whole new occupation.

Mark Halse says

Woof! The tale of the Musketeers comes to a screeching halt with this installment. They should retitile this bad boy Louis XIV Steals A Dumb Little Girl.

The Musketeers take a back seat to the ol' Sun King as he steals Raul's girlfriend. That one sentence sums up a twenty hour read. There are other things that occur that lead to the much better and more depressing THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK but I believe that this installment can be skipped. That is how I originally read this series and do not feel that this book added anything.

Unfortunately, I am a Dumas fanatic and couldn't bear (bare?) to not eventually read this. Dumas writing is a pleasure to read as always but the plot was a snooze-fest.

Recommended for ride-or-die Dumas bitches only.
