

All for One

a *The Musketeers* fanfic

for sasha_b

by Rodo

“YOU’RE REALLY GOING to do this?” Porthos asked with a questioning glance at the two men on the opposite end of the small clearing. They were in a heated argument. One was a tall man with broad shoulders called Allard. The other was smaller and of a more delicate build. His name was Cuvier, and he was an aspiring poet of all but twenty years. His yellow moustache and whiskers still looked pitifully patchy. Porthos looked back to Aramis, trying to convey in one glance what would need a thousand words, all of which boiled down to one sentiment: this was bloody stupid.

“It’s not like it was my choice. I tried to tell him,” Aramis said, gesturing to the arguing pair that likely had a similar argument.

“You evidently didn’t try hard enough.”

Aramis sighed and tilted his head back.

“Was she at least worth it?”

Aramis tilted his head. “Marie is a very nice young woman.”

“I bet the poet would phrase that differently.”

“He’s a poet. I’m just a musketeer.”

Allard now grabbed Cuvier’s rapier and drew it from its sheath. Cuvier flinched and stumbled, looking at the bare steel with wide eyes.

“So you’re going to kill him.”

“Of course not. Maybe I’ll maim him a little. He’ll get a nice scar out of it and a year’s worth of material to write poems about and impress girls with.”

“Unless he gets himself killed with his clumsiness,” Porthos pointed out. “Or the wound gets infected.”

Aramis shrugged. Cuvier had found his footing again and stood his ground

against his friend and second. It was like watching a determined puppy growl at a horse, but it seemed to work. Allard threw his hands in the air and dropped the rapier.

“You really did send Étienne to tell Athos, didn’t you?”

“Of course.”

But that had been hours ago, when the night was still young. And now it was dawn, Cuvier was still set on avenging the dishonour visited upon his beloved and Aramis was stuck trying not to hurt him too badly. They all knew it too, except Cuvier, who seemed to think he had an actual chance of winning just because he was in the right. Well, for a certain definition of “right”, anyway.

Finally, Allard went over to them, looking resigned. “It seems the duel is on, gentlemen. He wouldn’t listen to me.”

Aramis sighed and nodded while Porthos buried his face in his hand.

“Why do things always end like this whenever you look at a woman?” Porthos asked.

“I never got into a duel over one before,” Aramis pointed out, as if that would change his mind.

“Maybe. But you got chased by angry husbands. Or brothers. Or fathers. I remember that one time when we had to fish you out of the Seine without your breeches.”

Aramis was about to reply, but in that moment, they hurt the telltale sound of hooves approaching from the east. A few moments later and Athos rode onto the clearing in full uniform, a thunderous expression on his face.

“Gentlemen,” he said, raising his voice to be heard by Allard and Cuvier as well. “It appears someone alerted the Red Guard to the fact that there is going to be a duel here this morning. They can’t have left Paris more than a quarter hour after me, if that.”

Allard sprung into action first, grabbing a protesting Cuvier by the wrist and dragging him away. A mere breath later, Aramis and Porthos ran off as well. Their horses were tied to a tree nearby, and while they frantically untied them, they could hear more riders approach. In the end, they weren’t quite fast enough; two guardsmen reached them and drew their pistols.

“Halt! You’re arrested on suspicion of illegal duelling!” one of them called.

“I think you’re making a mistake,” Aramis argued while raising his hands.

“I think not.”

“I think you do,” Athos said calmly, still seated atop his horse. “We’re Musketeers returning from Calais. We just stopped a little to refresh ourselves before entering Paris. And as you can see, none of us has their weapon drawn.”

“But there was a tip—”

“I’m sure there was,” Athos reassured him. “But it is plain to see that it wasn’t about us. Or maybe you got the place wrong?”

Finally, the men lowered their pistols, if reluctantly. They shared a look, before turning their horses and riding off to find imaginary duellists.

“Good luck!” Porthos added as they vanished in the trees.

“Did you have to call the Red Guard?” Aramis asked once they were out of earshot.

Athos frowned. “Of course. It wouldn’t have been believable if the King’s Musketeers had shown up to arrest one of their own. I had to make it convincing.”

Pothos rolled his eyes. “Well, after all this, I fancy I drink. How about you?”

“Gladly,” Athos replied. “After we explain to Treville why none of us were at the garrison this morning when we were report to him.”

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