

EXT. GASCONY, FRANCE — DAWN (1625)

Birds CALL from treetops that loom over a verdant field. The wind RUSTLES through the green leaves. A FOX darts into a thick hedge.

The sound of CLASHING steel.

Two young men burst into view with swords cutting brilliant arcs through the morning air.

The first is MARCEL GIRARD, bearded, nearly thirty. He is a man in every facet.

The second, COMTE D'ARTAGNAN, is younger in appearance and attitude. He is exuberant and handsome. He bounds over a low, stone, wall with a boisterous cry.

They battle across an expanse of turf, thick with dew.

Girard is the more polished combatant. But D'Artagnan is nearly a force of nature. He whips his sword through the air with wild-hearted abandon. He tumbles and somersaults.

Girard and D'Artagnan cross the field and leap over a wooden fence as they fight. D'Artagnan gains increasing advantage as they approach a barn.

BARN ROOFTOP

Seen briefly in silhouette against the rising sun, GIRARD and D'ARTAGNAN scramble up the v-shaped rooftop, pause to exchange swipes at the peak, then slide down the other side, attacking, defending as they go.

FENCED ENCLOSURE

GIRARD leaps to the ground first, landing in an enclosure filled with SQUAWKING geese. D'ARTAGNAN flies after. The geese scatter.

D'Artagnan stumbles briefly. Girard seeks advantage, thrusting his sword toward the young man's heart. D'Artagnan parries the blow.

Girard's modest success devolves into desperate flight.

## ROAD

GIRARD spies escape in the form of a slow-moving hay-cart RUMBLING up the country road.

Girard runs toward the cart, leaps upon it, and turns back to D'ARTAGNAN with a confident smirk. His expression vanishes when D'Artagnan executes a nearly impossible leap to join him.

The hay-cart crosses a wooden plank bridge. Girard backs from D'Artagnan's sword, weak from exhaustion. Girard stumbles.

D'Artagnan prepares one last blow but the hay-cart shifts, depositing both men over the side and down to the small muddy creek below.

## CREEK

GIRARD lands flat on his back, stunned, with his sword out of reach.

D'ARTAGNAN lands similarly but recovers with grace. He rolls toward Girard, sword in hand. He lightly places the sharp gleaming tip against Girard's adam's apple.

Girard begins to laugh, long and loud. D'Artagnan responds with a charmed smile.

D'ARTAGNAN

Had enough?

GIRARD

I believe now would be a good  
time to end your formal training.  
Well done.

D'Artagnan leaps to his feet, racing off.

GIRARD

(to himself)

And god have mercy on whomever  
you meet next.

INT. D'ARTAGNAN'S HOME - FOYER - DAY

D'ARTAGNAN rushes inside the country manor.

D'ARTAGNAN

Mother? Did you see us? You heard us,  
I'll bet. Girard finally surrendered  
a compliment. Though I almost had to  
kill to get it. Mother?

D'Artagnan comes upon an open door. He steps inside.

FATHER'S STUDY

D'ARTAGNAN enters a room with heraldic emblems. He eyes a  
piece of parchment with an inscription: ALL FOR ONE, AND  
ONE FOR ALL.

In a place of honor, a worn blue and gold TUNIC is adorned.  
Below it, ISABELLE D'ARTAGNAN, in her 40's, kneels at an  
open chest. She turns toward D'Artagnan.

ISABELLE

Sit down.

D'ARTAGNAN

Didn't you hear me? Girard-

ISABELLE

Sit.

D'Artagnan sighs, sitting in a large wooden chair.  
Isabelle's eyes turn back toward the open chest.

ISABELLE

Your father was a proud man. And he  
had a right to be. I never knew one  
as brave or as kind. He knew that his  
strength was a gift to be given in  
the service of honor. That is why he  
dedicated his life to his country and  
his King. That is why he gave his  
life, for both.

She reaches into the chest, carefully extracting a  
beautiful SABER.

ISABELLE

It's time you find your fortune with  
men as brave and as bold as you are.  
In Paris, with the King's Musketeers.  
You'll need this.

D'Artagnan rises to his feet, accepting the sword Isabelle  
offers up.

D'ARTAGNAN

Father's sword.

ISABELLE

Forged in the Crusades, handed  
from generation to generation.

D'Artagnan takes it firmly into his hands.

CUT TO: