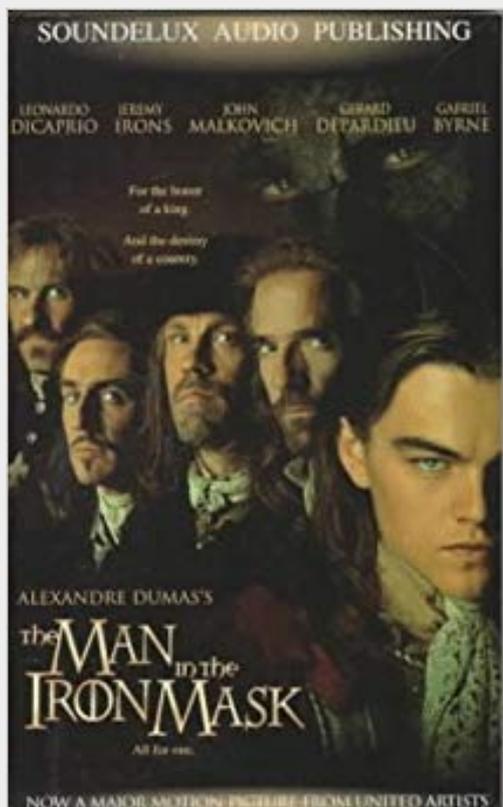


The Man in the Iron Mask *by* Alexandre Dumas



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ISBN: 1559352671

ISBN13: 978-1559352673

Author: Alexandre Dumas

Book title: The Man in the Iron Mask

Publisher: Soundelux Audio Pub; Abridged edition
(February 1, 1998)

Language: English

Category: Genre Fiction

Size PDF version: 1195 kb

Size ePUB version: 1310 kb

Size FB2 version: 1444 kb

Other formats: doc lrf mobi lrf

In this, the final adventure of "The Three Musketeers", the swashbuckling trio joins D'Artagnan to rescue a masked prisoner held in the Bastille. The motion picture stars Leonardo DiCaprio, John Malkovich, Gerard Depardieu, and Jeremy Irons. February publication date. February publication date. 2 cassettes. .



Reviews of the *The Man in the Iron Mask* *by* Alexandre Dumas

1. Mojar

If you read the entire d'Artagnan Romances (THE THREE MUSKETEERS, TWENTY YEARS AFTER, THE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE, LOUISE DE LA VALLIER, THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK), you'll probably feel you've

had one of the great reading experiences of your life. If you only read THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK, you'll probably think you've wasted your time. That's because THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK is the third part of THE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE, which itself is the third part of the d'Artagnan Romances. DON'T START AT THE END!!! The title "THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK" is so popular that even scholarly publishers like Oxford cash in by selling it WITHOUT TELLING YOU IT'S THE END OF A STORY. To read it by itself is like reading THE RETURN OF THE KING without THE HOBBIT, THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING and THE TWO TOWERS, or only book 7 of HARRY POTTER(I'm just trying to think of popular examples). Start with THE THREE MUSKETEERS, and if you like it, work through the series, whose richness always depends on what came before. The story of the man in the iron mask is one of many subplots in a much larger story, so coming into it from scratch, you might be upset if there are few pages devoted to him. So here's how it goes: THE THREE MUSKETEERS is part 1, TWENTY YEARS AFTER is part 2, and THE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE is part 3, but it's a massive part 3, divided into 3 books(in the original French, it's one mega-book, but it got divided in English translation): THE VICOMTE DE BRAGELONNE, LOUISE DE LA VALLIER, and THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK. I repeat my first sentence: If you read the entire d'Artagnan Romances, you'll probably feel you've had one of the great reading experiences of your life.

2. Viashal

Oh wow, what a great end to an incredible ride, the story of the Musketeers. I haven't been so engrossed in a series of books since I picked up Diana Gabaldon's Outlander. Athos, Raoul, Porthos, Aramis and of course D'Artagnan are going to be in my thoughts and dreams for some time, I hate to let them go.

If you are expecting the story as told by Hollywood, forget it. While I haven't seen the latest version with Leonardo DiCaprio (forgive me if I spell it wrong), I looked at the reader reviews and was quite surprised at how different the book is from Hollywood's version. I also recall a movie done in the late 70's/80's that is nothing like the book as well. I would pick it apart point by point, but that would include spoilers. The Man in the Iron Mask is actually the last third of a huge novel by Dumas originally titled The Vicomte de Bragelonne. Because of the size of the book, English publishers have divided into three books, The Vicomte de Bragelonne (Oxford World's Classics), Louise de la Vallière (Oxford World's Classics),

and *The Man in the Iron Mask*.

Suffice it to say that *TMITIM* is the final chapter of our heroic Musketeers, as well as Raoul, the son of Athos. While we all know the story of Louis XIV's twin and the plot to substitute him, that is a minor part of the whole story, as the action then becomes centered on the aftermath of that plot and Louis' revenge. It has been a grand, glorious ride reading this series, *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After*, *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, *Louise de la Valliere* and *The Man In the Iron Mask*. And do have your box of tissue handy for the last 20-30 pages. You'll need it.

One side note, some people are purchasing this as a stand-alone book, which it is not. You could probably get away with that, but you'll spend so much time looking back at the footnotes trying to figure who is who I doubt you will enjoy the story as much. Also, this version didn't have the list of characters that the VDB and LDLV did. Go for broke and read the whole thing, it's well worth it.

3. LoboThommy

Throughout history families have been separated, destroyed, and betrayed among themselves in search of power. It is impressive to observe how this lust for supremacy leads the people, who are supposed to be there by one's side, to betray one. Inhumane, it is. How horrible to be betrayed and imprisoned, and not know why or whose fault. To helplessly scream "What have I done!?" while rotting in a particular version of hell. In Alexandre Dumas' last book, "*The Man in the Iron Mask*", a situation similar to this is portrayed. This story is about the conflicts King Louis XIII's death brought upon France, as he had two heirs. Twins. He had seen brothers destroy countries fighting for power so he lied to his whole family before he died and banished one of his sons. This novel is based on a legend. Part real, part fantasy; the real mystery is, however, we don't know which part is which.

"*The Man in the Iron Mask*" is actually the third part of Dumas' huge novel, titled "*The Vicomte de Bragelonne*." This novel was divided into "*The Vicomte de Bragelonne*", "*Louise de la Valliere*", and "*The Man in the Iron Mask*." Without having read the other two thirds of this extensive novel, the beginning of this book might be a bit confusing, however the thrill begins somewhere in the middle and is impossible to miss. The impression of the book most people have of this book is of a "jailbreak"

story, based on its title. This book, however, spawns from several historic facts: in 1661, Monsieur Fouquet, who worked for King Louis XVI was arrested for robbery. Also, in the same year, King Louis won over the heart of a young lady called Louise de la Valliere, fact which caused some fuss. In his story "The Man in the Iron Mask", Dumas transmits the undisclosed story behind these facts, which involves, of course, his Four Musketeers: Porthos, Athos, Aramis, and D'Artagnan. The story takes place when the four retired Musketeers are feeling a bit aged and have the strongest desire for adventure; a desire they fulfill all throughout the whole of the novel.

This book regards a mission. The mission the Musketeers Porthos, Athos, Aramis, and D' Artagnan had: to save an innocent man's life, and to consequently save France from a selfish, arrogant ruler. Two birds; only one shot. It begins with Aramis, now Bishop of Vanes visiting a mysterious prisoner in the Bastille, Philippe, as his confessor. Dumas communicates and details this scene impeccably: "Doubtless the scrutiny the prisoner had just made out of the cold, crafty, and imperious character stamped upon the features of the bishop of Vannes was little reassuring to one in his situation." Aramis sees that he has nothing to confess, for his only crime was being the King's twin brother. The prisoner did not even know his true identity, therefore, Aramis reveals it, along with the plan he has come up with, the plan that was to turn his life in-side out: to take him out and to give him what he is the rightful owner of by switching the lives of Louis and Philippe, to arrest the king and substitute him with his brother. The novel frames Aramis' fascinating and complex plot to make this work, as well as how the other Musketeers fit into it.

The Man in the Iron Mask is the name given to a prisoner arrested in France in about 1670 who was held in a number of jails, including the Bastille. No one ever saw his face. He died on 19 November 1703, during the rule of Louis XVI. The possible identity of this man has been thoroughly discussed and has been the topic of many books, for this masked, unidentified character has the power to automatically engage the reader with mystery and thirst for more.

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