D'ARTAGNAN

"It is by my order and for the benefit of the State that the bearer of this note has done what has been done."

(He holds up the note so RICHELIEU can see it.)

You recognize your signature, of course?

RICHELIEU

I recognize it.

D'ARTAGNAN

I am the bearer of the note, therefore I am well within my rights to kill this man...

(RICHELIEU

(Interrupting)

Yes, yes—I understand.

(He turns to SOLDIERS #2 and #3.)

Remove the evidence.

(SOLDIERS #2 and #3 drag the bodies of BONACIEUX and ROCHEFORT off. RICHELIEU turns back to D'ARTAGNAN. He holds out his hand for the note.)

I'll take that paper..

D'ARTAGNAN

Not so fast, Your Eminence. This piece of paper is extremely valuable. What are you willing to exchange for it?

RICHELIEU

Exchange...?! Why you impudent little... give me that!

(He tries to grab the paper. D'ARTAGNAN moves it out of his reach and places his sword against Richelieu's chest.)

D'ARTAGNAN

Careful, now. I should so hate to slip.

RICHELIEU

Are you forgetting who I am, boy?
D'ARTAGNAN

Not at all. You are Cardinal Richelieu and with this paper you have given me permission to do anything I find necessary — which includes killing you.

(RICHELIEU considers for a moment.)

What do you want? Money?

RICHELIEU

No.

D'ARTAGNAN

Power? Prestige? Position?

RICHELIEU

No, no, and... no.

D'ARTAGNAN

What then? Out with it!

RICHELIEU

I want your ring.

D'ARTAGNAN

(RICHELIEU

(Dangerous)

What?

Your ring, monsieur. The one you wear on your right hand.

D'ARTAGNAN

Are you mad? The Pope gave me this ring!

RICHELIEU

Nevertheless, I will have it.

D'ARTAGNAN

No. I refuse to take it off! I would rather die!

RICHELIEU

Very well...

D'ARTAGNAN

(He raises his sword.)