



Oregon
Shakespeare
Festival.

2023 Study Guide



2023 *The Three Musketeers*
costume design
for D'artagnan
by Kara Harmon.

The Three Musketeers:

- Originally written in French by Alexandre Dumas.
- Written in collaboration with Auguste Maquet.
- Published in serial form for the newspaper *Le Siècle* between March and July 1844.
- Inspired by a scene in *Mémoires de Monsieur d'Artagnan* (1700), a historical novel by Gatien de Courtilz de Sandras.
- Takes place between 1625 and 1628.
- It is written in the swashbuckler genre, which has heroic, chivalrous swordsmen who fight for justice.
- Translated into at least 68 different languages.

The Three Musketeers

Written by Kirsten Childs
Inspired by Alexandre Dumas



KIRSTEN CHILDS

- Born in Los Angeles California.
- Parentage: Both parents were schoolteachers.
- American playwright, librettist, and former actress.
- Playwright and librettist of *The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin*, *Miracle Brothers*, *Funked Up Fairy Tales*, *Bella: An American Tall Tale*.
- In 1977 Bob Fosse cast her in the lead role of Velma Kelly in the first national tour of *Chicago*. She went on to appear in productions of *Dancin'*, *Jerry's Girls*, and *Sweet Charity*.
- Winner of an Obie Award and the Weston Playhouse New Musical Award.
- Adjunct Faculty for New York University Tisch School of the Arts' Graduate Musical Theatre Writing program.
- The 2022 world premiere of her play *The Three Musketeers* with The Acting Company at New Victory Theatre.



ALEXANDRE DUMAS

- Born Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie on July 24, 1802, Villers-Cotterêts, Aisne, France.
- Parentage: Marie-Louise Élisabeth Labouret (the daughter of an innkeeper) and Thomas-Alexandre Dumas (the son of Alexandre Antoine Davy de la Pailleterie, a French nobleman, and Marie-Cessette Dumas, an African slave).
- French novelist and playwright.
- Author of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After*, and *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later*.
- His works have been translated into many languages and he is one of the most widely read French authors.

Before seeing/reading the play

1. Research author Alexandre Dumas. Where did he grow up? What significant events were happening during his lifetime? Research his parentage and ancestry, especially his father Thomas-Alexandre Dumas. How did his parentage and ancestry affect his writing and/or opportunities where he grew up? What were some of the themes of his writings? What made his stories so universal? These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alexandre-Dumas-pere>
<http://www.cadytech.com/dumas/biographie.php>
<https://webmuseo.com/ws/musee-dumas/app/report/index.html>

Why are the Three Musketeers called musketeers when they spend all their time using swords?

2. Research Kirsten Childs. Where did she grow up? What significant events happened in her life, so far? What is her parentage and how might it have contributed to her writing and/or opportunities where she grew up? What are some of the themes of her writings? What elements of her stories are similar? How does she use music to tell a story or enhance it? These and other websites provide information:
<https://hope.edu/arts/great-performance-series/virtual-programs/three-musketeers.html>
<https://tisch.nyu.edu/about/directory/grad-musical-theater-writing/kirsten-childs>
<https://www.playwrightshorizons.org/shows/trailers/artist-interview-kirsten-childs/>
<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/18/theater/theater-beyond-black-just-herself.html>
3. Read *The Three Musketeers* novel by Alexandre Dumas. What themes are present in the novel? What social classes are represented in the story? Who are the main characters of the story? Who are the heroes of the story and why? Who are the villains in the story and why? Who are the secondary characters? These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Three-Musketeers>
<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-three-musketeers/summary>

4. Research the different forms in which *The Three Musketeers* has been published or produced. In what form was it originally published? How did its original form lend itself to being adapted into other forms? Define “adapted”, “inspired by,” and “translation” regarding novels and plays. How many times has this story been adapted, translated, or had creations inspired by it? What aspects of the story make it so universal that it has resulted in so many adaptations, inspirations, and translations? These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/biggest-best-three-musketeers-adaptations-1433041>
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/adapted>
https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc146482/m2/1/high_res_d/2001-23_Fee.pdf
5. What genre is *The Three Musketeers* considered to be and how did it bring about the genre itself? What defines the genre? What aspects of the genre make it universally appealing?
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/swashbuckler>
<https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-three-musketeers>



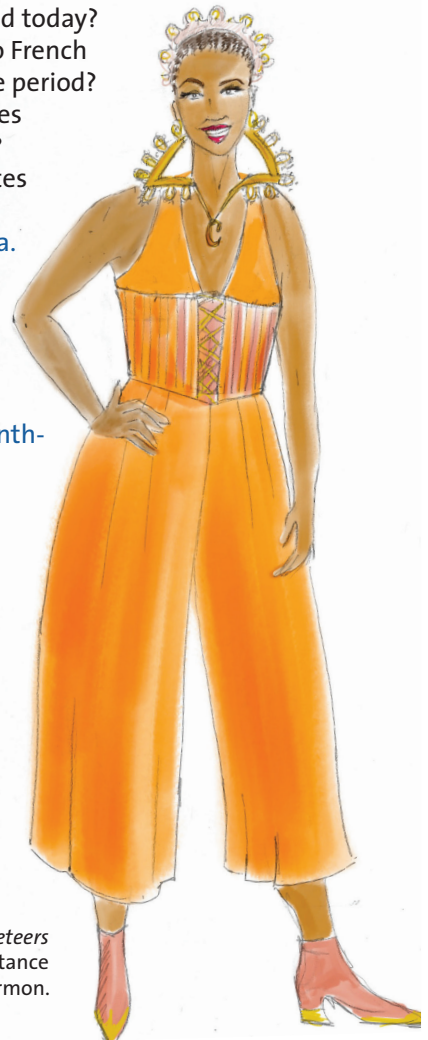
2023 *The Three Musketeers* costume design for Aramis by Kara Harmon.

6. The play and the novel are named *The Three Musketeers*. Define musketeer. What is a musketeer? Who were they? When and where did they first form as a group? When did they come into service in France, and how long were they, as a group, in service there? How long were their appointments as a musketeer? What weapons did they use? What part of the military were they? What was their specialty and function? Why are the Three Musketeers called musketeers when they spend all their time using swords? These and other websites provide information:
<https://history.howstuffworks.com/historical-figures/musketeer2.htm>
<https://musee-armee.fr/ExpoMousquetaires/the-real-musketeers.html>
7. The story of *The Three Musketeers* is based upon some real-life historical figures. Research other characters in *The Three Musketeers*. Which ones are based on real-life people? Which ones are fiction? What historical events occurred when these real-life figures were alive? What if any of those events play a role in the story? What roles do the non-fiction characters play in the story, and why? What roles do the fictional characters play in the story, and why? Who are each of the three musketeers? What are their names and what defines them? How are each of them similar and how are they different? Research their real-life counterparts. Compare and contrast the fictional and historical figures. These and other websites provide information:-
<https://www.historydefined.net/the-true-story-of-dartagnan-and-three-musketeers/>
<https://www.spellrock.com/history/real-people-three-musketeers/>
<https://www.historyextra.com/period/stuart/three-musketeers-real-athos-porthos-aramis-dartagnan/>



2023 *The Three Musketeers* set design by Edward E. Haynes Jr.

8. The time and setting of the play is Paris, France, between 1625 and 1628. Research the culture, social classes, and politics of 17th century France. Who was the king? Who was the Cardinal? What were their duties? How did they influence the culture of their time and today? What was important to French society during this time period? How were different races represented or treated? These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.britannica.com/place/France/Frenchculture-in-the-17th-century>
<https://www.history-learning-site.co.uk/france-in-the-seventeenth-century/>
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/bnf/bnfooo5.html>



2023 *The Three Musketeers* costume design for Constance by Kara Harmon.

After Seeing/Reading the Play

1. Refer to your research on the author and the playwright. How does Childs use Dumas in the play to establish the tone? How does she use music as an instrument of storytelling in the play? How does she use Dumas and music to establish/and or alter the atmosphere of a scene? How does she use her and Dumas's past to highlight the story?
2. Near the beginning of the play Dumas says, "You disappeared my father, disappeared him like he was nothing, like he was nobody." Refer to your research about Dumas's and Childs's parentage. How did their past influence the play? How did it enhance the original story of *The Three Musketeers*? How does storytelling help people be seen and remembered? How does it cause some people to be forgotten?
3. Refer to your research on Dumas and Childs, and your research about the time and setting of the play. How did the areas they lived in influence their stories? How did the time and setting of the play influence the writers? Compare and contrast the settings of their lives and the play. How might their lives have influenced this production?
4. Refer to your research on the novel *The Three Musketeers*. Compare and contrast the novel and the play. What elements are the same, and what elements are different? What themes were emphasized in the play versus the book? Were they the same, different, or both? Find examples to support your answers. What elements from the book helped enhance the play? What elements from the play helped enhance the original story?
5. "All for one, and one for all!" is perhaps the most famous line from the story. What does the phrase mean? What can it mean? What makes the line so appealing?
6. Refer to your research about the different forms in which the story has been told. In what ways is the play adapted, inspired by, and/or translated from the original story? Compare and contrast the original story and the play. Find one more *The Three Musketeers* story in a different form (TV show, movie, poem, etc.) that was adapted, inspired by, and/or translated from the original. Compare and contrast all three, or just the play and one other form. What makes them unique? What makes them the same? What elements make them universally appealing?
7. Consider the theme of heroism in the play. Who are the heroic figures in the story? How do they wrestle with their heroism during the play? Who wants to be rescued and why? Who doesn't want to be rescued and why? Who are the villains in the play and why? What characters could be seen as heroic and villainous and why?
8. Consider the theme of power in the play. Which characters have the most power in the play? Who do they have power over? How do the characters react to those in power? What or who gives the characters power?
9. Compare and contrast the musketeers in the play. Who is the most powerful? Who is the most heroic? Who is the most villainous? Who is the most humorous? Who is the leader? Why? Refer to your research on the Three Musketeers. How are the play's musketeers similar or different to those in the novel and/or their real-life counterparts?

"All for one, and one for all!" is perhaps the most famous line from the story. What does the phrase mean?

10. The character Dumas says, "That was the moment I swore vengeance—vengeance and reclamation!" Consider the theme of revenge in the play. Who seeks revenge? Who does not? How does revenge motivate the characters? Who is successful in their revenge? How does seeking revenge change their life?
11. If you are seeing *Romeo and Juliet*: Compare and contrast two characters' revenge journeys. How is revenge a motivator in their life? Who are they seeking revenge upon and why? What are the outcomes for each character?
12. If you are seeing *Romeo and Juliet*: Both stories feature an event where a word or gesture is considered highly offensive. Compare and contrast these scenes. Discuss why they are considered offensive. What would be a modern equivalent and why? What causes people to be offended and why is it a universal theme?
13. If you are seeing *Rent* and/or *Twelfth Night*: How do these shows use music to tell their stories? When and why is the music used? Compare and contrast the music in them to the music in *The Three Musketeers*.

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