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The Three Musketeers

Carlie Smith

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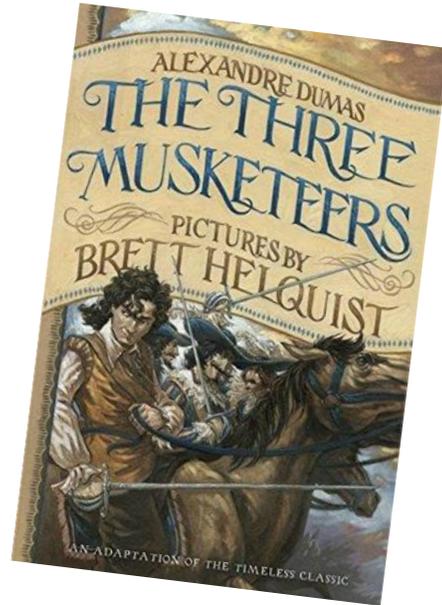
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Book Review

Title: The Three Musketeers
Author: Alexandre Dumas
Illustrator: Brett Helquist
Reviewer: Carlie Smith
Publisher: Harper
Publication Year: 2011
ISBN: 9780062082305
Number of Pages: 372
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Excellent



Review

Though he sets off on his adventure on an embarrassingly yellow horse, the feisty and gallant D'artagnan is determined to find dignity by joining the French king's special guard, the Musketeers. Initially, his chances seem limited when he challenges the legendary Athos, Porthos, and Aramis to duels his first day, but he later gains their friendship. Together they fight the schemes of Cardinal Richelieu for the king and honor. The foursome become entangled in a plot involving the Queen of France and her English lover, the Duke of Buckingham. D'artagnan falls in love with the queen's maid Constance Bonacieux, and thanks to his meddling, foils the Cardinal's plan to expose the Queen and earns a powerful enemy. He is bequeathed the enmity of Richelieu's prime spy, the seductive Milady, when he disguises himself as her lover. The Musketeers must traverse France and England in an effort to stop the assassination of the Duke of Buckingham and rescue Constance who has been kidnapped. Unfortunately, Milady's venomous ways succeed in causing both their deaths. The Musketeers bring her to justice and D'artagnan is rewarded for his bravery with a high position in the King's guard. Though he is heartbroken, his adventures have helped him grow to become a respectable Musketeer.

This book is similar to a summer blockbuster movie: adventurous, humorous, and filled with exciting plot twists. At times the complicated plot and allusions to French history may overwhelm young readers, but the vivacity of the classic heroes will keep all engaged until the end. The action-packed duels, exaggerations of chivalry, and the descriptions of the delightfully dangerous Milady are enchanting. Brett Helquist's detailed illustrations complement the action of the text well. Readers will wish for more pictures than the 15 included. D'artagnan is similar to a modern superhero in his exceptional talents and in the lessons that he learns about the consequences of exercising power. The excellence of the swashbuckling is to be expected, but this adapted version of *The Three Musketeers* is also very funny. The perspective of the narrator into the motivations, inner thoughts, and eccentricities of the heroes and villains makes the less action-packed moments of the story just as fun as the cinematic escapades.

*Contains mild sexual content and moderate violence.