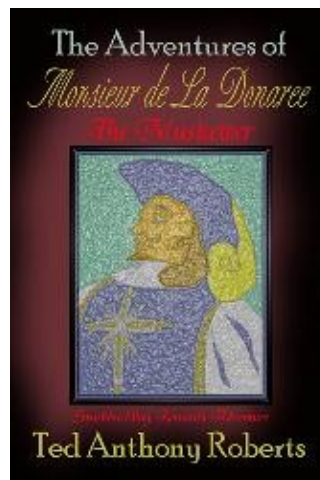


The Adventures of Monsieur de La Donaree the Musketeer

By : Ted Anthony Roberts

"The Adventures of Monsieur de La Donaree the Musketeer" is a swashbuckling, romantic tale which is set in seventeenth century Europe. Monsieur Donaree is a relatively new member of King Louis XIV.'s personal bodyguard who is alarmed to find out that the love of his life, the beautiful Madame Charlotte de La Rose, has been mysteriously abducted and carried off to England. Donaree's adventures to find her take him, not only into England, but also to the open sea to face Pirates, and even on toward the coast of Spain. The story is paced with adventurous sword-play, high-drama, un-guessable mystery, occasional comedy, and even romance! The adventures of Donaree recaptures the exciting novels of the greatest swashbuckling writers of the past, mixed with the lavish swashbuckling movies of the first part of the twentieth century, and it spins them all together with modern experimental ideas. Even though the Introduction gives necessary historical information which properly places the Musketeers into their relatively unknown place in history, the first chapter starts off with an intense duel - which causes the victor, who does not kill his opponent, to wonder what had caused the painstaking battle to be fought in the first place. He was insulted, it is true, but he cannot figure the reason of the bout. However, as Monsieur Donaree will find out, his mysterious challenger will haunt him for the rest of his adventure; and it will take him a while to put the pieces of the puzzle together of how this mysterious duel was actually an attempt to stop him from pursuing his advancements to find his lady. But why is this? Follow Donaree as he unravels the mystery!



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Chapter 1

Duel

“En garde!” is cried, as two long, flat blades slowly cross, and come to a freezing halt. The French duelists glare into each other’s eyes, and their gaze turns into a seemingly unbreakable stare. As one adversary’s heart starts to beat with a mad passion, sweat begins forming on his brow, while his teeth grit with anxiety. His opponent, however, stands as a statue: firm and majestic, with an unconcerned look in his eyes. This expression, which is quite hard to miss, only increases the other man’s agitation, as it grows immensely within his shaking frame. His nervous body is slightly bent forward, and his left arm lightly lingers behind him in the air. But the other man stands upright and tall: his left arm is bent at the elbow, while his fisted hand rests upon his side.

After what seems an eternity of waiting for the nervous fellow, the confident swordsman finally announces:
“Begin!”

Immediately, in this split second, the restless man takes a ferocious lunge at his victim – missing him by only a hair’s width! His target, though, parries very well. The two steel swords are now unleashed with lightning speed; causing, as they fly and hit, a very loud clanking-sound, of which can be heard a considerably long distance away. The two men who wield these swords continue staring into one another’s eyes, being careful not to miss or lose a single expression or thought that may appear within them – which could become extremely helpful for the defense of one’s skin in anticipating what the other opponent’s next move may be. But this battle tactic, for the tense fellow, is executed in vain, because the other duelist, as we observe, remains a cold, hard statue – with a very unreadable expression in his eyes. And for the swordsman of confidence, this tactic is easily accomplished, no doubt, for the nervous and anxious expressions of his dueling partner, which vary tremendously, is written deeply in his eyes, and it is manifested all over his face. However, bravado is greatly displayed on both sides; even though one man is nervous, he nevertheless shows great amounts of courage.

All around the duelists can be seen the breaking of a new day. On the horizon, the sun is beginning to slowly rise – revealing, little by little, an open grass valley with a great amount of beautiful trees. Off in the distances can be seen many rolling hills and far away trees, as though painted onto a great canvas background – giving the illusion of flowing mountains, hazed by the early morning mist. Numerous birds sing with great enthusiasm, as though thanking God for giving them another beautiful day to live and to be free. Late night clouds of grey quickly disappear, giving room to their fluffier and brighter cousins who obviously love the morning more than they. The few, various small animals that live in and around these scenes begin their day with their usual chores of gathering food. And, finally, the valley is totally covered with the brightness of the sun, letting all living things know that this truly is the beginning of a new day.

But though we see and admire all these wonders of nature, we must return to our two duelists, who are both hopeful of winning the day – and we do so with great anticipation! Even though we were temporarily caught away into the distant places of greenery and sunshine, we heard, though miles away, the desperate clanking of the two swords that are engaged in vicious combat. We return, therefore, with eager attention to

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their pursuits and advancements, and we continue to look onto this spectacle with the greatest of interest!

Slashing! Slashing! Slashing! The swords fly so fast, that there are no blades to be seen — for speed has made them nearly invisible. The bodies of the two men sway back and forth at a tremendous rate, while the duelists are careful not to lose any concentration, as they try to execute their skills in swordsmanship to the best of their abilities. Their techniques are incredible, and their skills are superb!

Keeping the right foothold, at this time, is very important. If an opponent steps forward or backward in the wrong way, it may cause him to trip to the ground. However, the greatest attention is not needed for the correct position of the feet — neither is it recommended to be set onto the blur of the flying steel; but a satisfied victory can be accomplished by maintaining a concentrated stare, as mentioned before, to the head — but particularly to the eyes — for it is a necessary thing that both men should do. Now, if either of these gentlemen were to keep his eyes locked onto the fast moving streaks of the two blades, trying to watch their every move (which anyway would be impossible), he would lose great advantage over his rival, and have almost no control of his own sword. So, as we can certainly see, in this art of fencing, watching two masters at work, if one were not skilled on his weapon (trained to perfection), and if one does not concentrate to the utmost of his ability, he could lose his life on a single and, more than likely, unseen mistake.

A thrust is given — one man lunges his sword forward; a parry is the other's natural response: a maneuver against a thrust which eludes the advancement of the invading blade; then forms a riposte — the latter man's thrust that directly follows his parry. The breathtaking duel seems to have no finish, but soon it must draw to a close, and a victor must be found. But who will this victor be? It may be obvious that the confident man shall prevail; although his shaken opponent just might overcome all his feelings, and advance to become the winner.

The clock ticks on . . . the swords clank on . . . and the man, who has from the very beginning entertained nervous thoughts into his conscience, begins to lose what little nerve he had. As a matter of course, he pulls all his strength together, in this moment of sureness (feeling that it is the right time), and lets his sword loose — aiming its sharp point toward his opponent's heart, in a hope that it will find its mark with accuracy, and sink its long tooth into the other man's chest.

He gives his thrust!

And, as if his efforts are of an apprentice swordsman, his target merely steps out of the way, causing the owner of this run-away sword to hit dirt. But just an instant before his body reaches the ground, he somehow maneuvers himself in such a way that, as he makes contact with the earth, he is facing his opponent. But upon impact, his right hand, which is holding his sword (with the pommel heading downwards), strikes a rather wide rock that is a bit hidden in the grass — which causes the weapon to immediately leave his grip — and it ricochets into the opposite direction from him. It then begins rolling swiftly on the ground, and comes to a dead stop near the feet of his most dreaded adversary!

The man, who has just unwillingly reached the ground, suddenly holds his breath in fear, and begins glaring in the eye of the other — who has, at this time, such an advantage over his victim. As the sweat pours from his face, as he tugs strenuously at the grass near his hands, the off-nerved fellow begins to shake heavily.

— You've dropped your sword. — the other nonchalantly responds.

Then with one quick movement, he slides his foot underneath the sword, slipping it near the hilt, and practically throws it, with his foot, into the hands of his surprised opponent. Without a word, the man jumps to his feet, and begins dueling again; but this time he has a sloppy technique, and has horrible accuracy. Losing his head completely, he looks as if he stares death in the face. His lips quiver; his throat is choked; and, just as

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he has instantly predicted to himself, he falls with a sword thrust through his body!

“Just get it over with quickly,” he mumbles, while pleading with the victor. He then closes his eyes, and clutches his wound.

The winner of the match begins cleaning his blood-stained sword by sticking its sharp point in and out of the ground several times. And after the blade is clean, he sheaths it.

Then he turns to the fallen man, and says: “It has pained me to wound you in the first place; I intend not to further dishonor myself by doing away with you entirely. You have insulted me, it is true—but it was a matter that I should have dismissed all together. Instead, I lost my head to anger. Fortunately, though, you are still alive, and the wound is not too deep. As a token of my anger you have received this wound from my blade, but as a token of my apologies for giving it to you, receive from my purse the money for the bill that you will most certainly have from a doctor.”

Opening his doublet, he reaches in, grabs, and throws several coins on the ground beside the confused man. Without another word, the champion departs from the battle scene, leaving behind a hurt, devastatingly off-nerved, and extremely confused man.

And now, let us walk with the victor, following his departure, and let us see where his steps will lead him . . .

END OF CHAPTER 1

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