



The Man in the Iron Mask: The True Story of the Most Famous Prisoner in History And the Four Musketeers

By Roger MacDonald

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'They never existed and were simply bastards of my imagination,' said Alexandre Dumas, of his famous Three Musketeers, but this is untrue. Athos, Aramis and Porthos were flesh and blood. Their supposedly fictional duel with Cardinal Richelieu's guards actually took place in 1640 and Charles d'Artagnan, a teenager on his first day in Paris, fought alongside the Musketeers. Many other elements of the tale are also true - the Cardinal's agent, Milady de Winter, really was an English aristocrat, and against all odds, d'Artagnan did succeed in becoming Captain of the King's Musketeers, the only person whom Louis XIV could trust to arrest his over-mighty minister, Fouquet. It was d'Artagnan who escorted Fouquet to the feared Alpine fortress of Pignerol, wherein lived the most mysterious of all prisoners, the Man in the Iron Mask. Oxford historian Roger Macdonald has spent five years unravelling fact from fiction to uncover the true story of the Musketeers and their connection with the Man in the Iron Mask. It is a reality more extraordinary than any tale Dumas could devise. Honour and heroism, betrayal and intrigue, are set amidst the lust, jealousy and deadly poisons that made the Sun King's court a world of frenzied paranoia. The Musketeers ride again across the pages of real history in this superbly researched account, and in his exciting denouement Macdonald at last reveals the identity of the Man in the Iron Mask.

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The Man in the Iron Mask: The True Story of the Most Famous Prisoner in History And the Four Musketeers By Roger MacDonald Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #6072611 in Books
- Published on: 2005-10-13
- Original language: English
- Binding: Hardcover
- 348 pages



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About the Author

Roger Macdonald is a writer, journalist and television producer. He studied history at Oxford, specialising in the French Ancien Regime. His many books include a historical guide to Provence and the Cote d'Azur.

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