



0. CARDINAL RICHELIEU - Story Preface

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This image depicts a painting, by Henri Motte, of Cardinal Richelieu at the Siege of La Rochelle. Created in 1881, the original work is maintained by the Orbigny-Bernon Museum, in La Rochelle, France.

Louis XIII was only a boy when he became king of France. Unable to manage the affairs of state, the young king and the country were managed by his mother, Marie de Medici, and her advisors.

Duke Armand-Jean du Plessis (later known as Cardinal Richelieu) was one of those advisors. Due to great intelligence and persistence, Richelieu became Louis XIII's chief advisor. In time it was difficult to determine who was actually in charge - the king or the cardinal.

At the time Henri IV died, his religious reforms had allowed the Huguenots to substantially run their own affairs. In the mind of Richelieu (and other nobles), the French Protestants had created a kind of "state within a state." Given the Cardinal's philosophy that the state was above everything, and religion existed to serve *its* purpose, Huguenots were in serious trouble with the first minister. \*\*

In his 1624 *Political Testament*, written at the time he was made head of the royal council, Richelieu identified his objectives for the king. They begin, and end, with the religious group he targeted:

*At the time when your Majesty resolved to admit me both to your council and to an important place in your confidence for the direction of your affairs, I may say that the Huguenots shared the state with you; that the nobles conducted themselves as if they were not your subjects, and the most powerful governors of the provinces as if they were sovereign in their offices.*

Protestant freedom and nobility independence were substantially diminished after the king granted Richelieu (in 1627) the authority to carry out his objectives. Within five years, his promise regarding the Huguenots came true. His words (in English translation):

*I promised your Majesty to employ all my industry and all the authority which it should please you to give me to ruin the Huguenot party...* (For Richelieu quotes, in this chapter, see *Readings in European History: A Collection of Extracts ...*, Volume 2—By James Harvey Robinson—beginning at page 371.)

How did he "ruin the Huguenot party?" And did that "ruin" help, or harm, the country at large?

\*\* (The Catholic Encyclopedia, however, states that Richelieu "admitted at the same time the supreme power of the pope and the supreme power of the king and the divine right of both.")

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CARDINAL-RICHELIEU-Musketeer-The>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/CARDINAL-RICHELIEU-Musketeer-The>



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### King Louis XIII

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### Marie de Medici

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