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George Villiers, who was also known as Lord Buckingham, failed in his attempt to help the Huguenots during the siege of La Rochelle. This image depicts a portrait of Villiers, by Peter Paul Rubens, created in 1625. Today the portrait is part of the Palazzo Pitti Collection (which is maintained—in Florence, Italy—at the Galleria Palatina). Image online via Wikimedia Commons.

When Buckingham and his English forces arrived in the Bay of Biscay, it was not the first time he had been in command of British ships. In 1619, he was named Lord High Admiral of England. It was also not the first time he had taken a position against Louis XIII, the king of France.

Buckingham was known to be handsome and charming. Louis' wife, Anne of Austria, was young and beautiful. Married to Louis when she (and he) were both 14, the Queen of France was a flirt. According to contemporary accounts, she was not in love with her husband. (Nor, reportedly, was he with her.)

While at the French court in 1625, two years before the siege of La Rochelle, Buckingham created a scandal when he publicly expressed his "passion" for the Queen. It is said that they met in the gardens of the medieval city of Amiens, site of the beautiful Cathedral of Notre Dame.

Whether Louis XIII loved his wife (or not) was of no consequence to Buckingham. His extraordinary breach of protocol (in meeting the Queen) seemed symptomatic of a more troubling problem: an inability to advance anything but his own interests.

Some historians (and the novelist Alexandre Dumas in chapter 41 of *The Three Musketeers*) even speculate that Buckingham led the La Rochelle expedition more to impress the Queen of France than to help the Huguenots.

If his motive was to impress, Buckingham failed miserably. Although he and his 8,000 men controlled Ile de Re (an island which shelters the harbor of La Rochelle), they were no match for Louis XIII, Richelieu and the royal forces who had built a vast sea wall to prevent outside relief.

Unable to help the Huguenot defenders break the siege, Buckingham returned to England in disgrace.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SIEGE-of-LA-ROCHELLE-Musketeer-The>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SIEGE-of-LA-ROCHELLE-Musketeer-The>



George Villiers

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Bay of Biscay - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy the [People's Daily](#) website.

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Anne of Austria

Image online, courtesy the [Norton Simon Foundation](#) website.

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Cathedral of Our Lady of Amiens

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Cathedral of Notre Dame - Amiens

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Alexandre Dumas

Photographic image of Alexandre Dumas, by Nadar - the professional name of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon (April 6, 1820 - March 23, 1910) - taken in 1855. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Ile de Re - Map Locator

Map online, courtesy Perry Casteñada Map Collection (University of Texas, at Austin).

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La Rochelle - The Harbor

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Richelieu and His Royal Forces

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La Rochelle - The Siege

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