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BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## The Most Cliched Line In History

I just finished reading a new translation of Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*. Richard Pevear did the honors (he and his wife(?) have done a number of Russian translations over the years) and it's tremendous fun. If I read the book as a kid (and I might have) it was long forgotten. This time I enjoyed it tremendously. The 70s film version is easily the most enjoyable spin on the tale but the novel shouldn't be missed. I only hope he takes the time to tackle the other Musketeer books, including *20 Years On* and *The Vicomte de Bragalonne* (usually printed in three volumes with that title, *Louise de la Valliere* and *The Man In The Iron Mask*). Now I feel myself getting on a Dumas kick and I'm eager to tackle one of his serialized tales that was just published in English for the first time: *The Last Cavalier*.

And I say all of this just to applaud a cheeky moment by Pevear in his new translation. It's page 650 of the paperback edition, chapter 65: *The Judgment*. Pevear's translation begins: "It was a dark and stormy night." He must have giggled when including that. I wondered if that was the origin of the cliché and went to the bookstore to look up two other translations of the book. They used words like *tempestuous*, though only a French person could tell me if they were avoiding the clichéd phrase or whether Pevear just decided it was an apt one to use. Did Dumas coin that deathless line? And did he get a writing credit for the movie "Throw Momma From The Train"? I wonder.

POSTSCRIPT: You gotta love the internet. I looked up Richard Pevear, who is teaching at a university in Paris and sent him an email:

Dear Mr. Pevear,

I just finished your delightful translation of "The Three Musketeers," which must have been an enjoyable diversion after the Russians. Is it too much to hope you will tackle the other Musketeer novels, ie. Twenty

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