

Name: Armand-Jean du Plessis (later de Richelieu)

Date of Birth: 9/9/1585

Date of Death: 12/4/1642, of old age

Age at time of story: 40

Parents: François du Plessis de Richelieu

- Served Henri III and Henri IV but died suddenly in 1590, leaving his family in deep debt

Suzanne de la Porte

- Raised her five children in her Mother in Law's house after her husband died

Spouse: None; however, before he became a churchman he was rumored to be quite the womanizer

Children: None

Religion: Roman-Catholic (started as a bishop and ended up a cardinal)

Early Life:

- Was educated until 1595 with the expectation of being a military officer (he would have spoken latin at school)
- In 1601 or 1602 he went to an expensive academy, a military-style finishing school (trained in horsemanship, fencing, and music as well as military mathematics and manners)
- In 1603 he allowed himself to be put forward as the family candidate for the bishopric of Luçon (he was still seven years under the canonical age of 26)
- In 1606 he became a bachelor of theology in Rome
- In 1607 he defended his doctorate in France and became a bishop as well as a doctor of theology
- In 1608 du Plessis (because he was not yet the eldest son) became the head of the diocese of Luçon, which was still largely Huguenot and contained 250 parishes
- In 1610 King Henry IV was assassinated and Louis was crowned
- In 1615 du Plessis presented the clergy's petitions for the King at the grand assembly and did a good job; therefore the King gave him the position of "grand almoner" to Anne of Austria-- he was now responsible for Anne of Austria's spiritual well-being
- In May 1615 he was additionally given the title counselor of state for Marie de' Medici, at the time he was making 25000 livres a year
- Du Plessis was dismissed by the king in 1617 because he had been a part of Marie de' Medici's cabinet; he left with her and immediately started spying on her for the king



- In 1619, du Plessis' one remaining brother died and he inherited the title de Richelieu; additionally, Marie de' Medici escaped and Richelieu was elevated to diplomat to reconcile her to the King
- He then continued to work between Luçon and the court until 1622, when the King's favorite du Lunyès died; that December Louis nominated Richelieu for cardinal and Pope Gregory XV granted
- In 1624 Richelieu was appointed to the King's cabinet

Personality:

- Described by his biographer as having a "highly strung and hypersensitive personality, huge energy, nervous intensity and remarkable abilities... [with] introverted uncertainties, sickness, insomnia, ulceration, and migraines"
- "His habits and tastes were austere"
- Was described in letters by nearly everyone he met as "charming"
- Loved gardens and seemed to always long for the open air
- In his twenties he was attracted to Saint-Cyran and Berulle, both of whom he would eventually disavow-- he finally modeled himself on Cardinal du Perron
- He liked cats

Political Leanings:

- Was a papalist-- he supported papal supremacy
- Saw loyalty to the king as a divine duty; his support never wavered for the legitimate king of France
- Dreamed of a "culturally controlled France" and to that end achieved control of the literary and artistic activities, created an academy, built buildings, collected art, had an interest in gardens, etc.
- Cardinal Richelieu's policy in the cabinet involved two primary goals: centralization of power in France and opposition to the Habsburg dynasty (which ruled in both Austria and Spain)
- Consistently played the role of the "reformer bishop" in his work in his diocese
- Was actually very dependent on the King for his power, especially around 1624