JOSE RIZAL

Noli Me Tangere
(Touch Me Not)

Translated, with an Introduction and Notes by
HAROLD AUGENBAUM

PENGUIN BOOKS
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(Touch Me Not)
Toward the end of October, Don Santiago de los Santos, who was generally known as Captain Tiago, gave a dinner party that, despite its having been announced only that afternoon, which was not his usual practice, was the topic of every conversation in Binondo and neighboring areas, and even as far as Intramuros. In those days Captain Tiago was considered the most liberal of men, and it was known that the doors of his house, like those of his country, were closed to no one but tradesmen or perhaps a new or daring idea.

The news surged like a jolt of electricity among the parasites, spongers, and freeloaders that God, in his infinite goodness, has so lovingly multiplied in Manila. Some went looking for boot-black, and others in search of collar-buttons and cravats, but everyone, of course, spent time deciding on the best way to greet the master of the house with just the right amount of familiarity to make him believe in a past friendship, or, if necessary, how exactly to make excuses for not having come by sooner.

The dinner was to be given in a house on Analoague Street, and since we no longer remember its number, we will describe it in such a way that it can still be recognized, if earthquakes haven’t destroyed it. We don’t believe the owner would have torn it down, because usually this sort of work is reserved for God or nature, which has, it appears, many projects of this type under contract with our government. It is quite a large structure, of a style similar to many others in the country, located near a section that overlooks a branch of the Pasig, often called the Binondo Creek, which plays, like many rivers in Manila, the multiple roles of bathhouse, sewer, laundry, fishing hole, thoroughfare, and even...
drinking water, if that serves the interests of the Chinese water-
seller. It is important to note that this vital district artery, where
traffic is so bustling and bewildering, for over a length of almost a
kilometer is served by just one wooden bridge, which for half the
year is under repair on one end and for the remainder closed to
traffic on the other, so that in the hot months horses take advan-
tage of this permanent status quo to jump from it into the water,
to the great surprise of the daydreaming individual as he dozes . . . 
or philosophizes on the century's progress.

The house in question is somewhat squat, its lines fairly un-
even. Whether the architect who built it could not see very well or
this resulted from earthquakes or typhoons no one can say for
sure. A wide, partly carpeted staircase with green balusters leads
from the tiled doorway and vestibule to the main floor, flanked by
Chinese porcelain flowerpots and vases of various colors and fan-
tastic scenes, sitting on pedestals.

Since no butlers or maids request invitation cards, or even in-
quire about them, let us go upstairs, my reader, my friend or foe,
if you find the strains of the orchestra or the lights or the great
clanking of the glasses and plates intriguing, and you wish to see a
gathering in the Pearl of the Orient. If it were up to me, I would
spare you a description of the house, but it is too important. We
mortal are, in general, like tortoises: we value and classify our-
subselves according to our shells; but the people of the Philippines
are like tortoises in other ways as well. If we go upstairs, we will su-
ddenly find ourselves in a broad expanse called the sala (I am not
sure why), which tonight will serve both as a dining and music
room. In the middle, a long table, abundantly and luxuriously ap-
pointed, seems to wink sweet promise at the freeloader while it
threatens the simple dalaga with two deadly hours in the com-
pany of strangers whose language and conversation often take
on a very odd character. In contrast to these worldly concerns is
the assortment of paintings on the wall, which represents such re-
ligious scenes as purgatory, hell, the last judgment, the death of
the righteous, and the death of the sinner. On the end wall, im-
prisoned in an elegant, splendid frame in a Renaissance style that
Arrévalo might have carved, is a curious canvas of grand dimen-

SINCE NO BUTLERS OR MAIDS REQUEST INVITATION CARDS, OR EVEN INQUIRE ABOUT THEM, LET US GO UPSTAIRS, MY READER, MY FRIEND OR FOE, IF YOU FIND THE STRAINS OF THE ORCHESTRA OR THE LIGHTS OR THE GREAT CLANKING OF THE GLASSES AND PLATES INTRIGUING, AND YOU WISH TO SEE A GATHERING IN THE PEARL OF THE ORIENT. IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I WOULD SPARE YOU A DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSE, BUT IT IS TOO IMPORTANT. WE MORTALS ARE, IN GENERAL, LIKE TORTOISES: WE VALUE AND CLASSIFY OURSELVES ACCORDING TO OUR SHELLS; BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE PHILIPPINES ARE LIKE TORTOISES IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL. IF WE GO UPSTAIRS, WE WILL SUDDENLY FIND OURSELVES IN A BROAD EXPANSE CALLED THE SALA (I AM NOT SURE WHY), WHICH TONIGHT WILL SERVE BOTH AS A DINING AND MUSIC ROOM. IN THE MIDDLE, A LONG TABLE, ABUNDANTLY AND LUXURIOUSLY APPOINTED, SEEMS TO WINK SWEET PROMISE AT THE FREELOADER WHILE IT THREATENS THE SIMPLE DALAGA WITH TWO DEADLY HOURS IN THE COMPANY OF STRANGERS WHOSE LANGUAGE AND CONVERSATION OFTEN TAKE ON A VERY ODD CHARACTER. IN CONTRAST TO THESE WORLDLY CONCERNS IS THE ASSEMBLAGE OF PAINTINGS ON THE WALL, WHICH REPRESENTS SUCH RELIGIOUS SCENES AS PURGATORY, HELL, THE LAST JUDGMENT, THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS, AND THE DEATH OF THE SINNER. ON THE END WALL, IMPRISONED IN AN ELEGANT, SPLENDID FRAME IN A RENAISSANCE STYLE THAT ARREVALO MIGHT HAVE CARVED, IS A CURIOUS CANVAS OF GRAND DIMENSION IN WHICH TWO OLD WOMEN ARE SEEN . . . THE INSCRIPTION READS: "OUR LADY OF PEACE AND GOOD VOYAGE, WHO IS VENERATED IN AN
quiet and maintain a religious modesty, or is it that these women are different from most others?

The only person to welcome these ladies was an old woman, a cousin of Captain Tiago, who had an open, friendly face and who spoke Castilian rather badly. Her notion of courtesy and sophistication was limited to offering the Spanish women a tray of cigarettes and beysos6 and extending her hand to be kissed, just as a friar might do. The poor old woman became bored and, taking advantage of the noise made by a plate breaking, quickly left the room muttering:

"Jesus! Just you wait, you good-for-nothing . . . !"

She never returned.

The men were noisier. A few cadets were engaged in a lively conversation in a corner, though quietly. From time to time they would look up at various people in the room, point at them, and laugh among themselves, though they tried to hide their laughter. Nearby, two foreigners dressed in white, their hands clasped behind their backs, strolled from one end of the room to the other without saying a word, taking large steps like bored passengers aboard a ship. Much of the interest and certainly the most animation came from a group composed of two friars, a soldier, and two laymen seated around a small table laid with bottles of wine and English biscuits.

The soldier was an old lieutenant, tall and severe; he looked like a Duke of Alba7 abandoned in the ranks of the Civil Guard;8 he spoke little, and brusquely even then. One of the friars, a young Dominican, handsome, graceful, and as bright as his gold-tinted glasses, was prematurely serious. He was Binondo's parish priest, who in years past was a professor in San Juan de Letran.9 He had a reputation for being a consummate inquisitor, so much so that when the Sons of Guzmán10 dared argue subtleties with lay brothers, even the agile debater Benedicto de Luna11 could not draw them in or catch them out; the subtle arguments of Fray Sibyla left them like the fisherman who tried to catch an eel on a string. The Dominican spoke little and seemed to weigh his words carefully.

In contrast, the other was a Franciscan who spoke a great deal and gesticulated even more. Though his hair was beginning to gray, his constitution seemed to have remained robust. Regular features, a disquieting mien, a square jaw, and a Herculean frame

made him look like a Roman patrician in disguise. We are reminded unfortunately of one of the three monks in Heine's The Gods in Exile who crossed a Tyrolean lake at midnight on the day of the autumnal equinox, each time leaving an ice-cold silver coin in the terrified boatman's hand.12 Unlike the monks, however, Fray Dámaso was not mysterious; he was lively, and if his voice had the quality of someone who has never held his tongue, who thinks of himself as holy and what he says memorable, his gay, open laughter erased that disagreeable impression. One could even excuse the sight of bare feet and hairy legs that would have made the fortune of a Mendicant in the fairs at Quiapo.13

The only distinguishing characteristic of one of the civilians, a short man with a black beard, was his nose, which, judging by its dimensions, should never have been his; the other, a young blond man, seemed to have only recently arrived in the country. The Franciscan was engaged in lively conversation with him.

"You'll see," he was saying, "after a few months here you'll understand what I'm talking about. It is one thing to govern in Madrid, and another to be in the Philippines."

"But—"

"Take me, for example," Fray Dámaso continued, raising his voice to keep the young man from getting a word in, "I have had twenty-three years of rice and bananas, and I can speak with authority. Don't give me your theories or rhetoric. I know the indio.14 You have to understand that when I arrived in this country I was posted to a small town. Though it was small, its people were extraordinarily hardworking farmers. To this day I cannot understand Tagalog very well, but still I heard confession from the women there, and we were able to make ourselves understood. They came to love me so much that three years later, when I was transferred to the curacy of a larger town, which had become vacant because of the death of the indio priest, everyone cried, they showered me with gifts, they saw me off with music . . ."

"But that only shows—"

"Just a minute, just a minute, not so fast! My successor stayed less time, and when he left he had more people see him off, more tears, and more music, even though he had beaten them more than I had and had almost doubled the parish taxes."

"If you will allow me—"
"Even more so, I was in the town of San Diego for twenty years. I left there only a few months ago... At this point he seemed to become disgusted. "Twenty years is more than enough to know a town, and no one can convince me otherwise. San Diego had six thousand souls, and I knew all the townspeople as if I myself had given birth to them and I myself had nursed them. I knew on which foot this one limped, which shoe was too tight for that one, who was courting which young woman, which sins this one had committed and with whom, who was the real father of that child, and so on, since I heard everyone's confession and they certainly knew better than to ignore that responsibility. Ask our host, Santiago, if I am wrong. He has a great deal of property there, which is where we became friends. You will see what the indio is like; when I left there only a few old women and a few tertiary brothers saw me off, after I had been there for twenty years!"

"But I don't know what this has to do with the end of the tobacco monopoly," replied the blond man, taking advantage of a pause when the Franciscan drank a glass of sherry.

Fray Dámaso was so surprised he nearly dropped his glass. He stared at the young man for a moment.

"What? What?" he exclaimed histrionically. "It's as clear as day and you can't see it? You are a child of God, and yet you can't see that all this is palpable proof that the ministerial reforms are irrational?"

The blond man was stunned. The lieutenant frowned even more deeply. The little man shook his head, either in agreement with Fray Dámaso or in disagreement. The Dominican had to be satisfied with virtually turning his back on all of them.

In the end, looking at the friar with curiosity, all the young man could say with any seriousness was, "Do you believe...?"

"Do I believe? As I believe in the Gospel! Indios are incredibly lazy?"26

"Ah, excuse me for interrupting," said the young man, lowering his voice and bringing his chair a little closer. "You have used a very interesting word. Are these natives truly indolent by nature, or is it, as a foreign traveler has said, that we make excuses for our own indolence, our backwardness, and our colonial system by calling them indolent? It has been said of other colonies whose inhabitants are of the same race..."
The Dominican went on, even more indifference in his voice.

"It must be painful to leave a town where you have been for twenty years and you know as well as you know your own habit.
For my part, at least, I was very sorry to leave Camiling,10 and I was only there a few months... but my superiors did it for the community's own good... and for my own."

For the first time that evening Fray Dámaso seemed preoccupied. Suddenly he smashed the arm of the chair with his fist and, breathing heavily, exclaimed:

"Either there is religion or there isn't, and that's that, either priests are free or they aren't! The country is being lost... it is lost!"

And with that he punched the arm of the chair a second time.

The whole room was surprised, and turned toward the group: the Dominican lifted his head to peer at him from under his glasses. The two foreigners who were strolling back and forth stopped for a moment, looked at each other, grinned slightly, burying their incisors, and then quickly resumed their stroll.

"It's a bad mood because they haven't treated him with the proper respect," the young blond man whispered into Señor Larúa's ear.

"What do you mean, your reverence, what's the matter?" the Dominican and the lieutenant asked, with different tones of voice.

"That's why there are so many calamities! The governors support the heretics against God's own ministers!" the Franciscan continued, raising his powerful fists.

"What do you mean?" Dámaso repeated, raising his voice even higher and facing the lieutenant. "I am telling you what I mean! I mean that when a priest tosses the body of a heretic out of his cemetery, no one, not even the king himself, has the right to interfere, and has even less right to impose punishment. And a general, a little general whose very name connotes calmness..."

"Father, His Excellency is Vice Royal Patron!" shouted the soldier while rising from his seat.

"Some Excellency, some Vice Royal Patron!" answered the Franciscan, getting up as well. "In any other time they would have kicked him down the stairs, as the religious orders once did with that impious Governor Bustamante. Those were times of faith!"

"I warn you that I will not permit... His Excellency represents His Majesty the King!"

"KING or rook or nobody! To us there is no other king than the rightful!" 14

"Stop!" yelled the lieutenant menacingly, as if he were addressing his soldiers. "Either you retract what you have just said or tomorrow morning I will report it to His Excellency."

"Why not do it right now, go ahead!" Fray Dámaso replied sarcastically, coming toward him, his fists clenched. "Do you for a moment think that because I wear a habit that I lack...? Go ahead, I'll even lend you my carriage!"

The situation was taking a comical turn. Fortunately the Dominican intervened.

"Gentlemen!" he said with authority and with that nasal voice so sweet to a friar's ears. "There is no need to confuse matters or seek offense where none exists. In Father Dámaso's words we must make distinctions between those of the man and those of the priest. Those that proceed from the latter, as they are, per se, can never be offensive, because they are born from absolute truth. In those of the man one must make a further subdistinction: those that he says ab initio, those that he says ex ore but not in corde, and those in corde. The last of these are the only offensive ones and even that depends: if they are premeditated in mente, or result per accidentem in the heat of the discussion, if there is..." 15

"Well, for accidents and for me I know his motives, Father Sibyla," interrupted the soldier, who found himself mixed up in so many distinctions that he was afraid he himself would not emerge from the conversation blameless. "I know the motives and the ones you are going to distinguish, your reverence. While Father Dámaso was away in San Diego, the coadjutor buried the body of a very distinguished person, a very distinguished person. I have had many dealings with him and have been a guest in his home. So what if he never went to confession. So what? I don't go to confession either. But to claim that he committed suicide is a lie, a slut. A man like him, with a son in whom he has placed all his hopes and affections, a man with faith in God, who understands his re-
sponsibilities to society, an honorable and just man, does not commit suicide. This is what I say, and I will say nothing else about what I think, and I thank you, your reverence.

Turning his back on the Franciscan, he went on:

"Then this priest returned to the town and, after mistreating the poor cadaver, had the body exhumed and taken out of the cemetery in order to bury it who knows where. The townspeople of San Diego were too cowardly to protest, and the truth is that very few of them knew about it; the dead man had no family, and his only son was in Europe. But His Excellency knew about it and because he is an upstanding man, he requested such a punishment... and Father Dámaso was transferred to a more appropriate town. That’s it. Now go ahead and make your distinctions."

With that, he left the group.

"I am sorry that without knowing it I touched upon such a delicate matter," said Father Sibyla. "But in the end if something has been gained by the changing of towns..."

"Gained? And what is lost when one is transferred? And the papers... and what is misplaced?" Fray Dámaso stammered, unable to contain his anger.

The gathering slowly returned to its earlier tranquility.

In the meantime, a few other people had arrived, among them an old, lame Spanish man with a sweet, insinuous look, who was supported under one arm by an old Philippine woman. Her face was made up and her hair had been curled, and she wore European-style clothes. The group greeted them warmly. Doctor de Espadaña and his wife Doña Victoria Güí sat among our friends. A few reporters and shopkeepers greeted one another and roamed about from one side to the other without knowing what to do.

"Can you tell me, Señor Laruja, what is the master of the house like?" asked the young blond man. "I haven’t been introduced to him yet."

"They say he has gone out. I haven’t seen him yet either."

"There is no need for introductions here," Fray Dámaso interjected. "Santiago is a good sort."

"Very even-tempered and calm. Certainly not the sort of man who would, say, invent gunpowder, for instance," added Laruja.

"Señor Laruja!" exclaimed Doña Victoria with a mild re-proach. "How could he invent gunpowder if, according to what they say, it was invented by the Chinese centuries ago?"

"The Chinese! Are you daft?" exclaimed Fray Dámaso. "A Franciscan invented it, one of my order, some Fray Savalls or something like that, in the... seventh century!"

"A Franciscan! Well, then he must have been a missionary in China, this Father Savalls," replied the señora, who was not willing to let go of her notions.

"Schwartzes, you mean, madam," put in Fray Sibyla, without looking at her.

"I have no idea. Fray Dámaso said Savalls. I’m only repeating what he said."

"All right. Savalls or Chevas, who cares? Change one letter and he’s no longer Chinese," the Franciscan replied, now in a bad mood.

"And in the fourteenth century, not the seventh," corrected the Dominican in such a way as to take the other man down a notch.

"Well, one century more or less still doesn’t make him a Dominican!"

"Please, don’t make his reverence angry!" said Father Sibyla with a smile. "Maybe he did invent it. At least it saved his brothers from having to do it."

"So, Father Sibyla, you say that it was the fourteenth century?" Doña Victoria said with great interest. "Before or after the birth of Christ?"

Happily for the man who had been asked that question, two people then entered the room.
CHAPTER 2
CRISÓSTOMO IBARRA

It wasn't beautiful, handsomely dressed young women who com-
mmanded everyone's attention (even that of Fray Sibyla). It wasn't
His Excellency the Captain General and his adjutants who drew
the lieutenant out of his reverie and made him come forward a
few steps, or that stopped Fray Dámaso in his tracks as if petri-
fied, it was merely the original of the portrait of the man in tails
leading by the hand a young man dressed in deep mourning.

"Good evening, gentlemen! Good evening, Father," was the
first thing Captain Tiago said, kissing the hands of the priests,
who forgot to give him their blessing.

The Dominican had removed his glasses in order to get a look
at the young man who had just arrived, and a pale, gaping Father
Dámaso.

"I have the great pleasure of introducing to you Don Crisó-
sto Ibarra, the son of my late friend," Captain Tiago continued.
"The gentleman has just arrived from Europe and I went to
welcome him."

At the sound of the name, a few cries could be heard. The lieu-
tenant forgot to greet his host. Instead, he approached the young
man—who by then was exchanging the customary greetings with
the whole group—and examined him from head to toe. There seemed
nothing particularly striking about him in that room, except for
his black suit. Nevertheless, his commanding height, his features,
and his movements gave off that scent of healthy youth in which
both the body and the soul have been equally cultivated. One
could see in his frank and lively expression, through a handsome
brown color, a few traces of Spanish blood, and a bit of pink in his
cheeks, perhaps the remnants of time spent in a colder climate.
"Why, for heaven's sake," he exclaimed with happy surprise,
spond in kind. Allow me to do this, not in order to introduce for-
gnern customs here, since our customs are certainly just as beauti-
ful as theirs, but because I find myself in need of doing so. I have
paid tribute to the heavens and to my homeland’s women; now I
would like to pay tribute to its citizens, my compatriots. Gentle-
men, my name is Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra y Magnalita?  
They said their names, which were more or less insignificant,
and more or less unknown.
“And my name is A . . . ?” said a young man dryly, with a
slight bow.
“Do I have the honor of speaking with the poet whose work has
helped sustain my enthusiasm for my homeland? I’ve been told you’re
no longer writing, but no one has been able to tell me why . . . .”
“Why? Because one does not invoke inspiration in order to hu-
miliate oneself and to lie. One fellow has been brought up on
charges for having included a certain figure of speech in his verse,
I may be a poet, but I am not crazy,” 39
“And may I ask what figure of speech it was?”
“He said that the son of a lion is also a lion. He was almost
exiled.”
The strange young man then left the group.
A young man with a pleasant disposition came toward him, al-
most running. He was attired in the native dress of the country,
with shiny buttons on his bib. He approached Ibarra and ex-
tended his hand saying:
“Señor Ibarra, I wanted so much to meet you. Captain Tiago is
a friend of mine and I knew your good father . . . My name is
Captain Tinong, I live in Tondo, 40 where you have a house. I hope
you will honor me with a visit. Please come have dinner with us
tomorrow.”
Ibarra found such amiability enchanting. Captain Tinong
smiled and rubbed his hands together.
“You can,” he answered with affection, “but I am leaving
for San Diego tomorrow . . .”
“What a shame! Then perhaps when you return.”
“Dinner is served,” announced a waiter from the Café La Cam-
pana. 41
The people began to file in, though the women needed a great
deal of prdding, especially the Philippine women.

CHAPTER 3

DINNER

Fray Sibyla seemed content. He wandered about serenely, his thin
lips pressed firmly together, though they had not yet begun to
show their disdain. He even deigned to speak to the cripple, Do-
cor de Espadaña, who replied in monosyllables because he had a
bit of a stutter. The Franciscan was in a frightful mood. He kicked
aside the chairs in his way and even elbowed aside a cadet. The
lieutenant had a serious look about him; everyone else chatted an-
imatedly and gushed over the magnificence of the table. Doña Vic-
torna, however, had crinkled up her nose. Suddenly she wheeled
about, as angry as a trodden snake; the lieutenant had stepped on
her train.
“Don’t you have eyes?” she said.
“Yes, ma’am, better ones than you, but I couldn’t take them off
your curls,” the ungalant soldier replied, and then walked away.
Instinctively, or perhaps out of habit, the two priests went
forward toward the head of the table. As one might have guessed, the same
thing occurred that occurs between rivals for a bishop’s chair. First
they exaggerate the merits and superiority of their opponent. Then
they express just the opposite, and finally they moan and groan
when they don’t get it.
“Afier you,” Father Dámaso.
“Afier you.” Father Sibyla.
“Our host’s oldest friend . . . the late mistress’s confessor . . .
your age, your integrity, your position . . .”
“Let’s not say ‘very’ old. On the other hand, you are the parish
priest,” hissed Father Dámaso, without letting go of the chair,
hower.
Since these are your orders, I will obey,” Father Sibyla said fi-
nally, getting ready to sit down.
"I did not order you to do anything," the Franciscan protested, "I did not order you to do anything!"

Father Sibyla, ignoring these protests, had already begun to sit down when his eyes met those of the lieutenant. The highest-ranking officer is somewhat lower on the social scale than the lay brother who prepares meals at the parish house. Censant arma togae, said Cicero, in the Senate; censant arma cooton, say the friars in the Philippines. But Father Sibyla was a cultured person, so he offered:

"Lieutenant, here we are in the world, not in the church. Here the seat is yours."

To judge by the tone of his voice, however, even in the world the seat belonged to him. The lieutenant, either not wanting to be bothered or to avoid having to sit between two friars, curtly declined.

Neither of the two remaining candidates had remembered their host. Ibarra saw him watching events unfold and smiling.

"Don Santiago, are you not joining us?"

But all the seats were occupied. Lucullus would not eat in the house of Lucullus.85

"Stay there, don't get up!" Captain Santiago said, putting his hands on the young man's shoulders. This party is meant to give thanks to the Virgin for your arrival. Hey, there! Bring in the tinola. I ordered tinola specially for you, since it has been so long since you have had any.

A steaming tureen was brought in. The Dominican, after murmuring the Benedictine86 to which no one knew the proper response, began to dish out the contents. Owing to carelessness or some other reason, Father Dámaso ended up with a plate in which a naked chicken's neck and a tough wing floated among a plateful of squash and broth. Meanwhile everyone else was eating legs and breasts, and Ibarra had the great luck to have been given the giblets. The Franciscan took in the whole scene, mashed the squash, ipped a bit of broth, dropped his spoon, which made a loud noise, and briskly pushed his plate away. The Dominican was distracted by his conversation with the young blond man.

"How long have you been away?" Laruja asked Ibarra.

"Almost seven years."

"Well, you must have forgotten a great deal!"

"On the contrary. And even though it seems to have forgotten me, home has always been on my mind."

"What do you mean?" the blond man asked.

"I mean that for a year I have had no news from here, so much so that now I feel like a stranger. I still don't know how or when my father died!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the lieutenant.

"And where were you that no one sent you a telegram?" asked Doña Victoria. "When we were married, we sent a telegram to the Península."

"I spent the past two years in northern Europe, madam, in Germany and Russian Poland."

Doctor Espadaña, who until then had not dared open his mouth, thought it appropriate to do so now.

"Wuh-wuh... once in Spain I knew a Pole from Wa-wa-Warsaw, named Studnitzki, if I remember correctly. You didn't come across him by any chance, did you?" he asked timidly, about to blush.

"It's possible," Ibarra replied amiably, "but I don't recall at the moment."

"But you couldn't possibly mumble... mix him up with anyone else," replied the doctor, who had perked up, "he was as blond as gold and spoke terrible Spanish."

"That's an excellent description but, unfortunately, the only time I spoke even a word of Spanish was in a few consulates."

"Then how did you get by?" asked Doña Victoria, with admiration in her voice.

"I used the local language, madam."

"Do you speak English, as well?" the Dominican asked. He had been to Hong Kong, where he mastered Pidgin-English, the adulteration of the language of Shakespeare by the children of the Celestial Empire.87

"I spent a year in England among people who only spoke English."

"And what was your favorite country in Europe?" the young blond man asked.

"After Spain, which I consider my second home, any country in free Europe."

"You have traveled a great deal... what made the greatest impression on you?" Laruja asked.
Ibarra stopped to think.
"Greatest impression in what sense?"
"For example... the life of the people... social life, political life, religious life, life in general, life in its essence, life as a whole..."
Ibarra mulled this over.
"Frankly, the surprising thing about these peoples, when you set aside everyone's national pride... before visiting a country, I tried to study its history, its Exodus,... so to speak, and in the end I found they all followed a common course. In every instance I noted that a people's prosperity or misery lay in direct proportion to its freedom or its inhibitions and, along the same lines, of the sacrifice or selfishness of its ancestors."
"That's it?" the Franciscan asked with a mocking laugh. Since the beginning of dinner he had not said a word; perhaps he had been distracted by the food. "It doesn't seem worth it to waste all that money just to find out such an insignificant thing. Any schoolboy knows that."
Ibarra did not know what to say. Everyone else was shocked. They looked from one to another, afraid there would be a scene.
"Dinner is coming to an end and I think you have had your fill, your reverences," the young man was going to say, but he reined himself in, saying only the following:
"Ladies and gentlemen, do not be too concerned about the familiarity with which our old curate treats me. This is how he treated me when I was a boy, and though many years have passed they add up to little for him. I thank him for bringing back to me the days when he visited our house and often honored my father's table with his presence."
The Dominican looked furtively at the Franciscan, who was now trembling. Ibarra went on, rising to his feet:
"If you will permit me, I will now take my leave. I have just arrived and I am leaving tomorrow morning so there are a great many things to take care of. The bulk of the dinner is over, I have had a little wine, and brandy is not my drink. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Spain and the Philippines!"
He drained the glass, which until then he had not touched. The old lieutenant followed suit, but without saying a word.
"Don't cot" Captain Tajo whispered to him. "Maria Clara will be here in a minute. I sent Isabel to fetch her. Your village's new priest will be coming. He is a saint."
"I'll come by tomorrow before I leave. Tonight I have a very important call to make."
He left. In the meantime, the Franciscan had recovered.
"Did you see that?" the young blond man said, gesturing with a dessert knife. "That's pride for you. They can't stand to be set to rights by the priest. And yet they still consider themselves decent people. That's the bad side of sending young people to Europe. The government should not allow it."
"And the lieutenant," said Doña Victoria, seconding the Franciscan. "He didn't stop frowning the whole night. A good thing he left. At his age still a lieutenant."
The lady would not forget his insolent allusion to her curls and his stepping on the folds of her skirt.
That night, among the things the young blond man would write was the next chapter in his Colonial Studies: "How a neck and wing in a friar's plate of tinola can spoil the happiness of a celebration." Among his observations were the following: "In the Philippines the person of least use is the one who gives the dinner or the party. The host could be tossed out into the street and everything would still proceed swimmingly." "In the current state of things, not allowing them to leave the country—or even teaching them to read—would actually be doing them a favor..."
CHAPTER 4
HERETIC AND SUBVERSIVE

Ibarra could not decide what to do. The night wind, which was already rather cool that time of year, seemed to lift the light cloud from his head. He took off his hat and breathed deeply.

Coaches passed like lightning, rented carriages at a deathly slow pace, people of various nationalities strolled by. Walking at the uneven pace generally associated with distracted or idle people, the young man headed toward La Plaza de Binondo, looking around as if he were searching for something. The same streets, the same white and blue houses, with walls either white-washed or painted in fresco style and made to look like granite. The church tower was still crowned by the clock with its translucent dial, the same Chinese shops with their dirty curtains and iron rods, one of which he had bent one night, the way Manila's more mischievous boys did. It was still bent.

"Things move so slowly," he murmured and went along Calle de la Sacristía.

The sherbet vendors were shouting, "Sherrberrt!" "Huepcer!" still shed their light onto the booths run by the Chinese and women, which sold foodstuffs and fruit.

"It's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "That's the same Chinese man from seven years ago, and the same old woman! You could say I dreamed about this every night of my seven years in Europe. My God, this paving stone is still broken, the same as when I left!" It was true. The flat stone that formed the corner of Calle San Jacinto and Sacristía was still loose.

While he contemplated such wonderful urban stability in a country of instability, someone laid a hand lightly on his shoulder. He looked up to find the old lieutenant watching him, and almost

smiling, without the hard expression or the harsh eyebrows that were his identifying characteristic.

"Young man, you should be careful, and learn from your father's example," he said.

"Excuse me, but it seems you had great deal of respect for my father. Perhaps you can tell me what happened to him?" Ibarra asked, looking at him.

"You mean you don't know?" the soldier asked.

"I asked Don Santiago, but he refused to talk about it until tomorrow. Do you know by any chance?"

"Of course I do, everyone does. He died in jail."

The young man took a step back and eyed the lieutenant up and down.

"In jail? Who died in jail?" he asked.

"Why, your father! He was a prisoner!" the soldier replied, somewhat surprised.

"My father... in jail... a prisoner in jail? What are you saying? Do you know who my father was? Are you...?" asked the young man, grabbing the soldier's arm.

"I don't believe I am mistaken. Don Rafael Ibarra."

"Yes, Don Rafael Ibarra," the young man repeated weakly.

"But I thought you knew," murmured the soldier, his voice full of compassion upon seeing the turmoil in Ibarra's soul, "I assumed you knew... but you must be brave. In the Philippines you are not considered to be honorable unless you have been to jail."

"I have to believe you are not toying with me," offered Ibarra in a weak voice, after a few moments of silence. "Can you tell me why he was in jail?"

The old man stopped to think.

"It seems odd to me that you have not been told about your family's affairs."

"His last letter arrived a year ago. He told me not to worry if he didn't write, since he would be very busy. He told me to keep studying... and he gave me his blessing."

"Then he wrote that letter just before he died. It is coming up on a year since he was buried in his village."

"Why was my father imprisoned?"
"For a very honorable reason. But walk with me, I have to go to my barracks. I'll tell you about it on the way. Take my arm."

For a while they walked along in silence. The old man seemed to be muttering something over and asking for inspiration from his gorget, which he stroked.

"As you well know," he began by saying, "your father was the richest man in the province, and even though many people loved and respected him, others hated and envied him. Unfortunately, the Spaniards who come to the Philippines are not always the ones who should. I say this as much about one of your grandparents as about your father's enemies. Frequent changes, lack of morale in high places, favoritism, and the inexpensiveness and brief length of the voyage are all to blame. The worst parts of the Peninsula come here, and if a good one does arrive, the country quickly corrupts him. Well, between the priests and the Spanish your father had many enemies."

He paused briefly.

"A few months after you left, the unpleasantness with Father Dámaso began, though I cannot figure out why, Father Dámaso accused him of not going to confession. Before that he didn't go to confession either, but they were still friends, as you well remember. In addition, Don Rafael was an honest man, more just than many men who go to confession. He held himself up to a rigorous moral standard and when the unpleasantness began he often said to me: "Señor Guevara, do you think God pardons a crime, a murder, for example, solely because one tells it to a priest, who is, in the end, a man, and who has the duty to keep it to himself, and who is afraid of burning in hell, which is an act of attrition, who is a coward, and certainly without shame? I have another conception of God," he would say, "to me one does not correct one wrong by committing another, nor is one pardoned by useless weeping, or by giving alms to the church." He gave me this example: "If I kill the head of a family, if I make a woman into a destitute widow and happy children into helpless orphans, will I have satisfied eternal justice if I let them hang me, or confide my secret to someone who has to keep it to himself, or give alms to the priests, who need it least, or buy myself a papal pardon, or weep night and day? And what about the widow and children? My conscience tells me I should replace as much as possible the person I have murdered and dedicate myself completely and for my whole life to the welfare of the family whose misfortune I have created. And even then, even then, who will replace the love of a husband and father? This was your father's reasoning. He always acted out of such moral stringency, and one could say that he never offended anyone. On the contrary, through his own good works, he tried to erase certain injustices that he said your grandparents had committed. But getting back to the unpleasantness with the priest. It took on an evil character. Father Dámaso made veiled allusions to him from the pulpit and it was a miracle he didn't mention him by name, since with a character like his anything is possible. Sooner or later it had to end badly."

The lieutenant again paused briefly.

"In those days there wandered throughout the province an esquireyman who had been thrown out of the ranks for being loutish and stupid. Though the man had to make a living, they wouldn't let him do any physical labor, which would hurt the army's prestige, so someone or other got him a job collecting vehicle taxes. The unhappy fellow had no education whatsoever and the indios got wind of it pretty quickly. A Spaniard who cannot read or write is quite a phenomenon here. They made fun of the poor fellow, who paid with mortification for the taxes he collected after he came to the realization that he was the butt of their jokes, and it made an already rude and gross personality even more bitter. They would intentionally write backwards. He would make a great show of reading it, and when he would reach a blank space, he would sign it with a sort of scrawl that in the end gave him a semblance of dignity. The indios paid up, but they made fun of him. He swallowed his pride and made his collections, but his spirits were such that he respected no one. He had exchanged strong words with your father.

"It happened one day that, while he was going over and over a piece of paper that he had been given in a shop, trying to get it right-side up, a schoolboy began to gesture to his friends, laugh, and point at him. The man heard the laughter and saw the joke making the rounds of the serious faces of those present. He lost his patience, whirled around, and began chasing the boys, who were running around shouting, 'Ba, be, bi, bo, bu.' Blind with anger and unable to catch up with them, he throws his stick,
which smashes one of them in the head and knocks him down. He runs over to him and stomps on him. None of those who had been making fun of him had the courage to intervene. Unfortunately, at that moment your father was passing by. Indignant, he runs over to the collector, grabs him by the arm, and reproaches him in no uncertain terms. He, who by that time could see only red, raises his hand, but your father didn’t give him a chance, and with the typical strength of the grandson of a Basque... some say he hit him, others that he only pushed him. In any event the man stumbled a few steps away and fell, hitting his head on a rock. Don Rafael calmly picks him up and takes him to the courthouse. Blood was spurring out of the ex-artilleryman’s mouth. He never regained consciousness and he died a few minutes later. As is usually the case, justice intervened, your father was imprisoned, and all his enemies emerged from hiding. Slanders rained down on him. They accused him of heresy and subversion. To be a heretic anywhere is a great disgrace, especially at that time, when the mayor made a great show of his religious devotion and prayed in the church with his servants and said the rosary in a great loud voice, perhaps so that everyone could hear him and pray with him. But to be a subversive is worse than being a heretic and killing three tax collectors who know how to read, write, and sign their names. Everyone deserted him. His papers and books were confiscated. They accused him of subscribing to the Overseas Mail, of reading the Madrid newspapers, of having sent you to German Switzerland, of having been in possession of letters and a portrait of a condemned priest, and who knows what else? They found accusations in everything, even of his wearing a peninsular-style shirt. If he had been anyone other than your father, he would have been set free almost immediately, especially since a doctor had attributed the death of the unfortunate tax collector to a blockade. But because of his wealth, his confidence in justice, and his hatred of anything that was not legal or just, they ruined him. I myself, in spite of the repugnance I feel in asking for mercy for anyone, went to the Captain General, a predecessor to the one we have now. I maintained that no one could be a subversive who took in any Spaniard at all and gave him a roof over his head and food to eat, and in whose veins the generous blood of Spain still flowed. But I ran into a brick wall. I swore on my poverty and my honor as a soldier, and I only succeeded in getting a poor reception, an even worse dismissal, and the nickname of ‘crackpot.’

The old man stopped to take a breath and, seeing the silence of his companion, who was not even looking at him, went on.

"I went through the appeals process on your father’s behalf. I hired the well-known Filipino attorney, the young A., but he refused to take the case. ‘I would just lose,’ he told me. ‘And my defense would only give them a reason to bring new charges against him and perhaps against me. Try Señor M., who is a fiery speaker, articulate, from the Peninsula, and who enjoys a great deal of prestige.’ I followed this advice and this famous lawyer took on the case, which he argued with skill and brilliance. But your father’s enemies were legion, and some... clandestine and unknown. There was a great deal of false testimony, and slander that anywhere else would have been dismissed with an ironic or sarcastic phrase was now given weight and substance. If the lawyer was able to bring out contradictions in the testimony itself, other accusations rose immediately thereafter. They accused him of having illegally acquired several properties, and they requested indemnities for damages and loss. They said he kept up relations with undesirables so that his fields and animals would be protected.

In the end, they entangled the affair to such an extent that at the end of a year no one could even understand it. The governor had to leave his post. Another one came who had a reputation for being upstanding, but he was here only a few months and the one who succeeded him had too great a love for horses.

"The suffering, the unpleasantness, the discomfort of prison or the pain of seeing so much cruelty undermine his iron constitution, and he fell ill with a disease that only the grave can cure. And just when he was about to be exonerated, when he was to be absolved of the accusation of enemy of the state and of the murder of the tax collector, he died in jail, with no one at his side. I arrived just in time to see him pass away."

The old man became quiet. Ibarra said nothing. By that time they had arrived at the barracks door. The soldier stopped, and taking him by the hand, said to him:
CHAPTER 5
A STAR IN THE DARK NIGHT

Ibarra went up to his room, which looked out over the river. He dropped into an armchair, and stared into the yawning space in front of him, through the open window.

The house opposite, on the other side of the river, was brightly lit, and from its upper floors the lively tunes of stringed instruments reached across to him. If the young man had been less preoccupied, and more curious, he might have tried to see, with the help of binoculars, what was going on in that atmosphere of light. He would have admitted one of those fantastic visions, those magic apparitions one sometimes sees in the great theaters of Europe, in which the deafening melodies of an orchestra are made to appear among a deluge of light, a torrent of oriental diamonds and gold surrounded by a diaphanous mist, from which a sylph comes forward, her feet barely touching the floor, encircled and accompanied by a luminous cloud. In her wake flowers shoot forth, a dance bursts out, harmonies awaken, and choirs of devils, nymphs, satyrs, spirits, country maidens, angels, and shepherds dance, shake tambourines, gesticulate wildly, and lay tribute at the goddess's feet. Ibarra would have seen a young, extraordinarily beautiful woman, slender, dressed in the picturesque costume of the daughters of the Philippines, amid a semicircle composed of all types of people, who vigorously gestured and moved about. There were Chinese, Spaniards, Filipinos, soldiers, priests, old women, young men, and others. To one side of this beautiful woman stood Father Dámaso. He was smiling, as if blessed. Father Silya, that same Father Silya, directed a few words toward her, and Doña Victorina was adjusting a string of pearls and precious stones in the young woman's magnificent coiffure, which
created a stunningly gorgeous prism of colors. She was white, perhaps too white. Her eyes, which were almost always cast down, when she raised them testified to the purest of souls, and when she smiled, revealing her small, white teeth, one might be tempted to say that a rose is merely a plant, and ivory just an elephant's tusk. Among the transparent lace around her white and sculpted neck fluttered, as the Tagalogs say, the sparkling eyes of a necklace made up of precious stones. Only one man seemed not to feel the influence of her luminosity, one might say: it was a young Franciscan, a thin, scrawny, pale youth, who contemplated her from afar, unmoving, like a statue, almost without breathing.

But Ibarra saw none of this; his eyes saw something else. They saw four bare and grimy walls enclosing a small space. On one of them, toward the top, was a grate, on the dirty and disgusting floor a mat, on the mat an old man in agony. The old man, who breathed with difficulty, looked all about him and uttered his name, weeping. He was alone, though from time to time one could hear the sounds of a chain or moaning through the wall, and then, from far away, a lively party, almost a bacchanal. A young man laughed and shouted, spilling his wine onto flowers, to the applause and intoxication of the others. The old man had his father's features, the young man resembled him, and the name he uttered while he wept was his.

This was what the unhappy man saw before him. The lights in the house opposite went out, the music and the noise ended, but still Ibarra could hear the anguished cries of his father, searching for his son at his final hour.

Silence had blown its empty wind over Manila and everything seemed to sleep in the arms of nothingness. A cock's crow alternated with the tower clock and the melancholy warnings of bored night watchmen. A sliver of moon began to rise. Everything seemed to be at rest. Even Ibarra slept, either exhausted from his sad thoughts or from his journey.

But the young Franciscan, whom we saw a little while ago still and silent amidst the liveliness of the great room, did not sleep. He waited. With his elbow on the windowsill of his cell, his pale, drawn face resting on the palm of his hand, he stared silently at a star shining far off in the dark sky. The star grew dimmer and
CHAPTER 14
TASIO, MADMAN OR PHILOSOPHER

The odd old man wandered dreamily through the streets.

He was a former philosophy student who had abandoned his career at the behest of his aging mother, not because he lacked the means or the ability; his mother was rich and he had talent, they said. This fine woman was afraid that with such wisdom he would forget God, so she offered him the choice of either becoming a priest or leaving the College of San José. He was in love, so he opted for the latter, and got married. Widowed and orphaned within a year, to find release from his sorrows, the cockpit, and his own languor, he sought consolation in books, but he became so enamored of his studies and his book collecting that he neglected his affairs, and so, gradually, he was ruined.

Policemen called him Don Anastasio or Tasio the Philosopher, but the impolite ones, who were the majority really, called him Tasio the Madman because of his odd ideas and his strange manner of dealing with people.

As we were saying, a storm threatened that afternoon. A few flashes of lightning lit up the leaden sky with a pale light. The atmosphere was heavy, the air terribly sultry.

Tasio the Philosopher seemed to have forgotten his beloved cane field. He smiled as he stared at the dark clouds.

Near the church he came upon a man dressed in an alpaca jacket holding a basket of candles and a ceremonial mace, the symbol of his authority.

"You seem happy," he said in Tagalog.

"Absolutely, Captain. I'm happy because I have hope."

"Ah! And what sort of hope is that?"

"The storm!"
one answered. "And I was hoping to get my pay to give to my
mother."
"Ah, and where are you going?"
"To the tower, sir, to ring for the souls."
"You are going to the tower? Well, be careful. Don't go near
bells during a storm."
Then he left the church, but not without a compassionate
look at the two boys, who were going up the stairs in the direc-
tion of the choir.
Tasio rubbed his eyes, looked again at the sky, and murmured:
"Now I'd be sorry if lightning struck."
With his head down, deep in thought, he made for the outskirtss
of town.
"Come on inside," came a voice in Spanish from a window.
The philosopher raised his head and saw a man of perhaps
thirty or thirty-five, smiling at him.
"What are you reading there?" Tasio asked, pointing at a book
the man was holding.
"It's a book especially for this season: The Penalties Suffered by
Blessed Souls in Purgatory," said the man, smiling.
"My, my, my," the old man exclaimed in a variety of tones as he
erected the house. "The author must be very smart."
As he went up the stairs, the owner of the house and his young
wife gave him a warm welcome. His name was Filipo Lino and
hers Teodora Vitha. Don Filipo was a deputy mayor and party
chief, almost liberal, if you could really call it that, and if there
really were political parties in the Philippines.
"Did you see the late Don Rafael's son in the cemetery, the one
who just got back from Europe?"
"Yes, I saw him getting out of his carriage."
"They say he went to look for his father's grave... the shock
must have been terrible."
The philosopher shrugged his shoulders.
"You don't find such misfortune interesting?" the young woman
asked.
"You know I was one of the six who accompanied the body. I
was the one who complained to the Captain General about such
extraordinary proclamation when I saw everyone here saying noth-
ing, not even the authorities. I would prefer to honor the man's
life, rather than his death."
"And so?"
"You know I'm no supporter of inherited monarchy, madam.
Because of the drops of Chinese blood my mother has given me I
think a bit like the Chinese: I honor the father for the merit of his
son, but I don't honor the son because of the father. Let everyone
be rewarded or punished because of what he himself does, not
what others do."
"Did you order the saying of a mass for your late wife, as I sug-
gested to you yesterday?" the woman said in order to change the
subject.
"No," the old man answered with a smile.
"That's too bad," she exclaimed, truly upset. "They say that
until tomorrow morning at ten o'clock souls wander freely as they
pray the help of the living, and that one mass today is worth five
or other days of the year, or six, the priest said this morning."
"Hello! Do you mean to say that we have an attractive oppor-
tunity we should take advantage of?"
"But, Dory," Don Filipo put it, "you know that Don Anastas-
io doesn't believe in purgatory."
"I don't believe in purgatory?" the old man protested, half ris-
ing from his seat, "I even know something about its history!"
"The history of purgatory?" both of them exclaimed, with
great surprise. "Well, tell us about it."
"You know nothing about it yet you order up masses and talk
about its penuries? Well, the rain has already started and it looks
like it's going to last, so we have plenty of time," replied Tasio,
shouting a moment to think.
Don Filipo closed the book he was holding and Dory sat be-
side him, ready to disbelieve everything Old Tasio was about to
say. He began with the following:
"Purgatory existed well before the coming of our Lord Jesus
Christ, and was meant to be at the center of the earth, according
to Father Astere, or in the whereabouts of Cluny, according to the
monk Father Gizard has mentioned. The exact spot is unimpor-
tant. Now then, who was being roasted in those fires burning
from the beginning of time? Its age-old existence proves Christian
philosophy, which holds that God has created nothing new since he rested.

"It could have existed in potentia, but not in acta," the deputy mayor objected.\textsuperscript{119}

"Very well...but nevertheless, I will answer that by saying that some people knew about it and its existence in acta! One of them was Zarathustra or Zaroeaster, who wrote a part of the Aveesta and who founded a religion that had several things in common with ours. Zarathustra, according to wise men, lived at least eight hundred years before Christ. I say at least, since Gaffarel, after having examined the testimony of Plato, Xantho of Lydia, Pliny, Hermipos, and Euodoro, believed that it was twenty-five hundred years before our era. Whatever you make of that, Zarathustra definitely outlined a type of purgatory, and the means for freeing oneself from it. The living can redeem the souls of the sinful dead by reciting passages from the Aveesta and by doing good works, but only on the condition that the person who prays has to be a fourth-generation relative. This window of time occurred once a year for five days. Later, when this belief was affirmed throughout the country, the priests of that religion saw in it a great opportunity and exploited those 'profoundly dark cells in which remorse reigned,' as Zarathustra had said. They established, then, that for a price of one ducum, a coin worth little, it is said, one could save a soul a whole year of torture. But since in that religion there were sins that could cost you three hundred to a thousand years of torment, such as lying, dishonesty, not keeping your word, and so on, it came to pass that these crooks pocketed millions of ducums. So here we see something like our own purgatory, with the differences between religions understood, of course."

A lightning bolt, followed by deafening thunder, brought Doray to her feet. Crossing herself, she said:

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! I'm leaving all this to you. I am going to burn a blessed palm and light candles of absolution."

A torrential rain began to fall. As the young woman went off, Iasio the Philosopher continued:

"Well, now that she's gone we can talk about more reasonable things. Even though Doray is a bit superstitious, she is a good Catholic and I have no desire to rip the faith from her heart. Pure, simple faith is as different from fanaticism as flames from smoke, as music from cacophony. Imbéciles, like deaf people, confuse the two. Between you and me, we can admit that the idea of purgatory is a good one, holy and rational. It maintains the connection between those who were and those who are, and obliges one to lead a purer form of life. The bad part is when people abuse it.

"But now that it existed neither in the Bible nor in the Gospels, let's see how the idea could have passed into Catholicism. Neither Moses nor Jesus makes the slightest mention of it and the one cited passage in the Macabees is insufficient and anyway that book was declared apocryphal by the Council of Laodica and the Holy Catholic Church only admitted it later on. Pagan religions also had nothing like it. The oft-cited passage in Virgil from the pandentur amentes,\textsuperscript{120} which gave St. Gregory the Great the opportunity to speak about drowned souls and which Dante amplified in The Divine Comedy could not be the basis for this belief. Neither Brahmins nor Buddhists nor the Egyptians, who gave Greece and Rome the Caronte and the Avernus, had anything similar to the concept. I am not talking about the religions of the peoples of northern Europe, religions of warriors, barns, and hunters, but nor of philosophers, who indeed retain their beliefs, and even their rituals, though Christianized, which could not accompany their hordes in the sacking of Rome or sit in the capitol, religions of a mist that dissipates in the midday sun. But even Christians of the first centuries did not believe in purgatory. They died in the happy belief that in a brief time they would stand face-to-face with God. The first Church fathers who seem to have mentioned it were San Clemente of Alexandria, Origines, and San Irenæus, who might have been influenced by Zoroastranism, which had spread throughout the Orient and still flourished; we read reproaches about Origines' orientalism everywhere. San Irenæus proved its existence by pointing out that Jesus Christ remained 'three days in the depths of the earth,' three days of purgatory, and he took that to mean that each person must remain there until the resurrection of the flesh, even if it seems to contradict Hades memos eis in Paradiso.\textsuperscript{121} Saint Augustine also speaks of purgatory, even if he doesn't affirm its existence; nonetheless he doesn't believe it to be impossible, figuring that the punishment we receive for our sins in this life can continue in the next."

"The devil with Saint Augustine!" Don Filipo exclaimed. "Was
he so unsatisfied with our suffering here that he needed it to continue?"

"That's how it goes. Some believed and others didn't. Nevertheless, though St. Gregory came to admit in his *de quibusdam levisibus calpis esse ante judicium purgatorios ignis credebantur est*, there was nothing definitive about it until 1419, that is, eight centuries later, when the Council of Florence declared that a purifying fire had to exist for souls that had died in the love of God, but without first having satisfied divine justice. Finally the Council of Trent, under Pius IV in 1563, in Session XXV, issued a decree on purgatory that began *Cone catholica ecclesias, Spiritus Sancto edocta*, and so on, which says that the payments of the living, prayers, alms, and other pious works were the most effective media by which souls were freed, except of course, the sacrifice of the mass. Nevertheless, Protestants don't believe in it, nor do Greek priests, but they miss out on the biblical precept and claim that the place for merit or lack thereof ends at death and the *Quodcunque lignes in terra* does not mean *usque ad purgatorium*, and so on. But one can respond to this by saying that because purgatory lies at the center of the earth, naturally it falls under the dominion of Saint Peter. But we would never finish if we had to reiterate here everything that has been said on the subject. If you want to discuss it with me someday, come to my house and we'll open up a few tomes and discuss it openly and calmly. Now I have to go. I have no idea why on this night Christian piety permits robbery and that you authorities allow it to happen, so I fear for my books. If they were robbing me to read them, I would let them, but I know that they want to burn them all as an act of charity for me, and this type of charity, worthy of the Caliph Omay, is frightful. Some people think I am already damned because of those books..."

"But I assume you believe in eternal damnation?" Doray asked with a smile. She appeared carrying a small brazier in which dried palm leaves gave off smoke with a persistent and agreeable scent.

"I have no idea, senora, what God will do with me?" Old Tasio said thoughtfully. "When I am suffering badly I will give myself over to God, without fear, and let him do with me what he will. But one thing has occurred to me."

"And what is that?"
CHAPTER 18
SOULS IN TORMENT

Father Salvi would finish saying his final mass by about seven in the morning, his third in the space of an hour.

"The father is not well," his parishioners said, "He is not doing things with his usual rhythm and elegance."

He removed his vestments without a word, without looking at anyone, and without a single comment.

"Look out," the sextons buzzed. "The hammer is about to fall, and fines will rain down upon us. And all because of those two brothers."

He left the sacristy to go up to the parish house. Seven or eight women sat at the school entrance, along with a man who paced back and forth. When they saw him come in, the women all rose. One came forward to kiss his hand, but an impatient gesture from the priest stopped her cold by the time she had gone halfway across the room.

"He must have lost a real, kurius," the woman exclaimed with a mocking laugh, offended by such a reception. Not to give her his hand to kiss. And she a monitor of the cofraternity, Sister Rufa. It was unheard of.

"And he wasn't even in the confession this morning," added Sister Sipa, a toothless old woman. "I wanted to confess so I could take communion and get indulgences."

"Well, I sympathize with you," responded a young woman with a frank expression. "This morning I got three plenaries, which I dedicated to my husband's soul."

"Wrong thing to do, Sister Juana," said the offended Rufa. "One plenary is enough to get him out of purgatory. You shouldn't waste your holy indulgences, Do what I do,"
"But I already know I'll get out of there," Brother Pedro replied, with a sublime confidence. "I've pulled many, many souls from the fire. I've made many, many saints. And even more so, in \textit{articulo mortis} I can get even more if I want, at least seven plegarias. And I'll be able to save others as I die!"

That said, he walked off laughingly.

"Nevertheless, you should all do as I do, not waste a single day and keep track of your accounts. I don't cheat and I won't be cheated!"

"What do you do, then?" Juana asked.

"You should copy the way I do it. For example, let's say I get a year of indulgences. I mark it down in my notebook and I say, 'Blessed holy sainted Father Domingo, do me the favor of looking into purgatory to see if there is someone who needs exactly one year, neither one day more or one day less.' I flip a coin. Heads I do it, tails I don't. Let's say it comes out heads. I write down 'collected.' And if it comes up tails, I hold on to the indulgence. That way I put together little groups of a hundred years that I mark off. It's too bad you can't do with them what you can with money; get interest. You could save more souls. Take it from me, and do what I do."

"But I do something even better," answered Sister Sipa.

"What? Better?" asked a surprised Rufa. "Can't be. You can't improve on my method."

"Listen a minute and I'll show you, sisters," old Sipa replied sourly.

"Well... well, let's hear it," said the others.

After a cough (for effect), the old woman said the following: "You all know full well that by reciting the 'Blessed for your purity' and the 'My Lord Jesus Christ, the sweetest father of pleasure' you get ten years for each letter..."

"Twenty! No, less, free!" said several voices.

"One here, one there, doesn't matter. Now, when a butler or maid breaks one of my plates, glasses, or cups, I make him pick up all the pieces, every one, no matter how small, and he has to recite the 'Blessed for your purity' and the 'My Lord Jesus Christ, sweetest father of pleasure,' and the indulgences I get I dedicate to the souls of the departed. Everyone knows about it in my house, except the cats."
The prefect had to intervene to make peace. No one remembered anything about Our Fathers. Instead they were talking about pigs.

"Please, please, one can't complain about one piglet, sister! The Holy Scriptures provide us with an example. The heretics and Protestants did not complain to Our Lord Jesus Christ when he flung a pair of their hogs into the water, and we, who are Christians and members of the brotherhood of the Holy Rosary, shall we complain about one piglet? What would our counterparts in the Third Brotherhood say about us?"

Everyone became quiet, admiring the teacher's profound wisdom and afraid of what the Third Brothers would say. Satisfied with such obedience, the prefect changed his tone of voice and continued.

"The priest will have us called soon. We'll have to say which preacher we have selected from among the three he proposed yesterday: Father Dámaso, Father Martín, or the coadjutor. I have no idea if the Third Brothers have made their selection. We need to decide."

"The coadjutor..." Juana whispered timidly.

"Hm, the coadjutor doesn't know how to deliver a sermon!* says Sipa. "Father Martín is better."

"Father Martín?" someone exclaimed with disdain. "He has no voice. Father Dámaso is better."

"That's true, that's true," Rufa shouted. "Father Dámaso knows how to deliver a sermon, he's almost like an actor!"

"But we can't understand what he's saying," Juana whispered. "Because he is very profound, which is why he preaches so well..."

At that point Sisa took off, carrying a basket on her head, said good day to the women, and went up the stairs.

"She's going up! Let's go up, too!* they said.

As she went up the stairs, Sisa could feel her heart beating violently. She had no idea what she was going to say to the priest to reduce his anger, nor what arguments she could make on behalf of her son. That morning, at the first light of dawn, she had gone down to her garden plot to pick her most beautiful vegetables, which she placed in her basket among banana leaves and flowers.

She went to the riverbank to get pakó,* which she knew the priest liked in his salad. She dressed in her best clothes and with her basket perched atop her head, without waking her son she left for the town.

Trying to make as little noise as possible, she went up the stairs slowly, listening carefully for a child's voice, familiar and alive.

But she met no one on the way, nor heard anyone, so she headed toward the kitchen.

There she looked everywhere. Servants and maids greeted her coldly. She would say hello, but they would barely answer.

"Where can I leave these vegetables?" she asked, without letting on that she was offended.

"Over there, anywhere over there!* a cook answered, with hardly a glance, intent on his work. He was plucking a capon.

Sisa started putting her eggplants, patolas,* ferns, and the tender shoots of pakó on the table. Then she put the flowers on top. She half-smiled and asked a servant who seemed more agreeable than the cook, "Can I speak with the father?"

"He's not feeling well," the man answered quietly.

"And Crispín? Do you know if he is in the sacristy?"

The servant looked at her with surprise.

"Crispín?" he asked, knitting his brows. "Isn't he at home? Are you trying to tell me he's not?"

"Basilio is at home, but Crispín stayed here," Sisa replied. "I would like to see him..."

"Yes, of course," said the servant. "At first he stayed, then he left. He took a lot of things. This morning the priest told me to go to the barracks to let the Civil Guard know. I assume they have already gone to your house after the boys."

Sisa clasped her hands over her ears and opened her mouth, but her lips moved in vain. Not a single sound came out.

"Look what kind of sons you have," the cook added. "Everyone knows you're a faithful wife, but the boys have taken after their father. Watch out that the younger one doesn't turn out even worse."

Sisa burst into bitter sobs, and collapsed onto a bench.

"Don't cry here," the cook shouted at her. "Don't you know the father is unwell? Go cry in the street."
The poor woman, virtually pushed out into the street, went down the stairs at the same time as the sisters, who whispered and conjectured about the priest's illness.

The unfortunate mother hid her face in her handkerchief and repressed her sobs.

When she got to the street she looked all around, undecided what to do. Then as if she had made up her mind, she hurried away.

CHAPTER 19
ADVENTURES OF A SCHOOLMASTER

The masses are fools, but it's they who pay, 
So give them folly to make them bray.

—Lope de Vega

The lake, surrounded by mountains, sleeps in that calm hypocrisy of the elements, as if the previous night and the storm had not somehow acted in concert. At the first reflections of light, which awaken phosphorescent genies in the water, from far off, almost at the edge of the horizon, grayish silhouettes become outlines: fishing boats and the fishermen who gather their nets. Sculls and parazos furl their sails.

Two men dressed in deep mourning contemplate the water from well above. One of them is Ibarra, the other a young man of humble appearance and an air of melancholy.

"Here it is," the latter said. "This is where they dumped your father's body. This is where the gravedigger brought Lieutenant Guevara and me."

Ibarra shook the young man's hand vigorously.

"There's no need to thank me," the young man replied. "I owed your father many favors and the only one I was able to do for him was to accompany him to the grave. I came here without references, name, or fortune... as I am now. My predecessor left teaching to take up selling tobacco. Your father took me in, found me a house, and helped me when I needed it so I could teach properly. He would go to the schoolhouse and give out quarters to the poor scholarship students. He gave them books and paper. But, like all good things, it didn't last long."

Ibarra removed his hat and for a long time seemed to be praying. Then he turned to his companion and said:

"You said my father used to help poor children. And now?"
ensign, instead of stopping his horse, kicked it with his spurs and shouted to the man to retreat. The man seemed to have little desire to go back over the same ground because of the load he was carrying on his shoulders, nor did he want to sink into the mud, so he kept on walking. The irritated soldier wanted to run him down, but the man grabbed a piece of firewood and hit the horse on the head with such force that it fell, depositing its rider in the mud. They say that the man kept on walking, calmly, paying no attention to the five shots the soldier took at him, one after the other, blind from anger and the mud. Since the man was entirely unknown to him, it was supposed that it was the famous Elías, who had come to the province a few months before, from who knows where, and who had become known to the civil guards because of similar incidents.

"Maybe he's a bandit," a shaking Victoria asked.

"I don't think so, since they say that he fought against the bandits once when they were sacking a house."

"He doesn't have the face of a bad person," Sinang added.

"No, it's just that he has a sad expression. The whole morning I didn't see him smile," returned a thoughtful María Clara.

The afternoon went on until the time to return to town arrived. At the final rays of a dying sun they emerged from the forest, passing in silence close to the mysterious tomb of Ibarra's ancestor. Then the gay conversations were reignited, full of warmth, under those boughs that were little accustomed to hearing such voices. The trees seemed sad, the vines swaying, as if to say, "Good-bye, my young friends, good-bye, dreams of day!"

And now, amid the light of the huge, reddish bamboo torches and the sound of the guitars, let's leave them on the road to town. The groups got smaller and smaller, the lights went out, the songs ceased, the guitars became silent, as they approached people's homes. Don again the mask you wear among your brothers!

CHAPTER 25

AT THE PHILOSOPHER'S HOUSE

On the following morning, Juan Crisóstomo Ibarra, after visiting his properties, made his way to the house of Old Taos. The garden was very quiet, since the swallows flitting about the eaves made almost no sound. Moss grew on the old wall where a type of ivy crept along the window edges. The little house seemed like a quiet manse.

Ibarra carefully hatched his horse to a post and, walking almost on tiptoes, crossed the tidy, scrupulously maintained garden. He went up the stairs and, since the door was open, went inside.

The first thing he saw was the old man, bent over a book in which he appeared to be writing. On the wall were collections of insects and leaves, interspersed with maps, and shelves filled with books and manuscripts.

The old man was so absorbed in his work that he never noticed the young man's arrival until, not wanting to disturb him, the latter tried to back out.

"What? You here?" he asked, looking at Ibarra strangely.

"Sorry," Ibarra answered, "I can see you're very busy..."

"Indeed, I was writing a little, but it's not urgent, and I wanted to rest anyway. Can I help you with something?"

"With a lot of things," Ibarra answered, coming forward, but..."

He scanned the book on the table.

"What?" he exclaimed in astonishment, "are you working on deciphering hieroglyphics?"

"No," the old man replied, offering him a chair, "I don't understand Egyptian, or even Coptic, but I do understand a bit of the writing system and I write in hieroglyphics."
“You write in hieroglyphics? But why?” the young man asked, finding it hard to believe his eyes and ears.

“So that no one will understand what I’m writing.”

Ibarra looked him up and down, wondering if indeed the old man was crazy. He gave the book a quick examination to see if he was lying and saw well-drawn animals, circles, semicircles, flowers, feet, hands, arms, and other things.

“But why are you writing if you don’t want anyone to read it?”

“Because I’m not writing for this generation, I’m writing for the ages. If they could read these, I would burn my books, my life’s work. On the other hand, the generation that can decipher these characters will be an educated generation. It will understand me and say, ‘In the nights of our grandparents, not everyone was asleep.’ Mystery and these curious characters will save my work from the ignorance of men, just as mystery and strange rites have saved many truths from the destructive priest class.”

“In what language are you writing?” Ibarra asked after a moment.

“In ours, Tagalog.”

“And you can use hieroglyphic marks?”

“If it weren’t for the difficulty of drawing, which takes time and patience, I would almost say it works better than the Latin alphabet. Ancient Egyptian had our vowels. Our o, which was only final and is not like the Spanish one, is somewhere between an o and a u. Like us, Egyptian had no true e sound. It was found somewhere between ha and our kha, which doesn’t exist in the Latin alphabet the way we use it in Spanish. For example, in the word mukha,” he added, pointing at the book, “I transcribed the syllable ha more appropriately with this figure of a fish than with the Latin h, which in Europe is pronounced in different ways. For a less strong aspiration, for example, in this word bahn, in which the b has less force, I use this fish’s head, or these three lotus flowers, depending on the quantity of the vowel. Even more so, I have the nasal sound that doesn’t exist in the hispanicized Latin alphabet either. I say again that if it weren’t for the difficulty of drawing, which has to be done perfectly, one would almost be able to adopt hieroglyphics. That same difficulty forces me to be concise and to say no more than is succinct and necessary. The work keeps me company, as well, when my Chinese and Japanese guests leave.”

“What?”

“Don’t you hear them? The swallows are my guests. This year one is missing, some malevolent Chinese or Japanese boy must have snared it.”

“How do you know they come from those countries?”

“Simple. Some years ago, before they left, I tied a small piece of paper to the leg of one of them with the word ‘Philippines’ in English, figuring they couldn’t go very far and that English is spoken in almost all these regions. For years, there was no answer to my little paper, until finally I decided to write it in Chinese and wouldn’t you know that the following November they came back with other little papers, which I deciphered. One was written in Chinese, greetings from the banks of the Hoang-ho, and the other, the Chinese man I consulted figures, has to be Japanese. But I’m taking your time with these things and I’m not asking what I can do for you.”

“I’ve come to speak to you about an important matter,” the young man replied. “Yesterday afternoon—”

“Have they caught that hoodlum?” the old man interrupted, filing with interest.

“Are you talking about Elías? How did you know about it?”

“I saw the Muse of the Civil Guard.”

“The Muse of the Civil Guard? What muse?”

“The ensign’s wife, whom you did not invite to your party. Yesterday morning what happened with the crocodile was bruited about the town. The Muse of the Civil Guard, whose reach is as long as her malice, figured the boatman had to be the same impudent fellow who threw her husband into the muck and beat up Father Dámaso. Since she reads the communiqués meant for her husband, as soon as he arrived home, drunk and half out of his mind, to take revenge on you she dispatched the sergeant and his soldiers to disrupt your party. Be careful! Eve was a good woman . . . when she was just out of God’s hand! They say that Doña Consolación is evil, and who knows what makes her tick. Women, in order to be good, must be maiden or mother.”

Ibarra smiled slightly. He took a few papers from his wallet before answering.

“My late father used to consult you about things, and I recall that by following your advice things always turned out happily.
for him. I have before me a small undertaking whose success I need to ensure."

Ibarra briefly explained the school project he had offered to his fiancée, unrolling for the astonished philosopher the plans that had arrived from Manila.

"I wanted you to advise me on which people in town are essential to making the project a big success. You know the residence well. I've just arrived and I'm almost a foreigner in my country."

His eyes wet tears, Old Tasio examined the plans in front of him.

"What you are going to create has been my dream, the dream of a poor madman," he exclaimed, clearly moved. "But now, the first advice I will give you is to never come to me for advice again."

The young man looked at him, astonished.

"Because sane people," he went on with a bitter irony, "will think you are crazy, too. People believe that madness is when you don't think as they do, which is why they take me for a madman.

And I'm grateful for that, because, well, the day on which they restore my reason is the day they deprive me of the small bit of freedom I've purchased at the price of a reputation as a sane person. And who knows if they are right? I neither think nor live according to their laws. My principles, my ideals, are different. Among them the mayor enjoys a reputation as a sane individual, since he has not learned anything more than how to serve chocolate and suffer Father Damian's ill humor. Now he is rich, he controls the general future of his fellow citizens, and at times he even talks of justice. 'Here is a man of many talents!' the crowd thinks. 'Look how he made himself into a big man, out of nothing!' But I, I inherited a fortune, and deference. I studied, and now that I am poor, they don't even offer me the lowest position, and everyone says, 'He's crazy, he understands nothing about life!' The priest has nicknamed me 'the Philosopher' and lets everyone know I'm a charlatan who stands on the laurels of what he learned in the university halls, which is precisely the least of what I make use of. Is it possible I am really crazy and they are the sane ones?"

The old man shook his head, as if to clear it of thoughts, and went on. "The second thing I would advise you is to consult the priest, the mayor, and everyone in an important position. They will offer you bad, unwieldy, or useless suggestions, but consulting does not mean obeying. Try to make it look as much as possible as if you were heeding their advice and make it clear that you are working according to that advice."

"Your advice is good, but it will be difficult to follow. Can't I carry my idea forward without a shadow hanging over it? Can't a good triumph over everything, and truth not need to dress in the borrowed clothes of error?"

"No one really loves the naked truth," the old man replied. "It's fine in theory, practical only in the dreams of youth. There is the schoolmaster, who shook things up in a vacuum, the heart of a child who only wanted to do good and ended up mocked and laughed at. You told me you are a stranger in your own land, and I can believe it. From the moment you arrived, you began to wound the pride of a priest who the people believe is a saint and whose peers consider wise. May God grant that this development has not predicted your future. Don't think that because Dominicans and Augustines look down on the twill cassock, the rope belt, and the indecent lack of shoes, because once upon a time a great doctor of Saint Thomas recorded that Pope Innocent III had labeled the statues of that order as more appropriate for pigs than for men, not all of them will swear to what a clerk once said, that 'the most insignificant legate can do more than the government and all its soldiers.' Can we say that?"

"Gold is very powerful; the golden calf has often brought down God and his altars, as far back as the time of Moses."

"I'm not that pessimistic, nor does life in my own country seem that dangerous," Ibarra answered with a smile. "I think such fears are a bit exaggerated, and I hope to bring all my projects to fruition without encountering a great deal of resistance from that quarter."

"Yes, if they lend a hand. No, if they pull it away. All your efforts will crash up against the parish walls if you so much as undo a friar's belt or wrinkle his cassock. The magistrate, on the smallest pretense, will deny tomorrow what he has conceded today. Not one woman will allow her child to attend the school, and then all your work will be counterproductive. It will disillusion everyone who wanted to try a noble undertaking."

"With all of that," the young man replied, "I cannot believe in
the power you are describing, and even if we suppose it exists, admit it exists, I'll still have the entire reasonable population on my side; the government, which is enthusiastic about such projects, has great vision and openly cares about the welfare of the Philippines.

"The government, the government," muttered the philosopher, lifting his eyes to the ceiling, "for all its enthusiastic desire to increase the benefit of this and the mother country, for all the generous spirit of the Catholic Monarchs that some functionary or other reminds and repeats to himself, the government neither sees, nor hears, nor judges any more than the priest or the mayor wants it to see, or to hear or to judge. The government is convinced that it relies on them, that it is maintaining itself it is because of them, that if it lives, it is because they allow it to live, and the day it fails, it will fall like a puppet without a stick. The government is terrified of raising its hand against the people and the people of the forces of government. And out of that comes a simple game that seems like what happens to frightened souls when they visit lugubrious places. They take their own shadows for ghosts, and their echoes for strange voices. While the government has no business set in the making of this country, it will not get out of such a relationship. It will live like those idiotic young men who tremble at their tutor's voice, though they seek his approval. The government has no dreams of a strong future. It is only an arm, the parish house is the head, and their inertia allows them to be dragged from one abyss to another. They end up as a shadow, they disappear as an entity, they are weak and impotent, and they entrust everything to mercenaries. Compare our system of government with that of other countries you have visited—"

"Oh, well," tharra interrupted, "that's asking a great deal. We should be happy to see that our people have few complaints and do not suffer as they do in other countries, which we owe to religion and the benevolence of our governors."

"The people don't complain because they have no voice, they don't act because they are lethargic, and you say they don't suffer: you haven't seen how their hearts bleed. But one day you'll see and hear... people who base their energies in ignorance or fanaticism, those who enjoy trickery and work through the night in the belief that others are sleeping! When daylight shines on shad-
about gratitude or curses from a people he doesn’t know, where he has no memories, or affection? For glory to be agreeable it has to resound in the ears of those who love us, in the atmosphere of our own homes or our own country, where our ashes will lie. We want our glory to lie atop our tombs to warm the coldness of death with its rays, so we are not reduced to nothingness, so that something of us remains. We can’t promise any of this to those who come to mind our futures. And the worst of it is that just as they start learning about their duty, they leave. But we are getting off the subject.”

“No, before going back to it I need to clarify certain things,” he quickly interrupted. “I will concede that the government doesn’t understand the people, but I believe the people understand the government even less. There are useless functionaries, even evil ones, if you will, but there are also good ones, and if they are unable to do anything it is because they come up against an inert mass. The population that barely participates in the things that concern them. But I haven’t come here to argue with you on this point. I came to ask for your advice and you tell me to bow my head to the great idols...”

“Yes, and I will say it again. Here, if you don’t bow your head, you’ll lose it.”

“Bow my head or lose it?” Ibarra repeated thoughtfully. “Is it such that my love of country is incompatible with my love of Spain? Is it necessary to prostitute myself in order to be a good Christian? To prostitute my own conscience in order to make my project a success? I love my country, the Philippines, because I owe it my life and my happiness, and everyone should love his country. I love Spain, the country of my forefathers, because, in spite of everything, the Philippines owes it her happiness and her future, and will owe them to her. I am Catholic, I maintain the pure faith of my parents and I don’t see why I need to bow my head when I want to lift it up, to deliver it to my enemies when I can bring them down.”

“Because the field you wish to till is in your enemies’ control and you have no power against them. It is necessary for you to first kiss the hand—”

“Kiss! But you are forgetting that among them they killed my father, and dragged him from his tomb... but I, his son, will not forget, and if I’m not taking revenge it’s because I see religion’s prestige.”

The old philosopher bowed his head.

“Señor Ibarra,” he replied slowly, “if you hold on to those memories, memories I can’t advise you to forget, abandon the task you have set before you and seek the welfare of the peasants in another arena. Such a task requires another man since, to bring it to fruition, it is not only necessary to have money and desire, in our country one needs alacrity, tenacity, and faith, since the earth has not been tilled. It has been sown only with discord.”

Ibarra understood the merit of these words, but would not be dissuaded. The memory of Maria Clara remained in his mind. His offer had to succeed.

“Your experience can offer me nothing more than such harshness?” he asked softly.

The old man took his arm and brought him to the window. A cool wind blew from the north. The garden stretched out before them, bounded by the vast forest that was used as a park.

“Why can’t we be like that frail stem, laden with roses and rosebuds,” the philosopher said, pointing at a beautiful rosebush.

“The wind blows it, it shakes, and it bends, as if it were trying to protect its precious charge. If the stem were to remain upright, it would break, the wind would scatter the flowers, and the buds would rot. The wind passes by and the stem straightens anew, proud of its treasures. Who would accuse it of folding in the face of such need? Look over there, at that giant kupang,179 whose high leaves sway majestically, up where the eagle makes its nest. I brought it from the forest when it was still a fragile cutting, with thin bamboo poles supporting its trunk for months. Had I brought it here when it was large and full of life, it would certainly not have survived. The wind would have shaken it before its roots could sink into the earth, before it could establish itself to its surroundings and develop the nourishment it needed for its size and stature. That’s how you’ll end up, a plant transplanted from Europe to this rocky soil, if you don’t find support and develop humility. You are alone, highborn, in terrible conditions. The ground shakes, the sky portends a storm, and the tree canopy of your family attracts lightning. To fight against everything that exists today is not valorous, it is rash. No one criticizes a ship’s pilot
who seeks the shelter of a port at the first gust of wind. To duck when a bullet goes by is not cowardice. The bad thing would be to defy it, and never get up again."

"And will such a sacrifice produce the fruits I am hoping for?" Ibarra asked. "Will the priest believe in me and forget his grievances? Will he openly help me with an education that disputes the riches of the country with the friars? They cannot pretend to be friendly, provide protection, and undermine, in the shadows, fight against it, undermine it, stab it in the back in order to weaken it more quickly than to attack it head-on? Given the antecedents you have just mentioned, anything could happen!"

The old man remained silent, without answering. He thought a while and then replied, "If all that happens, if your enterprise fails, you will have to be consoled by the thought that you have done as much as you could, and even then, something will have been won. Put in the first stone, sow the seeds. After the storm is unleashed, perhaps some grain will germinate, survive the catastrophe, save the species from annihilation and serve thereafter as the seed for the children of the late sower. Such an example can give heart to others, who are only afraid of beginning something themselves."

Ibarra considered this reasoning. He thought over the situation, and understood that, with all his pessimism, the old man was right.

"I believe you," he exclaimed, holding out his hand. "My hope for good advice was not in vain. I'll go carry the priest's favor right away. In the end, he has never done anything wrong to me, and he might be a good man. After all, not everyone persecuted my father. I'd also like to interest him in that unfortunate crazy woman and her sons. I commend myself to God and to all men!"

He said good-bye to the old man and, mounting his horse, left. "Careful," the pessimistic philosopher whispered, following him with his eyes. "Let's see how the drama begun in the cemetery will play itself out."

But this time he was truly mistaken. The drama had begun long before.

CHAPTER 26
FESTIVAL EVE

We have come to the tenth of November, festival eve.

Emerging from their general monotony, people give themselves over to extraordinary activity, at home, in the street, at church, at the cockpit, and in the fields. Windows are covered with flags and multicolored damasks, the whole place bursts with explosions and music, the air is pregnant, saturated with joy.

On a little table covered with an embroidered white cloth, a young woman sets out various local fruit preserves in lively colored glass jars. On a patio, chicks peep, hens cluck, and pigs grunt, frightened by such human delight. Servants run back and forth carrying gold spoons, forks and knives, and silver plates. Over here someone moans about a broken plate, over there a simple peasant girl is laughing. All over people give orders, they chatter, they shout, they make comments, they make noise and they clamor; all this trouble and fatigue for the benefit of guests known and unknown, to welcome the ones you know, and the ones you've never seen before—or will ever see again—with open arms, so that the stranger, the foreigner, the friend, the enemy, the Filipino, the Spaniard, the pauper, the rich man will emerge happy and satisfied. You don't even want thanks, nor is it expected from anyone who does anything short of marring a family's hospitality during, or even after, digestion. The rich, those who have been to Manila before and have seen a bit more than the others, have bought European beer, champagne, brandy, wine, and food from people who hardly ever get to try a bite or take a sip. These people will always set a gracious table.

In the midst of all this is a huge, artificial, but remarkably representative, wooden tapestry woven together with clips made of small sticks, expertly cut by convicts during their nonworking
Everyone tried to get comfortable. If they had no benches, they squatted, the women on the floor or on their haunches.

Father Dámaso waded through the crowd, preceded by two sextons and followed by another friar, who carried a large notebook. As he went up the spiral staircase he disappeared from view, but his round head quickly reappeared, followed by his thick neck and immediately thereafter his body. He looked around with great assurance, coughing slightly. He saw Ibarra, and with a quick private wink he showed he would not forget him in his prayers. Then he directed a look of satisfaction at Father Sibyla and another of disdain to Father Manuel Martin, the previous day's preacher. His circumspection complete, he turned to his companion, and with a magnanimous air, said, "Ready, brother!" and the latter opened the notebook.

But the sermon deserves its own chapter. A young man who had studied shorthand and had idolized the great orators took it down. Thanks to this we are able to bring to you a slice of the sacred oratory of those climes.

CHAPTER 31
THE SERMON

Father Dámaso began slowly, and spoke softly.

Et spiritum tuum bonum dedisti, qui doceret eos, et manna tuam non prohibuisti ab ore eorum, et aquam dedisti eis in siti.

"And to teach them you afforded them the goodness of your spirit, and your manna you took not from their mouths, and in their thirst you gave them water.

"Words our Lord uttered through the mouth of Ezra, book two, chapter nine, verse twenty." 199

Father Sibyla looked at the preacher, surprised. Father Manuel Martin grew pale and swallowed hard: the text was better than his own.

Whether something had occurred to him or someone was still amusing, Dámaso coughed several times and put his hands on the front edge of the holy rostrum. The just-painted Holy Ghost was above his head, white, clean, with a pink beard and little pink feet.

"O most excellent sir" (he meant the magistrate) "most virtuous fathers, Christians, brothers in Christ!"

Here he paused solemnly, slowly taking in the auditorium for a second time, where the attention and assemblage seemed to satisfy him.

The first part of the sermon had to be in Castilian, the other in Tagalog: loquebantur omnes linguis. 200

After these iterations and the pause, he stretched his right hand toward the altar, majestically, fixing his gaze on the governor. Then he crossed his arms, slowly, with nary a word, and passed from stasis to motion. He threw back his head and gestured toward the main door, slicing the air with his hand with such force that the sextons interpreted the gesture as a mandate and closed the doors. The ensign became nervous and was not sure if
he should stay or go, but then the preacher began to speak in a strong voice, full and sonorous. Clearly, that old housekeeper had known her medicine.

"Splendid and bright is this altar, broad this main door, the air itself the vehicle of the divine and holy word that flows forth from my mouth. Hear me, with the ears of your hearts and souls, so the words of the Lord will not fall on fallow ground to be devoured by the birds of hell, but so you will believe and so they will flourish like holy seeds in the fields of our venerable and seraphic St. Francis! You, great sinners, prisoners of the dark side of the soul that infects the seas of eternal life on powerful embankments of the flesh and the world! You, burdened with the shackles of lasciviousness and concupiscence, who row in Satan's infernal galleys, look on with reverence and humility at what will redeem a soul from the devil's captivity, the intrepid Gideon, the forcible David, Christianity's victorious Roland, heaven's Civil Guard, more valiant than the whole Civil Guard here with us now, or those we have had in the past, or those we shall have into the future!" The ensign frowned. "Yes, my dear ensign, more valiant and powerful, and with no more rife than a wooden cross they boldly triumphed over the eternal bandits of that shadowy world and over all of Lucifer's attendants, every one of whom would have been exterminated, had those spirits not been immortal. This marvel of divine creation, this impossible portent, is that most fortunate Diego de Alcalá who, if I may compare, because comparison helps in understanding something incomprehensible—as another has said, I will say too—that in this great saint alone and uniquely lies the ultimate soldier, the avatar of our most powerful undertakings, who gives orders from heaven to our seraphic father St. Francis, to whom by the grace of God I have the honor of belonging as a corporal or sergeant."

The uncultivated indios, as our correspondent says, fished out no more from this paragraph than the words Civil Guard, bandits, San Diego, and St. Francis. They noted the ensign's long face and the preacher's bellissimo gestures and deduced that the latter was upset with the former because he would not pursue these bandits. San Diego and St. Francis would take charge of that, and do it very well, which has been proved by the painting hanging in the parish house at Manila, in which St. Francis, with only a rope bel, fought back the Chinese invasion in the early years of the Discovery. This made them happy, especially the most reverence among them, and they thanked God for this help, for they had no doubt that once the bandits were gone, St. Francis would then destroy the Civil Guard. They redoubled their attention, and followed Father Dámaso as he continued.

"Most excellent sir, great things are eternally great things, even beside small things, and small things are small, even beside great ones. This is what history tells us, but since history is correct by pure chance, since it was made by men, and men err, errore es hominum," so says Cicero, 'have a mouth, mistakes will out,' as they say in my country, which means that there are more profound truths than one finds in history. These truths, most excellent sir, the Divine Spirit has told us, in his supreme wisdom, which human intelligence has never understood from the time of Seneca and Aristotle, those wise religious men from antiquity, to our own days of sin, and these truths are not only that small things are small things, but they are great things, not only next to the little ones but next to the largest things on the earth and in heaven and of the air and the clouds and of the waters and of the span of life, and of death!"

"Amen!" responded the prefect of the venerable Third Order, and crossed himself.

With this rhetorical flourish, which he learned from a preacher in Manila, Father Dámaso wanted to shock his audience, and, indeed, his holy ghost, stunned by so many truths, needed to be nudged with his foot to remind him of his mission.

"It is manifest!" the ghost said from below.

"It is manifest, the conclusive and forceful proof of this eternal philosophical truth! It is manifest, this sun of virtue, and I say sun and not moon, because there is no glory in the moon shining at night. In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king. At night a light can shine brightly, even a little star. The greater glory is when it can shine during the day, as the sun. Brother Diego still shines among the greatest saints! Ah, in your eyes it is manifest, in your impious incredulity, the masterpiece of the Most High that confounds the great ones of the earth! Yes, my brothers, it is manifest, manifest to all, manifest!"

A man rose, pale and trembling, and hid in the confessional. He
was a liquor salesman who had dozed off and dreamed that customs officers were demanding an import manifest he didn’t have. Rest assured he did not emerge from his hiding place during the sermon.

"Saint, so humble and self-possessed, your wooden cross" (the image was silver) "and your modest habit honors the great Saint Francis, whose sons we are and whom we emulate. We propagate your holy race throughout the world, in every corner, in cities, in towns, never differentiating between whites and blacks" (the governor held his breath) "suffering abstinence and martyrdom, your holy race of faith and armed religion" (ah, the governor breathed out) "which maintains the world’s equilibrium and keeps it from falling into perdition’s abyss."

His listeners, even Captain Tiago, gradually began to yawn. Maria Clara was paying no attention to the sermon. She knew Ibarrá was close by and was thinking about him as she stared, fanning herself, at one of the evangelist’s bulls, which had all the marks of a small water buffalo.

"We should all memorize the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the saints, and then I would not have to preach to you, you sinners. You should know important and necessary things, such as the Our Father, since many of you have already forgotten it, living as you do as Protestants or heretics or like the Chinese, with no respect for the ministers of God. But you will condemn yourselves, all the worse for you, condemned!"

"Abá, what say Pial Dámaso?" whispered Chinese Carlos, starting in anger at the preacher, who continued his improvisation, unleashing a series of apostrophes and imprecations.

"You will die in impetence, race of heretics! God already punishes you with jails and prisons on this earth! Families, women must fly from you, the government would have to hang everyone to keep them from spreading Satan’s seed in the vineyard of the Lord! Jesus Christ said, ‘If thy right arm offends thee, cut it off, and throw it into the fire.’"

Father Dámaso was nervous. He had forgotten his sermon and his rhetoric.  

"See?" asked a young student from Manila to his comrade.  

"Are you going to cut it off?"
b a believer, and devout; credulous, and candid; chaste, and loving;
close-mouthed, and discreet; suffering, and patient; valiant, and
feared; abstinent, and strong-willed; bold, and resolute; obedient,
and subordinate; bashful, and punctilious; cautious in your inter-
est, and disinterested; dextrous and able; ceremonious, and ur-
bane; urbane, and sagacious; with pity, and with piety; secret;
and with shame; vengeful, and valorous; poor through industri-
ousness, and conformist; prodigal, and economical, active, and
negligent; innocent, and penetrating; reformist, and understand-
ing of consequences; indifferent; and with the eagerness to learn.

God made you to feel the deliriums of platonic love. Help me to
sing your greatness and your name higher than the stars and
lighter than the sun itself that revolts at your feet! Help me, ask
God for the necessary inspiration by singing the Ave Maria!*

Everyone knelt, raising a din like the buzzing of a thousand bees.
With difficulty, the governor bent one knee, shaking his head, dis-
gusted. The enigma was pale and contrite.

"To hell with the priest," muttered one of the two young men
who had come from Manila.

"Quiet!" replied the other. "His wife will hear us..."

Meanwhile, Father Dámaso, instead of singing the Ave María,
uprooted his holy ghost for having skipped over three of his par-
graphs and downed two merengues and a glass of Malaga, se-
cure in the idea that he would find in them greater inspiration
than in all the holy ghosts, be they wooden in the shape of a bird,
or flesh in the form of a distracted friar. He was going to begin the
Tagalog sermon.

The old pious woman dealt another smack to her grandchildren,
who woke up grumpy and asked, "Is it time to weep?"

"Not yet, but don't go to sleep. Impy!" replied the good grand-
mother.

We have no more than a few brief notes on the second part of
the sermon, that is, the Tagalog part. Father Dámaso improvised
in that language, not because he spoke it better, but because he
took it for granted that provincial Filipinos were ignorant of rhet-
oric, and he didn't fear making egregious errors in front of them.
With the Spaniards it was another thing: the rules of oratory had
been bruited about and among his listeners it is possible someone

had spent time in a lecture hall, perhaps the chief magistrate him-
self. So he wrote down his sermons, made corrections, polished
them, learned them by heart, and then rehearsed them some two
days before.

Rumor has it that no one in attendance could understand the
sermon in its entirety. It was too obscure and the preacher too pro-
found, as Sister Rufa said, so the auditorium waited in vain for a
chance to weep and the condemned granddaughter of the old holy
woman went back to sleep.

Nevertheless, this part had more effect than the first one, at
least for some listeners, as we'll see further along.

He began with a *Mamá capitán con cristiano,* after which he
followed with an avalanche of untranslatable phrases. He spoke
of the soul, of hell, of *malab sa santo pintacali,* of the sin-
ing indios and the virtuous Franciscan fathers.

"Menche!* said one of the irreverent Manila to his friend.
"That's all Greek to me. I'm getting out of here."

Seeing the doors were closed, he left by way of the sacristy,
scandalizing the congregation and the preacher, who turned pale
and stopped in mid-sentence. Some people awaited a violent apo-
srophie, but Father Dámaso was satisfied with following him
with his eyes and he went on with his sermon.

He unleashed curses against the century, the lack of respect, the
nascent treachery. The last of these played to his strength, and
he grew inspired, expressing himself with force and clarity. He
spoke of sinners who did not confess, who die in jail without the
sacraments, of cursed families, supercilious mixed-bloods who
were full of themselves, of little know-it-alls, the so-called philoso-
phers or *filosófperas,* or the so-called lawyers, the so-called stu-
dents, and so on. This is a well-known practice employed by many
people when they want to ridicule their enemies: they add the pre-
fix "so-called," as if the brain wouldn't do it any other way, and
they are very pleased with themselves.

Ibarra heard all of it, and understood the allusions. Maintaining
an outward calm, he sought out God and the authorities with his
eyes, but found nothing more than images of saints, and the
magistrate was asleep.

Meanwhile the preacher's enthusiasm rose by degrees. He
talked of the old times, when a Filipino, when he came upon a priest, would doff his hat, get down on one knee, and kiss his hand.

"But now," he added, "you only remove your salacot or reed hat, which you then settle cocked across your head so as to not mess up your hair. You think that saying 'Good day, among' is enough, and there are proud students, with little Latin, who think that because they have studied in Manila or in Europe they have the right to shake a hand rather than kiss it. Ah, judgment day is coming soon and the world will come to an end, as many saints have prophesied. Fire will rain down, and stones and ash, to punish your arrogance!"

He exhorted the town not to imitate such savages, but to avoid them and treat them with disdain, because they have been excommunicated.

"Hear the words of the holy council," he said, "When an indio meets a priest in the street, he will bow his head and offer his neck to the among to press down on it. If the priest and the indio meet each other on horseback, the indio should take off his salacot or hat reverently. Finally, if an indio is on horseback and the priest on foot, the indio should get down off the horse and should not get back on again until the priest says, 'salutare' or is far away. This is what the holy council tells us and whoever does not obey will be excommunicated!"

"And when you are riding a water buffalo?" asked a scrupulous workman to his neighbor.

"Then . . . keep going!" answered his friend, who was something of a debater.

Despite the preacher's shouting and gesturing, many people were asleep or daydreaming, since the sermon was the same as all the rest. In vain, some devotees tried to sigh and weep at the sins of the wicked throughout, but they had to desist in this task, since they had so few partners, though Sister Putè thought about trying the opposite. A man seated beside her had fallen asleep and was crushing her habit. The good old woman took off one of her clogs and smashed him with it, waking him and shouting, "Eh! Get off, savage, animal, demon, buffalo, dog, condenado!"

A rumble resulted. The preacher stopped and raised his eyebrows, astonished by the size of the scandal. Indignation choked

the words in his throat and he only succeeded in bleating and smashing the tribune with his fists. This produced the desired effect. Grumbling, the old woman let go of her clog, crossed herself several times over, and devotedly dropped to her knees.

"Hey, hey!" the indignant priest was able to shout finally, crossing his arms and shaking his head. "Just for that I'll spend the entire morning preaching, savage! Here in the house of God you fight and use evil language, for shame! Hey, hey, you have no respect! This is the work of this century's laxness and inconstancy. I told you so!"

He preached on this theme for a half hour. The magistrate was snoring, Marta Clara's head bobbed up and down as she dozed. Without a painting or image to analyze or distract her, the poor thing could not hold back her sleepiness. Ibarra no longer took notice of either the words or the allusions. He was imagining a cabin on the top of a mountain, with Marta Clara in the garden. But at the far end of the valley men were being humiliated in their miserable towns.

Father Salvi had had the bells rung twice, but this only added fuel to the fire. Fray Dámaso was obstinate, and went on with the sermon. Fray Sibyla chewed on his lip, and rearranged his gold-framed crystal eyeglasses. Fray Manuel Martín was the only one who seemed to be listening with pleasure. He was smiling.

Finally, God said "Enough." The orator tired and left the pulpit. Everyone knelt to give thanks to God. The magistrate rubbed his eyes, stretched his arms out wide to shake off his drowsiness, and let out a deep, yawning "ah!

The mass went on.

While singing the Ballito and Chananay Incastatus est and everyone knelt and the priests bowed their heads, a man whispered in Ibarra's ear, "During the benediction ceremony, don't get too far from the priest, don't go down into the trench, and don't go near the cornerstone, and you'll go on living."

Ibarra looked up at Elias, who, having said this, disappeared into the crowd.
ing; terror and melancholy descended upon his heart. He understood what this soul was suffering, what it expressed in its song, and was afraid to ask himself the reason for such pain.

The Captain General came upon him somber and pensive.

"Come in to dinner with me. We'll talk about those missing boys," he said.

"Am I the reason?" the young man murmured, looking at His Excellency without seeing him, and following him mechanically inside.

CHAPTER 39

DOÑA CONSOLACIÓN

Why are the windows of the ensign’s house shut up tight? Where are the masculine face and flannel blouse of the Medusa, or Muse of the Civil Guard, as the procession goes by? Will Doña Consolación have understood how disagreeable her brow is, marbled with thick veins, conductors, it seems, not of blood but of vinegar and honey, and a thick cigar a fitting complement to her purple lips? Did her envious expression cede to a generous impulse not to disturb the gathering’s happiness by her appearance?

Bab, to her, generous impulses existed in the Golden Age!

The house is melancholy because the town is happy, as Sinaia said. It has neither lanterns nor flags. If the sentry had not been passing in front of the door, one would say the house was uninhabited.

A weak light illuminates the mess of a main room, making the couches transparent: spiderwebs have taken up residence there, where dust has encrusted them. The lady of the house, befitting her general indolence, dozes in a wide armchair. She is dressed as she is every day, which is to say, badly, horribly. A bit odd, a handkerchief tied to her head, allowing a few thin, short locks of tangle hair to escape, the blue flannel blouse set over one that was supposed to be white, and a fraying skirt that shows off her thin, flat thighs, one situated atop the other, and shaking violently. Puffs of smoke emerge from her mouth, which she disperses into the area toward which she stares when she opens her eyes. If Don Francisco de Calamaque could see her at this moment, he would take her for a town witch doctor or mamboñal, afterward larding his discovery with comments in a shopkeeper’s tongue he invented for his own private use.

That morning the lady had not gone to mass, not because she
didn’t want to. On the contrary, she wanted to show herself off at the gathering and hear the sermon, but her husband would not allow it. This prohibition was accompanied, as usual, by two or three insults, curses, and physical threats. The ensign understood that his wife dressed ridiculously, that she smelled of something called “camp-follower,” and that it was not in his best interest to let her be exposed to the stares of either the town fathers or outsiders.

But she did not see it that way. She knew she was pretty, attractive, had the air of a queen, and dressed much better and with greater richness than María Clara. The latter dressed in burlap, she in smooth silk. “Oh, shut up or I’ll send you back to your village at the point of my boot!”

Doña Consolación had no desire to go back to her village at the point of his boot, but she plotted her revenge.

The lady’s face had never been one to inspire trust in anyone, even when she put on makeup, but that morning she upset everyone, especially when they saw her pacing from one end of the house to the other, silent, pondering something terrible and malign. Her face had the look of the eyes of a snake that has been captured and is about to be squashed. Her eyes were cold, luminous, penetrating, with something vicious about them, loathsome, cruel.

The tiniest mistake, the most insignificant unexpected sound brought forth a clumsy, awful insult to buffet one’s soul. But no one would talk back. Even to beg pardon was considered another crime.

This is how the day passed. Finding no obstacles in her path—her husband had been invited out—the bile rose within her. She felt the very fiber of her being charged with electricity and threatening to explode into a horrible storm. Everything bowed before her, like stalks at a hurricane’s first blow. She encountered no resistance, she found no point, no eminence upon which to discharge her ill humor. Soldiers and servants scurried away from her.

So as not to bear the Merriment outside, she ordered all the windows closed. She gave orders to the watchman not to let anyone in. She tied a handkerchief to her head, as if to prevent it from exploding, and even though the sun still shone, she ordered lights lit.

Sisa, as we have seen, had been arrested for disturbing the peace and taken to the barracks. The ensign was not there at the time, and the unhappy woman had to spend the night seated on a bench, a look of indifference on her face. The following day, the ensign saw her and, afraid for her in those days of anger, and not wishing to create a disagreeable spectacle, he gave orders to his soldiers to take her into custody, to treat her with pity, and to give her something to eat, which is how the demented woman spent two days.

That night, perhaps the proximity of Captain Tiago’s house had carried María Clara’s sad song to her, or other melodies had awakened her own ancient songs. Whatever it might have been, Sisa began to sing as well, her voice sweet and full of melancholy, the kundiman of her childhood. The soldiers heard her and fell silent. Ah, those airs awakened ancient memories, memories of a time before everything was corrupted.

Doña Consolación, in her pique, heard her, too, and asked who was singing. “Get her up here immediately!” she ordered after a few seconds of deep thought. Something like a smile passed over her dry lips.

They brought Sisa, who entered unperturbed, showing neither puzzlement nor fear. She seemed not to see any lady. The Muse’s vanity was hurt; she believed she caused respect and fright.

The ensign’s wife courted and signaled to the soldiers to leave, and taking down her husband’s whip, said to the maidwoman in a sinister voice, “Now, magcantar icat!” Sisa, of course, did not understand, and such ignorance mollified the anger.

One of the lady’s most outstanding qualities was to try to keep from knowing Tagalog, or at least to pretend ignorance, and to speak it as badly as possible, which would give her the air of a true vovolante, which is the way she generally pronounced it. And, success! If she butchered Tagalog, Castilian did not come out any better, either in regard to her grammar or her pronunciation. Nevertheless her husband, by hook or by crook, would do his part to teach her. One of the words that gave her the hardest time, like Champollion hieroglyphs, was the word “Filipinas.”

The story goes that the day after her wedding, speaking with her husband, who was then a corporal, she had said “Filipinas.”
The corporal felt it was his duty to correct her and said, slapping her upside the head, "Say 'Filipinas,' woman! Don't be so stupid. Don't you know that the name of your idiotic country comes from Felipe?" The woman, who had long dreamed of her honeymoon, wanted to obey and said, "Filipinas." It seemed to the corporal she was catching on, so he increased the head slaps and scolded her, "Woman, can't you pronounce 'Felipe.' Don't forget that the kind Don Felipe, the Fifth, says 'Felipe,' and then add 'nas,' which means 'island of indios' in Latin, and then you have the name of your idiotic country."

Consolación, a washwoman at the time, the bump—or bumps—on her head throbbing, repeated, beginning to lose patience.

"Fe...ipe, Felipe... nas, Filipinas, is that it?"

"The corporal was in a daze. Why did it come out "Filipinas" instead of "Felipinas"? One of the two: either one said "Felipinas" or one had to say "Felipe."

That day he thought it better to just say nothing. He left his wife and went to consult reading matter, carefully. His admiration reached its peak, and he rubbed his eyes. So... slowly, Filipinas, said all the well-written publications. Neither he nor his wife was correct.

"What?" he murmured. "Can history lie? Doesn't this book say that Alonso Saavedra gave the country its name in honor of the crown prince Don Felipe? How could such a man make such a mistake? Perhaps this Alonso Saavedra was an indio..."312

He talked over his doubts with Sergeant Gómez, who in his salad years had wanted to be a priest. Without dignifying himself by looking at him, and exhaling a puff of smoke, he answered with the greatest arrogance.

"In the old days they said 'Filip' rather than 'Felipe.' We modern types, as we become more Frenzified, can't tolerate two 'k' in consecutive syllables. So well-educated people, especially in Madrid (have you been to Madrid?), well-educated people, I say, have started to say 'menisier, irritation, evitation, and indignant,' and so on, which is what they call 'modernizing.'"

The poor corporal had never been to Madrid, which is why he was unaware of such a paradox. What things one learns in Madrid!

"So now one should say..."
The madwoman understood the orderly and sang "Night Song."
At first Doña Consolación listened with a mocking sneer, but little by little the sneer disappeared from her lips and she became more attentive, then serious, and somewhat pensive. That voice, the meaning of the lyrics, and the song itself made an impression on her. Perhaps that arid, serene heart had been thirsty for rain. She understood it well. "Sadness, chill, and dampness that descends from the heavens under the blanket of night," as the kundiman went, and it seemed to her they descended into her heart. "The parched, faded flower that, by daylight, had shown off its finery, seeking applause and full of vanity, as the evening falls, repented and disillusioned, makes an effort to raise its withered petals to the sky, begging for a bit of shade to hide her and to die without the mocking light of a sun that has seen her in her regalia, without seeing the vanity of her pride, a bit of dew to cry upon her. The night bird leaves its solitary retreat, the hollow of an ancient trunk, disturbs the melancholy of the forest—"

"No, don't sing!" the ensign's wife shrieked in perfect Tagalog, as she stood up, upset. "Don't sing! I can't listen to those lyrics."

The madwoman fell silent. The orderly let out a "Abá, she spins Tagalog!" and he stared at his mistress with astonishment.

She understood she had exposed herself. She was embarrassed, and with an unworldly nature, her shame took on the color of anger and hatred. She showed the imprudent man to the door and kicked it closed behind him. She paced around the room several times, twisting the whip nervously in her hands, and, stopping suddenly in front of the madwoman, said to her in Spanish, "Dance!"

Sisa didn't move.

"Dance, dancet!" she said again, in a sinister tone of voice.

The madwoman looked at her, her eyes blank, without expression. The ensign's wife raised one arm, and then the other, shaking them. Useless: Sisa did not understand.
The ensign appeared, pale and somber. He saw what was happening and threw a terrible look at his wife, who did not budge from her spot, smiling cynically.

The ensign, as softly as he could, put his hand on the strange dancer's shoulder to make her stop. The madwoman breathed and gradually sat down on the floor, blotched from bleeding.

The silence went on. The ensign breathed heavily. His wife, who watched him with an inquiring expression, picked up the whip and asked in a slow, calm voice, "What's with you? You haven't even said good evening to me."

The ensign, without answering, called the orderly.

"Take this woman away," he said. "Have Marta give her another blouse and take care of her wounds. I want you to give her something good to eat and a good bed... and take care not to treat her badly. Tomorrow you'll take her to Señor Ibarra's house."

Then he carefully closed the door, locked it, and approached his wife.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked, getting up and backing away.

"What's the matter with me?" he yelled in a thunderous voice, unleashing blasphemies, and showing her a paper full of scribbles. He went on, "Didn't you write this letter to the magistrate claiming that I am paid off to allow gambling, you whore? I don't know how I keep from pulverizing you!"

"Let's see you do it, let's see you dare to try!" she said with a laugh full of scorn. "It would take a better man than you to pulverize me!"

He heard the offending remark but he also saw the whip. He grabbed a plate from the table and threw it at her head. The woman, used to such fights, ducked and the plate smashed against the wall. He had the same result with a cup and a knife.

"Coward!" she shouted at him. "You don't dare come near me!"

She spit at him to make him even angrier. He was blind with anger and, with a great roar, he threw himself at her but she, with astonishing quickness, striped his face with lashes and then ran headlong out of the room, slamming the door to shut herself up in her bedroom. Flushed from anger and pain, the ensign went after her, but he only succeeded in smashing against the door, which made him curse all the more.

"I curse your seed, marrana!" Open this door, you whore! Open it, you whore, or I'll break your head!" he bellowed, banging on the door with his fists and feet.

Doña Consolación did not answer. The creaking of chairs and rumps was heard, as if someone were building a barricade of household furniture. The house shook under the husband's kicking and swearing.

"Don't come in, don't come in!" the woman's sour voice said.

"If you even show your face, I'll shoot you!"

He gradually seemed to calm down and was content to pace back and forth in the main room like a wild animal in its cage.

"Go out and cool off," the woman went on with her mocking. It seemed she had finished preparing her defenses.

"I swear if I ever get my hands on you, not even God will be able to help you, dirty whore!"

"Sure, say whatever you want... you wouldn't let me go to mass! You wouldn't let me do my duty toward God," she said sarcastically, like only she knew how to do.

The ensign grabbed his helmet, straightened himself up, and strode out, but in a few minutes he returned without making the least sound. He had taken off his boots. The servants, used to such goings-on, were generally bored by them, but this new tack with the boots drew their attention and they winked at each other.

The ensign sat down in a chair beside the doorway to heaven, and had the patience to wait for more than a half hour.

"Did you really go out or are you still there, bastard?" a voice asked from time to time, changing epithets but raising her voice.

Finally, little by little she took away the furniture. He heard the sound and smiled.

"Orderly, has the master gone out?" Doña Consolación shouted.

The orderly, upon a signal from the ensign, answered, "Yes, ma'am, he's gone out."

Gay laughter was heard, and the lock was unlatched. The husband got up slowly. The door opened slightly...
A shout, the sound of a body falling, swearing, howling, curses, blows, threatening voices ... Who can describe what happens in the dark recesses?
The orderly, coming into the kitchen, made a sign to the cook.
"You'll pay for that," he said.
"Me? The town will in any case. She asked if he had gone out, not if he had come back."

It would be ten at night. The final rockets rise lazily into the dark sky, where they shine brightly like new stars. A few paper balloons went up a moment ago, thanks to the smoke and sultry air. Some, fireworks attached, burst into flames and menace all the houses, so one still sees on the rooftops men armed with long bamboo poles with a cloth on their ends, and equipped with buckets of water. Their black silhouettes stand in sharp relief in the air's hazy light and seem like phantasmagories come down from space to attend man's festivities. A great many fire-wheels, -castles, -balls, or -water buffalo have been burned, as well as a large volcano, which surpassed in both beauty and size anything the inhabitants of San Diego had ever seen.

Now the people move en masse toward the town square to attend the theater for the last time. Here and there Bengal lights are visible, giving a fantastic glow to the merry groups. Boys with torches search in the grass for unexploded firecrackers and other remnants they might be able to use, but then the orchestra gives the signal and everyone quits the field.

The large stage was illuminated splendidly, its stanchions encircled by thousands of lights hung from the ceiling and dappling the floor in clusters. A constable was in charge of them and when he came out to adjust them, the public responded with whistles and shouted, "They're fine already, they're all right!"

In front of the scenery the orchestra tuned its instruments with hits of melody. Behind them was the place the correspondent had discussed in his letter. The town fathers, Spaniards, and the wealthy nonresidents occupied a row of seats. The people, those without titles, formal or informal, occupied the rest of the square. Some carried a bench on their backs, less to sit on than to make
“What’s that?”

“Absolutely. A year ago he gave a caning to the vicar and a vicar is as much a priest as he is. Who pays any attention to excommunication, señor?”

Ibarra spotted Elias among the laborers. Elias greeted him along with the rest, but with a look that told him he had something to say.

“Master Juan,” Ibarra said, “can you bring me the list of laborers?”

Master Juan disappeared, and Ibarra approached Elias, who was lifting a heavy rock, which he deposited in a cart.

“If you can afford me, señor, a few hours of conversation, come by the lakefront a little later and we’ll go out in my boat. I have important matters to discuss with you,” Elias said, moving away after he saw the young man’s head nod assent.

Master Juan brought the list, but Ibarra read it in vain. Elias’s name was not on it.

CHAPTER 49

VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED

Before the sun had gone down, Ibarra had set foot on Elias’s boat on the shores of the lake. The young man seemed upset.

“Forgive me, señor,” Elias said when he saw him, with a certain melancholy. “Forgive me so bold as to request this meeting. I wanted to speak freely and there are no witnesses here. We’ll be back within an hour.”

“You are wrong, Elias, my friend,” Ibarra replied, attempting a smile. “You need to take me to that town whose bell tower you can see from here. It’s where Fate is leading me.”

“Fate?”

“Yes. It so happens that on my way here I ran into the ensign, who forced his company on me. I thought about you and I knew you knew one another, so to get away from him I told him I had to go to that town and spend the entire day there. So he wants to see me tomorrow afternoon.”

“I appreciate the precaution, but you could simply have said I was going with you,” Elias replied affably.

“What? And you?”

“He wouldn’t have recognized me, since the only time he’s seen me he wasn’t able to make the family connection.”

“What an awful day,” Ibarra sighed, thinking of María Clara.

“What did you need to tell me?”

Elias looked around him. They were far from shore. The sun had set and since in those latitudes dusk is brief, shadows began to lengthen and the moon’s disk had even begun to shine in its fullness.

“Señor,” Elias answered in a serious tone, “I am the bearer of the yearnings of many unhappy people.”

“Unhappy people? What do you mean?”
Eliás summarized in a few words the conversation he had had with the bandit leader, omitting the doubts he had expressed and his threats. Ibarra listened attentively. When Eliás had concluded his account, a long silence reigned, which Ibarra was the first to break.

"So, they want..."

"Radical reforms in the armed forces, in the clergy, in the administration of justice, meaning they want a more paternal oversight on the government's part."

"Reforms? What sort of reforms?"

"For instance, more respect for human dignity, more security for the individual, less force on the part of the armed forces, fewer privileges for the body of people who abuse them with impunity."

"Eliás," the young man replied, "I don't know who you are, but I assume you don't come from the lower classes. You think and act differently from the others. You'll understand me when I tell you that if the current state of things has its faults, it will be even worse if it is changed. I could go to my friends in Madrid, and by paying them off I could speak to the Captain General, but that would accomplish nothing. Not even he has the power to introduce so many new things. Nor would I take such a step in that direction, since I know full well that though it's true these bodies have their faults, at this point they are necessary, what you might call a necessary evil."

Eliás was surprised. He raised his head and looked at him, stunned.

"You believe in necessary evil, as well?" he asked, with a slight tremor in his voice. "You believe that in order to do good it is necessary to do evil?"

"No, but I believe in it as I believe in a drastic remedy that we might appreciate when we want to treat an illness. The country these days is an organism that suffers from a chronic illness. And to cure it the government finds itself needing to employ specific remedies, hard and violent ones, if you like, but useful and necessary."

"It's a poor doctor, señor, who only seeks to treat the symptoms and choke them off without attempting to root out the cause of that malady, or when he learns what it is, is afraid of attacking it. The Civil Guard has no more objective than the suppression of crime by terror and force, an objective met or accomplished only by chance. And one must bear in mind that society can only be harsh with individuals when it has furnished the means necessary for their moral perfectibility. Our country, since there is no society, since the people and the government do not form a unified structure, the latter must be more lenient, not only because more leniency is needed, but because the individual, neglected and abandoned by the state, has less responsibility when he has been afforded less enlightenment. In addition, in keeping with your comparison, the treatment afforded our country's maladies is as destructive as the one in a healthy organism itself whose vitality is weakened and then develops a malady. Wouldn't it be more reasonable to strengthen the sick organism and then lessen a bit the medicine's violence?"

"Weakening the Civil Guard would only endanger the people's security."

"The security of the villages?" Eliás exclaimed bitterly. "In a little while it will be fifteen years that these people have had the Civil Guard, and look: we still have bandits, we still hear about the sack of villages, one is still accosted on the roads. Robbery goes on and its authors cannot be discovered. Crime exists and the true criminal walks free, but the peaceful inhabitant of our villages does not. Ask any honest resident if he sees this institution as a boon, a governmental protection and not an imposition, a despotism whose excesses hurt them more than criminal violence, which when they occur are significant, but rare, and against which one can figure out how to defend oneself. One is not even allowed to protest maltreatment by the forces of law; even though they are not as significant as criminal violence, they are continuous and sanctioned. What effect does this institution produce in the life of our towns? It paralyzes communication, because everyone is afraid of being abused... in a lost cause. They lose in on formalities and not on the root of things, the first symptom of ineffectuality. When you forget your papers you have to be hollered at and mistreated, no matter that the person is decent and respected. Officers believe that the most important responsibility is to be saluted according to their station or by force, even by dark of night, in which their inferiors imitate them and mistreat and fleece the peasants, on a variety of pretext. There is no sanctity of one's home. A little while back in Calamba they stormed the house of a
peaceful resident to whom their officer owed favors, coming in through the window. There is no individual security. When the barracks or a house needs cleaning, they go out and grab anyone who does not resist and make them work the whole day. Do you want more? During the festival they let outlawed gaming go on, but they brutally raided festivities sanctioned by the authorities. Did you see what the town thought of them, how they had to be calmed down to await the justice of men? Ah, señor, if that's called keeping order ... !" 

"I agree there are problems," Ibarra replied, "but we accept the bad with the good that accompanies it. This institution might be imperfect, yet I believe that, but for the fear it inspires, the number of criminals would increase."

"I would say more accurately that fear increases the number," Elías corrected him. "Before the creation of this body, almost all malefactors were, with the exception of very few, made criminals because of hunger. They robbed and stole to live. If hunger and want were eliminated, the roads would again be free. Those poor but valiant militiamen with their imperfect weapons, so slandered by some, had written about our country, were always enough to drive them off, these people who have the right to die and the duty to struggle, yet as a reward, they are mocked. Nowadays there are people who are bandits their entire lives. One mistake, one crime inhumanely punished, resistance to the excesses of power, fear of awful tortures, tears them from society forever and condemns them to kill or be killed. The Civil Guard's terrorism shuts the doors on repentance, and as a bandit fights and defends himself in the mountains better than the soldier who mocks him, in the end we are not capable of extinguishing the evil we have created. Remember what Captain General De la Torre's restraint accomplished. Leniency, which he preferred to those unfortunate people, proves that in those mountains the heart of a man still beats, solely awaiting a pardon. Terrorism is useful when a people is enslaved, when the mountains have no caves, when the powers that be place a spy behind every tree, and when the slave's body has only a stomach and intestines. But when a desperate man fights for life his arms become strong, his heart beats boldly, and his whole being fills up with bile. Will terrorism have the capacity to put out fires while those people are adding fuel to the fire?" 

"It upsets me, Elías, to hear you say this. I would think you were right if I didn't have my own opinions. But remember one thing (and please don't be offended since I exclude you from this and set you as an exception), look at who demands those reforms. Almost all of them are criminals or people on the verge of being one."

"Criminals now or criminals in the future, no matter. But why are they this way? Because their peaceful lives have been disrupted, their happiness ripped away, their dearest affections harmed, and in demanding the protection of justice, they have become convinced they can only expect it if they provide it. But you are wrong, señor, if you think only criminals demand it. Go from town to town, go from house to house, listen to these families' hidden woes and you will become convinced that the maladies the Civil Guard corrects are equal, if not lesser, to the ones they continue to create. From this you reason that all the inhabitants are criminals? Then why bother defending them from one another? Why not let them all destroy one another?"

"There is some faulty logic here that escapes me for the moment, some mistake in your theory that undermines what really takes place, since in Spain, our mother country, this body of men serves now, and has always served, a great usefulness."

"I don't doubt it. Perhaps it is better organized there, its members more select. Perhaps they need it more in Spain, but not in the Philippines. Our customs, our mode of being, which they are always invoking when they want to deny us our rights, they forget completely when there is something they want to impose on us. And tell me, señor, why haven't other nations adopted this institution, since by their proximity to Spain they might have more in common than the Philippines? Could it be they have fewer train robberies, fewer street disturbances, fewer murders, and fewer beatings in their largest cities?"

Ibarra lowered his head, as if he were thinking this over. Then he raised it and replied.

"My friend, this matter deserves serious study. If my investigations tell me that these complaints are warranted, I will write to my friends in Madrid, since we have no legislators ourselves. Meanwhile, rest assured that the government needs a body with unlimited power, so it will be respected and impose authority."

"Certainly, señor, when the government is at war with the
country. But for the good of the government, we shouldn’t make
the people believe it is opposed to the powers that be. Moreover,
if this were the case, if we preferred force to influence, we should
take a good look at whom we have given this unlimited power,
this authority. So much power in the hands of men—ignorant
men—full of prejudices, with no moral education, with no proven
honesty, is a loaded weapon in the hands of a crazy man in the
midst of a defenseless population. I will concede, and I want to
believe along with you, that the government needs this branch,
but it should choose the branch wisely, it should select those who
are most appropriate. And since they prefer to appropriate this
authority without the people conceding it to them, at least they
should show they know how to appropriate it.”

Elias was speaking passionately, with enthusiasm. His eyes
sparkled and the timbre of his voice resonated vibrantly. A solemn
pause ensued. The oars no longer impelled the boat forward and
it sat calmly on the water. The moon glowed majestically in a
sapphire sky. A few lights gleamed on the far-off shoreline.

“What else do they want?” Ibarra asked.

“Reform of the priesthood,” a saddened Elias replied, out
of breath. “These unfortunate people want more protection
against . . .”

“Against the religious orders?”

“Against their oppressors, señor.”

“Have the Filipinos forgotten what they owe these orders?
Have they forgotten the immense debt of gratitude they owe those
who showed them the error of their ways and gave them faith,
those who sheltered them from the tyranny of civilian power?
This is the evil that comes from not teaching our country’s history!”

Surprised, Elias could hardly believe his own ears.

“Señor,” he replied in a serious voice, “you accuse the people of
ingratitude. Allow me, one of the people who have suffered, to
defend them. In order for such favors to be recognized as such, they
should be disinterested. Let’s set aside the oft-discussed mission of
Christian charity, let’s ignore history for the moment. Let’s not
question what Spain did to the Jewish people, who gave all of Eu-
tope one book, one religion, and one God, what it did to the Arab
people who gave it culture, who tolerated its religion, and who
awakened a national pride dormant during the domination of the

Romans and Goths. They say they have given us faith and showed
us the error of our ways. Do you call those barely related practices
faith, commerce in whips and scalpularies religion, the miracles
and stories we hear every day truth? Are they the law of Jesus?
For that we didn’t need a God to let himself be crucified or obli-
gate us to eternal gratitude. Superstition existed a long time be-
fore then. Only perfection it was necessary, and then raising the
price of the merchandise. You could say to me that as imperfect as
our religion is now, it is preferable to the one we had. I believe
that, and I agree with you, but the cost is too high if it means re-
newing our nationality and our independence. In exchange we
gave our best towns and our best fields to the priests; we give our
savings to buy religious objects. They introduced us to an article
of outside industry; we pay for it and are at peace. If you speak to
me of the protection they give us against indigence, I could an-
swer that in exchange we have fallen under the power of this in-
denture. But no! I recognize that a true faith and a true love of
humanity guided the first missionary that came to our shores. I
recognize the debt of gratitude to those noble hearts. I know that
Spain in those days teemed with heroes of all kinds in religion as
well as in politics, civil administration, and the military. But be-
cause their ancestors were virtuous, should we consent to be abused
by their degenerate descendants? Because they gave us such a good,
should we be judged guilty for wanting to impede their bringing
us an evil? The country is not asking for abolition, it is only seek-
ing the reforms that new circumstances and new needs demand.”

“I love our country as much as you are capable of doing, Elias.
I understand what you want, I’ve listened carefully to what you
have said, and even with all that, my friend, I think we are looking
at it with the eyes of passion. Here less than anywhere else do
I see the need for reforms.”

“Is it possible, señor?” Elias asked, holding up his hands in dis-
may, “Don’t you see the need for reform, you, whose family mis-
fortunes—”

“Oh, I ignore myself and my own problems in the face of secu-
ritv for the Filipinos, in the face of the interests of Spain,”
Ibarra interrupted with verve. “To preserve the Filipinos it is
absolutely necessary to go on with the friars, and in our union
with Spain lies the well-being of our country.”
Ibarra had stopped speaking, yet Elias was still listening. His expression reflected sadness, his eyes had lost their glow.

"The missionaries conquered the country, that's true," he replied. "Do you think that with the friars we will be able to preserve it?"

"Yes, with them alone, which is what many people who have written about the Philippines have said."

"Oh!" Elias exclaimed, tossing his oar into the boat in dismay. "I didn't think you had such a poor opinion of the government and the country. Why not criticize them both? What would you say about a family that can only live in peace through the intervention of a stranger? A country that obeys because it has been deceived, a government that rules because it appreciates deception, a government that has no idea how to make itself beloved and respected? Pardon me, señor, but I think your government is inept and suicidal if it takes joy in such beliefs. I appreciate your amiability. Where would you like me to take you at this point?"

"No," Ibarra replied, "let's talk. It's absolutely necessary that we know who is right in such an important matter."

"Forgive me, señor," Elias replied, shaking his head. "I am not eloquent enough to convince you. Although I've had some education, I am an indio. To you my very existence is doubtful and my works will always be suspect to you. Those who have expressed the opposite opinion are Spanish, and so, even though they may speak in trivialities and simplifications, their tone, their titles, and their birthplace consecrate them and give them such authority that I always refuse to argue with them. And when I see that you, who love this country so much, whose father rests beneath these tranquil waves, you who have seen us provoked, insulted, and persecuted, maintains such opinions in spite of all this and your own eyes, I begin to doubt my own convictions and I admit the possibility that the people are wrong. I need to tell those unhappy people that they have placed their faith in men and they should have placed it in God or in his helpmeet. I thank you again and ask you to tell me where to take you."

"Elias, your bitter words cut me to the quick and make me doubt as well. What do you want? I didn't grow up amid these people, of whose needs I am perhaps unaware. I spent my childhood in a Jesuit school, I grew up in Europe, books formed me and I have read only those things that men have brought to light. What remains in the shadows, what these writers have said, I don't know. With all that, I love this country as you do, not only because it's every man's duty to love the country to which he owes his life and to which perhaps he will owe his ultimate asylum, not because my father taught me this, because my mother was an india, and because all my most beautiful memories reside here, I love it because I owe it and will always owe it my happiness!"

"And I because I owe it my unhappiness," Elias muttered. "Yes, my friend, I know you're suffering, you're unhappy, which makes you see the future in a dim light and influences your way of thinking, which is why I listen to your complaints with certain reservations. If I could only understand your motives, and share your past . . ."

"My unhappy experiences stem from other things. If I thought they would be of some use, I would tell you about them, but apart from the fact that I don't keep them secret, a lot of people are aware of them."

"Perhaps knowing them will change my thoughts. You realize I don't put much stock in theories. I am guided by facts."

Elias remained pensive for a few seconds. "If that's the case," he replied, "I'll tell you about them."
CHAPTER 50
ELIAS'S FAMILY

"About sixty years ago, my grandfather lived in Manila and worked as a bookkeeper in the offices of a Spanish merchant. My grandfather was very young in those days, married, with a child. One night, without anyone knowing how it happened, the warehouse caught on fire. The flames spread first to the whole building and then to others. The losses were incalculable. They sought a perpetrator and the merchant accused my grandfather. He protested, but in vain; since he was poor and couldn't pay a prominent attorney, he was condemned to a public lashing and to be paraded through the streets of Manila. They employed that despicable punishment until not so long ago, which the people called horse-and-cow, and which was a thousand times worse than death. My grandfather, abandoned by everyone but his young wife, was tied to a horse, followed by a group of cruel people, and whipped on each street corner, in front of everyone, including his brothers, and in the vicinity of the many temples of a peaceful God. Once this unfortunate man, now shamed forever, had slashed man's revenge with his blood, his writhing, and his screams, they took him off the horse. He had lost all feeling, and wished he was dead. And then, as another one of these many refined barbarities, they let him go. His wife, who was pregnant at the time, went from door to door begging for work or charity to take care of her ailing husband and poor child. Who is going to care about the wife of a hated arsonist? So she resorted to prostitution.

Ibarra rose from his seat.

"Don't worry, prostitution wasn't dishonorable for either her or her husband in those days; honor and shame didn't exist then. The husband recovered from his wounds and went with his wife and son to hide in the province's mountains. The wife gave birth to a damaged fetus, full of infirmities, which had the good fortune to die. They lived there a few more months, miserable, isolated, separated from everything and everyone. My grandfather, unable to bear his misery, less valiant than his wife, hanged himself, despairing of seeing his wife so ill, removed from any help and care. His body decayed before the very eyes of his son, who could barely care for his sick mother, and the foul stench gave them away to the authorities. My grandmother was arrested and sentenced for not having reported it. They attributed her husband's death to her: it was believed, of course, that the wife of such a wretch was capable of anything; she was, after all, a prostitute. If she swears to something, they call it perjury, if she cries out, they say she is lying, blasphemy if she invokes God. However, they took pity on her and they waited for her to give birth before giving her her lashes. You realize that the friars expand their credos to include that one can only deal with indios with a stick. Read what Father Gaspar de San Agustin says."

"A woman so condemned will curse the day wherein her son is born, which means that, in addition to prolonging her torments, she will do violence to her own maternal feelings. The woman gave birth with joy, unfortunately, and unfortunately the child was born robust. Two months later they carried out the sentence to the great satisfaction of these men, who thought that in this way they were doing their duty. Not happy then in these hills, she fled with her two children to the neighboring province and there they lived like wild creatures, hating and hated. The older of the two brothers, who amid all this misery remembered his happy childhood, became a bandit as soon as he was strong enough. Soon the bloodthirsty name of Balat spread from province to province. He was the terror of the villages since in his revenge he put everything to the sword and the torch. The younger brother, whom nature had given a good heart, resigned himself to his fate and his infamy, alongside his mother. They lived on what the forest provided, dressed in rags passerby had tossed aside. She lost her name and was known only by the epithets of delinquent, prostitute, and 'the woman who was flogged.' He was known only as his mother's son, since the sweetness of his character let no one believe he could be the son of an arsonist, and since everyone
could question the morals of indios. In the end, one day the notorious Balat fell into the hands of the law, which had done nothing to set him on the right path but then held him fully accountable for his crimes, and then on another day the younger son went looking for his mother, who had gone into the forest to gather mushrooms and had still not returned. He found her laid out on the ground beside a road, under a cottonwood tree, her face turned to the sky, her gaze alarmed and fixed, her fingers twisted and sunk in the bloodstained earth. It occurred to the young man to follow the cadaver’s gaze, and he saw, hung on a branch, a basket, and inside the basket, his brother’s blood-soaked head.

“My God!” Ibarra shouted.

“That’s all my father could shout, as well,” Elias went on coldly. “The men had quartered the highwayman and buried the trunk, but the limbs were parcelled out and hung in different villages. If you go to Calamba in Santo Tomás, you will still find the miserable lomboi tree where one of my uncle’s legs hung, rotting away. Nature has cursed it; the tree neither grows nor bears fruit. They did the same with the other limbs, but the head, the head, as if it were the best part of the person, the part most easily recognised, they hung in front of his mother’s shack.”

Ibarra hung his head.

“The young man ran like one cursed,” Elias went on. “He ran from village to village, among hills and valleys, and when he thought no one knew him, he went to work in the house of a wealthy man in the province of Tayabas. Hard work and the sweetness of his character earned him the respect of whoever did not know his past. On the strength of his enterprise and thrift, he was able to put away a bit of savings, and since his misery was past and he was still young, he thought he might be happy. His good looks, his youth, and his somewhat improving circumstances drew the love of a young village woman, but he dared not ask for her hand lest his past become known. But love was stronger than that and they both failed to adhere to responsible behavior. The man, to save the woman’s honor, asked everything. When he asked for her in marriage, his papers were requested, and everything came to light. The young woman’s father was wealthy, and he succeeded in bringing him to trial. He admitted everything, and was sent to prison. The young woman gave birth to a boy and a girl, who were raised in secret and led to believe their father was dead, which was not difficult since they had seen their mother die at a tender age, and thought little about investigating their family history. Since our grandfather was wealthy, our childhood was wonderful. My sister and I were schooled together. We loved each other as only twins can when they know no other love. At a young age I went to study in a Jesuit school and my sister, so we wouldn’t be totally separated, went to the Concordia pension. Our brief education complete, since we only wanted to be farmers, we returned to the village to take possession of our grandfather’s inheritance. For a time, we lived a happy life, the future smiled on us, we had many servants, our fields produced well, and my sister was on the brink of marrying a young man she adored and who returned her love. Once, in a financial dispute and owing to my station, which was then very high, I alienated a distant relative and one day he threw my shadowy birth and infamous ancestry in my face. I believed it to be slanderous and sought satisfaction. The tomb in which there was so much pretence was reopened and the startling truth erupted. Worse yet, for many years we had had an old servant, who had put up with all my whims without complaining, without ever leaving us. All he could do was cry and groan amid the taunts of the other servants. I don’t know how my relative found out; he subpoenaed the old man and forced him to tell the truth. The old servant was our father, who had clung to his beloved children, and whom I had mistreated many times. Our happiness gone, I denounced our fortune, my sister lost her fiancé, and like our father we abandoned our town to go elsewhere. The idea that he had contributed to our disgrace cut short the life of that old man, from whose lips I learned the whole sad past. My sister and I ended up alone.

“She cried a great deal, but in the midst of such mounting pain, she couldn’t ignore her love. Without complaint, without a word, she watched her former fiancé wed another and I watched her grow steadily more ill, without being able to help her. One day she disappeared. I looked for her everywhere, in vain; in vain I asked for her everywhere, until six months later I learned, during a time after the lake had flooded, the drowned body of a young woman had been found on the beach at Calamba among the rice paddies. She had been murdered, according to reports, a knife stuck in her
chest. The authorities of that town made the facts public in neighboring towns. No one came to claim the body. No young woman had disappeared. By the clues they gave me later, because of her dress, her jewelry, the beauty of her features, and her abundant hair, I recognized that young woman as my poor sister. Since then, I have wandered from province to province. Many people talk about my reputation and story and a lot of things are ascribed to me. Sometimes they slander me, but I pay little heed and continue on my way. So now I've given you a brief version of my story and a story of men's justice.

Elias stopped speaking and went on rowing.

"I believe you don't lack a reason," Grisóstomo murmured quietly, "when you say that justice should seek goodness to recompense virtue and to reeducate criminals. It is only that... it's impossible, utopian. Where would the money come from, and so many new workers?"

"And what are the priests who preach a mission of peace and charity for? Could it be more valuable to wet a child's head with water and give him salt to eat than to awaken in the darkness of a criminal's conscience that God-given spark to seek good? Could it be more humane to accompany a convict to the gallows than to accompany him on the hard path that leads from vice to virtue? Aren't spies, executioners, and civil guards paid? Despite their corruption, they cost money, too."

"My friend, even if both of us wanted it, we couldn't make it come to pass."

"It's true. By ourselves we're nothing. But take up the people's cause, unite the people, don't ignore their voices, be an example to the rest, give them the concept of what one calls a nation!"

"What the people are asking is impossible. We have to wait."

"Wait! To wait is to suffer!"

"If I asked for this, they would laugh at me."

"And if the people back you up?"

"Never! I will never be the one to lead a multitude to get by force what the government does not think opportune. No. If someday I see this multitude armed, I would place myself on the side of the government and fight it, because I cannot see my country in this type of chaos. I want good for it, which is why I built a school. I seek it in education, for forward progress. Without light, there is no path."

"Without struggle there is no freedom either?" Elias answered.

"Well, I don't want that kind of freedom?"

"Without freedom there is no light," the boatman replied animatedly. "You say you know little about your country, I believe. You don't see the preparations for struggle, you don't see the cloud on the horizon. Combat begins in the sphere of ideas, to descend into the arena, which will be colored with blood. I hear the voice of God, woe to those who resist it! For them, history has not been written."

Elias was transformed. Standing with his head bare, his masculine appearance, lit by the moon, had something extraordinary about it. His full head of hair shook and he went on, "Don't you see how everything is waking up? Sleep has lasted centuries, but one day a lightning bolt came down and that lightning bolt, as it brought destruction, called upon life, and since then new waves have worked on these spirits, and these waves, though divided today, will someday come together, led by God. God has not failed other peoples, and will not fail ours. His cause is the cause of freedom."

A solemn silence followed these words. Meanwhile the boat, carried along insensibly by the waves, had approached the shore. Elias was the first to break the silence.

"What should I say to those who sent me?" he asked in an altered voice.

"I've already told you. That I greatly deplore our condition, but that they wait, because evil is not cured by other evils and we all share the guilt of our unhappiness."

Elias did not respond. He lowered his head and went on rowing. Arriving at the shore, he took leave of Ibarra, saying, "I thank you, señor, for the magnanimity you have shown me. For your own best interests I suggest you forget about me from now on and never acknowledge me in any circumstance in which you run into me."

That said, he went back to guiding the boat, rowing in the direction of a thicket on the beach. During the long crossing he remained silent. He seemed to see nothing more than the thousands
CHAPTER 51
CHANGES

Timid Linares is serious and laden with anxiety. He had just received a letter from Doña Victorina, which reads thus:

Dear Cousin:

Within three days I expect to hear from you of the ensign has killed you yet or you he I don't want another day to go by without that aminal have his punishment and ef this time has past and you haven't challenged him I tell Don Santiago that you never were secretary or jolt with Canobas or wine bout wit general Don Arsens Marines I tell to Clarina that it's all bonk and give you not one more quarter ef you challenge him I promise everting you want to have if you shall enge him I worn you that there are no excuses or rasons.

Your cousin who loves you from de hart

VICTORINA DE LOS REYES DE DESPADAÑA
SAMPALOC, MONDAY, 7 IN THE EVENING

The affair was serious. Linares was well aware of Doña Victo-rina's character and knew what she was capable of. To discuss reason with her was the same as talking about honesty and ur-banity with a home border guard who has decided to find contra-band when there is none. Begging was useless. Trickering her was worse. There was nothing left but to issue a challenge.

"But how?" he said as he strolled along by himself. "If he's in a terrible mood? If his wife answers the door? Who will be my sec-ond? The priest? Captain Tiago? Damn the day I listened to ad-vice from that jerk! Who made me put on airs, bluster, make up fairy stories? What will the young lady say to me. . . .? This is what I get for having been secretary to all the ministers!"
Our fair Linares was involved in this soliloquy when Father Salvi came upon him. The Franciscan was indeed skinnier and paler than usual, but his eyes shone with a singular light, his lips bearing an odd smile.

"Señor Linares, all alone?" he greeted him, going toward a room from which a few notes from a piano emerged through a half-open door.

Linares tried to smile.

"And Don Santiago?" the priest added.

Just at that moment Captain Tiago arrived, kissed the priest's hand, and put down his hat and walking stick. He bore the smile of the blessed.

"Well, well," the priest said as he went into the main room, followed by Linares and Captain Tiago. "I have good news for everyone. I have received letters from Manila that confirm the news that Señor Ibarra brought me yesterday... meaning, Don Santiago, that the impediment has disappeared."

Maria Clara, who was seated at the piano between her two friends, rose halfway up, but her strength gave out and she sat back down. Linares gets pale and looks at Captain Tiago, who lowers his eyes.

"That young man grows on me," the priest goes on. "At first I had a bad opinion of him... he is a bit too high-spirited, but then later he knows how to mend his ways and one cannot stay angry at him. If it hadn't been for Father Dámaso..."

The priest glanced at Maria Clara, who was listening, but without looking away from her musical notation, despite Sinang's clandestine pinching, which is how the latter expressed her joy. Had they been alone, she would have been dancing.

"Father Dámaso...?" Linares asked.

"Yes, Father Dámaso said," the priest went on while still looking at Maria Clara, "that as the godfather, he could not permit... but in the end, I think that if Señor Ibarra asks him for forgiveness, which I don't doubt he will, everything will be taken care of."

Maria Clara got up, excused herself, and went to her room, accompanied by Victoria.

"And if Father Dámaso refuses to forgive him?" Captain Tiago asks quietly.

"Well... María Clara will see... Father Dámaso is her father... spiritually, that is. But I think they will come to an understanding."

As that moment they heard steps and Ibarra appeared, followed by Aunt Isabel. His presence produced varied reactions. He made a warm greeting to Captain Tiago, who did not know whether to smile or cry, and Linares with a deep bow of his head. Friar Salvi rose and extended his hand so affectionately that Ibarra could not contain a look of surprise.

"Don't think it odd," says Friar Salvi. "We were just singing your praises."

Ibarra thanked him and went toward Sinang.

"Where have you been all day?" she asked in her childlike way.

"We were wondering and saying, 'Where would that soul redeemed from purgatory have gone?' And each one of us said the same thing."

"And can one know what that was?"

"No, it's a secret, but I'll tell you when we're alone. But now tell us where you've been, so we can see who guessed right."

"No, that's a secret as well, but I'll tell you when we're alone, if these gentlemen will allow it."

"I would think so, I would think so! We need nothing more!" said Father Salvi.

Sinang took Caretamento over to one end of the room. She was overjoyed by the idea that she would know a secret.

"Tell me, my little friend," Ibarra asked, "is María angry at me?"

"I don't know, but she says it would be better if you forgot about her and then she starts crying. Captain Tiago wants her to marry that gentleman, as does Father Dámaso, but she hasn't said either yes or no. This morning, when we were asking about you and I said, 'What if he went off to make love with someone?' she replied, 'If only!' and then started crying."

Ibarra was serious.

"Tell María I want to speak to her alone."

"Alone?" Sinang asked, looking at him and frowning.

"Completely alone, no, but without this fellow in front of us."

"That would be difficult, but you can be sure I'll tell her."

"And when will I know the answer?"

"Tomorrow come to the house early. María never wants to be
alone, so we go with her. Victoria sleeps with her one night and me the next. Tomorrow it's my turn. But wait, and the secret? You're leaving without telling me the most important thing?"
"True. I went to the town of Los Baños. I want to take advantage of the coconut groves and I'm thinking of building a factory. Your father will be my partner."
"That's all? What a secret!" Sinang loudly exclaimed with the voice of a stifled moneylender. "I thought—"
"Careful! I won't let you make this public."
"Forget it!" Sinang replied, wrinkling up her nose. "If it were something more important I might tell my friends. But buying coconuts? Coconuts? Who cares about coconuts?"
And in a great hurry she went off to find her friends.

A few moments later, Ibarra took his leave, seeing that the meeting had been played out. Captain Tiago had a bittersweet look on his face, Linares was tight-lipped and watchful. The priest, seemingly happy, was talking about odds and ends. None of the young women had come back out.

CHAPTER 52
THE CARD OF THE DEAD AND THE SHADOWS

The cloudy sky obscures the moon. A cold wind, pressaging the coming December, sweeps aside some dry leaves and dust on the narrow path leading to the cemetery.

Three shadows speak quietly beneath the gate.
"Have you spoken to Elias?" asks one voice.
"No, you know full well he is very odd and cautious, but he has to be one of us. Don Cristótero saved his life."
"That's why I was willing to go along," says the first voice.
"Don Cristótero had them treat my mother in a doctor's office in Manila. I'm taking care of the parish house to settle my account with the priest."
"And we have the barracks, to show the guards our father had sons."
"How many will you be?"
"Five. Five is enough. Don Cristótero's servant says we'll be twenty."
"And if it turns out badly?"
"Shh!" one said, and the others were quiet.

Through the semidarkness one could make out a shadow approach and unhook the gate. Now and then it would stop, as if it were turning to look behind it.

With good reason. About twenty paces back another, larger shadow approached, which seemed to cast more of a shadow than the first. It trod lightly, and quickly disappeared each time the first one stopped and turned around, as if the earth were swallowing him up.
"They're following me," the first one murmured. "Is it the Civil Guard? Did the chief sexton lie to me?"
"They say the rendezvous is here," said the second shadow in a
CHAPTER 53

IL BUON DI SI CONOSCE DA MATTINA

Early on the news was spread throughout the town that the previous night lights had been seen in the cemetery.

The head of the venerable Third Order was talking about lit candles and described shapes and sizes; he couldn’t say exactly what the number was, but he had counted more than twenty. Sister Sipa, of the sisterhood of the Holy Rosary, could not tolerate such braggadocio from one of the members of the enemy brotherhood just because he had seen this by the grace of God. Sister Sipa, even though she didn’t live nearby, had heard moans and groans, and even though she was able to recognize certain people’s voices, with whom she was in another time... but owing to Christian charity, she not only pardoned them but prayed for them, keeping their names to herself, for which everyone declared her a santa incontinentia. Sister Rufa indeed lacked such good hearing, but couldn’t bear that Sister Sipa had heard it and she hadn’t, so she had a dream in which a great many souls came to her, not only dead people but living ones, too. These souls in torment begged her for some of the indulgences she had accumulated and had carefully marked down in her book. She would be able to tell the names to the families in question and then would only request a small donation to help out with the Pope’s needs.

One little boy, a herder by trade, dared to assure everyone he had seen nothing more than a light and two men in salacottas, so he barely escaped their insults and blows. He swore to it in vain: his water buffalo were with him and they could speak to it, as well.

"Are you going to know more than the prefect and the sisters, paracutum," they said to him, glaring at him maliciously.

The priest went up to the pulpit and preached on purgatory again, and pesos again came out of their hiding place to pay for matresses.

But let’s leave those souls in torment and listen in on a conversation between Don Filippo and Old Tasio, who is ill, in his solitary cabin. This philosopher or madman has not left his bed for several days, laid low by a rapidly progressing illness.

"Truthfully, I don’t know whether to congratulate you for having submitted your resignation. Before, when the mayor completely disregarded the will of the majority, asking for it was the right thing to do, but now that you are fighting with the Civil Guard it is not the most convenient thing. In times of war it is important to stay at one’s post."

"Yes, but not when the general sells out," Don Filippo answers.

"You know full well that the following day the mayor freed the soldiers I had succeeded in enlisting and has refused to take one step forward. Without my superiors’ consent I cannot do anything."

"You, alone, no, but with other people, a lot. You could have taken advantage of the situation to provide an example to the other towns. The rights of the people take precedence over the mayor’s ridiculous authority. It was the beginning of a good lesson, and you missed the opportunity."

"And what could I have done against the representative of an occupying power? Take Señor Ibarra, he folded in the face of the beliefs of the group. Do you think he believes in excommunication?"

"You’re not in the same situation. Señor Ibarra wants to sow his seed and in order to do so one must bow down and conform to realities. Your mission is to shake things up and to shake things up requires strength and impulsion. In addition, the fight shouldn’t focus on the mayor. The motto should be: against the abuse of his power, against those who disturb the public tranquility, against those who do not do their duty. And you would not have been alone, since the country today is not the same as it was twenty years ago."

"You think?" Don Filippo asked.

"Don’t you feel it?" the old man answered, half lying down on the bed. "Ah, it’s because you haven’t seen the past, you haven’t studied the effects of European immigration, the coming of new
books and the flight of our youth to Europe. Study and comment: it's true that the Royal and Papal University of Saint Thomas still exists with its cloister of learning and some of the intelligent ways of scholasticism are still exercised with distinctive and high subtlety, but where would you find now that metaphysical youth of our times, of that philosophical instruction that, their gray matter tortured, died in philosophical discussions in the corner of our provinces, without finally understanding the attributes of the ente, without resolving questions of essence and existence, these most elevated concepts that make us forget what is truly essential: our existence and our own entity! Look at children these days! Full of enthusiasm at the sight of the widest horizons, they study history, mathematics, geography, literature, the physical sciences, languages, every subject that in our time we hear about with horror, as if they were heresies. The most freethinking person of my time declared them inferior to the categories of Aristotle and the laws of the syllogism. Man understood in the end what man is. He renounces the analysis of God, penetrating the impalpable, in which he has not seen, to give laws to the phantasms of his brain. Man understands that his inheritance is the greater world whose dominion is within his grasp. Tired of useless and presumptuous labor he bows his head and looks about him, and now he sees how our poets are born. Little by little nature's muses open their treasures and start to smile upon us, and lead us far from such labors. Experimental sciences have already given us their first fruits: now all we need is time to perfect them. New lawyers form themselves into new molds of the philosophy of Law. Some begin to shine amid the mists that surround our courts and presage a change in the march of time. Listen to how youth speaks, visit centers of learning, and other names resound in the walls of these cloisters, there where we only hear the names of Saint Thomas, Suarez, and others, the icons of my time. In vain do the friars clamor from their pulpits against immorality, like fishmongers who clamor against the greed of their customers without acknowledging that their trade is passé and useless. The friaries extend in vain their tentacles and roots to submerge new currents in these towns. The gods are leaving. Tree roots can starve plants that press against them, but not take away life from other beings who, like birds, rise again to the heavens.

The philosopher was speaking animatedly. His eyes sparkled.

"However, the new shoot is small. If we propose everything, progress which we purchase dearly, can be overwhelmed," an ingenuous Don Filipo objected.

"Overwhelmed? By whom? Man, that sick dwarf, overwhelmed progress, that powerful child of time and activity? When has he done it? Dogma, the scaffold, and the bontre, trying to suspend it, push it forward. E pur si muove?" Galileo said when the Dominicans forced him to declare that the Earth did not move: the same phrase could serve for human progress. Some wills will be broken, some individuals will be sacrificed, but that's unimportant: progress will continue on its path and from the blood of those who fall new and vigorous shoots will sprout. Look! The press itself, as retrograde as it is, even without wanting to take a step forward. The Dominicans themselves cannot escape this law and imitate the Jesuits, their irreconcilable enemies: they give parties in their cloisters, build small theaters, compose poetry, because since, despite the belief in the fifteenth century that they lacked intelligence, they understand that the Jesuits are right and will participate in the future of the young people they have educated.

"In your opinion the Jesuits are progressive?" Don Filipo asked in admiration. "Then why are they fighting another one in Europe?"

"I'll answer that like an old Scholastic," the philosopher replied, returning to his bed and regaining his amused expression. "One can be progressive in three ways: forward, to the side, and backward. The first of these lead, the second allow themselves to be led, and the last are dragged along, and the Jesuits belong to them. They wanted to direct progress, but because they perceive it to be too strong and since they have other inclinations, they go along with it, preferring to follow so as not to be crushed, or they remain in the middle of the road among the shadows. Nowadays, we in the Philippines walk three centuries behind the cart, we have barely emerged from the Middle Ages, which is why the Jesuits, who are so reactionary in Europe, seen from here represent progress. The Philippines owes them its nascent instruction, natural sciences, circa the nineteenth century, like the Dominicans' Scholasticism, dead despite Leo XIII. No pope can resuscitate what common will has condemned... But where have we been
going?” he asked with a change of tone in his voice. “Ah, we were talking about the current state of the Philippines... Yes, now we are entering a period of struggle, I say, you are: our generation belongs to the night, we are exiting. The fight is between the past, which has grasped and grappled with curses the rotting castle of feudalism, and the future, whose triumphal march is heard from afar in the splendors of a nascent rainbow, bringing good news to other countries... Who will fall and be buried in the ruins of what crumbles?”

The old man fell silent and, seeing that Don Filipo looked at him thoughtfully, he smiled and began again.

“I can almost guess what you’re thinking.”

“Really?”

“You are thinking that it’s very possible I’m wrong,” he said with a sad smile. “I have a fever today and I am not infallible: homo sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto, Terence said. But if sometimes one is allowed to dream, in the last hours of one’s life why not dream happy dreams? But then I have always lived by dreams! You are right. Dream! Our young people think about nothing more than love affairs and pleasure. They spend more time attempting to seduce and dishonor young women than in thinking about their country’s welfare. Our women, in order to take care of the house and family of God, forget their own. Our men limit their activities to vice and their heroics to shameful acts. Children wake up in a fog of routine, adolescents live out their best years without ideals, and their elders are sterile, and only serve to corrupt our young people by their example... I’m happy to die... claudite iam rivam, piuet...”

“Would you like some medicine?” Don Filipo asks in order to change the thread of the conversation, which had made the sick man’s expression somber.

“Dying people don’t need medicine, the ones who remain do. Tell Don Cristóvamo to come see me tomorrow; I have important things to tell him. In a few days I’ll be gone. The Philippines is in a fog!”

Don Filipo, after a few minutes more of conversation, left the sick man’s house, serious and thoughtful.

Bells announce the evening prayers. Upon hearing the religious singing they all stop, leave off their activities, and remove their hats. The laborer coming from the fields stops chanting to the rhythmic gait of the carabao he is riding, and prays. Women cross themselves in the middle of the street and exaggerate the movement of their lips so no one will question their devotion. Men stop petting their fighting cocks and chant the Angelus, so luck will smile upon them. In their horses, people pray loudly. Any sound other than the Hail Mary fades away, and all is quiet...

However, the priest, still wearing his hat, is crossing the street in a great hurry, which scandalizes several old women. And an even greater scandal! He is heading toward the ensign’s house. The devotees find time to stop moving their lips to kiss the priest’s hand, but Father Salvi pays them no mind. Today he takes no pleasure in placing a bony hand on a Christian nose to then furiously stroke (according to what Doña Consolación has observed) the breast of the pretty young woman who has leaned over to ask for his blessing. He must be preoccupied by an important matter if he forgets his own interests and those of the Church!

Indeed, he bounds up the stairs and knocks impatiently at the front door of the ensign, who appears with a scowl, followed by his better half, who smiles the smile of a condemned woman.

“Ah, Father, I was just coming to see you, your goat...”

“I have a highly important matter...”

“I can’t allow him to go about wrecking my fence... I’ll shoot him if he does it again.”

“That’s if you live ‘til tomorrow!” says the priest haughtily, heading toward the parlor.
"What? Do you think that that puny little kid will kill me? I can annihilate him with one swift kick!"
Father Salvi stepped back and instinctively glanced at the ensign’s foot.
"Who are you talking about?" he asked, trembling.
"Who else would I be talking about but that idiot who has proposed a duel with revolvers at a hundred paces?"
"Ah," the priest let his breath out. "I’ve come to talk to you on an urgent affair."
"I’m sick of all these affairs! Would it have anything to do with those two boys?"
If the light hadn’t been coming from an oil lamp whose globe was so dirty the ensign would have noticed the priest’s ashen face.
"This time in all seriousness it has to do with everyone’s life," he replied in a calm voice.
"Seriously?" the ensign replied, turning pale. "Is the young man a good shot?"
"I’m not talking about him."
"And... well?"
The friar pointed to the door, which the ensign closed in his own special way, with his foot. The ensign found his hands to be superfluous and would have missed nothing had he stopped having two. A curse and a bellowing answered from outside.
"Brule! You split open my head!" his wife shouted.
"Now, what’s on your mind?" the priest said calmly.
He stared at him for a long time. Then, in the nasal and monotonous voice of a preacher he asked, "Did you see how I came here, running?"
"God, yes, I thought you had diarrheal!"
"Well, then," said the priest, paying no attention to the ensign’s gross remark, "when I fail to complete my duties it’s because there are serious reasons."
"What else could it be?" the other man asked, tapping the floor with his foot.
"Calm down!"
"So, why were you in such a hurry?"
The priest came closer and asked mysteriously, "No... have you heard... any news?"
The ensign shrugged.

"Tell me you know absolutely nothing."
"Are you trying to tell me about Elias, whom your chief sexton killed last night?" he asked.
"No, I’m not talking about those rumors," the priest answered, irritated. "I’m talking about great danger."
"Well, well, out with it, then!"
"Well," the friar said slowly and with a certain disdain, "you’ll again see how important clerics are. The best layperson is worth a regiment, but a priest..." Lowering his voice and with a great deal of mystery, "I’ve uncovered a major conspiracy."
The ensign jumped up and stared at the friar, astonished.
"A terrible, intricately planned conspiracy that is supposed to come down tonight."
"Tonight!" the ensign exclaimed, rushing at the priest and then running to get his revolver and saber, which were hanging on the wall. "Who should I arrest, who should I arrest?" he shouted.
"Calm down, thanks to my hurrying there’s still time. Until eight...
"Shoot them all!"
"Listen! This evening a woman whose name I can’t say (it’s a secret of the confession) came to me and revealed everything. At eight o’clock they will take the barracks by surprise, sack the parish house, seize the patrol boat, and murder all the spaniards."
The ensign was struck dumb.
"That’s all the woman told me," the priest added.
"She didn’t say anything else? Then I’ll arrest her!"
"I can’t agree to that. The tribunal of repentance is the throne of a forgiving God."
"There is no God or forgiveness worth anything! I’m arresting her!"
"You’re losing your head. What you need to do is to be prepared. Quietly arm your soldiers and place them at an ambush. Send me four guards for the parish house and alert the people on the patrol boat."
"The patrol boat isn’t here. I’ll request help from the other garrison!"
"No, they’ll see what’s going on and won’t carry out their plot. The important thing is that we take them alive and make them sing, I mean, you make them sing. I, as a priest, can’t get mixed up
in such matters. Pay attention! You can end up with crosses and scars here. I only ask that you let it be known it was I who warned you."

"I'll let it be known, Father. I'll let it be known and maybe you'll end up with a miter," the ensign answered, radiant, strolling at his uniform sleeves.

"So send me four guards under cover, eh? Discreetly! Tonight it rains stars and burns!"

While this was going on, a man is running along the path that leads to Cristottomo's house and hurriedly ascends the stairs.

"Is the master at home?" Elías's voice asks the manservant.

"He is in his study working."

Ibarra, to get past his impatience waiting for the time when he will be able to work everything out with María Clara, had sat down to work in his laboratory.

"Oh, is that you, Elías?" he exclaimed. "I was thinking about you. Yesterday I forgot to ask you the name of the Spaniard in whose house your grandfather worked."

"It's not about me, señor..."

"I know," Ibarra went on, not noticing how upset the young man was and bringing a piece of bamboo toward the fire. "I've made a great discovery. This cane can't burn..."

"It's not about the cane at this point, señor. It's about your gathering your papers together and getting out of here this minute."

Ibarra stared at Elías and, upon seeing the seriousness of his expression, he dropped the object he had in his hands.

"Burn everything compromising and in an hour you'll be in a safer place."

"But why?" he asked finally.

"Put anything of value in a safe place."

"But why?"

"Burn any paper written to you or from you. Even the most innocent thing can be interpreted badly..."

"But... why?"

"Why? Because I just found out about a conspiracy that will be attributed to you in order to get rid of you."

"A conspiracy? And who is plotting?"

"I haven't been able to find out who the ringleader is. Just a mo-
in his hand several times and asks in a tremendous voice, “Did your family know Don Pedro Eibarramedia?”

“I knew him,” Ibarrá answered, opening a drawer and removing a pile of paper. “He was my great-grandfather!”

“Your great-grandfather! Don Pedro Eibarramedia?” Elías asked again, ashen, his expression changed.

“Yes,” Ibarrá answers absentmindedly, “we shortened the last name because it was too long.”

“Was he Basque?” Elías repeated, coming nearer.

“Basque, but what’s the matter?” he asks, surprised.

Elías clenches his fist, presses it against his forehead, and looks at Cristóbal, who takes a step backward when he sees the expression on Elías’s face.

“Do you know who Don Pedro Eibarramedia was?” he asks with gritted teeth. “Don Pedro Eibarramedia was that miserable man who slandered my grandfather and caused all of our unhappiness... I looked for his name everywhere and God has delivered you to me... talk about your misery!”

Cristóbal stared at him, terrified, but Elías took his arm and told him in a bitter voice that dripped of hatred, “Look at me carefully, look at how I have suffered, and you live, you love, you have money, a home, respect, you live... you live!”

Out of his head, he ran toward a small collection of weapons, but when he had barely withdrawn two daggers, he dropped them and like a madman glared at Ibarrá, who had not moved.

“What was I about to do?” he muttered, and flew out of the house.

CHAPTER 55
CATASTROPHE

Over there in the dining room Captain Tiago, Linares, and Aunt Isabel were having supper. The clatter of plates and utensils emerges from the parlour. María Clara has said she is not hungry and has sat down at the piano, accompanied by the ever-gay Sinang, who whispers private things in her ear, while Father Salvi paces nervously from one end of the room to the other.

It’s not that the convalescent does not feel hunger, nor is it that she is awaiting the arrival of someone and has taken advantage of a moment when her Argos is not there: Linares’s dinner hour.

“Look how that phantasm hangs around until eight o’clock,” Sinang whispers, pointing to the priest. “He’s supposed to be coming at eight. He’s in love, that one, like Linares.”

María Clara looked at her friend with fear in her eyes, who, without taking notice, went on with her horrid chattering.

“Well, now I know why he isn’t leaving, in spite of my hints. He doesn’t want to use up the parish house’s lights. You know? Ever since you fell ill, the two lamps that he had lit he has now had put out... look at those mooning eyes, what a face!”

At just that instant the house clock struck eight. The priest shuddered and went off to sit in a corner.

“He’s coming!” Sinang said, pinching María Clara, “You hear?”

The church bells tolled eight and everyone got up to pray. Father Salvi, his voice weak and tremulous, offered up a prayer, but since everyone had his or her own thoughts no one paid any attention to it.

Just when the prayer was over, Ibarrá appeared. The young man was dressed for mourning, not only in his attire but his face, so much so that, when she saw him, María Clara got up and took a step toward him, as if to ask what the matter was, but at exactly
perhaps to forgive you, could I have said that I was his daughter, the man who wished for my death so ardently? All that remained was to suffer, to keep my secret, and die suffering . . . Now, my friend, now that you know the sad story of your poor María will you have the same smile of disdain?"

"María, you are a saint!"

"I am happy just to think you believe me..."

"However," the young man added, changing his tone, "I have heard you are marrying..."

"Yes!" the young woman sobbed. "My father demands such a sacrifice... He loved me and fed me, when it was not his responsibility. And I will pay back the debt I owe him by ensuring his peace, through this new relation, but..."

"But?"

"I will not forget the oaths of fidelity I made to you."

"What are you thinking of doing?" Ibarra asked, trying to read it in her eyes.

"The future is dark and destiny lies in shadows! I don't know what is to be done. But I know that I love only once, and without love, I will never belong to anyone. And you, what will become of you?"

"I am no more than a fugitive... I'll run. In a little while they'll discover my escape, María..."

María Clara took the young man's head in her hands, and kissed him repeatedly on the lips, embraced him, and then, suddenly pushing him away, "Run, run!" she said. "Run! Good-bye!"

Ibarra stared at her, his eyes brilliant, but, at a sign from her, he went away, intoxicated, irresolute.

He jumped back over the wall and got into the boat. María Clara, leaning on the balustrade, watched him slowly recede into the distance.

Elias removed his hat, and bowed deeply.

CHAPTER 6.1
PURSUIT ON THE LAKE

"Listen to the plan I've been thinking about, señor," Elias said thoughtfully as they headed toward San Gabriel. "For the time being I will hide you in a friend of mine's house in Mandaluyong. I will bring you your money, which I saved and am keeping at the foot of the baliu, in your grandfather's unearthly tomb. You'll leave the country..."

"To go abroad?" Ibarra interrupted.

"To live in peace for the rest of your days. You have friends in Spain, you're rich, you can forgive. In any case, abroad, for us, is a better country than our own."

Cristóvón did not answer. He meditated silently.

At that moment they arrived at the Pasig and the boat began to move upstream. A rider galloped over the Puente de España; they heard a sharp, prolonged whistle.

"Elias," Ibarra took up, "you owe your misfortune to my family, twice you've saved my life, and I owe you not only my thanks but the restoration of your fortune. You advise me to live abroad, well, come with me and we can live as brothers. I am an outcast here, too."

Elias shook his head sadly and answered, "Impossible! It's true I can neither love my country nor be happy here, but I can suffer and die in it, and for it. That always counts for something. Let my country's misfortunes be mine, and though a noble thought cannot unite us, though our hearts do not beat with the same name, at least my comrades are united by a common misery; at least I cry at their pain, and the same misfortune oppresses all our hearts."

"Then why are you suggesting that I leave?"

"Because you can be happy elsewhere, but I can't, because you're not made for suffering, and because you'll hate your coun-
try if one day you become an outcast for her sake. And to hate one's country is the worst possible misfortune."

"You are being unjust," Ibarra exclaimed in bitter reproach.

"You forget that, when I had barely arrived here, I had dedicated myself to finding the best—"

"Don't take offense, señor, I'm not criticizing you. I wish every- one could follow your example! But I'm not asking for the im- possible and don't be offended if I tell you your heart is leading you astray. You loved your country because your father taught you to do so, you loved it because you had love there, fortune, youth, because everything smiled down on you, because your country never did you any injustices, you loved it because we love anything that makes us happy. But on the day you find yourself poor, hungry, persecuted, denounced, and sold out by your own countrymen, on that day you will renounce yourself, your coun- try, everything."

"Your words are painful," Ibarra said resentfully.

"I want to lift the scales from your eyes, señor, and help you avoid a sad future. Remember that time in this very boat and in this same moonlight a month ago, a few days more, a few less, when I spoke to you. You were happy then. My pleading on be- half of the less fortunate did not reach you. You disregarded their complaints because they were the complaints of criminals. You paid more attention to their enemies and, despite my reasoning and begging, you placed yourself on the side of their oppressors, and it depended on you whether I turned into a criminal or al- lowed myself to kill in order to comply with my sacred promise. God would not allow it, because the aged leader of these evil- ers died... A month has gone by, and now you think differently!"

"You're right, Elias, but man is a creature of circumstance. I was blind then, disgusted, what did I know? Now misfortune has ripped off my blinders. Solitude and the misery of prison have shown me. Now I see the horrible cancer growing at this society, rotting its flesh, almost begging for a violent extirpation. They opened my eyes, they made me see the sores and forced me to become a criminal! And so, just what they wanted, I will be a sub- versive, but a true subversive. I will call together all the down- trodden people, everyone who feels a heart beating in his breast, those who sent you to me... No, I won't be a criminal, you aren't a criminal when you fight for your country, just the oppo- site! For three centuries we have held out our hand to them, asked them for love, eager to call them brothers, and how do they an- swer us? With insults and mockery, denying us even the status of human beings. There is no God, no hope, no humanity, nothing more than the rights of power!"

Ibarra was nervous. His whole body shook.

They passed by the general's palace and thought they heard the guards move and rustle about.

"Have they discovered your escape?" whispered Elias. "Get down, señor, and let me cover you with the hay; we're going by the powder magazine and the sentinel may think it odd that there are two of us."

The boat was one of the narrow canoes that ride atop the wa- ter rather than settling in.

As Elias had foreseen, the sentry stopped him and asked where he was coming from.

"From Manila, from supplying hay to the judges and priests," he answered, imitating a Pampangan accent.23

A sergeant came out to find out what was going on.

"Sulung!" he said. "I warn you not to take anyone in your boat. A prisoner just escaped. If you capture him and bring him in I'll give you a reward."

"Very good, señor, what does he look like?"

"A gentleman, Spanish-speaking. So keep your eyes peeled!"

The boat drifted away. Elias turned back to look at the sentry's silhouette, his feet against the riverbank.

"We'll kill a few minutes here," he said softly. "We have to go into the Beata River to pretend that I'm from Pehañacris. You'll see the river Francisco Baltazar wrote about."

The town slept in the moonlight. Cristóstofo got up to admire the seapulchral tranquility of nature. The river was narrow and its banks formed a plane, shaded by haysacks.

Elias tossed his cargo onto the bank, grabbed a long bamboo pole, and from beneath the weeds pulled several empty burlap sacks or palm-frond bags. They sailed on.

"You are master of your own will, señor, and your future," he said to Cristóstofo, who was silent. "But if you allow me an ob-
servation, I will give it to you. Look well to what you are going to do. You are going to set off a war. You have money and brains and you will quickly find many to help you, since unfortunately there are many malcontents. Worse, in this fight you intend to undertake, the defenseless and innocent will suffer most. The very sentiments that a month ago made me come to you seeking reform are the same ones that motivate me now to tell you to think this over. This country, señor, is not about to separate itself from the mother country. It seeks only a bit of freedom, justice, love. I'll support the malcontents, the criminals, the desperate, but the people will back off. Seeing everything so darkly, you are wrong if you believe this country is desperate. The country is suffering, yes, but it still has hope, it believes, and it will rise up only when it has lost all patience, that is, when those who govern it want it that way, which is still far off. I myself will not follow you. I will never accede to those measures as long as I see men hope."

"Then I'll go without you!" Ceañon mo replied with resolve.

"That's your final decision?"

"My final one, and my only one, I swear on my father's memory! I can't let them rip away peace and happiness with impunity. I only wanted good things. I had respect for everything and suffered for love of a hypocritical religion, for love of my country. And how did they repay me? By burying me in a vile cell and making my future wife into a prostitute? No, not to avenge myself would be a crime, would just lead to new injustices! No, out with cowardice, let the fain of heart moan and cry at blood and life, when ridicule joins insult and threat. I'll call these people ignorant, I'll force them to see their own misery, and they won't think about brotherhood, only wolves that devour one another, and I'll tell them to rise up against this oppression and protest the eternal right of man to conquer his freedom!"

"Innocent people will suffer!"

"Better still! Can you guide me into the mountains?"

"Just until you are safe," Elias answered.

They emerged again into the Pasig. From time to time they talked of insignificant things.

"Santa Ana!" Ibarra whispered. "Do you know that house?" They were passing the Jesuit country house.

"I spent many happy, cheerful days there," Elias sighed. "In my day we came here every month... we were like everyone else then: we had fortune, family, we dreamed, we had visions of a future. In those days I could see my sister in the nearby school, she would present me with something she had made with her own hands... a girlfriend would be with her, a beautiful young woman. It's all gone by like a dream."

They remained silent until they arrived at Malapad-na-bato. People who have at one time cruised the Pasig at night, on one of those magic nights the Philippines offers, when the moon spills a melancholy poetry from a limpid blue, when shadows hide the misery of men and silence stuffs the rotten timber of their voices, when nature alone speaks, they will understand what was going through the minds of those two young men.

In Malapad-na-bato, the customs guards were sleepy and seeing an empty boat with no possible booty to skim in accordance with the traditional custom of that body and the use of their position, they let it pass freely. Neither did the Pasig's civil guardsmen suspect anything, and they could not be bothered.

When they arrived at the lake, dawn was breaking, meek and mild like a gigantic mirror: The moon waned, the east bathed in pinkish hues. At a certain distance one could make out a gray mass advancing little by little.

"The tender is coming," Elias whispered. "Lie down and I'll cover you with these sacks."

The dock became clearer and more visible.

"It's putting itself between us and the shore," Elias observed nervously.

He gradually altered the boat's direction, rowing toward Bi-angongan.77 To his amazement, the tender also changed direction, and a voice shouted out to him.

Elias stopped and thought a minute. The shore was far away and they would soon be in range of the launch's rifles. He thought about returning to the Pasig: his boat was faster than theirs. But bad luck; another boat was coming from the Pasig and one could see the helmets and bayonets of the Civil Guard.

"We're caught!" he whispered, turning pale.
He looked down at his strong arms and made the only decision left to him. With all his might he began rowing toward Talim Island. In the meantime the sun rose.

The boat slid rapidly through the waves. Elias could see several men standing on the launch, which was heaving toward them, gesturing at him.

"Do you know how to handle a boat?" he asked Ibarra.

"Yes, why?"

"Because we're lost if I don't jump into the water and lead them away. They'll come after me, I'm a good swimmer and diver... I'll lead them away from you and you can get to safety."

"No, stay and we'll sell our lives dearly!"

"It's no good. We have no weapons and with their rifles they'll kill us like little birds."

At that moment they heard a "chss" in the water like a hot body falling, immediately followed by a shot.

"You see?" Elias said, taking the oar into the boat. "We'll see each other on Christmas Eve in your grandfather's tomb. Save yourself!"

"And you?"

"God has gotten me out of worse fixes."

Elias took off his shirt. A bullet tore it from his hands and they heard two shots. Elias calmly clasped the hand of Ibarra, who remained lying at the bottom of the boat. Then he got up and jumped into the water, pushing off from the little dock with his foot.

Several shouts were heard and soon, a ways away, the young man's head appeared, as if he were taking a breath, then immediately disappeared.

"There, there he is!" several voices shouted and again bullets whistled.

The patrol launch and the boat set off in pursuit. A light wake signaled its path, getting further and further from Ibarra's boat, which bobbed up and down as if it had been abandoned. Each time the swimmer poked out his head to breathe, the civil guards and sailors shot at him.

The chase went on. Ibarra's little boat was already far away, the swimmer neared the shore about fifty yards away. The rowers were tiring, but so was Elias. He poked out his head often and each time in a different direction to confuse his pursuers. The betraying wake no longer gave away the fugitive's path. For the last time they saw him near the shore, ten yards away, and they fired... a few minutes went by, and nothing reappeared on the calm, deserted surface of the lake.

A half hour later, one of the rowers thought he found traces of blood in the water close to shore, but his comrades shook their heads with the air of saying yes, as much as no.
EPILLOGUE

Since many of our characters are still alive and we have lost sight of the others, a true epilogue is impossible. For everyone's benefit, we would gladly kill off all our characters, beginning with Father Salvi and finishing up with Doña Victorina, but that's not possible... let them live! Our country, and not we, will have to feed them in the end...

When María Clara entered the convent, Father Dímaso left town to live in Manila, as did Father Salvi, who, while he awaits a vacant miter, preaches several times in the Church of Santa Clara, in whose parish house he discharges an important duty. Not too many months later Father Dímaso received orders from the Very Reverend Provincial Father to take over the curacy of a distant province. They say he was so upset about it that the following day they found him dead in his cell. Some say he died from apoplexy, others from a nightmare, but the doctor dispelled these rumors by declaring that he died with no warning.

None of our readers would recognize Captain Tiago if they saw him. Weeks before María Clara took her vows, he fell into depression, began to lose weight, and got very sad, meditative, and fearful, like his former friend, poor Captain Tinong. As soon as the convent doors were shut, he ordered his inconsolable cousin, Aunt Isabel, to gather up everything that had belonged to his daughter and late wife and go to Malabon or San Diego, since he thenceforward wanted to live alone. He dedicated himself to lampó and the cockpit with a frenzy, and began to smoke opium. He no longer went to Antipolo, nor did he order masses to be said. Doña Patrocinio, his old competitor, piously celebrated her triumph, settling down to smore during sermons. If sometime, as the sun sets, you are passing through the street of Santo Cristo,
the tomb hugs her to its breast. We have asked several highly influential people in the holy convent of Santa Clara, but no one has wanted to say even one word, not even the devoted charlatans who receive the famous fried chicken livers and the even more famous sauce called "from the nuns," prepared by the highly intelligent chef of the Virgins of the Lord.

Nevertheless.

One September night, a hurricane raged and beat its giant winds against the buildings of Manila. Thunder roared at every turn. Lightning lit up from time to time the wind's destructiveness, throwing the residents into frightful panic. Rain fell in torrents. In the light of zigzagging lightning bolts one could see a piece of a roof, or a window flying through the air, then tumble down with a horrible crash. Not one coach or one pedestrian tried the streets. When the rough echo of thunder, reverberating a hundred times, faded into the distance, one could hear the wind sighing and the rain swirling, which produced a repeated "trac-trac" on the closed shutters.

Two civil guards were taking shelter in a building under construction near the convent. One was a common soldier, the other from a distinguished family.

"What are we doing here?" the soldier said. "No one is about... we should go home. My girlfriend lives in Calle del Arzobispo."

"It's quite a ways from here and we'll get soaked," the noble soldier answers.

"What does that matter, since we could get stuck by lightning?"

"Bah! Don't worry. The nuns must have a lightning rod to take care of that."

"Yes," says the common soldier. "But what good is it if the night is so dark?"

He looked up high into the darkness. At that moment a lightning bolt sparked several times, followed by a formidable thunderclap.

"Noli me tangere!" the common soldier exclaimed, crossing himself and clapping his companion. "Let's get out of here!"

"What's bothering you?"

"Let's go, let's get out of here!" he repeated, his teeth chattering from fear.

"What did you see?"

"A ghost!" he whispered, shaking all over.

"A ghost?"

"On the roof... it must be a nun gathering wood at night."

The noble soldier poked out his head, wanting to see. Another bolt shone and a vein of fire came out of the sky, bringing with it a horrible crash.

"Jesus!" he exclaimed, crossing himself as well.

Indeed, in the brilliant light of the flash he had seen a white figure, erect, almost on the peak of the roof, her arms and face lifted to the sky, as if imploring it. The sky responded with lightning bolts and thunder.

After the thunder one could hear a sad plaint.

"It's not the wind, it's a ghost!" the common soldier whispered, as if responding to the pressure of his companion's hand.

"Oh, oh"-the air swirled, superimposing itself onto the sound of the rain. The wind could not cover over with its whistling that sweet, wounded voice, full of disconsolation.

Another lightning bolt struck, with dazzling intensity.

"No, it's not a ghost," the noble soldier exclaimed. "I saw it again. It's beautiful, like the Virgin... Let's get out of here and report it."

The common soldier did not need him to repeat the invitation and they both disappeared.

Who means in the middle of the night, in spite of the wind, the rain, and the storm? Who is this timid virgin, the bride of Christ, who defies the unleashed elements and chooses such an extraordinary night and open sky to exclaim from a dangerous height her prayers to God? Has the Lord abandoned his temple in the convent and is not listening to supplications? Will they not leave his vaults so that the soul's aspiration can rise to the throne of the Most Merciful?

The storm unleashed its fury almost throughout the night. Not one star shone in the whole night. Desperate planks, mixed with the wind's sighing, went on, but they found nature and men deaf to them. God watched over them, and did not hear.
The following day, when the sky was cleared of its dark clouds, the sun again shone amid the purified ether, a coach stopped at the doorway to the Convent of Santa Clara. A man got out and identified himself as a representative of the authorities and asked to speak to the abbess and see all the nuns.

They say that one appeared with her habit soaking wet, all in tatters, and asked for the man’s protection against the violence of hypocrisy, making accusations of many horrors. They say as well that she was very beautiful, that she had the most gorgeous and expressive eyes one had ever seen.

The representative of the authorities did not offer her his protection. He discussed it with the abbess and then left her there, despite her entreaties and tears. The young nun watched the gate shut behind him, like a condemned man would watch the gates of heaven close to him, if it happened that heaven could end up as cruel and insensitive as men. The abbess said she was mad.

Perhaps the man did not know that in Manila there is a sanitarium, or perhaps he judged that a nunnery was nothing more than an insane asylum, though one thinks the man must have been fairly ignorant, particularly if he thought he could decide if a person was in her right mind or not.

They also say that General S. J. thought otherwise, when the incident reached him. He wanted to protect the madwoman and sent for her.

But this time no beautiful and disheveled young woman appeared, and the abbess refused him permission to visit the cloister, invoking the name of religion and the holy statutes.

No one spoke of the incident again, nor of the unfortunate María Clara.
“Well,” Salomé said, looking at him with great affection. “At least when I have gone, live here, live in this hut. Living here will make you remember me and when I’m far away I won’t think that a hurricane or the waves have carried it off. When I think back on these shores you and my home will be remembered together. Sleep here, where I slept, and where I dreamed... as if I myself lived here with you, and were at your side.”

“Oh,” Ellis exclaimed, gripping her arms in desperation. “Woman, you have to try to forget...” His eyes glistened, but only for a moment.

And letting go of the young woman’s arms, he fled to the darkness of the trees.

Salomé followed him with her eyes without moving, but listening to the sound of his footsteps that, little by little, faded away.

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Notes


2. Historians note the rebellions of Lakandula and Soliman in Manila in 1570; Tambor’s rebellion on the island of Bohol in 1644; the Leyte Island revolt of 1645; the Caraga revolt on Mindanao in 1630; the Cagayan insurrection of 1639; the Visayan revolt of 1649–50; Malong’s rebellion in Pangasinan in 1660; Francisco Dagohoy’s rebellion on Bohol in 1774; and Diego Silang’s revolt in 1766, among others.


4. In a letter to the German writer Ferdinand Blumentritt on February 4, 1890, Rizal repeated this comment on the Noli, which he said he had made to his former professor of rhetoric, Francisco de Paula Sánchez.


6. Friedrich Schiller, “Shakespeare’s Ghost” (Shakespeare’s Schatten).

Was es dirife kein Cesar auf euren Bildnus sich zeigen,
Kein Achill, kein Orest, keine Andromache mehr?
Nichts! Man sieht bei uns nur Pfarrer, Commerzienräthe,
Vöhrinische, Sterbstäders oder Eisenmannschaft.
Aber, ich bitte dich, Freund, was kann denn dieser Misere
Großes begangen, was kann Großes denn durch sie geschahen?

Rizal was greatly interested in Schiller’s work. He also translated the play William Tell, which was published in 1907, ten years after Rizal’s death.
7. The word means "inside the walls" and refers to the central section of Spanish Manila that was surrounded by thick, high walls. Acceso was permitted through five gates. "To go into this walled city is to remind you of Madrid, Spain... Its battlemented wall is a little over 2½ miles in circuit." (Philippine Commission of the Philippines: Manila Bureau of Printing, 1913.)

8. Calle Analoque (Analogue Street) comes from the Tagalog word for carpenter, and is named for the prevalence of that trade there. It now makes up a section of Calle Juan Luna, named for the Filipino artist.

9. The main river of Manila, flowing east to west into Manila Bay.

10. "Pearl of the Orient" (or Oriental Sea) was often used to refer to Manila, but it has also been used to refer to other cities in Asia, particularly Macau in particular. Rizal also used this expression in his poem "The Final Farewell": "Farewell, my adored homeland, region of the beloved sun, Pearl of the Oriental Sea, our beloved Eden."

11. A broad, interior patio at the top of the stairs in a Filipino house. Rizal's confused ignorance may come from the old meaning of the word, which means "a fallen place," but the calita lies generally at the top of the stairs.

12. In Tagalog, an unmarried woman; maiden.

13. José and Bonifacio Acravlo were father and son engravers and wood engravers.

14. Capistrana lauds was legendary for her devotion and the splendor of her contributions to the Church and was associated with many miracles. Rizal also refers to her in his novel, El filibusterismo.

15. This is most likely a dried version of the guinea fowl puffer (Atherinops affinis), a type of blowfish with black skin covered with white polka dots and large, beadlike teeth, a member of the Diostomiidae family of porcupine fish.

16. A stew prepared by wrapping a piece of arsena (Arsena cathara) in a peppered form of betel leaf, generally with a bit of shell lime.

17. The Duke of Alba, Fernando Alvarez de Toledo (1508-82), was a well-known general at the time of Charles V and Philip II. He was known to be so cruel that his name was used for centuries to frighten little children.

18. The Civil Guard was a sort of national police patterned on a similar body in Spain.

19. El Colegio de San Lebran, founded in 1624 in the center of Manila ( Intramuros), was originally a home for orphans and is the second oldest educational institution in the Philippines after the University of St. Thomas (1611). Rizal took university entrance examinations there.

20. Dominican friars belonging to the order founded in 1215 by St. Dominic of Guzmán (1170-1221).

21. Beneficio de Luna (1838-99) was considered one of the great debaters of his era. He established a school in the Manila section of Santa Cruz.

22. Heinrich Heine, German writer (1797-1856). The reference is to Die Götter des Exils (The Gods in Exile).

23. Mendizeta was a well-known public figure of the time who acted as an official gatekeeper of the mayoralty and carnival manager. Quiglo is a section of Manila corresponding to one of the thirteen original Spanish towns surrounding Intramuros. It is renowned for its church and the Festival of the Black Nazarene, which takes place on January 9 each year.

24. Derogatory term derived from the Spanish for "inhabitant of the Indies." It was also used during the Spanish colonial period in the Americas, though in the Philippines it was considered to be an extremely harsh epithet.

25. The right of the government to regulate the cultivation and sale of tobacco in the Philippines was established in 1782 and abolished in 1888.


27. A baile, meaning a "dance gathering" or ball, is an adaptation of the Spanish word baile and a Tagalog ending.

28. A soup stew of chicken, pork, or fish cooked with soy leaves and papaya or chayote, served as a first or main course.

29. A vegetable stew.

30. Town located in the province of Tarlac about one hundred miles north-northwest of Manila. It is the hometown of Rizal's first love, Leonor Rivera.

31. An allusion to General Teresio y Perinan, captain general of the Philippines from 1883 to 1885. Teresio y Perinan was known for his opposition to the monastic orders and for his disastrous military campaign against the datu Uno (a datu is a Filipino warrior).

32. The Vice Royal Patron would be the king's representative in the Philippines, or the governor-general.

33. Don Fernando Buxamante, called "the Marshal," was assassinated in 1749 in his own palace. See Introduction for more information.

34. King Ferdinand VII of Spain died in 1814, but not before naming his infant daughter, Isabel, heir to the throne. Several Spanish mo-
bles, however, declared their loyalty to Ferdinand's brother Charles (Carlos de Borbón), thereby initiating the Carlist struggles that lasted almost four decades.

35. Affected use of Latin phrases: ab inato (from auger), ex ore (from his mouth), in corde (in his heart), in mente (in his mind), and per accidentem (by accident).

36. In Spanish, a captain's wife has her own honorific, approximated by "captainess." I have chosen to leave it in the original (Tr).

37. No inventar pelotón is a Spanish idiom that means "not tending to irritability or bad temper." La Doctora Doña Victorina takes the meaning of the individual words literally, thus starting an issue and comical conversation.

38. Schwartz was a fourteenth-century German Franciscan monk and alchemist (d. 1384). It was widely, though mistakenly, believed that he invented gunpowder. In fact, Filipinos on the island of Luzon, in particular, had used gunpowder as early as the year 1300.

39. Savalls was a well-known Carlist.

40. According to Rizal editor Feliciano Baza, this refers to a Spanish saying, "We all have a bit of the madman and poet within us."

41. In the nineteenth century, a town north of Binondo. As Manila has grown, it has been incorporated within the city limits.

42. A society restaurant of the time at the corner of the Escolta and Calle San Jacinto (now Pintiio Street).

43. You said that you don't want it when it is exactly what you want." The phrase is a mixture of Tagalog and Castilian Spanish, a bit of street slang used in haggling, when you pretend that you don't want something in order to exact a better price. In his edition, Charles Derbyshire mistranslates it as "sour grapes."

44. Cede arma to the toga" (give up your individual power to lawful government). Rizal substitutes covert (habit).

45. In his Lives, Plutarch tells the following anecdote: "Once when he (Lucullus) stopped alone, there being only one course, and that but moderately furnished, he called his steward and reproved him, who professing to have supposed that there would be no need of any great entertainment, when nobody was invited, was answered, "What, did not you know, then, that to-day Lucullus dines with Lucullus?" (John Dryden translation).

46. Ritual blessing said before a meal, generally with a response from the gathering.

47. Linguistic perspective: when Victorina refers to Spain (the Peninsula), she adds a tildle to the first n.

48. A Chinese epithet for China, so called because its emperors were thought to be celestial deities.

49. Though Buena (and Rizal) refers to a nation's history in general, he chooses to do so through the book of the Bible focused on the liberation of the Hebrews.

50. Binondo town square, also known as the Plaza Calderon de la Barca after the seventeenth-century Spanish playwright. Like many growing cities, by the late nineteenth century, Manila had grown around formerly outlying towns, making them part of the city.

51. Street of the Sacristy.

52. Makeshift torches made of tar wrapped around the end of a pole, used to light the way when walking or at street stalls.

53. The boys mock the tax collector's illiteracy by mimicking children practicing their ABCs.

54. The Overseas Mail (El Correo de Ultramar) was a liberal newspaper published in Madrid, which argued on behalf of Philippine autonomy.

55. A shirt currently known as the bamboo tagalog, worn outside the trousers.

56. Bandits.

57. Lala Inn, owned by an Indian, Lala Ali, located at 37 Calle Barcia in Manila.

58. An open field and park in the southwestern reaches of Manila, near what is now known as the Luneta; the name is derived from the Tagalog bagong banggawa (new town). Here the three Cavite Mutiny priests were garroted, and Rizal himself was later executed by firing squad. See Introduction.

59. Matthew 6:10, commonly known as the Lord's Prayer (King James version, 1611).

60. A unit of currency (bato; hard money, or coin).

61. A prison in central Manila famous for its atrocious conditions. It was later used by the Japanese to house American prisoners of war.

62. A grass often fed to livestock; also called talang.

63. A political reference. Louis XIV and Philip II were absolute monarchs, but Louis XVI was deposed, and Anacleto I disdained the throne.

64. Paco and Ermita, Philippine towns known for their artists.

65. The talibon is a short-handled short-sword with a slightly curved, crescent-shaped blade native to the Philippines.


67. A cock breed for fighting.
68. Short-sword of the people of Jolo in Sulu Province of southern Philippines.
69. A town in Laguna Province, about seventy miles southeast of Manila, known for its wood-carvers.
70. Santa Catalina \(1298-9\), born in Tongres, Holland, was sent at the age of twelve to live with the Benedictine nuns of the Convent of Santa Catalina. She was known for experiencing a sort of stigmata, when drops of blood would appear on her forehead.
71. Santo Domingo (Saint Dominic, 1170-1221), born in Calaruega, Spain, founded the Order of Dominican Fathers.
72. A city about fifty miles south of Manila, known during the Spanish period for the cultivation of coffee.
73. The Sermon of Seven Weeks refers to Jesus’ final seven words spoken from the cross (usually translated into English as “Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do”).
74. A polite way of saying “whole hog.”
75. Sinangiang is a tomato-based soup eaten over rice. Dalag is a Filipino walking mouthfish that is often seen in rice paddies during the rainy season (Ophistochetus striatus). Alibangbang (Ranina tomentosa) is a leguminous plant whose acidic leaves are used in cooking.
76. The general Catholic mass in which the Eucharist represents the body of Christ used in a “propitiatory” manner, a ritualistic sacrifice.
77. A mestizo is a mixed-blood person, in this case the offspring of a European and a Filipino.
78. Malacca Palace was the home of the secular Spanish governor-general. It continued to be the governor-general’s home during the American period in the first half of the twentieth century. Its name means “place of good fishing.”
79. “Blessed are the poor in spirit and blessed are the owners.” A play on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.
80. “Glory be to God and peace on earth to men of goodwill.” From the Latin mass Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terram pacem hominibus bonae voluntatis.
81. Pampanga lies about forty miles north of Manila.
82. The town of Malabon lies about six miles north of Manila’s downtown, along the western coast of the island of Luzon, and is an important commercial fishing center.
83. The sanctuary of the Virgin of Dausay in Taal is used solely for retreat and devotion. Tarumba is a Tagalog term meaning “to tumble,” or “to caper about,” doubtless from the actions of the Lady’s devotees. Pakil is a town in Laguna Province.
84. The Spanish scholar Felix Torres Anas is best known for his translation of the Bible into Spanish.
85. A listening mother is a nun who monitors the conversations between a convent inmate and visitor from outside, to ensure adherence to the convent’s rules.
86. A short flat paddle often used as a rudder.
87. Andalusia is the southern region of Spain.
88. Sigiereys are shells once used as currency but now as counters in children’s games. Siklos is a children’s game in which one tosses the sigiereys up and catches them on the back of the hand. Sinaak is a shell- or pebble-based children’s game. Banul is an affectionate reproach by flicking one’s fingers on the back of another person’s hand. Chonka is a pebble-based game using a board with a “home” on either end and seven depressions on either side. Whoever accumulates the most pebbles in the “home” wins. A modern version is called mancala.
89. A reference to Longo’s fourth-century Greek novel Daphnis and Chloe.
90. A climbing, woody vine whose macerated stems are used as soap; “soap-vine.”
91. Francisco Balanza, The History of Flora and Laura in the Kingdom of Albania, stanza 100.
92. Day of the Dead, the first of November.
93. The names of most of Maria Clara’s friends are derivatives derived from their Spanish names. E.g., Andeng is the combination of Miranda and the Tagalog particle ng.
94. Water buffalo.
95. Chinese slippers that cover mainly the front of the foot. They have no heel and a soft leather sole.
96. The broad-brimmed, conical hat worn by Filipinos as they work in the fields and near the sea.
97. The Escolta neighborhood, a business district in central Manila.
98. The baths of Uli-Uli were located in that section of Manila.
99. A section of Madrid just south of the center now known for its bohemian style.
100. La Ermita (Hermita) and Malate lie on the western side of Manila, along the bay.
101. Benga is a species of banana tree native to the Philippines.
102. Ruben Espinosa (1588-1636), a painter of the Neapolitan school.
103. “When Jupiter would destroy he first drives mad.” Sophocles, Antigone.
104. The Philippine banayan tree. Also known as Balete.
105. Lomboi is the fruit of the Syzygium cumini, a stout evergreen tree.
    The ripe fruit is eaten fresh or made into juice, jelly, or wine.

106. According to James Morwood's Dictionary of Latin Words and Phrases (Oxford University Press, 1998), the saying "divide and conquer" was the motto of Philip of Macedon and Louis IX of France, but is often wrongly attributed to Niccolò Machiavelli.


108. The Order of Tertiary Brothers was part of the Franciscan order.

109. A ghoul-like being who often takes the form of a woman and feeds on adult organs and human bodies. The aswang is believed to be able to "hear" the sounds of death at great distances and change a human corpse into a pig carcass.

110. Contemptuous name for a Carlist (see note 34).

111. A west African civilization located in what is now Benin.

112. In Spanish, a cemetery is often called a "city of the dead."

113. The letters atop the cross on which Jesus was crucified. They stand for the Latin words Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews).

114. Confabulated versions of Latin liturgical phrases.

115. Adela is the oleander flower (Nerium oleander). Sampaguitas are jasmine flowers.

116. The tree of the flowers of the same name.

117. A type of stiff reed often used for walking sticks.

118. From Santa Barbara, i.e., they are all barbarians.

119. "They may have existed in theory, but not in reality."

120. "The others hang in the void." Virgil, the Aeneid, Book VI.

121. "On this day you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43 (my translation).

122. In order to believe there is a fire in the judgment of purgatory for light sins. St. Gregory (540-604).

123. "With the Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Spirit."

124. "How you led your life on earth" does not mean "until purgatory."

125. Job 31:40. The King James version translates it as "let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley."

126. A Semitic deity.

127. A lamp wick made from bulrushes (Agrostis stolonifera). The word is of Chinese derivation.

128. Sabay is a type of floor mat made of bamboo. Palayao is a root beam.

129. A zarandia is a little mole. A chico is a gcko.

130. A stone tripod on which one rests a cooking pot.

131. A Tagalog riddle: "Black sat down, tickled by red, when all broke loose."

132. Bird of genus Bucerot, the Philippine hornbill.

133. A love song in which the singer expresses undying love for his country, though he (or she) seems to be singing to a lover.

134. Calderón de la Barca (1600–81), author of metaphysical plays in the Spanish Golden Age. La vida es sueto (Life Is a Dream) is his most famous play.

135. An oil lamp fueled by coconut oil, generally used by the poor.


137. The sweet fruit of the alpsey tree (Nepheleium).

138. Miser, skiflist.

139. The edible Philippine saddlehead form (Althryoniscus equolientium).

140. Sponge guards (Mnestomidae charantia).

141. Lope Félix de Vega Carpio, Spanish dramatist (1562–1635).

142. A type of boat measuring between thirty and forty feet long.

143. The espadon is a ceremonial short-sword, about the size of a rapier. Rival specifically calls these polismen cuadilleros, the rural version of the Civil Guard. Hence, the relatively primitive weapons.

144. One of the oldest schools in Manila.

145. Senators populares romanos means "the Senate and people of Rome." Patres conscripti means "selected fathers" and refers to the Roman Senate. Cicero (106–43 B.C.) was a Roman statesman and orator. Solomon (whose date of birth has been approximated at anywhere from the eleventh to the ninth century B.C.) was King of the Hebrews.

146. Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138–78 B.C.), Roman dictator.

147. Liampi is played by means of a rectangular brass device, weighing more than two pounds; a second device, also of brass, marked with a visible line, is inserted in the first as in a cover. In this second device or cube there is inserted a square die, the surfaces of which are in two colors, red and white, and inscribed with Chinese characters. After this die has been set in its proper place in the second device, it is completely covered by the larger one, the whole then having the appearance of a single piece. All these arrangements are affected by the banker while the contumacy is concealed under his shirt or under a short. This concealment seems to give him a certain advantage over the players. After this is done, one of the players gives the device a turn on a piece of cloth more than a meter square marked by lines radiating from the center to form squares. Between the lines are separately marked the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The banker stations himself opposite the number 1 and bets are placed on the corresponding lines after the device has stopped turning. Then the outer cube is lifted, and the number toward which the red side of the die points is the winning number and the other numbers lose.
Ganjea de bauxity is the title for a village chief. The bauxity was an early boat that brought Malay settlers to the Philippines.

Tikalbing is akin to the Minotaur, but with the head of a horse. It is reputed to rape women who wander off alone.

Maring Makiling is a Filipino myth of the young goddess Maria who falls in love with the mortal Gasi Duru. When her parents learnt of the relationship, they forbid her from seeing him again. The parallels with the Noli's romance are obvious. Makiling published a retelling of the story in 1890 in Madrid's La Solidaridad.

A cashew nut (Anacardium occidentale).

A portable clay pot for use in cooking over wood or charcoal fires.

An infusion of fresh ginger boiled in water thought to be helpful for nasal and chest congestion and sore throat.

A sponge cake made of rice flour. Now called puto.

A Philippine horseshoe. See note 133.

A fishing net set off by fencing within a larger body of water.

A type of sour cucumber (Annona squamosa). Used often in Philippine cooking. Also known as kambias.

A green bean (Vigna sinensis).

The reference is to an anonymous, seventeenth-century German story retold by J. Victor von Schefell in the nineteenth century as "The Trumpeter of Säckingen."

"Oh, the times, oh, the customs!" Cicerio, Catalina I, s.

"Let all those who enter here abandon hope." Dante, Inferno, canto III, line 9.

A large knife similar to a machete.

Pedro Alejandro Paterno (1857–1911), Filipino writer and politician. Among his works are the novel of manners Ninya (1884) and Ancient Tagalog Civilization (1887). The cited verses are taken from Sampaguitas (Jasmine Flowers, 1882).

The ayuun, the bala, the dalag, the buaan-buan, and the buanak are all freshwater fish. Peak is a plate of fish cooked in water with ginger, peppercorns, onion, and a little salt.

See note 85.

Buffoon.

The full quotation would be "The madman knows more about his own household than the wise man about his neighbor."

See Appendix for chapter 25 from the original manuscript, which was eliminated in the final text of the first edition.

"Careful that you do not fall." In ancient Rome, when victorious generals were received in the city, during the welcoming procession a slave walked behind them carrying a gold crown and saying these words.

A large tree that grows up to 80 to 150 feet high (Parkia javanica).

A sweet and sour drink, the most common of which is made by macerating green papaya in vinegar with ginger and red pepper.

Sakahan are bamboo arches; kalasikot are bamboo stalks strewn for decorative purposes.

Filipino performers, some of whom are unknown today. Chananay was the stage name of Valentina Mauricio. José Carvajal was a comedian. Reyeng was the most well known, and mentioned in Te- tana's history of the time (see Suggestions for Further Reading).

A small stone thought to have talismanic power.

Biga is the plant known as the elephant ear (Aloesia macrophylla); tikas-tikas is the Indian shoot plant (Canna indica).

Water plant with large flowers (Nymphaea nouchali).


The cry of carriage drivers to warn pedestrians.

Also spelled Kiring-kiring. A tumbledown house often inhabited by the poor.

Doña Fernandina Gálvez y Márquez de Reyes, a graduate of the Madrid Conservatory and one of the finest pianists of her time. She died in 1926.

In 1331, Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese sailing around the world under the Spanish flag, was the first European to visit the Philippines. Antonio Legaspi arrived three decades later and claimed the archipelago for the Spanish Crown. See Introduction for more information.

Antolin Monesillo y Viso (1825–97), Spanish cardinal and archbishop of Toledo.

A semi-transparent cloth woven from the hemplike fiber of the abaka plant, a member of the banana family.

A solemn liturgical mask during which a loose-fitting robe with open sides and wide sleeves is worn by a deacon.

Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), French prelate, one of the greatest orators in French history.

Andalayan songs with four octosyllabic verses, often used in flamenco.

Claudia Galen (51–201), Roman physician and philosopher.

Segismundo (Sigismund) is a character from Calderón de la Barca's Life Is a Dream. Dormirchen means "rose thorn," or the story of Briaz Rose, i.e., Sleeping Beauty.
189. In some contemporary versions of the Bible, the second book of Ezra (Ezdra) is called the Book of Nehemiah.
190. "They will speak all languages." In their last supper, the Holy Ghost granted the apostles the gift of tongues.
191. The correct phrase in Latin would be "erit humanum est ("to err is human."); The mistake shows how little true education Dámaso really has; the comic irony is that he is speaking about making mistakes.
192. An approximate, literal translation might be, "whoever has a mouth can write."
193. Dámaso is using a prompter to feed him lines, like in the theater.
194. Rizal is mimicking the Chinese pronunciation of /k/ and /p/.
195. The reference is to Matthew 18:18. "If thy right hand offends thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." The reference to fire comes later in the verse. Dámaso has become caught up in his own frenzy.
197. The correct Tagalog would be maa kapatid, or "my brothers (in Christ)."
198. Venerable Holy Patron.
199. An interjection akin to the Spanish ¡Caramba!
200. Another irony. The expression actually comes from a medieval Church address (in Latin) to convince adherents that Greek was unsuitable as a language of devotion: Gravamen est: Non poiet legere.
201. This plays on the fact that Tagalog has no true /f/ sound.
202. An honorific Filipinos often used for priests.
203. "Get lost!"
204. Someone who is condemned for all eternity.
206. A traditional Spanish saying: Inan Palomo: yo me lo guizo y yo me lo como.
207. According to Herodotus, the Spartan king Leonidas was killed during the Battle of Thermopylai as he led three hundred soldiers into a virtual suicide mission. (Herodotus, Historia, chapter 9).
208. Voltaire (1694–1778), French author. "We have never spent time with such people solely in order to get rich and then intimidate them."
209. Coiled pads of bamboo—a sort of trivet—on which to place a cooking pot.
210. The filaments of a fern used to make Philippine hats.
when it was rumored that during a siege in a Pisian tower in 1389, he devoured several people before he himself expired. He appears
in Dante’s Inferno, chapter 13, discussing his alleged crime.

236. Lask is a red and white cock. Talasian is a multicolored cock. Bâ-
lik is a black and white cock.

237. An elegant, covered, four-wheeled carriage, with small wheels in
the front and larger ones at the rear.

238. A mocking term for a pretentious Filipina who tries to pass as a so-
phisticated European.

oscuras golondrinas / en tu balcón sus nidos a colgar; / y otras vez
con el ala a sus cristales jugando, llamándonos.”

240. High-quality woods generally used for furniture and finish work.

241. Gaspar de San Agustín, an anti-Filipino Spanish Augustinian resi-
dent in the Philippines from the late seventeenth to the early eight-
teenth century, wrote Conquistas de las islas Filipinas (1698).

242. See note 201.

243. “You can tell a good day by its morning."

244. “Complete saint.”

245. “Frank-mason.” This is another instance of the lack of the clear f
sound in Tagalog.

246. “Being."

247. “And yet, still it moves.”

248. “I am a man and I consider nothing human to be alien to me.” Ter-
ence (ca. 190-159 B.C.), Roman playwright, Heauton timo-
roumenos (Self Tormentor), act I. [my translation].

249. “Close off the taps, boys.” From the final verse of Virgil’s Eclogue
III. The complete phrase is “claudite iam rivos, poeta, let prata
infernæ,” or “Shut off the taps, boys, they’re drunk enough.”

250. “For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any
thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.” Luke 8:17
(King James version).

251. A tall, fruit-bearing deciduous tree with branches close to the
ground (Sandoricum indicum).

252. “Let the victors beware!”

253. The naval battle of Salamis took place between the Greeks, led by
the general Themistocles, and the Persians, on September 28 and 29,
480 B.C., in the strait between the island of Salamis and the shore of
Athena. It is retold, most famously, in Anacharsis’ The Persians.

254. In Greek mythology, the goddess of maternal suffering.

255. Mal agriero is a bad omen. The term is often used as in the phrase
“a bird of ill-omen.”

256. Typhoons.

257. “Nature abhors a vacuum.”

258. Tagalog term of endearment for mother.

259. “What do I see?” “Why are you doing that?”

260. “But first, what do you want? Nothing exists in the mind that did
not first exist in the senses: nothing you have not experienced can
hurt you.”

261. “Among what people are we?”

262. “Ibarra’s uprising against the lieutenant of the Civil Guard de-
stroyed.”

263. “My friends, Plato is a friend, but truth is a greater friend!” “This
is bad business and I fear a terrible end.”

264. “For one who denies there are principles, one can only argue with
a stick.”

265. “Wee to them! Where there’s smoke there’s fire. One gets pleasures
from one’s own. Since they almost hanged Ibarra, soon they
will . . .”

266. “I’m not afraid of death in bed, but I am afraid of it on the scaffold
at Bagumbayan.”

267. “The written word will give proof. What medicine cannot cure,
steel can. What steel cannot cure, fire can.”

268. “Extreme measures in extreme circumstances.”

269. “Perfidious one, did you hope to save that, too?”

270. “You, into the flames of the kiln!” See note 252.

271. “Believe me, cousin . . . one sera, sera. We should thank God you
are not in the Marianas Islands planting sweet potatoes.” The
Marianas Islands are an archipelago east-southeast of the Philip-
ippines, very much isolated from the rest of humanity in the late
nineteenth century. They were often used as a place for Philippine
political exile.

272. In Castilian Spanish, all z’s and c’s before an i or e are pronounced
as a zh. In Andalusia, in southern Spain, less educated people often
drop the initial d.

273. Panakan was a section of Manil that supplied Zacate (fodder
grass) to the capital.

274. Tagalog for “wide rock.” The place where the Laguna de Bay and
the Pasig River come together that was used for the collection of
duty.

275. Town on the Laguna de Bay [now Rizal Province].


277. Ariadne, the daughter of King Minos of Crete, helped Theseus
escape from the labyrinth in which he was imprisoned, on the
condition that he marry her and take her to Athens. Instead, after emerging from the maze, he abandoned her on the island of Naxos.

278. Nola derives from the Tagalog *ina ko* ("mother mine") and is a Filipino cry of surprise. Susurriósep derives from "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" a cry of astonishment among Catholics.