

***PERSISTENCE UNTIL DEATH***  
**(LOPE DE VEGA)**

**Translation by:**

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**and**

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<sup>1</sup> Esta traducción al inglés de la obra de Lope se toma de *Porfiar hasta morir/Persistence until Death* de Antonio Cortijo Ocaña, Jessica Ernst y Erin M. Rebhan (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2003).

## Translators' Note

In translating Lope de Vega's *Porfiar hasta morir* into English, we used Antonio Cortijo Ocaña and Adelaida Cortijo Ocaña's Spanish edition, also included in this volume. However, we have departed from this text in two important ways. First, the Spanish edition used here does not contain scene divisions as it was uncommon in Golden Age Spanish Theater for playwrights to do so. However, for the English version, in keeping with the norms of classical English drama and in order to aid the reader, we have divided the play into scenes following those established in the 1930 edition of *Porfiar hasta morir* edited by Ángel Valbuena Prat. We have marked each scene with its corresponding verse numbers from the Cortijo and Cortijo edition. Secondly, in order to facilitate the English speaker's reading of the play, we have chosen to translate from verse to prose. Although prose in some respects diminishes the poetic value of the versed edition, we feel that the use of prose provides clarity of meaning as well as heightened textual coherence that would have been impossible had we been constrained by requisites of verse such as meter and rhyme. In all other respects, we have endeavored to stay faithful to the Spanish edition.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MACÍAS  
NUÑO, his comic servant  
THREE RUFFIANS  
MAESTRE OF SANTIAGO  
INNKEEPER  
TELLO DE MENDOZA  
FERNANDO  
PAEZ  
COUNTESS DOÑA JUANA  
CLARA, lady in waiting  
LEONOR, slave  
KING DON ENRIQUE III  
MAYOR  
MUSICIANS  
SOLDIERS  
SERVANTS  
ENTOURAGE

## Act 1

### Countryside with an exterior view of the market in Alcolea

#### Scene I [vv. 1-38]

*(Enter MACÍAS and NUÑO in traveling clothes, boots and spurs)*

MACÍAS: One who hopes to make his destination should not keep late nights or dally at parties. Is that the inn?

NUÑO: Yes, that's the Alcolea Inn.

MACÍAS: And that must be the famous bridge.

NUÑO: Yes, the one that everyone remembers because so many blindmen once crossed it. The first to cross was the oldman Don Beltrán.

MACÍAS: Love takes his name for he is blind and leads blindmen.

NUÑO: What kind of guide leads us to find flaws in every lover?

MACÍAS: That which guides us to the good and to the bad has but one name. We should move on even though you had hoped for some sleep.

NUÑO: Ah, the great Guadalquivir, clear as white wine!<sup>2</sup> Although in moments like these, I'd prefer a spot of red. What proud city walls, lined with orange and lemon trees! Just as over there in the solemn courts merchants display their fine garments, here these blessed innkeepers hang their doors with fish and birds. If the shad tempts you, stop to rest, Macías, God will give you strength. Although it seems late, we'll reach Córdoba by tonight.

MACÍAS: How far is it?

NUÑO: Two leagues.

MACÍAS: Already the day feels cooler, just being in Andalucía.

NUÑO: Well, I don't feel anything, by God! It's Bacchus alone that keeps me warm.

#### Scene II [vv. 39-64]

*(MACÍAS and NUÑO. Enter MAESTRE OF SANTIAGO who is returning from a hunt wearing a heavy cloak which covers the Cross. Enter THREE RUFFIANS who surround him)*

RUFFIAN 1: There's no use in trying to sweet-talk your way out of this one. As sure as there's water in the ocean, you'll part with your clothes or with your money.

MAESTRE: Look, I'm a nobleman.

RUFFIAN 2: We don't have to look at anything, we have to eat.

RUFFIAN 3: It's just like a courtier to gloat over his meal while he leaves us to starve.

MAESTRE: If I had eaten, it would not have been ill-mannered; but I have not. I requested only barley.

RUFFIAN 1: So you eat barley?

MAESTRE: I got lost while hunting in these hills, and here you find me.

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<sup>2</sup> We have adapted the sense of Spanish “¿Qué cristalino en limetas / yace el buen Guadalquivir!” (“The river Guadalquivir runs with water as clear as that of a water-pitcher”) in order to better make sense of the joke in English.

RUFFIAN 2: And now he'll have to find his way home on foot.

RUFFIAN 3: Good thing the land is flat!

MAESTRE: No, I will not because once my horse has eaten, I'll go straightaway.

RUFFIAN 1: Give up your cloak, courtier.

MAESTRE: I demand that you leave at once.

RUFFIAN 1: I said, give it up!

MAESTRE: Well then, ruffians, chickens, now you'll see who I am.

MACÍAS: And you'll have two men by your side.

NUÑO: Two men who are as brave as Roland's soldiers.

*(They stab the RUFFIANS)*

**Scene III** [vv. 65-82]

*(RUFFIANS, MAESTRE, MACÍAS and NUÑO. Enter INNKEEPER)*

INNKEEPER: *(From inside)* Come here, Gil, they're killing each other! *(Goes outside)*  
Stop! Stop!

*(The RUFFIANS flee)*

MACÍAS: The thieves are fleeing.

MAESTRE: Like the wind!

INNKEEPER: May God repay you for chasing those ruffians from the inn. They have caused a world of grief to me and my customers.

NUÑO: One of them ran off howling because I shaved his head and split his scalp. Did they leave women?

INNKEEPER: Of course. There are two harlots here.

NUÑO: I'd like to whip 'em open!

INNKEEPER: I could do it better for they've discredited my inn.

NUÑO: Blessed Innkeeper!

*(Exit INNKEEPER)*

**Scene IV** [vv. 83-121]

*(MAESTRE, MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

MAESTRE: As an honorable gentleman, I wish to thank you sincerely for having helped me, as I was alone.

MACÍAS: On the contrary, sir, I suspect that I may have dishonored you, for, although there were three of them, they were not nobleman.

MAESTRE: Are you going to Córdoba?

MACÍAS: Yes.

MAESTRE: If it would so please you, I could perhaps be of some service.

MACÍAS: It is obvious that you are of noble rank. How is it that you came to be here?

MAESTRE: While hunting, I lost my way among the oaks. I saw that my horse was exhausted and I remembered this inn. When I arrived, they gave my horse barley. I came upon the fire where those ruffians, accompanied by such deserving women, cooked their food. I would have kindly given them some money or gold pieces but, faced with such vile characters, I forgot my decorum. Everything that happened afterwards, you

witnessed. I remain in your debt. But now that my horse has eaten, I must take my leave. I hope this diamond will be of use to you.

(MAESTRE *extends a ring to MACÍAS, who refuses it*)

MACÍAS: It has been my good fortune to serve you on this occasion. Keep the ring, for you might have the opportunity to reward me later in court.

MAESTRE: God be with you.

MACÍAS: And with you, sir.

(Exit MAESTRE)

**Scene V** [vv. 122-46]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

NUÑO: How odd that you didn't ask who he was.

MACÍAS: I didn't ask because, having been a student, I know that I can profit more in peaceful encounters than in conflict. But enough about that, if we weren't in such a hurry we could talk from here to Córdoba about my personal affairs, which I would rather enjoy.

NUÑO: I'm not sure that giving up your studies and your homeland was the right decision, but it's done.

MACÍAS: Perhaps you're right, but I feel that the sword is closer to my heart than are my studies...I might take advantage of these letters that I carry to ensure my position in the war...Or I may try my luck in the Court to exercise my intellect.

NUÑO: Your wit is matched by your might, sir. In war and in peace you are able and courageous.

**Scene VI** [vv. 147-86]

(TELLO DE MENDOZA, FERNANDO *and* PAEZ. MACÍAS *and* NUÑO, *walking towards them*)

TELLO: It would be foolhardy to keep looking for him.

FERNANDO: And especially here, for how can these travelers know of his whereabouts?

TELLO: Going to Córdoba without him seems foolish, Fernando. Ah, kind sirs! By chance, did you come across a gentleman wearing a bright cloak, black and straw-colored feathers, and silver spurs, with a black-maned sorrel carrying gold and green saddlebags?

MACÍAS: One who matches that description precisely just left the inn. If you care to, go quickly and you could still catch him. But, who, in the name of God, is he?

TELLO: The Maestre of Santiago. His cloak was covering the blood-red cross that graces his noble breast.

MACÍAS: My God, what dreadful luck! We spoke and I didn't even realize that it was him. Worse, I am bringing this packet of letters for him from Castile!

TELLO: Calm yourself, man. It would have been impertinent to give him the letters while on the road. Besides, when the Maestre spurs that horse, no one can catch him. Come with us and you will be certain to give him the letters in his home.

MACÍAS: By your advice, sir, I can see that you are a gentleman. I will join you if you would grant me permission.

TELLO: Paez...

PAEZ: Sir...

TELLO: Lead the way.

*(Exit TELLO, FERNANDO and PAEZ)*

**Scene VII** [vv. 187-96]

(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Can you believe that I didn't recognize the Maestre?

NUÑO: You should feel fortunate, for your brave deed has secured you a place in his favor. And I even think that he is fond of me for having stabbed that thieving ruffian. He's already lying in his grave.

*(Exit MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

**A room in the Maestre's house in Córdoba**

**Scene VIII** [vv.197-212]

(COUNTESS DOÑA JUANA *and* CLARA)

COUNTESS: My lord, the Maestre, has never tarried so long.

CLARA: Love does make one impatient; it never rests from worry.

COUNTESS: War and hunting are so much the same. In her soul, love fears them both. And so, when he goes to hunt, my peace and calm desert me, just as when he goes to war.

CLARA: It is wrong to equate the hunt, that contrived war, with a real and true battle.

COUNTESS: Clara, the memory that you awake disturbs me.

**Scene IX** [vv. 213-48]

(COUNTESS DOÑA JUANA *and* CLARA. *Enter* MAESTRE)

MAESTRE: I have returned. And so much faster, as I was alone.

COUNTESS: Alone, Maestre! What is this?

MAESTRE: I got lost, Countess, and it wasn't without peril. But I met with danger not where I was lost, but rather just two leagues from here where I encountered certain rogues who tested my valor.

COUNTESS: If the Moors don't frighten you, why do thieves? I wasn't worrying for naught.

MAESTRE: A brave gentleman came to my aid just in time.

COUNTESS: Did you give him a reward?

MAESTRE: He didn't want it and it weighs upon me. I tried to give him a diamond as he was in noble dress. In his deeds he proved valiant and skillful.

COUNTESS: You let him go without reward? Why didn't you insist?

MAESTRE: Because the diamond is yours.

COUNTESS: You could have brought him with you and I would be grateful that he defended your life, which is my life as well. Believe me that I would be pleased and even thankful if any of my possessions should save your life.

MAESTRE: He is coming to court and I expect to see him in the palace where I can pay him and fulfill your wish.

**Scene X** [vv. 249-84]

(COUNTESS DOÑA JUANA, CLARA *and* MAESTRE. *Enter* TELLO, MACÍAS, FERNANDO, PAEZ *and* NUÑO)

TELLO: Judge for yourself, my lord, how greatly you worried us as the white daybreak crowned the black night with her circles of light. But when the sun, adorned with her crown, lightened the mountains and warmed the valleys, we came to the inn and the bridge that contains the fierce currents of the Guadalquivir. There we had news from this gentleman that you had returned to Córdoba.

MAESTRE: You've done well to bring him.

MACÍAS: My service to you was truly improvised and may have been of little value. However, sir, my fate saw to it that you would be satisfied with my intervention. Please accept these letters and grant them favor as you have my actions.

(MACÍAS *hands the MAESTRE a packet of letters*)

COUNTESS: Is it you, good sir, who provided such a fine service to the Maestre?

MACÍAS: I humbly bow at your feet, noble lady.

COUNTESS: You deserved more than he gave you for your good deed. Take this gold chain.

MACÍAS: You imprison me with this chain, but coming from such beautiful hands, I will gladly subject myself to such a gilded prison.

MAESTRE: (*He reads from the letter*) "Macías, the most honorable of my vassals, will give this letter to Your Lordship. He left his studies to pursue the art of war, to which I believe he is inclined. I beg that he might join with you under your flag, as he is worthy of your favor. I vouch for his service and gratitude. - Don Luis Álvarez de Toledo." Where is my cousin now?

MACÍAS: He is in Alba, illuminated by two suns.

MAESTRE: I respect the author as well as the bearer of this letter. You will stay in my service and already I consider you my friend.

MACÍAS: I am your slave, sir.

COUNTESS: You may also count me among your supporters.

MACÍAS: My lady, I could hope for nothing better.

COUNTESS: I look forward to it.

(*Exit MAESTRE and COUNTESS, TELLO, FERNANDO and PAEZ*)

**Scene XI** [vv. 285-351]

(MACÍAS, CLARA *and* NUÑO)

CLARA: I am from Castile and, as I gather from the letter, so are you. I stayed here to inquire after some of my relatives.

MACÍAS: Where do they live?

CLARA: In Barco de Ávila.

MACÍAS: The Lord of Toledo, also called the Lord of Valdecorneja, holds Barco among his most prominent cities. I have never been there for I had always imagined that the homeland of the angels was in Heaven and not on Earth. But, being that you are from Barco, there must be a boat to Heaven just as there is, as the poets say, for the souls that



go to Hell. Those who are blessed by your grace will be taken to Heaven; those who suffer your disdain will go to Hell.

CLARA: So, you haven't been there?

MACÍAS: Such has not been my luck, but I have been there through your eyes.

CLARA: If you have left your studies for the battlefield, how is it that you are so softhearted?

MACÍAS: Because the sword doesn't stand in the way of my soul's ability to appreciate your beauty. Because such rare beauty entrances even the most heroic figures who have amazed the world with their astonishing deeds. Look only as far as the Holy Book and you'll see Samson defeated, or consider Hercules in the writings of the Greeks and the Romans.

CLARA: Love can conquer, hold and enslave everyone under Heaven and its passion is unequalled. But its power is not so great that it can cause, like a meteor, such effect in an instant.

MACÍAS: If love's effect weren't so sudden, Cupid's arrows would not be so swift.

CLARA: I believe that love obeys the Humors; the choleric type falls in love quickly, which is not necessarily better, while the phlegmatic type takes his time, but invariably his love endures.

MACÍAS: Well, all of those qualities meet in me: cholera for swiftness, phlegm for endurance. As the soul is immortal, I will have the life of the soul.

CLARA: I beg that you not try, for your designs have come too late. May God be with you.

MACÍAS: Tell me your name.

CLARA: Clara.

MACÍAS: Oh, Clara!...Oh, light!

NUÑO: (*Aside*) Oh, darkness!

MACÍAS: Oh, what beauty!

(*Exit CLARA*)

**Scene XII** [vv. 352-403]

(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

NUÑO: Oh, what stupidity! And so much so that I feel obliged to tell you. You've just come to this house today and already you've fallen in love.

MACÍAS: What did you expect? Is there any passion more rash than love? When a sane man goes mad, his mind is instantly turned upside down and he begins to do crazy things.

NUÑO: In this, sir, you are fooling yourself. In some sense, madness and poetry are bound together. A young man writes two ballads to his lady and from there he moves on to the sonnet, later to the *canzone*, and then to the pastoral novel. So when he finally achieves fame and is declared a poet, which is no small misfortune, he says that he is Virgil or Homer and he disdains all others who write, and this path leads him to insanity. First, he puts away his hat and cloak and then, if they haven't already taken it from him, he furiously draws his sword. And when he has lost his mind entirely, he claims to be king or monarch, star or sun and he even deigns to be one of the sacred deities. And you, who in seeing a woman, unleash such a string of nonsense, to which line of madmen do

you belong? Ah, yes, now I remember! I had forgotten, Macías, that you are a poet. How foolish to flatter her at first sight with such romantic blather! Because she was from Barco, you started out with the black boat of Charon. The only thing you left out was a bad Orpheus metaphor! Then you moved on to Samson and the rest. She left so irritated that I'm sure you'll never see her again.

MACÍAS: Well, I plan to love her.

NUÑO: To love her?

MACÍAS: All the days of my life.

**Scene XIII** [vv. 404-74]  
(MACÍAS and NUÑO. *Enter TELLO*)

TELLO: The Maestre, my master, has sent me to help you settle in. Come and I'll show you your quarters.

MACÍAS: Are they in the palace?

TELLO: Well, is that important if you are to work here?

MACÍAS: Listen to me, sir, and I will explain. I saw, in the moment I set foot here, the brightest, most exquisite gem, a beauty that astonishes even Mother Nature, who should try to emulate in other women what She has accomplished in this jewel. I saw her in the dawn's clear rays of pure light, before the Sun, her rival, found her among the jasmine and the carnations. I saw an angel, more beautiful than the clear pool in which Diana bathed, and I would have lost myself had she thrown an arrow from her hair; and not because her neck is not pure white as snow itself, but rather because she, honest although disdainful, could kill love itself with love. Finally, I saw weapons made beautiful by love, more lovely than those created by Apelles and the famous Protopogenes; eyebrows as bows and eyes as arrows. At last my soul has found refuge in her heart, in whose blessed celestial center I shall find either my reward or my perdition, and the man I was is gone and a new man takes his place. She told me, opening the heavens with two roses, that her name is Clara, and if names describe those who possess them, her name clearly signifies clarity. Now that I have illustrated her many beautiful qualities, although my love alone should have sufficed, I beg you, please tell me who she is so that I might serve her and adore her honestly.

TELLO: Macías, sir, that fine lady who serves my lady, the Countess, has a reputation as an honest gentlewoman and all of her actions reflect her virtue. A gentleman, who loves her and has let it be publicly known, serves her now and hopes to marry her. And she, although virtuous, returns his favor. In the time that two springs and two summers have been painted by the golden lines of the sun, he has shown great spirit, while always maintaining his propriety, in both court galas and in battle. With spoils of war, he has sought to endear himself to her and to oblige her to esteem his perseverance. The Maestre and my lady, the Countess, have plans for them to marry and have granted him permission to fight in her name in the admirable tournaments that take place in this land. If love has blinded you, let me be your guide, and I shall advise you that you must relent, for surely a love so new could not be truly important. This lady who you love is indeed a rare beauty. Your affections can be excused, for she is lovely. She is Clara, and so that it be even clearer, it is Tello de Mendoza who serves her.

MACÍAS: Well, now that you have told me who she is, tell me, who is Tello de Mendoza?

TELLO: You don't know?

MACÍAS: I'd like to know so that I might envy him.

TELLO: I am Tello.

**Scene XIV** [vv. 475-566]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Have you ever heard of a worse predicament than mine?

NUÑO: It's always terrible, sir, to see that your crazy love will amount to naught. Now that you know that she is spoken for, your madness must cease.

MACÍAS: Ah, Nuño, in the face of such beauty, the soul foretells of fire. I already know that my heart awaits a great many trials, but it is not this that has caused me to lose my power of reason. Tell me, what love has never faced any obstacle or been thrown to chance?

NUÑO: So, even though you've been warned, you still intend to love Clara?

MACÍAS: Was it not her betrothed who issued the warning?

NUÑO: You either have really terrible luck or you simply understand nothing. You've come here to serve and already you've begun to cause trouble for he who could help you.

MACÍAS: Nuño, I'm out of my mind.

NUÑO: The first thing a servant must do is win the confidence of his master. How do you expect to do that by causing him misfortune? The first to conquer the lover is the maidservant, the flatterer the entrance, the scribe the claimant and the suitor the butler. So much so that Orpheus was turned away by Cerberus for not having brought a gift and Jason couldn't take the golden apples as treasure from Dragontea's orchard without having pleased Medea. Would it not be foolish for a foreigner, upon arriving in a new place, to speak ill of its citizens when he could have had them as his allies? I have never seen such arrogant men prosper. They say that the crab, who could once walk forwards, decided one day to go into the sea, smugly boasting that he would out-swim the whales. Jupiter, who saw his arrogance from the shore, said: "Arrogant crab, I decree that from this day on, you will walk backwards when trying to go forwards."

MACÍAS: Nuño, everybody knows, as you say, that when starting out in a new place it is prudent to put your best foot forward.

NUÑO: Tell me then, if you believe that it is stupid for a stranger to act in such a manner, how can you even think of offending Tello? Tello, who has offered you entrance! How do you expect to enter if you close that door?

MACÍAS: Oh, heavens! I have been struck by both love and jealousy. I don't know what is to become of me.

NUÑO: What a typical love-struck poet! Love fairly courses through the poet's veins.

MACÍAS: I am undone justly, and just is my undoing. With my lot, I am content, for my love for you is matched only by your worthiness.

NUÑO: Now you're composing songs?

MACÍAS: I should elaborate on this one and you can take it to her.

NUÑO: Sure, we'll both get rich with this plan. I'll go first. "I serve such a..."

MACÍAS: Go on.

NUÑO: "...servant, just is my undoing."  
 (*Exit MACÍAS and NUÑO*)

### **Room in the royal palace**

**Scene XV** [vv. 567-607]  
 (*Enter KING with his entourage and MAESTRE*)

KING: Does the Moor dare to defy me, forgetting his decorum and his fear of the Castilian army?

MAESTRE: When you, great sir, raise your Christian flags and wave the golden castle and the blood-thirsty lion, he will return to Granada repentant for having drawn his sword against you, unless my sword reaches him first or he dies trampled by my soldiers. Since he dared to come so close to our gates he will now die just as far from the Elvira Door.

KING: Can you believe that he dared to break the truce? I'm ashamed for having accepted it and for having stopped in Córdoba for so long. Fly the banners and flags bearing crosses, castles and lions, the very symbols disdained by the Moor. This time I will inflict such vengeful punishment that the Genil River will see its sleepy bed of lilies and reeds changed into a barbaric torrent of red water.

MAESTRE: Sir, you would be holding him in high esteem were you to go in person. I beg you to permit me to temper your fury. I will go with my men, my servants shall be soldiers in this army though I would venture to say that even this is to honor him in excess.

KING: Do you not see that I hear his voice from here? His fanfare of drums and trumpets is annoying me!

MAESTRE: You will subdue those drums and trumpets without leaving Córdoba.

KING: I trust that your courage will triumph.  
 (*Exit KING and entourage*)

MAESTRE: Tello, go and alert my men.

TELLO: In no time you will have an armed squadron who will bring the victorious sword to crown the walls of Granada.

(*Exit MAESTRE and TELLO*)

### **Room in the Maestre's house**

**Scene XVI** [vv. 608-73]  
 (NUÑO and LEONOR, *slave*)

LEONOR: In just two days Macías is so smitten?

NUÑO: If you knew him as a poet, you'd understand that for him days are like years. I serve him but, by God, I've lost the patience to listen to any more of his nonsense.

LEONOR: You two are so different.

NUÑO: Do you wish that I would recite love poems?

LEONOR: Do I not deserve them?

NUÑO: I would recite them gladly.

LEONOR: Well, I no longer want them.

NUÑO: Wait, listen. In those brand marks, Leonor, that serve as your birth marks, love has chained all of my sorrows for they are emblems of love and of my forced exile...

LEONOR: Stop there! Though I have perfections, you have praised my faults and admired my misfortune.

NUÑO: I began with your defects for it is said that only meek men extol perfections. A one-eyed woman once told her beau: "You don't love me, for you always praise my mouth, be it opened or closed, and my perfect hair, but never my forehead and eyes. I believe that one who loves must praise imperfections. It's given that one's graces be praised, but why not pay my unfortunate blind-eye a compliment, which it so deserves. Even though it cannot see, praise this unfortunate eye because it is very graceful in its blindness."

LEONOR: Well now, you are a rogue. No more snide humor. What of that note from Macías?

NUÑO: Wait, here it is.

LEONOR: Don't think that Clara will accept it if it's not in verse.

NUÑO: I saw him writing.

LEONOR: What does it matter that you saw him?

NUÑO: I saw the gestures that he made.

LEONOR: Gestures! What strange inspiration!

NUÑO: And between each line he chewed one-and-a-half fingernails.

LEONOR: If he writes like that, he must not be a natural.

NUÑO: Once, although I shouldn't have, I spied a false poet wearing glasses composing on a small table in his bed. His eyes and mouth had a certain palsy while he labored through a verse, without the help of a midwife, and I would wager that it pained my mother less to give birth to me.

LEONOR: Clara is coming. Go at once.

NUÑO: Here's the note. Good-bye.

*(He gives her the note and exits)*

**Scene XVII** [vv. 674-89]

*(CLARA and LEONOR)*

CLARA: The two of you in conversation! Leonor, was it an honest meeting?

LEONOR: That lunatic gave me a note with some verses from Macías.

CLARA: Is that how you passed the time?

LEONOR: Since that nobleman has fallen in love with you all he does is talk about you. Do you want me to speak to him?

CLARA: Are those the verses?

LEONOR: Yes, he is extremely witty.

CLARA: Show me.

LEONOR: So eager! Is this a sign that your honesty is wavering?

CLARA: But Leonor, what woman would not wish to hear her praises?

LEONOR: Hide it! Tello has arrived.

**Scene XVIII** [vv. 689-711]

*(CLARA and LEONOR. Enter TELLO)*

TELLO: I regret to be the first to bring you news of a brief absence.

CLARA: What do you mean, Tello, a brief absence?

TELLO: Well, what is more brief than right away?

CLARA: Where are you going?

TELLO: To war. The King must defend the borders from Almanzor, the King of Granada, who has daringly defied them. The Maestre has beseeched the King to allow his company to receive the brunt of the attack and the King has agreed. He has just bid farewell to the Countess, oh Clara, and now I must follow his example, which is no consolation at all. The drums and trumpets are sounding; the palace is in an uproar. Everything is war, but for me, love is the greatest war.

*(Exit TELLO)*

**Scene XIX** [vv. 712-45]

(MAESTRE, COUNTESS, CLARA, MACÍAS, LEONOR, NUÑO, FERNANDO *and* PAEZ)

MAESTRE: One who is so accustomed to my actions and deeds now questions them because of a bad omen! Is absence a novelty in my home? Has it been so long since I returned from the war of Antequera? I can't avoid leaving.

COUNTESS: It isn't fair, but my feelings are not new to you.

MAESTRE: It pains me to see you upset.

COUNTESS: The soldiers you take are of your liking?

MAESTRE: No man who does not equal Hector, Achilles or Caesar will fight under my flag. I am taking men from my own house: Tello, Fernando, Esteban, Álvaro, Fortún, Paez, Ramiro, Sancho de Biedma and other noble vassals.

MACÍAS: And me sir, do you not count me among your men?

MAESTRE: As you were raised in the study of letters, are you equally prepared for arms?

MACÍAS: Letters are fit for governors, but who says that Plato isn't as fit for the sword as Alexander?

MAESTRE: Come with me and you shall see that I award he who fights. One cannot become a soldier wandering the palace hallways.

*(Exit MAESTRE and COUNTESS with their attendants. PAEZ and FERNANDO follow)*

**Scene XX** [vv. 746-77]

(MACÍAS, CLARA, LEONOR *and* NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Listen, my lady.

CLARA: How may I be of service?

MACÍAS: I am going to the war for you.

CLARA: Have you nothing else to say?

MACÍAS: Well I could but no one can understand me. I loved you from the moment I saw you with such pure and honest faith that for you I would gladly die a thousand times over. If you want my life, it shall be yours. And, even if you don't want it, it is no longer

possible for my soul to live without you. Give me, my lady, a token to serve as a soul while mine remains here with you. I promise on a nobleman's honor that, although it may cost me my life, I will not return from the war without spoils. I will carry you in my heart and you will be my inspiration. What do say you? What are you thinking about?

CLARA: Some time ago, when I belonged to myself, I would have returned your love, but now I cannot, for I belong to another. My lady, the Countess, intends to see me married to Tello, and although she has said nothing to me, it is enough just to know that she is arranging the wedding for me to obey her. Believe me, on a noblewoman's honor, that I would have returned your love for you deserve it. But please accept that I cannot.

*(Exit CLARA and LEONOR)*

**Scene XXI** [vv. 778-819]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Ah, Nuño. I'm lost.

NUÑO: Well, what could you have possibly lost? Wasn't that the solution of a discreet woman? Aren't you content knowing that your desire pleases her? She already belongs to Tello. What do you expect from her?

MACÍAS: What does it matter that he loves her? Does my love disappear because she says that she belongs to another? If she were to give me a potion that would cause me to loathe her, I could stop loving her, even if she were more beautiful. But if what she says leads me even more into love, and now jealousy feeds the fire, how can I forget her?

NUÑO: Just imagine the man that is to be her husband! It doesn't make sense to challenge a man of such valor.

MACÍAS: What holy blessing does this man have, you twit? Allow me to worship her while she is still without a master.

NUÑO: And then when he has her?

MACÍAS: Then I will love her all the more, for nothing better fuels love than its own impossibility. Oh, to be barred from the door of one's beloved whose love is enjoyed by another!

NUÑO: I would love her a good deal more if it were I who enjoyed her.

MACÍAS: What vulgar impertinence! What a vile thought!

NUÑO: By God, if it is freezing and I'm on the street and there's a lady awaiting inside in her bed, I would rather have a blanket than a thousand balconies and ladders.

## Act 2

### The vestibule of the palace

#### Scene I [vv. 820-31]

*(Drums are heard in the background. Enter, dressed as soldiers and with a proud demeanor, PAEZ, FERNANDO, TELLO, NUÑO, MACÍAS and MAESTRE)*

TELLO: All of Córdoba is awed by your victory, sir.

MAESTRE: The enemy must always retreat when faced with great bravery.

FERNANDO: How quickly the Moor found his way back to Granada!

TELLO: You are like a Castilian Caesar: you came, you saw, you conquered! No matter how I might try, it would be impossible to praise you enough.

PAEZ: It is high praise indeed that the King comes in person to receive you.

#### Scene II [vv. 832-1047]

*(PAEZ, FERNANDO, TELLO, NUÑO, MACÍAS and MAESTRE. Enter KING with his entourage)*

KING: Let me embrace you, Maestre.

MAESTRE: Your majesty!

KING: Your bravery is praise-worthy and should be publicly applauded. I won't ask how you are for your victory speaks for itself. Today you have brought great glory to your Order for your victory has surely struck the Moors with fear and will no doubt put an end to their advances. It has pleased me as much to see the Moor flee the battlefield as it would to see our flag flying in the Alhambra.

MAESTRE: August prince, what you praise is but a wish to offer you the world as a trophy. These soldiers have shown such valor that they well-deserve your praise. Tello de Mendoza is my steward and I assure you that his bravura could bring down the walls of Granada. Fortún Paez and Fernando Girón proved that they have inherited the blood and bravery of the Goths. But I swear that in all my days as a soldier, I have never seen a man fight better than this gentleman from Castile who has so recently come into my service. In all my life, I have never seen such a strong and valiant man nor such a gallant and spirited warrior. Such are his merits that I dare say I owe the victory to him.

MACÍAS: Your Majesty, as a soldier following the Maestre's example, it was easy to bravely defeat a thousand Moors just by imitating him. As a new recruit, I went only with the hope of beginning my service to you.

KING: I can see that what you say of him is true.

MACÍAS: If I have one ounce of inspiration, valor and spirit, although it may seem to come from me, in truth it derives solely from my master.

KING: How eloquent and courteous! Ask me, young man, any favor.

MACÍAS: Just to kiss your royal feet would be the greatest favor imaginable. But if Your Highness wishes to honor such a humble servant, I beg that you would consent to speak with me in private.

KING: Certainly, for it is only right that I be grateful to he who serves me.

*(Exit all but KING and MACÍAS)*



MACÍAS: Illustrious King Enrique, descendent of the Goth Kings, restorer of Spain's lost laurel! You, who so resemble the divine Pelayo, promise a fortunate end to what he so gloriously began. I am Macías, a gentleman of the good people who descended from the mountain to Castile. Although it is supposed that one whose good birth is a gift from Heaven deserves praise, I believe that one's good works make him worthy of admiration as well. The University of Palencia, so eminent at this time, afforded me enough knowledge to know something of the Law. But I, who have always found more pleasure in variety, preferred Rhetoric and Poetry. As a young man, I enjoyed composing love poems, for youth is the soul of poetry. For various reasons, I was forced to leave my homeland; I thought of the court, as would any young man leaving his home. I brought letters from the Duke of Alba and gave them to the Maestre. He received me in his service and it is my hope that through this service Heaven will increase your glory and your red flags will fly as far as Morocco, for you are endowed with valor and intelligence which do not waver in the face of ordinary human trials. The Countess, Doña Juana, descendent of the great House of Lara, whose fame equals her virtue, has in her service a lady, who, if you will excuse my poetry, is a heavenly seraph. Carefully, and without its usual haste, Nature crafted her in reds and whites, rivaling Lysippus' skill as a sculptor and Apelles' as a painter. Excuse me once again, sir, if my wild words exceed the boundaries of respect that are due to a king. Her name is Clara and compared to her face the sun shines darkly. She took my soul and without it, how can I live? The travails of love had me in such a state that I was happy that the Moors advanced so daringly and I went to war hoping for death. But death never comes to he who seeks it, but rather to those who are careless. I swear on Your Majesty's life that, as far as I can remember, I had never had the opportunity to draw a sword until I saw the Moors. But love, who makes men brave, gave me such spirit and valor that I became worthy to fight for the Maestre. I don't believe that a fierce North wind in November could whip the dry leaves from the elm with more violence and fury than I did with the heads of the Moors. And this is easy to believe, for the power of love makes all things possible. Since you have requested that I ask a favor of you, I shall do so with the same humility as if I were praying to God. I ask that you order the Maestre to give Clara as my wife, for I would treasure her more than all the gold in the Orient. For love, who dwells in the kingdom of the soul, does not yearn for earthly treasures. In doing me this good turn, sir, you will demonstrate your power, for in having her I live, and in losing her I die.

KING: I am glad to have heard you, for, as a man, I have proven a compassionate judge of men. You are excused, sir. Maestre?

MAESTRE: Sir.

KING: This soldier has asked me to request a favor of you.

MAESTRE: Sir, with such a grand intermediary, how could I refuse?

KING: Give him Clara for a wife.

MAESTRE: The Countess has already given her to my steward and they are betrothed.

KING: Alas.

MAESTRE: I will see that they do not marry.

KING: If I stand in the way, I will have to answer to God.

MAESTRE: This is true.

KING: Macías?

MACÍAS: Sir.

KING: This lady is already betrothed, the contract has already been drawn.

MACÍAS: Oh, sir, how unlucky I am.

KING: I will pay for what I have promised with a Cross of Santiago, which you have earned with your valor. Maestre?

MAESTRE: Sir.

KING: Give this gentleman the Cloak on my behalf, for I am well pleased with his merits.

MAESTRE: As King you may give and take away as you please, but be assured that no one has ever so clearly deserved the Cloak as Macías.

*(Exit all but MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

**Scene III** [vv. 1048-1151]  
(MACÍAS and NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Nuño, who could possibly have worse luck than I? My day of doom has come; Clara will not be my wife. I don't know what to do, hopeless as I am, for when there is no hope whatsoever Fortune is deprived of its power. Poor me! Oh life, with Clara lost, what good are you? You are so full of torments that you are more like death than life. While I clung to a hope and to the memory of her, you inspired victory, but had I known that I would lose her, I would have died gloriously on the battlefield. Tello de Mendoza, oh heavens! Is he to enjoy what should have been mine? How could my love and my jealousy be so intertwined? They are like fire and ice which torment me, and though I neither freeze nor burn, it is possible that the rivalry of love and jealousy is the only joy for the joyless lover.

NUÑO: Your feelings are a poor measure of your wit and good judgment. What an unfounded lament when they have granted you what you wished for! Your payment is of substance and the Cross is testimony to its greatness. Instead of making you a husband, they have made you a Knight of Santiago. The only difference would be, if you'll excuse my bluntness, fighting with the Moors or with your own wife. The former is a blood red sword and the later a martyr's crown; the first is the soul's calling and the second is the toil of the day-to-day. In all seriousness, who am I to judge between a knight and a married man? But in imitation of the Cloak's Red Cross, husbands must wear their crosses over their hearts. That he should feed his love lends light and life to a husband's honor, for some husbands carry their crosses upon their backs. Husbands, do as the soldier and wear your Crosses on your chest, and you shall see that that which burdens you the most will become light in your soul.

MACÍAS: What does your speech have to do with me, Nuño? In fact, I am in a better position than you to decide if wives are their husbands' crosses or not. Just as a Cross is placed on the tomb of a knight, the King has bestowed a Cross upon me, for he kills me by denying me Clara. If jealousy can be any consolation for love, let's go see her while I am still alive. Since tears console jealousy, I should lay my eyes upon the object of my weeping, for there is no greater sorrow than in seeing another's delight.

NUÑO: You are not as unlucky as you imagine, nor is Tello so fortunate to be her husband. Although he seems to be the lucky one, I am sure that after only a few days with Clara, Tello would gladly exchange his Cross for yours. In observing others, it is clear that there are few possessions that one doesn't come to scorn, no matter how much

they may delight him at first. I wager that if you were to eat only partridge and capon everyday you would soon crave fried onion and cold beef. Do you think that a wife is as much a goddess to her husband as she is to her admirers?

MACÍAS: What stupidity! How can love diminish in quality, provided the woman is discreet?

NUÑO: I meant if a wife reveals her flaws after she gets married. But I know that if a wife is discreet, tidy and even-tempered she shall be her husband's crown.

### **Room in the Maestre's house**

#### **Scene IV** [vv. 1152-65] (COUNTESS, CLARA *and* LEONOR)

COUNTESS: I would like you to wear this dress tonight.

CLARA: I kiss your feet, but your favor is excessive.

COUNTESS: It is not excessive to love you; I want for you to dress in this way. Here, take this sash and necklace as well, along with my congratulations. Given that God's will and the Maestre's wish are one and the same, it is only fitting that the Maestre should be so pleased by what the heavens have ordained for you. His wish has been to arrange for your good fortune. Tello de Mendoza is among the best Castilian gentlemen.

#### **Scene V** [vv. 1166-87] (COUNTESS, CLARA *and* LEONOR. *Enter* FERNANDO *and* PAEZ)

FERNANDO: By God, she is a beautiful woman.

PAEZ: From Toledo to Seville there isn't a woman with such beauty and wit.

FERNANDO: Clara is meant for Tello.

COUNTESS: (*Aside to CLARA*) Everyone rejoices in your union. Thanks be to God!

FERNANDO: I can't sleep for worrying about how I'll afford to compete in the tournament.

PAEZ: Why don't you sell two Moor slaves to pay for your costume?

FERNANDO: We've brought so many that two together are not even worth thirty reales.

PAEZ: Look for slaves from good families so that we can sell them back for ransom.

FERNANDO: (*nodding towards CLARA*) Who will fight for her in the tournament?

PAEZ: Tello will.

FERNANDO: They said it would be Macías.

PAEZ: I don't know why Macías, who is so favored, is so sad these days.

FERNANDO: He must be homesick.

PAEZ: I'm going to sell a Moor.

FERNANDO: Sell him to a merchant for silk and gold.

#### **Scene VI** [vv. 1188-1229] (COUNTESS, CLARA *and* LEONOR)

COUNTESS: Your wedding festivities have the house in an uproar, Clara.

CLARA: I feel so loved; everyone is so happy to see me marry such a noble gentleman.

COUNTESS: They rejoice even more for his good luck in marrying you. You should write to your parents.

CLARA: With your permission, I will write to them now.

COUNTESS: Clara, live happily and God will grant you good fortune.

CLARA: Oh, great lady! I am your slave.

COUNTESS: You deserve every happiness.

CLARA: Leonor, my friend, give me a quill and some paper.

LEONOR: I hope you'll be happy for a thousand years with Tello, my lord and your beloved husband, and that you shall never feel the pains of misfortune. But even though I was the first to give you the good news of your marriage, you haven't even paid me with kind words.

CLARA: Leonor, I have left you all of my gowns since from now on, my lady wants me to wear hers. Since you were given to Tello and you converted to our faith right away, I was reluctant, mistakenly, to give you your freedom. But I give it to you now.

LEONOR: I kiss your feet a thousand times. Well then, my lady, you are offering me my freedom?

CLARA: You belong to yourself.

LEONOR: So, I may give myself to whomever I choose?

CLARA: As you belong to yourself, you may.

LEONOR: Even if I am really free, my soul has nevertheless decided to return to her previous owner. As your slave, I was not obliged to appreciate you, but if I return to you after being freed, I am more mine being yours.

CLARA: That would be to make me your slave, Leonor.

### Scene VII [vv. 1230-89]

(CLARA and LEONOR. Enter MACÍAS and NUÑO)

MACÍAS: May I congratulate you on your happiness and on my death, beautiful Clara?

CLARA: I believe that my happiness well deserves it.

MACÍAS: Who could deny that your happiness deserves congratulations? What is strange is that my death should also deserve it. The King wished to grant me a favor in exchange for the services I rendered him. I asked for you, the greatest favor of all. The King told the Maestre that I was worthy of you but the Maestre responded that you were already betrothed. Oh lord! The King, upon seeing that you, Clara, would not be the prize for my services, ordered the Maestre to honor me with the Cloak of Santiago. And honor me he has, but more like one honors the dead, for dead I am. I don't know how to even talk to you, for it has always been foolish to speak of sad things to happy people. For you to marry and for me to die are such different things that neither one who lives nor one who dies can reconcile them. But between your good luck and my misfortune only one thing is possible, and I don't want you to think that it is hope, for I am not that ill-mannered.

CLARA: Well then, what is it that you want, being that it is such an honorable thing?

MACÍAS: That you should pity me.

CLARA: Is that all?

MACÍAS: Good Lord, yes! To ask you to suffer would be terribly impolite.

CLARA: Well, noble gentleman, be forewarned. Not only have you made me suffer by loving me, but I suffer knowing that if I were not already married I would be yours for all eternity. But I say this provided that you do not even hope or dare to persist in loving me any other way, for the day that this happens, I myself will tell my husband, a man as honorable as he is brave, to take your life.

MACÍAS: Do not be afraid, I will not stop loving you in my own way.

CLARA: How?

MACÍAS: Ideally and nothing else. I will love you without disgracing you.

*(Exit CLARA and LEONOR)*

**Scene VIII** [vv. 1290-1337]

*(MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

NUÑO: For God's sake! What a woman! And a real woman this is who says what she feels, unlike those who pretend to be prudish but who are really devious. Her lips, April roses in the snow, pronounced with such grace: "If I were not already married I would be yours for all eternity!"

MACÍAS: And what she said afterwards means nothing? That if I merely hope or dare to love her more than ideally, she would tell her own husband, a man as honorable as he is brave, to take my life.

NUÑO: She spoke nobly and justly in order to stop you. I respect a woman who appreciates love and guards her honor, unlike those merciless women who like to flirt and break mens' hearts just to catch a rich husband. Macías, there is nothing left to do but to bury your love, since you yourself say that you are dead.

MACÍAS: Get it straight, Nuño, and be advised that your advice is useless! From today on, I serve Clara.

NUÑO: What do you hope to gain? How will her husband, the Countess and the Maestre feel? If you persist in this foolishness, which is bound to be discovered, what is to become of you and of me?

MACÍAS: I can't love her?

NUÑO: You can.

MACÍAS: Is to love her a crime?

NUÑO: No.

MACÍAS: Do I offend her?

NUÑO: You do not.

MACÍAS: Well then, what does it matter?

NUÑO: You'll lose.

MACÍAS: What will I lose?

NUÑO: Time.

MACÍAS: Am I not already dying for her love?

NUÑO: This is madness.

MACÍAS: I confess it is.

NUÑO: Don't confess.

MACÍAS: What will I do?

NUÑO: Stop doing it.

MACÍAS: And who could?

NUÑO: You could, if you wanted to.

MACÍAS: I want to and I can't.

NUÑO: Persist!

MACÍAS: For God's sake Nuño, leave me alone; for death is the only outcome for one who is tired of living.

### Room in the royal palace

#### Scene IX [vv. 1338-1417]

(KING, *holding a book*, and MAESTRE)

MAESTRE: He has proved his letter's claim of his noble birth.

KING: I am as content with his intellect as you are with his sword. But, has Macías really written this entire book?

MAESTRE: Since I married off Clara, he has been showing the tenderness of a man in love, writing various poems, ballads and *canzone*, but they all seem to be dedicated to his misfortune in having lost her.

KING: If you had allowed them to marry all of these verses would have been lost.

MAESTRE: How so, sir?

KING: Because a love possessed doesn't desire and there is no better inspiration for poetry than an unrequited love or the hope of its fulfillment.

MAESTRE: Few write so well.

KING: He is extremely talented. Spaniards have a keen gift for poetry.

MAESTRE: That Your Highness holds it in such esteem will ensure that Spain will once again have poetry that equals that of a thousand Senecas and Martials.

KING: In Spain, such original themes in love poetry are inspired not by history or by other's verses, but by the personal experience of love's effects. It is said that no nation so esteems, loves and adores its women over land, fame and even life itself.

MAESTRE: The luxurious dresses and gold that they are given are proof.

KING: They are loved and served with great modesty, as is only becoming of women born so beautiful, perfect and rare. Read me the dedication that Macías has written to me.

MAESTRE: If it pleases you, your opinions of Macías will be confirmed. "To the very powerful King of Castile, the great descendant of Magno Pelayo, Spain's jewel and the bane of Africa, a bloody sword for the brave Moors who were loyal to Granada and Seville just as in the time of the Goths. Macías places these verses at your feet and humbly kneels before you."

KING: What a marvelous dedication!

MAESTRE: Just like the man to whom it is dedicated.

KING: By God, read me a love poem!

MAESTRE: (*Reads*) My love for her granted me the crown of love,  
 and now my name is on everyone's lips;  
 But the pain of loving was no less great  
 even when suffering gave me pleasure.  
 Its sweet errors overcome my judgment,  
 but they do not last forever for they later subside;

and, because they wounded me with the pain that they cause you,  
learn to unlove love, lovers.

KING: How excellent and how exemplary! Maestre, truly you should esteem this man.

MAESTRE: Who could be a better judge of his excellence than you? But he errs in his persistence because Clara is already betrothed.

KING: Were he not so distracted by the Moors, we would have even more brilliant poetry.

*(Exit MAESTRE and KING)*

### **Room in the Maestre's house**

**Scene X** [vv. 1418-1565]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

NUÑO: What kind of idiocy is this? Have you no brains?

MACÍAS: From what I have seen and heard, I have lost.

NUÑO: It's obvious. Why did you go to the wedding party knowing that it would upset you?

MACÍAS: Nuño, what choice did I have as they told me to accompany the bridegroom? But, despite my disillusion, can I stop dying for her love? Under the cover of night, such a perfect cloak for any of love's effects, I entered with the groom. I had gone pale as a man on his way to fight a duel. With my spirit battered by so many sorrows I didn't recognize my unruly heart as my own. I arrived, I turned back, I trembled, confusion ensnared my feet. Then my heart took over my feet and I looked, I felt lost, I cried. And finally I came to be in such a state that all of my mad and misplaced feelings began looking for comfort where, alas, there is so little. It seemed to me that I was not seeing what I was really seeing, nor was I hearing what I truly heard, but rather what I imagined. Have you never seen a fire? Thus did my soul burn, and then my reason, completely blinded, furiously demanded evermore water from my crying eyes to quench the flames. As with the cold red light of dawn a rose opens her petals to drink the dew, such was my beloved, that divine fury, so beautiful that a Spaniard could adore her as an Aztec would worship the sun. Had God not invented garnets and diamonds Nature still would have found such colors in the pearls of her teeth and in the rubies of her lips; and had the sun not been created, it could be found in her beautiful eyes; and were there no red carnations, the Heavens would see them in her; and if jealousy were unknown, it could be discovered in my anger. She left her quarters accompanied by the Countess, the groom arrived, more joyous than nervous, and with his Godfather at his side. The room fell silent. The Godfather stepped forward and taking their hands –Heavens! How can I yet live after seeing it with my own eyes?– he asked Tello, alas, if he accepted her as his wife. He said yes, and still I lived, for the other yes was still lacking. Then he asked Clara –until then I had waited with insane hope as if I had a noose around my neck– and I heard my sentence. The disillusion that is my executioner threw me from the stool. I don't know how I survived. Who would believe that I found her ugly when she said yes? But, perhaps, I did not understand why. She must have been beautiful Nuño, for things are always more beautiful when they are about to be lost. Nuño, imagine what a crazy thought I had! I entertained the idea of objecting to their marriage, but as I was thinking

it, the priest gave his blessing and Tello took Clara to the banquet, where, sitting surrounded by their guests, they cursed the creeping of time, while I hoped that it would never end. It must have been two in the morning and I feared they were about to leave for the music and dancing had ended. Oh Lord! The approaching moment of their sweet kisses and embraces was killing me. For if she killed me giving her hand to Tello, what would I do when she gave him both in an impassioned embrace?

NUÑO: Tello isn't as lucky as he seems to you. Isn't he, after all, a husband?

MACÍAS: And could he be any luckier?

NUÑO: By God, I don't know. Doesn't he have to stay at home?

MACÍAS: Well, where should he be?

NUÑO: Women are worthy of being loved and revered. But clearly, being obliged to stay at home every minute is less appealing.

MACÍAS: If only that were my predicament.

NUÑO: Although from the looks of it, there are women who, newly married, want the novelty of the night to last throughout the day. But, within a year they become as inanimate as a chair, a bench or a writing table. So much for novelty!

MACÍAS: Not for a man who has found a woman both discreet and beautiful.

NUÑO: So novelty means nothing, eh? Today I saw an old hag with a mouth full of teeth who, when I first met her, had none. I said to her, "What a disgusting thing! You were missing twelve pearls so you replaced them with this marble imposter!" And she responded, "I didn't lose my teeth, it's just that I'd had them for so long, that just for novelty's sake, I traded them in for these chompers." But, come over here. I think that they are coming.

*(They move to one side covering their faces)*

MACÍAS: All the Heavens are conspiring against me, Nuño.

### Scene XI [vv. 1566-79]

*(Pages carrying axes, PAEZ, FERNANDO, TELLO, holding the hand of CLARA, COUNTESS, and MAESTRE)*

TELLO: I beg you Madam, do not accompany us any further.

CLARA: My lady, you've done enough. You should not have to come any further.

COUNTESS: Alright then, may the Heavens protect you and grant you good fortune.

MAESTRE: Clara, I could not have honored you with a more gallant husband.

CLARA: Nor could you have done me a greater favor. I kiss your hand a thousand times!

FERNANDO: *(Aside)* Good Lord Paez, I am envious!

PAEZ: What a beautiful woman!

FERNANDO: She is like an angel.

*(The newlyweds exit to one side and MAESTRE and COUNTESS exit to the other.)*

### Scene XII [vv. 1580-1712]

*(MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

NUÑO: They are going off to bed. You can let down your cloak. We should go to bed since you no longer have Clara to wait for, unless you want to be up all night. Have you



nothing to say? But don't speak if it's going to be only complaints or seven thousand foolish lamentations repeated by lovers like that famous poem, "Do Not Enjoy the Newlywed." Let's go home, for it's late and tomorrow is the tournament where you will get to be a lady's defender. Rumor has it that you are valiant, a good poet, and an innovator of fashion in the eyes of the courtesans, and so, you'll have to be gallantly dressed and produce excellent verse.

MACÍAS: Oh, what unsteady fortunes on the sea of love in which I float like a ship, battered by the winds!

NUÑO: Let's go and don't stop walking.

MACÍAS: How can I go?

NUÑO: Well, can you not walk and talk at the same time? In a play on the day of Corpus Christi, an actor said: "I want to destroy the world." And as he was saying this, the parade arrived, and although he had only been acting, a policeman said: "You can destroy while you walk, Juan Sánchez!" Now you, complain while you walk.

MACÍAS: I plan to complain standing right here. I can't move under the weight of so much misfortune.

NUÑO: You are like a hunting dog on point who sees a partridge. Listen, the bells of forty churches announce laudes.

MACÍAS: Oh Nuño, tell the bells to toll for death, for I am dying. Oh jealousy, envies of love, if I don't die, kill me! Or do you want me to kill myself? Leave me alone, imagination, you who paint such images inside my mind, images that both burn and chill me. I can see Tello de Mendoza in the form of Mars whispering sweet nothings to her. I can see the beautiful fair skinned Clara, a Venus lying among the flowers of a green meadow. I can see two thousand Cupids in the branches of the willows, sprinkling orange blossoms and roses upon the tender lovers. Nuño, do you know what I am thinking? I want you to knock loudly and tell him that the Maestre wants him to get up. Do me this favor, Nuño, my friend.

NUÑO: Poor solutions are like drops of water in a blacksmith's furnace; they only fuel the flames. And this man is not so stupid as to think that the Maestre is calling him on such a morning.

MACÍAS: It won't work? I think it will, for he knows that powerful lords don't care about anyone when they need something.

NUÑO: What could possibly justify calling him at this unlikely hour? We can't tell him that the Countess is suffering from her monthly curse, for he doesn't cure such ailments. And besides, Clara could say from her bed: "Servant, burn some partridge feathers and if that doesn't work, prepare her a cold compress". And as for the Maestre, he has no problem pissing, does he?

MACÍAS: How comforting!

NUÑO: If you have a better idea, say it, for already the dawn's orange-blossom-rays are slicing like knives over the mountain peaks of Córdoba.

MACÍAS: Tell him that the Moors have come.

NUÑO: For what?

MACÍAS: What do you mean for what? For vengeance.

NUÑO: Well, since it's so early, I thought that they might be setting up to sell their wares in the streets. And if he asks where they are coming from?

MACÍAS: Tell him from Ecija.

NUÑO: And if he says that they can't arrive so quickly because Ecija is eight long leagues away, and in the meantime, His Lordship will sleep, what will we do then?

MACÍAS: Knock on the door. It would be revenge enough if you were to wake Tello.

NUÑO: Stupidity of stupidities. Do you think that Tello is sleeping when he has that angel at his side?

MACÍAS: May God curse you, Nuño, for you have killed me!

NUÑO: You never give up! Look, you're at his door and the dawn is laughing at your madness and the birds are singing of it.

MACÍAS: Is it possible that you don't want to rouse him from his bed?

NUÑO: Do you want the groom to catch a cold for nothing? Look, sir, day is dawning.

MACÍAS: Let it dawn along with my soul's thousand sorrows!

NUÑO: People are stirring inside and opening the doors. Where are those hunters going with their dogs and falcons in tow? My God, it's the Maestre! You can't flee now, it would make him suspicious.

**Scene XIII** [vv. 1713-33]

(MACÍAS and NUÑO. Enter MAESTRE, in hunting clothes, FERNANDO and PAEZ)

MACÍAS: There is no misfortune that hasn't befallen me!

MAESTRE: It is Macías?

FERNANDO: Yes sir, if the dawn doesn't deceive me.

MAESTRE: Why have you gotten up so early?

MACÍAS: I've come to accompany you since I knew you would be going hunting.

MAESTRE: It will be more pleasant with your company. Take the dappled mare, unless you've brought a horse, and give a mule to Nuño.

NUÑO: A mule? I didn't sleep at all and now a mule to go looking for a deer among the trees and bushes or for a heron flying through the air! I'm dead!

MAESTRE: Let's go, Macías.

NUÑO: Aren't you bringing lunch, Paez?

PAEZ: You just got out of bed and already you want to eat!

NUÑO: May God never curse anyone with such a terrible night! Do they plan to come back soon?

PAEZ: In the afternoon.

## Act 3

### Room in the royal palace

#### Scene I [vv. 1734-1867]

(KING, PAEZ, FERNANDO, MACÍAS, *wearing the Cloak of Santiago*, and NUÑO)

MACÍAS: The Maestre sends me to kiss your feet, sir, to express the gratitude that I feel on this blessed day for the honor that I carry upon my chest which is all the greater because it is undeserved.

KING: The Maestre sent you here under that pretense because I wanted to see you. Besides, it is to him that you owe this favor. He is the author of this honor; it is not right to credit me with more than intercession and goodwill.

MACÍAS: May heaven extend your influence to uncharted territories, and may your heir erect the Pillars of Hercules at the gates to an unknown world.

KING: How goes it with the muses?

MACÍAS: Clearly, the conflict of inopportune jealousies has vanquished them, but not so much that they no longer celebrate you in their sweet song. These days, a poet seeking fame hopes that his first verses will surpass those already consecrated in bronze and diamond. Other poets claim to teach, but are themselves ignorant of poetic principle. These poets all lack prudence.

KING: Who proved himself in the tournament? I did not see the pageant for I was occupied that afternoon, but the Maestre praised a soldier whose every deed demonstrated the valor of his wit, elegance and sword-play. Who fought for her?

MACÍAS: The newlywed himself, for love, more than art, lends agility to the sword.

KING: How exceptional!

MACÍAS: (*Aside*) Oh, sweet cause of my suffering! (*To the King*) Tello came out victoriously dressed in a white cloak embroidered with laurels. He is a tireless lover who has captured the object of his desire. With the golden ring secured on his lance, his spirit rivaled his confidence. His cloak, draped over his shoulders, swept the ground like a proud comet streaking the sky. I swear, Your Grace, that on his spirited mount, a sorrel plated in armor, he looked like a solid edifice, if an edifice in motion could be built. That magnificent horse's hooves hammered the ground with such insistent rhythm that the stones thought he was beating a well-tuned drum. Two giant men, led by a cherub, were his squires. The boy carried a banner emblazoned with Tello's motto: "My desires". Tello proved himself worthy of such an emblem for, given that he enjoys Clara's serene love, he wanted to show that marriage does not temper desire but rather fuels it. Fortún Paez wore a cloak of green and silver, embroidered with flowers. His motto was a complaint to a disdainful lover: "Wishes are not always granted." His mount was a dark bay, swift as a ball of fire and, although Cordovan horses are sons of the wind, this one was faster than thought. Fernando, who you see here, appeared dressed in a cloak of gold and mother-of-pearl, covered in tiny mirrors. His costume was an attempt, not to give advice, but rather to reflect upon his own experience in love. The ladies, shocked by this display, saw themselves reflected from afar. And, in honor of the mirrors and of his failed two-year romance, his motto was: "My disillusion." Then suddenly, encircled by a thousand burning comets, a knight, Don Diego de Lara, burst forth from a fire-vomiting

volcano. Dejected, he asked for a lance. Two celestial banners carried his motto: “Jealousy condemns me to hell.” Dionís Peralta, clad in white as a godlike Apollo, appeared on the field riding a horse dressed as a fierce serpent. Suddenly, in mid-gallop, the serpent shed its skin. Underneath was a horse so white and beautiful that it could have been a swan carved in snow. Recaredo entered, feathered like an ostrich, with an iron bit in his mouth. No doubt repenting some blunder, his motto read: “Let’s see if I can swallow it.” The horse, also adorned with feathers, and in a show of support for Recaredo, reared, bringing his iron-clad front hooves to his own bit. But surely you’d rather hear about me. I myself came out dressed as *Orlando Furioso* in a black French cloak adorned with vicious serpents intertwined in the shape of hearts. You could easily see that, as in Angelica’s story, I was jealous of Medoro, the fortunate master of the light which I adore. I rode a horse so black that it could have pulled the Night’s Chariot. His coat was an ebony so lustrous that it reflected the golden light of the sun. He galloped across the arena so sure and swift that his hooves barely touched the ground. Dressed as Astolfo, my squire Nuño went before me carrying my brain in a crystal goblet and the words of my motto: “I don’t want it anymore.” Everyone involved in the pageant gained something. I, a fortune-seeker without fortune, won the crowd’s approval for the best ensemble, but it means nothing for I lost the only true reward: to be her husband.

KING: I would have liked to have seen you, but it is enough to hear you tell it.

MACÍAS: I competed under such duress that it is little wonder that I lost at the joust.

KING: Forget that memory; it will pain you less with the thousand ducats you will receive as mayor of Arjona.

MACÍAS: May your name be praised everywhere that God’s light shines upon the earth.

(Exit KING)

PAEZ: Now you are the mayor of Arjona.

FERNANDO: You owe the King your highest regard.

(Exit FERNANDO and PAEZ)

## Scene II [vv. 1868-81]

(MACÍAS and NUÑO)

NUÑO: Forgive me, sir, but you’ve been foolish. Given that Clara is married, you should have dropped that way of speaking. Tello is an honorable man and you offend his honor. And the King showed his discontent and issued you a discreet warning when he said: “Forget that memory.”

MACÍAS: Nuño, make me stop loving, because otherwise there is no fear in the world that could make me act prudently.

(Exit NUÑO and MACÍAS)

## Room in the Maestre’s house

### Scene III [vv. 1882-1985]

(MAESTRE and TELLO)

MAESTRE: You can speak to me freely here.

TELLO: Sir, God knows that I am ashamed, but now that I am here and speaking with such a heavy heart, I know that you will agree with me. It is true that a just cause obliges me to tell you that since Clara is already my wife, no other man should serve her. Before I took her hand, Macías could have wooed her, but now, what is it that he intends, committing the same error with such foolish persistence? A fiancé may forgive such errors, but a husband cannot. I well know that Clara is honorable and virtuous, but a persistent bother, a stubborn will, and an ever-present love who reveals his heart through his eyes have caused many good women to falter. Who can promise to live honorably and securely under such a threat? Did God encircle the eyes of a woman with a moat and walls? What guards did He put in her heart so that my honor could remain undaunted even while under attack? Is will unbreakable like a diamond, or is it more like glass that can be shattered no matter how carefully it is guarded? Must I be complacent while he is wide awake? I cannot guard a soul that I can't see. How do I know that a day won't come that Clara's beauty will wane, and the persistence of a mad love will move her so that, trampling upon her honor, she might begin to love out of pity, a pity which will certainly lead to my dishonor? What is more, is it right, sir, that a man trusted by you and by the King should dare to stain my honor? Is it proper that the children of Córdoba sing out clear songs of Clara that appall men of honor and prudence? And is it right that this should continue even after I am married?

MAESTRE: No, of course not, Tello, nor is right that it be said of Clara that she gave rise to such great madness.

TELLO: If you order him to drop the pretension without telling him that I know, I know that he will. But should he give me cause...

MAESTRE: Don't worry. If he gives you cause, I will punish him.

TELLO: You well know that one's honor should not hang in the balance nor is it right that a paltry nobleman should take such license at the cost of my prudence and cause such a stir in the court. Nor that he should dare to serve the wife of a gentleman such as myself because first...

MAESTRE: Don't even say it for you are right and it pains me to hear it. Malicious rumors could be spread about even the most honorable woman, and there are many who have suffered this fate. There are many virtuous women whose honor has been damaged because they were pursued, and when their honor becomes the stuff of rumor, their good names are sullied by the foolishness of men and the jealousy of women. Clara is who she is but, in the end, rumors are such that they can speak ill even of an angel.

TELLO: Speaking to him will put an end to his persistence and to my burden.

MAESTRE: And I will make sure of it.

TELLO: I put my honor in your hands.

MAESTRE: I know well how to protect it.

*(Exit TELLO)*

**Scene IV** [vv. 1986-89]

*(MAESTRE and PAEZ)*

MAESTRE: *(Enter PAEZ)* Hello!

PAEZ: Sir...

MAESTRE: Is Macías here?

PAEZ: He's reading poetry.

MAESTRE: (*Aside*) He won't have another chance. Tell him to come here.

(*Exit PAEZ*)

**Scene V** [vv. 1990-2047]  
(MACÍAS *and* MAESTRE)

MACÍAS: I thought you were busy with Tello so I didn't come to tell you of a great favor the King has done for me.

MAESTRE: Ah, is that why you have stopped telling me of your accomplishments?

MACÍAS: His Highness, owing not to my merit but to his abundant greatness, has made me the Mayor of Arjona, with a salary of one thousand ducats.

MAESTRE: And well deserved!

MACÍAS: It was not because of me, but rather because of you, that he has so honored me.

MAESTRE: I need to speak with you.

MACÍAS: I am at your disposal.

MAESTRE: I have an issue with you, and not without reason. When you came to serve me you set your eyes upon one of the Countess' maidservants, as beautiful as she is discreet, and as virtuous as she is noble. The Countess gave her to the most honorable man in my service, who has proved himself both in peace and in war. In exchange for your services, you asked the King for her, which seemed fair, and so the King decreed that you should marry her. But it wasn't possible, for the contract had been drawn and they were already betrothed; to separate them would have been an act of violence and impiety. Tello was married, and on that day decency closed the door on your hope. It is not right that you so foolishly maintain that hope, for it jeopardizes the noble honor of a man who is as fine and as good as myself. I have been told that you have not ceased to pursue her, and this has caused me great sorrow. Tello is my trusted vassal; do not dare to anger him, for his honor is protected in my house. It is not that he is insecure, but his family complains about your verses, which are famous for the excellence of your wit and have been celebrated not only here, but as far as Granada where the Moors translate them into their tongue. You are intelligent enough to understand what I tell you: if Tello should become aware of your offense, he will not stand for it.

(*Exit MAESTRE*)

**Scene VI** [vv. 2048-61]  
(MACÍAS)

MACÍAS: Oh, what confusion of love's deceptions! This is the only torment I had yet to suffer. How could my verse offend Clara, when she is the cause of my condemnation? Oh, cruel law! Oh, unjust disillusion! Does he want me to not feel the pain that I'm feeling? How can my poetry deprive Tello of his honor, when my verses are simply a lyric consolation for my pain? To order me not to love her is the greatest violence that can be inflicted upon me, for to see Clara, but without hope, would be torture. Suffering as I am, from lost love, resistance would only strengthen that love, for there is no swift forgetfulness for a love so great.

**Scene VII** [vv. 2062-2165]  
(NUÑO *and* MACÍAS)

NUÑO: You can congratulate me. Springtime was on her way to brighten the waters of the Betis, and to bring life to the flowers on its banks. And the sun, shining brightly, tried to equal the majesty of the Spring. And Clara...

MACÍAS: Oh Lord!

NUÑO: Clara and Leonor were in a carriage, surrounded in a sphere of light, leaving a glowing trail in their path. Clara's eyes could have been stars on the most temperate night. No, I've not done them justice: they could have been suns of the sun itself. She looked at me, and it was a new thing altogether to be seen by eyes so intense; they appeared closer to me than they were. Leonor also looked at me, and you can't imagine the arrows that flew from her eyes to my soul. It seemed they were signs, and so I approached them.

MACÍAS: You did well.

NUÑO: So well, that when I got close to them, they drew that silk curtain and slapped me right on the nose.

MACÍAS: Given that you were so close to the carriage, does it surprise you that an angel would take offense at a human who would dare to draw so near to her divine throne?

NUÑO: Throne or no throne, my nose, which did not bleed pearls, felt the disservice. For there is no body part that is more sensitive, more at odds with any buffet, more delicate or more touchy. Is my nose broken?

MACÍAS: Nuño, what extraordinary tales you have for me! What did you feel when, leaning towards the carriage, your fortunate head came in contact with her divine lily-white hand?

NUÑO: I felt what you would feel if your nose came in contact with a lily-white stone.

MACÍAS: Oh, who could be so lucky to have received such a favor from that beautiful, crystalline, mother-of-pearl hand!

NUÑO: You call that a favor! But so that you'll envy me even more, I followed them, and watched as they climbed down from the carriage in the first orchard. As Clara descended, and I don't know if it was out of zeal or hurry, I saw...

MACÍAS: Before you tell me, how much do you want for your eyes, Nuño?

NUÑO: You want me to sell you my eyes, sir?

MACÍAS: Tell me! Tell me what you saw!

NUÑO: I saw the coachman's ordinary leather boots as he came to help Clara down.

MACÍAS: That's it?

NUÑO: Of course, what did you think? That they were Cordovan slippers, plated in gold and silver, and embossed with hearts and arrows? And did you really think that I'd have gotten flustered even if it had been some fancy material?

MACÍAS: I no longer wish to purchase your eyes.

NUÑO: If you wanted my nose, I'd sell it to you, for a good slap would make even the most aquiline of noses snub.

MACÍAS: How fortunate is the coachman whose arms would reach out without fear to an angel!

NUÑO: If you were to see a water carrier dressed in a suit of coarse cloth grab a lady and jump into the riding seat with her, what would you say?

MACÍAS: That's innocent love!

NUÑO: Coachmen and water carriers are like sacristans who set up religious idols but never pray to them.

MACÍAS: Could I see Clara?

NUÑO: With discretion, you could, but not without it.

MACÍAS: Nuño, what bad could come to me if I see her? And even if bad does come of it, isn't it all for her? What could be a higher glory than such sweet pain?

NUÑO: If we get close to them I'll cover my nose with a falcon hood.

MACÍAS: Does Clara offend you?

NUÑO: She slaps smartly!

*(Exit MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

### Garden on the shores of the Guadalquivir

#### Scene VIII [vv. 2166-2201]

*(CLARA and LEONOR)*

CLARA: I can't imagine the reason, my dear Leonor.

LEONOR: So soon, and already he's unhappy!

CLARA: I never thought that his new state would cause him such sadness. He is not lacking in favors or gifts; love finds him at night and wakes him in the morning.

LEONOR: Well then, why is he so sad?

CLARA: Because of some worry.

LEONOR: Worry?

CLARA: Sighs escape from his burning chest which pierce my soul like shots to a bull's-eye. I suspect that some mad jealousy is the cause of his sadness and sleeplessness.

LEONOR: How could he be disturbed by jealousy, when you are so devoted to him and when your honesty and virtue are so well known?

CLARA: Jealousy is a trick of the mind. As one who walks on a dark night until the break of day, so is the jealous lover who walks through his blind fantasy until the light of reason awakens him from his deception. Meanwhile, it is the object of his adoration who suffers.

LEONOR: I know for certain that your innocent soul is not guilty of dishonor, but in loving, one is obliged to feel both sadness and worry.

#### Scene IX [vv. 2202-72]

*(CLARA and LEONOR. Enter MACÍAS and NUÑO)*

NUÑO: *(Aside to Macías)* There they are.

MACÍAS: I've already seen them. But how am I to get to them?

NUÑO: Come back here!

MACÍAS: I can't. *(Aside)* What a beautiful marble statue I'm out to conquer! But why do I hesitate when I long for her so? My fears are warranted, yet my madness propels



me. To fear is foolish, for he who passes up an opportunity rarely thanks his good fortune. (*To Clara*) Oh beautiful Clara, the sole inspiration for my poetry and my pain, light with your beautiful eyes the darkness of my confusion. The only prize my insane love requests is to know that in your heart you pitied my obsession, for then I may die knowing that my love was not in vain. Please, listen to me, I want nothing more from you than to hear you say: “Good man, it pains me to see you in such a state.” Look how easy it would be for you to ease my torment! You well know that my intention is not to offend your honor, for your honor is the reason I dare to love you.

CLARA: Macías, when you told me how much you were suffering for having lost me, I felt obliged to thank you for it. That should be enough for a gentleman of your worth. Abandon your hopes, for you cannot love me without compromising my honor. He who cares not for his beloved’s name, does not truly love her; he loves only himself. You are discreet, and it is not just that I must be held as the subject of your verses. Stop writing, for it upsets my husband, and it is not right that you gain renown as a poet at my expense. Your love songs and your devotion only cause me tears. Write of war, Macías, and stop writing of love. Aren’t those enemy flags a better topic? Instead of serving me you bother me, and remember that married women lose their reputations when they are celebrated in poetry. An honorable woman will esteem herself knowing not that she was beautiful, but rather that she was chaste. Do you think, perchance, that your verses will appeal to my vanity? Such foolish deceptions! Write of your own disillusion and not of my disdain for you.

MACÍAS: My lady, listen to me...

**Scene X** [vv. 2273-93]

(CLARA, LEONOR, MACÍAS and NUÑO. TELLO, who after seeing MACÍAS, hides behind a tree)

TELLO: (*Aside*) What is this that I’m seeing?

CLARA: What good is it to persist in courting your own death?

(*Exit CLARA*)

MACÍAS: I didn’t mean to offend you. Leonor! Leonor!

LEONOR: There is no Leonor here.

(*Exit LEONOR*)

NUÑO: You’ve been foolish, sir.

MACÍAS: How can a man in love keep his wits about him when he is bound to the woman who rejects him?

NUÑO: (*Aside to Macías*) I saw Tello hiding among those trees.

MACÍAS: Surely he is with the Maestre, who often comes here. Did he see me?

NUÑO: I think so. Come over here, sir.

MACÍAS: Let’s go see the carriage instead.

NUÑO: You’re mad!

MACÍAS: While I still draw breath, don’t expect anything but my love-struck ranting.

(*Exit MACÍAS and NUÑO*)

TELLO: The suffering that puts my honor in doubt has become unbearable.

(*Draws his sword*)

**Scene XI** [vv. 2294-2319]  
(MAESTRE *and* TELLO)

MAESTRE: Where are you going with your sword drawn?

TELLO: I intend to cut down a tree.

MAESTRE: Are you trying to fool me? I know you have already seen Macías.

TELLO: I told you of his persistence, placing my honor in your care. But his celebrity, sir, has caused you to disregard my honor. Had you spoken with him, he would not have dared to defame me. After witnessing his audacity, I was on my way to kill him.

MAESTRE: I spoke with Macías, and, as I imagined that he was a man of reason, I thought it would be sufficient. But it was not, for not even my scolding could temper his stubborn affliction. Come with me.

TELLO: Forgive me, I assumed that you had not spoken with him.

MAESTRE: I am angry.

TELLO: I put my faith in you.

MAESTRE: His affront to you is minor compared with his insult to my honor, for one who disobeys his master does not deserve favor.

**Room in the Maestre's house**

**Scene XII** [vv. 2320-55]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO)

MACÍAS: Has the Maestre arrived?

NUÑO: I don't know. The Countess is waiting.

MACÍAS: And I am waiting without hope, for my faithful love persists with such misfortune.

NUÑO: One who could have stopped loving her, but who still insists on dying for her, does not have the luxury to complain about his luck.

MACÍAS: How can I suffer the pain of forgetting when I want to remember?

NUÑO: By understanding that it won't last long.

MACÍAS: I could not have the patience to live in her absence, Nuño, without losing my mind.

NUÑO: Once a man's molars complained to Jupiter, saying to His Greatness, that after so many years of chewing the man yanked them out just because they pained him one day. Jupiter scolded him and the man responded: "What should I have done when they ached so badly?" To which Jupiter replied: "Suffer, good man, for pain is your lot for now, but you can bear it. Later you will rejoice at seeing your molars in your mouth." Let your will suffer this small unpleasantness now, because later you will delight in your freedom.

**Scene XIII** [vv. 2356-73]  
(MACÍAS *and* NUÑO. PAEZ *and* MAYOR)

PAEZ: Macías...

MACÍAS: Who is it?

PAEZ: It's me.

MACÍAS: What do you want, Paez?

PAEZ: Be advised that they have sent me to seize you.

MACÍAS: Who has?

PAEZ: The Maestre.

MACÍAS: The Maestre is my master and my judge. If he has ordered it, Paez, then so be it. Did he tell you the reason?

PAEZ: No.

MACÍAS: Let's go.

PAEZ: The mayor is on his way to lock you in the tower.

*(Enter MAYOR)*

MAYOR: This is harder for me than it is for you.

MACÍAS: Don't feel bad, Don Pedro. These swings of fortune are beyond your control.

NUÑO: You, in prison!

MACÍAS: Silence, Nuño! For it is the servant who disobeys his master who deserves this punishment.

*(Exit)*

**Scene XIV** [vv. 2374-2431]

*(TELLO and CLARA)*

TELLO: I am certain of your honesty as well as your valor, but the liberties that Macías has taken with you, oblige me to examine my honor. You shouldn't feel alarmed by my behavior in this matter, for until now, I did not seek vengeance out of respect for the Maestre. Had it not been for him, I would have sought my revenge a long time ago. It is a great thing for a husband to know that other men admire his wife as long as that admiration is respectable and does not stain his honor. But, he who knows for certain that he has been affronted, yet knowingly consents to it, is neither a man nor an animal, for even animals avenge such insults. More than any other nation, the Spaniard's valor is founded on other's esteem and this esteem stems from a Spaniard's honor, especially when it comes to women. Clearly then, Spain must be the most honorable nation of all.

CLARA: Tello, it has been my misfortune that this foolish man has insisted on being so boldly persistent. But in his persistence he has not dared more than to profess his thoughts to me, though he knows his aspirations are hopeless.

TELLO: Well then, what does he hope for if capturing his love is as impossible as imprisoning the air?

CLARA: Just the vanity of having the perfect theme for love songs.

TELLO: Is my honor always to be tied to his freedom? Who has ever seen such stubborn will in a discreet man? If it is only for poetic effect, why does my wife have to be the subject? Is there a dearth of subjects in this world?

CLARA: I well know that your honor depends on mine. My only consolation is to know that you do not doubt my honor, for I do not deserve otherwise despite my being the subject of Macías' poetry.

TELLO: Your masters are coming. Don't discuss this with the Countess.

CLARA: What she already knows weighs upon me, but she is sure of my honor.

**Scene XV** [vv. 2432-57](TELLO *and* CLARA. COUNTESS, MAESTRE, PAEZ, FERNANDO *and* SERVANTS)

COUNTESS: I well know that valor obliges you to undertake this venture. When will you go?

MAESTRE: There is no sense in going before the soldiers arrive from Castile.

COUNTESS: You will lead them bravely. Do not take Tello for he is already married.

TELLO: I will not cease to be a soldier unless that is what you command.

COUNTESS: Take Paez, Fernando or Macías instead of Tello.

MAESTRE: I have put Macías in prison, for it is some time now that a matter of honor hangs a sword of Damocles over his head.

TELLO: (*Aside to Clara*) For the love of God! They hold him in such esteem that he hasn't been imprisoned to preserve my honor, but rather to protect him from me.

CLARA: On your life, do not say such a thing.

TELLO: Clara, everything has become clear to me.

COUNTESS: Macías is in prison?

MAESTRE: (*Aside to the Countess*) It is the best way to protect him. In prison he will surely forget her.

FERNANDO: The musicians from Archidona are here, sir.

**Scene XVI** [vv. 2458-76](TELLO, CLARA, COUNTESS, MAESTRE, PAEZ, FERNANDO *and* SERVANTS.  
*Enter* MUSICIANS)

MUSICIANS: The Mayor has sent us to perform for you.

MAESTRE: I very much appreciate it and will be even more pleased to hear you play. Have you anything new?

MUSICIAN: We have ballads, sir, and some verses.

MAESTRE: Sing! There is no need to tune your instruments.

MUSICIANS: (*Singing*) *Oh sweet are my thoughts of love,  
though I may lie in a dark dungeon.  
My only glory is that I am chained for love,  
my only light in this constant gloom is the vision of her.  
Tell my belle sans merci  
that the longer that I am kept from her  
the more vividly I see her in my thoughts of love.*

MAESTRE: That will do. Let us go, my lady, I want to tell you about my impending journey.

(*Exit* MAESTRE, COUNTESS, CLARA, FERNANDO, SERVANTS *and* MUSICIANS)

**Scene XVII** [vv. 2477-2503](TELLO *and* PAEZ)

TELLO: Paez! Paez!

PAEZ: Are you calling me, Tello?

TELLO: Are you my friend?

PAEZ: I am.

TELLO: Are you a true friend or a false friend?

PAEZ: I promise that I am a true friend.

TELLO: What do you think of the daring insult that Macías does to my honor, writing ballads even while he is a prisoner? That fool has sent the musicians from Archidona to Córdoba so that Clara would hear them.

PAEZ: From what I know of the Maestre, he holds him in high regard.

TELLO: Well, from what I know and from what I can see, this is how the Maestre has chosen to pay me for my services. So what am I waiting for?

PAEZ: Since you cannot kill him, I advise you not to complain.

TELLO: What do you mean I can't? I'll stab him with a lance through the bars of the tower. Lord help him if I succeed!

PAEZ: Don't do it, Tello. You're a sensible man. If the Maestre captures you, I suspect he'll have your head.

TELLO: It doesn't matter. I am noble man, and I will defend my honor.

*(Exit TELLO)*

**Scene XVIII** [vv. 2504-17]

(NUÑO *and* PAEZ)

NUÑO: I didn't come in to talk to you, because Tello was here.

PAEZ: I'm very sorry to learn that Macías is in prison.

NUÑO: I promise you that it is a sorry state, for he is an honorable nobleman who has loved doña Clara with the same honesty that Plato felt when depicting the perfect love. He wants only to love. I am taking this letter to the King.

PAEZ: I'd be willing to bet that he wants his freedom.

NUÑO: He asks for it in thirty verses.

*(A noise from inside)*

**Scene XIX** [vv. 2518-24]

(NUÑO *and* PAEZ. MAYOR, *with sword drawn behind TELLO, who is retreating*)

MAYOR: Capture him, soldiers, and if that's not possible, kill him!

TELLO: Since I have already avenged my honor, death is no longer a threat to me.

*(Exit TELLO)*

PAEZ: What's going on, sir?

MAYOR: Tello has killed Macías by stabbing him through the bars with a lance.

*(Exit MAYOR)*

**Scene XX** [vv. 2525-52]

(MACÍAS, *stabbed through with a lance, and soldiers, holding him up.* NUÑO *and* PAEZ)

MACÍAS: Oh Heavens! Today I die!

NUÑO: Sir, what happened?

MACÍAS: I don't know, Nuño. I can only tell you that your fear for my life has been realized. I loved well, I sang, I cried, I wrote and all of the writing, the loving, the crying and the feeling has resulted only in my persistence until death. Oh Clara, you have cost me my life, and it was all I had left to offer you, having already surrendered my entire being to you! I have loved you honestly as you well know, but my love now receives its just reward. It was a hopeless love which led me to persist until death. Tell my lord, the Maestre, that I pardon Tello for I gave him cause, and he has protected his honor. Oh Heavens, forgive my misjudgment! I thought that a chaste love would be permissible.

**Scene XXI** [vv. 2553-77]

(MACÍAS, NUÑO *and* PAEZ. *Enter* MAESTRE, COUNTESS, CLARA, LEONOR, MAYOR *and* SERVANTS)

MAESTRE: Is he dead?

MAYOR: Yes, in the end that is all this amounted to.

MACÍAS: Yes sir, persistence until death was my undoing.

(MACÍAS *dies*)

COUNTESS: What a strange turn of events!

MAESTRE: It's terrible! Why haven't they captured Tello?

MAYOR: It wasn't possible, sir. His friends defended him.

CLARA: Oh Leonor, who can stand to see so much pain?

LEONOR: My eyes shine with it.

CLARA: What will become of Tello?

MAESTRE: Your revenge is certain, Macías. By God, if I can, I shall lay his head at the foot of your honorable grave. And in the memory of a love so true and honest, I will engrave in the smooth marble of your tombstone: "Here lies love itself"!

NUÑO: And so, dear friends, here ends the tale of *Persistence until Death*.