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THE ADVENTURES OF
ALPHONSO AND MARINA:
AN INTERESTING SPANISH
TALE

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The adventures of Alphonso and Marina: An Interesting Spanish Tale

Marina, at seventeen, was the most admired beauty in Granada. She was an orphan, and heiress to an immense fortune, under the guardianship of an old and avaricious uncle, whose name was Alonzo, and who passed his days in counting ducats, and his nights in silencing serenades, nocturnally addressed to Marina. His design was to marry her, for the sake of her great fortune, to his own son, Henriquez, who had studied ten years in the university of Salamanca, and was now able to explain Cornelius Nepos tolerably well.

Almost all the cavaliers of Granada were in love with Marina. As they could obtain a sight of her only at mass, the church she frequented was filled with great numbers of the handsomest and most accomplished youths of the country.

One of the most distinguished among these, was Don Alphonso, a captain of cavalry, about twenty, not very rich, but of a family of the first distinction. Handsome, polite, and witty, he attracted the eyes of all the ladies of Granada; though he himself paid attention to none but Marina, who, not insensible to his attachment, began, on her part, to take notice of her admirer.

Two months passed away without the lovers daring to speak; nevertheless, they silently said much. At the end of that time Don Alphonso found means to convey a letter to his mistress; which informed her of what she knew before. The reserved Marina had no sooner read this letter than she sent it back to Don Alphonso; but, as she possessed an excellent memory, she retained every word, and was able to return a very punctual answer, a week afterwards.

A correspondence was now settled between the two lovers; but Don Alphonso was desirous to be still more intimate. He had long solicited permission to converse with Marina through her lattices. Such is the custom in Spain, where the windows are of much more use during the night than in the day. They are the places of rendezvous. When the street is vacant and still, the lover wraps himself up in his cloak, and, taking his sword, invokes love and night to favour him, and proceeds to some low lattice, grated on the side next the street, and secured on the inside by shutters.

He waits not long before the window opens softly, and the charming maid appears. She asks, in a tremulous voice, if any one is there. Her lover, transported at her condescension, endeavours to dispel her fears. They talk in a whisper, and repeat the same thing a hundred times. Day, at length, approaches, and they must separate.

Marina's lattice was on the ground floor, and opened into a narrow passage, where the houses were ill built, and only inhabited by the lower class of people. Don Alphonso's old nurse happened to occupy a tenement directly opposite the window of Marina. Don Alphonso, therefore repaired to his nurse. 'My good woman,' said he, 'I have been much to blame to suffer you to live so long in this miserable habitation; but I am now determined to make you amends, by giving you an apartment in my own house. Come, and reside in that, and leave me to dispose of this.'

The worthy woman could not refrain from tears, and, for a long time, refused; but, at last, overcome by his solicitations, she consented to the exchange, with every expression of gratitude to her benefactor.

Never did any monarch enter his palace with more satisfaction than Don Alphonso did the hovel of his nurse.

Early in the evening Marina appeared at her lattice. She promised to repair thither every other night, and she kept her word. These delightful interviews served only to fan the flame of love; and, very soon, the lovers nights were constantly passed in pleasing conversation, and their days in writing passionate epistles.

Just at this time, Henriquez, the intended husband of Marina, arrived from Salamanca; bringing with him a declaration of his passion in Latin, which had been written for him by the head of his college.

The lovers consulted each other on this event at the lattice; but, in the mean time, the old guardian had drawn up a contract of marriage, and a day was fixed on for the celebration of the nuptials of Marina and Henriquez.

In these circumstances, the only remedy was to fly into Portugal. This was determined; and it was also settled that the two lovers, on arriving at Lisbon, should first marry, and afterwards have recourse to the law, against the guardian.

Marina was to carry with her a box of jewels, which had been left her by her mother. These were very valuable, and sufficient to maintain the happy pair till the decision of their law-suit. To effect this escape, it was necessary to procure the key of the lattice, and in this Marina succeeded.

It was resolved also, that the next night, at eleven, Don Alphonso, after having appointed horses to wait without the city, should come and fetch Marina; who should descend from the window, into the arms of her lover, and immediately set off for Portugal.

Don Alphonso spent the whole day in preparations for his departure. Marina, on her part, was equally busy, in getting ready the little box she was to take with her. She was very careful to secret in it a very fine emerald, which had been given her by her lover.

Marina and her box were ready by eight in the evening; and, before ten, Don Alphonso, who had already provided carriages on the road to Andalusia, arrived at the appointed spot: his heart beating with perturbation and hope.

As he approached the place, he heard persons calling for assistance, and perceived two men attacked by five armed assassins. The brave and humane Alphonso forgot his own affairs to defend the lives of the assaulted. He wounded two, and put the other three to flight.

What was his surprise, on more attentively viewing the persons he had delivered, to perceive they were no other than Henriquez, and Alonzo, the guardian of Marina. Some desperate young cavalier of the city, who was in love with Marina, knowing it was intended that Henriquez should espouse her, had hired bravoës, to assassinate them; and, had it not been for the valour of Don Alphonso, the young scholar and the old miser would have found it no easy matter to escape.

Alphonso did his utmost to avoid their grateful acknowledgments, but Henriquez, who piqued himself on having learned politeness at Salamanca, swore he should not leave them that night. Alphonso, in despair, had already heard the clock strike eleven. Alas! he knew not the misfortune that had happened.

One of the bravoës, whom he had put to flight, had passed muffled up in his cloak, near the lattice of Marina. The night was extremely dark, and the unfortunate beauty, having opened the window, imagined him to be Don Alphonso, and presented him the box with joyful impatience: 'Take our diamonds,' said she, 'while I descend.'

At the word diamonds, the bravo suddenly stopped, took the box, without speaking a word, and, while Marina was getting out of the window, fled with the utmost precipitation.

Imagine the surprise of Marina, when she found herself alone in the street, and saw nothing of him whom she had taken for Don Alphonso. She thought, at first, he had left her, to avoid raising suspicion or alarm. She, therefore, hastily walked to a little distance, looked round on every side, and called in a low voice. But no Alphonso could she see; no lover could she hear.

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