

## THE FLORET ROAD

an epistolary romance in three acts

**SYNOPSIS:** In 1891—a time so distant from our advancements in long-distance communication—the three-year silence between a couple is broken with the end of their long distance relationship. The man grieves over the woman he has not seen for over eight years. What experience with her is so alive that a man would cling to memory over the myriad of alternatives before him?

*“A vague melancholy consumes me. I fear I’m going to be one traveling down a floret road, passing by without touching any of the flowers there, in the hope of finding something uncertain. The road then becomes dry, bare, and I look into the past with regret.”*

Jose Rizal

31 March, 1884

**SETTING:** 1877-1891, in different parts of Europe (Belgium, France, England, Austria, Spain), the Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan

**SET:** An empty space in the middle of the stage surrounded by four boxes that work as chairs for each of the characters. The boxes must have significant distance from each other. Each box contains whatever props, costumes, or wigs any character may need, and the transformations ideally should happen onstage. One box stands behind a frame, while behind a different box is a giant calendar.

## CHARACTERS:

- PEPE- Male. Jose Rizal as depicted from age 16 in 1877 to age 30 in 1891
- TAIMIS- Female. Can play all the women linked romantically to Rizal's life:
- Leonor Rivera (Filipina)
  - Suzanne Jacoby (Belgian)
  - Nellie Boustead (French)
  - Seiko Usui (Japanese)
  - Tottie Beckett (English)
  - Segunda Katigbak (Filipina)
- EVERYJUAN- Male. Aside from raising the questions and speculations in the gaps of history, he can also play Rizal's friend correspondents:
- Antonio Luna
  - Juan Luna
  - Matias Belarmino
  - Ferdinand Blumentritt
  - Antonio Regidor
  - Mariano Katigbak
  - Jose "Chenggoy" Cecilio
- EVERYMARIA- Female. Aside from filling in the facts and necessary context, she can also play Rizal's family correspondents
- Soledad Rizal
  - Saturnina Rizal
  - Narcisa Rizal
  - Paciano Rizal
  - Teodora Alonzo

THE PLAY:

[*PEPE enters, without the tie, overcoat, bowler hat, and thin moustache that make JOSE RIZAL easily recognizable. EVERYJUAN enters, wearing the tie, overcoat and bowler hat. He stares at PEPE. Silence. EVERYMARIA enters. PEPE brings out a book: EL FILIBUSTERISMO.*]

PEPE:                    *El Filibusterismo. “The Final Chapter.” [Opens the book and writes on the last pages.]* Only love can bring about magnificence, only virtue can redeem. Redemption implies virtue, as virtue implies sacrifice, and sacrifice, love.

EVERYJUAN:            [*removes and discards tie.*] Jose Rizal. Philippine National Hero and Cultural Icon.

[*EVERYMARIA picks up tie and brings it to PEPE.*]

EVERYJUAN:            National Fashion Accessory.

PEPE:                    [*as EVERYMARIA puts the tie on him.*] There is something providential behind persecutions.

EVERYJUAN:            [*removes and discards overcoat.*] Put Rizal on a mug and it will sell. Put Rizal on a t-shirt and it will sell.

[*EVERYMARIA picks up the overcoat and begins to put it on PEPE.*]

EVERYJUAN:            Put Rizal in a play and it will sell. In schools, at least.

PEPE:                    [*as EVERYMARIA puts the overcoat on him.*] If anything were born overnight, it would at best be mushrooms.

EVERYJUAN:        *[takes off his bowler hat.]* Quote Rizal to Filipinos and all other arguments are invalid.

PEPE:                What can be done? To suffer and to work.

EVERYMARIA:      He who speaks of what he hasn't experienced is either a dreamer or a liar. Maybe both.

EVERYJUAN:        Rizal is Pinoy gospel truth.

*[EVERYJUAN discards bowler hat.]*

PEPE:                Suffer? Work? Easy to say when one doesn't suffer, when work is rewarded. If God demands such sacrifice from man, who can't even rely on the present and is uncertain of the future... What kind of God is that? *[Pause.]* A just God... who chastises our lack of faith, the little value we give to dignity and virtue. He chastises us and betters us. Suffering tempers us, strengthens our soul.

EVERYMARIA:      He who claims to love his country but can't care for the faces most familiar to him is probably running for office.

EVERYJUAN:        Rizal is overrated.

*[EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at PEPE.]*

PEPE:                When one fights without understanding, it is better that he should lose.

*[TAIMIS enters. She has a Hibiscus flower on her hair. She walks to the box behind the frame.]*

PEPE:                *[as he looks at TAIMIS.]* Why should a wife commit to a husband who cannot love her enough to even die for her?

[*Silence. EVERYMARIA draws JOSE RIZAL's famous moustache on PEPE. PEPE puts aside the book in his hand. EVERYJUAN walks to his box as EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and reveals the title of Act I.*]

CALENDAR:            *ACT I: TEMPEST AT THE END OF THE ROAD*

[*EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA approach each other as they examine PEPE and TAIMIS. They meet at dead center and face each other. Beat. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA, in a sudden change of personality, first peek around to see if anyone is looking, then, reassured, walk side by side, intimately affectionate with each other. PEPE stares at them. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA continue to be affectionate. PEPE flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:            *6 JUNE 1890*  
                              *JOSE RIZAL to SOLEDAD RIZAL*

[*PEPE brings out a sheet of paper from the box and begins to write.*]

PEPE:                 Dear Soledad,  
                              Sister, I am glad to hear that you are now teaching, as you are in the position for self-improvement and becoming a model of virtue. [*Pause.*] That said, I've been told that you have caused some disturbance of peace in our family.

[*EVERYMARIA abruptly stops being affectionate to EVERYJUAN and turns sharply to PEPE. EVERYJUAN is surprised. Oblivious to the reaction, PEPE continues writing.*]

PEPE:                 Yes, I too by this time have caused much harm to our family. But my enemies can say nothing that will make me or our family bow our heads in shame.

[*Pause.*]

PEPE: To fall with head high and serene is not to fall but to triumph.

[*TAIMIS brings out an imaginary rifle and shoots PEPE. Gunshot. Everyone else is oblivious to it.*]

PEPE: I ask this of you, Soledad, to keep in mind the honor and good of your family. Don't do anything you cannot repeat or say to anyone with your head up. [*Pause.*] If you have a sweetheart, deal with him honorably instead of meeting him in secret as this only lowers your worth in a man's eyes.

[*EVERYMARIA looks at EVERYJUAN questioningly.*]

PEPE: Value yourself, and you will be more valued.

[*EVERYMARIA moves away from EVERYJUAN, leaving him frustrated.*]

PEPE: Though I do not set myself as a model, all my relationships with women have been acted upon honorably. [*EVERYJUAN scoffs at PEPE.*] I would feel humiliated if I acted otherwise, [*PEPE glares at EVERYJUAN*] and I have despised young men who prefer lurking in the shadows.

EVERYJUAN: [*moving away from PEPE; to the audience.*] Should we believe it? Jose Rizal: Philippine National Hero, Doctor, Writer, Artist, and now... Love Guru?

[*EVERYMARIA stares at EVERYJUAN, who stares back at her. TAIMIS finally turns to face PEPE, who stands up and approaches her, close enough that only the frame keeps them apart.*]

PEPE: Soledad, you do know that when I went back to Calamba in 1887, that I should have gone to Pangasinan, as I had a formal engagement there.

[*TAIMIS walks towards PEPE but they do not touch.*]

PEPE: I had long desired this. But Father's objection was enough to stop me.  
[Pause.] Leonor did the same thing. [PEPE raises his hand to reach out to TAIMIS, but hesitates.] The slightest defiance would have dishonored us and our families. Signed, your brother, Jose.

[PEPE and TAIMIS swiftly walk back to their respective boxes and sit. Silence.]

EVERYJUAN: Did Rizal really say that?

EVERYMARIA: [Points at the calendar.] See the dates and the other data over there?  
[Points at PEPE.] Rizal. [Points at herself.] Soledad Rizal. For now. [Points at EVERYJUAN.] Soledad's Mystery Lover. For now. [Points at TAIMIS.] Leonor Rivera. Mostly Leonor Rivera. [Pause.] You can verify these yourself after the play if you have doubts. [To the audience.] That goes for everyone as well. There's more where that came from.

EVERYJUAN: Whatever. Rizal was just saying that to get his sister to behave!  
[EVERYMARIA rummages through EVERYJUAN's box for some costume and props.] He didn't have to act so noble. Nobody in the Philippines saw what he was up to in Europe. Nobody could say he did otherwise!

[EVERYMARIA brings out a fake moustache and beer. She then approaches EVERYJUAN.]

EVERYJUAN: Think about all the women he's been romantically linked to. [As EVERYMARIA puts the moustache on him and brushes his suit up.] He did go for a lot of those foreign chicks, you know? Seiko Usui, Gertrude Beckett, Suzanne Jacoby, a.k.a. the one who called him "naughty boy"... [TAIMIS looks accusingly at PEPE, who is staring at EVERYJUAN.] ...and this girl... Was she a Fil-French? I forget. [EVERYMARIA gives EVERYJUAN the beer.] Thanks. [As EVERYJUAN drinks, EVERYMARIA walks to calendar and flips through it.]

CALENDAR:            AUGUST 1890

EVERYJUAN:            [*Oblivious to what EVERYMARIA is doing.*] I remember: Nellie Boustead. That chick in Brussels that Rizal and Antonio Luna were fighting over. You know: Luna, the guy with the funny moustache. There was something Luna said about Nellie, if I can only remember...

[*EVERYJUAN drinks a bit more. PEPE stands up and approaches him. It is then EVERYJUAN realizes that EVERYMARIA has dressed him up as ANTONIO LUNA. He looks at the beer he is holding in disbelief. PEPE goes dangerously close to him and grabs him by the collar cuffs.*]

PEPE:                    Tomorrow morning when you sober up. Swords or pistols. Your choice.

[*EVERYMARIA watches amusedly. PEPE lets EVERYJUAN go, and rummages through his box as if to search for something to kill EVERYJUAN with. EVERYJUAN rushes past EVERYMARIA to the calendar and reveals the date.*]

CALENDAR:            26 AUGUST 1890  
                          JUAN LUNA to JOSE RIZAL

[*EVERYJUAN then rushes past PEPE to his own box and brings out a letter. EVERYJUAN remembers to put moustache and beer into his own box before reading the letter.*]

EVERYJUAN:            [*As JUAN LUNA. Reads.*] I regret what happened between you and my brother Antonio. It was very unpleasant of him even if he was drunk. I hope this does not prolong resentment between the two of you. Aside from taking back what he said, Antonio is willing to have himself tied up if he ever got drunk again. Signed, Juan Luna.

*[EVERYJUAN hands letter to PEPE, who puts the letter in the box, slams the lid shut, and sits on the box, recomposed. EVERYJUAN stares at TAIMIS who, relieved, stares lovingly at PEPE. TAIMIS then glares at EVERYJUAN, who avoids her gaze. EVERYJUAN crosses over to EVERYMARIA, who has been enjoying the whole incident unfold in front of her.]*

EVERYJUAN: All right, maybe he did treat those women nobly. Whatever that means.  
Does it even matter?

EVERYMARIA: Why shouldn't it matter?

EVERYJUAN: Rizal's love life is just a crummy footnote in the annals of Philippine history. It's historical gossip at best. So what if he met all these women? So what if he was faithful to Leonor Rivera?

*[EVERYJUAN quickly takes a look at both PEPE and TAIMIS in case they both react violently again. They don't.]*

EVERYJUAN: All that matters about Rizal is his social relevance; his love for the Philippines and what came off that love. His novels! His articles! His martyrdom! Why bother prying into the love life of a National Hero?

*[Silence. PEPE and TAIMIS look at each other before staring at EVERYJUAN.]*

EVERYMARIA: Fine words you have there. Social relevance. Love. Philippines. National Hero. Do you even understand what they mean?

EVERYJUAN: Don't treat me as if I were stupid...

EVERYMARIA: No, really. Can you really talk about society without talking about the persons that comprise it? What is the Philippines without each and every Filipino?

[*EVERYMARIA goes to her box.*]

EVERYJUAN: Fine, I get it...

EVERYMARIA: I don't think you do.

[*EVERYMARIA brings out a potted plant and tosses it to EVERYJUAN. EVERYJUAN catches it.*]

EVERYMARIA: A land without people is no better than a potted plant.

[*EVERYJUAN returns the potted plant to EVERYMARIA's box.*]

EVERYMARIA: Why is Rizal's love life important? Because what he says should resonate in how he deals with others. Especially on the personal level. Life isn't split into nice neat columns. It's not as if Rizal just turns a switch in him and becomes a lover in one moment and a nation-saving machine in the next.

[*EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at PEPE, who has suddenly become mechanical.*]

EVERYMARIA: Words rarely capture the reality they depict. The phrase "eight years" can be said in a breath; but eight years contain more than a million breaths. And look:

[*EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar to reveal the text: FROM PHILIPPINES TO EUROPE and measures her arms against the text.*]

EVERYMARIA: The phrase form "Philippines to Europe" is hardly the length of my two arms. And yet how many times must I write this phrase down before I physically cover the distance between Philippines and Europe? As for the words "pain," "grief," "suffering"...

[TAIMIS removes the Hibiscus flower. She then puts on a wig and a small hat with a Red Poppy on it and transforms into SUZANNE JACOBY.]

EVERYMARIA:       Saying these words are easy compared to realities you need to endure.  
                  [Pause.] And the word “nobility”? To take Rizal’s words seriously is to put his  
                  life under scrutiny. For once, let’s take Rizal off his pedestal and see him as he is.

EVERYJUAN:         Really? Then what do you have to say about this?

[TAIMIS stands up and flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:           ?? AUGUST 1890  
                          SUZANNE JACOBY to JOSE RIZAL

TAIMIS:             [As SUZANNE JACOBY. Brings out paper and pen and writes.] My dear  
                  Mr. Rizal, we have received your letter and are glad that you did not suffer in  
                  your journey. I heard that the heat in Madrid is asphyxiating. I do hope that you  
                  have had the time to rest and to share with your countrymen there that famous rice  
                  and tomato dish that won you first prize in the Exposition of Culinary Art here.  
                  Supper is waiting, so I must finish this letter. Just one more thing. Mr. Leon  
                  appeals to your generosity and asks if you can send him a 20¢ stamp through  
                  mail. I’ll repay you with a thousand embraces and more if you wish. Till we meet  
                  again and good night. Signed, Petite Suzanne.

[TAIMIS hands the letter to PEPE who peruses it. TAIMIS goes back to her box]

EVERYJUAN:         [to EVERYMARIA.] Did you hear that? “I’ll repay you with a thousand  
                  embraces and more if you wish.” That doesn’t help your argument at all.

EVERYMARIA:        You can’t judge a character from a single letter, you know.

EVERYJUAN: Why? Because he's too busy saving his country?

*[TAIMIS removes the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and hat, then puts on the Hibiscus flower back on. As she does so, PEPE stands up and flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR: 20 AUGUST 1890  
JOSE RIZAL to RIZAL FAMILY

*[As PEPE does so, EVERYJUAN dresses up as MATIAS BELARMINO, a local of Calamba while EVERYMARIA dresses up as SATURNINA RIZAL, a sister of PEPE. TAIMIS removes the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and hat, then turns her back on the audience. PEPE sits down.]*

PEPE: *[Writing.]* Had the Authorities in the Philippines been enlightened, they wouldn't be so treacherous in their administrative proceedings. There is Providence in the deportation of enlightened people. These injustices keep the spirit awake, to be brave in the face of tyranny, and dangers, to not sleep in lethargic peace. My dear family, I shall report how my interview with the Minister will turn out.

*[Both EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA bring out potted plants from their respective boxes and place it at the middle of the stage. EVERYJUAN approaches PEPE and hands him a letter, which PEPE opens immediately. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR: 6 SEPTEMBER 1890  
MATIAS BELARMINO to JOSE RIZAL  
SATURNINA RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL

*[EVERYMARIA goes to PEPE and handing him a letter as well. PEPE opens the letter and looks at them alternately as both EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA, still as MATIAS BELARMINO and SATURNINA RIZAL respectively, speak out the contents of the letters. PEPE reacts appropriately to the news he discovers.]*

EVERYJUAN:        [As *MATIAS BELARMINO.*] Dear Señor Rizal,

EVERYMARIA:      [As *SATURNINA RIZAL.*] My dear Brother,

EVERYJUAN:        [As *MATIAS BELARMINO.*] Enclosed in letter is an order for 200 pesos as support from some of your fellow townsmen, like Tano and myself.

EVERYMARIA:      [As *SATURNINA RIZAL.*] Though late, I wish to tell you that our parents have been ordered to leave our house in execution of the order to evict and dispossess them.

EVERYJUAN:        [As *MATIAS BELARMINO.*] Tano and I are now in court for ejection.

EVERYMARIA:      [As *SATURNINA RIZAL.*] Our brother Paciano and others head for exile in Mindoro this afternoon.

[*PEPE approaches the potted plants and examines them carefully.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [As *MATIAS BELARMINO.*] On the 6<sup>th</sup> of this month, your brother Paciano and some others embarked on a steamer to Mindoro as exiles. Thank God, your family here is still well.

[*PEPE examines the letters once again.*]

EVERYMARIA:      [As *SATURNINA RIZAL.*] Separation is no longer strange to me, and when I think of all the injustice and suffering would eventually result to something good, I think of what you tell us and my faith is strengthened. Signed, Saturnina Rizal.

EVERYJUAN:           [As *MATIAS BELARMINO*.] Many regards to you and all the Filipinos there. Signed, Matias Belarmino.

[*PEPE*, after reading the letters, looks at *TAIMIS* whose back is still turned on him. He paces around. *TAIMIS* puts on the *SUZANNE JACOBY* wig and hat and flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:            1 OCTOBER 1890  
                          *SUZANNE JACOBY* to *JOSE RIZAL*

TAIMIS:               [As *SUZANNE JACOBY*, following *PEPE* as he paces around.] Dear Mr. Rizal, I heard that you were counting on coming back. I am so happy that I could not sleep. Come quickly; don't delay in writing us. I have worn out my shoes running to check the mail box for your letters. There is no home in which you are so loved as here in Brussels, you naughty boy. Hurry and come back. Signed,  
Your Petite Suzanne.

EVERYMARIA:        And that's the last we hear of Suzanne Jacoby.

[*PEPE* passes by *TAIMIS*' box. *TAIMIS* stops and eagerly opens the box only to find that *PEPE* hasn't left anything for her. *TAIMIS* slams the box shut and angrily removes the *SUZANNE JACOBY* wig and hat. She then calmly puts the wig and hat back into the box. She sits down, puts the Hibiscus flower back on her hair. *TAIMIS* then turns her back on *PEPE*. *PEPE* walks back to face the frame and stares at *TAIMIS*.]

EVERYJUAN:         So Rizal's a kiss 'em and leave 'em guy. We all know that. Rizal clearly led her on. "Nobly", my...

EVERYMARIA:        Right. Flirting takes priority over the domestic crisis.

[*EVERYMARIA* hands a sheet of paper to *EVERYJUAN*.]

EVERYJUAN:           What's this?

EVERYMARIA:        The eviction notice for Matias Belarmino. [*Pause.*] Let Rizal react to that.

[*EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:           8 OCTOBER 1890  
                          MATIAS BELARMINO to JOSE RIZAL

[*EVERYJUAN hands another letter to PEPE, who turns his back away from TAIMIS. PEPE peruses the letter. EVERYJUAN speaks out the contents of the letter.*]

EVERYJUAN:           [*As MATIAS BELARMINO.*] Dear Señor Rizal, as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month of October, Tano and I have been ejected from our land. Please tell Señor Marcelo H. Del Pilar that we have chosen him as our defender in case this reaches the Supreme Court. Tano and I have placed a complaint to the government. [*Pause.*] Your parents are well; they live in the house of your sister Narcisa.

[*PEPE goes to the potted plants and stares at them.*]

EVERYMARIA:        [*to EVERYJUAN.*] Take a look what happens next.

[*EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:           ?? DECEMBER 1890  
                          LEONOR RIVERA to JOSE RIZAL

[*TAIMIS turns around, holding a letter. She walks to PEPE and hands the letter to him. PEPE turns to face her, but she avoids his gaze and goes back to her old position, back turned away from PEPE. PEPE peruses the letter, and slowly sinks into sitting on the floor. Without looking, he hands the letter to EVERYMARIA, who hands it to EVERYJUAN, who peruses the letter.*]

EVERYJUAN:       It's blank!

EVERYMARIA:      No one really knows exactly what Leonor Rivera wrote to Rizal. Perhaps Rizal destroyed the letter or lost it. We do not even know when exactly he received this news.

*[EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at PEPE who stares at TAIMIS. TAIMIS still has her back turned away from PEPE. EVERYMARIA takes the letter from EVERYJUAN.]*

EVERYMARIA:      It may have been sometime between October and December; when he was hearing about what was happening to his family and townsmen in Calamba. But we can surmise the contents from the responses his friends wrote to him.

*[PEPE stands and walks away from the potted plants. EVERYMARIA approaches the calendar as EVERYJUAN puts on glasses and beard. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:         15 FEBRUARY 1890  
                      FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT to JOSE RIZAL

EVERYJUAN:        *[As BLUMENTRITT, brings out a letter and writes.]* My Brother, your New Year's letter has filled us with sadness. My wife cannot understand how a woman you so honored with love would abandon you.

*[PEPE turns away from EVERYJUAN and stares at TAIMIS who keeps her head bowed. EVERYJUAN approaches PEPE.]*

EVERYJUAN:        *[As BLUMENTRITT.]* But I, I know your heart. You are one of those heroes who overcome the wounds a woman inflicts because you pursue a nobler end. *[PEPE stares at EVERYJUAN.]* You are brave and a nobler woman gazes at you lovingly:

[*EVERYJUAN picks up the potted plants and offers it to PEPE.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [*As BLUMENTRITT.*] Your Native Land.

[*PEPE distances himself from EVERYJUAN.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [*As BLUMENTRITT.*] The Philippines is your enchanted princess, as in German Folklore, who waits for you, her valiant knight, to liberate her from an ugly dragon.

[*EVERYMARIA moves to the calendar.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [*As BLUMENTRITT, takes a step closer to PEPE.*] My family greets its Rizal. Your brother embraces you. Signed, Ferdinand Blumentritt.

[*PEPE moves away from EVERYJUAN. EVERYJUAN puts the potted plants back from where he picked it up. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:            *10 MARCH 1891*  
                          *NARCISA RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL*

[*EVERYMARIA hands a letter to PEPE who reads it as she speaks. EVERYMARIA picks up the potted plants.*]

EVERYMARIA:        [*As NARCISA RIZAL.*] Dear Brother, I'd like to fill you in for January and February: Our fellow townsmen have been despoiled of their lands, homes, animals, crops, and other fruits of labor. More than 300 families have been evicted.

[*PEPE moves away from EVERYMARIA but she follows him as she continues speaking.*]

EVERYMARIA:     [As NARCISA RIZAL.] With these abuses, these unfortunates hardly have means for daily bread. A little bit more, and Calamba is going to die. The rich can move to other towns, but the others... what can be done but to suffer?

[PEPE sits and EVERYMARIA stands behind him. EVERYJUAN approaches the calendar.]

EVERYMARIA:     [As NARCISA RIZAL.] Our only hope is that you file in the Supreme Court a complaint to this unjust outrage. Signed, your affectionate sister, Narcisa.

[EVERYMARIA puts the potted plants in front of PEPE, who stares away from them.]

EVERYMARIA:     [To EVERYJUAN.] What is Suzanne Jacoby now compared to the mysterious impact of Leonor Rivera?

[EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:           28 MARCH 1891  
                          FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT to JOSE RIZAL

[EVERYJUAN begins to write. PEPE looks at TAIMIS who leaves her box and walks towards the potted plants. She stares at the audience. PEPE flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:           29 MARCH 1891  
                          JOSE RIZAL to FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT

[PEPE begins writing as well. Both PEPE and EVERYJUAN ignore each other. EVERYMARIA looks at both and flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:           28 MARCH 1891  
                          FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT to JOSE RIZAL

29 MARCH 1891

JOSE RIZAL to FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT

EVERYJUAN: [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] My Brother,

PEPE: My Brother,

EVERYJUAN: [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] It's been an eternity since you last sent a letter.

PEPE: Despite the lack of frequency in my correspondence, the fraternity between us remains strong.

EVERYJUAN: [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] We can only hope your silence is simply because you are busy...

[*EVERYJUAN tries to write but nothing comes out. He falls in deep thought.*]

PEPE: When one's heart is heavy, one desires to make its bitterness flow to another heart for solace. But if it's too bitter and great, why make others suffer? It is better, then, to keep that bitterness in. [*Looks at EVERYJUAN.*] I know you always share in my sorrows, but if the affliction is so great it overflows the soul...

[*PEPE stares at EVERYMARIA who lifts potted plants with difficulty, carrying them around the stage. PEPE looks at TAIMIS. She ignores him as she stares at the audience. EVERYMARIA stands in front of PEPE, carrying the potted plant. PEPE avoids her and resumes writing.*]

PEPE: When I think of my family, I am so burdened with sorrow that had I less faith in God... Who knows what stupidity I'd do?

*[Pause. PEPE stops writing and brings out rope from his box. He stares at it, then begins to make a noose. He looks at EVERYMARIA who is now offering him the potted plant. PEPE puts the rope away. He resumes writing.]*

PEPE: I don't regret having undertaken this campaign; this is, after all, everyone's duty. If God asked me why I did not combat the injustices I see, what will I answer? *[As he stares at EVERYMARIA.]* But when I think of what my family suffers for me...

*[PEPE stares back at EVERYMARIA until she puts the potted plants beside TAIMIS and walks back to her box. PEPE looks at TAIMIS. TAIMIS puts on a bridal veil, still staring at the audience. PEPE walks towards TAIMIS.]*

PEPE: My fiancée has just written to me that she would soon marry. *[Silence.]* She is right. I deserve it. She always had many Filipino and Spanish suitors.

*[PEPE stares at TAIMIS. Silence. He goes back to his box and continues writing.]*

PEPE: My countrymen write to me about their sufferings and assure me that they will remain firm and they do not fear tyranny.

*[Long silence. PEPE approaches the potted plants and picks them up.]*

PEPE: I wish that a volcano would just erupt and devour the Philippines, sufferings, injustices, and all, and grace us with sleep.

*[PEPE moves as if to smash the potted plants. He hesitates. He puts down the potted plants and walks back to his box. EVERYJUAN hesitates, but then finally finds something to write.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As BLUMENTRITT.]* My first-born has been quite sick, flu, I think, but now he is better.

PEPE: I greet you. Signed, Jose Rizal.

*[EVERYJUAN tries to write some more but nothing else comes to mind.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As BLUMENTRITT.]* Your brother embraces you. Signed, Ferdinand Blumentritt.

*[PEPE and EVERYJUAN exchange letters, then peruse the content of the letters they have received, affected by the content. They look at each other. TAIMIS walks back to her box, passing between PEPE and EVERYJUAN. PEPE sits down while EVERYJUAN is pushed deep in thought. EVERYMARIA approaches the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR: 1 APRIL 1891  
*FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT to JOSE RIZAL*

*[As EVERYJUAN writes, PEPE goes to TAIMIS, removes the Hibiscus flower from her hair. He then puts the NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig on her and gives her some Iris flowers. PEPE then takes a few steps back.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As BLUMENTRITT.]* My Brother, you are sad. As I cannot do anything against this, I do hope that you will find comfort in the company of Luna in Paris. Perhaps later on—I hope—I will write to you about the extremes in your letter. My family greets you cordially and your friend embraces you. Signed, Ferdinand Blumentritt.

*[Long Silence. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA stare at PEPE, who is staring at TAIMIS. EVERYJUAN removes BLUMENTRITT glasses and beard, then puts on ANTONIO LUNA moustache. PEPE hesitates, and then faces EVERYJUAN who is taken aback. EVERYJUAN looks at TAIMIS dressed up as NELLIE BOUSTEAD with hesitation. TAIMIS looks away. EVERYJUAN takes the beer bottle and drinks. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:            *11 APRIL 1891*  
                              *ANTONIO LUNA to JOSE RIZAL*

*[As EVERYJUAN is talking, EVERYMARIA adjusts herself to look like a snobbish European. She approaches TAIMIS, who becomes submissive to her.]*

EVERYJUAN:            *[As ANTONIO LUNA.]* There's nothing anymore between Nellie and me. Yes, we used to exchange letters, I loved her, I knew how worthy she was...  
*[Pause.]* But I'm over it now. Yes, she is good, endowed with qualities desirable in a young girl... She would make you, or anyone worthy of her, happy. Signed, Antonio Luna.

*[EVERYJUAN hurriedly removes the ANTONIO LUNA moustache. PEPE approaches and hands a letter to TAIMIS who is still dressed as NELLIE BOUSTEAD. But before TAIMIS can read the letter, EVERYMARIA snatches the letter from TAIMIS. TAIMIS chases after EVERYMARIA, who eventually drops the letter. TAIMIS picks up and reads the letter, looking at PEPE lovingly on occasion. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar as TAIMIS writes.]*

CALENDAR:            *?? APRIL 1891*  
                              *NELLIE BOUSTEAD to JOSE RIZAL*

TAIMIS:                *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD, writing.]* Most Esteemed Rizal, this comes as a surprise!

EVERYMARIA:        *[To TAIMIS.]* Nellie, what are your feelings towards this man?

TAIMIS:                *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD to EVERYMARIA.]* I cannot show them, mother, until I know if he will embrace Christianity as I understand it, *[turns to PEPE who backs away]* and as it should be understood.

*[PEPE turns around.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD to PEPE.]* I know it's difficult. I had the same experience. But it's so easy if only you would ask for that grace He gives freely.

*[PEPE begins to walk away.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* I am willing to wait.

*[PEPE stops and turns to face TAIMIS.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* I understand that what I am asking for must be decided on with calmness and without haste.

*[PEPE turns and walks toward the potted plants.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* Do you really plan on going to Manila?  
*[Pause.]* I promise you fidelity while I wait.

*[PEPE stops and stares at TAIMIS.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* If you could only be more inclined to hear His voice.

*[PEPE looks away but stays where he stands. TAIMIS looks at EVERYMARIA who shakes her head with disapproval. EVERYJUAN changes into the BLUMENTRITT glasses and beard.]*

TAIMIS:                   *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* If I do not express what I feel for you it is because I cannot until you comply with my condition. Very sincerely, signed,  
Nellie.

*[TAIMIS puts down the Iris flowers and removes the NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig. PEPE stays where he is, staring at the potted plants, oblivious that EVERYMARIA is observing PEPE closely. PEPE turns to face TAIMIS and sees her back to her LEONOR RIVERA look, with the Hibiscus flower in her hair. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:               23 APRIL 1891  
                              JOSE RIZAL to FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT

*[PEPE brings out a letter and writes. EVERYJUAN looks at PEPE.]*

PEPE:                    My Brother, the tempest is over and nothing remains but ruins. *[Pause.]*  
                              Thank God! I have lost everything and I cannot lose more.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS, her back turned away from him, putting on a wedding veil.]*

PEPE:                    My fiancée, faithful to me for eleven years, is marrying an Englishman, a free man, an engineer. *[Pause.]* I thought I'd go mad, but with this happening having happened, I must smile, not cry. *[Silence.]* Enough about her.

*[TAIMIS takes off the veil and the Hibiscus flower. She puts the NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig back on, picks up the Iris flowers and faces PEPE.]*

PEPE:                    My family is finally bearing the name Rizal, instead of Mercado, the name we have been known under, until now. Rizal signifies persecution.

*[Pause. PEPE approaches the potted plants and stares at them.]*

PEPE:                    Perhaps it is time for me to go back to the Philippines and share dangers with my family. What good have I done in the last three years? What evil has occurred while I was in the country? Signed, Rizal.

*[PEPE hands the letter to EVERYJUAN. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:           24 APRIL 1891  
                          *NELLIE BOUSTEAD to JOSE RIZAL*

*[TAIMIS, as NELLIE BOUSTEAD, addresses PEPE.]*

TAIMIS:               *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* I understand your desire to leave. You plan to defend yourself against your enemies. God wants His creatures to work too, instead of just waiting for His aid.

*[PEPE looks away.]*

TAIMIS:               *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD.]* You tell me you want to follow Christ's laws. I am happy for you. I hope the Lord gives you more learning to do what you should. *[Pause.]* Remember how I was somewhat willing when you expressed your feelings towards me. I cannot go further without your decision.

EVERYMARIA:       *[To TAIMIS.]* Nellie, he is only in it for money!

PEPE:                 *[To TAIMIS.]* I will not marry you until I can afford to support you.

TAIMIS:               *[As NELLIE BOUSTEAD, ignoring EVERYMARIA, still writing.]* What else can I say? I wish you a happy trip and may the Lord guide your way and give you much blessings. Good bye! But you must come back. Signed, Nellie.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS, but then looks away. EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:           26 APRIL 1891  
                          *FERDINAND BLUMENTRITT to JOSE RIZAL*

EVERYJUAN:        [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] My Brother, I am truly sad that you have lost your fiancée. But if she could renounce you, she is not of your stature. She is just a silly girl who drops a diamond for a pebble.

EVERYMARIA:      [*to the audience*.] Blumentritt never knew what Leonor underwent.

EVERYJUAN:        [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] Enough about your fiancée, as I do not want to reopen a closed wound.

[*PEPE looks at TAIMIS who is still dressed as NELLIE BOUSTEAD and then at the potted plants. EVERYMARIA approaches TAIMIS and talks to her inaudibly, with TAIMIS getting increasingly offended.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [As *BLUMENTRITT*.] I am glad your family is well, but don't return to Philippines just yet. You will only suffer unnecessary peril there. You are more useful to your country while you are free. I believe better times in the Philippines are approaching. Affectionate regards from all of us, signed, Ferdinand Blumentritt.

[*TAIMIS, still as NELLIE BOUSTEAD, stands up, walks away from EVERYMARIA and approaches the calendar. She flips through it.*]

CALENDAR:                11 MAY 1891  
                              NELLIE BOUSTEAD to JOSE RIZAL

TAIMIS:                [As *NELLIE BOUSTEAD*.] Rizal, [*PEPE turns to face TAIMIS*.] I recommend that you do not ask my parents for my hand in marriage. At least, not just yet.

[*Silence. EVERYMARIA approaches TAIMIS.*]

TAIMIS:                   [As *NELLIE BOUSTEAD*.] It's my mother.

EVERYMARIA:       [*to TAIMIS*.] Nellie, Mr. Rizal is not settled and I don't quite see how he will provide for you.

TAIMIS:                   [As *NELLIE BOUSTEAD to EVERYMARIA*.] He won't marry me until he has the means to provide. Besides, until he concedes to my condition, I will reserve my answer.

EVERYMARIA:       And you believe everything Mr. Rizal says? Do you think yourself so beautiful that he'd do those impossible things he promises?

[*PEPE and TAIMIS are taken aback.*]

TAIMIS:                   [As *NELLIE BOUSTEAD to PEPE*.] I have no illusions about myself, but... [*Pause.*] I pray to the Lord for patience [*stares at PEPE and he notices*]. Sincerely, Nellie.

[*PEPE and TAIMIS stare at each other. TAIMIS reaches out but PEPE finally turns his back on TAIMIS. Silence. TAIMIS recomposes herself.*]

TAIMIS:                   [As *NELLIE BOUSTEAD*.] I am sorry that you take offense at my reserved manner towards you. But I have made clear my conditions. And do not get my parents wrong. I do not believe that they think you are incapable of loving me for other than financial reasons. As you wish it so, I will no longer hold my breath. [*Pause.*] I cannot offer you anything more than simple friendship. Sincerely, Nellie.

[*Silence. EVERYJUAN, while taking off the BLUMENTRITT glasses and beard, approaches EVERYMARIA, who is adjusting to a NARCISA RIZAL costume.*]

EVERYJUAN: Now that wasn't too bad. Rizal losing Leonor, sure, painful, that's understandable. But he got over it. Look at Nellie over there. And you still owe me an explanation regarding Suzanne Jacoby, how that flirting and leading her on can be called honorable.

*[As they speak, TAIMIS puts aside the NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig and Iris flowers. She reverts to the LEONOR RIVERA look, with the Hibiscus flower in her hair, her back turned to PEPE.]*

EVERYMARIA: As for Suzanne Jacoby, all we really have is that she is clearly attracted to him. No sign that he liked her back. It's happened before. Many times.

EVERYJUAN: My point exactly. He led her on. Nothing honorable about that.

EVERYMARIA: Not necessarily. Suzanne did say that she was so impressed with Rizal's cooking. *[To the audience.]* I never really imagined Rizal knowing how to cook.

*[PEPE winks at the audience.]*

EVERYMARIA: My main point is this: does being gentlemanly, courteous, and friendly necessitate to flirting? Is being attractive tantamount to leading one on? If it is, then let all men be boorish to all except their wives.

PEPE: If women were only to dance with their husbands, then let the worst dancers be the most virtuous.

EVERYJUAN: *[To PEPE.]* And where on earth did you say that?

*[PEPE walks to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR: *JOSE RIZAL'S ANNOTATIONS ON ANTONIO MORGAS  
"LOS SUCESOS DE LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS"*

EVERYMARIA: [To EVERYJUAN.] I warned you.

EVERYJUAN: Oh.

EVERYMARIA: And then, consider this: according to Rizal, he and Leonor Rivera have been in a relationship for eleven years. He didn't show the same patience with Nellie Boustead.

EVERYJUAN: Because she imposed an impossible condition on him.

EVERYMARIA: Impossible condition?

EVERYJUAN: A condition that was, for Rizal, impossible. To convert to Christianity in the way Nellie saw it. [Pause.] Oh. Never mind. I am still not convinced with what you said about Suzanne Jacoby.

EVERYMARIA: Let me show you something.

[EVERYMARIA approaches calendar and flips through it. It takes her some pages to find the date. EVERYJUAN waits impatiently, while PEPE sits down. TAIMIS remains in her position.]

CALENDAR: 27 DECEMBER 1891  
NARCISA RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL

[EVERYMARIA wears a black shawl and brings out a pile of letters tied together. She takes a sheet of paper and writes.]

EVERYMARIA: [As NARCISA RIZAL.] Dear Brother, here are some papers you asked for that I found in Calamba.

*[PEPE approaches the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:           28 DECEMBER 1891  
                          *JOSE RIZAL to MARIA RIZAL*

PEPE:                *[Bringing out a sheet of paper then writing on it.]* Dearest Maria, Sister,  
                          our loved ones have all arrived in Hong Kong with me and I have been told what  
                          you have been going through.

EVERYMARIA:        *[As NARCISA RIZAL.]* Pardon my delay in replying to you.

*[EVERYJUAN, confused, flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:           27 DECEMBER 1891  
                          *NARCISA RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL*  
                          28 DECEMBER 1891  
                          *JOSE RIZAL to MARIA RIZAL*

*[EVERYJUAN walks to stand in between PEPE and EVERYMARIA.]*

PEPE:                Endure all the hardships in this life and you can be sure that the next life  
                          will have only happiness for you.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS whose back remains turned. EVERYMARIA looks at TAIMIS, hesitates,  
and then continues reading. EVERYJUAN examines each one carefully, first PEPE, then  
EVERYMARIA, then TAIMIS.]*

EVERYMARIA:        *[As NARCISA RIZAL.]* I'm sorry that I have not found a single letter of  
                          Leonor you've asked for.

PEPE:                    Our lives are short and hardships are fleeting. Suffer everything for your name Rizal and for your children.

EVERYMARIA:        [*As NARCISA RIZAL.*] I do hope you'll forgive me for my delay. Aside from not finding Leonor's letters, I found my son Arsenio gravely ill and he died September 4 this year.

PEPE:                    Maria, I'm told that your children are very pretty and bright. I wish God be merciful to you all. When there is sadness, there is happiness.

EVERYMARIA:        [*As NARCISA RIZAL.*] I believe Mother would have already told you about the death of your godson Franz. [*Pause.*] Many regards to you and kiss our parents' hands for us.

PEPE:                    Maria, kisses for your children, signed, Jose.

EVERYMARIA:        [*As NARCISA RIZAL.*] Your distressed sister who loves and does not forget you, signed Narcisa.

*[Silence. EVERYJUAN takes EVERYMARIA's letter and then PEPE's. EVERYJUAN then puts PEPE's letter in EVERYMARIA's box before giving EVERYMARIA's letter to PEPE. As PEPE reads the letter, TAIMIS stands up and walks towards PEPE. PEPE absorbs the contents of the letter, looks at TAIMIS, then at EVERYMARIA, and looks straight ahead.]*

EVERYJUAN:            And boom goes his heart.

EVERYMARIA:        It doesn't end there.

*[EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:            ?? AUGUST (or SEPTEMBER) 1893

*[EVERYMARIA approaches PEPE and points to TAIMIS who is now wearing a black veil over herself. PEPE approaches the frame and touches it. He then breaks down. EVERYMARIA beckons EVERYJUAN to look away. They both do. As they do, PEPE's lamentation becomes frantic but noiseless.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As PEPE continues his noiseless and frantic lamentation.]* All right, what is that all about?

EVERYMARIA:     *[As PEPE continues his noiseless and frantic lamentation.]* Leonor Rivera died on the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 1893. By that time, Rizal was already exiled in Dapitan. It was probably soon after that he heard of Leonor's death and, possibly, from his sister Narcisa. Urban legend has it that he locked himself up for days.

*[PEPE continues his noiseless and frantic lamentation until he breaks into exhaustion. He wipes his tears and goes back to his place.]*

EVERYMARIA:     There's no way to verify what happened to Rizal, but based on what we've already seen through his correspondences, this is not hard to imagine. And I don't think he ever lamented over any other woman this way.

*[PEPE flips through the CALENDAR. EVERYMARIA plays a kundiman.]*

CALENDAR:        *JOSE RIZAL's "MY RETREAT"*<sup>1</sup>

PEPE:            I live with the remembrance of those that I have loved  
                    and hear their names still spoken, who haunt my memory;  
                    some already are dead, others have long forgotten—  
                    but what does it matter? I live remembering the past  
                    and no one can ever take the past away from me.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Mi Retiro" translation by Nick Joaquin

*[TAIMIS stands and moves to the cadence of PEPE's lines. PEPE stands up and follows her as TAIMIS keeps moving away. EVERYJUAN just watches on and the kundiman continues in the background.]*

PEPE:           Across the fields and rivers of my native town  
                  perhaps has traveled the breeze that now I breathe by chance;  
                  perhaps it will give back to me what once I gave it:  
                  the sighs and kisses of a person idolized  
                  and the sweet secrets of a virginal romance.

                  On seeing the same moon, as silvery as before,  
                  I feel within me the ancient melancholy revive;  
                  a thousand memories of love and vows awaken:  
                  a patio, an azotea, a beach, a leafy bower;  
                  silences and sighs, and blushes of delight ...

                  A butterfly athirst for radiances and colors,  
                  dreaming of other skies and of a larger strife,  
                  I left, scarcely a youth, my land and my affections,  
                  and vagrant everywhere, with no qualms, with no terrors,  
                  squandered in foreign lands the April of my life.

*[Silence. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA look at PEPE, still staring at TAIMIS. TAIMIS walks back to her box and sits. Silence. PEPE looks at EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA. PEPE fixes himself up. Long silence.]*

END OF ACT I

*[EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and reveals the title of Act II.]*

CALENDAR:           ACT II: SILENCE AT THE CROSSROADS

[EVERYJUAN stares at the calendar.]

EVERYMARIA:       [*finally breaking the silence. To the audience.*] Just a bit of trivia about Leonor Rivera and Jose Rizal: We heard from Rizal himself that when returned to the Philippines in 1887, he and Leonor did not meet. This means that they hadn't met each other since when Rizal left for Spain in May 1882. Between that year 1882 and 1890, well... that's eight years of not having seen each other.

[TAIMIS walks back to her spot behind the frame.]

EVERYJUAN:         A relationship through letters. Hard to imagine, given today's technology.

[PEPE and TAIMIS stare at each other while keeping distance. PEPE hands a letter to EVERYJUAN who walks towards TAIMIS. EVERYMARIA intercepts the letter.]

EVERYMARIA:       Actually, it's also said that at around 1888, [*crumples the letter.*] Leonor's mother eventually intercepted Rizal's letters to Leonor by bribing the postman.

[TAIMIS hands a letter to EVERYJUAN who walks towards PEPE.]

EVERYJUAN:         Wouldn't Rizal have suspected that, given Leonor's letters to him?

[EVERYMARIA gets the letter from EVERYJUAN.]

EVERYMARIA:       We could assume two possibilities: either Leonor was forbidden from writing to Rizal or her letters were also intercepted.

EVERYJUAN:         Wouldn't Rizal have suspected that as well?

EVERYMARIA: If he did, [*crumples the letter in her hand*] what could he do?

[*Both stare at PEPE.*]

EVERYJUAN: But then he would not have heard from Leonor from 1888 to 1890!

EVERYMARIA: Exactly. [*Pause.*] How could one man be struck with such grief over a woman whom he hasn't seen for eight years and hasn't heard from for two?

[*Silence.*]

EVERYJUAN: What about Rizal's women?

[*TAIMIS removes the Hibiscus from her hair. She then wears a SEIKO USUI wig and brings out a big Japanese fan with either a Chrysanthemum or Cherry Blossom design.*]

EVERYMARIA: What do you mean?

EVERYJUAN: Why wouldn't Rizal go for the girls he meets? Leonor Rivera wouldn't know and doesn't need to know.

PEPE: All my relationships with women have been dealt with honorably.

EVERYJUAN: Right, keep telling us that.

EVERYMARIA: The difficulty of assessing relationships is that intimate moments are hardly written down in detail. There is a privacy that's maintained.

EVERYJUAN: It's free for speculation then.

EVERYMARIA: But only within the bounds that the facts and contexts can frame them. We still have to account for Rizal's year-long grief over a woman he hasn't seen or heard from in a long while.

[*Silence.*]

EVERYJUAN: Let's begin with Seiko Usui, more popularly known as O Sei San.

[*TAIMIS as SEIKO USUI stands up and leaves the frame. PEPE stands up and approaches TAIMIS. After a pause, EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR: 13 APRIL 1888  
RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL

[*PEPE brings out a journal and writes on it.*]

PEPE: I like Japan. It was a beautiful golden month. I wonder if I shall have another month like it in my life. To think that I have to leave this life for uncertainty. I've been offered an easy way to live, to be loved and esteemed.

[*TAIMIS faces the audience.*]

TAIMIS: [*As SEIKO USUI.*] Konnichiwa. I, Usui Seiko, come from Chiba. My father was a samurai who ended up running a trading store in Yokohama. I know a bit of English and French. These languages help me in my work as an interpreter in the embassy.

PEPE: [*To TAIMIS.*] Sayonara. To you shall I dedicate this final entry in the memoirs of my youth. No woman like you has loved me better, no woman like you has sacrificed herself. You will never know how you remain in my memory.

TAIMIS:                   [As *SEIKO USUI*.] Yes, I know Mr. Rizal. I toured him around and showed him Japanese culture and sites. I even brought him to Ryusenji temple in Meguro, Tokyo. But I only knew him for one month. He was nice.

PEPE:                     Your name lives in my sighs. Your image animates my thoughts. When shall another divine afternoon in the Meguro temple ever return?

TAIMIS:                   [As *SEIKO USUI*.] Imagine my surprise when I learned that he became a hero in his country! They made post stamps out of him! [*Pause.*] Would you like to see my collection?

PEPE:                     When will sweet time with you ever return?

TAIMIS:                   [As *SEIKO USUI*.] Sadly, my stamp collection got destroyed during the bombing of Tokyo in 1944. [*Pause.*] I died in 1947, by the way, at age 80 and buried with my husband Alfred Charlton at Zoshigaya Reien. Alfred and I got married in 1897.

PEPE:                     When shall there be ever sweeter hours?

TAIMIS:                   [As *SEIKO USUI*.] No, I never really talked about Mr. Rizal in interviews. My sister, Usui Yoshida, she talked about me and my stamp collections. That was after my death.

PEPE:                     Sayonara!

[*EVERYJUAN approaches EVERYMARIA.*]

EVERYJUAN:             It's definite. Rizal liked her. A lot.

EVERYMARIA:           And he wrote about his feelings in a memoir, not to her.

EVERYJUAN: Still...

EVERYMARIA: Fine. If you will insist on a romance, then the best we can conjure is something like this...

*[PEPE moves closer to TAIMIS, still dressed as SEIKO USUI.]*

TAIMIS: *[As SEIKO USUI.]* ...and here you see is the burial place of Gonpachi and Komurasaki. Here in Meguro, in Ryusenji Temple, this is a popular site because of the great lovers Gonpachi and Komurasaki. Do you know Gonpachi and Komurasaki?

PEPE: It's the first time I've heard of them.

*[EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA begin to mime the story of Gonpachi and Komurasaki.]*

TAIMIS: *[As SEIKO USUI.]* Gonpachi was a ronin who discovered that his great love Komurasaki was reduced to a courtesan. Gonpachi wanted to buy her freedom back. But he did not have any money to do so and he became a bandit to buy her freedom. He then got caught and was executed. In grief, Komurasaki then visited Gonpachi's grave and killed herself there. Beautiful, no? Like Romeo and Juliet?

*[EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA (as Gonpachi and Komurasaki) fall dead. PEPE stares at them and then at TAIMIS. Silence.]*

PEPE: Yes, beautiful. *[Silence.]* I wrote a novel.

TAIMIS: *[As SEIKO USUI.]* Very nice. I would very much like to read it. Is it in English or in French?

[*EVERYJUAN suddenly stands up and separates TAIMIS and PEPE.*]

EVERYJUAN: This is ridiculous! That can't just be it!

[*EVERYMARIA stands up.*]

EVERYMARIA: If you like a girl and you want the relationship to go somewhere, you write to her, and not in your diary!

[*Pause.*]

EVERYJUAN: Rizal could have stayed.

PEPE: I was offered an easy way to live.

EVERYMARIA: And he didn't take it.

[*Both EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA look at TAIMIS, who has already removed the SEIKO USUI wig and fan, reverting back to her LEONOR RIVERA look. She puts back the Hibiscus flower in her hair. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA look at PEPE who, they see, is staring at TAIMIS staring back at him.*]

EVERYJUAN: All right. Rizal liked O Sei San but he didn't tell her.

[*TAIMIS stares angrily at EVERYJUAN. She removes the Hibiscus from her hair and puts on the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and hat.*]

EVERYMARIA: And that diary entry, that's the only time he mentions her. And where is Suzanne Jacoby mentioned?

EVERYJUAN: It's said that Suzanne Jacoby posed as a model for one of Rizal's sculptures.

*[EVERYJUAN flips through the s, revealing a picture of Rizal's sculpture: The Triumph of Science over Death. TAIMIS imitates the pose of that sculpture.]*

EVERYJUAN: Don't tell me nothing happens when you ask a woman to pose like that.

EVERYMARIA: Nothing worth noting, I suppose.

EVERYJUAN: That's why it's called flirting. It's nothing serious.

EVERYMARIA: Nice quirk to pin on Rizal. He only makes a move when he's not serious. When he likes a girl, all he manages is to write about her in a diary. And not in such great detail either as compared to another girl.

*[TAIMIS, offended, looks at PEPE. She angrily removes the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and then calmly puts it back in the box. TAIMIS recomposes herself as LEONOR RIVERA and puts the Hibiscus flower back on.]*

EVERYMARIA: Yes, there is another girl. But not at this point in Rizal's life.

*[EVERYJUAN looks at PEPE, who brings out a sheet of paper and begins writing. As he writes, EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR: 12 JUNE 1888  
JOSE RIZAL to RIZAL FAMILY

*[TAIMIS brings out a letter, kisses it, then hands it to EVERYJUAN who carries it to PEPE.]*

PEPE:                    *[as he writes.]* My dear family, I am quite surprised that I have received some letters from Blumentritt but no letters from you.

*[EVERYJUAN goes behind PEPE and crumples the letter.]*

PEPE:                    *[oblivious to what has happened.]* I cannot guess the reason.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS who just stares back. When PEPE gets back to his writing, TAIMIS removes the Hibiscus flower. She puts on a TOTTIE BECKETT wig and apron with a rose pattern on it.]*

PEPE:                    London is beautiful; the land is cultivated, the houses are pretty and neat, and the factories are big. I am now living with a private family, happy to rent me two rooms: one for sleeping and another for writing and receiving visitors.

*[TAIMIS, as TOTTIE, brings out a tray with a tea set from her box and serves it to PEPE.]*

PEPE:                    Thank you, Miss Beckett.

TAIMIS:                *[As TOTTIE BECKETT.]* Please, call me Tottie.

PEPE:                    *[smiles.]* Thank you, Miss Tottie.

*[TAIMIS smiles and moves back to her position behind the frame. PEPE resumes writing.]*

PEPE:                    The family I'm with consists of husband, wife and six children. The eldest daughter, Gertrude—or Tottie, for short—sings well.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS, who has already taken off her TOTTIE BECKETT wig and apron and reverted to her LEONOR RIVERA look, wearing the Hibiscus flower.]*

PEPE: Tottie and her sister are already young women and have sweethearts, by the way.

*[Silence. PEPE resumes writing. TAIMIS brings out a letter, kisses it, and hands it to EVERYJUAN.]*

PEPE: Please let me know if you have received the letters that I have sent you. Please let me know if you've received the other items I have sent you. Please write back so that I may not believe that letters get lost. May you continue united and in good harmony. Your son and brother who loves you dearly, signed, Jose.

*[EVERYJUAN goes behind PEPE and crumples the letter in his hand. Oblivious, PEPE hands his letter to EVERYMARIA who reads the letter upon receipt and goes back to his position in front of the calendar.]*

EVERYJUAN: Did Rizal sense that his letters to Leonor were being intercepted?

EVERYMARIA: Who knows?

EVERYJUAN: At least there's someone here to keep him company.

*[TAIMIS puts the TOTTIE BECKETT wig and apron back on.]*

EVERYMARIA: Company. That's all.

EVERYJUAN: That's all?

*[TAIMIS, as TOTTIE BECKETT, approaches PEPE and pours him tea and then moves away.]*

EVERYJUAN:           They had enough time together. Just imagine it: Tottie Beckett serving Rizal his breakfast in the morning, serving him a good cup of English tea when he comes back from the library... and how long did he stay with them?

*[EVERYJUAN runs to the calendar, flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:            12 JUNE 1888 to 19 MARCH 1889

EVERYJUAN:           Nine months! I bet she even posed for Rizal in some of his sculptures.

EVERYMARIA:         Just like Suzanne Jacoby.

EVERYJUAN:           Just like Suzanne Jacoby.

*[TAIMIS, as TOTTIE BECKETT, takes on a seductive pose. When PEPE finishes his tea, he finds a letter on the tray and reads it. TAIMIS speaks out its contents.]*

TAIMIS:                *[As TOTTIE BECKETT.]* You funny little thing. Did you never worry about the first letter I sent you? I had sent it back the other day. I was so miserable back then. I couldn't help but write to you... Nobody knew anything...

*[PEPE puts the letter aside and brings out a new letter. He flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:            19 MARCH 1889  
                          JOSE RIZAL to ANTONIO REGIDOR

*[PEPE then approaches EVERYJUAN and gives him a letter. As EVERYJUAN reads, PEPE speaks out its contents.]*

PEPE:                 I am leaving the Becketts soon. Perhaps even London.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS, still in TOTTIE BECKETT wig and apron.]*

PEPE: I cannot lead her on. I cannot marry her. I have other ties. I cannot commit the indignity of placing passion over the pure, virginal love she might offer me.

*[PEPE turns his back on the audience. TAIMIS approaches, sees the tray and looks at PEPE whose back is also turned away from her. Silence. TAIMIS picks up the tray and goes back to her position behind the frame. She packs up the tea set back into the box.]*

EVERYMARIA: When Rizal first met Tottie, she had a sweetheart.

EVERYJUAN: So? Who knows what happened in the Beckett's house?

*[TAIMIS hands PEPE a letter. As PEPE reads, TAIMIS speaks out the content.]*

TAIMIS: *[As TOTTIE BECKETT.]* I can't imagine why you don't answer my letter. It's been nearly three weeks since I wrote you. There is not a day that I haven't looked for a letter from you and being so disappointed not receiving one.

EVERYJUAN: Just like Suzanne Jacoby!

EVERYMARIA: Shut up and let her finish.

TAIMIS: I hope I haven't offended you. *[Silence.]* I can't think of what I have done. *[Silence.]* I shall know you are offended if you do not write me back.

*[PEPE folds the letter up and puts it in his box. TAIMIS hastily removes TOTTIE BECKETT wig and apron and shoves them in her box. She is once again in her LEONOR RIVERA look, wearing the Hibiscus flower.]*

EVERYMARIA: According to the 1911 census, Gertrude “Tottie” Beckett at 41 was still living with her parents, away from where they had accommodated Rizal.

EVERYJUAN: *[To the audience.]* Was Tottie Beckett still not over Rizal by 1911?

EVERYMARIA: I wouldn’t read that much into it. Stop creating intrigues.

EVERYJUAN: Like the intrigue I’m raising with Suzanne Jacoby?

EVERYMARIA: Yes.

*[PEPE approaches TAIMIS and they both look at each other. PEPE brings out a letter, kisses it, and hands it to EVERYMARIA.]*

EVERYJUAN: But it adds to the drama. *[Pause.]* Anyway, either way you look at it, Tottie Beckett really had one stinky love life. Talk about obsession.

*[TAIMIS brings out the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and hat but doesn’t wear it.]*

EVERYMARIA: *[Crumples PEPE’s letter while he is oblivious to it.]* Like this obsession you have over Suzanne Jacoby. Do you realize your whole theory rests on just a phrase and two sentences?

TAIMIS: *[As SUZANNE JACOBY.]* You naughty boy. Hurry and come back. I’ll repay you with a thousand embraces and more if you wish.

*[TAIMIS hides the SUZANNE JACOBY wig and hat.]*

EVERYMARIA: These go counter to everything we have seen so far.

EVERYJUAN: You’re so defensive.

EVERYMARIA: You're so obsessed. Well, since you've raised the topic of obsession earlier, we might as well revisit Nellie Boustead in 1889.

*[TAIMIS puts on NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig and brings out the Iris flowers.]*

EVERYJUAN: What for?

EVERYMARIA: Because Leonor Rivera wouldn't break up with Rizal until the latter part of 1890. As early as 1889, Rizal knew the Bousteads already.

*[EVERYMARIA brings out the ANTONIO LUNA moustache and hands it to EVERYJUAN.]*

EVERYJUAN: But why...

EVERYMARIA: Because, remember, Antonio Luna plays a big role in this.

EVERYJUAN: If I say that I see your point, can we skip this part?

EVERYMARIA: Come on!

*[EVERYJUAN sighs while putting on the moustache. When he looks at TAIMIS, now as NELLIE BOUSTEAD, he smiles at her and waves. TAIMIS waves as well, but at PEPE who politely bows back. EVERYJUAN notices this and stares at PEPE who stares back. EVERYJUAN looks at EVERYMARIA who gives him a letter and pen to write on. EVERYMARIA runs to the calendar.]*

CALENDAR: 9 OCTOBER 1889  
ANTONIO LUNA to JOSE RIZAL

EVERYJUAN: *[As ANTONIO LUNA, writes.]* Dear Rizal, friend, there is no reason for us to be cold. I asked you many times if you were courting Nellie. You said that you

didn't. You told me that you had engagements to fulfill. You even encouraged me to court her.

*[EVERYJUAN looks accusingly at PEPE before calming down.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As ANTONIO LUNA.]* That's all I wanted to say. We are still friends. In fact I always believed that we were. Signed, Antonio Luna.

*[EVERYJUAN hands the letter to PEPE. As PEPE peruses the letter quietly, EVERYJUAN picks up another letter, writes on it, kisses it, and hands it to TAIMIS. TAIMIS looks at it, and puts it inside the box. Silence. When PEPE finishes the letter, TAIMIS waves at him again. PEPE, again, politely bows back. EVERYJUAN brings out another letter and writes with agitation. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:       ?? DECEMBER 1889  
                    ANTONIO LUNA to JOSE RIZAL

EVERYJUAN:       *[As ANTONIO LUNA, writing.]* Does she love me? I wrote to Nellie some days ago and still she hasn't replied. *[Pause.]* Am I just a fool believing in a love that no longer exists?

*[EVERYJUAN hurriedly hands the letter to PEPE and hurriedly removes the LUNA moustache. TAIMIS waves at PEPE again, smilingly. PEPE bows with a polite smile.]*

EVERYJUAN:       Do not ask me to do that again. Luna saw that Rizal liked Nellie.

EVERYMARIA:     Luna was obsessed with Nellie. Why would you trust him?

EVERYJUAN:       Rizal eventually did court Nellie.

EVERYMARIA: Months after Leonor broke up with him. Rizal was on a rebound. What is obvious is that Nellie liked Rizal.

*[EVERYJUAN realizes that he still has the ANTONIO LUNA moustache on. He removes it and hands it to EVERYMARIA.]*

EVERYMARIA: As for Rizal, he didn't last two months courting Nellie. Contrast that again with the girl whom Rizal has neither heard from nor seen for two years and is still capable of breaking Rizal's heart.

*[TAIMIS takes off the NELLIE BOUSTEAD wig, reverting back to LEONOR RIVERA look, wearing the Hibiscus flower. EVERYJUAN, EVERYMARIA and PEPE stare at TAIMIS.]*

EVERYJUAN: What is it with her? What is it with Leonor Rivera?

*[PEPE goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR: JOSE RIZAL'S "THE FLOWERS OF HEIDELBERG"<sup>2</sup>

*[PEPE brings out a book from his box. He opens the book and brings out a pressed flower. He stares at it with intensity as EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA stare at PEPE. PEPE puts the flower back in the book. EVERYJUAN plays a kundiman.]*

PEPE: Go to my country, go, O foreign flowers,  
sown by the traveler along the road,  
and under that blue heaven  
that watches over my loved ones,  
recount the devotion  
the pilgrim nurses for his native sod!

---

<sup>2</sup> "The Flowers of Heidelberg" translation by Nick Joaquin

Carry, carry, O flowers,  
my love to my loved ones,  
peace to my country and its fecund loam,  
faith to its men and virtue to its women,  
health to the gracious beings  
that dwell within the sacred paternal home.

*[PEPE hands the book to EVERYMARIA, who then moves in cadence to PEPE's verses.  
EVERYMARIA hands the book to TAIMIS, who opens the book and brings out the flower.]*

PEPE:                   When you reach that shore,  
deposit the kiss I gave you  
on the wings of the wind above  
that with the wind it may rove  
and I may kiss all that I worship, honor and love!

*[PEPE stares at TAIMIS, who stares back at him. TAIMIS smells the flower, kisses it, and places  
it back in the book. She then places the book in her box. Silence. TAIMIS and PEPE sit.]*

## END OF ACT II

*[EVERYJUAN goes to the calendar and reveals the title of Act III.]*

CALENDAR:            *ACT III: FLOWERS ON THE ROAD*

EVERYJUAN:           You mean to show me Seiko Usui whom Rizal doesn't tell his feelings to,  
Tottie Beckett whom Rizal runs away from, and Nellie Boustead whom he only  
courts after his heartbreak for only one month. *[Pause.]* Now I'm not even sure  
any more about Suzanne Jacoby. *[Pause.]* What's with this Leonor Rivera that  
Rizal would be so hung up over her? What makes her so important? Why should  
she have any social relevance?

[*Silence.*]

EVERYMARIA: Consider how immobilized he was upon the time Leonor Rivera broke up with him. How he'd try to recover by courting Nellie Boustead. What matters is that Rizal found Leonor Rivera important enough to disrupt the regular rhythm of his life. As to why, I don't know. It's hard to know. It's near impossible.

[*Pause.*]

EVERYJUAN: You can't lead me on like that.

EVERYMARIA: In the famous compilations of Rizal's written works and correspondences, you have one volume of compiled letters between Rizal and his family, another volume for the correspondences between Rizal and his fellow propagandists, another volume for miscellaneous correspondences, and two volumes between Rizal and Blumentritt. Why is there none for Rizal and Leonor Rivera?

[*TAIMIS brings out a small box.*]

EVERYJUAN: Leonor's mother burnt those letters?

[*TAIMIS opens the small box.*]

EVERYMARIA: Legend has it that Leonor's mother told her that the only letters Leonor was allowed to keep were those of her husband's. She had to burn every single one of her letters from Rizal just before her wedding. It is also said that she kept the ashes of those letters until her death.

[*TAIMIS puts aside the small box and puts on a wedding veil.*]

EVERYJUAN: I heard of that. I also heard that she sewed in the remains of those letters at the hem of her wedding dress. *[Pause.]* You can't seriously believe that. And what about Leonor's letters to Rizal? Shouldn't they be lying around somewhere?

EVERYMARIA: The fact is that there is no compilation of Rizal-Leonor correspondences, regardless of the legends and speculations. Remember, even Rizal's sister could not find any of Leonor's letters to send back to Rizal.

EVERYJUAN: Maybe there was no Leonor Rivera-Jose Rizal relationship after all.

*[TAIMIS and PEPE look sharply at EVERYJUAN who backs away.]*

EVERYMARIA: We don't need their love letters. Just think about the grief we examined. The relationships that could have been. You can't deny it. The grief and the missed opportunities are clear.

*[EVERYJUAN looks at TAIMIS.]*

EVERYMARIA: You seriously don't think that Rizal was that in love with his country, that Leonor Rivera was simply a metaphor for the Philippines, or something like what Blumentritt would suggest.

*[TAIMIS brings out a small Philippine flag and uses it to cheer PEPE on.]*

PEPE: I wish that a volcano would just erupt and devour the Philippines, sufferings, injustices, and all, and grace us with sleep.

*[TAIMIS puts aside the flag. EVERYJUAN looks at PEPE.]*

EVERYJUAN: So we are at a dead end, then.

[*Silence.*]

EVERYMARIA: Not quite. We may not have the correspondences between Rizal and Leonor while Rizal was abroad; but we still have Rizal's journals, Rizal's correspondences with other people discussing Leonor Rivera, and, early letters from Leonor dating back 1881.

[*EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and flips through it.*]

CALENDAR: 2 JANUARY 1881  
*LEONOR RIVERA to JOSE RIZAL*

EVERYJUAN: What are we waiting for, then? Aside from the queasiness of looking at somebody else's diary?

[*PEPE takes off his bowler hat, overcoat, and tie.*]

EVERYMARIA: To keep in mind that the Rizal we are about to see isn't yet the man we see in our currency.

[*EVERYMARIA picks up the potted plants.*]

EVERYMARIA: He isn't the man yet who became notorious for his two novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*. Nor is he the man who cultivated Dapitan while in exile, got implicated as leader of the Revolution and executed in Luneta.

[*EVERYMARIA puts the potted plants in her box.*]

EVERYMARIA: For now, he is just a young boy, 19 years old.

[*PEPE wipes off his moustache.*]

EVERYMARIA: And Leonor is just 13.

*[Wide eyed, TAIMIS flashes a big smile. She brings out a letter and kisses it.]*

EVERYJUAN: 13?!

EVERYMARIA: During their time, menstruation already makes you a woman. Regardless of maturity. Or lack thereof.

EVERYJUAN: And Rizal was...

EVERYMARIA: As I said earlier, 19.

*[TAIMIS hands PEPE the letter and rushes back to her position behind the frame. PEPE reads.]*

TAIMIS: *[As LEONOR RIVERA.]* Esteemed friend, I have read your letter dated December 30. I haven't answered your letters, not because your letters were boring. In fact I wrote replies, but I ended up destroying them, as nobody came to visit me at the college.

*[TAIMIS glares suddenly at PEPE. TAIMIS's glare quickly transforms into a sweet smile.]*

TAIMIS: *[As LEONOR RIVERA.]* Aside from that, I couldn't help but blush. *[Hides her face in embarrassment, and then reveals a serious face.]* Your signature is different. Are you putting another name for fear that I might despise you? *[Breaks into a gentle smile.]* You have no idea how glad I am to receive your letters. But it's a good thing you used another name. Who knows what would happen if some stranger were to read it? *[Glares at the audience, then smiles at PEPE.]*  
Command your servant who kisses your hand, signed, Taimis.

[EVERYMARIA looks at the audience.]

EVERYMARIA: a.k.a. Leonor Rivera.

[Silence. PEPE folds up the letter and goes to the calendar and flips through it. He looks at TAIMIS. TAIMIS buns up her hair and puts on a shawl and a crown of white Jasmines, turning her into SEGUNDA KATIGBAK. She stares far away.]

CALENDAR: 16 NOVEMBER 1881  
JOSE RIZAL'S REMINISCENCES OF SEGUNDA KATIGBAK  
APRIL to DECEMBER 1877

[EVERYMARIA begins to play a kundiman. PEPE brings out his journal and writes.]

PEPE: [Writing.] Reminiscences: April to December 1877.

[EVERYJUAN changes costume. As PEPE narrates, TAIMIS (as SEGUNDA KATIGBAK) and EVERYJUAN relive PEPE's narrative. PEPE puts aside his journal and accompanies EVERYJUAN walking around the stage.]

PEPE: [To the audience.] My friend Mariano Katigbak and I were on vacation from college. It was April back then.

[TAIMIS approaches EVERYJUAN.]

TAIMIS: [As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.] Brother!

EVERYJUAN: [As MARIANO KATIGBAK.] Jose, this is my sister, Segunda. She is getting married this December.

*[TAIMIS looks at EVERYJUAN who raises a white veil in front of her. TAIMIS then looks at PEPE who greets her politely.]*

PEPE: *[to the audience.]* Things would have it been simple, if it weren't for...

TAIMIS: *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* My brother told me that you're skilled in sketching. Could you sketch me?

PEPE: *[to TAIMIS.]* I am really not all that skilled.

EVERYJUAN: *[As MARIANO KATIGBAK.]* No need to be so coy. *[To TAIMIS.]* I've seen Jose keep a lot of sketches.

*[TAIMIS goes her position behind the frame and poses, while PEPE brings out a sketchbook, looks at TAIMIS, and begins to sketch.]*

PEPE: *[To the audience as he sketches.]* She was 14 back then. She had expressive eyes, sometimes passionate, sometimes drooping, and her smile was bewitching and provocative... All in all, she was very like a nymph. *[Pause.]* In my 16 years, I've seen more beautiful women, but none as bewitching as her.

*[Finishes the sketch and hands it to TAIMIS. She looks at it and shows it to EVERYJUAN.]*

TAIMIS: *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* It's beautiful!

EVERYJUAN: *[As MARIANO KATIGBAK.]* Jose, no need to be modest.

PEPE: *[To the audience.]* It was an ugly sketch.

*[TAIMIS walks towards EVERYMARIA who keeps on playing a kundiman.]*

PEPE:                    [*To the audience.*] When Segunda finally entered La Concordia, I thought that that was that, and I stopped thinking of her. [*PEPE walks to EVERYMARIA.*] Then I encountered her again in La Concordia when I visited my sister.

[*TAIMIS gets in the way between PEPE and EVERYMARIA. PEPE stops beside TAIMIS.*]

PEPE:                    [*To the audience.*] I cannot recall how our conversation began, but I do remember her asking me...

TAIMIS:                 [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] What flowers do you like most?

PEPE:                    [*To TAIMIS.*] I like all, although I prefer white and black ones.

TAIMIS:                 [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] Oh. [*Silence.*] I like white and pink flowers. [*Silence.*] Actually, I like black flowers too. [*Silence.*] Do you have a sweetheart?

PEPE:                    I never thought of having one. Women won't pay attention to me.

TAIMIS:                 [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK, laughs.*] You're fooling yourself. Would you like me to find you one?

PEPE:                    No thank you. [*Silence.*] Will you be heading home this Decem...

TAIMIS:                 [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] No.

[*Silence. TAIMIS turns away. She looks at EVERYJUAN raising the white veil in front of her. TAIMIS faces PEPE again, smiling.*]

TAIMIS:                 [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] I would very much want to stay here and study for five more years. [*Silence.*] Is there anything you would ask of me?

[*Silence.*]

PEPE: I don't ask anything of women. Rather, I expect them to command me.

TAIMIS: [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] In that case...

[*TAIMIS gives PEPE her photograph. PEPE looks at it, then at her.*]

PEPE: Thank you. This will help me make another sketch of you. Perhaps, this time, I could do you justice.

[*TAIMIS just smiles and moves to her position behind the frame. PEPE moves away from TAIMIS and begins to sketch, looking at TAIMIS and not at the photograph as he does so.*]

PEPE: [*To the audience while sketching*] Segunda's glances were terrible for their sweetness; her voice was resonant, an accompaniment to her movements. [*Stops sketching. Silence.*] How did the years pass by too fast for me to even relish them?

[*PEPE finishes the sketch and pockets the photograph. He then approaches TAIMIS who brings out a bouquet of black and white flowers and meets PEPE. PEPE hands her the sketch.*]

TAIMIS: [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK, looking at the sketch.*] Thank you. You indeed do me justice.

[*TAIMIS hands him the bouquet. Pause.*]

TAIMIS: [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] From your sister.

[*Pause. PEPE looks at EVERYMARIA who still plays a kundiman.*]

PEPE: Thank you. Who arranged it? My sister has no skill in making bouquets.

[*Silence.*]

TAIMIS:                   [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] All right, I made it for you.

[*TAIMIS and PEPE smile at each other. Silence.*]

PEPE:                     [*Smells the flowers.*] Nevertheless, still, thank you.

[*Silence. PEPE looks at EVERYJUAN who raises the white veil once more.*]

PEPE:                     [*Looking at TAIMIS.*] After knowing you, December is going to be...

TAIMIS:                   [*As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.*] But I'm not going to get married!

[*TAIMIS turns away from PEPE and she wipes her eyes. PEPE stares at her for a while before putting the bouquet of flowers on top of his box.*]

PEPE:                     [*To the audience.*] Perhaps she did love me. Perhaps her love for her fiancé is nothing more than girlish love.

[*TAIMIS tries to snatch the white veil from EVERYJUAN who keeps it out of her reach. PEPE just stares at them. EVERYMARIA stops playing.*]

PEPE:                     I have no illusions about myself. I'm not gallant, not handsome... If she loved me despite that, her love would be true.

[*Silence.*]

PEPE:                     Was it something I'd risk?

*[TAIMIS gives PEPE a letter which he brings to EVERYJUAN. EVERYJUAN peruses the letter and gives it to PEPE. PEPE walks to TAIMIS but stops a few steps away from her. He instead goes to EVERYMARIA and gives her the letter. EVERYMARIA looks at the letter and brings the letter to TAIMIS. TAIMIS receives the letter, looks at EVERYMARIA, and then at PEPE who just stares back. TAIMIS looks at the letter again before staring back at PEPE. EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at both PEPE and TAIMIS.]*

PEPE:                    *[To the audience.]* Around that time, rumors flew about what was going on between Segunda and myself. *[Silence.]* The truth was that we loved each other without even having declared it. But our glances made it clear.

*[PEPE walks towards the bouquet on the box. EVERYMARIA resumes playing a kundiman.]*

PEPE:                    December crept closer and closer, and somehow it seemed that something contrived for our paths to meet.

*[TAIMIS approaches PEPE.]*

TAIMIS:                *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* I was told last night that you were sick.

PEPE:                    I feel better now, thank you. *[Picks up the flowers.]* Errand from my sister.

TAIMIS:                *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* I'm glad you're well. Last night I was praying for you.

*[PEPE walks away. Stops. Pauses. Walks back to TAIMIS and brings out the photograph.]*

PEPE:                    Señorita, I still have your photograph. Will you be offended if I keep it?

TAIMIS:                *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK, smiles.]* No, of course not.

*[EVERYJUAN approaches TAIMIS, gives her a letter and moves away. TAIMIS reads it.]*

TAIMIS:                    *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* It's my father. He wants me to go home.  
*[Silence.]* I do want to stay in La Concordia for a few more years. *[Silence.]* I  
cannot believe that it's December already.

*[Both look at the calendar. EVERYMARIA stops playing. Silence. PEPE moves closer to  
TAIMIS. TAIMIS does the same. They are very close, this time with no frame parting them.]*

PEPE:                    When are you heading home?

TAIMIS:                    *[As SEGUNDA KATIGBAK.]* This Saturday.

*[Pause. They stare at each other. Long silence.]*

PEPE:                    I'm heading home this Friday.

*[EVERYJUAN gets in between them and drops the white veil in front of TAIMIS.]*

PEPE:                    *[To the audience, while staring at TAIMIS.]* For a while we stared at each  
other in silence. I could not help but think of what it would have been had  
Segunda and I ended up together. It was then that I felt anguish, perhaps even a  
jealousy. Perhaps because I knew that this was the end, perhaps because of the  
million little things that got between us. Perhaps because I felt my love was  
gaining vigor, eager to face and overcome whatever obstacles were in the way.

*[Silence. TAIMIS breaks away from her stare with PEPE, picks up the white veil, and joins  
EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA, both away from PEPE. PEPE puts on his bowler hat.]*

PEPE:                    That Thursday, I learned that she, with her family, would be passing by on  
the way to Lipa. I went out to the road, expecting to see her for the last time. I

stared at the swift currents of the brook carrying away branches torn from nearby bushes, but I could not fix my mind at anything.

*[EVERYJUAN, TAIMIS, and EVERYMARIA line up, with EVERYJUAN at the head, TAIMIS in the middle, and EVERYMARIA at the tail.]*

PEPE:                   Then I heard a noise and my heart beat violently.

*[EVERYJUAN slowly walks past PEPE.]*

PEPE:                   *[As EVERYJUAN passes by.]* The first carriage carried Segunda's father. He invited me to join them. All I could do was to thank him. Then Segunda passed by, riding in the second carriage.

*[TAIMIS slowly walks past PEPE striking eye contact as she does so. She waves at him. PEPE tips his hat. TAIMIS proceeds and, head lowered, and passes PEPE by completely.]*

PEPE:                   *[To the audience while staring after TAIMIS.]* My tongue, so glib at other moments, falls silent.

*[EVERYMARIA passes by and stops behind PEPE. TAIMIS stares at PEPE.]*

EVERYMARIA:       Why don't you join us?

*[PEPE walks away. EVERYMARIA moves on and follows TAIMIS and EVERYJUAN.]*

PEPE:                   *[To the audience.]* I wanted to follow them.

*[PEPE stares at TAIMIS who finally puts on the white veil.]*

PEPE: But in the critical moments of my life, I have always acted against my will, obeying different purposes and mighty doubts. I took another road without having chosen it.

[*Long silence.*]

EVERYJUAN: [*Breaking the silence.*] That was just too awkward to listen to, to look at.

EVERYMARIA: That's what journal entries are: they're not meant for public consumption. Imagine Rizal's embarrassment if he knew how we can read his personal stuff just like that. Welcome to Rizal's private moments.

[*EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at PEPE. PEPE tries to hide his face discreetly.*]

EVERYJUAN: Not as if we haven't seen it before with his journal entry about Seiko Usui.

EVERYMARIA: But Seiko Usui holds no candle compared to his reminiscence of Segunda.

EVERYJUAN: Fine. His entry on O Sei San was barely a page, but this...

EVERYMARIA: Aside from the fact that Rizal wrote this reminiscence four years after...

EVERYJUAN: ...still keeping the images vivid as if it were yesterday...

EVERYMARIA: ...with Leonor Rivera already blushing over Rizal's letters to her...

EVERYJUAN: ...meaning that Rizal was writing to Leonor while he still had his hang ups over Segunda Katigbak.

[*Pause.*]

EVERYMARIA:     Would you like to bring Tottie Beckett and Suzanne Jacoby back into the conversation?

EVERYJUAN:       They're not so interesting anymore. [*Pause.*] Although I am beginning to wonder about what Rizal means when he says he treats women honorably. [*Pause.*] Maybe that's why he ends up breaking their hearts.

*[EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA stare at each other for a brief moment before looking at PEPE who is looking at TAIMIS. She removes the white veil and Jasmine garland, unties her hair bun and lets her hair loose, but keeps her shawl. She is nevertheless back to being LEONOR RIVERA again, wearing the Hibiscus flower.]*

EVERYMARIA:     Rizal's interaction with Segunda only ran for nine months. Four years later, he is still able to talk about it vividly as if his heartbreak was still fresh. What does that make Leonor Rivera, then? [*Stares at EVERYJUAN.*] Exactly.

*[TAIMIS wraps the shawl around her. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:        28 DECEMBER 1881  
                    LEONOR RIVERA to JOSE RIZAL

*[PEPE brings out a letter. TAIMIS stands up and rushes to PEPE but he walks past her and gives the letter to EVERYJUAN. TAIMIS is surprised but hopeful. PEPE walks back to his box just passing her by. TAIMIS runs back to her box and brings out a sheet of paper.]*

TAIMIS:           [*As LEONOR RIVERA, writing*] Esteemed Jose, I would be glad if you receive this letter in good health and happiness. I'm surprised that you have a letter for Papa but none for me. I didn't want to believe it at first... How could you do such a thing? Is this revenge for not having written you when I went to Antipolo?

[*TAIMIS looks at EVERYMARIA who just shrugs.*]

TAIMIS:                   [*As LEONOR RIVERA, writing.*] But my circumstances were different from yours! I wasn't in my own house and I could not hide anything from those girls! You, on the other hand, are at home and nobody meddles with you.

[*PEPE looks at TAIMIS.*]

TAIMIS:                   [*As LEONOR RIVERA, writing.*] That's all I'll tell you here, and there's more when you come. Your true servant who kisses your hand, signed, Taimis.

[*TAIMIS walks over to PEPE and hands him the letter. She goes back to her position behind the frame as PEPE silently reads the letter she gave him.*]

EVERYJUAN:            I'd never fall for a girl like that.

EVERYMARIA:         Pardon her. Leonor Rivera was only 14 when she wrote this.

EVERYJUAN:            Wait. Then she was around 15 when Rizal left at the beginning of May.

EVERYMARIA:         Making her 23 when she told Rizal that she was marrying that Englishman and 24 when she finally got married. [*Silence.*] Rizal grew up. Why wouldn't she? [*Pause.*] Besides, couldn't their relationship grow as well?

EVERYJUAN:            Grow to what direction?

EVERYMARIA:         Curious?

[*EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA look at TAIMIS, then at PEPE. EVERYMARIA buns up her hair and puts on a male coat. PEPE moves closer to the calendar and flips through it.*]

CALENDAR:            1 MAY 1882  
                          JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL

[EVERYMARIA approaches PEPE and pats him on the shoulder.]

PEPE:                    [To the audience.] May 1, 1882. My brother woke me up early for the trip. My parents were already awake and I had my cup of coffee with them. [Looks at EVERYMARIA.] Paciano and I were aware that my parents knew nothing.

[PEPE picks up a box and follows EVERYMARIA around the stage. TAIMIS is oblivious.]

PEPE:                    Calamba's landscape appeared to me with inestimable value. I thought of my family I was leaving behind. How much sacrifice for something so fleeting!

[EVERYJUAN approaches PEPE and gives him his passport. TAIMIS remains oblivious.]

PEPE:                    My friend Chenggoy gave me my passport. I went to the Jesuit fathers and they bade me goodbye and even wrote me letters of recommendation. I owe much to this religion, very nearly everything that I am.

[A foghorn blows. PEPE sits. EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA move away from PEPE.]

PEPE:                    The ship finally weighs anchor. My motherland, my town, I leave you. [Brings out pencil and paper, and sketches vigorously.] I take a pencil and sketch what I can of the Manila shore that disappears to the distance.

[PEPE looks at TAIMIS who remains oblivious to the scene.]

PEPE:                    Leonores, Dolores, Ursulas, Felipas, Vicentas, Margaritas, others: other loves will hold your attention and soon you will forget this traveler...

EVERYJUAN:                    Hold it!

*[PEPE stops and everyone looks at EVERYJUAN.]*

EVERYMARIA:        Interesting list of girls, isn't it? The question that remains is when Rizal began taking Leonor Rivera into serious consideration.

EVERYJUAN:        But what about Rizal saying that he treated these women honorably? Do you mean to say that these girls just keep falling for him?

EVERYMARIA:        What does your experience tell you? Use your imagination.

*[PEPE resumes writing. TAIMIS goes to where PEPE's box used to be, in front of the calendar. She is surprised at the empty space and looks at PEPE at a distance. EVERYJUAN guides her back to her place. TAIMIS immediately brings out papers and pen and writes voraciously.]*

PEPE:                    *[To TAIMIS.]* I'll return and find myself alone. You who used to smile at me will save your charms for others, while I chase after vain ideas and illusions...

EVERYJUAN:        Sorry, sorry! I have to interrupt again. Did I just hear that right? Vain ideas and...

PEPE:                    ...Vain ideas and illusions.

*[EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at each other.]*

EVERYJUAN:        Sorry. I know. I should use my imagination. This is me shutting up now. Carry on.

*[EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:           26 MAY 1882  
                          *PACIANO RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL*

EVERYMARIA:        [As *PACIANO RIZAL*.] Brother, your departure has understandably struck grief to our parents. Also, rumors about your leaving have spread, but no one could guess the truth. It is said that you'll finish your medicine degree in Barcelona, but keep in mind that opportunities for your greater inclination are in Madrid. Signed, Paciano.

[*EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:           16 SEPTEMBER 1882  
                          *JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL*

EVERYJUAN:         [As *JOSE CECILIO*.] My friend, Leonor was in a state of shock when she visited you in Calamba, only to find out that you were gone. She quickly lost mood for everything.

[*TAIMIS pauses in her writing. EVERYJUAN quickly runs to TAIMIS and speaks to her.*]

EVERYJUAN:         [As *JOSE CECILIO*.] Years will pass by quickly and Jose will be back for you. Don't you realize that leaving you is possibly Jose's greatest sorrows, if not his only one?

[*TAIMIS keeps on writing.*]

EVERYJUAN:         [As *JOSE CECILIO, to PEPE*.] My friend, you must console her. Signed, Chenggoy.

[*PEPE goes to the calendar and flips through it.*]

CALENDAR:           30 DECEMBER 1882  
                          JOSE RIZAL to LEANDRO LOPEZ

*[PEPE brings out a letter and writes.]*

PEPE:                My dear friend, I thank you for the news you send me. Although I am far from Calamba and will inevitably find the flowers there bloom into fruit, although some of the ladies have already removed me from their memory, because time and distance can kill anything... *[Looks at TAIMIS.]* I receive with joy and sorrow anything that would awaken my dormant memory.

*[TAIMIS stops writing and brings out the potted plants from EVERYMARIA's box and places them in front of PEPE. PEPE stares at TAIMIS. TAIMIS stares back.]*

PEPE:                *[Writing.]* Calamba doesn't lack in fine young men; but why do our young ladies end up marrying outsiders? It's better not to talk about it. It will only be a painful thought.

*[TAIMIS goes back to her box and starts emptying it of the other costumes she had previously used. She looks at them, emphasizing the flowers, before discarding them into a black trash bag.]*

PEPE:                Regarding the women here in Spain: I have no acquaintances yet, but I can tell you that there are many here who are pretty.

*[TAIMIS turns sharply towards PEPE. PEPE, however, is oblivious.]*

PEPE:                But they lack the gentleness, the coolness, the sweet look.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS, who looks back at PEPE with a loving gaze.]*

PEPE:                    [*Resumes writing.*] If you were here, Leandro, you would like them and be happy because you are so similar to them. The women in Spain are very different from the women in Calamba. Signed, Jose.

[*PEPE puts the letter back in his box. TAIMIS ties up the black trash bag and throws it off the stage. EVERYJUAN goes to the calendar and flips through it. TAIMIS brings out a letter and begins writing furiously.*]

CALENDAR:            8 FEBRUARY 1883  
                          JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL

EVERYJUAN:           [*As JOSE CECILIO, walking to TAIMIS.*] My Esteemed Friend, I visited the girl who suffers so much for you. She looked well today. But since you left, I've been told that one day, she'd be ill, another day well, and so forth.

[*TAIMIS stops writing and looks far off.*]

TAIMIS:               [*As LEONOR RIVERA, to EVERYJUAN.*] Chenggoy, if this about Jose, don't. [*Pause.*] I don't want to cling on to false hopes anymore.

EVERYJUAN:           [*As JOSE CECILIO.*] One has to have hope, especially in desolate times. Yet why should you despair? Hope is abundant in this world.

TAIMIS:               [*As LEONOR RIVERA.*] Oh, Chenggoy, you are such a temptation.

[*TAIMIS resumes writing.*]

EVERYJUAN:           [*As JOSE CECILIO. to PEPE.*] My friend, I'd like to believe that you are not abandoning her. Please. Do something to remedy her situation. Write to her.

[*Pause. PEPE looks at TAIMIS who is feverishly writing letters.*]

EVERYJUAN:        [As *JOSE CECILIO*.] Just so you know, in Lingayen, the word is that  
                    Leonor Rivera is your true fiancée. Signed, Chenggoy.

[*PEPE looks at EVERYJUAN. TAIMIS stands up, goes to the calendar and flips through it.*]

CALENDAR:         2 MAY 1883  
                    *JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL*

[*TAIMIS approaches him and gives him a letter. As TAIMIS goes back to her position behind the  
frame, PEPE reads her letter and smiles. PEPE brings out his journal and writes.*]

PEPE:             May 2, 1883. I received a letter from Taimis.

[*PEPE kisses the letter and puts it in his journal.*]

EVERYJUAN:        Maybe it's just the limits of my imagination, but where are exactly is this  
                    headed?

EVERYMARIA:      You'll see.

[*EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:         26 MAY 1883  
                    *PACIANO RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL*

EVERYMARIA:      [As *PACIANO RIZAL*.] Dear Brother, in your recent letters you have been  
                    telling us of your desire to go to Paris, asking for permission and for funds. Our  
                    parents have been silent about this, which we will take as a no. As for me, finish  
                    your medical course first.

*[PEPE puts his tie back on. EVERYMARIA picks up the potted plants and puts them at the center of the stage. PEPE looks at EVERYMARIA.]*

EVERYMARIA:     *[As PACIANO RIZAL.]* It's the time of year where we pay land rent again and, again, they take the money without issuing a receipt. Another thing, given the time and travel necessary just to pay taxes, we seem to end up paying double. Sincerely, Paciano.

*[PEPE looks at the potted plants. EVERYJUAN goes to calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:            15 SEPTEMBER 1883  
                          JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL

*[EVERYJUAN approaches TAIMIS and whispers something to her. She lets out a small laugh.]*

EVERYJUAN:           *[As JOSE CECILIO, to PEPE.]* Dear Friend, if you could only imagine what jokes I have to come up with, just to console her. *[Pause.]* Most of all, you have no idea how much she loves you. I myself cannot put it into words.

*[PEPE brings out TAIMIS's letter he has kept in his journal earlier. He looks at it and looks at TAIMIS. She looks back at him and they stare at each other.]*

EVERYJUAN:           *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* My friend, will it take some time before I read in the newspaper that you have produced a work? I look forward to it. Signed,  
Chenggoy.

*[TAIMIS goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:            10 JANUARY 1884  
                          JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL

*[TAIMIS approaches PEPE and gives him another letter which he reads. TAIMIS goes back to her position behind the frame. PEPE writes on his journal.]*

PEPE:                    *[Writing.]* January 10, 1884. Taimis wrote me another sweet letter with a loving conclusion.

*[PEPE kisses the letter and puts it in his journal. He looks at TAIMIS only to see her wearing a wedding veil. TAIMIS turns her back on PEPE. In panic, PEPE looks at EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA who also have turned their backs on him. Silence. PEPE walks around the stage in panic, examining EVERYJUAN, EVERYMARIA, and TAIMIS while ignoring the potted plants. PEPE flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:            24 JANUARY 1884  
                              JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL  
                              "A NIGHTMARE"

PEPE:                    *[writing in his journal.]* January 24, 1884. I had a nightmare. I went home to the Philippines and didn't find my parents there. Furthermore, *[looks at TAIMIS.]* Taimis was unfaithful. And there was nothing I could do. When I woke up, the nightmare left me in a very sad disposition.

*[PEPE approaches TAIMIS that only the frame parts them. TAIMIS slowly removes the veil. They stare at each other. EVERYJUAN approaches the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:            9 MARCH 1884  
                              JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL

*[EVERYJUAN hands PEPE a letter, which breaks PEPE's gaze at TAIMIS.]*

EVERYJUAN:            *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* Dear friend, I take the liberty of recommending to you a friend whom you know from your metaphysics class: Ceferino De Leon. He

admires your literary works. In fact, he has taken home everything you've written that he could get from me. He'll depart from here in April and head to where you are staying. He really wants to live beside you so he would learn how to write.

*[PEPE smiles at the news as he reads.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* Just a little funny thing about him; he calls you doubly Leonor.

*[PEPE is surprised and looks at TAIMIS who is now glaring at him. PEPE shrugs in defense.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* He wanted to court Leonor Rivera but didn't as he heard that she is your fiancée. Imagine his surprise when he found out that this was just a rumor.

*[It's TAIMIS's turn to shrug in defense as PEPE looks at her.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* He thought of courting Leonor Valenzuela instead. I told him that if he went to her town, rumors would be that Leonor Valenzuela is your fiancée!

*[TAIMIS and PEPE look at each other with concern.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* But with all seriousness, your mother and two sisters think that she is very foolish to suffer so much for you.

*[PEPE looks at EVERYMARIA, who is now looking at TAIMIS.]*

EVERYJUAN:       *[As JOSE CECILIO.]* What will she gain by marrying you? The truth is that she suffers fever every week and you should understand this as the effect of her pining for you. Until the next mail, signed, Chenggoy.

*[PEPE moves closer to TAIMIS as if to touch her, but the frame gets in their way. EVERYMARIA goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:           30 MARCH 1884  
                          JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL

*[PEPE turns and gets a letter from his box. He kisses it and hands it to TAIMIS who reads and kisses the letter. PEPE walks to calendar but stops momentarily to stare at the potted plants. PEPE continues his walk towards the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:           31 MARCH 1884  
                          JOSE RIZAL'S TRAVEL JOURNAL

PEPE:                 *[Writing on his journal.]* March 31 1884. *[Pause.]* A vague melancholy consumes me. I fear I'm going to be one traveling through a floret road, passing by without touching any of the flowers there, in the hope of finding something uncertain. The road then becomes dry, bare, and I look into the past with regret.

*[PEPE looks at TAIMIS. She approaches him. PEPE reaches out to her but she just smiles and goes back to her place behind the frame. EVERYMARIA flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR:           25 JUNE 1884  
                          JOSE RIZAL'S SPEECH  
                          IN HONOR OF JUAN LUNA AND FELIX RESURRECCION HIDALGO

*[Along with the date in the calendar, an image of Juan Luna's "Spoliarium" is shown. PEPE, examines it, puts on his overcoat, brings out a small wineglass and raises it.]*

PEPE:                 Gentlemen! I take this floor untroubled as you are here to join us in our enthusiasm. There are names in history that by themselves signify achievement,

bringing to mind affection and greatness. The names of Luna and Hidalgo belong with them. Their glories illuminate two ends of the globe: Spain and the Philippines. Luna and Hidalgo are as much Spanish glories as they are Filipino.

[*EVERYMARIA places an award ribbon on the "Spoliarium."*]

PEPE:                   Just as they were born in the Philippines, they could be born in Spain, because genius has no country, it is the heritage of all, cosmopolitan like space, like life and like God!

[*EVERYMARIA, EVERYJUAN, and TAIMIS applaud. Furthermore, they try to get the audience to applaud as well.*]

PEPE:                   As a mother teaches her child her language in order to understand his joys and sorrows, Spain also teaches her language to the Philippines, despite myopic midgets who secure their position, without ability to weigh consequences...

[*EVERYMARIA and TAIMIS look at each other, visibly disturbed. EVERYJUAN sees the reaction of the two and then he looks at PEPE, then at the "Spoliarium."*]

EVERYJUAN:           Ohhh!

EVERYMARIA:        Do you get it now?

EVERYJUAN:        Yes.

[*EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.*]

CALENDAR:           5 NOVEMBER 1884  
                          PACIANO RIZAL to JOSE RIZAL

[EVERYMARIA brings out a sheet of paper and writes.]

EVERYMARIA: [As PACIANO RIZAL.] Dear Brother, you must wonder why you haven't been receiving letters from us lately and why our sending of allowance has been irregular. The low price of sugar and the need to buy a new machine had left us in debt for a while.

[PEPE puts aside his wineglass and walks towards the potted plants.]

EVERYMARIA: [As PACIANO RIZAL.] Aside from that, Mother is sick and, sadly, you are the cause. Your speech in honor of the two Filipino painters caused quite a stir. Some say you lost friends with that speech. Others say that you've made enemies. Nobody thinks that it's a good time for you to go home, and this is what bothers Mother so. [Pause.] She blames me for this, like how she blames me for what is happening to our sugar business. I hope you will not complain anymore about your allowance.

[PEPE looks at TAIMIS who stares at him in disbelief.]

EVERYMARIA: [As PACIANO RIZAL.] You want to take graduate work in medicine in German schools. If it were not for this critical situation, I'm very agreeable to this. We are all in good health. Signed, your brother, Paciano.

[PEPE rushes to bring out a sheet and writes. EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR: 16 NOVEMBER 1884  
JOSE RIZAL to RIZAL FAMILY

PEPE: [While writing.] My Dear Parents and Siblings, the news from here prompt me to write that the future of Philippine sugar will get worse. I wish to go home to spare you further sacrifices.

[PEPE looks at EVERYMARIA.]

PEPE:                    [Continues writing.] I believe it's my duty to go home. My aspirations may have been high, but they were just...

EVERYMARIA:        ...vain ideas...

TAIMIS:                ...vain ideas and illusions...

PEPE:                    ...dreams of youth and realizing them was merely censurable egoism.  
Signed, your son and brother, Jose.

[EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar. EVERYMARIA and TAIMIS just stare at PEPE and he notices. PEPE brings the potted plants close to him and prepares a new letter.]

CALENDAR:            26 NOVEMBER 1884  
JOSE RIZAL to RIZAL FAMILY

PEPE:                    [While writing.] My Dear Parents and Siblings, I reiterate my desire to go home. I have spent much money for a long time without me being able to assist you. I am done with my medical studies, thank God. The doctorate is not much use for me now. Considering the present and the future, I'll satisfy myself with this: God will provide. I await your reply. Your son and brother, signed, Jose.

[PEPE stands and gives the letters to EVERYMARIA. PEPE then stands aside and waits. TAIMIS looks at PEPE who doesn't seem to notice her at the moment. In the meantime, EVERYMARIA removes her male coat, and puts on thickly framed glasses. She then walks to TAIMIS and gives her paper and pen. EVERYJUAN flips through the calendar.]

CALENDAR:            11 DECEMBER 1884

*TEODORA ALONSO to JOSE RIZAL*  
(as transcribed by LEONOR RIVERA)

EVERYMARIA: [As *TEODORA ALONSO*, dictating to *TAIMIS*.] My Dear Son, your sister and I are at the house of your beloved and she is helping me right now in writing this letter.

[*PEPE* looks at *EVERYMARIA* and *TAIMIS*.]

EVERYMARIA: [As *TEODORA ALONSO*.] You don't know the sadness I feel when I hear people talking about you. Please, do not meddle in things that will distress me.

[*TAIMIS* looks at *EVERYMARIA*, and then at *PEPE*.]

EVERYMARIA: [As *TEODORA ALONSO*.] I congratulate you for your graduation. I thank the Lord for having bestowed to you the intelligence you enjoy. [*Pause*.] I earnestly ask you, my son to not fail in your Christian duties, which is more important than being exceedingly learned. Knowledge can lead us to perdition. Your mother embraces you. Teodora Alonso de Rizal.

TAIMIS: [As *LEONOR RIVERA*, still writing.] This is a copy of your mother's letter which I have made. Pardon my penmanship. Signed, Taimis.

[*TAIMIS* hands the letter to *PEPE* and they freeze. *EVERYJUAN* approaches *PEPE* and sees him looking at *TAIMIS*. *EVERYJUAN* goes to *TAIMIS* and sees her looking at *PEPE*. He then looks at the letter in her hand, then looks at *EVERYMARIA*.]

EVERYJUAN: So Leonor knew what Rizal's mother disapproved of Rizal's...  
[*EVERYMARIA* nods.] ...and, because of Leonor's handwriting, Rizal knew that she knew that...

EVERYMARIA: That too.

EVERYJUAN: Then what could have been going on in their...

TAIMIS: [to PEPE.] Why?

PEPE: [to TAIMIS.] Whoops.

*[EVERYMARIA picks up the potted plants. PEPE looks at the plants and his gaze follows EVERYMARIA as she walks across the stage and stands behind TAIMIS. PEPE stares at TAIMIS and then at the potted plants behind her.]*

EVERYJUAN: Whoa.

*[PEPE goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR: 18 APRIL 1885  
JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL

*[PEPE goes to EVERYJUAN and hands him a letter. EVERYJUAN reads it and brings out a sheet. PEPE then looks at TAIMIS.]*

EVERYJUAN: [As JOSE CECILIO, writing.] Esteemed Friend, as regards to your question, if I were you, I favor Leonor Rivera. She is more feminine, more docile, sweeter, gentler, more scrupulous, and more educated. Another friend of mine pines for Leonor, knowing she'll never love him back. He keeps asking me if the talk that Leonor is engaged to you is true to which I keep replying no. Your friend, Chenggoy.

*[EVERYJUAN gives the letter to PEPE who reads it. PEPE sits down.]*

EVERYMARIA: We do know Rizal's decision at this point.

*[EVERYMARIA hands the potted plants to PEPE.]*

PEPE: My aspirations may have been high, but they're just dreams of youth and realizing them is merely censurable egoism.

*[PEPE puts the potted plants at the center of the stage. EVERYMARIA, PEPE, and TAIMIS stare at EVERYJUAN.]*

EVERYJUAN: Wait. Why is everyone staring at me now?

EVERYMARIA: Because your questions and cynicism got us to take on this journey in the first place. Not that we blame you or anything. It's just that these questions have crossed our minds at one point or another.

TAIMIS: In varying degrees of curiosity and intensity.

PEPE: For varied purposes.

*[EVERYMARIA, TAIMIS, and PEPE look at the audience.]*

EVERYMARIA, TAIMIS, and PEPE: All of us.

*[EVERYMARIA, PEPE, and TAIMIS look at EVERYJUAN again.]*

EVERYJUAN: We're at the end, then. *[Pause.]* All right.

*[EVERYJUAN and EVERYMARIA look at PEPE and TAIMIS staring at each other.]*

EVERYJUAN:        So Leonor wasn't simply a fill-in for Segunda like Nellie was for Leonor, nor a mere journal entry like O Sei San... and let's not even put Tottie Beckett and Suzanne Jacoby in the picture.

*[EVERYJUAN paces around PEPE and TAIMIS.]*

EVERYJUAN:        Even without her actual correspondence with Rizal, it's hard to deny Leonor Rivera is... special to him. Somehow. *[Pause.]* To think he'd lose her in the next five years. That he'd never see her. He doesn't know at this time. *[Pause.]* That's what you want me to say, right?

EVERYMARIA:      Rizal gets over it.

*[EVERYJUAN looks at EVERYMARIA. As EVERYMARIA speaks, TAIMIS draws PEPE's famous thin moustache on his face, dusts off his bowler hat and wears it on PEPE.]*

EVERYMARIA:      *[To the audience.]* Facts: Rizal moves on after his heartbreak over Leonor Rivera. He has to. He returns to the Philippines in 1892, gets exiled to Dapitan which he cultivates... oh yes, in August 1893, Leonor Rivera dies and it breaks Rizal's heart again. But that's okay, because in 1895, he meets Josephine Bracken...

*[EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN look at TAIMIS, who goes to her box and searches for a JOSEPHINE BRACKEN costume. There isn't any. TAIMIS looks at EVERYMARIA and EVERYJUAN and shrugs. She goes back to PEPE and gives him a reassuring pat on the shoulder.]*

EVERYJUAN:        That's for another play, then.

EVERYMARIA:     *[To the audience.]* ...but even that romance doesn't last long. In 1896, Rizal becomes the rallying cry of the Revolution—whether he liked it or not—and for that he gets shot at the end of the year.

*[PEPE goes to the calendar and flips through it.]*

CALENDAR:        *JOSE RIZAL'S "MY LAST FAREWELL"*<sup>3</sup>

PEPE:             Farewell, sweet foreigner – my darling, my delight!

*[EVERYMARIA shoots PEPE with an imaginary rifle and then bows to the audience.]*

EVERYJUAN:        That was cold.

EVERYMARIA:     Facts are cold. As you said, all that matters to us is that Rizal as a Filipino citizen. His personal relationships? As you said in the beginning: Historical gossip. Socially irrelevant.

EVERYJUAN:        So that's all Rizal is, then? Without his personal history, his ideals become nothing more than campaign slogans you can easily find in popular media. As if his very existence is hinged on his country and nothing else.

EVERYMARIA:     Why else do you think Rizal's the subject of many mugs, shirts, and plays? At least he's not running for office.

EVERYJUAN:        But he can't just be a mouthpiece, just a source for quotable quotes! No human being, none of us, exist for the sole purpose of being a drone for the nation!

*[Pause. EVERYMARIA smiles.]*

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<sup>3</sup> "My Last Farewell" translation by Nick Joaquin

EVERYMARIA: Listen to yourself. End this properly then. You do the honors.

*[EVERYJUAN hesitates. PEPE approaches EVERYJUAN and reassures him.]*

PEPE: To fall with head high and serene is not to fall but to triumph.

*[PEPE flips through the calendar.]*

CALENDAR: 30 SEPTEMBER 1885  
JOSE CECILIO to JOSE RIZAL

*[PEPE hands a letter to EVERYJUAN, who reads it and looks at EVERYMARIA, who hands EVERYJUAN a sheet of paper to write on. As EVERYJUAN writes, PEPE also is writing.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As JOSE CECILIO, writing.]* My Dear Old Friend, I have received your letters from June 28 and August 12, to which I have the pleasure of replying. Congratulations on obtaining your degrees.

*[PEPE finishes writing, kisses the letter, and goes to TAIMIS. TAIMIS removes her shawl.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As JOSE CECILIO, writing.]* Furthermore, I congratulate you on your selection.

*[EVERYJUAN hesitates and looks at EVERYMARIA, who just looks back at him. EVERYJUAN then looks at PEPE and TAIMIS facing each other. Pause. EVERYJUAN concludes the letter.]*

EVERYJUAN: *[As JOSE CECILIO, writing.]* In my humble opinion, your decision was a wise one. Signed, Chenggoy.

*[TAIMIS takes the letter but PEPE refuses to let go. They both look at each other and smile. EVERYJUAN puts the letter aside and looks at EVERYMARIA. Both look at the potted plants. They then look at both PEPE and TAIMIS who are as happy and in love as can be. Silence.]*

END OF ACT III

END OF PLAY

END NOTE: While the whole play is a work of fiction, the events in the play are derived from actual events recorded in actual correspondences and other documents. The secondary sources assist in filling in some gaps of history as well as provide leads to clarify further events.

#### SOURCES USED:

##### Miscellaneous Correspondence of Jose Rizal

1. Leonor Rivera, Manila, 2 January 1881
2. Leonor Rivera, Manila, 28 December 1881
3. Jose Rizal, Madrid, 30 December 1882
4. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, 29 May 1883
5. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, 15 September 1883
6. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, 9 March 1884
7. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, 18 April 1885
8. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, 30 September 1885
9. Jose M. Cecilio, Manila, May 1886
10. Suzanne Jacoby, Brussels, August 1890
11. Suzanne Jacoby, Brussels, 1 October 1890
12. Nellie Boustead, Biarritz, April 1891
13. Edward Boustead, Biarritz, 2 April 1891
14. Nellie Boustead, Biarritz, 24 April 1891
15. Nellie Boustead, Biarritz, 11 May 1891
16. Nellie Boustead (w/o date or address)

##### Letters Between Rizal and Family Members

1. Saturnina Rizal, Calamba, 10 October 1879
2. Teodora Alonso, Manila, (With note from Leonor) 11 December 1884
3. Paciano Rizal, Manila, 26 May 1883
4. Paciano Rizal, Calamba, 5 November 1884
5. Rizal, Madrid, 16 November 1884
6. Rizal, Madrid, 26 November 1884
7. Manuel T. Hidalgo, [Manila, 1887?]
8. Rizal, Rome, 29 June 1887
9. Rizal, London, 12 June 1888
10. Rizal, Brussels, 6 June 1890
11. Rizal, Madrid, 20 August 1890
12. Saturnina Rizal, Manila, 6 September 1890
13. Narcisa Rizal, Calamba, 10 March 1891
14. Narcisa Rizal, Manila, 27 December 1891
15. Rizal, Hong Kong, 28 December 1891

### Blumentritt-Rizal Correspondences

1. Blumentritt, Leitmeritz, 15 February 1891
2. Blumentritt, Leitmeritz, 28 March 1891
3. Rizal, Biarritz, March 29, 1891
4. Blumentritt, Leitmeritz, 1 April 1891
5. Rizal, Brussels, 23 April 1891
6. Blumentritt, Leitmeritz, 26 April 1891

### Reminiscences

1. Chapter VI, April to December 1877
2. Calamba to Barcelona (May 16-June 16 1882)
3. Japan

### Novel, Poems

1. *Noli Me Tangere*
2. "My Retreat"
3. "To the Flowers of Heidelberg"
4. "My Last Farewell"

### Miscellaneous Writings

1. Annotation of Antonio Morga's "*Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*"
2. Speech in honor of Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo

### Supplementary Sources

1. *The First Filipino* by Leon Ma. Guerrero
2. "O Sei San" by Ambeth Ocampo