shooting by the lake of La Janda; she would stay in Spain, and when he had leave next Christmas they would go to Madrid and he would buy her a little fur hood to protect her from the snow. And next spring they would go to Sevilla for the Holy Week.

A telegram arrived from Jerez saying: 'Arriving Cádiz tomorrow. Let us meet in lounge, Hotel Oceano, six-thirty, Diane La Joue.'

He was in agonies of excitement, longing, doubts and fears. He had given no thought to the problem of explaining himself when they first came face to face. 'When we meet,' he said, 'all will be understood and forgiven!'

That night he went to the venta and hired some flamencos to sing to him. He wept when they played their saddest songs of unrequited love and betrayal. He paid five thousand pesetas.

The next day Juan-Antonio the poet came into Cádiz and explained the situation to some of his friends, including, I now ought to mention, myself. Almost before anyone suggested it, we were strolling in the direction of the hotel.

'It is now six-fifteen,' Juan-Antonio said. 'We must get away from there before the Colonel arrives and sees us.'

The reception clerk was a friend of ours. We told him the story and asked if Diane La Joue had arrived yet.

'She has booked for one night only,' he said. 'She is waiting in the lounge. You can see her from the passage. Come with me.' He led us round the corner to a small service window in the wall. 'There she is!' he said with a malicious grin. We looked through into the lounge and saw a young man, of middle height, in a black corduroy jacket over a black thin sweater and narrow black trousers. He had close-cropped hair and wore sunglasses made to reflect like mirrors. He was holding a cigarette in one hand, while the fingers of the other were delicately balanced along the top of a flower-patterned armchair. He was the perfect picture of the professional Parisian seducer; the thoroughbred product of generations of men spoiled by generations of women. His mirror-glasses flashed light disconcertingly as he lazily and self-consciously changed his pose, leaning on the chair; his expression half cynical, half sulky, while he studied his fingernails. 'This,' he seemed to be saying, 'is going to be a pushover.'

We crept away.

At six-thirty exactly the Colonel's car drove up. His orderly opened the door. The Colonel sprinted up the steps, crossed the hall to the lounge, knocked and went in, closing the door behind him.

8

El Maestro Felipe

El Maestro Felipe was a guitarist who had suffered, at the age of forty-five, from an attack of paralysis. He had never been a good guitarist, even before his attack. Now he could play only with the greatest difficulty. He used to drift slowly from café to café in the poorer parts of Cádiz, where he was known and tolerated, scraping a livelihood from the charitable by offering to play for them. They would give him a peseta or two and say, 'Come back later, Felipe, in an hour.' Thus he kept his pride, and they saved themselves the tedium of listening to his performance.

I first noticed him on a pouring wet day. I was in a bar with an undertaker and his assistant. The undertaker was a large fat man, who had a wide creased face, big rolling eyes and black curly hair. He was jolly enough on the surface, full of anecdotes and jokes, but there were times when he was drunk for days at a stretch. Then he would become depressed, abusive and finally violent. It must be said in his favour that he usually collapsed before he actually hit anybody. His assistant was a frightful little hobgoblin with a great hooked nose, a huge grinning mouth with two dirty teeth in it and small malicious eyes.

The undertaker was describing his clients.

'All Basils are fat,' he said. 'In fact, it might be conceded that all the fattest men are called Basil. Whenever I hear of a new client called Basil I order an extra-size recipient for him, before going into further details. But the cost of wood being what it is, we can never find a recipient big enough. So if the recipient won't contain the client, the client must be made to fit the recipient.'

He made chopping motions through the air with the edge of his hand.

The undertaker's assistant was sitting opposite to me. No more than his head and shoulders showed above the table. His eyes flickering between the undertaker and myself, he burst out laughing. He reached up and emptied a bottle of beer into his glass. The froth came over the top and poured down the side on to the table.

'With the Basil before last,' he said, slurring the words between his

two remaining teeth, 'not even my most skillful efforts sufficed. There was difficulty with the lid.'

'True,' said the undertaker, 'when it comes to size, my assistant is ill-favoured by fortune. For that job, a larger man was needed—myself.'

Holding his arms by his sides with hands outspread, he bumped up and down on his chair, as though closing an overpacked trunk.

It was then that I noticed a gaunt figure hovering by the doorway like a ghost. His two claw-like hands were clutching an ancient and battered guitar round the neck. Through the door behind him I could see the rain beating on to the cobblestones and bouncing back an inch or two into the air in a shining spray. Rainwater was running down from his hair over his face and ears, and dripping from the end of his nose. The arms and shoulders of his jacket were dark with it, and it glistened on the face of his guitar.

Moving as slowly and mechanically as a sloth, he advanced toward us. As he passed us, he gravely bowed his head, and uttered the classical greeting to people at a table.

'Aprovechen!'

'Thank you!' we mumbled, myself slightly louder than the others. As we were merely drinking, his formality was hardly necessary.

'Who is that?' I said, when he had disappeared into a room behind the bar.

'El Maestro Felipe, the guitarist,' the undertaker said, 'who never knew much and forgot what he knew. Now he must pick up what he can.'

'He suffers,' said the assistant. 'He suffers from rheumatism, which impedes his playing, as if it hadn't been impeded already by his lack of talent.'

'Not rheumatism—palsy,' the undertaker said. To demonstrate, he held his hands trembling in front of him. 'What do you call it in English?'

'Parkinson's Disease,' I said.

'Was he a famous man who suffered from it?' asked the assistant.

'No, just a doctor, I think,' I said.

'Another English doctor to leave his name in history,' the assistant said, grinning like Punch. He blew the froth from his beer and drank. Then he said, 'We have a street here named after Fleming.'

'I noticed one in Vigo as well,' I said.

'You will find one in every town in Spain,' said the undertaker. 'He is honoured here.'

'He seems more honoured abroad than at home,' I said, 'like Picasso.'

'Spain needed a strong antibiotic, you see,' said the undertaker, as he got up to leave. Laughing at his little joke, he shook my hand, and they went to the door, pulling their collars up round their necks.

'May you have good business!' I called after them, and added, 'Now that winter is coming!'

'All is well!' the little assistant shouted without turning round. Bending forward, he ran off into the rain after his employer.

A waiter came and took the chairs away to another table.

I began to examine the photographs hanging all round the wall. The most intriguing one was old and faded and showed four rather fat gentlemen and a lady standing before an ancient motor-car. Between a pair of shafts fixed to the front of the car stood a grey horse, with a boy holding the bridle. A fifth gentleman was kneeling in the car, pouring wine from a bottle into a glass held up by the lady, who grasped a tambourine in her other hand. She wore a sort of tasseled dress fixed up with pins which could have dated from any period before the twenties, and a hat whose floppy brim hid the upper part of her face in deep shadow. The gentlemen, two of whom had stile-sticks, denoting them to be flamenco singers, held stiff statuesque poses. One held his hat in the air, at just the right angle to lead into the composition; another was solemnly pouring himself a drink; while the remaining two, their wide-brimmed Cordobés hats firmly on their heads, gazed with piercing eyes at the spectator. Their right hands rested on their sticks, which were held at exactly ninety degrees to the earth. Their left hands grasped the lapels of their jackets. Propped in the back seat of the motor was a guitar. The lower half of the picture was covered with a scrawl of illegible signatures and inscriptions containing such words as 'Felicidades' (best wishes) and 'Recuerdos' (regards).

I was trying to decipher the signatures when a voice spoke from behind me.

'They were distinguished artists from these parts.'

I turned and saw El Maestro Felipe standing by my table.

'Good afternoon,' I said, 'will you join me?'

With expressions of gratitude and reluctance to put me to trouble, he lowered himself into *my* chair, and leaned his guitar against the table. When he saw me fetching a chair for myself, he pretended to make motions of rising.

'What will you take?' I asked.

'Anything, it's of no importance,' he said, subsiding again.

'A fino or something?' I persisted.

'Carta Blanca!' he exclaimed, raising his head.

This was one of the most expensive drinks in the bar, and I felt my heart sinking as I sat down beside him.

When he discovered I was English, I had to go through the rigmarole, for the hundredth time since I had been in Spain, of being shown his documents. He showed me his identity card, various police passes and working permits, a pass to Gibraltar and three post office parcel receipts. Each one he showed to me with an expression of pride, carefully returning the previous document to his wallet before showing me the next. Then he produced a photograph of his eldest daughter.

'Encarnación,' he said. 'She works in Gibraltar for an English family of engineers. That is to say, the father is an engineer. She is saving money to return here and get married. I'm sorry that I have no photograph of my wife or my other children. Such things are expensive, and my eldest son is unfortunately deceased, as a result of the great explosion in Cádiz. He was unable to fulfil the promise he showed in the flower of his youth.'

The bar was beginning to fill up. It was a place frequented by many of the professional flamenco entertainers of the town and by their friends and clients, who were mostly rich businessmen. The front bar was architecturally still much the same as it had been in the eighteenth century. The ceiling was supported by wooden beams. The marble table-tops stood on iron legs. Standing by them were the cañeros. These were small round tables with holes cut out of the tops in patterns of concentric circles. Into these holes would be placed the narrow straight glasses called cañas. The cañero, with its trembling load of little glasses filled with pale golden sherry, would be placed between the flamenco singer and his guitarist at the start of a recital. As they drank and emptied the glasses, they would rotate the top to bring the full ones into their reach.

Beyond this room was a long dining-room, recently redecorated in the picturesque or 'típico' style. Sections of green wooden trellis and black wrought-ironwork were fixed to the wall, and bunches of artificial fruit hung from the ceiling. At the end were two doors. One opened into the kitchen, from which an ancient and completely bald chef would peer out from time to time, holding a clucking chicken by the legs, or a plate of mottled shiny squids. The other led to a plain room, containing only a bare table, three benches and a couple of wooden chairs. As far as the flamencos were concerned, this was where the real business was done. It was here that the wealthier men of the town would bring the guitarists and singers to perform for them, and where they would sit and listen through the night until five in the morning. It was here that the money was paid out in little envelopes, or slipped surreptitiously into pockets: a thousand pesetas for Aurelio, three hundred for Efrén, two hundred for the 'Arrow', a hundred for the 'Nightingale'.

El Maestro Felipe was glancing rather nervously at the customers in the bar. I sat looking at him, trying to place something familiar. Then I realized that the hooded, rather popping eyes, and the line of his mouth evoked Tenniel's drawing of the Mad Hatter in *Alice*, but thinner and hungrier. Sensing his lack of ease, I suggested we go into the back room.

When we sat down, he pulled from his coat a spotlessly clean handkerchief folded into four, and began drying his guitar.

'They say you play the guitar, and know more of it than anyone in Cádiz,' he said.

'And they well know it isn't true,' I said.

'Play a little seguiriya.' He offered me his guitar.

It was a frightful instrument, solid, 'wooden' and the strings were hard and sticky. After a while I tried a long and difficult variation invented by Ramón Montoya. It had taken me days to learn from an old gramophone record.

'I will show you the original of that,' El Maestro Felipe said. 'It was shown to me by an old man in Chiclana called Pescadilla (Little Fish) and he had learnt it from El Maestro Patiño, who invented it. Have you heard of Andrés Segovia?'

I told Felipe that whenever Segovia played in England, which was often, the halls were packed.

'Well, then,' he said, 'Andrés came to Cádiz especially to meet Patiño, whose fame was spreading throughout the land. He sat exactly where you are now, in the same wooden chair, and while Patiño played all night he watched him goggle-eyed, exclaiming, "Qué bárbaro!" As for this variation, or falseta, as we call it, there are few men who can remember it.'

With stiff and trembling hands he played the falseta. Yet even his hesitant playing, his scraped and mis-struck notes, could not dull the indestructible freshness of the passage. It was alive, as exhilarating as sea-spray on the wind. It came to rest and he said: 'Simple, but beautiful. We call it the Little Musical Box (Cajita de Música) because of its unusual tones. That is the foundation stone on which Ramón built his cathedral.'

'It is beautiful, and you played it beautifully,' I said.

'You understand,' El Maestro Felipe said, 'that at this season the wind from the east we call the Levante enters into my bones and I can't move my arms and legs.'

'Perhaps you will teach me that piece sometime,' I said, getting up to leave. 'Now I must work for my living. Meanwhile, I hope you will accept this in gratitude.' I offered him fifty pesetas.

He raised his eyebrows sharply, and held up the flat of his hand like

a policeman stopping traffic.

'Impossible, sir, impossible!'

'No, no!' I said.

The note disappeared into his pocket.

'Really, sir, you are too noble! There is no need! You shouldn't do it. But remember, I am at your service always, day and night, as Gibraltar is to the English.'

That evening I asked Aurelio about him.

'Un desgraciado,' Aurelio said. The word has many shades of meaning, ranging from our 'neurotic'—as when we describe someone who behaves badly—to a man cursed by fortune.

'He used to augment his income by a little smuggling. He lives out in San Fernando with a wife and two or three children. His sister-in-law used to visit Gibraltar to see his daughter there, and smuggle stuff in and out while she was doing it. Between them the English and Spanish Customs work it very cleverly. What goods the English pass, the Spaniards stop, and what the Spaniards pass the English stop, so you can't take anything across either way. Now between these two frontier posts, there is, as you know, a mile or so of no-man's land, and in the middle of this is a ditch. When they pass through the English Customs the old women declare those goods which they are free to take out. They declare them down to the last unnecessary detail. The forbidden goods they hide in their knickers—they wear great long bloomers under their skirts, you understand? When they reach the ditch they climb in, let down their knickers and swap over the goods. If anyone catches them there, which is unusual, they protest with shrill cries that, the walk being so long for women of their advanced age and there being such a shortage of conveniences, they are using this ditch merely to answer the call of nature in accordance with the principles of modesty and propriety. Then they walk to the Spanish frontier and pass the Customs there as well. Felipe's sister-in-law was unfortunately caught a few weeks ago and is having a holiday in prison, and Felipe, el pobre, is nearly destitute. We would like to take him to fiestas, but what can we do? Art is art, and we too have to live.'

The next time I saw El Maestro Felipe was in the market place at five o'clock one morning. The first light was beginning to pervade the town, and it was bitterly cold. A gusty wind blew rancid-smelling fumes of hot olive oil from the stalls of the churro sellers. Churros are long tubes of dough, star-shaped in section, fried in oil, served on pieces of newspaper and sprinkled with sugar. They are sold in the early hours of the morning. One or two people stood shivering near the stalls, holding

their hands toward the braziers. The bars facing the market were already crowded, and from one came the twanging of a guitar and fitful oriental wailings, presumably the last despairing cries of a dying fiesta. El Maestro Felipe was sitting by the door. He needed a shave, his cheeks were drawn in and he looked grey with fatigue or drunkenness. His guitar was propped between his knees and he was pulling his threadbare jacket—the same as I had seen him in before—tight over his front. When he saw me he sat up straight, rubbed his hands together and breathed on them. With a grimace he indicated the crowd inside. They were all men, sitting on tables or leaning with their backs to the bar, watching a wild-eyed sailor singing as though his life depended on it. His mouth, which was toothless, showed as a gaping black hole from which the harsh metallic sounds poured forth. The veins on his forehead and neck stood out and his hands fluttered in the air before his face, as he twisted and turned the upper half of his body in the effort to reach and control the semi-tones and quarter-tones of his song. Now and then words of encouragement came from the crowd, uttered in low hoarse voices. In a corner, huddled on a stool over his guitar, the accompanist glared up from the darkness. I noticed a deformity on his right hand—the forefinger curved sharply upward like a suture needle.

I sat on the bench beside Felipe and asked him if he would like some churros to warm his insides.

'It is a good time to leave,' he said.

Standing by the stall munching the golden churros, he said: 'Americans from the base at Rota contracted us to make up a fiesta. But it transpired that in our group each of us was deficient in those parts of our anatomies most vital to our respective professions. Nightingale, the singer, has only one lung; Cripple Vargas, the guitarist, has but three fingers and half a thumb; and the dancer, Farinas, is paralysed all down the right side. As for myself'—here he pressed down the lower lid of his eye with a forefinger—'I merely came to find what I could find. It was an unfortunate accident that we should have found ourselves together at such a time.' By now Felipe was laughing. 'The Americans were furious and refused to pay. So instead of being warm in bed where I should be, I am here. Those sailors picked us up, but I saw them trying to borrow money.' Felipe again pressed his finger below his eye and dropped his voice to a whisper. 'You will see them all rushing out of the door in a minute, when the time comes to pay. You must understand that, for me, joy is finished in this life. From now on there is nothing to wait for but the grave.'

He drank his coffee, pausing now and then to stare at me, to emphasize that he meant what he said. Then he asked, 'Do you intend

to travel to San Fernando this morning?'

I told him I was catching the seven o'clock bus there, for I had a class in San Fernando at eight-thirty.

'Perhaps you would permit me to accompany you.'

'Of course,' I said.

He asked me for another coffee and continued, 'I am most anxious to see my children, you understand.'

'Are you sure there's nothing to be got from there?' I asked, indicating the bar.

'Nothing!' he said, stretching his mouth in contempt.

In the bar, however, there was absolute silence, except for the hardly audible tinkling of the indefatigable guitar. A cry, sung by a voice of great strength, extended itself through the air about us; the note rose and fell, and was held with absolute purity, wobbled and died. The men around the stalls stopped eating and talking, and stood motionless, listening; there was a terrible tension in the air.

'Valiant!' said one.

'What majesty!' said another.

A fine drizzle was freezing our hands and faces, trickling down into our collars and into our shoes. The wind moaned as it buffeted its way through the narrow canyon-like streets surrounding us, shaking the frames of the balconies with their clusters of flowers and caged windows. The clouds scudded low over the roof-tops. In the distance the Atlantic breakers thundered against the city wall. The voice struck out again, straining as if to break open the universe. The words were clear and distinct.

'On the balcony,
All night long I wait,
Sitting on the balcony.
Yet when I hear your footsteps,
My heart is lifted with joy!'*

Above the applause I heard a cry of 'Cuckold!' then wild shouts and the smashing of glass. A man ran out from the café door. He was bent almost double, and he was making the sign of the horns with two crooked forefingers held to his temples. Behind him, clinging to his jacket with one hand and swinging punches with the other, was a blond curly-haired youth in a smart blue suit. More men spilled out on to the pavement, and the men around us by the churro-stalls put down their coffees and ran over to join the mêlée. Then the sailors broke free—first one, followed by two and then three or four more— and sped across the

market square toward the streets that led into the labyrinth of the Barrio de Santa María.

El Maestro Felipe laughed and said: 'There they go, just as I told you! How can we make a better world with people like that in it?'

That afternoon, in the poor quarter of San Fernando, I picked my way through the broken flagstones lying about on the trodden earth of the streets. The rain had stopped and the sun was burning over the Atlantic. Steam rose from the gutters and puddles as they dried. I was looking for Felipe's house, which was near the bullring.

One side of his street was a row of shops and bars, the other a low crumbling wall. Through this, at intervals, arched gateways opened on to mean courtyards. Outside the second gate a hook-nosed gypsy was sitting on a stone. Behind him squatted his wife, bending over his head and poking about in his hair for fleas. I stopped in front of them, bowed slightly and asked, 'Good afternoon, does El Maestro Felipe live here?'

The man looked up at me with his strange, abstracted, gypsy stare. A Spanish gypsy's eyes seem to pierce you and to disregard you at the same time. Beneath the slightly strained-looking lids the dark irises are flecked with iridescent green and gold—or appear to be until you study them closely. Like other facets of the gypsy character, when you examine them they withdraw into blankness. Their gaze is too penetrating to be comfortable, yet too distant to be hypnotic.

Then the gypsy held his hands flat together and inclined his head against them.

'Asleep!' he said. He rose and shouted into the courtyard, 'Esmeralda!' Turning to me, he said, 'Go in and see.' He sat down to resume his toilet.

In the yard I squinted against the glare and the flies. In the middle of the yard was a great stone copper. A woman stood beside it, dipping a red-spotted shirt into the water. In the wall round the courtyard were dark cavernous openings containing beds, tables, chairs, wardrobes, children, women and sleeping men all crowded together. Against the flat areas of the wall were propped huts constructed of bits of iron, wood, mattresses, cardboard and any serviceable thing that could be salvaged from the rubbish dumps. The pieces were tied together with string, here and there reinforced with nails and screws.

The woman came round the copper, drying her hands on her apron.

'I have come to see Felipe,' I said, and added, 'Perhaps he is asleep?'

'No, no,' she said, and went to fetch a chair, which she placed in the middle of the courtyard. 'Sit down, sit down.'

As I did so, children appeared from here and there, came to about

five feet from me, and stared without smiling. Some stood on one leg. Others had hands in their mouths.

The woman went over to one of the ramshackle huts and banged on the door which, like those of stables and pigsties, was in two halves.

'Farinas!' she cried. 'Farinas! An Englishman here to see Felipe.'

A muffled sound within, the upper part of the door flew open and Farinas' head peered out. He was the crippled dancer who had performed at the disastrous American party the night before.

'Hombre! What are you doing here?'

'I've come to see you before going back to Cádiz,' I said.

'Come in, come in!' Farinas disappeared.

Opening the lower part of the door, I went in.

'Close the doors,' Farinas said. When I had closed them it was nearly pitch-black inside, the only light coming from chinks in the walls and roof. The air was thick with a foul cloacal stench. On the verge of nausea and almost blind after the sunlight, I felt around for something to sit on and found the bed. By its shape and hardness it seemed to be a door resting on boxes. I sat down and the whole thing tilted perilously.

'Careful, man,' two voices called simultaneously.

I could just see Felipe's silhouette squashed into a corner. A patch of light touched his sleeve. I got up again and said: 'Look, gentlemen, I must open the door again or something. I can't see a thing.'

'Open the top half, that'll do,' Farinas said.

I opened the door and sat down again. We rolled and lit cigarettes in silence. I was waiting to get accustomed to the stink of sweat and ordure. Flies flashed briefly as they circled and darted through the sunbeam. I felt less anxious now that I could see them. The sun had transformed everything and lent glamour to the rotting walls and clothes, which reflected the evening light with a sombre and mysterious radiance. We inhaled and blew out the strong, pungent smoke of the Cuban tobacco I had brought as a present.

Felipe was just able, by sitting sideways, to squeeze between the bed and the far wall. Farinas was leaning on one elbow. His dark naked form, slightly withered, I thought, down one side, glistened with sweat. A small gold cross hanging from a chain, round his neck, glittered on his chest. His teeth and the whites of his eyes seemed luminous in the half-light like a cat's. Beside him huddled a little girl under the sheet. She pulled the sheet still higher and stared at me with one eye; the other turned sharply in toward the bridge of her nose. Despite this disfigurement, her face was shapely, sweet and sad.

'My daughter,' Farinas said, inclining his head toward her. 'You should see her dance the soleá—nobody has more dignity and grace.'

'You should take her to England,' Felipe said. 'You could be impresario to a group.'

Farinas glanced quickly at each of us, then reached up into his jacket which was hanging above his head and produced some soiled pieces of paper. I feared I was about to inspect some more documents. After a little searching he handed me a newspaper cutting. I held it in the light of the door. There was a photograph, a headline and some text. The photograph showed Farinas in the foreground, standing straight, his head turned to show his profile, his arms raised in a characteristic flamenco pose, or 'planta' as it is called. Behind him, spaced like gymnasts, all carefully copying Farinas' 'planta', were about a dozen people, most of them middle class, nordic and middle-aged. I had seen them all about the town. There was a stout man with a moustache, in his braces; two elderly ladies, whom I knew were from Hereford; a man in cast-off military clothing whose face was buried beneath a wild beard and glasses; a bull-necked German who was said to believe that Cádiz was founded on the stones of Atlantis, who was believed to have said that he was wanted for the burning alive of thirty Jews, and who was, whatever else, the representative of a machine-tool firm; there were two young people: a tall English girl with fluffy blonde hair staying with a Spanish family, on her way out to marry an officer in Singapore, and an even taller check-shirted Swede, with a crew-cut, who played bit-parts in Hollywood Westerns being filmed in Castilla. Finally, the ubiquitous English eccentric, in this case an engineer called Christopher, but nicknamed 'Espectáculos'. Being short-sighted, he had the habit of saying, 'Let me put on my glasses,' which he would render in Spanish as, 'Un momento, voy poner mis espectáculos.' But 'espectáculos', as luck would have it, means not spectacles you wear but spectacles you see, such as 'Ziegfield Follies' or a nude show.

All in all, they made the perfect cast for an old-fashioned transcontinental spy film.

The headline under the photograph said; 'THE WORLD COMES TO CÁDIZ', and continued: 'People of all nations come to the "Little Silver Cup" (a standard sobriquet for Cádiz), the cradle of Spanish dancing, to pay homage to our gracious art in the sincerest possible way, which is to say, by learning. In response to the numerous and heartfelt manifestations that have come to the notice of the Municipal Authorities, it has been decided to inaugurate special classes in Andaluz Dance, planned precisely for visitors from other lands and for foreign residents in our most ancient city. The professor elected by the authorities is no less than the most popular Farinas, famous not only for his command of an authentic and untarnished style but for his grace and "salero".' The

article finished with a quotation from Pliny, extolling the Gaditanian dancers of two thousand years ago.

I gave the cutting back to Farinas.

'What are they like?' I asked.

'Very good,' Farinas said, without a flicker of a smile.

'And the existentialist?' I insisted.

Farinas raised his eyebrows and said 'Hombre!' in a reproachful tone of voice. Before I could ask any more questions he said: 'Why not take us to England, my daughter and me? I have experience with handling foreigners, as you have seen.'

'Yes,' I said, 'yes, I most certainly will, when I go.' I was thinking of all the ways I could be ruined by such an undertaking. Flamenco groups, particularly small ones, were continually rent by feuds and jealousies, were repeatedly breaking up and losing their members, who remained stranded at whatever town a quarrel happened to break out. In Spain these matters were arranged with brutal simplicity. The artists knew that if they got out of line they could be fired without notice, and that there were queues of others waiting, and able, to replace them immediately. Thus, in the larger and more famous groups, a sort of uneasy stability was maintained, and the feuds were kept more or less out of sight, at least until a director himself became involved—which, heaven knows, seemed often enough. What chance would I, an Englishman and with a small group at that, have of foreseeing and, to some extent mitigating, the furious conflicts that would arise, or of compelling the artists to keep appointments and fulfill contracts when the novelty of doing so had worn off? Short of chaining them together, putting them under armed guard and refusing to pay them more than a shilling a day until the end of the tour, I could see no hope of keeping things organized.

My thoughts were interrupted by Felipe, who was saying: 'When my daughter—Encarnita—went to live with your compatriots in Gibraltar, she knew nothing. She says they are the kindest people she has ever met. The house is beautiful, spotlessly clean everywhere. She has bought herself clothes and given things to us. She will marry Vicente, the waiter at the Rosa. But what will she say when she comes back and compares? Perhaps she will have forgotten all this?'

'I don't know whether it matters,' I said. 'What about all the bullfighters like Belmonte and El Gallo? They came from the poorest families you could find anywhere. They made, each one, more money in a few years than this Englishman will make if he lives to be a thousand. I never heard that they abandoned their families.'

'Certainly not,' said Felipe. 'I said nothing of abandoning her family. I said, what will she *feel?*'

'It's not the same,' Farinas joined in. 'El Gallo made millions, Encarnita is only a working girl. Besides, when he married Pastora Imperio, the dancer, she said, "Now we have eighty enemies." She meant that row of forty open mouths she had been feeding for so long, and the row of forty open mouths he had been feeding for so long, and that now their burdens were doubled. One day he bought himself a pistol. He used to shout out curses—"All right, Manolo, you parasite, take that!"—Bang! Bang!—and he would spin round like a cowboy and fire at a rock—"This is what's coming to you, Fernando!"—Bang! and off he'd rush across the field waving his pistol in the air crying: "Cowards! Traitors! Backbiters! Layabouts! You won't escape your destiny! I shit on all your dead, you can't hide from me—take that, and that!" Bullets would hiss through the air and go screaming off stones—"And that for you, Augustín!"—Bang! Having terrorized the countryside and all the animals and birds, he would go home exhausted and fall asleep. He was a philosopher as well. He spent as much time as he could in bed. And when they came and said, "Rafael, you must exercise," he would snuggle down deeper and say: "Exercise? What's the use of exercise? The bull's always stronger." '

With irritation I remembered my class at the Chamber of Commerce back in Cádiz. The bus would leave in an hour. I was enjoying myself and wanted to invite them for a drink. But then I had five pesetas only—enough for the fare and a cup of coffee. If I stayed much longer we would all get into the mood for a fiesta, and there would be a disagreeable scene. Felipe was obviously in no state to go on a wild-goose chase, and I doubted if Farinas had ever paid for a drink in his life. I rose to leave and announced, 'Gentlemen, I have a class to teach in Cádiz.'

'You going?' asked Farinas anxiously. 'Wait till the next bus and let's go and have some coffee.'

'My class is in an hour at the Chamber of Commerce,' I said, bringing the time forward a bit.

'We'll get Capinetti and his guitar. Perhaps we could start up a juerga,' Farinas said.

'If the man has obligations you shouldn't insist,' Felipe said. 'After all, the Chamber of Commerce has paid him to teach the English language to all these people, who in their turn have paid money to the Chamber of Commerce for the privilege of attending . . .'

'Shut up,' said Farinas. He turned to me. 'Have you ever heard anyone more ponderous?'

Felipe either could not or would not cooperate.

'I was only saying,' he continued remorselessly, 'that everyone has

a responsibility where his business is concerned and that———'

'Me cago en to' tus muertos!' Farinas hissed. He sat up and extended his hand toward me with a smile.

'If you wait while I get dressed I'll come to Cádiz with you,' he said.

Wearily I saw that I was trapped once again. I tried the truth. Pulling the greasy crumpled note from my pocket, I said: 'This is my entire fortune at the moment. I must work, like you. Like you, I have eaten nothing all day. I shall be back the day after tomorrow, when we can get drunk until we are blind. There is no evening class that day. I shall stay all night if God wills it. But, as things are, what can I do?'

There was an awkward silence.

'All right,' Farinas said sulkily. Trying to hide the look of complete disbelief on his face, he looked down. His daughter seemed to have fallen asleep. He pulled a cigarette from under his pillow and lit it, without offering me one.

'Look,' he said, 'you have a class here, true? Surely one of your pupils would lend you a couple of duros until the day after tomorrow. Tell him you left your money behind. After all, they know you, a teacher, a gentleman. When I get to Cádiz there is a man there who owes me money for some work. I shall pay you tonight without fail. I swear on the soul of my mother.' He crossed himself. He watched my face for signs of indecision. A packet of cigarettes had appeared in his hand from nowhere. He offered me one, and produced a lighter as well.

'We can try it,' I said.

Felipe struggled out from his cramped position and we went out into the courtyard. It was twilight, and the first stars were pin-pointing the sky. An oil lamp was flickering in a dark recess where the communal evening meal was being prepared for all the families.

'Esmeralda!' Felipe called, saying to me, 'I shall introduce you to my wife.'

A woman came over, though I could hardly see her in the darkness. We shook hands, and Felipe shuffled off beside her. I heard her asking, 'Has he brought us some money?'

By carefully choosing the right pupil, I was able to borrow not two duros but five, without too much embarrassment. In Andalusia money is scarce, and is neither borrowed nor lent freely. It is either given outright or lent with high interest against cast-iron security. To ask the wrong person such a favour may well turn a friend into an enemy. The flamencos—more especially the gypsies—and the intellectuals were the only people I met in Cádiz who did not consider the need to borrow a social stigma.

When we were in a café, waiting for the bus, Farinas said, 'You must

come to a matanza.' Knowing that the word meant a 'massacre', I asked what he had in mind.

'At the slaughterhouse,' he said. 'Early in the morning. We kill the animals. And sometimes get some meat.'

'This accursed weather is terrible for meat,' Felipe said. 'It engenders the maggots—we couldn't eat the last lot, although it cost a week's earnings.'

What Felipe meant was this. The poor in Andalusia believe in spontaneous generation; that is, that the earth creates earthworms and beetles 'spontaneously', as the sea does the fish, and as the ants create their little aphidae which they later exploit. The maggots that appear in dead meat, or even in open wounds, are the outward expression of the flesh's inner corruption. A friend, the brother of the very man who had lent me the five duros, related that up in the mountains he had gone to drink at a spring. Seeing a dead mouse, a dead bird and a dead hedgehog floating in it, he had naturally hesitated. A girl from a nearby village, who had just filled her pail with the water, laughed at him, saying, 'Don't worry, the spring made those—they won't hurt.'

I was wondering whether to give these two a lecture on elementary biology when the bus arrived, and we departed for Cádiz.

'El Maestro Felipe has won the lottery! Ha tocado El Gordo!' 'El Gordo' was the biggest win, sometimes worth half a million pesetas. The news swept over the quarters of Santa María and La Viña like a bush fire.

For weeks Felipe's situation had been desperate. Perhaps under the strain of supporting his family on a peseta or two a day his paralysis seemed more noticeable than ever. Sometimes he appeared hardly to be moving, he walked so slowly, his trembling head tilted always slightly down, looking neither right nor left, his face expressionless. His daughter had not visited him; as she could not read or write—although, oddly enough, he could a little—she had sent no letters. His sister-in-law was still in prison, and he was dependent entirely on what he could scrape from his playing without descending into outright beggary. What he ate I do not know, but I believe he managed on a piece of bread, and perhaps a tomato, every other day, and some potatoes in oil twice a week. And, of course, there were the tidbits and drinks he picked up in the bars.

When I heard the news I went to find him.

He was in the bar where I had first seen him, surrounded by shouting people. He was rather drunk, sitting by a table covered with glasses, bottles and the broken heads of prawns, and he was playing his

guitar. He was sweating with the effort, his head was bent sideways, and there was a stiff, self-conscious smile on his face. Among the crowd was one whose pale greasy hair hung down over a face covered with red pimples. He grinned all the time, and shouted 'Olé' whenever Felipe managed to strike a clear note.

I hovered round the edge of the crowd. When Felipe saw me he stopped playing, opened wide his eyes, raised his hands in the air and said: 'Hombre! Hombre!'

He rose and, grasping my shoulder in his hand, led me to the bar. He leant over and said to the barman in a hoarse voice, 'Coñac for the Señor!'

'He's just won the lottery—El Gordo!' the barman shouted at me. The crowd followed Felipe and hemmed us in against the bar.

'What are you going to do now?' I asked. I felt myself going red, for this was hardly the moment for private conversation.

'I shall buy a grocer's shop in San Fernando and give it to my daughter, so that she can marry with honour.' He turned to the crowd and declared: 'When I was young I went on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella. I kissed the stone of the Puerta de la Gloria. It was on the fifth day of the fourth month of the year one thousand, nine hundred and eighteen. Whenever I saw a combination of those numbers on a lottery ticket I bought it, for I knew that sooner or later the Virgin and St. James would answer my prayer. I have worked honestly, observed the fasts, never missed Mass and always given to those poorer than myself whenever I have had a little money. My faith has been rewarded.'

He certainly looked like a man transformed. He stood up straight, his hands barely shook and his eyes, despite his drunkenness, looked clear and hard.

For the first time since his youth he was a man with a future. He had position and importance. His life, no longer an enigma, had suddenly acquired meaning. His family, which until that day had been—even if he hardly admitted it to himself—a curse, a burden, would now become the consolation of his old age. He would henceforth be at the centre of his children and grandchildren, nephews, nieces and cousins, a paterfamilias ruling them, guiding them, sustaining them, the object of their respect and their affection. In a word, he possessed a dignity that was founded on something more solid than inherited patterns of behavior. If all this was due not to his own efforts but to a caprice of luck or, as he would have it, the benevolent watchfulness of the Queen of Heaven and the Patron Saint of Spain, it was nevertheless a fact, and he was above being offended by the mocking insinuations that came

from the crowd of envious friends pressing so closely round him.

Farinas, El Bohiga (The Flask) and Langostino (Prawn) and other gypsies were there. 'At all events,' they said, 'we'll have a juerga in your honour at the Cantábrica.'

The Cantábrica was an open-air tavern on the isthmus that connected Cádiz to the mainland. It was protected from the sky by sheets of canvas hung over crossed wires. Although it was gusty and cold, and although Felipe himself failed to turn up, the fiesta went with a swing.

At midnight they said: 'Perhaps he's still in Cádiz. Let's go and find him.' We climbed on to an open lorry and sped back to town, bouncing and rattling along while the gypsies danced—spinning, leaping, clapping and stamping in the hurtling truck. We went from bar to bar and ended up in the prawn market. There, we stood on a stone ramp overlooking an enormous cellar lit by naked bulbs and watched the hundreds of women standing in rows by the long trestles, sorting the heaps of prawns into flat boxes. The briny scent of the prawns made us thirsty. Back into the lorry, and this time we drove helter-skelter to a piece of open ground beside a ruined house. There was a well there, and a rickety wooden stage which the gypsies used for their private fiestas. With flap lowered, the lorry became the bar. Rows of bottles appeared, presided over by an immensely fat gypsy called Eugenio. He said to me, while I was resting a moment from the din of dancing, singing and clapping, 'When all is said and done, the best musicians in the world, by which I mean the culmination of all the efforts of the creative genius of the human soul, the very peak of musical achievement, in a word the greatest composers that the world has ever seen, were the Australians.'

'The Australians?' I cried, amazed.

'Yes, the Australians, surely you know the ones I mean, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Strauss . . .'

When the wine was gone at the first grey tones of dawn the gypsies cried: 'Come on, let's go to the matanza! Come on! Come on!'

The lorry left us at the slaughterhouse on the beach, and drove on to San Fernando, throwing up reddish dust in the growing light of the morning. Giddy with wine, and dead tired, but still tense with the memory of the music, I watched the gypsies cut the throats of calves and sheep, tear off skins, slit up bellies, slop blood and steaming entrails on to the floor and into buckets. The sun rose from behind the mountains beyond the bay, warmed our faces and hands in its light and made the sea glitter blindly. High above, white swathes cut across the blue translucent sky. The American jets were off on their early-morning flights. Their volcanic thunder came down upon us, booming back and forth across the bay, echoing against the mountains, rolling out across

the ocean, until it seemed that everything was shaking beneath its irresistible waves of sound. The gypsies, squatting at their tasks on the sand and the concrete ramps, grunted and blinked up at the shining specks and sweeping curves of vapour.

'Olé, los Estados Unidos!'

'Qué escándalo de espanto!'

And while we were gazing at this display, half in awe and half in amusement, the lorry returned and the driver ran over to us shouting, 'El Maestro Felipe is dead!'

Felipe had spent five pesetas on the lottery ticket that had won the big prize—El Gordo. He had carefully hidden it in an old pair of trousers, so that no one would rob him at drunken fiestas in the early mornings.

His wife Esmeralda, having no money to buy food for her screaming children, hunted through his clothes to see if he had left anything in them. Finding the ticket, she was furious. 'The idiot! Fancy spending his last duro at the lottery, when his children haven't eaten for two days!' Then she took it out, sold it and bought some potatoes.

When Felipe returned to fetch the ticket, announcing that they were now rich, his wife was so overcome with terror that it took him half an hour to understand through her hysterical shrieks what she had done. She rolled on the earth of the courtyard, beside the stone copper, and scratched at her cheeks until blood poured out. The relatives came running from their hovels and fought with her, to stop her from blinding herself. And as the horror of their predicament made itself felt, they cursed Felipe and his family in their frenzy.

'Where are your St. James and the Queen of Heaven now?'

'I shit on their benevolent watchfulness!'

'So much for licking the arses of priests, you sanctimonious humbug!'

Felipe, reeling at the unbelievable disaster, had struck Esmeralda with all the strength he possessed, and hurled his guitar against the wall. Now he dithered round the struggling people, dazed and incapable of helping himself or anyone else. His wife, however, regained control of herself after a while. Holding a piece of cloth over her bleeding face, accompanied by all her children and relatives, she marched off to find the man to whom she had sold the ticket.

Felipe sat on the bed in Farinas' hut. Even more than the loss of a fortune, he was distraught by the money he had spent that afternoon, and would have to pay back. Some children, listening against the door, heard him muttering to himself, and weeping from time to time. 'Just like a dog!' they said.

His family returned after dark, escorted by the police. They had found the house, a chemist's shop. They had been met with a sympathetic but firm refusal. Then insults were exchanged and a fight broke out. The police arrived, and threatened that if there was any more violence they would have to take all Felipe's family into jail.

Later that night, while the arguments were still flying between the huts and hovels round the yard, Felipe crept out, went down to a nearby garage, climbed in through an open window and hanged himself from one of the iron beams that supported the roof.

I saw the undertaker and his assistant shortly after Felipe's funeral. The assistant had washed the corpse and prepared it for the coffin. As he lifted a leg, there was a rumble inside the stomach, and the corpse belched.

'Cállate, coño!' said the assistant.

'Something like this happened to a fellow I knew in La Línea called Gomez,' the undertaker said. 'He won the lottery, and was so carried away that he piled his furniture in the street and made a bonfire of it, while all the neighbours stood round and cheered. When he went to collect the money the authorities showed him that he had read the number incorrectly.'

I asked how Felipe's family had been able to afford a proper funeral. 'Besides, if he was a suicide, surely . . .?'

The undertaker explained that Felipe's daughter had returned from Gibraltar with about ten thousand pesetas, which her employers had advanced against her next two years' salary, together with a gift they had made her of fifty pounds to assist her unhappy family.

And then the chemist who had won El Gordo was so overcome with remorse at Felipe's suicide that after due consideration he offered to pay for the funeral. It was true that up till then there had been doubt as to whether Felipe could be buried in consecrated ground. However, it was decided that the contortions of his body indicated a struggle on the rope, which in turn suggested that he had repented at the last moment and tried to free himself. Technically, therefore, his was not a case of suicide but of accidental death.