

BETWEEN OCEANS

By

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EXT. OUT THE COAST - LIMA, PERU (CITY OF KINGS) - 1746 - DAWN

We take to the skies with seagulls, painted in gentle hues of pink, orange, and blue, as we leave behind rocky islands where colonies of seals and sea lions bask lazily in the sun. A colonial port welcomes us, surrounded by galleons and ships from lands far and wide. The journey continues through long sand roads, dunes, and deserts until we arrive at the City of Kings, a colonial city overflowing with grand palaces and majestic cathedrals. As the sun rises higher in the sky, its rays dance and shimmer on the bell towers and cupolas of these stunning structures.

EXT. GUZMAN MANOR - SERVICE COURTYARD - DAWN

ISABEL, 19, hurries through the service courtyard. She wears an elegant dress, running with SIMON, her slave, towards the mansion's service exit.

EXT. LIMA STREETS - ALLEY - DAWN

Isabel and Simon leave the colonial mansion.

SIMON

Your Mercy! If your mother finds out, she will send the overseer to whip me.

ISABEL

Simon, Don't be a coward! You know I can't leave the house unaccompanied. It will only take a second, and we'll be back in no time. I'll cover you!

The couple dashes through the labyrinthine streets and alleys, sprinting without looking back, until they finally arrive at the bustling main square.

SIMON

Your Mercy!

Isabel notices the confused looks of the passers-by who stare fixedly at her.

SIMON

Your shawl!

Isabel realizes in a start. She forgot to cover her hair and face with the shawl. No woman of society would go out into the street without the protection of the shawl.

ISABEL

For Our Lady's sake! Why didn't you  
tell me, Simon?

She quickly takes the embroidered shawl she had over her shoulders and, in a quick gesture, covers her hair and face, leaving only one eye uncovered.

SIMON

I tried, Your Mercy! But you run too  
fast!

Isabel spots the flower and essence PEDDLER, an old woman, with silver locks, clutches her tray of concoctions and fragrances, perched on the steps of the Main Church. Isabel breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. GUZMAN MANOR - MAIN QUARTERS - PARLOR - DAY

Isabel stops in front of a massive ornate mirror, before climbing the carved wooden staircase that leads to the second floor.

EXT. GUZMAN MANOR - MAIN QUARTERS - BALCONIES - DAY

Isabel's entire clan dons their finest threads, standing by for the procession's arrival. In tow are her sisters, MANUELA, 18, PAULA, 17, ANA MARIA, 14, CLARA, 10, her mother CONCHA, 34, grand-father, BARON GUZMAN, 62, handmaidens, and a horde of other kinfolk and acquaintances.

CONCHA

There you are! Where have you been? I  
sent all the slaves to look for you.  
Even Rosa, couldn't tell me where you  
were.

ISABEL

Sorry, Mother, I wasn't feeling well!

CONCHA

We'll talk afterward. Now let's watch  
the procession. Your sisters have  
saved you a spot in the balcony.

ROSA, 16, her maid, approaches with wide eyes of  
astonishment.

ROSA

Your Mercy! I didn't know what more  
excuses to invent for your mother.

ISABEL

Be quiet and say nothing more.

Isabel leans over the balcony. The streets are crowded, nobles parade their richest clothes and jewelry on decorated mules, accompanied by their maids and pages in elegant attire, many of them holding cups of gold and silver, where incense is burned. On the balconies of the entire street, decorated with oriental carpets, noble families lean out to watch the procession pass.

The wooden image of St. Jude Thaddeus, adorned with a mantle of gold threads, is carried on a litter by several Franciscan priests, followed by clergy carrying incense and wooden and silver crosses.

Manuela approaches.

MANUELA

Did you get the mixture, my sister?

Isabel discreetly opens her neckline and shows the lace bag. The sweet scent of perfume fills the air. Manuela smiles.

CLARA

Look, Isabel! It's them!

The noise of DRUMS, is heard above the prayers and litanies. The balconies suddenly get crowded with curious spectators.

The brotherhoods of black devotees, divided by their castes, enter the scene. Each group carries the flag of its brotherhood and a colorful umbrella, under which the king and queen of the brotherhood dance. Most of them are dressed in grotesque and caricatured costumes of devils, birds, bears, monsters, and other fantastic creatures, jumping and dancing to the sound of the drums and percussion.

The sisters applaud euphorically.

EXT. GUZMAN MANOR - BARON'S STUDY & LABORATORY - SUNSET

The Baron is stationed at his desk, encircled by cabinets and ornately-carved wooden shelves stocked with jars of preserved animal specimens, rare insect collections, pots of sprouting plants, and a handful of stuffed creatures. A map of South America, a compass, and stacks of scribbled notes adorn his work surface. He takes measurements, jotting down details, computing distances, and inscribing names.

Concha enters the room, holding a candle and a cup of wine.

CONCHA

I knew you'd be here, Papa.

She hands him the glass. The Baron nods and takes a sip.

CONCHA

I suppose you're sticking to your original plan. I had hoped you'd change your mind over time.

BARON

I promised I'd stay until Maria Isabel is engaged, and I've kept that promise. Don't break yours.

CONCHA

I won't, but it feels like a farewell to me. A journey this extensive will keep you away for years, maybe forever. You'll miss so much... you won't see your granddaughters grow into beautiful young women.

The Baron rises from his seat and takes Concha's hand.

BARON

They're already accomplished beautiful young women. I'll miss you too, my sweet daughter, but my journey has been postponed for far too long.

CONCHA

Father...

BARON

I'll wither away in frustration if I don't go. It's my destiny.

He plants a tender kiss on Concha's forehead before returning to his desk. A map unfolds before us, revealing a mysterious path from Lima, Peru to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

From the family courtyard, muffled VOICES can be heard. Concha peeks through the window, catching sight of her daughters' covert rendezvous in the courtyard. She smiles.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - SUNSET

The sun dips below the horizon, casting a warm glow over

Lima's palaces and churches on the skyline. The sound of bells shatters the stillness. Descending to the port citadel, we find a handful of homes, a couple of palaces and churches, and nearly deserted streets.

In the backdrop, the masts and sails of trading ships and Spanish armada galleons rise against the clear sky, standing out above the stone wall shielding the city from attackers and buccaneers.

Simon brings the cart to a halt in front of a small, opulent palace on the Main Square. GERMANO, 21, the Baron's godson, leaps off the cart and pounds on the sturdy wooden door.

SLAVE LEANDRO

Who's there?

GERMANO

Germano, the Baron Nicolás Guzmán's godson and the slave Simon. I come with a request from your excellency for Doña Aída.

The heavy door opens.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - JAIL - SUNSET

The fortress is a bleak and oppressive structure, devoid of any comfort or spaciousness. Spanish soldiers stand watch over cells teeming with criminals, pirates, and buccaneers. Inside one cell, a motley crew of intriguing characters catches our eye: ZENDE, a towering black man of 32; CRAB, a slender and peculiar-looking fellow of 29; RICHARD ONE EAR, a 40-year-old, TURK, 28; and the CAPTAIN, a Moroccan weathered seaman of 42. Some play cards, while others sleep, but the Captain fixates on the setting sun through a small window with fierce, intimidating eyes. He coldly stares at one Galleon at the port, with a Russian flag.

EXT./INT. DOÑA AIDA'S MANSION - SUNSET

They enter the wide courtyard of the residence. Someone in the big house is playing a SOFT MELODY on the pianola. They are taken to the kitchen, where a black WOMAN offers them a sweet. The pianola stops playing.

BEATRIZ (OFF)

Who is it?

INT. DOÑA AIDA'S MANSION - KITCHEN - SUNSET

BEATRIZ, 17, enters the kitchen, holding a gleaming silver candelabrum. Her damask dress sparkles in the warm glow of the fire, and her demeanor exudes a refreshing and amicable energy.

BEATRIZ

Cousin Germano! Are you bringing news of my cousins? Tell me everything. How are they?

DOÑA AIDA, enters the room in her nightgown, clearly displeased with the unexpected visit.

DOÑA AIDA

Good evening, nephew! What brings you here at this hour?

GERMANO

The Baron sent your mercy a letter.

Germano reaches into his pocket and pulls out a sealed envelope. Dona Aída snatches it from his hand.

DOÑA AIDA

Finally, Isabel's getting her engagement party. About damn time!

She thrust the letter at Beatriz to read.

DOÑA AIDA

Leandro, go fetch Tomás. The Baron needs him to help with the party preparations. And you, nephew, eat up. You're heading back to the City of Kings tonight.

EXT./INT. GUZMAN MANOR - FAMILY COURTYARD - SUNSET

The five sisters and Rosa sit around the ornate fountain at the center of the courtyard. Clara, reads the letter slowly, but Ana Maria snatches it.

CLARA

I want to read!

PAULA

This is so exciting!

MANUELA

I know! It's fascinating!

They all laugh. Isabel, smiles candidly.

ANA MARIA

Will he serenade you again, Isabel?

PAULA

I hope so. I can't wait to throw my own handkerchief.

CLARA

You don't even have a suitor.

PAULA

You had one, but Mom didn't allow it. Because you still play with dolls.

MANUELA

Tell us more Isabel! Tell us again how you guys met.

ANA MARIA

Please! It was so romantic.

Isabel smiles.

ISABEL

Well...

Suddenly, the GROUND SHAKES.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - STREETS - SUNSET

Germano navigates the paths of the fortified citadel in his carriage. Simon, catches up with his childhood pal, TOMAS, 19, as they ride along in the back. The carriage passes by the white building of the Callao Jail Fortress, when a RUMBLE from deep within the earth caused the horses to rear up in panic.

The ground quakes and Germano and the slaves scramble for safety under the carriage. In mere seconds, buildings crumble into dust and debris rains down. The horses, however, are trapped under the weight of the falling rubble, their fate sealed.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - JAIL - SUNSET

The ground trembles violently. The soldiers are not spared as



half of the ceiling falls on them, while walls and floors crack and crumble. In the Captain's cell, one of the walls gives way, leading to the escape of all the convicts.

EXT./INT. GUZMAN MANOR - FAMILY COURTYARD - SUNSET

The ground shake beneath their feet.

ISABEL

Don't panic. Stay together!

ALEJO, the giant slave, appeared from nowhere, covering the girls with his massive arms, shielding them from falling plaster and bricks from the upper floor. The water from the fountain boils. In seconds, the patio is filled with rubble from the galleries.

Covered in dust and with a cut on his forehead, the Baron crossed the gallery, dragging Dona Concha, with him. Behind them, the gallery ceiling collapsed on top of servants and slaves.

EXT. LIMA - CITY OF KINGS - SUNSET

The ground trembles violently, causing buildings to crumble and collapse into dust and debris. People and animals alike scream and cry out in terror as the city is devastated. No palace, church, or building is spared from destruction. When all ends, the once beautiful city lies in ruins.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - STREETS - DUSK

The earthquake has stopped. Germano and the slaves leave the security of the cart. They look around. The citadel is in ruins.

GERMANO

Doña Aída! Beatriz! Let's go!

They run towards the ruins of the mansion.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - OTHER STREETS - DUSK

The Captain and his crew sprint out of the city.

EXT./INT. GUZMAN MANOR - FAMILY COURTYARD - DUSK

The girls stand frozen, surveying the destruction around them. The once beautiful house is now a pile of debris.

INT. DOÑA AIDA'S MANSION - PARLOR - DUSK

Germano and the slaves storm into the mansion. The pianola lays under a pile of rubble.

INT. DOÑA AIDA'S MANSION - STAIRCASE - DUSK

Dona Aída and Leandro try to reach Beatriz's bedroom without success.

DOÑA AIDA

Get some tools nephew! She is Traped!

Leandro and Germano try frantically to remove the plaster and brick blocks that covered the hallway.

DOÑA AIDA

I said get TOOLS!

TOMAS

FOLLOW ME! Jeremia! The gardener! By the port!

Germano and Tomas exit the rubble of the demolished house, darting past the fortified walls and rushing towards the port. They make a beeline for JEREMIA's shack, located by the docks. Upon reaching it, they find Jeremia staring out into the distance with a somber and apprehensive expression.

TOMAS

Jeremia! Miss Beatriz is trapped in the mansion!

SIMON

Tomás... My dear Lord... Look!

Their words were drowned out by the growing ROAR of the water. Germano's eyes widened in panic as he sees the Galleons and Boques in the sea, advancing at high speed towards the pier, colliding with each other.

JEREMIAS

The sea is coming out! Get on the boat!

They run after the old man. And jump in a boat right before the first tsunami wave hits them.

EXT. CALLAO PORT CITADEL - PORT - DUSK

A wave, 15 meters high, hits the city walls with enormous

force, turning them into debris and falling on the remains of the demolished mansions and hundreds of innocent people. The boat flips, sucked in by the waters, Jeremia is carried away by the torrential forces of the sea. Germano, Simon, and Tomás clung to the boards of the sinking boat.

EXT. LIMA - CITY OF KINGS - CITY GATES - DAY

A caravan stretches out from the decimated city, a motley crew of survivors on foot or in carriages hauling precious chests of heirlooms and treasures salvaged from the ruins. The Guzmán family trudges along in mourning, their luggage hefted onto mules and horses. Their once-elegant dresses hang dirty and torn, their hair tangled and dusty.

EXT. ISOLATED BEACH - DUSK

The beach is an unforgiving terrain, with jagged rocks lurking just beneath the surface of the ocean. Makeshift tents dot the sandy shore, while the crashing waves break against the blackened silhouettes of the rocks.

Two fires burn like fiery eyes in the midst of this barren wasteland - one for the Guzman family, and one for the servants and slaves. Rosa and Germano move effortlessly between the two, bridging the gap between the social classes.

Manuela watches Germano with growing affection. Meanwhile, Rosa sits beside Isabel, tending to her every need. Ana Maria and Paula gently braid Clara's hair.

EXT./INT. GUZMAN MANOR - FAMILY COURTYARD - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

YOUNG MANUELA, 7, hides behind a column in the courtyard. YOUNG GERMANO, 12, stands alone, tears streaming down his face. The Baron converses with two soldiers, his expression grave. Something terrible has happened. Manuela feels a deep sense of compassion for Germano, and perhaps even love.

EXT. ISOLATED BEACH - DUSK

At the campsite, a gust of wind stirs up the embers of the fires. The girls huddle together.

PAULA

I don't think I can sleep... It reminds me of Beatriz.

Their eyes dart towards the dark water, where the silhouettes of rocks emerge ominously. The crashing waves fill them with dread, each one more terrifying than the last.