

## Martin Schell's Outline of Wojciech Has'

### *The Saragossa Manuscript*

*The content of this outline was last modified on November 30, 2006.*

[**Bold** indicates the names of narrators, the appearance of significant figures in the background, or other brief notes.]

I. **Jan Potocki, the Polish author of *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa***. Both the Foreword of the original novel and the opening scene of the movie depict a battle in a town. One officer retreats to the second floor of an inn, where he sees a large book on a reading stand in the corner. After opening the book with the tip of his sword, he carries it to the dining table and sits down. He is fascinated by drawings of two men hanging on a gallows and two women in a bed. An enemy officer enters and tries to arrest him, but he cannot be disturbed. The enemy officer reads some of the book and recognizes its author as his own grandfather.

- A. **The second officer reads his grandfather's story**. The grandfather, a young captain of the Walloon Guard, is lying prone on the ground. His two companions are worrying about the journey. The valet asks the muleteer, "Will we make it before dark?" When the two servants start to talk about ghosts, Captain Alfonso van Worden stands up and interrupts them. He refuses to change his route to Madrid, despite their fear. He points at a map on the ground, which is really a drawing of a building and its vicinity. [**The drawing is not laid flat, and therefore appears to show a three-dimensional landscape.**] He says they will go via the place of the cork oaks, and stay overnight at an inn called Venta Quemada.
- B. After riding for a while, Captain Alfonso stops at a desolate place that has a well. He realizes his muleteer Mosquito is missing and walks around calling for him. Suddenly he notices two men on a gallows and numerous skulls on the ground.

Alfonso returns to the well but his valet has disappeared -- he sees the man's lute and a glove with a knife through it, around which is coiled a snake.

Alfonso rides alone to Venta Quemada and tethers his horse in the stable at the entrance. The place seems deserted. He takes a metal pitcher from the dining table and sits on the edge of the stone floor. After drinking deeply, he rests his head on his left hand.

- C. Before he starts to doze, a barefoot woman comes through the inner door. She startles him, but he relaxes when he sees her smiling face. She wears a black cloak and a Muslim jilbab wimple but her left breast is bare. She says, "Two foreign ladies who are staying here would like to invite you to supper." She silently leads him through a tunnel while holding an Aladdin-style lamp. Smiling a little too broadly, she beckons him to enter the two ladies' room.

Inside, Alfonso whistles to himself as he admires the large chamber. There is a low table in the center, a canopied bed at the far end, and a portal in the left wall. He sits at the table and begins to eat, unaware that two women are approaching him. Princess Emina introduces herself and Princess Zibelda as Muslims from Tunisia.

Zibelda is disturbed by Alfonso's locket. He says it contains "a fragment of a genuine relic" and that "Only evil ghosts are afraid of relics." Emina counters, "Too bad our closest relative follows a strange faith." He laughs at her claim that he is their relative and says he never heard of the Gomelez family. Then he becomes distracted by four scantily dressed women who emerge from the portal, which has small lion statues at each of its corners.

Emina leads him to the bed. She says they have been waiting for him and his arrival means that he passed a test of courage. The two sisters have never had contact with a man, but have enjoyed intimate relations with each other. They have decided to marry the same man. As they seduce Alfonso, Emina says they must hurry because it is nearly dawn. They inform him that he cannot marry them unless he converts to Islam; Emina says, "You will be allowed to see us in your dreams only." He drinks from a skull chalice and becomes groggy while kissing each woman passionately.

- D. Alfonso wakes up outdoors, lying on his back. He dreamily stretches his arm ... and touches a corpse! He is at the gallows, but both dead men are now on the ground.

He runs back to the inn, where his horse waits calmly. He passes through the tunnel and opens the door. Instead of a huge lavish room with a table full of food, he sees a small dirty room with a broken table upon which there are rats and a skull. He leaves quickly.

Alfonso rides through a small Christian cemetery to another building where he meets a hermit who warns about the need to confess sins. He leads Alfonso upstairs, losing an Arabian-style shoe in the process. Alfonso looks out the window and sees his tethered horse spook.

After they sit, the Hermit says, "Strange things were happening last night." He asks if Alfonso slept at the deserted inn. A possessed man with no right eye enters and wails, startling Alfonso who is drinking goat milk. The Hermit commands the one-eyed man to take the goats uphill. After he leaves, the Hermit asks Alfonso about his family.

- 1. **Alfonso's tale.** His father is traveling through desolate country in a carriage, which overturns when another gentleman's carriage passes it. The father rides a horse into the town of Saragossa, where he finds the other carriage in front of an inn. **[This is the same inn where the two opposing officers met at the start of the movie.]** The other gentleman sits at a table on the ground floor, eating a lavish lunch. Alfonso's father interrupts him and challenges him to a duel outside. They go behind the inn and fight near a pigsty, above which skinned carcasses are hanging. Alfonso's father loses the duel when he is stabbed in the chest.
- 2. Alfonso's father is not dead, however. Wigless, he lies on a cart drawn by a pair of oxen. He cries out for water. At the point when he says he will sell his soul to quench his thirst, a young woman suddenly emerges from behind a large outcropping of rock, carrying a pitcher of water on her head. She wears a kind of jilbab that is untied at the neck, and her arms are bare. She gives him a drink and smiles.
- 3. Alfonso's father marries the woman in a church in Saragossa, near the inn. All the men whom he has invited to the ceremony are former dueling opponents. Suddenly a messenger on horseback arrives and gives him a note from the mayor of Bayon, who requests that Alfonso's father go to Ardennes and take care of his ancestral castle. He tells his friends that doing so would mean leaving the king's service, and asks them to help him decide. They vote with their swords: 5 up, 2 down. The innkeeper complains, "This is going to ruin me!" when he realizes that nobody will pay for the wedding feast. **[But he is still in business when Alfonso arrives at the Saragossa inn a generation later.]**
- 4. Everyone is enjoying the wedding feast at the castle, despite leaks from the rain. Alfonso's father and mother retire to their wedding bed, which is an island in the flooded bedroom.
- E. Alfonso tells the Hermit that he was born 9 months later. He then resumes his tale at a point when he is an adult.
  - 1. Alfonso returns to his parents after being raised by a nobleman. A man sits on a high stool, reading a large book that recounts the father's exploits battling skeletons. Meanwhile the father crawls on hands and knees searching the floor, and the mother does needlework in a chair.

After his parents greet him, Alfonso's father invites him to fence, saying that he will pass to his son all his experience from the 130 duels he has fought. Alfonso's mother shrieks even though the weapons have their tips covered. The father loses his rapier almost immediately and the lesson ends. **[His grip seems to have become weak due to arthritis.]**
- F. The Hermit commands Pasheko, the possessed man, to tell his story. Pasheko grimaces and wails twice, then suddenly calms and takes a bite of bread.
  - 1. **Pasheko's tale.** He is a young man eating lunch with his father, the father's new wife Camilla de Tormes, and her younger sister Inezillia.

Pasheko tells his father that he loves Inezillia, but the father forbids a marriage because it would be "unbecoming" to be his son's brother-in-law. After the father leaves, Camilla tells Pasheko that he can be Inezillia's lover even if he cannot marry her.
  - 2. Pasheko's father travels with the two women while Pasheko remains at home. Depressed at the absence of Inezillia, he plays with a pistol. A bearded man in black with a kind of conical hat (truncated, not pointed) delivers a letter from Pasheko's father, telling him to meet them at Venta Quemada.
  - 3. Pasheko rides to the inn and asks to stay overnight. The innkeeper says that the place is haunted -- even he and his wife don't sleep there anymore. Pasheko makes light of the matter, but his valet leaves. Alone, Pasheko opens a small chest and finds pearl necklaces, which he holds in his hands.
  - 4. His stepmother comes through the inner door and approaches him from behind. She tells Pasheko that his father is sleeping. Glancing at him adoringly, she leads him through the tunnel and asks him to wait briefly outside the large room while she goes in. When she calls, he enters and sees her on the bed with Inezillia. Camilla tells Pasheko to kiss her sister, and says that she

will always be present when he and Inezillia make love.

- 5. Pasheko wakes near the gallows, touching a skull when he dreamily stretches his arm. One hanged man is now on the ground; the other is still dangling. Afraid, Pasheko runs away.

Back at the inn, the people act as if they are seeing him for the first time, even though he knows the exact words the innkeeper is about to say.

- 6. After the innkeeper leaves, Pasheko opens the small chest happily, closing his eyes. He is startled to find a snake in his hands instead of pearls. He hears the voices of the two sisters, asking him to show affection. Suddenly the hearth fire starts by itself under the cauldron.

Approaching it, he sees the two men from the gallows hanging in the chimney. They drop down and chase him, vanishing and then reappearing outdoors. They catch him and tear out his eye.

- G. The Hermit tells Alfonso to sleep in the chapel. He goes down the stairs, pausing to look back at Pasheko and the Hermit when he hears them chuckling. In the chapel, Alfonso hears two voices that claim to be his mistresses longing for him. Recalling how Pasheko was lured by demons, Alfonso tells the voices, "Go back to your gallows." As he gestures, he loses his balance and hits his head on the stone steps of the altar. He looks briefly at the outer door, which seems to have movement behind it.
- H. Morning. The Hermit wakes Alfonso and says there was "mischief" last night. He warns, "Devils may assume various forms." Alfonso blithely replies, "They somehow stay away from me." After the Hermit points the way to Madrid, Alfonso rides off.

The Inquisition intercepts him on the road and arrests him. Wrestled to the ground, he protests loudly until one man knocks him unconscious by striking his head with a religious icon. Six men in black hoods and robes lay him over his horse and take him away.

- I. In a room where a skeleton full of cobwebs lies on a table, Alfonso sits in a chair, hands tied behind his back. A hooded man puts a huge horned mask around the prisoner's head like a helmet. An inquisitor in white asks Alfonso if he knows "two African princesses" but he refuses to answer. As Alfonso is hoisted from his chair and dangled from a rope, he starts to faint.

The two Muslim sisters enter with Zoto, his gang, and some armed men in Muslim clothing. After rescuing Alfonso, Zoto introduces his two brothers but mixes up their names. Alfonso says he saw the two brothers on the gallows, but they tell him the hanged men were impostors. Emina and Zibelda help him escape while the gang battles the Inquisition guards.

- J. Back in Venta Quemada's inner sanctum, the two princesses pry off the mask. After they each kiss him, Emina tears off Alfonso's locket and tosses it to her sister, who teases him before throwing it near the table. He looks for it, but can't find it.

Zibelda gives him a necklace with a talisman made of the two sisters' hair. Suddenly a turbaned man who is head of the Gomelez family descends the stone stairway behind Alfonso and berates him for daring to be with the women. Three guards appear and force Alfonso at sword point to drink the skull chalice. He faints.

- K. Alfonso awakens on the ground at the gallows again, but with a broken rope around his neck this time. One Zoto brother is hanging. Nearby is a Cabalist lying on a wagon wheel, also with a severed noose around his neck. The Cabalist, who wears a truncated conical black hat with two very long feathers in it, knows that Alfonso's mother was a Gomelez. He talks of the Song of Songs and Hebrew mysticism as they walk back to the inn.

Alfonso is surprised to see both of their horses in the stable of Venta Quemada. On the dining table are platters of food and the skull chalice. The Cabalist finds the locket that Alfonso had lost while playing with Emina and Zibelda, and says it proves Alfonso spent the night there. Alfonso refuses to discuss the matter, but becomes jealous when the Cabalist says he also spent the night with two beautiful women there and promised not to discuss the details. As they ride toward the Cabalist's castle, he speaks of the Zohar and other mystical topics, including how to distinguish between Hungarian and Polish zombies.

- L. The Inquisition stops a lone rider and wrestles him to the ground, mistaking him for Alfonso. He declares he is Don Pedro Velasquez, and they release him. The man in the straw hat, who jumped him first, reports the mistake to the Inquisition leader and tries to excuse it by claiming that Pedro looks like Alfonso.

Alfonso and the Cabalist have paused because Alfonso's horse has a thorn in one hoof. Seeing a rider approach, Alfonso suspects the Inquisition has found him again. He tells the Cabalist, "And there is no place to hide." But he immediately denies his fear, adding, "Just to examine the situation, of course." However, the rider is Don Pedro, who warns them about the Inquisition.

The three men decide to go to the Cabalist's castle. Pedro says he wants a quiet place to reconsider everything that has happened to him. The Cabalist warns, "That could drive an inexperienced person

insane." Pedro replies, "The human mind is ready to accept anything, if it is used knowingly."

### **This marks the end of Part One of the movie.**

- M. The Cabalist leads the other two men to his castle, which has two sphinx-like lion statues on opposite sides of the entrance. While his butler Enrico escorts Alfonso and Pedro inside, the Cabalist stays behind in the courtyard. His sister Rebecca greets him on the porch, asking why he arrived three days ahead of schedule. He says, "Unforeseeable complications. Everything got mixed up." He tells her that he must await instructions about what to do next.
- N. Pedro helps Alfonso put on a large black robe with symbols on it. Alfonso suggests that recent events were due to evil spirits, but Pedro says, "Someone must be after you to put you through all these misfortunes."

The Cabalist waits for Pedro to leave Alfonso; then he approaches the Captain and invites him to "Make yourself at home." However, Alfonso replies that he has "thought everything through" and decided to go to Madrid tonight. The Cabalist advises him to wait and recommends that he read the Spanish stories in the library, which has two lions in relief on its frieze.

Alone in the library, Alfonso discovers a large book opened to a page that has a drawing of two women in a bed. He flips forward to another page that is bookmarked by a flower stem and has a drawing of two men on a gallows above skulls and a wagon wheel. Astonished, he hurries down to the wine cellar and tells Pedro "I've found the answer." However, Pedro is only interested in the wine and says, "Perhaps this midnight oil will mark our vigil for the last time tonight."

Behind Alfonso's back, the Inquisition group comes through the side door of the cellar, which was already open. Enrico waves them away. Most of them go back out, but one goes up the stairs to the courtyard.

In the library, the Cabalist holds the large book and scolds Rebecca for carelessly leaving it in the open: "If he had read the end, the events which are to follow would make no sense." He closes the book and she takes it away just before Alfonso returns with Pedro.

- O. Alfonso and Pedro enter the library but can't find the book. Alfonso says that evil spirits made the book disappear. Pedro observes that Alfonso's "mind is rebelling against inexplicable phenomena" and asks for details. The Cabalist joins them and denies the book's existence. Pedro taunts the Cabalist about his belief that the world is full of demons and that "Incantations stop their mischief." The Cabalist offers to prove it.

Rebecca comes down to the library holding a candelabra in one hand and a Siamese cat in the other. The Cabalist introduces her to Captain Alfonso and Don Pedro. While the Cabalist and Pedro go to the library to debate about the supernatural, Rebecca asks Alfonso to recount everything that has transpired. He says, "I wouldn't know where to start. I must have been put to sleep with a potion and taken to the gallows." When he asks whether the Zoto brothers ever come down from the gallows, she replies "Very often." She reads Alfonso's palm and tells him that he is "possessed with love for the demons" which means he has no fear of humans.

- P. A band of gypsies arrives. The head gypsy wears a black truncated conical hat with no feathers. He waves to Rebecca at the window before riding into the courtyard.

The Cabalist greets the head gypsy warmly and invites him to recount his unusual adventures in life. Pedro flirts with Rebecca, telling her that he fears her magic power, not that of ghosts. The head gypsy says, "I reckon that from one end of the world to the other, the story of love is always the same." Recalling his youth makes him hear "the noise of a variety of passions and a mixed roaring of storms."

- 1. **The gypsy Avadoro's tale.** While five men duel in a street, Avadoro reclines on two stone statues of Chinese lions that are placed end-to-end. He is approached by a man in a black cloak who asks for help. The man gives the gypsy a coin as advance half-payment for the task of following a young lady to discover whether she is going to church or sneaking off to visit a lover. The gypsy guesses that the jealous man is the lady's husband.
- 2. Upon seeing the lady in front of the church, the gypsy decides to help her. As she is about to descend the church steps, he feigns falling on them in order to get close enough to whisper. He warns her that someone is suspicious of her affection. She drops a black glove for him to bring to her lover, the Caballero Toledo. Her chaperone offers Avadoro a coin, but he says, "My conscience forbids me taking payment from both sides."
- 3. As arranged, the gypsy goes to the Lovers Inn to meet the man in the black cloak. Before entering the courtyard, he passes a man leaving the inn who wears a tri-cornered hat with white

stitching around the rim. Avadoro finds the man in the cloak sitting at a table. He makes a prayer-like gesture, convincing the cloaked man that the young lady whom he spied on went to church. The man puts the gypsy's remaining payment on the table and then leaves. **[Behind them, on the second storey across the courtyard, three prostitutes are frolicking with a man in a blond wig who appears to be Alfonso's father.]**

Avadoro turns to watch the cloaked man leave, and then momentarily makes eye contact with a curly-haired man who has approached a prostitute standing nearby in a diaphanous blouse. The gypsy gives the second coin to a waiter in exchange for Toledo's address.

- 4. Crossing the town square, the gypsy notices the man in the black cloak lingering on the right of the steps below the church. Avadoro enters the narrow street outside Toledo's house, where he sees a Knight of Malta's doublet, hat, and sword laid out on the paving stones. He goes up a winding stairway into the house and finds the Caballero in a drunken stupor. Toledo wakes up and receives the black glove. He asks, "Would you like to become one of my servants?" The gypsy refuses the offer, explaining that he was born a nobleman and "chose the position of beggar as it does not dim a nobleman's jewel." They drink and Toledo expresses remorse about his own infidelity.
  - a. **Toledo's tale.** His good friend Aquillar from Malta visits, wondering aloud if he will live another day. Toledo guesses that he will have a duel and offers to be his witness. Aquillar says he would never ask him to witness such a duel, and Toledo immediately realizes that his brother is Aquillar's opponent. Aquillar tells Toledo to wait until midnight, when he will report about the afterlife if he dies in the duel.
  - b. Night. Thunder awakens Toledo. He converses with a voice outside his window, whom he assumes to be the ghost of Aquillar: "Is there a purgatory in the other world?" "There is one. And that's where I am!" Toledo goes to the window on the other side of the room in time to see a group of eight men entering the street below. Four of them carry a covered body on a stretcher. When he sees the Maltese cross on the corpse's doublet, he asks, "Who died?" In reply, the group's leader uncovers the face of Aquillar.
- Q. Back in the Cabalist's castle, Avadoro is interrupted briefly by a fellow gypsy. Alfonso tells his friends that he is confused by the gypsy's story-within-a-story: "I've lost the feeling of where reality ends, and fantasy takes over." Rebecca says the fantasy part is poetry. Pedro rambles about how math is near to poetry because one can define infinity without comprehending it. The Cabalist warns, "Empirical science leads to lack of faith." Pedro replies, "Only an uneducated man who sees a thing every day thinks he understands it. A true researcher proceeds among riddles." Then Avadoro returns and resumes his tale.
  - 1. After reciting his story, Toledo lifts a book that is on a reading stand and takes a skull, rosary, and penitent's shirt from the space underneath. The gypsy remarks that the voice was merely stating information that appears in any catechism, not information that could only be obtained in the afterlife. However, Toledo is sure that hearing the voice of the dead means he will die soon. He wraps a braided flagellant's cord around his neck and goes to the church to repent. In the plaza, he gives a necklace to Avadoro to deliver to his lover.
  - 2. The waiter from the Lovers Inn comes from the foot of the church steps as Toledo ascends. Avadoro pays him to deliver the necklace and agrees to take over the waiter's errand. The gypsy carries a small chest to the inn, where he asks for Lopez Soarez. As he goes up to the second storey, the curly-haired man appears at the top of the steps. He waits for Avadoro to pass, and then comes down the steps. The gypsy finds Lopez bedridden with a broken right arm and right leg. After Avadoro helps him take a spoonful of medicine, the young man asks the gypsy to sit on a chair and play guitar.
    - a. **Lopez Soarez's tale.** His father, Gaspar Soarez, is the richest merchant in Cadiz. He tells Lopez to go to Madrid to learn about the world, but he forbids four things: talking with noblemen, using the title Don, drawing a sword, and getting involved with the Moro family. He explains the last rule.
      - (1) **Gaspar Soarez's tale.** The banker Livardez of the Moro family gives the merchant Soarez 1,000,000 piastres to become a partner in a Philippines venture that is already successful. Some time later, Moro comes and tells him that Livardez has died. He asks for the money back.
      - (2) Years later, the investment triples in value and Soarez insists on giving Moro his share: 2,000,000 profit. Moro sends his agent to convey his refusal, on the grounds that he doesn't deserve the money. Soarez says he won't accept a "donation" from

Moro: "He is insulting me!"

- (3) Gaspar Soarez takes the matter to court in Seville. Six years later, his lawyer tells him that he has lost the case and must pay 600,000 piastres in court fees. He orders his lawyer to appeal.
- b. Lopez Soarez takes a carriage from Cadiz to Madrid, reading love stories on the way. He rents a suite at the inn, and is befriended by a rascal named Don Roque Busqueros who claims to be from Old Castille. He helps himself to the meal that is brought in for Lopez. **[Don Roque is the curly-haired man whom Avadoro has encountered twice without making his acquaintance.]**
- c. Lopez goes to a park called Buen Retiro which is famous as a place for romance. He falls in love at first sight with a woman named Inez, who is searching for a locket. Lopez finds it and returns it, but the woman considers him too direct in his request for a "prize" **[probably he means a light kiss to express her gratitude]**. At this point, Roque arrives carrying a small dog in his arms. He tells Inez that she is lucky because Lopez's father is the richest merchant in Cadiz.
- d. The next day, Lopez sits down to lunch, but Roque walks in and takes his food again. Roque explains that Inez only pretended to be angry, "to convince you she was not at all impressed by wealth."
- e. While strolling near the church, Lopez runs into Inez. She tells him not to talk to her unless she loses something again and he finds it; "Then you'll be able to demand a reward."
- f. In his suite's outer room, Lopez starts to write a love letter to Inez. When he goes into his bedroom to consult a romantic book in his trunk, Roque sneaks in and steals the letter. Lopez chases him.
- g. Roque teases Lopez by dangling the letter, then runs to the steps of the church, where Lopez pauses to pick up a stone and throw it at him. They run up the steps and Lopez falls halfway. Roque falls at the top, near Inez who is inside her palanquin. He gives the letter to her female attendant, who gives it to Inez.
- h. Lopez meets Inez at the park. She admonishes him for using a rascal to deliver the letter. He tells her that Roque "has haunted me like an evil spirit" ever since he arrived in Madrid.

When Lopez asks about her background, she says she is from a rich family, too: Moro is her father! Lopez backs away in despair. Roque (with a different dog in his arms) immediately approaches Inez and tells her not to "lose heart." She walks back to her palanquin, pausing to instruct her female attendant, who then tells Lopez, "Inez loves you more than her life." The woman also says that Inez wants to meet him "at the same spot tomorrow at sunset."

- i. At the inn, the waiter brings in a meal for Lopez with two empty plates. Sure enough, Roque arrives and sits at the table. However, this time Lopez welcomes him with a smile and offers the food.
- j. Lopez returns to the park and sits on a bench near the spot where he met Inez. He reads poetry and looks around, expecting her. Instead, Roque surprises him from behind, covering his eyes playfully. Roque offers to tell an "instructive" story.
  - (1) **Don Roque's tale.** One night, he climbs a ladder that is propped against someone's window. When Roque's head appears in the window of the bedroom, the woman in the bed wakes her husband, Don Diego. Diego shouts "Oh, fearsome head" and then flees the bedroom while she laughs.

Roque sits on the bed, but the wife acts prim and claims that she was expecting one of her "relatives" to come via the ladder. However, she quickly becomes flirtatious and tells Roque her story in response to his question about the "fearsome head."

- (a) **Frasquita's tale.** Even as a young girl, Frasquita Salero was flirtatious. A young man in a black cloak comes close to her window while pretending to search for something on the ground. **[In the background, a man demonstrates swordsmanship near the two Chinese lion statues that Avadoro rested on when this same cloaked man approached him at the beginning of the gypsy's tale.]**

The young man in the cloak asks Frasquita if she has dropped anything. He suggests that her necklace would be a lovely memento. When she yanks it off and drops it willingly outside the window, he picks it up and gives her a small

bouquet of flowers.

An older man appears in a doorway across the street and sees her receive the flowers. After the cloaked man walks away, the older man bows to Frasquita and then smiles at her.

After the older man leaves, Frasquita removes the ring that was binding the stems of the bouquet. She puts it on her left hand and kisses it.

- (2) Frasquita tells Roque that the young man in the cloak "never showed up again."  
[This is a lie.]
  - (a) Frasquita sits at a dressing table and dreamily rubs the ring. The older man comes to her side. Addressing her as "my beautiful wife," he asks if he is the only man she loves. Satisfied with her answer, Diego waves goodbye and leaves.
  - (b) As soon as he steps outside his house, Diego intercepts a letter that a boy is bringing to Frasquita. It is from someone named Pena Flor, who mentions a ring and expresses his yearning for her. Diego returns inside and questions his wife again. Then he kisses the ring on her right hand and leaves.
  - (c) Diego goes up the steps of the street where two men are dueling near the lion statues. He overhears one refer to Count Pena Flor as "a nightmare to husbands." When the other says he would kill the Count for 100 doubloons, Diego holds up a purse and offers to pay. However, a man wearing a Napoleon-style hat comes between the duelers and insists on doing the deed.
  - (d) While Diego and Frasquita are eating at home, a magistrate enters and announces that Count Pena Flor was murdered last night. He says that one of the assassins was found to be carrying a letter that mentioned receiving 100 doubloons from Diego. Diego calmly states that he has never seen Pena Flor, and explains that he paid a promissory note for 100 doubloons yesterday. The magistrate accepts his explanation and leaves.
- (3) Frasquita tells Roque that "strange things have been happening in the house" ever since then.
  - (a) Frasquita arouses her husband's guilt by throwing coins on him while he sleeps and speaking into an empty pitcher to make her voice sound eerie. She pretends to be a ghost talking about the 100 doubloons and calling Diego's name. She lures him into a hallway at the stroke of midnight and scares him with a lighted jack-o-lantern.
  - (4) Frasquita tells Roque that Pena Flor is imaginary and she paid various people to support the myth in order to trick her husband into going on a pilgrimage. Roque says this explains Diego's reference to the "fearsome head" moments earlier. After they laugh, she says, "And you understand why I thought you were somebody else."
- k. Lopez interrupts Roque and angrily says he is wasting time. He challenges Roque to a duel because "there is no other way to get rid of you." Roque easily disarms him and pokes him in the left tricep.

Roque resumes his tale: "That same night, I found myself in entirely different circumstances." But Lopez notices a spot of blood on his arm and immediately faints.

- l. Lopez sits on his dining table at the Lovers Inn while Roque and two of the prostitutes attend to his dueling wound. Roque resumes his tale, beginning "That same night... I found myself in entirely different circumstances."
  - (1) Roque and Frasquita kiss repeatedly, but he breaks their passionate embrace when he sees a head appear in the window with blood over the right eye. The bloody man barely holds onto the windowsill and nearly falls backward. **[He is the man in the black cloak who asked Avadoro to spy on the young lady.]**
- m. Roque interrupts himself by making a haunting noise and then laughing. Before he can resume the tale, the waiter announces the presence of a woman who has a message for Lopez.

Roque grabs the letter and reads it. He tells Lopez that Inez wants him to come to her house tonight. He says she will marry someone else tomorrow if Lopez doesn't come. Roque decides they will use the "old, well-known way" to get past the house guards. The three men hurry out.

- n. The night is stormy. Holding a lantern, the waiter leads Roque and Lopez down a street, followed by two men bringing a ladder on a cart. Roque counts three windows to Inez's bedroom and orders the waiter to set up the ladder under the third. He tells Lopez the signal: "When I clap my hands, go up to heaven!" Then Roque kisses Lopez on the cheek.
  - o. Reciting romantic poetry, Lopez ascends and knocks on the window shutter. There is no immediate response, so he glances back at Roque. At that moment, the occupant opens the window, causing Lopez to lose his balance. It is the house of Toledo, not Inez!
  - p. As the ladder falls backward, Lopez cries, "Oh God!" At the window, Toledo shouts, "Is there purgatory in the other world?" From below, Lopez replies, "There is one and I am in it!" He has fallen into a barrel and is stuck upside-down: purgatory instead of heaven.
- 3. Avadoro immediately realizes that it was Lopez Soarez, not the ghost of Toledo's friend Aquillar, who answered Toledo's questions. He seeks confirmation by asking if it was stormy that night. "Lightning like in hell," Lopez answers.
- 4. Laughing, the gypsy grabs his hat and hurries out of the room. He goes to the church stairway, where Toledo lies prone with his head on the top step. Waking him from a kind of stupor, Avadoro whispers the newly discovered context of the conversation that Toledo had attributed to his friend's ghost. Toledo declares that his penance is over and removes the flagellant's cord from his neck. He wants to meet Roque and hear him recount the story in detail. He asks Avadoro if he thinks the lady who gave him "a handkerchief" is still faithful. "Undoubtedly," the gypsy replies.
- R. The gypsy pauses, explaining to Rebecca and the others that he decided to seek Roque. One of his band whispers to him, and he requests "a few moments" to attend to the man. Alfonso traces the nesting of the story from Frasquita to Roque to Lopez to Avadoro, and comments, "It's enough to drive you crazy." Rebecca says that such adventures begin simply, "but one story creates another, and then another."

Pedro says this is like an infinite sequence of quotients, but Alfonso says math and philosophy mean nothing to him. Pedro replies, "We are like blind men lost in the streets of a big city. The streets lead to a goal, but we often return to the same places to get where we want to be." He affirms that "one man cannot invent something that another cannot solve." Rebecca smiles at this, but Alfonso admits, "I no longer follow."

Seated again, Avadoro says, "Toledo regained his former gaiety and balanced soul." He resumes his tale, recounting his search for "that impossible man" Roque.

- 1. That same day, Roque approaches the two lion statues. The assassin with the Napoleon hat tries to scare him with his sword, but Roque simply pushes the blade aside and walks on. Preoccupied, he pauses after passing the statues and wipes his brow. Then he glances back at Avadoro resting on the statues. Roque sizes him up and says, "I like you. I'll take you as a servant." The gypsy replies that he was raised as a gentleman and is a beggar by fate, not birth. **[This is similar to the offer and refusal that transpired when Avadoro first met Toledo.]**
- 2. Avadoro follows him around the corner to the church. When Roque starts to explain the duties of the job he is offering, the gypsy interrupts and asks if he is Don Busqueros "to whom Lopez Soarez owes so much." Roque confirms, and insists that everything would have gone well if Lopez had not gone to the wrong window. Avadoro tells him that Toledo wants to meet him. Roque says he is honored, and then immediately steers the conversation back to the task at hand. He tells Avadoro that the father of Lopez arrived in Madrid but did not find his son at "the house" **[probably on the outskirts of the city]** so he came to town and went to the nearest tavern.
- 3. Roque and Avadoro enter the tavern to seek the elder Soarez, whom they have never met. They feign an argument, recounting the Moro-Soarez feud loudly and positioning themselves on opposite sites of a wigged man who is playing chess and smoking a pipe. Roque defends the Soarez family as "the greatest in Spain" and dismisses Avadoro as "an ill-informed big mouth." The gypsy leaves the tavern. Although the chess player shows interest, Roque looks into his eyes and realizes he is not Soarez.
  - a. **How Roque united the families.** A man sitting at the table to the chess player's left calls Roque "an honest negotiator" on the basis of his account of the feud. The man introduces himself as Gaspar Soarez, but Roque calls himself Moraredo. Gaspar tells him that Lopez disobeyed all his advice and was thrown out of a window during a fight with a nobleman called Busqueros. He wants his son to marry immediately and asks "Moraredo" if he knows "a young lady from a spotless family." Roque remarks that this is a "lucky coincidence" because he knows a reputable merchant who got angry at his

daughter and demanded that she marry within the week. Gaspar asks to meet her, and Roque says he will arrange it today.

- b. Roque sits on the bed of Lopez, laughing and telling him that today he will understand the value of Roque's friendship. Then he leaves the bed and prepares to receive someone in the suite's outer room. As he closes the curtains that partition off the bedroom, Roque says, "You know, Don Lopez, such complex tasks are my specialty."
  - c. Gaspar arrives, but he does not know that this is his son's suite and Lopez is bedridden behind the curtain. He tells Roque that he is impressed with his knowledge but nobody in the circle of merchants recognizes the name Moraredo.
  - d. Inez enters the room with her female attendant and pulls back her veil. Gaspar is awed by her beauty and kneels before her.
  - e. At that moment, Inez's brother enters, wearing a tri-cornered hat with white stitching around the rim. **[He appears to be the man whom Avadoro passed before entering the inn for the first time.]** He confronts Gaspar, asking if he is Senorita Moro's suitor. Gaspar is astonished that she is a Moro. The brother challenges him to a duel and Roque supplies a sword. Instead of fighting, Inez's brother makes a cooing sound. On this cue, Roque pulls the curtain aside to reveal Lopez.
  - f. Gaspar rebukes his son for disobeying him, but Lopez and Roque point out that he just broke his own rules by associating with the nobleman Don Busqueros, by drawing a sword, and by admiring Inez Moro.
  - g. Moro comes in, followed by two of his guards. Recognizing Gaspar Soarez, he says, "the punishment always fits the crime" and he would be honored if their children marry. Moro excuses Lopez's attempt to enter through his daughter's window as being "due to the grudge" between the fathers. He says he will now accept the 2,000,000 that was unclaimed profit and give it to Lopez as a dowry, along with another 2,000,000. The two fathers embrace warmly and chuckle. Roque steps behind the curtain and gets paid by Inez's brother.
- 4. Avadoro and Toledo are roaring with laughter. Toledo compliments Roque, who concludes the Soarez story by saying that Lopez moved into Moro's house to complete his recovery under Inez's care.

Toledo asks about the other story, involving Frasquita. Roque says he told it to a young gentleman -- Toledo nods, saying Lopez Soarez then told it to Avadoro who "introduced me" to the protagonist.

Roque recounts the story of Frasquita's husband Diego, opening with almost the same phrase he spoke to Lopez: "That very night, I found myself in entirely different circumstances."

- a. **Diego's demise.** Roque and Frasquita are kissing passionately, but he suddenly stops when he sees a bloody man appear in the window. After Roque flees in fear, she lustfully strides to the window and kisses the man. On the street, Roque glances up and is horrified to see Frasquita pull the man inside her bedroom.
  - b. Roque is standing near the lion statues. When Diego runs out of an alley in terror, Roque teases him with his sword. Then Roque is shocked to see that Diego is in real danger, because he is being pursued by the man with the Napoleon hat, whose sword is drawn. Roque runs after Diego while the pursuer is looking the other way.
  - c. Afraid, Roque hides from the assassin in a fenced yard, where an upright coffin with a skeleton inside is partly uncovered. **[The carved cover of the coffin depicts a hill, a flower, and a skull on crossed bones, reminiscent of the images of the desolate country and gallows near Venta Quemada.]**
  - d. The assassin grins when he finds Diego cowering outside the fence. Lifting his Napoleon hat, he reveals a bloody letter A on his forehead that "shows I'm in the Devil's power." He pulls out the bag of money that Diego gave him to kill Pena Flor, and then holds up a second bag that Pena Flor paid him to take revenge on the one who ordered his assassination. The assassin runs his sword all the way through Diego's chest.
- 5. Toledo laughs tensely and walks to his window. He asks what happened to the widow Frasquita Cornandez. Joining him at the window, Roque says she married her lover and "has led a model life" ever since. He points out the window and says, "Here she is!"
- 6. Accompanied by her chaperone, the woman who gave Toledo the glove via Avadoro enters the narrow street below. She stops at a table that stands on a broad carpet and is set with two chairs

and two goblets. Then she lifts her veil: she is Frasquita!

- 7. Toledo says he thought her name was Dona Iscariz. When he sees her walk toward his house, he panics. While Avadoro braces a spear against the door, Roque helps Toledo go out the window. Roque and Avadoro follow him, but Roque tumbles straight down, losing a shoe and becoming covered with vines. As Avadoro helps Roque limp away, Toledo stands at the table and quickly drinks one of the goblets.
- 8. The three men stop fleeing when they reach the plaza. Toledo says, "I must think it all over again." He walks toward the church steps, flagellating himself with the vines that he grabbed as he went out the window.
- 9. Avadoro supports the limping Roque as they walk to the Lovers Inn, where a crowd blocks the entryway. Passing through the crowd into the courtyard, they see two men dueling. The winner is a man in a blond wig: Alfonso's father! **[The loser of the duel appears to be the man who joined Alfonso's father when he was frolicking with three prostitutes on the second storey, seen in the background after the cloaked man paid Avadoro for spying on Frasquita.]**
- S. The gypsy says to Alfonso, "If I'm not mistaken, that brave officer was your father." Alfonso gets up and circles the table, positioning himself between Rebecca and Avadoro. He confirms that his father's chronicles mention 11 duels that day. Avadoro announces that the story is over and "We must part." Suddenly, the butler Enrico calls Alfonso. Holding the Walloon hat and coat ready, he tells the Captain, "Important affairs are calling you." Alfonso removes the robe of symbols quickly and dons his uniform. But he is confused by the fact that he is the one who is leaving. Forlorn, he goes back to the table where the tale was told, muttering, "But you said..." Pedro guides Alfonso back to the courtyard and tells him that he doesn't have much time left. As the Cabalist watches, Alfonso leads his horse out. A man dressed completely in black rides up to the castle entrance, turns his horse, and waves to the Cabalist at the window. Then Alfonso gallops out of the castle, following the rider back to Venta Quemada.
- T. Alfonso leads his horse into the mysterious inn. Three bearded men in black with truncated conical hats are waiting for him in the stable. **[The leader is the man who delivered the message to Pasheko, informing him that his father was at Venta Quemada. The other two are Zoto's brothers Muma and Chico, who tormented Pasheko and rescued Alfonso.]** The leader says, "Welcome to Gomelez's land" and gestures toward the small dining area. Holding the Aladdin-style lamp in her left hand, the serving woman with the bare left breast approaches, greeting Alfonso with a silent smile.
- U. With some trepidation, Alfonso follows the serving woman to the huge room at the end of the tunnel. Upon entering, he sees the turbaned man sitting at the table, opposite Emina and Zibelda. The two sisters get up and embrace Alfonso fondly. The turbaned man acknowledges that he is the Hermit, and explains that his real identity is Sheik of the Gomelez family. Saying it is time to reveal their secret, he gestures for an old man dressed like a Chinese official to bring Alfonso the book. The Sheik explains that the entire adventure was a "planned game" to test Alfonso's honor and courage while waiting to see if Emina and Zibelda had become pregnant as a result of their first night with him. Alfonso opens the book to the page of the two men on the gallows. He lifts the bottom edge, tilting the book upside-down as he shows it to the Sheik. He asks if the ghosts and spirits were the Sheik's men. The sisters laugh. The Sheik confirms that the Zoto brothers, the Cabalist, and Pasheko were all in on the game. Alfonso doubts that the skeptical Don Pedro was part of it, but the Sheik says he was. The Sheik tells Alfonso that the book contains "everything you saw and experienced." Alfonso says, "Maybe I can put it all in some order at last." Together, the sisters turn the book back a page to the drawing of the two women in the bed. Alfonso glances at it and smiles. Emina holds up a quill pen which was marking that page. Alfonso takes it and looks to the Sheik for permission. The Sheik nods and says, "The rest you can write yourself." The Sheik blesses Alfonso, who bows his head onto the book. Alfonso returns the quill pen to the page it had marked and closes the book. Zibelda and Emina each kiss Alfonso in turn. He says, "Whenever I see you, I am always afraid I won't see you again." Zibelda says, "We want to live in your memory forever." Alfonso challenges, "But now I know everything, so tell me really who you are." The Sheik just smiles. Then Emina tells Alfonso to close his eyes. Zibelda tells him to follow them when his name is called. Emina puts the skull chalice in his hands, and the two sisters back away. Eyes still closed, he drinks.
- V. Alfonso opens his eyes and stands up. The room is empty except for the table of food and an Arabian-style shoe near the portal. He picks up the Sheik's shoe and looks through the portal, which is now brightly lit -- by sunshine instead of interior lighting. Alfonso sees himself a short distance beyond the portal, walking behind Emina and Zibelda in a desert. The three figures go toward the canopied bed,

which is by itself on the sand. When he gestures toward the three figures, they turn around and face him. The outdoor Alfonso points at him and then comes through the portal. The two Captains mirror each other's expressions and movements: first amazed, then giddy, and finally turning away in fear as unseen women break out in raucous laughter.

- W. Face down, Alfonso wakes below the gallows again. He finds his two servants napping nearby. The valet leans against the wagon wheel and has the book on his shins. He asks, "Can we make it before dark?" Alfonso replies, "We can" with confidence rather than bravado. He adds, "This time we can. For sure." The two servants laugh. They all mount and ride off.
- X. In the town of Saragossa, Alfonso sits at a table on the second storey of the inn, with a dozen pigeons on the railing behind him. **[This is the inn where the two officers met during the battle at the start of the movie. The innkeeper is the same one who served the man who defeated Alfonso's father in a duel.]** Grinning in a crazed way, Alfonso dramatically describes being reunited with the Gomelez family. As he starts to write this new "script" in the book, his muleteer Mosquito informs him, "Two foreign ladies, who are spending the night at this inn, would like to invite you for supper." **[This is almost the same phrase spoken by the serving woman when he first came to Venta Quemada.]**
- Y. Alfonso drops the quill pen and goes to the window. Opening it, he sees desolate country like that near Venta Quemada. A mirror suspended in the air reflects Zibelda, who wears a white cloak and sits in a chair on the left. Emina stands on the right in a black cloak, her back toward Alfonso. Emina turns and takes a few steps toward him while Zibelda turns her head to look at him. Emina stops and waves. Near her, skinned animal carcasses hang from a wooden frame. **[Similar to the carcasses that were hanging behind the inn when Alfonso's father lost the duel.]**

Alfonso comes away from the window and whimpers at the table. Suddenly he laughs wildly, throws the book across the room, and pushes his two servants aside. As he goes down the stairs, we see the book lying open on the reading stand in the corner **[where the first officer found it at the beginning of the movie]**. The page with the drawing of two women in a bed is visible.
- Z. In desolate country, Alfonso rides his horse toward a hill on which two men are hanging from a gallows.