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Love Letters of a Portuguese Nun

By Mariana Alcoforado

This is the story of a girl
who wrote a letter to God... God replied.
Cristbal!
You're just playing a joke on me
to frighten me.
Come on, stop that.
Do you think
I'm naive enough to fall for that?
Cristbal.
Stop scaring me.
Cristy...
Aren't you ashamed of yourself,
teasing this poor thing?
This poor thing prefers teasing me -
making me climb the highest tree
for the best apples
or pushing me into the pond.
Just because I want a kiss,
she makes a fool out of me!
- Marie!
- Cristy, you can't do that!
- Marie!
- See?
You little witch!
Catch me!
Come on, catch me!
Just you wait! What will happen
if I catch you?
Please forgive me, most gracious Father.
I thought we were alone.
So I gathered, from your behaviour.
- Where are you, Marie?
- Breaking chastity before God's servant!
Chastity?
Please, you are mistaken.
It hasn't been broken.
How would you know?
What parish do you belong to?
We belong to Veiga Baixa,
the neighbouring village.
- Who are your parents?
- I live with my mother.
- She has no husband.
- How old are you?

- 16.

- And you, son?

I'm over 18.

Go straight home.

I will have another word with you later.

And if I find out that you seduced her,
you will be duly punished.

Because those who flout
the commandment of chastity...

But, Reverend Father, Marie is an angel.

- I'll soon be taking her up the aisle.

- I don't know anything about that.

See? She's contradicting you.

She's resisting her seducer.

Come on, Marie. Don't be foolish.

- Are you going with him?

- No.

I'll take you home.

I need to speak to your mother.

Directed by Jess Franco

Until this unhappy day, she had led
a godly life, Reverend Father.

Yes, but if your daughter were to die
tomorrow, she would be condemned to hell.

And you would have neglected
your Christian duties.

But, Father, what can I do?

I have to work

to put food on the table for us.

- I have been a washerwoman for 20 years.

- That is praiseworthy.

Do you distil this schnapps yourself?

Yes, Reverend Father.

You're very efficient.

Would you like a bottle, Father?

Will you let me

give you one to take with you?

Well, if you insist...

but don't think that giving me presents
will change my mind

about saving this evil-spirited child.

It is not too late to tear her soul away
from the grip of Satan.

I am counting on your consent to me

taking her on as a novice in a convent.
Thank you for your kindness, Father.
You make me feel ashamed.
The abbess of Serra d'Aires only takes in
daughters of the highest nobility.
But as her confessor,
I can put in a good word for you.
I'll persuade her
to overlook your circumstances.
What's more, she will reduce the cost
of taking your daughter into the cloister
by bringing it into line with your means.
One delicate matter.
If the novice is not accepted for any reason,
the money will go to the abbey.
Reverend Father,
I am as poor as a church mouse.
I have been honest with you.
Perhaps not entirely honest.
You must have something saved.
20 years of tireless work
must bring some sort of return.
You shouldn't scrimp
on trying to save Marie.
But, Father, what can I give you
if I don't have anything?
Do you wish to continue
to tolerate her depraved life?
Do you want to leave her
to the devil's mercy?
Do you wish the power
of the Holy Inquisition on your daughter?
Please, Reverend Father, not that!
Help me! For God's sake, help!
I have 500 reales put away.
In case I ever became ill...
I wonder if 500 will suffice.
Well, at least it shows
that you're willing to contribute your mite.
How could you do this to me?
You've cast your mother into poverty.
I'm glad to get you out of my sight.
You can be sure of that,
since Christ's brides of Serra d'Aires

are neither allowed to leave the convent
nor to indulge in secular pleasures.

- Does that mean I won't see Mother?

- No. They won't be that strict.

The novices are kept away from temptation.

No man apart from me is admitted.

As you know,

the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

But hurry now.

God willing, we will hopefully
be on our way before nightfall.

Reverend Father,

is Serra d'Aires very far from here?

Far enough by horse and cart.

Definitely too far on foot.

Halt!

This is now your home.

It's not how I imagined it.

The abbey is famous for its architecture.

She really is a charming young thing.

What's your name?

You will address me as

'Reverend High Priestess'.

- I didn't know that.

- How could someone like you know?

I'm sorry.

Are you...still a virgin?

Yes, Reverend High Priestess.

Lift up your dress, please.

I need to know if your claim
is representative of the facts.

Don't feel embarrassed

in front of Father Vincente.

He is your protector,

the disciplinarian of your young soul
and also of your body.

So lift up your skirt, please.

She's as good as a little lamb.

We'll have an easy time with her.

No, lift it up higher.

Even higher.

More.

That'll do.

- You're not wearing bloomers?

- We're poor. I don't have any.
No wonder that you tend to have
a lewd imagination.
Spread your legs now.
Come on. Wider.
You have to relax.
Don't tense your muscles.
Relax them.
You are quite wilful, I can sense it.
You must be more obedient. Only then...
will we reach our goal.
Now, do you see?
Yes.
That's right.
That's right. You are untouched.
Intact.
A very tight hymen.
The virginal membrane.
I know this examination isn't pleasant,
but we are obliged to do it.
The Holy Office demands that only
pure virgins be admitted to our order.
We sacrifice our virginity and our virtue
to the Lord.
Before we put you in novice's dress, you will
go to confession with Father Vincente.
- Josefina, take her to the cell.
- Yes, Mother.
When she has confessed her sins,
she will spend three days in prayer
in solitary confinement.
Then Father Vincente and I
will receive her again here.
...the sins that Satan has made
Your servant commit, and cleanse her.
...the sins that Satan has made
Your servant commit, and cleanse her.
Have mercy upon us in pardoning our sins.
There she is.
Let us remember our sister.
Have mercy upon her.
May the Lord pardon her grave sins,
while she still lingers in this world
in the flesh.

Now, my child,
when was your last confession?
About three months ago.
And did you forget to mention any sins
during this confession?
Yes, one. I was so ashamed.
Why were you ashamed?
I don't know. I, er...
might have done something impure.
Did you maybe arouse forbidden desire
in that young man and touch him?
- Not just him...
- So you were also unchaste with others?
- I...
- Did you touch them?
Yes... No.
And where, my child?
Where did you touch them?
Outside, in the woods.
I mean, whereabouts on their body
did you touch them?
I touched their lips.
Their lips.
And where else did you touch them?
Perhaps a bit lower down?
No.
Yes... Once, I touched a boy on his chest.
- You confess that.
- And perhaps Cristbal, once.
Twice.
Confess it.
How often did you lead him into temptation?
- In spring...
- Where did you touch him? Tell me.
- I've confessed that.
- It doesn't matter.
Cristbal wanted me to touch him
somewhere and I ran away in anger.
I need to know exactly.
I'd like to know every little detail.
Did you not have any bloomers on?
- Yes, I did, but he...
- Isn't that so?
Crist never wanted me to do that again,

even though we were often alone.

But he said if we were married,

then I would have to do it.

What would you have to do, child?

Talk to me.

Touch the thing I didn't want to touch.

I did have to take it upon myself once,

but that was in a dream.

You need to express yourself more clearly.

If you don't confess your sins,

I won't be able to give you absolution.

No!

The poor thing. The Reverend Father

is probably beside himself.

- Continue.

- In my dream, my cousin came over.

Suddenly, he was standing there naked.

I screamed.

He put his hand over my mouth and said

that if I didn't do as he said, he'd kill me.

He pressed my head towards him

and demanded...

That you put something in your mouth?

I complied.

I was so scared, I nearly died.

- You didn't defend yourself?

- Not enough.

Were you...turned on by this?

I don't know what that means.

I mean, did it turn you on, physically?

Reverend Father, what's wrong? Are you ill?

I shall pray not to have any more shameless

desires or ideas that lead me to commit sins

and not to satisfy other people's lust

in my dreams.

- So you regret your grave sins?

-Yes.

- Have you often dreamt of your cousin?

- No, only once.

Aquilino left the village to join the military.

I never saw him again.

If you had seen him,

and I don't mean in a dream,

- would you have done forbidden deeds?

- No.

Well, I have formed an opinion
about your sinful body, my child.

You shall reform your flaw
with thorns and flagellation.

Doesn't one atone for one's sins
through prayer, Father?

I am not your father,

I am your master and disciplinarian.

May the Lord acquit you of the sins
that you committed through carnal lust.

Josefina, what is that castle over there?

It's the residence

of the Cardinal Grand Inquisitor.

The castle opposite contains
the dungeons of the court of Inquisition.

You mustn't touch these habits. They've
been sanctified, as the rule demands.

- The High Priestess herself will clothe you.

- Why is she called High Priestess?

You'll see. This is no ordinary place.

You'll get used to everything.

We'll help you.

You needn't fear us. Believe me.

I do.

You have a child's hands.

How soft they are.

Just go in.

That's Sister Antonia. I'm Sister Joana.

She and I are the youngest here.

- We novices must stick together.

- My name is Marie.

May I welcome you with a sisterly kiss?

Stick with me and Joana

as long as everything's new to you.

Give me the apple, Antonia. Thanks.

We play funny games as often as we can.

You should watch.

- I'll join in.

- Great. Come here.

Watch.

- Now it's your turn.

- It might be a sin.

It's only a game. There's no harm

in doing it. Come on, don't be a spoilsport.
But if you're one of those
who are always worried about sin,
then you're no playmate for us
because you're too fond of women.
Come on, Marie.
What's going on here?
You've made friends straight away?
You seem to be very quick to make friends.
- It wasn't her fault.
- I doubt that.
I will talk to you later.
Leave the room now. Go.
Take off your dress now.
You will spend three days without a dress.
Father Vincente has imposed
thorns upon you as a penance.
If you chastise yourself,
your sinful lust and desire will pass.
I have just seen with my own eyes
that his opinion of you is perfectly accurate.
If you wish to please God,
you must change.
Yes, High Priestess.
Lord of Darkness, I have daubed myself
with the juice of a toad,
and you have ordained me as your bride.
I have danced naked in front of you
and bitten your symbol into my loin.
On the goat meadow,
we have come together, joined in the flesh.
And now you're denying me our child?
I will not bear the one
I have received from you.
- Is it you?
- Yes, High Priestess.
Thy shall be done, Lord of Hell.
You are my arbiter. You command.
Come to me.
These two have caused me
to deliver the child before it is due
by offering me an apple.
Stand by us so that we may finish our task.
In the name of hell, leave my body, Lucifer.

- Joana.
- I'll be right there.
- Hurry up.
- Yes, High Priestess.
There.
Here's the powder from a child's liver.
Help me!
Satan!
Satan! The devil's child
is flowing from my loins. I'm giving birth,
but it can't take shape because
that's what the Lord of Hell has decided.
His child.
Why can't I be a devil's mother?
I sacrificed my virginity to him
on Walpurgis Night.
Lustfully, greedily, we merged,
when he visited me
in the shape of Father Vincente.
How many times did it happen?
I'm dying.
Help me, paramours of Satan. Help me!
Have mercy, Lord of Darkness.
Release me from this satanic sacrifice.
No. No.
Yes, Father Aquilino.
I'm coming.
But the Father will punish me with thorns.
No. No. No!
- She screamed loudly. I wonder why?
- We should ask her.
Father Vincente said, as soon as...
Watch out, there she is.
You need more self-discipline, Joana.
Well, Marie, have you done penance?
- I'm in great pain.
- All the better.
You must learn to regard pain as a triumph.
You must be ready to make sacrifices.
If only I could. I'm very weak.
I'm very simple-minded.
There are many things I don't understand.
And I'm very afraid of pain.
- One gets used to it.

- I'm not sure about that.
- Only with the right attitude, of course.
- High Priestess, help me achieve it.
- Please.
- I will, under one condition.
You will submit to me completely,
with obedience and discipline.
Your carnal desire and lustful wishes must
be mortified by inflicting pain upon yourself.
Before the evening comes, you shall drive
the thorns deep into the soles of your feet,
until they bleed and you are no longer able
to skip around so light-footedly.
- Marie? Marie, it's me.
- No! Cristbal.
- You mustn't be here. Please go away.
- But you'll come with me.
If they see you, I'm doomed.
I won't escape with you.
I have found peace here.
I don't believe you. You will only find peace
if you become my wife.
I'm the Lord's bride.
I can never be your wife.
I have given myself to heaven.
These are only words, Marie.
If you love me,
then...please go away.
- I swear to you, Antonia...
- To Satan.
I swear to Satan
that this is the loveliest of all our games.
Antonia!
Paramour of the devil.
I can see him in the shape of a goat.
Receive our obscene kisses of homage.
Lucifer.
Oh, Joana.
Antonia.
You have served me well.
I will serve you more, and even better.
You have given to me, mistress of Satan,
and now I shall give to you.
Yes.

Get me the devil. I want to ride him.

Oh, no.

Holy Michael, Holy Gabriel, Holy Raphael,
all ye holy angels and archangels,
pray for us.

Holy Peter, Holy Paul, Holy Jacob,
Holy Demetrius, Holy Bartholomew,
all ye holy apostles, pray for us.

Deliver us, o Lord, from all sin.

Deliver us from the snares of the devil,
from hatred and all ill will.

Deliver us from the spirit of fornication.

Lord, help me.

Kneel down

and rid yourselves of all secular thoughts.

For a few days,

there has been a girl among the novices
who has been abusing God's kindness
through grave transgressions.

Let us pray for her.

Lord, take the sinner back into your arms
who has saddened You by being unchaste.

Confess that you are a grave sinner.

I confess my grave transgressions
to the Holy Virgin Mary.

I do not know if it was the insinuations
of the devil or my own arrogance
that caused me to violate
the commandments of the church.

I pledge to Holy Mary and all the saints
that my efforts shall be without end
to return to the bosom of the church,
to the Holy Mother Church, which is
the only joy on earth for sinners like us.

- Sister Josefina, I have a favour to ask you.

- You're white as a sheet.

Sister Martina told me I should ask you
if I needed to send a letter to someone.

- Who are you sending it to?

- My mother, but nobody must know.

- It's in safe hands with me.

- Thank you.

Woe betide him who keeps secret
what he does and will not account for it.

He will be banished from the community,
whose joys he does not share,
whose trust he does not deserve.
For his secrecy conceals sin.
It says here, 'If Cristbal returned,
this time, I would flee with him.'
This abhorrent letter
proves your mendacity.
It also says, 'Take me back.
I am afraid of losing my soul.
'Dear mother, the sisters and the abbess
often behave in a rather strange manner.
'And Father Vincente is not
the devout man you took him for either.
'I can hardly describe it in decent words.
He is depraved.'

This letter is full
of such libellous statements.
You have only yourself to blame
for the consequences.
This disgraceful piece of paper
shall be destroyed for good.
What would have happened
if your mother had received it?
She might have died of sorrow and shame.
What if it had fallen into the wrong hands,
the hands of the General Inquisitor?
He would have shown you
what it means to lose your soul, and more.
You shall suffer the consequences.
Perhaps sooner than you think.
Josefina, this novice wishes
to be imprisoned, to flagellate herself
and to ponder her sins in solitude.

- No, I do not wish that.
- We determine your wishes.

Those who rebel against this
have not understood
that there are ways
of enforcing the statutes of this order.
Get out of my sight!
Come here.
Get in there.
O Lord, I don't know what to do.

Why don't you help me, Lord?

Well, child?

What do you request of me,

Reverend Father?

This is a moment of mercy.

The hour has come for you
to sacrifice your virginity to the order.

Today, you shall be
the centre of a great ceremony.

But first, you have to complete a task
for which I have chosen you.

This is the reason why I have come.

Ever since you confessed to me how
your cousin came to you in your dream,
I haven't found peace in prayer.

I think that you should grant me
the same as you granted him

because I am now
one of your closest confidants.

- Don't.

- You...

- Go away.

- What? Kneel down.

With him, you didn't resist so much.

You said so yourself.

I'm calling you, Lord of Hell.

Come, Lucifer.

Make me a priestess of the devil.

Make me another Lilith, your servant.

Hold her in readiness. Lord of Hell,
we are sacrificing this child to you.

Her blood is fresh and pure.

We know that you desire fresh blood.

Prepare yourself to sacrifice your virginity
to the King of Kings, Sister.

Heavenly Father!

Your father in hell will introduce you
to the pleasure of being his paramour.

He will marry you,

and you will belong to him for all eternity,
with your blood, your womb,

your whole body and all your entrails.

The bat's tail

and the birds that you will eat alive

will keep your sex drive up
and you will give birth to devils...
..in the shape of newts, lizards,
snakes and disgusting worms.
Mount her in the shape of a man, Satan.
Kneel down and show your reverence
to the most illustrious of all debauchees
so that he may fill you
with sensuality and lewd desires.
May he hasten to you and take from this
child what he has always been entitled to.
Fall down, on your knees.
She shall be yours.
Come on, Joana.
You're the paramour of the devil now.
Heaven is closed to you forever.
You're his bride. From now on you will enjoy
forbidden fruits together with the rest of us.
Rejoice with us that you are of the devil.
Well, have you finally calmed down?
No, how could I,
after all that's happened to me?
I've been dishonoured in a disgraceful way.
What nonsense are you talking? You're ill.
- No!
- So why are you talking feverishly?
The sisters called me because you scream
and lash out day and night like a demoniac.
You always mistake dreams
and fantasies for real experiences.
In your mind, everything must seem so real
that you mistake phantasms for the truth
and dreams for reality.
In order to counteract this danger
more efficiently,
you will remain in solitary confinement until
you realise that dreams can lead to lies.
- Are you implying that I dreamt all this?
- That was certainly the case.
No, that man and you
did disgraceful things to me.
She's possessed by the devil.
- God be with you, Sister.
- Do you know where Don Antonio lives?

- The alcalde? Up there, up those steps.

- God be with you. Thank you.

Who's making all that noise,
as if the devil was after him?

Who's making all that noise,
as if the devil was after him?

Take it easy!

I'm on my way.

- What's the panic?

- Forgive me, Alcalde.

- You're not exactly gentle, Sister.

- Are you the alcalde?

At your service. Antonio Fernando

Quijeros Mel. I'm the mayor.

I'm from the convent Serra d'Aires.

I need to talk to you.

I see. Well, come on in.

What's the matter, little Sister?

- Please sit down.

- Thank you.

You're welcome. How about a little drink?

A glass of red wine?

I'd prefer a glass of Bagasso.

- Very well.

- I could use it.

Well, it's up to you.

- There you are, Sister.

- Thank you.

You can really put it away.

My uncle would be happy.

He's very proud of his brew.

And now tell me what happened.

I had to flee the convent.

But why, for God's sake? The abbess
and the father are such good people.

If only you knew what goes on there.

I must get away.

They lead a scandalous life.

The abbess makes pacts with the devil.

And the father celebrates black masses.

They lead a depraved life. They live in sin.

I'm absolutely convinced that you're wrong.

The Reverend Father and I often drink
together. He leads a very godly life.

He's a demon. He forces me to do things
that are so disgusting and shameless
that I cannot talk to you about them.
They tried to convince me
that I was imagining it all, but it's real.
Believe me.

These things don't concern me.
I can't interfere with life in the convent.
Only the judges of the Holy Inquisition
can examine this.

Then lead me to them.
I'm sure they are wise and just.
And they will save the sinners' souls.

Help me.
God will reward you for helping a poor girl.
I'm not sure how to do that.
I have my doubts. Well, we shall see.

Gee up!

- We must find her.
- Don't worry. The witch won't escape us.
I swear she won't.

Whoa! Slow down.

Halt!

Praised be Jesus Christ, Mother Alma.
Greetings, Father. Here we are.
- This novice came to me today.
- There's no need to explain. We know why.
My poor, lost little sheep. It was prudent
of you to bring her back right away.

We were very worried about her.

She's a little confused.

Never do anything like that again.

I suspected as much. She wanted to see
the judges of the Inquisition.

If I hadn't been sensible,
we might be there now.

She was talking at me
as if she were possessed by the devil.

And the things she said about you!

So I said to myself, 'Take her to the abbess.

'She knows how to handle her
better than you.'

And so do you, Father. You're an expert
when it comes to young souls.

It was a wise decision.

We appreciate your helpfulness.

- Well, if one can be of assistance...

- You've served us excellently.

It's your own fault.

Now we'll have to see

if you're possessed by the devil.

What a pity.

If you don't confess it to us, we will hand you over to the court of the Inquisition.

They have means which...

She must want the Inquisition to save her soul.

Why else would she have asked the alcalde to take her there?

Isn't it possible that she intended to denounce us there, the dangerous witch?

The witch will soon confess this to us.

But probably not until we're torturing her.

That's the best method after all.

It makes people talk.

We'll only use it to spare her the Inquisition and to protect the reputation of the order.

As soon as the witch confesses, we can dispense with further interrogation.

- Are you possessed by the devil?

- No!

The Inquisition's henchmen will squeeze the information out of you.

No, no, no!

- Show her the pincers.

- No!

Then confess that you're possessed by the devil..to death by fire.

Lead her out.

Reverend Brother Crespo. Excuse me.

The Dominican Father Vincente da Silva requests an audience.

Tell him that it is granted.

Father Vincente?

What could he have for us?

We're delighted to see our brother here with us.

- Forgive me, Your Eminence.

- Speak frankly.

A matter of great urgency brings me to you.

A novice of our convent is suspected
of dishonouring our faith
and being in league with the devil.

- She hasn't confessed yet.

- And you think we will make her confess?

I don't see any other way of saving her soul.

It would be extremely helpful
if you could take care of her.

A heretic who is suspected
of being a paramour of the devil
should be granted
the mercy of the Inquisition.

That's true, but not everyone approves
of us. Devout faith is often scorned.

It is becoming difficult to execute sentences,
even if the accused has been found guilty.

The Grand Inquisitor's power
is wearing off...

..in the battle with the secular powers.

Mother Alma! Sisters, call the abbess.

His Eminence the Inquisitor is here.

Hurry up! Go and get the abbess
and the novice Marie.

Hurry up!

- Call Mother Alma.

- What's the matter?

- The Inquisitor is here.

- He's come here himself?

Let's hurry.

Antonia, Martina, go and get
the novice Marie from her confinement cell.

I'll make sure
she won't even get a word in edgeways.

Your Eminence.

- Eminence?

- My child?

Thank you for coming.

In our helplessness, we really need you.

It is duty that brings me here, Mother,
official duty.

But, as you know, it's a great pleasure

for us to see you again.

My Father.

How unfortunate.

She's barely 14 years old,
and she's already a sinner.

Please give me your blessing, Father.

Conte de Ariano, have the carriages stop.

Stop the carriages.

In the name of

His Majesty Prince Manuel, stop.

Are you deaf?

Stop in the name of His Majesty!

Outrageous! They're simply carrying on.

- Who was that?

- His Eminence, the Inquisitor.

- And the girl?

- Probably a so-called witch.

- I'll put a stop to this.

- But how, Your Majesty?

Until you can prove that witches don't exist,
the church will continue to burn them.

I shall teach them otherwise.

You are Marie Rosalia Coutinho,
and you're 14 years old?

Yes, Your Eminence.

Is it true or false

that you are possessed by the devil?

I am. It is true.

Have you had unchaste relationships
to your fellow sisters under his influence?

Yes, I have.

Is it true or false that you have sacrificed
your virginity to Satan
and that you could be called a paramour?

Yes, Your Excellence, it is true.

That is what I am.

You are an apostate heretic,
which is perfectly sufficient for the sentence.

Take her back to the dungeon
until we execute her.

Before you do that, you should interrogate
the ones who were accessories to my fall -
the abbess, who calls herself
'High Priestess', and the disciplinarian.

They asked me to do evil things.
It is they who are possessed by evil.
They seduced me, violated me
and sacrificed me to him in a sinful manner.
- Are you going to listen to any more of this?
- Slanderer!
To the dungeon with her.
Even at the stake she will insist on her lie.
The devil's spirit is within her.
She's a perverted witch.
Reverend Abbess, dear Brother Vincente,
there's no need for further evidence.
We've already passed judgement on her.
There is no doubt that she is guilty.
Which means that she'll be burnt publicly
as a recidivous heretic.
The accusations against you
will be dealt with in a separate trial later.
- You dare to put us on trial?
- Then I ask you to begin immediately.
- Quiet!
- Keep calm, dear Brother and Sister.
We don't believe the statement of a witch
who is possessed by the devil.
But the Brother Secretary is right to request
this trial. It's in the interest of our church.
If he has overzealously
overestimated his duty in this case,
we'll find a better solution for you.
It should be possible
to convince the accused
to withdraw her false allegations
against you by signing a document.
These will then be deleted
from the transcript.
That is the common procedure, isn't it?
So I suggest you get this signature
and thus spare us
a bothersome interrogation.
No effort is wasted if you manage to bring
this sinner closer to the Lord again...
..before He delivers her
from her sins in the fire.
- So, will you withdraw your allegation?

- What allegation? That you violated me?
Punish her for this lie. Tighten the chains.
Tighten them.
Tighten them.
You will sign. Tighten them!
Yes.
This signature
will have brought you closer to the Lord.
The Lord will release me.
- Yes.
- Let's go, Father.
All right.
No, not yet.
The church, which grants sanctuary
to every penitent conscience,
has sentenced you
through the judges of the Holy Inquisition.
Because you are
a paramour of the devil and a heretic,
you shall be burnt at the stake, standing
upright on the place of your execution.
No. No.
O Lord, help me.
Forgive me, God. I know You have more
important matters to attend to than me,
a sinner.
But I must write to You.
Beloved Lord,
I must tell someone who will listen to me.
The abbess of Serra d'Aires and Father
Vincente have involved me in great guilt.
I cannot believe that I am possessed
by the devil, as they say,
for I love only You, Heavenly Father.
I wish I had remained Your child because
I do not want to belong to anyone but You.
Now I will be burnt at the stake.
The agony of torture will be over then.
But I will go to hell, and from there
I will not be able to contact You again.
We will be separated forever.
Thus I will never see You.
My mother has often told me
that You were omnipresent.

How can You be when I am
in eternal perdition, atoning for my sins?
You are punishing me very severely,
but I shall do it out of love for You,
to prove to You that I truly love You
more than anything else in the world.
Yours, Maria Rosalia Coutinho,
a Portuguese nun who greets You
from the bottom of her heart.
The dungeons of the Vatican,
Conte de Ariano.
From the windows of his castle,
the Inquisitor sees them every day.
A man who has to judge good and bad,
true and false,
mustn't dread the sight of the acts of cruelty
with which he seeks to uncover the truth.
Was it a pigeon
that just fell on those bushes?
Unless I'm blind,
it was a piece of paper, Your Majesty.
We'll go and have a look.
A message...from heaven.
It is indeed a piece of paper, my Prince.
Read it.
' 'Forgive me, God,
but I must tell someone who will listen.
' 'The abbess of Serra d'Aires and Father
Vincente have involved me in great guilt.
' 'Tomorrow I will be burnt at the stake.
Heavenly Father, I love only You.
' 'Yours, Maria Rosalia Coutinho.' '
Stop! Do you want to end up
on the woodpile too?
- Are you all possessed by the devil?
- Not us, her.
Quiet now!
Make way.
Make room for His Majesty
Prince Manuel Gonaes of Portugal.
Quash the sentence immediately.
It was imposed by the Judge
of the Inquisition. Who...?
His Royal Majesty.

There must be another hearing
in the trial of Maria Rosalia Coutinho.
Furthermore, the ones who are really guilty
must be brought to trial.

The accused has confessed her guilt.

Who else is supposed to be guilty?

Those two.

- Arrest them.

- Who?

You failed to bring them to trial, Eminence.

You shall do it now.

In the name of His Majesty, stop!

You are his prisoners.