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Cinco de Mayo: La batalla

By Rafa Lara

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"FRANCE IS NOT AT WAR WITH YOU,
BUT THE EMPIRE.
"YOU AND I ARE FIGHTING AGAINST THE EMPIRE,
"YOU, IN YOUR COUNTRY,
I, IN EXILE.
"BRAVE MEXICAN MEN, RESIST.
"THE ATTACK AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
"IS A CONTINUATION OF THE ATTACK
AGAINST THE FRENCH REPUBLIC."

VICTOR HUGO:

Firing squad, ready!
Aim!
Fire!
AFTER LONG YEARS OF FIGHTING,
"THE WAR OF REFORM" IS OVER,
AS BENITO JUAREZ
AND HIS LIBERAL ARMY
DEFEAT THE CONSERVATIVE FORCES.
THE COUNTRY IS DEVASTATED
AND IN BANKRUPTCY.
PRESIDENT JUAREZ
IS FORCED TO SUSPEND
THE PAYMENT OF THE EXTERNAL DEBT.
THE CONSERVATIVE LEADERS FLEE

TO EUROPE:

LOOKING FOR SUPPORT TO THEIR CAUSE,
MEANWHILE, IN MEXICO,
THEY TRY TO REGROUP THEIR ARMY...
PARIS, FRANCE, 1861
Is it your first time in France?
Yes, indeed. We came here
because the Emperor invited us.
- Mr. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte?
- Yes.
Mr. Gutierrez Estrada,
and Mr. Jose Maria Hidalgo?
His Imperial Majesty Napoleon III,
Emperor of France, will receive you now.
I have been informed about your project
to establish a French monarchy in Mexico.
Interesting.

President Juarez
has announced the suspension
of payments of the external debt.
This is the perfect excuse.
Spain and England
are very annoyed, too.
One way or another,
we have their support.
I will send my troops,
commanded by Count of Lorencz.
It is a great honor,
Your Highness.
Give him your support
in Mexico.
Wise decision, Your Excellency.
- Thank...
- Enough.
This way, gentlemen.
Remember, General,
our victory must be
fast and blunt.
Your Highness,
Mexico will be no rival for us.
In a month, it will be ours.
After that, take the troops to our
allies of the U.S. Confederate Army.
As we agreed.
With our support,
they will defeat Lincoln's army,
without a doubt.
General, one step at a time.
Mexico will be ours,
and the United States
will be divided.
The future belongs to the French Empire.
VERACRUZ HARBOR,
MEXICO, 1862
Corporal.
Anemia'?
- Wake up!
- What's going on?
Look.
We have to inform Captain Leon.
You wait here.

France, England and Spain.

- Those are battleships.

Battleships?

- Captain, what is going on?

- Don't you see?

They're invading us.

- What are we going to do?

- What do you think?

- We won't let them in alive.

- Are you crazy? Put that down!

You will get us in trouble,
like you always do.

They are still far, you idiot.

Don't be a coward.

We have already protested
and invaders have stopped.

Minister Doblado,
begin diplomatic negotiations immediately.

I will, Mr. President.

We are confident that
the weapon of reason will avoid
a greater bloodshed.

Don't expect a country
to move its troops to another continent
and come back empty-handed.

We have to get ready for the worst.

Our military forces are inferior.

Mr. President, we don't have the resources
to transport and feed our troops.

Exactly. That is why
we have to use reason
and strategy,
not in order to attack them,
but to defend ourselves.

Let's hope we don't have to fight
against those three countries.

That
will depend mostly on you, Minister.
You will be the right hand
of this nation.

However, we must get
the left hand ready as well.

I don't understand, Mr. President.

I sent the general in charge of the defense

his designation.

- Who is he?

- Our war secretary.

General Ignacio Zaragoza.

Ignacio.

You have to go.

I will be fine.

I will look out for you from there.

For whatever you may need.

Don't let them take

our country from us.

I won't.

I swear.

General Prim,

these conditions are unacceptable!

This infernal weather

is breaking our soldiers!

They throw up all the time!

We have to order the Mexican government

to allow us to take our troops

inside the country,

where the weather is less harmful.

We cannot order them, but we could ask

for their permission, as a goodwill gesture.

We French don't ask

for anyone's permission!

- Before our whole troops get sick...

- I remind you that you are not alone.

France, Spain and England are allies,

all decisions must be made in common.

- We must be careful.

- Careful? About what?

The Mexican government should not

take our request like a menace.

As if our troops were moving forward.

We have to show them our goodwill.

Let us hope for a decent answer

from our Mexican friends.

Friends?

Okay, then.

But take us out of this hell, General Prim!

Give him some water!

Take him to the shade. Dismissed.

- How many do we have?

- Sixty, Captain.

So, you are coming with us, ma'am?

Of course!

My husband, God save his soul,

was a soldier,

and now it's our turn to help

our troops, isn't it?

Maybe the French will come

to harm us and then what would we do?

What are you doing with that cannon?

It's stuck, Captain.

- Don't worry, we are pulling it out, right?

- Yeah!

.Hurry up!

- Yes!

- Wait, Juan.

- What?

I'll help the lady.

- Here.

- Oh, thanks.

Thanks.

Let me help you.

Thank you.

You're welcome.

Here.

Come on, Juan! Hurry!

We need to get the cannon

out of the mud!

Wait!

We have to help the lady, right? Wait!

If I wore a skirt, would you help me

with the cannon?

No, I... I'm sorry, Captain!

Hurry UP!

- Citlali!

-Yes?

- What are you doing?

- Nothing, aunt.

- Come on, hurry up!

- Yes, yes.

Minister Doblado, please understand that

we are hereto help the Mexican people.

We only want your debt

with us to be guaranteed.

General, you are speaking for
Mr. Saligny and Commodore Dunlop.
I would appreciate it if you sent these
words to President Juarez in writing.
Yes, indeed.
We are going to send it
to Mexico City immediately.
We should send our troops instead.
I don't speak French,
but I understand it perfectly.
And I see all those soldiers
who arrived from so far, with you.
- More than we agreed, General.
-It's just for protection.
For protection?
Or for exploration?
As you know, our troops are at the port
suffering from black vomit.
For your peace of mind, we will send
half of them back to Veracruz.
Well, now that we understand each other
like the gentlemen that we are,
please allow me to offer you a cigar.
Now we understand each other.
We don't have whiskey,
but we can get you a fine tequila.
Mexican beer will do. Thank you.
Return to the port?
We will take some other route.
Lieutenant Fauvet,
those are not Saligny's orders.
Sergeant Vache,
we are military men and we have
to explore enemy territory.
Those are my orders,
are you against them?
Aim!
Fire!
Attention!
Terrible, gentlemen!
You don't act like soldiers!
If you don't want to be one,
get out of here!
Ignacio,

I have bad news.
Give me that.
President Juarez also sent
a statement from General Prim,
who is in charge
of the Spanish delegation.
According to Prim, they are here to demand
satisfaction for our past affronts
and get guarantees for the future.
What affronts?
They are here to get
their money the nasty way.
We are not ready to resist an attack.
Take the troops, cavalry
and supplies to Chalchicomula.
Order Oaxaca Division to move forward.
Here.
General Porfirio Diaz, too.
They are our best men.
What are you waiting for, Miguel?
Am I not clear?
I have more bad news.
It's your wife.
Rafaela died yesterday
of pneumonia.
I'm really sorry, brother.
If there is something
I can do for you...
- Maybe you should go to...
- We have no time.
If we don't take action now,
we will have more deaths to regret.
Virgen de la Candelaria.
I saw her on my way through
Canary Island.
And I find her here,
across the Atlantic Ocean.
In Mexico, like in Spain,
there are pious people, General.
Actually, we just celebrated her festivity,
on February the 2nd.
Although I'm far from my homeland,
I feel it so close.
I'm delighted to see

how similar our countries are.
And I am delighted that our similarities
put us on the path of peace.
I don't see any obstacle to that.
I know war pretty well.
And the pain
and the sorrow that it brings.
So, if I can avoid it...
It is a wise and noble thought,
General Prim.
Well, they must have
finished writing the treaty.
Shall we call it "La Soledad,"
like this hacienda?
All right, Minister.
One month later...
Charles Ferdinand Latrille,
Count of Lorencz.
I'm landing with eight battleships
and 5,000 armed men
at the service of the French Empire.
I don't understand, why bring in
more troops and a war commander?
With all due respect, Count.
Believe it or not, General Prim,
we came here
because our Mexican friends
invited us.
General Prim,
-it is an honor, sir.
- General Almonte,
we hadn't met,
but I know who you are.
What is wrong with you, Lieutenant Fauvet?
We are welcoming our war chief!
My respects, General.
Saligny, please forgive him.
I have known Lieutenant Fauvet
for a long time.
He is tough, sometimes excessive,
but efficient.
I have to give you this
urgently, General.
These are the updated geographic charts,

from the coast to Orizaba.
Excuse me, gentlemen,
but all this is not necessary.
You are right, General Prim.
It would be enough
if someone could tell me
where I can find President Juarez
to personally demand
the payment of the debt.
I am gathering all Conservative forces
and we'll join the French.
That peasant Juarez is gathering his
best men, ammunition and gunpowder
in Chalchicomula,
in order to resist an attack.
We have to stop them.
Don't worry about that,
General Marquez.
We won't let you down.
You better not.
You know what would happen to you.
- Get out.
- Yes, General.
Chalchicomula,
State of PUEBLA
Troop, stop!
General Alvarez,
we were waiting for you.
We come from Perote.
Okay, you will join Oaxaca Division.
- We are 1,200 men.
-It will be an honor, General.
We will rest at the barracks,
but the ammunition and gunpowder
must be carried to the prefecture.
Yes, General.
Hurry up, it will rain soon.
It's the Oaxaca Division! They are
the heroes of '47 and the War of Reform.
They're our best men!
Those fucking Europeans
won't even know what hit them!
Look, Juan!
There is that pretty girl.

Which one?

What was her name?

I think it was Citlali.

What? Make a fierce face
and pretend to be a tough guy.

- Stick your chest out!

- Like this?

Yeah!

Let's go.

General Almonte's landing taunts
the work of the last months.

It is not honorable
that France supports this.

Almonte,

Morelos' son,

their independence hero
wants a European empire,
like many other Mexicans.

Those who live there,
the exiled ones.

His presence is the apple of discord
with the Mexican government.

Gentlemen, Mexico has been a republic
for the last 40 years.

They fought to get rid of a monarchy.

Why would they want another one?

We have to march over Mexico.

Such is the will of the Mexican aristocracy
and the French Empire!

But it is not the will
of Spain and England!

That would violate

"La Soledad Treaty"!

And our alliance, the Treaty of London!

Lighten up, guys!

Replacements are coming!

They're getting the chow ready.

President Jurez's government
has been despotic and tyrannical.

Not only towards its citizens,
but towards the French
and the Spaniards who live here,
and you know it, Prim!

I only know that we have signed

agreements and given our word!
General, you know an agreement between
nations can't be broken just like that!
Gentlemen,
I just follow the Emperor's orders.
I am here as
a military commander.
Your political issues
are none of my business.
The Mexican government is willing
to meet our requests,
but they won't allow
any menace to their sovereignty.
Have something to eat.
Here.
- Thanks.
- Look.
Would you like some
beans and tortillas?
- Okay.
- Yeah.
-Hey!
-yes?
Where are you from?
- Why do you want to know?
- Yes, why?
Well, just because...
I'm from Orizaba.
Right by the volcano.
I see.
We are from Cuetzaln, right?
It's in the mountains.
- Do you know where it is?
- Yeah.
- Citlali!
- Yes!
There are more beans back there,
in the hut. Share them out.
-It's too far, aunt!
- Come on, don't be lazy!
Come, there is no place
to sit here.
- Hey!
- Okay.

I ask you to reconsider your position
for the sake of our nations' alliance!
Or we shall break it
and have our troops retreat!
Don't you see?
This would mean war!
So, we made our decision.
We will march over Mexico.
Aunt!
Aunt!
Watch out, Juan!
Look for more wounded!
Someone blew the gunpowder up.
The Oaxaca Division,
our best men,
they are all dead.
Along with hundreds
of women and children.
Dark times are coming
for Mexico.
General Zaragoza!
Attention!
Citlali, the General is coming.
General Zaragoza.
At ease.
- How many casualties?
- More than 1,500, General.
Soldiers, women and children.
And many more are injured.
What about the ammunition?
We lost almost all our weapons.
Also the gunpowder
and all our horses.
Having you here
is an honor, General.
The General is here.
The General!
Are you trained nurses?
No, General.
We live on the surroundings
and we are just helping.
We also lost some of our relatives.
I know you're in mourning.
But you will deliver an important service

to our homeland if you go with the troops.

Go where, General?

Puebla.

We'll defend ourselves there.

General.

The Oaxaca Division is finished.

They are all dead.

We are outnumbered.

We won't have enough time

to reinforce our troops.

That's why we need

to buy some time

and find better

conditions to our defense.

We will try to hold them back on

the crossing of the Acultzingo Summit.

General Prim has behaved with honor.

But his efforts to avoid a war

have not been enough.

We have to take

extreme measures

and face a war.

We must believe

that our struggle is fair.

At the moment

that the Mexican government,

faithful to the commitments

that it has acquired...

A curfew will be imposed.

Mexicans will have to abandon the cities

that the French army may occupy.

Watch out!

No Mexican man

between the ages of 20 to 60

will be exempt

from taking up arms.

Otherwise, they will be punished

like traitors.

Citlali?

How are you?

Fine.

So, you are coming to Puebla.

Yes.

I want to thank you

for taking care of me.
You don't have to.
I did it for everyone.
Are you feeling better,
by the way?
Yes, much better.
Stop that!
Go away!
Here.
It's for you.
- I can't accept this!
- Hold on!
This cross has taken care of me.
Just like you did.
It's the only way that
I can thank you.
So take it, please.
In fact, here.
It's very pretty.
Thank you very much.
- You're welcome.
- You are Juan, aren't you?
Attention, let them pass!
It's a General.
Present saber!
General Leonardo Marquez.
I've come to put my army at Napoleon III
and the French Empire's disposal.
Here he is.
The "Tiger of Tacubaya."
General, it's an honor
to have you among us.
It's time to settle things
with that usurper Juarez
and his pathetic Liberal army.
Mr. Dubois de Saligny, ambassador
and French politician.
- At your service, Mr. Saligny.
- Thank you, General.
Please.
We have heard terrible
things about you.
Excuse me?
They say you are a tiger

on the battlefield
and that you eat
your enemies alive.
A tiger who likes to eat Liberal men.
Exactly.

This is exactly what we need
to strangle Jurez's army.

I have 7,000 men.

They're ready to march over them.

7,000? Well, you accomplished
your task, General.

We have prepared a little reception
so you can sit and discuss with
our war chief, the Count of Lorencz.

This way, please.

We will pass through
the Acultzingo Summit.

It is the fastest way
to get to Puebla.

And the most dangerous one,
General Lorencez, if I might add.

That field could be favorable
for the enemy.

Yes...

But we are the French army.

My men are on the other side,
near Atlixco.

My proposal is to move forward
in parallel, to surround them.

General Marquez,

do you have any available cavalry?

Yes, indeed.

Excellent!

Our horses are in bad shape.

We didn't find any water
or food on our way.

So we had to leave most of them
in order to save them.

They don't have cavalry either.

Most of their horses
died in Chalchicomula.

And we have not only

French soldiers...

But also African,

Algerian, Bedouin.

Let's say

they're a little bit savage.

Then it is all settled, gentlemen.

- Long live the Mexican monarchy!

- Vive La France!

Lieutenant Fauvet,

escort General Marquez.

Yes, General.

After that,

set up an advanced party

on the other side

of our line of attack.

Fine, General.

When will we meet again, General?

Well,

I'll see you on the battlefield.

- At your command, General.

- We are counting on you, General.

I'll see you in Puebla, gentlemen.

Hurry up or I'll see you

when we enter Mexico City.

Or the United States.

Acultzingo Summit

April the 28th

Aim!

Fire!

Fire!

Soldiers!

Today we are going to die

for our homeland.

But many more Frenchmen

will die, too.

Forward!

Come on!

- Attack them!

-To the horsemen!

Attack them!

Get ready!

Artillery, artillery!

Fire!

Let's go!

Don't take any prisoner!

Kill them all!

Attack them!
God damn it!
Arteaga.
General Porfirio Diaz.
At you service, General.
The enemy is moving forward, even though
they have more casualties than we do.
We estimate 10 of them have
died for each one of ours, General.
Still...
Night will fall soon,
it will favor our withdrawal.
Withdrawal, sir? From this position,
we can resist and attack them.
Porfirio, from the beginning,
I knew this position was lost.
We are moving to Puebla,
and you will cover our backs. Understood?
Yes, General.
I am at your command.
They are not going to pass,
until the last man has withdrawn.
You, go to the points
where our troops are.
I need you to inform them
what happened here.
- Move!
- Yes, General!
We will barely have time
to prepare our defense.
Fire!
Finally!
Victory.
This is just the prelude of what
is going to happen in Puebla.
Retreat!
Protect the retreat!
Cannon number one, fire!
Fire!
Fire!
Fire!
Gather around!
Gather around!
Should we follow him?

That's not necessary.
He will surely die.
Besides, the terrain is sheer, Sergeant.
Will these work?
They worked in '47.
We'll only shoot twice anyway.
Before the third shot,
we will be in a hand-to-hand combat.
Yeah.
Hey!
Are you okay?
I am thirsty.
I am starving,
and I am cold.
I am tired.
Artemio, I am fed up.
We are just fleeing, aren't we?
What did you expect? Our best men died
and there's no ammunition.
That's the point.
What are we doing here?
- Don't you see it is impossible?
- What is?
What? Defeating the French!
What are you talking about?
- Doctor!
- I'm here!
What happened?
I bring news from Acultzingo.
The French defeated us.
- They seized that position.
- How many are they?
Around 6,000.
General Zaragoza orders
to go faster,
to reach Puebla
as soon as possible.
Calm down.
Calm down.
Your name.
What is your name?
There's nothing we can do.
This horse is exhausted.
You two,

bury this man.

L---

I'm done, Artemio.

What do you mean?

I'm quitting.

Tomorrow I'm going back
to our hometown, or anywhere.

Are you going to desert?

Don't be an idiot,
if they catch you, they'll shoot you!

So what?

If we stay,
the French will kill us anyway.

Like this man here.

Tell me, who is the idiot?

Fucking coward!

What's your problem?

What's going on?

I brought you some water.

-It's okay.

- No, it's not okay.

Tell her you want to leave.

That you are afraid of the French.

I don't want to die for no reason.

That's all.

Die like a man,
by defending our homeland.

Our homeland?

Nothing belongs to us!

Artemio, why don't you understand?

If I had some land,
a family and children...

But I can't have them if I'm dead.

I don't know about you,
but I'm leaving.

Fine.

Go! But if they ask me,
I'll tell them that you deserted.

If you leave...

What?

Are you going to report me, too?

No, no way.

So?

Take me with you.

What?

No, I can't do that.

My aunt was my only family,

I have no one left.

Just like you.

Besides, I've seen too much.

Too much death and pain.

I can't bear it anymore.

Okay.

- We can go to my hometown.

- Okay.

Right now. Hurry!

Hurry!

Goodbye, Artemio.

Good luck.

How many men do we have, really?

We have to gather all the injured men
and check them.

Then we'll decide how many
can go back to the battlefield.

Okay, Doctor Ruiz.

Private Artemio.

Where is your friend?

The soldier who helped you
bury that man.

- Who? Juan?

- I don't know. I haven't seen him.

He's probably with the group
that we left behind.

Are you sure?

He has not deserted us, has he?

You know desertion
is punishable by death.

No, Captain.

- Juan wouldn't dare.

- We have few soldiers.

I can't afford

to lose any of them!

Find him and bring him
to me! Understood?

- Yes, Captain.

- You'd better find him,

or I'll chase him, shoot him

and also you for covering him up!

Am I clear?
Yes, Captain.
This is a ghost town.
They burnt everything to the ground.
There is no water.
They fled leaving no food,
no animal behind, nothing.
Cowards!
It will be easy to defeat them.
They left some houses,
but they are closed, Lieutenant.
Our horses are thirsty.
Check the houses
and burn everything down.
We are going to sleep
in the outskirts.
What has happened?
Juan, I'm very tired.
I'm hungry and thirsty.
We would have brought something.
We had to leave
without being seen.
We had to flee just like that.
I didn't even bring my rifle.
I think leaving the camp
was a mistake.
Don't say that.
Don't worry. We'll be fine.
I promise.
Okay?
Look there's a barn.
I'm going to look for
something to eat.
Meanwhile, go get
some water at that well.
I hope it's not closed.
Okay, Juan.
Don't take too long!
I won't.
Be careful.
Here!
Are you lost, ma'am?
The poor thing is lost.
Come, don't be afraid.

Good evening, ma'am.

This bitch will learn
some French.

- Fauvet, what are you going to do?

- What do you think, moron?

I'll have fun with her,
and then the others.

It's dishonorable,
unbecoming of a French soldier!

This is a war! If you don't want her,
just shut the fuck up and watch!

We came to conquer them,
and I'll start with this bitch.

Grab her!

No, no!

No, please, don't!

It's a Mexican!

Catch him! Catch him!

Go both ways and surround him!

Be careful, there could be more!

Vache, stay with this peasant!

Use her as a shield, if you need to!

Don't kill him!

I want him alive!

Don't move!

Don't you move!

Take his horse!

Come on!

- Who shot them?

- I don't know.

- Probably our soldiers.

-If they see us, they'll kill us.

We have to hide until this is over.

Wait!

First, we are going to have fun.

This is a game I learned
in Africa.

I hope you'll enjoy it
as much as I do.

No, please, no!

The other Mexican soldier
could have killed me
and he didn't.

No, please!

We have to take him prisoner and shoot him,
there is no need to be savages.

Soldiers!

Vache!

Count to three.

No!

No, no.

Please, don't!

It's an order.

No, please, don't!

No, please, don't!

No, please, don't!

No, please, don't!

No, please!

No! No, please!

One...

Two!

Three!

Hey, Juan.

Do you think
they have already left?

I don't know.

What is that?

Wait.

Anemia'?

How much longer
before we get to Puebla?
Awhile.

We need to rest
and continue our trip.

Listen.

Yes?

Are you sure
you want to come back?

What do you think
Artemio would have done?

He was a brave man.

Not a coward, like me.

I should have saved him.

We didn't know it was him.

Besides, you couldn't have done anything,
they would have killed us both.

So don't say that,
you are not a coward.

You saved me.
If you don't want to go back,
I understand.
But I have to.
I want to be with you.
I'm going
up there
to...
To keep an eye on the road,
just in case.
Citlali?
What are you doing there?
I thought you might be cold,
and if you want, we could cuddle
and cover up with this blanket
to keep warm until dawn.
Okay.
Hey! Look! Look!
- What's going on?
- Shut up!
Those men don't look French.
They aren't ours either.

CITY OF PUEBLA:

FORT GUADALUPE:

Captain.
Private Juan Osorno,
at your service.
I see.
At ease.
I sent your friend to look for you.
I thought you were deserting.
No, sir.
I was in bad shape because
of my injuries and I was delayed.
Unfortunately, on the road,
we had a confrontation with the French.
My friend Artemio died
and we managed to escape.
What? We lost a man
because of your weakness!
Sir, please.
There's no time to waste.

We saw a group of Conservative soldiers
on the road to Atlixco.

They're coming this way
and there's many of them!

- How many?

- Over 5,000, for sure.

Apparently, they're
Leonardo Mrquez's troops.

We did everything
we could to avoid it.

So he finally managed
to gather his Conservative army.

Or the remains of it,
after we defeated them.

Send me to fight against them, General.

I can stop them and even defeat them!

I'm certain about that, General Diaz,
but I need you here.

We don't have enough time
or men to move you there.

Generals Carvajal and O'Horan
are at the place.

I'll send the order for them to move
with the 3,000 men that they have.

They'll confront them in Atlixco.

General.

We barely have over 2,000 men here.

The French army has 5,000 men.

If they don't stop them, General Mejia,
they'll surround us by the rear.

- We wouldn't be able to defend ourselves.

- Yes, but Carvajal,

and O'Horan,

-they will fight with few men...

-it's the only way, General Negrete.

I have asked Queretaro
and the surroundings for support.

I only hope backup will
arrive on time for May 6th.

Soldier, step forward.

Your report has been
very useful.

- What is your name?

- Juan Osorno, General.

At your service.
Well, you will fight next to others
named Juan.
General Juan Nepomuceno
and Commander Tomas Segura.
They command the men from
Zacapoxtla, Tetela and Xochiapulco.
They will be the first
to face the enemy.
I told them your desire
to be on the front.
On the first line, with all of them.
We may die, but they won't pass.
May the 3rd
General Arteaga,
you are a brave man.
And also a madman.
He wanted to defeat the French
all by himself.
And he was about
to succeed.
I'm sorry, General, but on the battlefield,
you can lose your grip.
Fortunately, you didn't lose your leg.
Thanks to you.
Mrs. Soledad is a distinguished
lady from Puebla.
She's helping with the hurt soldiers
and her work is exceptional.
I've always been interested
in medicine, General.
I have a sister who is a nun
and also a nurse.
Religious life was not for me,
so I married a doctor.
We're glad to have you,
Mrs. Soledad.
It's my privilege, General.
We are here to help you.
I'd have wanted to be
with you on the battlefield.
You will be. Thanks to you,
the French will attack us with 500 less men.
Ignacio, we have a report.

French troops are moving fast,
they will be here in one day.
Sooner than expected.
And our backup is not here yet.
The battle won't be on the 6th,
but on May the 5th.
Come on!
More!
Come on, guys!
Hurry up. guys!
What the fuck are you doing there?
What did I tell you?
There they are.
Just like we feared.
Do you think they are going
to attack us now?
It's about to get dark,
they won't attack, they're tired.
Luckily for us, we wouldn't
be able to stop them.
- Are the towers ready?
- Almost, sir. I'll tell them to hurry.
- Proceed as soon as they're done.
- Yes, sir.
Forts Loreto and Guadalupe
are the only obstacles
between us and Mexico City.
Tomorrow they will be in ruins.
And their soldiers
will be flesh for vultures.
And the beautiful women of Puebla
will welcome us under a rain of flowers.
Cheers!
What's going on?
Keep working!
Don't be afraid!
Come on!
We're going to kick French ass!
Come on!
They made a mistake, maybe.
On the contrary.
Why? I don't understand.
Gentlemen, open your eyes.
Those towers were our only visual

reference to locate the enemy.

And they are gone.

Keep on working.

We have a lot to do.

Atlixco,

State of PUEBLA

May the 4th

It's an ambush!

Run!

The best way to celebrate
is to expand the French Empire.

To our overwhelming
victory tomorrow.

- Cheers!

- Cheers!

If you'd be so kind,
my dear Count,
tell us about the letter
that you have written
to our Emperor Napoleon III.

Could you read it,
if you keep a copy?

It won't be necessary,
because I know it by heart.

"We have over those Mexicans
"such superiority of race,
"organization, discipline, morality
"and nobility
"that I beg you
to inform the Emperor
"that from this day on,
at the head of his 6,000 men,
"I am the lord and master
of Mexico."

- Vive la France!

-Vive la France!

Juan, do you want some coffee?

Thank you.

Take a seat.

Okay.

-It's delicious.

-It is, isn't it?

Why don't you take a rest?

What for?

I'd rather stay here,
helping the troop.
The troop?
This is not a troop, can't you see?
Many of them have no training
or experience in combat.
Some of them
don't even have a uniform
or shoes.
What's wrong with you?
I thought you were willing to fight.
I am.
We're going to fight,
but to win...
Will you promise me something?
What?
Please come back tomorrow.
I wouldn't want you to get hurt.
Well,
I'll do my best,
-but I can't promise you that.
- Please, promise.
And I'll kiss you.
L---
- Right now?
- No way!
God forbids! No!
Tomorrow, when you are back.
So will you just give me
one kiss?
Come on! Cool down!
I mean it.
Well,
I will come back.
I promise.
Tomorrow, at the battlefield,
if you are afraid,
think about Artemio.
Remember what those bastards
did to him, so you can find courage.
Believe me,
I think about that all the time.
Think about me, if you can.
I will be here, praying for the Virgin Mary

to take care of you.
They 53)'
That I have
The path of the winds
in my eyes
That my heaven
Is getting bigger
While I remove the grains
of silence
I smell the scent of the night
And your name
reverberates in my ear
Sweetening the flavor of this land
And taking death to oblivion
Silent flower of my lips
Palpitating, so dark
Let my moon shine
And light my sadness up
Flower burning on the night
Infinite and radiant light
Paint me a sky with no clouds
Relieve my torment
"Army drink"?
- What is that?
- Tequila with gunpowder.
To gather your courage
and to get warm.
Just that.
- Cheers, then.
- Cheers.
It's good.
Silent flower of my lips
Palpitating, so dark
Let my moon shine
And light my sadness up
Flower burning on the night
Infinite and radiant light
Paint me a sky with no clouds
Relieve my torment
Silent flower of my lips
Let my moon shine
And light my sadness up
Flower burning on the night
Infinite and radiant light

Paint me a sky with no clouds
And a country with no sorrow
Soldiers are coming!
There are many of them!
Get ready!

- To your positions, quickly!
- Get ready!

How is it going?
Where's the battle?

- Who are you?
- Backup from Queretaro and Guanajuato.

We are 200 and we're willing
to kill the French men!

They are our men!
Welcome!

May the 5th
Brother.

General, I didn't know
you were a religious man.
I have faith in our soldiers
and in our cause.

But a little help
from the General up above
would do no harm
on the battlefield.

Attention!

Present saber!

- General.
- Good morning.

General.

We have bad news.

- Well?
- General Marquezs troops.

What happened to him?

They were taken by surprise
and dispersed.

They won't be able to attack
the enemy's rear.

That's why we ask you
to reconsider this offensive.

Besides, our soldiers are tired.

They haven't rested in three days.

- To reconsider it, Saligny?
- Yes.

We are right in front of them,
ready to defeat them!
It is clear that General Zaragoza
and his officers know this field very well.
Our officers also know the field.
If we attack the forts directly,
we will be at a disadvantage.
If the forts fall today,
our victory will be fast and blunt,
like the Emperor ordered.
General!
With all due respect,
I ask you to listen to our generals.
- If we attack from the south...
-Your generals, Almonte.
What happened with your best man,
the "Tiger of Tacubaya"?
We'll follow the plan. We'll make
a full attack, there's no turning back.
Good luck.
They may be the first citizens
of the world, but you
are the first children of this country
and they want to take your homeland away!
I am sick of those Mexicans
who, because of fear,
and because they stupidly
feel inferior,
think that victory is impossible.
Today we have to change
that goddamned defeatism
that chases and humiliates us
as a nation.
This day,
you will face an army
that regards itself as unbeatable.
They do because they
have never faced brave Mexicans,
warlike Mexicans!
Like our ancestors.
Like all the people
gathered here today.
This country has shed
a lot of blood in wars,

since its independence.
The rich against the poor,
liberals against conservatives,
peasants, mixed race, foreigners.
Today,
You
have the opportunity
of bringing Mexico together!
Don't worry about fighting
a nation of warriors!
Because we are warriors, too!
And we are brave!
But above all, we are free men.
And free men
know no fear,
and recognize no rival!
Today, May the 5th,
the French
will respect the Mexican eagle
and they will look up
to this flag
from a puddle of their own blood!
Long live Mexico!
Long live free Mexico!
Long live Mexico!
Long live Mexico!
Long live Mexico!
Long live free Mexico!
The field is more irregular
than I thought.
Send a few men on horses, we're going
to try to catch them by the rear.
Yes, General!
We're going to concentrate on Guadalupe.
Fort Loreto is still far.
Lieutenant Fauvet,
attack them with your men
from the north side.
Then,
-do what we agreed.
- Yes, General.
Mr. Benoit.
Yes, General!
Command the artillery to move

and to protect our troops.
Yes, General.
- Vache, lead the troops.
- Yes, sir.
There they are.
General Mejia, you are in charge
of the defense of the fort.
I will be here.
In our headquarters.
Mejia,
it's a battle to the death.
To the death, General Zaragoza.
The French are coming,
motherfuckers!
Come on!
Let's go!
Here.
That's it!
Cover it!
This side!
- Move! Move!
- Move!
Get down!
Get down!
Protect the Count
of Lorencz.
Vache, take your position!
Attention! Halt!
To the left, now!
Move forward! March!
Their forces are divided
in two wings.
They're surrounding us.
Soldiers, take your positions!
Cover that side!
Move!
Prepare the attack!
Cannons in position!
They haven't seen us.
For God's sake,
why haven't they started to fire?
Captain, the field is bent!
Our men are moving forwards,
we have to protect them!

Get ready to open fire!
Cannon number one,
fire!
Resist!
Cannon number two, fire!
Cannon number three, fire!
Come on, move! Quickly!
Can you walk?
Move, quickly!
Fire!
Fire! Fire!
Hold your positions!
Adjust the angle to reopen fire!
Fire!
Fire!
Cannon number two, fire!
Cannon number three, fire!
Cannon number four, fire!
We can't even hit them.
Have artillery move forward and infantry
attack them with all their strength!
Move!
They will see what
the French army is made of.
Ready to shoot.
Ready!
Fire!
Fire!
Attack them! March!
Rifles on the front!
It looks like
they're walking past us.
Halt!
To the left! Left!
Move forward! Go!
Cannon number one, fire!
Keep the formation!
Fire!
Cannon number three, fire!
Cannon number four, fire!
Recharge!
Get ready!
Ready!
Ready!

Aim!
- Fire!
- Fire!
Fire!
Resist!
Come on!
Load!
Ready!
Ready!
Aim!
Fire!
Fire!
Prepare for combat!
Charge!
Hold your position!
Fire!
Fire!
Cannon number two, fire!
Fire!
Artillery!
More precision in your shots!
You, hurry up!
Prepare the cannon!
Hurry up, soldiers!
Good.
As soon as they pass the hill,
they can open fire over the fort.
Artillery!
Move forward!
Move forward!
Take the first line!
Don't take any prisoners!
This way!
Surround them!
Surround them! Come on!
Come on!
They're surrounding us!
Cover the right wing!
What are you waiting for, soldier?
Come on!
Fire!
Take your positions!
Hold on...
Fire!

Beware!
Move backwards!
Attack them!
Kill them all!
Fire!
Move backwards!
Cannon number one, fire!
Move backwards!
Vache, reorganize your group!
- Soldiers, come with me!
- Fall back.
Fire!
Fall back!
Take the injured and fall back!
Fall back, fall back, fall back!
Soldiers, this way!
This way!
Cannon number three, fire!
Cannon number four, fire!
Fall back!
Attack them!
Get me some wine.
- Doctor Ruiz?
- Yes?
We are medical students.
We came to help.
Welcome. Get on. And put that away,
you're not going to need it.
Tell Mrs. Soledad to hurry up.
As soon as we get the order,
we'll go to the battlefield.
Tie those horses, quickly!
Come on, hurry up!
Come on!
Hold your positions!
Fire!
Fire!
Surround them!
Come on!
We give up!
Enough, We give up!
- Kill them!
- No, no!
Prepare your positions!

Prepare your positions!

Vache!

Try to reach the front
from the north side.

We'll attack from the center
and get the artillery focused in that point!

Get ready to attack!

We are going to vanquish them
for the honor of France!

Fire!

Cannon number three, fire!

- Take your positions!

- Ready.

Aim!

- Fire!

- Fire!

Fire!

Fire!

- Fire!

- Fire!

Attack them!

Cannon number two, fire!

Cannon number three, fire!

Your men are recovering,
General Lorencez.

We are going to attack them simultaneously,
as we have planned.

I'm sure with this second attack,
we'll reach Fort Guadalupe.

And we'll take it.

Let's go!

Fire!

Fire!

If they get closer, we won't be able to use
the artillery, or we'll hurt our troops.

- Prepare infantry.

- Yes, sir. Come on!

Fire!

Fire!

Vache, take your men
to the north side!

Soldiers!

Come with me!

Come with me!

Come on!
Come on!
Almonte! They're Almonte's men!
- Almonte!
- Almonte!
Almonte!
They are not our men!
It's their cavalry!
Fire!
The cavalry!
Fire!
Fall back! Fall back!
Vache, order them to fall back!
- Come on, fall back!
- Fall back!
- Cover the right wing!
-Right wing, come on!
Prepare yourselves
to defend our position!
Fire!
Fire!
Cavalry! Fall back!
Infantry, move forward!
Ready!
Fire!
Attack them!
That is their cavalry!
General.
We must consider retreat.
General?
General!
No!
The French army will never be defeated
by a bunch of peasants!
This is not over yet.
Guards, follow me!
We have stopped the second attack,
but they will certainly come back!
Rain is falling, that will make it
hard to use the artillery. Hurry!
- Pick up our casualties.
- Yes, sir.
Inform the President
about the situation.

General, I think
we should attack them first.

- We could take them by surprise.
- I understand, General Diaz.

But our strategy will still be
to defend ourselves.
We don't have enough ammunition
or men to attack them.

- General...
- Porfirio, be patient!

You will be in combat very soon.
Hold your position.
Wait for my orders.
They're badly injured!
Help the injured!
Also help the French.

- Hurry up.
- Doctor, here.
- That man.
- Wait, they'll come for you.

Soldier!
My God! Doctor, this man
is bleeding too much!
Keep pressure on the wound.
Can you walk?
Can you walk? Yes?
Okay, go to the hospital!
Take him to the fort
with the others!
Hurry!
Hurry!
Take your positions! Fire!
Cannon number one, fire!
Cannon number two, fire!

General!
General, our men are exhausted.
The field is lost and the Mexicans
are fighting to the death!
I don't care, Sergeant!
Focus our attack on Fort Guadalupe
with all the strength we have!
I want you to take it now!
Understand?
Yes, General.

Fauvet!
General.
Take some men
and be our scouting patrol.
We will hit them on the head.
- Yes, General!
- Fauvet!
Don't disappoint me!
Vache, come with me!
Excuse me, General.
No one told us we were going to invade,
but to release.
Being prisoners doesn't allow you
to take our medals.
What medals?
Apparently, some of our men
took their medals.
Order them to give them back.
To treat them with respect,
I'm not going to tolerate...
- Take them!
-Cover the General!
The French are coming!
- Take your positions!
- Defend our positions!
Ignacio, get in!
Get in!
Cover them!
To the infirmary!
Take the injured inside! Move!
Hurry up! Take the injured inside!
Keep shooting!
And the doctor?
Where is the doctor?
Come on!
Hold on, Lieutenant!
General.
- We have men.
- I'll go with some men to the battlefield.
- But General...
- Do your duty and I'll do mine!
I beg you, stay here
and command the battle.
Our country needs you.

I want General Diaz
to continue with our plan.
Move!
Yes, General.
Captain, what's keeping you
from destroying those cannons?
- I'll do it immediately, sir!
- And the rest of you...
Attack them!
Fire!
Fire!
Attack them!
Fire!
Fire!
Fire!
- Save his leg!
- Change the water.
This man is dying!
I hear the cannons again!
The French are attacking us again.
Help me!
Put some pressure on the wound.
- I don't know...
- Pressure, hard! Talk to him!
Look at him.
Put more pressure on the wound!
Doctor Ruiz has gone, so I will have
to be in charge. I'll send you a doctor.
- What's your name?
- Juan...
Manuel.
No, no. Easy, easy.
- Don't leave me alone.
- You are not going to die.
You...
Nurse!
Somebody help me out here!
Attack them!
Cover your position!
Come on!
Don't let them pass!
Cover that door!
There!
Cover it!

Don't let them pass!
Come on!
Don't let them pass!
Cover yourselves!
The French are here!
They are taking the quarters by assault!
Come on! Attack them!
Attack them!
Come on!
Kill them all!
- Don't let them pass!
- Don't leave a soul!
Attack them!
Kill them all!
Don't leave a soul!
Finally.
They are ours.
Attack them
with all your strength!
Soldiers!
We are going to show
those bastards
what we Mexicans are made of!
Fire!
Cannon number three, fire!
-Infantry, let's go!
- Yes, sir!
Sharpshooters!
Stop them!
Aim!
Fire!
Kill him in the name of France!
You are not France!
You are not France!
It's over!
It's over!
Fire!
Take up arms!
Fire!
Get ready to attack!
Kill them!
No!
Fuck!
Fucking hell!

Hold your position!
Hold on! Hold on!
Hold your position!
Fire!
What are you doing, asshole?
What are you doing?
Protect your general!
Fire!
Retreat!
Retreat!
Retreat!
Retreat!
Retreat!
We won! We won!
- Are they saying that we won?
- So it seems.
It's a miracle!
We defeated them!
We defeated them!
We defeated them!
Ignacio, we have defeated the French.
Are you sure?
General Porfirio Diaz
is chasing them out.
Then,
today our National Army has
covered itself in glory.
Juan! Juan!
Juan! Juan! Juan!
Thank God you are alive!
- Have we won?
- Yes, we won.
Get up.
Wait! Wait!
I'll go look for someone
to help you!
Wait!
No. No.
Citlali, don't.
Please, don't go.
Don't leave me alone.
Juan, you're losing a lot of blood.
Please, let me get some help!
Hold me.
Hold me.

Don't be sad.

We won.

- Yes, we won.

- We won.

Hold me.

I'm cold.

I'm so cold.

Hold me.

Five months later,

General Ignacio Zaragoza

died unexpectedly of typhoid fever

in the city of Puebla.

He was 33 years old.

His mortal remains are in the same

grave alongside those

of his wife Rafaela.

Along with other generals,

Porfirio Diaz

continued fighting

against the French,

and his military victories

were the key to expel them

from Mexico in 1867.

The Count of Lorencz

was dismissed by Napoleon III

after his humiliating defeat

in the battle of Puebla.

Mexico's victory was highly

celebrated in the United States,

because it thwarted

Napoleon III's projects

to support the Confederate

Secessionist Army of the South.

President Abraham Lincoln

congratulated

and thanked

Benito Juarez

by offering his support

to expel the French invaders.