

Marià Fortuny
The Spanish Wedding

A WEDDING FULL OF SURPRISES

26 February 2009



One afternoon in August, everything was ready for the celebration of the solemn wedding of Francisco Lucientes and Luisa Marín.

The guests were murmuring: "How beautiful the bride looks! What a lovely dress! She looks like one of Goya's *majas*."

It was terribly hot.

A WEDDING FULL OF SURPRISES

That August afternoon at the vicarage, another couple, a bullfighter and a "manola", were waiting to get married next. Their friends, upon seeing the bride, were saying:

"Isn't she La Gata? I could swear she is."

"You're right! She's the one who used to dance at the moon tavern."

And the “manola” simply exclaimed:

“Phew, it’s so hot!”

These comments spoken out loud sent rumours going round among the guests. The bridegroom’s friends said:

“Have you heard?”

“Can what they’re saying about Luisa be true?”

“That? Just things made up by the plebs,” said one of the bride’s guests.

It was horrendously hot.

The bride, upon hearing that everyone at the vicarage was murmuring, blushed. Her best friend advised her:

“Take no notice, Luisa. Pretend you haven’t heard.”

But the bride’s mother burst into tears.

“My daughter, they’re going to spoil the happiest day of your life.”

The “manola”, fanning herself next to the bullfighter, said:

“Whether it’s La Gata or not, let’s see if they get married, as its our turn next. And waiting in this heat is killing me.”

This is how things were when suddenly, from nowhere, a strange hooded man with a curious tray appeared.

“Alms to atone for your sins, alms to erase the past.”

Meanwhile, at the back of the vicarage, in the half-light, an enigmatic man was saying to himself:

“The past is clear now. When they open the letter I have given to the notary the truth will be revealed and then we’ll see if love really does conquer all.”

“Alms to atone for your sins, alms to erase the past.”

While all this was going on, at that very instant at the other end of the room, the notary was whispering to his assistant:

“We have a problem. Can you hear those rumours? The letter that the ambassador brought has disappeared. Didn’t you have it?”

And the assistant replied:

“Letter? What letter?”

On the floor, forgotten by everyone, was the letter that revealed the truth about Luisa’s past.

But things took a spectacular turn when the bridegroom, who seemed oblivious to all the comments, leaned over and said very clearly:

“I don’t care if it’s La Gata or Luisa. I love this woman and right now I aim to make her my wife.”

And the priest thought:

“Oh, good lord! It’s so hot! And I’ve still got another wedding to do!”

It was an afternoon in August and Francisco Lucientes and Luisa Marín were married at last.

The guests began to applaud.

The hooded man kept on saying:

“Alms to atone for your sins, alms to erase the past.”

And the notary and his assistant were still looking for the letter.

And the friends of the “manola” and the bullfighter were insisting that the bride was La Gata. The one who danced at the moon tavern.

And then the bullfighter, who up to now had not spoken, said:

“Phew...”

And the “manola” added:

“Yes, it’s so hard in this heat!”

Victòria Bermejo