

# JUAN LUNA

(A Historical Playlet)

by CEFERINO JOVEN

Time: 1847.

Place: The deck of a ship in Manila Bay.

## CHARACTERS:

Juan Luna, as a sailor  
Sr. Guerrero, teacher-painter of Juan  
Captain of the ship  
Sailors

(As the curtains rise, the sailors are humming a sailor's tune as they work. Some are scrubbing the deck others are folding the sails, while LUNA and two sailors are rigging a brace to a spar of the ship. Once in a while LUNA looks towards the shore as if expecting someone.)

SAILOR 1. What is the matter, Juan?  
You are not yourself today. Expecting someone?

SAILOR 2. Probably the mailman, eh, Juan?

LUNA. Oh, no! You're wrong, boys.  
I'm expecting Señor Guerrero.

SAILOR 1. The painter?

LUNA. Yes, he may have some good news for me.

(The CAPTAIN enters. The sailors stand at attention and salute.)

CAPTAIN (backoning Luna). Juan!

LUNA (approaching). Ay! ay! sir!

CAPTAIN. This is for you. (hands Luna a roll scroll.) You have been appointed Pilot of the High Seas. You deserve it. (He shakes LUNA'S hand.) Congratulations!

LUNA. Thank you, sir!

(The CAPTAIN exits. The sailors gather around LUNA and congratulate him warmly. They sing a lively sailor's song. About the end of the tune, Señor Guerrero enters.)

GUERRERO (excitedly). Juan, Juan, you made it! The government will help you.

LUNA (anxiously). Really? How?

GUERRERO. You will be sent to Europe to continue your studies in an art school. The government will pay your expenses.

LUNA (gratefully). I have you to thank for all this, Señor Guerrero.

GUERRERO. But one thing more. You have to send a historical picture to the Philippine Government each year—you know, just to show improvement in your studies.

LUNA (firmly). I will do that. Perhaps some day I shall be able to paint great pictures!

SAILOR 2. But you are now a pilot, Juan. There is no use giving up the life of the sea.

SAILOR 3. Stay with us, and we shall see the world!

SAILOR 1. Painting is difficult. It requires a great deal of patience and effort. Let's forget all about it. What do you say, Juan.

LUNA (determinedly). No, my friends. If the eagle can fly to the top of the mountain, the snail after some patience and effort will reach him there in due time.

(Luna and Guerrero walk slowly to the Captain's cabin as the sailors hum "Auld Lang Syne." LUNA looks back at the sailors and exits into the cabin with Guerrero.)

## Scene 2

Time: 1879.

Place: The Luna Studio in Paris, France.

## CHARACTERS:

Juan Luna, the painter  
 Jose Rizal, T. H. Pardo de Tavera,  
 his friends

(After the musical interlude, the curtain is drawn. LUNA is seated at his table sketching and humming a kundiman. RIZAL and TAVERA enter.)

TAVERA. Hola, amigo!

RIZAL. What are you up to now, Juan!

LUNA (surprised, stands). Nothing in particular, Pepe. Have your seats, gentlemen.

(Rizal takes a seat, while Tavera goes around the studio looking at the sketches on the walls.)

RIZAL. You cannot fool us. We saw you busy at your desk.

LUNA. Well, if you must know, I am making a sketch of the historical picture I shall send home to the government. This is my first, and it is due soon.

RIZAL. Oh, I see.

TAVERA (turning around). And what is it about?

LUNA. The blood compact, Señor Tavera.

TAVERA. Que blood compact?

RIZAL. El pacto de sangre.

TAVERA. Hm . . . Hm . . . De Legaspi y Sikatuna?

LUNA. Exactly! Here, see my sketch. (He shows the sketch.) But I have difficulties ahead of me. I simply can't find the right model. (He stares at the two.) Wait . . .

RIZAL (noticing the stare). Well?

LUNA (excitedly). I have it! I have it! You are just the men I need. You will be my models!

TAVERA (baffled). Models? Que es models?

LUNA (eagerly). Here, here, put these on!

(LUNA hustles his friends to wear some costumes. Tavera dons a coat of mail while Rizal takes off his coat and rolls his shirt sleeves.)

RIZAL (curiously). What am I supposed to be?

TAVERA (uncomfortably). Y yo, que parte tengo? My, but this is warm!

LUNA. Señor Tavera here is Legaspi and will sit there. (Tavera takes the seat indicated.) And you, Pepe, will be Sikatuna. That will be your seat there. (He points to the chair opposite Tavera.) Well, gentlemen, you saved the day for me. That calls for a drink!

(LUNA gets three glasses and a bottle of wine. He pours wine into the glasses and they toast.)

RIZAL. To your success!

TAVERA. Success!

(All empty their glasses.)

(Musical interlude)

Scene 3

Time: 1884.

Place: A social hall in Madrid, Spain.

## CHARACTERS:

Juan Luna

Jose Rizal

Graciano Lopez Jaena

Other Filipinos in Spain

Spanish sympathizers and friends.

(As the last notes of the musical interlude is heard, the curtains open to a banquet scene where JUAN LUNA, JOSE RIZAL, GRACIANO LOPEZ JAENA, and ANTONIO LUNA may be seen at the head of the table. On the center wall is a big curtained picture. The crowd is merry and is almost through with the banquet.)

GUEST 1. (shouting). A song, a song . . .!

GUEST 2. Yes, a song . . .!

There is enthusiastic clapping of hands as one of the guests stands and sings a kundiman. After the song there is a salvo of applause. Then Rizal stands to speak)

RIZAL. Fellow countrymen and friends! For the second time we are gathered to do honor to a compatriot who has placed our beloved Philippines on the map of the world of art. For the second time he has shown that genius springs from any race. Genius is like light and air—the patrimony of all: cosmopolitan as space, as life, and as God.

(He points at curtained picture on center wall) On that canvass, which is not mute, is heard the tumult of the throng, the cry of slaves, the metallic rattle of the armors on the corpses, the sobs of orphans, and the hum of prayers, with as much force and realism as is heard in the fearful and frightful rumble of the earthquake.

This shows the characteristics of the painter, and it portrays the present conditions in our native land. Yes, pictures and paintings do not merely entertain our eyes; they often

speak louder than words the truths in our hearts.

Therefore, my friends, let us drink to the health of Luna. The Filipino youth of Europe, always enthusiastic, tender Luna a crown, a humble tribute which is small indeed compared to our enthusiasm, but the most spontaneous and freest of all the tributes yet paid him.

(Rizal raises his glass and the rest of the guests, except Luna, stand and follow suit.)

Gentlemen, to Juan Luna!

(All drink to Luna's health. Then the pianist plays a kundiman as the guests begin to leave, bidding Luna good-by. Soon Luna is left alone on the stage. The humming of the kundiman by the guests can be faintly heard in the distance. Luna walks to the painting and pulls the curtain revealing "The Spoliarium.")

## Letters . . . (Con't. from page 36)

Sir:

Kindly explain why no *Philippine Educator* is sent to me. The last issue I received was dated April and May, 1947.

Yours truly,  
ROMAN B. GONZALES

Sir:

*We did not come out in June. If we failed to send you the July issue before, we are sending it now—right now. Please forgive us. We have not enough clerical help to check up on our failures and shortcomings. Also, we are trying to economize members' money.*

Very respectfully,  
—ED.

Dear Mr. Laya:

I sincerely appreciate the efforts you are exerting for the PE and the PPSTA which in the last analysis are for "US", and I wish you inexhaust-

ible strength and unbeatable spirit to carry on the fight for "this cause of ours."

We are eager to help but we are hard-pressed for cash. You know these hard times. But if it's agreeable to you, you may send me 10 subscriptions for my teachers beginning with the July or August issue, payable in two "easier" payments—half from the September salary and the other half from the October pay. Is that o. k.?

Sincerely yours,  
RUSTICO FERNANDEZ  
Principal

Central Elementary School, Bohol

Dear Mr. Fernandez:

O. K. by "US." We'll send you ten.

—ED.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to request information regarding the subscription rate to your magazine.

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