



The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

By Vicente Blasco Ibanez

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They were to have met in the garden of the Chapelle Expiatoire at five o'clock in the afternoon, but Julio Desnoyers with the impatience of a lover who hopes to advance the moment of meeting by presenting himself before the appointed time, arrived an half hour earlier. The change of the seasons was at this time greatly confused in his mind, and evidently demanded some readjustment. Five months had passed since their last interview in this square had afforded the wandering lovers the refuge of a damp, depressing calmness near a boulevard of continual movement close to a great railroad station. The hour of the appointment was always five and Julio was accustomed to see his beloved approaching by the reflection of the recently lit street lamps, her figure enveloped in furs, and holding her muff before her face as if it were a half-mask. Her sweet voice, greeting him, had breathed forth a cloud of vapor, white and tenuous, congealed by the cold. After various hesitating interviews, they had abandoned the garden. Their love had acquired the majestic importance of acknowledged fact, and from five to seven had taken refuge in the fifth floor of the rue de la Pompe where Julio had an artist's studio. The curtains well drawn over the double glass windows, the cosy hearth-fire sending forth its ruddy flame as the only light of the room, the monotonous song of the samovar bubbling near the cups of tea—all the seclusion of life isolated by an idolizing love—had dulled their perceptions to the fact that the afternoons were growing longer, that outside the sun was shining later and later into the pearl-covered depths of the clouds, and that a timid and pallid Spring was beginning to show its green finger tips in the buds of the branches suffering the last nips of Winter—that wild, black boar who so often turned on his tracks...

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Vicente Blasco Ibáñez (29 January 1867 – 28 January 1928) was a journalist, politician and best-selling Spanish novelist in various genres whose most widespread and lasting fame in the English-speaking world is from Hollywood films adapted from his works. He was born in Valencia. At university, he studied law and graduated in 1888 but never went into practice. He was more interested in politics, journalism, literature and women. He was a particular fan of Miguel de Cervantes. In politics he was a militant Republican partisan in his youth and founded a newspaper, *El Pueblo* (translated as *The People*) in his hometown. The newspaper aroused so much controversy that it was taken to court many times. In 1896, he was arrested and sentenced to a few months in prison. He made many enemies and was shot and almost killed in one dispute. The bullet was caught in the clasp of his belt. He had several stormy love affairs. He volunteered as the proofreader for the novel *Noli Me Tangere*, in which the Filipino patriot José Rizal expressed his contempt of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines. He travelled to Argentina in 1909 where two new cities, Nueva Valencia and Cervantes, were created. He gave conferences on historical events and Spanish literature. Tired and disgusted with government failures and inaction, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez moved to Paris at the beginning of World War I. When living in Paris, Ibáñez had been introduced to the poet and writer Robert W. Service by their mutual publisher Fisher Unwin, who asked Robert W. Service to act as an interpreter in the deal of a contract concerning Ibáñez. He was a supporter of the Allies in World War I. He died in Menton, France in 1928, the day before his 61st birthday, in the residence of Fontana Rosa (also named the House of Writers, dedicated to Miguel de Cervantes, Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac) that he built.

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