

Aguirre, the Wrath of God

Characters:

Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of Francisco Pizarro
Lope de Aguirre, "The Wrath of God"
Pedro de Ursua, a Spanish nobleman
Inez de Atienza, Ursua's mistress
Fernando de Guzman, "Emperor of Peru"
Flores, daughter of Aguirre
Juan de Analte, young Hidalgo
Gaspar de Carvajal, a Dominican monk
Chimalpahin, an Indian nobleman, called
Baltasar
Diego Bermudez
Sebastian de Fuenterrabia } confidants of
Gustavo Perucho } Aguirre

Description of the Characters

Gonzalo Pizarro:

tall, incredibly lean, his cheeks suggesting that he suffers from some disease of the stomach. Unscrupulous and, like his brother Francisco Pizarro, the typical highly-intelligent illiterate.

Lope de Aguirre:

he calls himself either "The Great Betrayer" or "The Wrath of God". Fanatical, possessed, and with limitless ambition, but extremely methodical in his actions. There is a likeness between his type and late photographs of Kafka, with a black glimmer in the eyes. About forty years of age, taciturn, sinewy, and with hands like clutching steel claws. "Hands," Aguirre once said, "are made to clutch and grasp." Unscrupulous, and with an almost pathological criminal energy, yet so utterly human that one could not say, this kind of man no longer exists.

Pedro de Ursua:

a little younger than Aguirre but of a more ancient nobility and, like him, a Basque. Ursua is built strongly, tending somewhat towards corpulence. His greasy face is a bit fleshy, with perceivable shadows from his beard, and constantly seems to betray a sallow and sickly pallor. Physically and mentally very strong, with nimble somewhat uncontrolled movements.

Inez de Atienza:

between twenty-five and thirty, noble, giving the faint impression of a madonna. Self-composed, never losing her dignity even in the greatest misery. Unobtrusive and very devoted.

Fernando de Guzman:

an officer to whom no one paid any attention until, suddenly, through the machinations of Aguirre, he is proclaimed Emperor of Peru. Relatively colorless, of mediocre intelligence and, in comparison to the others, rather restrained in his craving for gold. Guzman is the eldest of the expedition, and his hair and beard already show streaks of white. Strongly boned horse-like face. After his promotion, develops a naive vanity.

Flores, daughter of Aguirre:

Thirteen years old, just released from the convent, flowering into a beauty. She is Innocence and, together with Arnalte, personifies a kind of hope in the film. Still almost childlike, like a birch. Her breasts are still small.

Juan de Arnalte:

still makes the impression of an adolescent Hidalgo. Typical of the sentimental youth, the youthful lover. Even when wounded, he is still graceful. Often fighting an inner battle between military obedience and human impulse.

Gaspar de Carvajal:

Dominican monk, in frock and with tonsure; later on his hair grows carelessly and gets

woolly. Rather young yet, and almost rabidly fanatical in converting people. Somewhat like Artaud in the film of Jeanne d'Arc by Dreyer.

Chimalpahin:

Indian noble, called Baltasar. Not yet thirty years old, slender with tawny complexion. Noble features, long blue-black hair, very graceful movements despite his handcuffs. Very dignified, and makes an impression of deep resignation. Continually wrapped in profound silence and almost apathetic, his gaze directed far off into the distance, dozing.

Diego Bermudez:

is appointed scrivener. Nimble, cynical, and loyal to crime alone. Versed in expressing himself.

Sebastian de Fuenterrabia and Gustavo Perucho: scoundrels craving for gold, depraved and violent, at first glance recognizable as "villains". Perucho wants only to give the defenseless Indians "a piece of my mind", and Fuenterrabia boasts: "I don't booze, I don't battle, I don't whore. My only vice is hunting Indians...."

March through the Andes

There are snowy peaks all around, majestic crests, and the mountains tower like Holy Cathedrals. Very clear, icy, silent air, frost lying on the hoary ground, all in deep, majestic silence. From the mountain crests, glacial tongues lick down into the depths. Clouds are gathering around the crests, as if coming out of nowhere. The air further above is light and blue, deep down it is a deep purple. Nothing at all is stirring. The huge mountains tower one above the other up to 18,000 feet, in profound silence.

All at once, there, in a breathtaking sweep, and with a breathtaking zoom that makes you dizzy, the camera picks out the top of a pass: now, suddenly, we recognize a thin thread of people there in zigzag formation, and we can distinguish hardly any movement. At certain points the thread is broken, then followed up again, winding through rocks, slag, and ice. The dizzying gaze still moves downward into the deep: we realize now that there are hundreds, dragging themselves along, hundreds, one man after another. Animals are now distinctly recognizable, some horses, llamas and, on the glacier, some pigs. They are standing in a long line at the edge of a crevice exhausted to death. The file works its way forward with great effort.

Now we are close to them: There are bearded Spaniards in armor bearing swords, and all of them can hardly hold out any longer. Some carry arquebuses and gunpowder, some drag horses

along by the bridle, and—almost unbelievably—there are Indians carrying two sedan chairs. Then a long, listless line of Indians with long blue-black hair. They are wearing ponchos and knitted-wool caps with ear flaps. They are bound to each other by chains in a ghastly fashion. Spaniards with crossbows beside them, and further down, Indians again, dragging a cannon with heavy wheels, they are half-dead. Thirty Indians drag the cannon with ropes.

Fog gathers around the slopes, enveloping the thread and setting it free again. In the distance, woolly clouds are swelling. No one utters a sound, no one utters a single word, only deep, heavy breathing and panting. A line of panting llamas bogs down, all of them carry heavy burdens. They are gasping and snorting, perturbed, some are sniffing and wrinkling their velvety nostrils.

A Spaniard is poking a pig on the glacier, but the pig doesn't stir. Everything is a unique unheard-of effort. The pigs are completely done in.

Now we behold a Spaniard whose nose begins to bleed from thin air and exhaustion, but he is so exhausted that he doesn't even wipe himself. From higher up loose stones come rumbling down upon the people, the stones making a rumbling, hollow noise.

Suddenly, a call heard from above spreads from one man to another; getting louder, it becomes intelligible, passes on, sinks down and disappears into the deep. "We've made it!" they are shouting and: "Here we are, at the top!" But there are no signs of joy, no one moves faster or

quickens his pace. The call resounds in the depths, as if no one understood it, as if it were nothing to no one.

Only up on the pass, where there is a pile of stones with flags of faded fabric flapping on it, everything starts to move a bit, then the order of the march is disturbed and comes to a halt. The men drop to their knees, and the Indians, bound to each other by their chains, relieve themselves of their burdens, drop to their knees, and with hands folded in front of their mouths, fervently pray.

Now we recognize Carvajal, the Dominican monk; he takes his crucifix from his chest, his left hand extending it far out over the land, beyond the pass, and blesses it with his right hand. And now we also catch sight of Aguirre, whose face is marked by the ascent and his unlimited willpower. "We've made it," a man beside him weeps. "Men," says Aguirre, "that was merely one step."

March atop the high plateau

A vast elevated plain framed by gigantic mountains, the march proceeds. A strong wind blows driving sand before it, the animals huddle close to each other. Nothing but a scant few, very hard tufts of grass grow at this height, with white streaks of saltpeter amongst them. Clouds are towering one above the other.

Now we see a flock of wild alpacas whose fur is being tousled by the wind. They are standing still, noses twitching, full of distrust, then suddenly, the whole flock flees, clustering closely to each other, dust swirling up behind them.

The file of Spaniards, closer. Strong as the clouds, the army marches on. A sedan-chair is carried along, the Indian bearers carry it in their customary quick-paced trot, with the other sedan behind them. Flores pushes the curtain aside a little and looks out, as the sedan has been forced to stop because of some timid llamas. Laden llamas behind the sedan, then Indians, neglected and linked to each other, Spaniards amongst them, armored and carrying heavy weaponry, pigs and then, more Spaniards. Roughly, they are pushing the Indians onward.

The vanguard. Gonzalo Pizarro, riding a nervous horse; he is harnessed and wears a flying cape, lanky and unbelievably lean, giving an impression of intelligence at first glance. Beside him, Ursua, somewhat insignificant, of average stature. His fleshy face has a pale ashen tint. Ursua gives a rather unhealthy impression, sickly but still quite agile and full of energy. Trailing those two, some soldiers—wild-looking sorts, filthy—and we know at once that they are ready to do anything at any time. The Indians, in spite of their rags — some wear shirts and trousers, many are barefoot or have sandals that are far too flimsy — leave a much cleaner impression. They are plodding on in deep apathetic resignation, scarcely paying attention along the way. They are so sure of their mutual movements that we realize they have been

chained to one another like that for weeks. Among the Spaniards, we now clearly recognize Bermudez, Perucho, and Fuenterrabia; they curse while pushing the Indians who are trying to free a cannon that is stuck in the sand.

Llamas trail with strange cages on their backs which, upon closer inspection, we recognize as chicken coops with hens balanced dizzily inside on their perches, fluffing themselves up, apparently feeling sick from the constant rocking.

To the rear of the procession, Aguirre rides and then stops abruptly at a trio of Spaniards who are busying themselves with a fourth man. He has sore feet and is unable to move on; he tries nevertheless, stubborn and silent.

“Arnalte,” says Aguirre to a young Hidalgo, “you take his things, and let him carry his sword.” Aguirre digs his spurs into his horse and, riding away, shouts at his men: “Give him a horse, now we need everyone.”

Aguirre rides alongside the procession from front to rear; it looks more orderly here on the plain and we can now behold the full extent of their equipment. Only now are we struck by a howling pack of giant hounds running about, gasping and scaring the Indians. Apparently they have been trained for Indians, since every now and then they snarl threateningly and start snapping at the Indians, forcing them to fall out of line. Aguirre stops by his daughter's sedan and slowly rides beside it awhile. Flores seizes her father's hand and kisses it. Neither of them utters a word. Mum, Flores gazes back at a dead Indian who has been left along the way. His bare soles are

covered with thick bruised skin. Prolonged silence, then Aguirre rides on to the front.

Carvajal wanders on foot with a staff in his hand, the wind blowing his frock forward, making it billow and flap. Aguirre salutes him with a glance. While moving ahead, Carvajal prays with his rosary without moving his lips. He gives the impression of being a tough methodical person.

Descent into the Urubamba Valley

A gloomy valley, densely overgrown with the beginning of the Amazon jungle. The green slopes are dropping steeply downward, following the meanderings of the Urubamba River which rushes way below. How far the slopes are reaching up cannot be discerned because, further above, the valley is closed in by an oscillating veil of vapor and fog. The slopes vanish in the seething steam up into nowhere. Just the muffled roar of the rapids. From the gathering clouds of steam, hummingbirds whirl into the deep.

The trek works its way forward. With almost inconceivable difficulty, a heavy cannon is lowered between the trees. The Indians have to fulfill this terrible task. It is so steep, and the slopes are already so densely overgrown, that one can hardly lead the horses down by their bridle. They slip and refuse to be drawn down any further. The two sedans must be borne down empty as Inez

and Flores, holding hands, lifting their long skirts, are steadied and supported by Spaniards. Ursua helps Inez and Arnalte, the young Hidalgo reaches out with his hand to Flores from further below. Climbing, Flores almost lends the impression of being a child.

All of a sudden, shouts from above, excitement. Twigs are crackling, a crash is heard and, with a hollow sound close to the women, a weighty cannon crashes down into the deep, cutting a swathe through the undergrowth. A dead pig comes sliding down after it. Far below, the two fall into the rapids of the brown boiling Urubamba.

The chained Indians are in peculiar straits, for if one of them slips, a whole row goes with him. The highland Indians are already beginning to suffer at this point; nearly all of them have caught colds and some are just staggering on.

We catch sight of a sitting Indian who has been unchained because he is too ill. He is shaking from a fever and draws in his breath with short gasps, like someone with pneumonia. A dog sniffs at him, snarling. They confront each other motionlessly, for a long time, and the dog grinds its teeth at the dying person: a gruesome picture.

Some Spaniards try to drag the llamas onward, but the animals' fright is greater. They have planted their feet into the soft moist soil and only permit themselves to be pulled by the neck. They resist unto death. From deep down, cries are discernible through the rear of the waters, but no one can tell what they mean.

By the Urubamba River

On a very narrow path, where a horse can scarcely support itself, the vanguard has stopped, all of them holding on to something so they won't slip into the raging torrent. They seem to be somewhat helpless, with only Aguirre apparently cool and master of the situation. Gonzalo Pizarro pretends to be calm. "For all of this," he says, "we shall be richer than anyone else before us."

Night camp by the river

Drawn out lengthily along the river, the troops are camping on a stretch of ground which is but one foot in breadth and slopes steeply down. Along the riverbank the flickering fires are drawn out lengthily.

Pizarro, Ursua, Aguirre and the monk are sitting together in deliberation. "When the river widens and is no longer so wild, then we will have made it," Ursua says. "We shall see," says Aguirre. Gonzalo Pizarro presses the point that boats must be built forthwith so some of the equipment can be conveyed by water. The animals and the main troops could then move on more easily along the river. Before too long they would have to stop counting on the Indians because the climate would not agree with them. But they could not have possibly foreseen that.

A Spaniard tends the fire and serves the men a hot drink, trying simultaneously to overhear something. With a barely perceptible hand gesture Pizarro sends him away. Aguirre contradicts Pizarro; very composed, he says it would be unwise, it would be madness in fact, to launch the boats now, the waters would be much too wild, it could not possibly work. Pizarro is rather puzzled, and therefore Ursua comes to his assistance, stating that the leader thus far had judged everything well, it was simply in the nature of his family. "Your Honor," says Ursua, "where there is a Pizarro, there is Honor and gold as well." Aguirre is silent.

Another campfire. Some wild-looking figures crouch around it in a very narrow space. The water is gurgling nearby. The Indians won't hold out much longer, one of them says, as they are so frail that they will perish from something as ridiculous as colds and measles. They're not used to anything and have no power to resist. "Not even flies die from a cold, have you ever heard flies sneeze?" Perucho asks. They all laugh crudely.

A more distant campfire, glowing only faintly. Indians have flocked closely together, we can see just their faces in the obscurity. Dark eyes in the dark. Baltasar, in handcuffs, is with his people and speaks to them very gently in the Quechua Indian dialect. He seems to comfort his people, uttering very soft and subtle words which we do not understand. The Indians cower motionlessly, almost in devout wonder, slowly comprehending their doom. The scene is profoundly serious and sad.

On the riverbank

Several days must have passed, for the Spaniards have built boats, ten in all, and they are completely laden with equipment. The boats are somewhat primitive and colorless, they seem bulky but solid. On each of four boats they have fastened a cannon, plus sacks with provisions and casks with powder. Chutes have been fashioned from wooden planks and lead directly into the whirling brown water. Everyone is ready to set out and awaits a sign from Gonzalo Pizarro. A little further downriver we distinguish about twenty carelessly-made graves, each of which bears a cross made of two sticks tied together. Indians are cowering there. Apparently these are the graves of Indians, for their number has diminished considerably. The Indians look callously up into the seething mist. They turn their heads like a single man and look up high into the clouds.

"It is time," says Pizarro. The boats are launched, but then a catastrophe. After only a few feet, the first boats capsize and sink in the violent rapids. Utter confusion on shore while the boats shatter. In the water, Spaniards fight for their lives, pulled down by their heavy armor, coming up again for brief intervals. The cannon sink with the provisions while a powder-filled cask spins in a whirlpool. A dog jumps into the water. Seven out of ten boats are shattered; the remaining three fight against capsizing while being pulled forward furiously. They disappear

beyond the first bend in the river, drifting along, rocking, the crew struggling wordlessly. We realize that, inevitably, one mile further on, they will drown as well.

For a long time the camera takes an interest in the raging waters. Our ears catch the excitement shot through with wild shouts. "God have mercy on our sins!" we hear Carvajal cry.

March along the river

Steep slopes, disappearing above into clouds of steam, the heat has increased. The number of men has lessened considerably, just fifteen Indians have survived, and some of these are recognizably sick at first sight. Baltasar still looks quite strong.

There is only a lone pig left; it keeps sinking into the soft, boggy ground up to its belly.

Then a dead llama in the jungle, over which thousands upon thousands of fire ants fly. Clouds of flies are buzzing about. There are but a few dogs left, but they seem to have grown wild rather quickly, and scarcely stay close to their group any more. With their swords and knives, the Spaniards labor their way through undergrowth and liana labyrinths. They are soaked through with sweat, and thick swarms of mosquitoes are dancing around every single man. Damp foliage everywhere, wet with rain, closing as the men pass in their wake, like water.

Then a boggy place where the horses can hardly move on; they refuse to budge. Some Spaniards advance into the smacking morass, dragging the horses behind them by the bridle. At the edge of the bog luggage is piling up. On the opposite side of the bog stands a man with a horse, and both are infested with leeches sucking away at them. The soldier is trying to get rid of the leeches with a little salt. No one is talking, it is a silent frightful fight for every inch.

From the river Urubamba, which is visible now and then through the foliage at their side, a deep roaring sound rises only to be thrown back by the walls, thus sounding like an endless waterfall. This and the wicked whirring of mosquitoes.

There, suddenly, a peculiar scene: two Spaniards are embracing a tree, weeping. One of them, deeply enraptured, kneels down and kisses the trunk. Among all the enormous trees overgrown with lianas, this tree seems rather insignificant. Somewhat surprised, a few Spaniards gather around the two who are so moved that they cannot utter a word.

Pizarro approaches them with Aguirre. "What's the matter here?" asks Pizarro. "Cinammon," sobs one of the two, "this is a cinammon tree." There is silence once more, as if every one were ashamed. "Fetch Baltasar," says Pizarro.

A larger gathering of Spaniards crowds around in a circle. Baltasar is thrust forward and the Spaniards push some Indians after him. Pizarro now delivers a brief public address which, apparently, is meant to encourage his men. From Baltasar, who speaks almost without an accent,

we learn that the famous king named El Dorado, who reigns over an immeasurably rich land of gold, is said to live where the cinammon trees grow. After him the land was named El Dorado. The houses are said to be covered with golden tiles and the king is so lofty that only his subjects wear clothes, while he himself is dressed in gold dust every morning. In the evening he steps into a lake and the priests rinse him clean, and every time the gold is lost, but the country has so much that no one cares.

By Pizarro's cross-examination we realize that he already knows the whole story behind the title, and that his men actually know everything also, so this speech is merely intended to strengthen their self-confidence and to encourage them. The Indians are questioned by Baltasar, and their answers come quickly, as if learned by heart.

Indeed, upon setting out the Spaniards seem revived. For once they appear to bear their burdens with a more joyful heart, as if it were but a day's march to El Dorado.

Inez and Flores sit beside each other in their sedans. "If I become Queen," Inez says, "you will be the first lady in my court." Flores smiles a bit self-consciously. "I shall do whatever my father tells me to do," Flores says. The sedans are lifted up and forced through the thicket, swaying. In this jungle the sedan-chairs seem to be a sign of civilized schizophrenia.

Aguirre, leading his horse by the bridle, is beside Ursua. He speaks with him confidentially, and we gradually discover that he will try to conspire with Ursua against Pizarro. He complains about

some mistaken decisions Pizarro has made. He, Aguirre, had always maintained that Indian sheep or llamas were useless, and that one could not have the whole load of equipment fall on them. Now all of them, mere superfluities to begin with, were all dead. They could no longer count on the Indians either, as the air didn't agree with them down here, and almost all the pigs had perished in the mountains. They must begin rationing the provisions more carefully, for it was not at all certain that they would reach El Dorado in one week's time. Ursua, feeling reassured, agrees because he had thought and said similar things himself, and because Aguirre confides in him more than in their leader, Pizarro. "We are simply in need of a man like Francisco Pizarro," Aguirre says, "Gonzalo Pizarro isn't even his shadow." He says this in such a way that Ursua must think that he, Ursua himself, has the makings of the leader within him. They drag their horses along. Teeming heat, mosquitoes all over, the everywhere putrid humidity. Pearls of sweat are forming on all faces. The buzzing of the mosquitoes is unbearable, and then the roar of the waters and the shrieks of the parrots. The jungle bares all its sounds. The sun can scarcely pass through to the dim decaying ground. Dogged penetration, step by step.

Large camp

Located where the land is a little flatter and allows for some space, there is a large chaotic work camp active in the jungle. Several big trees have been felled and the thick undergrowth cleared away. Bundles of accouterments are scattered about, some howling dogs are tied to branches, five or six smoking fires are burning at once. The clay soil is dank and sticky. The two sedans stand somewhat apart, and a small screen has been erected to protect them from wayward glances. Some beautifully decorated court dresses made of velvet are hanging on a line with a few lace petticoats. A strained silence reigns over the entire camp. Little movement amongst the men. From the disorderliness of the camp we can deduce the incipient process of dissolution. Clumps of equipment are lying around carelessly in the mud, filthy cages filled with hens are jammed between branches, shields and weaponry are strewn about, a young Indian in a hammock is dozing towards death, motionless. Only five of the horses are left. They seem to be the one thing attended to with extra care. The horses have been groomed and are covered with blankets. The saddles and bridles, too, are kept sufficiently dry and tidy on the tree limbs.

A hollow crash and crackle and rustle becomes audible now near camp. A huge tree sways very slowly to one side sighing, then faster it falls down lengthwise in a tumult, taking everything with it; a second one follows and directly after it,

a third. Now we hear the hacking of axes and the sound of saws. One tree falls after another. The camera shows a great fascination for the falling trees.

Great gathering in the camp

The Spaniards are sitting in a circle fully armored, some chained Indians behind them and, set off a bit to the side, the two sedans. Inez and Flores, however, have removed themselves and are listening from a distance. In the center of the circle stands Pizarro who is giving a speech to his men. He tells them they can't go on like this, the provisions are nearly exhausted and everything was getting scarce. One could not yet talk of starvation but some of the men had been doing so the past few days. The terrain was so treacherous that they could hardly proceed, and it was not to be expected that they would reach a populated region in the near future. Therefore, he and his camp foreman Pedro de Ursua and his lieutenant, Lope de Aguirre had made the following decision which had already been drafted by the scrivener into a legal document. They had resolved to build a raft, to man it with men led by Ursua, in order to explore the territory ahead of them and to search for means of subsistence. According to reports from the Indians, they were now approaching some hostile Indian tribes as

well, which would endanger the situation. The crew on the raft would have the task of returning within two weeks at most to the main camp here, either by land or by water, and if they hadn't returned by then, it would be concluded that all of them had lost their lives. In such a case, which they hoped wouldn't happen, the remaining expedition here would try to turn back to find refuge in regions where Christians lived. They would place a great deal of hope in the fate of the exploring vanguard, and, naturally, they were hoping to obtain precise data pertaining to the status of the gold country. Baltasar, who was indispensable as an interpreter, was sent with them for that reason. Maybe they would even find traces of the expedition under the valiant captain Orellana who had vanished three years earlier. He did not intend to flatter anyone, and none who were omitted from the party should feel neglected, but he did mean to stress that he had chosen the best of the available men; they were the flower of the Spanish crown and the strong arm of civilized Christianity. God had also given them the most reverend Fray Gaspar de Carvajal for guidance so that he might bring light into the night and darkness of Creation here, and preach the true creed.

They had come to the agreement that the two women would travel with the vanguard, although he did not want the responsibility as it was clearly stated in the document, wishing instead to save it for a different decision; but they would try to make their living situation as pleasant as circumstances would allow, nevertheless. Inez had

declared that she had sold all her belongings in order to follow Pedro de Ursua, and that she would rather give up her life voluntarily than not to be by his side; and she had proclaimed this with such grace and self-assurance that one could not help but let her go with them. As for Flores, Aguirre had prevailed in his wish to keep her under the protection of her father's arm since she was still in the first flower of her youth.

All of this had been decided, and as a symbol of their agreement they now would sign the document which had been formulated today, three days before the New Year. Thus they would be able to present it to the Indian Council upon their return.

Pizarro is given the document and sets it on a small improvised table, where pen and ink are already lying at his disposal. Pizarro withdraws a small metal plate from his pocket on which his signature has been carved. We watch how Pizarro copies his name with the pen in a clumsy hand. Then Ursua, Aguirre and some of the officers sign, and at last, the Dominican monk.

Departure of the raft

There lies the river in the first morning mist, a solid raft afloat upon it with the two sedans standing in the middle, and a roof of bark fastened to four poles. The heavy tree trunks are held

together by metal hooks, all else being fastened with cords and ropes. Coarse tow-ropes hold the raft to the bank of the fast flowing river, and in spite of its weight, it rolls slightly with the pressure of the waters. The raft is loaded to the brim with equipment: armor, weapons, barrels, a cannon, and even a horse, standing to the side. Then, cages with hens, provisions, sacks with corn and seed, fuel, rope, arquebuses, and some pans.

The Spaniards are trying to get a second horse aboard over some wooden planks, but despite having shielded its eyes, the horse resists with all its might, rearing up so high that the men consider it too dangerous. "Let it be," says Aguirre, "it has its reasons." "One horse will certainly be enough to frighten the Indians," says Ursua.

Already the raft is fully manned, there is barely enough room for forty men. They are all crammed close to each other. At both the front and rear of the raft stands a man with a clumsy oar which serves to maneuver the raft. The cars are lashed with rope to a fork of smooth wood.

At dawn, Carvajal, the Dominican monk, is on board reading the Mass. He gives Holy Communion to those on board first, and then to the kneeling Spaniards at the riverbank who are left behind. Deeply devoted and enraptured, the last surviving Indians are taking it on land.

The main rope is hacked through with a sword; it is a laconic, nearly speechless farewell. Baltasar has come to the edge of the raft and kneels before the last of his people, his bound hands folded. The Indians are clapping their hands on

their mouths in anguish and despair. Now, with a jerk, the craft frees itself and begins drifting very swiftly. "Now it goes up," cries Pizarro. "Now it goes down," says Aguirre. There is steam and seething mist over the tropical slopes, and the day proceeds.

On the river

The raft is drifting rapidly now, pushed forward from bend to bend unimpeded, turning round in circles repeatedly, the landscape slips by speedily. The raft moans and groans, and the waters of the river Urubamba are rushing sluggishly. The jungle slopes continue to rise up infinitely, although not as steeply as at first. Clouds are gathering over the canyon. The oarsmen work hard and incessantly, but in these wild waters they can barely manage to keep the raft in the middle of the river. Sometimes it drifts close to the shore where twigs and lianas and exposed roots dangle over the water, and the men on board must lower their heads and steady themselves in order to avoid being pulled overboard. There are some rapids which turn the raft with a jerk on its axis, intimidating the men somewhat, including Ursua who wants to prove himself leader. "For every hour," says Aguirre, "we would need a day on land."

The raft drifts onward and, upon hitting a sandbar with a jolt, some bundles of accouterments are lost. Hands stretch forth vainly to catch some of it again. Only Perucho lifts a bag filled with provisions on board, using a fork for propping up arquebuses. Some tree trunks have dislodged themselves dangerously and rub against each other with a groaning sound. Water is slapping the trunks. The men have to be careful not to trap their feet between the trunks. Creaking, the raft again hits sandy ground.

Inez and Flores have sat down anxiously in their two sedans which are standing close together. Inez is holding Flores' hands in hers, both await their fates patiently. Ursua approaches the pair to lend encouragement. Once they had escaped the worst torrents, they would be safe. And, as things appeared, there were no more torrents expected further down. The Indians had asserted this unanimously. The men gaze ahead eagerly, anticipating something around every bend. "Beyond this bend will be a house, perhaps," says Fuenterrabia. And while everyone maintains an incredulous silence, he adds that this could easily be the case.

All at once there is confusion and chaos on one side of the raft, because the horse has taken fright and is rearing up. In its excitement, it steps halfway onto a barrel which makes it rear up even more. It jerks its head hard as foam gathers around its mouth and flanks. Some of the men try to save themselves from the mad trampling hooves by moving to the narrowest space thereby adding to the general confusion. The

horse is on the verge of leaping overboard, simply refusing to calm down. Two men succeed at last in getting hold of the bridles and pushing the horse backwards onto a less-congested spot. Its forelegs get caught in some of the ropes, which are cautiously untied by Arnalte who courageously attends. Arnalte succeeds in becalming the horse completely. Baltasar is sitting all this time close by the dangerously trampling hooves, petrified with fright, and in his terror, unable to move whatsoever.

Flores has noticed Baltasar's paralysis and takes a few steps towards him from her sedan. She attempts to draw him aside a little, but the terror of the Indian is still too deeply rooted. Some of the Spaniards laugh at him cruelly, saying the Indian is more afraid than a girl, that he is shitting in his pants. Flores suddenly starts to cry. "Baltasar," she says, "it's a good horse, it's only frightened." Baltasar looks at her in strange wonderment. "But it's a stallion, and they call it Clodoaldo," says Flores.

Sandbank in the river

It is a blazing-hot noon, and at a point where the river has broadened a bit the raft has hit a sandbank. The current is still very strong. Some distance away, a few alligators are lying on the white sand of the sandbank in motionless avidity.

Several Spaniards have stepped into the water and are trying to free the raft with poles. Others poke at the water with their poles to chase away the alligators that might come close. A blue-black thunderstorm is brewing on the horizon, the pitch-black clouds towering heaven high, lit up already by flashes of lightning. The thunder is not yet audible. Excited screaming of birds in the jungle. "Heave-ho," cry the men on board, and when the raft half-frees itself they cry, "Come on!" "Come on, come on," cries the parrot, which Perucho has taken aboard with him. The bird flaps its wings and ruffles its feathers. The horse is standing there, frightened by the violent movements of the poles, nervously tramping on its narrow space.

Chimalpahin, whom they call Baltasar, is sitting a short distance away, and with faraway eyes he gazes at the clouds. All has become deathly still, but no one notices because of their work. Only Chimalpahin is looking about right now. The birds in the forest have become mute, no wind is blowing, and yet the flashes of lightning are already visible. Quite casually we catch sight of an arrow sticking in the wood as if it belonged there. Then suddenly, an outcry. Screaming, a soldier stands up with a start, an arrow stuck in his calf. And at the same time, the alligators disappear into the water with a hollow splash.

Shouts break out, wild movement. "To arms!" shouts Aguirre above all else. He roars at some soldiers, who have lost their heads and jump about helplessly, to go ahead and fire. Ursua and Arnalte, together with some Spaniards, have

armed themselves with shields and thrown themselves in front of the two sedans. Wild excitement and, what nobody notices, no more arrows. The sultry forest lies motionless as the first shots thunder from the arquebuses which are supported by the gunner on iron forks. "What are you aiming at?" someone shrieks. "Fire, you ass!" bellows Ursua wildly. Then, as if by themselves, the thunderous shots cease and the men become sober once again. One of them declares aloud that since there were no more arrows, the enemy was probably very few in number. Ursua asks whether anybody had seen one. No one can remember.

The wounded man is seated between two bundles, cursing; they have already extracted the arrow from his blood-gushing leg. The arrow wanders from hand to hand while the wounded man is seeing if he can still move his toes properly. Ursua orders them to continue firing into the forest for the sake of security and to chase away the enemy. The mouths of the cannon roar and smoke and in between, deep silence. The thunderstorm overhead refuses to draw close; in the distance its mute flashes are still flickering.

In the feverish swelter, with shots still being fired, the men succeed with a strenuous effort in freeing the raft. As the raft drifts on, there is just enough time for the men to be pulled onto the tree trunks. But some of the trunks have nearly come apart and some of the ropes are almost totally frayed. Several men on board are trying to re-attach two trunks with iron clamps, all this makeshift at most. The current is no

longer so strong however, and the steep slopes of the canyon now widen a bit. Dense swarms of malignant mosquitoes are swarming around the men on board. The jungle has regained its voice. Voices of birds and monkeys squabbling in some tree tops, thousands of other sounds. The men suffer in the broiling heat.

The towering clouds are now approaching, almost continual flashes of lightning and the distant grumble of thunder. Rain suddenly floods down, hot and heavy, hardly ever in single drops, almost entirely in a solid mass. Everyone is instantly drenched and they hardly attempt to cover their heads with their shields. All is soaked, the dresses, the bundles, the provisions; we behold a Spaniard, whose armored sleeve serves as a drainpipe. Thunder and lightning are very near now, the horse shies with fright and the jungle is one dull roar. The water in the river seems to boil, steam issuing forth from the surface. All on board are cowering, motionless, while lightning flashes incessantly. Heavy crashes of thunder echo out from the steep slopes.

Inside the sedan, soaked through as well, Inez is sitting, praying mutely with a rosary. Aguirre is beside his daughter's sedan, holding a shield in front of the curtain so that not too much rain may penetrate within.

Campsite on a sandy spot

The raft has been tied to the shore in a flat sandy place, objects lie scattered about in the sultry sun to dry. Steam is rising everywhere. Several fully-armored Spaniards have positioned themselves against possible aggressors by facing towards the jungle, some take a few cautious steps into the steaming wilderness. The trees are still dripping profusely. The horse is on shore eating leaves. Some Spaniards are digging in the sand for turtle eggs. The curtains in the sedans are pulled up to dry; Juan de Arnalte politely spreads a mat on the sand for the women, then he withdraws again. Lively activity everywhere. Perucho is alone on board with his parrot, trying to teach him the term "El Dorado".

The Spaniards have constructed two charcoal kilns on the sand, using thin tree trunks and strong branches. Both pyres are smoking away, with the men paying close attention so it doesn't start smoking too heavily. If too much smoke develops, they deaden it by covering it with sand. Ursua, Aguirre and Guzman are walking through the camp, carefully inspecting every object. They pick up some pans and a short chain, then they collect the iron forks from the arquebuses. "You have to make yourself wooden forks," says Aguirre to one of the men. Gradually we realize that they are searching for iron. They even remove the horse's shoes. The ground is soft here, anyway, Ursua reflects. Even the iron work on the handles of the sedans is taken off. A brief

discussion arises around Baltasar, as to whether or not they should remove his handcuffs. Ultimately Ursua is against it, because he fears that Baltasar might flee into the jungle. Proud Baltasar sits entranced, not listening to what they are saying.

Camp, early morning

The raft is completely cleared now, all the luggage being scattered about in the sand. The piles of charcoal are gone, and in one spot the Spaniards have built an improvised forge. A stone serves as an anvil, and from a coarse piece of leather the men have made a simple bellows, on which two men alternate working. The Spaniards are busy forging iron clamps and nails. It is very tiresome work.

There is a peculiarly tense atmosphere in the camp, no one dares to talk out loud. Furtive glances are cast aside, at a distance, Ursua and Aguirre are quarreling, barely able to restrain themselves. The men eye one another wordlessly while working. Something is in the air.

Ursua calls the men together, most of whom already sense what is happening, and he declares, reminding them of his authority as Major General, that he has decided to return. It probably would take two weeks to get back to the main camp by land; they had seen from the raft how

difficult the terrain really was, and by land the danger posed by the hostile natives would increase.

Aguirre, his most intimate friends gathered around him, curtly explains to Ursua that he will not follow this order, for their task was to explore the territory and supply themselves with food, and so far they hadn't achieved either of the two since nothing of importance had been encountered yet. In two days the powerful current had moved them so far away from the starting point that, under these circumstances, a return seemed senseless, as they would have exhausted all their provisions by the time they reached the camp and, furthermore, they would put an additional burden on Pizarro's shoulders by consuming his food. Things have progressed to such an extent that there was nothing to do but advance; and why had he, Ursua, given orders to forge nails if he didn't intend to mend the raft completely. That is not the only ambiguity he has shown. Aguirre calls upon the men, in the glorious name of the Spanish Crown, to continue their expedition at their own risk. He recalls Hernando Cortez in Mexico who, once he had sailed, had also received orders to return, but Cortez defied the order, and today he has riches and glory. Now it lay in their own power to alter the course of history, now it awaited their mighty grip.

The men are moved, and despite Ursua's order to be quiet, Aguirre continues talking to the men in strong inflammatory words. Most of them are indecisive, and only Aguirre's closest friends, Ber-

mudez, Guzman, and Fuenterrabia, give the impression of unity. But Aguirre knows that secretly he speaks from the heart of the majority.

Ursua is utterly enraged, and makes the mistake of ordering two men to seize the rebel Aguirre and put him in chains. The two timidly lay their hands on Aguirre. At this moment, happening so quickly that one hardly realizes how it came about, Fuenterrabia's musket explodes with a thunderous burst and, hit from the shortest of distances, Ursua falls flat on this face in the sand, mortally wounded. A wild commotion breaks out, Inez comes flying to the scene, Aguirre's men grab their arms. The horse gallops to and fro, trampling the sand. "Stop! No fighting!" thunders Aguirre at the mindless ones. He succeeds in subduing the initial panic, no one really knows whom to fight. Inez kneels beside Ursua who has turned to stone, and Carvajal the monk has pressed a small crucifix into his hands and listens with his ear close to the mouth of the dying man who is trying to say something. But Ursua is unable to utter a word, and rapidly his last ounce of life dies away. Flores runs about, completely upset, trying in vain to find bandages. An officer rises up against Aguirre and commands several men to kill Fuenterrabia and Aguirre on the spot. The men hesitate, looking for support. "Execute him," says Aguirre with an icy voice. He makes a hardly-discernible movement of the head. Bermudez, Perucho, and Fuenterrabia kneel down and aim at the officer, who first steps back a bit, but then, courageously, advances toward Aguirre, sword in hand and

resolved to do anything. Almost simultaneously, shots are heard. The officer is thrown back a ways, he is dead on the spot. The white sand surrounding him soaks up the blood. "Anyone else?" asks Aguirre.

Camp, towards evening

Evening's mood has spread over the sandy place. Mosquitoes are dancing in the last rays of sunlight, a few big butterflies are staggering by, drunk with the jungle. At the edge of the jungle, but still in the sand, two graves have been dug side by side, adorned with wooden crosses. Paralyzed with pain, almost without willpower, Inez kneels before Ursua's grave. She is kneeling as if she has not yet awakened from her bewilderment.

All of the Spaniards have gathered at the raft. The objects are still strewn about the landing place, and the raft is completely empty. The men are discussing whom they should take as their leader, and Aguirre, who leads the discussion, realizes that the others fear his boundless ambition and untamed energy and knows that his time has not yet come. All of the men have taken the precaution of appearing with arms, as the situation is not unequivocal yet, and everyone distrusts everyone else.

As a matter of course, Aguirre proposes that Fernando de Guzman be elected Major General. Guzman is of lofty descent and one of the most

experienced fighters ever to have fought for the Spanish crown in Peru. Aguirre distinctly believes therefore that no party will form against him. Guzman is extremely frightened and tries to keep the burden at bay, but Aguirre continues steadfastly to single out Guzman's merits, recalling the conquering of the fortress Sascachuyaman. Guzman must accept this high honor, but as he still resists, the Spaniards try persuading him from all sides to accept their wishes. They would willingly serve then under his able guidance, and further, they would appoint Lope de Aguirre as his deputy, since he had coolly analyzed the situation and expressed all of their innermost wishes. Only in this way would they all achieve riches and honor. Who is for Guzman, asks Aguirre. All raise their hands and, over the head of Guzman, they appoint him Major General. Who is for Aguirre as his deputy, asks Perucho. This time, too, all raise their hands; tributes resound and the council begins to dissolve.

At a distance, on the edge of the sandbank, Inez is visible, kneeling, her face as white as the sand; she is confessing to Carvajal, the monk who stands beside her. Carvajal is wearing his shawl, and has put one end of it on Inez' shoulder. He listens patiently while she apparently tries to get her life clear, she looks waxen and calm. They remain there for a long time, motionless, the two of them. The sun has already disappeared behind the mountain slope. Carvajal gives her his blessing and Inez rises, fully composed, as if she has summed up her life. From the jungle, sounds of a million beings are audible.

Night camp by the river

Several fires are burning and along the edge of the jungle, armed guards are watching. They have positioned themselves in pairs. Around the fires, the evening meal is almost over. Some of the Spaniards are baking a few milky translucent turtle eggs, which are covered with a soft skin, in the faint, glimmering ashes. Subdued conversation, the men lying leisurely and expectantly, trying to protect themselves from the mosquitoes. Aguirre walks calmly between the fires, talking quietly to individual groups of Spaniards. Bermudez, Perucho, and Fuenterrabia are whispering to each other. It looks as if something has been planned for the coming day.

Juan de Arnalte is sitting by the sedan with Flores, whispering to her of his mountains at home and of his brothers and the waterfall behind his house. He seems to be homesick, and Flores is aware of this, listening to him patiently and with great interest. Aguirre disturbs the two. He sends Arnalte away, he should go and sleep, for at midnight he will have to watch. This New Year's Day was the beginning of significant events, this will be a meaningful year, all of them will alter the course of history.

When Aguirre is alone with Flores, he tells her to inform Inez that he, Aguirre, will not do her any harm, on the contrary, he would treat her as a lady of honor. She was compelled only by the course of events to follow the expedition further, even if this did not agree with her wishes. We

notice that Aguirre has inhibitions which keep him from talking to Inez personally.

Camp, early morning

Everyone is already up and stirring. While the last iron clamps are fastened to the trunks of the raft, the Spaniards start reloading the raft. At the same time, some men are making a square in the sand with some poles and commence construction of a small wooden dais. Aguirre gives the orders here, whereas Guzman, who is suffering somewhat from diarrhea, supervises the work at the raft. Guzman disappears into the sultry damp jungle and returns with a not-too-happy face, trying, however, to keep his dignity. Aguirre speaks of an important council which must be held before they leave. Guzman is flattered, for he knows the council is for his benefit. The Spaniards are standing in the square now, leaving a free space in the center. Aguirre delivers a gripping speech to his men using very strong words. The time had come to take common fate into their own hands, only the brave are helped by fate, it casts off the cowardly. It was necessary to legalize all further undertakings, and so he and Guzman had mutually decided to appoint Diego de Bermudez scrivener. It was necessary now to decide for themselves, or else

once they had conquered El Dorado, they would have to relinquish the fruits of their efforts to the undeserving. It was therefore necessary to free themselves from the bonds of the Spanish crown, and to proclaim their leader Emperor of Peru and Dorado. Would they agree to that. "Yes," cry the enchanted men. A tumult erupts, exultation. Aguirre has directed this farce almost in the style of an operetta.

Aguirre pushes Bermudez and Guzman forward. He declares that overnight he had already formulated a document with Bermudez which he now wants to read to them, in order to ask them for their approval or disapproval. "Caesarean King," reads Aguirre, "by the grace of God, through our Holy Mother, the Holy Roman Church, named King Philipp the Second of Castille, we, the undersigned, have, until yesterday, the first day of the year 1561, after the birth of our savior Jesus Christ, regarded ourselves as your servants and subjects, after we have moved away from your servant Gonzalo Pizarro more than two hundred leagues within two days. Fate, the help of God, and the labor of our own hands have driven us down a river, called by the natives Urubamba, in search of a new land of gold, and we have decided to put an end to the quirks of our Fate. We are the Course of History, and no fruit of this earth shall henceforth be shared. We rebel unto death. We solemnly declare — and our hands shall be torn off and our tongues shall dry up if this is not so — the House of Hapsburg to be devoid of all its rights, and you, Philipp II, King of Castile, dethroned. By dint of this de-

claration thou art annihilated. In your stead, we proclaim the noble knight from the city of Seville, Fernando de Guzman, Emperor of Peru and Dorado. Flee, flee from here hence, O King, and may God protect your soul."

The Spaniards rejoice, and after the incense has been lit, Carvajal intones the Te Deum. The men wave their weapons overhead as Aguirre leads Guzman to a shabby improvised throne in the center of the square. A seat on the podium has been upholstered with one of Flores' velvet gowns. Guzman feels exceedingly honored, though half resisting still, and has objections to the kind of throne it is. "What is a throne?" growls Aguirre in his ear, pushing him forward, "A piece of wood, covered with a piece of velvet."

Guzman takes his seat and Aguirre, the first to kneel down, seizes his hand and kisses it. The other men follow his example, one pushing behind the other. Then everyone signs the document except the two women and Baltasar who have no right to do so. The men fire their muskets and start hailing Guzman who accepts this homage gravely, although obviously suffering from a belly ache.

Now they all form a great operatic tableau, and with ritualistic gestures, Guzman is led by Carvajal and Aguirre from his throne to the earth. Guzman boards the raft with solemn steps and, among the universal rejoicing of his people, gives the signal for departure.

On the river, mouth of the Ucayali

The river has broadened a bit, flowing more slowly, the mountain slopes recede undramatically. The raft is drifting calmly, but without delay. On the riverside, whole trees and overhanging limbs are dragging in the water. On the right-hand side a wide hidden valley opens up, and coming closer, we behold the mouth of a big river carrying yellowish-brown water, and upon which drifts a striking number of fallen branches, even whole trees, their roots outstretched toward the steaming sky. And there, fully bloated, a dead tapir as big as a mule floats past the Spaniards' raft. The river to the right is apparently larger. For miles, the darker waters of the Uribamba are not mingling with the waters of the Ucayali which carries large quantities of clay. In the middle of the already-gaping river runs a clear and colorful line of demarcation.

The Spaniards are very curious, and they beckon information from Baltasar who, however, is unsure about this. No information had reached the Incas from such a faraway realm, but he did know of a big river to the south called "Ucayali". Following Aguirre's instructions assiduously, Diego Bermudez is employed in making a rough sketch as quickly as possible before the raft has drifted past completely.

The men suffer under the oppressive sweltering heat, sweating without being cooled. The raucous quarreling of the monkeys carries from the jungle across the waters, growing to such an extent that

the parrots join in, as if they were asking for silence. We can distinguish some movement in the tree tops, and in the dense foliage, the squeaking proceeds from tree to tree.

Since passing the mouth, the horse has become restless, although there is no obvious reason for this. The stallion jerks his head and shies from something we do not see. The Spaniards aboard are listening, but they cannot discern a thing in the motionless jungle. The trees mysteriously mask their own trance. The horse nervously stamps at the ground, its dance creating disorder in the ordered assembly surrounding it. One Spaniard, shoving hastily, pushes another one and his helmet gets lost overboard. Hands are stretching out for it, but the helmet has swiftly sunk.

The horse is jumping now, and gets bundles of equipment between its hooves, which makes it shy away even more. A man has taken hold of the bridle and yanks it down, but the stallion fights back with all its might. One half of the raft is in an uproar. Chimalpahin is particularly perturbed, and Inez, praying with her rosary in the open sedan, briefly glances up from her trance. It takes a long time for the horse to calm down, and just when it seems to be tranquil once more, it jumps forward with a mighty leap right into a group of Spaniards who are preparing a meal over a small fire they have lighted between some stones. Sparks fly about and chaos breaks out. "The powder!" someone cries out, horrified, and now we catch sight of a powder barrel, where some spilled gunpowder is swiftly igniting

in the direction of the bunghole.

Panic-stricken, everyone flees to the edge of the raft, two men fall down and jump overboard. Aguirre advances coolly, and almost provocatively, he slowly lifts the barrel up and throws it into the water. There it glimmers on, drifting forward somewhat faster than the raft. Everyone on the raft has thrown himself to the floor, with Aguirre alone standing, serenely assessing the scene. Chimalpahin is sitting, unconcerned. A dull heavy detonation follows with a pillar of water shooting up in the air and splattering over the raft. Then, massive waves, the vessel rocks and sways, and a deep silence settles over the water and over the jungle. All voices have hushed. The two Spaniards who had fallen overboard and were clutching the edge of the raft are pulled up onto the dryness by helping hands. The horse seems restful now, but the excitement of the men lasts a long time. Slowly, order returns. A long, long view over the passing jungle. The forest is steaming dreamily, not one leaf rustles. Butterflies are dancing in the open air. Damp impenetrable labyrinths of leaves, exposed roots and trees, strangled to death by lianas. A cloud of whirring hummingbirds rises high, hovering motionless above the tree-tops. A hundred thousand strange sounds. The water flows lazily, caked with clay. Only very far away, in the background, mountain slopes overgrown with jungle are visible. Clouds are piling up everywhere, as they do before a thunderstorm.

Lunch on board

Food is distributed on board, but we realize at first glance that the food is being severely rationed. Not one of the men murmurs, we even notice one storing away a small supply of fruit for worse occasions. The Spaniards draw water from the brown river and drink it in a manner that suggests they quit caring quite some time ago. The horse is feeding on a heap of twigs and leaves amassed in front of it. Its forelegs are fettered. Aguirre, eating deliberately, sits among the men. Before starting on his own ration, Juan de Arnalte has politely served the ladies who apparently have been given a little more. The women have made themselves comfortable in their sedans.

While they are eating, the eyes of the men keep wandering secretly to the middle of the raft where, under the cover of a little bark roof, Guzman feasts as always. A table made from a little box and covered with a clean cloth is placed before him, and Guzman is the only one to receive proper cutlery. He has appointed a man cupbearer, who stands behind him and is not yet allowed to eat. Such a large quantity of food has been piled up in front of Guzman that one knows he cannot eat it all by himself. The men on board are silent, full of animosity, the happily feasting Guzman is unaware of this. With a graceful gesture he lifts the mug, and the man behind him pours brownish river water into it. Guzman obviously relishes his new role.

Flores has left her sedan and carries part of her food to Baltasar, who has been given hardly anything, and who has only begun to eat slowly with his fettered hands after a long interval of introspection. Flores climbs over some luggage until she reaches him. She sets a bowl before him. Baltasar slowly glances up, awakening from his trance. Flores climbs back to her sedan without anyone taking offense. A strange silence reigns over the raft when, suddenly, the jungle petrifies. All sounds have died as if by some blow, with deathly threatening stillness spreading.

A few men grow wary and listen, Aguirre glances about as only Guzman continues feasting joyfully. A man drawing a bowlful of water bends backwards. The man beside him slumps back with a weird expression, his morsel of food getting caught in his throat while he sinks into the river, legs upturned. At the same time the water commences to boil and seethe, as if the man were made of red-hot iron. There is a furious battle in the water, and now we recognize the piranhas, an enormous swarm of ravenous rapacious fish.

The man with the bowl tries to grab hold of the sinking man but misses him, and the piranhas snatch him with teeth like razor blades. The oarsman to the rear succeeds in pulling up with a pole the man's armor which had been drifting in the seething water. A hand sticks out of the water and two Spaniards grope for it hastily, momentarily withdrawing a boney arm that was eaten until nothing but skeleton remained. Only the hand is still where the hand should be. They are paralyzed with horror on board. The hand

wears a ring and bears a scar on the outside. The boiling spot in the water is left behind, the raft drifts on.

A view of the jungle, nothing perceptible, nothing stirs, still no sound.

On board the men have jumped up amid a confusion of highly excited voices. Inez and Flores turn aside, shuddering. One man alone sits motionless by his bowl, a pensive expression on his face, his fork sticking on his food. He is leaning against a cluster of luggage. Perucho's parrot has heeded the excitement. He screams "El Dorado." In his agitation, Fuenterrabia nudges the sitting man with his foot, and his fork falls to the floor with a clatter. Fuenterrabia is startled and turns around. "What?" says Fuenterrabia, attracting the attention of the other men. "He's done in," one of them says. The Spaniards push the sitting man a little, ever so gently, but the man is dead indeed and bends forward incredibly slowly. Now we notice a dart sticking in the nape of his neck, it is barely as big as a knitting needle and feathered behind with a ball of twisted cotton. Carvajal, the Dominican monk, is the first to regain his composure and extracts the dart from the neck of the dead man, carefully laying the corpse on the floor of the raft.

The dart, in closeup. It wanders from hand to hand, inspiring awe. The tip has been sharpened like a needle and thickened with a piece of bast cord. A sticky milky liquid coats it. "Poison," says Fuenterrabia, and "Poison," says Bermudez. "To arms!" shouts Aguirre. "Fire your muskets!"

Confusion arises once again as the Spaniards fire about wildly with their muskets, throwing themselves down behind their shields for protection. Here, all at once, the jungle seems to regain its voice, birdcalls are heard starting up again. "Come on, come on," Perucho's parrot croaks. The rolling gunshots are dying, and clouds of bluish smoke drift over the raft.

How could this have been possible, Aguirre asks his men, who have calmed down a bit. Yes, how could this have been possible, Guzman repeats, his napkin still stuck in his collar. Judging from the size of the arrow, reflects Perucho, it must have been a midget bow about nine inches long. He could not understand, however, how one could shoot so far with a bow as small as that, extending his hand to show. They had been at least a quarter of a league away from the river-side. But Fuenterrabia objects, saying that the arrow had no notch in back for a string, and besides, it was much too thin. Everyone tries to solve the riddle, Chimalpahin is unable to provide any information either. They are still oppressed by the alluring calmness of the jungle, and try to deaden their fright by way of their intense involvement with the blow-dart.

Dusk over the river

The raft drifts downriver. With a slow beating of oars on both sides, the men are keeping the raft in the middle of the river. We see the raft from a distance of about three hundred feet. Incense is rising, and all of the Spaniards have gathered on one end of the raft, kneeling. Carvajal prays as we hear their singing drift over the river. Two men now lift the corpse, which is sewn inside a linen shroud, and let it slide slowly overboard. The monk makes the gesture of a blessing. The raft drifts onward, calmly, and disappears. On both sides of the river, the jungle is already very dark.

Day on the river, sultry day

Aguirre stands at the front of the raft, gazing ahead expectantly towards a great bend in the river. It is an oppressively hot day and Aguirre's clothes are sticky with sweat. The men around him look noticeably more depraved, the clothes of one of them starting to rot. The men take hardly any measures to protect themselves from the mosquitoes which besiege them relentlessly. All have obviously lost weight. We catch sight of a Spaniard, nibbling meticulously at the stalk of a manioc root without caring about the dirt.

At the rear end of the raft, the men have constructed a little outhouse on a boom above the river which consists of four poles with canvas stretched between them. There, Guzman loiters about, apparently suffering severely from diarrhea. He keeps the place occupied most of the time, still trying, however, to look awe-inspiring. In their sedans standing side by side, the two women are suffering gravely from the damp heat. Flores fans herself feebly with a delicate laced fan, unable to cool herself. Beside her Inez sits peacefully in a beautiful velvet dress, praying with her rosary. She does not seem to notice anything around her any more.

Little is said on board, all of them are craning their necks in order to detect something beyond the next bend in the river. Slowly we see that around the bend, the river alone is stretching out further, and to the left and to the right, there is nothing but dense jungle. Bermudez, standing near Aguirre, appropriates the document with which they solemnly take possession of the land to the left and right. Guzman is summoned to sign the document, and then Aguirre also puts his name underneath it with a flourish. He writes Lope de Aguirre; he intends to add something else which, however, he ultimately omits. At certain spots the river is now about four miles wide, then it narrows a bit again before flowing onward ever so lazily. Islands appear more frequently, some are so long that one cannot guess how far drawn out they are. For this reason the river often forks out in several branches. Sandbanks rise up clearly out of the brownish water, as clouds like cotton balls drift overhead.

Inez and Flores are seated next to Baltasar, who is speaking calmly, now and then pushing his hair from his face with both hands which are still bound together with handcuffs. Baltasar talks about the downfall of his people and of his childhood, speaking very softly. They had experienced bolts of lightning and plagues and earthquakes, but what has happened to them now is much greater. His name was Chimalpahin, and his surname was Quauhtlehuanitzin, meaning "the one who speaks". Only his closest relatives, plus the Inca and his family, had the right to look at him, all others were forced to look at the floor before him. "That is the way Nobility declines," says Bermudez biting, having listened to them from nearby. Baltasar slowly glances up, keeping silent. "So speak, go on," growls Fuenterrabia, "and don't shit in your pants."

Perucho wants to know how big the golden daggers of El Dorado are, whether they are bigger than the ones from Peru: this big, or this—he spreads his hands and indicates two imaginary sizes, and since he knows that Baltasar cannot spread his hands, he starts howling with laughter at his own joke. More men laugh as Baltasar maintains silence, quite abstracted. "Quiet," says Aguirre, "we still need him." Flores sits weeping to herself. Fuenterrabia tells her that she shouldn't blubber, it was only an Indian, after all.

We take a close look at two Spaniards. They are both sitting right at the edge of the raft, and neither seems to want to fully expose himself to the Indians' poisonous darts out here on the

brink. Therefore both struggle slowly, silently, to take the better place away from the other, since it apparently promises superior shelter. They observe each other malevolently, and every time one of them gets a little inattentive, the other nudges him over a bit. Such jostling seems to have ensued for days, for the hostility of the two is gnawing.

Late afternoon

Part of the crew is sitting drowsily on board, the others are stretching their necks, straining to see what is coming around the next bend. Heavy lukewarm rain is falling steadily. The men are talking about El Dorado and how it could best be conquered. If the capital had walls that would be bad, of course, for they had no heavy equipment and a siege would require many more men. "El Dorado, El Dorado," Perucho repeats to his parrot continually, but it croaks and says: "Come on." Perucho has now provided a perch for his bird, upon which it plays about. Yes, says Perucho proudly, a parrot lives to be ninety at least. His was surely eighty already, and it only had a bald ass.

We can clearly determine that rust has formed on the men's armor and that, due to the humidity, the clothes of many have started to rot. Most of them have sore spots around their necks from the

rubbing of the armor and the continuous flow of salty sweat. A few seem to be suffering from fever, and they always feel cold in spite of all the heat. Guzman has apparently gotten the fever on top of his diarrhea, for he is always wrapped in a blanket.

Aguirre is sitting with Bermudez working on a map, and he adds some legal notes along the bottom. Bermudez wants to submit it to Guzman for his signature, but Aguirre merely says, "The Emperor has diarrhea." The two men eye one another knowingly. There were but a few bags of corn left and very little food besides, Bermudez allows. They must reach the country of El Dorado soon, or else someone would have to think of something else. Aguirre had noticed that Guzman had secretly held him, Aguirre, responsible for the difficulties with the provisions. The salt was used up completely, and some men had already complained of muscle ache because of this. Aguirre stands there, musing. The rain has abated and is only drizzling slightly.

Perucho sits with his parrot in a circle of Spaniards building castles in the air, how well one would live, and how many servants one would have. They would henceforth build all their cannons of gold, and fire golden balls. The men start naming the provinces and distributing them, and they discuss the offices that they would then hold. Perucho already imagines himself governor. He speaks of conquest and siege, and his motto is: "Billowing sails, holy oaths and ready arms." The men are gradually talking themselves into a state of agitation. Fuenterrabia, busy with his

hens, interrupts them, calling over to say that they would finally show the Indians what a rake is.

Carvajal interjects and scolds the men for forgetting that there were other things to be done. Actually they were the heralds who were conveying the light of Salvation to these savages. "Rubbish," says Fuenterrabia, who has just appointed a hen governor of a cornfield, "there will be hundreds of thousands after us." Perucho thinks that this is grossly exaggerated. There were but three or four thousand in Peru after so many years, precisely the right number to live a comfortable life. Only in this way would one enjoy it.

"I have a feeling that they're watching us," a man in the circle suddenly says. Everyone listens momentarily, the jungle is full of sounds, a fact that reassures the men a little. The steaming trees stand gloomily, nothing stirs at the jungle's edge. There, there he had seen something; he thought he had seen a man. Where, ask the others—they have seen nothing.

The two soldiers fighting for the best-protected place are attacking one another more vigorously now, shoving each other back and forth. "Here, from this crack on, you are forbidden to trespass." "Quiet," says Aguirre, and from then on the battle proceeds in silence. Aguirre commands them to be in constant readiness and to leave the arquebuses loaded. But the Spaniards still consider themselves comparatively secure because, as Perucho says, the jungle is singing. Danger would only arise from the silence.

Fuenterrabia is seriously engaged with giving out names and positions to the hens in the cages. His loaded arquebus is leaning beside him. Each of the hens was supposed to receive a whole cornfield, and once they had chickens, each chicken would get an Indian for a servant. Almost whimpering, he declares one of the hens his favorite and announces that he shall crown it. For this he takes a piece of silver wire, which he unravels from his powder horn, and working with painstaking precision, he starts to make a little crown with it. Fuenterrabia is exceedingly proud of his skillful work and responds morosely as the others jeer that the queen would be the first to be plucked and cooked. He tries the little crown out on the hen, but it is still too big and the hen just struggles, flutters and squawks. Suddenly there is dead silence all around. "I don't hear anything more," Perucho says. The river is divided by an island into two large arms of equal size, and now the Spaniards are in one arm trying to get to the middle of the river, as far removed from the riverbanks as possible. The jungle lies in horrible silence, maliciously still, the woodland waiting. Guzman gives the order to open fire, and the Spaniards shoot wildly into the foliage. Entire branches are torn off by the balls and tumble down. A man possessing only a sword has crept in terror beneath a blanket to protect himself. The whole raft is enveloped in gunpowder smoke. Shot after shot roars into the forest. But there is still no sound from within. The horse has been roused by the shots and starts galloping about the raft, frightened and panicky,

its forelegs fettered. It jumps over a row of gunners and slams into Flores' sedan, where Juan de Arnalte courageously throws himself in front of the horse, forcing it to retreat. Everything on board is in turmoil. A musket goes off, ripping to shreds half of the roof of bast in the middle of the raft. Luggage is lost and now drifts on the river. A sedan has tumbled over, and Arnalte holds Flores protectively in his arms; she is very frightened. Slowly calming down, the horse is pulled at by several men who are holding it to the deck. It stomps wildly about and kicks a man who goes flying several yards. The man rises but immediately sinks down again. Two men try to help him up, but they soon notice he is dead. "That's enough," Guzman says. The horse must leave the raft. Aguirre has examined the dead man and explains that he has died not from the horse's kick, but from a tiny dart that must have hit him an instant later. It was still sticking in the back of his hand. All at once the birds in the jungle start singing again, the sound passing through the woodland like a shock. One of the men on board remains sitting beneath his blanket, teased now by his comrades for his cowardice, and only after a great deal of persuasion does he appear, hesitantly. He sees Aguirre, Carvajal, and some of the others taking care of the dead man, and requests momentary silence to make sure that the sounds of the jungle had revived once again.

Dusk over the river

The raft has been tied to the shore, but the jungle is so dense and the overhanging branches jut out so far that first they had to hack a little swathe amid the dripping leaves and twigs with their knives. Over the smooth river the sun is slowly sinking low. The waters are flowing sluggishly, without a sound. Millions of mosquitoes are dancing in the night.

Hacking with their knives and swords the Spaniards carve a small clearing of just a few square yards in the jungle. Creepers and foliage are impenetrably interwoven everywhere; the undergrowth is utterly impenetrable. Aguirre declares his belief that what they are doing is a mistake. It was irresponsible to abandon the only horse they had merely because it easily shied and meant danger for them. Your Honor should simply keep in mind what a significant part horses have played in the conquest of Mexico and Peru, for the Indians had never seen such creatures before and, therefore, entire armies had fled in precipitous panic just because of some horses. But Guzman pretends not to listen to him. He apparently wants to accept this challenge of power and is willing to show that he can hold his own against Aguirre. Aguirre talks to him directly, but more so to all the men, and explains that even if the horse were to be of no use in the near future, that is to say, if the country of El Dorado was still farther away than they had thought, it certainly would provide a very important service

to the crew as a lifesaving article of food, since by that time all the provisions would have been used up. "Now that is enough, the horse must go," says Guzman, attempting to imitate Aguirre's own assured tone of voice. Aguirre hesitates for a few seconds as Perucho moves towards his musket, seemingly devoid of any ulterior motive. "Your Honor, the sun is going down," says Aguirre.

Seen from the raft. Without talking, and somehow touched, the men are standing on board gazing upon Clodoaldo, the stallion, who has been taken ashore. He has just enough space there to turn around once comfortably; everywhere around him he is enclosed by the jungle labyrinth. Evening's glow is spreading over the clouds in the sky. Like veils, the dancing gnats are waving. The horse paws the ground on its spot, flaring its nostrils as if it sensed something. From out of the jungle, plaintive cries of monkeys emerge. At the last moment before departure, Flores plucks a few leaves from a limb and places them in front of the horse. The tether is cut and the raft slowly frees itself from the land. It is a silent very sad scene. Slowly, in the red afterglow, the raft moves away from the horse. The horse is restless and whinnies. It is getting smaller and smaller and still one hears it whinnying. Very far away, we can still distinguish it as a small dark spot amid the green foliage, until distance and darkness swallow it up. "Come on, come on," Perucho's parrot continues crying in the darkness.

On the river, forenoon

The same river, the same islands, the same jungle, the same heat, the same moldering, the same clouds, as if a thunderstorm was approaching. Again we see the raft, drifting. The river seems to have become even broader. All is calm on board, with added space as well, we can clearly see some gaps. Slowly the oarsmen steer the craft in the middle of the current round a long extended sandbar.

There, suddenly, behind a river bend, smoke appears over the jungle, we can clearly distinguish it. At once the jungle is utterly still and threatening. Everything on board is instantly plunged into wild commotion. The Spaniards pile their luggage up as protective walls, and the curtains in the sedans are carefully closed. The man without a musket creeps beneath his blanket once again.

The Spaniards start firing some shots into the stillness, and a few of them make a real racket with their shields. The fright confronting the stillness is great. Aguirre gives orders not to fire too much, as they also must think about the gunpowder. There, all of a sudden, shrill cries from the jungle, the voices of men. "Seems like hundreds of them," reckons Bermudez. "Now they're in for it, we're going to give it to them," says Perucho.

View of the jungle. There, among the branches, some Indians are already revealing themselves. Wild and half-naked, they apparently wish to be

seen since they violently gesticulating for a moment, before vanishing again into the foliage. It seems as if they wanted to lure the Spaniards ashore.

On board, Aguirre asks for a green twig and waves it over his head. "Senneneh," scream the Spaniards, "Peace." "Jurua, jurau," the Indians call back, shrill and ecstatic from the jungle. "Meat, meat, there is meat swimming towards us," translates Baltasar. They are cannibalistic head-hunters, he says. Guzman gives the order to land, and the Spaniards fire feverishly to give themselves a clear spot for anchoring. When the raft is close to the land, the cries of the Indians stop as they withdraw noticeably into the shelter of the forest. Again, the jungle lies in utter stillness, full of danger and mystery.

After some waiting, when no attack is made from the dead silence of the forest, the Spaniards, who are ready for any sort of battle, get restless. At last, still with no leaf moving, Guzman orders five heavily-armored men to cautiously penetrate a little way into the woodland, in order to stake out the enemy. The men go ashore, and from a sandy place, they cautiously set out. Hacking away with knives, they must actually cut a swathe into the wildly-intertwined undergrowth to make any progress at all. Slowly the jungle swallows up the five.

View of the motionless jungle. For a while we continue to hear a rustling and a crackling and the hacking sounds of the knives. Gradually it dies away completely. Everyone on board is in a state of great suspense. All of the arquebuses are

propped up on their forks, aimed towards the jungle. No more sound is coming, long waiting in absolute suspense. The river flows steadily on.

Suddenly a lone man, deeply disturbed, steps out from the swathe and stumbles directly over the sand into the water. Only then does he turn towards the raft which has been moored but a few yards upstream. The man carries no knife and has lost his weapons, holding nothing but his powder horn in his hands. The Spaniards on board begin to stir. "What is it?" asks Aguirre. But the man has lost his speech, horselike. He just makes a strange gesture towards the jungle and stumbles onto the raft.

Aguirre immediately sets out with twelve heavily-armed men. The traces of the troops who have cut a swathe in the jungle are distinctly visible. The cleared path makes a slight bend around a giant tree, then another one. Deep dusk and deathly-still silence. Aguirre hurries ahead of his men, sword in hand. The path suddenly stops, the jungle closed on all sides and overhead like the end of a tunnel, and there, everything is full of blood. All the leaves and twigs are red, and on the ground there is only a bloodied boot. There is nothing else, as if the men had dissolved into thin air. Profound threatening stillness oppresses the woodland.

On the raft

There is great excitement on board the raft. Aguirre has returned with his men, having brought back nothing but a boot filled with blood. Aguirre reports that he has searched everywhere, but it was simply inexplicable how the men could have disappeared without a sound, as if they had dissolved into nothing. The disturbed man from the vanguard slowly begins to talk again, and he haltingly reports that he had retreated briefly after noticing his powder had been lost. He did find it, hanging on a branch, and when he hurried after the others he could find nothing but blood. The blood still steamed with warmth, then without a doubt he dropped everything and fled. But they did not find any of his things, which is strange, adds Aguirre with a twist.

The Spaniards decide to infiltrate the jungle again with a stronger force, since disregarding the four men who could hardly be saved, provisions have become so scarce that they had to find some settlement or village. Once more Aguirre leads the trek, this time joined by Fuenterrabia and Juan de Arnalte. The troops penetrate the silent woodland.

A long look, roaming over the raft. There the men stand waiting with their arquebuses ready. Mosquitoes are making their wait torturous. The sedans stand motionlessly, with no movement behind their curtains. Carvajal, armed with a sword, takes shelter behind one of the bundles.

His tonsure is already woolly and overgrown. Muddy humus has gathered between two trunks on the edge of the raft. Upon looking closer, we notice that grass is beginning to grow there.

On the raft, nightfall

The crew of the raft continues to wait in constant readiness. Someone breaks the silence by saying he has heard something. The others listen, but they can't make anything out. Then there is a faint crackle and rustle from afar, indeed, coming closer rapidly. Then voices of Spaniards as well, and all of a sudden, Aguirre's troops are out in the open. They are carrying a man with them. When they draw nearer, it turns out to be Juan de Arnalte, who seems to be wounded in his chest.

"Nothing," says Fuenterrabia, "nothing to be found." He reports that suddenly, without the men noticing anything of the enemy whatsoever, Arnalte was wounded by an arrow. On board, Arnalte is carefully bedded on a mat. He asks for something to drink, and Flores quickly brings him a mug of water.

On the river, stormy day

The crew of the raft seems demoralized, and once more the gaps have widened. Guzman is laboring away in the outhouse with a tormented look on his face, no one saying a word. In the front of the raft, a few of the men are sleepily keeping vigil.

Inez and Flores are with the wounded Arnalte, who is lying there very weak. Inez carefully raises one of his arms and washes it with a clean cloth. Then she washes his face and Flores dries it. She does this with a great deal of loving care. Suddenly, shouting and commotion at the front of the raft; the men have caught sight of something. View from the front, along the river. Beyond a bend, on a sandbank, a raft is distinctly visible, and on it are Spaniards sitting in their armor. On board there is wild jubilation, for this is undoubtedly Orellana who was considered lost. They joyfully salute them with cannonballs fired skyward, but the Spaniards on board the other raft do not stir and very soon the jubilation ends. Upon coming closer we realize there are only dead people on board. Paralyzing fright creeps over the crew. The two rafts are attached to each other, and now we can clearly see that armored skeletons are sitting there without heads. Each of the helmets is stuck on a pole above the breastplates. And now we realize the horrible fact that each of the dead is holding his own head, shrunk to the size of an apple, in his skeletal outstretched hand. On the shriveled heads you can

clearly distinguish facial traits, only the hair is much too long. The thick lips of the faces are sewn shut.

On the river, rain

The raft drifts along, as in a dream. Heavy warm rain is falling steadily down and the river is steaming. Nothing but a deep monotonous rushing sound. The river water is whitish-brown.

On the river, evening

Darkness has fallen and from the jungle there is hardly a sound. In the still-pale sky, huge bats are flying in an incomprehensible zigzag. Terror has spread through the raft and everyone is listening. Two small fireplaces continue to glimmer. The Spaniards are nibbling roots and soft-boiled bark, and eight men are sharing a fish that is a good nine inches long. Inez hands a drink to Arnalte who is lying apathetically. He takes very careful minute sips. In the middle of the vessel, under the half-destroyed bast roof, Guzman sits dining. His former cupbearer was one of the men who disappeared in the jungle, and so he has appointed another Spaniard who apparently does

not suit him. Somewhat clumsily, the cupbearer serves him a large plate filled with cooked corn, and the men nearby are sniffing unobtrusively. Discreet glances are exchanged, and some can manage to suppress their rage only with difficulty. "Don't you have a plate for my piece of bark?" one of them says, but Guzman keeps eating good-humoredly, ignoring the inimical undertones. "El Dorado," shrieks Perucho's parrot.

Unnoticed by the oarsmen, the raft has come quite close to the edge of the jungle. All of a sudden, lianas are dangling on board. Simultaneously something shapeless and heavy splashes into the river with the sinister sound of a crocodile. Everyone on the raft is seized by fright, and all around is profound alluring blackness.

On the river, early morning

Some of the Spaniards are still sound asleep, Juan de Arnalte is lying in fever. On the sides of the raft, armed men are watching. "Hey, wake up," one of them says, slowly standing up in the middle of the raft, "I think our Emperor is dead." Slowly a few more arise in disbelief, and Aguirre joins them. "What?" he asks with astonishment.

We see Guzman closely now. He lies beneath a

blanket, and his eyes are widely dilated and his face is bloated. Around his neck his napkin has been tied and pulled tightly, blue streaks now observable there. "He is quite cold already," the Dominican says.

The men are all embarrassed, and each of them purposely avoids the question of who has done it. How should one bury him, that was the only question that mattered; whether by land or by water, and how should he be honored. He had been rather ill anyway, everyone could see that. The murder is accepted as a natural death, yet all are confused because no one knows who has done it. No one serves as informer, and the unconcerned try hard not to appear concerned, but this makes them even more conspicuous.

Sandy shore, jungle beyond

A nice tomb has been erected on shore, a well-polished wooden cross and an inscription. Smooth stones from the river are arranged around the mound. Some orchids bedeck it and a piece of candle is burning in a bowl. A few men in the background are digging in the sand for snails and crayfish, laboring weakly, and one has dug up turtle eggs from the sand which are attacked ravenously by the men. They eat them

raw, as they are. Perucho is trying to fish from the raft with a rod, and several Spaniards are busy plaiting oyster-baskets with thin flexible tendrils.

Jungle, rain forest, twilight

The crew is working its way through labyrinths of lianas, searching for herbs and roots. With the tips of their swords they carefully dig up maniok roots and yucca plants from the soft moist soil. Parrots are shrieking and a laughing mockingbird bleats. A Spaniard proudly carries a killed snake and shows it to the others.

On the river, noontide

Spaniards are cooking their leather belts in a kettle, adding green herbs. With a spoon, Carvajal dispenses the last of the flour, which he had actually meant to reserve for the hosts. "We should have salt," someone complains. The kettle, closer. During the stirring, the single boot of the lost man soon rises to the surface. It is already soaked through and soft. The mood seems to be far better than the day before, some courage has

seemingly returned to the men. Aguirre stands with Fuenterrabia and Bermudez at the front of the raft, gazing steadily outward. Can those be houses, those white things over there, asks Bermudez. Aguirre thinks he has been deceived, that it was merely the sand on a sandbank.

And up ahead, Bermudez timidly reflects, can that be a canoe with two people in it. Where, there's nothing to see, says Fuenterrabia. But there, indeed, on the very edge of the jungle is a boat. The camera studies the woodland fringe and, as a matter of fact, half hidden by tree limbs, a dugout canoe is afloat. Aguirre directs the two oarsmen to steer toward it quickly. Coming closer, we can recognize two Indians, a man and a woman, in a twenty-foot long dugout canoe. Having noticed the raft, they advance towards the Spaniards with oars dipping slowly, half surprised and half afraid, while the Spaniards are working wildly so the canoe can't get away. Now we see that both Indians are dressed only in a loincloth. The man is athletic and sinewy. The utmost excitement reigns on the raft. Once the canoe, timidly moved forward by the two Indians, is close enough, it is boarded by the Spaniards with a crude jolt. The two Indians are dragged aboard and Fuenterrabia tries to make a go at the woman at once. Aguirre stops him. Spaniards have jumped into the boat and triumphantly pull out several fish of three feet or more, which the Indians apparently have caught with bows and remarkably long arrows. Before the Spaniards direct any questions to the

Indian, who seems to be rather small and of middle age, he begins talking slowly and with dignity, while held fast by several men. Baltasar answers him in a peculiar Indian dialect, and for a while the Indians talk with each other as if they were alone on board. He should translate at least, curses Perucho.

Baltasar and the strange Indian near him. Baltasar says, the man already knew from his forefathers that one day Sons of the Sun would come floating down the river, and they surely had come from afar with enormous hardships. He wanted to offer them whatever food he had and would prepare them a hammock, so at last they would get some rest. Yes, for a long time they had waited for the Sons of the Sun, since here, on this river, God had not finished his creation.

Aguirre wants to know what he was wearing around his neck on the string, and when he does not get an answer forthwith, Fuenterrabia rips the amulet off the Indian's neck. "Gold," he says, breathlessly. "Gold, gold," say the Spaniards. Wondrous and bewildered, the Indian is confronted by the Spaniards' greed. Where the country of El Dorado is, that is what the Spaniards want to know. But the Indian cannot give them any information as to where he got the gold from. From further downriver, the man indicates. This is too vague for the Spaniards, but the Indian is in no position to estimate the distance in leagues. Two days, he thinks, but fails to answer whether this is on foot or by

boat. He says that he already knew about the raft, for the Indians further upriver had spread the news in advance that strangers were coming with thunder-cloud noise which they produced from tubes.

Carvajal, waiting impatiently all this time for his turn, asks the Indian if he had heard of our Savior Jesus Christ and of the True Word of God. The Indian is very confused and gives no answer. This, here, is a Bible with the Word of God, and they had come to carry God's Light into the darkness. While saying this he shows him a Bible. The Indian is dumbstruck and does not comprehend a thing. Yes, within this book is the Word of God, Carvajal insists. Deeply disturbed, the Indian picks up the Bible and puts his ear to it, listening. "It does not speak," he says and casts the Bible to the floor. Highly incensed, some Spaniards seize him at once and kill him on the spot. The Indian woman is injured defending herself and falls overboard. She drowns instantly. "Perhaps that was a mistake," says Aguirre.

On the river, rain

The current is pushing the raft on, giving it no other choice. Thundershowers pour down heavily and accelerate the decaying of the clothes. Already the Spaniards' harnesses have a thick layer

of rust. A bundle of canvas is almost covered with mold. The Indians' pirogue has been tied to the rear of the raft, floating along with it.

Again, distinctly visible through the rushing of the rain, the woodland slips into silence. The Spaniards start to stir, but they obviously lack their former energy; many of them seem rather weak. Aguirre gives the order to shoot at regular intervals. The one cowardly man once more draws a blanket over his head, and the wounded Arnalte is covered with canvas as well. It looks as if he is slowly going downhill, he hardly responds anymore.

The man beneath the blanket is teased by his comrades, but apparently this does not bother him. He maintains his cowering posture beneath the blanket.

Under Aguirre's supervision, Bermudez has poured the last of the corn from an almost-empty bag into a bowl, and under the hungry eyes of all, the corn is dispensed kernel by kernel, counted out carefully. Some stray gunshots still rumble across the water. The arquebuses also get their ration. It is quite a laconic scene. No one says a word, just one of them counting the kernels. A man stands entranced beneath the cover of a bale, mutely recounting his kernels. Bermudez calls out for Manrique, but the man underneath the blanket does not answer. An arquebus shooter nudges him with his foot, but still he does not stir. Then Perucho comes over to make sure. He lifts up the blanket a bit, and beneath it sits the man named Manrique with his head bent back, looking upwards with a glassy ecstatic

gaze. He is totally stiff and dead. Some of the men refuse to believe it, but they find a small dart with a tiny cotton puff sticking in his neck. He could have been hit only in instant when he threw the blanket over himself, says Perucho. He had the impression, that something had come flying in like a shadow, but he had not seen where it came from, nor did he have an impression from having seen it directly at all.

The terror on the raft increases, and the Spaniards make a lot of noise so that they won't have to listen to the stillness. They are shooting about wildly, even making a racket with the pots and pans. We look at the raft from a distance. The powder clouds mingle with the steam from the warm rain, and from the raft comes an infernal noise. The dusky jungle stands quite taciturn in the pouring rain. On the raft Perucho's parrot starts to scream.

Indian settlement by the river

Seen from the raft. All the men have crowded together at the front end of the raft, staring with fascination at an Indian settlement up ahead. The houses, about a hundred of them, stand close together on top of thin poles several yards above the ground, and for the first time we see a free spot on shore, and a clearing. The buildings are airy and their side walls consist of fluttering bast

mats, the roofs are covered with palm fronds. Several canoes have been drawn ashore and fish nets are lying about to dry. Over the village huge clouds of smoke are rising up into the sky, and at the edge of the clearing some storehouses are burning completely ablaze. No man anywhere in sight, no sound, only the ghostly crackling of the fire. Up on the patio of the nearest house, hammocks in the wind lashed to the posts of the house are rocking gently in the wind.

The Spaniards do not fire any shots, they merely let themselves drift ever so cautiously near the pillared settlement, allowing the raft to run aground on the sand quite delicately, without tying it up at all. Aguirre signals his men to wait. For a long time the Spaniards wait in front of the abandoned village. They are apparently afraid of a trap. Now we recognize the open square, which has been kept free by the houses in the center of the settlement. From there, a path leads upward into the jungleland. Some fish nearby are hanging on a line to dry.

After a long silent wait, Aguirre whispers an order to Fuenterrabia to guard the raft with five men. At the head of his gang of wild and starved men, he then storms straight into the settlement. While running, the Spaniards fire shots from their arquebuses, wave their swords and storm forward, shouting. They search the first houses in no time and then stand back from the burning storehouses.

A Spaniard cries out from a house that he has found a pot filled with food that was still quite warm. The others storm this house yelling. We

see a Spaniard try to catch a wild turkey in an enclosed square. At last, overwhelmed with greed, he flings himself on top of the bird. Two men rush towards the jungle path where the dried fish are hanging but, all of a sudden, the jungle is raining arrows. One of the pair is wounded instantly above the eye, and only with some difficulty can the others withdraw. "There they are, in the jungle," one of them screams, and Aguirre rushes ahead with about ten men. All fire madly into the woodland, but the Indians are invisible, only shooting whole clouds of arrows. The Spaniards slowly withdraw, the provisions being their lone concern.

Now we behold a Spaniard kneeling by a track in the sand in the open square greedily licking the ground. Others come along. "Salt!," they scream, filled with ecstasy. Tears stream down the face of a Spaniard who now licks the ground. Suddenly, a strange scene. Like a vision, Inez in her most beautiful long royal gown of purple velvet, steps upright across the square past the burning storehouses. Her face is waxen and her hair is flowing down to her shoulders. The men licking the ground glance up, rigid with surprise. Unable to trust their eyes, they do not move. Inez walks directly towards the jungle fringe like a queen, and a moment later she disappears into the dark glade. "Captain, sir!" someone calls now to Aguirre, but no one dares to go near the jungle. The path lies silent and dusky, swallowed up by the jungle after just a few feet. For a long time our gaze remains fixed to the path.

Indian settlement, towards evening

Almost all the Spaniards are gathered on the raft where they have accumulated their modest catch. They have placed a turkey in one of the empty chicken coops. Whispering, the men are talking about Inez. Bermudez tells Aguirre in a low voice that those five men left on board would not broach the matter but, rather, would keep their mouths shut. Inez had left the moment that Flores had gone with the monk to find fresh water for the sick Arnalte, but, in his opinion, she was raped by the men. Anything was possible with Fuenterrabia and his gang. We shall see whether she can be found again, says Aguirre, but avoids clearing up the matter fully. Flores is sitting with the wounded Arnalte, apparently deeply shocked. She hardly moves at all, and by her face she seems to be thirty.

Seven heavily armed men are coming from a gap in the jungle across the open square, towards the raft. Two of the men carry the line with the dried fish in between them. They were not able to detect anything, Perucho reports, as they had cautiously penetrated into the jungle for about half a league but had not uncovered any natives. Then the path had branched out into two smaller paths, and first they had followed the one, then the other. But they had returned without delay, having been afraid of traps. One of the men, he would not say who, had been seized with mortal terror because of the profound stillness in the forest. They had not found any trace of Inez de

Atienza, not even a footprint.

"Men," says Aguirre, "our number must not be reduced any further." The men around him are depressed because of the deserted place. Remnants of the storehouses are still glowing in the background.

The Spaniards have kindled some fires on the sand in front of the raft and are busy preparing a big meal. They all sit expectantly for the food to be distributed, and on the open square facing the jungle, twin sentries are keeping vigil. Judging from the way the Spaniards have arranged things, they must feel relatively secure.

A man is sitting in the sand somewhat removed from the others, talking softly and urgently to another man. The two, a little closer. The soldier sitting with his back to the crowd of Spaniards tries to persuade the other that it would be better to leave the squadron in order to return to Peru by land somehow with a fair amount of provisions. He had had enough by now, this undertaking would only mean the certain perdition of them all.

Sitting with his crew, Aguirre starts listening and subtly directs his attention towards the discontented man. The latter has talked himself into a passion and raises his voice carelessly. It would still be preferable to put him on trial in Peru for having disobeyed orders, but it should be possible to keep marching alongside the river, that is to say, during the night, since during the day they would have to hide.

Aguirre very cautiously nudges Fuenterrabia who starts listening as well. "The man is a head taller

than me," he says in a low voice, "but that may change." Fuenterrabia has understood. He casually rises, taking his sword with him as if only incidentally. Apparently having nothing in mind, he walks near the soldier sitting with his back to him and who is just explaining to his comrade, by means of a rough sketch, how many days, march they would need from here. "Five, six, seven," he counts. Fuenterrabia has stopped behind him and is raising his sword. The man to whom this plan is being explained doesn't dare say anything in his terror. He just sits there rolling his eyeballs around, twisting his face into a horrible grimace, trying to tell his partner to turn around. But the discontented man has talked himself into such a passion that he continues counting, oblivious to the rolling of the eyes. "Eight, nine," he says. At this moment, Fuenterrabia cuts off his head from behind with an awful blow. "Ten," the head still says, already in flight.

With the entire camp paralyzed by surprise, Aguirre rises. "I am the Great Betrayer," he says. "There must be no one greater." A long silence ensues, no one dares to move. "Men," says he, "I, Aguirre, am the Wrath of God." Then he commands Bermudez, the scrivener, to come forth. In front of everyone he now dictates a document. Whoever removes himself even mentally from this doomed troop shall be cut up into ninety pieces, which shall be trampled upon to such an extent that the walls might be painted with them. Whoever eats one kernel of corn more than his share shall be imprisoned for one

hundred and fifty-five years. He who would let himself drift downstream to act out the role of his own fate, however, shall be assured of riches unlike anyone has ever seen at any time before. If he, Aguirre, willed the birds to drop dead from the trees, the birds shall drop dead from the trees. Upon reaching El Dorado, he and his daughter shall establish a new Very Pure Dynasty. This was the Course of History, and already it had been chosen for this country, irrevocably. Aguirre asks for the finished document and signs it: Aguirre, the Wrath of God.

The men are duly impressed and shout with joy. Even Carvajal displays great enthusiasm. Fuenterrabia and Perucho fire their arquebuses into the sky and rejoice. The buildings are standing atop their stilts and some hammocks are gently rocking in the wind. The joyful shouts are echoed by the dead-silent woodland.

Flores is sitting on the raft next to Arnalte whose health has deteriorated visibly, and wondering, first she looks at Arnalte then at Chimalpahin, the Inca. The latter is staring serenely and restfully at some clouds puffing up on the twilit horizon.

On the river, lower course of the Amazon

The river has widened immensely now, sometimes measuring about six miles, then again it is divided into a great number of intertwined branches.

Islands overgrown with jungle appear more and more frequently. Entire formations of trees with their soil and roots pointing skyward are floating like islands towards the sea. There the raft is drifting.

At first glance we notice that the situation on the raft has degenerated considerably. The gaps are wide and there are only about twenty men left. Some of them are lying wracked with fever, and Juan de Arnalte can hardly breathe. The whole raft is rotting, and no one tries to save it anymore. The tuft of grass between the two logs has grown markedly. Ahead of the raft, the river splits into several branches, and the two oarsmen are unable to decide which to take. At last, taking Aguirre's advice, they decide to take the widest one, on the extreme left. The raft drifts slowly on and, beyond a bend, the branch of the river winds up in the jungle. Slowly the raft drifts towards the end of the blind alley. We realize now that this branch of the river continues on through the jungle, that all of the trees are standing in the water. Very depressed, the Spaniards on board let themselves float close to the trees without doing anything.

Aguirre assigns Perucho the task of taking the canoe, which is still bound to the raft, out amongst the trees to see how far they would have to go to come to the open river again. If necessary, they would cut down the trees en route to get through, for it was almost impossible to get the raft into another branch of the river against the current.

Perucho sets out with three men, we are with

him. Slowly the canoe penetrates into the dusk of the jungle. The oars dip quietly, and the long slender canoe proceeds slowly among the huge tree trunks. Lianas are dangling down touching the boat. Far away a jaguar roars. Leaves the size of a wagon wheel are floating on the water with turned-up edges, huge water lilies amongst them. Brooding dusk in the woodland. All around, the staring of flowers, the ardor of orchids. The men in the canoe are very quiet. Monkeys begin to chatter above them, single leaves are fluttering down and start to float. The men are crouching in terror and only row lightly. The water stretches out through the jungle endlessly.

Return journey on the blind river branch

We now spot the raft on the jungle fringe, and all of the men on board are trying desperately to pull the raft backwards against the current while holding on to the overhanging limbs. Grabbing the limbs with their hands, they lean back with all their might and thus move the vessel almost imperceptibly upstream. To the rear of the raft, four men are working with long poles with which they poke the ground. Aguirre is amongst them, working indefatigably, unflinchingly. He pays no attention to the mosquitoes which are torturing

him. He pokes his pole vertically into the ground and leans against it until it slowly becomes diagonal and sinks into the muddy water almost up to his hands. Then he pulls it out again.

Even Flores and Baltasar with his chained hands try to pull themselves forward with the branches, and the monk, who looks ever more savage, is working with them as well. His hair has grown bushy and has gotten all matted like boiled sheep's wool.

We now observe the raft somewhat further along, at a place where the jungle recedes several feet and leaves a small, sandy space on the bank. Except for the four men still punting to the rear, everyone else has gotten off to drag the raft along with ropes. They have placed the ropes over their shoulders and are leaning forward, almost horizontally, their feet planted into the sandy ground. With awesome effort they gain ground, step by step. All of them utterly exhausted, they just stagger along.

This unspeakable labor has prevented them from noticing that no sound has come from the jungle in quite some time. All at once there is a strange rustle, and the first man bolts upright with considerable strain, an incredibly long arrow in his chest. The man, closer. He drops the rope and calmly grabs the arrow with both hands, the tip of which is sticking out of his back. The arrow is sticking up about six feet in front, pointing diagonally into the air. The man calmly measures the arrow with his eyes. "The long arrows have come into fashion," he says. Then he collapses and dies.

In a panic, all of the Spaniards drop their ropes and jump on board. Instantly the raft begins to drift indolently once again. The men fire about wildly, completely mad. The arquebusmen are working like crazy, shooting volleys into the jungle which is moving past slowly like before. Amid the thunder of guns, the raft is drifting back the same way in bluish smoke. At last Aguirre succeeds in bringing the raft to a halt with a hook, attaching it to a strong branch.

Amazon delta, about one hundred miles upland

The river has branched out more and more, and we behold a vast region of parting and rejoining tributaries. In the midst of a damp stifling steam, the raft floats along between two islands. Rain falls at a distance, the walls of water streaming down from the sky as gray as glass.

Most of the men on board the raft are lying down, scarcely one of them having strength enough to look ahead, due to exhaustion, sickness and hunger. Resignation has spread on deck. Juan de Arnalte is dying, and Flores kneels with the monk alongside him to pray. Aguirre has gotten a rash on his neck, but he is the only one who seems unresigned. He walks up and down the raft, accomplishing most of the work himself.

A Spaniard suddenly arises. "Don't you hear

drumming?", he says. There is a slight commotion amongst the others. All of them strain to hear something, yet no one can hear a thing. "Yes," says another one, suddenly. "Don't you hear?" Ta-room toom-toom. He indicates the rhythm with his finger. "You are mad," says Fuenterrabia. "Come on," Perucho's parrot says.

On a sandbank, the jungle beyond

The raft has been tied, and Perucho fires a single shot into the stillness of the jungle before him. "We are being watched. When it gets quiet, someone will have to die." But, nevertheless, the few Spaniards who have survived are so starved and sick that they go ashore. Some of them lean on sticks out of sheer exhaustion and start searching the sand for something edible. A few of them penetrate into the jungle, and one is so exhausted that he creeps on all fours into the woodland.

To the rear of the raft, Carvajal and Chimalpahin sink a crudely made fish net into the water. They are both pensive and mum.

Flores is sitting near them, dreamlost, singing to herself in a very low voice. She sings a song:

Fish are filling up the nets,
Pike and perch.
Our Noble Host has wine and such
So good and more than much.

Fish are filling up the nets,
Bass and butt.
Our Noble Host has wine and such
So good and more than much.

Fish are filling up the nets,
Carp and trout.
Our Noble Host has casks of beer
So very good and stout.

How these things are bountiful fare,
How they are beyond compare!

How these things are made to please,
How they make for mutual ease!

How these things are here in masses,
Just for a while and then it passes!

Sandbank, towards evening

Some luggage from the raft has been brought ashore, and a small smoky fire has been lighted. The Spaniards slowly emerge from the jungle one by one, most of them carrying some yucca plants

or other herbs. One of them has even shot a big bird of paradise. Apathetically they crouch around the fire and, while eating part of the meal raw, begin to prepare the food. After a long silent spell, one of them asks of the stillness, "Where is Pedro?" "Yes," says another, "Empudia is missing."

Aguirre orders three men to look for Empudia, Fuenterrabia amongst them. At these trees, he points out, is where Empudia crept into the jungle quite some time ago. The three men penetrate into the forest, making their way forward, bending the branches apart. They come across an enormous moldering tree which lies there defeated by creepers. And there, on the ground, a horrifying image. The man named Empudia is on all fours on the ground, stiff and dead, his mouth still filled with palmshoots, upon which he had been grazing like an animal. Empudia has a tiny blowgun dart in his neck, and seems to be completely rigid. "Come, quickly!" shouts Fuenterrabia filled with horror, now firing his arquebus into the foliage. Twigs are crackling, there is a rustling sound, and the Spaniards burst through the branches. All of them become paralyzed with fright. "Baltasar," we suddenly hear Flores cry from the sandbank. The Spaniards come creeping out of the jungle and run to the sandbank. There lies the raft, and in the middle of the river Chimalpahin is slowly rowing away with the canoe. He does not turn around, since he knows he is already beyond the reach of their guns. He works the paddle with his two hands tied and, utterly calm, he disappears

behind a densely overgrown island. "Now he dies alone," says Aguirre. Far away, evening is drawing near, and walls of rain are towering over the river.

Then Perucho notices that a bundle of luggage is floating on the water, that the water level has risen. This is a flood, this was because of the rain, he says. Yes, the water had been up to here a couple of hours ago, now it has almost reached the fireplace. "Men," says Aguirre, "I feel the ocean."

Amazon delta, about sixty miles upland

The same picture as often seen before. Only twelve men are still alive on board. Two corpses are lying wrapped in blankets. Apparently one of the dead is Juan de Arnalte, but no one has any strength or energy left to bury the dead, or to throw them overboard. Almost everyone is sick and totally degenerate, a piteous sight. Carvajal talks to the men and tells them to show repentance, for their sins had led them deep-down to the sea. The tide was growing steadily stronger, and they would drift three leagues forward and then two back again. That was a clear sign from Heaven. "Quiet, monk!" Aguirre thunders at him. They had not found El Dorado, it was just a delusion perhaps, but now it was time to make new plans.

A sudden outcry from the front of the raft. "A brigantine, certainly, there is a Spanish ship." It passes through the raft like a shock. Now we are looking across the river at the jungle where, indeed, a brigantine is sitting in the tree tops, about one hundred yards upland. Upon coming closer we see that the sails are tattered and creepers are growing round the main mast; it is like a ghostly vision. The men on board think they are dreaming. That wasn't a Spanish boat, how could it be, it is utterly impossible, argues Perucho. The others are dumbstruck. Those with a fever sink into their dreams. Someone should investigate this, says Aguirre, while the raft is stationary. Judging by the marks on the trees, it did look as though the tide sometimes rose about twelve fathoms until it went over the tops of the trees, and if the water sank afterwards once more, it could happen that a ship would get caught. He will convince himself of this.

Aguirre sets out with Perucho and Carvajal, but Perucho follows behind hesitantly. The three of them work their way through the jungle and soon reach the brigantine, the keel does not even reach to the boggy floor of the jungle. The men try climbing a giant tree overgrown with creepers, but already Carvajal is too weak and lags behind. Perucho and Aguirre reach the deck of the boat which is densely grown over with creepers, soil and foliage. Perucho touches the wood he is standing on ever so timidly, and hardly dares to step on it. Moldy sails are flapping lazily in the wind and moldy ropes are dangling from the decks. It is a ghostly scene. This cannot be, this

is not a Spanish ship, says Perucho. Aguirre tries to find something on board, but the boat is completely empty.

Long view from the boat, circling the jungle. As far as the eye can see, clusters of tree after tree, tree tops like an unknown sea. Some solitary mud-flowing branches of the lazy river amongst them, an unimaginable sight.

On the raft

Aguirre has returned with his two men and, at first glance, the men rise up against him belligerently. This is enough by now, says Fuenterrabia, all of them have now had enough, they will not go on. Aguirre quickly takes off himself and makes his way towards the raft, utterly resolved, while Fuenterrabia tries to stop him. But he himself is not so sure of the men behind him, either. Aguirre warns his men not to let themselves be deceived by hallucinations, thereby getting so confused; he had convinced himself with his own eyes and hands that the boat really existed. Indeed, they had not reached El Dorado, and the sea was very close, but now the time had come to make even bolder plans. They would — and he was hereby calling on everyone to follow him — build a brigantine upon reaching the sea, and then they would sail northward, up to the Isle of Trinidad, to wrench

the Spanish colony there away from the local governor. From there — and never again would the world witness a greater treachery — they would take all of the land from the undeserving Pizarro and Cortez, for now they wanted to have power over the whole of New Spain and New Andalusia. A great New and Pure Dynasty would emerge mighty in the world. "The Wrath of God has spoken!" cries Aguirre, "Who is for me?"

Four men stand beside Aguirre only hesitantly, Perucho among them. Aguirre realizes that he will not have the majority on his side any more. "Flores, come here!", he cries, "Thou shalt not witness this disgrace." Flores advances towards her father and he stabs her on the spot. Sighing, Flores sinks to the ground. "Monk," says Aguirre, "do not forget to pray, lest God's end be uncomely." The two parties immediately begin to fight, a swift and savage melee during which the raft frees itself from the bank. Some of the feverish men can no longer partake in the fighting. The raft drifts away as we realize that several people on board have been wounded, and Aguirre's head is bleeding. Then the fight is suddenly over. We cannot tell why.

Amazon delta

For a long time we watch the raft drift distantly on the river, without any pilot whatsoever. It

first moves backwards for awhile, then it comes to a standstill and starts floating forward. It is very quiet, and the water is hardly flowing any more.

Mouth of the Amazon, open sea

We see a broad tributary flow into the open sea, and hundreds of small and smaller islands are lying before it. Heavy clouds, towering up into the sky. The raft is slowly drifting between two islands overgrown with jungle, and further away we see the waves of the sea. The raft is pilotless, and from a distance we recognize several corpses piled up on the tree trunks. The two sedans are silhouetted against the horizon, and only a small part of the bast roof is still intact. Across the vast surface of the water a cry is echoing. "El Dorado," Perucho's parrot screams.

Long, long view. Then, when the raft has reached the open sea, and drifts out amongst the long-drawn waves, the camera turns to the land with an ineffable view over the islands. Above the jungle, pillars of smoke are rising everywhere. Bonfires are lighted in the jungle. From the profound silence, drums begin to sound from afar, accompanied by intoxicated flutes. Rain clouds are towering high.

There it lies, the Sad Country.