



An English-chinese Collation

Decameron

十日谈

上

(意)薄伽丘

中国戏剧出版社

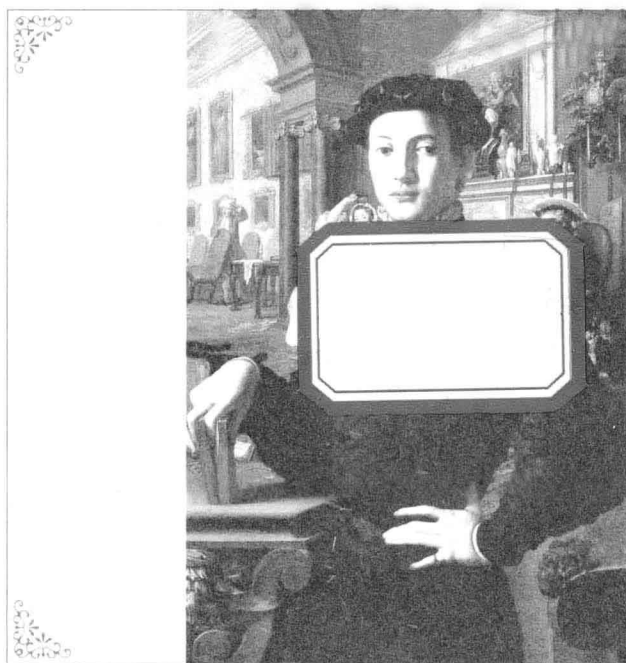
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5/7

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Introduction

WHENEVER, most gracious ladies, I consider how compassionate you are by nature, I realize that in your judgment the present work will seem to have had a serious and painful beginning, for it recalls in its opening the unhappy memory of the deadly plague just passed, dreadful and pitiful to all those who saw or heard about it. But I do not wish to frighten you away from reading any further, by giving you the impression that all you are going to do is spend your time sighing and weeping while you read. This horrible beginning will be like the ascent of a steep and rough mountainside, beyond which there lies a most beautiful and delightful plain, and the degree of pleasure derived by the climbers will be in proportion to the difficulty of the climb and the descent. And just as pain is the extreme limit of pleasure, so, then, misery ends with unanticipated happiness. This brief pain (I say brief since it contains few words) will be quickly followed by the sweetness and the delight which I promised you before, and which, had I not promised, might not be expected from such a beginning. To tell the truth, if I could have conveniently led you by any other way than this, which I know is a bitter one, I would have gladly done so; but since it is otherwise impossible to demonstrate how the stories you are about to read came to be told, I am obliged, as it were, by necessity to write about it this way.

Let me say, then, that thirteen hundred and forty - eight years had already passed after the fruitful Incarnation of the Son of God when into the distinguished city of Florence, more noble than any other Italian city there came a deadly pestilence. Either because of the influence of heavenly bodies or because of God's just wrath as a punishment to mortals for our wicked deeds, the pestilence, originating some years earlier in the East, killed an infinite number of people as it spread relentlessly from one place to another until finally it had stretched its miserable length all over the West. And against this pestilence no human wisdom or foresight was of any avail; quantities of filth were removed, from the city by officials charged with the task; the entry of any sick person into the city was prohibited; and many directives were issued concerning the maintenance of good health. Nor were the humble supplications rendered not once but many times by the pious to God, through public processions or by other means, in any way efficacious; for almost at the beginning of springtime of the year in question the plague began to show its sorrowful effects in an extraordinary manner. It did not assume the form it had in the East, where bleeding from the nose was a manifest sign of inevitable

引子

秀外慧中的女士们,我一向认为你们生性都悲天悯人。我知道,在你们看来这本书的开头未免沉重凄惨,教人提起前不久那场可怕的瘟疫,死亡狼藉、十室九空的情形伤心惨目,耳闻目睹的人至今心有余悸,记忆犹新。但是我不希望你们在翻开本书之前就给吓退,以为阅读时会唏嘘不已、潸然泪下。其实我这个悲惨的开头无非是旅行者面前的一座荒凉的大山,山那边就是鸟语花香的平原。翻山越岭固然劳累,一马平川却赏心悦目。欢乐过头会带来苦恼,而这本书开头的悲痛也会变成欣喜。经过短暂的愁苦(我说短暂是因为它只有几页),接踵而来的是甜美和欢快,这一点我事前作出许诺,以免你们因我不预先交代而不耐烦等待。说真的,如果我能够问心无愧地领你们沿着一条不太崎岖的道路抵达我想带你们去的地点,我很乐意那么做,但那条险路是你们将要读到的事件的铺垫,不追溯背景无法行文,我万不得已才写下我要写的东西。

话说基督降世之后过了硕果累累的一千三百四十八年,意大利最美丽的城市,出类拔萃的佛罗伦萨,竟发生了一场要命的瘟疫。不知是由于天体星辰的影响,还是因为我们多行不义,天主大发雷霆,降罚于世人,那场瘟疫几年前先在东方地区开始,夺去了无数生灵性命,然后毫不停留,以燎原之势向西方继续蔓延。人们采取了许多预防措施,诸如指派一批人清除城市的污秽垃圾,禁止病人进入市内,发布保持健康的忠告,善男信女不止一次地组织宗教游行或其他活动,虔诚地祈求天主,但一切努力都徒劳无功。总之,那年刚一交春,瘟疫严重的后果可怕而奇特地开始显露出来。佛罗伦萨的瘟疫和东方不同。在东方,病人鼻孔流血是必死无疑的症状。在这里,疫病初起时,无论男女腹股沟或腋下先有肿

death, but rather it showed its first signs in men and women alike by means of swellings either in the groin or under the armpits, some of which grew to the size of an ordinary apple and others to the size of an egg (more or less), and the people called them gavoccioli. And from the two parts of the body already mentioned, in very little time, the said deadly gavoccioli began to spread indiscriminately over every part of the body; then, after this, the symptoms of the illness changed to black or livid spots appearing on the arms and thighs, and on every part of the body - sometimes there were large ones and other times a number of little ones scattered all around. And just as the gavoccioli were originally, and still are, a very definite indication of impending death, in like manner these spots came to mean the same thing for whoever contracted them. Neither a doctor's advice nor the strength of medicine could do anything to cure this illness; on the contrary, either the nature of the illness was such that it afforded no cure, or else the doctors were so ignorant that they did not recognize its cause and, as a result, could not prescribe the proper remedy (in fact, the number of doctors, other than the well-trained, was increased by a large number of men and women who had never had any medical training); at any rate, few of the sick were ever cured, and almost all died after the third day of the appearance of the previously described symptoms (some sooner, others later), and most of them died without fever or any other side effects.

This pestilence was so powerful that it was transmitted to the healthy by contact with the sick, the way a fire close to dry or oily things will set them aflame. And the evil of the plague went even further: not only did talking to or being around the sick bring infection and a common death, but also touching the clothes of the sick or anything touched or used by them seemed to communicate this very disease to the person involved. What I am about to say is incredible to hear, and if I and others had not witnessed it with our own eyes, I should not dare believe it (let alone write about it), no matter how trustworthy a person I might have heard it from. Let me say, then, that the plague described, here was of such virulence in spreading from one person to another that not only did it pass from one man to the next, but, what's more, it was often transmitted from the garments of a sick or dead man to animals that not only became contaminated by the disease but also died within a brief period of time. My own eyes, as I said earlier, were witness to such a thing one day: when the rags of a poor man who died of this disease were thrown into the public street, two pigs came upon them, and, as they are wont to do, first with their snouts and then with their teeth they took the rags and shook them around; and within a short time, after a number of convulsions, both pigs fell dead upon the ill-fated rags, as if they had been poisoned. From these and many similar or worse occurrences there

痛,肿块大小像苹果或者鸡蛋,也有再小或再大一些的。一般人把这些肿块叫做脓肿。不久之后,致命的脓肿在全身各个部位都可能出现,接着症状转为手臂、大腿、或身体其他部位出现一片片黑色或紫色斑点,有的大而分散,有的小而密集。这些斑点和原发性的脓肿一样,是必死无疑的征兆。医生的嘱咐和药物的作用似乎都拿它没有办法,或许因为这种病是不治之症,或许由于病因不明,没有找到对症的药物(除了懂医道的人之外,原本毫无医药知识的男男女女也有许多偏方)。在这种情况下,侥幸痊愈的人为数极少,大多数病人没有发热或其他情况,在出现上述症状的第三天,或早或迟都会丧命。

那场瘟疫来势特别凶猛,健康人只要一接触病人就会传染上,仿佛干燥或涂过油的东西太靠近火焰就会起燃。更严重的是,且不说健康人同病人交谈或者接触会染上疫病、多半死亡,甚至只要碰到病人穿过的衣服或者用过的物品也会罹病。假如不是许多人和我本人亲眼目睹的话,我这番描述也许是难以置信的。假如许多殷实可靠的人没有耳闻目睹的话,连我也不敢相信,更不用说形诸文字了。我还要补充的是,那场疫病的传染力特别强,不但在人与人之间传播,即使人类之外的动物接触到病人或者病死的人的物品也会传染上,并且在很短的时间内死去。正如前文所说,有一天,我亲眼见到这么一件事:一个病死的穷人的破烂衣服给扔到马路上,有两头猪过来用鼻子拱拱,习惯地用牙齿啃起,过不多久,就像吃了毒药一样抽搐起来,双双倒在那堆破衣服上死了。这些事情,以及许多相似的、甚至更糟的事情,在仍

came about such fear and such fantastic notions among those who remained alive that almost all of them took a very creel attitude in the matter; that is, they completely avoided the sick and their possessions, and in so doing, each one believed that he was protecting his own good health.

There were some people who thought that living moderately and avoiding any excess might help a great deal in resisting this disease, and so they gathered in small groups and lived entirely apart from everyone else. They shut themselves up in those houses where there were no sick people and where one could live well by eating the most delicate of foods and drinking the finest of wines (doing so always in moderation), allowing no one to speak about or listen to anything said about the sick and the dead outside; these people lived, entertaining themselves with music and other pleasures that they could arrange. Others thought the opposite: they believed that drinking excessively, enjoying life, going about singing and celebrating, satisfying in every way the appetites as best one could, laughing, and making light of everything that happened was the best medicine for such a disease; so they practiced to the fullest what they believed by going from one tavern to another all day and night, drinking to excess; and they would often make merry in private homes, doing everything that pleased or amused them the most. This they were able to do easily, for everyone felt he was doomed to die and, as a result, abandoned his property, so that most of the houses had become common property, and any stranger who came upon them used them as if he were their rightful owner. In addition to this bestial behavior, they always managed to avoid the sick as best they could. And in this great affliction and misery of our city the revered authority of the laws, both divine and human, had fallen and almost completely disappeared, for, like other men, the ministers and executors of the laws were either dead or sick or so short of help that it was impossible for them to fulfill their duties; as a result, everybody was free to do as he pleased.

Many others adopted a middle course between the two attitudes just described; neither did they restrict their food or drink so much as the first group nor did they fall into such dissoluteness and drunkenness as the second; rather, they satisfied their appetites to a moderate degree. They did not shut themselves up, but went around carrying in their hands flowers, or sweet-smelling herbs, or various kinds of spices; and they would often put these things to their noses, believing that such smells were a wonderful means of purifying the brain, for all the air seemed infected with the stench of dead bodies, sickness, and medicines.

Others were of a crueler opinion (though it was, perhaps, a safer one); they maintained that there was no better medicine against the plague than to flee from it; convinced of this reasoning

然健康的人中间引起许多疑虑恐惧,到头来他们不得不采取一个相当残忍的措施:尽量远离病人和他们的物品,认为这一来就可以保住健康。

不少人认为生活有节制、避免一切过分的行为就能没灾没病。于是他们三五结伴,躲在自己家里和没有病人的地方,远离尘嚣。他们希望通过这种方式活得舒服些,有节制地享用美酒佳肴,凡事适可而止,不同任何人交谈,对外面的死亡或疫病的情况不闻不问,借音乐和其他力所能及的娱乐打发时光。另一些人想法不同,他们说只有开怀吃喝,自找快活,尽量满足自己的欲望,纵情玩笑,才是对付疫病的灵丹妙方。他们说到做到,尽力付诸实现,日以继夜地从一家酒店转到另一家,肆无忌惮地纵酒狂饮,兴之所至,甚至闯进别人家里为所欲为。这一点很容易就能做到,因为大家活一天算一天,仿佛明天不过日子了,自己的产业都置之不顾,许多私人宅第似乎成了公共场所,外人只要高兴,可以随便进入把它当成自己的家。他们横下一条心,飞扬跋扈,连病人见了他们也退避三舍。我们的城市陷入如此深重的苦难和困扰,以至令人敬畏的法律和天条的权威开始土崩瓦解。事实上,民政和神职执法人员和一般人一样,死的死,病的病,剩下的和家人一起闭户不出,根本不能行使职权,因此人们无法可依,爱怎么干就怎么干。

除上述两种极端之外,还有不少

人采取折衷的生活方式,既不像第一种人那样与世隔绝,也不像第二种人那样大吃大喝,胡作非为,而是根据自己的胃口吃饱喝足。他们不是自我幽禁,而是手拿香花芳草或一些香料外出。他们不时闻闻这些芳香的东西,认为香气能提神醒脑,又能解掉充斥空中的尸体、病人和药物的恶臭。

有些人冷酷无情(仿佛那样比较保险),说是避开疾病是治病的最佳良药。在这种意见的驱使下,他们只

and caring only about themselves, men and women in great numbers abandoned their city, their houses, their farms, their relatives, and their possessions and sought other places, going at least as far away as the Florentine countryside – as if the wrath of God could not pursue them with this pestilence wherever they went but would only strike those it found within the walls of the city! Or perhaps they thought *flint Florence*'s last hour had come and that no one in the city would remain alive.

And not all those who adopted these diverse opinions died, nor did they all escape with their lives; on the contrary, many of those who thought this way were falling sick everywhere, and since they had given, when they were healthy, the bad example of avoiding the sick, they in turn were abandoned and left to languish away without any care. The fact was that one citizen avoided another, that almost no one cared for his neighbor, and that relatives rarely or hardly ever visited each other – they stayed far apart. This disaster had struck such fear into the hearts of men and women that brother abandoned brother, uncle abandoned nephew, sister left brother, and very often wife abandoned husband, and – even worse, almost unbelievable – fathers and mothers neglected to tend and care for their children as if they were not their own.

Thus, for the countless multitude of men and women who fell sick, there remained no support except the charity of their friends (trud these were few) or the greed! of servants, who worked for inflated salaries without regard to the service they performed and who, in spite of this, were few and far between; and those few were men or women of little wit (most of them not trained for such service) who (lid little else but hand different things to the sick when requested to do so or watch over them while they died, and in this service, they very often lost their own lives mid their profits. And since the sick were abandoned by their neighbors, their parents, and their friends and there was a scarcity of servants, a practice that was previously almost unheard of spread through the city: when a woman fell sick, no matter how attractive or beautiful or noble she might be, she did not mind having a manservant (whoever he might be, no matter how young or old he was), and she had no shame whatsoever in revealing any part of her body to him – the way she would have done to a woman – when necessity of her sickness required her to do so. This practice was, perhaps, in the days that followed the pestilence, the cause of looser morals in the women who survived the plague. And so, many people died who, by chance, might have survived if they had been attended to. Between the lack of competent attendants that the sick were unable to obtain and the violence of the pestilence itself, so many, many people died in the city both day and night that it was incredible just to hear tiffs described, not to mention seeing it!

顾自己不考虑别人,许多男女抛下城市、家宅、亲戚和财产,住到乡间别人或自己的别墅,似乎认为天主为了惩罚作恶多端的人类而降下的瘟疫只能落到城墙之内的人们头上,不会蔓延到别的地方,还认为谁都不应该蹲在城里,否则在劫难逃。人们各持己见,莫衷一是,但不是所有的人统统死光,也不是个个都能保住性命。

事实是许多得病的人分散在各处,他们健康时善于养生的榜样,得病之后遭到舍弃,孤零零地奄奄待毙。且不说大家相互回避,街坊邻居互不照应,即使亲戚之间也不相往来,或者难得探望。瘟疫把大家吓坏了,以致兄弟、姐妹、叔侄、甚至夫妻互相都不照顾。最严重而难以置信的是父母尽量不照顾看望儿女,仿佛他们不是自己的亲生骨肉。

得病的男男女女数不胜数,他们别无他法,只得求助于为数极少的好心朋友,或者雇用贪心的仆人。由于伺候病人的工作条件恶劣,尽管工资极高,仍不容易找到佣人,即使找到,往往也是一些笨手笨脚、从未干过这一行的男女。这些佣人干不了什么事,只会根据病人的要求递些东西或者给病人送终。料理后事的差使常常得不偿失,挣了大钱而误了性命。病人既然得不到街坊亲友的照顾,佣人又那么难找,于是出现了一种前所未闻的做法,就是一个女人无论以前多么文雅、俊俏、高贵,病倒后会毫无顾忌地招聘一个男佣人,不管他年纪老少,并且只要病情需要,会毫不害羞地像在另一个女人面前那样露出自己身体的任何部位。痊愈的妇女日后往往不如以前那么贞洁,也许和这种情况有关。此外,许多病人如果得到照顾,也许能保住性命,但由于佣人奇缺,结果死了。加上疫病传染力特强,城里白天黑夜都有大批人死亡,这种情形听起来也骇人,更不用说亲眼看到了。因此,侥幸活下来的

Therefore, out of sheer necessity, there arose among those who remained alive customs which were contrary to the established practices of the time.

It was tile custom, as it is again today, for the women' relatives and neighbors to gather together in the house of a dead person and there to mourn with the women who had been dearest to him; on tile other hand, in front of the deceased' s home, his male relatives would gather together with his male neighbors and other citizens, and the clergy also came, many of them or sometimes just a few, depending upon the social class of the dead man. Then, upon the shoulders of his equals, he was carried to the church thorn by him before death with the funeral pomp of candles and chants. With the fury of the pestilence increasing, this custom, for the most part, died out and other practices took its place. And so not only did people die without having a number of women around them, but there were many who passed away without having even a single witness present, and very few were granted the piteous laments and bitter tears of their relatives; on the contrary, most relatives were somewhere else, laughing, joking, and amusing themselves; even the women learned this practice too well, having put aside, for the most part, their womanly compassion for their own safety. Very. few were the dead whose bodies were accompanied to the church by more than ten or twelve of their neighbors, and these dead bodies were not even carried on the shoulders of honored and reputable citizens but rather by gravediggers from the lower classes that were called becchini. Working for pay, they would pick up the bier and hurry it off, not to the church the dead man had chosen before his death but, in most cases, to the church closest by, accompanied by four or six churchmen with just a few candles, and often none at all. With the help of these becchini, the churchmen would place the body as fast as they could in whatever unoccupied grave they could find without going to the trouble of saying long or solemn burial services.

The plight of the lower class and, perhaps, a large part of the middle class was even more pathetic: most of them stayed in their homes or neighborhoods either because of their poverty or because of their hopes for remaining safe, and every day they fell sick by the thousands; and not having servants or attendants of any kind, they almost always died. Many ended their lives in the public streets, during the day or at night, while many others who died in their homes were discovered dead by their neighbors only by the smell of their decomposing bodies. The city was full of corpses. The dead were usually given the same treatment by their neighbors, who were moved more by the fear that the decomposing corpses would contaminate them than by any charity they might have felt toward the deceased: either by themselves or with the as-

市民中间不可避免地形成一些和以前完全相反的习俗。

按照以前的风俗(今天也是这样),哪家有了丧事,亲戚和邻居家的妇女同死者的女眷聚在一起,为死者恸哭,而男性邻居以及别的市民则在丧家门前同死者的男性亲属待在一起。随后来的是教士,他们的级别要看死者的身份而定。死者的灵柩由亲友们扛着,后面跟着手拿蜡烛吟唱着挽歌的送葬队伍,逶迤前往死者生前指定的教堂。当疫情日趋严重时,这些规矩即使不是全部、至少也是大部分给废除了,由新的规矩取而代之。病人临终时非但没有妇女围守床前,甚至没有任何人在场,能够赢得家属的真心悲痛和辛酸眼泪的人少之又少。相反的是,大多数活着的人尽情打闹嬉笑。本来女人生性富于同情,如今为了自身健康,竟出奇地学会了那种风气。护送尸体去教堂的邻人至多十来个。抬灵柩的不是有地位、有名望的市民,而是一些花钱雇来专司埋葬的、称为掘墓人的市井之徒。他们脚步匆匆,不把灵柩抬到死者生前指定的教堂,一般只送到路程最近的教堂就了事。他们背后跟着五六个教士,手拿蜡烛的很少,往往一支蜡烛都没有,也不费那份工夫一本正经地举行安葬仪式,只在最凑手的空墓穴里放下灵柩就完事大吉。

下层社会以及许多中层阶级的人受的罪更大。他们由于贫困,或者图个侥幸,大多守在家里,得病的每天成百上千,加上无人照看伺候,只有死路一条。白天黑夜都有大批人倒毙在路上,另一些人虽然死在家里,也只在尸体腐烂发出臭气时才被街坊发现。市民中间形成了一种大家共同遵守的风气:一发现哪家有死人,就和一些能找到的搬运夫从死者家里把尸体搬出来,放在门口。那并不是出于对死者的怜悯,而是考虑到尸体腐烂对他们自己有损害。第二

sistance of porters (when they were available), they would drag the corpse out of the home and place it in front of the doorstep, where, usually in the morning, quantities of dead bodies could be seen by any passerby; then they were laid out on biers, or for lack of biers, on a plank. Nor did a bier carry only one corpse; sometimes it was used for two or three at a time. More than once, a single bier would serve for a wife and husband, two or three brothers, a father or son, or other relatives, all at the same time. And very often it happened that two priests, each with a cross, would be on their way to bury someone, when porters carrying three or four biers would just follow along behind them; and whereas these priests thought they had just one dead man to bury, they had, in fact, six or eight and sometimes more. Moreover, the dead were honored with no tears or candles or funeral mourners; in fact, things had reached such a point that the people who died were cared for as we care for goats today. Thus it became quite obvious that the very thing which in normal times wise men had not been able to resign themselves to, even though then it struck seldom and less harshly, became as a result of this colossal misfortune a matter of indifference to even the most simpleminded people.

6

So many corpses would arrive in front of a church every day mid at every hour that the amount of holy ground for burials was certainly in sufficient for the ancient custom of giving each body its individual place; when all the graves were full, huge trenches were dug in all of the cemeteries of the churches and into them the new arrivals were dumped by the hundreds; and they were packed in there with dirt, one on top of another, like a ship's cargo, until the trench was filled.

But instead of going over every detail of the past miseries which befell our city, let me say that the hostile winds blowing there did not, however, spare the surrounding countryside any evil; there, not to speak of the towns which, on a smaller scale, were like the city, in the scattered villages and in the fields the poor, miserable peasants and their families, without any medical assistance or aid of servants, died on the roads and in their fields and in their homes, as many by day as by night, and they died not like men but more like animals. Because of this they, like the city dwellers, became careless in their ways and did not look after their possessions or their businesses; furthermore, when they saw that death was upon them, completely neglecting the future fruits of their past labors, their livestock, their property, they did their best to consume what they already had at hand. So it came about that oxen, don keys, sheep, pigs, chickens, and even dogs, man's most faithful companion, were driven from their homes into the fields, where the wheat was left not only unharvested but also unreaped, and they were allowed to roam where they wished; and

天早晨,街上行人会看到许许多多尸体。然后运来棺材,棺材不够,往往就把尸体搁在木板上。有时一口棺材塞进两三具尸体。一对夫妇、父子或者两三个弟兄的尸体盛在一口棺材里的情况屡见不鲜。更常见的是,两个教士举着一个十字架送葬时,半路上会有掘墓人抬着两三口棺材加入行列。教士们原以为是给一个死者送葬,事实上却是六七个、七八个。没有人为死者流泪,点蜡烛或者守灵,当时死人的事太平常了,正如今天死了一头山羊谁都不当一回事一样。事物兴衰消长是自然规律,但是以前很少遇到灾难,有识之士也不能做到乐天知命。如今大难当头,即使头脑最简单的人也知道必须逆来顺受,对这场空前浩劫满不在乎,若无其事。

每天,甚至每小时,都有大批尸体运来,教堂墓地的面积和按照老规矩进行安葬的人手都不够了,于是在拥挤不堪的墓地里挖出宽大的深坑,把后来的成百具尸体像海运货物那样叠床架屋地堆放起来,几乎堆齐地面,上面只薄薄盖一层浮土。

我们的城市当时的状况伤心惨目,一言难尽,我不忍继续细谈,但要补充的是,城里愁风惨雾,近郊和乡村并不因此而能逃过浩劫(且不说小城堡,那里的惨状和城里相差无几)。乡间分散的小村子里,穷苦的农民和他们的家属缺医少药,更没有佣人照顾,日日夜夜都有人像牲口那样死在家里、路上和田野。他们也像城市居民一样寻欢作乐,自暴自弃,荒废了农活和田地,每天都在等死似的不再理会牲畜、土地和自己辛勤劳动的成果,过一天算一天,只顾把现有的东西吃光用光。牛、驴、绵羊、山羊、猪、鸡,甚至对人一向极其忠诚的狗都被赶出家园,在庄稼没有收割的田地里到处乱跑。许多牲畜似乎有灵性,白天在田里觅食吃饱之后,一到晚上,

many of these animals, almost as if they were rational beings, returned at night to their homes without any guidance from a shepherd, full after a good day's meal.

Leaving the countryside and returning to the city, what more can one say except that so great was the cruelty of Heaven, and, perhaps, also that of man, that from March to July of the same year, between the fury of the pestiferous sickness and the fact that many of the sick were badly treated or abandoned in need because of the fear that the healthy had, more than one hundred thousand human beings are believed to have lost their lives for certain inside the walls of the city of Florence - whereas before the deadly plague, one would not even have estimated there were actually that many people dwelling in the city.

Oh, how many great palaces, beautiful homes, and noble dwellings, once filled with families, gentlemen, and ladies, were now emptied, down to the last servant! How many notable families, vast domains, and famous fortunes remained without legitimate heir! How many valiant men, beautiful women, and charming young boys, who might have been pronounced very healthy by Galen, Hippocrates, and Aesculapius (not to mention lesser physicians), ate breakfast in the morning with their relatives, companions, and friends and then in the evening dined with their ancestors in the other world!

Reflecting upon so many miseries makes me very sad; therefore, since I wish to pass over as many as I can, let me say that as our city was in this condition, almost emptied of inhabitants, it happened (as I heard it later from a person worthy of trust) that one Tuesday morning in the venerable church of Santa Maria Novella there was hardly anyone there to hear the holy services except seven young ladies, all dressed in garments of mourning as the times demanded, each of whom was a friend, a neighbor, or relative of the other, and none of whom had passed her twentieth year, nor was any of them younger than eighteen; all were intelligent and of noble birth and beautiful to look at, well-mannered and gracefully modest. I would tell you their real names, if I did not have a good reason for not doing so, which is this: I do not wish any of them to be embarrassed in the future because of what they said and what they listened to - all of which I shall later recount. Today the laws relating to pleasure are rather strict, more so than at that time, when they were very lax (for the reasons mentioned above), not only for ladies of their age but even for older women; nor would I wish to give an opportunity to the envious, who are always ready to attack every praiseworthy life, to diminish in any way with their indecent talk the dignity of these worthy ladies. But so that you may understand clearly what

虽然没有牧人带领,也会自动回到住处。

我们暂且抛开乡村再说城里,苍天无情,置人于不顾,人的狠心也无以复加。一则由于疫情凶猛,二则由于病人太多,健康人害怕传染,不愿照顾,听其自生自灭,从三月到七月,佛罗伦萨城里据信死了十万人以上。在发生那场要命的瘟疫之前,谁都没有想到这座城市竟有这么多居民。

唉,有多少巍峨的宫殿、豪华的邸宅、漂亮的房屋以前人丁兴旺,士绅和贵妇济济一堂,如今连佣人都死光死绝,一个不剩!有多少显赫的门第、著名的产业、庞大的财富留下来没有法定的继承人!多少勇敢的男子、如花似玉的美人、头角峥嵘的青年,就连加兰诺、希波克拉底和埃斯库拉庇乌斯也会认为是健壮的,早晨还同亲友伙伴一起用点心,晚上却和他们的祖先一起在另一个世界共进晚餐了!

喋喋不休地讲述灾难的惨状,我自己也觉得厌烦。因此,可以毫无顾虑地略去的部分我就按不下表,只谈一件事:正当我们城市的居民大批死亡,几乎十室九空的时候,我从一位可靠的人那里听说,某个星期二上午,庄严的圣马利亚新教堂里做完弥撒,几乎没有什么人了,但有七个年轻女郎聚在一起。她们都服丧,穿着黑色的衣裙,相互之间都很熟悉,不是沾亲带故,便是街坊邻居,年纪最大的不过二十八,最小的不到十八。她们都端庄文雅,出身名门,知书达理,容貌姣好,活泼开朗而不流于轻浮。出于充分的理由,我姑且隐去她们的真名实姓。理由是下文即将记载她们讲的和她们听到的事情,我不愿意以后哪一位女郎因之感到羞愧,因为今天的风俗习惯比当时严格一些,对寻欢作乐行为的约束要多一些。正由于已经谈到的原因,当时不仅像那种年纪的女郎,甚至年纪更大

each of them had to say, I intend to give them names which are either completely or in part appropriate to their personalities. We shall call the first and the oldest Pampinea and the second Fiammetta, the third Filomena, and the fourth Emilia, and we shall name the fifth Lauretta and the sixth Neifile, and the last, not without reason, we shall call Elissa. Not by any previous agreement, but purely by chance, they gathered together in one part of the church and were seated almost in a circle, saying their prayers; after many sighs, they began to discuss among themselves various matters concerning the nature of the times, and after a while, when the others were silent, Pampinea began to speak in this manner:

“My dear ladies, you have often heard, as I have, how proper use of reason can do harm to no one. It is only natural for everyone born on this earth to sustain, preserve, and defend his own life to the best of his ability; this is a fight so taken for granted that it has, at times, permitted men to kill each other without Blame in order to defend their own lives. And if the laws dealing with the welfare of every human being permit such a thing, how wrong or offensive could it be for us, or anyone else, to take all possible precautions to preserve our own lives? When I consider what we have been doing this morning and in the past days and what we have spoken about, I understand, and you must understand too, that each one of us is afraid for her life; nor does this surprise me in the least – rather I am greatly amazed that since each of us has the natural feelings of a woman, we do not find some remedy for ourselves to cure what each one of us dreads. We live in the city, in my opinion, for no other reason than to bear witness to the number of dead bodies that are carried to burial, or to hear whether or not the friars (whose number has been reduced to almost nothing) chant their offices at the prescribed hours, or to demonstrate to anyone who comes here the quality and the quantity of our miseries by the clothes we wear. And if we leave the church, either we see dead or sick bodies being carried all about, or we see those who were once condemned to exile for their crimes by the authority of the public laws making sport of these laws, running about wildly through the city, because they know that those who enforce these laws are either dead or dying; or we see the scum of our city, excited with the scent of our blood, who call themselves becchini and who ride all over the place on horseback,

一些的女子寻欢作乐的余地也多一些。此外,我不愿意给那些妒忌成性、对生活中一切美好现象都要评头论足的人以口实,免得他们红口白舌,褒贬如此贤惠的女郎们的品行。由于这个原因,并且为了不致把讲故事的女郎们弄混了,我准备根据她们每个人的特点起一个或多或少比较合适的名字。第一个年纪最大,我们不妨管她叫做潘皮内娅。第二个叫菲亚梅塔,第三个叫菲洛梅娜,第四个叫艾米莉娅,第五个叫劳蕾塔,第六个叫内菲莱,最后一个不无道理地叫艾莉莎。她们事先并没有约好,那天在教堂邂逅相遇,见面之后大家围成一圈,唏嘘不已,不再作祷告,而是开始谈论当前的情况和一些别的事。过了片刻,大家不说话了,这时潘皮内娅开口说道:

“亲爱的姐妹,你们和我一样,一定常听说这么一句话,那就是胸怀坦荡地动用主见的人是无可非议的。保存和维护自己的生命是每个人生而有之的本能。甚至有时候为了维护自己的生命而导致别人的死亡也不犯法。如果说人们的福利有赖于法律的实施,而维护自己的福利的做法又得到法律认可,那么我们以及任何别的女人为了维护自己的生存采取力所能及的不妨害别人的措施,又有什么不光彩的呢?考虑到今天早上和最近这些日子我们的行为以及我们的种种想法,我和你们一样,认为我们大家迟早要为自己的下场提心吊胆。我觉得这并不奇怪,奇怪的是(我们都具有女人的感情),既然我们都面临着千真万确的威胁,为什么不设法逃避?依我看,我们留在这里就像是喜欢或者理应观看有多少尸体运来埋葬,或者聆听教堂里所剩无几的修士在规定的时间内唱圣歌,或者穿着这身黑色的丧服向每一个来这里的人表明我们落到了多么悲惨的地步。我们一走出这道门,看到的不是病人便是搬运途中的死尸,再不就是犯有前科、遭到当局放逐的犯人,他们知道执行法律的官员如今不是

mocking everything, and with their disgusting songs adding insult to our injuries. Nor do we hear anything but 'So - and - so is dead, 'and' ,So - and - so is dying'; and if there were anyone left to mourn, we should hear nothing but piteous laments everywhere. I do not know if what happens to me also happens to you in your homes, but when I go home I find no one there except my maid, and I become so afraid that my hair stands on end, and wherever I go or sit in my house, I seem to see the shadows of those who have passed away, not with the faces that I remember, but with horrible expressions that terrify me. For these reasons, I am uncomfortable here in church, outside, and in my home, and the more so since it appears that no one like ourselves, who has the financial means and some other place to go, has remained here except us. And if there are any who remain, according to what I hear and see, they do whatever their hearts desire, making no distinction between what is proper and what is not, whether they are alone or with others, by day or by night; and not only laymen but also those who are cloistered in convents have broken their vows of obedience and have given themselves over to pleasures of the flesh, for they have made themselves believe that these things are permissible for them and are improper for others, and thinking that they will escape with their lives in this fashion, they have become wanton and dissolute.

"If this is the case, and plainly it is, what are we doing here? What are we waiting for? What are we dreaming about? Why are we slower to protect our health than all the rest of the citizens? Do we hold ourselves less dear than all the others do? Or do we believe that our own lives are tied to our bodies with stronger chains than others have and, therefore, that we need not worry about anything which might have the power to harm them? We are mistaken and deceived, and we are mad if we believe this. To have clear proof of this we need only call to mind how many young men and ladies have been struck down by this cruel pestilence. I do not know if you agree with me, but I believe that in order not to fall prey, out of reluctance or indifference, to what we could well avoid, it might be a good idea for all of us to leave this city, just as many others before us have done and are still doing. Let us avoid like death itself the ugly example of others, and go to live in a more dignified fashion in our country houses (of which we all have several), and there let us take what enjoyment, what happiness, and what pleasure we can, without in any way

死了便是病了,便肆无忌惮地在全国各地乱跑,这简直是对我们的莫大的嘲弄。我们看到的还是喝饱我们血的本城的渣滓,他们自称掘墓人,飞扬跋扈,到处横行,根本不把我们放在眼里,嘴里还哼着不三不四的小调,取笑我们的不幸。我们耳朵里听到的只是‘这个人死了,那个人快断气了’。如果说还有人为死者感到悲痛的话,我们听到的将只是一片哭声。我回到家里的时候(不知道你们的情况是否和我一样),发现原先人丁兴旺的家里只剩下一个使女。我吓得毛骨悚然,在家里走动时,似乎看到了死者的幽灵,不是平时见到的熟面孔,而是不知从哪里冒出来的、叫我心惊肉跳的别的可怖形象。因此,无论在这里,在外面,还是在家里,我总是不自在,目前更其如此。除了我们以外,凡是心脏仍然跳动、还能挪窝儿的人好像都不待在城里了。我经常注意到别的人不辨是非,不顾羞耻,无论独自一人也好,成群结队也好,日日夜夜吃喝玩乐,为所欲为。不仅是世俗的自由人,甚至隐居在修道院里的出家人也认为别人在干的事他们都可以干(清规戒律已经破除,他们沉溺于肉体的快感,认为这样便可以得救),变得淫乱堕落。

“如果情况如此(情况显然如此)我们还待在这里干什么?我们还等什么?我们还抱什么幻想?既然问题牵涉到我们的健康,我们为什么要比别的市民落后,迟迟不采取行动?难道我们以为自己低人一等?难道我们认为维系我们生命与肉体的链条比维系别人的更坚强,而不必提防损害我们生命的威胁?我们错了,我们是自欺欺人。如果我们有这种想法,那简直是糊涂透顶!只要一想起这场残酷的瘟疫夺去了多少年轻女人的生命,眼前的情况就一清二楚了。出于疏懒或犹豫,我们虽想躲避却没有想出躲避的办法。我认为(不知道你们是不是和我有同感)万全之计就是像许多在我们之前的人所做的那样离开这个地方,同时要

going beyond the bounds of reason. There we can hear the birds sing, and we can see the hills and the pastures turning green, the wheat fields moving like the sea, and a thousand kinds of trees; and we shall be able to see the heavens more clearly, the heavens which, though they still may be cruel, nonetheless will not deny to us their eternal beauties and which are much more pleasing to look at than the deserted walls of our city. Besides all this, in the country the air is much fresher, and the necessities for living in such times as these are plentiful, and there are just fewer troubles in general; though the peasants are dying there even as the townspeople here, the displeasure is the less in that there are fewer houses and inhabitants than in the city. Here, on the other hand, if I judge correctly, we would not be abandoning anyone; on the contrary, we can honestly say it is we ourselves that have been abandoned, for our loved ones are either dead or have fled and have left us on our own in the midst of such affliction as though we were no part of them. No reproach, therefore, can come to us if we follow this course of action, whereas sorrow, worry, and perhaps even death can come if we do not follow such a course. So, whenever you please, I think we would do well to take our servants, have everything we need sent after us, and go from one place one day to another the next, enjoying what happiness and merriment these times permit; let us live in this manner (unless we are overtaken first by death) until we see what end Heaven has in store for these horrible times. And remember that it is no less proper for us to leave blamelessly than it is for most other women to remain here dishonorably."

When they had listened to what Pampinea had said, the other ladies not only praised her advice but were so anxious to follow it that they had already begun discussing among themselves the details, as if they were going to leave that very instant. But Filomena, who was most discerning, said:

"Ladies, regardless of how convincing Pampinea's arguments are that is no reason to rush into things, as you seem to wish to do. Remember that we are all women, and any young girl can tell you that women do not know how to reason in a group when they are without the guidance of some man who knows how to control them. We are fickle, quarrelsome, suspicious, timid, and fearful, because of which I suspect that this company will soon break up without honor to any of us if we do not take a guide other than ourselves. We would do well to resolve this matter before we depart."

像避开死神那样避开别人放荡的榜样。我们大家在乡间都有几处别墅,不如搬到乡间去住,过清心寡欲的日子,在不超越理性的范围之内,随自己的兴致宴饮欢娱。在乡间,听到的是禽鸟啼鸣,看到的是青山绿野,田里的庄稼像海浪似的起伏,各种各样的树木千姿百态,寥廓的天空如今虽然带着哀愁,并没有失去它永恒的壮丽。乡间的一切赏心悦目,远不是我们这座萧索的空城可比。再说,乡间的空气也清新得多,在当前这种日子里,所需的东西比城里丰富,揪心的事情却比城里少。尽管乡民们也像城里人那样一个接一个地死去,但毕竟地广人稀,不像城里那样伤心惨目。从另一方面来看,如果我没错,我们并没有抛弃谁。相反,是我们被人抛弃。我们的亲人死的死,走的走,扔下我们受苦受难。如果照我的话去做,我们不会受到指责。不这么做,我们倒难免忧伤、苦恼、甚至死亡。因此,假如你们同意,我们不妨吩咐各自的使女带上必需的物品陪伴我们,今天住一处别墅,明天换一处,在这种日子许可的情况下尽情欢娱。我认为我们应该这么做,以便保存自己。只要死亡不找到我们头上,我们终归可以看到老天对这类事情作为安排。要记住,我们堂堂正正地离开城里,并不比许多留在城里却干伤风败俗的事的人更不光彩。"

大家听了潘皮内娅的一番话,非但称赞她的见解,表示愿意照办,甚至开始讨论实施的细节,仿佛一站起身就出发似的。但是菲洛梅娜十分谨慎,她说:

"姐妹们,潘皮内娅的话很有道理,不过我们不能随心所欲,说走就走。要记住,我们都是女人,年纪都不小了,不会不知道,如果没有男人参加,一群女人凑在一起是干不了大事的。我们生性变化无常,不安分,爱多心,又胆小,因此我很担心,如果光是我们几个而没有男人带头,我们很快就会散伙,并且闹得不痛快。因此我们在决定之前还得从长计议。"

Then Elissa said:

“We are truly the leaders of women, and without their guidance, our actions rarely end successfully. But how are we to find these men? We all know that the majority of our relatives are dead and those who remain alive are scattered here and there in various groups and have no idea of where we are (they, too, are fleeing precisely what we seek to avoid), and since taking up with strangers would be unbecoming to us, we must, if we wish to leave for the sake of our health, find a means of arranging it so that while going for our own pleasure and repose, no trouble or scandal follow us.

While the ladies were discussing this, three young men came into the church, none of whom was less than twenty-five years of age. Neither the perversity of the times nor the loss of friends or parents nor fear for their own lives had been able to cool, much less extinguish, the love they bore in their hearts. One of them was called Panfilo, another Filostrato, and the last Dioneo, each one very charming and well-bred; and in those turbulent times they sought their greatest consolation in the sight of the ladies they loved, all three of whom happened to be among the seven ladies previously mentioned, while the others were close relatives of one or the other of the three men. No sooner had they sighted the ladies than they were seen by them, whereupon Pampinea smiled and said:

“See how Fortune favors our plans and has provided us with these judicious and virtuous young men, who would gladly be our guides and servants if we do not hesitate to accept them for such service.”

Then Neifile blushed out of embarrassment, for she was one of those who was loved by one of the young men, and she said:

“Pampinea, for the love of God, be careful what you say! I realize very well that nothing but good can be said of any of them, and I believe that they are capable of doing much more than that task and, likewise, that their good and worthy company would be fitting not only for us but for ladies much more beautiful and attractive than we are, but it is quite obvious that some of them are in love with some of us who are here present, and I fear that if we take them with us, disgrace and disapproval will follow, through no fault of ours or of theirs.”

Then Filomena said:

艾莉莎这时说:

“一点不假,男人们确实是女人们的带头人,没有他们支配,我们做事很难圆满成功。但是我们怎么才能找到男人陪同?我们都清楚,我们的男性亲戚大多已经死去,活着的也像我们希望做的那样,各自结伴,分散在各地,下落不明。请陌生人同行又不妥当。如果我们以健康为重,就得想出妥善的办法。我们既是出于需要去寻求安宁,就不能让麻烦和流言蜚语接踵而来。”

女郎们正在议论之际,有三个年轻人走进教堂,说是年轻,也不太年轻,因为其中最小的一个也快二十五岁了。三个都是多情种子,流年不利,亲友亡故,为自身的安危担忧,都未能使他们的爱情熄灭,甚至有丝毫冷却。第一个名叫潘菲洛,第二个叫菲洛斯特拉托,最后一个叫狄奥内奥,三个人都风流蕴藉,文质彬彬。他们在寻找各自的心上人。在这人心惶惶的日子里,能见到心上人就是莫大的安慰。事有凑巧,七位女郎中间,三位恰好是她们的心上人,而另外几位同他们当中的这一个或那一个也有亲戚关系。他们刚走进教堂,几位女郎已经看到了,潘皮内娅莞尔一笑说:

“瞧,我们一开头就大吉大利,命运把几个谨慎、勇敢的年轻人带到了我们眼前,只要我们接纳,他们一定乐意充当我们的向导和侍从。”

内菲莱正是三个青年之一的情人,她羞红了脸说:

“天哪,潘皮内娅,瞧你说的!我很了解刚来的那三个人,他们都是没得说的好青年,我相信比这更重要的事他们都能对付。我还认为他们品行端正,别说陪伴我们,即使陪伴比我们更美貌、更高贵的女士也不会辱没她们。但是大家都知道,他们和我们中间的几个人相爱,我担心的是,如果由他们陪伴我们,尽管他们和我们都没有过错,诽谤和指摘仍然会落到我们头上。”

菲洛梅娜插嘴说:

“That does not matter at all; as long as I live with dignity and have no remorse of conscience about anything, let anyone who wishes say what he likes to the contrary: God and Truth will take up arms in my defense. Now, if they were only willing to come with us, as Pampinea says, we could truly say that Fortune was favorable to our departure.”

When the others heard her speak in such a manner, the argument was ended, and they all agreed that the young men should be called over, told ‘about their intentions, and asked if they would be so kind as to accompany the ladies on such a journey. Without further discussion, then, Pampinea, who was related to one of the men, rose to her feet and made her way to where they stood gazing at the ladies, and he greeted them with a cheerful expression, outlined their plan to them, and begged them, in everyone’s name to keep them company in the spirit of pure and brotherly affection.

At first the young men thought they were being mocked, but when they saw that the lady was speaking seriously, they gladly consented; and in order to start without delay and put the plan into action, before leaving the church they agreed upon what preparations had to be made for their departure. And when everything had been arranged and word had been sent on to the place they intended to go, the following morning (that is, Wednesday) at the break of dawn, the ladies with some of their servants and the three young men with three of their servants left the city and set out on their way; they had traveled no further than two short miles when they arrived at the first stop they had agreed upon.

The place was somewhere on a little mountain, at some distance from the road, full of different kinds of shrubs and plants with rich, green foliage – most pleasant to look at; at the top of this hill there was a country mansion with a beautiful large inner courtyard containing loggias, halls, and bedrooms, all of them beautifully proportioned and decorated with gay and interesting paintings; it was surrounded by meadows and marvelous gardens, with wells of cool water and cellars full of the most precious wines, the likes of which were more suitable for expert drinkers than for dignified and respectable ladies. And the group discovered, to their no little delight, that the entire palace had been cleaned, all the beds had been made, fresh flowers were everywhere, and the floors had been strewn with rushes. Soon after they arrived and were resting, Dioneo, who was more attractive and wittier than either of the other young men, said:

“ladies, more than our preparations, it was your intelligence that guided us here. I do not know what you intend to do with your troubled thoughts, but I left mine inside the city walls when I passed through them in your company a little while ago; and so

“那没有关系,站得正不怕影斜,只要我自己问心无愧,随别人怎么说,天主和真理会保护我的名誉。啊,要是他们愿意参加进来就好啦!那时候,就应了潘皮内娅的金口,我们就可以说命运助我们成行了。”

女郎们觉得这话说得在理,非但没有反对意见,还一致同意过去招呼那几个青年,把她们的打算讲给她们听,并且向她们表示希望他们同行。潘皮内娅不再多说,起身朝青年们走去,原来她还是其中一个的亲戚。青年们站住,只见她笑容满面向他们行了礼,说明她们的决定,并以姐妹们的名义请他们以兄弟般纯洁的感情陪伴。

青年们起先以为这是同他们开玩笑,但见那女郎说得十分恳切,随即愉快地答应同行。为了不迁延时日,双方分手前就谈妥了出发的准备工作。该做的事都有条不紊地布置好了,打算前往的去处也派人预先通知了。第二天,星期三,天刚破晓,女郎们带着几个使女,青年们带着三个侍从,出城上路。他们走了两英里不到就抵达事先选定的地点。

那地点在一个小山岗上,离东西南北通衢大道都有一段路程,山上草木郁郁葱葱,叫人看了眼目清凉。山顶筑有一座邸宅,中央是一个宽敞优美的庭院,回廊、厅房和卧室环绕四周,室内布置雅致,墙上装饰着色彩明快的图画。邸宅外面是草坪和长满异草奇葩的花园,园内不缺清冽的水井。宅内有地窖,贮藏着美酒,不过这东西对于端庄娴静的女士们并不合适,只好留给懂行的酒徒们去品尝。刚到的人高兴地看到,房屋已经打扫干净,卧室里被褥配备齐全,摆满了应时的鲜花和灯芯草环。大家坐定后,性情开朗、人品极好的狄奥内奥开口说:

“女士们,是你们的慧心,而不是我们的远虑,把我们引来这里。我不知道你们还有没有忧愁,反正我同你们一起出城时,已把心事抛在城门口

you must either make up your minds to enjoy yourselves and laugh and sing with me (as much, let me say, as your dignity permits), or you must give me leave to return to my worries and to remain in our troubled city."

To this Pampinea, who had driven away her sad thoughts in the same way, replied happily:

"Dioneo, what you say is very true: let us live happily, for after all it was unhappiness that made us flee the city. But when things lack order they cannot long endure, and since it was I who began the discussions which brought this fine company together, and since I desire the continuation of our happiness! think we should choose a leader from among us, whom we shall honor and obey as our superior and whose only thought shall be to keep us happily entertained. And in order that each one of us may feel the burden of this responsibility together with the pleasure of its authority, so that no one of us who has not experienced it can envy the others, let me say that both the burden and the honor should be granted to each one of us in turn for a day; the first will be elected by all of us; then, as the hour of vespers approaches, it will be the duty of the one who rules for that day to choose his or her successor; this ruler, as long as his reign endures, will prescribe the place and the manner in which we shall spend our time."

These words greatly pleased everyone and they unanimously elected Pampinea Queen for the first day; Filomena quickly ran to a laurel bush, whose leaves she had always heard were worthy of praise and bestowed great honor upon those crowned with them; she plucked several branches from it and wove them into a handsome garland of honor, which whenever it was placed upon the head of any of them was to be to all in the group a definite symbol of royal role and authority over the rest of them for as long as their company stayed together.

After she had been chosen Queen, Pampinea ordered everyone to refrain from talking; then she sent for the four servants of the ladies and for those of the three young men, and as they stood before her in silence, she said:

"So that I may set the first example for all of you which may be bettered and thus allow our company to live an orderly and pleasurable existence without any shame for as long as we wish, I first appoint Parmeno, Dioneo's servant, as my steward, and I commit to his care and management all our household and everything which pertains to the services of the dining hall. I want Sirisco, Panfilo's servant, to act as our buyer and treasurer and to follow Parmeno's orders. Tindaro, who is in the service of Filostrato, shall wait on Filostrato and Dioneo and Panfilo in their bedchambers when the other two are occupied with their other du-

了。因此我请求你们同我一起忘却烦恼,行乐歌唱,当然,要在不损害你们的端庄的限度以内,否则不如放我离开,让我带着我的烦恼回到愁云惨雾的城里去。"

潘皮内娅的重心事仿佛也都抛到了九霄云外,她高兴地说:

"你说得太好啦,狄奥内奥,我们希望活得快活,促使我们逃出城里的正是愁苦,但是没有规矩不成方圆,由于我出的主意,形成了这个愉快的集体,然而要使我们的愉快维持长久,我认为应该从我们中间推举一个头领,大家要对他尊敬服从,由他想出消遣的办法,好让我们的日子过得快活。为了使大家都能体会当首领的责任和乐趣,为了使我们没有尝试到的人不至于为这个或那个原因而生妒忌之心,我建议每天轮流让一个人承担责任和荣誉,第一个当政的人由大家推选。到了第一个傍晚,担任首领职务的他或者她就任命继承人,继承人在位期间可以随意决定我们应当生活的地点和方式。"

大家听了这番话十分高兴,异口同声地推选潘皮内娅为当天的首领。菲洛梅娜随即朝一株月桂树跑去,摘下几条叶枝,编了一个漂亮的桂冠,因为她常听说桂叶是荣誉的象征,当之无愧的人要戴桂冠。在那个集体相聚期间,谁出任至高无上的首领,发号施令,谁就戴着它。

潘皮内娅被任命为女王以后,吩咐大家安静,并且把三个男仆和四个使女叫来。等大家静下来后,她宣布说:

"大家既然推我做第一天的女王,我就立下一些规矩,希望我们相处期间日子过得尽可能有条有理,大家心情舒畅,越活越高兴。我首先指派狄奥内奥的仆人帕尔梅诺当我的总管,负责全体的伙食和照顾整个邸宅的事务。潘菲洛的仆人西里斯科负责掌管财物,听从帕尔梅诺的指挥。廷达罗除了照应菲洛斯特拉托之外,还得在狄奥内奥和潘菲洛的房