

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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The Orsini Princess / La princesa de los Ursinos (1947) Luis Lucía Mingarro (1914-1984)

OVERVIEW

Auteur Luis Lucía Mingarro was a prolific director and screenwriter for the principal film studio in twentieth-century Madrid, CIFESA. Born in Valencia in 1914, Luis eventually moved to Madrid when his father became the Spanish Minister of Communications in 1935. As a young man, Luis studied law and worked as CIFESA's primary attorney. Over time, however, he realized that he had a talent for screenwriting and casting. By the late 1940s, Lucía had established himself as a respected film director under Franco's regime. Like his contemporary Juan de Orduña, Lucía excelled at historical epics and melodramas. He wrote and directed films well into the 1970s. He died in Madrid in 1984.

Film *The Orsini Princess* (1947) is a black-and-white historical drama set during the War of Succession in Spain, Austria, and France (1701-1714). The plot involves a young French widow, Ana María de la Tremoille, who ends up advising the first Bourbon king of Spain, Felipe V. The film stars Ana Mariscal as the eponymous princess, Roberto Rey as the dashing Spanish troubadour Luis, and Fernando Rey as Felipe V. Not surprisingly, Fernando Rey would go on to star in several more historical epics, including his turn as the devious Flemish prince in *Madness of Love* (1948) and the stalwart general Palafox in *Agustina de Aragón* (1951).

Background *The Princess Orsini* is one of CIFESA's most successful historical epics of the 1940s. Like many films of the era, the screenplay was written by Carlos Blanco, Alfonso Danvila, and Luis Lucía himself. The film won best film and best screenplay in the 1948 Cinema Writers Circle Awards. The dominate studio in Francoist Spain, CIFESA, produced and distributed the film.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Ana María de la Tremoille	French noblewoman who becomes Felipe's advisor
Felipe V	first Bourbon king of Spain (1700-1746)
Spanish Minister	court official who advises Felipe
Luis Carvajal (aka Javier)	Spanish spy and troubadour who romances the princess
Cardinal Portocarrero	Luis's uncle and leader of the pro-Spanish movement
Ambassador Goncourt	French official who advises the princess
Count de la Vega	Frenchified nobleman at Felipe's court party
Louis XIV	French king and Felipe's grandfather

SYNOPSIS

In 1701, the last Hapsburg king of Spain, Carlos II, dies without a male heir. The French king Louis XIV quickly installs his grandson, Felipe V, on the Spanish throne. The Spanish people accept the new Bourbon monarch as their rightful leader, but other European forces wish to contest the French. The result is the War of Succession (1701-1714) in which Austrian forces invade Spain from the south.

In order to shore up his grandson's position, Louis XIV sends a beguiling noblewoman, the Orsini princess, as a cultural ambassador to the throne. He gives her three goals on her mission: keep Felipe V French in his politics, bring French culture to the Spanish court, and pave the way for a French takeover of northern Spain—or as he puts it, to make “the Pyrenees disappear.”

The princess and French Ambassador Goncourt follow their directives and continually try to influence Felipe at court. At one point, they convince the king to oust his ministers and bring in new Parisian

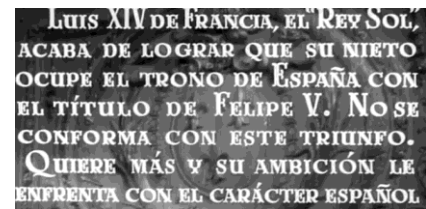
advisors. This plan is thwarted by the king's pro-Spanish advisors—the Prime Minister of Spain and the Cardinal Portocarrero, both of whom warn Felipe that the French are trying to invade Spain themselves. In order to fight the French influence, the cardinal employs his nephew, Luis Carvajal, to spy on and flirt with the princess.

While interacting with the princess, Luis falls in love with her but declares that he will stay true to Spain. Felipe vacillates between the two opinions at court but ultimately decides to reject French incursions—even though the French troops could protect the Spanish from the Austrian invasion. The princess finally changes her mind and decides that she will ask Louis XIV to send troops without the “payment” of northern Spanish territories.

While the princess is negotiating with Louis XIV in Versailles, Luis dies on the front lines as he and the Spanish troops hold off the Austrians. The French eventually send reinforcements to defend Madrid, and together, Spain and France win the war. The princess returns to the Spanish court and laments that she and Luis had to sacrifice their love in order for Spain to flourish.

SCENES

Historical Prologue Right after the opening credits, there is a prologue that explains that right at the beginning of the 18th century, Louis XIV in France managed to appoint his son, Felipe V, as the new king of Spain. The prologue warns that Louis XIV was not satisfied with his line on the throne, and his greed would lead to a conflict with the “indomitable Spanish character.” The final paragraph suggests the plot of the film is based on historical events that occurred during the War of Succession, but that the diplomatic duel within the film lies somewhere between “reality and fantasy.”



The French Official Gives the Princess a Mission An elegant woman visits the French court and discusses the future of the Spanish throne with a French official. He praises her service to Louis XIV and reminds her that the French king still controls Spain despite the death of the last Hapsburg. The French official gives her a new task as ambassador-spy: infiltrate Felipe V's court and make sure that the Spanish adopt French culture and political goals. She replies that it will be a difficult task, but he retorts that the Orsini Princess can make it happen. We understand that the elegant woman is, in fact, the princess on a mission.



The Spanish Prepare for the Princess's Arrival Back at the Spanish court, the cardinal warns his nephew Luis that Louis XIV is tightening his grip on Spain. He reports that the princess is coming and was surely sent to beguile the king with her beauty and wit. The cardinal correctly surmises that the princess is meant to “afrancesar,” or frenchify, the Spanish court and make sure that Felipe's commands align with French interests. His nephew asks what he should do about it, and the cardinal responds that he must also become a spy and track the princess's movements. The nephew retorts that he is not the best man for the job, but the cardinal says he should do his duty and defend Spain from the ongoing French invasion. The cardinal points to a map of the Pyrenees.



The Princess and Her Handmaid Discuss the Future There is a wide shot of the princess's coach and team of horses trotting through the forest. Inside the coach, the princess tells her handmaid that she must succeed in her mission to unite Spain and France and make “the Pyrenees disappear.” The princess admits, however, that she will miss France and her life of comfort at Versailles. The handmaid replies that she may very well find happiness in Spain, too. They cross the border, and the officials ask for documents. The Spanish captain opens the coach door, flirts with the princess, and recommends that

they stay the night at a border inn with good wine. When the coach drives away, the captain has a drink with Luis and tells him to follow the French coach to the aforementioned inn.

Luis Plays the Charismatic Cowboy-Troubadour Luis mounts his white steed with a guitar on his back. As he rides through a canyon, he whistles a cheerful tune. The rocks echo back, and Luis breaks into a jaunty folk song about the happiness that the Spanish sun brings. Down below, the princess and her handmaid hear his song and smile. The handmaid comments on the Spanish character of the song, and the princess quips that everything in Spain is Spanish. Luis continues singing as his horse trots across a rocky river gracefully. The camera cuts back and forth between the horse's steps and Luis as a singing rider. There are also panoramic shots of the rocky cliffs of the northeast Spanish landscape.



Spanish Versus French Music Luis eventually pulls up alongside the coach and greets the women inside. He introduces himself as Javier de Manrique, his spy pseudonym. He offers to sing more folk songs, including something Andalusian. The princess glowers and insists that she prefers French music. Luis breaks into a new Spanish song. Everyone except the princess moves along to the rhythm of the song and smiles appreciatively. The Princess pretends not to enjoy the song, but she eventually waves her hand to the beat. Luis stops singing and proclaims the princess to be as beautiful as if she were Spanish. The princess retorts that the Spanish do not have the monopoly on beauty. He offers her a truce and says that next time, he will sing her an original song about her beautiful eyes.



Machinations at the Inn The princess descends from the coach and is greeted inside by the French Ambassador Goncourt. The bumbling staff of the inn scurry around and promise to prepare a good feast. The princess reveals her mission to the ambassador, who agrees that Felipe is becoming too Spanish. She looks at herself in the mirror and proclaims that the king will remember his Frenchness soon enough. The ambassador warns her that the cardinal will create obstacles even though he supports Felipe's claim to the throne. The princess asks why the Spanish support Felipe given that he is a Bourbon and grandson to Louis XIV. The ambassador replies that the Spaniards don't see Felipe as French but rather as their chosen monarch. The princess prognosticates that the Austrian royal line and the British will attempt to invade the Iberian Peninsula, and the Spanish will have to rely on French troops to defend themselves. Then, Louis XIV can claim parts of northern Spain as a payment for the alliance.

Tavern Duels A drunk patron throws beer in the ambassador's face as he moves from the private room to the tavern. The ambassador draws his sword. Another Spaniard intervenes and says he will duel on the drunk's behalf. The French women move away quickly and watch the duel escalate. Luis intervenes when the drunk comes on to the handmaid. Another duel breaks out between Luis and yet another patron. The drunk stumbles in and around the four men dueling. Luis quickly wins his duel and allows the other man to withdraw uninjured. Luis then jumps into the original duel and defeats the other Spaniard on behalf of the ambassador. The princess expresses her appreciation for Luis's gallantry and skills.



Luis Explains His Philosophy: Dice, Horses, and Music Luis laughs and picks up a pair of dice on the table, saying that he knew he would win. The princess smiles at his superstitions, and Luis predicts that he will see the princess again. The ambassador retorts that he should depend on his steel rather than his dice, and the Frenchman offers Luis a sack of coins for his valiant efforts. Luis returns the payment and says that he sings, rides, and duels for pleasure and admiration—not for money. The princess hands Luis his guitar as the ambassador escorts her outside. The dueling Spaniards whom Luis “defeated” creep back into the tavern wielding their swords. Luis spots them and laughs. He offers them a drink and

thanks them for their extremely convincing performance. All laugh, and the fake duelers strike the innkeeper on the head with a jar. He falls back, cross-eyed.

Luis Continues to Charm the Princess Luis “Javier” shows up at the princess’s room and explains that he killed the drunk at the inn. The princess lets him in and is visibly impressed by his chivalry. When the police show up at the door, the princess covers for Luis and claims that no one else is in the room. She further suggests that they search the plains, as she saw a dark figure riding away. The police thank her for her help, and Luis thanks the princess for saving him from the gallows. The princess suggests that Javier can visit her at court, and she will use her influence to help him. Javier bids her farewell and sings as he rides away.



Felipe V Receives Bad News Upon arriving at the Spanish court, the princess greets the king-- Felipe V. She explains that France and the palace at Versailles continue to flourish, thanks in part to his leadership abroad. Felipe expresses relief that his grandfather approves of his reign. When the cardinal requests an audience, the princess takes a seat alongside Felipe. The cardinal and an official enter hurriedly and report that the Austrian pretender to the throne, Carlos the Archduke, has invaded Portugal with troops. Felipe laments that the Dutch and the British are helping the Austrians invade the Iberian Peninsula.

The Cardinal and the French Ambassador Debate Ambassador Goncourt warns that the Spanish cannot fight all of Europe, but the cardinal argues that the Spanish cannot give into a usurping king—especially when the Spanish people continue to support Felipe as their ruler. The princess interjects and suggests that Louis XIV will send troops to help defend Spain. The cardinal thanks her for this “generous” offer but argues that the problem cannot be solved by allowing yet another foreign occupation in Spain. When the ambassador becomes angry, the cardinal and official take their leave in order to prepare defenses. The ambassador and the princess continue to argue in favor of French aid, and Felipe admits that he agrees with their position. He worries, however, about offending the Spanish public. The princess suggests that Felipe throw out the cardinal and Minister and replace them with Parisian officials who better understand his own mind and objectives. Felipe thanks the French for their practical solution.



Luis and the Cardinal Play Dice Luis throws down his lucky dice while the cardinal looks on, amused. The cardinal explains to his nephew that France is planning a northern invasion in order to reduce Spain to a French colony. Luis tells him not to lose hope. When the cardinal asks about his plans with the princess, Luis replies that he will visit “the heavenly creature” soon. The cardinal warns him that she is an enemy. Luis throws the dice and declares that he will visit court during the welcome party for the princess.

Party at Court The nobles dance a stately minuet at court with the princess and the Count de la Vega as the lead couple. After the dance, the count declares that he longs for France, where he used to live. He asks the princess why she came to Madrid, and she replies that she is at court to serve the king. The count quips that he knows there is an ulterior motive. The princess excuses herself and moves across the room when she sees the ambassador enter. Goncourt reveals intelligence that the cardinal is moving against her and has been working with a charming and brave spy. The ambassador cautions the princess about gossiping with the count, as he may not be as pro-French as he professes. She scoffs initially, but then considers the possibility that the count is the cardinal’s secret spy. When the count asks her for another dance, she suggests that they take a stroll around the garden. The minister and cardinal watch the princess and declare that grace and beauty may be the downfall of the Spanish nation.

The Count Makes a Suggestion While strolling in the garden, the princess gently probes the count for more information. The count suggests that the princess could use her beauty and influence to promote French style and culture at court—to turn Madrid into a new Versailles. Their conversation is interrupted by the songs of a guitar



playing in the distance. The princess looks around to see if Luis-Javier appears. She asks to go back inside and bids adieu to the count. She then reports to the ambassador that the count is either a fool or a talented spy. The princess asks the ambassador to meet her in her chambers later.

The Princess and “Javier” Join Forces The princess immediately goes back outside to look for Javier. He whispers hello from the nearby bushes, and there is an abrupt cut back to the party. The princess is now dancing with Felipe. Later, the princess meets with Luis-Javier in an adjoining room and asks him if he accepts her proposal. He agrees, and she asks him to spy on the count. When the princess’s handmaid enters, she becomes flirtatious and giggly upon seeing Luis-Javier. The princess receives news, then asks Javier if he will accompany her to the French border as part of a new mission. She explains that she will meet with the new officials from Paris. He agrees to meet her at sundown.

Luis Hides in the Princess’s Office After the French ladies leave, Luis emerges and tries to break into the princess’s desk with his sword. He is interrupted when the princess and the ambassador enter the office. The princess explains the new plan. When she spots someone behind the couch, the princess shouts: “come out of there!” Instead of Luis, it is the princess’s white, fluffy dog. The camera pans to the side, and we see that Luis is hiding behind a curtain and remains undetected. The ambassador continues to praise the princess’s skills and marvels that there will be two French ministers installed at the Spanish court. The two decide to go outside, and Luis sneaks out behind them and climbs down to the courtyard. Luis-Javier greets them with a new song as if he had been waiting outside the whole time. Amused, the princess waves goodbye from the balcony, then explains to the ambassador that Javier will serve as her protector at the border.



Luis and the Cardinal Make a New Plan Luis goes back to his uncle and reports on the meeting at the border. The cardinal suggests that Luis steal the documents that name the French officials as Spanish ministers. Luis throws the dice and declares that he will be successful in this mission.

“Javier” and the Princess Arrive at the Inn Javier dismounts his horse and the princess descends from the coach. The bumbling innkeeper welcomes them in. Luis flirts with the princess and plays with his dice as they wait for the French officials to arrive. They discuss whether or not the count is a spy, and the princess decides that the count might be her second enemy. When Luis asks who is the first, the princess replies “The cardinal.” When the French officials arrive, the innkeeper leads them down into a secret room in the basement. Meanwhile, Luis sneaks out to the barn and meets with another spy. They exchange clothes in the dark.

Luis Interrupts the Meeting in Disguise The princess starts the meeting with the officials. Luis, now covered in a mask, cape, and tricornered hat, approaches the basement from outside. He enters the room suddenly, brandishing his sword and demanding that everyone relinquish their papers. Luis imitates the pompous voice of the count and flourishes his handkerchief in a similar fashion to the nobleman. The princess confronts the “count” and vows to have him hanged. She demands that he return the documents, but he merely laughs and escapes the way he came. Luis runs out to the barn and changes clothes again. When he reenters, Luis pretends to be shocked when the princess tells him about the robbery.



The Cardinal and the French Try to Influence Felipe Luis hands over the documents to the cardinal, who decides to confront the king in person. The cardinal warns the king that the French will likely invade Spain from the north—and through the Pyrenees. Felipe scoffs at the prediction and accuses the cardinal of being too pessimistic. The king also argues that Spain needs the French to fend off the Austrians. The princess and the ambassador interrupt the meeting to tell their side of the story. The cardinal stands behind the king and listens in despite the princess’s plea to speak in private. Felipe tells the French that he has decided to fight the Austrians alone. The princess asks whether he is willing to die for a foreign country, but Felipe retorts that he considers himself as Spanish as Fernando and Isabel. The ambassador warns the king that he may have to give the ultimate sacrifice for his new homeland. Felipe

vows to keep fighting all foreign invaders—including those who may try to come in from the north. Frustrated, the ambassador and princess leave.

Luis Confesses to the Cardinal The cardinal visits his nephew and describes how he won the king over to his position. Luis is impressed and asks to confess to his uncle. The cardinal correctly guesses that Luis has fallen in love with the princess.

The Ambassador Confronts the Cardinal The cardinal has Luis exit from a side door seconds before the ambassador enters his chambers. The ambassador immediately accuses the cardinal of intercepting the documents for the French officials, but the cardinal feigns ignorance. The ambassador warns the cardinal that he underestimates France's strength at his own peril and that he should learn to appreciate French culture and history. As he threatens the cardinal, the ambassador hits his hand on the table and notices the Luis's dice lying there. He surreptitiously palms the dice and slides them off the table. Meanwhile, the cardinal makes his own speech about how he has studied French history—and he admires how the common people revolted. The ambassador reminds the cardinal that it will be a miracle if the Spanish people defeat the Austrians. The cardinal vows to make the miracle happen. As the ambassador is leaving, he tells the cardinal that there is no more need for masks—he knows the identity of the spy who stole the documents. The cardinal watches him leave, alarmed.



Another Tryst in the Courtyard Luis meets the princess in the courtyard at night. He hands her the documents and pretends that he tracked down the thief. The princess acknowledges that the Cardinal is the voice of the people, which is hard to ignore. As Javier, Luis professes his love for the princess. She remarks that Spaniards are full of pride and passion, and Luis-Javier agrees that those qualities are the essence of the Spanish character. The ambassador walks out onto the balcony looking for the princess, and he runs into the handmaid, who is spying on the couple below. When he inquires after the princess, the handmaid reveals that Javier de Manrique is the one courting her. The ambassador interrupts the would-be lovers and insists that they pursue the spies who stole the documents. The princess asks why a search is necessary, given that Javier returned the stolen papers. The ambassador insists that “Javier” accompany him on the mission, and the two gentlemen take their leave of the princess.



The Ambassador Confronts Luis (Javier) The ambassador leads Luis into the dark forest and claims that he will duel with the “masked one.” Luis offers to duel on the ambassador's behalf, but the ambassador quips: “this time, you cannot replace me.” The two arrive at a castle and descend an outdoor staircase down to a pit. The ambassador points to a door that opens, as if by a ghost, and declares that the masked one has arrived. The ambassador then accuses Javier of being the spy. Luis retorts that he is a knight known as Luis Carvajal. The two glower at each other and unsheathe their swords. The duel ranges all over the castle, including up and down the staircase. As the more skilled fighter, Luis bests the ambassador and knicks his neck with his sword. The ambassador falls to the ground.



The Ambassador and Luis Call a Truce Luis suggests a truce so that he can take the ambassador to a doctor. The ambassador insists that Luis kill him and warns that he will come back to find him if Luis does not kill him. Luis refuses to execute him, and the Spaniard helps the ambassador walk back through the forest. The two chat about their patriotism, and Luis vows to die for his country. Luis admits that he has fallen in love with the princess but will give her up for the Spanish cause.

Luis Visits the Princess as the Masked Spy Luis enters the princess's chambers in the mask and cape. The princess, although startled, accuses him of being the count. Luis slowly takes off his disguise and reveals that Javier de Manrique is his pseudonym—and that his real name is Luis. He goes on to explain that he will remain true to his homeland even though he is drawn to her, just as she remains loyal to France. Luis laments that the Pyrenees have separated them, and he bids her farewell.

The Ambassador Recommends a French Invasion Wounded from the duel, the French ambassador dictates a letter to Louis XIV. He recommends that French troops invade by crossing the Pyrenees—but not until the Austrian forces have defeated the Spaniards in the south. The ambassador commands that a messenger ride to Versailles “without rest.” He then invites the princess into his chambers in order to reveal his plan. She says that he had made an error, and the ambassador accuses her of being seduced by the masked one. The ambassador declares that the French artillery will “ring out” soon. There is an abrupt cut to a line of soldiers lighting multiple canons. Plumes of smoke fill the air as charging troops fall under the canon fire.



Felipe's Response to the Invasion The cardinal and Spanish minister alert the king to the invasions of the Austrian archduke. Felipe counsels them to remain calm, and the cardinal recommends that the king leave Madrid before the troops get to the city. Felipe refuses to abandon his country, and he even suggests that he will throw a lavish party. The king explains that the party will project confidence to the enemies. The camera cuts back and forth from violent battle scenes to the court at Madrid. A few days later, the cardinal reports that, despite the bravery and stamina of Spanish soldiers, the Austrian troops are advancing towards Madrid. He further explains that the Spanish army is building a barricade around the capital city.

The Princess Offers a Compromise to the King The princess visits Felipe and offers a new plan to him and the Cardinal. She explains that although she remains French, she offers advice and help as a woman who has come to understand the character of the Spanish people. The princess offers to ask Louis XIV for assistance without the ulterior motive of taking over northern Spain. Both the king and the cardinal thank her profusely for her help. She tells them that she will leave that night by herself and meet with Louis in Versailles. Felipe suggests that a few soldiers accompany her, but the princess reminds him that she can slip across the border unnoticed if she goes alone. Felipe bows to her and declares that the party will now be in her honor.



Luis Gets a New Mission The cardinal and his nephew discuss the new plan, and the cardinal wonders whether the princess is trying to double-cross them. Luis assures him that she is sincere and that “Spain has entered her heart.” The cardinal asks Luis to follow behind the princess’s coach to ensure her safe passage to the border. He also gives the young troubadour documents taken from a captured Austrian soldier. Luis promises to deliver the documents and the princess safely.

The Party is Interrupted The princess sits at the side of Felipe at the party, where the cardinal brings him updates about the battle. The music stops suddenly when a wounded captain and his soldiers breach the palace. The captain reports to the king that the French artillery has overcome the barricade and the French have taken the southern outskirts of Madrid. The cardinal prays that the second line holds off the Austrians. Felipe admits to his guests that the enemy has arrived. Once again, the camera cuts between battle scenes and the dancing at the party. In one moment, a rifle turns into a bow drawn across a cello. The princess realizes that she must leave the party soon and may be captured by the Austrians. The cardinal warns her that there may no longer be a path to the border, but Felipe declares that the princess will succeed in her mission.



The Coach Rushes to the Border There is a panoramic shot of the coach racing through the night and crossing plains. The coachman remarks that they were lucky to have open roads so far. The princess warns him to not get too comfortable. They almost make it to San Sebastián, but Austrian soldiers stop the coach in the Pyrenees. The officials interrogate the princess and ask her to get out of the coach. An Austrian captain identifies the princess based on her



dark eyes and hair, and he confronts her by saying that he knows about her mission. The princess feigns innocence and claims that she is travelling to meet her husband in San Sebastián. The captain confronts her again and declares that she is María Pacheco. The princess quickly shifts gears and pretends to be the Spanish spy. Another soldier alerts the captain that there is also intelligence regarding the Orsini Princess, who fled Madrid the night before. The princess pretends to help the officials “catch” her by saying that the princess has light eyes and dark hair. She goes on to say that the princess is not particularly pretty, but she has an “interesting face.” The captain thanks “María” for her help, and the princess smiles slyly as she leaves.

The Coach Continues on the Road to Versailles As the princess and coachman ride on, Ana orders the coachman not to call her “Excellency,” but instead refer to her as María Pacheco. The princess reads peacefully as the coach man drives on. Luis follows behind on his white steed. The princess looks at Luis’s dice in the palm of her hand and smiles. Just as the coach reaches the French border, the princess hears Luis’s familiar voice singing next to her. She looks out to find her would-be lover on a nearby cliff. The two wave good bye to each other wistfully.



The Princess Meets with Louis XIV Louis XIV reads the Spanish papers and asks the princess why she had a change of heart. The princess replies that she complied with her mission but that she could not “make the Pyrenees disappear”—especially those that exist “in the Spanish heart.” The king says he will take her suggestions under advisement.

Luis and the Cardinal Hope for the Best Luis and the cardinal also meet to discuss the future of the war. The cardinal reports that Madrid will fall to the Austrians and the nobles will have to move the Spanish capital. Luis retorts that the princess will convince Louis XIV to send troops.

The Worm Turns in the Battle The camera cuts between violent battle scenes and Felipe receiving updates at court. We see the Austrians firing canons, then the French marching across the plains. The cardinal reports to Felipe that the French have sent 300,000 troops to their aid.



Luis Dies Back on the battlefield, Luis stumbles into the Spanish headquarters gravely wounded. He reports that the Spanish troops remain on the hill and continue to defend Madrid. Luis explains that the recent shipment of gunpowder helped them keep the Austrians at bay, but the troops will not be able to maintain their position. Luis asks the captain to bid farewell to the princess and ask her to always remember her horseman of the Pyrenees. Meanwhile, the Spanish start to regain their flank positions and the Austrians start to retreat.



The Spanish Win Against All Odds Felipe insists that Spain will be triumphant, and the camera superimposes shots of the French cavalry charging, the Spanish on horseback, and the trumpets sounding the charge. There is a “victory” montage in which a series of white letters lists all of the battles where the Spanish won, starting with the turning point victory of Almansa. The princess returns to the Spanish court upon their last victory. The cardinal reports to the princess that Luis died in battle. Mournful, the princess lauds his patriotism and takes out his lucky dice with her left hand. She waves and murmurs “good luck” with her left hand. The epilogue text proclaims that Luis’s spirit will live on forever in the hearts of all Spaniards.



CHARACTER ANALYSIS

ANA MARÍA DE LA TREMOILLE / THE ORSINI PRINCESS

The princess is a beautiful and clever ambassador who also acts as a spy. All of the male characters admire her looks and charm, but the princess is also an intelligent strategist and a gracious diplomat. She shows remarkable bravery and flexibility in her endeavors to serve both France and Spain.

Clever The princess is adept at both arguing the case and manipulating the men around her with flattery and charm. When dealing with Felipe, the princess uses a variety of strategies, from dancing with him to explaining French fire power. She often suggests and enacts strategies for moving along an agenda. For example, it is the princess who suggests meeting and hiring the French ministers, and it is she who offers to transport documents and diplomacy to Versailles during the Austrian invasion of Madrid.

Resourceful When one strategy does not work, the princess is quick to pivot to another option. She enlists both Luis-Javier and the Count in order to find out the truth about the stolen documents. Upon being captured in San Sebastián, the princess pretends to be a Spanish turncoat and gives the Austrians a red herring to pursue.

Intuitive Even though the princess falls for Luis's rouse and alter ego, she also senses that he has fallen in love with her sincerely. At court, the princess quickly recognizes that the Cardinal represents the Spanish position and that Felipe is inclined to frame himself as the leader of Spain. When she returns to Versailles, the princess is able to create an empathetic bridge between the two cultures.

LUIS CARVAJAL (AKA JAVIER DE MANRIQUE)

Luis is an accomplished rider and soldier who never wanes in his patriotism. He is also an ardent singer, swordsman, and superstitious gambler. As the star-crossed lover in the film, he is charming, handsome, and brave.

Talented Luis has excellent skills as a soldier and as a performer. He can ride and duel better than anyone in northern Spain, and he is a mesmerizing singer and musician. Luis's talents as a spy reveal themselves through his ability to act. He invents an alter ego and is able to imitate the count convincingly.

Brave Luis offers to serve his country on several occasions. He knows that the princess may catch him as a spy or that he might be captured by the Austrians along the border. He wins the duel with Ambassador Goncourt even though he is somewhat ambushed. When Madrid is about to fall, Luis goes to the front lines and sacrifices himself.

Patriotic Despite his love for the princess and his troubadour lifestyle, Luis remains fiercely loyal to Spain and the Spanish cause. He puts himself in danger multiple times as a spy, and he dies in battle defending Madrid from being sacked by the Austrians. He also confesses to the princess that he will always put the nation first.

CARDINAL PORTOCARRERO

The cardinal serves as king Felipe's primary advisor throughout the War of Succession. Although the minister works with the cardinal, it is the clergyman who presents the pro-Spanish argument to Felipe. He is persistent in his position, and he also is willing to sacrifice his nephew because he is so devoted to the cause.

Devoted The cardinal promotes the Spanish people at every turn in the film. Although he knows that the Spanish cannot resist the Austrian army for long, he argues that the Spanish cannot give over autonomy to France. He is so devoted to Spain and the idea of Spain that he charges his nephew, Luis, with dangerous missions.

Persistent The cardinal is so devoted to politics that he remains at court and consistently influences Felipe. He debates the French ambassador and the princess regularly, and he keeps sending Luis to surveil and sabotage the French efforts. When the Austrian forces invade, the cardinal keeps advising Felipe and insisting that the Spanish troops fight for their own country.

AMBASSADOR GONCOURT

Clever The ambassador uses both strength and flexibility to influence Felipe, and he manages to win the political argument on more than one occasion. He studies the cardinal's positions and helps prepare the princess for a response. In addition, the ambassador notices the presence of a spy and figures out Luis's true identity.

Persistent Like the princess and the cardinal, Goncourt is consistent in his efforts to win over Felipe and serve Louis XIV. He debates with the cardinal and conducts opposition intelligence. When he finds out that Luis is the masked spy, he leads him away from court and challenges him to a duel. Even after his injury, it is the ambassador who writes Louis XIV and encourages him to invade Spain via the Pyrenees.

THEMES

SOCIETY

National and Regional Identity As the central conflict of the film, the War of Succession becomes the context for the Spanish people's conception of themselves. Although he is born in France, Felipe V describes himself as a Spanish monarch who wishes the best for Spain. The king also resents his grandfather's attempts to take over northern Spain and turn it into a French colony. Culturally, the French visitors and some of the Spanish nobles wish to frenchify Spanish culture. The Count de la Vega even wants the court at Madrid to copy Versailles in architecture, fashion, frivolity, and manner. The princess shows disdain towards local Spanish culture and prefers her "elevated" Parisian lifestyle. Luis eventually wins her over with his charming songs, but she resists his insistence on wooing her with Spanish customs. After the War of Succession, the Spanish win political autonomy but become increasingly influenced by French culture and literature. This adherence to French manners persists throughout the eighteenth century. With regard to regional culture and identity, the film suggests that the Spaniards of northern Spain (those of the mountains) are skilled riders and tough soldiers. Like Luis, the Spanish troops manage to hold off the Austrians much longer than expected. Ironically, Luis also performs like an Andalusian troubadour with his Arabic-influenced singing and guitar playing.

Illustrative Moment: The "Pyrenees of the Heart" Will Never Disappear

Louis XIV reads the Spanish papers and asks the princess why she had a change of heart. The princess replies that she complied with her mission but that she could not "make the Pyrenees disappear"—especially those that exist "in the Spanish heart." The king says he will take her suggestions under advisement. Near the end of the film, the princess has realized that the Spanish will continue fighting for their homeland against all odds. She also appreciates the regional culture of northern Spain.



POLITICS

Conflict As discussed above, the political conflict of this period is the War of Succession (1701-1714), in which the French and Austrian royal lines fight for control of Spain in the eighteenth century. Carlos II's death in 1701 marked the end of the Hapsburg monarchy for Spain, which also becomes symbolic of Spain's decline as an empire. From the 1470 to 1650, roughly, the Spanish dominated Europe and their empire stretched to the end of the earth. This extended war, then, becomes a transition from one stage of Spanish history to the next. Moreover, this central conflict becomes the context for the Spanish people's conception of themselves: are we beholden to the French, the Austrians, or ourselves? If we move from the political to the personal, both the princess and Luis suffer from internal conflict. They must choose between love and duty to their respective nations. For the most part, the characters reluctantly choose duty over their relationships, with the result that they sacrifice their chance at love. Unlike in Lucía's other historical drama, *Lola la Piconera* (1949), the secondary characters in *The Orsini Princess* do not waver in their position or allegiances—Felipe V does not "regress" to his French birth, and both the Cardinal Portocarrero and the Ambassador Goncourt hold firm to their positions and act as ballasts that tie their respective spies (Luis and the princess) to their national duties.

Illustrative Moment: The Ambassador Confronts the Cardinal

In the cardinal's chambers, the ambassador immediately accuses the cardinal of intercepting the documents for the French officials, but the cardinal feigns ignorance. The ambassador warns the cardinal that he underestimates France's strength at his own peril and that he should learn to appreciate French culture and history. Meanwhile, the cardinal makes his own speech about how he has studied French history—and he admires how the common people revolted. The ambassador reminds the



cardinal that it will be a miracle if the Spanish people defeat the Austrians. The cardinal vows to make the miracle happen. This confrontation encapsulates the political and cultural conflicts throughout the film. Although both men wish to resist the Austrian invasion, they represent opposing views as to the nature of Spanish sovereignty. Both men fight fiercely to direct the fate of the Spanish state, and neither waver in their conviction. Whereas Luis and the princess must fight their attraction to each other, the cardinal and the ambassador remain focused on the mission at hand.

RELATIONSHIP

Love As with many of the historical epics of the 1950s, the characters sacrifice romantic love for the sake of the state. Both Luis and the princess remain true to their respective countries and missions despite their attraction to each other. Luis shows his love for his country through both song and combat. He insists on singing regional folk songs to the princess and complimenting her on her “Spanish” beauty. Although Ana ultimately adjusts her position regarding French invasion, she remains loyal to both Louis XIV and Felipe V. During their courtship, Luis serenades the princess from afar—either looking up at her from the courtyard or riding alongside her coach. In both instances, Luis expresses courtly love in the style of a medieval knight or troubadour. He defends her honor and protects her, yet they never kiss. By the end of the film, the two wave goodbye to each and whisper “good luck” several times. When Luis is killed in combat, he sends a message to Ana with his dying breath. When she learns of his sacrifice, the princess holds his dice and waves to him one last time. In this sense, the two characters are star-crossed lovers of the War of Succession.

Illustrative Moment: Luis Professes His Love for the Princess and for Spain

Luis enters the princess's chambers in the mask and cape. The princess, although startled, accuses him of being the count. Luis slowly takes off his disguise and reveals that Manrique is his pseudonym—and that his real name is Luis. He goes on to explain that he will remain true to his homeland even though he is drawn to her, just as she remains loyal to France. Luis laments that the Pyrenees have separated them, and he bids her farewell. In this moment, Luis reveals his true identity to the princess so that he may declare his love to her and emphasize his commitment to the Spanish cause. This declaration of love and patriotism presages the tragic ending where he will sacrifice himself for the Spanish state.



APPEARANCES

Deception and Disguise As spies and ambassadors, all of the main characters must perform their roles as diplomats. At court, the princess, cardinal, and ministers often hide their true objectives in the form of advising the king. In addition, the characters frequently put on disguises and false identities in order to complete their missions. Luis wears a mask and cape, and he purposefully imitates the count's mannerisms and speech in order to create confusion in the French. Even when he is not in disguise, Luis creates an alter ego in the form of Javier de Manrique, a gallant swordsman who protects the princess. Although Luis is in fact a good rider and fencer, he creates opportunities by staging his encounters ahead of time—be they serenading the princess at opportune moments or dispatching drunkards at the tavern. When her coach is detained in San Sebastián, the princess pretends to be another female spy and gives the Austrian captain false information.

Illustrative Moment: Luis Stages a Fake Duel

Luis laughs and picks up a pair of dice on the table, saying that he knew he would win. The princess smiles at his superstitions, and Luis predicts that he will see the princess again. The princess hands Luis his guitar as the ambassador escorts her outside. The “defeated” Spaniards creep back into the tavern wielding their swords. Luis spots them and laughs. He offers them a drink and thanks them for their extremely convincing performance. This scene in the tavern is important because the audience is introduced to Luis’s talents and deception as a spy. We see him as himself and as his alter-ego Javier de Manrique. Since the duel was planned ahead of time, Luis knew that he would win and knew that defending the French would win him credibility and favor. Thus, the roll of the dice is merely an extra layer of performative deceit and an opportunity to flirt with the princess.



Performance A large part of the performances in the film pertain to the deception of spies, as described above. Luis ingratiates himself with the princess and the ambassador by pretending to defend them, then deceives them about his true identity. At least half of his performances have to do with forwarding the mission of the state. However, Luis also performs in other ways, especially as a rider and troubadour. He does not need to sing or perform equestrian tricks in order to complete his mission, nor does he have to carry his guitar and dice everywhere he goes. When Luis first meets the princess in the coach, he sings to her for several minutes. Lucía also takes advantage of the landscape to show panoramic shots of Luis riding through the cliffs and close-ups of the horse’s dressage-like maneuvers through the mountain streams. Rather than forwarding the plot of the film, Lucía decides to entertain the audience with an extended musical sequence. Many of Luis’s gimmicks reveal his own personal quirks and talents, and the implication is that he would perform even if he weren’t a spy. His talent and charm endear him to the princess and her handmaid, and it is obvious that Luis enjoys the attention. The trope of the dice “always being right” offers a device that creates suspense and pathos throughout the film. Luis literally rolls the dice on his life, then “acts out” his fate. Later, the dice come to symbolize lost love. Luis also incarnates metatheater through his false identities—he pretends to be the count and Javier, often simultaneously. Along with Luis’s complex and entertaining performances, there is also a consistent use of dancing at court. The princess wields influence by dancing with both Felipe and the count, and she is often the featured performer of the parties at court. When Felipe decides to throw a performative party in the middle of the war, the princess attends as a ruse to hide her journey to the border. In this way, the song and dance performances serve multiple functions: they provide transitions between scenes, they underscore the characters’ motivations and machinations, and they relieve the tension of the battle scenes and provide some frivolity for the audience.

Illustrative Moment: Luis and The Princess Play Their Parts at the Court Party

The princess immediately goes back outside to look for Javier. He whispers hello from the nearby bushes, and there is an abrupt cut back to the party. The princess is now dancing with Felipe. Later, the princess meets with Luis-Javier in an adjoining room and asks him if he accepts her proposal. He agrees, and she asks him to spy on the count. The princess asks Javier if he will accompany her to the French border as part of a new mission. She explains that she will meet with the new officials from Paris. He agrees to meet her at sundown. In this sequence, the princess is trying to influence Felipe and the count through flirtation and dance, then work with the ambassador and Luis-Javier behind the scenes—she is performing two versions of herself. Luis is pretending to be Javier and goes out of his way to serenade the princess before he leaves Madrid. In both cases, the characters use song and dance to charm and manipulate others.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do the Spanish people accept Felipe V as their new king? Why does Felipe consider himself Spanish?
2. What does the princess hope to accomplish at the Spanish court?

3. In what ways do the costumes and props in this film influence the storyline? What do the dice symbolize?
4. Why does Lucía jump back and forth between battle scenes and the court party at the end of the film?
5. How do music and dance further the story?
6. Why are there slapstick moments throughout the film (the dog behind the couch, the bumbling innkeepers, etc.)? What is the effect of infusing a serious historical / war epic with humoristic, farcical, and musical elements?