

The Ring of General Macías

General Macías, a Federal officer in the Mexican Revolution, has been captured and faces possible execution. In this passage, two enemy spies have broken
5 *into the home of Raquel, the general's wife, and have shown her the general's wedding ring to convince her to hide them. Raquel attempts to discover what this means for her imprisoned husband.*

10 RAQUEL:
Cleto, did the general willingly give that ring to your captain?

CLETO:
Yes, señora.

15 RAQUEL:
Why?

CLETO:
The general wanted to save his own life. He said he loved you and he wanted to
20 save his life.

RAQUEL:
How would giving that ring to your captain save the general's life?

CLETO:
25 He's talked about you a lot, and when my captain knew we had to come into the city, he thought perhaps we might take refuge here if the Federals got on our trail. So he went to the general and said
30 that if he fixed it so we'd be safe here, my captain would save him.

RAQUEL:
Was your trip to the city very important—to your cause, I mean?

35 CLETO:
Indeed yes, señora. The captain got a lot of fine information. It means we'll win the next big battle. My captain is a very clever man, señora.

40 RAQUEL:
Did the general know about this information when he gave his ring to your captain?

CLETO:

45 I don't see how he could help knowing it, señora. He heard us talking about it enough.

RAQUEL:
50 Cleto, you think my husband is a coward, don't you?

CLETO:
[With embarrassment.] Yes, señora.

RAQUEL:
You don't think any woman is worth it, do
55 you? Worth the price of a great battle, I mean.

CLETO:
No, señora. But as the captain says, love is a very peculiar thing.

60 RAQUEL:
If your captain loved a woman as much as the general loves me, would he have given an enemy his ring?

CLETO:
65 Ah, but the captain is a great man, señora.

RAQUEL:
And so is my husband a great man. He is of the family Macías. All of that family
70 have been great men. All of them—brave and honorable men. They have always held their honor to be greater than their lives. That is a tradition of their family.

CLETO:
75 Perhaps none of them loved a woman like you, señora.

RAQUEL:
How strange you are. I saved you from the Federals because I want to save my
80 husband's life. You call me brave, and yet you call him a coward. There is no difference in what we have done.

CLETO:
But you are a woman, señora.

85 RAQUEL:
Has a woman less honor than a man, then?

CLETO:

90 No, señora. Please, I don't know how to
say it. The general is a soldier. He has a
duty to his own cause. You are a woman.
You have a duty to your husband. It is
right that you should try to save him. It is
95 not right that he should try to save
himself.

RAQUEL:
[Dully.] Yes, of course. It is right that I
should save him.

Adapted from *The Ring of General Macías* by
Josephina Niggli.