

## IV. Second Apparition

June the thirteenth was approaching, the important day when the Lady from Heaven was to appear a second time. The news of the apparition had spread all through the countryside. Everyone had his own idea on the matter; some believed, most did not. In fact, both the children and their parents were ridiculed by their neighbors. The parents were called simpleminded, unfit to bring up children or else too timid to punish them as they deserved. "I wish she were my daughter," one man said, twisting his stocking hat in his hands. "A good thrashing would soon put an end to their visions," another said, swinging his staff. Even the other children jeered and scoffed when Lucia and her cousins passed them.

Meanwhile, Lucia's mother, in her good faith, went to consult with the village Pastor, the Reverend Manuel Marques Ferreira. After hearing the mother's version, he suggested that the children be allowed to return to the Cova da Iria on the following thirteenth and that they be brought to him afterwards. He would interrogate them individually. Going home, Senhora dos Santos met Ti Marto and told him of the Pastor's advice. He thought it wise to go and talk it over with the Pastor also. When he reached the rectory, and was taken into the house, he said, "Senhor Prior, my sister-in-law has just told me that you want me to come here with the children after the next apparition, one at a time. I have come now to find out the best thing for us to do."

"What a mess this is," the Pastor remarked; "sometimes it is white, sometimes it is black."

"But, Reverend Father, you seem more ready to believe lies than facts," Ti Marto answered calmly.

"So far, I have never had to listen to anything of this sort," the Pastor countered, noticeably vexed by the whole affair. "Everybody knows things before me. If you want to bring the children to me, do it; if not, don't bring them."

"Senhor Prior, I have come with nothing but the best intentions in mind."

Ti Marto then got up to leave, but as he descended the stairs of the veranda, he could still hear the Pastor repeating, "Ti Marto, I leave it to you. If you want to bring them, do it; if not, don't bring them."

"Good Father, I have come only to find out what is best for us to do, not to cause any trouble."

Among those few who did believe, there is one who deserves special mention, Senhora Maria Carreira. Later, she came to be known as Maria da Capelinha (Maria of the Little Chapel). In her room in the hospital at the Shrine of Fatima, she told the author all she knew about the great happenings at the Cova da Iria, of which she had been a witness almost from the very beginning. "I had always been sick," she said, "and those seven years before the apparitions, the doctors gave me up completely. They said I had only a short time to live." Two or three days after the first apparition, Senhora Carreira's husband had been working with Lucia's father, and Antonio dos Santos told him about his daughter.

That night, Senhor Manuel Carreira said to Maria, his wife, "My dear, Antonio dos Santos told me that Our Lady appeared to one of his girls, the youngest one, and to two of the children of his sister, the one married to Ti Marto. Our Lady spoke to them and promised to return there every month through October."

Maria da Capelinha's curiosity was aroused. "I'm going to find out if this is true. If it is, I want to go there. Where is the Cova da Iria?"

Her husband told her, and although it was only a ten minute walk from their house, she had never gone there before. One never spoke of the place before. Senhor Carreira tried to discourage her from going. "You must be a fool. Do you think you too will see Our Lady?"

"I know I won't see Her, but if we heard that the king was going there, we wouldn't stay at home. If they say that Our Lady is coming, why shouldn't I go and at least try to see Her?" Later this lady was to be a great comfort to the little children through her kind understanding and helpful assistance.

The great feast of St. Anthony was approaching. Excitement rode high in the parish; everyone, old and young, was preparing for the celebration of the feast which also fell on the thirteenth. While the bells rang, oxcarts trimmed with branches, flowers, flags and draperies, and laden with five hundred bread-rolls, would be led around the church a few times before stopping under the Pastor's balcony for the blessing of the gifts. Maria Rosa knew how her youngest daughter liked celebrations, and she hoped this festival would help her forget about the Cova da Iria. "How good that tomorrow is our feast day," she said to her daughters. "We will be talking of nothing but the feast. We ourselves are to blame, always reminding Lucia of the Cova."

The family tried to avoid the problem of the apparition. When Lucia did bring it up, they changed the subject to divert her mind and make her forget her plans. Lucia took this for disdain and contempt on her family's part; she felt they had abandoned her. Lonely and sorrowful, she became very quiet, but every once in a while she blurted out, "Tomorrow, I am going to the Cova da Iria. It is what the Lady wants."

In spite of the Pastor's advice to allow the children to go to the Cova on the thirteenth of June, both mothers wished to prevent their going. Jacinta wished so very much to share with her mother the joy of the vision, but her mother would not believe it all. Overcome with enthusiasm for the cause of Our Lady, Jacinta pleaded "Mamma, come with us tomorrow to see Our Lady."

"Our Lady! What do you mean, silly little girl? No! Tomorrow, we go to the feast. Don't you want to get your roll? Besides, there is the band, and rockets, and a special sermon." The mother thought the mention of the band and the rolls would surely make the child forget about the Cova; little did she realize that music and food no longer attracted her child. For a month now the little children had given up singing and dancing, even their lunches, for the conversion of sinners.

"But mother, Our Lady does appear at the Cova da Iria."

"Our Lady does not appear to you, so it is useless to go there," Senhora Marto contradicted her child.

"Oh, but She does. Our Lady said that She would appear and She will," Jacinta rejoined.

"Don't you want to go to the feast?" Senhora Marto tried to change the subject.

"Saint Anthony is not beautiful."

"Why?"

"Because the Lady is more, much more beautiful. I am going to the Cova da Iria. If the Lady tells us to go to the feast of Saint Anthony, then we'll go."

Jacinta's father, Ti Marto, was in the same predicament. He didn't know what to do on the feast day. Should he go to the Cova? But what if nothing appeared? It didn't seem right that he should go to the celebration at the church and let the children go alone to the Cova. Finally he decided, since it was market day in Pedreira, he would go

there instead, buy the oxen he wanted, and when he returned, everything would have been settled. Yes, that's it; he would go to market. That would save him from committing himself. He went to sleep in peace.

As soon as Jacinta awakened in the morning she ran into her mother's room to invite her again to come to see the Lady. But her mother's room was empty, and Jacinta was sorely disappointed. "Mother will not see Our Lady today," she said. Then she thought to herself, "But at least now we can go in peace." She awakened Francisco and while he dressed, she let out the sheep. As soon as Francisco was ready, they hurried away to meet Lucia, nibbling on some bread and cheese as they went.

Lucia was already waiting for them at the Barreiro. So bitter did she feel at the lack of understanding and the cruel opposition of her mother and sisters that she was impatient to be alone with her cousins. Only with them did she feel joyful and happy. They alone understood and believed in her as she understood and believed in them. In her memoirs she writes, "I recalled the times that were past and I asked myself, where was the affection which my family had for me only a short while ago?"

But the Lady was coming, they had no time to lose. They must make sure to be at the Cova on time. "Today, let's go to Valinhos", Lucia decided. "There is plenty of grass there and the sheep will get through fast. Then we can go home and put on our best clothes. I won't wait for you, because I want to go to Fatima to talk with some of the girls who made their First Communion with me."

Later, when Lucia's mother saw her child getting all dressed up, she rubbed her hands with satisfaction at the thought that Saint Anthony had answered her prayer that Lucia might forget the whole thing. They watched to see where Lucia was going. To Fatima or the Cova da Iria. If Lucia went to the Cova, her mother decided that she had better follow her. She would hide herself so she could watch what went on and see if the girl was lying. Also she wanted to be there lest anyone try to harm the children. She wasn't going to let anyone hurt her Lucia, nor would she allow Lucia to fall into the bad habit of lying.

All worried and excited, she decided she had better go to the church first. On the way, she met some strangers who, she presumed, were going to attend the feast. She called to them, "Look here, you're going the wrong way. That's not the way to Fatima."

"We just came from Fatima. We're going to see the children who saw Our Lady."

"Where are you from?" she inquired.

"From Carrascos. Where are the children?"

"They are in Aljustrel, but they'll soon be coming to the feast."

Meanwhile, Lucia found her way to church, saw her First Communion friends and invited them to come to the Cova da Iria with her. Usually whenever Lucia suggested something her friends concurred, so altogether fourteen girls agreed to go along. While they were walking towards the Cova da Iria Lucia's brother, Antonio, tried to stop them; he even offered a bribe of a few pennies. "I don't care for your pennies," Lucia cried out. "All I want is to go to the Cova da Iria." He followed the girls for a while, urging them to come back, but soon gave up the attempt.

The fourteen girls were not alone at the Cova. A few people had joined them on the way and when they reached the place where the gate to the shrine is now situated, they were met by a small group of women, among whom were Maria da Capelinha and her crippled seventeen-year-old son. Senhora da Capelinha describes the happenings of this eventful day. "Being determined to go to the Cova on the thirteenth, I said to my daughters the evening before, 'Why don't we go to the Cova tomorrow instead of to the feast of Saint Anthony?'

"To the Cova da Iria? What for? We would rather go to the feast.'

“Turning to my crippled son, I said, ‘and how about you? Do you want to go to the feast or will you go with me?’

“I’ll go with you, mother.’

“The next day, even before the others had left for the feast,” continues the lady, “I came here (to the Cova da Iria) with my son John, who had to use a staff to get along. There wasn’t a soul around, so we went back to the road which we knew the children would take and sat down. After a while, a woman came along from Loureira. She was very surprised to see me there, for she knew I was sick and had been confined to my bed. ‘What are you here for?’ she said.

“For the same reason that you came here.’ Without another word, she sat down beside me. Then a man came along from Lomba da Égua and we exchanged about the same words. Then a few women from Boleiros came along. I asked them if they were running away from the feast.

“One woman answered, ‘Some people made fun of us, but who cares? We want to see what happens here and find out whether it is they or we who should be made fun of.’

“Still others came, some from as far away as Torres Novas, and around eleven o’clock, the children arrived. We followed them until they stopped near a little holm oak tree. I asked Lucia, ‘Little girl, which is the holm oak over which Our Lady appears?’

“See here? It was here that She stood.” It was a small tree, about three feet high, being at the peak of its growth, with straight, beautiful branches. Lucia withdrew herself a little, turned towards Fatima, then walked over to a large holm oak and sat down against the trunk to get in the shade. The day was very hot. Francisco and Jacinta sat at her side.

While eating lupini they talked and amused themselves with the other children. But as time went by, Lucia became more and more serious and apprehensive. Soon she said to Jacinta, who was still playing, “Quiet. Our Lady is coming.”

It was near noon. Maria da Capelinha was feeling weak. “Will it be long before Our Lady comes?” she asked.

“No, Senhora,” Lucia unhesitatingly responded. They all began the Rosary, and as they finished, one girl began the Litany. But Lucia stopped her, “There’s no time for it now.” Then she got up and shouted, “Jacinta, Jacinta, here comes Our Lady. I just saw the flash.”

The three of them ran over to the smaller holm oak. Everyone followed and knelt upon the brush and furze. Lucia raised her eyes towards the skies, as if in prayer, and was heard to say, “You told me to come here today. What do You want me to do?”

The others heard something that sounded like a very gentle voice but did not understand what was said. “It is like the gentle humming of a bee,” Maria da Capelinha whispered.

Lucia in later years tells us as follows: *“I want you to come here on the thirteenth of the next month. Say the Rosary, inserting between the mysteries the following ejaculation — ‘O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need.’ I want you to learn to read and write and later I will tell you what else I want.”*

Then Lucia asked Our Lady to cure a sick person who was recommended to her. Our Lady answered.

*“If he is converted, he will be cured within the year.”*

“I would like to ask You also to take us to Heaven!”

“Yes,” Our Lady answered, *“I will take Jacinta and Francisco soon. You, however, are to stay here a longer time. Jesus wants to use you to make Me known and loved. He*

*wants to establish the Devotion to My Immaculate Heart in the world. I promise salvation to those who embrace it and their souls will be loved by God as flowers placed by Myself to adorn His throne."*

"Am I going to stay here alone?" Lucia asked, full of sadness at the thought of losing her beloved cousins.

*"No, My daughter."*

Lucia's eyes filled with tears.

*"Does this cause you to suffer a great deal? I will never leave you, My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."*

"As She said these last words," Lucia tells, "the Blessed Virgin opened Her hands and communicated to us for the second time the reflection of the immense light that enveloped Her.

We saw ourselves in it, as if submerged in God. Jacinta and Francisco seemed to be on the side that was ascending to Heaven, and I was on the side that was spreading over the earth. There was a Heart before the palm of the right hand of Our Lady, with thorns piercing It. We understood that this was the Immaculate Heart of Mary, so offended by the sins of mankind, desiring reparation."

The crowd now saw Lucia rise quickly to her feet. Stretching out her arm she cried, "Look, there She goes; there She goes!"

Maria da Capelinha reports that when Our Lady left the tree, it was like the hissing of a distant rocket. She continues: "As for us, we saw nothing but a slight cloud, just a few inches away from the foliage, rising slowly towards the East."

The children remained silent, their eyes fastened in that direction, until a few minutes later Lucia cried out, "There now! It's all over. She has entered Heaven. The doors have closed."

The people turned their eyes back to the blessed holm oak and were surprised to see the highest branches, which before were standing upright, now inclined towards the east, as if they had been trod upon. The onlookers then began to break off the branches and leaves from the holm oak. Lucia asked that they take only the lower branches, as they had not been touched by Our Lady. Someone suggested that everybody say the Rosary before leaving, but because some had come such a long way, they said only the Litany at the Cova; then departing in a group, they recited the Rosary together on their way home.

When they reached the village of Fatima, even though the procession in honor of Saint Anthony was in progress, they were immediately noticed. Of course they told everyone how happy they were for having gone to the Cova instead of remaining in the village for the feast, and many felt sorry for themselves, not having done the same.

Maria da Capelinha recalls that evening being questioned by her daughters. "When I said that I was sorry they had not been there also, they decided to go with me next Sunday, which they did. On that occasion, while we were saying the Rosary by the holm oak, we noticed two people going by and saying, 'Look, some people are already at the place where Our Lady appeared!' We hid behind some bushes then. The people placed carnations on the holm oak and knelt to say the Rosary. Since that day then, I began going every day to the Cova da Iria. At home I always felt so weak and helpless, but as soon as I reached the Cova, I felt like a different person. I removed all the stones that were there and pulled out or cut away the thickets and furze. I gave the place the shape of a round thrashing floor. I also tied a silk ribbon on the branches of the holm oak and I was the first one to place flowers there."

Not everyone who had been in the Cova da Iria left immediately after the Litany.



Some few remained to ask the children the details of the apparition. The little ones told what they were allowed to tell, but kept the rest to themselves. About four o'clock they left for home, followed by this reverent little group of people. Passers-by made fun of them. The children did not mind it for themselves, but it seemed the people were ridiculing Our Lady. "Lucia, has the Lady come again for a walk over the holm oaks?"

"Jacinta, didn't the Lady tell you anything this time?"

"What, you are still on earth! Haven't you gone to Heaven yet?" It was with a sigh of relief that Jacinta crossed through the doorway into her house.

There, however, the questioning continued. Her sisters asked all kinds of questions, but, made wise by past experience, Jacinta answered very cautiously. How she longed to go to her mother and tell the whole story, and that Our Lady promised to take her soon to Heaven. Yet some mysterious force made her hold her tongue. All three children felt the same obligation to silence. Jacinta, however, did feel free to speak easily about the entrancing beauty of the Lady.

"Was the Lady as beautiful as so-and-so?" her sisters asked.

"Much more beautiful!"

"Was She like the little statue in church, with the mantle of stars?"

"No, She was very much more beautiful!"

"As beautiful as Our Lady of the Rosary?"

"Much more beautiful."

Her sisters and mother began to show her pictures of all the saints they had in the parlor, but the beauty of the Lady she had seen was greater than all and could not be compared with any of them. But, they insisted, "What did the Lady tell you this time?"

Jacinta lowered her head, repeating, "She said it is necessary to say the Rosary... She said She will return and She told us a secret that we cannot tell."

A secret! A secret! What could it be? From that moment on, Jacinta never again had peace. Everyone tried to pry it out of her. Her good father was the only exception. "All the women wanted to know what it might be," he said, "but I never bothered her. A secret is a secret and has to be kept. I remember once that some ladies came, all decked out in their jewels. They asked Jacinta if she liked their gold chains and bracelets."

"I like them," she admitted.

"Would you like to have them?"

"Yes."

"Then tell us the secret!" and they pretended to take off the jewels. But the child was all worried and cried out, "Don't! Don't! Take them away! I won't tell a thing. I won't tell the secret even if you gave me the whole world."

Another time, Maria das Neves and her niece were talking to Jacinta alone in the house. "Look here, Jacinta," the woman said, "tell me the secret and I will give you this chain of gold beads!"

"If you give me that lovely medal, hanging around your niece's neck," Jacinta playfully answered, "I'll tell you."

"Oh, but I couldn't give you that one for it's hers."

"But I'll give it to you," the niece cut in.

"I was only fooling," replied Jacinta, "I don't want it. I wouldn't tell the secret for the whole world."

The evening of the apparition, Lucia's sisters kept after her, trying to know her secrets. Disappointed, they threatened her with all kinds of evil. They spoke of the coming session with the Pastor and the punishment if she insisted on her silence even

with him. The frightened girl went over to her cousins' home to warn them. "Tomorrow we will see the priest. I am going with mother. My sisters have been trying to scare me," Lucia said.

"We're going, too," Jacinta told her, "but mother hasn't tried to scare us with any of those things. But if they do beat us, we will suffer it for love of Our Lord and for sinners."

However, the next morning when the children reached the rectory, the Pastor and his sister received them graciously. The Pastor hoped to settle his doubts. He thought that if Our Lady really appeared, She must have given the children an important message, and he felt he had a right to know it. Jacinta was the first to be questioned. She bowed her head before the priest in complete silence. Francisco spoke only two or three words. Lucia, however, did tell the Pastor something of what happened.

"It is not possible that Our Lady would come down from Heaven just to tell us that the Rosary should be said every day," remarked the Pastor. "This practice is followed almost by the whole parish. As a rule, when things of this sort happen, Our Lord directs the souls that He speaks with to give a full account to their pastors or confessors. This child holds back as much as she can. This could be a trick of the devil. Time will tell us what attitude we must take."

The reticence of the children did not allow the Pastor to realize the worldwide import of the apparitions. Had Lucia said a little more, she might have at least destroyed the Pastor's doubts and regained peace. The children and the Pastor were caught in a whirlwind. Our Lady's promise to Lucia applied also to the Pastor, "You are going to suffer a great deal."

When Lucia left the rectory, she was very uneasy, very worried. Is this a trick of the devil? Is the priest right? Who am I to say the priest is wrong? The child was terribly upset. "I began to doubt the manifestations then lest they might have come from the devil who wanted to destroy my soul. Since I heard that the devil always brings trouble and disorder, I began to think that, in truth, I could find neither joy nor peace in our home since I had seen these things. How unhappy I was... I told my cousins of this doubt and Jacinta quieted me 'Lucia, it is not the devil! Not at all! They say that the devil is very ugly and that he is under the earth in Hell. The Lady is so beautiful and we saw Her rise into Heaven.'"

Poor Lucia could not get the doubts out of her mind. So distraught was she, that she went as far as to consider saying that it was all a lie. Jacinta and Francisco, her angels of consolation, were always at hand to strengthen her. "Don't do it!" they urged her. "Don't you see that it is now that you are going to lie and lying is a sin!"

The encouraging words of her little cousins helped clear her mind. But doubts kept coming back with increasing force. One night, Lucia had a terrible dream. "I saw the devil laughing at me because he had deceived me, and he was struggling, trying to drag me into Hell. Seeing myself in his claws, I began to cry so loud, calling for Our Lady, that I woke my mother. Mother answered anxiously, asking what was the matter with me. I do not remember what I told her. What I do remember is that I could not fall asleep again that night since I was numbed with fear. This dream left my soul in a cloud of anguish and terrible fear."

The only place where Lucia could enjoy any semblance of peace was with her cousins near the holm oak.