The Daughter of the Regiment
(La fille du régiment)

by Gaetano Donizetti

Cast
MARIE (soprano)
MARQUISE (mezzo-soprano)
TONIO (tenor)
SERGEANT SULPICE (bass)
HORTENSIUS (bass)
CORPORAL (bass)
FARMER (tenor)
DUCHESSE DE CRAKENTORP (spoken role)
NOTARY (spoken role)
CHORUS: soldiers, peasants, guests of the Marquise

ACT I
An army camp site in the Tyrol

(An army camp site in Tyrol. At right a cottage, at left the outskirts of a village. In the rear the mountains. As the curtain rises, the Tyroleans are on observation on a hill. A group of women is kneeling in front of a statue of the Madonna. The Marquise of Berkenfield is sitting in a corner, sick with fright, supported by Hortensius who gives her smelling salts. In the distance, cannon shots are heard.)

No. 1. Introduction and Prayer

TYROLEAN SOLDIERS
Man the battle stations,
You’ve heard the command!
The foe is approaching,
We’ll make a stand.
Be on your guard.

WOMEN
Most holy virgin,
Graciously hear us,
We pray to Thee.
Stay ever near us,
Watch over me,
Protect our soldiers,
We pray to Thee.

HORTENSIUS (to the Marquise)
Be calm, I beg you, my dear lady,
Master your fear and take a deep breath.

MARQUISE
This is too much!
Surrounded by the foe!
Good Lord! My fate is worse than death!

SOLDIERS
Prepare yourself for battle
And be on guard!

WOMEN
Most holy virgin, etc….
A PEASANT (from the hill)
They are gone!
They are retreating!
The danger is past,
we are safe!

PEASANT WOMEN
Oh, what good news,
our prayers have been answered,
We are safe at last.

MARQUISE
How dreadful are the times of war
For such as me,
of rank and station!
Such discomfort and aggravation!
Life has no real style anymore!
No time for tea or social graces,
For musicale or fancy ball,
For royal hunts and sporting races.
For such as me the foe callously
Show no respect at all.

PEASANTS
No respect at all!

MARQUISE
I’ve been told the Frenchmen are inhuman,
Their soldiers are uncouth and bold,
That they seduce most any woman,
Let her be young, let her be old
(meaningfully) Or not so old!
I know (what will happen in my case,
I’m certain of what will befall,
For they are blind to beauty and virtue,
They will show no respect at all.

MARQUISE, CHORUS
O those terrible Frenchmen,
They’ll show no respect at all.

THE PEASANT
They won’t attack,
The enemy’s retreating!

HORTENSIUS, PEASANTS, SOLDIERS
They won’t attack!
They are retreating!

MARQUISE
And I hope they’ll never come back!
May those Frenchmen never come back.

ALL
The danger is over,
They will not attack,
The foe is retreating,
Their future is black.
They’ve taken a heating,
Happy days are hack.
All our tribulation.
At last shall cease,
And the population
Will taste the joys of peace.

MARQUISE
Will wonders never cease?

ALL
From now on our nation
Will prosper in peace!

MARQUISE
The danger is past,
Thank God, we’re safe.
Our noble name
Incurred no shame.

Dialogue

MARQUISE
My dear friends,
don’t abandon me!
My poor nerves are in a state!
Those terrible soldiers.

HORTENSIUS
I shall he here to defend you
and protect you, madame.

MARQUISE
Go! Make sure that there’s no more danger.
I shall wait for you
and above all, keep a careful eye on my carriage,
my gold and my jewels.

HORTENSIUS
Yes, madame.

MARQUISE
My friends,
I’ll stay close to you ...
I entrust myself to you.
Recitative

SULPICE
Holy smoke of a cannon!
How they’re running!
Those chicken-hearted rabbits!
How they’re shaking in their boots!
We’re here to bring them peace,
that at least they should know.
This proclamation makes it clear to ev’ryone.
All men will be protected,
if they do not resist and,
of course, all the women,
provided they are pretty.

MARIE (Off-stage)
La La lalalalalala!

SULPICE
Who is that?
O, that’s Marie,
our daughter,
the honor and glory,
the jewel of the Twenty-first!

No. 2. Duet

SULPICE
There she is, our Marie!
By heaven, she is lovely!
What other regiment
can boast of possessing such a daughter!

MARIE
And I am proud.
All of you brought me up,
it’s you who gave me love and friendship
as my guardians in my childhood years.

SULPICE (joyfully)
So we did.

MARIE
It was you who acted as my father and my
family so very well.

SULPICE
So we did.

MARIE
And if I may say so,
I think I have been worthy of you.

SULPICE
Yes, you have made us all very proud of you.

MARIE
Because I am brave.
I have the heart of a grenadier!
The thunder of battle was my cradlesong,
I live like a soldier
And here in the camp is where I belong.
I march with my regiment
And hold my head high,
“For emp’ror and country”
Is my battle cry.
For glory,
for vict’ry, for France
I would die.

SULPICE
I must confess,
her education,
All that she knows she owes to me.
No other girl in all creation
Can ever hold a candle to Marie.

MARIE
The thunder of battle, etc…

SULPICE
I praise the day when Providence decided
to trust you to our loving care,
The day your laughter broke the silence
Of our camp, ringing through the air.

MARIE
Each one of you, a tender father,
Gave me rides upon his back.

SULPICE
So we did.

MARIE
And my bunk,
as befits a soldier’s little girl,
Was an army trunk.

SULPICE
Where you would lie in peaceful sleep

MARIE
There I would lie in peaceful sleep

BOTH
To the sound of the rolling drum.
MARIE
But that is past,
now that I’m older
Ev’ry man gives me his salute.

SULPICE
As is expected of doting fathers
Showing you their due respect.

MARIE
On marches or on days of battle I’m on duty,
rain or shine —

SULPICE
To help and bring the wounded comfort,
Poring out a cup of wine.

MARIE
And later on in time of leisure,
Who entertains you with a song?

SULPICE
Whose friendly smile gives us pleasure?
That’s right, it’s no one but Marie.

MARIE
But to show the men that I was worthy
And to prove to them what I could do,
I became a true vivandièrè.

SULPICE
Appointed unanimously, too.

MARIE
You bet!

BOTH
Vivandièrè, appointed by complete acclaim!

MARIE
And what is more, if I were needed,
I’d even march with all you men.

SULPICE
She would even march!

MARIE
Yes, I’d even brave a hail of bullets
And just like you, I’d go and fight.

SULPICE
She would go and fight.

MARIE
They say I take after my father.
I surely do.

SULPICE
Yes, indeed you do.

MARIE
Banners high!

SULPICE
Banners high!

MARIE
That’s our battle cry!

BOTH
Banners high!

MARIE
The thunder of battle was my cradlesong!
The call of the trumpet, the roll of the drum!
Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan,
Forward march!

SULPICE
The roll of the drum, here we come!

MARIE
Present arms!
Salute and forward march!

Dialogue

SULPICE
Our men tell me that lately you seem to be
avoiding them.

MARIE
Well, there is a young man, a Tyrolean,
who saved my life.

SULPICE
Who saved your life?
How is that, please?

MARIE
I’ll tell you:
No. 3. Chorus and Song of the Regiment

SOLDIERS (pushing Tonio)
Come on! come on!
Move! Move!
Wretch that you are!
March! March!
Son of a dog!
You have spied all around the camp!

MARIE (noticing Tonio)
O, my God, it’s Tonio, yes it is!

SULPICE
Drag him in here!

MARIE (to the soldiers)
Let him go!
(softly to Sulpice)
It’s he!

SULPICE
I see, it’s the young man who loves you.

TONIO (aside)
There is Marie. What will I do now?

MARIE (softly to Tonio)
What has brought you to our camp?

TONIO (softly to Marie)
What else but you, my dearest love?

SOLDIERS
He’s a traitor,
Agitator,
He came here to prowl and spy.
Now or later
He must die.

MARIE
Not so fast, wait just a moment!
Hear me out!

SOLDIERS
He’s a traitor,
And a traitor must be punished,
He must die.

MARIE
No, he won’t!
He has saved me from mortal danger.

SOLDIERS
What’s she saying?

SULPICE
Is that true?

SOLDIERS
Explain what he has done.

MARIE
One day, I climbed a craggy mountain.
I would have fallen to my death,
He rescued me at risk of his own life.
Now do you still want to kill him?

SULPICE, SOLDIERS
No indeed, not at all.

SULPICE
If this is true, then he is welcome,
He’ll be our friend.

TONIO
I’m very glad. For as your friend
I can come here, and then I can be near
The girl I love and treasure.

SULPICE
And now my friends, let us honor the man
Who saved Marie from mortal danger.
Fill your cup, and drink to him who saved her life.

SOLDIERS
A toast to him who saved her life.

SULPICE
A round of rum!
We’ll celebrate her rescue!

SOLDIERS
We’ll celebrate her rescue!

SULPICE
Let’s drink to Bavaria
Which we will conquer soon.

TONIO
No, no, not that!
I’d rather break my glass!

SOLDIERS
What was that?
TONIO
Here’s to France
And all my gallant friends!

SOLDIERS
Here’s to glory and to vict’ry!
To France and all you friends.

SULPICE (to Marie)
But to complete the celebration
You have to sing the song we love.
The song of our regiment,
The Twenty-first.

TONIO, SOLDIERS
Go ahead! Go ahead!
And sing the Regimental song.

Song of the Regiment

MARIE
When vict’ry’s won
And peace has come,
Then ev’ry man Gets a decoration.
Lay down your gun,
Put down your sword,
Take up the plough
In peaceful occupation.
Yes, ev’ry man,
Each grenadier,
Each one a hero.
We have no peer.
Champions in war,
Champions in love,
Past comparing.
In the East, in the West, etc…

(A drum roll is heard.)

SULPICE
They are sounding the call!
On your way,
Ev’ryone must obey
The military rule.

(to Tonio)
And now, my boy, out of here.

MARIE
The prisoner is mine,
I will vouch for him.

SULPICE
Well, that is up to you.
Come and join the men.

SULPICE, SOLDIERS
When the call is sounding,
We all must obey.
When the drums are pounding,
Quick, it’s up and away.
On the eve of battle
Be of good cheer,
Let the sabres rattle,
Victory is near.
On the eve of battle
Be carefree, be gay,
Never mind tomorrow,
We live for today.

SULPICE
(spoken over music)
Are you coming, Marie?
MARIE
*(shakes her head “no”)*

SULPICE
You’re pouting?

MARIE *(nods)*

SULPICE
As you wish, my daughter. *(leaves)*
Ah, what a nasty disposition!
*(The soldiers leave with Tonio.)*

**Recitative**

MARIE
They have dragged him away by brutal force.
And I had to let him go!
So he could see me just once again,
he has risked his life.
*(noticing Tonio coming down the mountain)*

MARIE
It’s you!

TONIO
Here I am again!

MARIE
You came back!

TONIO
I pretended to go with them
and I let them believe it.
But at the first chance
I turned round and fled.
That old sergeant let out an awful curse.

MARIE
My father!

TONIO
Not your father, no, that big fat oaf!

MARIE
He is my father.

TONIO
No, the old one.

MARIE
He is my father, too.

TONIO
But say, Marie, do you by any chance have as your father the entire regiment?

MARIE
Exactly, for the regiment has adopted me as their daughter.

TONIO
If that is so, the situation changes a lot.

MARIE
What do you mean?
Why did you come back when you could have escaped?

TONIO
Must I explain it?
You want to know the reason?
It’s because I love you and I would rather die than lose you.
You must believe, Marie, that I love you.

**No. 4. Duet**

MARIE
So, then, you love me?

TONIO
How can you ask me?
Hear me out.
Only wait, before you judge me.

MARIE *(smiling)*
All right, go ahead,
And let me be the judge.

TONIO
The very day you crossed my way
And I embraced you,
Forlorn and frightened,
Life was different.
My future brightened
And I loved you more than I can say.
MARIE  
Sir, you’re wrong.  
It’s imagination  
And that is all.

TONIO  
Only wait, you haven’t heard the end.  
You must believe my declaration.

MARIE  
All right, go ahead,  
And let me be the judge.

TONIO  
The lovely land I knew from childhood,  
And the friends that I cherished, too,  
All of this I would leak behind.  
I would gladly give them up for you.

MARIE (maliciously)  
To be indifferent and disloyal  
Is very shameful,  
That is all I have to say.

TONIO  
Away from you  
I could no longer bear to suffer  
In sheer despair.  
There was nothing I would not dare.  
I came here in the face of all danger.  
Made my way to this camp to see you,  
For without you I could no longer go on living.

MARIE  
If you’re really in love,  
It seems to me,  
You would want to go on living.  
Dear sir:  
Your pleading is so tender.  
Oh, say it once again.  
I’ll let my heart surrender,  
To love that’s so sincere.

TONIO  
Please let your heart surrender,  
Because I hold you dear.  
My love is true and tender,  
Undying and sincere.

MARIE  
Your words are so appealing I cannot help respond.  
They touch my deepest feeling,  
They speak of love so fond.

TONIO  
To you I am appealing,  
I beg you to respond.  
Your words are so appealing.  
They speak to me of love.  
You must believe how much I love you.  
But do you love…

MARIE  
Then let me tell you.

TONIO  
Well, then, go ahead,  
And let me be the judge.

MARIE  
Before I met you, I was flirtatious,  
I took pleasure in being coy.  
That is over, and I’m beginning  
To know another kind of joy.  
Until today I loved to fight the foe.  
Now I am happy to surrender  
To an enemy I know.  
On that day in the mountains  
When you appeared  
And saved me from certain death.  
You gave to me this lovely fragrant flower,  
A magic charm that never lost its power.  
And since that day I kept it near my heart.  
Do you still doubt me,  
do you believe me?

TONIO  
I believe you!

MARIE  
Your pleading is so tender,  
Oh, say it once again,  
I’ll let my heart surrender  
To love that’s so sincere.
TONIO
Please let your heart surrender
Because I hold you clear.
My love is true and tender,
Undying and sincere.
With you I want to share my life.
You must become my wife.

MARIE, TONIO
You’re mine forever,
We’ll soon be man and wife,
We’ll lead a happy life.
I’m yours forever,
We’ll soon be man and wife,
We’ll lead a happy life.

Dialogue
SULPICE
(surprising them at the moment when Tonio embraces Marie)
Ah! Damn it all! Again that Tyrolean!
(Marie and Tonio leave.)

HORTENSIUS
There’s the French officer I was telling you about.
Don’t be afraid — he’s awfully ugly, but a very pleasant fellow.

MARQUISE
It’s just his uniform that upsets me so!

HORTENSIUS
(presenting the Marquise to Sulpice)
This is Madame the Marquise who desires to speak to you.

SULPICE
Ah — Madame the Marquise.

MARQUISE
Yes, captain.

SULPICE (aside)
Thanks. They are promoting me damned quickly.

HORTENSIUS
This is what it is about: Madame —

SULPICE
Silence in the ranks.
Madame will do me the honor of telling me.

MARQUISE
Dear captain —

SULPICE (aside)
Thank you.

MARQUISE
I have decided to give up my journey and return to my chateau, but our mountains are full of soldiers, and I am afraid.

SULPICE
You are very gracious, Madame Marquise.

MARQUISE
Therefore I thought that the French, being as chivalrous as they are brave, would not refuse a request from you to protect me as far as my chateau.

SULPICE
How far is it from here?

MARQUISE
From that mountain you can see the towers of Berkenfield.

SULPICE
Of Ber —

HORTENSIUS
— kenfield.

SULPICE
Beg pardon, Madame, what’s the name of your chateau?

MARQUISE
Berkenfield, of course, the same name as mine.

SULPICE (bursting out)
You! Damn it — could it be — ah, forgive me!

MARQUISE
What are you trying to say?
SULPICE
That name sounds very much like Robert’s name.

MARQUISE
Captain Robert!

SULPICE
You knew him?

MARQUISE (animatedly)
Very well, indeed, sir.
(recollecting herself)
I mean to say — not I — but a member of my family.
My sister.
Yes, captain, it was my sister, who knew him very well.

SULPICE
And this sister —

MARQUISE
She is no longer alive.
But from her marriage to this Frenchman a child was born.

SULPICE (excitedly)
A daughter!

MARQUISE
How did you know?
Indeed a poor child that the captain placed in my guardianship before he died.
But the old servant to whom the baby was entrusted also lost his life.
So the sole heiress to my fortune and my name...

SULPICE
Your niece?

MARQUISE
Who today would he a baroness — was lost, abandoned, trampled upon in the crowd — died, the poor little thing.

SULPICE
Saved, saved! Madame Krikenfield, saved, thanks to us!

MARQUISE
Ah, dear heaven, sir — help me, sir!

SULPICE
Saved, I tell you! By brave men.

MARQUISE
You know her, then?

SULPICE
Do I know her!

HORTENSIUS
Where is she?

SULPICE
Right nearby.

MARQUISE
Ah, captain, give me hack my niece, my child.
Take me to her.
For you have proof, have you not?

SULPICE
Proof! (opening his pouch)
I have it — a letter I have never been able to read.

MARQUISE
But one word more, sir.
This child, is she worthy of me and of the Berkenfield name?

SULPICE
(continuing to rummage in his pouch)
of the Berken — I should say so.

MARQUISE
She was brought up —

SULPICE
On solid principles.
She is very distinguished.

MARIE
(enters, chasing a soldier who has been stealing her cooking pot)
Damn you!

SULPICE
There she is.

MARQUISE
I have read it all, sir.
This letter is definitely from Captain Robert.
MARIE
What’s that lady talking about?

SULPICE
She says, she says, my child — that you are her niece — and she is your aunt.
*(pushes her into the arms of the Marquise)*

MARIE (explosively)
My aunt — you are my aunt? Impossible. Ah, hell!

MARQUISE
Dear Heaven! She swears.

HORTENSIUS
What an upbringing!

MARIE
All right — I’m going to introduce my father to you, the whole regiment.

MARQUISE
Later, perhaps. *(softly to Hortensius)*
It is necessary to take her away from these people here.

HORTENSIUS *(softly)*
As quickly as possible.

MARQUISE
Hortensius, ask for horses immediately. Mademoiselle Marie, it is necessary that you assume the title and rank belonging to you. And you will come with me immediately.

MARIE
Come with you — abandon them, my friends?

MARQUISE
I desire it and, if need be, I insist on it.

MARIE
And by what right, Madame?

MARQUISE (with emotion)
By the right your unfortunate father gave me, when he died.

MARIE
My father!

MARQUISE
Read what he wrote to me.

MARIE *(reading)*
Tomorrow, perhaps, I will no longer be alive. I entrust my daughter to your hands. She has no one in the world but you to depend on.
*(softening, to the Marquise)*
Ah, Madame!

SULPICE *(moved, to Marie)*
Come on, courage, you must!

MARIE
Well, then, I shall have, but you will all come with me, all of you.

HORTENSIUS
Merciful heaven! A regiment!

MARQUISE
We shall see about that. Come, dear niece! Hurry up, Hortensius!

SULPICE
Hurry up, Hortensius!
*(A drum roll is heard. The soldiers are rushing in from all sides.)*

No. 5. Chorus

CORPORAL, SOLDIERS
Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan! To the rhythmical beat
Of the fife and drum
We are marching, here we come! Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan.
Forward march, here we come. We march along with colors flying
We are the gallant soldiers of the Twenty-first! Fearless and strong,
In faith undying, We march proudly to battle
While cannon and rifle shots burst. Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan!
Dialogue

CORPORAL
Who is coming there? Eh!
It is the young peasant from this morning.
A new recruit — a new soldier!

TONIO (appears)
Yes it is true, I am a soldier!
I got my uniform today.
Here is my cap, I proudly wear it,
I’m one of you as of today.
My love inspired me to dare it,
Love alone has shown me the way.
To win her who won my admiration
I have chosen this new vocation.
It’s my only aim in life,
That she will consent to be my wife.

CORPORAL
It seems to me our friend is in love!

TONIO
I ask for the hand of your daughter.

SOLDIERS
What? You want to marry Marie?

TONIO
Listen to me, please
You are her father, listen to me,
For I know it depends on you
To let me marry Marie.

SOLDIERS
We can never allow our daughter
To wed a man who has been our foe.
No, we can’t let her fall so low.
She cannot marry you,
No, never!

TONIO
So you refuse?

SOLDIERS
Yes, we refuse.
Because her hand is promised
To one of us alone.

TONIO
But, my friends, hear me out.
I am one of you.
You are her father,
Therefore I beg you,
Hear me out.

SOLDIERS
That will not do.

TONIO
But your daughter loves me!

SOLDIERS (surprised)
How can that be? It can’t be true.

TONIO
Yes, she loves me, I tell you!

SOLDIERS
You say that she loves you?

TONIO
Yes, she loves me with all her heart.

SOLDIERS
This suitor, what of him?
Since she seems to love him,
Should we like a father
Consent on the spot?
But why must she marry
Some Tom, Dick or Harry?
It is just too had
And it makes us mad!
He is such a greenhorn!
How shall we take action?
To whose satisfaction?
She’s so far above hint,
Why then must she love him?
Such a stupid clod!
She deserves a god!

TONIO
What’s your answer?

CORPORAL
If that is so, we give you our consent.

SOLDIERS
Yes, we are giving you our consent.
TONIO (enthusiastically)
Day of glory, day of joy!
I’m a lucky, a lucky boy!
I have won her, won Marie,
I’m a soldier and a husband-to-be!

SOLDIERS
But will you love her
And protect her forever?

TONIO
I swear I will!

SOLDIERS
Do you swear that’s the truth?

TONIO
Day of glory, day of joy, etc….

No. 7. Finale

TONIO
At last I have achieved my goal.
Marie and I can marry!

SULPICE
Sorry, she can’t marry without express permission from her aunt who will take her away.

SOLDIERS
Take our daughter away?
What do you mean, how so?

TONIO
She can’t take her away,
For she belongs to me.
I will not let her go.

MARIE
Yes, I must leave.

Romance

He spoke the truth, my friends,
I have to leave you!
I part from you with heavy heart
But when I’m gone you must not let it grieve you.
No more tears, no regrets,
That will be my consolation,
A last farewell.
How I hate this separation,
Dear friends, good-by!

TONIO, SULPICE, CORPORAL
All of my joy goes with Marie.

TONIO
Nothing is left in life for me.

SULPICE, CORPORAL
What greater loss could ever he?

MARIE
I cannot bear to say good-by
To all I cherish,
To my childhood, to those for whom I care.
All the joys of my life that we share,
Now are over.
Instead of love and friendship
They offer me riches.
But I must leave!
Ah, no more tears, no regrets,
Think of me always.
Good-by, my friends, good-by!

TONIO
Ah, my dear friends, don’t let her go!
Please find a way, she must not leave,
Don’t let her go!

CORPORAL, SULPICE
How sad to lose our dearest child,
I can’t believe that this is so!

SOLDIERS
Marie, don’t go! no, don’t go!

TONIO
Ah, I will follow you if you go!

SULPICE
No, you can’t leave us now,
For you are one of us!
MARIE
Must you stay, Tonio?

TONIO
Yes, my beloved!

MARIE
To lose you now will break my heart!

TONIO
I love you, Marie!

MARIE
To lose you, on the day
When you were to be my husband!

TONIO
I love you, I love you!

SULPICE
He must stay with us.

MARIE
Why did you have to join them now,
Tonio dear?

TONIO
I did it for you, my love, for you!

SULPICE
We must part from Marie,
What a horrible day!
The devil with that woman
Who is stealing her away!

SOLDIERS
We must part from Marie, etc....

SULPICE, SOLDIERS
She who always was near us
Through the good and the bad,
She who knew how to cheer us,
Through the good and the bad!
Marie was our guardian angel,
The greatest luck we ever had!

MARIE, TONIO
Ah, there’s no more hope,
There’s no more future.
All our joy lasted but one day.
How can I live my life without you,
My one and only love?

SOLDIERS
To hell with that woman!

TONIO
My heart is yours, Marie, forever.
Before long I shall follow you,
No one can keep me away from you.

MARQUISE
Marie, we’re leaving,
We must get started,
The coach is here, we must depart.
Marie, we’re waiting, don’t delay,
Make haste, come on, make haste,
There is no time to waste.

MARIE
Tonio, don’t forget me,
My dear Tonio, farewell!

HORTENSIOUS
We must depart, we must move on,
The coach is waiting.
My dear Madame, make haste.

SULPICE, SOLDIERS
Enough, my child,
And no more weeping.
Salute your daughter,
That’s more in keeping.
The devil with that woman who is stealing her away.
And now it’s time,
That we march on our way.

(The drums are beating in the camp. The soldiers present arms to Marie, commanded by Sulpice who is wiping his eyes. Marie, weeping, waves good-by to them. Tonio throws his soldier’s cap to his feet in despair. Tableau.)

End of Act I
ACT II

(large drawing room
in the Chateau Berkenfield)

Dialogue

MARQUISE (alone)
Finally the marriage is settled.
She’ll he married to one of the greatest lords in
Germany.
One hundred and fifty branches in his family
tree.
Marie should be happy enough with that.

SULPICE
Your old steward said that you were asking for
me.

MARQUISE
Come here, come closer. I allow it.
You are a good man, a good soldier, Sulpice.

SULPICE
I should think so, damn it!

MARQUISE
Marie listens to you, you have her confidence.
You have helped me to make her more docile.
Thanks to my efforts, her rough bearing
and her soldierly manners have almost entirely
disappeared.
And I have been able to choose a husband for
her
who is one of the most illustrious nobles of
Bavaria,
the Duke of Krakentorp.

SULPICE
And Marie, I mean Mademoiselle Marie?

MARQUISE
She has consented — but not with the
enthusiasm
I would have desired.
Therefore I count on you to give her courage.
This very evening we shall sign the contract
which we will send to the Duke at the court.

SULPICE
Once a vivandière, now a future duchess!

MARQUISE
Quiet! Some of our noble compatriots,
envious of this union,
after having done everything in their power
to discourage the duchess,
keep insisting that Marie is awkward and badly
brought up.
I want to astound them by showing off her
graces, her talents.
I want Marie’s char rung voice to de-light them,
to overwhelm them.
Hush! Here she comes.
(Marie enters.)
Come here, come here, my child!
(She embraces her.)

Recitative

MARQUISE
We have found the chanson which you are to
perform.
It’s absolutely charming, “Venus comes down.”

SULPICE
My dander’s going up.

MARQUISE
What did you say?

SULPICE
I? That it’s dandy!

MARQUISE
Venus comes down in a veil of shadows
to see the god whom she’s chosen to love.
The music is by Maestro Calfariello.

MARIE
Sulpice, say something.

SULPICE
Delightful!

MARQUISE
Well, then, Marie, my silly girl,
don’t just stand there!
Here is your music.
I will accompany.
Now let’s begin.
No. 8 Terzet

MARIE
The grove lay still and cool at dawning,
As Venus from the sky above …

SULPICE (aside)
Yes, from the sky, just like a dove.

MARIE
Came down in tender mists of morning
To seek the object of her love.

SULPICE (softly to Marie)
Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan,
That’s the song we used to sing.

MARIE
Rataplan, rataplan, rataplan,
That’s the song we used to sing.

MARQUISE
Indeed, what does this mean?

MARIE
Dear aunt, I beg your pardon,
I suppose my attention strayed,

SULPICE
I suppose her attention strayed.

MARQUISEx
You’re doing well, don’t be dismayed.

MARIE
Ah, excuse me, dear aunt.
And this god, on whom the goddess Venus
Had bestowed her love.…

SULPICE
Rataplan, rataplan

MARIE
Bestowed her favor …

MARQUISEx
(spoken)
Go on, dear!

MARIE
Bestowed her favor and her love,

SULPICE
The prize of love past comparing.

MARIE
The prize of love past comparing.
In the East, in the West, we’re the best, by far,
Yes we are, yes we are, we’re the best, by far,
We’re the cream of the crop, we’re the top.
We’re the fabulous Twenty-First.

MARIE, SULPICE (aside)
This silly song’s not even pretty,
There’s no melody you can hum.
I prefer a little ditty
With the thrilling beat of a drum.

MARQUISEx (aside)
Oh, mon dieu, that’s all wrong.
In my song there’s no drum.

MARIE, SULPICE
What a bore!

MARQUISEx
Let us go on.

MARIE
I wish I could, but I guess
I am much too dumb. (continuing)
Philomel grieved for her faithless lover,
And then, as morning mist will rise …

MARQUISEx (prompting)
The lonely valley ...

MARIE
The lonely valley was resounding

MARQUISEx
With the wail of her ...

MARIE
With the wail of her plaintive sighs.

SULPICE (softly to Marie)
Who cares for sighs of Philomel.
The devil may take her plaintive sighs.

MARQUISEx
Marie dear, let us sigh together.
Tralalalalalalalala

MARIE (gaily)
Tralalalalalalalala
MARQUISE
That is much too fast,
That is not the tune, no, no no!

MARIE
Lalalalaaaaa!

MARQUISE (spoken)
No coloratura, please!

SULPICE
But it sounds good to me.

MARIE (softly)
Tralalala! Ah!

MARQUISE
Sing loud.

MARIE
Ah!

MARQUISE
Not quite so loud. That’s good!
That’s bad! That’s worse

MARIE
Ah! That’s enough, I give up.
In the regiment at least we sang the way we liked.

MARQUISE
Mon dieu! How can you say that,
How unrefined!

MARIE, SULPICE
Here we come, here we come.
That is the regimental song.
Let us march to the beat of the drum,
Rataplan, to the beat of the drum!

MARQUISE
What a disgrace, I can’t believe it,
That goes too far!
To mix up a song so pretty
With a military ditty,
With a vulgar soldier song.

MARIE, SULPICE
Forward march! Twenty-first!
Here we come!

MARQUISE
Oh, what a shock, a vulgar ordinary song!

MARIE, SULPICE
That is the regimental song.

Dialogue

MARQUISE
All this puts my nerves in a terrible state!
Really, Sulpice, it’s your fault, you encourage her!

SULPICE
Certainly. It’s a bit dull here.

MARQUISE
Moreover, today I have gathered together
the most noble personalities of the country,
titles equal to my own.
Be reasonable, my child,
come along, embrace me,
hold yourself straight,
raise your head — there — like that!
What a pretty duchess you’ll make!
Sulpice, come with me!
She is charming.
(She leaves with Sulpice.)

No. 9. Song

MARIE (alone)
There’s no more hope. I must do as they say.
Here I am alone, I see no other way.
They have given me wealth and a title,
They thought I would be impressed.
Instead I live in by-gone memory,
All my dreams and hopes are laid to rest.
Beneath the jewels and the laces,
I bury my grief and despair.
What use are beauty, frills and graces,
When my beloved is not here?
Where are you now, my dearest Tonio,
You are far away from your bride.
I’d give my rank and all my riches,
If you were only here at my side.
Before very long the guests will be arriving.
There is no other way,
I must sign this hateful contract.
(The sound of a military drum is heard.)
It’s the sound of a drum!
Or is it a dream?
The drums and the trumpet, I know the sound so well
Ah, it’s true,
Here they are, all my friends,
All my friends, ever faithful,
Bringing back the days of the past!
They are here, to a marl,
All my comrades in arms.
Come back, all you golden days
When I was happy,
Those thrilling olden days,
Glorious and carefree!
Here’s to friendship and happiness,
The good times I knew,
To daring adventure
And love that is true!
I’ll always remember
The days of my glory!

SOLDIERS
(entering from all sides)
Our daughter, we have found you,
All your friends from the past,
All your friends and your fam’ly,
We have found you at last.

MARIE
I’m so glad, dearest friends,
Here’s a hug and a kiss,
I’m so happy to see you,
Ah, all is not yet lost.
My dear friends, what a surprise!
Come back, all you golden days, etc….

Dialogue

SULPICE
Our friends, our comrades are here!

SOLDIERS
Sulpice! Sulpice!

MARIE
Tonio!

SULPICE
I salute you, officer!
And those poor soldiers, we must have them drink to your health.

HORTENSIUS
Woe is me! Soldiers again!

MARIE
Hortensius, hurry and bring my aunt’s best and oldest wine!

HORTENSIUS
Certainly not!

SULPICE
You heard the order! March!
(The soldiers leave.)

No. 10 Terzet

MARIE, TONIO, SULPICE
Here we are, all the three,
You and I, you and he,
I was never so glad and excited!
Is it you, is it true?
What a joy, once again reunited!
It’s too good to be true,
I can hardly believe,
We’re together again.

SULPICE
Those were the days.

TONIO
We were so happy.

MARIE
I missed you so!

SULPICE
You went away.

TONIO
But now we are once more together.

MARIE
The good old days are here again,
It is just like the good old days!

MARIE, TONIO, SULPICE
Here we are, all the three, etc….

TONIO
You have to speak for me.
MARIE
You have to speak for him.

MARIE, TONIO
I ask that much of you.

TONIO
You know what you must do.

MARIE
It now is up to you.

SULPICE
But, but, but, but
There’s something you don’t know.
Let me explain!

MARIE
Since I am sure he loves me,

TONIO
And since I have her love,

MARIE
And since I love him too,
You have to speak for him.

TONIO
It now is up to you.

MARIE
How can I love another,
When he loves me, too?

SULPICE
Oh, damn it, listen to me!

MARIE, TONIO, SULPICE
Here we are, all the three, etc…

No. 11. Romance

TONIO
Indeed I enlisted in the army
So that I could be near Marie.
And for her sake I’ve risked ev’ry danger.
But in my mind there was a doubt that troubled me:
Just suppose that her new-found riches and station
Should change this angel I adore.
If she no longer chose to love me,
I could not hear to go on living any-more.
So here I am to claim my darling.
With due respect to you, madame.
I know that we belong together.
Please believe how sincere I am!
We two are made for one another,
She is the one whom I adore.
If I were ever forced to lose her,
I could not bear to go on living anymore.

Dialogue

MARQUIS (to Tonio)
Monsieur, my niece is already promised.
Within an hour the contract will he signed.
I must ask you to leave this house instantly.
Sulpice, you stay here!

SULPICE
I?

MARQUIS
We are alone, Sulpice, you are an honest man.
You would not want to ruin a poor woman
who is confiding in you.

SULPICE
On my honor as a soldier, I wouldn’t.
MARQUISE
My family’s exceptionally high station, their desire to have me marry a man worthy of my name, condemned me to remain single far beyond the age when other girls of my station are usually married.
I was thirty years old, and though still beautiful, I was unmarried.

SULPICE (aside)
Poor girl.

MARQUISE
Captain Robert saw me and was attracted by....

SULPICE
They say that he was....

MARQUISE
Charming. I loved him, and despite my horror of a misalliance, I would have given him my hand, if his departure on a new campaign had not separated us abruptly at Geneva where I had followed him in my weakness.

SULPICE
Ah, ah.

MARQUISE
Some time later I waited for him in this chateau, but I returned here alone, without her....

SULPICE
Her? Who?

MARQUISE
My daughter.

SULPICE
Marie!

MARQUISE
My daughter, whose birth I had to conceal in order to prevent my life from being ruined.

SULPICE (aside)
Yes, yes, I begin to see it all.

MARQUISE
Do you understand, now, why, surrounded by a nobility so proud and haughty, I tremble that my secret may be revealed before everyone? Do you also understand that I love Marie, and that to take her from me would mean taking my very life away?

SULPICE
She shall not be taken away from you, Madame.

(Music begins.)

MARQUISE
This marriage saves everything. It gives a name and a title to someone whom I cannot acknowledge.... Persuade Marie to agree, and I will be eternally grateful to you.

SULPICE
Trust in me, Madame. A soldier’s heart never deceives, never betrays.

HORTENSIUS
Madame, the noble guests are beginning to arrive, the notary is already waiting in the library.

MARQUISE (aside)
Ah, good Lord! What a moment!

HORTENSIUS (announcing)
The Duchess of Krackenthorp.

MARQUISE (going to meet her)
Ah, Duchess. My niece and I have been awaiting you most eagerly. I shall have the honor of presenting her to you presently.

THE DUCHESS
Is she not here?

MARQUISE
She will be... she is busy with her preparations. She wants so much to please you, dear Duchess.

THE NOTARY (producing the contract)
Is everybody present?
THE DUCHESS (sarcastically)
Everybody, except the future.... (furiously)
This is no way to behave
with the foremost nobility of the country!

MARQUISE (aside)
Ah, I am going to die!

DUCHESS
What an affront, what a scandal!
I, the Duchess of Krackenthorp!

No. 12 Finale

MARQUISE
Ah, there she is!

MARIE
(rushing toward her, her voice choked with emotion)
My mother!

MARQUISE
Marie, my child!

SULPICE
Be careful, ev’ryone is watching you.

DUCHESS
Well, my dear Marquise....

MARIE
Oh, I must obey....
The contract ... give it to me ...
I am ready.
(Noise is heard outside.)

ALL
What on earth, what is that dreadful noise?

TONIO (off-stage)
Ev’ryone come with me!

GUESTS
Who let these soldiers in?

SOLDIERS
(entering with Tonio)
We have come to help our daughter,
This is why you see us here.
Dear Marie, don’t be afraid,
We have come to take you back.
All your troubles now are over,
We are coming to your aid.

TONIO
We came to set you free,
We cannot let you marry
A man you do not love.
We cannot let you suffer
And leave you to your fate.
We came to set you free
Before it is too late.

SOLDIERS
We came to set you free!

GUESTS
What do you mean?

TONIO
It’s time you all should know it.

TONIO, SOLDIERS
Marie is no noble lady,
She’s the daughter of the regiment!

GUESTS
Past belief, not a noble lady,
She’s the daughter of the regiment.

SULPICE
Now all is lost!

GUESTS
Are you really?

MARIE
Yes, poor helpless baby, abandoned in wartime,
By luck I was left to the care of these men.
They were my family and my only parents,
They gave me shelter, love and a home.
Could I forget what they have done,
When I owe them my life and home?
GUESTS
The girl is very charming,
She has a noble heart,
She is honest and kind,
And I’m taking her part.

MARIE
Now you know all,
If I put my name to this contract

TONIO
What will she do?

MARIE
I would die.

MARQUISE
Dearest child, my dear Marie,
How you have suffered.
You must not sign it, do not sign.

GUESTS
I do not understand this.

MARQUISE
This is too much!
Marie is my daughter!
Now no more pride,
I give you the love of your choice,
He shall be your husband and my son!

MARIE
Tonio!

TONIO
Marie!

SULPICE
God bless her heart,
And if I dared, for what she did,
I’d give her a kiss!

MARIE, TONIO, SULPICE, SOLDIERS
A toast to the future,
To love and friendship,
May fortune smile on us,
And bring us luck!
Forever and ever!

MARIE
Here’s to friendship and happiness,
The good times I knew,
To daring adventure
And love that is true!
Here’s to you,
all you golden days,
When I was happy,
Those thrilling olden days,
Days of the past!

ALL
Forever and ever!

End of the opera