

(The POSTULANT kneels. The MOTHER ABBESS blesses her. There is a knock on the door U.R.) Ave!

(SISTER MARGARETTA enters U.R. SISTER SOPHIA and the new POSTULANT exit U.R.)

Start MARGARETTA: Maria has asked to see you. I know it has taken her a long time.

MOTHER ABBESS: I waited until she wanted to come to me.

MARGARETTA: It's strange. She's happy to be here—but she's unhappy, too.

MOTHER ABBESS: Why did they send her back—do you know?

MARGARETTA: She doesn't speak. She hasn't spoken except in prayer.

MOTHER ABBESS: I shall see her.

MARGARETTA: *(Crosses to the door)* Maria.

(MARIA enters, goes to the MOTHER ABBESS and kneels.)

MOTHER ABBESS: *(Blessing MARIA)* This must have been a trying experience for you.

MARIA: It was, Reverend Mother.

MOTHER ABBESS: Has it taught you anything?

MARIA: I've learned that I never want to leave these walls again.

MOTHER ABBESS: Why did they send you back to us?

MARIA: *(After a moment's hesitation)* They didn't send me back. I left. I left without telling them I was going, without saying goodbye.

MOTHER ABBESS: Sit down, Maria. *(MARIA sits by the desk.)* Maria, what happened? Why did you do this?

MARIA: I was frightened.

MOTHER ABBESS: Frightened?

MARIA: *(With difficulty)* I was confused. I felt—I never felt that way before. I couldn't stay—and I knew that here I would be away from it—that here I would be safe.

MOTHER ABBESS: Maria, our abbey is not to be used as an escape. What is it you can't face?

MARIA: I can't face him again.

MOTHER ABBESS: *(After a pause)* Thank you, Sister Margareta. *(SISTER MARGARETTA exits U.R. The MOTHER ABBESS stands behind MARIA. She puts her hands on MARIA's shoulders and speaks quietly.)* Maria, are you in love with Captain von Trapp?

MARIA: *(Torn)* I don't know. I don't know.

MOTHER ABBESS: Tell me about it, my child.

MARIA: *(With emotion)* Brigitta said that I was—and that her father was in love with me—and then there he was—and we were looking at each other—and I could hardly breathe. Then I knew I couldn't stay. *(She rises.)*

MOTHER ABBESS: But you do like him, Maria?

MARIA: Oh, yes!

MOTHER ABBESS: Did you let him see how you felt?

MARIA: *(Turning to her)* If I did I didn't know that I did. That's what's been torturing me. I was there on God's errand. To have asked for the Captain's love would have been wrong. I don't know, Mother. I do know this— *(She kneels before the MOTHER ABBESS.)* I am ready at this very moment to take the vows of poverty, obedience and—chastity.

MOTHER ABBESS: *(Helping MARIA to rise)* Maria, the love of a man and a woman is holy, too. The first time we talked together—you told me that you remembered your father and mother before they died. Do you remember—were they happy? *(She seats MARIA on the stool.)*

MARIA: Oh, yes, Mother, they were very happy.

MOTHER ABBESS: Maria, you were born of their happiness, of their love. And, my child, you have a great capacity to love. What you must find out is—how does God want you to spend your love. *(The MOTHER ABBESS sits at her desk.)*

MARIA: I've pledged my life to God's service. I've pledged my life to God.

MOTHER ABBESS: My daughter, if you love this man, it doesn't mean that you love God less. You must find out. You must go back.

MARIA: *(Rising)* Oh, no, Mother, please, don't ask me to do that. Please! Let me stay here. *(MARIA circles behind the desk and sinks at the feet of the MOTHER ABBESS.)*

MOTHER ABBESS: These walls were not made to shut out problems. You have to face them. You have to find the life you were born to live.

MARIA: How do I find it?

End MOTHER ABBESS: Look for it. *(Her arm around MARIA.*

She sings.) Climb every mountain

Search high and low

Follow every byway

Every path you know.

Climb every mountain

Ford every stream

Follow every rainbow

Till you find your dream.

A dream that will need all the love you can
give

Every day of your life for as long as you
live.

(The MOTHER ABBESS rises.)

Climb every mountain

Ford every stream

Follow every rainbow

Till you find your dream.

A dream that will need all the love you can
give

(She lifts MARIA to her feet.)