

MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN

A Chronicle of the 30 Years' War



by Bertolt Brecht
English Version by Eric Bentley

SAMUEL FRENCH

**Mother Courage and
Her Children:**
A Chronicle of the 30 Years' War

by Bertolt Brecht
English version by Eric Bentley

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

I began to translate *MOTHER COURAGE* sitting at Brecht's side while he directed the play in a Munich theatre. I had no script in my hand. I listened to the actors' German and jotted down English equivalents as they came to mind. That was in 1950. It was not until 1955 that I could publish a finished translation, which I did in volume two of my Modern Theatre series. I also included in that volume Paul Dessau's piano-vocal score (songs only) to which my lyrics had been made to fit.

Over the years I have changed that original Bentley Version a number of times at the behest of various publishers and producers, so that, in the end, there were several, if not more, Bentley Versions. Two are in print today. One, published by the Grove Press, is a rather close translation of the complete German text, with lyrics that fit the Dessau score.

The other, published herewith by Samuel French by arrangement with the Grove Press, is a stage version and indeed an adaptation made by me and the composer Darius Milhaud. But I did not fit lyrics to Milhaud music. He set to music freely written lyrics of mine. An adaptation is a new work, after all, and this adaptation, with its additional songs and abundant incidental music, moves the play in the direction of opera. It is hardly an American Musical. It is (German-French-English) musical theater.

--Eric Bentley
September 14, 2009

P.S. If a producer wants to use other than Milhaud music to this adaptation, he or she should consult Samuel French, Inc.

THE CHARACTERS

MOTHER COURAGE

EILIF
SWISS CHEESE } *her sons*

KATTRIN, *her daughter*
RECRUITING OFFICER
SERGEANT
COOK
COMMANDER
CHAPLAIN
ORDNANCE OFFICER
SERGEANT
YVETTE POTTIER
ONE EYE
SOLDIER
COLONEL
CLERK
OLDER SOLDIER
YOUNGER SOLDIER
FIRST SOLDIER
PEASANT
SECOND SOLDIER
PEASANT WOMAN
SOLDIER, *singing*
OLD WOMAN
YOUNG MAN
SOLDIER
LIEUTENANT
OLD PEASANT
FIRST SOLDIER
PEASANT WOMAN
SECOND SOLDIER
YOUNG PEASANT

THE TIME

1624-1636

THE PLACE

Sweden, Poland, Germany

This version of *Mother Courage* is dedicated to the memory of my friend and collaborator Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

PROLOGUE.

(The wagon of a vivandière.)

(MOTHER COURAGE sits on the wagon with her daughter **KATTRIN**. Her sons, **EILIF** and **SWISS CHEESE**, pull the wagon and join in the refrains of the song. **KATTRIN** plays a harmonica.)

Song -- The Song Of Mother Courage

MOTHER COURAGE, EILIF, AND SWISS CHEESE. *(singing)*

HERE'S MOTHER COURAGE AND HER WAGON!

HEY, CAPTAIN, LET THEM COME AND BUY!

BEER BY THE KEG! WINE BY THE FLAGON!

LET YOUR MEN DRINK BEFORE THEY DIE!

SABERS AND SWORDS ARE HARD TO SWALLOW:

FIRST YOU MUST GIVE THEM BEER TO DRINK.

THEN THEY CAN FACE WHAT IS TO FOLLOW –

BUT LET 'EM SWIM BEFORE THEY SINK!

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!

THE SNOWS DEPART, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.

AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE,

GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE!

YOUR MEN WILL MARCH TILL THEY ARE DEAD, SIR,

BUT CANNOT FIGHT UNLESS THEY EAT.

THE BLOOD THEY SPILL FOR YOU IS RED, SIR,

WHAT FIRES THAT BLOOD IS MY RED MEAT.

FOR MEAT AND SOUP AND JAM AND JELLY

IN THIS OLD CART OF MINE ARE FOUND:

SO FILL THE HOLE UP IN YOUR BELLY

BEFORE YOU FILL ONE UNDERGROUND.

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!

THE SNOWS DEPART, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.

AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE,

GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE!

1.

(Spring, 1624. In Dalarna, the Swedish king Gustavus is recruiting for the campaign in Poland. The canteen woman Anna Fierling, commonly known as **MOTHER COURAGE**, loses a son.)
(Highway outside a town. A **TOP SERGEANT** and a **RECRUITING OFFICER** stand shivering.)

RECRUITING OFFICER. How the hell can you line up a squadron in *this* place – You know what I keep thinking about, Sergeant? Suicide. I'm supposed to slap four platoons together by the twelfth – four platoons the Chief's asking for! And they're so friendly around here, I'm scared to sleep nights. Suppose I do get my hands on some character and squint at him so I don't notice he's chicken-breasted and has varicose veins. I get him drunk and relaxed, he signs on the dotted line. I pay for the drinks, he steps outside for a minute. I get a hunch I should follow him to the door, and am I right! Off he's shot like a louse from a scratch. You can't take a man's word any more, Sergeant. There's no loyalty left in the world, no trust, no faith, no sense of honor. I'm losing my confidence in mankind, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. What they could use around here is a good war. What else can you expect with peace running wild all over the place? You know what the trouble with peace is? No organization. And when do you get organization? In a war. Peace is one big waste of equipment. Anything goes, no one gives a damn. See the way they eat? Cheese on rye, bacon on the cheese? Disgusting! How many horses they got in this town? How many young men? Nobody knows! They haven't bothered to count 'em! That's peace for you!! I been places where they haven't had a war in seventy years and you know what? The people can't remember their own names! They don't know who they are! It takes a war to fix that. In a war everyone registers, everyone's name's on a list. Their shoes are stacked, their corn's in the bag, you count it all up – cattle, men, *et cetera* – and you take it away! That's the story: no organization, no war!

RECRUITING OFFICER. It's the God's truth.

SERGEANT. Course, a war's like every real good deal: hard to get going. But when it's on the road, it's a pisser – everybody's scared off peace – like a crap-shooter that keeps fading to cover his loss. Course, *until* it gets going, they're just as scared off war – afraid to try anything new.

RECRUITING OFFICER. Look, a wagon! Two women and a couple of young punks. Stop 'em, Sergeant. And if there's nothing doing this time, you won't catch *me* freezing my ass in the April wind.

(**MOTHER COURAGE** enters on her wagon and with **HER CHILDREN** as in the prologue.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Good day to you, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. (*barring the way*) Good day! Who d'you think you are?

MOTHER COURAGE. Tradespeople.

(*She prepares to go.*)

SERGEANT. Halt! Where are you from, riffraff?

EILIF. Second Protestant Regiment!

SERGEANT. Where are your papers?

MOTHER COURAGE. Papers?

SWISS CHEESE. But this is Mother Courage!

SERGEANT. Never heard of her. Where'd she get a name like that?

MOTHER COURAGE. In Riga.

EILIF & SWISS CHEESE. (*reciting together*) They call her Mother Courage because she drove through the bombardment of Riga with fifty loaves of bread in her wagon!

MOTHER COURAGE; They were going moldy, I couldn't help myself.

SERGEANT. No funny business! Where are your papers?

(**MOTHER COURAGE** rummages among papers in a tin box and clambers down from her wagon.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Here, Sergeant! Here's a whole Bible – I got it in Altötting to wrap my cucumbers in. Here's a map of Moravia – God knows if I'll ever get there. And here's a document saying my horse hasn't got hoof and mouth disease – too bad he died on us, he cost fifteen guilders, thank God I didn't pay it. Is that enough paper?

SERGEANT. Are you making a pass at me? Well, you got another guess coming. You must have a license and you know it.

MOTHER COURAGE. Show a little respect for a lady and don't go telling these grown children of mine I'm making at pass at you. What would I want with you? My license in the Second Protestant Regiment is an honest face – even if *you* wouldn't know how to read it.

RECRUITING OFFICER. Sergeant, we have a case of insubordination on our hands. (*to her:*) Do you know what we need in the army? (**MOTHER COURAGE** starts to answer.) Discipline!

MOTHER COURAGE. I was going to say sausages.

SERGEANT. Name?

MOTHER COURAGE. Anna Fierling.

SERGEANT. So you're all Fierlings.

MOTHER COURAGE. I was talking about me.

SERGEANT. And I was talking about your children.

MOTHER COURAGE. Must they all have the same name? This boy, for instance, I call him Eilif Noyocki – he got the name from his father who told me he was called Koyocki. Or was it Moyocki? Anyhow, the lad remembers him to this day. Only the man he remembers is someone else, a Frenchman with a pointed beard. But he certainly has his father's brains – that man could whip the pants off a farmer's behind before he could turn around. So we all have our own names.

SERGEANT. You're all called something different?

MOTHER COURAGE. Are you pretending you don't get it?

SERGEANT. (*pointing at SWISS CHEESE*) He's a Chinese, I suppose.

MOTHER COURAGE. Wrong again. A Swiss.

SERGEANT. After the Frenchman?

MOTHER COURAGE. Frenchman? What Frenchman? Don't confuse the issue, Sergeant, or we'll be here all day. He's a Swiss, but he happens to be called Feyos, a name that has nothing to do with his father, who was called something else – a military engineer, if you please, and a drunkard.

(**SWISS CHEESE** nods, beaming; even **KATTRIN** smiles.)

SERGEANT. Then how come his name's Feyos?

MOTHER COURAGE. Oh, Sergeant, you have no imagination. Of *course* he's called Feyos. When he came, I was with a Hungarian. He didn't mind. He had a floating kidney, though he never

touched a drop. He was a very *honest* man. The boy takes after him.

SERGEANT. But that wasn't his father!

MOTHER COURAGE. I said, he took after him. I call him Swiss Cheese. And that is my daughter Katrin Haupt, she's half German.

SERGEANT. A nice family, I must say!

MOTHER COURAGE. And we've seen the whole wide world together – this wagon-load and me.

SERGEANT. (*writing*) We'll need all that in writing.

RECRUITING OFFICER. (*to EILIF*) So you two are the oxen for the wagon? Do they ever let you out of harness?

EILIF. Mother! May I smack him in the puss?

MOTHER COURAGE. You stay where you are. And now, gentlemen, how about a pair of pistols? Or a belt? Sergeant? Yours is worn clean through.

SERGEANT. It's something else *I'm* looking for. These lads of yours are straight as birch-trees. What are such fine specimens doing out of the army?

MOTHER COURAGE. (*quickly*) The soldier's life is not for sons of mine!

RECRUITING OFFICER. Why not? It means money. It means fame. Peddling shoes is woman's work. (*to EILIF:*) Step this way and let's see if that's muscle or chicken fat.

MOTHER COURAGE. It's chicken fat. Give him a good hard look, and he'll fall right over.

RECRUITING OFFICER. Well, I hope he doesn't fall on me, that's all.

(*He tries to hustle EILIF away.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Let him alone! He's not for you!

RECRUITING OFFICER. He called my face a puss. That is an insult. The two of us will now go settle the affair on the field of honor.

EILIF. Don't worry, Mother, I can handle him.

MOTHER COURAGE. Stay here. You're never happy till you're in a fight. (*to the OFFICER:*) He has a knife in his boot and he knows how to use it.

RECRUITING OFFICER. I'll draw it out of him like a milk tooth. (*to EILIF*) Come on, young fellow!

MOTHER COURAGE. Officer, I'll report you to the Colonel, and he'll throw you in jail. His lieutenant is courting my daughter.

SERGEANT. (*to OFFICER:*) Go easy. (*to MOTHER COURAGE:*) What have you got against the service, wasn't his own father a soldier? Didn't you say he died a soldier's death?

MOTHER COURAGE. He's dead all right. But this one's just a baby. You'll lead him like a lamb to the slaughter. I know you. You'll get five guilders for him.

RECRUITING OFFICER (*to EILIF*) First thing you know, you'll have a new cap and high boots, how about it?

EILIF. Not from you, thanks.

MOTHER COURAGE. "Let's you and me go fishing," said the angler to the worm. (*to SWISS CHEESE*) Run and tell everybody they're trying to steal your brother! (*She draws a knife.*) Yes, just you try, and I'll cut you down like dogs! We sell cloth, we sell ham, we are peaceful people!

SERGEANT. You're peaceful all right. Your knife proves that. Now tell me, how can we have a war without soldiers?

MOTHER COURAGE. Do they have to be mine?

SERGEANT. So that's the trouble! The war should swallow the pits and spit out the peach, huh? Tsk, tsk, tsk: call yourself Mother Courage and then get scared of the war, your breadwinner? Your sons aren't scared, I know that much.

EILIF. No war can scare me.

SERGEANT. Of course not! Take me. The soldier's life hasn't done *me* any harm, has it? I enlisted at seventeen.

MOTHER COURAGE. You haven't reached seventy.

SERGEANT. I will, though.

MOTHER COURAGE. Above ground?

SERGEANT. Are you trying to rile me, telling me I'll die?

MOTHER COURAGE. Suppose it's the truth? Suppose I see it's your fate? Suppose I *know* you're just a corpse on furlough?

SWISS CHEESE. She can look into the future. Everyone says so.

RECRUITING OFFICER. Then by all means look into the Sergeant's future. It might amuse him.

SERGEANT. I don't believe in that stuff.

MOTHER COURAGE. (*obeying the OFFICER*) Helmet!

(*SERGEANT gives her his helmet.*)

SERGEANT. Anything for a laugh.

(*MOTHER COURAGE takes a sheet of parchment and tears it in two.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Eilif, Swiss Cheese, Katrin! So shall we all be torn asunder if we let ourselves get too deep into this war! (*to the SERGEANT:*) I'll give you the bargain rate, and do it for free. Watch! Death is black, so I draw a black cross.

SWISS CHEESE. (*pointing to the second piece of parchment*) And the other she leaves blank, see?

MOTHER COURAGE. I fold them, put them in the helmet, and mix 'em up, the way we're all mixed up from our mother's womb on. Now draw!

RECRUITING OFFICER. (*to EILIF*) I don't take just anybody. I'm choosy. And you've got guts, I like that.

SERGEANT. (*after hesitating, fishes around in the helmet*) It's a lot of crap!

SWISS CHEESE. (*watching over his shoulder*) The black cross! Oh, his number's up!

SERGEANT. (*hoarsely*) You cheated me!

MOTHER COURAGE. You cheated yourself the day you enlisted. And now we must drive on. There isn't a war every day in the week.

SERGEANT. Hell, you're not getting away with this! We're taking that bastard of yours with *us*!

EILIF. I'd like that, mother.

MOTHER COURAGE. Quiet – you Finnish devil, you!

EILIF. And Swiss Cheese wants to be a soldier, too.

MOTHER COURAGE. That's news to me. I see I'll have to draw lots for all three of you. (*She goes to one side to do this.*)

RECRUITING OFFICER. (*to EILIF:*) People've been saying the Swedish soldier is religious. That kind of loose talk has hurt us a lot. One verse of a hymn every Sunday – and then only if you have a voice...

(*MOTHER COURAGE returns with the slips and puts them in the SERGEANT's helmet.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. So they'd desert their old mother, would they, the rascals? They take to war like a cat to cream! Well, there's yours, Eilif, my boy! (*As EILIF takes the slip, she snatches it and holds it up.*) See? A cross!

RECRUITING OFFICER. (*to EILIF*) If you're going to wet your pants, I'll try your kid brother.

MOTHER COURAGE. Take yours, Swiss Cheese. You should be a better bet – you're my *good* boy.

(**SWISS CHEESE** draws.) Don't tell me it's a cross? Is there no saving you either? Just look, Sergeant – a black cross!

SERGEANT. What I don't see is why *I* got one: I always stay well in the rear. (to the **OFFICER**) It can't be a trick: it gets her own children.

MOTHER COURAGE. (to **KATTRIN**) Now all I have left is you. You're a cross in yourself but you have a kind heart. (She holds the helmet up but takes the slip herself.) Oh dear, there must be some mistake! Don't be too kind, Kattrin, don't be too kind – there's a black cross in your path! So now you all know: be careful! Be very careful! (**MOTHER COURAGE** climbs on her wagon preparing to leave.)

RECRUITING OFFICER. (to **SERGEANT**) Do something!

SERGEANT. I don't feel too good.

RECRUITING OFFICER. Try doing business with her! (in a loud voice) That belt, Sergeant, you could at least take a look at it! Hey, you, the Sergeant will take the belt!

MOTHER COURAGE. Half a guilder. Worth four times the price.

SERGEANT. It's not even a new one. But there's too much wind here. I'll go look at it behind the wagon.

MOTHER COURAGE. It doesn't seem windy to me.

SERGEANT. Maybe it's worth half a guilder at that. There's silver on it.

MOTHER COURAGE. (now following him eagerly behind the wagon) A solid six ounces worth!

RECRUITING OFFICER. (to **EILIF**) I can let you have some cash in advance, how about it?

(**EILIF** hesitates. **MOTHER COURAGE** is behind the wagon.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Half a guilder then. Quick.

SERGEANT. I still don't see why *I* had to draw a cross. As I told you, I always stay in the rear – it's the only place that's safe. You've ruined my afternoon, Mother Courage.

MOTHER COURAGE. You mustn't say so. Here. Take a shot of brandy. (He does.) And go right on staying in the rear. Half a guilder.

(The **RECRUITING OFFICER** has taken **EILIF** by the arm and drawn him away.)

RECRUITING OFFICER. Ten guilders in advance, and you're a soldier of the king! The women'll be crazy about you, and you can smack me in the puss because I insulted you!

(They leave. **KATTRIN** makes harsh noises.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Coming Kattrin, coming! The Sergeant's just paying his bill. (She bites the half guilder.) All money is suspect, Sergeant, but your half guilder is good. Let's go. Where's Eilif?

SWISS CHEESE. Gone with the recruiting officer.

(pause)

MOTHER COURAGE. Oh, you simpleton! (to **KATTRIN**) You can't speak. You *couldn't* tell me.

SERGEANT. That's life, Mother Courage. Take a shot yourself.

MOTHER COURAGE. You must help your brother now, Kattrin.

(**BROTHER AND SISTER** get into harness together and pull the wagon. They all move off.)

SERGEANT. (looking after them)

When a war gives you all you earn
One day it may claim something in return!

*(In the years 1625 and 1626 **MOTHER COURAGE** journeys through Poland in the baggage train of the Swedish army. She meets her brave son again before Wallhof Castle. Of the successful sale of a capon and great days for the brave son.)*

(The tent of the Swedish Commander, and the kitchen next to it. Sound of cannon. In the kitchen.

MOTHER COURAGE and the **COOK**. The **COOK** has a Dutch accent.)

COOK. Sixty hellers – for that paltry piece of poultry?

MOTHER COURAGE. Paltry poultry? He’s the fattest fowl you ever saw. I could get sixty hellers for him – this Commander can *eat!*

COOK. They’re ten hellers a dozen on every street corner.

MOTHER COURAGE. A capon like that on every street corner? With a siege going on and people all skin and bones? Maybe you can find a field rat some place. I said maybe, because we’re all out of them too. All right, then, in a siege, my price for this giant capon is fifty hellers.

COOK. We’re doing the besieging, it’s the other side that’s “in a siege”!

MOTHER COURAGE. A fat lot of difference that makes – we don’t have a thing to eat either. Look at the farmers round here. They haven’t a thing.

COOK. Sure they have. They hide it.

MOTHER COURAGE. They haven’t a thing! They’re ruined. They’re so hungry they dig up roots to eat. I could boil that leather belt of yours and make their mouths water with it. And I’m supposed to let a capon go for forty hellers?

COOK. Thirty. I said thirty hellers.

MOTHER COURAGE. I know *your* problem. If you don’t find something to eat and quick, the Commander will cut your fat head off!

COOK. Look! Here’s a piece of beef. I am about to roast it. I give you one more chance.

MOTHER COURAGE. Roast it. Go ahead. It’s only twelve months old.

COOK. Twelve hours old! Why, only yesterday it was a cow – I saw it running around!

MOTHER COURAGE. Then it must have started stinking before it died.

COOK. I’ll cook it five hours if I have to.

MOTHER COURAGE. Put plenty of pepper in.

*(**THE SWEDISH COMMANDER**, **THE CHAPLAIN**, and **EILIF** enter the tent. The **COMMANDER** claps **EILIF** on the shoulder.)*

COMMANDER. In your Commander’s tent you go, Eilif, my son, sit at my right hand! Well done, good and faithful servant – you’ve played the hero in God’s own war and you’ll get a gold bracelet out of it yet if I have any say in the matter! We come to save their souls and what do they do, the filthy, irreligious sons of bitches? Try to hide their cattle from us – meanwhile stuffing beef into priests at both ends! But you showed ’em – so here’s a can of red wine for you. We’ll drink together. *(They do so.)* The chaplain gets the dregs, he’s so pious. And now, my hearty, what would you like for dinner?

EILIF. How about a slice of meat?

COOK. Nothing to eat – so he brings company to eat it.

MOTHER COURAGE. Sh!

COMMANDER. Cook! Meat!!

EILIF. Tires you out, skinning peasants. Gives you an appetite.

MOTHER COURAGE. Dear God, it's my Eilif!

COOK. Who?

MOTHER COURAGE. My eldest. It's two years since I saw him. He must be *high* in favor – the Commander inviting him to dinner! And what do you have to eat? Nothing. The Commander's guest wants meat! Take my advice: buy the capon. The price is one hundred hellers.

(The COMMANDER has sat down with EILIF and the CHAPLAIN.)

COMMANDER. *(roaring)* Dinner, you pig! Or I'll have your head!

COOK. This is blackmail. Give me the damn thing!

MOTHER COURAGE. A paltry piece of poultry like this?

COOK. You were right. Give it here. It's highway robbery, fifty hellers.

MOTHER COURAGE. One hundred hellers. No price is too high for the Commander's guest of honor.

COOK. Well, you might at least pluck the wretched thing till I have a fire going.

(MOTHER COURAGE sits down to pluck the capon.)

MOTHER COURAGE. I can't wait to see his face when he sees me.

COMMANDER. Another glass, my son! It's my favorite Faler-nian. There's only one keg left but it's worth it to meet a soldier that still believes in God! Our chaplain here only preaches. He hasn't a clue how things get done. So now, Eilif my boy, tell us how you fixed the peasants and grabbed the twenty bullocks.

EILIF. It was like this. I found out the peasants had hidden the oxen in a certain wood. The people from the town were to pick them up there. So I let them go for their oxen in peace – they should know better than me where they are, I said to myself. Meanwhile I made my men crazy for meat. Their rations were short already. I made sure they got shorter. Finally, their mouths would water at the sound of *any* word beginning with M – like mother.

COMMANDER. Smart kid!

EILIF. Not bad. The rest was a snap. *Only* the peasants had clubs – and outnumbered us three to one. They made a murderous attack on us. Four of them drove me into a clump of trees, knocked my sword from my hand, and screamed: Surrender! What now? I said to myself, they'll make mincemeat of me.

COMMANDER. So what did you do?

EILIF. I laughed.

COMMANDER. You what?

EILIF. I laughed. And so we got to talking. I came right down to business and said: "Twenty guilders an ox is too much, I bid fifteen." Like I wanted to buy. That foxed 'em. So while they were scratching their heads. I reached for my good sword and cut 'em to ribbons. Necessity knows no law, huh?

COMMANDER. What do *you* say, keeper of souls?

CHAPLAIN. Strictly speaking, that saying is not in the Bible. Our Lord made five hundred loaves out of five so that no necessity should arise. So when he told men to love their neighbors, their bellies were full. Things have changed since his day.

COMMANDER. *(laughing)* Things have changed! Some wine for those wise words, you old

Pharisee! Eilif my boy, you cut them to ribbons in a great cause! As for our fellows, “they were hungry and you gave them to eat!” You don’t know how I value a brave soldier like you. (*He points to the map.*) Let’s take a look at our position. It isn’t all it might be, is it?

MOTHER COURAGE He must be a very bad commander, this fellow.

COOK. Just a greedy one. Why bad?

MOTHER COURAGE. He says he needs *brave* soldiers. If his plan of campaign was any good, wouldn’t plain ordinary soldiers do? Bravery! In a good country, such virtues wouldn’t be needed. We could all be cowards and relax.

COMMANDER. I bet your father was a soldier.

EILIF. A very great soldier. My mother warned me about it. In a little song.

COMMANDER. Sing it’ (*roaring:*) Bring that meat!

EILIF. It’s called The Fishwife and the Soldier.

Song - THE FISHWIFE AND THE SOLDIER

TO A SOLDIER LAD COMES AN OLD FISHWIFE
AND THIS OLD FISHWIFE, SAYS SHE:
A GUN WILL SHOOT, A KNIFE WILL KNIFE,
YOU WILL DROWN IF YOU FALL IN THE SEA.
KEEP AWAY FROM THE ICE IF YOU WANT MY ADVICE,
SAYS THE OLD FISHWIFE, SAYS SHE.
THE SOLDIER LAUGHS AND LOADS HIS GUN
THEN GRABS HIS KNIFE AND STARTS TO RUN:
IT'S THE LIFE OF A HERO FOR ME!
FROM THE NORTH TO THE SOUTH I SHALL MARCH THROUGH
THE LAND
WITH A KNIFE AT MY SIDE AND A GUN IN MY HAND!
SAYS THE SOLDIER LAD, SAYS HE.
WHEN THE LAD DEFIES THE FISHWIFE'S CRIES
THE OLD FISHWIFE, SAYS SHE:
THE YOUNG ARE YOUNG, THE OLD ARE WISE,
YOU WILL DROWN IF YOU FALL IN THE SEA.
DON'T IGNORE WHAT I SAY OR YOU'LL RUE IT ONE DAY!
SAYS THE OLD FISHWIFE, SAYS SHE.
BUT GUN IN HAND AND KNIFE AT SIDE
THE SOLDIER STEPS INTO THE TIDE:
IT'S THE LIFE OF A HERO FOR ME!
WHEN THE NEW MOON IS SHINING ON SHINGLE ROOFS WHITE
WE ARE ALL COMING BACK, GO AND PRAY FOR THAT NIGHT.
SAYS THE SOLDIER LAD, SAYS HE.
AND THE FISHWIFE OLD DOES WHAT SHE'S TOLD:
DOWN ON HER KNEES DROPS SHE.
WHEN THE SMOKE IS GONE, THE AIR IS COLD,
YOUR HEROIC DEEDS WON'T WARM ME!
SEE THE SMOKE, HOW IT GOES! MAY GOD SCATTER HIS FOES!
DOWN UPON HER KNEES DROPS SHE.
BUT GUN IN HAND AND KNIFE AT SIDE
THE LAD IS SWEEPED OUT BY THE TIDE:
HE FLOATS WITH THE ICE TO THE SEA.
AND THE NEW MOON IS SHINING ON SHINGLE ROOFS WHITE
BUT THE LAD AND HIS LAUGHTER ARE LOST IN THE NIGHT:
HE FLOATS WITH THE ICE TO THE SEA.

*(The third stanza has been sung by **MOTHER COURAGE** , somewhat to the **COMMANDER's** surprise.)*

COMMANDER. What goes on in my kitchen? The liberties they take nowadays!

*(**EILIF** has now left the tent for the kitchen. He embraces his mother.)*

EILIF. You! Mother! Where are the others?

MOTHER COURAGE. *(still in his arms)* Happy as ducks in a pond. Swiss Cheese is paymaster with the Second Protestant Regiment.

EILIF. Paymaster, eh?

MOTHER COURAGE. At least he isn't in the fighting.

EILIF. Your feet holding up?

MOTHER COURAGE. I have a bit of trouble getting my shoes on in the morning.

COMMANDER. *(also in the kitchen by now)* So! You're his mother? I hope you have more sons for me like this young fellow?

EILIF. If I'm not the lucky one! To be the Commander's guest – while you sit listening in the kitchen!

MOTHER COURAGE. I heard you all right. *(She gives him a clout on the ear.)*

EILIF. *(grinning)* Because I took the oxen?

MOTHER COURAGE. No. Because you didn't surrender when the four peasants tried to make mincemeat out of you! Didn't I teach you to take care of yourself, you Finnish devil, you?

3.

*(Three years pass, and **MOTHER COURAGE**, with parts of a Finnish regiment, is taken prisoner. Her daughter is saved, her wagon likewise, but her honest son dies.)*

*(A camp. The regimental flag is flying from a pole. Afternoon. **MOTHER COURAGE**'s clothes-line is tied to the wagon at one end, to a cannon at the other. She and **KATTRIN** are folding the wash on the cannon. At the same time she is bargaining with an **ORDNANCE OFFICER** over a bag of bullets. **SWISS CHEESE**, wearing his Paymaster's uniform, looks on. **YVETTE POTTIER**, a very good-looking young person, is sewing at a colored hat, a glass of brandy before her. Her red boots are nearby; she is in stocking feet.)*

ORDNANCE OFFICER. I'm letting you have the bullets for two guilders. Dirt cheap. 'Cause I need the money. The Colonel's been drinking for three days and we're out of liquor.

MOTHER COURAGE. They're army property. If they find them here, I'll be court-martialled. You sell your bullets, you bastards, and send your men out to fight with nothing to shoot with.

ORDNANCE OFFICER. If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours.

MOTHER COURAGE. I won't touch army stuff. Not at that price.

ORDNANCE OFFICER. You can resell 'em for five guilders, maybe eight – to the Ordnance Officer of the 4th Regiment. All you have to do is give him a receipt for twelve. He hasn't a bullet left.

MOTHER COURAGE Why don't you do it yourself?

ORDNANCE OFFICER. I don't trust him: we're friends.

MOTHER COURAGE. *(taking the bag, to **KATTRIN**)* Take it round the back and pay him a guilder and a half. *(as the **OFFICER** starts to protest)* A guilder and a half!

*(**KATTRIN** drags the bag away, the **OFFICER** follows. To **SWISS CHEESE**.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. *(cont.)* Here's your underwear. Take care of it. It's October, autumn may come at any time. I don't say it must, but it may. Nothing *must* come, not even the seasons. Only your books *must* balance. Do your books balance, Mr. Paymaster?

SWISS CHEESE. Yes, Mother.

MOTHER COURAGE. Don't forget they made you paymaster because you're honest and so simple you'd never think of running off with the cash. Don't lose that underwear.

SWISS CHEESE. No, Mother. I'll put it under the mattress.

ORDNANCE OFFICER. I'll go with you, Paymaster.

MOTHER COURAGE. Don't teach him any finagling.

*(**THE ORDNANCE OFFICER** and **SWISS CHEESE** leave.)*

YVETTE. *(waving to the **OFFICER**)* You might at least say goodbye !

MOTHER COURAGE. *(to **YVETTE**)* I don't like that: he's no company for my Swiss Cheese. But the war's not making a bad start: if I look ahead and make no mistakes, business will be good. *(noticing the brandy)* Don't you know you shouldn't drink in the morning – with your sickness and all?

YVETTE. Who says I'm sick? That's a libel!

MOTHER COURAGE. They all say so.

YVETTE. Then they're all liars! I'm desperate, Mother Courage. They're avoiding me like a stinking fish. Because of those lies! So what am I fixing this hat for? *(She throws it down.)* That's why I drink in the morning. It gives you crow's feet, so what? The whole regiment knows me. I should have stayed home when my first was unfaithful. But pride isn't for the likes of us. You eat dirt or down you go.

MOTHER COURAGE. Don't start in again about your friend Peter Piper and How It All Happened – in front of my innocent daughter.

YVETTE. She's the one that *should* hear it. So she'll get hardened against love.

MOTHER COURAGE. That's something no one ever gets hardened against.

YVETTE. He was an army cook, blond, Dutch, and thin. Katrin, beware of thin men! I didn't. I didn't even know he'd had another girl before me and she called him Peter Piper because he never took his pipe out of his mouth even in bed – it meant so little to him. *(She sings:)*

Song -- THE CAMP FOLLOWER'S SONG

SCARCE SEVENTEEN WAS I WHEN
THE FOE CAME TO OUR LAND
AND LAID ASIDE HIS SABER
AND TOOK ME BY THE HAND.

AND WE PERFORMED BY DAY
THE SACRED RITE OF MAY
AND WE PERFORMED BY NIGHT
THE OTHER SACRED RITE.
THE REGIMENT, WELL EXERCISED,
PRESENTED ITS ARMS, THEN STOOD AT EASE,
THEN TOOK US OFF BEHIND THE TREES
WHERE WE FRATERNIZED.

EACH OF US HAD HER FOE AND
A COOK FELL TO MY LOT.
I HATED HIM BY DAYLIGHT
BUT IN THE DARK DID NOT.

SO WE PERFORM BY DAY
THE SACRED RITE OF MAY
AND WE PERFORM BY NIGHT
THE OTHER SACRED RITE.
THE REGIMENT, WELL EXERCISED,
PRESENTS ITS ARMS, THEN STANDS AT EASE,
THEN TAKES US OFF BEHIND THE TREES
WHERE WE FRATERNIZE.

ECSTASY FILLED MY HEART, O
MY LOVE SEEMED HEAVEN-BORN!
YET WHY WERE PEOPLE SAYING
IT WAS NOT LOVE BUT SCORN?

THE SPRINGTIME'S SOFT AMOUR
THROUGH SUMMER MAY ENDURE
BUT SWIFTLY COMES THE FALL
AND WINTER ENDS IT ALL.
DECEMBER CAME. ALL OF THE MEN
FILED PAST THE TREES WHERE ONCE WE HID
THEN QUICKLY MARCHED AWAY AND DID
NOT COME BACK AGAIN.

YVETTE. I made the mistake of running after him. I never found him. It's ten years ago now.
(*YVETTE goes behind the wagon.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. You're leaving your hat.

YVETTE. For the birds.

MOTHER COURAGE. Let that be a lesson to you, Katrin: never start anything with a soldier. Love

does seem heaven-born, so watch out: they tell you they worship the ground under your feet – did you wash 'em yesterday, while we're on the subject? – then, if you don't look out, you're their slave for life.

(**THE CHAPLAIN** comes in with the **COOK**.)

CHAPLAIN. Mother Courage, I bring a message from your son Eilif. The cook came with me – you've made an impression on him.

COOK. Oh, I thought I'd get a little whiff of the breeze.

MOTHER COURAGE. You're welcome to it, but what does Eilif want? I don't have any money!

CHAPLAIN. My message is for his brother, the paymaster.

MOTHER COURAGE. He's not here. He's not anywhere. Look, he is not his brother's paymaster. I won't have him led into temptation! (*She takes money from a purse.*) Give him this. But it's a sin – he's speculating in mother love.

COOK. Maybe not for long. How d'you know he'll come back alive? You're hard, you women. A glass of brandy wouldn't cost you much. But no, you say, no – and six feet under goes your man.

CHAPLAIN. My dear Cook, you talk as if dying for one's beliefs were a misfortune – it is the highest privilege! This is not just any war, remember, it is a religious war, and therefore pleasing unto God.

COOK. I see that. In one sense it's a war because of all the cheating, plunder, rape, and so forth, but it's different from all other wars because it's a religious war and therefore pleasing unto God. At that it does make you thirsty.

CHAPLAIN. (*to MOTHER COURAGE*) He says you've bewitched him. He says he dreams about you.

COOK. (*lighting his pipe*) Innocent dreams! I dream of a fair lady dispensing brandy! Stop embarrassing me! The stories you were telling on the way over still have me blushing.

MOTHER COURAGE. I must get you two something to drink, or you'll be making improper advances out of sheer boredom.

CHAPLAIN. That is indeed a temptation – said the Court Chaplain as he gave way to it. And who is this captivating young person?

MOTHER COURAGE. (*looking at KATTRIN*) That is not a captivating young person. That is a respectable young person. (*And she goes with COOK and CHAPLAIN behind the wagon.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. The trouble with Poland is the Poles. It's true our Swedish king moved in on them with his army – but instead of maintaining the peace the Poles would keep interfering. So their blood is on their own heads, *I* say.

CHAPLAIN. Anyway, since the German Kaiser had enslaved them, King Gustavus had no alternative but to liberate them!

COOK. Just what *I* always say. Your health, Mother Courage, your brandy is first-rate, I'm never mistaken in a face. This war is a religious war.

(**KATTRIN** watches them go behind the wagon, leaves the washing, picks up the hat, sits, takes up the red boots. The **COOK** sings:)

Song -- LUTHER'S HYMN

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

A BULWARK NEVER FAILING.

OUR HELPER HE, AMID THE FLOOD

OF MORTAL ILLS PREVAILING.

SATAN OUR ANCIENT FOE

DO TH SEEK TO WORK US WOE.
HIS CRAFT AND POWER ARE GREAT
AND ARMED WITH CRUEL HATE
ON EARTH IS NOT HIS EQUAL.

COOK. And King Gustavus liberated Poland from the Germans. Who could deny it? Then his appetite grew with eating, and he liberated *Germany* from the Germans. Made quite a profit on the deal, I'm told.

CHAPLAIN. That is a calumny! The Swedish king puts religion first!

MOTHER COURAGE. What's more, you eat his bread.

COOK. I don't eat his bread: I bake his bread.

MOTHER COURAGE. He'll never be conquered, that man, and you know why? We all back him up – the little fellows like you and me. Oh yes, to hear the big fellows talk, they 're fighting for their beliefs and so on, but if you look into it, you find they're not that silly: they do want to make a profit on the deal. So you and I back them up!

COOK. Surely.

CHAPLAIN. (*pointing to flag, to COOK*) And as a Dutchman you'd do well to look which flag is flying here!

MOTHER COURAGE. To our Protestant flag!

COOK. A toast!

(*And now KATTRIN has begun to strut about with hat and boots on. Suddenly, cannon and shots. Drums. MOTHER COURAGE, THE COOK and THE CHAPLAIN rush round to the front of the wagon, the two last with glasses in their hands. The ORDNANCE OFFICER and a SOLDIER come running for the cannon. They try to push it.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Hey, let me get my wash off that gun!

ORDNANCE OFFICER. Surprise attack! The Catholics! We don't know if we can get away! (*to the SOLDIER*) Bring that gun! (*He runs off.*)

COOK. Good God' I must go to the commander. Mother Courage, I'll be back soon – for a short conversation. (*He rushes off.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Hey, you're leaving your pipe!

COOK. (*off*) Keep it for me, I'll need it!

MOTHER COURAGE. This *would* happen just when we were making money.

CHAPLAIN. "Blessed are the peacemakers!" A good slogan for wartime. Well, I must be going too. Yes, if the enemy's so close, it can be dangerous. I wish I had a cloak.

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm lending no cloaks. Not even to save a life. I've had experience in that line.

CHAPLAIN. But I'm in special danger – because of my religion !

MOTHER COURAGE. (*bringing him a cloak*) It's against my better judgment. Now run!

CHAPLAIN. Thank you, you're very generous, but on second thought I better stay put. If I run, I might attract attention.

(*THE SOLDIER is still struggling with the cannon.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Let it alone, you idiot, who's going to pay you for this? *You'll* pay – with your life. Let me keep it for you.

SOLDIER. (*running off*) You're my witness: I tried!

MOTHER COURAGE. I'll swear to that. (*And now she sees KATTRIN with the hat and boots.*) Yvette's hat! Take it off this minute! Are you crazy – with the enemy coming? (*She tears it off her*

head.) They'll make a whore of you when they see it! And she has the boots on, too, straight from Babylon, I'll soon fix that. *(She pulls at the boots.)* Chaplain, help me with these boots, I'll be right back. *(She runs to the wagon.)*

(YVETTE enters, powdering her face.)

YVETTE. What's this – the Catholics are coming? Where's my hat? Who's been trampling on it? I can't run around in that, what will they think of me? And I've no mirror. *(Coming very close to the*

CHAPLAIN:) How do I look? Too much powder?

CHAPLAIN. No – er – just right.

YVETTE. And where are my red boots? *(KATTRIN is hiding her feet under her skirt.)* I left them here! Must I go barefoot? It's a scandal.

(Exit YVETTE. SWISS CHEESE comes running on with a cash-box.)

(Enter MOTHER COURAGE, her hands smeared with ashes.)

MOTHER COURAGE. *(to SWISS CHEESE)* What have you got there?

SWISS CHEESE. The regimental cash-box.

MOTHER COURAGE. Throw it away! Your paymastering days are over!

SWISS CHEESE. But they trusted me with it! *(He goes to one side.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. *(to the CHAPLAIN)* Take your pastor's coat off, or they'll recognize you, cloak or no cloak. *(She is rubbing ashes into KATTRIN's face.)* Keep still! A little dirt, and you're safe. When a soldier sees a clean face, there's one more whore in the world. That does it. Now stop trembling. Nothing can happen now. *(to SWISS CHEESE:)* Where've you put that cash-box?

SWISS CHEESE. I thought I'd just leave it in the wagon.

MOTHER COURAGE. In my wagon?! Why, they'll hang all three of us!

SWISS CHEESE. Somewhere else then. Maybe I'll run away some place.

MOTHER COURAGE. It's too late for that.

CHAPLAIN. *(still changing his clothes)* For Heaven's sake, that Protestant flag!

MOTHER COURAGE. *(taking the flag down)* I've had it twenty-five years. I don't notice it any more.

(The sound of cannon grows. Blackout. Three days later. Morning. The cannon is gone.)

MOTHER COURAGE , **KATTRIN**, **THE CHAPLAIN**, and **SWISS CHEESE** sit eating anxiously.)

SWISS CHEESE. This is the third day I've sat doing nothing. The sergeant has always been patient with me, but by this time he must be asking himself: Now where is Swiss Cheese with that cash-box?

MOTHER COURAGE. Be glad they're not on the trail.

CHAPLAIN. What about me? I can't even hold service here. It is written: "Out of the abundance of the heart the tongue speaketh" – but woe is me if my tongue speaketh!

MOTHER COURAGE. So here you sit – one with his religion, the other with his cash-box! I don't know which is more dangerous.

CHAPLAIN. We're in God's hands now.

MOTHER COURAGE. Oh, I hope we're not as desperate as *that!* But it is hard to sleep at night. It'd be easier if you weren't here, Swiss Cheese. All the same I've not done badly.

CHAPLAIN. The milk is good. As for the quantity, we may have to reduce out Swedish appetites somewhat. We are defeated.

MOTHER COURAGE. Who's defeated? There've been cases where a defeat is a victory for the little

fellows, it's only their honor that's lost, nothing serious. At that, either victory or defeat can be a costly business. The best thing, *I* say, is for politics to kind of get stuck in the mud. (to **SWISS CHEESE**) Eat!

SWISS CHEESE. I don't like it. How will the sergeant pay the men?

MOTHER COURAGE. Soldiers in flight don't get paid.

SWISS CHEESE. Then they should refuse to flee! No pay, no flight!

MOTHER COURAGE. Swiss Cheese, I've brought you up honest because you're not very bright, but don't overdo it! And now I'm going with the Chaplain to buy a Catholic flag and some meat. (She disappears into the wagon.)

CHAPLAIN. She's worried about the cash-box.

SWISS CHEESE. I can get rid of it.

CHAPLAIN. You may be seen. They have spies everywhere. Yesterday one jumped out of the very hole I was relieving myself in. I was so scared I almost broke into a prayer – think how *that* would have given me away! He was a little brute with a patch over one eye.

(**MOTHER COURAGE** *clammers out of the wagon with a basket.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. (to **KATTRIN**, *holding up the red boots*) You shameless little hussy! She went and snatched them – because you called her a captivating young person. (She puts them in the basket. To **KATTRIN**.) Stealing Yvette's boots! She at least gets paid for it, you just enjoy strutting like a peacock! Save your proud ways for peacetime!

CHAPLAIN. I don't find her proud.

MOTHER COURAGE. I like her when people say, I never even noticed her. I like her when she's a stone in Dalarna, where there's nothing but stones. (to **SWISS CHEESE**;) Leave the cash-box where it is, and look after your sister, she needs it. You two are more trouble than a bag of fleas.

(**MOTHER COURAGE** and **THE CHAPLAIN** *leave.* **KATTRIN** *clears the dishes away.*)

SWISS CHEESE. Not many days more when you can sit in the sun in your shirtsleeves. (**KATTRIN** *points to a tree.*) Yes, the leaves are yellow already. (With gestures, **KATTRIN** *asks if he wants a drink.*) No, I'm not drinking, I'm thinking. (pause) Mother says she can't sleep, so I *should* take the cash-box away. I have a place for it: the mole-hole by the river. I can pick it up there – late tonight maybe – and take it to the sergeant. How far can they have fled in three days? The sergeant's eyes'll pop! "You've disappointed me most pleasantly, Swiss Cheese," he'll say, "I trust you with the cash-box, and you bring it back!" Yes, Katrin, I *will* have a glass now.

(When **KATTRIN** *gets behind the wagon, two men confront her. One is a SERGEANT; the other doffs his hat and flourishes it in a showy greeting; he has a patch over one eye.*)

ONE EYE. Morning, young lady! Have you seen a staff officer from the Second Protestant Regiment?

(**KATTRIN** *is terrified and runs away, spilling her brandy. The two men look at each other, see SWISS CHEESE, and withdraw.*)

SWISS CHEESE. (starting up) You're spilling it, can't you see where you're going? I don't understand you. Anyway, I must be leaving. That's what I've decided on.

(He stands up. She tries to make him understand the danger he is in. He pushes her away.)

I know you mean well, poor thing, you just can't get it out. And don't worry about the brandy. I'll live to drink so much brandy – what's one glass? (He takes the cash-box out of the wagon and

puts it under his coat.) I'll be right back, but don't hold me up, or I'll have to scold you. Yes, I know you're trying to help!

*(He kisses her as she tries to hold him back, and pulls himself free. Exit **SWISS CHEESE**. **KATTRIN** is now desperate. She runs up and down, making little sounds. **MOTHER COURAGE** and **THE CHAPLAIN** return. **KATTRIN** rushes at her mother.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. What is it, what is it, control yourself ! Have they done something to you? Where's Swiss Cheese? *(to the **CHAPLAIN**)* And don't you stand around – get that Catholic flag up!

*(She takes the flag from her basket. **THE CHAPLAIN** runs It up the pole.)*

CHAPLAIN. God bless our Catholic flag!

MOTHER COURAGE. Now calm down Kattrin, and tell me all about it. What? That little rascal has taken the cash-box away? Oh, he's going to get a good whipping! Now take your time, don't try to talk, use your hands. I don't like that howling – what will the Chaplain think? A man with one eye? Here?

CHAPLAIN. That fellow is an informer. They captured Swiss Cheese?

*(**KATTRIN** shakes her head, then shrugs her shoulders. Voices off. **ONE EYE** and the same **SERGEANT** bring in **SWISS CHEESE**.)*

SWISS CHEESE. Let me go! I've nothing on me. You're breaking my shoulder. I am innocent!

SERGEANT. This is where he comes from. These are his friends.

MOTHER COURAGE. Us? Since when?

SWISS CHEESE. I was just getting my lunch here. I paid ten hellers for it. Maybe you saw me on the bench. The food was too salty.

MOTHER COURAGE. That's true. He got his lunch here. And it was too salty.

SERGEANT. Are you pretending you don't know him?

MOTHER COURAGE. I can't know all of them.

CHAPLAIN. He sat there like a law-abiding citizen and never opened his mouth except to eat. Which is necessary.

SERGEANT. Who d'you think you are?

MOTHER COURAGE. He's my bartender. And you must be thirsty. I'll bring you some brandy.

SERGEANT. No liquor while on duty. *(to **SWISS CHEESE**:)* You were carrying something. You must have hidden it. We saw the bulge in your shirt.

MOTHER COURAGE. Are you sure it was him?

SWISS CHEESE. I think you mean another fellow. There was a fellow with something under his shirt. I saw him.

MOTHER COURAGE. I think so too. It's a misunderstanding. Could happen to anyone. Oh, I know what people are like. I'm Mother Courage and I can tell you this: he looks honest.

SERGEANT. We want the regimental cash-box. And we know the looks of the fellow that's been taking care of it. It's you!

SWISS CHEESE. No! No, it's not!

SERGEANT. If you don't shell out, you're dead, see!

MOTHER COURAGE. Oh, he'd give it to you to save his life, he's not that stupid! Speak up, my boy, the sergeant's giving you one last chance!

SWISS CHEESE. What if I don't have it?

SERGEANT. We'll get it out of you.

(**ONE EYE** and the **SERGEANT** lead him off.)

MOTHER COURAGE. (*shouting after them*) He'll tell you! He's not *that* stupid! And don't you break his shoulder!

(*She runs a little way after them. Blackout. The same evening. The **CHAPLAIN** and **KATTRIN** are waiting.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. (*entering*) It's a matter of life and death. But the sergeant will still listen to us. Only he mustn't know it's our Swiss Cheese – or they'll say we helped him. It's just a matter of money. But where can we get money? Wasn't Yvette here? I just talked with her. She's picked up a Colonel, and she says he might buy her a canteen business.

CHAPLAIN. You'd sell the wagon, everything?

MOTHER COURAGE. Where else would I get the money for the sergeant?

CHAPLAIN. What are you going to live off?

MOTHER COURAGE. That's just it.

(*Enter **YVETTE** with a hoary old **COLONEL**. She embraces **MOTHER COURAGE**.)*

YVETTE. Dear Mrs. Fierling, we meet again! (*whispering:*) He didn't say no. (*loud:*) This is my friend, my...business adviser. I heard you might want to sell your wagon. **M**

OTHER COURAGE. I want to pawn it, not sell it. And nothing hasty. You don't find another wagon like this in a hurry.

YVETTE. In that case, I'm not sure I'd be interested. What do *you* think, my dear?

COLONEL. I agree with you, honey bun.

MOTHER COURAGE. It's only for pawn.

YVETTE. But I thought you *had* to have the money?

MOTHER COURAGE. I do have to. But I'd rather run my feet off looking for another offer than just sell. We live off that wagon.

COLONEL. Take it! Take it!

YVETTE. My friend thinks I might take it. (*turning to him*) But you think we should but it outright, don't you?

COLONEL. Oh, I do Bunny, I do!

MOTHER COURAGE. Then you must find one that's for sale.

YVETTE. Yes! We can travel around looking for on! I love going around looking. Especially with you, Poldy.

COLONEL. Really? Do you?

YVETTE. Oh, I love it. I could take weeks of it.

COLONEL. Really? Could you?

YVETTE. If you get the money, when would you pay it back?

MOTHER COURAGE. In two weeks. Maybe one.

YVETTE. I can't make up my mind. Poldy, chéri, advise me! (*aside to him*) She'll have to sell, don't worry. That lieutenant – the blond one – remember? – he'll lend me the money. He's crazy about me. He says I remind him of someone. What do you advise?

COLONEL. Oh, I have to warn against *him*: he's no good, he'll only exploit the situation. I told you, bunny, I told you I'd buy you something. Didn't I tell you that?

YVETTE. I can't let you.

COLONEL. Oh, please, please!

YVETTE. Well, if you think the lieutenant might exploit the situation?

COLONEL. I do think so.

YVETTE. So you advise me to go ahead?

COLONEL. I do, bunny, I do!

YVETTE. (*returning to MOTHER COURAGE*) My friend says all right: two hundred guilders. And I need a receipt saying the wagon would be mine in two weeks. With everything in it. I'll look it all over right now. The two hundred can wait. (*to the COLONEL*) You go on ahead to the camp. I'll follow.

COLONEL. (*helping her up the steps of the wagon*) I'll help you up. Come soon, honey bun. (*Exit COLONEL.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Yvette, Yvette!

YVETTE. There aren't many shoes left.

MOTHER COURAGE. Yvette, this is no time for an inventory, yours or not yours. You promised to talk to the sergeant about Swiss Cheese. There isn't a minute to lose. He's up for court martial one hour from now.

YVETTE. I want to check through these shirts.

(*MOTHER COURAGE drags her down the steps by the skirt.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. You hyena! Swiss Cheese's life is at stake! And don't say where the money comes from. Pretend he's your sweetheart, or we'll all get it in the neck for helping him.

YVETTE. I arranged to meet One Eye in the bushes. He must be there by now.

CHAPLAIN. And don't give him the whole two hundred. A hundred and fifty should do the trick.

MOTHER COURAGE. You keep your nose out of this! I'm not doing you out of *your* porridge. Now run, and no haggling! Remember his life's at stake! (*She pushes YVETTE off.*)

CHAPLAIN. All I meant was: what are we going to live on?

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm counting on that cash-box. At the very least, Swiss Cheese'll get paid out of it.

CHAPLAIN. But d'you think Yvette can manage this?

MOTHER COURAGE. It's in her interest – if I don't pay their two hundred, she won't get the wagon. And she knows the score, she won't have this colonel on the string forever. Kattrin, go clean the knives! And don't you just stand around: wash those glasses: there'll be fifty cavalymen here tonight...I think they'll let us have him. There's not wolves, they're human and after money. God is merciful and men are bribable – that's how His will is done on earth, I don't know about Heaven.

YVETTE. (*entering*) They'll do it for two hundred if you make it snappy. He confessed he'd had the cash-box, they put the thumb screws on him, but he threw it in the river when he saw them coming at him. Shall I go get the money from my Colonel?

MOTHER COURAGE. The cash-box in the river? How'll I ever get my two hundred back?

YVETTE. You were expecting to get it from the cash-box? I *would* have been sunk. Mother Courage, if you want your Swiss Cheese, you'll have to pay. Or shall I let the whole thing drop – so you can keep your wagon?

MOTHER COURAGE. Now I *can't* pay two hundred. I must hold on to something. Go say I'll pay one hundred twenty or the deal's off. Even at that I lose the wagon.

YVETTE. One Eye's in a hurry. Looks over his shoulder the whole time. Hadn't I better just give them the two hundred?

MOTHER COURAGE. I have her to think of. She's twenty-five and still no husband. I know what I'm doing. One hundred twenty or no deal.

YVETTE. You know best.

(YVETTE runs off. After walking up and down abstractedly, MOTHER COURAGE sits down to help KATTRIN with the knives.)

MOTHER COURAGE. I will pay two hundred if I have to. With eighty guilders we could pack a hamper and begin over. It won't be the end of the world.

CHAPLAIN. The Bible says: the Lord will provide.

MOTHER COURAGE. *(to KATTRIN)* You must rub them dry.

YVETTE. *(re-enters)* They won't do it. I warned you. He said the drums would roll any second now – and that's the sign they've reached a verdict. I offered one hundred fifty. He didn't even shrug his shoulders.

MOTHER COURAGE. Tell him I'll pay two hundred. Run!

(YVETTE runs, MOTHER COURAGE sits, THE CHAPLAIN has finished the glasses.)

I believe – I haggled too long.

(In the distance: a roll of drums. The CHAPLAIN stands up and walks away. MOTHER COURAGE remains seated. It grows dark; it gets light again. MOTHER COURAGE has not moved.)

YVETTE *(re-enters, pale)*. You've done it – with your haggling. You can keep your wagon now. He got eleven bullets in him. I don't know why I still bother about you, you don't deserve it, but I just happened to hear they don't think the cash-box is really in the river. They think it's here. And they think you were in with him. I think they're going to bring his body, to see if you give yourself away when you see him. You'd better not know him or we're in for it. And I should tell you straight: they're right behind me. Shall I keep Katrin out of this? **(MOTHER COURAGE shakes her head.)** Does she know? Maybe she didn't hear the drums or didn't understand.

MOTHER COURAGE. She knows. Bring her.

(YVETTE brings KATTRIN who stands by her mother, who takes her hand. Two men come on with a stretcher. There is a sheet over it, and something underneath. Beside them, the SERGEANT. They put the stretcher down.)

SERGEANT. There's a man here we don't know the name of, but he has to be registered to keep the records straight. He bought a meal from you. Look at him. See if you know him. *(He draws back the sheet.)* You know him? **(MOTHER COURAGE shakes her head.)** What? You never saw him before he bought that meal? **(MOTHER COURAGE shakes her head.)** Lift him up. Throw him on the garbage dump. He has no one that knows him.

(They carry him off.)

(**MOTHER COURAGE** sings *The Song of the Great Capitulation.*)

(Outside an officer's tent. **MOTHER COURAGE** waits. A **REGIMENTAL CLERK** looks out of the tent.)

REGIMENTAL CLERK. You want to speak to the captain? I know you. You had a Protestant paymaster with you. He was hiding out. Better make no complaints here.

MOTHER COURAGE. But I'm innocent and if I give up it'll look like I have a bad conscience. They cut my wagon to ribbons with their sabers, and then claimed a fine of five thalers – for nothing, for less than nothing!

REGIMENTAL CLERK. (*quietly*) For your own good: keep your mouth shut. We haven't many canteens, so we let you stay in business, especially if you've got a bad conscience and have to pay a fine now and then.

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm going to lodge a complaint.

REGIMENTAL CLERK. As you wish. Wait here until the captain is free.

(*The CLERK retires into the tent. A YOUNG SOLDIER comes storming in.*)

YOUNG SOLDIER. Screw the captain! Where is the son of a bitch? Grabbing my reward, spending it on brandy for his whores! I'll rip his belly open!

OLDER SOLDIER. (*following him*) Shut your hole, you'll only wind up in the stocks!

YOUNG SOLDIER. I was the only one in the squad who swam the river and *he* grabs the money. I can't even buy me a beer. Come out you thief. I'll make lamb chops out of you!

OLDER SOLDIER. Holy Christ, he'll destroy himself.

YOUNG SOLDIER. (*pulling himself free of the older man*) Let me go or I'll cut you down too!

OLDER SOLDIER. Saved the colonel's horse and didn't get the reward. He's young. He hasn't been at it long.

MOTHER COURAGE. Let him go. He doesn't have to be chained like a dog. Very reasonable to want a reward. Why else should he go to the trouble?

YOUNG SOLDIER. He's in there pouring it down. I done something special. I want the reward!

MOTHER COURAGE. Young man, don't scream at *me*, I have my own problems.

YOUNG SOLDIER. He's whoring on my money and I'm hungry! I'll murder him!

MOTHER COURAGE. You're hungry. You're angry. I understand.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Talking'll get you nowhere. I won't stand for injustice!

MOTHER COURAGE. How long? How long won't you stand for injustice? One hour? Or two? It's a misery to sit in the stocks: especially if you leave it till then to realize you do stand for injustice.

YOUNG SOLDIER. I don't know why I listen to you. Screw that captain!

MOTHER COURAGE. You listen because you know I'm right. Your rage has calmed down already. It was a short one, and you'd need a long one.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Are you trying to tell me I shouldn't ask for the money?

MOTHER COURAGE. Just the opposite. I only say your rage won't last, you'll get nowhere with it. If your rage was a long one, I'd say: go ahead, slice him up. But what's the use – if you don't slice

him up? What's the use if you stand there with our tail between your legs'

OLDER SOLDIER. You're quite right: he's crazy.

YOUNG SOLDIER. All right, we'll see whether I slice him up or not. (*He draws his sword.*) When he comes out, I slice him up.

CLERK. (*looking out again*) The captain will be right out (*A military order:*) Be seated!

(*The YOUNG SOLDIER sits.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. What did I tell you? Oh, they know us inside out. "Be seated!" And we sit. *I'm* no better. Let me tell you about the great capitulation.

Song -- THE GREAT CAPITULATION

LONG, LONG AGO, A GREEN BEGINNER

I THOUGHT MYSELF A SPECIAL CASE.

(*spoken:*) None of your ordinary, run of the mill girls with my looks and my talent and my love of the Higher Things.

I PICKED A HAIR OUT OF MY DINNER

AND PUT THE WAITER IN HIS PLACE.

(*spoken:*) All or nothing. Anyway, never the second best. I am the master of my fate. I'll take orders from no one.

THEN A LITTLE BIRD WHISPERS!

THE BIRD SAYS: "WAIT A YEAR OR SO
AND MARCHING WITH THE BAND YOU'LL GO
KEEPING IN STEP, NOW FAST, NOW SLOW,
AND PIPING OUT YOUR LITTLE SPIEL.
THEN ONE DAY THE BATTALIONS WHEEL!
AND YOU GO DOWN UPON YOUR KNEES
TO GOD ALMIGHTY IF YOU PLEASE!"

MY FRIEND, BEFORE THAT YEAR WAS OVER

I'D LEARNED TO DRINK THEIR CUP OF TEA.

(*spoken:*) Two children round your neck and the price of bread and what all!

WHEN THEY WERE THROUGH WITH ME, MOREOVER,

THEY HAD ME WHERE THEY WANTED ME.

(*spoken:*) You must get in with people. If you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. Don't stick your neck out!

THEN A LITTLE BIRD WHISPERS!

THE BIRD SAYS: "SCARCE A YEAR OR SO
AND MARCHING WITH THE BAND SHE'D GO
KEEPING IN STEP, NOW FAST, NOW SLOW,
AND PIPING OUT HER LITTLE SPIEL.
THEN ONE DAY THE BATTALIONS WHEEL!
AND YOU GO DOWN UPON YOUR KNEES
TO GOD ALMIGHTY IF YOU PLEASE!"

OUR PLANS ARE BIG, OUR HOPES COLOSSAL.

WE HITCH OUR WAGON TO A STAR.

(*spoken:*) Where there's a will, there's a way. You can't hold a good man down.

“WE CAN LIFT MOUNTAINS,” SAYS THE APOSTLE.

AND YET: HOW HEAVY ONE CIGAR!

(spoken:) You must cut your coat according to your cloth.

THAT LITTLE BIRD WHISPERS!

THE BIRD SAYS: “WAIT A YEAR OR SO
AND MARCHING WITH THE BAND WE GO
KEEPING IN STEP, NOW FAST, NOW SLOW,
AND PIPING OUT OUR LITTLE SPIEL.
THEN ONE DAY THE BATTALIONS WHEEL!
AND WE GO DOWN UPON OUR KNEES
TO GOD ALMIGHTY IF YOU PLEASE!”

MOTHER COURAGE. So stay here with your sword drawn, if your anger is big enough. If it isn't, you'd better go.

YOUNG SOLDIER. Aw, shove it! *(He stumbles off, the OLDER SOLDIER following him.)*

REGIMENTAL CLERK. *(again sticking his head out)* The captain is free now. You can lodge your complaint.

MOTHER COURAGE. I've thought better of it. I'm not complaining.

(She leaves. The CLERK looks after her, shaking his head.)

5.

*(Two years have passed. The war covers wider and wider territory. Always on the move, the little wagon crosses Poland, Moravia, Bavaria, Italy, and again Bavaria. 1631. General Tilly's victory at Leipzig costs **MOTHER COURAGE** four shirts.)*

*(The wagon stands in a war-ruined village. Victory march in the distance. **TWO SOLDIERS** are being served at a counter by **KATTRIN** and **MOTHER COURAGE**. One of them has a woman's fur coat about his shoulders.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. What, you can't pay? No money, no schnapps! If they can play victory marches, they should pay their men.

FIRST SOLDIER. I want my schnapps! I arrived too late for plunder. The Chief allowed just one hour to plunder the town. He's not inhuman, he says – so I guess they bought him off.

CHAPLAIN. *(staggering in)* There are people in the farmhouse. A whole family. Help me, someone! I need linen.

*(The **SECOND SOLDIER** goes with him. **KATTRIN**, becoming excited, tries to get her mother to bring linen out of the wagon.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. I have none. I sold all my bandages to the regiment. I'm not tearing up my officer's shirts for these people.

CHAPLAIN. *(over his shoulder)* I said: I need linen!

*(**MOTHER COURAGE** stops **KATTRIN** from entering the wagon.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Not on your life! They have nothing and they pay nothing.

*(The **CHAPLAIN** carries in a **WOMAN**.)*

CHAPLAIN. Why did you stay there – in the line of fire?

WOMAN. *(faintly)* Our farm...

MOTHER COURAGE. Think they'd ever let go of anything? And now I'm supposed to pay. Well, I won't!

FIRST SOLDIER. They're Protestants. Why do they have to be Protestants?

MOTHER COURAGE. Protestant, Catholic, what do they care? It's their farm they're thinking of.

SECOND SOLDIER. Anyway, they're not Protestants. They're Catholics.

FIRST SOLDIER. I guess our cannon don't know the difference.

*(The **CHAPLAIN** brings in a **PEASANT**.)*

PEASANT. My arm's shot.

CHAPLAIN. Where's that linen?

MOTHER COURAGE. I can't give you any. With all I have to payout in taxes, duties, bribes...

*(**KATTRIN** picks up a board and threatens her mother with it, making gurgling sounds.)*

Are you out of your mind? Put that board down this minute! I'm giving nothing!

*(The **CHAPLAIN** lifts her bodily off the wagon steps, then brings the shirts from the wagon, and tears the in strips.)*

My shirts! My officer's shirts!

(From the house, the cry of a child in pain.)

PEASANT. The child's still in the house.

*(**KATTRIN** runs into the house.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Hey, grab Kattrin, the roof may fall in!

CHAPLAIN. I'm not going back in there.

MOTHER COURAGE. My officer's shirts, half a guilder apiece. I'm ruined!

*(**KATTRIN** comes out with a baby in her arms. To her.)*

Never happy till you're dragging babies around! Give it to its mother at once!

*(**KATTRIN** is humming a lullaby to the child.)*

CHAPLAIN. *(bandaging)* The blood comes through.

MOTHER COURAGE. And, in all this, she's happy as a lark! Stop that music! I don't need music to tell me what victory's like.

*(The **FIRST SOLDIER** tries to make off with the bottle he's been drinking from.)*

Come back, you! If you want another victory, you'll have to pay for it.

FIRST SOLDIER. But I'm broke.

*(**MOTHER COURAGE** tears the fur coat off his back.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Then leave this. It's stolen goods anyhow.

*(**KATTRIN** rocks the child and raises it high above her head.)*

(The Catholic General Tilly is killed before the city of Ingolstadt and is buried in state. MOTHER COURAGE gives her views of heroes, and the Chaplain sings a song about the duration of the war. Kattrin gets the red boots at last. The year is 1632.)

(The interior of a canteen tent. The inside part of the counter is seen at the rear. Funeral march in the distance. The CHAPLAIN and the REGIMENTAL CLERK are playing checkers. MOTHER COURAGE and KATTRIN are taking inventory.)

CHAPLAIN. The funeral procession is just starting out.

MOTHER COURAGE. Pity about the Chief – twenty-two. pairs, socks – getting killed that way. They say it was an accident. There was a fog over the fields that morning, and the fog was to blame. He'd been telling his men to fight to the death, and was just riding back to safety when he lost his way in the fog, went forward instead of back, found himself in the thick of the battle and ran right smack into a bullet. *(A whistle from the counter. She goes over to attend to a soldier.)* It's a disgrace – the way you're all skipping your Commander's funeral.

REGIMENTAL CLERK. They shouldn't have handed out the money before the funeral. Now the men are getting drunk instead of going to it.

CHAPLAIN. *(to the REGIMENTAL CLERK)* Don't you have to be there?

REGIMENTAL CLERK. I stayed away because of the rain.

MOTHER COURAGE. It's different for you. The rain might spoil your uniform.

(ANOTHER SOLDIER comes to the counter. He sings:)

Song -- BATTLE HYMN

ONE SCHNAPPS, MINE HOST, BE QUICK, MAKE HASTE!
A SOLDIER'S GOT NO TIME TO WASTE:
HE MUST BE SHOOTING, SHOOTING, SHOOTING,
HIS KAISER'S ENEMIES UPROOTING!

SOLDIER. A brandy.

TWO BREASTS, MY GIRL, BE QUICK, MAKE HASTE,
A SOLDIER'S GOT NO TIME TO WASTE:
HE MUST BE HATING, HATING, HATING,
HE CANNOT KEEP HIS KAISER WAITING!

SOLDIER. Make it a double, this is a holiday.

MOTHER COURAGE. Money first. No, you can't come inside, not with those boots on. Only officers are allowed in here, rain or no rain.

CHAPLAIN. *(as the funeral music resumes)* Now they're filing past the body.

MOTHER COURAGE. I feel sorry for a commander like that – when maybe he had something big in mind, something they'd talk about in times to come, something they'd raise a statue to him for, the conquest of the whole world, for example – Lord, the worms have got into these biscuits! – he

works his hands to the bone and then the common riffraff don't support him because all they care about is a jug of beer or a bit of company. Am I right?

CHAPLAIN. You're right, Mother Courage. Till you come to the riffraff. You underestimate them. Take those fellows outside right now, drinking their brandy in the rain, why, they'd fight for a hundred years, one war after another – if necessary, two at a time.

MOTHER COURAGE. Seventeen leather belts. – Then you don't think the war might end?

CHAPLAIN. Because a commander's dead? Don't be childish. Heroes are cheap. There are plenty of others where he came from.

MOTHER COURAGE. I wasn't asking just for the sake of argument. I was wondering if I should buy up a lot of supplies. They happen to be cheap right now. But if the war's going to end, I might just as well forget it.

CHAPLAIN. There are people who think the war's about to end, but I say: you can't be sure it will ever end. Oh, it may have to pause occasionally, for breath, as it were. It can even meet with an accident – nothing on this earth is perfect – one can't think of everything – a little oversight and a war may be in the hole and someone's got to pull it out again. That someone is the King or the Emperor or the Pope. But they're such friends in need, this war hasn't got much to worry about: it can look forward to a prosperous future.

MOTHER COURAGE. If I was sure you're right...

CHAPLAIN. Think it out for yourself. How *could* the war end?

REGIMENTAL CLERK. I'm from Bohemia. I'd like to get home once in a while. So I'm hoping for peace.

CHAPLAIN. Peace?

REGIMENTAL CLERK. Yes, peace! How can we live without it?

CHAPLAIN. We don't have to. There's peace even in war. War satisfies all needs – even those of peace. I know a song about that. (*He sings:*)

Song -- THE ARMY CHAPLAIN'S SONG

DOES WAR, MY FRIEND, STOP YOU FROM DRINKING?

DOES IT NOT GIVE YOU BREAD TO CHEW?

TO MY OLD-FASHIONED WAY OF THINKING

THAT MUCH AT LEAST A WAR CAN DO.

AND EVEN IN THE THICK OF SLAUGHTER

A SOLDIER FEELS THE AMOROUS ITCH

AND MANY A BUXOM FARMER'S DAUGHTER

HAS LOST HER VIRTUE IN A DITCH.

REGIMENTAL CLERK. Maybe. But when shall I get another good night's sleep?

CHAPLAIN. That also has been care of.

SOMEHOW WE FIND THE BREAD AND BRANDY

AND FINDING WOMEN IS A SNAP.

AND WHEN THERE IS A GUTTER HANDY

WE CATCH A TWENTY-MINUTE NAP.

AS FOR THE SLEEP THAT LASTS FOREVER

THOUGH IT WILL COME IN ANY CASE

IN WAR MORE CHRISTIAN SOULS THAN EVER

REACH THEIR ETERNAL RESTING PLACE.

REGIMENTAL CLERK. And when everyone's dead, the war won't stop even then, I suppose?

CHAPLAIN. Let me finish.

WHAT WON'T A SOLDIER DO IN WARTIME
HIS SAVAGE LUST TO SATISFY!
BUT AFTER ALL, 'T WAS SAID AFORETIME:
BE FRUITFUL, LADS, AND MULTIPLY!
IF YOU IGNORE THIS HIGH INJUNCTION
THE WAR WILL HAVE TO STOP, MY FRIEND:
PERFORM YOUR BIOLOGIC FUNCTION
AND THEN THE WAR NEED NEVER END!

REGIMENTAL CLERK. You admit the war *could* stop.

CHAPLAIN. Tsk, tsk , tsk. You don't know where God lives. Listen!

PEACEMAKERS SHALL THE EARTH INHERIT:
WE BLESS THOSE MEN OF SIMPLE WORTH.
WARMAKERS HAVE STILL GREATER MERIT:
THEY *HAVE* INHERITED THE EARTH.
I'LL TELL YOU, MY GOOD SIR, WHAT PEACE IS:
THE HOLE WHEN ALL THE CHEESE IS GONE.
AND WHAT IS WAR? THIS IS MY THESIS:
IT'S WHAT THE WORLD IS FOUNDED ON.

War is like love: it'll always find a way. *Why should* it end?

MOTHER COURAGE. Then I *will* buy those supplies. I'll take your word for it.

(KATTRIN, who has been staring at the CHAPLAIN, suddenly bangs a basket of glasses down on the ground and runs out. MOTHER COURAGE laughs.)

She'll go right on waiting for peace. I promised her a husband when peace comes. *(She follows KATTRIN.)*

REGIMENTAL CLERK *(standing up)*. You were singing. I win.

(MOTHER COURAGE brings KATTRIN back.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Be sensible, the war'll go on a bit longer, and we'll make a bit more money – then peace'll be all the nicer. Now you go into the town, it's not ten minutes' walk, and bring the things from the Golden Lion. Just the special things for your trousseau : the rest we can pick up later in the wagon. The Clerk will go with you, you'll be quite safe. Do a good job, and don't lose anything, think of your trousseau!

(KATTRIN ties a kerchief round her head and leaves with the CLERK.)

Now you can chop me a bit of firewood.

(The CHAPLAIN takes his coat off and prepares to chop wood.)

CHAPLAIN. Properly speaking, I am a pastor of souls, not a woodcutter.

MOTHER COURAGE. But I don't have a soul, and I do need wood.

CHAPLAIN. What's that little pipe you've got there?

MOTHER COURAGE. Just a pipe.

CHAPLAIN. I think it's a very particular pipe.

MOTHER COURAGE. Oh?

CHAPLAIN. The cook's pipe in fact. Our Swedish Commander's cook.

MOTHER COURAGE. If you know, why beat about the bush?

CHAPLAIN. I wondered if *you* knew. It was possible you just rummaged among your belongings and just lit on... some pipe.

MOTHER COURAGE. How d'you know that's not it?

CHAPLAIN. It isn't! You did know! (*He brings the axe down on the block.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. What if I did?

CHAPLAIN. Mother Courage, it is my duty to warn you. You are unlikely to see the gentleman again, but that's a blessing. Mother Courage, he did not strike me as trustworthy

MOTHER COURAGE. Really? He was such a nice man.

CHAPLAIN. Well! So that's what you call a nice man! I do not. (*Again the axe falls.*) Far be it from me to wish him ill, but I cannot, cannot describe him as nice. No, he's a Don Juan, a cunning Don Juan. Just look at that pipe if you don't believe me – it tells all!

MOTHER COURAGE. I see nothing special about this pipe. It's been used, of course...

CHAPLAIN. It's been practically bitten through! Oho, he's a wild man! That is the pipe of a wild man! (*The axe falls more violently than ever.*)

MOTHER COURAGE. Now it's my chopping block that's bitten through!

CHAPLAIN. I told you the care of souls was my field. In physical labor my God-given talents find no adequate expression. You haven't heard me preach. Why, I can put such spirit into a regiment with a single sermon that the enemy's a mere flock of sheep to them and their own lives are no more than a smelly old pair of shoes to be instantly thrown away at the thought of final Victory! God has given me the gift of tongues! I can preach you out of your senses!

MOTHER COURAGE. But I need my senses. What would I do without them?

CHAPLAIN. Mother Courage, I have often thought that – under a veil of blunt speech – you conceal a heart. You are human, you need warmth.

MOTHER COURAGE. The best way of warming this tent is to chop plenty of firewood.

CHAPLAIN. Seriously, my dear Courage, I sometimes ask myself how it would be if our relationship should be somewhat more firmly cemented. I mean: now the wild wind of war has whirled us so strangely together.

MOTHER COURAGE. The cement's pretty firm already. I cook your meals. And you lend a hand – at chopping firewood, for instance.

(*The CHAPLAIN flourishes the axe as he approaches her.*)

CHAPLAIN. Oh, you know what I mean by a closer relationship. Let your heart speak!

MOTHER COURAGE. Don't come at me like that with your axe! That'd be *too* close a relationship!

CHAPLAIN. This is no laughing matter. I have given it careful thought.

MOTHER COURAGE. My dear Chaplain, be sensible, I do like you. All I want is for me and mine to get by in this war. Now chop the firewood and we'll be warm in the evenings. What's that?

(**MOTHER COURAGE** stands up. **KATTRIN** enters with a nasty wound above her eye. She is letting everything fall, parcels, leather goods, a drum, etc.)

What happened? Were you attacked? On the way back? It's not serious, only a flesh wound. I'll bandage it up, and you'll be better within a week. Didn't the clerk walk you back? That's because you're a good girl, he thought they'd leave you alone. The wound isn't deep. It will never show. There! (*She has finished the bandage.*) Now I have a little present for you. (*She fishes Yvette's red boots out of a bag.*) See? You always wanted them – now you have them. Put them on before I change my mind. It will never show. Look, the boots have kept well, I cleaned them good before I put them away.

(But KATTRIN leaves the boots alone, and creeps into the wagon.)

CHAPLAIN. I hope she won't be disfigured.

MOTHER COURAGE. There'll be quite a scar. She needn't wait for peace now.

CHAPLAIN. She didn't let them get any of the things.

MOTHER COURAGE. I wish I knew what goes on inside her head. She stayed out all night once – once in all the years. I never did get out of her what happened. *(She picks up the things that KATTRIN spilled and angrily sorts them out.)* And this is war! A nice source of income, I must say!

(Cannon)

CHAPLAIN. They're lowering the Commander in his grave. A historic moment!

MOTHER COURAGE. It's historic to me all right. She's finished. How would she ever get a husband now? And she's crazy for children. Even her dumbness comes from the war. A soldier stuck something in her mouth when she was little. I'll never see Swiss Cheese again, and where my Eilif is the Good Lord knows. Curse the war!

7.

*(A highway. The **CHAPLAIN** and **KATTRIN** are pulling the wagon. It is dirty and neglected, though new goods are hung around it.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. *(walking beside the wagon, a flask at her waist)* I won't have my war all spoiled for me! Destroys the weak, does it? Well, what does peace do for 'em? Huh? *(She sings The Song of Mother Courage.)*

SO CHEER UP, BOYS, THE ROSE IS FADING!

WHEN VICTORY COMES YOU MAY BE DEAD!

A WAR IS JUST THE SAME AS TRADING:

BUT NOT WITH CHEESE – WITH STEEL AND LEAD!

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!

THE SNOWS DEPART, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.

AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE

GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE!

*(In the same year, the Protestant king fell in the battle of Lützen. The peace threatens **MOTHER COURAGE** with ruin. Her brave son performs one heroic deed too many and comes to a shameful end.)*

*(A camp. Summer morning. In front of the wagon, an **OLD WOMAN** and her **SON**. The **SON** drags a large bag of bedding. **MOTHER COURAGE** is inside the wagon.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Must you come at the crack of dawn?

YOUNG MAN. We've been walking all night. Twenty miles. We have to get back today.

MOTHER COURAGE. What do I want with bed feathers? Take them to the town!

YOUNG MAN. At least wait till you see them.

OLD WOMAN. Nothing doing here either. Let's go.

YOUNG MAN. And let 'em sign away the roof over our heads for taxes? Maybe she'll pay three guilders if you throw in that bracelet. *(Bells start ringing.)* Hear that, Mother?

VOICE FROM A DISTANCE. It's peace! The King of Sweden got killed!

*(**MOTHER COURAGE** sticks her head out of the wagon.*

She hasn't done her hair yet.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Bells? Bells in the middle of the week?

*(The **CHAPLAIN** crawls out from under the wagon.)*

CHAPLAIN. What's that they're shouting?

YOUNG MAN. It's peace.

CHAPLAIN. Peace?!

MOTHER COURAGE. Don't tell me peace has broken out - I've gone and bought all these supplies!

CHAPLAIN. *(shouting)* Is it peace?

VOICE. Yes! The war stopped three weeks ago!

CHAPLAIN. *(to **MOTHER COURAGE**)* Why else would they ring the bells?

VOICE. A big crowd of Lutherans just arrived - they brought the news.

YOUNG MAN. It's peace, Mother. *(The **OLD WOMAN** collapses.)* What's the matter?

MOTHER COURAGE. *(back in the wagon)* Katrin, it's peace! Put on your black dress, we're going to church, we owe it to Swiss Cheese.

YOUNG MAN. The war's over. *(The **OLD WOMAN** gets up, dazed.)* I'll get the harness shop going again now. Everything will be all right. Father will get his bed back. Can you walk? *(to the **CHAPLAIN**)* It was the news. She didn't believe there'd ever be peace again. Father always said there would. We'll be going home.

(They leave.)

MOTHER COURAGE *(from the wagon)*. Give them a schnapps!

CHAPLAIN. Too late. they've gone! And who may this be coming over from camp? If it isn't our Swedish Commander's cook?!

(The COOK comes on, bedraggled, carrying a bundle.)

CHAPLAIN. Mother Courage, a visitor!

(MOTHER COURAGE clammers out of the wagon.)

COOK. I promised to come back, remember? For a short conversation? I didn't forget your brandy, Mrs. Fierling.

MOTHER COURAGE. The Commander's cook! After all these years! Where's Eilif?

COOK. Isn't he here yet? He went on ahead yesterday. He was on his way here.

CHAPLAIN. I'll be putting my pastor's clothes back on. *(He goes behind the wagon.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Katrin, Eilif's coming! Bring a glass of brandy for the cook! *(But KATRIN doesn't.)* Oh, pull your hair over your face and forget it, the cook's no stranger! *(to him:)* She won't come out. Peace is nothing to her. It took too long to get here. Here's your schnapps. *(She has got it herself. They sit.)*

COOK. Dear old peace!

MOTHER COURAGE. Dear old peace has broken my neck. On the chaplain's advice I went and bought a lot of supplies. Now everybody's leaving, and I'm holding the baby.

COOK. How could you listen to a windbag like the chaplain? If I'd had the time I'd have warned you against him. But the Catholics were too quick for me. Since when did he become the big wheel around here? **M**

MOTHER COURAGE. He's been doing the dishes and helping me with the wagon.

COOK. And telling you a few of his jokes? He has a most unhealthy attitude to women. He's completely unsound.

MOTHER COURAGE. And you're completely sound?

COOK. And I am completely sound. Your health!

MOTHER COURAGE. Sound! Only one person around here was ever sound, and I never had to slave as I did then. He sold the blankets off the children's beds in autumn. You aren't recommending yourself to me if you claim to be sound.

COOK. Ah well, here we sit, drinking your famous brandy while the bells of peace do ring!

MOTHER COURAGE. I don't see where they're going to find all this pay that's in arrears. Were you people paid?

COOK. *(hesitating)* Not exactly. That's why we disbanded. Why stay? I said to myself. Why not look up a couple of friends? So here I am.

MOTHER COURAGE. In other words: you're broke.

COOK. *(annoyed by the bells)* I wish they'd stop that racket! I'd like to set myself up in some business.

(The CHAPLAIN enters in his pastor's coat again.)

CHAPLAIN. Pretty good, eh? Just a few moth holes.

COOK. I have a bone to pick with you. You advised a lady to buy superfluous goods on the pretext that the war would never end.

CHAPLAIN. And what business is that of yours?

COOK. It's unprincipled behavior! How dare you interfere with the conduct of other people's businesses?

CHAPLAIN. Who's interfering now, I'd like to know? *(to MOTHER COURAGE:)* I was far from suspecting you had to account to *this* gentleman for everything!

MOTHER COURAGE. Now don't get excited. The cook's giving his personal opinion. You can hardly deny your war was a flop.

CHAPLAIN. You are a hyena of the battlefield! You are taking the name of peace in vain!

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm a what, did you say?

CHAPLAIN. A hyena!

COOK. Who insults my girl friend, insults me!

CHAPLAIN. *Your intentions are only too transparent! (to MOTHER COURAGE:)* But when I see you take peace between finger and thumb like a snotty old handkerchief, the humanity in me rebels! You want war, do you? Well, don't you forget the proverb: who sups with the devil must use a long spoon!

MOTHER COURAGE. Remember what one fox said to another that was caught in a trap? "If you stay there, you're just asking for trouble." I'm not in love with war, Mr. Army Chaplain, and when it comes to calling people hyenas, you and I part company!

CHAPLAIN. Then why all this grumbling about the peace? Is it just for the junk in your wagon?

MOTHER COURAGE. My goods are not junk. I live off them.

CHAPLAIN. You live off war. Exactly!

COOK. As a grown man, you should know better than to run around advising people. *(to MOTHER COURAGE:)* In your situation you should get rid of certain goods at once – before prices sink to zero.

MOTHER COURAGE. That's good advice. I think I'll take it. *(She climbs on to her wagon.)*

COOK. One up for me. Anyway, Chaplain, cockfights are unbecoming to your cloth!

CHAPLAIN. If you don't shut your mouth, I'll murder you, cloth or no cloth!

(Enter YVETTE, wearing black, leaning on a stick. She is much older, fatter, and heavily powdered. Behind her, a VALET.)

YVETTE. Hullo everybody! Is this the Mother Courage establishment?

CHAPLAIN. Quite right. And with whom have we the pleasure ?

YVETTE. I am Madam Colonel Starhemberg, good people. Where's Mother Courage?

CHAPLAIN. *(calling to the wagon)* Madam Colonel Starhemberg to speak with you!

MOTHER COURAGE. Coming!

YVETTE. *(calling)* It's me – Yvette!

MOTHER COURAGE. Yvette!

YVETTE. I've come to see how you're getting on! *(The COOK turns round in horror.)* Peter!

COOK. Yvette!

YVETTE. Of all things. How did you get here?

COOK. On a cart.

CHAPLAIN. Well! You know each other? Intimately?

YVETTE. I'll say! You're fat.

COOK. For that matter, you're no beanpole.

YVETTE. It's good we've met. Now I can tell you what I think of you, tramp.

CHAPLAIN. DO that. Tell him exactly what you think of him. But wait until Mother Courage comes out.

COOK. Now don't make a scene.

(MOTHER COURAGE comes out, laden with goods.)

MOTHER COURAGE. Yvette! *(They embrace.)* But why are you in mourning?

YVETTE. Doesn't it suit me? My husband, the colonel, died several years ago.

MOTHER COURAGE. The old fellow that nearly bought my wagon?

YVETTE. Nah, not him. His older brother.

MOTHER COURAGE. Good to see one person that got somewhere in this war.

CHAPLAIN. You promised to give us your opinion of this gentleman.

COOK. Now, Yvette, don't make a stink!

MOTHER COURAGE. He's a friend of mine, Yvette.

YVETTE. He's Peter Piper, that's what.

COOK. Cut the nicknames!

MOTHER COURAGE. Peter Piper? The one that turned the girls' heads? I'll have to sit down. And I've been keeping your pipe for you.

CHAPLAIN. And smoking it.

YVETTE. Lucky I can warn you against him. He's a bad lot. You won't find a worse on the whole coast of Flanders. He got more girls in trouble than...

COOK. That's a long time ago. It's not true any more.

YVETTE. Stand up when you talk to a lady! How I loved that man, and all the time he was having a little bowlegged brunette. He got her in trouble, too, of course.

COOK. I seem to have brought *you* luck.

YVETTE. Speak when you're spoken to, you hoary ruin! And take care, Mother Courage, this type is dangerous even in decay!

MOTHER COURAGE. (*to YVETTE*) Come with me. I must get rid of this stuff before the prices fall.

YVETTE. (*to COOK*) Miserable cur!

MOTHER COURAGE. Maybe you can help me at army headquarters – with your contacts.

YVETTE. Damnable whore hunter!

MOTHER COURAGE. Katrin, church is all off, I'm going to market!

YVETTE. Inveterate seducer!

MOTHER COURAGE. (*still to KATRIN*) When Eilif comes, give him something to drink!

YVETTE. I've put an end to your tricks, Peter Piper, and one day, in a better life than this, the Lord God will reward me! (*She sniffs.*) Come, Mother Courage!

(The two leave. Pause.)

CHAPLAIN. As our text this morning, let us take the saying: the mills of God grind slowly. And you complain of my jokes!

COOK. I'll be frank with you. I was hoping for a good hot dinner. And now she'll be getting a wrong picture of me. I think I should leave before she comes back.

CHAPLAIN. I think so too.

COOK. Chaplain, peace makes me sick! It's the lot of mankind to perish by fire and sword! Oh, how I wish I was roasting a great fat capon for the Commander – with mustard sauce and those little yellow carrots...

CHAPLAIN. Red cabbage. With capon: red cabbage.

COOK. You're right. But he always wanted yellow carrots.

CHAPLAIN. He never understood anything.

COOK. You always put plenty away.

CHAPLAIN. Under protest.

COOK. Anyway, you must admit, those were the days.

CHAPLAIN. Yes, that I might admit.

COOK. And now you've called her a hyena, you haven't much future here either...What are you staring at?

CHAPLAIN. Why, it's Eilif!

(**EILIF** enters followed by two soldiers with halberds. His hands are fettered. He is white as chalk.)

What happened?

EILIF. Where's my mother?

CHAPLAIN. Gone to the town.

EILIF. They said she was here. I was allowed a last visit.

COOK. (to the soldiers) Where are you taking him?

SOLDIER. For a ride.

(The **OTHER SOLDIER** makes the gesture of throat cutting.)

CHAPLAIN. What has he done?

SOLDIER. He broke in on a peasant. The wife is dead.

CHAPLAIN. Eilif, how could you?

EILIF. It's no different. It's what I did before.

COOK. That was in wartime.

EILIF. Shut your mouth. Can I sit down till she comes?

SOLDIER. No.

CHAPLAIN. It's true. In wartime they honored him for it. He sat at the Commander's right hand. It was bravery. Couldn't we speak with the provost?

SOLDIER. What's the use? Stealing cattle from a peasant, what's brave about that?

COOK. It was just dumb.

EILIF. If I'd been dumb, I'd have starved, smarty.

COOK. So you were bright – and paid for it.

CHAPLAIN. We must bring Katrin out.

EILIF. Let her alone. Just give me some brandy.

SOLDIER. No.

CHAPLAIN. What shall we tell your mother?

EILIF. Tell her it was no different. Tell her it was the same. Aw, tell her nothing.

(The soldiers lead him away.)

CHAPLAIN. I'll come with you!

EILIF. I don't need any priest.

CHAPLAIN. You don't know – yet.

COOK. I'll have to tell her, she'll expect to see him.

CHAPLAIN. Tell her he'll be back.

(He leaves. The **COOK** shakes his head, finally approaches the wagon.)

COOK. Hi! Won't you come out? I'm the cook! Have you got anything to eat in there? (He looks in.) She's got a blanket over her head.

(Cannon. Re-enter **MOTHER COURAGE**, breathless, still carrying her goods.)

MOTHER COURAGE. The peace is over! The war's on again – has been for three days! I didn't get rid of this stuff after all, thank God! The shooting has started in the town already. We must get away. Pack, Katrin! What's on *your* mind?

COOK. Nothing.

MOTHER COURAGE. But there is. I see it in your face.

COOK. Eilif was here. Only he had to go away again.

MOTHER COURAGE. He was here? Then we'll see him on the march. I'll be with our side this time.

How'd he look?

COOK. The same.

MOTHER COURAGE. He'll *never* change. And the war won't get *him*, he's bright. Help me with the packing. (*She starts it.*) Is Ellif in good with the captain? Did he tell you about his heroic deeds?

COOK. He's done one of them over again.

MOTHER COURAGE. Tell me about it later. (**KATTRIN** *appears.*) Kattrin, the peace is over. We're on the move again. (*to the COOK*) : What is eating you?

COOK. I'll enlist.

MOTHER COURAGE. Where's the Chaplain?

COOK. In the town. With Eilif.

MOTHER COURAGE. Stay with us a while, Cook, I need a bit of help.

COOK. This Yvette matter...

MOTHER COURAGE. Hasn't done you any harm in my eyes. Just the opposite. Where there's smoke, there's fire. You'll come?

COOK. I may as well.

MOTHER COURAGE. The twelfth regiment is under way.

(The COOK gets into harness with KATTRIN.)

Maybe I'll see Eilif before the day is out! Let's go!

(She sings, and the COOK joins in the refrain, The Song of Mother Courage.)

MOTHER COURAGE.

UP HILL, DOWN DALE, PAST DOME AND STEEPLE,
MY WAGON ALWAYS MOVES AHEAD.

THE WAR CAN CARE FOR ALL ITS PEOPLE
SO LONG AS THERE IS STEEL AND LEAD.

THOUGH STEEL AND LEAD ARE STOUT SUPPORTERS
A WAR NEEDS HUMAN BEINGS TOO.

REPORT TODAY TO YOUR HEADQUARTERS!
IF IT'S TO LAST, THIS WAR NEEDS YOU!

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!
THE SNOW DEPARTS, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.
AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE
GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE!

*(The religious war has lasted sixteen years, and Germany has lost half its inhabitants. Those who are spared in battle die by plague. Over once-blooming countryside hunger rages. Towns are burned down. Wolves prowl the empty streets. In the autumn of 1634 we find **MOTHER COURAGE** in the Fichtelgebirge not far from the road the Swedish army is taking. Winter has come early and is severe. Business is bad. Only begging remains. The cook receives a letter from Utrecht and is sent packing.)*

*(In front of a half-ruined parsonage. Early winter. A grey morning. Gusts of wind. **MOTHER COURAGE** and the **COOK** at the wagon in rags.)*

COOK. There are no lights. No one is up.

MOTHER COURAGE. But it's a parsonage. The parson'll have to leave his feather bed to go ring the bells. Then he'll have himself some hot soup.

COOK. Where'll he find it? The whole village is starving.

MOTHER COURAGE. Why don't we sing him something?

COOK. Anna, I've had enough. A letter came from Utrecht, did I tell you? My mother died of cholera. The inn is mine. Look! *(He hands her the letter. She glances through it.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm tired of this wandering life. I feel like a butcher's dog, taking meat to the customers and getting none for myself.

COOK. The world's coming to an end.

MOTHER COURAGE. Sometimes I dream of driving through hell with this wagon – and selling brimstone. Or I see myself driving through heaven handing out supplies to wandering souls! If only we could find a place where there's no shooting, me and my children – what's left of 'em – we might rest up a while.

COOK. Why don't we open this inn together? With you or without you, I'm leaving for Utrecht today. Think it over.

MOTHER COURAGE. I must tell Kattrin. Kattrin! *(**KATTRIN** comes out of the wagon.)* Listen. We're thinking of going to Utrecht, the cook and me. His mother's left him an inn. We'd be sure of our dinner. And you'd have a bed of your own. What about it?

COOK. Anna, I must speak to you alone.

MOTHER COURAGE. Go back in, Kattrin.

*(**KATTRIN** does so.)*

COOK. There's a misunderstanding. I hoped I wouldn't have to come right out with it – but if you're bringing her, it's all off.

*(**KATTRIN** is listening – her head sticking out at the back of the wagon.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. You want me to leave Kattrin behind?

COOK. There's no room. The inn isn't a place with three counters. If the two of us stand on our hind legs we can earn a living, but three's too many. Let Kattrin keep your wagon.

MOTHER COURAGE. I was thinking she might find a husband in Utrecht.

COOK. At her age? With that scar?

MOTHER COURAGE. Not so loud!

COOK. The customers wouldn't like it!

MOTHER COURAGE. Not so loud, I said!

COOK. There's a light in the parsonage. We'd better sing. Worthy Master Parson, and all within, we shall now sing the song of Solomon, Holy Saint Martin, and other good men who came to a bad end, so you can see we're good folk too, and have a hard time getting by, especially in winter.

(He sings. MOTHER COURAGE joins him in the refrains.)

Song -- THE SONG OF THE WISE AND GOOD

YOU'VE HEARD OF WISE OLD SOLOMON

YOU KNOW HIS HISTORY.

HE THOUGHT SO LITTLE OF THIS EARTH

HE CURSED THE HOUR OF HIS BIRTH

DECLARING. ALL IS VANITY.

HOW VERY WISE WAS SOLOMON!

BUT ERE NIGHT CAME AND DAY DID GO

THIS FACT WAS CLEAR TO EVERYONE:

IT WAS HIS WISDOM THAT HAD BROUGHT HIM LOW.

(BETTER FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE NONE.)

For the virtues are dangerous in this world, you're better off without, you have a nice life – some good hot soup included. We're told to be unselfish and share what we have, but what if we have nothing? Unselfishness is a very rare virtue, it simply doesn't pay.

UNSELFISH MARTIN COULD NOT BEAR

HIS FELLOW CREATURES' WOES.

HE MET A BEGGAR IN THE SNOWS

AND GAVE HIM HALF HIS CLOAK TO WEAR:

SO BOTH OF THEM FELL DOWN AND FROZE.

WHAT AN UNSELFISH PARAGON!

BUT ERE NIGHT CAME AND DAY DID GO

THIS FACT WAS CLEAR TO EVERYONE:

IT WAS UNSELFISHNESS THAT BROUGHT HIM LOW.

(BETTER FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE NONE.)

That's how it is! We're good, we don't steal, we don't kill, we don't burn the house down, and so, as the song says, we sink lower and lower and there isn't a plate of soup going.

GOD'S TEN COMMANDMENTS WE HAVE KEPT

AND ACTED AS WE SHOULD.

IT HAS NOT DONE US ANY GOOD.

O YOU WHO SIT BESIDE A FIRE

PLEASE HELP US NOW, OUR NEED IS DIRE!

STRICT GODLINESS WE'VE ALWAYS SHOWN.

BUT ERE NIGHT CAME AND DAY DID GO

THIS FACT WAS CLEAR TO EVERYONE:

IT WAS OUR GODLINESS THAT BROUGHT US LOW.

(BETTER FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE NONE.)

VOICE. *(from above)* You there! Come up! There's some hot soup for you!

MOTHER COURAGE. I couldn't swallow a thing. Was that your last word?

COOK. The inn isn't big enough. We better go up. **MOTHER COURAGE.** I'll get Kattrin.

COOK. If there are three of us the parson won't like it. Stick something in your pocket for her.

*(The **COOK** and **MOTHER COURAGE** enter the parsonage. **KATTRIN** climbs out of the wagon with a bundle. Making sure the others have gone, she lays out on a wagon wheel a skirt of her mother's and a pair of the **COOK**'s pants. She has just finished, and picked her bundle up, when **MOTHER COURAGE** comes down with soup for her.)*

MOTHER COURAGE. Kattrin! Where do you think you're going? *(She examines the bundle.)* Ah! So you were listening? I told him: nothing doing – he can have his lousy inn. *(Now she sees the skirt and pants.)* Oh, you stupid girl! Now what if I'd seen that, and you'd been gone! *(**KATTRIN** tries to leave. Her mother holds her.)* And don't imagine I sent him packing on your account. It was the wagon. They can't part me from my wagon. Now we'll put the cook's things here where he'll find 'em, that silly man. You and I are leaving. *(She climbs upon the wagon and throws the rest of the **COOK**'s few things down on to the pants.)* There! He's fired! The last man I'll ever take into this business! Get into harness, Kattrin. This winter will pass like all the others.

*(The two women harness themselves to the wagon and start out. A gust of wind. When they have disappeared, the **COOK** re-enters, still chewing. He sees his things.)*

*(On the highway. **MOTHER COURAGE** and **KATTRIN** are pulling the wagon. They come to a prosperous farmhouse. Someone inside is singing.)*

Song -- THE SONG OF SHELTER

IN MARCH A TREE WE PLANTED

TO MAKE THE GARDEN GAY.

IN JUNE WE WERE ENCHANTED:

A LOVELY ROSE WAS BLOOMING

THE BALMY AIR PERFUMING!

BLEST OF THE GODS ARE THEY

WHO HAVE A GARDEN GAY!

IN JUNE WE WERE ENCHANTED.

WHEN SNOW FALLS HELTER-SKELTER

AND LOUDLY BLOWS THE STORM

OUR FARMHOUSE GIVES US SHELTER.

THE WINTER'S IN A HURRY

BUT WE'VE NO CAUSE TO WORRY.

COSY ARE WE AND WARM

THOUGH LOUDLY BLOWS THE STORM:

OUR FARMHOUSE GIVES US SHELTER.

*(**MOTHER COURAGE** and **KATTRIN** have stopped to listen. They start out again.)*

11.

(January, 1636. Catholic troops threaten the Protestant town of Halle. The stones begin to talk. MOTHER COURAGE loses her daughter and journeys onward alone. The war is not yet near its end.)

(The wagon, very far gone now, stands near a farmhouse with a straw roof. It is night. Out of the wood come a LIEUTENANT and THREE SOLDIERS in full armor.)

LIEUTENANT. And there mustn't be a sound. If anyone yells, cut him down.

FIRST SOLDIER. But we'll have to knock – if we want a guide.

LIEUTENANT. Knocking's a natural noise, it's all right, could be a cow hitting the wall of the cowshed.

(The soldiers knock at the farmhouse door. An OLD PEASANT WOMAN opens. A hand is clapped over her mouth. Two soldiers enter.)

PEASANT'S VOICE. What is it?

(The soldiers bring out an OLD PEASANT and his SON.)

LIEUTENANT *(pointing to the wagon on which KATTRIN has appeared).* There's another. *(A SOLDIER pulls her out.)* Is this everybody?

OLD PEASANT. That's our son.

PEASANT WOMAN. And that's a girl that can't talk. Her mother's in town buying up stocks because the shopkeepers are running away and selling cheap.

OLD PEASANT. They're canteen people.

LIEUTENANT. I'm warning you. Keep quiet. One sound and you'll have a sword in your ribs. I need someone to show us the path to the town. *(Points to the YOUNG*

PEASANT.) You! Come here!

YOUNG PEASANT. I don't know any path!

SECOND SOLDIER. *(grinning)* He don't know any path!

YOUNG PEASANT. I don't help Catholics.

LIEUTENANT. *(to SECOND SOLDIER)* Show him your sword.

YOUNG PEASANT. *(forced to his knees, a sword at his throat)* I'd rather die!

SECOND SOLDIER. *(again mimicking)* He'd rather die!

FIRST SOLDIER. We'll soon fix this. *(walks over to the cowshed)* Two cows and a bull. Listen, you. If you aren't going to be reasonable, I'll saber your cattle.

YOUNG PEASANT. Not the cattle!

PEASANT WOMAN. *(weeping)* Spare the cattle, Captain, or we'll starve!

LIEUTENANT. If he must be stubborn.

FIRST SOLDIER. I think I'll start with the bull.

YOUNG PEASANT. *(to his father)* Do I have to? *(The OLD PEASANT nods.)* I'll do it.

PEASANT WOMAN. Thank you, thank you, Captain, for sparing us, for ever and ever, Amen.

(The OLD PEASANT stops her going on thanking him.)

FIRST SOLDIER. I knew the bull came first all right!

(Led by the YOUNG PEASANT, the LIEUTENANT and the soldiers go on their way.)

OLD PEASANT. What goes on? Nothing good, I guess.

PEASANT WOMAN. Maybe they're just scouts. What are you doing?

OLD PEASANT. *(setting a ladder against the roof and climbing up)* I'm seeing if they're alone. *(on the roof)* Things are moving – all over. I can see armor. And a cannon. There must be more than a regiment. God have mercy on the town and its people!

PEASANT WOMAN. Are there lights in the town?

OLD PEASANT. No, they're all asleep. *(He climbs down.)* It's an attack. They'll all be slaughtered in their beds.

PEASANT WOMAN. The watchman'll give warning.

OLD PEASANT. They must have killed the watchmen in the town on the hill or he'd have sounded his horn before this.

PEASANT WOMAN. If there were more of us ...

OLD PEASANT. But being that we're alone with that cripple.

PEASANT WOMAN. There's nothing we can do, is there?

OLD PEASANT. Nothing.

PEASANT WOMAN. We can't get to the town in the dark.

OLD PEASANT. The whole hillside's swarming with men.

PEASANT WOMAN. We could give a sign?

OLD PEASANT. And be cut down for it?

PEASANT WOMAN. No, there's nothing we can do. *(to KATTRIN)* Pray, poor thing, pray! There's nothing we can do to stop this bloodshed, so even if you can't talk, at least pray! *He* hears, if no one else does. I'll help you. *(All kneel, KATTRIN behind.)* Our Father, which art in Heaven, hear our prayer, let not the town perish with all that lie therein asleep and fearing nothing. Wake them, that they rise and go to the walls and see the foe that comes with fire and sword in the night down the hill and across the fields. God protect our mother and make the watchman not sleep but wake ere it's too late. And save our son-in-law too, O God, he's there with his four children, let them not perish, they're innocent, they know nothing, one of them's not two years old, the eldest is seven. *(KATTRIN rises, troubled.)* Heavenly Father, hear us, only Thou canst help us or we die, for we are weak and have no sword nor nothing ; we cannot trust our own strength but only Thine, O Lord; we are in Thy hands, our cattle, our farm, and the town too, we're all in Thy hands, and the foe is nigh unto the walls with all his power.

(KATTRIN, unperceived, has crept off to the wagon, has taken something out of it, put it under her skirt, and has climbed up the ladder to the roof.)

Be mindful of the children in danger, especially the little ones, be mindful of the old folk who cannot move, and of all Christian souls, O Lord.

OLD PEASANT. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. Amen.

(Sitting on the roof, KATTRIN takes a drum from under her skirt, and starts to beat it.)

PEASANT WOMAN. Heavens, what's she doing?

OLD PEASANT. She's out of her mind!

PEASANT WOMAN. Get her down, quick! *(The OLD PEASANT runs to the ladder but KATTRIN pulls it up on the roof.)* She'll get us in trouble.

OLD PEASANT . Stop it this minute, you silly cripple!

PEASANT WOMAN. The soldiers'll come!

OLD PEASANT. (*looking for stones*) I'll stone you!

PEASANT WOMAN. Have you no pity, don't you have a heart? We have relations there too, four grandchildren. If they find us now, it's the end, they'll stab us to death!

(**KATTRIN** is staring into the far distance, toward the town. She goes on drumming. To the **PEASANT**.)

I told you not to let that sort into the farm. What do *they* care if we lose our cattle?

LIEUTENANT. (*running back with soldiers and YOUNG PEASANT*) I'll cut you all to bits!

PEASANT WOMAN. We're innocent, sir, we couldn't stop her!

LIEUTENANT. Where's the ladder?

OLD PEASANT . On the roof.

LIEUTENANT. (*calling*) Throw down the drum, I order you! (*to PEASANTS*) You're all in this, but you won't live to tell the tale.

OLD PEASANT . They've been cutting down fir trees around here. If we get a good long trunk we can knock her off the roof...

FIRST SOLDIER. (*to the LIEUTENANT*) May I make a suggestion ? (*He whispers something to the LIEUTENANT, who nods. To KATTRIN.*) Listen, you! We'll do you a favor. Everyone in that town is gonna get killed. Come down, go with us to the town, show us your mother and we'll spare her.

(**KATTRIN** replies with more drumming.)

LIEUTENANT. (*pushing him away*) She doesn't trust you, no wonder with your face. (*He calls up to KATTRIN.*) Hey, you! Suppose I give you my word? I'm an officer, my word's my bond!

(**KATTRIN** again replies with drumming – harder this time.)

Nothing is sacred to her.

FIRST SOLDIER. They'll sure as hell hear it in the town. L

LIEUTENANT. We must make another noise. Louder than that drum. What can we make a noise with?

FIRST SOLDIER. We mustn't make a noise!

LIEUTENANT . A harmless noise, fool, a peacetime noise!

OLD PEASANT . I could start chopping wood.

LIEUTENANT . That's it! (*The PEASANT brings his axe and chops away.*) Chop! Chop harder!

Chop for your life! It's not enough. (*to FIRST SOLDIER:*) You chop too!

OLD PEASANT . I've only one axe.

LIEUTENANT . We must set fire to the farm. Smoke her out.

OLD PEASANT . That's no good, Captain, when they see fire from the town, they'll know everything.

(**KATTRIN** is laughing now and drumming harder than ever.)

LIEUTENANT . Laughing at us, is she? I'll settle *her* hash if it's the last thing I do. Bring me a musket!

(**TWO SOLDIERS** walk off.)

PEASANT WOMAN . I have it, Captain. That's their wagon over there, Captain. If we smash that, she'll stop. It's all they have, Captain.

LIEUTENANT . (*to the YOUNG PEASANT*) Smash it! (*calling*) If you don't stop that noise, we'll

smash up your wagon!

(The YOUNG PEASANT deals the wagon a couple of feeble blows with a board.)

PEASANT WOMAN. *(to KATTRIN)* Stop, you little beast!

(KATTRIN stares at the wagon and pauses. Noises of distress come out of her. She goes on drumming.)

LIEUTENANT. Where are those sonsofbitches with that gun?

FIRST SOLDIER. They can't have heard anything in the town or we'd hear their cannon.

LIEUTENANT. *(calling)* They don't hear you. And now we're going to shoot. I'll give you one more chance. throw down that drum!

YOUNG PEASANT. *(dropping the board, screaming to KATTRIN)* Don't stop now! Go on, go on, go on!

(The soldier knocks him down and stabs him. KATTRIN starts crying but goes on drumming.)

PEASANT WOMAN. You're killing him!

(The soldiers arrive with the gun.)

LIEUTENANT. Set it up! *(Calling while the gun is set up on forks:)* Once and for all, stop that drumming! *(Still crying, KATTRIN is drumming as hard as she can.)* Fire!

(The soldiers fire. KATTRIN is hit. She gives the drum another feeble beat or two, then collapses.)

LIEUTENANT. So that ends the noise.

(But the last beats of the drum are lost in the din of cannon from the town. Mingled with the thunder of cannon, alarm-bells are heard in the distance.)

FIRST SOLDIER. She made it.

(Toward morning. The drums and pipes of troops on the march, receding. In front of the wagon MOTHER COURAGE sits by KATTRIN's body. The THREE PEASANTS of the last scene are standing near.)

PEASANT WOMAN. The regiments have all left. No, there's still one to go.

OLD PEASANT. *(to MOTHER COURAGE)* You must latch on to it. You'll never get by alone. Hurry!

MOTHER COURAGE. Maybe she's asleep. *(She sings.)*

LULLAY, LULLAY, WHAT'S THAT IN THE HAY?
 THE NEIGHBOR'S KIDS CRY BUT MINE ARE GAY.
 THE NEIGHBOR'S KIDS ARE DRESSED IN DIRT:
 YOUR SILKS WERE CUT FROM AN ANGEL'S SKIRT.
 THEY ARE ALL STARVING. YOU HAVE A CAKE
 IF IT'S TOO STALE, YOU NEED BUT SPEAK.
 LULLAY, LULLAY, WHAT'S RUSTLING THERE?
 ONE LAD FELL IN POLAND. THE OTHER IS – WHERE?

MOTHER COURAGE. You shouldn't have told her about the children. **O**

LD PEASANT. If you hadn't gone off to get your cut, maybe it wouldn't have happened.

MOTHER COURAGE. I'm glad she can sleep.

PEASANT WOMAN. She's not asleep, it's time you realized, she's through.

OLD PEASANT. You must get away. There are wolves in these parts. And the bandits are worse.

MOTHER COURAGE. *(stands up)* That's right.

OLD PEASANT. Have you no one left?

MOTHER COURAGE. Yes, my son Eilif.

OLD PEASANT. Find him then, leave *her* to us.

PEASANT WOMAN; We'll give her a proper burial, you needn't worry.

MOTHER COURAGE. Here's a little money for the expenses. *(She harnesses herself to the wagon.)* I hope I can pull the wagon by myself. Yes, I'll manage. There's not much in it now. *(The last regiment is heard passing.)* Hey! Take me with you!

(The men are heard singing The Song of Mother Courage.)

DANGERS, SURPRISES, DEVASTATIONS –
 THE WAR TAKES HOLD AND WILL NOT QUIT.
 BUT THOUGH IT LAST THREE GENERATIONS
 WE SHALL GET NOTHING OUT OF IT.
 STARVATION, FILTH, AND COLD ENSLAVE US.
 THE ARMY ROBS US OF OUR PAY.
 ONLY A MIRACLE CAN SAVE US
 AND MIRACLES HAVE HAD THEIR DAY.

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE! THE WINTER'S GONE!
THE SNOWS DEPART, THE DEAD SLEEP ON.
AND THOUGH YOU MAY NOT LONG SURVIVE
GET OUT OF BED AND LOOK ALIVE !

APPENDIX

Darius Milhaud's music for *Mother Courage* is scored for a chamber orchestra of some fourteen players. What follow here are the first two pages of the piano-vocal score. To obtain the rest of the music, please contact Samuel French.

REVISED 10/25/95

Song Of Mother Courage MOTHER COURAGE
Brecht / Milhaud / Bentley

$\text{♩} = 84$ (Scene 1)

1
Harmonica

1
f

3
MOTHER COURAGE:
Here's Mo-ther Cou- rage and her wa- gon! Hey, Cap- tain, let them come and buy! Beer by the keg! wine by the fla- gon!

3
mp *f* *mp* *f* *ff* *ff*

5
Let your men drink be- fore they die! Sa- bres and swords are hard to swal- low: First you must give them beer to drink.

6
mf *mp*

9
Then they can face what is to fol- low But let 'em swim be- fore they sink!

9
Harmonics
mf *f* *mf* *f*

The musical score is presented in a standard piano-vocal format. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 84 and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into four systems. The first system shows the opening instrumental introduction for the Harmonica and piano accompaniment. The second system marks the beginning of the vocal part for Mother Courage, with lyrics: 'Here's Mo-ther Cou- rage and her wa- gon! Hey, Cap- tain, let them come and buy! Beer by the keg! wine by the fla- gon!'. The piano accompaniment features dynamic markings of *mp*, *f*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*, and *ff*. The third system continues the vocal line with lyrics: 'Let your men drink be- fore they die! Sa- bres and swords are hard to swal- low: First you must give them beer to drink.' The piano accompaniment has dynamic markings of *mf* and *mp*. The fourth system concludes the page with lyrics: 'Then they can face what is to fol- low But let 'em swim be- fore they sink!'. The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings of *mf*, *f*, *mf*, and *f*, and is marked with 'Harmonics' at the end.

12 **Refrain**

Chris-tians a-wake! the win-ter's gone! The snows de-part, the dead sleep on. And tho' you may not long sur-vive,

15

Get out of bed and look a-live!

Harmonio

19 **MOTHER COURAGE:**

Your men will march till they are dead, sir. But can-not fight un-less they eat. The blood they spill for you is red, sir, what

22

fi-res that blood is my red meat. For meat and soup and jam and jel-ly In this old cart of mine are found:

Other plays, translations and adaptations by

Eric Bentley...

1913

Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been

Baal

Brute and Other Farces

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Celestina

Celimare

Edward II

Fear and Misery in the Third Reich

From a Madman's Diary

From the Memoirs of Pontius Pilate

Good Woman of Setzuan

Inspector

The Jewish Wife

La Ronde

Leonce and Lena

Liola

Lord Alfred's Lover

A Man's a Man

The Mandrake

The Marriage

Mary Stuart

The Measures Taken

Plays: Pirandello

The Recantation of Galileo Galilei

The Siege of Numantia

Six Characters in Search of an Author

The Snob

Spring's Awakening

These Cornfields

The Underpants

The Wedekind Cabaret

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MORE ERIC BENTLEY FROM SAMUEL FRENCH

THE WEDEKIND CABARET

Eric Bentley

Music by Arnold Black, William Bolcom, Lucas Mason, and Peter Winkler

Musical Revue / Flexible casting, 1 m, 1 f

A first draft of this entertainment was produced at The Ballroom in New York City in 1994, starring Alvin Epstein and directed by Isaiah Sheffer. Howard Kissel, Daily News, commented: "Bentley's pungent translations of Wedekind's lyrics have been set deftly by three composers, Arnold Black, William Bolcom and Peter Winkler... *Tingle Tangle* [as the work was then called] is well performed and invariably fascinating."

For the Wedekind renaissance of the 21st century Eric Bentley has re-arranged the material and added to it. The piece now consists of two cabaret programs which could be performed together in one long evening or separately. The first program is framed by two Bentley ballads telling the stories of Spring's Awakening and The First Lulu, respectively. Within that frame is a varied series of Wedekind songs and spoken poems. The second program is framed by two Wedekind short stories, neither of them ever before presented on an American (or any other) stage. Within this second frame come poems and songs in which we meet another Wedekind, a wild poet who also had a tender, even elegiac side. The two-part show ends with a song by Eric Bentley and Arnold Black which celebrates, not Wedekind the rebel, but Wedekind the artist.

Eric Bentley has busied himself with Wedekind's work ever since the 1940's. In the 1950's he translated Spring's Awakening in collaboration with Wedekind's daughter, Kadidja. In the 1990's he did the American version of The First Lulu, Wedekind's other masterpiece. The Applause Books edition of the latter play contains a chronology that ends with this item, "1993: Eric Bentley writes the Wedekind Cabaret, an entertainment made up of approximations in English of Wedekind's poems and songs. Music by William Bolcom and Arnold Black."

"The renaissance of the German playwright Frank Wedekind continues."

- *The New Yorker*

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