

# *Rosvitha's Review*

A Musical Comedy in Three Acts

by

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(Book and Lyrics)

Music by  
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## ***ROSVITHA'S REVIEW***

### **SYNOPSIS**

Based on the life of Hrotsvita of Gandersheim, the 10th-century nun who was the first woman playwright on record, *Rosvitha's Review* is both a playwriting lesson provided by Rosvitha and a farcical, tongue-in-cheek speculation on how she came to write her plays, specifically one about the conversion of a prostitute.

When the nuns' enactment of a bawdy Terence comedy provokes Bishop Diehard's censure, Rosvitha determines to write her own play. With the help of Sophia (an uppity princess consigned to the convent by her Emperor-father), Rosvitha does "research" at a nearby tavern/brothel. Their plan backfires when the proprietor, ex-Empress Theophano, Sophia's long-runaway grandmother, sees through their ploy and sets them up for a rendezvous with a "customer"—her own paramour—the bishop, disguised on weekends as a blacksmith. The mutually terrified trio manage to escape one another's clutches, but not before the girls get the goods on the bishop.

Back at the monastery, grandmother and granddaughter are happily reunited. When the nuns present Rosvitha's new play, the bishop, recognizing the plot and even a few of his own lines, is both outraged and compromised, and thus blackmailed into giving his blessing to Rosvitha's playwriting career.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS** (9 women, 1 man)

Sister Rosvitha, 20's....Playwright, illuminator. Imaginative, innocent, spirited; an organizer

Mother Gerberga, 40's..Abbess, choir director, patron of the arts. Motherly, lovably vain

Sister Faith, 20's.....Sewing sister. Agreeable, eager

Sister Hope, 20's.....Gardener. Playfully pompous

Sister Charity, 20's.....Portress. High-strung

Sister Virginitas, 20's.....Sacristan. Tarty

Sister Brunhilda, 20's.....Cook. An Amazon with German accent

Bishop Diehard, 60's.....Self-important, with soft side

Princess Sophia, 20's.....Emperor's daughter. Feisty, jaunty, ambitious, adventuresome

Theophano, 60's.....Sophia's grandmother. Ex-empress, ex-actress; now an inn keeper and adventurer. A presence.

### **SETTING**

Place: Gandersheim, Saxony, Holy Roman Empire

Time: A weekend in the 10<sup>th</sup> century

Acts I& III: Monastery courtyard, including a "Terence stage"

Act II: A tavern in the town

Running Time: 2 hours

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

Orchestra: Piano, flute, drums

### Act I

“It’s Heavenly to Be a Nun” .....	Gerberga & the Novices
“ <i>Ecce Sacerdos Magnus</i> ” .....	Gerberga & the Novices
“I Want to Be the Emperor” .....	Sophia
“When the Censor Comes to Town” .....	Gerberga & the Novices
“I Write From Here” .....	Rosvitha
“Comic Spirit” .....	Rosvitha & Gerberga
“Research” .....	Rosvitha & Sophia

### Acts II & III

“Look at Me Now” .....	Theophano
“What a Fix” .....	Rosvitha, Sophia, Diehard
“At Home With You” .....	Diehard & Theophano
“ <i>Ecce Sacerdos Magnus</i> ” (Reprise) .....	Gerberga & the Novices
“I Want Her to Know Me” .....	Theophano & Sophia
“Here’s to Rosvitha” .....	Company
“I Write From Here” (Reprise) .....	Rosvitha

**ACT I:****Scene 1***AT RISE:**House lights dim as overture ends. The stage is dark (or curtain closed) except for a follow spot on ROSVITHA, with small book. She reads.*

ROSVITHA

“If my writing pleases anyone, I will rejoice. But even if it pleases none—because they disparage me or my simple style—what I have written yet remains a satisfaction to myself.”

*(Closes book, smiles at audience.)*

I wrote those words a thousand years ago. Not bad for a woman...of the tenth century, eh? My name is Rosvitha. I’m a nun from the convent of Gandersheim, Saxony, in the Holy Roman Empire. *And...*I’m a playwright. There’s been a lot of talk about my scripts—ever since a German fellow found them in a dusty corner five hundred years ago. One egghead actually claimed they were a forgery. Said no medieval woman could have been so smart. Imagine. Mostly they’ve been arguing about whether the plays were ever produced. So I’ve come to set the record straight. I’m going to write a play—

*(Patting book.)*

about how I wrote my plays. And I’m going to do it right here while you watch. First: exposition of the status quo. We need to ...establish the setting...introduce the main characters. So...

*(Music as lights come up [or curtain opens], revealing a “Terence stage” in a convent courtyard: a platform with three arches and steps going down to floor. On platform is a wicker trunk. At R. and L. are additional arches, one leading to the rest of the convent and the other to the outside. There is also a trellis with bench or some other suggestion of a garden. GERBERGA and NOVICES are poised in a tableau, miming various chores: sweeping, scrubbing, sewing, gardening, praying, etc.)*

Willkommen!

*(Two chords.)*

To Gandersheim!

*(Two chords.)*

These are my sisters!

*(She joins them and freezes in place. Music: “It’s Heavenly To Be a Nun.”)*

GERBERGA &amp; NOVICES

*(Sing.)*

IT’S HEAVENLY TO BE A NUN  
HERE IN THE MIDDLE AGES  
WHEN CONVENTS ARE THE HAPPY HAUNTS  
OF ROYALTY AND SAGES.

GERBERGA & NOVICES (*Cont.*)

WE'RE ALL FROM THE NOBILITY—  
 OUR DADDIES PAID OUR DOWRIES.  
 WE HAVE THE MOST SATISFACTORY  
 OF LINEAGES.

SOME OTHER GIRLS ARE MARRIED OFF  
 TO MEN THEY'D NEVER DREAM OF CHOOSING.  
 AT FIRST THEY SPEND THEIR AFTERNOONS  
 IN GOSSIPING OR SNOOZING.

THEY NEVER READ A SINGLE BOOK  
 OR GO OUTSIDE THEIR CASTLE,  
 BUT ONLY WAIT UPON THEIR LORDS  
 AS THOUGH THEY WERE HIS VASSAL.

AND THEN THE BABIES START TO COME,  
 ONE FOLLOWING THE OTHER  
 UNTIL THEY FIND THEY'RE ALL WORN OUT  
 AT TWENTY TIMES A MOTHER!

BUT HERE AT GANDERSHEIM WE'RE FREE,  
 BY VIRTUE OF OUR CHASTITY,  
 TO LEAD A LIFE A WORK AND PRAYER  
 AND SPECIALIZE WHERE WE HAVE FLAIR.

ROSVITHA

For example...Sister Faith!

FAITH

*(Sings and dances or mimes activities described.)*

THE SEWING ROOM IS MY DOMAIN,  
 I'M VERY GOOD AT WEAVING.  
 OUR CONVENT HOUSES TAPESTRIES  
 WITH PATTERNS OF MY CONCEIVING.

I MAKE THE ALTAR CLOTHS WITH CARE  
 AND HABITS SEWN WITH LINING.  
 BUT WHEN THE DEVIL GETS IN ME...  
 I DO COSTUME DESIGNING!

ALL

BUT WHEN THE DEVIL GETS IN HER...  
 SHE DOES COSTUME DESIGNING!

ROSVITHA

Sister Hope!

HOPE

*(Sings and dances or mimes activities described.)*

THE GARDEN IS MY HABITAT;  
I'M GREAT WITH HERBS AND VEGGIES.  
I PLANT AND WEED AND HARVEST CROPS  
AND TRIM THE TREES AND HEDGIES.

MY FLOWER BEDS ARE ALL ABLOOM,  
A BOUQUET TO OUR NOSES.  
WHEN THERE'S A CURTAIN CALL TO TAKE,  
IT'S I SUPPLY THE ROSES!

ALL

WHEN THERE'S A CURTAIN CALL TO TAKE,  
IT'S SHE SUPPLIES THE ROSES!

ROSVITHA

Sister Charity!

CHARITY

*(Sings and dances or mimes activities described.)*

MY NAME IS SISTER CHARITY  
AND I'M THE CONVENT PORTRESS.  
WHEN GUESTS ARRIVE, I'M THERE TO SAY  
"YOU'RE WELCOME TO OUR FORTRESS!"

IN ALL MEDIEVAL CHRISTENDOM  
YOU WON'T FIND LODGINGS PLUSHER;  
AND IF YOU COME TO SEE OUR PLAYS,  
I'LL BE YOUR FRIENDLY USHER!

ALL

AND IF YOU COME TO SEE OUR PLAYS,  
SHE'LL BE YOUR FRIENDLY USHER!

ROSVITHA

Sister Virginitas!

VIRGINITAS

*(Sings and dances or mimes activities described.)*

I'M SACRISTAN AT GANDERSHEIM,  
A KIND OF VESTAL VIRGIN.  
OF CEREMONIES I'M IN CHARGE—  
I SEND THE INCENSE SURGIN'.

VIRGINITAS (*Cont.*)

I SET THE CANDLES ALL IN PLACE,  
RING BELLS TO ROUSE THE LISTLESS;  
BUT WHEN WE WAX THEATRICAL,  
I SERVE AS PROPS...MISTRESS!

ALL

BUT WHEN WE WAX THEATRICAL,  
SHE SERVES AS PROPS...MISTRESS!

ROSVITHA

Sister Brunhilda!

BRUNHILDA

*(Sings—with German accent—and dances or mimes  
activities described.)*

THE KITCHEN IS MY BAILIWICK,  
I'M INTO ETHNIC DISHES:  
SAUERBRATEN, SAUERKRAUT,  
SAUER RHINELAND FISHES.

ON FEAST DAYS IN THE BAKERY  
I AM FOUND CAVORTIN'.  
FOR CAST PARTIES I PROVIDE  
THE APPLE STRUDEL UND TORTEN!

ALL

FOR CAST PARTIES SHE PROVIDES  
THE APPLE STRUDEL UND TORTEN!

GERBERGA

Sister Rosvitha!

ROSVITHA

*(Sings and dances or mimes activities described.)*

I WORK IN THE SCRIPTORIUM  
ILLUMINATING LETTERS.  
I READ—AND SOMETIMES IMITATE—  
MY LITERARY BETTERS.

I COPY MANUSCRIPTS WITH CARE.  
MY FORTE IS PLAY COLLECTING.  
THE SIGHT OF ROMAN COMEDIES  
INCITES ME TO DIRECTING!

ALL  
 THE SIGHT OF ROMAN COMEDIES  
 INCITES HER TO DIRECTING!  
*(Musical transition.)*

ALL  
*(Sing.)*  
 IT'S HEAVENLY TO BE A NUN  
 HERE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.  
 WE LEAD A STIMULATING LIFE  
 WITH STUDIES TO ENGAGE US:

ASTRONOMY, PHILOSOPHY,  
 FINE MUSIC AND MATHEMATICS.  
 YES, WE ARE THE EPITOME  
 OF MENTAL ACROBATICS.

BOTH GREEK AND ROMAN LITERATURE,  
 CALLIGRAPHY AND PAINTING—  
 THERE IS NO LIBERAL SCHOLARSHIP  
 THAT'S NOT OF OUR ACQUAINTING.

GERBERGA  
*(Sings.)*  
 I AM THE ABBESS—SEE MY KEYS—  
 THEY'RE SYMBOL OF POSITION.  
 I HAVE AUTHORITY TO RULE,  
 BLUE BLOOD, AND ERUDITION.

WHAT'S MORE, I'M MUSICALLY INCLINED;  
 OF SONG I NEVER TIRE.  
 I PLAY THE ORGAN AND, OF COURSE,  
 DIRECT THE CONVENT CHOIR!  
*(She turns and conducts.)*

ALL  
*(Sing.)*  
 ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

GERBERGA  
*(Continues singing.)*  
 OUR CONVENT KEEPS THE ARTS ALIVE  
 THROUGHOUT THE DARK AGES;  
 IN ALL MEDIEVAL HISTORY BOOKS  
 WE ARE THE BRIGHTEST PAGES.



GERBERGA (*Cont.*)

WE RE-ENACT LIFE'S COMEDY,  
THOUGH CHURCH LAW WON'T PERMIT IT.  
MY NOVICES PLAY FOOLS FOR CHRIST,  
AND I'M THE DRAMA CRITIC!

ALL

HER NOVICES PLAYS FOOLS FOR CHRIST,  
AND SHE'S THE DRAMA CRITIC!

*(ALL scatter themselves about stage and simultaneously  
repeat their solos. Then...ALL form a chorus line and  
sing together.)*

ALL

IT'S HEAVENLY TO BE A NUN  
WITH HUMANISTIC KNOWLEDGE.  
WHY, BEING HERE AT GANDERSHEIM  
S' LIKE GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE!

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

*(NOVICES exit. GERBERGA beckons ROSVITHA.)*

GERBERGA

Rosvitha, I've just received word that Bishop Diehard is coming.

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

The status quo is about to be disrupted.

GERBERGA

I thought you might organize the other novices and present some little diversion.

ROSVITHA

How about a play?

GERBERGA

Is that prudent?

ROSVITHA

How could anybody resist one of our productions?

GERBERGA

It's true our convent is renowned for the learned accomplishments of its nuns.

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Exposition with a vengeance!

GERBERGA

But keep it light. We want it just after dinner.

*(Exits.)*

ROSVITHA

*(To audience, as FAITH, HOPE, and CHARITY enter pick up wicker costume trunk and carry it to floor.)*

I've just been illuminating a Latin piece by Terence. Called *The Brothers*. Maybe you've heard of it? Outrageously funny—though a bit racy. Made me blush to read it. But the style of the Latin is so elegant, so...instructive, that I just forced myself to finish.

*(Crossing to trunk to distribute costumes..)*

The play is about two sets of fathers and sons.

HOPE

Not another one. Those Romans are so...andocentric.

ROSVITHA

Sister Hope, you will play Demea, the stern, authoritarian father.

HOPE

That's just the kind of part I did last time! Typecasting is limiting my creative growth.

ROSVITHA

All right, all right. Sister Charity, *you* will play Demea.

CHARITY

I don't mind. At least I don't have to play the whore.

ROSVITHA

Sister Virginitas will play the whore.

*(Looks around, costume in hand.)*

Where is she?

CHARITY

In the sacristy scraping candles.

ROSVITHA

Well, give her this.

*(Hands whore's costume to CHARITY, turns to HOPE with another costume.)*

Sister Hope, you will play Micio, the lenient, gentle father.

*(Thrusts it at her.)*

I trust this will challenge your creativity.

HOPE

Thank you.

FAITH

What about me?

ROSVITHA

*(Getting two more costumes.)*

Sister Faith, you will play the good son who, of course, turns out to be the wicked son.

*(Gives her costume.)*

FAITH

I love doing reversals!

ROSVITHA

Sister Brunhilda—

BRUNHILDA

*(Runs on, wiping hands on apron.)*

Sorry.

ROSVITHA

You will play the shallow and selfish son who remains shallow and selfish to the end.

*(Hands her costume.)*

BRUNHILDA

Is this punishment for coming late?

ROSVITHA

Slaves and pimps will be given out at lunch.

*(Takes scroll-scripts from trunk and distributes them.)*

Here, study your lines. We'll rehearse at recreation.

CHARITY

Are you sure that's enough time? I don't think I can memorize my lines that fast.

FAITH

I'll help you.

*(Hand bell rings offstage. ROSVITHA talks to audience as OTHERS carry trunk up to platform, where they are joined by VIRGINITAS and GERBERGA.)*

ROSVITHA

Have you got the picture? Good. Now what we need is an initiating incident. Something to start off the conflict with a bang. Enter: The Villain!

Scene 2

AT RISE:

*Crossfade, as ROSVITHA joins OTHERS in choir positions. GERBERGA gives note on pitch pipe, then joins them. They sing one line of straight liturgical music in Latin-- "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus" ("Behold the Great Priest") as BISHOP DIEHARD and PRINCESS SOHPA appear, then the tempo changes to a samba, as DIEHARD and SOPHIA dance in.*

NOVICES &amp; GERBERGA

*(Sing.)*

ECCE SACERDOS MAGNUS!  
 HERE COMES OUR BISHOP DIEHARD! DIEHARD!  
 WELCOME, SPIRITUAL LIFE GUARD! LIFE GUARD!

GERBERGA

*(Sings solo.)*

HE IS THE BIG CHEESE OF OUR DIOCESE  
 AND IN HIS PRESENCE WE TREMBLE.  
 SMILING, WE BOW AND SCRAPE TO CLEAN UP OUR ACT  
 AND PRACTICE TO DISSEMBLE.

NOVICES &amp; GERBERGA

*(Sing.)*

HERE COMES OUR BISHOP DIEHARD! DIEHARD!  
 HE-MAN SPIRITUAL LIFE GUARD! LIFE GUARD!

*(GERBERGA kneels, kisses DIEHARD's ring.)*

GERBERGER

Your Excellency!

DIEHARD

*(Lifting her up.)*

Abbess Gerberga.

GERBERGA

Our monastery is—

DIEHARD

—always a sweet relief from the cares of the world.

GERBERGA

That's why we like it here.

DIEHARD

The Emperor sends you his best: this is his daughter Sophia. She is to take the veil.

GERBERGA

*(To SOPHIA.)*

How happy you must be to have received the call!

*(SOPHIA scowls, turns away.)*

But you must be tired from your journey. Sister Rosvitha—please make the princess at home. Bishop Diehard, perhaps you would walk in the garden with me?

DIEHARD

Of course, Mother Abbess. I'm sure you'll want to know all the news of the court.

GERBERGA

It is our duty to pray for our rulers. And there's no prayer like informed prayer.

*(GERBERGA and DIEHARD exit. NOVICES sit on steps.*

*SOPHIA crosses in front, "inspecting" them.)*

SOPHIA

You all look alike.

ROSVITHA

I'm Sister Rosvitha.

FAITH

*(Stands, crossing her hands over her breast.)*

Sister Faith.

HOPE

*(Stands, folding her hands in prayer.)*

Sister Hope.

CHARITY

*(Stands, extending her open arms.)*

Sister Charity.

VIRGINITAS

*(Stands, striking pose of Venus-on-half-shell.)*

Sister Virginitas.

BRUNHILDA

*(Going down on one knee, pumping iron.)*

Sister Brunhilda!

ROSVITHA

So...what made you decide to enter the convent?

My father. SOPHIA

Oh. CHARITY

He wants me out of the way. SOPHIA

Why? FAITH

I got too big for my britches. SOPHIA

But surely a princess is allowed a certain royal pride. HOPE

Pride, yes. Ambition, no. SOPHIA

What exactly is your ambition? VIRGINITAS

To be emperor! SOPHIA

Emperor!? NOVICES

*(Music: "I Want to Be the Emperor." SOPHIA and the NOVICES execute a military march.)*

SOPHIA

*(Sings.)*

I WANT TO BE THE EMPEROR,  
 I WANT TO RULE THE LAND.  
 I WANT TO FLASH THE IMPERIAL RING  
 UPON MY DAINTY HAND.

I WANT TO GUIDE THE SHIP OF STATE,  
 TO STAND UPON THE PROW  
 I WANT TO WEAR THE REGAL CROWN  
 UPON MY LOVELY BROW.

I'M MADE FOR HIGHER THINGS, I AM,  
 THAN GOSSIPING AND BREEDING,

SOPHIA (*Cont.*)

FOR NOTHING STIKES MY FANCY LESS  
THAN TIRESOME MIDNIGHT FEEDINGS.

I HAVE A LAWYER'S MIND, I DO,  
A FLAIR FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE.  
I KNOW WHAT TREATIES NOT TO SIGN  
AND WHEN TO MAKE ALLIANCE.

I'M GOOD AT JUDGING CHARACTER  
WHEN ROGUES ARE BROUGHT TO COURT:  
THE PEASAN'T RIGHT, THE LANDLORD'S WRONG—  
INTUITION IS MY FORTE.

I LONG TO BE PHILOSOPHER-QUEEN,  
MONARCH OF THE REALM.  
THE ENEMIES OF TRUTH AND LOVE  
I WILL OVERWHELM.

*(They continue to march/dance, repeating the song, with  
the NOVICES joining in: "She wants..." Then...)*

SOPHIA

I WANT TO BE THE EMPEROR  
FROM RHINELAND TO THE RHONE.  
I YEARN TO PUT MY ROYAL REAR...

*(NOVICES escort SOPHIA up steps and lift her onto trunk.)*

UPON THE PURPLE THRONE!

*(NOVICES sit on steps, gathered around SOPHIA.)*

ROSVITHA

That's quite an ambition!

CHARITY

Especially for a girl.

SOPHIA

That didn't stop my grandmother.

FAITH

Who?

SOPHIA

Theophano. She started out as a barmaid, then became an actress, and—

ROSVITHA

An actress?!

SOPHIA

And finally rose to the head of the Byzantine Empire!

HOPE

Empress Theophano of Byzantium—your grandmother!

SOPHIA

She seduced my grandfather and ruled with him for twenty years. But he was more into the theatre than politics, so she—

ROSVITHA

What theatre?

SOPHIA

The Hippodrome.

ROSVITHA

Have you been there?

SOPHIA

Oh yes. It's very chic.

VIRGINITAS

So what happened with your grandmother?

SOPHIA

She poisoned my grandfather so she could be emperor.

VIRGINITAS

And got away with it?

SOPHIA

Well, nobody could prove it.

BRUNHILDA

Then *she* was emperor, *ja*?

SOPHIA

*Nein*. The archbishop refused to crown a woman emperor. So they got rid of her.

BRUNHILDA

What they do to her?

SOPHIA

Put her in a convent. Like me.



ROSVITHA

You know, Sophia, you might come to like it here.

SOPHIA

Like being a nun? Do you?

*(With lightning speed, NOVICES jump up into choir positions and sing a fast parody reprise of "It's Heavenly to Be a Nun.")*

NOVICES

*(Sing.)*

ITS HEAVENLY TO BE A NUN  
WITH HUMANISTIC KNOWLEDGE.  
WHY, BEING HERE AT GANDERSHEIM  
'S LIKE GOING AWAY TO COLLEGE!

SOPHIA

Still...there's more to life than studying.

BRUNHILDA

Luckily, the food is here very good.

ROSVITHA

Not to mention the cultural opportunities.

*(Hand bell rings offstage.)*

BRUNHILDA

Come along, Princess. We go now to dinner.

ROSVITHA

And then: on to the theatre!

*(ALL exit, except ROSVITHA, who speaks to audience.)*

How's that for preparation? Are you wondering what the bishop will think of our production of Terence? How do you like Sophia's subplot? I suppose that, as protagonist, I ought to feel a little threatened by her. I mean, she's a very appealing sort—and a good singer too. Could snatch the focus right away from me. But I like her too much to cut her lines. Dangerous business, playwriting!

*(Incidental music as lights crossfade and ROSVITHA sets up for the Terence play. She leans a placard which reads "The Brothers by Terence" against the open lid of the trunk in the center of the platform; pulls open the curtain—on which is a street-scene—across the R. arch; takes script from trunk and sits on edge of platform.)*

Scene 3

AT RISE:

*GERBERGA, DIEHARD, SOPHIA enter and form the “audience” for the play. GERBERGA and DIEHARD sit on bench, SOPHIA on floor next to GERBERGA. At signal from ROSVITHA, CHARITY/DEMEA enters crosses up steps to R. arch, paces frantically in front of “door” on street-scene backdrop. HOPE/MICIO enters, crosses to bottom of steps. This and the other two plays-within-the-play are performed in a very broad, fast-paced, presentational style with all actors declaiming their lines and squarely facing the audience throughout.*

Demea?

HOPE/MICIO

Micio! I’ve been looking for you for hours.

CHARITY/DEMEA

What for?

HOPE/MICIO

I have terrible news—about the criminal behavior of that goody-two-shoes son of yours.

CHARITY/DEMEA

Don’t be such a bore.

HOPE/MICIO

That slave girl business was bad enough. But now he has seduced a perfectly respectable free woman.

CHARITY/DEMEA

I know.

HOPE/MICIO

Well what are you going to do about it?!

CHARITY/DEMEA

Of course I disapprove, but it’s not—

HOPE/MICIO

They’ve had a baby!

CHARITY/DEMEA

HOPE/MICIO

Bless its little heart.

CHARITY/DEMEA

But the girl...the girl hasn't...

*(Looks panicked. Then to ROSVITHA.)*

Line!

ROSVITHA

“The girl doesn't have a penny to—”

CHARITY/DEMEA

*(Remembering.)*

The girl doesn't have a penny to her name! He'll have to marry her without a dowry.

HOPE/MICIO

Of course.

CHARITY/DEMEA

Then what will he do?

HOPE/MICIO

Have the girl move into our house.

CHARITY/DEMEA

Ye gods!

HOPE/MICIO

What else can we do?

CHARITY/DEMEA

And I suppose you're pleased with this...adventure?

HOPE/MICIO

It's history now so I've resigned myself. Life, my dear Demea, is a game of craps: if you don't get the roll you want, you settle for the roll you get.

CHARITY/DEMEA

Some philosophy!

*(VIRGINITAS/SLAVE GIRL enters from behind curtain, sidles up to HOPE/MICIO. He fondles her shoulders.)*

That slave girl cost you a bundle and now you'll have to get rid of her.

HOPE/MICIO

Why?

CHARITY/DEMEA

A harlot and a housewife under the same roof? Are you in your right mind?

HOPE/MICIO

I believe so.

CHARITY/DEMEA

Ah-ha! I see your game: you'll keep that slave girl singing for your own amusement.

HOPE/MICIO

Why not?

CHARITY/DEMEA

And I suppose the new bride will take lessons from her?

HOPE/MICIO

Naturally.

CHARITY/DEMEA

And you'll dance to both their tunes?

HOPE/MICIO

*(As VIRGINITAS/SLAVE GIRL sidles up to CHARITY/DEMEA.)*

Would you like to come along as our fourth?

CHARITY/DEMEA

Gods deliver us! Aren't you ashamed of yourself!?

DIEHARD

*(Jumping up.)*

God deliver us! Aren't *you* ashamed of yourselves?!

*(Action "on stage" stops. BRUNHILDA and FAITH, in Roman costumes, come meekly out from behind platform.)*

GERBERGA

What's the matter, Your Excellency?

DIEHARD

The "matter" of this...shameless spectacle! Seduction and crap games, illegitimate babies, fornicating fathers, household harlots, and...and...group sex! Who is responsible for this outrage?

ROSVITHA

I am, Your Excellency.

DIEHARD

This is your doing?

ROSVITHA

Well, I didn't write it. I mean, I'm not that clever.

DIEHARD

You call this clever!?! Making sport of all that's...sacred!

ROSVITHA

But it's satire. That's what it's supposed to do.

DIEHARD

*(Turning to GERBERGA.)*

Is this the "learned accomplishments" your convent is renowned for?

ROSVITHA

But Your Excellency, we've been reading Terence in Latin class and—

DIEHARD

You must be aware, Abbess Gerberga, that the Church Fathers have condemned the theatre and its...harlots as "licentious and...and...and..."

ROSVITHA

"Obscene."

GERBERGA

But they were referring to public circuses, not to literary classics.

DIEHARD

The penalty for such scandalous displays is excommunication! According to the Council of...of...of...

ROSVITHA

Constantinople. 681.

DIEHARD

Particularly condemned is the wearing of women's clothes by men and—

*(Plucking the costumes of HOPE and CHARITY.)*

men's clothes by women!

*(PLAYERS scurry off R.)*

GERBERGA

In public, Bishop Diehard. But our convent presentations do not play to the multitudes.

DIEHARD

*(Sarcastically.)*

Oh but they would—if the multitudes got word of what’s going on here.

ROSVITHA

Gosh, do you really think so?

GERBERGA

There is no danger of that—unless Your Excellency tells them.

DIEHARD

This is no joking matter. You must see the insidious danger lurking here.

GERBERGA

Where?

DIEHARD

A play is nothing more than a deception. Your novices were even now lying before our very eyes!

GERBERGA

Surely you were not deceived.

DIEHARD

They were assuming passions that are immoral. Do you think they can just walk away from that and return to their everyday lives?

GERBERGA

They’re normal, healthy young women—not schizophrenics.

DIEHARD

Women, in particular, must be protected from such fantasies.

GERBERGA

What women need to be protected from is men like you who believe such nonsense. And that, my dear Bishop, is why they’re here.

DIEHARD

Abbess Gerberga, are you challenging my authority?

GERBERGA

No, Bishop Diehard, you are challenging mine. Our convent is not answerable to any bishop. As abbess here, I have the rights and privileges of an overlord. I issue summonses, retain knights-at-arms, hold a seat in the Imperial Diet, and even—when the whim strikes me—mint coins in my image!

SOPHIA

Brava! Brava!

DIEHARD

Princess Sophia, you will return to court with me.

SOPHIA

I'm not sure I want to.

DIEHARD

I know, my child, that you have some reservations about your vocation. As I do.

SOPHIA

You do?

DIEHARD

Perhaps if I spoke to your father, he could be persuaded to change his mind.

SOPHIA

But I'm beginning to change my own mind.

DIEHARD

In that case, we must find you a suitable convent where your spiritual health—

SOPHIA

I'd just as soon stay here.

DIEHARD

You are young and impressionable, my child, and should allow yourself to be led by me.

SOPHIA

You led me here.

DIEHARD

Very well. I have some business in the town. But on the way back—on Sunday—I shall stop for you.

*(Exits brusquely.)*

SOPHIA

Oh, Mother Abbess, you were wonderful! Such forcefulness! Such courage!

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Such hubris.

SOPHIA

It was such a gripping moment! Such a scene!

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Such an initiating incident.

SOPHIA

All that tension! All that antagonism!

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

All that conflict.

SOPHIA

It was thrilling! It was exhilarating!

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

It was cathartic.

GERBERGA

My dears, it was a lesson.

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

What?

GERBERGA

A lesson in something as old as the theatre, as fundamental as fun.

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

What's that?

*(Four musical chords as GERBERGA mounts steps, dips into open trunk, and thrusts aloft a pair of maracas.)*

GERBERGA

Censorship!

*(Chord. Sings to tune of "Dies Irae" from Requiem mass.)*

OH, WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN...

*(Beat changes to samba for "When the Censor Comes to Town.")*

*NOVICES enter, provide singing and dancing backup.)*

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN,

HANG UP YOUR COSTUMES AND SEND OUT THE CLOWNS.

STRIKE DOWN THE SET AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS.

BURN EVERY SCRIPT FROM *SEX* TO *HAIR!*

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN,

IT'S GOOD-BYE, LAUGHTER; HELLO, FROWN!



GERBERGA (*Cont.*)

CROMWELL STOOD LONDON ON ITS WEST END;  
HAYS LEFT HOLLYWOOD AGAPE.  
THE LEGION OF DECENCY GOT MAE WEST  
IN THE MIDDLE OF PEELIN' HER GRAPE.

LLILLIAN HELLMAN WAS BANNED IN BOSTON;  
OH, CALCUTTA! SHOCKED BROADWAY.  
AS FOR TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS—  
EVEN SISTER IGNATIUS IS DENIED HER SAY.

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN,

IN TV LAND, TOO, THERE'S A STRONG SUSPICION  
THAT THE F.C.C. CARRIES ON THE TRADITION  
OF THE DANGEROUS, DERANGEROUS INQUISITION!

OH WHEN THE CENSOR MAKES THE SCENE,  
BEWARE THEATRICAL LIBERTINE!

SEX OF EVERY PERSUASION HE BANS,  
POLITICS HE DISALLOWS.  
BUT THE MOST *VERBOTEN* CONTRABAND  
IS SATIRE OF THE SACRED COWS!

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN,  
STRIKE DOWN THE SET AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS.  
BURN EVERY SCRIPT FROM *SEX* TO *HAIR!*

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES, WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN,  
IT'S GOOD-BYE, LAUGHTER; HELLO, FROWN!

WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES,  
WHEN THE CENSOR COMES TO TOWN, TO TOWN!  
OLE!

ROSVITHA

But the bishop can't censor us, Mother. You said so yourself.

GERBERGA

Not directly. But the bishop has the emperor's ear.

SOPHIA

That's true.

GERBERGA

Don't worry, dear, we'll think of something.

*(Exits.)*

SOPHIA

What can we do?

ROSVITHA

I guess we could promise there'll be no more Terence.

NOVICES *(Together.)*

No more Terence!

ROSVITHA

Well, you heard the bishop. He doesn't like seduction and fornication and illegitimate babies and—

SOPHIA

Of course not. He is one.

NOVICES *(Together.)*

What?

SOPHIA

He's my father's illegitimate half-brother. Everyone at court knows it.

ROSVITHA

So Terence is too close to home.

FAITH

But what will we do for feast days?

CHARITY

And birthdays?

VIRGINITAS

And holy days?

BRUNHILDA

Und holidays?

HOPE

And just plain boring days?

ROSVITHA

Why don't we write our own plays?!

FAITH

But you heard the bishop—he thinks all playacting is obscene.

ROSVITHA

But maybe if the subject matter were less...pagan...

CHARITY

What are you getting at?

ROSVITHA

We could write a Christian play!

CHARITY

*(Incredulous.)*

A Christian play!

HOPE

How's that going to brighten our boring days?

ROSVITHA

Why not pick a story we know he likes?

BRUNHILDA

How we know what he likes?

SOPHIA

I have a little paperback he gave me for edifying reading.

HOPE

*(Unenthusiastic.)*

Great.

ROSVITHA

Let's see it.

SOPHIA

Here it is: *Lives of the Saints.*

*(NOVICES moan.)*

ROSVITHA

*(Skimming scroll.)*

Here's one called "Sapientia."

VIRGINITAS

What's it about?

ROSVITHA

Three virgins being pressured by the Roman Emperor to offer incense to idols.

SOPHIA

*(Sings in self-parody.)*

I WANT TO BE THE EMPEROR!

BRUNHILDA

*(Drags SOPHIA onto bench.)*

Ja, we know.

CHARITY

What happens?

ROSVITHA

*(Skimming.)*

Blah, blah, blah...their mother Sapientia does a lot of praying and preaching.

HOPE

What did I tell you? Boring.

ROSVITHA

We could cut that part.

SOPHIA

But that's the part the bishop's always quoting.

ROSVITHA

Here's the action part.

FAITH

I think I know what's coming.

ROSVITHA

They refuse to offer the incense, so he has them—

FAITH

Executed?

ROSVITHA

But first: tortured.

BRUNHILDA

*(Jumping up, singing.)*

I WANT TO BE THE TORTURER!

ROSVITHA

The first virgin...

*(BRUNHILDA drags FAITH to C.)*

is scourged with whips...

*(FAITH, kneeling, writhes in pain as BRUNHILDA mimes scourging her.)*

but the whips don't hurt....

*(FAITH smiles under the whip.)*

So then she's roasted on a spit.

BRUNHILDA

A spit?

*(HOPE and VIRGINITAS get onto floor on all fours.*

*FAITH lies across them, face down. BRUNHILDA "salts" her, then turns her by the feet till she falls off.)*

FAITH

No problem. We can make paper flames.

ROSVITHA

And finally, she's beheaded.

FAITH

Offstage, I presume.

ROSVITHA

If you insist.

FAITH

I can handle it.

*(FAITH, HOPE, VIRGINITAS return to seats.)*

ROSVITHA

The second virgin...

*(BRUNHILDA grabs CHARITY.)*

is suspended on a rack...

*(BRUNHILDA stretches CHARITY on rack.)*

and scourged with rods.

*(Scourges her.)*

CHARITY

And when she doesn't feel it?

ROSVITHA

Thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil.

*(HOPE and VIRGINITAS form a cauldron; CHARITY  
backs up and sits in it.)*

SOPHIA

I wouldn't want to do props for this show.

CHARITY

And when that doesn't work?

ROSVITHA

*(Signaling cutting throat.)*

The inevitable.

*(CHARITY and VIRGINITAS return to seats.)*

HOPE

All right, what about Virgin #3?

ROSVITHA

*(Skimming scroll.)*

Hmm...they cut the nipples off her breasts.

HOPE

What is this? Snuff porn?

ROSVITHA

It says so right here. But instead of blood...milk gushes out.

HOPE

There are limits to stage magic, you know!

BRUNHILDA

You are sure the bishop will like this?

HOPE

I don't care what the bishop likes. I don't like it one bit!

FAITH

Oh come on, Hope, be a sport.

HOPE

Easy for you to say. You've got paper flames and an off-stage beheading.

ROSVITHA

*(Checking scroll.)*

So do you, eventually.

HOPE

I'll wait till the special effects crew gets a little more experience.

ROSVITHA

Look, why don't I read the rest of these after night prayer, find one that's a little more... stageable, and do the adaptation myself?

SOPHIA

I'll help make copies.

ROSVITHA

At last—a stage manager!

VIRGINITAS

What's the schedule?

ROSVITHA

We'll rehearse tomorrow after morning chores and show it to the abbess before Vespers.

CHARITY

Tomorrow! I'm not a quick study, Rosvitha. I can't do it!

FAITH

You did all right last time on short notice.

HOPE

She nearly had a nervous breakdown.

ROSVITHA

Don't worry, Charity—I'll make sure you don't get many lines.

*(Incidental music as lights fade. ALL exit.)*

Scene 4

AT RISE:

*Lights up on ROSVITHA'S cell: a table-desk with candle, ink pot, quill pen, blank parchment, Lives of the Saints scroll. ROSVITHA, in a cape-like robe, sits at desk, scribbling, as music comes up for "I Write From Here." She looks up, disgusted, crumples parchment, throws it away, stares at blank page, then looks up.*

ROSVITHA

*(Sings.)*

IT'S LONELY HERE.  
I HAVEN'T AN IDEA.  
I HAVEN'T GOT A SINGLE THOUGHT.  
I HAVEN'T GOT THE BRILLIANT MIND I OUGHT.  
IT'S LONELY HERE.

IT'S SCARY HERE  
BEGINNING MY CAREER  
WITH NOTHING BUT A CLEAN WHITE PAGE  
AND RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES AN EMPTY STAGE.  
IT'S SCARY HERE.

*(Stands next to desk.)*

IF ONLY I COULD FIND THE WORDS—  
THE ACTION AND THE PLOT—  
AND CONJURE UP THE CHARACTERS  
RIGHT OUT OF MY INK POT....  
IF ONLY I COULD MAKE MYSELF  
BE ALL THE THINGS I'M NOT....

*(Crosses to front of desk, leans against it.)*

IF ONLY I COULD BE INSPIRED  
BY VISIONS FROM ON HIGH  
TO KNOW THE MEANING OF ALL LIFE—  
WHAT MAKES THE SPIRIT FLY,  
I'D WRITE INSIGHTFUL TRAGEDIES  
THAT MAKE THE WHOLE HOUSE CRY.

*(Sits.)*

BUT I DON'T FEEL IT COMING DOWN  
IN LIGHTNING BOLTS OF TRUTH.  
I GUESS I HAVEN'T GOT THE ROD  
OR MAYBE IT'S MY YOUTH.  
I JUST DON'T HAVE THE URGE TO WRITE  
A LINE THAT STARTS "FORSOOTH..."



ROSVITHA (*Cont.*)

YES, I KNOW ME—  
NOT TUNED TO TRAGEDY.  
YET IF I LOOK NOT UP, BUT IN,  
I'LL FIND THE FOOLISHNESS THAT MAKES ME KIN  
TO ALL THE WORLD.

*(Stands, touching her heart.)*

I'LL WRITE FROM HERE.  
I'LL WRITE TO MAKE *ME* CHEER.  
I'LL TAKE MY TIME, GO DEEP INSIDE,  
LET MY IMAGINATION FIND ITS STRIDE.  
I'LL WRITE FROM HERE.

*(Crosses to desk.)*

I'LL BE SURPRISED,  
MY SPIRIT ENERGIZED.  
FOR THIS ONE BLESSING WILL I STRIVE:  
THE MOMENT I CAN FEEL I'M MOST ALIVE.  
I'LL BE SURPRISED...  
I'LL FEEL ALIVE...

I'LL FIGHT FOR,  
I'LL WRITE FOR,  
I'LL BURN MIDNIGHT LIGHT FOR  
THE MOMENT OF FEELING ALIVE.

*(Sits and starts to write as lights fade out.)*

Scene 5

AT RISE:

*The next afternoon. Lights up on NOVICES (except ROSVITHA) getting into costume or studying their lines. Trunk is on platform. SOPHIA is helping CHARITY on with her snake costume.*

This costume is hot.

CHARITY

Offer it up.

HOPE

I don't even have a single line.

CHARITY

You've got a hiss.

SOPHIA

You said you weren't a quick study.

HOPE

I didn't say I was an idiot.

CHARITY

Hold your arms still, will you?

SOPHIA

*(ROSVITHA enters. HOPE accosts her.)*

Virginitas always gets to play the girl. It's not fair.

HOPE

You're too tall. Besides, you've got the title role. What more do you want?

ROSVITHA

Opportunities for creative growth.

HOPE

If you grow any more, we'll have to do monster shows.

ROSVITHA

Virginitas, I'm having trouble with my through-line-of-action. Can you tell me what my super objective is?

VIRGINITAS

ROSVITHA

*(Adjusting VIRGINITAS's Roman headgear.)*

To keep your veil on. And stop laughing at your own lines, Virginitas. It's very unprofessional. Where's Brunhilda?

FAITH

Tell me, Rosvitha, am I supposed to be grossed out by Callimacho's plan?

ROSVITHA

What do you say when he suggests it?

FAITH

"Disgusting!"

*(ROSVITHA gestures a "duh.")*

Then why do I help him?

ROSVITHA

What's your next line?

FAITH

*(Checking script.)*

"How much will you pay me?" So—you think I do it for the money?

*(Another gesture from ROSVITHA.)*

But maybe I just pretend to be disgusted so Callimacho will offer me money—you know—to overcome my disgust.

ROSVITHA

Forget the subtext, will you, Faith? I'll be ecstatic if you remember your lines and blocking.

BRUNHILDA

*(Running on.)*

You was looking for me, *ja*?

ROSVITHA

*(Taking her scroll.)*

I want to cut some of Andronicus's speeches.

BRUNHILDA

More?

ROSVITHA

These long prayers slow down the action. Take this part out.

BRUNHILDA

Why are the good guys always boring? Or maybe is my acting?

ROSVITHA

You're doing fine. But you've got to be faster carrying out the body.

BRUNHILDA

I try. But she is heavy.

ROSVITHA

Virginitas, how about doing a little fasting today?

VIRGINITAS

You could ask Brunhilda to do a little exercising!

ROSVITHA

Is this in my contract?

SOPHIA

I've finished the signs.

ROSVITHA

Let's clear the stage, everybody!

*(VIRGINITAS and HOPE carry trunk to floor.)*

Now remember: the right is "The Street."

*(Pulls curtain across arch.)*

The left is "Drusiana's House."

*(Pulls curtain across arch.)*

And center is "The Tomb." Now this time through, try to pick up the pace.

*(VIRGINITAS, HOPE, and BRUNHILDA scurry "backstage.")*

*SOPHIA sits on floor next to trunk. GERBERGA enters.)*

GERBERGA

Here I am, Darlings.

ROSVITHA

*(Picks up placards from platform, displays the top*

*one to GERBERGA. It reads: "Callimacho by Rosvitha.")*

What do you think, Mother—is this too vain?

GERBERGA

Anything worth writing is worth signing. On the other hand, Anonymous can't be excommunicated.

*(Sits on bench.)*

ROSVITHA

Thanks.

*(Sets placards against open lid of trunk, then sits next to GERBERGA. SOPHIA takes out scroll for prompting,*

*and displaces front placard with a second one which reads: "A Street.")*

SOPHIA

Action!

*(Crossfade to R. arch. FAITH enters as FORTUNATUS, leans against far-right column. HOPE enters as CALLIMACHO.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Fortunatus, I'd like a few words with you.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

As many as you like, Callimacho.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Can we go someplace more private?

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Sure thing.

*(Sits on top step.)*

How's this?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

*(Sits next to him.)*

I'm in a state and need your help.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Hey—what are friends for?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I'm in love.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

With...?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Someone beautiful and charming.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Can you be more specific?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

A woman.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

That narrows it down. Try harder.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

*(Standing.)*

Drusiana!

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Andronicus's wife?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

That's the one.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

*(Stands.)*

You must be bonkers. She's been baptized. A Christian.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I don't care if she's a Cretan!

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Forget it. She won't have anything to do with you.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Plenty of other guys have seduced married women.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

But this one's on a celibacy kick. She won't even do it with her husband.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Then he won't mind.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

He's been converted too. This new religion is spreading like the plague. You haven't got a prayer.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Thanks for the encouragement.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Hey—what are friends for!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I'm going to tell her I'm crazy about her.

*(Exits through arch.)*

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

She'll believe the crazy part.

*(Exits through arch. Crossfade to L. arch. SOPHIA displays*

*placard reading: "Drusiana's House." VIRGINITAS enters as DRUSIANA, crosses to DL. corner, kneels in prayer. HOPE/CALLIMACHO bursts in on her.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Drusiana, I must speak to you of my heart's love.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

*(Jumping up.)*

I can't imagine what it has to do with me, Callimacho.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

You can't?

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

No.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I'm crazy about you.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

You're crazy.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

What?

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Why?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Your beauty.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

My beauty?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Yes.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

What's it got to do with you?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Nothing yet. But maybe later...

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Get away from me, you unspeakable cad!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

*(Throws himself at her feet, grabs her. Her veil tilts.)*

Dearest Drusiana, I cling to you.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

*(Adjusting veil.)*

I wish you wouldn't.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Return my love!

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

I turn my nose up at your lust, disgusting devil!

*(Bumps him off her.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

You can't fool me. You're acting!

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Never! Acting is forbidden to Christians! The truth is I despise you.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

You will change your mind.

*(Gets up.)*

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

You're crazy!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Yes—about you.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

What?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Your beauty.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

My beauty?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Yes.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

*(Dropping character, to SOPHIA.)*

Line!



SOPHIA

“What makes you think—”

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

*(Back in character.)*

What makes you think I’ll sleep with you when I don’t even sleep with my husband?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

He’s boring.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

He’s a Christian.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I’m exciting.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

You’re demented.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I won’t rest till I have you, Drusiana. Beware my trap!

*(Exits.)*

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Alas! What’s the use of my vow of celibacy?

*(Unseen by VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA, BRUNHILDA enters as ANDRONICUS, her husband.)*

My irresistible beauty has made this man crazy.

*(Kneels.)*

Pity me, pity me, O Lord!

*(Sits back.)*

What’s a good girl to do? If I tell my husband, there’ll be an ugly scandal. If I keep it to myself, uh-oh! There is no honorable way out but...to die!

*(Kneels up.)*

Please Lord, reward my virtue and grant me a speedy death!

*(She dies.)*

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Drusiana! My dear wife! What grief! She is dead und I am desolate. But wait—it is wrong to weep for one whose soul is in heaven.

*(Calls.)*

Fortunatus!

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

*(Entering.)*

Yes, Master Andronicus.

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Your mistress has died a martyr's death.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Really?

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

We must celebrate her funeral rites. I will lay her in our marble tomb. You will guard the grave tonight.

*(Tries to pick up body, but cannot.)*

I will lay her in our marble tomb...

*(Tries again—no luck.)*

I will lay her in our marble tomb...

*(Finally drags body along floor to center arch.)*

You will guard the grave tonight!

*(Arranges her corpse hurriedly, snaps veil down over her face, exits.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

*(Entering L. arch.)*

Fortunatus—what is to become of me? Even though she's dead, I'm still crazy about her.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Poor fellow. Anything I can do?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Let me into her grave.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Disgusting!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Hey—what are friends for?

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

How much will you pay me?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Take all I have.

*(Reaches for money bag. Looks frantically towards SOPHIA.)*

Prop!

*(SOPHIA reaches into trunk, throws him bag. He gives it to FAITH/FORTUNATUS.)*

Take all I have.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Let's go then.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

The sooner the better!

*(Crossfade as they exit L. arch and enter C. arch. SOPHIA displays placard: "The Tomb.")*

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

There's the body. And no sign of decay.

*(CHARITY/SERPENT enters on her knees.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

*(Kneels.)*

Oh, Drusiana, my Drusiana! I was crazy about you, yet you spurned me.

*(Lifts veil.)*

Now you are in my power and I can do anything I want to you! Heh...heh...heh...

CHARITY/SERPENT

Hssss...

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

Look out! A giant serpent is coming at us!

*(CHARITY/SERPENT bites FAITH/FORTUNATUS, who dies.)*

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

It's the devil! Damn you, Fortunatus, for getting me into this! Now you're dead of the serpent's bite and I'll die of fright!

*(Dies.)*

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

*(Entering C. arch, seeing three bodies.)*

What chaos is this? Alas, it is the work of the devil! First I must drive away the snake!

*(Lifts CHARITY/SERPENT into standing position.)*

In the name of the Lord, be gone, cursed snake!

*(CHARITY/SERPENT hops down steps and exits.)*

Callimacho, arise and confess your wicked crimes!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I confess I came here for an evil purpose, but I was crazy with love and so not responsible. Besides this fellow led me on.

*(Throws himself down.)*

Oh, pity me, Andronicus!

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

I do.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I am disgusted at what I did.

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Me too.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I repent my evil ways. From now on, I will embrace Christianity and be virtuous and chaste.

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

A truly miraculous conversion. Praise the Lord! But now, in his name, I must also raise my dear Drusiana back to life.

*(Reaches for her hand; she grabs his and jumps up.)*

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Glory be to God whose power makes me live again!

*(Shimmies for joy.)*

Venerable husband, I see that you have resurrected Callimacho who lusted after me sinfully—

*(Breaking character.)*

Listen, Rosvitha, how do I know that? I've been dead.

ROSVITHA

Good point. I'll rework it. Go on.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

*(Back in character.)*

...have resurrected Callimacho who lusted after me sinfully.

*(Indicating FORTUNATUS.)*

Should you not be as generous with this other sinner who betrayed your trust and my chaste body?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

No! Not that vile seducer who dared me to attempt this terrible deed. Never!

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Would you keep God's grace from him?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Yes. He doesn't deserve it.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Our faith teaches us to forgive if we would be forgiven.

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Oh, all right—if you insist.

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

You do it, Dear.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

Fortunatus, awake and in the name of the Lord, break the bonds of death.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

*(Sitting up.)*

Who has called me back to life?

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Drusiana.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

And is that Callimacho there looking so smug and virtuous? Why is he not crazy for Drusiana?

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

I have become a Christian.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

No!

HOPE/CALLIMACHO

Now I am crazy for Christ!

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

It is so.

FAITH/FORTUNATUS

I don't think I can take all this grace and virtue. I would rather eat worms than live in such a world.

*(Dies again.)*

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

No!

*(Goes for him.)*

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

*(Pulls her back.)*

Let him die und go to hell. He has rejected—through pride—the gift of life.

VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

How sad.

BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

We must not be sad. We must this day give thanks and make merry for the wondrous conversion of Callimacho.

## VIRGINITAS/DRUSIANA

May all his craziness be divine!

## HOPE/CALLIMACHO &amp; BRUNHILDA/ANDRONICUS

Amen!

*(CHARITY/SERPENT enters and ALL bow as GERBERGA stands and applauds. Then NOVICES and SOPHIA exit.)*

## ROSVITHA

What do you think, Mother, will the bishop like it?

## GERBERGA

If he can overlook the lust, seduction, suicide, bribery, and necrophilia.

## ROSVITHA

We've got to get him to change his mind.

## GERBERGA

Why is it so important to you?

## ROSVITHA

Life without theatre would be such a drag.

## GERBERGA

But Sister, our life here is to pray and work. Remember St. Benedict: "Ora et labora!"

## ROSVITHA

Remember St. Stanislavski: "To play is to pray!" Blessed are the ensemble players, for they shall learn how to share. Blessed are the upstaged, for they shall learn to forgive. Blessed are the walk-on's, for they shall learn to be humble.

## GERBERGA

Cursed are the impious playwrights, for they shall be denied an imprimatur.

## ROSVITHA

But Mother, this is a monastery. We've kept the arts alive for eight hundred years—through plague and pestilence and plundering. We can't stop now! Our convent "is renowned for the learned accomplishments of its nuns."

## GERBERGA

Still...I wonder, Rosvitha, if you couldn't...temper your talent.

## ROSVITHA

How?

GERBERGA  
 Try another style, Another...genre.

ROSVITHA  
 Like what?

GERBERGA  
 Tragedy, history...Harlequin romances. Anything but religious satire!

ROSVITHA  
 What's the matter with satire?

GERBERGA  
 It's too risky.

ROSVITHA  
 My plan is to disarm with humor.

GERBERGA  
 It won't work.

ROSVITHA  
 Where's your faith?

GERBERGA  
 In what?

ROSVITHA  
 In human nature.

GERBERGA  
 Whose?

ROSVITHA  
 The bishop's. He's just a man.

GERBERGA  
 But he doesn't know that.

ROSVITHA  
 Picture it: that marble face slowly cracking. First he'll smile, then he'll grin, then he'll laugh out loud and the spell will be broken.

GERBERGA  
 Yes, there will be breakage.

ROSVITHA

Now I see—it's my vocation! It's what I was called to do!

GERBERGA

To annoy bishops?

ROSVITHA

To make people laugh.

GERBERGA

Don't you think you're getting a little carried away?

ROSVITHA

It's up to me to deliver him from the bonds of...gravity. I'll break his shackles!

GERBERGA

Or raise his hackles.

ROSVITHA

I'll need a lot of inspiration.

GERBERGA

You'll need to find a new location.

*(Introductory music for "Comic Spirit." NOVICES run  
in and form gospel choir backup.)*

ROSVITHA

*(Sings.)*

GIVE ME THE SPIRIT,  
GIVE ME THE SPIRIT  
O LORD, GIVE ME THE COMIC SPIRIT!

I NEED THE FANCY  
THAT FLAIR AND FANCY  
THAT DARING FANCY  
ENSNARING FANCY.  
O LORD, GIVE ME THE COMIC SPIRIT!

GIVE ME INSIGHT,  
GIVE ME WIT;  
MAKE ME CLEVER—  
CLEVER AS A JESUIT!

I NEED THE FANCY  
THAT FLAIR AND FANCY,  
THAT DARING FANCY,



ROSVITHA (*Cont.*)

O LORD, GIVE ME THE COMIC SPIRIT!

PRAISE THE COMIC SPIRIT!  
LET ME WRITE THE SHOW—  
PRAISE THE COMIC SPIRIT!  
—TO LET MY BISHOP GO.

PRAISE THE COMIC SPIRIT!  
LET ME WRITE THE SHOW—  
PRAISE THE COMIC SPIRIT!  
—TO LET MY BISHOP GO.

PRAISE THE COMIC SPIRIT!  
TO LET ME WRITE THE SHOW.  
TO LET MY BISHOP,  
LET MY BISHOP,  
LET MY BISHOP GO!

## GERBERGA

(*Sings.*)

SOMETIMES,  
SOMETIMES,  
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A VIRGIN-MOTHER.  
SOMETIMES,  
SOMETIMES,  
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A VIRGIN-MOTHER.  
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A VIRGIN-MOTHER.  
WITH NOWHERE TO TURN.

I GOT ME HALF A DOZEN CHILLUNS  
WHEN DEY WAS ALL FULL GROWED.  
I GOT ME LIVELY, LOVIN' CHILLUNS  
BUT DEY SPIRITS OVERFLOWED.

PATIENCE,  
LORD, GIVE ME PATIENCE,  
GIVE ME PATIENCE.

'CUZ SOMETIMES  
I FEEL LIKE A VIRGIN-MOTHER  
WITH NOWHERE TO TURN.

*(ROSVITHA and GERBERGA sing together the refrains  
of their respective melodies as the Chorus of NOVICES  
joins in as backup. When the song is over, NOVICES run  
off. SOPHIA enters.)*

SOPHIA

Mother Abbess, a traveler just delivered this message from the Monastery at Mainz.

GERBERGA

*(Opens and reads it.)*

They've inherited a precious manuscript of Pliny the Younger and are willing to let us make a copy. Rosvitha, would you mind riding over there to get it? Take one of the others with you.

SOPHIA

May I go? That's the convent where my grandmother lives. When I was at court, they never let me visit her.

GERBERGA

You may go, but I'm afraid you won't see your grandmother.

SOPHIA

Why not?

GERBERGA

She...disappeared from the convent a long time ago.

SOPHIA

We received no word at court.

GERBERGA

I expect the abbess there wouldn't be too eager to let on.

SOPHIA

Where is she?

GERBERGA

No one seems to know.

SOPHIA

How terrible!

GERBERGA

I met your grandmother once.

SOPHIA

You did?

GERBERGA

At court. Just before I came to Gandersheim.

SOPHIA

What was she like?

GERBERGA

She was...a presence. And made everyone laugh. Even the sour old counselors.

SOPHIA

Did you talk to her?

GERBERGA

Oh no. I was a shy girl of your age. And she was a...

*(Sighs.)*

woman of the world.

*(SOPHIA and ROSVITHA sigh.)*

ROSVITHA

When do you want us to leave, Mother?

GERBERGA

Right away. Take the long way round to avoid the town.

*(Exits.)*

ROSVITHA

Are you worried about your grandmother?

SOPHIA

Mother always said she had "survival instinct."

ROSVITHA

Too bad you won't get to see her.

SOPHIA

Maybe it's just as well. I'm afraid she wouldn't like me.

ROSVITHA

Why not? You're a chip off her old block.

SOPHIA

I only talk big. She's actually done all those things. Compared to her, I'm a wimp.

ROSVITHA

You're still young. She wasn't *born* a murderer, or even an actress.

SOPHIA

What are you going to do about the play?

ROSVITHA

I dread re-writing.

SOPHIA

Maybe you should just start over. What were the other stories in that book about?

ROSVITHA

There was another one about the tortures of the virgin martyrs.

SOPHIA

Hope will never go for it.

ROSVITHA

There were a couple about the conversion of prostitutes.

SOPHIA

Really? Who converted them?

ROSVITHA

Usually some old hermit or priest.

*(Getting an idea.)*

Or bishop!

SOPHIA

That's it! Give him a hero to identify with!

ROSVITHA

But I don't know anything about prostitutes.

SOPHIA

Make it up.

ROSVITHA

I can't.

*(Touching her heart.)*

I write from here.

SOPHIA

You really think they're so different from us?

ROSVITHA

There's one way to find out.

SOPHIA

You wouldn't!

ROSVITHA  
Not by myself.

SOPHIA  
Go to a...to a...to one of those places!

ROSVITHA  
Brothel. They're called brothels.

SOPHIA  
How do you know so much about it?

ROSVITHA  
I read it in Terence.

SOPHIA  
What would we do?

ROSVITHA  
We don't have to do anything. Just look around...check out the characters...take a few notes...take in the ambience.

SOPHIA  
When?

ROSVITHA  
Tonight.

SOPHIA  
What about Pliny the Younger?

ROSVITHA  
Pick him up in the morning.

SOPHIA  
You mean actually spend the night in the town?

ROSVITHA  
No one would have to know.

SOPHIA  
At one of those places!?

ROSVITHA  
Some of them are just regular taverns where a couple of the rooms are...we wouldn't have to stay in that part.

SOPHIA

Did you get this set design from Terence too?

ROSVITHA

I overheard the blacksmith describing it to the stone mason.

SOPHIA

You a regular at the guild meetings?

ROSVITHA

The problem is how would we—

*(Spots SOPHIA's necklace, touches it.)*

pay for it?

SOPHIA

My jewels!?

ROSVITHA

The gold charm from your necklace should do it.

SOPHIA

We couldn't go like this.

ROSVITHA

We'll get dresses from the poor bag.

SOPHIA

I don't know, Rosvitha. I mean it seems so...wicked.

ROSVITHA

I thought you'd seen it all at the Hippodrome.

SOPHIA

But that was make-believe! You're talking Real Life here.

ROSVITHA

You don't think your grandmother would've been afraid of real life, do you?

SOPHIA

But it's so...I mean, it's just, well...it's outside my life experience. Yours too!

ROSVITHA

That's the whole point: it's time to broaden my life experience. How else can I be a playwright?

What? SOPHIA

I've got to do "research." ROSVITHA

Research? SOPHIA

Sure. ROSVITHA

Ah! Research. SOPHIA  
*(Beginning to understand.)*

*(Music: "Research.")*

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA  
*(Sing and dance. Music and movements start off demure and innocent.)*

IF YOU'RE SCARED OF GETTING' CAUGHTEN  
 DOIN' THINGS YOU KNOW YOU OUGHTEN,  
 DON'T BE LEFT IN THE LURCH...  
 SAY YOU'RE DOIN' "RESEARCH"!

*(Rhythm changes to faster, racier, more syncopated.  
 Movements become looser, more daring.)*

SOPHIA  
 WOULD YOU LIKE TO BATHE ON A BEACH THAT'S NUDE?  
 SAY YOU'RE GROWING YOUR ARTISTIC APTITUDE!

DO YOU WANNA WATCH ALL THE SOAPS ON TV?  
 SAY IT'S BEEN ASSIGNED FOR SOCIOLOGY.

IF YOU SHOP AT VICKIE'S FOR YOUR PEEK-A-BOO,  
 SAY YOU'VE BEEN APPOINTED TO THE COSTUME CREW!

WHEN YOU GET IDENTIFIED  
 DOIN' WHAT'S UNDIGNIFIED,  
 FIRST YOU THINK OF SUICIDE,  
 THEN YOU WANT A PLACE TO HIDE.

BUT YOUR CHARACTER YOU WON'T BESMIRCH  
 IF YOUR EXCUSE IS: DOIN' RESEARCH!

## ROSVITHA

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CRUISE INTO A BAR THAT'S GAY?  
 SAY YOU'RE JUST A WRITER FOR PSYCHOLOGY TODAY!

DO YOU LONG TO PIG-OUT ON CREPES FLAMBE?  
 SAY YOU'VE STARTED TRAINING TO COOK GOURMET!

IF YOU GO TO MOVIES WHERE THE FLICKS ARE BLUE,  
 SAY YOU'RE DOIN' CINEMA AT N.Y.U.!

## ROSVITHA &amp; SOPHIA

WHEN YOU GET IDENTIFIED  
 DOIN' WHAT'S UNDIGNIFIED,  
 FIRST YOU THINK OF SUICIDE,  
 THEN YOU WANT A PLACE TO HIDE.

BUT YOUR CHARACTER YOU WON'T BESMIRCH  
 IF YOUR EXCUSE IS  
 YOUR EXCUSE IS  
 YOUR EXCUSE IS  
 DOIN' RESEARCH!  
 RESEARCH!  
 RESEARCH!  
 RESEARCH!  
 SAY YOU'RE DOIN'...  
 DOIN' RESEARCH!  
 RESEARCH!

*(Lights.)*

INTERMISSION



## ACT II

SETTING:

*The monastery arches have been turned around to suggest a “tavern” with three areas: a dining area with an entrance from the outside, a bedroom area, and in between, UC., a pantry which has entrances to both other areas and a third exit UC., leading to an unseen room. The dining area has a table, two chairs, and a small counter. The bedroom area has a small cot, a night table, and a wicker trunk.*

### Scene 1

AT RISE:

*ROSVITHA and SOHPA, in peasants’ clothes, sit at table, eating. THEOPHANO, the innkeeper, is sweeping C., with her back to the audience, isolated in dim light from the OTHERS, who are also dimly lit. As Entr’acte music draws to an end, ROSVITHA crosses DR and speaks directly to audience. Light comes up on her.*

ROSVITHA

Well, here we are on the “other side.” Hope you were impressed with the scene change.

*(Indicating her clothing.)*

How do you like my “Good-Will fatigues”? That’s Theophano over there sweeping. But we don’t know that yet. She wanted Act II to open with her, but I said no, because, after all, it’s my play, isn’t it? The thing about playwriting is you can’t let your characters get out of control.

*(THEOPHANO turns around and glares at her.)*

I’ve got to get back to my supper.

*(Crosses back to chair. Entre’ acte music, which has been playing softly under ROSVITHA’s monologue, crescendos into “Look at Me Now.” Crossfade to THEOPHANO.)*

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

TO LOOK AT ME NOW, YOU WOULD NEVER GUESS:  
IN MY YOUTH I BECAME A FAMOUS ACTRESS.

I SWEEP ON STAGE AT THE HIPPODROME,  
MADE THE AUDIENCE FEEL RIGHT AT HOME.

I BELTED MY SONGS LIKE ETHEL MERMAN  
I SIGNED MY AUTOGRAPHS BEDECKED IN ERMINE.  
BUT LOOK AT ME NOW: I’M OLDER AND GRAYER...

*(Pause, then with pizzazz as follow spot comes on.)*

YET STILL EVERY INCH A PROFESSIONAL PLAYER!!

THEOPHANO (*Cont.*)

*(Livelier beat.)*

THE WORLD IS MY STAGE,  
I MAKE THE ACTION HAPPEN.  
I WRITE MY OWN SCRIPTS,  
PERFORM AND DO THE CLAPPIN'.

MY LIFE'S FULL OF PLOTS,  
SOME COMIC AND SOME TRAGIC.  
I KEEP ME AMUSED  
WITH HISTRIONIC MAGIC!

WHEN CHARACTERS ARRIVE,  
I CAST WHOEVER'S WILLIN'  
AS CLOWN OR PARAMOUR,  
AS HEROINE OR VILLAIN.

ADVENTURES COME IN DROVES  
WHEN YOU'RE A TAVERN KEEPER.  
IT'S BETTER THAN BROADWAY  
AND A WHOLE LOT CHEAPER!

*(Musical interlude. She breaks into a [tap?]dance,  
then sings again.)*

YES, ONCE I WAS AN ACTRESS—NOT YOUR COMMON HOUSE FRAU.  
THE PLAY WAS MY THING; I LIVED FOR THE BOWS.  
BUT IF YOU WOULD KNOW WHAT FUN LIFE ALLOWS,  
THEN LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, LOOK AT ME NOW!  
TAKE A GOOD GANDER AND LOOK,  
LOOK AT ME NOW!  
OH WOW! AND HOW!  
GIVE ME A SPOTLIGHT AND LOOK,  
LOOK AT ME NOW!

*(Spotlight out. Lights up on whole dining area.  
THEOPHANO unobtrusively changes her tap shoes,  
then continues to sweep.)*

SOPHIA

How's the research going?

ROSVITHA

*(Checking small scroll-notebook.)*

Well...lots of ambience.

SOPHIA

What about, you know—the characters?

ROSVITHA

I guess they're in the back. Maybe we could invite one to join us for dessert.

SOPHIA

Why?!

ROSVITHA

A sort of business lunch. We'll interview her.

SOPHIA

What about the innkeeper? Do you think she's...?

ROSVITHA

Probably the madam.

THEOPHANO

*(Crossing to table.)*

You girls just passing through?

SOPHIA

Yes, we're...eh...going to visit my grandmother. In Mainz.

THEOPHANO

You're sisters then?

ROSVITHA

*(Panicked.)*

How did you kn—?

SOPHIA

*(Elbowing her.)*

We're not sisters. She's just *my* grandmother.

THEOPHANO

Used to live in Mainz myself for a while. Quiet there. Deadly quiet.

ROSVITHA

How much do we owe you?

THEOPHANO

Let's see...that'll be two nuns.

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

What?!

THEOPHANO

Two marks. Living so close to both monasteries here, most of the coins we get have an abbess's stamp on them, so we have our little joke.

ROSVITHA

Hah. Yes...funny.

SOPHIA

You mean if I decided to enter the convent and got to be abbess, my image would be stamped on the marks?

THEOPHANO

I wouldn't get my hopes up. The abbess always has a drop or two of royal blood.

SOPHIA

Is that so?

THEOPHANO

Some distant relative of the emperor.

SOPHIA

Ah.

THEOPHANO

You two thinking of becoming nuns?

ROSVITHA

No! I mean...it's a very austere lifestyle.

THEOPHANO

Yes, there'd be a thing or two you'd have to give up—if you catch my meaning.

SOPHIA

Not likely we'd do that.

THEOPHANO

Too worldly in your tastes, are you?

ROSVITHA

Oh yes, we're very much, eh—

*(They strike poses.)*

“women of the world”!

THEOPHANO

*(Nods knowingly.)*

Will you be wanting anything else?

ROSVITHA

No, thank you.

*(THEOPHANO crosses to counter with dishes.)*

SOPHIA

*(Hand in pocket, whispers to ROSVITHA.)*

I can't find my charm.

ROSVITHA

*(Whispers.)*

What?

SOPHIA

*(Stands.)*

I put it in my pocket before we left. But it doesn't seem to—

*(Puts finger through a hole in pocket. Both moan.*

*To THEOPHANO.)*

We, eh...we seem to have lost our only gold piece.

*(Sits.)*

THEOPHANO

Is that right?

ROSVITHA

Do you think we could earn the two marks? With sweeping or something?

THEOPHANO

*(Holding up broom.)*

Too late.

ROSVITHA

How about washing dishes?

THEOPHANO

These are the only dishes that aren't clean.

ROSVITHA

There must be some way we can work off our debt.

THEOPHANO

*(Sizing them up.)*

Suppose I let you take it out in trade?

ROSVITHA

Trade?

THEOPHANO

I'm a little short of girls just now. There's a Blacksmiths' convention the other side of town.

ROSVITHA

Oh gosh...I don't think we have the...eh...experience you're looking for.

THEOPHANO

It'll do you good to broaden your experience.

SOPHIA

But we wouldn't know what to...how to...

THEOPHANO

I tell you what: I'll let you two keep your room for the night. If you don't get a customer, I'll call off your debt.

ROSVITHA

And if we do get a customer?

THEOPHANO

You'll make more than two nuns.

ROSVITHA

But we don't want any nuns!

THEOPHANO

Look, I'll give you girls a beginner's break. I'll send you an old one. With any luck, you won't have to do anything but humor him a little.

SOPHIA

Humor him?

THEOPHANO

You know—a little wine, a little flattery, a little sweet-talking.

SOPHIA

Two marks for talking?

THEOPHANO

On the other hand, sometimes they like to do the talking, and all you have to do is listen. Agree with them. Nod a lot.

*(They nod.)*

Smile.

*(They smile.)*

Grovel.

Grovel?!

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

Nothing kinky.

THEOPHANO

That's all?

ROSVITHA

Oh, he might ask you to fetch some hot water to soak his feet, or maybe rub his arthritic back.

THEOPHANO

Rub his back?

ROSVITHA

With massage oil. Very professional.

THEOPHANO

Well, I guess that could count as a corporal work of mercy.

ROSVITHA

At most a little snuggle.

THEOPHANO

I don't know about a snuggle.

ROSVITHA

But if you give him enough wine, he'll be asleep before he can think of anything else.

THEOPHANO

We don't have any wine.

SOPHIA

I'll get you a bottle from the pantry.

THEOPHANO

But we can't afford—

ROSVITHA

We'll consider it a business deduction.  
*(Exits to pantry.)*

THEOPHANO

You and your "research"!

SOPHIA  
*(Slaps scroll onto table.)*

ROSVITHA

*(Crossing D. To audience.)*

Is the suspense driving you crazy? Who's our customer going to be? We need a turning point that's "surprising but inevitable." Tough combination. The question is: will it make you laugh?

THEOPHANO

*(Returning from pantry.)*

In this business, the more you make the customer laugh, the more generous he's likely to be.

*(Offers bottle to ROSVITHA, who demurs. She turns to SOPHIA who also rejects it.)*

It's a good thing you girls are "women of the world"!

*(Thrusts wine at SOPHIA.)*

It's the other side of the pantry.

SOPHIA

But what if we're recognized? I mean what if the customer knows our...our families?

THEOPHANO

There's an old trunk full of wigs and make-up in that room. You can disguise yourselves. Like in a play!

*(Crosses to get key from coat hook, as SOPHIA stares, stupefied, at wine.)*

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Who's writing this script anyway? What did I tell you about characters getting out of hand?

THEOPHANO

*(Gives SOPHIA key.)*

Go on now. Right through there.

SOPHIA

Are you sure we couldn't just scrub the pantry? We're good at scrubbing.

ROSVITHA

How about copying? Got any old manuscripts you want duplicated?

THEOPHANO

I'm afraid nobody around here can read.

*(Pushes them into pantry. They cross through pantry into darkened bedroom, take off cloaks, and sit on bed in darkness during rest of scene. THEOPHANO bursts into laughter.)*

What a pair! "Got any old manuscripts?"

*(Collapses onto chair.)*

"Corporal work of mercy"!



*(Pounds the table with delight. DIEHARD enters in peasant's clothes and wig.)*

DIEHARD

What's so funny about a corporal work of mercy?

THEOPHANO

Well, look at you! What's with the peasant threads,  
*(Curtseying.)*  
Your Excellency?

DIEHARD

Sshh!  
*(Playfully, displaying his outfit.)*  
Got them from a blacksmith for a prayer.

THEOPHANO

Is the wig necessary?

DIEHARD

*(Takes it off, crosses UR., hangs it up.)*  
To cover the tonsure. Mustn't give scandal.

THEOPHANO

No indeed! No scandal! Want some dinner?

DIEHARD

Later. Give us a snuggle.  
*(They hug.)*  
Fishie-kissie.  
*(They pucker up like fish and almost kiss, but suddenly she pushes him away with playful theatricality.)*

THEOPHANO

Please, Wilhelm—not in front of the children!

DIEHARD

*(Dropping her, paranoid.)*  
What children?

THEOPHANO

Two little red riding hoods on their way to Grandma's.

DIEHARD

What are you talking about?

THEOPHANO

A pair of innocents in the back who think I'm running a brothel.

DIEHARD

Why would they think that?

THEOPHANO

I can't imagine. Do I look like a madam to you?

DIEHARD

You're up to one of your old tricks, Theo.

THEOPHANO

I couldn't help myself. Really. There they were.

DIEHARD

There they were what?

THEOPHANO

Slumming. Hoping for the worst. Doing some kind of "research."

DIEHARD

Research for what?

THEOPHANO

Their diaries, I'm sure. Anyway, they were miserably disappointed at the dullness of the place, so I set up a bit of an adventure for them. And you're going to be part of it!

DIEHARD

Oh no I'm not!

THEOPHANO

Oh Wilhelm, come on—it'll be such fun!

DIEHARD

For whom?

THEOPHANO

For me. I intend to listen to the whole thing at the door.

DIEHARD

Just what did you imagine I would do?

THEOPHANO

Pretend to be a customer.

DIEHARD

Theophano, you shock me! I have no intention of molesting children for your amusement!

THEOPHANO

Of course not. Just give them a good scare.

DIEHARD

You know that kind of deceitful playacting is against my principles.

THEOPHANO

*(Plucking at his blacksmith's clothes.)*

What do you call this, you old hypocrite?

DIEHARD

*(Arm around her waist, pulls her to him.)*

That's different. For a good cause.

THEOPHANO

*(Pulling away.)*

So is this. It'll teach those girls their lesson faster than any sermon on "Avoiding the Occasions of Sin."

DIEHARD

Humph!

THEOPHANO

Next time around, it may not be my inn they stumble upon.

DIEHARD

Drat it! Why don't their parents keep them at home?

THEOPHANO

Have you ever been a parent?

*(DIEHARD is shocked at the question. She retrieves his wig.)*

The point is: they may do this again unless you put a little fear of the Lord into them.

DIEHARD

But Theo, you're my first...companion. I don't know what to...how to.... What do young girls expect?

THEOPHANO

Young girls want romance...poetry. Just like old ones.

DIEHARD

But the only poetry I know is the Song of Solomon.

THEOPHANO

*(Putting wig on him.)*

You'll do fine.

DIEHARD

I don't want to do fine!

THEOPHANO

I mean you'll be very...convincing. Now off you go! Give 'em hellfire!

*(Pushes him through curtain into pantry. She remains outside curtain, listening. Crossfade.)*

Scene 2

AT RISE:

*Lights up on bedroom. Music: "What a Fix." During introduction, ROSVITHA and SOPHIA pace nervously in rhythm.*

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

*(Sing.)*

WHAT A FIX, WHAT A JAM!  
I'D RATHER BE SOME OTHER PLACE  
THAN WHERE I AM!

WHAT A SCRAPE, WHAT A TANGLE!  
HOWEVER DID WE FIND OURSELVES  
IN THIS TRIANGLE?

WHAT A MAZE, WHAT A MUDDLE!  
HOW WILL WE GET AWAY WITHOUT  
AT LEAST A CUDDLE?

WHAT A MESS, WHAT A JUMBLE!  
IT'S CERTAINLY ENOUGH TO MAKE  
A PROUD GIRL HUMBLE!

I WISH I WERE HOME,  
HOME IN MY BED,  
WITH NONE OF THIS TURMOIL,  
NONE OF THIS DREAD.

ASLEEP IN MY CONVENT,  
NO MORE TO ROAM,  
I WISH—I REALLY DO WISH  
I WERE HOME.

*(Musical interlude: ROSVITHA and SOPHIA repeat pacing sequence.  
Crossfade to pantry.)*

DIEHARD

*(Sings.)*

WHAT A FIX, WHAT A JAM!  
I'D RATHER BE SOME OTHER PLACE  
THAN WHERE I AM!

WHAT A SCRAPE, WHAT A TANGLE!  
HOWEVER DID I LAND MYSELF  
IN THIS TRIANGLE?

DIEHARD (*Cont.*)

WHAT A MAZE, WHAT A MUDDLE!  
HOW WILL I GET AWAY WITHOUT  
AT LEAST A CUDDLE?

WHAT A MESS, WHAT A JUMBLE!  
IT'S CERTAINLY ENOUGH TO MAKE  
A PROUD MAN HUMBLE!

I WISH I WERE HOME,  
HOME IN MY BED,  
WITH NONE OF THIS TURMOIL,  
NONE OF THIS DREAD.

ASLEEP IN MY NIGHTCAP  
DREAMING OF ROME,  
I WISH—I REALLY DO WISH  
I WERE HOME!

*(The three sing in harmony on opposite sides  
of the bedroom doorway.)*

ROSVITHA, SOPHIA & DIEHARD

*(Sing.)*

I WISH I WERE HOME,  
HOME IN MY BED,  
WITH NONE OF THIS TURMOIL,  
NONE OF THIS DREAD.

ASLEEP IN MY CONVENT/NIGHTCAP,  
NO MORE TO ROAM/DREAMING OF ROME.  
I WISH—I REALLY DO WISH I WERE HOME!

*(The last three notes of the accompaniment coincide with  
DIEHARD's knock on the door. Quick pin spot on ROSVITHA.)*

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Do you think this ever happened to Terence? Maybe I've been a bit too conscientious about this research business. I suddenly feel there's a lot to be said for armchair playwriting.

*(Spot out. Another knock.)*

SOPHIA

Who is it?

DIEHARD

One who seeks your company.

ROSVITHA

A customer!

*(Throws herself at SOPHIA's feet, arms around her waist.)*

DIEHARD

May I come in?

SOPHIA

*(Calling to him.)*

Just a minute!

*(They rummage through trunk, put on wigs. SOPHIA stands, strikes a pose. )*

How's this? Do I look like a whore?

ROSVITHA

How would I know?

*(Arranging her wig.)*

Is this one OK?

SOPHIA

Total tart.

*(Another knock.)*

ROSVITHA

Be right with you!

DIEHARD

I'm sure you will make my waiting worthwhile.

ROSVITHA

How did we get into this mess?

*(Kneels.)*

Please, God, open the heavens and drop down two nuns!

SOPHIA

*(Pulls ROSVITHA up and pushes her onto bed.)*

It's too late for that. Just remember—humor him.

*(Assumes affected pose, crosses to door.)*

ROSVITHA

Humor him.

*(Strikes a pose on bed as SOPHIA opens door.)*

DIEHARD

*(Stepping in.)*

“You ravish my heart, my sister, my bride.”

*(SOPHIA pushes him back out, slams door, and leans against it.)*

SOPHIA

Get the wine!

*(ROSVITHA gets wine, then nods to SOPHIA, who opens door again.)*

DIEHARD

Your beauty has been praised through all the land.

SOPHIA

*(Backing up.)*

It has?

DIEHARD

*(Crossing towards SOPHIA.)*

All men seek your favors.

SOPHIA

*(Backing up.)*

They do?

DIEHARD

Well, all the ones I've talked to.

ROSVITHA

*(Nervously, offering bottle.)*

Would you like some wine?

*(THEOPHANO enters pantry, listens at door of bedroom. She is lit only with spill for this scene.)*

DIEHARD

Oh, yes!

*(Remembering his mission.)*

No! I want only the sweet wine of your words...

ROSVITHA

Words. Oh, good.

*(Puts wine under chair.)*

What would you like to hear about? I read an interesting translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that—

DIEHARD

The sweet wine of your kisses...



ROSVITHA

*(Backing off, towards foot of bed.)*

Kisses! Eh, couldn't we get back to words? Heard any good jokes lately? There's one about the two nuns that die and go to heaven and St. Peter says—

*(Bumps into bed, falls onto it, sitting.)*

DIEHARD

*(Leaning over her, pressuring her down.)*

“Kiss me with the kisses of your mouth, for I am faint with love.”

ROSVITHA

No, that's not how it goes.

*(Rolls off bed onto floor.)*

DIEHARD

*(Straightening up.)*

You're right. It's “comfort me with apples, for I am faint with love.”

SOPHIA

Faint? You're feeling faint?

*(ROSVITHA hands her basin from nightstand; she heads for the door.)*

I'll just get some hot water to soak your feet.

DIEHARD

*(Intercepting her.)*

“Many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it.”

SOPHIA

No, I guess not.

DIEHARD

*(Kissing her arm.)*

“Set me as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death.”

SOPHIA & ROSVITHA

Death!!

*(SOPHIA drops basin—big noise.)*

DIEHARD

*(Stalking ROSVITHA.)*

“Draw me—I will run after thee.”

ROSVITHA

*(Backing up to nightstand.)*

I wish you wouldn't.

DIEHARD

“The smell of thy ointment is sweeter than all spices.”

ROSVITHA

Oh that.

*(Picks up bottle from nightstand.)*

That’s just massage oil.

*(Offers it to him.)*

Attar of roses. I could give you a little backrub if it would help your arthritis.

DIEHARD

*(Disdainful.)*

A backrub?

ROSVITHA

Yes, it would be a corporal work of mercy.

DIEHARD

Sacrilege!

ROSVITHA

What?

DIEHARD

*(Closing in on her.)*

You speak of works of mercy, wicked, wanton, wench of a woman!

ROSVITHA

Wait! That’s pretty good!

*(Leaps over bed to chair, grabs notebook, writes.)*

“Wicked, wanton...” Terrific alliteration.

DIEHARD

*(Leaping over bed in pursuit.)*

Do you know what anguish awaits you?

*(ROSVITHA crosses to SOPHIA. They huddle.)*

SOPHIA

We were hoping it wouldn’t go any further than a snuggle.

DIEHARD

I’m talking about hell, you little chits!

ROSVITHA & SOPHIA

Hell!

*(ROSVITHA drops notebook. Both run for door.)*

DIEHARD

*(Intercepts them, pulls them back.)*

The fiery torments that will be your eternal punishment—unless you repent your evil ways.

SOPHIA

You want us to repent?

DIEHARD

Of course! Why do you think I came here?

SOPHIA

To be comforted with apples?

DIEHARD

To convert you from your life of sin to a life of penance.

*(SOPHIA and ROSVITHA look at each other quizzically.  
Then...)*

ROSVITHA

*(Throwing herself on her knees at his feet.)*

Oh, kind Sir, you are surely an angel sent from God!

SOPHIA

*(Throwing herself on her knees at his feet.)*

The messenger of our redemption!

ROSVITHA

We grovel and repent our sins!

*(Lowers her head to his feet.)*

SOPHIA

We kiss your feet in thanksgiving for this salvation!

*(Lowers her head to his feet.)*

DIEHARD

*(Teetering.)*

Easy does it.

SOPHIA

*(Up to kneeling position.)*

We will be devoted to you forever!

ROSVITHA

*(Up to kneeling position.)*

We cannot control our gratitude.

DIEHARD

Well, I guess that's to be expected in...women of passion. Now I will leave you to your prayers.

ROSVITHA

Prayers?

SOPHIA

Now?

DIEHARD

But in the morning I will return.

ROSVITHA

What for?

DIEHARD

*(Puts a hand on each of their heads.)*

To take my two fallen lambs back to the flock.

ROSVITHA

Where exactly are they grazing these days?

DIEHARD

I will take you to a nearby convent where you may hope to do some special penance for your lascivious life.

SOPHIA

Some special penance?

DIEHARD

Immurement seems to be a fashionable penance these days.

*(They lean back in disgust.)*

Perhaps we could find you accommodations in the wall. Singles, of course. Well, more of that in the morning.

*(Turns to leave. THEOPHANO scurries out of pantry, through dining room, exits to outside.)*

ROSVITHA

Wait!

DIEHARD

You haven't changed your mind?

ROSVITHA

I was just wondering if you could let us have two nuns.

What for?  
DIEHARD

The wages of sin?  
ROSVITHA

*(He tosses her a bag of coins, then exits into pantry, crosses through dining area and out.)*

Now what do we do?  
SOPHIA

Clear out of here in a hurry!  
ROSVITHA

In the middle of the night?  
SOPHIA

Would you rather stay here for another fruitcake like that?  
ROSVITHA  
*(Putting on cloak.)*

But how? There's no way out but through the tavern. What if he's out there?  
SOPHIA

We'll hide in the pantry till the coast is clear, then make a run for it. What do you say?  
ROSVITHA

I wish I were home.  
SOPHIA

Let's go!  
ROSVITHA  
*(They exit through pantry, into dining room. Incidental music as lights crossfade.)*

**Scene 3**

AT RISE:

*Lights up on dining area. ROSVITHA and SOPHIA enter from pantry and cross towards door. ROSVITHA abruptly turns around; SOPHIA bumps into her.*

What's the matter?

SOPHIA

I forgot my notebook.

ROSVITHA

It's too late now.

SOPHIA

I can't go without my notebook.

ROSVITHA

Rosvitha, this is no time for playwright's posturing!

SOPHIA

It's got my name in it.

ROSVITHA

Hurry up!

SOPHIA

*(ROSVITHA runs back to bedroom, crosses D., speaks to audience in quick spot light.)*

By now you're probably wondering if it really happened this way. Some people think real life is too dull to be art. Still...you've got to start someplace!

ROSVITHA

*(Spot out. She searches bedroom for lost notebook. THEOPHANO's laughter is heard offstage.)*

Oh my God!

SOHPHIA

*(Runs to door, slides back viewing panel, looks out.)*

It's the innkeeper coming up from the stables. Good. Now we can pay her and—

*(DIEHARD's laughter is heard.)*

Who's that with her?

*(Looks again.)*

Oh, no! Oh my God! Rosvitha! It's him! It's the bishop!

ROSVITHA

*(Has found notebook, crossed back through pantry, and is entering dining area.)*

What's this about the bishop?

SOPHIA

Sshh!

*(Pushes ROSVITHA back into pantry, where they overhear and react to the following scene—ROSVITHA occasionally taking notes—in view of audience. THEOPHANO and DIEHARD, carrying his wig, enter.)*

THEOPHANO

I tell you, Wilhelm, that's the most fun I've had since I left the Hippodrome.  
*(ROSVITHA and SOPHIA exchange quizzical looks.)*

DIEHARD

*(Hangs up wig, crosses to counter, pours drinks.)*

Fun for you maybe. Watching a fool is more entertaining than being one.

THEOPHANO

Don't be silly—you were wonderful!

*(Mimicking him.)*

“The smell of thy ointment is sweeter than all spices.”

*(Kissing his arm as he did SOPHIA's.)*

“Many waters cannot quench love!”

*(Trying to control herself.)*

You're a born actor!

DIEHARD

You really think so?

THEOPHANO

So suave...so debonair...so devil-may-care!

DIEHARD

Was I?

THEOPHANO

Well, you had them convinced.

DIEHARD

*(Swaggering to table with mugs.)*

They really did take me for a suitor, didn't they?

*(Sits.)*

THEOPHANO

The real test is did *you* take you for a suitor?

DIEHARD

What do you mean?

THEOPHANO

Acting is believing. Using the “magic if.”

DIEHARD

The magic what?

THEOPHANO

Asking yourself: what would I do if I were really in this situation?

DIEHARD

But you know very well I’ve never been in that situation.

THEOPHANO

That’s the proof of your talent. You should give up this church business and go on the stage.

DIEHARD

You think I was that good?

THEOPHANO

“You ravish my heart!” If I had had you for a leading man forty years ago, I could never have left the Hippodrome—not even for the Emperor of Byzantium!

*(SOPHIA squeals. ROSVITHA claps a hand over her mouth.)*

DIEHARD

What was that?

THEOPHANO

What?

DIEHARD

I thought I heard a squeak from the pantry.

THEOPHANO

Mice.

DIEHARD

Mice?

THEOPHANO

This isn’t the chancery, Wilhelm. It’s a tavern. We have very hearty mice here.



DIEHARD

What a nuisance. You really should have them taken care of.

THEOPHANO

I take very good care of them. That's why they like it here. Just like you. Relax. You're safe here, Poopsie.

*(ROSVITHA and SOPHIA mouth "Poopsie" with gleeful exaggeration.)*

DIEHARD

We have had good times, haven't we, Theo?

THEOPHANO

Must you go back tomorrow?

DIEHARD

I'm having lunch with the Emperor on Monday. And I have to stop at the monastery and pick up Sophia.

THEOPHANO

My Sophia? What's she doing in a monastery?

DIEHARD

I'm afraid there's too much of you in her.

THEOPHANO

I want to see her!

DIEHARD

You know you can't do that.

THEOPHANO

I haven't seen her since I was exiled to my convent. She was a baby...

DIEHARD

It would give you away, Theo.

THEOPHANO

Not if I go in disguise.

DIEHARD

What disguise? What woman would it be...respectable for me to be traveling with?

THEOPHANO

Which monastery is it?

DIEHARD

Gandersheim.

THEOPHANO

A convent “renowned for the learned accomplishments of its nuns.”

DIEHARD

*(Chiming in.)*

“...learned accomplishments of its nuns.” So they say.

THEOPHANO

Then I shall say I am a Byzantine librarian come to tour the scriptoriums of Saxony. What could be more respectable?

DIEHARD

What could be more preposterous?

THEOPHANO

I’ll dig an old manuscript out of my trunk and present it to the abbess as a good-will gift. Which way do their tastes run?

DIEHARD

Unfortunately, they’re very fond of the theater.

THEOPHANO

How convenient! I’ll give them an anthology of Greek tragedies.

*(ROSVITHA squeals. SOPHIA claps a hand over her mouth.)*

DIEHARD

You really must do something about those mice.

*(ROSVITHA and SOPHIA scurry into bedroom.)*

THEOPHANO

Come along, Poopsie, we better get to sleep. We’ve a busy morning ahead of us.

DIEHARD

Do you think I could have a little hot water to soak my feet?

THEOPHANO

Of course, Dear. And I’ll give you a nice backrub.

DIEHARD

With attar of roses?

THEOPHANO

With attar of roses.

*(ROSVITHA crosses C. Crossfade to spot on her.)*

ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

Just the place for a song, don't you agree? A little romantic duet to give the villain another dimension. That's important for characterization.

*(Music: Introduction to "At Home with You." To orchestra.)*

That's the ticket.

*(To audience.)*

Get those hankies ready!

*(Musical introduction crescendos. ROSVITHA returns to bed, where she and SOPHIA sit, backs to audience, during song. Crossfade to DIEHARD and THEOPHANO. They sing.)*

DIEHARD

NOW AFTER MY COMMUTE IS THROUGH  
I LIKE TO BE AT HOME WITH YOU.

THEOPHANO

E-MAIL'S NOT THE WAY TO WOO,  
I WANT TO BE AT HOME WITH YOU.

THE WEEKEND'S HERE; WE RENDEZVOUS,  
AND SUDDENLY I'M HOME WITH YOU.

DIEHARD

OUR SHARING TIME IS OVERDUE,  
I FEEL MYSELF AT HOME WITH YOU.

I DON'T GIVE A THOUGHT TO THE LONG-DISTANCE RIDE.  
MY NERVES ARE UNJANGLED; MY TENSIONS SUBSIDE.  
I NEVER RELY ON A MIDNIGHT BROMIDE  
WHEN I'M HOME WITH YOU.

THEOPHANO

I DON'T CARE AT ALL IF THE WI-FI IS DOWN  
OR WISH I WERE LIVING IN SOME CLOSER TOWN  
OR COUNT ON THE WARMTH OF MY WOOLEN NIGHT GOWN  
WHEN I'M HOME WITH YOU.

DIEHARD & THEOPHANO

*(Singing and doing a few steps of a folk dance.)*

WE SIT BY THE FIRE AND WATCH LATE TV.  
WE EAT CAROB COOKIES AND DRINK HERBAL TEA.  
WE READ TRASHY NOVELS TILL AFTER MIDNIGHT,  
THE KITTEN BETWEEN US IS PURRING DELIGHT.

DIEHARD

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WE DO,  
I LIKE TO BE AT HOME WITH YOU.

THEOPHANO

WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER—JUST WE TWO,  
I FEEL MYSELF AT HOME WITH YOU  
*(Instrumental interlude as they waltz.)*

DIEHARD

I'LL BRUSH YOUR HAIR...

THEOPHANO

I'LL TRIM YOUR BEARD...

DIEHARD

WE'LL GIVE BACK RUBS...

THEOPHANO

WE'LL SHARE THE TUB...

DIEHARD

I'LL MAKE YOU LAUGH...

THEOPHANO

I'LL MAKE YOU LAUGH...

DIEHARD

WE'LL SING AND DANCE...

THEOPHANO

AND THEN ROMANCE...

DIEHARD

WE'LL BE AT HOME...

THEOPHANO

WE'LL FEEL AT HOME...

DIEHARD & THEOPHANO

THE WEEKEND'S HERE; WE RENDEZVOUS,  
AND SUDDENLY I'M HOME WITH YOU,  
AT HOME WITH YOU,  
AT...HOME...WITH...YOU.

*(They exit into pantry, then out UC. door. Incidental music as ROSVITHA and SOPHIA cross from bedroom, through pantry, to dining area. SOPHIA exits. ROSVITHA crosses to table.)*

ROSVITHA

*(Takes two coins from bag, slaps them down.)*

Two nuns—for the mistress of the inn!

*(Dramatically drops whole bag on table; shakes notebook in the air.)*

And the rest for her share of the royalties—in advance!

*(Exits. Incidental music during set change.)*

**ACT III**

SETTING: *The monastery courtyard. The next afternoon.*

**Scene 1**

AT RISE: *Lights up on ROSVITHA, printing placards.  
GERBERGA enters.*

GERBERGA

Too bad you couldn't bring him back, Dear.

ROSVITHA

Who?

GERBERGA

Pliny the Younger. Sophia told me about the mix-up.

ROSVITHA

She did?

GERBERGA

Sister Charity said you were back in time for morning prayer.

ROSVITHA

I couldn't wait to start work. No writer's block this time—the dialogue just came pouring out.

GERBERGA

My child, you are a model of productivity. But I do worry about burn-out.

ROSVITHA

I had the novices rehearsing the new play at noon recreation.  
*(CHARITY hurries on.)*

CHARITY

Mother Abbess, the bishop is here!

ROSVITHA

I'm sure he'll like this one. It's just the sort of thing he could have written himself.

GERBERGA

Go quickly and fetch the other novices for "Hail to the Chief!"  
*(ROSVITHA exits. To CHARITY.)*

Where is he?

CHARITY

In the outer courtyard. And he has a companion with him.

GERBERGA

Who?

CHARITY

I don't know, but she's dressed very...peculiarly.

GERBERGA

A woman?

CHARITY

I think so.

*(Hand bell rings offstage. NOVICES run in.)*

GERBERGA

Over here, Darlings!

*(They take choir positions on steps. She gives them a note, and ALL sing "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus," as in I-2. DIEHARD and THEOPHANO enter and when the tempo changes to a samba, they dance.)*

NOVICES & GERBERGA

ECCE SACERDOS MAGNUS!

HERE COMES OUR BISHOP DIEHARD! DIEHARD!

WELCOME, SPIRITUAL LIFE GUARD! LIFE GUARD!

GERBERGA

*(Sings solo.)*

HE IS THE BIG CHEESE OF OUR DIOCESE

AND IN HIS PRESENCE WE TREMBLE.

SMILING, WE BOW AND SCRAPE TO CLEAN UP OUR ACT

AND PRACTICE TO DISSEMBLE.

NOVICES & GERBERGA

HERE COMES OUR BISHOP DIEHARD! DIEHARD!

HE-MAN SPIRITUAL LIFE GUARD! LIFE GUARD!

*(GERBERGA kneels, kisses DIEHARD's ring.)*

DIEHARD

Mother Abbess, allow me to present Constantia Irene Anna Yolanda Alexandria Athenais, Head Librarian of the Scriptoriums of Byzantium.

*(To THEOPHANO.)*

Abbess Gerberga, cousin to the Holy Roman Emperor Otto the Second.

GERBERGA

Honored, I'm sure.

THEOPHANO

Your convent is renowned for the learned accomplishments of its nuns. I am most delighted to be among my fellow scholars. And to present you with this rare edition of Greek tragedies—an acting version used in our Hippodrome.

*(ROSVITHA squeals. DIEHARD looks at her quizzically.)*

GERBERGA

Would you like to see our scriptorium? I'll have Sister Rosvitha show it to you.

THEOPHANO

*(Looking around.)*

That is why I'm here, of course—though I understand your convent houses an even greater treasure.

GERBERGA

Really?

THEOPHANO

The Princess Sophia. She is a great favorite with my people.

GERBERGA

She would be, of course. Her mother was a Byzantine princess.

THEOPHANO

And her grandmother a Byzantine Empress!

GERBERGA

*(Suspicious.)*

And something of an actress, we've heard.

THEOPHANO

His Excellency tells me you are disciples of the lively art.

DIEHARD

Too lively if you ask me.

GERBERGA

Now Your Excellency, I'm sure you'll find much to appreciate in the little diversion we've prepared.

DIEHARD

Playacting, as I have been forced to remind you before, Abbess Gerberga, is forbidden by the—



THEOPHANO

Oh how delightful! I would love to see a play! Please, Your Excellency...  
*(She fishie-kisses the air at him as the shocked NOVICES look on. His objection subsides.)*

GERBERGA

This is something so edifying you might have written it yourself.

DIEHARD

*(Sarcastic.)*

Very likely.

GERBERGA

Perhaps Madam Athenais would enjoy a private visit with the Princess Sophia?

THEOPHANO

Wonderful!

GERBERGA

His Excellency, no doubt, will want to rest after his strenuous business in the town. Sister Charity, would you please show the bishop to the guest house?

*(CHARITY escorts DIEHARD off.)*

Sister Hope, would you send Sophia to the garden?

*(NOVICES exit.)*

This way, Madam Athenais.

THEOPHANO

Please—just call me Constantia Irene Anna Yolanda Alexandria.

GERBERGA

Thank you. You must come again as often as you wish and stay as long as you like, visiting with Princess Sophia. And of course, studying in our scriptorium.

THEOPHANO

You are very generous.

GERBERGA

You would, eh, also be a welcome addition to the casts of our little theatricals, should you wish to amuse yourself in that fashion.

THEOPHANO

I? An actress?!

GERBERGA

I am a natural talent scout, and my instinct tells me you would be admirable at...disguises.

*(Nods, then starts to go as THEOPHANO sits on bench.)*

THEOPHANO

Wait! Tell me...the princess...does she...is she like her mother?

GERBERGA

I'd say...more like her grandmother.

THEOPHANO

Thank you, Mother Abbess.

GERBERGA

Please—just call me Gerberga.

*(Exits.)*

**Scene 2**

AT RISE:

*Music: "I Want Her to Know Me." During introduction, THEOPHANO stands. SOPHIA enters. Each is isolated in light and sings unseen and unheard by the other.*

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

WHAT WILL SHE LOOK LIKE?  
WILL I KNOW HER FACE?  
WILL THERE BE SOME RESEMBLANCE—  
WILL I SEE JUST A TRACE?

SOPHIA

*(Sings.)*

WHAT WILL IT FEEL LIKE  
WHEN SHE LOOKS AT MY FACE?  
WILL SHE NOTE THE RESEMBLANCE?  
WILL SHE SEE JUST A TRACE?

ROSVITHA

*(Entering.)*

Hold it!

*(Music stops. To orchestra.)*

I thought I asked for upbeat music in the recognition scene.

*(To SOPHIA.)*

What's all this wailing?

SOPHIA

It's my last chance to do a ballad.

ROSVITHA

We just had a ballad in the last act.

*(Indicating audience.)*

They can only take so much schmaltz.

SOPHIA

I deserve a ballad.

ROSVITHA

You deserve...a walk-on!

SOPHIA

If I'm feisty, it's your fault. Anyway, it's too late now.

ROSVITHA

Oh yeah? Who do you think writes the lyrics you're about to sing?  
*(ROSVITHA exits smugly. Music resumes.)*

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

COULD SHE BE GOODY-TWO-SHOES,  
 A BORING CHERUBIM?  
 A DISAPPROVING CRITIC,  
 SO PRUDISH AND SO PRIM?

SOPHIA

*(Sings.)*

SHE'S A DOLLY LEVY,  
 A GOLDEN GIRL OF WIT.  
 AND I'M SO INGENUISH...  
 WILL SHE THINK I'M A TWIT?

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

WHAT IF SHE'S A YUPPIE  
 WITH HER MBA?  
 I'M FRIGHTENED TO THINK THAT  
 SHE DRINKS PERRIER!

SOPHIA

*(Sings.)*

SHE'S GOT HER ACT TOGETHER  
 WHILE I STILL SHAKE BACKSTAGE.  
 HOW I ADMIRE HER CHUTZPAH!  
 DOES IT COME WITH AGE?

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

I WANT HER TO KNOW ME  
 RIGHT FROM THE START  
 I WANT HER TO LIKE...  
 THIS SILLY OLD FART.

SOPHIA

*(Sings.)*

I WANT HER TO KNOW ME  
 RIGHT FROM THE START  
 I WANT TO BE LIKE HER...  
 TENDER AND TART.

*(Lights return to normal. SOPHIA turns to THEOPHANO.)*

SOPHIA

Grandmother...

THEOPHANO

You!? You are my Sophia?

SOPHIA  
Are you disappointed?

THEOPHANO  
Oh my sweet, sweet baby!  
*(Crosses to her, envelopes her.)*

SOPHIA  
You're not angry then?

THEOPHANO  
Why should I be angry with you?

SOPHIA  
For going to a tavern.

THEOPHANO  
I live in a tavern! And you are not the first in our family to run away from her convent.

SOPHIA  
But I didn't run away. I like it here.

THEOPHANO  
Thinking of becoming abbess, are you?

SOPHIA  
Oh, that. I was just being curious.

THEOPHANO  
Me too. I wondered what it would be like to be emperor.

SOPHIA  
I wanted to be emperor once. But now I have higher ambitions.

THEOPHANO  
What brought you to my tavern?

SOPHIA  
Research. Rosvitha was writing a play.

THEOPHANO  
Find what you needed?

SOPHIA  
Thanks to you.

THEOPHANO

Was it very wicked of me to cast you as wee harlots?

SOPHIA

You did give us a scare. But I suppose we deserved it.

THEOPHANO

Am I forgiven then?

SOPHIA

If you promise not to tell Mother Abbess.

THEOPHANO

I'll keep your secret if you'll keep mine. How did you find out anyway—that I was your grandmother?

SOPHIA

You really ought to do something about those mice in the pantry.

THEOPHANO

You heard us then! Everything we said!

SOPHIA

Everything.

THEOPHANO

You shameless little voyeurs!

SOPHIA

We didn't plan it. We got trapped in the middle of our escape. It's not like we were eavesdropping at the door.

THEOPHANO

That would be detestable. So—you've got the goods on me, do you?

SOPHIA

And on "Poopsie"!

THEOPHANO

Oh my God! The play!  
*(Hand bell rings offstage.)*

SOPHIA

We must go to dinner now, "Madam Athenais." And then—on to the theatre!

*(Crossfade to ROSVITHA.)*

## ROSVITHA

*(To audience.)*

That was the resolution of the subplot. Hope you liked it. Now we've got to move on to the climax and denouement!

*(Claps her hands.)*

Players! Take the stage!

*(Crossfade, as NOVICES enter, "in costume." and set up for the play. THEOPHANO and SOPHIA sit on a bench, as do DIEHARD and GERBERGA. ROSVITHA sets placards against open lid of trunk and faces audience.)*

Our little drama, as we tell it,  
will catch the conscience of the prelate!

*(Sits next to trunk with prompting script.)*

**Scene 3**

AT RISE:

*Lights up on R. platform arch. Front placard on trunk reads: "Nutius and Thais by Rosvitha." ROSVITHA displaces it with next one: "A Monastery." HOPE, as BISHOP NUTIUS, enters through R. arch, sits on top step. FAITH, as BROTHER PAUL, enters.*

FAITH/PAUL

Why such a long face, Bishop Nutius?

HOPE/NUTIUS

Brother Paul, there is a shameless hussy who lives right in our town.

FAITH/PAUL

*(Sitting next to him.)*

What is her miserable name?

HOPE/NUTIUS

Thais.

FAITH/PAUL

Thais the harlot? Why, she is infamous!

HOPE/NUTIUS

She drags all men down with her.

FAITH/PAUL

Tsk...tsk...

HOPE/NUTIUS

But listen—I have a plan to rescue her from this life of sin.

FAITH/PAUL

What makes you think she'd listen to a bishop?

HOPE/NUTIUS

*(Stands, throwing off cloak, revealing a blacksmith's tunic.)*

I will go disguised—as a lover!

FAITH/PAUL

What do you know about making love?

HOPE/NUTIUS

I have read the Song of Solomon.



DIEHARD

*(Startled.)*

What's this?

THEOPHANO

*(Calming him.)*

Sshh!

HOPE/NUTIUS

I'll need your prayers.

FAITH/PAUL

You'll also need a wig to cover your tonsure.

*(HOPE/NUTIUS pulls one out, puts it on over his tonsure.)*

And money for the innkeeper who pimps for her.

HOPE/NUTIUS

*(Displaying coin.)*

I have a gold piece for a little translation I did of Pliny the Younger.

FAITH/PAUL

Good.

HOPE/NUTIUS

How do I look?

FAITH/PAUL

The gold will help.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Farewell!

*(Exits. FAITH/PAUL follows him out. ROSVITHA displays placard: "The Tavern." BRUNHILDA, as INNKEEPER, enters through L. arch, sweeps. HOPE/NUTIUS enters.)*

Good day, Mistress Innkeeper.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER

Come in, Sir.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Have you a room for the night?

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER

*(Winks.)*

Everyone finds here comfort, Sir.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
 Good for you!

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
 I will get for you some supper.  
*(Starts to leave.)*

HOPE/NUTIUS  
 There is...something else.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
 Whatever you wish.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
*(Holding up gold piece.)*  
 I'm told there is a woman of great beauty who lives here. Perhaps she would like to have supper with me.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
*(Reaching for it.)*  
 With you?

HOPE/NUTIUS  
*(Pulling it back.)*  
 I have heard so much about her.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
 It is all true. You will not find a better...companion.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
 I'm already in love with her.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
*(Snatching coin.)*  
 What a wonder! At your age—to come on such a mission!

HOPE/NUTIUS  
 My mission is to be quite miraculous.

BRUNHILDA/INNKEEPER  
 Believe me!  
*(Exits.)*

HOPE/NUTIUS  
 Now must I hide my repugnance and play the paramour. Be still, my spleen!

*(VIRGINITAS, as THAIS, enters, filing her nails and possibly speaking in a Brooklyn dialect.)*

HOPE/NUTIUS *(Cont.)*

Ah, Thais, "thou hast ravished my heart with the look of thy eyes."

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

Do I know you?

HOPE/NUTIUS

*(Kneeling to her.)*

"Thy breasts are like twin gazelles that feed among the lilies."

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

What's this?

HOPE/NUTIUS

"Thy hair is like a flock of goats grazing on the mountain."

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

Listen, who are you anyway?

HOPE/NUTIUS

One who would be your lover.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

My lovers get what they pay for.

*(Aside.)*

And from the sound of it so far, I'd guess kinky for this one.

HOPE/NUTIUS

If only you knew how anxious I have been to...speak with you.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

A talker, eh? OK, let's hear it.

HOPE/NUTIUS

*(Stands.)*

It's a secret. Could we go someplace...more private?

*(They exit. ROSVITHA displays placard: "A Room in the Inn." They enter through C. arch.)*

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

Is this what you had in mind?

HOPE/NUTIUS

Perhaps something even more secluded. A quiet little corner?

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

There's a spot over here where I say my prayers.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Prayers!

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

Of course. I'm a good Christian girl.

HOPE/NUTIUS

O God of Patience! How have you not struck dead this sassy strumpet?!

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

What's the matter? Why are you shuddering and weeping?

HOPE/NUTIUS

I shudder at your insolence! I weep for your damnation! Wicked, wanton, wench of a woman!

DIEHARD

*(Jumping up.)*

I find this extremely offensive!

THEOPHANO

*(Pulling him down.)*

They do but jest. No offense intended.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

*(Kneels.)*

Oh Sir, your words have touched my very heart.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Your only hope is to abandon your life of sin and live a life of penance.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

What must I do?

HOPE/NUTIUS

Give up your lovers.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

Even you?

HOPE/NUTIUS

I will stay on—

*(Taking off wig to reveal tonsure.)*

as your confessor.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS

I'll follow you anywhere.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Come then, we must get thee to a nunnery.

*(They exit. ROSVITHA displays placard: "Another Monastery."**CHARITY/ABBESS, enters through R. arch. NUTIUS brings**THAIS on.)*

CHARITY/ABBESS

Welcome, Bishop Nutius!

HOPE/NUTIUS

You recognize me?

CHARITY/ABBESS

*(Straining away.)*

The odor of sanctity.

HOPE/NUTIUS

Mother Abbess, I have brought a little goat snatched from the mouth of wolves for you to make a lamb of.

CHARITY/ABBESS

I beg your pardon.

HOPE/NUTIUS

A reformed harlot seeking penance.

CHARITY/ABBESS

What did you have in mind?

HOPE/NUTIUS

Something simple: solitude, silence...a little cell.

CHARITY/ABBESS

All our cells are small.

HOPE/NUTIUS

A narrow space between the double walls. No doors or windows. Just a little slit for passing food through.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS  
Hey, wait a minute—

CHARITY/ABBESS  
I fear that is a bit rigorous.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
Have you such a place?

CHARITY/ABBESS  
Yes, right back there, but I really don't think—

HOPE/NUTIUS  
*(Takes VIRGINITAS/THAIS to arch, puts her "inside" the column.)*  
Here you are, my Dear. This is just the place for you to meditate on your sins.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS  
*(Extending upper body horizontally out from "wall.")*  
Oh my, it is small and dark and rather dampish—not quite what I bargained for.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
I thought you longed to do penance.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS  
*(Coming out.)*  
I do, I do. But I mean, really.

HOPE/NUTIUS  
When you have expiated your sins, your soul will fly straight to heaven.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS  
And, eh, what if I died now?

HOPE/NUTIUS  
Well, you have repented in intention, so you wouldn't go to hell. But not yet in deed, so...I figure Purgatory.

VIRGINITAS/THAIS  
I'll take it!

HOPE/NUTIUS  
What?

*(VIRGINITAS/THAIS falls to her knees.)*

## VIRGINITAS/THAIS

I beseech you, O Lord, in the name of Mary Magdalen, Harlot of Heaven, grant me a speedy death!

*(Dies.)*

## CHARITY/ABBESS

Please my Child, we'll find you another cell. Servant's quarters—something!

*(Checking body. To HOPE/NUTIUS.)*

Too late.

## HOPE/NUTIUS

May her gazelles feed among the lilies forever.

*(GERBERGA, THEOPHANO, SOPHIA applaud as cast bows. DIEHARD jumps up and stomps away.)*

## DIEHARD

This is outrageous!

## THEOPHANO

*(Running after him.)*

Don't make a scene, Wilhelm!

*(Turns back to stage, applauding loudly. Cast runs down steps, turn to face stage.)*

Author! Author!

*(ROSVITHA crosses to platform, bows, beckons SOPHIA to join her. They bow.)*

Brava! Bravissima!

*(Aside to DIEHARD.)*

Don't you recognize them? Our little red riding hoods!

## DIEHARD

*Mein Gott in himmel!* What have I done?

## THEOPHANO

It's what you're going to do that matters.

## DIEHARD

What?

## THEOPHANO

Give them your blessing.

## DIEHARD

For their...sacrilege?!

THEOPHANO

For their spirit! And our safety.

*(GERBERGA and ROSVITHA cross to DIEHARD.)*

GERBERGA

Well, Your Excellency? Wasn't it just the sort of edifying thing you could have written yourself?

DIEHARD

Ah...unfortunately, I did not. And now for all posterity, it will be attributed to, eh...

GERBERGA

Sister Rosvitha.

ROSVITHA

I'm so glad you liked it, Bishop. I knew you would.

DIEHARD

You did?

ROSVITHA

Only this morning I said to Mother Abbess: If we can just get the bishop to laugh at—

DIEHARD

Laugh!

ROSVITHA

—at our little...fiction.

DIEHARD

Ah.

THEOPHANO

The bishop admires your "fiction," Sister Rosvitha.

*(Shooting him a look.)*

Don't you, Your Excellency?

ROSVITHA

Only this morning I said to Mother Abbess: Bishop Diehard has a wonderful sense of humor.

DIEHARD

You said that?

ROSVITHA

We'll just tickle his funny bone. "Ravish his heart" with humor.



DIEHARD

Ravish my...

ROSVITHA

“Many waters cannot quench” humor.

DIEHARD

Many waters...

ROSVITHA

“The smell of thy [humor] is sweeter than all spices.”

DIEHARD

*(Taking her by the arm.)*

Don’t press your pluck, Sister.

THEOPHANO

*(Crossing to DIEHARD.)*

The bishop admires your spirit, Sister Rosvitha. Don’t you, Your Excellency?

DIEHARD

You certainly do have a great deal of spirit, Sister Rosvitha. Almost a dangerous amount of spirit. One must be careful not to...misuse such spirit. But I’m sure you wouldn’t do that, would you, Sister?

ROSVITHA

No, Your Excellency. I expect I’ll be too busy writing new plays.

GERBERGA

That’s our Rosvitha!

*(Music: “Here’s to Rosvitha.” NOVICES, in habits, run on during introduction.)*

ALL

*(Sing.)*

SHE GIVES US EXCITEMENT, DRAMA, SUSPENSE.  
SHE’S FUNNY, SHE’S CLEVER, AND SOMETIMES INTENSE.  
ROSVITHA’S A REBEL, NO COMMONPLACE NUN.  
AS MISTRESS OF REVELS, SHE’S OUR NUMBER ONE!

GERBERGA

*(Sings.)*

HER LATIN IS FLAWLESS—WRITTEN OR ORAL.  
ROSVITHA PRODUCES PLAYS WITH A MORAL.  
WHEN CENSORS COOME ‘ROUND, SHE’S HUMBLE AND MEEK,  
BUT NOT ABOVE WRITING WITH TONGUE IN HER CHEEK.

DIEHARD

*(Sings.)*

FROM LIVES OF THE SAINTS, SHE BORROWS HER PLOTS,  
 BUT TIES THEM ALL UP IN DEVILISH KNOTS.  
 LEWD TERENCE'S STYLE SHE FLAGRANTLY APES  
 WITH LYING, DISGUIISING,  
 WHEELING AND DEALING...  
 PIMPING AND PRIMPING...  
 WHORING, IMPLORING...  
 RAILING AND QUAILING...

THEOPHANO

*(Sings, interrupting.)*

CLEVER BLACKMAILING...

DIEHARD

*(Continues singing.)*

AND NARROW ESCAPES!

THEOPHANO

*(Sings.)*

SHE'S GREAT AT ADAPTING CLASSICAL SOURCES,  
 A WOMAN OF PYRIC, SATIRIC RESOURCES.  
 BUT WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO ORIGINAL WIT,  
 SHE'S GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO GIVE US A HIT!

ALL

*(Sing.)*

DIRECTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT, THE QUEEN OF PRETEND,  
 ROSVITHA'S AN ARTIST...

NOVICES

*(Sing.)*

A SISTER...

ALL

*(Sing.)*

A FRIEND.  
 WE LOVE HER, APPLAUD HER, SHE'S FINDING HER STRIDE.  
 HERE'S TO ROSVITHA—GANDERSHEIM'S PRIDE!

*(Musical transition. ALL exit except ROSVITHA.  
 Lights fade. Spotlight on ROSVITHA.)*

ROSVITHA

*(Sings.)*

I'LL WRITE FROM HERE.  
I'LL WRITE TO MAKE ME CHEER.  
I'LL TAKE MY TIME, GO DEEP INSIDE,  
LET MY IMAGINATION FIND ITS STRIDE.  
I'LL WRITE FROM HERE.

I'LL BE SURPRISED,  
MY SPIRIT ENERGIZED.  
FOR THIS ONE BLESSING WILL I STRIVE:  
THE MOMENT I CAN FEEL I'M MOST ALIVE.  
I'LL BE SURPRISED...  
I'LL FEEL ALIVE...  
I'LL FEEL ALIVE!

*(Blackout.)*

End of Play