

# #4 - Maria + Mother Abbess

## Scene Thirteen

*The office of the MOTHER ABBESS.*

*The MOTHER ABBESS is seated at her desk. The new POSTULANT and SISTER SOPHIA stand facing her.*

MOTHER ABBESS Sister Sophia, take our new postulant to the robing room. Bless you, my daughter. *(The POSTULANT kneels. The MOTHER ABBESS blesses her. There is a knock on the door) Ave.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

MOTHER ABBESS I shall see her.

MARGARETTA *(Crosses to the door)* Maria!  
*(MARIA enters, goes to the MOTHER ABBESS, and kneels)*

## Start

### THE SOUND OF MUSIC

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

MARIA *(Rising)* It was, Reverend Mother.

MOTHER ABBESS Has it taught you anything?

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

MOTHER ABBESS Why did they send you back to us?

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

MOTHER ABBESS Sit down, Maria.

*(MARIA sits by the desk)*

Maria, what happened? Why did you do this?

MARIA I was frightened.

MOTHER ABBESS Frightened?

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

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

MARIA I can't face him again.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

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

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

MOTHER ABBESS Tell me about it, my child.

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

MOTHER ABBESS But you do like him, Maria?

MARIA I like the kindness in his eyes. I like the way he speaks  
—even when he's stern. I like the way he smiles at little  
Gretl.

MOTHER ABBESS Did you let him see how you felt?

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

MOTHER ABBESS (*Helping MARIA to rise*) Maria, the love of  
a man and a woman is holy, too. The first time we talked

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

together—you told me that you remembered your father and  
mother before they died. Do you remember—were they  
happy?

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

MOTHER ABBESS Maria, you were born of their happiness, of  
their love. And, my child, you have a great capacity to love.  
What you must find out is—how does God want you to  
spend your love.

(*The MOTHER ABBESS sits at her desk*)

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

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

(*MARIA sinks at the MOTHER ABBESS' feet*)

MARIA Oh, no, Mother, please, don't ask me to do that. Please!  
Let me stay here.

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

MARIA How do I find it?

MOTHER ABBESS Look for it. (*She sings*)

end  
Climb every mountain,  
Search high and low,