

(MARIA crosses downstage center, kneels, and kisses the MOTHER ABBESS' ring.)

Sit down, Maria, I want to talk to you.

(MARIA sits on stool right of desk.)

MARIA. Yes – about last night. Reverend Mother, I was on my knees most of the night because I was late – and after you'd been so kind and given me permission to leave.

MOTHER ABBESS. *(Sits left of desk.)* It wasn't about your being late, Maria.

MARIA. I must have awakened half the abbey before Sister Sophia heard me and opened the gate.

MOTHER ABBESS. Maria, very few of us were asleep. We could only think you had lost your way – and to be lost at night on that mountain!

MARIA. Reverend Mother, I couldn't be lost on that mountain. That's *my* mountain. I was brought up on it! It was that mountain that brought me to you.

MOTHER ABBESS. Oh?

MARIA. When I was a little girl I used to come down the mountain, climb a tree and look over into your garden. I'd see the sisters at work, and I'd hear them sing on their way to vespers. Many times I went back up that mountain in the dark – singing all the way.

(She clasps her hands together and raises them above her head in an exuberant gesture. Then she catches herself, gives a guilty glance toward the MOTHER ABBESS, and puts her hands back beneath her cape.)

And that brings up another transgression – I was singing yesterday – and I was singing without your permission.

MOTHER ABBESS. Maria, it's only here in the abbey that there is a rule about singing.

MARIA. That's the hardest rule of all for me. Sister Margaretta is always reminding me – but too late, after I've started singing.

MOTHER ABBESS. And the day you were singing in the garden at the top of your voice –

MARIA. But Mother, it's that kind of song.

MOTHER ABBESS. I came to the window and when you saw me you stopped.

MARIA. Yes – that's been on my mind ever since it happened.

MOTHER ABBESS. It's been on my mind, too. I wish you hadn't stopped. I used to sing that song when I was a child, and I can't quite remember...

[MUSIC NO. 06 "MY FAVORITE THINGS"]

Please –

*(She gestures to **MARIA** to sing.)*

MARIA. *(Sitting, facing front.)*

RAINDROPS ON ROSES AND WHISKERS ON KITTENS,
BRIGHT COPPER KETTLES AND WARM WOOLEN MITTENS,

*(The **MOTHER ABBESS** starts to write.)*

BROWN PAPER PACKAGES TIED UP WITH STRINGS –
THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS.

*(The **MOTHER ABBESS** motions **MARIA** to rise.*

MARIA drops her hands, rises, takes stage, and enjoys herself.)

CREAM COLORED PONIES AND CRISP APPLE STRUDELS,
DOORBELLS AND SLEIGH BELLS AND SCHNITZEL WITH
NOODLES,

WILD GEESE THAT FLY WITH THE MOON ON THEIR
WINGS –

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS.

GIRLS IN WHITE DRESSES WITH BLUE SATIN SASHES,
SNOWFLAKES THAT STAY ON MY NOSE AND EYELASHES,
SILVER-WHITE WINTERS THAT MELT INTO SPRINGS –
THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS.