

Schweyk in the Second World War

(1943)

by Bertolt Brecht

*Liberated from
capitalist control
to educate the masses
by
Socialist Stories*

CHARACTERS

SCHWEYK, dog hustler in
Prague

BALOUN, photographer, his
friend

ANNA KOPECKA, owner of
the "Flagon"

YOUNG PROCHAZKA, a butcher's
son, her admirer

ANNA, a maidservant

KATI, her girl friend

BRETTSCHNEIDER, Gestapo
agent

BULLINGER, SS platoon leader
SS MAN MÜLLER 2

THE ARMY CHAPLAIN

HITLER

HIMMLER

GÖRING

GOEBBELS

VON BOCK

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

Prelude in the Higher Regions

Martial music. Hitler, Göring, Goebbels, and Himmler around a globe. All are larger than life-size except Goebbels who is smaller than life-size.

HITLER

Gentlemen, dear party members. Now that with iron hand
I have subjugated our own German land
I am fixing to conquer the whole world plus population
In my opinion, a mere problem of tanks, stukas, and concentration.

But now, before I forget in my great eagerness
Tell me, dear chief of police and SS
The Little Man—what does he think of me
Not only in Germany
Also in Czechovakia or whatever name
Those little countries used to be called (they're all the same)?

Is he for me? Or does he—love me?
Will he stand by me? Or will he—come to my help in an emergency?
Does he revere me, grand master of all art, strategist most noted?

In short, what is his attitude?

HIMMLER

Devoted.

HITLER

Will he make sacrifices? Will he make concessions
I mean, of his possessions

Which I need to make my war, for though a shining genius, I
Still am only a man.

HITLER

That I deny.

HITLER

Thanks. I should hope so. But as I've said
When this damn insomnia agitates my head
Then I wonder: Where does the humble Little Man in
Europe stand?

HITLER

My Führer, he worships you on one hand
As he would worship God. Meanwhile
On the other, he loves you just as dearly as the Germans
do.

GÖRING, GOEBBELS, HITLER

Heil!

1

Schweyk and Baloun are drinking their morning beer at the "Flagon." Mrs. Anna Kopecka, the owner, is serving a drunken SS man. At the bar sits young Prochazka.

MRS. KOPECKA You've had five Pilsners, and I'd rather not give you a sixth because you're not used to it.

SS MAN Give me one more. That's an order. You know what that means. If you're sensible and carry it out, I'll let you in on a secret. You won't regret it.

MRS. KOPECKA I don't want to hear it. That's why I'm not giving you any more beer. If you start blabbing your secrets, I'll be in trouble.

SS MAN That's very smart of you, take it from me. Anybody who knows this secret will be shot. They tried to kill

Adolf in Munich. A hair's breadth and he'd have been a goner.

MRS. KOPECKA You just keep quiet. You're drunk.

SCHWEYK (*amiably from the next table*) Which Adolf was that? I know two Adolfs. One was a salesman in Prusha's drugstore, he's in a concentration camp because he wouldn't sell concentrated hydrochloric acid to anybody but Czechs, the other is Adolf Kokoschka, that collects dog shit and he's in a concentration camp too for saying—so I'm told—that the shit of the English bulldog is best. No great loss, either of them.

SS MAN (*rises and salutes*) Heil Hitler!

SCHWEYK (*also rises and salutes*) Heil Hitler!

SS MAN (*threateningly*) You don't like it?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, sir, I like it fine.

MRS. KOPECKA (*arrives with beer*) Here's your Pilsner, it makes no difference now. But sit down and don't spill your Führer's secrets that nobody wants to know. No politics around here. (*She points to a sign saying: "Drink your slivovitz, drink your beer/but don't talk politics in here"*) I'm a businesswoman. If somebody orders a beer, I draw it for him, but that's all.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA (*when she returns to the bar*) Mrs. Anna, why can't you let your customers have a little fun?

MRS. KOPECKA Because the Nazis will shut the place down on me, Mr. Prochazka.

SCHWEYK (*who is again seated*) If it was Hitler they tried to kill, that would be a good one.

MRS. KOPECKA You keep still, too, Mr. Schweyk. It's none of your business.

SCHWEYK If it happened, maybe it's because we're running short of potatoes. People don't go for that. The trouble is we've got so much order, everything has its place, every bunch of soup greens is a coupon in the ration book, that's order. I'm told that Hitler brought us more order than anybody ever thought possible. When there's plenty, there's no order. For instance, when I've sold a dachshund, my money is all mixed up in my pocket, bills and five and ten heller pieces, but when I'm broke all I've got is one little bill and

one five-heller piece: how can you have disorder in that? In Italy when Mussolini came along the trains started running on schedule. They've tried to bump him off seven or eight times.

MRS. KOPECKA Stop shooting your mouth off and drink your beer. If something's happened, we'll all catch it.

SCHWEYK What I don't understand, Baloun, is why you're so down at the mouth about the news. I'll bet there aren't many like you in Prague.

BALOUN It's all very well to say that food is short in wartime. But with all these ration books and half a pound of meat a week, I haven't had a square meal since Corpus Christi last year. (*Pointing to the SS man*) It's all right for those fellows, look how well fed they are. Got to ask him a few questions. (*He walks over to the SS man*) What did you have for lunch, neighbor, that made you so thirsty, if I may ask? I bet it was something good and spicy—goulash maybe?

SS MAN That's none of your business, it's a military secret. Meat loaf.

BALOUN With gravy. And fresh vegetables? I don't want you to give away a secret, but if it was cabbage, was it well chopped? That makes all the difference. Dear me, one time in Przlov, before Hitler—begging your pardon—I had a meat loaf at the "Swan," I tell you, it was better than at "Plattner's."

MRS. KOPECKA (*to Schweyk*) Can't you get Baloun away from that SS man? Yesterday he kept asking Herr Brettschneider of the Gestapo—funny he hasn't shown up yet—about the helpings in the German army; they almost arrested him as a spy.

SCHWEYK You can't stop him. Food is his vice.

BALOUN (*to the SS man*) Do you happen to know if the Germans in Prague are taking on volunteers for the Russian campaign, and if the helpings are as big as in the German army, or is it a false rumor?

MRS. KOPECKA Mr. Baloun, don't bother the gentleman, he's here as a private citizen and you as a Czech ought to be ashamed of yourself asking such questions.

BALOUN (*guiltily*) I don't mean any harm, or I wouldn't be

asking questions so innocently; I know your opinions, Mrs. Kopecka.

MRS. KOPECKA I haven't any opinions, I have a tavern. All I ask of my customers is common decency. And I have a terrible time with you, Mr. Baloun.

SS MAN You want to volunteer?

BALOUN I'm only asking.

SS MAN If you're interested, I'll take you to the recruiting office. The food is excellent, if you want to know. The Ukraine is going to be the granary of the Third Reich. When we were in Holland, I sent so many packages home there was even enough for my aunt that I can't stand. (*Rises*) Heitler.

BALOUN (*also rises*) Heil Hitler.

SCHWEYK (*joining them*) Don't say "Heil Hitler," say "Heitler" like this gentleman, who must know: that shows you're used to it and even say it at home in your sleep.

MRS. KOPECKA (*puts a schnapps down in front of the SS man*) Here, one for the road.

SS MAN (*embracing Baloun*) So you want to volunteer against the Bolsheviks, that is good to hear; you're a lousy Czech but a smart one. I'll take you to the recruiting office.

MRS. KOPECKA (*pushes him back into his chair*) Drink your slivovitz, that will calm you down. (*To Baloun*) I have a good mind to throw you out on your ear. You have no dignity, that comes from your unnatural passion for food. You know the song they're singing? I'll sing it for you, you've only had two beers, you must have some sense left in you. (*She sings "The Song of the Nazi Soldier's Wife"*)

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife

From the ancient city of Prague?

From Prague it brought her some high-heeled shoes

A letter with news and high-heeled shoes—

That's what she got from the town of Prague.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife

From Warsaw, the town on the plains

From Warsaw it brought her a nice linen blouse

It was all on the house, that nice Polish blouse
That's what she got from the Polish plains.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From Oslo, across the sound?
From Oslo it brought her an elegant fur
Just the thing for her, that elegant fur
That's what she got from over the sound.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From opulent Rotterdam?
From Rotterdam it brought her a hat
How nice to look at, that little Dutch hat
That's what she got from Rotterdam.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From Brussels, the city of sprouts?
From Brussels it brought her some delicate lace.
Oh, it flattered her face, that delicate lace
That's what she got from the city of sprouts.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From Paris, city of light?
From Paris it brought her a silken dress
She loved to impress with that silken dress—
Sent from Paris, the city of light.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From Libyan Tripoli?
From Tripoli it brought her a charm
To shield her from harm, a copper-chained charm—
That's what she got from Tripoli.

And what did the mail bring the soldier's wife
From the land of Russia?
From Russia it brought her a widow's weeds
That's all she needs, a widow's weeds
That's what she got from Russia.

(The SS man triumphantly nods at the end of each stanza,

but before the last one his head drops onto the table because he is now completely drunk)

SCHWEYK A very nice song. (*To Baloun*) It shows that you'd better think twice before doing anything rash. Don't take it into your head to march to Russia with Hitler on account of the big helpings, you'll only freeze to death, you damn fool.

BALOUN (*shaken by the song, puts his head on his elbow and starts crying*) Holy Jesus and Mary, what's going to become of me and my appetite? You've got to do something for me or I'll crack up. How can I be a good Czech on an empty stomach?

SCHWEYK If you'd swear by the Virgin Mary that you'll never volunteer, you'd keep your oath. (*To Mrs. Kopecka*) He's religious. But would you swear? No.

BALOUN I can't swear just like that, it's no joke.

MRS. KOPECKA Terrible. You're a grown-up man.

BALOUN But a weak one.

SCHWEYK If somebody put a dish of roast pork in front of your nose and said: "There, eat, you hopeless degenerate, but swear you'll always be a good Czech," you'd swear, as I know you. You'd swear if they kept a good hold on the dish and snatched it away if you didn't swear. With you that would work.

BALOUN I guess it would, but they'd have to hold on tight.

SCHWEYK And you'd only keep your oath if you'd gone down on your knees and sworn on the Bible in front of a lot of people? Am I right?

(*Baloun nods*)

MRS. KOPECKA I'm almost tempted to try it. (*She goes back to young Prochazka*)

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Just hearing you sing, I can hardly breathe.

MRS. KOPECKA (*absently*) Why?

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Love.

MRS. KOPECKA How can you tell it's love and not just a passing fancy?

YOUNG PROCHAZKA I can tell, Mrs. Anna. Yesterday I wrapped up a customer's purse instead of a schnitzel because I was

thinking of you, and my father didn't like that at all. And every morning I have a headache. It's love.

MRS. KOPECKA The question is: how much love?

YOUNG PROCHAZKA What do you mean by that, Mrs. Anna?

MRS. KOPECKA I mean, how far would your love go? Maybe only as far as blowing your nose; that's been known to happen.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Mrs. Anna, don't crush my heart with cold suspicions. My love would go to the ends of the earth if it were only required. But it isn't.

MRS. KOPECKA I wonder, for instance, if it would go as far as two pounds of smoked butt.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Mrs. Anna! How can you be so materialistic at a time like this?

MRS. KOPECKA (*turning away to count bottles*) See? Any favor is too much.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA (*shaking his head*) I don't understand you, Mrs. Anna. Ships that pass in the night.

BALOUN (*hopelessly*) It didn't start with this war, it's an old weakness, this craving for food. To cure it, my sister and her kids, where I was living then, went to the Klokota church fair. But even Klokota was no good. My sister and the kids come home from the fair and right away she counts the chickens. One or two were missing. But I just can't help myself. I knew she needed them for eggs, but I go outside and it's like I'm in love. Suddenly, so help me, I feel a bottomless pit in my stomach and an hour later I'm all right again and the chicken is gone. I'm probably hopeless.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Were you serious?

MRS. KOPECKA Very serious.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Mrs. Anna, when do you want the smoked butt? Tomorrow?

MRS. KOPECKA Aren't you being a little rash? You'll have to take it from your father's shop, without permission and without meat coupons. That's called black-marketing nowadays. You'll get shot if they find out.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Do you really think I'd mind being shot if I knew you'd love me for it?

(*Schweyk and Baloun have followed the conversation*)

SCHWEYK (*appreciatively*) That's the way a man in love should behave. In Pilsen a young man hanged himself from a rafter for a widow who wasn't even so young any more, because she remarked one day that he'd never done anything for her. And at the "Bear" a man slashed his wrist in the toilet because the waitress poured more beer in another customer's glass—a family man at that. A few days later two men jumped into the Moldau off Charles Bridge because of a woman, but that was on account of her money. Seems she was rich.

MRS. KOPECKA I must admit, Mr. Prochazka, that a woman doesn't get to hear such things very often.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA That's God's truth. I'll bring it tomorrow noon. Will that be soon-enough?

MRS. KOPECKA I don't like you to take the risk but it's for a good cause, it's not for me. You heard what Mr. Baloun said: he needs a square meal with meat in it, or he gets terrible ideas.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA So you don't like me to take risks? That slipped out of you, didn't it? You do care if I get shot. You've made me happy, so don't take it back, Mrs. Anna. It's all settled—you can count on the smoked butt even if they blow my brains out for it.

MRS. KOPECKA Be here for lunch tomorrow, Mr. Baloun. I won't promise, but it looks like you'll get a meal.

BALOUN If I get just one more meal, I'll forget all my terrible ideas. But I won't start drooling before I see it. I've suffered too much.

SCHWEYK (*referring to the SS man*) I don't think he'll remember a thing when he wakes up; he's drunk. (*He shouts into the SS man's ear*) Hurrah for Beneš! (*When the man does not move*) That's the most reliable sign that he's out cold, or he'd make hash out of me because that's what they're scared of.

(*The Gestapo agent Brettschneider has entered*)

BRETTSCHNEIDER Who's scared?

SCHWEYK (*firmly*) The SS men. Sit down with us, Herr Brettschneider. A Pilsner for the gentleman, Mrs. Kopecka. It's hot today.

BRETTSCHNEIDER And what are they scared of, in your opinion?

SCHWEYK Of not being careful enough and letting a seditious remark slip by or some such thing. But maybe you want to read your newspaper in peace and I'm bothering you?

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*sits down with the paper*) Nobody bothers me if he's got something interesting to say. Mrs. Kopecka, you're looking like a spring blossom again today.

MRS. KOPECKA (*putting a mug of beer down in front of him*) Better say a summer bloom.

YOUNG PROHAZKA (*when she returns to the bar*) If I were you, I wouldn't let him get so fresh.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*opening his paper*) This is a special edition. There's been an attempt to assassinate the Führer, with a bomb, in a Munich beerhall. What do you think of that?

SCHWEYK Did he suffer long?

BRETTSCHNEIDER He wasn't hurt, the bomb exploded too late.

SCHWEYK Probably a cheap bomb. Nowadays they do everything with mass production methods, and then people are surprised that the workmanship is no good. Those things just aren't made with the same loving care as in the old days when they made them by hand, am I right? But imagine not picking a better bomb for a job like that? I call that negligence. I remember one time in Český Krumlov, a butcher . . .

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*interrupting*) You call it negligence when the Führer almost loses his life?

SCHWEYK A word like "almost" can be tricky, Herr Brettschneider. In '38 when they sold us out at Munich, we almost went to war, but then we almost lost everything because we didn't. In the First World War, Austria almost conquered Serbia, and Germany almost conquered France. You can't rely on "almost."

BRETTSCHNEIDER Keep on talking, it's interesting. You have interesting customers, Mrs. Kopecka. So well informed about politics.

MRS. KOPECKA One customer is like another. For a businesswoman like me there's no such thing as politics. And see here, Herr Brettschneider, I'll thank you not to needle my customers into making political statements so you can arrest

them afterwards. And you, Mr. Schweyk, as long as you pay for your beer, you're free to sit down and shoot off your mouth as much as you like. But right now, Mr. Schweyk, you've shot it off enough for two glasses of beer.

BRETTSCHNEIDER I have the impression that you wouldn't consider it a great loss for the Protectorate if the Führer were dead.

SCHWEYK It would be a loss all right, you can't deny it. A terrible loss. You couldn't replace Hitler with any old idiot.

A lot of people gripe about Hitler. It doesn't surprise me.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*hopefully*) What do you mean by that?

SCHWEYK (*with animation*) As the editor of *Field and Garden* once wrote, great men are always unpopular with the common people. The masses don't understand them, they think all those things are unnecessary, even heroism. The little man doesn't give a shit about a great era. All he wants is to drop into the bar now and then and eat goulash for supper. Naturally a statesman gets riled at bums like that, when it's his job to get his people into the schoolbooks, the poor bastard. To a great man the common people are a ball and chain. It's like offering Baloun here, with his appetite, a small Hungarian sausage for supper, what good is that? I wouldn't want to listen in when the big shots get together and start griping about us.

BRETTSCHNEIDER Are you, by any chance, of the opinion that the German people grumble, that they're not behind the Führer?

MRS. KOPECKA Please, gentlemen, talk about something else. There's no point in it, the times are too serious.

SCHWEYK (*takes a big swig of beer*) The German people are behind the Führer, Herr Brettschneider, nobody can deny it. As Reich Marshal Göring said one time: "People don't always understand the Führer at first, he's too great." Göring must know. (*Confidentially*) It's amazing, the way even the big shots cross Hitler up every time he gets one of his ideas. Last fall, I'm told, he wanted to put up a building that would reach all the way from Leipzig to Dresden—a memorial temple to Germany after it collapsed according to his great plan that he'd worked out in every detail, but

they shook their heads at the ministry. They said it was "too great," because they've got no appreciation for the incomprehensible things that a genius thinks up when he's got nothing else to do. He managed to get them into this war, but only by telling them that all he wanted was the city of Danzig, not an inch more. And, mind you, that's the higher-ups and the educated people, the generals and the directors of I. G. Farben who shouldn't give a damn, because, hell, do *they* pay for it? The common man is a lot worse. If they ask him to die for a great cause, he says it louses up his plans, he gripes and bellyaches, and pokes his spoon around in his tripe as if he didn't like the taste of it, and no wonder the Führer gets fed up, when he's gone out of his way to think up something really new for them, conquering the world for instance. What more is there to conquer? The world is limited like everything else. It's just as well.

BRETTSCHNEIDER Then you maintain that the Führer wants to conquer the world? That his aim is not just to defend Germany against its Jewish enemies and the plutocrats?

SCHWEYK Don't take it that way; he doesn't mean any harm. Conquering the world is nothing special for him, it's like drinking beer for you, he gets a kick out of it, so he thinks he'll give it a try. Woe to perfidious Albion, I won't say a word more.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*rises*) You don't need to say any more. Just come with me to Gestapo headquarters at the Petschek Bank, we'll have something to say to you.

MRS. KOPECKA But Herr Brettschneider, Mr. Schweyk only made a few innocent remarks. Don't get him in trouble.

SCHWEYK I'm so innocent that I get arrested. I had two beers and a slivovitz. (*He pays, then says to Brettschneider amiably*) I beg your pardon for going out ahead of you. It's to help you keep an eye on me and guard me.

(*Brettschneider and Schweyk leave*)

BALOUN Maybe they'll shoot him.

MRS. KOPECKA Better have a slivovitz, Mr. Prochazka. It's given you a bad shock, too, hasn't it?

YOUNG PROCHAZKA They're very quick about arresting people.

2

Gestapo headquarters at the Petschek Bank. Schweyk and Gestapo agent Brettschneider are facing Platoon Leader Ludwig Bullinger. In the background an SS man.

BULLINGER This "Flagon" seems to be a regular hotbed of subversive characters.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*quickly*) Not at all, Herr Platoon Leader. Frau Kopecka, who owns the place, is a very respectable woman who keeps her nose out of politics; Schweyk is a dangerous exception among her customers. I've had my eye on him for quite some time.

(The telephone on Bullinger's desk rings. He lifts the receiver. The caller's voice can be heard)

TELEPHONE VOICE Motorized squad. Banker Krusha denies making any remarks about the attempted assassination. Says he couldn't have read the news because he was arrested before it happened.

BULLINGER Is he the Commercial Bank? In that case, give him ten on the ass. *(To Schweyk)* So you're one of those bastards, are you? First, let me ask you a question. If you don't know the answer, you swine, Müller 2 *(pointing at the SS man)* will take you down to the cellar and educate you, understand? The question is: Do you shit thin or do you shit thick?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, I shit the way you want me to.

BULLINGER Answer correct. But you made remarks endangering the security of the German Reich, referred to the Führer's defensive war as a war of conquest, criticized the rationing system, and so on and so on. What have you to say for yourself?

SCHWEYK That's a good deal. You can have too much of a good thing.

BULLINGER *(with heavy irony)* I'm glad you're aware of that.

SCHWEYK I'm aware of a lot of things. There's got to be discipline. Without discipline nobody would get nowhere, like our sergeant told us in the 91st: "If somebody doesn't chew you out, you'll throw your pants away and start climbing trees." That's what I said to myself last night when they were manhandling me.

BULLINGER So you were manhandled—you don't say.

SCHWEYK In the cell. A gentleman from the SS came in and hit me over the head with a leather strap, and when I groaned he shined his flashlight in my face and said, "It's a mistake, it's not him." And he was so mad about making a mistake that he hit me again in the back. That's human nature: a man makes mistakes till his dying day.

BULLINGER I see. And you confess that you made the remarks recorded here? (*Pointing at Brettschneider's report*)

SCHWEYK If you want me to confess, Your Excellency, I'll confess, it can't hurt me. But if you say, "Schweyk, don't confess," I'll talk myself out of it till they tear me to pieces.

BULLINGER (*shouting*) Shut up! Take him away!

SCHWEYK (*when Brettschneider has taken him to the door, raising his right hand, loudly*) Hurrah for our Führer Adolf Hitler. We're going to win this war!

BULLINGER (*startled*) Are you feeble-minded?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, I can't help it, I was discharged from the army for idiocy. A military commission officially declared me an idiot.

BULLINGER Brettschneider! Didn't you notice that this man is an idiot?

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*hurt*) Herr Platoon Leader, the way Schweyk talked at the "Flagon" he sounded like an idiot who puts his seditious remarks in such a way that you can't prove anything.

BULLINGER And it's your opinion that we've been listening to the remarks of a man who knows what he's talking about?

BRETTSCHNEIDER Herr Bullinger, that is still my opinion. But if for any reason you don't want him, I'll take him back. It's just that at Investigation we haven't got much time to waste either, you know.

BULLINGER And my opinion, Brettschneider, is that you're a shitass.

BRETTSCHNEIDER Herr Platoon Leader, I don't have to take that from you.

BULLINGER And I want you to confess it. It's not much, and it would make you feel better. Admit that you're a shitass.

BRETTSCHNEIDER I don't know what makes you feel that way about me, Herr Bullinger. I do my duty down to the slightest detail, I . . .

TELEPHONE VOICE Motorized squad. Krusha is willing to take in your brother as a partner in the Commercial Bank but definitely denies that he made those remarks.

BULLINGER Ten more on the ass, I need the remarks. (*To Brettschneider, almost pleading*) Look, don't you see how little I'm asking of you? If you admit it, it won't hurt your reputation, it's just between you and me. You are a shitass, why not admit it? If I practically get down on my knees? (*To Schweyk*) You persuaded him.

SCHWEYK Beg to report, sir, I wouldn't want to come between you gentlemen, but I know what you mean, Herr Platoon Leader. On the other hand it's hard on Herr Brettschneider because he's such a good bloodhound, and he doesn't really deserve it.

BULLINGER (*sadly*) So you're betraying me, too, you swine. "And the cock crew a third time," as it says in the Jew Bible. I'll squeeze it out of you yet, Brettschneider, but right now I haven't any time for private affairs, I've got ninety-seven more cases to take care of. Throw out this idiot and try to bring me something better next time.

SCHWEYK (*steps up to him and kisses his hand*) A thousand thanks, the Lord bless you. If you ever need a nice little pooch, let me know. Dogs are my business.

BULLINGER Concentration camp. (*Brettschneider is about to take Schweyk away*) Stop! Leave me alone with this man. (*Brettschneider leaves angrily. The SS man leaves too*)

TELEPHONE VOICE Motorized squad. Krusha has confessed to the remarks, but only that the attempted assassination was all one to him. Not that he was happy about it, or that the Führer's a clown, but only that he's human like everybody else.

BULLINGER Five more until he's happy and the Führer's a stinking clown. (*To Schweyk, who smiles at him amiably*)

You realize, I hope, that in the concentration camp we tear you limb from limb if you try playing any jokes on us, you bastard!

SCHWEYK I know all about that. They shoot you before you can count to four.

BULLINGER So you're a dog hustler. In the park the other day I saw a purebred spitz that appealed to me, with a white spot on one ear.

SCHWEYK (*interrupts*) Beg to report, sir, I am professionally acquainted with the animal. A lot of people have asked for him. He's got a whitish spot on his left ear, right? He belongs to Undersecretary Voyta. That dog is the apple of his eye, he won't eat unless you beg him on bended knee, and it has to be breast of veal. That proves he's a purebred. Mongrels are smarter, but purebreds are racially superior and favored by dog thieves. Usually they're so dumb they need two or three maids to tell them it's time to shit or open their mouths to eat. High-class people are the same way.

BULLINGER That's enough about racial superiority, you bastard. I want the spitz, and that's that.

SCHWEYK You can't have him; Voyta won't sell. How about a police dog? The kind that sniffs out everything you want to know and leads you straight to the scene of the crime. A butcher in Vrshovitz has one, and it pulls his cart for him. That dog missed his calling, so to speak.

BULLINGER I told you I wanted the spitz.

SCHWEYK If Undersecretary Voyta were only Jewish, you could simply take the dog, and no questions asked. But he's an Aryan, with a blond beard, kind of moth-eaten.

BULLINGER (*interested*) Is he a genuine Czech?

SCHWEYK It's not the way you think, he doesn't commit sabotage and curse Hitler, that would be simple. Off to the concentration camp, just like with me when I was misunderstood. But he's a collaborationist, they even call him a Quisling, which is a headache as far as the spitz is concerned.

BULLINGER (*takes a gun from his drawer and cleans it ostentatiously*) I see, you don't want to get me the spitz, you saboteur.

SCHWEYK Beg to report, sir, I do want to get you the dog.

(*Lecturing*) There are several systems, Herr Platoon Leader. The way to steal a lap dog or a toy terrier is to cut its leash in a crowd. You can get a mean German spotted mastiff by using a bitch in heat for bait. A fried horse-meat sausage is almost as good. But some dogs are as spoiled and pampered as an archbishop. I remember a salt-and-pepper pinscher I needed for the dog kennel up over the Klamovka—he wouldn't take any sausage. Three days I tried, until I couldn't stand it any more and I went up to the woman who walked the dog and asked her what in the world he ate that made him so pretty. The woman was flattered and said he liked chops best. So I bought a schnitzel, that was even better, I thought. But do you know, that damn dog didn't even give it a second look because it was veal. He was used to pork. So I had to buy a pork chop. I let the dog sniff at it, then I ran, and the dog ran after me. And the woman shouted, "Puntik! Puntik!" But hell, her dear Puntik ran around the corner after the chop, I snapped a chain around his neck, and the next day he was in the Klamovka kennel.—But suppose people start asking you where you got your dog when they see the spot on his ear?

BULLINGER I don't believe anybody will ask me where I got my dog. (*He rings the bell*)

SCHWEYK Maybe not. It wouldn't get them very far.

BULLINGER In my opinion you were spoofing when you claimed to be a certified idiot; but I'll give you a break, in the first place because Brettschneider is a shitass, and in the second place if you'll get me the dog for my wife, you criminal.

SCHWEYK Herr Platoon Leader, if you'll allow me, it's true about my certificate, but I was spoofing a little too. As the innkeeper said in Budweis, "I'm an epileptic but I've also got cancer," which was only his way of not letting on that he was bankrupt. Or, as the saying goes, "An athlete's foot seldom comes singly."

TELEPHONE VOICE Motorized squad 4. Mrs. Moudra, the grocer, denies overstepping the ordinance that shops must not be opened before nine A.M. She claims she opened at ten.

BULLINGER Lock her up for a couple of months, the lazy

bitch, for *under-stepping* the ordinance. (*To the SS man who has entered, pointing at Schweyk*) Released until further notice!

SCHWEYK Before I leave for good, I'd like to put in a word for a gentleman who is waiting outside. He was brought in with the rest of us, but he'd rather not sit on the same bench because he's afraid of being mistaken for a political offender. He's only here for attempting to rob and murder a peasant in Holitz.

BULLINGER (*shouting*) Get out!

SCHWEYK (*at attention*) Yes, sir. I'll bring the spitz as soon as I get him. Good morning, everybody.
(*Leaves with the SS man*)

Interlude in the Nether Regions

Schweyk and SS man Müller 2 talking on their way from the Petschek Bank to the "Flagon."

SCHWEYK If I ask Mrs. Kopecka, she'll do it for you. I'm glad to hear you say the Führer doesn't chase skirts but saves his strength for important matters of state, and never touches liquor. What he's done, he's done with a cool head, which is more than a lot of people I know could say. And not eating anything but a little vegetables and cake is a good idea too, there isn't too much to go around what with the war and all, that makes one less mouth to feed. I knew a peasant in Moravia, he had a kink in the gut which spoiled his appetite, his hired hands were all as thin as a rail. The people in the village started gossiping, but the peasant went around saying, "At my place the hired hands eat the same as I do." Drinking is a vice, I'll admit that, Budova the leather dealer wanted to cheat his brother, and then when he was full of booze he signed over the inheritance to him, instead of the other way round. There are two sides to everything, and as far as I'm concerned, Hitler doesn't have to go without women. I wouldn't ask that of anybody.

3

At the "Flagon" Baloun is waiting for his meal. Two other guests are playing checkers, a fat lady shopkeeper is drinking a small slivovitz, and Mrs. Kopecka is embroidering.

BALOUN It's ten after twelve, and no Prochazka. I knew it.
 MRS. KOPECKA Give him time. Haste makes waste, you've got to have the right mixture of hurrying and taking it easy. You know "The Song of the Gentle Breeze"?
(She sings)

Haste to me, love, my dearest guest
 No one dearer do I know.
 But when within your arms I rest
 Then rather take it slow.
 Learn from the plums in autumn
 Ripe to be plucked with ease.
 They fear the mighty tempest
 They love the gentle breeze.
 Ah, you hardly feel the little breeze
 It gently rocks you round.
 The plums want anyway to fall
 And lie upon the ground.

O reaper stop, you've done enough.
 Let one stalk stand, just one!
 Don't drink your wine in one swift draft
 Don't kiss me on the run.
 Learn from the plums in autumn
 Ripe to be plucked with ease.
 They fear the mighty tempest
 They love the gentle breeze.
 Ah, you hardly feel the breeze
 It gently rocks you round.

The plums want anyway to fall
And lie upon the ground.

BALOUN (*walks nervously over to the checker players*) You're doing fine. Would you gentlemen be interested in post-cards? I work for a photographer. We've got a hot series. "German cities," we call it.

FIRST CUSTOMER I'm not interested in German cities.

BALOUN Then you'll like this series. (*He shows the postcards furtively as if they were pornographic*) This is Cologne.

FIRST CUSTOMER It looks terrible. I'll take them. Nothing but bomb craters.

BALOUN Fifty hellers. But be careful about showing them around. People have been stopped by the police patrol for showing them to each other, they think they're dirty pictures, the kind they like to confiscate.

FIRST CUSTOMER Here's a funny caption. "Hitler is one of the greatest architects of all time." And it shows a heap of wreckage that used to be Bremen.

BALOUN I sold two dozen to a German sergeant. He smiled when he looked at them; I liked that. I told him to meet me in the park in front of Havliček. I kept my knife open in my pocket, in case he was a stool pigeon. But he was on the level.

THE FAT WOMAN Them that live by the sword, die by the sword.

MRS. KOPECKA Careful!

(*Schweyk enters with the huge SS man Müller 2 who has escorted him from Bullinger's office*)

SCHWEYK Hello, everybody. This gentleman is off duty. Give us a glass of beer.

BALOUN I didn't expect you back for a couple of years, but a man can make mistakes. Herr Brettschneider is usually so efficient. Last week when you weren't here, he left with the upholsterer from around the corner, and *he* never came back.

SCHWEYK Probably a sap that didn't knuckle under. Herr Brettschneider will think twice before he misunderstands me again. I've got influence.

THE FAT WOMAN Are you the man they took away yesterday?

SCHWEYK (*proudly*) The same. In times like these you have to knuckle under. It's a matter of practice. I licked his hand. In the old days, they sprinkled salt on the prisoners' faces. They were tied, and then big German shepherds were sicked on them, and the dogs licked their whole faces off. Nowadays people aren't so cruel any more except when they get mad. But I forgot: this gentleman (*referring to the SS man*) would like to know what joys the future holds in store for him, Mrs. Kopecka. And two beers. I told him you were a fortune-teller and it gave me the creeps. I advised him against it.

MRS. KOPECKA You know I don't like to do it, Mr. Schweyk.

SS MAN Why don't you like to do it, young woman?

MRS. KOPECKA A gift like that is a responsibility. How do I know how a customer is going to take it, and will he always have the strength to bear it? Because sometimes a look at the future gives people the holy horrors, and they blame me. Like Czaka the brewer when I had to tell him his wife was going to be unfaithful, and right away he smashes my valuable wall mirror.

SCHWEYK She made a fool of him all right. We predicted the same thing to Blaukopf the schoolteacher, and it happened again. When she predicts things like that they always happen. It's uncanny if you ask me. The time you told Councilman Czerlek that his wife . . . remember, Mrs. Kopecka? It came true.

SS MAN Then you have a rare gift, it shouldn't go to waste.

SCHWEYK I told her to tell the whole city council the same thing. I wouldn't be surprised if it came true.

MRS. KOPECKA Mr. Schweyk, don't joke about things we know nothing about except that they happen. They're supernatural.

SCHWEYK The time you told engineer Bulova right to his face that he'd be torn to pieces in a train wreck? His wife is already remarried. Women stand up better to predictions. They have more strength of character, I'm told. Mrs. Laslaczek on Hus Street had so much strength of character

that her husband declared right out in public, "Anything is better than living with her," and went to work in Germany. But the SS can also stand a good deal, I'm told, they have to, what with concentration camps and interrogations where they need nerves of steel. Am I right? (*The SS man nods*) That's why you needn't have any qualms about foretelling this gentleman's future, Mrs. Kopecka.

MRS. KOPECKA If he promises to take it as a harmless bit of fun, and not to worry about it, I might take a look at his palm.

SS MAN (*suddenly hesitating*) I don't want to force you. You say you don't like to.

MRS. KOPECKA (*brings him his beer*) That's a fact. Forget it and drink your beer.

THE FAT WOMAN (*in a low voice to the checker players*) If you suffer from cold feet, try cotton.

SCHWEYK (*sitting down with Baloun*) I've got a little business to discuss with you. I'm doing some work with the Germans in connection with a dog, and I need you.

BALOUN I'm not in the mood for anything.

SCHWEYK There'll be something in it for you. When you get the dough, you can take your appetite to the black market and get something in no time.

BALOUN Young Prochazka isn't coming. Nothing but soggy potatoes again. Another disappointment like this will be the end of me.

SCHWEYK It seems to me we could set up a little club, six or eight men. All of them would agree to pool their eighth of a pound of meat, and you'd have a meal.

BALOUN But how would we find them?

SCHWEYK You're right, it won't work. They'll say, for a stinker like you, a Czech without any willpower, they wouldn't think of giving up a meal.

BALOUN That's true, they wouldn't give a shit about me.

SCHWEYK Can't you pull yourself together and think of the honor of your country when temptation raises its head and all you can see in the world is a leg of veal or a roasted tenderloin with a little red cabbage, or maybe a few pickles? (*Baloun groans*) Think what a disgrace it would be if you weakened!

BALOUN Can't help it. (*Silence*) Anyway I'd rather have cabbage than pickles.

(*Young Prochazka enters with a briefcase*)

SCHWEYK Here he is. You've been too pessimistic, Baloun. Good afternoon, Mr. Prochazka, how's business?

MRS. KOPECKA (*with a glance at the SS man*) Sit down with the gentlemen, I've got something to attend to. (*To the SS man*) You know, I think your palm might interest me, may I take a look? (*Takes his hand*) I thought so: your palm is very very interesting. I mean, it's the kind of palm that's almost irresistible for us astrologists and chiropracticians, really interesting. How many other men are there in your squad?

SS MAN (*painfully, as if having a tooth pulled*) In the storm squad? Twenty. Why?

MRS. KOPECKA I thought so. It's written in your palm. You're tied up for life and death with twenty men.

SS MAN Can you really see that in my palm?

SCHWEYK (*has joined them, cheerfully*) You'll be surprised at all the things she can see. But she's cautious, she only says things that are absolutely sure.

MRS. KOPECKA There's something electrifying about your palm, you're lucky with women, the well-developed mount of Venus shows that. They throw themselves at you, kind of, but then they get a pleasant surprise and they wouldn't have missed it for the world. You're a serious man, you've got a way of talking that's almost severe. Your success line is tremendous.

SS MAN What does that mean?

MRS. KOPECKA Nothing to do with money, much more than that. You see this H, these three lines here? That's an act of heroism, something you're going to do very soon.

SS MAN Where? Can you see where?

MRS. KOPECKA Not around here. Or in your own country either. Far away. Here's a strange thing that I don't quite understand. There's something mysterious about this act of heroism, as if only you and the men with you would know about it. Nobody else, not even afterwards, never.

SS MAN How can that be?

MRS. KOPECKA (*sighs*) I don't know, maybe it'll be on the

battlefield, in an advanced position or something. (*As if in confusion*) But that's enough now, isn't it? I've got to get back to my work, it's only in fun anyway, you promised not to take it seriously.

SS MAN But you can't stop now. I want to know more about the secret, Mrs. Kopecka.

SCHWEYK He's right, Mrs. Kopecka. You oughtn't to leave him up in the air like that. (*Mrs. Kopecka winks at him in such a way that the SS man can see it*) But, then, maybe you've told him enough at that. It's better not to know about some things. Varczek the schoolteacher once looked in the dictionary to find out what schizziphonia was, and after a while they had to put him in the insane asylum in Ilmenau.

SS MAN You saw more in my palm.

MRS. KOPECKA No, no, that's all. Leave me be.

SS MAN You won't tell me what you saw. And you winked at this gentleman here, I saw you, to make him stop pushing you, because you didn't want to say any more. But you won't get away with it.

SCHWEYK That's a fact, Mrs. Kopecka, the SS won't let you get away with it. When I was at the Gestapo, I had to speak up, like it or not. Right away I confessed that I wished the Führer a long life.

MRS. KOPECKA Nobody can force me to tell a customer disagreeable things, so he'll never come back.

SS MAN You see, you know something and won't tell me, you've given yourself away.

MRS. KOPECKA But the second H is very faint, ninety-nine people out of a hundred wouldn't even have noticed it.

SS MAN What's this about a second H?

SCHWEYK Another beer, Mrs. Kopecka. This is so exciting, it makes me thirsty.

MRS. KOPECKA It's always the same, it only gets you in trouble to give in and examine a palm to the best of your knowledge and ability. (*Brings Schweyk a beer*) I didn't expect the second H, but if it's there what can I do? If I tell you, it'll make you miserable, you can't do anything about it anyway.

SS MAN About what?

SCHWEYK (*amiably*) It must be something terrible. As long as I've known Mrs. Kopecka, I've never seen her like this—and she's read a lot of things in palms. Are you sure you can take it, do you feel strong?

SS MAN (*hoarsely*) What is it?

MRS. KOPECKA Suppose I have to tell you that the second H means a hero's death, that's what it usually means, and suppose it upsets you? You see, now you feel miserable. I knew it. Three beers—that will be two crowns.

SS MAN (*pays, crushed*) Palm reading is all a lot of nonsense. There's nothing in it.

SCHWEYK You're perfectly right. Don't give it a second thought.

SS MAN (*leaving*) Heil Hitler!

MRS. KOPECKA (*calling after him*) Promise me at least that you won't tell the other gentlemen.

SS MAN (*stops*) What other gentlemen?

SCHWEYK The ones on your squad! You know, the twenty.

SS MAN What business is it of theirs?

MRS. KOPECKA Oh, only because they're tied up with you for life and death. No use getting them all worried over nothing!

(*SS man leaves, cursing*)

MRS. KOPECKA Come again!

THE FAT WOMAN (*laughing*) You're all right, Mrs. Kopecka. Keep it up.

SCHWEYK We knocked out the whole platoon. Open your briefcase, Mr. Prochazka, Baloun can't stand it another minute.

MRS. KOPECKA Yes, Rudolf, hand it over, nice of you to bring it.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA (*weakly*) I haven't got it. When I saw them taking Schweyk away, it shook me up. I saw the scene all night. Good afternoon, Mr. Schweyk, I see you're back. I didn't have the nerve, I admit it. I feel terrible on account of you, Mrs. Kopecka, giving you a black eye in front of all these people, but I couldn't help it. (*Desperate*) Please, say something, anything is better than saying nothing.

BALOUN Nothing.

MRS. KOPECKA Well, so you haven't got it. But when you came in and I motioned that I had to get rid of the SS man first, you nodded as if you had it.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA I didn't have the nerve . . .

MRS. KOPECKA That's enough. I know your kind. You flunked your test as a man and a Czech. Get out, you coward, and never set foot here again.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA I don't deserve to be treated any better.
(*Slinks away*)

SCHWEYK (*after a moment's silence*) Talking about palm reading: Krish, the barber from Mnishek—you know Mnishek?—did a little palm reading at the parish fair and got drunk on the money he made, and a young peasant took him home with him, so he could tell him his future when he came to. Before falling asleep, Krish asked the peasant: "What's your name? Take my notebook out of my pocket. So your name is Kunert. Come back in fifteen minutes and you'll find the name of your future wife on a slip of paper." Then he started snoring, but woke up again and scribbled something in his notebook. He tore out the page, threw it on the floor, and put his finger on his lips and said, "Not yet, in another fifteen minutes. It's best if you look for the slip of paper blindfolded!" And do you know what he'd written on the slip of paper? "Your future wife's name will be Mrs. Kunert."

BALOUN That Prochazka is a criminal.

MRS. KOPECKA (*angrily*) Don't be a fool. The criminals are the Nazis who threaten and torture people until they go against their better nature. (*Looking out the window*) That fellow coming now is a criminal, Rudolf Prochazka is only a weakling.

THE FAT WOMAN We're guilty too, I tell you. Seems to me we could do more than drink slivovitz and crack jokes.

SCHWEYK Don't ask too much of yourself. It's quite a job just to be around nowadays. Keeps you so busy just staying alive, you haven't much time for anything else.

(*Brettschneider enters with yesterday's SS man*)

SCHWEYK (*cheerfully*) I wish you a good afternoon, Herr

Brettschneider. Will you have a beer? I'm working with the SS now, it can't hurt me.

BALOUN (*spitefully*) Out!

BRETTSCHNEIDER What do you mean by that?

SCHWEYK We were talking about food, and Mr. Baloun thought of the chorus from a popular song we were trying to remember. They mostly sing this song at church fairs, it's about the way they fix radish around Mnishek. They grow those big black ones, you must have heard about them, they're famous. Why don't you sing the song for Herr Brettschneider, Baloun? It'll cheer you up. He's got a good voice, he even sings in the church choir.

BALOUN (*sullenly*) I'll sing it. It's about radishes.

(*Baloun sings "The Song of How to Fix a Black Radish." During the entire song Brettschneider, at whom everyone is looking, is trying to make up his mind whether to take action. Several times he gets up and sits down again*)

BALOUN (*sings*)

You'd better take a black one, a big full one
And tell him gaily: "Brother, get on out!"
Don't leave your hands bare when you pull one
By the snout.

Better put gloves on, this black radish lives in rot.
Not a doubt! Must be got
Out!

And you can also buy one (at low prices)
And don't forget, first wash his dirty skin.
When you have cut him up in little slices
Put salt in.

And rub it in the wound, no matter how he frets.
Salt him down till he sweats.
Put salt in.

Interlude in the Higher Regions

Hitler and Reich Marshal Göring in front of a tank model. Both are larger than life-size. Martial music.

HITLER

My dearest Göring, we're now in the fourth year
 And victory is ours, at least pretty near.
 But my war keeps spreading to more and more vast new
 regions.
 I therefore now need more tanks, bombers, and new legions.
 Which means the people have just got to stop lying around
 and snoring
 They've got to labor for my war until sweat and blood are
 pouring.
 So tell me now if you can:
 How do things stand in Europe with the Little Man?
 Will he work hard and long when no one's paying?

GÖRING

My Führer, that in times like these goes without saying.
 The Little Man in Europe will work for your great war as
 cheerfully
 As the Little Man does in Germany.
 Labor Service will see to that.

HITLER

Good. To such an organization I gladly take off my hat.

4

On a bench in a park along the Moldau. Evening. Two lovers enter, stop for a moment, stand closely embraced, gaze at the Moldau in the background, and go on. Schweyk and his friend Baloun come in. They look back.

SCHWEYK That Voyta is mean to his servants. This is his third maid since Candlemas, and I hear she wants to quit, the neighbors are mean to her because she works for a quisling. It'll be all the same to her if she comes home without the dog as long as it's not her fault. You'd better sit

down before she gets here, she doesn't like to sit down on a bench with nobody on it.

BALOUN Don't you want me to hold the sausage?

SCHWEYK And have you gobble it up on me? Go on, sit down.

(Baloun sits down on the bench. Two maidservants enter, Anna and Kati, the first with a spitz on the leash)

SCHWEYK Excuse me, miss, how do I get to Palacky Street from here?

KATI *(suspiciously)* You cross Havliček Square. Come on, Anna.

SCHWEYK Pardon me if I ask where the square is. I'm a stranger here.

ANNA I'm a stranger here myself. Go on, Kati, tell him.

SCHWEYK So you're a stranger, too, miss? That's a good one. I'd never have known you weren't from the city, and such a nice little dog. Where are you from?

ANNA I'm from Protivin.

SCHWEYK Then we're practically neighbors. I'm from Budweis.

KATI *(tries to pull her away)* Come along, Anna.

ANNA Just a second. Then you must know Pejchara the butcher, on the main street, in Budweis?

SCHWEYK Of course I know him! He's my brother. Everybody likes him, he's honest and helpful, he has fresh meat, and he throws in an extra bone for soup.

ANNA Yes.

(Silence, Kati waits mockingly)

SCHWEYK What a coincidence running into each other like this, so far from home! Have you got a moment? We've got to talk about Budweis, here's a bench with a nice view. That's the Moldau.

KATI Really? *(Ironically)* That's news to me.

ANNA Somebody's sitting there.

SCHWEYK A gentleman enjoying the view. You better keep a close watch on your dog.

ANNA Why?

SCHWEYK Don't quote me, but the Germans are crazy about dogs, it's amazing, especially the SS. A dog like that is gone

before you can look twice, they send them home. I was talking to a platoon leader myself the other day, name of Bullinger, he wanted a spitz for his missus in Cologne.

KATI So you run around with platoon leaders and people like that? Come along, Anna, that's enough now.

SCHWEYK I talked to him when I was under arrest for remarks endangering the security of the Third Reich.

KATI Really? Then I take it back. We still have a little time, Anna.

(She walks ahead to the bench. All three sit down next to Baloun)

KATI What kind of remarks did you make?

SCHWEYK *(indicates that he cannot talk about it in the presence of the stranger, and speaks with pointed innocence)*
Do you like it in Prague?

ANNA Oh yes. But you can't trust the men around here.

SCHWEYK That's only too true. I'm glad you realize that. People in the country are more honest, am I right? *(To Baloun)* A fine view, isn't it, neighbor?

BALOUN Not bad.

SCHWEYK Something for a photographer.

BALOUN As a background.

SCHWEYK A photographer could do something with it.

BALOUN I am a photographer. In the studio where I work we painted the Moldau on a screen, but a little more picturesque. We use it for the Germans, mostly the SS men who pose in front of it for a souvenir when they have to leave and can't come here any more. Only it's not the Moldau, it's just some lousy river.

(The girls laugh approvingly)

SCHWEYK That's very interesting. Couldn't you snap a picture of the ladies, in bust, excuse me, that's what they call it.

BALOUN I could.

ANNA That would be nice. But not in front of your Moldau, eh?

(They laugh abundantly at the joke, then silence)

SCHWEYK You know this one? A Czech on the Charles Bridge hears somebody shouting for help in German from the Moldau. He leans over the rail and calls down: "Shut up,

you should have learned swimming instead of German!"

(The girls laugh)

SCHWEYK Yes, that's the Moldau. A lot of immorality goes on along its banks in wartime.

KATI In peacetime too.

BALOUN And at spring fairs.

SCHWEYK Out in the open until after All Saints' Day.

KATI And I suppose nothing happens indoors?

BALOUN Oh yes, plenty.

ANNA And at the movies.

(Again they all laugh)

SCHWEYK Ah yes, the Moldau. Do you know the song, "Henry Slept beside his Newly-wedded"? They sing it a lot in Moravia.

ANNA You mean the one that goes on "Heiress to a castle on the Rhine?"

SCHWEYK That's it. *(To Baloun)* Got something in your eye?

Don't rub. Could you take care of the gentleman, miss?

Use the corner of your handkerchief, that's the best way.

ANNA *(to Schweyk)* Would you mind holding the dog?

You've got to be careful in Prague. The air is full of soot.

SCHWEYK *(ties the dog loosely to the lamppost beside the bench)* Excuse me, I've got to be going now, to Palacky Street, on business. I'd like to hear you sing, but I can't. Good afternoon. *(Leaves)*

KATI *(while Anna tries to fish something out of Baloun's eye with a handkerchief)* He's really in a hurry.

ANNA I can't find anything.

BALOUN I feel better already. What's that song about?

ANNA Would you like us to sing it for you? Before we go?

Oh, keep quiet, Lux. I'll sure be glad to see the last of you and your master. *(To Baloun)* He's too fond of the Germans. I'll start. *(The two girls sing the ballad "Henry Slept beside his Newly-wedded"* with much feeling. Meanwhile Schweyk, behind a bush, uses a tiny sausage to lure the dog to him, and leaves with the animal)*

BALOUN *(after the song)* You sang that beautifully.

KATI We have to go now. Jesus, where's the dog?

* [The text of this ballad is given at the end of the play.]

ANNA Holy Virgin, he's gone. He never runs away. What will Mr. Voyta say?

BALOUN He'll call up his German friends, that's all. Don't worry, it's not your fault. I guess that gentleman didn't tie him very well, it seems to me I saw a shadow while you were singing.

KATI Quick, we'll go to the lost-and-found.

BALOUN Drop in some Saturday night at the "Flagon," 7 Hus Street. *(They nod to Baloun and leave quickly. Baloun looks at the view again. The lovers come back, but no longer holding each other tight. Then Schweyk enters with the spitz on the leash)*

SCHWEYK He's a typical quisling's dog—bites the second you look away. Been giving me a terrible time on the way. When I was crossing the railroad tracks, he lay down and wouldn't budge. Maybe he wanted to be run over, the scoundrel. Come along, now.

BALOUN Did he go for the horse sausage? I thought you only ate veal?

SCHWEYK War is no bed of roses. Not even for purebred dogs. I won't give him to Bullinger unless he puts the cash on the line, or he'll swindle me. They can't have collaboration for nothing.

(A tall, sinister-looking man has appeared in the background and has been watching the two. Now he approaches them)

THE INDIVIDUAL Taking a walk, gentlemen?

SCHWEYK That's right. What business is it of yours?

THE INDIVIDUAL Would you please identify yourselves? *(He shows them an official badge)*

SCHWEYK I've got nothing on me. Have you?

BALOUN *(shakes his head)* We haven't done anything.

THE INDIVIDUAL I haven't stopped you for doing anything but because it seems to me that you're not doing anything. I'm from the Voluntary Labor Service.

SCHWEYK Are you one of those gentlemen who stroll around in beer gardens and outside movie houses, picking up people to work in the factories?

THE INDIVIDUAL What is your occupation?

SCHWEYK I'm in the dog business.

THE INDIVIDUAL Have you a certificate that your enterprise is essential for the war effort?

SCHWEYK No, Your Excellency. But it is essential for the war effort. Same in war as in peace, a dog is a friend in need, what do you say, spitz? People are much calmer during an air raid if a dog looks at them as if to say, "Is this really necessary?" And this gentleman is a photographer, maybe that's even more essential for the war effort. He photographs soldiers, so the folks at home at least have pictures of their loved ones, which is better than nothing, you've got to admit.

THE INDIVIDUAL I think I'd better take you to headquarters. I wouldn't advise you to give them any of your applesauce.

BALOUN But we caught the dog on orders from higher up. Tell him.

SCHWEYK It's no use. The gentleman has orders from higher up too.

(They go with him)

SCHWEYK So your job is catching people?

5

Noon break at the freight station in Prague. On the rails sit Schweyk and Baloun, now railroad workers in Hitler's service, guarded by a German soldier armed to the teeth.

BALOUN I wonder where Mrs. Kopecka is with the grub. I hope nothing's happened to her.

A TRANSPORTATION CORPS LIEUTENANT *(passing by, to the soldier)* Guard! If anybody asks you which of these freight cars goes to Lower Bavaria, remember it's this one, number 4268.

SOLDIER *(at attention)* Yes, sir.

SCHWEYK With the Germans, organization is everything.

The world has never seen anything like the organization they have now. If Hitler pushes a button, it's the end of China, for instance. They've got the pope in Rome in their files, with everything he ever said about them, he's a dead duck. Even an underling, an SS leader for instance, has his buttons to push, and the next thing you know your ashes are delivered to your widow. It's lucky for us that we're here with a heavily armed guard watching us to keep us from committing sabotage and getting shot.

(Mrs. Kopecka hurriedly enters with enamel dishes. The soldier absentmindedly studies her pass)

BALOUN What is it?

MRS. KOPECKA Carrot cutlet and potato sausage. *(While the two men eat, dishes on knees, softly)* The dog has got to go. He's getting political. Don't stuff yourself like that, Mr. Baloun, you'll get ulcers.

BALOUN Not from potatoes. Maybe from a capon.

MRS. KOPECKA The morning paper had a story that the disappearance of Undersecretary Voyta's dog was an act of vengeance by the population against a civil servant friendly to the Germans. They're looking for him, they want to smoke out the nest of subversive elements. He can't stay at the "Flagon" another day.

SCHWEYK *(eating)* It's a little inconvenient now. Yesterday I wrote a special-delivery letter to Platoon Leader Bullinger telling him that my price is two hundred crowns, and I won't deliver till I get them.

MRS. KOPECKA Mr. Schweyk, you're taking your life in your hands writing a letter like that.

SCHWEYK I don't think so, Mrs. Kopecka. Herr Bullinger is a fat pig but he'll say it's perfectly natural, business is business, or where would we be; the story is that he needs the spitz for his missus in Cologne. Collaborationists don't work for-nothing. The fact is they're making more than ever, because their countrymen despise them. I've got to be paid for this thing or there's no point in it.

MRS. KOPECKA But you can't do business while you're locked up.

SCHWEYK *(amiably)* I won't grow moss around here. I've

already cost them a carload of soap. It's easy. One time in Austria, when they made a law against strikes, the railroad workers tied everything up for eight hours just by observing all the safety regulations.

MRS. KOPECKA (*firmly*) That dog can't stay at the "Flagon," Mr. Schweyk, and that's that. I can count on a certain amount of protection from Herr Brettschneider, he's still hoping to get somewhere with me, but it doesn't amount to much.

(*Schweyk listens to her only with half an ear because two German soldiers have passed by carrying a large, steaming cauldron and have ladled out some goulash soup into the soldier's mess tin. Baloun, who has finished his meal long since, stands up and takes a few steps as in trance, sniffing the soup*)

SCHWEYK I'll pick him up. Say, take a look at that!

GERMAN SOLDIER (*calling sharply after Baloun*) Halt!

MRS. KOPECKA (*to Baloun who returns disgruntled and agitated*) Pull yourself together, Mr. Baloun.

SCHWEYK There was a doctor in Budweis with such a bad case of diabetes that all they let him eat was a sip of rice soup—and he was built like an ox. He couldn't stand it, he kept sneaking into the pantry to stuff himself on leftovers, and he knew what he was doing. Then he got good and sick of it all and he told his housekeeper to bring him a seven-course meal, with pastry and all, she was blubbering so bad she could hardly serve him, and he made her play a funeral march on the gramophone, and it really did him in. It'll be the same with you, Baloun. You'll end up under a Russian tank.

BALOUN (*still trembling all over*) They're dishing out goulash.

MRS. KOPECKA I've got to go. (*She takes the dishes and leaves*)

BALOUN I just want to take a look. (*To the eating soldier*) Are the helpings always that big in the army, Herr Soldier? That's a pretty big one you've got. But maybe only for guards to keep you awake, or maybe we'd run away, wouldn't we? Couldn't I take just one sniff?

(The soldier sits there eating, but moves his lips between bites)

SCHWEYK Don't ask him questions. Can't you see he's got to learn the number by heart, or the wrong freight car will go to Lower Bavaria on him, you dope. *(To the soldier)* You're right to keep thinking about it, all sorts of things can happen. They've stopped painting the destination on freight cars because the saboteurs wipe it off and put wrong addresses on instead. What number is it? 4268, isn't it? Well, you don't have to sit here for half an hour counting with your lips. I'll tell you how to do it, I got it from a clerk in the license bureau: this is the way he explained it to a peddler who couldn't keep his number in his head. I'll show you with your own number and you'll see how easy it is. 4268. The first number is a four, the second a two. So remember 42, that's two times 2, I mean from front to back 4, divided by 2, and that gives you 4 and 2 next to each other again. Don't panic! How much is two times 4? 8, isn't it? So keep well in mind that the 8 in number 4268 is the last in the row, all you've got to remember is that the first number is a 4, the second a 2, and the fourth an 8. Now you've only got to find a good way to remember the 6 that comes before the 8. It's easy. The first number is a 4, the second a 2, 4 plus 2 is 6. So now you're sure as shooting that the second from the end is a 6. As the gentleman from the license bureau would have said, the order of those numbers will never fade from your memory. There's an even simpler way of getting the same result. He explained that one to the peddler, too. I'll show you with your own number.

(The soldier has listened with wide-open eyes. His lips have stopped moving)

SCHWEYK 8 take away 2 is 6. That gives him the 6 already. Six take away 2 is 4, so he knows the 4 too. 8 and the 2 in between makes it 4-2-6-8. There's still another easy way, with multiplication and division. This is how it works: just remember, I'm quoting the clerk again, that two times 42 is 84. The year has 12 months. So you take away 12 from 84, and you get 72, and another 12 months, that's 60. That

definitely gives us 6, we cross out the zero. So we know 42-6-84. When we cross out the zero, we also cross out the 4 in back. And again our number is complete. It works with division too, and I'll show you the way it goes. Now, what was our number?

VOICE (*from behind*) Guard, what's the number of that freight car that's supposed to go to Lower Bavaria?

SOLDIER What is it?

SCHWEYK Just a second, I'll try the method with the months.

There are 12 of them, aren't there? We agree on that.

SOLDIER (*desperately*) Tell me the number.

VOICE Guard! Are you asleep?

SOLDIER (*calling*) Forgot. I for-got! (*To Schweyk*) Damn your hide!

VOICE (*gruffly*) That car's got to leave for Passau with the 12:50.

SECOND, MORE DISTANT VOICE Take this one. This is the one, I think.

BALOUN (*satisfied, referring to the soldier who looks back in a fright*) He wouldn't even let me sniff at his goulash.

SCHWEYK Maybe now they'll be sending a carload of machine guns to Bavaria. (*Philosophically*) But maybe by that time they'll need harvesting machines in Stalingrad and machine guns in Bavaria. Why not?

6

Saturday night at the "Flagon." Among the customers are Baloun, Anna, Kati, young Prochazka and off to one side, two SS men. Dancing to the music of the electric piano.

KATI (*to Baloun*) When Herr Brettschneider questioned me, I told him I'd heard the SS was after the spitz. I didn't mention you, only your friend, Mr. Schweyk. And I didn't say anything about Mr. Schweyk pretending not to know you

so he could start up a conversation with us. Was that all right?

BALOUN Anything is all right with me: You won't see me very long around here. Man, won't they be surprised to see me!

ANNA You mustn't talk so glum, Mr. Baloun, it doesn't help. And that SS man over there will ask me to dance if I'm just sitting here. You'd better ask me.

(Baloun is about to get up when Mrs. Kopecka steps forward and claps her hands)

MRS. KOPECKA Ladies and gentlemen, it's almost half past eight, which is time for the beseda (*half to the SS men*), the folk dance we dance among ourselves. Some people don't like it, but we do. The music is on the house.

(Mrs. Kopecka puts a coin into the piano and those present dance the beseda, stamping very loudly. Baloun and Anna dance, too. The purpose of the dance is to drive the SS men away; bumping into their table, etc.)

BALOUN (*sings*)

Strikes the midnight hour, smack

Jumps the barley from the sack.

Yuppidiyah, yuppido.

Every girl lets go.

THE OTHERS (*joining in*)

Lets the fellows tweak her cheeks,

Almost all have got four cheeks.

Yuppidiyah, yuppido.

Every girl lets go.

(The SS men get up, cursing, and make their way to the door. After the dance Mrs. Kopecka comes back from the adjoining room and continues washing her glasses. Kati brings the First Customer from scene 3 with her to the table)

THE FIRST CUSTOMER Folk dancing is something new at the "Flagon" and very popular because the regular customers know that while it's going on Mrs. Kopecka tunes in on Radio Moscow.

BALOUN There won't be any more dancing for me. Where I'm going they don't dance the beseda.

ANNA They tell me we should have thought twice before going to the park. It's dangerous on account of the German deserters that attack you.

THE FIRST CUSTOMER They only attack men. Deserters need civilian clothes. Every morning these days you can find German uniforms in Stromovka Park.

KATI If you lose a suit it's not easy to get another. They say the clothing control office made a rule against paper suits and hats. On account of the paper shortage.

THE FIRST CUSTOMER The Germans are crazy about those kind of offices. They pop up like mushrooms. They make jobs for themselves to keep them out of the war. They'd rather pester the Czechs with milk control, food control, paper control, and so on. Keeps them out of the draft.

BALOUN They'll be too much for me. I can see my future. It's inevitable.

ANNA I don't know what you're talking about.

BALOUN You'll know soon enough, Miss Anna. I'm sure you know the song, "Countless Gates and Hallways," about the painter who died young. Sing it for me, will you. I'm just in the mood for it.

ANNA (*sings*)

Countless gates and hallways he was painting always
 Meanwhile giving kisses to the little misses.
 Now his painting's over, he is pushing clover.

Is that it?

BALOUN That's it.

ANNA Goodness, you're not going to do something to yourself?

BALOUN What I'm going to do to myself will give you the cold shivers, miss. I won't lay a hand on myself, I'm going to do something worse.

(*Schweyk enters with a package under his arm*)

SCHWEYK (*to Baloun*) Here I am with the goulash meat. Don't thank me, I'm swapping it for the cot you've put up in the kitchen.

BALOUN Let's see, is it beef?

SCHWEYK (*firmly*) Hands off. We're not going to unpack

it here. Good evening, ladies, you here too?

ANNA Good evening, we know the whole story.

SCHWEYK (*draws Baloun into a corner*) What did you blab to them this time?

BALOUN Only that we knew each other and pretending not to was a trick. I didn't know what to tell them. My cot is yours. You're saving a friend from the abyss, just let me sniff at it, through the paper. Mrs. Mahler across the street offered me twenty crowns for it, I wouldn't even consider it. How did you get it?

SCHWEYK It's from the black-market, from a midwife that got it from the country. Around 1930 she delivered a baby at a peasant's house. The baby had a little bone in his mouth, she started crying and said, "It means we'll all be starving." She said that before the Germans came; and every year the peasant woman has been sending her a little package to keep her from starving, but this year the midwife needed the money for taxes.

BALOUN If only Mrs. Kopecka has some real paprika!

MRS. KOPECKA (*joining them*) Go back to your table, in half an hour I'll call you into the kitchen. Meanwhile act as if nothing had happened. (*To Schweyk, after Baloun has returned to his table*) What kind of meat is it?

SCHWEYK (*reproachfully*) Mrs. Kopecka, I'm surprised at you.

(*Mrs. Kopecka takes the package from him and cautiously peeks in*)

SCHWEYK (*seeing that Baloun is talking to the girls with big, excited gestures*) Baloun is getting too excited to suit me. Put in a lot of paprika to make it taste like beef. It's horse-meat. (*She looks at him sharply*) All right, it's Mr. Voyta's spitz. I had to do it, because the "Flagon" would be disgraced if starvation made one of your steady customers join the Germans.

A CUSTOMER AT THE BAR Service!

(*Mrs. Kopecka hands Schweyk the package to hold so that she can quickly serve her customer. At that moment the sound of a large car is heard. SS men enter, led by Platoon Leader Bullinger*)

BULLINGER (*to Schweyk*) Your housekeeper was right that you'd be at the tavern. (*To the SS men*) Clear the floor! (*To Schweyk while the SS men push the other guests back*) What have you done with the dog, you stinker?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, the papers said he was stolen. Haven't you read about it?

BULLINGER Is this more of your impudence?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, I only wish to say that if you don't keep up with the daily papers, you might miss something and then you won't be able to take vigorous action.

BULLINGER I don't know why I bother with you, there must be something wrong with me. I probably want to see how far a character like you can go before he dies.

SCHWEYK Yes, sir, Herr Platoon Leader, and because you want the dog.

BULLINGER You admit you wrote me a letter asking me to pay two hundred crowns for that dog?

SCHWEYK Herr Platoon Leader, I admit that I wanted the two hundred crowns because I'd have had expenses if the dog hadn't been stolen.

BULLINGER We'll talk about that at the Petschek Bank. (*To the SS men*) Search tavern for spitz! (*One SS man leaves*) (*The sound of furniture being overturned, objects smashed, and so on, comes from the adjoining room. Schweyk waits in stoic calm, his package under his arm*)

SCHWEYK (*suddenly*) We've also got good slivovitz here. (*An SS man jostles a little man in passing. While drawing back, the latter steps on a woman's foot and says, "Pardon me," whereupon the SS man turns, knocks him down with a club, and, at a nod from Bullinger, carries him out with the help of another SS man. An SS man comes in with Mrs. Kopecka*)

SS MAN Tavern searched, dog not present.

BULLINGER (*to Mrs. Kopecka*) This innocent tavern of yours is a hornet's nest of subversive activity. But I'll smoke you out.

SCHWEYK Yes, sir, Herr Platoon Leader, Heil Hitler. If you don't, we might get fresh and snap our fingers at the regula-

tions. Mrs. Kopecka, you've got to run your tavern so everything's as clear as fresh spring water, like Chaplain Vyvoda said when he . . .

BULLINGER Shut up, you bastard. I have a good mind to pull you in and shut your place down, Mrs. Kosheppa.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*who has appeared at the door*) Herr Platoon Leader Bullinger, may I have a word with you in private?

BULLINGER I can't see anything to talk to you about. You know what I think of you.

BRETTSCHNEIDER The Gestapo has received new information concerning the whereabouts of Voyta's missing dog. I thought it might be of interest to you, Herr Platoon Leader Bullinger.

(The two men go to a corner and begin to gesticulate wildly. Brettschneider seems to be intimating that Bullinger has the dog, Bullinger seems to be saying "Me?" and to grow angry, etc.)

(Mrs. Kopecka has calmly resumed washing glasses. Schweyk stands there unconcerned and amiable. Unfortunately Baloun now embarks on a maneuver to get hold of his package and succeeds. At a sign from him a customer takes it from Schweyk and passes it on. It reaches Baloun and he fingers it, having lost all self-control.)

(An SS man has watched the wandering package with interest)

SS MAN Hey, what's going on here? (*With a few steps he is at Baloun's side, and takes away the package*)

SS MAN (*handing the package to Bullinger*) Herr Platoon Leader, this package has been smuggled to one of the customers, that man over there.

BULLINGER (*opens the package*) Meat! Owner, step forward!

SS MAN (*to Baloun*) You there, you opened the package.

BALOUN (*bewildered*) It was handed to me. It doesn't belong to me.

BULLINGER Oh, it doesn't belong to you? Ownerless meat, huh? (*Suddenly shouting*) Why did you open it then?

SCHWEYK (*when Baloun doesn't know how to answer*) Beg

to report, Herr Platoon Leader, this dumbbell must be innocent because he wouldn't have pecked if it was his; he'd have known what was in it.

BULLINGER (*to Baloun*) Who did you get it from?

SS MAN (*when Baloun again fails to answer*) The first thing I noticed was this man (*pointing at the customer who took the package from Schweyk*) passing the package.

BULLINGER Where did you get it from?

THE CUSTOMER (*unhappily*) It was handed to me, I don't know by whom.

BULLINGER This tavern seems to be a branch of the black-market. (*To Brettschneider*) And if I'm not mistaken, Herr Brettschneider, you vouched just a minute ago for the woman who owns it?

MRS. KOPECKA (*stepping forward*) Gentlemen, the "Flagon" is not a black-market.

BULLINGER No? (*Slaps her face*) I'll show you, you Czech swine!

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*excitedly*) Mrs. Kopecka is known to me as an unpolitical person. I'll have to ask you not to pass judgment on her without a hearing.

MRS. KOPECKA (*very pale*) Don't you dare strike me!

BULLINGER What's this? Backtalk? (*Slaps her again*) Take her away!

(*As Mrs. Kopecka prepares to haul off at Bullinger, the SS man hits her on the head. She falls*)

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*bending over her*) You'll have to answer for this, Bullinger. You're only trying to distract attention from Voyta's dog, but you won't get away with it.

SCHWEYK (*steps forward*) Beg to report, sir, I can explain everything. The package doesn't belong to anybody here. I know because I laid it down myself.

BULLINGER So it's you.

SCHWEYK A gentleman gave it to me to hold, then he said he was going to the toilet. Man of medium height with a blond beard.

BULLINGER (*amazed at the explanation*) Say, are you feeble-minded?

SCHWEYK (*looking him earnestly in the eye*) Yes, sir, as I've

already told you. I was officially certified an idiot by a commission. I was fired from the Voluntary Labor Service for the same reason.

BULLINGER But you're intelligent enough for the black-market, huh? Maybe when we get you to Gestapo headquarters you'll begin to realize that it won't do you a damn bit of good, even if you can show a hundred certificates.

SCHWEYK (*softly*) Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, I realize it won't do me a damn bit of good, because ever since I was a kid I've always gotten into a mess when I had the best of intentions and only wanted to help people. Like in Lubova one time, when I tried to help this school caretaker's wife to hang out her washing. If you'll step out in the hall with me, I'll tell you what happened. I got into this black-market business same as Pontius Pilate got into the Creed.

BULLINGER (*staring at him*) I don't know why I listen to you, and this isn't the first time. You've probably got me hypnotized, because I never saw such a villain before.

SCHWEYK It must be like you suddenly saw a lion on Karlova Street where it's unusual, or like in Chotebor when a postman caught his wife with the janitor and stabbed her one two three. He went straight to the police station to give himself up, and when they asked him what he did after the crime, he said that the minute he stepped out of the house he'd seen a naked man turning the corner, so they decided he was mentally deranged and let him go. But two months later they found out that a lunatic really had escaped from the asylum stark naked. The postman had told the truth, but they hadn't believed him.

BULLINGER (*amazed*) I'm still listening. I can't tear myself away. I know what you're thinking. You think the Third Reich is good for a year, or maybe ten years, but I'm here to tell you that ten thousand years is probably more like it. Makes your eyes pop out, doesn't it?

SCHWEYK That's a long time, like the sexton said when the lady that runs the "Swan" married him and dropped her teeth into the water glass for the night.

BULLINGER Do you piss yellow or do you piss green?

SCHWEYK (*amiably*) Beg to report, Herr Platoon Leader, I piss yellowish-green.

BULLINGER But now you're coming with me even if certain people (*referring to Brettschneider*) vouch for you till they're blue in the face.

SCHWEYK Yes, sir, Herr Platoon Leader. There's got to be order. Black-marketing is an evil and it won't stop until there's nothing left. Then we'll have order right away, am I right?

BULLINGER And we'll find the dog too.

(*He leaves with the package under his arm. The SS men seize Schweyk and take him along*)

SCHWEYK (*while leaving, good-naturedly*) I only hope you won't be disappointed. Some customers are so keen on a dog they move heaven and earth to get him, and once they have him, they don't like him any more.

BRETTSCHNEIDER (*to Mrs. Kopecka who has recovered consciousness*) Mrs. Kopecka, you have been the victim of certain conflicts between certain sections of the Gestapo and the SS. I say no more. However, you are under my protection, I'll be back to talk this over with you in private. (*Leaves*)

MRS. KOPECKA (*staggering back to the bar where she ties a dish towel around her bleeding forehead*) Does anybody want some beer?

KATI (*looking at Schweyk's hat still hanging over the table*) They didn't even let him take his hat.

THE CUSTOMER He'll never come off alive.

(*Young Prochazka enters shyly. He is horrified at the sight of Mrs. Kopecka's blood-soaked bandage*)

YOUNG PROCHAZKA What's happened to you, Mrs. Kopecka? I saw the SS driving away—did the SS do it?

CUSTOMERS They clubbed her on the head because they said the "Flagon" was a black-market.—Even Herr Brettschneider of the Gestapo stood up for her, or they'd have pulled her in.—They took one man away.

MRS. KOPECKA Mr. Prochazka, you have no business here at the "Flagon." This is a place for real Czechs.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA Believe me, Mrs. Anna, I've been miser-

able and I've learned my lesson. Can't I hope to make it up to you?

(Mrs. Kopecka's icy look makes him shudder and he sneaks guiltily away)

KATI They're nervous at the SS, too, because yesterday they fished another SS man out of the Moldau, with a hole in his left side.

ANNA They throw in plenty of Czechs.

CUSTOMER That's only because things are going badly for them in the East.

THE FIRST CUSTOMER *(to Baloun)* Wasn't it your friend they took away?

BALOUN *(bursts into tears)* It's all my fault. That's what I get for my gluttony. I've prayed and prayed to the Virgin Mary to give me strength and somehow shrink my stomach, but it's no use. I dragged my best friend into this and maybe they'll shoot him tonight, or if he's lucky tomorrow morning.

MRS. KOPECKA *(puts down a slivovitz in front of him)* Drink that. Bawling won't help.

BALOUN God bless you. You broke with your admirer on account of me, you won't find a better one, he's only weak, same as me. If I'd taken that oath you asked me to, things wouldn't look so desperate. If I could take it now—but can I? On an empty stomach? Good God, what's going to happen now?

MRS. KOPECKA *(goes back to the bar and starts washing glasses)* Somebody put a nickel into the piano. I'll tell you what's going to happen.

(A customer puts a coin into the electric piano. A light goes on inside, a transparency shows the moon over the majestically flowing Moldau. Washing her glasses, Mrs. Kopecka sings "The Song of the Moldau")

The stones on the Moldau's bottom go shifting
In Prague three emperors molder away.

The top won't stay top, for the bottom is lifting

The night has twelve hours and is followed by day.

The times will be changing. The intricate plotting
 Of people in power must finally fail.
 Like bloodthirsty cocks though today they are strutting
 The times will be changing, force cannot prevail.

The stones on the Moldau's bottom go shifting
 In Prague three emperors molder away.
 The top won't stay top, for the bottom is lifting
 The night has twelve hours and is followed by day.

Interlude in the Higher Regions

Hitler and General von Bock, known as "The Killer," facing a map of the Soviet Union. Both men are larger than life-size. Military music.

VON BOCK

Respected Herr Hitler, your expedition
 In Russia's costing a lot of bombers, guns, tanks, and am-
 munition
 To say nothing of men. "The Killer" is what they now call
 me.
 To be thought a spoil-sport would appall me
 But if you think you will get to Stalingrad, you're very
 much mistaken.

HITLER

Herr General von Bock, Stalingrad will be taken
 I've given the German people my promise.

VON BOCK

Herr Hitler, the winter is nearly on us
 And when it starts to snow out here in the east you know
 it's snowing.
 If we're stuck when the north winds start blowing . . .

HITLER

Herr von Bock, I will throw the peoples of Europe into the
 disaster
 And the Little Man will extricate his master.
 Herr von Bock, don't let me down, you would not dare.

VON BOCK

As for replacements . . .

HITLER

That's my care.

7

Cell in a military prison with Czech prisoners waiting to be drafted into military service, among them Schweyk. They are waiting, stripped to the waist, and are simulating the most pitiful ailments. One of them, for instance, is lying on the floor as if he were dying.

A STOOPED MAN I talked to my lawyer, he was very encouraging. They can't put us in the army if we're not willing. It's illegal.

A MAN WITH CRUTCHES Then why do you double up like that, if you don't expect to be taken?

THE STOOPED MAN Just in case.

(The man with crutches laughs scornfully)

THE DYING MAN *(on the floor)* They wouldn't dare, we're all invalids. They're unpopular enough already.

A NEARSIGHTED MAN *(triumphantly)* One night in Amsterdam a German officer was crossing what they call the Gracht, it was almost eleven and he was beginning to feel nervous. He asked a Dutchman for the time. The Dutchman gives him a solemn look and all he says is: "My watch has stopped." The officer walks on, feeling pretty glum, and stops a second man. Before he can even ask the question, the man says he left his watch home. They say the officer shot himself.

THE DYING MAN He couldn't take it. All that contempt.

SCHWEYK They're more likely to shoot other people than themselves. In Vralava a tavern keeper's wife was carrying on with his brother. He punished them with contempt. He

found a pair of her panties in his brother's wagon and put them on the bedside table, he thought that would make her feel ashamed. They went to the district court and had him declared legally incompetent, then they sold the tavern out from under him and went away together. But in a way he was right, because his wife admitted to her girl friend that she was almost ashamed to take his lined winter coat.

THE STOOPED MAN What are you here for?

SCHWEYK Black-marketing. They could have shot me but the Gestapo needed me as a witness against the SS. The big shots are at loggerheads and I benefited. They told me I was lucky about my name, because it's Schweyk with a "y". If I wrote it with a plain "i", I'd be of German descent and then I could be drafted.

THE MAN WITH CRUTCHES They're even drafting them out of jail these days.

THE STOOPED MAN Only if they're of German descent.

THE MAN WITH CRUTCHES Or if they volunteer to be of German descent like him over there.

THE STOOPED MAN The only hope is to be a cripple.

THE NEARSIGHTED MAN I'm nearsighted, I could never recognize an officer and salute.

SCHWEYK They can put you at a listening post reporting enemy planes. In that line of work blindness is an advantage, the blind develop extra-special hearing. A peasant in Socz, for instance, cut out his dog's eyes to improve his hearing. In other words you're fit for service.

THE NEARSIGHTED MAN (*in despair*) I know a chimney sweep in Brevnov who can give you such a fever for ten crowns that you'll jump out of the window.

THE STOOPED MAN That's nothing. There's a midwife in Vrshovitz who can dislocate your leg so good for twenty crowns that you'll be a cripple the rest of your life.

THE MAN WITH CRUTCHES I got my leg dislocated for five crowns.

THE DYING MAN I didn't have to pay anything. I've got a genuine strangulated hernia.

THE MAN WITH CRUTCHES Then they'll operate on you in Pankratz hospital, and then what will you do?

SCHWEYK (*cheerfully*) Listening to you people, somebody could get the idea that you're trying to keep out of this war that's got to be fought to defend civilization against Bolshevism.

(*A soldier enters and busies himself with the pail*)

SOLDIER You got crap all over the bucket again, you pigs. You haven't even learned how to shit.

SCHWEYK We're discussing Bolshevism. Do you fellows know what Bolshevism is? It's the sworn ally of Wall Street which has planned our destruction under the leadership of the Jew Rosenfeld in the White House. (*The soldier keeps busy with the pail in order to listen, and Schweyk continues patiently*) But they don't know us. Do you know the song about the cannoneer from Przemysl in the First World War, which was fought against the tsar? (*He sings*)

Standing behind the gun
 He loads from sun to sun.
 Standing behind the gun
 He loads from sun to sun.
 Then a bullet comes on swiftly
 Carries both his hands off deftly.
 But he stands by his gun
 Loading from sun to sun.
 Stands steady at his gun
 Loading from sun to sun.

The Russians fight because they have to. They got no agriculture, because they wiped out the big land-owners, and their industry is ruined because they want everybody to be equal and that's depressing and because the thoughtful workers are bitter about the big salaries of the bureaucrats. You see, there's nothing there, and once we get there, the Americans will be too late. Am I right?

SOLDIER Shut up. Conversation is prohibited.

(*He leaves angrily with the pail*)

THE DYING MAN Seems to me you're a stoolpigeon.

SCHWEYK (*cheerfully*) I'm not a stoolpigeon. I only listen regularly to the German radio. You ought to listen, once in a while. It's a scream.

THE DYING MAN It is not. It's a disgrace.

SCHWEYK (*firmly*) It's a scream.

THE NEARSIGHTED MAN There's no reason to crawl up their asses.

SCHWEYK (*lecturing*) Don't say that. It's an art. A lot of small animals would be glad if they could squeeze into a tiger. That way he couldn't get at them and they'd feel relatively safe; only it's hard to get in.

THE STOOPED MAN Don't be vulgar. It's not pretty to see the Czechs putting up with everything.

SCHWEYK Like this Jaroslav Vaniek said to the consumptive peddler. The owner of the "Swan" in Budweis, a big tall fellow, filled the peddler's glass only half full, and when the little runt didn't say anything, Vaniek gave him hell: "How can you take it lying down?—that makes you a partner in the offense." The peddler socked Vaniek, and that was the end of it. And now I'm going to ring the bell and make them hurry up with their war, I've got no time to waste. (*He stands up*)

A SHORT, FAT MAN (*who has been sitting apart from the others*) You will not ring the bell.

SCHWEYK Why not?

THE FAT MAN (*with authority*) Because things are going fast enough to suit us.

THE DYING MAN That's right. What did they pick you up for?

THE FAT MAN Because somebody stole my dog.

SCHWEYK (*interested*) Was it a spitz?

THE FAT MAN What do you know about it?

SCHWEYK I bet your name is Voyta. I'm glad to meet you. (*He proffers his hand which the fat man overlooks*) My name is Schweyk. Maybe that doesn't mean anything to you, but you can shake hands with me. I bet you're not a German-lover any more since they brought you here.

THE FAT MAN On the strength of what my maid told me, I accused the SS of kidnaping my dog. Is that enough for you?

SCHWEYK Plenty. At home in Budweis we had this teacher who was accused by a student he'd been picking on of having the newspaper on his music rack while he was play-

ing the organ in church. The teacher was a religious man, and he made his wife miserable by not letting her wear short skirts. But by the time they were through pestering him with questions, he said he didn't even believe in the Marriage at Cannae anymore. So you'll march to the Caucasus and shit on Hitler—only, like the owner of the "Swan" said, it all depends where you shit on what.

THE FAT MAN If your name is Schweyk, when they were leading me through the gate, a young fellow sidled up to me. He only had a chance to whisper, "Ask for Mr. Schweyk," then they opened the gate. He must still be down there.

SCHWEYK I'll have a look right away. I always thought there'd be a crowd down there in the morning, the owner of the "Flagon," who wouldn't want to miss the chance, and maybe a big fat fellow, waiting for Schweyk, but in vain. Give me a hand, one of you gentlemen!

(He goes to the little cell window and climbs onto the back of the man with the crutches, to look out)

SCHWEYK It's young Prochazka. I doubt if he can see me. Give me your crutches.

(He gets them and waves them. Young Prochazka seems to have noticed him, and Schweyk communicates with him with sweeping gestures. He indicates a tall man with a beard—Baloun—and makes the gestures of stuffing food into his mouth and of carrying something under his arm. Then he climbs down off the back of the man with crutches)

SCHWEYK You're probably wondering what I was doing up there. We made a gentleman's agreement, that's why he came here. I always knew he was a decent sort. I was only repeating his gestures, so he'd know I caught on. He probably didn't want me marching off to Russia with a weight on my mind.

(Orders are heard from outside, and marching steps; a band begins to play the "Horst Wessel" march)

THE DYING MAN What's going on? Did you see anything?

SCHWEYK A lot of people at the gate. Probably a battalion, marching off.

THE STOOPED MAN That music is terrible.

SCHWEYK I think it's pretty because it's sad and rousing.

THE MAN WITH CRUTCHES We'll soon be hearing it more often. They play the "Horst Wessel" march every time they get a chance. It was written by a pimp. I wish I knew what the words mean.

THE FAT MAN I can oblige you with a translation. The flag raised high/ and tightly closed the columns/ Storm troops march on with firm and steady tread./ The comrades who have shed their heroes' blood before us/ March on with us in spirit straight ahead.

SCHWEYK I know another version we used to sing at the "Flagon."

(He sings accompanied by the military band. He sings the chorus to the tune, the preceding stanzas to the drums)

After the drummer come
Sheep in great masses.
The skin for the drumhead
Comes from their asses.

The butcher calls. With eyelids tightly shuttered
The sheep march on with firm and steady tread.
And those who at the yard have shed their blood before
them
March on with them in spirit straight ahead.

They lift up their hands to show
What rough work they do
Already stained with blood
And empty too.

The butcher calls. With eyelids tightly shuttered
The sheep march on with firm and steady tread.
And those who at the yard have shed their blood before
them
March on with them in spirit straight ahead.

They carry a blood-red flag
Which has a cross on it.
A cross with a hook to hang
Poor people upon it.

The butcher calls. With eyelids tightly shuttered

The sheep march on with firm and steady tread.
 And those who at the yard have shed their blood before
 them
 March on with them in spirit straight ahead.

(The other prisoners have joined in the chorus from the second stanza on. At the end the door opens and a German army doctor appears)

THE ARMY DOCTOR It's nice to hear you all singing so happily. You'll be glad to know that I consider you well enough to join the army. You're accepted. Everybody up. Put your shirts on. Be ready to march in ten minutes. *(He leaves)*

(The prisoners, crushed, put on their shirts)

THE STOOPED MAN Without a medical examination, that's absolutely illegal.

THE DYING MAN I have a stomach ulcer, I can prove it.

SCHWEYK *(to the fat man)* I hear they'll put us in different outfits to keep us from being together and making trouble. Good-bye, Mr. Voyta, I was glad to meet you, I'll see you at the "Flagon" at six o'clock, after the war.

(Overcome with emotion, he shakes hands all around as the cell door opens. Schweyk marches out first with military bearing)

SCHWEYK Heitler! On to Moscow!

8

Weeks later. Deep inside the wintry steppes of Russia the good Hitler soldier Schweyk is marching to join his company near Stalingrad.-Because of the cold he is wrapped in many layers of miscellaneous garments.

SCHWEYK *(sings)*

Onward to Jaromersh hoofing
 Probably you think I'm spoofing

We arrived there just about
Almost dinner time.

(A German patrol stops him)

FIRST SOLDIER Halt. Password!

SCHWEYK Victory! Can you tell me the way to Stalingrad?
Something went wrong, I got separated from my company,
and I've been hiking all day.

(The first soldier examines his papers)

SECOND SOLDIER *(hands him his canteen)* Where are you
from?

SCHWEYK Budweis.

SECOND SOLDIER Then you're a Czech.

SCHWEYK *(nods)* I hear things aren't going so well up front.
*(The two soldiers who have been exchanging looks give an
ugly laugh)*

FIRST SOLDIER What's a Czech like you looking for at the
front?

SCHWEYK I'm not looking for anything. I only want to help
defend civilization against Bolshevism, same as you, if we
don't, it's a bullet in the chest, am I right?

FIRST SOLDIER You could be a deserter.

SCHWEYK Oh no, you'd shoot me right away for breaking
my soldier's oath and not dying for the Führer, Heil Hitler.

SECOND SOLDIER What? You still believe that stuff? *(Takes
back his canteen)*

SCHWEYK I believe as much as Tonda Novotny in Vysočan
who went to the parish house to apply for a job as a sexton.
He didn't know if the church was Protestant or Catholic,
but the minister was in suspenders and there was a woman
in the room, so he said he was Protestant, and guess what:
he was wrong.

FIRST SOLDIER Why does it have to be Stalingrad, you fishy
ally?

SCHWEYK Because that's where my regimental headquarters
is, comrades, and I need a stamp to show that I reported
for duty, or my papers won't be any good and I won't be
able to show my face in Prague. Heil Hitler!

FIRST SOLDIER And suppose we said "Shit on Hitler," we're deserting to the Russians and want to take you with us because you understand Russian because it's supposed to be like Czech.

SCHWEYK Czech is very similar. But I advise you against it. I don't know my way around here, gentlemen, I'd rather you told me how to get to Stalingrad.

FIRST SOLDIER Maybe you don't trust us. Is that it?

SCHWEYK (*amiably*) In my opinion you're good soldiers because, if you were deserters, you'd have something for the Russians, a machine gun or maybe a good field glass, something they could use, and you'd hold it up in the air so they wouldn't start shooting right away. That's the way it's done, I'm told.

FIRST SOLDIER (*laughs*) You mean they'd catch on, even if it wasn't Russian? I see, you're the cautious kind. So you think it's better to ask the way to your grave in Stalingrad. Go in that direction. (*He shows him*)

SECOND SOLDIER And if anybody asks you: we're an army patrol and we gave you a good grilling. Just in case.

FIRST SOLDIER (*leaving*) And your advice isn't bad, brother.

SCHWEYK (*waves after them*) Glad to help, and good-bye!

(The soldiers leave quickly. Schweyk starts in the direction indicated but is seen to deviate from it. He disappears into the twilight. When he emerges on the other side, he stops for a moment in front of a signpost and reads, "Stalingrad -30 miles." He shakes his head and marches on. The drifting clouds in the sky are now reddish from a distant conflagration. He watches them with interest while marching)

SCHWEYK (*sings*)

Thought that in the service

We would have a ball

Thought the war would last a week or two or three weeks

But that would be all.

(Smoking his pipe, he keeps on marching. The clouds pale, and Schweyk's table at the "Flagon" emerges in a pink light.)

His friend Baloun is kneeling on the floor. Beside him stands Mrs. Kopecka with her embroidery. At a table, behind a glass of beer, sits Anna, the maidservant)

BALOUN (*in the tone of a litany*) I swear without hesitation and on an empty stomach, because all efforts by various people to get me some meat have failed; without a square meal under my belt, I swear to the Virgin Mary and all the saints that I'll never volunteer for the Nazi army, so help me God Almighty. I swear in memory of my friend Schweyk who is now marching over the icy steppes of Russia in faithful fulfillment of his duty, because there's no help for it. He was a good man.

MRS. KOPECKA All right, you can get up now.

ANNA (*takes a sip from the glass of beer, stands up, and hugs him*) And the wedding can take place as soon as the papers from Protivin get here. (*After kissing him, to Mrs. Kopecka*) Too bad there's no happy ending for you.

(*Young Prochazka stands in the door, a package under his arm*)

MRS. KOPECKA Mr. Prochazka, I forbade you ever to darken my door again. It's all over between us. Now that I know your grand passion isn't even good for two pounds of smoked butt.

YOUNG PROCHAZKA But suppose I've brought it? (*Shows it*)
Two pounds of smoked butt.

MRS. KOPECKA What, you've got it? In spite of the heavy penalties?

ANNA But we don't really need it any more. Mr. Baloun took the oath without.

MRS. KOPECKA But you've to admit that it shows true love. Rudolf!

(*She embraces him passionately*)

ANNA That would make Mr. Schweyk happy, if he only knew, the good soul! (*She looks tenderly at Schweyk's bowler hanging over his table*) Take good care of that hat, Mrs. Kopecka, I'm sure Mr. Schweyk will come and get it after the war.

BALOUN (*sniffing at the package*) It would be good with lentils.

(The "Flagon" disappears. A drunken man, wearing two heavy sheepskins and a steel helmet, staggers from the background. Schweyk meets him)

THE DRUNK Halt! Who are you? I see you're one of ours and not a gorilla, thank God. I'm Chaplain Ignaz Bullinger from Metz. Would you happen to have some kirsch?

SCHWEYK Beg to report, sir, I haven't.

CHAPLAIN That's hard to believe. I don't need it to drink, as you may have thought, you stinker. Admit it, that's what you think of your priest. I need it for my car back there, the portable altar's in it; I've run out of gas. In Rostov they're trying to save gas on God, that'll cost them plenty when they step up to God's throne and he asks them in a thundering voice: "You motorized my altar, but where was the gas?"

SCHWEYK I don't know, Your Reverence. Can you tell me the way to Stalingrad?

CHAPLAIN God only knows. Do you know the one about the bishop who asks the captain during a storm, "Will we get through?" And the captain answers, "We're in the hands of God, bishop." And the bishop only says, "Is it as bad as all that?" and bursts into tears! (He sits down in the snow)

SCHWEYK Is Platoon Leader Bullinger your brother?

CHAPLAIN Yes, God help us, then you know him? You haven't any kirsch or vodka?

SCHWEYK No, and you'll catch cold if you sit in the snow.

CHAPLAIN It doesn't matter what happens to me. They want to save on gas, do they, let them see how long they can fight a war without God and God's word. On land, in the air, and on the sea, etcetera. I joined their stupid Nazi League for German Christians, but with a very troubled conscience. To suit them, I stopped saying that our Lord Jesus was a Jew, in my sermons I make him a thumping one hundred percent Christian, with blue eyes. I throw in Wotan for good measure, and I tell them the world has got to be German, even if the price is an ocean of blood, because I'm a renegade swine who's betrayed his faith for wages, and they don't give me enough gas, and now see where it's got me.

SCHWEYK To the Russian steppes, Your Reverence. You'd better go back to Stalingrad with me and sleep it off. (*He pulls him up and drags him along a few feet*) But you'll have to use your own legs too, or I'll drop you right here. I've got to get back to my company. Hitler needs me.

CHAPLAIN I can't leave my altar here, it'll be captured by the Bolsheviks, and then what? They're heathen. I passed a hut back there, there was smoke coming out of the chimney, I wonder if they've got any vodka. Just hit them over the head with your rifle butt, that'll do it. Are you a German Christian?

SCHWEYK No, the plain kind. Don't puke all over yourself, it freezes on you.

CHAPLAIN Yes, I'm frozen stiff. I'll make it hot for them at Stalingrad.

SCHWEYK First you've got to get there.

CHAPLAIN I'm not very optimistic. (*Calmly, almost soberly*) Do you realize—what's your name anyway?—that they laugh in my face, me a priest of God, when I threaten them with hell? The only way I can explain it is that they think they're there already. Religion is going to the dogs, it's all Hitler's fault, don't tell anybody I said so.

SCHWEYK Hitler's a fart, I can tell you because you're drunk. And who's to blame for Hitler? The people who handed him Czechoslovakia in Munich, in the name of "peace in our lifetime," which turned out to be a blitz peace. But the war turned out to be a long one, and for quite a lot of people a lifetime. That's the kind of mistakes people make.

CHAPLAIN Then you're against this war that it's our duty to fight against the godless Bolsheviks, you stinker. Do you know that I'm going to have you shot when we get to Stalingrad?

SCHWEYK If you don't pull yourself together and walk like a human being, you'll never make it to Stalingrad. And I'm not against the war, I'm not marching to Stalingrad for the fun of it, but because, "Where the bullets fly, the grub stands by," as Naczek the cook said in the First World War.

CHAPLAIN Don't tell me fairy tales. Deep down, you say to yourself, "Fuck your war," I can tell from the look on your

face. (*Grabs him*) How can you claim to be for the war, what's in it for you—admit it, you don't give a shit for this war.

SCHWEYK (*rudely*) I'm marching to Stalingrad, and so are you, because those are our orders, and because two lone stragglers would starve around here. I've said that before.

(*They march on*)

CHAPLAIN On foot, war is depressing. (*Stops*) There, I see the hut, let's go in. Got your rifle off safety?

(*A hut appears, they walk toward it*)

SCHWEYK But don't make a stink. They're people too, and you've had enough to drink.

CHAPLAIN Keep your rifle at the ready. They're heathen, and no backtalk!

(*From the hut step an old peasant woman and a young woman with a small child*)

CHAPLAIN Look, they're going to run away. We've got to prevent them. Ask them where they've buried their vodka. And look at that shawl she's wearing, I'll take it, I'm frozen stiff.

SCHWEYK You're freezing because you're drunk, you've got two fur coats on already. (*To the young woman who stands motionless*) Good morning, which way to Stalingrad?

(*The young woman points as in a trance*)

CHAPLAIN Does she admit they have vodka?

SCHWEYK You sit down, I'll do the talking, and then we'll move on, I don't want any trouble. (*To the woman, amiably*) Why are you standing here outside your house? Were you leaving? (*The woman nods*) Your shawl is so thin. Haven't you anything else to keep you warm? It's not really enough.

CHAPLAIN (*sitting on the ground*) Use your rifle butt. They're all gorillas, heathen.

SCHWEYK (*rudely*) You shut up. (*To the woman*) Vodka? The man is sick.

(*Schweyk has accompanied all his questions with illustrative gestures. The woman shakes her head*)

CHAPLAIN (*viciously*) Shaking your head, huh? I'll show you. I'm freezing and you shake your head. (*He struggles to his*

feet and staggers toward the woman with raised fist. She withdraws into the hut, closing the door behind her. The chaplain kicks the door in and enters the hut) I'll finish you off.

SCHWEYK (*trying in vain to hold him back*) You stay out here. It's not your house. (*He follows him in. The old woman also goes in. Then the woman's scream is heard, and sounds of struggle. Schweyk, from inside*) You better put your knife away, lady. Hold still, you bastard, or I'll break your arm. Get going, quick.

(*From the hut steps the woman with the child. She is wearing one of the chaplain's coats. Behind her the old woman*)

SCHWEYK (*coming out of the hut behind them*) He'll sleep it off. You'd better clear out.

THE OLD WOMAN (*bows low before Schweyk in the traditional manner*) God bless you, soldier, you're a good man. If we had some bread left, I'd give you a chunk. You could use it. Where are you going?

SCHWEYK To Stalingrad, babushka, to the battle. Can you tell me the way?

THE OLD WOMAN You're a Slav, you talk like us, you didn't come here to murder people, you're not with the Hitlers. God bless you. (*She blesses him with sweeping gestures*)

SCHWEYK (*without embarrassment*) No hard feelings, babushka. I'm a Slav all right, but don't waste your blessing on me, because I'm a satellite.

THE OLD WOMAN God protect you, son, your heart is pure, you've come to help us, you'll help us beat the Hitlers.

SCHWEYK (*firmly*) No offense but I've got to be moving on, it wasn't my idea. Say, babushka, I'm beginning to think you're deaf.

THE OLD WOMAN (*although her daughter keeps tugging at her sleeve*) You'll help us get rid of the robbers. Hurry, soldier, and God bless you.

(*The young woman pulls the old woman away; they leave. Schweyk marches on, shaking his head. Night has come and the stars appear in the sky. Schweyk stops again at a road sign and shines his blacked-out flashlight on it. Surprised, he reads "Stalingrad—30 miles" and marches on.*)

Suddenly shots ring out. Schweyk immediately raises his rifle in surrender. But nobody appears and the shots stop. Schweyk keeps marching faster. When he appears again in his circular course, he is out of breath and sits down on a snowdrift)

SCHWEYK (*sings*)

When we came marching to Kovno
It was pretty stinking.
For a slug of booze those dogs
Took our shoes and left us limping.

(His pipe drops from his mouth, he falls asleep and dreams. Schweyk's table at the "Flagon" appears in a golden light. Around the table sit Mrs. Kopecka in her wedding dress, young Prochazka in his Sunday suit, Kati, Anna, and Baloun with a full plate in front of him)

MRS. KOPECKA And for the wedding banquet you're getting your smoked butt, Mr. Baloun. You took the oath without it, that does you honor, but to help you keep your oath, a little piece of meat once in a while can't do any harm.

BALOUN (*eating*) I just love eating. God bless our food. God created everything, from the sun to caraway seeds. (*Pointing at the plate*) Can this be sin? The pigeons fly, the chickens pick seeds off the ground. The landlord of the "Hus" knew seventeen ways of cooking a chicken, five sweet, six sour, and four with stuffing. Wine grows from the earth for me, and so does bread, said the pastor in Budweis, that couldn't eat because of diabetes, and they're forbidden me. In Pilsen, in 1932, I ate a hare at the "Schlossbräu"—the cook has died in the meantime, so don't bother to go there any more—I tell you, I never tasted such a hare in all my life. It was served with gravy and dumplings. That's not unusual, but there was something in that gravy that made the dumplings go crazy like they didn't know themselves, like something got into those dumplings. It was really good, I've never seen the like of it since. The cook took the recipe with him to the grave. It's lost to mankind.

ANNA Don't complain. What would dear Mr. Schweyk say—

he probably doesn't even know what fried potatoes look like any more.

BALOUN That's true. There's always a way. In Pudonitz, when my sister was married, they did it with quantity: Thirty people at the Pudonitz tavern, men and women, and old people, too—they never weakened: soup, veal, pork, chicken, two calves and two fat pigs, from head to tail, plus dumplings and sauerkraut in kegs, and beer to start with, then schnapps. I only remember that my plate was never empty, and after every mouthful a bucket of beer and a waterglass of schnapps as a chaser. Once there was silence like in church when they brought in the pork. They were all good people when they sat there together, stuffing themselves. I'd have gone through fire for every one of them. And there were all sorts of characters, a judge from the district court in Pilsen, in private life he hounded thieves and workers. Eating takes the sting out of people.

MRS. KOPECKA In honor of Mr. Baloun I will now sing the "Song of the Flagon."

(She sings)

Come, dear guest, and have a seat
Share with us our dishes
Have some soup and cabbage meat
Or some Moldau fishes.

What you need is salt and bread
And a roof above your head.
As a man, these you deserve
And we honor whom we serve
For just eighty hellers.

No credentials, rank, and place
Ever need be cited.
If your face includes a nose
You will be invited.

Just a little friendliness
Wit and bragging count for less.
Eat your cheese and drink your beer

And you will be welcome here—
You and eighty hellers.

One day, looking out to see
If the sky is clearing
We will find the earth to be
Friendly, warm, and cheering.

Everyone a man will be
Overlooked by nobody.
When it's cold we'll all keep warm
Have a roof 'gainst snow and storm.
With but eighty hellers!

(All have joined in the chorus)

BALOUN When my grandfather who was auditor at the water department went to Pankratz hospital and they told him he'd have to cut down on his food or he'd lose his eyesight, he said, "I've seen enough, but I haven't eaten enough yet." *(Suddenly stops eating)* Christ, if only Schweyk doesn't freeze to death in the terrible cold out there!

ANNA He mustn't lie down. It's when they feel warm and cozy, I hear, that they're closest to freezing to death.

(The "Flagon" vanishes. It is daytime again. Driving snow. Schweyk stirs under a blanket of snow. The clanking of tank treads is heard)

SCHWEYK *(sitting up)* I almost fell asleep. But let's go now, on to Stalingrad!

(He pulls himself up and starts marching again. A large armored car appears out of the driving snow, carrying German soldiers with chalky white or bluish faces under steel helmets, wrapped in all sorts of clothes, skins, even women's skirts)

THE SOLDIERS *(sing "The German Miserere")*

One fine day our generals handed down the order
To overrun Danzig by crossing the border.
With tanks and bomber squadrons Poland we invaded
And after two weeks' blitzing we had made it.
God have mercy and lead us back home again.

One fine day our generals handed down the order

To cross the Norwegian and then the French border.
 With tanks and bombers France and Norway we invaded
 And after five weeks' blitzing we had made it.
 God have mercy and lead us back home again.

One fine day our generals handed down the order
 To make war on Russia and trample its border.
 With tanks and bomber squadrons Russia we invaded
 And after two years we still haven't made it.
 God have mercy and lead us back home again.

One fine day the order will come down from our dictator
 To conquer the ocean's depths and the moon's deepest
 crater

But it is bad enough in Russia's landscape
 Strong is the enemy, cold the winter, and there is no escape.
 God have mercy and lead us back home again.

(The armored car disappears in the driving snow. Schweyk keeps on marching)

(A road sign appears, pointing at right angles. Schweyk ignores it. But suddenly he stops and listens. Then he bends down, whistles softly and snaps his fingers. From under the snow-covered underbrush crawls a starving dog)

SCHWEYK Ha! I knew you were hiding in the brush, wondering whether to come out. You're a cross between a schnauzer and a German shepherd, with a little bulldog thrown in, and I'll call you Ajax. Don't cringe, and stop that trembling, I can't stand it. *(He marches on, followed by the dog)* We're going to Stalingrad. You'll meet other dogs, it's a busy place. If you want to survive in a war, stick to the crowd and the regular routine, don't do anything original, and keep quiet until you get a chance to bite. War doesn't last forever, neither does peace, and when it's all over, I'll take you back to the "Flagon." But we've got to watch Baloun or he'll gobble you up, Ajax. People will be wanting dogs again, and pedigrees will be faked because they want purebreds, it's crazy, but that's what they want. Don't get tangled up in my feet, or I'll give you a licking. On to Stalingrad!

(The snowstorm becomes more dense and hides them)

Epilogue

The good Hitler-soldier Schweyk marches untiringly toward the ever-distant Stalingrad. Out of the driving snow wild music flares up and a larger-than-life-sized shape emerges: Adolf Hitler. The historic meeting between Schweyk and Hitler takes place.

HITLER

Halt. Friend or foe?

SCHWEYK (*with a routine salute*)

Heitler!

HITLER (*outshouting the storm*)

What? I can't hear what you say.

SCHWEYK (*louder*)

I said Heitler. Can you hear me now?

HITLER

Yes.

SCHWEYK

The wind carries everything away.

HITLER

True enough. Not to mention all this snow.

Do you know who you're speaking to?

SCHWEYK

Sorry, no.

HITLER

I am the Führer.

(Schweyk, who has been standing with one arm upraised, is now frightened. He drops his rifle and raises the other arm as in surrender)

SCHWEYK

Holy Saint Joseph!

HITLER

At ease. Who are you?

SCHWEYK

I'm Schweyk from Budweis at the bend of the Moldau. I've hurried here to help you at Stalingrad. Just tell me how to get there.

HITLER

How in all the devil's creation
 Do I know that, with the rotten Bolshevik transportation!
 From Rostov to Stalingrad, on the map
 Seemed about the length of my little finger
 Now it turns out to be a good deal longer.
 What's more, the winter this year most unfairly
 Started on the third of November instead of the fifth.
 This is the second time it's started early.
 This winter is a typically underhanded Bolshevik stunt
 As a result I can't tell back from front.
 I started on the assumption that the stronger side would
 prevail.

SCHWEYK

And so it has done.

(Schweyk is very cold. He has been stamping his feet and now beats his sides with his arms)

HITLER

Herr Schweyk, if the Third Reich should fail
 Nature will have played us a very dirty trick.

SCHWEYK

From all I hear, it's nature plus the Bolshevik.

HITLER *(getting ready for a long explanation)*

Eastward or westward. That's the question, so history shows.
 Let me start with Herman the Cheruscan . . .

SCHWEYK

We'd better keep moving while you talk, or we'll be froze.

HITLER

Very well. Move on.

SCHWEYK

But where do you want me to go?

HITLER

Let's try the north.

(They push on a few steps toward the north)

SCHWEYK

But this way we're up to our necks in the snow.

HITLER

Then the south.

(They push a few steps toward the south)

SCHWEYK

This way there are mountains of dead men.

HITLER

Then I'll push east.

(They push a few steps toward the east)

SCHWEYK *(stops, whistling him back)*

That way there are armies of Red men.

HITLER

True enough.

SCHWEYK

Let's go home. Here we are nowhere.

HITLER

There stand my German people. I cannot go there.

(Hitler starts in all directions one after the other. Schweyk whistles him back each time)

HITLER

To the east. To the west. To the north. To the south.

SCHWEYK

You can't stay here and you can't get out.

(Hitler's movements in all directions are getting faster)

SCHWEYK *(starts to sing)*

Yes, you cannot go back and you cannot move on
 You're all rotten on top and your bottom's gone
 And the east wind's too cold and the Reds are too red
 So I simply don't know whether to pump you with lead
 Or take down my pants and shit on your head.
(Hitler's desperate thrusts have become a wild dance)

CHORUS OF ALL PLAYERS

(who take off their masks and step forward to the edge of the stage)

The times will be changing. The intricate plotting
 Of people in power must finally fail.
 Like bloodthirsty cocks though today they are strutting
 The times will be changing, force cannot prevail.

The stones on the Moldau's bottom go shifting
 In Prague three emperors molder away.

The top won't stay top, for the bottom is lifting
The night has twelve hours and is followed by day.

HENRY SLEPT BESIDE HIS NEWLY-WEDDED*

Henry slept beside his newly wedded,
Heiress to a castle on the Rhine.
Snake bites, which tormented the false lover,
Would not let him peacefully recline.

At the stroke of twelve the curtain parted.
On the sill a pale cold hand appeared.
In a shroud he saw his Wilhelmina
And her mournful, ghostly voice he heard.

Do not tremble, said his Wilhelmina;
Faithless lover, do not be afraid.
I have not come here in hate or anger,
I've not come to curse your marriage bed.

Bitter grief my poor young life has shortened,
I have died because I loved you well,
But the Lord has fortified my spirit
Saved me from the headlong plunge to hell.

Why did I believe your protestations
That your love would always be the same,
Never dreaming that for you to vanquish
Maiden's heart was but a paltry game?

Do not weep. This world does not deserve it,
'Tis not worth a single tear or moan.
Live serene and happy with Eliza
Now that you have got her for your own.

Henry, you have treasure, ah, uncounted,
Use it now to give my soul repose.
Give your Wilhelmine the peace of spirit
You denied her living, heaven knows.

Sacrifice! cried Henry in his fever;

* [This street ballad is sung by Kati and Anna in scene 4—Translated by Ralph Manheim.]

That's what you have come to ask, he cried.
Whereupon the poor spurned woman vanished
And the churl committed suicide.

God had mercy on her, but the faithless
Lover was condemned beyond repair.
Still he lives, an evil spooky monster
Wand'ring in the dreary midnight air.