

EDUARD TUBIN

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LIBRETTO

BARBARA VON TISENHUSEN

Opera in 3 acts and
9 scenes

LIBRETTO

by Jaan Kross

after a short story by Aino Kallas

Translated by Eino Tubin

Edited by Mart Humal and Avo Sõmer

This translation is based on Eino Tubin's translation published in the supplement of Ondine CD-776 2D (1991), with a number of changes. In addition to some corrections of content and style, these concern mainly the dialog passages taken by the librettist from the Estonian translation of Aino Kallas's short story. In the English translation of the libretto, these are taken, if possible, from the English translation of the short story published in 1927 (Aino Kallas, *Eros the slyer: Two Estonian Tales*. Trans from the Finnish by Alex Matson, Frome & London: Jonathan Cape, 1927) and obviously approved by the writer.

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List of Characters

Barbara von Tisenhusen – *soprano*

His three brothers **Jürgen**, master of Rannu castle – *baritone*

Reinhold – *tenor*

Bartholomeus – *bass*

Johann von Tödwen, master of Rõngu castle – *bass*

His wife **Anna**, Barbara's aunt – *mezzo-soprano*

Matthias Jeremias Friesner, Parson of Rannu – *baritone*

Franz Bonnius, scribe of Rõngu castle – *tenor*

Reinhold von Tisenhusen of Konguta – *bass*

Egbert von Ykskyl

His father

His mother

Alleth von Risebitter

Her father

Her mother

Wedding guests in the Guild Hall

Townpeople on in the streets

Old caanon – *bass-baritone*

The **von Tisenhusens**

Two peasant girls and the Boy

Two serfs

Jester – *tenor*

Herold

Servants, noblemen, armed men

Act 1

Scene 1

- 1 *The Great Guildhall in Tallinn, autumn 1551. The wedding of Egbert von Yxkyll and Alleth von Risebitter. The young couple with guests. Among them Barbara von Tisenhusen, always circled by young noblemen. When the curtain opens, there are banquet tables seen behind the dancing wedding guests.*
- 10 **CHOIR**
Wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding! Noble lords and ladies from Viru, Tartu, Harju! The barrels have been brought from the cellars! Tap your shoes, click your spurs, tap your shoes, click your spurs!
- 22 **FIRST NOBLEMAN** (*with beer cup*)
Refresh your thirsty souls from frothing tin cups!
- 25 **CHOIR**
Tap your shoes, click your spurs, tap your shoes, click your spurs! Wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding!
- 31 **FIRST NOBLE LADY**
With a peppery look, the groom watches the bride, the bride the groom!
- 35 **GROUP OF NOBLEMEN**
Let not the blood in our veins cool off!
- 47 **CHOIR**
Refresh your thirsty souls from frothing tin cups. Let not the blood in our veins cool off! Wedding, wedding, wedding!
- 66 *The dancing wedding guests stop, panting.*
- 69 **JESTER** (*pointing*)
Wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding... (*Impersonates a complaining old person.*) I look left, I look right: everything was better before.
- 80 **CHOIR** (*conducted by Jester*)
I look left, I look right: everything was better before.
- 85 **JESTER** (*Impersonates an old crone*)
Oh, what moustaches had the knights! When you kissed you felt a man at once.
- 90 **CHOIR**
Oh, what moustaches had the knights! When you kissed you felt a man at once.
- 95 **JESTER** (*Impersonates an old man*)
And the maidens, oh! They had higher morals and more generosity than nowadays.
- 100 **CHOIR**
And the maidens, oh! They had higher morals and more generosity than nowadays.
- 106 **JESTER** (*himself again*)
How they gambol, our groom and bride – our Moon and Mars. And I tell you, I blabbermouth (*half whispering*): The night will come and the Moon will go: Mars will play war games on the Moon. An eclipse will be expected. (*Laughter. Bride runs away among shouts, followed by groom.*)
- 127 **JESTER** (*whirling to Barbara, bowing to her at the word “Sun” and disappearing; Barbara and her surrounding in the spotlight*)
But we have nothing to worry about as the sun shines on us at this time.
- 136 **CHOIR**
But we have nothing to worry about as the sun shines on us at this time.
- 143 *Young men mill around Barbara. All try to help her. They toast her. She smiles and touches the cup with lips. Some wedding guests start dancing in the background. The young men lead Barbara in that direction.*
- 168 **FIRST NOBLE LADY**
The bride is pretty enough and has a nice dress.
- 170 **SECOND NOBLE LADY**
But Miss Barbara of Rannu beats her thrice.
- 172 **FIRST NOBLEMAN**
The young gentlemen’s blood quickens as they watch her!
- 175 **SECOND NOBLEMAN**
And who ever saw such a dress?!

- 177 **NOBLE LADY**
Gold from neck to toe! They talk about it even in Germany!
- 181 *Anna, Johan von Tödwen and Friesner appear, at some distance also Barbara's brothers Jürgen, Reinhold and Bartholomeus.*
- 186 **FRIESNER**
You know, Lady Anna, my heart cannot find peace with Barbara's dresses and necklaces... This exaggerated glitter spoils her soul!
- 196 **ANNA**
No! Barbara is quiet and chaste. I dressed her. Her dress and her necklaces are my fault. I dress my brother's orphan like a doll and my eyes rest on her. Oh, Friesner, that spoils neither the child's soul nor the sinful world!
- 213 **TÖDWEN**
Come, parson, let's drink! This vanity comes from our own lack of children, which is causing her pain.
- 219 *The wedding guests dance briskly. Groom and bride return. Some young noblemen, as well as Barbara's brothers, step aside.*
- 229 **YOUNG NOBLEMAN (to another)**
Whom would we ask to dance if we didn't have Barbara?
- 237 **SECOND YOUNG NOBLEMAN**
But her brothers are spiteful and ready for evil words...
- 248 **DRUNKEN NOBLEMAN**
(in the background)
With a peppery look, the groom watches the bride, the bride the groom...
- 256 **FIRST YOUNG NOBLEMAN**
(turning to the brothers)
It honours the brothers when a young Livonian knight courts their sister!
- 271 **REINHOLD**
She doesn't lack admirers...
- 276 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
...and of course we could only tolerate a gentleman in her company.
- 285 **JÜRGEN**
As anybody can tell, we are ourselves responsible for upholding her honour – and ours.
- 305 **CHOIR**
Wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding, wedding!
- 308 **CHOIR**
Tap your shoes, click your spurs, tap your shoes, click your spurs!
- 314 **CHOIR**
Let not the blood in our veins cool off!
- 329 **OLD CANON** *(watching Barbara, to a younger canon so that everybody hears)*
Oh, what a sweet beehive! The smell of honey makes my old mouth water... Let's hide it in my garden – when the bees swarm, I'll get perhaps some honey too!
- 342 *Great, merry and raunchy laughter. Dancing and singing begins.*
- 343 **CHOIR**
Oh, what a sweet beehive! The smell of honey makes our mouths water... Let's hide it in our garden and when the swarming starts, we'll get some honey too!
- 358 **HERALD** *(clapping hands)*
Gentlemen! The torch dance! The torch dance! The torch dance!
- 361 *Stage turns. The leaving people line up for the torch dance. At the exit they receive torches from the servants. The procession surges up and down the great staircase of the Guild Hall and back and forth on the street in front of the stairs. Admiring townspeople run up. As before, Barbara is in focus.*
- 420 **CRONE** *(to another)*
Look at her, in the middle of the procession! Does she not shine like an angel at the altar, golden and young!

- 425 **TANNER**
Golden and young! Ha! (*To the first crone*)
If you wish to know: she is the harlot of
Babylon herself! (*The townspeople are*
shocked.) On the outside golden but the heart
is of stone! (*Steps forward, provokingly*
watching Barbara.) Of course! With the gold
of her dress one could clothe a thousand poor!
I say: a thousand poor!
- 442 *Barbara hears, turns pale and stands in the*
forefront. Suddenly she seems to be lonely.
She stands like a person subconsciously
expecting a blow and then suddenly receiving
it when forgetting to expect it.
- 448 **BARBARA** (*quietly*)
My God! This tanner's mockery is like your
word! This frivolous noise, this empty noise,
this heavy sparkle, this burdening sparkle
imprison my heart! I thought a judgement
would come, and I would be torn naked
without any clothing to hide my shame...
I want away! I wanted long ago to get away!
(*Starts running. Tears off her necklace.*)
- 476 **ANNA**
Barbara! What's the matter?
- 477 **BARBARA** (*stopping, quietly*)
Nothing, aunt... My necklaces got too heavy.
- 478 *The brothers have rushed on Barbara,*
blocking her way.
- 479 **JÜRGEN**
No tricks, wench! Stay here!
- 480 **BARBARA** (*firmly*)
It's not you who can block my way! Get away!
- 483 *The brothers give way, shrugging shoulders.*
It appears that they have done it before in
front of Barbara. Barbara runs off.
- 485 **TÖDWEN**
What was it?
- 485 **VOICES OF THE WEDDING GUESTS**
What was it? What was it?
- 487 **JÜRGEN** (*gloomily*)
Our sister gives herself licence!
- 494 **ANNA**
Child, what are you doing!
- Curtain*
- ## Scene 2
- 1 *A corner of the garden of Rõngu castle in*
summer. A part of the wall and the garden
gate are seen. A stone bench. 5–6 girls are
tending the garden, some of them with rakes.
- 19 **GIRLS** (*singing at work*)
The young maiden, farmer's daughter, hears
the holiday come. The month she treads on
the beads, the day she treads on the pearls,
the year on the silver. Then she goes to the
village swing. Boys peep from shadows,
watch behind trees.
- 38 *Servant appears with Triin and the Boy.*
- 40 **SERVANT** with German accent
(*to Triin and Boy*)
Young lady is not back from village.
Wait here (*goes*).
- 41 **GIRLS**
Look! Hello, Triin!
- 43 **FIRST GIRL**
Did you bring your brother to the young lady's
lesson?
- 45 **TRIIN**
Well. I'm bringing and taking him back.
He's afraid...
- 48 **SECOND GIRL**
Look at that! Who frightens you? Barbara?
- 51 **BOY**
No. Not she but the masters... and the whole
castle.
- 55 **TRIIN**
But he can read quite well.

- 56 **FIRST GIRL**
Young lady will make you a learned man who will some day leave the overseer and his cane and mansion.
- 61 **SECOND GIRL**
Once you'll be the pride of our people, as Young lady says.
- 64 **TRIIN**
But he'd just like to hide in the bushes...
(*To Boy*) Sit here. I'll rake a bit too.
(*Takes a rake.*)
- 69 **GIRLS**
I, lonely orphan, I hear the holiday come, twine the willows together, green leaves of spring. Then I go to the village swing.
- 78 *Barbara comes. She is dressed simply, almost like the country girls. She comes in a hurry carrying a white hank of yarn.*
- 81 **TRIIN**
Good day, Miss Barbara!
- 83 **BARBARA** (*watches the yarn and points to it*)
Good day. Your spinning wheels in the village are so heavy! But the yarn is nice and white just like your hair.
- 87 **FIRST GIRL**
It's thanks to your lessons, Miss.
- 89 **BARBARA**
That's nothing. (*Girls leave. To Triin*) Now it's your turn to teach me. Sing this song once more. (*Takes a slate from the table and writes down the song.*)
- 96 **TRIIN**
I, lonely orphan, I hear the holiday come, twine the willows together, green leaves of spring. (*Barbara hums along*) Then I go to the village swing...
- 106 **BARBARA** (*for herself*)
Boys peep from shadows, watch behind trees: she's better without beads, prettier without gold, fancier without silver! I know it already! (*To the Boy*) But how is *your* knowledge? Which story did you read for today?
- 120 **BOY**
This one.
- 120 **BABRBARA**
Read!
- 121 **BOY** (*reads*)
Let every soul be in subjection to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God.
- 122 **BARBARA** (*stopping him*)
Not bad, but read this instead, (*points at the book*) you'll need this more.
- 123 **BOY** (*reads*)
Masters, give to your servants that which is just and equal and give up threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him. (*Falls silent in surprise.*)
- 123 *Tödwen and Friesner arrive.*
- 124 **TÖDWEN**
Haven't you noticed Barbara's sudden change of mind: she wears no pearls or ribbons nor the golden dress she got from my Anna. (*Notices the country girl and Boy. With a lazy reproach.*) You bother again with these sparrows... Get away! (*Triin and Boy disappear. Fans himself.*) Every time there is a smoky smell...
- 137 **FRISENER**
And their songs, dear daughter, these have neither rhyme nor reason and their screams and village noise is sometimes quite awful!
- 145 **BARBARA**
You know books written by learned men, Father, but *their* songs are not therein.
- 149 **TÖDWEN**
You think their witch-songs and incantations should be written in books?
- 152 *During the last words, Jürgen, Reinhold and Bartholomeus have entered and, listening to Barbara, sneaked behind her back.*

- 153 **BARBARA**
I think they should not be beaten but rather given school education.
- 158 **JÜRGEN** (*putting his hands over Barbaras eyes from behind*)
One monk called Münzer said so once in Germany...
- 161 **BARBARA** (*trying to free the face*)
Jürgen! Get away!
- 162 **JÜRGEN**
...but he cannot say it any more because his mouth has long since been filled with earth.
- 165 **TÖDWEN**
And it's not a matter for women.
- 167 **JÜRGEN**
Well, sister, kiss us welcome and show a merry face! (*Kisses Barbara. Anna arrives. Reinhold kisses Barbara.*) Oh, hello, Aunt Anna! (*Bartholomeus kisses Barbara. Jürgen kisses Anna. Guests arrive.*)
- 175 **REINHOLD**
On the way here we also brought along some guests.
- 177 *Mr. and Mrs. Risebitter and the wedded couple from Act 1 arrive.*
- 177 **TÖDWEN**
Oh, Mr. Risebitter! And your dear wife so well! And Mr. Yxkyll with his young wife!
- 182 *Guests approach rapidly; kisses are exchanged; simultaneously Bonnius comes, coolly watching the welcome ceremonies.*
- 187 **RISEBITTER** (*to Barbara, kissing her*)
Good day, sweet child!
- 188 **BARBARA**
Oh, Mr. Risebitter! (*Looking over*) And you, noble knight? You will not kiss me? Why not *you* if it is customary in this country?
- 197 **BONNIUS** (*comes closer*)
Because it is customary only for the nobility. I, alas, do not have the honour, the arms,
- the land or the house. (*Bowing elegantly but briefly*) Franz Bonnius, new scribe.
- 208 *Friesner in the spotlight. He notices the fateful moment. Barbara "becomes red as a berry in the field as she turns herself swiftly round and laughs and chatters as though nothing had happened".¹*
- 212 **TÖDWEN** (*clapping hands*)
Friends! Soon I'll serve you the bear steak. But for the appetite let's first throw some dice. Agreed! (*Directs the guests through the garden gate to inner rooms and leaves at once. Barbara and Bonnius are left alone. Pause.*)
- 232 **BARBARA**
Won't you gamble, Mr. Scribe?
- 234 **BONNIUS**
Why not? But Mr. Tödwen invited his *friends*. It's unnecessary to say that I am not among those.
- 240 **BARBARA**
...Are you then his enemy?
- 241 **BONNIUS**
No. His scribe.
- 242 *Pause. Barbara watches Bonnius with defiance and interest, then claps hands. The servant appears and, after receiving instructions, fetches cup and dice to Barbara and disappears.*
- 252 **BARBARA** (*to Bonnius*)
How many points?
- 253 **BONNIUS** (*not understanding*)
I don't know...
- 254 **BARBARA** (*giving him a cup*)
Hundred then. Begin.
- 255 **BONNIUS** (*taking the cup*)
You... will play with me?

¹ "Yet I saw Maid Barbara become red as a berry in the field as she turned herself swiftly round and with her cousins laughed and chattered as though nothing had happened." (Aino Kallas, *Eros The Slayer. Two Estonian Tales*. Trans. From the Finnish by Alex Matson. London: Jonathan Cape, 1927, p. 29)

- 257 **BARBARA**
Yes. (*Starting a talk*) Did you arrive from Germany?
- 259 **BONNIUS** (*shakes the cup*)
Yes, from Brunswick.
- 260 **BARBARA**
Is it a nice town and a nice country?
- 262 **BONNIUS**
I cannot blame the country. (*Throws the dice on bench*) Five points. The lord of the land, the Duke, is however such that for anyone daring to breathe there it's better first to write his will!
- 270 **BARBARA** (*shaking the cup*)
And you came... five for me too... because it might be easier to breathe in this country?
- 273 **BONNIUS**
Yes.
- 274 **BARBARA**
And what does it look like?
- 275 **BONNIUS** (*hesitating*)
I have been here for so little time...
- 277 **BARBARA**
What about it! Be frank!
- 279 **BONNIUS** (*harshly*)
For the nobility this is paradise but for peasants it is hell!
- 286 **BARBARA**
...And for *you*...
- 287 **BONNIUS**
Once it seemed like the backcourt of hell (*bewildered*)... But now – I don't know: maybe the forecourt of paradise.
- 297 **FRIESNER'S VOICE** (*from behind the stage*)
Barbara! Barbara! (*Friesner has appeared in the door without being noticed by Barbara or Bonnius.*)
- 298 **BARBARA**
I must go now. You are... (*Friesner disappears. Barbara runs to the door, stops for a moment, looks back at Bonnius, and disappears.*)
- 300 **BONNIUS**
What am I?
- 301 **BARBARA**
...a wondrous man.
- 305 **BONNIUS** (*looking after Barbara*)
I ask neither myself nor fate for anything but this – only this question is burning in my mouth: is it really possible? (*throwing the dice three times in succession*) Six! Six! Six!

Scene 3

- 1 *Summer night in forest near the castle. Bagpipes at distance. Tödwen and Anna come walking together with Friesner.*
- 11 **FRIESNER**
And how is your new scribe?
- 12 **ANNA**
He has charmed the whole castle!
- 13 **TÖDWEN**
Yes, he has no weaknesses. Doesn't chase girls, doesn't booze...
- 16 **ANNA**
So clean is his forehead that he could wear any wreath.
- 19 **TÖDWEN**
And he is very industrious at work. But deep inside, there might be a brawler (*stops*)... Will you stay here, father?
- 25 **FRIESNER**
Walking around in God's nature, I compose the morning sermon.
- 27 *Bows are exchanged. Tödwen leaves for the left. Friesner leaves slowly for the right. Barbara enters.*

- 41 **BARBARA**
Why is it said that a lover feels as if asleep?!
Never before have I had such a strong feeling
of wakefulness! All that's grey and dull is
still there and gives me twice the pain but all
that lives and moves and boils, all songs and
birds and beasts, are giving me many hundred
times more pleasure! Because my beloved –
oh, he is braver and more handsome than
St. George...
- 91 *Bonnius comes running, embracing Barbara
and lifting her off her feet for a long moment.*
- 95 **BONNIUS**
Is it true? Is it true? You, you, you are in my
arms with glowing cheeks? (*Puts down
Barbara*) We cannot count all that separates
us: walls, swords, rage, which will foam if
they learn... the bottomless well of arrogance,
the laws written on parchment, an abyss of
insane rage...
- 133 **BARBARA**
Nobody can separate us.
- 129 **BONNIUS**
Is it true, is it true?
- 131 **BARBARA**
Nobody.
- 133 **BONNIUS**
Nobody.
- 135 **BARBARA**
Nobody.
- 137 **BARBARA AND BONNIUS**
Nobody.
- 144 *Bonnius and Barbara are sitting and
embracing on the grass. Friesner comes silently
in view, stopping, shaking his head and
walking silently away with a worried face.*

Act 2

Scene 4

- 1 A part of courtyard balcony and a room at
the Rannu castle. Winter. On the balcony,
Johann and Anna Tödwen, Barbara and her
brothers (among them Jürgen, Master of
Rannu) in furs of sable, polecat and leopard
skins, Friesner, somewhat apart Bonnius and
some invited gentlemen and ladies. From
below increasing noise of barking dogs and
a roaring bear.
- 26 **CHOIR**
Today's bear is very strong and mean, and
the dogs are fierce.
- 30 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
Today's bear is very strong and mean.
- 31 **FIRST NOBLEMAN**
But the dogs are mean too, very mean!
Especially Sultan and Muri.
- 34 **SECOND NOBLEMAN**
They'll fly upon the bear and tear the ears off!
- 35 **CHOIR**
Tear them off, tear them off!
- 38 **NOBLEMAN WITH HOURGLASS** (*to
Bartholomeus*)
You'll see: no bear can stand against ten dogs
while this glass runs!
- 41 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
While this glass runs? I'll bet! A vat of claret!
Agree?!
- 46 **NOBLEMAN WITH HOURGLASS**
Agree! (*They shake hands*)
- 48 **BARTHOLOMEUS** (*to a nobleman*)
Kaspar, come and break! (He breaks up
the handshake.)
- 49 **JÜRGEN** (*orders from balcony*)
Drive the bear to the centre! That's it!
Grooms! Take out the dogs! (*A nobleman
leans far out over the rail of the balcony*)
- 56 **NOBLE LADY**
Bodo, You'll fall down!

- 58 **JÜRGEN**
So! Attention! Dogs loose! (*The nobleman with the hourglass turns it and leans out over the rail to watch. Great excitement and shouting.*)
- 66 **CHOIR**
Oh! Hanging in the ears from both sides!
Oh! Hanging in the ears from both sides! Oh, what claws! But the dogs are not a bit afraid! They hurt the bruin! Eh! (*Voices on the balcony, tramping, some of ladies laugh and clap hands. Anna presses a hand on her mouth and shakes her head. Barbara looks motionless into the yard.*) Hurt the bruin. Sultan lost his guts! Three dogs are already in his place!
- 93 **REINHOLD**
It's the dogs' blood that makes the snow red!
- 100 **NOBLEMAN WITH HOURGLASS**
No, the bear's!
- 101 **SECOND NOBLEMAN**
Never mind, it's great!
- 105 **BARBARA** (*exploding*)
Gentlemen! Aren't you ashamed to be torturing a poor animal for your delight?! *It's a shame!* I will look upon it no longer! (*She pushes through the crowd to the door behind the balcony, slamming the door behind her and leaning trembling to the wall. Sounds of bewilderment and indignation from the balcony.*)
- 125 **CHOIR**
What was that? What was that about? That was a naughty thing.
- 130 **ANNA**
Oh, this child...
- 131 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
Our sister really gives herself licence.
- 133 **JÜRGEN**
The plague may strike me if I cannot tame her! (*All eyes are turned back to the yard*)
- 137 **CHOIR**
Ah! Eh! Ah! Attack, attack, attack! (*Bonnius sneaks away from the spectators and hurries to the room behind the balcony, closing the door.*) Muri, bite! Bite him in the scruff, Aaa...!
- 154 **BONNIUS**
Barbara! You ...
- 156 **BARBARA** (*turning round*)
Oh, it's terrible that they have no hearts! Come... hold me... I'm cold (*Bonnius comes to Barbara and embraces her*)
- 166 **CHOIR**
Chewing, chewing, aah!
- 175 **BARBARA**
All the snow is bloody... Hold me! Always hold me!
- 182 **BONNIUS**
I'm holding you, always holding you!
- 195 **BARBARA**
I'm cold... All the snow is bloody... Hold me!
- 207 **BONNIUS** (*as if making an oath*)
I'm holding you, always holding you if God permits and even if he doesn't.
- 246 *In the balcony, Reinhold has observed Bonnius going out after Barbara. He gives a sign to Jürgen and Bartholomeus and the brothers come towards the door of the room behind the balcony. Barbara sees them through the window.*
- 253 **BARBARA** (*to Bonnius*)
Go! My brothers... (*Bonnius leaves. The brothers enter.*)
- 261 **JÜRGEN**
What are you doing here?
- 263 **BARBARA**
I will not see the blood in the yard.
- 266 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
You are a Tisenhusen but you have the faint heart of a merchant mistress!

- 270 **REINHOLD**
Why did Bonnius run after you? (*Barbara is silent*)
- 276 **JÜRGEN**
What does it mean? (*Pause*) I ask: what does it mean?
- 285 **BARBARA** (*decidedly*)
That I hate your bloody games and I love Bonnius!
- 291 **JÜRGEN** (*approaching Barbara*)
Say it once more!
- 293 **BARBARA** (*passionately*)
I hate your bloody games and I love Bonnius!
- 300 **BARTHOLOMEUS** (*with irony*)
Gratia Dei!
- 300 **SOME VOICES**
The bear is tired!
- 303 **JÜRGEN**
Is that all?
- 307 **BARBARA**
If you wish to know: no! I want to make him my husband.
- 316 **BARTHOLOMEUS** (*as before*)
Ah... That turns of course a new page in the book...
- 318 **REINHOLD** (*going*)
Damn, I'll throw this Bonnius to the dogs!
- 321 **JÜRGEN**
Stay! (*To Barbara*) How foolish can a noble maiden be, growing up without mother and father...
- 329 **REINHOLD**
Such shame...!
- 331 **JÜRGEN** (*to Barbara*)
Do you know the Pact of Pärnu? Not? Learn it and study it carefully. Remember: the Pact of Pärnu.

346 *Rejoicing. The brothers turn to go. Cheering. The nobleman with the hourglass rushes in and shatters the hourglass on the floor.*

351 **NOBLEMAN WITH HOURGLASS**
This damn bear, before succumbing, stood two glasses! Do you understand!

Scene 5

1 *Interior of Rannu church. A corner of the altar and an epitaph on the floor are visible. The organ plays while the congregation leaves. The church is nearly empty. The leaving villagers in winter clothes walk across the stage. Barbara is deeply in prayer facing the epitaph. Some stop and cross when passing her.*

24 *Everyone except Barbara has left. Friesner comes and stops, watching Barbara, walks up to her and touches her shoulder.*

30 **FRIESNER**
Barbara! What is the matter with her, Barbara! (*Barbara rises and puts herself together*)

33 **BARBARA**
I spoke with my blessed mother.

33 **FRIESNER**
...And your mother (*pointing at epitaph*) – did she... hear you?

35 **BARBARA**
Yes. (*Thinks a moment.*) Father, enlighten me.

37 **FRIESNER**
Here at the altar stairs?

37 **BARBARA**
Just here. Can you tell me what is the Pact of Pärnu?

40 **FRIESNER** (*grasping it*)
Oh... You are interested in law? (*Pause*) The Pact of Pärnu is a law, a law which prevents noble-born maidens from marrying an unworthy.

45 **BARBARA**
And how is it written?

- 46 **FRIESNER**
Oh, I must search my memory... Can I read it by heart?
- 49 **BARBARA**
Read.
- 50 **FRIESNER** (*quoting from memory*)
If a noble-born maiden against the will of her family weds an unworthy, she is to be hold in contempt and she and this unworthy and all who have helped them are to be judged and all that is theirs shall fall to their nearest of kin but these two, the noble-born maiden and the unworthy, are to die of hunger. (*Pause.*)
- 69 **BARBARA** (*haughtily*)
Is that all?
- 70 **FRIESNER**
That's all.
- 70 **BARBARA**
But tell me who is an unworthy?
- 71 **FRIESNER**
Everyone who ranks lower than these noble maidens.
- 73 **BARBARA**
Do you yourself think so too?
- 74 **FRIESNER**
How...?
- 74 **BARBARA**
Like the lawgivers think?
- 76 **FRIESNER**
...It's an earthly law, my daughter, not a God's law.
- 77 **BARBARA**
Unworthy and stupid men have made it. (*Pause.*)
- 80 **FRIESNER**
Barbara... Why do you blush so? Are you burning in love for this... this Bonnius who was born in Brunswick? Is it true, my daughter?
- 87 **BARBARA** (*kneeling and throwing her arms around Friesner's knees*)
It is true.
- 88 **FRIESNER**
Oh, that it should happen to you! (*Earnestly, suggestively*) Cast out this man, cast out him from your soul! He entered there like a mercenary! He sits there like a robber!
- 94 **BARBARA**
Do you too deem him unworthy?
- 97 **FRIESNER**
I... I have mostly heard... good of him. But you must understand, child, your uncle is the emperor's cupbearer in Vienna but this Bonnius is a former travelling merchant without name! All the dead Tisenhusens have turned in their graves already.
- 104 **BARBARA**
But not my mother!
- 104 **FRIESNER**
Maybe not she... But you can never expect permission from those who dwell on this earth. Never! They'll show the door to him! They'll send the dogs to chew him up!
- 108 **BARBARA**
But I'll not leave Bonnius even if I were to die the death of hunger! (*She pulls her furtails together and puts her hands in the sleeves, turns and hurries to the door, turns back and stops in front of Friesner.*) Father, bless me.
- 127 **FRIESNER** (*blessing her in an ecclesiastical manner*)
Benedicat te omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sancti. (*In a fatherly manner*) And bless you whatever you do... And may His own stars always show the way to you... (*Very quietly*) Go you now?
- 132 **BARBARA** (*quietly*)
I go now.
- 133 **FRIESNER**
And where?

133 **BARBARA**
I'll talk once more with my brothers.

133 **FRIESNER**
And then?

134 **BARBARA**
If you should hear anything of me, do not condemn me... *(She rushes away)*

Scene 6

1 *Knights' Hall at Rannu castle. Night. Nearly pitch dark. The Tisenhusen coat of arms glows on the wall.*

11 **SERVANT** *(half running, holding candlestick with burning candles)*
Oh, my God! Oh, my God, come and help us! *(He puts the candlestick on the table to lighten the coat of arms and leaves)*

23 *Reinhold, Bartholomeus and Jürgen appear. The first two in armour and with swords, the third in leather vest and with a riding whip.*

29 **JÜRGEN**
Brothers, look at the Tisenhusens' arms! Our eyes are wet with pain. But to wash away this shame we have to cross and break through everything like this bull *(claps hands)*. Scribe! *(Scribe appears half running)*. Is the letter ready to the vassals of the Order? Read!

54 **SCRIBE**
We, Jürgen and Reinhold and Bartholomeus Tisenhusen, ask and demand that where ever on the domains of the Order anybody sees them, they will be brought under the sword to us, our runaway former scribe Franz.

67 **JÜRGEN**
Add to his name: dog *(Scribe does it)*

70 **SCRIBE**
...and our former sister Barbara.

72 **JÜRGEN**
Did you write: *former* sister? And even if it should be so, did *you* cast her off from our kin? *(Whipping him in the face)* Ah? Did you? Write: our sister Barbara, noble-born maiden. *(Scribe disappears, Jürgen claps hands. A few armoured and sword-bearing soldiers appear.)*

92 **JÜRGEN**
Are the trackers ready? All – horses, arms, sleighs?

95 **FIRST SOLDIER**
Ready.

96 **SECOND SOLDIER**
Ready.

96 **REINHOLD**
I'll race towards Riga.

97 **BARTHOLOMEUS**
And I'll follow the road to Pärnu

99 *Anna von Tödwen, in furs for travelling, rushes in, followed by Friesner.*

101 **ANNA** *(panting)*
Yes, they've really left!

103 **JÜRGEN**
Regrettably.

104 *Friesner turns a little aside, folds his arms and smiles with his eyes closed. Servant brings a chair for Anna and leaves.*

110 **ANNA** *(sitting)*
This child, this wilful child... And she went so lightly dressed and I don't know where to send her warm skirts... *(Anna becomes aware of the soldiers, rises and grabs Friesner's hand.)* Friesner, look! *(Turning to the brothers)* Look here, why these swords?

125 **JÜRGEN**
To hack this dog's miserable body to pieces and to bring back Barbara and judge her.

- 133 ANNA (*to Jürgen*)
 ...But you know her... Once she gets an idea...
 Can't you let them go?! I am also hurt at all
 of this... But as a woman I know what is love.
 So, answer! (*Jürgen is silent*) (*To*
Bartholomeus) Answer! (*Bartholomeus is*
silent) (*To Reinhold*) Answer!
- 163 REINHOLD
 We'd never get over this river of filth.
 It would splash us all our lives: Ah,
 Tisenhusen, that Tisenhusen who gave his
 sister as harlot to this ink-scribbler.
- 185 BARTHOLOMEUS
 Mrs. Anna? Ah, an in-law of this quill driver,
 the aunt of his whore!
- 193 ANNA (*sinking into the chair*)
 My God! It's slander and shame!
 Terrible shame!
- 205 JÜRGEN
 They may hide with the devil or with the God
 himself, we have to find them! (*Claps hands,*
Bartholomeus and Reinhold leave with the
soldiers, Friesner crosses and supports Anna
when leaving.)

Act III

Introduction

- 9,32 CHOIR
 Hunger or sleep will not touch me; I will not
 tire while wine is wetting my bristle. I'm a
 steely hound, following the bird's scent until
 I catch the bird!
- 37 REINHOLD
 Silence! Tracks of their sledge!

Scene 7

- 42 *Bonnius and Barbara come wading in the red*
evening snow. Bonnius supports Barbara.
They arrive at a cave in the red snow-patched
sandstone gorge.
- 58 BARBARA (*tiredly*)
 We have broken the third horse...
- 60 BONNIUS
 But we haven't lost hope. It's awakening, it's
 still alive! We must get a horse from this
 village, whatever the cost!
- 66 BARBARA
 We have no more money...
- 67 BONNIUS
 Who will be able to stop me! Tomorrow night
 we will arrive at the Lithuanian border
 station!
- 70 BARBARA (*pulling Bonnius into the cave*)
 Come... Allow me some rest. (*Sits on a stone*
in the cave, pulling Bonnius near herself.
Bonnius kneels before her.) Do you love me?
- 80 BONNIUS
 More and more for every hour.
- 81 BARBARA
 And what do you love most with me?
- 83 BARBARA
 I don't have too much of it left...
- 92 BONNIUS
 Your pride

- 84 **BONNIUS**
It's greater than ever! (*Kisses her*) Because I, a wanderer without honour... (*Barbara's hand shuts his mouth*)
- 92 **BARBARA**
Oh, how I love you and your haughty courage.
- 95 **BONNIUS**
Barbara, you are a feather and a horse's hock-iron. (*Barbara watches him*)
- 101 **BARBARA**
The whole night I could watch the flame in your eyes...
- 107 **BONNIUS**
Soon, soon we'll reach a strange, friendly land, a foreign, friendly town...
- 111 **BARBARA**
Yes... If you are not too tired you could look for a horse.
- 114 **BONNIUS**
And you?
- 115 **BARBARA** (*lying down on the floor of the cave for a nap*)
The Lord's hand may protect me... (*Bonnius stops for a moment, takes Barbara's hand, kisses it and hurries off*)
- 127 **CHOIR** (*muffled from a distance*)
Hunger or sleep will not touch me; I will not tire while wine is wetting my bristle. I'm a steely hound, following the bird's scent, until I catch the bird!
- 129 *Trackers appear headed by Reinhold.*
- 131 **FIRST TRACKER** (*quietly*)
Two tracks are going in.
- 134 *Reinhold takes his sword and rushes into the cave. The others follow. Reinhold stops in front of the sleeping Barbara. Then he lifts his sword and touches her with it. Barbara awakens, sits up, puts up her hand to suppress a cry and looks around desperately, sinks the head but*
- then noticeably breaks down and rises slowly but decisively.*
- 169 **BARBARA**
Let's go.
- 173 **REINHOLD** (*sitting on a stone*)
Although we are in a hurry, we'll wait, sister, until your fiancé, that dog, comes back. (*Gives a sign to the men who spread out and look in all directions. In desperation Barbara gets an idea: she must save Bonnius from the trap awaiting him here.*)
- 185 **BARBARA**
He'll see from the tracks that you are a dozen. You wait in vain. He would fight three, four, six of your kind but not a dozen.
- 199 **REINHOLD**
You are right, sister. (*Beckoning four men apart*) You catch this dog. The rest get going. (*Four men leaving to one side, the rest to the other side.*)

Scene 8

- 1 Knights' Hall of the Rannu castle with the Tisenhusen coat of arms. A dozen of high chairs in a semicircle under the coat of arms. Anna enters supported by Johann Tödwen
- 13 **TÖDWEN**
Don't cry, woman. It is enough that you are not angry with her...
- 16 **ANNA**
But she is like a blossom within my own heart, my own child, my own flesh (*cries*)...
- 22 **TÖDWEN** (*helplessly*)
Oh, it's so sad, so sad...
- 24 *Half a dozen silent and stern Tisenhusens pass and sit on the chairs. Johann stays with the wife, then leaves her weeping and follows reluctantly the noblemen and sits on a chair. Jürgen enters pushing Friesner in front of him with commanding gestures.*

- 34 **FRIESNER** (*reluctantly*)
Why do you need me here?
- 36 **JÜRGEN**
The one who has baptised and confirmed her and heard her confession must attend a great family assembly. (*Friesner sits on a chair a little away from the others but still among them. Simultaneously another half-dozen noblemen take their seats. Pause.*)
- 48 **TISENHUSEN OF KONGUTA**
Bring Barbara. (*Reinhold and Bartholomeus exit and bring Barbara. Barbara's changed appearance is striking. Barbara remains standing in the focal point of the semicircle of chairs*)
- 59 **KONGUTA**
Who is accusing?
- 60 **JÜRGEN**
I am accusing
- 61 **KONGUTA**
Whom do you accuse?
- 62 **JÜRGEN**
Barbara von Tisenhusen, daughter of Reinhold.
- 64 **KONGUTA**
Of what do you accuse her?
- 66 **JÜRGEN**
Of forbidden intercourse with Franz Bonnius, a travelling merchant.
- 68 **KONGUTA**
Did you all hear the accusation?
- 70 **ALL**
We heard.
- 71 **KONGUTA**
Barbara von Tisenhusen, did you hear your brother's accusation?
- 74 **BARBARA**
I heard.
- 74 **KONGUTA**
What do you have to say about this severe accusation?
- 76 **BARBARA**
I have nothing further to say that, as the law decrees, I informed my brothers of my wish to be wedded to Franz Bonnius. Then my brothers said they would deprive me of my portion. Then I told my brothers: that should not cause me any trouble. I came naked to my father's house and I can also leave it naked. But they answered they would never permit it. And then I did flee, to get to a foreign country, a foreign town and to live with him there.
- 102 **KONGUTA**
You confess in front of all of us that he is your husband?
- 104 **BARBARA**
In front of all: he is my husband.
- 107 **KONGUTA**
And can you tell us who married you?
- 109 **BARBARA**
I can.
- 109 **VOICES**
Ooo!
- 110 **KONGUTA**
Who was it then?
- 111 **SOME TISENHUSEN**
What priest took such liberty?!
- 112 **BARBARA**
It was God, Who is in Heaven.
- 113 **REIHOLD**
Can there ever be worse depravity?!
- 115 **SOME TISENHUSENS**
Horrible!
- 116 **FRIESNER** (*quietly*)
Dear child... I understand: you speak from your soul's agony... but God Himself does not wed but rather his church on earth...

122 JÜRGEN

You are not Bonnius' wife as you believe but his concubine, and wolves walked in your wedding train!

127 KONGUTA

And where is now this Bonnius who left you in trouble?

129 BARBARA

Never has Bonnius left me in trouble! And even if I would be put on the wheel I would not tell where he is even if I should know it.

136 SOME TISENHUSEN

Girl! Do you think before you speak?

137 BARBARA

Yes! And I say: the day will come when your eyes will yet see him but these will bring disaster to several of you!

144 KONGUTA (*quietly but with dignity*)

Do you know what punishment you have to bear?

146 BARBARA

I know.

146 KONGUTA

You know that you have to taste from the chalice of death?

149 BARBARA

I know.

152 KONGUTA

Is there anybody you desire to call in your defence? (*Barbara looks one by one at the men on chairs*)

159 BARBARA

Nobody – for who would do it from love has been torn from my side, and they who should do it because of kin want to crucify me. Thus I have nobody.

169 JÜRGEN

We haven't cast you off. You have yourself spat on your blood and honour and on us.

174 FRIESNER

I speak to you not according to earthly law of which you know every colon and comma. I talk about the law of love, God's law.

And according to this I pray: excuse her! All the blunder she has committed was done because she loved with an exceeding love (*almost cries*).

190 KONGUTA (*dismissing Friesner out of hand, to the Tisenhusens*)

You Tisenhusens and those who are bound by blood to us, how must we wash off this insult that she has done to us?

197 JÜRGEN (*gives a sign to Reinhold and Bartholomeus whereupon they stand up*)

On us, her brothers, has fallen the greatest dishonour. Therefore we demand that she be given into our hands, so that she will receive the punishment she has to bear through her brothers.

206 KONGUTA

Who agrees to this, rise up! (*All noblemen at judgement rise not immediately but without much thinking and more or less simultaneously. The only exception is Johann von Tödwen who first starts to rise with the others but then almost demonstratively falls back and remains seated. Friesner as an outsider has of course remained seated from the beginning.*)

209 VOICES

Decided, decided ...

212 KONGUTA

Decided. (*Pause*) Thus I hand over Barbara into the hands of her brothers, so that she may receive the punishment that will absolve all her sins and misdeeds. (*Darkness. All but Barbara leave.*)

Scene 9

- 275 Barbara is standing motionless. A dim ice field emerges around her. About her, Jürgen, Bartholomes and Reinhold, Friesner and two Estonian peasants appear from the darkness.
- 284 **JÜRGEN** *(to the peasants)*
Make a hole in the ice! *(The peasants look down stubbornly, then to each other and begin to hew a hole in the ice, slowly and reluctantly swinging their axes)*
- 290 **FRIESNER** *(beside himself)*
Now it is time... now it is time for this...
Jürgen! I say to you: don't lay your hand on her, so that your hand will not wither in the hellfire because she is your sister!
- 300 **JÜRGEN**
No! She didn't care about our blood!
She rejected us. And now our family has spat her out! She is not my sister!
- 310 **FRIESNER**
Do not judge, so that you will not be judged – so it is said in the Holy Bible.
- 313 **JÜRGEN**
Don't preach; make her ready for death!
(Friesner crosses and resigns. He goes to Barbara.)
- 316 **FRIESNER**
Do you know, my daughter, that now you have to die?
- 318 **BARBARA**
I know.
- 319 **FRIESNER**
But I ask you with anguish, do you regret your sin?
- 322 **BARBARA**
What sin are you talking about, father?
- 324 **FRIESNER**
My daughter, don't add haughtiness to it in this solemn moment.
- 326 **BARBARA**
Father, if you call it a sin that I gave my soul and body to Bonnius then I don't regret at all. I will go to my death rejoicing for having known such bliss, such light around me, as if a wave of heavenly joy rolled over me on this earth.
- 350 **FRIESNER** *(choked)*
Is this all that you have to say?
- 352 **BARBARA**
Pray for me that I may have strength to forgive my brothers. *(Friesner blesses Barbara, steps aside and kneels)*
- 362 **JÜRGEN**
Our former sister, come forward! *(Barbara goes to the hole)*
- 369 **BARBARA** *(quietly)*
Brothers, the water is cold...
- 372 **JÜRGEN** *(to peasants)*
Push her into the water! *(Pause)* Push her into water!
- 378 **FIRST PEASANT**
This we will not do!
- 379 **JÜRGEN**
Are you insubordinate?!
- 382 **SECOND PEASANT**
Sir, don't burst with your great anger! You are all mean with us. But know this: nobody but she has been kind to our wives and children.
- 392 **JÜRGEN**
Your damned necks will regret this too!
(Beckoning Reinhold and Bartholomeus)
We'll do it ourselves! *(The three of them push Barbara into the hole in the ice)*
- 402 **FRIESNER** *(wringing hands, kneeling)*
My God, if Thou art Love, why hast Thou forsaken us?!
- 1571 – ...“Then Karl Henriksson, a very young man, the son of a knight from Konckas in Finland, advanced into Jerwen with three

hundred Swedish soldiers in order to further pursue the enemy from Oberpahlen. He chased them through swamp and thicket and surprised Jürgen Tisenhusen of Rander's squadron, composed almost entirely of Livonian junkers, at the village of Ubbegal. He slew them all, stabbing or strangling them and burning them in their huts and winning great spoils. Thus was Jürgen Tisenhusen paid back for what he and his horsemen had perpetrated against his fatherland and for killing his own sister in defiance of all brotherly love and affection. He had drowned her in a sack because she had fallen in love with a clerk, sinned with him and desired to marry him..." (Livonian Chronicle of Balthasar Russow)