

FATHER CHOLENEC: But we all know Katharine is ever first to offer help — and she is so good at fixing things too. Did the woman speak to Katharine about all this?

SUPERIOR: No. She told no one but me. She is a very virtuous and wise woman — one who would not make mischief willingly. She says that Katharine used to go alone into the woods for long periods all during the hunt and now she wonders if the two met there in the woods.

FATHER CHOLENEC: This is a very delicate matter indeed — to ask a saintly young girl about this thing, of which she may very well be innocent!

SUPERIOR: But, on the other hand, she may be guilty — you know how difficult it is for some girls to avoid sins of the flesh. I want you to question Katharine on the subject.

MUSIC: *Up and out*

FATHER CHOLENEC: Now, that is what this good woman suspects, my daughter. Is there any truth in it?

KATERI: No, Father. Her good husband would not think of me at all — nor I of him — or of any other man. I am God's alone! I did go into the woods every day along, though. I built a rustic shrine there and said my rosary. It was our dear Lord I went to meet!

MUSIC: *Up and out*

ANASTASIA: Kateri — there has been gossip all winter — for although Father believed in your innocence, there were others who thought you guilty — and they hold you in contempt because you did not defend yourself.

KATERI: But you see I do not mind being held in contempt. Did not the people of his day spit upon the face of Jesus?

ANASTASIA: It is true, my dear, that they did. But I do think that the best means of settling this talk is for you to be married. Another thing is this — look how poor your dress is. You need a man to provide you with all the things that an Indian woman needs to keep her warm and comfortable.

KATERI: I do not wish to marry, and I do not mind being poor. Did you not tell me, dear mother, that the good nuns in



Ville Marie* never marry, but live their lives dedicated to God alone — and are they not proud of their poverty?

MUSIC: *Up and out*

FATHER CHOLENEC: My child, I wish to speak with you. I agree with your mother, Anastasia, that you should marry.

KATERI: In all things, but this one, Father, I am willing to do as you wish. But I have prayed about this for days and I have decided what I am going to do. I have dedicated myself to Jesus, Son of Mary. I have taken Him for my Spouse and only He shall have my love.

FATHER CHOLENEC: Think well, Katharine. No Indian girl has ever lived such a life, without a mate. You are, of course, the only judge — it depends on you alone.

KATERI: Then, Father, I will not marry. Will you speak to Anastasia about it, so that she will not think I am doing something which you have frowned upon?

FATHER CHOLENEC: I will.

MUSIC: *Up and out*

(FADING IN) And so it seems to me that the Holy Spirit has directed our little Katharine to be a virgin all the days of her life. As for providing for her, think no more of it, good Anastasia. I, myself, and the other missionaries will see that she never is in want as long as she lives.

ANASTASIA: (SORROWFULLY) I fear that she will not live a long time, Father. Since her great illness last year, she has seemed to be suffering. She taxes her strength with continual work as well as penances of fasting — and she spends such long hours in prayer that sometimes I think she will die there.

MUSIC: *Up and fading to BG.*

ANASTASIA: Kateri, Kateri! Speak to me.

KATERI: Yes, Mother Anastasia.

ANASTASIA: You are very ill, my child. I thought you were dead!

KATERI: No, I shall not die today. Tomorrow, when all are gathered here ... (FADING).

MUSIC: *Up and fading to BG.*

ANASTASIA: Yes — Yes — come in — Kateri would want you here. The end is not far off.

FATHER CHOLENEC: Agonizing Heart of Jesus!

VOICES: Pity the Dying.

* Montreal.