

0801. MOZART TO HIS SISTER,¹ SALZBURG

Ma très chère sœur! –

*Vienne ce 18 d'Août 1784.*²

By the saints! – It is now time for me to write if I want my letter to reach you while still a Vestal Virgin! – A couple of days later, and – it's gone. –

[5] My wife and I wish you every happiness and pleasure on your change of legal status, and only regret from our hearts that we cannot be so fortunate as to be present at your wedding; but we hope quite firmly to embrace you as Frau von Sonnenburg,³ along with your esteemed spouse, next spring in Salzburg as well as in *St. Gilgen*;⁴ – [10] There is nothing we are more sorry about than our dear father, who must now live so entirely alone! – Of course you are not far away from him, and he can often drive out to see you⁵ – only he is now tied to the accursed *Capellhaus*⁶ once again! – But if I were in my father's place, I would do the following: – I would |: as a man who has already served so long :| ask him to send me into retirement – and after receiving a *pension* I would go to my daughter in *St. Gilgen* and live there peacefully; – if the Archbishop were unwilling to consider my request, I would ask to be dismissed and would go to my son in Vienna; – and that is the main thing I ask of you, that you should take the trouble to persuade him to do this; – [20] I have already written to him today⁷ saying the same thing. – and now I furthermore send you 1000 good wishes, from Vienna to Salzburg, particularly that both of you might live as well together as – the two of us; – accept therefore a little advice from my Poetic Brainbox; just listen to it:

- [25] Once married, knowledge you will gain
of what has long in darkness lain;
soon from experience you will know
the path along which Eve did go
to cause her to give birth to Cain.
- [30] To all such duties you'll impart
the joy of a most willing heart,
for, trust me, you'll learn fast enough;
yet ev'ry coin has got two faces:
besides its many joys and graces,
- [35] the ways of marriage can turn rough.
So when your husband strains your nerves,
with frowns no faithful wife deserves,
and angry clouds eclipse the light,
think: thus the moods of men do run,
- [40] and say, Oh Lord, thy will be done,
by day – – and mine be done by night.

Your sincere brother,

¹ BD: Mozart's sister, Maria Anna Walburga Ignatia ("Nannerl"), 1751-1829.

² "My very dear sister!// Vienna, this 18th day of August 5, 1784".

³ BD: On 23rd August, Nannerl married Johann Baptist Franz von Berchtold zu Sonnenburg, 15 years older than herself, already father of five children and twice a widower, administrator of St. Gilgen. He had known the Mozart family since at least 1776. With the marriage, Nannerl moved into the house in St. Gilgen in which her mother had been born.

⁴ St. Gilgen, roughly 25 km. east of Salzburg. BD: The visit did not take place.

⁵ BD: 6 hours by coach.

⁶ Salzburgwiki: Building dating from the 14th century, at this time used as a boarding school training young people for the cathedral music.

⁷ BD: No. 0800, lost.

W: A: Mozart mp⁸

[THE POEM LITERALLY:]

[25] In marriage you will learn much
which was half a puzzle to you;
soon you will know from experience
how Eve once had to act
so that she gave birth to Cain afterwards.

[30] Yet sister, these duties of marriage
you will carry out with a willing heart,
for, believe me, they are not difficult;
yet everything has two sides;
although marriage brings many joys,
[35] yet it also brings sorrow.

Therefore, if your husband shows you a grim mien,
which you think you do not deserve,
doing it in his nasty mood:
then remember these are the quirks of men,
[40] and say, Lord, thy will be done
by day – – and mine by night.

⁸ mp = “manu propria” = “in his/her own hand”.