

# ENGLISH

## TOPIC : ARMS AND THE MAN

### ACT : I

1. Background: Serbo- Bulgarian war(1885). The war started on 14<sup>th</sup> November and ended on 28<sup>th</sup> November. The battle was finalized at Slivnitza in Bulgaria(Battle of Slivnitza.) Bulgarians won it.
2. The play was written in 1894, published in 'Plays Pleasant' in 1898. The play was first enacted in 1894 in the Avenue Theatre.
3. Shaw's pleasant plays: 4, Unpleasant plays : 3
4. Shaw himself wrote a preface to the play in the 'Plays Pleasant.' In his preface he said that what he wanted was a background. He said, "now I am totally ignorant of history and geography." One of his friends Sidney Webb advised him to write something basing the war going on. To this Shaw said, " I looked up Serbia and Bulgaria in an atlas." He had no notion about these countries. So , to identify characters he has added – OFF with the 7 characters belonging to Bulgaria.
5. Albeit the play is not a historical play. Instead it is a play about the battle of ideas. Shaw's interest is not to give a faithful account of the battlefield, but to puncture the romantic concepts about war and love.
6. Another friend of Shaw HENRY SALT after reading the play suggested a title 'BATTLEFIELDS AND BOUDOIRS.'
7. But Shaw gave the title 'Arms and the Man.' The title is derived from Virgil's epic AENEID of which the first line in Latin reads thus-ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO. Dryden translated a book entitled 'TRANSLATION OF VIRGIL.' He translated the line as- 'ARMS AND THE MAN I SING.' Shaw picked up 'Arms and the Man' for the title. (Arms= ammunitions) motto of the preface: man is more important than his arms/ weapons.

8. Sub-title: An Anti- Romantic Comedy in Three Acts. Also known as Drama of Ideas/ Social Drama/ Realistic Drama/ Comedy of Manners/ Anti-Sentimental Comedy/ Comedy of Anti-Climax.
9. Main themes: Love and war., Social discrimination in the then Bulgarian society.
10. Characters : Captain Bluntschli : about 35 years old. Swiss soldier. Mouth piece of Shaw.
11. Sergius Saranoff : romantic, imaginative . is called Don Quixote. Led the cavalry charge of the Bulgarian army.
12. Raina : fiancé of Sergius. A romantic , imaginative, 23 years old,
13. Major Petkoff : about 50, unambitious unpolished character. Father of Raina,
14. Catherine Petkoff : over 40, fashionable, proud, mother of Raina,
15. Louka: maid servant of Petkoff family, Proud, independent spirit,
16. Nikola : man servant of Petkoffs. Spirit of servitude.
17. The play opens in the bed chamber of Bulgaria in late November in 1885 in a small town near Dragoman(mountain pass in the west of Bulgaria). The bed room is half rich Bulgarian, half cheap Viennese.
18. "Such news!"- Catherine says this to Raina. The news here refers to the victory of the Bulgarians in the Battle of Slivnitsa.
19. 'our gallant Bulgarians with their swords and eyes flashing, thundering down like an avalanche and scattering the wretched Serbs and their dandified Austrian officers like chaff.'" - Catherine here describes the cavalry charge led by Sergius.- with a brilliant simile Catherine here describes the cavalry charge led by the Bulgarians. The gallant Bulgarians with their swords and eyes flashing fell upon the enemies like an avalanche and scattered the Austrian officers like chaff. [Catherine imagined the whole scene. It is the romantic idea of a battle held by a home stayer.]
20. Raina kept Sergius waiting a year before she was betrothed to him.
21. "It proves that all our ideas were real after all."- Raina says this when she hears about the splendid victory of the Bulgarians led by Sergius. A romantic idiot Raina harbours idealistic view about soldiering. Such ideas were formed from her

reading of romantic poems of Byron and Pushkin, and also by her frequent visits to opera at Bucharest, the capital of Rumania.

22. 'A cavalry charge ! think of that.'- Catherine says this. Cavalry charge means attack by horsemen.
23. 'I doubted him'- Raina says this. She doubted whether Sergius would be able to fulfil her romantic ideas about him.
24. 'Real life is so seldom like that.' -Raina says this. 'That' refers to her romantic ideas about soldiering.
25. 'I was only a prosaic little coward.'- Raina says this. She considers herself a prosaic little coward because she had doubts whether Sergius would be able to live up according to her poetic ideals.
26. 'The world is really a glorious world for women who can see its glory and men who can its romance.'- Raina says this. She here speaks about her idealistic view of life about the role of men and women.
27. 'What happiness! What unspeakable fulfillment,'- Raina here relates her unbounded joy at the news of Sergius' leading the victorious cavalry charge. (Sergius fulfilled her idealistic expectations about soldiering.)
28. Raina's romantic view of life was developed by her reading of the poems of Byron, English romantic poet and Pushkin, Russian romantic poet.
29. 'This is the happiest night of my life...'- Raina says this. The night will be happiest if only no fugitive intrudes her house.
30. Raina keeps a portrait of Sergius at the chest of her drawers. She adores the portrait very often without kissing or pressing it to her breast.
31. 'I shall never be unworthy of you.'- Raina says this to the portrait of Sergius. She suffers from prick of conscience because earlier she doubted whether he would be able to live up according to her ideals.
32. Silhouetted – means seen in outline.
33. The man silhouetted in black is Bluntschli.
34. 'Some soldiers, I know, are afraid to die.'- Raina to Bluntschli.
35. 'This is a better weapon than the revolver.'- Raina's cloak is a better weapon to Bluntschli because without it Raina will not be able to welcome the search

party of Bulgarian Army in her night gown. Therefore , he throws his revolver on the ottoman.

36. 'it is not the weapon of a gentleman.'- Raina says this to Blunschli when the latter refuses to give her the cloak. Raina regards it as unchivalrous and ungentleman like
37. 'Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools.'- Raina says this to Blunschli. He means soldiers are fools and can be easily befooled.
38. Raina saved Blunschli by hiding him behind the curtain.
39. '...stops, petrified.'- Louka is turned into stone in surprise because she is cocksure about the presence of a fugitive in Raina's bed chamber. This is because she has noticed a revolver on the ottoman.
40. 'A narrow save; but a miss is as good as a mile.'- Blunschli says this to Raina when the search party leaves Raina's bedroom.
41. According to Blunschli, he joined the Serbian Army because when he came out of Switzerland in search of job, they approached him first.
42. 'You are an angel.'- Blunschli addresses Raina here because the latter because the latter gave him chocolates.
43. As per Blunschli, the young soldiers carry pistols and cartridges, but the old ones i.e., the seasoned soldiers carry food because they know that food is more important than cartridges.
44. 'You havnt been under fire for three days as I have.'- Blunschli says this to Raina. He means that he had been fighting for THREE DAYS in the Battle of Slivnitza.
45. 'I am as nervous as a mouse.'- blunschli says this about himself she feels fatigued for fighting in the Battle of Slivnitza.
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