**Character List**

**Raina**

The play’s protagonist and heroine. Raina is a young woman living in the provinces in Bulgaria, and born into the wealthy Petkoff family. She pines for her fiancé Sergius, who has just led a successful, if ill-planned, cavalry charge against the Serbs. Raina meets and falls in love with Bluntschli, the Swiss “chocolate cream soldier” fighting for the Serbs.

The heroine of the play, Raina’s inner self is more nuanced than her outward appearances. Her true self is revealed not to be horrible or evil, but simply complex and human. Raina aspires to a perfect romantic chastity for Sergius, but really harbors affection toward Bluntschli after their initial encounter. She claims never to have lied in her life, but admits later to telling strategic lies when they can make a situation easier to handle. Raina is revealed to be not a symbol of perfect femininity, but, rather, a human being, deserving of companionship with another human. In structuring Raina’s character this way, Shaw subverts some of the expectations of what might have been either a comedy of marriage or a serious play about love and war. *Arms and the Man*, and Raina in particular, are instances of the detail of lived experience complicating broader narratives about what “goodness,” “valor,” or “truth” ought to be.

**Bluntschli**

Swiss mercenary fighting for the Serbs, and Raina’s love interest, who she calls “the chocolate cream soldier.” He is skilled in warfare and emotionally sophisticated, but has a weakness for sweets. Bluntschli hides in Raina’s room with her help. When he returns in the spring to return Major Petkoff’s cloak, events are set into motion that bring out Catherine and Raina’s conspiracy to help him, and that lead to his engagement to Raina and an ultimately happy ending.

The “chocolate cream soldier” is the driving force of the plot. Bluntschli is a rationalist, meaning a man who believes in reacting to situations based on the facts, not on what is good versus what is bad. This does not mean that Bluntschli is immaculate. Bluntschli’s pragmatism entails that he will expect himself, sometimes, to behave irrationally, or to become afraid. He knows that he loves Raina passionately, but he is willing to suppress these feelings when he feels the match is impossible. When Bluntschli realizes Raina is a potential match for him, he does away with his scruples and carries forward. Bluntschli demonstrates a mode of life that is not divorced from passion or unreason, but that takes these feelings into account. This, more than anything, is what seems to inspire such devotion from the other characters at the end of the play. Bluntschli’s ability to expertly navigate the social interactions with the Petkoff family enable him to have come out on top

**Sergius**

Raina’s fiancé, and the hero of the Battle of Slivnitza. Sergius, by his own and many others’ admission, has no military skill. He led the charge out of a mixture of foolhardiness and desire for self-aggrandizement. Sergius flirts with the Petkoffs’ servant Louka, and the play ends in their engagement.

Sergius is Raina’s foil. He too is revealed to be far different than he first appears. He is not quite the noble hero of the Battle of Slivnitza. As Bluntschli notes, his cavalry charge was at best ill-informed, and it played to Sergius’s vanity. On top of this, Sergius admits to Louka, later in the play that he is a man of “many personalities.” He is no constant lover, and he has designs on Louka even while he maintains his engagement to Raina. Whereas Raina is revealed to be complex in a human and forgivable way, Sergius comes off as duplicitous and willing to manipulate the truth for his own purposes and at the expense of other people’s happiness. That Sergius winds up engaged at the play’s end is a jarring example of Shaw’s moral universe. Shaw does not always punish characters who might seem deserving of it. But Sergius does marry “below his station,” even as Louka improves hers.

**Catherine**

Raina’s mother, and matriarch of the Petkoff household. Catherine wants to marry off her daughter to as wealthy and prominent a man as possible. When Sergius appears to be this man, Catherine approves of the union. As it becomes clear that Sergius is not the man he presented himself to be, Catherine is willing to switch her allegiances to Bluntschli. Catherine is focused on making sure the Petkoffs’ are up-to-date in their home furnishings and technology.

Catherine is another of the play’s benevolent opportunists, making the most of circumstances as they break in her direction. At first, she is strongly supportive of the idea that Raina and Sergius marry. She finds Sergius to be a fitting future husband for her daughter, as he is a man whose bravery has been demonstrated on the battlefield. But once Sergius reveals that he has major flaws, Catherine and Petkoff are more than willing to support their daughter’s engagement to Bluntschli. This is especially true once Bluntschli indicates that he has recently come into a substantial fortune.

**Louka**

The Petkoffs’ female servant. Louka is engaged to Nicola, the head male servant. She has a vexed if flirtatious relationship with Sergius, who engaged to Raina. Louka wants to better her social station by marrying a noble, and criticizes Nicola for having no aspirations over those of a common servant.

Louka, the female servant, is another character who is willing to leverage what she knows in order to get what she wants. Louka admits to Nicola that she knows far more about the Petkoff family than they would like. Nicola is scandalized that she would trade in gossip to gain power over the Petkoffs, but for Louka this is not a moral calculation, it’s a practical one. Louka figures that if Nicola wants to remain a servant, he will, because he knows the rules of that game. But Louka wants to change the game itself and move up in the social hierarchy. This involves the violation of norms typical for servant life. It is Louka’s aspiration toward social rank that enables her to manipulate Sergius, who seemed at first to be manipulating her, and to arrange for a marriage that will make her a lady.

**Major Petkoff**

Head of the Petkoff family, and Raina’s father. The Major is a decent if unambitious soldier, and he seems concerned mostly with maintaining his family’s social position in the rural parts of Bulgaria. He and Catherine are willing to accept Bluntschli as Raina’s suitor by the play’s end only after he demonstrates just how wealthy he is.

**Nicola**

Head male servant of the Petkoff estate. Nicola initially reprimands Louka for her willingness to leverage information she’s heard as gossip against the Petkoffs. Louka feels that Nicola is not ambitious enough because he is content to be a servant for the rest of his life. Nicola ends the play by breaking his engagement amicably with Louka, allowing her to be engaged to Sergius.