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**SIEGFRIED AND  
THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS**

**Richard Wagner**

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THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS**

**RICHARD WAGNER**

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# Siegfried

# Characters

## **CHARACTERS**

Siegfried  
Mime  
The Wanderer  
Alberich  
Fafner  
Erda  
Brünnhilde

## **SCENES OF ACTION**

Act I. A Cave In A Wood  
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## The First Act

*[A rocky cavern in a wood, in which stands a naturally formed smith's forge, with big bellows. Mime sits in front of the anvil, busily hammering at a sword.]*

### Mime

*[Who has been hammering with a small hammer, stops working.]*

Slavery! worry!  
Labour all lost!  
The strongest sword  
That ever I forged,  
That the hands of giants  
Fifty might wield,  
This insolent urchin  
For whom it is fashioned  
Can snap in two at one stroke,  
As if the thing were a toy!

*[Mime throws the sword on the anvil ill-humouredly, and with his arms akimbo gazes thoughtfully on the ground.]*

There is one sword  
That he could not shatter  
Nothung's splinters  
Would baffle his strength,  
Could I but forge  
Those doughty fragments  
That all my skill  
Cannot weld anew.  
Could I but forge the weapon,  
Shame and toil would win their reward!

*[He sinks further back, his head bowed in thought.]*

Fafner, the dragon grim,  
Dwells in the gloomy wood;  
With his gruesome and grisly bulk  
The Nibelung hoard  
Yonder he guards.  
Siegfried, lusty and young,  
Would slay him without ado;  
The Nibelung's ring  
Would then become mine.  
The only sword for the deed  
Were Nothung, if it were swung  
By Siegfried's conquering arm  
And I cannot fashion  
Nothung, the sword!

*[He lays the sword in position again, and goes on hammering in deep dejection.]*

Slavery! worry!  
 Labour all lost!  
 The strongest sword  
 That ever I forged  
 Will never serve  
 For that difficult deed.  
 I beat and I hammer  
 Only to humour the boy;  
 He snaps in two what I make,  
 And scolds if I cease from work.

*[He drops his hammer.]*

**Siegfried**

*[In rough forester's dress, with a silver horn hung by a chain, bursts in boisterously from the wood. He is leading a big bear by a rope of bast, and urges him towards Mime in wanton fun.]*

Hoiho! Hoiho!

*[Entering.]*

Come on Come on!  
 Tear him! Tear him!  
 The silly smith!

*[Mime drops the sword in terror, and takes refuge behind the forge; while Siegfried, shouting with laughter, keeps driving the bear after him.]*

**Mime**

Hence with the beast!  
 I want not the bear!

**Siegfried**

I come thus paired  
 The better to pinch thee  
 Bruin, ask for the sword!

**Mime**

Hey! Let him go!  
 There lies the weapon;  
 It was finished to-day.

**Siegfried**

Then thou art safe for to-day!

*[He lets the bear loose and strikes him on the back with the rope.]*

Off, Bruin!  
 I need thee no more.

*[The bear runs back into the wood.]*

**Mime**

*[Comes trembling from behind the forge.]*

Slay all the bears  
 Thou canst, and welcome  
 But why thus bring the beasts  
 Home alive?

**Siegfried**

*[Sits down to recover from his laughter.]*

For better companions seeking  
 Than the one who sits at home,  
 I blew my horn in the wood,  
 Till the forest glades resounded.  
 What I asked with the note  
 Was if some good friend  
 My glad companion would be.  
 From the covert came a bear  
 Who listened to me with growls,  
 And I liked him better than thee,  
 Though better friends I shall find.  
 With a trusty rope  
 I bridled the beast,  
 To ask thee, rogue, for the weapon.

*[He jumps up and goes towards the anvil.]*

**Mime**

*[Takes up the sword to hand it to Siegfried.]*

I made the sword keen-edged;  
 In its sharpness thou wilt rejoice.

*[He holds the sword anxiously in his hand; Siegfried snatches it from him.]*

**Siegfried**

What matters an edge keen sharpened,  
 Unless hard and true the steel?

*[Testing the sword.]*

Hei! What an idle,  
 Foolish toy!  
 Wouldst have this pin  
 Pass for a sword?

*[He strikes it on the anvil, so that the splinters fly about. Mime shrinks back in terror.]*

There, take back the pieces,  
 Pitiful bungler!  
 'Tis on thy skull  
 It should have been broken!  
 Shall such a braggart  
 Still go on boasting,  
 Telling of giants  
 And prowess in battle,  
 Of deeds of valour,

And dauntless defence?--  
 A sword true and trusty  
 Try to forge me,  
 Praising the skill  
 He does not possess?  
 When I take hold  
 Of what he has hammered,  
 The rubbish crumbles  
 At a mere touch!  
 Were not the wretch  
 Too mean for my wrath,  
 I would break him in bits  
 As well as his work--

The doting fool of a gnome!  
 And end the annoyance at once!

*[Siegfried throws himself on to a stone seat in a rage. Mime all the time has been cautiously keeping out of his way.]*

### **Mime**

Again thou ravest like mad,  
 Ungrateful and perverse.  
 If what for him I forge  
 Is not perfect on the spot,  
 Too soon the boy forgets  
 The good things I have made!  
 Wilt never learn the lesson  
 Of gratitude, I wonder?  
 Thou shouldst be glad to obey him  
 Who always treated thee well.

*[Siegfried turns his back on Mime in a bad temper, and sits with his face to the wall.]*

Thou dost not like to be told that!

*[He stands perplexed, then goes to the hearth in the kitchen.]*

But thou wouldst fain be fed.  
 Wilt eat the meat I have roasted,  
 Or wouldst thou prefer the broth?  
 'Twas boiled solely for thee.

*[He brings food to Siegfried, who, without turning round, knocks both bowl and meat out of his hand.]*

### **Siegfried**

Meat I roast for myself  
 Sup thy filthy broth alone!

### **Mime**

*[In a wailing voice, as if hurt.]*

This is the reward  
 Of all my love!

All my care  
 Is paid for with scorn.  
 When thou wert a babe  
 I was thy nurse,  
 Made the mite clothing  
 To keep him warm,  
 Brought thee thy food,  
 Gave thee to drink,  
 Kept thee as safe  
 As I keep my skin  
 And when thou wert grown  
 I waited on thee,  
 And made a bed  
 For thy slumber soft.  
 I fashioned thee toys  
 And a sounding horn,  
 Grudging no pains,  
 Wert thou but pleased.  
 With counsel wise  
 I guided thee well,  
 With mellow wisdom  
 Training thy mind.  
 Sitting at home,  
 I toil and moil;  
 To heart's desire  
 Wander thy feet.  
 Through thee alone worried,  
 And working for thee,  
 I wear myself out,  
 A poor old dwarf!

[*Sobbing.*]

And for my trouble  
 The sole reward is  
 By a hot-tempered boy

[*Sobbing.*]

To be hated and plagued!

### **Siegfried**

*[Has turned round again and has quietly watched Mime's face, while the latter, meeting the look tries timidly to hide his own.]*

Thou hast taught me much, Mime,  
 And many things I have learned;  
 But what thou most gladly hadst taught me  
 A lesson too hard has proved--  
 How to endure thy sight.  
 When with my food  
 Or drink thou dost come,  
 I sup off loathing alone;

When thou dost softly  
 Make me a bed,  
 My sleep is broken and bad;  
 When thou wouldst teach me  
 How to be wise,  
 Fain were I deaf and dumb.  
 If my eyes happen,  
 To fall on thee,  
 I find all thou doest  
 Amiss and ill-done;  
 When thou dost stand,  
 Waddle and walk,  
 Shamble and shuffle,  
 With thine eyelids blinking,  
 By the neck I want  
 To take the nodder,  
 And choke the life  
 From the hateful twitcher.  
 So much, O Mime, I love thee!  
 Hast thou such wisdom,  
 Explain, I pray thee,  
 A thing I have wondered at  
 Though I go roaming  
 just to avoid thee,  
 Why do I always return?  
 Though I love the beasts  
 All better than thee--

Tree and bird  
 And the fish in the brook,  
 One and all  
 They are dearer than thou--  
 How is it I always return?  
 Of thy wisdom tell me that.

**Mime**

*[Tries to approach him affectionately.]*

My child, that ought to show thee  
 That Mime is dear to thy heart.

**Siegfried**

I said I could not bear thee  
 Forget not that so soon.

**Mime**

*[Recoils, and sits down again apart, opposite Siegfried.]*

The wildness that thou shouldst tame  
 Is the cause, bad boy, of that.  
 Young ones are always longing  
 After their parents' nest;  
 What we love we all long for,

And so thou dost yearn for me  
 'Tis plain thou lovest thy Mime,  
 And always must love him.  
 What the old bird is to the young one,  
 Feeding it in its nest  
 Ere the fledgling can flutter,  
 That is what careful, clever Mime  
 To thy young life is,  
 And always must be.

**Siegfried**

Well, Mime, being so clever,  
 This one thing more also tell me

[*Simply.*]

The birds sang together  
 So gaily in spring,

[*Tenderly.*]

The one alluring the other  
 And thou didst say,  
 When I asked thee why,  
 That they were wives with their husbands.

They chattered so sweetly,  
 Were never apart;  
 They builded a nest  
 In which they might brood;  
 The fluttering young ones  
 Came flying out,  
 And both took care of the young.  
 The roes in the woods, too,  
 Rested in pairs,  
 The wild wolves even, and foxes.  
 Food was found and brought  
 By the father,  
 The mother suckled the young ones.  
 And there I learned  
 What love was like;  
 A whelp from its mother  
 I never took.  
 But where hast thou, Mime,  
 A wife dear and loving,  
 That I may call her mother?

**Mime**

[*Angrily.*]

What dost thou mean?  
 Fool, thou art mad!  
 Art thou then a bird or a fox?

**Siegfried**

When I was a babe  
 Thou wert my nurse,  
 Made the mite clothing  
 To keep him warm;  
 But tell me, whence  
 Did the tiny mite come?  
 Could babe without mother  
 Be born to thee?

**Mime**

[*Greatly embarrassed.*]

Thou must always  
 Trust what I tell thee.  
 I am thy father  
 And mother in one.

**Siegfried**

Thou liest, filthy old fright!  
 The resemblance 'twixt child and parent  
 I often have seen for myself.  
 I came to the limpid brook,  
 And the beasts and the trees  
 I saw reflected;  
 Sun and clouds too,  
 just as they are,  
 Were mirrored quite plain in the stream.  
 I also could spy  
 This face of mine,  
 And quite unlike thine  
 Seemed it to me;  
 As little alike  
 As a fish to a toad:  
 And when had fish toad for its father?

**Mime**

[*Very angrily.*]

How canst thou talk  
 Such terrible stuff?

**Siegfried**

[*With increasing animation.*]

Listen! At last  
 I understand  
 What in vain I pondered so long:  
 Why I roam the woods  
 And run to escape thee,  
 Yet return home in the end.

[*He springs up.*]

I cannot go till thou tell me  
 What father and mother were mine.

**Mime**

What father? What mother?  
 Meaningless questions!

**Siegfried**

*[Springs upon Mime, and seizes him by the throat.]*

To answer a question  
 Thou must be caught first;  
 Willingly  
 Thou never wilt speak;  
 Thou givest nothing  
 Unless forced to.  
 How to talk  
 I hardly had learned  
 Had it not by force  
 Been wrung from the wretch.  
 Come, out with it,  
 Mangy old scamp!  
 Who are my father and mother?

**Mime**

*[After making signs with his head and hands, is released by Siegfried.]*

Dost want to kill me outright!  
 Hands off, and the facts thou shalt bear,  
 As far as known to myself.  
 O ungrateful  
 And graceless child,  
 Now learn the cause of thy hatred!

Neither thy father  
 Nor kinsman I,  
 And yet thou dost owe me thy life!  
 To me, thy one friend,  
 A stranger wert thou;  
 It was pity alone  
 Sheltered thee here;  
 And this is all my reward.  
 And I hoped for thanks like a fool!

A woman once I found  
 Who wept in the forest wild;  
 I helped her here to the cave,  
 That by the fire I might warm her.  
 The woman bore a child here;  
 Sadly she gave it birth.  
 She writhed about in pain;  
 I helped her as I could.

Bitter her plight; she died.  
But Siegfried lived and throve.

**Siegfried**

[*Slowly.*]

My poor mother died, then, through me?

**Mime**

To my care she commended thee;  
‘Twas willingly bestowed.  
The trouble Mime would take!  
The worry kind Mime endured!  
“When thou wert a babe  
I was thy nurse “ . . .

**Siegfried**

That story I often have heard.  
Now say, whence came the name  
Siegfried?

**Mime**

‘Twas thus that thy mother  
Told me to name thee,  
That thou mightst grow  
To be strong and fair.  
“I made the mite clothing  
To keep it warm “ . . .

**Siegfried**

Now tell me, what name was my mother’s?

**Mime**

In truth I hardly know.  
“Brought thee thy food,  
Gave thee to drink “ . . .

**Siegfried**

My mother’s name thou must tell me.

**Mime**

Her name I forget. Yet wait!  
Sieglinde, that was the name borne  
By her who gave thee to me.  
“I kept thee as safe  
As I keep my skin” . . .

**Siegfried**

[*With increasing urgency.*]

Next tell me, who was my father?

**Mime**

[*Roughly.*]

Him I have never seen.

**Siegfried**

But my mother told it thee, surely.

**Mime**

He fell in combat  
Was all that she said.  
She left the fatherless  
Babe to my care.  
“And when thou wert grown  
I waited on thee,  
And made a bed  
For thy slumber soft” . . .

**Siegfried**

Still, with thy tiresome  
Starling song!  
That I may trust thy story,  
Convinced thou art not lying,  
Thou must produce some proof.

**Mime**

But what proof will convince thee?

**Siegfried**

I trust thee not with my ears,  
I trust thee but with mine eyes:  
What witness speaks for thee?

**Mime**

[*After some thought takes from the place where they are concealed the two, pieces of a broken sword.*]

I got this from thy mother:  
For trouble, food, and service  
This was my sole reward.  
Behold, 'tis a splintered sword!  
She said 'twas borne by thy father  
In the fatal fight when he fell.

**Siegfried**

[*Enthusiastically.*]

And thou shalt forge  
These fragments together,  
And furnish my rightful sword!  
Up! Tarry not, Mime;  
Quick to thy task!  
If thou hast skill,  
Thy cunning display.

Cheat me no more  
 With worthless trash  
 These fragments alone  
 Henceforth I trust.  
 Lounge o'er thy work,  
 Weld it not true,  
 Trickily patching  
 The goodly steel,  
 And thou shalt learn on thy limbs  
 How metal best should be beat!  
 I swear that this day  
 The sword shall be mine  
 My weapon to-day I shall win!

**Mime**

*[Alarmed.]*

What wouldst thou to-day with the sword?

**Siegfried**

Leave the forest  
 For the wide world,  
 Never more to return.  
 Ah, how fair  
 A thing is freedom  
 Nothing holds me or binds!  
 No father have I here,  
 And afar shall be my home  
 Thy hearth is not my house,  
 Nor my covering thy roof.  
 Like the fish  
 Glad in the water,  
 Like the finch  
 Free in the heavens,  
 Off I will float,  
 Forth I will fly,  
 Like the wind o'er the wood  
 Wafted away,  
 Thee, Mime, beholding no more!

*[He runs into the forest.]*

**Mime**

*[Greatly Alarmed.]*

Stop, boy! Stop, boy!  
 Whither away?  
 Hey! Siegfried!  
 Siegfried! Hey!

*[He looks after the retreating figure for some time in astonishment; then he goes back to the smithy and sits down behind the anvil.]*

He storms away!  
 And I sit here:  
 To crown my cares  
 Comes still this new one;  
 My plight is piteous indeed!  
 How help myself now?  
 How hold the boy here?  
 How lead the young madcap  
 To Fafner's lair?  
 And how weld the splinters  
 Of obstinate steel?  
 In no furnace fire  
 Can they be melted,  
 Nor can Mime's hammer  
 Cope with their hardness.

[*Shrilly.*]

The Nibelung's hate,  
 Need and sweat  
 Cannot make Nothung whole,  
 Never will weld it anew.

[*Sobbing, he sinks in despair on to a stool behind the anvil.*]

### **Wanderer (Wotan)**

[*Enters from the wood by the door at the back of the cave. He wears along dark blue cloak, and, for staff, carries a spear. On his head is a round, broad-brimmed slouched hat.*]

All hail, cunning smith!  
 A seat by thy hearth  
 Kindly grant  
 The wayworn guest.

### **Mime**

[*Starting up in alarm.*]

Who seeks for me here  
 In desolate woods,  
 Finds my home in the forest wild?

### **Wanderer**

[*Approaching very slowly step by step.*]

Wanderer names me the world, smith.  
 From far I have come;  
 On the earth's back ranging,  
 Much I have roamed.

### **Mime**

If Wanderer named,  
 Pray wander from here  
 Without halting for rest.

**Wanderer**

Good men grudge me not welcome;  
 Many gifts I have received.  
 By bad hearts only  
 Is evil feared.

**Mime**

Ill fate always  
 Dwelt by my side;  
 Thou wouldst not add to it, surely!

**Wanderer**

*[Slowly coming nearer and nearer.]*

Always searching,  
 Much have I seen;  
 Things of weight  
 Have told to many;  
 Oft have rid men  
 Of their troubles,  
 Gnawing and carking cares.

**Mime**

Though thou hast searched,  
 And though much thou hast found,  
 I need neither seeker nor finder.  
 Lonely am I,  
 And lone would be;  
 Idlers I harbour not here.

**Wanderer**

*[Again coming a little nearer.]*

There were many  
 Thought they were wise,  
 Yet what they needed  
 Knew not at all;  
 Useful lore was  
 Theirs for the asking,  
 Wisdom was their reward.

**Mime**

*[More and more anxious as he sees the Wanderer approach.]*

Idle knowledge  
 Some may covet;  
 I know enough for my needs.

*[The Wanderer reaches the hearth.]*

My own wits suffice,  
 I want no more,  
 So, wise one, keep on thy way.

**Wanderer**

*[Sitting down at the hearth.]*

Nay, here at thy hearth  
 I vow by my head  
 To answer all thou shalt ask.  
 My head is thine,  
 'Tis forfeit to thee,  
 Unless I can give  
 Answers good,  
 Deftly redeeming the pledge.

**Mime**

*[Who has been staring at the Wanderer open mouthed, now shrinks back; aside, dejectedly.]*

Now how to get rid of the spy?  
 The questions asked must be artful.

*[He summons up courage for an assumption of sternness; aloud.]*

Thy head for thy  
 Lodging pays:  
 'Tis pawned; now seek to redeem it.  
 Three the questions  
 Thou shalt be asked.

**Wanderer**

Thrice then I must answer.

**Mime**

*[Pulls himself together and reflects.]*

Since, far on the back  
 Of the wide earth roving,  
 Thy feet have ranged o'er the world,  
 Come, answer me this:  
 Tell me what race  
 Dwells in the earth's deep gorges.

**Wanderer**

In the depths of earth  
 The Nibelungs have their home;  
 Nibelheim is their land.  
 Black elves they all are;  
 Black Alberich  
 Once was their ruler and lord.  
 He subdued the busy  
 Folk by a ring  
 Gifted with magical might;  
 And they piled up  
 Shimmering gold,  
 Precious, fine-wrought,  
 To win him the world and its glory.

Proceed with thy questions, dwarf.

**Mime**

*[Sinks into deeper and deeper meditation.]*

Thou knowest much,  
Wanderer,  
Of the hidden depths of earth.  
Now, answer me this:  
Tell me what race  
Breathes on earth's back and moves there.

**Wanderer**

On the earth's broad back  
The race of the giants arose;  
Riesenheim is their land.  
Fasolt and Fafner,  
The rude folk's rulers,  
Envied the Nibelung's might.

So his wonderful hoard  
They won for themselves,  
And with it gained the ring too.  
The brothers quarrelled  
About the ring,

And slain was Fasolt.  
In dragon's form  
Fafner now watches the hoard.

One question threatens me still.

**Mime**

*[Quite lost in thought.]*

Much, Wanderer,  
Thou dost know  
Of the earth's back rude and rugged.  
Now answer aright:  
Tell me what race  
Dwells above in the clouds.

**Wanderer**

Above in the clouds  
Dwell the Immortals;  
Walhall is their home.  
They are light-spirits;  
Light-Alberich,  
Wotan, rules as their lord.  
From the world-ash-tree's  
Holiest bough once  
Wotan made him a shaft.  
Though the stem rot,  
The spear shall endure,

And with that spear-point  
 Wotan rules the world.  
 Trustworthy runes  
 Of holy treaties  
 Deep in the shaft he cut.  
 Who wields the spear  
 Carried by Wotan

The haft of the world  
 Holds in his hand.  
 Before him kneels  
 The Nibelung host;  
 The giants, tamed,  
 Bow to his will.  
 All must obey, and for ever,  
 The spear's eternal lord.

*[He strikes the ground with the spear as by accident, and a low growl of thunder is heard, by which Mime is violently alarmed.]*

Confess now, cunning dwarf,  
 Are not my answers right,  
 And is not my head redeemed?

### **Mime**

*[After attentively watching the Wanderer with the spear, becomes very frightened, seeks in a confused manner for his tools, and looks timidly aside.]*

Both thou hast won,  
 Wager and head;  
 Thy way now, Wanderer, go.

### **Wanderer**

Knowledge useful to thee  
 Thou wert to ask for;  
 Forfeit my head if I failed.  
 Forfeit be thine,  
 Knowest thou not  
 The thing it would serve thee to know.  
 Greeting thou  
 Gavest me not;  
 My head into thy hand  
 I gave  
 That I might rest by thy hearth.  
 By wager fair  
 Forfeit thy head,  
 Canst thou not answer  
 Three things when asked  
 So sharpen well, Mime, thy wits!

### **Mime**

*[Very much frightened, and after much hesitation, at last composes himself with timid submission.]*

Long it is  
 Since I left my land;  
 Long it seems to me  
 Since I was born.  
 I saw here the eye of Wotan  
 Shine, peering into my cave;  
 His glance dazes  
 My mother-wit.  
 But well were it now to be wise.  
 Come then, Wanderer, ask.  
 Perhaps fortune will favour  
 The dwarf, and redeem his head.

**Wanderer**

*[Comfortably sitting down again.]*

Then first, honest dwarf,  
 Answer this question:  
 Tell the name of the race  
 That Wotan treats most harshly,  
*[Very softly, but audibly.]*  
 And yet loves beyond all the rest.

**Mime**

*[With more cheerfulness.]*

Though unlearnèd  
 In heroes' kinship,  
 This question I answer with ease.  
 The Wälsungs are Wotan's  
 Chosen stock,  
 By him begotten  
 And loved with passion,  
 Though they are shown no grace.  
 Siegmund and Sieglinde  
 Born were to Wälse,  
 A wild and desperate  
 Twin-born pair;  
 Siegfried had they as son,  
 The strongest shoot from the tree.  
 My head, say, is it  
 Still, Wanderer, mine?

**Wanderer**

*[Pleasantly.]*

How well thou knowest  
 And namest the race!  
 Rogue, I see thou art clever.  
 The foremost question  
 Thou hast solved;  
 The second answer me, dwarf.

A crafty Niblung  
 Shelters Siegfried,  
 Hoping he will slay Fafner,  
 That the dwarf may be lord of the hoard,  
 The ring being his.  
 Say, what sword,  
 If Fafner to fall is,  
 Must be by Siegfried swung?

**Mime**

*[Forgetting his present situation more and more, rubs his hands joyfully.]*

Nothung is  
 The name of the sword;  
 Into an ash-tree's stem  
 Wotan struck it;  
 One only might bear it:  
 He who could draw it forth.  
 The strongest heroes  
 Tried it and failed;  
 Only by Siegmund  
 Was it done;  
 Well he fought with the sword  
 Till on Wotan's spear it was split.  
 By a crafty smith  
 Are the fragments kept,  
 For he knows that alone  
 With the Wotan sword  
 A brave and foolish boy,  
 Siegfried, can slay the foe.

*[Much pleased.]*

A second time  
 My head have I saved?

**Wanderer**

*[Laughing.]*

The wisest of wise ones  
 Thou must be, surely;  
 Who else could so clever be!  
 But wouldst thou by craft  
 Employ the boy-hero  
 As instrument of thy purpose,  
 With one question more  
 I threaten thee.  
 Tell me, thou artful  
 Armourer,  
 Whose skill from the doughty splinters  
 Nothung the sword shall fashion.

**Mime**

*[Starts up in great terror.]*

The splinters! The sword!  
 Alas! my head reels!  
 What shall I do?  
 What can I say?  
 Accursèd sword!  
 I was mad to steal it!  
 A perilous pass  
 It has brought me to.  
 Always too hard  
 To yield to my hammer!  
 Rivet, solder--  
 Useless are both.

*[He throws his tools about as if he had gone crazy, and breaks out in utter despair.]*

The cleverest smith  
 Living has failed;  
 And, that being so,  
 Who shall succeed?  
 How rede aright such a riddle?

### **Wanderer**

*[Has risen quietly from the hearth.]*

Three things thou wert to ask me;  
 Thrice was I to reply.  
 Thy questions were  
 Of far-off things,  
 But what stood here at thy hand--  
 Needed much--that was forgot  
 Now that I guess it,  
 Thou goest crazed,  
 And won by me  
 Is the cunning one's head.  
 Now, Fafner's dauntless subduer,  
 Hear, thou death-doomed dwarf.  
 By him who knows not  
 How to fear  
 Nothung shall be forged.

*[Mime stares at him; he turns to go.]*

So ward thy head  
 Well from to-day.  
 I leave it forfeit to him  
 Who has never learned to fear.

*[He turns away smiling, and disappears quickly in the wood. Mime has sunk on to the bench overwhelmed.]*

### **Mime**

*[Stares before him into the sunlit wood, and begins to tremble more and more violently.]*

Accursèd light!  
 The air is on fire!  
 What flickers and flashes?  
 What buzzes and whirs?  
 What sways there and swings  
 And circles about?  
 What glitters and gleams  
 In the sun's hot glow?  
 What rustles and hums  
 And rings so loud?  
 With roll and roar  
 It crashes this way!  
 It bursts through the wood,  
 Making for me!

*[He rises up in terror.]*

Its jaws are wide open,  
 Eager for prey;  
 The dragon will catch me!  
 Fafner! Fafner!

*[He sinks shrieking behind the anvil.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Behind the scenes, is heard breaking from the thicket.]*

Ho there! Thou idler!  
 Is the work finished?

*[He enters the cave.]*

Quick, come show me the sword.

*[He pauses in surprise.]*

Where hides the smith?  
 Has he made off?  
 Hey, there! Mime, thou coward!  
 Where art thou? Where hidest thou?

### **Mime**

*[In a small voice, from behind the anvil.]*

'Tis thou then, child?  
 Art thou alone?

### **Siegfried**

*[Laughing.]*

Under the anvil?  
 Why, what doest thou there?  
 Wert thou grinding the sword?

**Mime**

[*Comes forward, greatly upset and confused.*]

The sword? The sword?  
How could I weld it?

[*Half aside.*]

By him who knows not  
How to fear  
Nothung shall be forged.  
Too wise am I  
To attempt such work.

**Siegfried**

[*Violently.*]

Wilt thou speak plainly  
Or must I help thee?

**Mime**

[*As before.*]

Where shall I turn in my need?  
My wily head  
Wagered and lost is,

[*Staring before him.*]

And forfeit to him it will fall  
Who has never learned to fear.

**Siegfried**

[*Vehemently.*]

Dost thou by shuffling  
Seek to escape?

**Mime**

[*Gradually recovering himself.*]

Small need to fly  
Him who knows fear!  
But that lesson was one never taught thee.  
A fool, I forgot  
The one great thing;  
What thou wert taught  
Was to love me,  
And alas I the task proved hard.  
Now how shall I teach thee to fear?

**Siegfried**

[*Seizes him.*]

Hey! Must I help thee?  
What work hast thou done?

**Mime**

Concerned for thy good,  
In thought I was sitting:  
Something of weight I would teach thee.

**Siegfried**

*[Laughing.]*

'Twas under the seat  
That thou wert sitting;  
What weighty thing foundest thou there?

**Mime**

*[Recovering himself more and more.]*

Down there I learned how to fear,  
That I might teach thee, dullard.

**Siegfried**

*[With quiet wonder.]*

This fear then, what is it?

**Mime**

Thou knowest not that,  
Yet wouldst from the forest  
Forth to the world?

What help in the trustiest sword,  
Hadst thou not learned to fear?

**Siegfried**

*[Impatiently.]*

What absurd  
Invention is this?

**Mime**

*[Approaching Siegfried with more and more confidence.]*

'Tis thy mother's wish  
Speaking through me.  
I must fulfil  
The promise I gave her:  
That the world and its wiles  
Thou shouldst not encounter  
Until thou hadst learned how to fear.

**Siegfried**

*[Vehemently.]*

Is it an art?  
Why was I not taught?  
Explain: this fearing, what is it?

**Mime**

In the dark wood  
 Hast thou not felt,  
 When shades of dusk  
 Fall dim and drear,  
 When mournful whispers  
 Sigh afar,  
 And fierce growling  
 Sounds at hand,  
 When strange flashes  
 Dart and flicker,  
 And the buzzing  
 And clamour grow--

[*Trembling.*]

Hast thou not felt grim horror--  
 Hold every sense in its clutches?--

[*Quaking.*]

When the limbs shiver,  
 Shaken with terror,

[*With a quivering voice.*]

And the heart, filled with dismay,  
 Hammers, bursting the breast--  
 Hast thou not yet felt that,  
 A stranger art thou to fear.

### **Siegfried**

[*Musing.*]

Wonderful truly  
 That must be.  
 Steadfast, strong  
 Beats my heart in my breast.  
 The shiver and shudder,  
 The fever and horror,  
 Burning and fainting,  
 Beating and trembling  
 Ah, how glad I would feel them,

[*Tenderly.*]

Could I but learn this delight!  
 But how, Mime,  
 Can it be mine?  
 How, coward, could it be taught me?

### **Mime**

Following me,  
 The way thou shalt find  
 I have thought it all out.  
 I know of a dragon grim  
 That slays and swallows men:

Fear thou wilt learn from Fafner,  
When I lead to where he lies.

**Siegfried**

Where has he his lair?

**Mime**

Neidhöhl'  
Named, it lies east  
Towards the end of the wood.

**Siegfried**

It lies not far from the world?

**Mime**

The world is quite close to the cave.

**Siegfried**

That I may learn what this fear is,  
Lead me there straightway;  
Then forth to the world!  
Make haste! Forge me the sword.  
In the world fain I would swing it.

**Mime**

The sword? Woe's me!

**Siegfried**

Quick to the smithy!  
Show me thy work!

**Mime**

Accursèd steel!  
Unequal my skill to the task;  
The potent magic  
Surpasses the poor dwarf's strength.  
'Twere more easily done  
By one who never felt fear.

**Siegfried**

Artful tricks  
The idler would play me;  
He is a bungler;  
He should confess,  
And not seek to lie his way out.  
Here with the splinters!  
Off with the bungler!

*[Coming to the hearth.]*

His father's sword  
Siegfried will weld:  
By him shall it be forged.

*[Flinging Mime's tools about, he sets himself impetuously to work.]*

**Mime**

If thou hadst practised  
Thy craft with care,  
Thou wouldst have profited now;  
But thou wert far  
Too lazy to learn,  
And now at need canst do nothing.

**Siegfried**

Where the master has failed  
What hope for the scholar,  
Had he obeyed him in all?

*[He makes a contemptuous grimace at him.]*

Be off with thee  
Meddle no more,  
In case with the steel I melt thee.

*[He has heaped a large quantity of charcoal on the hearth, and keeps blowing the fire, while he screws up the pieces of the sword in a vice and files them to shavings.]*

**Mime**

*[Who has sat down a little way off, watches Siegfried at work.]*

Why file it to bits?  
There is the solder  
All fused, ready to hand.

**Siegfried**

Off with the pap,  
I need it not;  
With paste I fashion no sword!

**Mime**

Now the file is ruined,  
The rasp is useless;  
Why grind thus the steel to splinters?

**Siegfried**

It must be shivered  
And ground into shreds;  
Only so can splinters be patched.

*[He goes on filing with great energy.]*

**Mime**

*[Aside.]*

I see a craftsman  
Is useless here;  
By his own folly the fool is best served.  
Look how he toils

With lusty strokes;  
The steel disappears,  
And still he keeps cool.

*[Siegfried has blown the fire to a bright flame.]*

Though I am as old  
As cave and wood,  
The like I never yet saw!

*[While Siegfried continues to file the piece of the sword impetuously, Mime seats himself a little further off.]*

He will forge the sword--  
I see it plain--  
Boldly weld it anew.

The Wanderer was right.  
Where shall I hide  
My luckless head?  
If nothing teaches him fear,  
Forfeit it falls to the boy.

*[Springing up and bending down in growing agitation.]*

But woe to Mime!  
If Siegfried learn fear,  
The dragon will never be slain;  
And, if so, how gain the ring?  
Accurst dilemma!  
Would I escape,  
I must find out some way  
Of subduing the boy for myself.

### **Siegfried**

*[Has now filed down the pieces, and puts the filings in a crucible, which he places on the fire.]*

Hey, Mime! The name!--  
Quick, name the sword  
That I have pounded to pieces.

### **Mime**

*[Starts and turns towards Siegfried.]*

Nothung, that is  
The name of the sword;  
'Twas thy mother told me the tale.

### **Siegfried**

*[During the following song keeps blowing the fire with the bellows.]*

Nothung! Nothung!  
Conquering sword!  
What blow, I wonder, broke thee.  
Thy keen-edged glory  
I chopped to chaff;

The splinters now I am melting.  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!  
 Bellows blow!  
 Brighten the flame!  
 In the woods  
 A tree grew wild;  
 It fell, by my hand hewn down.  
 The brown-stemmed ash  
 To charcoal I burned;  
 Now it lies heaped high on the hearth.  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!  
 Bellows blow!  
 Brighten the flame!  
 How bravely, brightly  
 The charcoal burns!  
 How clear and fair its fire!  
 With showering sparks  
 It leaps and glows,--  
 Hohei! Hoho! Hohei!--  
 Dissolving the splintered steel!  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!  
 Bellows, blow!  
 Brighten the flame!  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hoho, hohei! Hohei!  
 Nothung! Nothung!  
 Conquering sword!

Thy steel chopped to chaff is fused;  
 In thine own sweat  
 Thou swimmest now,

*[He pours the glowing contents of the crucible into a mould, which he holds up.]*

But soon my sword thou shalt be!

### **Mime**

*[During the pauses in Siegfried's song, still aside, sitting at a distance.]*

The sword he will forge  
 And vanquish Fafner,  
 So much I can clearly foresee;  
 Hoard and ring  
 The victor will have;  
 How to win them both for myself!  
 By wit and wiles  
 They shall be captured,  
 And safe shall be my head.

*[In the foreground, still aside.]*

After the fight, when athirst,  
 For a cooling draught he will crave;  
 Of fragrant juices  
 Gathered from herbs  
 The draught I will brew for him.  
 Let him drink but a drop,  
 And in slumber  
 Softly lapped he shall lie:  
 With the very sword  
 That he fashioned to serve him  
 He shall be cleared from my way,  
 And treasure and ring made mine.

*[He rubs his hands with satisfaction.]*

Ha! dull didst hold me,  
 Wanderer wise!  
 Does my subtle scheming  
 Please thee now?

Have I found  
 A path to peace?

*[He springs up joyfully, fetches several vessels, shakes spices and herbs from them into a pot, and tries to put it on the hearth.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Has plunged the mould into a pail of water. Steam and laud hissing ensue as it cools.]*

In the water flowed  
 A flood of fire;  
 Furious with hate,  
 Grimly it hissed;  
 Though scorching it ran,  
 In the cooling flood  
 No more it flows;  
 Stiff, stark it became,  
 Hard is the stubborn steel;  
 Yet warm blood  
 Shall flow thereby!  
 Now sweat once again,  
 That swift I may weld thee,  
 Nothung, conquering sword!

*[He thrusts the steel into the fire, and blows the bellows violently, While doing so he watches Mime, who, from the other side of the hearth, carefully puts his pot on the fire.]*

What does the booby  
 Make in his pot?  
 While I melt steel,  
 What art thou brewing?

### **Mime**

A smith is put to shame,  
 And learns from the lad he taught;  
 All the master's lore is useless now;  
 He serves the boy as cook.  
 Steel thou dost brew into broth;  
 Old Mime boils thee  
 Eggs for thy meal.

*[He goes on with his cooking.]*

### **Siegfried**

Mime, the craftsman,  
 Learns to cook now,  
 And cares no longer to forge;  
 I have broken  
 All the swords that he made me;  
 What he cooks my lips shall not touch.

*[During the following he takes the mould from the fire, breaks it, and lays the glowing steel on the anvil.]*

To find out what fear is  
 Forth he will guide me;  
 A far-off teacher shall teach me;  
 Even what he does best  
 He cannot do well;  
 In everything Mime must bungle!

*[During the forging.]*

Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!  
 Forge me, my hammer,  
 A trusty sword.  
 Hoho! Hahei!  
 Hoho! Hahei!  
 Blood-stained was once  
 Thy steely blue,  
 The crimson trickle  
 Reddened thy blade.  
 How cold was thy laugh!  
 The warm blood cooled at thy touch!  
 Heiaho! Haha!  
 Haheiaha!  
 Now red thou comest  
 From the fire,  
 And thy softened steel  
 To the hammer yields.  
 Angry sparks thou dost shower  
 On me who humbled thy pride.

Heiaho! Heiaho!  
 Heiahohohohoho!  
 Hahei! Hahei! Hahei!  
 Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!

Forge me, my hammer,  
 A trusty sword!  
 Hoho! Hahei!  
 Hoho! Hahei!  
 How I rejoice  
 In the merry sparks!  
 The bold look best  
 When by anger stirred!  
 Gay thou laughest to me,  
 Grimly though thou dost pretend!  
 Heiaho, haha, haheiaha!  
 Both heat and hammer  
 Served me well;  
 With sturdy strokes  
 I stretched thee straight;  
 Now banish thy modest blush,  
 Be as cold and hard as thou canst.  
 Heiho! Heiaho!  
 Heiahohohohoho! Heiah!

*[He swings the blade, plunges it into the pail of water, and laughs aloud at the hissing.]*

### **Mime**

*[While Siegfried is fixing the blade in the hilt, moves about in the foreground with the bottle into which he has poured the contents of the pot. Aside.]*

He forges a sharp-edged sword:  
 Fafner, the foe  
 Of the dwarf, is doomed;  
 I brewed a deadly draught:  
 Siegfried must perish  
 When Fafner falls.  
 By guile the goal must be reached;  
 Soon shall smile my reward!  
 For the shining ring  
 My brother once made,  
 And which with a potent  
 Spell he endowed,  
 The gleaming gold  
 That gives boundless might--  
 That ring I have won now,  
 I am its lord.

*[He trots briskly about with increasing satisfaction.]*

Alberich even,  
 Whom I served,  
 Shall be the slave  
 Of Mime the dwarf.  
 As Nibelheim's prince  
 I shall descend there,  
 And all the host

Shall do my will;  
 None so honoured as he,  
 The dwarf once despised!  
 To the hoard will come thronging  
 Gods and men;

*[With increasing liveliness.]*

The world shall cower,  
 Cowed by my nod,  
 And at my frown  
 Shall tremble and fall!  
 No more shall Mime  
 Labour and toil,  
 When others win him  
 Unending wealth.  
 Mime, the valiant,  
 Mime is monarch,  
 Prince and ruler,  
 Lord of the world!  
 Hei, Mime! Great luck has been thine!  
 Had any one dreamed of this!

### **Siegfried**

*[During the pauses in Mime's song has been filing and sharpening the sword and hammering it with the small hammer. He flattens the rivets of the hilt with the last strokes, and now grasps the sword.]*

Nothung! Nothung!  
 Conquering sword!  
 Once more art thou firm in thy hilt.  
 Severed wert thou;  
 I shaped thee anew,  
 No second blow thy blade shall shatter.  
 The strong steel was splintered,  
 My father fell;  
 The son who now lives  
 Shaped it anew.  
 Bright-gleaming to him it laughs,  
 And for him its edge shall be keen.

*[Swinging the sword before him.]*

Nothung! Nothung!  
 Conquering sword!  
 Once more to life I have waked thee.  
 Dead wert thou,  
 In fragments hewn,  
 Now shining defiant and fair.  
 Woe to all robbers!  
 Show them thy sheen!  
 Strike at the traitor,  
 Cut down the rogue!

See, Mime, thou smith;  
Thus sunders Siegfried's sword!

*[He strikes the anvil and splits it in two from top to bottom, so that it falls asunder with a great noise. Mime, who has mounted a stool in great delight, falls in terror to a sitting position on the ground. Siegfried holds the sword exultantly on high. The curtain falls.]*

## The Second Act

*A deep forest*

*[Quite in the background the entrance to a cave. The ground rises towards a flat knoll in the middle of the stage, and slopes down again towards the back, so that only the upper part of the entrance to the cave is visible to the audience. To the left a fissured cliff is seen through the trees. It is night, the darkness being deepest at the back, where at first the eye can distinguish nothing at all.]*

### Alberich

*[Lying by the cliff, gloomily brooding.]*

In night-drear woods  
By Neidhöhl' I keep watch,  
With ear alert,  
Keen and anxious eye.  
Timid day,  
Tremblest thou forth?  
Pale art thou dawning  
Athwart the dark?

*[A storm arises in the wood on the right, and from the same quarter there shines down a bluish light.]*

What comes yonder, gleaming bright?  
Nearer shimmers  
A radiant form;  
It runs like a horse and it shines;  
Breaks through the wood,  
Rushing this way.

Is it the dragon's slayer?  
Can it mean Fafner's death?

*[The wind subsides; the light vanishes.]*

The glow has gone,  
It has faded and died;  
All is darkness.  
Who comes there, shining in shadow?

### Wanderer

*[Enters from the wood, and stops opposite Alberich.]*

To Neidhöhl'  
By night I have come;  
In the dark who is hiding there?

*[As from a sudden rent in the clouds moonlight streams forth and lights up the Wanderer's figure.]*

### Alberich

*[Recognises the Wanderer and shrinks back at first in alarm, but immediately after breaks out in violent fury.]*

'Tis thou who comest thus?  
 What wilt thou here?  
 Go, get thee hence!  
 Begone, thou insolent thief!

**Wanderer**

*[Quietly.]*

Schwarz-Alberich  
 Wanders here?  
 Guardest thou Fafner's house?

**Alberich**

Art thou intent  
 On mischief again?  
 Linger not here!  
 Off with thee straightway!  
 Has grief enough  
 Not deluged the earth through thy guile?  
 Spare it further  
 Sorrow, thou wretch!

**Wanderer**

I come as watcher,  
 Not as worker.  
 The Wanderer's way who bars?

**Alberich**

Thou arch, pestilent plotter!  
 Were I still the blind,  
 Silly fool that I was,  
 When I was bound thy captive,  
 How easy were it  
 To steal the ring again from me!  
 Beware! For thy cunning  
 I know well,

*[Mockingly.]*

And of thy weakness  
 I am fully aware too.  
 Thy debts were cancelled,  
 Paid with my treasure;  
 My ring guerdoned  
 The giants' toil,  
 Who raised thy citadel high.  
 Still on the mighty  
 Haft of thy spear there  
 The runes are written plain  
 Of the compact made with the churls;

And of that  
 Which by labour they won  
 Thou dost not dare to despoil them:  
 Thy spear's strong shaft  
 Thou thyself wouldst split;  
 The staff that makes thee  
 Master of all  
 Would crumble to dust in thy hand.

### **Wanderer**

By the steadfast runes of treaties  
 Thou hast not,  
 Base one, been bound;  
 On thee my spear may spend its strength,  
 So keen I keep it for war.

### **Alberich**

How dire thy threats!  
 How bold thy defiance!  
 And yet full of fear is thy heart!  
 Foredoomed to death  
 Through my curse is he  
 Who now guards the treasure.  
 What heir will succeed him?  
 Will the hoard all desire  
 Belong as before to the Niblung?--  
 That gnaws thee with ceaseless torment.  
 For once I have got it  
 Safe in my grasp,  
 Better than foolish giants  
 Will I employ its spell.  
 The God who guards heroes  
 Truly may tremble!  
 I will storm  
 Proud Walhall with Hella's hosts,  
 And rule, lord of the world!

### **Wanderer**

[*Quietly.*]

Thy design I know well,  
 But little I care:  
 Who wins the ring  
 Will rule by its might.

### **Alberich**

Thou speakest darkly,  
 But to me all is plain.  
 Thy heart is bold  
 Because of a boy,

[*Mockingly.*]

A hero begot of thy blood.  
 Hast thou not fostered a stripling  
 To pluck the fruit thou durst not

*[With growing violence.]*

Pluck frankly for thyself?

**Wanderer**

*[Lightly.]*

With me  
 'Tis useless to wrangle;  
 But Mime thou shouldst beware;  
 For thy brother brings here a boy  
 To compass the giant's doom.  
 He knows not of me;  
 He works for Mime alone.  
 And so I say to thee,  
 Do as seems to thee best.

*[Alberich makes a movement expressive of violent curiosity.]*

Take my advice,  
 Be on thy guard:  
 The boy will hear of the ring  
 When Mime tells him the tale.

**Alberich**

*[Violently.]*

Wilt thou hold thy hand from the hoard?

**Wanderer**

Whom I love  
 Must fight for himself unaided;  
 The lord of his fate,  
 He stands or falls:  
 All my hope hangs upon heroes.

**Alberich**

Does none but Mime  
 Dispute me the ring?

**Wanderer**

Only thou and Mime  
 Covet the gold.

**Alberich**

And yet it is not to be mine?

**Wanderer**

*[Quietly coming nearer.]*

A hero comes  
 To set the hoard free;  
 Two Nibelungs yearn for the gold.  
 Fafner falls,  
 He who guards the ring;  
 Then a hand, seizing, shall hold it.

More wouldst thou learn,  
 There Fafner lies,  
 Who, if warned of his death,  
 Gladly would give up the toy.  
 Come, I will wake him for thee.

*[He goes towards the cave, and, standing on the rising ground in front of it, calls towards it.]*

Fafner! Fafner!  
 Wake, dragon! Wake!

**Alberich**

*[With anxious amazement, aside.]*

Does the madman mean it?  
 Am I to have it?

**Fafner's voice**

Who troubles my sleep?

**Wanderer**

*[Facing the cave.]*

A well-wisher comes  
 To warn thee of danger;  
 Thy doom can he averted,  
 If thou wilt pay the price  
 With the treasure that thou guardest.

*[He leans his ear towards the cave, listening.]*

**Fafner's voice**

What would he?

**Alberich**

*[Has come to the Wanderer and calls into the cave.]*

Waken, Fafner!  
 Dragon, awake!  
 A doughty hero comes  
 To try his strength against thine.

**Fafner's voice**

I want a meal.

**Wanderer**

Bold is the boy and strong;  
Sharp-edged is his sword.

**Alberich**

The ring he seeks,  
Nothing besides.

Give me the ring, and so  
The strife shall be stayed.  
Still guarding the hoard,  
In peace shalt thou live long!

**Fafner**

*[Yawning.]*

I have and I hold:--  
Let me slumber!

**Wanderer**

*[Laughs aloud and then turns again to Alberich.]*

Well, Alberich! That ruse failed,  
But call me rogue no more.  
This one thing thou shouldst  
Never forget:  
Each according to his kind must act;  
Nothing can change him.  
I leave thee the field now;  
Show a bold front,  
And try thy luck with thy brother;  
Thou knowest his kind perhaps better.  
And things unknown  
Thou also shalt learn!

*[He turns away, and disappears quickly in the wood. A storm arises and a bright light breaks forth; then both quickly cease.]*

**Alberich**

*[Looks after the Wanderer as he gallops off.]*

Away on his shining  
Horse he rides,  
And leaves me to care and scorn!  
Laugh on! Laugh on,  
Ye light-minded  
And high-spirited  
Race of immortals!  
One day ye shall perish  
And pass!  
Until the gold  
Has ceased to gleam,  
Will wise Alberich watch,  
And his hate shall prevail.

*[He slips into the chasm at the side. The stage remains empty. Dawn.]*

*As the day dawns Siegfried and Mime enter. Siegfried carries his sword in a sword-belt of rope. Mime examines the place carefully. At last he looks towards the background, which remains in deep shadow, whilst the rising ground in the middle becomes, after a time, more and more brightly illuminated by the sun.*

**Mime**

Our journey ends here;  
Here we halt.

**Siegfried**

*[Sits down under the lime-tree and looks about him.]*

So here I shall learn what fear is?  
A far way thou hast led me;  
We have wandered lone together  
A whole night long in the woods.  
This is the last  
Of thee, Mime!  
Can I not master  
My lesson here,  
Alone I will push forward  
And never see thee again.

**Mime**

Lad, believe me,  
If thou canst not  
Learn it here and now,  
No other place,  
No other time  
Ever will teach thee fear.  
Dost thou see  
That cavern yawning dark?  
Yonder dwells  
A dragon dread and grim,  
Horribly fierce,  
  
Enormous in size,  
With terrible jaws  
That threaten and gape;  
With skin and hair,  
All at a gulp,  
The brute could swallow thee whole.

**Siegfried**

*[Still sitting under the lime tree.]*

‘Twere well to close up his gullet;  
His fangs I will therefore avoid.

**Mime**

Poison pours  
From his venomous mouth;

Were he to spue out  
Spittle on thee,  
Thy body and bones would decay.

**Siegfried**

That the poison may not consume me,  
I will keep out of its reach.

**Mime**

A serpent's tail  
Sweeping he swings;  
Were that about thee wound  
And folded close,  
Thy limbs would be broken like glass.

**Siegfried**

That his swinging tail may not touch me,  
Warily then I must watch.  
But answer me this:  
Has the brute a heart?

**Mime**

A pitiless, cruel heart.

**Siegfried**

It lies, however,  
Where all hearts lie,  
Brute and human alike?

**Mime**

Of course! There, boy,  
The dragon's lies too.  
At last thou beginnest to fear?

**Siegfried**

[*Who till now has been lying indolently stretched out, sits up suddenly.*]

Nothing into  
His heart I will thrust!  
Is that what is meant by fearing?  
Hey, old dotard!  
Canst thou teach me  
Nothing but this  
With all thy craft,  
Linger no longer by me:  
No fear is here to be learnt.

**Mime**

Wait awhile yet!  
What I have told thee  
Seems to thee empty sound;  
When thou hast heard

And seen him thyself,  
 Thy senses will swoon, overwhelmed?  
 When thine eyes grow dim,  
 And when the ground rocks,  
 When in thy breast  
 Thy heart beats loud,

[*Very friendly.*]

Thou wilt remember who brought thee,  
 And think of me and my love.

### **Siegfried**

Thy love is not wanted!  
 Hast thou not heard?  
 Out of my sight with thee;  
 Let me alone!  
 Begin again talking of love,  
 And on the instant I go!  
 The horrible winking,  
 The nods and blinking  
 When shall I see  
 The last of them,  
 And rid be at length of the fool?

### **Mime**

Well, I will off,  
 And rest there by the spring.  
 Thou must stay here,  
 And as the sun scales the sky  
 Watch for the foe:  
 From his cave  
 He lumbers this way,  
 Winds and twists  
 Past this spot,  
 To water at the fountain.

### **Siegfried**

[*Laughs.*]

Liest thou by the spring,  
 Unchecked thither the brute shall go;  
 He shall swallow thee  
 Down with the water,  
 Ere with my sword  
 To the heart I stab him!  
 So heed well what I say:  
 Rest not beside the spring.  
 Seek somewhere else  
 A far-off spot,  
 And nevermore return.

### **Mime**

Thou wilt not refuse  
Cooling refreshment  
When the fierce fight is over?

*[Siegfried motions him angrily away.]*

Call on me too  
Shouldst thou need counsel,

*[Siegfried repeats the gesture with more violence.]*

Or if felled on a sudden by fear.

*[Siegfried rises and drives him away with furious gestures.]*

### **Mime**

*[Aside, as he goes away.]*

Fafner and Siegfried--  
Siegfried and Fafner--  
Might each the other but slay!

*[He disappears in the wood on the right.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Stretches himself at his ease under the lime-tree, and looks after Mime as he departs.]*

He is no father of mine!  
How merry of heart I feel!  
Never before  
Seemed the forest fair;  
Never day  
Wore as lovely a smile,  
For the loathed one has gone at last,  
To be looked on by me no more.

*[He meditates in silence.]*

My father--what was he like?--  
Ha! like me, without doubt.  
Had Mime by chance had a son,  
He would have been  
Mime's image:  
Quite as disgusting,  
Filthy and grey,  
Small and bent,  
Hunchbacked and halting,  
With ears long and hanging,  
Rheumy eyes running--  
Off with the fright!  
To see him makes me sick!

*[He leans further back and looks up through the branches of the tree. Deep silence. Woodland murmurs.]*

What could my mother,  
I wonder, be like;

That is not  
So easy to picture.

[*Very tenderly.*]

Her clear shining eyes  
Must have been soft,  
And gentle like the roe-deer's,  
Only far fairer.

[*Very softly.*]

In fear and woe she bore me,  
But why did she die through me?  
Must then all human mothers  
Thus die on giving  
Birth to a son?  
That would truly be sad!  
Ah, if I only  
Could see my mother!--  
See my mother,  
A woman once!

[*He sighs softly, and leans still further back. Deep silence. Louder murmuring of the wood. His attention is at last caught by the song of the birds. He listens with growing interest to one singing in the branches above him.*]

O lovely warbler,  
I know not thy note;  
Hast thou thy home in this wood?  
If I could but understand him,  
His sweet song might say much--  
Perhaps of my mother tell me.  
A surly old dwarf  
Said to me once  
That men might learn  
To follow the sense  
Of birds when they were singing;  
Could it indeed be done?  
Ha! I will sing  
After him,  
On the reed follow him sweetly.  
Though wanting the words,  
Repeating his measure--  
Singing what is his language--  
Perhaps I shall know what he says.

[*He runs to the neighbouring spring, cuts a reed of with his sword, and quickly makes himself a pipe out of it. He listens again.*]

He stops to hear,  
So now for my song!

[*He blows into the pipe, breaks of, and cuts it again to improve it. He resumes his blowing, shakes his head, and cuts the pipe once more. After another attempt he*

*gets angry, presses the pipe with his hand, and tries again. He ceases playing and smiles.]*

That rings not right;  
For the lovely tune  
The reed is not suited at all.  
I fear, sweet bird,  
I am too dull;  
Thy song cannot I learn.

*[He hears the bird again and looks up to him.]*

He listens so roguishly  
There that he shames me;

*[Very tenderly.]*

He waits, and nothing rewards him.  
Heida! Come hearken  
Now to my horn;

*[He flings the pipe away.]*

All I do sounds wrong  
on the stupid reed;  
To a song of the woods  
That I know,  
A merry song, listen now rather.  
I hoped it would bring  
Some comrade to me,  
But wolves and bears  
Were the best that came.  
Now I will see

Who answers its note:  
What comrade will come to its call.

*[He takes the silver hunting-horn and blows on it. During the long-sustained notes he keeps his eyes expectantly on the bird. A movement in the background. Fafner, in the form of a monstrous lizard-like dragon, has risen from his lair in the cave. He breaks through the underwood and drags himself up to the higher ground, so that the front part of his body rests on it, while he utters a loud sound, as if yawning.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Looks round and gazes at Fafner in astonishment. He laughs.]*

My horn with its note  
Has allured something lovely;  
A jolly companion wert thou.

### **Fafner**

*[At the sight of Siegfried has paused on the high ground, and remains there.]*

What is that?

### **Siegfried**

If thou art a beast  
 Who can use its tongue,  
 Perchance thou couldst teach me something.  
 Here stands one  
 Who would learn to fear  
 Say, wilt thou be his teacher?

**Fafner**

Is this insolence?

**Siegfried**

Courage or insolence,  
 What matter?  
 With my sword I will slay thee,  
 Wilt thou not teach me to fear.

**Fafner**

*[Makes a laughing sound.]*

Drink I came for;  
 Now food I find too

*[He opens his jaws and shows his teeth.]*

**Siegfried**

What a fine set of teeth  
 Thou showest me there!  
 Sweetly they smile  
 In thy dainty mouth!  
 'Twere well if I closed up thy gullet  
 Thy jaws are gaping too wide!

**Fafner**

They were not made  
 For idle talk,  
 But they will serve  
 To swallow thee.

**Siegfried**

Hoho! Ferocious,  
 Merciless churl!  
 I have no fancy  
 To be eaten.  
 Better it seems to me  
 That without delay thou shouldst die!

**Fafner**

*[Roaring.]*

Pruh! Come,  
 Boy, with thy boasts!

**Siegfried**

*[Draws his sword.]*

Beware, growler!  
The boaster comes!

*[He springs towards Fafner and remains defiantly confronting him. Fafner drags himself further up the knoll and spits at Siegfried from his nostrils. Siegfried avoids the poison, springs nearer, and stands on one side. Fafner tries to reach him with his tail. Siegfried, who is nearly caught, springs over Fafner with one bound, and wounds him in the tail. Fafner roars, pulls his tail angrily away, and raises the front part of his body so that he may throw its full weight on Siegfried, thus offering his breast to the stroke. Siegfried quickly looks to see where his heart is, and thrusts his sword into it up to the hilt. Fafner raises himself still higher in his pain, and, when Siegfried has let go his sword and sprung aside, he sinks on the wound.]*

### **Siegfried**

Lie there, envious brute!  
Nothung's point home has speeded!

### **Fafner**

*[In a weaker voice.]*

Who art thou, boy bold-hearted,  
That hast pierced my breast?  
Who stirred up thy childish soul  
To the murderous deed?  
Thy brain schemed not the harm  
Wrought by thy hand.

### **Siegfried**

Not much have I learned,  
Not even who I am;  
Thou thyself with thy taunting  
Stirred me to fight and to slay.

### **Fafner**

O boy bright-eyed,  
Who knowest not yet who thou art,  
Whom thou hast murdered  
Hear from me.  
Two mighty giants there were,  
Fasolt and Fafner;  
The brothers now are both fallen.  
For the cursed gold  
We got from the Gods  
I did Fasolt to death.  
He who now guards  
The hoard as dragon,  
Fafner, the last remaining,  
Falls, by a rosy boy slain.  
Boy in thy bloom,  
Watch and be wary:

He who stirred thee blind to this deed  
Takes thought how to compass thy death.

[*Dying.*]

Mark the ending!  
Think on me!

**Siegfried**

Who was my father?  
Tell, if thou canst.  
Dying, thou showest,  
Wild one, much wisdom.  
Siegfried my name is; haply  
That may help thee to guess.

**Fafner**

Siegfried! . . .

[*He raises himself and dies.*]

**Siegfried**

The dead can tell no tidings.  
My living sword, lead!  
Lead onward, my sword!

[*Fafner has rolled to the side in dying. Siegfried now draws the sword from his breast. In doing so his hand gets sprinkled with the blood; he draws it back quickly.*]

The hot blood burns like fire!

[*Involuntarily he raises his fingers to his mouth to suck the blood from them. As he looks musingly before him his attention becomes more and more attracted by the singing of the birds.*]

I almost seem  
To hear the birds speaking to me.  
Is there a spell,  
Perhaps, in the blood?  
The curious bird up there--  
Hark! he sings to me.

Voice of the Wood-bird

[*From the branches of the lime-tree above Siegfried.*]

Hei! Siegfried now owns  
All the Nibelung hoard!  
Oh! could he the hoard  
In the cave but find!  
Tarnhelm, if he could but win it,  
Would help him to deeds of renown;  
And could he discover the ring,  
It would make him the lord of the world!

**Siegfried**

*[Has listened holding his breath and beaming with delight.]*

Thanks, bonnie bird,  
For the counsel good  
I follow the call!

*[He turns towards the back and descends to the cave, where he at once disappears.]*

*Mime steals up, looking about him timidly to assure himself of Fafner's death. At the same time Alberich comes out of the cleft on the opposite site. He observes Mime, rushes on him and bars his way, as the latter turns towards the cave.*

**Alberich**

On what errand  
Furtive and sly,  
Knave, dost thou slink?

**Mime**

Accursèd brother,  
That thou shouldst come!  
What brings thee here?

**Alberich**

Rogue, has my gold  
Provoked thy greed?  
Dost covet my goods?

**Mime**

Get thee gone quickly!  
This corner is mine;  
What huntest thou here?

**Alberich**

Have I disturbed thee,  
Thief, at thy work,  
Secret and sly?

**Mime**

What I have slaved  
And toiled to win  
Shall not escape me.

**Alberich**

Who was it robbed  
The Rhine of gold for the ring?  
And whose cunning wrought  
The spell of magical might?

**Mime**

Who made the Tarnhelm,  
Changing its wearer's form?  
Though thou didst want it,  
Was it designed by thee?

**Alberich**

And what of thyself  
 Couldst aright have fashioned, thou bungler?  
 The magic ring  
 Forced thee to master thy craft.

**Mime**

And where is the ring?  
 'Twas reft from thy clutch by the giants.  
 What thou hast lost  
 I will gain and keep by my guile.

**Alberich**

What the boy has won  
 Would the niggard deny him?  
 'Tis not thine; the hero  
 Who won it is now its lord.

**Mime**

I brought him up;  
 For my pains now he shall pay;  
 For its reward  
 My trouble has waited too long.

**Alberich**

Just for rearing him,  
 The old niggardly,  
 Beggarly knave,  
 Bold as brass,  
 A king now would become?  
 The ring would befit  
 Better a dog  
 Than bumpkin like thee.  
 Never to thee  
 The magical ring shall fall!

**Mime**

*[Scratches his head.]*

Well, keep it, then,  
 And guard with care  
 The gleaming gold;  
 Be thou lord,

But treat me as a brother;  
 Give me against it  
 Tarnhelm for toy,  
 Fairly exchanged;  
 Divided thus,  
 There will be booty for both.

*[He rubs his hands confidently.]*

**Alberich**

[*With a mocking laugh.*]

Share it with thee?  
And the Tarnhelm too!  
How sly thou art!  
I could never  
Sleep for a moment safely.

**Mime**

[*Beside himself.*]

What I not even  
Strike a bargain!  
I must go bare,  
Beggared of gain!  
Thou wouldst leave me with nothing!

[*Shrieking.*]

**Alberich**

Nothing, not so  
Much as a nail,  
Shall fall to thy portion.

**Mime**

[*In a fury.*]

Neither ring nor Tarnhelm  
Shall thy hand touch, then;  
'Tis I will not share!  
I will call on Siegfried,  
Summon the aid  
Of his keen-edged sword;  
The lad will make  
Short work, dear brother, of thee!

**Alberich**

[*Siegfried having appeared in the background.*]

Turn and look there!  
From the cavern hither he comes.

**Mime**

He will have chosen  
Trivial toys.

**Alberich**

He bears the Tarnhelm!

**Mime**

Also the ring!

**Alberich**

Curst luck! The ring!

**Mime**

*[Laughing maliciously.]*

Get him to give thee the ring now!  
‘Tis I, not thou, who shall win it.

**Alberich**

And yet to its lord  
Must it at last be surrendered!

*[He disappears in the cleft.]*

*[During the foregoing Siegfried, with Tarnhelm and ring, has come slowly and meditatively from the cave; he regards his booty thoughtfully, and stops on the knoll in the middle of the stage.]*

**Siegfried**

I do not know  
Of what use  
Ye are; I chose you  
From out the heaped-up hoard  
Because of friendly advice.  
Meanwhile, of this day  
Be ye worn as witness,  
Recalling to mind  
How with fallen Fafner I fought,  
And yet could not learn how to fear.

*[He hangs the Tarnhelm on his girdle and puts the ring on his finger. Silence. His notice is involuntarily drawn to the bird again, and he listens to him with breathless attention.]*

**The Wood-bird’s voice**

Hei! Siegfried now owns  
Both the helm and the ring!  
Oh! let him not listen  
To Mime, the false!  
He were wise to be wary of  
Mime’s treacherous tongue.  
He will understand  
Mime’s secret intent,  
Because he has tasted the blood.

*[Siegfried’s mien and gestures show that he has understood the bird’s song. He sees Mime approaching, and remains without moving, leaning on his sword, observant and self-contained, in his place on the knoll till the close of the following scene.]*

**Mime**

*[Steals forward and observes Siegfried from the foreground.]*

He weighs in his mind  
The booty’s worth;  
Can there by chance

Have come this way  
 A Wanderer wise  
 Who talked to the child,  
 And taught him crafty runes?  
 Doubly sly  
 Be then the dwarf;  
 My snares must be cunning,  
 Cleverly set,  
 That with cajoling  
 And wily falsehoods  
 The insolent boy I may fool.

*[He goes nearer to Siegfried and welcomes him with flattering gestures.]*

Ha! Welcome, Siegfried!  
 Say, bold fighter,  
 Hast thou been taught how to fear?

**Siegfried**

A teacher still is to find.

**Mime**

But the dragon grim  
 Has fallen before thee?  
 A fell and fierce monster was he.

**Siegfried**

Though grim and spiteful the brute,  
 I grieve over his death,  
 While there live still, unpunished,  
 Blacker scoundrels than he was!  
 The one who bade me slay  
 I hate far more than the slain.

**Mime**

*[Very friendly.]*

Have patience! Thou wilt not  
 Look on me long.

*[Sweetly.]*

In endless sleep  
 Soon thine eyelids will be sealed.  
 Thy uses are over,

*[As if praising him.]*

Done is the deed;  
 The only task left  
 For me is to win the booty.  
 Methinks that task will not tax me;  
 Thou wert always easy to fool.

**Siegfried**

To me thou art plotting harm, then?

**Mime**

[*Astonished.*]

What makes thee think that?

[*Continuing tenderly.*]

Siegfried, listen, my own one!  
I have always loathed  
Thee and all that are like thee.  
It was not from love  
That I reared thee with care:  
The gold hid in Fafner's cave  
I worked for as my reward.

[*As if he were promising him something nice.*]

If thou wilt not yield  
It up to me,

[*As if he were ready to lay down his life for him.*]

Siegfried, my son,  
Thou plainly must see

[*As if in friendly jest.*]

I have no choice but to slay thee!

**Siegfried**

That I am hated  
Pleases me;  
But must I lose my life for thy pleasure?

**Mime**

[*Angrily.*]

I never said that;  
Thou hast made a mistake.  
See, thou art weary  
From stress of strife,  
Burning with fever and thirst;  
Mime, the kind one,  
To cool thy thirst  
Brought a quickening draught.  
While thy blade thou didst melt  
I brewed thee the drink;  
Touch it, and straight  
Thy sword shall be mine,  
And mine the hoard and Tarnhelm too.

[*Tittering.*]

**Siegfried**

So thou of my sword  
 And all it has won me--  
 Ring and booty--wouldst rob me?

**Mime**

*[Violently.]*

Why wilt mistake so my words!  
 Do I drivel or dote?  
 I use the utmost  
 Pains with my speech,  
 That what in my heart  
 I mean may be hidden;

And the stupid boy  
 Misunderstands what I say!  
 Open thy ears, boy,  
 And attend to me!  
 Hear, now, what Mime means.  
 Take this: the drink will refresh thee  
 As my drinks oft have done.  
 Many a time  
 When fretful and bad,  
 Though loth enough,  
 The draughts I brought thou hast swallowed.

**Siegfried**

Of a cooling drink  
 I were glad;  
 Say, how has this one been brewed?

**Mime**

*[Jesting merrily, as if describing to him a pleasant state of intoxication which the liquor is to bring about.]*

Hei! just drink it!  
 Trust to my skill.  
 In mist and darkness  
 Soon shall thy senses be sunk;  
 None to watch or ward them,  
 Stark-stretched shall thy limbs be.  
 Thou lying thus,  
 'Twere not hard  
 To take the booty and hide it;  
 But wert thou to awake,  
 Nevermore would  
 Mime be safe,  
 Even owning the ring.  
 So with the sword  
 He has made so sharp

*[With a gesture of extravagant joy.]*

First I will hack  
The child's head off!  
Then I shall have both rest and the ring!

*[Tittering.]*

**Siegfried**

Thou wouldst, then, slay me when sleeping?

**Mime**

*[Furiously.]*

Do what, child? Did I say that?

*[He takes pains to assume the utmost tenderness. Carefully and distinctly.]*

I only mean  
To chop off thy head!

*[With the appearance of heartfelt solicitude for Siegfried's health.]*

For even if I  
Had loathed thee less,  
And had not thy scoffs  
And my drudgery shameful  
So loudly urged to vengeance,

*[Gently.]*

I should never dare to pause  
Till from my path I thrust thee:

*[Jestingly again.]*

How else could I come by the booty,  
Which Alberich covets as well?

*[He pours the liquid into the drinking-horn, and offers it to Siegfried with pressing gestures.]*

Now, my Wälsung,  
Wolf-begot,  
Drink the draught and be choked,  
And never drink again!

*[Tittering.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Threatens him with his sword.]*

Taste thou my sword,  
Loathsome babbler!

*[As if seized by violent loathing, he gives Mime a sharp stroke with his sword. Instantly Mime falls dead to the ground. Alberich's voice in mocking laughter from the cleft.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Looking at Mime on the ground, quietly hangs his sword again on his belt.]*

Envy's wage  
 Pays Nothung;  
 'Twas for this that I forged him.

*[He picks up Mime's body, carries it to the knoll, and throws it into the cave.]*

In the cavern, there,  
 Lie on the hoard;  
 With steadfast guile  
 The gold thou hast gained:  
 Now let it belong to its master!  
 And a watchman good  
 I give thee, that thieves  
 Never may enter and steal.

*[With a great effort he pushes the body of the dragon in front of the entrance to the cave, which it completely stops up.]*

There lie thou too,  
 Dragon grim;  
 Along with thy foe  
 Greedy of gain  
 Thou shalt guard the glittering gold:  
 So both at last shall rest in peace.

*[He looks down thoughtfully into the cave for a time, and then turns slowly to the front of the stage as if tired. He passes his hand over his brow.]*

Hot I feel  
 From the heavy toil;  
 Fast and furious  
 Flows my blood,  
 My hand burns on my head.  
 High stands the sun in heaven;  
 From azure heights  
 Falls his gaze  
 Through a cloudless sky on my crown.

Pleasant shadows will cool me under the linden.

*[He stretches himself out under the lime-tree, and again looks up through the boughs.]*

If only, pretty warbler,  
 So long and so  
 Rudely disturbed,  
 I could once more hear thee singing!  
 On a branch I see thee  
 Merrily swaying;  
 Chirping and chattering,  
 Brothers and sisters  
 Are happily hovering round.

But I--I am alone,  
 Without brother or sister;  
 My mother died,

My father fell,  
 Unseen by their son!  
 The one soul I knew  
 Was a loathsome old dwarf;

[*Warmly.*]

Love he festered not  
 By kindness;  
 Many a cunning  
 Snare did he set me;  
 At last I was forced to slay him.

[*He looks sorrowfully up at the branches.*]

Bird sweet and friendly,  
 I ask thee a boon:  
 Wilt thou find for me  
 A comrade true?--  
 Wilt thou choose for me the right one?  
 So oft I have called,  
 And yet no one has come!

Thou, my friend,  
 Wilt manage it better,  
 So wise thy counsel has been.

[*Softly.*]

Now sing! I hearken to thy song.

### **The Wood-bird's voice**

Hei! Siegfried has slain  
 The deceitful dwarf!  
 I know for him now  
 A glorious bride.  
 She sleeps where rugged rocks soar;  
 Ringed is her chamber by fire.  
 Who battles the flames,  
 Wakens the bride,  
 Brünnhilde, wins as reward.

### **Siegfried**

[*Starts up impetuously from his seat.*]

O lovely song,  
 Flower-sweet breath!  
 Thy yearning music  
 Burns in my breast!  
 Like leaping flame  
 It kindles my heart.  
 What races so swift  
 Through soul and senses?  
 Sweetest of friends, O say!

[*He listens.*]

**The Wood-bird's voice**

Grieving yet glad,  
 Love I am singing;  
 Blissful, from woe  
 Weaving my song:  
 They only who yearn understand.

**Siegfried**

Forth, forth then,  
 Swift and rejoicing!  
 Forth from the wood to the fell!  
 just one thing more  
 I would learn, sweet singer:  
 Say, shall I break through the fire?  
 Can I awaken the bride?

*[He listens again.]*

**The Wood-bird's voice.**

No coward wins  
 Brünnhild' for bride,  
 Or wakes the maid:  
 Only a heart without fear.

**Siegfried**

*[Shouting with joy.]*

The foolish boy  
 Who has never learned fear,  
 Dear bird, that dullard am I!  
 To-day I took endless  
 Trouble in vain,  
 To find out what fear was from Fafner.  
 With longing I burn  
 Now from Brünnhild' to learn it.  
 What path soonest leads to the fell?

*[The bird flutters up, circles over Siegfried, and flies hesitatingly before him.]*

The bird to my goal will guide me.  
 Fly where thou wilt,  
 I follow thy flight!

*[He runs after the bird, who for a time flies uncertainly hither and thither to tease him; at last he follows him, when, taking a definite direction towards the back, the bird flies away.]*

## The Third Act

*A wild spot at the foot of a rocky mountain which rises precipitously at the back on the left. Night, storm, lightning and violent thunder. The latter ceases shortly, but the lightning continues to flash from the clouds for some time. The Wanderer enters and walks resolutely towards a cavernous opening in a rock in the foreground, and takes up his position there, leaning on his spear, while he calls the following towards the entrance to the cave.*

### Wanderer

Waken, Wala!  
 Wala! Awake!  
 From thy long sleep,  
 Slumberer, wake at my call!  
 I summon thee forth:  
 Arise! Arise!  
 From cloud-covered caves  
 In earth's dim abysses, arise!  
 Erda! Erda,  
 Old as the world!  
 From depths dark and hidden  
 Rise to the day!  
 With song I call thee,  
 I sing to wake thee,  
 From deep dreams of wisdom  
 Bid thee arise.  
 All-knowing one!  
 Fount of knowledge!  
 Erda! Erda,  
 Old as the world!  
 Waken! Awaken, thou Wala! Awaken!

*[A dim bluish light begins to dawn in the cavern. In this light Erda, during the following, rises very gradually from below. She appears to be covered with hoarfrost, which glitters on her hair and garments.]*

### Erda

Loud is the call;  
 Strong the spell that summons;  
 I have been roused  
 From dark and wise dreams:  
 Who wakes me from my sleep?

### Wanderer

'Tis I who awake thee  
 With song of magic,  
 That what in slumber  
 Was folded fast may rise.  
 The wide earth ranging,

Far I have roamed,  
 Seeking for knowledge,  
 Wisdom at fountains primeval.  
 No one that lives  
 Is wiser than thou;  
 Thou knowest all  
 In the hidden depths,  
 What moves on hill,  
 Dale, in water and air.  
 Where life is found,  
 There thou art breathing;  
 And where brains ponder,  
 There is thy thought.  
 Men say that all  
 Knowledge is thine.  
 That I might ask of thee counsels  
 I have called thee from sleep.

### **Erda**

My sleep is dreaming,  
 My dreaming brooding,  
 My brooding wisdom's calm working.  
 But while I sleep  
 The Norns are wakeful:  
 They twine the rope,  
 And deftly weave what I know.  
 The Norns thou shouldst have questioned.

### **Wanderer**

In thrall to the world  
 Sit the Norris weaving;  
 They cannot alter  
 What ordained is.  
 But I would fain  
 Be taught of thy wisdom  
 How a wheel on the roll can be stayed.

### **Erda**

Dark and troubled  
 My mind grows through men's deeds.  
 A God once subdued  
 The Wala's self to his will.  
 A wish-maiden  
 I bore to Wotan;  
 From fields of battle  
 She brought him slain heroes;  
 Bold is she  
 And wise to boot:  
 Why waken me?  
 Why seek not counsel  
 From Erda's and Wotan's child?

**Wanderer**

The Valkyrie, Brünnhild'?  
 Meanest thou her?  
 She flouted the storm-controller,  
 When, sorely urged, himself he controlled.  
 What the swayer and lord  
 Of battles longed for,  
 What he refrained from  
 Against his desire,  
 Brünnhilde, bold,  
 Rash, over-confident,  
 When the fight was at fiercest,  
 Strove for herself to perform.  
 War-father  
 Punished the maid:  
 He pressed slumber into her eyes,  
 On the flame-girt rock she sleeps.  
 The hallowed maid  
 Will waken alone,  
 That she may love and wed with a man.  
 Small hope of answer from her.

**Erda**

Dazed have I felt  
 Since I woke;  
 Wild, confused  
 Seems the world!  
 The Valkyrie,  
 The Wala's child,  
 Bound lay, fettered by sleep,  
 While her all-knowing mother slept!  
 Does revolt's teacher  
 Chide revolt?  
 Does the deed he urged to  
 Anger him, done?  
 He who guards the right,  
 To whom vows are sacred,  
 Hinders the right?--  
 Reigns through falsehood?  
 Let me down to the dark,  
 That my wisdom may slumber!

**Wanderer**

I will not let thee descend,  
 For a potent magic I wield.  
 All-wise one,  
 Planted by thee  
 The sting of care was  
 In Wotan's dauntless heart;  
 For, through thy wisdom,

Downfall and shameful  
 Doom were foretold him;  
 My mind was fettered by fear.  
 Now let the world's  
 Wisest of women  
 Answer and say  
 How a God may conquer his care.

### **Erda**

Thou art not  
 What thou hast said.  
 Why art thou come, wild and wayward,  
 To trouble the Wala's sleep?

### **Wanderer**

Thou art not  
 What thou hast dreamed.  
 Thy end draws near,  
 Mother of wisdom;  
 Thy wisdom at war  
 With me shall perish.  
 Knowest thou Wotan's will?

[*A long silence.*]

I tell thee  
 That thou mayest sleep  
 For evermore unvexed by care.  
 That the Gods are doomed,  
 No longer dismays me,  
 Since I will it so.  
 What, with myself at war, in anguish,  
 Despairing, once I resolved,  
 Gaily, gladly,  
 With delight I now do.

Mad with disgust I decreed once  
 The world to the Nibelung's hate,  
 But now to the valiant Wälsung  
 I leave it with joy.  
 One who never knew me,  
 Though chosen by me,  
 A boy bold and fearless,  
 Helped not by Wotan,  
 Has won the Nibelung's ring.  
 Blest in love,  
 Void of all envy,  
 On him shall fall harmless  
 Alberich's curse,  
 For no fear does he know.  
 Soon thy child and mine,  
 Brünnhild',  
 Shall be waked by him;

And when waked  
 Our child shall achieve  
 A deed to redeem the world.  
 So slumber again,  
 Closing thine eyelids  
 Dreaming behold my downfall!  
 Whatever comes after,  
 The God rejoicing  
 Yields to youth ever young.  
 Descend, then, Erda,  
 Mother of fear!  
 World-sorrow!  
 Descend! Descend!  
 And sleep for aye!

*[Erda, whose eyes are already closed, and who has gradually been sinking deeper, disappears entirely. The cavern has become quite dark again.]*

*Dawn lights up the stage; the storm has ceased. The Wanderer has gone close to the cave, and leans with his back again against it, facing the wings.*

### **Wanderer**

Lo! Yonder Siegfried comes.

*[He remains where he is without changing his position. Siegfried's wood-bird flutters towards the foreground. Suddenly the bird stops in his direct flight, flutters to and fro in alarm, and disappears quietly towards the back.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Enters and stops.]*

My bird has vanished from sight!  
 With fluttering wings  
 And lovely song  
 Blithely he showed me the way,  
 And then forsook me and fled!  
 I must discover  
 The rock for myself:  
 The path I followed so far  
 'Twere best still to pursue.

*[He goes towards the back.]*

### **Wanderer**

*[Still in the same position.]*

Boy, pray tell me,  
 Whither away?

### **Siegfried**

*[Halts and turns round.]*

Did some one speak?  
 Perhaps he knows the road.

*[He goes nearer to the Wanderer.]*

I would find a rock  
That by flaming fire is surrounded:  
There sleeps a maid  
Whom I would awake.

**Wanderer**

Who bade thee seek  
This rock flame-circled?--  
Taught thee to yearn for the woman?

**Siegfried**

It was a singing  
Woodland bird;  
He gave me welcome tidings.

**Wanderer**

A wood-bird chatters idly  
What no man understands;  
How then couldst thou tell  
The song's true meaning?

**Siegfried**

Because of the blood  
Of a dragon grim  
That fell before me at Neidhöhl'--  
The burning blood  
Had scarce touched my tongue  
When the sense of the singer grew plain.

**Wanderer**

Who was it urged thee on  
To try thy strength,  
And slay this dragon so dread?

**Siegfried**

My guide was Mime,  
A faithless dwarf:  
What fear is fain he had taught me.  
But 'twas the dragon  
Roused me himself,  
Wrathful, to strike the blow;  
For he threatened me with his jaws.

**Wanderer**

Who forged the sword  
So hard and keen  
That it slew the daunting foe?

**Siegfried**

I forged it myself  
When the smith was beaten;  
Swordless else I should have been still.

**Wanderer**

But who made  
The mighty splinters  
From which the sword was welded strong?

**Siegfried**

What know I of that?  
I only know  
That the splintered steel was useless  
Were not the sword forged anew.

**Wanderer**

*[Bursts out laughing with gleeful good-humor.]*

I fully agree.

**Siegfried**

*[Surprised.]*

At what dost thou laugh?  
Prying greybeard!  
Prithee have done;  
Keep me no longer here talking.  
Speak if thou knowest  
Whither my way lies;  
And hold thy tongue  
Unless thou canst tell.

**Wanderer**

Good boy, have patience!  
If I seem old,  
More need to show me due honour.

**Siegfried**

What an odd notion!  
My whole life long  
A hateful old man  
Has blocked my pathway;  
Him I at last swept aside.  
Standest thou longer  
Trying here to stay me,  
I warn thee frankly

*[With a significant gesture.]*

That thou like Mime shalt fare.

*[He goes still nearer to the Wanderer.]*

But what art thou like?  
Why wearest thou  
Such a monstrous hat,  
And why hangs it so over thy face?

**Wanderer**

*[Still without altering his position.]*

That is the way I wear it  
When against the wind I go.

**Siegfried**

*[Inspecting him still more closely.]*

But an eye beneath it is wanting.  
Perchance by some one  
Whose way thou didst  
Too boldly bar  
It has been struck out.  
Take thyself off,  
Or else very soon  
The other thou shalt lose also!

**Wanderer**

I see, my son,  
Where thou art blind,  
And hence thy jaunty assurance.  
With the eye that is  
Amissing in me  
Thou lookest now on the other  
That still is left me for sight.

**Siegfried**

*[Who has been listening thoughtfully, now bursts involuntarily into hearty laughter.]*

Thy foolish talk sets me laughing!  
But come, this nonsense must finish.  
At once show me my way;  
Then proceed thou too on thine own;  
For me further  
Use thou hast none:  
So speak, or off thou shalt pack!

**Wanderer**

*[Gently.]*

Child, didst thou know  
Who I am,  
Thy scoffs I had been spared!  
From one so dear,  
Insult hard to endure is.  
Long have I loved  
Thy radiant race,  
Though from my fury  
In terror it shrank.

Thou whom I love so,  
All too fair one,

Rouse my wrath not to-day;  
It would ruin both thee and me.

**Siegfried**

Still art thou dumb,  
Stubborn old man?  
Stand to one side, then  
That pathway, I know,  
Leads to the slumbering maid;  
For thither the wood-bird  
Was guiding when he flew off.

*[It suddenly becomes dark again.]*

**Wanderer**

*[Breaking out in anger and assuming a commanding attitude.]*

In fear of its life it fled.  
It knew that here  
Was the ravens' lord;  
Dire his plight were he caught!  
The way that it guided  
Thou shalt not go!

**Siegfried**

*[Amazed, falls back and assumes a defiant attitude.]*

Hoho! Interferer!  
Who then art thou  
That wilt not let me pass?

**Wanderer**

Fear thou the rock's defender!  
My might it is  
Holds the maiden fettered by sleep.  
He who would wake her,  
He who would win her,  
Impotent makes me for ever.

A burning sea  
Encircles the maid,  
Fires fiercely glowing  
Surround the rock;

He who craves the bride  
The flames must boldly defy.

*[He points with his spear towards the rocky heights.]*

Look up above!  
That light dost thou see?  
The surging heat,  
The splendour, grows;  
Clouds of fire rolling,  
Tongues of flame writhing,

Roaring and raging,  
Come ravening down.  
Thy head now  
Is flooded with light;

*[A flickering glow, increasing in brightness, appears on the summit of the rock.]*

The fire will seize thee,  
Seize and devour thee.--  
Back, back, there, foolhardy boy!

### **Siegfried**

Stand back, old babb'er, thyself!  
For where the fire is burning,  
To Brünnhilde yonder I go!

*[He advances; the Wanderer bars his way.]*

### **Wanderer**

Hast thou no fear of the fire,  
Then barred by my spear be thy path!  
I still hold the haft  
That conquers all;  
The sword thou dost wield  
It shivered long ago:  
Upon my spear eternal  
Break it once more.

*[He stretches out his spear.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Drawing his sword.]*

'Tis my father's foe,  
Found here at last!  
Now, then, for vengeance!

In luck am I!  
Brandish thy spear:  
My sword will hew it in twain!

*[With one stroke he hews the Wanderer's spear in two pieces. Lightning flashes from the spear up towards the rocks, where the light, until now dim, begins to flame brighter and brighter. A violent thunder clap, which quickly dies away, accompanies the stroke.]*

### **Wanderer**

*[Quietly picking up the pieces of the spear which have fallen at his feet.]*

Fare on! I cannot prevent thee!

*[He suddenly disappears in utter darkness.]*

### **Siegfried**

With his spear in splinters  
Vanished the coward!

*[The growing brightness of the clouds of fire, which keep sinking down lower and lower, attracts Siegfried's eye.]*

Ha! Rapturous fire!  
 Glorious light!  
 Shining my pathway  
 Opens before me.  
 In fiery flames plunging,  
 Through fire I will win to the bride!  
 Hoho! Hahei!  
 To summon a comrade I call!

*[He sets his horn to his lips and plunges into the fiery billows, which, flowing down from the heights, now spread over the foreground. Siegfried, who is soon lost to view, seems, from the sound of his horn, to be ascending the mountain. The flames begin to fade, and change gradually into a dissolving cloud lit by the glow of dawn.]*

*The thin cloud has resolved itself into a fine rose-coloured veil of mist, which so divides that the upper part rises and disappears, disclosing the bright blue sky of day; whilst on the edge of the rocky height, now becoming visible (exactly the same scene as in the third Act of "The Valkyrie"), a veil of mist reddened by the dawn remains hanging, which suggests the magic fire still flaming below. The arrangement of the scene is exactly the same as at the end of "The Valkyrie." In the foreground, under a wide-spreading fir-tree, lies Brünnhilde in full shining armour, her helmet on her head, and her long shield covering her, in deep sleep.*

### **Siegfried**

*[Coming from the back, reaches the rocky edge of the summit, and at first shows only the upper part of his body. He looks round him for a long time in amaze. Softly.]*

Solitude blissful  
 On sun-caressed height!

*[He climbs to the summit, and standing on a rock at the edge of the precipice at the back, gazes at the scene in astonishment. He looks into the wood at the side and comes forward a little.]*

What lies in shadow,  
 Asleep in the wood?  
 A charger  
 Resting in slumber deep.

*[Approaching slowly he stops in surprise when, still at some little distance from her, he sees Brünnhilde.]*

What radiant thing lies yonder?  
 The steel, how it gleams and glints!  
 Is it the glare  
 That dazzles me still?  
 Shining armour?  
 Shall it be mine?

*[He lifts up the shield and sees Brünnhilde's form; her face, however, is for the most part hidden by her helmet.]*

Ha! It covers a man!  
The sight stirs thoughts sweet and strange!  
The helm must lie

Hard on his head  
Lighter lay he  
Were it unloosed.

*[He loosens the helmet carefully and removes it from the head of the sleeper. Long curling hair breaks forth. Tenderly.]*

Ah! how fair!

*[He stands lost in contemplation.]*

Clouds gleaming softly  
Fringe with their fleeces  
This lake of heaven bright;  
Laughing, the glorious  
Face of the sun  
Shines through the billowy clouds!

*[He bends lower over the sleeper.]*

His bosom is heaving,  
Stirred by his breath;  
Ought I to loosen the breastplate?

*[He tries to loosen the breastplate.]*

Come, my sword,  
Cleave thou the iron!

*[He draws his sword and gently and carefully cuts through the rings on both sides of the breastplate; he then lifts this off along with the greaves, so that Brünnhilde now lies before him in a soft woman's robe. He draws back startled and amazed.]*

That is no man!

*[He stares at the sleeper, greatly excited.]*

Magical rapture  
Pierces my heart;  
Fixed is my gaze,  
Burning with terror;  
I reel, my heart faints and fails!

*[He is seized with sudden terror.]*

On whom shall I call,  
For aid imploring?  
Mother! Mother!  
Remember me!

*[He sinks as if fainting on to Brünnhilde's bosom; then he starts up sighing.]*

How waken the maid,  
Causing her eyelids to open?

*[Tenderly.]*

Her eyelids to open?  
 What if her gaze strike me blind!  
 How shall I dare  
 To look on their light?  
 All rocks and sways  
 And swirls and revolves;  
 Uttermost longing  
 Burns and consumes me;  
 My hand on my heart,  
 It trembles and shakes!  
 What ails thee, coward?  
 Is this what fear means?  
 O mother I Mother!  
 Thy dauntless child!

*[Very tenderly.]*

A woman lying asleep  
 Has taught him what fear is at last!  
 How conquer my fear?  
 How brace my heart?  
 That, myself, I waken,  
 I must waken the sleeper!

*[As he approaches the sleeping figure again he is overcome by tenderer emotions at the sight. He bends down lower; sweetly.]*

Softly quivers  
 Her flower-sweet mouth!  
 Its lovely trembling  
 Has charmed my despair!  
 Ah! And the fragrant,  
 Blissful warmth of her breath!

*[Is if in despair.]*

Awaken! Awaken,  
 Maiden divine!

*[He gazes at her.]*

She hears me not.  
 New life from the sweetest  
 Of lips I will suck, then,  
 Even though kissing I die!

*[He sinks, as if dying, on to the sleeping figure, and, closing his eyes, fastens his lips on Brünnhilde's. Brünnhilde opens her eyes. Siegfried starts up, and remains standing before her.]*

### **Brünnhilde**

*[Rises slowly to a sitting posture. Raising her arms, she greets earth and sky with solemn gestures on her return to consciousness.]*

Sun, I hail thee!  
 Hail, O light!

Hail, O glorious day!  
 Long I have slept;  
 I am awake.  
 What hero broke  
 Brünnhilde's sleep?

**Siegfried**

*[Awed and entranced by her look and her voice, stands as if spellbound.]*

Through the fierce fires flaming  
 Round this rock I burst;  
 I unloosened thy helmet strong:  
 I awoke thee;  
 Siegfried am I.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Sitting upright.]*

Gods, I hail you!  
 Hail, O World!  
 Hail, O Earth, in thy glory!  
 My sleep is over now,  
 My eyes open.  
 It is Siegfried  
 Who bids me wake!

**Siegfried**

*[Breaking forth in rapturous exaltation.]*

I hail thee, mother  
 Who gave me birth!  
 Hail, O Earth,  
 That nourished my life  
 So that I see those eyes  
 Beam on me, blest among men!

**Brünnhilde**

I hail the mother  
 Who gave thee birth!  
 Hail, O Earth,  
 That nourished thy life!  
 No eye dared see me but thine;  
 To thee alone might I wake!

*[Both remain full of beaming ecstasy, lost in mutual contemplation.]*

**Brünnhilde**

O Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 Hero most blest!  
 Of life the awaker,  
 Conquering light!  
 O joy of the world, couldst know  
 How thou wert always loved!  
 Thou wert my gladness,

My care wert thou!  
 Thy life I sheltered  
 Before it was thine;  
 My shield was thy shelter  
 Ere thou wert born:  
 So long loved wert thou, Siegfried!

**Siegfried**

*[Softly and timidly.]*

My mother did not die, then?  
 Did the dear one but sleep?

**Brünnhilde**

*[Smiles and stretches her hand out kindly towards him.]*

Adorable child!  
 Nevermore thy mother will greet thee!  
 Thyself am I,  
 If I be blest with thy love.

All things I know  
 Known not to thee;  
 Yet only of my love  
 Born is my wisdom.

O Siegfried! Siegfried  
 Conquering light!  
 I loved thee always,  
 For I alone  
 Divined the thought hid by Wotan;  
 Hidden thought I dared not  
 So much as utter;  
 Thought that I thought not,  
 Feeling it only;  
 For which I worked,  
 Battled and strove,  
 Defying even  
 Him who conceived it;  
 For which in penance  
 Prisoned I lay,  
 Because thought it was not,  
 But felt alone!  
 For what the thought was--  
 Say, canst thou guess it?--  
 Was love of thee, nothing but that!

**Siegfried**

How wondrous sounds  
 Thy rapturous song!  
 But dark the meaning to me.

*[Tenderly.]*

Of thine eyes the splendour  
 I see plain,  
 I can feel thee breathing  
 Soft and warm,  
 Sweet can hear  
 The singing of thy voice,  
 But what thou sayest I strive  
 Vainly to understand.  
 I cannot grasp clearly  
 Things so far distant;  
 Needed is every sense  
 To feel and behold thee!  
 By laming fear  
 Fettered am I,  
 For how to fear  
 Thou hast taught me at last;  
 Thou who hast bound me  
 In bonds of such power,  
 Give me my courage again!

*[He remains in great excitement with his yearning gaze fixed on her.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[Turns her head gently aside and looks towards the wood.]*

I see there Grane,  
 My sacred horse;  
 In gladness he grazes  
 Who slept with me!  
 He too has by Siegfried been waked.

**Siegfried**

*[Without changing his position.]*

My gaze on a mouth  
 Most lovely is feasting;  
 My lips are afire  
 With passionate yearning  
 For the pasture sweet that I look on!

**Brünnhilde**

*[Points to her armour, which she now perceives.]*

I see there the shield  
 That sheltered heroes;  
 And there is the helmet  
 That hid my head:  
 It shields, it hides me no more!

**Siegfried**

*[With fire.]*

By a glorious maid  
 My heart has been hurt

Wounds in my head  
 A woman has struck:  
 I came without shield or helm!

**Brünnhilde**

*[With increased sadness.]*

I see there the breastplate's  
 Glittering steel;  
 A keen-edged sword  
 Sundered the rings,  
 From the form of the maiden  
 Loosened the mail:  
 Nor shelter nor shield is left  
 To the weak and sorrowful maid!

**Siegfried**

*[With heat.]*

Through billows of fire  
 I battled to thee,  
 No buckler or breastplate  
 Sheltered or screened;  
 The flames have won  
 Their way to my heart;  
 My blood hot-surgings  
 Rushes and leaps;  
 A ravaging fire  
 Is kindled within me:  
 The flames that shone  
 Round Brünnhilde's rock  
 Are burning now in my breast!  
 O maid, extinguish the fire!  
 Calm the commotion and rage!

*[He has embraced her passionately.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[Springs up, resists him with the utmost strength of terror, and flies to the other side of the stage.]*

No God's touch have I known!  
 With awe the heroes  
 Greeted the maiden:  
 Holy came she from Walhall.  
 Woe's me! Woe's me!  
 Woe the affront,  
 The bitter disgrace!

He wounds me sore  
 Who waked me from sleep!  
 He has broken breastplate and helm;  
 Now I am Brünnhild' no more.

**Siegfried**

Thou art to me  
 The dreaming maid still;  
 Brünnhilde lies  
 Lapped still in sleep.  
 Awake, be a woman to me!

**Brünnhilde**

*[Bewildered.]*

Confused are my senses,  
 My mind is blank:  
 Wisdom, dost thou forsake me?

**Siegfried**

Said not thy song  
 Thy wisdom drew  
 Its light from thy love of me?

**Brünnhilde**

*[Staring before her.]*

Shadows drear-falling  
 Darken my gaze;  
 Mine eyes see dimly,  
 The light dies out,  
 Deep is the dark.  
 From dread-haunted mists  
 Fear in a frenzy  
 Comes writhing forth;  
 Terror stalks me  
 And grows with each stride!

*[She hides her eyes with her hands in violent terror.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Gently removing her hands from her eyes.]*

Dread lies dark  
 On eyelids bound;  
 With the fetters vanish  
 The fear and gloom;  
 Rise from the dark and behold  
 Bright as the sun is the day.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Much agitated.]*

Flaunting my shame,  
 Bright as the sun shines the day!  
 O Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 Pity my woe!  
 I have always  
 Lived and shall live--

Always in sweet,  
Rapturous yearning,  
And always to make thee blest!

O Siegfried! Glorious  
Wealth of the world!  
Laughing hero!  
Life of the earth!  
Ah, forbear!  
Leave me in peace!  
Touch me not,  
Mad with delirious frenzy!  
Break me not,  
Bring me not under thy yoke,  
Undo not the loved one so dear!

Hast thou rejoiced  
Thyself to see  
Reflected clear in the stream?  
If into wavelets  
The water were stirred,  
And ruffled the limpid  
Calm of the brook,  
Thy face would not be there,  
Only water's rippling unrest.  
So untouched let me stay,  
Trouble me not,  
And thy face  
Mirrored bright in me  
Will smile to thee always,  
Gay and merry and glad!

O Siegfried,  
Radiant child,  
Love thyself  
And leave me in peace;  
O bring not thine own to naught!

### **Siegfried**

I love thee;  
Didst thou but love me!  
Myself I have lost;  
Ah, would thou wert won!  
A fair-flowing flood  
Before me rolls;  
With all my senses  
Nothing I see  
But buoyant, beautiful billows.  
If it refuse  
To mirror my face,  
Just as I am,  
To assuage my fever,

Myself I will plunge  
 Straight in the stream:--  
 If only the billows  
 Would blissfully drown me,  
 My yearning lost in the flood!  
 Awaken, Brünnhilde!  
 Waken, O maid!  
 Laughing and living,  
 Sweetest delight,  
 Be mine! Be mine! Be mine!

**Brünnhilde**

[*With deep feeling.*]

Thine, Siegfried!  
 I was from of old!

**Siegfried**

[*With fire.*]

What thou hast been  
 That be thou still!

**Brünnhilde**

Thine I will  
 Always be!

**Siegfried**

What thou wilt be  
 Be thou to-day!  
 Clasped in my arms  
 And closely embraced,  
 Heart upon heart  
 Beating in rapture,  
 Glances aglow,  
 And breath mingled hungrily,  
 Eye in eye and  
 Mouth on mouth!  
 All that thou wert  
 And wilt be, be thou it now!  
 The fear and the fever would vanish  
 Were Brünnhild' now mine!

**Brünnhilde**

Were I now thine?

Heavenly calm  
 Is tossing and raging;  
 Light that was pure  
 Flames into passion;  
 Wisdom divine  
 Forsakes me and flies;

Jubilant love  
 Has scared it away!  
 If I be thine?  
 Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 Canst thou not see?  
 By the blaze of my eyes  
 Thou art not struck blind?  
 In my arms' embrace  
 Thou surely must burn!

As my blood like a torrent  
 Surges and leaps,  
 The fire fierce-flaming  
 Dost thou not feel?  
 Fearest thou, Siegfried?  
 Fearest thou not  
 The wild, love-frenzied maid?

### **Siegfried**

*[With a shock of joy.]*

Ha!  
 As the blood swift-surgings is kindled,  
 As our eyes devour one another,  
 As our arms cling close in their rapture,  
 Dauntless again  
 My courage swells,  
 And the fear I failed  
 For so long to learn,  
 The fear that I scarcely  
 Learned from thee--  
 The stupid boy fears  
 That fear is completely forgot!

*[With the last words he has involuntarily let Brünnhilde go.]*

### **Brünnhilde**

*[Laughing wildly with joy.]*

Oh, valorous boy!  
 Oh, glorious hero!  
 Unwitting source  
 Of wonderful deeds!  
 Laughing, laughing I love thee;  
 Laughing welcome my blindness;  
 Laughing let us go doomwards,  
 Laughing go down to death!

Farewell Walhall's  
 Radiant world,  
 Its stately halls  
 In the dust laid low!

Farewell, glittering  
 Pomp divine!  
 End in bliss,  
 O immortal race!  
 Norns, rend in sunder  
 Your rope of runes!  
 Dusk steal darkly  
 Over the Gods!  
 Night of their downfall  
 Dimly descend!  
 Now Siegfried's star  
 Is rising for me;  
 He is for ever  
 And for aye,  
 My wealth, my world,  
 My all in all:  
 Love ever radiant,  
 Laughing death!

### **Siegfried**

*[While Brünnhilde repeats the foregoing, beginning at "Farewell Walhall's Radiant world".]*

Laughing thou wakest,  
 Thou my delight!  
 Brünnhilde lives,  
 Brünnhilde laughs!  
 Hail, O day  
 In glory arisen!  
 Hail, O Sun  
 That shines from on high!

Hail, O light  
 From the darkness sprung!  
 Hail, O world  
 Where Brünnhilde dwells!

She wakes! She lives!  
 She greets me with laughter!  
 Splendour streams  
 From Brünnhilde's star!

She is for ever  
 And for aye  
 My wealth, my world,  
 My all in all,  
 Love ever radiant,  
 Laughing death!

*[Brünnhilde throws herself into Siegfried's arms. The curtain falls.]*

# Twilight Of The Gods

## Characters

Siegfried  
Gunther  
Hagen  
Alberich  
Brünnhilde  
Gutrune  
Waltraute  
The Three Norns  
The Rhine-Maidens  
Vassals  
Women

### SCENES OF ACTION

Prelude: On The Valkyries' Rock  
Act I. The Hall Of Gunther's Dwelling On The Rhine.  
The Valkyries' Rock  
Act II. In Front Of Gunther's Hall  
Act III. A Wooded Region On The Rhine. Gunther's Hall

## Prelude

*The curtain rises slowly. The scene is the same as at the close of the second day, on the Valkyries' rock; night. In the background, from below, firelight shines. The three Norns, tall women in long, dark, veil-like drapery. The first (eldest) lies in the foreground, to the right, under the spreading pine-tree; the second (younger) is stretched on a shelving rock in front of the cave; the third (youngest) fits in the centre at the back on a rock near the peak. Motionless, gloomy silence.*

### **The First Norn**

What light glimmers there?

### **The Second Norn**

Is it already dawn?

### **The Third Norn**

Loge's host  
Glow in flame around the rock.  
It is night.  
Why spin we not, singing the while?

### **The Second Norn**

*[To the first.]*

Where for our spinning and singing  
Wilt thou fasten the rope?

### **The First Norn**

*[While she loosens a golden ropes from herself and ties one end of it to a branch of the pine-tree.]*

I sing and wind the rope  
Badly or well, as may be.  
At the world-ash-tree  
Once I wove,  
When from the stem  
There bourgeoned strong  
The boughs of a sacred wood.  
In the shadows cool  
A fountain flowed;  
Wisdom whispered  
Low from its wave;  
Of holy things I sang.

A dauntless God  
Came to drink at the well;  
For the draught he drank  
He paid with the loss of an eye.  
From the world-ash-tree  
Wotan broke a holy bough;  
From the bough he cut  
And shaped the shaft of a spear.

As time rolled on the wood  
 Wasted and died of the wound;  
 Sere, leafless and barren,  
 Wan withered the tree;  
 Sadly the flow  
 Of the fountain failed;  
 Troubled grew  
 My sorrowful song.  
 And now no more  
 At the world-ash-tree I weave;  
 I needs must fasten  
 Here on the pine-tree my rope.  
 Sing, O sister--  
 Catch as I throw--  
 Canst thou tell us why?

### **The Second Norn**

*[Winds the rope thrown to her round a projecting rock at the entrance of the cave.]*

Runes of treaties  
 Well weighed and pondered  
 Cut were by Wotan  
 In the shaft,  
 Which wielding, he swayed the world.  
 A hero bold  
 In fight then splintered the spear,  
 The hallowed haft  
 With its treaties cleaving in twain.  
 Then bade Wotan  
 Walhall's heroes  
 Hew down the world-ash-tree  
 Forthwith,  
 Both the stem and boughs sere and barren.  
 The ash-tree sank;  
 Sealed was the fountain that flowed.  
 Round the sharp edge  
 Of the rock I wind the rope  
 Sing, O sister,  
 Catch as I throw;  
 Further canst thou tell?

### **The Third Norn**

*[Catching the rope and throwing the end behind her.]*

The castle stands  
 By giants upreared.  
 With the Gods and the holy  
 Host of the heroes  
 Wotan sits in his hall;  
 And round the walls  
 Hewn logs are heaped,  
 High up-piled,

Ready for burning:  
 The world-ash-tree these were once.  
 When the wood  
 Flares up brightly and burns,  
 In its fire  
 Shall the fair hall be consumed.  
 And then shall the high Gods' downfall  
 Dawn in darkness for aye.  
 Know ye yet more,  
 Begin anew winding the rope;  
 Again I throw it  
 Back from the north.  
 Spin and sing, O my sister.

*[She throws the rope to the second Norn, and the second throws it to the first, who loosens the rope from the bough and ties it on to another.]*

### **The First Norn**

*[Looking towards the back.]*

Is it the dawn,  
 Or the firelight that flickers?  
 Grief-darkened is my gaze.  
 The holy past  
 I can scarce remember,  
 When Loge burst  
 Of old into burning fire.  
 Dost thou know how he fared?

### **The Second Norn**

*[Winding the rope which has been thrown to her round the rock again.]*

Overcome by Wotan's  
 Spear and its magic,  
 Loge worked for the God  
 Then, to win his freedom  
 Gnawed with his tooth  
 The solemn runes on the shaft.  
 So with the potent  
 Spell of the spear-point  
 Wotan confined him  
 Flaming where Brünnhilde slumbered.  
 Canst thou tell us the end?

### **The Third Norn**

With the broken spear's  
 Sharp-piercing splinters  
 Wotan wounded  
 The blazing one deep in the breast;  
 Ravening fire  
 Springs from the wound,  
 And this is thrown  
 'Mid the world-ash-tree's

Hewn logs heaped ready for burning.  
 Would ye know  
 When that will be,  
 Wind, O sisters, the rope!

*[She throws the rope back; the second Norn winds it up and throws it again to the first.]*

### **The First Norn**

*[Fastening the rope again.]*

The night wanes,  
 Dark grows my vision;  
 I cannot find  
 The threads of the rope;  
 The strands are twisted and loose.  
 A horrible sight  
 Wildly vexes mine eyes:  
 The Rhinegold  
 That black Alberich stole.  
 Knowest thou more thereof?

### **The Second Norn**

*[With laborious haste winds the rope round the jagged rock at the mouth of the cave.]*

The rock's sharp edge  
 Is cutting the rope;  
 The threads loosen  
 Their hold and grow slack;  
 They droop tangled and frayed.  
 From woe and wrath  
 Rises the Nibelung's ring  
 A curse of revenge  
 Ruthlessly gnaws at the strands:--  
 Canst thou the end foretell?

### **The Third Norn**

*[Hastily catching the rope which is thrown to her.]*

The rope is too short,  
 Too loose it hangs;  
 It must be stretched,  
 Pulled straighter, before  
 Its end can reach to the north!

*[She pulls hard at the rope, which breaks.]*

It breaks!

### **The Second Norn**

It breaks!

### **The Third Norn**

It breaks!

*[They take the pieces of broken rope and bind their bodies together with them.]*

### **The Three Norns**

So ends wisdom eternal!  
The wise ones  
Will utter no more.  
Descend to Erda! Descend!

*[They vanish. The dawn grows brighter; the firelight from the valley gradually fades. Sunrise; then broad daylight.]*

*[Siegfried and Brünnhilde enter from the cave. He is fully armed; she leads her horse by the bridle.]*

### **Brünnhilde**

Belovèd hero,  
Poor my love were  
Wert thou thereby  
Kept from new deeds.  
One single doubt  
Yet makes me linger:  
The fear my service  
Has been too small.  
The things the Gods taught me  
I could give:  
All the rich hoard  
Of holy runes;  
But by the hero  
Who holds my heart  
I have been robbed  
Of my maiden valour.  
In wisdom weak,  
Although strong in will;  
In love so rich,  
In power so poor--  
Must thou not scorn  
Her lack of riches  
Who, though so eager,  
Can give nothing more?

### **Siegfried**

Wonderful woman, more  
Thy gifts than I can guard!  
O chide not if thy teaching  
Has left me still untaught.

*[With fire.]*

That Brünnhilde lives for me--  
To that lore I hold fast;  
And one lesson I have learned--  
Brünnhilde to remember!

### **Brünnhilde**

If thou wouldst truly love me,  
 Think of thyself alone,  
 And of thy deeds of daring!  
 The raging fire remember  
 That fearless thou didst fare through  
 When around the rock it burned--

**Siegfried**

That I might conquer Brünnhild'!

**Brünnhilde**

Think too of the shield-hidden maid  
 Thou didst find there lapped in slumber,  
 And whose helmet hard thou didst break--

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde to awaken!

**Brünnhilde**

Those oaths remember  
 That unite us;  
 The faith and truth  
 That are between us,  
 And evermore  
 The love we live for;  
 Brünnhilde in thy breast  
 Will deeply bum then for aye!

[*She embraces Siegfried.*]

**Siegfried**

Must I leave thee, O love,  
 In thy holy fortress of fire,

[*He has taken Alberich's ring from his finger, and holds it out to Brünnhilde.*]

This ring of mine I give thee;  
 Let it pay for thy runes.  
 Of whatever deeds I did  
 The virtue lies therein.  
 By my hand was the dragon grim,  
 Who long had guarded it, slain;  
 Keep thou the gold and its might  
 As token true of my love!

**Brünnhilde**

[*Putting on the ring in rapturous delight.*]

I covet it more than all else!  
 For the ring take Grane, my horse.  
 Through the air with me  
 He galloped once boldly,  
 But lost with mine  
 Was his magic art;

Upon clouds and storm,  
 Through thunder and lightning  
 No more  
 Gallantly now will he sweep!  
 But if thou lead the way,  
 Even through fire  
 Fearlessly Grane will follow.  
 For henceforth, hero,  
 Thou art his master!  
 Entreat him well;  
 He knows thy voice;  
 O, greet him often  
 In Brünnhilde's name!

**Siegfried**

Then every deed that I dare  
 Will be achieved through thy virtue;  
 All my battles thou wilt choose,  
 And my victories will be thine.  
 Upon thy good horse riding,  
 And sheltered by thy shield,  
 No longer Siegfried am I,  
 But only Brünnhilde's arm

**Brünnhilde**

O were but Brünnhilde thy soul too!

**Siegfried**

Through her my courage burns high.

**Brünnhilde**

Then wert thou Siegfried and Brünnhild'.

Siegfried

Where I am, there thy abode is.

**Brünnhilde**

[*With animation.*]

Then a waste is my hall of rock?

**Siegfried**

Made one, both there abide.

**Brünnhilde**

[*Greatly moved.*]

Ye Gods, O ye holy  
 Race of immortals,  
 Feast ye your eyes  
 On this love-hallowed pair!  
 Apart--who shall divide us?  
 Divided--still we are one!

**Siegfried**

Hail, O Brünnhilde,  
 Beautiful star!  
 Hail, love and its glory!

**Brünnhilde**

Hail, O Siegfried,  
 Conquering light!  
 Hail, life and its glory!  
 Hail, conquering light!

**Both**

Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

*[Siegfried leads the horse quickly to the edge of the sloping rock, Brünnhilde following him. Siegfried disappears with the horse down behind the projecting rock, so that he is no longer visible to the audience.]*

*Brünnhilde is thus suddenly left standing alone on the edge of the slope, and gazes down into the valley after Siegfried. Her gestures show that Siegfried has vanished from her sight. Siegfried's horn is heard from below.*

*Brünnhilde listens, and steps further out on the slope. She catches sight of Siegfried in the valley again, and waves to him joyfully. Her happy smiles seem to reflect the air of the merrily departing hero.]*

## The First Act

*The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine. This is quite open at the back. A open shore stretching to the river occupies the background. Rocky heights enclose the shore. Gunther and Gutrune on a throne at one side, before which stands a table with drinking vessels on it. In front of this Hagen is seated.*

### Gunther

Give ear, Hagen;  
Tell me the truth:  
Is my fame on the Rhine  
Worthy of Gibich's son?

### Hagen

I envy thee  
Thy fame and thy glory;  
Thy great renown was foretold  
To me by Grimhild' our mother.

### Gunther

I envy thee,  
So envy not me.  
I, as first-born, rule,  
But the wisdom is thine.  
Half-brother's feud  
Could scarce be laid better;  
Asking thus of my renown,  
'Tis thy wisdom that I praise.

### Hagen

My words I withdraw,  
Thy fame might be more:  
I know of precious treasures  
That the Gibichung has not yet won.

### Gunther

Hide these, and I  
Withdraw my praise.

### Hagen

In summer's full-ripened glory  
Blooms the Gibich stock,  
Thou, Gunther, still unwived,  
Thou, Gutrun', still unwed.

### Gunther

Whom wouldst thou have me woo,  
To win more wide renown?

### Hagen

One I know of,  
 None nobler in the world.  
 She dwells on soaring rocks,  
 Her chamber is circled by fire;  
 And he who would Brünnhild' woo  
 Must break through the daunting flame.

**Gunther**

Suffices my strength for the task?

**Hagen**

For one stronger still it is decreed.

**Gunther**

Who is that hero unmatched?

**Hagen**

Siegfried, the Wälsung's son;  
 He is the hero bold.  
 A twin-born pair,  
 Whom fate turned to lovers,  
 Siegmund and Sieglinde,  
 Had as their offspring this child.  
 In the woods he grew and waxed strong.  
 'Tis he that Gutrun' must wed.

**Gutrune**

[*Shyly.*]

Tell me what deed of high valour  
 Made this hero the first in renown.

**Hagen**

At Neidhöhle  
 A huge dragon lay,  
 Who guarded the Nibelung's gold.  
 He was slain,  
 And his horrid jaws closed  
 By Siegfried's invincible sword.

From this colossal deed  
 The fame of the hero dawned.

**Gunther**

[*Thoughtfully.*]

They say that a priceless treasure  
 The Niblungs had in their hoard.

**Hagen**

The man who could use its spell  
 Were lord of the world evermore.

**Gunther**

And Siegfried won it in fight?

**Hagen**

He has the Niblungs in thrall.

**Gunther**

And Brünnhild' no other can win?

**Hagen**

To no other will the flames yield.

**Gunther**

*[Rises angrily from his seat.]*

Why wake dissension and doubt?

Why stir up my desire

And yearning for joys

That cannot be won?

*[He walks to and fro much agitated.]*

**Hagen**

*[Without leaving his seat causes Gunther to pull up as he approaches him, by a gesture of mysterious import.]*

Would not Brünnhilde

Be thy bride,

Were she by Siegfried brought home?

**Gunther**

*[Turns away doubtful and angry.]*

But how could I force this man

To woo the bride for me?

**Hagen**

*[As before.]*

Thy simple prayer would force him,

Gutrune' winning him first.

**Gutrune**

Thou mockest, cruel Hagen!

What arts have I to bind him?

The greatest hero

In all the world

Has long ere this by the fairest

Women on earth been loved.

**Hagen**

*[Bending confidentially towards Gutrune.]*

What of the drink in the chest?

*[More secretly.]*

In me who won it have more faith.  
 To thee in love it will bind  
 Him whom thy heart most desires.

*[Gunther has come to the table again, and, leaning against it, pays close attention.]*

Hither did Siegfried come,  
 And taste of this potion of herbs,  
 He would straight forget he had looked  
 On any woman before,  
 Or been by woman approached.  
 Now answer:  
 Think ye my counsel good?

**Gunther**

*[Starting up suddenly.]*

Now Grimhild' be praised,  
 Who for brother gave us thee.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried fain I would behold!

**Gunther**

But how can he be found?

*[A horn on the stage, from the background on the left, very loud but distant.]*

**Hagen**

*[Listens and turns to Gunther.]*

Merrily hunting  
 After renown  
 Across the world  
 As through a wood,  
 Belike in his chase he will come  
 To the Gibich's realm on the Rhine.

**Gunther**

Heartily welcome were he.

*[A horn on the stage, nearer, but still distant. Both listen.]*

A horn from the Rhine I hear.

**Hagen**

*[Looks down the river and calls towards the back.]*

A man and horse on board a boat  
 His horn how gaily he winds!

*[A horn on the stage sounds nearer. Gunther stops halfway listening.]*

See the leisurely stroke,  
 And the indolent arm  
 Against the stream  
 Urging the boat!

So skilful a hand  
 On the swinging oar  
 Can be but his  
 Who the dragon slew:--  
 It is Siegfried-surely no other!

**Gunther**

Will he go by?

**Hagen**

*[Making a trumpet of his hands, calls towards the river.]*

Hoiho! Blithe hero,  
 Whither bound?

**Siegfried**

*[From the distance.]*

I seek the son of Gibich.

**Hagen**

I bid thee welcome to Gunther's hall.

*[Siegfried in a boat appears at the shore.]*

This way! Stop here and land!

*[Siegfried brings his boat to the shore. Hagen makes it fast with the chain. Siegfried springs ashore with his horse. Gunther has come down and joined Hagen.]*

**Hagen**

Hail, Siegfried, hero bold!

*[Gutrune gazes at Siegfried from the throne in astonishment. Gunther prepares to offer him friendly greetings. All stand fixed in silent mutual contemplation.]*

**Siegfried**

Who is Gibich's son?

*[Leaning on his horse, remains quietly standing by the boat.]*

**Gunther**

I am he thou dost seek.

**Siegfried**

Thy fame has reached me  
 From the Rhine;  
 Now fight with me,  
 Or be my friend.

**Gunther**

Be thou mine;  
 Thou art welcome!

**Siegfried**

Where stable my horse?

**Hagen**

Leave him to me.

**Siegfried**

*[Turning to Hagen.]*

My name thou knowest;  
Where have we met?

**Hagen**

I guessed from thy strength  
Who thou must be.

**Siegfried**

*[As he hands over the horse to Hagen.]*

Be careful of Grane,  
For thou hast never  
Led by the rein  
So noble a steed.

*[Hagen leads the horse away. While Siegfried looks thoughtfully after him, Gutrune, obeying a sign of Hagen's which Siegfried does not notice, goes to her room through a door on the left. Gunther comes into the hall with Siegfried, whom he has invited to accompany him.]*

**Gunther**

My father's ancient hall,  
O hero, greet in gladness!  
All thou beholdest,  
Where'er thou art,  
Treat as thine own henceforward  
Thine is my kingdom--  
Land and folk;  
By my body I swear it!  
Yea, myself I am thine.

**Siegfried**

Nor land nor folk have I to give,  
Nor father's house nor hall;  
In my body  
Is all my wealth;  
As I live it grows less.  
But a sword have I  
Which I welded;  
Let my sword be my witness!--  
That and myself I bestow.

**Hagen**

*[Who has come back and now stands behind Siegfried.]*

Of the Nibelungs' treasure  
Rumour names thee the lord.

**Siegfried**

*[Turning round to Hagen.]*

I almost forgot the hoard,  
So lightly I prize its worth.  
I left it lying in a cavern,  
Where a dragon once held watch.

**Hagen**

And nothing took at all?

**Siegfried**

Only this, not knowing its use.

**Hagen**

It is the Tarnhelm,  
The gem of the Nibelung's art;  
Its use, when worn on thy head,  
Is to change thy shape as thou wilt;  
If fain to be borne afar,  
In a flash lo! thou art there!  
Didst thou take nothing besides?

**Siegfried**

Yes, a ring.

**Hagen**

Which safe thou dost hold?

**Siegfried**

*[Tenderly.]*

'Tis held by a woman fair.

**Hagen**

*[Aside.]*

Brünnhild'!

**Gunther**

Nay, Siegfried, let us not barter;  
All I have a bauble poor,  
Matched with thy treasure, would be.  
I will serve thee without reward.

*[Hagen has gone to Gutrune's door, and now opens it.]*

**Gutrune**

*[Enters carrying a full drinking horn, with which she approaches Siegfried.]*

Welcome, O guest,  
To Gibich's house!  
'Tis his daughter gives thee to drink.

**Siegfried**

*[Bows in a friendly manner and takes the horn, which he holds thoughtfully before him.]*

Were all forgot  
 Thou gavest to me,  
 One lesson  
 I will never forget;  
 So this first draught  
 With love undying,  
 Brünnhild', I drink to thee!

*[He puts the drinking-horn to his lips and takes a long draught; then he hands it back to Gutrune, who, ashamed and confused, casts down her eyes. Siegfried gazes at her with sudden passion.]*

**Siegfried**

O thou who dost scorch  
 And blind with thine eyes,  
 Why sink them abashed by my gaze?

*[Gutrune, blushing, looks up at him.]*

O lovely maid,  
 Lower thine eyes;  
 My heart is aflame,  
 Burnt by their light;  
 They kindle my blood; it flows  
 In devouring torrents of fire.

*[With a trembling voice.]*

Gunther, what name is thy sister's?

**Gunther**

Gutrune.

**Siegfried**

*[Softly.]*

Can those be good runes  
 That in her eyes I am reading?

*[He ardently seizes Gutrune's hand.]*

With thy brother I was fain to serve;  
 His pride my prayer scorned.  
 Were I to pray the same of thee,  
 Wouldst thou like him be proud?

*[Gutrune, involuntarily meets Hagen's eye. She bows her head humbly, and, expecting her feeling of unworthiness with a gesture, leaves the hall with faltering steps.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Attentively watched by Hagen and Gunther, gazes after Gutrune as if entranced.]*

Gunther, hast thou a wife?

**Gunther**

I am not wed,  
 Nor, it would seem,  
 Likely to find a wife!  
 My heart on one I have set  
 Whom there is no way to win.

**Siegfried**

*[Turns with animation to Gunther.]*

In what canst thou fail  
 With me for friend?

**Gunther**

On rocky heights her home;  
 Surrounded by fire her hall;

**Siegfried**

*[Interrupting in wondering haste.]*

“On rocky heights her home  
 Surrounded by fire her hall” . . . ?

**Gunther**

He only who braves the fire . . .

**Siegfried**

“He only who braves the fire” . . . ?

*[As if making an intense effort to remember something.]*

**Gunther**

May Brünnhilde’s wooer be.

*[Siegfried shows by a gesture that at the mention of Brünnhilde’s name all remembrance of her has faded.]*

I dare not essay the dread mountain  
 The flames would not fall for me.

**Siegfried**

*[Awakens from his dreamy state, and turns to Gunther high spirited and gay.]*

For thee I will win her,  
 Of fire I have no fear;  
 For thy man am I,  
 And my strength is thine,  
 If Gutrun’ I win as my wife.

**Gunther**

Gutrune gladly I grant thee

**Siegfried**

Thou shalt have Brünnhilde then.

**Gunther**

But how wilt deceive her?

**Siegfried**

I will wear the Tarnhelm,  
And appear in thy form.

**Gunther**

Then let the oath now be sworn!

**Siegfried**

Blood-brotherhood  
Sworn be by oath!

*[Hagen fills a drinking-horn with fresh wine; he holds it out to Siegfried and Gunther, who cut their arms with their swords and hold them for a short pace over the horn; then they each lay two fingers on the horn, which Hagen continues to hold between them.]*

**Siegfried and Gunther**

Quickening blood  
Of blossoming life  
Lo! I drop in the horn!  
Bravely mixed  
In brotherly love,  
  
Bloom our blood in the draught!  
Troth I drink to the friend  
Glad and free  
To-day from the bond  
Blood-brotherhood spring!  
But if broken the bond,  
Or if faithless the friend,  
What in drops to-day  
We drink kindly  
In torrents wildly shall flow,  
Paying treachery's wage.  
So--sealed be the bond!  
So--pledged be my faith!

*[Gunther drinks and hands the horn to Siegfried, who finishes the draught, and holds out the empty horn to Hagen. Hagen breaks the horn in two with his sword. Gunther and Siegfried join hands.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Observes Hagen, who, while the oath was being sworn, has stood behind him.]*

Why hast not thou plighted thy troth?

**Hagen**

My blood had soured the good draught.  
It flows not pure  
And noble like yours;

Stubborn and cold,  
 Slow it runs,  
 My cheek refusing to redden.  
 I hold aloof  
 From hot-blooded bonds.

**Gunther**

*[To Siegfried.]*

Heed not him and his spleen.

**Siegfried**

*[Puts on his shield again.]*

Up, then, and off!  
 Back to the boat!  
 Sail swift to the mountain!

*[He steps nearer to Gunther and points at him.]*

By the bank one night  
 On board thou shalt tarry,  
 And then bring home the bride.

*[He turns to go, and beckons Gunther to follow him.]*

**Gunther**

Wilt thou not rest awhile?

**Siegfried**

I am eager to be back.

*[He goes to the shore to unmoor the boat.]*

**Gunther**

Thou, Hagen, keep guard o'er the homestead.

*[He follows Siegfried to the shore. Whilst Siegfried and Gunther, after laying their arms in the boat, are hoisting the sail and making ready for departure, Hagen takes up his spear and shield. Gutrune appears at the door of her chamber just as Siegfried is pushing off the boat, which immediately glides into the middle of the stream.]*

**Gutrune**

So swiftly whither haste they?

**Hagen**

To woo Brünnhild' for bride.

*[While he seats himself comfortably with shield and spear in front of the hall.]*

**Gutrune**

Siegfried?

**Hagen**

See how he hastes,  
For wife seeking to win thee!

**Gutrune**

Siegfried--mine?

*[She returns to her room greatly excited. Siegfried has seized an oar and rows the boat down-stream, so that it is soon lost to view.]*

**Hagen**

*[Sits motionless, his back against the door-post of the hall.]*

On guard here I sit  
Watching the house,  
Warding the hall from the foe;  
Gibich's son

Is sped by the wind,  
And sails away for a wife;  
A hero bold  
Of the helm has charge,  
And danger braves for his sake;  
His bride once loved  
He brings to the Rhine;  
With her he brings me--the ring.  
O merry comrades,  
Freeborn and honoured,  
Gaily speed on in your pride!  
Base though ye deem him,  
The Niblung's son  
Shall yet be your lord.

*[A curtain which frames the front of the hall is drawn, and cuts the stage off from the audience.]*

*The curtain is raised again. The rocky height as in the Prelude. Brünnhilde sits at the entrance to the cave in silent contemplation of Siegfried's ring. Moved by blissful memories, she covers the ring with kisses. Distant thunder is heard; she looks up and listens. She turns to the ring again. A flash of lightning. Again she listens, and looks into the distance, whence a dark thundercloud is approaching the rock.*

**Brünnhilde**

On my ear from afar  
Falls an old sound familiar.  
A horse comes flying  
Swift through the air;  
On the clouds it sweeps  
In storm to the rock.  
Who seeks the lonely one here?

**Waltraute's voice**

*[From the distance.]*

Brünnhilde, sister,  
Wake if thou sleepest!

**Brünnhilde**

*[Starts from her seat.]*

Waltraute's call!  
How welcome the sound!

*[Calling to the wing, and then hastening to the edge of the rock.]*

Dost thou, sister,  
Boldly swinging come this way?  
In the wood--  
Still dear to thee--  
Halt and dismount,  
And leave thy courser to rest.

*[She runs into the wood, from which a loud sound like a thunder-clap is heard. She returns in great agitation with Waltraute, and remains joyfully excited without noticing the latter's anxious fear.]*

Art thou so bold  
That thou art come  
Brünnhild' to greet,  
Thy love unconquered by dread?

**Waltraute**

Thou alone  
Art cause of my haste!

**Brünnhilde**

For Brünnhild's sake Warfather's ban  
Hast thou thus bravely broken?  
Or perchance--O say!--

*[With some hesitation.]*

Has he at last  
Softened to his child?  
When against the God  
I sought to shield Siegmund,  
Vainly--I know it--  
My deed fulfilled his desire.  
And I know that his anger  
Was assuaged,  
For albeit in slumber deep  
Here to the rock I was bound,  
  
Doomed to be thrall to the man  
Who should wake the maid as he passed,  
To my anguished prayer  
He granted grace;  
With ravening fire  
He surrounded the rock,  
To bar to all cowards the road.

Bane and chastisement  
 Turned so to blessing;  
 A hero unmatched  
 Has won me as wife;  
 Blest by his love,  
 In light and laughter I live.

*[She embraces Waltraute with wild manifestations of joy, which the latter tries with anxious impatience to repress.]*

Hast thou been lured by my lot,  
 And wouldst thou, sister,  
 Feast on my gladness,  
 Sharing in my delight?

**Waltraute**

*[Vehemently.]*

Sharing the frenzy  
 That has maddened thee, fool!  
 Far other the cause why I come,  
 Defying Wotan in fear.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Here, for the first time, notices with surprise Waltraute's wildly excited state.]*

Art afraid?  
 Anguished with terror?  
 So the stern one does not forgive?  
 Thou fearest his punishing wrath?

**Waltraute**

*[Gloomily.]*

Might I but fear it,  
 At an end were my distress.

**Brünnhilde**

I am perplexed and amazed.

**Waltraute**

Calm thou thy frenzy;  
 Mark with care what I say!  
 The fear that drove me  
 Hither to thee  
 Drives me back to Walhall again.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Alarmed.]*

What ails, then, the Gods everlasting?

**Waltraute**

Give earnest heed to what I tell thee!  
 Since from thee Wotan parted,

No more has he sent  
Us to battle;  
Anxious and bewildered  
We rode to the field.  
Shunned are Walhall's bold heroes  
By Warfather;  
Riding alone,  
Without pause or rest  
He wandered and roamed through the world.  
At last he returned  
With his spear splintered;  
In his hand the pieces;  
A hero had cleft it asunder.  
With silent sign  
Walhall's heroes  
Then he sent forth  
To hew down the world-ash-tree.  
He bade them pile  
The logs as they hewed them,  
Until they were heaped  
High round the hall of the blest.  
The Gods he next  
Called to a council;  
The high seat  
He solemnly took,  
Bidding them  
Who gathered in fear sit beside him.  
The heroes filled  
The hall, ranged round in their order.  
So sits he,  
Speaks no word,  
Upon his high seat  
Grave and mute,  
The splintered spear  
Held fast in his hand,  
Holda's apples  
Touching no more.  
Fear and amazement  
Hold the Gods fast fettered.  
He has sent his ravens  
Forth to seek tidings;  
If they return  
And bring him comforting news,  
Then the God will  
With soul serene  
Smile evermore and be glad.  
Round his knees in sorrow  
Twined lie the Valkyries;  
He heeds not  
Our glances beseeching;

By terror and wild anguish  
 We all are consumed.  
 Against his breast  
 Weeping I nestled,  
 Then soft grew his gaze:  
 He remembered, Brünnhilde, thee.

He closed his eyes  
 As if dreaming,  
 Heavily sighed  
 And whispered these words:  
 "If to the deep Rhine's daughters

She would restore the ring that was theirs,  
 From the grievous curse  
 Both God and world were freed!"  
 Then I took thought,  
 And from his side  
 Through the silent ranks  
 Stole noiselessly forth.  
 In haste, unseen,  
 I mounted my horse,  
 And stormed in tumult to thee.  
 Grant, O sister,  
 The boon I beg  
 What thou canst do,  
 Undaunted perform!  
 End thou the grief of the Gods!

*[She has thrown herself down before Brünnhilde.]*

### **Brünnhilde**

*[Quietly.]*

What dreadful dream-born fancies,  
 Sad one, are those thou dost tell?  
 The high Gods' holy  
 And cloud-paved heaven  
 Is no longer my home.  
 I grasp not what thou art saying;  
 Dark its sense,  
 Wild and confused.

Within thine eyes,  
 So over-weary,  
 Gleams wavering fire;  
 With thy wan visage,

O pale-faced sister,  
 What wouldst thou, wild one, of me?

### **Waltraute**

*[Vehemently.]*

The ring upon thy hand--  
 'Tis that: ah, be implored!  
 For Wotan fling it away!

**Brünnhilde**

The ring--away?

**Waltraute**

To the Rhine-daughters give it again.

**Brünnhilde**

The Rhine-daughters--I--the ring?  
 Siegfried's love-pledge?  
 Hast thou gone crazy?

**Waltraute**

Hear me! Hear my despair!  
 On this hangs  
 The world's undoing and woe.  
 Throw it from thee  
 Into the water;  
 End the anguish of Walhall;  
 The accurst thing cast in the waves!

**Brünnhilde**

Ha! dost thou know what 'twould mean?  
 How shouldst thou,  
 Maid unloving and cold!  
 Much is Walhall's rapture,  
 Much is the fame of the Gods;  
 More is my ring.  
 One glance at its shining gold,  
 One flash of its sacred fire  
 Is more precious  
 Than bliss of all the Gods  
 Enduring for aye!  
 For Siegfried's dear love  
 Shines from it bright and blessed.  
 Love of Siegfried!  
 Ah, could I but utter the rapture  
 Bound up in the ring!

Go back to the holy  
 Council of Gods;  
 Repeat what I have told thee  
 Of my ring:  
 That love I will not forswear,  
 Of love they never shall rob me;

Sooner shall Walhall's glory  
 Perish and pass!

**Waltraute**

This is thy faith, then?  
 To her sorrow  
 Thus coldly thou leavest thy sister?

**Brünnhilde**

Up and away!  
 Swiftly to horse!  
 I will not part with the ring.

**Waltraute**

Woe's me! Woe's me!  
 Woe to thee, sister!  
 Woe to Walhall's Gods!

*[She rushes away. A storm-cloud immediately rises from the wood, accompanied by thunder.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[As she looks after the brightly lit, retreating thunder-cloud, which soon vanishes in the distance.]*

Borne by the wind  
 In storm and lightning,  
 Haste away, cloud,  
 And may I see thee no more!

*[Twilight has fallen. The light of the fire gradually shines more brightly from below. She gazes quietly out on the landscape.]*

Eventide shadows  
 Dim the heavens,  
 And more brightly  
 The flames that encircle me glow.

*[The firelight approaches from below. Ever-brightening tongues of flame shoot up over the edge of the rock.]*

Why leap so wildly  
 The billows that blaze round the rock?  
 Up here to the peak  
 Surges the fiery flood!

*[Siegfried's horn is heard from the valley. Brünnhilde starts up in delight.]*

Siegfried?  
 Siegfried returned?

With his horn greeting he sends!  
 Up! Out to the welcome!  
 Swift to my God's embrace!

*[She hastens joyfully to the edge of the crag. Flames leap up, out of which Siegfried springs forward on to a high rock, whereupon the flames immediately withdraw and again only shine up from below. Brünnhilde recoils in terror, flies to the foreground, and from there, in speechless astonishment, stares at Siegfried, who, wearing the Tarnhelm, which covers the upper half of his face, leaving only his eyes free, appears in Gunther's form.]*

**Brünnhilde**

Betrayed! Who seeks me here?

**Siegfried**

*[Remaining on the rock at the back, motionless and leaning on his shield, regards Brünnhilde. In a feigned (harsher) voice.]*

Brünnhild'! A wooer comes  
Whom thy fire did not dismay.  
I want thee for my wife;  
Consent to follow me!

**Brünnhilde**

*[Trembling violently.]*

What man has done  
This deed undaunted  
That the boldest only dares?

**Siegfried**

*[As before.]*

A hero who will tame  
Thy pride by force at need.

**Brünnhilde**

A monster stands  
Upon yonder stone;  
An eagle has come  
To rend me in pieces!  
Who art thou, frightful one?  
Art thou a mortal,  
Or dost thou hie  
From Hella's dark host?

**Siegfried**

*[As before, beginning with a slightly tremulous voice, but continuing with more confidence.]*

A Gibichung am I,  
And Gunther is his name  
Whom thou must follow hence.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Breaking out in despair.]*

Wotan! Thou cruel,  
Merciless God!  
Woe! Now I see  
How thine anger works!  
To scorn and sorrow  
I am condemned.

**Siegfried**

*[Springs down from the stone and approaches.]*

Night falls apace;  
Within thy cave  
Thou must receive thy husband.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Stretching out with a threatening gesture the finger on which she wears Siegfried's ring.]*

Stand back! Fear thou this token!  
While I am shielded by this,  
Thou canst not force me to shame.

**Siegfried**

Wife it shall make thee to Gunther;  
With this ring thou shalt be wed.

**Brünnhilde**

Stand back, base robber!  
Impious thief!  
Nor dare, overbold, to draw near!  
Stronger than steel  
Made by the ring,  
I never will yield!

**Siegfried**

That it must be mine  
I learn from thy lips.

*[He presses towards her, There is a struggle. Brünnhilde wrenches herself free, flies and turns round as if to defend herself. Siegfried seizes her again. She flies; he reaches her. They wrestle violently together. Siegfried catches her hand and draws the ring from her finger. She gives a loud scream. As she sinks helpless into his arms her unconscious look meets Siegfried's eyes. Siegfried lays her fainting on the stone bench at the entrance to the cave.]*

**Siegfried**

Now thou art mine!  
Brünnhilde, Gunther's bride,  
Lead me the way to thy cave!

**Brünnhilde**

*[Stares, as if fainting, before her; exhausted.]*

O woman undone,  
Where now thy defence?

**Siegfried**

*[Drives her on with a gesture of command. Trembling and with tottering steps she goes into the cave. In his natural voice.]*

Now, Nothung, witness thou  
That chastely I have wooed,

And loyal been to my brother;  
Lie betwixt me and his bride!

[*He follows Brünnhilde. The curtain falls.*]

## The Second Act

*A open space on the shore in front of the Gibichungs' hall; to the right the open entrance to the hall, to the left the bank of the Rhine. From the latter, crossing the stage and mounting towards the back, rises a rocky height, cut by several mountain-paths. There an altar-stone to Fricka is visible, as well as one, higher up, to Wotan, and one at the side to Donner. It is night. Hagen, his arm round his spear and his shield by his side, sits against one of the pillars of the hall asleep. The moon shines out suddenly and throws a vivid light on Hagen and his immediate surroundings. Alberich is seen crouching in front of him, leaning his arms on Hagen's knees.*

### **Alberich**

*[Softly.]*

Hagen, son, art asleep?  
Betrayed by drowsiness  
And rest thou dost not hear?

### **Hagen**

*[Softly, without moving, so that he seems to sleep on although his eyes are open.]*

I hear thee, O baleful Niblung;  
What wouldst thou tell me while I slumber?

### **Alberich**

Remember the might  
Thou art endowed with,  
If thou art valiant  
As thy mother bore thee to me.

### **Hagen**

*[Still as before.]*

Though courage she bestowed,  
I have no cause to thank her  
For falling under thy spell;  
Soon old, wan and pale,  
Hating the happy,  
Where is my joy?

### **Alberich**

*[As before.]*

Hagen, my son,  
Hate thou the happy;  
This joyless and  
Sorrow-laden one,  
Him alone thou shalt love.  
Be thou strong  
And bold and wise!

Those whom with weapons  
 Of darkness we fight  
 Already our hate has dismayed.  
 And he who captured my ring,  
 Wotan, the ravening robber,  
 By one of his sons  
 In fight has been vanquished;  
 He has lost  
 Through the Wälsung power and might.  
 With the whole immortal race  
 He awaits in anguish his downfall.  
 Him I fear no more:  
 He and all his must perish!  
 Hagen, son, art asleep?

**Hagen**

*[Remains motionless as before.]*

The might of the Gods  
 Who then shall wield?

**Alberich**

I--and thou!  
 The world we shall own,  
 If in thy truth  
 I rightly trust,  
 Sharest thou my hate and wrath.  
 Wotan's spear  
 Was splintered by Siegfried,

The hero who won  
 As booty the ring  
 When Fafner, the dragon, he slew.  
 Power supreme  
 He has attained to;

*[Still mysteriously.]*

Walhall and Nibelheim bow to his will.  
 On this hero undaunted  
 My curse falls in vain,  
 For he knows not  
 The ring's true worth,  
 Nor makes use  
 Of its wonderful spell;  
 Laughing he burns life away,  
 Caring only for love.  
 Nothing can serve us  
 But his undoing!

Sleepest, Hagen, my son?

**Hagen**

*[As before.]*

Already he speeds  
Through me to his doom.

**Alberich**

The golden ring--  
'Tis that that we must capture!  
The Wälsung  
By a wise woman is loved.  
If, urged by her,  
To the Rhine's fair daughters  
--Who bewitched me once  
Below in the waves--  
The stolen ring he restored,  
Forever lost were the gold,  
And no guile could win it again.  
Wherefore with ardour  
Aim for the ring.

I gat thee  
A stranger to fear,  
That against heroes  
Thou mightst uphold me.  
I had not the strength,  
Indeed, to despatch,  
Like the Walsung, Fafner in fight;  
But I reared Hagen  
To deadly hatred,  
And he shall avenge me--  
Shall win the ring,  
Putting Wälsung and Wotan to scorn!  
Swear to me, Hagen, my son!

*[From this point Alberich is covered by an ever-deepening shadow. At the same time day begins to dawn.]*

**Hagen**

*[Still as before.]*

The ring shall be mine yet;  
Quietly wait!

**Alberich**

Swear to me, Hagen, my son!

**Hagen**

To myself swear I;  
Make thy mind easy!

**Alberich**

*[Still gradually disappearing, and his voice, as he does so, becoming more and more inaudible.]*

Be true, Hagen, my son!  
 Trusty hero, be true!  
 Be true!--True!

*[Alberich has quite disappeared. Hagen, who has never changed position, looks with fixed eyes and without moving towards the Rhine, over which the light of dawn is spreading.]*

*The gradually brightening red of dawn is reflected in the Rhine. Siegfried steps out suddenly from behind a bush close to the shore. He appears in his own shape, but has the Tarnhelm on his head still; he takes this off, and, as he comes forward, hangs it on his girdle.*

**Siegfried**

Hoioh! Hagen!  
 Weary man!  
 Where is thy welcome?

**Hagen**

*[Rising in a leisurely fashion.]*

Hei! Siegfried?  
 Swift-footed hero,  
 Whence stormest thou now?

**Siegfried**

From Brünnhilde's rock.  
 'Twas there that I drew the breath  
 I called to thee with;  
 A quick passage I made!  
 Slower behind me a pair  
 On board a vessel come.

**Hagen**

Hast thou won Brünnhild'?

**Siegfried**

Wakes Gutrune?

**Hagen**

*[Calling towards the hall.]*

Hoiho! Gutrune!  
 Haste and come!  
 Siegfried is here.  
 Why dost delay?

**Siegfried**

*[Turning to the hall.]*

How Brünnhild' yielded  
 Ye shall both be told.

*[Gutrune comes from the hall to meet him.]*

**Siegfried**

Give me fair greeting,  
Gibich's child!  
I come to thee with joyful news.

**Gutrune**

Freia greet thee  
To the honour of all women!

**Siegfried**

To thy lover glad  
Be gracious;  
For wife I have won thee to-day.

**Gutrune**

Comes then Brünnhild' with my brother?

**Siegfried**

None ever wooed with more ease.

**Gutrune**

Was he not scorched by the fire?

**Siegfried**

It had not burnt him, I trow;  
But I broke through it instead,  
That I for wife might win thee.

**Gutrune**

And no harm didst thou take?

**Siegfried**

I laughed 'mid the surge of the flames.

**Gutrune**

Did Brünnhild' think thee Gunther?

**Siegfried**

Like were we to a hair;  
The Tarnhelm saw to that,  
As Hagen truly foretold.

**Hagen**

I gave thee counsel good.

**Gutrune**

And so the bold maid was tamed?

**Siegfried**

Her pride--Gunther broke.

**Gutrune**

Did she give herself to thee?

**Siegfried**

Through the night the vanquished Brünnhild'  
To her rightful husband belonged.

**Gutrune**

For her husband thou didst pass?

**Siegfried**

By Gutrune sojourned Siegfried.

**Gutrune**

But 'twas Brünnhild' lay beside thee.

**Siegfried**

*[Pointing to his sword.]*

Far as north from east and west,  
So far was Brünnhild' removed.

**Gutrune**

But how got Gunther his wife from thee?

**Siegfried**

Through the flames of the fire as they faded,  
When day dawned, through the mist  
She followed me down the hill;  
When near the shore,  
None observing,  
I gave Gunther my place,  
And by the Tarnhelm's magic  
Wished myself straight to thee.  
A strong wind drives the lovers  
Merrily down the Rhine;  
Prepare to greet them with joy.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried! Such is thy might,  
I am afraid of thee!

**Hagen**

*[Calling from the shore.]*

I can see a sail in the distance.

**Siegfried**

Now be the envoy thanked!

**Gutrune**

Let us give her gracious greeting,  
That glad and gay she here may tarry!  
Thou, Hagen, prithee

Summon the men  
 To the hall here for the wedding,  
 While blithe maids  
 To the feast I bid;  
 Our joy they will merrily share.

*[As she goes towards the hall she turns round again.]*

Wilt thou rest, wicked man?

### **Siegfried**

Helping thee is rest enough.

*[He gives her his hand and accompanies her into the hall.]*

### **Hagen**

*[Has mounted a rock at the back, and starts blowing his cow-horn.]*

Hoiho! Hoiho! Hoho!  
 Ye Gibich vassals,  
 Up and prepare!  
 Woeful tidings!  
 Weapons! Weapons!  
 Arm through the land!  
 Goodly weapons,  
 Mighty weapons  
 Sharp for strife!  
 Dire the strait!  
 Woe! Danger! Danger!  
 Hoiho! Hoiho! Hoho!

*[Hagen remains where he is on the rock. Armed men arrive in haste by different paths; first singly, and then in larger and larger groups.]*

### **The Vassals**

Why sounds the horn?  
 Who calls us to arms?  
 We come with our arms,  
 We come with our weapons.  
 Hagen! Hagen!  
 Hoiho! Hoiho!  
 Who hath suffered scathe  
 Say, what foe is nigh?  
 Who forces war?  
 Is Gunther sore pressed?  
 We come with our weapons,  
 With weapons keen!  
 Hoiho! Ho! Hagen!

### **Hagen**

*[Still from the rock.]*

Come fully armed  
 Without delay!

Welcome Gunther, your lord:  
A wife Gunther has wooed.

**The Vassals**

Is he in straits,  
Pressed by the foe?

**Hagen**

A woman hard won  
With him he brings.

**The Vassals**

Her kinsmen and vassals  
Follow for vengeance?

**Hagen**

No one follows  
But his bride.

**The Vassals**

Then the peril is past,  
And the foe put to flight?

**Hagen**

The dragon-slayer  
Helped him at need;  
Siegfried, the hero,  
Kept him from harm.

**The Vassals**

How then can his vassals avail him?  
And why hast callèd us here?

**Hagen**

Sturdy oxen  
Ye shall slaughter;  
On Wotan's altar  
Their blood be shed!

**The Vassals**

And after that, Hagen? Say, what next?

**Hagen**

After that for Froh  
A boar ye shall fell,  
And a full-grown and strong  
He-goat for Donner;

But for Fricka  
Sheep ye shall slaughter,  
That she may smile on the marriage!

**The Vassals**

*[With increasing cheerfulness.]*

What shall we do  
When the beasts we have slain?

**Hagen**

The drink-horn take  
That women sweet  
With wine and mead  
Blithely have filled.

**The Vassals**

The drink-horn in hand,  
What task awaits us still?

**Hagen**

Gaily carouse  
Until tamed by wine:  
Drink, that the Gods, duly honoured,  
Grace may accord to this marriage.

**The Vassals**

*[Burst into ringing laughter.]*

Good luck and joy  
Laugh on the Rhine,  
If Hagen, the grim one,  
So merrily jests!  
To wedding-feasts  
Hagen invites;  
His prick the hedge-thorn,  
Hagen, has lost!

**Hagen**

*[Who has remained very grave, has come down to the men, and now stands among them.]*

Now cease from laughing,  
Doughty vassals!  
Receive Gunther's bride;  
Yonder come Brünnhild' and he.

*[He points towards the Rhine. Some of the men hurry to the height; others range themselves on the shore to watch the arrival. Hagen goes up to some of the men.]*

Be to your lady  
Loyal and true;  
Suffers she wrong,  
Swiftly avenge her!

*[He turns slowly aside and moves towards the back. The boat arrives with Gunther and Brünnhilde. Those who have been looking out from the height come down to the shore. Some vassals spring into the water and pull the boat to land. All press closer to the bank.]*

**The Vassals**

Hail! Hail! Hail!  
 Be greeted! Be greeted!  
 Welcome, O Gunther!  
 Hail! Hail! Hail!

*Gunther steps out of the boat with Brünnhilde.*

**The Vassals**

*[Range themselves respectfully to receive them.]*

Welcome, Gunther!  
 Health to thee and to thy bride!

*[They strike their weapons loudly together.]*

**Gunther**

*[Presenting Brünnhilde, who follows him with pale face and lowered eyes, to the men.]*

Brünnhild', a peerless bride,  
 Here to the Rhine I bring.  
 No man ever won  
 A nobler woman!  
 The Gods have shown from of old  
 Grace to the Gibichung stock.  
 To fame unmatched  
 Now may it mount!

**The Vassals**

*[Solemnly clash their weapons.]*

Hail! O hail, happy Gibichung!

**Gunther**

*[Leads Brünnhilde who never raises her eyes, to the hall, from which Siegfried and Gutrune, attended by women, now come forth.]*

Dear hero, greetings glad!  
 I greet thee, fair sister!  
 By him who won thee for wife  
 I joyfully see thee stand.  
 Two happy pairs  
 Here radiant are shining:

*[He draws Brünnhilde forward.]*

Brünnhild'--and Gunther,  
 Gutrun'--and Siegfried.

*[Brünnhilde, startled, looks up and sees Siegfried. Her eyes remain fixed on him in amazement. Gunther, who has released her violently trembling hand, shows, as do all present, blank astonishment at her behaviour.]*

**The Vassals and Women**

What ails her?  
Has she gone mad?

**Siegfried**

Why looks Brünnhild' amazed?

*[Goes a few steps towards Brünnhilde, who has begun to tremble.]*

**Brünnhilde**

Siegfried . . . here? Guttrune . . . ?

*[Scarcely able to control herself.]*

**Siegfried**

Gunther's gentle sister,  
Wed to me  
As thou to him.

**Brünnhilde**

*[With fearful vehemence.]*

I? Gunther? 'Tis false.

*[She sways and seems about to fall. Siegfried supports her.]*

Light fades from mine eyes . . .

*[In Siegfried's arms, looking faintly up at him.]*

Siegfried . . . knows me not?

**Siegfried**

Gunther, see, thy wife is swooning!

*[Gunther comes to them.]*

Wake, Brünnhild', wake!  
Here stands thy husband.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Perceives the ring on Siegfried's outstretched finger, and starts up with terrible vehemence.]*

Ha! The ring  
Upon his hand!  
He . . . Siegfried?

**The Vassals**

What's wrong?

**Hagen**

*[Coming among the vassals from behind.]*

Now pay good heed  
To the woman's tale.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Mastering her terrible excitement, tries to control herself.]*

On thy hand there  
I beheld a ring.  
'Twas wrested from me  
By this man here;

*[Pointing to Gunther.]*

'Tis not thine.  
How camest thou by  
The ring thou hast on?

**Siegfried**

*[Attentively regarding the ring on his finger.]*

'Twas not from him  
I got the ring.

**Brünnhilde**

*[To Gunther.]*

Thou who didst seize the ring  
With which I wedded thee,  
Declare to him thy right,  
Make him yield up the pledge!

**Gunther**

*[In great perplexity.]*

The ring? No ring I gave him,  
Though thou dost know it well.

**Brünnhilde**

Where hast thou hid the ring  
That thou didst capture from me?

*[Gunther, greatly confused, does not answer.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[Breaking out furiously.]*

Ha! He it was  
Who despoiled me of the ring-  
Siegfried, the treacherous thief!

*[All look expectantly at Siegfried, who seems to be lost in far-off thoughts as he contemplates the ring.]*

**Siegfried**

No woman gave  
The ring to me,  
Nor did I wrest it  
From a woman's grasp.  
This ring, I know,  
Was the booty won  
When at Neidhöhl' boldly I fought,  
And the mighty dragon was slain.

**Hagen**

[*Stepping between them.*]

Brünnhild', dauntless queen,  
Knowest thou this ring well?  
If it was by Gunther won,  
Then it is his,  
And Siegfried has got it by guile.  
For his guilt must the traitor pay.

**Brünnhilde**

[*Shrieking in terrible anguish.*]

Betrayed! Betrayed!  
Shamefully betrayed!  
Deceived! Deceived!  
Wrong too deep for revenge!

**Gutrune**

A wrong? To whom?

**Vassals and Women**

Deceit? To whom?

**Brünnhilde**

Holy Gods!  
Ye heavenly rulers!  
Whispered ye this  
In councils dark?  
If I must bear  
More than ever was borne,  
  
Bowed by a shame  
None ever endured,  
Teach me such vengeance  
As never was raved!  
Kindle such wrath  
As can never be calmed!  
Order Brünnhild's  
Poor heart to be broken,  
Bring ye but doom  
On him who betrayed!

**Gunther**

Brünnhild', dear wife,  
Control thyself!

**Brünnhilde**

Away, betrayer!  
Self-betrayed one!  
All of you, hearken!  
Not he,

But that man there,  
Won me to wife.

### **Vassals and Women**

Siegfried? Gutrune's lord?

#### **Brünnhilde**

He forced delight  
And love from me.

#### **Siegfried**

Dost thou so lightly  
Hold thine honour,  
The tongue that thus defames it  
I must convict of its falsehood.  
Hear whether faith I broke!  
Blood-brotherhood  
I have sworn unto Gunther;  
Nothung, my trusty sword,  
Guarded the sacred vow;  
'Twixt me and this sad woman distraught  
Its blade lay sharp.

#### **Brünnhilde**

Behold how thou liest,  
Crafty man,  
Vainly as witness  
Citing thy sword!  
Full well I know its keenness,  
And also the scabbard  
Wherein so snugly  
Hung on the wall  
Nothung, the faithful friend,  
When its lord won the woman he loved.

### **The Vassals and Women**

*[Crowd together in violent indignation.]*

What! Siegfried a traitor?  
Has he stained Gunther's honour?

#### **Gunther**

*[To Siegfried.]*

Disgraced were I  
And sullied my name,  
Were not the slander  
Cast in her teeth!

#### **Gutrune**

Siegfried faithless?  
False to his vow?

Ah, prove thou that worthless  
Is her word!

### **The Vassals**

Clear thyself straight;  
If thou art wronged  
Silence the slander;  
Sworn be the oath!

### **Siegfried**

If I must swear,  
The slander to still,  
Which of you offers  
His sword for the oath?

### **Hagen**

Swear the oath upon  
The point of my spear;  
Bad faith 'twill surely avenge.

*[The vassals form a ring round Siegfried and Hagen. Hagen holds out the spear; Siegfried lays two fingers of his right hand upon the point.]*

### **Siegfried**

Shining steel!  
Weapon most holy,  
Witness my oath sworn for ever!  
On this spear's sharp point  
I solemnly swear;  
Spear-point, mark thou my words!  
If weapon must pierce me,  
Thine be the point!  
When by death I am stricken  
Strike thou the blow,  
If what she tells is true,  
And I broke faith with my friend!

### **Brünnhilde**

*[Strides furiously into the ring, tears Siegfried's hand from the spear, and grasps the point with her own.]*

Shining steel!  
Weapon most holy,  
Witness my oath sworn for ever!  
On this spear's sharp point  
I solemnly swear!  
Spear-point, mark thou my words!  
Devoted be thy might  
To his undoing!  
Be thy sharpness blessed by me,  
That it may slay him!

For broken his oaths have been all,  
And false is what he has sworn.

### **The Vassals**

Help, Donner!  
Roar with thy thunder  
To silence this terrible shame!

### **Siegfried**

Gunther, look to this woman  
Who falsely slanders thy name.  
Let her rest awhile,  
The untamed mountain maid,  
That the unbridled rage some demon  
In malice has  
Against us roused  
May have the chance to subside.  
Ye vassals, go ye your ways;  
Let the womenfolk scold.  
Like cravens gladly we yield,  
Comes it to fighting with tongues.

*[He goes up to Gunther.]*

Thou art not so vexed as I  
That I beguiled her ill;  
The Tarnhelm must, I fear,  
But half have hid my face.  
Still, women's wrath  
Soon is appeased:  
That I won her for thee  
Thankful thy wife will be yet.

*[He turns again to the vassals.]*

Follow me, men,  
With mirth to the feast!

*[To the women.]*

Gaily, women,  
Help at the wedding!  
Joyfully laugh  
Love and delight!  
In hall and grove  
There shall be none  
This day more merry than I!  
Ye whom love has blessed,  
Like myself light-hearted,  
Follow and share in my mirth!

*[He throws his arm in the highest spirits round Guttrune and draws her into the hall. The vassals and women follow, carried away by his example. All go off, except Brünnhilde, Gunther, and Hagen. Gunther, in deep shame and dejection, with his*

*face covered, has seated himself on one side. Brünnhilde, standing in the foreground, gazes for some time sorrowfully after Siegfried and Guttrune, then droops her head.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[Lost in thought.]*

What dread demon's might  
 Moves here in darkness?  
 By what wizard's spell  
 Worked was the woe?  
 How weak is my wisdom  
 Faced by this puzzle!  
 And where shall I find  
 The runes for this riddle?  
 Oh, sorrow! Sorrow!  
 Woe's me! Woe's me!  
 I gave all my wisdom to him;

*[With increasing emotion.]*

The maid in his power  
 He holds.  
 Fast in his fetters  
 Bound is the booty  
 That, weeping her grievous shame,  
 Gaily to others he gives!  
 Will none of you lend a sword  
 With which I may sever my bonds?

**Hagen**

*[Going close to Brünnhilde.]*

Leave that to me,  
 O wife betrayed;  
 I will avenge  
 Thy trust deceived.

**Brünnhilde**

*[Looking round dully.]*

On whom?

**Hagen**

On Siegfried, traitor to thee.

**Brünnhilde**

On Siegfried? Thou?

*[Smiling bitterly.]*

One single flash  
 Of his eye and its lightning--  
 Which streamed in its glory on me  
 Even through his disguise--

And thy heart would fail,  
Shorn of its courage.

**Hagen**

But to my spear  
His perjury gives him.

**Brünnhilde**

Truth and falsehood--  
What matter words!  
To arm thy spear  
Seek for something stronger,  
Strength such as his to withstand!

**Hagen**

Well know I Siegfried's  
Conquering strength:  
How hard in battle to slay him;  
But whisper to me  
Some sure device  
For speeding him to his doom.

**Brünnhilde**

Ungrateful, shameful return!  
I taught him all  
The arts I know,  
To preserve his body from harm.  
  
He bears unwitting  
A charmed life  
And safely walks by spells enwound.

**Hagen**

Then no weapon forged could wound him?

**Brünnhilde**

In battle none;--yet--  
Did the blow strike his back!  
Never--I knew that--  
Would he give way,  
Or turn and fly, the foe pursuing,  
So there I gave him no blessing.

**Hagen**

And there shall my spear strike!  
[*He turns quickly from Brünnhilde to Gunther.*]

Up, Gunther,  
Noble Gibichung!  
Here stands thy valiant wife.  
Why hang thy head in grief?

**Gunther**

*[Starting up passionately.]*

O shame!  
Dishonour!  
Woe is me!  
No man has known such sorrow!

**Hagen**

In shame thou liest--  
That is true.

**Brünnhilde**

*[To Gunther.]*

O craven man!  
Falsest of friends!  
Hidden behind  
The hero wert thou  
While won were for thee  
The prize and the glory.  
Low indeed  
The race must have sunk  
That breeds such cowards as thou!

**Gunther**

*[Beside himself.]*

Deceived am I--and deceiver!  
Betrayed am I--and betrayer!  
My strength be consumed,  
And broken my heart!  
Help, Hagen!  
Help for my honour!  
Help, for my mother was thine--  
Thee too she bore!

**Hagen**

No help from head  
Or hand will suffice:  
'Tis Siegfried's death we need.

**Gunther**

*[Seized with horror.]*

Siegfried's death?

**Hagen**

Unpurged else were thy shame.

**Gunther**

*[Staring before him.]*

Blood-brotherhood  
He and I swore.

**Hagen**

Who broke the bond  
Pays with his blood.

**Gunther**

Broke he the bond?

**Hagen**

In betraying thee.

**Gunther**

Was I betrayed?

**Brünnhilde**

He betrayed thee,  
And me ye all are betraying!  
If I were just,  
All the blood of the world  
Would not atone for your guilt!

But the death of one  
Is all I ask for.  
Dying, Siegfried  
Atones for himself and you!

**Hagen**

*[Turning to Gunther and appealing to him secretly.]*

His death would profit thee;  
Boundless were indeed thy might  
If thou couldst capture the ring,  
Which, alive, he never will yield.

**Gunther**

*[Softly.]*

Brünnhilde's ring?

**Hagen**

The ring the Niblung wrought.

**Gunther**

*[Sighing deeply.]*

'Twould be the end of Siegfried.

**Hagen**

His death would serve us all.

**Gunther**

But Gutrun', to whom  
He has been given!  
How could we look in her face  
If her husband we had slain?

**Brünnhilde**

*[Starting up furiously.]*

What wisdom forewarned of,  
And runes hinted darkly,  
In helpless despair  
Is plain to me now.

*[Passionately.]*

Gutrune is the spell  
That stole my husband's heart away!  
Woe be her lot!

**Hagen**

*[To Gunther.]*

If this grief we must give her,  
Conceal how Siegfried died.

We go to-morrow  
Merrily hunting;  
The hero gallops ahead;  
We find him slain by a boar.

**Brünnhilde and Gunther**

So shall it be!  
Perish Siegfried!  
Purged be the shame  
He brought on me!  
Faith sworn by oath  
He has broken;  
Now with his blood  
Let him atone!  
Avenging,  
All-hearing God!  
Oath-witness,  
And lord of vows!  
Wotan, come at my call!  
Send thou thine awful  
Heavenly host  
Hither to hear  
While I vow revenge!

**Hagen**

Doomed let him die,  
The hero renowned!  
Mine is the hoard,  
And mine I shall hold it!  
From him the ring  
Shall be wrested!  
Niblung father!

O fallen prince!  
Night warder  
Nibelung lord  
Alberich! Hear thou thy son!

Ruling again  
O'er the Nibelung host,  
Bid them obey thee,  
The ring's dread lord!

*[As Gunther turns impetuously towards the hall with Brünnhilde they are met by the bridal procession coming out. Boys and girls, waving flower-wreathed staves, leap merrily in front. The vassals are carrying Siegfried on a shield and Gutrune on a seat. On the rising ground at the back men-servants and maids are taking implements and beasts for sacrifice, by the various mountain-paths, to the altars, which they deck with flowers. Siegfried and the vassals blow wedding-calls on their horns. The women invite Brünnhilde to accompany them to Gutrune's side. Brünnhilde stares blankly at Gutrune, who beckons her with a friendly smile. Is Brünnhilde is about to step back angrily Hagen comes quickly between them and presses her to wards Gunther, who takes her hand again, whereupon he allows himself to be raised on a shield by the men. Is the procession, scarcely interrupted, moves on quickly again towards the height, the curtain falls.]*

## The Third Act

*A wild wooded and rocky valley on the Rhine, which flows past a steep cliff in the background. The three Rhine-Maidens, Woglinde, Wellgunde, and Flosshilde, rise to the surface and swim and circle as if dancing.*

### The Three Rhine-Maidens

*[Swimming slower.]*

The sun  
Sends hither rays of glory;  
In the depths is darkness.  
Once there was light,  
When clear and fair  
Our father's gold shone on the billows.  
Rhinegold!  
Gleaming gold!  
How bright was once thy radiance,  
Lovely star of the waters!

*[They sing and again start swimming and circling about. They pause and then, then merrily splash the waters.]*

O sun,  
The hero quickly send us  
Who again our gold shall give us!  
If it were ours,  
We should no longer  
Envy thine eye for its splendour.  
Rhinegold!  
Gleaming gold!  
How glad was thy radiance,  
Glorious star of the waters!

*[A horn is heard.]*

### Woglinde

Hark! That is his horn!

### Wellgunde

The hero comes.

### Flosshilde

Let us take counsel.

*[They all dive down quickly.]*

### Siegfried

*[Appears on the cliff fully armed.]*

Some elf has led me astray  
And lured my feet from the path.

Hey, rogue! Behind what hill  
Hast suddenly hidden my game?

**The Three Rhine-Maidens**

Siegfried!

*[Rise to the surface again and swim and circle as in a dance.]*

**Flosshilde**

What art thou scolding about?

**Wellgunde**

With what elf art thou so wroth?

**Woglinde**

Hast thou been tricked by some sprite?

**All Three**

Tell us, Siegfried; let us hear!

**Siegfried**

*[Regarding them with a smile.]*

Have ye, then, hither charmed  
The shaggy-hided fellow  
Whom I have lost?  
Frolicsome maids,  
Ye are welcome to him,  
If he is your love.

*[The maidens laugh.]*

**Woglinde**

What would our guerdon be,  
Siegfried, if we restored him?

**Siegfried**

I have caught nothing yet,  
So ask of me what you will.

**Wellgunde**

A golden ring  
Gleams on thy finger.

**The Three Rhine-Maidens**

Wilt grant it?

**Siegfried**

From a dragon grim  
I won the ring in fight;  
And think ye for a worthless bear-skin  
I would exchange the gold?

**Woglinde**

Art thou so mean?

**Wellgunde**

In bargains so hard?

**Flosshilde**

Free-handed

Thou with women shouldst be.

**Siegfried**

On you did I waste my goods,  
My wife would have cause to scold.

**Flosshilde**

Is she a shrew?

**Wellgunde**

And beats thee sore?

**Woglinde**

Has the hero felt her hand?

*[They laugh immoderately.]*

**Siegfried**

Though gaily ye may laugh,  
In grief ye shall be left,  
For, mocking maids, this ring  
Ye ask shall never be yours.

*[The Rhine-Maidens have again join hands for dancing.]*

**Flosshilde**

So fair!

**Wellgunde**

So strong!

**Woglinde**

So worthy love!

**The Three**

How sad he should a miser be!

*[They laugh and dive down.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Comes down nearer to the river.]*

Why should I stand  
Their taunts and blame?  
Why endure their scorn?  
Did they return

To the bank again,  
The ring gladly I'd give them.

*[Calling loudly.]*

Hey, hey! ye merry  
Water-maidens,  
Come back; the ring shall be yours.

*[He holds up the ring, which he has taken from his finger.]*

### **The Three Rhine-Maidens**

*[Rise to the surface again. They appear grave and solemn.]*

Nay, hero, keep  
And ward it well,  
Until the harm thou hast felt  
That in the ring lies hid.  
Then wouldst thou fain  
Be freed by us from its curse.

### **Siegfried**

Sing something that ye know!

*[Calmly puts the ring on his finger again.]*

### **The Three Rhine-Maidens**

Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried!  
Dark our knowledge for thee!  
The ring thou keepest  
To thy own scathe!  
From the gleaming gold  
Of the Rhine 'twas wrought;  
He who cunningly forged it,  
And lost it in shame,  
Laid a curse on it  
Which, for all time,  
The owner thereof  
Dooms to his death.  
As the dragon fell  
So shalt thou too fall,  
And that to-day;  
Thy fate is foretold,  
Wilt thou not give to the Rhine  
The ring to hide in its waters.

Its waves alone  
Can loose the curse.

### **Siegfried**

Enough, O ye women  
Full of wiles!  
Was I firm when ye flattered,  
I am firmer now when ye threaten!

### **The Three Rhine-Maidens**

Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 Our warning is true:  
 Flee, oh, flee from the curse!  
 The Norns who weave

By night have entwined it  
 In the rope  
 Of Fate's decrees!

### **Siegfried**

My sword once shattered a spear;  
 And if the Norns  
 Have woven a curse  
 Into the strands  
 Of destiny's rope,  
 Nothung will cleave it asunder.  
 A dragon once warned me  
 Of this dread curse,  
 But he could not teach me to fear.

*[He contemplates the ring.]*

The world's wealth  
 Has bestowed on me a ring.  
 For the grace of love  
 Had it been yours,  
 And still for love might it be got,  
 But by threats to my life and my limbs--  
 Had it not even  
 A finger's worth--  
 The ring ye never shall gain.  
 My limbs and my life--

Look!--thus  
 Freely I fling away!

*[He lifts a clod of earth from the ground, holds it over his head, and with the last words throws it behind him.]*

### **The Three Rhine-Maidens**

Come, sisters!  
 Fly from the madman!  
 Though dauntless and wise  
 He seems to himself,  
 He is blind and in fetters bound fast.

*[Wildly excited, they swim in wide circles close to the shore.]*

Oaths he swore,  
 And was false to his word;

*[Moving quickly again.]*

Runes he knows  
 That he cannot rede.

A glorious gift  
 Fell to his lot;  
 He flung it from him  
 Unawares;  
 And the ring that deals doom and death  
 Alone he will not surrender!

Farewell, Siegfried!  
 A woman proud  
 Ere night falls thy wealth shall inherit.  
 our cry by her will be heard.  
 To her! To her! To her!

*[They turn quickly to their dance, and gradually swim away to the back singing.]*

### **Siegfried**

*[Looks after them smiling, one foot on a piece of rock and his chin resting on his hand.]*

Alike on land and water  
 I have studied women's ways:  
 Still those who mistrust their smiles  
 They seek with threats to frighten,  
 And, are their threats despised,

At once they begin to scold.  
 And yet--  
 Held I not Gutrun' dear,  
 Of these alluring maidens  
 One had surely been mine.

*[He looks calmly after the Rhine-Maidens, who have disappeared, and whose voices gradually die away. Horn-calls are then heard. Siegfried starts from a reverie and sounds his horn in answer.]*

### **Hagen's voice**

*[Far off.]*

Hoiho!

### **Vassals' voices**

Hoiho! Hoiho! Hoiho!

### **Siegfried**

*[Having answered the call with his horn.]*

Hoiho! Hoihe!

### **Hagen**

*[Appears on the height, followed by Gunther. He sees Siegfried.]*

So we have found thee  
 Where thou wert hidden!

### **Hagen**

Come down all! Here 'tis fresh and cool.

*[The vassals now appear on the height, and come down with Hagen and Gunther.]*

**Hagen**

Here let us rest  
And see to the meal.

*[They lay the game in a heap.]*

Lay down the booty  
And hand round the wine-skins.

*[Wine-skins and drinking-horns are produced. All lie down.]*

**Hagen**

Now be the wonders told us  
Of Siegfried and his hunting  
That chased the game from us.

**Siegfried**

No meal at all is mine;  
I beg of you  
To share with me your spoil.

**Hagen**

No luck at all?

**Siegfried**

I sought for forest-game,  
But water-fowl only I found;  
Furnished with the right equipment,  
A brood of three wild water-birds  
I had caught and brought you.  
Down there on the Rhine they told me  
That slain to-day I should fall.

*[Gunther starts and looks darkly at Hagen. Siegfried lies down between Gunther and Hagen.]*

**Hagen**

A sorry chase were that  
If the luckless hunter fell  
A victim to the quarry!

**Siegfried**

Thirst plagues me!

**Hagen**

*[Whilst he orders a drinking-horn to be filled for Siegfried, and hands it to him.]*

It has been rumoured, Siegfried,  
That thou canst tell the meaning  
Of what the birds sing:  
Does rumour speak true?

**Siegfried**

I have not listened  
For long to their song.

*[He takes the drinking-horn and turns with it to Gunther, to whom he offers it after he has drunk from it.]*

Drink, Gunther, drink!  
Thy brother hands the draught!

**Gunther**

*[Looks into the horn with horror. Moodily.]*

A pale draught thou hast poured!

*[More gloomily.]*

Thy blood alone is there.

**Siegfried**

*[Laughing.]*

With thine, then, be it mingled!

*[He pours from Gunther's horn into his own so that it runs over.]*

Thus mixed the wine flows over  
To Mother Earth  
May it prove a cordial kind!

**Gunther**

*[With a deep sigh.]*

Thou over-joyous man!

**Siegfried**

*[Low, to Hagen.]*

His cheer Brünnhild' has marred.

**Hagen**

*[Low, to Siegfried.]*

She speaks less plain to him  
Than speak the birds to thee!

**Siegfried**

Since I have heard women singing,  
The birds I have clean forgot.

**Hagen**

But thou didst hear them once?

**Siegfried**

*[Turning with animation to Gunther.]*

Hei! Gunther!  
Moody-faced man!  
Come, I will tell thee

Tales of my boyhood,  
If thou wouldst care to hear them.

**Gunther**

‘Twould please me much.

*[They lie down close to Siegfried, who alone fits upright.]*

**Hagen**

Sing, hero, sing!

**Siegfried**

Mime was  
A surly old dwarf  
Who because of greed  
Reared me with care,  
That when the child  
Grew sturdy and bold  
He might slay a dragon grim  
That guarded treasure in the wood.

He taught me to forge  
And the art of fusing,  
But what the craftsman  
Could not achieve  
The scholar did  
By skill and by daring--  
Out of the splinters of a weapon  
Fashioned featly a sword.  
My father’s blade  
Forged was afresh;  
Strong and true  
Nothung was tempered,  
Deemed by the dwarf  
Fit for the fight.  
The wood then we sought, and there  
The dragon Fafner I slew.

Listen and heed  
Well to my tale;  
I have marvels to tell you.  
From the dragon’s blood  
My fingers were burning,  
And these I raised to my lips;  
And barely touched  
Was the blood by my tongue,  
When what a bird was saying  
Above me I could hear.  
On a bough it sat there and sang  
“Hei! Siegfried now owns  
All the Nibelung hoard!  
Oh! could he the hoard  
In the cave but find!

Tarnhelm, if he could but win it,  
 Would help him to deeds of renown;  
 And could he discover the ring,  
 It would make him the lord of the world!

**Hagen**

Didst thou take  
 The Tarnhelm and ring?

**A Vassal**

Was that the end of the singing?

**Siegfried**

Having taken  
 Tarnhelm and ring,  
 Once more I listened  
 And heard the sweet warbler;  
 He sat above me and sang:--  
 "Hei! Siegfried now owns  
 Both the helm and the ring!  
 Oh I let him not listen  
 To Mime, the false,  
 For Mime, too, covets the treasure,  
 And cunningly watches and spies!  
 He is bent on murdering Siegfried  
 Be Siegfried wary of Mime!"

**Hagen**

'Twas well that he warned?

**The Vassals**

Got Mime due payment?

**Siegfried**

A deadly-brewed draught  
 He brought me to drink  
 But, fear-stricken,  
 His tongue stammered truly:  
 Nothung stretched him out dead!

**Hagen**

*[With a strident laugh.]*

The steel that he forged not  
 Mime soon tasted!

*[He has another drinking-horn filled, and drops the juice of a herb into it.]*

**The Vassals**

What further did the bird tell thee?

**Hagen**

From my horn  
 Drink, hero, first  
 A magical draught is this;

It will mind thee of things long forgotten,  
 And bring old days to remembrance.

*[He offers the horn to Siegfried, who looks into it thoughtfully and then drinks slowly.]*

### **Siegfried**

In sorrow I listened,  
 Grieving looked up;  
 He sat there still and sang.  
 "Hei! Siegfried has slain  
 The deceitful dwarf!  
 I know for him now  
 A glorious bride.  
 She sleeps where rugged rocks soar  
 Ringed is her chamber by fire.  
 Who battles the flames  
 Wakens the bride,  
 Brünnhilde wins as reward!"

### **Hagen**

The wood-bird's counsel  
 Didst thou follow?

### **Siegfried**

Straight without pause  
 I rose and I ran

*[Gunther listens with increasing astonishment.]*

Till I came to the fire-ringed rock.  
 I passed through the flames,  
 And for prize I found,

*[More and more ecstatic.]*

Sleeping, and clad in bright mail,  
 A woman lovely and dear.  
 The hard helmet  
 I loosened with care,  
 And waked the maid with my kiss.  
 Ah, then the burning, sweet embrace  
 Of Brünnhild's rapturous arms!

### **Gunther**

*[Springing up in greatest consternation.]*

What says he?

*[Two ravens fly up out of a bush, circle above Siegfried, and then fly away towards the Rhine.]*

**Hagen**

Didst understand  
What the ravens there said?

*[Siegfried starts up suddenly, and, turning his back to Hagen, looks after the ravens. Hagen thrusts his spear into Siegfried's back.]*

**Hagen**

Vengeance--that was the word!

*[Gunther and the vassals rush towards Hagen. Siegfried swings his shield on high with both hands in order to throw it on Hagen; his strength fails him; the shield drops from his grasp backwards, and he falls down upon it.]*

**Gunther and the Vassals**

Hagen, what dost thou?

*[Who have tried to hold Hagen back in vain.]*

**Hagen**

Death to traitors!

*[He turns calmly away, and is seen in the gathering twilight disappearing slowly over the height. Gunther bends over Siegfried in great grief. The vassals stand round the dying man full of sympathy.]*

**Siegfried**

*[Supported by two vassals in a sitting posture, opens radiant eyes.]*

Brünnhilde,  
Heaven-born bride,  
Awake! Open thine eyelids!  
Who again  
Has locked thee in sleep  
And bound thee in slumber so fast?  
Lo! he that came  
And kissed thee awake  
  
Again breaks the bonds  
Holding thee fettered  
And looks on Brünnhild's delight.  
Ah I those dear eyes  
Now open for ever!  
Ah I the soft fragrance  
Borne on her breathing!  
Death, thou art welcome--  
Sweet are thy terrors--  
Brünnhild' greets me, my bride!

*[He sinks back and dies. The rest stand round him motionless and sorrowing. Night has fallen. At a silent command from Gunther the vassals raise Siegfried's body and bear it away slowly in a solemn procession over the height. The moon breaks through the clouds, and lights up the funeral procession with increasing clearness as it reaches the top of the hill. A mist has risen from the Rhine which gradually fills the whole stage, on which the funeral procession has become invisible. After a*

*musical interlude the mist divides again, until at length the hall of the Gibichungs, as in Act I., appears with increasing distinctness.]*

*It is night. The moonlight is mirrored in the Rhine. Gutrune comes out of her chamber into the hall.*

**Gutrune**

Was that his horn?

[She listens.]

No!--he

Has not returned.

Troubled was my sleep

By evil dreams!

Then wildly neighed his horse;

Brünnhild' laughed,

And I woke up afraid.

What woman was it

I saw go down to the shore?

I fear this Brünnhild'

Is she within?

[*She listens at the door at the right and calls.*]

Brünnhild'! Brünnhild'!

Art awake?

[*She opens the door timidly and looks into the inner room.*]

No one is there!

So it was she

I saw go downwards to the Rhine.

[*A distant horn sounds.*]

Was that his horn?

No!

All silent!

[*She looks out anxiously.*]

Would but Siegfried return!

[*Hagen's voice is heard outside coming nearer. When Gutrune hears it she stands for a time transfixed with terror.*]

Hoiho! Hoiho!

Awake! Awake!

Lights! Ho! lights here!

Burning torches!

Home bring we

Spoils of the chase.

Hoiho! Hoiho!

[*Increasing light from the torches is seen without. Hagen enters the hall.*]

Up! Gutrun'!

Give Siegfried greeting,

For home to thee  
Thy hero comes.

**Gutrune**

*[In great fear.]*

What is wrong, Hagen?  
I heard not his horn.

*[Men and women with lights and firebrands accompany, in great confusion, the procession returning with Siegfried's body.]*

**Hagen**

The hero pale  
Will blow it no more;  
No more will he ride  
To battle or chase  
Or gaily go wooing fair women.

**Gutrune**

*[With growing terror.]*

What bring they here?

*[The procession reaches the middle of the hall, and the vassals set down the body on a hastily improvised platform.]*

**Hagen**

'Tis a wild boar's spoil they bring thee:  
Siegfried, thy husband slain.

*[Gutrune shrieks and falls upon the corpse, General emotion and mourning.]*

**Gunther**

*[Bends over the fainting Gutrune.]*

Gutrun', gentle sister!  
Open thine eyelids!  
Look up and speak!

**Gutrune**

*[Recovering consciousness.]*

Siegfried--they have slain Siegfried!

*[She pushes Gunther back violently].*

Hence! false-hearted brother,  
Thou slayer of my husband!  
Oh, who will help me!  
Woe's me! Woe's me!  
These men have murdered my Siegfried!

**Gunther**

Cast not the blame on me;  
'Tis Hagen who must bear it:

He is the accursèd wild boar  
That did the hero to death.

**Hagen**

With me art wroth for that?

**Gunther**

Woe and grief  
For aye be thy portion!

**Hagen**

*[Stepping forward with terrible defiance.]*

Yes, then, 'tis true that I slew him.  
I--Hagen--  
Did him to death!  
By my spear he falsely swore,  
So by my spear he fell.  
I have the sacred right  
Now to demand my booty,  
And what I claim is this ring.

**Gunther**

Away! Thou shalt not have  
What forfeit falls to me.

**Hagen**

Ye vassals, judge of my right!

**Gunther**

Thou wouldst seize Gutrune's dower,  
Insolent Niblung son?

**Hagen**

*[Draws his sword.]*

'Tis thus  
The Niblung son demands his own.

*[He rushes on Gunther, who defends himself; they fight. The vassals throw themselves between. Gunther falls slain by a stroke from Hagen.]*

**Hagen**

Mine the ring!

*[He makes a grasp at Siegfried's hand, which raises itself in menace. All stand transfixed with horror.]*

**Brünnhilde**

*[Advances firmly and solemnly from the background to the front. Still at the back.]*

Silence! Your sorrow  
Clamour less loud!  
Now for vengeance his wife comes,  
The woman all have betrayed.

*[As she comes quietly forward.]*

I have heard you whining  
As whine children  
When milk is spilt by their mother;  
But lamentation  
Meet for a hero unmatched  
I have not heard.

**Gutrune**

*[Raising herself suddenly from the floor.]*

Brünnhilde, spite-venomed!  
Thou art the cause of our woe!  
For, urged by thee, the men have slain him;  
Cursèd hour that brought thee here!

**Brünnhilde**

Peace, hapless wretch!  
Thou never wert wife of his;  
His leman wert thou,  
Only that.  
But I am his lawful bride;  
To me was the binding oath sworn,  
Before thy face he beheld.

**Gutrune**

*[Breaking out in sudden despair.]*

Accursèd Hagen,  
Why didst thou give the poison  
That stole her husband away?  
O sorrow!  
Mine eyes are opened:  
Brünnhild' was the true love  
Whom through the draught he forgot.

*[She turns from Siegfried in shame and fear, and, dying, bends over Gunther's body; remaining motionless in this position until the end. Hagen stands defiantly leaning on his spear and shield, sunk in gloomy thought, on the opposite side. Brünnhilde stands alone in the middle. After long and absorbed contemplation of Siegfried she turns with solemn exaltation to the men and women.]*

Let great logs  
Be borne to the shore  
And high by the Rhine be heaped;  
Fierce and far  
Let the flames mount  
That consume to ashes  
Him who was first among men!  
His horse lead to me here,  
That with me his lord he may follow.  
For my body longs  
To have part in his glory

And share his honour in death.  
Obey Brünnhild's behest.

*[The young men, during the following, raise a great pyre of logs before the hall, near the bank of the Rhine; women decorate this with rugs, on which they strew plants and flowers.]*

### **Brünnhilde**

*[Absorbed anew in contemplation of Siegfried's dead face. Her expression brightens and softens as she proceeds.]*

Sheer golden sunshine  
Streams from his face;  
None was so pure  
As he who betrayed.  
To wife forsworn,  
To friend too faithful,  
From his own true love--  
His only beloved--  
Barred he lay by his sword.  
Never did man  
Swear oaths more honest,  
No one was ever  
Truer to treaties;  
Never was love  
Purer than Siegfried's;

Yet oaths the most sacred,  
Bonds the most binding,  
And true love were never  
So grossly betrayed!

Know ye why that was?

*[Looking upward.]*

Ye Gods who guard  
All vows that are uttered,  
Look down on me  
In my terrible grief,  
Your guilt never-ending behold!  
Hear my voice accusing,  
Mighty God!  
Through his most valiant deed--  
Deed by thee so desired--  
Thou didst condemn him  
To the doom  
That else upon thee had fallen.  
He, truest of all,  
Must betray me,  
That wise a woman might grow!  
Know I all thou wouldst learn?

All things! All things!  
 All I know now:  
 All stands plainly revealed.  
 Round me I hear  
 Thy ravens flapping.  
 By them I send thee back  
 The tidings awaited in fear.  
 Rest in peace now, O God!

*[She signs to the vassals to bear Siegfried's body on to the pyre, at the same time she draws the ring of Siegfried's finger, and regards it musingly.]*

I claim as mine  
 What he has left me.  
 O gold accurst!  
 Terrible ring!  
 I now grasp thee  
 And give thee away.  
 O sisters wise,  
 Ye have my thanks  
 For your counsel good, ye who dwell  
 In the waters deep of the Rhine.  
 What ye desire  
 I gladly give;  
 From out my ashes  
 Take ye your treasure;  
 The fire by which I am burnt  
 Cleanses the ring of its curse.  
 Down in the waves  
 Wash it away,  
 And guard ever pure  
 The shining gold  
 That stolen was to your grief!

*[She has put the ring on her finger, and now turns to the pile of logs on which Siegfried's body lies stretched. Taking a great firebrand from one of the men, she waves it and points to the background.]*

Fly home, ye ravens,  
 Tell your lord the tidings  
 That ye have heard by the Rhine.  
 But fly, as ye go,  
 By Brünnhild's rock;  
 Still Loge flames there;  
 Bid him follow to Walhall;  
 For the Gods are drawing  
 Near to their doom.

Thus--thrown be the brand  
 On Walhall's glittering halls!

*[She hurls the brand on to the pile of wood, which quickly breaks into flame. Two ravens fly up from the rock by the shore and vanish in the background. Brünnhilde perceives her horse, which has just been led in by two men.]*

Grane, my horse,  
Be greeted fair!

*[She springs towards him, and, catching hold of him, removes his bridle and bends to wards him affectionately.]*

Knowest thou, my friend,  
To whom we are going?  
Thy lord lies radiant  
There in the fire,  
Siegfried, my hero blest!  
Thou neighest with joy  
To think thou shalt join him?

Laughing, the flames  
Allure thee to follow?  
Feel thou my bosom,  
Feel how it burns;  
Flames of fire  
Have laid hold on my heart.  
Ah, to embrace him,  
By him be embraced,  
United for ever  
In love without end!  
Heiajoho! Grane!  
Give thy lord greeting!

*[She has swung herself on to the horse, and urges it forward.]*

Siegfried! Siegfried!  
See! Brünnhild' greets thee, thy bride!

*[She urges her horse with one leap into the burning pile of logs. The flames immediately blaze up, so that they fill the whole space in front of the hall and seem to catch hold of the building itself. The terrified men and women press as far to the front as possible. When the whole stage appears to be filled with fire the glow gradually fades, so that there is soon nothing left but a cloud of smoke, which drifts towards the back and hangs there as a dark bank of cloud. At the same time the Rhine overflows and the flood rolls up over the fire. The three Rhine-Maidens swim forward on the waves, and now appear over the spot where the fire was. Hagen, who since the incident of the ring has been watching Brünnhilde's behaviour with growing anxiety, is much alarmed by the sight of the Rhine-Maidens. He throws away his spear, shield, and helmet, and dashes into the flood as if mad, crying out, "Back from the ring!" Woglinde and Wellgunde fling their arms round his neck and, swimming away, draw him down with them into the depths.. Flosshilde, swimming ahead of the others towards the back, joyously holds up the recovered ring.*

*Through the bank of cloud on the horizon a red glow of increasing brightness breaks forth, and, illumined by this light, the Rhine-Maidens are seen merrily circling about and playing with the ring on the calmer waters of the Rhine, which has gradually retired to its natural bed. From the ruins of the fallen hall the men and women watch in great agitation the growing gleam of fire in the heavens. When this is at its brightest the hall of Walhall is seen, in which the Gods and heroes sit assembled, as described by Waltraute in the first Act. Bright flames seem to seize*

*on the hall of the Gods. When the Gods are completely hidden by the flames the curtain falls.]*

THE END

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