

The Flying Dutchman

(Der fliegende Holländer)

by Richard Wagner

Cast

DALAND, a Norwegian skipper (bass)

SENTA, his daughter (soprano)

ERIK, a hunter (tenor)

MARY, Senta's nurse (mezzo-soprano)

STEERSMAN OF DALAND (tenor)

THE DUTCHMAN (baritone)

Norwegian Sailors, crew of the Flying Dutchman, maids

OVERTURE

ACT ONE

Scene One

(A part of the Norwegian coast with steep and rocky cliffs in the foreground. A violent storm is raging out to sea but between the rocks it is calmer except for intermittent squalls. Daland, the Norwegian captain, has just anchored his ship close to the shore and the sailors are busy furling sails, throwing out ropes, etc. Daland has gone ashore; he has scaled a cliff in an attempt to recognize the country inland.)

SAILORS

(at work)

Hojohe! Hallojo!

Hojohe! Hallojo! Ho! He!

Ho! He! Ja! Ho! Hallojo!

Ho! Johe! Hallohe! Hallohe!

DALAND

(descending to the shore)

No doubt! Seven miles the storm
has blown us from the safety of port.
So near our goal after a long voyage
and now this ill-luck!

STEERSMAN

(on board, shouting through cupped hands)

Ho! Captain!

DALAND

How's everything on board?

STEERSMAN

All's well, Captain. We're safe afloat.

DALAND

Sandwike it is. I know the bay well.

Confound it! On shore I saw my home.

Senta, my child, I seemed to embrace:
then this devilish gale blew up!

Who trusts the wind, trusts Satan's mercy!

(going aboard)

What's the good? Patience!

The storm is abating;

Raging so, it cannot last.

(on board)

Ho, lads! Your watch was long.

Rest now! I have no fear!

(The Sailors go below)

Now, helmsman, you'll take the watch for me?

There's no danger but you'd better stay awake.

STEERSMAN

Rest easy! Sleep in peace. Captain!

(Daland goes into his cabin. The Steersman is alone on deck. The storm has somewhat abated; it returns only at sporadic intervals; on the open

sea the waves are still rough. The steersman makes his round once more, then sits down near the rudder. He yawns, then rouses himself as sleep comes over him.)

STEERSMAN

In gale and storm from far-off seas,
my maiden, I am near you!
Over towering waves from the south,
my maiden, I am here!
My maiden, were there no southwind,
I could never come to you!
Ah, dear south-wind, blow stronger!
My maiden longs for me!
Hohojo! Hallohoho!
Jollohohoho! Hohoje!
Hallohoho! ho ho ho ho ho ho!

(A wave rises, violently shaking the ship. The steersman starts up and looks around; having satisfied himself that no harm has been done, he sits down again near the helm and sings, while sleep gradually overcomes him. He yawns.)

STEERSMAN

On southern shores, in far-off lands
I thought of you!
Through storms and sea, from Moroccan coast
I have brought you something.
My maiden, praise the south-wind,
I bring you a golden ring.
Ah, dear south-wind, blow stronger!
My maiden would like the trinket.
Hoho! Je! Holla ho!

(He struggles with his fatigue and finally falls asleep. The storm begins to rage violently again: it grows darker. In the distance appears the ship of the Flying Dutchman, with blood-red sails and black masts. She rapidly nears the shore, on the side opposite the Norwegian ship. With a fearful crash she drops anchor. The Steersman starts up from his sleep; without leaving his place he glances hastily at the beginning of his song.)

STEERSMAN

My maiden, were there no south-wind...

(He falls asleep once more. Silently, and without the slightest sound, the spectral crew of the

Dutchman furl the sails. The Dutchman goes ashore, wearing black Spanish clothing.)

Scene Two

DUTCHMAN

The time is up and seven more years
have gone. Weary of it the sea casts me up
on land. Ha! Proud ocean!
Soon you shall bear me again!
Your spite is fitful, but my torment is eternal!
The grace I seek on land never
shall I find! To you, ocean-tides,
I shall be true, until your last wave
breaks, and you are drained dry.
How often into the sea's deepest maw
have I longingly hurled myself,
yet death, ah, I found it not!
There, in the awful tomb of ships,
I drove mine on to the rocks,
but alas, no tomb closed over me!
Mockingly, I defied the pirate,
in fierce combat I hoped for death.
Here — I cried — Show your prowess.
With treasure my ship is filled.
Alas, the sea's barbarous son
crossed himself in terror and fled!
Nowhere a grave! Never death!
This is damnation's dread command!

You I ask, blessed angel of God,
who won for me the terms of my salvation,
was I the sorry plaything of your scorn,
when you showed me the way to redemption?
Vain hope! Terrible, futile folly!
There is no eternal fidelity on earth!
Only one hope is left to me,
only one that is undestroyed:
while Earth's seeds long may thrive
yet one day it must end too!
Day of Judgment! Day of Doom!
When will you dawn and end my night?
When will resound the crack of doom,
rending the earth asunder?
When all the dead rise up,
then shall I fade into the void.
Worlds, end your course!
Eternal destruction, take me!

THE DUTCHMAN'S CREW

(from the hold)

Eternal destruction, take us!

Scene Three

(Daland comes out on deck, he takes [the direction] of the wind and notices the foreign ship.)

DALAND

(looking around for the steersman)

Hey there! Steersman!

STEERSMAN

(half rising, still dazed with sleep)

It's nothing! It's nothing!

"Ah, dear south-wind, blow stronger,
my maiden..."

DALAND

(shaking the steersman)

You see nothing? —

Fine watch you keep, don't you, lad?

There lies a ship. —

How long have you been asleep?

STEERSMAN

(starting up quickly)

Devil take it! Pardon me, Captain!

(He takes a megaphone and calls across)

Who are you?

(Echo is heard; long pause)

Who are you?

(Long pause. Echo is heard again)

DALAND

They seem just as lazy as we are.

STEERSMAN

(as before)

Answer! Your ship and flag?

DALAND

(seeing the Dutchman on shore)

Wait! I think I see the Captain.

(calling the Dutchman)

Ahoy there! Sailor! Your name!

Where are you from?

(Long pause)

DUTCHMAN

(without changing his position)

I come from afar: would you deny me
anchorage in this storm?

DALAND

God forbid!

A sailor is always hospitable!

(going ashore)

Who are you?

DUTCHMAN

A Dutchman.

DALAND

God's greeting! So the storm drove you too
on this barren rocky beach?

I was no luckier: only a few miles
from here is my home: I was almost there
when I had to turn about. Say,
where are you from? Are you damaged?

DUTCHMAN

My ship is strong, she is undamaged.

Driven on by storm and ill winds

I rove the seas -

how long, I can hardly tell;

I no longer count the years.

It is impossible to name

all the lands that I have found:

the only one I long for

I cannot find — my homeland!

Grant me a short stay in your house,

and you won't regret your friendship.

With treasures from every land and zone

my ship is richly laden, if you'll agree,

you'll profit by it.

DALAND

How wonderful! Can I believe you?

Ill-luck seems to have dogged you.

To help you I'll offer what I can:

but — may I ask what your ship holds?

DUTCHMAN

(making a sign to his crew, two of whom bring a chest ashore)

The rarest treasures you shall see,
costly pearls, precious stones.

(He opens the chest.)

Look and satisfy yourself of the value
of what I offer for a friendly roof.

DALAND

*(looking at the contents of the chest in utter
astonishment)*

What? Is it possible? This treasure!
Who's rich enough to give a price for it?

DUTCHMAN

The price? I have just named it:
all this for one night's shelter!
Yet what you see is but the smallest part
of what is stowed in my ship's hold.
What use is treasure?
I have neither wife nor child,
and my home I shall never find!
All my riches I offer you,
if you give me a new home with your family.

DALAND

What do I hear?

DUTCHMAN

Have you a daughter?

DALAND

Indeed I have, a good child.

DUTCHMAN

Let her be my wife!

DALAND

(joyfully taken aback)

What? Did I hear aright?
My daughter his wife?
It is his own suggestion!
I almost fear that if I hesitate
he may change his mind.
I don't know if I am awake or dreaming.
Can there be a more welcome son-in-law?
I'd be a fool to miss this chance!
I'm delighted with my luck!

DUTCHMAN

Ah, no wife, no child have I,
nothing chains me to this Earth!
A pitiless fate pursues me,
torment was my only companion.

I shall never reach my homeland,
what good to me is gain of wealth?
Just consent to our union,
then take my treasure!

DALAND

Yes, stranger, I have a lovely daughter,
devoted to me with the true love of a child:
she is my pride, my greatest blessing,
my comfort in misfortune, my joy in success.

DUTCHMAN

May she always love her father:
True to him, she'll be true to her husband, too.

DALAND

You give jewels, priceless pearls,
but the peerless gem, a true wife...

DUTCHMAN

You give to me?

DALAND

I give you my word.
I am moved by your grim fate;
generous as you are
you show a noble heart and mind:
I would like my son-in-law so; and were you
not so rich, I'd still choose no other.

DUTCHMAN

My thanks! Shall I see your daughter today?

DALAND

The first fair wind will take us home,
you shall see her, and if you like her...

DUTCHMAN

She shall be mine...

(aside)

Will she be my angel?
When from my terrible anguish
my longing for grace drives me on,
dare I cling to the one hope left to me?
Dare I cherish the idle fancy
that an angel may pity me?
Of the torments that bemuse my brain,
have I at last reached the end?
Ah, without hope, as I am,
I still give in to hope!

DALAND

Praised be the violent storm
which drove me to this shore!
Truly, I have only to grasp
what he so generously gives me.
You winds who brought him to this coast,
I bless you!
Ha, what all fathers seek,
a rich son-in-law, is mine!
Yes, to a man so rich and noble,
I gladly give my house and daughter.

STEERSMAN

(on board)
South-wind, south-wind!

SAILORS

(waving their caps)
Halloho!

STEERSMAN

Ah, dear south-wind, blow stronger!

SAILORS

Hohohe! Halloho!
Hallo ho ho ho ho!

DALAND

You see, fortune favors you.
The wind's set fair, the sea is calm.
We'll weigh anchor now
and speedily sail for home.

DUTCHMAN

Can I ask you to sail on ahead?
The wind is fresh but my crew are weary.
I'll give a short rest and follow on.

SAILORS

Ho! Ho! Hallohe!
Hallohe! Hallohohe!

STEERSMAN

Hallohe! Hallohe!

DALAND

But our wind?

DUTCHMAN

It'll blow from the south a long time!
My ship is fast, we'll overtake you for sure.

DALAND

You think so? Maybe.
Farewell! You may still see my daughter today.

DUTCHMAN

Surely!

DALAND

(boarding his ship)
Ha! How the sails swell already!
Hallo! Hallo!
(He gives a signal on his whistle.)
Come on, boys, set to!

SAILORS

(exultantly, as they sail away)
In gales and storm from far-off seas,
my maiden, I am near you! Hurrah!
Over towering waves from the south,
my maiden, I am here! Hurrah!
My maiden, were there no south-wind,
I could never come to you.
Ah, dear south-wind, blow stronger!
My maiden longs for me!
(exultantly, as they sail away)
Hohoho! Johoho!
Hohohohoho!
(The Dutchman goes aboard his ship)

ACT TWO

Scene One

(A large room in Daland's house; on the walls are pictures of ships, maps, etc. On the back wall hangs a portrait of a man with pale face and dark beard, wearing a black cloak. Mary and the girls are seated round the stove, spinning. Senta, leaning back in an old-fashioned armchair, is lost in dreamy contemplation of the portrait on the wall.)

GIRLS

Hum and buzz, good wheel,
gaily, gaily turn!

Spin, spin a thousand threads,
 good wheel, hum and buzz!
 My love is out at sea,
 he thinks of home
 and his true maid;
 my good wheel, hum and sing!
 Ah, if you drove the wind,
 he'd soon be here.
 Spin! Spin! Spin!
 Set to, girls!
 Buzz! Hum!
 Good wheel!
 Tralaralalalala!

MARY
 Aha! Work away! How busily they spin!
 Each wants to win a sweetheart!

GIRLS
 Mistress Mary, hush! You know quite well
 the song is not yet finished.

MARY
 Then sing! It keeps the wheel at work. —
(to Senta)
 But you, Senta, not a word?

GIRLS
 Hum and buzz, good wheel,
 gaily, gaily turn!
 Spin, spin a thousand threads,
 good wheel, hum and buzz!
 My love out there at sea,
 in the South
 has won much gold;
 ah, good wheel, turn faster!
 He'll give it to his girl
 if she spins well.
 Spin! Spin!
 Work away, girls!
 Buzz! Hum!
 Good wheel!
 Tralaralalalala!

MARY
(to Senta)
 You naughty girl, if you don't spin,
 you'll get no gift from your sweetheart.

GIRLS
 She has no need to hurry;
 her sweetheart's not at sea.
 He brings no gold, but game,
 we know well what a hunter's worth.

(They laugh. Senta, without changing her position, softly hums a theme from the ballad which follows later.)

MARY
 Look! Always in front of that picture! —
(to Senta)
 Do you want to dream away
 your whole young life before that portrait?

SENTA
(without changing her position)
 Why did you tell me?
 Why did you tell me the story about him?
(sighing)
 The poor man!

MARY
 God be with you!

GIRLS
 Aha! What do we hear!
 She sighs for the pale man!

MARY
 She's lost her head over him.

GIRLS
 You see what a picture can do!

MARY
 It's no use though I grumble daily!
 Come, Senta! Turn around!

GIRLS
 She can't hear you — she's in love!
 Oh! Oh! Let's hope there'll be no quarrel,
 for Erik is very hot-blooded -
 may he do no violence!
 Say nothing or, mad with rage,
 he'll shoot his rival off the wall!
(They laugh)

SENTA

(starting up angrily)

Oh, stop your silly laughing!

Do you want to make me really angry?

GIRLS

(Interrupting Senta with comic fervor, meanwhile turning their spinning-wheels violently and very loudly as if give Senta no opportunity of scolding them)

Hum and buzz, good wheel,

gaily, gaily turn!

Spin, spin a thousand threads,

good wheel, hum and buzz!

SENTA

(jumping up angrily)

Oh, stop that stupid song,

it hums and buzzes in my ears!

If you want me with you,

think of something better!

GIRLS

Very well! You sing!

SENTA

Hear what I propose:

Let Mistress Mary sing us the ballad.

MARY

God forbid! I could not!

Leave the Flying Dutchman in peace!

SENTA

Yet I have often heard it from you!

MARY

God forbid! I could not!

SENTA

I'll sing it myself! Listen, girls!

Let me appeal to your hearts,

the poor man's fate will surely move you!

GIRLS

All right, let's hear it.

SENTA

Mark well the words.

GIRLS

Stop the spinning-wheels!

MARY

(crossly)

I'll spin on!

(Having put their spinning-wheels aside, the girls move their seats nearer to the armchair and group themselves round Senta. Mary remains sitting by the hearth and continues her spinning.)

SENTA

(in the armchair)

(BALLAD)

I.

Johohoe! Johohohoe!

Hohohoe! Johoe!

Have you met the ship at sea
with blood-red sails and black mast?

On the high deck, the pale man,
the master of the ship, keeps endless watch.

Hui! How the wind howls — Yohohey!

Hui! How it whistles in the rigging, Yohohey!

Hui! Like an arrow he flies,
without aim, without rest, without peace!

But redemption may one day

come to the pale man,

if he but find a woman on earth true unto death.

Oh, when will you find her, wan mariner?

Pray to Heaven that soon a woman

will stay true to him!

(Towards the end of the stanza Senta turns to the picture. The girls listen attentively; Mary has stopped spinning.)

II.

In bitter gale and raging storm,

he once tried to round a cape;

he cursed, in mad fury, and swore:

“Never will I give up!”

Hui! And Satan heard it! Yohohey!

Hui! Took him at his word! Yohohey!

Hui! And, damned, he now roams

the sea without rest or peace!

But the poor man

may still find salvation on earth

for an angel of God showed him how
 one day he might be redeemed.
 Ah, wan mariner, could you but find it!
 Pray to Heaven that soon
 a woman will stay true to him!

GIRLS

Ah, wan mariner, could you but find it!
 Pray to Heaven!

SENTA

(continues with ever-increasing agitation)

III.

At anchor every seven years,
 a wife to woo he goes ashore:
 he wooed every seven years,
 but never a true wife he found.
 Hui! "Hoist sails!" Yohohey!
 Hui! "Weigh anchor!" Yohohey!
 Hui "False love, false faith!
 Back to sea, without rest or peace!"
*(Senta, overcome by her emotion, sinks back in
 her chair)*

GIRLS

(after a pause, continue the song softly)
 Ah, where is she whom the angel of God
 someday may show to you?
 Where will you meet her who will be your own
 true love unto death?

SENTA

*(seized with a sudden inspiration, springs up
 from her chair)*
 It is I who will save you with my true love!
 May God's angel show me to you!
 Through me you shall find grace!

MARY AND GIRLS

(starting up in terror)
 Heaven help us! Senta! Senta!

ERIK

(entering, has heard Senta's final words)
 Senta, do you wish to destroy me?

GIRLS

Help us, Erik! She's out of her mind!

MARY

I feel my blood curdling!
 Horrible portrait, out you go
 as soon as her father comes home!

ERIK

(gloomily)

Her father's coming now!

SENTA

*(who has remained in her last position,
 oblivious of everything, starts up joyfully, as if
 awaking)*
 My father's coming?

ERIK

From the cliff I saw his ship approaching.

GIRLS

(joyfully)
 They're home! They're home!

MARY

Now see what a fine state we're in!
 No work is done in the house yet!

GIRLS

They're home! Hurry, let's go!

MARY

(detaining the girls)
 Stop! Stop! You just stay indoors!
 The crew will come with empty stomachs.
 To work in kitchen and cellar!

GIRLS

Oh! I've so much to ask him!
 I cannot check my curiosity.

MARY

You'll have to curb your curiosity -
 your duties come first!

GIRLS

All right! Once the food is served,
 we'll have no more to do!
*(Mary drives the girls from the room and
 follows them.)*

Scene Two

(Senta is also at the point of leaving when Erik detains her.)

ERIK

Stay, Senta! Stay but a moment!
Free me of my torment! Or if you wish,
oh then destroy me completely!

SENTA

(hesitantly)

What is...? What must...?

ERIK

Oh, Senta, say, what is to become of me?
Your father is home, before he sails again,
he will do what he has often wanted to.

SENTA

What do you mean?

ERIK

Give you a husband!
I offer a heart true unto death,
a few poor possessions, a hunter's lot: —
Can I ask for your hand as I am?
Won't your father refuse me?
If then my heart with sorrow breaks,
tell me, Senta, who will speak for me?

SENTA

Ah, say no more now, Erik.
Let me go out to greet my father!
If his daughter does not go aboard as usual,
he'll be angry, won't he?

ERIK

So you run from me?

SENTA

I must go to the harbor.

ERIK

You shun me?

SENTA

Oh, let me go!

ERIK

You shrink from this wound

you gave me, this madness of love?
Oh, listen to me here and now,
hear my last question: —
in this heart of mine breaks with grief,
will it be Senta who speaks for me?

SENTA

What? You doubt my heart?
You doubt my affection for you?
Tell me, what gives you such pain?
What has made you sad and suspicious?

ERIK

Your father, oh, he thinks only of wealth!
And you, Senta, how far can I rely on you?
Have you ever granted a wish of mine?
Do you not wound my heart each day?

SENTA

Your heart?

ERIK

What am I to think? That picture...

SENTA

The picture?

ERIK

Can't you forget your mad infatuation?

SENTA

Can I help it if my face shows my pity?

ERIK

And the ballad, you sang it again today!

SENTA

I am a child and know not what I sing.
What? Do you fear a song, a picture?

ERIK

You are so pale, tell me,
Why should I not fear it?

SENTA

Ought I not to be moved by the poor man's
dreadful fate?

ERIK

Doesn't my anguish move you more, Senta?

SENTA

Oh, don't boast! What can your anguish be?
Do you know the fate of that unhappy man?
(She leads Erik to the picture and show it to him.)

Do you feel the pain, the deep grief
with which he looks down on me?
Ah, the evil that robbed him forever of his peace
pierces my heart!

ERIK

Alas! I recall my baleful dream!
God defend you! Satan has ensnared you!

SENTA

What alarms you so?

ERIK

Senta! Please believe me:
I had a dream! Heed its warning!
(Senta, exhausted, sit down in the armchair; at the beginning of Erik's narration she falls into a trance-like sleep, so that she appears to be dreaming the dream being related to her. Erik stands at her side, leaning against the chair.)

ERIK

On a high cliff I lay dreaming,
saw the angry sea beneath me!
I heard the breakers as the foaming
waters dashed in fury upon the shore.
An alien ship near the coast
I saw, strange and mysterious;
two men were coming ashore,
I recognized one as your father.

SENTA

(her eyes closed)
The other?

ERIK

I knew him well,
with his black doublet, pallid face...

SENTA

(as before)
and gloomy mien...

ERIK

(pointing to the portrait)
That sailor, he.

SENTA

And I?

ERIK

You came from the house,
raced to greet your father.
I saw you just as you reached them,
you fell at the stranger's feet,
I saw you clasp his knees...

SENTA

(with growing excitement)
He raised me up...

ERIK

to his breast;
ardently you clung to him
and kissed him with hot desire...

SENTA

And then?

ERIK

(looking at her in astonishment)
I saw you two sail away.

SENTA

(awaking suddenly, in the utmost rapture)
He is looking for me. I must see him!

ERIK

Horrible! It is all clear now!

SENTA

With him must I perish!

ERIK

She is lost! My dream spoke true!
(Erik rushes away in despair and terror. Senta, after her outburst of excitement remains where she is, sunk in silent meditation, her eyes fixed on the portrait.)

SENTA

(softly but with deep emotion)

Ah, may you find her, pale seaman!
Pray to Heaven that soon
a woman will be true...

(The door is opened. Daland and the Dutchman enter.)

Scene Three

(The Dutchman is just entered and Senta's gaze sweeps from the portrait to the Dutchman... She utters a cry of astonishment and remains as if spellbound, without taking her eyes off him. The Dutchman, his eyes fixed on Senta, comes slowly forward.)

DALAND
My child, you see me on the threshold.
What? No embrace? No kiss?
You stand as if bewitched.
Senta, do I deserve such a greeting?

SENTA
(As Daland comes up to her, she grasps his hand.)
God greet you!
(drawing him closer to her)
Father, tell me,
who is the stranger?

DALAND
(laughing)
You really want to know?
My child, bid this stranger welcome!
A seaman he is, like me, he asks to be our guest.
Long homeless, always sailing far and wide,
in foreign lands he has won rich treasure.
Exiled from his homeland,
he'll pay well for a hearth.
Tell me, Senta, would it vex you
if this stranger lodged with us?
(Senta nods her assent to the suggestion.)

DALAND
(turns to the Dutchman)
Now, did I overpraise her?
You see her yourself — do you approve?
Need I lavish more praise?
Admit it, she adorns her sex!

(The Dutchman makes a gesture of assent.)

DALAND
(to Senta)
Will you, my child, be friendly to this man?
From your heart he asks too a gracious gift:
give him your hand,
for bridegroom you shall call him:
agree with your father and tomorrow
he is your husband.

(Senta makes a convulsive movement of pain. Daland produces some jewelry and shows it to Senta.)

See this bracelet, these clasps!
This is nothing to what he owns.
Surely you want them, dear child?
It is all yours when you exchange rings.
(He sees that neither Senta nor the Dutchman are paying any attention to him.)
But neither speaks... Do I intrude?
Yes. Better leave them alone.
(to Senta)
May you win this fine man!
Believe me, such luck never comes twice.
(to the Dutchman)
Stay here alone! I am going.
Believe me, she is as true as she is fair.

(Daland slowly goes out, leaving Senta and the Dutchman rapt in contemplation of each other. Senta and the Dutchman are alone.)

DUTCHMAN
(deeply moved)
As from the mist of times long gone
this girl's image speaks to me:
as I dreamt of her for restless ages,
I see her now before my eyes.
I have often lifted my eyes at dead of night,
longing for a wife.
Satan's spite left me but a pounding heart
to remind me of my torment.
The dull glow I feel burning here,
can I in my misery call it love?
Ah, no! It is a yearning for redemption:
would that through such an angel it came true!

SENTA

Am I deep in a wonderful dream?
 What I see, is it mere fancy?
 Have I been till now in some false world,
 is my day of awakening dawning?
 He stands before me,
 his face lined with suffering,
 it reveals his terrible grief to me:
 can deep pity's voice lie to me?
 As I have often seen him, here he stands.
 The pain that burns within my breast,
 ah, this longing, how shall I name it?
 What you yearn for, salvation,
 would it came true, poor man, through me!

DUTCHMAN

(drawing slightly, near to Senta)
 Do you agree with your father's choice?
 What he promised, say, can I count on it?
 Could you give yourself to me forever
 and offer your hand to a stranger?
 Shall I, after a life of anguish,
 find in your loyalty my long-sought rest?

SENTA

Whoever you are, whatever the evil lot
 which cruel fate has meted out to you -
 and whatever the future holds in store for me,
 I shall always obey my father!

DUTCHMAN

What? So unhesitating? Have you
 such deep pity for my suffering?

SENTA

(aside)
 Oh, what suffering! Could I but console you!

DUTCHMAN

(overhearing her)
 What a sweet sound in the murky tumult!
 You are an angel! An angel's love
 can comfort even a lost soul!
 Ah, if I can still hope for redemption,
 Eternal God, may it come through her!

SENTA

Ah, if he can still hope for redemption,
 Eternal God, may it come through me!

DUTCHMAN

Ah, if you realized the fate
 that then you would share with me,
 it would warn you of the sacrifice
 you make for me, if you swear to be true to me.
 Your young soul would flee in horror
 from the ruin to which you condemn it,
 without woman's noblest virtue,
 without eternal fidelity.

SENTA

I well know woman's sacred duty,
 take heart, then, unhappy man!
 Let destiny judge me
 who can defy its sentence!
 In the sheer purity of my heart
 I know what loyalty most demands.
 To whom I show it, I give it all,
 true love till death!

DUTCHMAN

(in exaltation)
 A holy balm for my wounds
 springs from this solemn oath.
 Hear me: my deliverance I have found,
 you powers that have repulsed me!
 The star of my evil fate shall fail,
 light of my hope, shine anew!
 You angels who once abandoned me,
 strengthen now this heart in faith!

SENTA

By mighty magic overcome,
 I am swept to his rescue:
 here may he find a home,
 here may he ship anchor safe in port!
 What stirs so strongly within me?
 What fills my heart with rapture?
 Almighty God, may the source of my exaltation
 be the strength of my true love.

DALAND

(re-entering)
 Forgive me!
 My people will stay outside no longer.
 After each voyage, you know, we have a feast.
 To grace the occasion, I have come to ask
 if you agree to the betrothal.
(to the Dutchman)

I think you courted to your heart's desire?
(to Senta)
 Senta, my child, say, are you willing?

SENTA
(with solemn resolution)
 Here is my hand! And without regret
 till death I vow to be true!

DUTCHMAN
 She gives her hand! You are
 mocked, Hell, by her true love!

DALAND
 You will not regret this union!
 To the feast! Today shall everyone rejoice!

ACT THREE

Scene One

(A cove with a rocky beach. In the foreground, to one side, is Daland's house. In the background, moored fairly close to each other, are the Norwegian and Dutch ships. It is a clear night. The Norwegian ship is lit up and the sailors are making merry on the deck. In sinister contrast, the Dutch ship is shrouded in unnatural gloom and deathly silence.)

NORWEGIAN SAILORS
 Steersman, leave your watch!
 Steersman, join us!
 Ho! Hey! Je! Ha!
 Hoist the sails! Anchor fast!
 Steersman, here!
 We fear no wind nor treacherous coast.
 Today we'll be right merry!
 Each has his girl ashore,
 grand tobacco and good brandy!
 Hussassahey!
 Rocks and storms outside —
 yollohohey!
 We laugh at them!
 Hussassahey!
 Furl sails! Anchor fast!
 Rocks and storms we laugh at them!
 Steersman, leave your watch!
 Steersman, join us!

Ho! Hey! Ye! Ha!
 Steersman, drink with us!
 Ho! Hey! Ye! Ha!
 Rocks and storms, hey!
 Are over, hey!
 Hussahey! Hallohey!
 Hussahey! Steersman! Ho!
 Here, come and drink with us!
(They dance on the deck, accompanying the down-beat of each bar with a heavy stamp of the feet.)

GIRLS
(They arrive, carrying baskets of food and drink.)
 Well! Just look! Dancing, indeed!
 They don't seem to need us girls!
(They go towards the Dutch ship)

SAILORS
 Hey! Girls! Stop! Where are you going?

GIRLS
 You've a taste for cool wine?
 Your neighbors there shall have some too!
 Is the food and drink for you alone?

STEERSMAN
 Right! Take it to the poor lads!
 They must be faint with thirst!

SAILORS
 We can't hear them.

STEERSMAN
 Oh, just look!
 No light! No sign of the crew!

GIRLS
(on the point of going aboard the Dutchman's ship)
 Hey! Sailors! Do you want torches?
 Where are you then? We can see nothing.

SAILORS
(laughing)
 Hahaha! Don't wake them up!
 They're still asleep!

GIRLS

(shouting to the ship)

Hey! Sailors! Hey! Answer then!

(Complete silence)

SAILORS

(mockingly, with affected sorrow)

Haha! Truly, they are dead:

they have no need of food and drink!

GIRLS

Hey, Sailors, are you already lying
snug in your bunks?

No feasting for you today?

SAILORS

(as before)

They're lying low, sitting tight,
like dragons guarding their treasure.

GIRLS

Hey, sailors! Don't you want some wine?

Surely you must be thirsty, too!

SAILORS

They don't drink, they don't sing;
no light burns on their ship.

GIRLS

Say! Haven't you sweethearts ashore?

Don't you want to dance with them on the
pleasant beach?

SAILORS

They must be old and pale, not red-blooded!
And their sweethearts are dead!

GIRLS

(calling loudly)

Hey! Sailors! Sailors! Wake up!

We bring you food and drink in plenty!

SAILORS

(reinforcing them)

Hey! Seamates! Seamates! Wake up!

(Long silence)

GIRLS

(disconcerted and fearful)

Yes, it is true! They seem dead.

They've no need of food and drink.

SAILORS

(cheerfully)

You know of the Flying Dutchman!

The ship you see there is exactly like his!

GIRLS

(as before)

Then don't wake the crew;

they are ghosts, we swear!

SAILORS

How many centuries have you been at sea?

Storms and rocks can do you no harm!

GIRLS

They don't drink! They don't sing!

No light burns on their ship!

SAILORS

Have you no letter, no errand for people ashore?

We'll deliver them to our great-grandfathers!

GIRLS

They must be old and pale, not red-blooded!

And their sweethearts, alas, are dead!

SAILORS

(noisily)

Hey, seamates! Set your sails

and show us the Flying Dutchman's speed!

GIRLS

(frightened, retreating from the Dutch ship)

They don't hear! Gives you the creeps here!

They don't want anything — so why call to
them?

SAILORS

You girls, let the dead rest!

Let us, the living, enjoy ourselves!

GIRLS

*(handing the basket aboard to the Norwegian
crew)*

Here! Your neighbor has spurned it.

STEERSMAN

What? Aren't you coming aboard?

SAILORS

What? Aren't you coming aboard?

GIRLS

Oh, not just yet! It's not late.
We'll come back soon. You drink up,
and if you want to dance as well,
but let your weary neighbors rest!
(exeunt)

SAILORS

(opening and emptying the baskets)
Hurrah! There's plenty here!
Dear neighbors, thank you!

STEERSMAN

Everyone fill his glass to the brim!
Our good neighbors send us drink!

SAILORS

Hallohohoho! Hallohohoho!
Good neighbors, if you've voice and speech,
wake up and follow our example!
(There is a faint sign of life aboard the Dutch ship.)

SAILORS

(laughing)
Wake up! Wake up!
Up and follow our example!
(They noisily clink their cups.)
Hussa!
Steersman, leave your watch!
Steersman, join us!
Ho! Hey! Ye! Ha!
Hoist the sails! Anchor fast!
Steersman, here!
We watched many a night in storm and terror,
we often drank the sea's brine:
today we watch, carousing and feasting,
and the girls give us
a better drink from the cask.
Hussassahey! Rocks and storms, outside!
Yollohohey! We laugh at them!
Hussassahey! Furl sails! Anchor fast!
Rocks and storms we laugh at them!
Steersman, leave your watch!

Steersman, join us!

Ho! Hey! Ye! Ha!
Steersman, here! Drink with us!
Rocks and storms, ha!
Are over, hey!
Hussahey! Hallohey!
Hussahey! Steersman! Ho!
Ho! Hey! Ye! Ha!
Here, come and drink with us!

(The sea, which everywhere else remains calm, has begun to rise in the neighborhood of the Dutch ship; a dull blue flame flares up like a watchfire. A storm wind whistles through the rigging. The crew, hitherto invisible, bestir themselves.)

THE DUTCHMAN'S CREW

Yohohoeh! Yohohohoeh!
Hojohohoeh! Hoeh! Hoeh! Hoeh!
Huissa!
The storms sweeps ashore,
Huissa!
Furl sails! Anchor away!
Huissa!
Run for the bay!
Somber Captain, go ashore,
seven years are over!
Seek the fair maid's hand!
Fair maid, be true to him!
Be merry today, hui!
A bridegroom, hui!
The stormwind howls bridal-music
and the ocean dances to it!
Hui! Hark, he whistles!
Captain, here again?
Hui! Hoist sail!
But your bride, say, where is she?
Hui! Back to sea!
Captain! Captain! You're unlucky in love!
Hahaha!
Scream, storm-wind, howl!
Leave our sails alone!
Satan has blessed them,
and they will not rend.
Hohoeh! Hoeh! Never!

(In the meantime the Dutch ship tosses to and from in the raging waters, with a gale howling in

the rigging. Yet, everywhere else, the sea and sky are calm.)

NORWEGIAN SAILORS

(who have watched and listened first with astonishment, then with terror)

What a shanty! Are they spooks? Makes the flesh creep!
Strike up our song! Sing it loud!
Steersman, leave your watch! etc.

THE DUTCHMAN'S CREW

Huissa!

Yohohoe! Yohohoe!

Scream, storm-wind, howl! etc.

(The Dutch crew interrupt with sinister cries and finally their chorus silences the Norwegian sailors who, terror-stricken, leave the deck and go below making the sign of the Cross. The ghostly crew burst into mocking laughter: ha ha ha ha ha ha! Whereupon gloom and silence once more envelop their ship and the surrounding sea)

Scene Two

(Senta hurries from the house followed by Erik in great agitation.)

ERIK

What I heard! God, what I saw!
Is it an illusion? The truth? A fact?

SENTA

(turning away, painfully moved)
Oh, do not ask! I dare not answer!

ERIK

Merciful God! It is true beyond doubt.
What unholy power tore you from me?
What force seduced you so rapidly,
to cruelly break this truest heart?
Your father — ha, he brought the bridegroom;
I know him well, I expected this to happen!
But you — is it possible — offer your hand
to a man who has hardly crossed your threshold!

SENTA

(struggling with herself)
No more! Say no more! I must, I must!

ERIK

Oh, this obedience, as blind as your act!
You welcomed your father's suggestion,
and with one blow broke my heart!

SENTA

(as before)
No more! No more! I must never see you again,
nor think of you: a noble duty decrees it.

ERIK

What noble duty? Isn't it nobler to keep
the vow you once made to me of eternal true
love?

SENTA

(frightened)
What? Did I ever vow to be always true to you?

ERIK

(sorrowfully)
Senta, oh Senta, you deny it?
Don't you remember the day
when you called me to you in the valley?
When to get highland flowers for you,
I bravely took countless risks?
Do you recall how on a steep cliff
we saw your father leave the shore?
He sailed on a white-winged ship
and to my protection he entrusted you.
And when you twined your arms
around my neck,
didn't you declare your love anew?
The rapture I felt at the touch of your hand,
say, wasn't that assurance of your true love?
(The Dutchman has overheard the previous scene and now wildly rushes forward.)

DUTCHMAN

Lost! Ah, lost! Redemption lost forever!

ERIK

(recoiling in terror)
What do I see? God!

DUTCHMAN

Senta, farewell!

SENTA
(barring his way)
 Wait, unhappy man!

ERIK
(to Senta)
 What are you going to do?

DUTCHMAN
 To sea! To sea! Forever!
(to Senta)
 Your pledge is ended,
 and with your pledge, my hope of grace!
 Farewell, I'll not ruin you!

ERIK
 Horrible! That look in his eyes!

SENTA
(holding the Dutchman back)
 Wait! You shall never flee from here!

DUTCHMAN
(giving a shrill blast on his whistle and shouting to his crew)
 Hoist sails! Weigh anchor!
 Say farewell to land forever!
 Away to sea again I'm driven!
 I doubt you just as I doubt God!
 Dead, dead is all faith!
 What you promised was a jest to you!

SENTA
 Ha! do you doubt my true love?
 Unhappy man, why are you so blind?
 Stay! Do not regret our bond!
 What I promised, I will fulfil!

ERIK
 What do I hear! God, what is this I see?
 Am I to trust my ears, my eyes?
 Senta! Do you want to perish?
 Come to me! You are in Satan's clutches!

DUTCHMAN
 Hear of the destiny from which I defend you!
 I am condemned to the most ghastly fate.
 A ten-fold death would be a long awaited joy!
 From the curse a woman alone can free me,
 a woman true to me till death.

You did vow to be true but
 not solemnly before God: this saves you!
 For know, poor girl, the fate awaiting
 those who break faith with me:
 eternal damnation is their lot!
 Countless victims have paid this penalty
 through me! But you shall be saved.
 Farewell!
 Farewell forever to my salvation!

ERIK
(in fearful terror, calling to the house and the ship)
 Help! Save, oh, save her!

SENTA
(checking the Dutchman)
 I know you well! And well I know your fate!
 I knew you when first I saw you!
 The end of your torment is near! I am she
 by whose true love you shall find salvation!

ERIK
 Help her! She is lost!
(At Erik's cry for help, Daland, Mary and the girls have hurried from the house, and the sailors from the ship.)

MARY, DALAND, GIRLS, SAILORS
 What do I see!

DUTCHMAN
(to Senta)
 You do not know me, cannot guess who I am!!
(He points to his ship, whose red sails are spread and whose crew, in ghostly activity, are preparing for departure.)
 Ask the seas around the globe, ask
 the seaman who has sailed the ocean.
 He knows this ship, the terror of all devout men:
 the Flying Dutchman they call me!

(The Dutchman rushes aboard his ship which instantly heads out to sea. Senta tries to follow him but is held back by Daland and Erik.)

CREW OF THE DUTCHMAN
(weighing anchor)
 Yohohoeh! Yohohohoeh! Hojohohoeh!
 Hoeh! Hoeh! Hoeh! Huissa!

MARY, DALAND, ERIK,
GIRLS, SAILORS
Senta! Senta! What are you doing?

SENTA

*(tears herself free and rushes to a rock
overhanging the sea. From there she calls after
the departing Dutchman.)*

Praise your angel and his edict!
Here I stand, true to you unto death!

*(She leaps into the sea; at once the Dutch ship
sinks with all her crew. The sea heaves and falls
in a whirlpool. In the glow of the rising sun, the
transfigured forms of the Dutchman and Senta,
clasped in each other's arms, are seen rising
over the wreck and soaring into the sky.)*

Curtain

Libretto by Richard Wagner