

# GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

by Richard Wagner

## Characters

SIEGFRIED (tenor)

BRÜNNHILDE (soprano)

WALTRAUTE, a Valkyrie (mezzo-soprano)

GUNTHER, a Gibichung (baritone)

GUTRUNE, Gunthers sister (soprano)

ALBERICH (bass-baritone)

HAGEN, Alberich's son, Gunther's half-brother (bass)

FIRST NORN (contralto)

SECOND NORN (mezzo-soprano)

THIRD NORN (soprano)

WOGLINDE, a Rhine daughter (soprano)

WELLGUNDE, a Rhine daughter (mezzo-soprano)

FLOSSHILDE, a Rhine daughter (contralto)

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## PRELUDE

*(The curtain rises slowly. The scene is the same as at the close of the second day [Die Walküre], on the Valkyries' rock: Night. Firelight shines up from the valley at the back.)*

*(The three Norns, tall women in dark, veil-like drapery. The first (oldest) lies in the foreground on the right, under the spreading fir tree; the second (younger) is stretched on a rock in front of the cave; the third (youngest) sits in the center at back on a rock below the peak. Gloomy silence and stillness.)*

### First Norn

What light shineth there?

### Second Norn

Dawneth the day so soon?

### Third Norn

Loge's host glows in flame around the fell.

Still 'tis night.

Why spin we and sing we not now?

### 2nd Norn

*(to the first)*

While we are spinning and singing,

whereon stretch we the rope?

*(The first Norn unwinds a golden rope from herself and ties one end of it to a branch of the pine tree.)*

### 1st Norn

Be good or ill the song,

winding the rope thus sing I.

At the world-ash-tree once I wove  
when far and wide from the stem outbranched  
a wondrous verdant wood.

In its cooling shadow rose a spring:  
whisp'ring wisdom rippled its waves;  
of holy things I sang.

A dauntless god came to drink at the well;  
as eternal tribute paid was the light of an eye.

From the world-ash-tree Wotan's hand  
a branch did break;

from the bough he shaped  
the mighty shaft of his spear.

The wound, as time grew old,  
wasted the life of the wood;

sere, leafless and stricken, fast faded the tree;  
sadly then failed the fountain's flow:  
darksome meaning filled all my song.

Today I weave at the world-ash-tree no more,  
now must the pine tree serve me to fasten the  
rope.

Sing, o sister; wind thou the rope:  
know'st thou what will hap?  
*(The second Norn winds the rope thrown to her  
around a projecting rack at the entrance of the  
cave.)*

### 2nd Norn

Runes of treaties deeply pondered  
graved Wotan in the shaft of the spear:  
he holds it to sway the world.  
A hero bold in fight has broken the spear;  
in splinters shivered the treaties' hallowed haft.  
Then bade Wotan Walhall's heroes  
to hew down the world-ash's stem  
and the withered boughs to cut in pieces:  
the ash tree sank;  
spent then for aye was the spring.  
Now round the sharp-edged rock  
I bind the rope.  
Sing, o sister; wind the rope:  
know'st thou, what will hap?

### 3rd Norn

*(catching the rope and throwing the end behind  
her)*  
The castle stands by giants upraised:  
with the gods and the hallowed host  
of the heroes  
sitteth Wotan on high.  
The lofty pile of riven boughs  
like a wall standeth round Walhall:  
the world-ash-tree was this once!  
When its wood burnetii, glowing and bright,  
then shall flames feed on the glittering halls:  
the end of all godhood dawneth  
then forever and aye.  
Know ye yet more?  
Then wind ye the rope once again;  
from northward now I cast it to thee.  
*(She throws the rope to the second Norn. The  
second Norn throws it to the first, who loosens  
the rope from the bough and fastens it on  
another.)*  
Spin, o sister, and sing thou!

### 1st Norn

*(looking toward the back)*  
Dawneth the day? Is it fire that flickers?  
My sight sorrow has dimmed;  
the holy vision of old time fadeth,  
when Loge long since blazed forth

in glowing flame.  
Know'st thou what happened to him?

### 2nd Norn

*(winding the rope thrown to her again  
around the rock)*  
By the spear's enchantment  
Wotan enthralled him;  
help he gave to the god.  
From his galling fetters freedom to win,  
he gnawed the runes of the shaft:  
then with the mighty spell of the spear-point  
Wotan confined him,  
flaming round Brünnhilde's fastness.  
Know'st thou what will befall?

### 3rd Norn

*(catching the rope again and throwing it behind  
her)*  
With the shattered spear-shaft's  
piercing splinters  
Wotan woundeth the burning one  
deep in the breast:  
ravaging flames flare from the wound  
and seize the shaft, which the god casts  
'mid the heaped up boughs of the ash tree.  
*(She throws the rope back; the second Norn  
winds it up and throws it back again to the  
first.)*

### 2nd Norn

What befalleth, would ye know?  
Wind then, sisters, the rope!

### 1st Norn

*(fastening the rope again)*  
The night wanes; dark are my senses:  
I feel no more the strands of the rope;  
unwound and loose are its threads.  
A hideous sight wounds and vexes mine eyes:  
the Rhine-gold robbed by Alberich once:  
know'st thou what came thereof?

*(The second Norn with busy haste winds the rope  
around the jagged rock at the cave's mouth.)*

### 2nd Norn

The rope is parting, cut by the crag,  
no more fast is its hold on the rock;  
it hangs raveled and frayed:  
through wrath and wrong

rises the Nibelung's ring:  
 a curse of revenge  
 gnaws at the moldering strands.  
 Know'st thou what comes thereof?

**3rd Norn**

*(hastily catching the rope thrown to her)*  
 Too slack is the rope, it reaches not.  
 If to the north its end shall be cast,  
 yet straighter must it be stretched!  
*(She pulls hard at the rope, which breaks.)*  
 It breaks!

**2nd Norn**

It breaks!

**1st Norn**

It breaks!  
*(They take hold of the pieces of the broken rope  
 and bind their bodies together with them.)*

**The Three Norns**

No more speaketh our wisdom!  
 The world now shall hear us no more.

**3rd Norn**

Descend!

**2nd Norn**

To Erda!

**1st Norn**

Descend!  
*(They vanish.)*

*(Dawn. The red glow of sunrise grows; the light  
 of the fire from below gradually fades.)*

*(Sunrise. Broad daylight. Siegfried and Brünn-  
 hilde enter from the cave; he is fully armed; she  
 leads her horse by the bridle.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Beloved hero, forth must I send thee,  
 love helpeth not holding thee here!  
 One only doubt yet makes me linger,  
 that all thy winning hath little worth.  
 What gold have shewn me gave I thee:  
 holiest runes in richest hoard;  
 but all my maidhood's hallowed strength  
 stole he from me, who is now my hero.  
 In wisdom weak, but strong in will:  
 in love so rich, so poor in power,

her scanty worth thou wilt disdain not,  
 who all has granted and nought more can give.

**Siegfried**

Wonder of women,  
 more gav'st thou than I can ward.  
 O chide not, if thy lessons have left me still  
 untaught.

One rede yet I well have read:  
*(with fire)* that for me Brünnhild' lives;  
 one lesson well I learned:  
 Brünnhilde to remember!

**Brünnhilde**

Wilt thou with love ever bless me;  
 remember only thyself:  
 thy dauntless deeds remember:  
 remember the flaming fire  
 that fearless thou defiedst,  
 when around the rock it burned!

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde so to win me.

**Brünnhilde**

Forget not the shield-hidden maid  
 whom in slumber deep thou foundest,  
 and whose fastened helm thou didst break.

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde to awaken.

**Brünnhilde**

Those oaths remember  
 that have bound us;  
 the troth remember that we plighted;  
 the love we live for aye remember:  
 Brünnhilde then will burn forever  
 deep in thy breast.  
*(She embraces Siegfried.)*

**Siegfried**

Love, I leave thee alone  
 in thy fastness guarded by fire;  
*(He has drawn Alberich's ring from his finger  
 and now holds it out to Brünnhilde.)*  
 for all thy runes I give thee  
 now as guerdon this ring.  
 Of the deeds my hand performed  
 the virtue there doth lie.

With my sword a dragon I slew,  
 who long had watched it in hate.  
 Now guard thou surely the gold  
 as witness true of my love!

**Brünnhilde**

*(putting on the ring in rapture)*

Ne'er shall it be reft from my hand!  
 For the ring take thou now my horse!  
 Though he once did fly  
 with me through the heavens,  
 with me he lost all his magic power;  
 over clouds afar, mid lightning and thunder,  
 no more boldly aloft will he fly;  
 yet where'er thou shalt lead,  
 e'en through the fire,  
 fearlessly Grane will follow:  
 for henceforth, hero, shall he obey thee.  
 Oh, ward him well; he knows thy voice:  
 Oh, speak to Grane oft Brünnhilde's name!

**Siegfried**

Then through thy virtue alone  
 will shine my deeds of valor!  
 All my battles thou wilt choose,  
 all my triumphs thou wilt achieve!  
 If with thy shield I ward me,  
 if on thy steed I fight,  
 then Siegfried am I no more,  
 I am but Brünnhilde's arm.

**Brünnhilde**

O were but Brünnhilde thy spirit!

**Siegfried**

Through her my valor doth burn.

**Brünnhilde**

Then thou wert Siegfried and Brünnhild'!

**Siegfried**

Where I am both are together.

**Brünnhilde**

*(with animation)*

Then my rock home deserted lies?

**Siegfried**

Made one, both there abide!

**Brünnhilde**

*(in highest excitement)*

O heavenly rulers! Race of eternal!  
 Turn now your eyes on this hallowed pair!  
 Apart, who shall divide us?  
 Divided, ne'er will we part!

**Siegfried**

Hail, o Brünnhilde, radiant star!

**Brünnhilde**

Hail, o Siegfried, conquering light!

**Siegfried**

Hail, rapture of loving!  
 Hail, gladdening star!  
 Hail, Brünnhild'!  
 Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

**Brünnhilde**

Hail, rapture of living!  
 Hail, conquering light!

Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

*(Siegfried leads the horse quickly toward the edge of the slope; Brünnhilde follows him.)*

*(Siegfried has disappeared with the horse down behind the projecting rock so that he is no longer visible to the audience; Brünnhilde stands thus suddenly alone at the edge of the slope and follows Siegfried with her eyes as he descends.)*

*(Brünnhilde's demeanor shows that Siegfried now vanishes from her sight. Siegfried's horn is heard from below. Brünnhilde listens.)*

*(She steps further out on the slope. Now she again catches sight of Siegfried in the valley: she greets him with a gesture of delight. Her joyful smiles seem a reflection of the gay demeanor of the departing hero.)*

*(Here the curtain must be quickly lowered.)*

*(During the last four bars the curtain is raised again.)*

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## ACT ONE

### Scene One

*(The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine. This is quite open at the back. The background itself presents an open shore as far as the river; rocky heights enclose the shore.)*

*(Gunther and Gutrune on a throne on one side, before which stands a table with drinking vessels on it; Hagen is seated in front of the table.)*

#### Gunther

Give ear, Hagen; tell me now true:  
is my fame on the Rhine  
worthy of Gibich's name?

#### Hagen

Thy glory's luster wakens my envy;  
for she who gave us life,  
Dame Grimhild, told of thy greatness.

#### Gunther

I envy thee; then envy not me.  
Mine thought he firstborn's right,  
wisdom was thine alone.  
Half-brothers' strife was ne'er so well ended;  
'tis thy wisdom wins my praise  
when I ask of my renown.

#### Hagen

Then blame I my word,  
since flawed is thy fame  
for treasures rare I wot of  
that the Gibichungs not yet have won.

#### Gunther

If these thou hide, I blame thee too.

#### Hagen

In ripeness and strength of summer  
standeth Gibich's race,  
thou, Gunther, yet unwived,  
thou, Gutrun', yet unwed.  
*(Gunther and Gutrune are lost in silent meditation.)*

#### Gunther

Whom wouldst thou I should wed  
that we new fame may win?

#### Hagen

A wife waits thee, the noblest in the world:  
'mid mountain rocks her home,  
a fire surroundeth her hall:  
who breaks thro' the flaming fire  
may Brünnhilde's wooer be.

#### Gunther

And serves not my strength for the task?

#### Hagen

For a stronger one it is decreed.

#### Gunther

Who is that boldest of men?

#### Hagen

Siegfried, the Wälsung son,  
he is the chosen man.  
A twin-born pair, in love's enthrallment,  
Sigmund and Sieglind'  
begat them the hero renowned.  
Strong and bold he grew in the woods;  
him would I Gutrun' should wed.

#### Gutrune

*(beginning shyly)*  
What deed brought him such fame  
that of heroes the first he is named?

#### Hagen

At Neidhöhle the Niblung's hoard  
long since by a dragon was held:  
Siegfried closed his threatening jaws  
and slew with conquering sword.  
That great and wondrous deed  
first won him a hero's fame.

#### Gunther

*(in meditation)*  
The hoard of the Niblungs holdeth,  
men say, a jewel of worth.

#### Hagen

The man who its might doth know  
would bend all the world to his will.

#### Gunther

And Siegfried won it in fight?

**Hagen**

Thrall are the Niblungs to him.

**Gunther**

And Brünnhild' he only can win?

**Hagen**

To none other waneth the fire.  
*(Gunther rises angrily from his seat.)*

**Gunther**

Why wak'st thou discord and doubt?  
Why stir my heart's desire  
by dreams of delights I may not win?  
*(He walks to and fro in agitation. Hagen, without leaving his seat, by a gesture full of hidden meaning holds Gunther fixed as he approaches him.)*

**Hagen**

Yet should Siegfried bring home the bride,  
then were not Brünnhilde thine?  
*(Gunther turns away again in doubt and anger.)*

**Gunther**

Yet how could I force this man  
for me to win the bride?

**Hagen**

*(as before)*  
Thy prayer alone would force him  
were but Gutrun' his wife.

**Gutrune**

Thou mocker, evil Hagen!  
What spell have I to bind him?  
If he of heroes be first on earth,  
the fairest women in the world  
long since would have won his love.

**Hagen**

*(bending confidentially to Gutrune)*  
Dost mind the drink in the chest;  
*(more secretly)*  
put trust in me who brought it home;  
'Twill bind him whom thou dost choose  
fast in love's fetters to thee.  
*(Gunther has again come to the table and, leaning upon it, listens attentively.)*  
Let now but Siegfried come  
and taste of the magical draught,

that he e'er a woman has seen,  
that one anear him e'er came,  
then straightway must he forget.  
Now answer: how like ye Hagen's rede?

**Gunther**

*(starting up with animation)*  
All praise be to Grimhild,  
that now this brother is ours!

**Gutrune**

Might but Siegfried hither come!

**Gunther**

What spell may find him out?  
*(A horn on the stage, from the background on the left, very loud but distant. Hagen listens. He turns to Gunther.)*

**Hagen**

Merrily hunts he, seeking renown,  
as through a wood he sweeps the world:  
while restless he storms on his way,  
to the Gibich's home will he come.

**Gunther**

Welcome to him would I give.  
*(Horn on the stage, nearer, but still distant. Gunther and Hagen listen.)*  
A horn from the Rhine I hear.  
*(Hagen looks down the river, and calls toward the back.)*

**Hagen**

On board a vessel man and horse!  
He blows so gaily the horn!  
*(Horn on the stage, nearer. Gunther stops halfway, listening.)*  
With an easy stroke,  
as from indolent hand,  
he drives the boat fast thro' the waves:  
so mighty an arm only one can own;  
his it must be who the dragon slew.  
Siegfried is it, surely none other!

**Gunther**

Come he to us?  
*(Hagen calls toward the river through his hollowed hands.)*

**Hagen**

Hoiho! Whom seek'st thou, hero blithe?

**Siegfried**

*(from the distance)*

The stalwart son of Gibich.

**Hagen**

His hall awaits thee with welcome here.

*(Siegfried appears at the shore in a boat.)*

Hither! Here come to land!

**Scene Two**

*(Siegfried brings his boat to the shore.)*

**Hagen**

Hail!

*(Hagen makes the boat fast to the shore with the chain. Siegfried springs on shore with his horse.)*

Hail! Siegfried, hero, hail!

*(Gunther has come to Hagen on the riverbank. Gutrune looks from the throne in astonishment at Siegfried. Gunther prepares to offer friendly greetings. All are fixed in mute contemplation of each other.)*

**Siegfried**

*(leaning on his horse, remains standing by the boat)*

Who is Gibich's son?

**Gunther**

Gunther, I, whom thou seek'st.

**Siegfried**

Far on the Rhine thy fame hath spread:  
now fight with me, or be my friend!

**Gunther**

Come in peace! Be thou welcome!

**Siegfried**

Where resteth my horse?

**Hagen**

Mine be his charge.

**Siegfried**

*(turning to Hagen)*

Thou call'st me Siegfried: met we ere now?

**Hagen**

I knew by thy might who thou must be.

**Siegfried**

*(as he gives the horse to Hagen)*

Tend Grane right gently:

of nobler strain thy hand never held  
by bridle a steed.

*(Hagen leads the horse away. While Siegfried looks thoughtfully after him, Gutrune, guided by a gesture of Hagen's which is unseen by Siegfried, goes out through a door on the left leading to her room. Gunther comes to the front with Siegfried, whom he invites to accompany him.)*

**Gunther**

O hero, gladly greet

the halls where dwelt my fathers.

Where'er thou standest, whate'er thou seest,

my goods I freely grant thee;

thine is my birthright, folk and land:

pledge of troth be my lifeblood!

Henceforth am I thine own.

**Siegfried**

Nor land nor folk have I to grant

nor father's house and hall:

all my birthright my bod/ s life

living wasteth away.

Yet a sword blade have I forged me:

pledge of troth be my weapon!

That with my life give I thee.

**Hagen**

*(who has returned and now stands behind Siegfried)*

Of the hoard of the Niblungs

rumor nameth thee lord.

**Siegfried**

*(turning around to Hagen)*

The treasure had I forgot;

so lightly its wealth I prize!

I in a cavern left it lying,

where a dragon once held watch.

**Hagen**

And nought didst take therefrom?

**Siegfried**

*(pointing to the piece of steel netting which hangs from his girdle)*

Nought but this, not knowing its use!

**Hagen**

The Tarnhelm it is,  
the Niblung's cunningest work:  
it serves, when set on thy head,  
to transform thee e'en as thou wilt;  
wouldst fain go to far-off lands,  
thy desire straight were fulfilled.  
Nought else took'st thou from the hoard?

**Siegfried**

A ring.

**Hagen**

That holdest thou safe?

**Siegfried**

*(tenderly)*

'Tis held by a woman fair.

**Hagen**

*(aside)* Brünnhild'!

**Gunther**

Nought, Siegfried, now shalt thou give me;  
dross would pay thee in return,  
though all my wealth thou shouldst win:  
without guerdon thee will I serve.  
*(Hagen has gone to Gutrune's door and now opens it. Gutrune enters and approaches Siegfried, carrying a filled drinking horn.)*

**Gutrune**

Welcome, o guest, to Gibich's house!  
From his daughter take thou this drink.  
*(Siegfried bows friendly to her and takes the horn. He holds the horn meditatively before him.)*

**Siegfried**

If lost were all thou gavest to me,  
one lesson still I ne'er will forget;  
this draught, the first my lips have tasted,  
Brünnhild', I drink to thee!

*(He puts the drink-horn to his lips and drinks a long draught. He returns the drink-horn to Gutrune who casts down her eyes before him in shame and confusion. Siegfried fixes his eyes on her with suddenly inflamed passion.)*

O thou who dost blind my sight by thy look,  
why sink'st thou before me thine eyes?

*(Gutrune, blushing, raises her eyes to his face.)  
(vehemently)*

Ha, fairest maid! Veil thy look;  
the heart in my breast burns in its beams,  
to fiery scorching streams

I feel it kindle my blood!

*(with trembling voice)*

Gunther, what name is thy sister's?

**Gunther**

Gutrune.

**Siegfried**

*(softly)* Are good the runes that there in  
her eyes I am reading?

*(He seizes Gutrune's hand ardently.)*

With thy brother service I have sought:  
his pride refused my bond;  
wilt thou like him deny my prayer,  
if for thy grace I crave!

*(Gutrune involuntarily meets Hagen's look. She humbly bows her head and, with a gesture expressing her feeling of unworthiness, she leaves the hall with faltering steps.)*

*(Siegfried, observantly watched by Hagen and Gunther, follows Gutrune with his eyes as if entranced.)*

Hast thou, Gunther, a wife?

**Gunther**

Not wed am I yet,  
and for a wife seemeth it vain to seek:  
on one my heart have I set,  
whom no deed of mine can win.

**Siegfried**

*(turns with animation to Gunther)*

What canst thou not win, with me for friend?

**Gunther**

On mountain rocks her home;...



**Siegfried**

*(breaking in hastily in astonishment)*  
On mountain rocks her home?

**Gunther**

... a fire surrounds her hall.

**Siegfried**

A fire surrounds her hall?

**Gunther**

Who breaks through the flaming fire.

**Siegfried**

*(as if striving with intense effort to remember something)*

Who breaks thro' the flaming fire?

**Gunther**

... may Brünnhilde's wooer be.  
*(Siegfried shows by a gesture that at the mention of Brünnhilde's name his remembrance has quite faded.)*

I may not set foot on the mountain;  
the fire wanes not for me!  
*(Siegfried comes to himself from his dreamy state and turns to Gunther with excessive gaiety.)*

**Siegfried**

I fear no fire,  
for thee I will win the bride;  
for thy man am I,  
and my arm is thine,  
if Gutrun' thou giv'st me to wife.

**Gunther**

Gutrune gladly I grant thee.

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde then shall be thine.

**Gunther**

How wilt thou beguile her?

**Siegfried**

By the Tarnhelm's craft  
changed shall my shape be for thine.

**Gunther**

Then let the oath now be sworn!

**Siegfried**

Blood-brotherhood bound be by oath!  
*(Hagen fills a drinking horn with wine; he holds it out to Siegfried and Gunther, who cut their arms with their swords and hold them for a few moments over the top of the horn. Both lay two fingers on the horn, which Hagen continues to hold between them.)*

Blossoming life's renewing blood  
into the draught I shed.

**Gunther**

Boldly mixed in brotherly love  
bloom our blood in the draught

**Both**

Troth I drink to the friend!  
Blithe and free let flow from our bond,  
blood-brotherhood aye!

**Gunther**

Broke if e'er be the bond:...

**Siegfried**

False if friend be to friend,...

**Both**

What in drops of love here we have drunken  
in streams shall freely flow:  
traitor thus shall atone!  
*(Gunther drinks and gives the horn to Siegfried.)*

**Gunther**

So swear I the oath!

**Siegfried**

So...  
*(He drinks and holds the empty drinking horn out to Hagen.)*  
...plight I my faith.  
*(Hagen strikes the horn into two pieces with his sword. Gunther and Siegfried join hands.)*  
*(Siegfried observes Hagen, who has stood behind him during the oath.)*  
Thou took'st in our troth-plight no part?

**Hagen**

My blood were bane to your drink;  
not pure and free like yours doth it flow:  
stubborn and cold scarce it stirs,

my cheek it never doth redden:  
so far I keep from fiery bonds.

**Gunther**

*(to Siegfried)*

Give no heed to his spleen!  
*(Siegfried puts on his shield again.)*

**Siegfried**

Forth let us fare!  
There lies my boat:  
swiftly sail to the mountain!  
*(He steps nearer to Gunther and points.)*  
By the shore but one night  
on board shalt thou tarry;  
the bride then shall be thine.  
*(He turns to go, and beckons Gunther to follow him.)*

**Gunther**

Takest thou first no rest?

**Siegfried**

Let my labor win my rest.  
*(He goes to the shore to cast the boat loose.)*

**Gunther**

Thou, Hagen! be guard of the homestead!  
*(He follows Siegfried to the shore. After Siegfried and Gunther have laid their arms in the boat, while they put up the sail and make all ready for departure, Hagen takes up his spear and shield.)*  
*(Gutrune appears at the door of her apartment just as Siegfried pushes off the boat, which immediately floats into the middle of the stream.)*

**Gutrune**

So fast! say, whither fly they?

**Hagen**

*(while he slowly takes his seat in front of the hall with shield and spear)*  
They fly Brünnhild' to wed.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried?

**Hagen**

See how he hastes!  
For wife so would he win thee!

**Gutrune**

Siegfried mine!  
*(She returns to her apartment in lively agitation.)*  
*(Siegfried has seized an oar and with its strokes drives the boat down the stream so that it is quickly lost to view.)*  
*(Hagen sits motionless, leaning his back against the post of the hall entrance.)*

**Hagen**

Here sit I on guard, watching the house,  
warding the hall from the foe.  
Winds are wafting Gibich's son,  
afar to his wooing he fares.  
His helm is held by a hero bold,  
for Gunther peril he braves:  
His rightful bride he brings to the Rhine;  
with her he brings me the ring!  
Ye sons of freedom, blithesome companions  
sail ye now merrily on:  
base though ye deem him, ye all shall serve  
the Nibelung's son.

*(A curtain which closes in the hall is drawn and cuts the stage off from the audience.)*

---

### Scene Three

*(The curtain is raised again. The rocky height as in the prelude.)*

*(Brünnhilde sits at the entrance to the cave in mute contemplation of Siegfried's ring. Touched by joyful memories, she covers the ring with kisses.)*

*(Distant thunder is heard; she looks up and listens. She turns again to the ring.)*

*(A flash of lightning. Brünnhilde listens again and looks into the distance, where a dark thundercloud is seen approaching.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Sounds familiar of old  
 send to my ear a greeting.  
 A steed 'tis, hither winging his flight;  
 on the cloud it fares in storm to the fell.  
 Who seeks this lonely one here?

**Waltraute**

*(from the distance)*

Brünnhilde!  
 Sister! Wake from thy slumber!

**Brünnhilde**

*(starts from her seat)*

Waltraute's call, how joyful the sound!  
*(calling to the wing)* Com'st thou, sister?

Boldly ridest thou to me?  
*(She hastens to the edge of the rocks.)*

There in the wood still dear to thee  
 light from thy horse,  
 and leave him there to take rest.

*(She runs into the wood, from which a loud  
 sound like a thunderclap is heard. Brünnhilde  
 comes back, in violent agitation, with  
 Waltraute; she remains in joyful excitement,  
 without observing Waltraute's anxious fear.)*

Com'st thou to me?  
 So bold art thou? Dar'st thou undaunted  
 bring thy greeting to me?

**Waltraute**

Thou alone art cause of my haste!

**Brünnhilde**

So rashly thou, dauntless in love,  
 Warfather's ban hast broken?  
 Or perchance! O say!  
 may I then hope Wotan's thought is changed?  
 When against the godhead Siegmund I guarded,  
 failing, I know it,  
 my deed fulfilled his desire.  
 That his anger is ended know I too.  
 For albeit he left me here,  
 fettered in sleep on the fell,  
 destined as thrall to the man  
 who should wake the maid in his path,  
 to my piteous prayer he granted grace:  
 with ravening fire he surrounded the fell,  
 to bar to all cravens the way.  
 So my blessing was born of my sentence:  
 the hero most famed hath won me for wife!

Blest by his love, in light and laughter I live.  
*(She embraces Waltraute with wild signs of joy,  
 which Waltraute attempts with impatience to  
 suppress.)*

Lured wert thou, sister, by my lot?  
 Upon my joy wouldst thou also feed thee,  
 share all that I have won?

**Waltraute**

*(vehemently)* Share all the frenzy  
 that hath maddened thy brain?  
 In anguish of dread have I come  
 and broken Wotan's behest.  
*(Brünnhilde here first observes with surprise the  
 wildly excited condition of Waltraute.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Pain and fear fetter thy spirit!  
 Then the god hath pardoned me not?  
 Thou fearest the punisher's wrath?

**Waltraute**

*(gloomily)*  
 If still I feared it,  
 then at end were all my pain!

**Brünnhilde**

Wonder bewilders my sense.

**Waltraute**

Calm thou thy frenzy,  
 give good heed to my words!  
 To Walhall terror drives me again,  
 that from Walhall drove me to thee.

**Brünnhilde**

*(frightened)*  
 What is't that doth ail the eternal?

**Waltraute**

Hearken with heed to what I tell thee!  
 Since from thee Wotan turned him,  
 to battle no more hath he sent us:  
 dazed with fear, bewildered we rode to the field;  
 Walhall's heroes no more may meet Warfather.  
 Lonely to horse, without pause or rest,  
 as Wand'rer he swept thro' the world.  
 Home came he at last;  
 in his hand holding the spear-shaft's splinters:  
 a hero had struck it asunder.  
 With silent sign

Walhall's heroes sent he to hew  
the world-ash-tree in pieces.  
The sacred stem at his command was riven  
and raised in a heap round about the hall  
of the blest.  
The holy host called he together;  
the god on his throne took his place.  
In dismay and fear at his word they assembled;  
around him ranged,  
the hall was filled by his heroes.  
So sits he, speaks no word,  
on high enthroned grave and mute;  
the shattered spear-shaft fast in his grasp;  
Holda's apples tastes he no more.  
Awestruck and shrinking sit the gods in silence.  
Forth on quest from Walhall sent he his ravens;  
if with good tidings back the messengers come,  
then forever shall smiles of joy  
gladden the face of the god.  
Round his knees entwining cower we Valkyries;  
nought reckes he nor knows of our anguish:  
we all are consumed  
by terror and ne'er-ending fear.  
Upon his breast weeping I pressed me;  
*(hesitating)*  
then soft grew his look;  
he remembered, Brünnhilde, thee!  
He closed his eyes, deeply sighing,  
and as in slumber spoke he the words:  
if e'er the river maidens  
win from her hand again the ring,  
from the curse's load  
released were god and world!  
Then I took thought: and from his presence  
through ranks all silent stealing away,  
with secret haste I mounted my horse,  
and rode in tumult to thee.  
Now, o sister, to thee I pray:  
what thou canst do, that dare to fulfill;  
end all the grief of the gods!  
*(She has thrown herself down before  
Brünnhilde.)*

### **Brünnhilde**

*(quietly)*

What tales of evil fancies tellest thou,  
sad one, to me?  
The cloudy heaven of gods on high  
have I, poor fool, now escaped;  
I grasp not what thou dost tell me.

Dark and wild seemeth thy speech:  
and in thine eyes, so overweary,  
gleams wavering fire.  
With cheeks so pallid, thou white-faced sister,  
what wouldst thou, wild one, from me?

### **Waltraute**

*(vehemently)* Upon thy hand, the ring,  
'tis that: hear but my rede:  
for Wotan cast it from thee!

### **Brünnhilde**

The ring? from me?

### **Waltraute**

To the Rhine daughters give it again!

### **Brünnhilde**

The Rhine daughters ... I ...  
the ring? Siegfried's love pledge?  
Lost are thy senses?

### **Waltraute**

Hear me, hear my despair!  
The world's ill-fate surely hangeth thereon.  
Cast it from thee, away in the waters;  
so shalt thou end Walhall's anguish:  
the accurst thing fling in the flood!

### **Brünnhilde**

Ha! know'st thou what 'tis to me?  
How canst thou grasp it, loveless maid!  
More than Walhall's rapture,  
more than the fame of gods is this my ring:  
one glance at its lustrous gold,  
one flash of its holy fire  
more is to me e'en than all the heaven's  
ayeenduring delight.  
For blissfully there shineth the love of Siegfried.  
Love of Siegfried!  
O might but its rapture be told thee!  
that lives in the ring.  
Go hence to the holy council of gods!  
And of my ring tell o'er to them my words:  
*(rather more slowly)*  
from love I never will turn,  
of love they never shall rob me,  
though into ruins  
Walhall's splendor should fall!

**Waltraute**

This is thy truth then? So thou leavest  
unloved in her sorrow thy sister?

**Brünnhilde**

Swiftly to horse! speed thee away!  
The ring thou winn'st not from me!

**Waltraute**

Woe's me! Woe's me!  
Woe to thee, sister!  
Woe to Walhall's gods!  
*(She rushes away. A storm cloud soon rises  
from the wood with thunder.)*

**Brünnhilde**

*(as she looks after the brightly illumined  
thundercloud, which is soon quite lost in the  
distance)*  
Borne on the wind  
yon flashing storm cloud flyeth afar:  
to me ne'er more may it come!  
*(Evening has fallen. From below, the light of the  
fire shines gradually brighter. Brünnhilde looks  
quietly out on the landscape.)*  
Twilight of evening hides the heaven;  
brightly flameth the rampart of fire  
round the fell.  
*(The firelight approaches from below. Tongues  
of flame, growing continually brighter, shoot up  
over the rocky wall.)*  
Why leap so wildly  
the blazing billows on high?  
The mountaintop is girt by the fiery sea.  
*(She starts up in delight.)*  
Siegfried! Siegfried returned!  
'Tis his call sounds in mine ears!  
Up! Up! now to meet him!  
clasped in the arm of my god!  
*(She hastens to the rocky parapet in the highest  
delight. Flames shoot: from them springs  
Siegfried forward on to a high rock: the flames  
immediately draw back and shed their light only  
from below.)*

*(Siegfried, with the Tarnhem on his head, which  
hides the upper half of his face, leaving only his  
eyes free, appears in Gunther's form. Brünnhilde  
shrinks back in terror, flies to the foreground,  
and from there fixes her eyes in speechless  
astonishment on Siegfried.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Betrayed! Who cometh here?  
*(Siegfried, remaining on the stone at back and  
leaning upon his shield, motionless, observes  
Brünnhilde.)*

**Siegfried**

*(with a feigned, rougher, voice)*  
Brünnhild'! A wooer comes,  
whom thy fire doth not fright.  
Thee seek I now for wife:  
wilt freely follow me?

**Brünnhilde**

*(trembling violently)*  
Who is the man who tempts undaunted  
what the boldest only dares?

**Siegfried**

*(as before)*  
A hero who shall tame thee  
if force alone may serve.

**Brünnhilde**

A monster  
standeth on yonder stone!  
To rend me in pieces cometh an eagle!  
Who art thou, awful one?  
Art thou a mortal?  
Com'st thou from Hella's darksome host?

**Siegfried**

*(as before, beginning with a slightly trembling  
voice, but presently continuing with more cer-  
tainty)*  
A Gibichung am I,  
and Gunther is his name  
whom thou shalt follow now.

**Brünnhilde**

*(breaking out in despair)*  
Wotan! Thou ruthless, merciless god!  
Woe! Now my sentence shines clear to me!  
to shame and sorrow giv'st thou me o'er!  
*(Siegfried springs down from the stone and  
comes nearer.)*

**Siegfried**

The night draws on: within thy cave  
must thou to me be wedded!

**Brünnhilde**

*(stretching out threateningly the finger on which she carries Siegfried's ring)*

Go back! Fear thou this token!

Thou shalt not force me to shame  
so long as this ring is my guard.

**Siegfried**

Husband's right so shall be Gunther's:  
let the ring make thee his wife!

**Brünnhilde**

Go back, thou robber! foolhardy thief!  
defy not the might of my hand!

Stronger than steel makes me the ring:  
ne'er shall it be thine!

**Siegfried**

From thee now to take it  
teach me thy words!

*(He presses toward her. They wrestle together. Brünnhilde wrenches herself free, flies, and turns around as if to defend herself. Siegfried seizes her again. She flees; he reaches her. Both wrestle violently together. He seizes her by the hand and draws the ring from her finger. Brünnhilde shrieks violently.)*

*(As she sinks down into his arms, as if broken, her unconscious look meets Siegfried's eyes. He lets her fainting body slide down onto the stone bench at the entrance to the cave.)*

Now art thou mine.

Brünnhilde, Gunther's bride,  
shew me the way to thy cave!

*(Brünnhilde stares fainting before her.)*

**Brünnhilde**

*(exhausted)*

How now canst thou help thee, ill-fated wife?  
*(Siegfried drives her on with a gesture of command. Trembling and with wavering steps she goes into the cave.)*

*(Siegfried draws his sword.)*

**Siegfried**

*(in his natural voice)*

Now, Nothung, witness thou  
that I in bonds have wooed.

Keep thou my troth to my brother,  
let thy blade safeguard his bride!

*(He follows Brünnhilde.)*

*(The curtain falls.)*

**ACT TWO****Prelude and Scene One**

*(The curtain rises. An open space on the shore in front of the Gibichungs' hall: on the right the open entrance to the hall; on the left the bank of the Rhine, from which, slanting across the stage to the back, rises a rocky height cut by several mountain paths. There Fricka's altar stone is visible: higher up is a larger one for Wotan, and on the side is another for Donner.)*

*(It is night. Hagen, with his arm around his spear and his shield by his side, sits asleep, leaning against one of the wooden pillars of the hall.)*

*(Here the moon suddenly shines out and throws a vivid light on Hagen and the objects immediately surrounding him; Alberich is seen crouching before him, leaning his arms on Hagen's knees.)*

**Alberich**

*(softly)*

Sleep'st thou, Hagen, my son?  
Thou sleep'st and hear'st me not,  
whom rest and sleep betrayed?

**Hagen**

*(softly, without moving, so that he appears to sleep on, although his eyes are open)*

Thy voice I hear, evil Niblung:  
what hast thou now to tell my slumber?

**Alberich**

Forget not the might that thou possessest  
if thou art valiant as they mother bore thee to  
me!

**Hagen**

*(still as before)*

Though might through her was mine,  
no debt of thanks I owe her,  
that prey she fell to thy craft:  
old in youth, weak and wan, hating the happy,  
ne'er am I glad!

**Alberich***(as before)*

Hagen, my son! Hate thou the happy!  
 This joyless and sorrow-laden one lov'st thou  
 so as thou shouldst.  
 Be thou crafty, strong and bold!  
 Those whom with weapons of darkness  
 we fight,  
 e'en now are dismayed by our hate.  
 And he who ravished my ring,  
 Wotan, the ravenous robber,  
 by one of his heroes himself was vanquished:  
 through the Wälsung  
 he lost dominion and might;  
 with his clan of gods and heroes  
 in dread he waiteth his downfall.  
 I fear him no more:  
 sink will they all and perish!  
 Sleep'st thou, Hagen, my son?  
*(Hagen remains motionless as before.)*

**Hagen**

The might of the gods,  
 who then shall win?

**Alberich**

I and thou! The world will be ours,  
 for in thy truth my faith is firm;  
 thou sharest my wrath and hate.  
 Wotan's spear was shattered by Siegfried,  
 and Fafner in fight before him hath fall'n  
 and left him as booty the ring;  
 power and might wieldeth the Wälsung:  
 Walhall and Nibelheim  
*(still mysteriously)*  
 bow before him.  
 On the boldest of heroes  
 in vain lies my curse;  
 for to him hath the ring no worth,  
 he knows nought of its wonderful might.  
 Laughing in ardor of love  
 burns his life aye away.  
 'Tis his undoing only can help us!  
 Sleep'st thou, Hagen, my son?

**Hagen***(as before)*

To work his undoing me doth he serve.

**Alberich**

The golden ring

must thou rob from the Wälsung!

A woman wise holdeth him in her love:  
 if by her rede to the Rhine's fair daughters,  
 who in wat'ry deeps my wisdom bewitched,  
 his hand should give back the ring, forever  
 lost were the gold,  
 and no wiles could win it again.  
 Then without stint strive thou for the ring!  
 I fostered thee fearless for this,  
 that against heroes safe thou shouldst hold me.  
 Though weak is my strength  
 to fight with the foe,  
 who as prey to Siegfried was doomed,  
 yet deadly hatred I bred in Hagen;  
 'tis his to avenge me, the ring to win me,  
 in Wälsung's and Wotan's despite!  
 Swear to me, Hagen, my son!  
*(From this point a gradually darkening shadow  
 again covers Alberich. At the same time  
 morning twilight begins.)*

**Hagen***(still as before)*

The ring will I gain me; rest thou in peace!

**Alberich**

Swear to me, Hagen, my son!

**Hagen**

To myself swear I; trust thou and fear not!  
*(As, during the following bars, Alberich's form  
 gradually disappears, his voice becomes more  
 and more inaudible.)*

**Alberich**

Be true, Hagen, my son!  
 Trusty hero! Be true! Be true! True!  
*(Alberich has quite disappeared. Hagen, who has  
 remained in the same position, looks, with fixed  
 eyes and without moving, toward the Rhine, over  
 which the light of dawn spreads itself.)*

---

## Scene Two

*(From this point the Rhine becomes more and more deeply colored by the glowing red of dawn.)*

*(Hagen makes a convulsive movement.)*

*(Siegfried comes suddenly from behind a bush close to the shore.)*

### Siegfried

Hoiho, Hagen!

Weary man! Wake thou and greet me!

*(Siegfried appears in his own shape, but has the Tarnhelm on his head; he now takes this off and hangs it on his girdle as he comes forward.)*

### Hagen

*(rising leisurely)*

Hei! Siegfried! Thou speedy hero!

Whence stormest thou now?

### Siegfried

From Brünnhilde's rock!

'Twas there that the breath was drawn  
that called thee but now,  
so fast hither I flew.

Toiling more slowly a pair  
by boat behind me to come!

### Hagen

Then won is Brünnhild'?

### Siegfried

Wakes Gutrune?

### Hagen

*(calling toward the hall)*

Hoiho! Gutrune!

Hither come! Siegfried is here:  
why linger'st thou?

### Siegfried

*(turning to the hall)*

Ye both shall hear the tale of Brünnhild's fate.

*(Gutrune comes from the hall to meet him.)*

Now give me welcome, Gibich maid!  
for tidings good to thee I bear.

### Gutrune

Freia greeteth thee

in name of woman's honor!

### Siegfried

Freely grant thou grace to thy wooer!  
for wife I have won thee today.

### Gutrune

Then comes Brünnhild' with my brother?

### Siegfried

Light was his wooing, I ween.

### Gutrune

Came he unharmed through the fire?

### Siegfried

Safe in its blaze had he been,  
had I not dared it for him,  
for so I sought to win thee.

### Gutrune

But thee hath it not harmed?

### Siegfried

I laughed in the tumult of flames.

### Gutrune

Held Brünnhild' thee for Gunther?

### Siegfried

Like were we to a hair:  
the Tarnhelm served me well,  
as Hagen truly foretold.

### Hagen

I gave thee goodly redes.

### Gutrune

Thy force tamed the valiant maid?

### Siegfried

She felt Gunther's force.

### Gutrune

And she gave herself to thee?

### Siegfried

Through the night  
the dauntless Brünnhild'  
to her rightful husband belonged.

### Gutrune

But the right in sooth was thine!



**Siegfried**

With Gutrune sojourned Siegfried.

**Gutrune**

But yet Brünnhild' lay beside him?

**Siegfried**

'Twixt the east and west

*(pointing to his sword)*

the north:

so far was Brünnhild' from him.

**Gutrune**

How from thee came she to Gunther's arms?

**Siegfried**

Through the fast fading glow of the fire,  
as day dawned, in the mist she followed me  
down the vale;

when near the shore, soon the bridegroom's  
place to Gunther I gave:

then by the Tarnhelm's magic wished myself  
hither straight.

A driving wind now brings the lovers to  
Gibich's home.

Then welcome give to the pair.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried! Mightiest man!

I shrink with fear of thee!

**Hagen**

*(calling from the shore)*

From afar a sail draweth hither!

**Siegfried**

Then grant the herald thanks!

**Gutrune**

Let us give her worthy greeting,

that blithe and fain she here may tarry!

Thou, Hagen, call the men for the wedding  
in Gibich's hall together!

Mirthful maids to the feast I call:

our merriment fain they would share!

*(as she goes toward the hall, turning around  
again)*

Wilt thou rest, faithless man?

**Siegfried**

Helping Gutrun' is my rest.

*(He gives her his hand and goes into the hall  
with her.)*

---

**Scene Three**

*(Hagen has ascended a rock at the back; he seats  
himself there and puts the cowhorn to his lips.)*

**Hagen**

Hoiho! Hoiho hoho!

Ye Gibich vassals, gather ye here.

Arm ye! Arm ye! Weapons! Weapons!

Arm through the land!

Goodly weapons! Mighty weapons!

Sharp for strife! Need is here!

Need! Arm ye! Arm ye! Hoiho! Hoiho hoho!

*(Hagen remains in the same position on the  
rock. By different paths armed Vassals rush on  
hastily; first singly, and then in continually  
increasing numbers together.)*

**The Vassals**

Why brays the horn?

Who calls us to arms?

We come with our arms.

We come with our weapons.

Hagen! Hagen! Hoiho! Hoiho!

Tell what need is here! Tell what foe is near!

Who brings us strife?

Hagen! Is Gunther in need?

Who is in need?

We come with our weapons,

with weapons sharp, with weapons of might.

Where is strife? Hoiho! Ho! Hagen!

**Hagen**

*(still from the rock)*

Arm yourselves well and loiter not!

Welcome give to your lord:

a wife Gunther has won.

**Vassals**

What is his need? Who is his foe?

**Hagen**

A Valkyrie wife bringeth he home.

**Vassals**

Her kinsmen and vassals follow in anger?

**Hagen**

Brünnhild' follows him; none beside.

**Vassals**

Then his peril is past?  
Then the fight has been fought? Tell the tale!

**Hagen**

The dragon-slayer brought him the bride.  
Siegfried, the hero, held Gunther safe!

**A Vassal**

Why call'st thou the host then together?

**Ten Others**

Why call'st thou then the host?

**Hagen**

Sturdy steers now shall ye slaughter;  
on Wotan's altar pour forth their blood!

**Vassals**

What, Hagen, what more dost bid us do?  
What more dost bid us do?  
What do we then? What more dost bid us do?

**Hagen**

Then a boar I bid you strike down for Froh;  
and a goat in his prime kill ye for Donner,  
sheep I bid you slaughter for Fricka,  
that grace she may grant to the marriage!

**Vassals**

*(with increasing hilarity)*  
Say to us, Hagen, what then must we do?

**Hagen**

The drink-horn take that fairest women  
with mead and wine gaily have filled!

**Vassals**

The drink-horn in hand,  
what have we then to do?

**Hagen**

Freely carouse until tamed by drink.  
So to the gods give all honor,  
that grace they may grant to the marriage!  
*(The Vassals break out in ringing laughter.)*

**Vassals**

Good hap and health greets now the Rhine,  
if Hagen, the grim one, so merry may be!  
The hedge's thorn pricks now no more;  
as wedding herald plays he now his part.  
*(Hagen, who has remained very grave, has  
come down to the Vassals and now stands  
among them.)*

**Hagen**

Now cease your laughing, valiant vassals!  
Receive Gunther's bride!  
Brünnhilde nears there with him.  
*(He points toward the Rhine. Some of the  
Vassals hasten to the height, while others  
arrange themselves on the shore to see the  
arrival.)  
(coming nearer to some of the Vassals)*  
Love well your lady, faithfully help:  
if she be wronged, swift be your vengeance!  
*(He turns slowly aside toward the back.)  
(During the following, the boat with Gunther  
and Brünnhilde approaches the shore of the  
Rhine.)*

**Vassals**

Hail! Hail! Hail!  
*(Those who have been looking out from the  
height come down to the shore.)*  
Hail! Be welcome! Be welcome!  
*(Some Vassals spring into the water and draw  
the boat to land. All press closer to the bank.)*  
Hail! Be welcome, Gunther!  
Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

---

## Scene Four

*(Gunther steps out of the boat with Brünnhilde:  
the Vassals range themselves respectfully to  
receive them. During the following Gunther  
ceremoniously leads Brünnhilde forward by the  
hand.)*

**Vassals**

Welcome, Gunther!  
Health to thee and to thy bride!  
Welcome, bridegroom,  
home and welcome bride!

Be welcome!

*(They strike their weapons noisily together.)*

**Gunther**

*(presenting Brünnhilde, who follows him with pale face and downcast eyes, to the Vassals)*

Brünnhild', the fairest wife,

here to the Rhine I bring.

By man ne'er was won a nobler woman.

On Gibich's glorious race

shone ever grace from the gods;

to highest fame now shall we rise!

**Vassals**

*(clashing their weapons)*

Hail thou, happiest Gibichung!

*(Gunther leads Brünnhilde, who has never raised her eyes, to the hall, from which Siegfried and Guttrune now come forth, attended by women. Gunther stops before the hall.)*

**Gunther**

I greet thee, hero mine,

and thee, lovely sister!

Gladly I see thee beside him

who now hath won thee for wife.

Two pairs in wedlock here shall find blessing:

*(He draws Brünnhilde forward.)*

Brünnhild' and Gunther, Guttrun' and Siegfried!

*(Brünnhilde, startled, raises her eyes and sees Siegfried; her look remains fixed on him as in astonishment. Gunther, who has released Brünnhilde's violently trembling hand, shows, as do all, blank astonishment at Brünnhilde's behavior.)*

**Vassals**

What ails her? What ails her?

**Women**

Is she distraught?

*(Brünnhilde begins to tremble.)*

**Siegfried**

*(goes a few steps toward Brünnhilde)*

What clouds Brünnhilde's brow?

**Brünnhilde**

*(scarcely able to command herself)*

Siegfried? here? Guttrune?

**Siegfried**

Gunther's gentle sister,

won by me as thou by him.

**Brünnhilde**

*(with fearful vehemence)*

I? Gunther? Thou liest!

*(She appears about to fall. Siegfried supports her.)*

Light fades from mine eyes.

*(In Siegfried's arms, she looks faintly up at his face.)*

Siegfried knows me not?

**Siegfried**

Gunther, give thine aid to Brünnhild'!

*(Gunther comes to them.)*

Awaken, wife! Here stands thy husband.

*(Brünnhilde perceives the ring on Siegfried's outstretched finger and starts with terrible vehemence.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Ha! The ring upon his hand!

He? Siegfried?

**Vassals**

What is't? What is't?

**Hagen**

*(coming from the back among the Vassals)*

Now give good heed to the woman's tale!

*(Brünnhilde tries to recover herself while she forcibly restrains the most terrible excitement.)*

**Brünnhilde**

On thy hand there I beheld a ring;

from me 'twas wrested, not by Siegfried

*(pointing to Gunther)*

but by him!

How came then from him the ring to thy hand?

*(Siegfried attentively observes the ring on his finger.)*

**Siegfried**

The ring came not to me from him.

**Brünnhilde**

*(to Gunther)*

Thou who didst rob the ring,  
with which I wedded thee,

now let him know thy right;  
take back again the pledge!

**Gunther**

*(in great perplexity)*

The ring? I gave him nothing:  
yet dost thou know it well?

**Brünnhilde**

Where hidest thou the ring  
that from my hand thou stolest?  
*(Gunther, greatly confused, is silent.)*  
*(breaking out in violent passion)*

Ha! He it was who from me did rob the ring.  
Siegfried! the traitor and thief!

*(All look expectantly at Siegfried, who is absorbed in distant thoughts while contemplating the ring.)*

**Siegfried**

No woman's hand gave me the ring,  
nor woman was't from whom I wrested it:  
I mind me well of the booty won,  
when at Neidhöhl' fought was the fight,  
and the mighty dragon I slew.

**Hagen**

*(coming between them)*

Brünnhild', dauntless wife!  
know'st thou right well the ring?  
Is't that Gunther took from thee? Then it is his,  
and Siegfried hath won it by guile,  
*(rather broadly)*  
that the traitor must now atone!

**Brünnhilde**

*(shrieking out in most terrible anguish)*  
Betrayed! Betrayed! Shamefully betrayed!  
Deceit! Deceit! Guile beyond all revenge.

**Gutrune, Vassals, Women**

Deceit? To whom?

**Brünnhilde**

Holy gods, ye heavenly rulers!  
Have ye ordained this dark decree?  
Ye who have doomed me to anguish so dire!  
ye who have sunk me so deep in disgrace!  
teach me such vengeance as ne'er was revealed!  
stir in me wrath, that may never be stilled!

Let but Brünnhilde's heart now be broken;  
bring her betrayer so to his death!

**Gunther**

Brünnhild', what say'st thou?  
Calm thyself!

**Brünnhilde**

Away, betrayer,  
self-betrayed one!  
Hearken then, all men: know ye,  
there standeth he whose wife am I.

**Women**

Siegfried? Wedded to her?

**Vassals**

Wedded to her?

**Brünnhilde**

He forced delight and love from me.

**Siegfried**

Thine own fair name dost hold so lightly?  
The tongue, then, that reviles it  
must I convict of its falsehood?  
Say if I broke my faith!  
Blood-brotherhood have I plighted to Gunther:  
Nothung, my goodly sword,  
guarded the holy vow:  
its blade in honor parted  
this ill-starred bride from me.

**Brünnhilde**

Thou crafty hero, see thy lie!  
Vainly thou call'st as witness thy sword!  
Its biting blade well know I,  
the sheath too that wards it,  
wherein as friend reposed on the wall  
Nothung, the trusty sword,  
when his true love was won by its lord.

*(The Vassals and Women crowd together in indignation.)*

**Vassals**

What? Siegfried a traitor?  
Tainted is Gunther's honor?

**Women**

Siegfried a traitor?

**Gunther***(to Siegfried)*

My fame were sullied, stained with disgrace,  
were not her slander cast in her teeth!

**Gutrune**

Faithless Siegfried, false to thine oath?  
Bear witness that wrongly thou art charged!

**Vassals**

Right thyself now, if thou art wronged!  
Silence her slander! Sworn be the oath!

**Siegfried**

Stilled be her slander!  
Sworn be the oath!  
Whose spear shall serve me  
as witness and ward?

**Hagen**

Here I hold my spear-point!  
swear ye thereon:  
your oath my weapon shall ward!  
*(The Vassals form a ring around Siegfried and Hagen. Hagen holds out his spear; Siegfried lays two fingers of his right hand upon the spear-point.)*

**Siegfried**

Shining steel, hallowed weapon!  
hold thou my oath in remembrance!  
On this piercing spear-point sworn be my oath:  
spear-point, witness my word!  
If weapon e'er shall pierce me,  
thine be the point;  
whene'er death comes to strike me,  
thine be the stroke.  
if this her tale be true,  
if to my friend I am false!  
*(Brünnhilde strides wrathfully into the ring, tears Siegfried's hand away from the spear, and seizes the point with her own.)*

**Brünnhilde**

Shining steel! Hallowed weapon!  
hold thou my oath in remembrance!  
On this piercing spear-point sworn be my oath:  
spear-point! witness my word!  
Devoted be thy might to his undoing!  
I pray that by thy point he may perish!

for broken are all his vows,  
and falsehood now hath he sworn.

**Vassals**

Help, Donner! Send us thy thunder!  
Help, Donner! Send us thy thunder,  
to silence this crying disgrace!

**Siegfried**

Gunther! Look to the woman  
who lying slanders thy name.  
Grant her rest a while,  
the tameless mountain maid,  
till her unbridled rage be bated,  
that by some demon's evil craft  
here against all hath been roused!  
Ye vassals, turn ye away!  
leave the women to scold!  
Like cravens gladly we yield  
when 'tis a battle of tongues.  
*(He comes close to Gunther.)*  
Sooth, more vexed am I than thou  
that ill was she beguiled;  
the Tarnhelm, by its spell,  
methinks but hid me half.  
But women's spite swiftly is sped:  
that for thee I have won her,  
surely will she yet give thanks.  
*(He turns again to the Vassals.)*  
Follow, ye vassals, blithe to the feast!  
*(to the women)*  
Gaily, women, help at the wedding!  
Let your delight laugh now aloud!  
In house and field freest of light-hearts  
shall ye find me today.  
Ye whom love hath blest,  
gaily share my gladness,  
be ye as blithesome as I!

*(Siegfried, in exuberant merriment, throws his arm around Gutrune and draws her with him away into the hall. The Vassals and Women, carried away by his example, follow him.)*  
*(The stage is cleared. Only Brünnhilde, Gunther and Hagen remain behind. Gunther, with covered face, has seated himself on one side in fearful dejection. Brünnhilde, standing in the foreground, looks for some time sadly after Siegfried and Gutrune, then droops her head.)*

## Scene Five

### Brünnhilde

*(absorbed in meditation)*

What demon's evil craft here lieth hidden?  
 What wizard's hateful spell  
 stirred up this storm?  
 This knot to unravel where is my wisdom?  
 Where shall I discover runes for this riddle?  
 Oh sorrow! Sorrow! Woe's me! Woe's me!  
 All my wisdom gave I to him!  
*(with increasing emotion)*  
 He holds the maid fast by his might;  
 he holds the booty fettered in bondage,  
 whom, wailing for her disgrace,  
 gaily he giveth away!  
 Who lendeth me now the sword  
 wherewith I may sever the bonds?

### Hagen

*(coming close to Brünnhilde)*

Give me thy trust, betrayed wife!  
 I will avenge thy wrong on him.

### Brünnhilde

*(looking around wearily)*

On whom?

### Hagen

On Siegfried, traitor to thee.

### Brünnhilde

On Siegfried? thou?

*(smiling bitterly)*

One single flash from his eye on thee glancing,  
 such as e'en through his lying disguise  
 looming glittered on me,  
 straight would cast dismay over thy daring!

### Hagen

But on my spear-point  
 sworn was his falsehood?

### Brünnhilde

Truth and falsehood, useless are words!  
 With stronger spells seek to arm thy weapon,  
 when at the strongest thou strik'st!

### Hagen

Well know I Siegfried's conquering might,  
 how hard to slay him in battle;

then whisper me now some goodly rede  
 that he before me may fall.

### Brünnhilde

O thankless, shameful return!  
 No single art to me was known  
 but his life is safe through its spell.  
 Unwitting he walks, by my charms enwound,  
 and now they hold him safe from harm.

### Hagen

Then no weapon's point can pierce him?

### Brünnhilde

In battle, none;  
 yet if at his back thou strike!  
 Never that knew I will he give way,  
 nor turn his back upon a foe-man:  
 and there I gave him no blessing.

### Hagen

And there striketh my spear!  
*(He turns quickly from Brünnhilde to Gunther.)*  
 Up Gunther, noble Gibichung!  
 Here stands thy valiant wife:  
 why givst thou way to grief?

### Gunther

*(starting up passionately)*

O shame! O sorrow!  
 Woe is me, of all men living the saddest!

### Hagen

In shame thou liest; truth to tell.

### Brünnhilde

*(to Gunther)*

O craven man! falsest of friends!  
 Hidden behind the hero wert thou,  
 that victory's guerdon he might win thee!  
 Deep had sunk the glorious race  
 that bore such faint-hearts as thou!

### Gunther

*(beyond himself)*

Deceived am I, and deceiver!  
 Betrayed am I, and betrayer!  
 Now crushed be my bones,  
 and broken my heart!  
 Help, Hagen! Help for my honor!  
 Help for thy mother, for thee, too, did she bear!

**Hagen**

Here helps no brain, here helps not a hand,  
nought helps but Siegfried's death!

**Gunther**

*(seized with horror)*  
Siegfried's death!

**Hagen**

Nought else purges thy shame!

**Gunther**

*(staring before him)*  
Blood-brotherhood truly we swore!

**Hagen**

The broken bond blood shall atone!

**Gunther**

Broke he the bond?

**Hagen**

In betraying thee!

**Gunther**

Am I betrayed?

**Brünnhilde**

He betrayed thee;  
and me ye all are betraying!  
Were I but just, all the blood of the world  
could not atone for your guilt!  
But the death of one now shall content me.  
Siegfried falleth atonement for guilt of all!

**Hagen**

*(to Gunther)*  
His downfall  
*(secretly)*  
brings thee gain!  
Might o'er all the world were thine,  
if thou from him win the ring  
that but death will wrest from his hand.

**Gunther**

*(softly)*  
Brünnhilde's ring?

**Hagen**

The Niblung's golden charm.

**Gunther**

*(sighing deeply)*  
Must this be Siegfried's downfall?

**Hagen**

His death will serve us all.

**Gunther**

Yet Gutrune, ah! whom he has wedded!  
How should we stand before her,  
with his blood upon our hands?

**Brünnhilde**

*(starting up in a rage)*  
What redes have told me,  
what runes have shewn me,  
through heart-breaking anguish  
shineth now clear:  
Gutrune is the spell  
*(passionately)*  
whereby my hero was beguiled.  
Ill-fate be hers!

**Hagen**

*(to Gunther)*  
If this dole must be dealt her,  
then hidden be the deed.  
We hie tomorrow merrily hunting;  
the hero, struck by a boar,  
may haply come by his death.

**Gunther**

So shall it be! perish Siegfried!

**Brünnhilde**

So shall it be: perish Siegfried!

**Gunther**

Purged be the shame cast by his crime!

**Hagen**

So shall he fall, the hero so famed!

**Brünnhilde**

Purged be the shame  
cast by his crime!

**Hagen**

Mine is the hoard,  
my hand aye shall hold it.  
My hand aye shall hold it:

from him the ring shall be wrested!  
 Harken, father, thou fallen prince!  
 Night-warder! Nibelung lord!  
 Alberich! Look thou on me!  
 Call now anew on the Nibelung host,  
 bid them obey thee, the lord of the ring!

**Gunther**

The oath of brotherhood hath he broken:

**Brünnhilde**

Holiest vows hath he broken:

**Both**

And with his blood let him atone  
 All-seeing god of revenge!  
 Oath-witness and lord of vows!  
 Wotan! Turn thee to me!  
 Call on thine awful heavenly host,  
 bid them give ear to the vow of revenge!  
*(As Gunther turns impetuously with Brünnhilde to the hall, the bridal procession issuing therefrom meets them. Boys and girls, waving branches of flowers, leap joyously in front. Siegfried on a shield and Gutrune on a seat are borne by the men. On the rising ground at the back men and women-servants take implements and animals for sacrifice by various mountain paths to the altars, which they adorn with flowers. Siegfried and the Vassals sound the wedding call 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. As Brünnhilde is about to step back impetuously, Hagen steps in and forces her toward Gunther, who seizes her again, whereupon he allows himself to be raised on a shield by the Vassals.)*

*(As the procession, scarcely interrupted, quickly puts itself again in motion toward the height, the curtain falls.)*

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**ACT THREE**

**Prelude and Scene One**

*(The curtain rises. A wild, woody and rocky valley on the Rhine, which flows past a steep cliff in the background.)*

*(The three Rhine daughters, Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde, rise to the surface and swim about, circling as in a dance.)*

**The Rhine Daughters**

*(pausing in their swimming)*

Fair sunlight sendeth rays of splendor;  
 night lies in the waters.  
 Bright were they once when through the waves  
 the radiant sun gleamed on the Rhine-gold.  
 Rhine-gold, shining gold,  
 how bright was once thy luster,  
 beauteous star of the waters!

*(They swim about again as in a dance.)*

Weialala, weialala heia leia wallala la  
 heia la la lei la la la la la lei,  
 walla la la la weia la wallala weia la  
 la la wallala la la leia leia leia leia la la!

*(Distant horn call. They listen. They joyously splash in the water.)*

Fair sunlight, send us now the hero,  
 who again our gold shall give us!  
 Let it be ours, then thy bright eye  
 no more will awaken our longing!  
 Rhine-gold! Shining gold,  
 how fair then thy luster,  
 glorious star of the waters!  
*(Siegfried's horn is heard on the heights.)*

**Woglinde**

I hear now his horn.

**Wellgunde**

The hero comes.

**Flosshilde**

Let us take counsel!

*(All three dive down quickly.)*

*(Siegfried appears on the cliff, fully armed.)*



**Siegfried**

Some elf hath led me astray,  
and now the track I have lost.  
Hey, rogue! What rocky cave has hidden so  
quickly my game?  
*(The three Rhine daughters rise to the surface  
and swim as in a dance.)*

**Rhine Daughters**

Siegfried!

**Flosshilde**

Why scold'st thou so at the rocks?

**Wellgunde**

Hath a fairy roused thine ire?

**Woglinde**

Or hath an elf played thee false?

**All Three**

Tell us, Siegfried, speak to us.

**Siegfried**

*(smilingly regarding them)*  
Have ye then lured away  
the shaggy-hided fellow  
whom I have lost?  
Is he your sweetheart?  
then, frolicsome maids, I leave him to you.  
*(The maidens laugh.)*

**Woglinde**

Siegfried, what giv'st thou us,  
if we thy game should grant thee?

**Siegfried**

Nought have I won today:  
so ask of me what ye will!

**Wellgunde**

A golden ring gleams on thy finger:

**Rhine Daughters**

That give us!

**Siegfried**

From a dragon fierce  
I gained the ring in fight,  
and for a worthless bearskin shall I  
give it you now as price?

**Woglinde**

Art thou so mean?

**Wellgunde**

So miserly, too?

**Flosshilde**

Free-handed aye with maids shouldst thou be!

**Siegfried**

On you if I waste my goods,  
belike then my wife will scold.

**Flosshilde**

Is she a shrew?

**Wellgunde**

She strikes perchance?

**Woglinde**

Hath the hero felt her hand?  
*(They laugh immoderately.)*

**Siegfried**

Now laugh ye gaily on!  
In grief will ye be left:  
the ring ye fondly crave  
your mocking never shall win!  
*(The Rhine daughters have again joined hands  
for the dance.)*

**Flosshilde**

So fair!

**Wellgunde**

So strong!

**Woglinde**

So worthy love!

**All Three**

How sad that he a miser is!  
*(They laugh and dive down.)*  
*(Siegfried comes lower down.)*

**Siegfried**

Why must I brook their idle mocks?  
Shall I bear this shame?  
Let them but come to the shore again,  
the ring then would I give them.  
*(calling loudly)*  
Hey! Hey hey!

Ye merry water-maidens!  
 Come now! I grant you the ring!  
*(He has drawn the ring from his finger and holds it on high. The Rhine daughters rise again to the surface. They appear grave and solemn.)*

**Flosshilde**

Then keep it still and ward it well,  
 till thou the ill-fate hast found,

**Woglinde, Welgunde**  
 that in the ring lies hid,

**All Three**

Right fain wilt thou then  
 be freed by us from the curse.

**Siegfried**

*(quietly places the ring again on his finger)*  
 Then sing me what ye know.

**Rhine Daughters**

Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 Evil fate we foresee.

**Wellgunde**

For thine own ill-hap hold'st thou the  
 ring.

**Wellgunde, Flosshilde**

From the Rhine's pure gold

**All Three**

was the ring once wrought:

**Wellgunde**

He who craftily shaped it

**Woglinde**

and lost it in shame,

**Woglinde, Wellgunde**

laid a curse thereon

**All Three**

for time to come,  
 that doometh its lord surely to death.

**Flosshilde**

As thou slew'st the dragon

**Wellgunde, Flosshilde**

shalt thou be slain

**All Three**

and here, today: so now we foretell,  
 if thou the ring wilt not yield

**Wellgunde, Flosshilde**

to rest for aye in the waters.

**All Three**

This stream alone stayeth the curse!

**Siegfried**

Ye wily women, hold your peace!  
 If your craft could not catch me,  
 by your threats still less will ye fright me!

**Rhine Daughters**

Siegfried! Siegfried!  
 We counsel thee well.  
 Turn thee! Turn from the curse!  
 By Norns at dead of night was it  
 woven in the rope of fate's decrees!

**Siegfried**

My sword once shattered a spear:  
 the endless rope of fate's decrees,  
 if in its strands a curse hath been spun,  
 Nothung shall cut it asunder!  
 A dragon once warned me to flee the curse,  
 but yet fear he brought not to me.  
*(He contemplates the ring.)*  
 The world's wealth hath a ring on me bestowed:  
 for the grace of love had it been yours,  
 and by your grace yet were it gained.  
 But when limbs ye threaten and life,  
 e'en tho' a finger outweigh its worth,  
 from me ye wrest not the ring.  
 My limbs and my life, see:  
*(He lifts a clod of earth from the ground, holds it over his head, and with the last words throws it behind him.)*  
 so freely I fling away!

**Rhine Daughters**

Come, sisters!  
 Speed from the madman!  
 Though valiant and wise he seems to himself,  
 though valiant and wise he seems to himself,  
 yet in bonds and in blindness is he!

*(They swim, wildly excited, in wide circles close to the shore.)*

Oaths he plighted, and heedeth them not!

*(Renewed animated movement.)*

Runes he readeth, and recks them not!

**Flosshilde**

A glorious gift once was his own:

**Woglinde**

A glorious gift once was his own:

**All Three**

That he has lost it knows he not;

**Flosshilde**

but the ring,

**Wellgunde**

that will deal him death,

**All Three**

the ring he will not surrender!

Farewell! Siegfried! A woman proud

will this day they wealth inherit;

our prayer by her will be heard:

to her!

*(They turn quickly to their dance, in which they slowly swim away to the back. Siegfried looks after them, smiling, then places one foot on a piece of rock on the shore and stands with his chin resting on his hand.)*

**Rhine Daughters**

Weialala weialala

leia leia wallala la la lei

la la la lei la la la la la lei

*(more and more distant)* walla la la la weia

la walla la weiala la lei wallala

la la leia leia leia leia la la la!

**Siegfried**

Alike on land and water

women's ways I now have learned:

the man who defies their smiles

they seek by threats to frighten;

if then he scorn their threats,

they sting him with scolding tongues!

*(The Rhine daughters have now quite disappeared.)*

And yet, but for my plighted oath,...

*(The Rhine daughters are heard in the far distance.)*

**Rhine Daughters**

La! la!

**Siegfried**

... of these so winsome maids,

full sure had one soon been mine!

*(He looks calmly after them.)*

*(Hunting horns are heard from the heights.)*

**Hagen**

*(far offstage)* Hoiho!

*(Siegfried starts from a dreamy reverie and answers the call with his horn.)*

**Scene Two**

**Vassals**

*(offstage)*

Hoiho?

Hoiho? Hoiho?

**Siegfried**

*(answering)* Hoiho! Hoiho hoihe!

*(Hagen appears on the height. Gunther follows him.)*

**Hagen**

*(seeing Siegfried)*

Found is the place, then,

where thou hast hidden?

**Siegfried**

Come ye down! Here 'tis fresh and cool!

*(The Vassals all come to the height and now come down with Hagen and Gunther.)*

**Hagen**

Here rest we now; make ready the meal!

*(They lay the game in a heap.)*

Lay down the booty,

and bring out the wineskins!

*(Wineskins and drink-horns are produced. All lie down.)*

The game from us he hunted;

be now the wonders told us

of Siegfried and his chase.

**Siegfried**

Ill fares it with my meal:  
to share your booty e'en must I now beg.

**Hagen**

No booty thine?

**Siegfried**

For wood-game went I forth,  
but waterfowl only I found:  
yet had I been fitly furnished,  
a brood of waterbirds to you  
had I brought as booty,  
who sang to my ears ill tidings,  
that slain today should I be.  
*(Gunther starts and looks darkly at Hagen.)*  
*(Siegfried lies down between Gunther and Hagen.)*

**Hagen**

That were an ill-starred chase,  
if a lurking beast should change  
to slay the luckless hunter.

**Siegfried**

I thirst now!

**Hagen**

*(while a drink-horn is filled for Siegfried, which Hagen then offers to him)*  
I heard it rumored, Siegfried,  
that when the birds are singing  
their speech thou dost know:  
can that be the truth?

**Siegfried**

Their singing long have I heeded no more.  
*(He grasps the drink-horn and turns with it to Gunther. He drinks and offers the horn to Gunther.)*  
Drink, Gunther, drink:  
thy brother brings the draught!  
*(Gunther looks into the horn with horror.)*

**Gunther**

*(moodily)*  
The draught is poor and pale:  
*(more gloomily)*  
thy blood alone is there!

**Siegfried**

*(laughing)*

Then let our blood be mingled!  
*(He pours from Gunther's horn into his own so that it overflows.)*  
Now mixed the wine runs over:  
to earth, our mother, a cordial let it be!

**Gunther**

*(with a deep sigh)*  
Thou overjoyous man!

**Siegfried**

*(low, to Hagen)*  
His mirth Brünnhilde mars!

**Hagen**

*(low, to Siegfried)*  
Her voice is not so clear as song of birds to thee!

**Siegfried**

Since women their songs have sung me,  
the birds have I clean forgot.

**Hagen**

Yet once thou heard'st them well?

**Siegfried**

*(turning to Gunther with animation)*  
Hey, Gunther, gloomy man!  
Give me thy thanks,  
and tales of the days of my boyhood will I tell thee.

**Gunther**

My thanks be thine.  
*(All lie down near Siegfried, who alone sits upright.)*

**Hagen**

Now sing to us.

**Siegfried**

Mime, know ye then, was a dwarf:  
he had fostered me, driven by greed,  
that, grown to strength, for him I might slay  
in the wood a dragon grim,  
who lay there guarding a hoard.  
So smithing he taught me  
and forging sword blades;

the task the craftsman ne'er could achieve,  
 the learner's cunning yet had to master:  
 out of a shattered weapon's splinters,  
 new to fashion a sword.  
 My father's blade forged I anew.  
 Ne'er was steel stronger than Nothung.  
 Fit for the fight then it was deemed;  
 together we sought the wood:  
 there slew I Fafner, the foe.  
 Now let your ears heed well my tale:  
 marvels have I to tell you.  
 From the dragon's blood  
 my fingers were burning;  
 I raised them straight to my mouth:  
 but when the blood scarce  
 had wetted my tongue,  
 then what the birds were singing  
 I seemed to hear like speech.  
 On a branch one sat there and sang:  
 "Hei! Siegfried now owneth  
 the Nibelung's hoard,  
 if hid in the cavern the hoard he finds!  
 Let him but win him the Tarnhelm,  
 'twill serve him for deeds of renown:  
 but could he discover the ring,  
 it would make him the lord of the world!"

**Hagen**

Ring and Tarnhelm took'st thou away?

**A Vassal**

Again then heard'st thou the woodbird?

**Siegfried**

Ring and Tarnhelm when I had seized,  
 then once again I gave ear to the warbler;  
 he sat above me and sang:  
 "Hei! Siegfried,  
 now owneth the helm and the ring.  
 Oh, let him not trust  
 to the falsest of friends!  
 for Mime too covets the hoard  
 and now craftily lurks on the road:  
 to his death he lureth on Siegfried:  
 let Siegfried trust not in Mime!"

**Hagen**

The warning was good?

**Four Vassals**

Got Mime his payment?

**Siegfried**

With murderous drink he came to my side;  
 shy and shaking, he told me his falseness:  
 Nothung paid him his wage!

**Hagen**

*(laughing harshly)*

He forged not the sword yet soon did he feel it!  
*(He has another drink-horn filled and drops the  
 juice of an herb into it.)*

**A Vassal**

What more didst hear from the woodbird?

**Another Vassal**

What more didst hear from the woodbird?

**Hagen**

Drink first, hero, from my horn:  
 I mixed thee a noble draught,  
 that its magic may wake thy remembrance,  
*(He offers Siegfried the horn.)*  
 and old times may not escape thee!  
*(Siegfried looks thoughtfully into the horn and  
 then drinks slowly.)*

**Siegfried**

In grief to the branches gazed I aloft;  
 there still he sat and sang:  
 "Hei! Siegfried hath struck down the evil dwarf!  
 Now know I for him a glorious bride:  
 on rocky fastness she sleeps,  
 guarded by fire is her home:  
 who fighteth the flames, wakens the maid,  
 Brünnhilde wins for his own!"

**Hagen**

The woodbird's counsel didst thou follow?

**Siegfried**

Straight, without pause I hied me away:  
*(Gunther listens with increasing astonishment.)*  
 till the flaming fell I reached:  
 I passed through its fire and found for prize,  
*(sinking more and more into a state of ecstasy)*  
 sleeping, a woman fair,  
 all clad in glittering mail.  
 The helm I loosed from the glorious maid,  
 my kiss awoke her from sleep:  
 ah, then like flames of fire  
 enfolded me beauteous Brünnhilde's arms!

**Gunther**

*(springing up in greatest dismay)*  
What saith he?

*(Two ravens fly up out of a bush, circle over Siegfried, and then fly away toward the Rhine.)*

**Hagen**

Those raven's speech! canst thou read it aright?  
*(Siegfried stands up suddenly and, turning his back to Hagen, looks after the ravens.)*

Vengeance is their decree!

*(Hagen thrusts his spear into Siegfried's back. Gunther and the Vassals rush toward Hagen. Siegfried swings his shield on high with both hands, as though to throw it upon Hagen: his force fails him, the shield falls backward, and he himself falls down on the shield.)*

**Four Vassals**

*(who have in vain tried to hold Hagen back)*  
Hagen, what dost thou?

**Two other Vassals**

What deed is that?

**Gunther**

Hagen, what deed is that?

**Hagen**

Falsehood's payment!

*(Hagen turns quietly away and then is seen through the gathering twilight slowly moving up the height, over which he disappears. Gunther bends down, stricken with grief, at Siegfried's side. The Vassals stand around the dying man, filled with sympathy.)*

**Siegfried**

*(held by two Vassals in a sitting position, opens his eyes)*

Brünnhilde! Holiest bride!

Awake! Lift up thine eyelids!

Who hath locked thee once more in sleep?

Who bound thee in slumber so fast?

Thy wak'ner came: he kissed thee awake,  
again now the bridge's bonds hath he broken:  
now laughs to him Brünnhild's delight.

Ah! those eyes ever now open!

Ah, what enchantment wafteth her breathing!

Blissful surrender, sweet are they terrors!

Brünnhild' greeteth me there!

*(He sinks back and dies. The rest stand around him in sorrow without moving.)*

*(Night has come. At Gunther's mute command the Vassals raise Siegfried's corpse and, during the following, carry it away in solemn procession over the height. Gunther follows at a little distance.)*

*(The moon breaks through the clouds and lights up the funeral procession more and more brightly as it reaches the height. Mists have arisen from the Rhine and gradually fill the whole stage, where the funeral procession has become invisible: they come quite to the front, so that the whole stage remains hidden during the musical interlude.)*

*(From this point the mists divide again, until at length the hall of the Gibichungs appears, as in Act One.)*

**Scene Three**

*(It is night. The moonlight is reflected from the Rhine. Guttrune comes out from her room into the hall.)*

**Guttrune**

Was that his horn?

*(She listens.)*

No! He cometh not yet.

Dreams of evil drove away my sleep.

Then wildly neighs his horse;

Brünnhild's laughter in waking I heard.

What woman was't

that to the shore I saw go down!

I shrink from Brünnhild'. Is she within?

*(She listens at the door to the right and calls:)*

Brünnhild'! Brünnhild'! Art awake?

*(She opens the door hesitatingly and looks into the inner room.)*

Bare is her room. Then it was she  
who to the river shore went down?

*(Horn on the stage, distant.)*

Was that his horn? No! All silent!

*(She looks anxiously out.)*

Would but Siegfried return!

**Hagen**

*(from offstage, coming nearer)*

Hoiho! Hoiho!

*(As Gutrune hears Hagen's voice she stands for a time motionless with fear.)*

Awake! Awake!

Torches, torches, burning torches!

Home bring we spoils of our hunt.

Hoiho! Hoiho!

*(Increasing fire-glow from offstage. Hagen enters the hall.)*

Up, Gutrun'! Give Siegfried greeting!

Thy hero bold now cometh home.

**Gutrune**

*(in great terror)*

What befell? Hagen! I heard not his horn!

*(Men and women in great confusion, with lights and firebrands, accompany the procession returning home with Siegfried's body.)*

**Hagen**

Thy pale-faced hero will wind it no more;  
to fight or to hunt no more will he hie,  
no more will he woo winsome women.

**Gutrune**

*(with growing horror)*

What bring hey here?

*(The procession reaches the middle of the hall, and the Vassals set down the body on a hastily raised mound.)*

**Hagen**

'Tis a boar's ill-fated victim:

Siegfried, thy husband, slain.

*(Gutrune shrieks out and falls upon the corpse. General horror and mourning. Gunther tends Gutrune.)*

**Gunther**

Gutrun', gentle sister,

look thou upon me, speak but to me!

**Gutrune**

*(coming to herself again.)*

Siegfried ... Siegfried is murdered!

*(She pushes Gunther back violently.)*

Hence! hence, faithless brother!

'tis thou hast slain my husband,

Oh help me! Help me! Sorrow! Sorrow!

My hero, Siegfried, is murdered!

**Gunther**

Cast not the blame on me,

cast there the blame on Hagen.

He is the accursed traitor

by whom this hero was slain.

**Hagen**

Art therefor wroth with me?

**Gunther**

Grief and ill-fate thine be forever!

**Hagen**

*(stepping forward with terrible defiance)*

Yes then! 'Tis I that did slay him.

I, Hagen, dealt him his death.

To my spear was he decreed,

whereon his false oath was sworn.

Holiest heritage have I by right now won me:

Therefore I claim here this ring.

**Gunther**

Away! What I have won,

that thou shalt ne'er make thine!

**Hagen**

Ye vassals, give me my right.

**Gunther**

Graspest thou Gutrune's dower,

shameless Niblung son?

*(Hagen draws his sword.)*

**Hagen**

The Niblung's dower so his son doth seize.

*(He rushes upon Gunther, who defends himself; they fight. The Vassals throw themselves between. Gunther falls dead from a stroke of Hagen's.)*

Mine, the ring!

*(He grasps at Siegfried's hand, which raises itself threateningly. Gutrune shrieks with horror as Gunther falls. All remain motionless with terror.)*

*(From the background Brünnhilde advances firmly and solemnly to the front.)*

**Brünnhilde***(still in the background)*

Silence your sorrow's clamorous cry!  
Whom ye all have betrayed,  
for vengeance cometh his wife.  
*(as she quietly comes farther forward)*  
Children heard I whining to their mother  
because sweet milk had been spilled:  
yet heard I not lament that befitteth  
the highest hero's fame.

**Gutrune***(raising herself from the ground)*

Brünnhilde! Envy-cursed one!  
Thou hast on us brought this bane,  
for thou didst rouse the men against him;  
woe, that to this house thou cam'st!

**Brünnhilde**

Ill-starred one, peace!  
for ne'er wert thou wife of his;  
his leman alone hast thou been.  
His manhood's bride am I:  
to me all his vows had been sworn  
ere Siegfried looked on thy face!

**Gutrune***(breaking out in sudden despair)*

Accursed Hagen! that thou the poison gav'st  
that has stol'n her husband away!  
Ah, sorrow! Mine eyes are opened,  
Brünnhild' was the true love  
whom through the drink he forgot!  
*(Full of shame, she has turned away from  
Siegfried and bends over Gunther's body in a  
dying condition; so she remains, motionless, till  
the end. Hagen stands, defiantly leaning on his  
spear, sunk in gloomy brooding, on the opposite  
side.)*  
*(Brünnhilde alone in the center: after remaining  
long absorbed in contemplation of Siegfried, she  
turns now to the men and women with solemn  
exaltation.)*

**Brünnhilde***(to the Vassals)*

Mighty logs I bid you now pile  
on high by the river shore!  
Bright and fierce kindle a fire;  
let the noblest hero's  
corse in its flames be consumed.

His steed bring to me here,  
that with me his lord he may follow:  
for my body burneth with holiest longing my  
hero's honor to share.

Fulfill Brünnhild's behest.

*(During the following, the young men raise a  
huge funeral pyre of logs before the hall, near the  
bank of the Rhine: women decorate this with  
coverings on which they strew plants and  
flowers.)**(Brünnhilde becomes again absorbed in con-  
templation of Siegfried's dead face. Her features  
take gradually a softer and brighter expression.)*

Like rays of sunshine streameth his light:

the purest was he, who hath betrayed!

In wedlock traitor, true in friendship;

from his heart's own true love,

only beloved one,

barred was he by his sword.

Truer than his were oaths ne'er spoken;

faithful as he, none ever held promise;

purer than his, love ne'er was plighted:

Yet oaths hath he scorned,

bonds hath he broken,

the faithfullest love none so hath betrayed!

Know ye why that was?

*(looking upward)*

Oh ye, of vows the heavenly guardians!

Turn now your eyes on my grievous distress;

behold your eternal disgrace!

To my plaint give ear, thou mighty god!

Through his most valiant deed,

by thee so dearly desired,

didst thou condemn him to endure

the doom that on thee had fallen;

he, truest of all, must betray me,

that wise a woman might grow!

Know I now all thy need?

All things, all things, all now know I.

All to me is revealed.

Wings of thy ravens wave around me;

with tidings long desired,

I send now thy messengers home.

Rest thou, rest thou, o god!

*(She makes a sign to the Vassals to lift Siegfried's  
body onto the pyre; at the same time she  
draws the ring from Siegfried's finger and looks  
at it meditatively.)*

My heritage yields now the hero.

Accursed charm! Terrible ring!



My hand grasps thee, and gives thee away.  
 Ye sisters wise who dwell in the waters,  
 give ear, ye sorrowing Rhine maids,  
 good counsel lives in your redes:  
 what ye desire I leave to you:  
 now from my ashes take ye your treasure!  
 Let fire, burning this hand,  
 cleanse, too, the ring from its curse!  
 Ye in the flood, wash it away,  
 and purer preserve your shining gold  
 that to your sorrow was stol'n.

*(She has put the ring on her finger and now turns to the pile of logs on which Siegfried's body lies stretched. She takes a great firebrand from one of the men.)*

*(waving the firebrand and pointing to the background)*

Fly home, ye ravens! tell your lord the tidings  
 that here on the Rhine ye have learned!  
 To Brünnhilde's rock first wing your flight!  
 there burneth Loge:  
 straight way bid him to Walhall!

For the end of godhood draweth now near.

So cast I the brand

on Walhall's glittering walls.

*(She flings the brand on the woodpile, which quickly breaks out into bright flames. Two ravens fly up from the rock and disappear in the background.)*

*(Brünnhilde perceives her horse, which has just been led in by two men.)*

Grane, my steed, I greet thee, friend!

*(She has sprung toward him, seizes and unbridles him: then she bends affectionately toward him.)*

Know'st thou now to whom  
 and whither I lead thee?

In fire radiant, lies there thy lord,  
 Siegfried, my hero blest.

To follow thy master, joyfully neigh'st thou?

Lures thee to him the light with its laughter?

Feel, too, my bosom, how it doth burn;  
 glowing flames now lay hold on my heart:

fast to enfold him, embraced by his arms,  
 in might of our loving with him aye made one!

Heiajaho! Grane! Give him thy greeting!

*(She has swung herself on the horse and urges it to spring forward.)*

Siegfried! Siegfried! See!

Brünnhild' greets thee in bliss.

*(She makes her horse 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 appear to seize on the building itself. The men and women press to the front in terror.)*

*(As the whole space of the stage seems filled with fire, the glow suddenly subsides, so that only a cloud of smoke remains, which is drawn to the background and there lies on the horizon as a dark bank of cloud. At the same time the Rhine overflows its banks in a mighty flood which rolls over the fire. On the waves the three Rhine daughters swim forward and now appear on the place of the fire.)*

*(Hagen, who since the incident of the ring has observed Brünnhilde's behavior with growing anxiety, is seized with great alarm at the appearance of the Rhine daughters. He hastily throws spear, shield and helmet from him and rushes, as if mad, into the flood.)*

### **Hagen**

Give back the ring!

*(Woglinde and Wellgunde embrace his neck with their arms and draw him with them into the depths as they swim away. Flosshilde, swimming in front of the others toward the back, holds up the regained ring joyously.)*

*(Through the bank of clouds which lie on the horizon a red glow breaks forth with increasing brightness. Illumined by this light, the three Rhine daughters are seen, swimming in circles, merrily playing with the ring on the calmer waters of the Rhine, which has gradually returned to its natural bed.)*

*(From the ruins of the fallen hall, the men and women, in the greatest agitation, look on the growing firelight in the heavens. As this at length glows with the greatest brightness, the interior of Walhall is seen, in which the gods and heroes sit assembled, as in Waltraute's description in the first act.)*

*(Bright flames appear to seize on the hall of the gods. As the gods become entirely hidden by the flames, the curtain falls.)*

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## Glossary

aye — always, forever  
 bane — poison; misfortune  
 belike — probably  
 corse — corpse  
 craven — coward  
 dole — sorrow, grief  
 dross — metal  
 fain — gladly, willingly  
 fell — a barren hill or highland  
 Gibich — father of Gunther and Gutrune  
 Gibichung — child of Gibich (i.e., Gunther or Gutrune)  
 Grane — the name of Brünnhilde's horse  
 grave — to engrave  
 Grimhild — mother of Gunther, Gutrune, and Hagen  
 guerdon — payment, reward  
 haft — handle (of a spear)  
 hap — to happen  
 haply — by chance, perhaps  
 Hella — goddess of the underworld  
 hie — to hurry  
 Holda — another name for Freia  
 leman — mistress, concubine  
 Neidhöhle — name of the cave where Fafner was slain  
 Norn — a goddess of fate  
 Nothung — name of Siegfried's sword  
 plaint — lament, complaint  
 plight — to pledge  
 ravening — devouring  
 reck — to care, be concerned  
 rede — advice; story  
 reft — stolen, deprived  
 rend — to tear apart  
 riven — broken up  
 rune — secret  
 sere — dry, withered  
 shew — to show  
 shiver — to shatter  
 sooth — truth  
 stint — restraint  
 thrall — slave; slavery  
 troth — faith  
 Walhall — Valhalla  
 Walsung — child of Wälse (Siegfried's parents)

are Wälsungs)  
 ween — to imagine, believe  
 wot — to know  
 wroth — angry