

SIEGFRIED

by Richard Wagner

Characters

SIEGFRIED (tenor)
BRÜNNHILDE (soprano)
THE WANDERER, Wotan in disguise (bass-baritone)
MIME (tenor)
ALBERICH (bass-baritone)
FAFNER (bass)
ERDA (contralto)
THE WOODBIRD (soprano)

ACT ONE

Prelude and Scene One

(A rocky cavern in a forest containing a naturally formed smith's forge with large bellows. Mime sits at the anvil in front, busily hammering at a sword.)

Mime

(stops working)

Heartbreaking bondage! Toil without end!
The strongest sword that ever I forged
for the hands of giants fit would be found:
but he it was made for, the insolent boy there,
he strikes and snaps it to bits,
as though I toiled for his sport!

(Mime throws the sword on the anvil in ill humor, puts his arms akimbo, and gazes meditatively on the ground.)

There is a sword that he could not shatter:
Nothung's fragments he would not defy
if I could forge the mighty pieces
that all my craft knows not how to weld!
Could I but shape the weapon,
I should win the wage of my shame!

(He sinks further back and bends his head in thought.)

Fafner, the dragon grim,
dwelleth in darksome lair;

with his mighty and monstrous bulk
the Nibelung's gold there doth he hold.
Siegfried's childish strength

right well would lay Fafner low:
the Nibelung's ring I trow then were mine.
But one sword boots for the blow;
'tis Nothung serveth my need,
in Siegfried's conquering hand:
and I cannot forge it,
Nothung, the sword!

(He has taken up the sword again and goes on hammering it in the deepest dejection.)

Heart-breaking bondage! Toil without end!
The strongest sword that ever I forged
will never serve for the one only deed!
I tinker and hammer only
because he commands;
he strikes and snaps it to bits,
and scolds me, work as I will!

(He drops the hammer.)

(Siegfried, in a rough forester's dress, with a silver horn hung by a chain, comes in boisterously from the wood. He leads a large bear by a rope of bast, and drives him in wanton merriment toward Mime.)

Siegfried

(still outside)

Hoiho!

(entering)

Hoiho! come on! come on!

Tear him! tear him, the tinkersmith!

(Mime drops the sword in terror and flies behind the forge. Siegfried drives the bear everywhere after him.)

(laughing)

Hahaha hahaha
hahaha hahaha hahaha ha!

Mime

Hence with the beast! I want not the bear!

Siegfried

I come double, the better to catch thee:
Bruin! ask for the sword!

Mime

Hey! let him go! There lies the weapon;
finished was it today.

Siegfried

Today then goest thou free!
*(He lets the bear loose and gives him a stroke
on the back with the rope.)*
Off, Bruin! I want thee no more.
*(The bear runs back to the wood; Mime comes
trembling from behind the forge.)*

Mime

I give thee leave the bears to slaughter,
but why dost bring me the beasts alive?
*(Siegfried sits down to recover from his
laughter.)*

Siegfried

For better companions seeking
than the one who sits at home,
in forest glades with my horn-calls
I set the echoes ringing:
if perchance they would find me
a faithful friend,
I sought with sounding tones!
From the bushes came a bear,
who growling gave ear to me;
and he pleased me better than thou,
but better yet shall I find!
With the trusty rope I bridled him there,
to ask thee, rogue, for the weapon.
(He springs up and goes toward the anvil.)
*(Mime takes up the sword to give it to
Siegfried.)*

Mime

I made the weapon sharp,
and its edge will gladden thy heart.
*(He holds the sword timidly in his hand;
Siegfried violently snatches from him.)*

Siegfried

What matters how sharp the weapon,
if not hard and true the steel?
(testing the sword)
Hei! what an idle toy is here!
This paltry pin call'st thou a sword?
*(He strikes it on the anvil so that the splinters fly
about. Mime shrinks with fear.)*
There hast thou the pieces, basest of bunglers!
Would that the blade on thy skull had broken!
Shall such a boaster brag to me longer?
Prat'st thou of giants and boldness in battles,
of valiant deeds and of dauntless defense?
Wouldst fashion me weapons,
swords wouldst weld me;
lauding thy craft as though it were true?
yet, if I handle what thou hast hammered,
a single handgrip crushes the trash!
Were not the wretch too vile for my wrath,
I would fling in the fire
the smith and his work,
the doting half-witted imp!
My loathing would then have an end!
*(Siegfried in a rage throws himself on a stone
seat. Mime has cautiously kept out of his way.)*

Mime

Again thou ravest like mad:
how thankless, child, art thou!
If for the graceless boy
all I do be not the best,
the goodly things I gave
at once are all forgot!
Wilt thou then ne'er remember
how boys should aye be thankful?
Right gladly shouldst thou obey him
who always shewed thee such love.
*(Siegfried ill-humoredly turns his back on
Mime, remaining with his face to the wall.)*
Now thou again will not hear me!
(He stands perplexed, then goes to the hearth.)
But hungry must thou be!
Come try the meat I have roasted:
or wilt thou not taste the broth?
For thee all has been cooked.
*(He brings food to Siegfried who, without
turning around, strikes both bowl and meat
from his hand.)*

Siegfried

Meat I roast for myself:
and thy pap go drink alone!

Mime

(in a wailing voice)

This is now my love's most grievous wage!
this the shameful pay for my pains!
A whimpering babe, brought I thee up,
warmly I clothed the tiny mite:
food, too, and drink gave I to thee,
sheltered thee safe as my very self.
As then thou didst grow I waited on thee,
and soft for thy slumber I made thy bed.
I forged for thee toys and a sounding horn;
aye for thy good gladly I worked:
my crafty counsels sharpened thy wits,
my shining wisdom lightened thine eyes.
Sitting at home I moil and toil,
to heart's content roam'st thou abroad:
for thee aye in trouble, in pain but for thee,
I wear myself out, a poor old dwarf!

(sobbing)

And for my worry is this all my wage,
that the passionate boy only hates me
and scolds?

(Siegfried has turned around again and has steadily watched Mime's face. Mime meets Siegfried's look and tries to hide the fear in his own.)

Siegfried

Much hast taught to me, Mime,
and many things have I learned;
but what thou most fain hadst taught me,
that lesson I ne'er could learn:
how to endure thy sight.
When with my food and drink thou dost come,
my loathing feeds me alone;
when for my sleep thou makest my bed,
no slumber comes to me there;
if from thy teaching wisdom be won,
fain were I deaf and dull.
If with my eyes I but look on thee,
too evil appeareth whatever thou dost.
I see thee stand, shamble and slink,
crawling and nodding,
with thine eyelids blinking:
by the throat I long to catch the crawler
and crush thy life out, thou loathsome nodder!

So learned I, Mime, to love thee.

Hast thou such wisdom? give me to know then
a thing that in vain I sought:
in the woods roaming, seeking to shun thee,
how comes it I ever return?

All the beasts to me are dearer than thou:
trees and birds and the fish in the brook,
truly I love them far better than thee:
how comes it I ever return?

Art thou wise, then tell me this.

Mime

(attempts to approach him confidently)

My child, that shews thee clearly how dear to
thy heart I have grown.

Siegfried

I cannot bear to see thee,
forget not that so soon.

(Mime goes back and again sits apart, opposite Siegfried.)

Mime

That comes from thy froward heart,
which the boy should try to tame.

Young ones are ever longing
after their parents' nest;

love begetteth the longing:

so yearnest thou too for me,

so too dost thou love thy Mime,

so must thou aye love him!

All that mother-bird is to birdling,

when in the nest it lies,

ere the fledgling can flutter:

such to thee, childish mite,

is clever, careful old Mime,

such must he, too, be!

Siegfried

Ei, Mime, art thou so clever,
then let thy wisdom yet teach me!

(simply)

The birdlings were singing so gladly in spring,

(tenderly)

the one was luring the other,

thou saidst thyself, when I asked thee there,

that they were wives with their husbands.

They chattered so fondly, and ne'er flew apart;

they built them a nest, and brooded therein:

then fluttered the weak little fledglings out,
and both took care of the brood.

So lay in the woods the roe-deer in pairs,
 e'en savage wolves and foxes:
 food was brought to the lair by the father,
 the mother suckled the young ones:
 and there I learned what love must be:
 I ne'er took the whelps from the mother's care.
 Where has thou now, Mime,
 the wife whom thou lovest,
 that I may call her mother?

Mime

(angrily)

What dost thou ask, fool that thou art?
 Art thou either wood-fowl or fox?

Siegfried

A whimpering child,
 brought'st thou me up,
 warmly thou clothed'st the tiny mite:
 whence came to thee then the childish mite?
 A motherless babe hast thou made alone?

Mime

(in great embarrassment)

Thou must trust whatever I tell thee:
 I am thy father and mother in one.

Siegfried

Thou liest, thou loathsomest imp!
 How all young ones are like the parents,
 right well have I seen for myself.
 I came to the limpid stream:
 there I looked on the trees and forest creatures;
 sun and shadows, e'en as they are,
 I saw there below in the brook.
 And there in the stream I saw my face;
 but not like to thine looked it to me:
 so like to a toad were a glittering fish;
 yet fish ne'er had toad for a father.

Mime

(much vexed)

Pitiful nonsense pratest thou there!

Siegfried

(with growing animation)

Look thou, I grasp myself the thing
 that so oft I pondered in vain:
 when through woods afar I roam to escape thee,
 why to thee still I return.
(He springs up.)

'Tis thou alone who canst tell me
 what father and mother are mine!

Mime

What father? What mother?

Idlest of questions!

(Siegfried springs upon Mime and seizes him by the throat.)

Siegfried

Then so must I grip thee,
 knowledge to gain me:
 nought tellest thou me from goodwill!
 All thus by blows must I win from thee:
 even speech I ne'er should have learned,
 had I wrung it not by force from the wretch!
 Now tell me, thou rascally rogue!
 Who are my father and mother?

Mime

(who is released by Siegfried, after making signs with his head and his hands)

Almost hast killed me outright!
 Let go! and of what thou dost ask,
 I'll tell thee all that I know.
 O hard-hearted and thankless boy!
 now hear, wherefor thou dost hate me!
 Father I am not, nor kin to thee,
 and yet thou dost owe me thy life!
 A stranger to me, thy one only friend;
 thro' my pity alone sheltered wert thou:
 and now thou pay'st me my wage!
 Fool was I to hope for reward.
 I found once in the wood
 a woman who lay in tears:
 I helped her thence to the cave:
 and warmed her here at the fire.
 A child bore she in secret;
 sadly she gave it birth;
 she writhed her to and fro,
 I helped as best I could:
 strong was the stress!
 She died: but Siegfried came to life

Siegfried

So died my mother through me?

Mime

To my charge she gave o'er the child:
(Siegfried stands thinking.)
 I gladly sheltered thee.

What care did Mime bestow!
 what worry his goodness endured!
A whimpering babe, brought I thee up...

Siegfried

Full oft hast thou told me that tale!
 Now say: why call'st thou me Siegfried?

Mime

Thy mother commanded
 so should I call thee;
 as "Siegfried" shouldst thou
 grow strong and fair.
And warmly I clothed the tiny mite...

Siegfried

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

Mime

Her name I hardly know!
Food, too, and drink gave I to thee...

Siegfried

(with animation)
 The name I bid thee to tell me!

Mime

I trow 'tis forgot. Yet stay!
 Sieglinde 'twas, I bethink me,
 who grieving gave thee to me.
I sheltered thee safe as my very self...

Siegfried

(with increasing urgency)
 I ask, then, who was my father?

Mime

(roughly)
 His face I ne'er have seen!

Siegfried

But his name my mother hath spoken?

Mime

He fell in fighting was all that she said;
 she left thee, fatherless babe, here to me:
*as then thou didst grow, I waited on thee;
 and soft for thy slumber I made thy bed...*

Siegfried

Still, with thy endless starling-song!
 If I may trust thy story,
 if aught but lies thou speakest,
 then let a proof be shewn!

Mime

What proof then can I shew thee?

Siegfried

I trust thee not with my ears,
 I trust thee but with my eyes:
 what witness speaks for thee?
*(After some thought Mime fetches the two pieces
 of a broken sword.)*

Mime

This once thy mother gave me:
 for trouble, food and service,
 this was my sorry wage.
 Look thou, 'tis a broken sword!
 Thy father, said she, had borne it,
 when at last in fight he was slain.

Siegfried

(with enthusiasm)
 And now these fragments straight
 shalt thou forge me:
 then won were my rightful sword!
 Up! Hasten thee, Mime! Quickly to work!
 Master art thou? then shew me thy craft!
 Cheat me no more with bootless trash:
 these fragments alone henceforth I trust!
 If I should find flaw in thy work,
 if thou play tricks with the trusty steel,
 with blows thy limbs all shall ache
 and learn what burnishing means!
 This day, I swear,
 mine shall yet be the sword;
 the weapon I win me today!

Mime

(alarmed)
 What wouldst thou today with the sword?

Siegfried

From the wood forth will I wander:
 nevermore to return!
 Gladness fills me for my freedom,
 nothing binds me nor holds.
 My father art thou not;

far away I seek my home;
 thy hearth is not my house,
 nor my roof thy rocky cave.
 As the fish fleetly in flood swims,
 as the finch freely in sky soars:
 so hence I fly, floating away,
 like the wind o'er the woods wafted afar;
 thee, Mime, I ne'er more will see!
(He runs into the forest.)

Mime

(in great alarm) Siegfried!
 Whither? Whither? Stay here!
(With greatest exertion he calls toward the wood.)
 Hey! Siegfried! Siegfried! Hey!
(He looks after Siegfried for a time in astonishment.)
(He returns to the smithy and seats himself behind the anvil.)
 There storms he hence! And I sit here:
 to all old cares comes yet a new one;
 now fairly caught am I fast!
 How help myself now? How hold him by me?
 How lead this young madcap to Fafner's lair?
 How forge me the splinters of spiteful steel?
 No furnace fire serves me to fuse them,
 nor can Mime's hammer
 conquer their hardness:
(shrilly)
 the Nibelung's hate,
 need and sweat cannot make Nothung whole,
 weld not the sword
(sobbing)
 e'er anew!
(He sinks in despair onto a stool behind the anvil.)

Scene Two

(The Wanderer comes in from the forest by the door at the back of the cave. He wears a long, dark blue cloak and carries a spear as a staff. On his head is a hat with a broad, round brim which hangs low down.)

Wanderer

All hail, worthy smith!
 To way-wearied guest
 grant thou grace of house and hearth!

Mime

(starting up in alarm)
 Who is't that doth seek me here in the woods?
 Who pursues me in forest wastes?

Wanderer

(coming nearer, step by step)
 "Wand' rer", so am I called;
 far led me my way:
 on the earth's broad back full
 long have I roamed.

Mime

Then take thyself hence and tarry not here,
 if thou "Wand' rer" art called!

Wanderer

Good men ever gave me welcome,
 gifts from many have I gained:
 for evil hearts only fear ill-fate.

Mime

Ill-fate dwelleth always with me:
 wouldst bring yet more to the Niblung?

Wanderer

(coming nearer, step by step)
 Ever seeking, full much I found:
 oft my words have taught men wisdom,
 oft they lightened weary sorrows,
 gnawing of heart's distress.

Mime

Well hast thou sought,
 and full much hast thou found;
 I want neither seeker nor finder.
 Lonely am I and lone would be,
 loiterers harbor not here.

Wanderer

(again coming a little nearer)
 Many weened that wisdom was theirs,
 yet all their need they never have known;
 when they questioned, freely I answered:
 wisdom came with my word.

Mime

(getting more and more anxious as he sees the Wanderer approach)

Idle knowledge many seek for:

I know enough for myself;

(The Wanderer reaches the hearth.)

and my wits are good, I want no more,
so, wise one, wend now thy way!

Wanderer

(sitting at the hearth)

I sit at thy hearth and wager my head
as stake in strife of our wits.

My head is thine, won fairly by thee,
if, when thou dost ask all thy want,

I free it not by my word.

*(Mime, who has been staring at the Wanderer
with open mouth, now shrinks back.)*

Mime

(aside, faint-heartedly)

How can I be rid of the spy?

Right crafty must be my questions.

(He tries to collect his courage.)

(aloud)

Thy head stak'st thou for the hearth:

give heed by cunning to save it!

Thrice my questions freely I ask!

Wanderer

Thrice then must I answer.

Mime

(sets himself to meditation)

Full long on this earth's rugged back

hast wandered,

and far hast walked o'er the world:

now tell me in sooth: what is the race
dwelling in earth's deep caverns?

Wanderer

In the earth's deep caverns

dwell the Niblung race:

Nibelheim is their land.

Black elves all are they;

Black-Alberich ruled o'er them once
as their lord!

By a magic ring's all-powerful spell
tamed were the hard-toiling folk:
richest treasure, shimmering gold
heaped they on high,

to win him the world as his kingdom.
what further, dwarf, wouldst thou ask?

Mime

(sinks into deeper meditation)

Much, Wanderer, knowest thou

and canst tell of earth's deep caves:

now say to me straight, what is the race
dwelling on earth's wide surface?

Wanderer

On the earth's wide surface

dwell the giants' race:

Riesenheim is their land,

Fasolt and Fafner, the giants' rulers,

envied the Nibelung's might,

and his far-famed hoard

they won for themselves,

thereto they gained them the ring.

Between the brothers the ring brought strife;

struck down was Fasolt: in dragon's shape

Fafner now guardeth the hoard.

One question threatens me yet.

Mime

(quite absorbed in thought)

Much, Wanderer, knowest thou

of the earth and all her dwellers.

Now true be thy word! tell me what race

dwells on cloud-hidden heights?

Wanderer

On cloud-hidden heights

dwell the Eternals: Walhall is their home.

Light spirits are they;

Light-Alberich, Wotan, commandeth their band.

From the world-ash-tree's hallowed branches

once he shaped him a shaft:

fades the stem, never faileth the spear;

and with the spear-point rules Wotan the world.

Holiest treaties' truthful runes

deep in the shaft he cut.

He holds the world's haft in his hand,

who the spear wields

that Wotan's fingers grasp:

now kneels to him the Niblung host;

the giants' race bow to his will:

ever they all must obey him,

the spear's all-potent lord.

*(He strikes the spear as if by accident on the
ground. A low sound of thunder is heard at*

which Mime is violently startled.)

Now tell me, crafty dwarf,
found are the answers true?

And may now my head go free?

(Mime, after attentively watching the Wanderer with the spear, now falls into a state of terror, seeks in confusion for his tools, and looks nervously aside.)

Mime

Wager and head well hast thou won:
now, Wand'rer, go on thy way!

Wanderer

What it boots thee to know,
shouldst thou have asked me:
gage for my word was my head.
Yet of thy need thou knewest nought;
I therefore claim thine now as pledge.
Greeting fair grantedst thou me not;
my head into thy hand I gave
to gain me rest at thy hearth.
By wager's law, lost is thine own,
shouldst thou not answer thrice what I ask.
So waken now, Mime, thy wits!

Mime

(very timidly and hesitatingly, at length composing himself, with nervous submission)

Long since left I my fatherland,
long since came I from my mother's womb:
on me lightened the eye of Wotan,
and peered here into my cave:
his glance wilders my mother-wit.
But now let my wisdom be tried,
Wand'rer, ask what thou wilt!
Good luck haply may help me;
the dwarf may save his head.

Wanderer

(again leisurely seating himself)

Now, worthiest dwarf, answer me truly.
Tell the name of the race
that Wotan harshly handles
(very softly, but audibly)
and yet holds most dear in the world.

Mime

(becoming more cheerful)

Much I know not of heroes' kinship;
that riddle yet lightly I read.

The Wälsungs should be the chosen race
that Wotan fostered and loved so dearly,
scant tho' the grace he grants.

Siegmund and Sieglind', children of Wälse,
a wild and desperate twin-born pair:

Siegfried to them was born,
the Wälsungs' mightiest son.

Now have I, Wand'rer, for once saved my head?

Wanderer

(pleasantly)

Right well thou knowest and namest the race!
hard, thou rogue, 'tis to catch thee.

The foremost question hast thou solved;
once more I ask thee now, dwarf!

A wily Niblung wardeth Siegfried,
Fafner's destined destroyer,

that the dwarf the ring may win him,
and make himself lord of the gold.

Say, what sword, when Siegfried shall wield it,
serveth for Fafner's death?

Mime

(forgetting more and more his present situation, joyfully rubs his hands)

Nothing is the name of a sword,
into an ash tree once struck by Wotan;

one only might bear it,
he who could draw it forth.

What strongest heroes could not achieve
Siegmund the bold alone performed;

well the weapon he bore
till on Wotan's spear it broke.

Now the bits are saved by a crafty smith;
for he knows

that alone with the Wotan-sword
a dauntless, foolish boy,

Siegfried, shall slay the foe.
(much pleased)

Now twice the dwarf has rescued his head?

Wanderer

(laughing)

Ha ha ha ha! Ha ha ha ha!

The wittiest art thou surely of wise ones;
in cunning where lives thy peer?

But if thou by craft wouldst win to thy service

the childish arm of the hero,
with one question still I threaten thee!
Tell me, thou wily armorsmith:
whose hand from the mighty splinters
Nothung the sword shall fashion?

Mime

(starts up in extreme terror)

(crying out)

The splinters! The sword!
Alas! what ails me?
What shall I do? What can I say?
Accursed steel! Would I ne'er had seen it!
My thieving has brought me but pain and care!
Ever too hard, my hand cannot weld it;
heat and hammer help me not here!
The wisest of smiths fails in the task!
*(As though crazy, he flings his tools about and
breaks out in despair.)*
Who forges the sword
I cannot forge?
That marvel who shall discover?

Wanderer

(has risen quietly from the hearth)

Thrice 'twas thine to ask questions,
thrice I stood at thy hest:
but empty knowledge soughtest thou;
the want that lies at thy door,
thy own need, knowest thou not;
now when I find it, dazed are thy wits;
and won by me is the crafty one's head!
Now, Fafner's dauntless undoer,
hear, thou fallen dwarf:
*He who the force of fear ne'er felt Nothung
shall he forge.*
(Mime stares at him: he turns to depart.)
Thy wily head ward from today:
I leave it forfeit to him
who has never learned to fear!
*(He turns away smiling and disappears quickly
in the forest. Mime has sunk, as if overwhelmed,
onto the seat.)*

Scene Three

*(Mime stares before him into the sunlit forest
and gradually gives way to violent trembling.)*

Mime

Accursed light! The air is aflame?
What flickers and flashes,
what flutters and whirs,
what floats there and flies, and hovers around?
It glistens and gleams in the sunlight's glow!
What hisses and hums and shrills so loud?
It growls and roars, comes crashing along!
It breaks through the wood, rushes on me!
(He rises up in terror.)
Its threatening jaws yawn at me there.
The dragon will catch me! Fafner! Fafner!
(He sinks down shrieking behind the anvil.)
*(Siegfried breaks from the forest thicket.
Siegfried, still behind the scenes, is heard
breaking through the bushes.)*

Siegfried

Heda! Thou idler!
Say, hast thou finished?
(He enters the cave.)
Quick, how is't with the sword?
(He pauses in surprise.)
Where hides the smith? Stolen away?
Hey-hey! Mime, thou coward!
Where art thou? where hidest thou?

Mime

(in a feeble voice, from behind the anvil)
'Tis thou then, child! Com'st thou alone?

Siegfried

(laughing)
Under the anvil?
Say, what there was thy work?
Wert thou grinding the sword?

Mime

*(coming forward greatly disturbed and
confused)*
The sword? The sword?
How can I forge it?
(half aside)
*He who the force of fear ne'er felt, Nothung
shall he forge.*
Too wise the dwarf is to do such work!

Siegfried*(vehemently)*

Wilt thou not speak then? or must I help thee?

Mime*(as before)*

Whence cometh help in my need?

My wily head lost I by wager:

(staring before him)

and forfeit to him will it fall

*who has never learned to fear.***Siegfried***(impetuously)*

Ha! dost thou flout me?

Me wouldst thou fly?

Mime*(gradually regaining his self-command)*

Him would I fly who knoweth fear!

But that have I not set me to teach thee;

I fool-like forgot the one good thing.

How thou shouldst love me was thy lesson;

but alas, no luck was mine!

How now shall I teach thee to fear?

Siegfried*(seizes him)*

Hey! must I help thee?

What wrought'st thou today?

Mime

In care for thy good,

sunk was I in brooding

what things of weight I might shew thee.

Siegfried*(laughing)*

Down under the seat sunk wert thou surely:

what things there of weight didst thou find?

Mime*(recovering himself more and more)*

What fear is learned I for thee,

that I, thou dunce, might teach thee.

Siegfried*(with quiet wonder)*

What is then this fearing?

Mime

That ne'er hast thou felt,

and wouldst from the wood

go forth to the world?

What booteth the trustiest sword,

were to thee fear not known.

Siegfried*(impatiently)*

Foolish redes alone hast thou found?

Mime*(approaching Siegfried with increasing confidence)*

All thy mother's redes come from my mouth;

what I have promised must I now tell thee:

to the world full of guile

thou shouldst not betake thee,

until to thee fear has been taught.

Siegfried*(vehemently)*

Is it a craft,

why know I it not?

Now tell! What is then this fearing?

Mime

Hast thou not felt in forest gloom,

as gloaming falls on darksome dells,

when comes a whisper, hum and hiss;

savage growling sounds anear,

dazzling flashes round thee flicker,

whirring waxes and fills thine ears:

(trembling)

hast thou not felt then grisly horrors

that grip thee and

(quaking)

hold thee?

Glaring terror shakes all thy senses;

in thy breast

(with quivering voice)

trembling and weak,

bursting hammers thy heart?

Hast thou not yet felt that,

then fear is stranger to thee.

Siegfried*(meditating)*

Wonderful surely must that be!

Yet my heart steadfast beats my breast.

The shivers and shakings,

the glowing and sinking,
 burning and fainting,
 beating and quaking:
 fain my heart is to feel them,
 longing to learn this delight!
 But how might it, Mime, be mine?
 How couldst thou, coward, e'er teach me?

Mime

Follow thou me, the way I know well:
 brooding brought it to mind.
 I know of a dragon grim,
 who slays and feeds on men:
 fear I trow teacheth Fafner,
 follow me to where he lies.

Siegfried

Where then is his lair?

Mime

Neidhöle, so is it named:
 t'ward east, at end of the wood.

Siegfried

Not far then 'tis from the world?

Mime

Right near to the world is his cave.

Siegfried

My guide shalt thou be to Fafner:
 fear shall he teach me, then forth to the world!
 Now quick! Forge me the sword:
 in the world fain would I wield it.

Mime

The sword? Alas!

Siegfried

Swift, to the smithy!
 Shew me thy work!

Mime

Accursed steel!
 My craft will not serve for the task:
 the mighty magic
 no dwarf hath the strength to sway.
 He who fear doth not know,
 might find more surely the art.

Siegfried

So by tricks this idler would cheat me!
 nought but a bungler aye will he be!
 now seeks he to fool me with lies!
 Here with the splinters, off with the bungler!
(coming to the hearth)
 My father's blade yields but to me:
 by me forged be the sword!
(Flinging Mime's tools about, he sets himself
impetuously to work.)

Mime

Hadst thou been careful to learn thy craft,
 now mightst thou reap thy reward;
 but lazy wert thou aye at thy task:
 then see how idleness serves thee!

Siegfried

Where the master has failed
 would scholar succeed
 although he had always obeyed?
(He makes a long nose at him.)
 Now go thy ways, meddle not here,
 lest thou with the steel be melted.
(He has made a large pile of charcoal on the
hearth and blows the fire, while he screws the
pieces of the sword in a vise and files them up.)
(Mime, who has seated himself a little aside,
watches Siegfried at work.)

Mime

What dost thou then there?
 Take but the solder;
 'tis fused ready for thee.

Siegfried

Out on the stuff, I want it not;
 with pap I weld not a sword!

Mime

But the file is finished;
 the rasp is ruined!
 Wilt crumble the steel to splinters?

Siegfried

In shivers must it be, ground into shreds:
 what is broken so must I mend.
(He goes on filing with great energy.)

Mime*(aside)*

Here helps no craftsman,
 I see that well: the fool's own folly
 alone serves his need.
 See how he toils with mighty strokes!
 The steel is in shreds,
 yet he is not warm!
(Siegfried has fanned the fire into bright flame.)
 Now I am as old as cave and wood,
 yet aught like this I ne'er saw!
*(While Siegfried continues filing the sword with
 impetuous energy, Mime seats himself a little
 farther off.)*

He will forge the sword, I see full well:
 fearless will he succeed.

The Wand'rer's word was true.
 Where now to hide my fearful head?
 To the dauntless boy it will fall
 if nought will teach him to fear!
*(springing up and bending low with growing
 restlessness)*

But woe to Mime!
 The dragon were safe,
 if fear he could bring to the boy.
 How could then the ring be mine?
 Accursed fortune! Caught fast am I!
 Whence will come counsel good,
 that this boy may be bent to my will?
*(Siegfried has now filed the pieces to powder
 and caught it in a crucible which he puts on the
 fire.)*

Siegfried

Hey, Mime!
(Mime starts and turns toward Siegfried.)
 Now tell the weapon's name,
 that I have pounded to pieces?

Mime

Nothing, that is the name of the sword:
 from thy mother heard I the tale.
*(During the following song Siegfried blows the
 fire with the bellows.)*

Siegfried

Nothing! Nothing! conquering sword!
 What blow has served to break thee?
 To shreds I shattered thy shining blade;
 the fire has melted the splinters.
 Hoho! Hoho! Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!

Bellows blow! Brighten the glow!
 Wild in woodlands waxed a tree
 that I in the forest felled:
 the ash tree's stem to charcoal I burned,
 on the hearth now lies it heaped.
 Hoho! Hoho! Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!
 Bellows blow! Brighten the glow!
 The blackened ash bole, how bravely it burns;
 how bright and fair the flames!
 With showering sparks they shoot aloft:
 hohei, hohei, hohei!
 and fuse me the splintered steel.
 Hoho! hoho! Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!
 Bellows blow! Brighten the glow!

Mime

(still aside, sitting at a distance)
 The sword will be forged
 and Fafner vanquished:
 so much I can clearly foresee.
 Hoard and ring will fall to the boy:
 how shall I then win me the prize?
 By craft and guile shall both be captured,
 and so my head be saved.

Siegfried

(again at the bellows)
 Hoho! Hoho! Hoho, hohei! Hohei!

Mime

(in the foreground, aside)
 Siegfried the dragon will slay,
 and will straight be athirst with his toil:
 from roots and flowers culled by my hand,
 a draught will I brew for him;
 let him drink but a drop of the potion,
 sleeping soon will he lie.
 With the self-same weapon
 that yonder he forges
 shall he be cleared from my path,
 and mine will be ring and hoard.
(He rubs his hands with delight.)

Siegfried

Nothing! Nothing! conquering sword!
 Now melteth thy splintered steel!
 In thine own sweat now swimdest thou.
*(He pours the glowing contents of the crucible
 into a mold and holds it on high.)*

Mime

Hei, wisest Wand'rer!
 Deem'st thou me dull?
 Say, how lik'st thou now my crafty wit?
 Have I found the path to peace?

Siegfried

Soon shalt thou serve as my sword!
*(He plunges the mold into the pail of water.
 Steam and the loud hiss of its cooling ensue.)*
 In the water flowed a fiery flood:
 anger and hate hissed from it there!
 Though scorching it flowed, in the water stream
 no more it flows. Stark lies it and stiff,
 stubborn and hard the steel.
 Ardent blood soon from thee shall flow.
*(He thrusts the steel into the fire and violently
 pulls the bellows.)*
*(Mime has sprung up, delighted; he fetches
 several vessels, shakes from them spices and
 herbs into a cooking pot and tries to put it on
 the hearth.)*
 Now sweat once again
 that so I may shape thee!
 Nothung, conquering sword!
*(During his work he observes Mime, who
 carefully places his pot on the fire from the
 other side of the hearth.)*
 What makes the booby there with his pot?
 While steel I melt, what mess art brewing?

Mime

A smith has come to shame,
 and learns from a boy his craft:
 from the master now his art is gone,
 as cook he serves the child.
 Thou makest broth of the steel;
 old Mime boileth eggs for thy soup.
(He goes one with his cooking.)

Siegfried

Mime the craftsman now learns cooking,
 his art delights him no more.
 All the swords he made I shivered to splinters:
 what he cooks shall ne'er touch my lips!
*(During the following Siegfried draws the mold
 from the fire, breaks it, and lays the glowing
 steel on the anvil.)*
 This fearing to learn now would Mime lead me;
 afar there dwelleth a teacher:
 e'en what best he can do, that cannot he teach,

for nought can he be but a bungler!
(during the forging)
 Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!
 Forge me, my hammer, a trusty sword!
 Hoho! Hahei! Hoho! Hahei!
 Blood once did stain thy steely blue;
 its ruddy trickling reddened thy blade:
 cold then was thy laugh;
 the warm blood licked'st thou cool!
 Heiaho! Haha! Haheiaha!
 Now burned with fire thou blushest red;
 to the hammer yieldeth thy softened steel:
 angry sparks thou dost shower
 on me who tamed thy pride.
 Heiaho! Heiaho! Heiaho hoho hoho!
 Hahei! Hahei! Hahei!

Mime

(aside)
 He shapes him a sharp-edged sword,
 Fafner to vanquish, the Niblungs' foe;
 I brewed a deadly draught;
 so shall I slay him when Fafner falls.
 My guile must gain me the prize;
 so my wage must be won!
*(He busies himself during the following in
 pouring the contents of the pot into a bottle.)*

Siegfried

Hoho! Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!
 Forge me, my hammer, a trusty sword!
 Hoho! Hahei! Hoho! Hahei!
 These merry sparks, how they cheer my heart;
 the brave look fairest by anger fired:
 Gaily laugh'st thou to me,
 yet wouldst look grisly and grim!
 Heiaho, haha, haheiaha!
 With heat and hammer luck is mine;
 with sturdy strokes I stretched thee straight:
 now banish thy blushing shame
 and be cold and hard as thou canst.
 Heiaho! Heiaho! Heiaho hoho hoho! Heiah!
*(He swings the blade and plunges it into the pail
 of water. He laughs aloud at the hissing.)*
*(While Siegfried fixes the sword blade in its hilt,
 Mime moves about in the foreground with the
 bottle.)*

Mime

Now the shining ring my brother once made,
 wherein he worked a mighty spell,

the glist'ning gold that o'ermasters all,
won is it by Mime, I hold it mine!
(He trots briskly about with increasing delight. Siegfried works with the small hammer. He files and sharpens the sword.)

Alberich, thou who once wert lord
shalt now be forced to serve me as thrall;
as Nibelheim's prince yonder I'll hie me,
and all the host to me shall bow.
(Siegfried hammering again.)
To the dwarf so despised all living shall kneel.
To the hoard will throng gods and heroes all.
(with increasing liveliness)
The world shall cower at my command,
and all will tremble under my wrath!

(Siegfried flattens the rivets of the hilt with the last strokes, and now grasps the sword.)

Siegfried

Nothung! Nothung! conquering sword!
Now cleav'st thou once more in thy hilt.

Mime

For truly Mime no more shall toil.

Siegfried

Severed in twain,
made one by my hand;
no stroke again thy steel shall shatter.

Mime

For him shall others win endless wealth.

Siegfried

The dying father
once broke thy blade:
the living son shaped it anew:
to him now its luster laughs,
and for him its edge shall be keen.

Mime

Mime the valiant, Mime is ruler,
prince of Niblungs, lord of the world.

Siegfried

(swinging the sword before him)
Nothung! Nothung! conquering sword!
Again to life have I woke thee.
Dead lay'st thou in splinters here,
now shin'st thou defiant and fair.

Mime

Hei! Mime, how met thee such luck!

Siegfried

Shew to all miscreants now thy sheen!

Mime

Who could believe this of thee?

Siegfried

Strike at the traitor, cut down the knave!
See, Mime, thou smith:
(He brandishes the sword.)
So sunders Siegfried's sword!
(He strikes the anvil, which splits in two pieces from top to bottom so that it falls asunder with a great noise. Mime, who has jumped onto a stool in great delight, falls in terror to the ground in a sitting position. Siegfried holds the sword on high in exultation.)

(The curtain falls.)

ACT TWO

Prelude and Scene One

(A deep forest. Quite in the background the entrance to a cave. The ground rises toward the middle of the stage to a small flattened knoll, sinking again toward the back, so that only the upper part of the opening is visible to the audience. To the left, a fissured cliff is seen through the trees.)

(Night. The darkness is deepest at the back, where the eye at first can distinguish nothing.)

Alberich

(lying by the rocky cliff, in gloomy brooding)

In forest gloom
at Fafner's cave I watch:
with ear alert, keenly peers mine eye.
Fateful day, breakest thou now?
Pale dost thou dawn from the darkness there?
(In the wood on the right a storm arises; a bluish light shines thence.)
What light glittereth there?
Nearer shimmers a radiant glow:
it runs like a fiery steed,

breaks through the wood, rushing to me.
 Cometh the dragon's slayer?
 neareth now Fafner's fate?
(The wind subsides. The light vanishes.)
 The light dies out, the glow
 sinks from my sight: Darkness falleth.
*(The Wanderer enters from the wood and stops
 opposite Alberich.)*
 Who comes there, shining in shadow?

Wanderer

To Neidhöl' by night I am come:
 who doth lurk in the darkness there?
*(The moonlight breaks forth as from a suddenly
 dissolving cloud and lights up the Wanderer's
 figure. Alberich recognizes the Wanderer,
 shrinks back alarmed, but immediately breaks
 out in violent anger.)*

Alberich

'Tis thou shew'st thyself here?
 What wouldst thou then?
 Hence from my path!
 Hie onward, shameless thief!

Wanderer

(quietly)
 Black-Alberich, roam'st thou here?
 Guardest thou Fafner's house?

Alberich

Goads thee thy greed to new evil deeds?
 Tarry not here, take thyself onward!
 Enough distress the world
 by thy guile has endured;
 therefore, traitor, let it now free!

Wanderer

As witness came I, not as worker:
 who barreth the Wand'rer's way?

Alberich

Thou false, treacherous trickster!
 Were I now the dullard
 that once thou found'st me,
 when thou didst bind the blind one,
 how easy were it again
(furious)
 the ring to ravish!
 Beware! all thy wiles know I full well;
(mockingly) but where thou failest,

that is not hidden from me:
 my stolen treasure freed thee from treaties,
 my ring paid for the giants' toil,
 who raised thee Walhall on high.
 What to the churls thy word once has promised
 in runes is writ this day
 on the mighty shaft of thy spear:
 thou dar'st not ever take back by force
 the wage the giants have won them;
 thy weapon's shaft thou thyself wouldst break;
 in thine own hand the staff of thy sway,
 so mighty, would fall into dust!

Wanderer

Its eternal runes of treaties
 bound thee not, base one, to me:
 by might it bends thy will to mine:
 for strife I ward it them well.

Alberich

In boastful strength
 how proudly thou threat'nest,
 and yet what dismay fills thy heart!
 Foredoomed through my curse,
 the treasure's lord soon shall surely perish:
 who then shall inherit?
 Will the glittering hoard
 belong once again to the Niblung?
 That gnaws thee with endless torment!
 For if once again it come to my hand,
 not like the foolish giants
 will I use its magic spell:
 now tremble thou godly guardian of heroes!
 I will vanquish Walhall with Hella's host:
 the world then shall be mine.

Wanderer

(quietly) Thy intent well I know,
 yet care frets me not.
 Its lord is he who winneth the ring.

Alberich

How darkly speak'st thou
 what so surely I know!
 On heroes' kin thy boldness doth hang,
(mockingly)
 whose sons blossomed forth from thy blood.
 Hast thou not fostered a stripling,
 that he the fruit may win thee
(with growing violence)
 that thou dar'st not pluck off?

Wanderer

Taunt me not, wrangle with Mime;
(lightly) for danger hither he brings:
 to this place he leadeth a boy
 who Fafner for him shall slay.
 Nought knows he of me;
 for Mime works he alone.
 I say to thee in sooth,
 freely work for thy ends!
(Alberich makes a violent move of curiosity.)
 Heed thou my words! be on thy guard!
 The boy knows nought of the ring;
 till Mime tells him the tale.

Alberich

(violently)
 From the hoard wilt thou hold thy hand?

Wanderer

Whom I love well,
 ever I leave unholpen:
 he stands or he falls, his lord is he;
 help to me comes but from heroes.

Alberich

Will no one fight me but he for the ring?

Wanderer

He alone beside thee covets the gold.

Alberich

Yet shall I not make it my own?

Wanderer

(quietly coming nearer)
 A hero nears to set free the hoard;
 two Nibelungs long for the gold;
 Fafner falls who doth guard the ring:
 he whose hand grasps it has won it.
 Wouldst thou know more?
 There Fafner lies:
(He turns to the cave.)
 If thou warn'st him of death,
 fain will he grant thee the toy,
 I now will wake him for thee.
*(He stands on the rising ground in front of the
 cave and calls toward it.)*
 Fafner! Fafner! Thou dragon, wake!

Alberich

(with anxious surprise, aside)
 What means the madman? Mine is it truly?
*(From the gloomy depth at back is heard
 Fafner's voice through a powerful speaking
 trumpet.)*

Fafner

Who wakes me from sleep?

Wanderer

(facing the cave)
 Here standeth a friend to warn thee of danger;
 thy life shall be thy guerdon
 if thou wilt grant to him
 all the treasure that thou guardest?
(He bends his head toward the cave, listening.)

Fafner

What would he?

Alberich

*(has come to the Wanderer and calls into the
 cave)*
 Waken, Fafner! Dragon, awake!
 A valiant hero comes,
 to match him with thy might.

Fafner

Then food is near.

Wanderer

Bold is his boyish heart,
 sharp-edged is his sword.

Alberich

The golden ring seeks he alone:
 grant thou the ring to me,
 the fight shall be stayed;
 the hoard thou shalt hold,
 and long shalt live in peace.

Fafner

I have and I hold:
(yawning)
 let me slumber!
*(The Wanderer laughs aloud and then turns
 again to Alberich.)*

Wanderer

Now, Alberich! That stroke failed.
 Yet call me no more rogue!
 This rede I give thee; heed thou it well!
(approaching him confidently)
 All things go their wonted way:
 their kind canst thou not alter.
 Alone here I leave thee, be on thy guard:
 contend with Mime, thy brother;
 for his kind, perchance, know'st thou better.
(turning to go)
 Things strange to thee
 now too wilt thou learn!
*(He disappears quickly in the wood. A storm
 arises, a bright glow breaks out: then both
 quickly cease. Alberich looks after the
 Wanderer as he rides swiftly away.)*

Alberich

There rides he away on lightning steed
 and leaves me in care and shame.
 Yet laugh ye on, ye light-spirited,
 self-worshipping clan of eternal!
 One day shall I see you all fade!
 For while the gold in sunlight gleams
 keeps a wise one his watch:
 surely worketh his spite!
*(He slips into the cleft at the side. The stage
 remains empty. Morning twilight.)*

Scene Two

*(As the day breaks, Siegfried and Mime enter.
 Siegfried carries a sword hung in a girdle of
 rope. Mime carefully examines the place; he
 looks at last toward the background, which
 remains in deep shadow while the rising ground
 in the middle becomes later gradually more
 brightly illuminated by the sun.)*

Mime

Our road is ended; stay thou here.

Siegfried

*(sits down under the lime tree and looks around
 him)*
 Here shall then this fear be taught me?
 Long hast thou been my leader;
 for a livelong night in woodlands dark

we two have wandered alone.
 Mime, now straight shalt thou leave me!
 If here I learn not what thou wouldst teach,
 alone shalt thou fare onward:
 free shall I then be from thee!

Mime

Truly, comrade,
 if today and here thou learn'st it not,
 no other place, no other time
 ever will teach thee fear.
 Seest thou there the darksome cavern mouth?
 Therein dwells a dragon fierce and grim:
 fearfully grisly is he and big,
 with threatening jaws wide open he yawns;
 with skin and hair, all in one gulp,
 the brute will swallow thee whole.

Siegfried

(still sitting under the lime tree)
 'Twere well to close up his gullet:
 so, clear of his jaws will I keep.

Mime

Poisoned foam from his mouth poureth out:
 if upon thee a drop should but fall,
 thy body and bones would melt.

Siegfried

That the poisoned foam my not hurt me,
 free will I leave him his path.

Mime

A serpent's tail sweeps he around:
 if that should catch thee fast and fold thee close,
 thy limbs would be broken like glass!

Siegfried

From his twisting tail to preserve me,
 well will I hold him in sight.
 But this let me know: has the brute a heart?

Mime

A merciless, cruel heart.

Siegfried

And lies it there where all hearts do beat,
 hearts of men or of beasts?

Mime

Be sure, stripling, there find'st thou it too.
 Now feel'st thou no fear in thine own?
(Siegfried, who has till now lain indolently, sits up suddenly.)

Siegfried

Nothing into his heart will I thrust!
 Is that what thou callest fearing?
 Hey! Old babbler! Is that lesson
 all that thy crafty guile can teach?

Hence on thy way fare onward:
 no fearing here shall I learn.

Mime

Wait but a while! What I have told thee
 deem'st thou but empty sound:
 the dragon must thou hear and see,
 and then will thy senses grow faint.
 When thine eyes are dim
 and falt'ring thy feet,
 when quaking beats thy heart in thy breast:
(very friendly)
 then thank thou him who has led thee,
 and think on Mime's love.

Siegfried

Thou shalt not love me!
 Hast thou not heard?
 Take thee afar from me! Leave me alone;
 if longer thou pratest of love,
 I will endure it no more.
 The nodding and slinking, with eyelids blinking
 when shall I never see them more,
(impatiently)
 when shall I be free from the fool?

Mime

I leave thee now,
 at the spring there lay me down;
 stand thou but here:
 soon, when the sun is on high,
 look for thy foe:
 from the cavern hither he comes,
 past this place winds along,
 to water at the fountain.

Siegfried

(laughing)
 Mime, wait at the stream, and there
(more animatedly)
 the dragon straight shall go:
 Nothing first in his heart shall be planted,
 when with his draught
 thou too shalt be swallowed.
 So heed well what I say
 if thou wouldst take thy rest,
 far from the stream then lay thee down,
 and ne'er come back to me!

Mime

When faint with the fight
 thou wouldst refresh thee,
 then were a draught right welcome.
(Siegfried turns away violently.)
 Call thou on me, shouldst thou need counsel.
(Siegfried repeats the gesture more violently.)
 Or if fear perchance comes to thy heart?
(Siegfried raises himself and drives Mime away with furious gestures.)
(as he goes away, aside)
 Fafner and Siegfried, Siegfried and Fafner:
 Would each the other might slay.
(He disappears in the wood on the right. Siegfried stretches himself comfortably under the lime tree, and looks after Mime as he departs.)

Siegfried

No son of Mime am I!
 That fills all my heart with joy.
 Now first to me is the forest fair;
 now first laugheth the gladdening day,
 as the loathed one leaves me here,
 nevermore to oppress my sight.
(He falls into silent meditation.)
 How looked my father's face?
 Ha! full sure, like my own!
 For had but Mime a son,
 would he not bear Mime's likeness?
 Even so gruesome, grizzled and gray,
 cramped and crooked,
 hunchbacked and halting,
 with ugly ears hanging, bleary eyes running?
 Off with the imp!
 I ne'er would see him more!
(He leans farther back and looks up through the

branches. Deep silence. Forest murmurs.)
 Might I but know what my mother was like!
 That will not my thought ever tell me!
(very tenderly)
 Her eyes' tender light
 surely did shine like the soft eyes
 of the roe-deer!
 Only far fairer!
(very softly)
 In anguish deep she bore me,
 but why did she die through me?
 Must then all mothers perish
 thus when their children come to the world?
 Sad the world would be then!
 Ah, mother, might I but look upon thee!
 On my mother, who lived on earth!
*(He sighs softly and leans still farther back.
 Deep silence.)*
*(Growing forest murmurs. Siegfried's attention
 is at length caught by the song of the woodbird.)*
*(He listens with growing interest to a woodbird
 in the branches above him.)*
 Thou gracious birdling, strange art thou to me:
 here in the wood is thy home?
 Ah, would I could take thy meaning!
 Thy song something would say,
 perchance a loving mother!
 A surly old dwarf said to me once
 that song of birds was only their speech,
 and men might find the meaning.
 How could one learn the way?
*(He reflects. His eyes fall on a reed bush, not far
 from the lime tree.)*
 Ha! I will try; sing his notes;
 on the reed echo his warblings:
 the tones I will catch,
 tho' words may escape me;
 while his speech I am singing
 perchance I shall know what he says.
*(He runs to the neighboring spring, cuts off a
 reed with his sword, and quickly makes a pipe
 out of it.)*
(He listens again.)
 He stops, and waits:
 then I will begin.
*(He blows into the pipe. He stops and cuts the
 pipe again. He blows again. He shakes his head
 and again cuts the pipe. He tries it. He gets
 angry, presses the pipe with his hands and tries
 again.)*

(He ceases playing and smiles.)
 That sounds not right;
 on the reed the blithesome melody
 may not be caught.
 Birdling, methinks I am but dull;
 from thee nought can I learn.
(He hears the bird again, and looks up to it.)
 Now shamefast am I at the roguish list'ner;
 he looks,
(very tenderly)
 yet vainly he listens.
 Heida! Then hearken now to my horn.
(He flings the pipe away.)
 With the foolish reed I am all unskilled.
 To a wood-song then lend me thine ear,
 a blithesome one now will I blow thee:
 for comrades to love me long have I called:
 nought better came yet than wolf and bear.
 Now let me see who comes to my call:
 if comrade or friend will appear.

*(He takes the silver hunting horn and blows on it.
 During the long-sustained notes Siegfried looks
 expectantly at the bird.)*

*(A movement in the background. Fafner, in the
 shape of a huge lizard-like dragon, has risen
 from his lair in the cave. He breaks through the
 underwood and drags himself up to the higher
 ground until the front part of his body rests upon
 it, when he utters a loud sound as if yawning.
 Siegfried looks around and fixes his eyes on
 Fafner in astonishment.)*

*(Fafner, at the sight of Siegfried, has stopped on
 the knoll and now remains there.)*

Ha ha! At last then my lay
 has allured something lovely!
 What a pretty playmate wert thou!

Fafner

What is there?

Siegfried

Ei, art thou a beast
 that can speak to me?
 Perchance something thou may'st teach me.
 One here knows not what fearing is:
 say, canst thou be his master?

Fafner

Art thou over-bold?

Siegfried

Bold or over-bold, I know not!
If fear thou canst not teach me,
surely my sword shalt thou feel.

Fafner

(makes a sound like a laugh)
Drink I came for, now too I find food!
(He opens his jaws and shows his teeth.)

Siegfried

All thy teeth I see glisten laughing to me;
fair is the picture thou shew'st me there!
Well were it to close up the cavern;
thy gullet opens too wide.

Fafner

For senseless talking ill it serves;
yet to devour thee fits it well.
(He threatens with his tail.)

Siegfried

Hoho! Thou cruel, merciless brute!
No mind have I to stay thy hunger.
Meeter it were, meseems,
that my sword should feed on thy heart.

Fafner

(roaring)
Pruh! Come, boastful boy!

Siegfried

Give heed, growler! The boaster comes!
(He draws his sword, spring toward Fafner, and remains defiantly standing. Fafner drags himself farther up the knoll and spits from his nostrils at Siegfried. Siegfried avoids the steam, springs nearer, and stands on one side. Fafner tries to reach him with his tail. Siegfried, who has nearly struck Fafner, springs over him at one bound and wounds him in the tail. Fafner roars, pulls his tail away, and raises the front part of his body, in order to throw its full weight on Siegfried, and so offers his breast to his stroke. Siegfried quickly seeks the place of his heart, and thrusts his sword into it up to the hilt. Fafner raises himself still higher in pain, and sinks on the wound as Siegfried lets go of his sword and springs aside.)

Lie there, merciless brute!
Nothing now hath o'erthrown thee!

Fafner

(in a weaker voice)
Who art thou, valiant stripling,
that hast pierced my breast?
Who stirred up thy childish heart
to this murderous deed?
In thy brain was not born
what thou has wrought.

Siegfried

Much have I not learned;
I know not who I am:
to this combat so deadly
didst thou thyself stir my heart.

Fafner

Thou fair, bright-eyed stripling,
strange e'en to thyself,
whom thou hast murdered hear from me.
The giant rulers of earth,
Fasolt and Fafner the brothers,
both are now fallen.
For the cursed gold we gained from the gods
death to Fasolt I dealt:
in dragon shape, the treasure guarding,
Fafner, the last of the giants,
falls by the hand of a boy.
Heed thyself well, blossoming hero!
He who stirred thee blind to this deed
designs now full surely thy death.
Mark the ending!
(dying)
Think on me!

Siegfried

Who was my father say to me now;
wise dost thou seem, thou wild one, in dying:
haply my name will tell thee,
Siegfried, so am I called.

Fafner

Siegfried!..
(He raises himself and dies.)

Siegfried

The dead can tell no tidings.
Then lead me henceforth my living sword!
(Fafner has rolled to the side in dying. Siegfried

now draws the sword from his breast; in doing so his hand becomes sprinkled with the blood: he draws it quickly back.)

Like fire burns the blood!

(He involuntarily carries his fingers to his mouth to suck the blood from them. As he looks meditatively before him his attention becomes suddenly attracted by the bird's song.)

Almost it seems

as woodbirds were speaking to me.

Is it a spell that lay in the blood?

The stranger woodbird there?

Hark! he sings to me.

Woodbird

(from the branches of the lime tree above Siegfried)

Hei! Siegfried now owns

all 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!

(Siegfried has listened, holding his breath with delight.)

Siegfried

(softly and with emotion)

Thanks, dearest birdling, for counsel good!

I follow thy call.

(He turns toward the back and descends into the cave, where he disappears.)

Scene Three

(Mime steals on, timidly looking around to assure himself of Fafner's death. At the same time Alberich comes forward from a cleft on the opposite side; he observes Mime attentively. As the latter turns toward the cave, Alberich rushes on him and stops him.)

Alberich

What wouldst, slinking hasty and sly,
slippery knave?

Mime

Accursed brother, I want thee not!

What brings thee here?

Alberich

Tell me, thou rogue, wouldst rob my gold?

Dost covet my goods?

Mime

Off get thee gone now!

The place here is mine:

what seekest thou here?

Alberich

Slinking so slyly here to thy work,

art thou now caught?

Mime

What I have won with toil and pain

shall not escape me.

Alberich

Was it then thou

who robbed the gold from the Rhine?

Was thine then the hand

that worked the spell in the ring?

Mime

Who shaped the helm

that hides and changes all?

Though thine the want,

was the hand that worked it thine?

Alberich

What work couldst thou, bungler,

ever have known to fashion?

The magic ring taught to the Niblung his craft.

Mime

Where hast thou the ring?

The giants have stolen it from thee.

What thou hast lost

I will gain by guile for my own.

Alberich

What the boy has won

would the miser lay hands on?

Not to thee belongs it,

the hero himself is its lord.

Mime

I brought him up;
for my pains now shall he pay:
my toil and care
have waited full long for their wage.

Alberich

For the baby's care
would the beggarly, miserly knave
make himself so great? king would he be?
To scurviest hound
rather the ring should go than to thee!
ne'er shalt thou gain, thou dullard,
its mighty gold!

Mime

(scratches his head)
Then hold it thou, and ward it well,
the shining ring;
be thou lord, but yet treat me as brother!
and for the Tarnhelm, fruit of my toil,
take thou the gold; then both are paid;
so shall the booty be shared.
(He rubs his hands confidently.)

Alberich

(with mocking laughter)
Share it with thee? And the Tarnhelm too?
How sly thou art!
Never safe in sleep were I from thy cunning!

Mime

(beyond himself)
Not e'en share it? Not e'en bargain?
Bare shall I go? Reft of reward?
(whining)
Nothing wilt thou then leave me?

Alberich

Not a trinket!
Not e'en a nailhead shalt thou lay hands on.

Mime

(in fury)
Neither ring nor Tarnhelm
shalt thou then win thee;
'tis I will not share!
For against thee Siegfried
now will I call with his
biting sword; his ready hand

shall pay thee, brother of mine.
(Siegfried appears in the background.)

Alberich

Turn thee but round!
From the cavern hither he comes.

Mime

Trinkets and toys full surely he found.

Alberich

The Tarnhelm holds he.

Mime

Aye, and the ring.

Alberich

Accurst! the ring?

Mime

(laughing maliciously)
Haply the ring will he give thee!
Yet soon I ween shall I win it.
(Mime with these words slips away into the wood.)

Alberich

And yet to its lord
shall it at last be surrendered.
(He disappears in the cleft.)
(Siegfried, with Tarnhelm and ring, has during the last dialogue come slowly and meditatively from the cave: he regards his booty thoughtfully and stops on the knoll in the middle of the stage.)

Siegfried

How ye may serve know I not;
I chose you out from the hoard
of heaped-up gold
because good counsel I heard.
The booty will serve as the battle's witness;
these toys shall approve
that I slaughtered Fafner in fight,
but yet fearing came not to me.
(He puts the Tarnhelm in his girdle and the ring on his finger. Silence. Siegfried's attention is again drawn to the bird, and he listens to him with baited breath.)

Woodbird

Hei! Siegfried has won him the helm
and the ring!
O! let him not trust to the falsest of friends!
Let but Siegfried now hearken to Mime's
treacherous tongue!
What at heart he means,
that must Mime make known:
thereto boots the taste of the blood.

(Siegfried's mien and gestures express that he has understood all. He sees Mime coming and remains without moving, leaning on his sword, observing and self-contained, in his place on the knoll till the end of the following scene.)
(Mime creeps forward and observes Siegfried from the foreground.)

Mime

He broods and weighs the booty's worth:
Here has perchance a Wand'rer wise been
roaming around
to counsel the boy with crafty runes and redes?
Doubly sly be now the dwarf;
my cunningest lures for him must be laid,
that I with coaxing and wily words may be fool
the wits of the boy.
(He advances nearer to Siegfried and welcomes him with flattering gestures.)
Be welcome, Siegfried! Say, my hero,
hast thou, perchance, learned to fear?

Siegfried

The teacher have I not found.

Mime

But the dragon grim,
say, hast thou then slain him?

Right fell was the monster, I trow!

Siegfried

Though fierce and spiteful he was,
his death grieves me in sooth,
when far banefuller scoundrels live their lives
yet unpunished.
He who led me here to fight
I hate yet more than my foe!

Mime

(very friendly) Now gently!
Not long wilt look on my face:

(sweetly) in endless slumber
soon thine eyes shall be closed.
What I from thee wanted
(as if praising him)
hast thou fulfilled;
nought else now for me is left
but to win the booty;
methinks that task will not foil me,
thou wert always easy to fool.

Siegfried

Then seek'st thou how thou may'st harm me?

Mime

(astonished)
What? said I then so?
(continuing tenderly)
Siegfried!
Hear me, my comrade! Thee and all thy kind
from my heart I ever hated;
(tenderly)
from fondness, thou burden, I fostered thee not:
the hoard hid in Fafner's cave,
the gold alone I worked to win.
(as though he were promising him pleasant things)
If thou wilt not give all to me now,
(as thou he were ready to give him his life)
Siegfried, my son, thou seest for thyself
(with friendly humor)
thy life then needs must thou yield me.

Siegfried

That thou dost hate me gives me joy:
yet must my life to thee too be yielded?

Mime

(crossly)
I have not said that?
Thou hear'st not aright!
(He feels for his bottle.)
See, thou art weary from heavy toil.
Fever doth burn in thy blood;
therefore to cheer thee with quickening drink
Mime has not delayed:
while thy blade thou didst melt
I mixed thee some broth;
now if thou drink,
I win me thy trusty sword,
and helm and hoard as well.

(tittering)

Hi hi hi hi hi hi!

Siegfried

So then of my sword
and all I have won me,
ring and booty, wouldst rob me?

Mime

(violently)

How thou mistakest my words!
Tell me, speak I not clear?
The greatest pains I take with my speech,
by treacherous lying seeking to trap thee,
and thou canst not, booby,
take my meaning aright!
Open thine ears then! And attend to me!
Hear thou what Mime means.
(again very friendly, with evident pains)
Take this and drink for thy comfort;
my draught freshened thee oft:
when thou wert fretful, froward to boot,
all that I brought, though surly,
still hast thou swallowed.

Siegfried

Of a goodly drink were I glad:
say, how has this one been brewed?

Mime

*(merrily jesting, as if describing a pleasant
intoxication which the potion is to bring about)*

Hei! Then drink it, trust to my craft!
In night and darkness
soon shall thy senses be laid;
without force or feeling,
stark stretched will thy limbs be.
There as thou liest
light then were the task to win me the booty:
but if e'er thou shouldst wake,
nowhere safe should I be from thee,
though the ring were my own.
Then with the sword
thou hast made so sharp,
(with a gesture of exuberant joy)
off will I hack thy head, my child:
then shall I have won rest and the ring!
(tittering)
Hi hi hi!...

Siegfried

In slumber wouldst thou then slay me?

Mime

(very angrily)

What would I? Said I then so?
(He takes pains to take the tenderest tone.)
Thy childish head shall thy sword
(with the most careful clearness)
hack off!
*(with the appearance of heart-felt solicitude for
Siegfried's health)*
For, were not my hate for thee so deep,
and did not thy scoffs
and my shameful labor
so loudly call for vengeance,
(gently)
yet from out my path to fling thee
still I dare not falter:
(again jesting)
how else could I come by the booty,
for Alberich covets it too?
*(He pours the draught into the drink-horn and
offers it to Siegfried with pressing gestures.)*
Now, my Wälsung! Wolf-son thou?
Drink and choke thee to death!
No drop more shalt thou drink.
Hi hi hi hi hi!

Siegfried

(threatens him with the sword)

Taste thou my sword, loathsome babbler!
*(As if seized by violent loathing he gives Mime a
sharp stroke with his sword. Mime falls at once
dead to the ground.)*

Alberich

(from the cleft, laughing in mockery)

Ha ha ha!...
*(As he looks at Mime on the ground, Siegfried
puts his sword back in his belt.)*

Siegfried

Envy's wage pays Nothing:
therefor serveth its sharpness.
*(He picks Mime's body up, carries it to the knoll
in front of the cave, and throws it down in
there.)*
In the cavern there lie on the hoard!
With steadfast guile thou soughtest the gold;
now may'st thou be lord of thy treasure!

and a trusty guardian, too, shalt thou have:
safe so from thieves shalt thou be.

(With great exertion he pushes the body of the dragon in front of the entrance to the cave so as to stop it completely up.)

There lie thou too, dragon grim!

The glittering hoard guard thou at once
with thy booty-coveting foe:
so shall ye both now find your rest.

(He looks thoughtfully down into the cave for a time and then turns slowly to the front, as if tired. It is midday. He passes his hand over his brow.)

Hot am I from the heavy toil.

Rushing flows my ardent blood!

My hand burns on my head.

High stands the sun in heaven;
from brightest blue shineth down
on my head his glorious light.

Rest and shelter beneath the tree
shall refresh me.

(He stretches himself on the ground under the lime tree and again looks up through the branches.)

Yet once more, dearest birdling,

whom we so long here have disturbed,
might I hear again thy warbling!

On a branch I see thee swaying so blithely;
chirping and chattering,

brothers and sisters

fly round thee in gladness and love.

But I am so alone,

have nor brother nor sister:

my mother died, my father fell:
ne'er seen by their son.

One comrade was mine,
a foul pestilent dwarf:

(warmly)

love was ne'er constrained by kindness:

craftiest lures he laid out to catch me,

at last I was forced to slay him.

(With painful emotion he again looks up at the branches.)

Friendliest birdling, I come to thee now.

Wouldst for me but find a comrade true!

Let thy rede now guide me rightly.

So oft I have called and yet no one has come.

Friend, thou surely better wouldst find him,

so right were ever thy redes.

Now sing! I hearken to thy song.

Woodbird

Hei! Siegfried has 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.

Siegfried

(starts up impetuously from his seat)

O song of joy! Gladdening strain!

Its burning sense glows hot in my breast;

like flame it pierces, kindling my heart!

What so swiftly flies through heart and senses?

Say to me, sweetest friend!

(He listens.)

Woodbird

Gladsome in grief, I sing of love,

weaving from woe, joy in my song:

heart-longing alone hears aright.

Siegfried

Hence I hie me, shouting with rapture,
forth from the wood to the fell!

Yet once more speak to me, lovely singer;

say, shall I break through the fire?

Can I awaken the bride?

(He listens again.)

Woodbird

Who Brünnhild' awakes,

winning the bride, no craven shall be:

he only who fear has not felt!

Siegfried

(shouting with joy)

The foolish boy,

he who fear has not felt,

my birdling, why that am I!

Today in vain I have tried with my might

from Fafner the dragon to learn it:

my longing doth burn

now from Brünnhild' to know it!

How find I the way to the fell?

(The bird flutters up, circles over Siegfried, and flies hesitatingly before him.)

So shall then the path be pointed:
 where'er thou flyest follows my foot!
*(He runs after the bird, who for a time teases
 him, by leading him hither and thither; at
 length, when the bird takes a definite direction
 toward the back, Siegfried follows.)*

(The curtain falls.)

ACT THREE

Scene One

*(A wild spot at the foot of a rocky mountain which
 rises steeply at the back on the left. Night, storm,
 lightning, and violent thunder which soon ceases,
 while the lightning continues flashing among the
 clouds.)*

*(The Wanderer enters. He walks resolutely
 toward the mouth of a cavernous opening in a
 rock in the foreground and stands there, leaning
 on his sword, while he sings the following toward
 the entrance of the cave.)*

Wanderer

Waken, Wala! Wala! Awake!
 From lasting sleep
 wake I thee, slumberer, up.
 I call on thee now: arise! arise!
 From earth's hidden caves,
 where prisoned thou sleepest, arise!
 Erda! Erda! Woman all-wise!
 From silence and darkness soar to the day!
 With song I rouse thee, arise and answer;
 thy slumbering wisdom must I awake.
 All-knowing one! Wisdom's guardian,
 Erda! Erda! Woman all-wise!
 Waken, awaken, thou Wala! Awaken!
*(The cavern begins to glow with bluish light.
 During the following, Erda rises very gradually
 from below. She appears as if covered with hoar
 frost; her hair and garments throw out a
 glittering shimmer.)*

Erda

Loud is the call; mighty spells arouse me.
 From wisdom's dream awakened am I:
 who scares my sleep from me?

Wanderer

Thy sleep-breaker am I;
 with spells I stir thee that waken surely
 what slumber's fastness holds.
 O'er earth I wander,
 far have I roamed knowledge to win me,
 world-wisdom's redes ever seeking.
 Liveth no being wiser than thou;
 thou knowest all that the deeps do hide,
 what hill and dale, air and water enfold.
 Where life doth wake moveth thy spirit;
 where brains are brooding pierceth thy thought:
 All things, men say, known are to thee.
 That I may win me thy counsel,
 thee I wake from thy sleep!

Erda

My sleep is dreaming,
 my dreaming brooding,
 my brooding working of wisdom.
 But while I sleep the Norns are waking:
 they wind the rope
 and truly weave what I know:
 the Norns will give thee answer.

Wanderer

In thrall to the world
 weave they forever,
 and nought their knowledge
 maketh or mendeth.
 To thee I come to learn of thy wisdom,
 how to hinder a rolling wheel.

Erda

Darkness spreads o'er my spirit
 through men's deeds,
 my wisdom itself
 once felt a conqueror's force.
 A wish-maiden I bore to Wotan:
 at his behest brought she heroes to Walhall.
 Bold is she and wise withall:
 why wak'st thou me and seek'st not counsel
 from Erda's and Wotan's child?

Wanderer

The Walküre mean'st thou,
 Brünnhild' the maid?
 She flouted the storm controller,
 when most his will himself he controlled:
 what the ruler of fights in fervent longing,
 thwarting his wishes, forbore to achieve,

Brünnhilde, proud, rashly defiant,
 in fire and fury of battle,
 strove for herself to perform.
 Warfather punished the maid:
 he closed her eyelids in sleep;
 on the fell she slumbers fast:
 the hallowed maid will waken alone
 that she as wife may mate with a man.
 What booteth counsel from her?

Erda

Dazed am I since I awoke:
 wild and strange seems the world!
 The Walküre, the Wala's child,
 lay in fetters of sleep
 while her all-knowing mother slept?
 Doth revolt's teacher scourge revolt?
 He who urged the doing chideth the deed?
 He who wardeth right, he who truth upholdeth,
 striketh at right, reigns by falsehood?
 Hold me longer not here!
 Sleep enfold now my wisdom!

Wanderer

Thou, mother, shalt not go free,
 for I wield the magic with might.
 All-wise one, care's piercing sting
 by thee was planted in Wotan's dauntless heart:
 with fear of shameful ruin and downfall
 filled was his spirit
 by tidings thou didst foretell.
 Art thou the world's wisest of women?
 say to me now, how a god may conquer his care.

Erda

Thou art not what thou hast said!
 Why cam'st thou, turbulent spirit,
 to trouble the Wala's sleep?

Wanderer

Thou art not what thou hast dreamed.
 Wisdom of ages finds its downfall:
 at war with my will thy wisdom waneth.
 Know'st thou what Wotan wills?
(Long silence.)

I cry it aloud in thine ear,
 that carefree ever thou may'st sleep!
 The eternal's downfall no more dismays me
 since their doom I willed.
 What in my spirit's fiercest anguish,
 despairing once I resolved,

glad and blithesome, freely I bring now to pass.
 Though I decreed in my loathing
 the world to the Nibelung's greed;
 I leave to the Wälsung
 gladly my heritage now.
 One who knew me never, though chosen by me,
 a boy of dauntless daring,
 all untaught by my counsel,
 has won the Nibelung's ring.
 Pure from greed, gladdened by love-dreams,
 all mightless on him falls Alberich's curse,
 for fear knoweth he not.
 Her whom thou didst bear,
 Brünnhild' will the hero wake:
 then thy wisdom's child will achieve
 a deed to set free the world.
 Then slumber thou now, close fast thine eyelids;
 dreaming behold my downfall.
 Whate'er shall befall them,
 to the ever-young in gladness yieldeth the god.
 Descend then, Erda! Mother of fear!
 World-sorrow! Descend!
 Descend, to endless sleep!

(Erda, who, with closed eyes, has already sunk deeper down, now disappears entirely. The cavern has again become quite dark. Dawn illumines the stage; the storm has ceased.)

Scene Two

(The Wanderer has come to the cave and leans with his back against the rocks looking toward the wings.)

Wanderer

Now yonder Siegfried comes.
(He remains without changing his position at the cave.)

(Siegfried's woodbird flutters toward the foreground. Suddenly the bird stops, flutters about in alarm, and then disappears quickly toward the back.)

Siegfried

(enters and stops)
 My birdling flew from my sight!
 With fluttering wing and sweetest song,
 blithely he shewed me the way:
 now far from me has he flown!

I needs must find out the rock for myself:
 the path my guide pointed out,
 my feet shall follow now.
(He goes toward the back.)

Wanderer

(still in the same position)
 Say, boy, whither leads thee thy way?

Siegfried

(stops and turns around)
 Who speaks to me?
 Can he shew me my way?
(He comes nearer to the Wanderer.)
 To a mountain fare I,
 by flaming fire surrounded:
 there sleeps a maid who must wake to me.

Wanderer

Who told thee then
 to seek the mountain?
 Who woke thy longing for woman?

Siegfried

It was a singing woodbirdling
 who gave me goodly counsel.

Wanderer

A woodbird chatters wildly;
 but none knows what he sings:
 how then couldst thou tell the singer's meaning?

Siegfried

'Twas worked by the blood
 of a dragon grim,
 who fell at Neidhöl' before me:
 his scorching blood scarce
 had touched my tongue
 when the bird's song was clear to my mind.

Wanderer

To fight so fierce a foe,
 who egged thee on,
 if thou hast felled the mighty dragon?

Siegfried

My guide was Mime, an evil dwarf;
 what fear is fain had he taught me;
 but to plunge my weapon into his heart
 dared me the foe himself
 with his cruel threatening jaws.

Wanderer

Who forged
 the sword so sharp and hard
 that it slew so fierce a foe?

Siegfried

I forged it myself
 when the smith was beaten:
 swordless else should I be still.

Wanderer

But who made the mighty splinters
 wherewith thou, boy, didst forge the sword?

Siegfried

What know I of that? I only know
 that the splinters could not stead me,
 were not the sword made anew.

Wanderer

(breaks into a laugh of joyous good humor)
 That I too believe!
(He looks at Siegfried with pleasure.)

Siegfried

(surprised)
 Why laugh'st thou at me
 with thy questions? Cease from thy jests,
 keep me no longer here prating.
 If thou canst help me onward, then speak thou:
 and canst thou not, then hold thy tongue!

Wanderer

Good youth, have patience! If I am old,
 then to the aged give honor.

Siegfried

Honor the aged! My whole life long
 there stood in my path an aged fellow;
 now I have swept him away.
 If thou stand'st longer seeking here to stay me,
 give good heed, old one, lest thou like Mime
(with a significant gesture)
 shouldst fare!

(He goes still nearer to the Wanderer.)

But how dost thou look?
 Why wearest thou such a monstrous hat?
 Wherefore hangs it so over thy face?

Wanderer*(still without changing his position)*

So doth the Wand'rer wear it
when against the wind he goes.

Siegfried*(examining him still more closely)*

But an eye beneath it thou lackest!
Full surely someone hath struck it out,
when thou so boldly didst bar his way!
Take thyself off or else thou may'st chance
to lose the light of the other.

Wanderer

I see, my son,
where nought thou know'st,
there know'st thou well how to help thee.
With the one eye that I lack in my head
thou lookest thyself on the other
that yet is left me for sight.
*(Siegfried, who has listened thoughtfully, now
involuntarily bursts out laughing.)*

Siegfried

Ha ha ha ha!
Thou servest but for my laughter!
But hear, I trifle no longer:
at once shew me my way,
then thine own way find for thyself;
for nought else canst thou be of use:
now speak, or off shalt thou go!

Wanderer

(gently)
Child, didst thou know who I am,
that scoff wouldst thou have spared.
Sad from one so dear seemeth scornful defiance.
Long have I loved thy radiant race,
though from my fury it shrank in dismay.
Thou whom I love so, all too fair one!
Wake my wrath not today;
it would ruin both thee and me!

Siegfried

Still art thou dumb,
unmannered wight?
Out of my path, then: for that way I know
leads to the slumbering maid:
so told me the woodbird
who here has left me alone.
(It quickly becomes quite dark again.)

Wanderer*(breaking out in anger)*

It left thee to save its life!
The ravens' ruler it knew was here:
ill-fate follows its flight!
The way that it pointed shalt thou not pass!
(Siegfried, surprised, steps back defiantly.)

Siegfried

Hoho! Wouldst thou stay me!
Who art thou then that here withstandest me?

Wanderer

Fear thou the fell's defender!
Enchained is held by my might
the slumbering maid:
he who should wake her,
he who should win her,
mightless would make me forever.
A flaming sea surroundeth the maid,
fiery billows o'erflow the fell:
he who craves the bride
must climb that flame-girdled rock.
*(He points with the spear toward the rocky
heights.)*
Look up on high! Behold'st thou the light?
The splendor grows, the luster spreads;
fire clouds are rolling,
flame-tongues are shooting:
roaring and writhing, hither they come.
A light-flood illumines thy head;
*(High up on the rocks a flickering glow appears,
gradually increasing in brightness.)*
right soon the blaze will seize and devour thee.
Go back then, foolhardy boy!

Siegfried

Go back, thou babbler, thyself!
There where the blaze is burning,
to Brünnhilde now must I hie!
(He moves onward; the Wanderer opposes him.)

Wanderer

Hast thou no fear of the fire,
then barred be thy path by my spear!
Yet holdeth my hand the hallowed haft:
the sword thou dost bear
once broke upon the shaft:
yet once again be it splintered
on this my spear!
(He stretches out his spear.)

Siegfried

(drawing his sword)

Then my father's foe here have I found!

Glorious vengeance doth greet me now!

Stretch forth thy spear:

its haft shall break on my sword!

(With one stroke he hews the spear into two pieces, from which a flash of lightning shoots up toward the rocky heights, where the ever-brightening flames begin to be visible. A loud thunderclap, which quickly dies away, accompanies the stroke. The pieces of the spear fall at the Wanderer's feet. He quietly picks them up.)

Wanderer

Fare on! I cannot withstand thee!

(He suddenly disappears in complete darkness.)

Siegfried

With his spear in splinters

fleeth the craven!

(The growing brightness of the clouds, which continually sink lower down, meets Siegfried's sight.)

Ha! Gladdening glow! Glorious light!

Shining, my pathway opens before me.

In fire will I bathe me!

Through fire will I fare to the bride!

Hoho! Hahei!

What comrade now comes to my call?

(Siegfried puts his horn to his lips and plunges into the waving fire, which, flowing down from the heights, spreads over the foreground.)

(Siegfried, who is soon out of sight, seems to be ascending the mountain.)

(Greatest brightness of the flames.)

(From this point, at which the brightness was at its height, the light begins to fade and gradually gives place to a dissolving cloud illuminated as if by the red glow of dawn.)

becoming visible (exactly the same scene as in the third act of "The Valkyrie") a light veil of reddish morning mist remains hanging, which suggests the magic fire still glowing below. The arrangement of the scene is exactly the same as at the close of the "The Valkyrie": in the foreground, under the wide-spreading fir tree, lies Brünnhilde in complete shining armor, with her helmet on her head, her long shield covering her, in deep slumber.)

(Siegfried, coming from the back, reaches the rocks which fringe the summit, and shows at first only the upper part of his body: he looks around for a long time in astonishment.)

Siegfried

(softly)

Haven of bliss on the
mountainous height!

(He mounts to the top of the height and, standing on a rock at the edge of the precipice at the back, gazes with surprise at the scene. He looks into the wood at the side and comes a little forward.)

What stands there sleeping
in shade of the wood?

A steed 'tis, waiting in slumber deep.

(He comes slowly nearer and then stops in surprise when he sees Brünnhilde, while still at some little distance from her.)

What ray streams thence upon me?

What glittering steel is there?

Doth then the fire yet dazzle my sight?

Shining armor? May it be mine?

(He lifts the shield up and sees Brünnhilde's form. Her face, however, is still for the most part concealed by the helmet.)

Ha! in armor a man?

How the sight doth gladden my heart!

The helm, methinks, presses his head?

Softer were his rest were it loosed.

(He carefully loosens the helmet and lifts it from the head of the sleeper; long curling hair breaks forth. He starts.)

(tenderly)

Ah! how fair!

(He remains sunk in contemplation.)

Shimmering clouds are fringing with fleeces a
radiant heaven's lake;

shining I see the light of the sun

Scene Three

(The clouds have dissolved into a fine, rose-colored veil of mist which now divides so that the upper part entirely disappears above and at length discovers the whole bright blue sky of day, while on the border of the rocky height now

laugh through the billowy clouds!
(He bends lower over the sleeper.)
 With labor of breathing heaveth his breast:
 loosed be the trammeling birny!
(He tries to loosen the breastplate.)
 Come, my sword! Cut through the iron!
*(Siegfried draws his sword and with gentle
 carefulness cuts through the rings on both sides
 of the breastplate, and lifts it off with the
 greaves so that Brünnhilde now lies before him
 in a soft woman's dress. Startled and
 astonished, he starts back.)*
 That is no man!
(He gazes at the sleeper in great excitement.)
 Burning enchantment pierces my breast;
 fiery spells dazzle and blind me:
 my heart doth falter and faint!
(He is seized with terror.)
 On whom shall I call that he may help me?
 Mother! Mother! Remember me!
*(He sinks, as if fainting, on Brünnhilde's
 bosom.)*
(Long silence. He stands up, sighing.)

How waken the maid,
 to see her eyelids unclosing?
 her eyelids unclosing?
 Would not her eyes blind mine own?
 How can I dare to look on their light?
 Around my head
 all wavers and sways!
 Anguish of longing wasteth my spirit;
 on my heart in its tumult trembleth my hand!
 What ails thee, craven? Can this be fearing?
 O mother! mother! thy dauntless child!
(very gently)
 A woman lieth asleep:
 and she now has taught him to fear!
 How vanquish the fear? How steel my heart?
 Myself to awaken,
 must I rouse her from slumber.
*(As he approaches the sleeping figure her
 aspect again fixes his gaze and overcomes him
 with tenderer emotions. He bends deeper down.)*
 Sweetly quivers her flowerlike mouth.
 Its gentle tremors charm fear from my heart!
 Ah! How I feel its warm and gladdening breath!
(as if in despair)
 Awaken! Awaken! Holiest maid!
(He gazes at her.)

She hears me not.
(slowly, with constrained expression)
 Then life from the sweetness
 of lips will I win me,
 E'en though I die in a kiss!
*(He sinks, as if dying, on the sleeping figure and,
 with closed eyes, fastens his lips on hers.
 Brünnhilde opens her eyes. Siegfried rises and
 remains standing before her. Brünnhilde slowly
 rises to a sitting position. She greets heaven and
 earth with stately gestures as her consciousness
 returns.)*

Brünnhilde
 Sun, I hail thee!
 Hail, o light!
 Hail, o radiant day!
 Long was my sleep; I am awake:
 Tell me what hero wakens the maid.
*(Siegfried, entranced by her look and her voice,
 stands as if rooted to the spot.)*

Siegfried
 Through the fire I burst
 that flamed around the fell:
 from thy head I unclasped the helm;
 Siegfried's kiss hath opened thine eyes.

Brünnhilde
(sitting upright)
 Gods, I hail you! Hail, o world!
 Hail, o earth in thy glory!
 At end is now my sleep; awake am I:
 Siegfried breaketh my slumber's bonds.

Siegfried
(breaking forth in highest ecstasy)
 O mother, hail, who gave me my birth!
 Hail o earth that fostered my life!
 now to behold those eyes
 whose beams on me laugh in my joy!

Brünnhilde
(deeply stirred)
 O mother, hail, who gave thee thy birth!
 Hail o earth that fostered thy life!
 Thine eye alone might behold me,
 alone to thee might I wake!
*(Both remain full of glowing ecstasy, lost in
 mutual contemplation.)*

O Siegfried! Siegfried! hero blest!
 Thou waker of life, o conquering light!
 O knewest thou, joy of the world,
 how I have ever loved thee!
 Thou wert my gladness, my care wert thou!
 Thy life I sheltered or ere it was thine;
 or ere thou wert born, my shield was thy guard.
 So long loved I thee, Siegfried!

Siegfried

(softly and timidly)

Then death took not my mother?
 bound in sleep did she lie?
(Brünnhilde smiles, stretching out her hand to him in a friendly manner.)

Brünnhilde

Thou child of delight!
 Thy mother no more will greet thee.
 Thyself am I, if blest I be in thy love.
 What thou know'st not find'st thou in me;
 yet only from my love cometh my wisdom!
 O Siegfried! Siegfried! conquering light!
 I loved thee ever, for I divined
 the thought that Wotan had hidden;
 that in shrinking awe I dared not to whisper,
 that all unclearly glowed in my bosom;
 for which I fought, suffered and strove;
 for which I flouted him who conceived it;
 for which, in penance, prisoned I lay,
 that I read not rightly, and felt alone!
 For, in my longing o may'st thou prove it!
 that thought was my love for thee!

Siegfried

How wondrous sounds
 thy gladdening song;
 but dark to me are thy words.
 Thine eyes' bright luster shineth clear;
 thy breathing wafteth warmth to me;
 in mine ears thy voice's song is sweet:
 yet what thy singing speaks,
 wond'ring I cannot grasp.
 What tales out of olden times dost thou tell me,
 when all my senses feel and see thee only!
 In bonds of fear holdest thou me:
 the fear that only from thee I have learned;
 thou who hast bound me in mightiest fetters,
 give me my manhood once more!
(In great excitement, he remains with his gaze

fixed upon her. Brünnhilde gently turns her head aside and looks toward the wood.)

Brünnhilde

I see there Grane, my sacred steed:
 he grazes in gladness who with me slept!
 With me was he wakened by thee.

Siegfried

(remaining in the same position)

On gladdening lips my glances are feasting:
 with passionate thirst my own lips are burning,
 till they taste that sweetness I gaze on!
(Brünnhilde points with her hand to her weapons, which she now perceives.)

Brünnhilde

I see there the shield
 that sheltered heroes.
 I see there the helm that once hid my head:
 it shields, it hides me no more.

Siegfried

(with fire) A glorious maid
 has vanquished my heart;
 wounds in my head a woman hath struck:
 I came without shield and helm.

Brünnhilde

(with increasing sadness)

I see there the birny's glittering steel:
 a sword's keen edge cut it in twain;
 from the maiden's limbs it loosened the mail:
 I am, without sword or shield,
 without guard a sorrowful maid!

Siegfried

(with fire)

Through furious fire to thee have I fared,
 nor birny nor buckler guarded my breast:
 the flames have broken through to my heart.
 My blood doth bound in turbulent streams;
 a ravening fire within me is kindled:
 the blaze that shone round Brünnhilde's rock
 now gloweth within my breast!
 O maid! now quench thou the fire!
 Still thou its furious rage!
(He has embraced her impetuously. She springs up, resists him with the utmost strength of terror, and flies to the other side of the stage.)

Brünnhilde

No god's touch have I felt!
 Low bent all heroes, greeting the maiden:
 holy came she from Walhall.
 Woe's me! Woe's me!
 Woe for the shame, the bitter disgrace!
 For he who woke me deals me the wound!
 He has broken birny and helm:
 Brünnhilde am I no more!

Siegfried

Still art thou to me the slumbering maid;
 Brünnhilde's sleep bindeth her yet.
 Awake! be a woman to me!

Brünnhilde

(in perturbation)

My senses are swaying, my reason wanes:
 must all my wisdom fail me?

Siegfried

Said not thy song thy wisdom was
 but the light of thy love for me?

Brünnhilde

(gazing before her)

Tristfullest darkness troubles my sight.
 Mine eyes are blinded, my light dies out:
 night wraps me round. From twilight and gloom
 comes a wild frenzy of fear on me:
 Terror rises and towers on high!
(She impetuously hides her eyes with her hands.)

Siegfried

(gently taking her hands away from her eyes)

Night enfolds imprisoned eyes.
 With the fetters vanish the gloomy fears:
 Mount through the darkness and see:
 bright as the sun shineth the day!

Brünnhilde

(in extreme agitation)

Bright as the sun shineth the day of my shame!
 O Siegfried! Siegfried! Look on my dread!
*(Her manner shows that a pleasing picture has
 come before her mind from which she turns and
 again looks with tenderness on Siegfried.)*
 Ever lived I, ever live I,
 ever in sweet longing delight,
 yet ever to make thee blest!

(with fire, but tenderly)

O Siegfried, glorious wealth of the world!
 Laughing hero, light of the earth!
 Leave, ah, leave, leave me in peace!
 Come not to me in thy furious frenzy,
 force me not with thy mastering might,
 bring ruin not on thy love!
 Saw'st thou thy face in the glassy stream?
 Hath it not gladdened thine eyes?
 Were but the shining water bestirred,
 the brook's limpid mirror broken and flawed:
 thy face then would be lost;
 nought were seen but eddying surge!
 Then bewilder me not, trouble me not!
 Ever bright see in me thyself
 laughing to greet thee,
 hero so blithesome and blest!
 O Siegfried! child of delight!
 Love thyself, and turn thee from me:
 o bring not thine own to nought!

Siegfried

I love thee: didst thou but love me!
 Mine am I no more: oh! would thou wert mine!
 A glorious flood before me rolls:
 with all my senses I only see
 its buoyant gladdening billows.
 Though in the deep I find not my face,
 burning I long for the water's balm,
 and now, as I am, spring in the stream:
 oh might its billows engulf me in bliss,
 my longing would fade in the flood!
 Awaken, Brünnhilde! Waken, o maid!
 Live in laughter, sweetest delight!
 Be mine! Be mine! Be mine!

Brünnhilde

(with deep feeling)

O Siegfried! Thine aye have I been!

Siegfried

(with fire)

Mine wert thou aye; then now be mine!

Brünnhilde

Thine ever will I be!

Siegfried

What thou wilt be, be thou today!
 Close in my arms I hold thee embraced,
 feeling thy heart beat on my breast;

our glances are glowing,
 breath is devoured by breath,
 eyes in eyes and lips on lips!
 Then art thou to me
 what aye thou wert and wilt be!
 Then fadeth the fever of doubt
 if now Brünnhild' be mine.
(He has embraced her.)

Brünnhilde

If I be thine?
 Godlike repose now rages in tumult;
 chastest light reddens with passion:
 heavenly wisdom flyeth afar;
 love's cry of rapture hunts it from hence!
 If I be thine? Siegfried! Siegfried!
 Seest thou me not?
 When my eyes on thee blaze,
 then art thou not blind?
 When my arm enfolds thee,
 then art thou not burned?
 When my surging blood
 toward thee doth stream,
 the raging fire feelest thou not?
 Fearest thou, Siegfried,
(She embraces him impetuously.)

Siegfried

(in joyful surprise)
 Ha! As my blood to flame is enkindled,
 as mine eyes now feed on the glances,
 as my arms with fervor unfold thee,
 comes back to me my dauntless heart,
 and the fear that—ah!—I have failed to learn,
 the fear that thou scarce couldst bring to me:
 meseemeth that fear
 has faded away like a dream.
*(With the last words he has involuntarily let go
 of Brünnhilde.)*

Brünnhilde

(with wild, joyful laughter)
 Oh, child of delight! Oh, glorious hero!
 Thou foolish lord of loftiest deeds!
 Laughing must I love thee,
 laughing welcome my blindness,
 laughing let us be lost,
 with laughter go down to death!

Siegfried

Laughing thou wakest in gladness to me!

Brünnhilde

Farewell, Walhall's light-giving world!
 Thy stately towers let fall in dust!
 Farewell, glittering pomp of gods!
 End in bliss, o eternal host!
 Now rend, ye Norns, your rope of runes!
 Dusk of gods in darkness arise!
 Night of their downfall dawn in mist!
 Now streams toward me Siegfried's star:
 he is forever, is for aye
 my wealth and world, my one and all:

Siegfried

Brünnhilde lives, Brünnhilde laughs!
 Hail, o day that shineth around us!
 Hail, o sun that lighteth our way!
 Hail, o light that hast risen from night!
 Hail, o world where Brünnhilde lives!
 She wakes, she lives,
 she greets me with laughter:
 proudly streameth Brünnhilde's star!
 She is forever, is for aye
 my wealth and world, my one and all!

Both

Light of loving, laughing death!
 Light of loving, laughing death:
 light of loving, laughing death!
(Brünnhilde throws herself in Siegfried's arms.)

(The curtain falls.)

Glossary

aught — anything
 aye — always, forever
 birny — a type of armor
 boot — to profit, benefit
 bruin — a bear
 churl — vulgar person
 craven — coward
 fain — gladly, willingly
 fell — fierce
 fell — a barren hill or highland (The place
 where Brünnhilde sleeps)
 fly — to flee
 froward — rebellious, disobedient
 gage — an item offered in pledge
 gloaming — twilight

greaves — a type of leg armor
 guerdon — payment, reward
 haft — handle (of a spear)
 haply — perhaps
 hest — command, bidding
 hie — to hurry
 lay — song
 meeter — better suited
 mien — expression
 mite — a small creature
 moil — hard work
 Neidhöle — name of the cave where Fafner
 guards the hoard
 Norns — daughters of Erda, goddesses of fate
 Nothung — name of Siegfried's sword, literally
 "needful"
 prate — to talk idly
 rede — advice; story
 reft — stolen, deprived
 rend — to tear apart
 rune — secret
 shew — to show
 shiver — to shatter
 shivers — small pieces
 sooth — truth
 stead — to help, to be of use
 thrall — slave; slavery
 trammeling — confining
 tristful — sad
 trow — to believe
 twain — two
 unholpen — without help
 wala — an earth spirit (in the Ring operas, "the
 wala" is Erda)
 Walhall — Valhalla
 Wälse — name used by Wotan as father of
 Siegmund and Sieglinde
 Wälsung — descendant of Wälse (Siegfried is a
 Wälsung)
 ween — to imagine, believe
 wend — to travel, go
 wight — creature, person
 withall — besides
 wonted — accustomed

English translation by Frederick Jameson