

THE RHINEGOLD & THE VALKYRIE



ILLUSTRATED BY
ARTHUR RACKHAM

NY PUBLIC LIBRARY THE BRANCH LIBRARIES

3 3333 08102 8116



LIB
J782
Wagner

REFERENCE

A34651

T-10
Biology
1900



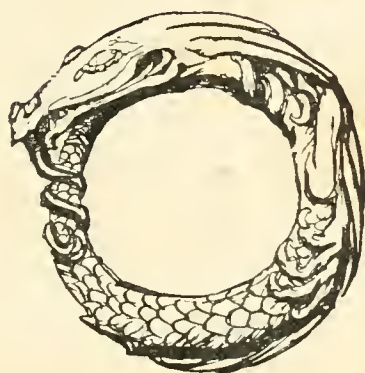




Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/rhinegoldvalkyri00wagn>

THE RING OF THE NIBLUNG



THE RHINEGOLD : PRELUDE
THE VALKYRIE : FIRST DAY OF THE TRILOGY
SIEGFRIED : SECOND DAY OF THE TRILOGY
THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS : THIRD
DAY OF THE TRILOGY

Books Illustrated by Arthur Rackham

Uniform with this volume,

15s. net each.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. By
William Shakespeare.

RIP VAN WINKLE. By Washington Irving.

THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS OF MIRTH AND
MARVELS. By Thomas Ingoldsby, Esq.

Also

UNDINE. By De la Motte Fouqué. Adapted
from the German by W. L. Courtney.

*With 15 Coloured and many Text Illustrations,
crown 4to. Price 7s. 6d. net.*

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.
By Lewis Carroll. With a Proem by
Austin Dobson.

*With 12 Coloured and several Text Illustrations,
crown 8vo. Price 6s. net.*

LONDON : WILLIAM HEINEMANN, 21 BEDFORD STREET, W.C.

THE RING
OF THE NIBLUNG
A TRILOGY WITH A PRE-
LUDE BY RICHARD WAGNER

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
MARGARET ARMOUR

I



“Raging, Wotan
Rides to the rock !

· · · · ·
Like a storm-wind he comes ! ”

See p. 143

THE · RHINECOLD & · THE · VALKYRIE

BY · RICHARD · WAGNER
WITH · ILLUSTRATIONS
BY · ARTHUR · RACKHAM



TRANSLATED · BY · MARGARET · ARMOUR

LONDON 222 WILLIAM · HEINEMANN
NEW · YORK 222 DOUBLEDAY · PAGE · & · CO

1910

All rights reserved

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

" Raging, Wotan Rides to the rock !	To face page
Like a storm-wind he comes !"	Frontispiece
The frolic of the Rhine-Maidens	4
The Rhine-Maidens teasing Alberich	10
" Mock away ! Mock ! The Niblung makes for your toy !"	14
" Seize the despoiler ! Rescue the gold ! Help us ! Help us ! Woe ! Woe !"	16
Freia, the fair one	22
" The Rhine's pure-gleaming children Told me of their sorrow "	28
Fasolt suddenly seizes Freia and drags her to one side with Fafner	32
The Gods grow wan and aged at the loss of Freia	34
Mime, howling. " Ohé ! Ohé ! Oh ! Oh !"	38
Mime writhes under the lashes he receives	40
Alberich drives in a band of Niblungs laden with gold and silver treasure	44
" Ohé ! Ohé ! Horrible dragon, O swallow me not ! Spare the life of poor Loge !"	50

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	To face page
" Hey ! Come hither, And stop me this cranny ! "	64
" Erda bids thee beware "	66
Fafner kills Fasolt	68
" To my hammer's swing Hitherward sweep Vapours and fogs ! Hovering mists ! Donner, your lord, summons his hosts ! "	70
" The Rhine's fair children, Bewailing their lost gold, weep "	72
" This healing and honeyed Draught of mead Deign to accept from me. "	
" Set it first to thy lips "	80
Hunding discovers the likeness between Siegmund and Sieglinde	82
Sieglinde prepares Hunding's draught for the night	88
" Siegmund the Wälsung Thou dost see ! As bride-gift He brings thee this sword "	100
Brünnhilde	102
Fricka approaches in anger	104
Brünnhilde slowly and silently leads her horse down the path to the cave	110
" Father ! Father ! Tell me what ails thee ? With dismay thou art filling thy child ! "	112

"

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	To face page
Brünnhilde stands for a long time dazed and alarmed	118
Brünnhilde with her horse, at the mouth of the cave	122
" I flee for the first time And am pursued : Warfather follows close He pears, he nears, in fury ! Save this woman ! Sisters, your help ! "	138
" There as a dread Dragon he sojourns, And in a cave Keeps watch over Alberich's ring "	142
The ride of the Valkyries	148
" Appear, flickering fire, Encircle the rock with thy flame ! Loge ! Loge ! Appear ! "	156
As he moves slowly away, Wotan turns and looks sorrowfully back at Brünnhilde	158
The sleep of Brünnhilde	160







THE RHINEGOLD



CHARACTERS

GODS : WOTAN, DONNER, FROH, LOGE

NIBELUNGS : ALBERICH, MIME

GIANTS : FASOLT, FAFNER

GODDESSES : FRICKA, FREIA, ERDA

RHINE-MAIDENS : WOGLINDE, WELLGUNDE, FLOSSHILDE

SCENES OF ACTION

I. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RHINE

II. OPEN SPACE ON A MOUNTAIN HEIGHT NEAR THE RHINE

III. THE SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS OF NIBELHEIM

IV. OPEN SPACE AS IN SCENE II.





FIRST SCENE

At the bottom of the Rhine

A greenish twilight, lighter above than below. The upper part is filled with undulating water, which streams restlessly from right to left. Towards the bottom the waves resolve themselves into a mist which grows finer as it descends, so that a space, as high as a man's body from the ground, appears to be quite free from the water, which floats like a train of clouds over the gloomy stretch below. Steep rocky peaks jut up everywhere from the depths, and enclose the entire stage. The ground is a wild confusion of jagged rocks, no part of it being quite level, and on every side deeper fissures are indicated by a still denser gloom. Woglinde circles with graceful swimming movements round the central rock.

Woglinde

**Weia ! Waga !
Roll, O ye billows,
Rock ye our cradle !
Wagala weia !
Wallala, weiala, weia !**

Wellgunde

From above.

Woglinde, watchest alone ?

Woglinde

If Wellgunde came we were two.

Wellgunde

Dives down to the rock.

How keepest thou watch ?

Woglinde

Swimming off, eludes her.

Wary of thee.

[They playfully tease and chase one another.]

Flosshilde

From above.

**Heiaha weia !
Ho ! ye wild sisters !**

THE RHINEGOLD

Wellgunde

Flosshilde, swim !
Woglinde flies :
Help me to hinder her flying.

Flosshilde
*Dives down be-
tween the two
at play.*

The sleeping gold
Badly ye guard ;
Watch with more zeal
The slumberer's bed,
Or dear you'll pay for your sport !

*[They swim asunder with merry cries. Floss-
hilde tries to catch first the one, then the other.
They elude her, and then combine to chase
her, darting like fish from rock to rock with
jest and laughter. Meanwhile Alberich
climbs out of a dark ravine on to a rock.
He pauses, still surrounded by darkness, and
watches the frolic of the Rhine-Maidens
with increasing pleasure.]*

Alberich

Hey, hey ! ye nixies !
Ye are a lovely,
Lovable folk !
From Nibelheim's night
Fain would I come,
Would ye be kind to me.

*[The maidens, as soon as they hear Alberich's
voice, stop playing.]*

Woglinde

Hei ! Who is there ?

Wellgunde

A voice ! It grows dark !

Flosshilde

Who listens below ?

[They dive down and see the Nibelung.]

Woglinde
and Wellgunde

Fie ! the loathsome one !

The frolic of the Rhine-Maidens

See p. 4



THE RHINEGOLD

Flosshilde
*Swimming
up quickly.*

Look to the gold !
Father warned us
Of such a foe.

*[Both the others follow her, and all three
gather quickly round the central rock.]*

Alberich

You above there !

The Three
Rhine-Maidens

What wouldst thou below there ?

Alberich

Do I spoil sport
By standing and gazing here ?
Dived ye but deeper,
Fain the Niblung
Would join in your frolic and play.

Wellgunde

He wishes to join us ?

Woglinde

Is he in jest ?

Alberich

Ye gleam above me
So glad and fair !
If one would only
Glide down, how close in my arms
Fondly clasped she would be !

Flosshilde

I laugh at my fears :
The foe is in love.

Wellgunde

The amorous imp !

Woglinde

Let us approach him.

*[She sinks down to the top of the rock, whose
base Alberich has reached.]*

Alberich

Lo ! one of them comes !

Woglinde

Climb up to me here !

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich
*Climbs with
gnome-like agility,
though with re-
peated checks, to
the summit of the
rock. Irritably.*

Horrid rock,
So slippery, slimy !
I slide and slip !
My hands and feet vainly
Attempt to hold on
To the slithery surface !
Vapour damp
Fills up my nostrils—
Accursed sneezing !

[He has got near Woglinde.]

Woglinde
Laughing.

Sneezing tells
That my suitor comes !

Alberich

Be thou my love !
Adorable child !

[He tries to embrace her.]

Woglinde
Escaping from him.

Here thou must woo,
If woo me thou wilt !

[She swims up to another rock.]

Alberich
*Scratching his
head.*

Alas ! not yet caught ?
Come but closer !
Hard I found
What so lightly thou didst.

Woglinde
*Swims to a third
rock lower down.*

Deeper descend :
Thou'lt certainly seize me !

Alberich
Clambers down quickly.

Down there it is better !

Woglinde
Darts upwards to a higher rock at the side.

But better still higher !

Wellgunde
and Flosshilde
Laughing.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich How capture this coy,
Elusive fish?
Wait for me, false one!
[*He tries to climb after her in haste.*

Wellgunde Heia! my friend there!
 Has sunk down to Dost thou not hear?
 a lower rock on the other side.

Alberich What? Didst thou call?
 Turning round.

Wellgunde Be counselled by me:
Forsake Woglinde,
Climb up to me now!

Alberich Thou art more comely
 Climbs hastily Far than that coy one;
 over the river- Her sheen is duller,
 bottom towards Her skin too smooth.
 Wellgunde. But thou must deeper
 Dive to delight me!

Wellgunde Well, now am I near?
 Sinking down till she is a little nearer him.

Alberich Not near enough.
Thine arms around me
Tenderly throw,
That I may fondle
Thy neck with my fingers,
And closely may cling
To thy bosom with love and with longing.

Wellgunde Art thou in love?
For love art thou pining?
Approach and show me
Thy face and thy form.
Fie! thou horrible
Hunchback, for shame!

THE RHINEGOLD

Swarthy, horny-skinned
Rogue of a dwarf!
Find thou a sweetheart
Fonder than I!

Alberich
*Tries to detain her
by force.*

I may not be fair,
But fast I can hold!

Wellgunde
Swimming up quickly to the middle rock.

Hold firm, or I will escape!

Loglinde
and Flosshilde
Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alberich
*Angrily
calling after
Wellgunde.*

Fickle maid!
Bony, cold-blooded fish!
Fair if I seem not,
Pretty and playful,
Smooth and sleek—
Hei! if I am so loathsome
Give thy love to the eels!

Flosshilde

What ails thee, dwarf?
Daunted so soon?
Though two have been wooed,
Still a third waits thee,
Solace sweet
Fain at a word to grant!

Alberich

Soothing song
Sounds in my ear!
'Twas well I found
Three and not one!
The chance is I charm one of many,
Whilst, single, no one would choose me!
Hither come gliding,
And I will believe!

THE RHINEGOLD

Flosshilde
*Dives down to
Alberich.*

How senseless are ye,
Silly sisters,
Not to see he is fair !

Alberich
*Hastening
towards her.*

I well may deem them
Dull and ill-favoured,
Seeing how lovely thou art !

Flosshilde

Sing on ! Thy song,
So soft and sweet,
Entrancing sounds in my ear !

Alberich
*Carefing
her with
confidence.*

My heart burns
And flutters and fails,
Flattered by praises so sweet !

Flosshilde
*Gently
resisting
him.*

Thy grace and beauty
Make glad my eye ;
And thy smile refreshes
My soul like balm !

[She draws him tenderly towards her.]

Dearest of men !

Alberich

Sweetest of maids !

Flosshilde

Wert thou but mine !

Alberich

Wert mine for ever !

Flosshilde
Ardently.

To be pierced by thy glance,
To be pricked by thy beard,
To see and to feel them for aye !
Might thy hair hard as bristles
Flow ever more
Enraptured Flosshilde wreathing !
And thy form like a frog's,
And the croak of thy voice—
O could I, dumb with amaze,
Marvel forever on these !

THE RHINEGOLD

Woglinde
and Wellgunde

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Dive down close to them and laugh.

Alberich
Starting in alarm.

Wretches, dare ye thus scoff?

Flosshilde

A suitable end to the song.

Suddenly darting away from him. [She swims up quickly with her sisters.

Maglinda
and Mellgunde
Laughing.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Alberich
In a waiting voice.

Woe's me ! Ah, woe's me !

Alas ! Alas !

The third one, so dear,

Does she too betray?

O sly and shameful

Worthless and dissolute wantons !

Live ye on lies

Alone, O ye false nixie brood?

The Three Rhine-Maidens

Wallala ! Wallala !

Lalalelai leialalei !

Heia ! Heia ! ha ! ha !

Shame on thee goblin,

Scolding down yonder !

Cease, and do as we bid thee!

Faint-hearted wooer,

Why couldst not hold

The maid, when won, more fast?

True are we,

And troth we keep

With lovers when once caught.

Grasp then and hold ;

Away with all fear !

In the waves we scarce can escape.

Wallala !

c

The Rhine-Maidens teasing Alberich

.



THE RHINEGOLD

Lalaleia! Leialalei!
Heia! Heia! Ha heil

[They swim apart hither and thither, now lower, now higher, to provoke Alberich to give chase.]

Alberich

Fiercely within me
Passionate fires
Consume and flame!
Love and fury,
Wild, resistless,
Lash me to frenzy!
So laugh and lie your fill—
One of you I desire,
And one must yield to my yearning!

[He starts chasing them with desperate energy. He climbs with terrible agility, and, springing from rock to rock, tries to catch one maiden after another. They keep eluding him with mocking laughter. He stumbles and falls into the abyss, and clammers up quickly again and resumes the chase. They sink down a little towards him; he almost reaches them, but falls back again, and once more tries to catch them. At last he pauses out of breath, and, foaming with rage, stretches his clenched fist up towards the maidens.]

Alberich

If but this fist had one!

[He remains speechless with rage, gazing upwards, when he is suddenly attracted and arrested by the following spectacle. Through the water a light of continually increasing brilliance breaks from above, and, at a point near the top of the middle rock, kindles to a radiant and dazzling golden gleam. A magical light streams from this through the waves.]

THE RHINEGOLD

Woglinde Look, sisters !
The wakener laughs to the deep.

Wellgunde Through the billows green
The blissful slumberer greets.

Flosshilde He kisses the eyelid,
Making it open ;
Bathed in splendour,
Behold it smiles,
Sending, like a star,
Gleaming light through the waves.

The Three
Rhine-Maidens
*Swimming
gracefully
round the
cliff together.*

Heia jaheia !
Heia jaheia !
Wallala la la la leia jahei !
Rhinegold !
Rhinegold !
Radiant delight,
How glorious and glad thy smile,
Over the water
Shooting effulgence afar !
Heia jahei !
Heia jaheia !
Waken, friend !
Wake in joy !
That we may please thee,
Merry we'll play,
Waters afire,
Billows aflame,
As, blissfully bathing,
Dancing and singing,
We dive and encircle thy bed !
Rhinegold !
Rhinegold !
Heia jaheia !

THE RHINEGOLD

Heia jaheia!

Wallala la la la heia jahei!

[With increasing mirthful abandonment the maidens swim round the rock. The water is filled with a glimmering golden light.]

Alberich

Whose eyes,

strongly attracted by the radiance, stare fixedly at the gold.

What is it, sleek ones,
That yonder gleams and shines?

The Three

Rhine-Maidens?

Where dost thou hail from, O churl,
Of the Rhinegold not to have heard?

Wellgunde

Knows not the elf
Of the famed eye golden
That wakes and sleeps in turn?

Woglinde

Of the star resplendent
Down in the depths
Whose light illumines the waves?

The Three

Rhine-Maidens

Together.

See how gaily
We glide in the glory!
Wouldst thou also
Be bathed in brightness,
Come, float and frolic with us!
Wallala la la leia lalei!
Wallala la la leia jahei!

Alberich

Has the gold no value
Apart from your games?
It were not worth getting!

Woglinde

He would not scoff,
Scorning the gold,
Did he but know all its wonders!

Wellgunde

That man surely
The earth would inherit

THE RHINEGOLD

Who from the Rhinegold
Fashioned the ring
Which measureless power imparts.

Flosshilde Our father told us,
 And strictly bade us
 Guard with prudence
 The precious hoard
That no thief from the water might steal it.
Be still, then, chattering fools.

Wellgunde O prudent sister,
 Why chide and reproach?
 Hast thou not heard
 That one alone
Can hope to fashion the gold?

Hoglinde Only the man
 Who love defies,
 Only the man
 From love who flies
Can learn and master the magic
That makes a ring of the gold.

Wellgunde Secure then are we
 And free from care:
For love is part of living;
No one would live without loving.

Hoglinde And least of all he,
 The languishing elf,
 With pangs of love
 Pining away.

Flosshilde I fear him not
 Who should surely know,
 By his savage lust
 Almost inflamed.

"Mock away! Mock!
The Niblung makes for your toy!"
See p. 15



THE RHINEGOLD

Wellgunde

A brimstone brand
In the surging waves,
In lovesick frenzy
Hissing loud.

The Three
Rhine-Maidens
Together.

Wallala ! Wallaleia la la !
Join in our laughter,
Lovable elf !
In the golden glory
How gallant thy sheen !
O come, lovely one, laugh as we laugh !
Heia jaheia !
Heia jaheia !
Wallala la la la leia jahei !

[They swim, laughing, backwards and forwards in the light.]

Alberich

*His eyes fixed
on the gold,
has listened
attentively to
the sisters' rapid
chatter.*

Could I truly
The whole earth inherit through thee?
If love be beyond me
My cunning could compass delight?
[In a terribly loud voice.]
Mock away ! Mock !
The Niblung makes for your toy !

*[Raging he springs on to the middle rock, and
climbers to the top. The maidens scatter,
screaming, and swim upwards on different
sides.]*

The Three
Rhine-Maidens

Heia ! Heia ! heia jahei !
Save yourselves !
The elf is distraught !
Swirling waters splash
At every leap :
The creature's crazy with love !
Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich

*Reaching the top
with a last spring.*

Still undismayed?
Go, wanton in darkness,
Water-born brood!

[He stretches his hand out towards the gold.]

My hand quenches your light;
I tear the gold from the rock;
Forged be the ring for revenge!
Bear witness, ye floods—
I forswear love and curse it!

[He tears the gold from the rock with terrific force, and immediately plunges with it into the depths, where he quickly disappears. Sudden darkness envelops the scene. The maidens dive down after the robber.]

**The Three
Rhine-Maidens**

Seize the despoiler!
Rescue the gold!
Help us! Help us!
Woe! Woe!

[The water sinks with them. From the lowest depth Alberich's shrill, mocking laughter rings up. The rocks are hidden by impenetrable darkness. The whole stage from top to bottom is filled with black waves, which for some time appear to sink even lower.]



**"Seize the despoiler !
Rescue the gold !
Help us ! Help us !
Woe ! Woe !"**

See p. 16





SECOND SCENE

Fricka **Wotan ! My lord ! Awaken !**
*Awakes ; her gaze falls on the castle , which has
become plainly visible ; alarmed.*

Fricka Up from deceitful
Shakes him. Bliss of a dream !
My husband, wake and consider !

17

THE RHINEGOLD

Fricka

While thou rejoicest,
Joyless am I.
Thou hast thy hall;
My heart fears for Freia.
Heedless one, hast thou forgotten
The price that was to be paid?
The work is finished,
And forfeit the pledge:
Hast thou then no care for the cost?

Wotan

My bargain well I remember
With them who built the abode.
'Twas a pact tamed them,
The obstinate race,
So that this hallowed
Hall they have built me.
It stands—the strong ones' doing:—
Fret not thou, counting the cost.

Fricka

O laughing, insolent lightness!
Mirth how cruel and callous!
Had I but known of thy pact,
The trick had never been played;
But far from your counsels
Ye men kept the women,
That, deaf to us and in peace,
Alone ye might deal with the giants.
So without shame
Ye promised them Freia,
Freia, my beautiful sister,
Proud of playing the thief.
What remains holy
Or precious to men
Once grown greedy of might?

Wotan
Calmly.

From such greed
Was Fricka then free
Herself when the castle she craved?

THE RHINEGOLD

Fricka

I was forced to ponder some means
To keep my husband faithful,
True to me when his fancy
Tempted him far from his home.

Halls high and stately,
Decked to delight thee,
Were to constrain thee
To peaceful repose.

But thou hadst the work designed
Intent on war alone ;

It was to add
More to thy might still,
To stir up to tumult still fiercer
That built were the towering walls

Wotan
Smiling.

Wouldst thou, O Wife !
In the castle confine me,
To me, the god, must be granted,
Faithful at home,
The right to wage war
And conquer the world from without.
Ranging and changing
All men love :
That sport at least thou must leave me.

Fricka

Cold, hard-hearted,
Merciless man !
For the idle baubles,
Empire and sway,
Thou stakest in insolent scorn
Love and a woman's worth !

Wotan

When I went wooing, to win thee
I staked ungrudging,
Gladly one of my eyes :
What folly now then to scold !

Women I honour
Beyond thy desire !
I will not abandon
Frei, the fair :
Such never was my intent.

Frcia
*Enters as if
flying from
some one.*

Help me, sister !
Shield me, O brother !
From yonder mountain
Menaces Fasolt :
He comes to bear me off captive.

Fricka To this tricky deceiver
 O why wilt thou trust?
 He always snares thee anew,
 Though from his snares thou hast suffered.

Fricka And art left in the lurch.
 The giants come.
 Lo ! hither they stride :
 Where lingers now thine ally ?

THE RHINEGOLD

- Freia** Where tarry ye, my brothers,
 When help ye should bring me,
Weak and bartered away by my kin?
 O help me, Donner!
 Hither! Hither!
Rescue Freia, my Froh!
- Fricka** Now the knaves who plotted and tricked
 thee
Abandon thee in thy need.
*[Fasolt and Fafner, both of gigantic stature,
enter, armed with stout clubs.]*
- Fasolt** Soft sleep
 Sealed thine eyes
 While we, both sleepless,
Built the castle walls:
 Working hard
 Wearied not,
 Heaping, heaving
 Heavy stones.
 Tower steep,
 Door and gate
 Keep and guard
Thy goodly castle halls.
[Pointing to the castle.]
 There stands
 What we builded,
 Shining fair
 Beneath the sun.
 Enter in
And pay the price!
- Wotan** Name, Workers, your wage.
What payment will appease you?
- Fasolt** We made the terms
 That seemed to us meet.

THE RHINEGOLD

Hast thou forgot so soon?
Freia, the fair one,
Holda, the free one—
The bargain is
We bear her away.

Wotan
Quickly.

Ye must be mad
To moot such a thing!
Ask some other wage;
Freia I will not grant.

Hasolt
*Stands for a
space speechless
with angry
surprise.*

What is this? Ha!
Wouldest deceive?—
Go back on thy bond?
What thy spear wards
Are they but sport,
All the runes of solemn bargain?

Hafner

O trusty brother!
Fool, dost now see the trick?

Hasolt

Son of light,
Light, unstable,
Hearken! Have a care!
In treaties keep thou troth!
What thou art
Thou art only by treaties,
For, built on bonds,
There are bounds to thy might.
Though cunning thou,
More clever than we:
Though we once freemen,
Are pledged to peace,
Cursèd be all thy wisdom;—
Peaceful promises perish!—
Wilt thou not open,
Honest and frank

Freia, the fair one



THE RHINEGOLD

Stand fast by a bargain once fixed.

A stupid giant

Tells thee this :

O wise one, take it from him !

Wotan

How sly to judge us serious

When plainly we were but jesting !

The beautiful Goddess

Light and bright—

For churls what charm could she have ?

Wasolt

Jeerest thou ?

Ha ! how unjust !

Ye who by beauty rule,

Proud and radiant race !

How foolish, striving

For towers of stone,

Woman's love to pledge—

Price of walls and of halls !

We dolts, despising ease,

Sweating with toil-hardened hands,

Have worked, that a woman

With gentle delight

In our midst might sojourn

And ye call the pact a jest ?

Wagner

Cease thy childish chatter ;

No gain look we to get.

Freia's charms

Mean little ;

But it means much,

If from the Gods we remove her.

Golden apples

Ripen within her garden ;

She alone

Grows the apples and tends them.

The goodly fruit

THE RHINEGOLD

Gives to her kinsfolk,
Who eat thereof,
Youth everlasting.
Sick and pale,
Their beauty would perish,
Old and weak,
Wasting away,
Were not Freia among them.
[Roughly.
From their midst, therefore, Freia must
forth !

Wotan
Aside.

Loge lingers long !

Fasolt

We wait for thy word !

Wotan

Ask some other wage !

Fasolt

No other : Freia alone !

Fafner

Thou there, follow us !

[Fafner and Fasolt press towards Freia.
Froh and Donner enter in haste.

Freia

Help ! Help from the harsh ones !

Froh

*Clasping Freia
in his arms.*

To me, Freia !

[To Fafner.

Back, overbold one !

Froh shields the fair one !

Donner

*Confronting
the giants.*

Fasolt and Fafner,

Have ye not felt

With what weight my hammer falls ?

Fafner

What means thy threat ?

Fasolt

What wouldst thou here ?

No strife we desire ;

We want but our due reward.

THE RHINEGOLD

Donner

Oft I've doled out
Giants their due :
Come, your reward is here
Waiting, full measure and more !
[He swings his hammer.]

Wotan

*Stretching out
his spear between
the combatants.*

Hold, thou fierce one !
Nothing by force !
All bonds and treaties
My spear protects ;
Spare then thy hammer's haft !

Fria

Woe's me ! Woe's me !
Wotan forsakes me !

Fricka

Can such be thy thought,
Merciless man ?

Wotan

*Turns away
and sees Loge
coming.*

There comes Loge !
Hot is thy haste
Smoothly to settle
Thy sorry, badly-made bargain !

Loge

*Has come
up out of the
valley in the
background.*

What is this bargain
That I am blamed for ?—
The one with the giants
That thou thyself didst decide ?
O'er hill and o'er hollow
Drives me my whim ;
House and hearth
I do not crave.
Donner and Froh,
They dream but of roof and room :
Wedding, must have
A home in which to dwell,
A stately hall,
A fortress fast.

THE RHINEGOLD

It was such Wotan wished.
Hall and house,
Castle, court,
The blissful abode
Now stands complete and strong.
I proved the lordly
Pile myself;
In fear of flaws,
Scanning it close.
Fasolt and Fafner
Faithful I found;
Firm-bedded is each stone.
I was not slothful
Like many here:
Who calls me sluggard, he lies!

Wotan

Cunningly
Thou wouldst escape!
Warned be, and wisely
Turn from attempts to deceive.
Of all the Gods
I alone stood by thee
As thy friend,
In the gang that trusted thee not.
Now speak, and to the point!
For when the builders at first
As wage Freia demanded,
I gave way only,
Trusting thy word
When thou didst solemnly promise
To ransom the noble pledge.

Loge

Perplexed to puzzle,
Plans to ponder
For its redeeming—
That promise I gave;

THE RHINEGOLD

But to discover
What cannot be,
What none can do,
No man can possibly promise.

Hricka See the treacherous
Rogue thou didst trust !

Hrob Named art Loge,
But liar I call thee !

Donner Accursèd flame,
I will quench thy fire !

Loge From their shame to shelter,
Foolish folk flout me.

[Donner threatens to strike Loge.]

Hotan Forbear and let him alone !
Stepping Ye wot not Loge's wiles.
between them. His advice,
Given slowly, gains
Both in weight and in worth.

Hafner Do not dally ;
Promptly pay !

Hasolt Long waits our reward.

Hotan Speak up surly one !
Turns sternly Fail me not !
to Loge. How far hast thou ranged and roamed ?

Loge Still with reproach
Is Loge paid !
Concerned but for thee,
Thorough and swift,
I searched and ransacked
To the ends of the earth

THE RHINEGOLD

To find a ransom for Freia
Fair to the giants and just.
In vain the search,
Convincing at last
That the world contains
Nothing so sweet

That a man will take it instead
Of woman's love and delight.

[All seem surprised and taken aback.]

Where life moves and has being,
In water, earth and air

I questioned,
Asking of all things,
Where weak still is strength,
And germs only stirring,
What men thought dear—
And stronger deemed—
Than woman's love and delight.
But where life moves and has being
My questions met
But with laughter and scorn.
In water, earth and air
Woman and love
Will none forego.

[Varied gestures of amazement.]

One man, one only,
I met who, renouncing love,
Prized ruddy gold
Above any woman's grace.
The Rhine's pure-gleaming children
Told me of their sorrow.

The Nibelung,
Night-Alberich,
Wooed for the favour
Of the swimmers in vain,
And vengeance took,

"The Rhine's pure-gleaming children
Told me of their sorrow"

See p. 28



THE RHINEGOLD

Stealing the Rhinegold they guard.
He thinks it now
A thing beyond price,
Greater than woman's grace.
For their glittering toy
Thus torn from the deep
The sorrowful maids lamented.
They pray, Wotan,
Pleading to thee,
That thy wrath may fall on the robber;
The gold too
They would have thee grant them
To guard in the water for ever.
Loge promised
The maidens to tell thee,
And, keeping faith, he has told.

Wotan

Dull thou must be
Or downright knavish !
In parlous plight myself,
What help have I for others ?

Fasolt

*Who has been
listening atten-
tively, to Fafner.*

The Niblung has much annoyed us ;
I greatly grudge him this Rhinegold ;
But such his craft and cunning,
He has never been caught.

Fafner

Other malice
Ponders the Niblung ;
Gains he might from gold
Listen, Loge !
Tell us the truth.
What wondrous gift has the gold,
That the dwarf desires it so ?

Loge

A plaything,
In the waves providing
Children with laughter and sport,

THE RHINEGOLD

It gives, when to golden
Ring it is rounded,
Power and might unmatched;
It wins its owner the world.

Wotan
Thoughtfully.

Rumours I have heard
Of the Rhinegold;
Runes of riches
Hide in its ruddy glow;
Pelf and power
Are by the ring bestowed.

Fricka
Softly to Loge.

Could this gaud,
This gleaming trinket
Forged from the gold,
Be worn by a woman too?

Loge

The wife who wore
That glittering charm
Never would lose
Her husband's love—
That charm which dwarfs are welding,
Working in thrall to the ring.

Fricka
Coaxingly to Wotan.

O could but my husband
Come by the ring!

Wotan
*As if falling
more and more
under the influence
of a spell.*

Methinks it were wisdom,
Won I the ring to my service.
But say, Loge,
How shall I learn
To forge and fashion it true?

Loge

A magic rune
Can round the golden ring.
No one knows it,
Yet plain the spell to him
Who happy love forswears.

[Wotan turns away in annoyance.]

THE RHINEGOLD

That suits thee not ;
Thou art too late too.

Alberich did not delay ;
Fearless he mastered
The potent spell,

[Harshly.]

And wrought aright was the ring.

Donner
To Wotan

We should all be
Under the dwarf,
Were not the ring from him wrested.

Wotan

The ring I must capture !

Froh

Lightly now,
Without cursing love it were won.

Loge
Harshly.

Just so :
Without guile, as in children's games !

Wotan

Then tell us how.

Loge

By theft !
What a thief stole
Steal thou from the thief ;
How better could object be won ?
But with baleful arms
Battles Alberich.
Wary, wise
Must be thy scheming,
If the thief thou wouldst confound,
[With warmth.]

And restore the ruddy
And golden toy,
The Rhinegold, to the maidens.
For this they pray and implore.

Wotan

The river-maidens ?
What profit were mine ?

THE RHINEGOLD

Fricka

Of that billow-born brood
Bring me no tidings,
For they have wooed
To my woe
Full many a man to their caves.

[Wotan stands silent, struggling with himself. The other Gods gaze at him in mute suspense. Fafner, meanwhile, has been consulting aside with Fasolt.]

Fafner
To Fasolt

Worth far more than Freia
Were the glittering gold.
Eternal youth, too, were his
Who could use the charm in its
quest.

[Fasolt's gestures indicate that he is being convinced against his will. Fafner and Fasolt approach Wotan again.]

Fafner

Hear, Wotan,
Our word while we wait ;
Freia we will restore you,
And will take
Paltrier payment :
The Niblung's red-gleaming gold
Will guerdon us giants rude.

Wotan

Ye must be mad !
With what I possess not
How can I, shameless ones, pay you ?

Fafner

Hard labour
Went to those walls ;
How easy
With fraud-aided force
(What our malice never achieved)
The Niblung to break and bind !

Fasolt suddenly seizes Freia and drags her to one side
with Fafner

See p. 33



THE RHINEGOLD

Wotan
More quickly.

Why should I make
War on the Niblung?—
Fight, your foe to confound?
Insolent
And greedily grasping
Dolts you grow through my debt!

Fasolt
*Suddenly seizes
Freia and drags
her to one side
with Fasner.*

Maiden, come!
We claim thee ours!
As pledge thou shalt be held
Till the ransom is paid.

Freia
Screaming.

Woe's me! Woe's me! Woe!

Fasner

From your midst
We bear her forth!
Till evening—mark it well!—
As a pledge she is ours.
We will return then.
But when we come,
If the Rhinegold be not ready,
The Rhinegold bright and red—

Fasolt

The respite is ended,
Freia is forfeit
And bides among us for aye!

Freia

Sister! Brothers!
Save me! Help!

[The giants hasten off, dragging Freia with them.]

Froh

Up! Follow fast!

Donner

Fall now the heavens!

[They look inquiringly at Wotan.]

Freia
In the distance.

Save me! Help!

THE RHINEGOLD

Loge
*Looking after
the giants.*

Downward over stock and stone
Striding they go ;
Through the ford across the Rhine
Wade now the robbers.
Sad at heart
Hangs Freia,
Thrown rudely over rough shoulders !
Heia ! hei !
The louts, how they lumber along !
Through the Rhine valley they reel.
Not till Riesenheim's march
Is reached will they rest !

[He turns to the Gods.]

How darkly Wotan doth dream !
What ails the high, happy Gods ?

*[A pale mist, gradually increasing in density,
fills the stage. Seen through it the Gods
look more and more wan and aged. All
stand in dismay and apprehension regard-
ing Wotan, whose eyes are fixed broodingly
on the ground.]*

Loge

Does a mist mock me ?
Tricks me a dream ?
Dismayed and wan,
How swiftly ye fade !
Lo ! the bloom forsakes your cheeks,
And quenched is the light of your eyes !
Courage, Froh !
Day's but begun !
From thy hand, Donner,
The hammer is falling !
And why frets Fricka ?
Sees she with sorrow
That Wotan's hair, growing grey,
Has made him gloomy and old ?

The Gods grow wan and aged at the loss of Freia

See p. 34



THE RHINEGOLD

Fricka

Woe's me ! Woe's me !
What does it mean ?

Donner

My hand sinks down.

Froh

My heart stands still.

Hoge

I have it : hear what ye lack !

Of Freia's fruit

Ye have not partaken to-day.

The golden apples

Within her garden

Restored you your strength and your
youth,

Ate ye thereof each day.

The garden's guardian

In pledge has been given.

On the branches dries

And droops the fruit,

To drop soon and decay.

My loss is lighter,

For still did Freia,

Stingy to me,

Stint the delectable fruit.

Not half as godlike

Am I, ye high ones, as you !

[Freely, but quickly and harshly.]

But ye trusted solely

To the fruit that makes young,

As well both the giants wist.

Your life they played for,

Plotted to take ;

Contrive so that they fail.

Lacking the apples,

Old and worn,

Grey and weary,

THE RHINEGOLD

Wasting, the scoff of the world,
The Gods must pine and pass.

Fricka
Anxiously.

Wotan, alas !
Unhappy man !
See what thy laughing
Lightness has brought us—
Scoff and scorn for all !

Wotan
*Coming to a sudden resolve,
Starts up.*

Up, Loge,
And follow me !
To Nibelheim hastening downward,
I go in search of the gold.

Loge

The Rhine-daughters
Thy aid invoked :
Not vainly they hoped for thy help then ?

Wotan
Angrily.

Fool, be silent !
Freia, the fair one—
Freia's ransom we go for.

Loge

Where thou wouldst go
Gladly I lead.
Shall we dive
Sheer through the depths of the Rhine ?

Wotan

Not through the Rhine.

Loge

Then swift let us swing
Through this smoky chasm.
Together, come, creep we in !

*[He goes in front and vanishes at the side
through a cleft, from which, immediately
afterwards, sulphurous vapour streams
forth.]*

Wotan

Ye others wait
Till evening here ;

THE RHINEGOLD

The golden ransom
When got will again make us young.

*[He descends after Loge into the chasm.
The sulphurous vapour which rises from it
spreads over the whole stage and quickly
fills it with thick clouds. Those who
remain behind are soon hidden.]*

Donner

Fare thee well, Wotan !

Froh

Good luck ! Good luck !

Fricka

O come back soon
To thy sorrowing wife !

*[The sulphurous vapour darkens till it
becomes a black cloud, which rises upwards
from below. This then changes to a dark,
rocky cavern which keeps rising, so that the
stage seems to sink deeper and deeper into
the earth.]*





THIRD SCENE

From various points in the distance ruddy lights gleam out. An increasing clamour, as of smiths at work, is heard on all sides. The clang of the anvils dies away. A vast subterranean chasm becomes visible which seems to open into narrow gorges on all sides. Alberich drags the screaming Mime out of a side cleft.

Alberich

Héhé! Héhé!
Come here! Come here!
Mischievous dwarf!
Prettily pinched
Promptly thou'lt be
Hast thou not ready,
Wrought to my wish,
The dainty thing I desire!

Mime
Howling.

Ohé! Ohé!
Oh! Oh!
Let me alone!
It is forged;
Heeding thy hest
I laboured hard
Till it was done!
Take but thy nails from my ear!

Alberich

Then why this delay
To show thy work?

Mime

I feared that something
Might still be wanting.

Mime, howling. "Ohé ! Ohé !
Oh ! Oh !"

See p. 33



*Radtke - 1910

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich

What is there to finish?

Mime

Embarrassed.

Here—and there——

Alberich

How here and there?

Hand me the thing!

[He tries to catch hold of his ear again. In his terror Mime drops a piece of metal-work which he has been clutching convulsively. Alberich picks it up hastily and examines it with care.]

Rogue, observe!

See how all wrought is

Well finished and feat,

Done as desired!

The simpleton wants

Slyly to trick me

And keep by cunning

The wonderful work,

Though all his skill

Came alone from my craft.

Thou art discovered, thief.

[He puts the Tarnhelm on his head.]

The helmet fits the head;

But will the spell prosper too?

[Very softly.]

“Night and darkness,

Seen of none!”

[He vanishes, and a pillar of cloud takes his place.]

Brother, canst see me?

Mime

Looks round in amaze.

Where art thou? I see no one.

Alberich

Invisible.

Then feel me instead,

Thou lazy scamp!

Take that for thy thievish thoughts!

THE RHINEGOLD

Alice Ohé! Ohé!
 Writhes under the Oh! Oh! Oh!
 lalbes he receives, the sound of which is heard without the whip being seen.

Alberich
*Invisible and
laughing.*

Ha! ha! ha!
Ha! ha! ha!
I thank thee, blockhead;
Thy work has stood the test.
Hoho! Hoho!
Nibelungs all
Bow now to Alberich!
For he is everywhere,
Waiting and watching;
Peace and rest
Are past for ever;
Ye must all serve him,
Though see him can none;
Where he cannot be spied
Look out for his coming;
None shall escape from his thralldom!

[*Harshly.*

Hoho! hoho!
Hearken, he nears:
The Nibelung's lord!

[The pillar of cloud disappears in the background. Alberich's scolding voice is heard more and more faintly. Mime lies huddled up in pain. Wotan and Loge come down through a cleft in the rock.]

Hoge Nibelheim here.
Through pale mists gleaming,
How bright yonder fiery sparks glimmer !

Mime Oh! Oh! Oh!

Wotan I hear loud groans.
Who lies on the ground?

r

Mime writhes under the lashes he receives

See p. 40



THE RHINEGOLD

Hoge
Bends over Mime. Why all this whimpering noise?

Mime
Ohé! Ohé!
Oh! Oh!

Hoge
Hei, Mime! Merry dwarf!
Who beats and bullies thee so?

Mime
Leave me in peace, pray.

Hoge
So much is certain,
And more still. Hark!
Help I promise thee, Mime!
[He raises him with difficulty.]

Mime
What help for me?
To do his bidding
My brother can force me,
For I am bound as his slave.

Hoge
But, Mime, how has he
Thus made thee his thrall?

Mime
By evil arts
Fashioned Alberich
A yellow ring,
From the Rhinegold forged,
At whose mighty magic
Trembling we marvel;
This spell puts in his power
The Nibelung hosts of night.
Happy we smiths
Moulded and hammered,
Making our women
Trinkets to wear—
Exquisite Nibelung toys—
And lightly laughed at our toil.

THE RHINEGOLD

The rogue now compels us
To creep into caverns,
For him alone
To labour unthanked.
Through the golden ring
His greed can divine
Where untouched treasure
In hidden gorge gleams.
We still must keep spying,
Peering and delving :
Must melt the booty,
Which, molten, we forge
Without pause or peace,
To heap up higher his hoard.

Hoge

Just now, then, an idler
Roused him to wrath ?

Mime

Poor Mime, ah !
My lot was the hardest.
I had to work,
Forging a helmet,
With strict instructions
How to contrive it ;
And well I marked
The wondrous might
Bestowed by the helm
That from steel I wrought.
Hence I had gladly
Held it as mine,
And, by its virtue
Risen at last in revolt :
Perchance, yes, perchance
The master himself I had mastered,
And, he in my power, had wrested
The ring from him and used it

THE RHINEGOLD

That he might serve me, the free man,
[*Harshly.*]
As now I must serve him, a slave!

Loge And wherefore, wise one,
Sped not the plan?

Mime Ah! though the helm I fashioned,
The magic that lurks therein
I foolishly failed to divine.

 He who set the task
 And seized the fruits—
 From him I have learnt,
 Alas! but too late!
All the helmet's cunning craft.
From my sight he vanished,
But, viciously lashing,
Swung his arm through unseen.
[*Howling and sobbing.*]

 This, fool that I am,
 Was all my thanks!
 [*He rubs his back. Wotan and Loge laugh.*]

Loge Confess, our task
 To Wotan.
Will call for skill.

Wotan Yet the foe will yield,
Use thou but fraud.

Mime Who are you, ye strangers
 Observes the Gods
 more attentively.
That ask all these questions?

Loge Friends to thee,
 Who from their straits
Will free all the Nibelung folk.

Mime Hark! Have a care!
 Shrink back in
 fear when he hears Alberich returning. [*He runs to and fro in terror.*]
 Alberich comes!

THE RHINEGOLD

Wotan

We'll wait for him here.

[He sits down calmly on a stone. Alberich, who has taken the Tarnhelm from his head and hung it on his girdle, is brandishing his scourge and driving before him a band of Nibelungs from the gorges below. These are laden with gold and silver treasure, which, urged on by Alberich, they pile up so as to form a large heap.]

Alberich

Hither ! Thither !

Héhé ! Hoho !

Lazy herd !

Haste and heap

Higher the hoard.

Up with thee there !

On with thee here !

Indolent dolts,

Down with the treasure !

Need ye my urging ?

Here with it all !

[He suddenly perceives Wotan and Loge.]

Hey ! Who are they

That thus intrude ?

Mime ! Come here !

Rascally rogue !

Gossiping art

With the pilgriming pair ?

Off, thou idler !

Back to thy bellows and beating !

[Lashing Mime, he chases him into the crowd of Nibelungs.]

Hey ! to your labour !

Get ye all hence now !

Swing ye down swift !

From the virgin gorges

Get me the gold !

This whip will follow,

r

Alberich drives in a band of Nibelungs laden with gold
and silver treasure

See p. 44



THE RHINEGOLD

Delve ye not fast !
That labour ye shirk not
Mime be surety,
Or surely the lash
Of my whip will find him ;
That where no one would guess
I watch and I wander,
None knows it better than he.
Loitering still ?
Lingering there ?

*[He pulls the ring from his finger, kisses it
and stretches it out in menace.]*

Fear ye and tremble,
O fallen host,
And obey
The ring's dread lord !

*[Howling and shrieking, the Nibelungs,
among them Mime, scatter, and creep down
into the clefts in all directions.]*

Alberich What seek ye here ?
Looks long and distrustfully at Wotan and Loge.

Wotan From Nibelheim's gloomy realm
Strange tidings have travelled up,
Tales of wonders
Worked here by Alberich ;
And, greedy of marvels,
Hither came we as guests.

Alberich By envy urged,
Hither ye hie.
Such doughty guests
I do not mistake.

Loge Since I am known,
Ignorant elf,
Say then, with growling

THE RHINEGOLD

Whom dost thou greet?
In caverns cold
Where once thou didst crouch,
Who gave thee light
And fire for thy comfort,
Had Loge not smiled on thee?
Or what hadst thou fashioned
Had not I heated thy forge?
I am thy kinsman
And once was kind:
Lukewarm, methinks, are thy thanks!

Alberich On light-born elves
 Laughs now Loge,
 The crafty rogue:
Art thou, false one, their friend
As my friend thou wert once,
 Haha! I laugh!
No harm from such need I fear.

Loge No cause then for thy distrust.

Alberich I can trust thy falsehood,
 Not thy good faith!
 [*Taking up a defiant attitude.*]
Yet I dare you all unflinching.

Loge 'Tis thy might
 That makes thee so bold;
 Grimly great
 Groweth thy power.

Alberich Seest thou the hoard
 Yonder heaped
 High by my host?

Loge A richer one never was seen.

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich

A wretched pile
Is this to-day, though.
Boldly mounting,
'Twill be bigger henceforward.

Wotan

But what is gained by the hoard
In joyless Nibelheim,
Where wealth finds nothing to buy?

Alberich

Treasure to gather
And treasure to garner—
Thereto Nibelheim serves.
But with the hoard
In the caverns upheaped
Wonders all wonder surpassing
Will I perform
And win the whole world and its fairness.

Wotan

But, my friend, how compass that goal?

Alberich

Ye who live above and breathe
The balmy, sweet airs,
Love and laugh :
A hand of gold
Ere long, O ye Gods, will have gripped you !
As I forswore love, even so
No one alive
But shall forswear it ;
By golden songs wooed,
For gold alone will his greed be.
On hills of delight
Your home is, where gladness
Softly lulls ;
The dark elves
Ye despise, O deathless carousers !
Beware !
Beware !

THE RHINEGOLD

For first your men
Shall bow to my might;
Then your women fair
Who my wooing spurned
The dwarf will force to his will,
Though frowned on by love.
[*Laughing savagely.*]

Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Mark ye my word?
Beware!

Beware of the hosts of the night,
When rise shall the Nibelung hoard
From silent depths to the day!

Wotan
Furiously.

Avaunt, impious fool!

Alberich

What says he?

Loge
*Stepping
between them.*

Cease from thy folly!
[*To Alberich.*]

Who would gaze not in wonder,
Beholding Alberich's work?
If only thy skill can achieve
Everything hope has promised,
Almighty I needs must acclaim thee!
For moon and stars
And the sun in his glory,
Forced to do thee obeisance,
Even they must bow down.
But what would seem of most moment
Is that they who serve thee,
The Nibelung hosts,
Bow and bear no hate.
When thy hand held forth a ring
Thy folk were stricken with fear.
But in thy sleep
A thief might slip up

THE RHINEGOLD

And steal slyly the ring.
Say, how wouldst thou save thyself then?

Alberich

Most shrewd to himself seems Loge ;

Others always
Figure as fools.
If I had to ask for
Advice or aid
On bitter terms,

How happy the thief would be !

This helmet that hides
I schemed for myself,
And chose for its smith

Mime, finest of forgers.

I am now able
Swift to assume
Any form that I fancy,
Through the helm.
No one sees me,
Search as he will ;
Though everywhere hidden,
I always am there.
So, fearing nothing,

Even from thee I am safe,
Most kind, careful of friends !

Loge

I have met
Full many a marvel,
But one so wondrous
Have never known.
Achievement so matchless
Scarce can I credit.

Were this possible, truly
Thy might indeed were eternal.

Alberich

Dost thou believe
I lie, as would Loge ?

THE RHINEGOLD

Loge

Till it is proved
I must suspect thy word.

Alberich

Puffed up with wisdom,
The fool will explode soon :
Of envy then die !
Decide to what I shall change ;
In that form I shall stand.

Loge

Nay, choose for thyself,
But strike me dumb with amaze.

Alberich

*Puts the
Tarnhelm on
his head.*

“Dragon dread,
Wreathe thou and wriggle !”

*[He immediately disappears. An enormous
serpent writhes on the floor in his place.
It rears and threatens Wotan and Loge
with its open jaws.]*

Loge

Pretends to be terrified.

Ohé !

Alberich

Laughing.

Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Loge

Ohé ! Ohé !
Horrible dragon,
O swallow me not !
Spare the life of poor Loge !

Wotan

Good, Alberich !
Well done, rascal !
How swiftly grew
The dwarf to the dragon immense !

*[The dragon disappears and, in its stead,
Alberich is again seen in his own shape.]*

Alberich

He he ! Ye scoffers,
Are ye convinced ?

“ Ohé ! Ohé !
Horrible dragon,
O swallow me not !
Spare the life of poor Loge ! ”

See p. 50



THE RHINEGOLD

Loge
*In a trembling
voice.*

My trembling tells thee how truly.
A giant snake
Thou wert in a trice.
Having beheld,
I must credit the wonder.
Coudest thou turn
To something quite tiny
As well as bigger?
Methinks that way were best
For slyly slipping from foes;
That, though, I fear were too hard!

Alberich

For thee, yes;
Thou art so dull!
How small shall I be?

Loge

The most cramped of crannies must hold
thee
That hides the timorous toad.

Alberich

Nothing simpler!
Look at me now!
[He puts the Tarnhelm on his head again.
"Crooked toad,
Creep and crawl there!"

*[He vanishes. The Gods see a toad on the
rocks creeping towards them.*

Loge

To Wotan.

Quick and catch it!
Capture the toad!

*[Wotan sets his foot on the toad. Loge
makes a dash at its head and holds the
Tarnhelm in his hand.*

Alberich

Is suddenly seen

in his own shape writhing under Wotan's foot.

Ohé! I'm caught!
My curse upon them!

THE RHINEGOLD

Loge

Hold him fast
Till he is bound.

[Loge binds his hands and feet with a rope.]

Now swiftly up!

Then he is ours.

[Both seize hold of the prisoner, who struggles violently, and drag him towards the shaft by which they descended. They disappear mounting upwards.]





FOURTH SCENE

The scene has changed as before, only in reverse order. Open space on mountain heights. The prospect is veiled by pale mist as at the end of the second scene. Wotan and Loge climb up out of the cavern, bringing with them Alberich bound.

Loge

Here, kinsman,
Thou canst sit down !
Friend, look round thee ;
There lies the world
That was thine for the winning, thou fool !
What corner, say,
Wilt give to me for my stall ?

[He dances round Alberich, snapping his fingers.]

Alberich

Infamous robber !
Thou knave ! Thou rogue !
Loosen the rope,
Set me at large,
Or dear for this outrage shalt answer !

Wotan

My captive art thou,
Caught and in fetters.
As thou hadst fain
Subdued the world
And all that the world containeth,
Thou liest bound at my feet,
And, coward, canst not deny it.
A ransom alone
Shall loose thee from bondage.

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich

Ah, the dolt,
The dreamer I was,
To trust blindly
The treacherous thief!
Fearful revenge
Shall follow this wrong!

Loge

Vain talk this of vengeance
Before thy freedom is won.
To a man in bonds
No free man expiates outrage.
If vengeance thou dreamest,
Dream of the ransom
First without further delay!

[He shows him the kind of ransom by snapping his fingers.]

Alberich

Declare then your demands.

Wotan

The hoard and thy gleaming gold.

Alberich

Pack of unscrupulous thieves!

[Aside.]

If I only can keep the ring,
The hoard I can lightly let go,
For anew I could win it
And add to its worth
By the powerful spell of the ring.
If as warning it serves
To make me more wise,
The warning will not have been lost,
Even though lost may be the gold.

Wotan

Wilt yield up the hoard?

Alberich

Loosen my hand
To summon it here.

[Loge frees his right hand.]

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich
*Touces the
ring with his
lips and secretly
murmurs the
command.*

Behold the Nibelungs
Hither are called ;
I can hear them coming,
Bid by their lord,
With the hoard from the depths to the day.
Now loosen these burdensome bonds.

Wotan

Nay, first in full thou must pay.
*[The Nibelungs come up out of the cleft laden
with the objects of which the hoard is
composed.]*

Alberich

O bitter disgrace
That my shrinking bondsmen
Should see me captive and bound !
[To the Nibelungs.]

Lay it down there,
As ye are bid !
In a heap
Pile up the hoard.
Must I aid, idlers ?
No spying at me !
Haste there ! Haste !
Then get ye gone quickly.
Hence to your work.
Home to your gorges !
Let the sluggards beware,
For I follow hard at your heels !
*[He kisses the ring and holds it out with an
air of command. As if struck with a blow,
the Nibelungs press terrified and cowering
towards the cleft, down which they hastily
disappear.]*

Alberich

The price is paid ;
Let me depart !
And that helm of mine
Which Loge still holds,
That also pray give me again !

THE RHINEGOLD

Hoge The plunder must pay for the pardon.
 Throwing the Tarnhelm on to the heap.

Alberich Accursed thief !
 But patience ! Calm !
 He who moulded the one
 Makes me another ;
 Still mine is the might
 That Mime obeys.
 Loath indeed
 Am I to leave
My cunning defence to the foe !
 Nothing Alberich
 Owns at all now ;
Unbind, ye tyrants, his bonds !

Hoge Ought I to free him ?
 To Wotan. Art thou content ?

Wotan A golden ring
 Girdles thy finger :
 Hearest, elf ?
That also belongs to the hoard.

Alberich The ring ?
 Horrified.

Wotan The ring must also
 Go to the ransom.

Alberich My life—but the ring : not that !
 Trembling.

Wotan The ring I covet ;
 With greater violence. For thy life I care not at all.

Alberich But if my life I ransom
 The ring I must also rescue ;

THE RHINEGOLD

Hand and head,
Eye and ear
Are not mine more truly
Than mine is the ruddy ring!

Wotan

The ring thou claimest as thine?
Impudent elf, thou art raving.
Tell the truth;
Whence was gotten the gold
To fashion the glittering gaud?
How could that be
Thine which reft was,
Thou rogue, from watery deeps?
To the Rhine's fair daughters
Down and inquire
If the gold
Was as gift to thee given
That thou didst thief for the ring!

Alberich

Vile double-dealing!
Shameless deceit!
Wouldst thou, robber,
Reproach in me
The sin so sweet to thyself?
How fain thou hadst
Bereft the Rhine of its gold,
If it had been
As easy to forge as to steal!
How well for thee,
Thou unctuous knave,
That the Nibelung, stung
By shameful defeat,
And by fury driven,
Was fired into winning the spell
That now alluringly smiles!
Shall I, bliss debarred,

THE RHINEGOLD

Anguish-burdened
Because of the
Curse-laden deed,
My ring as a toy
Grant to princes for pleasure,
My ban bringing blessing to thee?
Have a care,
Arrogant God!
My sin was one
Concerning myself alone:
But against all that was,
Is and shall be
Thou wouldst wantonly sin,
Eternal one, taking the ring.

Wotan

Yield the ring!
Thy foolish talk
Gives no title to that.

*[He seizes Alberich and draws the ring from
his finger by force.]*

Alberich
*With a fright-
ful cry.*

Woe! Defeated! Undone!
Of wretches the wretchedest slave!

Wotan
*Contemplating
the ring.*

I own what makes me supreme,
The mightiest lord of all lords!
[He puts on the ring.]

Hoge
To Wotan.

Shall he go free?

Wotan

Loose his bonds.

Hoge
*Sets Alberich
quite free.*

Slip away home,
For no fetter binds thee!
Fare forth, thou art free!

THE RHINEGOLD

Alberich
*Raising him
self, with
furious laughter.*

Am I now free,
Free in truth?
My freedom's first
Greeting take, for it is thine!
As a curse gave me the ring,
My curse go with the ring!
As its gold
Gave measureless might,
May now its magic
Deal death evermore!
No man shall gain
Gladness therefrom;
May ill-fortune befall him
On whom it shines.
Fretted by care
Be he who shall hold it,
And he who doth not,
By envy be gnawed!
All shall covet
And crave its wealth,
Yet none shall it profit
Or pay when won.
Those who guard it nothing shall gain,
Yet shall murder go where they go.
The coward, death-doomed,
By fetters of fear shall be bound;
His whole life long
He shall languish to death—
The ring's proud lord
And its poorest slave—
Till again I have
In my hand the gold I was robbed of.
So blesses
The Nibelung
The ring in bitter despair!
Hold fast to it!

[*Laughing.*]

THE RHINEGOLD

Keep it with care ; [Grimly.
From my curse none shall escape !

[*He vanishes quickly through the cleft. The
thick mist in the foreground gradually clears
away.*

Hoge Hadst thou ears
For his fond farewell ?

Wotan Grudge him not vent to his spleen !
Loft in contemplation of the ring. [*It keeps growing lighter.*

Hoge Fasolt and Fafner
Looking to the Come from afar
right. Bringing Freia again.
[*Through the vanishing mist Donner, Froh,
and Fricka appear, and hasten towards
the foreground.*

Froh The giants return.

Donner Be greeted, brother !

Fricka Dost bring joyful tidings ?
Anxiously to Wotan.

Hoge By fraud and by force
Pointing to We have prevailed :
the hoard. There Freia's ransom lies.

Donner From the giant's grasp
Freed comes the fair one.

Froh How sweetly the air
Fans us again !
Balmy delights
Steal soft through each sense !
Sad, forlorn had our lot been,
For ever severed from her

THE RHINEGOLD

Who gives us youth everlasting,
And bliss triumphant o'er pain.

[Fasolt and Fafner enter, leading Freia between them. Fricka hastens joyfully towards her sister. The foreground has become quite bright again, the light restoring to the aspect of the Gods its original freshness. The background, however, is still veiled by the mist so that the distant castle remains invisible.]

Fricka

Sweetest of sisters !

Lovely delight !

Once more for mine have I won thee !

Fasolt

Keeping her off.

Hold ! Touch her not yet !

Freia still is ours.

On Riesenheim's

Rampart of rock

Resting we stayed.

The pledge we held

In our hands we used

Loyally.

With deep regret,

I bring her back now

In case ye brothers

Can ransom her.

Wotan

Prepared lies the ransom ;

Mete out the gold,

Giving generous measure.

Fasolt

In truth it grieves me

Greatly the woman to lose ;

And that my heart may forget her

Ye must heap the hoard,

Pile it so high

That it shall hide

The blossom-sweet maid from mine eyes !

THE RHINEGOLD

Wotan

Be Freia's form
The gauge of the gold.

[Freia is placed in the middle by the two giants, who then stick their staves into the ground in front of her so that her height and breadth is indicated.]

Fafner

Our staves give the measure
Of Freia's form ;
Thus high now heap ye the hoard.

Wotan

On with the work :
Irksome I find it !

Loge

Help me, Froh !

Froh

I will end
Freia's dishonour.

[Loge and Froh heap up the treasure hastily between the staves.]

Fafner

Let the pile
Less loosely be built ;
Firm and close
Pack ye the gauge !

[He presses down the treasure with rude strength ; he bends down to look for gaps.]

I still can see through ;
Come, fill up the crannies !

Loge

Hands off, rude fellow !
Touch nothing here !

Fafner

Come here ! This gap must be closed !

Wotan

*Turning away
angrily.*

Deep in my breast
Burns the disgrace !

THE RHINEGOLD

Fricka

See how in shame
Beautiful Freia stands ;
For release she asks,
Dumb, with sorrowful eyes.
Heartless man !
The lovely one owes this to thee !

Fafner

Still more ! Pile on still more.

Donner

My patience fails ;
Mad is the wrath
Roused by this insolent rogue !
Come hither, hound !
Measure must thou ?
Thy strength then measure with mine !

Fafner

Softly, Donner !
Roar where it serves ;
Thy roar is impotent here.

Donner

It will crush thee to thy cost, rogue.
Lunging out at him.

Wotan

Calm thyself !
Methinks that Freia is hid.

Hoge

The hoard is spent.

Fafner

Still shines to me Holda's hair.
Measures the Yonder thing, too,
hoard carefully Throw on the hoard !
with his eye, and looks to see if there are any crevices.

Hoge

Even the helm ?

Fafner

Make haste ! Here with it !

Wotan

Let it go also !

THE RHINEGOLD

Hoge
*Throws the
Tarnhelm on the heap.*

At last we have finished.
Have ye enough now?

Hafolt

Freia, the fair,
Is hidden for aye!
The price has been paid.
Ah, have I lost her?

*[He goes up to the hoard and peers through
it.]*

Sadly shine
Her eyes on me still,
Like stars they beam
Softly on me;
Still through this chink
I look on their light.

[Beside himself.]

While her sweet eyes I behold thus,
From the woman how can I part?

Hafner

Hey! Come hither,
And stop me this cranny!

Hoge

Greedy grumblers!
Can ye not see
The gold is all gone?

Hafner

Not the whole, friend!
On Wotan's finger
Shines a golden ring still;
Give that to close up the crevice!

Wotan

What! Give my ring?

Hoge

Be ye counselled!
The Rhine-Maidens
Must have the gold;
Wotan will give them what theirs is.

Fafner. "Hey ! Come hither,
And stop me this cranny !"

See p. 64



THE RHINEGOLD

- Wotan What nonsense is this?
The ring I won so hardly,
Undismayed I hold and will keep.
- Hoge Broken then
 Must be the promise
I gave the maidens who grieved.
- Wotan By thy promise I am not bound;
As booty mine is the ring.
- Fafner Not so. The ring
Must go with the ransom.
- Wotan Boldly ask what ye will:
 It shall be granted;
 But not for all
The world would I give you the ring.
- Fasolt
 Furious, pulls
 Freia from be-
 hind the hoard. All is off!
 The bargain stands:
Fair Freia ours is for ever!
- Freia Help me! Help me!
- Fricka Heartless God,
Grant it! Give way!
- Froh Keep not the gold back!
- Donner Give them the ring too!
- Wotan Let me alone!
I hold to the ring.

[Fafner stops Fasolt as he is hastening off. All stand dismayed; Wotan turns from them in anger. The stage has grown dark again. From a cleft in the rock on one side issues a bluish flame in which Erda suddenly becomes visible, rising so that her upper half is seen.]

THE RHINEGOLD

Erda
*Stretching
out a warning
hand towards
Wotan.*

Yield it, Wotan! Yield it!
Flee the ring's dread curse!
Awful
And utter disaster
It will doom thee to.

Wotan

What woman woe thus foretells?

Erda

All things that were I know,
And things that are;
All things that shall be
I foresee.
The endless world's
Ur-Wala,

Erda, bids thee beware.
Ere the earth was,
Of my womb born
Were daughters three;
And my knowledge
Nightly the Norns tell to Wotan.
Now summoned by
Danger most dire,
I myself come.

Hearken! Hearken! Hearken!
All things will end shortly;
And for the Gods
Dark days are dawning!

Be counselled; keep not the ring!

*[Erda sinks slowly as far as the breast,
while the bluish light grows fainter.]*

Wotan

A mystic might
Rang in thy words.
Tarry, and tell me further.

Erda
Disappearing.

Thou hast been warned;
Enough dost know;
Weigh my words with fear!

[She vanishes completely.]

c

"Erda bids thee beware"

See p. 66



THE RHINEGOLD

Wotan If thus doomed to foreboding—
 I must detain thee
 Till all is answered!

[*Wotan is about to follow Erda in order to detain her. Froh and Fricka throw themselves in his way and prevent him.*]

Fricka What meanest thou, madman?

Froh Go not, Wotan !
 Fear thou the warner,
 Heed her words well !

[Wotan gazes thoughtfully before him.]

Donnet
*Turning to the
giants with a
resolute air.*

Hark, ye giants !
Come back and wait still !
The gold we give you also.

Fricka Ah, dare I hope it?
Deem ye Holda
Worthy of such a price?

[*All look at Wotan in suspense ; he, rousing himself from deep thought, grasps his spear and swings it in token of having come to a bold decision.*

Odin
 To me, Freia,
 For thou art free!
 Bought back for aye,
 Youth everlasting, return!
 Here, giants, take ye the ring!
 [*He throws the ring on the hoard. The
 giants release Freia; she hastens joyfully
 to the Gods, who care for her in turns for a
 space, with every manifestation of delight.*]

Fasolt
To Fafner.

Hold there, greedy one!
Grant me my portion!
Honest division
Best for both is.

THE RHINEGOLD

Fafner
More on the maid than the gold
Thou wert set, love-sick fool,
And much against
Thy will the exchange was.
Sharing not, Freia
Thou wouldst have wooed for thy bride ;
Sharing the gold,
It is but just
That the most of it should be mine.

Fasolt Infamous thief !
Taunts? And to me !
[To the Gods.
Come judge ye between us ;
Halve ye the hoard
As seems to you just !
[Wotan turns away in contempt.

Loge Let him have the treasure ;
 Hold to what matters: the ring !

Fasolt Back, brazen rascal !
Falls upon Fasner, Mine is the ring.
who has mean- I lost for it Freia's smile.
while been steadily packing up the treasure. [He snatches hastily at the ring.]

Fafner Off with thy hands !
The ring is mine.
[There is a struggle. Fasolt tears the ring
from Fafner.]

Fasolt I hold it. It is mine now!

Fasolner Hold fast, lest it should fall !
 [Lunging out with his slave, he falls Fasolt
 to the ground with one blow ; from the
 dying man he then hastily tears the ring.
 68

Fafner kills Fasolt

See p. 68



THE RHINEGOLD

Now feast upon Freia's smile :
No more shalt thou touch the ring !

*[He puts the ring into the sack and tranquilly
continues to pack up the rest of the hoard. All
the Gods stand horrified. A solemn silence.]*

Wotan

Dread indeed
I find is the curse's might.

Hoge

Unmatched, Wotan,
Surely thy luck is !
Great thy gain was
In getting the ring ;
But the gain of its loss
Is gain greater still :
There thy foemen, see,
Slaughter thy foes
For the gold thou hast let go.

Wotan

Dark forebodings oppress me !
Care and fear
Fetter my soul ;
Erda must teach me,
Tell how to end them :
To her I must descend.

Fricka

*Carefing and
coaxing him.*

Why linger, Wotan ?
Beckon they not,
The stately walls,
Waiting to offer
Welcome kind to their lord ?

Wotan

Gloomily.

With wage accurst
Paid was their cost.

Bonner

*Pointing to
the background,
which is still
enveloped in
mist.*

Heavily mists
Hang in the air ;
Gloomy, wearisome
Is their weight !
The wan-visaged clouds

THE RHINEGOLD

Charged with their storms I will gather,
And sweep the blue heavens clean.

[Donner mounts a high rock on the edge of the precipice, and swings his hammer; during what follows the mists gather round him.]

Hey da! Hey da! Hey do!

To me, O ye mists!

Ye vapours, to me!

Donner, your lord,

Summons his hosts!

[He swings his hammer.]

To my hammer's swing

Hitherward sweep

Vapours and fogs!

Hovering mists!

Donner, your lord, summons his hosts!

Hey da! Hey da! Hey do!

[Donner disappears completely in a thunder-cloud which has been growing darker and denser. The stroke of his hammer is heard falling heavily on the rock. A vivid flash of lightning comes from the cloud, followed by a loud clap of thunder. Froh has also disappeared in the cloud.]

Donner
Invisible.

Brother, to me!
Show them the way by the bridge!

[Suddenly the clouds roll away. Donner and Froh become visible. A rainbow of dazzling radiance stretches from their feet across the valley to the castle, which is gleaming in the light of the setting sun.]

Froh
Who, with outstretched hand, indicates to the Gods that the bridge is the way across the valley.

Lo, light, yet securely,
Leads the bridge to your halls.

Undaunted tread;

Without danger the road!

[Wotan and the other Gods stand speechless, lost in contemplation of the glorious sight.]

“To my hammer's swing
Hitherward sweep
Vapours and fogs !
Hovering mists !
Donner, your lord, summons his hosts ! ”

See p. 70



THE RHINEGOLD

Wotan

Smiling at eve
The sun's eye sparkles ;
The castle ablaze
Gleams fair in its glow.
In the light of morning
Glittering proudly,
It stood masterless,
Stately, tempting its lord.
From dawn until sundown
No little toil
And fear have gone to the winning !
From envious night,
That now draws nigh
Shelter it offers us.
[Very firmly, as if struck by a great thought.]
So greet I my home,
Safe from dismay and dread.
[He turns solemnly to Fricka.]
Follow me, wife !
In Valhall sojourn with me.

Fricka

What means the name Valhall ?
I never seem to have heard it.

Wotan

That which, conquering fear,
My fortitude brought
Triumphant to birth—
Let that explain the word !
[He takes Fricka's hand and walks slowly with her towards the bridge. Froh, Freia, and Donner follow.]

Loge

*Remaining in
the foreground
and looking
after the Gods.*

They are hasting on to their end,
They who dream they are strong and
enduring.
I almost blush
To be of their number ;

THE RHINEGOLD

A fancy allures me
And wakes in me longing
Flaming fire to become :
To waste and burn them
Who tamed me of old,
Rather than perish,
Blind with the blind—
Yes, even if godlike the Gods were—
More wise were it, perhaps !
I must consider :
The outcome who knows !

*[With a show of carelessness he goes to join
the Gods.]*

The Three
Rhine-Maidens
*From the
valley.
Invisible.*

Rhinegold !
Rhinegold !
Rhinegold pure !
How radiant and clear
Once thou didst shine on us !
For thy lost glory
We are grieving.
Give us the gold !
Give us the gold !
O give us the Rhinegold again !

Wotan What wailing sound do I hear ?
About to set his foot on the bridge, pauses and turns round.

Loge The Rhine's fair children,
Looks down into Bewailing their lost gold, weep.
the valley.

Wotan Accursèd nixies !
Bid them tease us no more !

Loge Ye in the water,
Calling down Why wail ye to us ?
towards the List to Wotan's decree.
valley.

" The Rhine's fair children,
Bewailing their lost gold, weep "

See p. 72



THE RHINEGOLD

Ye have seen
The last of the gold ;
In the Gods' increase of splendour
Bask and sun yourselves now.

*[The Gods laugh and cross the bridge during
what follows.]*

The Three
Rhine-Maidens

Rhinegold !
Rhinegold !
Rhinegold pure !
Oh, if in the waves
There but shone still our treasure pure !
Down in the deeps
Can faith be found only :
Mean and false
Are all who revel above !

*[As the Gods cross the bridge to the castle
the curtain falls.]*







THE VALKYRIE



CHARACTERS

WOTAN

HUNDING

FRICKA

SIEGMUND

SIEGLINDE

BRÜNNHILDE, Valkyrie

EIGHT OTHER VALKYRIES :

Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute,

Schwertleite, Helmwig, Siegrune,

Grimgerde, Rossweisse

SCENES OF ACTION

ACT I. THE INTERIOR OF HUNDING'S DWELLING

ACT II. A WILD ROCKY MOUNTAIN

ACT III. ON THE TOP OF A ROCKY MOUNTAIN

(BRÜNNHILDE'S ROCK)





THE FIRST ACT

The interior of a dwelling-place built of wood, with the stem of a mighty ash-tree as its centre ; to the right, in the foreground, is the hearth, and behind this the store-room. At the back is the large entrance door ; to the left, far back, steps lead up to an inner chamber ; on the same side, nearer the front, stands a table with a broad bench behind it, fixed to the wall, and with stools in front. The stage remains empty for a space. Outside a storm is just subsiding. Siegmund opens the entrance door from without, and enters. With his hand on the latch he surveys the room. He seems overwhelmed with fatigue ; his dress and appearance indicate that he is in flight. He shuts the door behind him when he sees nobody, walks to the hearth with the final effort of an utterly exhausted man, and throws himself down on a bearskin rug.

Siegmund

**I rest on this hearth,
Heedless who owns it.**

[He sinks back and remains stretched out motionless. Sieglinde enters from the inner chamber ; she thinks her husband has returned. Her grave look changes to one of surprise when she sees the stranger stretched out on the hearth,

THE VALKYRIE

Sieglinde
*Still at the
back.*

A stranger here !
He must be questioned.

[Coming nearer.]

What man came in
And lies on the hearth ?

*[As Siegmund does not move, she draws nearer
still and looks at him.]*

Way-worn, weary
He seems and spent.
Faints he from weariness ?
Can he be sick ?

[She bends over him, and listens.]

He breathes still, his eyelids
Are sealed but in slumber.
Worthy, valiant his mien,
Though so worn he rests.

Siegmund
Suddenly raising his head.

A drink ! A drink !

Sieglinde

I go to fetch it.

*[She takes a drinking-horn and hurries out.
She returns with it full, and offers it to
Siegmund.]*

Lo, the water
Thy thirsting lips longed for :
Water brought at thy wish !

*[Siegmund drinks, and hands her back the
horn. As he signifies his thanks with a
movement of the head, he gazes at her
with growing interest.]*

Siegmund

Welcome the water !
Quenched is my thirst.
My weary load
Lighter it makes ;
New courage it gives ;
Mine eyes that slept

THE VALKYRIE

Re-open glad on the world.
Who soothes and comforts me so ?

Sieglinde This house and this wife
 Belong to Hunding.
Stay thou here as his guest ;
Tarry till he comes home.

Siegmund Shelter he surely
 Will grant a worn,
Wounded, weaponless stranger.

Sieglinde Quick, show me ! Where are thy wounds ?
With anxious haste.

Siegmund My wounds are slight,
Shakes himself Scarce worthy remark ;
and springs up My limbs are well knit still,
briskly to a Whole and unharmed.
sitting posture.
If my spear and shield had but been
Half so strong as my arm is,
I had vanquished the foe ;
But in splinters were spear and shield.
The horde of foemen
Harassed me sore ;
Through storm and strife
Spent was my force ;
But, faster than I from foemen,
All my faintness has fled ;
Darkness fell deep on my lids,
But now the sun again laughs.

Sieglinde
Goes to the storeroom, fills a
horn with mead, and prof- This healing and honeyed
fers it to Siegmund with Draught of mead
friendly eagerness. Deign to accept from me.

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmund

Set it first to thy lips.

[Sieglinde sips from the horn and hands it back to him. Siegmund takes a long draught, regarding Sieglinde with increasing warmth. Still gazing, he takes the horn from his lips and lets it sink slowly, while his features express strong emotion. He sighs deeply, and lowers his gaze gloomily to the ground.]

Siegmund

Thou hast tended an ill-fated one !

In a trembling voice.

May all evil

Be turned from thee !

[He starts up quickly, and goes towards the back.]

I have been solaced

By sweet repose :

Onward now I must press.

Sieglinde

Who pursues thee so close at thy heels ?

Turning round quickly.

Siegmund

Bad luck pursues me,

Stops.

Everywhere follows ;

And where I linger

Trouble still finds me :

Be thou preserved from its touch !

I must not gaze but go.

[He strides hastily to the door and lifts the latch.]

Sieglinde

Then tarry here !

Forgetting herself, calls

Misfortune thou canst not bring

To those who abide with it !

impetuously after him.

Sieglinde. " This healing and honeyed
 Draught of mead
 Deign to accept from me."

Siegmund. " Set it first to thy lips."
 See p. 79



THE VALKYRIE

Siegmund

Deeply moved,

remains standing ; he looks searchingly at Sieglinde, who, ashamed and sad, lowers her eyes. Returning, he leans against the hearth, his gaze fixed on Sieglinde, who continues silently embarrassed.

Wehwalt named I myself :
Hunding here will I wait for.

Sieglinde starts, listens and hears Hunding outside leading his horse to the stable. She hurries to the door and opens it. Hunding, armed with shield and spear, enters, but, perceiving Siegmund, pauses on the threshold. Hunding turns with a look of stern inquiry to Sieglinde.

Sieglinde

*In answer to
Hunding's look.*

On the hearth
Fainting I found
One whom need drove here.

Hunding

Hast succoured him ?

Sieglinde

I gave him, as a guest,
Welcome and a drink.

Siegmund

*Regarding
Hunding firmly
and calmly.*

Drink she gave,
Shelter too :
Wouldst therefore chide the woman ?

Hunding

Sacred is my hearth :
Sacred hold thou my house.

[To Sieglinde, as he takes off his armour and hands it to her.

Set the meal for us men !

[Sieglinde hangs up the arms on the stem of the ash-tree, fetches food and drink from the store-room and sets supper on the table. Involuntarily she turns her gaze on Siegmund again.

THE VALKYRIE

Hunding

*Examining
Siegmund's
features keenly
and with amaze,
compares them
with Sieglinde's.
Aside.*

How like to the woman !
In his eye as well
Gleams the guile of the serpent.

*[He conceals his surprise, and turns with
apparent unconcern to Siegmund.]*

Far, I trow,
Must thou have fared ;
The man who rests here
Rode no horse :
What toilsome journey
Made thee so tired ?

Siegmund

Through wood and meadow,
Thicket and moor,
Chased by the storm
And peril sore,
I ran by I know not what road.
I know as little
What goal it led to,
And I would gladly be told.

Hunding

*At table,
inviting
Siegmund
to be seated.*

'Tis Hunding owns
The roof and room
Which have harboured thee.
If to the westward
Thou wert to wend,
In homesteads rich
Thou wouldst find kinsmen
Who guard the honour of Hunding.
May I ask of my guest
In return to tell me his name ?

*[Siegmund, who has taken his seat at the
table, looks thoughtfully before him. Sieg-
linde, who has placed herself beside
Hunding and opposite Siegmund, gazes
at him with evident sympathy and suspense.]*

Hunding discovers the likeness between Siegmund and
Sieglinde

See p. 82



THE VALKYRIE

Hunding
*Watching
them both.*

If thou wilt not
Trust it to me,
To this woman tell thy secret :
See, how eagerly she asks !

Sieglinde
*Unembarrassed
and interested.*

Gladly I'd know
Who thou art.

Sigmund
*Looks up and,
gazing into
her eyes, begins
gravely.*

Not for me the name Friedmund ;
Frohwalt fain were I called,
But forced was I to be Wehwalt.
Wölfe they called my father ;
And I am one of twins :
With a sister twin I was born.
Soon lost were
Both mother and maid ;
I hardly knew
Her who gave me my life,
Nor her with whom I was born.
Warlike and strong was Wölfe,
And never wanting for foes.
A-hunting oft
Went the son with the father.
One day we returned
Outworn with the chase
And found the wolf's nest robbed.
The brave abode
To ashes was burnt,
Consumed to dust
The flourishing oak,
And dead was the mother,
Dauntless but slain.
No trace of the sister
Was ever found :
The Neidungs' heartless horde
Had dealt us this bitter blow.

THE VALKYRIE

My father fled,
An outlaw with me ;
And the youth
Lived wild in the forest
With Wölfe for many years.
Sore beset and harried were they,
But boldly battled the pair of wolves.

[*Turning to Hunding.*]

A Wölfiug tells thee the tale,
And a well-known Wölfiug, I trow.

Hunding

Wondrous and wild the story
Told by thee, valiant guest :
Wehwalt—the Wölfiug !
I think that dark rumours anent
This doughty pair have reached me,
Though unknown Wölfe
And Wölfiug too.

Sieglinde

But tell me further, stranger :
Where dwells thy father now ?

Sigmund

The Neidungs, starting anew,
Hounded and hunted us down ;
But slain by the wolves
Fell many a hunter ;
They fled through the wood,
Chased by the game :
Like chaff we scattered the foe.
But trace of my father I lost ;
Still his trail grew fainter
The longer I followed ;
In the wood a wolf-skin
Was all I found ;
There empty it lay :
My father I had lost.—
In the woods I could not stay ;

THE VALKYRIE

My heart longed for men and for women.—

By all I met,
No matter where,
If friend I sought,
Or woman wooed,

Still I was branded an outlaw ;

Ill-luck clung to me ;

Whatever I did right,

Others counted it wrong ;

What seemed evil to me

Won from others applause.

Grim feuds arose

Wherever I went ;

Wrath met me

At every turn ;

Longing for gladness,

Woe was my lot :

I called myself Wehwalt therefore,

For woe was all that was mine.

*[He looks at Sieglinde and marks her
sympathetic gaze.]*

Hunding

Thou wert shown no grace by the Norns

That cast thy grievous lot ;

No one greets thee as guest

With gladness in his home.

Sieglinde

Only cowards would fear

A weaponless, lonely man !—

Tell us, O guest,

How in the strife

At last thy weapon was lost !

Sigmund

A sorrowful child

Cried for my help ;

Her kinsmen wanted

To wed the maiden

THE VALKYRIE

To one whom her heart did not choose.

To her defence

Gladly I hied;

The heartless horde

Met me in fight :

Before me foemen fell.

Fordone and dead lay the brothers.

The slain were embraced by the maid,

Her wrongs forgotten in grief.

She wept wild streams of woe,

And bathed the dead with her tears ;

For the loss of her brothers slain

Lamented the ill-fated bride.

Then the dead men's kinsmen

Came like a storm,

Vowing vengeance,

Frantic to fall on me ;

Foemen on all sides

Rose and assailed me.

But from the spot

Moved not the maid ;

My shield and spear

Sheltered her long,

Till spear and shield

Were hewn from my hand.

Standing weaponless, wounded,

I beheld the maid die :

I fled from the furious host—

She lay lifeless on the dead.

*[To Sieglinde with a look of fervent
sorrow.]*

The reason now I have told

Why none may know me as Friedmund.

*[He rises and walks to the hearth. Pale
and deeply moved, Sieglinde looks on the
ground.]*

THE VALKYRIE

Hunding
Rises.

I know a wild-blooded breed ;
What others revere
It flouts unawed :
All hate it, and I with the rest.
When forth in haste I was summoned,
Vengeance to seek
For my kinsmen's blood,
I came too late,
And now return home
To find the impious wretch
In haven under my roof.—
My house holds thee,
Wölfin, to-day ;
For the night thou art my guest.
But wield to-morrow
Thy trustiest weapon.
I choose the day for the fight :
Thy life shall pay for the dead.
[To Sieglinde, who steps between the two
men with anxious gestures; harshly.
Forth from the hall !
Linger not here !
Prepare my draught for the night,
And wait until I come.

[*Sieglinde stands for a while undecided and thoughtful. Slowly and with hesitating steps she goes towards the store-room. There she pauses again, lost in thought, her face half averted. With quiet resolution she opens the cupboard, fills a drinking-horn, and shakes spices into it out of a box. She then turns her eyes on Siegmund, in order to meet his gaze, which he never removes from her. She perceives that Hunding is watching, and proceeds immediately to the bed-chamber. On the steps she turns once more, looks yearningly at Siegmund, and indicates with her eyes, persistently and with speaking plainness, a particular spot in the stem of the ash-tree. Hunding starts, and drives her off with a violent gesture. With a last look at Siegmund, she disappears into the bed-chamber, and shuts the door behind her.*

THE VALKYRIE

Hunding
Taking his
weapons from
the tree-stem.

ons man should be armed.
With weapons-morrow then, Wölfin.
We meet to you hast heard ;
My word thif well !
Ward thyse

*goes into the bed-chamber. The shooting
[He the bolt is heard from within.
of*

*dark. All the light in the hall comes
Siegmond alone. It has grown quite Siegmund sinks down on to a couch
from a dull fire on the hearth. me time silently in great agitation.
beside the fire and broods for soi*

Siegmond

said when most wanted
My father 'should find and wield.
A sword I
Swordless I entered
man's house,
My foe's hostage here
As a kin.
I remain a fair
I saw n and sweet,
Woman's bliss and dread
And bane my heart.
Consult for whom I long—
The woman's charm both wounds and
She whose s—
delight held by the man
In thrall is a weaponless foe.
Who mock! Wälse!
Wälse, is thy sword?—
Where's thy sword
The trusty sword
To be swung in battle,
To be in my bosom should burst
When from that fills my heart?
The fury th

*the fire collapses. From the flame which
[The] leaps up a bright light falls on the spot in
the ash-tree's stem indicated by Sieglind's
took, and on which the hilt of a sword is
how plainly visible.*

Sieglinde prepares Hunding's draught for the night

See p. 87



THE VALKYRIE

What can that be
That shines so bright?
What a ray streams
From the ash-tree's stem!
My eyes that saw not
See the bright flash;
Gay as laughter it gleams.
How the radiant light
Illumes my heart!
Is it the look
That lingered behind,
Yonder clinging,
When forth from the hall
The lovely woman went?

[From this point the fire gradually goes out.]

Darkly the shadows
Covered my eyes,
Till her shining glance
Over me gleamed,
Bringing me warmth and day.
Gay and splendid
The sun appeared,
And blissfully circled
With glory my head—
Till by the hills it was hid.

[The fire flickers up faintly again.]

But once more, ere it set,
Bright it shone upon me,
And the ancient ash-tree's stem
Was lit by its golden glow.
The splendour passes,
The light grows dim,
Shadowy darkness
Falls and enshrouds me;

THE VALKYRIE

Deep in my bosom's fastness
Glimmers still faintly the flame !

[The fire goes out altogether. Total darkness. The door of the bed-chamber opens noiselessly. Sieglinde comes out in a white garment and advances softly but quickly towards the hearth.]

Sieglinde

Art asleep ?

Siegmund

Joyfully surprised.

Who steals this way ?

Sieglinde

With stealthy haste.

'Tis I : listen to me !
In sleep profound lies Hunding ;
The draught that I mixed him I drugged.
Use to good purpose the night !

Siegmund

Ardently interrupting.

Thou here, all is well !

Sieglinde

I have come to show thee a weapon ;
O couldst thou make it thine !
I then might call thee
First among heroes,
For only by him
Can it be won.
O hearken : heed what I tell thee !
Here Hunding's kinsmen
Sat in the hall,
Assembled to honour his wedding.
He took as his wife,
Against her will,
One who was bartered by thieves.
Sad I sat there
Through their carousing.

THE VALKYRIE

A stranger entered the hall,
An old and grey-coated man.
So slouched was his hat
That one of his eyes was hidden ;
 But the other flashed
 So that all feared it :
 Overwhelming
 Its menace they found ;
 I alone
 Suffered, when looked on,
Sweet pain, sad delight,
Sorrow and solace in one.
 On me glancing,
 He scowled at the others,
As he swung a sword in his hands.
 This sword he plunged
 In the ash-tree's stem,
To the hilt driving it home.
The weapon he gains in guerdon
Who draws it from its place.
 Though sore they struggled,
 Not one of the heroes
Could win the weapon for his ;
 Coming, going,
 The guests essayed it,
The strongest tugged at the steel ;
Not an inch it stirred in the stem ;
In silence yonder it cleaves.
I knew then who he was
That in sorrow greeted me.
 I know too
 Now for whom
The sword was stuck in the tree.
 O might I to-day
 Find here the friend
 Brought from afar

THE VALKYRIE

By a woman's woe !
Then all I have suffered
In sorrow untold,
All scorn and all shame
In anger endured—
All would avenged be,
Sweetly atoned for—
Regained fully
The good I had lost ;
For mine I should win
All I had wept for,
Could I but find the dear friend,
And clasp him close in my arms !

Siegmond
Embracing
Sieglinde
with passionate
ardour.

Dear woman, that friend
Holds thee at last,
Both woman and sword are his.
Here in my breast
Burns hot the oath
That welds us twain into one.
For all that I sought
I see now in thee,
In thee all
That once failed me I find.
Thou wert despised,
My portion was pain ;
I was an outlaw,
Dishonoured wert thou ;
Sweet revenge beckons,
Bids us be joyful ;
I laugh
From sheer fulness of joy,
Holding thee, love, in my arms thus,
Feeling the beat of thy heart !

[The outer door swings open.]

THE VALKYRIE

Sieglinde
*With a start
of alarm, tears
herself away.*

Ha, who went? Who entered there?

*[The door remains open. Outside, a glorious
spring night. The full moon shines in,
throwing its bright light on the pair, so
that they can suddenly see one another
quite plainly.]*

Siegmund
In soft ecstasy.

No one went—
But one has come :
Laughing the spring
Enters the hall !

*[He draws Sieglinde with tender force on
to the couch, so that she sits beside him.
The moon shines more and more brightly.]*

Winter storms have yielded
To May's sweet moon,
And mild and radiant
Sparkles the spring.
On balmy breezes
Light and lovely,
Weaving wonders,
Soft she sways.
Through field and forest
She is breathing ;
Wide and open
Laughs her eye ;
When blithe the birds are singing
Sounds her voice ;
Fragrant odours
She exhales ;
From her warm blood blossom flowers
Welcome and joyous.
Shoot and bud,
They wax by her aid.
With tender weapons armed,
She conquers the world.
Winter and storm yield
To the strong attack.

THE VALKYRIE

No wonder that, beaten boldly,
At last the door should have opened,
Which, stubborn and stiff,
Was keeping her out.
To find her sister
Hither she came ;
By love has spring been allured ;
Within our bosoms
Buried she lay ;
Now glad she laughs to the light.
The bride who is sister
Is freed by the brother ;
In ruin lies
What held them apart.
Loud rejoicing,
They meet and greet ;
Lo ! Love is mated with spring !

Sieglinde

Thou art the spring
That I used to pine for,
When pinched by the winter frost ;
My heart hailed thee friend
With bliss and with fear,
When thy first glance fell on me sweetly
All I had seen appeared strange ;
Friendless were my surroundings ;
I never seemed to have known
Any one who came nigh.
Thee, however,
Straightway I knew,
And I saw thou wert mine
When I beheld thee :
What I hid in my heart,
All I am,
Clear as the day
Dawned to my sight

THE VALKYRIE

Like tones to the ear
Echoing back,
When, upon my frosty desert,
My eyes first beheld a friend.

*[She hangs enraptured on his neck, and looks
him close in the face.]*

Siegmund
Transported.

O rapture most blissful!
Woman most blest!

Sieglinde
Close to his eyes.

O let me, closer
And closer clinging,
Discern more clearly
The sacred light
That from thine eyes
And face shines forth,
And so sweetly sways every sense!

Siegmund

The May-moon's light
Falls on thy face
Framed by masses
Of waving hair.
What snared my heart
'Tis easy to guess:
My gaze on loveliness feasts.

Sieglinde
*Pushing the
hair back from
his brow,
regards him
with astonish-
ment.*

How broad and open
Is thy brow!
Blue-branching the veins
In thy temples entwine.
I hardly can endure
My burden of bliss.—
Of something I am reminded:—
The man I first saw to-day
Already I have seen!

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmund

A dream of love
I too recall ;
I saw thee there
And yearned for thee sore !

Sieglinde

The stream has shown me
My imaged face—
Again I see it before me ;
As in the pool it arose
It is reflected by thee.

Siegmund

Thine is the face
I hid in my heart.

Sieglinde

*Quickly averting
her gaze.*

O hush ! That voice !
O let me listen !
These tones as a child
Surely I heard—
But no ! I heard the sound lately,
When, calling in the wood,
My voice re-echoing rang.

Siegmund

To sweet and melodious
Music I listen !

Sieglinde

*Gazing into
his eyes again.*

And ere now thy glowing
Eye have I seen :
The old man whose glance
Solaced my grief,
When he greeted me had that eye—
I knew him
Because of his eye,
And almost addressed him as father.
[After a pause.]
Art thou Wehwaît in truth ?

Siegmund

If dear to thee,
Wehwaît no more ;
My sway is o'er bliss not sorrow !

THE VALKYRIE

Sieglinde

And Friedmund does not
Fit with thy fortunes.

Siegmund

Choose thou the name
Thou wouldst have me be known by :
Thy choice will also be mine !

Sieglinde

The name of thy father was Wölfe ?

Siegmund

A wolf to the fearful foxes !
But he whose eye
Shone with the brightness
Which, fairest one, shines in thine own,
Was named—Wälse of old.

Sieglinde
Beside herself.

Was Wälse thy father,
And art thou a Wälsung ?—
Stuck was for thee
His sword in the stem ?—
Then let my love call thee
What it has found thee ;
Siegmund
Shall be thy name.

Siegmund
Springs up.

Siegmund call me
For Siegmund am I !
Be witness this sword
I grasp without shrinking !
That I should find it
In sorest need
Wälse foretold.
I grasp it now !
Love the most pure
In utmost need,
Passionate love,
Consuming desire
Burning bright in my breast,
Drive to deeds and death !

THE VALKYRIE

Nothing ! Nothing !
That, sword, is thy name.
Nothing ! Nothing !
Conquering steel !
Show me thy sharp
And sundering tooth :
Come forth from thy scabbard to me !

*[He draws the sword with a violent effort
from the stem of the tree and shows it to
the amazed and enraptured Sieglinde.]*

Sigmund the Walsung
Thou dost see !
As bride-gift
He brings thee this sword ;
With this he frees
The woman most blest ;
He bears thee
From the house of his foe.
Far from here
Follow thou him :
Forth to the laughing
House of the spring ;
Thy shield be Nothung, the sword,
When Sigmund is captive to love !

*[He throws his arm round her so as to draw
her forth with him.]*

Sieglinde
*Delirious with
excitement,
tears herself
away and
stands before
him.*

Art thou Sigmund
Standing before me,
Sieglinde am I
Who longed for thee ;
Thy own twin-sister
As well as the sword thou hast
won !

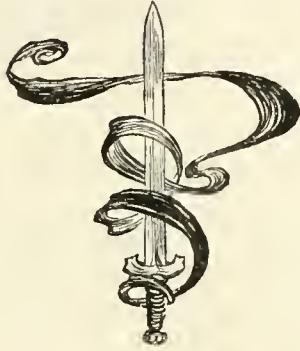
[She throws herself on his breast.]

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmund

Bride and sister
Be to thy brother—
So Wälsungs shall flourish for aye!

*[He draws her to him with fervent passion.
The curtain falls quickly.]*





THE SECOND ACT

A wild mountainous spot. In the background a gorge rises from below to a high ridge of rocks, from which the ground slopes down again towards the front. Wotan, in full armour, carrying his spear. Before him Brünnhilde as a Valkyrie, also fully armed.

Wotan

Go bridle thy steed,
 Valorous maid!
 Bitter strife
 Soon will break forth;
 Brünnhilde, storm to the fray
 And cause the Wälsung to win!
 Hunding choose for himself
 Where to bide:
 No place in Walhall has he.
 So up and to horse!
 Haste to the field!

Brünnhilde

*Ascends the
 height on the
 right, shouting
 and springing
 from rock
 to rock.*

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
 Heiaha! Heiaha!
 Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
 Heiaha! Heiaha!
 Hojotoho! Hojotoho!
 Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

"Sieg~~m~~und the Walsung
Thou dost see !
As bride-gift
He brings thee this sword "

See p. 98



THE VALKYRIE

Heiaha! Hojoho!

[She pauses on a high peak, looks down into the gorge and calls back to Wotan.]

I warn thee, Father,

See to thyself;

Stern the strife

That is in store:

Here comes Fricka, thy wife,

Drawn hither in her car by her rams,

Swinging the golden

Scourge in her hand!

The wretched beasts

Are groaning with fear;

And how the wheels rattle!

Hot she hastes to the fray.

Such strife as this

No strife is for me,

Though I love boldly waged

Strife 'twixt men.

The battle alone thou must brave;

I go; thou art left in the lurch!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha! Heiaha!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha! Heiaha!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Hojotoho! Hojotoho!

Heiaha! Ha!

[She disappears behind the mountain peak at the side. Fricka, in a car drawn by a pair of rams, has driven up the gorge to the mountain ridge, where she suddenly stops, alights and strides angrily towards Wotan in the foreground.]

Wotan.

Aside, when he sees Fricka approaching.

The usual storm!

The usual strife!

But I must act with firmness.

THE VALKYRIE

Fricka All alone among the hills
 Moderating I seek thee, where thou dost hide
 her pace as she Fearing the eyes
 approaches, and Of thy wife,
 confronting Wotan That help in need thou may'st promise.
 with dignity.

Wotan Let Fricka tell
 Her trouble in full.

Fricka I have heard Hunding's cry,
 For vengeance calling on me ;
 As wedlock's guardian
 I gave ear :
 My word passed
 To punish the deed
 Of this impious pair
 Who boldly wrought him the wrong.

Wotan Have this pair then
 Done such harm,
 Whom spring united in love ?
 'Twas love's sweet magic
 That lured them on ;
 None pays for love's might to me.

Fricka How dull and how deaf thou wouldst seem !
 As though thou wert not aware
 That it is wedlock's
 Holy oath
 Profaned so rudely I grieve for.

Wotan Unholy
 Hold I the bond
 That binds unloving hearts ;
 Nor must thou
 Imagine that I

Brünnhilde



THE VALKYRIE

Will restrain by force
What transcends thy power ;
For where bold natures are stirring
I urge them frankly to strife.

Fricka

Deeming thus laudable
Wedlock's breach,
Pray babble more nonsense
And call it holy
That shame should blossom forth
From bond of a twin-born pair !
I shudder at heart,
My brain reels and whirls.
Sister embraced
As bride by the brother—
Who has ever heard
Of brother and sister as lovers ?

Wotan

Thou hearest it now !
Be taught by this
That a thing may be
Which has never befallen before.
That those two are lovers
Thou must admit ;
So take advice and be wise !
Thy blessing surely
Will bring to thee gladness,
If thou wilt, laughing on love,
Bless Siegmund and Sieglinde's bond.

Fricka

*With a
burst of deep
indignation.*

Then nothing to thee
Are the gods everlasting
Since the wild Wälsungs
Won thee for father ?
I speak plainly—
Is that thy thought ?

THE VALKYRIE

The holy and high
Immortals are worthless ;
And all that once
Was esteemed is thrown over ;
The bonds thou didst bind
By thyself now are broken ;
Heaven's hold
Is loosed with a laugh,
That this twin-born pair, unimpeded,
The fruit of thy lawless love,
May in wantonness flourish and rule !
But why wail over
Wedlock and vows,
Since by thee the first they are scorned !
The faithful wife
Betrayed at each turn,
Lustfully longing
Wander thy glances ;
Thine eyes scan
Each hollow and height
As thy fickle fancy allures thee,
While grief is gnawing my heart.
Heavy of soul
I had to endure it,
When to the fight
With the graceless maidens
Born out of wedlock,
Forth thou hast fared ;
For, thy wife still holding in awe,
Thou didst give her as maids
The Valkyrie band
To obedience bound,
Even Brünnhilde, bride of thy Wish.
But now that new names
Afford thee new pleasure,
And Wälse, wolfish, in

•

Fricka approaches in anger

See p. 101

•

•



THE VALKYRIE

Forests has wandered ;
Now that to bottomless
Shame thou hast stooped,
And a pair of mortals
Hast vilely begotten—
Now thy wife at the feet
Of whelps of a wolf thou dost fling !
Come finish thy work !
Fill the cup full !
Mock and trample now the betrayed one !

Wotan
Quietly.

Thou couldst not learn,
Though I might teach thee ;
To thee there is nothing plain
Till day has dawned on the deed,
Wonted things
Thou alone canst conceive,
Whereas my spirit broods
On things not yet brought forth.
Listen, woman !
Some one we need,
A hero gods have not shielded,
And who is not bound by their law.
So alone
Were he fit for the deed
Which no god can accomplish,
Yet which must be done for the gods.

Fricka

With sayings dark
Thou fain wouldst deceive me !
What deed by hero
Could be accomplished
That was beyond the strength of the gods,
By whose grace alone he is strong ?

Wotan

Then his own heart's courage
Counts not at all ?

THE VALKYRIE

Fricka

Who breathed their souls into men?
Who opened their eyes, that they see?
Behind thy shield
Strong they appear;
With thee to goad them,
Upward they strive;
Those men that thou praisest,
'Tis thou who spurrest them on.
With falsehoods fresh
Thou wouldst fain delude me,
With new devices
Thou wouldst evade me;
Thou shalt not shelter
The Wälsung from me;
He lives only through thee,
And is bold through thee alone.

Wotan

With emotion.

He grew unaided
In grievous distress;
My shield sheltered him not.

Fricka

Then shield him not to-day;
Take back the sword
That thou hast bestowed.

Wotan

The sword?

Fricka

Yes, the sword,
The magic sword
Sudden and strong
That thou gavest to thy son.

Wotan

Unsteadily.

Nay, Siegmund won it
Himself in his need.

[From here Wotan's whole attitude expresses an ever-deepening uneasiness and gloom.]

THE VALKYRIE

Fricka
*Continuing
passionately.*

Both conquering sword
And the need came from thee.
Wouldst thou deceive me
Who, day and night,
At thy heels follow close?
For him thou didst strike
The sword in the stem;
Thou didst promise him
The peerless blade.
Canst thou deny
That thy cunning it was
Which led him where it lay hid?

*[Wotan makes a wrathful gesture. Fricka
goes on more and more confidently as she
sees the impression produced on him.]*

The Gods
Do not battle with bondsmen;
The free but punish transgressors.
Against thee, my peer,
Have I waged war,
But Siegmund is mine as my slave.

*[Another violent gesture from Wotan, who
then seems to succumb to the feeling of his
own powerlessness.]*

Shall thy eternal
Consort obey one
Who calls thee master
And bows as thy slave?
What! Shall I be
Despised by the basest,
To the lawless a spur,
A scoff to the free?
My husband cannot desire me,
A goddess, to suffer such shame!

Wotan
Gloomily.

What then wouldst thou?

THE VALKYRIE

Fricka Shield not the Wälsung.

Wotan His way let him go.
In a muffled voice.

Fricka Thou wilt grant him no aid,
 When to arms the avenger calls?

Wotan I shield him no more.

Fricka Seek not to trick me ;
 Look in my eyes !
 The Valkyrie turn from him too.

Wotan The Valkyrie free shall choose.

Fricka Not so ; she but acts
 To accomplish thy will ;
 Give order that Siegmund die.

Wotan Nay, slay him I cannot,
After a violent
internal struggle.
 He found my sword !

Fricka Remove thou the magic,
 And shatter the blade :
 Swordless let him be found.

Brünnhilde Heiaha ! Heiaha !
Is heard
calling from
the heights.
 Hojotoho !
 Heiaha ! Heiaha !
 Heiohotojo ! Hotojoha !

Fricka Thy valorous maiden comes ;
 Shouting, hither she rides.

Wotan For Siegmund I called her to horse.

[Brünnhilde appears with her horse on the rocky path to the right. When she sees Fricka she stops abruptly and, during the following, slowly and silently leads her horse down the path. She then puts it in a cave.]

THE VALKYRIE

Fricka

By her shield to-day
Be guarded the honour
Of thy eternal spouse !
Derided by men,
Shorn of our power,
Perish and pass would the Gods
If thy valiant maid
Avenged not to-day
My sacred and sovereign right.
The Walsung falls for my honour.
Does Wotan now pledge me his oath ?

Wotan

*Throwing himself
on to a rocky seat
in terrible dejection.*

Take the oath !

*[Fricka strides towards the back, where she
meets Brünnhilde and halts for a moment
before her.]*

Fricka

Warfather
Waits for thee ;
He will instruct thee
How the lot is decreed !
[She drives off quickly.]

Brünnhilde

*Comes forward
anxious and won-
dering to Wotan,
who, leaning back
on his rocky seat,
is brooding gloomily.*

Ill closed
The fight, I fear ;
Fricka laughs at the outcome !
Father, what news
Hast thou to tell me ?
Sad thou seemest and troubled !

Wotan

*Dropping his
arm helplessly
and sinking his head on his breast.*

By self-forged fetters
I am bound,
I, least free of all living !

Brünnhilde

I know thee not thus :
What gnaws at thy heart ?

THE VALKYRIE

Wotan

*His expression
and gestures
working up,
from this point,
to a fearful
outburst.*

O sacrilege vile !
O grievous affront !
Gods' despair !
Gods' despair !
Infinite wrath !
Woe without end !
Most sorrowful I of all living !

Brünnhilde

*Alarmed, throws
her shield, spear
and helmet from
her and kneels
with anxious
affection at
his feet.*

Father ! Father !
Tell me what ails thee ?
With dismay thou art filling thy child !
Confide in me
For I am true ;
See, Brünnhilde begs it !

*[She lays her head and hands with tender
anxiety on his knees and breast.]*

Wotan

*Looks long in
her eyes, then
strokes her hair with involuntary tenderness. As if coming
out of a deep reverie, he at last begins, very softly.*

What if, when uttered,
Weaker it made
The controlling might of my will ?

Brünnhilde

Very softly.

To Wotan's will thou speakest
When thou speakest to me ?
What am I
If I am not thy will ?

Wotan

Very softly.

What never to any was spoken
Shall be unspoken now and for ever.
Myself I speak to,
Speaking to thee.

[In a low, muffled voice.]

When young love grew
A waning delight,
'Twas power my spirit craved ;
By rash and wild
Desires driven on,

Brünnhilde slowly and silently leads her horse down the
path to the cave

See p. 108



THE VALKYRIE

I won myself the world.
 Unknown to me
 Dishonest my acts were ;
 Bargains I made
 Wherein hid mishap,
Craftily lured on by Loge,
Who straightway disappeared.
 Yet I could not leave
 Love altogether ;
When grown mighty still I desired it.
 The child of night,
 The craven Nibelung,
Alberich, broke from its bond.
 All love he forswore,
 And procured by the curse
The gleaming gold of the Rhine,
And with it measureless might.
 The ring that he wrought
 I stole by my cunning,
 But I restored it not
 To the Rhine ;
 It paid the price
 Of Walhall's towers :
The home the giants had built me,
From which I commanded the world.
 She who knows all
 That ever was,
 Erda, the holy,
 All-knowing Wala,
Warned me touching the ring :
Prophesied doom everlasting.
 Of this doom I was fain
 To hear further,
But silent she vanished from sight.
Then my gladness of heart was gone,
The god's one desire was to know.

THE VALKYRIE

To the womb of the earth
Downward then I went :
By love's sweet magic
Vanquished the Wala,
Troubled her wisdom proud,
And compelled her tongue to speak.
Tidings by her I was told ;
And with her I left a fair pledge :
The world's wisest of women
Bore me, Brünnhilde, thee.

With eight sisters
Fostered wert thou,
That ye Valkyries
Might avert the doom
Which the Wala's
Dread words foretold :
The gods' ignominious ending.
That foes might find us
Strong for the strife,
Heroes I got ye to gather.
The beings who served us
As slaves aforetime,
The men whose courage
Aforetime we curbed :
Who through treacherous bonds
And devious dealings
Were bound to the gods
In blindfold obedience—
To kindle these men
To strife was your duty,
To drive them on
To savage war,
That hosts of dauntless heroes
Might gather in Walhall's hall.

Brünnhilde

And well filled surely thy halls were ;
Many a one I have brought.

"Father ! Father !
Tell me what ails thee ?
With dismay thou art filling thy child !"

See p. 110



THE VALKYRIE

We never were idle,
So why shouldst thou fear?

Odin
*His voice
muffled again.*

Another ill—
Mark what I say—
Was by the Wala foretold!
Through Alberich's hosts
Doom may befall us;
A furious grudge
Alberich bears me;
But now that my heroes
Make victory certain
I defy the hosts of the night.
Only if he won
The ring again from me,
Walhall were forfeit for ever.
Used by him alone
Who love forswore
Could the runes of the ring
Bring doom
To the mighty gods,
And shame without end.
My heroes' valour
He would pervert,
Would stir to strife
The bold ones themselves,
And with their strength
Wage war upon me.
So, alarmed, I resolved
To wrest the ring from the foeman.

[In a low voice.]

I once paid Fafner,
One of the giants,
With gold accurst
For work achieved.
Fafner guards now the hoard

THE VALKYRIE

For which his own brother he slew.
The ring I must needs recover
With which his work I rewarded.

But I cannot strike one
By treaties protected ;
Vanquished by him
My valour would fail.
These are the bonds
That bind my power ;
I, who by treaties am lord,
To my treaties also am slave.

But what I dare not
One man may dare—
A hero never
Helped by my favour,
To me unknown
And granted no grace,
Unaware,
Bidden by none,
Constrained thereto
By his own distress—
He could achieve
What I must not do :

The deed I never urged,
Though it was all my desire.
But, alas ! how to find
One to fight me, the god,
For my good—
Most friendly of foes !
How fashion the free one
By me unshielded,
In his proud defiance
Most precious to me ?
How get me the other
Who, not through me,
But of himself

THE VALKYRIE

Will perform my will?
O woe of the gods!
Horrible shame!
Soul-sick am I
Of seeing myself
In all I ever created.
The other whom I so long for,
That other I never find.
The free by themselves must be fashioned,
All that I fashion are slaves!

Brünnhilde

But the Wälsung, Siegmund,
Works for himself.

Wotan

Wild I roamed
In the woodland with him,
Ever against the gods
Goading him to rebel.

[Slowly and bitterly.]

Now, when the gods seek vengeance,
Shield he has none but the sword
Given to him
By the grace of a god.
Why did I try
To trick myself vainly?
How easily Fricka
Found out the fraud!
She read my inmost
Heart to my shame.

I must bend my will to her wishes.

Brünnhilde

Of victory wouldst Siegmund deprive?

Wotan

I have handled Alberich's ring,
Loth to let the gold go.
The curse that I fled
Is following me:

THE VALKYRIE

I must always lose what I love most,
Slay what my heart holds dearest,

Basely betray
All those who trust.

*[His gestures, at first those of terrible grief,
end by expressing despair.]*

Pale then and pass
Glory and pomp,
Godhead's resplendent,
Glittering shame !
In ruins fall
The fabric I built !

Ended is my work ;
I wait but one thing more :
The downfall—
The downfall !

[He pauses thoughtfully.]

And for the downfall
Schemes Alberich !
Now I see
The sense hidden

In the strange, wild words of the Wala :

“ When the gloomy foe of love

Gets a son in his wrath,
The high gods' doom
Shall be at hand ! ”

Not long ago
A rumour I heard

That the dwarf had won a woman,
By gold gaining her grace.

A woman bears
Hate's bitter fruit ;
The child of spite
Grows in her womb ;
This marvel befell
The man who loved not ;

THE VALKYRIE

But I, the loving wooer,
Have never begotten the free.

[Rising in bitter wrath]

Accept thou my blessing,
Nibelung son !
I leave to thee
What I loathe with deep loathing :
The hollow pomp of the gods.
Consume it with envious greed !

Brünnhilde
Alarmed.

O say ! tell me
What task is thy child's ?

Wotan
Bitterly.

Fight, faithful to Fricka ;
Wedlock and vows defend !
What she desires
Is also my choice,
For what does my own will profit,
Since it cannot fashion a free one ?
For Fricka's slaves
Do battle henceforth !

Brünnhilde

Ah repent,
And take back thy word !
Thou lovest,
And fain, I know,
Wouldst have me shelter the Wälsung.

Wotan

Siegmund thou shalt vanquish,
And fight so that Hunding prevails.
Ward thyself well
And doughtily do,
Bring all thy boldness
To bear on the field ;
A strong sword
Swings Siegmund ;
Undismayed he will fight !

THE VALKYRIE

Brünnhilde

He whom thou still
Hast taught me to love,
He whose courage high
To thy heart was so precious—
I will shield him in spite of
Thy wavering word!

Wotan

Ha, daring one!
Floutest thou me?
Who art thou—who but the choiceless,
Blind slave of my will?
I have sunk so low
By showing my mind,
That the creature made by me
Holds me in scorn.
Dost thou, child, know my wrath?
If ever its awful
Lightning struck thee
Then quail wouldst thou indeed!
Within my bosom
Burns enough rage
To lay waste
In dread ruin a world
That once wore nothing but smiles.
Woe to him whom it strikes!
Dear the price he would pay!
So be advised,
Call it not forth
But carry out my commands.
Cut down Siegmund!
That is the Valkyrie's task.

*[He storms away and disappears among the
rocks to the left.]*

Brünnhilde stands for a long time dazed and alarmed

See p. 119



Arthur Rackham 1910

THE VALKYRIE

Brünnhilde
Stands for a
long time
dazed and
alarmed.

Warfather
Oft have I seen
Enraged, but never once like this !

*[She stoops down sadly, takes up her armour
and puts it on again.]*

How heavy
My armour feels !
And it felt so light
When gladly I fought !
I fight afraid.
Evil is my cause !

[She gazes thoughtfully before her.]

Woe ! My Wälsung !
With sorrow sore
Must the faithful one falsely forsake thee !
[She turns slowly towards the back.]

*On reaching the rocky pass, Brünnhilde, looking down into the gorge,
perceives Siegmund and Sieglinde. She watches them for a moment,
then turns into the cave where her horse is, so that she is completely
hidden from the audience. Siegmund and Sieglinde appear on the
pass, Sieglinde hurrying in front. Siegmund tries to stop her.*

Siegmund Wait here and rest ;
Tarry a while !

Sieglinde Farther ! Farther !

Siegmund No farther now !
O linger, woman most sweet !
From bliss when most blissful
Breaking away,
In headlong haste
Far thou hast fled,

THE VALKYRIE

So fleet that I lagged behind :
Through wood and field,
Over cliff and scaur,
Voiceless, silent,
Speeding along,
Thy foot stopped for no call.

[Sieglinde stares wildly before her.]

Tarry a while !
Say but a word,
Ending this speechless dread !
See, thy brother
Holds thee, his bride :
Sigmund's comrade art thou !

*Sieglinde
Gazes into his
eyes with
growing rap-
ture, throws
her arms
passionately
round his neck
and remains
so for some time.
She then starts
up in wild
terror.*

Away ! Away !
Fly the profaned one !
Unholy
The clasp of her arm ;
In shame, dishonoured,
This body died.
Fling it from thee,
Flee from the corpse !
The winds scatter her dust—
The foul one who loved one so fair !
When in his loving embrace
She rested in rapture pure,
And all the love of the man
Was hers who loved him alone—
When on holiest height,
When bliss was at sweetest,
And sense and soul
Were steeped in delight,
Hatred and loathing
Of hideous dishonour
Shook the disgraced one,
Filled her with fear—

THE VALKYRIE

The thought she once had obeyed.
Bridegroom unloving, unloved.

Leave the accurst one,
Far let her fly!
An outcast she is,
Bereft of grace!
Ah, I must leave
The purest of heroes;
I cannot be thine,
To sully thy glory:

Scorn to bring on the brother,
Shame to the rescuing friend!

Siegmund

For the shame and dishonour,
Pay the transgressor's blood!
No farther, then, flying,
Here let us wait him;
Here—here I shall slay him:
When Nothung's point
Shall pierce his heart,
All thy wrongs will be avenged!

Sieglinde
*Starts up and
listens.*

Hark! The bugles!
Dost thou not hear?
All around,
Angry and shrill,
From wood and vale
Clamour their calls.
Hunding has wakened
From slumber deep;
Kinsmen and hounds
He summons together;
How the dogs howl,
Urged on hotly,
Loud-baying to heaven
Of the vows and the wedlock profaned!

[Gazes before her as if gone crazed.]

THE VALKYRIE

Where art thou, Siegmund?
Art thou still here,
Fervently loved one,
Beautiful brother?
Let thine eyes like stars
Shine again on me softly;
Turn not away
From the outcast woman's kiss!

*[She throws herself sobbing on his breast, and
presently starts up in terror again.]*

Hark! O hark!
That is Hunding's horn!
With his hounds full force,
In haste he comes.
No sword helps
When the dogs attack:—
Throw it down, Siegmund!
Siegmund, where art thou?
Ha, there! I see thee now!
Horrible sight!
Eager-fanged
Are the bloodhounds for flesh;
Ah, what to them
Is thy noble air!
By the feet they seize thee
With terrible teeth;
Alas!
Thou fallest with splintered sword:—
The ash-tree sinks—
The trunk is rent!
Brother! My brother!
Siegmund—ha!

[She falls fainting into his arms.]

Brünnhilde with her horse, at the mouth of the cave
See p. 123



THE VALKYRIE

Siegmond

Sister ! Belovèd !

[He listens to her breathing, and, when convinced that she still lives, lets her slide down so that, as he himself sinks into a sitting posture, her head rests upon his knees. In this position both remain till the end of the following scene. A long silence, during which Siegmund bends over Sieglinde with tender concern, and presses a long kiss on her brow.]

Brünnhilde, leading her horse, comes out of the cave and walks slowly and solemnly towards the front. She pauses and watches Siegmund from a distance, then advances slowly again and stops when she gets nearer. In one hand she carries her shield and spear, the other rests on her horse's neck, and thus she gravely stands looking at Siegmund.

Brünnhilde

Siegmond !
Look on me
Whom thou
Must follow soon !

Siegmond

Who art thou, say,
Looking up at her. That dost stand so fair and so stern ?

Brünnhilde

Death-doomed are they
Who look upon me ;
Who sees me
Bids farewell to the light of life.
On the battle-field only
Heroes view me ;
He whom I greet
Is chosen and must go.

Siegmond

When thou dost lead,
Looks into her Whither follows the hero ?
eyes with a long steadfast and searching gaze, then bows his head in thought and finally turns resolutely to her again.

THE VALKYRIE

Brünnhilde

I lead thee
To Wotan ;
The lot he has cast :
To Walhall must thou come.

Siegmund

In Walhall's hall
Wotan alone shall I find ?

Brünnhilde

A glorious host
Of heroes slain
Will greet thee there
With love holy and high.

Siegmund

Say if in Walhall
Sojourns my father, Wälse.

Brünnhilde

His father there
Will the Wälsung find.

Siegmund
Tenderly.

Will any woman
Welcome me there ?

Brünnhilde

Wishmaidens
Serve there serene :
Wotan's daughter
Wine will bring for thy cup.

Siegmund

High art thou
And holy of aspect,
O Wotan's child :
But one thing tell me, divine one !
The sister and bride,
Shall she follow the brother ?
Will Siegmund find Sieglinde there ?

Brünnhilde

Air of earth
Still she must breathe here ;
Siegmund will find no Sieglinde there !

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmond
*Bends tenderly
over Sieglinde,
kisses her softly
on the brow,
and turns again
quietly to
Brünnhilde.*

Then greet for me Walhall,
Greet for me Wotan,
Greet for me Wälse
And all the heroes,
Wishmaidens lovely
Greet thou also,
And tell them I will not come !

Brünnhilde

Nay, having looked
On the Valkyrie's face,
Thou must follow her forth !

Siegmond

Where Sieglinde dwells
In weal or woe,
There will Siegmund dwell also ;
My face grew not pale
When I beheld thee :
Thou canst not force me to go !

Brünnhilde

Force thee can none
While thou dost live ;
Fool, what will force thee is death :
Warning of death
Is what I bring.

Siegmond

What hero to-day
Shall hew me down ?

Brünnhilde

Hunding's hand in the fight.

Siegmond

Use threats more baleful
Than blows from Hunding !
Lurkest thou here
Longing for strife,
Fix on him for thy prey.
I think it is he who will fall !

Brünnhilde

Nay, Wälsung,
Doubt not my word ;
Thine is the death decreed.

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmond

Knowest this sword?
Who gave the sword
Gave triumph sure :
With this sword I laugh at thy threats.

Brünnhilde

In a loud voice.

He whose it was
Now dooms thee to death,
For the magic spell he withdraws !

Siegmond

Vehemently.

Hush ! Alarm not
The slumberer here !

*[In an outburst of grief he bends tenderly
over Sieglinde.]*

Woe ! Woe !
Woman most sweet !
Most sad and ill-starred of all true ones !
Against thee rages
The whole world in arms,
And I who was all thy defence,
For whom thou the world hast defied —
To think I cannot
Shield thee, but, beaten
In battle, thy trust must betray !
O shame on him
Who bestowed the sword,
And triumph now turns to scorn !
If I must fall thus,
I fare to no Walhall—
Hella hold me for aye !

[He bends low over Sieglinde.]

Brünnhilde

Moved.

So little prizest thou
Life everlasting ?

[Slowly and with hesitation.]

All thy care
Is thy helpless wife
Who, sad and weary,

THE VALKYRIE

Heavily hangs in thy arms?
Precious only is she?

Siegmond
*Looking up at
her bitterly.*

Though young and fair
Thou shinest to me,
In my heart I know thee
Cruel and cold!
Canst thou do nothing
But mock me, begone,
Malicious, merciless maid!
Or if thou must gloat
Upon my distress,
Then gloat and feast thyself full!
With my woe
Solace thy envious soul:—
But of Walhall's loveless raptures
Nothing more let me hear!

Brünnhilde

I see the distress
That is tearing thy heart;
The doomed hero's holy
Sorrow I feel.
Siegmond, thy wife be my charge,
Protected safely by me.

Siegmond

No other than I
While my wife is living shall guard her.
If death be my lot
I will slay the slumberer first!

Brünnhilde
*With
increasing
emotion.*

Wälsung! Madman!
Listen to me!
Entrust her to me
For the pledge's sake
That she carries of thee and thy love!

THE VALKYRIE

Sigmund
*Drawing his
sword.*

This sword
That a true man received from a false—
This sword
That fails me when facing the foe ;
Worthless when turned on the foe,
Will serve me when turned on the friend.

[He points the sword at Sieglinde.]

Two lives now
Laugh to thee here :
Take them, Nothung,
Envious steel !
Take them with one fell stroke !

Brünnhilde
*With a passionate
outburst of sym-
pathy.*

Forbear, Wälsung !
Listen to me !
Sieglinde spare thou,
And Sigmund too shall be spared !
'Tis thus decreed,
Recast the lot is !
Thou, Sigmund,
Shalt be blest and prevail !

[Horns are heard in the distance.]

Hark to the horn !
Prepare for the fray ;
Trust to the sword
And strike without fear :
Thy sword shall prove strong
Thee the Valkyrie faithfully shields !
Farewell, Sigmund,
Hero most blest !

On the field again I shall find thee.

[She rushes away and disappears with her horse down a gorge on the right. Sigmund gazes after her joyful and exultant. The stage has gradually grown dark. Heavy storm-clouds have gathered in the background, and hide the cliffs, gorge, and rocky pass completely from view.]

THE VALKYRIE

Siegmond

*Bending over
Sieglinde, listens
to her breathing.*

Charmèd slumber

Softly soothes

The dear one's pain and grief.

When the Valkyrie came, perchance

She brought her this blissful repose ;

Else would the grimly fought fight

Have terrified one in such woe.

Lifeless seems she,

And yet she lives ;

The sad one by smiling

Dreams is caressed.

In slumber lie soft

Till the fight is won

And peace shall end thy pain !

*[He lays her gently on the rocky seat and
kisses her brow in farewell. Then, hear-
ing Hunding's horn sound, he starts up
with resolution.]*

Thou who dost call,

Arm for the fray ;

Thy dues in full

Thou shalt have :

[He draws his sword.]

Nothing pays him his debt.

*[He hastens to the back and, on reaching the
pass, immediately disappears in a dark
thunder-cloud, from which, the next instant,
a flash of lightning breaks.]*

Sieglinde

*Begins to move
uneasily in her
dreams.*

Would but my father come back !

With the boy he still roams in the wood.

Mother ! Mother !

I am afraid—

The strangers seem

So harsh and unfriendly !

Fumes that stifle—

THE VALKYRIE

Dense and black smoke—
Fierce are the flames,
And closer they flare—
On fire the house !
O help us, brother !
Siegmund ! Siegmund !

[She starts up. Violent thunder and lightning.]

Siegmund ! Ha !

*[She stares about her in growing terror.
Almost the whole of the stage is veiled by
black thunder-clouds. Hunding's horn is
heard close at hand.]*

Hunding's voice
*From the
mountain pafs
in the background.*

Wehwalt ! Wehwalt !
Stand there and fight,
Or with the hounds I will hold thee !

Siegmund's voice
*From farther
back in the
gorge.*

Where hidest thou,
That I have missed thee thus ?
Halt, that I may find thee !

Sieglinde
*Listening in
terrible fear.*

Hunding—Siegmund—
Could I but see them !

Hunding

Come hither, impious wooer !
Here by Fricka be slain !

Siegmund
*Also from the
pafs now.*

Thou thinkest me weaponless,
Coward, still.
Threat not with women !
Thyself now fight me,
Lest Fricka fail thee at need !
For see, from the tree
That grows by thy hearth
I drew undaunted the sword ;
Come and try the taste of its steel !

THE VALKYRIE

Sieglinde
*With all her
strength.*

**Hold your hands, ye men there !
Strike me dead first !**

*[She rushes towards the pass, but is suddenly
dazzled by a light which flashes forth from
above the combatants to the right, and staggers
aside as if blinded.]*

Brünnhilde's voice

**Strike him, Siegmund !
Trust to the sword !**

*[Brünnhilde appears in the glare of light, floating
above Siegmund, and protecting him with her
shield. Just as Siegmund is aiming a deadly
blow at Hunding a glowing red light breaks
through the clouds from the left, in which
Wotan appears, standing over Hunding
and holding his spear across in front of
Siegmund.]*

Wotan's voice

**Back ! Back from the spear !
In splinters the sword !**

*[Brünnhilde with her shield recoils in terror
before Wotan ; Siegmund's sword breaks in
splinters on the outstretched spear. Hunding
plunges his sword into the disarmed man's
breast. Siegmund falls down dead, and Sieg-
linde, who has heard his death-sigh, sinks to
the ground as if lifeless. With Siegmund's
fall the lights on both sides disappear. Dense
clouds shroud all but the foreground in dark-
ness. Through these Brünnhilde is dimly
seen turning in wild haste to Sieglinde.]*

Brünnhilde

To horse, that I may save thee !

*She lifts Sieglinde up quickly on to her horse,
which is standing near the side ravine, and
immediately disappears. Thereupon the clouds
divide in the middle, so that Hunding, who has
just drawn his sword out of Siegmund's breast,
is distinctly seen. Wotan, surrounded by clouds,
stands on a rock behind, leaning on his spear and
gazing sorrowfully on Siegmund's body.*

THE VALKYRIE

Wotan
To Hunding.

Begone, slave !
Kneel before Fricka ;
Tell her that Wotan's spear
Has slain what mocked her might.
Go ! Go !

*[Before the contemptuous wave of his hand
Hunding falls dead to the ground. Suddenly
breaking out in terrible anger.]*

But Brünnhilde !
Woe to the guilty one !
Woe to her
As soon as my horse
Shall overtake her in flight !

*[He vanishes with thunder and lightning.
The curtain falls quickly.]*





THE THIRD ACT

On the top of a rocky mountain

On the right the stage is bounded by a pine-wood. On the left is the entrance to a cave, above which the rock rises to its highest point. At the back the view is quite open. Rocks of varying heights form the edge of the precipice. Clouds fly at intervals past the mountain peak as if driven by storm. Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute, and Schwertleite have taken up their position on the rocky peak above the cave. They are in full armour.

Gerhilde

*On the highest
point, calling
towards the
background, where
a dense cloud is passing.*

**Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
Heiaha ! Heiaha !
Helmwige ! Here !
Guide hither thy horse !**

Helmwige's voice
At the back.

**Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
Heiaha !**

*[A flash of lightning comes from the cloud,
showing a Valkyrie on horseback, on whose
saddle hangs a slain warrior. The ap-
parition, approaching the cliff, passes from
left to right.]*

**Gerhilde,
Waltraute,
and Schwertleite**
*Calling to her as
she draws near.*

Heiaha ! Heiaha !

*[The cloud with the apparition vanishes to
the right behind the wood.]*

THE VALKYRIE

Ortlinde <i>Calling into the wood.</i>	Thy stallion make fast By Ortlinde's mare ; Gladly my grey Will graze by thy chestnut !
--	--

Waltraute <i>Calling towards the wood.</i>	Who hangs at thy saddle ?
--	---------------------------

Helmwige <i>Coming out of the wood.</i>	Sintolt, the Hegeling !
---	-------------------------

Schwertleite	Fasten thy chestnut Far from the grey then ; Ortlinde's mare Carries Wittig, the Irming !
---------------------	--

Gerhilde <i>Descending a little towards the others.</i>	And Sintolt and Wittig Always were foemen !
---	--

Ortlinde <i>Springs up and runs to the wood.</i>	Heiaha ! Heiaha ! The horse is kicking my mare !
--	---

Gerhilde <i>Laughing aloud with Helmwige and Schwertleite.</i>	The heroes' feud Makes foes of the horses !
--	--

Helmwige <i>Calling back into the wood.</i>	Quiet, Brownie ! Pick not a quarrel.
---	---

Waltraute <i>On the highest point, where listening towards the right she has taken Gerhilde's place as watcher, calling towards the right-hand side of the background.</i>	Hoioho ! Hoioho ! Siegrune, come ! What keeps thee so long ?
--	--

Siegrune's voice <i>From the back on the right.</i>	Work to do. Are the others all there ?
---	---

THE VALKYRIE

The Valkyries **Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !**
In answer, their **Heiaha ! Heiaha !**
gestures, as well as a bright light behind the wood,
showing that Siegrune has just arrived there.

Grimgerde's and **Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !**
Rossweisse's voices **Heiaha !**
From the back on the left.

Waltraute **Grimgerd' and Rossweisse !**
Towards the left.

Gerhilde **Together they ride.**
[In a cloud which passes across the stage from the left, and from which lightning flashes, Rossweisse and Grimgerde appear, also on horseback, each carrying a slain warrior on her saddle.

Helmwige,
Ortlinde, **We greet you, valiant ones !**
and Siegrune **Rossweiss' and Grimgerde !**
Have come out of the wood and wave their hands from the edge of the precipice to Rossweisse and Grimgerde, who disappear behind the wood.

Rossweisse's and **Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !**
Grimgerde's voices **Heiaha !**

All the other **Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !**
Valkyries **Heiaha ! Heiaha !**

Gerhilde **Your horses lead into**
Calling into the wood. **The wood to rest !**

Ortlinde **Lead the mares far off**
Also calling into **One from the other,**
the wood. **Until our heroes'**
 Anger is laid !

Helmwige **The grey has paid**
The others laughing **For the heroes' anger.**

THE VALKYRIE

Rossweisse
and Grimgerde

Coming out of the wood.

Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !

The Valkyries

Be welcomed ! Be welcomed !

Schwertleite

Went ye twain on one quest ?

Grimgerde

No, singly we rode,
And met but to-day.

Rossweisse

If we all are assembled
Why linger longer ?
To Walhall let us away,
Bringing to Wotan the slain.

Helmwige

We are but eight ;
Wanting is one.

Gerhilde

By the brown-eyed Walsung
Brünnhilde tarries.

Waltraute

Until she joins us
Here we must wait ;
Warfather's greeting
Grim were indeed
If we returned without her !

Siegrune
*On the look-out,
calling towards
the back.*

Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
This way ! This way !
[To the others.]
In hottest haste riding,
Hither she comes.

The Valkyries
*All hasten to the
look-out.*

Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
Heiaha !
Brünnhilde, hei !

[They watch her with growing astonishment.]

THE VALKYRIE

- | | |
|---|---|
| Waltraute | See, she leads woodward
Her staggering horse. |
| Gringerde | From swift riding
How Grane pants ! |
| Rossweisse | No Valkyrie's flight
Ever so fast was. |
| Ortlinde | What lies on her saddle ? |
| Helmwige | That is no man ! |
| Siegfrune | 'Tis a woman, see ! |
| Gerhilde | Where found she the maid ? |
| Schwertleite | Has she no greeting
For her sisters ? |
| Waltraute
<i>Calling down
very loudly.</i> | Heiaha ! Brünnhilde !
Dost thou not hear ? |
| Ortlinde | From her horse
Let us help our sister.
<i>[Helmwige and Gerhilde run to the wood,
followed by Siegrune and Rossweisse.]</i> |
| The Valkyries | Hojotoho ! Hojotoho !
Heiaha ! |
| Waltraute
<i>Looking into the wood.</i> | To earth has sunk
Grane the strong one ! |
| Gringerde | From the saddle swift
She snatches the maid. |
| The other
Valkyries
<i>Running to the
wood.</i> | Sister ! Sister !
What has occurred ?
<i>[The Valkyries all return to the stage ;
Brünnhilde accompanies them, leading and
supporting Sieglinde.]</i> |

THE VALKYRIE

Brünnhilde
Breathless.

Shield me and help
In dire distress !

The Valkyries

Whence rodest thou hither,
Hasting so hard ?
Thus ride they only who flee.

Brünnhilde

I flee for the first time
And am pursued :
Warfather follows close.

The Valkyries
Terribly alarmed.

Hast thou gone crazy ?
Speak to us ! What ?
Pursued by Warfather ?
Flying from him ?

Brünnhilde
*Turns and looks
out anxiously,
then comes back.*

O sisters, spy
From the rocky peak !
Look north and tell me
If Warfather nears !

*[Ortlinde and Waltraute spring up the peak
to the look-out.]*

Quick ! Is he in sight ?

Ortlinde

A storm from the north
Is nearing.

Waltraute

Darkly the clouds
Congregate there.

The Valkyries

Warfather, riding
His sacred steed, comes !

Brünnhilde

The wrathful hunter,
He rides from the north ;
He nears, he nears, in fury !
Save this woman !
Sisters your help !

Brünnhilde. "I flee for the first time
And am pursued :
Warfather follows close.

He nears, he nears, in fury !
Save this woman !
Sisters, your help !"

See p. 138



THE VALKYRIE

The Valkyries

What threatens the woman?

Brünnhilde

Hark to me quickly !
Sieglinde this is,
Siegmund's sister and bride.
Wotan his fury
Against the Wälsungs has turned.
He told me
That to-day I must fail
The brother in strife ;
But with my shield
I guarded him safe,
Daring the God,
Who slew him himself with his spear.
Siegmund fell ;
But I fled,
Bearing his bride.
To protect her
And from the stroke
Of his wrath to hide,
I hastened, O my sisters, to you !

The Valkyries
Full of fear.

O foolish sister,
How mad thy deed !
Woe's me ! Woe's me !
Brünnhilde, lost one !
Mocked, disobeyed
By Brünnhilde
Warfather's holy command !

Waltraute
On the look-out.

Darkness comes
From the north like the night.

Ortlinde
On the look-out.

Hither steering,
Rages the storm.

THE VALKYRIE

Rossweisse,
Grimgarde,
and Schwertleite

Wildly neighs
Warfather's horse !

Helmwige,
Gerhilde,
and Siegrune

Panting, snorting it comes !

Brünnhilde

Woe to the woman
If here she is found,
For Wotan has vowed
The Wälsungs shall perish !
The horse that is swiftest
Which of you lends,
That forth the woman may fly ?

Siegrune

Wouldst have us too
Madly rebel ?

Brünnhilde

Rossweisse, sister,
Wilt lend me thy racer !

Rossweisse

The fleet one from Wotan
Never yet fled.

Brünnhilde

Helmwige, hear me !

Helmwige

I flout not our father.

Brünnhilde

Waltraute ! Gerhilde !
Give me your horse !
Schwertleite ! Siegrune !
See my distress !
Stand by me now
Because of our love : .
Rescue this woman in woe !

THE VALKYRIE

Sieglinde
*Who until now
has been staring
gloomily and coldly
before her, starts
up with a repel-
lent gesture as
Brünnhilde
encircles her with
a warm,
protective embrace.*

Concern thyself not about me ;
Death is all that I crave.
From off the field
Who bade thee thus bear me ?
For there perchance
By the selfsame weapon
That struck down Siegmund
I too had died,
Made one with him
In the hour of death.
Far from Siegmund—
Siegmund, from thee !
O cover me, Death,
From the sorrow !
Wouldst thou not have me
Curse thee for flying ?
Thou must hearken, maid, to my prayer :
Pierce thou my heart with thy sword !

Brünnhilde
Impressively.

Live for the sake
Of thy love, O woman !
Rescue the pledge
Thou has gotten from him :
The Wälsung's child thou shalt bear !

Sieglinde
*Gives a violent
start ; suddenly
her face beams
with sublime joy.*

Save me, ye bold ones !
Rescue my child !
Shelter me, maidens,
And strong be your shield !

*[An ever-darkening thunderstorm nears from
the back.]*

Waltraute
On the look-out.

The storm has drawn nigh.

Ortlinde

Fly, all who fear it !

THE VALKYRIE

The Valkyries

Hence with the woman ;
Here she is lost :
The Valkyries dare not
Shield her from doom !

Sieglinde
*On her knees
before Brünnhilde.*

Save me, O maid !
Rescue the mother !

Brünnhilde
*Raises Sieglinde
with sudden
resolve.*

Away then, and swiftly !
Alone thou shalt fly.
I—stay in thy stead,
Victim of Wotan's anger.
I will hold here
The God in his wrath,
Till I know thee past reach of his rage.

Sieglinde

Say, whither shall my flight be ?

Brünnhilde

Which of you, sisters,
Eastward has journeyed ?

Sieg rune

A forest stretches
Far in the east ;
The Nibelung's hoard
By Fafner thither was borne.

Schwertleite

There as a dread
Dragon he sojourns,
And in a cave
Keeps watch over Alberich's ring.

Grimgerde

'Tis uncanny there
For a woman's home.

Brünnhilde

And yet from Wotan's wrath
Shelter sure were the wood ;
For he both fears
And keeps far from the place.

" There as a dread
Dragon he sojourns,
And in a cave
Keeps watch over Alberich's ring "

See p. 142



THE VALKYRIE

Waltraute
On the look-out.

Raging, Wotan
Rides to the rock !

The Valkyries

Brünnhilde, hark !
Like a storm-wind he comes !

Brünnhilde
Urgently.

Flee then swiftly,
Thy face to the east !
Boldly enduring,
Defy every ill—
Hunger and thirst,
Briar and stone ;
Laugh, whether gnawed
By anguish or want !
For one thing know
And hold to always—

The world's most glorious hero
Hideth, O woman, thy sheltering womb !

*[She takes the pieces of Siegmund's sword
from under her breast-plate and gives
them to Sieglinde.]*

The splintered sword's pieces
Guard securely ;
From the field where slain was
His father I brought them.
And now I name
Him who one day
The sword new-welded shall swing—
"Siegfried" rejoice and prevail !

Sieglinde
Greatly moved.

Sublimest wonder !
Glorious maid !
From thee high solace
I have received !
For him whom we loved
I save the beloved one.
May my thanks one day

THE VALKYRIE

Sweet reward bring !
Fare thou well !
Be blest by Sieglinde in woe !

[She hastens away to the right in front. The rocky peak is surrounded by black thunder-clouds. A fearful storm rages from the back. A fiery glow increases in strength to the right.]

Wotan's voice

Ortlinde
and Waltraute
*Coming down
from the look-out.*

The Valkyries

Brünnhilde

The Valkyries
*Fly towards the
rocky point in
fear, drawing
Brünnhilde with
them.*

Stay, Brünnhilde !

The rock is reached
By horse and rider !

[Brünnhilde, after following Sieglinde with her eyes for a while, goes towards the background, looks into the wood, and comes forward again fearfully.]

Woe, Woe ! Brünnhilde !
Vengeance he brings !

Ah, sisters, help !
My courage fails !
His wrath will crush me
Unless ye ward off its weight.

This way, then, lost one !
Hide from his sight !
Cling closely to us,
And heed not his call !

[They hide Brünnhilde in their midst and look anxiously towards the wood, which is now lit up by a bright fiery glow, while in the background it has grown quite dark.]

Woe ! Woe !
Raging, Wotan
Swings from his horse !
Hither hastes
His foot for revenge !

THE VALKYRIE

Wotan

*Comes from the
wood in a terrible
state of wrath*

*and excitement and goes towards the Valkyries on
the height, looking angrily for Brünnhilde.*

Where is Brünnhilde ?
Where is the guilty one ?
Would ye defy me
And hide the rebel ?

The Valkyries

Fearful and loud thy rage is !
By what misdeed have thy daughters
Vexed and provoked thee
To terrible wrath ?

Wotan

Fools, would ye flout me ?
Have a care, rash ones !
I know : Brünnhilde
Fain ye would hide.
Leave her, the lost one
Cast off for ever,
Even as she
Cast off her worth !

The Valkyries

To us fled the pursued one,
In her need praying for help,
Dismayed and fearful,
Dreading thy wrath.
For our trembling sister
Humbly we beg
That thy first wild rage be calmed.

Wotan

Weak-hearted
And womanish brood !
Is this your valour,
Given by me ?
For this have I reared you
Bold for the fight,
Made you relentless
And hard of heart

THE VALKYRIE

That ye wild ones might weep and whine
When my wrath on a faithless one falls ?

Learn, wretched whimperers,
What was the crime
Of her for whom
Ye are shedding those tears.
No one but she

Knew what most deeply I brooded ;
No one but she

Pierced to the source of my being ;
Through her deeds

All, I wished to be, came to birth.
This sacred bond

So completely she broke
That she defied me,
Opposing my will,
Her master's command
Openly mocked,

And against me pointed the spear
That she held from me alone.

Hearest, Brünnhilde ?
Thou who didst hold
Thy helm and spear,
Grace and delight,

Life and name as my gift !
Hearing my voice thus accusing,
Dost hide from me in terror,
A coward who shirks her doom ?

Brünnhilde

*Steps out from the
band of Valkyries, and humbly but with a firm step descends
from the rocky peak until within a short distance from Wotan.*

Here I am, Father,
Awaiting thy sentence !

Wotan

I—sentence thee not ;
Thou hast shaped thy doom for thyself.
Through my will only

THE VALKYRIE

Wert thou at all,
Yet against my will thou hast worked ;
Thy part it was
To fulfil my commands,
Yet against me thou hast commanded ;
Wish-maid
Thou wert to me,
Yet thy wish has dared to cross mine ;
Shield-maid
Thou wert to me,
Yet against me raised was thy shield ;
Lot-chooser
Thou wert to me :
Against me the lot thou hast chosen ;
Hero-rouser
Thou wert to me :
Thou hast roused up heroes against me.
What once thou wert
Wotan has told thee :
What thou art now,
Demand of thyself !
Wish-maid thou art no more ;
Valkyrie thou art no longer :—
What now thou art
For aye thou shalt be !

Brünnhilde
Greatly terrified.

Thou dost cast me off ?
Ah, can it be so ?

Wotan

No more shall I send thee from Walhall
To seek upon fierce
Fields for the slain ;
With heroes no more
Shalt thou fill my hall :
When the high Gods sit at banquet,
No more shalt thou pour
The wine in my horn ;

THE VALKYRIE

No more shall I kiss
The mouth of my child.
Among heaven's hosts
Numbered no longer,
Outcast art thou
From the kinship of Gods ;
Our bond is broken in twain,
And from my sight henceforth thou now
art banned.

The Valkyries
*Leave their places
in the excitement, and come a little farther down the rocks.*

Woe's me ! Woe !
Sister ! O sister !

Brünnhilde

All that thou gavest
Thou dost recall ?

Wotan

Conquering thee, one shall take all !
For here on the rock
Bound thou shalt be,
Defenceless in sleep,
Charmed and enchained ;
The man who chances this way
And awakes her, shall master the maid.

The Valkyries
*Come down from
the height in
great excitement,
and in terrified
groups surround
Brünnhilde, who
lies half kneeling
before Wotan.*

O stay, Father !
The sentence recall.
Shall the maiden droop
And be withered by man ?
O dread one, avert thou
The crying disgrace :
For as sisters share we her shame.

Wotan

Have ye not heard
Wotan's decree ?
From out your band
Shall your traitorous sister be banished,
No more to ride

The ride of the Valkyries

See p. 149



THE VALKYRIE

Through the clouds her swift steed to the
battle ;

Her maidenhood's flower

Will fade away ;

Her grace and her favour

Her husband's will be ;

Her husband will rule her

And she will obey ;

Beside the hearth she will spin,

To all mockers a mark for scorn.

*[Brünnhilde sinks with a cry to the ground.
The Valkyries, horror-stricken, recoil from
her violently.]*

Fear ye her fate ?

Then fly from the lost one !

Swiftly forsake

And flee from her far !

Let one but venture

Near her to linger,

Seek to befriend her,

Defying my will—

The fool shall share the same doom :

I warn you, ye bold ones, well !

Up and away !

Hence, and return not !

Get ye gone at a gallop,

Trouble is rife else for you here !

The Valkyries

*Separate with a
wild cry and rush
into the wood.*

Woe ! Woe !

*[Black clouds settle thickly on the cliff ; a rushing sound is
heard in the wood. From the clouds breaks a vivid
flash of lightning, by which the Valkyries are seen
packed closely together, and riding wildly away with
loose bridles. The storm soon subsides ; the thunder-
clouds gradually disperse. In the following scene the
weather becomes fine again and twilight falls, followed
at the close by night.]*

THE VALKYRIE

*Wotan and Brünnhilde, who lies stretched at his feet, remain behind alone.
A long solemn silence.*

Brünnhilde

*Begins to raise
her head a little,
and, commencing
timidly, gains
confidence as she
proceeds.*

Was the offence
So shameful and foul
That to such shame the offender should be
doomed?
Was what I did
So base and so vile
That I must suffer abasement so low?
Was the dishonour
Truly so deep
That it must rob me of honour for aye?

*[She raises herself gradually to a kneeling
posture.*

O speak, Father!
In my eye looking,
Calming thy rage,
Taming thy wrath,
Explain why so dark
This deed of mine
That in thy implacable anger
It costs thee thy favourite child!

Wotan

*His attitude
unchanged, gravely and gloomily.*

Ask of thy deed,
And that will show thee thy guilt!

Brünnhilde

I but fulfilled
Wotan's command.

Wotan

By my command
Didst thou fight for the Wälsung?

Brünnhilde

Yea, lord of the lots,
So ran thy decree.

THE VALKYRIE

Wotan

But I took back
The order, changed the decree !

Brünnhilde

When Fricka had weaned
Thy will from its purpose ;
In yielding what she desired
Thou wert a foe to thyself.

Wotan

Softly and bitterly.

I thought thou didst understand me,
And punished thy conscious revolt ;
But coward and fool
I seemed to thee !
If I had not treason to punish
Thou wouldst be unworthy my wrath.

Brünnhilde

I am not wise,
But I knew well this one thing—
That thy love was the Wälsung's ;
I knew that, by discord
Drawn two ways,
This one thing thou hadst forgotten.
The other only
Couldst thou discern—
What so bitterly
Wounded thy heart :
That Siegmund might not be shielded.

Wotan

And yet thou didst dare
To shield him, knowing 'twas so ?

Brünnhilde

Beginning softly.

Because I the one thing
Had kept in my eye,
While by twofold desire
Divided wert thou,
Blindly thy back on him turning !
She who wards thy back
From the foe in the field,

THE VALKYRIE

She saw alone
What thou sawest not :—
Siegmund I beheld.
Bringing him doom
I approached ;
I looked in his eyes,
Gave ear to his words.
I perceived the hero's
Bitter distress ;
Loud the lament
Of the brave one resounded ;
Uttermost love's
Most terrible pang,
Saddest of hearts
Defying all odds—
With my ear I heard,
My eye beheld
That which stirred the heart in my breast
With trouble holy and strange.
Shamed, astonished,
Shrinking I stood.
Then all my thought
Was how I could serve him ;
Triumph and death
To share with Siegmund—
That seemed, that only,
The lot I could choose !
Faithful to him
Who taught my heart this love,
And set me
By the Wälsung's side as friend—
Most faithful to him—
Thy word I disobeyed.

Wotan

So thou hast done
What I yearned so greatly to do—

THE VALKYRIE

What a twofold fate
Withheld from my desire !
So easy seemed to thee
Heart's delight in the winning,
When burning woe
In my heart flamed fierce,
When terrible anguish
Wrung my soul,
When, to save the world
That I loved, love's spring
In my tortured heart I imprisoned ?
Against my own self
When I turned, to my torment,
From swooning pain
Arose in a frenzy,
When a wild longing
Burning like fire
The fearful design in me woke
In the ruins of my own world
My unending sorrow to bury,

[Somewhat freely.]

Thy heart was lapped
In blissful delight.
Trembling with rapture,
Drunken with joy,
Thy lips drank laughing
The draught of love,
While I drank of divine woe
Mixed with wormwood and gall.

[Dryly and shortly.]

By thy lightsome heart
Henceforth be guided :
From me thou hast turned away !
I must renounce thee ;
Together no more
Shall we two whisper counsel ;

THE VALKYRIE

Apart our paths lie,
Sundered for ever,
And so long as life lasts
I, the God, dare nevermore greet thee !

Brünnhilde
Simply.

Unfit was the foolish
Maid for thee,
Who, dazed by thy counsel,
Grasped not thy mind
When, to her, one counsel
Alone appeared plain—
To love what was loved by thee.
If I must forth
Where I shall not find thee,
If the fast-woven bond
Must be loosed,
And half thy being
Far from thee banished—
A half once thine and thine only,
O God, forget not that !—
Thy other self
Thou wilt not dishonour,
Dealing out shame
That will shame thee too ;
Thine own honour were lowered,
Were I a target for scorn !

Wotan

The lure of love
Thou hast followed fain :
Follow the man
Who shall wield its might !

Brünnhilde

If I must go from Walhall,
No more in thy work be a sharer,
And if as my master
A man I must serve,
To braggart base

THE VALKYRIE

Abandon me not !
Not all unworthy
Be he who wins !

Wotan With Wotan no part hast thou—
 He cannot fashion thy fate.

Brünnhilde By thee has been founded a race
Too glorious to bring forth a coward ;
One day must a matchless hero
From Wälsung lineage spring.

Notan Name not the Wälsungs to me !
 Renouncing thee,
 Them too I renounced ;
 Through envy they came to naught.

Brünnhilde

She who turned from thee
Rescued the race ;
[With an air of secrecy.]
Sieglinde bears
Fruit holy and high ;
In pain and woe
Beyond woe known to woman
She will bring forth
What in fear she hides !

No shelter for her
 Seek at my hand,
 Nor for fruit that she may bear.

Brünnhilde The sword she has kept
That thou gavest Siegmund.

And that I splintered with my spear.
 Strive not, O maid,
 My spirit to trouble !
 Await thou the lot
 Cast and decreed ;

THE VALKYRIE

I cannot choose it or change !
But now I must forth,
Fare from thee far ;
Too long I stay by thy side.
I must turn from thee,
As thou didst from me ;
I must not even
Know thy desire ;
Thy doom alone
I must see fulfilled !

Brünnhilde And what is the doom
 That I must suffer ?

Wotan In slumber fast
 Thou shalt be locked ;
Wife thou shalt be to the man
Who finds and wakes thee from sleep !

Brünnhilde If fettering sleep
 Falls on her knees. Fast must bind me,
 An easy prey
 To the basest coward,
This one thing that in deep anguish
I plead for thou must accord !
 O shield thou the sleeper
 With soul-daunting terrors,
 [Firmly.
That by a dauntless
Hero alone
Here on the rock
I may be found !

Wotan Too much thou askest—
 Too big a boon !

Brünnhilde This one thing
 Clasping his knees. Grant me, O grant me !

Wotan. "Appear, flickering fire,
Encircle the rock with thy flame!
Loge! Loge! Appear!"

See p. 159



THE VALKYRIE

The child that is clasping
Thy knees crush dead ;
Tread down thy dear one
And shatter the maid ;
Let her body perish,
Pierced by thy spear,
But, cruel one, expose her not
To this crying shame !

[*With wild ecstasy.*

O cause a fire
To burn at thy bidding,
With flame fiercely flaring
Girdle the rock,
And may its tongue lick,
And may its tooth eat
The coward who, daring, rashly
Approaches the terrible spot !

Wotan

*Overcome and
deeply stirred,
turns quickly
towards Brünn-
hilde, raises her
from her knees
and looks into her
eyes with emotion.*

Farewell, thou valiant,
Glorious child !
Thou the most holy
Pride of my heart,
Farewell ! Farewell ! Farewell !

[*Passionately.*

Must we be parted ?
Shall I never more
Give thee love's greeting ?
Must thou no longer
Gallop beside me,
Nor bring me mead at banquet ?
If I must lose thee,
Whom I have loved so,
The laughing delight of my eyes,
For thee there shall burn
A bridal fire brighter
Than ever yet burned for a bride !

THE VALKYRIE

Fiercely the flames
Shall flare round thy bed,
Flames dreadful, devouring,
Daunting all cowards ;
Let cravens flee
From Brünnhilde's rock !
One only shall set the bride free,
One freer than I, the God !

[Moved and enraptured, Brünnhilde sinks on the breast of Wotan, who holds her in a long embrace ; then she throws back her head again, and, still embracing him, gazes into his eyes with emotion and awe.]

Those eyes so lovely and bright
That oft with smiles I caressed,
Thy valour
With a kiss rewarding
When, sweetly lisped
By thy childlike mouth,
The praise of heroes I heard :
Those eyes so radiant and fair
That oft in storm on me shone,
When hopeless yearning
My heart was wasting,
And when the joy
Of the world I longed for,
While fears thronged thick around me—
Once more to-day
Gladdening me,
Let them take this kiss
Of fond farewell !
On happier mortal
May they yet shine ;
On me, hapless immortal,
Must they close, and for ever !

[He takes her head in both hands.]

c

As he moves slowly away, Wotan turns and looks sorrowfully
back at Brünnhilde

See p. 160



THE VALKYRIE

'Tis thus that the God
From thee turns :
He kisses thy Godhead away !

[He kisses her long on the eyes, and with these closed she sinks back softly into his arms, unconscious. He carries her gently to a low mossy mound, and lays her there beneath the broad-spreading pine-tree which overshadows it. He gazes at her and closes her helmet; his eyes then rest on the form of the sleeper, which he completely covers with the great steel shield of the Valkyries. Having done so, he moves slowly away, turning to take one more sorrowful look. Then he strides with solemn resolve to the middle of the stage, and points his sword towards a large rock.]

Loge, hear !
Hark to my word !
I who found thee at first
A fiery flame,
And from whom thou didst vanish
In wandering fire,
I, who once bound,
Bid thee break forth !
Appear, flickering fire,
Encircle the rock with thy flame !

[He strikes the rock three times with his spear during the following.]

Loge ! Loge ! Appear !

[A gleam of fire issues from the stone and gradually becomes a fiery glow; then flickering flames break forth. Soon wild, shooting flames surround Wotan, who, with his spear, directs the sea of fire to encircle the rock. It spreads towards the background, so that the mountain is surrounded by flame.]

THE VALKYRIE

Let none who fears
The spear of Wotan
Adventure across this fire !

[He stretches out his spear as a ban, looks sorrowfully back at Brünnhilde, then moves slowly away, turning his head for a farewell gaze. Finally he disappears through the fire. The curtain falls.]



Printed by BALLANTYNE & COMPANY LTD,
Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London

The sleep of Brünnhilde

See p. 159



