

# РИХАРД ВАГНЕР

THE RHINEGOLD & THE  
VALKYRIE. THE RING OF  
THE NIBLUNG, PART 1

**Рихард Вагнер**  
**The Rhinegold & The Valkyrie.**  
**The Ring of the Niblung, part 1**

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The Rhinegold & The Valkyrie / The Ring of the Niblung, part 1:*

# Содержание

THE RHINEGOLD	4
FIRST SCENE	6
SECOND SCENE	39
THIRD SCENE	82
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	100

# **Richard Wagner The Rhinegold & The Valkyrie / The Ring of the Niblung, part 1**

## **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 respectively 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 mans 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 fisures 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!

## WELLGUNDE

Flosshilde, swim!

Woglinde flies:

Help me to hinder her flying.

**FLOSSHILDE** [*Dives down between 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. Flosshilde 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 jests 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.

**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!

## **ALBERICH**

*[Climbs with gnome-like agility, though with repeated 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!

**ALBERICH**

How capture this coy,  
Elusive fish?  
Wait for me, false one!

[*He tries to climb after her in haste.*

**WELLGUNDE**

*[Has sunk down to a lower rock on the other side.*

Heia! my friend there!  
Dost thou not hear?

**ALBERICH** *[Turning round.*

What? Didst thou call?

**WELLGUNDE**

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

**ALBERICH**

*[Climbs hastily over the river-bottom towards Wellgunde.*

Thou art more comely  
Far than that coy one;  
Her sheen is duller,  
Her skin too smooth.  
But thou must deeper  
Dive to delight me!

**WELLGUNDE**

*[Sinking down till she is a little nearer him.]*

Well, now am I near?

**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!

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!

**WOGLINDE 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!

**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** [*Caressing 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!

**WOGLINDE and WELLGUNDE**

*[Dive down close to them and laugh.*

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

**ALBERICH** *[Starting in alarm.*

Wretches, dare ye thus scoff?

**FLOSSHILDE** *[Suddenly darting away from him.*

A suitable end to the song.

*[She swims up quickly with her sisters.*

**WOGLINDE AND WELLGUNDE** *[Laughing.*

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

**ALBERICH** *[In a wailing 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!  
Lalaleia! Leialalei!  
Heia! Heia! Ha hei!

[They swim apart hither and thither, now lower, now

higher, to provoke Alberich to give chase.



The Rhine-Maidens teasing Alberich.

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 clambers 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.*

## **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!  
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  
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?

## WOGLINDE

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.

## WOGLINDE

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 away!  
The Niblung makes for your toy!"

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 clambers 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!

### **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.]*

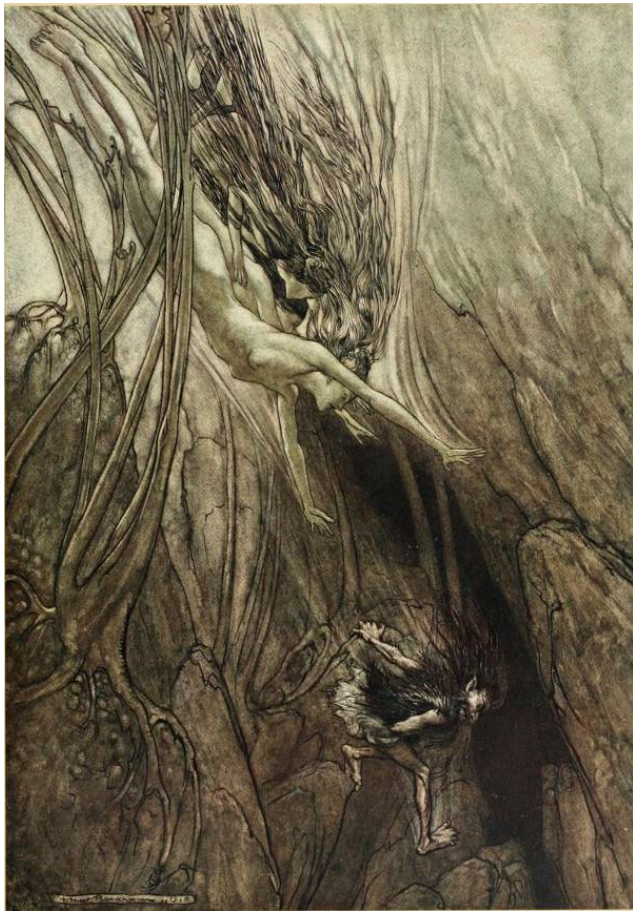
## **THE THREE RHINE-MAIDENS**

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!"

## SECOND SCENE



*The waves have gradually changed into clouds which, becoming lighter and lighter by degrees, finally disperse in a fine mist. As the mist vanishes upwards in light little clouds an open space on a mountain height becomes visible in the dim light which precedes dawn. At one side Wotan with Fricka beside him both asleep, lie on a flowery bank. The dawning day illumines with increasing brightness a castle with glittering pinnacles which stands on the summit of a cliff in the background. Between this and the foreground a deep valley is visible through which the Rhine flows.*

### **FRICKA**

*[Awakes; her gaze falls on the castle, which has become plainly visible; alarmed.]*

Wotan! My lord! Awaken!

**WOTAN** *[Continuing to dream.]*

The happy hall of delight

Is guarded by gate and door:  
Manhood's honour,  
Power for aye,  
Rise to my lasting renown!

**FRICKA** [*Shakes him.*]

Up from deceitful  
Bliss of a dream!  
My husband, wake and consider!

**WOTAN**

*[Awakes and raises himself slightly. His glance is immediately arrested by the view of the castle.]*

The walls everlasting are built!  
On yonder summit  
The Gods' abode  
Proudly rears  
Its radiant strength!  
As I nursed it in dream  
And desired it to be,  
Strong it stands,  
Fair to behold,  
Brave and beautiful pile!

**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?

**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

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.

## FRICKA

*[ Anxiously looking towards a point not on the stage.*

Then succour her now:  
Defenceless, in fear,  
Hither she hastens for help!

## FREIA

*[Enters as if flying from someone.*

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



WOTAN

Let him come!  
Sawest thou Loge?

FRICKA

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

WOTAN

I ask for no aid  
Where simple truth suffices;  
But to turn the spite  
Of foes to profit,  
Craft and cunning alone  
Can teach, as by Loge employed.  
He whose advice I obeyed  
Has promised ransom for Freia:  
On him my faith I have fixed.

FRICKA

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

### 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.  
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.

**FASOLT**

*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?

**FAFNER**

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

## FASOLT

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  
Stand fast by a bargain once fixed.  
A stupid giant  
Tells thee this:  
O wise one, take it from him!



Freia, the fair one

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?

## FASOLT

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?

## FAFNER

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  
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.

**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!

**FREIA**

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

## FRICKA

See the treacherous  
Rogue thou didst trust!

## FROH

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.]*

## WOTAN

*[Stepping between them.]*

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

## FAFNER

Do not dally;  
Promptly pay!

## FASOLT

Long waits our reward.

## WOTAN

*[Turns sternly to Loge.]*

Speak up surly one!

Fail me not!

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

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,  
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.



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

WOTAN

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

### **FASOLT**

*[Who has been listening attentively, 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,  
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.

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?

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

**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 Fafner.*

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!

**FAFNER**

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!

**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*

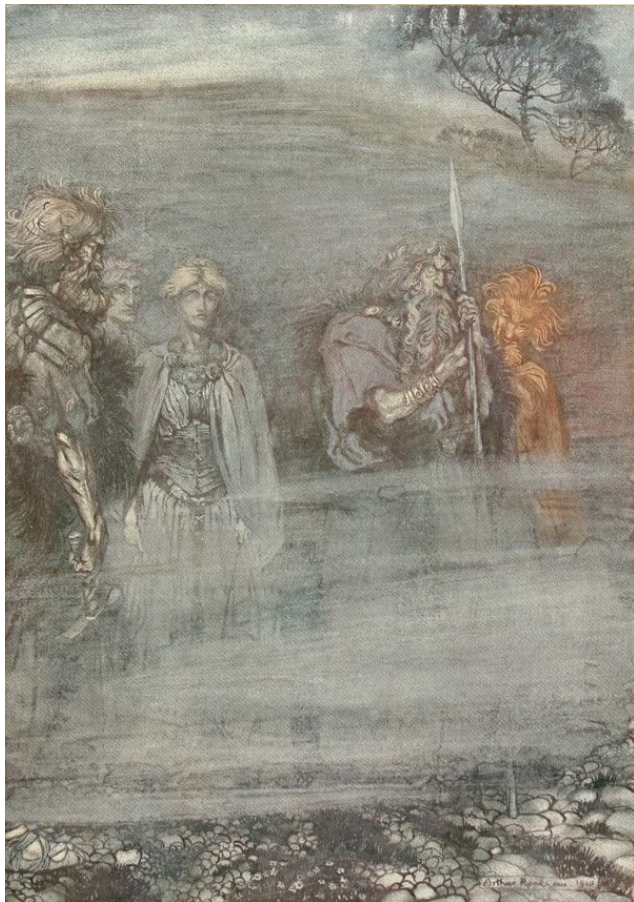
*and aged. All stand in dismay and apprehension regarding Wotan, whose eyes are fixed broodingly on the ground.*

## **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?

## **FRICKA**

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



The Gods grow wan and aged at the loss of Freia.

DONNER



My hand sinks down.

## FROH

My heart stands still.

## LOGE

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,  
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 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!"



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!

**MIME**

*[Writhes under the lathes he receives, the sound of which is heard without the whip being seen.]*

Ohé! Ohé!  
Oh! Oh! Oh!

**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.]*

## LOGE

Nibelheim here.

Through pale mists gleaming,

How bright yonder fiery sparks glimmer!

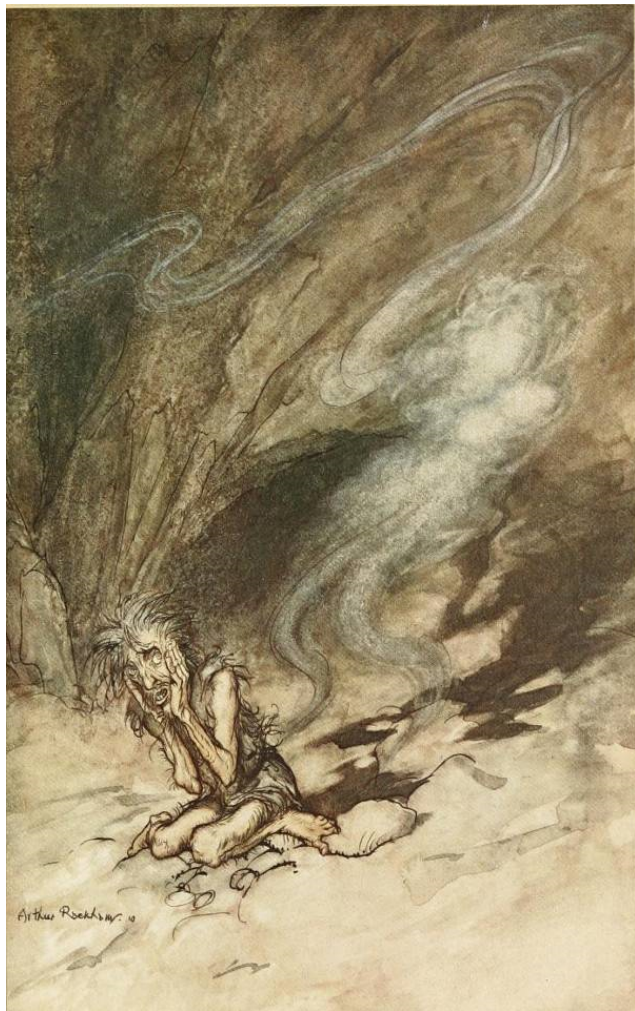
## MIME

Oh! Oh! Oh!

## WOTAN

I hear loud groans.

Who lies on the ground?



Mime writhes under the lashes he receives.

**LOGE** [*Bends over Mime.*

Why all this whimpering noise?

**MIME**

Ohé! Ohé!

Oh! Oh!

**LOGE**

Hei, Mime! Merry dwarf!

Who beats and bullies thee so?

**MIME**

Leave me in peace, pray.

**LOGE**

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.

## **LOGE**

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 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.

## LOGE

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  
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 I 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** [*To Wotan.*]

Confess, our task  
Will call for skill.

WOTAN

Yet the foe will yield,  
Use thou but fraud.

**MIME** [*Observes the Gods more attentively.*]

Who are you, ye strangers  
That ask all these questions?

LOGE

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

**MIME** [*Shrinking back in fear when he hears Alberich returning.*]

Hark! Have a care!  
Alberich comes!

[*He runs to and fro in terror.*]

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,  
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?



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

[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.]*

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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