

РИХАРД ВАГНЕР

SIEGFRIED & THE
TWILIGHT OF THE
GODS. THE RING OF
THE NIBLUNG, PART 2

Рихард Вагнер
Siegfried & The Twilight
of the Gods. The Ring
of the Niblung, part 2

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Siegfried & The Twilight of the Gods / The Ring of the Niblung, part 2:*

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Richard Wagner

Siegfried & The Twilight of the Gods / The Ring of the Niblung, part 2

SIEGFRIED

CHARACTERS

SIEGFRIED

MIME

THE WANDERER

ALBERICH

FAFNER

ERDA

BRÜNNHILDE

SCENES OF ACTION

I. A CAVE IN A WOOD

II. DEPTHS OF THE WOOD

III. WILD REGION AT THE FOOT OF A

ROCKY MOUNTAIN; AFTERWARDS: SUMMIT OF
"BRÜNNHILDE'S ROCK"

THE FIRST ACT

A rocky cavern in a wood, in which stands a naturally formed smith's forge, with big bellows. Mime sits in front of the anvil, busily hammering at a sword.

MIME

[Who has been hammering with a small hammer, stops working.]

Slavery! worry!
Labour all lost!
The strongest sword
That ever I forged,
That the hands of giants
Fitly might wield,
This insolent urchin
For whom it is fashioned
Can snap in two at one stroke,
As if the thing were a toy!

[Mime throws the sword on the anvil ill-humouredly, and with his arms akimbo gazes thoughtfully on the ground.]

There is one sword
That he could not shatter:
Nothung's splinters

Would baffle his strength,
Could I but forge
Those doughty fragments
That all my skill
Cannot weld anew.
Could I but forge the weapon,
Shame and toil would win their reward!

[He sinks further back his head bowed in thought.

Fafner, the dragon grim,
Dwells in the gloomy wood;
With his gruesome and grisly bulk
The Nibelung hoard
Yonder he guards.
Siegfried, lusty and young,
Would slay him without ado;
The Nibelung's ring
Would then become mine.
The only sword for the deed
Were Nothung, if it were swung
By Siegfried's conquering arm;
And I cannot fashion
Nothung, the sword!

[He lays the sword in position again, and goes on hammering in deep dejection.

Slavery! worry!
Labour all lost!
The strongest sword
That ever I forged
Will never serve
For that difficult deed.
I beat and I hammer
Only to humour the boy;
He snaps in two what I make,
And scolds if I cease from work.

[He drops his hammer.

SIEGFRIED

[In rough forester's dress, with a silver horn hung by a chain, bursts in boisterously from the wood. He is leading a big bear by a rope of bast, and urges him towards Mime in wanton fun.

Hoiho! Hoiho!

[Entering.

Come on! Come on!
Tear him! Tear him!
The silly smith!

[Mime drops the sword in terror, and takes refuge behind

the forge; while Siegfried, shouting with laughter, keeps driving the bear after him.

MIME

Hence with the beast!
I want not the bear!

SIEGFRIED

I come thus paired
The better to pinch thee;
Bruin, ask for the sword!

MIME

Hey! Let him go!
There lies the weapon;
It was finished to-day.

SIEGFRIED

Then thou art safe for to-day!

[He lets the bear loose and strikes him on the back with the rope.

Off, Bruin!
I need thee no more.

[The bear runs back into the wood.

MIME [*Comes trembling from behind the forge.*

Slay all the bears
Thou canst, and welcome;
But why thus bring the beasts
Home alive?

SIEGFRIED

[Sits down to recover from his laughter.

For better companions seeking
Than the one who sits at home,
I blew my horn in the wood,
Till the forest glades resounded.
What I asked with the note
Was if some good friend
My glad companion would be.
From the covert came a bear
Who listened to me with growls,
And I liked him better than thee,
Though better friends I shall find.
With a trusty rope
I bridled the beast,
To ask thee, rogue, for the weapon.

[He jumps up and goes towards the anvil.

MIME

[Takes up the sword to hand it to Siegfried.

I made the sword keen-edged;
In its sharpness thou wilt rejoice.

[He holds the sword anxiously in his hand; Siegfried
snatches it from him.

What matters an edge keen sharpened,
Unless hard and true the steel?

[Testing the sword.

Hei! What an idle,
Foolish toy!
Wouldst have this pin
Pass for a sword?

[He strikes it on the anvil, so that the splinters fly about.
Mime shrinks back in terror.

There, take back the pieces,
Pitiful bungler!
'Tis on thy skull

It should have been broken!
Shall such a braggart
Still go on boasting,
Telling of giants
And prowess in battle,
Of deeds of valour,
And dauntless defence?—
A sword true and trusty
Try to forge me,
Praising the skill
He does not possess?
When I take hold
Of what he has hammered,
The rubbish crumbles
At a mere touch!
Were not the wretch
Too mean for my wrath,
I would break him in bits
As well as his work—
The doting fool of a gnome!—
And end the annoyance at once!

[Siegfried throws himself on to a stone seat in a rage.
Mime all the time has been cautiously keeping out of his
way.]

MIME

Again thou ravest like mad,

Ungrateful and perverse.
If what for him I forge
Is not perfect on the spot,
Too soon the boy forgets
The good things I have made!
Wilt never learn the lesson
Of gratitude, I wonder?
Thou shouldst be glad to obey him
Who always treated thee well.

[Siegfried turns his back on Mime in a bad temper, and sits with his face to the wall.

Thou dost not like to be told that!

[He stands perplexed, then goes to the hearth in the kitchen.

But thou wouldst fain be fed.
Wilt eat the meat I have roasted,
Or wouldst thou prefer the broth?
'Twas boiled solely for thee.

[He brings food to Siegfried, who, without turning round, knocks both bowl and meat out of his hand.

SIEGFRIED

Meat I roast for myself;
Sup thy filthy broth alone!

MIME [*In a wailing voice, as if hurt.*]

This is the reward
Of all my love!
All my care
Is paid for with scorn.
When thou wert a babe
I was thy nurse,
Made the mite clothing
To keep him warm,
Brought thee thy food,
Gave thee to drink,
Kept thee as safe
As I keep my skin;
And when thou wert grown
I waited on thee,
And made a bed
For thy slumber soft.
I fashioned thee toys
And a sounding horn,
Grudging no pains,
Wert thou but pleased.
With counsel wise
I guided thee well,
With mellow wisdom
Training thy mind.

Sitting at home,
I toil and moil;
To heart's desire
Wander thy feet.
Through thee alone worried,
And working for thee,
I wear myself out,
A poor old dwarf!

[Sobbing.

And for my trouble
The sole reward is
By a hot-tempered boy

[Sobbing.

To be hated and plagued!

SIEGFRIED

[Has turned round again and has quietly watched Mime's face, while the latter, meeting the look, tries timidly to hide his own.

Thou hast taught me much, Mime,
And many things I have learned;
But what thou most gladly hadst taught me

A lesson too hard has proved—
How to endure thy sight.
When with my food
Or drink thou dost come,
I sup off loathing alone;
When thou dost softly
Make me a bed,
My sleep is broken and bad;
When thou wouldst teach me
How to be wise,
Fain were I deaf and dumb.
If my eyes happen
To fall on thee,
I find all thou doest
Amiss and ill-done;
When thou dost stand,
Waddle and walk,
Shamble and shuffle,
With thine eyelids blinking,
By the neck I want
To take the nodder,
And choke the life
From the hateful twitcher.
So much, O Mime, I love thee!
Hast thou such wisdom,
Explain, I pray thee,
A thing I have wondered at:
Though I go roaming
Just to avoid thee,

Why do I always return?
Though I love the beasts
All better than thee—
Tree and bird
And the fish in the brook,
One and all
They are dearer than thou—
How is it I always return?
Of thy wisdom tell me that.

MIME

[Tries to approach him affectionately.

My child, that ought to show thee
That Mime is dear to thy heart.

SIEGFRIED

I said I could not bear thee;
Forget not that so soon.

MIME

[Recoils, and sits down again apart, opposite Siegfried.]

The wildness that thou shouldst tame
Is the cause, bad boy, of that.
Young ones are always longing

After their parents' nest;
What we love we all long for,
And so thou dost yearn for me;
'Tis plain thou lovest thy Mime,
And always must love him.
What the old bird is to the young one,
Feeding it in its nest
Ere the fledgling can flutter,
That is what careful, clever Mime
To thy young life is,
And always must be.

SIEGFRIED

Well, Mime, being so clever,
This one thing more also tell me:

[Simply.

The birds sang together
So gaily in spring,

[Tenderly.

The one alluring the other;
And thou didst say,
When I asked thee why,
That they were wives with their husbands.

They chattered so sweetly,
Were never apart;
They builded a nest
In which they might brood;
The fluttering young ones
Came flying out,
And both took care of the young.
The roes in the woods, too,
Rested in pairs,
The wild wolves even, and foxes.
Food was found them and brought
By the father,
The mother suckled the young ones.
And there I learned
What love was like;
A whelp from its mother
I never took.
But where hast thou, Mime,
A wife dear and loving,
That I may call her mother?

MIME [*Angrily.*

What dost thou mean?
Fool, thou art mad!
Art thou then a bird or a fox?

SIEGFRIED

When I was a babe
Thou wert my nurse,
Made the mite clothing
To keep him warm;
But tell me, whence
Did the tiny mite come?
Could babe without mother
Be born to thee?

MIME [*Greatly embarrassed.*]

Thou must always
Trust what I tell thee.
I am thy father
And mother in one.

SIEGFRIED

Thou liest, filthy old fright!
The resemblance 'twixt child and parent
I often have seen for myself.
I came to the limpid brook,
And the beasts and the trees
I saw reflected;
Sun and clouds too,
Just as they are,
Were mirrored quite plain in the stream.
I also could spy

This face of mine,
And quite unlike thine
Seemed it to me;
As little alike
As a fish to a toad:
And when had fish toad for its father?

MIME [*Very angrily.*

How canst thou talk
Such terrible stuff?

SIEGFRIED [*With increasing animation.*

Listen! At last
I understand
What in vain I pondered so long:
Why I roam the woods
And run to escape thee,
Yet return home in the end.

[He springs up.

I cannot go till thou tell me
What father and mother were mine.

MIME

What father? What mother?
Meaningless questions!

SIEGFRIED

[Springs upon Mime, and seizes him by the throat.

To answer a question
Thou must be caught first;
Willingly
Thou never wilt speak;
Thou givest nothing
Unless forced to.
How to talk
I hardly had learned
Had it not by force
Been wrung from the wretch.
Come, out with it,
Mangy old scamp!
Who are my father and mother?

MIME

[After making signs with his head and hands, is released
by Siegfried.

Dost want to kill me outright!
Hands off, and the facts thou shalt hear,
As far as known to myself.

O ungrateful
And graceless child,
Now learn the cause of thy hatred!
Neither thy father
Nor kinsman I,
And yet thou dost owe me thy life!
To me, thy one friend,
A stranger wert thou;
It was pity alone
Sheltered thee here;
And this is all my reward.
And I hoped for thanks like a fool!

A woman once I found
Who wept in the forest wild;
I helped her here to the cave,
That by the fire I might warm her.
The woman bore a child here;
Sadly she gave it birth.
She writhed about in pain;
I helped her as I could.
Bitter her plight; she died.
But Siegfried lived and throve.

SIEGFRIED [*Slowly*].

My poor mother died, then, through me?

MIME

To my care she commended thee;
'Twas willingly bestowed.
The trouble Mime would take!
The worry kind Mime endured!
"When thou wert a babe
I was thy nurse...."

SIEGFRIED

That story I often have heard.
Now say, whence came the name
Siegfried?

MIME

'Twas thus that thy mother
Told me to name thee,
That thou mightst grow
To be strong and fair.
"I made the mite clothing
To keep it warm...."

SIEGFRIED

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

MIME

In truth I hardly know.
"Brought thee thy food,
Gave thee to drink...."

SIEGFRIED

My mother's name thou must tell me.

MIME

Her name I forget. Yet wait!
Sieglinde, that was the name borne
By her who gave thee to me.
"I kept thee as safe
As I keep my skin...."

SIEGFRIED

[With increasing urgency.

Next tell me, who was my father?

MIME [*Roughly.*

Him I have never seen.

SIEGFRIED

But my mother told it thee, surely.

MIME

He fell in combat
Was all that she said.
She left the fatherless
Babe to my care.
"And when thou wert grown
I waited on thee,
And made a bed
For thy slumber soft"...

SIEGFRIED

Still, with thy tiresome
Starling song!
That I may trust thy story,
Convinced thou art not lying,
Thou must produce some proof.

MIME

But what proof will convince thee?

SIEGFRIED

I trust thee not with my ears,
I trust thee but with mine eyes:
What witness speaks for thee?

MIME

[After some thought takes from the place where they are
concealed the two pieces of a broken sword.

I got this from thy mother:
For trouble, food, and service
This was my sole reward.
Behold, 'tis a splintered sword!
She said 'twas borne by thy father
In the fatal fight when he fell.

SIEGFRIED [*Enthusiastically.*

And thou shalt forge
These fragments together,
And furnish my rightful sword!
Up! Tarry not, Mime;
Quick to thy task!
If thou hast skill,
Thy cunning display.
Cheat me no more
With worthless trash;
These fragments alone
Henceforth I trust.
Lounge o'er thy work,
Weld it not true,
Trickily patching

The goodly steel,
And thou shalt learn on thy limbs
How metal best should be beat!
I swear that this day
The sword shall be mine;
My weapon to-day I shall win!

MIME [*Alarmed.*

What wouldst thou to-day with the sword?

SIEGFRIED

Leave the forest
For the wide world,
Never more to return.
Ah, how fair
A thing is freedom!
Nothing holds me or binds!
No father have I here,
And afar shall be my home;
Thy hearth is not my house,
Nor my covering thy roof.
Like the fish
Glad in the water,
Like the finch
Free in the heavens,
Off I will float,
Forth I will fly,

Like the wind o'er the wood
Wafted away,
Thee, Mime, beholding no more!

[He runs into the forest.

MIME [*Greatly alarmed.*

Stop, boy! Stop, boy!
Whither away?
Hey! Siegfried!
Siegfried! Hey!

[He looks after the retreating figure for some time in
astonishment; then he goes back to the smithy and sits down
behind the anvil.

He storms away!
And I sit here:
To crown my cares
Comes still this new one;
My plight is piteous indeed!
How help myself now?
How hold the boy here?
How lead the young madcap
To Fafner's lair?
And how weld the splinters
Of obstinate steel?
In no furnace fire

Can they be melted,
Nor can Mime's hammer
Cope with their hardness.

[Shrilly.

The Nibelung's hate,
Need and sweat
Cannot make Nothung whole,
Never will weld it anew.

[Sobbing, he sinks in despair on to a stool behind the
anvil.

WANDERER (WOTAN)

[Enters from the wood by the door at the back of the
cave. He wears a long dark blue cloak, and, for staff, carries
a spear. On his head is a round, broad-brimmed slouched
hat.

All hail, cunning smith!
A seat by thy hearth
Kindly grant
The wayworn guest.

MIME [*Starting up in alarm.*

Who seeks for me here

In desolate woods,
Finds my home in the forest wild?

WANDERER [*Approaching very slowly step by step.*

Wanderer names me the world, smith.
From far I have come;
On the earth's back ranging,
Much I have roamed.

MIME

If Wanderer named,
Pray wander from here
Without halting for rest.

WANDERER

Good men grudge me not welcome;
Many gifts I have received.
By bad hearts only
Is evil feared.

MIME

Ill fate always
Dwelt by my side;
Thou wouldst not add to it, surely!

WANDERER [*Slowly coming nearer and nearer.*]

Always searching,
Much have I seen;
Things of weight
Have told to many;
Oft have rid men
Of their troubles,
Gnawing and carking cares.

MIME

Though thou hast searched,
And though much thou hast found,
I need neither seeker nor finder.
Lonely am I,
And lone would be;
Idlers I harbour not here.

WANDERER [*Again coming a little nearer.*]

There were many
Thought they were wise,
Yet what they needed
Knew not at all;
Useful lore was
Theirs for the asking,
Wisdom was their reward.

MIME

[More and more anxious as he sees the Wanderer approach.]

Idle knowledge
Some may covet;
I know enough for my needs.

[The Wanderer reaches the hearth.]

My own wits suffice,
I want no more,
So, wise one, keep on thy way.

WANDERER [*Sitting down at the hearth.*]

Nay, here at thy hearth
I vow by my head
To answer all thou shalt ask.
My head is thine,
'Tis forfeit to thee,
Unless I can give
Answers good,
Deftly redeeming the pledge.

MIME

[Who has been staring at the Wanderer open-mouthed,

now shrinks back; aside, dejectedly.

Now how to get rid of the spy?
The questions asked must be artful.

[He summons up courage for an assumption of sternness;
aloud.

Thy head for thy
Lodging pays:
'Tis pawned; now seek to redeem it.
Three the questions
Thou shalt be asked.

WANDERER

Thrice then I must answer.

MIME [*Pulls himself together and reflects.*

Since, far on the back
Of the wide earth roving,
Thy feet have ranged o'er the world,
Come, answer me this:
Tell me what race
Dwells in the earth's deep gorges.

WANDERER

In the depths of earth
The Nibelungs have their home;
Nibelheim is their land.
Black elves they all are;
Black Alberich
Once was their ruler and lord.
He subdued the busy
Folk by a ring
Gifted with magical might;
And they piled up
Shimmering gold,
Precious, fine-wrought,
To win him the world and its glory.

Proceed with thy questions, dwarf.

MIME

[Sinks into deeper and deeper meditation.

Thou knowest much,
Wanderer,
Of the hidden depths of earth.
Now, answer me this:
Tell me what race
Breathes on earth's back and moves there.

WANDERER

On the earth's broad back
The race of the giants arose;
Riesenheim is their land.
Fasolt and Fafner,
The rude folk's rulers,
Envied the Nibelung's might.
So his wonderful hoard
They won for themselves,
And with it gained the ring too.
The brothers quarrelled
About the ring,
And slain was Fasolt.
In dragon's form
Fafner now watches the hoard.

One question threatens me still.

MIME [*Quite lost in thought.*]

Much, Wanderer,
Thou dost know
Of the earth's back rude and rugged.
Now answer aright:
Tell me what race
Dwells above in the clouds.

WANDERER

Above in the clouds
Dwell the Immortals;
Walhall is their home.
They are light-spirits;
Light-Alberich,
Wotan, rules as their lord.
From the world-ash-tree's
Holiest bough once
Wotan made him a shaft.
Though the stem rot,
The spear shall endure,
And with that spear-point
Wotan rules the world.
Trustworthy runes
Of holy treaties
Deep in the shaft he cut.
Who wields the spear
Carried by Wotan
The haft of the world
Holds in his hand.
Before him kneels
The Nibelung host;
The giants, tamed,
Bow to his will.
All must obey, and for ever,
The spear's eternal lord.

[He strikes the ground with the spear as if by accident,
and a low growl of thunder is heard, by which Mime is

violently alarmed.

Confess now, cunning dwarf,
Are not my answers right,
And is not my head redeemed?

MIME

[After attentively watching the Wanderer with the spear,
becomes very frightened, seeks in a confused manner for
his tools, and looks timidly aside.

Both thou hast won,
Wager and head;
Thy way now, Wanderer, go.

WANDERER

Knowledge useful to thee
Thou wert to ask for;
Forfeit my head if I failed.
Forfeit be thine,
Knowest thou not
The thing it would serve thee to know.
Greeting thou
Gavest me not;
My head into thy hand
I gave
That I might rest by thy hearth.

By wager fair
Forfeit thy head,
Canst thou not answer
Three things when asked;
So sharpen well, Mime, thy wits!

MIME

[Very much frightened, and after much hesitation, at last composes himself with timid submission.

Long it is
Since I left my land;
Long it seems to me
Since I was born.
I saw here the eye of Wotan
Shine, peering into my cave;
His glance dazes
My mother-wit.
But well were it now to be wise.
Come then, Wanderer, ask.
Perhaps fortune will favour
The dwarf, and redeem his head.

WANDERER [*Comfortably sitting down again.*

Then first, honest dwarf,
Answer this question:
Tell the name of the race

That Wotan treats most harshly,

[Very softly, but audibly.

And yet loves beyond all the rest.

MIME [*With more cheerfulness.*

Though unlearnèd
In heroes' kinship,
This question I answer with ease.
The Wälsungs are Wotan's
Chosen stock,
By him begotten
And loved with passion,
Though they are shown no grace.
Siegmund and Sieglinde
Born were to Wälse,
A wild and desperate
Twin-born pair;
Siegfried had they as son,
The strongest shoot from the tree.
My head, say, is it
Still, Wanderer, mine?

WANDERER [*Pleasantly.*

How well thou knowest

And namest the race!
Rogue, I see thou art clever.
The foremost question
Thou hast solved;
The second answer me, dwarf.
A crafty Niblung
Shelters Siegfried,
Hoping he will slay Fafner,
That the dwarf may be lord of the hoard,
The ring being his.
Say, what sword,
If Fafner to fall is,
Must be by Siegfried swung?

MIME

[Forgetting his present situation more and more, rubs his hands joyfully.

Nothing is
The name of the sword;
Into an ash-tree's stem
Wotan struck it;
One only might bear it:
He who could draw it forth.
The strongest heroes
Tried it and failed;
Only by Siegmund
Was it done;

Well he fought with the sword
Till on Wotan's spear it was split.
By a crafty smith
Are the fragments kept,
For he knows that alone
With the Wotan sword
A brave and foolish boy,
Siegfried, can slay the foe.

[Much pleased.

A second time
My head have I saved?

WANDERER [*Laughing.*

The wisest of wise ones
Thou must be, surely;
Who else could so clever be!
But wouldst thou by craft
Employ the boy-hero
As instrument of thy purpose,
With one question more
I threaten thee.
Tell me, thou artful
Armourer,
Whose skill from the doughty splinters
Nothing the sword shall fashion.

MIME [*Starts up in great terror.*

The splinters! The sword!
Alas! my head reels!
What shall I do?
What can I say?
Accursèd sword!
I was mad to steal it!
A perilous pass
It has brought me to.
Always too hard
To yield to my hammer!
Rivet, solder—
Useless are both.

[He throws his tools about as if he had gone crazy, and
breaks out in utter despair.

The cleverest smith
Living has failed;
And, that being so,
Who shall succeed?
How rede aright such a riddle?

WANDERER [*Has risen quietly from the hearth.*

Three things thou wert to ask me;

Thrice was I to reply.
Thy questions were
Of far-off things,
But what stood here at thy hand—
Needed much—that was forgot,
Now that I guess it,
Thou goest crazed,
And won by me
Is the cunning one's head.
Now, Fafner's dauntless subduer,
Hear, thou death-doomed dwarf.
By him who knows not
How to fear
Nothing shall be forged.

[Mime stares at him; he turns to go.

So ward thy head
Well from to-day.
I leave it forfeit to him
Who has never learned to fear.

[He turns away smiling, and disappears quickly in the wood. Mime has sunk on to the bench overwhelmed.

MIME

[Stares before him into the sunlit wood, and begins to tremble more and more violently.

Accursèd light!
The air is on fire!
What flickers and flashes?
What buzzes and whirs?
What sways there and swings
And circles about?
What glitters and gleams
In the sun's hot glow?
What rustles and hums
And rings so loud?
With roll and roar
It crashes this way!
It bursts through the wood,
Making for me!

[He rises up in terror.

Its jaws are wide open,
Eager for prey;
The dragon will catch me!
Fafner! Fafner!

[He sinks shrieking behind the anvil.

SIEGFRIED

[Behind the scenes, is heard breaking from the thicket.

Ho there! Thou idler!
Is the work finished?

[He enters the cave.

Quick, come show me the sword.

[He pauses in surprise.

Where hides the smith?
Has he made off?
Hey, there! Mime, thou coward!
Where art thou? Where hidest thou?

MIME

[In a small voice, from behind the anvil.

'Tis thou then, child?
Art thou alone?

SIEGFRIED [*Laughing.*

Under the anvil?
Why, what doest thou there?
Wert thou grinding the sword?

MIME [*Comes forward, greatly upset and confused.*

The sword? The sword?
How could I weld it?

[Half aside.

By him who knows not
How to fear
Nothing shall be forged.
Too wise am I
To attempt such work.

SIEGFRIED [*Violently.*

Wilt thou speak plainly
Or must I help thee?

MIME [*As before.*

Where shall I turn in my need?
My wily head
Wagered and lost is,

[Staring before him.

And forfeit to him it will fall
Who has never learned to fear.

SIEGFRIED [*Vehemently.*

Dost thou by shuffling
Seek to escape?

MIME [*Gradually recovering himself.*

Small need to fly
Him who knows fear!
But that lesson was one never taught thee.
A fool, I forgot
The one great thing;
What thou wert taught
Was to love me,
And alas! the task proved hard.
Now how shall I teach thee to fear?

SIEGFRIED [*Seizes him.*

Hey! Must I help thee?
What work hast thou done?

MIME

Concerned for thy good,
In thought I was sitting:
Something of weight I would teach thee.

SIEGFRIED [*Laughing.*

'Twas under the seat
That thou wert sitting;
What weighty thing foundest thou there?

MIME

[Recovering himself more and more.

Down there I learned how to fear,
That I might teach thee, dullard.

SIEGFRIED [*With quiet wonder.*

This fear then, what is it?

MIME

Thou knowest not that,
Yet wouldst from the forest
Forth to the world?
What help in the trustiest sword,
Hadst thou not learned to fear?

SIEGFRIED [*Impatiently.*

What absurd
Invention is this?

MIME

[Approaching Siegfried with more and more confidence.

'Tis thy mother's wish
Speaking through me.
I must fulfil
The promise I gave her:
That the world and its wiles
Thou shouldst not encounter
Until thou hadst learned how to fear.

SIEGFRIED [*Vehemently*

Is it an art?
Why was I not taught?
Explain: this fearing, what is it?

MIME

In the dark wood
Hast thou not felt,
When shades of dusk
Fall dim and drear,
When mournful whispers
Sigh afar,
And fierce growling
Sounds at hand,

When strange flashes
Dart and flicker,
And the buzzing
And clamour grow—

[Trembling.

Hast thou not felt grim horror
Hold every sense in its clutches?—

[Quaking.

When the limbs shiver,
Shaken with terror,

[With a quivering voice.

And the heart, filled with dismay,
Hammers, bursting the breast—
Hast thou not yet felt that,
A stranger art thou to fear.

SIEGFRIED [*Musing.*

Wonderful truly
That must be.
Steadfast, strong

Beats my heart in my breast.
The shiver and shudder,
The fever and horror,
Burning and fainting,
Beating and trembling—
Ah, how glad I would feel them,

[Tenderly.

Could I but learn this delight!
But how, Mime,
Can it be mine?
How, coward, could it be taught me?

MIME

Following me,
The way thou shalt find;
I have thought it all out.
I know of a dragon grim
That slays and swallows men:
Fear thou wilt learn from Fafner,
When I lead to where he lies.

SIEGFRIED

Where has he his lair?

MIME

Neidhöhl'
Named, it lies east
Towards the end of the wood.

SIEGFRIED

It lies not far from the world?

MIME

The world is quite close to the cave.

SIEGFRIED

That I may learn what this fear is,
Lead me there straightway;
Then forth to the world!
Make haste! Forge me the sword.
In the world fain I would swing it.

MIME

The sword? Woe's me!

SIEGFRIED

Quick to the smithy!
Show me thy work!

MIME

Accursèd steel!
Unequal my skill to the task;
The potent magic
Surpasses the poor dwarf's strength.
'Twere more easily done
By one who never felt fear.

SIEGFRIED

Artful tricks
The idler would play me;
He is a bungler;
He should confess,
And not seek to lie his way out.
Here with the splinters!
Off with the bungler!

[Coming to the hearth.

His father's sword
Siegfried will weld:
By him shall it be forged.

[Flinging Mime's tools about, he sets himself impetuously to work.

MIME

If thou hadst practised
Thy craft with care,
Thou wouldst have profited now;
But thou wert far
Too lazy to learn,
And now at need canst do nothing.

SIEGFRIED

Where the master has failed
What hope for the scholar,
Had he obeyed him in all?

[He makes a contemptuous grimace at him.

Be off with thee!
Meddle no more,
In case with the steel I melt thee.

[He has heaped a large quantity of charcoal on the hearth, and keeps blowing the fire, while he screws up the pieces of the sword in a vice and files them to shavings.

MIME

[Who has sat down a little way off, watches Siegfried at work.

Why file it to bits?
There is the solder
All fused, ready to hand.

SIEGFRIED

Off with the pap,
I need it not;
With paste I fashion no sword!

MIME

Now the file is ruined,
The rasp is useless;
Why grind thus the steel to splinters?

SIEGFRIED

It must be shivered
And ground into shreds;
Only so can splinters be patched.

[He goes on filing with great energy.

MIME [*Aside.*

I see a craftsman
Is useless here;
By his own folly the fool is best served.
Look how he toils
With lusty strokes;
The steel disappears,
And still he keeps cool.

[Siegfried has blown the fire to a bright flame.

Though I am as old
As cave and wood,
The like I never yet saw!

[While Siegfried continues to file the piece of the sword
impetuously, Mime seats himself a little further off.

He will forge the sword—
I see it plain—
Boldly weld it anew.
The Wanderer was right.
Where shall I hide
My luckless head?
If nothing teaches him fear,
Forfeit it falls to the boy.

[Springing up and bending down in growing agitation.

But woe to Mime!
If Siegfried learn fear,
The dragon will never be slain;
And, if so, how gain the ring?
Accurst dilemma!
Would I escape,
I must find out some way
Of subduing the boy for myself.

SIEGFRIED

[Has now filed down the pieces, and puts the filings in a crucible, which he places on the fire.

Hey, Mime! The name!—
Quick, name the sword
That I have pounded to pieces.

MIME *[Starts and turns towards Siegfried.*

Nothing, that is
The name of the sword;
'Twas mother told me the tale.

SIEGFRIED

[During the following song keeps blowing the fire with

the bellows.

Nothing! Nothing!
Conquering sword!
What blow, I wonder, broke thee.
Thy keen-edged glory
I chopped to chaff;
The splinters now I am melting.
Hoho! Hoho!
Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!
Bellows blow!
Brighten the flame!
In the woods
A tree grew wild;
It fell, by my hand hewn down.
The brown-stemmed ash
To charcoal I burned;
Now it lies heaped high on the hearth.
Hoho! Hoho!
Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!
Bellows blow!
Brighten the flame!
How bravely, brightly
The charcoal burns!
How clear and fair its fire!
With showering sparks
It leaps and glows,—
Hohei! Hoho! Hohei!—
Dissolving the splintered steel!

Hoho! Hoho!
Hohei! Hohei! Hoho!
Bellows, blow!
Brighten the flame!
Hoho! Hoho!
Hoho, hohei! Hohei!
Nothing! Nothing!
Conquering sword!
Thy steel chopped to chaff is fused;
In thine own sweat
Thou swimmest now,

[He pours the glowing contents of the crucible into a
mould, which he holds up.

But soon my sword thou shalt be!

MIME

[During the pauses in Siegfried's song, still aside, sitting
at a distance.

The sword he will forge
And vanquish Fafner,
So much I can clearly foresee;
Hoard and ring
The victor will have;
How to win them both for myself!
By wit and wiles

They shall be captured,
And safe shall be my head.

[In the foreground, still aside.

After the fight, when athirst,
For a cooling draught he will crave;
Of fragrant juices
Gathered from herbs
The draught I will brew for him.
Let him drink but a drop,
And in slumber
Softly lapped he shall lie:
With the very sword
That he fashioned to serve him
He shall be cleared from my way,
And treasure and ring made mine.

[He rubs his hands with satisfaction.

Ha! dull didst hold me,
Wanderer wise!
Does my subtle scheming
Please thee now?
Have I found
A path to peace?

[He springs up joyfully, fetches several vessels, shakes spices and herbs from them into a pot, and tries to put it on the hearth.

SIEGFRIED

[Has plunged the mould into a pail of water. Steam and loud hissing ensue as it cools.

In the water flowed
A flood of fire;
Furious with hate,
Grimly it hissed;
Though scorching it ran,
In the cooling flood
No more it flows;
Stiff, stark it became,
Hard is the stubborn steel;
Yet warm blood
Shall flow thereby!
Now sweat once again,
That swift I may weld thee,
Nothung, conquering sword!

[He thrusts the steel into the fire, and blows the bellows violently. While doing so he watches Mime, who, from the other side of the hearth, carefully puts his pot on the fire.

What does the booby

Make in his pot?
While I melt steel,
What art thou brewing?

MIME

A smith is put to shame,
And learns from the lad he taught;
All the master's lore is useless now;
He serves the boy as cook.
Steel thou dost brew into broth;
Old Mime boils thee
Eggs for thy meal.

[He goes on with his cooking.

SIEGFRIED

Mime, the craftsman,
Learns to cook now,
And cares no longer to forge;
I have broken
All the swords that he made me;
What he cooks my lips shall not touch.

[During the following he takes the mould from the fire,
breaks it, and lays the glowing steel on the anvil.

To find out what fear is
Forth he will guide me;
A far-off teacher shall teach me;
Even what he does best
He cannot do well;
In everything Mime must bungle!

[During the forging.

Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!
Forge me, my hammer,
A trusty sword.
Hoho! Hahei!
Hoho! Hahei!
Blood-stained was once
Thy steely blue,
The crimson trickle
Reddened thy blade.
How cold was thy laugh!
The warm blood cooled at thy touch!
Heiaho! Haha!
Haheiaha!
Now red thou comest
From the fire,
And thy softened steel
To the hammer yields.
Angry sparks thou dost shower
On me who humbled thy pride.

Heiaho! Heiaho!
Heiahohohohoho!
Hahei! Hahei! Hahei!
Hoho! Hoho! Hohei!
Forge me, my hammer,
A trusty sword!
Hoho! Hahei!
Hoho! Hahei!
How I rejoice
In the merry sparks!
The bold look best
When by anger stirred!
Gay thou laughest to me,
Grimly though thou dost pretend!
Heiaho, haha, haheiaha!
Both heat and hammer
Served me well;
With sturdy strokes
I stretched thee straight;
Now banish thy modest blush,
Be as cold and hard as thou canst.
Heiho! Heiaho!
Heiahohohohoho! Heiah!

[He swings the blade, plunges it into the pail of water,
and laughs aloud at the hissing.]

MIME

[While Siegfried is fixing the blade in the hilt, moves

about in the foreground with the bottle into which he has poured the contents of the pot. Aside.

He forges a sharp-edged sword:
Fafner, the foe
Of the dwarf, is doomed;
I brewed a deadly draught:
Siegfried must perish
When Fafner falls.
By guile the goal must be reached;
Soon shall smile my reward!
For the shining ring
My brother once made,
And which with a potent
Spell he endowed,
The gleaming gold
That gives boundless might—
That ring I have won now,
I am its lord.

[He trots briskly about with increasing satisfaction.

Alberich even,
Whom I served,
Shall be the slave
Of Mime the dwarf.
As Nibelheim's prince
I shall descend there,

And all the host
Shall do my will;
None so honoured as he,
The dwarf once despised!
To the hoard will come thronging
Gods and men;

[With increasing liveliness.

The world shall cower,
Cowed by my nod,
And at my frown
Shall tremble and fall!
No more shall Mime
Labour and toil,
When others win him
Unending wealth.
Mime, the valiant,
Mime is monarch,
Prince and ruler,
Lord of the world!
Hei, Mime! Great luck has been thine!
Had any one dreamed of this!

SIEGFRIED

[During the pauses in Mime's song has been filing and sharpening the sword and hammering it with the small hammer. He flattens the rivets of the hilt with the last

strokes, and now grasps the sword.

Nothing! Nothing!
Conquering sword!
Once more art thou firm in thy hilt.
Severed wert thou;
I shaped thee anew,
No second blow thy blade shall shatter.
The strong steel was splintered,
My father fell;
The son who now lives
Shaped it anew.
Bright-gleaming to him it laughs,
And for him its edge shall be keen.

[Swinging the sword before him.

Nothing! Nothing!
Conquering sword!
Once more to life I have waked thee.
Dead wert thou,
In fragments hewn,
Now shining defiant and fair.
Woe to all robbers!
Show them thy sheen!
Strike at the traitor,
Cut down the rogue!
See, Mime, thou smith;

Thus sunders Siegfried's sword!

[He strikes the anvil and splits it in two from top to bottom, so that it falls asunder with a great noise. Mime, who has mounted a stool in great delight, falls in terror to a fitting position on the ground. Siegfried holds the sword exultantly on high. The curtain falls.

THE SECOND ACT

A deep forest

Quite in the background the entrance to a cave. The ground rises towards a flat knoll in the middle of the stage, and slopes down again towards the back, so that only the upper part of the entrance to the cave is visible to the audience. To the left a fissured cliff is seen through the trees. It is night, the darkness being deepest at the back, where at first the eye can distinguish nothing at all.

ALBERICH

[Lying by the cliff, gloomily brooding.]

In night-drear woods
By Neidhöhl' I keep watch,
With ear alert,
Keen and anxious eye.
Timid day,
Tremblest thou forth?
Pale art thou dawning
Athwart the dark?

[A storm arises in the wood on the right, and from the same quarter there shines down a bluish light.]

What comes yonder, gleaming bright?

Nearer shimmers
A radiant form;
It runs like a horse and it shines;
Breaks through the wood,
Rushing this way.
Is it the dragon's slayer?
Can it mean Fafner's death?

[The wind subsides; the light vanishes.

The glow has gone,
It has faded and died;
All is darkness.
Who comes there, shining in shadow?

WANDERER

[Enters from the wood, and stops opposite Alberich.

To Neidhöhl'
By night I have come;
In the dark who is hiding there?

[As from a sudden rent in the clouds moonlight streams
forth and lights up the Wanderer's figure.

ALBERICH

[Recognises the Wanderer and shrinks back at first in

alarm, but immediately after breaks out in violent fury.

'Tis thou who comest thus?
What wilt thou here?
Go, get thee hence!
Begone, thou insolent thief!

WANDERER [*Quietly.*

Schwarz-Alberich
Wanders here?
Guardest thou Fafner's house?

ALBERICH

Art thou intent
On mischief again?
Linger not here!
Off with thee straightway!
Has grief enough
Not deluged the earth through thy guile?
Spare it further
Sorrow, thou wretch!

WANDERER

I come as watcher,
Not as worker.

The Wanderer's way who bars?

ALBERICH

Thou arch, pestilent plotter!
Were I still the blind,
Silly fool that I was,
When I was bound thy captive,
How easy were it
To steal the ring again from me!
Beware! For thy cunning
I know well,

[Mockingly.]

And of thy weakness
I am fully aware too.
Thy debts were cancelled,
Paid with my treasure;
My ring guerdoned
The giants' toil,
Who raised thy citadel high.
Still on the mighty
Haft of thy spear there
The runes are written plain
Of the compact made with the churls;
And of that
Which by labour they won

Thou dost not dare to despoil them:
Thy spear's strong shaft
Thou thyself wouldst split;
The staff that makes thee
Master of all
Would crumble to dust in thy hand.

WANDERER

By the steadfast runes of treaties
Thou hast not,
Base one, been bound;
On thee my spear may spend its strength,
So keen I keep it for war.

ALBERICH

How dire thy threats!
How bold thy defiance!
And yet full of fear is thy heart!
Foredoomed to death
Through my curse is he
Who now guards the treasure.
What heir will succeed him?
Will the hoard all desire
Belong as before to the Niblung?—
That gnaws thee with ceaseless torment.
For once I have got it
Safe in my grasp,

Better than foolish giants
Will I employ its spell.
The God who guards heroes
Truly may tremble!
I will storm
Proud Walhall with Hella's hosts,
And rule, lord of the world!

WANDERER [*Quietly.*

Thy design I know well,
But little I care:
Who wins the ring
Will rule by its might.

ALBERICH

Thou speakest darkly,
But to me all is plain.
Thy heart is bold
Because of a boy,

[Mockingly.

A hero begot of thy blood.
Hast thou not fostered a stripling
To pluck the fruit thou durst not

[With growing violence.

Pluck frankly for thyself?

WANDERER [*Lightly.*

With me
'Tis useless to wrangle;
But Mime thou shouldst beware;
For thy brother brings here a boy
To compass the giant's doom.
He knows not of me;
He works for Mime alone.
And so I say to thee,
Do as seems to thee best.

[Alberich makes a movement expressive of violent curiosity.

Take my advice,
Be on thy guard:
The boy will hear of the ring
When Mime tells him the tale.

ALBERICH [*Violently.*

Wilt thou hold thy hand from the hoard?

WANDERER

Whom I love
Must fight for himself unaided;
The lord of his fate,
He stands or falls:
All my hope hangs upon heroes.

ALDERICH

Does none but Mime
Dispute me the ring?

WANDERER

Only thou and Mime
Covet the gold.

ALDERICH

And yet it is not to be mine?

WANDERER [*Quietly coming nearer.*

A hero comes
To set the hoard free;
Two Nibelungs yearn for the gold.

Fafner falls,
He who guards the ring;
Then a hand, seizing, shall hold it.
More wouldst thou learn,
There Fafner lies,
Who, if warned of his death,
Gladly would give up the toy.
Come, I will wake him for thee.

[He goes towards the cave, and, standing on the rising ground in front of it, calls towards it.

Fafner! Fafner!
Wake, dragon! Wake!

ALBERICH [*With anxious amazement, aside.*

Does the madman mean it?
Am I to have it?

FAFNER'S VOICE

Who troubles my sleep?

WANDERER [*Facing the cave.*

A well-wisher comes
To warn thee of danger;

Thy doom can be averted,
If thou wilt pay the price
With the treasure that thou guardest.

[He leans his ear towards the cave, listening.

FAFNER'S VOICE

What would he?

ALBERICH

[Has come to the Wanderer and calls into the cave.

Waken, Fafner!
Dragon, awake!
A doughty hero comes
To try his strength against thine.

FAFNER'S VOICE

I want a meal.

WANDERER

Bold is the boy and strong;
Sharp-edged is his sword.

ALBERICH

The ring he seeks,
Nothing besides.
Give me the ring, and so
The strife shall be stayed.
Still guarding the hoard,
In peace shalt thou live long!

FAFNER [*Yawning.*

I have and I hold:—
Let me slumber!

WANDERER

[Laughs aloud and then turns again to Alberich.

Well, Alberich! That ruse failed,
But call me rogue no more.
This one thing thou shouldst
Never forget:
Each according to his kind must act;
Nothing can change him.
I leave thee the field now;
Show a bold front,
And try thy luck with thy brother;
Thou knowest his kind perhaps better.
And things unknown
Thou also shalt learn!

[He turns away, and disappears quickly in the wood.
A storm arises and a bright light breaks forth; then both
quickly cease.

ALBERICH

[Looks after the Wanderer as he gallops off.

Away on his shining
Horse he rides,
And leaves me to care and scorn!
Laugh on! Laugh on,
Ye light-minded
And high-spirited
Race of immortals!
One day ye shall perish
And pass!
Until the gold
Has ceased to gleam,
Will wise Alberich watch,
And his hate shall prevail.

[He slips into the chasm at the side. The stage remains
empty. Dawn.

*As the day dawns Siegfried and Mime enter. Siegfried carries
his sword in a sword-belt of rope. Mime examines the place
carefully. At last he looks towards the background, which remains*

*in deep shadow, whilst the rising ground in the middle becomes,
after a time, more and more brightly illuminated by the sun.*

MIME

Our journey ends here;
Here we halt.

SIEGFRIED

[Sits down under the lime-tree and looks about him.]

So here I shall learn what fear is?
A far way thou hast led me;
We have wandered lone together
A whole night long in the woods.
This is the last
Of thee, Mime!
Can I not master
My lesson here,
Alone I will push forward
And never see thee again.

MIME

Lad, believe me,
If thou canst not
Learn it here and now,
No other place,
No other time

Ever will teach thee fear.
Dost thou see
That cavern yawning dark?
Yonder dwells
A dragon dread and grim,
Horribly fierce,
Enormous in size,
With terrible jaws
That threaten and gape;
With skin and hair,
All at a gulp,
The brute could swallow thee whole.

SIEGFRIED

[Still sitting under the lime-tree.

'Twere well to close up his gullet;
His fangs I will therefore avoid.

MIME

Poison pours
From his venomous mouth;
Were he to spue out
Spittle on thee,
Thy body and bones would decay.

SIEGFRIED

That the poison may not consume me,
I will keep out of its reach.

MIME

A serpent's tail
Sweeping he swings;
Were that about thee wound
And folded close,
Thy limbs would be broken like glass.

SIEGFRIED

That his swinging tail may not touch me,
Warily then I must watch.
But answer me this:
Has the brute a heart?

MIME

A pitiless, cruel heart.

SIEGFRIED

It lies, however,
Where all hearts lie,
Brute and human alike?

MIME

Of course! There, boy,
The dragon's lies too.
At last thou beginnest to fear?

SIEGFRIED

[Who till now has been lying indolently stretched out,
sits up suddenly.

Nothing into
His heart I will thrust!
Is that what is meant by fearing?
Hey, old dotard!
Canst thou teach me
Nothing but this
With all thy craft,
Linger no longer by me:
No fear is here to be learnt.

MIME

Wait awhile yet!
What I have told thee
Seems to thee empty sound;
When thou hast heard
And seen him thyself,
Thy senses will swoon, overwhelmed!

When thine eyes grow dim,
And when the ground rocks,
When in thy breast
Thy heart beats loud,

[Very friendly.]

Thou wilt remember who brought thee,
And think of me and my love.

SIEGFRIED

Thy love is not wanted!
Hast thou not heard?
Out of my sight with thee;
Let me alone!
Begin again talking of love,
And on the instant I go!
The horrible winking,
The nods and blinking—
When shall I see
The last of them,
And rid be at length of the fool?

MIME

Well, I will off,
And rest there by the spring.

Thou must stay here,
And as the sun scales the sky
Watch for the foe:
From his cave
He lumbers this way,
Winds and twists
Past this spot,
To water at the fountain.

SIEGFRIED [*Laughs.*]

Liest thou by the spring,
Unchecked thither the brute shall go;
He shall swallow thee
Down with the water,
Ere with my sword
To the heart I stab him!
So heed well what I say:
Rest not beside the spring.
Seek somewhere else
A far-off spot,
And nevermore return.

MIME

Thou wilt not refuse
Cooling refreshment
When the fierce fight is over?

[Siegfried motions him angrily away.

Call on me too
Shouldst thou need counsel,

[Siegfried repeats the gesture with more violence.

Or if felled on a sudden by fear.

[Siegfried rises and drives him away with furious
gestures.

MIME [*Aside, as he goes away.*

Fafner and Siegfried—
Siegfried and Fafner—
Might each the other but slay!

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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