

РИХАРД ВАГНЕР

TRISTAN AND
ISOLDA

Рихард Вагнер

Tristan and Isolde

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Tristan and Isolde: Opera in Three Acts:

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Richard Wagner

Tristan and Isolda:

Opera in Three Acts

THE STORY OF

"TRISTAN AND ISOLDA"

ACT I

Tristan, a valiant Cornish knight, is bringing Isolda, princess of Ireland, over as a bride for his uncle, King Mark. He is himself in love with her, but owing to a blood feud between them, forces himself to conceal his passion. Isolda, in anger at his seeming unkindness, attempts to poison herself and him, but her attendant, Brangæna, changes the draft for a love potion, which enflames their passion beyond power of restraint.

ACT II

Isolda has been wedded to King Mark, but holds stolen interviews with Tristan, during one of which they are surprised,

for Tristan has been betrayed by a jealous friend, Melot. Touched by King Mark's bitter reproaches, Tristan provokes Melot to fight and suffers himself to be mortally wounded.

ACT III

Tristan's faithful servant, Kurvenal, has carried his wounded master to his native home in Brittany, where he is carefully tended. Isolde has also been sent for, as being skilled above all others in the healing art. The excitement of her approach only hastens Tristan's death, and he breathes his last sigh in her arms. Mark has followed Isolde; he has had matters explained, and is prepared to reunite the lovers, but it is too late. Isolde utters her lament over the body of her lover, and her heart breaks: in death alone are they united.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

TRISTAN

MELOT

KING MARK

BRANGÆNA

ISOLDA

A SHEPHERD

KURVENAL

A STEERSMAN

SAILORS, KNIGHTS, AND ESQUIRES

TRISTAN AND ISOLDA

ACT I

[A pavilion erected on the deck of a ship, richly hung with tapestry, quite closed in at back at first. A narrow hatchway at one side leads below into the cabin.]

SCENE I

ISOLDA *on a couch, her face buried in the cushions.*—
BRANGÆNA *holding open a curtain, looks over the side of the vessel.*

THE VOICE OF A YOUNG SAILOR *(from above as if at the mast-head).*

West-ward sur-ges slip, East-ward speeds the ship. The wind so wild blows
 West-wärts schneift der Blick, Ost-wärts streicht das Schiff. Frisch weht der Wind der

home-ward now; my I-rish child, where wait-est thou? Say, must our sails be
 Hei-math zu:—mein I-rische Kind, wo wei-lest du? Sind's dei-mer Seuf-zer

weight-ed, Fill'd by thys sighs un-bat-ed? Waft us, wind strong and wild! Woe, ah,
 We-hen, die mir die Se-gel-blä-ken? We-he, we-he, du Wind! Weh, ach,

woe for my child! . . O I-rish maid! . . my win-some, nar-vel-lous maid!
 we-he, mein Kind! . . I-rische Maid . . du wil-de, mi-ni-ge Maid!

ISOLDA (*starting up suddenly*).

What wight dares insult me?

(She looks round in agitation.)

Brangæna, ho!

Say, where sail we?

BRANGÆNA (*at the opening*).

Bluish stripes

are stretching along the west:

swiftly sails

the ship to shore;

if restful the sea by eve

we shall readily set foot on land.

ISOLDA. What land?

BRANGÆNA. Cornwall's verdant strand.

ISOLDA. Never more!
To-day nor to-morrow!

BRANGÆNA. What mean you, mistress? say!

(She lets the curtain fall and hastens to ISOLDA.)

ISOLDA *(with wild gaze)*.

O fainthearted child,
false to thy fathers!
Ah, where, mother,
hast given thy might
that commands the wave and the tempest?
O subtle art
of sorcery,
for mere leech-craft followed too long!
Awake in me once more,
power of will!
Arise from thy hiding
within my breast!
Hark to my bidding,
fluttering breezes!
Arise and storm
in boisterous strife!

With furious rage
and hurricane's hurdle
waken the sea
from slumbering calm;
rouse up the deep
to its devilish deeds!
Shew it the prey
which gladly I proffer!
Let it shatter this too daring ship
and enshrine in ocean each shred!
And woe to the lives!
Their wavering death-sighs
I leave to ye, winds, as your lot.

BRANGÆNA (*in extreme alarm and concern for ISOLDA*).

Out, alas!

Ah, woe!

I've ever dreaded some ill!—

Isolda! mistress!

Heart of mine!

What secret dost thou hide?

Without a tear

thou'st quitted thy father and mother,

and scarce a word

of farewell to friends thou gavest;

leaving home thou stood'st,

how cold and still!

pale and speechless

on the way,

food rejecting,
reft of sleep,
stern and wretched,
wild, disturbed;
how it pains me
so to see thee!
Friends no more we seem,
being thus estranged.
Make me partner
in thy pain!
Tell me freely
all thy fears!
Lady, thou hearest,
sweetest and dearest;
if for true friend you take me,
your confidant O make me!

ISOLDA. Air! air!
or my heart will choke!
Open! open there wide!

(BRANGÆNA *hastily draws the centre curtains apart.*)

SCENE II

[The whole length of the ship is now seen, down to the stern, with the sea and horizon beyond. Round the mainmast sailors are ensconced, busied with ropes; beyond them in the stern are

groups of knights and attendants, also seated; a little apart stands TRISTAN folding his arms and thoughtfully gazing out to sea; at his feet KURVENAL reclines carelessly. From the mast-head above is once more heard the voice of the young sailor.]

THE YOUNG SAILOR (*at the mast-head invisible*).

The wind so wild
blows homewards now;
my Irish child,
where waitest thou?
Say, must our sails be weighted,
filled by thy sighs unbated?
Waft us, wind strong and wild!
Woe, ah woe for my child!

ISOLDA (*whose eyes have at once sought TRISTAN and fixed
stonily on him—gloomily*). Once beloved—
now removed—
brave and bright,
coward knight!—
Death-devoted head!
Death-devoted heart!—

(laughing unnaturally).

Think'st highly of yon minion?

BRANGÆNA (*following her glance*).
Whom mean'st thou?

ISOLDA. There, that hero
who from mine eyes
averts his own:
in shrinking shame
my gaze he shuns—
Say, how hold you him?

BRANGÆNA. Mean you Sir Tristan,
lady mine?
Extolled by ev'ry nation,
his happy country's pride,
The hero of creation,—
whose fame so high and wide?

ISOLDA (*jeeringly*).
In shrinking trepidation
his shame he seeks to hide,
While to the king, his relation,
he brings the corpse-like bride!—
Seems it so senseless
What I say?
Go ask himself,
our gracious host,
dare he approach my side?
No courteous heed
or loyal care

this hero t'wards
his lady turns;
but to meet her his heart is daunted,
this knight so highly vaunted!
Oh! he wots
well the cause!
To the traitor go,
bearing his lady's will!
As my servant bound,
straightway should he approach.

BRANGÆNA. Shall I beseech him
to attend thee?

ISOLDA. Nay, order him:
pray, understand it:—
I, Isolda
do command it!

[At an imperious sign from ISOLDA BRANGÆNA withdraws and timidly walks along the deck towards the stern, past the working sailors. ISOLDA, following her with fixed gaze, sinks back on the couch, where she remains seated during the following, her eyes still turned sternward.]

KURVENAL (*observing Brangæna's approach, plucks Tristan by the robe without rising.*)
Beware, Tristan!

Message from Isolda!

TRISTAN (*starting*). What is't?—Isolda?—

(He quickly regains his composure as BRANGÆNA approaches and curtsies to him.)

What would my lady?
I her liegeman,
fain will listen
while her loyal
woman tells her will.

BRANGÆNA. My lord, Sir Tristan,
Dame Isolda
would have speech
with you at once.

TRISTAN. Is she with travel worn?
The end is near:
nay, ere the set of sun
sight we the land.
All that your mistress commands me,
trust me, I shall mind.

BRANGÆNA. That you, Sir Tristan,
go to her,—
this is my lady's wish.

TRISTAN. Where yonder verdant meadows
in distance dim are mounting,
waits my sov'reign
for his mate:
to lead her to his presence
I'll wait upon the princess:
'tis an honor
all my own.

BRANGÆNA. My lord, Sir Tristan,
list to me:
this one thing
my lady wills,
that thou at once attend her,
there where she waits for thee.

TRISTAN. In any station
where I stand
I truly serve but her,
the pearl of womanhood.
If I unheeding
left the helm,
how might I pilot her ship
in surety to King Mark?

BRANGÆNA. Tristan, my master,
why mock me thus?
Seemeth my saying

obscure to you?
list to my lady's words:
thus, look you, she hath spoken:
"Go order him,
and understand it,
I—Isolda—
do command it."

KURVENAL (*springing up*). May I an answer make her?

TRISTAN. What wouldst thou wish to reply?

KURVENAL. This should she say
to Dame Isold':
"Though Cornwall's crown
and England's isle
for Ireland's child he chose,
his own by choice
she may not be;
he brings the king his bride.
A hero-knight
Tristan is hight!
I've said, nor care to measure
your lady's high displeasure."

[*While TRISTAN seeks to stop him, and the offended BRANGÆNA turns to depart, KURVENAL sings after her at the top of his voice, as she lingeringly withdraws.*]

"Sir Morold toiled
o'er mighty wave
the Cornish tax to levy;
In desert isle
was dug his grave,
he died of wounds so heavy.
His head now hangs
in Irish lands,
Sole were-gild won
at English hands.
Bravo, our brave Tristan!
Let his tax take who can!"

[KURVENAL, *driven away by TRISTAN'S chidings, descends into the cabin. BRANGÆNA returns in discomposure to ISOLDA, closing the curtains behind her, while all the men take up the chorus and are heard without.*]

KNIGHTS AND ATTENDANTS.

"His head now hangs
in Irish lands,
sole were-gild won
at English hands.
Bravo, our brave Tristan!
Let his tax take who can!"

SCENE III

[ISOLDA *and* BRANGÆNA *alone, the curtain being again completely closed. ISOLDA rises with a gesture of despair and wrath. BRANGÆNA falls at her feet.*]

BRANGÆNA. Ah! an answer
so insulting!

ISOLDA (*checking herself on the brink of a fearful outburst*).
How now? of Tristan?
I'd know if he denies me.

BRANGÆNA. Ah! question not!

ISOLDA. Quick, say without fear!

BRANGÆNA. With courteous phrase
he foiled my will.

ISOLDA. But when you bade him hither?

BRANGÆNA. When I had straightway
bid him come,
where'er he stood,
he said to me,
he truly served but thee,

the pearl of womanhood;
if he unheeded
left the helm
how could he pilot the ship
in surety to King Mark?

ISOLDA (*bitterly*).

"How could he pilot the ship
in surety to King Mark!"
And wait on him with were-gild
from Ireland's island won!

BRANGÆNA.

As I gave out the message
and in thy very words,
thus spoke his henchman Kurvenal—

ISOLDA.

Heard I not ev'ry sentence?
it all has reached my ear.
If thou hast learnt my disgrace
now hear too whence it has grown.
How scoffingly
they sing about me!
Quickly could I requite them!
What of the boat
so bare and frail,
that floated by our shore?
What of the broken

stricken man,
feebly extended there?
Isolda's art
he gladly owned;
with herbs, simples
and healing salves
the wounds from which he suffered
she nursed in skilful wise.
Though "Tantris"
The name that he took unto him,
as "Tristan"
anon Isolda knew him,
when in the sick man's keen blade
she perceived a notch had been made,
wherein did fit
a splinter broken
in Morold's head,
the mangled token
sent home in hatred rare:
this hand did find it there.
I heard a voice
from distance dim;
with the sword in hand
I came to him.
Full well I willed to slay him,
for Morold's death to pay him.
But from his sick bed
he looked up
not at the sword,

not at my arm—
his eyes on mine were fastened,
and his feebleness
softened my heart:
the sword—dropped from my fingers.
Though Morold's steel had maimed him
to health again I reclaimed him!
when he hath homeward wended
my emotion then might be ended.

BRANGÆNA.

O wondrous! Why could I not see this?
The guest I sometime
helped to nurse—?

ISOLDA.

His praise briskly they sing now:—
"Bravo, our brave Tristan!"—
he was that distressful man.
A thousand protestations
of truth and love he prated.
Hear how a knight
fealty knows!—
When as Tantris
unforbidden he'd left me,
as Tristan
boldly back he came,
in stately ship
from which in pride

Ireland's heiress
in marriage he asked
for Mark, the Cornish monarch,
his kinsman worn and old.
In Morold's lifetime
dared any have dreamed
to offer us such an insult?
For the tax-paying
Cornish prince
to presume to court Ireland's princess!
Ah, woe is me!
I it was
who for myself
did shape this shame!
with death-dealing sword
should I have stabbed him;
weakly it escaped me:—
now serfdom I have shaped me.
Curse him, the villain!
Curse on his head!
Vengeance! Death!
Death for me too!

BRANGÆNA (*throwing herself upon ISOLDA with impetuous tenderness*).

Isolda! lady!
loved one! fairest!
sweet perfection!
mistress rarest!

Hear me! come now,
sit thee here.—

(Gradually draws ISOLDA to the couch.)

What a whim!
what causeless railing!
How came you so wrong-minded
and by mere fancy blinded?
Sir Tristan gives thee
Cornwall's kingdom;
then, were he erst thy debtor,
how could he reward thee better?
His noble uncle
serves he so:
think too what a gift
on thee he'd bestow!
With honor unequalled
all he's heir to
at thy feet he seeks to shower,
to make thee a queenly dower.

(ISOLDA turns away.)

If wife he'd make thee
unto King Mark
why wert thou in this wise complaining?
Is he not worth thy gaining?

Of royal race
and mild of mood,
who passes King Mark
in might and power?
If a noble knight
like Tristan serves him,
who would not but feel elated,
so fairly to be mated.

ISOLDA (*gazing vacantly before her*).
Glorious knight!
And I must near him
loveless ever languish!
How can I support such anguish?

BRANGÆNA.
What's this, my lady?
loveless thou?

(*Approaching coaxingly and kissing ISOLDA.*)

Where lives there a man
would not love thee?
Who could see Isolda
And not sink
at once into bondage blest?
And if e'en it could be
any were cold,

did any magic
draw him from thee,
I'd bring the false one
back to bondage,
And bind him in links of love.—

(Secretly and confidentially, close to ISOLDA.)

Mindest thou not
thy mother's arts?
Think you that she
who'd mastered those
would have sent me o'er the sea,
without assistance for thee?

ISOLDA (*darkly*).
My mother's rede
I mind aright,
and highly her magic
arts I hold:—
Vengeance they wreak for wrongs,
rest give to wounded spirits.—
Yon casket hither bear.

BRANGÆNA.
It holds a balm for thee.—

(She brings forward a small golden coffer, opens it, and

points to its contents.)

Thy mother placed inside it
her subtle magic potions.
There's salve for sickness
or for wounds,
and antidotes
for deadly drugs.—

(She takes a bottle.)

The helpfulest draught
I hold in here.

ISOLDA.
Not so, I know a better.
I make a mark
to know it again—
This draught 'tis I would drain.

(Seizes flask and shows it.)

BRANGÆNA (*recoiling in horror*).
The draught of death!

(*ISOLDA has risen from the sofa and now hears with increasing dread the cries of the sailors.*)

VOICES OF THE CREW (*without*).

"Ho! heave ho! hey!

Reduce the sail!

The mainsail in!

Ho! heave ho! hey!"

ISOLDA.

Our journey has been swift.

Woe is me! Near to the land!

SCENE IV

(KURVENAL *boisterously enters through the curtains.*)

KURVENAL.

Up, up, ye ladies!

Look alert!

Straight bestir you!

Loiter not,—here is the land!—

To dame Isolda

says the servant

of Tristan,

our hero true:—

Behold our flag is flying!

it waveth landwards aloft:

in Mark's ancestral castle

may our approach be seen.
So, dame Isolda,
he prays to hasten,
for land straight to prepare her,
that thither he may bear her.

ISOLDA (*who has at first cowered and shuddered on hearing the message, now speaks calmly and with dignity*).

My greeting take
unto your lord
and tell him what I say now:
Should he assist to land me
and to King Mark would he hand me,
unmeet and unseemly
were his act,
the while my pardon
was not won
for trespass black and base:
So bid him seek my grace.

(KURVENAL *makes a gesture of defiance.*)

Now mark me well,
This message take:—
Nought will I yet prepare me,
that he to land may bear me;
I will not by him be landed,
nor unto King Mark be handed

ere granting forgiveness
and forgetfulness,
which 'tis seemly
he should seek:—
for all his trespass base
I tender him my grace.

KURVENAL.

Be assured,
I'll bear your words:
we'll see what he will say!

(He retires quickly.)

SCENE V

ISOLDA (*hurries to BRANGÆNA and embraces her
vehemently*)

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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