

**MANFRED:
A DRAMATIC POEM.**

Adapted by Michael Barakiva

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10 "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."
[*Hamlet*, Act i. Scene 5, Lines 166, 167.]

This adaptation is designed for 12 actors.

Manfred
Chamois Hunter
Abbot of St. Maurice
Manuel
20 Herman

Spirit of Air/Witch of Atlas
Spirit of Mountain/Second Destiny
Spirit of Ocean/First Destiny
Spirit of Earth/Nemesis
Spirit of Wind/Third Destiny
Spirit of Night/Arimanes
Spirit of Star/Phantom of Astarte

30

*The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the
Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.*

ACT 1.

Scene 1.—Manfred alone.—Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.

Man.

The lamp must be replenished, but even then
 It will not burn so long as I must watch:
 My slumbers—if I slumber—are not sleep,
 10 But a continuance, of enduring thought,
 Which then I can resist not: in my heart
 There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
 To look within; and yet I live, and bear
 The aspect and the form of breathing men.
 But Grief should be the Instructor of the wise;
 Sorrow is Knowledge: they who know the most
 Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
 The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.

20 Philosophy and science, and the springs
 Of Wonder, and the wisdom of the World,
 I have essayed, and in my mind there is
 A power to make these subject to itself—
 But they avail not: I have done men good,
 And I have met with good even among men—
 But this availed not: I have had my foes,
 And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
 But this availed not:—Good—or evil—life—
 Powers, passions—all I see in other beings,
 30 Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
 Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
 And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
 Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
 Or lurking love of something on the earth.
 Now to my task.—
 Mysterious Agency!

Ye Spirits of the unbounded Universe!
 Whom I have sought in darkness and in light—
 Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
 40 In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
 Of mountains inaccessible are haunts,
 And Earth's and Ocean's caves familiar things—
 I call upon ye by the written charm
 Which gives me power upon you—Rise! Appear!

[*A pause.*]

They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him
 Who is the first among you—by this sign,
 50 Which makes you tremble—by the claims of him
 Who is undying,—Rise! Appear!—- Appear!

[*A pause.*]

[*A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery:
 it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.*]

Spirit of Air.

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed,
 60 From my mansion in the cloud,
 Though thy quest may be forbidden,
 On a star-beam I have ridden,
 To thine adjuration bowed:
 Mortal—be thy wish avowed!

Spirit of Mountain.

Mont Blanc is the Monarch of mountains;
 They crowned him long ago
 On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
 70 With a Diadem of snow.
 I am the Spirit of the place,
 Could make the mountain bow

And quiver to his caverned base—
 And what with me would'st *Thou*?

Spirit of Ocean:

In the blue depth of the waters,
 Where the wave hath no strife,
 Where the Wind is a stranger,
 80 And the Sea-snake hath life,
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold!

Spirit of Earth.

Where the slumbering Earthquake
 Lies pillowed on fire,
 And the lakes of bitumen
 Rise boilingly higher;
 I have quitted my birthplace,
 90 Thy bidding to bide—
 Thy spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my guide!

Spirit of Wind.

I am the Rider of the wind,
 The Stirrer of the storm;
 The hurricane I left behind
 Is yet with lightning warm;
 To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
 100

Spirit of Night.

My dwelling is the shadow of the Night,
 Why doth thy magic torture me with light?

Spirit of Star.

The Star which rules thy destiny
 Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
 It was a World as fresh and fair
 As e'er revolved round Sun in air;

110 Its course was free and regular,
 Space bosomed not a lovelier star.
 The Hour arrived—and it became
 A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
 A pathless Comet, and a curse,
 The menace of the Universe;
 Still rolling on with innate force,
 Without a sphere, without a course,
 A bright deformity on high,
 The monster of the upper sky!

120 And Thou! beneath its influence born—
 Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
 What would'st thou, Child of Clay! with me?

Spirit of Earth

Earth—

Spirit of Ocean

Ocean—

130 *Spirit of Air*

Air—

Spirit of Night

Night—

Spirit of Mountains

Mountains—

Spirit of Winds

140 Winds—

Spirit of Star

Thy Star,

All Spirits

Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
 Before thee at thy quest their Spirits are—
 What would'st thou with us, Son of mortals—say?

150 *Man.*
 Forgetfulness—

Spirit of Air.
 Of what—of whom—and why?

Man.
 Of that which is within me; read it there—
 Ye know it—and I cannot utter it.

160 *Spirit of Mountain.*
 We can but give thee that which we possess:
 Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
 O'er earth—the whole, or portion—or a sign
 Which shall control the elements, whereof
 We are the dominators,—each and all,
 These shall be thine.

Man.
 Oblivion—self-oblivion!
 170 Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
 Ye offer so profusely—what I ask?

Spirit of Ocean.
 It is not in our essence, in our skill;
 But—thou may'st die.

Man.
 Will Death bestow it on me?

180 *Spirit of Earth.*
 We are immortal, and do not forget;
 We are eternal; and to us the past

Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?

Man.

Ye mock me—but the Power which brought ye here
 Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
 The Mind—the Spirit—the Promethean spark,
 The lightning of my being, is as bright,
 190 Pervading, and far darting as your own,
 And shall not yield to yours, though cooped in clay!
 Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spirit of Wind.

We answer—as we answered; our reply
 Is even in thine own words.

Man. Why say ye so?

200 *Spirit of Night.*

If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,
 We have replied in telling thee, the thing
 Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have called ye from your realms in vain;
 Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit of Air.

210 Say—
 What we possess we offer; it is thine:
 Bethink ere thou dismiss us; ask again;
 Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days—

Man.

Accurséd! what have I to do with days?
 They are too long already.—Hence—begone!

Spirit of Ocean.

Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;
 220 Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
 Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

Manfred

No, none: yet stay—one moment, ere we part,
 I would behold ye face to face. I hear
 Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
 As Music on the waters; and I see
 The steady aspect of a clear large Star;
 But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
 230 Or one—or all—in your accustomed forms.

Spirit of Night.

We have no forms, beyond the elements
 Of which we are the mind and principle:
 But choose a form—in that we will appear.

Man.

I have no choice; there is no form on earth
 Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him,
 240 Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect
 As unto him may seem most fitting—Come!

Spirit of Star (appearing in the shape of Astarte).

Behold!

Man.

Oh God! if it be thus, and *thou*
 Art not a madness and a mockery,
 I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee,
 250 And we again will be——

[*The figure vanishes.*

My heart is crushed!

[Manfred *falls senseless.*

Spirit of Air

260 When the Moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;

Spirit of Mountain

When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
270

Spirit of Ocean

Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.
Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy Spirit shall not sleep;

Spirit of Earth

There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
280 By a Power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;

Spirit of Wind

Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Spirit of Night

290 Though thou seest me not pass by,

Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
 As a thing that, though unseen,
 Must be near thee, and hath been;

Spirit of Star

And when in that secret dread
 Thou hast turned around thy head,
 Thou shalt marvel I am not
 As thy shadow on the spot,

300

All Spirits

And the power which thou dost feel
 Shall be what thou must conceal.
 And a magic voice and verse
 Hath baptized thee with a curse;

Spirit of Air

And a Spirit of the air
 Hath begirt thee with a snare;

310

Spirit of Mountain

In the wind there is a voice
 Shall forbid thee to rejoice;

Spirit of Ocean

And to thee shall Night deny
 All the quiet of her sky;

Spirit of Earth

320

And the day shall have a sun,
 Which shall make thee wish it done.

Spirit of Wind

From thy false tears I did distil
 An essence which hath strength to kill;

Spirit of Night

From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;

330

Spirit of Star

From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake;

All

From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

340

Spirit of Air

By the cold breast and serpent smile,

Spirit of Mountain

By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,

Spirit of Ocean

By that most seeming virtuous eye,

350 *Spirit of Earth*

By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;

Spirit of Wind

By the perfection of thine art

Spirit of Night

Which passed for human thine own heart;

Spirit of Star

360 By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,

All

I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!
And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,

370 *Spirit of Star*

Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed—now wither!

END OF SCENE

Act I, Scene II.—*The Mountain of the Jungfrau.*—*Time, Morning.*—*Manfred alone upon the cliffs.*

Man.

The spirits I have raised abandon me,
 The spells which I have studied baffle me,
 The remedy I recked of tortured me
 I lean no more on superhuman aid;
 It hath no power upon the past, and for
 10 The future, till the past be gulfed in darkness,
 It is not of my search.—My Mother Earth!
 And thou fresh-breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
 Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
 And thou, the bright Eye of the Universe,
 That openest over all, and unto all
 Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
 And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
 I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
 Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
 20 In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
 A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
 My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
 To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
 I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
 I see the peril—yet do not recede;
 And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm:
 There is a power upon me which withholds,
 And makes it my fatality to live,—
 If it be life to wear within myself
 30 This barrenness of Spirit, and to be
 My own Soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
 To justify my deeds unto myself—
 The last infirmity of evil. Aye,
 Beautiful!
 How beautiful is all this visible world!
 How glorious in its action and itself!

But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
 Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
 To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
 40 A conflict of its elements, and breathe
 The breath of degradation and of pride,
 Contending with low wants and lofty will,
 Till our Mortality predominates,
 And men are—what they name not to themselves,
 And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,

[The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.]

Oh, that I were
 50 The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
 A living voice, a breathing harmony,
 A bodiless enjoyment—born and dying
 With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a Chamois Hunter.

Chamois Hunter

What is here?
 Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reached
 60 A height which none even of our mountaineers,
 Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
 Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
 Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance:
 I will approach him nearer.

Man.

(not perceiving the other).

Ye toppling crags of ice!
 Ye Avalanches, whom a breath draws down
 70 In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
 I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,

C. Hun.

The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

C. Hun.

Friend! have a care,
80 Your next step may be fatal!—for the love
Of Him who made you, stand not on that brink!

Man.

(not hearing him).

Farewell, ye opening Heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
You were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms!

90 *[As Manfred is in act to spring from the cliff, the Chamois Hunter seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.]*

C. Hun.

Hold, madman!—though aweary of thy life,
Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood:
Away with me—I will not quit my hold.

Man.

I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
I am all feebleness—the mountains whirl
100 Spinning around me—I grow blind—What art thou?

C. Hun.

I'll answer that anon.—Away with me—
The clouds grow thicker—there—now lean on me—
Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well-
The Chalet will be gained within an hour:

Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
110 And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath washed since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely done—
You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

[As they descend the rocks with difficulty, the scene closes.]

END OF SCENE

ACT II.

Scene I.—A Cottage among the Bernese Alps.—Manfred and the Chamois Hunter.

C. Hun.

No—no—yet pause—thou must not yet go forth;
 Thy mind and body are alike unfit
 To trust each other, for some hours, at least;
 When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
 10 But whither?

Man.

 It imports not: I do know
 My route full well, and need no further guidance.

C. Hun.

Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage—
 One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
 Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these
 20 May call thee lord? -Which of these is thine?

Man.

No matter.

C. Hun.

Well, Sir, pardon me the question,
 And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
 'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
 'T has thawed my veins among our glaciers, now
 30 Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly!

Man.

Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!

C. Hun.

What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

Man.

I say 'tis blood—my blood! but still it rises up,
 40 Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from Heaven,
 Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

C. Hun.

Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
 Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
 Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet—
 The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience——

Man.

50 Patience—and patience! Hence—that word was made
 For brutes of burthen, not for birds of prey!
 Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
 I am not of thine order.

C. Hun.

Thanks to Heaven!

I would not be of thine for the free fame
 Of William Tell; but whatsoe'er thine ill,
 It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.
 60

Man.

Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

C. Hun.

This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Man.

I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
 Many long years, but they are nothing now
 70 To those which I must number: ages—ages—
 Space and eternity—and consciousness,
 With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked!

C. Hun.

Why on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.50

Man.

Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
80 It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,

C. Hun.

Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.

Man.

I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distempered dream.
90

C. Hun.

What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

Man.

Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free;

100 *C. Hun.*

And would'st thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

Man.

No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange
My lot with living being: I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.

110 *C. Hun.*

And with this—
 This cautious feeling for another's pain,
 Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so.
 Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked revenge
 Upon his enemies?

Man.

Oh! no, no, no!

My injuries came down on those who loved me—
 120 On those whom I best loved: I never quelled
 An enemy, save in my just defence—
 But my embrace was fatal.

C. Hun.

Heaven give thee rest!
 And Penitence restore thee to thyself;
 My prayers shall be for thee.

Man.

130 I need them not,
 But can endure thy pity. I depart—
 'Tis time—farewell!—Here's gold, and thanks for thee—
 No words—it is thy due.—Follow me not—
 I know my path—the mountain peril's past:
 And once again I charge thee, follow not!

END OF SCENE

Act II, Scene II.—A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.

Enter Manfred.

Manfred

It is not noon—the Sunbow's rays still arch
 The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
 And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
 O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,
 And fling its lines of foaming light along,
 10 And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
 I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
 And with the Spirit of the place divide
 The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[Manfred takes some of the water into the palm of his hand and flings it into the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the Witch of the Alps rises beneath the arch of the sunbow of the torrent.]

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
 20 And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
 The charms of Earth's least mortal daughters grow
 To an unearthly stature, in an essence
 Of purer elements; while the hues of youth,—
 Carnationed like a sleeping Infant's cheek,
 Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
 The beauties of the Sunbow which bends o'er thee.
 Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
 Wherein is glassed serenity of Soul,
 Which of itself shows immortality,
 30 I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
 Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
 At times to commune with them—if that he
 Avail him of his spells—to call thee thus,
 And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch.

Son of Earth!

I know thee, and the Powers which give thee power!

I know thee for a man of many thoughts,

40 And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,

Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.

I have expected this—what would'st thou with me?

Man.

A boon;—

But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

Witch.

I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

50

Man.

Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same;

My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards

My Spirit walked not with the souls of men,

Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;

The thirst of their ambition was not mine,

The aim of their existence was not mine;

My joys—my griefs—my passions—and my powers,

Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,

60 I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,

Nor midst the Creatures of Clay that girded me

Was there but One who—but of her anon.

My joy was in the wilderness,—to breathe

The difficult air of the iced mountain's top

or to plunge

Into the torrent, and to roll along

On the swift whirl of the new-breaking wave;

To follow through the night the moving moon,

The stars and their development; or catch

70 The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;

These were my pastimes, and to be alone;

Witch.

Proceed.

Man.

Yet there was One——

Witch.

80 Spare not thyself—proceed.

Man.

She was like me in lineaments—her eyes—
 Her hair—her features—all, to the very tone
 Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
 But softened all, and tempered into beauty:
 She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
 The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
 To comprehend the Universe: nor these
 90 Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
 Pity, and smiles, and tears—which I had not;
 And tenderness—but that I had for her;
 Humility—and that I never had.
 Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own—
 I loved her, and destroyed her!

Witch.

With thy hand?

100 *Man.*

Not with my hand, but heart, which broke her heart;
 It gazed on mine, and withered.

Witch.

And for this—

A being of the race thou dost despise—
 The order, which thine own would rise above,
 Mingling with us and ours,—thou dost forego

The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
 110 To recreant mortality——Away!

Man.

Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour—
 But words are breath—look on me in my sleep,
 Or watch my watchings—Come and sit by me!
 My solitude is solitude no more,
 But peopled with the Furies;—I have gnashed
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
 Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have prayed
 120 For madness as a blessing—'tis denied me.
 I plunged amidst Mankind—Forgetfulness
 I sought in all, save where 'tis to be found—
 And that I have to learn—my Sciences,
 My long pursued and superhuman art,
 Is mortal here: I dwell in my despair—
 And live—and live for ever.

Witch.

It may be

130 That I can aid thee.

Man.

To do this thy power
 Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
 Do so—in any shape—in any hour—
 With any torture—so it be the last.

Witch.

That is not in my province; but if thou
 140 Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
 My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

Man.

I will not swear—Obey! and whom? the Spirits

Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me—Never!

Witch.

Is this all?

150 Hast thou no gentler answer?

Man.

I have said it.

Witch.

Enough! I may retire then—say!

Man.

Retire!

160

[*The Witch disappears.*]

Man.

We are the fools of Time and Terror: Days
Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke—
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
170 Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
In all the days of past and future—for
In life there is no present—we can number
How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
180 And that is nothing: that which I love

Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful,
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now?—a sufferer for my sins—
A thing I dare not think upon—or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain—
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrunk to gaze
On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,
190 And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears.—The night approaches.

END OF SCENE

Act II - Scene III.—*The summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.*

Enter the Three Destinies

First Destiny

The Moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;
 And here on snows, where never human foot
 Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
 The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
 10 We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
 The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
 Frozen in a moment—a dead Whirlpool's image:
 Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
 To the Hall of Arimanes—for to-night
 Is our great festival

Second Destiny

The Captive Usurper,
 Hurl'd down from the throne,
 20 Lay buried in torpor,
 Forgotten and lone;

Third Destiny

I broke through his slumbers,
 I shivered his chain,
 I leagu'd him with numbers—
 He's Tyrant again!

The Three Destinies

30 With the blood of a million he'll answer my care,
 With a Nation's destruction—his flight and despair!

First Des.

Where's Nemesis?

Second Des.

At some great work;

But what I know not, for my hands were full.

40 *Third Des.*

Behold she cometh.

Enter Nemesis.

First Des.

Say, where hast thou been?

Nem.

I was detained repairing shattered thrones—
50 Marrying fools, restoring dynasties—
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goadng the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh—for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance—and to speak
Of Freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstayed the hour—mount we our clouds!

ACT II - Scene IV.—*The Hall of Arimanes.—Arimanes on her Throne, a Globe of Fire surrounded by the Spirits.*

Witch of Atlas

Hail to our Mistress!- Queen of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters—in her hand
The sceptre of the Elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at her high command!

10 [Enter the three Destinies and Nemesis.

First Destiny

She breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;
She speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder;

Second Destiny

She gazeth—from her glance the sunbeams flee;
She moveth—Earthquakes rend the world asunder.

20 *Third Destiny*

Beneath her footsteps the Volcanoes rise;
Her shadow is the Pestilence: her path
The comets herald through the crackling skies;
And Planets turn to ashes at her wrath.

Nemesis

To her War offers daily sacrifice;
To her Death pays her tribute; Life is hers,
With all its Infinite of agonies—
30 And her the Spirit of whatever is!

All Spirits

Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,

And we are vigilant. Thy late commands
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

40 *Enter Manfred.*

First Destiny
What is here?

Second Destiny
A mortal!—

Third Destiny
Thou most rash and fatal wretch,
50 Bow down and worship!

Witch of Atlas
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!

Nemesis
Bow down and worship, slave!—

Second Destiny
What, know'st thou not
60 Thine and our Sovereign?—Tremble, and obey!

All the Spirits.
Prostrate thyself, and thy condemnéd clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

Man.
I know it;
And yet ye see I kneel not.

70 *Witch of Atlas*
Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanes on her throne

Man.

110 Ye know what I have known; and without power
I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

Nem.

What would'st thou?

Man.

120 Call up the dead—my question is for them.

Nem.

Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?

Ari.

Yea.

Nem.

130 Uncharnel? Whom wouldst thou

Man.

One without a tomb—call up
Astarte.

Nemesis.

140 Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,
 And the aspect thou worest
 Redeem from the worm.
 Appear!—Appear!—Appear!

150 Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[The Phantom of Astarte rises and stands in the midst.]

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;
 But now I see it is no living hue,
 But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
 Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
 It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
 To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
 160 I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
 Forgive me or condemn me.

Nemesis.

By the Power which hath broken
 The grave which enthralled thee,
 Speak to him who hath spoken.
 Or those who have called thee!

Man.

170 She is silent,

Nem.

My power extends no further. Queen of Air!
 It rests with thee alone—command her voice.

Ari.

Spirit—obey this sceptre!

Nem.

180 Silent still!

She is not of our order, but belongs

To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.

Man.

Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:
I have so much endured—so much endure—
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
190 Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other—though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be
One of the blessed—and that I shall die;
For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence—in a life
Which makes me shrink from Immortality—
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
200 I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art, and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music—Speak to me!
Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness—Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.
210 Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—
I reckon not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once—once more!

Phantom of Astarte.

Manfred!

Man.

Say on, say on—

I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

220

Phan.

Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.

Farewell!

Man.

Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

Phan.

Farewell!

230

Man.

Say, shall we meet again?

Phan.

Farewell!

Man.

One word for mercy! Say thou lovest me.

240

Phan.

Manfred!

[The Spirit of Astarte disappears.]

Nem.

She's gone, and will not be recalled:

Her words will be fulfilled. Return to the earth.

Second Des.

250

He is convulsed—This is to be a mortal,

And seek the things beyond mortality.

Third Des.

Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes

His torture tributary to his will.
Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful Spirit.

Nem.

260 Hast thou further question
Of our great Sovereign, or his worshippers?

Man.

None.

Nem.

Then for a time farewell.

Man.

270 We meet then! Where? On the earth?—
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!

END OF SCENE

ACT III.**Scene I.—A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.**[150]*Manfred and Herman**Man.*

What is the hour?

Her.

It wants but one till sunset,

10 And promises a lovely twilight.

Man.

Say,

Are all things so disposed of in the tower

As I directed?

Her.

All, my Lord, are ready:

Here is the key and casket.

20

Man.

It is well:

Thou mayst retire.

*[Exit Herman.]**Man. (alone).*

There is a calm upon me—

Inexplicable stillness! which till now

30 Did not belong to what I knew of life.

If that I did not know Philosophy

To be of all our vanities the motliest,

*Re-enter Herman**Her.*

My Lord, the Abbot of St. Maurice craves

To greet your presence.

40 *Enter the Abbot of St. Maurice.*

Abbot.

Peace be with Count Manfred!

Man.

Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

50 *Abbot.*

Would it were so, Count!—
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Man.

Herman, retire.—What would my reverend guest?

Abbot.

'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man;
60 That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the Shade of Death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an Anchorite's—were it but holy.

Man.

And what are they who do avouch these things?

70

Abbot.

My pious brethren—the scaréd peasantry—
Even thy own vassals—who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril!

Man.

Take it.

Abbot.

80 I come to save, and not destroy:
I would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee
With the true church, and through the church to Heaven.

Man.

I hear thee. This is my reply—whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself—I shall not choose a mortal
90 To be my mediator—Have I sinned
Against your ordinances? prove and punish!

Abbot.

My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the last,
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
100 I leave to Heaven,—"Vengeance is mine alone!"
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Man.

Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep Despair,
110 Which is Remorse without the fear of Hell,

'Tis strange—even those who do despair above,
 Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth,
 To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

Man.

Aye—father! I have had those early visions,
 And noble aspirations in my youth,
 To make my own the mind of other men.

120 *Abbot.*

And wherefore so?

Man.

I could not tame my nature down; for he
 Must serve who fain would sway; and soothe, and sue,
 And watch all time, and pry into all place,
 And be a living Lie, who would become
 A mighty thing amongst the mean—and such
 The mass are; I disdained to mingle with
 130 A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves,
 The lion is alone, and so am I.

Abbot.

And why not live and act with other men?

Man.

Because my nature was averse from life;

Abbot.

140 Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
 From me and from my calling; yet so young,
 I still would——

Man.

Look on me! there is an order

Of mortals on the earth, who do become
 Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
 Without the violence of warlike death;
 150 Some perishing of pleasure—some of study—
 Some worn with toil, some of mere weariness,—
 Some of disease—and some insanity—
 And some of withered, or of broken hearts;
 For this last is a malady which slays
 More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
 Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
 Look upon me! for even of all these things
 Have I partaken; and of all these things,
 One were enough; then wonder not that I
 160 Am what I am, but that I ever was,
 Or having been, that I am still on earth.

[Exit Manfred.]

Abbot.

This should have been a noble creature: he
 Hath all the energy which would have made
 A goodly frame of glorious elements,
 Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
 170 It is an awful chaos—Light and Darkness—
 And mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts
 Mixed, and contending without end or order,—
 All dormant or destructive. He will perish—
 And yet he must not—I will try once more,
 For such are worth redemption; and my duty
 Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
 I'll follow him—but cautiously, though surely.

END OF SCENE

Act III - Scene II.— .—*The Mountains—The Castle of Manfred at some distance—A Terrace before a Tower.—Time, Twilight.*

Manfred, Herman and Manuel.

Her.

My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks behind the mountain.

10 *Man.*

Doth he so?

I will look on him.

[*Manfred advances to the Window of the Hall.*

Glorious Orb! the idol

Thou chief Star!

Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable and temperest the hues

20 And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,

Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!

I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take

My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been

30 Of a more fatal nature. He is gone—
I follow.

[*Manfred exits into the Tower.*

Her.

'Tis strange enough! night after night, for years,

He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
 Without a witness. I have been within it,—
 So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
 40 Or its contents, it were impossible
 To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
 His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
 One chamber where none enter: I would give
 The fee of what I have to come these three years,
 To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel.

'Twere dangerous;
 Content thyself with what thou know'st already.
 50

Her.

Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
 And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle—
 How many years is't?

Manuel.

Ere Count Manfred's birth,
 I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

60 *Her.*

There be more sons in like predicament!
 But wherein do they differ?

Manuel.

I speak not
 Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
 Count Sigismund was proud, but gay and free,—
 A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
 With books and solitude, nor made the night
 70 A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
 Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
 And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside

From men and their delights.

Her.

Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

80

Manuel.

These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.

Her.

Come, be friendly;
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
90 Which happened hereabouts, by this same tower.

Manuel.

That was a night indeed! I do remember
'Twas twilight, as it may be now, the wind
Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows
Began to glitter with the climbing moon;
Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower,—
How occupied, we knew not, but with him
The sole companion of his wanderings
100 And watchings—her, whom of all earthly things
That lived, the only thing he seemed to love,—
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The Lady Astarte, his——
Hush! who comes here?

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot.

Where is your master?

110

Her.

Yonder in the tower.

Abbot.

I must speak with him.

Manuel.

'Tis impossible;

He is most private, and must not be thus

120

Intruded on.

Abbot.

Upon myself I take

The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—

But I must see him.

Her.

Thou hast seen him once

his eve already.

130

Abbot.

Herman! I command thee,

Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.

Her.

We dare not.

Abbot.

Then it seems I must be herald

140

Of my own purpose.

Manuel.

Reverend father, stop—

I pray you pause.

Abbot.

Why so?

Manuel.

150 But step this way,
And I will tell you further.

END OF SCENE

Act III - Scene III.—Interior of the Tower.

Manfred *alone*.

Manfred

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
 Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
 I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
 Hath been to me a more familiar face
 10 Than that of man; and in her starry shade
 Of dim and solitary loveliness,
 I learned the language of another world.
 And thou didst shine, thou rolling Moon, upon
 All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
 Which softened down the hoar austerity
 Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
 As 'twere anew, the gaps of centuries;
 Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
 And making that which was not—till the place
 20 Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
 With silent worship of the Great of old,—
 The dead, but sceptred, Sovereigns, who still rule
 Our spirits from their urns.
 'Twas such a night!
 'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
 But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
 Even at the moment when they should array
 Themselves in pensive order.

30 *Enter the Abbot.*

Abbot.

My good Lord!
 I crave a second grace for this approach;
 But yet let not my humble zeal offend
 By its abruptness—all it hath of ill

Recoils on me; its good in the effect
 May light upon your head—could I say *heart*—
 Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered,
 40 But is not yet all lost.

Man.

Thou know'st me not;
 My days are numbered, and my deeds recorded:
 Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!

Abbot.

Thou dost not mean to menace me?

50 *Man.*

Not I!

I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
 And would preserve thee.

Abbot.

What dost thou mean?

Man.

Look there!
 60 What dost thou see?

Abbot.

Nothing.

Man.

Look there, I say,
 And steadfastly;—now tell me what thou seest?

Abbot.

70 That which should shake me,—but I fear it not:
 I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
 Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
 Her face wrapt in a mantle, and her form

Robed as with angry clouds: she stands between
Thyself and me—but I do fear her not.

Man.

Thou hast no cause—she shall not harm thee—but
Her sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy.

80 I say to thee—Retire!

Abbot.

And I reply—

Never—till I have battled with this fiend:—
What doth she here?

Man.

Why—aye—what doth she here?
I did not send for her,—she is unbidden.

90

Abbot.

Alas! lost Mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! she unveils her aspect: on her brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from her eye
Glares forth the immortality of Hell—
Avaunt!—

100 *Man.*

Pronounce—what is thy mission?

Arimanes.

Come!

Abbot.

What art thou, unknown being? answer!—speak!

Arimanes.

The genius of this mortal.—Come!'tis time.

110

Man.

I am prepared for all things, but deny
The Power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

Arimanes.

Thou'lt know anon—Come! come!

Man.

I have commanded
120 Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!

Arimanes.

Mortal! thine hour is come—Away! I say.

Man.

I knew, and know my hour is come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I'll die as I have lived—alone.⁹⁰
130

Arimanes .

Then I must summon up my brethren.—Rise!

[*Other Spirits rise.*

Abbot.

Avaunt! ye evil ones!—Avaunt! I say,—
Ye have no power where Piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name—
140

Witch of Atlas

Old man!

We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;

First Destiny

Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.

Second Destiny

150 Once more—I summon him—Away! Away!

Man.

I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
 Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
 Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
 To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength
 To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
 Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

160 *Nemesis*

Reluctant mortal!
 Is this the Magian who would so pervade
 The world invisible, and make himself
 Almost our equal?

Third Destiny

Can it be that thou
 Art thus in love with life? the very life
 Which made thee wretched?

170

Man.

Thou false fiend, thou liest!
 My life is in its last hour,—*that* I know,
 Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
 I do not combat against Death, but thee
 And thy surrounding angels; my past power
 Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
 But by superior science—penance, daring,
 And length of watching, strength of mind, and skill
 180 In knowledge of our Fathers—when the earth
 Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
 And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
 Upon my strength—I do defy—deny—

Spurn back, and scorn ye!—

First Destiny

But thy many crimes
Have made thee—

190 *Man.*

What are they to such as thee?

Must crimes be punished but by other crimes,
And greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The Mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts,—

200 Is its own origin of ill and end—

And its own place and time: its innate sense,
When stripped of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
Thou didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter.—Back, ye baffled fiends!

210 The hand of Death is on me—but not yours!

[*The Spirits disappear.*

Abbot.

Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white—
And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle: Give thy prayers to Heaven
Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.

220 *Man.*

'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well—
Give me thy hand.

Abbot.

Cold—cold—even to the heart—
But yet one prayer—Alas! how fares it with thee?

230 *Man.*

Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.

[*Manfred expires.*]

Abbot.

He's gone—his soul hath ta'en its earthless flight;
Whither? I dread to think—but he is gone.

END OF PLAY

240