Ariadne on Naxos

Opera in one act by Hugo von Hofmannsthal Music by Richard Strauss

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To be performed after the urgeois Gentilhomme" of Molière The Perfect Gentleman)

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TO BE PERFORMED AFTER "LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME" OF MOLIÈRE (THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN)



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OPERA IN ONE ACT BY HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

MUSIC BY

RICHARD STRAUSS

TO BE PERFORMED AFTER "LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME" OF MOLIÈRE (THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN) (ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY ALFRED KALISCH)



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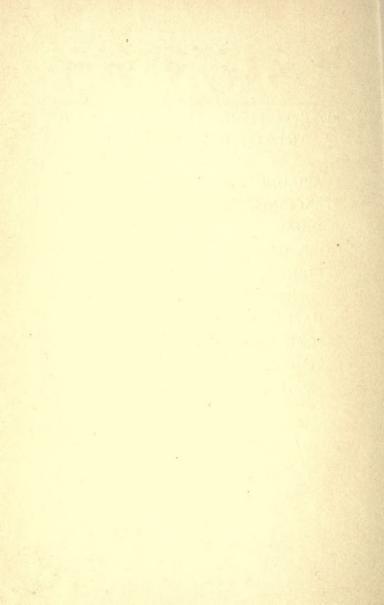
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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

This translation is not adapted to the music for the purpose of being sung. A. K.

CHARACTERS OF THE OPERA: ARIADNE ON NAXOS

ARIADNE		Soprano
BACCHUS		Tenor
NAIAD		High Soprano
DRYAD	,	Alto
ЕСНО		Soprano
ZERBINETTA)	0	High Soprano
HARLEQUIN	lezza	Baritone
SCARAMUCCIO	Itern	Tenor
TRUFFALDINO	as Ir	Bass
BRIGHELLA		Tenor





ARIADNE ON NAXOS.

Ariadne at the mouth of the cave, stretched motionless. Naiad on the left. Dryad on the right. Echo at the back at the wall of the Grotto.

She sleepeth?

Naiad.

Sleepeth she?

Dryad. Naiad.

No, she weepeth!

Dryad.

Weepeth sleeping! Hear her moaning!

Both.

She is always thus, alas!

Najad.

Day by day benumbed by sorrow,

Dryad.

She renews her bitter moan.

Naiad.

Fever shakes her frame anew.

Dryad.

Wounded heart that now and ever

Echo.

Now and ever.

Dryad.

Fate defiest;

All Three.

For so long her pain endureth, That no more our senses heed it, Than the winds that through the tree-tops Whisper, or the rippling waves. Use has dulled the edge of pity, For the days — who knows their number — Pass, and naught allays her pain.

Ariadne

(on the ground).

Where was I? Dead? Or still among the living? Wake I to pain?

I live, but yet, ye gods, I live not truly:

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Oh shattered heart, oh, cease thy bootless throbbing. (Half rising.)

What was it then I dreamed?—Alas, forgotten! O memory, art thou fled?

Jourdain.

This is a little monotonous, do you not find it so?

Dorante.

Hush! That is the simplicity of the Great Style, it is that that men of taste place higher than anything else.

Jourdain.

Yes, yes. I find it very pretty, but I am sorry he has not used the hunting horn.

Ariadne.

Shadows are flitting Where one dark shadow broods: And then a quivering light—and then the cruel pain! Ah!

Echo.

Ah!

(Behind the scenes.)

Harlequin.

How young! how fair! How great her sorrow!

Zerbinetta.

So childlike in her form, yet grief has marred her features!

Brighella. Truffaldino.

And hard the task, I fear to comfort her will be.

Ariadne

(paying no heed to them, continues her monologue).

A thing of beauty—"Theseus" 'twas. Ariadne Gloried in sunlight and rejoiced in life! Why know I aught, who fain would be forgetting? But one thing would I find: for it is shame To be no more myself! I must arouse myself: yea, I must find her, The maid that once was I.

Jourdain.

She does nothing but complain. It makes one melancholy. I wish they had lit more candles. There are surely enough in the house.

Dorante.

She is dreaming of Theseus who has deserted her.

Jourdain.

Is he coming back?

Dorante.

Hush, let us listen.

Jourdain.

I wish something more amusing would happen. I gave orders that ...

(Rises from his seat to look for the Dancing Master).

Dorimene. Dorante.

Hush! Hush!

Ariadne.

Nay, not the name, the name has grown entwined Close with another name, for all things soon Are lost in other things. Alas!

Naiad. Driad. Echo.

Ariadne!

Ariadne

(with deprecating gesture).

Nay! Not again! She dwells close by alone. And light her breath and light too is her step, No blade of grass moves when she walks, Gentle her sleep! at peace her mind, Her heart is pure as crystal well: With loving care she tends herself, for soon The day will dawn when in her mantle's folds She will enwrap herself, and in a shroud, Covering her face, will gladly lay herself, To rest among the dead.

(She dreams on.)

Harlequin

(behind the scenes).

I fear great grief has quite overthrown her mind.

Zerbinetta.

Will music soothe her pain?

Brighella. Truffaldino.

For certain, she is mad.

Ariadne

(without turning her head, to herself, as if the last words form: d part of her dream).

Mad—but with method. Yes! I know what blessings To sorrowing heart relentless Fate denieth.

Zerbinetta.

Ah, charm her with your singing from her grief.

Harlequin.

Love and Hate and Hope and Terror Every pleasure, every pain, Human heart can bear their anguish Once, and many a time again.

But to feel nor pain nor pleasure In a heart that's numb and cold, Cannot be endured—'tis anguish Worse than death a hundredfold. Lift thyself from out thy darkness, Though it be to fiercer pain, Live, and let not life dismay thee, Wake to love and life again.

Echo

(repeats soullessly like a bird the melody of Harlequin's song).

Ariadne

(still motionless, dreams on).

Zerbinetta

(half whispered—parlando). She does not even lift her head!

Harlequin

(the same). 'Tis all in vain. It felt it as I sang.

Zerbinetta.

Pity for her sorrow quite unmans you.

Harlequin.

Never has man's or woman's lot so moved me.

Zerbinetta.

'Tis thus with every girl you see.

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Harlequin.

And perhaps you are not the same with every man?

Ariadne

(to herself).

A land there is whence all uncleanness, Is banished far—the land of death.

(Rises from the ground as she speaks.) Here all is tainted! Here nought is holy! (She fold her mantle round her.) Soon a messenger approacheth— Hermes do the gods him call. With his wand He urges on the huddled souls! Like birds that flutter, Like leaves all faded Drives he them on. Thou beauteous god serene! See, Ariadne waiteth!

Ah! trom every taint of passion Purged must be the human heart. Then with a smile thy godlike features Towards me turning, quickly hither Thou wilt wing thy fight, and on me Press thy icy death-compelling hand. In the glittering festal raiment, Work of best loved mother's hand, I will wrap these limbs, and lay me In my tomb in yonder cave. But my soul in seemly silence Followeth its new-made lord, Like a leaf by zephyr driven, Followeth to the realms below.

It is thou wilt give me freedom, Thou wilt to myself restore me. This life and its burdens From me thou wilt lift, In thee shall I be lost completely, With thee will Ariadne dwell.

The Four.

This Lady's all too much inclined To yield to heaviness of mind. Whate'er misfortune may befall, In time its traces vanish all.

Love betrayed and truly grieving Moves our compassion. But 'tis folly past believing To pine in this fashion.

Now striving to cheer her, This beauteous maiden Comes modestly near her With all her companions.

(They dance.)

To stay thee from weeping All other aids fail us: Will dancing or singing To help thee avail us?

The sun's caresses Dry glistening tear-drops The wanton winds Dry glistening tear-drops.

Sad lady, to cheer thee The beauteous maiden, Who now standeth near thee Did bid her companions.

Zerbinetta

(all the four continue their dance). Behold them now dancing, Their dainty feet gleaming Should she not beholding Their sweet mazy measure, Find comfort and pleasure?

But lo! The sad lady Her closed eye averteth, She hears not the singing, She sees not the dance.

(Stepping in between the four dancers.) Go, Go! Have done! You do but give her pain.

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The Four.

In vain all our dancing, In vain all our singing, Naught aids us in winning Her lips to a smile.

Sad lady, to cheer thee The beauteous maiden Who now standeth near thee Did bid her companions.

Zerbinetta

(forcibly dragging them away).

Then cease from your dancing, And cease from your ceasing! And leave us awhile. Most gracious sovereign lady, who but knows full

well

That grief and pain of noble kingly souls like thine Cannot be measured or be weighed by the same means As those of common mortals. None the less,

(Approaches a step. Ariadne pays no heed.) Are we not women, both? And in each breast Throbs not a heart that passeth understanding? (Approaches still nearer, with a curtsey. Ariadne so as not to see her, veils her face.)

To speak of our own frailty, Unto ourselves confess it, Say, is't not bitter-sweet? And do not all our senses long for it? Alas! You will not listen, Fair and proud you sit, and move not, As though you were in truth the monument on your own tomb. And will you have no partner of your sorrows But heartless rock and unresponsive ocean? (Ariadne retreats to the mouth of the cave.) Hear, gracious lady, hear my words. Not you alone, Each woman—yea, each woman has endured it all. What woman's heart but bleeds from wounds just

such as thine—

Deserted, outcast, and despairing!

Unnumbered are the desert islands such as this E'en midst the throng of men. E'en I myself Have dwelt in such—not once but many times, And yet I have not learned to curse all mankind. (Ariadne retreats into the cave. Zerbinetta still addresses his consolations to her after she is no longer visible.)

Faithless, they are! Wholly, unspeakably! One fleeting day, One night soon passed, One breath of air, One burning glance Transforms their heart! But are we women proof

Against such cruel, such entrancing magic Of fickleness ununderstandable? I think myself plighted for ave to one only I deem myself steadfast, content with my lot-When, treacherous, my heart and my senses bewitching A dream of sweet freedom ne'er tasted before, A vision of secret delight of new love, In a twinkling allures me-my vows are forgot. Still am I true: but truth is falsehood, My faith I keep with heart by unfaith stained-With weights that cheat me all things are assayed. Half knowing what I do, and half as in a dream, At last I deceive him, yet love him right well. Half knowing what I do, and half as in a dream, At last I deceive him, yet love him right well. Twas thus with Pagliazzo, 'Twas thus with Mezzetino, And next it was Cavicchio, Then Burattino Then Pasquiarello! Yes, and at times too Methinks there were two! But ne'er was it fancy-'Twas always a something Within me, with wonder With trembling compelled me. Strange is woman's heart that ever. Ever knows itself so ill.

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As a god came each one towards me, His very footsteps bereft me of speech. When I felt his first caresses, Captive was I of the god. All my being suffered change. As a god came each one towards me, Each one made my being change, When I felt his first caresses, Captive was I, reft of speech, Captive was I, reft of speech, Captive was I, reft of speech, When the new god came towards me Captive was I, reft of speech.

Echo

(invisible, repeats the Rondo, but without words, ad libitum).

Harlequin

(re-enters from the wing).

Pretty sermon, but to ears that hear not!

Zerbinetta

Yes, it seems the lady and I do not speak in the same tongue.

Harlequin.

It seems so.

Zerbinetta.

But I doubt not, she soon will learn to speak in mine.

Harlequin.

Let us wait. But what we will not await ...

(With a bound he is close to her, attempts to embrace her.)

Zerbinetta

(frees herself).

Harlequin.

A ravishing girl, whose relationship to me should be closer, more vital—

Zerbinetta.

Shameless! Remember I pray where you are, Two paces from the royal lady's dwelling.

Harlequin.

Pah! Dwelling! Nothing but a cavern.

Zerbinetta.

What matters that?

Harlequin.

It matters much — a cavern hath no windows! (Again tries to kiss her.)

Zerbinetta

(struggles energetically). It seems that you would really venture

Harlequin.

Doubt not. I venture all things.

Zerbinetta

(eying him closely, half to herself).

To think that they are women who would like him, just because—

Harlequin.

And to think that you are from top to toe just such a woman!

Zerbinetta

(still eyeing him).

(The faces of Brighella, Scaramuccio, Truffaldino appear on the left from the wings.)

Brighella. Scaramuccio. Truffaldino.

Pst! Pst! Zerbinetta.

Zerbinetta

(has freed herself from Harlequin, runs to the front, straight on, nearly to the spectators).

Men! If Heaven really wanted us to resist them, why did it create them all so different!

(She finishes in the middle of her words with a roulade.)

Harlequin. Brighella. Scaramuccio. Truffaldino.

Try no more this moody lady To console, 'tis labour lost'. If all comfort she refuses, Do not baulk her of her will.

Zerbinetta

(dances from one to the other-cajoling each one).

Brighella.

No moody youth am I If you but smile reply. In love and sun to bask Is all that e'er I ask.

Scaramuccio.

In this sweet island Are sweet recesses. Come, let me lead thee, I know them well.

Truffaldino

(loutishly amorous).

Had I but a chariot And of horses a pair. Right quickly this maiden I'd take to my lair.

Harlequin

(discreetly in the background).

What gestures alluring! What glances endearing! The end I await here 'Twixt hoping and fearing.

Zerbinetta.

(still dancing from one to the other). A something compelling, Ne'er a free fancy, Always a marvel Past understanding! (The Four with Zerbinetta.)

Brighella.

I am not moody.

Harlequin.

The end I await here.

Zerbinetta

(still dancing).

'Twas thus with Pasquariello, With Mezzetino too.

Scaramuccio.

Had I the fair one ...

Truffaldino.

I'd know what to do.

Zerbinetta.

Then with Cavicchio And with Burattin.

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Two.

Come, let us lead you, The end I await here.

Zerbinetta

(still dancing).

Yes—and not seldom Two loves had I.

Two.

There are sweet recesses I know them full well.

(As she is dancing she appears to lose a shoe. Scaramuccio with great agility seizes the shoe and kisses it. She permits him to draw it on her foot, supporting herself the while on Truffaldino, who has fallen at her feet on the other side.)

Zerbinetta.

(to Truffaldino).

See, what grace, what eagerness! (To Scaramuccio, to whom she holds out the palm of her hand to be kissed.)

How caress repays caress!

Zerbinetta and Scaramuccio

(retreat Right and Left respectively).

Brighella

(leaps clumsily towards Zerbinetta).

Zerbinetta

(resuming her dance).

If I make this bumpkin jealous, See how nimble, see how zealous Round me he will dance and skip.

Brighella.

If the false jade makes me jealous, See how nimble and how zealous Round her I will dance and skip.

Scaramuccio

(dancing).

If the false jade makes me jealous, See how nimble and how zealous Round her we will dance and skip.

Truffaldino

(also dancing).

How the false jade makes them jealous, How she makes them nimble, zealous, Round and round her dance and skip. (As the three turn their backs on her, Zerbinetta falls backwards into the arms of Harlequin and hurriedly disappears with him.)

Scaramuccio, Brighella and Truffaldino.

Mine the shoe! Mine the glance! Mine the hand! That was the sign— Cunningly now I must vanish: she's mine. 'Tis I am her friend, 'Tis me she expecteth, My rivals the loveliest goddess rejecteth.

(All three slink into the wings. Immediately afterwards Scaramuccio reappears from the right, hiding his face. To himself.)

Scaramuccio.

Pst! Where is she? Where may she be? (Looks round. Walks round the stage to the right.)

Brighella

(hiding his face. Coming from the left, softly, folishly cunning).
(Turns to the right and runs against Scaramuccio who is returning.)

Truffaldino

(hiding his face, coming from the left hand corner at the very moment when Brighella takes the first step to the right).

Pst! Where is she? Where may she be?

(Runs against the two who are running against eachother.— All three stagger to the centre of the stage.)

All Three

(each one to himself).

Accurst mischance! But no one knows me who I am!

Zerbinetta's Voice

(from the back, as if from a distance behind the cavern). That a woman's heart should ever, Ever know itself so ill.

Harlequin's Voice (invisible).

What grace of form, what charm of feature.

Zerbinetta's Voice

(also invisible).

Hands that clasp and lips that kiss!

The Three.

Ai! Ai!

Harlequin's Voice.

How caress repays caress!

The Three.

Ail Ai!

Harlequin und Zerbinetta

(together invisible).

Hands that clasp and lips that kiss, Tremulous with magic bliss!

The Three

(as they dance off sad and angry). Ai! Ai! The thief! The thief!

The Three.

The wicked, wicked, rascally thief! Ail Ail Ail Ail

(After the exit of the five Masks—Zerbinetta, Harlequin &c., the stage remains empty.)

(Intermezzo of the orchestra, referring to Bacchus—very strange, mysterious. Then, almost simultaneously, Naiad, Dryad and Echo hastily appear from the right, the left, and the back respectively.)

Dryad.

(agitated). *

A beauteous marvel!

Naiad.

A radiant youth!

Dryad.

Youthful god.

Echo.

A youthful god! A youthful god!

Dryad.

And know you-

Naiad.

His name?

Dryad.

'Tis Bacchus.

Naiad.

O hear me.

Echo.

O hear me, I pray.

Dryad.

His mother died as he was born.

Naiad. Dryad.

Aroyal lady.

Dryad.

A god's beloved! A god's beloved!

Naiad.

What godlike lover's?

Echo

(with enthusiasm).

A god's beloved! A god's beloved!

Naiad

(eagerly).

What godlike lover's?

Dryad.

Lovingly-hear me-then did Nymphs of Nysa nurture the child.

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Echo

(with enthusiasm).

Nymphs did nurture the child, Nymphs did nurture the child.

Naiad. Dryad.

Nymphs! Oh, the tender weanling divine!

Three.

Oh! that an office so sweet had been mine!

Dryad.

He throve like a flame in a fostering breeze!

Naiad.

Ripening to manhood, no longer a child.

Dryad.

Quickly to sea, with his playfellows wild.

Naiad.

Setting his sails in the dead of the night.

Dryad.

He the helmsman, he the helmsman.

Naiad.

God undaunted.

Echo

(in a birdlike voice).

He the helmsman.

Dryad. Naiad.

Eager for the first adventure . . .

Echo.

He the helmsman, he the helmsman.

Dryad.

The first-and know ye what it was?

Naiad.

Circe! Circe! To her island Steer they the ship, to her abode Come they at night, torches to guide them

Dryad

(taking the words from her mouth).

At the threshold Circe greets him, To the feast she leads him in, His thirst, his hunger she allays

Naiad.

The magic potion! The magic lips! In their sweetness peril hidden.

Dryad

(in tones of triumph).

Then by her the god is bidden, Striving with her spells to charm him, Lowly at her feet to kneel: But her magic cannot harm him, None but beasts her power feel.

All Three.

All her magic cannot harm him, None but beasts her power feel!

Dryad.

From her arms unchanged he flieth, To her arts he pays no heed, Passionless her wiles defieth, Stands revealed, a god indeed.

Dryad. Echo. Naiad.

Passionless her wiles defieth, Stands revealed, a god indeed.

Echo

(ecstatically, in a birdlike voice).

All unchanged!

Naiad. Dryad

(at the entrance of the cave).

Ariadne!

Naiad.

Sleeps she?

Dryad.

Sleeps she?

Naiad.

No, she hears us!

Echo.

All unchanged!

Dryad

(speaking to Ariadne).

A radiant marvel!

Naiad.

A god, yet a boy!

e.

Dryad

(still turned towards the cave).

Yesterday still guest of Circe, Feasting, by her side reclining, Sipping of the magic wine ...

Echo.

All unchanged! All unchanged!

Naiad.

Sojourns he with us to-day.

Dryad.

Hearest thou?

Naiad.

Hearest thou?

Both

(softly).

Ariadne.

(The voice of Bacchus is heard. At the same moment, as if drawn by irresistible magic, Ariadne emerges from the cave listening. The three nymphs, also listening retire to the two sides and to the back respectively.)

Bacchus

(young-mysterious-dreamy).

Circe, canst thou, distant, hear me? Me thy magic could not touch, But who is wholly thine, I fear me, Through thee must suffer much. Circe, I had power to escape thee. See, I can yet smile, at peace. What ill was in thy mind, enchantress, To wreak on me?

Ariadne

(while he is singing, to herself, very softly).

As light through clouds of sorrow. It melts my ancient pain: it shines like sunlight on my heart.

Naiad. Dryad. Echo

(softly, timidly).

Pause not, pause not, voice enchanting: Sing on, mystic songster, sadly: Lamentation so melodious, Who but hears its cadence gladly?

The voice of Bacchus

(melancholy-sweetly).

But since no change I suffered, Since I feared not thy caress, Why are thus my heart, my senses Weighed down with heaviness?

I faint as a beast of the forest, Numbed by some venom's pain: Must then their fate befall me, Though Circe's arts were vain?

Ariadne

(as before).

O messenger of death! How sweet thy singing That bringest peace and healest souls in sorrow!

Naiad. Dryad. Echo

(as her voice seems to die down. Softly).

Pause not, pause not, voice enchanting. Sing on, mystic songster, sadly: Lamentation so melodious, Who but hears its cadence gladly?

Bacchus

(with a sound as of playful scorn, a little nearer).

Circe, I had power to escape thee. See, I can yet smile at peace. What ill was in thy mind, enchantress, To wreak on me?

Ariadne

(together with him, and with closed eyes, and with hands uplifted in the direction whence his voice scems to come).

Oh give not gifts so lavish Of joy of death and darkness To my distracted sense! End thou my weary waiting, Take me hence!

Zerbinetta

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(enters hurriedly with a deep curtsey to Ariadne).

Great lady! Say what guerdon for good tidings have I earned! A man dwells in this isle-nay more-a god! A marvel dwelleth here beyond compare! He fareth forth, and soon from vonder hill Descending to this cave will wend his way! And then—he is a man—and what a man! And vet, not hard as they, nor rude as others are-Cheeks like a girl, and eyes of timid doe. To gaze at him, to follow in his steps, No sweeter pleasure woman e'er could know. O rapture! but in secret to observe him! No mortal walked e'er thus: as poised in flight He floats from spot to spot: with arms uplifted, He laughs, as laughs a boy-a child. He seems a youngling doe, Affrighted on a mountain wild.

Is he the same that sudden pricks his ear, When something rustles in the branches near, Gathering his limbs together for a spring, Strong with such strength as all men wonder at, With panther's stealthy speed to hurl him at his prey? Ah! All things stir and crowd to cross his path, Yearning by such a foeman to be captured, And in his arms' relentless clasp to die enraptured.

Echo

(ecstatic).

And in his arms' relentless clasp to die enraptured.

Zerbinetta.

But he, as though intent on other thoughts,—nor heeding

The prowess of his hands—alas! Lets his fresh quarry from his grasp, that, speeding To safety, hides he recks not where. A shadow, as it were of kingly crown, Plaited for him by loving hands unseen Flits o' er his face serene. Now a bright smile—and then a darkling frown— His eye at gaze to where the heavens meet The earth, while from his lips a flood is welling Of song half sad, half sweet, Whispered to him by soft celestial voices.

Naiad

(softly).

The song we hear! And whoso hears rejoices!

Zerbinetta.

Already hear? And, see, the lady here Not yet arrayed to greet as it befitteth So great a guest. - 40 --

Ariadne

(mysteriously).

He comes to me!

Zerbinetta.

Hush! She is as entranced! (They adorn Ariadne who is passive, half unconscious.) Small wonder if she heard the great god singing. And yet his form she has not seen! The fillets quickly bring, and bring her mantle too! Sandals to tie upon her beauteous feet! Can you not feel it? He is near! Doth not foreknowledge what must happen lend you wings?

Ariadne

(tenderly).

Now am I robed for death. There is my grave. My dearest mother! Now fares Ariadne forth from hence.

(Sounds of approaching footsteps growing louder. Bacchus appears.)

(Ariadne in wildest terror covers her face with her hands.) Theseus!

(Then bowing her head quickly.) No, no! It is the beauteous peaceful god! All hail to thee! Thou herald of the immortals! (Zerbinetta, Naiad, Dryad, Echo have by now, after making deep obeisance retired in various directions.)

Bacchus

(quite young-in the tenderest accents.)

O loveliest being! Art thou the goddess of this island?

And is this cavern thy abode? And are these maidens thy attendants?

And sing'st thou, as thou spinnest, songs of magic? Dost take the stranger to thy cave

And by his side recline

And at the feast allay his thirst with magic draught, And whoso yields himself to thee, dost change his shape?

Woe! Art thou a magician, such as she?

Ariadne.

I know not what thou sayest, Is it thy will to put me to the test? My mind is mazed from pining long uncomforted! Here do I dwell and wait thy coming, wait thy coming, Lord,

Through many a weary day and night, alas! How long I know not.

Bacchus.

What? Knowest thou me? Didst thou hear tell of me ere this? Was it not thou that called me by my name?

Ariadne.

No! No! Thou art not he. My mind is soon misled.

Bacchus.

Who am I then?

Ariadne

(bowing her head).

The master thou of a fabled ghostly bark That ploughs the ghostly sea.

Bacchus

(nods).

The master I-of a fabled bark.

Ariadne

(impetuously).

Take me! Beyond! Away from here to drown all sorrow! A useless burden am I to the earth.

Bacchus

(gently).

Wilt thou then sail with me upon my bark?

Ariadne.

I wait thy word—Dost ask? Wouldst put me to the test once more?

(Bacchus shakes his head.)

Ariadne

(with suppressed terror).

How comes the change from life to death? Dost smite us

With magic wand? Or is't a draught that lulls Our senses all to sleep? Thou spakest of a draught?

Bacchus

(absorbed in contemplation).

Spake I then of a draught? I have forgot.

Ariadne

(nods).

It is thus in the land, to which thou guid'st me! Who dwelleth there forgetteth all full soon. And, quick as thought, nor breath nor speech remain, There is repose that knoweth not any end; For none are weary there with weeping. All have forgot the things that caused them sorrow: There all is nought that here had might, I know.

(She closes her eyes.)

Bacchus

(deeply moved, with unconscious solemnity).

As I am a god, begot by a god? As thunder and lightning my mother destroyed When, clad in his glory my father approached herAs I could dread Circe's magic defy, Secure in my godhead, since blood of mortals Flows not in my veins, filled with balsam and aether— So hear then, mortal, that looks't on me, So hear me, thou that cravest death. Far sooner will perish the stars in the heavens, Than I will cause thee death or destruction.

Ariadne

(retreating, awed, from the majesty of his tones).

Ah, how mighty is thy magic! Woe! So soon! Now there is no return. Giv'st thou oblivion So soon? As quick as thought Do all things leave me? Leave me thus? The heavens? The sunlight? And I myself? Is all my sorrow's weight for ever, ever, Gone from me? Ah!

(Fainting.)

Dies all of Ariadne but a breath?

(She sinks down, he supports her.)

Bacchus

(with deep emotion rather than loud).

I say to thee, now first doth life in truth begin For thee and me.

(He kisses her.)

- 44 ---

Ariadne

(frees herself from his embrace, half conscious, looks round her in fear and astonishment).

Was not the world's weight on my breast? Didst thou,

Did thy breath take it from me?

(She points to the cave, in childlike fear.)

Within there lay the mourning outcast And grovelled low in thorns and nettles 'Midst loathly reptiles, and poorer than they.

Bacchus.

And now doth thy sorrow's holiest joy Arise to triumph in our hearts!

Ariadne.

Magician thou, that changest all! Doth not from the shadow of thy mantle My mother's eye shine forth on me? And are the realms of death so greatly blessed, So free from need of the things of this earth?

Bacchus.

'Tis rather thou, thou my enchantress That needest nought of earth.

Ariadne.

Is there, then, no Beyond? Is this our goal? Is this our goal? - 46 --

How could it come to pass? My very cave is fair—with roof Arched o'er a sacred altar— A couch so soft for blissful dreams. How wond'rous, wond'rous is thy power to change.

Bacchus.

Thou! All is thou! I am quite other than I was, The power of godhood awakes in me; Fierce longing quite thy soul to capture Stirs all my limbs with rapture divine! The cavern, then! Behold! The cavern of thy sorrows Be it a roof to shelter our great joy! (A sudden gust of wind carries him and Ariadne with

A sudden gust of wind carries him and Ariadne with him, quickly, to the mouth of the cave.)

Ariadne

(hanging on his arm. They are both still visible at the mouth of the cave).

What is it that hangs Thus on my arm? What secret was it That thus thy wooing From me that perish, Could win for thy own? Doth aught of Ariadne still remain? Let not my sorrow be for ever lost! (Vine leaves and ivy fall from heaven to cover them both. The sound of their voices is still heard.)

Ariadne's Voice.

Let not my sorrow wholly perish! With thee let Ariadne be!

(Repeated thrice.)

Bacchus' Voice.

Thee I needed since first I had sense! Now am I other than erstwhile I was! Through thy sorrow am I rich, Now thrills all my being with rapture divine! Far sooner will perish the stars in the heavens, Than I will cause thee death or destruction.

(Zerbinetta, Harlequin, Scaramuccio, Truffaldino and Brighella, also the Naiad, the Dryad and Echo have come on to the stage from different sides: at first they stand still, listening.)

(After the last words of Bacchus, while it is quite dark, Dorante and Dorimène have silently left their seats. When the lights are lit again, Jourdain discovers with astonishment that the seats by his side are empty.)

(As the two voices die down, Zerbinetta springs to the front and in tones of ironical triumph repeats her Rondo.)

Zerbinetta.

When the new god came towards me, Captive was I, reft of speech, When I felt his first caresses, Captive was I of the god. As a god came each one towards me, Each one made my being change.

(She gives her hand to Harlequin and the others do likewise, two by two. Zerbinetta sings and dances with her partner.)

'Twas thus with Pagliazzo,

(a curtsy)

'Twas thus with Mezzettin!

(a curtsy)

Then with Cavicchio,

And then Burattin!

(a curtsy)

But ne'er was it fancy, 'Twas always a something Within me, with wonder, With trembling compelled me. Strange is woman's heart that ever, Ever knows itself so ill. (All join in, singing and dancing. Dancing and singing they disappear.) (After the characters in the play have disappeared, dancing, through the door on the left, Jourdain stands disconcerted at the departure of his guests.)

First Footman

(Comes up to him and says something to him softly, while the music is still going on. He tells him that the lady and gentleman have gone out by the door on the right).

Jourdain

(makes a deep bow in the direction of the door).

Second Footman.

Shall the fireworks take place all the same?

Jourdain

(pays no attention to him, speaks to himself in a brown study).

Everybody is reproaching me for my intercourse with great nobles—and I, I find nothing more pleasing than that. Your great noble has a certain decency, and certain easy courtesy beyond comparison. I wish, it had cost me a few fingers of either hand, that I had been a Count or a Marquis by birth and had got that certain Something with my mother's milk with which they know how to give the Great Air to all that they do.

End.



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