

Act II, Scene 2

The magic garden fills the stage completely. Tropical vegetation, a most luxurious collection of flowers; Upstage, the castle ramparts and on either side, in a rich Arabian style, projecting terraces.

Parsifal stands on the rampart, gazing astonished at the garden. From every side, first from the garden, then from the palace, beautiful girls rush in, in total confusion. At first, a few, then more and more. They've thrown on softly colored veils as if they've just been frightened out of a sound sleep.

Flower Girls:

Here was the battle!

Weapons!

Wild war whoops!

Where is the villain?

Let's take vengeance!

My beloved is smitten!

Ah! I woke up abandoned!

But where is my man now?

Where have they fled to?

Where are our beloveds?

Oh pain! Oh sorrow!

There in the hallway!

We saw them in the hallway!

We saw them all bloody and wounded.

Someone help us!

But who is our foe?

(they notice Parsifal and point to him)

That's him, there!

There he is! There he is!

Where? There!

I saw!

With my Ferris's sword in his own hand!

Our castle he stormed!

Ah! I recognize my lover's blood!

And I heard our Master's horn.

Yes, we, too, heard his horn.

My swain ran that way.

Yes, all of them ran that way.

Oh, pain!

They all came out here but each of our men lost his sword!

Woe to him whom they fought!
He smote my beloved!
He cut down my friend.
His weapon's still bloody!
My beloved's foe—
You there!
Why did you cause such pain?
How could you bring us such pain?
Accursed should you be!
Villain!
Dare you approach?
How could you smite all our lovers?

(Parsifal jumps deeper into the garden. The Girls draw back. He looks at them, full of admiration.)

P:
You charming children,
how could I not smite them
when they, you beauties,
they would have kept me from you?

Girls:
You came just for us?
Had you seen us?

P:
I've ne'er seen so lovely a crowd.
I'd say you're pretty —is that allowed?

Girls:
So then you don't want to smite us?
So you wouldn't smite us?

P:
I'd rather not.

Girls:
What harm you've done us by rampaging!
You've gone and smitten all our playthings!
Who'll play with us now?

P:
I volunteer!

(Girls' surprise has become lusty laughter. As Parsifal nears the two excited groups of Girls, the First Group and First Chorus slip away behind the flowerbeds to adorn themselves with flowers.)

Girls: *(Second Group and Second Chorus)*
So treat us right and do not stray from us.
And if you do not chide us
We'll make it worth your while.
We do not play for wealth,
we're playing for love itself.
If you manage to assuage us
then you'll have earned your wages!

(The Girls from the First Group and First Chorus reenter, dressed in flower gowns and looking like flowers themselves. They immediately rush Parsifal.)

(First Group)
Take your hands off him!
He belongs to me!
No! No! No, me!

(Second Group)
Ha! The hussies!
They've painted their faces!

(Second Group exits to behind flowerbeds and also return wearing flower gowns.)

(Girls dance in changing circles around Parsifal, as in a children's game. They softly stroke his cheeks and chin.)

Come! Come! Handsome fellow!
I'll be your flower!
To your bliss and refreshment
I will devote every hour!
Let me come into flower.
To your blissful refreshment
we'll dedicate every hour!

P: *(merrily, calmly, from the middle of the circle of Girls)*
Your scent is so sweet!
Say, are you flowers?

Girls:
The garden's best!
A scent so luscious,
in Spring the Master plucks us!

We grow up here in sun and Summer;
we bloom for your bliss and wonder.
Now all our needs attend:
Don't keep from the flowers their friend!
If you can't make love to us each minute
we'll wilt and die off in an instant!

Upon your bosom take me!
Your hair, ah, let me brush it!
Your handsome cheek, let me touch it!
Your mouth, oh, let me kiss it!
No, I!
For I am fairest!
No, no, I am fairer!
I am fairer!
No, my scent is sweeter!
I! I! Yes, I!

P: (*gently deflecting their charming impetuosity*)
Crazed gaggle of blossoms so shapely,
If we're to play games you must not suffocate me!

Girls:
You're scolding us?

P:
Because you're fighting.

Girls:
We're fighting over you!
Hands off of him!

P:
Hey, stop that!

Girls:
See, he wants me!
He wants me!
No, me!
No, no, he prefers me!

(*to Parsifal*)
You're pushing me away?
You're turning your back?
Rejecting me?
Rejecting me?

He's afraid of women?
Don't you dare to kiss them?
You're horrible —cold and a coward.
The bee must be chased around by the flowers!

Oh, he is cold!
Cowardly, he!
Let's leave the fool boy.
We're giving up our best toy.
But we'll try one more ploy:

He's ours!
No, ours!
No, mine —ah, he's all mine!
No, he belongs to us!
To me and me and me and me!

P: *(half angrily shooving the Girls away)*
Let go! I'm not your prey!

(Parsifal wants to run away but the sound of Kundry's voice from the flower beds makes him stay where he is.)

Kundry:
Parsifal! Stay here!

P:
Parsifal, she called me that in her sleep, my mother.

Ku: *(slowly becoming visible)*
Parsifal! Oh stay here, Parsifal!
You'll find salvation and joy withal!

(Upon hearing Kundry's voice, the Girls are shocked and move away from Parsifal.)

You sulkers and pouters,
leave him alone!
Poor, half-wilted flowers —
hands off! He isn't one of your toys!
Run home, back to your bowers.
There, tend your lonely, wounded boys!

Girls: *(Girls bashfully, reluctantly retreat from Parsifal and return to the Castle.)*
Ah, to leave you!
To desert you!

Oh, how painful!, Oh, painful!
Painful, indeed!
How painful!
We'd gladly jilt our other lovers
to be with you alone—
alone with you.
Farewell, you handsome, you haughty, you fool!

(With the last words, the Girls disappear giggling into the castle.)

(Parsifal looks around shyly to see where the voice came from. The flowerbeds part, revealing a most beautiful young woman —Kundry, now totally transformed. Lying on a bed of flowers, in lightly veiled, fantastical, Arabian-style dress, she comes into view.)