

I-2: Venusberg Scene

Tannhäuser suddenly raises his head, as if startling awake from a dream. Venus, caressing him, pulls him back.

Venus:

My darling, say, what's on your mind?

Tannhäuser:

Too much! Too much! I wish I could wake up now!

V:

Say, what troubles you?

T:

I dreamed I heard the far off sound
the sound my ear so long has missed...
I dreamed I heard some bells so merrily ringing.
How long ago did I last hear that sound?

V:

What has come over? Where have you gone?

T:

The time I while away here I can not keep track of!
Days and months just seem to slip away.
How long since I last saw a sunrise?
Last saw the starry nights up in the heavens?
No green plants have I seen that bloom and blossom each year
when Summer returns.
The nightingale I hear no more as she the Spring announces!
Will I not hear or see her e'er again?

V: *(sitting up on her couch)*

Ha! What is this, such ludicrous complaining?
Have you so quickly tired of the banquet
that my affection lays before you?
Could you be sorry you've become a god down here?
But do not remember all the pain you suffered
and how happy you are now?
My singer, come, take up your harp and play it!
To Love sing praises with your celebrated voice,
this voice won you Love's own goddess for your own.
To Love sing praises, for you've won her highest prize!

T: *(suddenly resolute, picks up his harp and stands formally before Venus)*

Your praise I sing, in tribute to this Wonderland
where we mate and happily commune!
Ecstatic bliss that comes to me at your command
lifts up my song into a joyful tune!

For pleasure, ah! for exquisite indulgence
my heart did long and all my senses thirst.
You made this world for gods in their refulgence.
Into its charms, this mortal you immersed.

But mortal I am, mortal merely
and of your love I have grown weary.
Gods can enjoy your endless fun
but I need change or I'm undone,
This pleasure dome, I find it smothering.
My heart goes seeking after suffering,
so from your kingdom I must flee.
My queen, oh my goddess, set me free!

V:
What are you saying? *That's* your song?
What tragic tale do you tell?
You told me that you liked it here.
You told me you felt right at home.
Do tell, just how was my affection lacking?
My lover, tell me, what have I done wrong?

T:
Praised be your charm and treasured your embraces!
Made happy forever, he who dwells with you!
Envied for always, who's in your good graces
who's basked in your arms and shared your godly glow!
Enchanting are the joys of your dominion
Where magical delight shines through and through.
No lands on Earth can have such treasures in them,
yet all that's here is child's play to you.

Yet I, deep in this rosy bower,
I long to see some fields and flowers,
long for our sky so blue and clear,
long for our forests and our fields,
long for our birds, their tuneful singing,
long for our bells, their trusty ringing,
so from your kingdom I must flee!
My queen, oh my goddess, set me free!

V: (*jumping up from her couch*)
Disloyal knave! What nonsense are you saying?
You dare accept my love and then disdain it?
You praise my love and want to run away?
You're weary of it and you cannot stay?!

T:
Oh, lovely goddess, do not be offended!

V:
You're weary of it and you cannot stay?!

T:
Your lusty charm is why I must away!

V:
Hypocrite! Traitor! Ingrate! Woe betide you! Woe!
You mustn't go! I'll never let you leave!
You mustn't go! You mustn't leave! Ah!

T:
Ne'er has my love been greater, never truer
than now, when I must leave you.
Forever I must leave, now that I must leave you.
Forever I must leave.

V:

[Venus covers her hands with her face and dramatically turned away from Tannhäuser. After a moment, she turns back to him, smiling and seductive.]

My lover, come, look at our grotto.
The scent of roses wafts throughout.
It would enchant even a god to
linger in this charming house.

Reclining on the pillows downey
your limbs are freed of every pain.
Your burning brow, so cool and drowsy
as passion's burning fire warms your veins.

Out in the distance we can hear the bells chime.
It's at their sound that we prepare for bedtime,
when from my lips you sample a godly wine,
as by my eyes you're lit with a love divine,
our union turns into a celebration,

an orgiastic feast, a revelation!
No timid victim to her altar bring, no!
Here with Love's own goddess, worship reveling!

Sirens: (*Off, from a distance*)
Come to our beach here!
We're within reach here!

V: (*as she tries to pull Tannhäuser gently toward her*)
My champion, my lover,
would you leave me?

T: (*in a state of utmost rapture, drunkenly grabs his harp*)
Of you alone, alone will I sing praises!
Long and loud, your glory I intone!
Your sweet allure begets all that is gracious,
and all things beautiful come from you alone.

The glowing heart you kindled in your servant,
its fire burns now brightly just for you!
Against the very world I, unswerving,
henceforth will be your champion brave and true!

But I must join the world of humans
since here I'm just a slave boy to you.
I long for my own liberty.
I long, oh how I long to be free,
in wars and contests to compete
even to death and to defeat.
So from your kingdom I must flee!
My queen, oh my goddess, set me free!

V: (*with violent fury*)
Get out, mad maniac!
Get out, you traitor! Leave! Who's stopping you?
I set you free!
Get out! Get out!
May you get everything you want!
Ah, may you get just what you want!
Get out! Get out—
out to the world of cold mankind
with its delusions dull and drab,
the world we pleasure gods escaped
here in the warmth of the womb of the Earth.

Get out, you beggar —seek to be saved!
Seek to be saved and never find!

Watch how the pride seeps from your soul.
Humbled, I'll see you as you near,
destroyed, defeated, crawling, you'll come
beg for the marvel of my charms!
Destroyed, defeated, crawling you'll come
beg for the marvel of my charms!

T:
Ah, lovely goddess, fare you well!
Never will I come back to you!

V:
Ah, if you don't come back to me...
(despondent)
If you don't come back, ah!
I'll take the whole human race
and curse them, curse them all their days!
They'll seek my wonders but in vain find only—
they'll seek my wonders but in vain find only
the world a wasteland and its knight a knave!

Come back, ah, come to me again!

T:
Our happy love has reached its end!

V:
Come back, oh heed your heart's own plea!

T:
Forever must your lover leave!

V:
When you're rejected and disgraced...

T:
From magic spells, through penance, saved!

V:
There's no forgiveness for your crime!
Come back: redemption you won't find!

T:

I'll find redemption through Maria!

[Venus screams, collapses and disappears. Sudden change of scene.]
