Parsifal
Stage Dedication Festival Play
in Three Acts by Richard Wagner
Poem by Richard Wagner
English translation by Andrew Porter

Parsifal was first performed at the Festspielhaus, Bayreuth on July 26, 1882. The first performance in the United States was at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York on December 24, 1903. The first performance in England was at Covent Garden on February 2, 1914.

The stage directions are literal translations of those written by Wagner and do not reflect any actual production. The numbers in square brackets refer to the Thematic Guide.

The translation was made for, and with admiration, affection and gratitude is dedicated to, Sir Reginald Goodall.

Andrew Porter
CHARACTERS

Amfortas son of Titurel and ruler of the Kingdom of the Grail
Titurel former ruler
Gurnemanz a veteran Knight of the Grail
Klingsor a magician
Parsifal
Kundry
First and Second Knights
Four Squires
Six of Klingsor’s Flower Maidens
Brotherhood of the Knights of the Grail, Youths and Boys, Flower Maidens

The scene is laid first in the domain and in the castle of the Grail’s guardians, Monsalvat, where the country resembles the northern mountains of Gothic Spain; afterwards in Klingsor’s magic castle on the southern slope of the same mountains which looks towards Moorish Spain. The costume of the Knights and Squires resembles that of the Templars: a white tunic and mantle; instead of the red cross, however, there is a dove flying upwards on scutcheon and mantle.

Orchestral Prelude
[1, 25, 11, 1e, 3, 41, 50, 9, 1k]

Act One

A forest, shadowy and impressive, but not gloomy. Rock strewn ground. A clearing in the middle. Left rises the way to the castle of the Grail. The background slopes steeply down in the centre to a forest lake. Daybreak. Gurnemanz (elderly but still vigorous) and two youthful squires are lying asleep under a tree. From the left, as if from the castle, sounds a solemn reverie on trombones. [1b]

Gurnemanz
(waking and rousing the squires)

He! Ho! Wood guardians you?
Sleep guardians I call you: awake at least with the morning.

The two squires leap up. [25]

Hör’t ihr den Ruf? Nun danket Gott, dass ihr berufen ihn zu hören!

He sinks to his knees with the squires and joins them in silent morning prayer [11, 25]: as the trombones cease, they slowly rise.
Now up, young pages! See to the bath; time now for you to greet our master.


The sickbed of the King is near, I see the heralds on their way!

[45] Zeit ist’s des Königs dort zu harren.

Hail there! How fares our King today?
He comes far earlier than usual: the balsam that Gawain with skill and daring boldly won, I’m hopeful that it eased his pain.

Second Knight

You still can hope, you who all things know?
His pain returned more keenly, more grievous than before: sleepless and racked with anguish, he bade us swift prepare the bath.

[42] Das währst du, der doch alles weiss?
Ihm kehrten sehrender nur die Schmerzen bald zurück; schlaflos von starkem Bresten, befahl er eifrig uns das Bad.

Gurnemanz
(sadly bowing his head)

Fools we are, to seek for balm to ease him:
one single healing cures him!
We search for balsams, soothing potions, search in vain far through the world: there is but one thing, only one man!

[54] Toren wir, auf Lindruna da zu hoffen, wo einzig Heilung lindert!
Nach allen Kräutern, allen Tränken forscht und jagt weit durch die Welt: ihm hilft nur eines, nur der Eine!

Second Knight

Tell us his name!

Gurnemanz
(evasively)

Sorgt für das Bad!

See to the bath!

The two squires, who have returned to the background, look off right.

Second Squire

Seht dort, die wilde Reiterin!

But look, who’s wildly riding here!

First Squire

He! Wie fliegen der Teufelshärte die Mähren!

Hey! The mane of the devil’s mare is streaming!
SECOND SQUIRE

Ha! Kundry's here!
FIRST SQUIRE

She brings some weighty tidings?
SECOND SQUIRE

Her mare is stumbling.
FIRST SQUIRE

Flew she through the air?
SECOND SQUIRE

She's falling upon the ground.

With her mane she's wiping the grass.

The rider has flung herself off.

Kundry rushes in, almost staggering. She is in wild garb, her skirts tucked up by a snakeskin girdle with long hanging cords, her black hair loose and dishelved, her complexion deep ruddy-brown, her eyes dark and piercing, sometimes flashing wildly, more often strangely fixed and staring. She hurries to Gurnemanz and presses on him a small crystal phial.

Kundry

Here! Take it! Balsam . . .
A procession of squires and knights appears from the left, carrying and escorting the litter on which lies Amfortas. Gurnemanz has at once turned from Kundry to the approaching company.

Gurnemanz

(as the procession reaches the stage)

He bears, they bear him on the litter. Ah woe! Can I thus bear to see him, when in the pride of flowering manhood, the proud king of a conquering race is to his sickness made a slave!
[10,11] Behutsam! Hort, der König stöhnt. The squires halt and set down the litter. If this balsam fails, Arabia offers naught else to soothe his pain. Ask no further! I am weary. She throws herself on the ground.

Amfortas

(raising himself a little)


The holy lake will make my sufferings lighter; it soothes my woe; my night of pain grows brighter.
Gawain

The holy lake
will make my sufferings lighter:
it soothes my woe;
my night of pain grows brighter.
Gawain

Im heil'gen See
wohlt mich auch die Welle:
es staunt das Weh.
Gawain

SECOND KNIGHT

Sire! Gawain is not here; for when the healing herb he strove so hard to bring you proved to be of no avail, upon another search at once he ventured.

SECOND KNIGHT

Herr! Gawain weile nicht, da seines Heilkrauts Kraft, wie schwer er’s auch errungen, doch deine Hoffnung trog; hat er auf neue Sucht sich fortgeschwungen.

Amfortas

Unbidden? May he not regret it, to leave before the Grail commands! Oh, woe to him, so boldly daring, if he in Klingsor's snares should fall! And so let none presume to help me! I wait for one, the one appointed: “Made wise through pity,” was it not so?

Gurnemanz

You told us it was so.

Amfortas

“The blameless fool.” I think that I can name him; for soon as Death I'll claim him.

Gurnemanz

(shoulders Kundry’s phial to Amfortas)

First, my lord, please see if this will help you.

Amfortas

(examining it)

Would this strange, mysterious elixir?

Gurnemanz

For you from far Arabia it was brought. Dir ward es aus Arabia hergeführt.

Amfortas

And who has brought it?

Gurnemanz

There lies the wild maiden. Up, Kundry! Come!

Kundry refuses and remains on the ground.

Amfortas

You, Kundry? Again I have to thank you, you shy and restless maid? Till well, your balsam now I mean to try: I give you thanks for your devotion.

Kundry

(raising uneasily on the ground)

Not thanks! Ha, ha! Ha! Was wird es helfen? Nicht Dank! Ha, ha! Was wird es helfen?

Not thanks! Be off — your bath!
Amborsa gives the signal to move on. The procession passes into the far background. Gurnemanz, gazes sadly after it, and Kundry, still stretched on the ground, remain. Squires come and go. [45, 40]

**THIRD SQUIRE**
(a young man)

Hey, you, there! Still lying there like a savage beast?

**KUNDY**
[25] Sind die Tiere hier nicht heilig?

**THIRD SQUIRE**
[40] Ja! doch ob heilig du, das wissen wir grad noch nicht.

**FOURTH SQUIRE**
(too young a man)

And with her magic balm, maybe she'll harm our master, even destroy him. [5] Mit ihrem Zaubersaft, wähn ich, wird sie den Meister vollends verderben.

**GURNEMANZ**

Hm! Has she done harm to you? When you are all perplexed, and wonder how you can get news to distant brothers fighting afar off and hardly know where to send, she, while you are still in debate, comes and goes on wings of the wind, to bear your tidings and bring reply.

You feed her not, you house her not, she has nothing in common with you: but when you're in need she gives her aid, with zeal she flies to do your will, and never asks one word of thanks.

I ask you, is this harmful, when nothing but good she brings you?

**THIRD SQUIRE**

She hates us though; just look, see how her eyes are flashing hate!

**FOURTH SQUIRE**

She's a heathen maid, a sorceress.

**GURNEMANZ**

Yes, under a curse she well may lie. Now she lives here, perhaps renewed, to stone for guilt she may be driven, some former guilt still unforgiven. Though she may serve us but as a penance, yet the noble band of knights is grateful; good are her deeds, from them we can tell: she helps us... herself as well.

**THIRD SQUIRE**

And so, perhaps, that guilt of hers brought upon us our great distress?

**GURNEMANZ**
(recollecting)

True, when so long she stayed away from us, then cruel misfortune came to pass. I long have known her well, but Titurel knew her still longer.

He found her, when first he built our castle, asleep among the bushes here, benumbed, lifeless, as dead. Thus I myself did find her lately, when our misfortune came to pass, when that foul schemer over the mountains shamefully assaulted us.

**KUNDY**
(to Kundry)
Der fand sie, als er die Burg dort baute, sie schlafend hier im Waldgestrüpp, erstarret, leblos, wie tot. So fand ich selbst sie letztlich wieder als uns das Unheil kaum geschehn, das jener Böse über den Bergen so schmählich über uns gebracht.

**FOURTH SQUIRE**

She says it herself.

**THIRD SQUIRE**

That's for another... That task we're denied.

**GURNEMANZ**
(gloomily)

Thus surely armed, Amfortas, boldly daring, what power could prevent you from vanquishing the enhancer? Beside the walls virtue was snatched away... a fearful beauteous woman holds him in sway, her warm embraces he is drinking, the Spear from his hand is sinking... A deathly cry! To him I fly!

**FOURTH SQUIRE**

O wounding, wonderful, all-holiest Spear! I saw you wielded by unholiest hand! I beheld his shivering with unheilighest Hand!

**GURNEMANZ**
(absorbed in recollection)


**THIRD SQUIRE**

The King escaped. To him I fly!

**FOURTH SQUIRE**

See mocking Klingsor standing there, with impious hand grasping the spear. The King escaped, I guarded his returning, but he was wounded,
in his side the wound was burning: a wound it is that ne'er will close again.

The first and second squires return from the lake. [45]

THIRD SQUIRE
(to Gurnemanz)

So then you knew Klingsor?

GURNEMANZ
(to the two returning squires)

How fares our King now?

FIRST SQUIRE
[40] Ihn frischt das Bad.

SECOND SQUIRE
Dem Balsam wich das Weh.

But Gurnemanz, say: we long to know: you once knew Klingsor — how was that?

GURNEMANZ
(to himself)

A wound it is that ne'er will close again! [45] Die Wunde ist's, die nie sich schliessen will!

The third and fourth squires have already sat down at Gurnemanz's feet; the other two join them under the great tree.

THIRD SQUIRE

Doch Väterchen, sag und lehr uns fein: [45, 60] du kannst Klingsor, wie mag das sein?

GURNEMANZ

Titurel, der fromme Held, der kann ihm wohl.

To him, when evil forces showed their might, and the realm of faith defended:

Titurel, the fromme Held, der kann ihm wohl. Denn ihm, da wilder Feinde List und Macht des reinen Glaubens Reich drohten,

To him there came one holy solemn night our blessed Saviour's angels descending:

dem ihm neigten sich in heiligem Nacht dereinst des Heilands selige Boten
daraus er trank beim letzten Liebesthan.

they brought the Cup used at the Last Supper, the blessed Cup, that glorious holy relic, which at the Cross received His sacred blood:

[25] das Weihgefäss, die heilg edle Schale, darin am Kreuz sein göttlich Blut auch

they brought the Spear as well, which shed that blood. These tokens of God's love, of wondrous worth,

dazu den Lanzenspeer, der dies vergoss.
der Zeug; hunger höchstes Wundergut. So gaben sie in unser Königs Hut.

To him they gave to guard on earth. For them he built our mighty sanctuary.

das gaben sie in unseres Königs Hut. Dem Heiltem baute er das Heilthum. For to its service you were hidden by pathways from all sinners hidden;

Die seinem Dienst er zugesindet auf Pfaden, die kein Sünden findet, ihr wisst, dass nur dem Reinen vergönnt ist sich zu einen dens Grund, die zu höchsten

you know that here no other save pure in heart, as brother may enter; to those who work the will of Heaven the Grail's most wondrous might is given.

Guat es, zu him, of whom you ask, denied, Klingsor, though eagerly and long he tried.

It was, so it was to him, of whom the airy, dem Brüden, die zu höchsten

Yonder the valley where he made his dwelling; beyond it lie luxuriant heathen lands.

I knew not what sin he there committed; he sought atonement for it, yes, holy he would be. Unable to kill the sinful, raging lust within him, his hand upon himself he turned to gain the Grail for which he yearned, and by its guardian he with scorn was spurned.

Afire with rage, then Klingsor swiftly learned, how his unholy, shameful deed to evil, unholy craft could lead: he mastered it!
The desert bloomed for him as magic garden, where blossom devilish lovely women; there he once in wait to lure our brothers

to shameless joy and hell's defiance: those whom he snares serve him as master:

and many fell in foul disaster.

When Titurel, bowed down with age and stricken, to his son dominion had given, Amfortas planned without delay to end this plague: went on his way.

What happened you now understand: the Spear is held in Klingsor's hand; and now he uses it to wound our brothers.

The Grail he covets; he hopes soon to win it!

Kundry has been turning back and forth in furious agitation. [7, 1h]

FOURTH SQUIRE

Then first of all the Spear we must reclaim!

Fourth Squire: Ha! Who does that wins lasting joy and fame!

Vor allem nun: der Speerkehr uns zurück!

GURNEMANZ

Ha! Wer ihn brächt, ihm war's zu Ruhm und Glück!

Before the ravished sanctuary in fervent prayer lay Amfortas, a sign of pardon he entreated: the Grail was lighted by a mystic radiance; a holy vision then appeared to him and spoke.

these words of mystic meaning shone before him: "Made wise through pity, the blameless fool, wait for him, the one I choose."

But he saw and heard not what ails the angeled lad in arms: "Made wise through pity, the blameless fool ---"

From the lake are heard shouts and cries from the knights and squires. Gurnemans and the four squires start up and turn in alarm. [57, 22, 56]

THE FOUR SQUIRES
(deeply moved)

"Made wise through pity, the blameless fool ---"

[54] "Durch Mitleid wissend, der reine Tor ---"
SQUIRES

Woe! Woe!

KNIGHTS

Hoho!

SQUIRES

Ah!

KNIGHTS

A wild swan flutters unsteadily from over the lake.

Who dared to do it?

A wild swan flutters unsteadily from over the lake.

What is it?

Fourth Squire

Dort!

Third Squire

Hie!

Second Squire

Ein Schwan!

Fourth Squire

Ein wilder Schwan!

A forest swan!

Third Squire

And it is wounded!

ALL KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES

Ha! Shameful! Shameful!

Ha, wehe! Wehe!

GURNEMANZ

Who shot the swan?

The swan, after a laboured flight, falls to the ground exhausted; the second knight draws an arrow from its breast.

GUNTHER

The King had hailed it as a happy omen, as o'er the lake circled the swan, and then a shaft . . .

Knights and squires lead in PARSIFAL.

KNIGHTS

He it was!

SQUIRES

He shot!

(indicating Parsifal's bow)

SECOND KNIGHT

And the arrow is just like his.

GURNEMANZ

(to Parsifal)

Did you deal to our swan his death-blow?

PARSIFAL

Of course! I shoot at all things that fly!

GURNEMANZ

You killed the swan?

And feel no horror at the crime?

SQUIRES AND KNIGHTS

Punish the culprit!

GURNEMANZ

Shameful, cruel deed!

So you can murder, here, within this forest, where quiet, holy peace should reign?

The woodland creatures, are they not your friends?

Are they not gentle and tame?

From the branches the birds sang their songs to you.

What harm did the faithful swan?

His mate he was seeking, so they both might fly and circle over the lake, thus nobly consecrating the bath.

Were you not amazed?

No, all you did was loose a cruel shaft from your bow.

He was our friend: what is he to you?

Gurnemanz kneels down by the swan.

Here, look here! 'twas here you struck, his blood not yet dry, limp, drooping his wings now, his snowy plumage darkened and stained, and broken his eye, see how he looks! Parsifal has followed Gurnemanz with growing emotion, now he breaks his bow and hurls his arrows away. 

Do you regret an act so heartless?

Wirst deiner Stundentat du inne?

Speak, boy, do you repent your cruel deed? Parsifal passes his hand over his eyes.

How could you commit this crime?

PARSIFAL

I did not know then.

Ich wusste sie nicht.

GURNEMANZ

Where are you from?

PARSIFAL

Who is your father?

PARSIFAL

I do not know.

GURNEMANZ

Who sent you to seek this forest?

PARSIFAL

I do not know.

GURNEMANZ

What name have you?

PARSIFAL

Dein Name denn?
I once had many, but now those names are all forgot; doch weich ich ihrer keinen mehr.

There's nothing that you know? Das weiss du alles nicht?

Then one so dull erfand bisher ich Kundry nur!

I've never met — save Kundry here! (to the squires, who have assembled in increasing numbers) Be off! Erstand bisher ich Kundry nur! (aside)

The King requires your attendance there! [45] Versaumt den König im Bade nicht! Go!

The squires reverently lift the dead swan onto a bier of fresh branches and move apace eastwards towards the lake. [45, 22] At length only Gurnemanz, Parsifal and — apart — Kundry remains behind. Gurnemanz turns back to Parsifal. [25, 22, 58]

Now speak: you cannot answer my questions: Nun sag nichts weisst du was ich doch frage:

but tell what you can, denn etwas mussst du doch wissen

for something you must remember.

I have a mother, Herzelide her name! [58] Ich hab eine Mutter, Herzelide heisst she.

In woods and in lonely meadows we made our home. Im Wald und auf wilder Aue waren wir zu heim.

Who gave you your weapons?

I made them myself to fright the savage eagles from the forest.

An eagle you seem yourself, and nobly born too; why did your mother not find you worther weapons to handle?

who during Gurnemanz's recital of the fate of Amfortas has been violently writhing in agitation, now, still lying in the undergrowth, eyes Parsifal keenly and, as he is silent, voices calls:

All fatherless did his mother bear him, for in battle slain was Gamarot!

To save her son from dying as his father perished, far from arms and people, as simple fool she raised him: more fool she.

She laughs.

Yes! And once I saw a glittering array of men on noble horses pass the edge of the forest; but laughing they galloped away. So I pursued, but I could not overtake them; through savage places passing, over hill and dale;

night followed day, day followed night: my bow and arrows defended me when the beasts or men attacked me...

Kundry has risen and moved towards the men.

Yes! Robbers and giants fell to his might, the fearless boy soon taught them to fear him.

Who fears me? Say! Wer fürchtet mich? Sag!

The wicked!

So those who fought me, were they wicked? Die mich bedrohten, waren sie böse?

Who is good?

Your dear mother, whom you deserted, and who for you now must mourn and grieve.

She grieves no more: for his mother is dead.

Dead! My mother? Who says so? Ich ritt vorbei und sah sie sterben: dich Toren hiess sie mich grussen.

Who rades by I saw her dying:

Parsifal springs furiously at Kundry and seizes her by the throat. Gurnemanz restrains him. [57]

So wild and violent! Brutal again?

Verruckter Knabe! Wieder Gewalt?

After Gurnemanz has freed Kundry, Parsifal stands as if dazed. [42, 58]

What harm has she done? She tells the truth, for Kundry sees much and never lies.

I am fainting! Ich verschmachtte!

Kundry, seeing Parsifal's condition, at once hastens to a spring in the wood and now brings water in a horn, sprinkles Parsifal with it and then gives it to him to drink. [23, 36]

Right so! That is the Grail's compassion. So recht! So nach des Grael's Gnade:

die evile ends when with good it's returned.

I'm yearning, ah! I'm weary.
She turns away sadly and, while Gurnemanz tends Parsifal in a fatherly way, she creeps, unobserved by them, towards a thicket in the wood.
Slumber! Oh, may I not be wakened!
No! Not slumber! Terrors seize me!
She falls into a violent trembling, then lets her arms and head drop wearily. [4, 7]
Vain to resist! The time has come.
By the lake there is movement, and at length in the background the procession of knights and squires returning home with Amfortas's litter.
Slumber — slumber — I must!
She sinks down behind the bushes and is not seen further.

GURNEMANZ
But from the lake the King returns;
the sun is high now:
so to our celebration let me lead you.
If you are pure,
then now the Grail will comfort and
refresh you.
He has gently put Parsifal's arm round his neck and supporting him in this way he leads him
with very slow steps. Very gradually, the scene begins to change.

PARSIFAL
Who is the Grail?

GURNEMANZ
Das sagt sich nicht;
doch, du selbst zu ihm erkoren,
bleibt die Kunde unverloren.
Und sieh!

I think you now indeed:
no pathway to the Grail doth lead,
and none can venture to approach it
unless the Grail itself has called him.

PARSIFAL
Ich schreite kaum,
doch wahn ich mich schon weit.

GURNEMANZ
Du siehst, mein Sohn,
zum Rauf wird hier die Zeit.
Gradually, while Gurnemanz and Parsifal appear to walk, the scene changes more perceptibly:
the woods disappear and in the rocky walls a gateway opens, which closes behind them. [39, 25, 41, 30, 1a, 30] The way has led upwards through walls of rock, and the scene has entirely
changed. Gurnemanz and Parsifal now enter the mighty hall of the castle of the Grail. Gurnemanz turns to Parsifal, who stands as if bewitched.

PARSIFAL
Du siehst, mein Sohn,
zum Rauf wird hier die Zeit.

GURNEMANZ
Nun achte wohl, und lass mich scheinen;
if you're a fool and pure,
what wisdom here your folly may secure.

SCENE TWO. A pillared hall with a vaulted dome over the Feast-chamber. On both sides of the
far end the doors are opened; the knights of the Grail enter from the right and range themselves
by the Feast-tables. [25, 30]

KNIGHTS OF THE GRAIL
O Feast of Love undying,
from day to day renewed,
A procession of squires passes rapidly
draw near, as for the last time,
to taste this sacred food.

Zum letzten Liebesmahle
gerustet Tag für Tag,
across the back stage,
gleich ob zum letzten Male
es heut uns letzten mag.

A second procession of squires crosses the hall.
Who revels in good deeds
this holy Feast still feeds:
He dares approach the shrine
to share this gift divine.

The assembled knights station themselves at the tables. From the left door Amfortas is borne in
on a litter by squires and serving brothers; before him walk the four squires bearing the covered
shrine of the Grail. This procession moves to the centre backstage, where there is a raised couch
on which Amfortas is set down from the litter; before it is an oblong stone altar on which the
squires place the covered shrine of the Grail. [41, 29, 25]

YOUTHS
(from halfway up the dome)
For sins of the world
with thousand sorrows
His sacred blood He offered;
to the world's Redeemer
with joyful heart,
He died, for sin atoning thus,
He lives, by death He lives in us!

BOYS
(from the summit of the dome)
In faith and love,
behold the dove,
the Saviour's shining token:
Take ye the wine,
His blood divine,
and bread of life here broken!
When all have taken their places, and after a complete silence, the voice of the aged Titurel is
heard in the extreme background from a canted niche behind Amfortas's couch, as if from a
tomb.

Titurel
My son Amfortas, are you prepared?
(silence)
Muss ich sterben, vom Retter ungeleitet?

AMFORTAS
(in an outburst of painful desperation)
Sorry! Oh, eternal grief!
My father, oh! just once more
resume the sacred task!
Live, live and let me perish.

Titurel
Entombed I live here by our Saviour's
grace;
too weak, however, now to serve Him.
You make atonement for your guilt!
Reveal the Grail!

AMFORTAS
(restraining the squire)
No! Leave it unrevealed! Oh!
May no one, no one know the burning
pain
caused by the holy sight that gives you
delight!

Weh! Weh mir der Qual!
Mein Vater, oh! noch einmal
verrichte du das Amt!
Lebe, leb und lass mich sterben.

Titurel
Im Grabe lieb ich durch des Heilands
Huld;
schwach doch bin ich zu dienen.
Du bist im Dienste deine Schuld! Enthüllt den Grail!

AMFORTAS
Nein! Lasst ihn unenthüllt! O!
Dass keiner, keiner diese Qual ermiss,
die mir der Anblick weckt, der euch
entzückt!
What is the Spear-wound, all its raging smart,  
compared to the pain, the agony  
of being condemned to serve this task!  
Woeful my birth-right, defiled by  
sinning;  
I, only sinner, am the guardian  
who holds the Grail for sinless others,  
entreat its holy blessing on my brothers!  
Chastisement! Merciless chastisement  
from, ah! the offended God of mercy!  
For Him, for His all-holy greeting,  
my stricken heart is yearning;  
in deepest innermost repentance,  
for Him my soul is burning.  
The time is near:  
a light beam sinks upon the holiest shrine:  
the covering falls.  
The blood within that pure holiest Cup  
now glows and shines with tender light.  
Transfixed by rapturous and joyful pain,  
the fount of that holy blood,  
I feel it flowing in my heart:  
the furious surge of my own guilty blood,  
my vile blood now defiled  
by shame, recoils before it,  
to the world of sin and lust  
how wildly now it is gushing.  
The wound has opened again,  
my blood now is streaming forth,  
here, through the spear-wound, a  
wound like His,  
inflicted by the Spear that wounded Him,  
the Spear that inflicted the sacred wound,  
through which with bleeding tears  
the Holy One wept for the sins of man,  
in pity's holiest yearning.  
And now here from me, in my sacred office,  
the guardian of godliest treasure,  
of redemption's balm, the keeper,  
my fevered sinful blood flows forth,  
ever renewed by the tide of yearning  
that, ah! no repentance ever stirs!  
Have mercy! Have mercy!  
All-merciful! Ah, have mercy!  
Take back my birth-right,  
end my affliction,  
that holy I perish —  
pure, whole, and healed!  
He sinks back as if unconscious.  

BOYS AND YOUTHS  
(from halfway up the dome)

“Made wise through pity,  
the blameless fool:  
wait for him,  
the one I choose.”

[9]

THE KNIGHTS  
 Española, 1723  
[25]

“Durch Mitleid wissend,  
der reine Tor:  
bratte sein,  
den ich erkrat!”

[33a, b]

THE KNIGHTS  
(first group)

“Take ye the bread,  
change it anew

[99]
Act Two

[7, 41x, 36]

Klingsor’s magic castle. In the inner keep of a tower which is open to the sky. Stone steps lead up to the battlements and down into the darkness below the stage which represents the rampart. Magical and necromantic apparatus. Klingsor on the offset of the tower to one side, sitting before a metal mirror. [4]

KLINGSOR

Die Zeit ist da.

Schon lockt mein ZauberSchloss den Toren,

den, kindisch jauchzend, fern ich nahen seh!

with childish laughter he’s approaching me.

Klingsor, being a native of old, with no sense of what is a joke, just wanders about. He alternates between and forward. [4, 36]

Im Todesschlage hält der Fluch sie fest,

der ich den Krampf zu löschen weiss.

children, the charms of the magic circle, which is according to the words of the, come to an end. [4]

[54, 57]

Herauf! Herauf! Zu mir!

Herauf! Her! Zu mir!

Ding Meister ruft mich her! [7]

Urteufel! Höllenrose!

Herauf! Herauf! Zu mir!

[61]

Dein Meister ruft mich her!

Her! Her! Zu mir!

Dein Meister ruft mich her!

Her! Her! Zu mir!

Erwacht zu! Ha!

Meinem Banne wieder

verfallen heut‘ – zur rechten Zeit.

[60]

Pfla! Dort bei dem Rittergespen, wie ein Vieh du dich halten lässt!

Pfla! Dort bei dem Rittergespen, wie ein Vieh du dich halten lässt!

[36]

Gefällt dir’s bei mir nicht besser?

Als ihren Meister du mir gefangen –

[41y]

ha ha! den reinen Hüter des Graltes, was jagte dich da wieder fort?

KUNDRED (hoarsely and brokenly, as though striving to regain speech)

Ah! – Ah!

Ah! – Ah!

[43]

Ach! – Ach!

Ach! – Ach!

[4]

Tiefe Nacht –

Tiefe Nacht –

Wahnsinn – Oh! – Wut –

Wahnsinn – Oh! – Wut –

Ah! – Rage...

Ah! – Rage...

[43, 10]

Ach! Ja! Jammer!

Ach! Ja! Jammer!

[9]

Schlafo Schlaf – Schlafo Schlaf –

Schlafo Schlaf – Schlafo Schlaf –

tiefer Schlaf – Tod!

tiefer Schlaf – Tod!

KLINGSOR

Dau weckte dich ein And’rer? Ha?

KLUNDRED (as before)

Ja... mein Fluch.

Ja... mein Fluch.

[36]

Oh! Sehnen... Sehnen!

Oh! Sehnen... Sehnen!

[41]

KLINGSOR

Ha ha! So for the knights you’re yeaming?

Ha ha! Dort nach den keuschen Rittern?
KUNDY

There... I... served them.

KLINKSOR

Yes, yes, atoning for the evil
that you had maliciously wrought;
But they cannot help;
all can be purchased,
when I provide the price:
the strongest will fall,
sinking in your embraces,
and so he falls by the Spear
that from their king himself I have seized.
The most dangerous of all today must be met:
his folly shields him well.

KUNDY

I—will not. Oh... oh!

KLINKSOR

You'll do it, for you must.

KUNDY

You... cannot... compel me.

But I can force you.

KLINKSOR

Your master. Dein Meister.

KUNDY

And by what power?

KLINKSOR

Deine Macht nicht vermag.

KUNDY

Ha! Are you chaste?

KLINKSOR

Why ask me that, accursed witch?
Fearful my fate!

KUNDY

So am I derided now,
because once to be holy I strove?
Fearful my fate!

Fiery longings and scorching pain,
hellish desires and pangs of lust,
which I once stifled at fearful cost,
rise to mock me aloud
through you, you devil's bride!

Ha!—beware!
One for his scorn and contempt pays dearly,

KUNDY

Ha! bist du keusch?

KLINKSOR

Was fragst du das, verfluchtes Weib?
Furchtbare Not!

KUNDY

So lacht nun den Teufel mein,
dass einst ich nach dem Heiligen rang,
Furchtbare Not!

KLINKSOR

Ungebandigten Sehns gen Pein,
schrecklicher Triebem Heulendrang,
mein Todesschweregei zwang,
Hut dich!

KUNDY

Hocht und hoht er nun laut

KLINKSOR

Kundy falls into wild hysterical laughter: "HA! Ha! Ha!" the light is extinguished and all is dark.

KUNDY

How fearfully those dull ones resist his attack!

KLINKSOR

Kundy, leaning out, blows a horn.
Sorely wounded they're running for home! [54] Seine Wunde trägt jeder nach heim!
What pleasure that gives me! Wie das ich euch gönne!
Would that the whole Would that the whole
despised assembly of knights das ganze Rittergezücht
thus might destroy one another! unter sich selber sich würen!
Ha! How proudly he stands on the rampart! Ha! Wie stolz er nun steht auf der Zinne!
He's laughing, and flushed with his victory, Wie lachen ihm die Rosen der Wangen,
with childish surprise da kindisch erstaunt
sees deserted the garden below! in den einsamen Garten er blickt!

Hey! Kundry!

[36] Ha! At your work? Wie? Schon am Werk?
Ha ha! The magic spell I know Ha ha! Den Zauber wusst' ich wohl,
that always compels you to serve my der immer dich wieder zum Dienst mir
designs! gesellt!

You there, childish and free, [54] Du da, kindischer Spross,
though — your was — auch
mission was foretold, Weisagung dich wies,
so young and dull, zu jung und dum!
you'll fall right into my hands: fiel'st du in meine Gewalt:
when pureness once has left you, die Reinheit dir entrissen,
then I will be your master! bleibst mir du zugewiesen!

The whole tower rapidly sinks with him; in its place rises the magic garden. The magic garden fills the whole stage with tropical vegetation and a luxuriant growth of flowers. It rises in terraces to the extreme background, where it is bounded by the battlements of the castle. On one side appear projections of the palace building, in rich Moorish style. Upon the rampart stands Parsifal, gazing in astonishment into the garden. [57, 59] From all sides rush in the Flower-Maidens clad in light veil-like garments, first singly, then in groups, forming a confused, many-coloured throng. They seem as though just startled out of sleep.

ALL MAIDENS
(to one another)

Where are our beloveds? Wo sind uns're Liebsten?
Inside the castle? Drinnen im Saale!
Where are our beloveds? Wo sind uns're Liebsten?
We saw them go in there. Wir sahn's sie im Saale.
We saw them all bleeding and wounded. Wir sahn's sie mit blutender Wunde.
Ahh! My lover! Wehe! Wehe!
Ah, come help me! Auf, zur Hilfe!
And who is our foe? Wer ist unser Feind?

They perceive Parsifal and point him out.

[62] Da — steht er!
Da — steht er! Dort — dort!
Seht ihn dort, seht ihn dort!
Wo? — Dort! Ich seh's!

1ST MAIDEN 1ST GROUP
And my Ferris' sword in his hand! Meines Ferris Schwert in seiner Hand!
2ND MAIDEN 1ST GROUP
My beloved's blood red on the blade. Meines Liebsten Blut hab' ich erkannt.

CHORUSES I AND II
I saw! The castle he stormed! Ich sah's! Der stürzte die Burg!

3RD MAIDEN 2ND GROUP
And I heard the master's horn. Ich hörte des Meisters Horn.

3RD MAIDEN 1ST GROUP AND 2ND MAIDEN 2ND GROUP
Yes, we all heard the horn. Ja, wir hörten sein Horn.

CHORUSES I AND II
Yes, he! Der war's!

1ST AND 3RD MAIDENS 2ND GROUP
My hero obeyed. Mein Held lief herzu.

2ND AND 3RD MAIDENS 1ST GROUP
They all obeyed the command. Sie kamen Alle herzu.

1ST MAIDEN 1ST GROUP
My hero obeyed. Mein Held lief herzu.

CHORUSES I AND II
They all obeyed the command, Sie Alle kamen, doch Jeden empfing seine Wehr!
but they fell to his sword! Oh Weh! Weh' ihm, der sie uns schlug!

2ND MAIDEN 1ST GROUP AND MAIDENS FROM CHORUS I
He wounded my lover. [44] Er schlug mir den Liebsten.

1ST MAIDEN 1ST GROUP AND MAIDENS FROM THE CHORUSES
He struck at my friend. Mir traf er den Freund.

2ND MAIDEN 2ND GROUP AND MAIDENS FROM THE CHORUSES
His sword is still bleeding! Noch blutet die Waffe!

1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP AND MAIDENS FROM THE CHORUSES
My beloved's foe.

ALL MAIDENS
Weh! Du dort! Oh Weh'!
Was schufst du solche Not?
Accursed, accursed you must be!

Parsifal leaps somewhat further into the garden. The maidens hastily retire. Now he pauses, full of wonder. [57]

Ha! Bold one!

1ST MAIDEN 1ST GROUP, 1ST AND 2ND MAIDENS 2ND GROUP

Dare you approach us?

2ND AND 3RD MAIDENS 1ST GROUP, 3RD MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

Why did you wound our beloveds?

PARSIFAL

You lovely children, I was forced to smite them!
For they, you fair ones, they tried to keep me from you.

1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

You knew we were here?

[62a] Zu uns wolltest du?

1ST MAIDEN 1ST GROUP

You'd seen us before?

PARSIFAL

I have never beheld a scene so bright:
If I said fair, would that seem right?

2ND MAIDEN 1ST GROUP

Then truly you will not harm us?

[44] So willst du uns wohl nicht schlagen?

2ND MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

You will not harm us?

PARSIFAL

I couldn't do that.

1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

And yet you injured us severely —

2ND AND 3RD MAIDENS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS

— grievously harmed us!

1ST MAIDENS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS

You wounded all our companions!

ALL MAIDENS

Who'll play with us now?

PARSIFAL

Gladly will I!

The maidens, passing from wonder to enjoyment, break into a merry laugh. While Parsifal steps nearer to the excited throng, the maidens of the first group and first chorus slip away unconcerned to complete their flower-adornment behind the flower-hedges. [57]

CHORUS II

If you are kind —

2ND GROUP

— stay so far from us.

— so bleib' nicht fern! —

CHORUS II

1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

And if you do not chide us —

2ND MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

— reward you have beside us:

2ND GROUP

(to one another)

We do not play for gold.


1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

But only for love's reward.

2ND MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

If you seek to console us —

1ST MAIDEN 2ND GROUP

— Ah, then ties of love must hold us!

The maidens of the first group and first chorus return adorned with flowers, appearing like the flowers themselves, and make a rush at Parsifal.

2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP

Leave him for me now!

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP

He belongs to me!

3RD THEN 2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP

No! No!

CHORUS I

Nein! Nein!

CHORUS II AND 2ND GROUP

Ha! The sly ones! In secret decked themselves!

While the newcomers throng round Parsifal, the maidens of the second group and second chorus hastily leave the stage to adorn themselves also.

CHORUS I AND 1ST GROUP

During the following the maidens dance in a graceful childlike manner about Parsifal, caressing him gently.

Come! Come!

Handsome stranger!

For you I'll bloom now!

Come! To delight and please you, that is all I long for.

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP

Come, handsome stranger!

[63] Komm', holder Knabe!

2ND AND 3RD FLOWERS 1ST GROUP

Handsome stranger!

ALL FLOWER MAIDENS

Come! Come!

Handsome stranger!

Ah! For you I'll blossom, to delight and please you, that is my labour of love!

Komm'! Komm'! Holder Knabe!

Lass' mich dir erblühen, dir zu wonniger Labe

gilt unser minniges Müh'n!
(standing in the midst of the maidens in silent enjoyment)

How fragrant you are!
Are you then blossoms?

[63] Wie duftet ihr hold!
Seid ihr denn Blumen?

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP
The garden’s joy —
Des Gartens Zier, —

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
— its gentle fragrance, —
— und duftende Geister, —

1ST FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
— in spring plucked by our master! —
— im Lenz pflückt uns der Meister! —

2ND FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
We flourish here, —
Wir wachsen hier, —

1ST FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
— in summer and sunlight, —
— in Sommer und Sonne, —

1ST AND 2ND FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
— for you we blossom in gladness.
— für dich erblühend in Wonne.

3RD FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS AND CHORUS I
You must be kind and true!
Nun sei uns freund und hold!

2ND FLOWERS 1ST AND 2ND GROUPS AND CHORUS I
And give to the blossoms their due!
Nicht kargte den Blumen den Sold!

ALL FLOWER MAIDENS
If you cannot love us and cherish,
we’ll wither and sadly we’ll perish.

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
Oh, hold me close to your heart!
An deinen Busen nimm mich!

ALL FLOWER MAIDENS
Come! Handsome stranger!
Komm'! heller Knabe!

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP
Your brow, oh, let me cool it!
Die Stirn lass' mich dir kühl'n!

CHORUSES I AND II
Let me for you blossom!
Lass' mich dir erblüh'n!

2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP
Soft cheeks, oh, let me stroke them!
Lass' mich die Wange dir fühlen!

2ND FLOWER 2ND GROUP
Soft mouth, let me kiss it!
Den Mund, lass' mich dir küs'n!

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP
No! I! The fairest am I!
Nein! Ich! Die Schönste bin ich!

2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP
No! I am the fairest!
Nein! Ich bin die Schönste!

CHORUSES I AND II
I am fairer!
Ich bin schöner!

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
No! I am more fragrant!
Nein! Ich dufte süßer!

ALL THE OTHERS
No! I! I! Yes, I!
Nein! Ich! Ich! — Ja, ich!

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(softly moving them back)

You wild throng of blossoms enchanting, —
[57] Ihr wildes Blumengedränge,
if I am to play with you, some space you[44, 57] soll ich mit euch spielen, entlasst mich der
must grant me!
Engel!

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
Why do you scold?
[64] Was zankest du?

PARSIFAL
Because you quarrel.
Weil ihr euch streitet.

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP THEN 2ND FLOWER 2ND GROUP
But only over you.
Wir streiten nur um dich.

PARSIFAL
Have done, then!
Das meidet!

2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP
Let go of him: it's he likes!
Du lass' von ihm: sieh', er will mich!

Me rather!
Mich lieber!

3RD FLOWER 1ST GROUP
No, me!
Nein, mich!

3RD FLOWER 2ND GROUP
No, no, it's he likes!
Nein, lieber will er mich!

2ND FLOWER 2ND GROUP
You're pushing me away?
Du wehrest mich von dir?

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
You drive me away?
Du scheuchest mich fort?

2ND AND 3RD FLOWERS 1ST GROUP, 3RD FLOWER 2ND GROUP
Avoiding me?
Du wehrest mir?

CHORUS II
You're afraid of women?
Bist du feige vor Frauen?

ALL FLOWERS 2ND GROUP
Can't you trust yourself then?
Magst dich nicht getrauen?

CHORUS II
Can't you trust yourself then?
Magst dich nicht getrauen?

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP
How sad you're so cold and prudish! [44] Wie schlimm bist du Zager und Kalter!

BOTH CHORUSES
How sad! So shy?
Wie schlimm! So zag?

1ST FLOWER 2ND GROUP
How sad you're so cold and prudish!
Wie schlimm bist du Zager und Kalter!

CHORUS II
So shy and cold!
So zag und kalt!

1ST FLOWER 1ST GROUP
Would you have the butterfly wooed by
Die Blumen lässt du umbuhlen den
the flowers?
Valter?
2ND AND 3RD FLOWERS 1ST GROUP
So shy and cold!

CHORUS I
The fool won't awaken!

1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
By us he is forsaken.

CHORUS II
And so by us he's taken!

2ND GROUP
No, he belongs to me!

ALL FLOWER MAIDENS
No, he belongs to us!

[64] Wie ist er zag!

[64] Wir geben ihn verloren.

[64] Doch sei es uns erkoren!

[64] Nein, mir gehört er an!

[64] Nein, uns gehört er!

[64] Ja uns! Ja uns! Ja uns, ja uns!

PARSIFAL
(half angrily, frightening the maidens off)

[57] Lasst ab! Ihr fangt mich nicht!

He is about to escape, when, hearing Kundry's voice out of the flower-foliage, he stands still in surprise.

KUNDY
Parsifal! — Stay here!

[54x] Parsifal! — Weile!

PARSIFAL
Parsifal, . . .

So named me, dreaming one day, my mother.

At the sound of Kundry's voice, the maidens, terror-stricken, withdraw at once from Parsifal.

KUNDY
(gradually coming into sight)

Here linger! Parsifal!
To greet you, gladness and joy are here. Fast-withering flowers, be off, he was not sent for your sport. Go home, tend to the wounded, lonely awaits you many a knight.

The maidens, turning timidly and reluctantly away from Parsifal, withdraw to the palace.

1ST FLOWER THEN 3RD FLOWER, 2ND GROUP
Must I leave you!

2ND FLOWER 2ND GROUP
Must I lose you!邓

3RD FLOWER THEN 1ST FLOWER, 1ST GROUP
Oh, what sorrow!

2ND FLOWER 1ST GROUP
Oh, sorrow and pain!

BOTH CHORUSES
Oh, wehe!

ALL FLOWERS 1ST GROUP
From all I'd gladly part forever, — [64] Von Allen möchten gern wir scheiden, —

— to be alone with you. — mit dir allein zu sein.

1ST AND 2ND GROUPS
Farewell! Farewell! Leb' wohl! Leb' wohl!

You fair one, you proud one, you — fool!

du Holder, du Stolzer, du — Tor!

Laughing, the maidens disappear into the palace.

PARSIFAL
This garden — is it all a dream? He looks round timidly to the side whence the voice came. There appears through an opening of the flower-hedges a young and very beautiful woman — Kundry, in altered form — lying on a flowery couch, wearing a light veil-like robe of Arabian style.

Did you call to me, the nameless? Riefst du mich Namenlosen?

KUNDY
I named you, foolish pure one, "Fal pars!", —

So pure and foolish: "Parsifal".

So cried, in far Arabian land where he died, your father Gamuret to you, his son, who in your mother's womb were stirring, yes, thus he named you as he perished; to tell these tidings I was waiting here: what drew you here if not the wish to know?

Ne'er saw I, nor dreamed before, what now I see, and what has filled my heart with fear.

Are you a flower grown in this lovely garden?

KUNDY
No, Parsifal, you foolish pure one!

Far, far from here my homeland.

For you to find me, I lingered here awhile; from far hence came I, many things I've seen.

I saw the child upon his mother's breast, his early laughter lingers in my ear:

[58] Ihr herz war griesend,

[58] du funken, durch ihre Furcht;

[58] deine Schmerzen

[58] dein Lachen, das Lachen,

[58] du morgen, der Morgen

[65] die traurige 

ich schau', und was mit Bangen mich erfüllt.

Entflieht du ihnen wie Blumenhaine?

KUNDY
Nein, Parsifal, du tö'ger Reiner!

Fern, fern ist meine Heimat.

Dass du mich fandest, verwelkst ich nur hier;

von weit her kam ich, wo ich viel ersah.

Ich sah das Kind an seiner Mutter Brust, sein erstes Lächeln lacht mir noch im Ohr: das Leid im Herzen, wie lachte da auch Herzeleide, als ihren Schmerzen zuvorzukommen ihrer Augen Weide.

Gebetet sanft auf weichen Moosen, den Halt geschlossen sie mit Rosen, dem, bang in Sorgen, den Schlummer bewacht der Mutter Sehnen, den weckt am Morgen der heisse Tau der Muttertränen.

Nur weinen war sie, Schmerzgebahnen um deines Vaters Lieb' und Tod:
as holy duty she decided
to save you from a fate like his.
From clash of arms, from men in deadly
conflict,
she ever strove to shield you and protect
you.
So anxious was she, ah! and fearful:
no news of fighting arrived to disturb
you.
Can you remember her anxious cry
when late and far you were roaming?
Can you remember how she laughed
in relief when you had returned;
and how she caught you in her
embrace?
Oh, did you not fear her kisses then?
You were heedless of all her care,
of all her anguished grieving:
when one day you did not return
and left no trace behind you.
Long days and nights she waited,
until her cries grew silent,
when grief consumed all the pain;
for quiet death she yearned:
then sorrow broke her heart,
and Herzeliede died.

( in growing surprise and alarm sinks
down at Kundry's feet, overcome with distress )

Sorrow! Sorrow! What did P Where was P
Mother! Sweetest, dearest mother!
Your son, your son was then your
murderer!
O fool! Blind and blundering fool!
I wandered away, I could forget you,
mother, I could forget you?
Truest, dearest mother!

War dir fremd noch der Schmerz
des Trostes süss?
labte nie auch dein Herz;
das Weh, das dich ruht;
die Not nun busse
im Trost, den Liebe dir beut.

Kundry, still reclining, bends over Parsifal's head, gently touches his forehead, and winds
her arm confidingly round his neck. [36, 42]

Acknowledge
your fault and then it's ended;
by knowledge
your folly soon is mended.
Of love now learn the rapture
that Gamuret once learned,
when Herzeliede's passion

Bekennnis
wird Schuld in Reue enden,
Erkenntnis
in Sinn die Torheit wenden.
Die Liebe lerne kennen,
die Gamurest umschloss,
as Herzelieds Entbrennen

Parsifal
within him fiercely burned!
For love that gave you
life and being,
must death and folly both remove,
love sends
you now
a mother's blessing, greets a son
with love's first kiss!

She has bent her head completely over his and now presses her lips to his mouth in a long kiss. [4, 9, 1, 1h, 41]

Parsifal
O! Wehe! Wehe! Was tat ich? Wo war ich?
Mutter! Süße, holde Mutter!
Dein Sohn, dein Sohn musste dich
morden!
O Tor! Blöder, taumelnder Tor!
Wo irrtest du hin, ihrer vergessend,
deiner, deiner vergessend?
Traute, teuerste Mutter!

Das alle Sinne mir fasst und zwängt!
Oh! Oh! Wie alles schaut, bebt und zuckt
in sündigem Verlangen!

While Kundry stares at him in fear and wonder, Parsifal appears to fall wholly into a trance.

Parsifal
The Spear-wound! — The Spear-wound! —
It burns here in my heart!
Oh! Torment! Torment!
Fearfulst torment,

The cry of anguish pierces my heart.
Oh! — Oh!

Piteous sufferer!
The wound that I saw bleeding
is bleeding now in me!

Hier — hier — hier — hier — hier —
Hier! Hier, in the Herzen der Brand!
Das Schinden, das fürchtbare Schenden,
das alle Sinne mir fasst und zwängt!
Oh! Oh! Wie alles schaut, bebt und zuckt

The Saviour's cry is stealing through [11, 41x, 50] Das Heilandes Klage da vernimm ich, me,

Parsifal
for the profaned sanctuary:
"Reform me, rescue me
from hands defiled and guilty!"
Thus rang his lamentation,

And I, a fool, a coward,
to childish deeds of daring fled away!

He throws himself despairingly on his knees. [38]

Parsifal
O noble knight! Cast off your fear!
Look up and find redemption here!

Kundry, whose astonishment has changed to sorrowful wonder, seeks hesitatingly to
approach Parsifal.

Kundry
Gelobter Held! Entfleht dem Wahn!
Blick auf! Sei hold der Hulden Nah'n!

[4, 36, 58, 42, 16, 41x, 41, 45, 41x, 41x, 41x, 41x, 41x, 41x, 41x, 38, 1, 1h, 41]
PARSIFAL
(still kneeling, gazing fixedly at Kundry, who during the following, bends over him with the
caring movements that she describes)

Yes! With these accents she called to him;
and with this look, — I seem to know it well,
and this one, with its remorseless
laugher;
these lips too, yes, they tempted him thus,
she bent her neck toward him,
thus boldly rose her head,
thus fluttered her tresses around him,
thus twined she her arms round his neck —
so tenderly his cheek caressing;
with all the powers of pain united,
his soul’s salvation
these lips once kissed away!
Ha! — and her kiss!

PARSIFAL has gradually risen and pushes Kundry from him.

Destroyer! — Go from my side!
Ever, ever be gone!

KUNDY
(very passionately)

Cruel man!
If in your heart you feel
only others’ sorrows,
now feel what sorrows are mine!
If you’re a saint, then what restrains you
from joining with me in my salvation?

Through endless ages you I awaited,
My saviour, ah! so late!
Whom once I feared revile!
Oh!

If you knew the curse
that holds through sleep and waking,
throught death and living,
pain and laughter...
To new afflictions newly steeld...[40] zu neuen Leiden neu gestählt,
endless torment racks my soul!
I saw Him — Him —
and mocked Him...
on me fell His look!
I seek Him now from world to world
Nun such’ ich ihn von Welt zu Welt,
till once more I behold Him.

In deepest woe —
I feel that He must be near,
I see that look He gave.
Then once more my accursed laughter
fills me:
a sinner sinks in my embrace!
I laugh then, laugh then,
I cannot weep,
but crying, raging,
storming, raging,
I sink again into shameful night,
from which, remorseful, scarce I wake.
One I desire with deadly yearning,

Parzival, though I despised Him:
let me upon His breast lie weeping,
for one brief hour with you united,
and then though God and world might scorn,
I’d be redeemed by you and reborn!

PARSIFAL

For evermore
you’d be condemned with me,
for that brief hour,
forget ful of my calling,
within your arms enfolded!

For your salvation I was sent,
if of your yearnings you repent.
The solace that can end your suffering
from purer fountains sweetly flows,
and grace will never be accorded
until the sinful fount you close.

Another grace, another, yes!
For which in sorrow once I saw
the brothers pine: what cares distressed them,
what fear tormented and oppressed them!
But who with soul unclouded knows
that fount whence truly healing flows?

O night of worldly error,
in quest of true salvation’s light,
we drink damnation’s draught of terror!

KUNDY
(in wild ecstasy)

So it was my kiss
that made you see all these things clearly?
The full embrace of my loving
surely to godhead will raise you.

Redeem the world then, if that’s your task,
become a god this moment,
let me be redeemed for evermore,
my wound remain unlosed!

PARSIFAL

Redemption, sinful one, I offer you.

Then as a god let me love you,
redemption you would bring to me.

KUNDY
(entreatingly)

Love and redemption will be granted, —
if the way
to Amfortas you now show.

KUNDY
(breaking out in fury)

No, — you’ll never find him!
He has fallen, so let him perish,
the unhallowed,
shame — welcome,
whom I derided, —
laughing —
laughing —

Ha! Ha! Who fell by his own good Speer!

KUNDY

Lass mich dich Göttlichen lieben,
Erlösung gab’sst du dann auch mir.

PARSIFAL

Lieb’ und Erlösung soll dir werden, —
zu Amfortas mir den Weg.

PARSIFAL

Nie — sollst du ihn finden!
Den Verfallenen lass ihn verderben,
den Unsel’gen,
Schmachzähmen,
den ich verleuchte, —
laucht — lacht —

Ha! Ha! Ihn traf ja der eig’ne Speer!
Who dared then to wound him with the sacred Spear?

He — he — who once my laughter rebuked:
his curse, — ha! it gives me strength, 'gainst you yourself! I'll summon the Spear
if for that sinner you dare to plead! —
Ha, madness!

Mercy! Mercy on me!
And for one hour be mine!
For one brief hour be mine...
To Amfortas
then I shall lead the way!

She tries to embrace him. He thrusts her forcibly from him.

Begone, accursed woman!

She recoils in wild raging fury, and calls into the background.

And though you should escape, and search through
every road in the world,
the path that you seek,
that path you'll never discover:
each road and pathway
that leads from my presence,
I now curse them to you:
Wander! Wander!
Share in my fate!
Wander like me evermore!

Klingsor appears on the rampart and prepares to throw the Spear towards Parsifal.

Halt there! I hold the weapon that will serve!
The holy fool will fall by his master's spear!

He hurls the Spear, which remains hanging over Parsifal's head.

So with this Spear I vanquish your enchantment:
and the wound shall be healed now
by the Spear that wounded.
To darkness and ruin
falls your deceiving display!
He swings the Spear in the Signs of the Cross, the Castle falls as by an earthquake. The garden wethers to a desert; the ground is scattered with faded flowers. Kundry sinks down with a cry. Parsifal, hastening away, pauses on the top of the ruined wall, and turns back to Kundry.
Act Three

The curtains open. Pleasant open spring landscape in the domain of the Grail. Flowering meadows rise gently towards the background. The edge of the forest is seen in the foreground, stretching away, right, to rising rocky ground. By the side of a spring, and opposite this, further back, a hermit's hut, built against a mass of rock. Very early morning. Gurnemanz, grown very old and grey, and dressed as a hermit in the tunic of the Grail Knights, steps out of the hut and listens. [44, 47, 4]

Gurnemanz

From there I heard the groaning. [7]
On Dorf her kam das Stöhnen.
So man merk't, klagt kein Wild,
und gewiss gar nicht am heiligen Morgen heut!

I think I recognise that call of grief. [4, 23x]

A dull groaning is heard. [4, 23x]

He walks purposefully towards a thorn thicket at the side, much overgrown; he forces the undergrowth apart, then suddenly stops. [4]
Ha! Sie wieder da?
Das winterlich ruhe Gedöhn
hielt sie verdeckt: wo lang? schon?

Now winter's fled, and spring is here! [5]
AUF! Kundry! AUF!

Awaken! Awaken to spring! —
He draws Kundry stiff and lifeless out of the bushes, and bears her to a grassy mound nearby.

Kalt und starr!

This time I truly fear she's dead: and yet her groaning came to my ear? [18b]
Diamal hielt ich sie wohl für tod:
doch was ihr Stöhnen, war ich vernahm?

As Kundry lies before Gurnemanz, he rubs her hands and temples, and does his utmost to relax her stiffening. [38] At last life seems to awaken in her. [44] She is now fully awake, opens her eyes and raises a cry. [25, 36] She wears the coarse robe of a penitent, as in the first Act; her face is pale; the wildness has vanished from her looks and behaviour. She gazes long at Gurnemanz. Then, raising herself, she arranges her hair and dress, and moves away through a serving maid. [52, 52a]

How strange you are!

Have you no word for me? [26a]
Is this my thanks,
when from deathly slumber
I waken you once again?

Kundry slowly bows her head; at length she speaks, hoarsely and brokenly. [52, 18b]

Kundry

Dienens ... dienen.

Gurnemanz

(shaking his head)

Your task will be but light:

for now no messengers we need,
herbs and roots
each of us finds for himself
from beasts of the forest we learned.
Kundry has meanwhile looked after her, sees the hut, and goes into it. Gurnemanz gazes after her, wondering.

How different from what she was before! [26a]

Can this holy day be the cause? [25]

O day of mercy past comparing! [8, 10]

In truth, for her salvation
I was allowed to wake

this soul from deathly slumber.

Kundry returns from the hut; she carries a pitcher and goes with it to the spring. Here, glancing into the wood, she sees someone approaching in the distance, and turns to Gurnemanz to point this out to him. [28, 31] He looks into the wood.

Who comes toward the sacred spring? [57, 48, 42]
Wer nahet dorn dem heil'gen Quell?
In gloomy war apparel?
He is not one of our band!

During Parsifal's entry, Kundry fills her pitcher and moves slowly away into the hut, where she bides herself. Parsifal enters from the wood in a suit of black armour: with closed helm and lowered Spear he strides slowly forward, and moves with bended head in dreamy uncertainty to the little grass mound beside the spring, where he seats himself. [47 & 5, 48]

A Parsifal gently shakes his head. [47, 48]

Gernemanz, having gazed long at Parsifal in astonishment, now steers towards him.

Heil dir, mein Gast!
Bist du verritt, und soll ich dich weisen?

No word of greeting to your host?

Parsifal bents his head. Gurnemanz continues, disconcerted.

Heil! — Was? —

Some vow perhaps has constrained your lips to silence,
but mine are bound to speak,
to tell you plainly, what is right.

This place you see is holy ground:
a man should take no weapons here,
no visored helmet, shield or spear,
and least today! Do you not know
what holy day this is?

Parsifal shakes his head.

No! From whence have you come?

Among that heathens have you dwelt,
that you know not there dwells
on us now the all-holy Good Friday morn? [25, 8]

Parsifal sinks his head yet lower.

Lay down your weapons!

Injure not the Lord, who this day,
bar of defence, His holy blood
on once to redeem the sinful world!
Parsifal raises himself after a further silence, thrusts his Spear into the ground before him, lays shield and sword beneath it, raises his visor, and removing it from his head lays it with the other arms, and then kneels in silent prayer before the Spear. Gurnemanz matches Parsifal in wonder.

Parsifal raises his eyes devoutly to the Spear-head. [3]
Gurnemanz addresses Kundry softly.

You know him now?

He is it who once the swan destroyed?

Kundry nods her head slightly. [1, 3]
Gewiss, 's ist er.

der Tor, den ich zurück von uns wies.

HA! By what pathway came he? [1b, 55]

Da welche Pfad eina? [1b, 55]

The Spear — I know it now.

Parsifal

Praise God! Once again I have found you!

Gernemanz

You still remember me?

You still recall me:
whom grief and care have deeply bowed?

How came you here — and whence?

Heil mir, das ich dich wiederfinden!
Through error and through suffering's pathways came I, and can I rightly think I can escape them, now that the forest's murmurs once again I'm hearing, and, good old man, again I greet you... Or—do I err still? For everything seems altered.

But say, who is it you are seeking?

The man whose deepest anguish
in foolish wonder once I heard —
whom I can heal; I bring
his ordained salvation, as foretold.
But—ah!—the way of healing never finding,
I wandered in error,
by a fearful curse led astray:
numberless dangers,
battles and duels
forced me to leave the pathway,
even when I thought it was found. Then I was seized with dread of failure,
to keep the Spear unprofan'd;
so to defend it, and to guard it,
I suffered many a wound on the way; the Spear itself could not be wielded in battle; unprofan'd at my side then I bore it; and home I now restore it: you see it shining pure and clear — the Grail's most holy Spear.

its guardian, racked with sinful suffering,
who could not die so long as he beheld its light,
thus hoped that he would perish,
and with his life thus end his cruel torment.
The food of Heaven we are now denied, [68, 49] Die heil'ge Speisung bleibt uns nun versagt,
and common fare must now support us: so there fadeth all our heroes' might. [33, 29, darin versiegte uns'r Helden Kraft.
No suppliants seek us now;
no call to holy strife in distant countries:
pale, dejected, wandering
and lost, and leaderless our knightly band. Here in the forest I have come to dwell,
till death shall come to claim me, as death my aged warrior-lord has claimed; yes, Titurel, my holy King,[25] when once the Grail's refreshment was denied him he died — a man, like others! [47] er starb — ein Mensch, wie Alle!

And I— It is,
who brought this woe on all!
Ha! What transgression!
With a load of sin
must this my foolish head
eternally be laden,
for no repentance, no atonement
my blinded eyes can lighten,
though chosen by God as a saviour,
I lost myself in error;
salvation's only path has vanished!
Parsifal seems about to fall senseless. Gurnemanz supports him, and lets him sink down onto the grassy ground. [67, 23x] Kundry hastily fetches a basin of water with which to sprinkle Parsifal. [32]

Not that!
The holy spring itself
must now refresh our pilgrim's brow,
I feel some holy work
he must today accomplish,
perhaps fulfill some sacred office;
let him be pure of stain,
the dust of doubtful ways
our sacred spring can wash away!

They both gently move Parsifal to the edge of the spring. [24] During the following Kundry unbinds the greaves of his armour, and Gurnemanz removes his breast-plate.

This day to Amfortas shall I be guided? [68] Wer'd heut' zu Amfortas ich noch geleitet?

Most surely; for the lofty hall awaits:
Gewisslich; uns'r harrt die ehre Burg: the solemn funeral of my dearest lord the Todtenfeier meines lieben Herrn, has summoned me today.

so hofft sein sündenreger Hüter,
da er nicht sterben kann
wann je er ihn erschaut,
sein Ende zu erzwingen, und mit dem Leben seine Qual zu enden.
The Grail shall once more be to us revealed, the long neglected office shall once more be fulfilled, to sanctify the noble father, who by his son's misdeed was slain; the vow would now atonement make: this vow Amfortas swore.

Parsifal gazes in quiet wonder at Kundry, who with eager humility is bathing his feet. [26a]

**PARSIFAL**

(to Kundry)

You washed my feet so humbly, now bathe for me my brow, good friend!

Gurnemanz takes some water in his hand from the spring and sprinkles Parsifal's head.

**GURNEMANZ**

Be purified, you pure one, by this water!

It washes every guilt and care away from you!

During this Kundry draws a golden phial from her bosom, pours its contents over Parsifal's feet, and dries them with her hair, which she has hastily unbound. [27, 8, 32]

**PARSIFAL**

(gently taking the phial from her and passing it to Gurnemanz)

My feet you have anointed; my head now, friend of Titurel, anoint, this very day as King you shall acclaim me!

Gurnemanz (pouring the phial over Parsifal's head, upon which he lays his hands in blessing)

So truly it was promised; my blessing on your head, as King I now acclaim you. O pure one! Pitying sufferer, all-wise deliverer! You have redeemed him, torments you have suffered, now lift the load forever from his head! [57, 25] die letzte Last entnimm nun seinem Haupt!

**PARSIFAL**

Unnoticed, he has filled his hands with water from the spring, and now bends forward to Kundry, who is still kneeling before him, and pours it over her head.

My first of tasks I thus perform: — Mein erstes Amt verricht' ich so —

baptized be, und glaub' an den Erlöser!

Kundry sinks her head to the earth; she seems to weep passionately. [41, 50] Parsifal, turning away, gazes in gentle ecstasy upon field and forest, which are glowing in the morning light. [40, 28]

Today the fields and meadows seem so fair! Many a magic flower I've seen, which wildly sought to twine itself around me; but never before so fair and mild the meadows flowers blooming; their scent recalls my childhood days and tells of loving trust to me.

**GURNEMANZ**

It is Good Friday's magic, lord!

**PARSIFAL**

O sorrow, that day of agony! When all creation, all that blooms, that breathes, lives and lives anew, should only sigh and sorrow.

**GURNEMANZ**

You see, it is not so.

The sinner's tears of true repentance today with holy dew bedeck the flowery mead and make them glow so brightly; while all created things rejoice to see the Saviour's sign of grace, and raise a prayer to praise Him.

Himself, the Saviour crucified, they see not; and so they raise their eyes to man redeemed, the man set free from sin, set free from terror, by God's most loving sacrifice made pure: today each blade and blossom upon the meadow knows well the foot of man will do no harm; in truth, as God with heavenly loving care, doth woh, went with him,ゲット with him, the innocent has won, all is renewed once more this day.

Kundry has slowly raised her head, and gazes up with tearful eyes, filled with calm and earnest entreaty, at Parsifal. [20]

**PARSIFAL**

I saw them withering when once they mocked me; are they now for redemption yearning? A dew of sorrow from your eyes is flowing; you're weeping ... look, they smile, da de entschiedet Natur heut' ihren Ulschultag erwart.

**GURNEMANZ**

Midday, the time has come. Allow me, lord, as your squire to lead you! Gestatte Herr, dass dein Knecht dich geleite!

From the hut, Gurnemanz has fetched his Grail Knight's mantle, with which he and Kundry invest Parsifal. — Parsifal solemnly takes up the Spear and with Kundry follows Gurnemanz, who leads slowly. [29, 57] The scene changes very gradually, as in the first Act, but from right to left. After remaining for a time visible, the three entirely disappear, while the forest gradually vanishes, and in its place the rocks draw near. [69, 16, 47] Through the arched passages, the sound of bells swells ever louder. [30] The rock walls open, disclosing the lofty Grail Hall, as in the first Act, but without the feast-table. Dusky light. From one side appear knights bearing Titurel's coffin, from the other side those escorting Amfortas in the lute, preceded by the covered shrine of the Grail. [69, 47]
1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
(with Amfortas)
While we with sacred awe, concealed in
this shrine,
the Grail escort to the altar,
concealed there in gloomy shrine,
in mourning whom do you bear?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
(with Titurel's body)
We bear a hero within this shrine,
it holds the heavenly might,
whom God Himself once chose as His
guard:
Titurel hither we bear.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
By whom was he killed, who, in God's
own guard,
God's self had in keeping?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
He fell by the hand of conquering age,
when the Grail's pure light was denied
him.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Who kept him the Grail's pure light from
enshining?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
The man you're escorting, the Grail's
sinful guardian.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
We escort him today because once more
now,
and once more only
he'll fulfill his office.

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Amfortas is now placed on the couch behind the Grail altar, the coffin is set down in front.
During the following, the knights turn to Amfortas.

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Sorrow! Sorrow! Guardian of the Grail,
the final time
be your office performed!

AMFORTAS
(earnestly raising himself a little)
Yes — sorrow! Sorrow! Sorrow for me!
So cry I gladly with you:
Gladder still if you would deal me death,
for sin like mine small atonement.

The coffin is opened. [9] All, at the sight of Titurel's corpse, break into a cry of woe.
[45 & 36, 15] Amfortas raises himself high on his couch, and turns to Titurel's corpse.

My father!
Highly blessed among all heroes!
You pure one, to whom once angels
descended:
attempting myself to die,
I dealt you your death!
Oh! You are now in glory on high
and behold the Saviour's face: —

entreat Him for me that His holiest blood,[10, 11] erleich von ihm, dass sein heiliges Blut,
if but once more now its blessing
the brothers here may quicken,
renewing life within them,
may bring me solace in death!
[8, 60] Only mercy!
[17] The wound and the poison, destroy their
torment:
they gnaw my heart: so let it be stilled! [42, 43] das es zernagt, erstarrte das Herz!
My father! Oh, — hear me:
You must cry unto Him:
"Redeemer, grant to my son release!"

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"Erlöser, gib meinem Sohne Ruh!"

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Geleiten wir im bergenden Schrein
[8] den Gral zum heiligen Amte,
wen berget ihr im düst'ren Schrein
und führt ihr traernd dahin?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Es birgt den Helden der Trauerschrein,
er birgt die heilige Kraft,
der Gott einst selbst zur Pflege sich gab:
Titurel führten wir her.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Wer hat ihn gefällt, der, in Gottes
Hexe;
Gott selbst einst beschirmte?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Ihn fällt's des Alters siegende Last
da den Gral er nicht mehr erschaute.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Wer wehrt' ihm des Grales Huld zu
erschauen?

2ND PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Den dort ihr geleitet, der sündige Hüter.

1ST PROCESSION OF KNIGHTS
Wir geleiten ihn heut', weil heut' noch einmal,
zum letzten Mal,
will des Amtes er warten.

[47x] Ach, zum letzten Mal!

PARSIFAL
One weapon only serves:
the Spear that smote
must heal you of your wound.

AMFORTAS' face shines with holy rapture; he staggers, as though overcome with awe and
emotion; Gurnemanz supports him. [43, 34x, 1b] Be healed, godfearing and stoned!
Now I shall undertake your task.
Oh, blessed be your suffering,
for pity's highest power,
and purest wisdom's might,
to this weak fool they brought!

Parsifal strides towards the centre, the Spear raised high before him. [57]
The sacred Spear
I bring you once again!
All gaze in highest rapture upon the upheld Spear, to the point of which Parsifal raises his eyes,
as he continues ecstatically. [14]
Oh! Wondrous miracle of joy!
This holy weapon that has healed you,

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upon its point fresh blood is flowing and yearning to join the kindred fountain, [41]

ihn seh' ich heil'ges Blut entfließen in Sehnsucht nach dem verwandten Quelle,

der dort fliesst in des Glares Welle. No more conceal that holy shrine:

[54, 1b] Nicht soll der mehr verschlossen sein: Enthüellt den Gral, öffnet den Schrein!

Parsifal ascends the altar-steps, takes the Grail from the shrine already opened by the Squire, and sinks to his knees in silent prayer before it. The Grail softly shines. Increasing gloom below and growing light from above. [25, 2, 11]

BOYS, YOUTHS AND KNIGHTS

Highest holy wonder! [54] Höchsten Heiles Wunder!
Redeemed the redeemer! [2] Erlösung dem Erlöser!


A painting of the Temple of the Holy Grail by Max Brückner after designs by Paul von Joukovsky for the Bayreuth premiere in 1882 (Royal Opera House Archives)