MANFRED:
A DRAMATIC POEM.

Adapted by Michael Barakiva

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

This adaptation is designed for 12 actors.

Manfred
Chamois Hunter
Abbot of St. Maurice
Manuel
Herman

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

The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.
ACT 1.
Scene 1.—Manfred alone.—Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.

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

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

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

[A pause.]

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

[A pause.]

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

Spirit of Air.
Mortal! to thy bidding bowed,

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

Spirit of Mountain.
Mont Blanc is the Monarch of mountains;
They crowned him long ago
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
With a Diadem of snow.
I am the Spirit of the place,
Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his caverned base—
And what with me would'st Thou?

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

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

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

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

_Spirit of Star._
The Star which rules thy destiny
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a World as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round Sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosomed not a lovelier star.
The Hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless Comet, and a curse,
The menace of the Universe;
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!

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

*Spirit of Earth*
Earth—

*Spirit of Ocean*
Ocean—

*Spirit of Air*
Air—

*Spirit of Night*
Night—

*Spirit of Mountains*
Mountains—

*Spirit of Winds*
Winds—

*Spirit of Star*
Thy Star,

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

150  *Man.*
Forgetfulness——

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

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

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

*Man.*
Oblivion—self-oblivion!

170  Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely—what I ask?

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

*Man.*
Will Death bestow it on me?

180  *Spirit of Earth.*
We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal; and to us the past
Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?

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

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

Man. Why say ye so?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Spirit of Star (appearing in the shape of Astarte).*
Behold!

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

*[The figure vanishes.]*

My heart is crushed!
[Manfred falls senseless.]

_Spirit of Air_

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

_Spirit of Mountain_

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

_Spirit of Ocean_

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

_Spirit of Earth_

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

_Spirit of Wind_

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

_Spirit of Night_

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;

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

300
*All Spirits*
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.
And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;

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

310
*Spirit of Mountain*
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;

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

*Spirit of Earth*
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

320
*Spirit of Wind*
From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
Spirit of Night
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;

330

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

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

340

Spirit of Air
By the cold breast and serpent smile,

Spirit of Mountain
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,

Spirit of Ocean
By that most seeming virtuous eye,

350

Spirit of Earth
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;

Spirit of Wind
By the perfection of thine art

Spirit of Night
Which passed for human thine own heart;

Spirit of Star
360 By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
All
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!
And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,

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

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

*Man.*
The spirits I have raised abandon me,
The spells which I have studied baffle me,
The remedy I recked of tortured me
I lean no more on superhuman aid;
It hath no power upon the past, and for
10 The future, till the past be gulfed in darkness,
It is not of my search.—My Mother Earth!
And thou fresh-breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.
And thou, the bright Eye of the Universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight—thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
20 In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever—wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse—yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril—yet do not recede;
And my brain reels—and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live,—
If it be life to wear within myself
30 This barrenness of Spirit, and to be
My own Soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Aye,
Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,  
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit  
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make  
A conflict of its elements, and breathe  
The breath of degradation and of pride,  
Contending with low wants and lofty will,  
Till our Mortality predominates,  
And men are—what they name not to themselves,  
And trust not to each other. Hark! the note,

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

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

*Enter from below a Chamois Hunter.*

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

*Man.*  
(*not perceiving the other).*  
Ye toppling crags of ice!  
Ye Avalanches, whom a breath draws down  
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!  
I hear ye momently above, beneath,
C. Hun.
The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

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

Man.
(not hearing him).
Farewell, ye opening Heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully—
You were not meant for me—Earth! take these atoms!

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

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

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

C. Hun.
I'll answer that anon.—Away with me——
The clouds grow thicker——there—now lean on me—
Place your foot here—here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub—now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle—softly—well-
The Chalet will be gained within an hour:
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath washed since winter.—Come,'tis bravely done—
You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

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

END OF SCENE
ACT II.

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

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

10 But whither?

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

C. Hun.
Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high lineage—
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these

20 May call thee lord? -Which of these is thine?

Man.
No matter.

C. Hun.
Well, Sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thawed my veins among our glaciers, now

30 Let it do thus for thine—Come, pledge me fairly!

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

C. Hun.
What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.
Man.
I say 'tis blood—my blood! but still it rises up,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from Heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

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

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

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

Man.
Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

C. Hun.
This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Man.*

Oh! no, no, no!

My injuries came down on those who loved me—

On those whom I best loved: I never quelled
An enemy, save in my just defence—
But my embrace was fatal.

*C. Hun.*

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

*Man.*

I need them not,

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

END OF SCENE
Act II, Scene II.—A lower Valley in the Alps.—A Cataract.
Enter Manfred.

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

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

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

Witch.
Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the Powers which give thee power!
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this—what would'st thou with me?

*Man.*
A boon;—
But why should I repeat it? 'twere in vain.

*Witch.*
I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

*Man.*
Well, though it torture me, 'tis but the same;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My Spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys—my griefs—my passions—and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the Creatures of Clay that girded me
Was there but One who—but of her anon.
My joy was in the wilderness,—to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top
or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new-breaking wave;
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
Witch.
Proceed.

Man.
Yet there was One——

Witch.
Spare not thyself—proceed.

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

Witch.
With thy hand?

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

Witch.
And for this——
A being of the race thou dost despise——
The order, which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours,—thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality——Away!

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

Witch.

It may be
That I can aid thee.

Man.

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

Witch.
That is not in my province; but if thou

Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

Man.
I will not swear—Obey! and whom? the Spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me—Never!

Witch.
Is this all?

150 Hast thou no gentler answer?

Man.
I have said it.

Witch.
Enough! I may retire then—say!

Man.
Retire!

[The Witch disappears.

Man.
We are the fools of Time and Terror: Days
Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke—
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
In all the days of past and future—for
In life there is no present—we can number
How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science—I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,

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

END OF SCENE
Act II - Scene III.—The summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter the Three Destinies

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

Second Destiny
The Captive Usurper,
Hurled down from the throne,
20 Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;

Third Destiny
I broke through his slumbers,
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers—
He's Tyrant again!

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

First Des.
Where's Nemesis?

Second Des.
At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.

40  Third Des.
    Behold she cometh.

Enter Nemesis.

First Des.
Say, where hast thou been?

Nem.
I was detained repairing shattered thrones—
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties—
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh—for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance—and to speak
Of Freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstayed the hour—mount we our clouds!
ACT II - Scene IV.—The Hall of Arimanès.—Arimanes on her Throne, a Globe of Fire surrounded by the Spirits.

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

10 [Enter the three Destines and Nemesis.

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

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

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

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

30 All Spirits
Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,
And most things wholly so; still to increase
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,
And we are vigilant. Thy late commands
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

40 Enter Manfred.

First Destiny
What is here?

Second Destiny
A mortal!—

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

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

Nemesis
Bow down and worship, slave!—

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

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

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

70 Witch of Atlas
Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanthes on her throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of her Glory?—Crouch! I say.

Man.
Bid her bow down to that which is above her,
The overruling Infinite—the Maker
Who made her not for worship—let her kneel,
And we will kneel together.

The Spirits.
Crush the worm!
Tear him in pieces!—

Nem.
Hence! Avaunt! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote: his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature—like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
    have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know—
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.

No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his—or power upon his soul.

First Destiny
What doth he here then?

Nem.
Let him answer that.
Man.

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

Nem.

What would'st thou?

Man.

Call up the dead—my question is for them.

Nem.

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

Ari.

Yea.

Nem.

Whom wouldst thou

Uncharnel?

Man.

One without a tomb—call up
Astarte.

Nemesis.

Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou boarest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou warest
Redeem from the worm.
Appear!—Appear!—Appear!

Who sent thee there requires thee here!

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

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek;
But now I see it is no living hue,
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,

I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
Forgive me or condemn me.

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

Man.

She is silent,

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

Ari.
Spirit—obey this sceptre!

Nem.

Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,  
And we are baffled also.

\textit{Man.}  
Astarte! my belovéd! speak to me:  
I have so much endured—so much endure—  
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more  
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me  

Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made  
To torture thus each other—though it were  
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.  
Say that thou loath'st me not—that I do bear  
This punishment for both—that thou wilt be  
One of the blesséd—and that I shall die;  
For hitherto all hateful things conspire  
To bind me in existence—in a life  
Which makes me shrink from Immortality—  
A future like the past. I cannot rest.  

I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:  
I feel but what thou art, and what I am;  
And I would hear yet once before I perish  
The voice which was my music—Speak to me!  
Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,  
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.  
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,  
And never found thy likeness—Speak to me!  
Look on the fiends around—they feel for me:  
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone.  

Speak to me! though it be in wrath;—but say—  
I reck not what—but let me hear thee once—  
This once—once more!

\textit{Phantom of Astarte.}  
Manfred!

\textit{Man.}
Say on, say on—
I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!

Phan.
Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
Farewell!

Man.
Yet one word more—am I forgiven?

Phan.
Farewell!

Man.
Say, shall we meet again?

Phan.
Farewell!

Man.
One word for mercy! Say thou lovest me.

Phan.
Manfred!

[The Spirit of Astarte disappears.]

Nem.
She's gone, and will not be recalled:
Her words will be fulfilled. Return to the earth.

Second Des.
He is convulsed—This is to be a mortal,
And seek the things beyond mortality.

Third Des.
Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
His torture tributary to his will.
Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful Spirit.

_Nem._

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

_Man._
None.

_Nem._
Then for a time farewell.

_Man._

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

END OF SCENE
ACT III.
Scene I.—A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.[150]

Manfred and Herman

Man.
What is the hour?

Her.
It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

Man.
Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her.
All, my Lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man.
It is well:
Thou mayst retire.

[Exit Herman.

Man. (alone).
There is a calm upon me—
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know Philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,

Re-enter Herman

Her.
My Lord, the Abbot of St. Maurice craves
To greet your presence.

Enter the Abbot of St. Maurice.

Abbot.
Peace be with Count Manfred!

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

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

Man.
Herman, retire.—What would my reverend guest?

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

Man.
And what are they who do avouch these things?

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

Take it.

Abbot.

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

Man.

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

Abbot.

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

Man.

Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer, nor purifying form
Of penitence, nor outward look, nor fast,
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep Despair,
Which is Remorse without the fear of Hell,
'Tis strange—even those who do despair above, 
Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth, 
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

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

120 *Abbot.*
And wherefore so?

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

*Abbot.*
And why not live and act with other men?

*Man.*
Because my nature was averse from life;

*Abbot.*
140 Alas! 
I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid 
From me and from my calling: yet so young, 
I still would——

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

[Exit Manfred.

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

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

Manfred, Herman and Manuel.

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

10 Man.

Doth he so?
I will look on him.

[Manfred advances to the Window of the Hall.

Glorious Orb! the idol
Thou chief Star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable and temperest the hues
20 And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
30 Of a more fatal nature. He is gone—
I follow.

[Manfred exits into the Tower.

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

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

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

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

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

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

_Her._

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

80

_Manuel._

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

_Her._

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

_Manuel._

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

_Enter the_ Abbot.

_Abbot._
Where is your master?

110

_Her._
Yonder in the tower.

_Abbot._
I must speak with him.

_Manuel._
'Tis impossible;
He is most private, and must not be thus
120 Intruded on.

_Abbot._
Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be—
But I must see him.

_Her._
Thou hast seen him once
his eve already.
130

_Abbot._
Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprize the Count of my approach.

_Her._
We dare not.

_Abbot._
Then it seems I must be herald
140 Of my own purpose.

_Manuel._
Reverend father, stop—
I pray you pause.
Abbot.
Why so?

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

END OF SCENE
Act III - Scene III.—Interior of the Tower.

Manfred alone.

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

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot.
My good Lord!
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness—all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head—could I say heart—
Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered,
But is not yet all lost.

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

*Abbot.*
Thou dost not mean to menace me?

*Man.*
Not I!
I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
And would preserve thee.

*Abbot.*
What dost thou mean?

*Man.*
Look there!

60 What dost thou see?

*Abbot.*
Nothing.

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

*Abbot.*
That which should shake me,—but I fear it not:
I see a dusk and awful figure rise,
Like an infernal god, from out the earth;
Her face wrapt in a mantle, and her form
Robed as with angry clouds: she stands between
Thyself and me—but I do fear her not.

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

I say to thee—Retire!

*Abbot.*

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

*Man.*

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

*Abbot.*

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

*Man.*

Pronounce—what is thy mission?

*Arimanæs.*

Come!

*Abbot.*

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

*Arimanæs.*

The genius of this mortal.—Come!'tis time.
Man.
I am prepared for all things, but deny
The Power which summons me. Who sent thee here?

Arimanes.
Thou'lt know anon—Come! come!

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

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

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

Arimanes.
Then I must summon up my brethren.—Rise!

[Other Spirits rise.

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

Witch of Atlas
Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;

First Destiny
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Second Destiny
150 Once more—I summon him—Away! Away!

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

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

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

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

First Destiny

But thy many crimes
Have made thee—

190  Man.

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

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

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

[The Spirits disappear.]

Abbot.
Alas! how pale thou art—thy lips are white—
And thy breast heaves—and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle: Give thy prayers to Heaven
Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus.
220  Man.
'Tis over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well—
Give me thy hand.

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

230  Man.
Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.

[Manfred expires.

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

END OF PLAY