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# GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Mira van Dijk

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Mira van Dijk

Götterdämmerung 2001

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# Götterdämmerung

or

## How Schmoolik got lost in the forest

Fancy stage play in one act

**The scene:** *A thick forest with leaves, fallen branches and twigs scattered upon the ground. Autumn colors. In the background a rock. One hears the murmur of a stream.*

**Cast:** SIEGFRIED, SCHMOOLIK.

SIEGFRIED dressed in skins with a rope around his waist, sits on the ground next to a tree, sifting through the thick carpet of leaves. Next to him a large sword leans against a tree trunk. SCHMOOLIK appears in modern business suit with a briefcase in his hand. Disoriented, he wanders, peering through the trees, hoping to find a path. After a while he realizes that he is not alone and walks shyly toward SIEGFRIED. But SIEGFRIED remains seated, deep in thought, with his head hanging and his hands in the leaves, unaware of SCHMOOLIK's presence.

SCHMOOLIK (*hesitantly*): Good day, sir. Please forgive me. . . I think I'm lost. You seem to know this area. Perhaps you would be so kind



as to direct me to the path. I really don't know how to find my way out.

SIEGFRIED (*Looks at SCHMOOLIK for the first time from head to toe. He appears to be extremely surprised.*): But... where have you come from?... where are you going?... who are you?

SCHMOOLIK: Look, to be honest, I want to leave this forest as quickly as possible. I'm very frightened here. I come from far away, from the East, where this kind of forest, in which one can so easily get lost, does not exist. Where I come from we have mainly desert... loneliness... as far as the eye can see. (*He offers SIEGFRIED his hand.*) I am SCHMOOLIK, from the travel agency *The Wide World*. But who are you?

SIEGFRIED (*Takes his hand, but remains deep in thought.*): I am SIEGFRIED, WOTAN's grandson, and I sit here awaiting my destiny.

SCHMOOLIK, *frightened, tries to leave.*

SIEGFRIED (*holds him back*): Do not be afraid of my destiny, SCHMOOLIK.

SCHMOOLIK: If both of us could get away from here, out of the forest, then perhaps your destiny would not be able to get hold of you, and both of us could escape without being harmed.

*From the background, sounds of the forest: owls, the cuckoo, and snapping twigs.*



SCHMOOLIK (*looks around with fear*): This forest is frightening! I'll never come back here again! (*He sits on the ground, next to SIEGFRIED.*) I thought that I'd be able to do some business here. Do you know, SIEGFRIED, how hot it is for my people in the desert? My plan was to come here, to this cool forest, to organize bus tours. I saw them, my people, getting off of the bus, breathing in the fresh air, picking mushrooms and, of course, getting hungry.

SIEGFRIED *looks at SCHMOOLIK in surprise.*

SCHMOOLIK: I thought of everything. I was even negotiating with a chicken breeder and a mushroom grower. Look, precisely here (pointing to the space between two trees), I planned on building a country restaurant. A barn decorated with branches, and inside, people sitting on tree trunks. Chicken and mushrooms grilled on coals. Of course a family with two children would only have to pay for one. Imagine, SIEGFRIED, how they would push and shove into my barn. You don't think that they would just wait patiently outside in a queue? Pushing, shouting, jostling, stepping on each other's toes. But this wouldn't shock me. Organization! Everything is solved by good organization. I'd let them sit at a table for half an hour, no longer. Then I'd take them to the river, over there behind the rocks, because by then they'd be thirsty. Rhine water tastes good, but I'd rather have sold them *Cola*.

SCHMOOLIK *sighs, looking at the exact place where his*



*restaurant was to have stood.*

SIEGFRIED: But SCHMOOLIK, do you realize where you are? This forest is overflowing with hate. Since ancient times giants, dragons and ugly dwarfs have done battle here, each trying to grab the Rhinegold in order to dominate the whole world.

SCHMOOLIK: The Rhinegold? What is that? Where is it? Who has it?

SIEGFRIED: Long ago, when legends came to be and the world was still innocent, the Rhine hid its glittering gold in the depths of its waters. Its daughters had to guard the gold, and for those who were willing to forsake love, a ring could be forged, giving them power over the entire world. But it came to pass that the Rhinedaughters were not careful enough, and ALBERICH, an evil ugly dwarf, abandoned love and stole the gold. This is how the tragedy within my race began. They all began killing each other; gods, people, dwarfs and dragons, here in this forest, in the hope of getting hold of the golden ring. The forest is dense, the trees old, the rocks hostile, and spirits can easily hide here.

*SCHMOOLIK gripped with fear, collapses, clinging desperately to a tree trunk.*

SCHMOOLIK: Believe it or not, I think it's better in the desert, even though it's very hot, and you can't find shade. But it seems to me that



too much shade is not good either. Shade hides evil and confusion. That frightens me. I have traveled through the desert for a long time, without ever encountering a single ugly dwarf or dragon. They have no place to hide, and besides that, they would melt from the heat. In our desert there are no trees to obstruct your view, only sand, stones, blue sky and sun. You can see forever. Your thinking becomes clear, and as you look into the depths of the desert, light penetrates your brain and you suddenly realize how simple things are. This is inspiration. Whenever my forefathers had to solve a problem, they would go into the desert to think. There, and only there, can one achieve enlightenment. But tell me, SIEGFRIED, whatever happened to the gold?

SIEGFRIED: As I told you, ALBERICH the ugly dwarf forged the Rhinegold into a ring, with the intention of wresting power away from the gods, and thus banning love from the world. But this distressed WOTAN, the great god, who decided, at any cost, to liberate the ring from the evil hand of ALBERICH, returning it to the Rhinedaughters, thereby bringing love back to earth. Unfortunately, this task could be fulfilled neither by WOTAN, nor by any of the other gods. Therefore a new hero had to be born. A hero that knew no fear and was able to love. I am he, the hero SIEGFRIED!

SCHMOOLIK: It would appear that you have a bit too much on your mind, SIEGFRIED.

SIEGFRIED: Yes, indeed. This task lies heavily on my shoulders,



considering that no one consulted me on the matter. They bore me with the sole purpose of ridding the world of this curse, and of returning the ring. For you must know that since the ring was stolen from the Rhinedaughters, it has brought a curse on all who touch it: those who possess it are devoured by trouble, and those who seek it, are consumed by envy. Much is expected of me, all deeds of heroism: to be a brave and skillful swordsman, to slay dragons, evil dwarfs and other devilish beings, not to mention braving fire in order to wake WOTAN's daughter, BRUNHILDE, from her sleep.

SCHMOOLIK: To wake up BRUNHILDE? To be quite honest, I wouldn't advise it, braving fire for such a thing. You never know in which mood women will awake, especially after a deep sleep. But where does this BRUNHILDE sleep?

SIEGFRIED: On a rock, surrounded by fire. This was WOTAN's punishment, because she disobeyed her father and saved my mother from destruction before my birth. WOTAN had also punished my parents, SIEGMUND and SIEGLINDE, because they had loved each other. SIEGMUND and SIEGLINDE were, unknown to themselves, twin brother and sister. And to make matters worse SIEGLINDE was already married to another!

SCHMOOLIK: Sounds very complicated. I smell disaster.

SIEGFRIED: It was indeed a disaster, because WOTAN the intolerant, believed that only death could wipe out this sin. BRUNHILDE, knowing



that SIEGLINDE was with child, chose to disregard her father's decision, saving SIEGLINDE from death, thus allowing me to be born. WOTAN then banished her to the rock, where she sunk into a deep sleep surrounded by a sea of flames, awaiting the arrival of a true hero. He would have to brave the fire and awaken her through the power of his love. There is still a lot for me to do SCHMOOLIK. I now sit here against this tree catching my breath from the bloody past of my forefathers, before gathering courage to throw myself into the flames. I must go and awaken BRUNHILDE soon, for she is guarding the ring, and as I have told you, enemies are ready to tear it out of her hands. As you can see, SCHMOOLIK, everything revolves around this golden ring. It is a valuable possession, which – once in the wrong hands – causes only misery. One must carefully guard valuable possessions, day and night; all generations must do so, because only in the right hands can they bring luck and happiness. Arduous is the task of the guard!

SCHMOOLIK: Don't give up, SIEGFRIED. Don't lose courage. Preserve with care that which is valuable. Look, we also have kept something for many centuries: two stone tablets.

SIEGFRIED: Golden stone tables?

SCHMOOLIK: No, stone, stone tables.

SIEGFRIED: Cut from stone?

SCHMOOLIK: Chiseled and engraved with Ten Commandments.



SIEGFRIED: And do you have to guard these stones? Do you need to protect them from enemies who would like to take them from you? Do you guard the stones?

SCHMOOLIK: No, we guard the commandments.

SIEGFRIED: Tell me, SCHMOOLIK, with whom have *you* fought?

SCHMOOLIK: Only with myself.

*In the distance a horn signal sounds, coming ever closer, until it grows into a fanfare. It is the leitmotif of the ring from Wagner's cycle. SIEGFRIED rises, but remains deep in thought.*

SIEGFRIED: Duty calls. I am afraid that WOTAN will retract his orders only upon our death.

SCHMOOLIK: But where is WOTAN? Maybe you could negotiate with him to lighten your burden.

SIEGFRIED: WOTAN dwells with the other gods in the fortress Walhalla high in the mountains. The giants FAFNER and FASOLT built this fortress for him, and as a reward they demanded the goddess of eternal youth, FREIA. She is the one who grew the apples that the gods had to eat daily in order to remain young. You should know that WOTAN keeps watch over the order on earth; therefore he had to keep his word, and according to the agreement, give FREIA to the two



giants. But as soon as FAFNER, FASOLT and FREIA left Walhalla the gods began to age. You see, it was the apples. There were no more apples.

SCHMOOLIK: But SIEGFRIED, everyone knows that the apple is a very dangerous fruit. I will tell you what once happened to my people because of an apple. In the beginning my forefathers lived in a beautiful garden. But that was long ago when the world had just been created. This garden was so beautiful that it was a joy to behold, wherever one looked. Delicious fruit hung on the trees, desirable to look at and good to eat. Here lived a man and a woman who could spend the whole day, without care, enjoying the wonderful fragrances and bathing in the river which ran through the garden. When they became hungry they had only to pluck fruit from the trees which hung above. And the owner of this wonderful garden was our Lord, *God*, who had made everything in the garden *Himself*. From above he watched over *His* garden.

SIEGFRIED: So this god is a sort of WOTAN.

SCHMOOLIK: Yes, only *He* doesn't share his power with other gods, and doesn't live in a fortress.

SIEGFRIED: But where does he live?

SCHMOOLIK: Everywhere.

SIEGFRIED (*thoughtfully*): That means that he could also be somewhere here in this forest.



SCHMOOLIK: You are right, SIEGFRIED. But don't be frightened. *He* won't get mixed up in WOTAN's affairs. *He* has his hands full with *His* own business. And as I already told you, *God* created this wonderful garden to please the man and the woman. However, *He* placed a restriction on them: they could eat freely from every tree, with the exception of the tree of Good and Evil. Should they partake of this fruit, they would die. However, on this very tree in the middle of the garden, grew the most beautiful and desirable apples. Just looking at the apples made your mouth water. The man, in awe of the interdict, only looked at the apples and left them alone. However one day the woman engaged in a conversation with a cunning snake that happened to be passing. The snake saw how the woman looked with desire at the apple, and convinced her in a seductive voice that she could eat the apple without encountering any problems. She certainly wouldn't die. The woman needed to hear no more. She immediately bit into the apple, noticed how good it tasted and gave some to the man. Now you must understand SIEGFRIED that our *God* knows no forgiveness, and as soon as *He* saw that they had broken the commandment, *He* became enraged, and immediately punished them. *He* put a curse on the snake: that it would crawl on his belly and would eat dust until the end of its days. The man and woman were exiled from the beautiful, cool garden. This is how we found ourselves in the desert.

*Two black ravens fly in circles above the heads of SIEGFRIED and SCHMOOLIK, only to disappear behind the*



rocks. From deep within the forest sounds the signal of a 'steerhorn'. It is SIEGFRIED's leitmotif.

SIEGFRIED (*stands up; at the same time both disturbed and excited*): Listen SCHMOOLIK, listen well! Do you hear the call of the horn? The forest is awakening from a deep sleep.

SIEGFRIED (*looks at his hands; speaking to his hands*): You have rested enough! Seize your sword; let blood flow, enough indifference! SCHMOOLIK, do you hear the horn? It makes my heart pound, my blood course through my veins, and my patience wither. I must heed its call and go to battle.

SCHMOOLIK (*still seated on the ground, pulls SIEGFRIED's sleeve*): Stay calm, SIEGFRIED, don't let yourself be carried away. We too have such a thing in the desert, only it is not a steers horn, it is a rams horn and its sound is piercing.

SIEGFRIED: And what do you do... how do you feel when you hear it?

SCHMOOLIK: My heart becomes warm and tears come to my eyes.

SIEGFRIED: And do you also go to battle?

SCHMOOLIK: Yes, within myself.

SIEGFRIED (*sits down again, grabs his sword and strokes it*): My heroic duties weigh heavily upon my shoulders, as does the past. I



have roamed for a long time through the forest, trying to understand its secrets. Just as you cannot penetrate the forest, so you cannot penetrate the entanglements of fate. Each time I think that I have found the thread of fate, it breaks before my fingers can grasp it. I am tired, SCHMOOLIK, very, very tired. The deeper I go into the forest, the farther I stray from the truth. I can't find it, the forest hides it, and I am sure that I will perish before I am able to understand anything.

SCHMOOLIK: In other words, you are also lost in this forest! And I thought that you could help me.

SIEGFRIED: The forest will disappear, will be destroyed before we learn its secrets. I will be killed by HAGEN's sword, and a giant fire will consume Walhalla along with the forest. Nothing will stand in the Rhine's way, its waters will rise and flood the land, erasing all signs of hatred, curse and sin. (*In the background we hear the majestic chords of the death-knell motive, the motive of the irreversible fate of the **Götterdämmerung**.*) The Rhine daughters will rediscover the ring in the ashes of the dusk. They will again swim happily in the Rhine, as the gold will have been returned to the place where it belongs. Peace will return to Earth. Be assured, SCHMOOLIK, the forest will disappear, consumed by flames.

SCHMOOLIK (*jumps up and calls cheerfully*): Excellent! That means that we will easily be able to escape from here. We won't be held



back by so much vegetation. As far as I am concerned I will return directly to the desert.

*Black birds force their way onto the stage. They seem to be alarmed, flying uneasily above the heads of SIEGFRIED and SCHMOOLIK. They make scratching sounds, black feathers flutter between the twigs and leaves.*

SIEGFRIED (*stands up, listening attentively. He frowns. After the birds have left the stage he turns emphatically to SCHMOOLIK*): In the forest I came into the world: here I learned to forge a sword, to fight against powerful enemies, but I also learned the language of the birds. Have you noticed, SCHMOOLIK, how hasty the birds were? They came to announce their departure. Now that the fortress and the forest are going to disappear, the birds will have to leave for other places, for distant destinations farther east. A rumor is circulating among the birds that the desert is going to blossom, that perhaps forests will appear.

*Upon hearing this, SCHMOOLIK sinks to the ground – distraught –, grasping his head in his hands.*

*Curtain.*

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