

Imre Madách

**Tragedy
of the
Man**

 Publio

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FIRST SCENE

The Heaven. The LORD encircled by glory is sitting on his throne. ANGELS are kneeling. The four ARCHANGELS are standing near the throne. Great brightness.

ANGELS' CHOIR

Eternal glory be to our God on High,
Let him be prais'd by the earth and heaven,
Who created the Universe by one word
And his glance has govern'd the end again.
5He is the power, knowledge and happiness,
Our share's only his shade cast over us,
We adore Him for his endless patronage
For having this allotment in his light.
Yes, the great Thought has become incarnated,
10Complete is, as a whole, the Creation
The Lord waits at his holy hassock from all
Living creations their due devotion.

THE LORD

The work, the great work is now completed,
Machine is running, the creator rests.
15It will move for some millions of years
Till one of its cogs will need some repairs.
Up! Guardian spirits of my world! Arise!
Let you start your never-ending orbit.
As you whizzing past under my feet
20Let me be with you highly delighted.

(The spirits of stars rolling single, double star spheres, comets and nebulae of different size and colour rush in front of the throne. Music of spheres in a subdued voice.)

ANGELS' CHOIR

What a stately flare-ball's coming
In its brightness pretentiously,
Though it serves to a modest group
Of stars just now unconsciously.
25Like a lamp of glimmery light
This tiny star twinkles only
Yet millions of creatures
Are living on its globe lonely. -
Two balls fight against each other

30To disjoint and to encounter
And this struggle is the grand curb
In its orbit it to govern. -
That will rush down with a thunder,
You look at it with some fearing,
35In its bosom millions find
Happiness and peaceful being. -
How simple's it - though it some time
Will be lustrous star of the love,
As solace to the earthly life
40Be it protected from above. -
There are small worlds all to be born,
Here's the coffin for extinction,
Warning voice to all conceited
For despondings' stimulation. -
45Disturbing all comes the comet
With exorbitant appearing,
And its path becomes just order'd
When hears the Lord's voice of warning. -
Come along, thou young nice spirit
50With your globe that's always changing,
Who both sorrow and the light-pall
With a white guise are exchanging.
Be bless'd by God! And go ahead
Without disbar: that is your fate,
55In your tiny quiet realm
Great ideas will militate.
Though smile and tear like the winter
And like spring will you inundate,
Light and shade will be together
60On it the Lord's favour and rage.

(Spirits of stars marched off.)

GABRIEL ARCHANGEL

Thou, who the endless space have measur'd
And created in it the Substance,
Thou, who by one word generated
All the mightiness and the distance:
65Hosanna be to Thee, Thought! *(Throws himself down.)*

MICHAEL ARCHANGEL

Who unifies the eternally
Changing and the unchanging nations,
Creating infinity and time
And entities and generations:

70Hosanna to Thee, Power! (*Throws himself down.*)

RAPHAEL ARCHANGEL

Thou, who irradiates blessedness
Bringing to consciousness the body,
And allows piously the whole world
Your wisdom forever to study:

75Hosanna to Thee, Goodness! (*Throws himself down.*)

(*Pause.*)

THE LORD

You, Lucifer, are silent, proudly stand,
Or you have no words to my laudation?
Or you dislike what I have created?

LUCIFER

And what to like in it? That some matter
80Endowed with different characteristics
That before being manifested maybe
You did not foresee in them and if yes,
You possess now no power to change them,
Being moulded in some balls by fits and starts,
85These attract, pursue, repel one another
And become conscious in some sorry worms,
Till all will be fill'd and all will be cool'd
And there remains the neutral slag only. - -
Man will certainly learn this by watching
90And will simulate it in his kitchen. -
You put into your great kitchen your man
And of his bungling you take no notice,
He brews and fancies himself to be God.
But when he wastes and damages the brew
95You will fly into a passion afterwards.
Albeit, what do you expect for dilettants? -
And for what purpose is the whole creation?
You wrote a nice ode to your own glory,
Put it into a useless machinery
100And don't lose your interest endlessly
In the same song always with the same tune.
Is this toy worthy of such a greybeard
That may divert only infantile children?
Where only a pugged spark imitates
105His Lord, but is his misbirth, not his wraith;
Fate and freedom are hunting each other:

And the concordant judgement is missing. -

THE LORD

I can only be respected, not be judged.

LUCIFER

I can pass nothing except my essence.

(Pointing to the angels.)

110 You are praised enough by this caddish crowd,

As to praise you is only fair of them.

You gave birth to them as light to shadow,

But I've been living since eternity.

THE LORD

Insolent! Were not you born by matter,

115 Where did your power, you exist before?

LUCIFER

This my question would be to You, as well.

THE LORD

I have planned it since eternity

And lived inside me what's now created.

LUCIFER

And did not you feel gap among your thoughts

120 That encumbered all life you wanted

And forced you to perform the creation?

Lucifer has been the name of this gap,

Who has been the spirit of negation.

You triumph'd over me since it's my fate

125 As to go under always in my fights,

But revive and be reinforc'd again.

You gave birth to matter - I won the space,

Life is accompanied always by death,

Happiness always by deep depression,

130 Light always by shade and so doubt by hope. -

That's all. I stand in all time where you are:

Thus, who knows you so, should I respect you?

THE LORD

Get out! Rebellious spirit! Get out!

I could annihilate you but I won't,

135Hunting out of all the mental relations
You have to struggle in the dirtiness,
In painful feeling of your bare loneliness
You must be anguished by the endless thought:
That it is useless to shake your shackles,
140Your fight is illusory against the Lord.

LUCIFER

No! You daren't jostle me out of the way
Like wretched tool that became superfluous. -
The creation is ours. I do clamour
For my share.

THE LORD (*with irony*)

Well, be as you want it. Look at
145The Earth. Among the trees of Eden, now
Just in the middle the two slender fruit-trees
I damn and these will be yours forever.

LUCIFER

You are hard-fisted, why you're powerful Lord,
And I need only the soil underfoot,
150Where negation gains only a foothold,
It will certainly overthrow your world. (*Starts to exit.*)

ANGELS' CHOIR

Be off the presence of our Lord! You damn'd!
153Hosanna to Him who has us govern'd. -

SECOND SCENE

In the Paradise. In the middle the trees of knowledge and of immortality. ADAM and EVE come, different animals surround them with gentle confidence. Glory radiates through the open gate of Heaven and the soft harmonic voice of angels' choir is heard. Sunny day.

EVE

To live, to live: how sweet, how delightful!

ADAM

155 And to feel to be lord of everything.

EVE

To feel that we are protected from above
And we have to give for this only pure love
To Him who provides us all these delights.

ADAM

Being subordinated: that's your style. -
160 I'm thirsty, Eve. Look, how temptingly
This fruit is smiling.

EVE

I'll pluck one of them.

THE LORD'S VOICE

Stop there! Look out! I gave you the whole Earth,
Adam, but keep clear of the two trees there,
Their bewitching fruits serve other powers
165 And will surely die who does savour it. -
Here the reddening bunch of grapes you find,
There you get gentle shade with tranquillity
In outrageous heat of the shining noontide.

ADAM

That's strange command but seems to be true.

EVE

170 Why are these trees nicer than others or why
Are these forbidden?

ADAM

Why is the sky blue?
Why is the bosk green? - It is so, it's enough.
Let's follow this warning, come, come with me, Eve.

(They seat themselves in a bower.)

EVE

Come to my arms and I will gently fan you.

(Strong flurry, LUCIFER appears among the leaves.)

ADAM

175Ah! What's that! I have not heard something like this,
Like an inimical and strange force would
Suddenly spring on us.

EVE

I am trembling.
The heavenly voice became silent, too.

ADAM

Here in your arms it seems to me to hear it.

EVE

180And I find it in your bright eyes, Adam,
When glory above will become overcast.
Ah, where could I find it besides you, where?
Who was born only due to your craving
Like in its flood of light the princely sun
185Takes the colour of water - as lonely not
To be in infinite universe - plays
With it, enjoys to be accompanied,
Forgetting generously that it is
Only the pale image of its own fire
190That would disappear together with it.

ADAM

Do not say that, Eve, don't put me to shame.
What's the voice when nobody understands?
And tell me what is beam without colour?
What would I be when not be mirror'd
195In you, like both the echo and the flowers

In which I can adore only myself?

LUCIFER

Why do I listen to this mild flirting?
I look away otherwise I'll be ashamed:
The cold and self-seeking reasoning will
200 Become envious of the artless mind.

(A tiny bird begins to sing on a twig.)

EVE

Adam, listen to it, tell me, do you
Perceive the song of this merry lover?

ADAM

I listen'd to the babbling of the creek
And found it to sing the same merry song.

EVE

205 Darling, this is wonderful harmony,
These diverse words and one reason only. -

LUCIFER

Why do I tarry? Let me start to work.
I swore to seduce them, they should be perish'd.
And now I'm doubting again and again,
210 Is it not useless to fight against them
With fascinating arms of the knowledge
And ambition, against their emotion
That like an asylum is protecting
And supports who's ruin'd. But away with care!
215 Only none but the brave deserve the fair!

(Strong flurry again. LUCIFER occurs before the frightened human couple. The glory grows dark. LUCIFER laughs.)

LUCIFER

What do you gaze at? *(To EVE who starts to run.)*
Stop! You graceful lady!
Let me admire you for a short moment.

(EVE stops and takes courage.)

LUCIFER *(aside)*

This pattern will repeat for million times. (*Aloud.*)
Adam, you fear?

ADAM

You? You shabby fellow?

LUCIFER (*aside*)

220He is good forefather of the proud mankind. (*Aloud*)
Hail to thee! Brother-in-mind!

ADAM

Who you are?
From where you come? From above or below?

LUCIFER

As you like it. It's all the same for me.

ADAM

I didn't know that man's living except us.

LUCIFER

225Oho! There's a lot that you do not know and
Will not forever. Or the kind old man
Would create you from this penurious clay
To give a share you in the Universe?
You praise Him, and He keeps you in exchange,
230He says: take this and be afraid of that,
He guards and governs you as a brute beast;
To have cognition, you do not have need.

ADAM

To cogitate? - Do you think I do not?
And I do not feel the blessing sunshine,
235Pleasant happiness of my existence,
And endless benevolence of my Lord
Who created me as God of this realm?

LUCIFER

Maybe small worms that are eating your fruit
And the eagle that swoops on the tiny bird
240Hold both the same opinion of these.
Or why you would be nobler than others?
That's a gleam glimmering in your dim mind,

That is a stirring move of an endless force,
Like tiny drops of wave that having flash'd
245For a moment, fall back imperceptibly
Into dark grey depth of their common bed. -
Maybe, there will be one thing, yes, the thought
That's slumbering in your unconscious heart,
This would emancipate you entrusting to
250Your self-effort to choose the right or wrong,
To govern your fate only by yourself:
This would absolve you from the providence.
But it's better for you to flourish like a
Dung-worm in the mild lap of your own small scope
255And to burn out with your life without knowledge. -
It's easy to resign to your confession;
It's nobler but hard to be your own master. -

ADAM

You tell us great words, these make my head swim.

EVE

I'm keen on these, you tell nice and new things.

LUCIFER

260But knowledge in itself is not enough
To be realized in magnificent works.
Immortality is also needed.
What the short life is able to produce?
These two trees possess this ability
265And Lord has forbade you to have their taste.
If you would taste it you would know as Lord
And your grace would be agelessly preserved.

EVE

Our Lord has been even cruel to us!

ADAM

And maybe you betray?

(Glory is somewhat clarified.)

HEAVENLY CHOIR

Woe is thee, world,
270The true negation is haunting.

THE LORD'S VOICE

Man! Look out!

ADAM

What's that voice again?

LUCIFER

Wind is shaking the twigs.
Help! My forces!
Help! Elements!
To bag the man
275For all events!

(Flurry, the glory grows dark.)

These two trees are mine.

ADAM

Who are you after all?
Since you seem to be similar to us.

LUCIFER

Look at the eagle as wheeling among clouds,
Look at this mole rooting down in the soil,
280Both of them are of different horizons.
The spiritual world lies out of your scene
And man does mean you the highest known grade.
Dog takes only a dog as its idol and
Honours you with its companionship.
285But as you are endlessly scornful of it
And you overhang it like its ill fate
Hailing down blessing and curses on its head,
So we, stately sharers of the world of
Spirits, have been superior to you.

ADAM

290You would be one of these higher powers?

LUCIFER

Oh yes, most powerful among the mighty,
I stood there, close to the throne of the Lord
And got my share of his greatest glory.

ADAM

Why did you not remain in the bright heaven?
295Why did you descend to this vale of dust?

LUCIFER

I had enough there of the second site,
Of the monotonous regular life,
The immature choir with infantile voice
That always praises but has no free choice.
300I want struggle and fight against the old
That generates new power and new world,
Where the soul may be in itself mighty
And where me the brave can accompany.

ADAM

Lord said that he will strictly punish us
305When do not follow the way that He has mark'd.

EVE

Why would he do? - When He set out the way
For us to go along as He it wanted,
His creatures are certainly made so
Not to be obedient to vicious bents.
310Or why He put us above deep whirl with
Dizzy head, being sentenc'd to perdition. -
Yet, if He figur'd in to be sinful
Like the storm occurs between sunshiny days,
Who believes more sinful while it jangles
315Than this for its animating ardour?

LUCIFER

Well, the first philosopher has appear'd. -
You'll have, my dear, a lot of inherents
Who will debate this in million manners;
Many of them will stray wobbly in madhouse,
320Many will shy off, none of them get home.
Now, give up this meaningless meditation,
All the things bear many-many colours,
Who does want to know it all in detail,
Will know less than he knew at the first moment,
325And will have no time to decide what's it.
Meditation is the death of action. -

EVE

Well, I decided to pluck one of these fruits.

ADAM

The Lord damn'd it.

(LUCIFER laughs)

But never mind. Pick it.

Come what may, let us be as wise as our
330 Lord: to know everything.

(First EVE then ADAM taste the apple of knowledge.)

EVE

And above all

For ever young.

LUCIFER

This way, come, here you are,

This is the tree of immortality.

Come along! Be quick!

(He draws them to the other tree, a CHERUB blocks their way with a blazing sword.)

CHERUB

Off with you, sinners!

THE LORD'S VOICE

Adam, Adam! You have abandon'd me,

335 I also leave you. See what you are alone.

EVE

We are lost.

LUCIFER

You despair?

ADAM

No, not at all.

That's the shiver of walking of my mind. -

Let's get out from here, my lady, get out!

This land is desolate and unwonted.

HEAVENLY CHOIR

340 Ah! Be the whole world tear-stain'd wherever,

341Lie's winning - the Earth is lost forever.

THIRD SCENE

Picturesque landscape outside the Paradise. Small, clumsy wooden hovel. ADAM sticks pegs for closure, EVE builds a bower. LUCIFER

ADAM

This is mine. Instead of the roomy world
This scene will be my home. I'll cultivate
And will guard it from all the wild animals
345And will compel it to give me harvest.

EVE

I will build a bower similar to the
Former and so I try to retrieve for us
The lost Paradise.

LUCIFER

Ah! How great words you
Have said. Family and private ownership
350Will be the twofold promoter of the world,
That generates all pleasures and torments.
These two ideas will grow unbroken
While producing homeland and industry,
All that is generous and magnificent
355That engorges its own individuals.

ADAM

You tell mysteries. You have promised me
Knowledge, I gave up the pleasures of instinct
That though struggling hardly, to be mighty.
And what's the outcome.

LUCIFER

Do you not feel it?

ADAM

360I feel that as my Lord left me plunging
Into the bare loneliness by empty hands,
I left him, too. I became myself to
My own God and all what I'll attain, will be
Justly mine. This is my power and self-pride.

LUCIFER (*aside*)

365 You vain pawn, you flout now the heaven proudly,
Let us see your heart when thunders flash loudly.

EVE

And it's just only proper pride of mine
To be ancestress of the whole mankind.

LUCIFER (*aside*)

Glorious is her thought, that's really,
370 To hand down evil sinful misery.

ADAM

What should I thank to Him? My bare existence?
But this being if would be worthy of
Its share, will be the outcome of my labours.
The delight to drink a glass of water
375 I have to deserve by the glow of my thirst,
The price of savouring a kiss is where
It is wandering: in deep despondency.
Though the mask of gratefulness is off me
And became free to govern my own fate
380 And to deteriorate what I've planned
Soundly again and again - maybe your
Help should not have been truly provided,
I could have made it alone, by my force.
And you did not save me from the heavy bond
385 That binds my body to this dusty ground.
Though I don't know its name, I feel what's it,
Maybe it's a thread - and it's all the more
Infamous - that restraints my proud being.
Look, I try to spring but I'm falling back,
390 My eyes and my ears are out of their duty
When I sound secrets of the remoteness;
If my soul wants to reach higher levels
Hunger forces to be humiliated
And return again to the trampled matter.

LUCIFER

395 This bond is stronger than I ever be.

ADAM

You are a very infirm spirit, yes,

If this obscure thin spider-work, this nothing
That cannot be seen by the millions
Who gambol with the feeling of freedom
400In this net being suspected by some
Higher spirits only, is flouting you.

LUCIFER

And only this, this is able to flout me
'Cause it's spirit like me. Or do you think
That though being still and of hidden act
405It's not strong? - Don't think, it's sitting in mist
Who staggers and shakes and creates a world:
Its visual appearance would swim your head.
Only the man-made things curtail'd by the
Limited life are glinting and rattling.

ADAM

410This running operation let me see
- For a moment only, I'm strong, you know -
How it acts on me who in myself am
So alone but am the totality.

LUCIFER

"I am" - it's mad word. You were and will be,
415Life is eternal ring of being and death.
But let you look 'round and see with spirits' eyes.

ADAM (*What he says in the following, become visible*)

What a flow is so springing up around me
Prograding continuously upwards,
Aspires high, where it bifurcates and runs
420As a storm up to the poles.

LUCIFER