

ACT ONE

Scene One

PRELUDE.

CHORUS of DAWN SPIRITS, ( invisible.)

Ho, Mother, awake.  
 Break thy slumber, Mother of All.  
 See again the sacred Mystery.  
 The night flies before the dawn,  
 The east pales with tender light.  
 Softly, softly stirs the breath of morn;  
 All the leaves move to greet the wind.  
 Earth, waken! Breathe the Spirit's life;  
 Earth, answer, answer to the call,  
 Renew thy life in the sacred dawn.

( The curtain rises disclosing a rolling prairie with low hills in the distance. Overhead the pearly sky of early dawn is lit with faint stars. On the left is a knoll with a low thicket of bushes on its right side. Upon this knoll, Aedeta stands in impressive dignity.)

AEDETA, ( with feeling.)

Lo, the dawn, the starry blue dawn  
 Shining softly on the earth.  
 So love shines on my heart,  
 For love dispels all darkness  
 And glorifies the life.

In the still, blue dawn I sing, --  
 Dawn, fresh as a soaring eagle's wing,  
 Dawn, soft as the breast of a dove.  
 Like an eagle is the Soul of my love,  
 An eagle soul!

In the still, blue dawn I sing.  
 Would her soul might hear me and know!

( As if hearing a rustle, he looks to the right, then vanishes into the thicket. Nemaha enters and springs lightly up the knoll, throwing down his morning catch of fish. The dawn deepens as he sings.)

NEMAHA, ( with joyous fervor.)

She whom I love is fair, fair as dawn,  
 The red dawn in the bright Moon of Green Leaves.

( He looks around exultingly.)

Sweet is her voice as the pleasant waters,  
 Lithe is her form as the birch in the forest  
 Where the young fawn strays under silent boughs,  
 And the glow in her eyes is as warm as the sun.  
 Light are her steps, light as wind,  
 The cool wind on the new grass of springtime.  
 She whom I love is gay, gay as spring.  
 She whom I love is fair, fair as dawn.  
 She is the dawn and the springtime!

( Aedeta emerges from his hiding-place and advances joyfully to greet his friend. Nemaha stands entranced, arm out-flung.)

AEDETA.

Nemaha!

NEMAHA, ( surprised.)

Aedeta!

AEDETA.

I knew not that thou lovest.

NEMAHA, ( brightly.)

Surely; and though?

AEDETA, ( with dignity.)

Before thee, I sang in the dawn.

( They smile at each other and throw themselves down on the knoll. A lover and his maid cross the rear of the stage. The lover plays his flute of sumac wood; the maid carries her water jar. The friends watch them. Nemaha turns to Aedeta.)

NEMAHA, ( with curiosity.)

Thy choice?

AEDETA, ( with quiet emotion.)

I love a maid  
Single among the maidens of our tribe;  
Proud of soul; a strong mate for a warrior,  
Yet mild and very kind;  
As gentle as the breeze of summer twilight.  
And thou?

NAMAHA, ( with enthusiasm.)

Beauty I love. The flashing eye,  
The curving brow, the raven hair,  
The willow grace, the fawn-like tread.

AEDETA, ( puzzled.)

She whom I love hath beauty also.

NEMAHA, ( with decision.)

She whom I love is good as well as fair.

AEDETA, ( still more puzzled.)

Can one tribe possess two such maidens?

NEMAHA, ( in sudden suspicion.)

Thou lovest?

AEDETA, ( proudly.)

Ramala.

NEMAHA, ( in stricken amazement.)

Ramala! I, too.

( They spring to their feet and regard each other silently  
a long time. Then Aedeta approaches Nemaha.)

AEDETA, ( expressively.)

Let not this come between us.  
Friends were our fathers, warriors together;  
At peace with each other they lived and loved  
And, still at peace, they died.  
Shall their sons have bitter words?

Friends are our mothers,  
Serving in their tents in the winter of life;  
Shall their sons have dissension?

Together we vied in youthful sport,  
Together we learned to guide our arrows' flight,  
Together we longed to prove our might.  
Today we go upon the warpath.  
Let it be as friends, O Nemaha.

NEMAHA, ( firmly.)

As friends, then, O Aedeta.

AEDETA, ( renounceingly.)

Ramala is thine;  
Not mine the hand to rob a friend.

NEMAHA, ( impulsively.)

Nay. Be thine the maiden, Ramala.

( Aedeta goes to Nemaha and grasps his friend's arm.)

AEDETA, ( calmly.)

Let the maiden choose  
And we abide her choice.

NEMAHA, ( brightening.)

Friends shall we go into battle.

BOTH, ( in exultant excitement.)

Ha ya hi-ee!

( The first ray of the rising sun shows in the east.  
The friends address the luminary reverently.)

NEMAHA and AEDETA, ( in reverent exaltation.)

O thou Sun, who movest in the heavens.  
By whose touch all living things survive,  
Great Spirit, hear thou.

We vow a vow by thy rising power.  
Hear us and keep our faith alive;  
As brothers stand so shall we stand,  
In love, in peace, in war, in life,  
In death.  
No warrior's tongue may swear a lie,  
No warrior's head may falsely bow  
We shall be friends unto the grave.  
Wakanda, hear us, hear our vow.

CURTAIN.

ACT ONE

Scene Two

( Late afternoon of the same day. Taene's fine tepee is in the center of the stage with the flaps open. In the Background is seen part of an Indian village. Taene, Ramala, and Megena, handsomely dressed, sit in front. The old woman is beading a moccasin; the cousins are gossiping gaily, Ramala toying with a game of antelope hoofs. Megena's little dog is with her. A group of serenading girls comes past bearing willow wands. They sway in rhythm to the music.)

YOUNG GIRLS.

Wave, wave, tender willow sprays,  
Slow, slow as a nida sways;  
Pause here to tell of the woodland ways,  
Whisper of love and youth and spring  
Breeze, breeze, lightly blowing by,  
Soft, soft as cloudlets floating high,  
Pause here awhile where the maidens sigh,  
Whisper of youth and love and spring.

( Ballet of the Willow Wands)

Wave, wave, tender willow sprays,  
Slow, slow as a nida sways;  
Pause here to tell of the woodland ways,  
Whisper of love and youth and spring.  
Breeze, breeze, lightly blowing by,  
Soft, soft as cloudlets floating high,  
Pause here awhile where the maidens sigh,  
Whisper of youth and love and spring.

( The young girls pass on. Megena jumps up vivaciously and points to Taene's embroidery.)

Megena, ( vivaciously.)

What means this design?  
Never have I seen its like.

( Taene displays her work.)

TAENE.

I work here the Northern Lights  
As a symbol of my vision.

( The two girls examine the moccasin, then return it to Taene. )

TAEENE, ( mystically. )

There is a legend in our tribe  
That northward go the warriors  
Who die in battle.  
The splendid leaping flames that glow  
In mystic beauty thro the winter night  
Above the ice fields in the Land of Snow,

( She rises majestically. )

They are the campfires of departed braves;  
There dwell the Spirits of dead warriors.  
Their glory chills the blood and warns of coming woe.  
When there is to be a battle  
The Northern Lights burn high.  
That is the legend.

In the Moon of Cold Winds I saw them gleam,  
Beautiful but evil portents in the sky.  
Today our warriors go on the warpath.  
Be warned.  
There shall be death in the tribe.  
Forget not my words, --  
There shall be death in the tribe.

( The girls stand awestruck then shake off their feeling  
of dread. )

MEGENA, ( lightly. )

Why speak of death?

( Ramala goes back to her game, chanting alternately the  
names of her two suitors. )

MEGENA, ( gaily. )

Hear me, Ramala, I have a jest for thee.

Wooded me a lover by the spring,  
His mirror lit the morning;  
The feeble heart, the foolish thing,  
He is but fit for scorning.

I told him I should wed a brave,  
A warrior eagle-hearted;  
No beaded dandy did I crave,  
And, oh, the fellow smarted.

( The girls laugh heartily. )

RAMALA, ( looking up. )

What then?

MEGENA.

Into his face his love I flung;  
He blamed me like a martyr.  
And then my dog upon him sprung  
And stole his foxtail garter.

( Ramala catches the hoof on the name "Aedeta." She drops  
the game, clasps her hands, sits still a moment, then rises as in a  
trance. )

RAMALA, ( exultantly. )

Aedeta! To him my life belongs.  
My heart I know at last.

MEGENA and TAEENE, ( Taene is angry and scolds.  
Megena is secretly pleased and only pretends to chide. )

MEGENA, ( pointing her finger. )

Oh, fie! Oh, fie! To choose thy love  
So carelessly in childish play.  
The law which leads the mating dove,  
The heart of maiden should obey.

TAEENE, ( crossly. )

A daughter of mine to choose her love  
By foolish chance in childish play.  
Oh, fie! For shame!

( Megena, happy that Ramala has chosen Aedeta steals a  
little away to hide her joy. )

MEGENA, ( jubilantly. )

Nemaha is free! I love him  
And now he may turn to me.

RAMALA, ( with dignity. )

Chide. chide me not!  
Mysterious the voice  
Which in that simple way hath spoken.  
When failed my heart to choose its mate,  
A sacred Power revealed my love to me  
And I believe.

( Joyfully.)

When o'er the hills of spring my warrior cometh,  
Like sun-kissed waters leaps my heart and sings;  
While all the air about me stirs with young leaves dancing  
As tho' my heart were fluttering on happy beating wings.

O Moon of Gladness, Moon of Dancing Leaves,  
Hide not yet behind the western tree;  
Tho' if thy splendor fade, Moon of all my Loving,  
Let not thy waning take my love from me.

When o'er the hills of spring my warrior cometh,  
When sweet his flute calls across the rosy light,  
Then all my being wakens as the year is waking  
Then all my heart and soul join the year's delight.

( She stands transported. The sun sets, leaving a bright afterglow. Soon the sound of many voices singing is heard in the distance, increasing gradually in volume. Mounted warriors armed with war-clubs, shields, spears and bow and arrows come into view and pass at the rear of the stage. Among them are Aedeta and Nemaha. The serenading maidens follow them.)

WARRIORS.

Hae ha hae ha ah,  
Hae ha ah ha ah,  
Ha ah he tha ah,  
E tha hae tho.

( The warriors pass on. As their voices die away, the village women gather and sing a song of encouragement. Megena, Ramala and Tsene joining in.)

WOMEN, ( encouraging.)

Go forth, Warriors!  
Go ye forth!  
Go forth in strength to conquer.  
Our thoughts go with you into battle,  
Our love shall aid you in the fight.  
Go forth, Warriors,  
Our thoughts and our love shall be with you.  
Go ye forth.

( As the chorus ends, the warriors have passed on, the village women, the girls and Megena following. Tsene goes into the tent and busies herself with the evening work, but Ramala remains outside, motionless, gazing in the direction the war party has taken. Dusk falls, the sounds of the village are faintly heard, fire flies flit about, but she is unconscious of it all. The moon rises. Finally, Tsene comes out and draws down the sides of the tent, pegging the edges down for the night. As she moves about, she watches Ramala anxiously.)

TSENE, ( tenderly.)

Ho-o-o-o, Ramala!  
Chill is the dew-fall,  
Chill airs of the night blow o'er thee.  
Come, Ramala,  
Put by thy grieving!  
Here still is the bosom which bore thee.

RAMALA, ( sorrowfully.)

Not now, not now, my mother.  
Only the night shall know my heart.  
Leave me!

( Megena, grieving for Nemaha, wanders back in the darkness. She unperceived by mother and daughter, she is dimly visible in the moonlight.)

MEGENA, ( lamenting.)

Nemaha has gone,  
Gone on the warpath with the warriors.  
In his heart are love and sorrow,  
But not for me.

I have no right to mourn.  
Anguished my grief I hide  
Lest my love bring me scorn.  
Ah, bitterly I sigh.  
Breaks my heart with slighted love,  
With humbled pride.  
I am ever left forlorn.

I have no right to weep,  
 Still here alone I steal  
 While the lodge dreams in sleep.  
 Ah, to the night I cry.  
 Wounded love can nothing soothe,  
 Can nothing heal.  
 Sorrow I shall ever keep.

( Suddenly she sees Ramala and walks rapidly toward the camp.)

CHORUS of NIGHT SPIRITS, ( invisible.)

From the azure heavens  
 Where the visions dwell,  
 Starry beams bring you dreams.  
 Sleep, O grieving maidens,  
 Slumber soft and deep.  
 Love shall bless your sleep.

Though the dawn shall call them  
 Fleeting to the sky,  
 From above dreams bring love.  
 Sleep and dream, O maidens,  
 While the stars are high.  
 Love shall hear your sigh.

( As the chorus dies away Ramala rouses suddenly.)

RAMALA, ( in sudden decision.)

I shall follow Aedeta  
 To sustain him with my love.

( She starts away. The curtain falls quickly. Horse's  
 hoofs are heard beating the prairie sod and gradually dying away.)

CURTAIN.

ACT TWO

( Mid-morning on a Nebraska plain. The Omaha camp is  
 situated in a wooded spot near a stream bordered with willows. On  
 the right is a large tree-stump. The warriors are seated in a semi-  
 circle.)

PRAYER of the WARRIORS.

Wakanda thanega thae kae,  
 Wakanda thanega thae kae,  
 Wakanda thanega thae kae, acha  
 Thane hinga we tho has tho.

( The warriors perform the ceremony of the offering of  
 the pipes.)

SENTINAL, ( from without.)

Ho, ye warriors, watch ye now,  
 Watch ye!  
 O'er the plain come beating hoofs  
 Along the trail.

( All faces are turned intently in the direction of the  
 sound. Obeska scans his men.)

OBESKA, ( indicating a young brave.)

Kaaela, go thou and ask  
 What menaces the camp.

( Kaaela hurries out to learn the particulars of the  
 warning. He soon returns.)

KAAELA, ( animatedly.)

A sentinel hath espied a rider  
 Approaching camp along the trail.  
 He hath judged by color and by movement  
 That the horse is owned by Weze,  
 Thy noble kinsman.  
 The rider is a woman.

( The warriors look startled. The sentinel enters.)

OBESKA.

Speak, sentinel; who is the woman?  
 What her errand?

SENTINEL, ( with perturbation.)

Ramala is here; the daughter  
Of thy brother Waze.  
She will not disclose her errand,  
Neither will she come into camp.

OBSKA, ( perplexedly.)

Strange!

( The warriors look puzzled. The Chief silently watches the faces of the younger men. Aedeta turns to Nemaha.)

AEDETA, ( with feeling.)

How great the love which brought her through the lonely night  
To thee, O Nemaha.  
Thy friend it is who sends thee to her, Nemaha,  
Go thou!

NEMAHA, ( with answering emotion.)

Thro night, thro dawn, thro morning light,  
The maiden all alone hath sought our camp,  
Lonely.  
But if for love of thee or me,  
We know not now,  
But soon shall know.  
Stay thou! If I return alone,  
Then is the maiden thine.

(Nemaha hurriedly leaves the camp but soon returns, whispers to Aedeta, then falls prone, his face buried in his arms. Aedeta bends, puts his hand caressingly on his friend's shoulder, then goes out. Shortly, he comes back, leading Ramala by the hand. They stand before the Chief. Nemaha rises to his feet.)

RAMALA, ( pleadingly, yet with dignity.)

I have come here alone,  
Do not blame me, I pray.  
--- my love is as pure  
As the sweet air of day.  
I have come here alone,  
Scorn me not with disdain  
For my soul is as white  
As the snow of the plain.

( She turns to the warriors)

You know two warriors wooed me,  
Two noble warriors of our tribe.  
Yet loved I not one above the other,  
For one was grave and tender  
While one was passionate and gay  
And each I loved in different moods.

( She pauses impressively.)

Last eve, by mystic sign, I chose my mate,  
Aedeta.

( She regards her lover with devotion. His look responds.)

Lest he return no more  
But fall before the arrows of our foe,  
I have come unto him.

( She turns to Obska earnestly)

I have followed my love  
The lonely night through;  
I have followed my love,  
Where the dark drank the dew.

( Fearfully)

There were winds in the cedars,--  
In what terror they whispered!  
There were wolves, there were night-birds,  
How eerie their voices,  
How eerie their voices!

AEDETA, ( with great tenderness.)

Last night I rose from dreams  
And walked the forest,  
Longing for thee.

RAMALA, ( more brightly.)

But a soft wind at dawning  
From Shadow Land came,  
And the Red Star of Morning  
Warmed my being with flame.

( Imploringly as if begging mercy. )

I have followed my love  
The lonely night through;  
I have followed my love  
Where the dark drank the dew.  
I have followed my love, --  
Let thy mercy out flow  
For my heart is as pure  
As sun on the snow.

( She bows her head and stands as if awaiting judgment )

AEDETA, ( deeply moved. )

As the sun, beloved.  
On the snow!

( Aedeta and Ramala clasped hands in deep silence,  
broken after a moment by the Chief. )

OBESKA, ( with much kindness. )

Ramala, thy devotion moves me.

AEDETA, ( with fervor. )

Daughter of warriors, love's bond hath claimed thee;  
Proud tho thy spirit, love's pow'r hath tamed thee.

( He draws her nearer to him and looks down upon her tenderly. )

How oft beside thy lodge within the forest,  
I wander'd, lonely, driven by despair;  
With melting flute, with passionate wild singing  
I sent my love-call through the tender air,  
Till all the birds in all the waiting wood-land  
For-sook their notes to sing my yearning strain,  
One aching strain to break thy spell of slumber  
And beat upon thy heart my passion's pain.

( He stands motionless in a fervor of emotion, then bends  
over Ramala, clasping her hand. Their eyes meet. He addresses Obeska. )

Ramala I love, -- her and her kindred.  
Ere I go into battle, I would call her wife.  
Honored Chief, wilt thou not grant it?

OBESKA, ( affectionately. )

Noble and true hast thou ever been, Aedeta,  
Take thou the maiden, Ramala.

AEDETA, ( turning to the warriors. )

Kinsmen, warriors, have you aught  
Against the union?

WARRIORS, ( heartily. )

Be thine the maiden Ramala.

OBESKA, ( rising. )

Marriage is life's promise;  
War is life's destruction.  
Therefore war and marriage go not well together  
And all the traditions and the customs of our tribe  
Forbid the union.

( He pauses impressively sweeping the circle with his glance )

Yet such is my affection for my kinswoman,  
Such my regard for the brave Aedeta,  
That I put aside the customs of my puápae  
And declare the marriage good.  
Man and wife are ye now.

( Solemnly )

Should ill befall the enterprise because of my decision,  
Upon me alone let the evil fall.

WARRIORS, ( joyfully. )

Joy attend thee, Ramala.  
Honor and joy the noble Aedeta.

( A scout rushes in. )

SCOUT, ( breathlessly. )

The foe! They are upon us!

OBESKA, ( in command.)

Quick! To your bows and spears, my men!  
Valorous deeds shall we do this day  
Or die like brave men!

( The warriors hastily string their bows and adjust their shields and spears. Aedeta and Nemaha draw Ramala aside.)

AEDETA, ( tenderly.)

Stand thou here, beloved,  
And watch the conflict from a far.

NEMAHA, ( with solicitude.)

Should the fortunes of battle turn against us  
And we be put to flight,  
Wait not for us  
But look to thine own safety, O Ramala.

AEDETA, ( with emotion,)

Fare well, fare well!

NEMAHA and AEDETA.  
We shall come a'or sunset dyes the west  
Or shall come not at all.

RAMALA, ( courageously.)

Go, my young braves;  
Think not of me, nor fear, nor death.

( Nemaha rushes away to join his companions. Aedeta carries a moment with Ramala. They embrace lingeringly. Then Aedeta puts her gently from him and follows Nemaha. The warriors charge off the stage with shouts and war cries. Soon there come the sounds of battle. Left alone, Ramala prays.)

RAMALA, ( lifting her arms to the Sun.)

O thou Sun,  
Resplendent and high in thy Heaven!  
Hear me, hear me who pray in anguish.  
Thou all powerful, life and strength are thine!  
Look thou with favor upon our warriors  
And grant them victory.

( She lowers her arms.)

Spirits of departed warriors,  
If around me now you hover,  
Hear my cry, hear my cry.  
Strengthen the arms of our noble kinsmen,  
Direct their speeding arrows' flight  
Straight to the hearts of the foe.

O thou Sun!  
Resplendent and high in thy Heaven,  
Hear me, hear me who pray in anguish!  
Look on me with favor upon our warriors.  
Thou all powerful,  
Hear my cry. Ah!

( Kaabela limps into view, wounded -- Ramala hastens to him and begins to attend his wound.)

KAAELA, ( excitedly.)

Look to thy safety, little sister;  
The chance of battle is against us.

( He pauses weakly. Ramala assists him.)

At the very first our men were scattered  
And driven like leaves before the wind.  
Each man now fights for himself  
With the strength of despair.  
Stay not here, little sister,  
Hasten! Hasten home  
Lest harm befall thee!

RAMALA, ( with great anxiety.)

What knowest thou of Aedeta and his friend?  
Are they living or are they dead?

KAAELA, ( sadly.)

Alas, I know not!  
Stay not here, little sister;  
Wait not their return.

RAMALA, ( tenderly.)

Go, brave man, and look to thy wound.  
Here must I stand till I have tidings  
Of Aedeta and his friend.

(Kasala passes on. Ramala gazes in the direction of the fighting. The sounds of battle are fainter and more intermittent. Soon Nemaha hastens up.)

RAMALA, ( in agony.)

Nemaha, thou comest alone!  
What of Aedeta? Tell me at once.  
What of Aedeta?

(Nemaha shows emotion.)

NEMAHA, ( sadly.)

Ah, Ramala, I would comfort thee.

RAMALA, ( in desperation.)

Oh, tell me!

NEMAHA, ( mournfully.)

Let me comfort thee. Aedeta lies yonder;  
His brave spirit has gone,  
Leaving us to live in sorrow.

(Ramala gives way to grief.)

RAMALA, ( weeping.)

O Aedeta,  
Thou wilt return no more.

(Nemaha strives to console her.)

NEMAHA, ( insistently.)

Thou art overcome with grief, O Ramala.  
'Tis not safe to linger here.  
Let me take thee away.

RAMALA, ( appealingly.)

Oh, stay!  
Wait here awhile until the foe depart,  
Then take me to thy friend.  
Let me cover his face with my own hands,  
The last, the parting touch.  
Do this for him, for me!  
Come let us go.

NEMAHA, ( urgently.)

Aedeta no longer feels joy or sorrow,  
Make haste! 'Tis folly to seek him.  
Come!

(He grasps her arm to force her along. She resists. She strains her gaze toward the battlefield.)

RAMALA, ( excitedly.)

The warriors depart.  
Come with me to Aedeta.

NEMAHA, ( impatiently.)

Nay! Fly with me.

RAMALA, ( determinedly.)

Come with me to Aedeta.

NEMAHA, ( forgetting all caution.)

Ramala, I love thee with an ever-burning love.

(Ramala recoils in horror.)

RAMALA, ( furiously.)

Oh, shame! 'Tis thy pity not thy love  
My heart in its anguish craves.

(Overcome, Ramala sinks down upon a tree-stump. Nemaha addresses her with eloquent passion.)

NEMAHA, ( passionately.)

Once on the banks of the Misty Water  
Wooded by the call of my carolling flute,  
Thou comest to me at the rise of the sun,  
Where, beneath a flowering tree, I stood.  
I sang my love to thee,  
Thy little hand in mine clasped tenderly.  
It was there my ardent soul went out to thee in all its love.  
Dost thou not remember?

There, with the sighing of the winds,  
 With the murmuring waters moving in unison,  
 Thou gavest in answer a sigh  
 Which thrilled me to the heart.  
 Oh, there where the morning breeze, approving,  
 Showered thy head with cherry blossoms,  
 My longing soul met thine with all its love.

RAMALA, ( quickly.)

No! No!

NEMAHA, ( wistfully.)

Hast thou forgotten?

( Reproachfully. )

If canst forget,  
 Not so can I!

( Ramala springs to her feet. Impetuously, Nemaha strains  
 her to his heart. Ramala fights free. )

RAMALA, ( with sharp reproof.)

Though canst forget thy friend,  
 Thy life-long friend.

NEMAHA.

Dead is my friend; let him lie as he fell.  
 Come with me.

RAMALA.

I'll find Aedeta.  
 Away! Away!

NEMAHA, ( importuning.)

Fly, fly with me.

RAMALA, ( with passion.)

Away! Away!

( They move in opposite directions. Nemaha pursues his flight.  
 Ramala runs toward the battle-field. As the curtain falls very slowly,  
 the defeated Omahas begin to straggle homeward along the trail Keels  
 and Nemaha have taken. )

OMAHA WARRIORS, ( wailing.)

Haeh e tha, haeh e tha  
 Ah haeh tha e tha haeh  
 E tha tho.

SLOW CURTAIN.

## ACT THREE.

## Scene One.

(A red sunset casts its glow over a thinly wooded spot. Ramala is seen on the deserted battle field searching among the slain for Aedeta. There are indications of an approaching spring storm. She pauses in exhaustion and despair.)

RAMALA, ( with deep feeling.)

Here the battle stormed.  
Here the arrows hissed like hail  
To fall like thunder-bolts!  
Alone with the dead in the dusk  
I seek thee.

Oh, my proud warrior,  
Who rode but yesterday, so proudly,  
So proudly and so gladly on the war-path,  
Is thy strength indeed over?  
Thy life so quickly ended?

(Lightning flashes. Thunder rumbles. Ramala looks around desperately.)

Oh, my young lover  
Whose steps were once so firm upon the wind-blown grasses,  
How quiet art thou now!

(She searches, hurriedly, shuddering with horror.)

Ah, where art thou lying?  
I cannot find thee.

(standing straight, she calls.)

Aedeta, Aedeta, Aedeta!  
The night is falling; the lightning's eye is flashing;  
The wind is wailing and the Thunder-bird approaching  
On swift, sable wings.  
I am alone with storm and death.

(She resumes her search frenziedly.)

Aedeta, Aedeta, Aedeta.  
Let thy spirit lead me where thou liest  
Lest the storm in fury over whelm me  
And the night hide thy face forever.

(Searching frantically, she comes to an abrupt stop; with a gasp of surprise she stoops and picks up a bow, its broken string dangling.)

His bow! The string is broken!  
Aedeta lives!  
Helpless, with this broken cord  
He was captured!

(She holds the bow out before her and apostrophises it.)

O thou bow with broken string,  
Thou traitor bow that failed him in the battle!  
How didst thou falter when need was greatest!  
Cruelly failed him in the hour of danger!

Helpless in the carnage,  
Before the arrows of his foes,  
Weaponless, defenseless, thou yielded him  
To his enemies.

(The storm increases. Ramala is in anguish.)

O thou bow with broken string,  
Thou traitor bow that failed him in the battle!  
How didst thou fail him in the hour of danger  
Even as failed him, also, his friend,  
His trusted friend,  
O traitor bow!

(She flings the bow aside but as it touches the ground, brilliant flashes of lightning illuminate it. She snatches it up and examines it closely in the almost continuous glare.)

The string is cut, not broken.  
There has been treachery. Treachery!

(The storm breaks. She drops the bow.)

Now shall I seek thee, O Aedeta,  
I shall seek thee in the camp of the foe,  
To live with thee if thou livest,  
To die with thee if thou diest.  
Oh, send thy thoughts of love and strength to guide me.  
Aedeta, I come.

(She dashes away thro the storm now raging furiously.)

CURTAIN.

ACT THREE.

Scene Two.

(The curtain rises on a Pawnee village. Above shines the large and brilliant Morning Star to which the captive Aedeta is to be sacrificed. The stage is crowded with people. Aedeta, at the left, is bound in a tent.)

VICTORY HYMN.

Standest thou with in the East,  
Star, Star, Star of Dawn.  
Fruitfulness and strength are thine,  
Star, Star, Star of the Morning;  
In thy hands is life renewed,  
O holy Star.

Thou who bringest joy, all hail!  
Star, Star, sacred Star.  
Thou who givest strength, all hail!  
Hail, hail, divine Star!  
Thou didst grant us victory,  
O Sacred Star!

(The people from in a procession singing a choral as they march.)

CHORALE.

Ah hi ae ae ah!  
Ah hi ae ae ah!  
Ah hi ae ae ah!  
Ah ae ae ah!

(The procession halts in a semi-circular formation. Into the cleared space springs a group of warriors -- shield-bearers, ceremonial banner-carriers etc. They perform a barbaric dance, casting menacing glances at Aedeta. After the dancers retire, the procession resumes the chorale and marches off the stage to prepare for the sacrifice.)

AEDETA, (with power.)

Lo, now death I defy!  
Anguish and pain cannot daunt me;  
Flint cannot pierce my courage  
Nor flame shrivel my fearless spirit!  
Graven foe, I defy thee.  
Helpless, I defy thee.  
Fortune cannot make a warrior quail.  
Death I defy!

(Enter Ramala from left stealthily. She looks about cautiously.)

RAMALA, (in a hushed voice.)

Aedeta!

AEDETA, (startled.)

Thou, Ramala!

RAMALA, (in joy.)

At last I have found thee!

(She enters the tent and they embrace.)

AEDETA, (in agitation.)

Stay not, O Ramala, to put thyself in peril.  
Bruised am I by the blows of my captors,  
Wounded, bound, and helpless,  
Doomed a sacrifice to the Morning Star.  
Stay not, Ramala, to die also.  
Thou canst not save me;  
Escape, then, while there is time.  
Embrace me once again and say farewell.

(Ramala examines his bonds.)

RAMALA, (vehemently, though softly.)

Never shall I leave the oh, my loved one.

AEDETA, (protesting.)

Leave me! Leave me!

RAMALA, (firmly.)

If thou diest, I die also.

AEDETA, (imploring.)

Stay not, beloved, they will torture thee!  
If thou wilt not think of thyself,  
Think of me in my anguish.  
Can I bear thy torture?  
Stay not, O Ramala.  
Embrace me once again and leave me!

(Ramala struggles with his bonds. Aedeta grows more anxious.)

RAMALA, (reassuring.)

They prepare for the sacrifice  
And we are not observed.

AEDETA, (with an attempt at command.)

They will come soon;  
Leave me!

(Ramala shakes her head as she strives frenziedly to release him)

RAMALA, (devotedly.)

Never shall I leave thee, beloved.

AEDETA, (warningly.)

They are coming.

(Suddenly Ramala releases him. She supports him and he finds he can move.)

BOTH, (with great joy.)

'Tis done. 'Tis done! We are free.

(They hasten softly away. The processional reenters.)

SWIFT CURTAIN.

ACT FOUR

(The village of the Omahas. The people are gathering in excitement from all parts of the camp around the large tepee of the Chief. The tent has been thrown open and the flaps fastened back. In the center sits OBESKA. Tama, Megana, Namaha and Kaela are seen in the crowd.)

FULL CHORUS.

Make way, they come! Make way, they come.  
Wakanda guides the lost ones home.  
As from the dead they come again  
To ease our sorrow, heal our pain.  
Make way!

(All are on the look out.)

Make way, they come! They come, make way.  
Wakanda's favor lights our day  
And those we mourned we welcome home  
Behold them now, they come, they come,  
Make way!

(Aedeta and Ramala come into view. Aedeta leaning on Ramala's shoulder. A place is assigned to them beside the Chief in the tent. Obeska rises to greet them.)

OBESKA, (with deep feeling.)

O Aedeta! O Ramala.  
The hearts of the tribe are gladdened  
By your safe return.  
All gather around you in joy.

WOMEN, (with sympathy.)

Ah, how pale and wan their faces!  
From our hearts rise tears of pity.  
From the very depths of our hearts.

(Kaela, forgetting decorum, speaks.)

KAELA (impulsively.)

Speak, speak, Aedeta, that we may know  
How thou, so strong a warrior,  
Become a captive to our foes

OBESKA. (with authority)

Silence!

We must first hear from Nemaha.  
Nemaha, stand forth!

(Nemaha stands before Obeska with head raised defiantly.)

Nemaha, what of thy tale  
Of Aedeta's death?

Nemaha, (sullenly.)

Honored Chief, I spoke as I believed.

THE TRIBE, (nodding to each other)

I fear he lies. Ah, yes, he lies.  
Behold his altered face, his shifting eyes.

OBESKA, (sternly.)

Go.

(Nemaha slinks away.)

Now let Aedeta speak.

(Aedeta rises. The people grow silent.)

AEDETA, (rapidly, eloquently.)

Brief shall be my story  
Yet true as yonder sun's pathway.  
I need not tell you  
The story of our friend-ship.  
My life and Nemaha's lie plain before you;  
Both in our youth and our manhood  
We were ever one.  
That you know.  
One, also, we were in love,  
Each choosing Nemaha.  
That too, you know.

(The people nod assent)

Each offered to sacrifice his love unto the other  
But neither accepted the sacrifice,  
For were we not friends?  
Ere we went upon the war-path,  
We vowed to let the maiden choose between us,  
To abide her choice and keep our friendship true.

(Very sorrowfully.)

Wounds and bruises from my captors I have suffered,  
But the shaft that entered deepest,  
That pierced my very soul,  
Was sped from the heart of my friend.

THE TRIBE, (surprised and agitated.)

From his friend? Was it so?  
What can he mean?

AEDETA.

Nemaha and I went forth to meet the enemy;  
Side by side we fought, but vainly.  
Like leaves before an angry whirlwind,  
Your warriors scattered  
Till we were left alone.  
Closer pressed the foe upon us  
And furiously we fought.  
Suddenly my bow-string snapped!  
I turned to my friend;  
He was fleeing unpursued,  
Sheathing his knife as he ran.  
He had cut the string.

OBESKA, (in horror.)

Out his bow-string! What villainy!  
Alas, that one of our tribe should be guilty  
Of such a deed!

THE TRIBE.

What horror! What villainy!  
Seize the traitor! Bring him forth!  
Put him to death!

TAENE, ( going up to Obeska.)

False to one, false to all.  
False to his friend false to his tribe,  
False to his vow. Let him die.

OBESKA, ( rebukingly.)

What is this to thee, old woman?  
Be silent.

TAENE, ( firmly.)

Though I have no right to speak,  
Honored Chief, bear with me.  
On the eve of battle  
Did not the Northern Lights portend death?  
The powers have spoken.  
Let him die.

THE TRIBE, ( wildly.)

False to one, false to all.  
The powers have spoken;  
Bring forth Nemaha!  
Let him die!

( Megena/ rushes to Obeska. The clamor quiets temporarily but  
breaks out at intervals.)

MEGENA, ( imploringly.)

Have mercy! and. Spare him!  
Let not your wrath prevail against him.  
Noble Chief, he once possessed your confidence and love.  
Look back into the past.  
Was he not good son, true friend, strong lover?  
Never before hath he been found unworthy.  
Oh, spare him!  
Aedeta and Ramala live;  
Let him live also.  
Oh, save him, I implore.  
I pray thee.

THE TRIBE, ( vindictively.)

Sieze the traitor! Bring him forth!  
Oh, kill him.

TAENE, ( viciously.)

He deserves death!

( Megena raises her hand for silence. The tumult partially subsides.  
She turns to Aedeta and Ramala.)

MEGENA, ( passionately.)

Love was his undoing;- baffled love!  
Can you who love happily  
Fail to pity him?

( She turns to the people.)

Did you never love that you are pitiless?  
Have none of you loved vainly  
Or nightly cried unto the gods in anguish?  
Have none of you felt torment  
When the flute sang of love in the dawn?  
Can none of you pity him?  
Shall his own tribe take his blood upon it?  
Oh, spare him!

THE TRIBE, ( relentlessly.)

Bring him forth.  
Kill the traitor!  
Let him die.

( Megena turns again to Obeska. Taene pulls her away.)

TAENE, ( with contempt.)

Find not for the traitor.  
The powers have spoken.

OBESKA, ( benignantly.)

Be calm, my daughter.  
Nemaha has defied the powers of good  
And sinned deeply.

(with religious fervor.)

But Wakanda has wrought a wonder.  
We shall pray for wisdom.

AEDETA, (much moved.)

Let him go.  
For old friendship, let him go.  
I do not desire his death.

THE TRIBE, (muttering.)

Forgive him not.  
Let him die.

RAMALA, (in tears.)

Oh, Nemaha, Nemaha, so long and well-beloved,  
Let us not cause his death.  
Let not his blood be upon us.  
Are we not safe? Alive, unharmed?  
Surely he hath repented.  
Oh, let him go.

AEDETA, (with emotion.)

We forgive! Let him live  
And be one with us again.

THE TRIBE, (insisting.)

No. False to one, false to all!  
Slay the traitor. Slay him.

EAENE, (grimly.)

Let him die as his friend would have died  
But for Ramala.

(Obeska rises but before he can speak, Nemaha stalks in, stripped  
except for a loincloth.)

NEMAHA, (with scornful pride.)

Nemaha begs no forgiveness,  
Nor asks for woman's pity,  
Nor fears man's vengeance.

(He draws his knife.)

He with his own hand  
Shall take his life.

(He stabs himself, staggers and falls. Megenia runs over and drops  
beside him. Ramala follows and kneels beside her.)

MEGENIA and RAMALA.

Nemaha, our tears and our love  
Follow the into the Spirit Land.

CURTAIN.