ATTILA (ACT I)

The Secret Teachings of Opera
HASNAMUSSEN: HEROES AND VILLAINS

हा Ha: a Sanskrit particle expressing sorrow, dejection, pain;
अश्न asna: voracious, eating, consuming; or, a stone;
मूष mus: mouse, thief
INVOCATION TO FORESTO AND THE ELEMENTS

“Weep freely now. Throw off restraint, O heart. At this silent hour when even tigers rest. I alone wander from place to place. And yet I have been waiting and praying for this hour forever. In that fleeting cloud is your image not imprinted, O Father? Heavens! The image has changed! This is my Foresto. O stream, pause your murmuring. Air, stop blowing. So that I may hear the voice of my beloved spirits.”

—Odabella
“Yes, look at who I am, the one whom you betrayed, faithless one. Here, among the cups and the songs, you smile upon the murderer. And the thought of your fatherland in ashes does not even come into your mind, nor your dying father and his anguish and misery.” —Foresto

“Wound me with your dagger, not with your words, Foresto. Do not curse a wretched person. This is a cruel trick! Father, you can read right into my heart from heaven. O, tell him that I am longing for full vengeance in my heart.” —Odabella
THE STORY OF JUDITH

“Foresto, do you remember Judith who saved Israel? From that day when she wept for you, fallen with her father on the field of glory, Odabella swore to the Lord that she would repeat the story of Judith.” —Odabella

In the apocryphal Book of Judith, a Jewish widow murders an Assyrian general to save her town from invasion. יְהוּדִית Judith seduces the general Holofernes in the sieged city of Bethulia, murdering him in his sleep. This assassination gave the Israelites the upper hand against the Assyrians.
“Look! This is the monster’s sword! It is the Lord’s will!”
—Odabella

“O immense, boundless joy, intoxicate yourself in this embrace! In this moment granted to us, our present sorrows are scattered! Here the lives of two wretched ones are merged into a single life. One hope, one single vow revives and consoles us.” —Odabella and Foresto
“His voice was like the wind in a cave.”
—Attila

“O King, all around is silence. There are only the footsteps of the watchful guard.”
—Uldino

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before יהוה (Jehovah). And, behold, יהוה passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before יהוה; but יהוה was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but יהוה was not in the earthquake:

And after the earthquake a fire; but יהוה was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. —1 Kings 19:11-12
“Listen, my faithful one. While my soul seemed to swell before Rome, a huge old man appeared who grabbed my hair. My senses were overwhelmed, my hand froze on my sword, he smiled in my face and commanded me in this way, ‘You are appointed as scourge only against mortals. Withdraw! The path is now closed. This is the land of the gods.’ Within me such words sound somber, even fatal, and the soul in Attila’s breast is frozen with terror.” —Attila
“Horror! And what do you think you will do?” —Uldino

“Now my senses are free! I flush for my fear. Call the druids, the leaders, the kings. Now, more rapidly than the wind, I will fly to you, wicked Rome. Beyond that boundary I wait for you, O specter! Whoever could deny this to Attila. You shall see if, fearful, I withdraw there, if the world will finally know me as avenger.” —Attila
POPE LEO (LEONE)
“Come, visit our minds, O spirit of creation. Let the treasure of life rain on us from your forehead.” —Children’s Chorus

“This is not the echo of my trumpets. Open up there! Who is coming?” —Attila

“Illuminate our errand senses, breathe love into our breasts. Overcome the enemy and spread the lovely serenity of peace.” —Children’s Chorus
“Uldino, that is the sinister phantom! I want to defy him! Who is holding me back?” —Attila

“You are appointed as scourge only against mortals. Withdraw! The path is now closed. This is the land of the gods.” —Pope Leo
BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN (MATTHEW 18:3)
“Great God! The same words which the terrible vision impressed on my mind. No! This is not a dream which now invades my soul. There are two giants who fill the sky. Their eyes are flames, flames their sword. Their burning points touch me. Spirits, stop! Here man withdraws. Before the gods the king prostrates himself.” —Attila
“Behold the power of the Eternal one! Goliath was defeated by a shepherd boy. Mankind was saved by a humble maiden. By unknown people faith was spread. Before a devout and pious crowd the king of the heathens now withdraws! What power is this? The king of the Huns prostrates on the ground for the first time!” —Chorus