

Oh, tell me wherefore thou ever art mourning.  
Wherefore thy tears now flow.  
AIDA.—Alas! the cry of war I hear.  
Vast hosts I see assemble;  
Therefore the country's fate I fear,  
For me, for all I tremble.  
AMNERIS.—And art thou sure no deeper woe now bids thy tears to flow?  
Tremble! oh thou base vassal!  
RADAMÉS (*aside, regarding AMNERIS*).  
Her glance with anger flashing  
Proclaims our love suspected.  
AMNERIS.—Yes, tremble, base vassal, tremble,  
Lest thy secret stain detected.  
RADAMÉS.—Woe! if my hopes all dashing  
She mar the plans I've laid!  
AMNERIS.—All in vain thou wouldst dissemble,  
By tear and blush betrayed!  
AIDA (*aside*).—No! fate, o'er Egypt looming,  
Weighs down on my heart dejected.  
I wept that love thus was dooming.  
To woe a hapless maid!  
(*Enter the KING, preceded by his guards and followed by RAMPHIS, his Ministers, Priests, Captains, etc., etc., an officer of the Palace, and afterwards a Messenger.*)  
THE KING.—Mighty the cause that summons.  
Round their King the faithful sons of Egypt.  
From the Ethiop's land a messenger this moment has reached us.  
Tidings of import brings he. Be pleased to hear him.  
Now let the man come forward!  
(*To an officer.*)  
MESSENGER.—The sacred limits of Egyptian soil are by Ethiops invaded.  
Our fertile fields lie all devastated, destroy'd our harvest.  
Embolden'd by so easy a conquest, the plund'ring horde  
On the Capital are marching.  
ALL.—Presumptuous daring!  
MESSENGER.—They are led by a warrior, undaunted, never conquered;  
Amonasro.

ALL.—The King!  
AIDA.—My father!  
MESSENGER.—All Thebes has arisen, and from her hundred portals  
Has pour'd on the invader a torrent fierce.  
Fraught with relentless carnage.  
THE KING.—Ay, death and battle be our rallying cry!  
RADAMÉS, RAMPHIS, CHORUS OF PRIESTS, CHORUS OF MINISTERS AND CAPTAINS.  
—Battle! and carnage, war unrelenting.  
THE KING (*addressing RADAMÉS*).—Isis, revered Goddess, already has appointed  
The warrior chief with pow'r supreme invested.  
Radamés!  
AIDA, AMNERIS, CHORUS OF MINISTERS AND CAPTAINS.—Radamés!  
RADAMÉS.—Ah! ye Gods, I thank you!  
My dearest wish is crown'd!  
AMNERIS.—Our leader!  
AIDA.—I tremble.  
THE KING.—Now unto Vulcan's temple, chieftain, proceed,  
There to gird thee to vict'ry, donning sacred armor.  
On! of Nilus' sacred river  
Guard the shores, Egyptians brave,  
Unto death the foe deliver,  
Egypt they never, never shall enslave!  
RAMPHIS.—Glory render, glory abiding,  
To our Gods, the warrior guiding;  
In their power alone confiding,  
Their protection let us crave.  
AIDA (*aside*).—Whom to weep for?  
Whom to pray for?  
Ah! what pow'r to him now binds me?  
Yet I love, tho' all reminds me  
That I love my country's foe!  
RADAMÉS.—Glory's sacred thirst now claims me;  
Now 'tis war alone inflames me;  
On to vict'ry! Naught we stay for!  
Forward, and death to every foe!  
AMNERIS.—From my hand, thou warrior glorious,  
Take thy sword, aye victorious;  
Let it ever lead thee onward  
To the foeman's overthrow.  
ALL.—Battle! No quarter to any foe!  
May laurels crown thy brow!  
AIDA.—May laurels crown thy brow!