

## TRIFFINA - ACT I, Scene 1 - “The Prophecy”

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**From the Play:** *Triffina and the Queens of Conomor*, ACT I, Scene 1

**Genre:** Drama

**Author:** Justy Fairfield

### **Characters:**

**Dame Destiny** – The Primordial Orchestrator of Fate, appears as an Old Crone.

**Conomor** – King of Cornwall and Usurper of Domnonée. A ruthless man in his 40s.

**Setting:** *A clearing in the woods beyond Castle Domnonée in Brittany, France, 540 CE.*

**Background:** *After easily conquering the petty realm of Domnonée, Conomor feels confident in his plan to seize all of Brittany and become its High King – until he encounters an Old Crone in the woods.*

*(As the scene opens, DAME DESTINY stands alone in a clearing in the woods, awaiting a “chance” encounter with CONOMOR and speaking to herself.)*

DAME DESTINY

Ruination, his destination! Ruination, not damnation!

*(DAME DESTINY turns to face CONOMOR, who enters from Stage Left.)*

CONOMOR

Whose voice do I hear?

DAME DESTINY

Only mine.

CONOMOR

*(suspiciously)* Who were you talking to, Old Crone?

DAME DESTINY

The wind, the trees, the sky. — They're all good listeners!

CONOMOR

*(approaches her cautiously)* Some claim the demons of the old religion roam these woods and conspire with witches.

DAME DESTINY

*(laughs)* How ominous you make one sound whose simple joy is walking Nature's path!

CONOMOR

Better to walk Godde's path!

DAME DESTINY

Do you, Conomor, King of Cornwall?

CONOMOR

— and of Domnonée! If you know who I am, you know I rule here, as well!

DAME DESTINY

Is it *well* that you murdered King Jonas to gain this realm?

CONOMOR

That's treason, Hag!

DAME DESTINY

As was the vision of his widowed queen! (*toying with him as a cat plays with a mouse*) Miraculous, how she eluded your capture and escaped to France.

CONOMOR

What are you blathering about?

DAME DESTINY

What was it she saw in that dream? (*snaps her fingers as if just remembering*)  
— Ah, yes! Her *own* son, Prince Judwal, standing victorious upon a battlefield, surrounded by all the nobles of Brittany — paying homage to *him* as High King, Conomor, not to you!

CONOMOR

*(amazed)* How could you know of that premonition?! — All who heard it were  
*(stops suddenly)* —

DAME DESTINY

— put to death? Yes! – All except the one who had sent her that vision.

*(CONOMOR draws his sword and puts it under  
DAME DESTINY's chin.)*

CONOMOR

Witch! The clergy will send you to the fire that consumes sorcery!

DAME DESTINY

Don't be impetuous, Your Majesty. Many remain faithful to the dead king's  
memory.

CONOMOR

*(thoughtfully)* And would gladly see his son put on the throne.

DAME DESTINY

They may interpret my *blathering* as a message from Godde.

CONOMOR

Providing an excuse to rise against me!

DAME DESTINY

One never knows how people will choose to explain the inexplicable.

CONOMOR

*(smiles, suddenly calm)* No explanations will be necessary. You won't live to work your Spell of Dissention among them!

*(CONOMOR thrusts his sword through DAME DESTINY, but she does not flinch. He withdraws his sword, but there is no blood on its shaft. CONOMOR throws down his sword and steps back in terror, gazing at DAME DESTINY.)*

DAME DESTINY

*(laughs)* Ah, Conomor! You are as predictable as ever!

CONOMOR

Who are you? *What* are you?!

DAME DESTINY

The Arranger of All Things!

CONOMOR

Dame Destiny? Impossible!

DAME DESTINY

Oh?

CONOMOR

The ancient goddesses do not exist! — Not even She who was first and foremost among them?!

DAME DESTINY

Yet here I stand before you!

CONOMOR

We humans plot the course of our lives by our own free will!

DAME DESTINY

Free Will is Destiny's greatest tool! I know beforehand which path you will choose at every fork in the road. How easy it is for me, then, to set you on that course which leads directly to the destination that I have determined for you!

*(Pause. DAME DESTINY's words have aroused CONOMOR's curiosity. He approaches her.)*

CONOMOR

If that is true, you knew I would be in the woods today. This was no chance encounter! What do you want of me?

DAME DESTINY

The question is what do *you* want, Conomor?

CONOMOR

I would be High King of Brittany!

DAME DESTINY

So would Judwal. To succeed, he must regain his father's throne. How will you stop him?

CONOMOR

I'll marry. My queen will give me an heir to defend me as I age and continue my dynasty.

DAME DESTINY

A reasonable plan, except —

CONOMOR

What?

DAME DESTINY

*(laughs)* How eagerly you hang on the words of one who does not exist! But if you place your faith in me, Majesty, I will reveal the fate I have determined for you.

*(For the next few lines, CONOMOR speaks to himself, but DAME DESTINY can hear him. DAME DESTINY also speaks to herself as if speaking to CONOMOR; however, he cannot hear her.)*

CONOMOR

Shall I renounce the Christian Godde for pagan divination?

DAME DESTINY

Dispense with the pious pageant, Conomor; I know you too well!

CONOMOR

Yet, isn't revealing our future the greatest blessing *any* godde can bestow?!

DAME DESTINY

And who would shun a godde's blessing?!

CONOMOR

My soul is already in peril for the murder an anointed king.



DAME DESTINY

Then what have you to lose by turning to me?

CONOMOR

Destiny beckons me, not Judwal. Clearly, she intends that / should be High King!

DAME DESTINY

How you would love to hear those words from my lips! —

CONOMOR

— To be some godde's darling despite my sins!

*(CONOMOR speaks directly to Dame Destiny again,  
and she to him.)*

CONOMOR

Yes, Dame Destiny, I choose you as my one true Godde!

DAME DESTINY

Are you sure, Majesty? There is no turning back once you have stepped upon this path.

CONOMOR

It is the foothold of my future. Speak that future truly to me!

DAME DESTINY

Your choice is made! Now despair of your fate: Through the treacherous betrayal of your son shall the House of Conomor fall!

CONOMOR

No!

DAME DESTINY

And every decision you make from this moment forward will bring you one step closer to that destiny!

CONOMOR

You knew what I would choose. You sought to destroy me. – Why?!

DAME DESTINY

I don't grant sovereignty lightly, Conomor, but Cornwall I gave you as your birthright. *You* chose not to be satisfied with my gift! *You* chose to covet Brittany, and that greed will destroy you! Fool you are to seek a godde who sanctions sin! Now farewell, Your Majesty, as the parting goes; although *well* we *both* now know you shall not fare!

*(DAME DESTINY vanishes.)*

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