

**MAHASENA: A
PLAY IN
THREE ACTS**

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Mahasena: A Play in Three Acts by Maurice Baring

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MAURICE BARING

**MAHASENA: A
PLAY IN
THREE ACTS**

MAHASENA:

A PLAY IN
THREE ACTS, BY
MAURICE BARING.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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"Ihr führt ins Leben uns hinein,
Ihr lasst den Armen schuldig werden."—GOETHE.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

MAHASENA, The King of the Island of Lanka.

MAHINDA, A Prophet.

VIRATA.

SUGRIVA, A Warrior.

YASSA, The King's Minister.

TISSA, A Courtier.

CHANDRA BAI.

ANOULA, Wife of Sugriva.

PRITHA, Chandra's Serving Woman.

Priests, Warriors, etc.

The action takes place in the Island of Lanka.

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MAHASENA.

ACT I.

The Palace of MAHASENA. On the right is a flight of steps leading up to a throne. On the left a flight of steps leading to a temple. In the centre a terrace looking out on to the garden.

Enter MAHINDA.

TISSA. Whom seek you in the Palace of the King?

MAHINDA. From the calm summits of untrampled snow
I come, from voiceless caves and unvisited haunts,
Where for long years in vigil and stern fast
I communed with the silence of my soul.
To-night the moon is full; you celebrate
The feast-day of the sacred blossoming bough;
The ancient rite. From distant lands I come
To bring the worship of a heart made pure
And proved by cloudless years of ecstasy.

TISSA. Welcome. Thou art a prophet wise and holy;
Whom seekest thou?

MAHINDA. I seek the King.

TISSA. He comes.

MAHINDA. Leave me with him; of old he knoweth me.
[Exit TISSA.]

Enter MAHASENA.

MAHINDA. Hail Mahasena! Hail!

MAHASENA. Thy face I know not,
Yet welcome.

MAHINDA. Draw thou near to me and look;

I am Mahinda, whom thou knewest of old.

But the long, solemn years have shrunk my form.

MAHASENA. Mahinda! Hail, thou man of saintliness.

Most blessed be this day of thy return.

MAHINDA. Draw near, my son, and let me scan thy face.

MAHASENA. Give me thy blessing.

MAHINDA (*looking at him*). Changed, and yet the same!

The same as when in the dark, troubled years,

Thou, like the lightning from a cloud, didst fall;

Thou, with the flowing locks and face of gold,

With lion-shoulders and mild lotus eye;—

Thou, void of passion, with all virtue blest,

Boldest among the bold in the field of war,

Sedate and seeking still the holy path,

Taught by the elders in our ancient rite;

Thou, who with voice of pealing thunder spakest

Among a doubtful people, Priest and pattern,

Of Law and Duty in the blighted land;—

Think now upon the day of thine anointment,

When people from the Island's confines came

To celebrate the rite and share the feast.

MAHASENA. What of that day?

MAHINDA. When the long rolling tide

Of joyful tribes uplifted loud their voices,