

The Robbers by Frederick Schiller

M/M SmS, SS, R&D, BS

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SCHWEITZER. The night is far advanced, and the captain has not yet returned.

RAZ. And yet he promised to be back before the clock struck eight.

SCHWEITZER. Should any harm have befallen him, comrades, wouldn't we kindle fires! ay, and murder sucking babes?

SPIEGEL. (takes RAZMANN aside). A word in your ear, Razmann!

SCHWARZ (to GRIMM). Should we not send out scouts?

GRIMM. Let him alone. He no doubt has some feat in hand that will put us to shame.

SCHWEITZER. Then you are out, by old Harry! He did not part from us like one that had any masterpiece of roguery in view. Have you forgotten what he said as he marched us across the heath? "The fellow that takes so much as a turnip out of a field, if I know it, leaves his head behind him, as true as my name is Moor." We dare not plunder.

RAZ. (aside to SPIEGELBERG). What are you driving at? Speak plainer.

SPIEGEL. Hush! hush! I know not what sort of a notion you and I have of liberty, that we should toil under the yoke like bullocks, while we are making such wonderful fine speeches about independence. I like it not.

SCHWEITZER (to GRIMM). What crotchet has that swaggering booby got in his numskull, I wonder?

RAZ. (aside to SPIEGELBERG). Is it the captain you mean?—

SPIEGEL. Hush! I tell you; hush! He has got his eavesdroppers all around us. Captain, did you say? Who made him captain over us? Has he not, in fact, usurped that title, which by right belongs to me? What? Is it for this that we stake our lives—that we endure all the splenetic caprices of fortunes—that we may in the end congratulate ourselves upon being the serfs of a slave? Serfs! When we might be princes? By heaven! Razmann, I could never brook it.

SCHWEITZER (overhearing him—to the others). Yes—there's a hero for you! He is just the man to do mighty execution upon frogs with stones. The very breath of his nostrils, when he sneezes, would blow you through the eye of a needle.

SPIEGEL. (to RAZMANN). Yes—and for years I have been intent upon it. There must be an alteration, Razmann. If you are the man I always took you for—Razmann! He is missing—he is almost given up—Razmann— methinks his hour is come. What? does not the color so much as mount to your cheek when you hear the chimes of liberty ringing in your ears? Have you not courage enough to take the hint?

RAZ. Ha! Satan! What bait art thou spreading for my soul?

SPIEGEL. Does it take? Good! then follow me! I have marked in what direction he slunk off. Come along! a brace of pistols seldom fail; and then—we shall be the first to strangle sucking babes. (He endeavors to draw him of.)

SCHWEITZER (enraged, draws his sword). Ha! caitiff! I have overheard you! You remind me, at the right moment, of the Bohemian forest! Were not you the coward that began to quail when the cry arose, "the enemy is coming!" I then swore by my soul—(They fight, SPIEGELBERG is killed.) To the devil with thee, assassin!

ROBBERS (in agitation). Murder! murder!—Schweitzer!—Spiegelberg!— Part them!

SCHWEITZER (throwing the sword on the body). There let him rot! Be still, my comrades! Don't let such a trifle disturb you. The brute has always been inveterate against the captain and has not a single scar on his whole body. Once more, be still. Ha, the scoundrel! He would stab a man behind his back—skulk and murder! Is it for this that the hot sweat has poured down us in streams? that we may sneak out of the world at last like contemptible wretches? The brute! Is it for this that we have lived in fire and brimstone? To perish at last like rats?

GRIMM. But what the devil, comrade, were you after? What were you quarreling about? The captain will be furious.

SCHWEITZER. Be that on my head. And you, wretch (to RAZMANN) you were his accomplice, you! Get out of my sight! Schufterle was another of your kidney, but he has met his deserts in Switzerland—has been hanged, as the captain prophesied. (A shot is heard.)

SCHWARZ (jumping up). Hark! a pistol shot! (Another shot is heard.) Another! Hallo! the captain!

GRIMM. Patience! If it be he, there will be a third. (The third shot is heard.)

SCHWARZ. 'Tis he! 'Tis the captain! Absent yourself awhile, Schweitzer—till we explain to him! (They fire.)