

WILHELM TELL



F. SCHILLER

Wilhelm Tell

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[DRAMATIS PERSONAE.](#)

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Wilhelm Tell

Friedrich Schiller

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.



*HERMANN GESSLER, Governor of Schwytz and Uri.
WERNER, Baron of Attinghausen, free noble of
Switzerland.*

ULRICH VON RUDENZ, his Nephew.

*WERNER STAUFFACHER, |
CONRAD HUNN, |
HANS AUF DER MAUER, |
JORG IM HOFE, | People of Schwytz.
ULRICH DER SCHMIDT, |
JOST VON WEILER, |
ITEL REDING, |*

*WALTER FURST, |
WILHELM TELL, |
ROSSELMANN, the Priest, |
PETERMANN, Sacristan, | People of Uri.
KUONI, Herdsman, |
WERNI, Huntsman, |
RUODI, Fisherman, |*

*ARNOLD OF MELCHTHAL, |
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN, |
MEYER VON SARNEN, |
STRUTH VON WINKELRIED, | People of Unterwald.
KLAUS VON DER FLUE, |
BURKHART AM BUHEL, |*

ARNOLD VON SEWA, /

PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE.

KUNZ OF GERSAU.

JENNI, Fisherman's Son.

SEPPI, Herdsman's Son.

GERTRUDE, Stauffacher's Wife.

HEDWIG, Wife of Tell, daughter of Furst.

BERTHA OF BRUNECK, a rich heiress.

ARMGART, /

MECHTHILD, / Peasant women.

ELSBETH, /

HILDEGARD, /

WALTER, / Tell's sons.

WILHELM, /

FRIESSHARDT, / Soldiers.

LEUTHOLD, /

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, Gessler's master of the horse.

JOHANNES PARRICIDA, Duke of Suabia.

STUSSI, Overseer.

THE MAYOR OF URI.

A COURIER.

MASTER STONEMASON, COMPANIONS, AND
WORKMEN.

TASKMASTER.

A CRIER.

MONKS OF THE ORDER OF CHARITY.

HORSEMEN OF GESSLER AND LANDENBERG.

MANY PEASANTS; MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE
WALDSTETTEN.

ACT I.



SCENE I.

A high, rocky shore of the lake of Lucerne opposite Schwytz.

The lake makes a bend into the land; a hut stands at a short

distance from the shore; the fisher boy is rowing about in his

boat. Beyond the lake are seen the green meadows, the hamlets,

and arms of Schwytz, lying in the clear sunshine. On the left

are observed the peaks of the Hacken, surrounded with clouds; to

the right, and in the remote distance, appear the Glaciers. The

Ranz des Vaches, and the tinkling of cattle-bells, continue for

some time after the rising of the curtain.

FISHER BOY (sings in his boat).

Melody of the Ranz des Vaches.

The clear, smiling lake wooed to bathe in its deep,

A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;

Then heard he a melody

Flowing and soft,

And sweet, as when angels
Are singing aloft.
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,
The waters are murmuring over his breast;
And a voice from the deep cries,
"With me thou must go,
I charm the young shepherd,
I lure him below."

HERDSMAN (on the mountains).
Air.—Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.
We go to the hills, but you'll see us again,
When the cuckoo is calling, and wood-notes are gay,
When flowerets are blooming in dingle and plain,
And the brooks sparkle up in the sunshine of May.
Farewell, ye green meadows,
Farewell, sunny shore,
The herdsman must leave you,
The summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS HUNTER (appearing on the top of a cliff).
Second Variation of the Ranz des Vaches.

On the heights peals the thunder, and trembles the
bridge,
The huntsman bounds on by the dizzying ridge,
Undaunted he hies him
O'er ice-covered wild,
Where leaf never budded,
Nor spring ever smiled;
And beneath him an ocean of mist, where his eye

No longer the dwellings of man can espy;
Through the parting clouds only
The earth can be seen,
Far down 'neath the vapor
The meadows of green.

[A change comes over the landscape. A rumbling,
cracking
noise is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds
sweep
across the scene.

[RUODI, the fisherman, comes out of his cottage.
WERNI, the
huntsman, descends from the rocks. KUONI, the
shepherd, enters,
with a milk pail on his shoulders, followed by SERPI, his
assistant.

RUODI.
Bestir thee, Jenni, haul the boat on shore.
The grizzly Vale-king 1 comes, the glaciers moan,
The lofty Mytenstein 2 draws on his hood,
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind;
The storm will burst before we are prepared.

KUONI.
'Twill rain ere long; my sheep browse eagerly,
And Watcher there is scraping up the earth.

WERNI.
The fish are leaping, and the water-hen
Dives up and down. A storm is coming on.

KUONI (to his boy).
Look, Seppi, if the cattle are not straying.

SEPPI. There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.

KUONI.

Then all are safe; she ever ranges farthest.

RUODI.

You've a fine yoke of bells there, master herdsman.

WERNI.

And likely cattle, too. Are they your own?

KUONI.

I'm not so rich. They are the noble lord's
Of Attinghaus, and trusted to my care.

RUODI.

How gracefully yon heifer bears her ribbon!

KUONI.

Ay, well she knows she's leader of the herd,
And, take it from her, she'd refuse to feed.

RUODI.

You're joking now. A beast devoid of reason.

WERNI.

That's easy said. But beasts have reason too—
And that we know, we men that hunt the chamois.
They never turn to feed—sagacious creatures!
Till they have placed a sentinel ahead,
Who pricks his ears whenever we approach,
And gives alarm with clear and piercing pipe.

RUODI (to the shepherd).

Are you for home?

KUONI.

The Alp is grazed quite bare.

WERNI.

A safe return, my friend!

KUONI.

The same to you?

Men come not always back from tracks like yours.

RUODI.

But who comes here, running at topmost speed?

WERNI.

I know the man; 'tis Baumgart of Alzellen.

CONRAD BAUMGARTEN (rushing in breathless).

For God's sake, ferryman, your boat!

RUODI.

How now?

Why all this haste?

BAUMGARTEN.

Cast off! My life's at stake!

Set me across!

KUONI.

Why, what's the matter, friend?

WERNI.

Who are pursuing you? First tell us that.

BAUMGARTEN (to the fisherman).

Quick, quick, even now they're close upon my heels!

The viceroy's horsemen are in hot pursuit!
I'm a lost man should they lay hands upon me.

RUODI.

Why are the troopers in pursuit of you?

BAUMGARTEN.

First save my life and then I'll tell you all.

WERNI.

There's blood upon your garments—how is this?

BAUMGARTEN.

The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.

KUONI.

How! What! The Wolfshot? 3 Is it he pursues you?

BAUMGARTEN.

He'll ne'er hunt man again; I've settled him.

ALL (starting back).

Now, God forgive you, what is this you've done!

BAUMGARTEN.

What every free man in my place had done.

I have but used mine own good household right

'Gainst him that would have wronged my wife—my honor.

KUONI.

And has he wronged you in your honor, then?

BAUMGARTEN.

That he did not fulfil his foul desire

Is due to God and to my trusty axe.

WERNI.

You've cleft his skull, then, have you, with your axe?

KUONI.

Oh, tell us all! You've time enough, before
The boat can be unfastened from its moorings.

BAUMGARTEN.

When I was in the forest, felling timber,
My wife came running out in mortal fear:
"The seneschal," she said, "was in my house,
Had ordered her to get a bath prepared,
And thereupon had taken unseemly freedoms,
From which she rid herself and flew to me."
Armed as I was I sought him, and my axe
Has given his bath a bloody benediction.

WERNI.

And you did well; no man can blame the deed.

KUONI.

The tyrant! Now he has his just reward!
We men of Unterwald have owed it long.

BAUMGARTEN.

The deed got wind, and now they're in pursuit.
Heavens! whilst we speak, the time is flying fast.

[It begins to thunder.

KUONI.

Quick, ferrymen, and set the good man over.

RUODI.

Impossible! a storm is close at hand,
Wait till it pass! You must.

BAUMGARTEN.

Almighty heavens!
I cannot wait; the least delay is death.

KUONI (to the fisherman).

Push out. God with you! We should help our neighbors;
The like misfortune may betide us all.

[Thunder and the roaring of the wind.

RUODI.

The south wind's up! 4 See how the lake is rising!
I cannot steer against both storm and wave.

BAUMGARTEN (clasping him by the knees).
God so help you, as now you pity me!

WERNI.

His life's at stake. Have pity on him, man!

KUONI.

He is a father: has a wife and children.

[Repeated peals of thunder.

RUODI.

What! and have I not, then, a life to lose,
A wife and child at home as well as he?
See, how the breakers foam, and toss, and whirl,
And the lake eddies up from all its depths!
Right gladly would I save the worthy man,
But 'tis impossible, as you must see.

BAUMGARTEN (still kneeling).

Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands,

And with the port of safety close in sight!
Yonder it lies! My eyes can measure it,
My very voice can echo to its shores.
There is the boat to carry me across,
Yet must I lie here helpless and forlorn.

KUONI.
Look! who comes here?

RUODI.
'Tis Tell, brave Tell, of Buerglen. 5
[Enter TELL, with a crossbow.

TELL.
Who is the man that here implores for aid?

KUONI.
He is from Alzellen, and to guard his honor
From touch of foulest shame, has slain the Wolfshot!
The imperial seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg.
The viceroy's troopers are upon his heels;
He begs the boatman here to take him over,
But he, in terror of the storm, refuses.

RUODI.
Well, there is Tell can steer as well as I.
He'll be my judge, if it be possible.

[Violent peals of thunder—the lake becomes more tempestuous.

Am I to plunge into the jaws of hell?
I should be mad to dare the desperate act.

TELL.
The brave man thinks upon himself the last.

Put trust in God, and help him in his need!

RUODI.

Safe in the port, 'tis easy to advise.
There is the boat, and there the lake! Try you!

TELL.

The lake may pity, but the viceroy will not.
Come, venture, man!

SHEPHERD and HUNTSMAN.

Oh, save him! save him! save him!

RUODI.

Though 'twere my brother, or my darling child,
I would not go. It is St. Simon's day,
The lake is up, and calling for its victim.

TELL.

Naught's to be done with idle talking here.
Time presses on—the man must be assisted.
Say, boatman, will you venture?

RUODI.

No; not I.

TELL.

In God's name, then, give me the boat! I will
With my poor strength, see what is to be done!

KUONI.

Ha, noble Tell!

WERNI.

That's like a gallant huntsman!

BAUMGARTEN.

You are my angel, my preserver, Tell.

TELL.

I may preserve you from the viceroy's power
But from the tempest's rage another must.
Yet you had better fall into God's hands,
Than into those of men.

[To the herdsman.

Herdsman, do thou
Console my wife, should aught of ill befall me.
I do but what I may not leave undone.

[He leaps into the boat.

KUONI (to the fisherman).

A pretty man to be a boatman, truly!
What Tell could risk you dared not venture on.

RUODI.

Far better men than I would not ape Tell.
There does not live his fellow 'mong the mountains.

WERNI (who has ascended a rock).

He pushes off. God help thee now, brave sailor!
Look how his bark is reeling on the waves!

KUONI (on the shore).

The surge has swept clean over it. And now
'Tis out of sight. Yet stay, there 'tis again
Stoutly he stems the breakers, noble fellow!

SEPPI.

Here come the troopers hard as they can ride!

KUONI.

Heavens! so they do! Why, that was help, indeed.

[Enter a troop of horsemen.

FIRST HORSEMAN.

Give up the murderer! You have him here!

SECOND HORSEMAN.

This way he came! 'Tis useless to conceal him!

RUODI and KUONI.

Whom do you mean?

FIRST HORSEMAN (discovering the boat).

The devil! What do I see?

WERNI (from above).

Is't he in yonder boat ye seek? Ride on,
If you lay to, you may o'ertake him yet.

SECOND HORSEMAN.

Curse on you, he's escaped!

FIRST HORSEMAN (to the shepherd and fisherman).

You helped him off,
And you shall pay for it. Fall on their herds!
Down with the cottage! burn it! beat it down!

[They rush off.

SEPPI (hurrying after them).

Oh, my poor lambs!

KUONI (following him).

Unhappy me, my herds!

WERNI.
The tyrants!

RUODI (wringing his hands).
Righteous Heaven! Oh, when will come
Deliverance to this devoted land?

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE II.

A lime-tree in front of STAUFFACHER'S house at
Steinen,
in Schwytz, upon the public road, near a bridge.

WERNER STAUFFACHER and PFEIFFER, of Lucerne,
enter into
conversation.

PFEIFFER.
Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,
Swear not to Austria, if you can help it.
Hold by the empire stoutly as of yore,
And God preserve you in your ancient freedom!

[Presses his hand warmly and is going.]

STAUFFACHER.

Wait till my mistress comes. Now do! You are
My guest in Schwytz—I in Lucerne am yours.

PFEIFFER.

Thanks! thanks! But I must reach Gersau to-day.
Whatever grievances your rulers' pride
And grasping avarice may yet inflict,
Bear them in patience—soon a change may come.
Another emperor may mount the throne.
But Austria's once, and you are hers forever.

[Exit.

[STAUFACHER sits down sorrowfully upon a bench
under the lime tree. Gertrude, his wife, enters,
and finds him in this posture. She places herself
near him, and looks at him for some time in silence.

GERTRUDE.

So sad, my love! I scarcely know thee now.
For many a day in silence I have marked
A moody sorrow furrowing thy brow.
Some silent grief is weighing on thy heart;
Trust it to me. I am thy faithful wife,
And I demand my half of all thy cares.

[STAUFFACHER gives her his hand and is silent.

Tell me what can oppress thy spirits thus?
Thy toil is blest—the world goes well with thee—
Our barns are full—our cattle many a score;
Our handsome team of sleek and well-fed steeds,
Brought from the mountain pastures safely home,
To winter in their comfortable stalls.
There stands thy house—no nobleman's more fair!
'Tis newly built with timber of the best,