

**DER FREYSCHUTZ:  
GRAND OPERA  
IN THREE ACTS**

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Der Freyschutz: Grand Opera in Three Acts by Carl Maria von Weber

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**CARL MARIA VON WEBER**

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# DER FREYSCHUTZ,

GRAND OPERA IN THREE ACTS

BY

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

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GERMAN TEXT, WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

AND

THE MUSIC OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL AIRS

ADAPTED AND EDITED BY

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## ARGUMENT.

Among the superstitions with which the middle ages abounded, was one peculiar to that class of persons who were employed by owners of large tracts of forest to look after the timber, furnish game for the owner's table and keep the ground clear of poachers, a class of regular huntsmen, who spent their whole life in the darkness of the old woods. This superstition was to the effect that there was an evil spirit abiding in the forest,—an adaptation of the general idea of the devil to the peculiar habits, notions and pursuits of the huntsman,—laying snares to gain the souls of honest hunters by the tempting offers of unerring bullets. On this is founded the story of the "Freischutz," which name, literally translated Free-shooter, means a person who shoots with bullets, which, through the aid of magic and devilry, always hit the mark.

Some time during the seventeenth century, there lived on the domains of Prince Otzokar, of Bohemia, close upon the border of the immense forests of that country, an old, trusty forester, by the name of Kuno. He was a widower, and had an only child, a daughter, who was, at the time when our story opens, just on the verge of womanhood. Agathe—this was her name—was betrothed to one Max, a young hunter, in the employ of her father, loved by him like a son, and whilst a young man of excellent qualities and well skilled in his calling. Kuno desired to retire from his post, which was hereditary, but having no son, he had requested the Prince to appoint his future son-in-law his successor in office. The Prince had kindly consented, on condition that the young man should prove himself out a good marksman in a trial-shot, which was to take place before the Prince in person. On the issue of this trial-shot depended the union of the two lovers. Now by the secret influence of the evil spirit above mentioned, Max had for a couple of weeks before the appointed trial-day been very unsuccessful in the chase. His eye and hand seemed to fail him; the game escaped from him, unharmed by his bullets. Nay, more; on the very evening before the trial-day, at a shooting-match got up by the peasants of an adjoining village, he had not hit the target once, and had been the subject of merciless raillery from the peasantry. (First Act, first scene.) Dejected in spirit and filled with gloomy forebodings, the youth was left to his thoughts by the merry crowd of villagers, who, when evening set in, repaired to the village inn to close the festival with a dance.

Max had a comrade in service, named Caspar, a reckless licentious, devil-may-care fellow, loved by none, shunned and suspected of evil practices by many, who had entered into a compact with the evil spirit, Zamiel. The latter was to supply Caspar with charmed bullets for a certain time, at the close of which Caspar was to yield life and soul to him. This compact expired on the very day of Max's ordeal, or trial of skill. Caspar, desirous of obtaining a respite from Zamiel, by bringing one new victim, perhaps two, within his reach, took advantage of Max's state of mind after the unlucky shooting-match, to force himself in his confidence. He dwelt upon his misfortune, his poor chance of success in the morrow's trial, painted to him Agathe's despair at his falling in the most vivid colors, and finally threw out a hint that by the aid of magic bullets his success might be made a certainty. Max laughed at the "magic bullets," whereupon the other, scanning the sky, and discovering an eagle at an immense height right above them, handed his rifle to him, and pointing up to the eagle, asked Max to shoot. Max took the rifle, aimed and fired, and to his amazement—for he knew the eagle to be quite out of the range of any rifle—the bird fell at his feet. He desired more of these enchanted bullets. Caspar had no more; the last one had killed the eagle. But we can cast some, said he. Meet me in the Wolf's Glen,

an hour before midnight. Max shuddered at the mention of the place, and wavered. But the evil spirit already had a hold on him. He yielded, promised his comrade to be at the appointed place, and hurried off to bid a hasty "Good Night" to his beloved Agathe.

Agathe had been haunted by strange presentiments that some terrible disaster would attend her wedding-day. The portrait of old Kuno's ancestor, the first one who had filled the hereditary post, had tumbled down twice. The box sent from the milliner's contained a black funeral wreath, instead of the myrtle-wreath of white and green. In vain strove Auncheon, a young relative and friend of the ranger's daughter, to impart some of her own cheerfulness to her sad friend. Agathe found comfort only in prayer.

Max had proceeded to the Wolf's Glen at the appointed hour. Undaunted by apparitions which tried to impede his progress he made his way to the magic circle, where Caspar was already waiting for him. Caspar pronounced the incantation. Frightful apparitions crowded around, the air was filled with unearthly noises, which increased as the hour of midnight drew near. At last seven bullets were cast—the magic number. The clock struck midnight, and the spectres vanished. The two hunters divided the bullets—four fell to Max's lot; Caspar took three. Six of these seven bullets would fly as the will of the hunter directed them; but the seventh—that is, the last one fired—Zamiel reserves for himself, and directs it as he wills. This seventh bullet Caspar took care to leave to Max to fire, by quickly squandering his own three bullets on small game, as soon as Max had got out of hearing distance.

On the trial-day Max had made three excellent shots, which so delighted the Prince, that he desired still new proofs of the superior marksmanship of the young hunter. Max grew concerned lest his stock should give out. He applied to Caspar for more; but he had none. At length the Prince consented to be satisfied with one more shot. A white dove hovered round a tree close by. "Bring down the dove," the Prince commanded. Max raised his rifle, which contained the fatal seventh bullet. "Do not fire! I am the white dove!" exclaimed Agathe, just approaching the scene. It was too late; Max fired. A loud shriek was heard from Agathe; she fell fainting in the arms of her bridesmaid. But the bullet had not harmed her. She wore a precious relic about her person, which was proof to every charm. Zamiel, defeated in his fell purpose, had then directed the bullet to the heart of Caspar, from whom loud groans and oaths were now heard to proceed. Max confessed his credulity and folly, and was banished by the Prince. Here an aged hermit, whom everybody highly revered, interposed in favor of Max. "Through him speaks Heaven," said the Prince, and yielded to the sentence he pronounced. Max was to pass one ordeal-year, and then, if irrepensible, receive Agathe in marriage. The trial-shot was abolished forever.

This Opera, the libretto of which was furnished by Friedrich Kind, was performed for the first time in Berlin, on the 18th of June, 1821, and created a greater enthusiasm throughout Germany than any similar work. It has since been translated into the principal languages. In the original German Opera spoken dialogue connects the musical portions. This feature has been retained in the various English versions which have appeared. In the French and Italian versions, however, recitatives had to be substituted for the spoken portions of the work, and Hector Berlioz has added these with a faithfulness to the spirit of the original, which has everywhere been recognized.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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<p>OTTOKAR, a Prince of Bohemia. (Tenor.)</p> <p>KUNO, Head-Ranger to the Prince. (Bass.)</p> <p>AGATHE, his Daughter. (Soprano.)</p> <p>ANNCHEN, a Relative and Friend of Agathe. (Soprano.)</p> <p>CASPAR, first Huntsman. (Bass.)</p> <p>MAX, second Huntsman. (Tenor.)</p> <p>ZAMIEL, the Wild Huntsman.</p> <p>A HERMIT. (Bass.)</p> <p>KILIAN, a Peasant. (Tenor.)</p>	<p>}</p> <p>}</p>	<p>OTTOKAR, böhmischer Fürst.</p> <p>CUNO, fürstlicher Erbförster.</p> <p>AGATHE, seine Tochter.</p> <p>ANNCHEN, eine junge Verwandte.</p> <p>CASPAR, erster Jägerbursche.</p> <p>MAX, zweiter Jägerbursche.</p> <p>SAMIEL, der schwarze Jäger.</p> <p>EREMIT.</p> <p>KILIAN, ein reicher Bauer.</p>
<p><i>Bridesmaids; Huntsmen and Attendants on the Prince; Peasants, Musicians; Spirits, Demons, and various Apparitions.</i></p>	<p><i>Brautjungfern, Jäger und Gefolge, Landleute, Musikanten, Erscheinungen.</i></p>	
<p>(The Scene is laid in Bohemia. The Action is represented as taking place shortly after the termination of the Thirty Years' War.)</p>	<p>(Die Zeit: Kurz nach Beendigung des dreißigjährigen Krieges.)</p>	

# DER FREYSCHUTZ.

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.

(An open Green in front of an Inn in the Forest. MAX seated alone, with a beer-jug and glasses before him. At the back is a target on a pole, surrounded by a multitude.)

*Chorus.* Victoria!—Let fame to the master  
be given,  
His rifle the star of the target has riven;  
No marksman so keen from near or from  
afar.  
Victoria, victoria, victoria!

*Max.*

(Rising hastily and planting his gun against a tree.)

Was I blind,  
Or do the sinews of my arm now fail me?

## ERSTER AUFZUG.

### ERSTER AUFTRITT.

(Platz vor einer Waldschenke. MAX sitzt allein im Vorgrunde. In dem Augenblicke, als die Gardine aufgeht, fallen Schüsse. Chor der Landleute, indem die Scheibe herabgebracht wird.)

Viktoria! Viktoria! der Meister soll leben,  
Der wacker dem Sternlein den Rest hat  
gegeben!  
Ihm gleicht kein Schütz' von fern und  
von nah'!  
Viktoria! Viktoria! Viktoria!

*Max.* Immer frisch! Schreit! schreit! (*stampt  
und legt seine Büchse an einen Baum.*)  
War ich denn blind? Sind die Sehnen  
dieser Faust erschlafft?

(Es hat sich ein Zug von Bauern geordnet, welche KILIAN im Triumph vor MAX bringen.)

SCHAU DER HERR MICH AN ALS KÖNIG!— WHY GOOD PEOPLE ARE YOU GAZING.

KILLIAN.  
SONG AND CHORUS.

Why, good peo- ple, are you gaz- ing? Whom, good peo- ple, are you prais- ing?  
*Schau' der Herr mich an als Kön- ig! Dünkt ihm mei- ne Macht zu wen- ig?*

Doff your hats— I'm King to- day! Do you hear me? eh, eh, eh! Do you hear me?  
*Gleich sieh' er den Hut, Mos- je! Wird er? frag' ich— He! He! He! Wird er? frag' ich—*

CHORUS.

Eh, eh,  
*He! He!*

eh, eh, eh!  
*He! He! He!*





*Max.*

(Appearing ashamed and in despair.)  
I cannot deny it—I have not hit the mark!

*Caspar.*

(In an undertone.)

Zamiel, I thank thee! (*To MAX.*) Believe me, friend, it is e'en as I said: there is some charm which you must break, ere you will again wing a bird. But the charm may easily be broken; there is nothing more simple. You must first go to where four roads meet, and in the centre draw a circle with a ramrod or sword dipp'd in blood; then, standing within the circle, you must call three times on the Great Hunter.

*Killian.* God's mercy on us! One of Belzebub's legion!

*Kuno.* Hold thy tongue, forward fellow! Have a care! I have long known thee for an idle varlet, a drunkard, and a cheat at play. (*CASPAR crouches, and by his gestures attempts to excuse himself.*) Silence, I tell thee! One word, and I dismiss thee on the spot. And you, Max, have a care that you forfeit not your claim to my daughter; for, if to-morrow you prove not the best shot, you may bid adieu to my service and your hopes of her heart. But cheer up—I believe love has bewitch'd you. Before sunrise I shall expect you at the Prince's Camp.

*Max.* To-morrow!

*Killian.* How stands the matter of the trial-shot? We have heard of it often.

*Peasants.* Yes! Tell us, good master Kuno.

*Kuno.* Well, as you will.—My ancestor, whose picture you may have seen in the Ranger's house, was, like myself, named Kuno, and was one of the Prince's body-guard. One morning a stag broke cover to the hounds, and on this stag a man was stoutly chained; for so in former times a forest-thief was punished.—At sight of this, compassion moved the Prince; he

*Max.*

(Beschämt und verzweifelt.)  
Ich kann's nicht leugnen; ich habe nie getroffen.

*Caspar.*

(Vor sich.)

Dank, Samiel! (*Zu MAX.*) Glaube mir, Kamerad, es ist wie ich gesagt habe. Es hat dir Jemand einen Waidmann gesetzt, und den muszt du lösen, oder du triffst keine Klaue. Geh' nächsten Freitag auf einen Kreuzweg, zieh' mit dem Ladestock oder einem blutigen Degen einen Kreis um dich und rufe dreimal den groszen Jäger—

*Killian.* Gott bewahr' uns! Einen von des Teufels Feerschaaren!

*Kuno.*

(*Zu CASPAR.*)

Schweig', vorlauter Bube! Ich kenne dich langst. Du bist ein Tagedieb, ein Schlemmer, ein falscher Würfler—hüte dich, dass ich nicht noch Aergeres von dir denke. (*CASPAR macht eine kriechende Bewegung, als wolle er sich entschuldigen.*) Kein Wort, oder du hast aus ver Stelle den Abschied!—Aber auch du, Max, siehe dich ver! Ich bis vier wie ein Vater gewogen; es sreut mich.

*Max.* Morgen! morgen schon!

*Killian.* Was ist das eigentlich mit dem Probeschusz? Schon oft haben wir davon gehört.—

*Andere.* O erzählt's uns, Herr Kuno!

*Kuno.* Meinetwegen! (*Setzt sich.*) Mein Ureltervater, der noch im Forsthause abgebildet steht, hiesz Kuno, wie ich, und war fürstlicher Leibschtüz. Einst trieben die Hunde einen Hirsch heran, auf dem ein Mensch angeschmiedet war; so bestrafte man in alten Zeiten die Wald frevler. Dieser Aublick erregte das Mitleid des damaligen Fürsten. Er versprach Demjeni-

promised the post of Ranger and the manor-right to the Forest Lodge, to any one who should kill the stag without injuring the man. Gallant Kuno, as much for pity as for reward, fired without hesitation. The stag fell, and the poacher was saved!

*Peasants.* Bravo! bravo! That was a master-shot!

*Kuno.* But listen to the end of the story. There was then, as now, (*eying CASPAR*) the tares which the devil sows amid the wheat. Kuno's enemies tried to convince the Prince that the shot took effect through supernatural agency, and that the bullet was magical.

*Caspar.* I thought so! (*Aside*) Help, Zamiel!

*Killian.*

(*To Peasant.*)

A magic bullet! Those are the devil's snares! My grandmother has often said, six hits the mark, but the seventh belongs to Satan, and flies as he directs.

*Caspar.* Pooh! 't is nothing!

*Kuno.* Upon such grounds is it then, that the Prince has ordained that Kuno's descendants should take the trial-shot. It is our custom that the lucky marksman should wed on that day.

But, enough of this! Let us be away! — Max, go thou to the house; and take good care! Love is weaving a web around thee! Meet me in the morning—early—ere sunrise.

TRIO AND CHORUS.

*Max.* Oh, dreaded morrow!  
Would day's latest sands were run!

*Kuno.* Ere fades von sunset,  
All is lost, or all is won!

gen, welcher den Hirsch erlege, ohne des Missethäter zu verwunden, eine Erbfolge, und zur Wohnung das nahegelegene Waldschlösschen. Der wackere Lebeschütz, mehr aus eigenem Erbarmen, als wegen der groszen Verheissung, besann sich nicht lange. Er legte an und befahl die Kugel den heiligen Engeln. Der Hirsch stürzte, und der Wilddieb war, obwohl im Gesicht vom Dorngebüsch derzerrkratzt, doch im Uebrigen unversehrt.

*Männer.* Brav! brav! — das war ein Meisterschutz.

*Cuno.* Hört noch das Ende! Es ging damals jetzt (*mit einem Blick auf CASPAR*), dasz der böse Feind immer Unkraut unter den Weizen säet. Cuno's Neider wussten es an den Fürsten zu bringen, der Schutz sei mit Zauberei geschehen, Cuno habe nicht gezielt, sondern eine Freikugel geladen.

*Caspar.* Dacht' ich's doch! — (*Vor sich*) Hilf zu, Samiel!

*Kilian.*

(*Zu einigen Bauern.*)

Eine Freikugel! — das sind Schlingen des bösen Feinds; meine Grossmutter hat mir's einmal erklärt. Sechse treffen, aber die siebente gebört dem Bösen; der kann sie hinführen, wohin ihm's beliebt.

*Caspar.* Alfanzeri! Nichts als Naturkräfte!

*Cuno.* Aus diesem Grunde machte der Fürst bei der Stiftung den Zusatz, dasz jeder von Cuno's Nachfolgern zuvor einen Probeschutz ablege, schwer oder leicht. Du, Max, magst noch einmal zu Hause nachsehen, ob sämtliche Treibleute angelangt sind. — Nimm dich zusammen! — der Waidmann, der dir gesetzt ist, mag die Liebe sein. — Noch vor Sonnenaufgang erwarte ich dich beim Hoflager.

*Max.* O! diese Sonne,  
Furchtbar steigt sie mir empor!

*Cuno.* Leid oder Wonne,  
Beides ruht in deinem Rohr!