

**THE MUSICIAN: A
LEGEND OF THE
HARTZ MOUNTAINS**

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The Musician: A Legend of the Hartz Mountains by Frank Waters

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FRANK WATERS

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The Musician

A Legend of the Hartz Mountains

Frank Waters



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Preface.

Many years ago, while still a child, I read a wild German legend, which made an indelible impression on me. Name and author alike I have forgotten, and nearly all else of the tale, beyond the basic facts of the bridegroom-musician's compact with an evil power, and a ruin consequent thereon.

In so far as these two basic ideas go, the following poem is founded on the tale. Otherwise, it is wholly my own. The grotesque horrors of the original I have changed, and elevated to the plane of tragedy and pathos. I have expanded my theme until it touches on heaven at its zenith, and on hell at its nadir, depicting man and woman as living centres open to the direct influence of God-head on the one hand, and of the Adversary on the other. In the bride, I have drawn the portraiture of a perfect womanhood; and, in the bridegroom, that of a most imperfect, but potentially a noble, manhood, wrecked by a perverted devotion to false ideals and aims, but finally retrieved by a noble repentance. In this poem, too, as in "Shadows Of The Soul," I have especially striven to convey some realization of that divine delicacy and purity of passion which should characterize the love between the sexes—that love which is, by choice, God's own favorite figure of expression for the love which should unite the creature with its Creator. In fine, I have illustrated the worse-than-uselessness of all art which is not derived from God; and I have taught the omnipotence of prayer to raise even the most desperately fallen. But here, as elsewhere, I have inculcated the moral aim of my work as an artist, not as a preacher; merely shaping a perfect work of art informed with a soul of spiritual meaning self-expounding.

FRANK WATERS.

August 8th, 1895.



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PART FIRST

The quiet German village—'mid the trees
Dreaming it sate upon the aged knees
Of the old mountains watching over it
With sheltering tenderness, as grandames sit
And gaze upon their children's children fair.
But for the human souls that habit there,
The mountains cannot shield them, but may be,
As those do choose, or haunts of Deity,
Or of the dwellers in the deep, who build
New hells on earth till time shall be fulfilled.

Who has not read, erewhile, some wizard tale,
Such as, in youthful hours, doth paint all pale
The ruddy cheek with heart-delighting fear
Of terrors grown artistically dear—
Who has not read some legend wild and weird
Of the Hartz Mountains, in whose bosom seared,
'Mid sunless glens far sunk from noonday-shine,
Or on sheer steeps whose shaggy fell of pine
Bristles a horror, demon dwellers haunt,
In varied semblances of were-wolf gaunt,
Or mountain hunter gloomed with stormy stain,
Or (deadlier thus) o'erfeathered with the grain
Of earth's fair angelhood, in form of her,
Man's complemental being, apt to stir
The pulse of evil as of good in him,
Since, erst in Eden, grown of glory dim,
She dwindled from her primal loveliness?

Yet, well I ween, the Maker—who did dress
With veiling love her beauty, when of shame
The breath inclement, breathing on the same,
Made shrink her blossomed sweetness, 'ware of flaw—
Did also add thereto a robing awe
Of virgin holiness, and left her still
So excellent a beauty as may thrill
With image of His own the heart of man.

So thought the bridegroom, as he turned to scan
His blushing bride, where on the village green
She sate beside him, with her virgin mien
All blown in roses, and her heart at strife,
Being all maiden yet, though wedded wife,
And wavering 'twixt a maiden's lovely shame—
To which the open heart seems open blame—
And the new freedom of a love wherein
God re-creates an Eden free from sin.

Where the Hartz Mountains from their heights descend,
Till, close below, their rugged billows blend
With woodlands flowing southward—in a nest
Rimmed by the circling steeps behind, whose crest
Of nodding pine shook voices down below,
Caught from the spirits of the wind, that blow
The organ forests to a music such
As elemental hands of dæmon touch
Draw from the stops of nature—sheltered well,
The quiet village lay. In front, down fell
The shelving mountain to the plains below,
Leaving a portal whence the eye might go
On quest through murmurous woodlands rolling far,
With bosky lawns between, unto the bar
Of the horizon, where they broke into
The deeps unfathomed of the shoreless blue.

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Around the village, in its rocky bay,
A quiet reach of grassy sward outlay,
With here and there a tall grove islanded,
Which took the challenge of the pines o'erhead,
And gave an answer from the woods beneath.
And when the airs of summer made to breathe
Their millioned stops of finer voice through all
The instrumental forests, till the ball
Of the orb'd planet through its thrilling round
Seemed spiritualising into sound,
So full a soul of music drenched the air
As though the heart of God, made vocal there,
Grew audible in harmony divine.

Other it was when winter from the pine
Tore hearts of howling discord, slaying sense
Of music through their groaning fibres, whence,
With jarring shriek and roar, a thousand hells
Seemed loosened, as the deep's abysmal wells,
Flooding, had bellowed upward from below,
With voices of apocalyptic woe—
A woe that thundered all to one dread note
Of horror grown concordant, in the throat
Of Heaven's compelling justice forced to be
A unison of wrath's tremendous key.

So was the mountain village suited well
To cradle a musician: heaven and hell
Sent voices from beneath, around, above,
Wherein all chords divine, from wrath to love,
Gave utterance, in the mighty Master's art,
To every modulation of His heart.

And in the bridegroom of this summer day
A sentient spirit quickened through the clay—
A soul of swiftest aptitude to take