

# The Robbers

Friederich Schiller



# Contents

<b>Dramatis Personæ</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Act i</b>	<b>7</b>
Scene i . . . . .	7
Scene ii . . . . .	8
<b>Act ii</b>	<b>11</b>
Scene i . . . . .	11



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MAXIMILIAN, COUNT VON MOOR.

CHARLES,	}	his Sons.
FRANCIS,		

AMELIA VON EDELREICH, his Niece.

SPIEGELBERG,	}	Libertines, afterwards Banditti
SCHWEITZER,		
GRIMM,		
RAZMANN,		
SCHUFTERLE,		
ROLLER,		
KOSINSKY,		
SCHWARTZ,		

HERMANN, the natural son of a Nobleman.

DANIEL, an old Servant of Count von Moor.

PASTOR MOSER.

FATHER DOMINIC, a Monk.

BAND OF ROBBERS, SERVANTS, ETC.



## ACT I

### SCENE I – I . – FRANCONIA

*Apartment in the Castle of COUNT MOOR.*

FRANCIS, OLD MOOR

FRANCIS But are you really well, father? You look so pale.

OLD MOOR Quite well, my son – what have you to tell me?

FRANCIS The post is arrived – a letter from our correspondent at Leipsic.

OLD MOOR (*eagerly*) Any tidings of my son Charles?

FRANCIS Hem! Hem! – Why, yes. But I fear – I know not – whether I dare – your health. – Are you really quite well, father?

OLD MOOR As a fish in water. Does he write of my son? What means this anxiety about my health? You have asked me that question twice.

FRANCIS If you are unwell – or are the least apprehensive of being so – permit me to defer – I will speak to you at a fitter season. – (*Half aside.*) These are no tidings for a feeble frame.

OLD MOOR Gracious Heavens? what am I doomed to hear?

FRANCIS First let me retire and shed a tear of compassion for my lost brother. Would that my lips might be forever sealed – for he is your son! Would that I could throw an eternal veil over his shame – for he is my brother! But to obey you is my first, though painful, duty – forgive me, therefore.

OLD MOOR Oh, Charles! Charles! Didst thou but know what thorns thou plantest in thy father's bosom! That one gladdening report of thee would add ten years to my life! yes, bring back my youth! whilst now, alas, each fresh intelligence but hurries me a step nearer to the grave!

FRANCIS Is it so, old man, then farewell! for even this very day we might all have to tear our hair over your coffin.

OLD MOOR Stay! There remains but one short step more – let him have his will! (*He sits down.*) The sins of the father shall be visited unto the third and fourth generation – let him fulfil the decree.

FRANCIS (*takes the letter out of his pocket*). You know our correspondent! See! I would give a finger of my right hand might I pronounce him a liar – a base and slanderous liar! Compose yourself! Forgive me if I do not let you read the letter yourself. You cannot, must not, yet know all.

OLD MOOR All, all, my son. You will but spare me crutches.

FRANCIS (*reads*) “Leipsic, May 1. Were I not bound by an inviolable promise to conceal nothing from you, not even the smallest particular, that I am

able to collect, respecting your brother's career, never, my dearest friend, should my guiltless pen become an instrument of torture to you. I can gather from a hundred of your letters how tidings such as these must pierce your fraternal heart. It seems to me as though I saw thee, for the sake of this worthless, this detestable" – (OLD MOOR *covers his face*). Oh! my father, I am only reading you the mildest passages – "this detestable man, shedding a thousand tears." Alas! mine flowed – ay, gushed in torrents over these pitying cheeks. "I already picture to myself your aged pious father, pale as death." Good Heavens! and so you are, before you have heard anything.

OLD MOOR Go on! Go on!

[...]

SCENE I – II . – A TAVERN ON THE FRONTIER OF SAXONY.

CHARLES VON MOOR *intent on a book; SPIEGELBERG drinking at the table.*

CHARLES VON MOOR (*lays the book aside*). I am disgusted with this age of puny scribblers when I read of great men in my Plutarch.

SPIEGELBERG (*places a glass before him, and drinks.*) Josephus is the book you should read.

CHARLES VON MOOR The glowing spark of Prometheus is burnt out, and now they substitute for it the flash of lycopodium, a stage-fire which will not so much as light a pipe. The present generation may be compared to rats crawling about the club of Hercules.

A French abbe lays it down that Alexander was a poltroon; a phthisicky professor, holding at every word a bottle of sal volatile to his nose, lectures on strength. Fellows who faint at the veriest trifle criticise the tactics of Hannibal; whimpering boys store themselves with phrases out of the slaughter at Canna; and blubber over the victories of Scipio, because they are obliged to construe them.

SPIEGELBERG Spouted in true Alexandrian style.

CHARLES VON MOOR A brilliant reward for your sweat in the battle-field truly to have your existence perpetuated in gymnasiums, and your immortality laboriously dragged about in a schoolboy's satchel. A precious recompense for your lavished blood to be wrapped round gingerbread by some Nuremberg chandler, or, if you have great luck, to be screwed upon stilts by a French playwright, and be made to move on wires! Ha, ha, ha!

SPIEGELBERG (*drinks.*) Read Josephus, I tell you.

CHARLES VON MOOR Fie! fie upon this weak, effeminate age, fit for nothing but to ponder over the deeds of former times, and torture the heroes of antiquity with commentaries, or mangle them in tragedies. The vigor of



its loins is dried up, and the propagation of the human species has become dependent on potations of malt liquor.

[...]



## ACT II

### SCENE II – I . – FRANCIS VON MOOR IN HIS CHAMBER – IN MEDITATION.

FRANCIS It lasts too long – and the doctor even says is recovering – an old man's life is a very eternity! The course would be free and plain before me, but for this troublesome, tough lump of flesh, which, like the infernal demon-hound in ghost stories, bars the way to my treasures.

Must, then, my projects bend to the iron yoke of a mechanical system? Is my soaring spirit to be chained down to the snail's pace of matter? To blow out a wick which is already flickering upon its last drop of oil – 'tis nothing more. And yet I would rather not do it myself, on account of what the world would say. I should not wish him to be killed, but merely disposed of. I should like to do what your clever physician does, only the reverse way – not stop Nature's course by running a bar across her path, but only help her to speed a little faster. Are we not able to prolong the conditions of life? Why, then, should we not also be able to shorten them? Philosophers and physiologists teach us how close is the sympathy between the emotions of the mind and the movements of the bodily machine. Convulsive sensations are always accompanied by a disturbance of the mechanical vibrations – passions injure the vital powers – an overburdened spirit bursts its shell. Well, then – what if one knew how to smooth this unbeaten path, for the easier entrance of death into the citadel of life? – to work the body's destruction through the mind – ha! an original device! – who can accomplish this? – a device without a parallel! Think upon it, Moor! That were an art worthy of thee for its inventor. Has not poisoning been raised almost to the rank of a regular science, and Nature compelled, by the force of experiments, to define her limits, so that one may now calculate the heart's throbbings for years in advance, and say to the beating pulse, "So far, and no farther"? Why should not one try one's skill in this line?

And how, then, must I, too, go to work to dissever that sweet and peaceful union of soul and body? What species of sensations should I seek to produce? Which would most fiercely assail the condition of life? Anger? – that ravenous wolf is too quickly satiated. Care? that worm gnaws far too slowly. Grief? – that viper creeps too lazily for me. Fear? – hope destroys its power. What! and are these the only executioners of man? is the armory of death so soon exhausted? (*In deep thought.*) How now! what! ho! I have it! (*Starting up.*) Terror! What is proof against terror? What powers have religion and reason under that giant's icy grasp! And yet – if he should withstand even this assault? If he should! Oh, then, come Anguish to my aid! and thou, gnawing Repentance! – furies of

hell, burrowing snakes who regorge your food, and feed upon your own excrements; ye that are forever destroying, and forever reproducing your poison! And thou, howling Remorse, that desolatest thine own habitation, and feedest upon thy mother. And come ye, too, gentle Graces, to my aid; even you, sweet smiling Memory, goddess of the past – and thou, with thy overflowing horn of plenty, blooming Futurity; show him in your mirror the joys of Paradise, while with fleeting foot you elude his eager grasp. Thus will I work my battery of death, stroke after stroke, upon his fragile body, until the troop of furies close upon him with Despair! Triumph! triumph! – the plan is complete – difficult and masterly beyond compare – sure – safe; for then (*with a sneer*) the dissecting knife can find no trace of wound or of corrosive poison.

(*Resolutely.*) Be it so! (*Enter HERMANN.*) Ha! *Deus ex machina!* Hermann!

HERMANN At your service, gracious sir!

FRANCIS (*shakes him by the hand.*) You will not find it that of an ungrateful master.

HERMANN I have proofs of this.

FRANCIS And you shall have more soon – very soon, Hermann! – I have something to say to thee, Hermann.

HERMANN I am all attention.

[...]