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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
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Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
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# **Wilhelm Tell**

Friedrich Schiller

# Imprint

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller was born at Marbach, Wurtemberg, Germany, November 10, 1759. His father had served both as surgeon and soldier in the War of the Austrian Succession, and at the time of the poet's birth held an appointment under the Duke of Wurtemberg. Friedrich's education was begun with a view to holy orders, but this idea was given up when he was placed in a military academy established by the Duke. He tried the study of law and then of medicine, but his tastes were literary; and, while holding a position as regimental surgeon, he wrote his revolutionary drama, "The Robbers," which brought down on him the displeasure of his ducal master. Finding the interference with his personal liberty intolerable, he finally fled from the Duchy, and in various retreats went on with his dramatic work. Later he turned to philosophy and history and through his book on "The Revolt of the Netherlands" he was appointed professor extraordinarius at Jena, in 1789. His "History of the Thirty Years' War" appeared in 1790-93, and in 1794 began his intimate relation with Goethe, beside whom he lived in Weimar from 1799 till his death in 1805. His lyrical poems were produced throughout his career, but his last period was most prolific both in these and in dramatic composition, and includes such great works as his "Wallenstein," "Marie Stuart," "The Maid of Orleans," "The Bride of Messina," and "William Tell" (1804). His life was a continual struggle against ill-health and unfavorable circumstances; but he maintained to the end the spirit of independence and love of liberty which are the characteristic mark of his writings.

This enthusiasm for freedom is well illustrated in "William Tell," the most widely popular of his plays. Based upon a world-wide legend which became localized in Switzerland in the fifteenth century and was incorporated into the history of the struggle of the Forest Cantons for deliverance from Austrian domination, it unites with the theme of liberty that of the beauty of life in primitive natural conditions, and both in its likenesses and differences illustrates Schiller's attitude toward the principles of the French Revolution.



# **WILHELM TELL**

by

Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERMANN GESSLER, governor of Schwytz, and Uri.  
WERNER, Baron of Attinghausen, free noble of Switzerland.  
ULRICH VON RUDENZ, his Nephew.

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

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

People of Unterwald:  
ARNOLD OF MELCHTHAL.  
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN.  
MEYER VON SARNEN.  
STRUTH VON WINKELRIED.  
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, peasant woman.  
MECHTHILD, peasant woman.  
ELSBETH, peasant woman.  
HILDEGARD, peasant woman.  
WALTER, Tell's son.  
WILHELM, Tell's son.  
FRIESSHARDT, Soldier.  
LEUTHOLD, Soldier.  
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 farms 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 smile-dimpled lake woo'd to bathe in its deep,  
A boy on its green shore had laid him to sleep;  
Then heard he a melody  
Floating along,  
Sweet as the notes  
Of an angel's song.  
And as thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,  
The waters are rippling 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 calls, and the merry birds sing,  
When the flowers bloom afresh in glade and in glen,  
And the brooks sparkle bright in the sunshine of Spring.  
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 vapour  
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 milkpail on his shoulders, followed by Seppi, his assistant.]

RUODI.

Come, Jenni, bustle; get the boat on shore.  
The grizzly Vale-King[\*] comes, the Glaciers moan,  
The Mytenstein[+] is drawing on his hood,  
And from the Stormcleft chilly blows the wind;  
The storm will burst before we know what's what.

[\*] The German is, Thalvogt, Ruler of the Valley – the name given figuratively to a dense grey mist which the south wind sweeps into the valleys from the mountain tops. It is well known as the precursor of stormy weather.

[+] A steep rock, standing on the north of Rutli, and nearly opposite to Brumen.

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  
Keeps diving up and down. A storm is brewing.

KUONI (to his boy).

Look, Seppi, if the beasts be all in sight.

SEPPI.

There goes brown Liesel, I can hear her bells.

KUONI.

Then all are safe; she ever ranges farthest.

RUODI.

You've a fine chime 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 told off 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.

Easily said. But beasts have reason, too,—  
And that we know, we chamois-hunters, well.  
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.

KONRAD BAUMGARTEN (rushing in breathless).

For God's sake, ferryman, your boat!

RUODI.

How now? Why all this haste?

BAUM.

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.

BAUM. (to the fisherman).

Quick, quick, man, quick! they're close upon my heels!

It is the Viceroy's men are after me;

If they should overtake me, I am lost.

RUODI.

Why are the troopers in pursuit of you?

BAUM.

First make me safe and then I'll tell you all.

WERNI.

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

BAUM.

The Imperial Seneschal, who dwelt at Rossberg—

KUONI.

How! What! The Wolfshot?[\*] Is it he pursues you?

[\*] In German, Wolfenschiessen—a young man of noble family, and a

native of Unterwalden, who attached himself to the House of Austria, and was appointed Burvogt, or Seneschal, of the Castle of

Rossberg. He was killed by Baumgarten in the manner, and for

the

cause, mentioned in the text.

BAUM.

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

ALL (starting back).

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

BAUM.

What every free man in my place had done.  
Mine own good household right I have enforced  
'Gainst him that would have wrong'd my wife — my honour.

KUONI.

How? Wronged you in your honour, did he so?

BAUM.

That he did not fulfil his foul desire,  
Is due to God, and to my trusty axe.

WERNI.

And you have cleft his skull then with your axe?

KUONI.

O, tell us all! You've time enough, and more,  
While he is getting out the boat there from the beach.

BAUM.

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 ta'en unseemly freedoms,  
From which she rid herself, and flew to me."  
Arm'd as I was, I sought him, and my axe  
Has given his bath a bloody benison.

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.

BAUM.

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, ferryman, and set the good man over.

RUODI.

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

BAUM.

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

KUONI (to the fisherman).

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

[Thunder and the roaring of the wind.]

RUODI.

The South-wind's up![\*] See how the lake is rising!  
I cannot steer against both wind and wave.

[\*] Literally, The Fohn is loose! "When," says Muller, in his History of Switzerland, "the wind called the Fohn is high, the navigation of the lake becomes extremely dangerous. Such is its vehemence, that the laws of the country require that the fires shall be extin-

guished in the houses while it lasts, and the night watches are doubled. The inhabitants lay heavy stones upon the roofs of their houses, to prevent their being blown away."

BAUM. (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.

BAUM. (still kneeling).  
Then must I fall into the tyrant's hands.  
And with the shore of safety close in sight!  
Yonder it lies! My eyes can see it clear,  
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, ay, Tell, of Burglen.[\*]

[\*] Burglen, the birthplace and residence of Tell. A chapel, erected in 1522, remains on the spot formerly occupied by his house.

[Enter Tell with a crossbow.]

TELL.

What man is he that here implores of aid?

KUONI.

He is from Alzellen, and to guard his honour  
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 ferryman to take him over,  
But frightened at the storm he says he won't.

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 never.  
Come, risk it, man!

SHEPHERD and HUNTSMAN.  
O save him! save him! save him!

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

TELL.  
Nought's to be done with idle talking here.  
Each moment's precious; the man must be help'd,  
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, gallant Tell!

WERNI.  
That's like a huntsman true.

BAUM.  
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 better 'tis you fall into God's hands,  
Than into those of men.

[To the herdsman.]

Herdsman, do thou  
Console my wife if I should come to grief.