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Gotz von berlichingen poetry

Portrait of Götz von Berlichingen, copper engraving, Cologne City Museum. PERSONS IN THE DRAMA Emperor Maximilian Bishop of Bamberg Goetz von Berlichingen Franz Lerse Adelbert von Weislingen Elizabeth, wife of Goetz Franz von Sickingen Marie, his sister Hans von Selbitz Adelheid von Walldorf Franz, page to Weislingen's Imperial Councillor George, page to Goetz Usher Faud Max Stumpf, Sievers, Metzler, Link, Kohl, Leader of the Rebels' Farmers ACT I Scene I.-Forest; a poor hut in the background. Goetz and George. Where can my men be? Upside down, I have to go so that sleep doesn't overcome me. Five days and nights already ambushed. But when I get you, Weislingen, I'm going to make up for it! You priests will have to send weislingen around to condemn me, I'm awake. You escaped me, Bishop! So your dear Weislingen will pay piper. George! George! (Enter George.) Tell Hans to get ready. My scouts could be back any minute. And give me some more wine! GEORGE: Hark! I hear some horses galloping, two, it must be your men! Goetz: My horse, fast! Tell Hans that arm! [Enter Faud, who reports to Goetz that Weislingen is approaching. Exit Goetz and his men. Oh, St. George! Make me strong and brave! And give me spears, armor and horse! [Exit. Scene II.—Hall at Jaxthausen. Elizabeth and Marie. If I had a man who always put himself in danger, I'd die the first year. Thank God, I'm made of harder things! God grant that my boy may take after his father, and not become a treacherous hypocrite, like Weislingen. You're very bitter with him. Yet the report speaks well of him. Your own man loved him, when they were pages together to the mark. [The gay melody of a wind-instrument is heard. There he returns with his prey! I need to get the meal ready. Here, take the cellar keys and let them have of the best wine! They've earned it. [Exeunt. Enter Goetz, Weislingen, and men-at-arms. GOETZ - (take off his helmet and sword): Loosen my cuirass and give me my doublet! Weislingen, you've given us hard work! Be of good cheer. Where are your clothes? I could lend you some of mine, a neat, clean suit, which I wore at the wedding of my gracious master Count Palatine, when your bishop became so infuriated with me, because I made him shake hands with me, unknown, after taking two of his ships two weeks before on main. I'm asking you to leave me alone. - I don't know why. Pray, be happy. You are in my power, and I will not abuse it. You know that the duty of my knight is sacred to me. And now I have to go to see my wife. [Exit. Oh, that it was all a dream! In the power of Berlicing - and he, the old true-hearted Goetz! Back again in the hall, where we played like boys, where I loved him with all my heart! How strange past and present seem mixed here. [Enter Goetz, and a man with pitcher and bisk. Let's drink until the meal is ready. Come on, you're home. It's been a long time since we've shared a bottle. (Raising sin bin gang) A gay heart! Those times are over. God forbid! Although better days we may not find. If only you had followed me to Brabant, instead of resorting to the miserable life at court! Aren't you as free and nobly born as anyone in Germany? Independent, subject only the Emperor? And you submit to vassals, who poison the emperor's ear against me! They want to get rid of me. And you, Weislingen, are their tools! WEISLINGEN: Berlichingen! No more of that! I hate explanations. They only lead to defrauding one or the other, or both. They turned their backs on each other. Enter Marie. MARIE - (to Weislingen): I come to greet and invite you in my sister's name. What's up? Why are you both quiet? You're the host and guest. Let yourself be guided by a woman's voice. You remind me of my duty. Who could resist such a heavenly clue? Draw close together, get reconciled! (The men shake hands.) A union of brave men is the most burning desire of all good women. ACT II Scene I.—A room on '. Marie and Weislingen. You say you love me. I willingly believe in it, and hope to be happy with you and to make you happy. Blessed be your brother and the day he rode out to catch me! [Enter Goetz. Your side is back. Whatever his news, Adelbert, you're free! All I ask is your word that you will not help and abet my enemies. I'll take your hand. And may I take care of this noblest of all women? Can I say yes to you, Marie? You don't have to blush—your eyes have answered clearly. Well, then, Weislingen, take her hand, and I say Amen, friend and brother! I have to call my wife. Elizabeth! (Enter Elizabeth.) Join their hand and say God bless you! They're a couple. Adelbert goes back to Bamberg to get away openly from the bishop, and then to his estates to settle his affairs. And now we leave him undisturbed to hear his boy's report. [Finish with Marie and Elizabeth. Such happiness for such an unworthy! [Enter Franz. Franz: God save you, noble sir! I come with you greetings [Pg 5]from everyone in Bamberg— from the bishop down to the jester. How they are saddened by your mishap! I am telling you to be patient—they will think more impatiently about your deliverance; Because they can't spare you. They have to. I'm going back, but Not to stay long. Franz: Not to stay? Sir, if you knew what I know! If you had seen her— the angel in female form, who makes Bamberg the forecourt of heaven—Adelheid von Walldorf! I've heard a lot of her beauty. Is her husband at court? Franz: She has been a widow for four months, and is at Bamberg for pleasure. If she looks at you, it's like you're basking in the spring sun. Her charm would be lost on me. I'm betrothed. Marie will be the happiness of my life. And now pack up. First to Bamberg, then to my castle. [Exeunt. II.—A forest. Some Nuremberg merchants, who attacked on their way to the Frankfurt Fair by Goetz and his men, have fled and left their wares in the hands of the knights. The side George, however, has recaptured two of the merchants that Goetz and his men entered. Goetz: Search the forest! Don't let anyone escape! GEORGE - (stepping forward): I've done some preparatory work. Here they are. Welcome, boy! Keep them well guarded! (Finish their husbands with the merchants.) And now, what news about Weislingen? Bad news! He looked confused when I said to him, A few words from your Berlichingen. He tried to put me in empty words, but when I pressed him, he said he wasn't guilty to you, and he wouldn't have anything to do with you. Goetz: Enough! I will not forget this infamous betrayal. Whoever comes into my power shall feel it. (Quit George.) I'll revel in their anguish, ridicule their fears. And how, Goetz, do you change? Will the faults and vices of others make you refrain from your chivalry, and abandon you to vulgar cruelty? I'll drag him back into chains, unless I can get him any other way. And that's one on it, Goetz; think of your duty! [Enter George with a coffin. Let your joke get one, they're scared enough. One of them, a handsome young man, gave me this coffin and said, Take this for ransom! The jewels I'm going to take to my betrothed. Take them, and let me escape. GOETZ (examining jewels): This time, Marie, I won't be tempted to bring it to you as a birthday present. Even in your misfortune, you would rejoice in the happiness of others. Take it, George. Give it back to the kid. Let him take it to his bride, with greeting from Goetz! And let all prisoners free at sunset. ACT III Scene I.—Entertainment Garden at Augsburg. Emperor, Bishop of Bamberg, Weislingen, Lady Adelheid, courtiers. EMPEROR: I'm tired of these merchants with their eternal grievances! Every shopkeeper wants help, and no one will touch against the common enemy of the empire and Christianity. Who would be active abroad when threatened at home? If we could just remove that proud Sickingen and Berlichingen, the others would soon fall asunder. Brave, noble men at heart, who must be spared and used against the Turks. The consequences can be dangerous. Better to catch them and leave them silent on their knight's parole in their castles. Emperor: If they then follow the law, they can once again be honorable and useful employees. I shall open the assembly session to-morrow with this proposal. A cry of cheerful backlog will spare your majesty at the end of the speech. [Exit emperor, bishop and courtiers. And so do you mean to leave the festive scenes that you longed for with all your heart, to leave a friend for whom you are indispensable, to delay our union? Faggot, the suitor, I'll go back to you. WEISLINGEN: Will you be satisfied if move on towards Berlichingen? Adelheid: You deserve a kiss! My uncle, Von Wanzenau, must be the captain! WEISLINGEN: Impossible! An incompetent old dreamer! Adelheid: Let the fiery Werdenhagen, his sister's stepson, go with him. He is thoughtless and foolhardy and will not improve things. We need to think about our relatives. For the love of me, you have to do it! And I want some exceptions for the monastery of St. Emmeraru; you can work chancellor. Then the cup holder's post is vacant at Hessian Court, and the high stewardship of the Palatinate. I want them for our friends Braimau and Mirsing. HOW am I supposed to remember everything? I'm going to train a starling to repeat the names to you, and add: Please, please. (End Weislingen. To Franz, as she stops as he crosses to follow his master): Franz, can you get me a starling, or would you be my starling? You should learn faster. Franz: If you were to teach me. Try. Take me with you. No, you have to serve me here. Do you have a good memory? Franz: For your words. I remember every syllable you spoke to me on the first day at Bamberg. Listen, Franz. I'll tell you the names that I want you to repeat to your master, always add, Please, please. FRANZ - (grasping her hand passionately): Please, please! ADELHEID - (step back): Hands are not desired. You must lose such bad behavior. But you can't be so upset about a little rebuke. One punishes the children one loves. Franz: What about you love me? I may love you as a child, but you'll be too tall and violent. Scene II.— Hall at Jaxthausen. Sickingen and Goetz. So you want to marry a jilted woman? Sickingen: Being deceived by him is an honor for both of you. I want a mistress for my castles and gardens. In the field, at court, I want to stand alone. [Enter Selbitz. Bad news! The Emperor has put you under the ban, and has sent troops to arrest you. Sicking, you hear me? Take back your offer, and leave me! I'm not going to turn away from you in trouble. No better courteer than wartime and danger. On one condition. You must publicly detach yourself from me. The Emperor loves and high-rankings you, and your intercession can save me in times of need. But I can secretly send you 20 riders. I accept that offer. Scene III.—A hill overlooking a fertile land. George and Goetz's men cross the stage, chasing the imperial troops. Then Selbitz is carried on, wounded, accompanied by Faud. Selbitz: Let me rest here!—and back to your master; back to Goetz! Let me stay with you. I'm not good below; they've hammered my old legs until I can barely move. (Exit soldiers.) Here from the wall I can watch the game. What do you see? Your riders are turning their tails. I can see Goetz's three black feathers in the midst of the commotion. Woe, he's fallen! And George's blue plume has disappeared! Sickingen's riders in It's me, it's me. I see Goetz again! And George! Victory! Victory! They're being routed! Goetz is after them, he has seized their flag! The fugitives are coming here! Oh! What will they do to you? Come down and draw! My sword is ready. I'll make it hot for them, even sit or lie down! [Enter imperial troops. Selbitz and Faud defend themselves until Lerse comes to their rescue, attacking the soldiers furiously, killing some and putting the rest to the escape. Enter Goetz, George, a troop of armed men. Good luck, Goetz! Victory! Victory! How did you make it? Goetz: To George and Lerse I owe my life; I was off my horse when they came to the rescue. I have their flag and some prisoners. Lerse saved me, too. Look at the work he's done here! Goetz: Good luck, Lerse! And God bless my George's first brave deed! Now back to the castle, and let us gather our scattered men. ACT IV Scene I.—Jaxthausen. A small room. Marie and Sickingen. Sickingen: You can smile, but I felt a desire to own you when you first looked at me with your blue eyes, when you were with your mother on the Diet of Speier. I have long been separated from you; but that desire remained, with the memory of that look. [Enter Goetz. SICKINGEN: Good luck! Welcome, a thousand times! Now quickly to the chapel! I've thought it all up, and time presses. Scene II.—Large Hall; in the background a door, which leads to the chapel. Lerse and men-at-arms. Enter Goetz from the chapel. How now, Lerse? It is best that the men are distributed over the walls. Let them take all the chest plates, helmets and arms they might want. Are the gates well manned? Lerse: Yes, sir. Sickingen's going to leave us right now. You will lead him through the lower gate, along the water, and over the calf. Then look around and come back. [Enter Sickingen, Marie, Elizabeth, from the chapel. Drums in the distance announce the enemy's approach. Goetz: May God bless you and send you happy, happy days! And may He let your children be like you! I thank you, and I thank you, Marie, who will lead me to happiness. A nice trip! Lerse leads the way. That's not what we meant. We're not going to leave you. You have to, sister! (To Sickingen) You understand what I'm going to do? Talk to Marie; She's your wife. Get her to safety, and then think of me. [Exeunt Lerse, Sickingen and Marie. Enter George. They're approaching from all sides. I saw their pike siuptgle from the tower. Has the gate barricaded with beams and stones. [Quit George. A trumpeter is heard faintly from a distance and asks Goetz to give up unconditionally. Goetz angrily refuses, and slams the window. Enter Lerse. LERSE: There are plenty of powders, but bullets are scarce. Goetz: Look around for lead! In the meantime, we need to get the crossbow to do. Finish Goetz with a crossbow. LERSE (break a window and loosen lead from the glass): This wire has rested long enough; now it can be for a change. [Enter Goetz. They have stopped firing and offer a truce with all sorts of signs and white rags. They're probably going to ask me to give up on knight's parole. Lerse: I'm going to go see. 'Tis best to know their mind. [Going out and returning shortly. LERSE: Freedom! Liberty! Here are the terms. You can retire with arms, horses and armor and leave all the provisions behind. Your property will be closely watched. I'm going to stay. Come, bring the best arms, and leave the others here! Come on, Elizabeth! Through this very gate I led you as a young bride. Who knows when we'll be back? [Exeunt Goetz and Elizabeth, followed by George. As the men choose arms and prepare, Lerse, who has heard screams and shoots without, looks through the window. LERSE : God! They're killing our master! He's off his horse! Help him! George's still struggling. Come on, let's go! If they die, I don't want to live! Scene III.—Night; the room of Adelheid Castle. Weislingen, Franz, Adelheid, with an entourage of masked and costumed revellers. May I, in these moments of lightness, speak to you about serious matters? Goetz is probably at this time in our hands. The farmers' revolt grows in violence; and the Covenant has given me command against them. We'll start shortly. I will take you to my castle in Franken, where you will be safe, and not too far from me. We'll consider that. I could be of use to you here. We don't have much time, because we break up to morrow! ADELHEID - (after a break): Very well, then; carnival to night, and war to-morrow! You're fond of change. A nice night for you! [Exit. I get it, i'm sorry. You would take me off the court, where Charles, our emperor's great successor, is the subject of all hope? You're not going to change my plans. Franz! FRANZ - (in): Gracious Lady! Adelheid: Look at all the masks, and find out for me archduke is disguise! You look sad? Franz: It's your will that I should languish to death. Adelheid - (apart): I feel sorry for him. (To Franz) You are true and loving; I won't forget you! Scene IV.—Heilbronn Town Hall. Imperial Councillor and Magistrates, Usher, Goetz. You know how you fell into our hands, and you're a prisoner at your own discretion? What are you going to make me forget about it? You gave your knight parole to appear and humbly await His Majesty's pleasure? Well, here I am, waiting for it! His Majesty's mercy frees you from the prohibition and punishment, provided that you subscribe to all the articles to be read to you. I am His Majesty's servant. But, before you go on, where are my men; what is their fate? It's none of your business. Secretary, read the articles! (Reads): I, Goetz von Berlichingen, who has recently risen in rebellion against the Emperor... GOETZ: 'Tis false! I'm not a rebel! I refuse to listen! COUNCILLOR: And yet we strict orders to persuade you by fair means, or to throw you in jail. To prison? Me? It can't be the emperor's orders! To promise me permission to wait for myself conditionally, and then again to break your treaty. We don't owe the robbers any faith. If you weren't the representative of my respected ruler, you should swallow that word, or choke on it! [Councillor makes a sign, and a bell is ringing. Enter citizens with halberds and swords. You're not going to listen, take him! [They're rushing at him. He knocks one down, and snatches one sword from another. They're reserved. Come on, let's go! I would like to get acquainted with the bravest among you. [A trumpet is heard without. Enter Usher. Franz von Sickingen is without and sends the message that after hearing how faith has been broken with his brother-in-law, he insists on justice, or within an hour he will fire the four quarters of the city, and abandon it to be dismissed by his men. Brave friend! You best advised against his rebellious intent. He will only be the companion to your case! In the meantime, we will consider how best to maintain the emperor's authority. [Exeunt all except Goetz. Enter Sickingen. It was help from heaven. I just asked knightly ward on my parole. Sickingen: They have shamefully abused the imperial authority. I know the Emperor, and I have some influence with him. I want your fist in a company I'm preparing. In the meantime, they will let you and your men return to your castle on the promise not to go beyond its limits. And the Emperor will soon call you. Now back to wigs! They have had enough time to talk; let's save them the trouble! ACT V Scene I.—Forest. Goetz and George. Goetz: Not anymore! Another step and I should have broken my oath. What's that dust beyond? And the wild mob that moves towards us? LERSE - (enter): The rebel farmers. Back to the castle! They have possessed the noblest men! GOETZ : On my own land I will not try to escape the rabble. [Enter Stumpf, Kohl, Sievers, and armed peasants. You come to ask, brave Goetz, to be our captain. GOETZ: What! Me? To break my oath? Stumpf, I thought you were a friend! Even if I were free, and you wanted to continue as you did on Weinsberg, delirious and burning, and murderous, I'd rather be killed than be your captain! If we had a leader of authority, such things would not happen. The princes and all of Germany would thank you. SIEVERS: You must be our captain, or you will have to defend your own skin. We'll give you two hours to consider it. Goetz: Why consider? I can decide now as well as later. Will you renounce your misdeeds, and act like decent people who know what they want? Then I'll help you with your claims, and be your captain for four weeks. Come on, come on! Scene II.—Landscape, with village and castle in the distance. Goetz and George. I'm asking you to leave this infamous mob of uppretendier. Goetz: We have done some good and saved many a monastery, many a life. Oh, sir, I beg you to leave them right away, before they drag you away with them as a prisoner, instead of following you as captain! (Flames are seen rising from the remote village.) Look at that! A new crime! It's Miltenberg. Quick, George! Prevent burning of the castle. I have nothing more to do with the jokers. I'm going to save Miltenberg, or you won't see me again. [Exit. Everyone accuses me of the mischief, and no one gives me the honor of preventing so much evil. Would I be thousands of miles away! [Enter Sievers, Link, Metzler, farmers. LINK: Rouse himself, captain; The enemy is close and in great force! Who burned Miltenberg? If you want to make a fuss, we'll teach you soon! Are you threatening? Villain! [He knocks him down with a punch of his fist. You're crazy! The enemy is coming, and you're arguing. [Tumult, battle, and rout of the peasants. Then the scene gradually fills with gypsies. Goetz returns wounded, recognized by gypsies, who bandage him, help him on his horse, and ask him to lead them. Soldiers enter and level their halberds on Goetz. Scene III.—Adelheid's room. Night. Adelheid. Franz. FRANZ: Oh, let me stay for another little while-here, where I live. But is death! Already you hesitate? Then give me back phial. You played the hero, but you're just a boy; A man who woos a noble woman stakes his life, honor, virtue, happiness! Boy, leave me! No, you're mine. And if I get your freedom, I'll have my own. With a firm hand, I will pour the poison into my master's cup. Farewell. [He embraces her and hurries away. Scene IV.—Rustic garden. Marie sleeps in an arbour. Lerse, i'm sorry. LERSE: Gracious lady, awake! We have to go. Goetz is caught as a rebel and thrown into a dungeon! His age! His wounds! We have to hurry to Weislingen. Only dire necessity can propel me to this step. Save my brother's life. I will kneel before him, cry before him. [Exit. Scene V. - Weislingen's Hall. A miserable fever has dried my marrow. No rest for me, day or night! Goetz haunts my dreams. He's a prisoner, and yet I tremble before him. (Enter Marie.) Oh, heaven! Marie's spirit, to tell you about her death! MARIE : Weislingen, I'm not a spirit. I've come to ask you my brother's life. WEISLINGEN: Marie! You, the angel of heaven, bring with you the torture of hell. The breath of death is upon me, and you come to throw me in despair! My brother's sick in prison. His wounds, his age... WEISLINGEN: Enough. Franz! (Enter Franz in great tension.) The papers there! (Franz hands him a sealed package.) Here is your brother's death sentence; and thus I tear it down. He's alive. Don't cry, Franz; there is hope for the living. Franz: You can't, you have to die! Married from your wife. [Rushes to the window, and throws himself into the river. Woe to me! from my wife! Franz seduced by the infamous woman! I am dying; and in my agony poundthe torture of hell. MARIE - (kneeling): Merciful God, have compassion for him! Scene VI.—A small garden outside the prison, Goetz, Elizabeth, Lerse, and prison-keeper. Almighty God! How lovely is it under Your heaven! Goodbye, my children! My roots are cut off, my strength tutters in the grave. Let me see George one more time, and sun me in his looks. You turn away and cry? He's dead! Then die, Goetz! How did he die? Unfortunately! They took him among the inexorable, and he has been executed? No, he was killed in Miltenberg and fought like a lion. GOETZ: God praised ! Now let go of my soul! My poor wife! I'm leaving you in an evil world. Lerse, don't abandon her! Blessings on Marie and her husband. Selbitz is dead, and the good emperor, and my George. Give me some water! Heavenly air! Freedom! [He dies. ELIZABETH: Freedom is only above, with you; the world is a prison. LERSE: Noble man! Woe to this age who rejected you! Woe to the future that will misjudge you! You!

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