

The Robber Baron and the Baker Thief

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Written by

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The Robber Baron and the Baker Thief

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Cast

Hans, the Baker's son

Maria, The daughter of a miller

Helga, Marias evil step-mother

Robber One

Robber Two

Robber Three

Baron Blackheart

Gisela, Maria's step-sister

Irmhilde, Maria's step-sister

Gretchen, A beautiful witch

Joe, Owner of Joe's Forest Hideaway

Katya, A spectral bride of the Baron

Kristen, A spectral bride of the Baron

A Pirate Captain, A Witch, Three pigs, The Big Bad Wolf,

Setting: A kingdom far far away

Time: A long time ago

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE A Baker's Shop

The lights come up on a baker's shop. Upon the front counter are various bake goods such as breads, cookies, cakes etc. Behind the counter looking busy is HANS. From L come MARIA and HELGA her step-mother.

HANS

(Smiling nervously) Good morning, Helga, Maria.

HELGA

Don't good - morning me, Boy! Where's that oaf of a father of yours?

HANS

In back. In the kitchen. Why, what's wrong?

HELGA

I will speak to him, not his brat.

MARIA

You don't have to talk to him like that, Helga.

HELGA

(To MARIA) You mind your tongue, Young Lady. *(To HANS)* In back you say.

HANS

(Starts to exit R) I'll go get him.

HELGA

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You will do no such thing. I shall go to him.

HANS

(Bowing) As you wish.

HELGA

(To MARIA) Watch him. *(She exits R)*.

MARIA

I'm sorry about her, Hans.

HANS

That's okay. It's not your fault Helga is the way she is.

MARIA

I just wish she wasn't so mean to you.

HANS

That makes two of us. What has her in such a foul mood anyways? Not that she has any other kind of moods.

MARIA

Burnt bread.

HANS

Excuse me?

MARIA

Apparently the last order of bread was darker than she liked it.

HANS

Ridiculous! sounds like she just wanted something to complain about.

MARIA

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That's my thought too. So anyways, how have you been?

HANS

Fine.

MARIA

Just fine?

HANS

What can I say. I spend all my time here learning to bake bread. I don't get out much.

MARIA

Maybe you and I can go do something sometime.

HANS

I don't think that would be such a good idea.

MARIA

Don't you like me?

HANS

That's not it.

MARIA

You didn't answer my question.

HANS

Of course I like you.

MARIA

So what's the problem. (*HANS steals a quick look R where HELGA has exited*).

HANS/MARIA:

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HELGA!

HANS

She scares me. That woman could scare the spots off a leopard.

MARIA

Tell me about it. I live with her.

HANS

You have my sympathy.

MARIA

She doesn't have to know about it you know.

HANS

She'd find out. Those two step - sisters of yours have spies everywhere.

MARIA

You're just being paranoid.

HANS

No I'm not.

MARIA

Are you saying there's no chance for us?

HANS

I didn't know there was an us.

MARIA

(Flirting) There could be if you'd stop being a 'fraidy cat.

HANS

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Helga would never allow it. Face it Maria, we are from two different worlds. I am the son of a baker and you are the daughter of a Miller. In the grand scheme of things you hold a higher station in life than I do.

MARIA

That's just stupid. What difference does it make what station we hold in life. If two people love each other it shouldn't matter.

HANS

(Teasing) Maria, are you saying you love me?

MARIA

(Flustered) I am saying no such thing. I am simply trying to make a point.

HANS

Well you're right. It shouldn't matter, but it does.

MARIA

Still doesn't make it right.

HANS

No it doesn't.

HELGA

(Entering from stage R and calling off stage) Lucky for you I am in a good mood today.

HANS

(To MARIA) If she's in a good mood I'd hate to see her in a bad mood.

MARIA

There isn't much difference.

HELGA

(Crossing to MARIA) Well that's settled. I am going to get Irmhilde and Giesla and go home. *(Handing a list to MARIA)* Here is a list of bake goods you are to bring home, and don't dawdle.

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MARIA

Yes, (*Sarcastically*) Mother.

HELGA

Don't take that tone of voice with me, Young Lady, or there will be no supper for you.

MARIA

Yes, Ma'am.

HELGA

Better, and be quick the fog is starting to move in. I don't want you getting lost. There's work to be done (*She exits the shop*).

HANS

Why do you let her treat you like that.

MARIA

Like what?

HANS

A scullery maid.

MARIA

It's better than the alternative. (*Handing HANS the list*) I guess you better fill this. It's starting to get foggy out there. (*As HANS takes the list from Maria the lights fade to black*).

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SCENE TWO A Dark and Scary Forest

The lights come up to half. Some trees and bushes are placed haphazardly around the stage. A fog covers the stage. From LEFT comes MARIA carrying a basket with breads and rolls in it looking around confused.

MARIA

Where am I? (*Still looking around confused*) I don't believe I have ever been in this part of the forest before. This fog has me all turned around. (*From RIGHT and LEFT come ROBBERS ONE, TWO and THREE*) Can you tell me where I am?

ROBBER THREE

You're in the forest of Baron Blackheart.

MARIA

Who?

ROBBER TWO

Baron Blackheart.

MARIA

I got that. I mean who is he?

ROBBER ONE

He rules these lands.

ROBBER THREE

Anyone coming through these woods has to pay a tax.

ROBBER ONE

And we're the tax collectors.

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MARIA

You mean robbers.

ROBBER TWO

Robbers is such an ugly word. We prefer entrepreneurs.

MARIA

Whatever. Look I just want to know how to get home from here.

ROBBER ONE

We can help you with that , My Dear.

MARIA

Great.

ROBBER TWO

For a finders fee.

MARIA

A finders fee? For what?

ROBBER THREE

Helping you find your way home.

MARIA

This is highway robbery.

ROBBER TWO

Robbers.

MARIA

I've had enough of this foolishness. I can find my own way out of here thank you very

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much. *(She turns to go back the way she came)*

ROBBER THREE

(Blocking her way) Not before you pay the tax to the Baron.

MARIA

I'm not paying you anything.

ROBBER ONE

Then we have orders to arrest you and throw you into the Baron's dungeon until you or someone close to you comes up with the money to pay your taxes.

*(As the **ROBBERS** close in on **MARIA HANS** ENTERS from LEFT dressed as the Highwayman Black Jack. He wears a black cape, mask and a black plumed hat with one side turned up. In his hand he wields a sword)*

HANS

Stand aside, You Blackguards, this young maid is under my protection .

ROBBERS

*(Moving away from **MARIA**)* Black Jack!

HANS

You're not as dumb as you look.

ROBBER ONE

Dumb was you coming here alone. *(To the others)* Take him!

*(**HANS** and the **THREE ROBBERS** fight. **HANS** makes short work of the **ROBBERS** disarming all three of them)*

HANS

Tell the Baron this is one fee he won't be collecting today.

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ROBBER ONE

You'll regret this one day. The Baron doesn't like it when you meddle in his affairs.

HANS

Go! Before I change my mind and run you all through.

ROBBER ONE

Come on let's go. (*They exit RIGHT*).

MARIA

What horrid men they were.

HANS

(*Sheathing his sword*) They're Baron Blackhearts enforcers.

MARIA

Who is Baron Blackheart?

HANS

A Robber Baron who bleeds his subjects dry with his taxes. Those who can't pay are ransomed or forced into servitude to the Baron until they have earned enough to pay off their debts to him.

MARIA

(*Aghast*) How horrible!

HANS

You're not safe here?

MARIA

Am I any safer with you?

HANS

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What do you mean?

MARIA

Aren't you the notorious Highwayman known as Black Jack?

HANS

I am.

MARIA

I have heard many unflattering things about you.

HANS

Most of it is true.

MARIA

I have also heard you think yourself quite the ladies man.

HANS

Not true. In truth there is only one girl for me.

MARIA

Who is she? Is she pretty?

HANS

She has skin the color of pure white snow and eyes as blue as the bluest skies.

MARIA

She sounds beautiful. Does she know how you feel about her?

HANS

Sadly no. I have only loved her from afar, but perhaps one day I will find the courage to tell her how I feel.

MARIA

Good luck with that. Now if you're not going to rob me I really need to get home.

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HANS

I have no intention of harming you, Fair Maid. I am called The Gentleman Highwayman for a reason. I do not harm or let harm come to fair maids and children. Everyone else, however, is fair game.

MARIA

How noble of you.

HANS

Hey, a guy has to make a living.

MARIA

Get an honest job. Now if you could just point me in the right direction I'll be on my way.

HANS

(Pointing off RIGHT) Follow the path back the way you came. When you come to the fork in the road turn right and you'll be back on the main road.

MARIA

Thank you for rescuing me.

HANS

(With a sweeping bow) It was my pleasure, Fair Maid. *(MARIA starts to exit)* Before you go, may I not have your name?

MARIA

(Incensed) You certainly may not *(She starts to exit again)*.

(From L comes BARON BLACKHEART. Upon spying HANS and MARIA he moves behind a tree.)

HANS

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It is the least you can do for someone who has just risked their life to save yours

MARIA

Oh alright, since you put it that way. It's Maria. Now I really must be going (*She exits RIGHT*).

BLACKHEART

(To *Audience*) Egads! What a stunning creature this Maria is.

HANS

(*Dropping the Black Jack persona and removing his mask*) Oh Maria, If you only knew it was you whom I've loved from afar. But how can I provide for you being the son of a baker. Being a baker is not the most lucrative of professions, and being a robber isn't much better. It's more lucrative, but not very long term. I guess for now I must be content with loving you from afar.(*HANS replaces his mask and exits RIGHT.*)

BLACKHEART

What a sap! Men to me. (*The BARON'S men join him*) We have work to do. This Maria is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen. I must have her for my bride.

ROBBER THREE

Another one, Boss?

BLACKHEART

What's that suppose to mean?

ROBBER TWO

You don't have much luck with your wives, Boss. The last two died shortly after you married them.

BLACKHEART

Both were accidents.

ROBBER THREE

What makes you think she won't end up like them?

BLACKHEART

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Three times the charm, Boys.

ROBBER ONE

What do you want us to do, Boss?

BLACKHEART

(To **ROBBER THREE**) Follow her. Find out where she lives and report back to me.
(**ROBBER THREE** exits L).

ROBBER TWO

Then what will you do?

BLACKHEART

Charm her folks. Ask for her hand in marriage.

ROBBER ONE

And if that doesn't work?

BLACKHEART

I'll pay for her hand in marriage. Now come on, let's get out of here. (*As they exit the lights fade to black*)

SCENE THREE

Maria's home a couple days later

A table is set CENTER stage. UP LEFT is a stool with a broom next to it. As the lights come up HELGA, Maria's Step - Mother is sitting at the table. From RIGHT comes GISELA and from LEFT comes IRMHILDE.

GISELA

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Mother, Irmhilde and I can't find Maria anywhere's.

IRMHILDE

It's like she just disappeared.

HELGA

Well she couldn't have gone far. Did you look in the garden?

IRMHILDE

That was the first place Gisela looked.

HELGA

Maybe she went for a swim down by the stream.

GISELA

That was the second place I looked. It seems that whenever there is work to be done she disappears. My room is a mess.

IRMHILDE

And my laundry needs to be done.

HELGA

Well the dishes aren't done either. I specifically told her to do them first before doing anything else.

MARIA

(Entering) I'm home.

HELGA

Where have you been, Maria?

GISELA

Yeah that's what I want to know. There are a lot of things that need to be done around here and we couldn't find you anywhere's.

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MARIA

I went into town to do some shopping.

IRMHILDE

A likely story. I bet you went into town to meet with the baker's son again.

HELGA

Again?

GISELA

Irmhilde and I have it on good authority Maria and the baker's son have been spending an awful lot of time together.

HELGA

Really, Maria! You're the daughter of a miller. He's the son of a baker. Carrying on with the baker's son is beneath your station.

MARIA

Hans is sweet.

GISELA

And poor.

MARIA

I don't care about that. Hans doesn't put on airs and he likes me for who I am.

HELGA

Enough of this. If your father were still alive how do you think he'd feel about you carrying on with a Baker's son?

MARIA

He would think nothing of it if Hans made me happy.

GISELA

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(With a dawning realization) You're in love with him.

MARIA

(Defensively) No I'm not.

IRMHILDE

Yes you are. I can see it in your eyes.

HELGA

No daughter of mine is going to marry a baker's son. I don't care how she feels about him. Now there will be no more discussion on this matter. You have a lot of work to do so I suggest you get started. Your sisters and I are going out and when we get back I expect your work to be done. *(To GISELA and IRMHILDE)* Come along, Girls. *(They exit L)*

MARIA

It isn't fair. With them it's Maria do this and Maria do that and Maria you missed a spot. I know they're my family, but their starting to get on my nerves. I wish my prince would come and take me away from all this. *(MARIA picks up the broom and starts to sweep the floor. As she begins to sweep the lights fade to black)*

SCENE FOUR

Outside Maria's home

As the lights come up HELGA is sitting outside in a rocking chair snapping beans and putting them in a basket on her lap. The sound of birds can be heard. From RIGHT comes BARON BLACKHEART and ROBBER THREE both neatly attired. As they enter BARON BLACKHEART moves DOWN LEFT with ROBBER THREE.

BLACKHEART

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Are you sure this is the place?

ROBBER THREE

I did what you asked, Baron. I followed Maria and this is where she led me?

BLACKHEART

Who's the hag? Is that her mother?

ROBBER THREE

Step - Mother actually.

BLACKHEART

Good thing for Maria (*Crossing to HELGA*) Good day to you, madam.

HELGA

(*Setting the beans aside*) And to you, Sir.

BLACKHEART

I am Lukas Black.

HELGA

Well, Herr Black, what can I do for you?

BLACKHEART

I have come to ask for your daughter Maria's hand in marriage.

HELGA

And how do you know Maria?

BLACKHEART

I don't really. I have only seen her a few times in town but was captivated by her beauty. I can see now where she gets her good looks. (*ROBBER THREE tries to keep from laughing*).

HELGA

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(Becoming giddy) Why, Herr Black, you certainly know how to charm the ladies. If I were a few years younger I would go for you myself.

BLACKHEART

How fortunate, then, for both of us. About Maria?

HELGA

Now understand, Herr Black, I need to know a little bit more about you before I can give you my permission.

BLACKHEART

Well for starters I'm very rich.

HELGA

(Her interest peaked) Really?

BLACKHEART

I even have my own castle, and I am willing to pay for the honor of making Maria my bride.

HELGA

And what is your offer for this privilege?

BLACKHEART

Perhaps we can go inside where it is more private to discuss the terms of my offer.

HELGA

Alright. *(She takes **BARON BLACKHEART'S** arm and leads him off LEFT. **ROBBER THREE** follows them inside)* You know, I also have two other daughters.....*(They exit)*

*(From RIGHT we hear **MARIA** singing a popular song as she enters. Behind her comes **HANS** carrying a bag of breads.)*

HANS

Hello, Maria.

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MARIA

(Startled scream) Oh, Hans, you startled me.

HANS

I'm sorry.

MARIA

What are you doing here? If my Stepmother finds you here we're both in trouble.

HANS

I was just delivering your Stepmother's bread order, unburned.

*(From LEFT comes **HELGA, BARON BLACKHEART, and ROBBER THREE.** **HELGA** is laughing and holding the **BARON'S** arm. **HANS** immediately recognizes **BARON BLACKHEART**)*

HELGA

Oh Maria, there you are. I have some good news for you. *(With contempt)* Hello, Hans, I'm glad you're here to. You need to hear this.

HANS

Hear what?

MARIA

What's this about good news?

HELGA

This gentleman, his name is Lukas Black, has asked for your hand in marriage and I have given it to him.

MARIA/HANS

WHAT!

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BLACKHEART

*(Disengaging himself from **HELGA** and crossing to **MARIA** and **HANS**)* I know we don't know each other, yet, so you must come visit me so that we can get acquainted.

HANS

*(To **HELGA**)* You can't let her marry this man.

HELGA

I don't believe I needed to ask your permission, Baker Boy.

HANS

But he's not who he says he is.

BLACKHEART

Be off with you, Boy! This is not your concern.

HANS

Please, Helga, you're making a mistake. You have no idea what you are doing. His first two wives died under mysterious circumstances.

BLACKHEART

Go home, Boy. *(Taking **ROBBER THREE DOWN LEFT**)* Take our young friend deep into the woods and kill him. *(Loud enough for all to hear)* Jakob, see that this young man gets home safely.

ROBBER THREE

Sure thing Baron..... Ah Herr Black. Come on you. His lordship wishes to be alone with his bride to be. *(He takes **HANS** by the arm and pulls him off **RIGHT**)*.

HANS

(As he's being pulled off stage) Helga, please listen to me. You're making a horrible mistake.

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ROBBER THREE

Come on, Boy! (*He and HANS exit*)

HELGA

Impertinent youth. (*To the BARON*) I shall leave the two of you to get acquainted. (*She exits back into the house*).

BLACKHEART

Alone at last.

MARIA

(*Nervous*) Uh yes, yes we are. What did you say your name was again?

BLACKHEART

Black. Lukas Black.

MARIA

Well, Herr Black, it was nice to meet you. (*She turns to exit*).

BLACKHEART

(*Stopping her*) Forgive my boldness, Maria, but you don't seem all that pleased about this arrangement.

MARIA

(*Coolly*) Do you think?

BLACKHEART

Give me a chance. Come to my home tonight, spend the early part of the evening with me. Then if you still feel this way about us we'll call it off. Fair enough?

MARIA

Thank you for the offer, but my heart belongs to someone else (*starting to exit*).

BLACKHEART

Let me put this to you another way. Agree to my terms or you will never see your baker

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again.