

STORYS

OF THE

Wild Huntsman,

AND THE

FORCE OF CONSCIENCE,

AN INTERESTING TALE.



PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELERS.

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this extraordinary favour, he was by no means so in reality; for the excessive attachment of the king actually deprived him of his personal freedom. However, as his well knew from what cause this arose, he resolved to regain his liberty by renouncing the possession of the enchanted ring.

One day, therefore, while riding with the king through the forest of Gurre, he threw the ring into a marsh, and from that moment the king's attachment seemed to be transferred to that marsh, and he could not live comfortably any where else. Here he built the castle of Gurre, and hunted in the forest night and day. So much attached was he to the place, that his love of it drew from him certain sinful words which finally became his condemnation before the tribunal of Heaven. They were to the effect that God might keep his heaven to himself, provided he, Waldemar, might for ever live hunting in the forest of Gurre.

He now rides every night from Burre to Gurre, and is known throughout the whole country as the Wild Huntsman. When he approaches, there is a great rushing noise and cracking of whips in the air, and all who bear it, step aside and hide themselves behind the trees. Then follows the whole hunt. First come some coal-black dogs running about, as if smelling at covers,

with their blood-red tongues hanging out of their mouths; then Waldeman appears galloping on his snowwhite horse, and not unfrequently he seems to hold his head under his left arm. If he meets any person, particularly old people, he commands them to keep his dogs, and leaves them standing with them, till at a signal made by a shot, the dogs burst their leashes and rush off noiting wildly. When the Wild huntsman goes off in this style, he is heard clashing the gates violently behind him; and in those places where there is any thoroughfare, he gallops in at one gate, and out at the other, in spite of the strongest bolts and bars.—At Christmas time he generally rides through Ibshof in Høiby; and behind Roesklide there is a court where at night-time they always leave the gate open, as he has repeatedly broken the locks.—Sometimes he rides over the roofs of the houses. Thus in the neighbourhood of Herlufsholm is a house the roof of which is considerably sunk, as it is said, by his riding over it.—In the northern part of Zealand are some ruins which are called Waldemar's castle. Here the old women go out regularly at night during midsummer, to open the gates for him.—Half a mile from Gurre lies Waldemar's hill, which is surrounded by water. On this island, tradition says, six

priests in black vestments, are often seen at midnight walking about and muttering strange rhymes.— There are several places at which he rests himself in his wanderings. People say he has a bed-room with two beds at Wallace castle, and there he sometimes spends the night in the form of a black dog. In this room stand two large chests, which, when opened once, were found filled with those little round pieces of leather which formed the only species of money known in Waldemar's time. A subterranean passage connects Wallace castle with Tølløschof castle, where also Waldemar has a sleeping room, and where in ancient times it was even usual to keep a servant for his special use. Sometimes he rests himself at Wordingburg, in Waldemar's tower, or in the ruins of the castle, where the ghosts of people who appear to have belonged to his own times, are yet seen going about and making the beds. A peasant who would not believe that the king ever visited this tower at night, once ventured to spend the night there. At midnight the king appeared to him, and greeting him in a friendly tone, said: "Thank you for keeping watch in my tower." He also gave him a piece of gold but when the peasant took it, it burned a round hole in his hand and fell like a coal upon the ground. From this people cou-

jecture the nature of the punishment which
 Waldemar suffers— Sometimes however it
 happens that when old men or women have
 faithfully kept his dogs for hours, he throws
 something to them, which at first looks like
 a coal, but when more narrowly examined,
 turns out to be a piece of fine red gold.



tered a lovely flower; though
 ————
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Juliana was only ten years old, when her
 father first brought her to the forest. She
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THE FORCE OF CONSCIENCE.
 A DANISH TALE.

NEAR the centre of the dark and gloomy forest of Soroe, in Denmark, was a miserable looking hovel, inhabited only by Francis, the surveyor of the forest, and his daughter Juliana. Nothing can be imagined more melancholy than the situation of this lonely hut: far from any other habitation, and surrounded as it was on all sides by tall, thick trees, it seemed a spot fitted only for a wretch who would shun all communion with his fellow-men, and yet that roof sheltered a lovely flower; though

‘———born to blush unseen,
 And waste its sweetness on the desert air.’

Juliana was only ten years old, when her father first brought her to the forest. She had no recollection of her mother, but in her infancy she had been the constant companion and plaything of the Countess Ulrico, with whom her father lived as courier. This lady was the widow of a Danish nobleman, in whose family Francis had been

brought up, who had resided in Italy for many years, who died there, when Juliana was yet quite an infant. From the moment of his death, the Countess secluded herself from society, and appeared to find no pleasure save in the company of her young son Otto, and that of Juliana. These engaging children were with her incessantly, and by their innocent caresses, made her forget half her griefs. Otto, was five years older than Juliana; and when he was fifteen, his partiality to his youthful playmate became so marked, that the Countess, fearing lest, as they grew older, an attachment might take place between them procured the situation for Francis which he now held.

Poor Juliana bitterly felt the change. She had acquired, under the tuition of the Countess, a softness and delicacy of manners which rendered her quite unfit to associate with the Danish peasants, and her father she had always feared rather than loved. He was, indeed, an object well calculated to inspire fear. His long residence in Italy had bronzed his once fair complexion and hair, whilst thick bushy eyebrows, deep sunken eyes, and a lowering brow, gave a sinister expression to his countenance which made the beholder turn from him with an indescribable feeling of disdain: added to which, the haughtiness he treated his neigh-

hours with when circumstances obliged them to have any communication, completed their disgust, and made them regard him as one accursed. One sole spark of human affection, yet lingered round this man of terror—it was love for his Juliana. But even this, pure and holy as it was, partook of the wild and uncertain nature of all his emotions. Sometimes he would hang over his child, gazing with loving fondness upon her lovely face—then he would spring her from him with every demonstration of hatred and disgust, and, flying to his own chamber, shut himself up there from the world. Juliana's affections were thus withered in the bud, & her heart, seared by unkindness, recurred with rapture to the days of her childhood, when, carressed by the beautiful Countess and the youthful Otto, she had known no care, and the world had seemed a paradise of joy. These pleasing remembrances received additional force from the presents the Countess frequently sent her, of clothes made in the fashion of those of Italy; and her sole pleasure, when the absence of her father gave her an opportunity, was to dress herself in this gay attire, and sit and fancy herself again in the lovely country of her birth, till, lost in the visions created by her imagination her heart beat, her cheek glowed and happiness again played round her heart.

Then as she heard the hollow wind howl dismally through the forest, an icy chill sank to her soul; all the horrors of her forlorn and desolate situation flushed again upon her mind, and bitter tears rolled unheaded down her cheeks.

Francis and his daughter were Catholics, but as their Danish Neighbours were all bigotted Mutherans, they were compelled to rear an humble alter to the Virgin, in their own lowly dwelling, before which Francis would frequently kneel for hours together, apparently quite absorbed by the fervency of his devotion. Upon one day in particular, that of all Souls, this devotion became penance; for on that day, Francis neither ate nor spake. He shut himself up in the cabinet which contained his humble alter, and uttered shrieks and groans of so horrible a nature, that the passing foresters, who heard them, thought he must be holding converse with evil spirits. At other times, Francis quitted his dwelling with the dawn, and did not return till night; when his livid countenance, and evident exhaustion terrified his gentle daughter, who, heard ways found, had provided some simple refreshment to revive him; and who endeavoured to cheer him, whilst he partook of his repast, with a song. Nature had blest Juliana with a molodious voice, and as her

full clear notes swelled upon her father's ear, the violence of his passions seemed to subside and sometimes tears would trickle from his eyes.

In this manner they lived till Juliana had attained the age of sixteen: when, one night in winter, as she sat by a glowing fire, anxiously awaiting her father's return, she fancied she heard a strange voice at the casement imploring shelter. The night was tempestuous;—the wind burst with fury through the forest, and the rain fell in torrents, 'It must have been only the whistling of the wind,' thought Juliana, as another blast gushed past the cottage with tremendous violence. A cry, however, mingled with the gale: it was followed by a deep groan of agony and despair. Juliana hesitated no longer, with trembling hands unbarred the door and gave admittance to a man who staggered into the room, and then fell in a state of utter exhaustion upon the hearth.

The stranger appeared about forty, and his dark brown hair, cleared complexion, and manly features, seemed to distinguish him alike from the ruddy Dane or swarthy Italian. Juliana, however, thought not of his appearance, but, touched with compassion for his sufferings, she presented him with warm wine and other simple food. While she was thus employed, her father entered;

he started on seeing a stranger, and angrily inquired his business. Juliana replied in a few words, and Francis seated himself opposite the reviving traveller, who shrank shuddering from his fixed gaze.

‘Who are you?’ asked Francis sternly, as soon as he saw his guest was sufficiently recovered to speak.

‘My name is Carl Von Morder,’ replied the man. ‘I am an artist, employed by Christian IV. to paint alter-pieces for several towns in Denmark. I am now executing one for the church at Soroe. An enthusiastic love of nature, engendered by my art, led me into this forest to study the most striking effects of light and shade. I lost my way, was overtaken by the tempest, and should have perished, but for the angelic kindness of your lovely daughter.’

‘I tell you candidly,’ said Francis, ‘that if I had been at home, you should not have been admitted: however, as you are here, you may remain till the storm abates — I will then conduct you through the forest.’

The gratitude of the painter was evidently chilled by the ungracious manners of his host, and they sat in perfect silence till the storm had ceased—the artist endeavouring to imprint the features of the forester upon his memory, in order to depict them in the alter-piece he was then painting.

'We may now venture,' said Francis, looking out.

'Will you not accept this trifle?' said the painter, with some hesitation, as he laid a purse upon the table: for he felt alike unwilling to remain under an obligation to his host, or to offer a pecuniary recompence for the kindness of his daughter.

'No!' cried Francis, in a voice of thunder, and strode out of the hovel, followed by his terrified guest.

Some months after this adventure, the young Count Otto, and Christian, his servant, entered the gloomy forest of Scroe. They advanced slowly through the thick underwood, which hung in tangled mazes over their path; whilst their fiery coursers tossed their arched necks, and lashed their long tails, impatient of delay. It was the first day of November, and the evening was fast closing in with the damp chill peculiar to that season. It did not rain, but moisture hung in the air, and the blood of the travellers felt turned to steel. After proceeding some time in silence, a long vista through the trees, showed them, at a distance, an extensive lake, which gleamed like polished silver, amidst the surrounding darkness. A tall figure, wrapt in a large mantle, stood upon its banks, resting upon the stock of a fowlingpiece; a broad Spanish hat

heightened the effect produced by the sombre appearance of the figure, and, altogether, the scene formed a picture, worthy of Salvator Rosa.

'Thank God! there is a man,' cried Otto, spurring his horse to reach the lake, 'no doubt he will be able to tell us the road.'

'Dear Sir,' returned Christian, his teeth chattering in his head, 'your honour will not surely be so rash as to speak to that figure? It looks just for all the world like the wild woman of the forest, who tears people asunder with her eagle claws, and long, wolf-like teeth.'

'Peace fool!' exclaimed his master, urging his horse forward as he spoke. When he reached the lake, however, the animal started back from the figure, rearing so frightfully, that his master, though an excellent horseman, could scarcely keep his seat. Otto dismounted; when he had, in some degree, tamed his restive steed, and throwing his bridle to Christian, approached the figure alone. The man had stood perfectly still during the disturbance occasioned by the untowardness of the horse, apparently uninterested in the event. When the count addressed him, however, he threw back his hat, and, disclosing features which would have suited an Alpine bandit, gazed earnestly upon the Count, uttered a shriek,

and then darted into the thickest part of the forest.

'It is very strange,' said Otto, as he returned to Christain, whom he found still endeavouring to pacify the panting steed.

'Not at all, my lord,' muttered the servant, 'that is begging your honour's pardon for being so bold as to contradict you. These creatures have ten times more sense than we think that they have,' continued he, qualifying the boldness of his assertion, as he saw a cloud gathering upon his master's brow. 'They cannot bear the sight of a spirit. See, poor fellow, how he pants; and how he's covered with foam; and mine is not much better. They are terrified out of their senses, poor things, and, indeed, it isn't much wonder, for I am almost as bad myself.'

'Poor Æone!' said the count, patting his horse's neck, 'he is terribly frightened; however we must go on. It was my mother's dying command, that I should, immediately on her decease, seek Francis. I have obeyed her; and, as his dwelling is in the forest, we must proceed.'

'Heaven be praised!' said Christian, 'I see a light, and it comes from something in the shape of a house. Grant they may be human beings, and not demons, that inhabit it.'

They soon reached the hovel from which the light proceeded, and the Count, striking violently with his riding whip against the door, the window was opened, and a miserable-looking old woman put forth her head, demanding, in a tremulous voice, 'what was wanted?' The figure of this withered creature, strongly relieved as it was by the light of the pine logs, which burnt upon her hearth, was certainly not calculated to repel supernatural fears, and Christian devoutly crossed himself, as he heard his master inquire of her for Francis.

'Italian Francis!' shrieked the woman: 'why devils themselves would fear to seek him on such a night as this. It is the eve of All Souls, and on this night Satan has him under full controul.'

Nevertheless, I must see him if possible, and I shall be obliged to you, good mother, to show me the road to his dwelling.'

'You might as well expect the moon for football,' said the old woman, 'as turn a wilful man from his way. However, it is no fault of mine.' And with evident reluctance, she gave the required direction.

Christian's terrors increased with every step, and even Otto felt uneasy; for the thickness of the trees now quite obscured their path, and the stillness of the night was broken only by the pattering of the horses'

hoofs; and the monotonous gush of the waters of the lake. Soon the wind moaned through the trees; and, as its rising blast now whistled shrilly amongst the shrivelled leaves, and then died sadly away, it sounded like the wailing of accursed spirits sighing at the remembrance of the sins which they had committed whilst on earth. At length they reached an open space, apparently cleared from the forest, in the centre of which stood a blasted oak, its bare arms stretching wide asunder, and looking like lines of jet, when relieved by the dark grey sky beyond. Close to this oak was the cottage of Francis, and Otto, springing from his horse, knocked against the door. It opened, and Otto started back as a vision of celestial beauty flashed upon his sight. It was Juliana, arrayed in the picturesque dress of her native country; for on this evening, she had felt secure that her father would not soon return and she had indulged her feelings by putting on her Italian garb. Otto's astonishment on beholding her, deprived him of speech; and Juliana, after waiting some seconds, raised her light to his face. She knew him, notwithstanding the time which had elapsed since they last met, and in the transport of the moment she threw herself into his arms. "Dear Juliana!" said he, pressing her to his bosom. This action recalled Juliana to

herself, and, deeply blushing, she withdrew herself from his embrace. She could not, however, quite conceal the transport she felt at so unexpectedly meeting again with her former playmate. Pleasure danced in her bright eyes, and the hours which elapsed before the return of Francis, flew winged with flowers. It is true, a few bitter tears were shed to the memory of the departed Countess; but at Juliana's age, grief does not absorb every other feeling, and when the Count spoke of Italy, her soul seemed 'lapt in Elysium.' Whilst listening to him, she forgot all beside, and time passed unheeded till she was called to a consciousness of the present, by the return of her father. He entered the cottage hastily; and, throwing aside his mantle and large hat, disclosed to Otto's astonished gaze, the features of the mysterious forester: Christain, who, after taking care of the horses, had ensconced himself snugly in the chimney corner, shrieked with affright; but Francis heeded him not. With livid lips, and glazed eyes, he seized the arms of Otto and his daughter. 'Hugo! Ulrica!!' cried he, and sank apparently lifeless on the ground. Francis was removed to his bed, he awoke only to utter delirious ravings, & for several days his life was despaired of. Otto sent for the first medical aid in Sorjé, and by the

assistance of that, and the dutiful attentions of Juliana, Francis slowly recovered. He sent for Otto as soon as he was able to bear the interview.

'I am sorry, Count,' said he, with a suavity quite different from his usual manner, 'to have received you so inhospitably, but I was evidently even then labouring under the effect of fever. Would you believe it, I took you for your father; and Juliana, for my lady, your mother, both of blessed memory;' continued he, after a short pause, devoutly crossing himself, as he spoke.

'Where did your mother die?'

'At Soplits,' said Otto.

'And she told you to seek me?'

'With her dying breath. She also gave me this (showing a diamond cross) for Juliana.'

Francis took the cross and looked at it. On the back were engraved the words, 'Watch over thy soul, and pray for the dead.' Francis read them aloud; then murmured them to himself; and then again crossing himself, sunk back upon his pillow.

'You come upon a painful business, Otto,' said Francis, after a long pause; 'Juliana tells me that your mother sent you to me to learn some secret, but I can tell you nothing.'

'Nothing!' exclaimed the Count, in a

tone of evident disappointment, 'my mother, even in her last agonies, spoke of some dreadful tale which you only could reveal.'

'I cannot,' says Francis; and even if I could, I would not.' His voice sounded hoarse and unnatural, and his eyes glared with the malice of a demon. The Count seized his arm. 'I insist upon your telling me,' cried he, wildly; 'or—'

'Or what?' asked Francis, with a fearful laugh.

'In what manner can you make me do what I WILL NOT? You would be doing me a service to deprive me of life, for I have nothing in this world to regret; except, perhaps, my child,' added he, in a milder tone as a softened expression crept over his stern features.

Otto was affected, he begged the forrester to forgive him; and in the agitation of the moment, swore solemnly never to question him more. Francis did not reply, and Otto found he fainted, for the energy of his mind had been too much for the enfeebled state of his body.

The agitation occasioned by this conversation, brought on a relapse, and for several days Francis's life hung upon a thread. During this time, Otto could not daily, nay, hourly, see the beautiful Juliana, without becoming devotedly attached to her; it was not in nature that she should hear this unmoved; and long ere Francis was

able to leave his chamber, they had exchanged vows of everlasting constancy.

No one could act more honourably than Otto, and as soon as he thought Francis able to bear such a subject, he declared his passion, and demanded Juliana for a wife.

“Are you mad, Count? asked Francis, looking at him intently, if you are not, my answer is, that I would rather follow Juliana to her grave, than see her united to you. From this moment, you never see her more.”

The Count remonstrated, but he might as well have hoped to stay the billows of the sea, as move the inexorable Francis.

What however, will not mutual love effect?

The Count and Juliana met secretly; she had never loved her father, and she was easily persuaded that his refusal was unreasonable: she adored the Count, and she at length consented to become his wife.

It was a gloomy morning when Juliana left her father's dwelling: he was buried in a profound sleep, and the Count, with all the ardour of a youthful lover, flattered himself that Juliana and he would have plighted their mutual vows before the altar of the church of Soroel long before the drowsy forester would awake. Juliana's heart beat almost audibly, and she entered, for the first time, this magnificent church, now rendered

ously attractive by the splendid alter-piece painted for it by Carl Von Monder; the subject of which was 'The Treachery of Judas.' Beautiful, however, as the painting was, Juliana was too much agitated to look at it. She stood before the altar, but she thought only of the awful ceremony which was to unite her forever to the Count. The priest went through the usual forms, but just as Juliana gave her hand to her husband, a fearful scream ran through the whole building, and in an instant, Francis rushed between the new married pair, exclaiming, in a voice of thunder, 'I FORBID THE BANDS!' As he spoke, his eyes fell upon the picture; and to his indelible horror, he saw his own features depicted for those of Judas. He shrieked in anguish. 'I—I am Judas!' screamed he, thrown of his guard by this unexpected incident—'I betrayed my master—I seduced his wife, and then poisoned him to conceal my crime. Otto, Juliana is MY SISTER!'

Who shall paint the agony of the moment? Francis had broken a blood-vessel from the violence of his emotion, and as he finished speaking, the crimson torrent gushed from his lips. He never spoke again, but ears of lengthened misery waited on the victims of his crime. Juliana entered a convent, and Otto sought to win glory by

his sword. He succeeded; his name became illustrious; his praises filled every mouth, but happiness never visited him more. At length he fell: a lock of jet-black silky hair was found next his heart—'Take it to my sister,' murmured he, as life feebly ebbed away. His wishes were complied with, and when Juliana died, that lock of hair, bathed in her brother's blood was buried in her grave.

