

BEETHOVEN'S MOONLIGHT SONATA

Author Unknown



Wetmore Declamation Bureau

Box 2695
Sioux City, IA 51106

www.wetmoredeclamation.com
Email: speeches@wetmoredeclamation.com

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It happened at Bonn. One moonlight winter's evening I called upon Beethoven, for I wanted him to take a walk, and afterward sup with me. In passing through some dark, narrow street, he paused suddenly.

"Hush!--what sound is that? It is from my Sonata in F!" he said eagerly. "Hark! how well it is played!"

It was a little, mean dwelling, and we paused outside and listened. The player went on; but in the midst of the finale there was a sudden break, then the voice of sobbing. "I cannot play any more. It is so beautiful, it is utterly beyond my power to do it justice. Oh, what would I not give to go to the concert at Cologne!"

"Ah, my sister," said her companion, "why create regrets, when there is no remedy? We can scarcely pay our rent."

"You are right; and yet I wish for once in my life to hear some really good music. But it is of no use."

Beethoven looked at me. "Let us go in," he said.

"Go in!" I exclaimed. "What can we go in for?"

"I will play to her," he said in an excited tone. "Here is feeling--genius--understanding. I will play to her, and she will understand it." And before I could prevent him his hand was upon the door.

A pale young man was sitting by the table making shoes; and near him, leaning sorrowfully upon an old-fashioned harpsichord, sat a young girl, with a profusion of light hair falling over her bent face. Both were cleanly but very poorly dressed, and both started and turned toward us as we entered.

"Pardon me," said Beethoven, "but I heard music and was tempted to enter! I am a musician."

The girl blushed and the young man looked grave--somewhat annoyed.

"I--also overheard something of what you said," continued my friend. "You wish to hear--that is, you would like--that is--Shall I play for you?"

There was something so odd in the whole affair, and something so comic and pleasant in the manner of the speaker, that the spell was broken in a moment, and all smiled involuntarily.

"Thank you!" said the shoemaker; "but our harpsichord is so wretched, and we have no music."

"No music!" echoed my friend. "How then, does the Fraulein--"

He paused and colored up, for the girl looked full at him, and he saw that she was blind.

"I--I entreat your pardon!" he stammered. "But I had not perceived before. Then you play by ear?"

"Entirely."

"And where do you hear the music, since you frequent no concerts?"

"I used to hear a lady practicing near us, when we lived at Bruhl two years. During the summer evenings her windows were generally open, and I walked to and fro outside to listen to her."

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