

Robert Schumann
And Mascot Ziff
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CHAPTER ONE

A WATCHFUL OLD moon was still riding the skies when the rambling, red-roofed little town of Zwickau shook itself awake.

And not a moment too soon, to be ready for such a day as there never had been — not in all the years that it had lain there so peacefully beside the swiftly flowing Mulde.

Every rough street of the town was swarming with bustling housewives.

“Good morning to you, Frau!” echoed their neighborly greetings, “God grant us fair weather this day! Ah, yes, this day of all days!”

How their nightcaps bobbed in the candlelight as they flew in and out of their simple homes to polish the last windows and tidy the smiling pots of flowers, winking so cheerily through shining panes.

My, what a day it was to be!

Over on the edge of the market square, the household of August Schumann was the busiest of all. Such a scurrying and racing about as there was, with five lively children running upstairs and down, hanging garlands of ribbon and paper flowers from every door and window.

“See that the roses are on the river side! And drape the doorway in blue!” rang their brisk commands.

The skies were paling now, and small hands worked faster than ever to make their house the prettiest in the town.

“Robert! Robert!” called Mother Schumann, searching the house for the youngest of her brood. Now where could he have vanished so quickly?

But the littlest of the five had slipped away in the noisy excitement to explore the shadowy streets just outside.

What fun it was to watch the men throw buckets of water over the gray cobblestones and sweep it along with their tall scraggly brooms. Robert laughed as he poked the bubbling whirlpools that swished by his feet.

Just as the last river of water raced by, his sharp ears caught the sound of marching feet. Off he sped to the house as fast as he could go, calling out his news.

“The soldiers! The soldiers are coming!”

The next moment he found himself buttoned into his



best coat by his mother's trembling fingers.

"Stay close, Robert — no running away!" she cautioned as she hurried the others into their clothing.

"The soldiers! The soldiers!" rang the call from house to house as the Schumanns, big and little, ran into the street with their neighbors.

Robert felt himself racing through the air, to be planted firmly on the shoulders of his tall father. Now he could see everything in the whole world, he thought joyfully, and peered intently down the road with bright blue eyes sparkling.

"The soldiers! The soldiers are coming!" he shouted, his hands closing tightly on Father Schumann's thick black hair.



Yes, there were the French soldiers, marching over the Bridge Mount and the lovely River Mulde with banners flying and drums beating in fine style.

Nearer and nearer they came, the band making the most beautiful music that Robert had ever heard.

On down the street and right in front of the Schumanns marched the army on its way to Russia. And then a new cry rang through the village.

“The Emperor! The Empress! Make way!”

When the spirited Napoleon and his proud Empress and noble followers of the court in their glittering robes of state rode by in gaily decked carriages, the excitement was almost