



WERUHER

Jules Massenet

Werther

illustrations by Diana Schoenbrun

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In a small town in Germany, a poet falls madly in love with a young woman. Unfortunately, she is already engaged to be married. Unable to possess her, the poet finds himself falling into a web of jealousy and obsession—from which his only escape is death.



Charlotte
A young woman,
engaged to Albert



Werther
A young poet



Albert
Charlotte's fiancé



The Bailiff
Charlotte and Sophie's father

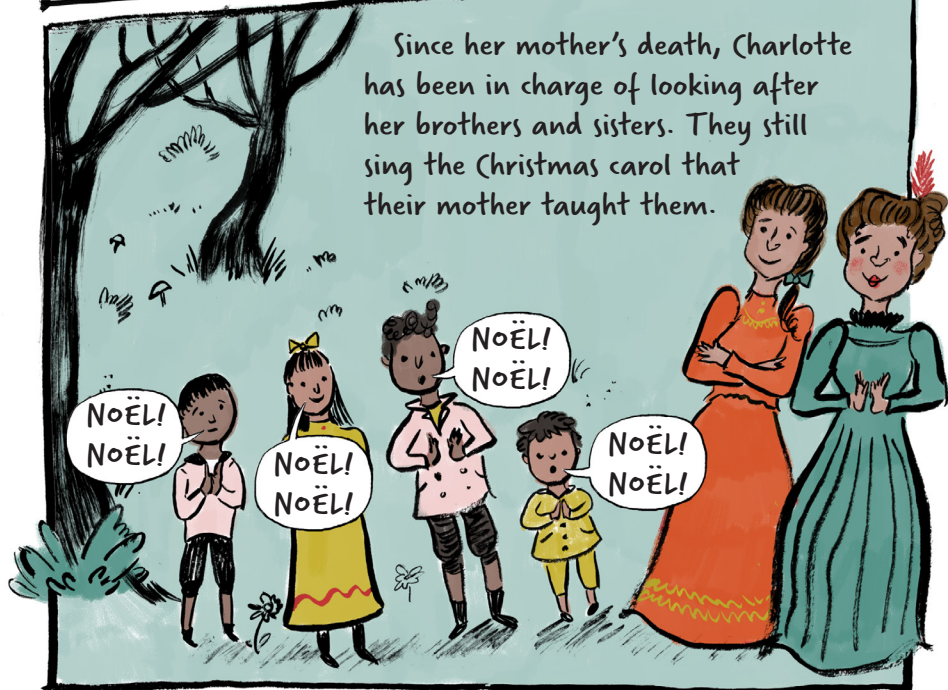


Sophie
Charlotte's sister

While singing Christmas carols with her children, a mother suddenly collapses and dies. Her heartbroken family buries her in the frozen ground.



Since her mother's death, Charlotte has been in charge of looking after her brothers and sisters. They still sing the Christmas carol that their mother taught them.



A young poet named Werther has recently moved into the neighborhood. At first, he focuses on writing poems about the beauty of nature . . .

OH NATURE,
SO FULL OF
GRACE . . .

. . . but soon
he notices the
beautiful young
Charlotte.

One night, Werther invites Charlotte to a ball. They have a wonderful time together — but when she returns home, there is a surprise waiting for her.

CHARLOTTE,
ALBERT HAS
RETURNED!

WHO IS
ALBERT?

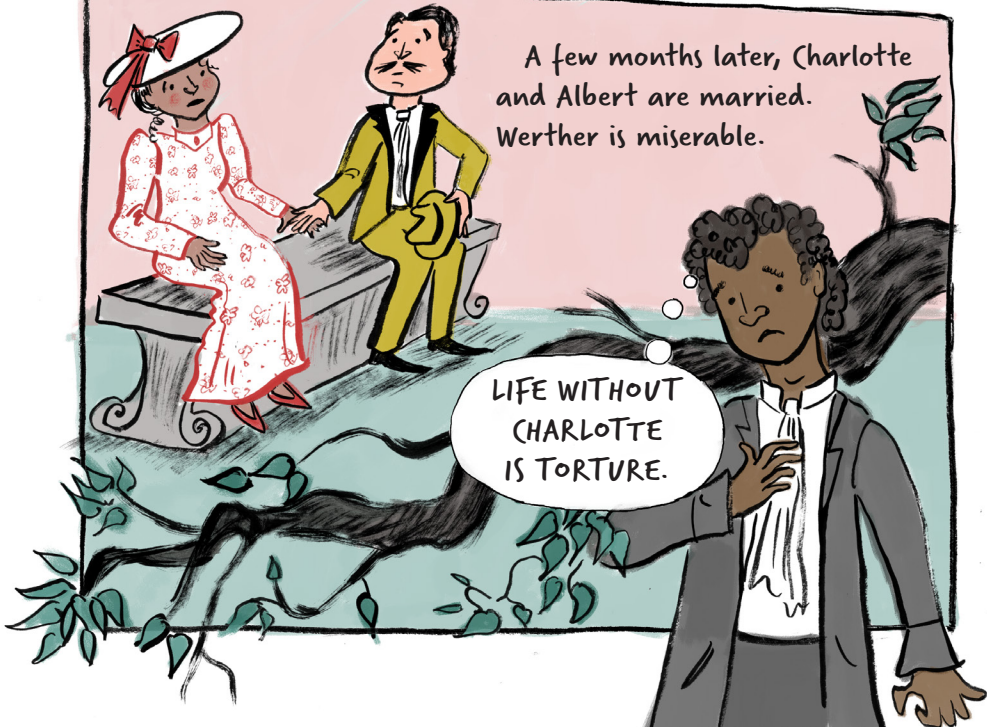
Charlotte sadly explains to Werther that she is already engaged.

I PROMISED MY DYING MOTHER THAT I'D MARRY ALBERT. FOR HER SAKE, I MUST KEEP MY WORD.



A few months later, Charlotte and Albert are married. Werther is miserable.

LIFE WITHOUT CHARLOTTE IS TORTURE.





Charlotte sees how upset Werther is, and she knows that the only solution is for him to leave.

GO. AND DON'T RETURN UNTIL CHRISTMAS.



Several months pass. Charlotte misses Werther desperately. Alone in her library, she reads his letters over and over.

Suddenly Werther bursts into the library. It is Christmas Eve, and he has returned.

I STILL LOVE YOU.
LIFE WITHOUT YOU
IS NOT WORTH
LIVING!

Charlotte is terrified by Werther's fervor.
When he tries to kiss her, she runs from the room.

Albert, meanwhile,
has guessed that Werther is in love with his
wife. He confronts her. Just then, a servant brings
in a note from Werther asking to borrow
a pair of pistols.

HE WANTS
TO HURT
HIMSELF!

IT SERVES HIM
RIGHT. TAKE HIM
THE PISTOLS.



Werther cannot live without Charlotte. He writes her a letter. Then, taking one of Albert's pistols out of its case, he shoots himself.



Charlotte arrives just in time for Werther to die in her arms.

I HAVE LOVED YOU SINCE THE DAY WE MET.

I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO DIE WITH YOU BESIDE ME. MY DREAM IS FULFILLED.