

## Germany. A Winter's Tale Caput XII

*At night, the chaise bumps on through  
the woods.  
Suddenly a cracking is heard:  
A wheel's come off. We came to a halt.  
Not very pleasant, take my word.*

*The coachman got down, he hurried away  
To the village, and I'm left there  
Alone in the woods at midnight.  
A howling is heard everywhere.*

*That's the wolves, they howl so wildly,  
Their hungry voices are screaming  
Like lights in the total darkness,  
Their fiery eyes are gleaming*

*Surely, they've heard of my coming,  
And set the woods afire  
In honour of my visit;  
They even sang in choir.*

*It's a serenade, I see it now,  
A personal celebration!  
Deeply moved, I stroke a pose,  
And spoke with animation:*

*"My fellow wolves! I am happy today  
To spend time in this surrounding,  
Where so many noble minds,  
For me, are so lovingly howling*

*To what I feel in this moment,  
There is no possible measure;  
Yes, I shall eternally remember  
This lovely hour of pleasure.*

*I thank you for this confidence,  
Demonstrated without denial,  
And which you have so clearly  
proved,  
In every period of trial.*

*My fellow wolves! You never doubted me,  
Never be deceived by those thugs,  
Who spread the tale that I've betrayed you,  
That I've gone over to the dogs,*

*That, as a traitor, as a councillor-to-be,  
To the sheep-nation I was sold!  
It was beneath me to contradict  
All the lies that you were told.*

*The sheepskin that I wore at times,  
Was only used to keep me warm,  
It was no cause for sheep affection,  
In any shape or form.*

*I'm not a sheep, I'm not a dog,  
I'm not a councillor at all.  
I've always remained a wolf, my teeth  
Are wolfish, and so is my soul.*

*I am a wolf, and always will  
Howl the way wolves do.  
So, count on me and help yourself,  
Then God will help you too!"*

*That was the speech I made,  
Without any preparation.  
Kolb's Allgemeine had it printed,  
Not without some mutilation.*

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Illustration by Hans Traxler, Reclam

