

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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translated into English by Joseph Massaad



Illustration by Hans Traxler, Reclam

