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AARON ANGELL, LUCY STEIN, ISSY WOOD

WINTER SHOW

20 November – 17 December

Preview: 19 November, 2016 6-9pm

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The small, woolly lapdog had leapt suddenly down from its cushion and crept shivering under the sofa. At the same moment an outburst of angry barking came from the dogs in the castle-yard, and other dogs could be heard yapping and barking in the distance.

„What is disturbing the animals?“ asked the Baron.

And then the humans, listening intently, heard the sound that had roused the dogs to their demonstrations of fear and rage; heard a long-drawn whining howl, rising and falling, seeming at one moment leagues away, at others sweeping across the snow until it appeared to come from the foot of the castle walls. All the starved, cold misery of a frozen world, all the relentless hunger-fury of the wild, blended with other forlorn and haunting melodies to which one could give no name, seemed concentrated in that wailing cry.

„Wolves!“ cried the Baron.

Their music broke forth in one raging burst, seeming to come from everywhere.

„Hundreds of wolves,“ said the Hamburg merchant, who was a man of strong imagination.

Moved by some impulse which she could not have explained, the Baroness left her guests and made her way to the narrow, cheerless room where the old governess lay watching the hours of the dying year slip by. In spite of the biting cold of the winter night, the window stood open. With a scandalised exclamation on her lips, the Baroness rushed forward to close it.

„Leave it open,“ said the old woman in a voice that for all its weakness carried an air of command such as the Baroness had never heard before from her lips.

„But you will die of cold!“ she expostulated.

„I am dying in any case,“ said the voice, „and I want to hear their music. They have come from far and wide to sing the death-music of my family. It is beautiful that they have come; I am the last von Cernogratz that will die in our old castle, and they have come to sing to me. Hark, how loud they are calling!“

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The cry of the wolves rose on the still winter air and floated round the castle walls in long-drawn piercing wails; the old woman lay back on her couch with a look of long-delayed happiness on her face.

„Go away,“ she said to the Baroness; „I am not lonely any more. I am one of a great old family . . . „

„I think she is dying,“ said the Baroness when she had rejoined her guests; „I suppose we must send for a doctor. And that terrible howling! Not for much money would I have such death-music.“

„That music is not to be bought for any amount of money,“ said Conrad.

„Hark! What is that other sound?“ asked the Baron, as a noise of splitting and crashing was heard.

It was a tree falling in the park.

There was a moment of constrained silence, and then the banker’s wife spoke.

„It is the intense cold that is splitting the trees. It is also the cold that has brought the wolves out in such numbers. It is many years since we have had such a cold winter.“

The Baroness eagerly agreed that the cold was responsible for these things. It was the cold of the open window, too, which caused the heart failure that made the doctor’s ministrations unnecessary for the old Fraulein. But the notice in the newspapers looked very well -

„On December 29th, at Schloss Cernogratz, Amalie von Cernogratz, for many years the valued friend of Baron and Baroness Gruebel.“

Excerpt from The Wolves of Cernogratz by Saki

Exhibition Hours
Wednesday–Saturday
12pm–6pm

Please contact us for
further information.

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