

Legendary Wolves:  
In Memory of Peter Stumpp's Daughter (Redux)

## Characters

The Wolf

The Girl

Both a beast and a young  
woman.

Beele Stumpp, fifteen years  
old.

Scene I

*The WOLF stands beneath a willow tree.  
The stage is dark.*

WOLF

This is factual: The werewolf trial of 1589 ended with one of the most brutal executions in German history. A farmer named either Peter Stumpp, Peter Stube, or Peter Stübbe was accused of killing fourteen children and two pregnant women while in the shape of a ravenous wolf. He was accused on account of his missing left hand, for the werewolf in question was missing a left forepaw. Peter was also a wealthy Protestant in a time and place where Protestants were suspect. Under torture, he confessed to practicing black magic, consorting with the Devil, and possessing a magic belt that allowed him to transform into a wolf. No such belt was ever found. He also confessed to having an incestuous relationship with his young daughter, whose name was either Beele or Sybil. She was likely fifteen years old. Both Peter, Beele, and Peter's lover, a woman whose name we do not know, were put to death on October 31st, 1589. Peter was broken on the wheel, his limbs shattered and his head removed, before he was then burned in a pyre. Beele and the woman Peter loved were flayed and strangled, their bodies burned. When it was done, a pole was erected carrying the torture wheel and a figure of a wolf as a warning against evil. Peter's head was placed on top.

No evidence has ever been found to support the guilt of Peter Stumpp, his daughter, or his unnamed lover.

*The WOLF smiles.*

All that is factual. And in some ways, this is true.

Begin.

*Blackout.*

Scene II

*A GIRL lies under a willow tree, dead, a sheet over her face. A WOLF lies by her feet. The GIRL rises abruptly, kicking the*

*sheet off.*

Wolf!

GIRL

Girl.

WOLF

*They circle each other.*

Am I--?

GIRL

WOLF

Very. I dug you up. Don't think badly of me for that. I was very careful to put your bones back in place. You shouldn't feel any pain.

*The girl touches her arms, her face, her hips.*

GIRL

They said I did wicked things with a wolf. Not you, but a wolf. They said the wolf was my father.

WOLF

It was a cruel lie they told. Would my sorrow comfort you?

GIRL

No. Maybe. But I want somebody to be sorry. Have you ever been broken?

WOLF

Yes. But not like you.

GIRL

You have an answer for everything. It's so fucking easy for you, isn't it?

WOLF

I have seen this before.

GIRL

You witness

WOLF

I watch.

GIRL

Fuck you.

WOLF

If you like.

*The Wolf lies down at her feet.*

WOLF

I will not say you are stronger now.

GIRL

Then what am I?

WOLF

The aftermath.

GIRL

I suppose I should do something with that.

WOLF

By definition, martyrs never do anything with their fame.

GIRL

People worship martyrs like Christ.

WOLF

Blasphemy.

GIRL

They called me a whore. Broke my hips when they raped me. I cried for my father - who wouldn't? - and that, that was my confession, you see.

WOLF

I'm sorry.

GIRL

I don't want your sorrow.

WOLF

What then shall I lay at your feet?

GIRL

Nothing! Fuck you!

WOLF

I will bring you willow for your pain. Then, maybe, I will bring you teeth.

*The Wolf turns abruptly.*

WOLF

You were burned and scattered in the marsh. It took me a long time to stitch you back together, Peter's Daughter, and I'm afraid I could not find every piece. The dust of you will stick in the mud.

GIRL

And my aunt?

WOLF

The same. It's best you don't ask about your father.

GIRL

Why not?

WOLF

The memory is cruel.

GIRL

You don't get to decide that.

WOLF

I'm only saying.

GIRL

You owe me that much.

WOLF

I owe you?

*The Wolf rises and moves to stand next to the Girl, guarding her.*

WOLF

Maybe I do. Hmm. In time they will question his guilt. It won't matter, of course. But the world will wonder. They'll feel some sorrow for the legend.

GIRL

And me?

WOLF

They won't remember your name, Peter's Daughter. Your father killed children or your father was a sad man who did nothing at all. Whatever he did, Peter's Daughter bled on the pyre and lost her sorry head. It's assumed you suffered.

It's assumed.

GIRL

Shall I give you teeth, my dear? I don't love you, but I'm here.

WOLF

What am I supposed to do with teeth?

GIRL

Hmm. Whatever a ghost does with fear.

WOLF

Oh my God, you're a fucking poet.

GIRL

Language.

WOLF

Fuck you.

GIRL

I never did. It seems a shame. We could have been wild together.

WOLF

I thought wolves only seduced virgins.

GIRL

Is that what you learned from Little Red?

WOLF

I don't know her.

GIRL

One day, everyone will. But I don't blame her. She was only a child.

WOLF

Oh.

GIRL

If I can be flippant? We love who we love. All this talk of virgins comes back to sacrifice. And we are beautiful - certainly, we are beautiful! - but we are wolves, my dear. Not gods.

WOLF

I thought it would matter to you.

GIRL

The sacrifice? WOLF

Being a virgin. GIRL

That is a human word. WOLF

Oh. GIRL

*They linger in silence.*

What would I do with teeth? GIRL

Anything you please, except revenge. Dying is cruel that way. WOLF

You're giving me useless teeth. GIRL

Not useless, my love. I promise you'll be remembered. WOLF

"My love." GIRL

Perhaps. I would not be opposed to the idea. WOLF

That doesn't change any of it. You're supposed to avenge me. GIRL

I am not that kind of wolf. But... WOLF

*A pause.*

I see no reason your memory should be gentle. WOLF

Teeth, was it? GIRL

And claws as well. Very sharp. WOLF

GIRL  
How sharp?

WOLF  
As sharp as your pain. Even God would flinch.

GIRL  
I thought I was the blasphemer.

WOLF  
I seduce, that much is true, but I never lie. These teeth are what you make of them: everything in the world except gentle.

*The Girl examines her hands.*

GIRL  
I never had a lover, you know. I must not have been a very good whore.

*The Wolf growls.*

WOLF  
That was not done out of love.

GIRL  
Would you? "Do me" out of love?

WOLF  
If you asked.

GIRL  
You said I could do anything with teeth.

WOLF  
Almost anything. You can haunt them, Peter's Daughter. Bleed their righteous dreams. You can watch from the tree, grind your sorrow down and rage with it. Or you can step away from it, my love, and I will teach you how to sing as wolves sing.

GIRL  
I see.

WOLF  
And what do you choose?

GIRL  
I will have those teeth, I think.

They will remember you. I promise.

WOLF

*The Wolf holds out a hand. The Girl takes it.*

*Blackout.*