

# *The Dancing Mistress*

Novel



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Daniela Brotsack

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Dancing Mistress*

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*Life is too precious,  
to waste it on trivialities!*

# Foreword

With this book, you are holding a very special novel in your hands. Daniela Brotsack's story takes us back to the 18th century, when Wolfgang Mozart also lived in Salzburg. This novel will whet your appetite for culture! And along the way, the reader learns many interesting facts about the history of this period.

The author Daniela Brotsack has been a member of my dance group in Salzburg for many years, where we dance contra dances from Mozart's time and English country dances. Inspired by our experiences and adventures with dance, Daniela came up with the idea for this novel and so, as today's dance master, I have the honour of writing the foreword.

We have experienced many celebrations with dance and music together and Daniela authentically describes in her novel how dancing together connects us, makes us happy and has a strengthening effect. That's exactly how we experience it again and again.

Even though the book is called "The Dancing Mistress", dance is not the main content. As I wrote in the first sentence: you are holding a special book in your hands.

Why? Because this novel can do something very special: It has the potential to spread a soothing atmosphere through reading.

It has a healing effect on the soul to experience in this novel how people in the circle around the main character and narrator treat each other with respect and dignity. How in every person, regardless of social status, it is above all being, goodwill and honesty that count. The protagonist champions these values with her own example and ingenious ideas, which she puts into practice, and takes the reader with her into her world.



Of course, it's not all sunshine and cheerfulness. The world that the author takes us into plays out all of life's pieces – from misfortune, suffering and sadness to joy, success and happiness.

The narrator Victoria and her family are characterised by how they deal with strokes of fate and events. People help each other, listen to each other, are there for each other and, strengthened in this way, get through crises together. Culture – particularly emphasised in the novel – music and dance also help. Daniela Brotsack lets her narrator listen to special gems of music or play them herself and describes them in such a way that you want to listen to every piece immediately.

And – how could it be otherwise – all these human values that make life so worth living and loving and that come to life in this novel are experienced by the author herself. Wherever possible, Daniela enriches her environment with ideas and initiatives in order to experience beautiful and thus invigorating things together.

Her two earlier novels are also characterised by these values. The first novel, "Mit dem Mut einer Löwin – der lange Weg nach Hause", is set in the Middle Ages, while the second, "Des Falken Treue" (both not yet available in English), like a sequel to the first, tells a story of our time.

I hope you enjoy reading the novel "The Dancing Mistress".

Salzburg, in March 2021

Verena Brunner

Female dance master of today





# *Briefly explained*

Dear reader,

Sometime around 2007, I discovered my enthusiasm for medieval dances. Shortly before the 1st Paris Lodron Ball of the University of Salzburg in the rooms of the prince-archbishop's residence in 2012, I got to know and love the dances from the Mozart era and have been a member of Verena Brunner's Salzburg dance group with members from up to seven decades ever since, rehearsing historical dances with a lot of fun and joy.

In earlier centuries, everyone danced right up to the highest kings. Unfortunately, that has changed. Nowadays, dancing is often seen as unmanly. And yet many women still consider a good dancer to be particularly attractive. To counteract the widespread laziness to dance, I wanted to write about a female dancing master to inspire others to dance.

After the first forty or so pages of my manuscript, my writing flow came to a standstill. When I started working again, some of my protagonists developed a life of their own. They didn't want to accept the life I had planned for them and wouldn't leave me alone until I had rewritten everything. However, this also meant that the time frame of my story had to change.

Since a woman in the 18th century could hardly fulfil such a profession as dancing master on her own, I felt compelled to provide my protagonist with a brother who shares her enthusiasm for dancing.

Although I certainly didn't want to write a romance novel (yet again), I was confronted with the problem that a single woman at this certain time wasn't considered anything in the eyes of society, which is why my dancing master wasn't allowed to remain unmarried – and so love is involved.

I hope I have managed the balancing act between historical facts and an easy-to-read story with likeable people, so that my readers are also fascinated by those women who went their own way against all odds in earlier times and were quite successful.

Despite the numerous historically documented persons and facts, I would like to point out that my story is a novel in which there are also many fictional dialogues and scenes. I did not set out to reproduce every detail with historical accuracy and took the liberty of allowing my protagonists to act against some of the conventions of the time. After all, who knows whether there weren't people and ideas at the time described that were similar to the ones I had imagined?

A word about the cover: at the time described, fans were a very common accessory. Because the ladies wore corsets and often countless layers of fabric, a fan was at least a small help to prevent fainting in stuffy air. I thought that a dancing master's very personal fan could display the insignia of her art together with some drawings of dance figures. Some dance masters advertised the mastery of the following skills as a prerequisite for their profession: dancing, riding, fencing and playing the pochette (pocket fiddle).

I gave the friends of my protagonist Victoria the names of noble families from Bavaria who were long extinct at the time.

As the story is set in Deutschland (Germany) and present-day Österreich (Austria), the German names are given in the original German spelling. The English spelling can be found in the footnotes

I hope you enjoy the dancing mistress and her adventures!

Yours

Daniela Brotsack

*"Everyone wants to have an intelligent wife,  
but they don't want to give them the means of  
understanding."*

Dorothea Christiane Erxleben,  
doctor and pioneer of women's studies  
(1715–1762)

## January 1774

It was cold and we had a respectable amount of snow. Archbishop Colloredo sent us an invitation to a sleigh ride from the Domplatz (cathedral square) to Schloss Hellbrunn, followed by a masked ball in the residence. The date was set for the next full moon on the 27th of the month, a Friday. My mamma was to entertain the prince's guests with her music at a small reception at Schloss Hellbrunn. For this reason, our family was given the special privilege of being invited to the "Schlittade"<sup>1</sup> itself and no one who could stand on their feet would turn down such an invitation.

Pappa broached the subject in the evening: "We have two sledges and trained horses that are suitable for a ride like this. That means there's room for all of us. Of course, I'll be driving the sleigh with your mamma myself. You will steer the second one with Victoria, Christoph."

Mamma now took the floor. "At the same time as the Monarch's invitation, we received another invitation from your Uncle Josef and Aunt Maria, offering us the opportunity to stay with them in Salzburg for the days around the Schlittade. Through the Monarch's secretary, of course, they know that we will be there. Isn't that marvellous?"

Father nodded in agreement. "Your brother Josef and his wife Maria are lovely people who I would like to see again.

I'm really looking forward to this evening. Please promise me to prepare yourselves so that nobody gets tired and inattentive. That could be dangerous with the sledges, especially in the dark. Oh yes, and to make sure my children both have fun, we'll mix up the pairs on the way into town. Christoph, you go with your mamma and I'll put myself in my daughter's capable hands and let her take the reins."

I hugged my clever father with the soft heart. He wouldn't regret his decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Schlittade comes from the word Schlitten, which is a sledge.



Christoph and I took care of the preparations in the stable and shed. First we inspected the sledges again. One looked like a wolf and the other like a feisty eagle. Both were in good condition and just needed a little cleaning. We touched up the paint here and there.

They were two really comfortable sledges that came from my father's parents. Both of them had a space under the seat where you could stow a hot brick to keep the person sitting nice and warm on their backside. And both had a screwed-on frame on the runners where the coachman stood, which was about knee-high and bent backwards at the bottom. The driver stood on it and it protected him and his legs from snow and wetness from the front, which was a great relief and not standard. In addition, both vehicles had a lantern in the centre front to illuminate the path directly in front of the horse, as well as holders for torches.

For the seats, there were beanbags sewn from bearskins, fur on the inside and leather on the outside. This protected the sitter's legs and abdomen from wind and weather.

Mamma and I had a lot of fun with the rest of the preparations. We were looking forward to this trip like children and packed clothes for two days and nights, but also thought of enough torches for the sledges.

A few days later, on the day before the spectacle, we set off on both sledges towards Salzburg under slightly overcast skies.

I was wearing winter trousers and thick boots and a simple skirt that I could button up left and right. The top layer was a long coat. When I stood behind the sledge, you couldn't see anything that might cause offence.

We gave the horses free rein on a long straight and they chased along so fast it was a joy. The little bells on the sledges and the horses' harnesses accompanied every movement and everyone in front of us heard us coming and made way for us with a hello.

When Pappa turned round to me from time to time, he looked very happy. I hadn't seen him this cheerful for a



long time. I'd always had the feeling that something was bothering him recently. But he didn't talk about it.

Every now and then I would hear my mamma yowl or the loud crack of my brother's whip, which spurred his horse on even more. However, the encouragement wasn't particularly necessary, as our animals were dashing forwards out of sheer joie de vivre and none of them was better than the other.

When we arrived at Uncle Josef and Aunt Maria's house in the centre of the city, right on the banks of the Salzach, between the Mozarts' flat and the residence, the horses were reasonably dry again and we were looking forward to a warm room. My uncle's groomsman and another servant would look after our horses and the sleighs. A stable that also rented out boxes was just round the corner and as the sleighs weren't very big, our relatives would have a suitable place to keep them.

"Welcome, my dears!" Maria embraced each of us with a warmth that was almost unbearable. Uncle Josef stood somewhat awkwardly next to her and offered his hand to everyone with a broad grin. His handshake was legendary and I wrested my right hand from him as quickly as possible so as not to get hurt. I was delighted to see them both in such good health.

"Dionys, how happy I am to see you with such a cheerful gleam in your eyes and a healthy complexion!" Josef gave his brother-in-law a well-meaning pat on the shoulder.

"I was able to enjoy the journey here to the full. I had a really cosy ride because my daughter drove me to the city limits. Thank you for the invitation." My father was in a great mood.

"Now come in at last, settle down and hurry into the warm parlour. We have a small evening party tonight with a light dinner among good friends. Oh yes, the Mozarts are coming too. So after a nice hot cup of mocha, I suggest you get some rest."

My aunt changed the subject to the latest gossip about who had got engaged and which dances they had already



attended or would be attending this carnival season. Uncle Josef also knew all the latest news and rumours.

Of course, there was not only mocha, but also excellent pastries. Among other things, the cook had made a *Linzer Torte*, which my brother particularly enjoyed. I guess the cook wanted to ingratiate herself again because Christoph knows how to give nice compliments.

Although I didn't feel tired, I went to the room provided for me and lay down. After reading two pages in the book from my relatives' library, my eyes fell shut. My aunt's maid woke me up at the right time and teased me that I looked a bit sleepy. The cheeky young thing always makes me laugh.

The evening event was supposed to be completely informal. In other words, I put on an evening gown, of course, but not my best ball gown. I had Wolferl<sup>2</sup> Mozart as my table host. "Greetings, noble Countess von Falkenstein. You look lovely again. Before anyone else beats me to it, I'll ask for the first dance."

"Thank you for the compliment, genius Mozart. Of course I'll dance the first dance with you. It's a pleasure. Because of your travels to Italy and Wien<sup>3</sup> and my trip last year, we haven't seen each other for so long that I almost didn't recognise you."

Of course, this was an exaggeration. I would have recognised my old friend anytime and anywhere. But as he was also not always telling the truth, that was fine. Wolferl knew a lot to tell about his travels and, as always, he made jokes that made me laugh heartily.

"Don't tell me I'm still growing." He sat up very straight and pushed his chest forward until I laughed.

"Now that you mention it, you've grown up!" I ducked away from him and he gave me a peck on the arm and laughed out loud.

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<sup>2</sup> Wolferl is a Bavarian/Austrian loving short form of the name Wolfgang.

<sup>3</sup> Vienna



People chatted between courses and a wide variety of topics came up. An elderly lady, whose name I simply can't remember, asked the group: "Which of the ladies has actually read *The History of Lady Sophia Sternheim* by that writer in Koblenz, Sophie von La Roche? It's quoted everywhere."

My aunt eagerly took the floor. "Of course I had to read that. Did you know that La Roche originally came from Kaufbeuren? She was born Gutermann zu Gutershofen, so she is a distant relative of mine."

"Oh, that's very interesting. Then somehow you have family ties with Christoph Wieland, the poet. How exciting!" came back from the lady immediately. "As far as I know, he's a cousin of La Roche."

Mrs Mozart also shared her knowledge. "They're both very talented, anyway. I've read La Roche's *Sternheim* and also a few things by Wieland. His *Lady Johanna Gray* in particular really touched my heart, even though I'm Catholic through and through." She put her hands over her breasts and looked upwards. Wolfgang started to giggle and I couldn't hold back any longer. Especially when she realised and winked at us conspiratorially while exaggerating the gesture even further.

As already announced, after the meal there was dancing in the *Tanzmeistersaal*<sup>4</sup>, which belonged to the flat and also had a separate entrance. There were plenty of musicians in the room who were itching to dance. Among them were my mother and Wolfgang's father, who played a duet with their violins with an undetermined outcome. It was marvellous to see them both in their element. Leopold Mozart is otherwise a very rational and rather serious person. But the music makes even him shine.

"So, here comes an Anglaise<sup>5</sup>!" My friend Nannerl Mozart sat down at the pianoforte and tapped the keys like a der-

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4 Dancing master's hall, part of Mozart's apartment.

5 A dance in a long lane in which the first couple dances with every other couple in turn. When it reaches the bottom, it dances back to the starting point in the role of the other couple.





vish. The rest of us danced to the cheerful and sometimes almost too fast melodies with great joy. Completely exhilarated, I briefly opened a window during a break in the dancing. Immediately there were shouts from all sides that I should close it again immediately before people died. Why is everyone always so sensitive? I must almost be dying of heat because the others start shivering at the first draught. That happened to me again and again.

I fell into bed in the early hours of the morning, dog-tired but happy. It had been an evening when I had felt completely at ease. However, it had been far too hot and I had a headache.

It wasn't until late morning that I got up again, reasonably well-rested, and got dressed. I skipped breakfast as there would be a snack at lunchtime. My first stop was at my brother's to check on our horses with him. After all, they had to look their best today and be fit for the ride. In return for a small gift of money, the stable lads at the livery stable were overflowing with kindness and wanted to take extra good care of our horses and spruce them up.

Shortly after midday, the horses were harnessed and our small group set off for the nearby cathedral square. There were already many different sledges.

"Look, Vic, there's a bear over there."

"Yes, and there's even a dragon over here. I like its green colour. It looks so poisonous."

"And there, another dark lindworm. What a difference to the radiant, shimmering gold dragon behind!"

Mamma called over and drew our attention to a sledge with a beautifully carved wolf.

We marvelled at the wide variety of sledges, some of which were real works of carving art. Other ornaments seemed to me to be rather skilfully made from papier-mâché. Together with the beautifully gleaming horses and the people elegantly dressed in furs, it was a real feast for the eyes. Countless bells rang out their delicate sound, you could hear joking shouts, horses neighing and dogs bar-



king. A joyful, excited atmosphere prevailed in the square. People came from all corners and streets to see what was going on.

And then the sleigh with the archbishop came out of the courtyard of the residence next to the cathedral.

It was adorned with a white stag with a cross between its antlers<sup>6</sup>. In other words, the animal from the legend of St Hubert.

His coachman, a tall man, drove to the front of the procession and off we trotted towards the town. Outside, in the open field, the pace was then briefly increased a little and I felt wonderful because I was allowed to be part of this spectacle.

The colourful procession, initially accompanied by many onlookers, made a large loop across the snow-covered fields towards Hellbrunn. Obviously the route had already been prepared in advance. Presumably to ensure safety, as you can't see holes and small ditches in the snow. I also spotted a lot of animal tracks.

The snow meant that nature had also become superficially quiet in the city, but there were still the constant sounds of craftsmen, shouts, horse-drawn carriages and much more.

All I could hear here was the gentle tinkling of bells, the snorting of horses and the cheerful laughter of people. My heart soared and I felt really happy.

When we arrived at the castle, it was still light and everything looked like something out of a fairy tale. Many servants had been specially deployed to look after the horses. The guests of the Schlittade were invited to attend a small reception in the castle's Carabinieri Hall. Champagne and snacks were served. Then our mamma played a chamber music concert with some excellent musicians for about three quarters of an hour. It was marvellous.

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6    *Such a sledge is not documented.*



I had a seat next to a window during the performance. Everything around the castle looked spectacular as the sun slowly disappeared behind the mountains. And shortly afterwards, the sky seemed to glow. It was a marvellous sunset that I was able to watch and was incredibly impactful, especially with the beautiful music.

Back outside, the torches were lit. Of course, there were again guests who had not made any arrangements in this direction and who were dependent on the archbishop's servants to provide torches for their vehicles. Well, perhaps they had reckoned on that too and saved themselves some money. But we had made provisions for everything and so the horseboy was not forced to provide us with any further services.

I was about to snuggle into the leather sack on the eagle sledge when Pappa held my arm. "Victoria, I know that you have better eyesight at night and that you are also the better sledge driver of the two of us. So I'd be happy to put myself in your capable hands as far as the city limits and be content as a passenger."

I was surprised and delighted at the same time. So I helped my father to find a comfortable sitting position, gathered up my skirts, under which I was wearing trousers anyway in the cold, and prepared to set off. The servant who was holding our carriage looked astonished and indignant when he noticed the change. He was no doubt of the opinion that what had never been should not be. I gave him my friendliest smile and was rewarded by the fact that he no longer looked so grumpy.

Then I took off the blanket that had covered the sweating horse and stowed it on the sledge. I then took my place on the runners and looked over at my brother challengingly.

He laughed happily and my mother looked at me with a satisfied expression on her face. Just a few minutes later, the archbishop's sleigh set off back towards the town. The full moon shone on the landscape and covered everything in a silvery glow.



"You'll see that not everyone will arrive in the city in one piece. Some of the gentlemen here have looked very deeply into the champagne glass. Wait and see, we can foresee an incident." Christoph played Cassandra again. He would not be disappointed.

Not long after setting off, the first accident occurred. One of the guests didn't have his horse under control. It broke loose and ran straight to a ditch. It jumped over it and arrived safely on the other side. But the sleigh landed in the ditch along with the lady and the powerless coachman. Fortunately there was no water in the ditch, but it was boggy and the sleigh had obviously been damaged. As there were enough helping hands at work, in no time at all, we drove on and enjoyed our adventure.

"Look how beautiful the landscape is!" Mamma called out to us, pointing enthusiastically at the silhouette of the city.

From a distance, it looked as if we were gliding towards a city that was not of this world. On the Festung<sup>7</sup>, which otherwise towers in darkness, fires could be seen blazing and fireworks were being set off on the *Gaisberg*<sup>8</sup>. It was like being in a pleasant dream!

"How lucky we are to be able to live such a life. Not many are granted that. May it always stay that way so that we don't have to worry too much!" Pappa looked up at me encouragingly and I picked up the pace. It was as if Christoph's and my sledge were flying over the snow. I could literally feel the horses' joy on this outing and at that moment I loved our little community even more.

The return journey didn't take that long, as there was only one big "S". When we had a closer look at the first houses, we could already see many people. My father told Christoph and me to stop and we changed positions again. Acting unconventionally is one thing, but presenting it to the public is another story.

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7 The archbishop's fortress above the town, today known as Hohensalzburg

8 A small mountain (1287 m above sea level) next to Salzburg



There was more light in the city and my father felt safe again as a coachman. Besides, I had had my fun and knew that I couldn't insist on my role any longer to ensure that the rest of the evening went well. We arrived back at the residence the same way we had started in the afternoon and nobody would have anything to complain about.

"Dionysius, let's go quickly to Maria and Josef. Their lads can look after the horses and we still have time to change in peace." Mamma was right, of course. Our relatives could also take us to the residence in one of the sedan chair services and the masked ball definitely required a change of clothes.

For my taste, it took far too long before we were all ready to set off again. Of course, we were still well on time, but I always get fidgety when so much time is wasted on useless activities. So I'd been sitting in the library reading for ages when the signal to leave finally came.

Like many other women, I had read the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, published in 1763, who was the wife of an ambassador in Constantinople. I had raved so much about it to Christoph that we both had father get us original Turkish clothes. Of course, we wouldn't be the first or the most original masks in Turkish style, but we would probably be among the most stylish, because they were original.

Christoph wore an undergarment with a rich floral pattern and a matching, typical şalvar, or harem trousers. Over this was a magnificent belt with semi-precious stones. The most important thing was a richly embroidered silk caftan and a matching white turban, just like the Turks themselves wear.

I also wore an underdress and a Şalvar, which was richly embroidered in the lower third. Then a gold-embroidered Turkish blouse and, on top of that, a magnificent entari with a train, as the overdress is called, which in my case was worn open from the waist down. This, I was told, was the dress of the palace ladies in Turkey.



We both wore pointed shoes made of soft leather that were specially made for dancing.

I had already had my hair braided into very thin plaits at the beginning of the day, which was not visible under my cap. I also wore a hat decorated with feathers and gemstones and an intricate veil.

I hadn't realised that father had also bought Turkish clothes for himself and mother and was surprised that they also looked like a sultan and his lady of the heart.

A short time later, we entered the residence, which was lit up with the help of probably thousands of candles. The high stucco walls – a glittering place that holds many memories for me.

Many guests had already gathered, some wearing unusual masks that showed a lot of imagination. Others, on the other hand, hadn't gone to much trouble with their costumes. They just wore a half-mask or a little hat with a veil combined with a normal evening gown.

The orchestra was already assembled and mamma was just whispering to my father which of the musicians she knew, when she stumbled and turned towards us. "Oh dear, I left my fan on Maria's chest of drawers. I won't make it through the evening without it!" Christoph made a little bow, waved his arms a little – and suddenly had mamma's fan in his hand.

"I was curious to see how long it would take for his loss to be noticed. When we left, he was lying alone on the piece of furniture and called out to me: 'Take me with you', so I couldn't resist."

"Have I ever told you that I couldn't wish for a better son? You are a wonderfully attentive person. Thank you so much, you saved my evening." With that, she gave him an air kiss and took her fan.

It was still a pleasant temperature in the room, but with more people and the many candle flames, it would be scorching hot in a few hours.



The sound of fanfares drew the attention of all visitors of the ballroom. Of course, there were still whispers here and there. Some people just can't keep their mouths shut. But it became noticeably quieter and all attention turned to the entrance of the hall. There, the host appeared in a magnificent robe with a Venetian mask, while the orchestra played the *Entrance of the Queen of Sheba* from the oratorio *Solomon* by Georg Friedrich Händel<sup>9</sup>. What a performance!

Prince Archbishop Colloredo welcomed his guests and asked them to dance.

Immediately afterwards, the orchestra began to play the first dance that I had already promised my brother. It was a minuet<sup>10</sup>.

Afterwards, I danced with my uncle Josef, who knew how to make me laugh with funny remarks or short grimaces and gestures.

It was an Anglaise in the long alley. We stood in the first third and danced down. After a good twenty minutes, we reached the bottom and danced back up again.

The dance had lasted about an hour and we had met a lot of old acquaintances. We exchanged brief pleasantries with every couple we already knew – as far as the dance gave us the opportunity. We got ourselves all heated up and went for some of the punch that was by the refreshments. It was very good, but also to be enjoyed with caution. I realised the effects of the alcohol very quickly and held back from then on.

Then, we continued with a quadrille<sup>11</sup>. A friend of my father's had asked me to do this dance, a good dancer and a consummate gentleman. I had adored him even as a small child. In my childish imagination, all men should be like him: Always friendly, well-mannered, nice to children and accomplished dancers. Mr Blumenau was also very

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9 George Frideric Handel

10 Courtly ballroom dance in 3/4 cadence.

11 Contra dance with 4 pairs



well-read and had a refreshing wit. The dance went by far too quickly with him.

During a break from dancing, I found myself in a pleasant company where everyone had something to say. One of the gentlemen had an aunt in Berlin.

"That damn Preußenkönig Friedrich<sup>12</sup>! You can still remember his *Tartoffel* orders or whatever that stuff is called, can't you?"

Another gentleman spoke up: "You mean *Erdäpfel*; aren't they called *Kartoffeln* (potatoes) by the Preußen? Farmers were supposed to grow them because they were nutritious. That certainly made sense during the famine in Sachsen<sup>13</sup> three years ago. But by force? There were the so-called *tuber preachers* who travelled the countryside and told people everywhere that they should grow the crop."

I also knew something about the subject. "Many farmers didn't know what to do with the plant at first. They didn't realise for a long time that it was the tubers that were eatable and not the herb and flowers. This led to a number of deaths. Understandably, the farmers didn't want to know anything more about it."

One lady said: "I heard that Friedrich once even had potato fields guarded as a ruse so that the farmers would think the plants were valuable. It seems to have worked. He's a real rascal! The farmers now supposedly have to grow the plants on a tenth of their arable land. I don't like that stuff. But it still did a good job during the famine."

Finally, the first speaker continued, "It's all true. Well, as we all know, there's no accounting for taste. But now Friedrich gets down to the coffee. In Prussia, crazy Fritz imposed a luxury tax of 150 per cent on coffee! In Berlin, the beans cost many times more than from our Vic's father, from whom I always buy them – although we already pay a lot more here in the south than in Hamburg due to the many different customs duties from the north down here."

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12 Prussian King Frederick the great

13 Saxony





"Oh no, he's crazy! And why is that?" the lady wanted to know.

"Because he doesn't want the bourgeoisie and normal people to drink the brew. That's what my aunt told me in one of her letters. Recently, a large parcel sent to her was actually searched. As the inspectors found coffee<sup>14</sup> in it that wasn't labelled, I had to pay a hefty fine. What's more, the coffee was confiscated!" the first speaker replied.

"I've always been suspicious of the Prussians. I can't understand why anyone would still want to live in their territory." The lady had her own opinion.

I stood next to them and could only marvel at the ideas some rulers came up with. But not for long, because my next dancer was already standing in front of me and wanted to accompany me to the dance floor.

It was an all-round harmonious celebration. The whole day was a special experience. For me, the Schlittade was the first time I had experienced something like this, although it is organised at many courts in Germany, for example in Dresden. But I had only ever heard of such events.

For me, this day was a very special experience that I will remember for the rest of my life. The night-time drive, the people, the music, everything was just right and I felt really happy that day.



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14 A few years later, on 21 January 1781, Frederick the Great hired out 400 veterans to act as "coffee sniffers". From then on, it was forbidden to roast coffee yourself (so that the smuggled coffee could be found).



Around 1770: Victoria is a friend of Nannerl and Wolfgang Mozart and lives near Salzburg. She sees her calling as a dance mistress. But social conventions and her father do not allow this. The young woman has to overcome many obstacles and face numerous challenges in life before her wish comes true.

Everywhere she goes, Victoria hears about women who are living their vocation and are held in high esteem by society. She gets to know some of them personally. These women encourage Victoria to go her own way.

„An engaging well-researched allegorical novel of eighteenth-century Salzburg and Bavaria with great relevance for modern society.“

*Peter Longley, Author of 'When the Cows Come Home',  
a Bavarian family saga*

„Through this exciting story of Victoria and her entanglements in love and music, the author has masterfully managed to captivate the reader from the very first moment. This novel is a perfect reminder to never stray from the most important qualities of being human.“

*Bettine Clemen, international flautist*

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