

TAKS



KADRI HINRIKUS ELINA SILDRE

Dachshund and Dane

Text by [Kadri Hinrikus](#)

Illustrated by Elina Sildre

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Dane has recently moved in near Dachshund, and has already won over the hearts of many with his kind nature. Husky and Basset, Bernard and Corgi, Labrador and Collie—all the neighbors are blown over! Dachshund likes Dane so much that she wants to invite him over for Christmas, to go sledding, to sniff spring scents, and to dig up flower beds, just the two of them! At the same time, their friends just want to lie on the couch and think about everything beautiful in the world.



pp. 5–7

Christmas Eve

The snow was falling and falling. Dachshund was sitting at home and staring out the window. The Christmas tree in the corner was decorated, and a candle on the table was waiting to be lit.

"Should I send her a text message, or should I call?" Dachshund wondered anxiously "And how should it begin? Is it okay to write 'Dearest Dane!', or should I just type 'Dear Dane' instead?"

Dachshund nervously tapped on his phone. He really wanted to invite Dane over for Christmas Eve. He'd wanted to for several days, in fact, but just couldn't work up the courage to ask. Dane moved to the neighborhood only recently but had managed to win over all the local dogs with her friendly attitude.

"Oh, what should I write?!" Dachshund sighed. "I bet Dane has a houseful of guests over already. They'll just make fun of my awkward invitation!"

Dachshund stared at the Christmas present he'd gotten for her—the best liver sausage in the whole wide world. In his opinion, liver sausage was tastier than every cookie, wafer, waffle, gingerbread, pastry, candy, cake, and pie put together. Lighting the candle, he sat down at the table.

At that same moment, Dane was sitting in her kitchen and spinning her phone around in her paw, not knowing what to do.

"Should I write 'Dear Dachshund,' or should the text begin with more energy?" Dane wondered. "Maybe it should go: 'Hello-mellow! What's pawing? Pop over here to my place and let's get the party started!'"

Dane blushed in excitement. "No, no—I don't dare to write anything like that! He'll just laugh at me."

She stared at the small feast she'd laid out, dearly wishing that Dachshund would come be her guest for Christmas Eve. Dane had brought out an especially low table so that Dachshund would be nice and comfortable, given his short legs. And she had a gift all ready for him, too—a hunk of the best liver sausage in the whole wide world.

"Oh, what's the good of dreaming," Dane sighed, shuffling to the table and trying to squeeze her legs beneath it. Then, she lit a candle.

Dachshund was sitting at home, gnawing on liver sausage meant for Dane by candlelight, and reminiscing about the first time he saw the gorgeous dog—in the circle cast by the spotlight next to the shed.

Dane was sitting at home, absentmindedly nibbling on the world's best liver sausage, and wondering what Dachshund might be up to. Was he cold and would he remember to pull on wool socks before going to bed? Winter winds could be so frigid.



Kadri Hinrikus. Dachshund and Dane. Translated by Adam Gullen

Reading sample

It came time to go to sleep.

"Good night, dearest Dachshund," Dane whispered as she pulled the blanket up to her snout. She dreamed about swinging in a hammock with him, surrounded by sweet-smelling lilac bushes.

"Good night, dearest Dane," Dachshund sighed as he stretched out in bed. In his dream, he and Dane raced to the sledding hill, which they slid down softly in the brilliant sunlight.

It was a very beautiful Christmas Eve. Almost.

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Smells

The snow melting brought endless new smells with it. Dachshund and Dane's days were filled with sniffing. Their snouts were pointed to the ground from morning till night as they incessantly smelled, compared, and discussed.

"Hey, come here!" Dachshund shouted, waving Dane to a fencepost. "Have you ever sniffed anything like this before?"

Dane trotted over and gave the post a long, hard sniff.

"It reminds me a little of a young mountain goat that has just shed its coat," she suggested thoughtfully. "Or maybe a red deer?"

"Come on, it's definitely not a deer! You were right the first time—I bet it's a mountain goat. The cold scent of steep cliffs is pretty clear."

They padded onward. Soon, Dane called out to Dachshund.

"You won't believe what I found! This old stump smells like a pine marten that has just barely escaped the jaws of a hungry wolf. Come see how strong it is!"

Dachshund sniffed once and was amazed—the smell really was powerful!

"I just came across the smell of a badger over there—it's that same old guy who's been expanding his den out past the woods for at least the last five years," Dachshund told her. "The scent tells me he's dug two more entrances and five exits in addition to the three entrances and four exits he had already. Some creatures really can get hoity-toity sometimes!"

"It smells like a herd of cattle passed that oak over there. When I went to take a closer look, I found a nursing bottle."

Dachshund went "mm-mmm!" in pleasure as he stretched out his back. "You reckon we should get gathering and canning now?"



Reading sample

Dane agreed.

They couldn't just let the wind sweep away the cloud of incredible springtime smells. Because many of the trickles of meltwater had originally fallen as snow blown from far away, they also carried distant smells. Apart from the amazing scents of mountain goats and pine martens, there were also whiffs of flying squirrels, snow leopards, bobcats, lynx, pink sowbread flowers, and yellow pond lilies. Not to mention the usual smells of coltsfoot, fir needles, pinecones, damp moss, and earthworms.

So, Dachshund and Dane gathered up the most exciting, spicy, sweet, mellow, and unusual scents, and arranged them into a fabulous bouquet. Dane then stuffed the mixture into a large glass jar, which she set on her living room table. Every now and then, she liked to unscrew the lid, take a sniff, and give samples to her friends for their birthdays.

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On the Beach

The sun glittered and sparked on the sea. Gentle, drowsy waves slid across the sandy beach.

"The water is just perfect for a swim,"

Dachshund said, feeling a little woozy from sunbathing. "Are you coming in, too?"

Dane shook her head. She had settled in beneath a sunshade, was crocheting a new collar for formal occasions, and had no plans of scampering into the waves.

"You go ahead. Just don't wade out too far—it gets deep pretty quick here."

Dachshund snorted and strutted into the waves. They were soft, cooling, and refreshing.

"I'm no puppy! I'll swim out as far as I'd like," he thought as he happily sloshed straight towards the horizon. The bright light made him squint, but his tail was a steady rudder.

"I wonder if she can see what an incredible swimmer I am."

Dachshund made a couple of especially powerful doggy-paddle strokes and slapped his tail against the surface. A little too much water splashed into his throat and made him cough, but he didn't care.

By then, the shore was rather far behind

him and the waves were getting higher.

"It's about time for Dane to yip for me to come back!" Dachshund thought a little anxiously. "Is she even watching? Would she swim to my rescue at all?"

Dachshund was floundering and felt a little bit out of control. A couple of pesky waves splashed over his head and his tail was starting to tire out, not to mention his paws.

Back on shore, Dane was afraid she'd lose all her fur from worry. "What's that crazy Dachshund up to this time?!" she groaned. "Why does he always have to doggy-paddle out so far?"

Dane trotted around the sand in circles, watching Dachshund so intensely that she thought her eyes might pop out. "But if I swim out there, then he'll think that I think he's just some pup who isn't a strong enough swimmer! Oh, no!"

Whimpering and swaying, Dane stood panting right on the edge of the sea, waiting for the right moment to rush to the rescue. It had to be perfect—not a smidgen too early nor a smidgen too late.

As soon as Dachshund stuck his snout out of the water after the next wave rolled by, he decided to finally turn around to head back to shore. He couldn't go any further, no matter what Dane might think of him. So, he simply let the surf carry him back to the beach, where he lay panting on the sand.

"You sure swam out pretty far," Dane remarked from the shade of her umbrella.

"So you saw me?"

"Of course I did. You were paddling around like it was nothing. It was an absolute joy to watch."

The two stretched out and relaxed on the sand until late that evening, both recovering in pleasant silence.

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The Hike

Come on a hike through the woods to the big boulder! A journey full of unexpected turns! Anyone who'd like is welcome to join. We'll meet tomorrow beneath the oak tree. Mutt.

So read the flier Dachshund was carrying when she scampered over to Dane.



Reading sample

"I wonder what he means by 'unexpected turns'!" she said, inspecting the invitation doubtfully.

"I hope it's something exciting. Maybe we'll run into Bear, or Lion will chase down Corgi, or Labrador and Husky will get into a tiff."

"Labrador's certainly not getting into a tiff with anybody," Dane said with a grin, then left to pack some snacks for the hike.

The next morning, a nice-sized pack of pups gathered beneath the oak tree. Spaniel, Greyhound, Husky, Labrador, and even Basset showed up in addition to Mutt, Dachshund, and Dane.

"Don't look so surprised" Basset snuffled when everyone stopped to stare at her. "A little stroll in the fresh air is just what I need."

So, the dogs set off.

Greyhound shot ahead of everyone else before they even made it out of the shade. They didn't see him again on that hike.

Basset plodded at the very end of the procession until they reached the lilac bushes. There, she flopped down to take a break and woke up from her unexpected nap when the sun was setting. She then hurried home to rest up from the hike.

Spaniel leapt into every ditch, pond, and puddle they came across. He didn't let anyone spoil his fun. In the end, they left him splashing around a stream surrounded by tall cattails.

Husky had a rather difficult time. Since he refused to go hiking without his sled—even though summer snow conditions were worse than measly—it kept getting stuck behind all sorts of stumps, tree roots, rocks, and fallen branches. The sled simply refused to slide. It got so hopelessly tangled in a wild rose bush that Husky stayed behind to get it loose.

Labrador, who was extremely kind, stayed to lend Husky a hand. Her good heart simply wouldn't let her abandon anyone in such a mess.

Mutt also turned back shortly before they got to the big boulder. He remembered he'd left a pup alone in the bath back at home.

So, Dachshund and Dane reached the giant stone alone. They munched on hot dogs and sausages, ate some wild raspberries growing in the brush, lay in the sunshine, and stared at the clouds.

"Hiking's not so bad at all," Dachshund said when they got home. "Only there weren't any unexpected turns at all—everything went just the way it always does."

"Well, almost," Dane replied.

"What do you mean?"

"Cuckoo sang louder than ever before."

