

The 18th century presented a world quite different from ours. Consider the following story - a story everyone knows, though not in the following version, which is the tale more or less as it was told around firesides in peasant cottages during long winter evenings in 18th century France

Once a little girl was told by her mother to bring some bread and milk to her grandmother. As the girl was walking through the forest, a wolf came up to her and asked where she was going.

"To grandmother's house," she replied.

"Which path are you taking, the path of the pins or the path of the needles?"

"The path of the needles."

So the wolf took the path of the pins and arrived first at the house. He killed the grandmother, poured her blood into a bottle, and sliced her flesh onto a platter. Then he got into her nightclothes and waited in bed.

"Knock, knock."

"Come in, my dear."

"Hello, grandmother. I've brought you some bread and milk."

"Have something yourself, my dear. There is meat and wine in the pantry."

So the little girl ate what was offered; and as she did, a little cat said, "Slut! To eat the flesh and drink the blood of your grandmother!"

Then the wolf said, "Undress and get into bed with me."

"Where shall I put my apron?"

"Throw it on the fire; you won't need it any more."

When the girl got into bed, she said, "Oh, grandmother! How hairy you are!"

"It's to keep me warmer, my dear."

"Oh, grandmother, what big shoulders you have!"

"It's better for carrying firewood, my dear."

"Oh, grandmother! What big teeth you have!"

"It's for eating better, my dear."

And he ate her.