

This lesson is based on Professor Anne Duggan's TED-talk. The original video is here



Can you remember the plot of Little Red Riding Hood? Why is the fairy tale called like this? Have you ever seen any hidden message or moral in this fairy tale?

Listen to the first snippet from the TED-talk. What was the main difference between the earliest version of LRRH and the one you know?

Clip 1 _____



Do you remember who penned this fairy tale? Listen to Clip 2
_____ **and decide whether these statements are true or false:**

1. This earliest version of Little Red Riding Hood was penned by Grimm Brothers in 17th-century Germany. T F
2. Perrault was a very important man in the age of Louise XIV. T F
3. Perrault told fairy tales to the government. T F
4. An elite group of women and men in a luxuriously decorated aristocratic home were the main audience of Charles Perrault. T F

At the end of the tale Perrault appends a moral to the story which in fact recontextualizes the tale for such an audience and it reads as follows:

Moral: Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say “wolf,” but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.

Join the pairs of synonyms:

charming

quiet

polite

unassuming

complacent

placid

adorable

silent

withdrawn

well-mannered

Listen to clip 3 _____ and choose the correct set of missing words

So Perrault's moral makes the wolf into a _____ – _____ aristocrat who follows young ladies into salons to _____ them which we could understand in terms of _____.

1. smooth-talking/ gobble/ satisfaction
2. smooth-talking/devour/seduction
3. smooth-taking/devour/seduction

In fact, some _____ have argued that this is a story about _____ given the _____ of the tale.

1. schoolboys/ rape/ violence
2. scholars/ ape/ violence
3. scholars/ rape/ violence

In the 17th century French incarnation of Little Red Riding Hood the wolf clearly is a male _____ who _____ around French salons ready to _____ unsuspecting young ladies.

1. seducer/ foams/pounce on
2. seducer/ roams/ pounce on
3. seducer/roams/ bounce on

It is an _____ tale about seduction or rape and those connotations can play out in very _____ ways in different media. Little Red Riding Hood is often _____ which could suggest that she brought the tragedy upon herself.

1. allergic/ suggestive/sexualized
2. allegorical/ suggestive / sexualized
3. allegorical/ digestive / sexualized



Listen to another version of Little Red Riding Hood in clip 4 _____.

1. What century was this version of Little Red Riding Hood published in?
2. How did the folklorist Paul Delarue call the fairy tale?



Listen again _____ and put the lines in order – type in the number next to the snippet (the first line is in its place already).

1. A mother sends her daughter off to her grandmother's house with a loaf of bread and a bottle of milk.

____ Then the wolf tells her to take off her clothes, throw them into the fire and crawl into bed with him. The girl does so and then she started saying, oh granny, how hairy you are. But before the wolf can devour her, the girl says, I have to relieve myself.

____ The girl goes to her grandmother's house and she's in the woods, and she encounters the wolf and in this version the wolf says, he asks her, would you be taking the path of the pins or the path of the needles?

____ When the girl arrives, the wolf disguised as her grandmother has her come in the house and the wolf says, why don't she eat some of the meat in the pantry and drink some of the wine from the bottle.

____ The wolf races to grandmother's house and we might expect he kills her. But what's a little strange in this version is he takes her body and cuts it up a little bit and he puts some of her flesh in the pantry, and he puts some of her blood in a bottle.

____ And the girl says the path of the needles.

____ The wolf ties a rope around her ankle, lets her go outside, and the girl goes outside, takes the rope, ties it around a tree and flees and runs to her (grand) mother's house before the wolf can catch her.

____ The girl unknowingly eats and drinks her grandmother.



Listen to clip 5 _____ and fill the gaps

So, the _____ of grandmother _____ surprising in this version, but let's keep in mind the tale was told in the context of Catholic rural France.

This scene could be playing on Catholic Eucharistic ritual in which bread and wine are trans-substantiated into _____ of Christ, which believers consume and that incorporation is something that brings strength.

So, it could be precisely because _____ ingests _____ that she is able to outwit and outmaneuver _____.

She quite literally incorporates her grandmother's _____ and _____.

If we go back to the scene where she's in the woods and has to choose between the path _____ and the path _____ – these are the _____ of the peasant woman.

So, her choice of needles, her ingestion of grandmother and her outwitting of the wolf could all be read in terms of a girl's _____ into _____.

So, this version of the tale focuses on female initiation and even empowerment rather than the _____ by a male aristocrat of a clueless young lady as is the case of Perrault's tale.

So, these two _____ tales communicate two _____ messages, but the theme of seduction remains a _____ in both versions.

This is the perfect example of how knowing the history of a tale completely transforms our understanding.