

0. LEGENDS AND FAIRY TALES - Story Preface

1. THE BEAST OF GEVAUDAN

2. La BETE

3. TEMPORARY REPRIEVE

4. DEATH TO LA BETE

5. LEGENDS AND FAIRY TALES



Arthur Rackham, a British artist, created this illustration of "Little Red Riding Hood," circa 1909. Have a look at the roots of Rackham's trees. Is he intending that they resemble a wolf's claws? Do the trees make the scene more scary for Red Riding Hood?

Not long before Jakob Ludwig Grimm (the German writer of fairy tales) penned *Rotkappchen* (known in English as *Little Red Riding Hood*), he was librarian to Napoleon's brother, Jerome Bonaparte. It is said Grimm would have learned the story of *la Bete*, then dead less than five decades, from those French connections.

But ... the Beast of Gevaudan could not have been the model for Grimm's *Little Red Riding Hood*, despite the obvious parallels, since the story of the grandmother-eating wolf predated *la Bete* by many years.

When Charles Perrault wrote his *Stories of Times Past* in 1697, the eight stories in his book, including *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* - the French version of *Little Red Riding Hood* - were already well-known tales. Perrault did not invent these plots, which included *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Instead, he gave them what scholars call "literary legitimacy."

At the time, such folk tales were intended more for young adults than for children. Each story was followed by "The Moral," as in *Red Riding Hood*, which begins:

*From this short story easy we discern
What conduct all young people ought to learn...*

Some of the stories, like *Red Riding Hood*, had harsh endings. The Brothers Grimm changed the earlier version of the story (wherein the wolf ate both the grandmother and the child) to something less drastic (wherein local woodsmen retrieved both humans from the entrails of the wolf they had killed).

Perhaps the real-life ending of *la Bete* did influence the story-ending of Jakob Grimm's version which, itself, has continued to evolve through the centuries.

It is also said *la Bete* was the model for another famous story by a much-loved writer. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, pits the legendary Sherlock Holmes against a ravaging beast. Holmes, of course, follows the clues to solve the crimes.

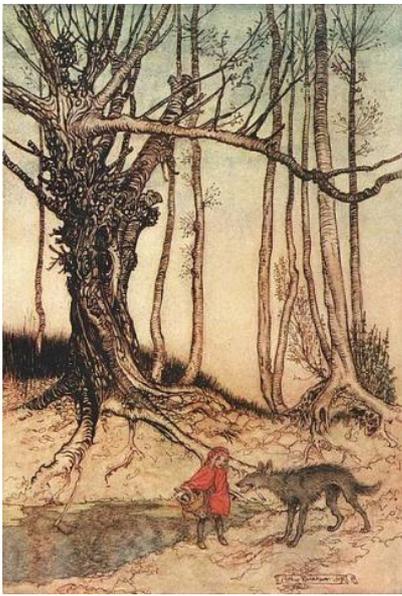
At the time of the actual killings, *la Bete* was widely reported in the *Avignon Gazette*. Today the story (about one-third real and two-thirds fiction) is the backdrop for Le Pacte des Loups, a movie known in English as *Brotherhood of the Wolf*.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LEGENDS-AND-FAIRY-TALES-Brotherhood-of-the-Wolf>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Little Red Riding Hood

Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) created this illustration of “Little Red Riding Hood” with the wolf.

Rackham, a Brit who also illustrated for Charles Dickens, was famous during his lifetime. He helped to make children’s books, like *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, come alive for children. If we look at the trees in this illustration, they seem like they are characters in the story. Little Red Hiding Hood isn’t just walking down the path to visit her Grandmother. She is walking down a path surrounded by many trees which almost seem like living creatures themselves:

- Did Rackham mean for these trees to seem like they have arms and faces?
- As their claw-like roots grip the earth, are the trees like the wolf with its claws?

Rackham created this illustration circa 1909. Click on the image for a better view. Arthur Rackham illustration of "Little Red Riding Hood," circa 1909. Online via Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

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Jakob Ludwig Karl Grimm - Portrait

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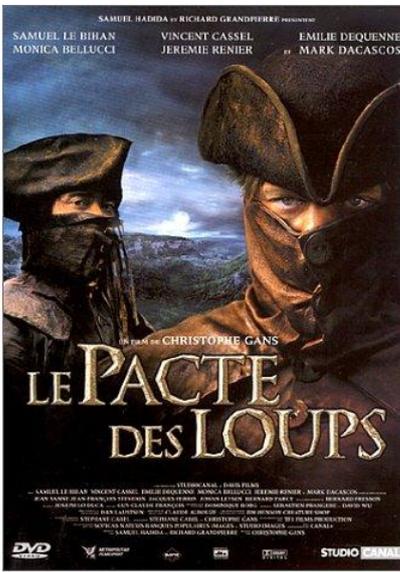
Jerome Bonaparte Portrait

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Brotherhood of the Wolf - Movie Poster

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Charles Perrault Portrait

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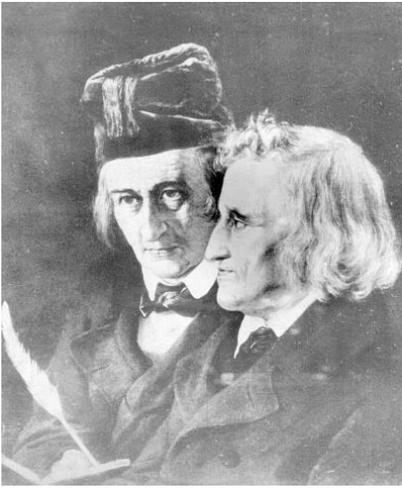
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Photo

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The Brothers Grimm Portrait

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