

# HISTORY

*Little Red Riding Hood* is one of the few popular tales that has no known literary version prior to the publication of the tale in Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du temps passe* (1697). The tale did exist orally prior to Perrault's version, but we do not have enough information to know how old the tale is. After Perrault's version was published, the tale rapidly grew in popularity; it was anthologized in several English fairy tale collections during the 18th century, such as in *A Pretty Book for Children*; or, an *Easy Guide to the English Tongue* (1744) and later in *The Top Book of All, for Little Misters and Misses* (1760). The first English version of the tale was a translation of Perrault's collection *Histories, or Tales of Past Times* (1729).

Charles Dickens, the famous English author of *Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*, called *Little Red Riding Hood* his first love. "I should have known perfect bliss," he claimed if he had been able to marry her.

Some scholars believe that the ending dialogue between Red Riding Hood and the Wolf has been the reason for the tale's never-ending popularity. The questions about the wolf's ears, mouth, etc. bring rising suspense and humor to the tale.

Although Perrault's version ends with the Wolf eating Riding Hood, many later versions have been changed to "happier" endings. Little Red Riding Hood has been killed, rescued or escaped in various versions. Sometimes the Grandmother survives, too. The rescuer is most often a hunter, but sometimes the girl's father or herself.