

THE FOUR BEAUTIES AND THE FOUR BEASTS

There was once a family that lived in a pretty house in the middle of a wood, named Charmelieu, or the Red House. It must have been a long way from here, because there were beings in that land who ate people.

The father was named Brancabanda, and the mother Houssihoussa, and they had four sons and four daughters. The boys were tall and sturdy and the girls so very beautiful that no one has ever seen anything to equal them. Their hair was golden, their eyes stars, their cheeks roses, their breasts lilies, and they were so perfect that one would have sworn, on seeing them, that they were fays rather than human creatures. What is more, they knew how to spin, sew and embroider, and they sang like sirens. As for the four boys, they were also very handsome; they had ebony hair, a masculine and proud appearance, tall stature, broad shoulders and slim legs; one might have taken them for Princes rather than for the sons of a modest countryman.

Brancabanda and Houssihoussa were only commoners, but they became so proud, on seeing such children that they no longer wanted their sons to work the land or their daughters to spin. They raised their sons like Messieurs and their daughters like Demoiselles; the girls embroidered and sang all days long, and, as for their brothers, they went hunting, for their father, and especially their mother, had told them only to live like gentlemen, and that way, perhaps they might marry the daughters of lords, who would fall in love with them on seeing them living so nobly, being so handsome and so strong. The mother had also said to the daughters that by embroidering and singing like demoiselles, they might well charm a Comte or a Marquis, who would be only too glad to obtain them in marriage. The result was that their parents rendered them very proud, and scornful of their peers.

Whenever some commoner came to Charmelieu, or even some poor gentleman, Houssihoussa said to her daughters: "Go to your rooms; the sun is too hot today." And the father responded to gallants: "My daughters are too young; goodbye." And the poor gallants went home with death in their hearts, for the girls were so beautiful that one could not see them without dying of love.

Now, for some time, in the neighborhood of the Red House, there had also been a little old woman, wrinkled, hump-backed, bandy-legged and bleary-eyed, named Grignotine,¹ the Lady of La Loge, who also had four sons and four daughters. The boys were so deformed that one could not look at them without horror, and the girls so ugly that one could not see them without feeling nauseated.

The eldest of the boys was Z-shaped and had only one large eye in the middle of his forehead; the second was only two-and-a-half feet tall and resembled Punch; the third was red-haired, cross-eyed and stammered, and his mouth was cleft vertically with a hare-lip; the fourth was one-armed and had a tumor the size of a lemon beneath his left eye. Each of the girls resembled one of her brothers, feature for feature, and if there was any difference, it was that the boys were considerably less ugly than their sisters.

Thus had the noble Fay Ouroucoucou permitted it to be, who had her reasons.

But if the little old woman and her family were ugly, they were rich, and good—so good that, once people got to know them, it was as if their deformity gradually diminished, and they liked them as much as if they had been handsome. They did good deeds throughout the canton, and one never heard talk of anything but their generosity.

One day, while going past the Red House, Grignotine's four sons and four daughters saw through the gaps in the main gate the four daughters and four sons of Brancabanda and Houssihoussa. The boys were playing tennis in the courtyard, while their sisters were embroidering in the shade under a hazel-tree arbor

¹ The French word *grignotine* was not to be found in dictionaries in 1785, although it has since been invented, in order to refer to "snack food." It comes from the verb *grignoter*, "to nibble" and Restif presumably intended to imply a somewhat rodent-like appearance

and their mother milked the cows—for she preferred to do it herself rather than let her daughters spoil their hands.

The Grignotins found the girls and boys of the Red House so beautiful and so handsome that they all fell in love, to the extent that they stopped eating and drinking. And the boys said to one another: “We’re very lucky to love the daughters of the Red House, who are so proud that they cause people to die of love.” But the girls said nothing. And all eight of them grew thin, which was a pity—except for the boy and girl who had tumors, for the growths increased visibly, which did not embellish them.

That gave Grignotine, who did not know what was wrong with them, a great deal of chagrin. Every day, she went to ask them: “My poor children, what’s the matter with you?” But they did not reply, for they were utterly ashamed, being so ugly, of being lovesick.

“Oh, it’s the ogre of Vaucharme,” said the old woman, “who has put a spell on them. If I knew what it was I’d go to Courtenay, to the noble fay Ouroucoucou, my godmother, who would take it off.”

In the end, Grignotin pressed them so much, she wept so much, that Caliborgon, her eldest, who was forty years old, replied to his mother, blushing: “My dear Maman, I love Mademoiselle Hhûeip Brancabanda de Charmelieu”—for he had heard that the brothers and sisters named themselves thus while watching them play.

Ratatinet, the second, who was thirty-nine, then said: “And I, my dear Maman, love Mademoiselle Hhûhhuip Brancabanda.”

“And I Mademoiselle Bizibizibizi Brancabanda,” said Becdelièvre, the third, who was one year younger.

“I love Mademoiselle Hhouiphhouip Brancabanda,” said Loupinet, the fourth, who was only thirty-seven.²

“Is that all, my children?” Grignotine replied. “Console yourselves; I’ll have you marry your mistresses, and I’ll go ask for their hands in marriage for you tomorrow.”

Grignotine’s four sons shook their heads, saying to themselves: *You can ask, but will you obtain them?*

“Well, my daughters,” said the old woman then, “Will you also tell me your woes?”

The eldest, Caliborgnette, who was thirty-six years old, hid her face modestly, which would have rendered her very likeable if she had not been so ugly, and started weeping instead of replying.

“And you, Ratatinette?” said the old woman to the second.

Ratatinette’s only response was to put her head in her apron, sobbing.

“Will you talk to me, then, Becdehaze?” said Grignotine to the third.

Becdehaze ran away to hide.

“It’s up to you, then, Loupinette,” said the mother to her youngest daughter, aged thirty-three. “Come on, little girl, I want someone to obey me.”

But Loupinette stated crying with all her might, and her mother, seeing the tumor growing prodigiously, was obliged to employ many caresses to appease her.

“I’ll wager that it’s also amour,” Grignotine said, to herself—and, seeing that her daughters made no reply, she became certain of it.

“Is it the Seigneur des Vauxgermains?”

“They’re black monks, Mother.”

“Is it the Seigneur des Boislabbés?”

“They’re monks, Mother.”

“Is it the Seigneur de Saintcyr?”

“They’re white monks, Mother.”

“Is it the Seigneur de Lichères?”

² Author’s note, credited to the hypothetical narrator: “The Burgundians, in telling this tale to their children to put them to sleep, pronounce the first name like the sound of a simple kiss, the second like a double kiss and the fourth like a very emphatic triple kiss. I shall also observe that they leave out many events and recount others of which the blissful ignorance and urbanity of cities do not allow the conservation.”

“They’re monks, Mother.”

“Then it’s de Nitri?”

“Monks, Mother.”

“De Saci?”

“Canons, Mother.”

“Escerf?”

“Black and white monks, Mother.”

“I’ll wager that it’s the de Charmelieu lads?”

The daughters did not say a word.

“That’s it, then! Have courage, my daughters. While asking for the sisters for your brothers, I’ll propose you for the boys of the Red House. Each of you, just name me the one you like best.”

Then Caliborgnette said: “Sacripar,” Ratatinette “Fandipouf,” Becdehaze, “Farôdor” and Loupinette “Craquoman.”

“It shall be done,” said the old woman, “or my name will no longer be Grignotine.”

The next day, Grignotine put on her beautiful yellow-and-green satin dress, her skirt the color of dead leaves, her scarlet cape, her black taffeta hat, her sapphire pendants, her chrysoprase necklace and her duck-egg-blue velvet shoes embroidered with mother-of-pearl. She had her russet donkey saddled and she went straight to the Red House, the home of Brancabanda.

She was well enough received, except that the brothers and sisters could not help laughing a little at her face and her adornment, but the sisters looked at the nacre of her shoes, which they thought quite beautiful. When she had rested she was asked what she wanted and what they could do for her.

“I am the Lady of La Loge,” said Grignotine, and I’ve come to propose to you four good, young and rich gentlemen for the four beautiful daughters that you have here.”

“Many thanks—for we know that La Loge is a good and rich fief.”

“That’s not all,” she continued; “those four gentlemen have for sisters four young demoiselles of the finest character, the most virtuous in the canton; we shall render you as much as you give, if you wish.”

The thanks were doubled, and the young men started to lavish a thousand politenesses on the old lady. They gave her dinner, and she went home joyfully, to tell her children that everything was going well.

Caliborgnon and Caliborgnette shook their heads, for neither the brothers nor the sisters had any vanity.

“What does that mean?” Grignotine said to them.

“Maman,” replied the eldest daughter, “it’s just that Monsieur Brancabanda’s sons and daughters don’t know us.”

“What! They don’t know you! And you love them without knowing them! But there’s no harm done. Tomorrow you’ll visit your mistresses, each with a present that I’ll give you to take them. In the meantime, rejoice, for sadness spoils beauty and joy even embellishes ugliness.”

And they set about rejoicing—but no matter how hard they tried, they were no more beautiful for it.

The following day, Grignotine had her sons put on their best clothes, which she had kept for more than twenty years in a beautiful wooden chest, well waxed, for they only put them on at the great annual festivals. They were in iron-gray cloth with black buttons as big as goose-eggs; their boots were knee-length and their coat-tails so broad and so stiff that they made the poor Grognotins liked like strutting turkey-cocks.

When they were dressed, their Mother said: “Oh, my sons, you’re as handsome as angels; but that’s not sufficient. Here are the presents that I’ve destined for your mistresses. You, Caliborgnon, take this lovely white dog; you, Ratatinet, this domesticated gray wolf; you, Becdelièvre, this large black cock; and you, Loupinet, this red sheep. You’ll present your gifts as soon as you’ve asked for the daughters, and you’ll listen carefully to what’s said to you, so that you can report it back to me word for word. And whatever is said to the first who speaks, the others must still ask for their mistresses.”

The four brothers were encouraged by their mother's speech. They set forth together, each leading his present on a leash.

They had not gone a quarter of a league when, on the little hill of Puitsdebond, they met four braggarts, whistling, chatting, blaspheming, swearing, shouting and playing the fool. They were the sons of Charmelieu, Sacripar, Fandipouf, Farôdor and Craquoman, who were coming to see Caliborgnette, Ratatinette, Becdehaze and Loupinette, their sisters. The four sons of Charmelieu saw the four Grignotins at a distance, and stated laughing, pointing at them and mocking them—which rendered the poor Grignotins deeply ashamed.

When they came closer, Sacripar, bold as he was, was so fearful of them that he threw a stone at them and ran away; Fandipouf hit them with his cane; Farôdor wanted to make them dance and threw their hats on the ground; and Craquoman said: "We might as well amuse ourselves with them! They're apes, and I've seen similar ones in the Congo during my last voyage to Germany."

"They have a fine dog!" said Sacripar.

"A fine wolf!" said Fandipouf.

"A fine cock," said Farôdor.

"A fine sheep!" said Craquoman.

"It's necessary to take them! It's necessary to take them," cried the four brothers, "in order to present them to our mistresses."

"Let's see! I'll begin," said Sacripar.

"I want the gray wolf," said Fandipouf.

"And I the black cock," said Farôdor.

"And I the red sheep," said Craquoman.

Scarcely had Sacripar put his hand on the white dog, however, than it bit him hard enough to draw blood. The wolf showed its teeth to Fandipouf; the cock started leaping at Farôdor's eyes, and the sheep, having retreated twenty paces, butted Craquoman so terribly that he threw him into the air—which made the four Brancabandas go away, cursing.

In the meantime, the poor Grignotins picked up their hats, and fled as quickly as they could, looking behind them at intervals. But the youngest called out to the Brancabandas: "Messieurs, Messieurs, turn right, for on the left, past Le Croixpilate, there's the ogre of Vaucharme, who eats people."

"You're apparently his sons," replied Sacripar.

"They ought to be strung up," said Fandipouf.

"Let's go see this ogre," put in Farôdor.

"I'll kill him myself," exclaimed Craquoman.

And they turned left, instead of right—but they soon got scared, and went back to the road that Loupinet had indicated to them.

Meanwhile, the four Grignotins continued on their way, and at midday they arrived at Charmelieu, at the home of Brancabanda, whom they found sitting in the shade outside his door.

As soon as he had seen them in the distance, the fellow had called his wife and his daughters, saying: "Come and see these little apes, with four animals, which are coming on their own, without guides. I'd like to know who makes them dance..."

Houssihoussa had come quickly, with her daughters—and while the Brancabanda family were staring at them, the Grignotins arrived. But when the four beauties had seen them at close range, they were so frightened that they fled to their rooms.

"Monsieur and Madame," said the eldest. "Is this not the Red House of Charmelieu, and are you not Monsieur Brancabanda and Madame Houssihoussa?"

"Yes," replied the father of the four beauties, laughing.

"My name, Monsieur and Madame, is Caliborgnon, at your service. Madame Grignotine, my mother, came yesterday to have the honor of saluting you and to ask you for the hand in marriage of Mademoiselle Hhûeip, your eldest daughter."

"You can't think so!" said Brancabanda. "You frightened her!"

“I know, Monsieur,” Caliborgnon replied, “that I’m not handsome; but inquire about myself and my brothers in the canton; I don’t believe anyone will speak ill of us. In addition, my mother has given me this fine white dog, to give you as a present.”

“Let him keep his dog,” replied Houssihoussa. “I don’t want to give him my daughter.”

Caliborgnon tried to insist, but the mother of the four beauties flew into a temper. “I’d rather have your dog for a son-in-law than you,” she said to him, scornfully.

Immediately, Caliborgnon began to weep, and was no more handsome for it.

After presenting himself, Ratatinet said: “Monsieur and Madame, my name is Ratatinet; my mother has permitted me to ask you for the hand in marriage of the beautiful Hhûhhuip, your second daughter, and to offer you as a present this domesticated gray wolf.”

“I can’t accept it,” said Brancabanda.

“Let him keep his wolf!” cried the mother. “Wolf as it is, I’d rather give him my daughter than that scoundrel.

Ratatinet stepped back immediately, his heart swollen, saying: “Inquire about me, Madame, and you’ll see that people will tell you...”

As soon as he had finished speaking, Becdelièvre was seen to come forward, timidly. “Monsieur and Madame, my name is Becdelièvre, the third son of Grignotine, who spoke to you yesterday, and I’ve come to ask you for the hand in marriage of the beautiful Bizibizibizi, asking you to accept this fine black cock, which my mother has asked me to present to you.”

“We have enough cocks for our hens, Ugly Mug,” said Houssihoussa; “I’d rather give my daughter in marriage to a cock than to you.”

Becdelièvre immediately withdrew, with tears in his eyes, saying to himself. “Alas, I’ve never said harsh things to anyone, but I’ve just received some very cruel ones!”

Finally, Loupinet presented himself, with his red sheep; but Houssihoussa did not give him time to explain himself. “What does this ruffian want? Your red sheep, because of its rarity, is worth a hundred times more than you.”

While she said that, Loupinet still recited, like his brothers: “My name is Loupinet, the youngest son of Grignotine, and I’ve come to ask you for the hand in marriage of the beautiful Hhouiphhouip, your fourth daughter.”

“I’d rather give her to your sheep,” replied Houssihoussa, again—and poor Loupinet withdrew, sighing.

Thus refused, the four brothers went home, utterly ashamed, without even being offered anything to drink. When they reached the Le Croixpilate fork, where they had encountered the Brancabanda brothers in the morning, they were so deeply afflicted that, without perceiving it, they took the road that led to Vaucharme, the home of the ogre Carnicroquain, who ate people.

They walked for a long time without saying anything. In the end, they realized that they had gone astray and that they were in the valley of Vaucharme, but by the time they noticed it, it was too late.

They saw a peasant-woman in a field spreading dung. “Where are you going, my lads?”

“To La Loge, Mother.”

“Alas, no: it’s to the home of the ogre of Vaucharme; run away quickly, so that he doesn’t see you, for he’ll eat you.”

“He doesn’t eat you, then, Mother?”

“No my lads, I’m too old and too tough. Save yourselves, for if he sees you, he’ll attract you with his breath, as a snake attracts birds.”

The four Grignotins wanted to get away, but they were so tired and weak that they were unable to run, so the ogre perceived them and he drew them to him with his breath.

“Come in, come in!” he cried to them, in ogrish—which is a very harsh language, even harsher than German. “Here’s a chubby little one,” he added, touching Loupinet’s tumor, “who’ll make me a nice meal. Who are you, for I like to know what I’m eating?”

“Alas, we’re the four boys of La Loge, sons of the good lady Grignotine.”

“The sons...?” said the ogre, going pale.

“Of the good lady Grignotine, most amiable of ogres!”

“You’re the sons...! Come in, Messieurs, come in. Be welcome.”

“Alas,” said Caliborngnon, “eat us straight away, if you wish, for we’re so unhappy that one misfortune more wouldn’t make any difference.”

“Good!” said the ogre, smiling from ear to ear. “You’re the first ones who have ever engaged me to eat them, except for an Englishman who came here expressly from his own country in order to beg me to give him a sepulcher in my stomach. He was quite content, for I expedited him in a single meal, of which nothing was left that was larger than a lentil. As for you, however, I won’t render you the same service, and I’m not in a humor to be obliging every day. Sit down there with your animals; I’ll give you some milk, butter and cheese. I have many other things to, including a very tender thigh of...”

“Of, God!” cried Ratatinet, “Don’t finish! You’ll cause our death, and if you don’t want to eat us, let us live!”

“So be it,” said the ogre. “Everyone had his own tastes, and I don’t condemn anyone’s. But I want you to eat what I’m going to serve you, otherwise I’ll set before you...”

“We’ll eat it, we’ll eat it, handsome ogre,” said Becdelièvre, swiftly.

And they ate the cheese and butter and drank the first-rate milk of she-wolves and wild sows, which fortified them considerably. They even felt, after that meal, that they could have eaten a little meat, but their good education combated that carnivorous inclination.

When they were well-refreshed and well-rested, Carnicroquain told them that they could leave. They were burning with desire to do so, for the she-wolf milk, in giving them the desire to eat, had taken away that of being eaten. They got up, therefore, each taking his animal, and left.

They had not yet got out of the ogre’s courtyard when they heard voices singing, and others that were crying out, and one that sounded like their mother’s, lamenting. They stopped, as motionless as boundary-markers.

Carnoquain started laughing with all his might, saying: “Oh, a fine windfall, a fine windfall! But hide, the four of you; I want those fellows to be caught in my snare.” And he hid them in his slaughterhouse, where there was only one tiny window.

As soon as they were hidden, they saw the four Brancabandas arrive, leading Grignotine on her donkey, with her head turned toward its tail, and making her four daughters march to either side of her, all disheveled. At that spectacle, the four Grignotins thought they would die of dolor.

“Oh, you old witch,” said Sacripar, “you come to our house to mock my father, my mother, my sisters and us...!”

Fandipouf said: “We’ve met your apes—oh, if we had known who they were! But perhaps we’ll find them again at our house, or on the road.”

“A fine family!” said Farôdor. “And they wanted to ally themselves with ours!”

As for Craquotin, he promised nothing less than to exterminate all the Grignotins in the world, even if there were a hundred thousand.

“My lads,” Grignotine, “You’re wrong to mistreat me, and even more wrong to act so brutally with young women as honest as my daughters; fortune sometimes changes, at the moment when one least expects it, and one is obliged to adore what one has scorned.”

“In the name of humanity,” said Becdehaze, “respect my mother, our sex and yourselves!”

Farôdor responded by spitting in her face.

Becdehaze wiped it away, and said to him, softly: “Can one act with so much fury against oneself? Oh, Farôdor, is that the price of the sentiments I have for you...?”

The four Grignotins wept, not daring to move.

“Oh, the wretches!” exclaimed Carnicroquain. “I’m not the most tender of individuals, and yet I feel touched by compassion almost as often as I’m seized by fury. You’re going to see a fine game!”

Meanwhile, the four brothers said: “Let’s see what there is in that chateau, and whether the girls there are beautiful.”

Carnicroquain, who heard that, caused four of his provisions to appear, as white as lilies, who were due to be eaten the following day at a great feast that he intended to give his friends Brisecrâne, Massacrotin and Cassechine.

As soon as the four brothers perceived the four beauties they ran to force the door of the château. Carnicroquain had opened it by a crack, and was only retaining it with his back. The four brothers set about trying to break it down, with no more success than if it had been a wall.

Carnicroquain, counterfeiting the voice of a decrepit old man, shouted: "What do you want, my lads? I'm just a poor old man, who lives here in solitude with my granddaughters, to protect them from rogues. Pass on, pass on, and don't come to afflict my poor old age."

"Open up, you old ape!" cried Farôdor.

"Open up right away!" added Sacripar.

"We're going to amuse ourselves a little with your daughters," said Fandipouf.

"We've got a pretty one here, to whom we're going to marry you!" shouted Craquoman.

"You absolutely insist, then?" replied Carnicroquain.

"You ought to have done it already!" retorted Fandipouf.

"You ought to know..." At the same time, he let go of the door and stood aside. The four brothers all rushed in at once.

"Wretches!" cried Carnicroquain, in a thunderous voice.

The four brothers saw a giant more than twelve feet tall, and fell backwards, gripped by fear. Carnicroquain grabbed all four of them, tied them up like a bundle of asparagus and took them to his kitchen, where he put them on a plank. Then, returning to Grignotine and her daughters, he invited them in, gave them milk, butter and cheese and brought out Caliborgon, Ratatinet, Becdelièvre and Loupinet, which gave Grignotine and her daughters even more pleasure.

"What vengeance would you like?" asked Carnicroquain.

"None, alas," replied Grignotine. "Release them and let them go."

"No, by the jawbone of my father, the great Broyelesos!" said Carnicroquain. At the same time, he went to fetch the four Brancabanda brothers, untied them and showed them his tomahawk. "You can be killed and eaten right now, or you can adore these young beauties, and say nice things to them, with which they'll be content, as will I."

Trembling with fear, the four brothers threw themselves to their knees, Sacripar before Caliborgnette, Fandipouf before Ratatinette, Farôdor before Becdehaze and Craquoman before Loupinette, and they started begging their pardon.

"Beautiful Caliborgnette/Ratatinette/Becdehaze/Loupinette," they said, in unison, "forgive us for our folly. How blind we must have been not to see that you're adorable! What eyes! What a mouth! What teeth! What a nose! What a figure! What..."

"That's enough details," Grignotine interrupted, laughing.

"The four lovers continued: "Receive my homage; yes I adore you; I invest my glory and my happiness in obtaining you for a wife, and I promise to oblige my father and my mother, by giving my sisters to your bothers. What an alliance!—and how much astonishment it will excite!"

"That's not all," said the ogre. "Come on, Messieurs, down on all fours, so that these ladies can climb on to your backs, and take them home."

They obeyed very swiftly, for they already wanted to be out of the house of the terrible son of the great Broylesos.

"You're heaping me with favors," Grignotine said to Carnicroquain, "but I have a favor to ask you, nevertheless, which is to stop eating people and give me the four naked girls that I saw in your kitchen."

The ogre trembled from head to toe at that request. "Madame," he said to Grignotine, "I believe that I've done enough to merit your benevolence, but you want to take away my greatest privilege!"

"That's because there's no happiness without virtue," Grignotine replied to him, "and I want to make you loved. Try it."

“I’m forced to do as you ask,” he said in a low voice, “for I saw right away that you’re a friend of the noble fay of Courtenay, the great Ouroucoucou. Command—but how shall I regale my three friends tomorrow?”

“I’ll tell you. My sons, what response was made to you when you asked for your mistresses? Everything depends on that.”

Houssihoussa replied to me that she would rather have my white dog as a son-in-law than me,” said Caliborgnon.

“She shall have him.”

“My gray wolf than me,” said Ratatine.

“She shall have him.”

“My black cock than me,” said Becdelièvre.

“She shall have him.”

“My red sheep than me,” said Loupinet.

“She shall have him,” and Grignotine, again. “Here, Carnicroquain, you see these four animals that I gave to my sons this morning in order to make a present of them to Brancabanda and Houssihoussa. I abandon them to you. Kill them, and take off their skins, which you’ll return to me. You can give the white dog to Brisecrâne, the gray wolf to Massacrotin, the red sheep to Cassechine, and you can have the black cock. Henceforth, don’t eat human flesh any more, and we’ll be friends. Bitter virtue, as you’ve just seen, gives me very little power over humans, but it submits beings of your species and all of nature to the noble fay Ouroucoucou.”

“I know that only too well. And all four—my three colleagues and I—will obey the great Ouroucoucou. Alas, we are the last of the ogres, and this will be the end of our reign. With what will nurses frighten children?”

“There are other stupidities enough,” replied Grignotine.

Carnicroquain, obliged to obey the secret power of the noble fay, first took the white dog in order to kill it, but having looked at it he said, muttering—for he was no fool: “It’s a pity!” Then he took the gray wolf, the black cock and the red sheep, repeating; “It’s a pity...it appears that my friends and I will have a sad feast tomorrow.”

“Take off their skins, then,” said Grignotine—and the ogre started skinning them, including the cock, with an infinite dexterity, for ogres excel in that.

A prodigy, however! The flayed skins stood upright on their feet and continued walking, for the animals only had an outer layer, like our fops, and an appearance of sentiment, which they owed to a foreign power. And Carnicroquain, to his great regret, only found inside the dog, instead of flesh, a sack of wheat; nothing in the wolf but a sack of chestnuts; nothing in the cock but a sack of barley; and nothing in the red sheep but a bundle of asparagus, three bundles of turnips, six cabbages, two bushels of beans and a hundred crabapples.

“With that, you and your friends won’t die of hunger,” said Grignotine, laughing. And she took the four skins.