

Returning by train from my latest lecture at Leeds University on 'The impact of rhymes - nursery or otherwise - on the social and political history of their relevant times', I wondered whether modern rhymes would have an impact on this day and age and whether they would still be quoted two or three hundred years later? This led me to thinking, 'could I relate those old rhymes to periods in my social history?' Well it may take a lot of imagination and twisting of facts, but it would certainly pass the train journey in a reasonably interesting way. Well for me anyway!

First of all I was one of two twins. Ah, Tweedledee and Tweedledum I hear you say, no, we couldn't look more different if we tried! My brother resembled the Archangel Gabriel, radiating goodness and light - the only thing missing was the wings - whereas I resembled the Devil Incarnate! The odious quirk of fate that put us in the wrong bodies also put our personalities in the wrong bodies too! Inside his, was the Devil Incarnate and I was the Angel Gabriel! You wouldn't believe the times that he organised incredible acts of mischief, and organised them so that I would take the blame! I mean, who could accuse the beautiful child with innocent tears running down his face, it must be that black-haired evil looking scowling child alongside him!

But I digress, where can the Nursery Rhymes be? Well, there were eight children in our family squashed into a small box-like cottage with a one story extension on the side, which, with a little imagination, (well a lot really), could be a shoe. Our parents' marriage was already struggling and our birth was, I believe, the last straw. My father began to come home later and later, unable to face the 'out of control' children and a screaming, nagging wife, as soon as he walked through the door! My mother completely lost the plot and retreated to bed! We were left to do exactly what we wanted, which was incredible fun until food ran out and the Social Services ran in!

Several foster homes ensued over the years, due to our impossible behaviour, but we were always placed together, being twins, (only one nursery rhyme so far), but now comes the turning point. My brother found girls! I was roped in to provide clandestine meetings and it seems as if he had obtained some of his ideas from nursery rhymes. So now I can improve my score! There was no time, for instance, when my brother and the farmer's daughter let the sheep out and herded them into the woods, I had to lead the searchers the other way! Thankfully the sheep did eventually come home, I don't know about their tails wagging, but if my brother had had a tail, it certainly would have been! Of course there was Halloween, and yes, he dressed up as a spider, but she didn't run away. It was he who did, because the girl's father sat down beside him! Apparently he was doing unspidery things on the park bench!

The last one I can think of was when we were fostered by the gardener and his wife at the local Manor House. The Squire's daughter, after seeing my brother, became very interested in gardening. At Miss Mary's birthday party all the girls disappeared! They were found, lined up, waiting for my brother's amorous attentions. I was supposed to keep watch, but when I saw the Squire striding

towards them brandishing his shot gun, I disappeared!

We were separated after that, I went to University and my brother to London, Oh! If you are still awake, one more rhyme. My brother was discovered by Cole Studios, the head of the studios was of course known as King!

But as my train pulls into the station, I can't remember how many loose, very loose associations I have made with some of the more well-known nursery rhymes, but then I'm sure so could anyone!