

I am a curious person. I don't mean curious-strange, although that might well be true. I suspect most girls are curious-strange at some stage in their teenage years. No, curious as in wanting to know things, wanting to try things, wanting to discover new things. My parents say, "She has an enquiring mind. She'll go far." The neighbours say, "She's just nosey. She'll get into trouble". And I say, "I wonder what this does?" or "I wonder what would happen if..." And I'll try anything, at least once.

That means that I open a lot of doors I probably shouldn't open. Look in drawers I probably shouldn't look in and read books I probably shouldn't read.

So, alone in the house, I was opening drawers. I opened this particular one, high inside the wardrobe, where "secret" things had been kept in the past. But what I found there this time surprised me a little. It really wasn't what I expected, but then I suppose I open drawers exactly because I don't know what to expect. But it was new. It hadn't been there a couple of days ago. And because of that I left it untouched. I didn't want to be found out. But I did remember it was there. Ready to go.

And it's not just things. It's language as well. I believe a girl should strive, struggle and endeavour to enrich, further and enlarge her command of language. And a word I found relatively recently was "fuck". Again, it was not something I could use immediately. It would have been "Where did you hear that?" "Who told you that?" "Don't you ever say that again!" and so on. No, I kept it to myself, just rolled it around in my head, enjoying its monosyllabic brevity, and tried it in its various forms, as an adjective, as a noun and as a simple expletive. Gave it a workout, whenever I felt like shouting at something and I tried it against a few different sets of circumstances. I knew what it meant of course. Well, I knew what it meant in theory, but for the time being I was just content to give it some mental exercise as an adjective. And the phrase that kept coming up was "every fucking day!"

You may have read in the press about my grandma. If you have, I expect your image of her is the popular one. The one the press seemed to put across. A white haired old lady sitting up in bed, wearing a bonnet, waiting patiently for her grand-daughter to bring her daily meal - every fucking day.

Well the press got it wrong I'm afraid. She was a granny and she was old, and there was a bonnet, but it was filthy, as unwashed as she was. And she wore it mostly to cover her baldness, but it also meant we didn't have to look at her warty old face, all covered with wrinkles and whiskers. Or the hairs growing out of her nose. Or her toothless mouth which could only slurp at the broth I took her - every f.... well, you get the idea. And spout the language she threw at me. I could have said to my mother. "That's where I got it from", except for the fact that granny only ever swore when there was no-one else there. So, I wouldn't have been believed.

Now, I'd like to set the record straight, since the press seems to have created this "fairy story" that has been circulating for God knows how long. So, here we go. That morning when I was about to set out for granny's cottage in the woods, I returned to the drawer and got it out. I knew I could be back home and return it before anyone else came home. So, where was the harm, and it felt kind of cool.

Off I trotted through the woods, the original picture of innocence. And you probably have seen the pictures. The artist's impressions in the press. Basket

over my arm, the contents covered and concealed from sight by a red and white check cloth, and me with my red cape wrapped round me and the hood up, because it was a little windy.

I arrived at the cottage, knocked and walked straight in as usual. Called out "It's me granny" but there was no answer. I could hear a scrabbling behind the bedroom door, so I assumed she'd got out of bed for some reason. Even warty old grannies have to use the chamber-pot. It meant that the room would probably stink when I went in, but ho hum. I gave her a couple of minutes to get back into bed and rearrange herself. And then opened the door. Well, I never expected what I saw, I have to say. Granny was on the floor and standing over her, blood dripping from its jaws was a wolf. I have to assume it was big and bad, but I had no real basis for comparison, it being the first one I had seen.

We both kind of froze for a moment, the wolf and I, looking at each other, but then I reacted, pretty fast, even though I say so myself. I reached under the red and white check cloth and pulled it out. Now, I was as unfamiliar with handguns as I was with wolves, but they're pretty simple. This one wasn't your dainty little tuck-it-in-the-top-of-your-stockings lady-gun, nor was it your Dirty Harry "do ya feel lucky, wolf, well, do ya?" magnum. It was a straight forward automatic with a simple safety and a trigger. Safety off, point and squeeze.

It may not have been large but it was LOUD. And three things happened almost simultaneously. The gun bucked in my hand, the wolf dropped and the adrenalin.... Wow. The adrenalin zapped me like, well like nothing I had ever experienced before. With a grin on my face, I looked at what I had done. The wolf looked pretty dead with a large hole in its head. And the bullet appeared to have gone straight through and into granny and killed her as well. Which was unfortunate.

But the adrenalin! I was pumped. So much so, that I fired two more shots into the wolf, just for the hell of it.

Now, I assume you're expecting the appearance of a woodman around this stage and, of course, I won't disappoint you. Even in the woods the sound of three gun-shots is bound to attract some attention and fairy tales created by the press usually have a basis in truth. But once again, the press will have given you the wrong impression. You're expecting a large avuncular type with a full, dark beard, wearing a red-plaid lumberjack shirt, open to the waist to reveal a white undershirt. And on his head a knitted hat. And braces holding up the trousers which are tucked into a pair of heavy lace up boots. With an axe in his hand, of course. You've seen the pictures.

The kind of man who would immediately throw his jacket over the corpses and hustle me out of the cottage, so I didn't have to worry my pretty little head about death. And then try to claim that the wolf had killed granny and he had saved me by killing the wolf with his axe. At least that seems to be the story that everyone has got hold of.

Well, it wasn't like that. Yes, there was a woodman, I could tell that from the axe in his hand. But he was probably only a couple of years older than me and he was wearing a tight white T shirt and Levis and he was hot! And I don't mean hot from running to the cottage.

At this point the adrenalin was still buzzing through my veins and my new favourite word was running through my mind. I didn't even take the time to consider the options. I decided that this was exactly the right time to find out what it meant in practice. As I said, I am curious. I'll try anything. At least once.