

I Like Aerated Water

Sometimes I think Humans are just too clever for their own good. I had this one in the larder until last night - maybe fourteen years old, it was. Juicy, tender bits in all the right places, you know the kind. But it said it would make a deal with me: if it could stop me being hungry every night, I would put it back into the larder for the next night.

I suppose it was my fault - I encouraged it. Found it wandering alone in the forest, took it home, stuck it in the larder for a late-night snack. Late night came, took it out and said something daft like "Well, I don't know what this is going to do to my waist-line, but I am looking forward to you!" Don't know why I said this - do you sometimes blurt out things you don't really mean? M'm. So up it pipes in one of those squeaky voices that make you just slaver down your hairy chest:: "Oh, Mr Wolf, Mr Wolf, please don't you eat me up. You *are* very fat, aren't you. I know a good way of slimming, if you want." So, of course, what does muggins do but go and look in the mirror. Not as slim as I used to be. Skin hanging loose in some places, and some other places a bit tight. Look at all these chins, for instance. So I fell for it all. "OK," I say to the child, "What's the trick?"

So it comes up with this idea I already mentioned - it would tell me something each night which would put me off my food. If I still felt hungry, I would eat the child up there and then. We agreed that if the child lasted a week, I would let it go again.

Done deal, I said, and told it to get started straight away. Not that I intended to let it win either way, of course: I'm a wolf, amn't I?

So it said, here's what we do: I say something beginning with 'A' that I like to eat or drink, and you say something beginning with 'B', and I say 'C' and so on. Can you manage that? it asks me. Now I know I'm not educated at Cambridge or anything, but I do know my alphabet. Course I can, I says, let's get started: I tied on my bib and got out the knife and fork, just to be ready.

I like Aerated Water, says the child.

Now, aerated water makes my tummy go all queasy, all those bubbles chasing about. And it gets up my nose.

Yeuch, I say, and put down the knife and fork to burp.

I like Bones, I say.

I like Coleslaw, says the little devil.

I untied my bib and sadly put the child back in the larder.

Next night, same thing. Out it comes at tea-time, because I'm starving.

You start, it says. We were at D.

This is better, I think.

I like Digits diced and dressed, I say, sharpening my knife on a stone.

I like Enemas, it says.

I groaned. Yes, just like you now. But I persevered: I like Fried Feet..

Quick as a flash it says - I like Gazpacho.

What?! I shrieked and ran to the river.

Next night, I'm getting really hungry. Could hardly get myself out of bed for pangs of hunger. My cheeks were all hollow, my eyes kind of dull. I open the larder, out it comes.

I like Hearts.

I like Individual Asparagus Tarts.

Already my stomach was churning. Have you ever smelled that stuff? Worse than a farmyard at the height of summer. And their parents let children eat that up.

I like Jellied Intestines, I said, getting quite ravenous now.

I like Kiwi Fruit.

I mean, what possesses people to name fruits and things after perfectly edible birds? And these ones are all green. Like what I turned. I had to put the child back in the larder.

So, I'm getting hungrier by the hour, and every night that horrible child upsets my stomach and I have to close the larder again. And what's worse, there's all kinds of things in there going off - rabbits, hedgehogs, some rather nice squirrel-pie I was saving up for your visit.

Out it comes again last night. I'm a shadow of myself.

You start at L, then, it says chirpily.

I'm good at this one. I like Legs with the skin still on.

I like milk shakes.

I like nails crisped in the oven, with gore.

I'm still holding out, you see, trying not to think of what that child is telling me. If I can get to Z without throwing up, I'll be OK.

I like olives.

I like pupils covered with gravy. Sorry, am I making you hungry?

I like quiche.

Oh, my goodness, I think, but I try not to show it. Quiche? - yuk!

I like roast tongue.

I like spinach, says the child cheekily. That did it. You know how vegetables get my bowels in all of a muddle. If the Great Creator had wanted me to eat vegetables, he would have given me a Vegetable Steamer. I had to run all the way into the woods and couldn't come back for hours.

And when I came back, the child had gone and the larder was bare.

Well, not exactly bare: look what it filled the larder with once it had removed the pheasants and hares and bunnies and mice and pigeons! Just look, will you: Aubergines, Bananas, Cheddar Cheese, Dandelion Tea, Egg Mayonnaise, Figs - euk! Excuse me, I have to run -