

Little Red Riding Hood



Once upon a time, there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cape of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called "Little Red Riding Hood."

One day, her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Riding Hood; here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother as she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path or you may fall and break the bottle; and when you go into her room, don't forget to say, 'Good morning.'"

"I will take great care," said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was and was not at all afraid of him.

"Good day, Little Red Riding Hood," said he.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What have you got in your apron?"

"Cake and wine; my poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three large oak trees; you surely must know it," replied Little Red Riding Hood.

So the wolf walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said, "See, Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here—why do you not look round? You do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry."

Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, "Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time." And so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers.

Meanwhile, the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?"

"Little Red Riding Hood," replied the wolf. "She is bringing cake and wine; open the door."

"Lift the latch," called out the grandmother. "I am too weak, and cannot get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word, he went straight to the grandmother's bed and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed, and drew the curtains.

Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she called out, "Good morning," but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her



grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

“Oh! grandmother,” she said, “what big ears you have!”

“The better to hear you with, my child,” was the reply.

“But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!” she said.

“The better to see you with, my dear.”

“But, grandmother, what large hands you have!”

“The better to hug you with.”

“Oh! but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!”

“The better to eat you with!”

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound, he was out of bed and swallowed up Red Riding Hood.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep, and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, “How the old woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.” So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. “Do I find you here, you old sinner!” said he. “I have long sought you!” Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved; so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf. When he had made two snips, he saw the little Red Riding Hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, “Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf”; and after that, the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf’s belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf’s skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Red Riding Hood had brought, and revived. But Red Riding Hood thought to herself, “As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.”