

Little Red Hood

Lower Lusatia (Germany/Poland)

Once upon a time, there was a little darling damsel, whom everybody loved that looked upon her, but her old granny loved her best of all, and didn't know what to give the dear child for love. Once she made her a hood of red samite, and since that became her so well, and she, too, would wear nothing else on her head, people gave her the name of "Red Hood."

Once her mother said to Red Hood, "Go; here is a slice of cake and a bottle of wine; carry them to old granny. She is ill and weak, and they will refresh her. But be pretty behaved, and don't peep about in all corners when you come into her room, and don't forget to say 'Good-day.' Walk, too, prettily, and don't go out of the road, otherwise you will fall and break the bottle, and then poor granny will have nothing."

Red Hood said, "I will observe everything well that you have told me," and gave her mother her hand upon it.

But granny lived out in a forest, half an hour's walk from the village. When Red Hood went into the forest, she met a wolf. But she did not know what a wicked beast he was, and was not afraid of him.

"God help you, Red Hood!" said he.

"God bless you, wolf!" replied she.

"Whither so early, Red Hood?"

"To granny."

"What have you there under your mantle?"

"Cake and wine. We baked yesterday; old granny must have a good meal for once, and strengthen herself therewith."

"Where does your granny live, Red Hood?"

"A good quarter of an hour's walk further in the forest, under yon three large oaks. There stands her house; further beneath are the nut trees, which you will see there," said Red Hood.

The wolf thought within himself, "This nice young damsel is a rich morsel. She will taste better than the old woman; but you must trick her cleverly, that you may catch both."

For a time he went by Red Hood's side Then said he, "Red Hood! Just look! There are such pretty flowers here! Why don't you look round at them all? Methinks you don't even hear how delightfully the birds are singing! You are as dull as if you were going to school, and yet it is so cheerful in the forest!"

Little Red Hood lifted up her eyes, and when she saw how the sun's rays glistened through the tops of the trees, and every place was full of flowers, she bethought herself, "If I bring with me a sweet smelling nosegay to granny, it will cheer her. It is still so early, that I shall come to her in plenty of time," and therewith she skipped into the forest and looked for flowers. And when she had plucked one, she fancied that another further off was nicer, and ran there, and went always deeper and deeper into the forest.

But the wolf went by the straight road to old granny's, and knocked at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Little Red Hood, who has brought cake and wine. Open!"

"Only press the latch," cried granny. "I am so weak that I cannot stand."

The wolf pressed the latch, walked in, and went without saying a word straight to granny's bed and ate her up. Then he took her clothes, dressed himself in them, put her cap on his head, lay down in her bed and drew the curtains.

Meanwhile little Red Hood was running after flowers, and when she had so many that she could not carry any more, she bethought her of her granny, and started on the way to her.

It seemed strange to her that the door was wide open, and when she entered the room everything seemed to her so peculiar, that she thought, "Ah! My God! How strange I feel today, and yet at other times I am so glad to be with granny!"

She said, "Good-day!" but received no answer.

Thereupon she went to the bed and undrew the curtains. There lay granny, with her cap drawn down to her eyes, and looking so queer!

"Ah, granny! Why have you such long ears?"

"The better to hear you."

"Ah, granny! Why have you such large eyes?"

"The better to see you."

"Ah, granny! Why have you such large hands?"

"The better to take hold of you."

"But, granny! Why have you such a terribly large mouth?"

"The better to eat you up!"

And therewith the wolf sprang out of bed at once on poor little Red Hood, and ate her up. When the wolf had satisfied his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, and began to snore tremendously.

A huntsman came past, and bethought himself, "How can an old woman snore like that? I'll just have a look to see what it is."

He went into the room, and looked into the bed; there lay the wolf. "Have I found you now, old rascal?" said he. "I've long been looking for you."

He was just going to take aim with his gun, when he bethought himself, "Perhaps the wolf has only swallowed granny, and she may yet be released."

Therefore he did not shoot, but took a knife and began to cut open the sleeping wolf's maw. When he had made several cuts, he saw a red hood gleam, and after one or two more cuts out skipped Red Hood, and cried, "Oh, how frightened I have been; it was so dark in the wolf's maw!"

Afterwards out came old granny, still alive, but scarcely able to breathe. But Red Hood made haste and fetched large stones, with which they filled the wolf's maw, and when he woke he wanted to jump up and run away, but the stones were so heavy that he fell on the ground and beat himself to death.

Now, they were all three merry. The huntsman took off the wolf's skin; granny ate the cake and drank the wine which little Red Hood had brought, and became strong and well again; and little Red Hood thought to herself, "As long as I live, I won't go out of the road into the forest, when mother has forbidden me."

Source: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0333.html#wratismaw>