

RED RIDING
HOOD
A FAIRY TALE

FROM THE LATIN



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Red Riding Hood

A Fairy Tale

In a cottage near the edge of the woods there lived a mother and her daughter who was everybody's darling, especially her grandmother's who herself was living in a hut on the far side of the woods.

For her birthday she'd made her granddaughter a present of the red riding cloak – cut by half for convenience – she, as a girl, had been wearing for years herself.

From then on the girl was never seen without this red, hooded cloak and was called after it by the neighbours Red Riding Hood.

One morning, the mother called the girl and said: I've just been told by the hunter that granny's in bed with a fever. Go you quickly to see her and bring her this loaf and some wine, that she may put on strength and make a quick recovery. But promise me to cut it short through the woods, no loitering and keep yourself from talking with strangers.

So the girl promised. She put bread and wine in a reed basket, kissed her mother goodbye and went on her way.

Once under the green canopy, she was keeping up a stout pace until she reached a massive oak where on its lowest branch was perching a raven.

– Good morning, croaked the bird. Walking the woods all on your own, are you? Where are you going, Red Riding Hood?

– And a good morning to you, brother raven, she replied. It's to my grandmother's I'm making my way. She lives at the far end of the woods. She's taken ill and I'm bringing her some food and drink.

– Well, really! But haven't you heard of the wolf roaming in these parts? whom, lately, I saw crouching around the pens of the farms. Be careful where you're going, dear, unless, perhaps, you'd rather meet him?

And at these last words he laughed raucously.

– Oh no! cried the girl, somewhat shaken. By the immortal gods! may I never set eyes upon this brute. I thank you very much, brother raven, for your good counsel. From here onward, I'll watch my every step.

The wolf, however, was hiding in the bushes and had overheard their conversation. When the girl had taken her leave from the raven he was following her from a short distance. She never noticed him being so close and when she was entering a glade, which Flora had painted with thousands of flowers, it seemed to her a good idea to pick a fistful of them as a present to her grandmother.

Meanwhile, the wolf was pondering to jump her then and there unexpectedly, but noticing two woodcutters plying their trade not far off he refrained from the attempt. Instead, he went running ahead through the woods and shortly reached the grandmother's hut.

Finding the door ajar he went in with ease and once inside dragged the old woman by her feet from the bed and devoured her in one bite – so small and skinny was she and so big his maw. Scarcely satisfied he curled up on the bed and awaited the girl's arrival.

What busybodies those ravens and how curious they are!

After saying goodbye to the girl the raven had flown to her grandmother's dwelling place. From the dark shadows of a dense juniper tree he had watched the wolf entering the hut. At first he'd stayed in place and later alighted on a pine branch that was leaning on the roof. Peeping inside from there through the only window he'd observed the wolf lying in the woman's bedding. Then he'd silently flown away, back to the glade where the lumberers were still busy. By his loud croaks he'd caught their attention and told them everything he had seen.

The woodmen had become greatly alarmed, for they knew the old woman well. She had often been of help to them, because she was learned in salutary herbs and knew a lot about tending wounds. They had grabbed their axes and run to her place as fast they could.

About that time, Red Riding Hood had made it to the hut.

She went inside and when her eyes had accustomed to the prevailing gloom she put her basket and the flowers on the trestle and asked:

- How are you doing, grandma? Look, it's me, Hoody.
- Nice to see you, Hoody, the sly wolf whispered in a hoarse, tiny little voice.
- My! your voice, said the girl, it sounds like a stranger's!
- Comes with the illness, groaned the wolf, but be a good girl, put off your clothes and lie down beside me, so much cosier and easier talking for me.

The girl hung her cloak and tunic over the table and joined her grandmother under the coverlet.

The wolf wasn't feeling especially hungry and so he decided, for the time being, to have some fun with her first. He embraced her with all fours and holding her face-to-face pressed her to his breast. As soon as she felt the roughness of his fur she exclaimed:

- Gran! Ah, you're hairy all over!
- I sure am, my dove, as is fitting my age. Hairs come with the years, as they say. But you, my lass, you've such a nice shock of hair, long and soft like a lamb's, and while he spoke he put his long nose into her hair and snuffled.
- So sweet, this smell of yours, he said and licked his lips.
- Is it?
- And see these ears! the wolf went on, what tasty little titbits! and with his tongue he licked her earlobe.
- Not shy of hearing well, though.
- And your nose, too! another sweet snack of sorts, and once again he applied his tongue.

– Not shy of smelling well, though, and my! what I'm smelling is far from pleasant. Your breath smells, granny.

– Ah, yes, this naughty little mouth of yours! too small for such rudeness. You owe your granny a kiss for that, Hoody.

Reluctantly, the girl barely touched the long snout with her lips and received a lick in return.

– Fie! don't do this...

– And this here? asked the wolf undisturbed, stroking her throat with the back of his paw – no hair? Your whole neck and shoulders are lacking in hair! just the bare skin, deliciously sweet and tender.

– But granny! have you forgotten that virgins and women grow no hair on their bodies?

– And feel these breasts! as soft and tender as pig's udder, but firm, nonetheless! and bending over the wolf began to lick her breasts.

Unable to keep himself from nibbling her tits already, he was nearing the point where he would lose all restraints altogether.

Red Riding Hood did her best to push him away from her, but failed miserably. With both her hands pressed hard against his chest she suddenly realized that something was amiss about the physical sphere and despairing she cried:

– Why, grandma! where are your breasts?

With a growl the wolf came struggling back to his senses.

– Desiccated, shrivelled up, he ventured. Don't you know women's breasts gradually wither with age? And I am very old indeed.

– Pish! may I hang if I know! I've never heard of it. I know elderly women, quite a few...

Between the words she felt his paw sliding to her belly and, on impulse, followed it with her hands.

– Ooh! the soft belly, sighed the wolf slobbering, the deli department of the body, and again he licked his lips.

The girl, meanwhile, was feeling his belly and was greatly surprised at it.

– But grandma, how come you've such a big belly? You're not pregnant, are you?

This caused the wolf to laugh out loud.

– Hahaha, if you only knew. Maybe, there's someone in it, my little mellibelly, someone anxious to meet you.

Even lower his paw went and now it was his turn to be surprised.

– Well I never! you're not that bare, after all. What is this I'm feeling right here, my little pussy? and he pawed the frizzlies of her loins.

– Stop it! cried she, raising her knees in embarrassment.

She snatched his paw away from her underbelly and by doing so happened upon certain parts of his physiology the very presence of which sufficed to end all lingering doubt. She squeezed them rather vigorously, which made the wolf badly gasp for air.

– Fraud! she exclaimed, you're not my grandma at all! and kicking him in the belly with all her might she ejected herself from the bed onto the floor.

Right that moment, the door was flung open and in stormed two men, one after another. The first one assessing the situation in an instant swung his axe. The wolf who had been quick to raise himself got the iron in his shoulder. When he was down howling, the second man

sprang forwards and hacked off his head at a single sweep. It went rolling on the floor to opposite the girl's face. She was looking straight down the gaping jaws. Not long and she'd have perished through them if these men in the nick of time hadn't run to the rescue. She shrieked in terror and hardly had the sound died away or tears sprang from her eyes and she burst into piteous sobbing.

The men had a brief discussion. Then the second and younger one picked up Red Riding Hood, took her in his arms and carried her into the open. The girl put her arms around his neck and leaning against his chest doused his shoulder with her tears.

The man went for the brook at some distance behind the hut. There he sat down on a boulder and cuddled her in his lap. He tried to comfort her by whispering sweet words into her ears.

But as often happens when a man, young and energetic, seeks to console a girl in distress – the more so if she's naked from the start – he began to caress, then fondle and kiss her and it wasn't long ere she, between sobs, responded to his kisses with hers. At last, they lay together on the soft grass of the bank and obliged to Amor's silent nod. Afterwards, they refreshed themselves in the little stream and still they embraced several times before walking back to the hut.

On coming back, hand in hand, they found the other man hadn't wasted his time either. He had flayed the wolf and cut up the carcass. The bloody remains he had thrown on the dunghill in appreciation of the ravens who with excited croaks were already gathering in the surrounding treetops. Grandmother's body he had laid out beside the hole he was still busy digging. Observing their approach he looked them both over and smiled knowingly.

When the hole was deep enough they lowered in the corpse. The girl covered it with the red cloak – it once had been hers, after all – and over it strewed the flowers she had picked in the glade. They performed the funeral rites and said the words that ought to be spoken in honour of the deceased. Then the men filled up the grave with earth while the girl stood by in tears, just watching.

Only then they took their ease and enjoying the bread and wine she had brought with her they talked about the things that had and could have happened until they dozed off one by one.

Late in the day, they left to take the girl back home. The elder man carried the wolf's pelt, the younger the cruel head and Red Riding Hood – divested of her namesake cloak – led grandmother's goat on a string.

When they were passing by the glade the elder man went back to the lumbering site to collect their tools and other belongings and the two of them moved on not saying much, each of them lost in thoughts of his own.

At sundown they arrived at the cottage. Her mother having grown more worried by the hour had been on the lookout and now, greatly relieved, called them in.

– Why this goat? she asked, and you're not wearing your cloak?

Then they related the horrible story to the last detail, or rather, almost to the last, at the intimate part they stopped short.

But the mother, while watching the glances constantly darting between them and noticing her daughter's flushed throat suspected more than they were aware of.

At last the young man took his leave, but his farewell surpassed the usual and took a lot longer as well.

The next day, at daybreak, back there he was. For the mother he'd brought a honeycomb, which mightily pleased her. The girl who had grown utterly smitten with him followed him into the woods where they spent most of the day together.

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For the Latin original – [click here](#).