

Little Red Riding-Hood

Flora Annie Steel

Once upon a time there was a little girl who was called little Red Riding-Hood, because she was quite small and because she always wore a red cloak with a big red hood to it, which her grandmother had made for her.

Now one day her mother, who had been churning and baking cakes, said to her:

“My dear, put on your red cloak with the hood to it, and take this cake and this pot of butter to your Grannie, and ask how she is, for I hear she is ailing.”

Now little Red Riding-Hood was very fond of her grandmother, who made her so many nice things, so she put on her cloak joyfully and started on her errand. But her grandmother lived some way off, and to reach the cottage little Red Riding-Hood had to pass through a vast lonely forest. However, some wood-cutters were at work in it, so little Red Riding-Hood was not so very much alarmed when she saw a great big wolf coming towards her, because she knew that wolves were cowardly things.

And sure enough the wolf, though but for the wood-cutters he would surely have eaten little Red Riding-Hood, only stopped and asked her politely where she was going.

“I am going to see Grannie, take her this cake and this pot of butter, and ask how she is,” says little Red Riding-Hood.

“Does she live a very long way off?” asks the wolf craftily.

“Not so very far if you go by the straight road,” replied little Red Riding-Hood. “You only have to pass the mill and the first cottage on the right is Grannie’s; but I am going by the wood path because there are such a lot of nuts and flowers and butterflies.”

“I wish you good luck,” says the wolf politely. “Give my respects to your grandmother and tell her I hope she is quite well.”

And with that he trotted off. But instead of going his ways he turned back, took the straight road to the old woman’s cottage, and knocked at the door.

Rap! Rap! Rap!

“Who’s there?” asked the old woman, who was in bed.

“Little Red Riding-Hood,” sings out the wolf, making his voice as shrill as he could. “I’ve come to bring dear Grannie a pot of butter and a cake from mother, and to ask how you are.”

“Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up,” says the old woman, well satisfied.

So the wolf pulled the bobbin, the latch went up, and—oh my!—it wasn’t a minute before he had gobbled up old Grannie, for he had had nothing to eat for a week.

Then he shut the door, put on Grannie’s nightcap, and, getting into bed, rolled himself well up in the clothes.

By and by along comes little Red Riding-Hood, who had been amusing herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and picking flowers.

So she knocked at the door.

Rap! Rap! Rap!

“Who’s there?” says the wolf, making his voice as soft as he could.

Now little Red Riding-Hood heard the voice was very gruff, but she thought her grandmother had a cold; so she said:

“Little Red Riding-Hood, with a pot of butter and a cake from mother, to ask how you are.”

“Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up.”

So little Red Riding-Hood pulled the bobbin, the latch went up, and there, she thought, was her grandmother in the bed; for the cottage was so dark one could not see well. Besides, the crafty wolf turned his face to the wall at first. And he made his voice as soft, as soft as he could, when he said:

“Come and kiss me, my dear.”

Then little Red Riding-Hood took off her cloak and went to the bed.

“Oh, Grandmamma, Grandmamma,” says she, “what big arms you’ve got!”

“All the better to hug you with,” says he.

“But, Grandmamma, Grandmamma, what big legs you have!”

“All the better to run with, my dear.”

“Oh, Grandmamma, Grandmamma, what big ears you’ve got!”

“All the better to hear with, my dear.”

“But, Grandmamma, Grandmamma, what big eyes you’ve got!”

“All the better to see you with, my dear!”

“Oh, Grandmamma, Grandmamma, what big teeth you’ve got!”

“All the better to eat you with, my dear!” says that wicked, wicked wolf, and with that he gobbled up little Red Riding-Hood.

Downloaded from www.libraryofshortstories.com

This work is in the public domain of Australia. Please check your local copyright laws if you live elsewhere.