

Little Red Riding Hood - Charles Perrault

There was a little village girl, the prettiest that had ever been seen. Her mother doted on her. Her grandmother was even fonder, and made her a little red hood, which became her so well that everywhere she went by the name of Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother, who had just made and baked some cakes, said to her:

“Go and see how your grandmother is, for I have been told that she is ill. Take her a cake and this little pot of butter.”

Little Red Riding Hood set off at once for the house of her grandmother, who lived in another village.

On her way through a wood she met old Father Wolf. He would have very much liked to eat her, but dared not do so on account of some woodcutters who were in the forest. He asked her where she was going. The poor child, not knowing that it was dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf, said:

“I am going to see my grandmother, and am taking her a cake and a pot of butter which my mother has sent to her.”

“Does she live far away?” asked the Wolf.

“Oh yes,” replied Little Red Riding Hood; “it is yonder by the mill which you can see right below there, and it is the first house in the village.”

“Well now,” said the Wolf “I think I shall go and see her too. I will go by this path, and you by that path, and we will see who gets there first.”

The Wolf set off running with all his might by the shorter road, and the little girl continued on her way by the longer road. As she went she amused herself by gathering nuts, running after the butterflies, and making nosegays of the wild flowers which she found.

The Wolf was not long in reaching the grandmother’s house.

He knocked. *Toc Toc.*

“Who is there?”

“It is your granddaughter, Red Riding Hood,” said the Wolf disguising his voice, “and I bring you a cake and a little pot of butter as a present from my mother.”

The worthy grandmother was in bed, not being very well, and cried out to him:

“Pull out the peg and the latch will fall.”

The Wolf drew out the peg and the door flew open. Then he sprang upon the poor old lady and ate her up in less than no time, for he had been more than three days without food.

After that he shut the door, lay down in the grandmother’s bed, and waited for Little Red Riding Hood.

Presently she came and knocked. *Toc Toc.*

“Who is there?”

Now Little Red Riding Hood on hearing the Wolf’s gruff voice was at first frightened, but thinking that her grandmother had a bad cold, she replied:

“It is your granddaughter, Red Riding Hood, and I bring you a cake and a little pot of butter from my mother.”

Softening his voice, the Wolf called out to her:

“Pull out the peg and the latch will fall.”

Little Red Riding Hood drew out the peg and the door flew open.

When he saw her enter, the Wolf hid himself in the bed beneath the counterpane.

“Put the cake and the little pot of butter on the bin,” he said, “and come up on the bed with me.”

Little Red Riding Hood took off her cloak, but when she climbed up on the bed she was astonished to see how her grandmother looked in her nightgown.

“Grandmother dear!” she exclaimed, “what big arms you have!”

“The better to embrace you, my child!”

“Grandmother dear, what big legs you have!”

“The better to run with, my child!”

“Grandmother dear, what big ears you have!”

“The better to hear with, my child!”

“Grandmother dear, what big eyes you have!”

“The better to see with, my child!”

“Grandmother dear, what big teeth you have!”

“The better to eat you with!”

With these words the wicked Wolf leaped upon Little Red Riding Hood and gobbled her up.

Moral

From this story one learns that children,
Especially young lasses,
Pretty, courteous and well-bred,
Do very wrong to listen to strangers,
And it is not an unheard thing
If the Wolf is thereby provided with his dinner.
I say Wolf, for all wolves
Are not of the same sort;
There is one kind with an amenable disposition
Neither noisy, nor hateful, nor angry,
But tame, obliging and gentle,
Following the young maids
In the streets, even into their homes.
Alas! Who does not know that these gentle wolves
Are of all such creatures the most dangerous!