

Little Red and the Guardian of the Woods

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A village on the edge of the woods.

A mother appears at the door of the house, pushing a young girl by the shoulders out of the house and stuffing a red cape with a hood into her arms. The girl takes two steps back. The mother looks like she remembers something, holds up her hand to wait, walks back into the house. The girl looks annoyed and rolls her eyes. The girl starts to walk towards the woods.

The mother comes back out with a basket.

Mother: NOW STOP RIGHT IN YOUR TRACKS, YOUNG LADY.

Little Red: *(mumbles to herself)* Drat!

Mother: *(shoving the basket on the girl's arm)* Your Grandmother is sick. Again. And I made her a get-well basket. You're going to have to get it to her since I have more dress orders to complete so I have no time. You know what to do.

Mother and Little Red *(both say at the same time):* Stay on the path and don't talk to strangers.

Little Red rolls her eyes again.

Mother: I've had just about enough of your attitude, Little Red!

Little Red: Mom, I wasn't rolling my eyes at you. I was watching the butterflies pass by.

Mom: A likely story. *(She goes back inside, still looking strict).*

Little Red: Granny is sick again! And Mom makes me go in the middle of the woods and the only info she gives me is don't talk to strangers and don't go off the path! *(A red deer appears in front of a tree).*

Oooohh... A Red Deer.

Little Red tiptoes towards the deer and hides behind a tree to peer at it. A shadow crosses the stage and covers both the girl and the deer for a second. Then suddenly a bullet whizzes by nearly striking Little Red. The deer bolts. The bullet leaves a hole in the tree behind where the deer had been.

Enter Hunter

Hunter: Hello and Good Morning to you. Any chance that you have seen a red deer? I shot at it. It was supposed to be my dinner. And its head would have been on my wall by now, if it had not got away

Little Red: Uhhhhh... *(trying not to be disgusted)* Number one, I haven't seen it! Number two, I may be Red, but that doesn't mean that you get to shoot at me.

Hunter: Well, number one, I have a proper hunting licence. Number two, this is a registered hunting ground...

Little Red *(interrupts)*: Okay, how about number three? Maybe I did see that deer. Oh, and there's number four: the deer does not have a gun. I will never understand why it makes a person feel happy to hurt a defenseless creature which has no weapons unlike yo...!

Hunter *(interrupts this time)*: Okay, I've got a number three too: the hunting lodge is having a competition. Whoever hunts down a red deer first gets 5000 crowns. Number four: You better tell me where my deer went. Then we can go our separate ways.

Little Red points in the opposite direction to the one where the deer went.

Little Red *(sneering)*: Right before you go, I have a number five too. I hear howling. Better hope your deer didn't get eaten by a natural predator instead of a moron with a rifle.

Hunter: Number five: If a predator gets in my way, I'll just shoot it too and take its hide in for the prize instead. Number six: You're annoying.

Runs in the direction where Little Red pointed

Little Red *(giggles to herself)*: Ha ha, there are no wolves in our forests. There have not been wolves in the Czech Republic for 100 years! *(Suddenly, she remembers.)* Oh no, Mom will kill me if I do not deliver this basket to Granny.

Red starts to walk again rapidly but in one place, just to show that she is walking somewhere.

Shadow crosses her again.

Rustling comes from a bush.

Little Red: Just what I need, that lousy hunter again.

Bush: *(rustling)* I'm no hunter, but I'm hiding from the hunter.

Little Red: Of course you're not a hunter, you're a bush (*sarcastically and a bit annoyed*)

A dog tail wags out of the bush.

Little Red: Ooh, are you a husky? Why should you hide from the hunter? I thought dogs like hunters.

Bush: Some dogs do, but not my type.

The Wolf comes out from the bush.

Little Red: (*speaking to herself*): Okay, so maybe I like that hunter more than I thought....

Wolf: Why would you say that?

Red: What good ears you have! The reason is because of what great teeth you have!

Tries to run but her red cloak gets stuck on a branch and she trips.

Shooting heard in the distance.

The Wolf starts to cry and sob piteously with fear, with loud, long snuffles and yelps. Little Red cannot help but hand him her hanky, looking a bit amazed and amused.

Wolf takes the hanky, and very loudly blows nose into it.

Little Red: How did you get here. The country has not had wolves since the turn-of-the-20th-century.

Wolf: It's true, we were hunted to extinction in the Czech lands and Germany but we came back, starting with my pack at Lake Macha. We love the Lake. I have a mother and father, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews and a large family of cousins (*Wolf pauses*), mostly in Poland. Please don't let the hunter get me. If I was to leave that red deer alone (can't make promises about the rest of my family when they are hungry), would you help me? To be honest, it's for the good. Because all those deer who you love so much eat up everything. A beautiful oasis turns into a desert when those deer get at it. Bambi... don't make me laugh. A fawn isn't cute. It's an eating machine!

Little Red: If a deer is an eating machine, what are you?

Wolf: Natural predators like me balance the ecosystem. We keep deer in check, allowing trees to grow tall for birds to nest in and flowers to grow to feed bees. Wolves are heroes! We are

the Guardians of the Woods! (Stands in a heroic pose, looking for applause) You're welcome!
So, Little Red, can I hide under your riding hood?

Little Red: (obviously hesitating and nervous) Well, my mother and my granny wouldn't be so pleased if I ...

Wolf: (*cuts in, begging, whining with puppy eyes*) Please, please, pleeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

Little Red hears more rustling, a shot and stamping and a shout, "Come back, here, you pesky Deer." The Hunter is coming near again.

Wolf whimpers.

Little Red: Fine, try and hunch down under my hood!

Wolf: Your hood is too small.

Little Red: Okay, fine, crouch under my cape!

Enter Hunter

Hunter: Not you again!

Little Red: Charmed.

Hunter: So you might have been right about the wolf. I saw paw prints.

Little Red: No, I was just joking. There have been no wolves in our country for 100 years.

Hunter: True (*thinking*) ... Is it just me or have you gotten a hunch back since we met 10 minutes ago?

Little Red: (*talking quickly*) Yes, I slipped and (*looking everywhere to find an excuse and seeing a stump*) and fell over a stump and got a hunch back! Okay, guess I'll be going.

Hunter: Do you need help getting to your destination?

Little Red: Oh, so now you want to be nice. Probably just because I know where that deer went. (*Red shifts nervously in her cape and the Wolf sneezes*).

Hunter: What was that? I didn't see you sneeze.

Red: Hatchoo! (*making a very bad imitation of a sneeze*), Hatchoo, I'd better get going. I don't want to get you sick while you're having such a good time stalking defenseless animals.

Little Red steps back, accidentally stepping on the Wolf's paw. Wolf howls!

Hunter: What, Was that you too? You trying to trick me about wolves again!

Red: Yup, you got me. Gotta go now. Nice to know you, wouldn't want to be you.

Carefully walks forward trying to stay together with the Wolf under her cape. Little Red steps too quickly and the cape moves forward a little as they are moving away. Hunter stares at their back, which shows an excited tail wagging from under the girl's cape.

Hunter: Excuse me Werewolf, it is not nighttime. Or did your fall give you tail as well a hunchback? (*He leaps forward and seizes the cape pulling it off Little Red*). I've got you, you big, bad... actually you're not that big. I'm just going to call you the Bad Wolf!

Wolf: Hey, I'm pretty big for my age!

Hunter: (*drops his rifle*) Wait a second, Mr. Bad, I just need to get my rifle ready.

Wolf: Goodbye life and Goodbye Little Red Riding Hood. No more eating delicious steak or running with the pack or watching the moon rise while howling in harmony.

Little Red: You guys howl in harmony?

Wolf: Yup and that's the name of our band. The Harmony Howlers. It's a family thing.

Hunter: (*takes aim*) That's weird. Any last words, Mr. Bad.

Wolf: I just said my last words.

Hunter gets ready to shoot when suddenly Granny leaps out of the woods from behind a tree with the hole in it and smacks him over the head with a rolling pin.

Hunter: (*falls to the ground*) Owwww! What was that for? (*turns around*)

Granny: Who are you?! I've had enough of you loud men stamping, shooting, shouting in my backyard, scaring away the birds. Plus you almost shot the guardian of my garden. Ever since this nice young stray puppy came he was so generous he scared away all those eating machines, those deer that used to ruin my daffodils, tulips, roses, violets and don't get me started on the cabbages.

Wolf: *(aside to the audience)* Yes, right, let's go with scared away....

Granny: Of course, in return I gave that nice pup a little hut and his favorite, beef stew.

Little Red: Granny! I'm sorry that I didn't come on time. How are you feeling? Here's your basket.

Granny: For me? *(confused)* Oh no, I was not sick. Only my pup seemed a little feverish but maybe that's because all these strangers shooting around the woods distressed him.. And me.

Hunter rubs his head, groaning loudly.

Granny: *(grabs him by the ear and whacks him again with the rolling pin)* If you try to hurt our nice pup and deer one more time, I'm going to have to find your mother and have a long talk with her.

Hunter: *(gives a terrified scream)* Not my mother! *(runs away, dropping his licence and rifle).*

Little Red: *(giggles)* Well, I guess he won't be hunting anytime soon.

Wolf: Thanks Little Red Riding Hood for saving my life and thanks Mrs. Hood for all that delicious stew. I must be going for a visit to my family at Lake Macha.

Granny: Of course, dearie, and thank you for protecting my beautiful flowers and vegetables.

Little Red: Please come back with your cousins and relatives. I would really like to hear the Harmony Howlers.

Wolf: You don't have to wait. *(Two more wolves appear on stage.)*

Wolf: *(Getting ready to sing)* One, two and a one, two three, four:

The three wolves let out a group howl and then begin to sing Selena Gomez's Wolves:

I've been running through the forest
I've been running with the wolves
To get to you, to get to you
I've been down the darkest alleys
Saw the dark side of the moon
To get to you, to get to you

All exit.

