Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there lived a little girl. She was modest and kind, obedient and hardworking. Her mother could not rejoice enough that such a helper was growing up in her home: the daughter helped her with the housework, and when all the work was done, she would read something aloud to her mother.

Everyone liked this sweet little girl, but her grandmother loved her most of all. Once she sewed a little cap out of red velvet and gave it to her granddaughter for her name day.

The new cap suited the girl so well that from that day on she refused to wear any other, and so people began to call her Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother decided to bake a pie.

She kneaded the dough, while Little Red Riding Hood picked apples in the garden. The pie turned out splendidly! Her mother looked at it and said:

"Little Red Riding Hood, go visit your grandmother. I will put a piece of pie and a bottle of milk into your basket; take them to her."

Little Red Riding Hood was delighted, immediately got ready, and set off to visit her grandmother, who lived on the other side of the forest.

Her mother came out onto the porch to see the girl off and began to give her instructions:

"Do not talk to strangers, my daughter, and do not stray from the path."

"Do not worry," replied Little Red Riding Hood, bade her mother farewell, and set off through the forest toward the house where her grandmother lived.

Little Red Riding Hood walked along the road, walked on, when suddenly she stopped and thought: "What beautiful flowers are growing here, yet I am not looking around; how melodiously the birds are singing, yet I seem not to hear them! How wonderful it is here in the forest!"

Indeed, sunbeams pierced through the trees, magnificent flowers fragrant on the clearings, and butterflies fluttered above them.

And Little Red Riding Hood decided:

"I shall bring my grandmother not only the pie but also a bouquet of flowers. She will surely be pleased. It is still early; I shall have plenty of time to reach her."

So she turned off the road straight into the dense forest and began to gather flowers. She would pick one flower and think:

"There grows another one even prettier just beyond,"—and run toward it; and thus she wandered deeper and deeper into the forest.

The girl walked through the forest, gathering flowers and singing a little song, when suddenly a fierce wolf appeared before her.

Yet Little Red Riding Hood was not frightened of him at all.

"Hello, Little Red Riding Hood!" said the wolf. "Where are you off to so early?"

"To my grandmother's."

"And what do you have in your basket?"

"A bottle of milk and a pie; Mother and I baked it to cheer up Grandmother. She is sick and weak; let her regain her strength."

"Little Red Riding Hood, where does your grandmother live?"

"A little farther into the forest; her little house stands beneath three large oak trees."

"Have a safe journey, Little Red Riding Hood," muttered the wolf, while thinking to himself: "What a nice little girl; she would make a tasty morsel for me; tastier, perhaps, than the old woman; but to catch them both, I must proceed more cunningly."

And he raced with all his might along the shortest path to the grandmother's house.

Little Red Riding Hood walked through the forest, in no hurry, while the gray wolf was already knocking at the grandmother's door.

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Little Red Riding Hood; I have brought you a pie and a bottle of milk; open the door for me," answered the wolf in a thin voice.

"Lift the latch," called out the grandmother, "I am very weak and cannot get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, the door opened, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed and swallowed the old woman.

Then the wolf put on her dress and her cap, lay down in the bed, and drew the curtain.

Meanwhile, Little Red Riding Hood kept gathering flowers, and when she had collected so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother and set off toward her.

Little Red Riding Hood approached the grandmother's little house, and the door stood open. She was surprised, went inside, and called out:

"Good morning!"—But there was no answer.

Then she approached the bed, drew aside the curtain, and saw—there lay the grandmother, her cap pulled down over her face, and she looked strange.

"Oh, Grandmother, why are your ears so big?" asked Little Red Riding Hood.

"To hear you better!"

"Oh, Grandmother, what big eyes you have!"

"To see you better!"

"Oh, Grandmother, why are your hands so big?"

"To hug you more easily."

"Oh, Grandmother, what a big mouth you have!"

"To swallow you more easily!"

Having said this, the wolf leaped from the bed—and swallowed poor Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf, having eaten his fill, lay down again in the bed, fell asleep, and began to snore very loudly indeed.

A hunter happened to pass by.

He heard some strange sounds coming from the little house and grew alert: it could not be that the old woman snored so loudly!

He crept up to the window, peered inside—and there in the bed lay the wolf.

"So there you are, gray robber!" he said. "I have been searching for you for a long time."

At first the hunter wanted to shoot the wolf, but then he changed his mind. Perhaps the wolf had eaten the grandmother, and she might still be saved.

So the hunter took a pair of scissors and cut open the belly of the sleeping wolf. Out climbed Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother—both alive and unharmed.

All three were very, very glad. The hunter skinned the wolf and took the hide home. The grandmother ate the pie, drank the milk that Little Red Riding Hood had brought her, and began to recover and gain strength.

As for Little Red Riding Hood, she understood that one must always obey elders and never stray from the path in the forest.