



Bread and Wine

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Retold Fairy Tales

Lupar knew what he had to do. She tasted vile, and yet strangely sweet; like prunes mixed with moisturizer. She let out a sigh as she sank into his stomach. He had explained to the sweet old lady what needed to be done; she had consented, on the condition that he give her a knife, in case something happened to him. She was old, but he didn't doubt she'd have the guts to cut her way out of his stomach if he died.

Next, he went into the wardrobe, pulling out all sorts of clothes. An old sundress covered in floral prints looked like it would do the job; he pulled it over his furry body, covering much of his tan fur. Next was a turtleneck. He looked in the mirror. Not too shabby. Except, then, he realized a flaw in his plan. This girl was smart. She would notice. Who would wear a sundress with a turtleneck? Scowling, he pulled the clothes off. His movements were sluggish, with the added weight of the grandmother in his stomach. He hadn't counted on that. He found an old nightgown that covered up quite a bit. A nightcap paired well with it, in pink tones, and he pulled it on tight, covering as much of his body as he could. Still not enough.

He opened his mouth, and tried to tell the grandmother what he wanted; she seemed to understand the guttural tones he made with his mouth open, and handed her spectacles up to him. He wiped the spittle off them with his nightgown, and put them on his head. Everything was hazy through the glasses. Another problem.

There was a knock on the door. No time to improvise. He jumped into the bed, the grandmother letting out a small whimper as he moved, jostling her in his stomach. He wished for her to stay quiet long enough.

"Come in, dearie," he said in his elderly voice. He pulled the covers up to cover his snout as she entered the room.

She looked to be around 13, with long black hair and sharp blue eyes. Her cloak was red; to hide the blood, they said. Her hood was pulled up around her head, framing her locks. She looked evil.

He tried not to lose his nerve as he remembered all his friends in the pack that were no longer with him. He could smell the steel of a knife hidden in her cloak. He couldn't see it, though; the glasses made everything fuzzy. He tried to peer over them.

"Nana, I've come with some wine, and bread!" she cried out.

Lupar wondered what kind of responsible adult would let a 13-year-old carry wine.

"Oh, bring it here, dearie, so that I may see. My stomach is rumbling ever so loud."

His stomach's rumbling wasn't from hunger; it was from the grandmother's whimpers. She was scared of her grand-daughter, and for good cause. Everyone should be.

She came to the foot of the bed, and tilted her basket, to show the goods inside. The bottle of wine was half-drunk. Naughty girl.

She gave a small hiccup. "Nana, let me cut you some bread. Here, it's fresh, and smells so... Nana, are you feeling alright?"

"What do you mean, dearie?"

"Your eyes, they're so big."

"Oh, it's just my glasses. They make everything seem big."

"But you always wear glasses. Today they seem especially big."

"Well, maybe I'm sick. Could you come and feel my forehead?"

That was the wrong thing to say. He inwardly cursed himself, for being such a stupid detective. Her attention was now focused on his forehead.

"My, Nana, look at that forehead. It's so furry."

"Young lady, I do not have a furry forehead! Maybe you're the one who's sick, and it's affecting your vision. Come here, let me feel your head for a fever."

She shook her head. Her hand drifted to her belt, where the knife was sheathed. "Nana, I have something for you."

Lupar prayed to all the gods. He was happy, at least, that if he died, the grandmother would live. The grandmother had always been the girl's target. He wanted her to have a chance.

The girl strode to the head of the bed. "Nana, give me a hug?"

Lupar nodded. "Come here, dearie. Hug your Nana."

She embraced him, and he felt her hand pull the knife from her sheath. He could reach around her and push her to the ground, then cuff her. She'd be in jail before she could say...

Oh no. The girl had him pinned, with her arms around his. She was a lot stronger than she looked; she trained

a lot for this kind of kill.

He couldn't move. He could see her pull the knife out, and she rested her knees on his elbows, pinning him to the bed. He couldn't do anything. Dear gods, please let her stab my chest. Let her not stab my stomach, so the grandmother can be safe.

He felt pain rip through his abdomen as the knife pierced his flesh. There was a muffled scream.

The knife stuck out from his stomach. Only the tip. It was the grandmother's knife, pushed through him from the inside. The end was bloody, and the girl lay on the ground, clutching her arm and sobbing. It was a deep cut.

The wolf opened his mouth, and the grandmother climbed out from his gullet. He was bleeding profusely, as was the little girl.

He reached for the first aid kit he had stashed under the bed, in case of an emergency. Wrapping bandages and gauze around his stomach, he patched it enough to stop the bleeding until proper help could arrive. He took the girl's knife, and bandaged her arm, too. The grandmother was still shaking at what she had done.

Rising from the bed in pain, he clicked his handcuffs on the girl's wrists. Little Red Riding Hood, as she was called. Most of the wolves called her the Red Ripper. To him, she didn't deserve a name. She was just a murderer, nothing else. He saw the fear in her eyes, knowing she would never see anything again but the inside of a cell. He grinned a wolfish grin, and lay back in bed.

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