



# *Covered In Red*

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Retold Fairy Tales

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I have an old memory of which I cannot help but relive. It began when I was but 12 years of age on a cool night in spring. Sitting with my grandmother on the creaking front porch of her house, I asked a question. “Hey Grandma, must I wear a hood?” I inquired. I tilted my head to peek from underneath the heavy wool cloak at her face. The icy glow of her gray hair provided contrast to her warm smile. “Dear, we’ve been through this before.” She spoke gently but with underlying exasperation. She placed her thin fingers on my red cheeks. “You are not like the other little children, you’re special.” She moved her hands from my face and began to stroke my hair, leaving a trace of her warmth on my cheeks. I allowed myself to be silenced by the repeated stroking and nuzzled my head against her hands.

The next morning, I followed the pattern to which I had gladly become accustomed. Grandma woke me at sunrise to begin my chores. Together we’d sweep, wash, dry, scrub, dust, and by the end of our chores Grandma’s pie would be finished cooking. It would come out of the oven golden brown, and she would sit it in the window sill to let it cool. By this time, it would be mid-morning to afternoon. The town’s children would come around to sneak and grab a slice. I wasn’t allowed to associate with them, but I was allowed to watch over the pie to make sure no thieving fingers would come and snatch it. If they did come, I was instructed to alert grandma immediately.

Taking my job seriously, I paced back and forth in front of the window clutching a thick branch from a tree that I’d refer to as my bat. My red woolen cloak would sweep to and fro as I stomped around on the grass, trying to appear intimidating. And as expected, the town children, led by their fat stomachs would come to try for some

of our delicious pie. The three of them would surround me. “Little Red,” They’d say, “Why don’t you give us a bite to eat?” as they flashed their ugly teeth, releasing their smelly breath in my face. Then I squared up against them, my red hood hanging just below my nose and shouted, “You stinky boys’ll get what’s coming to you this time!” as I charged at them with my wooden bat.

I swung furiously, missing by several inches every time. With the bat and cloak combination, I was weighed down much more than the boys who just wore some torn trousers and a button-up shirt. Though I was panting and dripping with sweat, the children let out a boisterous laugh and began to roll around the dirt at the spectacle. My face turned hot from a mix of rage and embarrassment. I quickly swung the bat at the biggest child’s stomach and whacked him in the gut. It made impact with a big ‘whump’ sound as he grunted and recoiled in pain. The other two children quickly turned enraged with me, tackling me to the ground. I squirmed against their tight grip to no avail. “You’ll pay for that!” they grunted.

I managed to knock one of the boys in the groin and began to wrestle with the smallest one. We were about the same size and build, but he was stronger. In an effort to turn the tide, he whipped out his pocket knife scraped and scratched against my cloak, ripping the body of the cloak to shreds and cutting my skin. His knife dragged across my arm, causing hot blood to flow from the wound. I screamed in pain, alerting my grandma from the upstairs. I heard her shoes banging against the wooden steps as she ran downstairs screaming, “Dear, what’s wrong?! Dear?!” I gave no answer. I felt as if I was shrouded in a mist. The boys all got up and crowded around me, and I stood as well, blood dripping from my arm. They all smirked confidently at me.

In what felt like a lifetime, I ripped off my red cloak and jumped at the biggest one. Claws bared, we fought tooth and nail. Meanwhile, my grandmother threw the back door open with a switch in hand, threatening to smack their hides red. The damage, however, had already been done. The boys started rumors that spread around at the speed of light. In fear for our lives, we moved into the forest. Surrounded by nothing, we lived in terror because the whole town knew, an old woman had adopted a wolf.

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