



# *Little Red Riding Hood, Grandma, The Wolf, and the Guy with the axe.*

Ben Marshall  
Retold Fairy Tales

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## Red Riding Hood

Once a upon a time there was a totally awesome young girl...well, almost young woman really, and she was amazing and smart and, like, all kinds of good stuff except omigod she had the worst family ever.

Okay, it's me. I'm Tracy and I'm, like, stuck having to take old-people food to my grandma in the woods.

Exactly. My parents who hate me are sending me into the woods where I could be attacked and killed and bashed and robbed and, like, no one would find my totally dead body until it was, like, you know, gross.

But, because I'm awesome, I say 'yeah whatever fine I'll probably be killed but grandma needs her old-people food so who cares about me' and then I head off with the basket of old-people food and my red raincoat because, duh, it's raining, yay.

So I'm in the woods, right, and it's all dark and I'm far enough from the houses so when I'm attacked no one will hear my screams as I'm totally killed and stuff.

And then, wouldn't you know it, out jumps this huge wolf with slavering jaws and razor-sharp teeth and claws and red eyes and the worst breath ever.

Grrrrr!!! He says. And because I'm looking in the basket for a weapon – like maybe even a big potato I can throw at his head or like that – the wolf has to clear his throat and go...

Grrrrrrrr!!! Even louder.

And I'm like, 'wait!'

And the wolf is like, grrr!

And I'm like, 'no!'

And the wolf is like, uh – grrr?

And the best I can find is a long green thing which I hold up like it's a deadly weapon and wave it like I'm ready to smash his brains out. "Back off!"

The wolf sits, looking puzzled. "A zucchini? You're threatening me with a zucchini?"

"If that's what this is called then, yes, I'm threatening you with a zoo-thingy."

"Zucchini. Old people food. Yuk."

"Tell me about it. This whole basket is full of them."

"Zuchinis?"

"And a big orange thing and some red things..."

"Red things are beetroots. The orange one is a pumpkin."

"Gross, whatever, omigod, yuk."

Then there's a kind of awkward silence because neither of us really knows what to do next.

"You're new at this, huh." I say.

"How did you know?"

"Your tail's wagging."

"Damn it!" The wolf leaps up and tries to grab his tail, and runs around in circles trying until he gets dizzy and has to sit down again. "I hate when that happens."

"You can't control it?"

"No," he sighs. "Any emotion I have goes straight to my tail. It's just the worst. I kept wondering why everyone was beating me at poker until one time I got a four aces and saw my tail wagging in one of the guy's mirrored sunglasses."

"Were you really going to tear me apart just now?"

"Nah. You were supposed to run, screaming, and I'd, like, chase you for a bit and everyone else who lives in the

forest would see me and go ‘whoa – he’s such an animal’ and I’d get respect. People would look up to me, and you’d get to dine out on a great I-was-nearly-eaten-by-a-wolf story. Win-win.”

“So you totally weren’t going to eat me. Even if I lay down on a plate with a knife and fork and salt and pepper and stuff.”

“Yuk, no way. Fresh meat is awful plus also I really can’t do the whole not-aliving thing to other animals.”

“Not aliving?”

“Yeah, you know th-the helping-someone-pass-into-the-next-spiritual-realm thing.”

“Killing them?”

The wolf winces. “I prefer not to use that word.”

“Wait, so if you don’t kill stuff, how do you eat?”

“Animals and birds die all the time. After a few days, they get rotten and quite tasty and smelly. Which is when I find them and tuck in. Nom, nom, nom.”

“Which is why you have the worst breath evuh.”

The wolf holds a paw up to his jaws and breaths onto it, sniffs then winces. “Eeuw...”

“Toothpaste, dude,” I say. “And sugar-free gum after meals. My grandma would probably bang on about flossing too but omigod seriously who can be bothered flossing it’s soooooo boring.”

“Toot-pays?”

“Tooth. Paste. You put it on a little brush, and press the button and it goes bzzzzz and then clean fresh breath.”

“Right.” But the wolf’s tail droops.

“Okay, look – I’ll do you a deal,” I say being awesome and smart like what I was saying earlier. “We’ll go to Grandma’s, but on the way, if we see any other animals, I’ll scream and act like I’m terrified.”

“You’d do that?”

“Yes, totally. As long as I get to tell my parents who totally hate me how I was nearly torn apart by a wolf and how would they like it if I was dead instead of being so brave and not-aliving you with the zoo-thingy.”

“Wait, what – you’re going to not-alive me?”

“Duh, no. Yuk. So do we have a deal?”

“Okay, sure.”

So we walk on and whenever we see any other animals, I scream and run for a bit and Wolfy runs after me going ‘grrr’ and the animals all run away, and then me and Wolfy stop running and keep walking.

In between I tell him about my suck family and how school sucks and how it sucks I'm not like sixteen and I can't do whatever I want.

Then we get to Grandma's and I knock and Grandma comes out of the woodshed with an axe and I stand between them with my hands up and I'm like 'whoa – everyone – let's just all calm down, okay? No one needs to be not-alived here.'

But my grandma just nods to the wolf. "Yo," says Grandma.

"Yo," Wolfy replies.

"Sup," says Grandma.

"Nuthin'. Just hanging. Working on my rep."

"Word," nods Grandma. "Live in the hood, you need respect."

"True dat," sighs Wolfy.

I'm a little bummed by this but I roll with it because my Grandma knows a lot of people plus she's actually pretty tough and, truth be told, she's also way scary because she's got this killer Look she gives you when you act like a dick for too long. And then you feel The Worst.

"You guys met already, huh," I say, then hold up the basket of old-people food. "I brought you some old-people food mum sends her love dad too etcetera."

Grandma takes the basket. "Tell them 'thanks'."

"No problemo," I say, quietly praying even though I'm not very godly that she won't invite me in to eat some old people food.

"Come in. I'll make us something to eat."

"Wait, no I can't," I say, stalling until my brain can think up something.

My Grandma waits, but nothing's coming on my side so Wolfy chips in. "She ate too much old-people food on the way over already."

"Liar," says Grandma.

Wolfy looks surprised. "How could you know that?"

"You couldn't get a vegetable into this one if you paid her. Plus, whenever you try to lie, your tail goes between your legs."

Wolfy looks down, and sure enough, there it is. He growls at his tail, barks at it, but the tail stays where it was.

He sighs. "Darn thing."

"It's okay, Tracy," says Grandma. "I won't make you eat old-people food. I made a cake this morning."

"Dude! Sweet!" I reply, relieved. "Wait, has it got any skinny orange things in it?"

"Carrots? No."

"Okay, whew." Then I remember. "Oh, do you have a spare toothbrush and some paste for Wolfy? His breath stinks so bad I nearly not-alived when he breathed at me."

"No worries," Grandma replies, ushering us inside. "I get lots of samples to give out."

So Wolfy and I are inside and I'm looking for the cake so I can eat it and get away before Grandma can start asking me how I'm getting on at school omigod kill me now school is soooo boring and talking about is like sooooo boring times a trillion and then, like, Grandma tells Wolfy to sit and open up so she can look in his mouth.

And because Grandma's a dentist and cannot talk for more than five minutes without mentioning flossing which if anything is even more boring than school she shines a little torch in on Wolfy's fangs.

"What big teeth you have," I say, feeling like I maybe heard that line in a film or on Netflix or whatever.

Grandma's going hmm, and Wolfy's starting to look worried, even though his jaws are like cranked open like one of those bridges that opens so ships can go through them. "You've got some meat stuck in there," says Grandma. "We need to get that out, check for cavities and teach you how to brush and floss."

Grandma puts the torch away. "Get yourself some cake, Tracy. Wolfy, let's get you in the bed so we can do this properly.

"I think I just remembered a thing I have to do which means I can't stay," says Wolfy, his tail firmly tucked in between his legs.

"Don't be a wimp," Grandma replies. "I won't hurt because duh I'm a modern, highly-trained dentist – a good one, who takes pride in not hurting anyone ever. Up you go."

Wolfy reluctantly hops up onto the bed, turns and lies down as Grandma puts a sheet over him and a cap to hold his ears out of the way. Which is all good cover for me cutting a ginormous piece of cake and stuffing it into my face.

"Don't choke," says Grandma even though her back's to me and omigod I don't know how she does it old people are evil.

Then she gets the mobile light and some little silver tools and some toothpaste and a brush and dentist junk, while I wonder if she'll spot me going for seconds.

"I just have to get some samples from my car," she says and goes out the back which is perfect for me to get a second slice in me.

Wolfy's looking at me.

I'm like 'mmp?'

And he's like, "I'm a wolf and I eat rotting bodies but even I feel sick in my stomach watching you eat that."

"Mmp uimg gnrr ffph!" I snort back still chewing. That's him told. And to emphasise the point I take a third slice and sit beside him, eating from both hands.

At which point Grandma's front door kind've crashes open and this big guy in a check shirt and braces with one of those fake-beaver hats with the flaps that fold down over your ears plus he's wearing glasses and holding a big axe and he's all red in the face.

"I heard screaming in the woods!"

"Mph wwwmm," I explain.

But beaver-hat guy sees Wolfy, pushes his thick glasses up his nose to peer through them, then freaks out. "Get away from him!" he shouts.

"Mwhph?" I reply.

"That's not your Grandma! It's a wolf!"

At which point time slows down as he raises the axe, I jump up spitting cake so I can talk this maniac down, Wolfy's totally freaking out with his tail fully curved up over his belly, and Grandma runs in from the back.

"Stop!" she bellows.

And because Grandma is so terrifying they could drop her in a war-zone to growl all the soldiers and send everyone home to their mothers and the war would be over, the beaver-hat guy stops, axe raised, Wolfy stops, half-way scrambling up the wall, and I stop spitting cake.

"For goodness' sake," says Grandma. "how many pieces of cake have you had?"

"Fphww," I reply, unable to meet her eye.

"Good grief," she mutters. "Don't your parents feed you?"

Wolfy points a paw at beaver-hat. "Could you get him to put the not-alive stick down, please?"

Grandma gives the beaver-hat a look. Beaver-hat quickly lowers the axe, suddenly more scared of Grandma than any wolf which is frankly like I explained the right move because of the Look she uses omigod I'd rather she just belted me over the head with a brick than do that Look. Seriously.

Then we all sit down and have tea and cake and Beaver-hat is like 'yum this cake is it carrot?' and Grandma's like 'no – pumpkin' and then she laughs at my face which has frozen mid-chew and she's like 'ha – sucked in! hahaha you're eating old people food' and I'm like giving her the evils and Wolfy's like 'hey you look a lot like Grandma when you do that' and I'm like even madder but I eat the cake which despite the yuk factor is really good and omigod finally that's the end of this stupid story.

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