



# *Who's Afraid*

Jeanette Stampone  
Humor, Retold Fairy Tales

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I clamber on top of the brick chimney and throw my head back, howling with laughter. This plan is utter genius, and at last I will catch those three irritating little pigs. My bottom wriggles—and I'm in! Shuffling down, down, down into the darkness.

“YEEEOOWW!”

Scalding heat jolts up my tail! I find myself in hot water – literally! I jump in the air, yelping in pain and land on the floor in a heap. This was not part of the plan. Ahead, the door is open. I can make it if I hurry. Got to get out of here quickly! Who knows what else those awful creatures have planned for me.

I bolt across the floor and out of the door, heading for the safety of the shady forest. Grunting echoes behind me and I glance over my shoulder. There, standing in the doorway of the brick house, the three little pigs are clutching their bellies, snorting with laughter.

As I retreat to my den, deep in the forest, a sense of loneliness sweeps over me. I trudge through the rickety hut, slump onto the floor and gently lick my throbbing tail. A single tear rolls down my face, soaking into my coarse fur. It would be nice to have a few friends, maybe even get invited over for dinner once in a while, but it never happens.

“No more hunting,” I mutter. “I’m changing my ways for good.”

Within a few days of that unfortunate incident, posters with my photo are pinned on trees throughout the

forest.

*Beware – Big Bad Wolf!*

From that moment, everywhere I go, doors slam in my face and wary faces peer out of windows. I have absolutely no hope of making friends or getting a decent meal. As the days drag on, I resign myself to the fact that I will slowly starve to death.

Being a wolf in a magical land is not all it's cracked up to be. Around here, it's not considered good manners to eat your neighbours. I always dreamed of being a regular wolf. Those you read about in non-fiction books. Legend has it that they live in a world where humans and animals roam. They hunt in a pack, feasting on fresh meat and sleep together at night. I know it's all made-up rubbish, of course. I should just stop dreaming about real life and get back to my fantasy world.

I sigh deeply and sit alone in the shadowy forest, picking at a pile of berries and nuts. It's not going to be easy, but I have made my decision. No more munching on fairy tale characters.

The next few days drag on, and my stomach cramps with hunger as I mope around my den. Finally, I curl up on my bed and close my eyes, too exhausted to do anything else.

As I drift in and out of sleep, a beautiful aroma fills my lungs—rich, fatty and meaty. It's just a dream... isn't it? My eyes flick open. Sniff sniff... It's real! The mouth-watering fragrance hangs in the air. Saliva drips from my tongue, mmmm... I can almost taste it! I jump from my bed and race outside, frantically sniffing the air. Is it? Could it be? A wide smile spreads across my face. There's no mistaking it—that's definitely MEAT!

And there, wandering through the trees, I spy a little girl in a red coat. She skips through the crisp leaves, swinging a basket in her hand.

"Hello little girl," I say. "Where are you off to?"

A look of suspicion spreads across her face. "Grandma's not well. I have some stew for her."

A cunning plan materialises in my mind. "Oh, sounds delicious."

"I better go," she says hastily, before rushing away towards the path.

With that, I zip along the shorter route, eagerly scuttling towards Grandma's cottage. Then, with my fiercest

growl, I burst through the door. For someone who's meant to be sick, Grandma can move like a firecracker. She leaps out of bed and shrieks at the top of her lungs.

"Please don't eat me!"

"Don't flatter yourself!" I say. "I'm not interested in chewy old ladies!"

Grandma stands in silence, frozen to the spot. I lunge forward and push her into the wardrobe. Then, grinning wickedly, I slip into one of her nighties and climb into bed.

Shortly, as expected, footsteps tip-tap up the path. The little girl enters the room, lays the bowl on the table and greets me cheerfully, before trotting over to my bedside.

With a frown, she peers closely at my face. "Grandma, what big eyes you have."

"All the better to see you with."

"And what big ears you have."

"All the better to hear you with."

The heady smell of beef stew enters my nostrils. I can't help but lick my lips and smirk.

The girl's voice trembles. "Grandma! What big teeth you have!"

"All the better to eat *stew* with!"

Well, I'm not sure what I did wrong but the kid loses it! She screams with her arms in the air and sprints straight out of the house. Not sure what her problem is, but at least she left dinner. I throw the blankets off and settle at the table, grasping the warm bowl with my paws and inhaling the sweet scented steam.

Just as I lift the bowl to my mouth, there's a shout and a man bursts through the door holding an axe above his head. Arghh! He's after me! I drop the bowl and scramble to the corner of the room, cowering as he approaches.

"You ate Grandma!" he yells.

"No! She's in there," I say, pointing a shaky paw towards the wardrobe.

The man swings his head around. At that moment, I dive between his legs and fly out of the door, never stopping until I reach my den. What is wrong with people around here? They're all very unfriendly.

Still starving hungry, my stomach grumbles with every movement and I huddle in bed, trembling with cold and listening to the sounds surrounding my den. The wind whistles through the trees, the rain patters on the flimsy roof and fairies buzz at the windows. That reminds me—I must remember to add fairy spray to my shopping list. Annoying things they are.

But wait...! What's that? My ears prick up. There's another sound. I hold my breath and listen again. It's faint, but yes, it's definitely there! Bleating sheep! I can hardly contain my excitement and race outside to get a better scent. As I silently weave between the trees, the smell becomes stronger and stronger, until I discover a clearing. And there, in the paddock gathers a flock of scrumptious, juicy sheep. A young boy sits under the shade of a tree, humming to himself.

From the edge of the forest, I call out, "Care to spare a sheep or two?"

Wide-eyed, he jumps to his feet. "It's the Big Bad Wolf!" he cries.

A passing elf looks up and rolls his eyes. "Yeah, sure. You say that every time."

"Help! Wolf!" the boy screams again.

"Oh, shut up," the elf remarks, before disappearing into the distance.

The boy stares at me, now hysterically screeching at the top of his lungs. Still no-one comes.

So I eat a couple sheep and polish the boy off for dessert. Yummy.

Well, what did you expect? I'm the Big Bad Wolf!

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