

# Little Red Riding-Hood

by Katharine Pyle *from Mother's Nursery Tales*

There was once a little girl whose father and mother loved her so dearly that they thought nothing too good for her. Her mother made for her the prettiest of little dresses; her stockings were of fine yarn, and there were bright buckles on her shoes. Her mother also made for her a little cloak and hood of red cloth, and the little girl looked so pretty in them that her mother called her Little Red Riding-Hood instead of Mary, as she had been christened.

Little Red Riding-Hood had a grandmother who was so old that sometimes she lay in bed all day and felt too weak to get up.

One day the mother called the little girl to her and said, "My child, I have put a pat of butter and some fresh eggs and a wheatcake in this basket. Take it and carry it to your grandmother. Run along quickly, and do not loiter nor stop to talk to anyone along the way, for I want you to get back before the afternoon is late."

"Yes, dear mother," said the little girl, and she took the basket in her hand and set out for her grandmother's house.

At first she ran along briskly and stopped for nothing, but the fields were full of pretty flowers. "I am sure," thought Red Riding-Hood "that my grandmother would be glad to have a bunch of daisies and buttercups." She began to pick one here and another there until she had quite a handful.

Presently she heard feet padding along the path, and the old gray wolf came trotting by.

"Good-day, Red Riding-Hood," said the wolf.

"Good-day," answered the child.

"And where are you going this fine bright day with your basket on your arm?"

"Oh, I am going to my grandmother's house. She is so old that sometimes she lies in bed and cannot get up, and I am taking her some butter and some fresh eggs and a wheaten cake."

"And where does your grandmother live?"

"She lives over beyond the wood in a little white house with a thatched roof and green blinds, and the path runs straight there."

The wolf had now learned all he cared to know. He bade Red Riding-Hood good-by and trotted on briskly.

As soon as he came into the wood where Red Riding-Hood could not see him he began to gallop. On and on he galloped as fast as he could, for he was anxious to get to the little white house with the thatched roof and the green blinds before Red Riding-Hood did.

In the depths of the wood a woodcutter was busy at his work. He saw the old wolf go hurrying by, and he wondered what he was after. "He's up to some mischief or other, and that is sure," said the woodcutter. And he shouldered his axe and followed on after the wolf to see what he was going to do.

On went Mr. Wolf, and presently he came to the edge of the forest, and there stood the little white house with the thatched roof and green blinds, and the path led straight up to the door, so the wolf knew that must be where the grandmother lived.

He stopped and looked all about him, for he did not want anyone to watch him. He saw no one, however, for the woodchopper had hidden behind some rocks. Then the wolf knocked at the door, rap-tap-tap!

Nobody answered, so he knocked again, rap-tap-tap! Still no one answered, and there was no stir within the house, though the wolf cocked his ear and listened carefully. The wolf pulled the latchstring, the latch flew up, and he pushed the door open, and slipped inside. He looked about, and there was nobody there, for the old grandmother had been feeling stronger that day, so she had dressed and had gone out to see a neighbor.

The old wolf hunted about until he found the grandmother's bedgown; then he pulled it on over his big hairy body. He tied on a big ruffled cap and put the grandmother's spectacles on his nose, and after that he crawled into bed and drew the coverlet up under his chin.

The woodcutter, outside, wondered what the wolf was doing in the house, but he did not hear a sound, so he sat down to watch and see what would happen next, and as he was very tired he fell fast asleep.

It was not long before Little Red Riding-Hood came running along, and she was in a great hurry, for she had spent a long time gathering flowers. The woodcutter did not see her, however, for he was asleep. The little girl ran up to the door and knocked upon it, rap-tap-tap!

Then the old wolf made his voice very faint and weak like the grandmother's. "Who is there?" he asked.

"It is I, grandmother; Little Red Riding-Hood," answered the child.

"Pull the latchstring, and lift the latch," said the wolf.

Red Riding-Hood lifted the latch and pushed the door open and went in.

There was not much light in the room, for the wolf had pulled the curtains across the window.

"I am not able to get up, dear child," said the wolf, still in the same weak voice. "Put your basket on the table and come over here."

Red Riding-Hood did as she was told. She put the basket on the table and came over to the bedside, but as she came closer she thought her grandmother looked very strange.

"Oh, grandmother, what great big eyes you have," said she.

"The better to see you, my dear," answered the wolf.

“But, oh grandmother, what long, long ears you have.”

“The better to hear you, my dear!”

“But, grandmother, what big sharp white teeth you have!”

“The better to eat you!” howled the wolf, and he sprang out of bed and caught Red Riding-Hood by the cloak.

The little girl cried out, but at this moment the woodcutter burst open the door and rushed in. The howl had awakened him from his sleep, and just in time. He struck the wolf such a blow on the head that it fell down dead.

Then he took Red Riding-Hood up in his arms and comforted her, for she was crying bitterly. She was frightened and her pretty red cloak had been torn. He wiped her eyes, and promised to walk home with her, but first, he said, they must wait until the grandmother came home.

When she came at last, and heard the story and saw the wolf lying there on the floor, she could not thank the woodcutter enough. And indeed, if it had not been for him the little girl would certainly have been eaten by the wolf.

But from then on Red Riding-Hood was careful to obey her mother, and not to loiter on the way when she was sent on errands.

**Questions**

1. What does *loiter* mean here: "do not loiter nor stop to talk to anyone along the way"?
2. Red Riding-Hood told the wolf where her grandmother lived. Was that a good thing to do? Why or why not?
3. Red Riding-Hood told the wolf, "what great big eyes you have." How did the wolf answer?
4. What was Red Riding-Hood careful to do from then on?

This passage includes words that students should learn to recognize on sight. We've highlighted 12 of these words below, from the Dolch sight word list for Pre-K through 1st grade. Tip: Read through the passage once with your student. Read a second time, but pause on the sight word and ask your student to say the word.

### Sight Word List

1. can
2. here
3. little
4. make
5. good
6. have
7. going
8. fast
9. draw
10. long
11. cake
12. day

Print and cut-out the flash cards below. Show each sight word to your student and ask them to say the word.

**can**

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