

The Bloody Riding Hood

“It’s time,” Red said. The old hag had to die today. “I’m not ready,” the large man standing before Red replied. “I didn’t ask if you were ready,” Red declared. She looked up, her glowing red eyes fixated on the large man. “How much longer do you think Porky will last, Huntsman?” She asked as she tilted her head. The Huntsman knew he had no choice, he feared this girl and for the safety of Porky. He slowly nodded his head in agreement. With that, Red walked away.

Red approached a small little cottage, there were several flowers and trees surrounding it. She climbed up the brick steps leading to the front door, making sure to avoid the third to last step. She turned the wooden doorknob and entered the collage. Walking past the main hallway, the first thing she noticed as she entered the kitchen was a straw basket on the counter with a bottle of red wine and a piece of strawberry cake inside. A note lay in front of the basket, it read: Red, could you please deliver this basket to Granny, she has fallen ill and can’t come pick it up herself. Love, Mom. Red had seen the note earlier, hence why she met with the Huntsman earlier. From the moment she saw the note, she knew that today was the day her plan would finally come to fruition.

With the Huntsman taking care of his end of the plan, all she needed to do was pick up her supplies. Basket in hand, Red left the cottage and proceeded back down the brick steps, coming to halt on the third to last step. Red bent over and removed the brick. She had to use force, the brick had been lodged in tightly. Hidden underneath was the key to plan. Red picked the small glass vile up and smiled. She returned the brick back to its step and placed the vile

in her coat pocket for safekeeping. She adjusted her red hood and with a wicked grin on her face, she skipped into the forest.

The wolf ran through the forest at a speed that no ordinary wolf would be capable of. He knew the forest like the back of his paw and he could move like the wind. The wolf never knew what it was like to fear for one's life since nothing in the forest was even capable of matching his power, until now. Suddenly, trees began to uproot themselves in front of him and began to block his path. Even the forest path began to twist and turn; the world was shifting in favor of his predators. It was as if the forest itself wanted the wolf to understand how it felt to be nothing more than prey.

Red ventured through the forest hoping she wouldn't run into any of its denizens. She couldn't allow anyone to potentially screw up her plan or realize where it was she was headed. Everyone in the forest knew Red, thanks to Granny's reputation. Granny was known as the savior of the forest. Back in her prime, Granny had saved the forest from destruction by the King's army. Now, in her old age, she provides a myriad of services for the forest dwellers. If an animal had been hurt, Granny would tend to their wounds. If an animal was being hunted, Granny would give you a place to hide. Granny had made it her life's work to protect the forest which made everybody think her family would be as caring as she is.

As much as Red hated it, she played along. She faked a friendly smile, acted like a naïve child, wore dresses, and skipped everywhere. She knew that it provided the perfect cover for who she really was, a wolf in sheep's clothing. Today, in particular, that reputation of hers would come in handy. Red knew that the forest animals would always compensate Granny for

her services and always with gold. She knew that Granny was rich and she wanted it all for herself. She wanted a way to escape her life in the forest, she wanted to run away but she needed money. So Red devised a plan, to rob Granny blind and kill her in the process. Who would suspect her, of all people, for the crime that was about to be committed? She had to make a detour before reaching Granny's, into an area which her mother had always forbidden her from entering, the wolf's territory.

In order for the plan to work, Red needed to kill the wolf. Unfortunately for her, this was something she couldn't do herself. The wolf was the strongest animal in the forest; some even thought him to be invincible. However, upon doing some research, she came across an old story, which detailed a magical axe that was made with the purpose of disposing of the wolf. She managed to track the axe to a family living in the forest. To her surprise, the axe was revealed to only work for the person it was passed on to, which, at this point in time, was in the Huntsman's possession. She hated having to work with that burly idiot, but as long as she had Porky, he had to do as he was told.

The wolf slowly began to realize that the forest was funneling him towards his predators. The trees had been creating a single path and there was no escape. Without anywhere else to go, he followed the path laid out by the forest. He was terrified of those he would come face to face with at the end. He didn't want to die but at the same time, he felt like he deserved what was coming to him. He marched on, like a prisoner on death row. Eventually, he stood face to face with his assailants, the three little pigs. These pigs, however, were huge, walked on two legs, and brandished sharp axes. No ordinary axes, they were the only weapons

in existence that could kill him, a large green axe with which writing inscribed upon the blade of the axe. With the trees blocking his exit, the pigs began to surround the wolf and laughed as he cowered in fear.

The wolf could only focus on their raging stares. He understood the hatred they harbored. He had blown down their houses and ate them, it was no wonder they wanted revenge. "I'm sorry," the wolf yelled over and over again. All he wanted was to be forgiven but, the pigs didn't care for forgiveness, they wanted blood. The pigs had begun to close in on him. The wolf didn't try to fight; he knew this was his punishment. Once the pigs were right above the wolf, they lifted their axes. The wolf closed his eyes; he was getting what he deserved. Then, the pigs brought down their axes upon the wolf.

Red continued through the wolf's territory, which had been granted to the wolf after he had been banished from the mainland. The wolf was a key element in her plan and so, without any hesitation, she made her way towards the wolf's den. She had heard rumors that the wolf was trying to reform, that he no longer wished to be known as the big bad wolf. She hoped this wasn't true, she hoped he was still the savage killer from the stories her mother told her to prevent her from venturing into the forest. Eventually, she arrived at the place the wolf called home. A small dark cave, she couldn't imagine living in such conditions. She made sure her footsteps were loud enough for the wolf to hear, she wanted to make her presence known.

Right as the pig's axes were about to connect with his body, the wolf had been startled awake by footsteps outside his den. He had only been dreaming, much to his relief. A part of him worried that the footsteps outside were from the pigs from his dream, that they had

actually manifested themselves in reality and were coming for blood. He dashed outside to check on who was in his territory, which was when he noticed Red. There was no mistaking those long red nails of hers, that glistening black hair and her signature red hood. He wondered what could've possessed this innocent little girl to arrive at his den.

"My, my, if it isn't little red riding hood," the wolf said. Red had been standing outside his den, waiting for him to come out. "Are you lost?" He asked. "Please, I know very well where I am," She answered. "I'm here for you wolf, I need your help." "Why would you, of all people, need my help Red?" He asked her. "The Huntsman, he's wandering the forest and he plans to kill my Grandmother," she explained. "I need you to stop him." "And how do you propose I do that?" The wolf asked. "Well, by ripping him to shreds of course," she replied with a wicked smile on her face. The wolf was flabbergasted by the words that came out of this girl's mouth. "First of all, a girl like you shouldn't be speaking in such a manner," the wolf answered. "Don't tell me what I can and cannot do wolf, for I know of all your past transgressions," she snapped. "I've changed, haven't you heard?" He tried to defend himself. "I am no longer this big bad wolf which you all have nicknamed me, I want to better myself, all I ask is forgiveness for all the things I've done," he told her. "Which is why I cannot help you, I don't kill anymore." Having said that, the wolf turned from Red and walked back into his den.

Red watched as the wolf disappeared into his den. Her approach had failed and now she needed a new way to appeal to the wolf. If the wolf really had decided to become a better animal, then her whole operation was in jeopardy. "Humans don't change, wolf, so I highly doubt that wolves can," she yelled into the wolf's den. The wolf sunk his head. He knew that

changing how people viewed him would be a challenging task but they weren't even giving him a chance. All he wanted was a way to prove to everyone that he had changed. He curled up in a ball and closed his eyes, hoping he would be spared from the wrath of the pigs this time. That's when it hit Red, like a light bulb going off on top of her head. "What do you think people will say after they find out that you helped rescue Granny from a murderer?" Red yelled after getting no response from the wolf. "They will think you a hero; they will come to see that you really are trying to change!" The wolf lifted his head, she was right.

Once the wolf had been coerced into working with her, Red told the wolf to follow the trail of chopped down trees. He would find the Huntsman at the end of the trail. With that in mind, the wolf took off, eager to be redeemed. On his way towards the Huntsman, the wolf could only imagine how his life would change after this. He would be allowed to roam outside the forest and the other animals wouldn't immediately run when seeing him approach. He hoped that by saving Granny, he wouldn't be seen as a villain anymore, he wanted to become a hero. He would be able to see what is what like to have friends but, he was getting ahead of himself. Since he had been lost in his fantasy, he failed to realize he had found the Huntsman already. The Huntsman was sitting on a tree stump, legs crossed with his arm resting on the giant axe stuck into the ground. It seemed like the Huntsman had been waiting for him the entire time.

Red was worrisome as she followed the path of chopped trees. She had been left behind by the wolf, who had taken off at full speed. On her way, she wondered if the Huntsman would be able to fulfill his end of the plan. She thought back to the day she met the Huntsman. She

had tracked the axe down to a small cabin in the woods, in a rather isolated area. The cabin was hidden in between the trees and would be impossible to notice if you were not actively searching for it. After making sure nobody was watching her, she snuck inside through an open window. Her idea was to hold the Huntsman's family hostage and only allow them to live if he agreed to help her. To her surprise, upon inspection of the house, there were no signs of a family living there. However, at that very moment, she heard a bark coming from somewhere in the house. That'll do, she thought.

After finding a place to hide the dog, she waited for the Huntsman to return home. She pulled up a chair so she could watch the front door of the cabin. The moment the Huntsman arrived, she made her intentions clear. "Hello, Huntsman," she spoke to the burly man in front of her. The Huntsman was about six feet, six inches tall and full of muscle. Compared to Red, who was a measly five feet, two inches tall. This man could easily break her in half. The Huntsman quickly reached for his axe. "Before you do something stupid, I'll let you know, I have your dog hostage," she continued. The Huntsman was in disbelief. "Porky!" He cried out, but there was no bark in response. "Where is he?" He yelled. "He's safe, for now," she replied. That's when the Huntsman lunged.

Red had to quickly move out of the way in order for the axe to miss striking her in the head. The Huntsman had put too much force into his strike and stumbled over, a mistake brought about by emotion. Red took this opportunity to knee him in the groin. The Huntsman dropped his axe from the pain and Red knocked him to the floor. She took out her knife, a weapon she always carried with her in case she had to defend herself or if she was ever

compelled to use it. She put the knife at the Huntsman's throat. "You do know that killing me will ensure your pet's death right?" The Huntsman was surprised to have been brought down by such a small girl. He wondered if Red really had the gull to kill someone but he decided to not take a chance. He knew he was at her mercy.

"What do you want?" The Huntsman asked. "I need you to use that axe of yours and kill the big bad wolf," she replied, rather nonchalantly. The Huntsman couldn't believe what Red had just said to him. "I should also add that you will help me, or I'll just have to kill you and your stupid mutt as well," she declared. With that, she let the Huntsman up, while making sure the axe was always in her sight. Even with it happening before him, he just couldn't fathom that this is the innocent little girl he's heard so much about. "Why would you want him dead?" The Huntsman asked her. "He killed my grandmother," she explained. The Huntsman was shocked to learn of this, he had believed the wolf was trying to change. "I need him disposed of and that axe is the only thing that can do it, trust me, if I could do it myself, I would." The Huntsman understood a drive for revenge but he never thought to be hearing such plans from this tiny girl. "I don't have a choice in this, do I?" The huntsman asked. "Of course you do, silly," she responded. "However, if you choose incorrectly, you and Porky will end up dead, and I don't think you want that."

Red gave the Huntsman a piece of Porky's ear. Upon seeing this, he agreed to her terms, he knew Red wouldn't be afraid to kill them both. Red had convinced the Huntsman to help with the story she concocted, a story in which the wolf had murdered her beloved grandmother and drove Red on a path of revenge. The Huntsman had a feeling that she was

lying, he knew that she could've gone a different route in getting justice for her grandmother. Kidnapping his pet, manipulating him and beating him was not something a sane person would do. Something was off about the whole thing but, there was nothing he could do. This situation had made him come to see how twisted Red really was and that instilled fear into his very core. He couldn't allow anything to happen to his best friend Porky, so he had no choice but to go along with Red's plan.

Red had finally made it to where the wolf and the Huntsman would have their showdown. She decided to hide behind some bushes and watch the fight. "Hello there, Wolf," the Huntsman spoke. The wolf turned quickly in the direction of the voice. The first thing he noticed was the green axe, just like in his dream, the axe that could kill him. Just the sight of it made the wolf cower, but he had to do this, he needed everyone to see him as something other than the big bad wolf. The Huntsman was worried, even with the axe, he wasn't sure he would be able to take down the wolf. Hell, he couldn't even beat a sixteen-year-old girl. However, the thought of Porky scared and alone in a cellar somewhere, gave him the incentive to fight. They locked eyes, they knew what was about to happen; only one would be leaving here alive.

The wolf pounced, claws out and mouth wide open. The Huntsman jumped out of the way and gripped his axe. He took a fighting stance and waited for the wolf to pounce again. The wolf hadn't been in a fight in years and he felt rusty, his reflexes weren't as fast as they once were. Had he been in top shape, the Huntsman wouldn't have been able to dodge his attack so easily. The wolf charged at the Huntsman but, once again he wasn't quick enough. The Huntsman was waiting for the perfect shot. He couldn't take the wolf head on; he needed to

gain the upper hand to win this fight, even if it meant fighting dirty. The wolf had gotten an idea, he charged at the Huntsman once more but this time stopped before reaching him. As expected, the Huntsman rolled out of the way and that's when the wolf managed to sink his sharp, jagged teeth right into the Huntsman's leg.

The Huntsman dropped the axe as he screamed in pain, the bite sent shocks all throughout his leg. He grabbed the wolf by its head and sank his fingers into the wolf's eyes. The wolf howled and let go of the Huntsman's leg then backed away. The wolf realized that all he had to do was repeat his previous manner of attack while aiming for the throat and the fight would be over. He would be victorious and be known as a hero, he grew overconfident. The Huntsman's leg was covered in blood and was pulsating from the pain but the adrenaline kept him in the fight. He quickly picked up his axe. He knew he was severely disadvantaged now but, he had an idea. All he needed was the wolf to repeat his attack. At that moment, the wolf pounced once more. He jumped straight for the Huntsman's throat. Exactly what the Huntsman was expecting. The Huntsman ran and slid under the wolf with the axe raised, cutting the wolf's stomach open. The wolf had not expected that.

The wolf realized there was no way he could survive an injury as profound as this. He couldn't believe that he, the powerful and vicious wolf, had been bested by a lowly human. His body slammed on the ground, his breathing slowed and he began to feel extremely weak. Oddly enough, he wasn't in any pain. He told himself that he was dying a hero's death. He could only hope that Red would spread word of his final heroic deed. The wolf realized his life would

be coming to an end soon. He hoped people would realize that he had changed and that they would regard as a hero for what he tried to do in the end. With that, he let himself go.

The Huntsman dropped the bloody axe on the ground and breathed a sigh of relief, he had won. Then, he heard the sound of clapping behind him. He turned around, there was Red, who he had no idea had been watching the whole time. "Very good, Huntsman, I surely thought you were a goner after that bite," she spoke. "Now clean this up," she commanded. Before leaving, she went over to the wolf, took a handful of his fur and some of his blood. "Insurance," she said with her wicked smile. Without looking back, she went to execute the second phase of her plan, leaving the Huntsman all to himself. "What about Porky!" He yelled at her. Red didn't even bother to give him an answer.

Red arrived at her Grandmother's cabin and knocked on the front door. "Who's there?" Granny asked, weakly. "It's me Grandma, Red, Mother sent me to check up on you," she answered. "Lift the latch, honey," Granny yelled from inside. Red did as she was told and made her way inside the cabin. She dropped the basket of goods on the kitchen counter and went to check on her grandmother. Granny was lying in bed, she looked unwell. Her skin was pale and the look on her face screamed pain. Even though it was obvious that she was in pain, she put a smile on her face and greeted Red. "Hello there Red, you're looking quite lovely today," a smile on her face. "And you look like you're on death's doorstep, Grandma," Red replied. Granny laughed. "You won't be losing me anytime soon, Red," "Oh, you never know, Granny," Red replied. "Would you like something to drink? Mother sent over some red wine." Red asked.

“That would be wonderful, dear,” Granny answered. Red wanted to get this over with already, she couldn’t risk anyone seeing her or coming to check on Granny.

Red went into the kitchen and grabbed an old glass cup from the cupboard. After pouring the wine she proceeded to take out the poison from her coat pocket and poured the powder into the cup. After stirring the cup to make sure the powder dissolved completely, she made her way back to Granny’s bedroom. She knew her grandmother wasn’t a bad person but, she wanted the money more than she cared for the old woman. In fact, she didn’t care about the old hag one bit. She brought the poisoned drink to her grandmother and handed it to her without a second thought. She watched as Granny gulped it down as if she had been dying of thirst. There had been no reason to distrust Red, of course. “Delicious!” Grandma told Red. “Care for another?” Red asked. “Another couldn’t hurt,” Grandma answered. By the time Red returned with another drink, Granny was gone. The poison was supposed to be fast acting. Granny lay on the bed, lifeless. Her cold dead eyes fixated on the ceiling. Red went downstairs to prepare the scene.

With the deed done, Red proceeded to add the finishing touches. Red began to craft the scene for her story to check out. She dropped some of the wolf’s fur around the house and on the bed where Grandma laid. She broke the front door down so it would look like the wolf had broken inside. She spilled some wolf blood on the floor to make it seem as if a fight happened within the confines of the house. She broke Granny’s cups, her pictures, flipped the chairs and tables to make it look like there was a struggle. She then carried her grandmother’s body

outside and went to bury her, deep into the forest where nobody would ever find. Once finished, she hurried back, she needed that gold.

She made her way back to the cabin and found the Granny's safe, hidden away in a closet. The safe was easy to open, the combination was obvious. As soon as she opened it, she hoped to find a gold stash to last her a lifetime. However, all that was inside the safe was one measly piece of gold. Red screamed, she ransacked the cabin, trying to find another safe or any indication of where the rest of the gold was. She needed that gold or everything she did was for naught. She tore up the house and found nothing, no gold to speak of. She was outraged; she cursed her grandmother then went back to where she had buried the old woman. She had taken all her possessions and piled them up next to her grandmother's corpse. She proceeded to burn everything. Watching the flames engulf every last remnant of her grandmother calmed her. She had no idea what she had done with money, all she knew was she deserved to be killed and forgotten. She wanted the fire to spread and burn the entire forest down but she knew that would cast too much attention. Red did not want to risk getting caught so while it pained her to snuff the flames, she knew it was the only way to ensure she would still get away with the crime.

Red returned to the Huntsman. She told him that he needed to go along with one more part of her plan before getting Porky back. She told him the whole story, the real reason she needed the wolf dead. The Huntsman was horrified by the events she had depicted, he had no idea of what her true intentions were. When he heard that Red failed to acquire any gold, he smiled. Serves her right, he thought. Red then told him to memorize the story she was about to

him, it would serve as their alibis. The Huntsman just wanted to get Porky back, at this point, he would've agreed to anything. With that, Red gave the Huntsman the key to where Porky was being held. He took off; he needed to get Porky home. Meanwhile, Red sat on a rock in the forest planning what she would do next, maybe she could kill her way to queen status.

The story they had agreed upon was this: Red's mother had sent her to deliver a basket of goods to Granny due to the fact that she had fallen ill. On the way there, Red encountered the wolf and accidentally let slip that she was on her way to Granny's. The wolf managed to make his way to Granny's cabin first since Red had gotten distracted picking apples in the forest. Once she arrived at Granny's, the wolf tricked her into thinking he was her Grandmother. She had been duped by the wolf who had been posing as Grandma. She would go on to describe how she noticed her big ears, big hands, big eyes and her big mouth, which was when he attacked her. Luckily for her, the Huntsman was passing by and heard a struggle so he went to investigate. Upon seeing what was going on, he fought and killed a wolf, saving Red in the process. The Huntsman then dumped the wolf's body in the river after filling his stomach with rocks. That was the story they told everyone and no one was ever the wiser.