One day her mother, who had just made and baked some cakes, said to her:
"Go and see how your grandmother is, for I have been told that she is ill. Take her a cake and this little pot of butter."
Little Red Riding Hood set off at once for the house of her grandmother, who lived in another village.

On her way through a wood she met old Father Wolf. He would have very much liked to eat her, but dared not do so on account of some wood-cutters who were in the forest. He asked her where she was going. The poor child, not knowing that it was dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf, said:
"I am going to see my grandmother, and am taking her a cake and a pot of butter which my mother has sent to her."
"Does she live far away?" asked the Wolf.
"Oh, yes," replied Little Red Riding Hood, "it is yonder by the mill which you can see right below there, and it is the first house in the village."
"Well now," said the Wolf, "I think I shall go and see her too. I will go by this path, and you by that path, and we will see who gets there first."

The Wolf set off running with all his might by the shorter road, and the little girl continued on her way by the longer road. As she went she amused herself by gathering nuts, running after the butterflies, and making nosegays of the wild flowers which she found.

The Wolf was not long in reaching the grandmother's house.
He knocked. Toc Toc.
"Who is there?"
"It is your granddaughter, Red Riding Hood," said the Wolf, disguising his voice, "and I bring you a cake and a little pot of butter as a present from my mother."

The worthy grandmother was in bed, not being very well, and cried out to him:
"Pull out the peg and the latch will fall."

The Wolf drew out the peg and the door flew open. Then he sprang upon the poor old lady and ate her up in less than no time, for he had been more than three days without food.

After that he shut the door, lay down in the grandmother's bed, and waited for Little Red Riding Hood.
Presently she came and knocked. Toc Toc.
"Who is there?"

Now Little Red Riding Hood on hearing the Wolf's gruff voice was at first frightened, but thinking that her grandmother had a bad cold, she replied:
"It is your granddaughter, Red Riding Hood, and I bring you a cake and a little pot of butter from my mother."

Softening his voice, the Wolf called out to her:
"Pull out the peg and the latch will fall."

Little Red Riding Hood drew out the peg and the door flew open. When he saw her enter, the Wolf hid himself in the bed beneath the counterpane.
"Put the cake and the little pot of butter on the bin," he said, "and come up on the bed with me."

Little Red Riding Hood took off her clothes and climbed into the bed. She was astonished to see what her grandmother looked like in her nightgown.
"Grandmother," she said, "what big arms you have!"

"The better to hug you with, my child."
"Grandmother, what big legs you have!"
"The better to run with, my child."
"Grandmother, what big ears you have!"
"The better to hear with, my child."
"Grandmother, what big eyes you have!"
"The better to see with, my child."
"Grandmother, what big teeth you have!"
"The better to eat you with!"

Upon saying these words, the wicked wolf threw himself on Little Red Riding Hood and gobbled her up.

Moral

From this story one learns that children, especially young girls, pretty, well-bred, and genteel, are wrong to listen to just anyone, and it's not at all strange, if a wolf ends up eating them. I say a wolf, but not all wolves are exactly the same. Some are perfectly charming, not loud, brutal, or angry, but tame, pleasant, and gentle. Following young ladies right into their homes, into their chambers, but watch out if you haven't learned that tame wolves are the most dangerous of all.

BROTHERS GRIMM
(Jacob 1785–1863; Wilhelm 1786–1859)

Little Red Cap

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl. If you set eyes on her you could not but love her. The person who loved her most of all was her grandmother, and she could never give the child enough. Once she made her a little cap of red velvet. Since it was so becoming and since she wanted to wear it all the time, everyone called her Little Red Cap.

One day her mother said to her: "Look, Little Red Cap. Here's a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother. She is ill and feels weak, and they will give her strength. You'd better start now before it gets too hot, and when you're out in the woods, walk properly and don't stray from the path. Otherwise you'll fall and break the glass, and then there'll be nothing for Grandmother. And when you enter her room, don't forget to say good morning, and don't go peeping in all the corners of the room."
"I'll do just as you say," Little Red Cap promised her mother.

Grandmother lived deep in the woods, half an hour's walk from the village. No sooner had Little Red Cap set foot in the forest than she met the wolf. Little Red Cap had no idea what a wicked beast he was, and so she wasn't in the least afraid of him.

"Good morning, Little Red Cap," he said.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Where are you headed so early in the morning, Little Red Cap?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What's that you've got under your apron?"

"Cake and wine. Yesterday we baked and Grandmother, who is sick and feels weak, needs something to make her feel better."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Cap?"

"It's another quarter of an hour's walk into the woods. Her house is right under three large oaks. You must know the place from the hazel hedges near it," said Little Red Cap.

The wolf thought to himself: "That tender young thing will make a dainty morsel. She'll be even tastier than the old woman. If you're really crafty, you'll get them both."

He walked for a while beside Little Red Cap. Then he said: "Little Red Cap, have you seen the beautiful flowers all about? Why don't you look around for a while? I don't think you've ever noticed how sweetly the birds are singing. You are walking along as if you were on the way to school, and yet it's so heavenly out here in the woods."

Little Red Cap opened her eyes wide and saw how the sunbeams were dancing this way and that through the trees and how there were beautiful flowers all about. She thought to herself: "If you bring a fresh bouquet to Grandmother, she will be overjoyed. It's still so early in the morning that I'm sure to get there in plenty of time."

She left the path and ran off into the woods looking for flowers. As soon as she picked one she saw an even more beautiful one somewhere else and went after it, and so she went deeper and deeper into the woods.

The wolf went straight to Grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who's there?"

"Little Red Cap, I've brought some cake and wine. Open the door."

"Just raise the latch," Grandmother called out. "I'm too weak to get out of bed."

The wolf raised the latch, and the door swung wide open. Without saying a word, he went straight to Grandmother's bed and gobbled her up. Then he put on her clothes and her nightcap, lay down in her bed, and drew the curtains.

Meanwhile, Little Red Cap had been running around looking for flowers. When she finally had so many that she couldn't carry them all, she suddenly remembered Grandmother and set off again on the path to her house. She was surprised to find the door open, and when she stepped into the house, she had such a strange feeling that she thought to herself: "Oh, my goodness, I'm usually so glad to be at Grandmother's, but today I feel so nervous."

She called out a greeting but there was no answer. Then she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. Grandmother was lying there with her nightcap pulled down over her face. She looked very strange.

"Oh, Grandmother, what big ears you have!"

"The better to hear you with."

"Oh, Grandmother, what big eyes you have!"

"The better to see you with."

"Oh, Grandmother, what big hands you have!"

"The better to grab you with!"

"Oh, Grandmother, what a big, scary mouth you have!"

"The better to eat you with!"

No sooner had the wolf spoken those words than he leaped out of bed and gobbled up poor Little Red Cap.

Once the wolf had satisfied his desires, he lay down again in bed, fell asleep, and began to snore very loudly. A huntsman happened to be passing by the house just then and thought to himself: "How the old woman is snoring! You'd better check to see what's wrong." He walked into the house and when he got to the bed he saw that the wolf was lying in it.

"I've found you at last, you old sinner," he said. "I've been after you for a while now."

He pulled out his musket and was about to take aim when he realized that the wolf might have eaten Grandmother and that she could still be saved. Instead of firing, he took out a pair of scissors and began cutting open the belly of the sleeping wolf. After making a few snips, he could see a red cap faintly. After making a few more cuts, the girl jumped out, crying: "Oh, how terrified I was! It was so dark in the wolf's belly!" And then the old grandmother found her way out alive, though she could hardly breathe. Little Red Cap quickly fetched some large stones and filled the wolf's belly with them. When he awoke, he was about to bound off, but the stones were so heavy that his legs collapsed and he fell down dead.

All three were overjoyed. The huntsman skinned the wolf and went home with the pelt. Grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine Little Red Cap had brought her and recovered her health. Little Red Cap thought to herself: "Never again will you stray from the path and go into the woods, when your mother has forbidden it."

There is also a story about another wolf who met Little Red Cap on the way to Grandmother's, as she was taking her some cakes. The wolf tried to divert her from the path, but Little Red Cap was on her guard and kept right on going. She told her grandmother that she had met the wolf and that he had greeted her. He had looked at her in such an evil way that "If we hadn't been out in the open, he would have gobbled me right up."

"Well then," said Grandmother. "We'll just lock that door so he can't get in."

Not much later the wolf knocked at the door and called out: "Open the door, Grandmother, it's Little Red Cap. I'm bringing you some cakes."

The two kept quiet and didn't open the door. Then old Grayhead circled the house a few times and finally jumped up on the roof. He was planning on waiting until Little Red Cap went home. Then he was going to creep up after her and gobble her up in the dark. But Grandmother guessed what he had on his mind. There was a big stone trough in front of the house. She said to the child: "Here's a bucket, Little Red Cap. Yesterday I cooked some sausages. Take the water in which they were boiled and pour it into the trough."

Little Red Cap kept carrying water until that big, big trough was completely full. The smell of those sausages reached the wolf's nostrils. His neck was stretched.
out so long from sniffing and looking around that he lost his balance and began to slide down. He went right down the roof into the trough and was drowned. Little Red Cap walked home cheerfully, and no one did her any harm.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. Although Perrault and the Grimms tell what is basically the same story, the two versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" contain some important differences. Compare and contrast the two versions' handling of the following elements. How does the comparison illuminate the two stories' themes and characters? Which of the two versions do you find more effective?
   - Little Red Riding Hood's leave-taking from her mother
   - The function of the woodsman
   - The accounts of what finally happen to Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother

2. Perrault's story ends with a poetic moral, the Grimms' version with an epilogue about another encounter with the wolf. How do the epilogues function?

3. In some other versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" story, the moral has more to do with Little Red Riding Hood's character than it does with the danger presented by strangers. What evidence do you find that Little Red Riding Hood is in some way responsible for her and her grandmother's predicaments? To what extent do we find her behavior blameworthy?

4. In discussing these stories with others, we have discovered that many have heard significantly different versions of the "Little Red Riding Hood" tale. If you have heard a different version from the ones presented here, how is your version different? How might your version reflect the needs, desires, and values of those who told you the story (or their sense of your needs and desires)?

TANITH LEE (1947– )

Wolfland 1983

When the summons arrived from Anna the Matriarch, Lisel did not wish to obey. The twilit winter had already come, and the great snows were down, spreading their aprons of shining ice, turning the trees to crystal candelabra. Lisel wanted to stay in the city, skating fur-clad on the frozen river beneath the torches, dancing till four in the morning, a vivid blonde in the flame-bright ballrooms, breaking hearts and not minding, lying late next day like a cat in her warm, soft bed. She did not want to go traveling several hours into the north to visit Anna the Matriarch.

Lisel's mother had been dead sixteen years, all Lisel's life. Her father had let her have her own way, in almost everything, for about the same length of time. But Anna the Matriarch, Lisel's maternal grandmother, was exceedingly rich. She lived thirty miles from the city, in a great wild château in the great wild forest.

A portrait of Anna as a young widow hung in the gallery of Lisel's father's house, a wicked-looking, bone-pale person in a black dress, with rubies and diamonds at her throat, and in her ivory yellow hair. Even in her absence, Anna had always had a say in things. A recluse, she had still manipulated like a puppet-master from behind the curtain of the forest. Periodic instructions had been sent, pertaining to Lisel. The girl must be educated by this or that method. She must gain this or that accomplishment, read this or that book, favor this or that perfume or color or jewel. The latter orders were always uncannily opposite and were often complemented by applicable—and sumptuous—gifts. The summons came in company with such. A swirling cloak of scarlet velvet leapt like a fire from its box to Lisel's hands. It was lined with albinor fur, all but the hood, which was lined with the finest and heaviest red brocade. A clasp of gold joined the garment at the throat, the two portions, when closed, forming Anna's personal device, a many-petaled flower. Lisel had exclaimed with pleasure, embracing the cloak, picturing herself flying in it across the solid white river like a dangerous blood-red rose. Then the letter fell from its folds.

Lisel had never seen her grandmother, at least, not intelligently, for Anna had been in her proximity on occasion only: the hour of her birth. Then, one glimpse had apparently sufficed. Anna had snatched it, and sped away from her son-in-law's house and the salubrious city in a demented black carriage. Now, as preposterous as then, she demanded that Lisel come to visit her before the week was out. Over thirty miles, into the uncivilized northern forest, to the strange mansion in the snow.

"Preposterous," said Lisel's father. "The woman is mad, as I've always suspected."

"I shan't go," said Lisel.

They both knew quite well that she would.

One day, every considerable thing her grandmother possessed would pass to Lisel, providing Lisel did not incur Anna's displeasure.

Half a week later, Lisel was on the northern road.

She sat amid cushions and rugs, in a high sled strung with silver bells, and drawn by a single black-satin horse. Before Lisel perched her driver, the whip in his hand, and a pistol at his belt, for the way north was not without its risks. There were, besides, three outriders, also equipped with whips, pistols and knives, and muffled to the brows in fur. No female companion was in evidence. Anna had stipulated that it would be unnecessary and superfluous for her grandchild to burden herself with a maid.

But the whips had cracked, the horses had started off. The runners of the sled had smoothly hissed, sending up lace-like sprays of ice. Once clear of the city, the north road opened like a perfect skating floor of milky glass, dim-lit by the fragile winter sun smoking low on the horizon. The silver bells sang, and the fierce still air through which the horses dashed broke on Lisel's cheeks like the coldest champagne. Ablaze in her scarlet cloak, she was exhilarated and began to forget she had not wanted to come.

After about an hour, the forest marched up out of the ground and swiftly enveloped the road on all sides.

There was presently an insidious, but generally perceptible change. Between the walls of the forest there gathered a new silence, a silence which was, if anything, alive, a personality which attended any humanly noisy passage with a cruel and resentful interest. Lisel stared up into the narrow lane of sky above. They might have been moving along the channel of a deep and partly-frozen stream. When the drowned sun flashed through, splinters of light scattered and went out as if in water.