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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Little Red Riding Hood

(or “Grandmother Slyboots”)

Fairy Tale

by

CHARLOTTE B. CHORPENNING



# Little Red Riding Hood

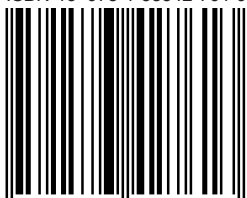
(or “Grandmother Slyboots”)

A memorable play that children relive over and over.

***Fairy tale. By Charlotte B. Chorpennig. Cast: 2m., 3w., 2 either gender.*** A young wolf, who thinks he is smarter than men, plots to outwit them and make them his servant. He gains possession of Red Riding Hood’s cloak by trickery. He learns the password used between her and her grandmother. And he practices until he can talk and walk exactly like Red Riding Hood. But he cannot learn to control his wolf nature, and just when success is almost within his grasp, the sly old grandmother trips him up. It takes him three acts to learn that it is better to be a good wolf than an imitation man. *Three sets. Peasant and wolf costumes. Code: LG2.*

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Little Red Riding Hood  
(Chorpennig)



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Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD OR “GRANDMOTHER SLYBOOTS”)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-761-3

# **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**

(or "Grandmother Slyboots")

by CHARLOTTE B. CHORPENNING

## **Cast**

*(in order of their appearance)*

YOUNG WOLF

OLD WOLF

RED RIDING HOOD

NICHOLAS

PETER

MOTHER

GRANDMOTHER

## **Synopsis**

ACT ONE. In front of Red Riding Hood's home.

ACT TWO. Deep in the forest. The cave of the wolves.

ACT THREE. Interior of the Grandmother's cottage.

## ***The Wolf Costume***

This costume can be made of a union suit, dyed to the right color, and covered with small pieces of finely ravelled hemp rope or yarn, doubled and sewed on in the middle. They can be made thicker and longer in spots to help shape the body. When the costume is finished, it can be trimmed as the actor wears it, to finish the shaping. A simpler costume can be made of rough napped canton flannel, or other goods, cut teddy-bear fashion, and painted with dye or scene paint, then stippled to give the effect of depth of fur. Such a costume should be padded in some places, according to the build of the actor to wear it. The tail should be fastened to a harness, worn inside the costume, and brought through a slit which is covered by a flap snapped over it. The harness goes over the shoulders, down the back, and around the legs. Pieces of elastic, set in, give the tail relation to the movements of the actor, which is very effective. The tail is made of ravelled rope, sewed to a central strip of cloth, with a piece of light wire to prevent too great flabbiness. Both head and costume can usually be rented from a local costumer, if preferred.

The procedure for making the Wolf's head of papier mache is fairly simple, and within the means and ability of most producing groups. Take some modeling clay or plastecine, and mold the head as you wish it to look. When this is finished, take two tablespoons of flour, and sift into a cup of cold water. While mixing, heat two cups of water in a saucepan. As soon as this water has reached the boiling point, pour in the flour water, and stirring constantly, boil for five minutes. This makes the glue.

The next step is to cut paper toweling or newspaper into small strips and squares, to be ready for applying. Dip these squares into the glue, making sure that they are completely covered, and apply to the clay model. Overlap these squares, and be sure to press them into all the lines of the face, though the eyes should be left uncovered. Apply three to five layers of these paper squares, to give the mask a good, firm body, then place in a warm room for at least twenty-four hours. When completely dry, work the papier mache off the clay, and the mask is ready to be worked.

For a complex head, the next step is the cutting of the mouth, so that it opens and closes. Take a sharp razor blade, and cut the mouth along the lips back to the jaw bone. Then, in a curved line, downward, cut the lower jaw completely away from the neck. Reinforce the two sections where the jaw bone meets, and hinge together with tape or cord.

Add teeth of wood, or some other material; apply the ears, which can be made of felt. Then paint the features, and the whole head to go with the costume, and glue some cotton yarn, or ravelled rope, to the back of the head, and around the neck, for a mane.

# DUET

(Sung by Wolf and Red Riding Hood in Act Two)

PRESTO

Sun on the cow --- slips Yel --- low  
I'm walk-ing a - long and sing-ing a song be - cause I'm not  
oh, are the cow --- slips Sun on the  
going to for - get----- I'm walk-ing a - long and  
cow --- slips -- and now my song is be- gun.  
sing - ing a song be---cause I'm not going to for - get I'm  
Far-ling, go gath-er the cow --- slips --- Rid -- le te  
walk-ing a - long and sing-ing a song be--cause I'm not  
Tidle te Hoodle te Hood - le te, Dear - y go gath - er the  
going to for - get----- I'm walk-ing a - long and  
cow --- slips and now --- my song it is done.  
sing-ing a song be-cause I'm not going to for - get.



## **Scenery Note**

The same trees outline the stage for all scenes, showing through the window in Act III. At the Goodman Theatre, where the play was given in a “picture book” setting, these were cutouts on gauze, with necessary openings for exits and entrances. They may be anywhere from such suggestive affairs to three-dimension tree trunks with a leaf border, the rest of the setting being in the same key. For example, at the Goodman Theatre the cave was merely several flat painted pieces, with levels between. The Grandmother’s house had walls whose edges made an interesting design, with a border along it. If the trees are three dimensional the house would be literal.



*Act One, from Goodman Theatre production of*

## **LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD**

### **ACT ONE**

*(In front of Red Riding Hood's home, on the edge of the forest. A brewing tub, front, at one side, large enough to conceal the wolf. In an opening of the forest-trees back, sits the Old Wolf, peacefully taking in the beauty of the day. She notices the audience and waves a paw at them. Music sounds off (Gavotte by Grety, Victor No. 20440, B. No. 2). She starts, looks off, and swiftly hides herself back of a tree or bush from which she can peer out. The Young Wolf enters, wearing a bow on one ear and a garland of flowers on the other, and Red Riding Hood's dainty little apron tied around his waist. He goes on two feet, and dances, leaping high, clapping his feet in the air, etc., in the exuberance of his "smart-aleck" pride in himself. He stops, straightens out his apron with rapid, dainty little flutterings of his paws, and tossings of his head. He tries to sing in imitation of Red Riding Hood, but his falsetto voice breaks into his wolf-voice. He stamps his foot. The music fades out during this.)*

**YOUNG WOLF:** La, la, la, la—no, no. That wasn't like Red Riding Hood's voice. La, la, la, la, la,—ha, ha, ha! . . . That's like her!  
*(He trips about, with dainty little steps, imitating her. The Old Wolf comes out of hiding, watches him, shaking her head and finally speaks.)*

OLD WOLF: You'll get yourself caught some day, Young One.

YOUNG WOLF: Why did you follow me here, Old One?

OLD WOLF: To keep you out of mischief.

YOUNG WOLF: I don't need you. You're just an ordinary wolf. I'm like men. I go on two feet. I think what I'm about. I make *plans*. I'm making a plan now.

OLD WOLF: You'll get the wood cutters after you, next you know.

YOUNG WOLF (*annoyed*): It isn't in my plan to get them after me.

OLD WOLF: You put yourself in danger from them, for all that.

YOUNG WOLF: Nothing of the sort. I'm not an ordinary wolf. I've been within sound of their axes and their talk all morning, and no one knew I was there.

OLD WOLF: Some day you'll get excited, and then let them know.

YOUNG WOLF (*more annoyed*): It isn't in my plan to get excited.

OLD WOLF: You'll do it, just the same. Wolves were meant to get excited and spring at their prey. It's in their bones and muscles.

YOUNG WOLF: You think I'm just an ordinary wolf.

OLD WOLF: So you are, at heart.

YOUNG WOLF: Not a bit of it! I followed Red Riding Hood all morning and didn't spring at her as most wolves would have done. She strayed from the path, picking flowers. She danced to the flowers till she lost the ribbon on her hair, and I put it on mine. She sat under a tree and wove herself a chain and a chaplet for her hair, and I watched and wove one for mine. I slipped through the fern, sly as a shadow, and didn't let a single sound come out of my throat. When she went where the woodcutters were, I made a wide circle and got here ahead of her. (*Struts.*) Now, am I an ordinary wolf?

OLD WOLF: What was the use of coming here? There are always woodcutters within sound of this cottage. It will never be safe to leap at her here.

YOUNG WOLF: I know that.

OLD WOLF: Then what are you doing here?

YOUNG WOLF (*very superior*): I'm carrying out my plan.

OLD WOLF: How?

YOUNG WOLF (*runs to the door and listens at the keyhole*): I came to listen to Red Riding Hood's voice.

OLD WOLF: What good is that? You can get her scent many times as far as you can hear her voice.

YOUNG WOLF: It isn't in my plan to get her scent. I'm too smart for that. Listen.

(*Young Wolf capers about in pride, then poses as Red Riding Hood and speaks her words in her high, soft voice, hanging his head.*)

"Oh, I forgot. What will mother say?" Now, does that sound like a wolf?

OLD WOLF: No!

YOUNG WOLF: Why are you so cross about it?

OLD WOLF: Wolves should be wolves.

YOUNG WOLF: I can talk like Red Riding Hood! Am I not clever?  
Am I not wise?

OLD WOLF: Wolf wisdom is not like man's. You must lie very still, and feel the sun on your fur, and listen to the littlest sounds in the forest and let all the scents in the world blow to you, if you would learn to be wise.

YOUNG WOLF: That's not my way. I'm not an ordinary wolf. (*striding:*)  
See how I walk on two feet, like men.

OLD WOLF: You're not like men for all that. Let a fear leap in you and you'll run on four again.

YOUNG WOLF: Not a bit of it. (*Tripping around like a dainty maiden:*)  
I trip along as pretty as the finest folk in the countryside. Watch.

OLD WOLF: Men! To cover!  
(*Young Wolf is down and behind a bush in a trice, in panic.*)  
(*Laughing:*) What did I tell you? You're four-footed under your skin, and it's no use to pretend you were meant to go on two. What's in will out.

YOUNG WOLF (*sulky*): You took me sudden.

OLD WOLF: Ah—and so I took you true. It's the same with your talk. You think you can talk like Red Riding Hood, but let true wolf feelings stir in you and wolf sounds will come out of your throat.

YOUNG WOLF: Wolf sounds aren't part of my plan. I'm not an ordinary wolf. I can copy more than Red Riding Hood. I can talk like any one I please. At noon, I stood before the grandmother's door and made her believe I was Nicholas, the woodcutter. I said, "I give you good day, dame. Shall I fetch you cool water from the spring?" Every day he calls out so. Today I was ahead of him! La, la, la! Now am I clever?

OLD WOLF: Did she let you in?

YOUNG WOLF (*imitating voice of each*): She said, "Come in and get the bucket, friend Nicholas". And I said, just as he always does, "Lift the latch and I will". But she said, "Reach your hand through the little window by the bed and I will put the key in it".

OLD WOLF: Does she always say that?

YOUNG WOLF: No. That was bad luck.

OLD WOLF: H-m-m-m. Did you reach your hand through?

YOUNG WOLF (*laughing*): I was too smart for that. I saw at once that she would know I wasn't Nicholas if she saw my paw. So I ran to the big window and stood on two feet and looked in. I made fun of her. I said, "I give you good day, Mistress Quick-wit. You think I am an ordinary wolf. But I got ahead of you, this time. You thought I was Nicholas."

OLD WOLF: What did she say to that?

YOUNG WOLF: She said, "La, ye there, now, Master Quick-wit. However did you learn to talk so like my good friend, Nicholas?" I told her I lay in the fern and listened when he came at noon. I told her I could

talk like any one I pleased. I laughed at her and told her I would come again some day, and for all her sharpness, she would let me in.

*(The Young Wolf gives a high leap.)*

OLD WOLF: You were foolish to boast. You have put her on her guard.

YOUNG WOLF: I know that! I am not an ordinary wolf! I use my wits. She will be waiting for me to talk like Nicholas. Now hear how clever I am. I shall not talk like Nicholas when I go back. I shall talk like somebody else. *(Skips.)* La, la, la, la, la.

*(Young Wolf comes back to her and leans close, secretive. She lifts her head till their noses nearly touch, also secretive.)*

Guess who it will be?

OLD WOLF: Who?

YOUNG WOLF: Little Red Riding Hood! *(He leaps up in ecstasy, prancing.)* Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi.

OLD WOLF: The grandmother is too sharp to be fooled that way.

YOUNG WOLF: That's all you know about it. She and Red Riding Hood have . . .

*(He pauses, lifts a paw, wagging it at her, before spilling the important word.)*

Passwords. Every time Red Riding Hood leaves her, they make up a new one to use the next time she comes. Yesterday she taught her the one for today with the door wide open. I lay in the fern and listened. La, la, la, la, la. "Here I come knocking, grandmother dear, in the bright of the day and spring of the year". I have come to listen to Red Riding Hood's voice some more. Then I will go where the grandmother lies snug in her bed, and call out the password, and up will go the latch and in I'll *bound* and *make a meal* of her!

*(He barks on the italicized words and the Old Wolf leaps aside, stiffening.)*

OLD WOLF: Be still! You'll have them after you if you bark like that!

YOUNG WOLF: I didn't bark!

OLD WOLF: Young idiot! Here they come!

*(The Old Wolf runs off. The Young Wolf goes on all fours, whirls about in confusion and bounds behind the house as the door flies open and Nicholas and Peter rush out, axes lifted. The mother follows.)*

*(The music (Gavotte) starts up as the door opens, and what follows is in rhythm to it, the humans entering and exploring in a Morris step, the Wolf running and leaping high into the air to it. Nicholas and the Mother, who carries a bowl and huge spoon, go to the edge of the stage, and so have their backs to the wolf as he tears madly around the house, followed by Peter, three times, keeping always just out of sight of Peter. The third time he dashes into the house through the open door—or windows, if the actor is enough of an athlete.)*

NICHOLAS: Wolf! Wolf!

PETER: Hi! Hi, hi, hi, hi!

MOTHER (*setting the bowl on the brewing tub with a flourish, but keeping the spoon*): Red Riding Hood!

NICHOLAS: Red Riding Hood . . . Wait, I'll find her! . . . Red Riding Hood!

(*Nicholas runs off.*)

PETER: It was a mistake. There's no wolf around.

MOTHER: I heard one plainly. Red Riding Hood!

R. R. HOOD (*off*): Here I am.

MOTHER: How she frightened me! Gathering flowers again, I warrant. And she hasn't done a single one of her tasks this morning.

PETER: I suppose she forgot.

MOTHER: There never was a child who forgot like mine!

PETER: Well, well. The days with things she can't forget will come soon enough.

MOTHER: She was to take a basket of goodies to her grandmother this morning and nothing is ready.

(*Red Riding Hood runs in, aglow, wearing a garland like the wolf's in her hair, flying. She carries a long chain of flowers woven on a piece of grapevine. She whirls her mother around and around joyously, does the same to Peter who lifts her into the air, then sets her down in front of him. Her glow fades as she sees her mother's accusing look.*)

So you are here at last.

R. R. HOOD: See my flowers.

MOTHER: That's what you've been doing all morning long.

R. R. HOOD (*going to her*): They're for you.

MOTHER: They're very fine flowers, Red Riding Hood. But who did you think would help me pack the grandmother's basket of goodies?

R. R. HOOD: Oh! I forgot!

MOTHER (*holding out bowl of butter she brought on with her*): And who did you think would help me with the butter?

R. R. HOOD: I forgot that, too.

MOTHER: And who did you think would gather the eggs to take to her?

R. R. HOOD: Oh, mother . . .

MOTHER: And who did you think would help me make the cake?

R. R. HOOD: I forgot all about the cake. Let's make it now!

MOTHER: It's out of the oven and ready to put in the basket. And who did you think would dry the brewing tub? Didn't you offer to do that for me?

R. R. HOOD: I meant to, mother. But I couldn't lift it up to drain it. And then I forgot it. (*She begins to tug at it eagerly.*)

PETER: There, now. Let Peter help you. There now, the sun can get into it.

(*He arranges the tub, the rim resting on a stone.*)

MOTHER: I think you went deep into the forest, all alone.

R. R. HOOD: Thank you Peter. I'll give you my chain, to pay you back. See how long and strong it is. I made it on a grape vine. I can skip

rope with it. (*She skips all around the stage.*) Now you do it.  
(*She gives it to Peter. The Young Wolf peers out the window now and again, and is much interested in this. He almost gets himself caught as she turns suddenly in her skipping.*)

PETER: It's on a grape vine sure enough. Where did you get that grape vine?

R. R. HOOD: I—I picked it.

MOTHER: There are no wild grape vines near our cottage.

R. R. HOOD: Well, I—I found one.

MOTHER: Come here. (*Mother puts bowl down. Red Riding Hood crosses to mother and kneels at her feet.*) Look me square in the eye. I'm afraid you have been a very naughty girl.

R. R. HOOD: No, mother.

MOTHER: Did you stay on the path, as I told you to?

R. R. HOOD: I kept seeing more flowers ahead of me. Oh, mother, they were such pretty ones . . .

MOTHER: Never mind the flowers, now. You forgot every word of warning about leaving the path, didn't you?

R. R. HOOD: I was looking for cowslips. I wanted to pick some for grandmother. Yesterday she said, "A handful of cowslips is like a handful of sunshine." It made me want to give her some. I kept seeing yellow off the path, but it never turned out to be cowslips.

MOTHER: You forgot how often I've told you to keep within sound of my voice.

R. R. HOOD: I didn't know I was out of the sound of your voice, mother. I didn't hear you try to call me . . .

MOTHER: Of course you didn't. You were too far away. You forgot how often I've told you not to go out of sight of the cottage.

R. R. HOOD: I didn't know I was out of sight of the cottage till I turned around.

MOTHER: And you forgot how often I've told you to keep within sound of the woodcutters' axes.

R. R. HOOD: I didn't think about the axes.

MOTHER: I think I'll have to give you a new name. Little Miss Forgot It.

R. R. HOOD: Oh, mother! Anyway, nothing happened to me. I didn't see a single wolf.

(*The wolf looks out the door.*)

MOTHER: Heaven be praised for that.

R. R. HOOD: Once I thought I saw one.

MOTHER: What made you think so?

R. R. HOOD: I heard a rustling in the tall fern, and I thought I saw some furry ears sticking out from them.

(*The wolf feels his ears with his paw, and ducks further back into the cottage.*)

MOTHER: What did you do then?

R. R. HOOD: I ran. I called to the woodcutters. Bye and bye I heard their axes and went where they were. They laughed at me. They said I just imagined a wolf from the wind and shadows. Wasn't it a joke for me to think I saw a wolf?

MOTHER: It's better than if there'd been one. Why, child, what's happened to your ribbon?

R. R. HOOD (*reaching for it*): I ran so fast I lost it.

MOTHER: And your apron. Where is your apron?

R. R. HOOD: Oh, mother, I took it off when I sat down to make the chain. And then forgot it.

MOTHER (*dancing and chanting*):

Forget all about it,  
Little Miss Oh-I-forgot-it,  
How can you forget so soon?  
You used to remember  
The first of December  
But now you forget until June

*(She repeats it, Peter joining in. The wolf becomes so intent that he appears in the doorway, practicing it with them. He barely escapes detection as Red Riding Hood turns toward him, in tears, but whisks out of sight through the door in time.)*

R. R. HOOD: You're laughing at me.

MOTHER: Never mind, child. Never mind. Mother's only trying to help you remember. If you let every new thought chase the old one out of your head like this, you'll get into real trouble with a wolf some day.

R. R. HOOD (*throwing her arms around her mother*): I'll never, never forget again.

MOTHER: Just suppose you forgot the password grandmother gave you for today and she wouldn't let you in when you got there?

R. R. HOOD: I never forget our passwords.

MOTHER: Never?

R. R. HOOD: Never a single line.

MOTHER: Tell me the one for today.

R. R. HOOD: Well, first I am to say—oh, I forgot! I can't tell you! Grandmother and I have a bargain. She is never, never to tell it to anybody but me, and I am never, never to say it to anybody but her. Because she says when you have passwords, they're secret.

MOTHER: I see you can be trusted to keep a secret even if you do forget your apron. Come. We'll mend the cape.

*(Red Riding Hood falls into the dance and sings her own version of the song.)*



R. R. HOOD: Remember about it,  
Little Miss Never Forgot It.  
How can she remember so soon?  
She used to remember  
The first of December  
But now she remembers till June.

Now you sing it, mother, while we go into the house.  
*(At these words the wolf gets into a panic, showing at the door, afraid to come out, while Red Riding Hood, Peter, and the mother dance and sing.)*

ALL: Remember about it.  
Little Miss Never Forgot It.  
How can she remember so soon?  
She used to remember  
The first of December  
But now she remembers till June.

*(As they approach the door the wolf closes it hastily. Peter opens it, he bowing on one side and the mother on the other, while Red Riding Hood goes in between them, thus not seeing the wolf, who tumbles frantically out the window as they go in. He gets to four feet and starts off when Nicholas' voice comes from off. He whirls, starts this way, then that, at each sound from off, and finally hides in the brewing tub.)*

NICHOLAS *(off)*: Ho! Ho!

PETER *(inside)*: It's Nicholas.

MOTHER *(inside)*: Go the back way to meet him . . . I'll go the front!  
*(Peter enters from behind the house, the mother and Red Riding Hood from the door.)*

NICHOLAS *(off)*: Oho-o—!

GRANDMOTHER *(off)*: Haya—a—

PETER: Grandmother!

*(The two enter swinging along to the verse the grandmother is chanting. Nicholas is supporting the grandmother.)*

GRANDMOTHER *(off)*: Grandmother Slyboots  
Hopped out of bed  
She'll show the young wolf  
How to use an old head.

*(Red Riding Hood rushes out and almost knocks the grandmother over in the violence of her greeting. Nicholas springs to keep her from falling flat.)*

R. R. HOOD: Grandmother!

GRANDMOTHER: Gently! Gently!

MOTHER: How often have I told you not to rush at your grandmother so!

R. R. HOOD: I forgot.

MOTHER: You ought to make yourself wait till you can go to her properly.

R. R. HOOD: I won't do it again.

GRANDMOTHER (*opening her arms*): Give me a little hug.  
(*Red Riding Hood hurls herself at her grandmother and again almost  
knocks her to the ground.*)

MOTHER: You shouldn't spoil her so, grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER: Let us alone.

MOTHER: You almost fell.

GRANDMOTHER: A body can get up, if she falls . . . can't she?

MOTHER: You might hurt yourself.

GRANDMOTHER: Can't a body get hurt if she chooses? Much better  
be hurt than not to be loved.

MOTHER: Nicholas, help her to a seat.

GRANDMOTHER: I don't want to be helped.

MOTHER: You haven't walked so far since the day you fell.

GRANDMOTHER: What of that? Today isn't yesterday.  
(*Walking gayly*)

Young Master Quick-wit  
Thinks I'm in bed.  
But here I am walking  
And using my head.

(*They sit, Nicholas on the tipped surface of the tub, the others under  
the window. The Wolf peers out of the tub.*)

Now, why do you suppose I made Nicholas bring me here?

MOTHER: It was a foolhardy thing to do.

GRANDMOTHER: It would have been foolhardy not to. I came to  
warn you.

MOTHER: What about?

GRANDMOTHER: Young Master Wolf is up to tricks.  
(*Wolf listens eagerly.*)

MOTHER: You hear that, Red Riding Hood? You must remember to  
stay near the woodcutters. You must keep to the path.

R. R. HOOD: What tricks, grandmother?

GRANDMOTHER: He talked outside my door so like Nicholas I was  
ready to let him in. But suddenly his voice was a bark on one word  
and I knew him for a wolf.

(*The wolf is surprised at this and angry.*)

PETER: Then you sent him scampering with his tail between his legs,  
I warrant.

GRANDMOTHER: Not a bit of it. I made him thrust his hand in for  
the key.

NICHOLAS: And caught him so! Clever grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER: Not he. He's a foolish fellow but not so foolish as that.

R. R. HOOD: Did he run away?

GRANDMOTHER: The silly show-off couldn't keep his smartness to  
himself. He looked in the window and boasted how he lay in the fern  
by my door and listened till he could talk like Nicholas.

MOTHER: It's a wonder dear grandmother is still alive!

PETER: Only for her sharp ears and quick wit, the wolf would have made a meal of her!

NICHOLAS: Instead, she made a fool of him.

*(The wolf is demonstrative over this. It burns him up.)*

GRANDMOTHER: But my little Red Riding Hood can't reach so far as the little window. I can't tell her to put her hand in. If young Master Smarty should talk like her, the trick about the key wouldn't work.

R. R. HOOD: We have our password, grandmother. The wolf doesn't know that.

*(Wolf hugs his knees in delight.)*

GRANDMOTHER: The stupid fellow's boasting put it into my head he might know our password as well as what Nicholas is wont to say.

R. R. HOOD: No, I've never told any one at all, not even mother.

GRANDMOTHER: Mind where you were when I taught you the password?

R. R. HOOD: I stood on the step outside.

GRANDMOTHER: By the open door. If he heard Nicholas, he could have heard you.

PETER: She has sharp wits, that one!

GRANDMOTHER: So I've come to give you a new password.

*(Wolf wiggles with triumph and puts head on one side.)*

MOTHER: Why didn't you send word back by Nicholas?

GRANDMOTHER: I've taught the child to take it from no tongue but mine. So I said to myself, what must be done, can be done. And myself said to me, get up and walk! And here I am, ready to teach you a new password. Young Master Wolf will never hear a syllable of this.

*(The wolf wags his head in triumph.)*

R. R. HOOD: I'm ready.

GRANDMOTHER: Not so fast. First let Nicholas and Peter make sure Master Smarty's furry ears are not cocked anywhere in the fern or around the corners of the house.

*(They go shouting here and there; the wolf peers out after them.)*

NICHOLAS: No ears anywhere, grandmother.

PETER: Now let's hear the password.

R. R. HOOD: You can't hear. It's secret.

GRANDMOTHER: It doesn't matter so long as you hear it from me, child. You know these three know it, and no more.

MOTHER: You don't think we would tell anyone else, do you?

NICHOLAS: It will never get to the wolf from us.

GRANDMOTHER: Now. First go past the window in your red hood. Knock as high as the latch, and no higher.

*(Wolf repeats action after her.)*

R. R. HOOD: Knock as high as the latch and no higher.

*(Wolf repeats it with her, to himself, wagging his head and his paws to the words.)*

GRANDMOTHER: When I hear the knock, I'll say, "Who is that knocking at my door?"

R. R. HOOD: What shall I say then?

GRANDMOTHER: Make up your own answer.

R. R. HOOD: I'll say, "It's your little Red Riding Hood with butter and eggs and a cake for you."

GRANDMOTHER: Very good. Then we will start a little catch. I will make up the first line and you will make up a line that rhymes with it.

R. R. HOOD: That will be fun!

NICHOLAS: This will be worth listening to!

*(He gives the tub a twist as he speaks, to make it stand level, and sits on it. Taking Red Riding Hood on his knee. He almost catches the wolf with the edge of it, for the latter is listening with all his ears, his head well out from under the tub.)*

GRANDMOTHER: Now. One, two . . .

R. R. HOOD: I come to you.

GRANDMOTHER: Three, four . . .

R. R. HOOD: I'm at the door.

GRANDMOTHER: Five, six . . .

*(Nicholas starts to whisper to her, as she hesitates.)*

R. R. HOOD: Oh, dear—don't anybody help me . . . the wolf plays tricks!

GRANDMOTHER: Seven, eight . . .

R. R. HOOD: He'll come too late!

GRANDMOTHER: Nine, ten . . .

R. R. HOOD: I'm here again.

GRANDMOTHER: Now I know my darling dear.

R. R. HOOD: There's no wicked wolf to fear. Grandmother dear, let me in, let me in, let me in! That's the way we always end.

*(She jumps down to dance up and down with joy.)*

NICHOLAS *(rising)*: No silly wolf will ever get the best of you two.

*(The tub lifts and ears stick out.)*

MOTHER: He may think all the sly thoughts in the world, but his wits will never match yours.

PETER: You haven't lived your eighty years for nothing.

GRANDMOTHER: I begin to want my bed. Get your basket, child, and we'll set out.

R. R. HOOD: I don't want to go with you, grandmother.

MOTHER: Red Riding Hood! How can you say such a thing to your grandmother? You'll hurt her feelings.

GRANDMOTHER: Don't fret about my feelings. Can't a body have a little sense?

R. R. HOOD: I didn't mean to hurt her feelings.

GRANDMOTHER: I understand the child. She wants to go alone. She wants a chance to show she'll remember not to forget to stay on the path.