

The Wolfs Tale

Louise Cooper

You all know the story of Little Red Riding Hood, right? Well, I'm sure of one thing. You don't know what *really* happened. No one does, except me. I know people don't believe in fairy tales these days, but the Riding Hood story happens to be true. I should know. You see, I'm the wolf¹. And the rest of them—the girl, the woodsman², all the other people—they got it wrong. *All* wrong.

They think I killed³ and ate old Granny. I didn't. I wouldn't have harmed⁴ a hair of her head, but when I tried to tell them so, of course they couldn't understand me. So the woodsman cut me open. Oh, how that *hurt*⁵. I can remember the pain⁶; it was horrible. Even now I have nightmares⁷ about it, and I shudder⁸ and cry out⁹ in my sleep, until I wake up screaming¹⁰.

They didn't kill me, you see. They thought they did, but they didn't. I can't be killed that way. It has to be something else. A silver bullet¹¹, that's the only thing that will work. A silver bullet, for a werewolf¹².

Because that's what I really am. I was attacked by a werewolf one night, years ago. It bit¹³ me, and infected me with its curse¹⁴. I'd give anything to be free. I'd rather die¹⁵ than live like this, changing every full moon¹⁶ into a monster that no one can control. I'd give anything to be what I used to be. A harmless¹⁷ human being. A little old lady, who was kind¹⁸ to everyone.

Red Riding Hood thought she knew all about her dear granny.

But she didn't. No one does.

Only me . . . and, now, you.

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First published in 'Short and Scary' by OUP