

## THE TRUTH ABOUT RED RIDING HOOD

So what's a wolf supposed to do? I mean put me in a room with a sweet young girl with baby blue eyes, angel blonde hair and a coy smile and then mention a heinous crime and who is the first person you are going to look at? Right it is not the little cutie with the saccharin smile. No it will be me, and why I want to know? Most fashionable young ladies would like to be draped in my fur, every steely young man would love my cobalt eyes and their super cool gaze. Okay the teeth are a little bit more pronounced, but a man has to chew and gnaw to eat! And don't get taken in by that sweet little angel with the oh-so innocent smile, I can tell you a thing or two about Miss Red Riding-Hood, in fact its time the records were put straight.

Grandma Hood lived in a beautiful wooden lodge in the forest down by the lake. Grandpa Hood was a forester and built it for her there when they married. They loved the place and lived there happily all their lives. They had a son, Joey, who was born there and grew up following in his father's footsteps, until he went to the city to do his College course. There he met the sweet Anne Riding with whom he fell in love and courted and, when the couple married, put her name with his. Anne was a city girl and so it was there that they settled. Broke grandma and grandpa Hood's hearts, but they accepted their son's decision and left him to lead his own life, which he did. The visits to their home became less and less and the lovely Anne wouldn't visit at all. The country did nothing for her! Then along came their first born, a dear little girl that they called Red. Grandma and grandpa, wondered what sort of name that was? What was wrong with Mary or Ethel? Well Joey visited his parents with their grandchild on a few occasions, but the last time they saw her she was 2!!

That was about the time that I came into the Hood's life. Grandpa had found me in the forest, I had been injured in a fight between my dad and his pack and another dad and his pack. Too long a story to tell, but have a word with Jack Wild, his accounts regarding wolves are a bit more factual than the brothers Grimm! But grandpa took me home and sorted out my wounds and grandma fed me nice food and soon I was back to good health. The cosy hearth and blanket, grandma's food and grandpa's loving took away my feral traits and I just loved staying in the lodge with them. Well there were a few occasions when the wild streak returned and I'd go off for a night or two on the tiles, but I always came home! I helped grandpa round the forest, checking vermin, rounding up deer and tracking down those creatures he wanted to check on. We were a team and I became their family.

Then grandpa died and grandma was so low and lonely. But who was the one who kept her company, brought a rabbit home for the pot, or a fish from the lake to fry? Who sat with her night after night giving her comfort and keeping her spirits up? Well it wasn't Joey or his lovely wife or the dear young granddaughter. No they finally turned up a few years later when grandma was feeling a little frail. Knocking on the door with sweet smiles came Joey and Red just like it had only been a week since their last visit. Soon it was every Friday afternoon, though

Joey had left it all to Red then who 'Soooooo loved her special grandma in the forest'. Yes, it made me want to spit too, and grandma kept saying something strange was going on, a basket full of special goodies for her special grandma every week. Well it finally produced a form one day suggesting grandma sign over her house and finances to Joey, and he would sort her out with a flat in the old folks home in town. Grandma was distressed and I could see she was upset, so I made my first mistake and gave that girl a growl that showed all my lovely teeth. Wow! Did she let out a yell, scurried out of the house like a shot from a gun.

So grandma and I agreed that the next week I would take her place and be firm in telling Miss Sweetie-pants to take her documents and put them..... well never mind! So the following Friday I put on grandma's nightgown, her nightcap and shawl and lay in her bed with the covers up around me to help my disguise, I mean grandma had a few white whiskers on her chin but not as many as me!! Her glasses on my nose finished the trick, and grandma hid in the wardrobe. Well it all started so well when Miss Red arrived and I was doing a fine job in telling her to leave things alone for a little while longer, then damn me, an ear popped out of the night cap and she caught on straight away. I really don't recollect any sweet 'what big eyes you have' and all that baloney just her screaming like a banshee swearing that I'd eaten her grandma and was about to devour her. Next thing we knew her dad was back with gunmen and grandma was whisked off into a home for loopey ladies just because she said I was her friend and trying to help her. I of course did the cowardly thing and fled to the forest!!

I knew how sad grandma was away from her home and I knew her heart would break if she couldn't be back where she belonged with her memories of grandpa., so I turned myself in, confessed to everything Miss Red accused me of and was condemned to death. As I have said, me in the dock with her opposite, no chance. Fortunately though, the doctor declared grandma fit and well and she was allowed to go home, and he told Joey to back off as he was causing his mother stress and anxiety but trying to pressurise her into moving. So that was a good result. My being driven into the forest to be shot didn't feel so hot!! When I got into the van that morning with my executioner driving, my heart was in my boots. We got to the clearing and he opened the van doors and pointed his gun at me I closed my eyes and prayed. Then a sweet little voice that was grandma's said 'Thanks Hank, here's your whiskey, I'll take my boy on from here'.

Well it was all cuddles and kisses from there, and back to the lodge for a grand tea and a roaring fire. And guess what? We did live happily ever after!!