

Red Riding Hood

4. Stay on the path

Little Red Riding Hood was getting ready to go to Grandma's. She placed the cake and sandwiches in her basket, then put on her favourite red cape.



Ma was resting her twisted ankle. 'Now remember what I told you,' she said. 'The path runs all the way to Grandma's and you must stay on it at all times. That way you'll keep safe and won't get lost. Oh, and don't dawdle.'

'Yes, Ma,' replied Little Red Riding Hood with a big smile. Now she was about to set off she didn't feel nervous any more, just excited. Maybe, just maybe, she would see a fairy!



The path began behind a green gate in a fence. Little Red Riding Hood opened the gate and walked through. She was inside the woods, all by herself, for the very first time. 'What would Mrs Midgley say?' she thought to herself. 'Oh, stay on the path! Or the Wolf will be after you!'

Little Red Riding Hood set off along the path. There was so much to look at and listen to. All around stood beautiful, tall trees thick with green leaves.



Birds were singing in the branches and bumble bees buzzed among the colourful flowers on the mossy ground. Little brown rabbits hopped across the path, their white tails bobbing along behind them.

Suddenly a noise frightened her. Little Red Riding Hood turned around quickly to look behind her. She'd had a strange feeling she was being watched.

But there was nothing there. 'I must be imagining things,' she thought.



But she didn't imagine what happened next. Tiny voices were laughing and singing a short distance away. Peering through the trees, Little Red Riding Hood could just about see five or six tiny people with wings on their backs, dancing and playing round a red toadstool.



'Fairies!' she thought with a flash of joy. She so wanted to get closer, but knew she must stay on the path. Besides, the fairies might be shy and run away. But Little Red Riding Hood was just so fascinated that, without realising it, she started creeping closer and closer...

Then suddenly the fairies flapped their wings. They flew up and darted away in a panic. And at that moment Little Red Riding Hood felt a tap on her shoulder.

'Hello there,' said a deep growly voice.



She swung round. An enormous, hairy creature, with a straw hat on its head, was looking at her with a rather strange smile. The Wolf had raided his wardrobe for a disguise, but the hat was the best he could manage.

'Oh, I do hope I didn't frighten you,' he said in his nicest possible voice. 'But I was worried, finding you so far from the path.'



'Er, you're not a Wolf are you?' asked Little Red Riding Hood nervously.

'A Wolf?' laughed the Wolf, rather too loudly. 'Goodness me, no! There are no wolves in these woods, I can assure you. Why, I'm just a large, hairy dog, out for a walk, just like you. Er, where is it you're going, may I ask?'

'To see my Grandma,' replied Little Red Riding Hood. 'The path leads right to her house.'



'Does it now?' said the Wolf. 'Well, you'd better be on your way. You don't want to be late, do you? And anyway, I must dash myself! Bye-eee!'

And with that the Wolf suddenly ran into the trees and disappeared.

'How strange,' thought Little Red Riding Hood as she returned to the path.

She continued on her way, lost in thought. Something didn't feel right. A dog in a straw hat? Why was he in such a hurry to leave? And where was he in such a hurry to get to?

