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SPARKLING GEMS

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Aunt Louisa's SPARKLING GEMS

written by
Laura Valentine
edited by Dr. Bruess

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COMPRISING

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

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NELLIE'S CHRISTMAS EVE

❧

AESOP'S FABLES

❧

THREE CHRISTMAS BOXES

❧

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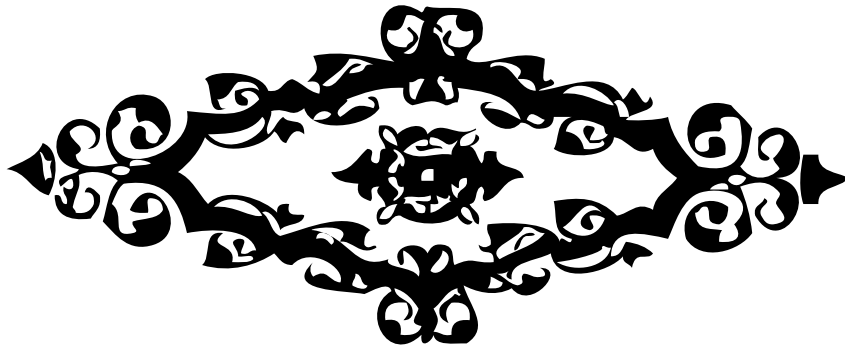
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LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD



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LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

ONCE UPON A TIME, in a pretty village, stood a neat little cottage, covered with roses and honey-suckles, and shaded by large trees.

In this cottage lived a good woman, who had a very pretty daughter—a sweet, dear little girl, with bright eyes and long hair, falling in golden curls. Her cheeks were as rosy as two ripe peaches, all over her neck and shoulders and her laugh was the merriest you would hear on a Summer's day; and what was better than all this was, that little girl was a kind, good child, with a gentle heart and obliging manners. She had a pleasant smile and cheerful word for all, and would do anything to give pleasure to others.

So it is no wonder she became the greatest favorite with all the villagers. Every one who knew her liked her; and when she called to see any poor or sick neighbor, her presence was like a ray of sunshine to them, so pleased were they to see her.

Now, although she was greatly liked by all the villagers, far and near, none loved her so dearly as her mother and grandmother. This little girl's grandmother, to show how much she appreciated her goodness, made her a beautiful riding-hood of scarlet cloth, such as ladies wore in those days when they went out riding.

The little girl looked quite charming in this riding-hood, and she found it so handy and convenient, she seldom went abroad without it; hail, rain. or shine, she would wear it--in fact, it was her favorite article

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of dress. She wore it so frequently, and looked so nice in it, that when she was seen coming along the village, the neighbors would say: "Here comes Little Red Riding-Hood" till at last she was known by that name, and no other; indeed, I have never been able to learn her other name.

Now, the good old grandmother had been very sick for a long time, and, although not so bad as she had been, she was not yet sufficiently well to leave her cottage. So the mother, who had been making some cheese-cakes, and churning some butter that morning, said to her daughter: "You may go, my child, to your grandmother's, and take her some of these nice cakes, and a pot of fresh butter, for her breakfast."

Little Red Riding-Hood was highly delighted at the thought of a run to her grandmother's on such a fine morning, so she went and brought a little basket for the cakes and butter; and you may be sure she did not forget to put on the little scarlet hood which became her so well. She was very soon ready, and the cakes and butter were put into the basket and covered with a clean cloth.

Now, it was not very far from Little Red Riding-Hood's home to the cottage in which her grandmother lived, so her mother thought little of sending her alone. Still, on parting with her, she told her not to stop too long on the way. She also charged her with many kind messages for the good old grandmother.

Little Red Riding-Hood promised not to forget, and giving her two

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kisses, and saying "Good-bye," tripped off as gay and light-hearted as any of the little birds that were singing on the boughs of the trees.

Now, there were some woodmen at work in the forest, cutting down trees for firewood, and singing as they dealt their strokes with willing hands and heavy axes. There was also something there that threatened danger to the little girl, namely: a great hungry wolf.

This cruel animal had paid a visit to a sheep-fold, thinking he could steal a lamb for dinner, but was disappointed, for the watch-dog had caught him, and beaten him soundly.

The wolf knew Little Red Riding-Hood very well, and had often watched and plotted to carry her off, that he might devour her. He was desperately hungry this morning, and out of temper, for he felt very sore from his recent beating; but the sight of the little girl made him grin with delight.

Now, the wolf would like to have made one spring at Red Riding-Hood, and have eaten her up at once; but he was too cunning for that, for the woodmen were near, and he was afraid they would see him, which would never do. So he resolved to make her acquaintance, and pretend to be her friend.

One of the woodmen saw both the wolf and Little Red Riding-Hood, and, suspecting Master Grizzly was bent upon some mischief, kept a watch on him without seeming to do so.

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Master Wolf walked daintily up to Little Red Riding-Hood, wagging his tail, and tried his best to appear as amiable as possible, and succeeded very well; only his great green eyes had a most treacherous look, and glared in a hungry, and very uncomfortable manner. When he smiled, he showed a double row of sharp, dangerous-looking white teeth. But she felt not the slightest fear of him. The wolf made a graceful bow, and said: "Good-morning, Little Red Riding-Hood."

"Good-morning, Master Wolf," replied Little Red Riding-Hood.

"And, pray, where are you going so early, my darling?" continued the wolf.

"I am going to my grandmother's," answered the child.

"Your grandmother? How is the dear old lady?" asked the wolf, pretending to take the greatest interest in her welfare.

"She has been very sick, and is not yet well," said Little Red Riding-Hood. "I am taking her some cakes, and a pot of nice fresh butter."

"Dear me! I am sorry to hear my respected friend, your grandmother, is out of health. I will call upon her; she will be glad to see me, I have no doubt. Allow me to carry your basket, my dear; I fear you are tired." At the same time giving a sly, hungry sniff, and almost thrusting his nose into the basket.

Little Red Riding-Hood thought this was rather rude of him, after his polite offer, but only said; "O no, I thank-you; I am not a bit tired."

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"Well," said the wolf, "give my love to your grandmother, and say I will call and see her. Now, suppose I take this path to the right, and you follow that one, and we'll see which of us gets there first."

Now, this cunning old wolf knew very well he would get to the old dame's cottage first. He had chosen the shortest way, you may be sure; and not only that, but as soon as the child was out of sight, he set off galloping as hard as he could go.

Little Red Riding-Hood had no cause to hurry, it being yet early; she loitered along the pleasant forest path, to gather the pretty wild flowers that grew by the wayside, to make a nosegay. "Grand-mamma likes flowers," she said to herself, "and she will be pleased if I bring her a handsome nosegay; and a few wood-strawberries, to eat with her cakes will, perhaps, please her too."

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