

# Politically Correct Little Red Riding Hood

There once was a young person named Little Red Riding Hood who lived on the edge of a large forest full of endangered owls and rare plants that would probably provide a cure for cancer if only someone took the time to study them.

Red Riding Hood lived with a nurturer whom she sometimes referred to as "mother", although she didn't mean to imply by this term that she would have thought less of the person if a close biological link did not in fact exist.

Nor did she intend to denigrate the equal value of nontraditional households, although she was sorry if this was the impression conveyed.

One day her mother asked her to take a basket of organically grown fruit and mineral water to her grandmother's house.

"But mother, won't this be stealing work from the unionized people who have struggled for years to earn the right to carry all packages between various people in the woods?"

Red Riding Hood's mother assured her that she had called the union boss and gotten a special compassionate mission exemption form.

"But mother, aren't you oppressing me by ordering me to do this?"

Red Riding Hood's mother pointed out that it was impossible for womyn to oppress each other, since all womyn were equally oppressed until all womyn were free.

"But mother, then shouldn't you have my brother carry the basket, since he's an oppressor, and should learn what it's like to be oppressed?"

And Red Riding Hood's mother explained that her brother was attending a special rally for animal rights, and besides, this wasn't stereotypical womyn's work, but an empowering deed that would help engender a feeling of community.

"But won't I be oppressing Grandma, by implying that she's sick and hence unable to independently further her own selfhood?"

But Red Riding Hood's mother explained that her grandmother wasn't actually sick or incapacitated or mentally handicapped in any way, although that was not to imply that any of these conditions were inferior to what some people called "health".

Thus Red Riding Hood felt that she could get behind the idea of delivering the basket to her grandmother, and so she set off.

Many people believed that the forest was a foreboding and dangerous place, but Red Riding Hood knew that this was an irrational fear based on cultural paradigms instilled by a patriarchal

society that regarded the natural world as an exploitable resource, and hence believed that natural predators were in fact intolerable competitors.

Other people avoided the woods for fear of thieves and deviants, but Red Riding Hood felt that in a truly classless society all marginalized peoples would be able to "come out" of the woods and be accepted as valid lifestyle role models.

On her way to Grandma's house, Red Riding Hood passed a woodchopper, and wandered off the path, in order to examine some flowers.

She was startled to find herself standing before a Wolf, who asked her what was in her basket.

Red Riding Hood's teacher had warned her never to talk to strangers, but she was confident in taking control of her own budding sexuality, and chose to dialogue with the Wolf.

She replied, "I am taking my Grandmother some healthful snacks in a gesture of solidarity."

The Wolf said, "You know, my dear, it isn't safe for a little girl to walk through these woods alone."

Red Riding Hood said, "I find your sexist remark offensive in the extreme, but I will ignore it because of your traditional status as an outcast from society, the stress of which has caused you to develop an alternative and yet entirely valid worldview. Now, if you'll excuse me, I would prefer to be on my way."

Red Riding Hood returned to the main path, and proceeded towards her Grandmother's house.

But because his status outside of society had freed him from slavish adherence to linear, Western-style thought, the Wolf knew of a quicker route to Grandma's house.

He burst into the house and ate Grandma, a course of action affirmative of his nature as predator.

Then, unhampered by rigid, traditionalist gender role notions, he put on Grandma's nightclothes, crawled under the bedclothes, and awaited developments.

Red Riding Hood entered the cottage and said, "Grandma, I have brought you some cruelty free snacks to salute you in your role as wise and nurturing matriarch."

The Wolf said softly "Come closer, child, so that I might see you."

Red Riding Hood said, "Goddess! Grandma, what big eyes you have!"

"You forget that I am optically challenged."

"And Grandma, what an enormous and fine nose you have."

"Naturally, I could have had it fixed to help my acting career, but I didn't give in to such societal pressures, my child."

"And Grandma, what very big, sharp teeth you have!"

The Wolf could not take any more of these specist slurs, and, in a reaction appropriate for his accustomed milieu, he leaped out of bed, grabbed Little Red Riding Hood, and opened his jaws so wide that she could see her poor Grandmother cowering in his belly.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Red Riding Hood bravely shouted. "You must request my permission before proceeding in a new level of intimacy!"

The Wolf was so startled by this statement that he loosened his grasp on her.

At the same time, the woodchopper burst into the cottage, brandishing an ax.

"Hands off!" cried the woodchopper.

"And what do you think you're doing?" cried Little Red Riding Hood. "If I let you help me now, I would be expressing a lack of confidence in my own abilities, which would lead to poor self esteem and lower achievement scores on college entrance exams."

"Last chance, sister! Get your hands off that endangered species! This is an FBI sting!" screamed the woodchopper, and when Little Red Riding Hood nonetheless made a sudden motion, he sliced off her head.

"Thank goodness you got here in time," said the Wolf. "The brat and her grandmother lured me in here. I thought I was a goner."

"No, I think I'm the real victim, here," said the woodchopper. "I've been dealing with my anger ever since I saw her picking those protected flowers earlier. And now I'm going to have such a trauma. Do you have any aspirin?"

"Sure" said the Wolf.

"Thanks."

"I feel your pain," said the Wolf, giving a little belch, and said "Do you have any Maalox?"