**Little Red Riding Hood**

**Charles Perrault**

Once upon a time there lived in a certain village a little country girl, the prettiest creature who was ever seen. Her mother was excessively fond of her; and her grandmother doted on her still more. This good woman had a little red riding hood made for her. It suited the girl so extremely well that everybody called her Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother, having made some cakes, said to her, "Go, my dear, and see how your grandmother is doing, for I hear she has been very ill. Take her a cake, and this little pot of butter."

Little Red Riding Hood set out immediately to go to her grandmother, who lived in another village.

As she was going through the wood, she met with a wolf, who had a very great mind to eat her up, but he dared not, because of some woodcutters working nearby in the forest. He asked her where she was going. The poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stay and talk to a wolf, said to him, "I am going to see my grandmother and carry her a cake and a little pot of butter from my mother."

"Does she live far off?" said the wolf

"Oh I say," answered Little Red Riding Hood; "it is beyond that mill you see there, at the first house in the village."

"Well," said the wolf, "and I'll go and see her too. I'll go this way and go you that, and we shall see who will be there first."

The wolf ran as fast as he could, taking the shortest path, and the little girl took a roundabout way, entertaining herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and gathering bouquets of little flowers. It was not long before the wolf arrived at the old woman's house. He knocked at the door: tap, tap.

"Who's there?"

"Your grandchild, Little Red Riding Hood," replied the wolf, counterfeiting her voice; "who has brought you a cake and a little pot of butter sent you by mother."

The good grandmother, who was in bed, because she was somewhat ill, cried out, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up."

The wolf pulled the bobbin, and the door opened, and then he immediately fell upon the good woman and ate her up in a moment, for it been more than three days since he had eaten. He then shut the door and got into the grandmother's bed, expecting Little Red Riding Hood, who came some time afterwards and knocked at the door: tap, tap.

"Who's there?"

Little Red Riding Hood, hearing the big voice of the wolf, was at first afraid; but believing her grandmother had a cold and was hoarse, answered, "It is your grandchild Little Red Riding Hood, who has brought you a cake and a little pot of butter mother sends you."

The wolf cried out to her, softening his voice as much as he could, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up."

Little Red Riding Hood pulled the bobbin, and the door opened.

The wolf, seeing her come in, said to her, hiding himself under the bedclothes, "Put the cake and the little pot of butter upon the stool, and come get into bed with me."

Little Red Riding Hood took off her clothes and got into bed. She was greatly amazed to see how her grandmother looked in her nightclothes, and said to her, "Grandmother, what big arms you have!"

"All the better to hug you with, my dear."

"Grandmother, what big legs you have!"

"All the better to run with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big ears you have!"

"All the better to hear with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big eyes you have!"

"All the better to see with, my child."

"Grandmother, what big teeth you have got!"

"All the better to eat you up with."

And, saying these words, this wicked wolf fell upon Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up.

Moral: Children, especially attractive, well bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.

**Bluebeard**

**Charles Perrault**

There was once a man who had fine houses, both in town and country, a deal of silver and gold plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over with gold. But this man was so unlucky as to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly that all the women and girls ran away from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters who were perfect beauties. He desired of her one of them in marriage, leaving to her choice which of the two she would bestow on him. Neither of them would have him, and they sent him backwards and forwards from one to the other, not being able to bear the thoughts of marrying a man who had a blue beard. Adding to their disgust and aversion was the fact that he already had been married to several wives, and nobody knew what had become of them.

Bluebeard, to engage their affection, took them, with their mother and three or four ladies of their acquaintance, with other young people of the neighborhood, to one of his country houses, where they stayed a whole week.

The time was filled with parties, hunting, fishing, dancing, mirth, and feasting. Nobody went to bed, but all passed the night in rallying and joking with each other. In short, everything succeeded so well that the youngest daughter began to think that the man's beard was not so very blue after all, and that he was a mighty civil gentleman.

As soon as they returned home, the marriage was concluded. About a month afterwards, Bluebeard told his wife that he was obliged to take a country journey for six weeks at least, about affairs of very great consequence. He desired her to divert herself in his absence, to send for her friends and acquaintances, to take them into the country, if she pleased, and to make good cheer wherever she was.

"Here," said he," are the keys to the two great wardrobes, wherein I have my best furniture. These are to my silver and gold plate, which is not everyday in use. These open my strongboxes, which hold my money, both gold and silver; these my caskets of jewels. And this is the master key to all my apartments. But as for this little one here, it is the key to the closet at the end of the great hall on the ground floor. Open them all; go into each and every one of them, except that little closet, which I forbid you, and forbid it in such a manner that, if you happen to open it, you may expect my just anger and resentment."

She promised to observe, very exactly, whatever he had ordered. Then he, after having embraced her, got into his coach and proceeded on his journey.

Her neighbors and good friends did not wait to be sent for by the newly married lady. They were impatient to see all the rich furniture of her house, and had not dared to come while her husband was there, because of his blue beard, which frightened them. They ran through all the rooms, closets, and wardrobes, which were all so fine and rich that they seemed to surpass one another.

After that, they went up into the two great rooms, which contained the best and richest furniture. They could not sufficiently admire the number and beauty of the tapestry, beds, couches, cabinets, stands, tables, and looking glasses, in which you might see yourself from head to foot; some of them were framed with glass, others with silver, plain and gilded, the finest and most magnificent that they had ever seen.

They ceased not to extol and envy the happiness of their friend, who in the meantime in no way diverted herself in looking upon all these rich things, because of the impatience she had to go and open the closet on the ground floor. She was so much pressed by her curiosity that, without considering that it was very uncivil for her to leave her company, she went down a little back staircase, and with such excessive haste that she nearly fell and broke her neck.

Having come to the closet door, she made a stop for some time, thinking about her husband's orders, and considering what unhappiness might attend her if she was disobedient; but the temptation was so strong that she could not overcome it. She then took the little key, and opened it, trembling. At first she could not see anything plainly, because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to perceive that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, on which lay the bodies of several dead women, ranged against the walls. (These were all the wives whom Bluebeard had married and murdered, one after another.) She thought she should have died for fear, and the key, which she, pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.

After having somewhat recovered her surprise, she picked up the key, locked the door, and went upstairs into her chamber to recover; but she could not, so much was she frightened. Having observed that the key to the closet was stained with blood, she tried two or three times to wipe it off; but the blood would not come out; in vain did she wash it, and even rub it with soap and sand. The blood still remained, for the key was magical and she could never make it quite clean; when the blood was gone off from one side, it came again on the other.

Bluebeard returned from his journey the same evening, saying that he had received letters upon the road, informing him that the affair he went about had concluded to his advantage. His wife did all she could to convince him that she was extremely happy about his speedy return.

The next morning he asked her for the keys, which she gave him, but with such a trembling hand that he easily guessed what had happened.

"What!" said he, "is not the key of my closet among the rest?"

"I must," said she, "have left it upstairs upon the table."

"Fail not," said Bluebeard, "to bring it to me at once."

After several goings backwards and forwards, she was forced to bring him the key. Bluebeard, having very attentively considered it, said to his wife, "Why is there blood on the key?"

"I do not know," cried the poor woman, paler than death.

"You do not know!" replied Bluebeard. "I very well know. You went into the closet, did you not? Very well, madam; you shall go back, and take your place among the ladies you saw there."

Upon this she threw herself at her husband's feet, and begged his pardon with all the signs of a true repentance, vowing that she would never more be disobedient. She would have melted a rock, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Bluebeard had a heart harder than any rock!

"You must die, madam," said he, "at once."

"Since I must die," answered she (looking upon him with her eyes all bathed in tears), "give me some little time to say my prayers."

"I give you," replied Bluebeard, "half a quarter of an hour, but not one moment more."

When she was alone she called out to her sister, and said to her, "Sister Anne" (for that was her name), "go up, I beg you, to the top of the tower, and look if my brothers are not coming. They promised me that they would come today, and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste."

Her sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor afflicted wife cried out from time to time, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

And sister Anne said, "I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass."

In the meanwhile Bluebeard, holding a great saber in his hand, cried out as loud as he could bawl to his wife, "Come down instantly, or I shall come up to you."

"One moment longer, if you please," said his wife; and then she cried out very softly, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?"

And sister Anne answered, "I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass."

"Come down quickly," cried Bluebeard, "or I will come up to you."

"I am coming," answered his wife; and then she cried, "Anne, sister Anne, do you not see anyone coming?"

"I see," replied sister Anne, "a great cloud of dust approaching us."

"Are they my brothers?"

"Alas, no my dear sister, I see a flock of sheep."

"Will you not come down?" cried Bluebeard.

"One moment longer," said his wife, and then she cried out, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?"

"I see," said she, "two horsemen, but they are still a great wayoff."

"God be praised," replied the poor wife joyfully. "They are my brothers. I will make them a sign, as well as I can for them to make haste."

Then Bluebeard bawled out so loud that he made the whole house tremble. The distressed wife came down, and threw herself at his feet, all in tears, with her hair about her shoulders.

"This means nothing," said Bluebeard. "You must die!" Then, taking hold of her hair with one hand, and lifting up the sword with the other, he prepared to strike off her head. The poor lady, turning about to him, and looking at him with dying eyes, desired him to afford her one little moment to recollect herself.

"No, no," said he, "commend yourself to God," and was just ready to strike.

At this very instant there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Bluebeard made a sudden stop. The gate was opened, and two horsemen entered. Drawing their swords, they ran directly to Bluebeard. He knew them to be his wife's brothers, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer; so that he ran away immediately to save himself; but the two brothers pursued and overtook him before he could get to the steps of the porch. Then they ran their swords through his body and left him dead. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength enough to rise and welcome her brothers.

Bluebeard had no heirs, and so his wife became mistress of all his estate. She made use of one part of it to marry her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had loved her a long while; another part to buy captains' commissions for her brothers, and the rest to marry herself to a very worthy gentleman, who made her forget the ill time she had passed with Bluebeard.

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| **Moral:** | Curiosity, in spite of its appeal, often leads to deep regret. To the displeasure of many a maiden, its enjoyment is short lived. Once satisfied, it ceases to exist, and always costs dearly. |
| **Another moral:** | Apply logic to this grim story, and you will ascertain that it took place many years ago. No husband of our age would be so terrible as to demand the impossible of his wife, nor would he be such a jealous malcontent. For, whatever the color of her husband's beard, the wife of today will let him know who the master is. |

# Rapunzel

## Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Once upon a time there was a man and a woman who had long, but to no avail, wished for a child. Finally the woman came to believe that the good Lord would fulfill her wish. Through the small rear window of these people's house they could see into a splendid garden that was filled with the most beautiful flowers and herbs. The garden was surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared enter, because it belonged to a sorceress who possessed great power and was feared by everyone.

One day the woman was standing at this window, and she saw a bed planted with the most beautiful rapunzel. It looked so fresh and green that she longed for some. It was her greatest desire to eat some of the rapunzel. This desire increased with every day, and not knowing how to get any, she became miserably ill.

Her husband was frightened, and asked her, "What ails you, dear wife?"

"Oh," she answered, "if I do not get some rapunzel from the garden behind our house, I shall die."

The man, who loved her dearly, thought, "Before you let your wife die, you must get her some of the rapunzel, whatever the cost."

So just as it was getting dark he climbed over the high wall into the sorceress's garden, hastily dug up a handful of rapunzel, and took it to his wife. She immediately made a salad from it, which she devoured eagerly. It tasted so very good to her that by the next day her desire for more had grown threefold. If she were to have any peace, the man would have to climb into the garden once again. Thus he set forth once again just as it was getting dark. But no sooner than he had climbed over the wall than, to his horror, he saw the sorceress standing there before him.

"How can you dare," she asked with an angry look, "to climb into my garden and like a thief to steal my rapunzel? You will pay for this."

"Oh," he answered, "Let mercy overrule justice. I came to do this out of necessity. My wife saw your rapunzel from our window, and such a longing came over her, that she would die, if she did not get some to eat."

The sorceress's anger abated somewhat, and she said, "If things are as you say, I will allow you to take as much rapunzel as you want. But under one condition: You must give me the child that your wife will bring to the world. It will do well, and I will take care of it like a mother."

In his fear the man agreed to everything.

When the woman gave birth, the sorceress appeared, named the little girl Rapunzel, and took her away. Rapunzel became the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was twelve years old, the fairy locked her in a tower that stood in a forest and that had neither a door nor a stairway, but only a tiny little window at the very top.

When the sorceress wanted to enter, she stood below and called out:

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| Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair to me. |

Rapunzel had splendid long hair, as fine as spun gold. When she heard the sorceress's voice, she untied her braids, wound them around a window hook, let her hair fall twenty yards to the ground, and the sorceress climbed up it.

A few years later it happened that a king's son was riding through the forest. As he approached the tower he heard a song so beautiful that he stopped to listen. It was Rapunzel, who was passing the time by singing with her sweet voice. The prince wanted to climb up to her, and looked for a door in the tower, but none was to be found.

He rode home, but the song had so touched his heart that he returned to the forest every day and listened to it. One time, as he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw the sorceress approach, and heard her say:

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| Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair. |

Then Rapunzel let down her strands of hair, and the sorceress climbed up them to her.

"If that is the ladder into the tower, then sometime I will try my luck."

And the next day, just as it was beginning to get dark, he went to the tower and called out:

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| Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair. |

The hair fell down, and the prince climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man such as she had never seen before came in to her. However, the prince began talking to her in a very friendly manner, telling her that his heart had been so touched by her singing that he could have no peace until he had seen her in person. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him as her husband, she thought, "He would rather have me than would old Frau Gothel." She said yes and placed her hand into his.

She said, "I would go with you gladly, but I do not know how to get down. Every time that you come, bring a strand of silk, from which I will weave a ladder. When it is finished I will climb down, and you can take me away on your horse." They arranged that he would come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day.

The sorceress did not notice what was happening until one day Rapunzel said to her, "Frau Gothel, tell me why it is that you are more difficult to pull up than is the young prince, who will be arriving any moment now?"

"You godless child," cried the sorceress. "What am I hearing from you? I thought I had removed you from the whole world, but you have deceived me nonetheless."

In her anger she grabbed Rapunzel's beautiful hair, wrapped it a few times around her left hand, grasped a pair of scissors with her right hand, and snip snap, cut it off. And she was so unmerciful that she took Rapunzel into a wilderness where she suffered greatly.

On the evening of the same day that she sent Rapunzel away, the fairy tied the cut-off hair to the hook at the top of the tower, and when the prince called out:

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| Rapunzel, Rapunzel, Let down your hair. |

she let down the hair.

The prince climbed up, but above, instead of his beloved Rapunzel, he found the sorceress, who peered at him with poisonous and evil looks.

"Aha!" she cried scornfully. "You have come for your Mistress Darling, but that beautiful bird is no longer sitting in her nest, nor is she singing any more. The cat got her, and will scratch your eyes out as well. You have lost Rapunzel. You will never see her again."

The prince was overcome with grief, and in his despair he threw himself from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell poked out his eyes. Blind, he wandered about in the forest, eating nothing but grass and roots, and doing nothing but weeping and wailing over the loss of his beloved wife. Thus he wandered about miserably for some years, finally happening into the wilderness where Rapunzel lived miserably with the twins that she had given birth to.

He heard a voice and thought it was familiar. He advanced toward it, and as he approached, Rapunzel recognized him, and crying, threw her arms around his neck. Two of her tears fell into his eyes, and they became clear once again, and he could see as well as before. He led her into his kingdom, where he was received with joy, and for a long time they lived happily and satisfied.