

forgotten what I sent them to do! They're probably playing games again." He was afraid that his daughter might die without being baptized, and in his anger he exclaimed "I wish those boys would all be turned into ravens!"

No sooner had he uttered those words than he heard a whirring over his head, and when he looked up, he saw seven ravens, black as coal, flying up and away. It was too late for the parents to revoke the curse, and even though they were sad about the loss of their seven sons, they were comforted to a certain extent by their dear little daughter, who grew stronger and more beautiful with each day that passed. For a long time she was unaware that she had brothers, because her parents took great care not to mention them. But one day she overheard some people talking about her and saying that though she was indeed beautiful, she was actually the one who had caused the misfortune that had struck her seven brothers. Upon hearing this she was greatly distressed. She went to her father and mother and asked whether she had brothers and what had happened to them. Her parents could no longer keep the secret from her. However, they said the will of heaven had been responsible for her brothers' fate and not her own birth. Nonetheless, their fate weighed heavily on the maiden's conscience, and she believed it was up to her to rescue them. From then on she had no peace of mind, and finally she secretly set out into the wide world to find some trace of her brothers and free them, no matter what it might cost. The only things she took with her were a little ring as a memento to remind her of her parents, a loaf of bread to still her hunger, a jug of water to quench her thirst, and a little stool to rest on when she became tired.

She set out, walking straight ahead, and went far, far away until she reached the end of the world. She came to the sun, but it was too hot and terrible, and it ate little children. So she turned away from there as quickly as she could and ran to the moon, but it was too cold, not to mention gruesome and wicked. When it saw the girl, it said, "I smell something! I smell human flesh!" Immediately she scampered away and went to the stars, which were friendly and kind to her. Each one was sitting on its own little chair, but the morning star stood up, handed her the drumstick of a chicken, and said, "If you don't have this drumstick, you won't be able to open the glass mountain, and that's where you'll find your brothers."

The girl took the drumstick, wrapped it carefully in a piece of cloth, and continued traveling until she reached the glass mountain. The gate was locked, but she was prepared to take out the drumstick. Yet, when she began unfolding the cloth, she found it was empty. Indeed, she had lost the gift of the good, kind stars. What was she to do now? She wanted to rescue her brothers but did not have a key to the glass mountain. So the good sister took a knife, cut off a little finger, stuck

it in the gate, and was fortunate enough to unlock it. After she entered, a little dwarf came toward her and said, "What are you looking for, my child?"

"I'm looking for my brothers, the seven ravens," she replied.

"The lord ravens are not at home," the dwarf said. "But, if you wish to wait here until they return, come right in."

Then the dwarf brought in the ravens' meal on seven little plates, along with seven little cups, and their sister ate a tiny morsel from each one of the plates and took a little sip from each one of the cups. When she came to the last cup, she took the ring that she had been carrying with her and dropped it into the cup.

All at once there was a whirring and fluttering noise in the air, and the dwarf said, "Now the lord ravens will soon be home."

When they arrived, they wanted to eat and drink and went straight to their plates and cups. Then each one in his turn cried out, "Who's been eating from my plate? Who's been drinking from my cup? It was a human mouth."

And when the seventh brother got to the bottom of his cup, a little ring rolled out. He looked at it and recognized it as the ring that belonged to his parents.

"God grant us that our little sister may be here. Then we'd be saved!" he said.

The maiden was standing behind the door, and when she heard that, she came out, and all the ravens regained their human form. They hugged and kissed each other and went happily home.

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Little Red Cap

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a sweet little maiden. Whoever laid eyes upon her could not help but love her. But it was her grandmother who loved her most. She could never give the child enough. One time she made her a present, a small, red velvet cap, and since it was so becoming and the maiden insisted on always wearing it, she was called Little Red Cap.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Cap, take this piece of cake and bottle of wine and bring them to your grandmother. She's sick and weak, and this will strengthen her. Get an early start, before it becomes hot, and when you're out in the woods, be nice and good and don't stray from the path, otherwise you'll fall and break the



glass, and your grandmother will get nothing. And when you enter her room, don't forget to say good morning, and don't go peeping in all the corners."

"I'll do just as you say," Little Red Cap promised her mother. Well, the grandmother lived out in the forest, half an hour from the village, and as soon as Little Red Cap entered the forest, she encountered the wolf. However, Little Red Cap did not know what a wicked sort of an animal he was and was not afraid of him.

"Good day, Little Red Cap," he said.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Where are you going so early, Little Red Cap?"

"To Grandmother's."

"What are you carrying under your apron?"

"Cake and wine. My grandmother's sick and weak, and yesterday we baked this so it will help her get well."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Cap?"

"Another quarter of an hour from here in the forest. Her house is under the three big oak trees. You can tell it by the hazel bushes," said Little Red Cap.

The wolf thought to himself, This tender young thing is a juicy morsel. She'll taste even better than the old woman. You've got to be real crafty if you want to catch them both. Then he walked next to Little Red Cap, and after a while he said, "Little Red Cap, just look at the beautiful flowers that are growing all around you! Why don't you look around? I believe you haven't even noticed how lovely the birds are singing. You march along as if you were going straight to school, and yet it's so delightful out here in the woods!"

Little Red Cap looked around and saw how the rays of the sun were dancing through the trees back and forth and how the woods were full of beautiful flowers. So she thought to herself, If I bring Grandmother a bunch of fresh flowers, she'd certainly like that. It's still early, and I'll arrive on time.

So she ran off the path and plunged into the woods to look for flowers. And each time she plucked one, she thought she saw another even prettier flower and ran after it, going deeper and deeper into the forest. But the wolf went straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who's out there?"

"Little Red Cap. I've brought you some cake and wine. Open up."

"Just lift the latch," the grandmother called. "I'm too weak and can't get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, and the door sprang open. Then he went straight to the grandmother's bed without saying a word and gobbled her up. Next he put on her clothes and her nightcap, lay down in her bed, and drew the curtains.

Meanwhile, Little Red Cap had been running around and looking for flowers, and only when she had as many as she could carry did she remember her grandmother and continue on the way to her house again. She was puzzled when she found the door open, and as she entered the room, it seemed so strange inside that she thought, Oh, my God, how frightened I feel today, and usually I like to be at Grandmother's. She called out, "Good morning!" But she received no answer. Next she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled down over her face giving her a strange appearance.

"Oh, Grandmother, what big ears you have!"

"The better to hear you with."

"Oh, Grandmother, what big hands you have!"

"The better to grab you with."

"Oh, Grandmother, what a terribly big mouth you have!"

"The better to eat you with!"

No sooner did the wolf say that than he jumped out of bed and gobbled up poor Little Red Cap. After the wolf had satisfied his desires, he lay down in bed again, fell asleep, and began to snore very loudly. The huntsman happened to be passing by the house and thought to himself, The way the old woman's snoring, you'd better see if anything's wrong. He went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw the wolf lying in it.

"So I've found you at last, you old sinner," said the huntsman. "I've been looking for you for a long time."

He took aim with his gun, and then it occurred to him that the wolf could have eaten the grandmother and that she could still be saved. So he did not shoot but took some scissors and started cutting open the sleeping wolf's belly. After he made a couple of cuts, he saw the little red cap shining forth, and after he made a few more cuts, the girl jumped out and exclaimed, "Oh, how frightened I was! It was so dark in the wolf's body."

Soon the grandmother came out. She was alive but could hardly breathe. Little Red Cap quickly fetched some large stones, and they filled the wolf's body with them. When he awoke and tried to run away, the stones were too heavy so he fell down at once and died.

All three were quite delighted. The huntsman skinned the fur from the wolf and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine that Little Red Cap had brought, and soon she regained her health. Meanwhile, Little Red Cap thought to herself, Never again will you stray from the path by yourself and go into the forest when your mother has forbidden it.

There is also another tale about how Little Red Cap returned to her grandmother one day to bring some baked goods. Another wolf spoke to her and tried to entice her to leave the path, but this time Little Red Cap was on her guard. She went straight ahead and told her grandmother that she had seen the wolf, that he had wished her good day, but that he had had such a mean look in his eyes that "he would have eaten me up if we hadn't been on the open road."

"Come," said the grandmother. "We'll lock the door so he can't get in."

Soon after, the wolf knocked and cried out, "Open up, Grandmother. It's Little Red Cap, and I've brought you some baked goods."

But they kept quiet and did not open the door. So Grayhead circled the house several times and finally jumped on the roof. He wanted to wait till evening when Little Red Cap would go home. He intended to sneak after her and eat her up in the darkness. But the grandmother realized what he had in mind. In front of the house was a big stone trough, and she said to the child, "Fetch the bucket, Little Red Cap. I

cooked sausages yesterday. Get the water they were boiled in and pour it into the trough."

Little Red Cap kept carrying the water until she had filled the big, big trough. Then the smell of sausages reached the nose of the wolf. He sniffed and looked down. Finally, he stretched his neck so far that he could no longer keep his balance on the roof. He began to slip and fell right into the big trough and drowned. Then Little Red Cap went merrily on her way home, and no one harmed her.

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The Bremen Town Musicians

A MAN HAD A DONKEY who had diligently carried sacks of grain to the mill for many years. However, the donkey's strength was reaching its end, and he was less and less fit for the work. His master thought it was time to dispense with him and save on food, but the donkey got wind of what was in store for him. So he ran away and set out for Bremen, where he thought he could become a town musician. After traveling some distance he came across a hunting dog lying on the roadside and panting as if he had run himself ragged.

"Why are you panting so hard, you old hound dog?" asked the donkey.

"Ah," the dog said, "because I'm old and getting weaker every day. Now I can't even hunt anymore, and my master wanted to kill me. Naturally, I cleared out, but how am I going to earn a living now?"

"You know what," said the donkey, "I'm going to Bremen to become a town musician, and you can come with me and also join the town band. I'll play the lute, and you, the drums."

The dog agreed, and they continued on their way. Soon after, they encountered a cat sitting on the roadside, making a long and sorry face.

"Well, what's gone wrong with you, old whiskers?" asked the donkey.

"How can I be cheerful when my neck's in danger?" the cat replied. "My mistress wanted to drown me because I'm getting on in years. Moreover, my teeth are dull, and I'd rather sit behind the stove and purr than chase after mice. Anyway, I managed to escape, but now I don't know what to do or where to go."

"Why don't you come along with us to Bremen? You know a great deal about night serenades, and you can become a town musician."