

# The company of wolves



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This adaptation of Little Red Riding Hood and werewolf mythology explores the horror and sexuality of fairytales. The girl, Little Red Riding Hood, weaves a series of complex fantasies revealing her confusion about men, sexuality and desire.

Little Red Riding Hood is a young girl in the story who is only just becoming a woman. “ She has just started her woman’s bleeding ...

... Her breasts have just began to swell. ” All of these are signs of the girl going through puberty. The Author also makes it clear that the girl is a virgin by describing her as an “ unbroken egg”, suggesting she is fragile, maybe both sexually and physically.

Apart the physical attribute of the girl being a virgin, the author also illustrates her as a stereotypical virgin. “ Her hair is lint, so fair it hardly makes a shadow on the her forehead. ” Usually, fair-haired girls are seen as ‘ pure’ and ‘ beautiful’ thus, her being a virgin. But maybe the author has chose to portray Little Red Riding Hood like this, only later to break the conventions of a normal fairy tale ending. The girl retreats into the woods, on her way to her old grandmothers house. As the girl travels along in the dark, she seems to have no fear of the forests.

When she has the knife with her, she overcomes all fear and become tough and fearless. It could although be that the girl is ignorant, or even innocent, and has not been warned about what lairs in the woods. However, the girl is close to the knife throughout the journey. Sexuality is an important theme in the story, and it concentrates mostly on sexual behaviour, both her growing up, and her sexual feelings towards the wolf. The wolf in the story is a

metamorphic creature, like a werewolf, who, on a full moon, turns into a wolf, a “carnival incarnate”. This quote also explains that he is an impatient creature, acting only on instinct.

“As if the beasts would love to be less beastly, if only they knew how”. The author has created a lot of imagery with the two main characters, especially when it comes to the wolf. “His skin is the texture of vellum, a crisp trip of hair runs down his belly, his nipples are ripe and dark as poison fruit but he’s so thin you count the ribs under his skin if he gave you the time” The author makes many comments both towards the girl’s sexually maturing body, and the wolfs, both when human and animal. She comments on his genitals “Huge! Ah, Huge”. Little Red Riding Hood is obviously attracted to the naked wolf.

Her body too is attractive. “So pretty and the youngest of her family” although her attractiveness is very much different than the wolves, based more on ‘pretty’ looks, and not necessarily sexual looks. The book raises issues of the differences between men and women. I think that the author has portrayed the wolf as a stereotypical male. There are many attributes which relate to men in reality i. e.

instinct. Many of the males actions are based on instinct, like sex, for example. The wolf is a carnivore – bloodthirsty. The human male does not necessarily crave blood, but sex, or women.

When Red Riding Hood meets the wolf in the woods, they make a bet that if he gets the house first, he will grant her with a kiss. From this moment we can understand that the girl has feelings already for him, as she purposely

tires to lose. When the wolf beats Red Riding Hood to the house, he comes across her grandmother. The woman is old. So old in fact she is close to death. “ Her life is ticking away – or something like that?!? ” The grandmother is also a pious old lady, who reads the bible by her bed.

The wolf, like in the fairytale, eats the emaciated old woman, and disguises himself as Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Red Riding Hood arrives at the house. Very much like the fairytale. Riding Hood is inquisitive, announcing the famous line “ Oh, but what big eyes you have”. Red Riding Hood is brave, and overcomes her fear of being eaten. (good quote, try and find.

) In the end, the conventional story is then twisted. Red Riding Hood finds herself in bed with the wolf. But instead of the creature being filthy with lice, he now seems tender. The wolf has changed, but is he still a carnivore in another sense, maybe just craving sex? We do not actually know if Red Riding Hood broke her virginity to the wolf, that remains a mystery. The only reason I can think of her not to is that she is young, and would preferably have to ‘ stay pure’.

The idea of her having sex with him within the short time of knowing him is a bit implausible, or it might just be that Red Riding Hood, who represents woman, is just accepting that she too is only a woman, a body, and it is as though she has lowered herself to the wolves primitive level and has accepted her own physical self. Also, by letting the wolf into her ‘ house’ she is accepting him for what he is. Once he is inside, she can domesticate and civilise him, something which is quite a stereotypical role of a woman. I enjoyed the book, and I liked the way the story had been changed. I

especially loved the authors use of descriptions to create the vivid imagery, and it was also somehow poetic. The story, I felt, had a lot of imagination.