

Little Red

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Everything in the forest seemed dead.

No birds were chirping to fill the afternoon silence. The sky seemed an endless blue with no clouds or sun in sight. The deer that usually drank from the nearby creek were nonexistent, as were the other various nondescript creatures whose names he never bothered to remember.

The wolf snorted from his relaxed position on the flat rock, the sun soaking into his thick black fur. His golden eyes danced from tree to tree, trying to remember the deep, calming green of the layers of leaves, the rich, passionate purple of the flowers that littered the forest floor, and the vibrant, obnoxious yellow of the birds that fluttered about.

None of it was coming back.

He turned his attention to his ever-constant companion. Her *red*, *red* cape the color of fresh blood covered her body in a thick blanket, hiding everything except her childish face from his view. Long, wild, midnight-black hair spilled from her hood, shifting with every movement of her body. Pale fingers danced along the wreath of flowers between them, seeming to glow in their own luminescence. Pink geraniums, blue hyacinths, white mock oranges, and orange lilies all came together in a large, interwoven circle.

Your level of stupidity is astounding.

The words seemed to echo from the empty trees surrounding them. The wolf snarled in anger at the insult, staring into the eyes that frightened him so much. Their color was a *dark*, *dark* brown that almost seemed black, making that eternally childish face seem almost demonic. They stared right back, unafraid; her pale pink lips curled into an almost indulgent smile that made her seem like a parent watching over her adorable, misguided child.

It pissed him off to no end.

Her *blank*, *blank* eyes continued to stare at him while her luminescent fingers continued to expertly dance around the crown of assorted pinks, blues, oranges, and whites. He watched the hypnotizing movements with a trancelike quality, ignoring everything but those pale digits.

I will always be here, my friend. A constant thorn at your side.

The phrase 'my friend' was spoken in a tone drenched in a contradictory mixture of sarcasm and sincerity. He never remembered agreeing to be her friend; she was just kind of...there.

He snorted through his extended muzzle as her smile turned mischievous, fitting into the contours of her face more naturally. She



always seemed to find him, he thought absently. No matter how far he ran or where he hid, the little girl in the *red, red* cape would always show up eventually, like an annoying little lady bug. Both are sure to taste nasty, he thought certainly. Disregarding this fact, he vowed as a pup to never eat a bug in his life.

You shouldn't deceive yourself, Mr. Wolf, she said with a small, humorless smirk. *You know I taste delicious.*

He snorted again before turning to his side, presenting her with his black-covered back. Trying to ignore her giggles that once again echoed around him in an endless orchestra, he refocused on trying to remember the colors that were once so prominent in his life. Absently, he listened to the soft, almost crisp crunches of the stems of the flowers as they fell prey to her restless hands.

They fell into the silence that had become almost comforting in its consistent presence. He tried to remember the details that had made his world so vibrant in the past while she focused on the construction of the colorful wreath.

You know, Mr. Wolf, I almost hate you. You are allowed to be wild and free to your heart's content, while I am stuck here. Why can't I be free, Mr. Wolf?

He considered her question, answers coming to mind but none of them the one that she wanted so desperately to hear. So, like every other day, he would ignore the glowing little girl with the face of an angel and the eyes of the devil.

Closing his dull gold eyes, the wolf with the *black, black* fur forced his tired body to sleep, knowing that when he awoke the ghost of his *precious* Little Red would be gone, leaving behind a wilted wreath made of folly, constancy, deceit and hatred lying atop a *red, red* cape stained crimson and worn with age.

He slept, knowing her memory would haunt him again tomorrow. Stealing the color and sound from his world and forcing him into the hell that was the memory of his only friend in his cold, lonely existence. Forcing him to remember the day that he had killed and eaten her in a fit of rage, the dagger of her betrayal lodged deep in his back. Forcing him to remember her last damning words. The big, bad wolf's lips curled into a toothy smile.

Oh my, the ghost said in mock innocence. *What large teeth you have.*

