

STELLA DEMARIS

The Little Girl Dressed in Red



Stella Demaris

The Little Girl Dressed in Red

In a small village deep in the countryside lived a little girl who was the most beautiful child that ever lived in that neck of the woods. Her mother was very proud of her, and her grandmother was even more so. Since winter was approaching, her grandmother made her a little red cape with a hood, and the little girl always wore it when she went out.

“How cute you are with your little red cape,” said all the inhabitants of the village, and she smiled and bowed her head.

One day when the sky was white with snow, the little girl was told to go and visit her grandmother. Her mother prepared a little wicker basket full of gifts, and said:

“Go and visit your grandmother because she is sick in bed. Bring her these oatmeal cookies, this pot of butter and the envelope with the money from her pension that I picked up at the post office. Be careful, always follow the main road and make sure that you don’t venture into the woods.”

The child put on her little red cape, pulled the hood over her head to protect herself from the cold, took her little wicker basket and went out of the house waving goodbye to her mother. As soon as she arrived at the edge of the village, she started on the road that bordered the woods, and as she was walking, she ran into a bandit who was armed with a pistol. He asked her where she was going.

“I’m going to visit my grandmother because she is sick in bed,” replied the little girl.

“Does your dear grandmother live far from here?” asked the rogue.

“Oh yes, over there, at the old windmill past the river,” said the child while pointing in the right direction.

“And tell me sweet little thing, what have you got in your basket?” asked the rogue while caressing his pistol which was hanging from his belt.

“I’m bringing to my grandmother some oatmeal cookies, a pot of butter and an envelope with the money from her pension that my mother picked up at the post office.”

At those words the bandit was tempted to attack the child in order to rob her, but upon hearing the voices of some woodcutters coming from the woods, he had second thoughts and instead proposed a race.

“I’ll come to visit your grandmother too, but I’ll pass through the woods while you take the main road, and we’ll see who can get there first.”

The little girl accepted the challenge and both of them set off on their way. Thanks to a shortcut, the bandit quickly arrived at his destination while the little

girl, with her tiny little legs, was still only half way there. The bandit knocked on the door of the old windmill, but nobody answered. He looked through a window and saw that no one was at home. He found a key on the window sill, and used it to open the door. Once inside, he rummaged through the closets and drawers without finding where the grandmother's money and valuables were hidden. Then he decided to dress up in one of her nightgowns, put on an embroidered bonnet and got into bed covering himself up with the bedcovers.

After a while, he heard a knock at the door.

"Who's there?" asked the bandit disguising his voice.

"It's your little granddaughter who has come to visit you."

"Come in sweetheart, the door is open."

The child entered, went up to her grandmother's bed and sat down while pulling off her little red hood.

"What a beautiful bow you have in your hair!" said the bandit while hiding part of his face under the bedcovers.

"It's to keep my hair out of my eyes," replied the child.

"What a nice cape you have on!"

"It's to protect me from the cold."

"What a nice basket you have in your lap!"

"It's to carry the gifts that my mother has sent you."

"And what gifts are you talking about?" asked the bandit who had already imagined himself with the envelope full of money from the grandmother's pension.

"Some oatmeal cookies that I know you like very much," answered the child without getting the least bit agitated.

"Oh, cookies... and what else have you brought me?"

"A pot of excellent butter."

"Oh, butter... but tell me, sweetheart, don't you have anything else for your sick, old grandmother?"

"A bouquet of flowers that I picked up for you along the road."

"Oh, a bouquet... but come on, little thing, you should have something else for me in your basket..."

"No, no, I haven't got anything else," said the child showing her little empty hands.

"Well, you should have an envelope with the money from my pension!" insisted the bandit who was starting to get impatient.

"That I have already given to my real grandmother, whom I ran into a little while ago in front of the house."

"OK, enough is enough! You have made me angry!" exclaimed the bandit as he threw off the bedcovers and pointed his pistol at the child. At that moment a voice from the back of the room shouted:

"Kill, Fido, kill!" and suddenly a ferocious German shepherd jumped on the bandit and bit him on the arm.

"Help! Help!" screamed the bandit as his pistol fell to the floor. The grandmother came forward, picked up the pistol and with the help of her

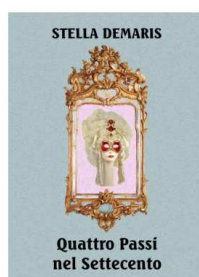
wonderful German shepherd, was able to chase the rogue away. He ran as fast as he could tripping over his nightgown, screaming at the top of his lungs. Then the grandmother called the dog back, and both she and the child threw stones after the bandit.

The next day the little girl went to the market, sold the pistol, and with the money she got, she bought a doll for herself, a new nightgown for her grandmother, a bone for Fido and some oatmeal flour for her mother.

Translated from the Italian by Jennifer Lieberman.

**The original Italian text, “La bimba di rosso vestita”,
is included in the anthology *Fiabe da Ridere*: e-book
and paperback that you can buy on Internet.**

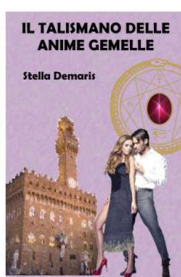
OPERE DI STELLA DEMARIS DISPONIBILI IN FORMATO E-BOOK E CARTACEO



Quattro passi
nel Settecento



Piacere di conoscerla!
Nomi e cognomi
assurdi ma veri



Il Talismano delle
Anime Gemelle



Fiabe da Ridere



Sorelle del Peccato
e altre storie

**www.stellademaris.comze.com
stellademaris@libero.it**

Copyright © 2012 Stella Demaris - Tutti i diritti riservati