

## Epilouge

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/10079204) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/10079204>.

Rating:	<a href="#">General Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">Gen</a>
Fandoms:	<a href="#">Revolting Rhymes - Roald Dahl</a> , <a href="#">DAHL Roald - Works</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Red Riding Hood</a> , <a href="#">Wolf</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-03-04 Words: 1,243 Chapters: 1/1

# Epilouge

by [Evaunit02mark1](#)

## Summary

Red decides to finish what she started.

Or to put it another way.

A wolf finally gets his just reward.

## Notes

A oneshot thrown together in response to the BBC remake of Revolting Rhymes.

It was harder to move nowadays. She creaked with every step, popped with every flex, and ached with every shuffle. Idly she wondered how her grandmother dealt with it herself all those long days ago. The old woman would groan or moan about her aches and pains, in fact she seemed to move with a boundless joy for life.

Funny that Red was thinking of her now, in this place.

A few more steps and she broke through the trees, the dark and gloom of those leafy branches giving way to a well lit clearing full of waving grasses. It looked just like she remembered it, not that she could ever forget. It was a memorial one time, long ago when she lost her best friend and her grandmother in the space of a few hours, then it became, if not that, then something else.

It was here that she had made a declaration to the world, here where she stood unafraid and undaunted. This was the place where she said “Enough” and took back her life. Or, well, where she thought she had at any rate. Looking back on it now it seemed foolish, but it needed to be done, if only so that she would never fear the monsters of the world again.

It was strange how it always came back to this place.

With exaggerated care she nealt down, easing herself into a sitting position among the blooming red flowers. She plucked one with a well practiced twist of her fingers, snapping the stem so easily it was almost as if it was made of paper. Closing her eyes she sniffed it, letting the fragrance take her back all those days, back to her childhood, to that place where every day was something to smile for, to that place where she hadn’t become what she had to be to survive.

“Hello,” she said without opening her eyes, removing the flower slowly from her face.

“Hello to you too Red,” the voice replied, croaking with age. There was a rustling noise in front of her, and she could hear the voice giving out a grunt. She opened her eyes, letting them refocus with the help of her glasses upon her conversation partner.

His eyes were slightly runny and scattered about their surface were dashing lines of brown. The ears were still there, though one was slightly dipping, and she could see where it was making an effort to swing in her direction. Even his fur was not spared, the blackish grey pelt showing patches where some had fallen out and left gnarled pink skin exposed to the open air. If she was feeling vindictive she might have laughed, though she knew that she wore her own age just as badly as the wolf in front of her did.

“Why are you here Red, our story is long since over.” The wolf’s voice was tired. Red knew he was giving her the time of day only out of morbid curiosity. That was fair, she was doing the same to him after all.

“Yes, it is, though now, nearing the end, I’d rather not leave any unanswered questions.”

“Oh?”

“You spared them. Why?”

She didn’t have to elaborate, the wolf knew what she meant. That night, that terrible night where she almost lost her children. That night where everything she did, everything she accomplished, might have all come crashing down again.

There was a pause, a few moments of silent contemplation, before the wolf spoke again.

“Their names were Rolf and Rex. Those two wolves you killed. They were my nephews.”

There was another pause. Neither of them spoke, but Red gave a silent nod of acknowledgement.

“I know why you did it, at least for Rolf. He ate your grandmother. Rex though...”

“At the time, at least for me, it was enough that he was a wolf,” Red replied, her answer frank. This time the wolf nodded.

“They were my only family you know. My nephews were all I had left.”

“And my Grandmother was all I had left of mine. That still doesn’t explain why you walked away that night.”

More silence. Neither of them moved to break it. It was the patience of the hunter, the patience of age, it was a comfortable silence, like an armchair made from lack of noise.

“It was hard. Not the getting in part, not the beginning. That was easy, almost routine. No, the hard part came afterwards. I told them stories you know, not the fake ones, the real ones.”

“I know. It was their favorite storytime ever to hear them tell it.”

The wolf smiled at this, his fang filled mouth glistening in the light. “Well that’s grand. I’d like to think I did a good job there.”

“And you just left it at that?”

“Yes. Because no matter how much it hurt when you killed Rolf and Rex, your children weren’t part of this. It ended with dead grandmothers, with pig bankers,” and here he growled low in his throat, “with wolf skin coats.

“Killing them would have hurt you, but in some way I think it would have hurt me too. So I left, I let our story end there. With a reminder, with a warning, with the knowledge that I could have, but I didn’t.”

The last sentence hung in the air like fog, the weight of it covering them both. After a moment Red sighed, pulled her pig skin traveling case up to her side and snapped it open. She expected the wolf to run, to pounce, but instead he simply lied there, waiting to see what she did next.

“Not scared?”

“At our age it’s kind of foolish don’t you think?”

“Fair enough.”

She reached into the depths of her bag and pulled out two bundled packages. Each one was black with white twine, and pinned to each was a sprig of mistletoe. Neither of them spoke. The wolf glanced at the packages and then back at her.

“My greatest regret,” Red said, as she clasped her bag back shut, “was never being able to give my grandmother a proper burial. There was little of her left in the end when all was said and done. But there was enough to put in the ground beside grandad. You I fear didn’t even have that.”

“So this is a peace offering then?”

“No, what they did to me and to others can not and will not be excused. But, you spared my children. This isn’t peace, nor is it apology, but it is gratitude. I had to bury my grandmother but I didn’t have to bury my children.”

The wolf stared at the packages again, before getting back up slowly. He plodded forward, and gently took both in his jaws by the twine. Their eyes met, there was a final nod, and then he turned and walked back into the forest, letting the shadows swallow him up back into the darkness.

Red stared for a moment more, before reaching down and pulling out her pistol. With the same deft movements that plucked the flower she unloaded the single bullet residing in its magazine. Empty and with the bullet lying on the ground beside it, she left it in the clearing.

Soon there was only the sound of her shuffling away, and then there was nothing left but birdsong.

It wasn’t a happy ending, but it was good enough.

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