

## Red Cap and the Tiger of Sabrodt

### Cast

Heinz, *a hunter*

Jan, *a hunter*

Ma, *Red Cap's mother*

Pa, *Red Cap's father*

Red Cap (*Little Red-riding Hood*)

Mattie, *a crow*

Wolf, *the Tiger of Sabrodt*

Gran, *Red Cap's grandmother*

Cat, *Gran's talking cat*

Meadow (*singer*)

Stream (*singer*)

### Scene 1

*(lights low, there is a gunshot, followed by the 'thump' of a falling body. Two hunters enter, examine the dead deer and begin the German hunter's ritual. They turn the deer onto its right side and break off a branch of fir or oak to put in its mouth. They place a second larger branch over its body. They stand in silence, contemplating it in respect. Then Heinz tears a third sprig for Jan to wear in his hat.)*

Heinz:

Good shot. We've got three animals today. Time to quit.

Jan:

All right, but I'm going to stay in the woods. I'll spend the night in the old woman's cottage and get an early start tomorrow.

Heinz:

Fine. Then I'll see you next weekend. *(sees something on the ground)* Well, well, well, what's this? *(examines footprint)*

Jan:

*(takes a look)* Hmm. I haven't seen anything like it in years. Too big for a fox.

Heinz:

Not a bear, though. *(they look at each other with the same thought.)*

Jan:

A wolf?

Heinz:

Wolves in these forests were all killed off a century ago.

Jan:

Maybe they're coming back from elsewhere.

**Black out**

## Scene 2

*(lights brighten a little on Red Cap's house)*

Ma:

*(calls)* Little Red Cap, come help me with dinner. *(no answer)*

Pa:

She'll come as soon as it's dark.

Ma:

One day she'll go too far into the woods and not find her way back. And I don't like the way she talks to that ugly crow.

Pa:

It's her friend. With no other children around here, she's used to playing with animals.

Red Cap:

*(enters with a crow on her shoulder)* A stranger's coming.

Pa:

Where? *(gets up and goes out)* I don't see anyone.

Red Cap:

He'll be here in a few minutes. Mattie saw him.

Pa:

That crow's got good eyes. You pay attention to him and you'll be safe.

Red Cap:

Her. She's the best. She knows when to be silent and when to caw up a storm.

Pa:

*(a crow caws)* I guess our guest is here. *(he goes to greet hunter)*

Jan:

Good evening. Beautiful place you've got here.

Pa:

Why, thank you.

Jan:

Are you Red Cap senior?

Pa:

*(laughs)* Yes, I might as well be called that. Who told you?

Jan:

I spent last night in the cottage of an old lady who said you lived around here.

Pa:

That'd be my wife's mother. Come in. We're about to eat.

Thank you. Jan:

Welcome. Ma:

It smells wonderful. *(Jan places his gun in the corner)* Jan:

What's your name, stranger? Pa:

Jan Grouse. Jan:

You've been hunting? Ma:

Yes, the farmers hired me to shoot the deer and wild pigs eating their crops. Jan:

They eat in our field too, but I don't mind. We don't kill them. Pa:

My husband believes it's like paying a tax to wild nature. If we have to pay tax to the government to give us something, why not to nature that gives us more? Ma:

That's a good philosophy. I also love nature. It's only being in the woods that I feel truly alive. Jan:  
*(Red Cap laughs cynically)*

What's so funny, little girl? Jan:

You! You love nature? And you kill it? I wouldn't trust that kind of love. Red Cap:

If we don't kill the deer and wild pigs, they overpopulate, and then starve to death. Jan:

That's only because you first killed off all the wolves and bears that ate them naturally. All killed for pleasure by you hunters. Red Cap:

I won't deny it. It's a grand thrill. And then, of course, eating deer and wild pig is good meat. Jan:

Yes, it's only *your* nature you love. Red Cap:

Ma:

Red Cap, don't be rude.

Jan:

Aye, little girl. Man is a hunter. That's the way it's been and always will be.

Red Cap:

Then I'm glad I'm not a man, to kill the thing he claims to love.

Jan:

Kill or be killed—that's nature, too.

Red Cap:

Really? What's killing you?

Jan:

*(laughs)* Touché. No animal threatens me, although I've had some close encounters with large wild boars. No, it's the boredom of the modern world that's killing me, killing my spirit. Most of us are stuck in offices during the week. Only on the weekend can we go out into the wild and feel our natural being.

Red Cap:

So animals must die because you're bored? A wild duck exhausted after migrating thousands of miles settles down for a rest and you shoot it. *(sarcastic)* What manliness! Such excitement!

Pa:

That's enough, Little Red Cap.

Jan:

Perhaps you shouldn't be called 'Little Red Cap' but 'Miss Greenheart'.

Red Cap:

The creatures struggle so hard just to live even in good times. It isn't fair.

Jan:

We hunters feel deep respect for the animals, too. It's something you can't understand.

Red Cap:

Don't condescend to me. I understand perfectly.

Pa:

*(changing subject)* So, you're looking for deer...have you seen anything else?

Jan:

*(laughs)* Nothing unusual...yet. But now that the Eastern borders are open, who knows what we'll see. The forests of Poland are more intact than ours. Perhaps Little Red Cap has already seen something special.

Red Cap:

No.

Jan:

And you wouldn't tell me if you had, right?

Red Cap:

Right.

Jan:

Say, that cap of yours is very bright. It can be seen from quite a distance in the forest.

Red Cap:

You've seen me?

Jan:

Yes, but until now I wasn't quite sure what I'd seen. (*gets up*) Well, I'd better be get to bed early. Thank you for the delicious meal. Oh, I almost forgot to tell you (*to Ma*)—the old lady is feeling a bit poorly.

Ma:

I've told her she's welcome to live with us, but she's stubborn and wants to live alone.

Jan:

She mentioned wanting some of your cinnamon cakes and ale.

Pa:

Perhaps Little Red Cap could take them to her.

Red Cap:

Nothing would suit me better.

Ma:

Then we have to bake the cakes now so you can go tomorrow at day break.

***Black out***

### **Scene 3**

*(Red Cap is leaving the house in the morning)*

Ma:

Now, don't let that crow peck at the cakes. I've made a sandwich for you.

Red Cap:

Thanks, Ma.

Ma:

It's a long way, so don't dawdle, and stay on the path.

Red Cap:

Don't worry, I'll be back by dinner. Come, Mattie, let's go.

Meadow:

*(singing)* Be careful walking through the meadow. Don't step on the sleeping flowers. Hear the birds waking up the trees. The deer looks up and sees you pass, but won't run away. Don't bump into the spider's web. Don't crush the black beetles underfoot.

Stream:

*(singing)* Take off your shoes and pause in the cool water. The water weeds and little fish tickle your feet. Let the sound of running water clear your mind. Careful, the stones are slippery. Grab hold of a strong welcoming branch to help you climb out.

Red Cap:

Mattie, we're about half way. Let's take a rest. What's this? *(she sees a small monument and reads)* The last wolf in these parts was killed here in 1904 and this stone erected to commemorate the victory.

*(A wolf is sitting, leaning against the other side of the stone, legs crossed, eyes closed in the sun.)*

Red Cap:

Oh excuse me, I didn't see you.

Wolf:

Likewise, my apologies. *(Growls, backs away.)*

Red Cap:

Don't worry, I won't hurt you.

Wolf:

Not so likewise. I make no promises.

Red Cap:

You're a wolf, aren't you?

Wolf:

Last time I looked I was.

Red Cap:

I'm not a hunter. Besides, killing wolves is forbidden.

Wolf:

*(laughs)* Forbidden? Too late for that. Only wolf bones and ghosts around here.

Red Cap:

Are you an illegal immigrant from the East?

Wolf:

My family was on this land long before yours, my dear. So, who's the illegal alien?

Red Cap:

But *you* couldn't have been born here.

Wolf:

This *wolfstein* commemorates the killing of my great great granddaddy, the "Tiger of Sabrodt," the last wolf in Brandenburg. I'm the "Tiger" now and have come back to raise my family on my ancestral land.

Red Cap:

Are you called “Tiger” because you’re fierce and dangerous?

Wolf:

Oh, those old fairytales. Didn’t your parents teach you that they’re metaphorical.

Red Cap:

What?

Wolf:

The French writer Perrault who wrote the first Red Cap story wasn’t talking about us *real* wolves. He was warning innocent young girls to stay away from evil *men*. The story was me-ta-phor-i-cal.

Red Cap:

I thought it was a German story!

Wolf:

The Grimm brothers just cleaned it up. They invented a hunter to slit open the wolf and free the grandmother. It’s absolutely absurd. No wolf would eat a withered old dame.

Red Cap:

Perhaps the wolf ate her just so he could trick a tasty tender girl like me.

Wolf:

In the wolves’ version, *you* also eat your Grandmother.

Red Cap:

No way!

Wolf:

After the wolf gobbles up Grandmother, he leaves behind a little bit her flesh, and Red Cap, being hungry, and not knowing what it is, eats it. It’s a warning to wolf children about barbarity of humans.

Red Cap:

But *you* ’ve...never eaten a human.

Wolf:

Fortunately, I’ve never so desperate. Deer and wild pigs are my favorites. (*sighs*) But I guess there is always a first time...

Red Cap:

That’s why hunters hate you. You steal their game.

Wolf:

*Their* game? They have every other food in the world to eat, and yet they get angry when I kill one animal to feed my family

Red Cap:

Are you sure you don’t want to eat me?

Wolf:  
Quite sure, but I wouldn't mind that ham sandwich.

Red Cap:  
Oh sure. (*gives it to him*) Are you alone?

Wolf:  
Yes, but my family is not far behind.

Red Cap:  
Oh look. The sun is already setting. I'll never make it to Gran's house and back home in time. I've got to go. Thank you for the very interesting conversation.

Wolf:  
You'd better hurry. The woods are a dangerous place at night.  
**Black out**

**Scene 4**  
(*At Red Cap's house*)

Pa:  
What do you mean you *talked* with a philosophical wolf?

Red Cap:  
He told me about his family history. This is his forest. We talked so long, I didn't have time to get to Gran's house.

Ma:  
Your Gran was waiting for her cakes and ale. She'll have worried, and be furious.

Red Cap:  
I'll go tomorrow.

Pa:  
No you won't, not with wolves out there.

Red Cap:  
If he wanted to kill me, he had plenty of chance today.

Ma:  
Maybe he had just finished eating. Don't talk to strange animals. People will think you're crazy.

Pa:  
(*realizes something*) Aha!

Red Cap/Ma:  
What?

Pa:  
Jan, that hunter, is after the wolf!



Red Cap:  
But it's forbidden to hunt wolves.

Pa:  
Only because there weren't any.

Red Cap:  
If that hunter is here to kill my wolf, I won't let him.

Ma:  
You stay away from both of them.

Pa:  
If wolves are back, the ban might be lifted.

Ma:  
(to Red Cap) But that's not your affair.

Red Cap:  
If not mine, then whose? I've *talked* to him!

Ma:  
Go to bed. I'll have to take the cakes and ale myself tomorrow.

Red Cap:  
Oh no, Ma. I'll go. I'll stay on the path...and not talk to anyone till I get to her house. I promise!

Pa:  
No one goes. We wait a few days, and if we hear nothing more about Jan or the "Tiger," you can go.

***Black out***

**Scene 4**  
(At Gran's house)

Gran:  
(draining the bottle) Drat! Where's that girl? I was certain she'd come right away, but it's been almost a week and still no sign of her.

Cat:  
She probably ate our cakes and is too ashamed to come

Gran:  
Nonsense. She dawdled in the woods, forgetting all about me. It won't be the first time.

Cat:  
Then you'll just have to trick her into coming.

Cat:  
What does Red Cap love most?

Gran:

The forest and all its creatures. She doesn't care much for humans. Not even her dear old Gran.

Cat:

So why don't you disguise yourself as a wild animal and go into the woods.

Gran:

If I go as a deer, I might be attacked by another animal or shot by a hunter.

Cat:

What if you dressed as a wolf?

Gran:

But there aren't any wolves around here.

Cat:

Precisely. And wolf hunting is banned, so you're safe. You dress up as one, and I guarantee she'll come to you. She'll find you irresistible.

Gran:

My goodness! What's this world coming to when a Gran has to dress in wolf's clothing to see her granddaughter...

Cat:

...and get her cakes and ale.

Gran:

What'll I wear?

Cat:

You have some dog skins we can sew up. We'll make some pointy ears and large mouth with sharp teeth.

Gran:

Can't I just buy a rubber mask made in China?

Cat:

Come on, we'll make a good costume.

Gran:

*(dresses up and walks on all fours)* I look like wolfwoman rather than a real wolf.

Cat:

I don't think there's ever been a wolf *woman* before.

Gran:

And all this crawling around hurts my knees.

Cat:

Well, get up. Wolves don't walk on their knees.

Gran:

*(on her hands and toes)* This is worse.

Cat:

Truly, I can only help you look like a wolf, but I can't teach you to move like one. Now try howling.

Gran:

*(she howls, and Cat shivers)*

Cat:

That was too good. Are you sure you aren't part wolf?

Gran:

You think I only speak 'Cat'? I know many languages.

Cat:

I didn't know you knew dead languages like 'wolf.' Now, go find a comfortable place under a tree, and cry as if you were injured. Red Cap will hear, and rush to rescue you.

Gran:

Good idea. I hope what you said about 'no wolf hunting' is true.

Cat:

Just to be safe, I'll hide in the tree above you and keep watch.

***Black out***

## **Scene 5**

*(at the Wolfstein)*

Red Cap:

You've got to go. A hunter is after you.

Wolf:

Go where? We're hated everywhere, like gypsies, excuse me, the Roma, and like them we need lots of land to freely roam.

Red Cap:

Everyone needs freedom.

Wolf:

Hah, most people don't. They lock themselves in little boxes called houses. They move in little boxes called cars. They eat food from little boxes called 'takeaway.' They only feel safe and happy in boxes. No, they don't want freedom; they fear it.

Red Cap:

They fear wolves.

Wolf:

Utterly irrational. And all because of those damn fairytales. Prejudice! Evil stereotypes! But at least here, I'm protected by law.

Red Cap:

Laws can be changed.

Wolf:

I won't run any more.

Red Cap:

But it's so close to Berlin, the capital. At least go deeper into the woods.

Wolf:

No, they'll have to find a way to live with me.

Red Cap:

But what will you eat? The hunters already kill the quota of deer. If you start attacking sheep or calves, the farmers will find a way to kill you.

Wolf:

Rabbits, badgers, even foxes, if I have to.

Red Cap:

People's cats and dogs, too?

Wolf:

Maybe. You didn't bring another sandwich, did you? *(she gives him the sandwich)* Would Gran notice if I took just a little swig of ale?

Red Cap:

I don't think she'll mind

Wolf:

*(drinks)* Ah, very good.

Red Cap:

Don't drink too much!

Wolf:

Just one more sip. *(drinks again)* I really needed that. *(sighs)* You don't know how it feels to be always be hated.

Red Cap:

I don't hate you. Environmentalists are fighting for your right to be here.

Wolf:

I no longer belong anywhere. *(sighs, gives back empty bottle)* Even you wear me out. I'm a wild creature, not a dog, not a 'wolfman,' just a wolf. I'd be happiest if you'd just leave me alone.

Red Cap:

Won't I ever see you again?

Wolf:

You might hear me howl on a moonlit night.

Red Cap:

I'll howl back.

Wolf:

That'd give me a good laugh. (*they hear a cry*)

Red Cap:

What was that? Another wolf?

Wolf:

Hardly. A poor imitation. Probably that hunter you were talking about. I'm gone. Remember, you never saw me. (*dashes away*)

Red Cap:

I'll never betray you. (*sees bottle is empty*) Gran is going to be furious. Come Mattie, we'll have to spend the night with her.

**Black out.**

## Scene 6

(*in the woods*)

Jan:

(*runs in and looks at ground*) The prints are fresh. He must be close by. (*hears a whimper*) What's that? Maybe he's injured. (*looks through his binoculars and sees Gran*) Wow! He's bigger than I ever imagined. A monster! (*shoots, Gran screams and dies. Jan goes to the body. He lifts the head and the mask comes off*)

What? The old woman? What kind of trick is this? What was she doing? Oh my God! Who will believe it was a mistake? Wait! I'll make it look like a wolf killed her. No, she's got a bullet in her. But if I take her out of the costume, and stuff it with pine needles to fill it out, it will look like a wolf. I'll say I thought a wolf was attacking her and shot. It was an honest mistake. A terrible accident. (*he makes the preparations*) **Black out.**

## Scene 7

(*In Red Cap's house*)

Ma:

It looks like Little Red Cap won't be home before dark.

Pa:

She probably decided to spend the night at your mother's house.

Ma:

But we don't know if she's there.

Pa:

I don't worry since she's got the crow. If anything is wrong, the crow will fly back to us. By the way, did you hear that shot this afternoon?

Ma:

I did.

Pa:

I can't say I like having hunters this close. Men with guns make me nervous.

Ma:

If Red Cap doesn't show up tomorrow, we'll have to go look for her, crow or no crow.  
**Black out.**

### Scene 8

*(Little Red Cap enters Gran's house)*

Red Cap:

Gran! Gran! Strange, she's not in the house or the garden. Mattie, take a look around. *(Mattie caws frantically)*

Red Cap:

What? Show me. *(discovers the body)* Oh no! Tiger? Gran! Mattie, Gran's dead. But this 'wolf' is fake. How could it kill her? This is too weird.

Cat:

*(comes down out of the tree)* I am the witness to all that's happened. I am the only one surviving this terrible tragedy that knows the whole story, how it began, and went terribly awry. I alone am privy...

Red Cap:

Just tell me.

Cat:

I was the one who suggested...*(remembers he proposed the scheme)*, Well, actually, I didn't really, in fact, I can't remember exactly. It was so chaotic, everything happened so suddenly.

Red Cap:

What happened here, beneath the tree?

Cat

In fact, my vision was obstructed. You see that branch there blocked my view, I...

Red Cap

But you heard the shot!

Cat:

Yes, indeed, I heard a shot, but when I looked, both wolf and Gran had fallen.

Red Cap:

Who was the shooter?

Cat:

That, I couldn't say.

Red Cap:

You're useless! Gran loved you and you can't even identify her killer.

Cat:

The shot came from far away, behind that boulder, or those bushes, or that tree way over there.

Red Cap:

But who made this fake wolf?

Cat:

Why Gran herself.

Red Cap:

Why?

Cat:

Why? Well, she was uh, uh, practicing magic. Yes. When you didn't come, she had a dream that you had talked to a wolf, so she made a wolf effigy to burn so that the wolf wouldn't attack you. A hunter must have thought it was a real wolf attacking her and shot it. Yes, I am certain that's what happened.

Red Cap:

Oh, poor Gran. It's all my fault. I did talk to a wolf. Oh, now they'll really want to kill him. (*she cries*)

Mattie:

(*caws*)

Red Cap:

Oh Mattie, I've done a terrible thing. I'll never talk to animals again. No, not even you.

Mattie:

(*caws*)

Red Cap:

No, I won't. I don't understand your language anymore. Oh, Gran, please forgive me. I'll live here in your house, keep your garden growing, I'll...oh Mattie, stop. Can't you see I'm grieving? Even crows are supposed to understand grief.

Mattie:

(*caws*)

Red Cap:

What? What's that? The wolf in danger from Jan? I don't care anymore. It's because I talked to him that Gran got killed. It's his fault. I won't go.

Cat:

You should help him. It wasn't his fault.

Red Cap:

Shut up! I don't understand 'cat.'

Cat:

Oh, but you do. You know you'll feel bad if you do nothing to save The Tiger.

Red Cap:

Shut up!

Cat:

Mattie, fly high and see where the wolf and hunter are. We'll follow (*they run, they hear a shot*)

Red Cap:

Did you hear that? Maybe The Tiger has already been killed.

Cat:

Hurry, follow Mattie.

Red Cap:

(*sees a dead deer*) Oh, it's a deer, and very dead. Jan is a good shot. It didn't suffer.

Cat:

Dead is still dead.

Red Cap:

But where's Jan? Perhaps, he's left the deer hoping to lure the wolf. (*she hears a sound and hides*)

Jan:

(*runs in and sees the Wolf running*) There he is. I'll keep chasing him toward the road.

Red Cap:

Mattie, pounce on Jan's head. Stop him! (*she runs off stage*)

Jan:

(*looks behind*) The girl! Damn, I have to get rid of her. (*shoots into the air*)

Red Cap:

(*screams*) Mattie, are you hurt?

Cat:

Jan's warning us to stay away.

Red Cap:

Mattie what's happening? The wolf is running toward road? (*they hear a howl and then a screech of tires, Mattie caws wildly*)

Jan:

(*runs up to the car*) Good work, Heinz. Spot on.

Heinz:

Hurry, get him in the sack and let's go.

Jan:

We might have been seen.

Heinz:

By who?



Jan:  
A girl who lives in the woods.

Heinz:  
I don't like that.

Jan:  
All she could have seen was an accident.

Heinz:  
She saw you chasing the wolf?

Jan:  
There's no law against running after a wolf. I startled it by shooting the deer and you accidentally hit it as it dashed across the road.

Heinz:  
Yes, all right. *(exit)*  
**Black out**

### Scene 9

*(Little Red Cap is with her mother. She is pouring elderflower ale on the ground where Gran was shot and then she prays)*

Ma:  
That's not Gran's grave.

Red Cap:  
It's where she died...strangely, in the embrace of the wolf. I can't get the picture out of my mind.

Ma:  
Let's go home now.

Red Cap:  
No, I'm going to live in her house.

Ma:  
You can't stay here alone.

Red Cap:  
I'll have the Cat and Mattie. If there is trouble, I'll send Mattie to you. But I'm going to stay to protect The Tiger's family. I saw the female and two pups yesterday. *(she moves further off and pours more ale)*

Ma:  
Now what are you doing?

Red Cap:  
A prayer for The Tiger. I've made a new *wolfstein*. 'Here, after 110 years of exile, the first wolf returned to Brandenburg, his home.

**The End**