

This is the story of Big Red Riding-Breeches, what happened to happen near where I live, in St Just-near-Trunch.

Now Big Red – a he was known to all and sultry – had a granny, Mrs Ethel Red Riding-Breeches, who lived right in the very middle of Demons Wood – in between the three bears and the three little pigs. And one day Big Red decided to visit his granny and take her some goodies, so he packed a basket. In it he put a jar of brylcream, 20 Capstan Full Strength, a bottle of horseradish wine and an old copy of the Trunch Trumpet. And with that he set off. Well, as a matter of fact he set off without it, but he remembered he'd forgotten it just down the lane, so he went back and got it and set off again with it, like I said.

Before long he entered Demons Wood. He walked and he walked and he walked – well, he'd missed the bus, what with going back for the basket. And as he walked he sang a little song to himself, and it went like this “Mavis wears red white and blue, Get 'em down, get 'em down; She'll lower her colours if you ask her to, Mavis gets 'em down.” He was just getting to the really good verse about the hairs on her Dickey Davies when out of the corner of his ear he thought he heard someone else moving in the wood. Taking a deep breath he called out “Is there anybody there?” And do you know what – out of the woods loped a huge, hairy wolf.

“Do you mean me?” said the wolf.

“As a matter of fact I rather hoped I didn't”, said Big Red. “Aren't you Black Shag, the horrible headless hound of hell with eyes as big as saucers, what scares the pants off people?”

“No I am not!” replied the wolf. “I'm a respectable wolf, going about my business. It's not my fault if people choose to take their pants off.”

“Well that's alright then,” said Big Red, slipping his braces back over his shoulders. “Fare thee well then.”

“Hang on a minute, said the wolf; “Who are you?”

“I am Big Red Riding-Breeches, and I'm going to see my granny who lives in the middle of the wood.”

“Fair enough,” said the wolf, “But take my advice and don't stay too long.” And with that he vanished into the forest and was never seen again, until a few minutes later

- as you'll hear in, er..., a few minutes.

So Big Red carried on walking and singing his song: "Some girls want to change the earth, Get 'em down; But you can give Mavis what you think she's worth, Mavis gets 'em down". Now when he got to his granny's cottage he went straight in, and what do you think he saw? His granny. She was sitting up in bed, wearing a low-cut, see-through nightie, and breathing heavy. But there was something odd about her.

"Don't I know you from somewhere?" he asked politely.

"Of course you do," replied his granny; "I'm your granny. An what do you mean by turning up here unannounced? It's not exactly convenient at the moment."

But Big Red just stared at her. "Oh granny," he said, "What big eyes you've got."

"Right, that does it," yelled his granny. "First you come barging in without a by-your-leave, and now you start making personal remarks, Sod off!"

So off he sodded. But he didn't go straight home. He knew there was something going on, so he sneaked round the back of the cottage. And what do you think he saw? Well, go on then - what do you think he saw? You'll never guess. And if you do I've got another ending, so I'll still say you're wrong!

What he saw was the very last tippy tip tip of the wolf's toe, going in though granny's window. Straightaway he grabbed up a woodsman's axe, what happened to be lying nearby - which was very handy, 'cos otherwise he'd have had to go home for his own axe, and the story would have gone on a bit longer. He picked up the axe, jumped through the window, and was just in time to see the wolf climbing into his granny's bed. With one great blow of his chopper he chopped the wolf's head right off. Was his granny pleased to see him again? As a matter of fact she was furious. Quick as a flush she grabbed the axe and chopped Big Red clean in two. Well, when I say clean that's not strictly true, what with the blood and gore and so forth all over the carpet. But that was the end of the tale.

Except that when they had the trial there was some very interesting things come out about the wolf. Apparently he'd been two-timing her with the Trunch Women's Bright Hour. In fact he was the Trunch Women's Bright Hour! So granny claimed that it was a crime of passion fruit, and was let off with a loud report and a caution never to do it again and to look both ways when crossing the road. And as she left

the court she was given a huge round of applause.

(supplied to us by Chris Sugden)