

Sample notecard by a seventh-grader, December 2013.
(Written on Charles Perrault's *Little Red Riding hood*)

The wolf in the story *Little Red Riding Hood* is commonly referred to as “the big bad wolf”, so why does Little Red Riding Hood dare speak to such a ferocious creature? She speaks to him because she has no concept of “bad.” We discover that “Her mother was excessively fond of her; and her grandmother doted on her still more.” This shows that Little Red Riding Hood's family members are desperate to keep her happy, and would not want her to be frightened of things in the outside world. The fact that the grandmother “doted on her still more” means that when Red Riding Hood goes to her grandmother's house, she feels that she is traveling to a safe place where someone will take care of her, giving her a sense of false confidence. Another reason that Red Riding Hood does not use caution about the wolf is the kind way in which he speaks to her, “softening his voice as much as he could.” When he speaks to her in this tone, it reminds her of the way her mother and grandmother speak to her, who love her and would never harm her. She associates this voice with those protective people she does not need to use caution around, and thus does not use caution around the wolf. In the beginning of the story, we learn that Red Riding Hood is “The prettiest creature who was ever seen.” Such a pretty girl would be treated very well by the people around her, especially because she is young, which means people would speak kindly to her, as the wolf does.

There are many frustrated readers who scold Little Red Riding Hood for trusting the wolf, but she simply does not know that it is wrong. She has been brought up in a safe, protected world with everyone around her kind to her, and she was given no warnings. She had never conceived the idea of "big and bad".