



# Lon Po Po

*Ed Young*

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"Not for the faint-hearted, *Lon Po Po* (Grandmother Wold), is a tale of a menacing danger and courage...(Young's) command of page composition and his sensitive use of color give the book a visual force that matches the strength of the story and stands as one of the illustrator's best efforts." -- *Booklist*" Absolutely splendid." -- *Kirkuse Reviews*. "An extraordinary and powerful book." -- *Publisher's Weekly*

## Lon Po Po Details

Date : Published April 16th 1996 by Puffin Books (first published January 1st 1989)

ISBN : 9780698113824

Author : Ed Young

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Folklore, Cultural, China, Animals, Fiction, Folk Tales

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## From Reader Review Lon Po Po for online ebook

### Erin Ramai says

I gave this book a 4 star rating. Lon Po Po won a Caldecott medal in 1990. The illustrations combine ancient Chinese panel art with contemporary watercolors and pastels. The reading level of this book is appropriate for children aged 4-8, but can be enjoyed as a read aloud with younger children and as a trip down memory lane for older readers. However, reader be warned, it is slightly morbid.

Lon Po Po is a red riding hood story from China. It fits into both the multicultural and traditional categories of literature. Po Po is the name that the three grandchildren, Shang, Tao and Paotze call their grandmother. And Lon Po Po means granny wolf. The story follows the traditional pattern of red riding hood. The mother leaves the children alone, so that she can visit her mother, and while she is away the wolf comes to their door claiming to be their grandmother. The wolf says that his voice is lower because he has a cold and they let him in—in the dark. While he is lying in bed with the children, he continues to make excuses for his foot having a bush on it, and his hand having thorns on it (a variation on big eyes and sharp teeth). Shang, the eldest and most clever, is suspicious and lights a candle, which the wolf quickly blows out again. Even though it was lit for only a moment, she sees the wolf. Next, she decides to tempt the wolf with ginkgo. All of the children climb the ginkgo tree to get away from the wolf. They convince the wolf that ginkgo is only magical if it is plucked from the tree by the person eating it. But the wolf says that he is too old to climb the tree, so Shang tells him that the children will help him by hoisting him up inside of a basket. It ends well for the children, but not so for the wolf.

This book would be useful when teaching fairytales, especially along with a collection of red riding hood tales from various cultures. This type of study would also lend itself nicely to teaching comparison and contrast of various cultures' take on a classic tale.

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### Manybooks says

I have very much enjoyed both narrative and accompanying illustrations of this Red Riding Hood type of tale from China, how the three sisters are able to outsmart and later kill the "big bad wolf" by subterfuge, and by specifically focusing and playing on the latter's greediness and gluttony. Author/illustrator Ed Young's water colours and pastels evocatively and expressively provide a perfect physical and atmospheric mirror of and to the text, with just enough creepiness to mildly frighten (although very sensitive children might well have a possibly stronger reaction). But that being said, and taking nothing away from my appreciation of text and images, I have also never found these types of stories all that enjoyable in and of themselves, as I personally do happen to really like wolves (and consider their generally horrible reputation in culture and lore one of the main reasons why they are now so critically endangered in many if not actually even most areas of the world).

However, Lon Po Po is actually (or at least it seems so to me) not ONLY a Red Riding Hood type of folktale, but also has similarities (and actually in my opinion, considerably stronger similarities) to the tale of the wolf and the seven little kids (Der Wolf und die Sieben Geißlein), as it appears in Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, a cautionary story, where a mother goat leaves the children home alone, and a hungry, nasty wolf gains entrance by using a number of disguises to appear and sound like the mother goat. For me, Lon Po Po is thus only very much partially a Red Riding Hood type of tale, as the wolf gaining entrance to the house by pretending to be the grandmother is truly much more similar to the wolf and the seven little kids

type of folktale types. But I guess the latter is not nearly as popular as Red Riding Hood (and is thus also not as well known, especially in North America).

And with this salient fact in mind, I am actually rather massively disappointed that Ed Young has NOT provided an author's note on the genesis (and history) of his Lon Po Po. The fact that this tale actually feels more like a Wolf and the Seven Little Kids folklore variant is more of a personal consideration and observation, but according to Wikipedia, in the original Chinese tale, there were actually NOT three sisters, just ONE single girl left home alone, and really, Ed Young should have at least acknowledged this fact and that he had changed this in his adaptation (and also why).

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### **Henry Martin says**

An interesting cautionary tale in the style of 'Little Red' from China. Unlike the western version, this one has a different ending where the children outwit the wolf. The illustrations accompanying the text are wonderful, and match the text well.

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### **Dolly says**

This is a unique version of "Little Red Riding Hood," where the wolf comes to visit the little girls while their Mom is visiting Grandma (or "Po Po").

It is an interesting story, and although it might be a little scary for our girls, they really liked it. It's a wonderful book to read aloud at storytime. Great illustrations!

Mar 2012 update: We watched this story on DVD as part of Scholastic's Storybook Treasures. The story is not truly animated, but the illustrations are shown with various zooming techniques throughout as it is narrated by B.D. Wong.

Our girls didn't remember this story, since we read it more than three years ago, so we really enjoyed watching it together.

This tale was selected as one of the books for the July 2016- Quarterly Caldecott discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

This book was also selected as one of the books for the May 2018 - Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Book Award Winners 1983-1990 discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

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### **Trish says**

This is the Chinese version of Red Riding Hood and it is quite wonderful. We get three children in danger of the wolf and they handle it by using their brains so it's a much more intelligent spin than we often get in European versions of fairy tales.

Plus, this book has some very nice artwork completing the overall look of the story. Simple but beautiful.

## Julie says

My daughters are participating in “Book Bingo” this summer, a reading program from their school librarian that involves them “playing bingo” on a card with 25 different reading opportunities.

Last night's box to be filled was “a Caldecott winner,” and, since we own several, we struggled to choose just one, and this involved a small scuffle with painful elbows and the near-destruction of the winning book.

The fighting ninjas eventually chose *Lon Po Po*, the only Caldecott winner penned and illustrated by a Chinese-American author (1939's Caldecott winner, *Mei Li*, takes place in China, but was authored by a Caucasian writer/illustrator).

Ed Young, *Lon Po Po*'s creator and illustrator, is alive and kicking at 86, and my Chinese-American girls love his three female protagonists: Shang, Tao and Paotze.

There's some serious girl power here, especially when the three sisters realize that their enemy is a wolf in grandmother's clothing and he has come to do them serious harm.

This darkly illustrated tale offers a few humorous moments and then reminds all of us that no matter how small we are or how hopeless our situation seems, if we keep our heads, we will often find that our mind is our greatest weapon against any enemy.

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## Licha says

Another book I read to my daughter when she was little. Liked it and remember the artwork being perfect for the mood and retelling of this children's classic. No rating due to this being read so long ago.

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## Tatiana says

*Lon Po Po*, which means “granny wolf” in Chinese, is the Chinese retelling of the classic Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale. A mother leaves her three daughters—Shang, Tao, and Paotze—home alone when she sets out to visit their grandmother. The wolf dresses up as the grandmother and gains entrance to the family home soon thereafter. When the girls realize the wolf is not their grandmother, they use the lure of ginkgo nuts to trick the gluttonous wolf, allowing them to climb the ginkgo tree. Telling the wolf that they will pull him up in a basket, the girls haul him up to the top and then let go, dropping the wolf to his death. The girls wait for their mother to come home and tell her what happened with the wolf.

Both versions of the fairy tale teach the reader a valuable lesson about the potential dangers of the world. Just like in the classic Little Red Riding Hood, the children are smart enough to realize that the wolf is not their grandmother. However, in the traditional fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood appears dependent, even helpless. In this Asian fairy tale, the girls help themselves! Such positive female role models are rarely seen in traditional fairy tales.

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## karen says

the origins of the little red riding hood story are unclear, but they can be traced to well before the 17th century Perrault interpretation most familiar to western readers. earlier versions of the tale have turned up in other parts of Europe, in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. in some of the stories, the children are eaten, in some they escape, in some they are eaten and *still* escape, sometimes the antagonist is a tiger, a fox, a hyena...

this book is presenting itself as *A Red-Riding Hood Story From China*, but it's actually closer to one of riding hood's splinter tales - either "The Wolf and the Kids" or "The Tiger Grandmother" in which the threat is invited in; where a predator disguised as a family member tricks its way into the house by bamboozling a trusting child or children, as opposed to gaining access to the house first, and then awaiting the child's visit cleverly disguised as a loved one.

this distinction is only interesting or important to fairy-tale scholars or people like me who tend to overthink picture books. for the rest of you, all you need to know is that this book won the Caldecott Medal, has really haunting illustrations, in part because of their "misty" quality, and definitely made me sympathize with the wolf.

this version is set in China, where three young children are left at home while their mother goes off to visit their grandmother to bring her birthday cheer. apparently, children are not part of birthday cheer. as she leaves, she instructs them:

*"Be good while I am away, my heart-loving children; I will not return tonight. Remember to close the door tight at sunset and latch it well."*

but a locked door won't stop a clever wolf from approaching the house late that evening, disguised as their po po - the very woman their mother had gone to meet. and after using his verbal sparring skills to deflect a series of questions similar to the "what big eyes you have" portion of the red riding hood tale, the wolf ends up snuggled tight in bed with the three girls, eagerly anticipating this easy meal, until he handles the second round of inquisitive tales less adroitly:

*When Shang stretched, she touched the wolf's tail. "Po Po, Po Po, your foot has a bush on it."*

*"Po Po has brought hemp strings to weave you a basket," the wolf said.*

*Shang touched grandmother's sharp claws. "Po Po, Po Po, your hand has thorns on it."*

*"Po Po has brought you an awl to make shoes for you," the wolf said.*

and the girls clock that this furry beast is not, in fact, their po po.

too clever to let on that they've seen through his ruse, the children spontaneously devise an elaborate scheme to escape the house and punish the wolf that's got some br'er rabbit/Aesop trickery to it, but ends more horribly. (view spoiler)

i feel like this story is missing its last beat. it ends (view spoiler)

still, i love the artwork,

i love that this is on the spooky-creepy end of the fairytale spectrum, but for all of that, i'm still totally team wolf.

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### **Calista says**

Unsettling! So much more intense and scary than Little Red Riding Hood. These 3 girls are brave, fierce things standing up to this hungry wolf. I mean, this gave me chills.

Plus, the art is impressionistic and the uncertain depictions really helped to unsettle the story. I really enjoy this story. It is wonderful and wow. It shows what being brave really is.

This was intense for the kids and they still enjoyed it. The nephew needed some reassurance it would be alright.

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### **NS- Sarah says**

This is a version of the "The Little Red Riding Hood" from China about three siblings whose mother leaves to visit their grandmother. This book is a 1990 Caldecott Medal winner. The wolf sees the mother leave and approaches the house pretending to be the grandmother. In the end, the children out smart the wolf by tricking him into climbing a tree with them. The wolf falls to his death and the children return safely to their home. Upon their mother's return they enlighten her about how they escaped the wolf.

I feel that this book would be an excellent option for doing a genre study or a compare/contrast activity. I think young students would really enjoy discussing the similarities and differences between this story and the traditional story of "Little Red Riding Hood." It also comes to us from another country which provides an opportunity for a cultural connection. Lastly, I would like to mention the illustrations in this book. They seem to represent Chinese artwork as they are panels of illustrations on each page instead of one solid drawing or painting. The illustrations do a great job of making the reader connect with the characters and better understand their feelings. I would definitely recommend this book to both primary and intermediate elementary school teachers.

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### **Willow says**

*Lon Po Po* is another book I wanted to check out because it made the Top 20 Most Beautiful Children's Books list. I love the creepy wolf on the cover. I think Ed Young loves wolves too because he puts a dedication at the beginning of the book.

*To all the wolves of the world  
for lending their good name*

*as a tangible symbol  
for our darkness*

This is an old Chinese folk tale called Granny Wolf. The illustration is excellent, and I loved the old world feeling the book had. *Lon Po Po* may be bit too creepy for very young children, but older ones will probably enjoy it.

(view spoiler)

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## **Cheryl says**

I particularly like the dedication page, in which Young creates an image that is both man and wolf, and is written:

"To all the wolves of the world  
for lending their good name  
as a tangible symbol  
for our darkness."

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## **Ronyell says**

“Lon Po Po” is a Caldecott Medal winning book by Ed Young that is a remake of Brothers Grimm’s classic “Red Riding Hood,” only this time, there are three sisters who outwit a cunning wolf in this tale. “Lon Po Po” may be a bit too scary for smaller children because of the images, but older children will easily love this story that is full of mystery and suspense.

Ed Young has done a great job at writing and illustrating this old Chinese folktale about how three sisters outwit a cunning and frightening wolf. The writing is brief, as there is only one paragraph on each page, but it is dramatic and creepy enough to scare small children as the writing gets intense whenever the wolf seems to get closer to eating the girls after he stealthily disguises himself as the grandmother to get at the girls. Ed Young’s illustrations are brilliantly beautiful and haunting at the same time as he illustrates the wolf being terrifying and mysterious as the wolf seems to appear as some kind of mist on every page to imply that he is some sort of evil spirit.

Parents should know that there are some scary images in this book, mainly the images of the wolf himself as he is presented as some kind of mist mainly during the scenes where he enters the girls’ house and he is always in the shadows, where the audience cannot clearly see him. Parents might want to reassure their children about the dangers of letting in strangers in one’s house and they may want to read this book before they read it to their child to see if their child can handle the scary images presented in this book.

“Lon Po Po” is a great story for children who love Chinese folktales and love listening to stories that has a horror theme. I would recommend this book to children ages six and up since the images of the wolf looking mysterious and menacing might scare smaller children.

**Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog**

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**Lynne King says**

The most wonderful book that a child, and also any other individual could read. The ending was exquisite and I do like wolves! My father always read fairy tales to me and it certainly brings back wonderful memories of a bygone era... My... the delights of childhood and bravo here particularly.

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