

Carmine: A Little More Red

By Melissa Sweet
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Ages 5 to 8

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“Don’t dilly dally, “ said Carmine’s mother. “Go directly to Granny’s.”

And, as Carmine takes off on her bicycle with Rufus, that is just what she intends to do. But Carmine is a dreamy painter, always in search of capturing just the right hue in her drawings, and this drawing—the one she begins in a lovely forest clearing just off the path to Granny’s—must be her best yet.

Here is a fresh, lively retelling of a timeless tale with enough twists and turns to keep readers guessing until the very end.

Pre-reading:

- What do you think the subtitle means?
- Looking only at the cover: Does this character remind you of any other? Why? How do you think it might be similar to that story?
- How might it be different?

Questions to consider:

1. Describe Carmine. For example, what does she love?
2. What does it mean to dilly dally? Do you like to dilly dally? When? Where?
3. Why are some words in the story written larger than others?

4. Compare Carmine's story to another version of Little Red Riding Hood. How are they similar? How are they different? (Create a Venn diagram if you like).
5. Choose your favorite word from the book and your favorite illustration. Why did you pick these?
6. Create a list of facts you know about Carmine, Rufus, the wolf and Granny.
7. Create a list of opinions about the same characters. How are these two lists different? How are they similar?
8. Do you think Carmine will go straight to her granny's house the next time? Why or why not?
9. Write your own haiku about your own granny!
10. Can you explain what must have happened at Granny's house?

Across the Curriculum

Language Arts:

- Make an ABC list of your favorite words and then try to write a story with them. You might even try retelling another classic fairytale as Melissa Sweet did.
- Interview the wolf about his part in this story. What questions will you ask? How will he answer? You can work with a partner if you like (one reporter, one wolf).
- The wolf knows exactly what the dog is saying. Do you know what your own animals are saying when they speak? Make a list and identify their meanings. For example, my dog says "Ahhhhhhroooooo= I'm lonely!" If you don't own a pet, make one up. What sounds might your dragon make if he were hungry?

Art:

- Create a map between your house and your "granny's" house. What things would you stop to sketch along the way? Paint, sketch or draw a picture for your own Granny (or other older person you adore and give it to them).
- We never see a picture of Carmine's mom. Create one.

- Take a picture during a time of day that you think has “exquisite light.” In a brief journal describe why you picked this location and tell what other conditions existed that contributed to the light.
- Cut a heavy piece of white paper out in the shape of an artist’s palette. Then, around the edge research as many names for your own favorite color that you can find (like Melissa Sweet does on the endpapers of Carmine). Next, using your paints or found objects, identify the colors-mixing your own shades if you need to.

Mathematics:

- Solve these Carmine math riddles (or make up one of your own!)
If the wolf filches a dozen bones from Granny’s house and he has six pups how many will each pup get?
What if Pop Wolf keeps one? What if he keeps two?
- In each bowl of Granny’s alphabet soup there are 100 letters. Each spoonful gets ten letters. How many spoonfuls will it take to make all the letters disappear?
- If it is two miles to the woods and another mile to Granny’s then how many miles does Carmine travel? What if she forgets Rufus back at Granny’s and has to return when she’s in the woods?

Science:

- Research the true nature of wolves.
- How are they similar to their depictions in fairy tales? How are they different?
- Research the answer to these questions: Where are wolves naturally found? What foods do they eat? How many pups are usually in a pack? Why have wolves been hunted (and villainized) for so long?

History:

- Take an oral history from your own granny.
- What stories did *her* mother (your great grandma) tell as a little girl? Did she ever hear a version of Little Red Riding Hood? How did it go?

Music:

Sing this song about Carmine to the tune of “Mulberry Bush” or make up one of your own to another common tune.

Carmine is going to Granny’s house
Granny’s house
Granny’s house
Carmine is going to Granny’s house
Oh, please don’t dilly-dally!

Carmine stops to paint the poppies
paint the poppies
paint the poppies
Carmine stops to paint the poppies
on her way to Granny’s.

Rufus reckons there is a wolf
is a wolf
is a wolf
Rufus reckons there is a wolf
on the way to Granny’s.

The wolf makes trouble at Granny’s house
Granny’s house
Granny’s house
the wolf makes trouble at Granny’s house
and not a neighbor knows it.

Carmine’s been told a zillion times
zillion times
zillion times
Carmine’s been told a zillion times
not to dilly dally.

Carmine makes a promise to keep
a promise to keep
a promise to keep
Carmine makes a promise to keep
not to dilly-dally!

This guide created by Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a reading specialist and author of the poetry book: Sketches from a Spy Tree. Visit her site and find dozens of other guides to children’s literature.
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A Little More Mapping and Voila!:

- Visit Brooklyn's CUNY's map home page.
<http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/geology/leveson/core/linksa/maptop.html>
- Create a map of each student's bedroom, backyard or the route from home to school. Add a legend and consider marking places where birds are sighted, where the neighborhood dogs live, where favorite trees are. Write directions how to get from place to place, (start at the back door, go straight 6 steps to the sidewalk and turn left...).
- Create a map of your school indicating the places students might dawdle if the classroom were home and the cafeteria were Granny's, (the water fountain, the office, the library).
- Look at the two maps in CARMINE. With an enlarged copy of the map, (or an overhead of the map) indicate the places where Carmine might have dawdled, painted, where Rufus was waiting for her.
- Create diary, journal or notebook like the one Carmine keeps. Make entries and pictures of her adventure and describe how things looked along the way. What might have written in her journal at the end of this day?
- Read the book, DIRTY LAUNDRY PILE: *Poems in Other Voices* by Paul Janeczko. Write a poem or haiku from the point of view of the tree the wolf lurks behind, the mockingbird, or Carmine's bicycle.

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For information about Melissa Sweet, her books, reviews, biography and more, please visit: www.melissasweet.net

Compare these Little Red Riding Hood stories and fill in the chart:

	The setting is...	Describe Little Red Riding	What happens to Granny is...	In the end, the wolf...	Granny is saved by....	Different from a tradition story...
Carmine A Little More Red By Melissa Sweet						
Ruby by Michael Emberley						
Lon Po Po By Ed Young						
Bridget and the Gray Wolves By Pija Lindenbaum						
No Dinner! By Jessica Souhami						
Any traditional retelling Title:						

