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Grade: 3
Title: The Wood of Hoods

Xavior woke up to the sound of his canary, Zoey, singing. He peeled off his blue pajamas, and jumped into a white t-shirt, black jeans, and white socks. He slammed his bedroom door and dashed down the stairs to find his mom cooking his favorite breakfast, waffles.

“Hurry, honey,” said his mom. “You’ve got an errand to run.” He found himself being ushered into the kitchen.

“An errand?” said Xavior. “But mom, we just moved here and plus, you’re always worried about me going out alone.”

“Oh, you’ll see what I mean.” said his mom with a wink. “So, you are going to go to the market to buy milk and a dozen eggs. AND I will warn you, do not go off the white marble path, an easy place to get lost, you know.” At this time Xavior had already finished his toast.

“I’m done, mom.” He said.

“Oh, good, good.” said his mom. “Brush your teeth and off you go.”

As he brushed his teeth, he thought about how funny his mom was acting. This time the voice didn’t answer. Oh well, he thought. He rinsed, and spat, and gave his mom a hug and a kiss, and off he went along the white marble path.

As he walked down the white marble path, he felt kind of strange. He walked, and walked, and walked some more, until a village came into his view. He saw a big weathered sign.

“WELCOME TO THE VILLAGE OF BOOKS” it said. The Village of Books? He thought, what kind of name is that? A good one, said the voice. He plodded on, wondering why he was the one who had to go instead of accompanying his mom. By now, he was in the little village and he saw the woods. And next to that, was the market. That’s weird, he thought, and even before the voice could answer, Beep! He looked down and saw that he had stepped on a red button.

Xavior looked around at his surroundings. It looked familiar to him. REALLY familiar. In the distance, he could make out a little girl with red hood made of velvet, and a little basket. Wait a minute, he thought. A little girl with a red hood made of velvet and a basket? He gasped. He was in the setting of his favorite fairytale, Little Red Riding Hood. As he called it, The Wood of Hoods...

He ran to Little Red Riding Hood. We had to tell her what the wolf was planning, and what was going to happen.

He explained everything to LRRH, but there was one BIG problem. Instead of talking, he heard barking, and instead of saying “Thanks,” LRRH said, “Awww, cute little puppy! I’ll take you with me.”

I am a dog? Hmmm. Oh well, he thought. He tried to explain again, but LRRH did NOT understand.

“You want a name?” she asked. “HmMMMM. What about... Bella?!” Bella? Thought Xavior, I’m a boy! I don’t want to be called Bella!

He tagged along anyway, for heaven's sake. He STILL had to tell LRRH about what was going to happen.

He thought and thought about what he could do. After a few more minutes of thinking, he had a brilliant idea. I can write on the ground with my paw! I will have to wait for the wolf to come, he told himself, so he can persuade LRRH to play with him. As they plodded along, he worked out his plan.

1. He would wait for the wolf to ask LRRH to play with him.
2. Bring a twig up to her and force her to play fetch.
3. When the twig is thrown, purposely miss and pretend to be wounded.
4. While LRRH nursed me, write about what's going to happen and to call the hunter with his claw.
5. Bark at writing and force LRRH to read it.
6. Save LRRH!

After what seemed like ages, the wolf came.

"Why, hello LRRH," he said. "Where are you headed so early in the morning?"

"I'm going to go to my grandma's house. She is very sick, and this magic medicine will make her better in seconds." LRRH said, fearless, because she did not know- how evil the wolf was.

Hmmmmmm, the wolf thought. I would like to eat this child and her grandma. I will have to find a way to eat both of them.

Now, the wolf was very clever, much like the Grinch. And very much like the Grinch, he came up with a plan. A horrible, despicable, rotten plan.

"Where does your sick grandma live?" asked the wolf.

"She lives over that river and through the big hazelnut grove," she said, pointing.

"Why don't you play fetch with your dog?" asked the wolf.

Score! thought Xavior. The wolf had already completed #1 and #2 of his plan! At least LRRH seemed to know what fetch was.

She picked up a stick. "Fetch, Bella!" she said. She threw it far. What luck! Xavior thought. It gives me more time!

He ran to catch the stick, jumped into the air, and fell down on his side. He whined, like he was hurt. Then, he wrote as fast as he could.

Wolf trying to eat Grandma and YOU! Call hunter immediately!!!!

LRRH came running. "Oh Bella, are you alright?" He jabbed at the writing. She read it, and she gasped! "Thank you sooooo much, Bella!!" she gushed, hugging him. He barked in response.

"Hunter!" she called. The hunter came dashing. "What's wrong?" he said, breathless.

“Bella wrote that the wolf was going to eat my Grandma! We have to go! Please shoot the wolf!” said LRRH.

“OK, sound great. Get on my back and you carry the dog.” said the hunter.

“Bella’s name is not ‘the dog,’ she is Bella!” LRRH practically shouted.

“Okay, okay,” said the hunter, “Carry Bella, then!”

And off they went. After a few minutes of sweat, panting, and a few “where’s the wolf?”s, the wolf finally became prey, and right away, LRRH and Bella jumped off his back. The hunter took his gun and shot the wolf, just before he opened the door to Grandma’s house.

Bam! Thud! Grandma woke up, startled. “Grandma?” she heard someone say. It was her granddaughter, LRRH! “What is going on, honey?” she asked croakily.

“First of all, I brought you the magic medicine,” she said.

“Good, good,” she said. LRRH gave her the medicine. “Ah, I feel better now,” she said, “Thank you, sweetie.”

“And second of all,” LRRH continued, “I went on an adventure today. On the way here, I found Bella,” she motioned to the dog, “And she saved you from getting eaten by the wolf!”

“Well, well, as a reward, I’ll keep her so whenever you come visit, you’ll be able to play with her.”

“Thank you soooo much, Grandma!!!” she said, hugging Grandma. “I’m gonna play fetch!”

LRRH and Bella played fetch for a while. Then LRRH threw it far, a little too far. So far that it flew out of the forest.

“Go get it, Bella,” she encouraged him. So he did. He ran out of the forest when-

BEEP!

He had stepped on an identical red button...

He was standing right in front of the grocery store. Then, as he turned around to continue his journey, a woman appeared.

“Hello,” she said, “you are... Xavier?”

“Yes,” he answered, “but what’s so important about me? Why have you come to find me?”

“Well, first of all, I think I should introduce myself,” she said. “I’m Zaphora, Merlin’s messenger. Second of all, Merlin sent me to tell you that fairytales are repeating over and over again. It’s your job to help them. Today, you finished your first quest. You did very well. If you find a book on your desk, it’s your job to go into that story. There will be a map, too. When you go out, tell your mother that you are going to play with your friend, Elijah. Okay?”

“Okay,” he agreed.

“Oh dear, here are your milk and eggs.” She said handing him milk and eggs.

As he walked- no, ran along the path to his house, he realized... Zaphora is his Mom!!!!

She winked, was hurrying him, was all excited, and she made the waffles to boost his energy. It all fit in, like a jigsaw puzzle.

Oh, I'm very lucky, he thought as he smiled to himself.

And that was JUST the beginning of Xavior'