She lived, the girl, in the land of grey. In the city of cold hearts and brightly lit screens.

There was a patch of green though; an island in the grey ocean of concrete. Small it was and forgotten as no human feet intended to wander into its wild territory. Mostly only those with the desire to hunt and kill.

And there was a girl and her granny who was so old that her eyesight had long vanished and yet, her memories did not. Often her memories were roaming the forest, her wild spirit climbing the trees, her barefoot touching the soil.

One morning, she was sitting with her cup of coffee, swinging in her rocking chair, her eyes focused on distant lands seen by no one but her…

“I would die to taste those sweet red forest berries once more,” she whispered loud enough for the girl to hear how much she desired them.

“But granny…I have never been to the forest. I don’t know its ways nor do I know where to find the berries.”

However, the girl loved her granny so much that all her hesitation soon vanished.

“Of course I will go, granny” she said.

And the eyes of the old granny shone gold for a split second. But no one saw that… Not long after, she stood up from her rocking chair and hobbled toward an old treasure chest. She wiped the dust with her hands lovingly and lifted the lid as if it were the sacred chest she was opening.

And it was.

Out she pulled something red, as the girl stared in admiration.

And something else. Red again.

“Come closer,” said granny, handing her a red cloak with a special wooden brown button. The girl was not sure; was it a forest she just smelled? And then Granny handed the girl an old, small basket.

“For bringing home berries,” she explained and smiled gently.

“Will I know where to go?” asked the girl.

“Take the way that goes into the forest and follow it. You cannot go wrong then,” Granny said.

Next morning, when the sun was rising and all the greyness was hidden in a mystical reddish fog of the waking morning, the girl set off. With the red cloak wrapped around her and a red hood covering her long black hair, the basket in her hands and a sense of adventure under her feet. The road was long and narrow, trees in the near distance were waving with the promise of the forest ahead. The smell in the air rising from the forest ground enchanted her. Her steps went faster still. She kept walking, amazed by the colour and textures, drinking in the green and savouring the freshness. The day grew darker, she did not realise she had been walking all day. With the sun setting behind the great oak trees, she heard a crying sound. She followed it through the higher grass and found a clearing in the middle of the ancient oak trees. There she saw, just by the great root, there was a wolf lying and crying. She looked closer and realised that his paw was caught in a trap. She felt her heart tremble with fear but her compassion for the beautiful being in pain was stronger. She went closer, saying…

“It is alright, I am here to help.”

Their eyes met.

The girl moved even closer, slowly reaching for the trap. Using her small hands, with all her strength she tried to release its hold and open the vicious claws that kept the wolf caught. When doing that, the sharp claws cut her pale skin. A drop of red blood fell on the forest floor. Then she gently lifted the wounded paw into her hands. Drops of blood fell on the forest floor. Again, their eyes met, The Wolf and the Girl. In that very moment the blood bond was written. She took her bottle of water and poured it across the wound, cleaning it. The wolf licked it and then licked her hand in gratitude.

The sun was long gone, but there was the light of the full moon shining on them as they sat on the roots of the great old oak tree, sharing pieces of bread she had brought from home and the rich silence.

The soft breeze brought the new day riding on the morning dawn. The girl woke up alone; her friend was gone. She saw blood drops leading deeper into the forest.

“I must find these red berries,” she thought to herself and wandered deeper into the forest. She walked all day, walking and resting on the soft green moss and watching the spider weave his web as the threads of sun danced across her. She continued walking and searching for the red berries of the forest. When she grew tired, she ate the bread her Granny had given her, and when she got cold in the night she wrapped herself in the red cloak and slept under the blanket of the night sky.

Never did she feel afraid, in fact, she had never felt safer than in the dark forest.

One morning, when the bread was finished and the last crumbs had been shared with the squirrels, she decided now was really the time to go and find the berries. But where?

She kept happy-bare-foot walking, wearing her red cloak and red cheeks until she noticed the tracks in the mud. Wolf. She could not help but follow, running and jumping from one to another, crawling beneath the spruce trees and splashing through the streams. By nightfall she found them - the wolf tribe. Hidden in the safety of the great rocks, they gathered. It appeared as if they were all listening to the old mother wolf; a great grey lady. In the next second they sensed her and began to snarl at her, their white teeth shining sharply.

“She is my friend,” said one wolf and stepped forward. And all the others relaxed in trust.

The wolf told them how the girl had saved his life and invited her to join them. Humbly she joined them, excited beyond reason. When she came closer, they made a friendly circle around her, waiting for her to speak.

“I am looking for the red berries for my Granny,” she explained.

There was a special silence after she had finished. All eyes turned to the Grey mother wolf.

In silence, she looked at the girl, then spoke.

“Red berries are special and not everyone is granted the honour to find them. And only during the night of the full moon one can eat them. You should do so before taking them to your Granny,” she said.

“May I stay and learn the ways of the pack?” the girl asked.

“You may,” the Grey mother wolf answered and with those word,s a great honour was granted to the girl.

That night she played with young pups, stared at the beauty of the Grey mother wolf whilst she sang them lullabies and slept among the pack. Never in her young life did she feel warmer.

In the days leading to the full moon her life was gradually changing. She learned to use her instinct and sharpened her senses but most importantly she learned the true ways of the pack. With tears in her eyes, she observed the wolves taking care of an older wolf and she stood among them feeling their infinite family bond. She learned about the power of friendship but most of all she learned and felt the love and respect they felt for their forest.

The full moon came, carrying the bucket of white light through the sky. Grey mother wolf approached the girl and gave her a sign to follow. They ran, crossing the paths where there were not any, until they reached the dark part of the forest. There, under the thick branches of spruce trees, they shone in the deep green moss - the red berries. The girl ate one and the mother wolf caressed her with her silky tail. A gesture wishing her well and then she was gone like shadow.

A strange feeling grew inside of the girl as she ran like the wind through the forest. In the middle of it she found a lake. A black pool with a giant pearl in the middle, the full moon. She went down and started to drink the fresh water when she felt the presence of another. She turned and it was her wolf friend, sitting next to her, drinking water. Then he looked at her with warm friendly eyes telling her…

“Look into the mirror of the water.”

She did and what she saw amazed her. There, staring back, was a face and a body of a wolf. So beautiful it took her breath away. Then she felt her fur in amazement and ran. Where her paws touched the forest floor, shoots of new trees came out and wherever she ran, the forest grew.

With the touch of her paws she called the vivid, unstoppable force of growth from the Earth.

And they ran all night, coming to that clearing in the middle of the old oak trees. Morning sun was already finding its way to the sky when they said their goodbyes. In the golden rose light, he bounded back into the forest and the girl touched her face, feeling her soft human skin again. Her black hair was wet and her red cloak was muddy, but there she was, the girl again. With the basket in her hands and a red berry in it. It was time to go home.

Coming out of the forest she remembered the magic she had performed in the wolf’s skin. She wanted to nurture that magic and change the concrete world into the now familiar green oasis of wild. So, she picked the seeds that got caught in her basked and planted them. She tended them with all the love and attention she could, and they grew lustrous.

And the patch of grey concrete became the soft grass, smelling of wild herbs, trees and wildflowers and birds. And the world around her grew greener and kinder. And when she spread the seeds from her red cloak forest, it grew even wilder with other people planting them and tending them with love and care.

In and out the forest grew; and the life slowly returned to the once grey concrete world of no feeling.

As for the Granny, the girl knew where she was going on the night of the full moon.

And she was forever grateful to her for sending her to look for it.