

LIL' ROJA N THE HOOD

(FAIRYTALES FOR LOST GIRLS ANTHOLOGY)

Written by

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Based on, 'Little Red Riding Hood' by the Brothers Grimm.

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FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM, NETTA'S HOUSE, EAST L.A. - DAY

A sink counter in a crowded bathroom is strewn about with makeup and hair products. Homegirl's NETTA and SAD EYEZ study their friend ROSA's appearance.

Netta applies foundation to Rosa's skin.

NETTA

We go a shade or two darker. We don't want to look white.

Sad Eyez draws liquid eyeliner on Rosa's eyelids.

SAD EYEZ

Your eyes hold the key to your soul. Eyeliners like our armor so you gotta get the lines perfect.

A hand draws lip liner and lipstick on Rosa's lips.

Sad Eyez teases and sprays Rosa's hair with hairspray.

NETTA

When you walk down the street you can hold your head high. You got power now. Everyone will respect you.

SAD EYEZ

And fear you.

ANGEL, Netta's gangster boyfriend, slinks into the bathroom.

ANGEL

Netta, come here baby.

He grabs Netta and they sit on the edge of the tub and kiss.

Rosa looks into the mirror and ties a red bandana around her forehead.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Mira! You're one of us now. Necesitas un nombre nuevo.

NETTA

I already have her new name picked out.

INT. LIL' ROJA'S HOUSE, EAST L.A. - DAY

LUPE works in the kitchen packing food into a wicker basket.

LUPE

Rosa! Rosa, Where are you?

Rosa, a.k.a. LIL' ROJA now, steps into the kitchen from the entry way. The door shuts behind her. She is in chola style clothing. Black eyeliner heavily outlines her eyes. A red bandana is tied across her forehead.

LUPE (CONT'D)

I need you to take these tamales to your abuelita's house before they get cold. You know how she complains when her food--

Lupe sets the basket of food on the kitchen table and finally notices her daughter.

LUPE (CONT'D)

What are you wearing? And what is that mess all over your face?

LIL' ROJA

Eyeliner. And I don't want to be called Rosa anymore. It's Lil' Roja now.

LUPE

Lil' Roja? Oh, Lil' Roja, huh? No, not in my house.

LIL' ROJA

I'll move out if I have to, but I'm hanging with the homegirls now.

LUPE

Did your no-good cousin put you up to this? I'm going over there to talk to your tia.

LIL' ROJA

No, mama. Netta has nothing to do with this. Neither does Aunt Cecilia or anyone else. It's my choice. I decided.

LUPE

You wanna be a chola then? A dirty gangster like my sister, and your cousins, and my uncles, and all the generations before them?

(MORE)

LUPE (CONT'D)

You're smarter than that. Bangers end up in jail, strung out on drugs, or dead. It's a never ending cycle of violence.

LIL' ROJA

There's nothing wrong with violence. Sometimes you need to protect yourself.

LUPE

Mija, I know its hard for you in the barrio, but once you go off to college things will get better.

LIL' ROJA

In two years I'll feel safe enough to walk down the street? No. At least with the homegirls and the homeboys no one can touch me.

LUPE

I don't understand where this is coming from all of a sudden? What happened?

LIL' ROJA

Nothing.

LUPE

Is this about the other night, when you came home at four in the morning? I knew something was wrong. Rosa, que te paso?

LIL' ROJA

My car ran out of gas. I walked all the way home. I told you the story.

LUPE

Now tell me the parts you left out.

Lupe sits at the table. Lil' Roja sits in an adjacent chair.

LIL' ROJA

I walked part of the way home. The rest of the way, I hitched.

LUPE

You hitchhiked? Eres estúpida?

LIL' ROJA

It was miles to get home. I could barely walk anymore.

(MORE)

LIL' ROJA (CONT'D)  
 I didn't think anything bad would  
 happen to me outside of the hood.

SUPERIMPOSITION: OVER LIL' ROJA'S FACE-

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - NIGHT

A car with bright headlights pulls to the side of a dark road.

ULRIK (V.O.)  
 Want a ride?

LIL' ROJA (V.O.)  
 Yeah. I'm headed to East L.A.

ULRIK (V.O.)  
 Hop in.

DISSOLVE TO:  
 FLASHBACK

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Rosa places her backpack on the passenger seat floor.

She looks at the driver, ULRIK, who is nicely dressed.

ULRIK  
 People run out of gas along this  
 route all the time.

LIL' ROJA  
 I got a little lost out here.

ULRIK  
 You don't look like you're from  
 East L.A.

LIL' ROJA  
 What do you expect me to look like?

ULRIK  
 I-- sorry, I just didn't expect you  
 to be so pretty. (beat) I'm Ulrik.

He holds out his hand. She shakes it.

LIL' ROJA  
 Lil' Roja. (beat) Actually that's  
 just a nickname my loca cousin  
 keeps trying to give me.

ULRIK

Little Red. So you're Spanish.

LIL' ROJA

Spanish is the language. I'm Mexicana.

He gives her an annoyed look at being corrected. Then his expression gives way to a smile.

ULRIK

I come from a Viking lineage myself.

LIL' ROJA

Vikings? I read about them. They're old school barbarians, right? Thugs? They raped and pillaged all over the world.

ULRIK

Yes, but I promise I don't pillage.

She looks at him uncertain.

ULRIK (CONT'D)

Coming from 'the hood' I suspect you'd know a thing or two about thugs.

LIL' ROJA

No offense, but you don't really know anything about me or my life.

ULRIK

Just knowing where your from I can extrapolate some facts about the environment you've grown up in. Your city is predominantly poor, most of its inhabitants education levels are below average, crime is a daily occurrence.

LIL' ROJA

And?

ULRIK

And being a product of your environment, cyclical violence permeates your everyday existence.

(MORE)

ULRIK (CONT'D)

Without even realizing it you probably admire individuals or even family members who obtain high levels of power within this milieu, which is why I suspect you'd adopt a nickname that sounds like your a gang banger. Interesting word, banger. Bang-errr, bang-her.

LIL' ROJA

How do you know those types of things? What do you do?

ULRIK

I'm a professional student. I'm getting my doctorate at U.C.L.A. Lately all my time is spent writing my dissertation.

LIL' ROJA

What's your paper about?

ULRIK

My 'paper' is academia at the highest level. You wouldn't understand it.

LIL' ROJA

I'm not stupid. I get good grades in school.

ULRIK

It's in the field of psychology. It's a bit over your head.

LIL' ROJA

I read somewhere that psych majors are loco. They're all just trying to figure themselves out. Must be true.

ULRIK

The truth is my dissertation is about teenage girls that hitchhike alone at night and their psychological motivations for doing so.

LIL' ROJA

You think you're better than me? You're not. My car broke down that's the only reason I'm hitchhiking at night.

ULRIK

Do you have a father or were you raised by a single mother?

LIL' ROJA

None of your business.

ULRIK

I suspect you don't have a father or you would have answered the question. Didn't your mother ever warn you not to get into a strangers car at night?

LIL' ROJA

I'm from the hood. I can take care of myself.

ULRIK

Really? Do you recognize any of these exits? I'd say we're going deeper and deeper into the woods. Your poor mother is going to be terrified when she finds out what happened to you. Should have listened to her.

LIL' ROJA

My mama used to tell me fairytales about monsters. Evil creatures that could snatch your soul in the dead of night. The barrio is a much scarier place to grow up than a storybook. Instead of dark woods we have alley ways. Instead of decaying castles there are crack houses. But the creatures she said were the deadliest were the wolves, because wolves can penetrate both worlds. They can look like normal men but deep down they are really perverts, molesters, rapists... Big Bads.

Ulrik has now transformed into BIG BAD, a black wolf. Big Bad reaches over and hits the child proof locks on the car.

Lil' Roja tries the doors and windows but they won't unlock.

LIL' ROJA (CONT'D)

My cousin is in Nortenas 14. If you hurt me your muerto. *Dead.*

BIG BAD

Homegirls get passed around from homeboy to homeboy. Do you think your cousin enjoys sex with multiple men?

LIL' ROJA

You don't know anything about us.

BIG BAD

Dangerous situations excite you. It's nothing to be ashamed of. I think you let your car run out of gas on purpose because you wanted to have a little fun.

LIL' ROJA

Please just stop the car and let me out. I'll walk the rest of the way.

Big Bad puts his clawed hand on her leg.

Lil' Roja frantically reaches down into her backpack and pulls out a gun.

SFX: FLICKER/MORPHING EFFECT-

When she looks back up at him Big Bad has transformed back into Ulrik.

ULRIK

Wait! Wait! I was just playing. I'm not going to do anything without your consent. I'm not who you think I am. I'm just a regular guy. I'm not the Big, Bad--

Ulrik looks out the front window and swerves the wheel suddenly. A GUN SHOT goes off.

Lil' Roja jerks in her seats as blood splatters. She SCREAMS.

A CRASH is heard and everything goes BLACK.

DISSOLVE TO  
PRESENT DAY:

INT. LIL' ROJA'S HOUSE, EAST L.A. - DAY

Lupe and Lil' Roja sit around the kitchen table.

LUPE

You shot him. (beat) Where did you get the gun?

LIL' ROJA

Netta made me hold it for her after school cause she had to go to the principal's office. I would have been dead without it. You see why I need to be in the gang now?

LUPE

It's not the answer.

LIL' ROJA

You just don't get it, do you? I don't want to talk anymore. I'll go take grandma her tamales.

Lil' Roja grabs the basket and walks towards the door.

LUPE

Rosa! Come back here. We are not done talking.

LIL' ROJA

I told you it's Lil' Roja now.

Lil' Roja walks out the front door.

EXT. SIDEWALK, EAST L.A. - DAY

Lil' Roja swings the basket by her side when suddenly homeboys CRUISER and SMILEY walk up and corner her.

CRUISER

Sup? We're looking for your cuz, Netta.

SMILEY

Where you going with that basket?

LIL' ROJA

None of your business.

SMILEY

Vato check this out. She's a Nortena now. She can give Netta your message.

LIL' ROJA

Get the hell out of my way.

Cruiser pulls up his shirt. A blue handkerchief hangs out of his pocket.

CRUISER

But we got a present for you  
homegirl.

Cruiser shoves a gun into her stomach. A GUN SHOT sounds.

Lil' Roja recoils in shock.

The wicker basket drops to the ground.

Cruiser and Smiley run away down the street.

Lil' Roja lies on the ground.

Blood seeps through her T-shirt.

She takes a few deep breaths gasping for air as her mother runs to her side.

LUPE

Mija. Don't talk, just breathe.

LIL' ROJA

The wolves... they're everywhere.

FADE OUT.