

Elderidge Hollow

Reader Guide

A Storyland Magic companion for teachers, librarians, families, and anyone ready to step into the story with children.

Before Elderidge Hollow - Begin with the Classic

Before introducing the Storyland Magic version, help children become familiar with the traditional *Little Red Riding Hood* story. Read a classic version together, then give children time to retell and reenact the familiar tale through dramatic play.

Create a Little Red Riding Hood Dramatic-Play Area

Keep it simple. The purpose of this area is to let children play with the **original story** until the characters, setting, and basic sequence feel familiar. It is not yet an introduction to Annie, Valor, or Elderidge Hollow.

- Red fabric, felt, fleece, or remnants for simple Little Red capes.
- A basket or two and pretend food or other lightweight classroom items.
- A simple space to represent Grandma's house.
- A wolf puppet or stuffed wolf.
- Dress-up pieces or woodland props already available in the classroom.

USE WHAT YOU HAVE!

Storyland Magic doesn't require expensive costumes or elaborate props. Fabric remnants can become capes, classroom toys can become story props, and ordinary supplies can become something magical with a little imagination. The goal isn't to create a perfect set - it's to help children feel as though they have stepped inside the story.

The Storyland Magic Sequence

Read the classic → Play the classic → Experience the reimagined story → Talk about it → Create and extend it.

Now Step Into Elderidge Hollow

Once children know the familiar tale, it's time for a brand-new adventure. Invite them to become Little Reds, pack their journey bags, and follow the forest path into Elderidge Hollow with Annie and Valor.

Prepare for the Elderidge Hollow Experience

- Red capes or pieces of red fabric for the children.
- Clear gift bags or small baskets for journey supplies.
- Printed Journey Supplies page and child-safe scissors.

- A simple forest path leading to the reading circle.
- Dog ears for the reader who becomes Valor; optional small side baskets and a homemade "Valor" tag.
- Printed bee-watering-station directions and Family Bee Guide for the follow-up activities.

Pack Your Journey Bag

Give each child a clear gift bag or small basket. Using the Journey Supplies page, children can add the story's pretend provisions before setting off through Elderidge Hollow.

Become Valor

The reader gets to join the adventure, too! Become Valor, Annie's faithful German shepherd and traveling companion. Put on a simple pair of dog ears and, if you'd like, wear two small baskets at your sides just like Valor.

Enter Elderidge Hollow

One at a time, each Little Red follows the winding forest path and takes a place in the reading circle. As each child starts down the path, Valor can say: **"Stay close, Little Red. Adventure awaits in Elderidge Hollow!"**

FIRST READING: JUST ENJOY THE STORY!

Keep the story moving and let the children enjoy the adventure. During the first reading, simply read and experience the story together. There will be plenty of time to come back later, revisit favorite moments, and talk about Annie's courage, choices, and kindness.

Return to the Story - Look for Courage

- **When Annie sets off through the forest with Valor to visit her sick grandmother:** What makes Annie brave? Does being brave mean you're never nervous?
- **When Annie notices the thin, hungry wolf:** Instead of being afraid and hurrying away, what does Annie do? How does listening help her understand what he needs?
- **As Annie stops along her journey to help others:** What do you notice about Annie's choices? Can helping someone be an act of courage?
- **When Annie reaches Grandma and continues caring for others:** What have we learned about Annie? How does she use both courage and kindness throughout her adventure?

After the Story

The story may be over, but the adventure isn't! Help children think about what they learned, how the story made them feel, and what they can do with what they discovered.

HEAD - What Did We Discover?

- What are some ways Annie showed courage?
- Who did Annie notice needed help along her journey?
- How did Annie and Valor work together?
- What did Annie discover about helping others?

HEART - What Did We Feel?

- How do you think Annie felt traveling through the forest?
- How do you think the animals felt when Annie stopped to help them?
- How do you think Grandma felt when Annie arrived?
- How do you feel when someone notices that you need help?

HANDS - What Can We Do?

- How can we notice when a person or animal might need our help?
- What is one small act of kindness you could do today?
- How can you be brave when helping someone feels a little difficult?
- **What could you do to make the world kinder for people, animals, or even tiny creatures?**

Keep the Magic Going

Make a Bee Watering Station

Turn clean plastic bottle caps and a wooden dowel into a tiny drinking station for visiting bees. An adult should complete all hot-glue steps. Children can choose and arrange the caps, decorate the dowel, and help care for the finished station.

Shake Up Some Butter While You Create!

While children work on their bee-watering-station sticks, pour heavy cream into several tightly sealed **plastic** containers. Pass them around so everyone gets a turn shaking. Invite children to notice how the cream changes as it becomes butter, then enjoy it on preschool-approved crackers.

Courage in Action

Courage doesn't always mean doing something big or scary. Sometimes courage means noticing someone who needs help and choosing to do something about it. Invite children to think of one kind or helpful thing they can bravely do for someone today.

Take the Magic Home

Send each child's bee watering station home with the Family Bee Guide. Families can place it securely near flowers, add fresh shallow water, and help children care for visiting bees.

Little Red's Treasure Pocket

For an extra bit of magic, give each child a small red drawstring pouch as a treasure pocket. Encourage children to collect little treasures outdoors when it is okay to take them - and to remember that sometimes the best treasures are ones we **look at, enjoy, and leave for someone else to discover.**

Storyland Magic

Read it. Become it. Create it. Live it.