

'Oh, what a big gun you have': NRA rewrites fairytales to include firearms

David Barnett, *The Guardian*, Thursday 24 March 2016

The US pro-gun lobby is entertaining its younger members with its own take on classic fairytales, but they have a unique twist: firearms.

The National Rifle Association's nrafamily.com website is featuring the pro-firearms stories. The latest Hansel and Gretel (Have Guns), written by Amelia Hamilton and posted last week, is accompanied by a picture of the titular siblings lost in the forest, as is traditional, but rather than being petrified of the story's witch they're supplied with rifles.

The story opens with their family bemoaning their lack of food and deviates from the classic text with the lines: "Fortunately, they had been taught how safely to use a gun and had been hunting with their parents most of their lives. They knew that, deep in the forest, there were areas that had never been hunted where they may be able to hunt for food. They knew how to keep themselves safe should they find themselves in trouble."

Not falling foul of the witch in her gingerbread cottage themselves, they instead find some other children held prisoner: "The boys directed Hansel to the key that would unlock their cage while Gretel stood at the ready with her firearm just in case, for she was a better shot than her brother."

Another story published on the site in January follows a similar theme – Little Red Riding Hood Has A Gun. Red is off to visit grandma, as usual, but when she's approached by the predatory wolf things unfold rather differently: "As she grew increasingly uncomfortable, she shifted her rifle so that it was in her hands and at the ready. The wolf became frightened and ran away."

In the NRA re-telling, little old grandma doesn't fall foul of the salacious beast either. The story doesn't get as far as the wolf gobbling her up and the usual "what big eyes you've got" exchange, it stalls when grandma whips out her scattergun. What a big gun you've got, indeed.

Author Amelia Hamilton is described on the site as "a lifelong writer and patriot" who is also "a conservative blogger" and author of the Growing Patriots series of children's books.

The site says she has a master's degree in both English and 18th century history from the University of St Andrews in Scotland, and a post-graduate diploma in fine and decorative arts from Christie's London.

Introducing the Red Riding Hood story – the first in a series to be published – the site's editors write: "Most of us probably grew up having fairy tales read to us as we drifted off to sleep. But how many times have you thought back and realized just how, well, grim some of them are? Did any of them ever make your rest a little bit uneasy?"

"Have you ever wondered what those same fairy tales might sound like if the hapless Red Riding Hoods, Hansels and Gretels had been taught about gun safety and how to use firearms?"

However, not everyone saw the funny side. The Washington-based Coalition to Stop Gun Violence wrote on its Facebook page that the stories were a symbol of a "degenerate culture that corrupts children and encourages them to take on significant, and unnecessary, risks."