

Whuppitie Stourie

Ah ken ye'r fond o clashes aboot fairies, bairns, an a storie anent a fairie an the guidwyfe o Kittilrumpit haes juiist cum inti ma mynd The guidman o Kittilrumpit wesna guid for mukkil. He wes a vaigin kynd o bodie an he gaed til a fair ae day, an no anelie never cam hame again, but never mair wes haired tell o. Sum say he listit, an ither sum that the weiriefu press gang cleikit him up, for aw he wes cled wi a wyfe an a waen forby.

Aweill, whan the guidman wes gaen, the guidwyfe wes left aw hir lane wi smaw fendin. Littil gear haed she, an a soukin laddie bairn. Awbodie said hou vext thay war for hir, but naebodie helpit hir, whilk's a common case, Serrs! Housumever, the guidwyfe haed a sou, an that wes hir anelie consolation, for the sou wes suin ti farrae, an she howpit for a guid bairn-tyme.

But we aw ken howp's fallaciuss. Ae day, the wyfe gaes til the sty for ti fill the sou's troch; an whit dis she finnd but the sou liggin on hir back, gruntin an graenin, an lyke reddie ti gie up the gaist.

Ah trowe this wes a new stound til the guidwyfe's hert; sae she sat down on the knockin stane wi hir bairn on hir knee, an grat sairer nor ever she did for the loss o hir guidman.

Nou Ah premise that the oot-houss o Kittilrumpit wes biggit on a brae, wi a mukkil fir-wuid ahint it, o whilk ye may hear mair or lang gae. Sae the guidwyfe, whan she wes dichtin hir een, chaunces ti luik doun the brae, an whit dis she see but an wuld wumman, amaist lyke a leddie, cummin slaemie up the gait. She wes buskit in green, aw but a whyte short aipron, an a blek velvet hood, an a steipil-crowned beaver hat on hir heid. She haed a lang walkin staff, as lang as hirsell, in hir haund---the kynd o staff that auld men an auld weimen helpit thairsells wi lang syne. Ah see nae sic staffs nou, Serrs!

Aweill, whan the guidwyfe saw the green gentilwumman near hir, she rase an made a curchie; an "Madam", quo she, greitin, "Ah'm ane o the maist misfortunate weimen leeivin."

"Ah dinna wush ti hear pypar's news an fiddlar's yairns, guidwyfe," quo the green wumman. Ah ken ye hae tint yeir guidman—we haed waur losses at the Shirra Muir, an Ah ken that yeir sou's unco seik. Nou whit wul ye gie me gin Ah sort hir?"

"Oniething yeir leddieship's madam lykes," quo the wutless guidwyfe, never jalousin wha she haed ti dael wi.

"Lat's wat thouns on that bergain," quio the green wumman; sae thouns war wat, Ah'se warrant ye, an inti the sty madam mairches.

She luiks at the sou wi a lang glower, an syne beguid ti mummil til hisell whit the guidwyfe coudna verra weill unnerstaun, but she said it soundit lyke:

“Pitter patter,
Halie watter.”

Syne she taen oot hir poutch, wi sumthing lyke eyl in’t, an dichts the sou wi’t abuin the gruntil, ahint the lugs, an on the tip o hir tail.

“Sit up, beiss,” quo the green wumman, “afore Ah tak ma stick til yeir back!” Nae suiner said nor duin—up bangs the sou wi a grunt, an awa til hir troch for hir brekfest.

The guidwyfe o Kittilrumpit wes a joyfu guidwyfe nou, an wad hae kisst the verra hem o the green madam’s gown-tail, but she wadna lat hir.

Ah’m no sae fond o fashions,” quo she, “but nou that Ah hae richtit yeir seik beiss, lat us end oor siccar bergain. Ye’l no finnd me a kittil measlie bodie—Ah lyke aye ti dae a guid turn for a smaw rewaird—aw Ah ask, an wul hae, is that bit laddie bairn at yeir breist.

The guidwyfe o Kittilrumpit, that nou kent hir customer, gied a skirl lyke a stickit gryce. The green wumman wes a fairie, nae dout, sae she prays, an greits, an fleitches, an flytes; but aw wadna dae.

Ye nicht as weill spare yeir dirdum,” quo the fairie, “skirlin at me gin Ah wes as deif as a dure nail; but this Ah’l lat ye ti wat: “Ah canna, bi the law we leeve on, tak yeir bairn or the third day eftir this day, an no than, gin ye can tell me ma richt name.”

Sae madam gaed awa round the swynesty end, an the guidwyfe faws down in a swarf ahint the knockin stane,

Aweill, the guidwyfe o Kittilrumpit coud sleep nane that nicht for greitin, an aw the neist day the same, cuddlin hir bairn till she near birzed its braith oot. But the saicont day, she thinks o takkin a dander i the wuid Ah telt ye o; an sae, wi the bairn in hir airms, she sets oot, an gaes ferr in among the trees, whaur wes an auld quarrie-hole, growne owre wi gerss, an a bonnie spring wal in the mids o’t.

Afore she cam verra near, she hears the birrin o a lint-wheel, an a vyce liltin a sang. Sae the wyfe creeps quaetlie forrit among the whun busses, an keiks owre the brae o the quarrie, an whit did she see, but the green fairie kempin at hir wheel, an singin lyke onie precentor:

“Littil kens oor guid dame at hame
that Whuppitie Stourie is ma name.”

“Ah ha!” thinks the wyfe, “Ah hae gatten the mason’s wurd at lest; the Deil gie thaim joy that telt it!”

Aweill, ye maun ken that the guidwyfe wes forordnar a joco wumman an aye crouss whan hir hert wesna unco sair owrelaiden. Sae she thinks ti hae sum sport wi the fairie, an at the trystit tyme she pits the bairn ahint the knockin-stane, an sits doun on't hirsell. Syne she pous hir mutch ajee owre hir left lug, cruiks hir mou on the tither syde, as gin she war greitin, an a filthie face she made, ye can be shuir.

She haedna lang ti wait, for up the brae mounts the green fairie, naither lame nor lazie, an lang or she gat near the knockin stane, she skirls oot:

“Guidwyfe o Kittilrumpit, ye weill ken whit Ah cum for---staun an deleiver!”

The wyfe maks oot ti greit sairer nor afore, an wreings hir neives, an faws on hir knees, pleadin:

“Och sweet madam mistress, spare ma anelie bairn, an tak the wearie sou!”

“The Deil tak the sou for ma share,” quo the fairie. “Ah cumna for swyne’s flesh. Dinna be contramaciuus, hizzie, but gie me the gett bedein!”

“Ochon, dear leddie myne,” quo the greitin guidwyfe, “forbeir ma puir bairn, an tak masell!”

“The Deil’s in the daft jaud,” quo the faiorie, luikin lyke the ferr end o a fiddil. “Ah’l wad she’s claen dementit. Wha in aw the yirdlie warld , wi hauf an ee in thair heid, wad ever middil wi the lykes o thee?”

Ah trowe this set up the wyfe o Kittilrumpit’s birss, for tho she haed twa bleirit een an a lang reid neb forby, she thocht hirsell as bonnie as the best o thaim. Hir bairn seeminlie thocht sae, tae! Sae she bangs aff hir knees, sets up hir mutch croun, an wi hir twa haunds fauldit afore hir, she made a curchie doun ti the grund an says:

“In truith, fair madam, Ah nicht hae haen the wut ti ken that the lykes o me isna fit ti fessen the warst shae strings o the heich an nichtier princess, Whuppitie Stourie!”

Gin a fluf o gunpouter haed cum oot the grund, it coudna hae gart the fairie lowp heicher not she did. Syne doun she cam again, dumps on hir shae-heels, an whurlin round, she ran doun the brae, skreichin for rage, lyke a houlet houndit bi wutches.

The guidwyfe o Kittiklrumpit leuch till she wes lyke ti ryve; syne she taks up hir bairn, an gaes intil hir houss, singin til’t aw the gait:

“A gou an a gittie, ma bonnie wee tyke,
Ye’se nou hae yeir fower-oories;
We hae gien Nick a bane ti pyke
Wi his wheels an his Whuppitie-Stouris.”

