

The Lang Tale o the Weidae an hir Thrie Dochters

Aince, a guid whyle back, the war a weidae wi thrie dochters o hir ain. Geyan puir she wes, an she haed juist a wee butt an ben for leevin in, wi juist a smaw kailyaird forenent it. That wes aw she haed an naething mair. An no even the kailyaird did she git til hirsell, for whit soud cum day an daylie but a mukkil gray horse, ti aet up the puir weidae's kail an cabbages, tho thay war aw the puir wumman haed for makkin a pat o soup for hirsell an hir thrie dochters.

Cam the day whan the kailyaird wes hauf tuim, an wunter on the wey. Whit war thay gaun ti dae, the weidae an hir thrie dochters, an thaim wi nae man ti fend for thaim? The weidae's auldest dochter said til hir mither:

“See, Ah wul tak ma spinnin jennie oot onti the kailyaird, an Ah wul sit thare spinnin aw day. That wey, whan the mukkil horse cums, batheration that he is, Ah wul can dryve him aff.”

An awa gaed the auldest qyne ti sit hirsell doun ootby i the kailyaird, an she set til hir spinnin, in the blae back end sunlight, or the beiss soud cum. An cum he did, the mukkil gray greedie craitur! At aince, the auldest lassie taen the roke frae hir spinnin jennie an flang it wi aw the micht o hir airm, sae that it dang the mukkil horse. But wunner o wunners, the lassie's luif stak til the roke an did the tither end no stik til the horse? Syne the horse troddit aff, takkin wi him the roke an the auldest lassie forby!

On an on he gaed, the lassie rinnin at his syde as best she micht, an hir wi amaist nae braith left in hir bodie; on an on, or the horse cam til a green knowe wi the wund blawin about it an the wyld burds wheiplin roun it in the sunlight. Thare the horse poued up an nichert:

“Open! Open nou, green knowe, an lat you inby the weidae's auldest dochter!”

An the knowe did juist that! The weidae's lassie haed never seen the lyke in aw hir leevin days. Atweill she haedna. The horse lowsed hir frae the roke an made wi its heid, for hir ti gang inby, sae she did sae. Syne she turnt roun for ti see gin he wes cummin in ahint hir, but he wes naewhaur ti be seen. He haed vainisht awthegither, an at hir cuits, wes a heich man, braw as a keing's son.

Aweill, he wes juist that verra thing, but he haed a derk shaidae on his brou as gin he cairrit the wecht o sum fell saicret. Houanever, he seemed innerlie aneuch, for he brocht warm wattir for ti wash the auldest lassie's feet, wi thaim be-in taigilt an sair wi aw the rinnin she haed duin, an he fed hir lyke a princess. An eftir that, he gied hir a fyne saft bed til hirsell, sae she micht sleep the nicht awa eftir aw hir traivel.

The neist day, the prince gied inti the haund o the auldest lassie the kies til aw the chaumers she micht open, binna juist the ane the ferr end o the langest lobbie o aw. Syne the prince telt hir he wes aff til the huntin an that she maun mak reddie his denner for his hamecummin. An she did awthing weill, he wad mairrie hir, an grund wad be the waddin. Wi that, he gaed his gait.

The auldest quyne regairdit the mukkil hankil o kies in his haund an thinks she: “Ah wul gang aw haur in the mukkil houss an see the ferlies o’t, for it’s mebbe no aften Ah’s finnd massell in a houss the lykes o this. An gin Ah’m lyke ti be the mistress o’t, whit mair lyke the thing nor that Ah soud ken aw aboot it, shuirлие? The denner can wait the-day, sae it can!”

An awa she gaed, wi the kies that wad open ilka dure til hir. She gaed inti ae chaumer eftir anither, an ilkane brawer nor the ane afore it, an the ferrer she gaed, the prouder she grew lyke. For nou she wes ettlin for ti be mistress o aw the grandeur afore hir een. An i the feinish, whan she haed seen aw the ither chaumers, thare she fund hirsell forenent the dure ti the chaumer that the prince haed wairnt hir no ti gang intil. Lang, lang she stuid thare switherin. An the langir she stuid the mair curious she becam. An i the hinner end, she said til hirsell: “Is it no an unco thing that in aw this graund steid the suid be juist ae chaumer whaur Ah maunna gang? Whit can the prince hae thare that Ah maunna see, an me gey near his guidwyfe? The day wul shuirлие cum whan Ah wul can gae in, sae whitfor no nou?”

Sae whit did she dae but open the dure an staup inby? An whit suid she see inby but a haill chaumerfu lassies, aw streikit oot stane deid on the fluir. Fell fest the auldest lassie lockit the dure ahint hir an ran back aw the road ti the kitchen. But whan she wan inti the kitchen, thare on hir richt fuit, she saw a drap o bluid frae the fluir o the chaumer that the prince haed telt hir no ti gang intil!

As smert as ye lyke, the auldest lassie brocht a bowle o cauld wattir an doun she sat wi it at the kitchen ingil ti wesh hir fuit. Weill she wesht it, an again an again, but the bluidmerk wes sweir ti cum oot. Again she wesht it, an again an again, but cuid she wesh it oot? Whitever she did, the merk wes aye thare.

Syne she haird a wee bit squek, an whit suid cum in at the kitchen dure but a littil kittlin. An here this kittlin cuid speik.

“Mistress,” said the kittlin, saftlyke, “an ye wad be sae guid as ti gie me a sowp o guid milk, Ah wul claen yeir fuit for ye.”

But the auldest lassie hae nae tyme for cats, an forby, she wes nou feirt. Sae she said wi feim in hir vyce:

“You git oot o here, ugsum bruit that ye ir. Div ye think Ah canna claen ma ain fuit better nor you? Awa ye gang at aince!”

An the kittlin gaed awa mew-mewin til itsell:

“Juist you wait an see whit befaws ye whan the prince cums hame the-nicht!”

Ai Mercie me, but bi this tyme, the shaidaes war raxin oot an it wes gey neir tyme for the prince ti be hame frae the huntin. Sae the auldest quyne set hirsell ti mak a pat o kail for his denner.

“He wul juist hae ti mak dae wi thir the-nicht, alang wi a bit breid,” says she til hirsell, “for hae Ah no been eydent this haill day? An Ah’m no lyke duin yit, for Ah lyke aye ti be smert, an here this bluidmerk aye kenspekkil on ma fuit.

It wesna lang or the prince cam in eftir a guid day at the huntin an he luikit at the lassie an spiert whuther she haed duin weill the-day? But afore settlin doun til his denner, he says til hir:

“Afore Ah stert inti thir kail, Ah maun hae a keik at yeir feet ma lassie.”

An whan he luikit, whit suid he see on the richt fuit but the drap o bluid, an weill he kent that she haed been inti the chaumer he haed telt hir no ti enter. Richt awa, he hystit his huntin aix an cawed aff the lassie’s heid wi it. Syne he taen the heid an corp an kuist thaim in amang the ither deid quynes in the chaumer the ferr end o the langest lobbie o aw. An that wes that!

The neist day, the prince turnt hirsell back intil the maik o the mukkil gray horse, an awa he skelpit, back til the weidae’s kailyaird. The weidae’s saicont dochter wes sittin thare wi hir shewin, waitin for ti chase awa the horse gin he suid cum. An nae suiner haed he cum in at the yett, but the lassie hut oot wi hir shewin, an lyke afore, the shewin stak til the horse, an the lassie stak til the shewin, an the mukkil horse stoued awa wi hir the same gait. An sae it wes that the saicont lassie forby, cam til the hous anaith the gress knowe. An aw the things that befell the auldest lassie, befell this ane tae. Sae nou, here wes the pur weidae wi juist the ae dochter left, an the pair o thaim sair wurriein anent whit haed befawn the ither twa. An the war naebodie ti tell thaim awa.

The mornin o the neist day, the yungest lassie thocht til hirsell:

“Whitever, ma sisters drave awa the mukkil horse for a wee whylie. The-day it is for me ti tak ma knittin an sit masell doun in the kailyaird or the horse cums back again.”

An sae she did juist that, an cum he did. As suin as ever she saw him, the quyne threw hir knittin at him, an here did the knittin no stik til the horse an the lassie til the knittin, sae aw gaed as afore, an the third lassie feinisht up in the hous ablo the green knowe. Aince mair, the horse chyngeid hirsell inti the prince an luikit eftir the yungest quyne as he haed duin wi the ithers. An whan the neist mornin cam, he gied hir, tae, the kies til aw the chaumers in the hous, tellin hir ti gang whaur she wad, binna the chaumer the ferr end o the langest lobbie.

Atweill, the yungest lassie wes nae wyce nor hir sisters, for she gaed anaw an keikit inti the forbidden chaumer. An thare she gat a gliff whan she saw hir twa sisters lyn deid amang the ithers, an thaim wi thair heids snedit aff.

She wesna lang i rinnin awa, Ah can tell ye, but for aw she wes fuilish lyke hir sisters, she wesna sae proud, an wad tak help gledlie, wharever she fand it. An whan she wan back ti the kitchen, thare wes the littil kittlin, sittin purr-purrin afore the ingil. An the kittlin said:

“Gin ye wul gie me a sowp o guid milk, Ah wul claen yeir fuit for ye, an lick awa the bluidmerk that is on it.!”

The yungest lassie haed been owre feirt ti tak tent til the bluidmerk, but she saw it nou, bricht an kenspekkil.

“Thenk ye, ma wee cat,” says she, “Ir ye no the kynd ane? An clivver, tae, for never afore this day hae Ah haird o a cat that cuid speik. Haud on nou, or Ah fesh a sowp milk for ye!” An the lassie did juist that.

An whan the kittlin haed laipit up the milk ti the verra lest drap, it spak again:

“Dinna you be pit oot, ma lassie, at whatever ye see in this haudin, for it is a place o glaumerie. The prince himsell is anaith the spell o a blek, blek wutch an maun dae as he is bidden. But Ah wul help ye, sae Ah wul. In monie things, ye sal see! But first, yeir fuit, for that is whit maitters nou. The lave sal follae eftir, Ah promise ye.”

Sae the yungest quyne raxt oot hir fuit as the kittlin bad hir, an as smert as ye lyke, the littil kittlin haed lickit it richt claen in twa licks o hir wee pink tung. Syne she gaed awa til hir ain place, leivin the lassie ti mak reddie the prince’s denner.

This she did an a sicht mair. An whan the prince cam hame forfochen frae the huntin, the kitchen haed been aw redd up, the pats war burnisht, an the ingil lowed bricht in the sheinin fyreplace, an waitin for him wes the graundest denner that ever a hungirie man cuid want. The prince spiered at the lassie gin she haed duin weill this day, an whan the lassie said she haed, he luikit at hir feet. An wes he no richt gled no ti see even the tottiest bluidmerk on aither ane o thaim? He wes that. Syne, whan he haed etten up his guid denner, he smirtilt at the quyne an said:

“Atweill, ye hae duin weill the-day ma lassikie. Byde you juist a wee whyle langir an dae as weill the-morn an Ah’l mairrie ye wi pleisir.”

Sae the forenicht gaed in, the lassie an the prince crakkin the tane til tither, lyke twa auld freins thegither. An on the mornin o the neist day, he gaed awa again til the huntin.

Nae suiner haed he set his feet owre the dure, or the littil kittlin cam in inti the kitchen an sat hirsell doun bi the ingil. Syne she said:

“Ma lassie, gin ye wul gie me a sowp o guid milk, Ah’l tell ye masell whit neist ye maun dae.”

Sae she gat hir sowp o guid milk, an whan she haed laipit up the milk til the verra lest drap, the kittlin spak again.

“Juist you lippen ti me nou, an Ah wul tell ye the suinest wey ti mairrie wi the prince, sae Ah wul. An ye maun dae whit Ah’m gaun ti tell ye—nae mair an nae less.

“In the grund-houss doun ablo this place, the’r seivin wuiden kists aw kuivert wi oodir an speider’s wabs. Thay ir auld an clairtie, but thay ir strrang tae. Ye’s e tak thrie o thaim an redd thaim up the-day, an ye ir no ti mention thaim til the prince this forenicht or eftir he haes etten the guid denner ye wul hae reddie for him! No ae wurd wul ye say till than. Didna Ah tell ye but yestrein, that the’r weirdrie in this houss? But ye sal ken, tae, whit ti be sayin whan the richt tyme cums, Sae tak tent ti whit Ah say an mynd it weill.”

An wi that, the littil kittlin rase frae the ingil neuk an gaed tipper-taes til hir ain place.

The lassie did as she wes bidden. She taen thrie o the seivin strang wuiden kists an she skourit thaim claen. Syne she left thaim in the grund-houss ti dry oot an gaed back up til the kitchen ti mak reddie the prince’s denner. An this forenicht, tae, the prince wes weill pleased wi hir, an he said:

“Dae you as weill the-morn, ma lassie, an the neist day we sal be mairrit, Ah can promise ye.”

An as thay sat thare thegither bi the ingil speikin the tane til the tither eftir thair denner, the lassie said:

“Bi the by, Ah wes doun in the grund-houss the-day, an here Ah fand seivin auld kists lyin thare. It cam inti ma mynd that gin Ah wes ti redd up mebbe thrie o thaim, ma mither wad be richt gled o thaim. An ye wad be sae guid as ti cairrie thaim owre til hir ane at a tyme i the mirk the-morn’s nicht, eftir ye hae huntit an etten the guid denner that Ah sal mak for ye, that wey, ma mither winna see you. That wul shuirly be the best plan, for she is uised wi seein ye in yeir maik as a horse, an disna ken ye as a man ava. We wadna want ti gie hir a fleg.

The prince smyled at the quyne an said he:

“That is the verra least Ah cuid dae for ye ma lassie. Hae you the kists reddie for the morn’s forenicht an Ah wul tak thaim til yeir mither!”

“Thank ye kyndlie,” said the lassie, an wi that, she gaed awa til hir bed.

The neist day, as suin as ever the prince wes up an awa, the littil kittlin cam inti the kitchen an sat hirsell doun bi the ingil, sayin:

“Ma lassie, gin ye wul gie me a sowp o guid milk, Ah wul tell ye whit ti dae neist.”

Sae she gat hir milk, an whan she haed laipit it up ti the verra lest drap, says she:

“Nou lippen weill ti me, for Ah’s e tell ye whit ye maun dae ti lowse the prince frae the spells the wutch haes kuisten on him! Syne he wul mairrie ye for shuir. Nou cum you wi me ti the chaumer the ferr end o the langest lobbie o thaim aw. Thare we wul sort yeir twa sisters! Dinna you be feirt nou, for ye wul see sumthing ti wunner at, sae ye wul!

Sae thegither, the yungest lassie an the littil kittlin gaed ti the chaumer the ferr end o the langest lobbie o thaim aw, an the lassie unlockit the dure. Syne the littil kittlin gaed in an lickit wi hir wee pink tung, first the auldest lassie an syne the saicont lassie, an here did thay no baith bang up on ti thair feet as gleg an weill as ever thay war, an cum oot ti whaur thair wee sister stuid waitin for thaim? Thay did juist that an the war gret rejycin, Ah can tell ye.

“Cum you,” said the littil kittlin, “ for the’r mair wark yit ti dae, an you yeirsell maun dae it, ma lassie. Doun ti the grund-houss wi ye, an yeir sisters along wi ye! Pit intil the thrie kists ye redd up yestrein, as mukkil gowd an siller frae the prince’s treisur as wul keep yeir mither an sisters in peace an rowth aw thair leevin days. But leive weygait for yeirsell, for ilkane o ye is ti ly doun in ane o the kists. Hoy on nou, for feir the prince cums hame aerie frae the huntin, the-day!”

Sae the yungest lassie an hir sisters did awthing as the kittlin haed said, an whan thay war richt feinisht, the kittlin cam doun ti the grund-houss an said:

“Fegs! Ye hae duin weill, an ye haena been owre grabbie wi the prince’s treisur aither. Nou lat yeir sisters straik thairsell oot in thair treisur kists, an cum you up ti the kitchen for ti mak reddie the prince’s denner. An Ah wul tell ye whit wul be juist about yei lest spell.

“Whan the prince haes etten his fill, ye ir ti gie him ae mair tassie o wyne, an ye ir ti say til him that whan he haes drukken it, the thrie claen kists wul be reddie for him. An tell him that he made a paction wi me that he wad mairrie ye gin ye did awthing weill i the houss, nou she maun mak ane wi him. Say ye wul mairrie him eftir he haes laid the kists forenent yeir mither’s houss dure, but that he maunna open thaim on the wey! Tell him strecht, ma lassie, that gin he sets doun onie o the thrie kists an keiks inby, ye wul see him daein it throu a byuss glaumerie o yeir ain! Syne tell him ye hae darg ti dae, leive him wi his tassie o wyne an rin ti shut yeirsell in the third o the thrie kists.”

Whan the prince cam hame frae the huntin, the yungest lassie telt him awthing the littil kittlin haed said, an the prince said, Ay shuirly, he wad set doun the thrie kists bi the weidae’s houss dure, an he wadna keik inti onie o thaim. An he laucht richt hertie-lyke at the lassie’s paction, for bi this tyme, he haed cum ti loue hir weill. An he said:

“Ye maunna darg owre sair, littil ane, for the-morn is our waddin day, an Ah’m no mistaen!” An the lassie said:

“The suiner Ah git richt stertit, the suiner Ah’l be lyke ti feinish, sae Ah’l juist awa nou.”

Sae awa doun ti the grund-houss she gaed, an stauptit inti the kist that wes reddie for hir, an wha suid cum up til hir but the littil kittlin?

“Tak tent aince mair,” said the kittlin, “an mynd weill whit Ah say. Gin the prince suid stap on his turns wi the kists an set doun onie o thaim ti tak the wecht aff his shouter, the lassie inby maun rair oot, ‘Ah can see ye, sae Ah can!’ Whan he hears hir he wul suin tak up the kist again an haigil on wi it, an aw wul be weill.

“But whan he wins hame again an finnds ye gaen, he wul be unco roused an he wul mak strecht for yeir mither’s houss again for ti finnd ye. An syne ye maun lowse him frae the lest spell o the blek wutch. Unbar the dure til him an lat him inby. But haud you the bar o the dure in yeir haund an ding aff his heid wi the ae dird!

“An whan ye hae duin this he wul be lowsed o aw spells, ye wul see.”

An awthing turnt oot as the littil kittlin said. Thrie tymes did the prince haigil a kist til the weida’s houss. An on ilka traik he set doun the kist he cairrit for ti hae a keik inby. An ilka tyme the lassie inby cryit oot:

“Ah can see ye, sae Ah can.”

An ilka tyme, the prince wad humf the kist up again on his back an gang forrit wi it. An i the hinner end, aw thrie kists war laid forenent the weidae’s houss dure, an the prince gaed awa hame ti seek the yungest lassie. But at hame he cuid finnd hir nane. She wes naewhaur ti be funnd i the houss. Sae whit did he dae but hoy back again in a tid, ti dird on the weidae’s houss dure.

Wi the verra first chap, the yungest lassie, the dure bar in hir haund, flang the dure wyde ti the waw. She did juist that, an as the prince breinged in, wi ae dird, she dang aff his heid, juist as the littil kittlin haed telt hir ti dae. An syne, aw at aince, forenent hir, stuid the prince, bricht lyke the sun. The shaidae wes gaen frae his brou foraye, an he wes that braw, the warna his neibor in the weidth o the haill warld. At lest, he wes lowsed frae the ill spell o the wutch. He mairrit his lassie the verra neist day, an thay leaved blyth an content the lave o thair days. An as for the weidae an hir twa aulder dochters, thay wantit for naething, an haed rowth o gowd an siller ti keep thaim bien aw thair days.

