

The Page Loun an the Siller Tassie

The war aince a wee page loun that serred in a grund castel. He wes ane innerlie littil fallae, an did his darg that weill that awbodie lykit him, frae the gret Yerl he serred ilka day on his knees, ti the stout auld butler, whas messages he ran.

Nou the castel stuid on the lip o a mukkil craig abuin the sea, an for aw the waws abuin the wattir war unco thick, in thaim the war a littil postern door that opent ontill sum nairrae steps that gaed down the face o the craig til the forelaund, sae that oniebodie that wantit, coud gae down for a douk in the sea in the fyne simmer mornins. On the ferr syde the castel, the war gairdens an a pleasance, openin ontill a lang streitch o hether muir that raxt aw the wey til the ferr bens.

The page-loun lykit aye ti reinge about on this muir whan his wark wes duin, for thare he coud rin about as he pleased, eftir fogie-bees an butterflies, an huntin burds' nests i the Spring tyme. An the stout auld butler wes weill content that he soud gang thare, for he kent that it wes a guid thing for a yung laddie ti divert himsell rinnin free in the caller air. But ilka tyme the lassie gaed out, the auld man aye gied him the ae wairnin.

“Nou mynd whit Ah tell ye, ma laddie! Ye'd mukkil need no gang near the Ferlie Knowe, for the wee fowk bydes thare an thay ir no ti be lippent til.”

This knowe he spak o wes a wee green heich that stuid on the muir no twantie yairds frae the gairden yett, an fowk said it wes the hame o the Fairies, that wad sort onie mortal that wes daft aneuch ti cum near thaim. An kis o this, the kintrie fowk wad gang a guid hauf-myle out thair road, even i the braid daylight, rather nor gae owre near the Ferlie Knowe an risk provokin the Fairies. An at nicht, thay wad haulrie cross the muir ava, for awbodie kens the Fairies cums out in the mirk, leivin thair houss door open, sae that whaever disna watch out, is lyke ti finnd himsell dounby ablo the grund.

But the littil page-loun wesna a bit blate, an instead o be-in feirt for the Fairies, he wes fain for ti see thaim, an ti veisit thair steidin, juist ti see whitlyke it wes.

Sae ae nicht, whan awbodie wes sleepin, he creepit out the castel bi the postern door, stale down the stane steps, an alang the sea shore, an up ontill the muir, an syne gaed strecht ti the Ferlie Knowe. An thare he fand that awthing he haed haird wes true. The tap o the Knowe wes cowpitt up lyke a lid, an frae the openin he coud see licht glintin out.

His hert wes fair stoundin wi the glif he gat, but he gethert himsell an slippit doun inby inti the Knowe.

He suin fand himsell in a mukkil chaumer lit bi hunders o tottie caunils, an thare, sittin roun a burnist aik taibil, war scores o the Wee Fowk: Fairies an Wurfs an Fanes, gled in green, yallae, pink, blue, purpie an skerlet --- aw the culors ye cuid think on, an a whein forby, naebodie haed ever seen afore.

The loun stuid in a derk neuk watchin awthing, an fou o wunner, thinkin hou droll it wes that the suid be sic a hantil o thir wee craeturs aw leevin thair ain lyfe in saicret sae neirhaund. An aw at aince, sumbodie --- he coudna tall wha --- gied an order.

“Fesh out the Tassie!” cryit the vyce, an bedein, twa littil Fairie pages, cled aw in skerlet, dairtit frae the taibil, til a wee press in the waw an cam back haiglin the wecht o a mukkil braw siller tassie, fynelie wrocht, an lyled wi gowd.

Thay set this tassie doun on the taibil heid, an amang a fouth o clappin o haunds an skellochin an houchin, aw the fairies taen turns ti waucht out it. An the page coud see frae whaur he stuid, that naebodie poured onie wyne intil it, but for aw that, the tassie wes aye fou. Forby this, the wyne that wes in it wes no aye the same thing, for ilka fairie, whan he gruppit the tassie, wusht for the wyne he lykit the best, an in a glisk, the tassie wes lipperin fou o it.

“It wad be a fyne thing gin Ah coud tak that unco tassie hame wi me,” thocht the page. “Naebodie wul ever credit Ah hae been here at aw, binna Ah haena sumthing ti shaw for it.” Sae he bydit his tyme an watcht.

Eftir a wee whyle, the Fairies taen tent o him, but, insteid o be-in roused wi him for be-in in wi thaim, as he expekkit thay wad be, thay seemed weill pleised ti see him, an invytit him ti sit himsell doun at thair taibil. But suin thay becam ill-moued an impiddent an lichtlied him for be-in content ti serr mortals. An thay telt him thay kent awthing that gaed on at the Castel an thay miscawed an laucht at the cannie auld butler, that haed aye been a guid frein til the page. Syne thay aw haed a guid lauch at the meit he ett at hame, sayin it wes juist fit for grumfies, an whanever anither dentie dish wes set afore thaim bi the pages in thair skerlet graithin, thay wad push the dish owre til him, smirtlin: “You eit this up whyle ye hae the chauce, loun, for ye’l never see oniething hauf as guid at hame!”

Hinnerlie, he cuid thole thair snash an thair ill tungs nae langir, an forby, he kent he wad hae ti mak a move gin he wantit ti lift the tassie that nicht. Sae aw at aince, he stuid up on his feet an gruppit the haunil o the tassie in his haund.

“Ah think nou, Ah’d lyke ti drink ti ye aw in wattir,” says he, an bedein, the reid wyne wes chyngit inti clear, cauld burn wattir.

He hystit the tassie til his mou, but insteid o bebbin frae it, wi a sudden yerk he clasht the wattir owre the caunils. At aince, the haill chaumer wes pit mirk. Syne he claucht the tassie tichtlie in his airms and made for the openin ti the Knowe, whaur he cuid see the sterns skinklin abuin in the lift. Wi ae lowp, he wes throu an outby inti the nicht air.

Syne he wes stourin alang the muir owre the wat, dew-cuivert gress wi the hail clekkin o Fairies, Wurfs an Fanes wallop in at his heels. Thay war aw byordnar roused an he coud hear thair yowls o rage no ferr ahint him. He kent weill he coud expek nae mercie frae thaim gin thay catcht him. His hert beguid ti sink, for tho he wes a fest rinner, he wes nae match i the lang rin, for the Fairie Fowk, an he coud hear that thay war makkin up on him aw the tyme. Thare seemed nae howp for him whan ane unco vyce soundit out the mirk:

“Gin ye wad win ti the Castel door’
haud ti the blek stanes on the sea shore!”

Nou he haed aince haird that whan oniebody walkit on the wat sands, whaur the waves haed run owre thaim, the fairies coudna follae, an hearin this vyce brocht this thocht intil his heid. Sae he turnt an made for the shore as fest as his legs wad cairrie him. But his feet sank doun inti the saund an he wes that pechilt, he felt he wad hae ti gie up; but he warsilt on, an juist as the foremaist fairies war about ti lay haunds on him, he lowpit owre the wattir merk onti the siccar wat saund, forenent the ebb tyde an the blek stanes, an syne he kent he wes sauf.

The Wee Fowk docht na gang anither step, an thay stuid on the dry saund ahint him, yowlin an skraichin wi feim an vexation, whyle the page-loun ran lichtlie alang the forelaund, the braw tassie in his airms, sklum blythlie up the steps in the craig, an santit throu the postern yett. An for monie a year eftir, lang eftir the wee page-loun haed growne up an turnt intil a mukkil stout butler himsell, that sent ither page-louns on messages, the braw tassie stuid in his chaumer in the castel, ti bring him in mynd o his veisit til the Fairie Knowe.