

The Reid Bul o Narroway

In the tyme afore this thare leeved in a gret an graund pailace a keing an his queen. Thay haed a bonnie kinrik ti thairsells whaur awbodie bade in gret content frae ae year's end til anither. Forby, the keing an queen haed thrie dochters. The first princess an hir neist sister war prood, prood quynes—that prood thay didna even jalouse thay war ugsum But thay war! Thay war that, an crabbit lyke, tae.

But the yungest lassie wes different awthegither. Hir weys war gentil an innerlie, an hir mither an faither loued hir weill. Sae did awbodie in the kinrik, an thay aw taen prude in hir bewtie an hir licht-hertit cantrips.

Cam a nicht whan the thrie sisters gat roun ti crakkin aboot the tyme whan thay wad mairrie. The auldest princess kuist hir heid hie, an says she:

“Me, Ah’m gaun ti mairrie a keing. Naething less is guid aneuch for the lykes o me!”

An the saicont princess said:

“Mercie! Ir ye no the prood ane? Mebbe the'l no be a keing that wul want ye, for ye'r owre prood awthegither, sae ye ir! Nou Ah’m prood anaw, but no sae prood as yeirself. For Ah wad bring masell doun ti mairrie a prince gin he war walthie aneuch, an weill-faured. Mebbe Ah might even tak til a yerl, gin he war a gret ane, an brawlyke.”

An the third princess haed the graundest lauch at baith hir sisters, an says she:

“The Reid Bul o Narroway wul dae me fyne an he suid cum.”

“Ai, ye ir stuipit!” said hir twa sisters. “Whaever haird tell o the Reid Bul o Narroway? We haena , an we ken awthing that's wurth the kennin! We div sae, ye daft tawpie!”

But thay didna ken awthing. Atweill, thay didna! For the verra neist mornin at the brekfest, whit soud thay hear but a mukkil rowtin an rairin, the lyke o whilk haed never been haird afore in aw the kinrik? Awbodie ran ti luik oot the winnoks, an whit suid thay see staunin ootby, but the biggest reid bul in the haill wORLD, seeminlie cum ti tak the yungest princess for his bryde!? An haed she no said, the verra nicht afore, that she wad mairrie wi the Reid Bul o Narroway gin he suid cum? Shuirlie she haed.

The keing an his queen coudna beir ti gie thair bonnie littil lass til a mukkil bul. But whit suid thay dae, for war the no weirdrie here? Shuirlie the maun be. Awbodie thocht an thocht or thay haed sair heids wi aw the thinkin. Even the twa auldest princesses thocht a wee, for wha wad ettil for ti mairrie *thaim*, wi a mukkil bul for a guidbrither? Naebodie ava, thay war weill shuir! An i the hinner end, the Queen stuid up til hir ful hicht an said:

“Nou Ah ken whit we ir gaun ti dae. We wul gie the henwyfe ti this Reid Bul o Norroway. He haes never set een on oor wee dochter, an sae the bul wad never ken the difference, mukkil coarse beiss that he is!”

Sae thay did juist that. An the Reid Bul o Norroway rade awa wi the henwyfe on his back an awbodie nichert at the droll sicht. But she wesna thare for lang. No hir! For the Reid Bul gaed nae ferrer nor he cam til a mukkil derk shaw fou o jaggie brier busses. Thare he flang the henwyfe owre his mukkil shouther in amang thaim an wallopt back til the graund braw pailace o the keing an queen.

Again an again the same thing happent. Owre an owre, the keing an queen gied ane o thair sairvants til the Reid Bul, an ilka tyme did he no mak strecht for the mukkil derk shaw an throw the quyne in amang the brier busses. Tyme an tyme again. Suin the war but the thrie princesses left. First the keing gied his auldest dochter til the Reid Bul, syne his saicont ane. But the Reid Bul serred thaim the same gait, an syne he cam back ti the pailace for the yungest princess, an gaed aff wi hir wi a blyth hert.

Thegither, the princess an the Reid Bul traivelt throu the mukkil derk forest, an ferr athort lanesum muirs, bi day an bi nicht, anaith sun an sterns, or thay cam til a castel whaur the war a fek o fowk daunsin an divertin thairsells in a wyde coortyaird. The laird o the castel bad the princess jyne the splore, tho he haed his ain thochts anent hir unco frein. Wha wad ever think ti meet up wi sic a bonnie lassie rydin a mukkil reid bul? Naebodie at aw—binna yeirsell.

Tho, whit wi his fower legs, he wesna for the daunsin himsell, the Reid Bul an the yungest princess gaed ti jyne the thrang wi licht herts apiece, but whan thay war in the bodie o the thrang, here did the princess no see a lang prein stickin oot the Reid Bul's coarse hyde? An whit suid the kynd lassie dae but pou oot the prein, for she thocht:

“It's aiblins jaggin him sair, an Ah wadna wuss him onie ill, puir sowl.”

At aince, the Reid Bul santit awa! An in his steid, stuid the brawest prince in aw the fower neuks o the wyde warld. An the prince lowtit doun at the feet o the yungest princess ti thenk hir frae his hert, for haed she no brukken the ill spell that haed been on him thir monie year? Shuirlie she haed, or sae she thocht. An awbodie wes even mair joco nor afore, an gret wes the lauchin an daffin that gaed on.

But lyke maist guid things, it wesna ti lest. For aw at aince, in aw the gledness an pleisir, the prince santit oot o sight in a glisk. Awbodie socht for him. Aw owre the kintrie thay socht an huntit, an huntit an socht, but the war nae wurd o him oniewhaur ava, For aw, the yungest princess wadna stap luikin for him. She wad stravaig the haill warl ti finnd him, she said. But the monie wearie days, trauchilt anaith hir feet, an the wearie days raxt inti weeks, an the lang weeks inti months, an still she cuidna cum up wi him oniewhaur. In nae place ava, wes he ti be fund—an nane haed haird tell o him.

Hinnerlie, ae forenicht, the guid littil princess cam til a wuid. Lanesum an ourie it wes, an the trees war that thick that never a stern cuid she glisk throu thair brainches. Whaur cuid she lay hir heid this nicht? On an on she traikit, wearie an waesum, an lyke ti dee for the hungir that wes in hir. Syne, aw at aince, whit suid she see but a wee bricht licht glimmerin i the mirk?

The princess airtit hir wabbit sell til it an whan she cam up ti the place o the licht, she fand it sheinin frae a wee biggin set ablo the brainches on a mukkil fir tree. Inby the biggin, war an auld kerlin an wes she no the kynd ane? She wes aw that, for she taen the princess in asyde the ingil, an gied hir a bowle o guid het soup, a crust o breid ti gang wi it, an a sowp o creamie milk. Sae the puir quyne sleepit warm an bein throu the lang mirk o the nicht. But mair wes ti cum, sae it wes.

The neist mornin, the auld kerlin gied the princess thrie smaw nits, the lyke o whilk the princess haed never seen afore. An the kerlin said:

“Lippen nou ti me, an mynd richt whit Ah tell ye! Ye haed mukkil need no brek thir nits or yeir hert is lyke ti brek for the wae that is in it. Syne brek you open the ae nit, an see whit ye sal see! Keep the ither twa sauf, an dinna you open aither ane binna yeir hert is lyke ti brek! Mynd that, nou, ma bonnie dearie! Mynd it weill!”

“Ah wul mynd it, shurlie,” the princess aunsert hir, “an thenk ye! Rael kynd ti me ye hae been, an Ah im hert gratefu til ye.”

An wi that, she set oot aince mair for ti hunt for the prince. Throu the derk forest she gaed, but this day the trees thinned out intil a birkenshaw an the sun shane doun throu the brainches. Syne the sweet burds lilit ti cheer the princess’s hert, an the howp in hir grew strangir. She haedna gaen that ferr on hir road, whan she haird, aw o a suiden, the tinglin o smaw bells. She staupit oot ahead an whit suid she see but a hantil ither traivlars in the forest? Lairds an Leddies rydin brawlie, strang-steppin, brankin naigs, an awbodie speikin o a feast suin ti tak place in a gret castel that stuid ayont the ferr rink o the forest. For wesna a bodie cryit the Duik o Narroway, ti be mairrit thare the verra neist day?

The princess follaed the thrang, hingin a wee bit ahint; an suin thay cam oot the forest, an afore thaim stuid the brawest castel the princess haed ever seen. It haed fower mukkil touers, an gairdens fou o sweet flouers airtin this wey an that in the sowf an the bricht sunshein, as gin thay daunst for delyte at sum ferlie that pleased thaim weill. The coortyaird wes fair thrang wi eydent fowk. The war tylars rinnin awroads wi bricht clraith in thair airms, the war fleshars an bakstars; cuiks an herpars streirin aboot; sic a steir, naebodie seemed ti ken whit ti be at neist. The princess goaved, an whyle she kuist hir een aboot hir, hir haill mynd fou o wunner, whit soud she hear but vyces cryin louder an louder:

“Mak wey! Mak wey thare, for the Duik o Narroway, himsell!”

An wha soud cum rydin by on a mukkil blek horse, an it brankin its mane aboot in the sunlight, but the prince himsell—hir prince that haed santit awa sic a lang tyme sen, frae afore the verra een o the princess. The prince that she haed huntit an socht, socht an huntit throu the wearie weys o hauf the warld for sae lang! Ai, but asyde this prince, rydin a wee whyte pownie, wes a leddie, unco fair o face, an lauchin for the pleisir that wes in hir.

But the war nae lauchter i the hert o the princess. This Duik o Narroway wes hir verra ain prince, an he wes gaun ti mairrie this lauchin leddie the morn at daw. Awbodie wes sayin sae. The hert o the princess wes lyke ti brek at the thocht. An syne, she myndit o the thrie nits at the auld wumman haed gien hir. Shuirlie wesna this the verra tyme ti open ane o thaim.

Sae she did juist that. She brak open the first nit, an wunner o wunners, inby sat the tottiest wumman ever seen, cairdin woo for the spinnin. The princess haed never seen the lyke. Hou cuid she? For never haed the been the lyke o it in aw the days o the world! An a thocht cam til hir that wi siccana ferlie, she coud aiblins fleitch the Duik o Narroway's bryde ti lat hir speak til him.

Awa gaed the princess, an shuir aneuch, whan the castel fowk saw whit she haed on hir, thay lat hir inti the bryde's chaumer. An as suin as ever the bryde set een on the wee leddie sittin inby hir nit, cairdin woo for the spinnin, naething wad dae but that the bryde soud hae the nit til hirsell for ti keep. The princess said, shuirlie she nicht hae it ti keep, but first she maun pit aff hir waddin for ae day, an lat the princess speak wi the Duik himsell throu the nicht. An the bryde, whas hert wes fair set on the gift, gied hir wurd on it, an gaed awa content wi the ferlie, the lyke o whilk haed never been seen afore in aw the days o the world.

But she wes a sleikit ane, that same bryde. For that verra forenicht, did she no gie the Duik o Narroway a waucht o guid wyne that wad gar him sleep soun the haill nicht throu? She did juist that! An tho the princess sat asyde him aw throu the derk hours, she cuidna wauken him, an whan mornin cam she buid ti leave him. An again hir hert wes lyke ti brek.

But syne the princess myndit that she haed the saicont nit, an she brak that ane tae, as the auld kerlin haed bidden hir. Inby it, whit suid thare be but another wee leddie wi the tottiest o spinnin jennies, an it birrin awa spinnin the guid woo! Wha haed ever seen the lykes o that, aither? Naebodie, shuirlie, sen the stert o the warld!

Again the princess gaed ti see the bryde. An again the bryde's hert greined ti hae this nit tae, for hir ain, an again the princess said it soud be hirs gin she wad pit aff the waddin yit another day, an lat the princess speak wi the Duik o Narroway in the oors o the nicht ti cum. Yit again, the bryde wes wullin, but aince mair she gied the Duik a waucht i the forenicht ti gar him sleep ticht, an sae, on that nicht tae, the waesum wee princess didna git speakin wi him. An whan the cock crew at the dawin, she buid ti quut the Duik's chaumer.

But it's a bare muir wi nae hether cou! This tyme, help wes ti cum. For whan the Duik's sairvant cam ti help his maister cleid himsell, he spiered at the Duik: haed he no haird thir past twa nichts, a leddie sabbin til hirsell an liltin sad sangs the haill nicht throu? The Duik said he haed haird naething ava.

"Aweill, yeir Grace, the-nicht," said the sairvant, "tak you nae drink afore ye gang til yeir bed an ye'l finnd oot whit this unco thing maun be aboot, gin it suid befaw yit again!"

Meanwhyle, the princess brak the third nit that the auld kerlin haed gien hir. An in this ane, the war a third wee leddie as bonnie as the ither, an hir eydent rowin woo. Again the princess gaed ti the bryde, an an naething wad dae but that the bryde maun hae this nit tae, for hirsell. Sae aw fell oot as afore. But on this nicht o nichts, the Duik o Narroway taen nae drink frae the bryde's haunds, an this tyme, whan the littil princess spak til him, here he opent his een.

An at aince, he kent hir for his ain princess that he loued wi his haill hert. An nou he kent that he haed been anaith ill spells. Haed thir no turnt him intil a bul, an haed thay no keepit him sae or the princess set him free? Shuirlie thay haed. An haed thay no claucht him an cairrit him awa throu the wyde warld, an garred him forget his wee princess?

An nou it cam back til him wha haed putten sic spells on him. It wes the bryde hirsell, nae less. She wes a wutch an wantit him for hirsell, sae she did. But nou he wes free o hir foraye. The wutch dochtna dae nae mair. An weill she kent it, for bi the dawin cam, she haed flaen the castel, never mair ti be seen. She haed that, an whaur she gaed an whaur she is nou, naebodie kens ti this day.

Mukkil wes the blyth in aw the Duik's wyde launds, an in the castel the war a byordnar steir ti mak awthing reddie for the mairriage o the Duik o Narroway til his ain true princess, hir that haed socht him throu the weidth o the warld. Thay war mairrit that verra same day, an leeved weill content throu aw the monie year that cam eftir. Atweill, for aw Ah ken, thay might weill be leevin sae yit!

