

The Thriftless Guidwyfe

Ae tyme in ane outlin pairt o the north o Scotland, thare bade an honest an eydent faimlie that haed but the ae dochter. This quyne wes cryit Meg an she wes sic a bewtie that men cam frae aw airts to pey court til hir. But for a peitie, the lassie's mither wes a wee thing sempil an wantit hir mairrit aff at the first guid offer that kythed. Aweill, she haedna lang ti wait.

A yung fermer chiel turnt up that pleased the mither that weill, she gart hir dochter lay the yoke whaur she haed been spinnin, ti the ae syde for ti speak til him, an shaw him favor. The fermer wes cawed Murdo an the mither taen him an Meg aw throu the houss an lat him see a rowth o yairn that hir dochter wes credited wi spinnin. Murdo wes weill pleased wi seein this, thinkin himsell chancie wi be-in sae ferr ben, an in fawin in wi a lass that wes baith eydent an bonnie, an Meg, for hir pairt, wes fair taen up wi Murdo. Sae afore verra lang, he brocht hir a ring an thay war mairrit.

No that lang eftir Murdo haed taen Meg back til his ain houss, he shawed hir a gret hantil o woo he haed lyin ti spin an telt hir ti spin it aw athout mair adae.

“We maun stert the wey we ettil ti gaun on!” says he.

But Meg didna lyke pinglin wark---she haed nae notion ti spin woo aw day, an insteid o daein the job hirsell, she fermed aw the wark out til hir neibors, ilkane ti be peyed a guid pikkil o the woo for hir wark. In the hinner end, whan aw the wark wes duin bi thir neibors, out o aw the woo that wes gien out, nae mair nor ae wee baw o yairn cam back.

Ae day, Meg's guidman spiert at hir gin the wab war feinisht.

“O ay, Guidman,” says Meg. “It's feinisht richt aneuch, an the-nicht Ah hae ti git the yairn wund on pirns reddie for weavin. Wad ye be sae guid as ti byde hame the-nicht an gie me a haund?”

Murdo wes gled ti dae thus, for he lykit aye ti git weill fordilt wi his wark. Houanever, Meg pat him ben the houss whyle she bade in the kitchen an rowed the same baw o worsted back owre the fluir ti him the haill forenicht, garrin Murdo believe that he wes rowin a hantikl baws o woo inti monie pirns, whan aw the tyme, the war but the ae baw.

Weill it sae happent that Meg's faither wes a weaver ti trade, sae she says:

“The-morn Ah'l tak the yairn hame til ma faither for ti mak inti claith.”

Sae aerie neist mornin, owre she gangs ti see hir faither for ti tell him hou she haed begunkit hir guidman wi the yairn. Hir faither wes gey ill-pleised ti hear this, but he wes that vext for hir, he feinisht up bi tellin hir he haed a wab o claith o his ain in the luim an that he wad gie this til hir, gin she wad try ti dae better as a wyfe. Sae eftir bydin twa-thrie days wi hir mither an faither, Meg humfit the wab on hir back an stertit ti cairrie it hame.

But on the road hame she cam til a yillhouss an thocht til h.irsell:

“Ah’l juist gang in here an rest ma feet an hae a wee drap ti restore masell.”

Weill, aince she gat stertit on the drams the war nae haudin hir, an afore verra lang, she wes fou as a buit an fair daivert.

For aw, she stytert out the howf onti the road whaur the war sum birks an haed a thocht til hersell that the wab o claith wad luik braw on ane o thaim. Sae she wappit the wab round the brainches o ane o the trees, plankit hirsell doun on the grund an fell asleep bedein.

No lang eftir, a packman bodie cam daunerin by, an whan he sichtit hir lyin thare fest asleep, he taen out his shears, cut aff hir lang yallae hair, stappit it in his poutch an made aff wi the claith frae the tree. Whan Meg woke up out hir sleep, she wes fair dumfounert an haurlie kent whaur she wes, an eftir rinnin about in circles for a whyle huntin the wab, she ran aw the road hame til hir man.

“Whaur im Ah nou? Whaur im Ah nou?” she cryit whan she saw him.

“Whaur wad ye be, “ says hir man, “but in yeir ain houss whaur ye belang . But whaur is the wab o claith, no ti speak o yeir heid o hair.?”

“Ma mither,” says she, “telt me that aince Ah gat it happit on ma back, Ah. wad be as braw as Jock’s wyfe, sae Ah wad, sae Ah tryit it on ane o the trees for ti see whatlyke it wad luik. But whan Ah woke up eftir a wee bit sleep it wes naewhaur ti be seen. Ah dout the tree maun hae swallaed it or hid it frae me.”

At this, hir guidman stertit ti teir his hair an cherk his teeth. “Ah canna byde wi the lykes o you,” he raired. But she pled on him ti gie hir anither chauce an promised him she wad try ti dae better, an eftir a wee whyle he forgied hir.

“Wyfe!” says he. Ah killed a sheep this mornin an the corp is lyin throuby in the back kitchen. Ah’m gaun up nou ti the lang rigg for an oor, an whyle Ah’m awa, Ah’d lyke ye ti cut up the sheep intil as monie bittoks o meat as the’r stoks o kail in the yaird. Syne pit ae bit o hoch on wi saut ti sotter on the reinge for ma denner!”

As suin as he haed left the room, Meg chappit up the sheep in the back kitchen inti littil bits wi the gullie knyfe, an syne gaed inti the yaird an laid a skuddok o the meat at ilka stok o kail. An whan Murdo cam hame for his denner, whit did he see but a clekkin o burds an beiss in the yaird, aw eydent ruggen an ryvin at bits o meat? At first, he haurlie kent whit wes gaun on, but whan he fund out whit haed happent, he wes that roused it wes aw he coud dae ti keep frae letherin his wyfe.

However, he haed a pig ti kill that eftiruin an eftir the pig wes richt deid, he laid the fek o the corp asyde, in the howp that Meg wad dae better wi the pig.

“Merk weill whit Ah say,” he telt hir. “This pig is ti be keepit for Lent an the Lang Reed.”

This wes a halie day i thae days on whilk a feast wes hauden, but puir Meg taen it ti be sum auld bodie's name, an spierit at ilka gangril she saw, whit wes his name, ti finnd out whuther he wes cryit, "Lent an the Lang Reed." An shuir aneuch, ae day an auld bodie mair fly nor the lave telt hir that he wes whyles kent bi this name an wes the man she socht. Sae the gangrel wes gien the pig ontil his back an awa he gaed nicher-nicherin til himsell, weill pleased wi his day's wark.

Sae whan Murdo gat back frae his darg at the plou, his wyfe telt him wi a blythsum hert, that Lent an the Lang Reed haed been at the houss dure an wes awa cantie an crouss wi the bacon. Smaw wunner that Murdo wes sair vext at this an thraetent again ti leave hir. But aince mair, she pled wi him an gat roun him, wi promises that she wad dae better.

Syne Murdo telt hir he haed a pikkil meal at the mill an that he wad truist hir ti gang an winnie it, but ti be shuir no ti loss onie o it. Sae aff she gaed; but here whan she wes wurkin wi the meal, did a flae no lowp its wey inti the barrel.. Syne she cairrit the barrel outby for ti riddil the meal an find the flae, but the wund rase an blew aw the meal agin the gairden waw an the waws o the houss, or awthing kythed as gin it haed been new happit wi snaw, altho this wes at the hicht o simmer, whan awthing wes green.

Sae whan the guidman cam hame this day, the war sum surprise waitin for him, an he micht he been haird ti remerk that for the month o Juin, the haed been a awfu snaw sen he quit the houss that mornin. But whan Meg telt him whit haed happent, he wes at his wuts' end an again he thraetent ti leave hir, an again she fleicht him ti chynge his mynd.

Nou, bi this tyme, Murdo wes stertin ti think his wyfe wad be the ruination o him, an he made up his mynd ti tell hir naething about important maitters. Sae he askit hir ti luik eftir a jaur o hurlie-burlie seed, as he said it wes. Whit he didna tell wes that insteid o seed, the jaur wes fou o the gowd he haed hained in, owre monie a year o darg.

Bi this tyme, wurd o Mag's fekliness haed spreid aw owre the kintrasyde an the steidin wes aye thrang wi packmen, moutchers, skellums an gangrel bodies, aw eftir sum betterment. Ane o thir packmen offert hir a whein gee-gaws for gouns, but she telt him she hae naething ti gie him but a pigfu hurlie-burlie seed hir man haed dernt in the middil o the fluir. The packman jaloused that siller or gowd micht be in the jaur an offert hir whit she fancied for it, sae that Meg feinisht up bi pairtin wi a pigfu gowd for a poke o bairn's nick-nacks.

"That dis it!" said hir man whan he haird whitna grund bergain she haed made for his hurlie-burlie seed. This tyme Ah'm awa for guid, an yue can greit as mukkil as ye lyke—Ah'l no chynge ma mynd. Ah'l no byde here a meinit langir wi a gomeril for a wyfe!" An wi that, he staupit out the houss, his wyfe rinnin greitin ahint him. Sen she seemed bentset on follaein him, he gart hir cairrie the houss dure alang wi hir on hir back ti hinner hir, an she wes that feart for his glowerin face bi this tyme, she did as she wes telt.

Aw day thay maircht on this gait thegither wi hir styterin ahint him, an bi the forenicht, fand thairsells in the middil o a gret wud i the back o beyont. Here thay settilt for ti byde the nicht, but Murdo thocht it wad be best ti sklim up a heich tree for fear o wyld beiss reingin about on the grund. But he wes aye ill at Meg an gart hir haigil the houss dure up inti the tree alang wi hir.

Thay warna lang up the tree or thay haird the soun o monie roch vyces doun ablo thaim. A gang o kettrens that haed been reivin aw day haed settilt doun ti mak camp at the ruits o the verra tree thay war on.

“Wheisht!” whuspert Murdo. “Byde you quaet for aince in yeir lyfe! For the luiv o Guidness, Wheisht! We maunna lat thir kettrens ken we’r up here or we ir as guid as deid areddies!”

But bi nou, Meg wes sair wearit wi haudin the dure on hir back an here did she no lat it faw wi a fell clatter onti the kettrens’ camp? This gied thaim sic a glif thay aw ran awa, leavin aw thair graith an siller ahint thaim---aw but ane o thaim that haed daidilt ahint kis he wes sweir ti be sindert frae his share. At aince, Murdo dreipit doun frae the tree, gruppit this kettren bi the thrappil, bure him ti the grun an cut out his tung at the ruit wi his skean.

But the kettren warsilt lowss frae him an stourit aff throu the wuids eftir his freins cryin, “Byde, byde!” for he kent he haed but the ae man ti dael wi. Houever, his mou wes that fou o bluid, his freins coudna richt mak him out an thocht he wes cryin, “Ryde, ryde!” Fae the soun o him thay kent he wes sair mittilt, sae thay aw ran the fester, an for aw we ken, they nicht be rinnin yit.

Whiteever,. Murdo an his guidwyfe saw thaim nae mair, an eftir getherin up aw the kettrens’ graith an siller, thay gaed hame thegither weill pleased. Eftir that, bit bi bit, Meg mendit hir daftlyke weys, sae that in the hinner end, thay leaved out thair days in a mair wycelyke mainner an in peace an plentie.