

## THE SMITH'S GUIDWYFE FRAE YARRAEFUIT

By David Purves

A guid whyle syne, the bleksmith at Yarraefuit haed twae brithers prenticed til him: baith steidie lads an fyne healthy fallaes the tyme thay war taen on. But eftir a wee whyle, the yungir o the twae turnt fauch an shilpit lyke, lost his appetite an shawed ither signs o ailin. In the feinish, the pur laddie burst oot greitin, an telt his brither he wes fair duin, an wad be brocht til his lair throu the smith's guidwyfe. Seeminlie, she wes a wutch on the sly, tho naebodie kent it.

“Ilka nicht,” he grat, “she cums ben ti ma bedsyde, kisses me, pits a magic brecham roun ma neck, an chynge me inti a mukkil horse. Syne she lowps on ma back an gars me gallop for myles ower Minchmuir, whare she an hir bogil freins haud thair unco feasts. Ah wadna lyke ti tell ye whit thay eat, naither Ah wad! It wad gar ye bowk. Thare she tethers me aw nicht, an at the dawin, Ah cairrie hir hame on ma back. Syne She taks aff ma brecham and here im Ah masell again, but that wearie, Ah can haurlie staun. An this is the wey Ah pit in ma nichts whyle ye ir aw sound sleepin! Ah im fair duin, sae Ah im! Ah dinnae think Ah can gaun on lyke this onie langir.”

Whan the aulder brither heard aw this, he declared he wad lyke for ti tak his chaunce o a nicht amang thir wutches; sae that verra nicht, he pat his brither in his ain bed, neist the waw, an lay wauken in his steid or the tyme the wutch wumman appeared forordnar. She cam awricht, haudin the brecham in her haunds, an kisst him ful on the mou; an whan she flang the brecham ower the aulder brither's heid, up sprang in his steid a mukkil, broun huntin naig. The leddie clam on his back an stertit oot for the trystin place that nicht, that turnt oot ti be the grundhouss o the local laird.

Thare, she an hir gruesum freins helpit thairsells til a hantil claret an whusky, but the mukkil hunter, that wes left in a spare staw in the stables, birzed his heid agin the waw or he lowsent the brecham. In the end, he warsilt it aff an it fell on the grund, whan he recuivert his human shape. Haudin the brecham afore him he courit doun an dernt himsell at the back o the staw, an whan his mistress cam forrit ti fesh him oot, quick as ye lyke, he cuist the magic brecham ower hir heid; an thare stuid a braw gray meir, champin at the bit!

He lowpit on hir back an galloped aff, stourin ower the muir throu hedge an sheuch, or, luikin doun, he saw she haed tint a shae frae ane o hir front feet. Sae he taen hir til a smiddie near Tweedsmuir, haed the shae replaced, an a new ane putten on the ither front fuit anaw. Syne he spurred hir wallop in up an doun a glaurie ploued rigg or she wes fair forfochen. In the feinish, he rade hir hame, an poued the brecham aff hir heid juist in tyme for hir ti creep intil hir bed in hir ain maik, afore hir guidman waukent up, for ti gether himsell for his day's darg.

Syne the honest smith rase up, littil kennin whit haed been gaun on aw nicht, but his wyfe girmed she wes no weill, lyke ti dee, an fleicht him ti send for a doctor. Sae he roused his twae prentices. The aulder ane gaed oot, an suin cam back wi a mediciner frae Ettrickhaugh. The doctor made ti feel hir pulse, but she set hir teeth, hid hir haunds anaith the claes an wadna shaw thaim. The doctor didnae richt ken whit ti dae, but hir man, blek affrontit at his wyfe's cairrie-on, yerkit aff the bed claes, an fand, dumfounert, that the twae horseshuin war aye nailit til hir haunds! An whan thay luikit at hir haill bodie, thay coud see that the baith sydes o hir war fair cuivert wi derk skurls an sair skartit frae the kicks the prentice haed gien hir, throu the ryde up an doun the ploued field.

The twae brithers syne cam forrit an telt awthing that haed befawn. The neist day, the wutch wes shekkilt an harled bi the burley man afore the wurthie beylies at Selkirk. She threipit she wes saikless, but the beylies wadnae heed hir. Thay kent fyne whit haed ti be duin wi a wutch, an she wes tryit an condemned ti be burnt ti daith on a stane at the Bulsheugh, a sentence that wes cairrit oot athoot mair adae. An awbodie said, for aw hir skellochin an skraichin in the lowes, it fairlie serred hir richt.

In the hinner end, eftir spendin a guid whyle no weill in his bed, the yungir brither recuivert his guid health bi eatin butter kired frae the milk o cous, hirselt in kirkyairds, a weill-kent cure for the ills brocht on throu mellin wi wutches.