



The Sharp Grey Sheep

(Scottish Version of Cinderella)

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Scottish

Advanced
6 min read

There was a king and a queen, and they had a daughter, and the queen found death, and the king married another. And the last queen was bad to the daughter of the first queen, and she used to beat her and put her out of the door. She sent her to herd the sheep, and was not giving her what should suffice her. And there was a sharp (horned) grey sheep in the flock that was coming with meat to her.

The queen was taking wonder that she was keeping alive and that she was not getting meat enough from herself, and she told it to the henwife. The henwife thought that she would send her own daughter to watch how she was getting meat, and Ni Mhaol Charach [Bald Scabby Thing], the henwife's daughter, went to herd the sheep with the queen's daughter. The sheep would not come to her so long as Ni Mhaol Charach was there, and Ni Mhaol Charach was staying all the day with her.

The queen's daughter was longing for her meat, and she said, "Set thy head on my knee, and I will dress thy

hair.”

And Ni Mhaol Charach set her head on the knee of the queen’s daughter, and she slept.

The sheep came with meat to the queen’s daughter, but the eye that was in the back of the head of the bald black-skinned girl, the henwife’s daughter, was open, and she saw all that went on, and when she awoke she went home and told it to her mother, and the henwife told it to the queen, and when the queen understood how the girl was getting meat, nothing at all would serve her but that the sheep should be killed.

The sheep came to the queen’s daughter and said to her, “They are going to kill me, but steal thou my skin and gather my bones and roll them in my skin, and I will come alive again, and I will come to thee again.”

The sheep was killed, and the queen’s daughter stole her skin, and she gathered her bones and her hoofs and she rolled them in the skin; but she forgot the little hoofs. The sheep came alive again, but she was lame.

She came to the king’s daughter with a halting step, and she said, “Thou didst as I desired thee, but thou hast forgotten the little hoofs.”

And she was keeping her in meat after that.

There was a young prince who was hunting and coming often past her, and he saw how pretty she was, and he asked, “Who’s she?”

And they told him, and he took love for her, and he was often coming the way; but the bald black-skinned girl, the henwife’s daughter, took notice of him, and she told it to her mother, and the henwife told it to the queen.

The queen was wishful to get knowledge what man it was, and the henwife sought till she found out whom he (was), and she told the queen. When the queen heard who it was she was wishful to send her own daughter in his way, and she brought in the first queen’s daughter, and she set her own daughter to herd in her place, and she was making the daughter of the first queen do the cooking and every service about the house.

The first queen’s daughter was out a turn, and the prince met her, and he gave her a pair of golden shoes. And he was wishful to see her at the sermon, but her muime [stepmother] would not let her go there.

But when the rest would go she would make ready, and she would go after them, and she would sit where he

might see her, but she would rise and go before the people would scatter, and she would be at the house and everything in order before her muime would come. But the third time she was there the prince was wishful to go with her, and he sat near to the door, and when she went he was keeping an eye on her, and he rose and went after her. She was running home, and she lost one of her shoes in the mud; and he got the shoe, and because he could not see her he said that the one who had the foot that would fit the shoe was the wife that would be his.

The queen was wishful that the shoe should fit her own daughter, and she put the daughter of the first queen in hiding, so that she should not be seen till she should try if the shoe should fit her own daughter.

When the prince come to try the shoe on her, her foot was too big, but she was very anxious that the shoe should fit her, and she spoke to the henwife about it. The henwife cut the points of her toes off that the shoe might fit her, and the shoe went on her when the points of the toes were cut.

When the wedding day came the daughter of the first queen was set in hiding in a nook that was behind the fire.

When the people were all gathered together, a bird came to the window, and he cried, "The blood 's in the shoe, and the pretty foot's in the nook at the back of the fire."

One of them said, "What is that creature saying?"

And the queen said, "It's no matter what that creature is saying; it is but a nasty, beaky, lying creature."

The bird came again to the window; and the third time he came, the prince said, "We will go and see what he is saying."

And he rose and he went out, and the bird cried, "The blood's in the shoe, and the pretty foot's in the nook that is at the back of the fire."

He returned in, and he ordered the nook at the back of the fire to be searched. And they searched it, and they found the first queen's daughter there, and the golden shoe on the one foot. They cleaned the blood out of the other shoe, and they tried it on her, and the shoe fitted her, and its like was on the other foot. The prince left the daughter of the last queen, and he married the daughter of the first queen, and he took her from them with

him, and she was rich and lucky after that.

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