

The Barn Elves

Folk-Lore And Legends: English

English

Intermediate
2 min read

An honest Hampshire farmer was sore distressed by the nightly unsettling of his barn. However straightly, over night, he laid his sheaves on the threshing floor, for the application of the morning's flail, when morning came all was topsy-turvy, higgledy-piggledy, though the door remained locked, and there was no sign whatever of irregular entry.

Resolved to find out who played him these mischievous pranks, Hodge couched himself one night deeply among the sheaves, and watched for the enemy. At length midnight arrived. The barn was illuminated as if by moonbeams of wonderful brightness, and through the keyhole came thousands of elves, the most diminutive that could be imagined. They immediately began their gambols among the straw, which was soon in the most admired disorder. Hodge wondered, but interfered not, but at last the supernatural thieves began to busy themselves in a way still less to his taste, for each elf set about conveying the crop away, a straw at a time, with astonishing activity and perseverance. The keyhole was still their port of egress and regress, and it[186]resembled the aperture of a beehive, on a sunny day in June. The farmer was rather annoyed at seeing his grain vanish in this fashion, when one of the fairies, while hard at work, said to another, in the tiniest voice that ever was heard—

“I weat; you weat?” (I sweat; do you sweat?)

Hodge could contain himself no longer. He leapt out, crying—

“The deuce sweat ye! Let me get among ye.”

The fairies all flew away so frightened that they never disturbed the barn any more.

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