

The Two Gossips

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Celtic

Advanced
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At Minane, near Tracton, there was a young couple whose name was Mac Daniel, and they had such a fine, wholesome-looking child, that the fairies determined on having it in their company, and putting a changeling in its place; but it so happened that Mrs. Mac Daniel had a gossip whose name was Norah Buckeley, and she was going by the house they lived in (it was a nice new slated one, by the same token) just coming on the dusk of the evening. She thought it too late to step in and ask how her gossip was, as she had above a mile and half further to go, and moreover she knew the fairies were abroad, for all along the road before her from Carrigaline, one eddy of dust would be followed by another, which was a plain sign that the good people were out taking their rounds; and she had pains in her hones with dropping so many curchies (courtesies). However, Norah Buckeley, when she came opposite her gossip's house, stopped short, and made another, and said almost under her breath, "God keep all here from harm!" No sooner had these words been uttered than she saw one of the windows lifted up, and her gossip's beautiful child without any more to do handed out; she could not tell, if her life depended on it, how, or by whom: no matter for that, she went to the window and took the child from whatever handed it, and covered it well up in her cloak, and carried it away home with her.

Next morning early she went over to see her gossip, who began to make a great moan to her, of how different her child was from what it had ever been before, crying all the night, and keeping her awake, and how nothing she could think of would quiet it.

"I'll tell you what you'll do with the brat," said Norah Buckeley, looking as knowing as if she knew more than all

the rest of the world: “whip it well first, and then bring it to the cross-roads, and leave the fairy in the ditch there for any one to take that pleases; for I have your own child at home safe and sound as he was handed out of the window last night to me.”

Mrs. Mac Daniel on hearing this, when the surprise was over, stepped out to get a rod, and her gossip happening for one instant to look after her, on turning round again, found the fairy gone, and neither she nor the child’s mother saw any more of it, nor could ever hear a word of tidings how it disappeared in so wonderful a manner.

Mrs. Mac Daniel went over with great speed to her gossip’s house, and there she got her own child, and brought him back with her, and a stout young man he is at this day.

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