

Auld Cruivie

As told by Stanley Robertson



Awa hiney back, in the days before the widden bilers, there lived an auld wummin, and she'd one wee laddie ca'd Jack. She bade in the Lumphanan area an she workit for the Laird o the black hairt, and the Laird o the black hairt was a greedy auld gadgie. And the poor wummin, fer a the things she done fer him, only got tae bide in one hovel o' a wee hoosie, nae furniture, an a she made her furniture oot o was wee bits of sticks that she could get fae the forest. And fan her wee laddie Jack was the age o five, the Laird o

the black hairt said,

‘Now, in order for you to bide in yer hoose, this wee laddie has to become the keepich - the keeper of the sheep, the shepherd.’

Even though he was only five, that wee laddie had to ging and sit under the auld Lumphanan and guard the auld Laird o the black heart's sheep, and ivery day his mother had to come and bring him a wee bitie to eat to taste his moost and keep him goin.

And so she would visit him everyday with something to eat, and eh wee laddie sat under Auld Cruivie, which was the king of the forest – a huge ake tree surrounded by a these attendant trees in a circle. He sat under there keepin his sheep, cause in tha days there wisnae only folk tae steal the sheep, there was a lot of wild animals – a lot of foxes and wolves in tha days - and this poor laddie hid tae guard the sheep by screaming holy blue murder when there was anybuddy comin aboot. But he did it, and all he iver done wis sit under this

Auld Cruivie. It shaded him in the too hot days, it kept him dry in the afa rainy days. So wee Jack would sit there.

Because the length of time he took to sit, he started to tune intae Mither Nature, and then Mither Nature started to teach him the language o the birds. So Jack cid understand every bird's language, and he was able tae converse wi the birds. Many years had passed, an he came upon midsummer's eve day. An that day, there wis an afa excitement and furore gan aboot the trees, an he noticed a lot o the wee birdies gettin their wee fledglings and flyin awa wi them and takin them awa somewise different. And Jack says tae this bird,

'Fit's a' the cairry on aboot? Why are ye a' movin?'

He says, 'Oh Jack, this is a very, very special day, this is eh fiftieth year, and every fifty years Auld Cruivie rises oot o his birth spot, and a' the attendant trees leave their spots an they go right doon tae tek their fifty year drink fae the burn, and then the trees dance taegither, an Auld Cruivie mates wi' some o the younger trees tae keep his lineage going.

Jack says, 'I never heard o that before,'

The bird says, 'I bet yer mither kens aboot it.'

Later on his mither came. An she says tae Jack, 'I've got something tae gie ye, some instructions tae gie ye.' She giv him something big and soft, and says, 'Pit this in yer pooch, it'll halp ye fan yer needin tae be halped. Noo this is a special day, this is the fiftieth year, and tonight Auld Cruivie and the ither trees will rise fae their birth spots. But into their birth spots are the most wonderful jewels and gems. Now, niver on no account go intae Auld Cruivie's birth spot, because if ye ging into his birth spot and ye dare tek a gem, ye'll sink aboot ten feet at a time, and ye'll no get oot. If ye ging intae one o the attendant trees and mibbe tek two, three at the very maist, you'll only sink doon a good bit. But I'll give ye somethin' to help ye to get oot o yer predicament when the time comes.'

She says, ‘But the auld laird o the black hairt kens and the greedy auld bech’ll come doon an cause an afa cairry on if he sees ye, dear, an if ye go near Auld Cruivie’s birth spot he’ll kill ye stone deid.’

And Jack says, ‘Well I’ll keep awa fae Auld Cruivie’s birth spot an I’ll keep awa fae the auld laird.’

So later that efterneen nearly a’ the birds are awa, and jist the trees is left. There wis a strange eerie kind of atmosphere comin over the auld road far the trees were. An the very sheep are afa quiet. And then the skiffie lassie fae the castle fa had kent Jack fer a few years and liked him cem an says, ‘Jack, fitever ye dee, be very careful of the auld laird o’ the black hairt, because he’s got it in his mind tae kill ye if ye look near Auld Cruivie’s treasure.’

An’ Jack said, ‘Well ye neednae worry, I’m nae goin tae look near Auld Cruivie’s treasure.’

So the time passes, an the darkness starts tae fall – it’s almost midnight in the auld road. Jack hears a strange sort o creaking feeling, and hears a queer, strange, fairy-like creepy music gan aboot. Like as if there wis an unknown band o strange creatures playing tunes.

The creaking gets louder, so Jack moves doon the road a bit, and then there’s a great thunderous movement when Auld Cruivie rises right oot o his birth spot and all his attendant trees rise wi him, and they walk doon the hill to the burn. At the burn they could tek their fifty year drink, which wis very important fer the trees. An wi’ this music, the trees a’ started tae dance wi each ither, an then Auld Cruivie starts tae mate wi all o the younger trees, tae mak sure his line wid carry on.

Then, fan they looked doon their birth spot, Auld Cruivie’s got a’ these wonderful treasures, the gems and jewels, and so has a’ the attendant trees. An Jack jumps doon into the halla of one o the attendant trees, he picks up three

gems, an' sinks awa doon inta the earth. An fan he looks up, he's a good bitty awa, but then the skiffie lassie came back and she cries oot, 'Jack, far are ye?'

Cos the auld laird o the black hairt was inside Auld Cruivie's birth-spot an' he was stealin and stealin til he was away doon the hills, and he would never get oot, he wis too far doon. So Jack minded his mother had give him something, an he took it oot – it was a strong ladder she made oot o the bow, so he threw it up and the lassie managed to attach it someway, and Jack was able to climb oot o the birth spot.

Jack hid three jewels, which was enough to keep ony man goin fer life. And then this chilly music stops, an Auld Cruivie stops the dancin an the matin. An all the trees come back, jump inta their birth spots and the laird o the black hairt was in a feedin frenzy, he was away miles doon an Auld Cruivie come and jist crunched him doon wi the rest of the treasures that wis lyin there. An ye may say he was that greedy, he jist really dug his ane grave.

Efter a while, a new laird came to the castle, but he wasnae a laird wi a black hairt, he wis a kindlier man.

So says to the auld wummin, 'How long have you workit?'

She says, 'I've workit a' ma life fer that laird.'

And he says, 'This is all I've got,' he says, 'I can surely get you a better place tae bide than this smelly, scabby hovel.'

Jack got three jewels that wur priceless, but he was able to buy his mither a fine hoose to hersel, an a' the trimmings – wonderful furniture, and the best of everything. An the laird o the black hairt gave her money an a', back pay she'd never been payed, and Jack was offered his job as the keeper, but the laird would pay him well.

So Jack married the skiffie lassie, they did well, the auld wummin had a hoose o her ain, an everybuddy did very well o it.

The moral o the story is: Man has been stealin all his life fae Mither Nature, and pittin nothing back. If you keep stealin fae Mither Nature and pitting naethin back in its place, then nae winder the earth keeps havin all these earthquakes and fightin back tae you. Everybuddy should be aware, ye ken, o nae wastin earth's resources and nae destroyin anything good o nature. Nearly everything is gan awa because man hasnae looked aefter the things that he's got. So if man looks aefter the things that he's got then it'll be a far better place if everybiddy's green minded. And that's the ancient tale of Auld Cruivie.