

# The Last Fairy o the Auld Road

By Stanley Robertson

**An original story, told by the late, great Aberdeen Traveller storyteller, Stanley Robertson. This is presented as told, in Aberdeen dialect. It's a good example of a traveller story.**



Intae the heart o the Auld Road there stood a bonnie natural monteclara well. It wis the pure mountain blood that flowed aff the hillside and collected intae a birlin puddle fu o puddocks and boatie waders. Underneath the stroops o the well wis whar about the Fairy folks boorichied. Noo only a puckle selected Traivellers hid gandered them gan aboot cos they were awfy shy o people. Yet it wis there they bade, and they didnae really fash themsels wi folks cos there wis only three hooses on the hale length and breadth o the Auld Road. Occasionally they wid help oot a fairmer wi the hearst as lang as the fairmer gaed them nae payment – cos there's nae charge for a fairy's gift.

Noo underneath intae their domain there were pixies, sprites, goblins and elves, but it wis far too smaa for tae hoose waater kelpies or the broonies cos they bade awa at a grotto aside the River Dee. Their paths wid cross at times but they mair or less kept tae the realms o their ain pairts.

King Futrick Face ruled under the Auld Road. He wisnae an awfy bonny cratur in oor terms, but he wis classed as something special amongst his ain kind. Tae humans he looked like an unca boglet. He hid a lump upon his back like Benahighlie, a pair o the biggest pointed lugs, a lang snoot for sniping neeps and a reek came aff o him that wid choke a cuddy. Everybody in his realm obeyed him. Whit he said wis law and naebody challenged his authority. Sometimes his rule wis awfy strict. There wisnae a fairy wha wid disobey the king.

Een o his rules wis that nae fairy wis gang tae leave the kingdom, cos since man had gotten modernised wi aa his new fangled technology then there wis nae need for the fairies. Whin fairies are nae remembered by folks then they jist vanish intae obliviation. Fit they really mean is that they gang intae hiding and winnae come oot for hunners o years. Sometimes the conditions between men and

fairies becomes strained and the fairies jist close themsels hinnie awa frae menkind.

Biding in amongst the fairies wis an awfy bonnie traditional wee quinie fairy. Her name wis Jinty and she wis awfy weel liked by the ither cratur that lived underneath the Auld Road. It sae happened that ay day a young Traiveller lassie wis walking up the Auld Road and she hid bin collecting blueberries frae the side o the Auld Road. Though, like the fairies, her folks nae langer bade according tae the wyes cos the roads were closed doon tae the traditional Traivellers. Amongst the Traivellers they kept up their traditions inside their ain hooses and passed them on through an oral tradition and telt their bairnies aa about the auld wyes and preserved the Cant Language. The wee lassie's name wis Clysta and her mither and faither hid rented oot a cottage for the Simmer at the nearby Bogentassie. Clysta liked tae mak blueberry jam. She wid bile her berries intae a jeelie pan wi the sugar and rind peel and puckle ginger and whin it wis aa ready she wid strain it through a muslin cloot tae tak awa the hard seeds that comes aff the blueberries. It noo happened by fate that Clysta stopped tae tak a drink at the heart's blood o the well. Aa the fairy folks got excited it the thought o a lassie being sae close tae their hame.

The Auld Road winded on for about three miles and the waatery well wis fair at the bottom o a hill whar the road veered aff intae a different direction. There wis a big aik at the left hand side o the well and that represented the black magic, and at the tither side there lay a bonnie rodden tree and of course conter ballanced it wi the white magic. Clysta shouted oot aloud,

“My mither telt me that naebody his bade here for fifety years and noo I'll be the first Traiveller lassie tae drink oot o this well.” Clysta dighted her hands over the puddocky waater, scooped up a sloch, pit it tae her lips and drank o Adam's wine. The sensation o the ice cauld sloch o waater tantalised her taste buds and trickled doon past her tongue quaiching the thrapple. Eence the thirst saited, Clysta sat doon under the rodan tree and jist luxuriated intae the cwochy spot. Nature aroused her awareness untae the beauty and grandeur o the place and it kittled up a hale dose o reeking emotions and gaed her plenty o food for thocht. As she rested she reminded upon some o the stories her grandfather telt her about the Auld Road and aa its lore. The Traivellers believed intae the fairies and noo she wis sitting intae a spot whar some o her folks actually said that they hid espied the fairyfolk. The wee lassie started tae sing a fairy song that her granny aye sung her tae sleep. It wis the sang “Colin's Cattle” and it telt

the story o a lassie wha hid her caie stowen awa with fairies and left her lamenting their loss. Clysta began tae sing.

*“O a maiden sat sighin on the banks o the Lea, chro chalin chro chalin chro chalin for me.”*

This wis far too much for Jinty to bear. Here she wis, stuck intae fairyland and jist a puckle feet awa wis a wee human lassie singing about the fairies. Jinty prigged wi the King Futrick Face tae let her ootside for bit a wee shottie o time so she could mak freens wi the wee Traiveller lassie. They hid sae muckle in common and they could share a lot o things atween them twa.

Futrick Face felt in a generous mood so he allowed Jinty tae gang ootside and spik tae Clysta. Jinty wis aside hersel wi glee cos this wis her very first encounter wi a real lassie and she wis aa excited up tae the naddies. Noo she hid tae only let Clysta think that she wis jist anither quinie. She dressed herself up intae a bonnie pale blue outfit and she looked really braw. At lang last she wid be able tae get some gen on the modern lassie. Then, as if she came oot o a puff o blue reek, Jinty emerged oot frae naewye and she gaed Clysta a fleg.

Clysta asked her whar she did appear sae suddenly and Jinty said that she hid bin up on the hill collecting blueberries as weel. Clysta couldnae for love nor money fit wye her hands were no aa stained wi the blue dye o the berries. Jinty changed the subject richt awa and speired aboot whar she bade and whar she wis gan tae which Clysta telt her she wis gan back tae their cottage on the Bogentassie. “O the Bogentassie, I know it well. Could I walk back with you?”

“Weel I am gan awa noo so if ye are coming then ye better mak a spurtie on.”

The twa wee lassies trudged onwards whin it started tae get a bit rainy. Baith the wee lassies ran for aa they were worth and got back tae the Bogantassie cottage jist wi minutes tae spare or they wid hae bin drooked. Clysta’s mither gaed them a tool tae dry their heids and the twa quinies were killing theirsels laughing.

There wis a big pot o soup biling awa on an open hearth fire sway cos it wis a real auldfashioned kind a cottage. Jinty hid never tasted human soup and she liked it. She wis weel fed by the mither and aifter that Clysta took oot a mobile phone and started tae play on it. Jinty wis fascinated wi the scores rising high and she got a shottie o it but she couldnae mak heid nor tail o its working.

“Dae aa the bairnies play wi this kind o a contraptions?” asked Jinty.

“Every bairn nooadays aa hae computer games,” retorted Clysta.

“Whit aboot fairies, dae ye no believe in them onymar?”

“Weel I wis brought up as a Traiveller, so I believe in them, but there’s nae very muckle folks believe in fairies.”

“If folks dinna believe in fairies then they jist vanish oot o sicht.”

“That’s awfy sad. Whar dae they gang?”

“Underneath the puddocky well intae the Auld Road.”

Clysta says, “That’s whar I met ye.”

“I am gan tae get a rich moofae aff o King Futerick Face cos I wisnae supposed tae leave the well. But it is aa worth it tae mak freens wi anither lassie. I’ll hae tae gang awa but could I maybe come tae visit ye again?”

“Nae bother,” wis the reply.

Jinty flew back tae the Auld Road and back tae her well. She apologised tae the King and she wis on her best fairy behaviour cos she wanted tae gang and visit wi Clysta again. The fairy king gaed her permission tae be freens wi Clysta but certain rules hid tae be met. She hidnae iver tae tell folks that she wis a fairy, even though she hid telt and hinted tae Clysta that she wis een. So Jinty managed tae secure a wee freen wi Clysta at the times whin her folks came oot tae the Bogentassie.

Clysta telt her mither that silly wee Jinty fairly believed she wis a real fairy. Aabody wid laugh aboot it. Yet she really wis a fairy frae the Puddock Well on the Auld Road o Lumphanan.

