

The Paddo

As told by Margaret Tollick, with credit to Robert Chambers' *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*.

Margaret believes passionately in the need to keep our Scots language and local dialects alive. She has given this very old folktale which is told in Scots.



Aince on a day, lang afore you, or me, or onybody we ever kent wis born, there lived a poor widow and her dochter.

Weel now, ae day the widow set to, to make bannocks – but here, when she went to fell her joug wi water, there wis nane left. So she sent her young dochter awa tae the well, tae fetch a bucket-fu. The lassie gaed, and gaed an better gaed, till she cam tae the well. But when she keekit in, the well that was usually lipperin fu wis near dry, an try as she would she couldna reach far enough down to fill her bucket. What wis she to do? Her mither wis waiting fir water – nae water, nae bannocks – nae bannocks, naethin tae eat that day! The puir lassie sat doon at the side o the well an fell a-greetin.

Sair the tears, an loud the sobbin – till WHOOSH – a Paddo cam loup-loup-loupin out o the well, sat doon aside the lassie, and speired at her whit was wrang. The lassie telt him everything, an wis fir greetin mair, till up spak the Paddo. “If ye wid promise to marry me, I’ll fetch ye plenty o water!” Noo, the lassie wis richt bonnie, but she wisnae fir marryin a Paddo! And, thinkin the Paddo wis jist havin her on, wi a licht hert she said, “Aye, Paddo, I’ll marry ye, gin ye fill my bucket wi water!” So the Paddo did – an wi a smile an a curtesy, and nivir anither thocht o the Paddo, the lassie gaed awa hame wi the water.

Bannocks were baked, and eaten, an the widow an her bonnie dochter were about tae douse the candle and gae to their beds when, o a sudden, they heard something at the door! Standin still as still, they listened – an this is the sang they heard:

*O open the door, my hinnie, my heart,
O open the door, my ain true love,
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i’ the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Whit noise is that at the door?” says the mither.

“Hout!” says her dochter, “it’s naethin but a clarty Paddo.”

“Weel, then, ye had better open the door tae the poor Paddo,” says her mither. So the lassie opened the door, and the Paddo cam loup-loup-loupin in, and sat down by the ingle-side. Then he sang:

*O gie me my supper, my hinnie, my heart,
O gie me my supper, my ain true love.
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i’ the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Hout,” says the lassie, “wid I gie a clarty Paddo his supper?!”

“O aye,” says the mither. “Ye maun gie the poor Paddo his supper.” So the Paddo got his supper, and efter that he sings again:

*O put me to bed, my hinnie, my heart,
O put me to bed, my ain true love.
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i’ the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Hout,” says the lassie, “Would I put a clarty Paddo tae his bed?”

“O aye,” says the mither. “Ye maun put the poor Paddo tae his bed.” So the paddo wis put tae his bed, and then he sings again:

*Now fetch me an axe, my hinnie, my heart,
Now fetch me an axe, my ain true love.
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i’ the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Hout,” says the lassie, “Would I fetch a clarty Paddo an axe?”

“O aye,” says the mither. “Ye maun fetch the poor Paddo an axe.” So the lassie fetched an axe tae the Paddo, and then he sings again:

*Now chap aff my head, my hinnie, my heart,
Now chap aff my head, my ain true love.
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i’ the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Hout,” says the lassie, “Would I chap aff the head o a clarty Paddo?”

“Oh aye,” says the mither. “Ye maun chap aff the poor Paddo’s head.” So the lassie chapped aff the head o the Paddo. An afore she could blink her een the Paddo had disappeared – and there had started up instead the bonniest young Prince that ever was seen! And the handsome young Prince says:

*Marry me now, my hinnie, my heart,
Marry me now, my ain true love.
Remember the promise that you and I made
Down i' the meadow, where we twa met.*

“Richt gladly,” says the lassie, “I will marry you now!”

“O aye,” says the mither, “ye maun marry the bonnie Prince!”

And so the lassie and the Prince were married and lived happy a the rest o their days.