

Whuppity Stoorie

As told by Senga Munro in Scots

A lang lang time ago, afore your granny was born – or her granny, or her granny, or her granny, there lived a wife at Kittlerumpit.

Noo, she had a man, an her man used tae gan tae the market, an he'd gan tae the pub, an he'd get drunk. Wan day, he jist didnae come hame. Some folks said that he wis takken tae be a sodjer, an ither folks said he jist went awa. So the gid wife o Kittlerumpit wis left with a fairm tae rin a on her lee lain, wi her wee bairn, an her no so wee grice, or grumphie.

She needed the grumphie, because every three or fower months it wid hae nine or ten wee pigs. Aefter they were fed up an takken tae the market, they wid pay the rent an onythin else she needed that she couldnae grow on the fairm.

Noo wan day she wis takkin the brock intae the pig tray, an she wis jist aboot tae empty it intae the troch, when she saw her grumphie lyin on its back wi it's legs in the air. She thocht tae hersel, 'What'll A dae?!'

She dashed ower, an she gied it the kiss o life, rubbed its lugs an pu'd its tail, but it didnae mak ony difference. She went oot, sat doon, an she roared an she gret, an she roared an she gret. She thocht, 'What am A gon tae dae? How am A gon tae live withoot a grumphie? There's the wee laddie tae look aefter as weel!'

Jist as she thocht this wouldnae dae, an she dried her een, she looked doon the hill, an there comin up the hill wis a ladylike buddie. As she got nearer, she saw that she wis wearin a green cloak, a green frock, a white peenie, a white match an a black pinted hat. An she wis no blachit, this lady came right up an said, 'A suppose ye want me tae dae somethin aboot sortin yer grumphie?'

'Hoo did you ken?'

'A ken they kind o things. Noo, A'm no gan tae do it fer nothin ye ken. What'll ye gie me?'

Withoot thinkin, the gid wife said, 'Onythin! I'll gie ye onythin, if ye can sort ma grumphie.'

'Richt noo, you jist sit there, dinnae move an A'll see to yer grumphie.'

Noo you ken, and A ken, when somebody tells you no tae dae somethin, what dae ye dae? Well, that's what the gid wife of Kittlerumpit did.

When the lady went roond the corner and intae the pig tray, aff went the gid wife, an there wis a wee knothole. She stuck her ee tae the knothole, an there she saw the lady tak a bottle oot o her pooch, gie it a shoogle, tak aff the lid, an pit some o the potion on the pig's snout.

Ahint it's ears an on the tip o its tail, an a the time she wis mutterin somethin that soonded like 'Bitter, batter, holy water, pitter, patter, holy water'.

Afore she had finished pittin the potion on the grumphie's tail it got up, an went ower to the troch, sayin, 'Ahhh lovely, this is gid – A'm stervin!' The gid wife of Kittlerumpit got back onto her set.

The lady said, 'A've din it – yer grumphie's fine and noo A'll have yer bairn.'
'Ma bairn? Ye cannae hae ma bairn! Why no hae the grumphie?'
'What wid a lady like me be daein wi a grumphie?'
'Well, oh why do you no tak me?'
'Tak you? What wid A dae wi a fat fairmer's wife?'
'A'll tell ye what though, it's gon tae tak me three days tae be ready, so if you could jalouse my name, before I get back, then A'll no tak the bairn.'

Wi that, the lady turned on her heel, went up the brae through the wood, an disappeared oot o sicht. The gid wife o Kittlerumpit roared an she gret an she roared an she gret, an rocked the cradle wi her fit an felt that sorry.

She thocht: 'No, A'll have tae think o a nim. Noo what cid her nim be? A ken – Aggie. No, no she disnae look like an Aggie. Jeanie? No, no, she's no a Jeanie A dinnae think. Em, Georgina? No. Euphebia? No. Donaldina? No, no it couldnae be that either.' An then, ye ken what it's like, she got a bit daft. 'Big Lang Neb! Hen Tea! Big Bahookie!'

Then she decided she'd jist gan tae her bed. She put the bairn in the cradle and went to her bed, but not a wink did she sleep that nicht. She reeshled an she rummled, an she kept thinkin o names...it wis an awfy nicht. But in the mornin, aeffter she had fed the grumphie, she thocht, 'There's nae pint in ma stayin here.'

She got her plaid an wrapped the bairn up, an off they went up the brae, into the wood, richt through the wood an at the tap there was a quarry.

She looked doon intae the quarry, for she had heard someone singin. There in the bottom o the quarry, in front o a bonnie hoose, was a lady in a green cloak, a green frock, a white peenie, a white match an a black pointed hat. She wis at her spinnin wheel, an the spinnin wheel was gawn roond an roond, an she was singin: 'Little kens ma gid dame at hame, that Whuppity Stoorie is ma name! Little kens ma gid dame at hame, that Whuppity Stoorie is ma name!'

'Whuppity Stoorie? Ma gidness, A wid never ha thocht o that name in a month o Sabbaths.' An the gid wife o Kittlerumpit laughed, she laughed and she laughed as she went doon the hill.

That nicht she certainly had a gid sleep. On the day that Whuppity Stoorie wis tae come back, she was on wi her Sabbath best claes, but afore it wis time she rubbed her een tae mak it look as if she had been greetin, she got some stoor and pit it doon her cheeks an waited.

Then, doon the hill cam the lady. She got up an curtsied, sayin, 'Gid aefternoon ma lady.'

'A've come fer the bairn.'

'Well, are ye no goin tae let me try an jalouse what yer nim is? Is it, is it Grizzle?'

'No, it's no Grizzle!'

'Is it Ellen?'

'No, it's no Ellen.'

The gid wife o Kittlerumpit stood up tae her fu hicht, pit her hauns on her wist, an said, lookin up, 'Ah weel, ma high an mighty Whuppity Stoorie, yer no getting ma bairn!'

And at that, Whuppity Stoorie began to birl roond and roond and roond and roond, an she took aff like a rocket. She wis never seen again, fae that day tae this.

But the gid wife o Kittlerumpit? Well, the grumphie lived fer a guy long time an it wis aye haein wee piggies, an ye ken the fairm ran awfy weel. An her wee laddie? He grew up tae be a gid fairmer, an he aye looked aifter his mither.

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