

Transcript

Ruth Kirkpatrick: My name is Ruth Kirkpatrick; I live in Edinburgh but originally come from the North East of Scotland.

Now I wonder do any of you know of a place called Kittlerumpit?

Audience: No.

Ruth: No, neither did I, and I am not actually sure where it is, but I have heard a story about a woman that lived there, and she was known as the Auld Wife of Kittlerumpit. Now she had not had her trouble to seek, this poor wife, for her man had gone away off to the fair one day and he had never come back. Now nobody kened what had happened to him, they didn't know if he had found another dame to run away with, or if he had maybe been murdered, or maybe he had been devoured by the press-gangs, those ferocious hungry beasts that prowled the countryside in those days and swallowed up men all over the place.

Well the poor wife of Kittlerumpit was left with her wee laddie bairn still sucking at her breast, and a pig. Well one morning she got up, and as if things hadn't been bad enough, she went and looked at the pig and it was not well, it looked like it might be dying. It was groaning and moaning, rolling on its back with its four wee trotters up in the air. And as if this wasn't bad enough, it was due to give her piglets which would have given her a wee bit of money. Well she sat down on the knocking stone with her wee bairny and she roared and she grat. She grat that sore, sorer than she had grat when her man left, because this pig was her life.

Well, then she noticed coming down the road was somebody, a strange looking body, it looked like a woman but she walked more like a laddie. Slowly she marched down, and as she got nearer she could see she wore a green velvet dress with a bonny crisp white apron, and on her head a big tall bonnet made of beaver. Well this woman comes marching up with a big staff - you don't see many folk nowadays walking with a big staff do you? - but this body was, and she walked right up to the auld woman of Kittlerumpit, and she said, 'Now don't you give me your piper's news and your fiddler's tales because I ken all about it. I ken all about your man leaving, and I ken all about how your pig's not well. But I could tell you this, I could soon fix that pig, would you like that?' 'Oh could you?' said the wife of Kittlerumpit, 'Could you fix my pig? Oh, if you could make it better, well, that would be just the best news ever, because at the moment I am feeling like the most unfortunate soul on earth.' 'Oh aye,' she said, 'I could do that if you like, I could make your pig better, but what would you give me in return?' 'Oh' said the wife, 'I would give you anything at all, anything you asked for.' 'Anything?' said the woman. 'Aye,' said the wife, 'anything at all.' 'Very well then,' she says, 'I will just come over and see your pig.' So she stepped into the pigsty, she bent down into her bag and she took out a wee bottle of water. She shook the water, she put some on her fingertips and she rubbed the pig behind the lugs on its curly-wurly tail, and then right on the end of its neb (nose). And then she muttered a wee incantation 'Pitter-patter holy water. Pitter-patter holy water', will you join in?

Audience: Pitter-patter holy water, pitter-patter holy water.

Ruth: Up jumped the pig onto its wee trotters over to the trough and started gobbling up its breakfast [snorting sounds] right as rain. 'Oh' said the wife of Kittlerumpit 'oh, you have saved me now. Oh, now what can I give you in return? I could kiss the hem of your skirt,' 'Oh no,' said the woman, 'I don't go in for that sort of thing. And I am not a greedy soul, but I will tell you what I will take.' 'Anything,' says the wife of Kittlerumpit. 'Well, I will take that wee laddie bairn at your breast.' 'Oh no,' she said, 'you cannot take my wee laddie.' 'But you said I could have anything I liked.' 'But not my wee bairny.' 'Well, well,' she says, 'you can sit there and gurn all you like, but in the land that I live in you are allowed three days, and if you can come up with my real name within three days then I will not take him. I will be back in three days.' And away she went down the road with her great big staff.

Well the wife sat back down on the knocking stone and she cuddled her wee bairny. 'Oh my, what will I do? What will I do?' And she grat, and she begged and she prayed, but she knew it would make no difference.

Well, when the third day came, she decided she would get up with her wee bairny and take a wee stroll through the woods, and at least take her mind of her troubles. So as she walked, she came to an old quarry, and in the middle of the old quarry there was a beautiful fresh water spring, and any sound in that quarry echoed and carried all around it. So as she got near she began to hear a woman singing. So she crept closer and closer, and when she saw who it was - it was the auld fairy that had visited her - and here she was sitting spinning with her big spinning wheel. And as she sat she said, 'Little kens our good dame at hame, that Whuppity Stoorie is my name. Oh little kens our good dame at hame that Whuppity Stoorie is my name.' 'Oh' said the wife of Kittlerumpit, 'so that's her name.' She crept all the way back with her wee bairny back to her house.

And the next morning bright and early here comes auld fairy down the road again. And she comes marching up to the wife of Kittlerumpit and she says 'Stand and deliver, you know what I have come for, give me that bairn.' 'Oh well,' said the wife of Kittlerumpit, 'but could I no have a guess at your name?' 'Oh well,' said the old fairy, 'aye, we could have a bit of crack if you like, you can guess my name.' 'Oh well,' she said, 'is it Tiddle Tabouris?' 'Ha-ha-ha, no it's not,' she said, 'That's one try used up.' 'Oh well,' said the wife, 'is it Kiddy Terankus?' 'Ah, ha-ha-ha, no it's not, two tries used up, you have got one left,' she says. 'As if anybody with half an eye in their head would enjoy looking at you any longer, hurry up and get on with it.' 'Well,' she said, 'would it be Whuppity Stoorie?' Oh the old fairy went white with rage - as white as a sheet - and then she couldn't have moved quicker if a gun had gone off, far away down the road she shot just leaving a trail of dust and chuckies behind her.

So the auld wife of Kittlerumpit sat down on the knocking stone with her wee bairny and said, 'A goo and a gitty, my bonny wee tyke, you've now got your four-oories; for we've gien Nick a bone to pick wi' his wheels and his Whuppity Stoories.'

[End of Recording]