

TAID O THAT ILK



*an a pail o whytwaash*

## THE WATTIR BRAE

**T**HE MOWDIEWORT bene dargin sair aw the mornin, wi the wair-tid redd o hiz wie hame. Firstlins wi besoms, than wi disters, than on lethers an staups an cheirs, wi a birss an a pail o whyt-waash; ontill he hed stour in hiz thrappil an ein, an splairges o whyt-waash aw owre hiz blak furr, an a stound in hiz riggin furby weiriet airms.

Wair wes muivin in the air abuin an in the yird ablo an aroun him, thirlin evin hiz dirk an hameart wie houss wi its spreit o heivenlie discontentment an hert-hungir. It wes smaw wunner, than, at o a suddentie he flang doun hiz birss on the fluir, sayed 'Jings!' an 'Halp ma bob!' an also 'Ti Hekkilburnie wi the wair-tid redd' an joukit outby the houss wiout evin bydin ti pit on hiz coit. Sumthin upby wes cryin on him ringinlie, an he med fur the stey wie tonnel at awnsert in hiz kess ti the graivelt cairrage-dryve awned bi baists whas residentins ar nerrer the sunn an air. Sae he skartit an skreived an skraibilt an skrougit, an than he skrougit agane an skraibilt an skreived an skartit, dargin eydentlie wi hiz wie luifs an mumpin til hissell, 'Up we gang! Up we gang!' ontill at lest, pap! hiz snout cam out untill the sunnlicht, an he fand hissell rowin i the waarm gerss o a gryte meidaae.

'This is fine,' he sayed til hissell. 'This is bettir nir whyt-waashin!' The sunnschein strak het on hiz furr, saft grays kittilt hiz het brou, an eftir the out-the-vey warl o hiz dunnie at he hed leived ben sae lang, the bayin o the sonsie burds fawit on hiz dowfff herin amaist lik a roup. Lowpin aff hiz fowre legs at aince, in the jo o leivin an the delyte o wair ouden its reddin, he tuik the gate acorss the meidaae til he reikit a hege on the ither syde.

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“Up haud!” sayed ane eildit mappie at the slap. “Saxpence fur the privilege o weygang bi the prevat rodd!” He wes bouled owre in a gliff bi the fuffie an sneistie Mowdiewort, at skelpit on along the hege-syde jamphin at the ither mappies as thai keikit heistie-lik frae thair claps ti sei whitlik the stushie wes about.

“Ingan brie! Ingan brie!” he aff-takkit, an wes gane afoir thai’l cuid think o a richt settifsein repone. Than thai aw stertit ti grumph at ither. ‘Whitwey ar ye that stupid! Whitfur did ye no tel him – ’ Weill, whitwey did yow no say – ’ Ye mote mynded him – ’ an sae furth, in the uiswal wey: bot in course, it wes than ferr owre ahinhaun, as is aye the kess.

It aw semed owre guid ti be trew. Hither an yon throu the meidaes he stravaigit eydentlie, along the hege-raws, acorss the shaws, finndin awhours burds biggin, flouers sproutin, leifs thristin – awthin sonsie, an furthie, an thrang. An insteid o haein a wanristie inwutt jaggin at him an whusperin ‘Whyt-waash!’ he sumgates cuid anerlie feill whitlik jellie it wes ti be the ae lither tyke amang aw thon thrang ceitezans. Eftir aw, the best pairt o a holiday is aiblins no juist ti be ristin yeirsell, bot ti sei aw the ither fellaes beisie dargin.

He thocht hiz happienes wes complete whan, as he stravaigit along, o a suddentie he stuid on the ege o a weill stowed wattir. Nivver in hiz lyfe hed he sein a wattir afoir – this sleke, sinnonie, fuboukit baist, chasin an kekklin, gruppin things wi a gurl an laein thaim wi a lauch, ti fung itsell on fress pleyferes at shuik thairsells frie, an wes keppit an hauddit agane.

Aw wes ashak an ashither – glents an glaims an skinkils, reishil an pirl, yitter an bell. The Mowdiewort wes glamourit, taen-lik an chairmed. Bi the syde o the wattir he treitilt as ye treitil whan gey smaw, bi the syde o a carle at hauds ye inchantit wi rerr

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*lichtsumlie stauppit intil a wie boit*

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stores; an whan forfochen at laist, he set down on the brae, whyles the wattir aye blethered awaw til him, a blabberin parawd o the best stores i the warl, sent frae the hert o the yird ti be tauld at lest ti the awdevorin sie.

As he sat on the gerss an vissied owre the wattir, a derk bore i the bank opposeit, juist abuin the wattir's ege, kep hiz ei, an in a dwam he settit ti consitherin whitlik a perjink cosh wone it wuid mak fur a baist wi fyow waants an fain o a dinkie wattir-syde residentin, abuin fluid lavell an hyne awaw frae dirdum an stour. As he govit, sumthin bricht an smaw semed ti skinkilt down i the hert o't, vainisht, than skinkilt aince mair lik a peirie stern. Bot it cuid skantlins be a stern in sicna orra sitivautioun; an it wes owre glisterin an smaw fur a lowe-clok. Than as he luiked it blenkit at him, an saegates declered itsell ti be ane ei; an a smaw faiss begoud pece an pece ti growe up roun it, lik a rand roun a pictur.

A wie broun faiss, wi whuskers.

A thochtie roun faiss, wi the samen skinkil in its ei at hed erest tuik hiz tent.

Smaw nate lugs an thik soylik fax.

It wes the Wattir Mouss!

Than the twa baists stuid an vissied ilk the tither tentie-lik.

"Ay, Mowdie!" sayed the Wattir Mouss.

"Ay, Mouss!" sayed the Mowdiewort.

"Wuid ye lyk ti cum owre?" speired the Mouss eftir a wie.

"Och! It's aw verra weill ti blether," sayed the Mowdiewort, a bit towtie-lik, him be-in nyow ti the wattir-syde lyfe an aw its weys.

The Mouss sayed naethin, bot loutit an onhankit a raip an harlt on it; than lichtsumlie stauppit until a wie boit at the Mowdiewort hedna obsairvit. It wes pentit bew outsyde an whyt athin, an wes juist

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the bouk fur twa craiteurs; an the Mowdiewort's hale hert gaed out til it belyve, evin tho he didna yit fullie unnerstaun its uissis.

The Mouss skilled smairtlic acorss an med fest. Than he hauidit up hiz foir luif as the Mowdiewort stauppit cannilie doun. "Stell on thon!" he sayed. "Nou than, staup gleglie!" an the Mowdiewort til hiz surprise an raptur, fand hissell akwallie sated i the starn o a rale boit.

"This hes bene a wunnerfu day!" sayed he, as the Mouss shivvit aff an tuik til the airrs agane. "Dae ye ken, A hae niver bene in a boit afoir i aw ma lyfe."

"Whit?" cryed the Mouss, gantin: "Niver bene in a – ye niver – weill A – whitlik ye bene daein than?"

"Is it as cantie as aw that?" speired the Mowdiewort blate-lik, tho he wes weill reddies ti beleve it as he liggit baklins in hiz sate an vizzied the codd, the airrs, the roweloks, an aw the chairmin munts, an feillit the boit swey lichtlie unner him.

"Cantie? It's the anerlie thing" sayed the Wattir Mouss solempniously, as he boued forrit fur hiz rowth. "Beleve me, ma ying frein, the'r naethin – evindounlie naethin – haiflins as mukkil wirth daein as semplie plowterin about i boits. Semplie plowterin,' he gaed in a dwam; 'plowterin – about – in – boits – plowterin – about – in – boits; plowterin –"

"Luik aheid, Mouss!" cryed the Mowdiewort o a suddentie.

It wes owre ahinhaun. The boit strak the bank fu raik. The dramer, the blythe airrsman, liggit on hiz riggin at the boddom o the boit, heles owre gowdie.

" – about i boits – ir wi boits," the Mouss ongaed cannilie, gaitherin hiz feit wi a couthie lauch. "In thaim ir out o'm, it disna maitter. Naethin semes ti maitter a bit, thon's the chairm o't. Whedder ye gang awaw, ir whedder ye dinna; whedder ye wun til yer

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destinautioun ir whedder ye reik sumwhours els, ir whedder ye nivver git oniewhours awaw, ye'r aye thrang, an ye nivver dae oniethin in parteiklar; an whan ye hae duin't the'r aye sumthin els ti dae, an ye'l can dae it gif ye lyk. Bot ye'd mich bettir no. Luik sei! Gif ye trewlins hae naethin els in haun this mornin, suppose we drap doun the wattir thegither, an hae a lang day o'd?"

The Mowdiewort spartilt hiz taes frae evindoun happienes, spreidit hiz kist wi a secht o fu pleisur, an layed hissell bak seilfu intil the saft codd. "Whitna day A'm haein!" he sayed. "Lat's stert richt nou!"

"Haud yer horssis, than!" sayed the Mouss. He hankit the snekkler thro a ring in hiz laundin-stance, skimmed up intil hiz holl abuin, an eftir a wie kythit staucherin unner a stappit-fu wikkers kettil-creill.

"Shiv thon unner yer feit," he obsairved ti the Mowdiewort, as he passit it doun intil the boit. Than he onhankit the snekkler an tuik the skills agane. "Whit's intilt?" axed the Mowdiewort, waummlin wi kweriositie.

"The'r cauld chukken intilt," replied Mouss cuttie-lik, "cauld tung-cauld-am-cauld-beif-pikkilt-marraes-sallet-frainche-rowes-girss-peces-pottit-mait-gingie-yill-skoush-sodae wattir –"

"O stap, stap," cryed Mowdiewort clene awaw wi't, "this is owre mukkil!"

"Dae ye trewthilie think sae?" inquired the Mouss sairiouslik. "It is anerlie whitlik A aye tak on thur wie splores; an the ither craiteurs ar aye tellin me at A'm owre scrimpit an spreid it gey tin!"

The Mowdiewort nivver hard a wurd he wes sayin. Out owre the lugs i the nyow lyfe he wes interin upo, hiz heid tirmed wi the skinkil, the lipper, the douce smells an souns an the sunnlicht, he trailed a luif

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*a stappit-fu wickers kettle-creill*



i the wattir an dramed lang dwams. The Wattir Mouss, lik the guid billie at he wes, skilled on stiddielik an didna fash him.

“A fair lyk yer claes, ma frein,” he obsairved eftir lik ae hauf our hed passit. “A’m gaun ti git a blak veluet smeikin jaiket masell sumday, as suin as A’l can affuird it.”

“A beseik yeir forgienes,” sayed the Mowdiewort, reddin hissell up wi ae maucht. “Ye maun think me verra courss; bot aw this is sae nyowlins til me. Sae – this – is – a – wattir!”

“The Wattir,” correkkit the Mouss.

“An ye akwallie leive by the Wattir? Whitna jellie lyfe!”

“By it an wi’t an on it an in it,” sayed the Mouss. “It’s brither an tittie ti me, an aunties, an companie, an mait an drenk, an (in course) waashin. It’s ma warl, an A dinna waant onie ither. Whitlik it hesna gat isna wirth haein, an whitlik it disna ken isna wirth kennin. Losh! – the tymes we hed thegither. Whedder in wintir ir simmer, wair ir baken, it aye hes its funn an tirrorvie. Whan the spates ar on in Februar, an ma dunnie an laich-flett is owrelippin wi drenk at is nae guid til me, an the broun wattir rins by ma best chaumer winnok; ir agane whan it aw draps awaw an schaws platchis o glaur at smell lik ploum-kake, an the rashis an sprots clag the gaws, A’l can plowter about dray-shod owre maist o the bed o’t an finnd caller mait ti ait, an things tentles fowk hae drappit out o boits!”

“Bot isna it a bit dowff betymes?” the Mowdiewort venturt ti speir, “juist ye an the wattir, an nane ither ti hae a blether wi?”

“Nane ither ti – weill, A maunna be sair on ye,” sayed the Mouss wi tholerance. “Ye ar nyow tilt, an in course ye dinna ken. The bank is that thrangit nou the days at monie fowk ar flittin awaw awthegither. Na, na, it isna whitlik it uised ti be, awaw. Otters, keingfushers, wie grebes, stank hens, aw o’m about aw day lang an aye

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waantin ye ti dae sumthin – gif a fellae hed nae beisines o hiz ain ti mynd!”

“Whit liggs owre thare?” axed the Mowdiewort, waffin a luif towart a bakgrun o widdlaun at derklie randit the wattir-meidaes on ae syde o the wattir.

“Thon? Och, that’s juist the Wuld Widd,” sayed the Mouss cuttie-lik. “We dinna gang thare verra mukkil, uz Wattir fowk.”

“Ar thai no – ar thai no verra innerlie pepill owre-by?” sayed the Mowdiewort a whein nervishlie.

“Wei-ll,” replied the Mouss, “lat me sei. The conns ar aw richt. An the kinnens, a whein o’m, bot kinnens ar a mixer-maxter. An than thare’s Brok, in course. He bydes richt i the hert o’t; wuidna leive oniewhairs els, aither, gif ye peyed him ti dae’t. Seillie auld Brok! Naebuddie middils wi him. Thai hed bettir no,” he eikit meninfullie.

“Whitwey, wha suid intertryke wi’m?” speired the Mowdiewort.

“Weill, in course – the’r ar ithers,” explened the Mouss in a switherin kinna wey. “Waizels – an whitrats – an tods – an whussil owre the lave o’d. Thai ar aw richt in a wey – A’m guid freins wi thaim – hae a bit nyows whan we forgaiter, an aw that, bot thai outbrak betymes, ye canna naesay it, an than – weill, ye canna trewlins traist thaim, an that’s the fak.”

The Mowdiewort kent weill at it wes geylies agin bestial-mainers ti dwell on possibil trubalance, ir evin ti mint at it, sae he drappit the maitter.

“An ayont the Wuld Widd agane?” he axed: “whaur it’s aw bew an mirkie, an ye sei whitlik mote be huls ir mibbies arna, an sumthin lik the reik o touns, ir is it anerlie clud-stour?”

“Ayont the Wuld Widd cams the Wyde Warl,” sayed the Mouss. “An that is sumthin at disna maitter, aither ti yow ir me. A hae nivver