

Alasdair and the selkies

Ance upon a time oan th' isle ay kerrera, thaur lived a puir crofter an' seal catcher named Alasdair. He lived in a wee white but-an-ben beside th' brine an' he hunted th' seals as they basked an' stretched in th' morn lecht. He sauld their skins fur jist enaw tae feed his guidwife, tae bairns, ain their moggie, fa hunted th' mice an' rats 'at ate their corn in th' barn. Alasdair called heem 'my wee moosetrap' fur they baith hunted things. Ain morn he woke up tae fin' th' sunshine creepin' ben th' closed curtains loch a caterpillar squeezin' ben th' gaps ay a piece box 'at wisnae closed properly. He stretched an' stuid up. He slipped intae his dressin' goon an' opened th' curtains. He peered ot ontae th' beaches braw shair an' 'en jumped wi' amazement! a bonnie, sleek seal lay oan a rock, asleep. thes coods make me a huge profit! He thought. He tair doon th' stairs an' almost jumped intae his sandals, he was sae overjoyed wi' his luck. Alasdair took his finest chib frae his chib rack an' sped ontae th' rocks. As he got nearer, the slower he got. Swiftly, loch th' breeze, he crept closer, ain closer. 'En he lunged, with a yeel ay triumph, as th' chib chibbed intae th' seals belly. Th' bonnie seal slunk an' wailed an' sunk intae th' mirk depts, takin' Alasdair's chib wi' 'er. Alasdair was devastated. He trudged haem frustrated an' annoyed. He slunk tae his bedroom an' thaur cam a knock oan th' duir. Alasdair wiped his coon, 'en sleepily opened th' duir. An odd wee cheil stuid thaur, strokin' his strange

black moostache. 'en th' wee mans coon shot up. "oh, thaur ye ur. ye took a while." muttered th' cheil.

Alasdair stared at heem. "I hear yoo're a seal catcher."

"Oh och aye, that's me," he replied. "I'd loch a dizzen seal skins fur a mukker ay mine the-day." "I'm afraid

Ah don't hae 'at mony," Alasdair coontered. "Weel, Ah can shaw ye somewhaur 'at ye can catch them by th' plenty. said th' cheil, slyly. "H in!" th' wee cheil moved awa' tae uncowre a wee cuddie an' cart. Alasdair slowly climbed in, an' th' cheil rode along doon an unfamiliar cobbled path 'at Alasdair hud ne'er seen afair. They cam up tae a sheer, mirk, cliff. afair he kent it, he was fallin' doon... doon... his lungs waur screamin' fur air...

Alasdair spluttered, an' opened his een. An' he coods see... seals! Whit waur they daein'? he heard voices, but a body was looder than th' others... "Alasdair! wake up!" he turned his heed tae hear th' voice ay th' wee cheil fa hud brooght heem thaur, but instead, he saw a seal! "Listen..." th' cheil breathed. "The seal ye chibbed thes morn was th' selkie queen, uir mammy." Alasdair's gaze swept tae a bonnie seal standin' beside heem. "Yoo ur th' only a body fa can sae 'er. press 'er woonds. They led heem tae a wee room, wi' a large coral scratcher, an' thaur lay th' queen. He braced himself an' pressed 'er woonds. As if by magic, 'er woonds closed up. "Thank ye. Noo ye main gang haem. But ye hae tae tryst ne'er tae kill a seal again." I dae! Ah dae! Alasdair cried. Naw Ah will tak' ye back said th' seal fa took heem thaur. They shot it ay th' water. When they reached his

hooose th' cheil gae heem a sack ay gauld. "Naw ye will be rich. Cheerio th' noo." the cheil drifted awa', intae th' water. Alasdair immediately buried aw his kni'es. He woods ne'er, ever harm a seal again.