

Marta's Key

It wis a bonny sunlicht morning' on da shores 'o' Papa Stour. An dere wis a peerie lass by da name 'o' Martha, but a' 'o' her family an freends ca'ad her Marta.

Noo, I'm gain tae tell dee a but about Marta. Shö wia da kind 'o' lass dat wid niver sit still, shö hed a whelk in her tail! Hit wis also rare that shö wid stay put in But or Ben, no, no. Marta wis always ootside.

Noo, wan fine bonny day, Marta ws hockin' aboot in da gairdeen. Her Mam telt her tae nip tae da shop in Hamnavoe fir some mair parafin fir da lamp. Off shö guid. Marta wis nearly at da shop, shö could see it ower da water. But instead 'o' gain dere, shö went tae da beach instead!

"Boys-o-boys" Marta said as shö picked up something shiny fae among da tang an scoom. "Hit's a bonny bottle! Hit's got something inside 'o' hit!" So Marta poured oot da contents apö her lap. Oot fell a bit 'o' piper.

"Whit's dis den?" Marta said, mair den a bit curious.

Dis bit 'o' piper hed a very bonny picture in da middle 'o' peerie men wi fiddles. Trows. Hit also hed strange marks aroond da edge 'o' it. Dey seemed familiar. But shö couldna pit her finger on hit. But wan ting dat seemed clear, hit looked lik a map.

Marta den stood up again, still heading tae da shops, wi wan een on da piper, an da ider on da road.

But afore Marta set fit in da shop door, a peerie black figure ran oot afore her an snatched da piper right oot 'o' her hands! Da nerve!

"AAA my piper!" screked Marta. Marta den began tae chise dis figure, aa da wye tae a peerie mootie loch ca'ad Goardie Water.

Marta kent dis loch very will, aa'body did aroond here. Hit wis da home 'o' da trows. Trows are peerie mootie folk, wi a grey face and a lang nose. Hit wis telt dat if you helped a trow, you wid be rewarded. But if you tricked a trow or didna help wan, du wid be cursed wi aful tings, lik slugs in your pooches or fir da milk fae da coo tae go soor. Marta of coorse kent dis.

But she didna tink dat da figure wis a trow. Hit wis likly wan 'o' da younger school bairns being cheeky.

Shö could see da peerie figure at da edge 'o' da loch, den hit went ahint a stone and disapeard! Marta hed ta follow hit. But wan issue, da side o'o da loch wis as guttery as nuting ider! So da only option wis ta git klertid!

Marta tankfully browt her rubber boots.

Da gutter wis da kind dat sooked in your rubber boots an didna gie dem back, da kind dats gits under your fingernails an takes ages tae git oot, an da kind dat whin hit gits in somebody's hair hit makes hit a right trussel.

Hit took a moment (an sivil yanks 'o' stuck rubber boots) tae git Marta past da guttery hol. But shö finally got tae da Ston dat da figure disapeered at.

Shö fon nothin.

Still is da water on da yearly simmer's dim.

Den dere wis a noise, quiet hit first den hit cem a bit looder, an looder, until hit wis lik hit wis right nixt tae her.

A fiddle.

Den a picture cem intae her hed.

Da map.

Marta tapped on da stone, den waited fir a reply. Niting happened so shö started tae tap da tune 'o' da song dat wis being played. Hit opened.

An a trow wis inside playing da fiddle.

Da song dat wis being played wisna just any song, hit wis her map, hit wis actually a song sheet.

An on da song sheet wis da name, 'Marta's Key.'

Her song. With her name on it.

"Hiyi Marta, I kent you wid be here."

"Kerilbockie", Marta wis in awe. "How has dat song got my name on it?"

"Weel peerie wan, dat's just fir you tae oot in time."

Hit dat, Marta smiled.

"Challenge accepted."