

PAIRT ANE

Cheptour Fyve

The Lest o the Blinnd Man

Ma kweriositie, in ae sinse, wes mair strang nir ma feir; fur A cuidna byde whaur A wes, bot crap baklins ti the bank agane, whaur frae, beildin ma heid ahent a bruim buss, A mote owrevissie the rodd afoir wir duir. A wes skarcelins in poseition or ma inimies begoud ti incum, seiven ir echt o'm, rinnin haird, thair feit baitin out o tyme along the rodd, the man wi the bouet a curn passis afoir. Thrie men run thegither, haund in haund; an A med out, evin throu the rouk, at the mids buddie o this thriesum wes the blinnd thigger. An the neist mament, hiz voss schawed me A wes richt.

“Doun wi the duir!” he cryed.

“Ay, ay, sir!” awsert twa, thrie, an a rousch wes med upo the ‘Ammiral Barton’, the bouet haulder follaein, an than A cuid sei thaim hover, an here speik trokkit in a laicher tuin, as thai wes surprised ti finnd the duir apen. Bot the stell wes brefe, fur the blinnd agane ischewit hiz commaunds. Hiz voss sounnit louder an heicher, as he wes brennin wi yare an raptur.

“Ben, ben, ben!” he shoutit, an banned thaim fur thair taiglin.

Fowre, fyve o'm obayit belyve, twa steyin on the rodd wi the poustie thigger. The wes a stell. Than a cry o surprise, an than a voss shoutin frae the houss:

“Bill’s deid!”

Bot the blinnd man agane sweirt at thaim fur thair aff-pittin.

“Serss him, a curn o ye renaigin lubbarts, an the lave o ye alaft an get the kist,” he cryed.

A cuid here thair feit dirlin up wir auld sterrs, sae at the houss maun hae shak wi’d. Richt eftirwart, fress souns o dumfounnerie arase; the winnok o the skipper’s chaumer pleyed dunt wi ae tingil o brukken

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gless, an ae man hingit out i the muinlicht, heid a shouthers, an addressit the blind thigger on the rodd ablo'm.

"Pew," he cryed, "Thai bene afoir'z. Sumbuddie's forkit the kist out ablo an alaft."

"Is it thare?" raired Pew.

"The monet's thare."

The blinnd cursit the monet.

"Kydd's neive, A mene," he cryed.

"We dinna sei it heir, naegates," retoured the man,

"Heir, ye ablo thare, is it on Bill" cryed the blinnd man agane.

At that anither fellae, maist lik him at remaned ablo ti serss the skipper's bodie, cam til the duir o the inns.

"Bill's bene owreharled awreddies," sayed he, "nocht levit."

"It's thur fowk o the inns – it's that lad. A wissit A putten hiz ein out!" cryed the blinnd man, Pew. "Thai wes heirabouts schort syne – thai hed the duir bowtit whan A cawed at it. Skail out, lads, an finnd thaim."

"Shuir eneuch, thai levit thair licht heir," sayed the fellae frae the winnok.

"Skail an finnd thaim! Redd the houss," repetit Pew, clashin wi hiz staif upo the rodd.

Than thare follaed a gryte stushie throu aw wir auld inns, wechtie feit dingin bak an forrit, plenishins cowpit, duirs in-kikkit, ontill the verra roks bak-rang, an the men cam outby, ane eftir ither, on the rodd an declered at we wes nowhairs ti be fand. An juist than the samen whussil at hed alairmit ma mither an masell owre the deid man's monet wes aince mair clair hard throu the nicht, bot this tyme twycet. A thocht it bene the blinnd's horne, lik, summondin hiz kippage towart the assaut; bot nou A fand it wes a sinakil frae the brae towart the clachan, an, frae its effek upo the buccars, a sinakil ti wairn thaim o daunger approachin.

"The'r Durk agane," sayed ane. "Twycet! We'l hae ti jie, mates."

"Jie, ye skowk!" cryed Pew. "Durk wes a cuif an a cownt frae the firsten, ye wuidna mynd him. Thai maun be clos by; thai canna be ferr;

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ye hae yer hauns ontilt. Skail an luik fur'm, dugs! O, grue ma sowel," he cried, "gif A hed ein!"

This priggin semed ti yeild sum effek, fur twa o the fellaes begoud ti luik heir an thair amang the rottaks, bot peistie-lik, A thocht, an wi hauf ane ei ti thair ain daunger aw the tyme, whyle the lave stuid switherin on the rodd.

"Ye hae yer hauns on thousands, ye cuifs, an ye hing a leg! Ye'd be as ryke as keings gif ye cuid finnd it, an ye ken it's heir, an ye staun thare, fraikin. The wesna ane o ye daured staun afoir Bill, an A duin it – a blinnd! An A'm ti tyne ma kep fur ye! A'm ti be a puir crowlin thigger, cadgin fur rumb, whan A mote be hurlin ben a coche! Gif ye hed the gumptioun o a mauk in a birsket ye wuid kep thaim yit."

"Hing it, Pew, we gat the dublones!" grummilt ane. "Thai micht a hoddit the blissit thing," sayed anither. "Tak the Chairlies, Pew, an dinna staun thare squaikin."

Squaikin wes the wird fur'd, Pew's angir rased that hie at thae nae-says; ontill at lest, hiz feim halelie taein the owrance, he strak at thaim richt an wast in hiz blinndnes, an hiz staif sounnit sairly on mair nir ane.

Thur, i tour about, banned bak at the blinnd rinagate, threitent him in awfu tairms, an ettlit knotleslie ti kep the staif an warsil it frae hiz gresp.

This brulyie wes the saufin o'z; fur whyle it wes aye teirin awaw anither soun cam frae the brae-heid syde o the clachan, the stramp o horssis wallop. Amaist at the lik tyme a pestoll shott, flaucht an touch, cam frae the hege-syde. An thon wes plenn-lik the lest sinakil o daunger; fur the buccars tirmed belyve an run, skailin in ilk airt, ane siewart along the inlat, ane askew acorss the hul, an whussil owre the lave o't, sae at in hauf a meinit no a sing o thaim remaned bot Pew.

Him thai hed forleit, whedder in skyre panshine ir out o vengeance fur hiz ill wirts an clours, A kenna, bot thare he bad ahent, chappin up an doun the rodd in a frainesie, an graipin an cawin fur hiz billies. At lang an lest he tuik the wrang tirn, an run a whein staups by me, towart the clachan; cryin:

“Jokkie, Blak Tyke, Durk,” an ither nems, “ ye winna leve auld Pew, marraes, no auld Pew!”

Juist than the dirdum o horssis tappit the brae-heid, an fowre, fyve ryders cam in sicht i the muinlicht, an swoupit at fu wallop doun the sklent.

At thon, Pew sei'in hiz arrour, tirmed wi a skelloch, an run straucht fur the dutch, at he rowit intilt. He gaithert hiz feit agane in a saicont, an med anither skelp, nou alluterlie comflummixed, richt unner the nerress o the cummin horss.

The ryder ettilt ti sauf him, bot wi nae luk. Doun gaed Pew wi a skreich at rung hie intil the nicht; an the fowre huifs strampilt an kest at him an passit by. He fawed on hiz syde than huilie foundert upo hiz faiss, an muivit nae mair.

A lap til ma feit an hoyit the ryders. Thai wes up-pullin, oniegates, skunnert at the amshach; an A suin sein whitlik thai wes. Ane, follaein ahent the lave, wes a lad at hed gane frae the clachan ti Dr Livingston; the ithers wes customars, at he hed fawen in wi in the bygaun, an wi thur he hed the mense ti retour belyve. Sum spin anent the lugger i Hutton's Howe hed fand its wey ti Vizziear Dance, an set him furth that verra nicht in our airt, an ti thon circumstans ma mither an masell awed our preservautioun frae daith.

Pew wes deid, stane deid. As fur ma mither, whan we hed cairriet hir ti the clachan a whein cauld wattir an sauts an thon suin brocht hir bak agane, an shae wesna the waur o hir terrour, tho aye she murnit the lave o the siller. Fur the nou, the vizziear rade on, as fest as he cuid gang, ti Hutton's Howe: bot hiz men hed ti lowp aff an graip doun the dene, ledin an whyles uphauddin thair horss, an in aye-bydin feir o waits, sae it wes no gryte maitter fur surprise at, whan they wun doun ti the Howe, the pinnage wes awreddies unner wey, tho aye clos in.

He hoyed hir. A voss reponed, tellin him ti haud out o the muinlicht, ir he wuid get a pikkil leidd intil'm, an at the samen tyme a billet whussilt clos by hiz airm. Suin eftir, the lugger dubilt the pynt an santit. Maister Dance stuid thare, as he said, “lik a fush out o the wattir”, an aw he'l cuid dae wes ti dispache a man ti Berwick ti

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"the dirdum o horssis"

wairnish the cutter, "An thon is juist as guid as naethin. Thai gat aff clene, an the'r an en. Anerlie," he eikit, "A'm glaid A trod on Maister Pew's werroks," fur bi this tyme he hed hard ma store.

A gaed baklins wi him ti the 'Ammiral Barton' an ye canna imaigin a houss in sicna stait o stramash; the verra nok bene flang doun bi thur fellaes in thur rid wud hunt eftir ma mither an masell; an tho nocht bene taen bot the skipper's monet poke an a whein siller frae the tull, A cuid sei belyve we wes rewynit. Maister Dance cuid mak naethin o the schene.

"Thai gat the monet, ye say? Weill than, Hawkins, whit in fortoun wes thai eftir? Mair siller, A suppose?"

"Na, sir, no monet A jalouse," A reponed. "I fak, sir, A trew A hae the thing ben ma breist pouche, an ti tel ye the truth, A suid lyk ti get it pit by intil sauftie."

"Ti be shuir, lad, ye'r richt," sayed he. "A'l tak it, gif ye lyk."

"A thocht mebbies Dr Livingston - " A begoud.

"Perfit an richt," he interrupperit, verra cantie, " Perfit an richt, a gentilman an a bailie. An, nou at A cum ti think on't, A mote as weill ryde roun thair masell an raport til him ir the laird. Maister Pew's deid, whan aw is duin, no at A regrait it, bot he's deid, ye ken, an fowk wul mak it out agin ane offishar o Hiz Majestie's Fisk, gif mak it out thai'l can. Nou, A'l tell ye, Hawkins: gif ye lyk, A'l tak ye alang,"

A thankit him maist hertilie fur the bode, an we shankit it bak ti the clachan whaur the horssis wes. Bi the tyme A telt ma mither o ma purposs thai wes aw muntit.

"Dugald," sayed Maister Dance, "ye hae a guid horss; tak up this lad ahent ye."

As suin as A wes muntit, hauddin on til Dugald's belt, the Vizzier gied the wird, an the pairtie set aff at a stottin jundie on the gate ti Dr Livingston's houss.