

Ma Onduchtie Faimlie

bi Kizzen Iain

Lik monie ying fowk o thair tyme, ma pawrents wes kene on the outwith wey o lyfe. Ma faither spak o rakkin about the Grampian muntains an no sei'n a sowel fur twa ouks on en. A ken at ma mither an sisters wes verra aire uisers o the youth-ostil seistem an telt a yairn o aince slepin twa in a bink, fur aw the ither beds wes taen. Peggie wouk wi'r neb agley on'r face wi be'in preissed agin the waw bi the wecht o hir aulder sister ower the hale nicht, baith bein sair forfochelt wi the exerceive o cawin thair pouss bykes aw day. A mynd, tae, A wes telt at thai gaed ti the Borders wi a jokkie's cairrievan harled bi ane auld horss at cuidna wun up ein wie braes. The puir beiss wesna uised ti grene gerss an wes owerwhummelt wi grede an a dose o the teinge whan tirmed inti a feild ti nip. A fermer cheil stak a k'nyfe intil its wame ti lowse the win, tho A canna sweir ti the trewth o thon.

Eftir ma faither kythit in hir lyfe, ma mither gaed stravaigin ower the huls wi'm. Sklimmin buits i thon days wes fell teuch geir. Thai hed rails o taikets roun the walt an the ledder hed ti be med saft wi saiddil saip. Ma mither telt me at, eftir a lang day on the hul, hir tae-nails cam out an shae wes bot advysed ti wapp yowe's ou roun thaim ti busk fur the neist days bowt. Als, shae telt whitwey shae cam ti be craigfast. Ma faither clam up abuin'r, lat doun a raip an swang'r acorss the chimla ti a daiss at wes mair siccar. Shae sayed at shae nivver wes mair terrified in aw hir leivin days! Bot the wes meiths o triblance ti cum. Yeirs syne ma mither schawed me auld lettirs frae ma faither priggin hir ti aperdon hiz illdaeins at hed teir draps rinnin doun the ink. A ken, fur exempil, at ma faither wes i the Cuillins daein the first wauk o aw the taps, furby Blaven, in ae day in 1939, the yeir eftir A cam hame! Mebbies he wes happie ti list i the Airmie whan weir wes declered, suin eftir.

He wes wrang. He cam bak a befruschit diveidwal, mertert bi the weir, ti a nyow bergane fur maistrie o hiz ain smaw faimlie. He laed ma mither in a snod wie bungalo, coft wi ma Grannie's siller, an ae bairn at kentna hiz

faither's voss or haun. Ower the sax yeir o the weir, ma Grannie flitted ti a nerrabout bungalo an the twa weimen hed the moyen o thair warl. Whan ma faither retoured ti convoless, the wes a whein out-sortins requiered an A'm feirt at doums monie o'm isna redd up ti this day.

The eirieorums o ma faither's weir wesna aw kent ti me ontill A wes eildit masell. Ma mither telt me anerlie the faks at suitit hir kess or aiblins thur at shae cuid comprise. Egged up bi his guid wyfe, he raised hissel throu the rangs to Captane akkin Major. He hed mandement o a grup o Churchill pansers. Whan thai wes i the Laich Kintraes eftir the incummin o the Allied Airmies intil Europ, he wes sittin in hiz jepe, bein drave throu the mirk nicht wioutten onie lights, whan a larrie breinged inti thaim. Thai kentna gin it wes frein or fae fur it didna stap. Oniegates, it laed ma faither wi at laist twa o ilka thing; twa keikers, twa k'nies dang ti skowes, a brace o brakken ribs an twa hauns ful o plexiegress at wirked itsell out throu the skin o'z luifs i wie, squar sterns fur monie a yeir eftir.

A wes nivver telt at he wes als batailyie seik. This wes narrate ti me raicent-lik bi hiz yinger sister at bad adreich frae'z i France an at wesna awned bi ma faimlie ontill schort sin-syne. This infurmautioun at ma auntie gied me med sinse. A nivver cuid unnerstaun whitwey ma faither wes in the Ryal Ingineres an focht i pansers. Heir the rizzon. The Bret Airmie hed speishil squadrones o tanks wi aw kinkeind o whurliemajiggers attched til'm. Thai wes cryed "Funnies" an wes fur inginerin purpossis. Ae teip liggit cannas rodds ower saft saun. Anither cairriet licht brigs atap o'm ti caw ower dykes. A thrid hed ern frails at swoupit myne feilds ti mak a sauf inlat fur the sojers. Thai hed lowe-kesters an bulldozers furby vehikils at cuid swoum. Thur pansers wes aften first intil the brulyie an wes used bi baith the Americain an Bret airmies, fur the Yanks didna hae "Funnies" bot suin sein the mister o'm. Thusgates, ma faither's sop o tanks wes everlie in actioun ontill he wes bemangit. Whan he wes dimobileised, he wes nae dout howpin at ma mither wuid sei eftir him, bot shae thocht at he wes cummin hamewith ti sie eftir hir ! Sae the stage wes set fur the first ak; the struissil ower eddicautioun.

Ma sister wes brocht intil the pley about this tyme. Whan ma mither wes in ospital ti be deleivert o hir, A mynd ma Grannie tuik me in ti veisit.

Shae busked an bouned me in ma nyow skuil uinifurm. A hedna bene ti skuil yit bot ma mither wes that heillie at hir sin wes ti gang til the waugepeyin skuil whaur hir ain faither wes educat at shae cuidna wyte ti sei the ful glore o masell i ma regimentals. Ma lugs stak out ablow ma kepp lik haunnils on a joug an ma shilpit k'nies kythit fur ae saicont atwein ma lang schorts an ma gryte ouie stokkins. Thai ein coft a haun-med skuil-bag frae a saiddlar i Dunbar, wi strops strang eneuch ti haud a Clydesdale. A hae it yit.

The'r a norie i ma memore at A hed this bag on ma shoulders at the ospital. It wes twycet the brenth o me. Hunkerin doun i the mids o the waird, A spanghewit the lenth o'd. Wi ilkane hap, A sayed,

"A'm a puddok, A'm a puddok."

A mynd anerlie the ither puir patients wi thair shetes pued up ower thair faces, nae dout ti steke out the sicht o sicna wie ouf.

The morn's morn, ma Grannie tuik me ti skuil fur the first day an A grat sair. A wes a pupil at Daniel Stewart's College fur thretene yeir an didna lyk it onie mair the day A quat nor A did the day A stertit. A didna lyk the squaik o cauk on the blakbuird, A didna lyk the tawse, A didna lyk the bell cawin awaw the spailis, the feichie cludgies, rugbie-fitbaw, "The Peratts o Penzance", skartin the skin aff ma k'nies on the grush o the pleygrun, skuil denners, an whussil ower the lave o'd. Ma faither didna lyk it aither, bot fur ither raisons.

He bene a skolar at Heriot's skuil. It didna chairge as mich as mynes. Hiz faimlie wes lik ma mithers an wes major myndit. Bot kiz thon graunfaither wes a puir airtiss thai hedna's mukkil siller as ma mither's pairt o the faimlie. Thai mey hae bad in a vaudie houss in George Squar, bot ma faither gaed furth the skuil wantin hiz "Highers" fur he hed ti tak a job wi a propalar ti yirn hiz leivin afoir hiz eddicaution wes duin. Whan he bakcam til this wark, tho he bene an airmie offisher A jalouse at he wesna weill peyed. A raik the Wyvern suin wuid bene skartin at'm ti wun mair siller sae at hiz bairn cuid hae a better at he hedna enjosed hissell. It maun bene a kell-heid o plie, fur A think at he wesna ower leised on the outcum o ma mither's ring, an thocht a bit airmie norter wuid dae'z mair guid.

At first, he wes lik monie faithers hame frae weir. He kerved ma a ryfil

THE SEIVEN KIZZENS



"A'm a puddok"

wi a widden stok an inset a barrell furmed frae lectra-cundie complete wi a metal bowt at snekkit bak an forrit lik ye wes bendin't. A mynd A spleit the stok an gat muild up the muzzil. Forby he med a bouncer wi weings, twene ingines an propellours aw out o timmer bot fur the trams. Thai wes med o bress an gaed duik-fittit whan A pit ma wecht on thaim, sae at the bonie propellour blads brak on the grun. He maun bene fair disappynit fur thai wes med wi skeil out o the fyow materials at cuid be hed in thon dreich days eftir the weir. Whan A wes aulder tho, he begoud ti chasteise me wi'z ledder belt fur sic ower-lowpins, as hiz ain faither duin ti him.

He bocht me "Meccano" an constructit a machine at hed geirs an a nok-wark ingine sae at it cuid rowe up a stey, wie brae, verra slaw-lik. A wes mair interessit in naitur, an wes daein a prattik wi wattir snails. Fur a raison A canna bring ti mynd, A hed steikit the windae-brods an, i the mirk pit ma fuit ti the puir machine. A wes weill whuppit fur thon. A wesna aye at faut. Aince, A gaed outby ti the bak-grene afoir ma denner ti howk out rammok wi the graip. Whan the male wes serred, thai cuidna finnd me. Tho A wes bot ettlin ti halp wi the gairdenin, A wes whuppit on thon occasioun fur bein absent frae the buird. A think at aw this roch discipline wes bot ma faither sekin maistrie ower the Wyvern.

Ma mither focht ti haud a moyen fur hir pairt. Gin ma faither hedna onie siller ti spare, hir ain mither did. Shae gried wi Grannie Dougal ti coff a mukkil manse-lik houss wi the auld wumman up the sterr an wirsells on the grun flair. The wes a guid gairden, wi a gless-houss an out-biggins. The keichen stak out the bak wi the umquhyle keichie-deme's chaumer ower-abuin up a derk sterr. This wes ma chaumer. A wes sae africhtit ti gang down intil the bodie o the houss at nicht, at A pished ahent ane aumrie raither nor reisk the bogils ablo.

Gin a wes seik, ma mither cuidna here ma yellochs an A bot tirmed the cod ower wi the boak on the unner syde an slepeit til the morn. The wesna ither bairns about sae A hed nae freins. A sklimmed ontill a bing o coke atwein the keichen an the out-biggins an snekkit an auld weire wi snips. Bot it wes yit sperkie an A wuid bene lectracuitit bot the eldrin A stuid on wes a guid insulatour. Twa yeir sinsyne ma faither outkest wi ma Grannie an we

flitted ti a tenement in Mairchmont. Afoir hauf our plenishins wes out o the pantechnikon, aw the local bairns, wi ma ful tolerans, wes pleyin up an doun the paument wi ma toys. A wes geyan happie wi aw ma nyow freins. Bot, ye arna alloued ti be happie fur lang.

The struissil atwein ma faither an ma mither nou cam ti be mair odious. This wes the tyme at he tuik ti beltin me, as a telt ye. The mair he ettilt at norter, the mair ma mither browdened on me. A wesna ti hae a het bottil i ma bed. Ilka nicht shae gied me a pigg. Gin A wes feirt ti gang ti bed eftir redin about the graif-yaird aventur in "Tom Sawyer" he wuidna gie me a chum up the sterr tho we wes in a strynge houss on holiday in Mull. He med me ete aw the creish on the stovit mate. Ma mither ettilt ti tak the plate awaw wi the orrals aye ontilt bot he didn allou't. A hed ti pit the sneddins inti ma mou an ak lik A hed swallied thaim. A leirit ti haud thaim i ma cheke an spit thaim out eftir.

Ilkane ouk-en, ma mither tuik uz awaw til hir ain mither's houss in Nor Berrik. Ae Sabbath on wir retour, we fand the haw tuim. Aw the buiks at wes ma faither's at linned the waws wes gane an aw hiz guids an geir, excep fur a wie set o lumes fur ma byke at wes layed out fur me. Ma mither telt ithers at shae bene distroyed, bot A think shae vainquished him.

Fur masell it wes a releif. A hed a guiltie saicret. About twa yeir afoir ma faither sauntit, he tuik me ti veisit an auld sojer. A pleyed wi a sett o regimental bannet-bages, aw polisht lik siller, at he shawed in a wie gless caibinet. Thai wes braw. A stow the taiken o the Ryal Scots an smuggled it hame. Ma faithers frein maun hae notished, bot out the kyndnes o'z hert didna tel. A wuid gat a rale guid ledderin furd. A hod the thesaur amang ma claes an wytit ti be fand out an gien ma fairins. Bot ma faither fugied first. A tuik the sairie taiken an flang it awaw intil the ryss ti clenge masell.

A thocht A wes at laist frie o a torterar bot in fak wes nou at the marcie o the Wyvern. A wes a tarloch laddie, eisie mait fur a draigon. Ma sister wes yit tate, at mebbies wul shaw agane. We baith nou leived in the warl o the sairpent's tung. Ma faither, at aince bene the yingess Scout Maister in Scotland, wes mowenced intil a horn-daft veilane, at wuid cum durand the nicht ti shuit uz wi'z birlin haun-gune, sae A maun sleip i ma mither's bed ti

hain hir frae skaith ! A kent it wesna richt. Gin ye didna pleise hir in ivverie wey, shae wuid schore ti sen ye ti byde wi yeir faither i Glesca, a weird waur nor daith, shae warnished uz. A kent at shae cuidna hae'z beleve at shae wes aw things guid on ae haun, an yit be lik ti kest uz intil the outby mirk on tither. A mynd aince A boued the k'nie an priggitt hir no ti bannis me fur sum cutchak or ither. Whitna warl o cheitrie an onsiccarnes ! A jalouse it wes the sam pyne at caused ma faither's teir tashed pistils lang syne.

Foroutten were, ma puir mither wes nivver at pace wi hirsell. The draigon wes aye at inimitie wi mense, the aigil wi leibertie an the sairpent wi the trewth.