

Duffy and the Devil

A FOLKTALE FROM ENGLAND



The autumn air was sweet with the smell of apples. It was cider pressing time on Squire Lovel's estate. He briskly galloped his horse past red dappled trees and jolly apple pickers, when suddenly he heard an angry quarrel coming from one of the cottages alongside the road.

"You're lazy and good for nothing!" scolded a woman in a shrill voice.

"I am not lazy!" a tearful girl spoke back. "I make the best meat pies in all of Cornwall!"

Squire Lovel rode to the cottage and quieted the argument. He asked the rosy-cheeked maiden, "Can you spin and knit? You seem unhappy here. Perhaps you'd prefer to work at my manor house."

"Well, sir, my name is Duffy," she said, dabbing her eyes with her apron. "I make the best meat pies in all of Cornwall, and I'd be happy to work for you if you'd have me."

"Come along then, you're hired," he said, helping her up behind him on the horse. "You'll soon be in the finest house around!"

"Good riddance!" shouted her old mistress, but Duffy's ears were listening only to the Squire, who bragged all the way home about his elegant abode.

When at last they entered the Squire's manor house, Duffy's high spirits fell. Clouds of dust rose up around her feet as she made her way through the clutter on the floor. When the Squire led her to the attic, she saw an old spinning wheel covered with cobwebs, and unspun fleece piled to the ceiling.

"As you can see, Duffy, no spinning's been done here for a while," said the

Squire. "I'll need some socks first. My toes are poking through. And I'll need a new hunting jacket and pants."

Duffy anxiously thought, "I don't know the first thing about spinning!" But she said out loud, with a curtsy, "I'll see to it first thing in the morning, sir!"

At dawn, the Squire went hunting. Duffy eyed the mess about her. She moved a bit of clutter and swept a few sweeps. Rolling clouds of dust floated up only to settle somewhere else. She sighed, and spent the rest of the day in the kitchen making meat pies, for that's what she liked to do best.

When the Squire returned home that evening, the meat pies smelled so delicious, he hardly remembered about the socks he needed until after supper. Happily patting his stomach he said, "I hope your spinning and knitting are as fine as your pies, Duffy."

"I haven't quite gotten to the attic, sir—maybe tomorrow," she mumbled.

The next day, once again, Duffy spent the day in the kitchen making pies. The Squire was pleased with his supper after a long day hunting, but seeing no spinning or knitting done, sorely complained, "My feet need warm socks, Duffy!"

"I'll go up to the attic this instant, Squire Lovel," she said to calm him.

The attic was a musty smelling place. Duffy eyed the piles of fleece and the spinning wheel. She stamped her foot and muttered out loud, "Oh, the devil can spin and knit for this messy old Squire for all I care!"

Suddenly Duffy heard a raspy laugh behind her. She turned to see an impish, pointy featured man, who said, with a devilish grin, "Duffy, my dear, I'll do all the spinning and knitting you can wish for. But, at the end of three years, you'll have to come away with me unless," he said, twirling his tail, "you can guess my name. You can have as many tries as you like."

"Well," considered Duffy, "in three years it will be easy enough to discover his name. In the meantime, all my woolen work will be done for me!" She agreed to the bargain.

The next morning Duffy found a fine pair of woolen socks waiting for her in the attic. Duffy brought them to the Squire, who was so pleased he went to church with his pants rolled up to his knees to show them off.

"And you should taste her meat pies!" he bragged to everyone.

After that, each day, Duffy wished for all kinds of interesting spun, knitted, and woven things. Britches, shirts, coats, and blankets all appeared with the help of the impish little man, who said, "No!" with glee, to every name she tried.

The Squire bragged often about Duffy's cooking and spinning. Before long, each night, there was a different young man sitting in the chimney corner come to court Duffy. The Squire was alarmed that he might lose his prize housekeeper to a suitor! So one day he said to Duffy, "Will you marry me?"

"Imagine a peasant girl like me," thought Duffy, "becoming Lady Lovell!" She agreed to become the Squire's wife. However, after the wedding, nothing much changed in her life except her name. The Squire spent all of his time out hunting and was content as long as he had his meat pies and warm socks.

Duffy soon became lonely and, for company, she went to the gristmill every morning to watch the women gather on the green. They danced and sang while their flour was being ground. Old Bet, the miller's wife, kept time for their dances on a drum made of a sieve covered by a sheepskin.

"Join in the dance, Duffy," Old Bet hollered. She often wondered how Duffy had so much free time every day and yet managed to produce such an abundance of fine woolen goods. Old Bet was a witch and soon guessed who was helping Duffy.

Three years passed quickly, and one day Duffy pounded anxiously on the gristmill door. "Old Bet," she pleaded, "please help me. You're the only one who might understand. I've made a frightful bargain. I'm going to have to spend eternity with an evil imp, for I cannot guess his name." She sobbed and buried her face in her hands.

Old Bet felt sorry for Duffy, and opening the mill door, she said, "Poor lass, when you can name your fear, it does not have power over you. I'll help you to be free of that imp if you promise never to make lazy bargains with the likes of him again."

"Never!" said Duffy, wiping her tears.

"Very well," said Old Bet, "Tonight is the full moon. Bring a jug of the

Squire's strongest applejack and meet me at sunset. Every sprite, fairy, hobgoblin and imp will come out to watch the witches dancing in the cavern."

At sundown, Duffy was at the mill with a large clay jug. Old Bet flung on a warm, red cape, took her drum and the jug of applejack and set out for the cave, with Duffy scampering after.

"Hide in the brambles and keep your ears and eyes open!" Old Bet cautioned.

Shivering from the damp and cold, Duffy hid herself behind the bushes and watched as the witches gathered and danced their strange dance around the blue flame of the fire that leaped almost to the ceiling of the cavern. Old Bet beat the drum to keep time for the dance. Sure enough, one by one, every sprite, pixie, fairy, and hobgoblin came out to watch, and one by one they joined in. Among them, Duffy saw the imp! Every time he came 'round the circle of the dance, Old Bet handed him the jug of applejack. He kept taking swigs until, finally, he became so tipsy and gleeful he began to swing his forked tail and sing a drunken song:

*"Duffy, my lady, it's you I'll claim.
Duffy, you'll never guess my name.
I'll take you away and I'll never stop.
I'm terrible, I terrify, I'm TERRYTOP!"*

Duffy's heart leaped to her throat. She whispered to herself, "Terrytop!"

Suddenly, just as she rose to leave, Duffy heard galloping and the baying of hounds. There was Squire Lovel and his dogs charging after a hare! But as the dogs approached the cave, they turned and ran off yelping, with their tails between their legs. The Squire pulled up his horse's reins and saw the great blue flame of the fire. He heard the drumming and saw the dance. He came closer and closer and closer. Finally, unable to hide himself any longer, he jumped into the circle with a heave and a ho! The witches rose up and chased him across the moor with the imps, sprites and fairies flying after. Squire Lovel barely got home with his breath.

He burst in the door to find Duffy at the stove. "What an adventure I've

had!" he gasped. "There were witches, sprites, pixies and hobgoblins dancing around a fire! They were so angry when I joined in they chased me home! I felt like the hare I'd been hunting!"

"I hope they don't cause us any mischief," said Duffy, stirring up both the stew and the Squire's superstitions. "Strange things can happen when you disturb the goblins."

"I prefer not to think about goblins when there's a fine supper to be had," said the Squire with a shudder. He sniffed the pot hungrily and said, "I'll be back to eat as soon as I fetch my runaway dogs." Out he went into the night.

Swift as a sparrow, Duffy was in the attic. Sure enough the imp was there too, laughing wickedly.

*"Duffy, oh Duffy, it's you I'll claim.
Duffy, you'll never guess my name!
Three more times, you may try,
then Duffy my dear,
off we'll fly!"*

Duffy trembled as she asked, "Is your name Lucifer?"

"No, that's my uncle," he replied tartly.

"Beelzebub?" she whispered, barely able to speak.

"No! No! No! Just a cousin! Soon you'll be mine, mine, mine!" he taunted. "Just one more guess ..."

"If I am correct, don't deny it," she blurted. "You are Terrytop!"

He raged and rasped, "How did you guess?!" He stamped his foot and disappeared in a puff of sulfur and smoke, howling, "You'll not keep a bit of my magic!"

When he vanished, every single thing he had spun or knitted for three years turned to ashes where it lay.

It was a bitter, cold night and the Squire was out riding on the moor ... The first thing to go were his socks. Then his shirt, his coat, his pants, and in a snap, his woolen underwear disappeared.

When he came in the door, blue as ice, he stood with only his leather vest

and riding boots on, saying, "Duffy, the strangest thing has happened."

"So I see," she gasped. "The same thing has happened here! Every bit of spinning and weaving I've done for three years has vanished. Some terrible evil is at hand and I think it is caused by the goblins you disturbed at their dance!"

"Could be," exclaimed the Squire, shivering and warming himself by the fire. "They certainly were angry! Well, you'll just have to get busy and make some more warm woolen things."

"I can't ..." Duffy said quickly. "I mean ... it probably wouldn't do any good." Thinking fast, she added, "What if the mischief at hand is a spell cast on anything I make for you! All my hard work might disappear when you'd least expect it! We can't take a chance! Imagine ... One day you'll be bowing before the Lords and Ladies at the royal court in your finest woolen clothes, and suddenly your suit will vanish! Or, what if, on a cold winter night, all our blankets disappear from our bed and we freeze in our sleep?"

Squire Lovel shivered and said, "That would never do. Perhaps it would be best for you not to do any more spinning, weaving, and knitting."

From that day on, village weavers made all the woolen goods used at the manor house. In time, Duffy and the Squire grew to love each other dearly. The Squire hunted happily each day and Duffy spent her afternoons doing just what she liked to do best ... making meat pies.

The Magic Mill

A FOLKTALE FROM NORWAY



One snowy Christmas eve, a poor brother knocked on his rich brother's door. "What do you want?" a gruff voice said, as the door creaked open.

Hat in hand, the poor man humbly replied, "Dear brother, my wife and I have no food at our house for the holiday. Please be kind and give us something special to eat."

The rich brother grumbled, "Since it's the holiday season, I will give you a ham. Just promise me that you will do as I say."

"I will do as you ask," said the poor brother, taking the ham.

"Well then," said the rich brother, slamming the door, "go to the Devil and leave me alone!"

As the poor brother walked away with the ham under his arm, he said to himself, "A promise is a promise. I will go to the Devil just as my brother requested."

The poor brother walked hour after hour and finally came to a large house with bright lights shining from every window. An old man, whose beard hung to the ground, was chopping wood nearby.

The poor brother said, "Pardon me, old man, I am looking for the Devil. Can you help me find my way?"

"Well," said the old man, "you've come to the Devil's own house. But if you go inside with that ham under your arm, everyone will want it. Don't sell it or trade it unless you get the Magic Mill from behind the door. It's good for grinding one thing or another. Bring it to me and I'll show you how to use it."

and had it plated with gold. Ships from far out at sea could see the shining roof. Many a sea captain stopped to visit the now wealthy man. They came to enjoy his hospitality or to sell him fine goods from faraway lands.

One day, the captain of a fishing boat came to call. The two men spoke of this and that and when the subject of the Magic Mill came about, the sea captain begged to see it. The brother brought the Mill down from the shelf and showed the sea captain the marvel.

The brother explained, "I just think of what I desire and say, '*Magic Mill, Grind and Spill.*' That's all there is to it! It grinds anything."

"But is it able to make salt?" asked the captain, "When I get a big catch, I need salt to preserve the fish until I can get them to market. What a joy it would be to have a Mill that could grind salt as I need it! I will give you one thousand pieces of gold for the Mill."

"It's not for sale," said the brother, ending the conversation. The sea captain bristled and left abruptly.

During the night, the sea captain crept back into the brother's house and stole the mill. He set sail immediately with the Mill on board. In the morning, far out at sea, the captain caught a net full of codfish. He put the Mill on the deck to make it grind. Imagining a mountain of salt, he said the magic words, "*Magic Mill, Grind and Spill,*" just as the brother had told him. To the sea captain's delight, salt began spilling from the mill. The salt piled up higher and higher on the deck. The ship began to list from side to side. "That's enough salt!" the sea captain said.

But the Mill kept grinding. The captain tried everything he could think of to stop the mill, but it kept on spilling salt! The brother had not mentioned anything about how to make the magic stop. The salt piled so high and heavy on the deck that the ship, the captain, and the Mill sank to the bottom of the sea.

To this day, somewhere at the bottom of the ocean, the Magic Mill is still grinding salt. And if you don't believe this story ... taste the sea water!

1. Which story is a re-telling of the "Rumpelstiltskin" story?
- 2-3 According to the **myth**, "The Magic Mill," why is the sea salty?
4. What words caused the Magic Mill to **begin** its magic?
5. What words caused the Magic Mill to **stop** its magic?
6. To **what place** did the poor brother go to get the Magic Mill?
7. From what country did the story of the Magic Mill come?
8. How much did the rich brother pay to get the Magic Mill?
9. How much did the rich brother pay to turn off the Magic Mill?
- 10 Who stole the Magic Mill from the poor brother?
- 11 After he stole the mill, what happened to the thief's ship?
- 12 What was the **name** of the **county** where Duffy and the Squire lived?
- 13 What was Duffy's favorite skill?
- 14 What did Squire Lovel hire Duffy to do?
- 15 What would happen to Duffy if she could not guess the devil's name?
- 16 For how long did the devil work for Duffy?
- 17 **Name** the person who was a friend and helped Duffy defeat the devil.
- 18 What drink did Duffy's friend give to the devil?
- 19 After Duffy guessed the devil's name, what happened to Squire Lovel's clothes?
- 20 Define **imp.**
- 21 In "Duffy and the Devil," what was the devil's name?
- 22-23 Write the definition for **myth**.

