

CI003-(E)-giantess

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HD: Well, Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh, I didn't know what that meant but when we were young, people often told us stories about Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh and she was a giantess, so they said.

EE: Right.

HD: And you know, you can see on the Paps of Jura, on Beinn an Òir, you can see a sort of large scrape there and they call that the scrape of the old woman and that's where Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh fell down and she left that [scrape] on the mountain. And...we heard she often ran after young people, we didn't understand what that meant at that time and we thought that she was trying to kill them. And that's right enough, she was. And also when we were over in Jura, you know, on the shore you would see a type of seaweed, wee broken seaweed and they would say "Oh that's Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh's tea leaves." And when you see that seaweed, you know, the really long ones like string or something, that's Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh's hair. And then there's a big stone, Clach an Daormunn up above Carraig Dubh close to Ardnahoe and they said that Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh threw the stone there from Jura. She was very angry one day, she was trying to get hold of a man or a boy or something and he escaped and he got away and she was so angry she threw the stone after him and it landed up at Ardnahoe. And with that, we were raised on stories about Eagsa Bhuidhe na Fèidh.

But this year, or last year, I found out who she was, I think, because I read this story about her. There were two women and they went over from Islay to Jura to collect shellfish and they stayed over there for two or three days or something and according to the story they were over just down south of Feolin between Feolin and the big bridge I think and they were out collecting whelks. And in the afternoon, they went back, they had a sort of hut or something, and one of the women said to the other one "Will you look after my baby so I can go out for more shellfish?" "Oh I'll do that" said the other woman. And away she went, when she returned there was no sign of the baby and she was alarmed that there was something strange about this woman and she said to her "Where's the baby?" And she didn't answer. And she went into the wee bothy and there was no sign of the baby and she looked around and there was a pot on the fire and a terrible smell coming from the pot. She looked into the pot and what was it but the baby. Well, then she took real fright and she ran away and the other woman was alarmed that she was escaping [?] and she ran after her and got hold of her, she killed her and apparently, she ate her. And then, this woman went into a rage because she started walking on all fours, you know, she was walking on her hands and her feet. They said that her nails grew so long until they were like the claws of an eagal and she grew hair as well, like an animal. And no-one could go close to her because she got hold of them and she was going to kill them and eat them. And the way...that it happened, some of the Ilich, they got the mail through Jura at the time and they weren't getting a thing, there wasn't a letter coming because everyone was scared of coming to this side of Jura because of the woman. And in the end, one man said to another man from Islay, "You have a gun and a dog don't you?" and the

second man said “Yes.” “Well,” said the second man “I have also got a gun and a dog and a boat and come over to Jura with the dogs and the guns and we will kill her.”

And away over they went and they went over to Feolin and the first man said “I think I know where she is. You wait here with one dog and your gun and I will go up that hill and I’ll try and see her.” And he climbed up the hill and just as he was at the top of the hill his leg hit the stones, away went the stones and they made a noise and she was down below them, and she heard him and she saw him and then she went after him. But he wasn’t scared, he had a gun with him, he raised the gun [?] and he fired the gun. He didn’t kill her and she kept on him but his second barrel he fired that away, but the second one didn’t kill her either. And then she jumped on him but he turned and hit her with the foot of the gun and killed her. And he went back to tell the other man and that was the end of the story. But I think that according to the stories that we heard when we were young I think that that is the way the story started about Easga Bhuidhe na Fèidh and that it was a true story to begin with. I think that it’s a woman who lost her sense and then people started telling stories about her.

There is one, she lived in a cave somewhere in Jura and three or four men went in on a boat. And she wanted fish, and they had fish with them, and she shouted to them “Do you have fish?” “Yes” he replied, “Oh well come in and I’ll give you a cup of tea and you’ll get a cup of tea and I’ll get the fish.” And they didn’t know her and they went in but as soon as they went into the cave they felt that something wasn’t quite right with this woman. And in the end, one of them said, Dougie said “I have to go down erm eh eh...to keep my eye on the boat...erm eh...the tide is coming in.” And away he went and he never came back. And from there Iain said, “I don’t know what happened to him, I should try [and find] what is keeping him, he should be back, may be he needs help with the boat.” And away he went. And he never came back either. Then Seumas said “Now what happened to the boys? I’d better go, something must have happened to the boat.” And away he went. And the youngest one was left and he was alarmed that she, this woman, was giving him an evil eye and he became a bit scared and eventually he said “I’d better go too” and then the woman jumped on him and he ran away like the [?] after him and as it was he went down to the shore and he screeched out to the boys “Put the boat out! Put the boat out!” And they put the boat out and she went after him. She jumped into the water and they said that she drowned. That’s one story.

EE: Right.

HD: But the other story, they say that that he ran up the mountain and when she ran after him, she fell, she hit her foot on a rock or something and that’s when she fell down the mountain and she left the scrape there. That’s the sort of story that they tell about her.