

The Woodsman and the Wishes

Told by Howard Horner

[Folk Music]

Once, there was a young woodsman with a fine cap upon his head, working deep within the forest and he came across a large oak tree, gnarled and grizzled with age. And so, he took his axe and lifted his blade, fresh from the whetstones' kiss, up towards the summer sun. But just as he was getting ready to swing that blade into the tree, there suddenly appeared in front of him a pixie.

[click]

'Oh, please don't cut down my tree...I'll...I'll grant you three wishes if you don't!'

Well, the woodsman was immediately excited at this and started dreaming of all the things that he could ask for: more coin than he could carry; more grain than he could grind. And so, he agreed to the pixie's demands.

'Oh, thank you. You need only say the phrase 'oh, how I do so wish' and whatever you say next shall come to pass.'

[click]

And so, the woodsman headed home, full of excitement about what he could wish for. But the day was hot and the journey long, and soon his thoughts were filled with how his feet ached, how his shoulders hurt, and how much his stomach rumbled. So, by the time he got home, he had forgotten all about the pixie and its wishes.

Opening the door, he shouted out:

'Dear wife, is my dinner ready?'

'Your dinner? No, I haven't had time; I've been busy all day!'

'Oh, oh, how I do so wish my favourite dinner was ready for me right now!'

Well, as soon as he had said the phrase, suddenly the woodsman [sniff sniff] could smell something cooking in the kitchen and he could hear the sudden sizzling of fat cooking in a pan. And so, he raced into the kitchen and there he saw, cooked and ready to eat, a thick and juicy sausage – his favourite dinner. And immediately, all that had happened by that gnarled and grizzled old oak tree came flooding back to the woodsman and he regaled his wife with tales of pixies and wishes.

But when the woodsman was finished, a shadow passed over the wife's face.

'You mean to tell me that you could have wished for anything – more coin than we could carry, more grain than we could grind – and you waste a wish on your rumbling stomach? Oh, how I do so wish that the whole world could see how foolish you really are!'

Well, as soon as the wife had said the phrase, the sausage disappeared from the plate and, looking around, confused, suddenly – oh – the wife saw where the sausage had ended up! For on the woodsman's face, where once a proud and noble nose had stood, there now dangled that self-same thick and juicy sausage.

Well, husband and wife screamed and desperately tried to rid the husband's face of the sausage – the woodsman trying to pull it off, and the wife in vain trying to tug off the sausage but there was no use; the sausage was stuck fast. The pixie's magic was too strong.

And the husband started to cry, tears dribbling down his cheek, either side of the sausage, and the wife looked upon the woodsman and pity grew in her heart. And so, taking his face in her hands, she said:

'Though you may be a fool, you are my fool. Oh, how I do so wish that my husband's face was returned to that same beauty that left my bed this very morn.'



And well, as soon as she said that, the sausage was returned to the plate and that proud and noble nose returned to the husband's face. And wife and woodsman hugged one another and laughed. They were no richer in coin or in grain, true, but they were rich enough in love for one another. And they were rich too in a thick and juicy sausage to share.