

The Priest Who Locked Up His Wife at Home While he Was at Work

Once there was a priest who had a very beautiful wife. Every time the priest went out to go to church or on some other business, he would lock his wife up in the house, so she would not go out of the house, and people would not see her and think badly of her.

Today, tomorrow, the priest had been locking up his wife for many days. The poor priest's wife wondered how it had happened that she should live in a prison, locked in the house, unable to go outside of the house to see and speak with other women. Once she said to the priest:

"Listen, priest. I sit here and wonder why you're doing this to me, why you keep me locked in the house as in some sort of prison. What have I done to you? I beg you, by your wedding vows, tell me!"

"How can I not lock you up, dear wife," he said to her, "when you are the most beautiful woman in town?"

"And if I am beautiful, priest, is that any reason for me to be locked in a prison? What other husband would lock up his wife like you do? Come on now, I'm human, and I want to go outside, go to church, like all the other women. I want to chat with my old friends. And if you think you can prevent me from doing something bad by locking me up, get it out of your head. I can do the most shameful thing to you even here where I am locked up, and you won't even notice. That's how I am, priest, if I set my mind to it. I'll make you very, very sorry. I'm warning you! Take care of this now, because when I say I'm sick of it you'll really be in trouble," the priest's wife said to him and left him there.

"Listen wife, are you saying this to convince me not keep you locked up, to let you wander about like a stupid cow? For as long as I have a head on my shoulders, I won't let you out to wander in the streets, for anyone to look at you, for everyone to hassle you since you are so

beautiful."

"Well, priest, why are you making a fool of yourself? Even if people were to see me and hassle me, even if they curse at me, what can they do to me? When I have an apron tied around my waist, when I am an honorable woman, I have no fear of anyone. So what if they get an eyeeful, when their hands are empty. So, come to your senses, don't lock me up, or you'll regret it," she said and then fell silent.

"Regret or no regret, I will lock you up, wife, and that's all there is to it," the priest said, being stupid that he was.

Since she was clever, the priest's wife figured out a way to re-marry, as there was no other way out. There was a man who was recently left a widow. Now this man, when he was young, had wanted to take the priest's wife as his bride when she was a young girl. However her father had been a learned man, and had the desire to marry off his daughter to a more learned man, and therefore she became the priest's wife. The priest's wife thought that perhaps he might want to take her again, first because she was the priest's wife, and he was also their neighbor. One wall separated their house. She dug and dug into the wall and opened a hole big enough so that it was possible to crawl through it outside and into the neighbor's house. The dirt that she had dug out she hid under a mat without the priest noticing. In front of the hole she arranged some pillows, and then she met with the neighbor, and they agreed to get married. The priest's wife told the neighbor what to do and how to do it.

One morning the neighbor took a large apple and went to the priest. He bid him good morning and extended other greetings. The neighbor simply stood there, took off his cap, kissed the priest's hand, reached into his breast pocket, took out an apple, and gave it to the priest saying:

"It would please me, father, if you would come to my place this evening and perform the wedding for me, as I am getting married to a widow."

"Oh, oh, thank you, neighbor, thank you. Congratulations, congratulations! When did you get engaged? Does she look like a good housewife, or is she a good-for-nothing?"

"She's a real fine housewife, and also good looking, Holy Father. There is no other like her; her face, her figure, her eyes, her brows, her age, she is just like your wife. Lord grant it that your wife lives a long, and may you be together a century! I simply sit and I marvel, father, how the Lord has turned things my way: so many people wanted to take her, and they told her father that they would even take her by force, since she is so beautiful. But, I was the lucky one. Late last night I went and took her without anyone seeing me. So I beg you, father, come quickly this evening to get me married, before those who wanted to kidnap her find out, for the devil is never idle. That's why I am begging you, father. Here, I will pay you double in advance if you will do this for me. Only come as quickly as possible and don't tell anyone. And you should know that I've got some of that wine that you like."

When the priest heard of the double payment, and that the neighbor had some of the wine that he liked, and was inviting him to dinner, he jumped to his feet as soon as he had seen the neighbor off, grabbed the epitrachelion and the prayer book, locked his wife in the house, and set off to the neighbor's house to perform the marriage ceremony.

As the priest was walking to the neighbor's house, his wife crawled through the hole which she had made in the wall, went to the neighbor's house, and was standing in a corner with her arms crossed and her eyes cast down like a shy young bride.

The priest entered the house and sat on a chair by the fireplace. He noticed the dinner cooking in the kettles. The neighbor poured him a glass of his best brandy, and the priest, having

blessed the bride, raised the glass. As he is drinking the brandy he looks at the bride in the corner, and immediately he noticed that something was wrong and said to himself: "My God, this bride must be my wife. I'll go home to see whether or not she is locked up."

Before the priest even got home, his wife crawled through the hole, sat down, and started knitting socks, which is what she was doing when the priest left. She was knitting as if nothing had happened.

The priest arrived and peeped through the window to see if she was there or not.

"Oh hell, what is going on? There's my wife in the house knitting socks. I guess it wasn't her. I will go and marry him, then," said the priest to himself, and went to the neighbor's house to marry him.

The priest's wife again crawled in and stood in the corner like before. The priest came to the neighbor's house, sat on a chair and began staring at the new widow. The poor priest sits there and is amazed, and again says to himself: "Hmm, this woman is my wife, and that's that. Should I ask my neighbor? I don't know what to do: if it's not her, then I will shame myself. I'll go once more to the house and see if my wife is at home."

"Neighbor, I'm going to my house to get the other book, the one for marrying widowers, the one I brought is for bachelors."

"Go, father," the neighbor said to him, "but I beg you to return as quickly as you can and finish this business, so that we can sit and have our dinner."

The priest ran home and again found his wife there knitting. He did this a third time and went into the house to see his wife:

"I tell you, wife," he said, " I am amazed at the widow the neighbor has taken."

"But why are you amazed, priest? Haven't you seen enough widows and got those

married that you're amazed at the neighbor's widow?"

"But how could I not be amazed, wife, when she looks just like you, dear wife." The priest said to her. "Her clothes, her figure, everything? I was afraid that it was you. It's three times now that I've come here to see if you are at home or not."

"Oh, come on now, priest, you'll shame yourself, if the neighbor gets a hold of this!" The priest's wife said to him. "But now didn't the neighbor tell you this morning when he came for you, that the wife he was taking looked like me? Is there only one white donkey, now priest? Think how many white donkeys there are in the world. There are also women who resemble each other in their faces and in everything else. Run, priest, go marry him off and be his guest. He's got a good meal and some bubbling wine. You don't need to come here and look for me. I'm locked up in the house with two sets of locks."

When he heard these words from his wife, he was finally fully convinced that it wasn't her. He took some other book with him, since he was supposed to have gone home to get the book, and not for another reason. He went back and performed the wedding. After the wedding, the wife went into the room, and the priest sat down for supper. The neighbor poured him some strong brandy, and afterwards some wine. As he was greedy, the priest drank a lot of wine and got drunk; he was out like a light. The neighbor shaved his beard and his head; he made him up so that he would wonder what had happened to him, he put on him some clothes made of heavy white cloth, he put a pointed cap on his head, tied a bright red sash around him, they fastened a cartridge belt and a gun on him, they put boots on his feet, and left him in the doorway to sleep, drunk as a skunk and made up like a rebel guerilla.

The priest slept his drunken sleep, and at dawn he woke up, since he was in the habit of rising every day at dawn to go to church. He jumped up from the bed, and without realizing what

he looked like, he ran to the water trough in the courtyard to wash his face and then to go to church. He took the cap off his head and placed it on a tree stump by the fountain, and dipped his hands in the water and flung it on his face to wash up, he ran his hands down his face to wash his beard. He looks in his hands and there's no beard in them. Once again he ran his hands along his face and found himself without a beard and without hair on his head.

"Oh, mother-f," he said to himself, "last night I had a beard and long hair, and why don't I have them now? Well shit, aren't I the priest?" Thinking about all this, he looks at the cap, he sees what he's dressed in. When he sees the pistols in the sash, he gets confused. "Hey," he said to himself, "what's going on here? Am I the priest, or not? I guess I must not be the priest, ha ha? If I were the priest, where is my beard, my hair, my cowl, my skullcap? How did these pistols get in my belt? Aaaah, I must be a guerilla fighter, since the cap is bound with a red scarf! That's it, that's it, I must be a guerilla fighter! But wait. By God, I'll go to the neighbor and ask him and see what he says, if I'm the priest or some sort of guerilla."

At this time the neighbor and the priest's wife stared out the window to see what the priest would do. The priest came to the door, and as soon as he knocked the neighbor let out a yell:

"Hey people, neighbors, God save me! Is there a living man who will come to my aid! The bandits have come to our house and will steal everything!"

When the priest heard these cries, "I guess," he said to himself, "I'm really a bandit," and ran out the gate. He walked along the street, and again turned back. He went up to his own door and knocked on it for his wife to open it. As soon as the wife heard the door, she started to shout to the neighbors. When the priest heard his wife shouting on account of him, he was truly convinced that he was a bandit and left, and ran off into the mountains and joined other bandits,

and he left his bones there.

He looked for the devil, and he found two.