

THE SHEEP HEAD

A woman lived at some farm cottages not far off the church and one Sunday she was busy making a big potful of broth and she had in the pot a sheep head and a large dumpling. She has a big boy who was silly and not very right. She had the pot on the side of the fire, and as she wanted to go to church she told the boy to look after the broth or she came back. After the woman had been away for some time the boy thought he would have a look into the pot and see what it was doing. So he lifted the lid and looked in and to his surprise the heat had caused the sheep head (to move) its jaws and they were stuck in the dumpling. He threw the lid on again, and as the kirk was not far off he ran up to the door which was open, and he keeked in and he got his eyes on his mother, and to draw her attention he hissed to her till she saw him and winked to him to go away but he kept on hissing at her and she always winked to him till his patience gave way, and he shouted out among all the kirk folk, "Ye'd sit wink winking there till the sheep head eats a' the dumplin." The woman was so affronted she had to rise up and leave the church.

This tale, in common usage, was written down by Mr. John Elliot, Hangingshaws, Yarrow, in 1955. The spelling is normalised. Words in brackets supplied.