

Tape 207B

1. Three Hairs On The Giant's Back; folk tale well told by Mr. Wilmot MacDonald, Miss Manny's informant, Glenwood, N.S.; young man married king's daughter but king sends him for giant's three hairs; on way is given three questions to ask giant; giant's wife gets hairs, and answer with each hair; king tries and becomes a ghost ferryman; <sup>young</sup> man rewarded with much gold.

2. Riddle; this is most popular riddle in Maritime Provinces, six there are and seven to be. Well told by Mr. Wilmot MacDonald.

Well, this is another story about an old fella, and he had three sons. So anyway, one Sunday they was all sitting out along the verandah. So this old king was walking by and he said to the old man, he says, "Boys, you got three nice sons, there." Max says, "Yes," he says, "I have. And do you know," he says, "that I've got one son here," he says, "is going to marry your daughter." He said,

"Marry my daughter?" Max said, "Yes." This old man said yes. Now, he says, "he's leaving this afternoon and I want you to make out - to write him a note telling him where he's going and what he has to do," he said, "when he gets there, for he's going to marry your daughter."

Well the old king thought to himself, "I'll fix him." So he took out an envelope and a paper out of his pocket, so he just turned around and he wrote this on it, and he put on this note to behead this man as soon as he gets there, which means kills him. So he folded it and put it in the envelope and sealed it and give it to the young fellow, and away the young fellow started. Well he never thought to open this letter or do anything like that, so he travelled all that day, and night overtook him. He was travelling through a great long junk of woods which was no houses on each side, so he come to an old wood road, and up that wood road there was a fire burning there, and a man setting alongside of it, so it was some old kind of a tramp of some kind, that was hungry and cold, and thought he'd put a fire on. So he sat there and he talked to this guy, and the old tramp says to him, he says,

"Where are you going?" So he told him, and he said,

"Do you ever expect to get her?" and he said, "Yes, I got the letter right here in my pocket, stating that the king's going to

give her up to me." Well that's all right.

So Khalix the young fellow was tired after walking all day, anyway, he fell asleep, and when he was sleeping this old tramp went through his pockets, so he found this letter. So he opened the letter and he took the letter out and he seen what was on it, so, so he just took another piece of paper the same as it, and wrote on it to marry this man whenever he gets there. So he folded this up, put it in the envelope, and wrote it so much like the old king that it was just the very exact same. So the young fellow woke up and he said to him the next morning,

"Well," he said, "I'm awful sorry that we can't have nothing to eat, but we'll have to go." So the tramp said,

"All right, go on." So anyway, he got there that day and he went in and he made himself acquainted who he was and where he come from and was talking to his father (her mother) and he handed her this letter. So the mother took the letter and she read it and she give it to the daughter and they looked at this young man and well, she said,

"Mary," she said, "it's his hand writing, and he must want you to get married, so then they got married ready and was away getting married when the old king come in. He said,

"Where is that young fellow that come here?"

"Well," she said, "they're away getting married." He said,

"I didn't put that on to the letter, to marry."

"Well," she said, "it's right on it."

"Well," he said, "if it is he must have wrote it. I told them on the letter to kill him." Well she went and got the letter and he looked at it.

"Well it looks like my handwriting," so the old king wrote

it again, so no matter how good he wrote it, it was the same, how bad he wrote it was the same anyway.

"Well," he said, "he ain't going to live with that girl." He said, "He'll do road work before he'll ever get that daughter," so when he come home from being married he said,

"Lookit, before that you can sleep with that woman, or live with her, or I'll ever give you anything," he says, "you must go to this giant and get the three gold hairs out of his back. Bring them to me and then you can have her." So he started out for this old giant's outfit, so anyway he travelled that day and he went into a house to have his dinner. So he told the guy where he was going and everything and he says,

"Do you ever expect for to get that?"

"Well," he said, "me life is no good anyway if I can't get her," he said, "my life is no good anyway. I married her and," he said, "I can't live with her."

"Well now," he said, "if you do happen to get talking to him, you ask him how it is that I got a tree out in my orchard that grows one kind of fruit on one side, a different kind of fruit on the other side." Well he said he would. Well so anyway he travelled on and he went into a place to have his supper so he told him where he as going and everything when he was eating his supper.

"Well," he said, "I hope you get them but," he says, <sup>ever</sup> "there never was a man that went to that old giant's house that ever come out."

"Well," he says, "I'm going to try her anyway."

"Well now," he says, "lookit. If you happen to get talking to him you ask him," he says, "when I married my wife she was the prettiest woman that ever you seen in your life. Now

she's so homely I can't live with her." Well he said he would, so he had two stories now to tell the giant.

Now the next place he come, he come to a river, like the Miramichi here, and there was no bridge, nor there was no ferry. You have to swim her out. So he sat there on the shore wondering "how am I going to get across this river," and the giant's house is just on the other side. So by and by there's a great ghost comes out of the water. So he said, the ghost said to him, "Hop on." He said, "You mean I gotta go over on your back?" He said "Yes, I'm ferrying here." So he and the ghost, he swum him right over. So when they got to the other side he stopped and he asked him where he was going. He told him.

"Well now," he said, "you might get it, but if you do happen to get talking to him, ask him," he said, "how it is that I got to ferry so many men across this river and get no thanks for it. Can't collect no money; money's no good to me. I'm only a ghost."

So  
"Well," he said, "you would." Well anyway, he went up to the house and he knocked on the door and the giant's wife come, so he told her what he had come from, for the three gold hairs, and he told her these three stories what those people told him.

"Well now you know," she said, "my man eats boys like you but," she says, "you go in and you get under the bed and you curl up there and stay there, and I'll see what I can do to-night to help you out, if you can't live with your wife."

"Well," he said, "all right." So anyway it wasn't long before the old giant come home and he come in, and he got snuffing and smelling around, and he says,

"Fee, fo, fi, fum," he says, "I smell the blood of an Englishman."

"No you don't smell nothing like that at all," she says, "it's just this supper I got on cooking." He said,

"Maybe so." So anyway she put the supper on the table and he sat down to eat it. Well, he eat a half a barrel of potatoes, and about twenty pound of beef, and three or four loaves of bread, drunk ninetyish cups of tea, and he rolled into bed. Well when he got into his bed this young fellow was pretty small in his boots then, so she done up the supper dishes and she thought she'd go to bed to see what she could do. So he got sleeping away, snoring away, so she reached over and she jerked one of those hairs out of his back. So she just put it down behind the bed. The young fellow got it, put it in his little box and he kinda woke him up. He says,

"What's the matter with you to-night?"

"Oh gim t," she said, "I can't sleep. I fell asleep and I dreamt that that man's got fruit trees growing one kind of fruit on one side, a different kind on the other side."

"Well," he said, "if the darn fool would dig up that pot of gold that's under that tree," he said, "he'd grow fruit alike and he'd have enough money to do him the rest of his life." So he got the answer of the story, which he got one hair. Well, she got him to sleep again and she jerks another one out. This time it made him pretty ugly. He turns around and he said,

"What's the matter with you to-night?"

"Oh gim t," she said, "I'm just dreaming," <sup>she</sup> ~~to-night~~ said, "about that fellow married that girl and she was so pretty. Now she's so homely he can't live with her."

He says, "If the darn fool wasn't so mean and stingy she'd be pretty enough." So he gets two hairs, two answers. So the sad part is Johnny's lying there to come yet. Well she got him

nice and sound asleep again and she pulled the third one. He jumped and he hit her a box, and she said, "Oh giant don't kill me," she said. "I can't sleep. I'm twisting and turning and I'm dreaming," she said, "about a man ferrying those men across the river and getting no thanks for it and can't collect no money." He said,

"If the darn fool, the next man he swims across the river is to throw him off and drown him and let him ferry in his place." So he got the three answers and the three hairs. Well he put those three hairs in the box, and when they got to sleep he got out that door, and good-morning boss when ~~they~~<sup>he</sup> struck hard footing, for he left her. Well the first place he came was to the river. Now he couldn't tell the ghost this because he knew it was his death. He'd have to be the ferrier. So he sat down on the shore and he got talking to the ghost and he told him and he said,

"Lookit," he said, "I was so scared when he told me, that I forgot what he told me." Well the ghost said,

"Never mind," he said. "Get on and I'll ferry you over." So when he got back on his own side he sat back on the shore again and he said, "Lookit," he said. "I'm going to set here and see can I think <sup>of</sup> what he told me." So the last of it he thought to himself to himself, he made up a little plot now. He said, "Lookit, here's what he said. He told me to tell you the next man that you have to ferry across this river going towards his house to bother him, to throw him off." He says,

"Thank you, that's just what I'll do." So he got out of there. So he woke the other man up in the middle of the night and he got up and got him something to eat and was so overjoyed, and he told him he got those three hairs, and he said, "Yes," he said, "I asked him and he told me."

"Well what did he say?" Well his wife was getting this lunch ready for him. "Well he told me to tell her if she wasn't so mean and stingy she'd be pretty enough." Well she got to heaving dishes and breaking windows and thrashing furniture in the house. The last of it shewas so pretty they couldn't look at her. So he got his supper anyway and he got out of that. It was just about breaking daylight the next morning when he lands at the man with the fruit tree, so he went in, had his breakfast with them, and he asked him .

"Well now," he said, "I'll tell you what he told me and you to do. He told me and you to go out and dig up the pot of gold was under that fruit tree and divide it, and each take shares of it, and you'd have enough money to do you the rest of your life." So out they went with picks and axes and they dug up this big iron pot of gold, which was a barrel of gold under it, so they each had a bag apiece. He had an old horse and express wagon there, this fellow had, and he give the young fellow this old horse and express wagon. He said,

"Never mind bringing it back," he said. "I don't need it no more. This is all the gold that me and me old woman wants." So he takes this horse and express wagon with his bag of gold and he lands at the king's. Tied the horse at the gate and the old king come out and he takes his three gold hairs in and he give them. He says, "There they are." Well the old king says to him,

"What kind of a man is he?" He says,

"He's the nicest man that ever you met." He says, "He give me those three gold hairs out of his back which I could redeem your daughter ." He said, "Come on out to the wagon." He says, "Here's a solid bag of gold gimme. Gimme a horse and express



wagon. Go ahead." So the king said,

"I wonder could I get any if I went." He said,

"Naturally, I'd be only too glad to drive you there."

So they takes the horse and wagon, and him and the old king drove  
 just as tight as they could jump. <sup>He</sup> They galloped the old horse all  
 the way there. So they come right to the river. They never stopped  
 for nothing till they got to the river. So the young fellow says,

"You got to cross the river on the ghost's back." So  
 whenever the ghost got him off the half way he threw the king off  
 and let his ferry in his place. So anyway I swung around and come  
 back anyway, and I took the daughter and we went away and we built  
 a house and we had this gold and we had a whale of a time.

Told by Mr. Wilmot MacDonald, Miss Manny's informant,  
 Glenwood, N.B. and recorded by Helen Creighton, September 1960.

Question: You say you know a riddle, Mr. MacDonald?

Answer: Yah. I want you to try and answer it.

It's about a girl. This riddle was made about a girl. She was in jail and she was going to be hung. She was condemned to die, but anyway, the Monday before she was going to be hung they told her if she could make a riddle that all the judge and the jury couldn't figure out what it was, they would let her go free. Well she said - she had two hours to do it - but she said she couldn't hardly do it in jail. "You'd have to let me out; out to walk around." So they let her out and the guard went with her and she walked up around this great field that was around about maybe three acres around the edge of the woods, so she looked all around the edge of that field, and along the sides of the wood. The guard led her up right clean around which she didn't know what she was looking at nor a thing. So she come back right around and she said,

"You can go ahead and take me in. I have known the riddle right now." So they took her out on the stage - on the stand - so she said this riddle. "Well," she said, ~~xxxxxxixweikexentx~~

"As I walked out and in again,  
From the dead the living came,  
Six there was and seven shall be,  
That will set the virgin free."

Now what was it?

Answer: Well Mr. MacDonald I know that riddle. I've heard it all over Nova Scotia. But Miss Manny doesn't know it. You tell her, will you?"

Question: Well now Miss Manny, what was it? Eh? Well, this girl walked around this fence and there had been a horse had died in the winter, which they took the remains to the woods, and in this horse's eye, the ball of the eye where the flesh was all gone, the bird had made a nest,

and in that nest there was five little birds and one egg. If that egg come out there 'd be six birds, but there was five in it then and the sixth one might come out, but they never guessed it, so they let her go, free.

Question: We say Six there are and seven to be  
And that will set the prisoner free.

That's a very good riddle.

Answer: It is.

Told by Mr. Raimot MacDonald, Miss Manny's informant,  
Glenwood, N.E., and recorded by Helen Creighton, Sept. 1960