

The Keach i the Creel (Child 281A)

- 1 A FAIR young may went up the street,
Some white-fish for to buy,
And a bonnie clerk 's faen in love wi her,
And he 's followed her by and by, by,
And he 's followed her by and by. 5
- 2 'O where live ye, my bonnie lass,
I pray thee tell to me;
For gin the nicht were ever sae mirk
I wad come and visit thee.'
- 3 'O my father he aye locks the door, 10
My mither keeps the key;
And gin ye were ever sic a wily wight
Ye canna win in to me.'
- 4 But the clerk he had ae true brother, 15
And a wily wight was he;
And he has made a lang ladder,
Was thirty steps and three.
- 5 He has made a cleek but and a creel,
A creel but and a pin;
And he 's away to the chimley-top, 20
And he 's letten the bonnie clerk in.
- 6 The auld wife, being not asleep,
Heard something that was said;
'I 'll lay my life,' quo the silly auld wife,
'There 's a man i our dochter's bed.' 25
- 7 The auld man he gat owre the bed,
To see if the thing was true;
But she 's ta'en the bonny clerk in her arms,
And coverd him owre wi blue.
- 8 'O where are ye gaun now, father?' she says, 30

‘And where are ye gaun sae late?
Ye ’ve disturbd me in my evening prayers,
And O but they were sweet!’

9 ‘O ill betide ye, silly auld wife,
And an ill death may ye die! 35
She has the muckle buik in her arms,
And she ’s prayin for you and me.’

10 The auld wife being not asleep,
Then something mair was said;
‘I ’ll lay my life,’ quo the silly auld wife, 40
‘There ’s a man i our dochter’s bed.’

11 The auld wife she got owre the bed,
To see if the thing was true;
But what the wrack took the auld wife’s fit?
For into the creel she flew. 45

12 The man that was at the chimley-top,
Finding the creel was fu,
He wrappit the rape round his left shouther,
And fast to him he drew.

13 ‘O help! O help! O hinny, now, help! 50
O help, O hinny, now!
For him that ye aye wished me to
He ’s carryin me off just now.’

14 ‘O if the foul thief ’s gotten ye,
I wish he may keep his haud; 55
For a’ the lee lang winter nicht
Ye ’ll never lie in your bed.’

15 He ’s towed her up, he ’s towed her down,
He ’s towed her through an through;
‘O Gude assist!’ quo the silly auld wife, 60
‘For I ’m just departin now.’

16 He ’s towed her up, he ’s towed her down,
He ’s gien her a richt down-fa,

Till every rib i the auld wife's side
Playd nick-nack on the wa.

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- 17 O the blue, the bonnie, bonnie blue,
And I wish the blue may do weel!
And every auld wife that 's sae jealous o her dochter,
May she get a good keach i the creel!