

Linda – Part II

Dear listener, you'll recall my telling
How Linda Arabella's Pa
Did wed a widow most repelling;
How Linda's Grimstock step-mamma
And daughters Vila and Viyella,
Did mock and name her Lindarella.
I told you also, listener dear,
How once to bring our Linda cheer
Her long dead mother came and told her
"Be kind to mice, accept your lot,
"And duly tend the pumpkin plot."
Before our Linda grew much older
They changed that Lindarella name,
And Cinderella it became.

"For look, among the motes and flinders
"Our step-sis sweeps and is besmeared
"With dust and dirt and soot and cinders,"
The Grimstock sisters mocked and jeered.
Enough of Vila and Viyella!
You know the tale of Cinderella:
Her fairly odd mamma returned
When Linda sat alone, all spurned,
By pa and step-ma and those sisters;
Then pumpkin changed to coach, and mice
To prancing horses in a trice
To thwart the scheming Grimstock twisters.
For Linda *did* go to the ball,
And there the throng she did enthrall.

You know how Linda fled the dancing
As midnight struck, and how her shoe
Of glass fell off, as never glancing
Behind she ran headlong all through
The halls to where her coach awaited,
Wherein to home was she translated
Within a wink, and pumpkin found
With mice that scampered all around.
But now, dear listener, pay attention;
For over time the story changed,
And what ensued was rearranged
And mixed with false and strange invention.
Now learn the truth of what did pass,
And who did claim that shoe of glass.

The Prince, 'tis true, did gaze in wonder
Upon our Linda's glassy shoe;
"Oh pooh!" he cried, "She's made a blunder
"To flee so fast on her debut!
"I've got the shoe: I'll have the wearer.
"Fetch herald! Fetch my standard-bearer!"
When Herald and the Ensign came,
He cried, "Stand by, for I'll proclaim
"In every village, town and dwelling:
"To her whose foot this shoe does fit
"Myself in marriage I commit
"And give her wealth beyond all telling."
So Ensign, Prince and Herald sought
Throughout the realm, achieving nought.

"We've searched the land," the Prince said sighing.
"No foot 's been found to fit the shoe.
"I've had enough, 'tis no use trying.
"I'm bored with all this ballyhoo!"
"But Sire," said Herald, "one remaining
"Abode is left, perchance containing
"The girl whose blessed foot will fit.
"We're nearly done, so let's not quit!"
"OK," sighed Prince, "so let's get going
"And see just what we find inside –
"Mayhap at last I'll find a bride
"Who's worth the toil we're undergoing."
They entered and discovered there
Our Linda and the Grimstock pair.

The Grimstocks wowed the Prince quite silly
Who thought "Oh what a buxom pair!
"Good breeding stock is either filly;
I'll have an heir and more to spare!"
He ogled Vila and Viyella,
But when he noticed Cinderella
"Good grief," he thought, "oh what a slut –
"So skinny, grimed with soot and smut!
"Let's hope the shoe fits one who's plumper."
"Oh dear!" he thought, "what shall I do
"If skinny's foot should fit the shoe?"
"I know," he mused, "I'll go and dump her!"
The Vila sister had first go;
"My foot will fit," she said. "I know!"

The Prince looked glum as Vila struggled
To get her foot in, make it fit.
However much the Grimstock juggled,
It was no good; she had to quit.
Viyella took the shoe and tried it;
Her foot so snugly went inside it.
"Oh frabjous day! Oh wow! Oh boy!"
Th' ecstatic Prince exclaimed with joy.
Poor Linda found it very vexing
Her glassy shoe should fit her sis.
"Oh dear," she thought, "things are amiss –
"The Prince is foul. 'Tis so perplexing."
That night as she lay on her bed
Odd thoughts kept flitting through her head.

Then Linda heard close by another
Who greeted her and called "What cheer?"
"Oh ma!" cried Linda to her mother,
"My fairly odd mamma is here!"
"Oh yes," said ma, "to stop all squabbles
"And put an end to all your troubles.
"Twas not intended in my plan
"You lost your shoe as off you ran.
"But never mind, it's turned out dandy.
"I've saved you from that stupid prat,
"The Prince, who's but a spoiled brat.
"Viyella's got him, and that's handy
"For to the palace she has gone
"And soon shall Vila follow on."

"Why Vila?" Linda asked her mother.
"What calls her to the palace too?"
"The Prince," said ma, "has told his brother
"Who'll summon her and there'll ensue
"A double wedding." "Ah, 'tis folly,"
Our Linda said, "they're off their trolley
"To marry each a Grimstock sis.
"For sure their lives will not be bliss.
"But I'm left here with my step-mother,
"And pa whose head is going soft;
He's with the fairies and is oft
Entranced in this world or another."
"But come," said ma, "this shall not be;
"And you from Grimstocks *shall* be free!"

"How so?" asked Linda. "Tell me truly,
 "With whom will step-mamma consort?"
"She joins her daughters," ma said, "duly
 "Installed within the royal court."
"And won't they take me there as skivvy?"
Our Linda asked. "And clean their privy!"
 Her mother laughed. "Not so! No way!
 "Now listen, girl, to what I say:
"You cannot stay in this land longer
 "With Grimstocks now in royal state;
 "But know for you a fairer fate
"Awaits; you'll find a love far stronger
 "Than Vila or Viyella know,
 "Though each may have a royal beau."

"Do you," continued ma, "remember
 "That guest you danced with at the ball –
"The one whose elfin eyes an ember
 "Of love enkindled to enthrall
"Your very heart and inner being?"
"Oh ma," said Linda, blushing, "seeing
 "His eyes so full of love did fill
 "My very soul and make it thrill!"
"I know," ma said, "and 'twas intended
 "That you should one day be his bride.
 "Your cast off shoe the Prince espied
"And thought t' himself 'What ho! How splendid!
 I'll wed the girl to spite the bloke
 With elfin eyes. Oh, what a joke!"

"The toad!" cried Linda, "such a slimy,
 "Unpleasant, mean and spiteful creep.
"Those Grimstocks made me smirched and grimy;
 Such ghastly girls their grooms can keep!"
"Indeed," said ma, "for sure Viyella
"Deserves the Prince, that loathsome fella;
 "And Vila too deserves his bro,
 "And just as bride deserves each beau
"E'en so does Prince and royal brother
 "Deserve their brides; the pairs are matched.
 "But come, my girl, you're unattached.
"The Elfin king does love no other
 "Than you, my dear, and you love him
 "So let's forget those sisters grim."

"You saved me from that royal bumpkin,"
Said Linda, "But the Elfin king"
"Tomorrow fetch the mice and pumpkin,"
Ma interrupted, "and please bring
Your pa, for though he be a duffer,
"We cannot leave him here to suffer.
"And when the Grimstocks are away,
"I shall return without delay.
"Sleep well, my daughter, till tomorrow
"When you shall go into the west
"Where lies the Island of the Blest,
"Where banished is all grief and sorrow.
"Let troubles not disturb your sleep
"And sylphs their watch around you keep!"

The day had dawned, and Linda waking
Discerned a bustle in the yard.
She looked and saw the Grimstocks taking
Their leave and paying no regard
To her or pa as they departed.
So Linda rose, called pa and started
To fetch the pumpkin and the mice.
"I hope," thought Linda, "these suffice"
As she returned with seven critters.
"That's fine," said ma, as she appeared
From nowhere; then a space she cleared
And called the mice to stop their twitters,
"Be sharp!" she cried, "Attend, take heed
And form three pairs with one to lead."

When mice were to the pumpkin tethered,
"Pazam!" cried ma, and straight away
The mice became great eagles, feathered
In gorgeous hues and bright array.
Then Linda and her pa ascended
Within a nacreous sphere most splendid.
Above the clouds they westward flew
Beyond the land, o'er ocean blue
And in the Blessèd Isle alighted
Where waiting was the Elfin King.
He greeted them and did them bring
Unto his court; and there he plighted
To Linda everlasting troth
And bound himself with solemn oath.

Then nymphs and sylphs and dryads singing
 Did celebrate their nuptial day
And set the Blessèd Isle a-ringing
 With solemn and with merry lay.
And here where fruits abundant flourish
And silver dew, not rain, does nourish
 The fertile soil, and wholesome air
 Prevents disease and no despair
Or ills are known, now lived serenely
 Our Linda's fairly odd mamma
 In peace at last with Linda's pa,
While with her king in state most queenly
 Our Linda reigned with nought amiss
 And lived in everlasting bliss.

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