



Patrick Jemmer: Pantomeim / Pantomime

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Unwaith, pan o'n i'n grwt yn ddeuddeg oed, falle, ges i ran mewn panto yn neuadd yr eglwys yn Sgeti. Ro'n i'n chwarae rhan gwas heliwr, ac roedd yr holl beth yn gyffrous iawn, gyda'r ymarfer, dysgu'r llinellau, gwneud y gwisgoedd (wel, tasg i Mam oedd hynny, a ges i wasgod ledr, britshis, sanau hir gwyn, a sgidiau sgleiniog ac arnynt fyclau mawr o aur), a phopeth. arall. Wedi dweud hynny oll, ches i ddim ond yr un llinell (sa i'n gallu cofio beth, erbyn hyn), ac wrth gwrs bu'r sioe yn Saesneg. Yn fyw tebyg i gomedi golbio (neu "slapstic") oedd fy mherfformiad, nag i drasiedi Shakespearraidd, gallech chi ddweud. Roedd rhaid i fi ddilyn wrth sodlau'r heliwr ei hun. Chwe troedfedd o'n i, fwy neu lai (bois bach, fe fu'r gwyniau tyfiant yn arteithiol), ac yn llawer talach na'r dyn hŷn a dweud y gwir. A bob tro y trôi e gan gymryd arno fe chwilio amdana i'n astud dan ebychu "Ble wyt ti, was?", trown i hefyd, ac ar y gair, byddai'r gynulleidfa'n gweiddi "mae'r tu ôl i chil!" Wel, pan es i i'r chweched dosbarth nes i helpu gyda'r panto eto, ac rwy wastad wedi bod dan gyfaredd y math hwn o ddrama a gai ffwrdd fel arfer tuag adeg y Nadolig ac sy'n llawn o ffars, cerddoriaeth, cymeriadau traddodiadol, a jôcs cyfoes (yn ôl Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru; a gallech chi ddarllen y traethawd "In Pantoland" gan Angela Carter, hefyd). Nes i ddechrau sgrifennu'r darn hwn wrth neud y Cwrs Canolradd, gwpl o flynyddoedd yn ôl, ac edrych arno unwaith eto wrth siarad â Neil am syniadau ar y wefan 'ma. Rwy wedi cael llawer o hwyl gan lunio'r stori, a gobeithio gwenwch chi dipyn bach hefyd.

Once, when I was a kid of twelve, perhaps, I got a part in a panto in the church hall in Sketty. I was playing the part of a huntsman's assistant, and the whole thing was very exciting, with the rehearsals, learning the lines, making the costumes (well, that was a job for Mum, and I got a leather waistcoat, breeches, long white socks, and shiny shoes with big gold buckles), and everything else. Having said all that, I had only one line (I can't remember what now), and of course the show was in English. My performance was more like slapstick comedy than Shakespearian comedy, you could say. I had to follow on the heels of the huntsman. I was six foot tall, more or less (man, the growing pains had been torture), and a lot taller than the older man. And every time he turned, pretending to look carefully for me and exclaiming "Where are you, boy?" I would turn as well, and at just that moment, the audience would shout "He's behind you!" Well, when I went to the sixthform I helped with the panto again, and I've always been fascinated by this kind of play which is usually performed at Christmas and which is full of farce, music, traditional characters, and current jokes (according to the University of Wales Dictionary; and you could read the essay "In Pantoland" by Angela Carter, too). I started writing this piece whilst doing the Canolradd Course, a couple of years ago, and looked at it again while talking to Neil about ideas for this website. I've had lots of fun creating the story, and I hope you'll smile a little too.

Unwaith, llawer iawn o flynyddoedd yn ôl, yng Ngwlad Gwir a Glendid, anhygoel o bell oddi yma, yr oedd Brenin a Brenhines yn byw'n hapus hapus mewn castell dirfawr wedi'i wneud o galchen a chaws, lle bodolai bob llawenydd daearol, a phob rhinwedd nefol, a ffos wres canolog oedd iddo hefyd. Ond byddwch yn ofalus: fe newidai'r castell hwnnw ei wedd yn gyson, fel llewpard yn newid ei frychni. Un dydd yn y gaeaf, roedd y Frenhines yn gwnio, wrth eistedd ger sillf y ffenestr wedi'i gwneud o bren cyn ddued ag eboni (neu effallai mai eboni oedd hi, pwy a wyr?). Roedd y ffenestr ar agor, achos bod yr ystafell yn boeth, a gorchuddiwyd ei harffed ag eira. Roedd y fenyw'n canu yn drist, gan nad oedd hi'n fam i'r un plentyn (a dyna fu disgwyliad cymdeithas ar y pryd), ac wrth wneud hyn, pigodd hi ei bys gyda'r nodwydd. Cwymodd un dafn o waed ar yr eira a gronni yno.

Fel mae'n digwydd, y pryd hwnnw, fe wnaeth y gŵyr i gyd oedd yn byw ar bwys y Gŵyr gwympo mewn cariad â gwyrif o'r enw Glangalon, a'i gwalt melyn, hir. Roedd hi'n gweithio mewn melyn oedd â lloriau gŵyr, ar ben y bryn lle roedd tŷ ei chwaer. "Dymunwn ni dy briodi di: wyt ti'n fodlon?", medden nhw, ond "Ddim ar gyfrif yn y byd," atebodd hi dan bwdu. Ond rwy'n fodlon dweud ei bod yn mwynhau'r mynyddoedd o siocled a'r afonydd o win pefriog serch hynny. Pan gawsai hi lond bol ar yr holl sothach hon, penderfynodd hi ffoi, a dychmygodd y ffôi y tu hwnt i'r enfys, i gyrrau'r Ddaear. A rhedeg bant a wnaeth, nerth ei thraed, a chanddi gwfl marchog coch amdani. O weld hyn, roedd mwyafrif o'r dynion yn cwyno: "Gŵyr hi ei meddwl ei hun, felly, gwaetha'r modd. Well i ni fynd lan i'r dafarn i foddi'ch gofidiau." A dyna beth a wnaethon nhw, yr hen gythreuliaid gwirion, ac eithrio un ohonynt Twm Path, oedd wedi cael gradd yn ecoleg yr arfordir a chwaraeon dŵr, ond oedd yn ddi-waith ac mewn dyled hyd at ei geseiliau erbyn hynny.

Pan welodd y Frenhines y tri lliw prydferth – du, coch, a gwyn – fe'i swynwyd. "O, fe fyddwn i'n dwlu ar gael merch gyda gwalt cyn ddued â'r frân yn y fynwent, gyda chroen cyn wynned ag eira ar y bedd, a gyda gwefusau cyn goched â gwaed lesu ar y groes," meddyliai i'w hun. Roedd y Duw Da'n gwrando arni, ac yn fuan wedi hynny, esgorodd y Frenhines ar ferch fach, ond clywsai'r Diawl hefyd, a sicrhaoedd i'r fam santaidd farw ar yr un pryd. "Paid â phylu; paid â gwywo; paid mynd yn hŷn" oedd ei geiriau olaf i'r plentyn. Heddwch i'w llwch: ni ddaw'i hoes drachefn.

Gyda llaw, methodod yr eneth fentrus ac uchelgeisiol honno, o'r enw Glangalon, â chwrdd â'r un ungyrn na choblyn, er iddi fynd o goed i gastell, drwy froydd a thros frysiau, hwynt ac yma, mewn gwlad a gorwlad. Ond, o'r diwedd, fe drawodd hi ar ddraig, neu neidr, uffernol o siaradus, oedd yn haerllug gyda'i gweniaith, yn llawn o ddywediedau melysion fel "dywed y gwir nes cocho'r cythraul." Esboniodd y bwystfil mytholegol sut y gallai'r melinydd wireddu meddylfryd ei chalon. Doedd dim problem o gwbl: fe fyddai rhaid iddi wneuthur drych hud o freuddwydion wedi'u chwalu, a chasglu nifer mawr o lysiau gwenwynig, a dofi pâr o

Once, a very long time ago, in the Land of Truth and Beauty, incredibly far from here, a King and Queen lived very happily in an enormous castle made of chalk and cheese, where could be found all earthly delight, and every heavenly virtue, and where the moat had central heating, too. But beware: that castle was constantly changing its aspect, like a leopard changing its spots. One day in the winter, the Queen was sewing, sitting by the window-sill which was made of wood as black as ebony (or perhaps it was ebony, who knows?). The window was open as the room was hot, and the sill was covered with snow. The woman was singing sadly, because she was not mother to even one child (and that was the expectation of society at the time), and while doing this, she pricked her finger with the needle. One drop of blood fell on the snow that was collecting there.

As it happens, at that time, all the men who lived near the Gower fell in love with a maid named Glangalon, and her long yellow hair. She worked in a mill which had slanting floors on top of the hill where her sister's house was. "We want to marry you, are you willing?" they said, but "Not on your nelly," she replied, pouting. But I'm glad to say that she enjoyed the chocolate mountains and rivers of fizzy wine despite that. When she had had a gutful of all this old nonsense, she decided to flee, and imagined that she would escape beyond the rainbow, to the furthest corners of the Earth. And run away she did, as fast as her feet would carry her, dressed in a red riding-hood. When she saw this the majority of the men complained: "She knows her own mind, then, more's the pity. We'd better go down the pub to drown our sorrows." And that's what they did, the stupid old devils, apart from one of them, Twm Path, who had graduated in coastal ecology and water sports, but was unemployed and up to his armpits in debt by then.

When the Queen saw the three colours – black, red, and white – she was enchanted. "O, I would love to have a girl with hair as black as the crow in the graveyard, with skin as white as snow on the grave, and with lips as red as the blood of Jesus on the cross," she thought to herself. The Good God was listening to her, and soon after that, the Queen brought forth a little girl, but the Devil had heard too, and ensured that the sainted mother died at the same time. "Do not fade; do not wither; do not grow old," were her last words to the child. May she rest in peace: her time shall not be seen again.

By the way, the way, that enterprising and ambitious girl named Glangalon failed to meet a single unicorn nor leprechaun, although she went from pillar to post, up hill and down dale, hither and thither, upland and lowland. But, in the end, she came across a dragon, or a snake, who was hellish talkative, and who was brazen-faced in his blandishments, full of sweet sayings such as "tell the truth to shame the devil." The mythological beast how the miller could fulfil her heart's desire. There was no problem at all: she would have to make a magic mirror from shattered dreams, and collect a large number of noxious herbs, and train a pair of ravens so they might be eyes and ears for her,

gigfrain fel y bônt yn llygaid a chlustiau iddi, a gwerthu ei henaid, ac yn y blaen ac ati. Cytunodd yr eneth yn frwd, a chyda un diferyn o waed mewn gobled o laeth enwyn poeth, roedd pwerau'r Fall wedi ei hawlio iddo'u hunain. O hynny ymlaen ei hwynepryd a fwriad gysgod hir dros bawb yn ei gwydd, ac oni bai am ei llais persain, ei geiriau hudol, a swyn ei drych parablus, fe fyddai i'w gweld mewn ffurf draig, a'i chroen yn gennau i gyd, a'i gwalt hir melyn llawn llwch blawd.

Fodd bynnag, yn ôl y castell o esgyrn a gewynnau yn y brifddinas roedd y baban newydd yn y teulu brenhinol yn dra phrydferth. Roedd ei gwalt cyn ddued â'r frân, ei chroen cyn wynned ag eira, a'i gwefusau cyn goched â gwaed, ac felly y'i henwyd yn Eirwen. Datlhodd yr holl deyrnas, ond gresynon nhw'n gyfamserol hefyd. Er bod y Brenin yn bur drist, priododd e fenyw newydd ar unwaith. Gwraigda hardd oedd hi, o'r enw Glangalon, y daethai adfyd i'w rhan. Roedd wedi cyrraedd y castell amser yr angladd, a gwerthai oel nadroedd, dognau o gedwrach ag arian byw rhag y frech, ac elicsirau ieuencnid. Eithr gwrrach ddrwg iawn oedd hi, does dim dwywaith amdani. Calondu oedd ei henw cyfrin gan ei bod yn ymddangos yn dda, ond bod ei henaid hi cyn ddued â nos heb leuad na sêr. A dweud y gwir, defnyddiai hi ei hud, a dod yn bertach o ddydd i ddydd gan wneud pethau drwg- fel bwyta cŵn bach, dad-diwnio pianos, a rhwystro cariadon.

Bob dydd, fe fyddai Glangalon (a adwaenir fel Calondu yn ei amser ei hun) yn holi'r un cwestiwn i'w drych swynol, pan ofynnai iddo fe: "O ddrych hud, fy nrych swyn, nawr codwch eich llef; pwy bellach yw'r pertaf o bob peth dan nef?" A bob dydd atebai'r drych yn yr un wedd: "Arglywyddes, un peth rwy'n ei ddweud wrthoch chi: o bob peth dan haul, y degaf ych chi!" Byddai'r ymddiddan hwn yn parhau bob dydd yn ddi-fael, ac roedd Ilysfaam Tywysoges Eirwen wrth ei bodd. Fodd bynnag, roedd y Dywysoges ifanc yn dod yn fwy prydferth bob dydd hefyd, a heb ddefnyddio hud, a phan ddaeth hi'n ddeunaw newidiodd popeth.

Ar ben-blwydd Eirwen, aeth y Frenhines fel cyw cog yn y nyth i holi ei chwestiwn fel arfer. Ond atebodd y drych y tro hwn: "O, Arglywyddes, mae'n amlwg eich bod chi'n dra theg; ond y bertaf i gyd ydy Eirwen heb freg" Wedyn, daeth Calondu'n grac arswydus, ac addo i'w hun i ladd ei llysferch cyn gynted â phosib ar ôl cael ei thriniaeth harddu gan ymdrochi mewn crochan o waed moch berwedig a stemllyd.

Roedd dicter y wrach yn ddychrynllyd yn wir, ond ni allai hi ei hun ddim lladd y Dywysoges ifanc am fod hud nerthol cariad ei mam ymadawedig yn ei gwarchod. Felly, gorchmynnodd y Ilysfaam anfad i heliwr hunangyflogedig o'r enw Twm Rwpather, oedd yn mynd o gwmpas i chwilio am waith, wneud y weithred ddrwg. Dywedodd hi wrtho am fynd â'r Dywysoges i lwyn ger y castell o groen a chyhyr, ac yno, mynnodd hi y dylai dynnu ei chalon gan ddefnyddio cyllell finiog, ac wedyn dod â'r galon yn ôl iddi yn syth. Wrth gwrs, aeth e â'r ferch fach i'r goedwig. Fodd bynnag dyn rhywiog oedd e, felly ni allai ei lladd hi chwaith. Dwedodd e wrthi hi am redeg bant a chuddio ei hun, wedyn lladdodd e faedd gwylt yn ei lle hi.

Rhedodd y ferch bant; rhedeg nes na allai hi redeg rhagor.

Daeth yr heliwr â chalon y baedd yn ôl i'r castell o ewin a chorn, lle y'i bwyttaodd y Frenhines anfad dan lawenychu. Er hyn, ddathlodd hi ddim am yn hir, oherwydd pan aeth i holi'r cwestiwn arferol i'r drych hud, atebodd yn hyf: "Arglywyddes, go dlws ydych chi, wraig mor syw; ond y ferch fwy teg fyfth ydy Eirwen sy'n byw!" Wedyn gwyltiodd Calondu'n ofnadwy; daeth ei hwyneb yn wyrrd o genfigen; aeth ei chalon mor ddu â chwrmwl taran. "Fe fydd yn edifar gan y forwyn am y dydd y cafodd hi ei geni," tyngai, "ac yn hyderus fe fydd hi farw bellach dan fy nwylo fy hun!" Ac aeth y

and sell her soul, and so on and so forth. The girl agreed enthusiastically, and with one drop of blood in a goblet of hot buttermilk, the powers of Darkness had claimed her for themselves. From then on, her visage cast a long shadow over all in her presence, and were it not for her melodious voice, her magic words, and the enchantment of her loquacious mirror, she would have been seen in the form of a dragon, its skin all scaly, and its long yellow hair full of flour-dust.

However, back in the castle of bone and sinew in the capital, the new baby in the royal family was most beautiful. Her hair was as black as the crow, her skin as white as snow, and her lips as red as blood, and so she was called Eirwen, Snow-white. The whole kingdom celebrated, but they simultaneously grieved. Although the King was very sad, he married a new woman straight away. She was a handsome noblewoman who had fallen on hard times, named Glangalon. She had arrived at the castle at the time of the funeral, and was selling snake oil, doses of nightshade and quicksilver for the pox, and elixirs of youth. But a very evil witch she was, no two ways about it. Blackheart was her true name, because she appeared good, but her soul was as black as a moonless, star-free night. To tell the truth, she would use her magic, and get more and more pretty from day to day by perpetrating evil deeds – like eating puppy-dogs, untuning pianos, and frustrating sweethearts.

Every day, Glangalon (who was known as Calondu in her own time), would ask the same question to her magic mirror when she would enquire of it: "O mirror mystic raise your voice: state beauty mine's the wide world's choice!" And every day the mirror would answer in the same fashion: "My Lady, one thing I can say unto you: your beauty's the greatest the whole world doth view." This dialogue would continue every day without fail, and the stepmother of Princess Eirwen was most pleased. However, the young Princess was becoming more beautiful every day too, and without using magic, and when she turned eighteen, everything changed.

On Eirwen's birthday the Queen, like a cuckoo in the nest, went to ask her question as usual. But the mirror answered this time: "O Lady it's clear that indeed you're most fair; but Eirwen's most lovely I doubtless declare." Then Calondu became fearfully angry, and promised herself to kill her step-daughter as soon as possible after having her beauty treatment, bathing in a cauldron of boiling, steamy pigs' blood.

The witch's anger was terrifying indeed, but she could not herself kill the young Princess, because her the strong magic of her departed mother's love was protecting her. So, the wicked stepmother commanded a self-employed huntsman called Tom Something-or-other, who was doing the rounds looking for work, to do the evil deed. She told him to take the Princess to a grove near the castle of skin and muscle, and there, she insisted he should tear out her heart with a sharp knife, and then straightaway bring the heart back to her. Of course, he took the young girl to the forest. However, he was a noble man, so he could not kill her, either. He told her to run off and hide herself, and the he slew a wild boar in her stead. The girl ran off, and ran until she could run no more.

The huntsman brought the boar's heart back to the castle of nail and horn, where the atrocious Queen ate it, rejoicing. Despite this, she did not celebrate for long, because when she went to ask the usual question to the magic mirror, it answered impudently: "O Lady: most fair are you, woman so fine; but less so that Eirwen whose beauty still shines." Then Calondu became terribly angry, her face went green with jealousy; her heart went as black as a thunder cloud. "The wench will regret the day she was born," she swore, "and assuredly she shall die now by my own hand!" And the villainous stepmother went off in a huff to boil her

Ilysfaṁ ysgeler i ffwrdd dan sorri i ferwi ei chrochan, ac i fwrw ei hud. Ac, esgyrn Dafydd – yr oedd yr heliwr ‘na, Twm, amdani heb os nac oni bai, roedd yn ei haros hi, ac fe fyddai’n chael hi yng nghyflawnder yr amser!

Yn y cyfamser, roedd Eirwen yn crwydro yn y goedwig dywyll ac enbyd tan iddi flino'n llwyr. Yn y diwedd, daeth hi o hyd i fwthyn bach yng nghanol y coed, a baglu i mewn. Doedd neb yno, a bwyttaodd damaid bach o fwyd cyn iddi gwympo i'r llawr dan lewygu. Ac wedyn roedd yn trwm gysgu, ddydd a nos, nes i'r trigolion ddychwelyd adre. Ac roedden nhw'n saith bardd crwydr o'r dosbarth isaf a thrwydded ganddynt i berfformio comedï yn ogystal â chanu mawl am dâl. Mewn gwirionedd, dyna oedd y saith clerwr, ac enwogion o fri ydoedd hefyd. Chwioryst a brodyr yn y ffydd oeddent yn wir: ffydd a gofleidiai a dathlu a pharchu a gwerthfawrogi tebygrwydd, amrywiad a gwahaniaeth rhwng gwyr a gwragedd – o safbwyt diwylliant, cymdeithas ac economeg.

Pan ddaeth y clerwyr i mewn i'r bwthyn, dihunodd y ferch ar unwaith. “Beth ‘chi’n wneud yn ein tŷ ni?” oedd y cwestiwn ng ngenau pawb. “F’arglywyddi trugarog, does dim dichell yno i; rwy'n ffoi rhag fy llysfaṁ sy eisiau fy lladd i!” atebodd, dan gwympo'n fflachdar i'r carpel Persiaidd helaethwych fel petai'n anymwybodol. Roedd hi mor hardd er ei bod ym mhob man, a chyffyrddodd ei geiriau gwirion y clerwyr hyd at ddagrau. Felly rhoddon nhw hi yn y gwely, a gofalu amdani hi nes iddi ddihuno unwaith eto.

Pan ddigwyddodd hyn, daethon nhw â dysgl cawl iddi hi, a holi iddi i ddweud ei hanes i gyd wrthyn nhw. Gwnaeth hi hyn, a phan gwplasai, estynnodd y saith clerwr eu cydymdeimlad dwysaf. “Bydd rhaid i chi aros yma gyda ni,” meddan, “fe fyddwn ni'n gofalu amdanoch chi, ac fe gewch chi ofalu amdanon ni.” Cytunodd Eirwen heb amheuaeth o fath yn y byd. Ond, yn anfod dus, ni allan nhw fyw'n hapus byth oddi ar hynny, gan fod y Frenhines ddrwg yn cynllunio gwneud drwg, ac roedd y plot yn mynd yn fwy cymhleth, tra ceulai'r gwaed baban a llaeth blaidd yn ei phair.

Nawr, arbenigwr ar greaduriaid amffibiaidd oedd y Twm Path hwnnw, a frasgamasai o'r dref yn y Gŵyr amser maith yn ôl, gan adael cannoedd o ewythr a neaint a chefndyr yn ei ôl er mwyn dod yn ei flaen yn y byd. Gallai fe droi ei law at unrhyw beth, a rhoi cynnig ar weithio mewn sawl sw, ond heb eiryn o lwc, gan fod ar yr anifeiliaid i gyd chwant ei gusanu, a'i anwesu. Ond, pan rythai ym myw eu llygaid, ar amrantiad y diflanasai pob un ohonynt megis trwy ryw felltith wael, gan adael dim ond chwyrliad troellog o blu gloywddu, a llais yn canu'n angyliaid “hoenus yw'r byd, er bod tranc yn ffaith, unwaith boch fyw, mwynhewch y daith!” Yn y pendraw, llawn siom a dicter a gofid, wedi tro bach yn gweithio'n ddielw fel heliwr, llwyddodd mewn cyfweliad. Ac wedyn Y Tywysog Swynol fyddai o hynny ymlaen mewn pantomeimiau drwy gydol y wlad.

Halodd y wrach dwy gigfran o'r enwau Atgof a Meddwl o'r castell i'r goedwig fel ysbwyr, a phan ddaethant yn ôl, dangos iddi hi lle roedd y Dywysoges yn byw bryd hynny. “Byw y mae'r lodes o hyd, ond yn fuan fe fydd hi yn farw,” meddai dan chwerthin, ond gwnaeth wawchio'r adar anfodlon ddim ond “ofer yw hoedl, rhwch i ni gnawd, â pawb i'w tranc, ni ddown â'u ffawd.”

Dair gwaith y cuddwsgai'r fenyw anfad ei hun, a cheisio lladd Eirwen tra nad oedd y clerwyr gartref. Y tro cyntaf aeth hi a ffur yr Olchyddes wrth y Rhed â bodis lasiog, a thro dwyn perswâd ar ei llysferch i'w defnyddio, ond daeth ei chyfeillion ffyddlon yn ôl mewn pryd ar y funud olaf un, a'i hachub hi. Yr ail dro, aeth hi â chrib a gwenwyn sarff arni, a thrio ei gwenwyno hi, ond

cauldron, and cast her spells. And, good gracious – that huntsman, Twm, has had it now, without a doubt, he was in for it, and he'd get it, in the fullness of time!

In the meantime, Eirwen wandered in the dark and perilous woods until she was totally exhausted. In the end, she found a small cottage in the middle of the trees, and stumbled in. There was nobody there, and she ate a morsel of food before she fell to the floor, swooning. And then she slept soundly, through the day and through the night, until the inhabitants returned home. And they were seven wandering poets of the lowest class, who were permitted to perform comedy as well as singing dirges for payment. In fact, these were the seven strolling minstrels, and famous, renowned individuals they were, too. They were truly brothers and sisters in true faith: the faith that embraced and celebrated and respected and appreciated the similarity, variety, and difference between men and women – from the viewpoint of culture, society, and economics.

When the minstrels came into the cottage, the girl awoke forthwith. “What're you doing in our house?” was the question on everyone's lips. “My merciful lords, there is no deceit in my, I'm fleeing from my stepmother who wants to kill me,” she answered, falling in a heap on the sumptuous Persian carpet, as if unconscious. She was so beautiful despite being all over the place, and her mangled words moved the minstrels to tears. So, they put her in bed, and cared for her until she awoke again.

When this happened, they brought her a bowl of soup, and asked her to tell her whole story to them. She did this, and when she had finished, the seven strolling minstrels extended their deepest sympathies. “You must say here with us,” they said, “we'll look after you, and you can care for us.” Eirwen agreed without a shadow of a doubt. But, unfortunately, they couldn't live happily ever after, as the evil Queen was planning to do evil, and the plot was thickening, while the baby blood and wolf-milk congealed in her cauldron.

Now, an expert on amphibious creatures was that Twm Path, who had stridden from the town in the Gower ages ago, leaving hundreds of uncles and nephews and cousins behind in order to get on in the world. He could turn his hand to anything, and had a go at working in several zoos without an iota of luck, because all the animals wanted to kiss and cuddle him. But, when he stared into the whites of their eyes, in an instant every one of them would disappear, as if through some vile curse, leaving only a whirling vortex of jet-black feathers, and a voice singing angelically: “life's full of joy, though it will end, one time you live, enjoy all it sends!” In the end, full of disappointment and grief, after an unprofitable spell working as a huntsman, he succeeded in an interview. And then The Charming Prince would be from then onwards, in pantomimes throughout the land.

The witch sent two ravens named Thought and Memory from the castle to the woods as spies, and when they came back, they showed her where the Princess was living then. “The wench is yet alive, but soon she'll surely perish,” said she, laughing, but the disaffected birds merely croaked, “futile is life, dead flesh doth us sate, everyone's doomed, we bring their fate.”

Thrice the abominable woman disguised herself, and tried to kill Eirwen while the minstrels were not at home. The first time, in the form of the Washer at the Ford, she took a lacy bodice, and tried to persuade her stepdaughter to use it, but her faithful friends came back in time at the very last minute to save her. The second time she took a comb with snake venom on it, and tried to poison her, but her friends returned at

dychwelodd ei ffrindiau ar yr unfed awr ar ddeg unwaith eto, a llwydo ei harbed hi. Bob tro, anfonodd y Frenhines ei hysbiwyr i ddarganfod beth ddigwyddasai ar ôl iddi adael, a bob tro rhoddon nhw'r un ateb: "Ofer yw!" Pan ddywedodd y drych hud yr un ateb yn union hefyd, aeth y wraig ddrwg yn wylt gacwn yn waeth na chynt.

Y trydydd tro, fe fwriadodd yr Arglwyddes Uffernol hud nerthol, a chreu afal swynol oedd yn flasus ac yn farwol fel ei gilydd. Aeth hi â'r afal i'r bwthyn yn y goedwig, wedi'i gwisgo fel hen ferchetañ, ddall ac unig, lle temtiodd Eirwen i'w fwyta. Ni chafodd y llances yr un tamaid i'w fwyta drwy'r dydd, a gwnaeth ei frathu'n farus. Cyn gynted ag y cydiodd ynddo fe, cwympo i'r llawr, a'r tro hwn ni fedrai'r saith clerwr ei helpu hi erbyn iddynt ddychwelydd, gan na allent ddarganfod y gwenwyn. Roedd y ferch hardd i'w gweld yn cysgu, felly fe'i rhoddon nhw hi mewn arch grisial, fel y byddai pawb yn gallu edrych arni hi, rhag ofn iddynt ei hanghofio hi.

Un dydd, flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach, daeth Tywysog golygus (wel nid llyfant amffibiad ydoedd, beth bynnag, er gwaethaf ei fethiant gofalwr sw) i weld y Dywysoges oedd yn cysgu'n soudn yn yr arch grisial. Fe wyddai fod llwbrau gogoniant yn arwain at y bedd, ond roedd wastad arno angen rhedeg yn wylt a chael hwyl, yr hen lanc gwirion. Crefodd e ar y clerwyr i'w hagor hi, a phan wnaethon nhw hyn, plygodd drosodd er mwyn ei chusanu hi. Aeth y clerwyr o'u cof o weld y fath anghywirdeb gwleidyddol yn digwydd, a allasai fod yn gyfartal ag ymosodiad. Er mwyn osgoi'r sarhad hwn ar weddusrwydd, nhw a ymosododd arno fe, gan fwrw yn erbyn yr arch yn ystod yr ysgarmes. Diolch byth, fe ryddhawyd y darn o afal gwenwyn o'i gwddw, a dihunodd hi ar unwaith, mor llawn â'r gog ar y gainc, ac mor llon â'r brithyll.

Nid oes angen dweud i'r Tywysog a'r Dywysoges briodi heb ymdroi (ar ôl mynd trwy broffil personol ei gilydd yn fanwl anghyffredin), ond nid cyn y pâr ifanc call lunio cytundeb priodasol oedd yn ddiddos ac yn holol sicr. Ac roeddwn nhw'n byw'n hapus fyth oddi ar hynny, wedi mabwysiadau eu saith cyfaill ffyddlon, a dwy gigfran anhydrin. A beth am y llysfaam ddrwg? Pan glywodd hi am y briodas, torrodd hi'r drych hud yn chwilfriw, mor grac oedd hi, ond distrywiodd hyn ei swyn i gyd, ac aeth hi yn grebachlyd, a chludwyd hi ymaith gan haid o gysgodion i Wlad y Tylwyth Teg, fel nad oedd dim byd o gwbl ohoni ar ôl heblaw am ei llais yn galaru: "rhyfedd yw serch, rhowch i mi hedd, ymado a wnaf, lle bydd fy medd?" Wedi dweud hynny oll, hi a gyflwynasai melino peiriannol i'r brifddinas, a chychwyn y Chwldro Diwydiannol o ganlyniad; ac roedd ei meddygaeth werin o werth enfawr i'r cwmnïoedd fferyllol rhyngwladol a ddeuai maes o law. Aeth yr hen Frenin i fyw yng nghymunedod y brodyr drwg eu tymer yn y Gŵyr, a helodd ei damaid trwy werthu tywod i drigolion Anialwch Arabia. A dyna ben ar hanes Tywysoges Eirwen, Twm Path, a'r Saith Clerwr.

the eleventh hour once again, and managed to rescue her. Each time, the Queen sent her spies to discover what had happened after she departed, and every time they gave the same answer: "It's futile!" When the magic mirror uttered the exact same answer as well, the evil woman went even more berserk than before.

The third time the Hellish Lady cast powerful magic, and created an enchanted apple which was tasty and deathly in equal amounts. She took the apple to the cottage in the woods, dressed as a blind and lonely old maid, where she tempted Eirwen to eat it. The young woman had not had a bite to eat all day, and gnashed down on it greedily. As soon as she touched it, she fell to the floor, and this time the seven strolling minstrels couldn't help her, by the time they arrived, as they could not discover the poison. The beautiful girl seemed to be asleep, so they placed her in a crystal coffin, so that all could gaze upon her, lest they forget her.

One day, years later, a handsome Prince (well, he was no toad, anyway, despite his failure as a zookeeper) to see the Princess who was sleeping soundly in the crystal coffin. He knew that the paths of glory lead unto the grave, but he always wanted to run wild and have fun – the stupid old bachelor. he beseeched the minstrels to open it, and when they did thus, he bent over to kiss her. The minstrels went mental on seeing such political incorrectness happening, which could have been tantamount to assault. In order to avoid the insult to decency, they set upon him, bumping against the coffin during the scrum. Thank goodness, the piece of poisoned apple was released from her throat, and she awoke at once, as happy as the proverbial sand-boy.

Needless to say, the Prince and the princess got married without delay (after going through each other's personal profile in uncommon detail), and not before the young pair made a nuptial contract that was copper-bottomed and watertight. And they lived happily ever after thenceforth, having adopted their seven faithful friends, and two unruly ravens. And what of the evil stepmother? When she heard about the wedding she smashed her magic mirror to smithereens, so angry was she, but this destroyed all her magic, and she shrivelled up, and was swept away by a flock of shadows to Fairyland, so that there was nothing at all of her left save her voice, lamenting: "How strange is love, I cool peace I need, I'm flying off, now where's my mead?" Having said all that, it's she who had introduced industrial milling to the capital, and started the Industrial Revolution as a result, and her folk medicines were of immense value to the international pharmaceutical companies where were to come in due course. The old King went to live in the Bad-Tempered Brothers' commune in the Gower, and earned his crust selling sand to the inhabitants of the Arabian Desert. And that's the end of the Tale of Snow-White, Twm Path, and the Seven Strolling Songsters.