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The Hoodie Man

by Jess Smith

Travelling men used to say that you'd see sometimes - and without a dram in them may I add - if they were just under the bridge yonder, there was one old guy, I cannae mind his name for sure, I think he could have been Alexander Reid's son. It's coming in to my head now. He married the lassie Stewart, Martha Stewart, and they lived forever all round about that area Dunkeld and Birnam and I believe that he went in after he saw a hoodie man walk across the river from where the cathedral is and he went in to Dunkeld and Birnam and all around about and Torrvald and all round about and he tellt everybody who is the hoodie man and people didn't believe him and several other travellers had seen this hoodie man and then someone says 'Aye that's the Abbot. Now and again he leaves. He goes and backwards and forwards but he keeps going up to his old burial ground, up where he's buried beside the auld hermit' and they say that he frequented the River Tay many times and he became more like a watchman, you know if there was anybody poaching the salmon, sometimes a light would be seen, you know, at the other side of the river, enough to frighten them, to make them shift and leave the salmon in its proper place and then there was them that would be maybe pearl fishing in the Tay and you're no supposed to take a mussel oot of the burn unless it's got either a fiddlebelly, you know it's sucking in, it's aged so there could be a stone in there, or its dark grey and got the proper lines of age on it, and you can get the young pearl, the young mussel shells, and a lot of young silly laddies wouldnae have the knowledge or wouldnae really have the respect for the mussel and would open the shell looking for a pearl which obviously wouldnae be there in such a young mussel and sometimes they say that if they were daein this someone would breathe on the back of their neck and the auld folk said, 'That's the Abbot. That's the Abbot frae Dunkeld. You shouldnae have been there. You must have been rippin open the young mussels'.

This is the transcript of the audio file available at
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