

## Scots

# Burns Nicht

Hullo! Ma name's Chris, or else you kin cry me A-Lau.

Ah'm fae Hong Kong masel – Ah wis born oan the island, and ma Maw's side o the faimly comes fae Sha Tin, near Tai Wai. Ma Paw's side o the faimly, hooever, cam fae Scotland. A toon ca'd Paisley, which ye nicht ken fae its famous textiles!

Noo, ah moved wi ma Maw, ma Paw, and ma wee sister back when ah wis just a wean, sae ah've lived maist o ma life here in Scotland. Scotland's a wunnerful place, wi bonnie countryside aye jist doon the road, the warmest fowk ye could ivver hope tae meet, and plenty o history tae it, tae!

Nae doot ye've mibbe heard o wir famous son, the People's Poet Rabbie Burns. He wis a crackin scriever, wan o the best – he wrote poems aboot aw sorts: Hings he saw in everyday life, his loves, his pals, neebors wham he didnae particularly like... Aw the wey through tae mair fantastic fare, lik bogles and witchies and Auld Nick hisself!

Weel, he wis sic a great scriever that every year, oan January the twinty-fifth, we Scots hiv a richt guid hoolie in his honour! It's mibbe no a holiday richt enough, but whit a fuss is made! At the schule, ye'd be learnin and recitin his maist famous works – “Tae a Moose” is aye the favourite fur bairns aw ower the place! Or if ye're wee bit aulder and intae the singin, ye nicht hae a bash at “Scots Wha Hae”, or a rousin round of “Ye Jacobites By Name”. Aw, that song aye gets ma blood up, so it does!

Maist important of aw – whether it's at hame wi your faimly, or at a social or a club o some kind – it's the scan. The traditional Burns Supper.

D'ye ken whit Haggis is? There's mony wha'd scoff at it wha've nivver even tried it, but ah love it – ah aye huv! It's a wee bit like a sausage, I suppose, an ye bile it for a bit and there's a kind o rich spicy mince inside. But afore ye stick a dirk in it and slice it open, ye've tae gie it proper respect, like – there a grand auld poem that Burns hissel wrote, ca'd “Tae A Haggis” that sings its praises and gies thanks tae it fur its simplicity, and feeding aw ae us ower the years.

Noo, the haggis is jist wan part o the meal – traditionally, ye huv it wi a wee dod neeps and tatties. And if it's ma granny makin them, enough white pepper tae tickle yer neb! Of course, as they say, ye can tak the boy oot fae Hong Kong, but ye'll nivver tak the Hong Kong fae oot the boy – in ma hoose, it wis only ma Paw wha hud the tatties. Fur me, ma maw, and ma sister, it was Haggis and biled rice! Auld habits die hard, ye ken! We were still made tae eat wir neeps, o course – tae mak us big and

strong, or so we were telt. I still huv rice wi ma haggis tae this day, though ithers micht ca me daft fur it – it’s ma tradition and a’m stickin wi it!

And o course, nae Burns Supper is complete without a wee nip o the cratur – if ye’re auld enough, there’s almost certainly a wee dram o a guid single malt whisky fur ye afore the nicht ends. And if ye’re no, it’s a gless o Scotland’s ithers national drink – Irn Bru! Delicious, fizzy, and it glows a healthy radioactive orange colour tae.

Onywey, ah’ve probably blethered oan lang enough. Ah hope ye’ve enjoyed hearin aboot ma faimly’s weird wee Burns Nicht Tradition. Ah’ll leave you wi a slightly cleaner version o a guid toast tae swally yer Burns Nicht dram tae, fae ma Grandpaw the sailor:

Wha’s like us? No mony, and they’re aw deid!

English

# Burns Night

Hello! My name’s Chris, or else you can call me A-Lau.

I’m from Hong Kong myself– I was born on the island, and my Mum’s side of the family comes from Sha Tin, near Tai Wai. My Dad’s side of the family, however, came from Scotland. A town called Paisley, which you might know for its famous textiles!

Now, I moved with my Mum, my Dad, and my little sister back when I was just a kid, so I’ve lived most of my life here in Scotland. Scotland’s a wonderful place, with beautiful countryside always nearby, the warmest people you could ever hope to meet, and plenty of history in it, too!

No doubt you might have heard of our famous son, the People’s Poet Robert Burns. He was a great writer, one of the best – he wrote poems about all sorts of things: Things he saw in everyday life, his loves, his friends, neighbours that he didn’t particularly like... All the way through to more fantastic things, like ghosts and witches and The Devil himself!

Well, he was such a great writer that every year, on January the twenty-fifth, we Scots have a big celebration in his honour! It isn’t actually a holiday, but a lot of attention is paid to it! At school, you learn and recite his most famous works – “To a Mouse” is always the favourite for children everywhere! Or if you’re a little older and like to sing, you might try “Scots Who Have”, or a rousing round of “You Jacobites By Name”. Ah, that song always gets my heart racing, it really does!

Most important of all – whether it's at home with your family, or at a party or a club of some kind – it's the food. The traditional Burns Supper.

Do you know what Haggis is? There are many people who dismiss it without even having tried it, but I love it – I always have! It's a little bit like a sausage, I suppose, and you boil it for a short time and there's a sort of rich spicy mince inside. But before you stick a knife in it and slice it open, you have to give it proper respect – there's a great old poem that Burns himself wrote, called "To A Haggis" that sings its praises and gives thanks to it for its simplicity, and feeding everyone throughout the years.

Now, the haggis is just one part of the meal – traditionally, it's served with a side of turnips and potatoes. And if it's my Gran making them, enough white pepper to make you sneeze! Of course, as they say, you can take the boy out of Hong Kong, but you can't take the Hong Kong out of the boy – in my house, it was only my Dad who ate the potatoes. For me, my Mum, and my Sister, it was Haggis and boiled rice! Old habits die hard, you know! We were still made to eat our turnips, of course – to make us big and strong, or so we were told. I still have rice with my haggis to this day, though other people might call me silly for it – it's my tradition and I'm sticking to it!

And of course, no Burns Supper is complete without a little drink – if you're old enough, you'll almost certainly have a small glass of a good single malt whisky before the night ends. And if you're not, it's a glass of Scotland's other national drink – Irn Bru! Delicious, fizzy, and it glows a healthy radioactive orange colour too.

Anyway, I've probably chatted away long enough. I hope you've enjoyed hearing about my family's odd little Burns Night Tradition. I'll leave you with a slightly cleaner version of a good toast to have your Burns Night drink to, from my Grandpa the sailor:

Who's like us? Not many, and they're all dead!