

The King with the Donkey's Ears

Once there lived a King called Labhraí Loingseach.

He had a big secret.

He had donkey ears which he kept covered under his crown.

To keep his secret he had to kill any barber who cut his hair.

A young man named Dónal wanted to be a famous barber.

His mother worried that he might be killed by the king.

Then one day he was chosen to cut the King's hair.

Dónal's mother was very upset and she went to speak the King.

She waited outside the palace crying until the king let her in.

She begged him not to kill her son, the barber.

The King promised not to kill Dónal.

But he made Dónal promise to keep his secret.

Dónal agreed but soon he became very ill.

He could not tell anyone what was wrong.

Donal and his mother went to talk to a druid.

He told him to tell his secret to an oak tree.

Dónal did this and immediately felt better.

King Labhraí's favourite musician wanted to make a new harp.

He cut a branch from the oak tree.

That evening the musician was asked to play his new harp.

Suddenly it began to sing 'Labhraí Loingseach has donkey ears!'

King Labhraí's crown fell to the ground and everyone saw his donkey ears.

At first, he was furious but after a while nobody seemed to notice his ears.

King Labhraí was happy because everyone knew his secret.

Thanks to Dónal, no more barbers were killed in the kingdom.

He was a hero and the Royal Barber from then on!