

The Scottish English Podcast

E10 Myths of the Scottish Waters: The Secrets of Selkies and Kelpies | The Scottish English Podcast

Transcript	Vocabulary and grammar structures you should know. *= meaning used in the podcast if there is more than one meaning.	Collocations, idioms and other useful phrases.
	than one meaning.	

Claire | Kilted English:

Have you ever heard of the Selkies or the Kelpies?

These <u>legendary</u> beings have been part of Scotland myths for centuries and today we'll uncover their secrets. So grab a cup of tea, get comfortable, and let's journey into Scottish legend.

Hello and welcome to the Scottish English Podcast, the show where English language learners can explore the culture, history and accents of Scotland.

I'm Claire, and today we are diving into the deep, mysterious world of Scottish folklore.

The story of the Selkies.

Let's start with the Selkies, one of Scotland's most <u>haunting</u> and romantic folktales.

Legendary (adjective) / ledzəndri/

- very famous and talked about a lot by people
- mentioned in stories from ancient times*

- The legendary Bob Dylan
- Legendary heroes

Mysterious (adjective) /mɪˈstɪəriəs/

- difficult to understand or explain; strange*
- (of a place) seeming strange or secret
- (especially of people) strange and interesting because you do not know much about them
- (of people) not saying much about

- A mysterious illness
- The mysterious disappearance of an aircraft

Selkies are seal people. By day, they swim in the cold northern seas as sleek, beautiful seals, but under the light of the full moon, they can <u>shed</u> their skins and walk the land as humans.

Many Selkie stories are <u>tragic</u> love tales. One of the most famous tells of a fisherman who finds a beautiful woman by the shore.

He discovers her seal skin hidden on the rocks and steals it.

Without her skin, she's unable to return to the sea. So he forces her to marry him. Awful. They have children, and for years they seem happy, but deep inside she longs for the ocean. Then one day she finds her seal skin hidden away. Without hesitation, she puts it on, transforms back into a seal, and disappears into the waves, never to be seen again.

Selkie legends come from Scotland's, northern coasts and islands, especially Orkney and Shetland, the islands in the north of the country.

something, especially when other people want to know more

Haunting (adjective)

/'ho:ntɪŋ/

 beautiful, sad or frightening in a way that cannot be forgotten

Shed (verb)

/[ed/

- shed something to take off a piece of clothing
- shed something if an animal sheds its skin, or a plant sheds leaves, it loses them naturally*

Tragic (adjective)

/ˈtrædʒɪk/

- making you feel very sad, usually because somebody has died or suffered a lot*
- connected with tragedy (= the style of literature)

Shore (noun)

/ʃɔː(r)/

- the land along the edge of the sea, the

- A haunting melody/experience/i mage

- A tragic love story
- A tragic accident

- A rocky/sandy shore
- On the shore
- Off shore = when a boat is anchored

Some people say these myths were inspired by	ocean or a lake	away from the coast
real stories. Perhaps of shipwrecked sailors or		
strangers coming from far away countries.	Shipwrecked (adjective) /ˈʃɪprekt/	
Others believe they reflect Scotland's deep	- having been sailing in a ship that was	
connection between the people and the sea.	then lost or destroyed at sea	
And of course, in these coastal villages, seals were a <u>familiar</u> sight, intelligent creatures that seem to watch humans with knowing eyes.	Familiar (adjective) /fəˈmɪliə(r)/ - well known to you; often seen or heard and therefore easy to recognize*	A familiar voiceThe song was vaguely familiar
Could they really be Selkies in disguise?	 familiar with something knowing something very well 	
The deadly kelpies.		
Now let's move from the sea to Scotland's rivers and lochs, where a much darker creature <u>lurks</u> ; the kelpie.	Lurk (verb) /lɜːk/ - when something unpleasant or dangerous	
The kelpie is a <u>shape-shifting</u> water spirit.	lurks, it is present but not in an obvious way	
It often appears as a magnificent black horse standing at the water's edge. But don't <u>be fooled</u> .	Shape-shifting (adjective) /ˈʃeɪp ʃɪftɪŋ/ - (in stories) able to change into other	
If you try to ride it, its skin becomes sticky, trapping you on its back. Then before you can	people, animals or things	

escape, it <u>gallops</u> into the water, <u>dragging</u> you to a watery death.

Creepy right.

One of the most famous Kelpie legends comes from Loch Ness. Yes, the same place as the Loch Ness Monster, which we talked about in last week's episode.

Some believe that Nessie, the giant creature of the loch, might be a kelpie <u>in disguise</u>.

But kelpies don't always take the form of horses. Sometimes they appear as humans. Usually a handsome man or a beautiful woman who tries to <u>lure</u> you into the water. But if you look closely, you might notice something strange. Their feet remain <u>hooves</u> no matter what form they take.

These stories served as warnings, especially for children. Just as they can be today, rivers and lochs were dangerous places. And kelpie tales reminded people to be careful near the water.

Fool (verb)

/fu:l/

 to trick somebody into believing something that is not true

Gallop (verb)

/ˈgæləp/

 when a horse or similar animal gallops, it moves very fast and each stride includes a stage when all four feet are off the ground together

Drag (verb)

/dræg/

- to take hold of something and pull it

Disguise (noun)

/dɪsˈgaɪz/

- to change your appearance so that people cannot recognize you

Lure (verb)

/lʊə(r)/

 to persuade or trick somebody to go somewhere or to do something by promising them a reward Today, Scotland still remembers the kelpies. If you visit Falkirk, you'll see two enormous metal horse heads, 30 meters tall. These sculptures, called the Kelpies, were built to celebrate Scotland's horse powered history but they also remind us of these mythical creatures.

Selkies and kelpies in modern culture.

Even today, Selkies and Kelpies continue to inspire books, films, and music.

Many of you will know the battle between Elsa and the spirit horse in Frozen 2. This is a legend from Scandinavian folklore similar to the Scottish Kelpie.

And you should check out Song of the Sea, a beautiful animated film about a young boy and his Selkie sister.

I will leave a link to the <u>trailer</u> in the description.

So that brings us to the end of today's episode.

Hooves (noun)
/huːvz/
(plural of hoof)

- the hard part of the foot of some animals, for example horses

- On the hoof (idiom)
= (British English,
informal) if you do
something on the
hoof, you do it
quickly and without
giving it your full
attention because
you are doing
something else at
the same time

Trailer (noun) /ˈtreɪlə(r)/

> a series of short scenes from a film or television programme, shown in advance to advertise it

I hope you've enjoyed discovering the legends of Selkies and Kelpies.

If you've enjoyed this episode, please give me a thumbs up and subscribe on YouTube. And if you're listening in podcast land, please follow me on your favourite podcasting app and leave a review. It really helps other people find the show. And do comment down below if you want to find out more about Scotland's history, culture, what interests you, let me know and I will see if we can make some more episodes of the Scottish English Podcast just for you.

Thanks for listening. See you later.

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