

This is a piece of 'faction', a few facts mixed in with fiction to come up with a short story.

Honey & Heather

Broadford – Isle of Skye 1888

James stared at the bedroom ceiling, sleep alluding him, his wife's gentle breathing confirmed that she was having no such problem. But why would she have any worries? He was a well-respected businessman on the island, a hotel proprietor and land owner, they had three healthy boys. However the unrest amongst the crofters, leading them to withhold their rent, the fall in the population on Skye and some misjudged investments, were taking their toll on James. Outgoings were beginning to outweigh the income. The hotel was mainly used by businessmen from the mainland, things were picking up, but he was worried.

The next morning, Eleanor hurried the boys to eat their porridge.

"James, you look tired. Is everything alright?"

He raised a smile "Aye my sweet, just a lot on at the moment. I'm heading into Portree this morning if you need any supplies?"

Eleanor nodded and went to find the housekeeper. The Bradford Hotel had been owned by her family, she made sure everything was ready for the passing trade. James returned to reading the daily Skye man Newspaper, breaches of the Crofters Holdings Acts were reported, stroking his auburn beard he sighed and folded the paper.

James strode out into the cold, frosty morning, a pin holding the folds of his kilt material in place. He climbed onto the cart and pulled the rug around him. The snow covered mountains and frozen waterfalls bought a sense of calm, pink and purple heather poked through the white landscape, bowing to the winter sun.

Firstly a visit to the bank, where the manager told him he could allow another six months before he would have to take action and maybe James should consider selling some land.

"Aye Mr Henderson, I'll think on what you've said."

Then the general stores to collect the provisions.

"Good Morning Mr Ross, I have ye order here, I'll get the boy to load it on the cart. Could you step into the shop, just a query on your accounts?"

With the bill not settled last month, James tipped a few gold coins from his sporran, and the store man seemed happy.

"Sorry Mr Ross, you ordered four bottles of brandy, I'm afraid the ferry bought none over this week. Would ye like anything else?"

"Aye" James winked, "Give me four of your own blend whisky, that will be a saving at least! I'll take some of your honey too."

James arrived back at the hotel as the sun was setting. Placing some heather on the table for Eleanor, he headed to the stables. He took out the piece of parchment that his father assured him was a recipe that had been passed to the Clan McKinnon by none other than Bonnie Prince Charlie! James set to work, substituting the brandy with whisky then infusing the spirit with honey, heather

and spices. A few months later friends and locals sat in the hotel bar, relishing this new drink. One announced in Gaelic 'the drink that satisfies' or 'An Dram Budheach'!

Drambuie was born!