

Young Tambling

Anne Briggs

Lady Margaret, Lady Margaret, was sewing at her seam
And she's all dressed in black.
And the thought come in her head to run in the wood
to pull flowers to flower her hat, me boys,
to pull flowers to flower her hat.

So she hoisted up her petticoats a bit above the knee
And so nimbly she'd run o'er the ground.
And when she come in the merry greenwood,
Well, she pulled them branches down, me boys,
Well, she pulled them branches down.

Suddenly she spied a fine young man,
He's standing by a tree.
He says, "How dare you pull them branches down
Without the leave of me, my dear,
Without the leave of me?"

Well, she says, "This little wood, oh, it is me very own,
Me father gave it to me.
I can pull these branches down
Without the leave of thee, young man,
Oh, without the leave of thee."

And he took her by the milk-white hand
And by the grass-green sleeve,
He pulled her down at the foot of a bush,
And he never once asked her leave, me boys,
No, he never once asked her leave.

And when it was done she twist about
To ask her true-love's name.
But she nothing heard and she nothing saw
And all the woods grew dim, grew dim,
And all the woods grew dim.

There's four and twenty ladies all in the land
and they're all playing at chess.
Except it was the Lady Margaret
And she's green as any glass, me boys,
Oh, she's green as any glass.

And there's four and twenty ladies all in the land
Grow as red as any rose.
Except it was the Lady Margaret,
She's pale and wan, me boys,
Oh, pale and wan she goes.

Up then spoke the little servant girl,
She lift her hand and smiled,
Says, "I think my lady has loved too long
And now she goes with child, me dears,
Oh, and now she goes with child."

Up then spoke the second serving girl
"Oh, ever and alas," said she,
"But I think I know a herb in the merry greenwood,

It'll twine thy baby from thee, madam,
It'll twine thy baby from thee."

So Lady Margaret she got her silver comb,
Made haste to comb her hair,
And then she's away to the merry greenwood
As fast as she can tear, me boys,
Oh, as fast as she can tear.

And she hadn't pulled in the merry greenwood
A herb but barely one
When by her stood the young Tambling,
He says, "Margaret, leave it alone,
Oh Margaret, leave it alone."

"Why d'you pull that bitter little herb,
The herb that grows so grey,
For to destroy that fine young babe
That we got in our play, my dear,
That we got in our play?"

"Well, come tell me now, young Tambling," she says,
"If an earthly man you be."
"I'll tell you no lies," says young Tambling,
"I was christened as good as thee, me dear,
I was christened as good as thee."

"But as I rode a-hunting on a bitter, bitter night,
It was from my horse I fell,
And the Queen of Elfland she caught me
In yonder green hill to dwell, to dwell,
Oh, in yonder green hill to dwell."

"But tonight is Halloween, lady,
The Elven Court will ride.
And if you would your true love win,
By the mill bridge you must hide, me dear,
By the mill bridge you must hide."

"And first will run the black horse and then will run the brown,
And then race by the white.
You hold him fast and you fear him not,
For he's the father of your child, my love,
Oh, he's the father of your child."

"They'll turn me all in your arms, lady,
Into many's the beasts so wild.
But you'll hold on fast and you fear no ill,
For it's the father of your child, my love,
It's the father of your child."

So Lady Margaret she got her silver comb,
She made haste to comb her hair.
Then she's away to the old mill-bridge
As fast as she could tear, me boys,
Oh, as fast as she could tear.

And about the dead hour of the night
She heard the bridles ring.
And oh, me boys, it chilled her heart
More than any earthly thing it did,
More than any earthly thing.

And first run the black horse and then run the brown
And then race by the white.
Well, she hold it fast and feared it not,
For it's the father of her child,
Oh, it's the father of her child.

The thunder rolled across the sky,
The stars blazed bright as day.
The Queen of Elven gave a thrilling cry,
"Young Tambling's away, brave boys,
Young Tambling's away."

And the very first thing they turned him into
Was a lion that runs so wild.
But she held him fast, she feared him not,
For he's the father of her child, me boys,
Oh, he's father of her child.

And the very next thing they turned him into,
It was a loathsome snake.
He says, "Hold me fast and fear me not,
For I'm one of God's own make, my love,
Oh, I'm one one of God's own make."

And again they changed him all in her arms
To a red hot bar of iron.
But she held it fast, she feared it not,
And it did to her no harm, no harm,
And it did to her no harm.

And the very last thing they changed him into
Was like any naked man.
She flung her mantle over him,
She cried, "Me love I've won, I've won,"
Oh, she cried, "Me love I've won."

And the Queen of Elven she called from a bush,
She's red as any blood.
"I should have tore out your eyes, Tambling,
And put in two eyes of wood, of wood,
And put in two eyes of wood."