

Holly, Ivy, & Yew

Heather Dale

Guinevere would sit, amid the holly and the ivy,
And there enthroned she'd hear the pleas of lovers vain
and true.

And there she'd sit serenely 'neath the thorns upon the
holly,
the creepers of the ivy, and the bending boughs of yew.

One day there came before her, 'neath the holly and the
ivy,
An uncle and a nephew and the woman both did woo.
Betrothed to the elder, but beloved of the younger
And bitter thorns of holly grew between the two.

The queen -- with rooted wisdom, like the holly and the
ivy --
Said, "Lovers' hearts will cling like vines no matter
what they do.
But blessed is the woman who accepts her wedded duty
like the strong and supple branches of the bending
yew."

And so she asked the uncle, 'neath the holly and the
ivy,
Were he to have a choice, what day of wedding would he
choose:
To have a wife in summer, when all goodly things are
growing,
or to wait to take his lover 'til the trees stood nude.

The uncle cast his gaze amid the holly and the ivy,
And greedily appraised the woman said to be his due.
"My lady Queen, I'll take her when the trees have bared
their branches,
And the nights are at their longest, and diversions
few."

So Guinevere sat smiling, 'midst the holly and the ivy,
As maid and lover clung at what they thought was
dreadful news.
"My dear, you have your answer - you are free to wed
your lover
For this man has loosed the bonds that you could not
undo.

"For here where we are sitting, 'neath the holly and
the ivy,
Is much the same in winter when the holly berries
bloom.
So go, and have my blessing 'til the holly goes
unclothed,
and the creepers of the ivy, and the bending boughs of
yew...
These greenest boughs of holly, and of ivy, and of
yew."