

sing yonder

vol. 4

simple contemporary settings for songs 31-40 in the Roud Index

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introduction

Welcome to Volume 4, come on in, don't take your shoes off, it's a building site in here. This one has taken me a bit longer, thanks in part to the particular stresses of trying to write something about Tam Lin (Roud 35), but also other life circumstances. However, here it is, I hope you like it.

As well as the challenges of trying to represent in short form something as revered and complex (musically and folklorically) as Tam Lin*, there were some other difficult decisions to be made. My initial reading of Kempy Kay (Roud 32) reminded me once again that at some point my brutally sequential approach to the Roud Index is going to fail**, ie. when the content becomes so irredeemably horrible that it should be consigned to a museum basement. However, I think I managed to navigate a route through Kempy Kay that focuses more on the unlikely love affair of two unconventionally attractive giants, rather than the Rabelaisian misogyny that blighted early settings.

Another thing that I agonised over longer this time was the cover. I'm not sure how many more opportunities I will get to put a snake (namely, the one found in Tam Lin) on the front, as they are pretty thin on the ground in traditional song***. I tried a few snakes, but none were to my aesthetic satisfaction (sorry herpetophiles). Eventually I decided on the more bucolic thistlecock, found in the rare revenant ballad Proud Lady Margaret (Roud 37). You might think it looks more like a song thrush, and you would be right, as "thistlecock" is the charming old Scottish name for that very bird.

The final bit of news is the announcement of the first compilation album based on these books. To my huge delight, nine of my favourite folk artists have generously committed to recording a song from Sing Yonder vol. 1. For the tenth track we are embracing the Sing Yonder manifesto: that this is music for all. So we are recruiting the tenth from anyone who would like to have a go at Roud 2: The Unfortunate Lass. Details are on singyonder.co.uk - please have a look, and tell your musical friends - we'd love to hear it in as wide a range of genres and styles as possible.

Karl Sinfield, August 2022.

* As with most of the long "big songs" of the canon, don't feel tied to the verses published herein - the format is normally such that you can add in as many of the original verses as you like if you want to sing a longer, more complete song. Make it your own!

** Headline writers love to say I'm on a quest to arrange the entire Roud Index. In short: I am not. But I recognise there's no clickbait for a quest where the Quixotic adventurer is setting out not to conquer all before him, but to enjoy the journey for its own sake with no stated destination at all.

*** The Cockey Moor Snake is Roud 23592. Much as it saddens me, I doubt I will get to that one.

a note on the settings

My process to arrive at each arrangement was first to listen to every version I could find, although in some cases these were thin on the ground. However, generally this is much easier these days thanks to streaming platforms, and sometimes I found I had at least thirty versions of each song at my fingertips. There might be the basis of something in there I can use, or at least over the course of a few listens, something might work almost untouched, something might need a bit of tweaking to fit, or if nothing else, just the general feeling of the song will lead me to a new version.

Of course, a huge help in the listening odyssey I have been on is the tireless work of Reinhard Zierke and his Mainly Norfolk site, which provides a great resource for finding tunes when the names vary (I have listed most of the alternative names underneath each song title to save you some time if you want to search for them yourself), and the site also includes a plethora of illuminating sleeve notes.

I have also suggested a few tracks for further listening. These might be related to the setting in some way, or a contrast, or just something I think is interesting. I have tried to list a combination of old and new, traditional and modern. But do go out and find your own favourites, they are all good, even the bad ones.

Finally, this project has also hugely increased my knowledge and appreciation of these old stories (which is the main reason I started in the first place), and those singers that have carried them for us all for generations. I have included a list of some of the sources (there are lots more in earlier volumes if you want a fuller reading list) that have helped me on this journey at the end of the book.

recordings

Since this book is aimed at people with basic skills, I have made some very rough homemade "guide recordings" to accompany this book, and these can be found, along with the book in PDF format, at the website singyonder.co.uk. DISCLAIMER: It should be apparent that I'm no great singer, and my guitar skills are conspicuously average. Thus, I am the perfect test bed for these simple tunes - if I can play them, anyone can. And if I can play them in a way that's vaguely tolerable, I'm sure you will make them sound amazing.

I have used simple open chords for each setting in this book (plus alternates are given), to make everything playable for people of all skill levels. Where I have used a capo in the recording to make the song work for my vocal range, or to give easier access to embellishments, that will be noted on the song page.

ROUD 31

The Trees They Do Grow High

AKA: The Young Laird of Craigstoun, Long a-Growing, Young and Growing, Daily Growing, The College Boy, Young But Daily Growing, The Bonny Boy

Summary:

An arranged child marriage ends in tragedy.

Setting notes:

Despite not being included in Child's famous collection of ballads*, this has been a very popular song in the British isles, from the 18th century right up to the modern day. It seems to have originated in Scotland; an early manuscript collection belonging to accountant and apparently extremely dour song collector David Herd in 1776 notes just two verses, but it's clearly recognisable as this song. Some have attributed the story to an account of the marriage of the young Laird of Craigstoun (Aberdeenshire) in the 17th century, but there is no definitive evidence of this even happening, and marriages of convenience of both boys and girls of young ages have been an effective method of consolidating wealth and power since the middle ages, so tying this to a specific event seems as impossible and unnecessary as usual. The age of the boy at the start of their relationship has varied through the varying attitudes of the folk tradition of the time - it mostly ranges from twelve to eighteen. The other main variation is the "Growing, growing..." refrain, a form of which first appeared in James Maidment's 1824 collection "A North Country Garland"; it's an enjoyable addition to proceedings, especially if sung communally. Other than these, there are few other variations in printed texts, and an orthodoxy has arisen over the tune, an orthodoxy hugely influenced by Martin Carthy's 1965 recording, and an orthodoxy that I have followed here.

Suggested further listening:

"The Trees They Do Grow High", Martin Carthy, *Martin Carthy*

"Young and Growing", Harry Cox, *What Will Become of England*

"Daily Growing", Altan, *The Blue Idol*

"The College Boy", Lizzie Higgins, *Princess of the Thistle*

"Young But Daily Growing", Bob Dylan, *Live in New York 1961*

"Daily Growing", Stuart Macdonald, *Leave it There*

* It's always fun to ponder why Francis Child chose to omit certain ballads from his list (it being so popular, he definitely would have heard of this one). We know he disavowed many comical, bawdy or otherwise frivolous songs. This for the most part is none of those things. However, there is one salacious verse in many versions where the reluctant bride sleeps with the young boy, and suddenly all her complaints about his youth are extinguished. Perhaps the implications of this were too much for Child to bear.

Alternate chords:

Am		Dm		Am
C		G		Am
Am		Dm		Am
				Em
C		Dm		Am
C		G		Am
				Dm
				Am

ROUD 31: THE TREES THEY DO GROW HIGH

Em Am Em
 The trees they do grow high and the leaves they do grow green,
 G D Em
 The day is past and gone, that you and I have seen.
 Em Am Em Bm
 It's a cold winter's night, my love, when I must lie alone.
 G Am Em
 The bonny boy is young but he's growing.
 G D Em Am Em
 Growing, growing, my bonny boy is young but he's growing

“Oh father, dearest father, you've done to me great wrong,
 You married me a boy and I fear he is too young.”
 For he is only sixteen years and I am twenty one
 The boy he is too young and still growing / Growing etc..

“We'll send him off to college, for another year or two,
 And then perhaps in time, my love, he will do for you
 I'll buy a bunch of white ribbons to tie about his waist
 To let the ladies know that he's married.” / Married etc...

Now as I was a-walking all by the college wall
 I saw four and twenty college boys a-playing at the ball
 And there I spied my own true love, he's the fairest of them all
 And I said he was a long time a-growing. / Growing etc..

At the age of sixteen, oh, he was a married man,
 And at the age of seventeen she brought to him a son.
 At the age of eighteen, green grass grew over him
 Sudden death had put to an end to his growing. / Growing etc..

She made her love a shroud of the holland oh so fine
 And every stitch she put in it, the tears come trinkling down.
 Crying once I had a sweetheart but now I have got none,
 So fare you well my love, you were growing. / Growing etc..

Now he's dead and buried and in the churchyard laid
 The green grass is all over him so very, very thick
 Oh once I had a sweetheart but now I have got none,
 But I'll watch over his son while he's growing. / Growing etc..

ROUD 32

Kempy Kay

AKA: King Knapperty

Summary:

A darkly humorous account of the courtship of a couple of giants with unconventional good looks and questionable personal hygiene.

Setting notes:

Cecil Sharp believed this to be of Scandinavian origin, but also in some way connected to the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*. What it says about the Scandinavian psyche is a matter for discussion, as it's pretty unkind to both parties, but in the end, true love wins the day. There only seem to be three official recordings, one of which, by Derbyshire-based folk legend Brian Peters is only available on a 1987 cassette produced for Children in Need, which is, not surprisingly, currently unavailable**. Martin Carthy recorded "King Knapperty" on his 1976 album *Crown of Horn*, and finally Jock Tamson's Bairns recorded a steadfastly Scottish version in 1982. All recorded versions and most found by Francis Child are by today's standards unnecessarily cruel to the shortcomings of the woman, but the central story of an unlikely love match I think is worth preserving. With that in mind, I have abridged the available verses across various versions, partly those Child recorded from Kinloch's 1885 Ballad Book, with a bit of Martin Carthy's interpretation of (I suspect) the same version, and applied a simplified version of the tune used by Jock Tamson's Bairns, with the addition of the repeated last line from Kinloch (and Carthy).

Suggested further listening:

"Kempy Kay", David Cleveland, *[on YouTube]*

"King Knapperty", Martin Carthy, *Crown of Horn*

"Kempy Kaye", Jock Tamson's Bairns, *The Lasses Fashion*

* There is indeed a Knight in the Arthurian legends called Kay (or Cai in Welsh), a fierce warrior and giant of a man, which would tally with the idea of an oversized love-match, but the only mention of his romantic life in the legends involves Queen Andrivete of Northumbria, reportedly a delicate woman of high status, so the connection to the song is tenuous at best.

** A moot point, as, like many people who are either behind or ahead of the times depending on your perspective, I no longer own a working cassette player. However, Brian helpfully informed me that his version closely followed Martin Carthy's arrangement.

ROUD 32: KEMPY KAY

G Em
Kempy Kay's a wooing gone,
G C
Far away over the sea,
G Em
And there he met with an old old man,
G C D C D G
His godfather to be, to be, His godfather to be.

Alternate chords:

C				Am	
C				F	
C				Am	
C	F	G	F	G	C

So will you be going to find a wife,
As you do tell to me,
So you may have my dear daughter,
Your own wife for to be to be, your own wife for to be

So the old man went back to the house,
And he looked through a tiny hole,
And there he saw his dear daughter
All a grovelling through the coal, the coal, a grovelling through the coal

'Rise up, rise up my daughter dear,
And make your foul face clean,
For the finest wooer that ever you saw
Is come a travelling down the green, the green, travelling down the green

Kempy Kay came in the door,
Stood even up in the floor;
Although she'd never seen him before,
She knew him to be her dear, her dear, she knew him to be her dear

He has put his hand into his pocket,
And he's taken out a ring:
Says, 'Take that, my dearest dear,
It's made of the brazen pan, the pan, it's made of the brazen pan.'

She thanked him once, she thanked him twice,
She thanked him over again:
'Never got a ring before in my life,
But this night I've gotten one, got one, this night I've gotten one.'

These lovers bed it was well made,
And at their hearts' desire;
These lovers bed it was well made,
At the side o the kitchen fire, the fire, at the side of the kitchen fire

ROUD 33

Young Akin

AKA: Hind Etin, Hynde Etin, Young Hastings

Summary:

Magical elf-king Akin uses musical enchantment to lure the king's daughter into his woodland lair to be his wife. After years of confinement, and bearing seven children, she misses her old life. Her eldest son notices and asks his father Akin, who admits that he captured her and that she is the king's daughter. The son breaks the spell and she escapes back to her family home with all the children. Finally they convince the king to allow Akin to live with them, thereby reuniting the family.

Setting notes:

The few known English language versions of this ballad, mostly found in Scotland, are an abridged form of more complex and multi-faceted Northern European versions, the earliest known coming from 16th century Denmark, "Jomfruen og Dværgekongen". An interesting German version, "Agnes and the Mermaid" has the elf king substituted for a merman, and the woman kept captive under the sea instead of in the wood (usually in more complete versions, inside a hill), and the final escape of the woman being agreed with the woman as long as they share the children equally. As they had seven children, this leads to gruesome consequences for one of them. Child found three versions in English, two of which are incomplete, and one is 54 verses long*. Perhaps because of its complexity, it has not really troubled the oral tradition beyond the 19th century, and audio sources are very sparsely found today. However, contemporary artists Jim Moray and Gavin Davenport have both had excellent cracks at it. Jim's re-working is especially notable, due to his introduction of a clever twist where the eldest son uses the mystical wife-enchanting flute skills learned from his father to effect the escape. For the version here, I have stuck to the existing verses noted by Child in the most complete version, then substantially abridged it. I use a two-verse pattern of the melody similar to the one transcribed in Christie's 1881 "Traditional Ballad Airs".

Suggested further listening:

"Hind Etin", Jim Moray, *Skulk*

"Young Hastings", Gavin Davenport, *Brief Lives*

* There is an indomitable YouTuber called Raymond Crooke who has played his own versions of every Child ballad, and he does not shy away from the longer interpretations - his video for this one runs at 13.59 minutes, and he can't fit it all in.

ROUD 33: YOUNG AKIN

G Em D
Lady Margaret sits in her bower door,
G C
Sewing at her silken seam;
G Em D
She heard a note in Elmond's wood,
G D
And wished she there had been.
G C Em G D
She let the seam fall from her side, And the needle to her toe,
Em G Em D
And she is on to Elmond's wood As fast as she could go.

Alternate chords:

C	Am	G
C	F	
C	An	G
C	G	
C	F	Am C G
Am	C	Am G

She hadn't pulled a nut, a nut, Nor broken a branch but three,
Till by it came him Young Akin, And told her let them be.
He's built a bower, made it secure with walls of solid stone;
Though travellers were never seen, Appearance it had none.

He's kept her there in Elmond's wood, For six long years and one,
Till six strong sons to him she bore, And the seventh she's brought home.
It fell upon another day, This good lord he thought long,
And he is to the hunting gone, with him his dog and his gun.

It fell once upon a day, This good lord went from home,
And he is to the hunting gone, Took with him his eldest son.
'A question I'd ask, dear father, if you wouldn't angry be:
I see my mother's cheeks all wet, I never can see them dry;

And I wonder what that ails my mother, To mourn continually.'
'Your mother was a king's daughter, Sprung from a high degree,
And she might have wed some worthy prince, Had she not been stolen by me.'
So the boy ran back through the wild wild wood to set his mother free.

He's taken his mother by the hand, His six brothers also,
And they are on through Elmond's wood, As fast as they could go.
They knew not where about they ran, with every step of their feet;
And they knew not where about they ran, Till at her father's gate.

When she came in before the king, Fell low down on her knee;
'Get up, get up, my daughter dear, This day you'll dine with me.'
'O father I can't eat no more, No drop can I now drink,
Until I see my dear husband, For long for him I think.'

They searched the country wide and broad, The forests far and near,
And found him into Elmond's wood, Tearing his yellow hair.
When he came in before the king, Fell low down on his knee;
'Get up, get up now, Young Akin, This day you'll dine with me.'



ROUD 34

The Broomfield Hill

AKA: The Broomfield Wager, Green Broom, The Merry Broomfield, A Wager A Wager, The Young Squire, Green Broom Field, I'll Wager

Summary:

A knight bets his lover that she could not go to the top of a nearby hill and return a virgin. She accepts the bet and goes to the hill as arranged, only to find the amorous knight fast asleep, apparently bewitched and/or drugged*. She thereby wins the bet, much to the groggy knight's later disappointment.

Setting notes:

A common poetic trope across Europe as far back as the 12th century, the first example of this appearing as a song in Britain was in 18th century broadsides. Initially popular in Scotland but declining throughout the nineteenth and early 20th century, but popular again since the 1960s folk revival, probably (and rightly) since it's a rare ballad where a woman gets the upper hand. Ewan MacColl learned a version from his father William Miller of Stirlingshire, to the tune of a later Scottish ballad "Jock Sheep" (Roud 5862), another song about a maid tricking her way out of physical intimacy with an amorous knight, but although many versions of Jock Sheep share the opening verse of Broomfield Hill, overall it is more closely aligned with The Baffled Knight (Roud 11). This version is based on that collected by Ella M. Leather and Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mrs. Powell of Weobley in Herefordshire, in 1910. It's quite a prevalent version today, and close to the one sung by AL Lloyd in 1962.

Suggested further listening:

"The Broomfield Hill", A. L. Lloyd, *Jug of Punch*

"Merry Green Broom" Kate Rusby, *Little Lights*

"Broomfield Wager", Dr Faustus, *Wager*

"Broomfield Wager", Tanteeka, *A New Tradition*

"The Broomfield Wager", Rachel McShane, *No Man's Fool*

"Broomfield Hill", Show of Hands, *Folk Music*

"Broomfield Hill", Martin Carthy & Dave Swarbrick, *Walnut Creek: Live Recordings 1989-96*

"Broomfield Hill", Bellowhead, *Hedonism*

* The magical cause of his sleepiness is made more explicit in some versions than others. In the common Scandinavian versions of the song, it's made quite clear that the magic in question is conjured by the use of runes.

ROUD 34: THE BROOMFIELD HILL

Am G Am
“A wager, a wager with you, my pretty maid,
Here’s five hundred pound to your ten;
Am G Am
That a maid you shall go to yon merry green broom,
Am E Am
But a maid you shall no more return.”

“A wager, a wager with you, kind sir,
With your five hundred pound to my ten;
That a maid I will go to yon merry green broom,
And a maid I will boldly return.”

Now when that she came to this merry green broom,
Found her true love was fast in a sleep,
With a fine finished rose, and a new suit of clothes,
And a bunch of green broom at his feet.

Then three times she went from the crown of his head,
And three times from the sole of his feet.
And three times she kissed his red rosy cheeks,
As he lay all fast in a sleep.

Then she took a gold ring from off of her hand,
And put that on his right thumb,
And that was to let her true love to know
That she had been there and gone.

As soon as he awoke from his drowsy, drowsy sleep,
And found his true love had been there and gone,
It was then he remembered upon the cost,
When he thought of the wager that he’d lost.

Three times he called for his horse and his man,
The horse he’d once bought so dear,
Saying, “Why didn’t you wake me out of my sleep,
When my lady, my true love, was here?”

“Three times did I call to you, master, O me dear,
And three times did I blow with my horn,
But out of your sleep I couldn’t you awake
Till your lady, your true love, was gone.”

“Oh, had I been awake when my true love was here,
Of her I would have my will;
If not, the pretty birds in this merry green broom
With her blood they should all have had their fill.”

Alternate chords:

Em	D	Em
		Bm
Em	D	Em
Em	B	Em



ROUD 35

Tam Lin

AKA: Lady Margaret, Tam Lane, Janet of Carterhaugh, Saturday Night is Halloween Night, Tom Linn, Janet and Tam Blain, Young Tambling, Tam-a-Line the Elfn Knicht

Summary:

A simple tale of woman goes to forbidden forest*, woman meets Tam Lin, woman becomes pregnant, woman returns to forest to pick herbs to end pregnancy, woman meets Tam Lin again who tells her how he has been captured by the queen of the fairies and trapped by a spell, woman helps Tam Lin escape the spell at Halloween by holding onto him as he turns into various animals, etc. The end.

Setting notes:

Very much the Bohemian Rhapsody of balladry, Tam Lin is a complex melodrama renowned for its vocal difficulty, feared for its length, and a touchstone for all singers of traditional song. All of which makes it difficult to introduce over two small pages. Thankfully, as you may have noticed, these books are not about painstaking, thorough song scholarship; they are simply a humble portal through which the tradition can be viewed, before immersing yourself fully into the briny depths. In this instance, those waters are both wide and deep - the ballad turns up in endless reams of folklore and music research, but also, modern interpretations of the song span genres like no other ballad**; it clearly has a muse-like quality that begs for re-interpretation (e.g. the great Anaïs Mitchell version listed below). In traditional English folk circles, the 32 verse Mike Waterson version reigns supreme but as well as its daunting length, it has a subtly difficult tune that would be unsuitable here. Instead, this ultra-concise pregnancy-free setting is from the wonderful 1956 recording of Glaswegian Betsy Johnson, set to Archie Fisher's version of a tune found in the Appalachians in 1937.

Suggested further listening:

"Tam Lin", Archie Fisher, *Big Bend Killing: The Appalachian Ballad Tradition*

"Tam Lin", Moira Craig, *On ae Bonny Day*

"Tamlyn", Mike Waterson, *Mike Waterson*

"Tam Lin", Anaïs Mitchell & Jefferson Hamer, *Child Ballads*

* The undeniably poetic place name of Carterhaugh that is mentioned in many early versions of this song would set its origins at that epicentre of balladry, the Scottish Borders.

** There's even a popular Irish session tune of the same name. Composed by fiddler Davey Arthur (from famous Irish band The Fureys), there's no discernible connection with the ballad, but it does have an epic feel to it that is somewhat fitting, in my opinion.

ROUD 35: TAM LIN

Am C G
Lady Margaret, Lady Margaret
Dm F
Been sewing at a seam.
C Em
She looked East, she looked West
G F*
And she saw those merry woods green,

For she lifted up her petticoats
It's up to them she ran;
And when she came to Carterhaugh
She pulled those branches down

And it's there she spied a gentleman
Through the wood and to her side.
"Oh it's who did give you leave my dear
To pull those branches down"

He caught her by the middle small
And he gently laid her down;
"It's since you've got your will of me
Come tell to me your name

"For tomorrow it's the new Halloween,
And the quality's going to ride;
You'll pass them by at the old mill bridge
As they go riding by

"For the first will be a white milk-steed
And it's then there'll be a black;
You'll hold his head, you'll fear no ill
He's the father of your child

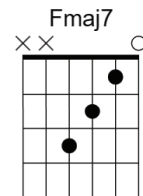
"For the next the change will be
Is into a snake so large;
You'll hold his head, you'll fear no ill
He's the father of your child

"For the next will be Tam Lin
All changed into your arms;
You'll throw your mantle all around
And cry, you've won, my dear

Alternate chords:

Em	G	D
Am	C	
G	Bm	
D	C	

* for a bit of variation and general spice, you can use an Fmaj7 chord here



ROUD 36

Captain Wedderburn's Courtship

AKA: Mr. Woodburn's Courtship, A Strange Proposal, The Devil and the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Six Dishes, It's I Must Have, The Laird of Rosslyn's Daughter, You Lie Next to the Wall, The Song of the Riddles, Stock and Wall, Keeper of the Game

Summary:

A woman, unimpressed by her suitor, will only accede to his wishes* once a number of riddles are solved.

Setting notes:

Since the dawn of written history, men have been attracting the romantic attention of women by giving them arcane riddles to solve. Well, maybe not so much these days, but the global reach and persistence of these stories from Ancient Rome and Persia until Victorian times in would suggest that it was definitely a dating technique among some presumably higher strata of society. The name Wedderburn is unusual; the only namesake of note is Alexander Wedderburn, an unscrupulous 18th century politician with a terrible reputation for cruelty, corruption and naked ambition. He was never a captain, but in 1801, in yet another example of the very worst people floating to the top tiers of society like effluent solids in a toilet bowl, he was made Earl of Rosslyn by George III, so the song could recount an actual event, or more likely he was just in the public consciousness when the ballad writer was trying to come up with names. The riddles themselves can be found in much older texts, including in Roud 330, I Gave My Love a Cherry, a simpler love song which is so close a relative it is listed in the Child index as an appendix to this ballad. The ballad has rarely been found in England but spread fairly widely from its Scottish roots to Ireland and the US. This version roughly follows Tim Hart and Maddy Prior's version from 1969, which is an anglicised collation of several of the Scottish versions noted by Child.

Suggested further listening:

"Captain Wedderburn's Courtship", Tim Hart and Maddy Prior, *Heydays*

"Captain Wedderburn's Courtship", Alasdair Roberts & Karine Polwart, *[Single release]*

"Captain Wedderburn's Courtship", Jean Redpath, *Jean Redpath*

"Captain Wedderburn", Bellowhead, *Hedonism*

* In most versions (including this one) there is a strange preoccupation with the woman being made (or allowed) to lie next to the wall. The reasons for this are not expounded within the song, and could be either a demonstration of ownership or protection, a euphemism for the sexual act, or, least likely of all, an indication that he'll be the one to get up and tend to the baby and make the breakfast while she has a well deserved lie-in.

ROUD 37

Proud Lady Margaret

AKA: The Bonny Hind Squire, Archerdale, The Knicht o' Archerdale

Summary:

A knight passing by the titular Margaret's castle engages in some flirtatious riddle-combat. However, it becomes apparent that the knight is actually Margaret's dead brother*, unable to find rest in his grave due to his sister's pride and vanity.

Setting notes:

Like the previous ballad, this is one of six "riddling ballads" recorded by Child, and one of an even smaller handful of "revenant ballads" where the dead return in ghostly form to haunt those who they perceived to have wronged them while living (see Roud 14, *The Demon Lover*, for a well known example**). Most examples collected by Child seem to be hybrids of more than one set of verses, and are quite diverse, so it's particularly difficult to find either any coherent history or establish what aspects of the story a representative text might encompass. It's possible that these factors led to something of a lack of enthusiasm from late-20th century folk singers, so there are only a very few recordings from which to draw inspiration. With this relative paucity of source material in mind, I have in the great folk tradition, ~~cobbled together~~ carefully assembled a selection of verses from various sources that tell something like a coherent tale. Three tunes for the ballad have been noted down since the 19th century, all of a rather plaintive nature. The tune here is based on the singing of Katherine Campbell, who uses the melody taken down by Amelia and Jane Harris in the mid-19th century, under the title "The Knicht o' Archerdale".

Suggested further listening:

"Proud Lady Margaret", Ewan MacColl, *The English & Scottish Popular Ballads Vol 2*

"Proud Lady Margaret", Lizzie Higgins, *In Memory of Lizzie Higgins*

"Proud Lady Margaret", Pete and Chris Coe, *Out of Season, Out of Rhyme*

"The Knicht o' Archerdale", Katherine Campbell, *The Songs of Amelia and Jane Harris*

* The message we are meant to draw from this saga is that one should not be proud and vain. However, I'd also like to suggest another: don't be an ectoplasmic sociopath and pretend to chat up your own sister from beyond the grave with the sole purpose of making her sick with guilt.

** Two less well known ones would be Sweet William's Ghost (Roud 50 - covered in *Sing Yonder Vol. 5*) and Willie's Fatal Visit, which will be discussed if and when we reach Roud 244.

ROUD 37: PROUD LADY MARGARET

Em D Em
It was on a night, an evening bright
Em G Em
When the dew begun to fall,
Em D Am G
Lady Margaret was walking up and down,
Em D Em
Looking over the castle wall.

Alternate chords:

Am G Am
Em C Am
Am G Dm C
Am G Am

She looked west, she looked east / To see what she could spy,
When a gallant knight came in her sight / Unto her gates drew nigh.

‘But I am come to this castle / To seek the love of thee.
And if you do not grant me love / This night for thee I’ll die.’

‘If you should die for me, sir knight / There’s few for you will moan;
For many a better has died for me / Whose graves are growing green.

‘But you must read my riddle,’ she said / ‘And answer my questions three;
If you don’t read them right,’ she said / ‘Go stretch you out and die.

‘Now what’s the flower, the first flower / Springs either on moor or dale?
And what’s the bird, the bonnie bonnie bird / Sings on the evening gale?’

‘The primrose is the first flower / Springs either on moor or dale,
And the thistlecock is the bonniest bird / Sings on the evening gale.’

‘But what’s the little coin,’ she said / ‘Would buy my castle bound?
And what’s the little boat,’ she said / ‘Can sail the world all round?’

‘O hey, how many small pennies / Make thrice three thousand pound?
Or hey, how many salt fishes / Swim all the salt sea round?’

‘You’re the likest to my own brother / That ever I have seen,
But he’s buried in Dunfermline church / A month and more bygone.’

‘I’m the likest to your own brother / That ever you did see,
But I cannot rest into my grave / All for the pride of thee.

‘Leave pride, Margaret, leave pride / Margaret, leave your vanity;
Before you see the sights I’ve seen / Or altered you may be.’

He got her in her stately hall / Combing her yellow hair,
He left her on her sick sick bed / Shedding the salt salt tear.



ROUD 38

The Two Brothers

AKA: The Twa Brothers, The Rolling of the Stones, Two Pretty Boys, The Twa Brithers

Summary:

An apparently friendly wrestling match between two brothers ends in tragedy.

Setting notes:

This Scottish fratricide ballad was popular in its native Perthshire in the 1800s, then disappeared almost everywhere, but was subsequently widely found in North America during the early 20th century song collecting trips of Maud Karpeles and Cecil Sharp. All written records of an original Scottish tune had been lost, apparently leaving us with those found in America. Like many ballads, however, the traveller community in Scotland had quietly kept them alive, and when asked, legendary custodians of Scottish song like Belle Stewart, Jeannie Robertson and Lizzie Higgins were happy to share their versions. The main question arising from the story is whether or not the fatal wound was an innocent accident. Many versions make a point of the weapon mistakenly falling out of a pocket and fatally wounding the boy, others give explicit reasons for revenge, including land disputes and possible incestuous relationships with a sister, with or without the implicit encouragement of a malicious stepmother. It's quite possible to imagine a relatively innocent song of a tragic accidental death becoming involved in an arms-race of spicing-up through the oral tradition. I have stuck with an accidental version here, gleaned from "Walks Near Edinburgh" - a book of history trails by Margaret Warrender from 1890, in which she cites an incident when an accidentally discharged pistol on the knee of William (son of Lord Somerville) kills his brother, and its possible connection to the song**.

Suggested further listening:

"The Twa Brothers", Sheila Stewart, *Live from Celtic Connections, 2001*

"The Two Brothers", Jarlath Henderson, *Hearts Broken, Heads Turned*

"The Two Brothers", Alasdair Roberts, *No Earthly Man*

"Two Pretty Boys", Peter Bellamy, *English Folk*

* Bertrand Harris Bronson found 41 tunes from various corners of the US, including Appalachia, Virginia, the Ozarks, Nova Scotia and New England. While the tunes are fairly diverse, there is a clear family resemblance, which might hint at a single source.

** As usual with these "historical" connections to old ballads, this is most likely a bit of spurious back projection from an ambitious lyricist keen to exploit sensational events for sales purposes.

ROUD 38: THE TWO BROTHERS

Em Am Em Bm
There were two brothers in the north,
Em Am B
Lord William and Lord John,
Em Am Em Bm
And they would try a wrestling match,
C D Bm C
So to the fields they've gone, gone,
Em Am Em
So to the fields they've gone.

They wrestled up, they wrestled down,
Till Lord John fell onto the ground.
And a knife that fell from William's pocket
Gave him a deadly wound, wound, etc.

'Oh take me on your back, dear William,' he said,
'And carry me to the burnie clear,
And wash my wound so deep and dark,
Maybe it'll bleed no more, more.' etc.

He took him up upon his back,
And carried him to the river clear,
But oh the more he washed his wound
It only bled the more, more, etc.

'Oh take me on your back, dear William,' he said,
'And carry me to the churchyard fair,
And dig a grave so deep and dark,
And lay my body there, there.' etc.

'But what shall I say to my father dear
When he says, Willie, what's become of John?'
'Oh tell him I am gone to Greenock town,
To buy him a puncheon of rum, rum.' etc.

'And what shall I say to my sister dear
When she says, Willie, what's become of John?'
'Oh tell her I've gone to London town
To buy her a marriage-gown, gown.' etc.

'But what shall I say to my grandmother dear
When she says, Willie, what's become of John?'
'Oh tell her I'm in the churchyard dark,
And that I'm dead and gone, gone.' etc.

Alternate chords:

Am	Dm	Am	Em
Am	Dm	E	
Am	Dm	Am	Em
F	G	Em	F
Am	Dm	Am	

ROUD 39

The King's Daughter Jane

AKA: Queen Jane, Fair Rosie Ann, Rosie Ann, The King's Tochter Lady Jane, Lady Jean

Summary:

A woman meets a stranger in the woods, and, this being a folk ballad, a sexual act ensues*. When the woman suggests her father will be furious, it emerges that they both have the same father, and the subsequent shame of their incestuous act ends, you guessed it, in both their deaths.

Setting notes:

Clearly in the Tam Lin (Roud 35) family of ballads, the opening verses of all of the handful of versions of this ballad recorded by Child are, with only slight modifications, almost exactly the same; an apparently innocent seamstress being drawn to a nearby wood to do some impromptu foraging, and a subsequent sexual liaison. This is an uncommonly performed ballad, both now and historically, maybe because the always painful themes of rape and incest are not, as in Tam Lin and some of the other related ballads, tempered by a clearly supernatural undercurrent; it's all a bit too real. However, one approach that might make a contemporary interpretation more palatable would be to imagine the encounter in the woods an impulsive yet consensual one, and in this spirit I have taken two verses from fiddle-singer Sean Breadin that change the act in such a way that the story becomes more singable (for me, anyway), but retains the overall narrative thrust. Apart from that, this is mostly the version from the brilliant Hedy West, who learned it from New York folk singer Sara Cleveland in the 1960s. It stops before the grief-stricken deaths of the protagonists that ends most of Child's versions, but the final verse strongly implies such a turn of events, while drawing a veil across the actual grisly details.

Suggested further listening:

"Queen Jane", Hedy West, *Untitled*

"King's Tochter, Lady Jean", Sean Breadin, *Sedayne : Fiddlesangs* [Soundcloud]

"Queen Jane", Sara Cleveland, *Ballads and Songs of the Upper Hudson Valley*

"Queen Jane", Martin Simpson, *Rooted*

"King's Daughter Jane", Erika Littman, [Youtube]

* One can only imagine the impossibility of going for a woodland walk in ballad times without tripping over fornicating couples. (Or, if you aren't so lucky, getting attacked by a wild boar - see Roud 29.)

ROUD 39: THE KING'S DAUGHTER JANE

Am Em
Queen Jane sat in her window one day
Am Em
Sewing a silken seam
Am Em
She looked out at the merry greenwood
Am Dm
And saw a green nut tree.
Am Em Am
And saw a green nut tree.

Alternate chords:

Em Bm
Em Bm
Em Bm
Em Am
Em Bm Am

She dropped her thimble at her heel / And her needle at her toe
And away she run to the merry greenwood / To gather nuts and sloe x2

She scarce had reached the merry greenwood / She'd scarce pulled nuts two or three
When a forester he comes striding by / Says, 'Fair maid, let those be.' x2

'Why do you pull the nuts,' he said, / 'And why do you break the tree?
And why do you come to the merry greenwood / Without the leave of me?' x2

'It's I will pull the nuts,' she said, / 'And I will break the tree,
And I will come to the merry greenwood / Without the leave of thee.' x2

So he took her by the middle so small / And they've danced around the green
And they laughed and sang til the deed was done / An she bade him do it again x2

'Now you've got your will of me, / Pray tell to me your name,
For I am the King's young daughter Jane / And this night I'll never go home.' x2

'If you're the king's young daughter,' he said, / 'I'm his eldest son!
And woe to this unhappy hour / And the wrong I have done. x2

'The very first time I come from sea, / O, Jane, you were unborn!
And I wish my gallant ship had sunk / And I'd been left forlorn, x2

'The very next time I come from sea / You were on your nurse's knee
And the very next time I come from sea / You were in this woods with me,' x2

'I wish I'd never seen your face / And that you'd never seen mine!
That we'd never met in this merry greenwood / And this wrong could be undone.' x2

'I wish that my young babe were born / And on its nurse's knee
And I myself were dead and gone / And the green grass growing on me.' x2



ROUD 40

Lord Bateman

AKA: Young Beichan, Susie Pirate, Lord Baker

Summary:

While roving abroad, wealthy gadabout Lord Bateman is captured by pirates and imprisoned in Turkey. The king's beautiful daughter takes a shine to him and helps him to escape, on the promise he will wed her and share his riches at some later date. After the standard balladic seven years (plus a few more) she pursues him to England, where she finds he has married another. The unfortunate bride is summarily paid off so Bateman can be reunited with his long distance lover.

Setting notes:

Possibly the original holiday-romance ballad, one might be tempted to trace its genesis (and there are many very old songs across Europe with the same plot) back to the Crusades, and the inevitable love affairs that were started in foreign climes by red-blooded men and women faced with the irresistible appeal of an exotic out-of-towner*. Its swashbuckling story and relatively upbeat ending** has led to huge popularity since its appearance in 1624, followed by a flurry of 18th and 19th century broadsides, and through uninterrupted oral transmission, right up to today, rightly earning its "big song" status. Accordingly, there is an intimidating slew of interpretations, old and new. As usual our biggest concern is finding a version that fits within the space restraints - to that end here's an economical set of verses from Virginia, collected in 1929 by Arthur Kyle Davis from a singer by the name of Sam Pritt. The tune is based on Percy Grainger's scratchy 1906 wax cylinder recording of Joseph Taylor of Lincolnshire, well worth seeking out in the British Library online collection.

Suggested further listening:

"Lord Bateman", Jean Ritchie, *British Traditional Ballads in the Southern Mountains Vol. 1*

"Lord Bateman", The Askew Sisters, *Through Lonesome Woods*

"Lord Bateman", Jim Moray, *Sweet England*

"Lord Bateman", James Findlay, *As I Carelessly Did Stray*

* A manuscript from around 1300 tells the story of 12th century Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket's father returning from a foray to the mysterious east, to be pursued by his Turkish lover Shusha Pye who found him by wandering the streets of London shouting "Gilbert!", thereby predicting today's popular pastime of searching for old flames on Facebook.

** Sparing a thought of course for Bateman's spurned original bride - hopefully she was happy enough with her four-wheeled alimony payment.

More info and the audio files that accompany this book can be found at

singyonder.co.uk*

Some more useful resources, in addition to those listed in Volumes 1-3:

Books:

"Folklore in the English and Scottish Ballads", Lowry Charles Wimberly

"Dictionary of Faiths and Folklore", W.C. Hazlitt

"Traditional Ballads of Virginia", Arthur Kyle Davis

"The Ballad Matrix: Personality, Milieu and the Oral Tradition", William Bernard McCarthy

"Songs from David Herd's Manuscripts", David Herd and Hans Hecht

"A North Countrie Garland", James Maidment

Websites:

tam-lin.org - thorough examination of the poetry and folklore of Tam Lin

contemplator.com - useful summaries of ballad research

soundpost.org.uk - Sheffield-based fulcrum of folkie encouragement

Audio, Podcasts, etc:**

sounds.bl.uk - British Library sound archives

The Invisible Folk Club podcast

Folk Radio UK

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* If you are from the future and have found a rare hard copy version at the back of a dusty loft, and none of the links or email addresses work, it's possible I have either died, or otherwise departed from the internet to live in a log cabin somewhere. Either way, don't try and find me, go and learn some folk songs instead.

**Please also wherever possible follow/support your favourite folk artists on social media and buy their stuff.

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a key to the folkie locker and a simple first step to singing and playing trad songs...I hope it's picked up by everyone with access to a voice box and/or guitar etc.”

Phil Widdows, FolkCast

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