

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Tamlin

Tamlin

Oh, I forbid you maidens all
That wear gold in your hair
To come or go by Cartershay
For young Tamlin is there, my love
For young Tamlin is there

There's none that go by Cartershay
But they leave him a wad
Either their rings or their green mantles
Or else their maidenheads

May Margery sat in her castle tower
Sewing her silken seam
She looked from out her high window
And she saw the leaves growing green

She's let the seams drop to her foot
The needle to her toe
And she's away to Cartershay
As fast as she can go

She had not pulled a red, red rose
A rose but barely three
When up there started young Tamlin
Says, Let the roses be

Why pulls thou the rose, Margaret?
And why breakest thou the wand?
And why comes thou to Cartershay
Withouten my command?

Cartershay it is my own;
My father gave it me
And I will go to Cartershay
And ask no leave of thee

He's taken her by the milk-white hand
Among the leaves so green
And what they did I cannot say
The green leaves were between

Now since you've had your will of me
Come tell to me your name
But she nothing heard and nothing saw
And all the woods grew dim

May Margery's kilted her green, green skirt
A little above her knee
And she is to her father's hall
As fast as she can hie

Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ball
And out it's come Lady Margaret
Who was once the flower of all

Four and twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess
And out it's come Lady Margaret
As green as any glass

Out then spoke her old waiting maid
And she spoke meek and mild
And ever alas, sweet Margaret, she says
I think thou goes with child

Out then spoke an old grey knight
Lay over the castle wall
And ever alas, fair Margaret, for thee
But we'll be blamed for all

Oh hold your tongue, you ill-faced knight
Some ill death may you die
Father my child on whom I will
I'll father none on thee

Out then spoke her old father dear
And he spoke meek and mild
And ever alas, fair Margaret, he says
I think thou goes with child

If that I go with child, Father,
Myself must bear the blame
There's ne'er a lord about your hall
Shall get the baby's name

If my true love were an earthly knight
As he's an elfin grey
I would not give my own true love
For any lord here today

The horse that my true love rides on
Is lighter than the wind
With silver he is shod before
With burning gold behind

Out then spoke her mother dear
And ever alas, said she
I know an herb in the merry green wood
That will scathe thy babe from thee

May Margery's braided her yellow hair
A little above her breast
And she's away to Cartershay
Without a moment's rest

She had not pulled at Cartershay
An herb but barely one
'Till up there started young Tamlin
Says, Leave the herbs alone

Why pulls thou that bitter herb
Among the leaves so green?
And all to kill the bonnie babe
That we got us between

Now tell to me the truth, Tamlin
A truth - we will not lie-
If ever you were a mortal man
And christened the same as me?

Oh, I will tell the truth, Margaret
A truth - I will not lie -
It's truth I've been in holy chapel
And christened as well as thee

But once it fell upon a day
As hunting I did ride
As I rode East and I rode West
Strange chance did me betide

There blew a drowsy, drowsy wind
And sleep upon me fell
The Queen of Fairies she was there
And she took me to herself

And never would I tire, Margaret
In fairyland to dwell
And pleasant is the fairyland

But an eerie tale to tell

For aye, at every seven years
They pay a tithe to Hell
And I'm so fair and full of flesh
I'm feared 'twill be myself

The night is Halloween, Margaret
The morn is Hallowday
The win me, win me, and ye will
For all I know ye may

Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The elfin folk will ride
And they that would their true love win
At Miles Cross, they must bide

But how shall I thee ken, Tamlin
And how shall I thee know?
Among so many unearthly knights
The like I never saw?

Oh, first let by the black, black steed
And then let by the brown
But haste ye to the milk white steed
And pull the rider down

For I'll be on the milk white steed
With a gold star in my crown
Because I was an earthly knight
They gave me that renown

And they will turn me in your arms
Into a beast so wild
But hold me fast and fear me not
I'm the father of your child

And they'll change me in your arms
Into the red hot iron
But hold me fast and fear me not
I'll do you no harm

They'll turn me in your arms, my love
Into an awful snake
But hold me fast and fear me not
For I'm to be your mate

At last they'll turn me in your arms
Into the melting lead

Then throw me into clear well water
And throw me in with speed

And then I'll be your own true love
I'll turn a naked knight
Cover me with your green mantle
And cover me out of sight

My right hand will be gloved, Margaret
My left hand will be bare
Cocked up shall my helmet be
No doubt I shall be there

Gloomy, gloomy was the night
And eerie was the way
When Margaret in her green mantle
To Miles Cross she did gae

About the middle of the night
She heard the bridles ring
Margaret was as glad of that
As any mortal thing

First went by the black, black steed
And then went by the brown
But quickly she ran to the milk-white steed
And pulled the rider down

And thunder rolled across the sky
And the stars they burned like day
And out then spoke the Queen of the Fairies
Crying young Tamlin's away

They turned him to a bear so bold
Then to a lion wild
She held him fast and feared him not
He was the father of her child

And then they turned him in her arms
Into iron like hot fire
She held him fast and feared him not
He was her heart's desire

They turned him, changed him in her arms
Into a hissing snake
She held him fast and feared him not
He was to be her mate

At last they turned him in her arms

Into the molten lead
She threw him into clear well water
And threw him in with speed

And then he turned a naked knight
She young Tamlin did win
She covered him with her green mantle
As blithe's a bird in spring

Out then spoke the Queen of the Fairies
Out of a bush of broom
She that has gotten young Tamlin
Has gotten a stately groom

Out then spoke the Queen of the Fairies
And angry queen was she
Shame betide her ill-starred face
And an ill death may she die

Out then spoke the Queen of Fairies
Out of a bush of rye
She has gotten the fairest knight
In all my company

If what I'd see this night, Tamlin
Last night I'd understood
I'd have torn out thy two grey eyes
And put in two of wood

If what I see this night, Tamlin
Last night I'd only known
I'd have taken out your heart of flesh
Put in a heart of stone

If I'd but half the wit yestereen
That I have bought today
I'd have paid my tithe seven times to Hell
E'er you'd been won away

verses compiled by Michael Cooney from various sources. Sung by
Michael Cooney, Frankie Armstrong ("Here's a health to man and
maid"), Ann Briggs, etc.

Child #39

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