

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

www.traditionalmusic.co.uk

The Green Lady

The Green Lady

Now all you young fellows take heed what I tell.
A-down in the wood a Green Lady do dwell.
Her hair it is green and all green is her gown,
And she calleth to all, "Come here! Draw near!"
But she means them no good for she drinks their hearts' blood;
They never do wed, for they takes to their bed,
And they dies -they all dies at the end of the year.
All under the tree
There sits a Green Lady.

Now all you young fellows take heed what I tell.
A-down in the wood a Green Lady do dwell.
And a bush lad drew nigh with a roving eye
And she called to him, "Draw near! Come here!"
But his sweetheart she ran and caught hold of her man
And she took him away and to him she did say
"You shan't die. You shan't die at the end of the year."
All under the tree
There sits a Green Lady.

Now all you young fellows take heed what I tell.
A-down in the wood a Green Lady do dwell.
To the wood then she goes in his breeches and hose
And the Green Lady called, ""Draw near! Come here!"
But a little axe had she, hid down by her knee,
And she chopped down the tree and the Green Lady
And they died -yes they died- at the end of the year.
All under the tree
There sits a Green Lady.

Ms. Tongue remarks, "Verses 2 and 3 are compiled from lines and fragments of the much longer ballad "Isaiah" sang in tantalizing occasional phrases during the period 1904 to about 1919."

She goes on to say: "A chilling but fairly complete picture of a dangerous nature spirit, of the vampire type. Any wood called Green Ladies was sedulously avoided -not only for the fairy claim upon it but in case it harboured such a tree spirit. She is true sister to the East

Anglian ghost quoted to me in 1956, by a schoolgirl:

So they looked thro' the keyhole
To see what they could see
And there they saw the Green Lady
Dancing with the Devil in a Bowl of Blood!

There are only two folk tales about her in Folk Lore's early volumes, but in each
the hint of a tree spirit is present."

I wouldn't care to comment on the authenticity or otherwise of this song,
but it certainly is an impressive piece. The melody is equally unusual,
and a midi goes to the midi site. This unusual song comes from the folklorist
Ruth L. Tongue's autobiographical book, *The Chime Child*, or,
Somerset Singers (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), and was brought to my
attention some years ago by Hugh Waller of Sheffield, who is the only person
I have ever heard sing it. Ms. Tongue apparently learned it from
"Isaiah Sully" (an alias), 1825-1923, "Singer, Mummer, Morrisman"
and reputed possessor of dark powers, who lived in Taunton Deane,
West Somerset.

<link to melody Jan 6>

MD
apr00