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MU. Pardon my boldness, fair lady; sith we both

May safely talk now out of Brema's sight,

Unfold to me, if so you please, the full discourse

How, when, and why you came into these woods,

And fell into this bloody butcher's hands.

AM. Hermit, I will.

Of late a worthy shepherd I did love—

MU. A shepherd, lady? Sure, a man unfit

To match with you.

AM. Hermit, this is true; and, when we had—

MU. Stay there; the wild man comes!

Refer<sup>1</sup> the rest until another time.

*Enter Brema.*

BRE. What secret tale is this? What whisp'ring have we here?

Villain, I charge thee tell thy tale again.

MU. If needs I must, lo, here it is again:

Whenas we both had lost the sight of thee,

It grieved us both, but specially thy queen,

Who in thy absence ever fears the worst,

Lest some mischance befall your royal grace.

"Shall my sweet Brema wander through the woods?

Toil to and fro for to redress my want,

Hazard his life, and all to cherish me? I like not this," quoth she,

And thereupon cravéd to know of me

If I could teach her handle weapons well.

My answer was I had small skill therein,

But gladsome, mighty king, to learn of thee.

And this was all.

BRE. Was't so? None can dislike of this.

I'll teach

You both to fight; but first, my queen, begin.

Here, take this weapon; see how thou canst use it.

AM. This is too big; I cannot wield it in my arm.

BRE. Is't so? We'll have a knotty crab-tree staff

For thee.—But, sirrah, tell me, what sayest thou?

MU. With all my heart I willing am to learn.

BRE. Then take my staff and see how thou canst wield it.

MU. First teach me how to hold it in my hand.

BRE. Thou hold'st it well.

Look how he doth; thou mayst the sooner learn.

MU. Next tell me how and when 'tis best to strike.

BRE. 'Tis best to strike when time doth serve;

'Tis best to lose no time.

MU. [*Aside.*] Then now or never is my time to strike.

BRE. And, when thou strikest, be sure to hit the head.

MU. The head?

BRE. The very head.

MU. Then have at thine!

*He strikes him down dead.*

So, lie there and die,

A death no doubt according to desert,

Or else a worse as thou deserv'st a worse.

AM. It glads my heart this tyrant's death to see.

MU. Now, lady, it remains in you

To end the tale you lately had begun,

Being interrupted by this wicked wight.

You said you loved a shepherd?

AM. Ay, so I do, and none but only him,

And will do still as long as life shall last.

MU. But tell me, lady, sith I set you free,

What course of life do you intend to take?

AM. I will disguiséd wander through the world,

Till I have found him out.

MU. How if you find your shepherd in these woods?

AM. Ah, none so happy then as Amadine.

*He discloseth<sup>2</sup> himself.*

MU. In tract of time a man may alter much.

Say, lady, do you know your shepherd well?

<sup>1</sup> Postpone.

<sup>2</sup> Early edns. read *disguiseth*.