

Child Maurice (Child 83A)

- 1 CHILDE MAURICE hunted ithe siluer wood,
He hunted itt round about,
And noebodye *that* he ffound therin,
Nor none there was with-out.
- 2
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And he tooke his siluer combe in his hand,
To kembe his yellow lockes.
- 3 He sayes, Come hither, thou litle ffoot-page,
That runneth lowlye by my knee,
Ffor thou shalt goe to Iohn Stewards wiffe
And pray her speake with mee.
- 4 ‘
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I, and greeete thou doe *that* ladye well,
Euer soe well ffroe mee.
- 5 ‘And, as itt ffalls, as many times
As knotts beene knitt on a kell,
Or merchant men gone to leeue London,
Either to buy ware or sell.
- 6 ‘And, as itt ffalles, as many times
As any hart can thinke,
Or schoole-masters are in any schoole-house,
Writting *with* pen and inke:
Ffor if I might, as well as shee may,
This night I wold *with* her speake.
- 7 ‘And heere I send her a mantle of greene,
As greene as any grasse,
And bidd her come to the siluer wood,
To hunt with Child Maurice.
- 8 ‘And there I send her a ring of gold,
A ring of precyous stone,

And bidd her come to the siluer wood,
Let ffor no kind of man.'

- 9 One while this litle boy he yode,
Another while he ran,
Vntill he came to Iohn Stewards hall,
I-wis he neuer blan.
- 10 And of nurture the child had good,
Hee ran vp hall and bower free,
And when he came to this lady ffaire,
Sayes, God you saue and see!
- 11 'I am come from Ch[i]ld Maurice,
A message vnto thee;
And Child Maurice, he greetes you well,
And euer soe well ffrom mee.
- 12 'And, as itt ffalls, as oftentimes
As knotts beene knitt on a kell,
Or marchant-men gone to leeue London,
Either ffor to buy ware or sell.
- 13 'And as oftentimes he greetes you well
As any hart can thinke,
Or schoolemasters [are] in any schoole,
Wryting with pen and inke.
- 14 'And heere he sends a mantle of greene,
As greene as any grasse,
And he bidds you come to the siluer wood,
To hunt with Child Maurice.
- 15 'And heere he sends you a ring of gold,
A ring of the precyous stone;
He prayes you to come to the siluer wood,
Let ffor no kind of man.'
- 16 'Now peace, now peace, thou litle ffoot-page,
Ffor Christes sake, I pray thee!
Ffor if my lord heare one of these words,
Thou must be hanged hye!'

17 Iohn Steward stood vnder the castle-wall,
And he wrote the words euerye one,

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18 And he called vnto his hors-keeper,
'Make readye you my steede!
I, and soe hee did to his chamberlaine,
'Make readye thou my weede!'

19 And he cast a lease vpon his backe,
And he rode to the siluer wood,
And there he sought all about,
About the siluer wood.

20 And there he ffound him Child Maurice
Sitting vpon a blocke,
With a siluer combe in his hand,
Keming his yellow locke[s.]

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21 But then stood vp him Child Maurice,
And sayd these words trulye:
'I doe not know your ladye,' he said,
'If *that* I doe her see.'

22 He sayes, How now, how now, Child Maurice?
Alacke, how may this bee?
Ffor thou hast sent her loue-tokens,
More now then two or three.

23 'Ffor thou hast sent her a mantle of greene,
As greene as any grasse,
And bade her come to the siluer woode,
To hunt *with* Child Maurice.

24 'And thou [hast] sent her a ring of gold,
A ring of *precyous* stone,
And bade her come to the siluer wood,
Let ffor no kind of man.'

25 'And by my ffaith, now, Child Maurice,

The tone of vs shall dye!
'Now be my troth,' sayd Child Maurice,
'And *that* shall not be I.'

- 26 But hee pulled forth a bright browne sword,
And dryed itt on the grasse,
And so ffast he smote att Iohn Steward,
I-wisse he neuer [did] rest.
- 27 Then hee pulled fforth his bright browne sword,
And dryed itt on his sleeue,
And the first good stroke Iohn Stewart stroke,
Child Maurice head he did cleue.
- 28 And he pricked itt on his swords poynt,
Went singing there beside,
And he rode till he came to *that* ladye ffaire,
Wheras this ladye lyed.
- 29 And sayes, Dost thou know Child Maurice head,
If *that* thou dost itt see?
And lapp itt soft, and kisse itt offt,
Ffor thou louedst him better than mee.'
- 30 But when shee looked on Child Maurice head,
Shee neuer spake words but three:
'I neuer beare no child but one,
And you haue slaine him trulye.'
- 31 Sayes, Wicked be my merrymen all,
I gaue meate, drinke, and clothe!
But cold they not haue holden me
When I was in all *that* wrath!
- 32 'Ffor I haue slaine one of the curteousest *knights*
That euer bestrode a steed,
Soe haue I done one [of] the fairest ladyes
That euer ware womans weede!'