

Fruit of the Yew

Words and Music: James Treebull the Stubborn ([Jim Pipkin](#))

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and common time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first two lines of the poem. The second staff contains the next two lines. The third staff contains the question: "How can this hap-pen, and where is our King? And where are the war-riors we pay?" The fourth staff contains the answer: "Aye, the King may be King where he sits on his throne, But his throne is four days ride a - way!"

"Aye, the King may be King where he sits on his throne, But his throne is four days ride a - way!"

Grim warriors appeared, decked in iron and gold,
Their bright banners snapped in the breeze
Harvest was over, the weather was cold
Turning hot breath to cloud in the freeze.

They moved over river, and meadow and field
The peasantry scattered before
They gathered the wealth of the land on their shields
And carried it off to the shore.

"How can this happen, and where is our King?
And where are the warriors we pay?"

"Aye, the King may be King where he sits on his throne,
But his throne is four days ride away!"

Swift word was sent to the men of the woods
There'll be no trade for Winter this year.
No sacks of grain for the skin of the fox,
No ale for the flesh of the deer.

*But deep in the woodlands of Wales grows a tree,
And the name of that tree is the yew.
And the fruit of the yew is a stout longbow stave
Throwing straight clothyard shafts strong and true!*

They gathered in numbers from forest and fen
Walking soft as the hunting-men do,
And hung at their belts were the straight clothyard shafts
In each hand was the fruit of the yew.

*And, slipping by night thru the still-burning steads,
They looked for the camp by the shore
And each made a vow, as he passed by the dead,
That the morning would even the score.*

Well, morning broke clear, and the raiders awoke,
With a leisurely thought for the day
Till one showed himself, and a soft bowstring spoke,
From three hundred paces away!

*And as he fell dead, a loud, taunting voice spoke
"It's a pleasure to pay you your due!"
"You came seeking all of the fruits of our land,
Have a taste of the fruit of the yew!"*

What use are shields that don't cover the legs?
Or helms that don't cover the eyes?
Or shirts of bright mail 'gainst the stout clothyard shaft
That can pierce thru a stag on the fly?

*The King arrived early, mud-spattered and tired,
Just to look on a field of the dead.
Cut down from the front as they stood in their line,
Cut down from the rear as they fled!*

"And where are the men that have done me this deed?"
Asked the King, from his horse ridden lame,
"'Twas outlaws and brigands from back in the woods,
They've since fled back whence they all came."

*"And would they take Pardon, and live in my Peace?"
Asked the King of his Councilor true,
Said the Councilor, "Nay, they're a quarrelsome lot;
They'll not become lawful for you."*

Raiders, take heed to the gist of my tale
(It may lengthen your lives, if you will!)
When you go a-reavin' be sure of your mark!
Take care that it matches your skill!

*For England pays silver, and Spain will give gold,
And France will grant land, that is true,
But seek not for wealth in the woodlands of Wales,
For they pay in the fruit of the yew!*