



Elfin Knight

Anonymous

This is the description of a pilgrim belonging to the clergy taken from the 'General Prologue' to The Canterbury Tales.

- Can you make me a cambric¹ shirt,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme²
 Without any seam³ or needle work⁴?
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- 5 Can you wash it in yonder dry well⁵,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 Where never sprung water nor rain ever fell?
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- Can you dry it on yonder thorn⁶,
 10 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 Which never bore blossom⁷ since Adam was born?
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- Now you have asked me questions three,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 15 I hope you'll answer as many for me.
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- Can you find me an acre⁸ of land
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 Between the salt water, and the sea sand?
 20 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- Can you plough⁹ it with a ram's horn¹⁰,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 And sow¹¹ it all over, with one pepper corn?
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- 25 Can you reap¹² it with a sickle of leather¹³,
 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 And bind it up¹⁴, with a peacock's feather¹⁵?
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.
- When you have done, and finished your work,
 30 Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
 Then come to me for your cambric shirt.
 And you shall be, a true lover of mine.

- 1 **cambric.** Di stoffa bianca e sottile.
 2 **Parsley ... thyme.** Prezzemolo, salvia, rosmarino e timo.
 3 **seam.** Cucitura.
 4 **needle work.** Lavoro di ago.
 5 **yonder ... well.** Pozzo secco laggiù.
 6 **thorn.** Roveto.
 7 **never ... blossom.** Non è mai fiorito.
 8 **acre.** Acro.
 9 **plough.** Arare.
 10 **ram's horn.** Corno dell'ariete.
 11 **sow.** Seminare.
 12 **reap.** Mietere.
 13 **sickle of leather.** Falce di pelle.
 14 **bind it up.** Legarlo.
 15 **peacock's feather.** Piuma di un pavone.