

PLAY TEN- ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

(The Parchment-makers and Bookbinders)

ABRAHAM

Great God, that all this world has wrought

And wisely *wote both good and ill,

(*distinguishes)

I thank him *thrally in my thought

(*loyally, servant-like)

Of all his love he lends me *tille.

(*to)

That thus from barrenhood has me brought,

A hundred winter to fulfil,

Thou grant me might so that I might

Ordain my works after thy will,

For in this earthly life

Are none to God more bound

Than is I and my wife,

For friendship we have found.

Unto me told God on a tide

Where I was telde under a tree,

(*under cover, i.e. camping)

He said my seed should be multiplied

Like to the gravel of the sea,

And as the stars were strewed wide,

So said he that my seed should be;

And bade I should be circumcised

To fulfil the law: thus learned he me.

In world whereso we *wonne

(*dwell, live)

He sends us riches rife.

As fierce as shines the sun,

He is *stinter of strife.

(*ender)

Abram first named was I,
And *sythen he set a syllable more, (*since)
And my wife *hight Sarae (*was called)
And *sithen was she named Sara. (*since then)

But Sara was uncertain then
That ever our seed should sagates yield (*so get)
Because herself she was barren,
And we were both gone in great *eld. (*age)
But she wrought as a wise woman.
To have a bairn us for to *beelde, (*protect, i.e. raise)
Her servant privily she won
Unto my bed my will to wield.
Soon after then befell
When God our deed would *dight, (*arrange)
She brought forth *Esmuell, (*Ishmael)
A son *seemly to sight. (*handsome)

Then afterward when we waxed old,
My wife she fell in fear for same,
Our God needs tidings to us told
Where we were in our house at home,
'Til have a son we should be bold,
And Isaak should be his name,
And his seed should spring manifold.
If I were blithe, who would me blame,
And for I *trowed this tiding (*trusted)
That God told to me then,
The ground and the beginning
Of truth that time began.

Now owe I greatly God to *yield	(*i.e. yield up in sacrifice)
That so would tell me his intent,	
And not *gainstanding our great *eld,	(*withstanding) (**age)
A *seemly son he has us sent.	(*handsome)
Now is he *wight himself to wield	(*strong, lively)
And from me is all *wightnes went;	(*strength, liveliness)
Therefore shall he be my *beelde.	(*shield, helper)
I love him that this loan has lent,	
For he may stint our strife	
And (de)fend us from all ill.	
I love him as my life	
With all mine heart and will.	

ANGELUS

Abraham, Abraham!

ABRAHAM

Lo, I am here.

ANGELUS

Now *bodeword unto thee I bring:	(*bidding, message)
God will *assay thy will and cheer,	(*test)
If thou will bow to his bidding.	
Isaak, thy son, that is thee dear,	
Whom thou loves over all thing,	
To the land of Vision wend in *feere,	(*fellowship? Fear?)
And there of him thou make offering.	
I shall thee show full soon	
The *stead of sacrifice.	(*place, home)

God will this deed be done,
And therefore thee advise.

ABRAHAM

Lord God, that lends *ay-lasting light, (*ever-lasting)
This is a *ferly fare to feel; (*horrible, marvellous)
To have a son *seemly to sight, (*handsome)
Isaak, that I love full well.
He is of *eld, to reckon right, (*age)
Thirty year and more *sumdele, (*a part)
And unto dead him must be *dight: (*done)
God has said me so for my *seele, (*happiness)
And bids me wend on all wise
To the land of *Vysioune (*Vision/Visitation)
There to make sacrifice
Of Isaak that is my son.

And that is hither three days journey,
The *gainest gait that I can go, (*fastest)
And *sertis, I shall not say him nay (*surely, certainly)
If God command myself to *sloo. (*slay)
But to my sone I will not say
But take him and my servants two,
And with our ass wend forth our way.
As God has said, it shall be so.
Isaak, son, I understand
To wilderness now wend will we
Therefore to make our *offerand, (*offering)
For so has God commanded me.

ISAAC

Father, I am ever at your will,

As worthy is withouten *trayne,

(*deception)

God's commandment to fulfil

Owe all folk for to be *fayne.

(*happy, eager)

ABRAHAM

Son, thou says me full good skill,

But all the *sooth is not to *sayne.

(*truth) (**i.e. to be said)

Go we see we shall *thertille,

(*there to)

I pray God send us *wele again.

(*wealth, comfort)

ISAAC

*Childir, lead forth our ass

(*Servants)

With wood that we shall burn;

Even as God ordained has

To work we will begin.

I FAMULUS

(*Servant)

At your bidding we will be bound

What way in world that ye will wend.

II FAMULUS

Why, shall we truss out forth a town

In any *uncouth land to **lende?

(*wild, untamed) (**live)

I FAMULUS

I hope thou have in this season

From God of heaven some solace send.

II FAMULUS

To fulfil it is good reason,
And kindly keep that he has *kenned.

(*made known, revealed)

I FAMULUS

But what they mean certain
Have I no knowledge clear.

II FAMULUS

It may not greatly gain
To *move of such matter.

(*scorn, moan, grimace)

ABRAHAM

No, *noye you not in no degree
So for to *deem here of our deed,
For as God commanded so work will we
Unto his *tales us must take heed.

(*annoy, fuss)

(*judge)

(*words, commandments)

I FAMILIUS

All those that will his servants be,
Full specially he will them speed.

ISAAC

*Childir, with all the might in me
I *lowe that Lord of *ilke a lede

(*servants)

(*love, laud, praise) (**each)

(***man? Law?)

And worship him certain;
My will is ever unto.

II FAMILIUS

God give you might and main
Right here so for to do.

ABRAHAM

Son, if our Lord God Almighty
Of myself would have his *offerande, (*offering)
I would be glad for him to die,
For all our *heelee hangs in his hand. (*health, prosperity)

ISAAC

Father, forsooth, right so would I,
*Lever than long to live in land. (*Rather)

ABRAHAM

Ah, son, thou says full well, *forthy (*therefore)
God give thee grace *gratthely to stand. (*nobly)
*Childir, bide ye here still. (*servants)
No further shall ye go,
For yonder I see the hill
That we shall wend unto.

ISAAC

Keep well our ass and all our gear
To time we come again you *till. (*to)

ABRAHAM

My son, this wood behoves thee bear
Till thou come high upon yon hill.

ISAAC

Father, that may do no *dere (*harm, ill)
God's commandment to fulfil,
For from all *wathes he will us **were (*risks, dangers) (**ward, guard)
Whereso we wend to work his will.

ABRAHAM

Ah, son, that was well said.
Lay down that wood even here
*Tille our altar be **grathide. (*Until) (**prepared, made)
And, my son, make good cheer.

ISAAC

Father, I see here wood and fire,
But whereof shall our offering be?

ABRAHAM

*Sertis, son, good God our sovereign sire (*Surely, certainly)
Shall ordain it in good *degree, (*order, place)
For son, *and we do his desire, (*if)
Full good reward therefore get we.
In heaven there must we have our *hire, (*reward)
For unto us so *hight has he. (*told, promised)
Therefore, son, let us pray
To God, both thou and I,
That we may make this day
Our offering here duly.

Great God that all this world has wrought
And *grathely governs good and ill, (*skilfully, nobly)

Thou grant me might so that I might

Thy commandments to fulfil.

And if my flesh grouch or grieve ought

Or *sertis my soul assent thertill, (*surely)

To burn all that I hither brought

I shall not spare if I should *spill. (*die, fall)

ISAAC

Lord God, of great *pousté, (*power)

To whom all people prays,

Grant both my father and me

To work thy will always.

But, father, now would I *frayne full **fayne (*ask) (**gladly)

Whereof our offering should be *grathid? (*prepared)

ABRAHAM

*Sertis, son, I may no longer **layne, (*Surely, truly) (**lie)

Thyself should bide that bitter *brayde. (*blow, strike)

ISAAC

Why, father, wills God that I be slain?

ABRAHAM

Ya *soothly, son, so has he said. (*truly)

ISAAC

And I shall not grouch there again;

To work his will I am well paid.

Since it is his desire

I shall be bound to be

*Brittynd and burnt in fire,

(*smashed, cut, destroyed)

And therefore mourn not for me.

ABRAHAM

Nay, son, this *gatis must needs be gone,

(*path, journey)

My Lord God will I not gainsay,

Nor never make mourns nor moan

To make offering of thee this day.

ISAAC

Father, since God our Lord alone

Vouchsafe to send when ye gone pray

A son to you when ye had none,

And now will that he wend his way,

Therefore *faynde me to **fell

(*test, try) (**kill)

To offering in this place,

But first I shall you tell

My counsel in this case.

I know myself by course of *kind,

(*nature)

My flesh for dead will be *dreadande;

(*dreading)

I am feared that ye shall find

My force your forward to withstand.

(i.e. my strength too much to withstand)

Therefore is best that ye me bind

In bands fast, both foot and hand.

Now whilst I am in might and mind,

So shall ye safely make *offerrande,

(*offering)

For father, when I am bound

My might may not avail.

Here shall no fault be found
To make your *forward fail. (*future, intent, fore-word)

For ye are old and all unwield,
And I am *wighte and wild of thought. (*lively)

ABRAHAM

To bind him that should be my *beelde, (*comfort, shelter)
*Outtane God's will, that would I not. (*out-take, i.e. disregard)
But lo, here shall no force be *felde, (*felt)
So shall God have that he has sought.
Farewell, my son, I shall thee yield
To him that all this world has wrought.

Now kiss me heartily, I thee pray,
Isaak, I take my leave for *ay, (*ever)
Me must thee *mys. (*upset)
My blessing have thou entirely,
And I beseech God Almighty
He give thee his.

Thus are we same assent
After thy words wise.
Lord God, to this take (at)tent:
Receive thy sacrifice.

This is to me a peerless pain
To see mine own dear child thus bound.
Me had well *lever my life to **tyne (*rather, prefer) (**take, destroy)
Than see this sight, thus of my son.

It is God's will, it shall be mine,
Against his *saande shall I never **schone; (*sound, command) (**hesitate)
To God's commandment I shall incline
That in me fault none be found.

Therefore my son so dear,
If thou will anything say,
Thy death it draws near.
Farewell, for once and *ay. (*ever, all, eternity)

ISAAC

Now, my dear father, I would you pray,
Here me three words, grant me my *boon (*request)
Since I from this shall pass for *ay. (*ever)
I see mine hour is coming full soon.
In word, in work, or any way
That I have trespassed or ought misdome,
Forgive me, father, ere I die this day,
For his love that made both sun and moon.
Here since we two shall twain,
First God I ask mercy
And you in more and *min (*less)
This day ere ever I die.

ABRAHAM

Now my great God Adonai,
That all this world has worthily wrought,
Forgive thee son, for his mercy,
In word, in work, in deed, and thought.
Now, son, as we are *leryd (*told)

Our time may not miscarry.

ISAAC

Now farewell, all middle-earth,

My flesh waxes faint for *ferde. (*fear)

Now, father, take your sword,

Methink full long ye tarry.

ABRAHAM

Nay, nay, son, nay, I thee *behete (*entreat, beg)

That do I not, withouten *were. (*doubt)

Thy words makes me my *wangges to wet (*cheeks)

And changes, child, full often my cheer.

Therefore lie down, hand and feet;

Now may thou wit thine hour is near.

ISAAC

Ah, dear father, life is full sweet,

The dread of dead does all my *dere. (*harm)

As I am here your son,

To God I take me *till. (*to)

Now am I laid here *bone, (*bound)

Do with me what ye will.

For father, I ask no more respite

But here a word what I would mean:

I beseech you ere that ye smite

Lay down this (hand)kerchief on mine eyes.

Then may your offering be perfect

If ye will work thus as I wene.

And here to God my soul I *wit,
And all my body to burn *bydene.
Now, father, be not missing
But smite fast as ye may.

(*give as a fee or fine)

(*immediately, utterly)

ABRAHAM

Farewell, in God's dear blessing
And mine for ever and *ay.

(*ever)

That peerless prince I pray
Mine offering hereto have it,
My sacrifice this day:
I pray the Lorde receive it.

ANGELUS

Abraham, Abraham!

ABRAHAM

Lo, here *iwys.

(*surely)

ANGELUS

Abraham, abide, and hold thee still.
Slay not thy son, do him no *misse.
Take here a sheep thy offering *tyll,
Is sent thee from the king of bliss
That faithful *ay to thee is **fone.
He bids thee make offering of this
Here at this time, and save thy son.

(*misery)

(*to be)

(*ever) (**found)

ABRAHAM

I *lowe that Lord with heart entire
That of his love this loan me lent,
To save my son, my darling dear,
And sent this sheep to this intent
That we shall offer it to thee here;
So shall it be as thou has meant.
My son, be glad and make good cheer,
God has to us good comfort sent.
He will not thou be dead,
But to his laws take keep.
And see, son, in thy stead
God has sent us a sheep.

(*love, laud, praise)

ISAAC

To make our offering at his will
All for our sake he has it sent.
To *lowe that Lorde I hold great skill
That to his *many thus has meant.
This *dede I would have ta'en me *till
Full gladly, Lord, to thine intent.

(*love, laud, praise)

(*multitude, family)

(*death, deed) (*to)

ABRAHAM

Ah, son, thy blood would he not spill,
*Forthy this sheep thus has he sent,
And, son, I am full *fayne
Of our *spede in this place,
But go we home again
And *lowe God of his grace.

(*Therefore)

(*glad, eager)

(*luck, good fortune)

(*love, laud, praise)

ANGELUS

Abraham, Abraham!

ABRAHAM

Lo, here indeed.

Hark, son, some salving of our sore.

ANGELUS

God says thou shall have *mickle **mede (*great) (**reward)

For this good will that thou in were;

Since thou for him would do this deed

To *spill thy sone and not to spare (*slay, destroy)

He means to multiply your seed

On sides *sere, as he said are. (*diverse, separate)

And yet he *hight you this (*tells, promises)

That of your seed shall rise

Through help of him and his

Overhand of all enemies.

Look ye him love, this is his *liste, (*desire)

And loyally live after his *laye, (*law, teachings)

For in your seed all must be blessed

That there be born by night or day.

If ye will in him *trowe or trust, (*trust, believe)

He will be with you ever and *ay. (*ever, eternity)

ABRAHAM

Full well were us if we it *wiste (*learn, understand)

How we should work his will away.

ISAAC

Father, that shall we *frayne (*ask)
At wiser men than we,
And fulfil it full *fayne (*gladly)
Indeed after our degree.

ABRAHAM

Now, son, since we thus well has *sped, (*been lucky)
That God has granted me thy life,
It is my will that thou be wed
And *welde a woman to thy wife; (*govern, take in marriage)
So shall thy seed spring and be spread
In the laws of God by reason rife.
I *wot in what **stead she is *stede (*know) (**place, homestead) (**living)
That thou shall wed, withouten strife.
Rabek, that damsel,
Her fairer is none found,
The daughter of Batwell
That was my brother's son.

ISAAC

Father, as thou likes my life to spend,
I shall assent unto the same.

ABRAHAM

One of my servants soon shall I send
Unto that *bird to bring her home. (*girl)
The *gainest gaits now will we wend. (*fastest)
My bairns, ye are not to blame
If ye think long that we here *lende. (*live)

Gather same our gear, in God's name,

And go we home again

Even unto Barsabé.

God that is most of *main (*power)

Us *wise and with you be. (*teach)