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He came running up to her, his eyes wide with fear. His clothing was soaked in blood, although he had few, if any, wounds. She recognized him as the King's general.

"Come, my lord, come quickly!" she said to him, motioning to her husband's tent. "You may hide and rest here until your men come for you."

"Thank you," he replied, breathless. "Where is your husband?"

"Out with the flock," she replied. "He should return soon."

The general nodded and entered the tent. "May I have some water? I am very thirsty."

She gave him instead their finest milk. Then he stretched out in a corner. She covered him with a heavy rug. As he fell asleep, he told her, "Stand guard outside. If anyone asks for me, tell them I am not here."

She nodded.

Outside, she finished the laundry. She made sure there was enough hay for the horses that would soon arrive. She refreshed the pitchers of water and milk. She fed the animals. Once all her tasks for the day were completed, she ventured back into the tent. The general was asleep. She smiled at his snores.

Outside, she saw riders in the distance. They were coming towards her. She filled a basin with water. Then she pulled out a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went back inside. The general was snoring even louder. She smiled, crouching over his body, and whispered, "Your murderous rampage ends now."

She placed the tent peg at the center of his temple. Gripping the hammer, she drove it into his

skull. The general awoke, screaming.

She said to him, "Tell your father in hell that you've been killed by a woman."

She drove the peg further and further into his skull, until his head was fastened to the ground. Then she washed the blood off her hammer. She changed clothes, soaking her bloody robes and the heavy carpet in the basin of water.

When the riders arrived, she told them that she had the general. The men, and the woman with them, dismounted. They stared in awe at the body nailed to the ground.

The woman rider said to their leader, "I told you he would only be delivered into the hands of a woman."

He smiled and replied, "Now we are free. Blessed be God and you, young executioner."

They pulled the body free from the soil and tied it to one of the horses.

"Wait," the young executioner said. "Before you leave, may I have one request?"

Their leader smiled broadly. "Anything. Name it."

"I will need the peg back," she said, motioning to a flapping section of the tent.