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2SAMUEL 13: 1 After this, Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

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Amnon falls in love with his half-sister Tamar, and feigns himself sick, and requests her to attend him, 2Sam 13:1-6. David sends her to him, and he violates her, 2Sam 13:7-14. He then hates her, and expels her from his house, 2Sam 13:15-17, She rends her garments, puts ashes on her head, and goes forth weeping, 2Sam 13:18, 2Sam 13:19. She is met by Absalom her brother, who, understanding her case, determines the death of Amnon, 2Sam 13:20-22. Two years after, he invites all his brothers to a sheep-shearing, when he orders his servants to murder Amnon, 2Sam 13:23-29. Tidings come to David that Absalom has slain all the king's sons, which fill him with the bitterest distress, 2Sam 13:30, 2Sam 13:31. The rest soon arrive, and he finds that Amnon only is killed, 2Sam 13:32-36. Absalom flees to Talmai, king of Geshur, where he remains three years, 2Sam 13:37, 2Sam 13:38. David longs after Absalom, having become reconciled to the death of Amnon, 2Sam 13:39.

#### Verse 1

Whose name was Tamar - Tamar was the daughter of David and Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur, and the uterine sister of Absalom. Amnon was David's eldest son by Ahinoam. She was therefore sister to Amnon only by the father's side, i.e., half-sister; but whole sister to Absalom.

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2SAMUEL 13: 2 Amnon was so troubled that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her.

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#### Verse 2

Amnon was so vexed - for she was a virgin - It has been well remarked that "the passion of love is nowhere so wasting and vexatious, as where it is unlawful. A quick sense of guilt, especially where it is enormous, as in the present instance, strikes the soul with horror; and the impossibility of an innocent gratification loads that horror with desperation: a conflict too cruel and too dreadful for human bearing." - Delaney.

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2SAMUEL 13: 3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very subtle man.

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#### Verse 3

Jonadab was a very subtle man - And most diabolic advice did he give to his cousin. We talk of the simplicity and excellence of primitive times! "Say not thou what is the cause that the former days were better than these." Take them altogether, we may thank God that they are past, and pray him that they may never return.

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2SAMUEL 13: 4 He said to him, "Why, son of the king, are you so sad from day to day? Won't you tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

2SAMUEL 13: 5 Jonadab said to him, "Lay down on your bed, and pretend to be sick. When your father comes to see you, tell him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand.'"

2SAMUEL 13: 6 So Amnon lay down and faked being sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

2SAMUEL 13: 7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him."

2SAMUEL 13: 8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. She took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes.

2SAMUEL 13: 9 She took the pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. Amnon said, "Have all men leave me." Every man went out from him.

2SAMUEL 13: 10 Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the room, that I may eat from your hand." Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the room to Amnon her brother.

2SAMUEL 13: 11 When she had brought them near to him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister!"

2SAMUEL 13: 12 She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me! For no such thing ought to be done in Israel. Don't you do this folly.

#### Verse 12

Nay, my brother - There is something exceedingly tender and persuasive in this speech of Tamar; but Amnon was a mere brute, and it was all lost on him.

2SAMUEL 13: 13 I, where would I carry my shame? And as for you, you will be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you."

#### Verse 13

Speak unto the king - So it appears that she thought that the king, her father, would give her to him as wife. This is another strong mark of indelicacy in those simple but barbarous times. There might have been some excuse for such connections under the patriarchal age, but there was none now. But perhaps she said this only to divert him from his iniquitous purpose, that she might get out of his hands.

2SAMUEL 13: 14 However he would not listen to her voice; but being stronger than she, he forced her, and lay with her.

2SAMUEL 13: 15 Then Amnon hated her with exceeding great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"

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#### Verse 15

Hated her exceedingly - Amnon's conduct to his sister was not only brutal but inexplicable. It would be easy to form conjectures concerning the cause, but we can arrive at no certainty.

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2SAMUEL 13: 16 She said to him, "Not so, because this great wrong in sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me!" But he would not listen to her.

2SAMUEL 13: 17 Then he called his servant who ministered to him, and said, "Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her."

2SAMUEL 13: 18 She had a garment of various colours on her; for with such robes were the king's daughters who were virgins dressed. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

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#### Verse 18

A garment of divers colors - See the note on Gen 37:3, where the same words occur.

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2SAMUEL 13: 19 Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her garment of various colours that was on her; and she laid her hand on her head, and went her way, crying aloud as she went.

2SAMUEL 13: 20 Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart."

So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

2SAMUEL 13: 21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very angry.

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#### Verse 21

But when King David heard - To this verse the Septuagint add the following words: *Και ουκ ελυπησε το πνευμα Αμνων του υιου αυτου, οτι ηγαπα αυτον, οτι πρωτοτοκος αυτου ην;* "But he would not grieve the soul of Amnon his son, for he loved him, because he was his first-born." The same addition is found in the Vulgate and in Josephus, and it is possible that this once made a part of the Hebrew text.

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2SAMUEL 13: 22 Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

2SAMUEL 13: 23 After two full years, Absalom had sheep shearers in Baal Hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

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#### Verse 23

Absalom had sheep-shearers - These were times in which feasts were made, to which the neighbors and relatives of the family were invited.

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2SAMUEL 13: 24 Absalom came to the king, and said, "See now, your servant has sheep shearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant."

2SAMUEL 13: 25 The king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you." He pressed him; however he would not go, but blessed him.

2SAMUEL 13: 26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." The king said to him, "Why should he go with you?"

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#### Verse 26

Let my brother Amnon go - He urged this with the more plausibility, because Amnon was the first-born, and presumptive heir to the kingdom; and he had disguised his resentment so well before, that he was not suspected.

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2SAMUEL 13: 27 But Absalom pressed him, and he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

2SAMUEL 13: 28 Absalom commanded his servants, saying, "Mark now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; and when I tell you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Haven't I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant!"

2SAMUEL 13: 29 The servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man got up on his mule, and fled.

2SAMUEL 13: 30 While they were on the way, the news came to David, saying, "Absalom has slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left!"

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#### Verse 30

Absalom hath slain all the king's sons - Fame never lessens but always magnifies a fact. Report, contrary to the nature of all other things, gains strength by going.

Virgil has given, in his best manner, a fine personification of Fame or Evil Report. - Aen. iv., 173.

Extemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes;

Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum,

Mobilitate viget, viresque acquirit eundo, etc. "Now Fame, tremendous fiend! without delay,

Through Libyan cities took her rapid way;  
Fame, the swift plague, that every moment grows,  
And gains new strength and vigor as she goes," etc.

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2SAMUEL 13: 31 Then the king arose, and tore his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

2SAMUEL 13: 32 Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered, "Don't let my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead; for by the appointment of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

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Verse 32

And Jonadab - said - Amnon only is dead - This was a very bad man, and here speaks coolly of a most bloody tragedy, which himself had contrived.

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2SAMUEL 13: 33 Now therefore don't let my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead; for Amnon only is dead."

2SAMUEL 13: 34 But Absalom fled. The young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, many people were coming by way of the hillside behind him.

2SAMUEL 13: 35 Jonadab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons are coming! It is as your servant said."

2SAMUEL 13: 36 As soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept. The king also and all his servants wept bitterly.

2SAMUEL 13: 37 But Absalom fled, and went to Talmi the son of Ammihur, king of Geshur. David mourned for his son every day.

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Verse 37

Absalom fled - As he had committed wilful murder, he could not avail himself of a city of refuge, and was therefore obliged to leave the land of Israel, and take refuge with Talmi, king of Geshur, his grandfather by his mother's side. See 2Sam 3:3.

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2SAMUEL 13: 38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

2SAMUEL 13: 39 King David longed to go out to Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.

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Verse 39

David longed to go forth unto Absalom - We find that he had a very strong paternal affection for this young man, who appears to have had little to commend him but the beauty of his person. David wished either to go to him, or to bring him back; for the hand of time had now wiped off his tears for the death of his son Amnon. Joab had marked this disposition, and took care to work on it, in order to procure the return of Absalom. It would have been well for all parties had Absalom ended his days at Geshur. His return brought increasing wretchedness to his unfortunate father. And it may be generally observed that those undue, unreasonable paternal attachments are thus rewarded.