

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Bramble Briar

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Sung by Mrs. Joiner, Chiswell Green, Herts. (L.E.B. 1914)

In Bruton town there lived a farmer,
Who had two sons and one daughter dear.
By day and night they were contriving
To fill their parents' heart with fear.

He told his secrets to no other,
But unto her brother this he said:
'I think our servant courts our sister.
I think they has a great mind to wed.
I'll put an end to all their courtship.
I'll send him silent to his grave.'

They asked him to go a-hunting,
Without any fear or strife,
And these two bold and wicked villains,
They took away this young man's life.

And in the ditch there was no water,
Where only bush and briars grew.
They could not hide the blood of slaughter,
So in the ditch his body they threw.

When they returned home from hunting,
She asked for her servant-man.
"I ask because I see you whisper,
So brothers tell me if you can."

"O sister, sister, you do offend me,
Because you so examine me.
We've lost him where we've been a-hunting.
No more of him we could not see."

As she lay dreaming on her pillow,
She thought she saw her heart's delight;
By her bed side as she lay weeping,
He was dressed all in his bloody coat.

"Don't weep for me, my dearest jewel,
Don't weep for me nor care nor pine,
For your two brothers killed me so cruel-
In such a place you may me find."

As she rose early the very next morning,
With heavy sigh and bitter groan,
The only love that she admired,
She found in the ditch where he was thrown.

The blood upon his lips was drying.
Her tears were salt as any brine.
She sometimes kissed him, sometimes crying:
'Here lies the dearest friend of mine.'

Three days and nights she did sit by him,
And her poor heart was filled with woe,
Till cruel hunger crept upon her,
And home she was obliged to go.

When she returned to her brothers:
"Sister, what makes you look so thin?"
"Brother, don't you ask the reason,
And for his sake you shall be hung!"

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Laws M32

recorded by Tim Hart & Maddy Prior, Folksongs of Old England

JY