

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## Stepmother's Cruelty

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There was a lord of worthy fame and a hunting he would ride  
Attended by a noble train of gentry by his side

And whilst he did in chase remain to see both sport and play  
His lady went, as she did fain, unto the church to pray

This lord he had a daughter fair, whose beauty shined so bright  
She was beloved both far and near, of many a lord and knight

Fair Isabella she was called, a creature fair was she  
She was her father's only joy as you shall after see

But yet her cruel stepmother did envy her so much  
That day by day she sought her life, her malice it was such

She bargained with the master cook to take her life away  
And taking of her daughter's book, she thus to her did say

Go home, sweet daughter, I thee pray, go hasten presently  
And tell unto the master cook these words that I tell thee

And bid him dress to dinner straight that fair and milkwhite doe  
That in the park doth shine so bright, there's none so fair to show

This lady feared of no harm obeyed her mother's will  
And presently she hasted home her mind for to fulfill

She straight into the kitchen went, her message for to tell  
And there the master cook she spied who did with malice swell

You master cook, it must be so, do that which I tell thee  
You needs must dress the milkwhite doe which you do know full well

Then straight his cruel bloody hands he on the lady laid  
Who quivering and shaking stands, whilst thus to her he said

Thou art the doe that I must dress, see here, behold my knife  
For it is pointed presently to rid thee of thy life

O then cried out the scullian bou, as loud as loud might be  
O save her life, good master cook, and make your pies of me

For pity sake, do not destroy my lady with your knife  
You know she is her father's joy, for Christ's sake, save her life

I will not save her life, he said, nor make my pies of thee  
But if thou dost this deed betray, thy butcher I will be

But when this lord he did come home for to sit down and eat  
He called for his daughter dear to come and carve his meat

Now sit you down, his lady said, o sit you down to meat  
Into some nunnery she is gone, your daughter dear forget

Then solumly he made a vow before the company  
That he would neither eat nor drink until he did her see

O then bespoke the scullian boy with a loud voice so high  
If that you will your daughter see, my lord, cut up that pie

Wherein her flesh is minced small and parched with the fire  
All caused by her stepmother, who did her death desire

And cursed be the master cook, o cursed may he be,  
I proffered him my own heart's blood, from death to set her free

Then all in black this lord did mourn and for his daughter's sake  
He judged for her stepmother to be burned at the stake

Likewise he judged the master cook in boiling leads to stand  
And made the simple scullian boy the heir to all his land.

from a broadside from 1600s  
SOF