

The Famous Flower of Serving Men

$\text{♩} = 85$

My mo - ther did me dea - - dly spite, for
she sent thieves in the dark of the night; put my
ser - vants all to flight, they robbed my bower they slew _my knight

My mother did me deadly spite, for she sent thieves in the dark of night
Put my servants all to flight, they robbed my bower, they slew my knight

They couldn't do to me no harm, so they slew my baby in my arm
Left me nought to wrap him in but the bloody sheet that he lay in

They left me nought to dig his grave but the bloody sword that slew my babe
All alone the grave I made, and all alone the tear I shed

And all alone the bell I rang, and all alone the psalm I sang
I leaned my head all against a block, and there I cut my lovely locks

I cut my locks and I changed my name from Fair Eleanor to Sweet William
Went to court to serve my king as the famous flower of serving men

So well I served my lord the king that he made me his chamberlain;
He loved me as his son, the famous flower of serving men

And oft time he'd look at me and smile, so swift his heart I did beguile
And he blessed the day that I became the famous flower of serving men

But all alone in my bed at e'en, there I dreamed a dreadful dream
I saw my bed swim with blood, I saw the thieves all around my head

Our king has to the hunting gone, he's ta'en no lords nor gentlemen
He's left me there to guard his home, the famous flower of serving men

Our king he rode the wood all around, he stayed all day but nothing found
And as he rode himself alone, it's there he spied the milk-white hind

The hind she broke, the hind she flew, the hind she trampled the brambles through
First she'd mount, then she'd sound, sometimes before, sometimes behind

Oh what is this, how can it be, such a hind as this I ne'er did see
Such a hind as this was never born; I fear she'll do me deadly harm

And long, long did the great horse turn, for to save his lord from branch and tree
And but long e'er the day was o'er, they tangled all in his yellow hair

All in a glade the king drew nigh and the hind shone bright all in his eye
He sprang down, sword drew, she vanished there all from his view

And all around the grass was green, and all around where a grave was seen
And he sat himself all on the stone, great weariness it seized him on

Great silence hung from tree to sky, the woods grew still, the sun hung fire
As through the wood, the dove he came, as through the wood he made his morn

Oh, the dove, he sat down on a stone, so sweet he looked, so soft he sang
Alas the day my love became the famous flower of serving men

The bloody tears they fell as rain; still he sat, and still he sang
Alas the day my love became the famous flower of serving men

Our king cried out, and he wept full sore, so loud unto the dove he did call
"Come pretty bird, come sing it plain!"

"Oh it was her mother's deadly spite for she sent thieves in the dark of the night
They come to rob, they come to slay, they made their sport, they went their way

"And don't you think that her heart was sore, as she laid the mould on his yellow hair
And don't you think her heart was woe, as she turned about all away to go"

And how she wept as she changed her name from Fair Eleanor to Sweet Will
Went to court to serve her king, the famous flower of serving men

The bloody tears they lay all around, he's mounted up and away he's gone
One thought filled his mind, the thought of her that was a man

And as he's rode himself alone, a dreadful oath he there has sworn
That he would hunt her mother down like he would hunt the wildwood swine

For there's four and twenty ladies all, And they're all playing at the ball
But fairer than all of them, is the famous flower of serving men

Our king rode in, into his hall, and he's rode in among them all
He's lifted her to his saddle brim, and there he's kissed her cheek and chin

The lords all stood and they stretched their eyes, the ladies took to their fans
For such a strange homecoming, no gentleman had ever seen

And he has sent his nobles all, and to her mother they have gone
Ta'en her that's did such wrong, they've laid her down in a prison strong

And he's brought men up from the corn, and he's sent men down to the thorn
All for to build a bonfire high, all for to set her mother by

Ah, bonny sang the morning thrush, all where he sat in yonder bush
Louder did her mother cry in the bonfire where she burned close by

For there she stood all among the thorn, and there she sang her deadly song
Alas the day that she became the famous flower of serving men

For the fire took first upon her cheek and there it took upon her chin
It spat and it sang in her yellow hair, as there she burnt like hokey green