

Peggy Seeger

"Child Waters"

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CHILD WATERS

I warn you all you ladies fair that do wear red and brown

That you don't leave your father's house to run with a boy from town

For here am I, a lady fair, I did wear red and brown
And I did leave my father's house to run with a boy from town

He's mounted on his big white horse and fast away rode he

She dressed herself like a little footboy, she ran at the horse's knee

And when they came to the river's edge that was so deep and wide

"Oh, will you swim," her lover said, "Or hang on the horse's side?"

The very first step that lady took, it reached up to her knee

"Oh alas, alas," that lady said, "I fear you're drowning me"

"Lie still, lie still, my baby dear, don't work your mother woe

Your father's high on high horseback, he cares not for us two"

But when she's come to the other side, she's mounted on a stone

He's turned around his big white horse and took her on behind

"Oh do you see yon high castle, that shines so white and free?

There is a lady in that castle, that will part you and me

"She will eat the good white bread, you will eat but corn
And you will sit and curse the hour ever you was born"

"If there's a lady in that castle that will part you and I
The day I see her," Ellen said, "That day I will die"

Four and twenty ladies gay welcomed the young man home

But the fairest one among them all in the great hall stood alone

And then upspoke his old mother, and a wise woman was she

"Where did you come in with that little footboy, that

looks so sad at
thee?
"Sometimes his cheek is rosy red, sometime's its pale
and wan
He looks like a woman deep in love or caught in deadly
sin"
"It makes me smile, my mother dear, to hear those
words from thee
That's but a lord's own younger son, who for love hath
followed me
"Rise up, rise up, my little footboy, go feed my horse
his hay"
"Oh that I will, my master dear, fast as ever I may"
She took the hay in her soft white hands, she ran out
from the hall
She ran into the great stable and into the horse's stall
And there she did begin to weep, she did begin to
mourn
For even among those great horse feet, she had to
bear her son
"Lie still, lie still, my baby dear, thou pledge of careless
love
I would thy father was a king, thy mother in her grave"
"Rise up, rise up, my darling son, go see how she do
fare
For I heard a woman and her baby calling for your
care"
Up he rose and down he goes, into the barn he went
"Fear not, fear not, fair Ellen," he said, "There's no one
here but me
Up he took his little young son and gave to him sweet
milk
And up he took fair Ellen then and dressed her in green
silk
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