

Seeger Pete

"Half Hitch"

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HALF HITCH

A noble rich man in Plymouth did dwell
He had but one daughter, a beautiful girl
A handsome young farmer with riches supplied
He courted this fair maid to make her his bride
He courted her long and gained her love
And then she intended this young man to prove
When he asked her to marry she quickly replied
And told him right off she would not be his bride
He vowed then that home he quickly would steer
And by a sad oath to her he did swear
How he'd wed the first woman that e'er he did see
If she was as mean as a beggar could be
She ordered her servants this man to delay
Her jewels and rings, she laid them away
She put on the worst of old rags she could find
She looked like a teapot before and behind
She rubbed both her hands on the old chimney back
And then blackened her face from corner to crack
Then around to the road she flew like witch
With her petticoats hoisted all on the half hitch

The young man came riding and when he did see her

He cried out 'alas' for his oath he did fear

But being so faithful to keep his words true

He soon overtook her, saying "Pray, who are you?"

"I am a woman"

This answer did suit him as well as the rest

It lay very heavy and hard on his breast

"How can I bear for to make her my bride?"

But still he did ask her behind him to ride

"Your horse will throw me, I know"

"No", he replied, "My horse, he will not"

So then she climbed up and behind him she got

He wished himself well from his promises free

But he turned to her saying, "Will you have me?"

"Yes I will"

My heart it doth fail me, I dare not go home

My parents will think I am sorely undone

I will leave you here with my neighbor to tarry

Within a few days with you I will marry

"You won't, I know"

He told her he would and home he did go

He soon told his father and mother also

Of his woeful case and how he had sworn

His parents said to him, "For that do not mourn"

Oh, ne'er break your vows, but bring home your girl

We'll soon snug her up and she'll do very well
They asked his old spark to the wedding to come
Her servants replied that she was not at home
They invited her maidens to wait on her there
And then for the wedding they all did prepare
Published the banns and invited the guests
And then they intended the bride for to dress
"I'll just be married in my old clothes"
When they were married, they sat down to eat
With her fingers she hauled out the cabbage and meat
As she stood a-stooping some called to his bride
Saying pray go along and sit by his side
"I'll just sit in the chimney corner like I'm used to"
She burned all her fingers in the pudding, I fear
Then licked them and wiped them all on her old rags
They gave her a candle, what could she want more
And showed her the way to the chamber door
"Husband, when you hear my shoes go "clunk", you
may come along"
Upstairs she then went and kept stepping about
His mother said to him, "What think is the rout?"
He cried out, "Dear Mother, Pray don't say a word
For ne'er any comfort can this world afford"
A little while later, her shoes they went "clunk"
They gave him a candle and bade him go along
Upstairs then he went and quickly he found

As handsome a lady as e'er stepped the ground
All dressed in the richest of clothes to behold
She was finer and fairer than pictures of gold
He greatly rejoiced at this end to his fears
For he had married the lady he courted for years
Downstairs they went and a frolic they had
Which made both their hearts feel merry and glad
They looked like two flower that pleased the eye
With many full glasses, all wished them great joy

related to Child #31 The Marriage of Sir Gawain

Pete Seeger has recorded it on "Story Songs"

@courtship @marriage

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