

# Ballads of The Lord of Clun

The men of Clun, warriors all  
Ride forth to Huntingdon --  
To be entertained by the lords convened  
And seduced to the bloodless King.

I'm a Celt, you dogs!  
Of the crucible born --  
I don't kneel to your Norman King!

I'll drink their ale and eat their meat  
And eye their women all.  
But what is this? A flame does burn  
'Midst this chill and soulless lot.

She's eyes of fire, this woodland nymph,  
She sets my blood a-boil.  
Like a fine white mare she moves and twirls.  
My head spins wild and free!

Bewitched am I, the warrior lord,  
Besotted by her face.  
I'll know no peace 'til she is mine--  
A queen thron'd at my side.

Ah, the ballads they'll sing  
Of the warrior king  
Side by side with his forest-bred bride!

The smooth-faced boy, the Earl's one son,  
Capers and mutters and frets.  
He speaks of modern chivalry,  
The honor of the wolfshead's wife.

He'd have her for his own, he would --  
I see it in his eyes.  
But she's mine by right, the fire burns bright --  
There's none surpasses me.

Assault by stealth's for other men --  
I'm open as the day.  
A fast'rid'n raid and she is mine --  
The father's nout to me.

How the stories will wing!  
And our blades they'll ring  
O'er the country as we do ride.

She's mine, to be, bride and wife,  
The mother to my sons:  
Fine big lads of the House of Clun  
Born to the May Day Queen.

And yet she weeps, her eyes grow red --  
She caterwauls and cries.  
Where is she now, the Noble Queen,  
Who held my heart beguiled?

And yet she touches me,  
In ways I've never known.  
The wolfshead's widow cries for love  
Lost, cut down, betrayed.

Let the minstrels sing  
Of the warrior king  
Bound by love to his forest-bred bride!

Gulnar promised fidelity  
But can he promise love?  
Passion, power, all be mine --  
But the heart of a woman fair?

The day has dawned, the wedding feast  
Begins a life renewed.  
The blood game's played for shiny gold --  
It's nout beside my prize.

But here's the heir to Huntingdon,  
The smooth-faced prattling child.  
He's come to claim his heart's desire --  
My woman, wife and bride.

How the stories will wing!  
Of the blades that ring  
Round the floor of my castle hide.

He fights well, this Saxon whelp,  
There's steel in those limbs so fair.  
But my champion's a better man --  
We'll see great sport today!

But what is this? Treachery!  
A coward's way to win.  
Prisoner of the Earl's one son,  
My queen torn from my side --

She'll ne'er be mine, I see it now,  
Her soul longs for the glade.  
Players all, in a pantomime,  
By our parts then are we known.

Oh! the ballads they'll sing  
Of the warrior king  
Betrayed by his forest-bred bride.

And the stories will wing  
Oh -- the chuckles they'll bring  
Of the day Lord Owen died.

-- Deborah M. Walsh

