

Jack Orion

Bert Jansch

Jack Orion was as good a fiddler
As ever fiddled on a string
He could make young women mad
To the tune his fiddle would sing
He could fiddle the fish out of salt water
Or water from a marble stone
Or milk from out of a maiden's breast
Though baby she'd got none
He's taken his fiddle into his hand
He's fiddled and he's sung
And oft he's fiddled unto the King
Who never thought it long
And he sat fiddling in the castle hall
He's played them all so sound asleep
All but for the young princess
And for love she stayed awake
And first he played at a slow grave tune
And then a gay one flew
And many's the sigh and loving word
That passed between the two
Come to my bower, sweet Jack Orion
When all men are at rest
As I am a lady true to my word
Thou shalt be a welcome guest
He's lapped his fiddle in a cloth of green
A glad man, Lord, was he
Then he's run off to his own house
Says, Tom come hither unto me
When day has dawned and the cocks have crown
And flapped their wings so wide
I am bidden to that lady's door
To stretch out by her side
Lie down in your bed, dear master
And sleep as long as you may
I'll keep good watch and awaken you
Three hours before 'tis day
But the rose up that worthless lad
His master's clothes did don
A collar he's cast about his neck
He seemed the gentleman
Well he didn't take that lady gay
To bolster nor to bed
But down upon the bower floor
He quickly had her laid
And he neither kissed her when he came
Nor when from her he did go
And in and out of her window
The moon like a coal did glow
Ragged are your stockings love
Stubble is your cheek and chin
And tangled is that yellow hair
That I saw yester' 'een
The stockings belong to my boy Tom
They're the first come to my hand
The wind is tangled my yellow hair
As I rode o'er the land
Tom took his fiddle into his hand

So saucy there he sang
Then he's off back to his master's house
As fast as he could run
Wake up, wake up my good master
I fear 'tis almost dawn
Wake up, wake up the cock has crowed
'Tis time that you were gone
The quickly rose up Jack Orion
Put on his cloak and shoon
And cast a collar about his neck
He was a lord's true son
And when he came to the lady's bower
He lightly rattled the pin
The lady was true to her word
She rose and let him in
Oh whether have you left with me
Your bracelet or your glove?
Or are you returned back again
To know more of my love?
Jack Orion swore a bloody oath
By oak and ash and bitter thorn
Saying, lady I never was in your house
Since the day that I was born
Oh then it was your young footpage
That has so cruelly beguiled me
And woe that the blood of the ruffian lad
Should spring in my body
Then she pulled forth a little sharp knife
That hung down at her knee
O'er her white feet the red blood ran
Or ever a hand could stay
And dead she lay on her bower floor
At the dawning of the day
Jack Orion ran to his own house
Saying, Tom my boy come here to me
Come hither now and I'll pay your fee
And well paid you shall be
If I had killed a man tonight
Tom I would tell it thee
But if I have taken no life tonight
Tom thou hast taken three
Then he pulled out his bright brown sword
And dried it on his sleeve
And he smote off that vile lad's head
And asked for no man's leave
He set the sword's point to his breast
The pommel to a stone
Through the falseness of that lying lad
These three lives were all gone