

### *CLERK SAUNDERS*

1. Clerk Saunders and May Margaret  
Walked ower yon garden green;  
And sad and heavy was the love  
That fell thir twa between.
2. —“A bed, a bed,” Clerk Saunders said,  
“A bed for you and me.”—  
—“Fye na, fye na,” said May Margaret,  
“Till anes we married be.
3. “For in may come my seven bauld brothers,  
Wi’ torches burning bright;  
They’ll say—“We hae but ae sister,  
And behold she’s wi’ a knight!”—
4. —“Then take the sword frae my scabbard,  
And slowly lift the pin;  
And you may swear, and safe your aith,  
Ye never let Clerk Saunders in.
5. “And take a napkin in your hand,  
And tie up baith your bonny een;  
And you may swear, and safe your aith,  
Ye saw me na since late yestreen.”—
6. It was about the midnight hour,  
When they asleep were laid;  
When in and came her seven brothers,  
Wi’ torches burning red.
7. When in and came her seven brothers,  
Wi’ torches shining bright;  
They said “We hae but ae sister,  
And behold her lying with a knight!”—
8. Then out and spake the first o’ them,—  
—“I bear the sword shall gar him die.”—  
And out and spake the second o’ them,—  
—“His father has nae mair than he!”—
9. And out and spake the third o’ them,—  
—“I wot that they are lovers dear.”—  
And out and spake the fourth o’ them,—  
—“They hae been in love this mony a year.”—

10. Then out and spake the fifth o' them,—  
—“It were great sin true love to twain.”—  
And out and spake the sixth o' them,—  
—“It were shame to slay a sleeping man!”—
11. Then up and gat the seventh o' them,  
And never a word spake he;  
But he has striped his bright brown brand  
Out thro' Clerk Saunders' fair bodye.
12. Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned  
Into his arms as asleep she lay;  
And sad and silent was the night  
That was atween thir twae.
13. And they lay still and slept sound,  
Until the day began to daw;  
And kindly to him she did say,  
—“It is time, true love, you were awa'.”—
14. But he lay still, and slept sound,  
Albeit the sun began to sheen;  
She looked atween her and the wa',  
And dull and drowsie were his een.
15. Then in and came her father dear,  
Said—“Let a' your mourning be:  
I'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,  
And I'll come back and comfort thee.”—
16. —“Comfort weel your seven sons;  
For comforted will I never be:  
I ween 'twas neither knave nor lown  
Was in the bower last night wi' me.”—
17. The clinking bell gaed thro' the town,  
To carry the dead corse to the clay;  
And Clerk Saunders stood at May Margaret's window,  
I wot, an hour before the day.
18. —“Are ye sleeping, Margaret?” he says,  
“Or are ye waking presentlie?  
Gie me my faith and troth again,  
I wot, true love, I gied to thee.”—

19. —“Your faith and troth ye sall never get,  
Nor our true love sall never twin,  
Until ye come within my bower,  
And kiss me cheik and chin.”—
20. —“My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,  
It has the smell, now, of the ground;  
And, if I kiss thy comely mouth,  
Thy days of life will not be lang.
21. “O cocks are crowing a merry mid night,  
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;  
Give me my faith and troth again,  
And let me fare me on my way.”—
22. —“Thy faith and troth thou sall na get,  
And our true love sall never twin,  
Untill ye tell what comes of women,  
I wot, who die in strong traivelling?”—
23. —“Their beds are made in the heavens high,  
Down at the foot of our good Lord’s knee,  
Weel set about wi’ gillyflowers:  
I wot sweet company for to see.
24. “O cocks are crowing a merry mid night,  
I wot the wild fowl are boding day;  
The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,  
And I ere now will be missed away.”—
25. Then she has ta’en a chrystal wand,  
And she has stroken her troth thereon;  
She has given it him out at the shot window,  
Wi’ mony a sad sigh, and heavy groan.
26. —“I thank ye, Marg’ret; I thank ye, Marg’ret;  
And aye I thank ye heartilie;  
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,  
Be sure, Marg’ret, I’ll come for thee.”
27. It’s hosen and shoon, and gown alone,  
She climbed the wall and followed him,  
Untill she came to the green forest;  
And there she lost the sight o’ him.

28. —“Is there ony room at your head, Saunders,  
Is there ony room at your feet?  
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,  
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep.”—
29. —“There’s nae room at my head, Marg’ret,  
There’s nae room at my feet;  
My bed it is full lowly now:  
Amang the hungry worms I sleep.
30. “Cauld mould is my covering now,  
But and my winding sheet;  
The dew it falls nae sooner down,  
Than my resting place is weet.”—

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