

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Laidley Worm

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Oh, when I was but seven years old my mother she did die
My father he married the worst woman that ever your eyes did see

My father he married the worst woman that ever your eyes did see
And she was a witch of the vilest kind and both a high lady

She turned me into a laidly worm to coil around a tree
And she turned my sister, sweet Mary, to a mackerel of the sea

It's seven bold knights I've slain here all of them 'neath this tree
And were you not my own father dear the eighth one you would have been

His father has sent for his own lady gay and all unto her did say
O what have you done to my own young son and his sister burd Mary

Your son is gone all to the king's court earning his meat and fee
Your daughter has gone to the queen's high court a fine lady to be
You lie, you lie, you vile woman, so loud I hear you lie
You've turned my son to a laidly worm to coil around a tree

And you've turned my daughter sweet Mary to a mackerel of the sea
So this lady has taken a wee hazel wand and she's stroked it three times three

And there has stood up the bravest young knight that ever your eyes did see
And then she has taken a small silver horn and loud and shrill blew she

And all the fish came up unto her but the proud mackerel of the sea
Saying you changed me once to an unseemly shape and you never more will
change me

He's sent to the wood for vines and hawthorne to build the bonfire high
And there he's tied his own lady gay and there he did her burn

Child #36

AJS