

## **7 Noble Sisters**

“Now did you mark a falcon,  
Sister dear, sister dear,  
Flying toward my window  
In the morning cool and clear?  
With jingling bells about her neck, 5  
But what beneath her wing?  
It may have been a ribbon,  
Or it may have been a ring.”—  
“I marked a falcon swooping  
At the break of day; 10  
And for your love, my sister dove,  
I 'frayed the thief away.”—

“Or did you spy a ruddy hound,  
Sister fair and tall,  
Went snuffing round my garden bound, 15  
Or crouched by my bower wall?  
With a silken leash about his neck;  
But in his mouth may be  
A chain of gold and silver links,  
Or a letter writ to me.”— 20  
“I heard a hound, highborn sister,  
Stood baying at the moon:  
I rose and drove him from your wall  
Lest you should wake too soon.”—

“Or did you meet a pretty page 25  
Sat swinging on the gate;  
Sat whistling whistling like a bird,  
Or may be slept too late:  
With eaglets broidered on his cap,  
And eaglets on his glove? 30  
If you had turned his pockets out,  
You had found some pledge of love.’—

"I met him at this daybreak,  
Scarce the east was red:  
Lest the creaking gate should anger you, 35  
I packed him home to bed."—

"Oh patience, sister. Did you see  
A young man tall and strong,  
Swift-footed to uphold the right  
And to uproot the wrong, 40  
Come home across the desolate sea  
To woo me for his wife?  
And in his heart my heart is locked,  
And in his life my life."—

"I met a nameless man, sister, 45  
Hard by your chamber door:  
I said: Her husband loves her much.  
And yet she loves him more."—

"Fie, sister, fie, a wicked lie,  
A lie, a wicked lie, 50  
I have none other love but him,  
Nor will have till I die.  
And you have turned him from our door,  
And stabbed him with a lie:  
I will go seek him thro' the world 55  
In sorrow till I die."—

"Go seek in sorrow, sister,  
And find in sorrow too:  
If thus you shame our father's name  
My curse go forth with you." 60

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