

THE PRICKLE HOLLY BUSH (traditional UK)

I always wonder what happened before and after the action described in this classic ballad.

Hangman, stand here awhile
For I seem to see my dear old father
He's a coming over yonder stile.

Father hast thou got any gold?
Any silver to set me free;
For to keep my body from the cold clay ground,
And my neck from the high gallows tree?

Oh no, I've got no gold.
No silver to set thee free.
For to keep thy body from the cold clay ground,
And thy neck from the high gallows tree.

Oh the prickle holly bush.
It pricks my heart quite sore
And if ever I get out of the prickle holly bush
I'll never get in it any more.

(similarly for mother, brother, and sister)

Hangman, stand here awhile
For I seem to see my dear old lover
He's a coming over yonder stile.

Lover hast thou got any gold?
Any silver to set me free;
For to keep my body from the cold clay ground
And my neck from the high gallows tree?

Oh yes, I have got gold
And silver to set thee free
For to keep thy body from the cold clay ground
And thy neck from the high gallows tree.

Oh the prickle holly bush
It pricked my heart quite sore
And now that I'm out of the prickle holly bush
I'll never get in it anymore.

I

*This is a version of "The Maid Freed from the Gallows" (Child ballad #95) from the singing of Fred Hewett from Mapledurwell, Hampshire. I learned it from **The Voice of the People** collection of traditional singers on Topic Records.*

From Judy Cook's CD "Far From The Lowlands"

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