



# King Arthur had three sons

Rutland Boughton  
(1878-1960)

### **King Arthur had three sons**

This folk song appears in *English County Songs* (1893), a collection by Lucy Broadwood. She notes the source as from Lancashire. In *One Hundred English Songs* (1914) the song is listed as “a traditional Lancashire song.”

King Arthur had three sons—  
That he had;  
He had three sons of yore,  
And he kicked 'em out o' door  
Because they could not sing—  
That he did;  
He had three sons of yore,  
And he kicked 'em out o' door  
Because they could not sing.

The first, he was a miller—  
That he was;  
The second, he was a weaver—  
That he was;  
And the third, he was a little tailor boy,  
And he was mighty clever—  
That he was.

The miller stole some grist for his mill,  
And the weaver stole some loom,  
And the little tailor boy,  
He stole some corduroy  
To keep those three rogues warm—  
That he did;  
And the little tailor boy,  
He stole some corduroy  
To keep those three rogues warm.

Oh the miller, he was drowned in his dam,  
And the weaver, he was killed at his loom,  
And old Nick, he cut his stick with the little tailor boy  
With the broad-cloth under his arm—  
That he did!

[note: Old Nick is a folk term for the Devil]

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Rutland Boughton

**Tempo giusto** (♩ = c. 120)  
*Scherzando ma pesante*

S King Ar - thur had three sons, King Ar - thur had three sons, He

A King Ar - thur had three sons, King Ar - thur had three sons

T King Ar - thur had three sons, King Ar - thur had three

B That he had; That he had; He

5

S had three sons of yore And he kicked'em out o' door Be - cause they could not

A And he kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause they could - n't

T sons And he kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause they could not

B had three sons of yore And he kicked 'em out o' door

## King Arthur had three sons

8

S sing- Be - cause \_\_\_\_\_ they could - n't sing- Be -

A sing- Be - cause they could - n't sing- That he did;

T sing- Be - cause they could not sing- That he did;

B That he did; That he did;

11

S cause they could not sing- That he did He had three sons of yore And he

A Be - cause they could - n't sing- That he did; He had three sons of

T Be - cause \_\_\_\_\_ they could - n't sing- That he did; He had three sons of yore And he

B That he did; He had three sons of yore And he

*tenori marcato*

14

S kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause \_\_\_\_\_ they could not sing-

A yore And he kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause they could - n't sing-

T kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause they could not sing-

B kicked 'em out o' door Be - cause they could not sing- That he did;

# King Arthur had three sons

17

S That he was, the sec - ond, he was a

A The first, he was a mil - ler- a mil - ler- That he

T That he was; That he was; That he was; That he

B That he was; That he was; That he was; That he

21

S wea - ver- That he was, that he was, And the third, he was a

A was; That he was; That he was; That he was; And the third, he was a lit - tle

T was; That he was, A wea - ver, That he was; That he was; And

B was; That he was; And the third, he was a lit - tle tai - lor boy,

24

S lit - tle tai - lor boy, And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was

A tai - lor boy, And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er-

T he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was; And he was migh - ty clev - er-

B And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was; And he was

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27 *sostenuto e cresc.* *f* *mf*

S migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- And the

A And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er-

T 8 And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

B migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

30 *f*

S third, he was a lit - tle tai - lor boy And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

A And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

T 8 And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

B And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- And he was migh - ty clev - er- That he was;

34 *Secretly* *sempre pp*

S And the

A *sempre pp* Now the mil - ler stole some grist for his mill,

T *sempre pp* The mil - ler stole some grist for his mill,

B *sempre pp* The mil - ler stole some grist for his mill, That he

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S wea - ver stole some wool for his loom, — And the lit - tle tai - lor

A And the wea - ver stole some wool for his loom, And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, — He

T And the wea - ver stole some wool for his loom, And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, — He

B *pp* did; That he did; That he did; And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, He

40

S boy, He stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three rogues

A stole some cor - du - roy — To keep those three rogues warm- That he did; — That he

T stole some cor - du - roy — To keep those three rogues warm- — That he

B stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three — rogues

43

S warm- to keep those three rogues warm-

A *f* did; — That he did; *pp* To keep those three — rogues warm- — To keep — those

T *f* did; — That he did; *pp* To keep those three — rogues warm-

B warm- — That he did;

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S *f* > > > That he did; And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, He

A three rogues warm— And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, He *subito f*

T To keep those three rogues warm— And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, He *subito f*

B *pp* To keep those three rogues warm— And the lit - tle tai - lor boy, He *subito f*

49

S stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three rogues warm—

A stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three rogues warm—

T stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three rogues warm—

B stole some cor - du - roy To keep those three rogues warm— That he did;

**Poco Adagio**  
*p doloroso*

S Oh, the mil - ler, he was drowned in his dam And the wea - ver, he was killed in his *dim.*

A Oh, The mil - ler and the weav - er were *dim.*

T Oh, the mil - ler, he was drowned, And the wae - ver, he was killed at his

B Oh, the mil - ler was drowned, That he was; And the wea - ver was



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55 *accel. sempre poco a poco*

S loom And old Nick, he cut his stick with the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

A killed And old Nick, he cut his stick with the tai - lor boy

T loom, And old Nick, he cut his stick with the tai - lor boy

B killed, That he was; And old Nick, he cut his stick with the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

58

S broad - cloth un - der his arm- with the broad - cloth un - der his

A With the broad - cloth un - der his arm- With the broad - cloth un - der his

T With the broad-cloth un - der his arm- That he did; With the broad - cloth un - der his

B broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did; With the broad - cloth un - der his

61 *poco rit.* **Presto**

S arm- with the broad - cloth un - der his arm- And old

A arm- that he did; With the broad - cloth un - der his arm- And old

T arm- That he did; With the broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did; And old

B arm- That he did; With the broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did; And old

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S Nick, he cut his stick with the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

A Nick, he cut his stick with the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

T Nick, he cut his stick With the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

B Nick, he cut his stick with the lit - tle tai - lor boy With the

66

S broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did!

A broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did!

T broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did!

B broad - cloth un - der his arm- That he did!

**Rutland Boughton** (1878-1960) was the son of a grocer of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. He showed exceptional talent at an early age and studied briefly at the Royal College of Music. Finances caused him to abandon the RCM after only one year. Although he was substantially self-taught, he had opportunity to study with Charles Villiers Stanford and Walford Davies. He was good friends with Gustav Holst, Granville Bantock, Edward Elgar, Thomas Beecham and George Bernard Shaw. Boughton's output included three symphonies, several concertos, part-songs, songs, and chamber music but he is primarily known as a composer of opera and the principal English advocate of the theories of music drama expounded by Richard Wagner. Boughton set out to create a new form of opera he called "choral drama". He was enamored with Arthurian legends and created an "Arthurian Cycle" of operas. He had planned a fourteen-day cycle of dramas on the life of Christ in which the story would be enacted on a small stage in the middle of an orchestra while soloists and the chorus would comment on the action. However, it never developed. His *Bethlehem* (1915) is based on the Coventry Nativity Play and notable for its choral arrangements of traditional Christmas carols. That work became very popular with choral societies worldwide. Arthurian legends, narrative folk-tales and other stories were often the basis for his part-songs, some titled "Choral Variations". As a result, some of them are a little longer than the norm for the genre.

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David Anderson  
SHORCHOR Music  
1706 NE 177th St.  
Shoreline, WA 98155 USA

