

The Pheasant Plucking Song

(a.k.a. "The Pheasant Plucker's Son", "The Pheasant Plucker's Wife"
& "The Pheasant Plucker")

Words & Music:
Undetermined (see notes)

I have seen many people credited with this song, but cannot determine the original songwriter(s). It is said to originate with an Old English rhyme or the tongue-twister: "I am a Pheasant Plucker & a Pheasant Plucker's son. And I'll be plucking pheasants 'til the Pheasant Plucker's come!!" or "I'm not a Pheasant Plucker, I'm a Pheasant Plucker's son. And I'm only plucking pheasants 'til the Pheasant Plucker comes!!" or "I'm not the Pheasant Plucker, I'm the Pheasant Plucker's son. And I'm sitting plucking pheasants 'til the Pheasant Plucker comes."

"Pheasant Plucker" would have been an actual trade, probably on a large estate (like Balmoral is today), in the days before refrigeration when the birds needed to feed a large household would have been bagged and prepared that same day.

This has been covered in a variety of styles by The Irish Rovers, Seamus Moore & The Wurzels, among others. There are versions for women, people who want to be Pheasant Plucker's sons and people who do not wish to be so. Here are several variations on the theme. Enjoy!

1. "The Pheasant Plucker":

F C7
Me father said he'd learn to me his trade when I were grown.
C7 F
And sure enough before the bird in our back yard had flown.
F F7 Bb
One day when I was thinking watching birds was very pleasant,
C7 F
Me father said, "Your time has come, go and pluck that pheasant!"

CHORUS:

F C7
I'm not a pheasant plucker, I'm a pheasant plucker's son.
C7 F
And I'll go plucking pheasants 'til the pheasant plucking's done.
F F7 Bb
It is a very pleasant trade from morn 'til set of sun.
C7 F
So, come and pluck some pheasants, for pheasant plucking's fun!

I turned me hand right willingly, the trade I soon did know.
I plucked 'em here, I plucked 'em there, me fame it soon did grow.
But still me father's hand were best, I could not him outdo.
Where there's one pheasant plucker, there isn't room for two.

CHORUS:

One day I met a fair maid and to her I said with glee,
"Where are you going, my young lass?" "A-milking, sir," said she.
"I'll show you a more pleasant task, 'twill be a lot of fun!"
"Are you a pheasant plucker?" "No, a pheasant plucker's son!"

CHORUS:

One evening, I was drinking ale down at the local inn.
Got talking to a posh young man with tonic in his gin.
He said his father owned a yacht, so not to be outdone,
I said, "My dad's the better man - I'm a pheasant plucker's son!"

CHORUS:

Me father was the king of all the pheasant plucking clan.
Of all the pheasant pluckers, he was far the bravest man.
He plucked 'em on the table and he plucked 'em on the run.
And none so proud as me to be a pheasant plucker's son.

CHORUS:

But, now, me father's met his fate and in the ground lies he.
And I've a wife and son and I'm as happy as can be.
I've taught me son me father's trade, we both have lots of fun.
And now it is his turn to say "I'm a pheasant plucker's son!"

CHORUS:

But one night when the moon was full I heard a mournful sound.
Me father's ghost returned to haunt his pheasant plucking ground.
Bell, book and candle would not do, peace would not to him come,
Until I sang the old song, "I'm a Pheasant Plucker's Son!"

CHORUS: [2x]

2. "The Pheasant Plucking Song":

Me husband is a keeper, he's a very busy man,
I try to understand him and I help him all I can,
But sometimes of an evening I feel a trifle dim,
All alone and plucking pheasants when I'd rather pluck with him.

I'm not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's mate
And I'm only plucking pheasants 'cause the pheasant plucker's late.

I'm not good at plucking pheasants, pheasant plucking I get stuck,
Though some peasants find it pleasant I'd much rather pluck a duck,
Oh, but plucking geese is gorgeous, I can pluck a goose with ease
But plucking pheasants is sheer torture, for they haven't any grease.

I'm not the pheasant plucker, he has gone out on the tiles,
He only plucked one pheasant and I'm sitting here with piles.

You have to pluck them fresh, if they're fresh it's not unpleasant,
I knew a man in Dunstable, could pluck a frozen pheasant.
They say the village constable has pheasant plucking sessions
With the vicar of a Sunday 'twixt the first and second lessons.

I'm not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's son,
And I'm only plucking pheasants 'til the pheasant plucker's come.

My good friend Godfrey's most adept, he's really got the knack,
He likes to have a pheasant plucked before he hits the sack.
I try and lend a helping hand, I gather up the feathers,
It's really all this pheasant plucking keeps us here together.

I'm not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's friend,
And I'm only plucking pheasants as a means unto an end.

Me husband's in the woods all day, a-banging with his gun,
If he could hear me heartfelt cries, then surely he would run,
For I've fluff in all me crannies and there's feathers up me nose,
And I'm itchin' in the kitchin' from me head down to me toes.

I'm not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's wife,
And when we pluck together, it's a pheasant plucking life!

3. Michael Trapani's "Build Your Chops" version - "The Pheasant Plucker's Song"

Michael recommends playing this with the following chord changes in as many styles as you can think of. It keeps the song fresh and your chops pretty sharp. Also, try it in different tempos, especially for your tongue!

2/4 time

||:G | C | D7 | G | | G | Em | C | D7 | G | Em | Am7 | G :||

CHORUS:

I'm not the pheasant plucker, I'm the pheasant plucker's son.
I'm only plucking pheasants 'till the pheasant plucker comes.
So, if you've got a pheasant that needs plucking, I'm your man.
'Cause I'm the second-fastest pheasant plucker in the land.

If you like plucking pheasants, pleasant plucking on your own.
But pluck 'em when they're younger, 'cuz it's harder when they're grown.
You can pluck 'em real easy, you can pluck 'em real hard.
Some pluckers find it pleasant plucking pheasants in their yard.

CHORUS:

Everybody in my family is a pheasant plucker, too.
If you like plucking pheasants, we might have a place for you.
So keep on plucking pheasants, 'til you pluck as fast as me.
Then quit your plucking job and join our plucking family.

CHORUS: