

Magpie and the Lark

As sung by
Eryl Levers
07-26-1946 Madison, WI

In a snug little field in a neigh-ber-ing park
In a beau-tiful morn-ing in spring a
sly mag-piee ^{back forth} ~~jack~~ saw a peep lit-tle lark and he
thought ~~she~~ could teach him to sing. "Oh
no," said the lark, with a com-ic-~~cal~~ look as he
waddled in front with his tail, "I would
be so much trou-ble and far to much ~~work~~ ^{work} and I
know it would ~~miss~~ ^{miss} like-ly ~~fail~~. For He who
the op-po-site fit to be ^{dis} ~~is~~ ^{tick} ~~and~~ ^{rise}
who has checks on can ne-~~ver~~ ^{er} expect to be white

In a snug little field in a neighboring park
In a beautiful morning in spring
A sly magpie jack saw a pert little lark
And he thought he could teach him to sing.
“Oh no,” said the lark with a comical look
As he wobbled in front with his tail,
“ ‘Twould be so much trouble and far too much work
And I know it would most likely fail.
For he who would be the opposite
And who has checks on, can never expect to be white.”

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcription by Peters, p. 269

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

Eryl Levers. A pert little magpie inquires of a lark if he thought he could teach him to sing. Oh no, said the lark with a comical look as he warbled and wagged his tail. It would be too much trouble and sorrow for I know I most surely would fail. For he won't listen [thewart...?] of a teacher defies, and birds who chatter can never expect to be wise.

Editor's notes:

Peters notes that this is often sung as a round.

Sources:

Peters, Harry B., ed. *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin: An Illustrated Compendium of Words and Music*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977.

K.G.