

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Dreadful Ghost

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Its of a sailor of whom I write.
Unto the seas he took great delight.
Two maidens fair he did beguile,
And those two maidens he had with child.

Oh, one of them for public shame
Unto some handsome grove she came,
And there at length for to end all strife,
She cut it there, the thread of life.

She hung herself down from a tree,
Where two men a-hunting, did her see.
They got a knife and cut her down;
And on her bosom a note was found.

And this was writ in letters large:
"Don't bury me, I do you charge.
But on the ground there let me lie,
That maids may see me as they pass by."

"Let them take warning by my fate,
And quit this folly before its too late."
And while on land she plagued him so,
To the seas at length he was forced to go.

One morning on the topmast high,
A little boat he chanced to spy.
A little boat with a large crew of men
And a female ghost who stood up then.

Down decks, down decks this young man goes,
To greet the captain in his morning clothes.
He says: "Captain, captain stand my defense,
For I see a spirit coming hence."

So up on deck this captain goes,
And there he spies this dreadful ghost.
She says: "Captain, captain, tell me true;
Does such a man sail among your crew?"

"It was in St. Tallians this young man died,
And in Saint Tallians his body lies."

She says: "Captain, captain don't tell me so,
For he's sailing down in your ship below."

"And if you don't bring him up to me,
A mighty storm you soon shall see.
Which will cause both you and your gallant men to weep,
And leave you slumbering in the deep."

Down decks, down decks this captain goes,
And brings this young man up to his foes.
And when she fixed her grim eyes on him,
It made him tremble in every limb.

Oh don't you remember when I was a maid,
You caused my poor trembling heart to bleed.
Now I'm a sprit and I come for thou;
You balked me once, but I've got you now.

Down in her boat she forc-ed him.
Down in her boat he was forced for to go.
And as he did, we all did admire,
For the boat went down in a flame of fire.

And as she sank, she rose again;
And, aye, she sang this mournful strain:
"You sailors all, who runeth behind,
Never prove false to young womankind."

Recorded by John Roberts and Tony Barrant on Dark Ships in the
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