

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Lord Abore and Mary Flynn

Lord Abore and Mary Flynn
(Traditional)

Lord Abore and Mary Flynn were both children young
They were scarcely 14 years of age when love between them sprung
When love between them sprung

Now Lord Abore was going out one day and when his mother came to know
'You are going away, my son', she said, 'you will drink before you go
You will drink before you go'

She called for a cask of the very best wine and filled a glass for him
To her fause, her fause, with her two fingers she put strong poison in
She put strong poison in

'Oh why, oh why, dear mother', he said, 'have you poisoned me full sore'
'It is so, my son', she said to him, 'you'll see Mary Flynn no more
'You'll see Mary Flynn no more'

'Is there anyone in this household', he said, 'who will go on an errand for me
'Who will ride to Mary Flynn's high tower and fetch here to me
'And fetch her here to me?'

And then up spoke the young servant boy, 'I'm your faithful servant', said he,
'I will ride to Mary Flynn's high tower and fetch her here to thee
'And fetch her here to thee'

And when he came to Mary Flynn's tower, he stepped into the hall
The tables were laid and the music played and the ladies were dancing all
And the ladies were dancing all

'What brought you here, my pretty little boy, what brought you here to me?
'Has my grandmother set a place for you or yet invited thee,
'Or yet invited thee?'

'Your grandmother set no place for me, nor invited me', he said
And then she learned from the servant boy that Lord Abore was dead
That Lord Abore was dead

'Come saddle for me my swiftest steed, come saddle for me the bay
'That I may ride to my true love's side without the least delay
'Without the least delay'

And when she came to Lord Abore's tower, she stepped into the hall

The tables were laid and the sheets were spread and the torches burning all
And the torches burning all

What brought you here, Mary Flynn', she says, 'what brought you here to me?'
'Oh the ring that['s] on his little finger, I came to crave of thee
'I came to crave of thee'

'No ring, no ring, Mary Flynn', she says, 'no ring have I for thee
'For the pain of death it came so quick, it split the ring in three
'It split the ring in three'

She laid her cheek down by his cheek, her side down by his side
She laid her cheek down by his cheek and then Mary Flynn she died
And Mary Flynn she died

Source: Al O'Donnell 'Al O'Donnell 2' The Leader Tradition LTRA 501. Tom Munnelly collated this text from recordings of Jim Kelly and Frank Feeney and passed it on to Al O'Donnell.

This is a lovely Irish version of Child ballad 87 'Prince Robert', a Scots version of which is to be found in the DT. Tom Munnelly noted: 'This splendid ballad of a mother who poisons her son to prevent his marriage Professor Child included in his monumental collection as No 87 'Prince Robert'. The four versions he publishes are all of Scots origin, but unfortunately the tune was never noted by the collectors. As all these texts were early 19th century, the ballad was thought to be traditionally extinct. This being the case, you can imagine how thunderstruck I was when I heard it being sung in a Dublin pub in 1969! The singer was Jim Kelly who learned it from Frank Feeney who in turn had it from his late wife, a Carlow woman'. (Tom Munnelly notes to LTRA 501)
If you compare Stewie's Lord Abore and Mary Flynn above with "Prince Robert" from the Digital Tradition (DT) you cannot easily spot the similarities. The similarities are weaker in other verses, but Child 87, version C, is the precursor of the ballad above. And if you listen closely in your mind to someone singing the words 'Lord Robert' with the stress on the last syllable of the name (as the tune I know demands), you can hear how 'Abore' is but a mondegreen of 'Robert'.

Child #87

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