

Traditional & Folk Songs with lyrics & midi music

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Silk Merchant's Daughter

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There was a rich merchant in London did right,
Had one only daughter, her beauty shined bright;
She loved a porter, and to prevent the day
Of marriage they sent this poor young man away.

Oh now he is gone for to serve his king,
It grieves the lady to think of the thing.
She dressed herself up in rich merchant's shape;
She wandered away her true love for to seek.

As she was a-travelling one day, almost night,
A couple of Indians appeared in her sight;
And as they drew nigh her, oh this they did say:
'Now we are resolved to take your life away.'

She had nothing by her but a sword to defend
These barbarous Indians murder intend,
But in the contest one of them she did kill,
Which caused the other for to leave the hill.

And as she was a-sailing over the tide
She spied a city down by the seaside.
She saw her dear porter a-walking the street;
She made it her business her true love to meet.

'How do you do, sir. Where do you belong?
I'm a-hunting a diamond, and I must be gone.'
He says: 'I'm no sailor, but if you want a man
For [your] passage over I'll do all I can.'

Then straightway they both went on board.
Says the captain to the young man:
'What did you do with your sword?'
On account of long travel on him she did gaze:
'Once by my sword my sweet life did save.'

Then straightway to London their ship it did steer;
Sueh utter destruction to us did appear.
It was out on the main sea, to our discontent,
Our ship sprung a leak, and to the bottom she went.

There was four-and-twenty of us contained in one boat;
Our provision gave out and our allowance grew short.
Our provisions gave out, and death drawing nigh,
Says the captain: 'Let's cast lots for to see who shall die.'

Then down on a paper each man's name was wrote;
Each man ran his venture, each man had his note.
Amongst the whole ship's crew this maid's was the least;
It was her lot to die for to feed all the rest.

'Now', says the captain, 'let's cast lots and see
Amongst the ship's crew who the butcher will be.'
It's the hardest of fortune you ever did hear,
This maid to be killed by the young man, her dear.

He called for a basin for to catch the blood
While this fair lady a-trembling stood,
Saying: 'Lord, have mercy on me, how my poor heart do bleed
To think I must die, hungry men for to feed.'

Then he called for a knife his business to do.
She says: 'Hold your hand for one minute or two.
A silk merchant's daughter in London I be;
Pray see what I've come to by loving of thee.'

Then she showed a ring betwixt them was broke.
Knowing the ring, with a sigh he spoke;
'For the thoughts of your dying my poor heart will burst;
For the hopes of your long life, love, I will die first.'

Says the captain: 'If you love her, you'll make amend;
But the fewest of number will die for a friend.
So quicken the business, and let it be done';
But while they were speaking they all heard a gun.

Says the captain: 'You may now all hold your hand.
We all hear a gun, we are near ship or land.'
In about half an hour to us did appear
A ship bound for London, which did our hearts cheer.

It carried us safe over and us safe conveyed;
And then they got married, this young man and maid.

Note: something for everyone. RG
from Oxford Book of Sea Songs, Palmer
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