

BARBARA ALLEN

3/4

Traditional

*Although this song is written in broad Scots, the lyrics tell us Sir John is English. When this song travelled to America it became **Barb'ry Allen** and the opening line was **In London Town** or **In Scarlet Town**. In some versions the rose grows from Sir John's heart and the briar grows from Barbara's back. It can be found in Appalachian collections, and is often heard in period films.*

C

'Twas in and about the Martinmas time

G7

When green leaves were a-fallin'

F

C

That Sir John Graeme of the West Country

G7 C

Fell in love with Barbara Allen.

C

He sent his man down thro' the town

G7

To where she was a-dwellin'

F

C

"Oh, haste and come to my master, dear

G7 C

Gin ye be Barbara Allen."

C

Then hooly, hooly raise she up

G7

And slowly she drew nigh him

F

C

And when she drew the curtain by

G7 C

"Young man, I think ye're dyin' "

C

"Oh, it's I'm sick, and very sick

G7

And 'tis all for Barbara Allen"

F

C

"O the better for me, ye'd never be

G7 C

Tho' ye're hearts-blood were a-spillin' "

C
"Oh, dinna ye mind," young man said she
G7
"When ye were in the tavern a-drinkin'
F C
And ye made the haelths gae 'round and 'round
G7 C
And slighted Barbara Allen"

C
"Tis well I ken yonder night
G7
When wine it was a-spillin'
F C
I gave a haelth to all young maids
G7 C
-- And my heart to Barbara Allen"

C
He turned his face unto the wall
G7
And death was with him dealing
F C
"Adieu, adieu my dear friends all
G7 C
And be kind to Barbara Allen"

C
He turned his face unto the wall
G7
For death he was a-willin'
F C
He turned his face unto the wall
G7 C
And his back to Barbara Allen

C
Then hooly, hooly raise she up
G7
And slowly, slowly left him
F C
And sighing said she couldna' stay
G7 C
Since death of life had reft him

C

As she walked down the road to home

G7

She heard the bells a-knelling

F

C

And every gow that death-bell gi'ed

G7

C

Cried woe to Barbara Allen

C

She hadna'e gone a mile but twa

G7

When she heard the bells a-knelling

F

C

And every gow did seem to say

G7

C

"Hard-hearted Barbara Allen"

C

"Oh mother, mother make my bed

G7

Make it saft and narrow

F

C

Sir John died for me to-day

G7

C

I'll die for him to-morrow"

C

Sir John died an' it might be to-day

G7

Barbara died on the 'morrow

F

C

Sir John died of pure, pure love

G7

C

Barbara died of sorrow

C

They buried her by the auld church tower

G7

Sir John was there beside her

F

C

And from his heart there grew a rose

G7

C

From Barbara's heart, a briar

C

They grew to top the auld church tower

G7

They couldna' grow no higher

F

C

And there they twined in a true lover's knot

G7

C

The rose grew 'round the briar

Broad Scots

an' - if

auld - old

dinna - don't

dinna ye mind - don't you remember

gae - go

gi'ed - gived, gave

gin - if (the g is hard as in good or get)

gow - strike of the bell

haelth - toast (to your health)

hooly - slowly

ken - know

knell - ring

Martinmas - St Martin's Day on November 11

reft - bereft or robbed

saft - long

West Country - roughly corresponds to today's South West England. It encompasses: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Bristol, and may include Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

FYI -the North Country is south of the Scottish border down to the River Trent

winna' - will not

woe - sorrow

ye're - ye (you) are