

The Cruel Ship's Carpenter

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: 1. In fair Worcester city and in Worcester - shire, A handsome young dam - sel and she live - ed there, A handsome young man he cour-ted her for to be his dear, And he was by trade a ship's car - pen - - ter.

2. Early one morning by the dawn of the day
Straight away to his Polly's bedroom he had strayed.
Saying "Polly, dear Polly, you must go with me,
And before we get married, our friends for to see."
3. He led her through woods and through valleys so deep.
It caused pretty Polly to cry and to weep.
"Dear Willie, dear Willie, you have led me astray,
On purpose my innocent life take away."
4. "It's true, dearest Polly, it's true all what you say.
I've been all this long night a-digging your grave."
The grave being open and the spade standing by,
It caused pretty Polly to weep and to cry.
5. "Pardon, oh Willie, my baby and me.
I will travel old England to set you quite free,
I'll travel old England for set you quite free
If you will but now pardon my baby and me."
6. "Pardon" says Willie, "I have no time to spare."
And out from his pocket a long knife he drew.
He pierced her body 'til the blood it did flow
And into the grave her fair body he throw.
7. He covered her up, it was safe and so sound
He were thinking the murderer had never been found.
'Til he stepped on board of ship for to sail the world round
He were thinking the murderer had never been found.
8. Early one morning by the dawn of the day
Our captain he cried "Order. All hands come this way.
There's a murderer on board of ship, and it's lately been done
For our ship she's a-mourning and she cannot sail on."

9. Up stepped a young lad saying, " 'deed it's not I."
And up steps another, "The same here" says he.
Up stepped young Willie for to stomp and to swear,
"Indeed it's not I, sir, I vow and declare."

10. But as he was turning by the captain in speed
He met pretty Polly, caused his heart to bleed.
For she ripped him, she stripped him, and she tore him in three
Because that he murdered both baby and she.

Source: Mrs Elizabeth Smithers (61) at Tewkesbury. Collected by Cecil J. Sharp on 9 January 1908.

Notes: First verse only collected with this tune. The remaining verses have been supplied from another Gloucestershire version.

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