

Ship's Carpenter's Mate (The Cruel Ship's Carpenter)

[In fair Wor - cester ci - - ty in fair Worcest - er - - shire, a
hand - some young dam - - sel and she _____ lives there. Long
time I had cour - ted her to be _____ my dear and I
lived by the trade _____ of a _____ ship's car - - pen - - ter.]

Now our Captain wanted seamen to sail on the sea
Which was the first parting of Willy and me
"Oh Billy, oh Billy don't you go to sea
Remember the vows you have made unto me."

Oh he drunk and he drunk, 'til he drunk all his store
"Dear Father, dear Father, I can't drink no more."
"Lovely Betsy, lovely Betsy, won't you come along with me
To purpose our enemy, our friends they for to see."

And he lead her through woods and valleys too,
Until this poor damsel she started to weep
[She said "Dearest Willy, you have led me astray
Just on purpose my innocent life to take away."]

["Oh Polly, dear Polly, it's true what you say
For all of this long night I've been digging your grave."
There's your grave lying open, and the spade standing near
[Which made Pretty Polly to weep and to cry]

["Oh Pardon, oh pardon, oh pardon my life
And I will not covet you to be your wife"
I'll travel all England for to set you quite free
If it's you will it's pardon the baby and me."

["No pardon, dear Polly, it's true what you say."
Then out of his pocket a long knife he drew.
He pierced her poor body, till the blood it did flow
And into the grave her poor body he threw.]

He covered her over, so safe and so sure
And just to make sure, he went straightaway
[And he stepped on board a ship for to sail the world round]
For to 'list for some soldier, some ship carpenter's mate.

[It was early one morning by the dawn of the day
Our captain cried 'Order, all hands come this way.]
"There is murder, there is murder, so lately been done
And our ship lays in mourning and cannot sail on."

For it's jumped up one of them, "Indeed sir, not me,"
Up jumped another, "Indeed sir, not me,"
Up jumped Sweet William with these words so unkind,
"Your honour, dear Captain, indeed sir, not me."

Now when he was a-leaving his captain in full speed
He met his lovely Betsy, it made his heart bleed
She ripped him, she tore him, and she laid him all three
Because he had murdered both baby and she.

Source: Sung by Wiggy Smith, Cheltenham. Recorded by Gwilym Davies
and Paul Burgess 1998.

Notes: Wiggy's version has been supplemented with words in brackets from other
Gloucestershire gypsy versions.

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