



# Lord Randal

## Anonymous

Lord Randal (13th–15th centuries)

*The poem you are going to read is a traditional ballad, a folk narrative poem which was very popular in the late Middle Ages and was originally adapted for singing and dancing. The text, which was taken from a small manuscript volume written in or about 1710 and published in the anthology The English and Scottish Popular Ballads by Frances James Child in 1882, is given in the original version.*

O where ha<sup>1</sup> you been, Lord Randal my son?  
And where ha' you been, my handsome young man?  
I ha' been at the greenwood<sup>2</sup>; mother, mak<sup>3</sup> my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied wi<sup>4</sup> hunting and fain wad<sup>5</sup> lie down.

5 An' wha<sup>6</sup> met ye<sup>7</sup> there, Lord Randal my son?  
An' wha met you there; my handsome young man?  
O I met wi my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied wi' huntin'<sup>8</sup> an' fain wad lie down.

10 And what did she give you, Lord Randal my son?  
And what did she give you, my handsome young man?  
Eels fried<sup>9</sup> in a pan; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied wi' huntin' and fain wad lie down.

15 And wha gat your leavins<sup>10</sup>, Lord Randal my son?  
And wha gat your leavins, my handsome young man  
My hawks and my hounds; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied wi' huntin' and fain wad lie down.

20 And what becam<sup>11</sup> of them, Lord Randal my son?  
And what becam of them, my handsome young man?  
They stretched their legs out an' died; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm wearied wi' huntin' and fain wad lie down.

O I fear you are poisoned, Lord Randal my son,  
I fear you are poisoned, my handsome young man.  
Oyes, I am poisoned; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down.

25 What d'ye<sup>12</sup> leave to your mother, Lord Randal my son?  
What d'ye leave to your mother, my handsome young man?  
Four and twenty milk kye<sup>13</sup>; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and fain wad lie down.

- 1 **ha.** Have.
- 2 **greenwood.** Bosco.
- 3 **mak.** Make.
- 4 **wi.** With.
- 5 **fain wad.** Gradirei (wad = would).
- 6 **An' wha.** And who.
- 7 **ye.** You.
- 8 **huntin'.** Hunting.
- 9 **Eels fried.** Anguille fritte.
- 10 **wha gat your leavins.**  
*Who got your leavings.*  
*Chi ebbe gli avanzzi del pasto.*
- 11 **becam.** Became.
- 12 **d'ye.** Do you.
- 13 **kye.** Cows.



## 4 Text Bank

What d'ye leave to your sister, Lord Randal my son?  
30 What d'ye leave to your sister, my handsome young man?  
My gold and my silver; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart an' I fain wad lie down.

What d'ye leave to your brother, Lord Randal my son?  
What d'ye leave to your brother, my handsome young man?  
35 My houses and my lands; mother, mak my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down.

What d'ye leave to your true-love, Lord Randal my son?  
What d'ye leave to your true-love, my handsome young man?  
I leave her hell and fire; mother, mak my bed soon,  
40 For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down.

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### COMPREHENSION

**1 ANSWER the following questions.**

- 1 Who is speaking?
- 2 Can you say when and where the story is set?
- 3 Where has Lord Randal been? Why?
- 4 How did he go there?
- 5 Who did he meet?
- 6 What was he given?
- 7 What did he take with him?
- 8 What happened to him?
- 9 What did his mother ask him at the end?
- 10 Why do you think Lord Randal's true-love acted like that? Who do you think she really is?

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### ANALYSIS

**2 FOCUS on the organisation of the poem on the page, that is to say, on its layout.**

- 1 How many stanzas are there?
- 2 How many lines are there in each stanza?

**3 WRITE down the rhyme scheme using the letters of the alphabet. Is it regular?**

**4 POINT OUT all the repeated words. Are there many? Consider the effect of rhyme and repetition. Tick as appropriate and justify your choice.**

- They help the listener to memorise.
- They create a musical effect.
- They link words and lines.
- They emphasise important details.

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### YOUR TURN

**5 COMPLETE the beginning of the story you have just read using your own words: *Lord Randal has been hunting in the wood and he has met...***