



# The ballad of Lord Randall

Lord Randall is an Anglo-Scottish ballad built in the form of a dialogue.

The different versions follow the same general lines: the main character is poisoned, usually by his sweetheart.

This is revealed through a conversation between Lord Randall and his mother.

Variants of this ballad are found all over Europe.

"O where hae<sup>1</sup> you been, Lord Randal my son?  
O where hae you been, my handsome young man?"  
"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi'<sup>2</sup> hunting, and fain<sup>3</sup> wald<sup>4</sup> lie down."

"Where got ye your dinner, Lord Randal my son?  
Where got ye your dinner, my handsome young man?"  
"I dined wi' my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What got ye to your dinner, Lord Randal my son?  
What got ye to your dinner, my handsome young man?"  
"I got eels boiled in broo;<sup>5</sup> mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord Randal my son?  
What became of your bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"  
"O they swelled and they died; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down."

"O I fear ye<sup>6</sup> are poisoned, Lord Randal my son!  
O I fear ye are poisoned, my handsome young man!"  
"O yes, I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down."

Lord Randall

## GLOSSARY

1 have - 2 with - 3 gladly - 4 would - 5 broth - 6 you

## ACTIVITIES

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 The ballad deals with a murder mystery. Who is the victim? Who is the killer? How is the victim killed?
- 2 What does Lord Randall tell his mother in the first stanza?
- 3 What did Lord Randall have for dinner?
- 4 What happened to Lord Randall's hounds?
- 5 Explain both the literal and metaphorical meanings of the phrase "I'm sick at the heart".

