

THE BALLAD

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

Rhyme - Most ballads use one of three different types of rhyme: abac, aabb, or abcb.

Rhythm - iambic heptameter (14 syllables per line) is a common rhythm.

Repetition - Repetition can be found in all ballads, in one form or another. The oldest type of repetition is the repetition of entire verses, with only slight changes made to each one.

Structure - Most of the ballads that have survived to the present day can be divided into verses of four lines.

Dialogue and dialect - Ballads often contain a dialogue (speaking between two characters) who use dialect (speech particular to their region of the world).

Language - Archaic words are often found in ballads.

Poem type - Ballads are narrative (tell a simple story) and centre around tales of love, loss and death.

“Lord Randall”

"O where ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?

And where ha you been, my handsome young man?"

"I ha been at the greenwood; mother, mak my bed soon,

For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down."

"An wha met ye there, Lord Randal, my son?

And wha met ye there, my handsome young man?"

"O I met wi my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,

For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fain wad lie down."

"And what did she give you, Lord Randal, My son?

And wha did she give you, my handsome young man?"

"Eels fried in a pan; mother, mak my bed soon,

For I'm wearied wi huntin, and fein wad lie down."

"And what gat your leavins, 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 fein wad lie down."

"And what becam of them, Lord Randal, my son?

And what becam of them, my handsome young man?

"They stretched their legs out and 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!"

"O yes, I am poisoned; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart, and fain wad lie down."

"What d'ye leave to your mother, Lord Randal, my son?

What d'ye leave to your mother, my handsome young man?"

"Four and twenty milk kye; mother, mak my bed soon,

For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."

"What d'ye leave to your sister, Lord Randal, my son?

What d'ye leave to your sister, my handsome young man?"

"My gold and my silver; mother mak 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?"

"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,

For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wad lie down."