# Lord Randall

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This article is about the ballad. It is not to be confused with [Stuart Randall, Baron Randall of St Budeaux](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuart_Randall,_Baron_Randall_of_St_Budeaux).

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| "Lord Randall" | |
| Lord Randal.jpg  Illustration by [Arthur Rackham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Rackham) in *Some British Ballads*, ca. 1919 | |
| [Song](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Song) | |
| Written | 17th century (earliest known) |
| [Genre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_genre) | [Border ballad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border_ballad), [folk song](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_music) |
| [Songwriter(s)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songwriter) | Unknown |

"**Lord Randall**", or "**Lord Randal**", ([Roud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roud_Folk_Song_Index) [10](http://library.efdss.org/cgi-bin/query.cgi?cross=off&index_roud=on&query=10&field=20), [Child 12](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_ballad)) is an [Anglo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon)-[Scottish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) [border ballad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Border_ballad)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-1) consisting of dialogue between a young Lord and his mother.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-2) Similar ballads can be found across [Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe) in many languages, including [Danish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_language), [German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language), [Magyar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_language), [Irish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_language), [Swedish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedish_language), and [Wendish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorbian_languages).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-3) [[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-4) [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) variants are usually titled "[L'avvelenato](http://it.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=L%27Avvelenato)" ("The Poisoned Man") or "Il testamento dell'avvelenato" ("The Poisoned Man's Will"), the earliest known version being a 1629 setting by Camillo il Bianchino, in [Verona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verona).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-5)

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## Summary

Lord Randall returns home to his mother after visiting his lover. Through the mother's inquiry, it is gradually revealed that the Lord has been poisoned by his lover, who has fed him poisoned eels.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-:0-7) In some variants, Lord Randall dictates his [last will and testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_Will_and_Testament) after realizing he has been poisoned. His lover's motive for poisoning him is never discussed.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-:0-7)

## Cultural uses

In 1962, [Bob Dylan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Dylan) modeled his song "[A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Hard_Rain%27s_A-Gonna_Fall)" on "Lord Randall", introducing each verse with variants of the introductory lines to each verse of "Lord Randall". Dylan's ballad is often interpreted as a reaction to the [Cuban Missile Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuban_Missile_Crisis). Dylan himself disclaimed this as an oversimplification, and in reality, Dylan first publicly performed the song a month before the crisis.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-8)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randall#cite_note-9)

## See also

* [List of the Child Ballads](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_the_Child_Ballads)

## References



* *Border Ballads* By William Beattie, Compiled by William Beattie, Published by Penguin Books, 1952, p. 17

* [Francis James Child](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_James_Child), *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, ["Lord Randal"](http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/child/ch012.htm)
* Leonhardt, Luise (1968). "Spin Magazine article on Finding Folk Songs". Spin Magazine. **6** (4): 17.
* Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, v. 1, pp. 153–55, Dover Publications, New York 1965

* [Alessandro D'Ancona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alessandro_D%27Ancona), *La poesia popolare italiana* Livorno, 1878, cf. ["L'avvelenato"](http://it.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=L%27Avvelenato)
* Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, v. 1, p. 153, Dover Publications, New York 1965
* Hallissy, Margaret (1987). Venomous woman: fear of the female in literature. New York: Greenwood Press. p. 24. [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number) [0313259194](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/0313259194). [OCLC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OCLC) [15790392](https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/15790392).
* Mike Marqusee,*Wicked messenger: Bob Dylan and the 1960s*. Seven Stories Press, 2005, pp. 64ff

1. Robert Shelton,*No direction home: the life and music of Bob Dylan*. Da Capo Press, 2003, p. 152

## External links

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|  | [Wikisource](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikisource) has original text related to this article:  [**Child's Ballads/12**](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Child%27s_Ballads/12) |

* Digitised copy of [Lord Randal](http://digital.nls.uk/87742141) in James Johnson's [Scots Musical Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scots_Musical_Museum), printed between 1787 and 1803, from [National Library of Scotland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Library_of_Scotland). JPEG, PDF, XML versions.
* [Traditional English Lute Songs - Lord Randall](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UooMssjjci0)
* A painting of the poisoning of Jimmy Randall appears on Kentucky artist and ballad singer Daniel Dutton's web site: ["Ballads of the Barefoot Mind"](https://web.archive.org/web/20061127180923/http:/www.dandutton.com/ballad_events.html)
* Italian version ["L'avvelenato"](http://it.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=L%27Avvelenato)

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Oh where ha'e ye (*have you)* been, Lord Randall, my son!  
O dove sei stato, Lord Randall, figlio mio!  
And where ha'e ye been, my handsome young man!"  
E dove sei stato, mio bel giovane!  
"I ha'e been to the wild wood: mother, make my bed soon,  
Sono stato nella foresta selvaggia (verde): madre, fammi presto il letto,  
For I'm wearied wi' (*with)* hunting, and fain wald (*and happily would)* lie down."  
Perchè sono stato per la caccia e volentieri vorrei sdraiarmi

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

E cosa hai incontrato lì…  
An wha met you there, my handsome young man?"  
"I dined wi my true-love; mother, make my bed soon,

"*Ho cenato con il mio vero amore…"*  
Ho cenato con il mio vero amore

For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down."  
  
"And what did she give you, Lord Randall, my son?

"*E cosa ti ha dato…"*

And what did she give you, my handsome young man?"  
"Eels fried in a pan; mother, make my bed soon,  
"*Anguille fritte in padella…"*

For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down."  
  
"And wha gat your leavins (*got your leavings*), Lord Randall, my son?

"*E chi ha avuto i tuoi avanzi*…"  
And wha gat your leavins, my handsome young man?"  
"My hawks and my hounds; mother, make my bed soon,

"*I miei falchi e i mie cani…"*  
For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down."  
  
"What become a yer bloodhounds, Lord Randall, my son?

"*Cosa è successo ai tuoi bloodhounds…"*  
What become a yer bloodhounds, my handsome young man?"  
"They stretched their legs out an died; mother, make my bed soon,

"*Hanno stirato le gambe e sono morti…"*  
For I'm weary wi huntin, and fain wad lie doon."  
  
"O I fear ye are poisoned, Lord Randall, my son!

"*O io temo che tu sia avvelenato…"*  
I fear ye are poisoned, my handsome young man!"  
"O yes, I am poisoned; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm sick at m' heart, and I fain wad lie down."

What d'ye leave (*do you)* to your mother, Lord Randal, my son?

*E cosa lasci a tua madre...*

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

"Four and twenty milk kyes (*cows)*; mother, mak (*make)* my bed soon,

"*Ventiquattro mucche..."*

For I'm sick at the heart, and 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,

"*Il mio oro e il mio argento"*

For I'm sick at the heart, and 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,

*"Le mie case e le mie terre..."*

For I'm sick at the heart, and 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,

"*Le lascio inferno e fuoco..."*

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