

# Barbara Allen

Words & Music:  
Traditional Scottish

*There are a zillion chord change versions for this song. I have given two below - simple on top, more complex on the bottom. Other variations to the simple version are added in parentheses, to give you a third option. I cannot hear this tune without thinking of the Porky Pig rendition in "Robin Hood Duck". A classic.*

D (G) (A) (D)  
D A7 D A7 F#m  
In Scarlet town where I was born there was a fair maid dwelling.

G (A) D Bm (A) D  
Em D F#7 B7 E7 A7 G7 D  
And every youth cried, "Well away!", her name was Barbara Allen.

'Twas in the merry month of May, the green buds were a swelling.  
Sweet William came from a nearby town and he courted Barbara Allen.

'Twas in the midst of jolly June, when love was meant for telling,  
Sweet William on his deathbed lay for the love of Barbara Allen.

He sent a servant unto her to the place she was dwelling.  
"My master ails and he sends for you if your name be Barbara Allen."

"And death is painted on his face and o'er his heart is stealing  
Then hasten away to comfort him, ah, lovely Barbara Allen!"

So, slowly, slowly, she arose. She went and soon came nigh him.  
And all she said when she got there was, "Young man I think you're dying."

"O yes, I'm sick an' very sick and death is on me dwelling.  
No better, no better, I never can be if I can't have Barbara Allen."

"O, yes, you're sick and very sick and death is on you dwelling.  
No better, no better, you never will be for you can't have Barbara Allen."

And she replied in painful tone, "I hear you drank a gallon  
Of what I warned would poison you, but you laughed at Barbara Allen."

"O, don't you remember in yonder town when you were at the tavern?  
You drank a health to the ladies all around and slighted Barbara Allen."

"And furthermore, you gave a ball, inviting to your dwelling  
A dozen girls with whom you danced, but you slighted Barbara Allen."

"Oh, yes, he said, I know it well, and it wasn't quite a gallon.  
And while I gave those girls a toast in my heart was Barbara Allen."

She lightly tripped away from him and hopped upon her stallion  
She rode away and left him cold, heading home was Barbara Allen.

As she was riding o'er the fields, she heard the death bell knelling.  
And every stroke it seemed to say, "Hardhearted Barbara Allen."

Then, she looked east and she looked west and spied his corpse a'coming.  
"Lay down, lay down, that corpse of clay, that I may look upon him."

The more she looked, the more she mourned 'til she fell to the ground a'crying.  
Saying, "Take me up an' carry me home for I am now, a-dying."

"Oh, mother dear, make me my bed and make it long and make it narrow  
Sweet William died for pure, pure love; and I shall die for sorrow."

"Oh, father dear, go dig my grave. Go dig it long and narrow.  
Sweet William died for me today. I'll die for him tomorrow."

They buried her in the old churchyard. Sweet William's grave was nigh her  
And from his grave grew a red, red rose; from hers grew a briar.

They grew and grew to the steeple top 'til they could grow no higher.  
And there they twined in a true love's knot - red rose around green briar.

Some folks today who live in town declare they saw a stallion.  
Ride through the night in the pale moonlight  
With Sweet William and Barbara Allen.