

Little Musgrave

Traditional, With New Words By Christy Moore

Played by Planxty, sung by Christy Moore

It fell upon a holy day as manys in the year
Musgrave to the church did go to see fine ladies there
some were dressed in velvet red and some in velvet pale
and then in came Lord Barnard's wife, the fairest among them all
She cast an eye on the Little Musgrave as bright as the Summer's sun
said Musgrave unto himself: this Lady's heart I've won
I have loved you Fair Lady full long and manys the day
and I have loved you Little Musgrave and never a word did say
I have a bower in Bucklesfordberry, its my heart's delight
I'll take you back there with me if you lie in my arms tonight
But standing by was a little footpage from the Lady's coach he ran
although I am a lady's page I am Lord Barnard's man
My Lord Barnard will hear of this whether I sink or swim
and every where the bridge was broke he'd enter the water and swim
My Lord Barnard my Lord Barnard you are a man of life
But Musgrave is at Bucklesfordberry asleep with your wedded wife
If this be true my little footpage, this thing that you tell me
all the gold in Bucklesfordberry I gladly will give to thee
But if this be a lie, my little footpage, this thing that you tell me
From the highest tree in Bucklesfordberry hanged you will be
Go saddle me the black he said go saddle me the grey
and sound you not your horns he said lest our coming you'd betray
but there was a man in Lord Barnard's train who loved the Little Musgrave
he blew his horn both loud and shrill. Away Musgrave Away!

Instrumental interlude

I think I hear the morning cock I think I hear the jay
I think I hear Lord Barnards men I wish I was away
Lie still lie still my Little Musgrave and hug me from the cold
'tis nothing but a sheperd's lad abringing his flock to fold
Is not your hawk upon his perch your steed eats oats and hay
and you've a lady in your arms and yet you'd go away
So he's turned around and he's kissed her twice and then they fell asleep
when they awoke Lord barnard's men were standing at their feet
How do you like my bed he said and how do you like my sheets
How do you like My fair Lady that lies in your arms asleep
Tis well I like your bed he said and great it gives me pain
I'd gladly give a hundred pound to be on yonder plain
Rise up rise up Little Musgrave rise up and then put on
it'll ot be said in this country I slayed a naked man
So slowly so slowly he got up and slowly he put on
Slowly down the stairs thinking he'd be slain
There are two swords down by my side and dear they cost my purse
you can have the best of them and I will take the worst
and the first stroke that Little Musgrave struck it hurt Lord Barnard sore
but the next stroke Lord Barnard struck Little Musgrave ne'er struck more

Instrumental interlude

And then up spoke the lady fair from the bed whereon she lay
although you're dead my Little Musgrave still for you I'll pray
How do you like his cheeks he said and how do you like his chin
how do you like his dead body now there's no life within
Tis more I like his cheeks she cried and more I want his chin
its more I love that dead body then all your kit and kin

He's taken out his long long sword to strike the mortal blow
through and through the Lady's heart the cold steel it did go

Instrumental interlude

A grave a grave lord Barnard cried to put these lovers in
with my Lady on the upper hand for she came from better kin
For I've just killed the finest knight that ever rode a steed
and I've just killed the finest lady that ever did a woman's deed

Instrumental interlude

It fell upon a holy day as manys in the year
Little Musgrave to the church did go to see fine Ladies there

Instrumental outro

MORE INFO

its a long story, told often in other places. At my Granny Dowlings wake my dear grand Uncle Frank Dowling surprised at 20 past 3 in the morning when waking from a half dozen of stout slumber he burst into song and sang Little Musgrave before falling asleep again. It was the only time in his 83 years that he ever sang a song.