

Bonny Barbara Allen

Bonny Barbara Allen is a traditional ballad originated in Scotland. The reader could recognize this from its structure, its rhythm and from the repetitions of some words. Reading the title I expect the narrator tells about a woman, Barbara Allen, and he/she tells about a love story because it's a typical topic of Middle Ages' ballads. The intelligent reader should also focus his/her attention on the word "Bonny", and he could understand that Barbara is pretty. Reading the text I see that my expectations are satisfied. The ballad is organized into 8 quatrains, and it narrates about a tragic love story between Sir John and Barbara Allen. He loves her, but she does not love him. In the first stanza the reader can understand the love story begins on Martinmas, Sir John Graeme fell in love with Barbara Allen. The "green leaves" suggest a romantic, pastoral setting appropriate for the lovers. Barbara does not reciprocate his love so Sir John sent a servant to fetch her, and he said her to make his quickly, these I the second stanza. The second stanza is connected to the first by phonetical parallelism of second and fifth line. While in the third and fourth ones, Barbara didn't hurry as shown by the repetition of the word "hooly" which emphasizes her slow movement, then she had gone to Sir John and he found him lying behind a curtain, maybe his deathbed. She expressed nothing for him, but she recognized she appeared to be dying. Sir John said her the cause of his sickness is his spurned love for her. Barbara answered him that it is better for her if he died, even if his heart is spilling. In the fourth stanza there are not narrated parts, all are dialogues. In the fifth stanza the narrator is reporting Barbara's words. She invites Sir John to remember a moment when he was drunk. The narrator uses dialect because it allowed him/her to add a realistic element to the story. The narrator concludes the stanza focusing on Barbara Allen's fit of rage. In the sixth stanza the narrator and Sir John are speaking. Sir John is fighting with death he's using the language of aristocracy because he belongs to it. He tells his friends to be kind with Barbara Allen, because he has loved her yet. In the seventh stanza Barbara leaves Sir John slowly, and she tells him (his body) she couldn't stay there because death took him. It's a sad stanza, and the narrator uses a dismal language. In the eighth stanza the narrator tells Barbara Allen listed the dead bell that Sir John died when she was two miles from him. She is sorry and she cries. Also in this stanza the narrator uses a somber language. The narrator in the text uses lots of repetitions, because they help the reader to memorise the ballad, they create a musical effect, the link words and lines and they emphasise important details. At the end of the first, second, fifth, sixth and last stanza the reader could find an anaphora of "Barbara Allen" words. In the third stanza there is the repetition of word "hooly" while in the seventh one there is the repetition of "slowly" word. On the second line of sixth stanza there is

an inversion, the correct layout of the sentence is: "And death was dealing with him". There are also alliterations in the text, for example on the third line in the seventh stanza there is an alliteration of letter "S". Death is personified in lines 22 and 28 as one that deprives the speaker Sir John Graeme of life and health. The author used some difficult words which were used in the antique Scottish dialect around the middle ages like: a-falling, haste, gin ye be, hooly, a', dinna ye mind, gae round, slighted, adieu, reft, twa, jow, cry'd woe. I think the message that the author wants to send us is: we do not refuse the love of a person because we realize only after his death that we were lost. Barbara Allen is the example.