

Sir Patrick Spens

anonymous

*The King sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blood-red wine;
"O where shall I get a good skipper
To sail this ship of mine?"*

*Then up and spake an elder knight,
Sat at the King's right knee:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
That ever sailed the sea."*

*The King has written a broad letter,
And sealed it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.*

*"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the foam;
The King's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou must fetch her home."*

*The first line that Sir Patrick read,
A loud laugh laughed he;
The next line that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his eye.*

*"O who is this has done this deed,
Has told the King of me,
To send us out at this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea?"*

*"Be it wind, be it wet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the foam;
The king's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her home."*

*They hoisted their sails on Monday morn,
With all the speed they may;
And they have landed in Noroway
Upon a Wodensday*

*They had not been a week, a week,
In Noroway but twae,
When that the lords of Noroway
Began aloud to say, -*

*"Ye Scottishmen spend all our King's gold,
And all our Queenis fee."*

*"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
So loud I hear ye lie.*

*"For I brought as much of the white monie
As gane my men and me,
And a half-fou of the good red gold
Out o'er the sea with me.*

*"Make ready, make ready, my merry men all,
Our good ship sails the morn."
"Now, ever alack, my master dear
I fear a deadly storm.*

*"I saw the new moon late yestreen
With the old moon in her arm;
And if we go to sea, master,
I fear we'll come to harm."*

*They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurlly grew the sea.*

*The ankers brake and the top-masts lap,
It was such a deadly storm;
And the waves came o'er the broken ship
Till all her sides were torn.*

*"O where will I get a good sailor
Will take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall top-mast
To see if I can spy land?"*

*"O here am I, a sailor good,
Will take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall top-mast,
But I fear you'll ne'er spy land."*

*He had not gone a step, a step,
A step but barely ane,
When a bolt flew out of the good ship's side,
And the salt sea came in.*

Sir Patrick Spens

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*"Go fetch a web of the silken cloth,
Another of the twine,
And wap them into our good ship's side,
And let not the sea come in."*

*They fetched a web of the silken cloth,
Another of the twine,
And they wapp'd them into the good ship's side,
But still the sea came in.*

*O loth, both, were our good Scots lords
To wet their cork-heel'd shoon,
But long ere all the play was play'd
They wet their hats aboon.*

*And many was the feather-bed
That fluttered on the foam;
And many was the good lord's son
That never more came home.*

*The ladies wrang their fingers white,
The maidens tore their hair,
All for the sake of their true loves,
For them they'll see nae mair.*

*O lang, lang may the maidens sit
With their gold combs in their hair,
All waiting for their own dear loves,
For them they'll see nae mair.*

*O forty miles of Aberdeen,
'Tis fifty fathoms deep;
And there lies good Sir Patrick Spens,
With the Scots lords at his feet.*

In the mid 1200's, Princess Margaret of Scotland was escorted by a large party of nobles to Norway for her marriage to King Eric; on the return journey many of them were drowned. This is a poem inspired by those events. There is no known author and there are many different versions.