

The Mermaid (Landlubbers)

A traditional ballad (not a shanty), "The Mermaid" is sometimes called a Child Ballad because of its inclusion as #289 version "B" in an 1860 anthology of 305 English and Scottish ballads collected by Francis James Child.⁷ Roud 124.

One Friday morn when we set sail
And our ship not far from the land
We there did espy a fair, pretty maid
With a comb and a glass in her hand, her hand, her hand
With a comb and a glass in her hand

Chorus:

*For the raging seas did roar
And the stormy winds did blow
While we jolly sailor boys were up, were up aloft
And the landlubbers lying down below, below, below
And the landlubbers lying down below*

Then up spoke the captain of our gallant ship
And a brave young man was he
"I've a wife and a child in fair Portsmouth Town
But a widow I fear she will be, will be, will be
But a widow I fear she will be"

Chorus

Then up and spake the little cabin boy
And a pretty little boy was he
"Oh, I'm more grieved for my daddy and my mam
Than you for your wife may be, may be, may be
Than you for your wife may be"

Chorus

<more>

⁷ <https://archive.org/details/englishscottishp1904chil/page/614/mode/2up>

Then three times round went our gallant ship
And three times round went she
For the want of a lifeboat all went down
And she sank to the bottom of the sea, the sea, the sea
And she sank to the bottom of the sea

Chorus

Last Verse <not found in the 1860 text>:

*Now up here in Heaven we get all we want to eat
And there's good beer and grog as well
The bunks are very cosy and the girls are very sweet
Which the land-lubbers haven't got in Hell, in Hell, in Hell
Which the land-lubbers haven't got in Hell.*

Chorus