

Willie Was as Fine a Sailor

Freely, in 2 $\text{♩} = 60$

As sung by Ted Ashlaw

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four systems of music, each with a letter label (A, B, C, D) above the first measure. Chord markings are placed above the staff lines. The lyrics are written below the notes.

A Dm Am Dm C Dm
1. Wil - lie was as fine a sail - or as ev - er spliced a rope,
F Dm C
B
And Mar - y was his own true love, his own fond love at home.
F Dm C
C
They dear - ly loved each oth - er and were to join their wed - lock then,
Dm Am Dm C Dm
D
When Wil - lie got his or - ders to sail to some for - eign land.

There are many melodic variations from verse to verse. It's best to listen to Ashlaw's performance of the song to get the gist of how the music is changed to fit the text.

There is also great variation as to the number of lines in each verse. Below is an indication (via letter labels for each phrase) as to how the verses are structured and sung.

- A** 2. On the day that Willie was to sail, he met Mary on the strand.
B "It's adieu unto you, Mary dear, for now we're doomed to part,
D And I pray to God before I leave you'll pledge your aching heart."
- A** 3. "Oh, yes, you're going to leave me, ove, to plough the deep blue sea;
B When foreign faces on you smile, you'll never think of me."
C For time had passed true lovers' hope, and under a dis-a-mal sky,
D "And if you should prove false to me, Willie, 'twould break my heart and I'd die."
- A** 4. Oh, yes, I'm going to leave you, love, to plough the deep blue sea.
B When foreign faces on me smile, it will make you dearer to me.
C And if I should break my promises, on foreign land or here,
D And if you should die, I pray your ghost would haunt me ev'rywhere."
- A** 5. He took one brace, in fond embrace, and then he went away.
B "Aloft, aloft," our captain cried, to get our ships to sea.
D With a heavy load, 'twixt sea and gale, we entered into the storm.
C We waltzed with joy and danced with glee, and each man drank a lot,
D 'Til another fair damsel Willie beguiled, and Mary was forgot.
- A** 6. It's now our ship has cast its anchor, and once more leaves the shore,
B And when it gets into deep water, we'll see the land no more.
C And when it got into deep water and under a dis-a-mal sky,
D A dark cloud came up in the west and a storm it did draw nigh.
C And when the storm, it did draw nigh, it caused our ship to reel,
D And Willie, being a first class sailor, was sent to guide the wheel.
- A** 7. Amidst a flash of lightning, a figure stood in his eye,
B All clad in white, and when it spoke, it was like a graveyard's cry,
C Saying, "Willie, you false young man, I'm Mary's ghost," says she,
D "I'm here to remind you of the promise on shore you made to me."
- C** 8. She clasped him with her clay-cold hands, says, "Willie, come with your bride;"
D When a mountain of waves swept over them, and it washed them down the side.
C "They're gone! They're gone!", the captain cried, which shocked those men with fear,
D When their bodies sank beneath the waves and the night drew calm and clear.