

Decemberists

"Mariner's Revenge Song"

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We are two mariners
Our ship's sole survivors
In this belly of a whale
It's ribs our ceiling beams
It's guts our carpeting
I guess we have some time to kill

You may not remember me
I was a child of three
And you, a lad of eighteen
But, I remember you
And I will relate to you
How our histories interweave

At the time you were
A rake and a roustabout
Spending all your money
On the whores and hounds
Oh oh

You had a charming air
All cheap and debonair
My widowed mother found so sweet
And so she took you in
Her sheets still warm with him
Now filled with filth and foul disease

As time wore on you proved
A debt-ridden drunken mess
Leaving my mother
A poor consumptive wretch
Oh oh

And then you disappeared
Your gambling arrears
The only thing you left behind
And then the magistrate
Reclaimed our small estate
And my poor mother lost her mind

Then, one day in spring
My dear sweet mother died

But, before she did
I took her hand as she, dying, cried
Oh oh

Find him, bind him
Tie him to a pole and break
His fingers to splinters
Drag him to a hole until he
Wakes up naked
Clawing at the ceiling
Of his grave

It took me fifteen years
To swallow all my tears
Among the urchins in the street
Until a priory
Took pity and hired me
To keep their vestry nice and neat

But, never once in the employ
Of these holy men
Did I ever, once turn my mind
From the thought of revenge
Oh oh

One night I overheard
The prior exchanging words
With a penitent whaler from the sea
The captain of his ship
Who matched you toe to tip
Was known for wanton cruelty

The following day, I shipped to sea
With a privateer
And in the whistle of the wind
I could almost hear
Oh oh

Find him, bind him
Tie him to a pole and break
His fingers to splinters
Drag him to a hole until he
Wakes up naked
Clawing at the ceiling
Of his grave

There is one thing I must say to you
As you sail across the sea
Always, your mother will watch over you
As you avenge this wicked deed

And then, that fateful night
We had you in our sight
After twenty months at sea
Your starboard flank abeam
I was getting my muskets clean
When came this rumbling from beneath

The ocean shook
The sky went black and the captain quailed
And before us grew
The angry jaws of a giant whale
Oh oh
Oh

Don't know how I survived
The crew all was chewed alive
I must have slipped between his teeth
But, oh! What providence
What divine intelligence
That you should survive as well as me

It gives my heart great joy
To see your eyes fill with fear
To lean in close and I will whisper
The last words you'll hear
Oh oh

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