

Unit 12

Lord Ullin's Daughter

Many works of literature and a number of popular films deal with the tragedy of star-crossed lovers whose romance is doomed for various reasons. Often one or the other of the lovers—sometimes both—die tragically.

Are you familiar with any such story—or perhaps a real-life happening? Share with your class.



A chieftain¹, to the Highlands bound,
Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry²!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry!'—

'Now, who be ye, would cross Lochgyle³,
This dark and stormy weather?'
'O, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this, Lord Ullin's daughter.—

'And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen⁴,
My blood would stain the heather⁵.'

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight⁶,—
'I'll go, my chief—I'm ready:—
It is not for your silver bright;
But for your winsome⁷ lady:



¹chieftain a leader of a people/clan ²tarry delay ³Lochgyle the lake near Ulva in Scotland ⁴glen a narrow valley ⁵heather a purple-flowered heath ⁶wight a person of a specific kind ⁷winsome attractive

'And by my word! the bonny⁸ bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So, though the waves are raging white,
I'll row you o'er the ferry.'—

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer⁹,
Adown the glen rode armèd men,
Their trampling sounded nearer.—

'O haste thee, haste!' the lady cries,
'Though tempests round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father.'—

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,—
When, O! too strong for human hand,
The tempest gather'd o'er her.

And still they row'd amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reach'd that fatal shore,—
His wrath was changed to wailing.

'Come back! Come back!' he cried in grief
'Across this stormy water:
And I'll forgive your Highland chief,
My daughter!—O my daughter!'

'Twas vain: the loud waves lash'd the shore,
Return or aid preventing:
The waters wild went o'er his child,
And he was left lamenting¹⁰.

Abridged

THOMAS CAMPBELL

⁸bonny plump and healthy ⁹drearer depressingly dull ¹⁰lamenting grieving