

“Barbara Allan” Comprehension Questions

01. Who are the characters in the ballad?
02. What time of year does the story occur? How do you know?
03. Who is the “master” referred to in stanza two?
04. Who is “his man” and what has he been sent to do?
05. Describe Barbara Allan.
06. Summarize the ballad through stanza 4.
07. How did Barbara Allan respond to Sir John?
08. Why does Sir John say, “Be kind to Barbara Allan”? What does that phrase mean?
09. Why did Barbara Allan reject Sir John?
10. What do Sir John’s dying words reveal about his true feelings for Barbara Allan?
11. What does Barbara Allan believe the church bells are saying each time they ring?
12. What does Barbara Allan ask her mother to do? What does this request reveal about her feelings for Sir John?
13. Do you think the ballad would have been more effective if the narrator included the characters’ specific thoughts and emotions? Explain *why* or *why not*.