

My Grandmother Lived on Yonder Green (Grandma's Advice)

As sung by
Charles Dietz
09-02-1946 Monroe, WI

Grandma's Advice

My grand-ma lives on yon-der lit-tle green, As fine an old la-dy as ev-er was seen, She has
of-ten cau-tioned me with care, Of all false young men to be-ware. Tim-my
I, tim-my um tum, tim-my up-a-tah, Of all false young men to be - ware.

Verse 1.

My grandma lives on yonder little green,
As fine an old lady as ever was seen.
She has often cautioned me with care,
Of all false young men to beware.
Timmy I, timmy um tum, timmy up-ah-tah,
Of all false young men to beware.

Verse 2.

“These false young men, they flatter and deceive,
So, my dear, you must never believe;
They will flatter, they will coax, till they get you
in their snare.
Then away goes poor old grandma’s care.”
Timmy I, timmy um tum, timmy up-ah-tah,
“Then away goes poor old grandma’s care.”

Verse 3.

The first came courting was little Johnny Green,
As fine a young man as ever was seen,
But the words of my grandma rung in my head,
And I could not hear one word that he said.
Timmy I, timmy um tum, timmy up-ah-tah,
And I could not hear one word that he said.

Verse 4.

The next came a-courting was young Ellis Grove;
‘Twas then that we met with a joyous love,
With a joyous love, I couldn’t be afraid.
Better get married than die an old maid,
Timmy I, timmy um tum, timmy up-ah-tah,
Better get married than die an old maid.

Verse 5.

Thinks I to myself, “There’s some mistake.
What a fuss these old folks make.
If the boys and girls had allo’ been so’ fraid,
Then grandma herself would have died an old
maid,
Timmy I, timmy um tum, timmy up-ah-tah,
Then grandma herself would have died an old
maid.”

Transcription and lyrics from the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection.

Critical Commentary

Transcriptions by Peters, p. 157, and HST.

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

Version A sung by Mrs. Moody Price, age about 71, Dodgeville, 1946.

Mrs. Price had never seen the words or music of this song in print. She learned it from her mother, Mrs. William Ruggles, who used to go on horseback in Iowa County to give music lessons. This song is probably a derivation of Die an old Maid which was printed in the Virginia Sentinel and Gazette (Winchester) March 2, 1795.

Version B sung by Charles Dietz, age 76, Monroe, 1946.

Editor's notes:

Scarborough writes that Cox found this song in *The Lover's Harmony* (London, 1840, p. 134) and *The Virginia Sentinel and Gazette* (Winchester, March 2, 1795) (Scarborough 374). Randolph adds that a song called "My Grandmother's Lesson Song" was copyrighted in 1857 by A.N. Johnson, and might be derived from the eighteenth-century English ballad "Die an Old Maid" (Randolph 383). Linscott points out that the tune is related to "Turkey in the Straw," the origin of which is the Irish ballad "The Old Rose Tree, or The Rose Tree in Full Bearing" (Linscott 244).

Alternate titles/related songs: "My Grandmother's Lesson Song," "My Grandma's Advice," "Die an Old Maid."

Sources:

Chapple, Joe Mitchell. *Heart Songs Dear to the American People: and By Them Contributed in the Search for Treasured Songs Initiated by the National Magazine*. Boston, Mass.: Chapple Pub. Co., 1909. "My grandma's advice"

Flanders, Helen Hartness, Elizabeth Flanders Ballard, George Brown, and Phillips Barry, collectors, transcribers, and editors. *The New Green Mountain Songster: Traditional Folk Songs of Vermont*. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: H. Milford: Oxford University Press, 1939.

Linscott, Eloise Hubbard, collector and editor. *Folk Songs of Old New England*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1939.

Peters, Harry B., ed. *Folk Songs out of Wisconsin: An Illustrated Compendium of Words and Music*. Madison, WI: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1977.

Randolph, Vance, collector and editor. *Ozark Folksongs*. Vol. I. Columbia, Mo.: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-50. "Grandmaw's advice"

Scarborough, Dorothy. *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains; American Folk Songs of British Ancestry*. New York, Columbia University Press, 1937.

Spaeth, Sigmund. *Weep Some More, My Lady*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927.

K.G.