

BARROOM BALLADS

Traveling entertainers, musicians, warrior poets, and Kings' jesters... The common thread running throughout all of the various incarnations of the bard is his ability to move people with his music, whether it be inspiring an army or soliciting laughter from the locals at the corner pub. How often during the game, when your bard gets a chance to do his thing, do you actually have a song prepared? What type of song would enthrall a King and his court, rowdy tavern goers, or a troop of soldiers? Here are some ballads you can stun your audience (and the other players) with the next time you have the opportunity to do what bards do best. Each song is set up so you can add your own verses to reflect your own experiences and those of your fellows. Use these songs as inspiration for creating your own songs.

DENAN'S ARM

Denan's Arm is sung to commemorate the wounds sustained by great warriors in battle. After each new verse, all the wounds are repeated in order and the participants slam their drinking mugs on the table with each one. After the list is complete, everyone drinks to the wounded to honor them. In truth, many of the traditional verses are so old that no one even remembers who they're about, and many of the verses are probably bardic fabrications. Add a verse or two to this song if you want to add information about your own exploits and those of your friends. The meter of this song is very similar to Ohnedado's Castle, but Denan's Arm is a bit slower.

Denan, he kept order
in the hills along the border,
and he saved his towns from harm.
Then the orcs, there were so many,
and our Denan, he slew twenty
'fore their leader sliced off his arm.

Denan's Arm! (slam) (drink)

Ilya's army crossed the ice
against all her friends advice
and caught the giants still in bed.
That night many giants died,
but the price was far too high
for brave Ilya lost her head.

Denan's Arm! (slam)
Ilya's Head! (slam) (drink)

Nomo Thugen fought with swords,
and knew many magic words
when he led his rogues out west.
They cut through the goblin horde,
and they slew the Iron Lord,
but poor Nomo was stabbed in the chest

Denan's Arm! (slam)
Ilya's Head! (slam)
Nomo's Chest! (slam) (drink)

Captain Kil, he knew his sheets,
stays, yardarms, jibs, and cleats.
In a wind his ship would fly!

Pirates flanked him with the tide,
caught him on his leeward side
and Kil took grapeshot to the eye.

Denan's Arm! (slam)
Ilya's Head! (slam)
Nomo's Chest! (slam)
Kil's Eye! (slam) (drink)

OHNEDADO'S CASTLE

Ohnedado's Castle is a popular drinking song. Participants stand up during the refrain to claim the right to choose and sing the next verse. Each verse is a riddle about a creature, a challenge to the audience, who shouts out the name of the creature during the short pause between the verse and the refrain. Some verses are well known, while others are unique to a region. Many participants make up their own verses on the spot, sometimes to pick on a friend or make a statement about a well-known person. Ohnedado's Castle is accompanied by many different tunes, but is always a brisk song in trochaic meter, with every other syllable stressed.

(refrain) Ohnedado's Castle
is a place that's bound to baffle
with its strange menagerie.
His creatures are a mystery,
but listen very close to me,
and guess what they might be.

Far up in his tower
lives a maid, who with a glower,
can cause your heart to stop.
What a lass should have, she's got 'em,
but that's only on the bottom.
There's a hundred fangs up top.
(audience shouts)Medusa!

(refrain)

In the fanciest of parlors,
Ohnedada keeps his growlers
with their spells and magic script.
While they're urging you to dine,
and they're serving poisoned wine,
you may see their palms are flipped.
(audience shouts)Rakshasa!

(refrain)

In a cage of hemp and pine,
reinforced with oak and twine
lives a harmless seeming bug.
If you approach it without fear,
you will find that all your gear
is dust upon the rug.
(audience shouts)Rust Monster!

(refrain)



WYVERN RIDING

Wyvern Riding is a useful song to maintain a long running chronicle of your adventuring party's exploits and misadventures. The format is simple and the rhyme very friendly. Use the following verses as samples to start out your own version of Wyvern Riding.

(refrain) Hey, ho! Off we go!
Wyvern riding, wyvern riding!
Hey, ho! Off we go,
riding on a wyvern!

Have you ever been down to Hades
and danced about amongst the shades?
The damned they be there in spades,
riding on a wyvern!

(refrain)

Have you ever been to the great city,
where tarts grind on your knee?
Oh, the lovely sights you'll see,
riding on a wyvern!

(chorus)

Have you been to Fallen Downs?
Zombies roam like drunken clowns.
Oh, the cults o' death they abound,
riding on a wyvern!

(chorus)

Ever been on the great big sea,
tossed about from stern to lea?
The fear'll put you on your knees,
riding on a wyvern!

(chorus)

Have you ever been under the mountain,
where magma sprays like a fountain?
It's hot enough for Devils,
riding on a wyvern!

(chorus) ◆