

Name _____

Date _____

The Mistletoe Bough

- Read the poem, then tell the story to your helper.

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall;
And the baron's retainers¹ were happy that day,
Keeping their Christmas holiday.

The baron saw with a father's pride
His beautiful child, young Lovell's bride;
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of the goodly company.

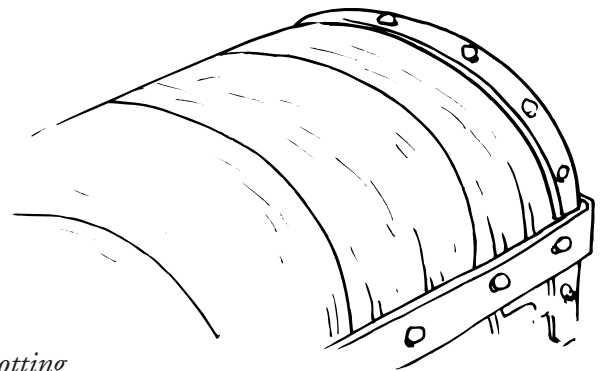
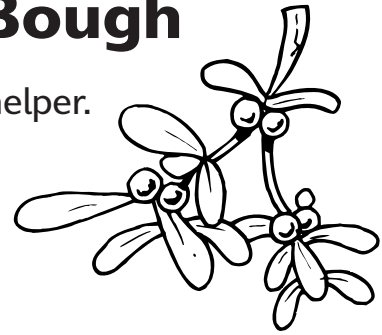
'I'm weary of dancing now,' she cried;
'Here wait a moment – I'll hide – I'll hide!
And, Lovell, be sure you are first to trace
The clue to my secret hiding place.'
Away she ran – and her friends began
Each tower to search, and each nook to scan;
And young Lovell cried, 'Oh where do you hide?
I'm lonely without you, my own dear bride.'

They search all night and they searched next day!
And they kept on searching 'til a week passed away!
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot,
Young Lovell sought wildly – but found her not.
And years flew by, and their grief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past,
And when Lovell appeared, the children cried,
'See! the old man weeps for his long lost bride.'

At length an oak chest, that had long lain hid,
Was found in the castle. They raised the lid –
And a skeleton form lay mouldering² there,
In the bridal wreath of that lady fair!
Oh! sad was her fate! – in playful jest
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.
It closed with a click – and, dreadful doom,
The bride lay locked in her living tomb!

Thomas Haynes Bayley (slightly adapted)

¹retainers = servants and followers; ²mouldering = rotting



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Dear helper

Objective: To read a narrative poem and show understanding of the story.

Task: Share the reading of the poem with your child – for example, by taking verses in turn. Then help your child to retell the story in the poem. Discuss what happened and talk about similar incidents today, such as children who get trapped in abandoned fridges.