

Green Gravels

Informant/Performer:
Jean Ritchie
Viper, KY

Source:
*Children's Songs and Games
from the Southern Mountains*
Folkways FC 7054, 1957

Green gra - vels, green gra - vels, the grass is so green.

All o - ver cre - a - tion I'm a - shamed to be seen.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time, key of D major. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

2. Dear Rhodie, dear Rhodie, your true lover's dead.
He wrote you a letter to turn back your head.

Game Directions

At the beginning of the game, all the children form a circle while holding hands, and march around while facing towards the center of the circle. When a child's name is mentioned (in the 2nd stanza when she is told her true love is dead), the child faces in the opposite direction (outward from the center), and continues to march around in the circle holding hands with the other children. The song begins again and each time a child's name is mentioned that child faces outward; the game continues until all the children are facing outward. The ring could then be faced toward the center again by having each child call out the name of her dead true love, and then turning around.

Background Information

Turning the head is a sign of sorrow; in some British versions the game is continued by another in which the lost lover appears, and the dancers, who have all turned about, are one by one made to face the ring... I think that "Green Gravel" was meant to receive such continuation.

In this case the absent lover has gone to the war, and the letter announcing his death in battle comes, I should think, from his officer.

Newell, William Wells, *Games and Songs of American Children*