

# Black Jack Davy

Informant/Performer:  
Mary Jo Davis  
Fayetteville, AL, 1955

Source:  
Harold Courlander, compiler  
*Folk Music U.S.A.*  
Folkways FE 4530, 1959

♩ = 108 - 112

The musical score is written on five staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked as 108-112 beats per minute. The melody features several triplet markings (groups of three notes beamed together). The lyrics are written below the notes.

Black Jack Da - vy came a ri - din' through the woods,  
Sing - in' his song — so — gai - ly,  
He sang so loud — he made the wild - woods ring.  
And charmed the heart of a la - dy,  
Charmed the heart of a la - - dy.

Transcribed by Eleanor G. Locke

2. He said pretty Miss will you go with me,  
Will you be my honey?  
I swear by the sword that hangs by my side  
You'll never want for money,  
Never want for money.
3. The old man came home late that night,  
Inquiring for his lady.  
The servant spoke before he thought,  
She's gone with Black Jack Davy,  
Gone with Black Jack Davy.
4. Go saddle me up my milk-white horse,  
Saddle him slow and easy.  
I'll ride all night till the broad daylight,  
And overtake my lady,  
And overtake my lady.
5. He rode all night till the broad daylight,  
Till he came to the edge of the water.  
There he looked on the other side,  
And there he spied his darling,  
There he spied his darling.
6. Oh, will you forsake your house and home,  
Will you forsake your baby?  
Will you forsake the one you love,  
To go with Black Jack Davy,  
To go with Black Jack Davy?
7. Oh, yes, I'll forsake my house and home,  
Yes, I'll forsake my baby.  
Yes, I'll forsake the one I love,  
To go with Black Jack Davy,  
To go with Black Jack Davy.
8. Then pull off that little black glove you wear,  
Made out of that Spanish leather,  
Place your little white hand in mine,  
And here we'll part forever,  
Here we'll part forever.
9. She pulled off that little black glove,  
Made out of that Spanish leather,  
Placed her little white hand in his,  
And there they parted forever,  
There they parted forever.

Background Information

Even in this mass-media century - - in which popular songs have a life expectancy of about three months - - some families preserve songs and traditions in singing them, from one generation to another. In this way the family of Mary Jo Davis kept alive a style of English traditional singing. Such "family" styles may be closer to older ways of singing than any others, preserving elements of oral presentation. Sometimes in this way of singing, words are changed (witness the many versions of "Barbara Allen") to make sense locally or to fit an immediacy of mood, but the sweetness of tone so often encountered and the enduring simplicity of the melodic structure somehow remain as confident of their place in the scheme of things as a theme by Haydn.