

# Ballad of Yarmouth Castle

Gordon Lightfoot

Well, it's four o'clock in the afternoon  
And the anchors have been weighed  
From Miami to Nassau  
She's bound across the waves

She'll be headin' south through Biscayne Bay  
Into the open sea  
Yarmouth Castle, she's a-dyin' and don't know it

Now the many years she's been to sea  
She's seen the better times  
She gives a groan of protest  
As they cast away her lines

And the grumble of her engines  
And the rust along her spine  
Tells the Castle she's too old to be sailin'

But the sands run out within her heart  
A tiny spark glows red  
It smolders through the evening  
There's laughter overhead

Now the dinner's served and the cards are dealt  
And the drinks are passed around  
Deep within the fire starts a-burnin'

Now it's midnight on the open sea  
And the moon is shinin' bright  
Some people join the party  
And others say goodnight

There's many who are sleepin' now  
It's been a busy day  
And a tiny wisp of smoke is a-risin'

"Oh Lord," she groans, "I'm burning  
Let someone understand"  
But her silent plea is wasted  
In the playin' of the band

Everybody's dancin' on her deck  
And they're havin' such a time  
And a voice says, "Shut up and deal, I'm losin'"

Deep within the Yarmouth Castle  
The fire begins to glow  
It leaps into the hallways  
And climbs and twists and grows

And the paint she wore to keep her young  
Oh Lord, how well it burns  
And soon that old fire is a-ragin'

Up beneath the bridge it's climbin' fast  
The captain stands aloft  
He calls up to the boatswain, says

"Boatswain, we are lost"

For the ragged hoses in the racks  
No pressure do they hold  
And the people down below will soon be dyin'

All amidships, oh she's blazin' now  
It's spreadin' fore and aft  
The people are a-scramblin'  
As the fire blocks their path

The evil smoke surrounds them  
And they're fallin' in their tracks  
And the captain in his lifeboat is a-leavin'

Oh then the ship, Bahama Star  
Comes steamin' through the night  
She sees the Castle blazin'  
And 'tis a terrible sight

"Jump down, jump down", the captain cries  
"We'll save you if we can"  
Then the paint on his funnels is a-fryin'

"God help the ones who sleep below  
And cannot find the way  
Thank God for those we rescue  
Upon this awful day"

Now the heroes, they are many  
But the times are growin' slim  
And now from stern to bow, she's a-blazin'

Oh the Yarmouth Castle's moanin'  
She's cryin' like a child  
You can hear her if you listen  
Above the roar so wild

Is she cryin' for the ones who lie  
Within her molten sides?  
Or cryin' for herself, I'm a-wonderin'

But the livin' soon were rescued  
The ones who lived to tell  
From the Star they watched her  
As she died there in the swells

Like a toy ship on a mill pond  
She burned all through the night  
Then slipped beneath the waves in the mornin'