

# What is mistletoe?

Discuss with a partner anything  
you know about it

Mistletoe is a plant

Many countries that celebrate Christmas have the tradition of hanging up Mistletoe

At Christmas time boughs of Mistletoe are hung up on the ceiling and anyone stepping beneath it can be kissed

There are 1300 species of Mistletoe worldwide

Mistletoe is actually poisonous to humans

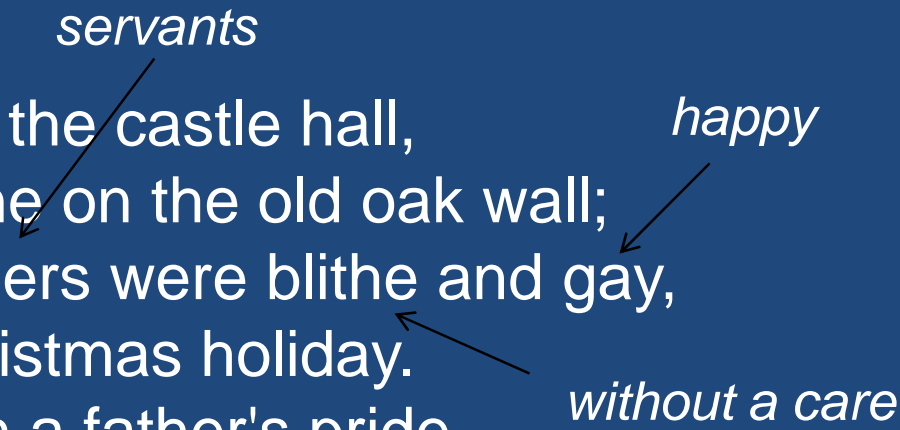
Read through the following which is the first verse of a ballad written by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797-1839)

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,  
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall;  
And the baron's retainers were blithe and gay,  
And keeping their Christmas holiday.  
The baron beheld 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.

*servants*

*happy*

*without a care*



What sort of atmosphere is created by the first verse (stanza)?

Give reasons (find evidence) for your suggestions.

Now read the second verse:

'I'm weary of dancing now," she cried;  
"Here, tarry a moment - I'll hide - I'll hide!  
And, Lovell, be sure thou'rt first to trace  
The clew to my secret lurking place."  
Away she ran - and her friends began  
Each tower to search, and each nook to scan;  
And young Lovell cried, "O, where dost thou hide?  
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride."

What do you think happens next?

Give reasons for your ideas from this  
verse.



Discuss your ideas with others in the class

Have you all come to similar or different conclusions about the ending of the poem?

Here are the last two verses so you can compare them with your own ideas:

They sought her that night! and they sought her  
next day!

And they sought her in vain while 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 fairy 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 moldering there  
In the bridal wreath of that lady fair!  
O, sad was her fate!-in sportive jest  
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.  
It closed with a spring!-and, dreadful doom,  
The bride lay clasp'd in her living tomb!