

Dives & Lazarus

Words & Music:

Traditional English carol, possibly from Herefordshire.

Ralph Vaughan Williams' variations on this tune are rather famous. Martin Simpson performed his usual magic with this tune on the 2001 album "The Bramble Briar". I've done my best to infer chords from his version, but may have missed here and there. This song is old and modal and, in good English folk tradition, driven by the tune and not the chords. Thus, the "5" chords don't imply "power chords", but modal. You can buy Martin's beautiful (and simple) tab at martinsimpson.com.

"Verse chords" [VC]

G5 Bb5 F5 G5 F5
As it fell out upon one day, rich Dives made a feast,
G5 Bb5 F5 G5
And he invited all his friends, and gentry of the best.

"Chorus chords" [CC]

Bb5 F5 C5 G5 F5
Then Lazarus, he laid him down and down and down at Dives' door:
G5 F5 Bb5 G5
"Some meat and drink, brother, Diverus, bestow upon the poor."

[CC]

"Thou'rt none of my brothers, Lazarus, that liest begging at my door;
No meat, nor drink will I give thee, nor bestow upon the poor."

[VC]

Then Lazarus laid him down and down and down by Dives' wall:
"Some meat, some drink, brother Diverus, for hunger starve I shall."

[CC]

"Thou'rt none of my brothers, Lazarus, that liest begging at my wall;
No meat, nor drink will I give thee; for hunger, starve ye shall."

[VC]

Then Lazarus, he laid him down and down and down by Dives' gate:
"Some meat and drink, brother, Diverus, for Jesus Christ's sake."

[CC]

"Thou'rt none of my brothers, Lazarus, that liest begging at my gate;
No meat, nor drink will I give thee; for Jesus Christ's sake."

[VC]

Then Dives sent out his hungry dogs to bite him as he lay;
They hadn't the power to bite one bite, but they licked his sores away.

[CC]

Then Divès sent to his merry men for to beat him where he lay;
They hadn't the power to strike one stroke, but flung their whips away.

[VC]

As it fell out upon one day, Poor Lazarus sickened and died;
There came two angels out of Heaven, his soul therein to guide.

[CC]

"Rise up! Rise up, Brother Lazarus and go along with me;
There is a place prepared in Heaven to sit on an angel's knee."

[VC]

As it fell out upon one day, rich Divès sickened and died;
There came two serpents out of Hell, his soul therein to guide.

[CC]

"Rise up! Rise up, Brother Diverus and come along with me;
There is a place provided in Hell for wicked men like thee."

[alt: "For you've a place provided in Hell, to set upon a serpent's knee."]

[CC]

Then Divès looked up with his eyes and saw poor Lazarus blest;
"Give me one drop of water, brother Lazarus, to quench my flaming thirst."

*There are two more verses which are not included in the Simpson version, but they feel
"tacked on" by a later hand. I have not included them here.*