


I'm not robot  reCAPTCHA

[Continue](#)

Rime of the ancient mariner iron maiden

Editor’s Note: This article previously appeared in a different format as part of The Atlantic’s Notes section, retired in 2021.Reader Max calls my attention to a classic I hadn’t yet read—or heard.What of Iron Maiden’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”?Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s 626-line tale of a cursed sailor’s sin and redemption is a lot to take in, I soon discovered, if you haven’t read it before. Luckily, bass player Steve Harris’s lyrics provide a pretty straightforward summary, and the music—shifting from shouted lyrics and frantic guitars as Death descends on the mariner’s ship, to a spooky, atmospheric section that recalls a glassy sea—helps to dramatize the mariner’s story. Heavy metal and Romantic poetry might seem like an unlikely combination, but the noise, the drama, and the driving beat of Iron Maiden’s interpretation feel right for Coleridge’s horror story—most of all because they capture the urgency of a curse that forces the mariner to tell his tale, as the song repeatedly puts it, “on and on and on.” Update from Max:I would have written something about how the track led me to Coleridge, culminating in a hard slog of a course on 17th-century British literature; about how Iron Maiden always managed to throw a bit of history or literature on the albums back in the ’70s and ’80s, and how it led to greater discovery; or how my friends always thought that “Rime” was kind of the worst Iron Maiden song, but it was my favorite. But, it’s fiscal year closeout here at my office, and so really nuts.(Submit a song via hello@. Track of the Day archive here. Pre-Notes archive here.) The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Rime of the Ancient Mariner may also refer to: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (film), a 1975 British film Rime of the Ancient Mariner (film), a 1978 British television film “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (song), a song by Iron Maiden from the album Powerslave See also Ancient Mariner (disambiguation) Topics referred to by the same term This disambiguation page lists articles associated with the title Rime of the Ancient Mariner.If an internal link led you here, you may wish to change the link to point directly to the intended article. Retrieved from " Rime of the Ancient Mariner is one of the cornerstone tracks on the classic fifth Iron Maiden album Powerslave from 1984. It is a true epic, based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s darkly foreboding poem with the same name which was written in the late 18th century. At 13:38 minutes, it would be the longest track in the band’s catalogue for over 30 years until it was surpassed by the 18-minute Empire of the Clouds from the 2015 album The Book of Souls. The band recorded Powerslave at Compass Point Studios located in the Bahamas. In the late 1970s and 1980s, Compass Point was one of the great recording studios of the world, attracting major acts worldwide. Amongst the artists who recorded there, we find AC/DC, Judas Priest, Whitesnake, the Rolling Stones, U2, Dire Straits, Bowie, Marley, Clapton, The Cure, Duran Duran, ELO, Status Quo, Roxy Music, Thompson Twins, Paul McCartney & Wings, Bad Company, and many others. And Iron Maiden, obviously. They has first recorded their fourth album Piece Of Mind there in 1983, after previously recording in the rather less exotic surrounds of London. “We had so much fun doing Piece Of Mind out in Compass Point we had to go back,” says Steve Harris with a laugh. “That, and tax reasons!” Rime of the Ancient Mariner is as much progressive as it is metal. It goes through several movements and changes, retelling Coleridge’s story about the cursed mariner by continually changing its colours to match the story. It should surprise nobody who follows Iron Maiden with half an eye that the song was written by Steve Harris. The bass-playing ever-present band leader has written several Maiden epics inspired by literary sources, going back to the very first album which features the lengthy track Phantom of the Opera. A few albums later, a concept track about the Dune books followed, called To Tame A Land. For a long time, Maiden albums were expected to have at least one epic track per album that tackled some literary work or historic event of note. “This was Steve’s mad idea,” guitarist Adrian Smith told Classic Rock Magazine. “In those days we used to head off to Jersey, to record things in this studio we rented as a bunch of tax exiles, basically. It was usually fucking horrible winter weather, I might add. Anyway, we had this system whereby we’d each come up with our ideas, then work with whomever to fill them out. Like I would often work with Bruce on lyrics to my songs or Davey on harmonies and guitar parts and that. Steve usually works on his ideas alone, and when they’re kind of 90 per cent done he’ll present them to the band. That presentation, if you like, was always at the end of the day in the main communal area, like a ‘show and tell’ at school! But when he put …Mariner forward I just knew we had to do it, because I’d never heard anyone do anything like it before.” Typically, Steve Harris is a lot more down-to-earth when discussing the genesis of this remarkable piece of work. “I don’t know where it came from, actually,” he confessed. “I wrote most of it in the Bahamas where we recorded the album. I had an idea back in Jersey, but really it was at Compass Point Studios where it all came together.” Adrian Smith adds, “I think when we recorded it in the Bahamas he had to bang the lyrics from the top of the wall all the way to the floor, there were so many. And Steve was so fired up about it he convinced everyone else. It’s so dramatic how can you not like it?” “The funny thing is,” says Harris, “no one actually thought it was 13 minutes long at all. We were all so into making it work, and we all enjoyed it so much that we thought it was only eight or nine minutes long, maximum. When our producer Martin Birch timed it at 13 minutes we were all like, ‘Fuckin’ ell, 13 minutes?!’ And when we play it live, it never seems like 13 minutes at all.” The original story had to be shortened quite a bit even for a song at nearly 14 minutes, but they managed to fit quite a bit into it, focusing on the overall scope and dramatic elements. They had permission to use some parts of the original poem verbatim, which also added a lot to the feel of the piece. Retelling the full story here is not feasible, nor is it possible to do it justice with a brief summary. Still, here is a rough overview of sorts. The poem (and song) begins as an old, grey-bearded mariner manages to stop a guest at a wedding ceremony to tell him a story of a sailing voyage he took long ago. The wedding guest is at first reluctant to listen as the ceremony is about to begin, but something in the mariner’s glittering eye captivates him and soon he has forgotten the wedding. Hear the rime of the ancient marinerSee his eye as he stops one of threeMesmerises one of the wedding guestsStay here and listen to the nightmares of the seaAnd the music plays on, as the bride passes byCaught by his spell and the mariner tells his tale The song “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” by 1980s British heavy metal band Iron Maiden is based on the poem written by Samuel Coleridge, and re-tells the legendary poem with the same of metal music and frightening soundscapes as a foundation for the tale. The tale begins with a Mariner narrating a story of a voyage to wedding guests that are about to enter into a wedding celebration. The Mariner speaks about the bad winds and fog he and his crew they experienced at the beginning of the voyage, and how an albatross came to the ship to help guide it. Out of ignorance and overconfidence the Mariner shoots the albatross dead, and because of that there is a price to pay. After shooting it, snake like creatures begin to arise from the water and the ocean becomes violent. As the trip goes on the crew begins dying of thirst, and decide to hang the dead albatross around the Mariners neck to mark him as a sinner, hoping that they will be spared. A ghost ship then appears captained by a ghost named Death and another named Life-In-Death. Death kills the crew of the ship, leaving the Mariner alone, starving, and dehydrated. As the snakes begin to near his ship, the Mariner prays and blesses the snakes, causing the albatross to drop from his neck. Angels have filled his crew mates, and the crew, along with the ocean, push the ship towards a far off port. Once closer to the port the Mariner hears two voices tell him he must continue his penance, and a man in a rescue boat brings him to land. Immediately after touching the earth the Mariner feels a sharp pain inside of him and has the urge to tell his story to the man who brought him home. The pain subsides after the Mariner tells the story but it later returns, and the Mariner must tell his story for it to subside again. He then tells the wedding guests that the reason for telling them the story is to subside the pain, and that he is cursed to wander the earth to tell his tale. I personally love the song and how the story is told. I find that when artists use music to either reimagine or tell a story it provides a whole new atmosphere, and the creepy, metal styled structure this song presents is perfect for the tale. The song doesn’t stick to typical song structure, as it is almost fifteen minutes long and contains many different sections. Throughout the beginning and end of the song, various fast paced song sections are used, characterized by distorted guitar and strong drum hits. A galloping bass thunders throughout these particular sections, seeming to move the listener through the story. The vocalist Bruce Dickinson makes use of his high octave range to deliver the song’s story right into the listener’s ears, both quoting the poem and describing the tale. The final few minutes are mostly instrumental, still containing distorted guitar and a bass gallop that takes the listener to the end of the tale. The unusual section is the middle portion, where various soundscapes are used to create the atmosphere of the story. Creaking of the ship, the dangerous wind, an eerie bass line, and ghost like noises fill the song, seeking to make the listener feel as though they’re on the ship as well. The section is mostly instrumental until the end, when Bruce delivers low octave speech and singing to push the song back into its heavy instrumental state from before. The song is based on the fictitious poem by Coleridge, therefore it has no biographical or real-life relevance. The song is very usual for Iron Maiden, as many of their songs are very bass driven and contain stories about monsters, warfare, and various mythical beings. What is special however is the length, as many metal bands including Iron Maiden didn’t have songs longer than five to six minutes. It has no specific relevance to the album it is on, which is Iron Maiden’s 1984 release Powerslave. The special section of the song is the middle section containing the sound effects and eerie bass line. As a listener, I find it cool that the song was successful without being released as a single. Usually the songs that become popular are released as singles, but this song became popular without any extra push from the music industry. Not to mention, the song was also released on the same album as two of Iron Maiden’s most critically acclaimed songs, but still shines and receives the recognition it deserves. I think this song is perfect for when a listener wants to sit down and get lost in the music. I personally listen to concept albums and storytelling songs when I can completely focus on their story and can become enraptured in it. If one were to listen to this while working out, blowing off steam, or doing homework, I really do not think the song could be appreciated for all it has to offer. Just as a person watches a movie or reads a book without distraction, I think this song should be treated with the same respect. It’s perfect for any metal or rock playlist that the listener intends to use solely for listening to and enjoying the music. Works Cited Dickinson, Bruce. Perf. Steve Harris, Adrian Smith, Nicko McBrain, and Dave Murray. Rime of the Ancient Mariner. Iron Maiden, Martin Birch, 1984. Cassette. Iron Maiden. “Rime of the Ancient Mariner – Iron Maiden.” Google Play Music. EMI Records, n.d. Web. 31 Jan. 2015. Song Lyrics