

SCARBOROUGH FAIR

Are you going to Scarborough Fair? Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

Remember me to one who lives there. She once was a true love of mine.

Tell her to make me a cambric shirt. Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

Without no seams nor needle work. Then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to find me an acre of land. Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

Between the salt water and the sea strand. Then she'll be a true love of mine.

Tell her to reap it with a sickle of leather. Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme.

And gather it all in a bunch of heather. Then she'll be a true love of mine.

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This is a traditional English ballad about the Yorkshire town of Scarborough. In Medieval times, the herbs mentioned in the song represented certain virtues. Parsley represented comfort, sage was strength, rosemary was love, and thyme was courage. The lyrics appear to have something in common with an obscure Scottish ballad, *The Elfin Knight*, which has been traced at least as far back as 1670 and may well be earlier. However, we are told that, lyrically, the refrain "parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme" dates this version to 19th century.