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Nursery Rhymes: London Bridge is Falling Down 儿歌《伦敦桥要倒塌了》

- Andrea: We all grew up singing nursery rhymes like this one, but do we know much about them?
- Jean: London Bridge is Falling Down 《伦敦桥要倒塌了》，这是英国最有名的一首儿歌，不过这首歌的背后又是个什么样的故事呢？
- Andrea: Well, today on BBC Learning English we're going to find out a little more. Hello I'm Andrea Rose.
- Jean: 大家好，我是董征。
- Andrea: So, Jean do you know the words to the nursery rhyme, London Bridge is Falling Down?
- Jean: London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling... London Bridge is falling down... um...
- Andrea: Well done, you got most of it!
- Jean: Well, in China we know this nursery rhyme too.
- Andrea: But do you know what this nursery rhyme is actually all about? Chris Roberts, who has studied the history of British nursery rhymes, tells us the story behind the rhyme.

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This is a 10th century poem about the victory of King Olaf, who was fighting an alliance with one English king against another. And what the poem is about is about him attaching his ships to an old Saxon wooden bridge that crossed London near where the current bridge is, and waiting for the tide and then towing that bridge away. So it's the destruction of a London bridge but a wooden London bridge.

- Jean: Chris 告诉我们，这首歌起源于 10 世纪的英国，是一首讲述当时伦敦被破坏时的战争诗歌。
- Andrea: King Olaf, who was fighting with an English king against another English king, attached or connected his ship to a wooden bridge in London and then pulled it down.



Jean: To attach 去附着、牵系上。Olaf 国王把他的轮船牵系在桥上，然后把桥给拉倒了。

Andrea: In fact, the bridge Chris is talking about was an old wooden bridge.

Jean: 而今天的伦敦桥是用钢铸成的，所以诗歌中所说到的伦敦桥并不是我们今天所熟知的那座伦敦桥。

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I like London Bridge but sometimes you kind of wonder what it means and you never actually know. But you just think it's nonsense but sometimes you find out to be much more than that.

Andrea: This child, like so many of us, thought this nursery rhyme was just something silly for children. She thought it was nonsense, something that didn't make any sense.

Jean: 不过后来她发现这个歌谣其实并不是胡说的，其实它背后是很有典故的。

Andrea: But does it have a dark side?

Jean: Ooh, scary. 让我们来听听童谣专家 Morag Styles 对这首诗歌是如何解释的。

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There's this element of fear in the poem. There's a need for someone to watch over the bridge. I mean there does seem to be some suggestion that human bones and sometimes children's have been found in bridges in different parts of the world, from India and all over Europe.

Andrea: Morag says that there is an element of fear in the poem.

Jean: Morag 说这首歌里有一种恐惧的因素。

Andrea: She says that in some parts of the world, people's bones have been found in bridges.

Jean: 在桥里发现人的骨骸。That's scary. 看来这首歌并不是一首轻松可爱的儿歌，而是相当令人恐怖的吟诵。下面是 Chris 为我们解释，这首诗歌为什么是被人用来唱给河流听的。

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With many buildings but particularly bridges, it was thought that the spirits of the river needed to be placated in order for the building to stand up. There are many legends alluding to the sacrifice of a child or a woman, put into the foundations of buildings in order for them to stand up straight and not fall down.

Andrea: Bones were put into the bridges so that they wouldn't fall down.

Jean: Chris 用到了一个词 placate 安抚、抚慰。原来那时候的人们认为需要去抚慰河流让它高兴，而且还迷信要把人的骨骸放在楼房的地基里，楼房才会造的直站得结实。



Andrea: He says there are lots of legends or stories that allude to this or talk about this. So maybe this nursery rhyme is about spirits and bones too.

Jean: 正如 Morag 所说，这可不是一首欢快的儿歌，绝对是有一个相当恐怖、让人不舒服的由来的。

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This is one which seems to have some rather uncomfortable even quite nasty roots.

Andrea: When Morag talks about roots she means where it comes from.

Jean: The roots of nursery rhymes are sometimes nasty. 就是说，追溯起来，很多儿歌的根源其实有时候是很让人不愉快的。

Andrea: So what are your favourite nursery rhymes, Jean?

Jean: 我们中国也有一些这样的歌谣，不过有时候仔细想想也有点让人摸不着头脑。

Andrea: I like Three Blind Mice, and in that one, their tails get cut off with a carving knife.

Jean: 我现在越来越觉得儿歌其实比我原来想象的要恐怖许多。

Andrea: Please don't have any nightmares! Anyway it's goodbye from both of us at BBC Learning English. Bye.

Jean: Bye!