

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

10 *Danny Deever*

“What are the bugles blowin’ for?” said Files-on-Parade.

“To turn you out, to turn you out,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

“What makes you look so white, so white?” said Files-on-Parade.

“I’m dreadin’ what I’ve got to watch,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they’re hangin’ Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play, 5  
The Regiment’s in ’ollow square — they’re hangin’ him to-day;  
They’ve taken of his buttons off an’ cut his stripes away,  
An’ they’re hangin’ Danny Deever in the mornin’.

“What makes the rear-rank breathe so ’ard?” said Files-on-Parade.

“It’s bitter cold, it’s bitter cold,” the Colour-Sergeant said. 10

“What makes that front-rank man fall down?” said Files-on-Parade.

“A touch o’ sun, a touch o’ sun,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

They are hangin’ Danny Deever, they are marchin’ of ’im round,  
They ’ave ’altd Dannv Deever by ’is coffin on the ground;  
An’ ’e’ll swing in ’arf a minute for a sneakin’ shootin’ hound — 15  
O they’re hangin’ Danny Deever in the mornin’!

“Is cot was right-’and cot to mine,” said Files-on-Parade.

“E’s sleepin’ out an’ far to-night,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

“I’ve drunk ’is beer a score o’ times,” said Files-on-Parade.

“E’s drinkin’ bitter beer alone,” the Colour-Sergeant said. 20

They are hangin’ Danny Deever, you must mark ’im to ’is place,  
For ’e shot a comrade sleepin’ — you must look ’im in the face;  
Nine ’undred of ’is county an’ the Regiment’s disgrace,  
While they’re hangin’ Danny Deever in the mornin’.

“What’s that so black agin the sun?” said Files-on-Parade. 25

“It’s Danny fightin’ ’ard for life,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

“What’s that that whimpers over’ead?” said Files-on-Parade.

“It’s Danny’s soul that’s passin’ now,” the Colour-Sergeant said.

For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,  
The Regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away; 30  
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,  
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

*1890*

(From *Rudyard Kipling's Verse*. Definitive edition. London, 1940)