

Barlowe Knife

Traditional

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The musical score is written for guitar in 2/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system (measures 1-5) has a key signature change to two sharps (F# and C#) and includes a double bar line with a repeat sign. Chords D, A7, and D are indicated above the staff. The second system (measures 6-10) has chords G, D, A7, D, and A7. The third system (measures 11-13) has chords G and D. The fourth system (measures 14-17) has chords A7, D, A7, D, A7, D, A7, and D, ending with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The fifth system (measures 18-21) has chords A7, D, A7, and D, with a section labeled 'Up the neck break' between measures 19 and 20. The sixth system (measures 22-25) has chords A7, G, D, and A7. The score includes various guitar techniques such as hammer-ons (H), pull-offs (Po), slides (Sl), and bends (B). Fingering numbers (1-4) are provided for many notes. Measure numbers 6, 10, 14, 18, and 22 are placed at the start of their respective systems.

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26

A7 G D

30

1. A7 D 2. A7 D A7 D

34

A7 D A7 D 1. A7 D 2. A7 D A7 D

39

This three part fiddle tune is from West Virginia, probably African American in origin. It is usually played in A, but occasionally it is fiddled in D, the key I first learned to play it in. It works nicely in open D tuning. Fiddler Henry Reed called this tune Cabin Creek. It has a few lyrics, sung generally to the B part:

I've been workin' 'bout all my life,
 And all I've got is a Barlow knife.
 Barlow handle and a Barlow blade,
 Best durn knife that ever was made.

I worked in the cotton mill all my life,
 Nothin' to show but a barlow knife.
 Barlow handle and a Barlow blade,
 Best durn knife that ever was made.

I've been a poor boy all my life,
 All I want is a barlow knife.
 Barlow handle and a Barlow blade,
 Best durn knife that ever was made.

Take my wife, take my life,
 Just don't take my barlow knife.
 Barlow handle and a Barlow blade,
 Best durn knife that ever was made.