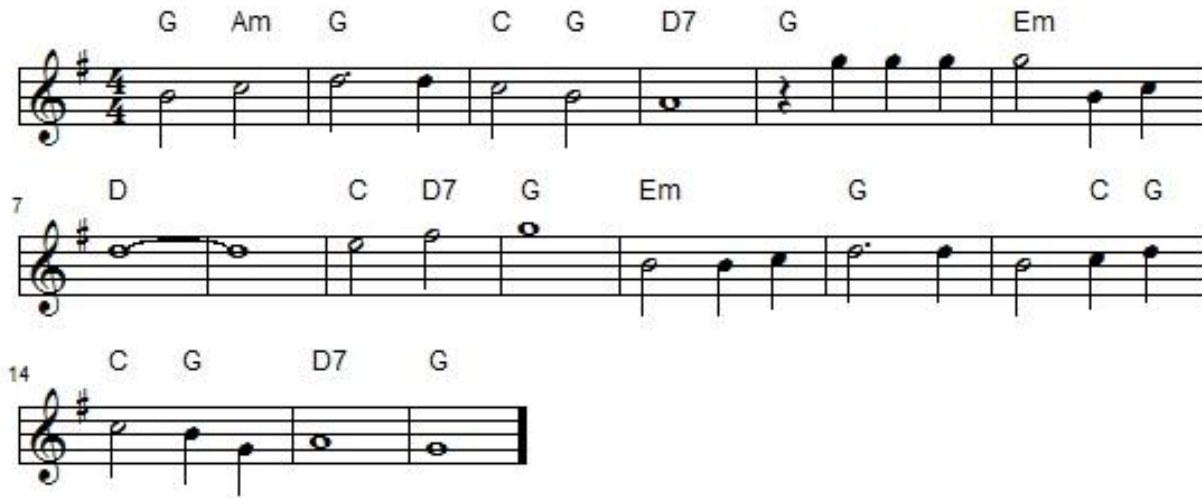


# Roll, Turn, Spin

Len Chandler



1. Roll, turn, spin, the wheel we're in,  
Tick, tock and toll on the bell,  
Round and round, in, out, up, down,  
The wheel will keep turning forever.
2. He brought her sweets and things to eat,  
A clip to bind up her hair.  
Her hair hung down, he liked it bound.  
She'd bind it no more come the morning.
3. The candy and his beaded strands,  
Were not all he would pay,  
For secrets slip from love-drunk lips  
And help to pave the way to coming morning.
4. She shined his boots and pressed his suits,  
And passed his secrets on,  
Not caring what the townsmen thought,  
In calling her the wife of the invader.
5. Old friends pretend that she was dead,  
As dead she'd risk to be,  
But all would know at dawn's first glow,  
They'll tell them that she never was a traitor.
6. The days she'd bowed, the tears she'd cried  
The dauntless deaths that she died,  
Her enemy still could not see,  
That she must only fain her love 'til morning.
7. And in the circle of her arms,  
He felt a warning chill,  
You could not weigh the purse he'd pay,  
To hold back the sun and the morning.
8. And with every tick that followed tock,  
He wished that clock were still,  
But the hourglass calls just as fast  
But silently the coming of the morning.
9. For rebel sons with sullen guns,  
Were waiting for the sign,  
In steeple spire they tend the fire,  
A fire that would burst into morning.
10. And in the stark and ancient dark,  
A marksman takes his aim,  
And waits for him to step through  
The door that knew no morning.
11. The night was clear of fog and fear,  
As he stepped through her door,  
And then they heard the signal word,  
His farewell to Thomasina.
12. In the dark, the shot that sparked,  
Like a cock that crowed for the dawn,  
And with that sign, one stroke behind,  
The breaking of the long awaited morning.
13. She rubbed her hands in the cleansing sand  
And called aloud her own name  
And with great care unbound her hair  
And let it fall free to her shoulders.
14. Roll, turn, spin the wheel we're in,  
Tick, tock and toll on the bell,  
The sands will spill and shift until,  
A new day will be a-dawning.

---

For many people, the first impression of this song is that it is a story from World War II - a woman working with the underground infiltrating a German officer's confidence. Len Chandler's comments indicate that he was thinking in a wider context, both in time and place, of any colonial or occupying force and internal resistance to it.

Chandler's notes from his **Lovin' People** album:

"I saw three movies in one week: 'Gone Are the Days' with Godfrey Cambridge, 'Mata Hari' with Greta Garbo and 'Notorious' with Ingrid Bergman. They inspired this song. There's the thing like going to a country we've conquered and being able to choose from among the wives and mistresses, sweethearts, mothers and sisters in exchange for an orange or a pack of cigarettes. Then it seems strange to us that ten years later nobody loves us."

Recorded by Len Chandler, Benji Aronoff (**The Two Sides Of Benji Aronoff** - 1965), Taj Mahal and probably some others.

I learned this by ear and worked out the guitar instrumental the same way but I can't remember if it was from Chandler's or Aronoff's recording or from someone else.