

The Highwayman by Alfred Noyes

Important Information

Plot

A highwayman is in love with Bess, the Landlord's daughter. The highwayman is betrayed by jealous Tim the Ostler and the red-coat troops come to find the Highwayman. Bess shoots herself to warn him but he is killed by the soldiers. In the final stanza, it is suggested that the ghosts of the lovers meet again on winter nights.

Themes

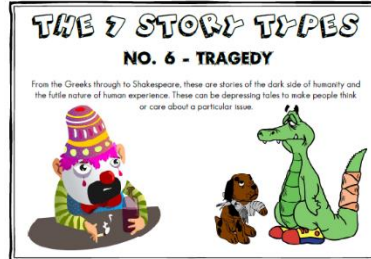
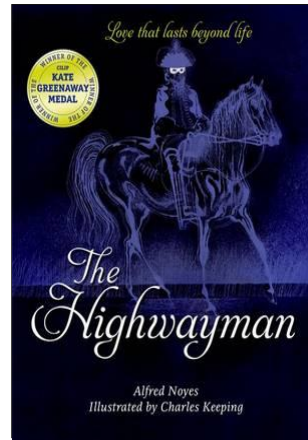
Love, courage, sacrifice, man v.s. man, man v.s. society.

Setting

18th-century rural England.

Characters

The Highwayman	Robber; French cocked-hat, lace, red velvet coat, doeskin breeches, high boots, jeweled pistol and rapier; loves Bess; visits by moonlight; tries to avenge her death, but gets killed by the soldiers.
Bess	Landlord's daughter; black eyes, long black hair, red lips; loves the highwayman and meets secretly at night; shoots herself to try to protect him from the soldiers.
Tim the Ostler	The ostler; pale skinny face, "mad" eyes, dirty yellow hair; crazy love for Bess; probably helped set the trap for the highwayman



Name of Book: The Highwayman

Date Published: 1906

Author: Alfred Noyes

Genre: Narrative, Lyrical Poetry

What Can the Book

Teach Us?

The poem celebrates true love, fate and sacrifice

Quotes

'the moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas'

'the highwayman came riding- Riding- riding'

Key Vocabulary

torrent	a violent rush of something
galleon	a large sailing vessel
claret	a dark shade of red
breeches	knee-length trousers
doe-skin	deer skin
hilt	the handle of a sword
rapier	a small sword
cobbles	pavement made of round stones
whip	a thing used to hit an animal
landlord	person that runs an inn or pub
ostler	person who looks after horses
bonny	dialect - pretty, good, pleasing
stirrups	the foot rest on a horse
casement	a window
rein	a strap used to guide a horse
gypsy	lives from place to place
musket	a large 16 th century gun

Context - The Highwayman is a romantic lyrical poem written in 1906 by Alfred Noyes. It was written on the edge of Bagshot Heath in Surrey when Noyes was 24. The poem was written in two days.