The Highwayman

Phil Ochs

Advisory - the following lyrics contain explicit language:

Pre>By alfred noyes
---------Part one
I
The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight, over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding-
Riding-riding-
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.Ii
He'd a french cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.Iii
Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.Iv
And dark in the old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say-V
"one kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,

I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."Vi
He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement! his face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed it's waves in the moonlight,
(oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.Part two
I
He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching-
Marching-marching-
King george's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.Ii
They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For bess could see, through the casement, the road that he would ride.Iii
They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"now keep good watch!" and they kissed her.
She heard the dead man say-
Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!Iv
She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till here fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like
Years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! the trigger at least was hers!V
The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.Vi
Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! had they heard it? the horse-hoofs
Ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? were they deaf that they did
Not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,

The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! she stood up strait and still!Vii
Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! tlot-tlot, in the echoing night
!
Nearer he came and nearer! her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him-with her death.Viii
He turned; he spurred to the west; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew grey to hear
How bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.Ix
Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.* * * * * *X
And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding-
Riding-riding-
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.Xi
Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard,
And he taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.By alfred noyes and phil ochs

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C em
The wind was a torrent of darkness
Am
Among the gusty trees
Em f
The moon was a ghostly galleon
Dm g7
Tossed upon cloudy seas
C em
And the road was a ribbon of moonlight

Am
Over the purple moor
F c e am
And the highwayman came riding, riding, riding
F c
Yes, the highwayman came riding
Dm g7
Up to the old inn door
Over the cobbles he clattered
And clashed in the darkened yard
And he tapped with his whip at the window
But all was locked and barred
So he whistled a tune to the window
And who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black eyed daughter
Bess the landlord's daughter
Plaiting a dark red love knot
Into her long black hair
One kiss, my bonny sweetheart
For I'm after a prize tonight
But I shall be back with the yellow gold
Before the morning light
Yet if they press me sharply
Harry me through the day
Oh, then look for me by moonlight
Watch for me by moonlight
And I'll come to thee by moonlight
Though hell should bar the way
He did not come at the dawning
No, he did not come at the noon
And out of the tawny sunset
Before the rise of the moon
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon
Looping the purple moor
Oh a redcoat troop came marching, marching, marching
King george's men came marching
Up to the old inn door
And they bound the landlord's daughter
With many a sniggering jest
And they bound the musket beside her
With the barrel beneath her breast
Now keep good watch and they kissed her
She heard the dead man say
"oh look for me by moonlight
Watch for me by moonlight

And I'll come to thee by moonlight
Though hell should bar the way"
Look for me by moonlight
Hoof beats ringing clear
Watch for me by moonlight
Were they deaf that they did not hear
For he rode on the gypsy highway
She breathed one final breath
Then her finger moved in the moonlight
Her musket shattered the moonlight
And it shattered her breast in the moonlight
And warned him with her death
Oh he turned; he spurred on to the west
He did not know who stood
Out with her black hair a flowing down
Drenched with her own red blood
Oh not 'til the dawn had he heard it
And his face grew gray to hear
How bess the landlord's daughter
The landlord's black eyed daughter
Had watched for her love in the moonlight
And died in the darkness there
C em
Back he spurred like a madman
Am
Shrieking a curse to the sky
Em f
With the white road smoking behind him
Dm g
And his rapier brandished high
C em
Blood red were his spurs in the golden noon
Am
Wine red his velvet coat
F c
When they shot him down on the highway
E am
Down like a dog on the highway
F c
And he lay in his blood on the highway
F g
With a bunch of lace at his throat
And still on a winter's night they say
When the wind is in the trees
When the moon is a ghostly galleon

Tossed upon cloudy seas
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight
Over the purple moor
Oh the highwayman comes riding, riding, riding
Yes the highwayman comes riding
Up to the old inn door. /pre>

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