**The Highwayman - Heidi**

Bess waited in the almost-still breeze that was settling gently over the purple Yorkshire Moors. She plaited her cave black hair, and practised her greeting smile. Tlot tlot. The ever-growing sound of a horse’s hooves echoing on the cobbled floor rang in Bess’ ears. She sighed in delight; around the corner came the Highwayman, dressed in the finest velvet. He rode up to the window that Bess was waiting in. Fluttering her eyelashes, she tied the end of her plait up with a ribbon.

“I’ll come for you tonight, and then you can come with me. However, if they chase me, I will return to you tomorrow,” proclaimed the Highwayman grandly. Bess stretched her hand down towards him, and he reached up towards her. Bess let down her mass of pitch-black sea. Its waves flowed down over the villain’s chest. He gave it one brief – yet meaningful- kiss, and rode away…

The shine of one thousand holes that had been punched into the coal black sky reflected dramatically on him as he disappeared.

He did not come in the morning, he did not come at noon, and he did not come in the evening. Bess wished that he would come soon.

Awoken by the sound of marching, Bess stared out of the window. Things that looked like clockwork toys, came into her father’s inn. Bess heard the pounding of footsteps on the wooden stairs that lead up to her room. King George’s men burst in.

Bess let out a high-pitched scream, which was immediately silenced by a soldier with a stubble for a beard. He whipped out a bedraggled handkerchief and tied it tightly around her dainty mouth. She watched in fear as two other men unveiled a large rope. They tied her to her bedpost and put a gun next to her heart.

“Keep good watch,” they said suspiciously, leaving Bess’ side. Bess waited, wishing for the first time that her loved one would *not* come. Remembering his promise, she reached for the musket. She stretched, strained and squirmed until her finger touched the tip of the trigger. Her hands were wet (with sweat or blood?) from all the writhing…

She waited. And waited. She waited some more; she didn’t want her wriggling to alert the guards.

Tlot tlot. A sound became clearer and clearer, louder and louder. Bess could hear the Highwayman as he drew nearer. She waited a few more seconds.

Bess caught her loved one’s eye – or thought she did. She pulled the trigger. Bess felt the bullet move past her stomach. Then, it hit her. The cold metal propelled itself silently through her heart – with love. Her last moment was triumphant; she had saved him- with her death.