

## WAGOLL

When the highwayman arrived at the inn that was lit up by the moon, the old inn-doors were locked and barred. The highwayman pursed his lips and whistled a gentle tune underneath a particular casement. Within seconds, the shutters were eased open and Bess, the landlord's daughter, stared down sweetly, her black eyes twinkling in the moonlight. "My love, you're here," she whispered, looking around to check nobody was in sight.

"I am, for you are my sweeting and I will always come back to you," replied the highwayman, gazing up at her in awe.

Unbeknownst to the smitten pair, they weren't alone. Hidden away in the stable, behind a bale of straw, Tim the ostler listened. His hollow eyes, tinted green by what he witnessed, looked out of a pale white mask. Silently, he listened.

The highwayman told Bess his plan for the night. "I shall be back before the morning light," he promised his love. "Though if the wretched King's men harry me, wait for me by moonlight. I promise I will return!" With those parting words, he rose in his stirrups and leaned to take the girl's pale hand for a sweet buss. The fair lady pulled it away and released the ribbon around her hair. Smiling at his love, the highwayman kissed the long, black waves and rode away to the west.

Outside in the darkness, Tim watched on. "Shall I be the one to break their love? I will tell King George's men about what I have just seen." he repeated to himself as he shrunk to his knees, clutching at his midriff, at the pain he felt as it took over his body.