

# The plot of the highwayman novel

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



The Highwayman Their journey to London was not a long one, but in the night, it was a treacherous one. A rolling fog covered the land, one couldn't see twenty feet ahead, but in the still, quiet night, sound carried for a mile. They began their trek in the early evening, the sun had yet to dip below the horizon. The passengers needed in London, could not wait for the next morning.

The stage driver was the best to be found, his fee large, but his experience was priceless. He was accompanied by another man with a large rifle. The Rifleman had keen eyes and his ears were at attention, listening over the horses for oncoming riders; for the Highwaymen who preyed on the stages.

Long after the sun had set, not a sound had been heard over the consistent clip-clop of the horses. Their hooves hit the dirt road, broadcasting a message for nearly a mile of the nearing prey. The sound alerting all the nearby predators to keep a good watch, to be ready, for the prize will soon be in their grasp. The fog, like a blanket spreading itself out on the land, concealed all stars, the only light was from a lantern suspended above the stage driver. The passengers nervous, expecting to hear shots fired. They jumped at every bump in the road that the wheels struck.

Clutching their baggage close, they prayed that the night would pass quickly. The Highwayman, alerted to the approaching stage, was hidden by the road, and concealed by the fog, he was not yet able to discern the light from the quickly approaching lantern. Clutching his pistol, his only weapon, he planned to take all that he desired from the stage. His family was at home, sitting by the fire. His late night occupation provided their home, food

and clothing. During the day he works in a stable for the nearby English noble. Feeding and grooming their horses, only he knows the stable well enough to “ barrow ” a horse. Not every night, but often enough for his family to live better than most. Passing through a small wooded area, the stage continued at its rapid pace, the horses sweating, pulling the large stage coach and its five passengers.

The Rifleman, ever intent, tenses, telling the driver to push the animals even harder. The two horses, running as fast as they can, try to comply, but they gain no speed. The passengers, jumping at every bump in the road, wishing the ride over, holding fast to the coach, expecting any minute for the stage to roll on its side. They were waiting for the Highwayman to strike. Behind a wall of fog that hides him from the stage, not making a sound, he waits. He is waiting for the right moment to ride forth. He knows that quickly he will see the light and the stage that brings it. And then they will be able to see him. His rifle is ready in his arms, ready to rise to his shoulder, take aim, and fire. The lantern throws ghostly shadows as the coach rushes by the surrounding trees. The experienced eyes of the Rifleman, watching everything as it flies by, waits for that movement, that shape, that does not belong. He listens to the sound of air rushing past, the sound of the horses, listening to their hooves as they strike ground and gulp for air in the night. He listens for the sound that does not meld with the others, the of beat of a third horse. He can see the light now, his anticipation building, his heart beating, over powering the sound of the stage, smothering the sounds of the horses pulling it. His pistol ready, in his shaking hand. His other hand holds the reins, his feet ready to propel the horse onward, to overtake the stage.

Waiting for the right moment, waiting to strike. The Rifleman waits, scanning the forest as it streaks past, his nerves building a lump in his throat. The Highwayman can now see the stage in its entirety.

The Rifleman ready, will see him. Now is the time to strike. He is surprised at the speed of the coach, the cargo must be must be important. The passengers pray that they complete the trip, curse the driver for the speed. Not knowing of the dangers out side, clutching to each other, they sit on the floor of the coach. Scared, they wait for the hellish ride to end. Kicking his horse, he bursts from his hiding place, flying toward the coach, his pistol raised, ready to fire. He banks from left to right as he intercepts the stage. The Rifleman raises his weapon, looks down the long barrel at the approaching Highwayman. Tracking left to right and aiming at the Highwayman, he glances at his pistol, then he centers his rifle on the Highwayman, and hesitates, knowing that he has only one shot. Though the pistol at his side reassures him, because should he miss, he is not out of the game. The Highwayman takes aim with his pistol. He looks down the barrel at the Rifleman, his weapon pointing back at him. He rides straight, aims, and fires. The bench explodes next to the Rifleman as a bullet drives it self in to the stage, closely missing him. He continues aiming at the bandit, looks him in the eye, breathes out, holds his breath, and fires.

The Highwayman does not feel the bullet enter his chest, so much as the force knocking him off his horse. He crashes to the ground, his horse riding away in to the night. He lays there dying, breathing in his last breaths, says a silent good bye to his family, and the air escapes from his lungs, never to

return. The passengers huddling on the floor of the stage. The gun shots scaring them so much, they fear the worst. They begin saying goodbye to each other and to their loved ones, as death is imminent. The stage continues. The stage breaks through the forest on to the plains. The fog lifting, they can see the light of the soon to rise sun, though day is still hours a way. London is not far, they have completed their journey. The driver slows the horses to a gallop. The Rifleman sinks back in the bench, spent. The game is over. The passengers begin cheering that they have not been killed, and that they have reached London unhurt. Relieved and exhausted, they collapse on their benches.