The Highwayman

a fanbook by khorazir
The Highwayman

by Alfred Noyes
adapted and illustrated
by khorazir
This fanbook contains 17 ink drawings created during the summer of 2014. They are based on characters from the fabulous BBC series *Sherlock*, created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, and the famous poem *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes, the text of which has been slightly adapted to fit the Sherlockian setting.

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All drawings can also be found online at:
khorazir.tumblr.com/tagged/highwayman
The Highwayman
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.
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.
3.

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the
dark inn-yard.
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 landlady’s grey-eyed lodger,
    Sherlock, the landlady’s lodger,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into his long black hair.
4.

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Jim the ostler listened.
His face was white and peaked.
His eyes were hollows of madness,
his hair like mouldy hay,
But he loved the landlady’s lodger,
    The landlady’s quick-witted lodger.
Sly as a fox he listened, and he heard the robber say—
5.

“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.”
6.

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach his hand,
But he loosened his hair in the casement. His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
   (O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.
He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at 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,
A red-coat troop came marching—
    Marching—marching—
King George’s men came marching, up to the old inn-door.
8.

They said no word to the lady. They drank her ale instead.
But they gagged her lodger, and bound him, to the foot of his narrow bed.
Two of them knelt at his casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
Sherlock could see, through his casement, the road that he would ride.
They had tied him up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.
They had bound a musket beside him, with the muzzle beneath his breast!
“Now, keep good watch!” and they kissed him.
He heard the doomed 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!
10.

He twisted his hands behind him; but all the knots held good! He writhed his hands till his 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 his!
11.

The tip of one finger touched it.
He strove no more for the rest.
Up, he stood up to attention, with the muzzle beneath his breast.
He would not risk their hearing; he would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
    Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of his veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to his love’s refrain.
12.

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horsehoofs 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! He stood up, straight and still.
13.

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! Tlot-tlot, in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer. His face was like a light.
His eyes grew wide for a moment;
he drew one last deep breath,
Then his finger moved in the moonlight,

    His musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered his breast in the moonlight and warned him—
with his death.
14.

He turned. He spurred to the west;
he did not know who stood
Bowed, with his head o’er the musket,
drenched with his own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face
grew grey to hear
How Sherlock, the landlady’s lodger,
   The landlady’s grey-eyed lodger,
Had watched for his love in the moonlight,
and died in the darkness there.
Back, he spurred like a madman, shouting a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high.
Blood red were his spurs in 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.
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,
Two highwaymen come driving—
   Driving—driving—
Two highwaymen come driving, up to the old inn-door.