

Character Actions

Part A

Which character do the extracts describe? What do the actions of the character(s) tell us about them?

1. 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.

This extract is about _____

What is happening in the extract?

What does this tell us about the character(s)?

2. They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.
They had bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath her breast!
'Now, keep good watch!' and they kissed her.

This extract is about _____

What is happening in the extract?

What does this tell us about the character(s)?

Character Actions

3. Back, he spurred like a madman, shouting a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high

This extract is about _____

What is happening in the extract?

What does this tell us about the character(s)?

Character Actions

Part B

For each character (Bess, the highwayman, the red-coats) find an extract that describes their action(s) in the poem and explain what this action tells us about them.

★ Challenge Task ★

If Tim was in Part 2 of the poem, what do you think his actions might be?

Character Actions Answers

Part A

1. *The extract is about Bess. Bess has pulled the trigger on the musket and killed herself. This action serves as a warning to the highwayman who will now know not to come any nearer to the inn.*

Bess' actions tell us that Bess loves the highwayman very much and she is very loyal. She would rather lose her own life than risk the highwayman being captured and/or killed.

2. *The extract is about the red-coat soldiers. The soldiers laughed as they bound ropes around Bess which force her to stand upright in the window. They have also propped the long musket up her body so that the muzzle is pointing into her chest. They have done this to taunt the highwayman and to encourage him to come and try to rescue her so that they can then capture him.*

The red-coats' actions tell us that they are cruel and heartless. They are intent on capturing the highwayman and are not afraid to treat Bess roughly and use her like bait in order to do so.

3. *This extract is about the highwayman. The highwayman is charging back to the inn on his horse. He has his sword out ready and rides so fast that he leaves a cloud of dust 'smoking' in his wake.*

The highwayman's actions tell us that he loved Bess dearly. He is absolutely incensed to hear what has happened and he is intent on seeking revenge on those who contributed to Bess' death.