

Formal and Informal Language

Part A

'The Highwayman' is written using formal language which is typical of poetry of this style.

Read the following stanza and then write it again using informal and more modern language. It does not need to rhyme.

*'One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize tonight,
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.'*



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Part B

'The Highwayman' is written using formal language which is typical of poetry of this style. Read the following stanza and then write a new stanza using informal and more modern language.

*'One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize tonight,
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.'*



★ Challenge Task ★

Write a new stanza for the poem that includes Bess's formal response to the highwayman's words from Part 1, stanza 5.

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Part A

Example Answer:

Please give me a kiss my lovely. I'm going off to get some good stuff tonight.

Don't worry though - I'll be back with the money before the morning.

If they're after me and stop me getting back in the day then look out for me in the evening. I'll make sure I come back to you in the evening whatever happens.

Part B

Example Answer:

A kiss please, my lovely lady, I'll get some good things tonight,

But I will be back with plenty of money before it even gets light,

Although, if they chase and harass me, and I struggle to come in the day,

Then look out for me in the evening, watch for me in the evening,

I'll come to you in the evening and nothing will stand in my way.

Challenge Task

Write a new stanza for the poem that includes Bess's formal response to the highwayman's words from Part 1, stanza 5.

Example answer:

Her smile as warm as sunshine, Bess tossed back her sweet black hair,

Tim the ostler strained to hear her words so soft and fair -

'Sweetheart, I shall not leave this room 'til you return to me,

I'll wait here at the casement,

I'll watch here at the casement,

Come back to me at the casement, my heart I pledge to thee.