

The Naked Highwayman

Fairport Convention

As I rode out one summer's day for profit and for pleasure
I planned to rob the London coach and take it at my leisure
A brace of pistols duly primed, a saber fit to shave on
I waited underneath the trees that lined the banks of Avon

I didn't hear her dainty step as she appeared before me
A face to charm a singing bird with words that did implore me
"Can you help me sir?" she said, "I fear the time is near run
For me to cross before the tide swells the banks of Avon"

All you roving fellows listen, while you can
Of the time that I became a naked highwayman
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Of the time that I became a naked highwayman

So gallantly I did dismount and walked into the water
As she told me that she was a wealthy merchant's daughter
So I thought I'd try my luck and do my best to charm her
Said I was the only son of a country farmer

"Your hands they are as smooth as silk, they never touched a plough sir
And I suppose these pistols help you milking of your cows"
She looked at me with mocking eyes as coal-black as a raven
And then she fell into my arms beside the banks of Avon

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Her honeyed lips, I was beguiled, a lamb led to the slaughter
Eventually I fell asleep in the arms of the merchant's daughter
When I awoke I was alone, my clothes and pistols taken
With just the leaves to hide my shame beside the banks of Avon

In vain I tried to catch a glimpse of the city spires
Running like a rabbit through the bushes and the briars
Then I heard the London coach and I was all a-shiver
A lady's voice was calling out: "Stand-to and deliver!"

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"Your money or your life I'll have, it's all the same to me
It's hanged for a sheep or murder in the first degree"
She stood there in my overcoat, brandishing my pistols
And reliever the London coach of the gold of Bristol

And it's up she's mounted on my horse and rode into the distance
And I went naked to the coach begging for assistance
No more I'll play the highwaymen, nor more I'll put the mask on
I'll leave it to the bright-eyed girl who roams the banks of Avon

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