



Howard Pyle

Title

The Spy

Medium

Oil on canvas

Date

1905

Dimensions

24 1/8 × 16 1/4 in. (61.3 × 41.3 cm)

Accession number

2007.11.30

Credit Line

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Howard P. Brokaw, 2007

Web Description

The Spy, depicting a female Civil War spy, first appeared in Harper's Monthly in February 1904 to illustrate Robert W. Chambers's story "Special Messenger." Though aspects

of the character resemble the life of Confederate spy Belle Boyd, Chambers's unnamed character is fictional. As the story unfolds, we learn that the main character is carrying a message to Union officers and trying to evade Confederate soldiers in pursuit. Pyle's illustration captures perfectly the wary mood of the subject as described by Chambers: "Sitting her worn saddle, sensitive face partly turned, she listened, her eyes sweeping the bit of open ground behind her. Nothing moved there."