

my weekly wage and keeping from the pubs and racetracks you can ask my workmates they will tell you what a retiring chap I were. This does not mean a complete hermit many is the happy hour I spent with Tom Lloyd as we bought and sold horses but everything were on the up and up and I maintained the receipts of every beast we purchased. I had also made a friend of Wild Wright though he were soon arrested for Receiving and earned 3 yr. in Beechworth Gaol.

Joe Byrne come calling as well and once he realised how peaceful I were living life he brung me tobacco and when I said I didnt smoke he give me a book. If you seen Joe Byrne in a Beechworth pub you would never take him for a scholar you might note instead his restless limbs his wild and dangerous eye it could cut right through you like a knife. This same Joe Byrne sat me down on a log and opened up his book his hard square hands were very gentle on them pages.

Shutup Ned and listen.

So were I introduced to John Ridd the hero of the book called LORNA DOONE. I sat on a slippery debarked log at Killawarra but my eyes was seeing things from centuries before I were witness to a mighty fight between John Ridd and another boy as soon as John won he discovered his father were murdered by the Doones.

John Ridd lost his da at the exact same age I lost my own. He were a champion wrestler but tired of hearing about it often longing to be smaller. So even before I met with Lorna herself I liked this book as well as ice cream ipso facto it is proven that Joe Byrne the so called CRIMINAL were a better schoolmaster than Mr Irving who taught me how to make the ink without the pleasure of its use.

In 2 blessed yr. of peace I read LORNA DOONE 3 times I also read some Bible and some poems of William Shakespeare. I had no interest in the world outside least of all my family. While George King prospered as a horse thief I would not go near Eleven Mile Creek. It were not until the spring of that year I opened my eyes sufficient to see what had become of my brother Dan and what happened then I will tell you at another time. It were the end of my quiet life that is for sure.

## PARCEL 8

### His life at 24 years of age

EIGHTY UNBOUND QUARTO SHEETS OF MEDIUM STOCK. HEAVY FOXING, STAINS AND WATER DAMAGE, BUT STILL VERY LEGIBLE.

*Much of the material concerns an alleged slander by Mr Whitty relating to stolen stock. Dan Kelly's changed character described, also his conflict with Constable Flood and the ensuing flight to the Wombat Ranges, where an outlaw gang incubates. Some background concerning Steve Hart's transvestism. Kelly's meeting with Fitzpatrick and his introduction to Mary Hearn, certainly the M.H. of Parcel 2. Mrs Kelly's hostility towards Mary Hearn and the author's explosive response to George King's earlier behaviour. Pages describing the shooting of Constable Fitzpatrick are much revised by a second hand reliably presumed to be that of Joe Byrne.*



What with babies & husbands to keep Mother busy Dan had to grow himself up alone & soon found a 2nd family of young men they was known as the Greta Mob. He now travelled the dusty plains in a great noisy crowd he drank and he smoked though I don't know how he paid for any of it because it is a fact he never worked for wages. He certainly could not afford to dress himself and he wore clothes previously abandoned by myself. Sometimes he persuaded Maggie or Kate to take up his cuffs or shorten sleeves etc. but as one year led to another they was ever more out of temper with him and by the time I come to pay attention my brother had become a scarecrow.

It were payday I were on the upstairs veranda of O'Brien's Hotel giving Tom Lloyd £2 which was owed for the servicing of certain mares. Soon we heard a drumming of hooves then a great mob of riders racing down the main street from the direction of Moyhu they pulled up outside the pub with much hooing and hahing the horses was snorting and whinnying the riders dressed very flash like desperadoes their hat straps beneath their noses and coloured sashes round their waists. Their mascot were none other than 16 yr. old Dan Kelly they had provided him a new red sash to wear round his middle.

As I watched from above my brother slid off his saddle and fell like a raggy doll into the dirt then a great cheer went up Good on you Dan good old Dan.

The tight faced boy saluted his admirers by throwing up violently in front of them. I ran down stairs and found him spitting and cursing and weaving round the road.

Then he saw me.

Kelly versus Kelly cried he roll up Kelly versus adjectival Kelly now. If he was promoting this fight to keep his mates' interest the effort were wasted for in the time it took for him to draw the scratch his companions had walked their horses into O'Brien's yard.



To see him spoiled and abandoned it broke my heart.

I come towards him with Christian intentions but as I arrived at the scratch he swung a punch I easily ducked it but he irritated me & I clamped my hand firmly on his bony shoulder to escort him down the road. I had planned walking to old Mrs Danaher's house that were safe territory for us but as we passed the Police Station he slipped out of his coat and begun ducking and weaving it were a very stupid place for such a dance. Not 10 yd. away I could see a pair of highly polished boots resting on the veranda rail. Hall had been transferred but a successor were now lurking.

I can thrash youse Dan shouted come on come on.

He suddenly swung and I blocked him gathering him by his scrawny wrist. Shush I said and I saw the copper's boots withdraw into the shade. The traps is watching.

You b-----d cried he what do you care what happens to me? Why don't you eff off back to your adjectival sawmill?

Fearing we was both in danger of arrest I got his coat over his head and backed up against a gum tree he were soft and squirrely like some big slippery fish.

I heard Cons Farrell call something then Sergeant Hogan come out the door and stood surveying us with his thumbs tucked in his braces. Fatnecked Farrell were running his hand through his ginger hair he made me think of a hotel cat with its tail swishing back and forth.

What is we doing here says Dan.

Shutup you just wait.

Mum's the word said my brother turning his drunk attention to the sugar ants moving in and out of the untidy bark after a while he began to slowly unwind his sash.

O Ned said he I'm such a fool.

It took a moment to realise he were not apologising for his attack he were upset to see his precious sash were soiled with vomit. Now he unwound the whole 6 ft. of it he were as weepy as a girl with a gravy stain on her ballgown. I told him I would wash the damn thing if that would make him happier.

You've got a girlfriend he sneered.

Observing Cons Farrell's broad grin I pulled my brother to his feet and guided him along the street.

I see said Dan thats why you won't come home you finally got yourself an adjectival tart.

Shutup.

You got a donah.

You know I aint got any girl Dan.

True said he your ma is your donah as everybody knows.

Shutup.

Hubba hubba Mamma is your girl.

The traps behind us was enjoying this conversation it would be spread round the township by the morning.

You got a grudge against George cause he married your girl.

The coppers dropped about a chain behind us but that was close enough to hear my brother declare George King a better horse thief than I would ever be.

When I jabbed him in the ribs he put his vomit mouth against my ear. Don't panic cobber they didnt hear.

Button your effing lip.

He put the mouth back on my ear I did not like the slippery feel of it. Said he George can duff an effing mob of 20 horses without effing touching them. The b-----rs follow him.

I drew away but my little brother were as persistent as a hungry kitten.

George King has stole 500 horses and never been in adjectival gaol not even the effing lockup.

Not caring what George King done I marched my drunk brother up through Mrs Danaher's orchard leaving the smirking Constables to go back to their roost so then we cut across Horan's pasture which brought us back on the road beside the pub.

I told him Dan had to keep away from the mob and get himself some occupation. Though his crow black hair was falling in his eyes I know he were listening v. careful and so I offered to take him in as a partner dealing horses with me & Tom Lloyd.

Ned?

Yes Dan.



Lend me 10 bob will you.

I should of knocked him to the ground instead I opened my pay envelope and give him a 10/- note.

Don't pee it all away give some to your mother.

It were the 1st time he smiled at me all day. Thank you Ned thank you very much you'll have it back before you can say Jack Robertson.

I watched him lurch up onto the veranda to join his mates his long sleeves flapping his trousers dragging in the dirt a great cheer issuing forth as he entered.

These mates of his all talked a certain way and although their mouths was foul they was not criminals just young lads galloping to and fro to kill the time but from that day it were clear to me and Tom that the squatters would not tolerate my brother's friends for long.

In a very bad year even the richest farmers was cutting down saplings to feed their stock they was pressed hard themselves and so harsher than usual to their poor neighbours. Through his connections in government the squatter Whitty had been permitted to rent the common ground and as a result a poor man could no longer find a place to feed his stock in all the drought stricken plains. If you set your horse grazing beside the govt. road it would be taken by Whitty's drones and locked away in the pound. I have known 60 head of horses impounded in one day all of them belonging to poor farmers who was then required to leave their ploughing or harvest and travel to Oxley and when they got there perhaps they didnt have money to release them & so they would have to give a bill of sale or borrow money which is no easy matter.

By this time there was men so enraged by these abuses that they put the squatters' oats under the torch in revenge but I continued my labour at the sawmill keeping my head in the ground like the proverbial ostrich until they finally charged Dan with having stole a saddle. I will not say he never stole a saddle but on this occasion he were innocent and so I returned to the Greta Police Station to defend him.

I begun to furnish Constable John Farrell with the explanation of why

my young brother should not be charged but he interrupted when I had hardly started.

The police are sick of your criminal activity.

Whose activity mine?

No one else is present.

You must of confused me with someone else.

Are you Edward Kelly of Greta? He opened THE POLICE GAZETTE that proved I were wanted for the theft of a mare which were property of Henry Lydecker selector.

I said I never done it any more than Dan stole that saddle he should leave the poor people alone and look instead how the squatters made a game of the law getting the best land for themselves. I pointed out how Mr Whitty had used dummyming and peacocking to illegally gain his holdings on the Fifteen Mile Creek.

O I suppose we are picking on you he sneered. At that time I didnt know the policeman were Mr Whitty's son in law.

As a consequence of this false accusation against me I lost a day's wages while attending Oxley Police and another day's wages when the case were brought to court in Benalla where Mr Lydecker swore I never took his mare. Of course they had no choice but to acquit me.

I were grateful to Mr Lydecker for his words on my behalf and when I found a wild scrub bull I roped it and brung it to him as a gift. Whitty heard about this bull and of course decided that if a Kelly had give away a bull then it followed the bull must be stolen furthermore the legal owner must be Mr Whitty. I heard from many people I had stole this bull and would soon be charged for it.

I continued my work at the mill never knowing what day I might be summonsed. No charge were laid.

When Dan come to trial I took the day off to go with him to court. After he were declared innocent we went to the Moyhu Races where Mr Whitty were pointed out to me he were in the company of R.R. McBean and others.

I introduced myself.

Am I meant to know you said he looking at me like I were nothing but a tinker.



O you must know me Mr Whitty. I were very polite.  
No said he I don't know you at all.

When the coward rudely turned away I continued speaking. But I hear you're saying that I stole your bull.

Whitty revealed that wild mad eye you see the 1st time a brumby feels a saddle on his back. You were misinformed Kelly.

O I don't think so Mr Whitty.

He then admitted he lost a bull which were later found but he had never blamed me for stealing it. He said his son in law Cons Farrell told him Ned Kelly had stole the bull then sold it.

I was happy to have cleared my name but next week I learned that Whitty were now accusing me of stealing a mob of his calves. I could of taught him a lesson then but did not.

Finally our mares in foal strayed onto the common land so the mongrel Whitty impounded them. Now Tom and me had fed them horses at great expense paid for the stallion and otherwise invested considerable funds. When Whitty locked them in the pound I decided to show him he did not own this earth. I didnt burn his oats or nothing all I done were break the lock at the Oxley Pound and take back what I legally owned this did not seem a crime to me not then or now.

The very next day my brother Dan were ambling peacefully through Oxley township he were dragged from his horse by Cons Flood then frogmarched into the laundry of the Police Camp where the cowardly Flood threatened to plunge his face into the boiling sheets. The same Cons Flood that seduced our sister Annie now tortured my young brother until he pleaded for his life he scalded his arm he thrust his govt. revolver against Dan's empty belly saying he would arrest him for stealing horses from the pound.

Dan pleaded he were innocent.

Said Flood I will see those mares back in the pound by tomorrow morning or there will be an adjectival war with you the 1st to fall. Then he set Dan loose.

I did not know it yet but this were to be my last day of paid labour it

were noon which is dinner time at the sawmill so I were sitting with my mug of tea while the cook laid out the tucker table that is a sheet of canvas spread upon the ground. I saw a mighty cloud of dust and at its lead were my young brother he come galloping right into the yard scattering bark and dirt across the fresh baked yeast bread there are few greater offences in the bush.

I rose to greet him steering him and his mount away from the meal but even before he spoke I could see his injury not only on the arm which were already red and blistered but also the eyes. All the bluster had been leeched away it were a dreadful thing to see.

He explained his injury also reported Flood's threat and I wondered who could be so stupid to think they could hurt my family without no fear of justice. Dan were my little brother flesh & blood I sat him on a log to dress his burn with butter then fetched a slice of yeast bread spreading it thick with golden syrup and finally I give him a good feed of lamb stew.

At 5 o'clock I handed in my notice at the sawmill then we set out to the one place on earth we could rely on. Heading south we rode straight past my mother's selection all them dead and ringbarked trees was the grave of honest hope. That night we slept rough by the Four Mile Creek that is deep in the folds of Mr McBean's Kilfeera Station where our horses still found grass no matter there were a drought in all the world outside. The next day we moved invisibly across the squatter's rolling land he couldnt see me he didnt know I were a serpent inside his arteries a plague rat in his bowels.

By noon we cut the Magistrate's last barbed wire fence then we come into unselected land the smell of the explosive eucalyptus growing stronger and stronger. We climbed all afternoon through giant dry forests of mountain ash but it were not till night that we finally heard the water running through the damp grass of Bullock Creek. In the moonlight I could see a silver field of bracken on its edge were Harry Power's old bolthole there were now a fallen limb across its roof. The bark were severely injured but the old burlap cribs was strong enough to take my brother's sleeping body. All night my mind turned the lathe I would not leave Dan until I had him fit but when that day come I would teach his



torturers they could not steal our stock and threaten our families without suffering the consequences.

The Wombat Ranges is a rough steel wedge driven into the soft rich lands of Whitty and McBean & having entered through the Magistrate's Station. The drought were hard on this country but the squatter did not have to punish it the way a small selector did so all his acres was a contrast to my mother's where the grass were eaten to the roots. By Fifteen Mile Creek I come upon a pair of very well fed shire horses glistening in the moonlight also any number of healthy thoroughbreds some of them mares with foal nothing could be more different from the state of the stock when I arrived back home the following day the dairy cows' ribs was showing I counted 5 dead sheep their eyes picked out by the crows.

I give my 1st cooee from behind the cowbail a 2nd when I come in view of the hut.

After a few minutes my mother stepped out of the shade of the veranda raising her arm across her eyes.

What do you want she asked for I had not been to visit since the celebration of her wedding that were more than 2 yr. previous.

I want to see himself.

He's in Benalla at the Doctor's.

I jerked my head towards the sorrel mare which were standing very foul tempered in the paddock. Whats his horse doing here then?

The sorrel can't be rid she's got the splent.

I dismounted stepping up onto the veranda as my brother in law Bill Skilling appeared at the doorway. Now now Ned says he but when his eyes shifted in alarm I turned to catch my mother rushing at me with a piece of 4 x 2 which I swiftly encouraged her to drop. She began clutching me with her bandaged hand I have seen likenesses of mothers plump and soft their skin glowing with the luxuries of cream and roast beef but my mother's hands was large and dried like roots dug from the hard plains of Greta.

Don't hurt him cried she I could not bear another loss.

It is Whitty that will have the loss said I and told her how they tortured Dan and stole my horses. It is time they felt a little pain themselves.

Don't do nothing she said you go back to work.  
I've given up my job Ma I have come to steal them horses like you wanted.

My mother give a queer little howl and then she were in my arms completely I felt her poor hard body wracked by sobs.  
I never meant to put you in harm's way I don't want you stealing nothing.

Shush shush said I it were only as I held her that I knew how deep I loved her we was grown together like 2 branches of an old wisteria.  
What can I do for you Ned?

George King stood at the corner of the hut with his carbine at the hip his finger on the trigger but from that position he could not hit a wombat's arse and I could of knocked him down at least I thought so.

Young Dan's been blowing you can make a mob of horses follow you he says you learned it from the savages in Arizona.

George showed me his big white teeth. You reckon that is blowing do you Ned?

It is a knowledge I have need of George.

My mother said they had some spare money she would rather give it to me than be the cause of me being lagged once more.

I told her money were not my concern I meant to impound the squatter's best fed horses.

I aint got no time for this malarkey said George King what is it you want?

Mr Whitty's got a big mob out the back of Myrrhee they look like they been eating pretty well.

George smiled again but it were nothing soft or friendly. Ellen said he go put the kettle on.

I noticed how my mother obediently did the Yankee's bidding and this sickened me but it were not my business so him and me walked over to the horse paddock where we leaned against the rails staring at his lame horse a while.

When I come here Ned I were prepared to be your mate I would not marry your ma until you was out of prison. You could of been my partner then but you as good as told me to shove it up my blot.



True enough.

If you want to pinch a few of Whitty's ponies you don't need my permission.

I want to take a whole adjectival mob of them.

Ask Dan and Jem to help you. Or Tom Lloyd.

I don't want no one getting scalded for what I do I want you to teach me what you learned from them savages.

He didnt say nothing so we stayed at the rails looking at his mare trying to chew the bandage off her leg. After a while my mother called from the hut door that the tea were made.

Very well said George at last we'll do this one job together we'll borrow 50 horses from Mr Whitty in a night.

We can take them into the Wombat.

No we'll run them up across the Murray into New South Wales we'll cut the proceeds  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  now go on I can see your girlfriend has got your tea for you.

He climbed into the paddock I gone back in the hut to sit at the old table with my mother.

You won't be at war with George no more she said her fingernails all broken her knuckles swollen from her labours.

I held her hand against my cheek.

He's a good man George said she.

I could not say he werent.

I knew horses all my life but it took a Yank to show me what a contrary bugger the horse can be if you go towards it then it runs off if you turn your back it cannot keep from following. George King needed no mare or stallion or oats or whip or halter to start them horses walking he needed nothing but himself and he drew them away from the plains of Myrreece and Kilfeera using nothing more than their own curiosity. I never seen such a picture as this previously there was 50 thoroughbreds swinging along in that easy canter their heads down all in single file trailing George King's Arab up into the ranges.

Never having been a thief before I were surprised to discover what a

mighty pleasure stealing from the rich could be. When it come the squatters' turn to suffer they could not bear their punishment they was immediately screaming like stuck pigs calling public meetings about the outrage while all the time I lived on their back door more than once sitting on my horse to watch McBean eat tea & when his dogs was going wild he could do no more than stare out into the wild colonial dark. He did not own that country he never could.

Soon others was drawn into the ranges to be with us at Bullock Creek they come not to avoid honest graft the opposite when you stayed with me and Dan you would leave your grog behind and work beside us from dawn to dusk thus in the middle of that wilderness we cleared the flats and planted crops. We was building a world where we would be left alone.

Joe Byrne is now reported to be a Depraved Criminal well the 1st thing he done at Bullock Creek were construct a sluice for gold in other words he begun one of them Secondary Industries the government is so keen about. O he were flash his mood cd. swing back and forth like the tail of a cranky horse but you could say the same thing of the sainted Mr Whitty. Joe brought along Aaron Sherritt they was mates since birth at night they slept beside the fire curled up like cattle dogs upon the earth also they had a queer and private way of conversing they said THAT PLACE & THAT COVE & THAT THING and only they knew what it meant. They sat by the fire smoking their BLACK SMOKE they gone as mellow as 2 old Chinamen and very even in their temperaments.

I were most surprised one morning to see Steve Hart had found his way to us he were the horrid thing who had previously worn a dress and now I found him sitting on his horse surveying our achievements in the wilderness.

Nice horses.

I threw a stone & hit his gelding on the rump it reared and started.

Well eff you he cried I have ridden 2 adjectival days to be here Dan's my mate you well recall.

Well now you can ride 2 adjectival days back and if I get any visits from the traps I'll know where they got the information & I'll come find you wherever you are hiding then I'll break your skinny little neck.

You think I'm a sissy but I aint.



I don't think nothing about you.

Well I'm Steve Hart he said my horse is effed and I aint eaten in a day  
With that the bandy little thing dismounted it were disturbing to see  
his confidence out of proportion to his weight and age.

I aint a sissy he repeated.

I had a fascination about him I suppose and when he announced he  
would put his horse in my paddock I did not prevent him. It were a fine  
bay mare long necked fully 16 1/2 hands & v. strong I couldnt see how a  
boy that age would get the money for an animal like that. The saddle  
were an old fashioned Hungarian it were very worn and cracked I kept  
my hands in the pockets as he lay it across the fence.

I'm a Lady Clare Boy he said.

I pushed my hands deeper in the pockets.

Wisely he come no closer I'll tell you what I am said he.

That were a door I did not wish to open I told him we would have a  
cup of tea and then he could depart.

Why I tolerated them secretive and fervent eyes staring out at me  
through the smoke I cannot think it is a wonder I did not evict Steve  
Hart that day or the next for he quickly revealed himself a pesky talker  
full of assumptions about horses and history and every subject from the  
defeat of O'Brien to the correct way to plait a greenhide whip.

Joe Byrne were the scholar amongst us many is the poem he wrote  
the song he sang but Joe were inclined to be quiet in his opinions unless  
riled. By contrast you would think Steve Hart were a Professor to hear  
him on the state of Ireland blah blah blah rattling off the names of his  
heroes Robert Emmett & Thomas Meagher & Smith O'Brien he never  
seen them men but he were like a girl living in Romances and Histories  
always thinking of a braver better time.

Joe and me occupied the waking world we knew our hard circum-  
stances was made by Whitty and McBean who picked the eyes out of the  
country with the connivance of the politicians and police. Against their  
force all this queer boy's daydreaming were no defence at all his Irish

martyrs couldnt get us decent land not even remove our cows from Oxley  
Pound. The following morning I told him he had better leave.

He aint a bad little fellow said Joe Byrne.

He talks too adjectival much.

Theres some of it is educational.

He don't vex you?

He aint doing no damage said Joe besides he's company for Dan.

So I give Dan and Steve 5/- packing them off to Benalla for oatmeal  
and potatoes thank God to have a little peace.

3 days later I were butchering a kangaroo beside the creek stripping  
back the fur to reveal the shiny tight blue belly when I heard the crack  
of a breaking stick. Living in that valley were like inhabiting the insides  
of a banjo that noise were like a gunshot and I immediately detected 2  
riders threading their way through the stripy shadow of the mountain  
ash. At 1st I thought it were Kate and Maggie then the front woman  
passed into the full sunshine and it were Dan he had been absent only 3  
days and now he were wearing a bright blue dress his face blacked from  
ear to ear. Behind him come the smudge lipped culprit Steven Hart.

My brother and the strange boy rode directly up to me their horses  
stood less than one yd. away I tore out the kangaroo guts and threw them  
down into the dust I commanded Steve Hart to climb down from his  
horse.

Dan obeyed on Steve's behalf and he had a stupid grin about his coal  
black phiz as he smoothed down the rumped dress it were bright new  
satin the label still hanging from its breast. When Dan held out his hand  
to me a single drop of blood formed in his palm like a saint in a Holy  
Picture then Steve Hart reached out his paw and I could see they had  
both sworn some oath together. Steve Hart's eyes was bright and secret I  
dragged him off his horse and threw him down. He scrambled to his feet.

You aint got no reason to hit me.

I roared at Dan to get the dress off.

Steve Hart ordered Dan to disobey he told me he could make an  
explanation but I said to shut his gob then turned on Dan to demand  
where they got the dresses and how much they paid. He answered they



come from Mrs Goodman's in Winton he confessed they had stole them and for that mighty stupidity I kicked him up the quoit.

Hart sprung at me though I caught his wrist with one hand and slapped him down very hard with the other when he rose his fuzzy lip were bleeding his eyes was filled with tears. I told him I were leaving the camp and expected him to be gone when I returned.

I left the  $\frac{1}{2}$  butchered kangaroo for whatever man or beast could use it then I collected the dresses immediately setting off for Winton I were hoping to arrive before charges was pressed against my brother. After hard riding and a bad night's rest I come into the township and made my enquires and were directed to a broken backed cottage on the high ground above the Seven Mile Creek this were the residence of Davin Goodman hawker it were built in the middle of a wagon graveyard with spare wheels rusted springs and bits of timber over which was scattered the droppings of ducks it were a most distinctive odour. I untied the bundle and carried it up to the house.

My Cuban heels was hardly on the veranda before the door creaked open and a big bosomed woman with a lot of red hair and creamy white skin asked me what I wanted. I told Mrs Goodman I were returning her husband's merchandise but as she were inspecting the contents of the bundle a policeman appeared suddenly at the door.

This is him she cried arrest him Fitzy.

I told the Constable I had not stolen nothing.

You're all adjectival Kellys cried the woman whats the adjectival difference it all goes in the one pot.

And which adjectival Kelly is this asks the trap kind of humorous.

I am Ned Kelly.

Whereupon much to Mrs Goodman's consternation and my own considerable surprise the policeman seized me warmly by the hand. My brother has give me written orders to take you dancing.

Jesus Fitzy cried Mrs Goodman wait a mo.

The Constable ignored her. I am Alex Fitzpatrick he said and you are the cove what knocked the bark off my brother John at the Police Commissioner's in Melbourne. You ate roast beef through the night in Richmond Barracks.

Roast lamb.

Thats right and you will have a jar with me this very adjectival night.

Fitzy this b---r is a thief.

Shutup Amelia said Fitzpatrick lets look at them dresses.

With that we entered Mrs Goodman's front parlour where a great deal of liquor and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  eaten leg of boiled mutton were in evidence and Cons Fitzpatrick opened my bundle to poke around with his whip lifting one dress then the other I thought him very like his brother he had the Devil in him.

Now heres a nice one Amelia.

Thats worth 2 adjectival pounds.

Heres another.

Thats 3 guineas.

O the Constable winked at me now Mrs Goodman has moved onto GUINEAS.

I said I only come to return the dresses I had no money for further purchase but Fitzpatrick handed them to Mrs Goodman saying she should put them on to show us how they looked again I were surprised to see her retire meekly behind a screen & Fitzpatrick poured me a sherry I would rather have had the mutton as I had not eaten for the best part of 2 days. He said his brother often spoke of me.

Soon enough Mrs Goodman appeared in a bright red dress it had a very large bustle her good temper had returned she told me I were a handsome lad I should dance with her.

Go on cried Fitzpatrick take a turn.

Mrs Goodman come towards me smiling her arms outstretched but I were shy and couldnt dance and when she lowered her arms I seen I had insulted her.

Mr Kelly is not here for dancing said Fitzpatrick he's here for shopping.

Mrs Goodman then showed us several other dresses from her stock but from this point she were sullen and again thought me her enemy.

Very good says Fitzpatrick now you can wrap up the blue and the red both. He had a way with him I never seen in another man insulting the woman even as he charmed her. Mrs Goodman presented both parcels to Fitzpatrick then told him she were sure he would pay his bill.



O yes I will give it to you double.

O you will will you?

Yes both front and back.

I begun to make my excuses thinking to find a feed and bed at Eleven Mile Creek but Cons Fitzpatrick winked at me saying I would either find a dancing partner of my liking or else go to the lockup the choice were mine. We stepped out into the dark and left Mrs Goodman rejected in her house I know for a fact that it were on account of this rejection that she later charged Dan Kelly and Tom and Jack Lloyd with Intent to Rape and Breaking and Entering and Stealing. Thus THE BEECHWORTH ADVERTISER wrote it up:

*In the neighbourhood of Greta for many years there has lived a regular Gang of young ruffians who from their infancy were brought up as rogues and vagabonds and who have been constantly in trouble and on Sunday we learnt that though it is but a short time since some of them have been released from gaol where they have been serving sentences for horse stealing a little game with which they are thoroughly au fait they have again indulged in their pranks.*

It is more or less true about the horse stealing but there is no mention of how I earned Mrs Goodman's enmity you will notice that true & secret part of the history is left to me.

Every poor farmboy knows that Beechworth is the place for dancing you would not put the township of Winton in the same division so when the Constable and I ambled our horses along the middle of the dark & mucky road beside the Seven Mile Creek I said we must postpone that particular pleasure to another date.

Come on old man can't you hear the waltz playing?

There were no music other than what were made by a cowbell down on the floodplain but Dan's fate were in Fitzpatrick's hands. When we come upon the deep wagon ruts which is named Benalla Road the trap leaned his grog sour mouth towards my ear whispering I deserved an official commendation for returning the dresses to Mrs Goodman.

I had no clue what a commendation were but when the policeman steered his horse towards Benalla I had no intention of abandoning him. I seen all the official memorandums said he they all come across my desk y'know.

Memorandum were more Greek I didnt know.

I seen all the memorandums agin you Ned Kelly but now I have a different type of information to lay against your name.

What is that I asked v. alarmed.

What is that he cried so loud he spooked his gelding into a short bolt. What is that he said and seemed to forget what he were about to say. This is in confidence he finally announced but I am going to be the Sergeant in Benalla bye and bye so then you'll have a mate who knows you Ned Kelly. You won't be just an adjectival scoundrel in a memorandum do you follow me?

I don't.

O Christ man I am John Fitzpatrick's adjectival brother I'll look out for you and your brother too.

How do you mean look out for?

No charges for the larceny of them dresses how's that for a start?

Then I knew my 2 day ride were worth it every inch & mile I shook his hand with great relief.

Now he cried catch me if you can.

Were there ever trap like him? Not in my experience. He shot off at a canter through the trees and though my mare were weary she always had great heart and now stuck behind the gelding in and out the gums under the death dealing branches over the crabholes the full 8 mi. We thundered across the Broken River Bridge and into Arundel Street right outside the cells where I had previously suffered but Fitzpatrick had no interest in the law he were quickly dismounted he untied Mrs Goodman's parcels then tethered his horse at the rail of the bootmaker's on the opposite side of the road.

What about some water for the horses?

Directly Ned directly.

I followed his excited footsteps as he rushed through a gate up onto



the wide and dark veranda knocking loudly and uttering a cry I have heard so often from the other side.

Police open up.

The order were rapidly obeyed and there come a female voice atop Fitzpatrick's laughter as the pair of them tumbled into the house. A lamp were quickly lit revealing our hostess as a smiling sturdy woman with her hair done up in a kerchief as if for bed. She produced a tray of liquors which Fitzpatrick drunk from thirstily.

2 much younger ladies soon come into the room if they had been sleeping they give no sign of weariness their eyes was bright & their hair were coifed. One were a tall pretty blonde very jolly and bosomy she immediately begun waltzing with Fitzpatrick though there were no music none at all.

The 2nd girl could be no more than 5 ft. tall but her beauty were much finer more delicate her hair were the colour of a crow's wings glistening it would reflect the colour of the sky. Her back were slender with a lovely sweep to it her shoulders was straight her head held high. When she come into my arms she smelled of soap and pine trees and I judged she were 16 or 17 yr. of age.

I confessed immediately I could not dance and she said she would teach me and she fit into my arms as light as a summer breeze. Her eyes were green her skin v. white as it is with girls not long off the boat from home and she and her friend begun to sing and sway it being too late to play the piano Dee Dah Dee Dah.

She said her name were Mary Hearn and she had come from the village of Templecrone just this past year she said I were a marvellous student did ever anyone learn the steps so rapidly? I were suddenly more happy than I had ever hoped to be.

Having been 2 days in the saddle I now wished out loud I had a clean shirt and had combed the burrs out of my hair but she said I shouldn't worry for her own da were a blacksmith and farrier back home so the smell of horses made me most familiar and she lay her glossy head against my chest and we danced around the room with Mrs Robinson sitting in her chair knitting a long pink scarf.

No matter what skullduggery and death Fitzy later caused no matter

how great a coward & liar he proved himself I still believe he never wanted no more than this in life and when he danced with that bosomy Belinda at Mrs Robinson's there were no malice in him.

We all collapsed out of breath on the pretty sofas they was upholstered in expensive velvet with red & yellow roses in panels at the back and even little cloths to keep the hair oil from staining.

Then Fitzpatrick brought out them parcels and the girls was excited and wondering what could be inside although they knew very well of course.

As the whole world now understands Fitzpatrick were a very poor policeman but he might have worked in a haberdashery and made a honest living off it. He presented one dress to Belinda while I give the other to Mary Hearn and both girls cried out in happiness Mary kissing me on both my cheeks.

The girls departed to try on their gifts so Mrs Robinson brought out the cold leg of lamb cutting us great slabs I were very hungry but knew I must attend to my horse who had not been watered yet. Coming back inside the house I heard my name called out Ned Kelly Ned Kelly.

I followed the call along the passage it were very dark I come around a dogleg and there I found an open door and Mary Hearn standing in candlelight she were holding the back of the dress together with her hand.

Ned you'll hook me up.

She turned and took her hand away the dress sliding from her to the floor she tasted like butter shortbread I told her what a sweet & pretty thing she were and she put her hand across my mouth and buried her face into my beard.

My daughter I cannot guess how old you are so I ask you not to read no more until you have children of your own even then perhaps you will be like me you will not wish to see inside your parents' door. But do not burn this or destroy what follows I will want it for myself to remember what a joy it were to fall in love.

Then we was playing what they call THE GAME you never knew so many hooks and buttons and sweet smelling things we took them off her one by one until she lay across her bed there were no sin for so did God make her skin so white her hair as black as night her eyes green and her



lips smiling. She were a teacher with a mighty vocation pulling and dragging when I took her she were slender and strong as a deer her breasts small but very full she threw back her head offering her pale throat to me I run her to ground I took her breasts took them in my mouth sucking & suckling I didnt know whose milk I stole but she were crying out and holding my hair it were the best thing that happened to me in my life.

We lay close together afterwards and smiled at each other and it were only when her babe awoke that I were upset. I had not known she were the mother of a child and I were ashamed to have acted thus.

Leaving well ahead of dawn I set off back across the rich flats heading up towards the distant Wombat Ranges they was beyond sight of the streets of Benalla. 2 days later I turned down beside Bullock Creek I were not prepared for what I seen.

Dan and Steve Hart had blazed a ferocious track up a gully along a ridge then down a hillside filled with wombat holes I should of been angry that Steve were still in residence but were I not only 24 yr. old with a new present handed me by Mr McBean who generously donated a mare named Music to my care? Over 16 hands she were square backed with a good barrel we was soon very tight together she knew how to oblige my every wish. No sooner was we arrived from our long journey but she could feel the excitement in the air she would not miss no challenges so in a mo I were galloping her along the flats leaning from the saddle to pick up a handkerchief between my teeth. I hurdled cockatoo fences whilst kneeling on her back and performed a dozen such acts of derring do and yet there were not one instant of this time I could forget that slender girl with her little baby. I desired her so very badly I had little time to think of Steve Hart I lay sleepless in my crib at night wondering what sort of coward would abandon a young Catholic girl to such a life of shame.

Next day I said I were taking the gold dust to the Assay Office in Benalla I didnt care if the others believed the lie or no.

On a cold frosty dawn I appeared at Mrs Goodman's house in Winton there were a child already out of bed throwing food to all the ducks but

it took a long while for her father to hear my knocking. I told him I wished to buy a dress from his missus.

He informed me Mrs Goodman were still in bed but I could help myself he brung me inside and I seen the same mutton still sitting on the table with the addition of a snotty boy eating porridge from a bowl. A great number of dresses was thrown carelessly upon a sofa and amongst them I found a red one with sequins on its front. Davis Goodman claimed its price were £3 I offered £2 he could take it or leave it. He said he would take it so I give him the money then set off through the blustering cold wind to Benalla thence across the bridge and down to Arundel Street.

The very moment I come round the corner Mary Hearn stepped out to fetch the milk she were wearing a bright yellow cotton dress and for the 1st time I feared the baby's father were at home. When she seen me I tipped my hat as if just passing but her face lit up she didnt care who were watching her run down the steps and I lifted her up kissing her on the lips in broad daylight. All this occurred no more than 20 ft. from the courthouse where I were 1st arraigned but so does life swing like a river cuts its banks in the boil of flood. I were a frightened boy no more.

Sir says she what brings you here of a cold morning?

I set her down she were lithe & slender moving from one foot to the other in a kind of jig. So this is love I thought.

I brought a wee present.

You did did you said she smiling all the time.

I did.

You want to give it to me?

I aint wrapped it yet.

O why go to all that trouble when you only take the paper off?

Inside the house it were dark and cosy as a swallow's nest I were prepared to kiss her again but she were v. busy flitting here to there attending to her tasks. Having swept out the firebox of the stove and laid the kindling she now put the match to it.

I asked where were the babe.

O he's a fierce little sleeper don't you worry. She ran a spoon across the top of the milk skin you didnt need to be a dairy farmer to see it



were v. good milk there is no equal to the river flats at Benalla. Here she says taste the cream.

She put the spoon in my mouth then she stole the creamy milk back from me.

Whats this said she?

She had felt the gift bump against her so I said she might as well unwrap as crush it. Her lips were full & wide & very nicely shaped I never saw the like of her before she were so wonderfully familiar.

The kitchen were very dim and the kindling native pine so it were catching in the firebox with many small explosions. Mary took the gift from inside my shirt brushing it against her cheek the way I seen my mother touch a red rose to her face.

Silk she exclaimed then let the dress drop against her it were my flag I couldnt think a single thought nor see anything other than herself and I picked her up to hold her close against me. She were a gazelle although I never saw a gazelle she were a foal I carried her around the kitchen <sup>1/2</sup> drunk in happiness she had that dear Irish smell of homemade soap & ashes in her hair I loved her so I told her.

The kindling were all blazing she laughed happily but had yet to load the firebox and place the milk upon the stove. Lifting her even higher I kissed her throat and she moaned and I lifted her higher still I put my lips against her bodice.

Parting with reluctance we set the split wood in the box then she poured milk into a copper pan her hands was trembling. I stood behind her my arms around her waist waiting for the milk to simmer she swayed and hummed a little song about a girl who dreamt of great white horses.

I told her I had never imagined marrying anyone but now I could imagine what a peaceful life a man might have she turned towards me and I saw her eyes gone dark and serious. She put her finger against my lips.

Don't never talk like that you must not.

I begged her pardon she put her arms around my neck and kissed me further not only lips and eyes but also beard and moustache I were pleased I had washed my hair and beard in Ryan's Creek.

Soon as the milk come to the boil she poured it into a bowl setting a

muslin cloth across the top then she checked the fire box and reduced the draft. I asked her would she like to try her dress and escorted her along the wide dark corridor towards her room. Her baby were asleep in the middle of the bed a fine fair haired boy with red pouting lips and chubby legs and she lifted him ever so gently placing him in an open drawer then drawing a blanket over him.

Her yellow dress were now dark & wet with mother's milk and what I wanted I wanted right or wrong I do not know if it were a sin or not a sin but we was both v. happy and lay in bed that morning long.

When the Clerk of Court opened up across the road my calm and tender Mary lay warm against my chest I were listening to Mr Grieves the bootmaker next door and I heard each tack he hammered then presently her babe awoke and I watched her feed him from them breasts which was all the more miraculous for their tidy size. The sucking baby lay his hand upon her chest he should have a father to look after him and it were then I got it into my head that I would make application for that post.

Soon as we heard the household stirring Mary said she must set to her chores Mrs Robinson were her employer after all.

I asked your mother when next I could see her. She said I would have to wait until Friday week this were almost 10 days in the future I rode back to Bullock Creek not knowing how to pass the days.

The 1st warning were not the gunshots but a tradesman's cart abandoned one wheel sunk into a wombat hole the name O'Reilly painted on the sides. This violence had struck not long before and although the horses was gone the dung were still fresh though no longer warm to touch. Some large and heavy object had been dragged from the cart cutting a great yellow gouge through the sedge & bracken to a stand of wattles at which point it become a juggernaut crashing through the barrier and breaking saplings <sup>1/2</sup> way along their length.

I were riding towards the injured wattles when I heard a carbine bark and next come the snap of a pistol so I slipped off and crawled through the sedge the air were ripe with the fruity odour of BLACK SMOKE or



OYOUKNOW call it what you will. At the edge of cleared land I witnessed our camp in huge upheaval my Arab having leapt the fence were heading back across the creek I never seen him again my thoroughbred mares was all in a state of great excitement whinnying and racing round the yard.

Steve Hart had my Colt .31 he were blazing away bang bang bang firing murderously at the hut.

I had no idea who he were intent on harming I ran towards him but once I was in his range he shouted and the door to the hut swung open and out strolled Dan & Joe Byrne & Aaron Sherritt they might have been walking out of church so indolent and pacific did they seem. Joe bestowed on me a queerly sweet and happy smile but his interest were in the door which had taken all the fire now he kneeled before picking dreamily at the splinters with his knife. I were very confused and angry most particularly at Steve Hart who I had ordered to depart some time previous.

Then a strange voice says Would you happen to be the Ned that I am waiting for?

I beheld a big fat old Irishman he were seated on a log behind me. Though I never seen his lardy face before it were clear from the particular muscles of his forearm he were a blacksmith. This log he now straddled had been surrounded not 2 days before by bracken which were now all trampled flat. Between the log and creek was a set of bellows and the scattered remains of a forge. All this I noted in a moment also that there were a 2nd log that must of been used as his anvil for it were very burnt. Lastly a great rusty ballast tank with  $\frac{1}{2}$  its side cut out.

I asked who the hell he were.

He said he were John O'Reilly and he could see I were not happy. He also were unhappy and would remain so until he were paid the transport of the ballast tank plus the steel in the said tank also the cost of his labour for cutting the iron plate to fit the inside of the cabin door. He said he never did nothing on the cross before but THE LITTLE CROPPY BOY had bailed him up at the village of Tatong tempting him with a good plump poddy calf he promised to butcher for him. He were a widower said he and his 7 offspring was staying at present with his sister in Winton all of them was hungry otherwise he would never of give up this ballast

tank so cheap. In any case he had seen no cattle since Ryan's Creek outside Tatong merely a great number of fancy horses in this very camp he noted them most particular.

I told him our stock was legally obtained and he would be paid as promised.

When I started for Steve Hart he anticipated me coming out to meet me offering back my Colt .31.

Now don't say nothing yet said he.

Holstering the pistol in my belt I told him he had disobeyed my direct order.

No I went a day along the track.

Then?

Then a great opportunity presented itself.

Yes said I the opportunity to betray our camp to this adjectival blacksmith.

Betray you he cried his eyes suddenly brim full. Why I'd rather burn in adjectival Hell than betray you and at this he threw his hat upon the ground. O Jesus you don't remember who I am.

No I don't.

When you 1st set eyes on me I were 8 yr. old.

You're mistaken.

No I aint you was the runner for Harry Power and you brung my da sufficient cash to make the rent o yes you did Ned Kelly then you done it twice more each time when the government was about to seize our land.

I had no memory of this at all.

Near Wangaratta said he then provided a list of all the places he had spied me in the intervening years the race courses the ploughing contests he seen me whip Wild Wright and lately he heard I were stealing horses from under Whitty's nose.

I come to join your gang. There aint much of me he said but what there is is very good.

I couldnt help but allow myself to admire his pluck.

I'll help you anyway you wish said he.

There aint no gang son.



You are the Captain you give an order they obey.  
Everyone but you it seems.

I would never of come back except I saw a way to assist you and your door is armour plated as a consequence.

But look at that old blacksmith Steven Hart look at his lardy old face and his droopy adjectival eyes then tell me you don't reckon he won't be happy to provide my whereabouts to Whitty.

I thought of that so I bound pennies across his eyes. I warrant the old b---r don't know where he is.

And his payment?

It is a poddy calf thats all and how I make the payment is my concern not yours.

You ever duff a poddy calf before?

He hesitated.

Killed a beast?

I give him my hand and word said Hart.

I told him he were relieved of this obligation. Joe and me will manage the poddy calf said I and we will butcher and salt it down if that is what your man desires. Then when all is done you fix them pennies on his eyes and see him and his meat home to Winton. Then you can piss off to your beloved da in Wangaratta and the pair of you sing your rebel songs and tell each other stories about Meagher and O'Connell but don't come back here Steve. There aint no gang.

I would help any way you wish.

I'm obliged.

I could write a coffin letter to Mr Whitty I can make them very edifying.

No.

You think I am a sissy but thats something I can explain.

No you can't and you must excuse me for I have business to attend to.

Whatever you wish to call it black smoke or yen pok or oyouknow the substance were a tonic for Joe's character. Grog made him fierce & angry

but the smoke turned all his movements as slow and gentle as butter melting in the sun. While he bled the bull calf I went to find a rope to raise it on a gallows for the butchering but when I come back the dead beast were already on its back with a small hole cut into its brisket. Joe winked and fitted a sharpened stick into the hole and lo the creature were neatly propped up leaning a fraction to the side.

No need for rope old man.

In a single long and lazy movement he had the skin off one side then he turned the carcass and propped it on the other to complete the exercise. Then with an axe he sundered the middle of the brisket from whence the tail were slit by a knife. There were never any sign of rush or urgency but within 20 minutes the carcass were cut into 4 pieces and Joe were wandering off to see Aaron about a little bit of THING or so he named it.

I called the younger lads to help deliver the bounty onto the blacksmith's cart but the old Irishman then announced he never travelled in the dusk for fear of bushrangers. He could not be persuaded out of our camp until morning when Steve & Dan & me must tote tongs & hammers & bellows out along the valley to his abandoned cart we then must line its floor with green leafy gum branches and lay the clean meat on top and cover it with wet bags then we must harness his horses and bind the pennies to his eyes. Even then we was a long way from being quit of him.

I put Steve Hart behind the reins this time I would personally escort the boy away.

Say goodbye I told my brother Dan for you won't be seeing Mr Hart no more.

It were v. difficult country for a wagon we had a long day getting as far as Tatong. When we begun following the rutted track beside Kilfeera it were only our 2nd morning and already the meat were on the nose. At Hansen's selection we purchased salt to preserve it as best we could.

At midday we caught sight of a solitary mounted policeman and I immediately commanded the blacksmith to remove his blindfold which he done with great eagerness tho when he seen the copper cantering towards us he tried to tie the pennies on again crying out he would be



arrested he had done no wrong. I advised him shut his gob but he were in a panic even as he obeyed.

Steve Hart remained round shouldered and very still on the bench seat I give him my Colt .31 telling him to shoot the blacksmith if he did not behave.

Cons Fitzpatrick approached and begun to circle round my sweaty mare. Whats all this then Kelly?

Sir cried the blacksmith let me answer.

I seen he were waddling urgently back along the track towards us his blindfold pulled back up over his left eye while his right hand clutched the britches he had previously unbuttoned for his comfort.

Fitzpatrick had his back turned to this vision splendid but I seen Steve Hart aim the Colt and heard the hammer strike the nipple thank Jesus I give the boy an empty gun.

He's shooting me cried the blacksmith.

Shutup said Fitzpatrick turning to ride past Steve Hart who had already slid the useless weapon in his pants. It were the flies that attracted the policeman's interest they was gathering above the stolen meat as thick as priests at a wedding feast. When Fitzpatrick circled twice around the cart he leaned down to inspect the bumpy hessian bags the flies rose in a cloud to meet him.

At ease said he.

Steve Hart had already done time in prison he put his feet obediently astride his arms behind his back.

Not you cried Fitzpatrick I'm addressing the adjectival flies then he burst out into a great gale of laughter. The blacksmith saw the situation was more complicated than he had imagined he smiled at me uncertainly.

Well done said Fitzpatrick trotting back to me. Blessed if they aint the best turned out flies I ever seen.

That sent him into another laughing fit. Steve Hart were mortified by the joke against him but then it turned more serious and Fitzpatrick loudly announced he wished to interview me about horses stolen from Kilfeera Station and I accompanied him a chain or so away into the shade of a big old river gum while Hart stared nervously in our direction.

I asked Fitzpatrick did he have a warrant and in answer he leant confidentially towards me and tapped his beaky nose.

Theres no adjectival warrant you sap I'm still drunk I spent the night with old McBean now theres a man who can put away the piss.

So where is you headed?

Eleven Mile Creek as chance would have it.

Then you're going in the wrong direction.

Fitzpatrick removed a compass from a leather pouch but seeming unable to concentrate he tucked it away and smiled at me companionably. I am in love said he.

That adjectival blacksmith is listening.

Eff the blacksmith he can't hear nothing but what do you think of my information. I don't give a damn what no one says but I still need your particular blessing old man.

Who are you in love with?

I told you.

You did not.

It is your sister Kate as I said its very queer that we should meet out here a 100 mi. from nowhere when I've been thinking of you all week long.

But it were even more queer to think of Alex Fitzpatrick laying his sour moustache upon Kate's 14 yr. old mouth every bit as appetising as seeing Harry Power's ugly feet sticking out the bottom of my mother's bed.

Excuse me Sir called the blacksmith if you are arresting this gentleman can I go on now?

O Ned whispered Fitzpatrick she's so fresh & spirited she has such a pretty set to her neck don't frown at me old boy you come and see how I behave with her. He pulled out his compass. Aint it north east from here?

It were due north but that were not the point I told him we was heading for Benalla.

At this Fitzpatrick abruptly swung his horse away acting in an officious way towards the blacksmith who he directed to drove his mob of blowflies to wherever they belonged or he would have him on a serious offence.



O thank you said the blacksmith you're a fine man Sir could I enquire your name?

Eff off said Fitzpatrick.

Yes Sir.

What about me asked Steve Hart.

I'm taking Ned Kelly in to Benalla said Fitzpatrick you may accompany him if you wish.

I tipped Steve the wink but he were not soothed.

What are you effing lagging him for said he Ned Kelly is a better adjectival man than all your family combined.

Do you want to come in with him yes or no? It will be no problem for you to share his cell.

The boy stared back in silent misery.

Then eff off said the Cons.

Hart mounted the buckboard beside the blacksmith he did not look at me but as he flicked the reins his slumped body declared all his shame and the cart slowly pulled away towards the rainclouds in the north.

You won't come with me to see your sister asked Fitzpatrick.

Not just now mate.

You're set on Benalla?

I am indeed.

You know you're an adjectival fool he said peevishly removing his compass once again. You should of consulted me before you fell for that woman.

I could say the same about you and my sister.

Mary aint the girl for you Kelly I know her character I wrote to my brother just yesterday I told him I feared I done you a very bad turn when I made the introduction.

This were all water off a duck's bum to me I knew it were the ignorance that sort of male is prey to.

You don't know my character Alex.

You always think yourself top dog said he then waited as if he had asked a question. You think yourself the better horseman he suggested.

When I did not answer the erratic fellow dug his heels into the gelding's flank and he were off I admit he sat him very nicely there were

never daylight seen between him and the saddle though he drove his horse so hard he might of killed him. 3 hr. later I found him waiting near the Broken River bridge the poor animal's flanks all wet with sweat and blood from his military spurs.

You are an adjectival fool he said then rode away again.

It is a generally accepted fact that a man once lagged by coppers will be abandoned by his mates this is not cowardice but common sense for the traps are always on the hunt for so called KNOWN ASSOCIATES who will be well advised to stay as far from the town as possible. Steve Hart knew this but didnt care and once his blacksmith were delivered to Winton he headed directly to Benalla Police Station. Informed I were not known there he thought them liars so he loitered on the street outside waiting for the time when I would be marched from the lockup to the courthouse.

Meanwhile I were a free man sitting happily with your mother on Mrs Robinson's veranda the spring had now come on the jasmine tumbling from the front fence in great white fistfuls as fragrant as a young girl's handkerchief. On Sunday early we went to mass for me it were the 1st time in many years and when the priest heard my sins he said I must get married and I told him I would attend to that immediately. That afternoon I paid 2 quid to rent a fancy sulky from Davis Goodman he were a mighty robber but no one else were doing business on the Sunday then I drove the sulky out to Eleven Mile Creek to show my beloved and her baby to Mother. I had no fears about the meeting were not Mary Irish and Catholic and very agreeable in her manner?

My mother received us inside the hut she made the scones she poured the tea I cannot say there were outright rudeness but that afternoon she repaid me for my behaviour with her beaux. She and George King sat in their chairs stiff as boards they never looked at Mary until she stood to leave.

Very nice to have met you said my mother it were a branding iron laid upon my heart.

On our way back to Benalla I saw the tears flow down Mary's pretty



cheeks when I asked would she marry me she asked What about your mother's feelings I said my mother could go to Hell.

That night I took my good news to Fitzpatrick at his boardinghouse he said only an adjectival fool would marry Mary Hearn I demanded what he had against her but he dared not say nothing to my face. After I left him Fitzpatrick wrote a long letter to Mary its reason as badly tangled as Blind Freddy's fishing line but the gist of it were he loved me like a brother and would punish anyone who deceived me.

The following morning when I was sleeping Mary discovered this edict folded inside the handle of the milk billy she were so frightened by what she read she didnt even take the milk inside but gathered up her skirts and rushed down Bridge Street to the police stables. At that hour she saw no one save Steve Hart who were very cold & hungry but still maintaining his watch outside the lockup. Not knowing his connection to me Mary ran past into the stables where she wept and begged Fitzpatrick not to ruin her chance of happiness. What pleasure did it give the so called LADIES' MAN to see this beautiful woman's face contorted & wet with tears her lovely milky skin were crumpled like the letter in her hand.

Why are you so cruel to me she cried she could not see his face hidden in the shadow of the horse's flank. What have I ever done against you?

Tell him the truth Mary.

He will kill someone if I do.

You have my word as an officer Ned Kelly shall not harm you.

Its not me he'll hurt Fitzy.

This give the b----r pause to chew on his moustache looking Mary up and down. Who will he hurt Mary he finally asked and she turned her clear green eyes directly on himself.

Me?

I do not know.

Well girlie if you won't tell him the situation then I will undertake the duty for you.

Please Fitzy I beg you.

But his eyes was cold as he put his foot in the stirrup. You will tell him what you have hidden from him and I warrant he will take it calmly.

Steve Hart recognized Fitzpatrick as he come galloping out the stables like an adjectival mad thing and it is well known the policeman continued at this rate all the way to Winton where he visited the aforementioned Davis Goodman receiver hawker perjurer and from this lard bucket he purchased a small envelope of white powder and under Fitzpatrick's instruction Mrs Robinson made a glass of fresh lemonade loading it with honey before stirring in the drug.

Willie wagtails danced on the fence while my slender dark haired Mary give me the lemonade and watched me drink it.

When she took my hand hers were so clammy I asked if she was well. Dear says she I cannot marry you if you do not know the father of the child.

You told me it were a Mr Stuckey.

Mr Stuckey has another name.

O who is that?

He is also known as George King.

I heard the hateful truth but continued talking like a kangaroo will take those extra hops before it falls. Did George King promise he would marry you?

I knew he were married to your mother.

O God I groaned how could you let me take you to visit?

You wished it so much how could I refuse?

O they must of thought me such an effing fool.

They thought us both great fools dear.

Her sweet young face were deathly cold all joy abandoned. My hate for George King were deep and black as hard & cruel as a pike I should of killed him the day I come home from Pentridge he were wearing that yellow pullover my mother knitted I knew him then for what he were.

The chambers of my heart filled with melted steel the truth pushed like fire through my arteries and I roared out loud and jumped up to my feet. The drug had made my legs turn soft as dough.

Sit down dear.

I had no voice but threaded my way through the familiar house all the way to the back veranda where my saddle and bridle was waiting on



the rail. I were staggering like a drunk and as I tried to lift my saddle I heard Mary call for Fitzzy this made no sense at all.

It were very hard going down the steps towards the bootmaker's paddock but my mare were coming to meet me at the stile.

Where are we off to Neddy asked Fitzpatrick I didnt see where he appeared from.

Home said I.

Not today Ned.

He had handcuffs I took a swing at him but he got me in Hegans hold he could never have succeeded had I not been drugged. He got my arms behind my back and told me he admired me more than any man he ever met I felt the shackles pinch which were pretty much the last thing I remember before waking in the cells next morning.

Cons Fitzpatrick come to call in the stiff necked company of Sergeant Whelan. I acted like I never knew him and I could see him much relieved he pulled in his gut then read his lies against me in a baritone it were alleged I rode a horse upon a footpath it were alleged I had been intoxicated I couldnt recall doing none of them things but had a very distinct memory that George King had dishonoured my mother and my fiancée.

It seems my character had become so altered overnight that an army were needed to contain me it now assembled on the garden path. The crowding of these traps caused me to step on Sgt Whelan's lettuce for which crime Cons Lonigan struck me in the kidney. Next I endured officious language from my so called Friend he bawled The prisoner should march left right left right.

On Arundel Street left right left right I seen a different category of friendship it were bandy little Steve Hart his clothes in a poor state after 2 nights in the street but his black hair were combed very flash parted in the middle with a curl on either side. With him was Tom Lloyd these 2 lads begun barracking the police together Steve could not contain his outrage at my fate. When he stooped as if to pick up a stone Whelan immediately called for the bracelet to be fitted to the Prisoner.

I called to Steve to put down his rock I reminded the dome headed Sergeant he had arrested me previously for Highway Robbery and I give him no trouble on that occasion. Today I were charged only with riding a horse on a footpath but Fitzpatrick had his bracelets out and were coming at me. When I brushed the coward aside my mates begun to cheer me and I walked on freely towards the court my head held high.

Good on you Ned you are a better adjectival man than all them cowards put together etc.

I begun to cross the street but Lonigan ordered me to halt and when I did not pause he leapt upon me from behind. Spinning on my heel I knocked the mongrel to the earth.

As the bootmaker's door were wide open I sprinted through it but the back door were padlocked Lonigan come at me and I brushed him off then Fitzpatrick caught my boot and tore the sole and heel clean off. He begged me cooperate so I sent him cooperating against the wall the bootmaker fast retreating his wig all crooked his tacks stuck like doll's teeth in his mouth. Then Lonigan come from behind seizing my bawbles he crushed them in his filthy hands while Whelan began to lay his fists into my kidneys the traps was yapping like fox terriers about me but I would not be still I carried them around the shop banging them into the walls.

A miller appeared calling out the police should desist they done so. They should be ashamed he said he were a fair sized fellow in a well made suit with a broad and honest face he asked would I permit him to apply the handcuffs I said I would seeing how he asked me so politely. When he enquired would I accompany him to court I went peaceful as a lamb but I did not forget about George King or the sentence I would pass on him as soon as possible.

Steve Hart & Tom Lloyd followed me inside where Mary were already seated that made 3 pair of eyes full of sympathy for my condition but it were only the 4th that I paid attention to I refer to George King's offspring. Doubtless I were mad but when I looked down from the dock the baby seemed to glare at me with his father's cold blue eyes.

Then it turned out I had severely misjudged the miller's character for he were the Magistrate. Fitzpatrick then give his evidence against me and



the damn miller found me guilty of Drunkenness and Disorderly Conduct and Assault he fined me £4 and also 5/- for damage to Fitzpatrick's clothing then the mongrels took me down to the cells once more.

Mary Hearn saw Steve & Tom counting the pennies in their pockets she told them to follow her to the Bank of Australasia where she withdrew her savings then the 3 walked to the Police Station and give it all away to the government.

When I were brought to meet my benefactors I hardly seen them noticing only that baby's eyes and the way he curled his lip at me as if he already knew the penalty I would do against his blood. It were then I learned the child's name he were christened George as well.

I had to wait while the receipts was issued it begun to thunder and by the time my mare were splashing down the boggy track to Eleven Mile Creek it were hailing hard. I forced my brave Music through the pain I had my .31 Colt stuck in my belt and my .577 Enfield rolled inside my oilskin coat it were better my powder were dry I didnt care about my cold and shivering skin.

As I come alongside Halloran's house the hail stopped and the sun emerged and from that govt. earth there rose a fragrant mist. I spied our neighbour Brickly Williamson running across the paddock when his boot fell off he did not stop but continued clump footed through the mud. Thinking he were going to warn George King I dug my heels into my mount and galloped across the back of Halloran's block then jumped the high 4 rail fence thus approaching my mother's property from the south. Even before I come around from behind the cover of the cowbail I seen something were wrong for a wedgetail eagle rose into the sky the crows squalling with fury round its mighty wings. In the middle of the yard George's sorrel mare lay dead & mangled a 2nd wedgetail had its head buried in its gut. The mare were destroyed by a shotgun in both head and heart thus opening a great greasy feast the big kidneys was <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> gone already and a line of shining blue intestines led from their natural place towards my mother's hut. The eagles feasted the crows attacked. I unwrapped my Enfield and approached the hut on foot. Everything were still.

I burst into the hut finding nothing but a great deal of grain spilled over the table and 3 rats gorging on it.

I called King's name and something moved beneath my mother's bed I cocked the rifle.

Come out you coward.

It were only George King's issue 3 yr. old John and 4 yr. old Ellen I ordered them tell me what had happened but they would not budge their eyes was glistening like baby possums in the dark. Under the other cribs I found nothing only a 4th rat which were in great distress lying on its back and dying like a blowfly.

I come out outside looking up in the peppercorn in case he climbed it thence to the veggie garden where I discovered my da's old shotgun laid across the path my mother sitting on the top step of the stile. She were rocking the way you see the old women do at a wake her big veined hands rested on her belly. When she turned around her eyes was sunk her nose seemed grown she gone completely grey in just one day.

He bolted said she I could not stop the b----r.

I picked up the shotgun it were well warmed.

But I stopped the adjectival horse she said and noting the way she continued holding her hands against her belly I realised she were with child again she were too old for this having lost 4 teeth while pregnant with John King now her cheeks was cleaving to her gums. I put my arm around my ma feeling only bone no flesh no hope she said her hut were damned it had never escaped the stinky man's curse and she would burn it to the ground she didnt care what crockery she lost.

I knew there were no curse on anything except that put on us by the police and squatters. I went back inside to fetch her a glass of brandy and observed King's tankard missing from its hook also a scalp he claimed to have took off a red Indian. I brung the brandy back to my mother but although she did not refuse the drink it brought no colour to her cheeks and her eyes saw nothing hopeful.

She said the years she spent with George was a curse for added proof of it she pointed to the irises she had planted round the borders of the hut I thought her mad to find even the flowers a cause of misery but then noted a movement and realised it were a rat. Soon I seen there was many



they was running around in great distress standing up and waving their paws.

She had poisoned the rats dealing with them better than any rat charmer but she saw their death as proof of the curse by now she were too emotional for me. I prayed one of the older girls would come to help me but Maggie were now married to Bill Skilling and Gracie were nowhere to be seen. Sometime in the late afternoon Kate returned I will never forget the contrast she made to her mother her large dark eyes her shining long black curls. Kate coaxed her frightened <sup>1/2</sup> brother & sister out from under the bed it was her who found Gracie hiding at Halloran's.

Her children tried to persuade their mother back inside but she were ever a stubborn woman none could change her mind. At dusk I fetched Maggie who brung a big pan of baked lamb also a brandy bottle so we all of us ate beneath the peppercorn tree and that night my mother slept at Maggie's.

Next day Brickly and I buried George King's horse it were night by the time I returned to Mary Hearn she were nursing her baby in Mrs Robinson's kitchen her back turned towards me.

Hello said I.

No reply.

Hello my dearest.

She wd. not look at me. Where were you?

I said I needed to build a new house for my mother I mentioned nothing of King but when she put her baby to her shoulder the child stared at me with his departed father's cold blue eyes.

Fitzpatrick come to Mary Hearn begging her to speak to me on his behalf he said he only gaoled me because he loved me but Mary would never forget the threats he had made against her she were a mere 5 ft. tall and v. slender but she backed the big booted policeman off the veranda he tripped and stumbled on the garden path. Don't never come back here again you vermin scab.

I don't think Mrs Robinson will want to hear that.

O don't make me tell Ned what you just said.

But Ned were the knot at the middle of a tug of war at Eleven Mile Creek I were labouring each day to construct a temporary shelter for my mother this were what you might build to keep the rain off your hay no more than 4 posts with cross bracing on 3 sides some ironbark rafters with bark lain down then saplings lashed on top. When that were complete I commenced the new hut and my mother were very happy with the progress. Every nail driven made her back straighter her eyes brighter her only complaint were that I continued to depart as the sun went down. Finally I asked Mary to camp with me beside the creek but she said my mother hated her. Mrs Robinson then announced she needed £2 for Mary's room I found the money but I did not reveal my domestic situation to my mother just the same she smelled another rat.

Some sheila no doubt said she looking towards the home paddock where the cows was as usual all massing at the gate. She loved her horses but she never liked a cow I know it.

You know it aint just some sheila. I brought Mary out to visit I think you must recall.

Must I now? Gracie get them cows into the bails.

I don't reckon you would forget.

She snapped her head around bringing her hard eye to bear on me. Ah yes I know the one she had herself a child off a married man.

Thus troubles rushed towards us like white ants hatching on a summer night in Benalla there were a knock on Mary's window and a man calling Ned Ned Ned it woke us from our sleep. Mary whispered it were Fitzpatrick I must not answer but raising the sash I found the policeman in a dreadful state he were very drunk & wretched declaring himself the most miserable man alive for he had lost my friendship. He fell off the veranda into the hydrangeas I rescued him then took him walking down the centre of the muddy midnight road me in my underwear him in his uniform he wept profusely he said he only lagged me to prevent me doing murder to George King.

It were one in the a.m. before I had calmed and forgive him but it were nearly 3 hr. more before I had pacified my Mary who were in a fierce rage against Fitzpatrick she revealed he had one girl in Frankston another in Dromana and refused to make an honest woman of either one.



She could not appreciate what it meant to have a policeman as a friend but we Kellys was so constantly oppressed by Flood & Hall & Farrell that Fitzpatrick were of great value not least to my mother who were once more running her shebeen.

At Eleven Mile Creek I were framing out the bedroom when Fitzpatrick arrived in mufti announcing he wished to spend his day off assisting me he had brung his own tools his chisels was worthy of a cabinet maker. He carefully unwrapped a very good long plane and this we put to work immediately.

In Benalla that night Mary and me was laying in bed we heard footsteps on the veranda. Here comes that lying devil said she.

But it were Steve Hart he were wanted by the police for having stole a saddle we hid him on the floor then in the morning I sent him back to Bullock Creek. I promised to see what could be done to have the charges against him dropped.

How could you do that feat asked Mary are you a squatter suddenly?

I'll see what can be done.

You've been talking to Fitzpatrick.

No I aint.

3 days later Fitzpatrick were again at Eleven Mile Creek I asked what he could discover of the charge then spoke very favourably about Steve's character. Fitzpatrick promised he would enquire but explained he come on a more pressing matter a charge sworn against Dan Kelly by Mrs Goodman alleging Breaking & Entering and Stealing plus Intent to Rape.

I knew Dan had not been in the district so could honestly pronounce this a lie Fitzpatrick could see I told the truth this were the advantage of our friendship.

Said he Even Sgt Whelan knows she's lying. He has written a memorandum to Melbourne saying he is set on getting Mrs Goodman and her husband sent down for perjury. Whelan don't want Dan at all so here is how we get him off. You bring your brother to the station so he can give himself up.

And why would I do that?

So he will be found not guilty and Mrs Goodman can be punished.

We walked to Bill Skilling's hut where Mother & Kate & Maggie &

Bill all took part in the decision. When Fitzpatrick finally departed we all agreed he were a good man and Dan would be well advised to do as recommended.

Next morning I told Mary I had to visit my brother then I paid Mrs Robinson sixpence for a few cold potatoes and a mutton sandwich. It were wild & blustering spring weather I set my face against the gale heading once more on the long familiar journey to the Wombat Ranges through the rich dirt of Kilfeera up Ryan's Creek and into the wild unselected country when my nose smelled those tossing trees I knew this were my haven my one good inheritance off old Harry Power he give me land like a Duke to his older son for every track and ridge I were obliged to him.

At Bullock Creek in the damp dripping dawn my brother Dan agreed to do what I asked of him he were very frightened of prison but donned his oilskin and set his hat low on his eyes then Steve and me accompanied him down through the Wombat towards the plains.

The evening we come into Benalla it were still raining the Broken River running very high. Steve and me witnessed Dan Kelly surrender himself bravely he were taken to the cells by candlelight.

As Fitzpatrick had promised the case soon were brought to court with Dan acquitted of all serious charges but then the adjectival Magistrate cleared his throat and as a kind of afterthought he give Dan 3 mo. for Damaging Property.

When the sentence were pronounced my brother's eyes sought mine he were but 16 yr. old a grubby boy with dirty fingernails his black hair plastered flat upon his head. Dear God he winked at me it broke my heart to see him taken down. That were the end of my friendship with Constable Alexander Fitzpatrick.

This took place in 1877 the government were in crisis there was no funds for gaols or judges' pay so when Dan got out of prison in February he were suffering badly his clothes hung off him his eyes was dull his skin had scabby sores from hunger. He come to find me in Arundel Street where I were still resident I told him he should stay away from the settled



areas as they was infested with police who now would lag anyone to justify their own employment.

Dan returned to Bullock Creek where he soon were joined by others including Joe Byrne & Aaron Sherritt they was finding the police in their own district as agitated as bull ants. When Fitzpatrick come knocking on our door one March evening I were packed and already on the way to Bullock Creek before he broke into the room.

The warrant against me were for the theft of Whitty's horses but 4 weeks later the police issued another against Dan Kelly & Jack Lloyd on the basis of evidence that they RESEMBLED the people who sold some of Whitty's stolen horses.

So were the hornets stirred on Easter Sunday Cons Lonigan following my mother back from mass in Benalla. I don't know who he thought he might arrest there but he were disappointed having to assist in the birth of a baby girl.

We was our mother's sons we come like the 3 Wise Men to welcome the baby to the world Joe Byrne were of our number. It were just on dusk the birds was fidgeting in the trees they might of benefited from the pipe on which my mate were sucking. His entire life were about to be decided but he sat beside me on the blind side of the hut wrapped up in the fruity smell of yen pok. Opium is alleged to dull the senses but it did not prevent Joe recognising the boots thumping on my mother's front veranda.

Cops he warned, Fitzpatrick.

I never even heard the horse. You sure its him I asked.

Joe didnt move but his pale blue eyes observed me remove the little Colt revolver from my belt.

Aint there a warrant out for Dan he asked.

For him and me said I charging all 6 chambers then sealed each with grease before placing the weapon carefully inside my belt. By then Joe's eyes had drifted away he were watching the sweet smoke rise and cling like cobweb on the darkening walls.

I cursed him softly and moved around to the south side of the hut where I could see my brother through a window. He were still as a rabbit staring at his fate i.e. Cons Alexander Fitzpatrick. As I watched my mother

put in her teeth then spoke to Gracie who run out the hut returning a moment later followed by her sister Kate.

I seen Fitzpatrick pull my sister roughly onto his knee that were the last adjectival straw as far as I were concerned I showed myself plainly at the door.

Off I ordered.

Although he must of seen my gun the policeman disobeyed he patted my little sister's hand. As for my mother she ignored the outrage opening her oven door and withdrawing 2 loaves of crusty bread on a long handled shovel.

Get my sister off your effing lap.

Fitzpatrick sighed You see what I must tolerate from those whom I protect?

You must not worry none said Kate my brother will be nicer when he hears we're to be married.

O you silly tart I cried he cannot marry you.

Fitzpatrick pushed her from his lap I seen his hand go round his revolver mine was already on the Colt.

What game is this he asked.

You're spoken for already you mongrel.

That got the ma's attention.

He's engaged to one tart he's got another pregnant in Frankston.

My mother never hesitated she raised her shovel and clouted Fitzpatrick across the head his helmet fell he stumbled drawing out his .45. I fired the .31 hitting him in the wrist his revolver clattered to the floor.

The new baby screamed and Joe Byrne come in the door his pupils the size of pinpricks he had my father's old shotgun aimed at Fitzpatrick more or less. Little John King scuttled under the bed bum 1st. Kate had run away and were moaning behind the curtains of her crib. I ordered Joe to put down his gun and get the children over to Maggie Skilling's.

Bricky Williamson took one look at Joe then volunteered to take the kiddies he departed with babies hanging off him like an old sow running with her piglets sucking on her tits.

Fitzpatrick were trying to wrap a handkerchief around his bleeding hand he cringed from me. It aint like it seems said he.



Shut your mouth cried my mother I saw she had taken possession of the police issue .45 which she were pointing at the treacherous Fitzpatrick her hands was covered in flour her jaw were set her eyes alight with the power of her mighty will.

You spoiled my girl you b——d.

Fitzpatrick seemed surprised to see her take issue on this point.

I'm very adjectival tired of whining cheating men my mother said she cocked the pistol with her big flat thumb it were wrong of me to let the last one go.

Fitzpatrick then begun to cry he said he were a wretch he knew it but he swore before God he never would report us if we only let him live. Snot ran out his nose gathering in his whiskers he were an abject creature which won him no pity from my mother she spat on his head screaming that Annie were buried beneath the willows that were one daughter already dead from a policeman's pizzle. I seen she might just shoot him.

Give me the weapon Ma.

Her hair were  $\frac{1}{2}$  unpinned her eyes was strange. I moved v. slowly extending my hand towards the .45 but even as I secured the cold hard barrel I knew I could not predict my mother.

Now let it go Ma.

Her mouth twisted downwards. Do it careful said I or you'll have me beneath the willows too.

At that her mouth collapsed issuing a dreadful cry she begun tearing at her hair. I took the revolver's deadly weight as she rushed out into the night I could hear her bawling echoing down around the creek you never heard such grief it contained Bill Frost and George King all them lost children every loss and hurt she ever suffered it would wrench your guts.

All around Fitzpatrick were people he had betrayed there was Dan & me & Kate whimpering on her bed there were more pain in that hut than any of us could bear I removed the shells and give his weapon back.

If you have read Cons Fitzpatrick's sworn statement you will not know of our kindnesses to the snivelling cur. Joe poured him rum I cut the bullet from his hand then dressed the injury and when he finally departed

our hut he stood in the doorway thanking me with the following speech Joe Byrne were able to write it down so I submit it here as evidence.

FITZPATRICK: I have to say you are as decent a man as ever I met and I want you to know that I know you saved my life tonight and I didnt deserve my life to be saved I am very sorry to have lost your respect for there is no man's respect I would rather have.

Once he had gone Joe recorded the following exchange.

E. KELLY: What did you think of his speech?

J. BYRNE: May he be roasted on hot iron the b——d is going to shop us all.

So did it come to pass.