

The Capture of the Kelly Gang

Some people think the Kelly Gang were so great and wonderful. Others take pity and sympathise with them. Naturally, this is outrageous. I have just repaired the railways and headed towards home, when Ned Kelly himself turns up in the afternoon. He orders me and my colleagues to haul up the tracks we had just laid to derail the train, that's what he does.

At first I believed he was joking, but when his vicious gleam got hold of my eyes and his gun was pointed at my head, I realised he was serious. The rifle he had was an old one, and I can't be sure, but it looked like it was held together with string. After we had reluctantly accomplished his terrible task, he carefully inspected the tracks to make sure his deadly deed was done. Anger seeped through my skull. It was as if he didn't trust us. Sometime later, he shouted out, 'Follow me if you want to live!' We had no choice if we wanted to but to walk where he directed us to.

After an extensive walk, we arrived at the Glenrowan Hotel. It seemed that anybody the Kelly Gang had come into contact with that day became their unfortunate prisoner. We eventually arrived at the hotel. 'Get in, and stay there,' shouted Ned's grumpy, imperfect voice, as if we were deaf. The cool, refreshing, misty air battled the hot air that clung to their clammy skin, like snails.

Ned's prisoners, now over 60 people, were getting bored and tired. To satisfy his prisoners' need for action, he began organising sport and dancing competitions. Because he was in a hotel, the main event for the prisoners were drinking. It was as if he wanted to win the people over with his kindness, by allowing them to get drunk. But he didn't win me over, and Ned wasn't going to pay the bill.

After a tedious night, there was an announcement from Ned, about how the police were so unfair to him and his mother. His bright, red eyes pierced the darkness. He was anxiously looking outside the hotel, like when a mouse in a mouse hole stares at a cat. He sensed that his life was in danger. In the early morning, he released some people he trusted. Shortly afterwards, he surprisingly said, 'The rest of you can now leave.' Immediately after he uttered those words, there was an ear piercing, squealing noise coming from the railway tracks. A train had arrived near the hotel. The Kelly Gang ushered us back inside the hotel. We were desperately trying to escape, as there would surely be bloodshed. The Kelly Gang quickly put on thick, black, iron armour to shield themselves from murderous bullets, as shots rang out over the countryside. The prisoners were laying on the floor, trying desperately to dodge the shots that the police fired. Things didn't go to plan for Ned. He would surely die, as no one could survive so many shots.

Inside the hotel, I couldn't see what was happening. I heard murderous shots being fired and the occasional groan when the bullets struck a target. No one was safe, including the police, the bushrangers and us poor prisoners all were in the line of fire. The metal armour made long, ringing clashes when bullets attempted to pass through it. A bullet narrowly missed my head, crashing into a poor, female civilian

who died two minutes later. I was so angry, I could have tackled Ned to the ground if the police stopped firing random shots everywhere.

Then it all stopped. There was a deathly silence ringing up and down the countryside. I carefully glanced out the window to witness a bullet colliding into Ned's leg, causing him to crash to the ground. Other police surrounded Ned and restrained him to the ground which wasn't a very hard task, considering that he was in a drunken state, moving like a sleepy sloth. He would have been weak from the massive loss of blood and shock. I imagined I could smell blood in the air and terrible screams coming from the gang.

The gunfire had finally stopped. People began cautiously walking out of the hotel, staring at the dejected sight. I staggered away from the scene of the frightful action, as someone set fire to the hotel. All's well, at least I can sleep peacefully now, knowing that the dangerous threat to the lives of many, defenceless people (including me) will end up safely behind bars to await his judgment. I later applied and missed out on some of the reward for Ned's capture, which failed to take into account my bravery. In hindsight, it was a good thing that Ned gave me £5 on the way down to the railway tracks, and £5 on the way back to the hotel.

Thomas McFarland, railway repairman.

Written by Daniel Cottrell