



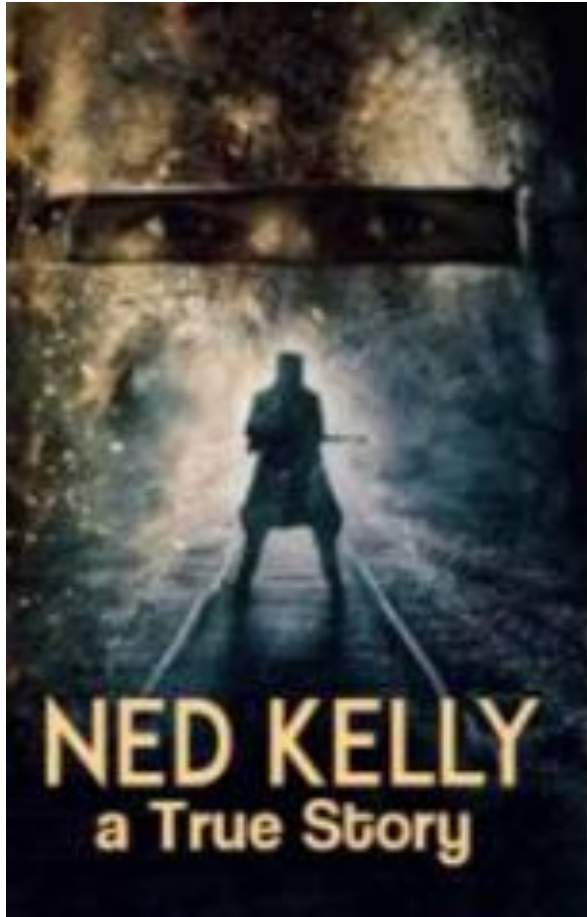
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**Adapted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu.**

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Ned Kelly a True Story

By Christine Lindop

IT IS THE YEAR 1880.

In the prison in Melbourne, Australia, a young man has visitors - his mother, a brother, and two sisters. Nobody is saying very much. There is only one word to say, and the word is 'Goodbye'.

Because the young man is Ned Kelly, the most famous outlaw in all Australia. And tomorrow morning the prison officers are going to put a rope around his neck and hang him until he is dead.

This is Ned Kelly's story...

CHAPTER ONE

Ned's Young Days

JULY, 1865. The story begins in Avenel, a small town north of Melbourne. Ned Kelly lives here with his parents, John and Ellen Kelly. Ned is ten years old, the oldest boy of the seven Kelly children. He has two brothers, Jim and Dan, and four sisters - Anne, Maggie, Kate, and Grace.

'Where's your father, boy?' Ellen Kelly called out to her son one evening. 'Is he on the road? Can you see him?'

Ned Kelly looked out of the door. 'No, Ma,' he said. 'I can't see him.'

Ned's father came home late, and he came in quietly.

'Ellen,' he said, 'come with me. I need your help. There's a dead cow by the trees on the hill. We must cut it up and bring it home.'

'Oh, John, is it one of our cows?' his wife asked. 'How did it die?'

'It's one of Morgan's cows, and I killed it,' John said. 'So we must be quick, before he comes looking for it.'

'Oh, you fool!' said Ellen.

In the children's bed in the next room, Ned listened to this. It was a small house, with only two rooms, and you could hear everything. Ned was pleased about the dead cow. They didn't often have meat to eat, and the children were always hungry.

But dead cows bring trouble. Three days later there was a policeman at the door. 'John Kelly, you killed Morgan's cow, and I'm taking you to prison...'

That was the end of school for Ned Kelly. He was the man of the family now. He helped his mother, and he worked on the Kellys' farm. The farm was not very big, and life was not easy for the Kellys.

John Kelly and Ellen Quinn were from Ireland. They first met in Melbourne, and then came north, to find land for a farm. Many other Irish people did the same thing. Everybody wanted land, but some people had a lot more land than other people. It was a hard, wild life. There was a lot of drinking, a lot of fighting, a lot of stealing - horses, cows, dead or alive...

John Kelly was in prison for six months. Prison was not good for him, and when he came out, he began to drink. A year and a half later he was dead.

'What are we going to do now, Ma?' Ned asked.

Ellen thought about it. She was a tall, strong woman, and all her life she was a fighter. She had twelve children in the end and was ninety-three years old when she died.

'We must leave here,' she said. 'We must go to the northeast, and live near my family.'

The Kellys' new house was at Eleven Mile Creek, near Greta. They had some animals and a small garden, and Ned worked hard to get money for the family. He could do farming work, take care of horses and cows, cut down trees.

But trouble was never far away. The police did not like the wild Kelly boys, or their friends. In 1870, when Ned was fifteen, he hit a man very hard in a fight, and the police put him in prison for six months.

The next year something worse happened. Ned was in the town of Greta on a brown horse when Policeman Hall came up to him.

'Ned Kelly, you get down and come with me. You stole that horse and I'm taking you to prison.'

'That's not true,' said Ned, and then there was a terrible fight. Policeman Hall had a gun and Ned did not, but Ned was the better fighter. In the end Hall called for help and five men came to help him.

Next day they took Ned down to Wangaratta and he went in front of the judge.

'It's not my horse, it belongs to a man called Wild Wright,' Ned told the judge. 'Wright was at my mother's house, and his horse ran away. He needed a horse so I gave him one of my horses. And he said to me, "When you find the brown horse, you keep her for me." And so when I found the horse, I kept her.'

'Ned Kelly stole that horse!' Policeman Hall said. 'It belongs to a man in Mansfield, and someone stole it on the 6th of March.'

'Well,' Ned said, 'I was in Beechworth prison up to the 29th of March. How can I steal a horse when I'm in prison? And Wright told me it was his horse - I didn't know it was a stolen horse.'

But it is a crime to have a stolen horse. Wild Wright, of course, stole the horse, and he went to prison for eighteen months. But they put Ned Kelly in prison for three years. When he came back to Eleven Mile Creek in 1874, things were very different.

CHAPTER TWO

The Kelly Gang

MAY, 1874. Neds sister Annie is dead; his brother Jim is in prison (five years for stealing cows), and his brother Dan is often in trouble too. There are new faces at home - a new husband, and a new baby, for Neds mother.

'Ned? Is that you? Oh, Ned!' Ellen Kelly ran to the door. Ned, now nineteen years old, tall and strong, was home from prison. He put his arm round his mother.

'Hello, Ma,' he said.

'Oh, Ned, it's good to see you,' said Ellen.

'I heard about Jim,' Ned said. 'And little Annie.'

'Poor, poor Annie,' said his mother. 'She was so ill after she had the baby, and we couldn't do anything to help her. And poor Jim got five years!'

'Yes, that's hard,' said Ned. 'And what about you, Ma? I hear you've got a new husband.' He looked at the sleeping baby in his mother's arms.

'He's a good man, Ned. Little Ellen here - she's his daughter.'

Ned touched the baby's little hand.

'I'm happy for you, Ma. And I'm happy to be back.'

Ned soon found work. He moved from farm to farm, cutting down trees and helping with the horses and cows. He often came home to see his mother, and he and George King, Ellen's new husband, were soon friends. George was from California, and was only five years older than Ned.

On one visit home, Ned talked to George about the police. 'Why do they give me all this trouble?' he said.

'I don't know,' said George. 'They just don't like you.'

'It's true,' Ned said. 'When somebody loses a cow or a horse, the police always come to me with their questions. Then they go to my mother's house and ask

her questions. And they always go late at night, when you're all in bed. It isn't right.'

'Well, come and work with me,' said George. 'Why not? You're good with horses, and I don't have any trouble with the police.'

'What work are you planning to do?' said Ned.

'Sell horses - lots of them.'

'And where are you going to get all these horses from, George?' asked Ned.

George smiled. And Ned laughed.

It was exciting work. 'We stole 280 horses,' Ned said later. 'Then we took them across the Murray River and sold them in New South Wales for a lot of money.'

The police got angrier and angrier. They couldn't stop the stealing, and they couldn't catch Ned Kelly or George King with the stolen horses.

In August 1877 a new policeman came to Benalla. Alex Fitzpatrick liked horses, girls, and drink, and for some weeks he and Ned were friends. Ned's sister Kate was a beautiful girl with long black hair. She liked Fitzpatrick too, at first. But soon there were angry words between him and Ned, and then a fight. A policeman could not be a friend of the Kellys for long.

April 1878 came. The police had questions about stolen horses for Dan, and for Ned's best friend, Joe Byrne. So Fitzpatrick rode out to the Kellys' house, to find Dan. Perhaps he wanted to see Kate too - but did Kate want to see him? On his way there he stopped and had two or three drinks. When he arrived at the house, he felt very strong and brave.

'Dan Kelly, you're coming with me to the police station,' he said.

'I'm having my dinner,' said Dan. 'You can wait.'

Fitzpatrick sat at the table, waiting for Dan, but his eyes were on Kate all the time - on her long black hair, on her beautiful body. The small room felt very hot.

Then Kate walked past the table, very near him, and he put his arm around her.

'You're a beautiful girl, Kate,' he said. 'Let's -'

'Take your hands off me!' said Kate.

Suddenly Ned was at the door, with a gun in his hand. He fired at Fitzpatrick and hit him in the wrist.

'Get out!' said Ned. 'Get away from my sister!'

Fitzpatrick ran out of the house and rode through the night back to Benalla.

The next morning there were ten policemen at the door. They found Ellen at home, but not Ned or Dan.

'Ellen Kelly,' they said. 'You and your sons tried to kill Policeman Fitzpatrick.'

'Nobody tried to kill Fitzpatrick!' said Ellen. 'You just want to make trouble for me and my family.' She had a new baby in her arms, her third child by George King. But George did not live with Ellen now.

'Mrs Kelly, where are your sons?' said a policeman.

Ellen looked into the policeman's eyes. 'I don't know,' she said. 'You want them, you go and find them.'

When Ned and Dan left their mother's house that night, they rode away into the Wombat Hills. At Bullock Creek, miles from anywhere, they built a small hut. They lived wild, and looked for gold in the river.

Joe Byrne, Ned's good friend, went with them, because he needed to hide from the police too. And in June, three months later, Steve Hart, another good friend, came out of prison. He, too, got on his horse and rode to Bullock Creek. So there were four of them.

Then, in October, Ellen's brother came to find them, with some terrible news.

'Your mother's going to prison, Ned. For three years. Because she and you and Dan tried to kill Fitzpatrick, the judge said. And the police are looking for you and Dan. Be careful, boys - stay in the hills!'

For a second Ned's eyes were red like fire. He spoke slowly and coldly.

'They can look,' he said, 'but they can't catch me out here.' He looked at his brother Dan and his friends Joe and Steve. 'These policemen, these judges - they're worse than dogs! They put my mother in prison, and what did she do?'

Nothing! From now on, we're the Kelly gang. We're free men - and we're staying that way. Are you with me, boys?'

And that was the beginning of the Kelly Gang.

CHAPTER THREE

Three Dead Men

OCTOBER, 1878. Four policemen ride north from the town of Mansfield, Kennedy, McIntyre, Lonigan, and Scanlon are on their way to Stringybark Creek in the Wombat Hills. They plan to camp there for a week, look for the Kelly Gang - and bring them back to Mansfield, dead or alive.

Very early one morning Ned and Dan left Bullock Creek. Joe and Steve waited at the hut.

'Walk quietly, Dan,' said Ned, 'and listen. I saw horses' tracks near here yesterday, and I think the police are after us.'

The police camp at Stringybark Creek was only two kilometres away, and the brothers soon found it. They hid behind the trees and watched. They saw the four policemen, and their guns - two big heavy guns and four smaller guns.

Later, back at Bullock Creek, Joe and Steve listened to the news about the guns.

'We've only got two guns. What can we do?' said Joe.

'They want to kill us,' said Dan. 'They're going to shoot to kill. Isn't that right, Ned?'

'Yes, that's right,' said Ned. 'So, we can stay here and wait for them - or we can go down there and take their guns and horses. What do you say?'

It was an easy answer. The Kelly Gang got ready, left Bullock Creek, and went quietly through the trees.

When they arrived at the police camp, only Lonigan and McIntyre were there. Lonigan sat on a tree, reading a newspaper, and McIntyre watched the camp fire. Then, from behind a tree, Ned Kelly called out.

'Put your hands up!'

McIntyre had no gun, so he sat still and put his hands up, but Lonigan ran. Then he got down behind a fallen tree, took out his gun, and put his head up.

He was a fool. A bullet from Ned's gun hit him in the head, and he died at once.

Ned ran to McIntyre. 'Don't move!' he said. 'We don't want to kill you, we just want the guns and horses.'

But before the gang could find the guns and leave, they heard a noise in the trees.

'Ned!' called Steve. 'The other two policemen are coming back!'

'Sit on this tree,' Ned said to McIntyre. 'And when you see your friends, call out to them. Say, "Don't shoot - put your guns on the ground." We don't want to kill them, or you.'

Seconds later, Kennedy and Scanlon rode into the camp. McIntyre stood up and said, 'Get off your horses and put your hands up - there are men with guns here.'

'Oh yes?' said Kennedy. He laughed at McIntyre. 'What men? What guns?'

At once the Kelly Gang came out of the trees and Ned called, 'Put your hands up!'

Everything happened very quickly. A bullet from Ned's gun hit Scanlon, and he fell from his horse. Kennedy jumped off his horse and fired at Dan. Dan fired back, and Kennedy ran back into the trees.

McIntyre could not shoot because he did not have his gun with him. But there in front of him was Kennedy's horse. He jumped on it and rode into the trees.

Kennedy tried to get away too. He went quietly through the trees, but suddenly he saw Ned in front of him. The two men fired - and Kennedy fell down. Soon he was dead.

'He was a brave man, but it was him or me,' said Ned. 'I didn't want to do it. I didn't want to kill any of them.'

The gang put coats over the three dead bodies, took the horses, guns and food, and rode away.

'They came to kill us, boys,' said Ned, 'but we killed them. What could we do? Now we must go - and we're not coming back.'

The Kelly Gang rode away to the north.

The next day, tired and dirty, McIntyre arrived back in Mansfield. Soon every town and village and farm in the north-east knew about the killing of the three policemen at Stringybark Creek.

'The Kelly Gang are killers,' said the police. 'These men are now outlaws, and we must catch them, dead or alive. When you see them, tell us. We are giving 500 pounds reward for news of every man in the gang - 2000 pounds for all four of them.'

It was a lot of money. More policemen came to the north-east, with more guns, more horses.

Ned and the gang stayed in the north-east. They tried to get away to the north, but there was a lot of water in the Murray River, and they couldn't get across it. They got help from their friends and moved from place to place all the time. One week they rode more than three hundred kilometres.

Thirty policemen rode through the hills for a month and looked for the outlaws night and day. But they never found them, and in December Ned and the gang moved on to the Warby Hills. It was a hard, wild life, and the outlaws were tired, hungry, and angry men.

CHAPTER FOUR

Two Visits to the Bank

DECEMBER, 1878. The Kelly Gang have many friends, but they have no money. So they rob the bank in the little town of Euroa. They speak nicely to the people in the town, and do not fire their guns. They leave Euroa with 2260 pounds. But they give a lot of the money to their friends, the poor farmers of the north-east, to buy food, clothes, and land. The police reward goes up to 2500 pounds.

The police tried hard to catch the Kelly Gang, but the outlaws had help from their friends. They were always miles away when the police came to look for them. So the police put many of their friends in prison.

Ned was very angry about this. 'It isn't right!' he said. 'Why do the police do this? Because our friends are poor farmers, not rich ones, and because they help us. We must stop the police!'

'But how?' said Steve. 'What can we do?'

'Two things,' said Ned. 'First, we need more money, so we must visit a bank. And second, we tell everybody in Australia about the police here in Victoria.'

'Rob another bank?' Dan said. 'But the police are watching all the banks now.'

'Yes, in Victoria,' said Ned. 'But not in New South Wales, so we're going to a bank in Jerilderie. Here's the plan. There are only two policemen in Jerilderie. We arrive at night, go to the police station, and lock the policemen in the station. Then we rob the bank, and go to the office of Jerilderie's newspaper.'

'The newspaper office?' said Dan. 'Why? What for?'

'To print this,' said Joe. 'Look. It's Ned's letter to the world. I wrote it down for him. It tells the true story about Ned and his family, about the police, about Stringybark Creek, about everything.'

'We want everybody to read this letter, but how do we give it to them?' Ned said. 'We must print it in a newspaper. It's the only way.'

Ned planned the Jerilderie visit very carefully. There were now more than two hundred policemen in the north-east of Victoria because of the Kelly Gang, and Ned asked his friend Aaron Sherritt for help.

So Aaron went drinking with a policeman. Money passed from one hand to another, and Aaron spoke quietly in the policeman's ear.

'Go to Corryong. The gang are planning to cross the Murray River near there very soon.'

So the police rode east to Corryong - and the Kelly Gang rode west, and crossed the river two hundred kilometres away. And late on a Saturday night in February 1879, they rode into the town of Jerilderie.

Outside the police station Ned began to shout, 'Help! Help! There's a big fight at the hotel! We need help!'

The two policemen ran out - and saw the outlaws with their guns. The gang locked the policemen in a room in the station, and took their uniforms.

For the next two days the gang lived in the police station. On Sunday Joe and Steve put on the police uniforms and walked around the town. 'We're the new policemen for Jerilderie,' they told everyone. They went past the bank and the hotel next to it, and looked carefully at all the doors, front and back.

Then, on Monday morning Dan and Steve went into the hotel next to the bank, and took out their guns. They took all the hotel workers into one room.

'Don't move,' said Dan. 'You're our hostages, but don't be afraid. We don't want to shoot anybody.'

Ned and Joe went into the bank through the back door. When they came back to the hotel, they had more hostages - two bank workers and all the people from the bank. And Ned had the bank's money - 2140 pounds.

There were now about sixty hostages in the room, and Ned began to speak to them.

'What's happening in this country? Do you know? No, you don't! So listen! Poor men get poorer, and rich men get richer. The police help the rich farmers, and put the poor farmers in prison. Why? For nothing! Do you call this justice? There is no justice in Australia!

'The police say we are killers. But I say the police are killers! I'm going to tell you about Stringybark Creek - the true story, not the police story.'

Ned began to read to the hostages from his letter. It was a long letter, 56 pages and more than 75,000 words. After a few pages he stopped.

'Where's the newspaper office in this town?' he said. 'I want to print this letter. Then everybody can read it.'

Edwin Living, one of the bank workers, answered.

'Mr Gill is the editor of the newspaper,' he said. 'I know his house. I can take you there.'

'Come on, then,' Ned said.

But Mr Gill was not at home. He was at a farm ten kilometres away. When he heard the Kelly Gang were in town, he ran away, because he was afraid of them.

At the house Mrs Gill opened the door.

'Where's your husband?' Ned asked.

'I - I don't know. He's - he's away,' Mrs Gill said.

Ned looked at her angrily, and took out his letter. 'I want him to print this in his newspaper,' he said.

'Give it to me,' said Edwin Living. 'I can give it to Mr Gill when he gets back.'

'He must print it,' said Ned. 'It's about my life, and I want the world to read it.'

'Yes,' said Edwin. 'Everybody must read it. And Mr Gill's going to print it - for sure, Mr Kelly.'

'He must,' Ned said. 'All right, you give it to him. But do it! Or the next time I come to Jerilderie...'

They went back to the hotel, and Ned had a drink with the hostages. Then the four outlaws rode out of town, back to the Murray River, and across into Victoria and the hills in the north-east.

The police looked everywhere. They made the reward 8,000 pounds, but nobody came to get it. Nobody wanted to help them. In Jerilderie, people laughed about the visit of the Kelly Gang. In April, Ned's friends came out of prison and went back to their farms. And for sixteen months, the police heard nothing of the Kelly Gang.

And Ned's letter - the famous 'Jerilderie Letter'?

Edwin Living did not give it to Mr Gill. He went down to Melbourne and gave it to the police.

Nobody saw the letter again for fifty years.

CHAPTER FIVE

Alive or Dead at Glenrowan

JUNE, 1880. The Kelly Gang are living in the hills. Their friends bring them food, but life is hard, and the police are still making trouble. They don't put the Kellys' friends in prison now, but they stop them buying land. And why? Because they are friends of the Kelly Gang...

'We must do something,' Ned said, 'to help our friends. We need a new country - a country for poor people, with good police, and good judges. But it's not going to happen easily. We must fight for it!'

'We need money for that,' said Joe. 'A lot of money. And there's a policeman with a gun at every bank now.'

'We need armour, to go over our heads and bodies,' Ned said. 'Bullets can't get through armour.'

'How are we going to get armour?' asked Dan.

'We can make it,' said Ned.

And they did. With help from their friends, they made four suits of armour from old farm machinery. Then they began to plan their fight.

'Our friends want to help,' Ned said. 'They have guns, and they want to fight with us. So we need to bring a lot of policemen to one place. How can we do that?'

'With a killing,' said Joe. 'We kill Aaron Sherritt. He's working for the police - he tells them everything about us! You know it, I know it, everybody knows it. He was a friend once, but now he wants to see us dead!'

'Yes, that's true,' Ned said. 'We hear it from everybody. So, you go to Aaron's house at Beechworth and shoot him. You and Dan.'

'Right,' said Dan. 'And then when the Beechworth police hear about the killing, they know it's us, the Kelly Gang. So they ask for help from the police at Benalla...'

'And the Benalla police take the train to Beechworth,' said Steve. 'Lots of police, all in one train.'

'And we', Ned said quietly, 'are waiting for the train at Glenrowan...'

The plan began well. Joe and Dan rode to Beechworth. When Aaron Sherritt opened his door on Saturday 26th June, Joe shot him at once. Then the two outlaws rode sixty kilometres across country to Glenrowan. News of the killing went down to Benalla.

Ned and Steve arrived at Glenrowan Inn on Saturday afternoon. They began to bring hostages into the inn - people from the railway station, railway workers, people from the town. Then Ned took some of the railway workers to the hill just past the railway station.

'Take up the railway line,' he told them. 'Go on!'

'We can't do that!' one worker said. 'Do you want to kill everybody on the next train?'

Then he saw Ned's gun, and asked no more questions. The workers took up three metres of railway line, and went back to the inn with Ned. Joe and Dan were there now, and some of the gang's friends. Other friends, about thirty men, stayed near the railway line. In the inn there was a lot of drinking that night.

On Sunday morning Ned found more hostages - the schoolteacher, Thomas Curnow, with his young wife, baby, and sister. There were now sixty-two hostages in the inn. And everybody waited for the police train.

The police moved very slowly. In Beechworth, Benalla, and Melbourne they talked, made plans, and talked some more. In the end, a police train left Melbourne late on Sunday evening. And that evening Ned told about twenty of the hostages, 'You can go home.' Later, the schoolteacher came to him.

'Can I take my family home?' he asked. 'Don't be afraid of me - you know I'm a friend of the Kellys.'

'Yes, you can go,' said Ned.

Thomas Curnow was a brave man. He took his young family home, and later went quietly out into the night and along the railway line. At three o'clock in the morning he heard the train, and held up a red light.

'Stop! Stop!' he cried.

At the inn, Ned and the gang heard the train too. They listened, but there was no noise of a crash, no train falling through the trees, no cries and shouts.

'What's happening?' Steve said.

'Nothing,' said Ned. 'Somebody stopped the train before it got to the broken rails. Put your armour on, boys, and get ready to fight.'

The gang went out to the front of the inn. They began to fire at the police, and the police fired back. Bullets went everywhere.

Three of the hostages inside the inn died. The police shot Ned in the arm and the foot, and Joe in the leg.

'Go back into the inn,' Ned said to the gang. 'I must find our friends. They must get away from here.'

The gang's friends were near the railway line.

'We want to fight, Ned,' they said. 'Take us with you!'

'No, no, you must get away,' said Ned. 'The plan for the train went wrong, and there are police everywhere. This is our fight. You can't help us! Go!'

Back at the inn, the shooting did not stop. The hostages, many of them women and children, were on the floor, their faces white and afraid. Joe was in the front room with a drink in his hand.

'I drink to the Kelly Gang!' he cried. Then a bullet came through the wall and hit him. He died at once.

The wounds in Ned's arm and foot were bad, and in the trees he fell to the ground. A friend tried to help him, but for some hours Ned could not move. Then, slowly, he stood up, and in his armour began to walk back to the inn. His brother Dan and Steve Hart were still inside the inn, and Ned went back to help them.

In the early morning light, he came slowly out of the trees, his gun in his hand. One man against thirty-four policemen. They fired and fired at him, but the bullets hit Ned's armour, and Ned laughed.

'Go on - fire! You can't kill me!' he called.

But there was no armour on Ned's legs. One of the policemen saw this, and fired - once, twice... The bullets hit Ned's legs, and he fell slowly to the ground.

At once the police were all around him. He was alive, but only just, and they carried him to the railway station.

Soon after this, the last hostages left Glenrowan Inn.

Only Dan and Steve were still inside, but the police did not stop firing at the building. Later on that Monday morning a second train arrived in Glenrowan, with more police, photographers, and newspaper men. There were now more than a thousand people in the town. And down south, in Melbourne, hundreds of people waited in the streets for news of the Kelly Gang.

On Monday afternoon Ned's sisters, Maggie and Kate, arrived in Glenrowan. They heard the news about Ned, and then asked for news of Dan.

'Maggie, tell your brother and Steve Hart to put down their guns and come out of the inn,' said a policeman.

'Tell them to stop fighting? Never!' said Maggie.

Maggie and Kate did not see Dan alive again. The police were afraid to go into the inn, but they did not want Dan and Steve to get away in the night. So they set fire to the building.

Old buildings burn fast, and when Maggie and Kate got to the inn, the sky was red with fire.

'Dan! Oh, Dan!' Maggie called out, again and again.

'My poor, poor brother!' Kate cried.

Glenrowan Inn burnt down to the ground. When the fire was cold, they took out the dead bodies of Dan Kelly, Steve Hart, and Joe Byrne. Ned was alive, but in prison. It was the end of the Kelly Gang.

CHAPTER SIX

Ned's Last Days

JULY, 1880. The police take Ned Kelly to Benalla, then to Melbourne prison. There is a lot of waiting, and talking, and more talking. The police talk, the judges talk, Ned talks - but the ending is always the same.

At the end of October Ned went before his last judge, Sir Redmond Barry, in Melbourne. For two days Judge Barry listened to the police, listened to Ned, read the police papers, and thought about it. But he didn't think long. There were a lot of dead policemen in Ned Kelly's life, and there was only one answer to that.

Ned Kelly must die. Hang him in the prison. Hang him by the neck until he is dead. A lesson to every outlaw in Australia.

Ned's mother Ellen was still in Melbourne prison. When they told her the news, she cried - she cried for her dead son Dan, and she cried for her son Ned, alive, but waiting to die. They took her to see Ned on his last day alive. What did mother and son talk about that day?

Ned's sisters and brother worked hard to help him.

'How can they do this?' said Maggie angrily. 'How can they hang poor Ned? What did the police do to him? Why don't the judges think about that?'

'Shh, Maggie,' said Jim. 'No time for that now. We must get out there and talk to the people in the town.'

And so they did. They went all round Melbourne, to all the hotels, talking to everybody.

'They're going to hang Ned Kelly. What do you think about that?' they asked.

'It's not right,' said one man.

'Why do they want to hang him?' a second man said. 'Because he killed a policeman? No. Because he helps poor people and gives them money, that's why.'

'But what can we do?' asked a third man.

'Put your names on our petition,' was the answer.

There were more than 32,000 names on the Kelly petition, but the petition changed nothing.

So the last visitors came to see Ned on the 10th of November, and he ate his last dinner. Then he sang for half an hour, and went to bed.

Next morning they took Ned across the prison to a room with a rope.

Outside the prison more than 5000 people waited - men and women, rich and poor.

'Where's the Kelly family?' one woman asked.

'Some of them are here, at the hotel,' was the answer. 'But Maggie went back to Beechworth yesterday. She wanted to be with her children. And there's Ned's poor mother - she's in the prison too, waiting for ten o'clock.'

Then the prisoners in Melbourne prison began to make a terrible noise, shouting and crying out and banging on their doors. And in her room Ellen Kelly cried quietly for her oldest son.

In the hotel Jim Kelly sat with his head in his hands.

'Poor Ned, this is the end of all his troubles,' he said.

And at ten o'clock, the prison officers put the rope around Ned Kelly's neck and hanged him.

Ned was dead - but in the north-east, life went on. Sixty-eight people got money from the Kelly Gang reward. Schoolteacher Thomas Curnow got 1000 pounds.

A new man, Policeman Graham, came to Greta. He was a good policeman, and Ned's friends listened to him. 'Don't make trouble, and then you can buy your farms,' he told them. He went to Eleven Mile Creek and had tea with Ellen Kelly. Everyone talked about that.

Slowly things began to change. The police tried to be more friendly, to help poor people, and not just the rich. Most of the young men stopped stealing and fighting the police. Soon it was quiet in the north-east.

The other Kelly children stayed out of trouble. Jim Kelly was a good son to his mother all her life. Ellen lived to the age of ninety-three, and had many grandchildren. But she never forgot her oldest son Ned.

Who was the real Ned Kelly? Did he fight for the poor, or just for Ned Kelly? Some people say he was a brave man. Some people say he was a fool. Some people say he was just a killer, just a wild man with a gun.

One thing is sure. More than a hundred years later people are still talking about him. There are books about him, and songs and films and websites. Everybody still remembers Australia's most famous outlaw.