

CHAPTER 1

Boone

“ Hell No Bill! I’m done.” This exclamation from twenty five year old, Roy Boone the youngest member of Bill Doolins Gang. Bill replied , “ The Hell you are! Nobody quits me and lives. You pull your horns in Boy. Yeah that last job was a big bust, but I got another figured out that’s a gold mine.” Roy replied, “ Yeah, like the last one! Almost enough to pay the rent. I don’t care about the damn money Bill. Didn’t you see that poor woman when she fell outta that Stage Coach? Her whole shoulder and side of her face was bloody from that guards Shotgun firing when he fell.” Bill replied “ Hell Roy, is that what’s got you all wrinkled up. Them things happen. Wasn’t nothing anybody could do about that.’ Roy replied, “The hell there wasn’t ! You didn’t have to shoot the Guard, he was an old man. No I’ve had enough. You git somebody else. I’m done.” Doolin stood up and said,” Yes you are Boy, if you’re walkin out on me.” Roy replied, “ I figured you’d take it this way Bill, so I emptied your gun. Are you gonna draw on me with an empty? Remember, I ain’t no slouch with a pistol.” Bill exclaimed, “ You’re lying, nobody touches my gun!” Roy said, “ You think so? There’s an easy way to find out.” Roy jerked out his pistol seeing the panic in Bills eyes and walked over, pulling the gun from his holster and emptied it. The bullets striking the floor as Bill said, “ Damn you! I’ll kill you Boone if it’s the last thing I do, I’ll kill you!” Roy said, “ Bill, I wish you wouldn’t try, I’ll leave you your bullets here, your pistol I’ll put in your saddle bags on your horse. I’ll only take him down the road a little ways, maybe he’ll come back.”

Roy watched the cabin as he rode away leading Bill’s horse hoping that Bill didn’t have another gun handy, his rifle was in the saddle boot. “ Yeah” he was thinking , “That four years in prison taught me a lotta things, but hooking up with Doolin was plain stupid. I’m thinking now that he probably turned yellow on the Dalton boys when they were shot up in Coffeerville. Claimed his horse went lame.

Well I won't be part of any more of his stage holdups, Sounded pretty easy. Shoulda known better . That old gunfighter at Huntsville Prison was right. A little indecision during a gunfight can be your last one. Doolin was afraid to see if I was lying. I'm glad it's done with; I'll start punching cows again. They ship from Texas by train and they still need some one with a long stick, willing to ride in the cattle cars and prod them off the floor and trampled." Roy rode into El Paso and headed for the stock yard.

He was welcomed by the shipping clerk and after a short haggle with the Manager , he signed up for a three day run and return on the empties. This was the best arrangement, he could save money on his return. Most cow punchers came back in Passenger. Six runs he had made and although he now had a little money, he was thinking of selling his horse and gear The livery keep was taking some and he really didn't need a horse. Wrong!

Preparing for another run at the shipping yard, the clerk told him that a man wearing store bought clothes was asking about him. Didn't know his name but Roy's long black hair, beard, and general build fit the description of a member of the Doolin Gang. The clerk said that he didn't tell the man a thing . Roy decided a partial haircut and shave was necessary and he better keep his horse for awhile. Wouldn't be a smart move to quit his job and run; that would be a dead giveaway.

Between the livery stable and the shipping yard, he was making a few dollars, but he longed for a decent place to live and clean clothes. On every run he lived in straw and cow manure. He looked for other jobs. The days going north weren't bad, but that lonesome ride home , was playing hard on his mind. As he remembered and dreamed even. He couldn't get that picture of the young woman out of his mind laying on the ground , her face covered in blood Did she die? The picture began to haunt him. He wished that he was a drinking man .

Maybe that would help. He began to take a bottle with him on his runs. Didn't help; things just got worse.

At the shipping yard he learned that Law officers had found Doolin and killed him on the porch of his cabin. They were now out in force to round up the rest of his Gang. Roy quit his job and rode north into Oklahoma Territory. It could have been fate or accident that he wound up in the little Settlement of Guerriere , but three days of short water and feed ;, His horse needed a rest. The livery was ran by Les Jenkins an old Civil War veteran and it was here that fate caught up with Roy. Les was still recovering from a gunshot injury that had broken his left arm. His arm had been useless for months. When it finally healed , he had no muscling left and he had a difficult time with all the work . Roy offered to work for keep if he could while he looked for a job with cattle. He had been a Top Hand with cattle before a bad rustling attempt earned him four years in prison.

A few weeks after he started work for Les, two former associates and members of Doolin's Gang came into town. Charlie Pence and George Bittercreek. Roy recognized them but they didn't him. He handled their horses and kept his voice high when he had to speak to them and his hat pulled low. The law was hot after them and even bounty hunters were on the look. Drunken and wanting to make trouble they came from the Saloon to the Stable and began to harass Les. Roy didn't wanna get involved, but they might hurt him . Grabbing his gun, he dropped down from his bed in the loft exclaiming, " Leave him alone! Get the hell outta here!" both Charlie and George grabbed their guns swinging around to confront Roy. Without another thought, Roy did what the old gunfighter said, " Shoot first! Or die!" almost emptying his gun before both outlaws went down. He went to them , Charlie was dead and George was still alive but going fast. Looking up ,his eyes open wide in surprise, he recognized Roy saying, "Boonie why?"Roy had no answer. Boonie was what the Gang called him. A heavy sorrow engulfed him and he sat down in the straw. These men

had been his buddies and now they lay dead by his hand. Les came rushing over saying, “ My God Roy ! Damn! ,you killed ‘em both. There weren’t no need ! There weren’t no need ! They were just being drunks Damnit Roy, There weren’t no need!” Roy was crying with the shock and Les finally came to him and patted him on the shoulder, saying, “ No Roy I ain’t blaming you; they drew their guns. It’s terrible, Damnit, it’s just terrible.”

Les misunderstood Roy’s grief for nervous reaction and said , “ Stay here, and try to calm down. I’ll get the Sheriff.” Roy sat there alone telling the dead Charlie and George that he was sorry. Sheriff Bob Townsend walked in just as Roy was saying out loud, “ I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry.” Sheriff said, “ Les we’ll all take a close look at everything , but it appears like Roy was justified in shooting them. Anytime you pull a gun, you never know what might happen and most times someone gets shot. Roy take it easy there. I know it’s hell to kill a man, but sometimes it’s you or him and luckily this time it ain’t you.”

The grief ridden Roy was almost ready to confess knowing the men when a Deputy pulled a wanted poster from Charlie’s saddlebag and exclaimed, “ Outlaw’s! Sheriff, they’re outlaws , look here, look here, they’re two of the Doolin Gang. Charlie Pence and George Bittercreek! I can’t believe it; right here in town two of the most wanted killers in Oklahoma Territory and Roy here, killed’em both. Lord , if that ain’t something !”

Les was suddenly quiet and said, ‘ Sheriff, I was gittin on Roy , but now I gotta thank him . These are two of the Bastards that held up our Stage shooting me and Jenny. We ought to hang the Bastards , dead or alive. We can string’em up on my barn loft. Let everyone come to town for a good look and then drag’em off for the coyotes and crows. God I wish Jenny was here to see this.”

Roy couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Les and his daughter were on that stage. This startling bit of information brought Roy to his

senses. Till now, he'd never mentioned Doolin around Les and he had no idea that Les was the guard that had shot his own daughter in falling from the Coach. The story of that Stage hold up was repeated with tonight's shooting over and over that evening and pretty soon the whole town was awake with the news. Roy crawled back up in his loft to avoid the hand shakers and well wishers for what he had done. Roy wasn't proud of it and made plans to leave town the following day.

The morning brought the Sheriff telling Les, There's a five hundred dollar reward for each of these killers. I've sent a message to the Territorial Marshall. That money will be here in a week. Your man, Roy Boone sure did the Territory a big favor. A lotta folks can feel a lot safer riding stage after today. These two were the last of that Wild Bunch that anyone knows of. Where is he, I'd like to talk to the young man." Les replied, " Sheriff, he's still in shock. Said he's leaving town today. I don't think he's afraid , it's just that he don't wanna be around folks for awhile. Let me talk to him and I'll tell him about the reward. Maybe that'll change his mind.' Sheriff replied, "OK, but ask him if he'd be interested in a deputy job . I'm lookin for one that ain't afraid of gun smoke. Those two killers each had two fired rounds in their guns. It takes a very special kind of man to shoot straight in a gunfight. Les, Roy is a very dangerous man. I want him on my side. "

Roy was still sleeping at noon. He had worried himself sick all night with the guilt of killing two men he had shared as comrades. His mind was made. " He was leaving town. Too much attention and his past would catch up with him. Let Les answer all the questions and he could push it from his mind. He began shoeing his horse . He would leave as soon as he could get things together." It was while he was putting a bedroll together that Les said, " Roy, I know you wanna get away for a few days, but I have to let you know Sheriff Townsend was by this morning to haul the bodies over to Boot Hill. He tells me there's a five hundred dollar reward out for each of these killers and son , it's all yours."

Roy exclaimed “ God No! I don’t want any part of it. God it’s bad enough that I killed them . I Damn sure don’t wanna take money for it. Tell him to keep it, Les, I’m riding out tomorrow. I thank you for everything Les , but I don’t wanna stay around here. I can’t sleep. I need to get away.” Les said, “ Son I know how you feel, I had to kill during the War. It was hell every minute, but I couldn’t ride off and forget it. After awhile, you put the killing from your mind and just Thank God for another day. There was lotta killing, but a lotta good came outta that War. Don’t make any jump decisions about that money son. You go ahead take a few days, but come back to see me before you leave. I had kinda hoped you might be interested in a working partnership. I had thought we worked pretty well together. I’ve never had a son and there’s no one to take over when I’m gone.”

Roy could see the sadness and sorrow in his eyes. Guilt over rode him as he remembered that young woman lying on the ground , her face covered in blood from the shot gun . “ God” , he was thinking, “ How horrible to think he’d killed his own daughter during that robbery.” Roy shuttered in shame and guilt. The very least he could do was stick with Les and make his life more bearable. It was bad enough that he only had one good arm. “ I can’t walk away from that and call myself a man” he said to himself and then to Les, “ Thanks Les, you made me take another look at things and you’re right. I’ll not run out on you and that partnership ain’t necessary. I’ll just go sit on the mountain for a couple of days. I’ll be back.” Roy saddled and rode out.

Three days later Roy came back to a broken Les. He sat in the stable office bitterly weeping! At Roy’s question of what’s wrong, Roy himself was surprised. Les handed him a disturbing letter. It was from Les’s daughter Jenny; the girl Roy thought was killed in the robbery. With great relief she was alive on one hand , but Roy was stricken with more guilt by the contents of the letter, which read, “ Dear Daddy, You were right. I should have stayed with you, but I couldn’t take the daily staring and curious looks of all those in Town. I told you , even the

kids were afraid of me. They looked at me as a Monster. I'm sorry Daddy but I just couldn't take it. I came west to marry William like we had planned, but Daddy, he refused to even be in the same room with me. He's not the William I was engaged to. He hates to be seen with me. I know you spent all your savings to send me out here. I asked him for money to return . He refused. I had to find work to live. I'm cleaning Saloons and stores in the early morning hours before customers can see me. There's a Wonderful lady at the mercantile that offered me a small room to live in and lets me arrange her products as rent. When I can save enough , I'm coming home. Please don't worry about me. Love, Jenny"

All Roy could utter was " My God!". Les took a deep breath and said, " The damage to her face Roy. It was horrible! Doc Peters said it might take two years before some of the discoloration and scaring would fade some. Roy, that poor little girl was ruined for life! That damned Doolin Gang. I hope and pray they'll everyone burn in Hell forever. I tried to tell her all along that her engagement to William Townsend was a big mistake. Yeah, he's the son of the Sheriff. Never was worth a damn in my opinion. Took all of her Hope Chest and a dowry left her by an Uncle . Gonna homestead a place and send for Jenny. I think that was a lie from the beginning. Poor little girl, she loved the man and dreams of their marriage was the only thing keeping her from killing herself after that terrible damage to her face. Roy she's all I've got." Les broke down weeping again. Roy patted Les on the back. He was afraid to say anything for fear of breaking down himself.

After a few minutes, Les stood up saying, "Roy, I've gotta go get her! I'll have to sell or get a loan, but I can't leave her out there in Bisbee, that place is a hell hole in the summer. Why that idiot William wanted to homestead there I'll never know. No water and nothing but desert far as you can see and beside that, half a dozen Mexican Raider Gangs keeping the outlying homesteads wiped out. No I can't have

peace of mind with her trying to survive in that place. I'll go see Collins the banker, tomorrow. Roy if I get a loan, could you hang out here and keep things goin till i get back?"

Roy had to wipe his eyes and replied, " Of course, I'll do it Les. How long you figure it'll take?" Les replied , " If i ride the Butterfield Stage , about three weeks gittin there and three weeks back. Bisbee's down on the Border almost. If I rode a horse I could do it in half that time maybe better, but with this bum arm I'd never make it. No, I'll go Butterfield." Roy said, " OK Les, you show me what's necessary while you're gone and I'll take care of everything.

That night Roy ran over in his mind ,the terrible results of their pitiful stage coach Holdup and how it had ruined the lives of many others without any concern on the part of Doolin. He reminded himself that Roy Boone was just as guilty. The least he could do was help Les rescue his daughter and pray that it could be done quickly before she let depression and hopelessness cause her to take her life.

The following day Sheriff Townsend stopped to see Les and said, " Les. Got a letter from William. He says Jenny called off the wedding. Didn't give a reason. I'd thought she'd jump at the chance to marry Will. With her face all messed up , she'll have a hell of a time gittin a husband. I'm kinda proud of Will being willing to stick by her and all. You know yourself she was awful hard to look at." When Les didn't say a thing, Roy could see he was about to lose his temper and let his own feelings known, said " Sheriff , I think you're wrong. Jenney took pity on Will . Didn't wanna see him stuck with someone disfigured like herself she's a mighty strong and brave little woman. Sheriff what you see outside doesn't really matter, it's the soul of a person where the real hero lives. I personally think your son missed his chance." The Sheriff spun saying " Didn't think you knew Jenny." Roy smartly replied, " Don't sound like you did either and it's for sure your William didn't." Les jumped in saying , " Roy calm down , I'm Ok. Whatta you

need Bob?" Ignoring Les, the Sheriff a little stiffly said, "Roy you're mighty touchy about Jenny, you might wanna curb your temper a little. I was only making conversation. Les I just brought this over, need your mark or signed name right here as a witness and I need to make sure Roy's name is spelled right. " Les looked at the papers and made his sign next to his printed name. Next he turned to Roy and asked, "your proper name Roy, I need to write it in here. Is it Roy or Roger? Roy replied , " Neither one, Sheriff its' Roland Boone but everyone knows me as Roy. What's the paper for?" Sheriff printed Roy's name and handed the paper to him saying , "It's a territorial draft for one thousand dollars. Be sure you sign it as Roland Boone at the Bank .

Roy exclaimed, " Les! I told you i don't want no damn money for killing them. Keep your blood money Sheriff." As he tried to hand it back the Sheriff said, " It's in your hands now Roy. I can't take it back. If you don't want it burn it or give it away. I don't care what you do with it, but in this world a thousand dollars is like a fortune to most folks. I'd suggest you take the money and disappear before some gun slick wants to challenge you." Townsend had said his piece; turned and left shaking his head.

An angry Roy turned to Les and said, " Whatta I do? Whatta I do Les , I cain't spend blood money. It ain't right." Les replied, ' Roy I know you didn't wanna kill those men. You probably didn't know they were Outlaws, but son I asked Bob to send for that money. You did the territory a great service and saved the life and lives of who we don't even know, I just wish someone had put Doolin down before he ruined mine and Jenny's life." Roy handed the draft to Les saying , " You put it away for me . Today I'd like to forget about it. I'm trying to forget killing and I don't need any reminders." Later, as he made a delivery, the words of Les kept coming back to him . With the thought of the money on his mind, he suddenly realized Les needed money to rescue Jenny. Now he knew what he would do with it. Get Jenny home!

Returning to the stable , his first thing to do was tell Les what he had in mind. He said, “ Les, I’ve decided to keep the money but if you’ll agree, I wanna use it to get Jenny home.” Les was surprised , Thankful but refusing, insisting that the money was Roy’s and he could get a loan to make the trip. He only needed a hundred dollars or so. Roy said, “ Les I’ve thought about this all morning since Townsend was here. I’m thinking I should take his advice. He’s right about some gun slick wanting to challenge me. It’s happened hundreds of times to others. I’m gonna go get Jenny. Now listen to me, before you say Hell No! I need to get lost for awhile. You said yourself that a man on horseback would be much faster, you can’t do that but I can.” Les said , “ Roy you would do that? It’s a long way to Bisbee on horseback. Son I can’t let you do that. I thank you and ’ll take your offer on the money, but I’ll go . Jenny won’t know you from Adam. She’s a spit fire when she has to be.”

Roy said, “Les you and i both know a trip on a stage coach in your condition would be murder for your arm. I’ll write a note for you. Tell me what to say. In your words describe me and then put your sign on the note. If there’s a special keepsake of her’s I could take would be helpful.” Les thought for awhile. He could come up with nothing, Jenny had taken everything of hers when she went to marry William. Roy selected a small mustang for a pack horse and began putting together supplies for the trip. Two days later he was ready to leave with two hundred dollars in his pocket, his draft in the bank and before riding out, he said to Les, “ If I have trouble , I’ll try to get a letter to you, That gives me an idea; get me the envelope your letter from Jenny came in and I’ll just put your note to her in that envelope. She’ll know for sure then that I came from you.” Roy rode out waving his good bye to Les. Bisbee was across New Mexico and deep into Arizona territory, He was following what some folks called the southern Santa Fe Trail.

Grass was poor and water was scarce, but both horses were in good shape and a hand full of corn each night helped. Making better than average time he came to a spring fed waterhole near the Arizona , New Mexico border. He had been warned in Santa Fe that it housed a band of riff raff forcing travelers to buy God given water. Roy arrived late and watered his horses, filled his canteens and rode on sayin to his horse, “ Don’t wanna bother a thief while he’s asleep. It would spoil a beautiful moon lit night.” Unfortunately he was seen by a bushy faced rogue that almost sent a bullet after him and would in a few weeks threaten his life. Two weeks later the low mountains around Bisbee came up on the horizon. It was late evening when he rode in.

The town never went to sleep with miners working night and day. That night as he camped nearby in an area with stone outcroppings that resembled a Graveyard. He had no idea that he was in what the miners called Tombstone Canyon, an area sacred as an ancient Indian burial ground. All miners and people of Bisbee avoided going there for fear of Indian outrage and reprisal. Local wild life were not hunted in this area, so antelope, burro’s and wild Mustangs roamed there freely. With daylight, Roy was amazed to see a group of Antelope within a hundred yards. Thankful for such a great opportunity to get fresh meat , he selected and shot a good looking younger one of the herd. He enjoyed a nice steak for breakfast. Then, it took most of his morning to butcher and pack the better cuts of the animal with thoughts of selling the meat in town. During this time, he was seen by the local Indian women. His desecration of the sacred burial ground was quickly reported to a town group of Apaches and half breeds working for the big Mines.

Roy was looking for a Mercantile Sign, riding into town , when he was met by this group of mine workers. Their leader walked up to the unsuspecting Roy and angrily shouted, “ White man , you bring insult to my Father’s grave! You die!” He quickly grabbed Roy’s leg jerking him from the saddle and just as quick he was covered by Indians

beating him with rocks and sticks. His last memory was the sound of a gunshot as his knife was jerked from his belt and slashed across his chest just missing his throat. He had no knowledge that Tom Donaldson a Deputy Marshall had stopped the assault saving his life.

Two days later he awoke from a coma induced concussion. He was laying on a box bed in a dingy dark room . He was in Jail! He hurt all over and in moving to sit up the pain brought a sharp cry and brought Marshal Tom to his cell saying, “Good! You’re out of it. Weren’t sure you were gonna make it. Mister, you sure played Hell. Camping in an Indian burial ground and really making the Indians killing mad by slaughtering and butchering an animal there. I don’t think you could have done anything worse. I almost had to kill an Indian for you. Yeah, don’t try to move, you’re cut up pretty bad. Had to bring you here for your protection. The Apaches are not a forgiving people. Once you’re outta here they’ll be after you again. They feel their Ancient ones cannot rest until you are dead.” Roy managed to say, “ Didn’t know, I didn’t know it was a burial ground. It was dark when I rode in. Antelope at dawn and I needed meat.’ Tom replied, “ Well that Antelope at dawn almost got you killed and you aren’t safe by any means. You walk out that door and your Apaches will be waitin. They’ve probably got their squaws on lookout. You won’t be walkin for awhile. Mister, you lost a lotta blood. You get up now. You’ll fall flat on your face. Week ends comin up. Need to git you outta here by then. I’ll be needin this cell. What’s your name anyway? You got folks here?” Roy replied, “ No folks, name’s Roy Boone.” Tom said, “ Boone you’re kinda in tough, Jack Wilber the blacksmith, fixed you up; ain’t no doctor but we ain’t got one of those. He does OK fixin cuts and stuff. Maude Helms the Mercantile lady owner came over and painted you with that red stuff. You look like a painted Indian right now, but you gotta thank her. She’s a wonderful lady. She’ll be back this afternoon,. I gotta make some rounds, Your guns and stuff is right here by your bunk. Maude took your clothes to wash the blood out. I’m gonna lock

you in and nobody can bother you in case you sleep. I'll be gone an hour maybe."

At her store earlier, Maude was telling Jenny about the young man almost killed by the Indians because of what he did in their Sacred Burial grounds. She was fearful that he might get an infection in that cut across his chest. At the moment she was about to go to the Jail, but Tom came over to let her know about Roy. He gave her his story and said, "Maude, he seems like a pretty healthy young man, but he's pretty close mouthed about why he's in Bisbee . Maybe he's just in shock."

"I was gonna tell you , i didn't search his clothes , they were pretty messed up with blood so maybe there' s money in those pants pockets. Collect anything and bring it when you come over this evening. I'm sure he'd appreciate that. I've got a real problem trying to figure how I can get him outta jail and where i can take him that'll be safe from Apaches. I know I'll need that cell for drunk Indians this weekend. They're a pure race of people and their system is not able to handle whiskey. They love it and that's the problem. I'll have a cell full by Sunday night."

Maud had asked Jenny to clean out and wash Roy's clothes. When suddenly Jenny cried out from the back porch Maude fearing she was hurt rushed out to find Jenny folded on her knees , bitterly crying. Maude had taken poor depressed Jenny in and almost became a Mother to her. Jenny had fought to get herself outta self pity and depression. She had become a real fighter. This broken crying girl was not her Jenny. " Jenny Hon what's wrong girl?" she pleaded. hugging her. Jenny still sobbing , said, " Everything Maude!" and held up the letter envelope saying bitterly, "Daddy didn't get my letter ! Look, you helped me write it. It was in this pouch with money. I'm sorry Maude , but nothing is going right for me. I don't know what to do." Maude exclaimed , " Well Damn, I sure do! Let's close up here and find Tom.

Your letter could be part of a Hold up. This Roy might be an Outlaw. You said there was money too. Sounds like a robbery to me. Maybe a stage coach, they carry the mail.”

Hurriedly they searched and found Tom. Jenny and Maude excitedly braced him with the envelope and their suspicions. Tom said, “ I don’t know. He didn’t strike me as an outlaw, but there was a stage coach robbery a couple of months back outta Tucson and that’s the way of the mail. Ladies, let’s get to the Jail. He’s locked up but Damn, I left him his guns. We gotta be careful, don’t say anything, he could be dangerous.”

Once at the Jail , Tom unlocked and went into the cell. Roy was sleeping and Tom took his guns to the outside saying , “Well ladies , shall i wake him up?” He knew that Jenny would want answers right now. Surprisingly, Jenny put her hand up and said quietly, “ No, he’s hurt bad, lets go outside. He ain’t going anywhere”. Once outside the Jail, she said, “He don’t look like an Outlaw.” Maude said , “I didn’t think so either.” Tom said, ‘ Ladies what’s an outlaw supposed to look like? “ Maude laughed saying, “ Sorta like you Tom when you don’t shave, Ugly!” Tom laughed and said, “ Ok we’ll let him rest awhile. Come back in a couple hours. We’ll get some answers.”

Back at the mercantile Jenny was saying, “ Maude I thought I had put myself back together after the way William treated me, but this just hit me too hard. I’m sorry.” Maude said, “ No , Jenny you’re a fighter and you’ve got good feelings. You didn’t wanna wake that young man. Outlaw or not, he is suffering. i’m proud of you putting your own wants and needs aside for him, girl, that’s feelings.” Jenny said , “ Maude I can’t explain it. I almost feel that I’ve met him somewhere before. I truly hope that he’s gonna heal Ok. I know what those awful cuts feel like.” Maude had tears in her eyes watching the once beautiful young woman unknowingly tracing her own scars with tender fingers as she talked about Roy’s.

That afternoon Jenny cooked up a pot of soup and at Maude's question, she said, "Yeah I made a little extra. We'll take Roy a tin. Outlaw or not he's gotta eat." Maude just laughed and rolled her eyes as they went to the Jail. "She hoped and prayed that there was an easy answer to that letter, but it sure looked bad for Roy. She couldn't imagine how he could possibly have come by it honestly. She was more concerned than Jenny."

At the Jail, Tom said, ' I haven't mentioned the letter. He's pretty groggy and runnin a fever; gave him some pain killer; can't get a lotta information outta him, but he's dang sure gotta Texas way of talkin, Seems he can read too. Saw me checking Wanted Posters. Didn't bother him a bit. If he's Outlaw, it ain't from around here."

" One thing though, that might go against him, was I judging him . His guns are sure outlaw and in clean perfect working order, fully loaded. He was wearing an open cutaway forty four holster with tie downs, the kind preferred by gun fighters. I'd have to say those Indian miner's can be awful thankful he was not suspecting anything or Boot Hill would be crowded today. I feel a lot better now with his guns in my office. I see you brought him a tin of soup Jenny. Thank you, i was gonna hit the saloon kitchen for some. Maude I gave him some of that opium stuff. It eased his pain pretty quick."

As they entered Roy's cell, sunlight hit the scarred side of Jenny's face and Roy half dopey from the opium, couldn't hold his surprise and horror as he exclaimed, " Oh God Jenny, I'm so sorry! I, I, found you!" Tom. Jenny and Maude stopped dead still. His exclamation shocked all three " He knew Jenny!" Jenny said sharply, " I don't know you! My Father's letter. How did you get it? How did you know me. I've never seen you before. Why are you sorry you found me?" Roy couldn't take his eyes from Jenny's face, the terrible scaring and shocking memory of that terrible day had him crying.

Tom said, “ Ease up Jenny slow down , he’s still suffering from a coma and that Opium’s working on his thinking. We’re pushing him too hard. Take it easy Roy, we’re here to help you. Jenny brought you some soup. Do you think you can sit up?’ As they propped him into a sitting position , he still glued his eyes on Jenny and said “ You’re so beautiful”. Jenny said, “Yeah Tom , you’re right, he’s still in a coma.” Tom said , “ Roy, Roy look at me. The letter, Where did you get the letter?” Roy finally getting his thinking together said, “ My letter. My letter,” and began looking around for it. Jenny said, “ Here’s your letter Roy.”

Roy still groggy ,pushed her hand back saying , “You Read, You read “ Jenny said,’ i know what it says, Maude and I wrote it.” Maude said, “ Go ahead , read it to him Jenny maybe it’ll help him remember”. Taking the folded paper from inside Jenny cried out almost dropping it as she read the short note from her Dad. She exclaimed , to Tom and Maude , “ Oh God it’s from Dad! Roy came to take me home! He came to bring me home. Oh God, I can’t believe it ‘ Turning to Roy she asked . “ How is Dad?” Roy was asleep! That Opium was strong stuff.

Almost at daybreak Jenny was at the Jail to bring breakfast for Tom and Roy. Jenny said, “Mister Roy Boone are you still drunk? Can we talk? How’s Dad?” Roy said, “ I’m sure sorry , but I don’t remember a lotta what was said. I know you were here and it’s a great pleasure to meet you. Your Dad wanted to come but his arm couldn’t take the trip. I’m working for him. I wanted to make the trip .Needed to get away for awhile. I’m sorry for the way I am right now. Guess I sure pulled a stupid stunt , but I didn’t know it was a graveyard. Almost got me killed . Jenny, after meeting you, the trip was worth it. You’re a beautiful young lady.”

Jenny said, “ Roy! You don’t have to lie for my sake ; I know what I look like. These terrible scars are sickening.” Roy said softly, “ Jenny I wasn’t talking about your face.” Jenny was wiping away tears

as she stood up to go but stopped saying “ Thank you Roy. You’re not so bad yourself.”

“ I know everything looks wonderful and the skies are beautiful, but we still have a gang of Apaches to deal with that wanna kill you Roy.” These words from Tom following that feeling meeting between Roy and Jenny that morning. Roy said, “Thanks Tom for all your help. Gimme a day more and I’ll deal with a band of Apache miners.” Tom said, “Hell No!, I don’t want any killing. Things are quiet and I wanna keep’em that way. I need to get you outta here and I think I’ve figured a way to do it. Jack Wilber is the man that sewed you up. He’s our Blacksmith and also builds Boot Hill boxes. Roy we’re gonna haul you outta here in one. Jenny says you can have her room at Maude’s for a few days. The miners will get word that you died. That should settle them down. Maybe you and Jenny can get outta here in a week or so, if you can travel.” Roy replied, “ Just don’t shut it, I can’t stand being closed in. Never could figure how a man could work underground. You know Tom , that Jenny is a wonderful girl. That William is a damned fool on every count. She’s lucky to be shet of him.”

That evening in plain sight, Jack and Tom hauled a burial box outta the Jail to a waiting wagon which was driven to Boot Hill, but later returned to the back of the Mercantile. Jack laughed and said, “ Tom I’m gonna lose money on this box. Can’t sell it new, it’s been used.” Tom agreed laughing also and said, “ Roy will be glad to pay you for the rent Jack. I know I would.” That night Roy slept in Jenny’s room and began to tell them some of his life. Maude was thrilled, She had never seen Jenny so bright and happy.

This became a job for Maude over the next few days She had to keep her out of her room. She was spoiling Roy rotten. She said,’ Jenny hon, don’t go building a lotta dreams. We don’t know Roy at all. Don’t put yourself in line for another big fall and disappointment. You may not be able to survive.” Jenny said,” Maude, I’m never gonna do

that again; you taught me better. I'm ready to fight now. There's a deep sorrow in Roy. I can feel it and I can see him brighten up every time I'm with him. There's been a terrible happening in his life. Maybe someday I'll know what it is." Maude said, " well he is a great figure of a man. I'd wonder if he had a sweetheart back in Oklahoma. Speaking of that , we need to cut his hair off and give him a shave. Don't want them Indians mistaking him for the man that died in Jail."

Two weeks after Roy's attack , he wasn't showing signs of the injuries. Marshall Tom came over frequently to talk and it was becoming obvious to him that Roy was a gunfighter. He wore tiedown most of the time and untied sitting down. His back was never to a door or window. And he was naturally looking at everyone entering the store with an unusual interest. Yeah, he had a History behind him. He was concerned with his attachment to Jenny and began to wonder if she was just a game for him. He soon got his answer. William Townsend came to town.

Tom went to see Roy saying, " Roy, if I read you right, you can handle yourself in a gunfight. I know you don't think much of Bill Townsend, for how he treated Jenny, but he can be dangerous. He's survived a few shootouts and half a dozen raids from across the Border. In the minds of a lotta folks, including himself, he's a dangerous man. I don't want any bullets flying around in town. If things get that far outta hand , take your fight somewhere else." Roy said, "Tom it won't do for me to have words with him. He broke a sweet young girl's heart and I won't do anything that might hurt her or prevent me from taking her home to her Dad." Tom said, " Roy, have you considered Jenny's reputation if you take her home by yourself?" Roy said," Yeah it's a concern, I'll have to talk with Jenny about. She might be more comfortable on a stage coach. Where is Townsend right now?" Tom replied , " I saw him headed for the Mercantile."

Roy was thinking as he started that way himself, “No, I better hold my tongue. I might put a bullet in him.” His plans for staying out of a fight were wasted. Upon entering the store, Townsend was saying to Maude, “ You mean she’s still around here? How can you stand having someone like her around selling food. It’s a wonder anyone comes here.” Before Maude could answer , Roy said, “ Mister William Townsend, I’m speaking for Jenny. Your mouth and your business is not welcome. Any more insulting remarks from you ,I’ll take personally. I suggest you leave .” Townsend spun to Roy saying, “ Who the hell are you? I’ll do as I damned well please and I’ll say whatever I want to. Maude, who is this guy? You better warn him to keep his mouth shut. Nobody talks to me that way.” Roy walked straight at Townsend saying, “ You’re almost right, but I’m the nobody you never met and anything more you have to say about Jenny might be your last words.” At that instant Tom busted in exclaiming, “ Damnit , Roy, I told you no shooting in town!” Roy said, “ Hold on Tom. You said no bullets flying around. I would only need one, but Mister Townsend is leaving. It’s up to him how he leaves.”

Townsend made the right decision and left. The realization that he might be facing a real gunfighter shut him up. Tom said, “ Roy you’re sure pushing Townsend, he may be back.” Roy said, “ No Tom you watch a man’s eyes and body moves. They give him away every time. He’s no coward, but he’s no fool either. He prefers to bully people and Jenny is a perfect victim for him. I guess it makes him feel better when he can hurt someone without getting hurt himself. The minute I came on strong, he backed up half a step. I knew then there would be words but no shooting.” Tom said, “ i sure hope you’re right. We’ve seen all the killing we need in this town.”

When Jenny came in, Maude could hardly wait to tell her about the almost gunfight. She said, “Jenny, I don’t know what kind of spell you have over Roy, but he was ready to kill Bill Townsend an hour ago and Bill was scared. You could see it in his eyes. Jenny, I think the

man is falling in love with you and will have no one speak ill of you. Bill was being his normal nasty self and Roy put him down hard! Tom was afraid there was gonna be a shooting. Jenny, I've been around a long time, but I've never seen a man stand that tall for any woman. Bill was smart enough to know that running his mouth would put him in Boot Hill and he backed away thankful that Tom came in . I'll bet as long as Roy's in town, he'll watch what he says about you."

Jenny exclaimed, "Oh God Maude! I don't want a fight over me. I can't believe it. Why would Roy feel that way. Look at me Maude. What man could love someone like me?" Maude said, " Jenny, Roy don't see your face. Look at me Jenny, hard lines, white hair and face of wrinkles, but Johnny loves me now when I have no youth or looks to offer. He's uglier than a mud fence and I still love the man. Oh and by the way Jenny, you've sure brightened up since Roy came to town. You're a different girl. I wonder what might cause such a thing."

That evening Jenny didn't know what to say to Roy. Finally Roy said, " Jen, I reckon you heard about today and I got a little hot with Townsend. Tom thinks it might be a good idea for us to leave for Oklahoma as soon as we can. He might be right. When it comes to you I'm a little touchy . Your Dad helped me when I needed it and I promised him I'd bring you home." Jenny said, " Roy, I'm a big girl. I can take Bill's insults and in a way he's right , my face is not pretty. I don't want you getting hurt because of me." Roy replied, " Jenny, that's one of your problems, you think your marked face ruins you forever. Next time you smile , look at yourself, every scar disappears. Yes, when you smile , you're beautiful and that's how I see you all the time." Jenny had to turn away crying, "Maude was right , Roy was in love with her!" Those were tears of joy and so was a beaming smile. She said, " Roy you're wonderful. I know we've never met but it seems like I know you and you always seem to know how to make me happy. I feel like a different person around you. Maude said you were talking about leaving."

Roy replied, “ Gotta get away from here Jen before I have to shoot someone. How would you like to travel . I can’t just ride off with you. It wouldn’t help your reputation at all. How about the Stage Coach?” Jenny exclaimed, “ Never again Roy. I rode one coming out here. It was awful, every one staring at my scared face. A stage coach is my worst nightmare. I’ll never feel safe on one again. I’m a good rider. Gimme a horse Roy, and don’t worry about my reputation. I don’t need one and it wouldn’t help my looks anyway.” Roy said, “ Jen, will you let me decide how you look. Quit putting yourself down. To me you’re a beautiful girl, but being with a lone rider can draw trouble. There’s a lotta evil out there. If we go horseback, how would you feel dressed as a boy?” Jen replied and laughed, “ Roy i ain’t never been one, but wearing pants sounds good to me. Sure let’s try it.”

Jen couldn’t believe the way Roy treated her once on the Trail. Wouldn’t let her do anything. Finally she said, “ Roy, unless you let me do my share, we ain’t going anywhere. I’m not helpless and remember I’m a boy! I don’t need you babying me, besides, I don’t like your cooking.’ Roy laughed and said, “ Jen , you’re right, I guess I’ve never traveled with a woman before and you’re kinda special.” Jen said, “ Don’t go spoiling me Roy, you can save that for your wife.” Roy laughed and said, “ Don’t have one of those ,yet. You interested?” Jen said , “ No! I just went through a very bad time with William. No, I guess marriage ain’t for me. I’ll just get home and try to make things easier for Dad.” Secretly she was thinking, “ I would love to tell him Yes, I’m interested, but it would never work, he would soon tire of looking at me.” Her eyes were wet with tears of self pity, but forced herself to push those thoughts away.

She said, ‘ Roy , you said you’d teach me how to shoot a gun. I’m pretty good with a rifle, but a hand gun I’ve never used.” Roy said, “ Jen, I told you that I wished you’d never have to use one, but we’ve got to be honest. Out here with Indians, outlaws and groups of raiders all around us, we have to be able to defend ourselves and two guns would

be better than one. I'm gonna teach you to use this short barreled forty four. It's smaller and lighter weight, but at twenty feet it's as deadly as anything out here. Thumbing the hammer back may be a little difficult for you, so we're gonna work on fanning the hammer with the left hand. This requires a lotta practice at holding the gun pointed without bouncing. You won't be shooting until I see a steady hand."

Jenny was a quick and dedicated learner. Every opportunity she had included fanning practice. They were over a week out when Roy let her shoot three times. She was Ok pointing and shooting, but her fanning was really bad. At real close quarters she was deadly, but twenty feet made a big difference. Roy encouraged her to keep trying and finally she hit a cactus with three bullets at twenty five feet. Roy was proud of her saying, ' Jen you're plenty good enough to protect yourself, but don't think when you shoot. You hesitate and you're dead. That cactus can't shoot back, but a man can and will."

Jenny was interested in Roy's past and brought the subject up many times, but Roy didn't open up. Seeing her sincere interest, he finally told her of his orphan years and rustling which got him four years in Prison. He omitted his time with Doolin and told her the rest about killing Pence and Bittercreek, two members of Doolin's Gang when they threatened her Dad. Jenny was shocked hearing the story, and thanked him over and over for what he had done, while bitterly condemning Doolin and his Gang for her condition and that of her Dad. She said, " Roy, I wanna learn everything I can about guns. If I ever meet a member of Doolin's Gang; I'll kill him!" She wondered later about Roy's reaction to her threat to kill. He seemed a different Roy with very little to say.

As they approached the Border where Roy had seen the group of rogues holding people hostage to sell water, he was hoping they could water there in the late night and ride on, but his timing was wrong and it was early afternoon when the Waterhole Oasis appeared like magic

in the dry desert. It rubbed him raw thinking these thieves were robbing travelers for taking water from a God given waterhole. He had told Jenny of his experience there and told her there might be trouble. He wasn't in favor of paying for water to a bunch of Outlaw thieves. Jenny could see a quiet anger coming over him the closer they came to the waterhole. She said, " Roy, remember I need you. Don't go risking trouble for a little water."

Roy replied, "Jenny check your gun and take off the keeper. If we have trouble get on the ground. Can't do a lot from horseback." Riding in , Roy could see four armed men waiting to meet them. He said, " When we dismount lead both horses toward the waterhole. Jenny, I have a very bad feeling, keep the horses between them and yourself and use them for protection in case of shooting." Remembering what the old gunfighter in Huntsville had taught him , he looked for any protection. There wasn't any. The rough ground around the waterhole would be his best bet, but that wasn't too good. He had about decided to pull in his horns and pay their asking fee like Jenny wanted. This was until the bushy faced leader said, " Mister, I recognize that horse you're riding. You're the sneak thief that came through here weeks ago and stole water from us. I'd recognize that bald faced horse anywhere. This time you're gonna pay big. I want your horse. You can take that Mule over yonder to ride. You get your water and I get your horse. That's what it's gonna cost you. I kinda like your saddle too, but I don't have one to trade. You can just leave it on the horse."

Then he yelled at Jenny, as he began to pull his belt gun, " Hey Boy, lead those horses over here ! We're gonna make a trade." Roy did like he had been taught. Keep your mouth shut and don't argue, if it calls for shooting, plan your first move and take the fight to them, as Jenny stopped and began to turn the horses, all eyes were on her and Roy waited no longer. His gun came flashing out as bushy face jerked his. Roy shot the big man and dove to the ground as the other three

scattered dropping down and shooting. Roy rolled over twice to get further into the rough ground for protection and shot one kneeling in front of him. One man took off running and the third man got a clear shot at Roy, the bullet caught him on top of his shoulder and cut a swat across his back. Roy dropped his gun with the quick pain and the man seeing this stood up for a killing shot. Roy tried to grab for the gun with his left hand as a roll of gunfire hit the man standing. Jenny, frightened, did as Roy had taught her fanning three bullets in the direction of her target crying and frightened, ran to Roy, thinking he was shot bad.

Blood covered his shoulder and back, but he said thru pain clinched teeth, “Jen, reload your gun and get the rifle. There’s more of them over by their camp. Hand me my gun.” One of the thieves was wounded, but Bushy face was dead along with the one that shot Roy. The wounded man was calling for a friend Jim, to come help him. He was bleeding bad. Jim the man that had ran off came walking around the waterhole with his hands up. He said ‘Mister don’t shoot! Collins needs help.” Roy could see more men in the Rogue’s camp and quickly said, “Jenny Hon, take the horses to water and fill our canteens, I’m bleeding some but we’ve gotta get outta here. Can’t stay, they’ll come for us, when they know I’m wounded.” Jennys’ horse was the smaller and Roy managed with Jenny’s help to get in the saddle.

They were over two miles away when they rode into a rock formation and Jenny got Roy to lay down. His shirt had taken the blood and was now drying. Jenny still in shock and crying pleaded, “Oh Roy, I have to do something! Please don’t die!. What can I do?” Roy said, “Jen, it hurts like hell and I’ve lost some blood, so listen Use a little water to get the shirt loose. Pull some hair from my horse’s tail and get a large cactus or thistle thorn and sharp stick to sew up the cut. When you’re finished crush up some of that dried desert weed, mix with a little water and pack it over the wound to stop the bleeding.

Honey, that's all we can do . I may pass out on you, but don't worry , I'm not ready to die. Gotta job to do."

Jenny was glad for the job she had to do. It kept her from thinking about shooting that man. Later as night came on , her ragged stitching job seemed to be working. There was no bleeding and Roy was resting. Earlier his wild talking in his sleep had scared her, but now she only looked with loving eyes at this man who loved her praying that he would heal. She reloaded every gun and sat through the night hoping the Rogues wouldn't follow them. With the dawn she ate jerky and dared not build a fire. She had tethered the horses out all night, but brought them into the rocks at daybreak. She was praying they wouldn't be seen. Roy slept through most of the day and it was late afternoon when he awoke with a lot of questions. Once he was satisfied that they were safe, Jenny questioned him about a fire. He needed something to eat and he told her how to build a small fire using dry sticks so there was no smoke. Small desert willows grew among the rocks and later a hot willow tea with a lot of honey sugar had both feeling better.

Roy asked , "Jen did you get cold last night? I can see you used all the horse blankets on me." Jen said, " No, Roy, I cuddled up next to the man I'm gonna marry. You! Mister you talk in your sleep and yes I'm interested If you are." Roy exclaimed , " What girl! Damn you can't do that! Please don't joke Jenny. Did I really say something in my sleep , like asking you to marry me?" Jenny said, " Oh a whole lot better than that Roy. You're the sweetest man I ever met and I'm not gonna let anything happen to you." Then, Jenny said, "I think all of the squatters are gone from the water hole . I need to ride back down there. There was no smoke from there this morning and we need more water. I used a lot boiling everything. We can't make it with what we've got."

Roy said, “ Jen , I can’t let you do that alone, maybe by tomorrow I can go with you.” Jenny replied, “ No, remember I’m the scar faced gunman that put an end to the shooting the other night. I can do it again . You’ve protected and risked your life for me enough. Roy , I’m not afraid to try anything after the other night. Yeah ,I was frightened and cried for the life I had taken, but it’s over. What comes next I don’t know , but I’ll face it. You taught me how to use a gun and now I know that I can. Roy your little timid scar faced Jenny has grown up. I want you for my man. I can’t love you any more than I do right now. I’ll tell you what; I promise to make a quick run. If there’s sign of anyone there I’ll come back right away, but we have to have water, even if it means more shooting.”

Roy said, “Ok, but wait until the moon is high and ride in slow. You may be able to fill up without any trouble. If any one shoots at you, bail off your horse and move close to the ground. Never stay in one position when shooting at night. Your gunfire makes a great target.”

Thankfully , Jenny had no trouble . The water hole was vacant; the squatters had moved on. The following day, Roy and Jen rode back to the waterhole for the horses to fill up before heading across New Mexico. He said nothing to Jenny about the three grave mounds on a small side hill. No need to remind her of the shooting.

As they approached the town of Santa Fe, Roy had recovered somewhat from his gunshot wound, but Jenny insisted they stop in town and get medication or a doctor for it. Once in town Roy said, “ Jen you can dress like a girl now if you like. I’d love to see you as a girl again.” Jenny grinned at Roy saying, “ You gittin ideas Mister? I’ve been wondering if you were. Dear Roy, you were right. When I laugh or smile those scars disappear. Thank you for loving someone like me. Dear Roy, Oh how I love you, but In your eyes I still see a deep sadness; when are you gonna tell me of your hurt that brings you such

sorrow?" Roy said, "Jenny Hon, I hope you can forgive me. You have always been right . You have seen me before. I saw you shot that day during the Stage coach robbery. I was part of Doolin's Gang. That horrible day is burned in my memory and every time I look at you, it breaks my heart." Jenny wrapped her arms around Roy's neck saying, " Poor Darling Roy you told me your secret when you were shot and I've known for a long time of your love. The terrible tragedy of that Stage Coach shooting brought us together. I was right, I had seen you before and Maud was right; I know now that love is such a beautiful thing that it will cover the ugliest of scars for a lifetime." Roy said, Jen Honey, let's find a Padre and get married. I'd love to surprise your Dad. It would be the most wonderful gift for your Dad to see you happily, married and the loving daughter he once knew." Jenny was crying at just the thought, but almost slapped Roy when he laughed and said, 'I might find something to like about marriage too."

The End