

Hannibal Heyes' Revenge (The Reunion Part 4)

Genre: Outlaw days, action, hurt/comfort, angst

When Kid Curry returns injured to Devil's Hole, Heyes rides out seeking revenge.

Hannibal Heyes' Revenge

(The Reunion part 4)

By Maz McCoy

"Find out what time the bank opens," Hannibal Heyes said as Kid Curry adjusted the cinch on his saddle.

"I will," Kid assured him.

It was early morning and the sun had only just cleared the mountain tops as they stood outside the cabins at Devil's Hole.

"And who opens up? Is it the bank manager? Or one of the tellers? And if so when do the other staff get there?"

"I know."

"And find out what type of safe it is. Note down any...

"...markings, names, dates," Kid continued for him. "Count the number of windows, what type of bars are on them, is there a back door, what time does the bank close, what time do the staff leave? I know Heyes. You've been over it at least twenty times." He looked at his friend patiently, and then climbed into the saddle.

"I just want to get this right." The dark-haired man looked up at his friend. Kid adjusted his hat against the sun.

"I know, but I could recite it in my sleep, so you don't have to tell me again."

"It's my biggest bank job with the Gang so far. I don't want it going wrong. I heard one of the new men muttering last night. He thinks I'm too young to be leader."

"Want me to have a word?" Two blue eyes narrowed.

"No, just get what we need."

"I promise you I'll get all the information you asked for, just like I have before." He held up a hand before his friend could interrupt. "And yes, I will be discrete about it too."

"Okay. Be careful."

"I will, Heyes." Kid touched the brim of his hat and turned his horse away from the cabins. Heyes watched him go. His leadership of the Devil's Hole Gang rested on this job, but there was no one he trusted more than Kid to help him.

A few days later, Kyle Murtry and Willis Tyler sat on the ridge above the signal rock. They were on guard duty, watching the valley below for anyone trying to enter Devil's Hole; waiting for the shots that would tell them whether someone approaching was friend or foe. They were under strict instructions from their new leader, to keep alert and eagled-eyed at all times.

"Four," said Kyle, confidently.

"Four?" Willis asked.

"Yep, four."

"You sure?"

Kyle nodded and Willis dealt him four cards. Kyle looked at them, studied the hand he now had and threw the cards onto the ground in disgust.

"D'you want to play again?" Willis asked. "So far you owe me three pebbles and a twig."

"Sure why not? Ain't nothin' goin' on down there." He cast a casual glance into the valley, and saw a rider far below. "Shoot! Willis, we got company!" Kyle jumped to his feet, having been neither eagle-eyed nor alert. The two men watched as a man rode slowly along the valley. He was too far away for them to make out who he was, which was why Heyes wanted to get them all binoculars, next time they were in town. Was this man friend or foe? At the signalling point the horse came to a halt. Kyle watched, waiting for the man to draw his gun and fire the agreed signal. The man did not move. Did he know the signal? If not why had he stopped there?

"Can you tell who it is?" Willis asked.

"Nope, he's too far away." Kyle squinted just in case it helped. It didn't.

They watched and waited. The man slid slowly from the saddle, crumpling in a heap on the floor.

"What the...?"

"I think you'd better go get Heyes," Kyle said and Willis headed for his horse.

A group of riders rounded the bend and Kyle watched as Heyes led four other gang members to find the man they had reported seeing. Well aware that this could be some kind of trap, Heyes had stationed men on the ridge, guns trained on the valley below. As they turned towards the signalling point, Heyes spotted the horse standing patiently. He raised a hand to halt the men and they approached with caution. There was something familiar about the animal. As they drew closer, Heyes realised it was Kid's horse. He spurred his own mount on and then saw the man on the ground. Heyes jumped from the saddle and ran towards the slumped figure.

"Kid?" he said gently, as he knelt beside him. His friend was lying on his back, unmoving. He was badly beaten; blood was dried about his nose and mouth and had run from a cut above his left eye. Kid's shirt was torn, some of the buttons ripped off. Where it lay open Heyes could see purple bruises on his friend's abdomen and ribs.

"Someone sure worked him over good," Virgil Atkins muttered.

"We have to get him back." Heyes looked at his horse, desperately trying to decide the best thing to do.

"Heyes, he can't sit a horse like that," Lobo said.

"Help me get him on mine. I'll ride double with him." The men gathered round, ready to help.

As they rode into the hideout, the rest of the gang came out of the main cabin, interested to see who the mysterious stranger was. They were stunned to see Kid Curry slumped forward on Heyes' horse. Kid was carried, carefully, into the leader's cabin and placed on his bed. The blond man groaned as they lay him down. Two bruised blue eyes opened. The room came slowly into focus. There was something familiar about it, but Kid couldn't quite connect everything. A man stepped into view.

"Heyes?" Kid managed to croak.

"Yeah, I'm here," his friend assured him.

"How'd I get here?"

"You were spotted at the signalling point."

"Oh."

"Who did this?" Brown eyes held blue, but Kid didn't reply. "Kid?"

His friend's eyes closed. Kyle entered the room, having been relieved from guard duty.

"Heyes is it true, it's Kid?" He stopped when he saw the familiar figure lying unconscious. "Sheesh."

"Give me a hand, will you, Kyle?" Between them they eased Kid out of his shirt. Kyle looked at Kid's torso. Whoever had worked him over had been thorough. Red marks on Kid's wrists indicated that he had been tied up.

"He sure made someone mad," Kyle observed.

"Yeah, I guess he did."

"Any idea who?"

"Not yet."

"Heyes what's this?" Kyle held out a piece of paper that had fallen from Kid's shirt pocket. Taking it from him, Heyes opened it. Anger welled up in him as he read, "One Gundog returned." The dark-haired man knew immediately who had written it. Kid couldn't have known the paper was there or he'd never have left it for Heyes to find. Heyes screwed up the paper. His knuckles turning white with barely contained rage.

"What's it mean Heyes?" Kyle asked.

"It means I have some unfinished business."

They cleaned Kid up as best they could; wiping the dried blood from his face. Heyes sat in a chair beside the bed, trying to read, but his mind was on something else. He took the screwed up piece of paper from his pocket, flattened it on his leg and read it again. He looked up at the man lying in bed; the man he had only recently been reconciled with; the best friend he'd ever had and had thought he'd lost; someone he could easily lose again if the note writer had his way. He wasn't about to let that happen. His brown eyes darkened. Heyes came to a decision.

Sunlight through the window woke Kid. He groaned. His head hurt. His face hurt. His ribs hurt. Heck it would be easier to list the parts of him that didn't hurt. Slowly he raised his head and saw Heyes asleep in a chair. He sat up, a pain shot through his side. His cry woke Heyes.

"You all right?"

"No," Kid admitted. "Everything hurts."

"Yeah, I can imagine. I'd say you're lucky to be alive." Heyes stood up and approached the bed.

Kid looked up at his friend.

"Did I fall off my horse?"

"Yeah, but I hope you're not gonna tell me that's what happened to you?"

Kid did not reply. Heyes pulled the chair closer. Kid watched as he sat down, clearly they were about to have one of Heyes' talks.

"All right, what happened?"

"Nothin'."

"You gonna tell me you beat yourself up?" Kid did not reply. "Or is this nothing, like Brannigan working you over was nothing? Like you being shot in the arm was nothing? One of those kind of nothings?"

Kid sighed.

"I just got on the wrong side of someone, that's all." He tried to ease himself into a more comfortable position but couldn't find one.

"Uh huh. I worked that much out. The question is, who?"

"Just someone."

"Someone I know?"

"I doubt it."

"So what did you do to make this someone so all fired angry at you? Did you cheat at cards? Drink his beer? Did he catch you in his wife's bedroom?"

"No!" Kid protested, finally meeting Heyes' eyes.

"Well it had to be something serious. I mean look at you! He beat you nearly half to death!"

"We had a disagreement." Kid shifted uncomfortably under Heyes' scrutiny. He held his ribs as he moved.

"So this wasn't anyone I know?"

"No."

"Nobody I may have met before?"

"No."

"Not someone who used to be in the Gang?"

"No."

"Not someone like...oh say...Deke Stevens?"

Kid's eyes opened wide as he shot a look at his friend, then looked quickly away.

"You made me go through all that when you already knew?"

"He left this in your pocket." Heyes held up the piece of paper. "One Gundog returned. I guess he means you."

Kid closed his eyes and let out a long sigh.

"Your turn," Heyes told him, settling back ready to hear Kid's story.

Kid sat on the porch in front of the saloon. He removed the cigar from his mouth and let out a long stream of smoke. His eyes moved to the bank across the street and to a small man in a dark suit, approaching it. He watched as the man searched in his jacket pocket, found a key and unlocked the door. He opened the large door and went inside. As the door closed, Kid casually removed his watch from his vest pocket and noted the time. He took another long draw on his cigar.

Once the bank was open, Kid took a stroll around the town. His nonchalant amble took him past the General store, where he stopped to admire the rope, hats and farm implements on display. As he sauntered past the barber's shop he contemplated a hair cut, decided against it and headed for the livery stables. Having checked on his horse, he wandered behind the buildings, stopping at the back of the bank. Anyone watching would have seen a blond man apparently removing something from the bottom of his boot. In reality, Kid was noting an open window, the bars on them all and any possible entry point.

When he returned to the main street, Kid entered the bank. A guard, standing in the corner watched him. Kid nodded politely as he waited for a teller to become free; at the same time he took a mental note of the name and the date on the safe behind the counter.

Finally a teller was free. A pretty, young woman stood at the counter and Kid gave her the benefit of his blue eyes and charming smile, as he approached. She smiled back.

"How can I help?"

"Just giving me that smile has made my day ma'am," he told her and she blushed. He handed her a bill, asking if she could exchange it for smaller coins. She did so. Picking them up, Kid thanked her, touched the brim of his hat and wished

her good day. She watched him walking away until a stern cough, from the neighbouring teller, drew her back to matters at hand.

Standing outside the bank, Kid looked at his watch and decided it was time for coffee. He didn't know, his slow stroll from the bank to the cafeteria was watched by a man with dark hooded eyes.

Kid watched the day's comings and goings at the bank from his seat in the cafeteria window, as he chatted to Eliza, the waitress. Later, he returned to his hotel room for a while and decided to clean his gun at the table beside the window. Finally, he returned to the boardwalk and the seat he had occupied that morning. Tipping the chair back on two legs, one foot resting on the porch rail, he rocked slowly back and forth. When the day's banking business had been done and the building was locked up, Kid decided it was time for supper and then a beer.

He spent a very pleasant evening in the saloon. He played a few hands of poker, increasing his funds considerably. He had a few beers and got to know Emma, one of the saloon girls, real well. Kid was enjoying himself so much he decided to volunteer next time Heyes wanted a bank checked out.

It was a warm night and the stars shone brightly in the clear, dark sky as Kid stepped through the bat-wing doors onto the boardwalk. He decided to take a nocturnal look at the bank before heading to bed. His boots sounded on the wooden boards as he stepped down into the street. As he passed an alley between the buildings a hand reached out and

grabbed his arm, pulling him into the darkness. Kid struggled and a fist connected with his jaw. He staggered backwards and tried to fight but found both his arms held back. Another punch hit him in the ribs and he doubled over. Then everything went black.

"Wake up Curry!" Someone slapped his face as he lay on the ground and Kid slowly regained consciousness. He was at the entrance to the Devil's Hole hideout. Deke Stevens peered down at him. "Can you hear me?"

Kid gave a faint nod.

"Good. Tell Heyes I'll be waiting for him. I still intend to challenge him for the leadership of the gang. Either he comes to me or I'll find him. You got that?"

"I hear you."

They got Kid onto his horse. Fortunately, the horse knew the way back to the hide-out as well as his rider did. Kid let the animal take the lead as he faded in and out of consciousness. When the horse stopped, at the signalling point, Kid could hold on no more and slid from the saddle.

Heyes looked at his friend. He put down his coffee cup.

"You're sure Deke didn't say anything? No message for me? No threats? No boast about anything?"

"Nothing I can remember," Kid lied, having left that part out of what he had told Heyes. "It was me he wanted. Just a little payback." Heyes brown eyes studied him thoughtfully. He knew Kid was lying. Kid eased himself up on the pillow, a hand holding his ribs as he did so.

"Get some rest," Heyes advised. "We can talk more later." Kid was already asleep when Heyes closed the bedroom door.

It was dark when Heyes stepped outside. Light streamed from the windows of the main cabin and the sound of laughter drifted through the darkness. The leader of the Devil's Hole Gang leaned against the porch post, thinking. Kid was lying, he knew that. No doubt he was trying to protect him from something, in the same way he hadn't wanted Heyes to know Deke Stevens was back. However if Stevens was out there planning something Heyes had to know what it was. He wanted to be ready for him. The image of Kid's bruised and battered body came into his mind. Anger welled up in the dark-haired man and he thumped the hitching rail. If Stevens had something to say he should have come to him, not take it out on Kid.

The main cabin door opened and Lobo wandered outside, heading to the outhouse. Heyes wanted to talk to him, but waited until he was heading back to the cabin.

"Hey Lobo!" he called. Lobo walked towards him.

"How's Kid doing?"

"Better I think. He was lucky. They coulda killed him."

"Yeah." They stood quietly for a moment.

"You were friends with Deke when he was here weren't you?"

"Deke? Yeah. As much as anyone, I guess."

"If I needed to get in touch with him, would you know how to?"

"Maybe. I reckon I know where he is. Well where he was, last I heard."

"Where?" Lobo turned to look at his leader.

"Heyes, you're not thinking of using him on a job are you? I mean he didn't exactly leave on good terms."

"I know. Why don't you let me worry about that? I just want to have a word with him."

"Maybe you should wait until Kid...?"

"No! Where is he?" There was a hard edge to the directness of the question. Lobo suspected this had something to do with Kid. He hesitated. "Lobo, where?"

"There's a cave..."

There was a cry from the bed. Heyes stopped packing his saddlebags and put his head around the door. Kid was asleep but obviously dreaming. As he moved beneath the blankets he groaned in pain. Heyes' resolve deepened. He would deal with Stevens this time. When he looked back at the bed two blue eyes met his.

"Hey," Kid said, sleepily.

"Go back to sleep, I'm watching your back this time," Heyes advised and turned away.

Grim faced, Heyes saddled his horse. He pulled the cinch too tight and horse looked round at him.

"Sorry," Heyes apologised and this seemed to satisfy the animal. The horse turned its head away, as Heyes threw his saddle bags across its back. Heyes heard someone behind him.

"What are you doin' Heyes?" Kyle asked. There was a chill in the morning air. Dawn was beginning to break over the mountains, casting long shadows around them.

"There's just something I have to do Kyle."

"You're ridin' out?"

"Yeah."

"What about Kid?"

"Look after him, okay?"

"Sure, Heyes." Kyle was confused. "Where ya goin'?"

"I should be back in a couple of days."

"But where ya goin'?"

Heyes met Kyle's gaze.

"Don't tell Kid I've gone. At least not for a while all right? I want him to get better, heal up before he rides again."

"You goin' after the men that did that to him?"

"Just don't tell him I've gone."

"Heyes, you're not as fast as...I mean if you're plannin' on facin'..." Kyle didn't know how to express exactly what he was

thinking, but his message was clear.

"Just look after him." Heyes pulled himself into the saddle. "I'll see you, Kyle."

"See ya, Heyes." Kyle watched the leader of the gang ride out. He wondered what he was going to tell Kid if he asked where his friend was.

Kid opened his eyes. He took a moment to assess his injuries. He came to a decision. He still hurt. Kid looked around, wondering where Heyes was. He came face to face with Kyle.

"Howdy, Kid," the small man smiled.

"Hey, Kyle."

"Want some coffee?"

"Yeah, thanks." Kid eased himself up on the pillow, groaning as he did so. Moments later Kyle returned carrying a steaming cup. The pleasant aroma reached Kid's nose and he held out a hand, taking the cup from his friend.

"Where's Heyes?"

"He asked me to keep an eye on ya for a while."

"Where is he?" Kid eyed Kyle over the top of the cup as he took a sip of coffee.

"Do you think you'd be up to eatin' somethin' later? I could cook you some..."

"Where is he Kyle?" Kid interrupted. The small man turned away, finding it hard to lie to his friend. Kid lowered the cup, suddenly concerned. "Kyle?"

"He's gone."

"Gone where?" Kid's bruised eyes fixed on the gang's safe blower. "Kyle?"

"I don't know. He rode out earlier. He wouldn't say where he was going and I sure wasn't about to stop him, but I think he..." Kyle suddenly stopped himself.

"You think he what?" Kid prompted.

"I think he's going out lookin' for someone, if ya know what I mean?" Kid knew exactly what he meant.

Kid threw back the covers and swung his legs over the edge of the bed.

"Kid you can't...I mean you shouldn't..."

"Help me up." Kyle moved quickly to his side.

"Heyes'll kill me if you hurt yourself any more."

"And I'll kill you if you don't help me." Kyle looked at the young blond man sitting on the edge of the bed. "Get my clothes Kyle and ask Lobo to saddle my horse."

"Kid if you..." The ice blue glare Kyle received stopped him.

"How long ago did he leave?"

"About an hour ago, can't be more than that. Kid I don't think you should..." He got the look again. "I'll tell Lobo, to get your horse ready."

"Heyes'll be real angry if you get yourself killed," Kyle muttered as he helped Kid towards his horse.

"I don't imagine Heyes'll be too pleased if he gets himself killed either do you?"

Kid removed his hand from Kyle's shoulder and took hold of the saddle horn. Kyle shot a look at Lobo who was holding the horse's reins. Lobo shrugged. Kid was as determined as his partner. No one was going to stop Kid Curry riding out if

he thought Heyes was in trouble.

"Help me up Kyle...please."

Kyle reached down, took hold of Kid's leg and hoisted him into the saddle. Kyle and Lobo exchanged a look, as the young man took a moment to get his breath back.

"Kid, maybe you should wait until..." The look Kyle received silenced him.

"So where is this cave, Lobo?" Lobo repeated what he'd told Heyes. Kid thanked him and turned the horse away.

"He's gonna kill himself, if he can stay on his horse long enough," Lobo observed as he stood with Kyle watching Kid ride out.

"If he does we'd better make ourself scarce when Heyes gets back." A gloop of Kyle's tobacco juice hit a nearby tree.

"Yeah," Lobo said, thoughtfully.

"We gotta do somethin' Lobo."

"I'll get our horses."

Following the route Lobo had described, Heyes rode into the valley leading up to the cave. He rode cautiously, his eyes scanning the rocks for any sign of someone lying in wait. He needn't have worried. Not expecting any visitors, Deke had sent his men into town for a well deserved rest. Stevens had some planning to do. As he rode, Heyes' anger at himself grew. Kid could have been killed and it was his fault. He'd encouraged his friend to return with him to Devil's Hole. Kid had been protecting him when Deke had tried to draw on him. And it was because of that, that Deke had taken his revenge on Kid. Even if Kid wouldn't tell him the full story, Heyes had worked it out for himself. If Deke wasn't stopped, who knew when he would return to finish this? Heyes wasn't about to sit around waiting for Deke to take the lead. He would finish this now. It was between him and Stevens, no one else.

By the time he saw the mouth of the cave, Heyes had talked himself into it. He pulled his horse to a halt and lowered himself from the saddle. Tying the reins to a tree, he moved cautiously towards the cave entrance. Hearing a horse approach, Deke appeared, expecting some of his men to have returned. Stevens smiled when he saw who had just ridden in.

"Heyes!" he called. "I guess you got my message."

"I saw what you did to Kid, if that's what you mean?" Heyes kept walking.

"I'm surprised you came on your own. You are on your own?" Deke looked around, seeing no one there. "I didn't think Kid would be up to riding just yet, although he was tougher than I expected." His hand hung at his side as he strode towards Heyes.

"You should have come straight to me Deke, if you had something you wanted to say. I don't like people hurting my friends."

"Oh, I thought it best to remove your Gundog first. Still I'm surprised you had the courage to come and face me on your own. I didn't have you down as much of a gunman Heyes. You sure you know how to use that Schofield?"

"I can use it."

Deke smiled, but it was a nervous smile. They stood facing each other, both men ready to draw. There was something hard in Heyes' dark eyes, something people rarely saw. A barely contained, inner fury, had surfaced. If Heyes ever let go of that, heaven help anyone who stood in the way.

"Still as confident as ever huh?" he sneered.

Heyes said nothing. His eyes fixed on Deke's. Was this what Kid felt when he faced down a man? Heyes' mouth was dry. He could hear his pulse pounding in his chest. Nothing seemed to move around them. He gritted his teeth, controlling his anger, focussing on Deke, watching his hand hanging by his side. And then Deke's hand moved.

Kid rode hard, pushing his horse on, he clung to the saddle horn. Heyes was pretty handy with a gun, not as fast as Kid was, but then... he chastised himself, what was he thinking? Heyes wasn't a gunman. He carried one and could use it, but only if he had to. He wouldn't go up against another man unless he was angry, really angry...and then he might not think as clearly as he should. Kid dug his heels into the horse's side and turned his sweat covered animal into the valley

Lobo had described. He had to get there before Heyes... Two gunshots rang out.

"Damn it!" Kid cried. There was a tight feeling in his chest and he spurred his horse on. Kid spotted the cave ahead and Heyes' horse tied to a tree. He pulled his horse to a halt and lowered himself, painfully, to the ground. He began to run, stumbled, picked himself up and, gun in hand, edged his way up the hill to the mouth of the cave. When he reached it, Kid stopped dead in his stride. He heard none of the sounds around him, his eyes focused only on the scene before him, he wasn't even sure if he was breathing. Please don't let this be what it looked like. It couldn't end this way.

Two men lay on the ground. Neither was moving. Then as Kid approached, Deke moved a hand to a bloody wound in his left shoulder. He groaned loudly. His gun lay a few feet away from him. Heyes' lay on his back, staring at the sky.

"Heyes!" Kid raced towards his friend. Heyes groaned and reached his right hand across to his left arm. He was alive! Kid dropped to his friend's side. Blood stained Heyes' shirtsleeve. "You okay?"

"No," came Heyes' reply. Blood ran through the fingers of the hand clamped over the bullet wound.

"You hit anywhere else?" Kid's eyes searched his friend's body.

"No."

"Okay. Hold on a minute." Leaving Heyes momentarily, Kid walked over to Deke and stooped to pick up his gun. His eyes met the hooded ones of the outlaw. Kid's expression was one of disdain. Shoving the gun into his waistband he returned to his friend's side, pulling his bandana off as he did so.

"Let me see," he instructed. Heyes groaned as Kid ripped open the shirtsleeve. He examined the wound then wrapped his bandana around it. "It's just a flesh wound."

"Just? What do you mean, just? It hurts like Hell!"

Brown eyes met bruised, blue ones.

"What the heck were you thinking?" Kid pulled the bandana tighter than necessary.

"Ow, watch it!"

"Did that hurt?"

"Yes."

"Good. I ought to flatten ya for what you just did. You coulda got yourself killed!"

"Well I didn't."

"More by luck than your skill with a gun!"

"Hey, I ain't dead! And he's hurt worse, so I reckon I won."

"You call this winning? What were you thinking? Oh no wait! You weren't! I thought you were supposed to be the brains of the outfit!"

"I am the brains!"

"Then why didn't you use 'em? You just got into a gunfight! He coulda killed you!"

"Well, I didn't want you having to look over your shoulder for the rest of your life, wondering when he was gonna show up again to finish the job!"

Kid gave a heavy sigh and sat back on his heels.

"Is that why?"

"Yes."

"Heyes, from the moment I first out drew another man, I've been looking over my shoulder. It goes with being known as a fast gun. I only sleep well because you don't." Heyes looked at his friend, realising the truth in what he said.

"Kid, I..."

"It's okay. I appreciate you trying, but don't get yourself killed on my account."

"I have to admit I didn't think it would hurt so much."

Kid smiled and helped his friend sit up.

"I guess we needn't have worried about Deke anyway. I mean you beat him in a draw. Heck, I didn't realise he was that slow!"

The leader of the Devil's Hole Gang shot his friend a look. Kid grinned.

"You know we should have an agreement," he said, placing a hand on his ribs. "I'll do the gun stuff you do the thinking in future, okay?"

It was Heyes' turn to smile. He could tell how worried Kid had been.

"All right," he agreed, looking into his friend's bruised face. "That's a good deal."

"C'mon, let's get you up." Kid held out a hand and hauled Heyes to his feet. Both men groaned. It had been a tough few days.

"What about me?" came a cry and they turned to stare at Deke. Kid walked towards him, a menacing look in his eyes. He didn't say a word as he drew his gun. As Deke tried to control the feeling of dread in his stomach, Kid aimed his Colt at the man lying on the ground.

"Give me one reason why I shouldn't pull the trigger?"

Deke's eyes were wide with fear.

"I didn't think you'd shoot an unarmed man, Curry."

"Well you don't know me very well Deke. You underestimated both of us."

"You'd shoot me in cold blood?"

"You look warm enough to me." Ice blue eyes held Deke's. Stevens realised he had no idea what the blond man would do. He'd heard stories about Kid Curry but which ones were true?

"Kid," Heyes cautioned. Kid ignored him and took a step closer to Stevens.

"I don't want to be looking over my shoulder for you. Maybe I should just finish it here."

"You haven't got the guts!" Deke sneered with false bravado.

"Are you willing to bet your life on that?" Kid asked as he pulled back the hammer.

"Kid." It was Heyes again, worried at what his friend would do. Deke's eyes met Kid's and he swallowed when he saw the lack of emotion in them. His fear grew.

"Like I said Deke. You don't know me at all." Kid continued to stare at him.

The sound of approaching horses drew everyone's attention but Kid didn't turn away from Deke. Instead he left it to

Heyes to face the riders.

"Heyes!" Kyle's voice drifted towards them as the scruffy little man ran up the hill. Lobo was close on his heels. "Heyes, you all right?" Kyle asked, as he spotted the bloodstained bandana around his leader's arm.

"I'm okay, Kyle. Lobo. Thanks for coming."

"Well sheesh, Heyes when Kid took off after ya, we didn't think he'd make it. I knew you'd be mad if we let anything happen to him so here we are." Kyle smiled, revealing yet another well chewed mouthful of tobacco.

"Lobo!" Kid called over his shoulder and the outlaw walked towards him. "You got any rope on your saddle?" His eyes still held Deke's.

"Yeah, Kid."

"Tie Deke up will you?"

Lobo looked at the man lying on the ground, remembering what he'd done to Kid and Heyes.

"My pleasure," he said and went to get the rope from his horse. Kid released the hammer on his gun and placed it back in his holster. Deke visibly relaxed. Heyes breathed a sigh of relief too. He'd known Kid wouldn't shoot him...hadn't he? The Kid he'd grown up with wouldn't have, but he was still learning about what Kid had been through in their time apart and how it had or hadn't changed him. He'd heard the same stories Deke had.

Kid turned towards Heyes, to find two brown eyes staring at him. He knew he'd had him worried. Kid walked towards him. Unseen by either man, Deke reached slowly into his boot. He kept his eyes on the four men as he withdrew a small pistol. Raising it just enough to give him a clear shot, he aimed it at Kid's back. He closed one eye slightly as he sighted the weapon. One shot was all he needed to finish the job. One shot and Kid Curry would be out of the picture for good.

A gunshot rang out, echoing off the rock walls. Kid drew his Colt and looked at Lobo, who held a gun in his hand.

"He was gonna shoot ya," Lobo announced. Kid turned round. Deke lay unmoving on the ground, a fresh bullet hole in his chest. It seemed no one would be looking over their shoulder for him after all.

"Thank you, Lobo," Heyes said.

"I'd hate to lose our new Leader," the man said, gruffly, as he holstered his gun. "Or his partner." Kid nodded his appreciation as Lobo turned back to his horse.

Having buried Deke they headed back to Devil's Hole. Kid rode in silence. Heyes' pulled his horse alongside his friend.

"You okay?"

"I'm fine."

Heyes didn't challenge him on that but he knew it was a lie.

"You wouldn't have shot him would you?"

Kid turned to look at Heyes.

"No Heyes, not in cold blood."

"Good."

"Were you worried that I might?"

"No!"

"You were!" Kid accused. "Sheesh, don't you know me better than that?" Heyes pulled his horse to a halt and Kid did the same. Heyes looked across at his friend.

"I did, once. I hope I still do, but we were apart a long time, people change."

"You haven't."

"You sure?"

"Yeah. You're still the same bossy, irritating, overconfident, know-it-all, I grew up with."

"Listing my good points first, huh?"

"Yeah." They exchanged a smile. "I haven't changed Heyes."

"I'm glad, partner. I'm glad."

THE END of Part 4