Taking His Chance

Slim Dusty

They stood by the door of the Inn on the Rise
May Carney looked up in the bushranger's eyes:
"Oh! why did you come? — it was mad of you, Jack;
You know that the troopers are out on your track."
A laugh and a shake of his obstinate head
"I wanted a dance, and I'll chance it," he said

Some twenty-odd bushmen had come to the ball
But Jack from his youth had been known to them all
And bushmen are soft where a woman is fair
So the love of May Carney protected him there
Through all the short evening it seemed like romance
She danced with a bushranger taking his chance

'Twas midnight, the dancers stood suddenly still
Hoofbeats were heard on the side of the hill
Ben Duggan, the drover, along the hillside
Came riding as only a bushman can ride
He sprang from his horse, to the dancers he sped
"The troopers are down in the gully!" he said

Quite close to the shanty the troopers were seen
"Clear out and ride hard for the ranges, Jack Dean!
Be quick!" said May Carney, her hand on her heart
"We'll bluff them awhile, and 'twill give you a start."
He lingered a moment, to kiss her, of course
Then ran to the trees where he'd hobbled his horse

She ran to the gate, and the troopers were there
The jingle of hobbles came faint on the air
Then loudly she screamed, it was only to drown
The treacherous clatter of slip-rails let down
But troopers are sharp, and she saw at a glance
That someone was taking a desperate chance

They chased, and they shouted, "Surrender, Jack Dean!"
They called him three times in the name of the Queen
Then came from the darkness the clicking of locks
The crack of the rifles was heard in the rocks
A shriek and a shout, and a rush of pale men
And there lay the bushranger, chancing it then

Oh, the sergeant dismounted and knelt on the sod
"Your bushranging's over, make peace, Jack, with God!"
Oh, the dying man laughed, not a word he replied
But turned to the girl who knelt down by his side
He gazed in her eyes as she lifted his head
"Just kiss me my girl, and I'll chance it," he said