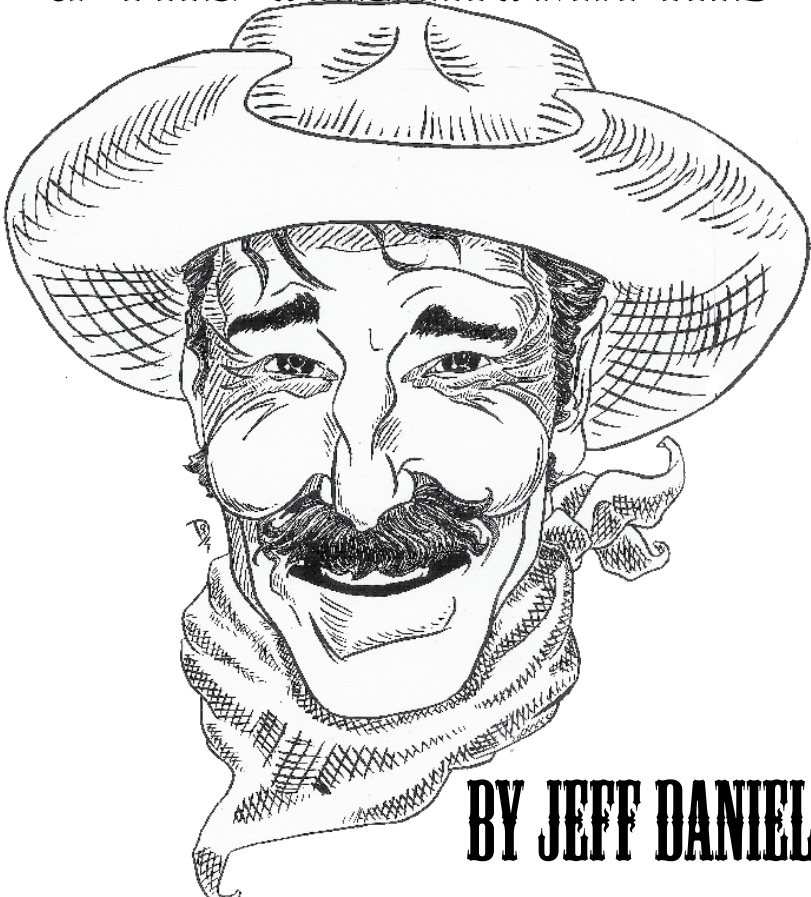




The Purple Rose Theatre Company

PANHANDLE SLIM & THE OKLAHOMA KID



BY JEFF DANIELS



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The Purple Rose Theatre Company
137 Park Street
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**PANHANDLE SLIM
& THE OKLAHOMA KID**

**BY
JEFF DANIELS**

Panhandle Slim & The Oklahoma Kid

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Originally produced by The Purple Rose Theatre Company (2008)

Jeff Daniels, Executive Director; Guy Sanville, Artistic Director;

Alan Ribant, Managing Director

The production was directed by Guy Sanville.

Panhandle Slim & The Oklahoma Kid premiered at The Purple Rose Theatre Company in Chelsea, Michigan, on June 27, 2008. The play was directed by Guy Sanville; music direction by Jeff Daniels; the set design was by Dennis G. Crawley; the properties design was by Danna Segrest; the costume design was by Christianne Myers; the lighting design was by Reid G. Johnson; the sound design was by Quintessa Gallinat; and the stage manager was Michelle DiDomenico. The cast was as follows:

PANHANDLE SLIM.....Tom Whalen
THE OKLAHOMA KID John Seibert
MAN Phil Powers
YOUNG WOMAN..... Jessica Garrett

CHARACTERS

PANHANDLE SLIM	an outlaw
THE OKLAHOMA KID	a singing cowboy
A MAN	various roles
A YOUNG WOMAN	various roles

PLACE

Oklahoma

TIME

The summer of 1894

SONGS

THERE'S A SONG IN MY SADDLE (pg. 9)	Kid
PASSIN' THROUGH (pg. 12)	Kid & Annabelle
THE BALLAD OF PANHANDLE SLIM & BIG BILL TUTTLE (pg. 18).....	Kid, Slim & Tuttle
IN THE MEANTIME (pg. 29)	Kid & Slim
TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE* (pg 33).....	Kid & Mama
SLEEPLESS NIGHTS (pg 39)	Kid, Slim & Annabelle
OVER THE WATERFALL / MISSISSIPPI SAWYER** (pg 47)	Kid & Company
I'M STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU (pg 50)	Annabelle & Slim
IN THE MEANTIME (REPRISE) (pg 54).....	Kid & Slim

*1890s hymn. Text: Frances R. Havergal. Music: Louis J.F. Herold.
Arranged by George Kingsley. www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh399.sht

**From *Last Winter In Copper Country* by Steppin In It

PANHANDLE SLIM & THE OKLAHOMA KID

In the darkness, we hear the sound of a horse galloping. The lights fade up on the desolate prairie of the Oklahoma plains. Rocks. Brush. An outlaw (TUTTLE) wearing a long coat, boots with spurs and pulled-down Stetson is already dragging a wounded man (PANHANDLE SLIM) up and over a rise. Bootless, SLIM's stocking feet are tied around the ankles. His hands are tied behind his back. TUTTLE drops him beside a large rock. SLIM has been gunshot. Fresh, dark blood stains most of his abdomen. TUTTLE places SLIM's six gun and holster out of reach, tosses SLIM's hat aside. After a final look down at SLIM, TUTTLE walks off.

TUTTLE *(going off)* Good riddance.

A coyote howls. A pool of light fades up on SLIM. From somewhere, we hear a WOMAN's voice.

WOMAN *(singing)*
And I still love happy endings ...

SLIM's head stirs.

WOMAN *(singing)*
And I love my sunsets long ...

SLIM struggles to rise. Searches for the "voice." In silhouette against the dark sky, a young WOMAN in a bright, gingham dress enters.

WOMAN *(singing)*
And I still shed a tear
After all these years

Singin' you this song ...

SLIM Annabelle? Annabelle, is that you?

ANNABELLE Ya make me feel so special! Like I's the
only one in this whole, wide world!

SLIM Do I?

ANNABELLE Well, ya mos' certainly do! I catch m'self
thinkin' jus' how wonderful life could be if'n I's to spend
it in yer company!

SLIM So ya forgive me?

ANNABELLE Forgive ya? Now, why would you go an'
ask me a silly thing like that?

*In silhouette, a vagrant outlaw (HORSE FACE
JOHNSON) staggers on, whiskey bottle in his hand.
His gun belt is askew. His six gun hangs in its holster
behind his back.*

JOHNSON Ya wanna have a go?

ANNABELLE Trouble is ya got yerself a mean streak. I
can ...

JOHNSON ... See it in yer eyes, ya son of a bitch!

*As ANNABELLE goes to SLIM, their words hang in
the air.*

ANNABELLE & JOHNSON (*alternating, echoing*) Son of
a bitch. Son of a bitch. Son of a bitch.

*As ANNABELLE kneels next to SLIM, JOHNSON
staggers into position.*

ANNABELLE Still, I can't help but be pulled to ya.

SLIM I had to draw on 'im.

JOHNSON's drunk as a skunk ...

ANNABELLE I keep thinkin' on ya, day an' night.

JOHNSON Where'n the hell's my ... ?

*Like a dog chasing its tail, JOHNSON vainly reaches
behind himself for his errant six gun.*

ANNABELLE People say to me, "Annabelle, what're ya
doin' with a scoundrel the likes o' him?"

JOHNSON G'damn ...

ANNABELLE Y'know what I tell 'em?

SLIM Don't do it.

JOHNSON *(re: his gun)* There it is!

SLIM Don't.

As JOHNSON reaches for his six gun ...

ANNABELLE I tell 'em, "Somewheres inside that rascal's soul is a good heart."

Like a thunderclap, a shot rings out. The blast echoes across the plains. JOHNSON lowers his six gun and goes off.

ANNABELLE *(singing)*

Roses are red

And violets are blue

And I'm still in love with you

ANNABELLE turns and goes.

SLIM Annabelle? ... ANNABELLE!

SLIM doubles over in pain. As ANNABELLE disappears, off in the distance, a horse approaches.

KID *(o.s.)* Hyah! Hyah!

Against the silhouette, a cowboy "rides" an imaginary horse across the dark sky and is gone. SLIM lifts his head. The hooves come to a stop. The horse whinnies.

KID *(o.s.)* Hyah! Hyah!

Galloping back on stage "rides" THE OKLAHOMA KID. KID brings his "horse" to a trot and circles SLIM. The lights go to a brilliant orange and red. Dressed colorfully, the KID'S accoutrements include a western belt and buckle, a western shirt, a kerchief tied around the neck, chaps, a leather vest, a canteen, boots with spurs, and a ten gallon hat. With twine as a strap, KID has a beaten guitar slung across his back. All in one motion, KID dismounts

and quickly ties his "horse" to a tree behind SLIM. Keeping his distance, KID ambles around to get a better look at SLIM. The lights go to the bright sunlight prairie.

KID Afternoon.

Nothing from SLIM.

KID Who might you be?

SLIM *(staring back)* You the law?

KID No, but I have been tol' I'm righteous as rain.
Please to meet ya. I'm The Oklahoma Kid.

SLIM Ya come any closer, I'll shoot ya where ya
stand.

KID I don't doubt yer intentions, Mister, but I do
question yer ability to execute such a scenario. If'n ya
don't mind, I'd like to take a quick look-see at yer bullet
wound.

SLIM You one o' Tuttle's boys?

KID No, sir.

SLIM Who sent ya?

KID *(re: wound)* Looks like he got ya good.

SLIM Who sent ya?

KID Jus' passin' through.

SLIM Git yer knife out.

KID Now why would I do that?

SLIM Cut me loose.

KID Where ya think yer gonna go? Bleedin' like a
stuck pig?

SLIM None o' yer g'damn business. Git yer knife out.

KID Ain't got one.

SLI Ya ain't gotta knife? What kind o' cowboy rides
without a knife?

KID A Singin' Cowboy. How 'bout I sing a song?

SLIM Over to my gun belt. Git it.

KID Proud to say I have a song fer every occasion.
(strums a chord on his guitar)

SLIM I don't wanna hear no g'damn song.

KID Might be exactly what the doctor ordered.

SLIM There's an idea! Go git me a doctor!

KID Doctor ain't gonna do you no good now. 'Sides, it's a day's ride to the nearest town. Time I get back, ya'll be dead.

SLIM Then what the hell am I s'posed to do? Jus' lay here an' die a slow, horrible death?!

Riding a wave of pain, SLIM collapses.

KID I read somewhere that a good song can lift yer spirits. Maybe I jus' overheard it. No. I do believe I jus' now made it up. No matter, my friend, for a fine melody on top o' some well done lyrics can take away yer troubles, quick as that. Lucky fer you, I got jus' the number!

KID hits an opening chord.

THERE'S A SONG IN MY SADDLE

KID *(singing)*
There's a song in my saddle
There's a saddle in my song
Git along, little dogies
Little dogies, git along
There's a song in my saddle
There's a saddle in my song
Git along, little dogies
Little dogies, git along

(spoken, over the guitar)
Well, I was ridin' down Tombstone Trail
This ol' gitar in my hand
When I come upon the unseemingly sight
Of a dastardly an' dangerous man
He's outa sorts, a little bit touched
An' tied like a bag o' feed,
But the Oklahoma Kid's
Gonna sing him a song
An' set his spirit free!

(singing)
There's a song in my saddle
There's a saddle in my song
Git along, little dogies
Little dogies, git along

Clinging to his sanity, SLIM lunges at KID. His shoulder screams. SLIM cries out in pain.

SLIM Aaaaah!

KID *(singing)*
There's a song in my saddle
There's a saddle in my song
Git along, little dogies
Little dogies, git along

Underneath the following, KID plays guitar.

KID *(spoken, over guitar)*
Y'know, in these troubled times, temptation and desperation lay in wait 'round every bend. But if'n a man's lucky, he'll ride up over a hill an' come upon salvation. An' so it was for me. Yes, friends, for it was on a bright, sunshiny day, I stumbled upon a cowpoke by the name o' "Smiley" LaRue. Not only was he a favorite to have along on a cattle drive, but the cows loved 'im, too. All them head o' cattle took to Smiley like butter to bread. An' how'd he do it? Well, all Smiley had to do to get them cows to foller was open up 'is mouth an' sing 'em a song! All day long, he'd ride beside 'em, sittin' high in his saddle, singin':

Kid throws his head back and yodels.

KID *(yodeling)*
Yoodle-doo, Yoodle-doo,
Yoodle-doo Yoodle-doo
Yoodle-doo, Yoodle-doo,
Yoodle-doo, Doodly-doo

(to SLIM) Everybody!

SLIM lunges at KID again. More pain.

SLIM Aaaaah!

KID *(singing)*

 There's a song in my saddle

 There's a saddle in my song

 Git along, little dogies

 Little dogies ... git alooooooong!

Song ends. Smiling, KID turns back to SLIM who eyes him.

SLIM Yer a dandy, ain't ya?

KID A what?

SLIM Ya heard me.

KID I feel dandy, I know that. *(off SLIM's look)* Oh!
 You mean ... ?

SLIM Stay the hell away from me!

KID 'Cause why? I'm a singer o' songs? Goodness
 me, what is this old world comin' to where a man can't
 sing a song with a smile on his face while wearin' a pair
 o' bright britches?

SLIM Who sent ya?

KID I tol' ya. I'm jus' passin' through.

SLIM Out in the middle o' nowheres?

KID Can't a man jus' be ridin' along an' see a fellow
 cowboy in need?

In plain view, KID whinnies.

KID *(to his "horse")* Hush now.

SLIM looks back behind him.

KID *(re: "horse")* Bit ornery today. Gettin' mean in his
 old age. Course, ain't we all.

*Trying to hang onto what little sanity he has left, SLIM
looks back and forth between KID and "horse."*

KID I know who ya are. An' I know everything ya ever
 done. Shame on you, Panhandle Slim. Shame on you
 and yer sorry soul.

SLIM Go to Hell.

KID You first.

KID looks out at the horizon.

KID *(re: sunset)* Ain't that just the prettiest sight ya
ever did see? Big orange ball fallin' behind them hills.
That there's a one an' only, Slim. Each one its very own.
This is gonna be a good one, it surely is. Ya can tell by
the way the clouds hang.

SLIM If'n it wasn't Tuttle, who was it?

KID Like God Hissel's gettin' ready to put on a big,
fancy show.

SLIM Who was it?

KID Wouldn't it be somethin' if a man could remember
a sight like that ferever?

SLIM Who was it?!

Underneath the following, KID plays quietly.

KID Ya keep askin' me that. But ain't that jus' the
way it is. Everybody wantin' to know what's what. Like
there's an answer fer everythin'. Do yerself a great big
favor, Mr. Panhandle Slim. Pretend I'm not here. You
know how to do that, don't ya?

Kid gazes back out at the horizon.

PASSIN' THROUGH

KID *(singing, slowly at first)*
Pulled up reins
By the side of the road
Middle of nowhere er so I'm told
I got the sky above me
And the earth below
Soon as I got here
It was time to go
It won't be long
'Til I'm here an' gone
I'm passin' through

(song picks up tempo)
Feels like Heaven

Looks like Hell
Sure wish I was
Somewhere's else
Strangest place I ever been
Don't think I'll be back again
It won't be long
'Til I'm here and gone
Just passin' through

Well, the writin's on the wall
And the clock is tickin'
The story unfolds
As the plot thickens
I'm comin' 'round that mountain
I'm comin' round the bend
Oh, Dinah blow that horn again
I'm passin' through

I's just passin' through
It won't take long
'Til I'm here and gone
Just passin' through

ANNABELLE sashays on. Smiling, she harmonizes with KID. Out of sorts, SLIM stares at her.

KID Bow your heads, let us pray
KID & ANNABELLE Doo doo doo-doo, doo doo doo
KID That Preacher he sure loves Judgement Day
KID & ANNABELLE Doo doo doo-doo, doo doo doo
KID But like Romeo said to Juliet
KID & ANNABELLE Doo doo doo-doo, doo doo doo
KID "After you, darlin'
 I ain't ready yet!"
KID & ANNABELLE Doo doo doo-doo, doo doo doo
KID Oh, it won't be long
 'Til we're here and gone
 We're just passin' through

Dancing, ANNABELLE "oohs & aahs" harmonies.

KID Oh, the writin' on the wall
 And the clock is tickin'
 The story unfolds
 As the plot thickens
 I'm comin' 'round that mountain
 I'm comin' round the bend
 Oh, Dinah blow that horn again
 I'm passin' through

 I's just passin' through
 It won't be long
 'Til we're here and gone
 We're just passin' through
 No, it won't be long
 'Til we're here and gone
 We're just passin' through
 No, it won't be long
 'Til we're here and gone
 We're just passin' through

After a final lick on the guitar, ANNABELLE bounds off. Crazed, SLIM nods to his gun.

SLIM Git on with it.
KID Git on with what?
SLIM Ya was sent here to shoot me.
KID I was?
SLIM Don't talk stupid, Dandy.
KID I didn't come here to do anything of the kind.
SLIM No?
KID Nope.
SLIM Then cut me loose.
KID Can't do that, neither. No, sir. Yer what is known
 in these parts as "a perilous threat to the common
 good." I'd be deader'n dead if'n I set ya free.
SLIM I'm a changed man.
KID Are ya now?
SLIM Jus' come over me.
KID Seen the error o' yer ways, have ya?

SLIM Like the sun comin' out from 'hind a cloud.
KID That's quite a turn.
SLIM Straight an' narrow, that's the life fer me. Go on.
Git my knife.
KID The only thing yer gonna change is who ya kill
an' the whereabouts o' where ya kill 'em.
SLIM Coward.
KID First, I'm a dandy an' now I'm coward? With
qualities such as that, maybe I should change, too?
Ya find enjoyment in it? (off Slim's look) In doin' yer
dastardly deeds?
SLIM Never much thought about it.
KID When ya put a bullet through a man's chest,
droppin' him to the ground, ya don't think on that?
SLIM More than likely, he had a gun pointed in my
direction at the time, so it was a choice of either him or
me. I chose him.
KID What about when yer robbin' a bank?
SLIM That's where they keep the money.
KID And when you take the money outa the vault,
that give ya good feelin'?
SLIM Depends how much is in there.
KID What if I's to say to you that I kept my whole life
savings in the Lincoln County Bank over to Chandler
an' that when ya robbed it of every cent it had, I's left
without a penny to my name?
SLIM So shoot me.
KID Wouldn't bring back my money, would it? No,
sir. You an' me's differ'nt as night an' day. Good an'
bad. Heaven an'—
SLIM Hell.
KID —Hell, that's right. I got me a guitar. You got
yerself a six gun. Yer name strikes fear into the heart o'
every man, woman, an' child, fillin' their souls with a terror
even the Good Lord Hissself can't quiet. I ride through
prairie towns spreadin' nothin' but joy, happiness an' a
overall sense o' goodwill. And yet, here we are. Drinkin'
outa the same canteen.

KID has his canteen extended to SLIM. Staring back at him, SLIM opens his mouth. KID pours some water down SLIM's throat.

KID I understand ya better than ya think. Ya kill. Ya rob. Ya steal 'cause that's who ya are. It's what ya do.

SLIM Man's gotta make a livin'.

KID Yes, indeed. He surely does. I don't fault ya that. No, sir. Ain't my place to pass judgement, that's fer the Good Lord to do. Me? I'm jus' tryin' to make sense of somethin' that defies every moral code and ethical principle known to mankind. Do you seek attention?

SLIM G'dammit.

KID I read somewheres that "a life without proper lovin' could 'cause a man to come to terrible harm." Then again, maybe I heard it. No. I do believe I jus' now made it up. Top 'o my head. Sometimes I surprise m'self, I surely do. Anywho, they say those that spent their childhood unloved never come to know what love is. Would that be true o' yerself? Not that I would know. I had enough lovin' fer the both of us. My Mama, bless her soul, she did more fer me than any boy had a right to receive. Food. Shelter. A education. I was plenty took care of, I was. An' she didn't have the means. Father one day up and left, never to return. She clung to her little homestead jus' west o' town like it was the only thing keepin' her from Death's Door. Nothin' to her name but the love she gave. Prob'ly why I turned out so full o' goodness. I know it's why I sing. Made me a singer, my Mama did. Put this very guitar in my hands at the age o' ten. Taught me how to play. First song she ever taught me was a hymn.

SLIM Shut up.

KID Well now, ya don't want me to sing and now ya don't want me talkin'? My friend, I'm afraid yer askin' the impossible 'cause yer in the company of a born chatterbox! Words jus' pour outa my mouth like prairie grass outa the back end of a mule, if'n ya know what I mean by that!

SLIM Go ... go find a rock. Big as yer fist. Bring it back here. Then I want you to take it an' throw it as hard as you can into the middle o' my forehead.

KID Wouldn't that kill ya?

SLIM If ya throw it hard enough.

KID I can't do that.

SLIM It's easy. I done it a bunch o' times. Saves on bullets.

KID I ain't never killed a man in my whole life an' I ain't about to start now. No, sir. I'm proud to say I have lived a murderless life. The very thought of killin' anything, big er small, gives me the willies. An' I been done wrong. Plenty o' times. Jus' never had cause to be vengeful.

SLIM Vengeance is the Devil's Redemption.

KID D'ya read that somewheres?

SLIM No.

KID Overheard it, then.

SLIM No.

KID Musta made it up.

SLIM Maybe I jus' know it.

KID Heckuva thing to know. "Vengeance is the Devil's Redemption." That would mean that Forgiveness is God's Salvation. *(off Slim's look)* Look it up. It's in yer Bible. Yer history books. Oh, sure, once in a great while, some evil minded tyrant somewheres'll conquer this er that, destroyin' everything in his path, but when it's all said and done, goodness reigns down like ... well, like rain. Goodness reignin' down like rain. That's not bad. *(picks up his guitar)* Goodness ... Goodness ... *(changes key)* Here it is ... *(strums)*

 Goodness reignin' down like rain
 Forgiveness upon the plains ...

SLIM Hey.

KID I'll get it, don't worry. *(strums)*

 Redemption, thy maiden name

SLIM Hey.

KID Salvation, thy fire's flame ...

SLIM HEY!

KID stops. They sit in silence. The horizon. Finally:

KID How 'bout a killin' song? That do ya? *(off Slim's look)* Got me more'n a few of 'em, too. Fact, I got me one that's fresh off the fingerboard. An' I think yer gonna like it. Yes, sir, I think yer gonna like this one a lot.

THE BALLAD OF PANHANDLE SLIM & BIG BILL TUTTLE

KID *(spoken, over guitar)*
Panhandle Slim's been to Hell and back
And now his heartless heart bleeds cold
In a world gone wrong
Falls a righteous rain
Thy truth thou shalt be told ...

BIG BILL TUTTLE appears. An outlaw. Armed. He holds a glass of whiskey. Both KID and SLIM see him.

KID *(spoken, over guitar)*
Yes, thy truth thou shalt be told

KID and TUTTLE circle each other.

KID In a sad saloon north o' Norman
Slim bellied up to the bar
Big Bill Tuttle eyed
This ne'er do well
Over a whiskey from afar

Their eyes did meet and their
Stares held fast
Neither 'bout to blink
Slim downed his shot
Felt his throat burn hot
From the fire inside the drink

Tuttle smiled a smile
His teeth laid bare

And nodded oh so slight
Slim ambled down
With a step only found
In a man who lived to fight

Panhandle Slim's been to Hell and back
And now his heartless heart bleeds cold
In a world gone wrong
Falls a righteous rain
Thy truth thou shalt be told
Yes, thy truth thou shalt be told

Tuttle stood up tall
His gun in view
His shootin' hand at the ready
Slim stopped in his tracks
As the crowd stepped back
His stare still firm and steady

SLIM "I ain't here to shoot ya,"
KID Panhandle said
SLIM "But yer fixin' to die in a hurry, ya see
 Oklahoma's meant to be mine
 So if I was you I'd scurry"

TUTTLE throws his head back and laughs.

KID Tuttle's cacklin' filled the crowded room
 And all his boys around him roared
TUTTLE "Why yer nothin' but a scoundrel!"
KID Tuttle replied
TUTTLE "And yer Mama was a two bit whore!"

KID Panhandle Slim's been to Hell and back
 And now his heartless heart bleeds cold
 In a world gone wrong
 Falls a righteous rain
 Thy truth thou shalt be told
 Yes, thy truth thou shalt be told

As if to say something to one of his “boys,” TUTTLE turns away.

KID Slim squared up proper fer a fair man’s fight
 When Tuttle turned an’ fired

TUTTLE whirls and fires at KID. A shot rings out. Still playing, KID falls to his knees.

KID His aim was sound
 An’ Slim went down
 At the feet of the Devil’s desire

 He awoke on the prairie
 Under a blindin’ sun
 Left to die lonesome and alone

TUTTLE turns and slowly walks off.

KID While Tuttle’s Gang rode out West
 His legend sure to grow

KID rises. Walks slowly to SLIM.

KID Panhandle Slim’s been to Hell and back,
 and now his
 Heartless heart bleeds cold
 In a world gone wrong
 Falls a righteous rain
 Thy truth thou shalt be told, yes
 Thy truth thou shalt be told

And final strum. The song ends. Finally:

SLIM Ya seen it.

KID I seen it all.

SLIM Wasn’t a fair shootin’. I’s steppin’ out so we
 could square up. Draw proper. He turned to his boys
 like he’s laughin’ with ‘em. Turned an’ fired.

KID That he did.

SLIM Why didn’t he jus’ finish me off?

KID His boys wanted to. Tuttle stopped ‘em. Said he
 had a better idea.

SLIM He send ya out to watch me die?

KID Come on my own. When I heard what they's gonna do, I figgered even a man the likes o' you shouldn't die lonesome.

SLIM A man the likes 'o ... ? Ya lissen to me, Dandy. I'll burn in Hell fer what I done, I know that. But I'd never deny a man a dignified death only to drag 'im out onto the prairie an' let the buzzards an' coyotes fight over 'is carcass. That ain't bad. That's pure evilness. You go back to Tuttle. You tell that son of a bitch he can have Oklahoma. Still Injun territory, anyways. An' he oughta know. Any man gets hisself jail time fer runnin' perfectly good whiskey out to the Cherokees is bound to make a mistake an' I mean sooner rather than later. I only wish I's there to see it.

KID Maybe I should write a song 'bout that?

SLIM Yeah, why don't ya? Now that'd be one I'd sing!

SLIM laughs himself into a coughing fit. KID gets up. Uncaps his canteen. Gives SLIM some water.

KID *(re: SLIM's gulps)* Easy. *(takes the canteen away)*
Gotta make it last.

KID goes to his "horse." Offers canteen to the "horse." SLIM turns halfway. Sees what KID's doing. Turns back. Blinks to focus. Made by KID, we hear the sound of a horse dirinking.

SLIM Is it me er are you waterin' a horse that' ain't there?

KID *(to "horse")* Don't ya lissen to 'im. He's jus' talkin' to hear hisself talk.

SLIM Which one of us is seein' things?

Nothing from KID.

SLIM I'm talkin' to you!

KID We hear ya.

SLIM That's it. Git the hell outa here.

KID Can't do that, Slim.

SLIM Hell, ya can't! Ya pick up yer little guitar, ya hop on yer, yer horse an' ya ride the hell on outa here!

KID I'll have you know that this here animal is the finest companion a man could ever know.
SLIM That a fact?
KID That's a fact.
SLIM What color is he?
KID Ain't ya got eyes in yer head?
SLIM Eyes, yes. Brains? I ain't so sure.
KID Prettiest Palomino ya'll ever see. Goes by the name o' Buttermilk.
SLIM Buttermilk?
KID That's what I said.
SLIM I had me horse by that name. As a kid.
KID (*whinnies, then to "horse"*) Easy now.
SLIM I don't know who's crazier. Me er you.
KID Jus' 'cause ya can't see somethin', don't mean it ain't there.

As KID pets his "horse," SLIM struggles to hang onto his sanity. Giving up:

SLIM Shoot me.
KID What?
SLIM I said, shoot me.
KID I tol' ya already, I ...
SLIM This time I'm beggin'!
KID I ain't gonna do no such a thing.
SLIM I'm bleedin' an' hog tied! I'm fryin' like a egg under a prairie sun! An' now I'm bein' pestered by a dandy who's tendin' to a horse I can't see! I think it's fer the best!
KID I didn't come all this way to shoot ya, Slim.
SLIM Then why the hell are ya here?
KID I tol' ya.
SLIM Ya ain't tol' me nothin'. Walk over to my g'damn gun! Point it in my direction! And fire!
KID I ain't gotta medical bone in my body, but even I can see the last thing ya need is another bullet in ya.
SLIM G'dammit.
KID 'Sides, I didn't come here to cause you any

additional harm. I'm here to provide comfort.

SLIM I don't want yer comfort.

KID My company?

SLIM I don't want yer company, neither! I want ya to kill me dead! That's what I want! I askin' ya to do one last simple thing in my dyin' hours! As a self proclaimed righteous man, I'd be much obliged if'n ya had the g'damn decency to honor my g'damn request!

KID All right.

KID walks over to SLIM's gun. Picks it up.

KID Got some weight to it.

SLIM Got it offa some gunslinger who said it used to belong to Texas Jack Vermillion.

KID Got hissself into a gunfight up to Kansas, I heard.

SLIM Caught a con man cheatin' at cards. Shot 'im in the eye. When they asked 'im why they called 'im "Texas Jack," he said ...

KID "'Cause I'm from Virginia."

SLIM stares at KID. Finally:

SLIM Go over there.

KID Where?

SLIM There.

KID Here?

SLIM Little closer.

KID moves closer.

SLIM Not too close. Don't wanna git any on ya.

KID spins the gun around his trigger finger. The gun ends up dangling in his hand.

KID That's harder than it looks. *(spins the gun again, more dangling)* How d'ya git it to end up back where ya started? *(spins the gun a third time, catches his finger)* Ouch! Oh, goodness, would ya look at that? Blood blister on my strummin' hand. Not the kinda thing to have if'n yer a guitar slinger!

SLIM Use yer other hand.
KID Shoot leftie? Why, I'd be lucky to hit ya at all. No, sir. Despite my abilities with musical instruments, my coordinatin' is sorely lackin' when it comes to aimin' at things. 'Specially, with my weaker extremity.

SLIM Use 'em both.

KID Both?

SLIM Both yer hands, ya g'damn ninny!

KID brings the gun up. Both hands. SLIM braces himself. Finally:

KID Which eye?

SLIM What?

KID Which eye do I look outa?

SLIM Pick one.

KID Seein' how I'm right handed I'm more than likely right eyed, so if'n it's all the same to you, I'll go with my right.

SLIM Good choice.

KID This thing loaded?

SLIM G'dammit all to Hell!

KID Well, I can't very well shoot if I ain't got no bullets!
(opens chamber) Oh, goodness. Yer absolutely right.

KID clicks the chamber. Click, click, click. His head nods with each click.

KID Y'know, that reminds me of a song.

SLIM I don't wanna hear no g'damn song.

KID It won't take but a minute.

SLIM G'dammit!

KID When they come to ya, ya can't deny 'em. It's the kinda thing that can't be stopped, I'm afraid. Once a tune gets into my head, the only way to get it out is to sit down an' sing it.

SLIM I don't wanna hear no—

KID Reminds o' the time I was—

SLIM —g'damn song ...

KID sets down the gun and picks up his guitar.

KID —strummin' in a little saloon near Talluquah. I was doin' what I thought was a pretty fair version o' a number I like to call, *I'm Still In Love With You*. Prettiest song I ever wrote, if'n I do say so m'self.

(singing and playing)

Roses are red
And violets are blue
And I'm still in love
With you

(spoken) Pretty, ain't it?

SLIM No.

KID So, I'm singin' my heart out when this sassy young lass sashays up to the edge of the stage there an' stops me right in the middle o' my number! One o' these gals that's gotta spirit bigger'n the sky! Y'know the type I'm talkin' about?

Sashaying, ANNABELLE comes out.

KID Anywho, she says to me:

ANNABELLE “Oklahoma Kid? Am I fallin' in love with yer song er am I fallin' in love with you?”

KID And ya know what I said to 'er?

SLIM “Meet me at the top o' the stairs?”

KID I said, “Darlin', once ya start fallin', it don't much matter.”

ANNABELLE grabs KID's lapels and plants a kiss right on the lips.

KID Whoa!

ANNABELLE runs off.

KID Now, bein' o' man of good conscience, I'm proud to say I behaved m'self like a gentleman that night. An' don't think she wasn't displayin' her fine self like candy on a counter.

SLIM What was her name?

KID Like yer in a position to act on yer urges.

SLIM What was her damn name?

KID Never got it, sorry to say. I do recollect hearin'

somethin' 'bout her meetin' a fateful end. Died of a bullet meant fer somebody else.

SLIM Whatta shame.

KID Yes, it was. There's evil in this world, Slim. Fer the life o' me, I'll never understand its reason fer bein'. Figger as long as I can pick up my guitar and sing a song, I'll survive.

SLIM Ya think I'm evil?

KID I think ya done some evil things. But inside? Inside, I believe there's goodness.

SLIM Ain't nothin' good inside o' me, Kid.

KID I beg to differ. I believe when it comes to livin' yer life, a man's got but two choices: one of 'em's good and the other's not so good. An' the only place to find which ya are ... (*taps his heart*) ... is in here.

SLIM You a preacher?

KID No, sir.

SLIM Then shut the hell up.

KID Jus' talkin' to yer heart, is all.

SLIM I don't have a heart. An' the thing that's beatin' inside me is cold, jus' like ya sung.

KID Everybody's gotta heart, Slim. Even you.

SLIM Ya'd be hard pressed to find it. After a life spent doin' wrong on a regular basis, ya know what I see when I look in the mirror? I see the Devil. That's what I see. Where the hell's the good in that?

KID Ya got horns?

SLIM No, I don't got no horns.

KID Any redness in yer complexion?

SLIM No.

KID How 'bout fire breathin'? Ya ever had any flames shoot out yer mouth?

SLIM I got devilish tendencies magnified beyond reason, that's what I got! An' what that is, least by any definition, ain't fit to be called human.

KID There's lots of folks can fit that description and they's as human as anybody else.

SLIM Not like me. The dark side o' my soul wins out,

time and time again. I's born with a animal inside me, Kid. A angry animal. Full of rage. Hatred. A beast that would stop at nothin' to get whatever his heart desired.

KID I don't believe I have a song for that.

SLIM Sure, ya do. Ya jus' ain't wrote it yet. Soon as I die, ya'll sit down with yer little guitar an' bang, out it'll come. Jus' make sure ya keep the part about the Devil. That's the part that'll ring true.

KID Was it fer the money?

SLIM G'dammit.

KID I'm jus' askin'.

SLIM I never stole much. There're others who loved money more than me. Tuttle, for one. To me, robbin' banks is jus' a lotta coordinatin' and organizin' that frankly can tire a man out. I jus' like killin'.

KID An' what's that do to ya?

SLIM Don't do nothin' to me. I'm the one doin' it to him.

KID When ya kill a man, what happens inside?

SLIM Nothin'.

KID Somethin'.

SLIM Joy. Happiness. General goodwill. But then it wears off an' I have to go out an' kill somethin' else. Never said I's perfect.

KID This may come as a surprise to you, but I'm a little short o' perfect m'self.

SLIM You?

KID True.

SLIM I don't know you from a hole in the ground, but if'n I was asked to find me somebody without a care in the world when it come to that sorta thing, I'd steer 'em straight to the likes o' you.

KID I must admit to a few deficiencies in character.

SLIM Like what?

KID I'd have to think on it.

SLIM I ain't goin' nowhere.

Kid walks away. Thinks. Finally:

KID I have a unquenchable need to seek out my

demons. Confront them. Challenge them. My hope is that by the end o' my lifetime, I will have squared up with all that I fear 'bout m'self. An' by doing so, I will have cleansed my soul. Trouble is, I'm jus' the type o' man who gets up in the mornin' an' it don't matter where I am er what's goin' on outside my window, far as I'm concerned, it's jus' another sunshiny day. Could be rainin' buckets. Stormin'. Wind. Still, all I see is the sun. An' I know fer a fact that life ain't a never endin' string o' sunshiny days. I don't have to tell you. All sorts o' things get thrown in yer path cause ya to think otherwise. Take dyin', fer instance. No sunshine there.

SLIM "The day's gonna come when yer bottle's empty an' the creek runs dry."

KID Well, lissen to you! If'n that jus' don't beat all? Where'd that come from?

SLIM I have been known to turn a phrase er two.

KID I should say so! Here's another: "It's not what ya do, it's what ya do in the meantime."

SLIM What the hell's that s'posed to mean?

KID I have no idea, but it sure sounds good, don't it?

SLIM Say it again.

KID "It's not what ya do ...

SLIM Slower.

KID "It's not ...

SLIM "It's not ...

KID What ya do ...

SLIM What ya do ...

KID It's what ya do in the meantime."

SLIM Huh.

KID Must mean somethin'.

KID picks up his guitar. Strums.

SLIM In the meantime.

KID *(singing)*

In the in between time

Darlin' won't ya be mine

In the meantime

IN THE MEANTIME

KID

(singing)

Sun goes down, comes back around
When the evenin' falls
When the darkness calls
What ya never knew
What was always true
Yer where ya don't belong
Sing a sad man's song

But in the meantime
In the in between time
Darlin', won't ya be mine
In the meantime

Yer bluer than blue
Through and through
Like a sinner's last sin
All yer chips are in
What come before
Is now forevermore
To try to right a wrong
Ya sing a sad man's song

Quietly, SLIM sings. KID falls out, plays underneath.

SLIM

(singing)

But in the meantime
In the in between time
Darlin', won't ya be mine
In the meantime

Everywhere ya been's
Like a long, lost friend
Everyone ya know
Is everywhere ya go
Yer where ya don't belong

Ya try to right a wrong
It's time to say so long
An' sing a sad man's song

KID & SLIM *(singing)*
But in the meantime
In the in between time
Darlin', won't ya be mine
In the meantime

KID *(repeating Chorus)*
In the meantime ...

SLIM has stopped singing.

KID Ya sound good!
SLIM That's enough.
KID *(singing)*
 In the in between time ...
SLIM I said, that's enough!

KID stops playing.

SLIM Git the gun.
KID Not jus' yet.
SLIM I said, git the gun.
KID I'll sing the killin' song again.
SLIM Git the g'damn gun!
KID Can I confess somethin'?
SLIM If'n yer scared, jus' close damn yer eyes!
KID It's not the shootin'. Well, it is the shootin',
 but there's somethin' else. Somethin' I say with great
 trepidation, knowin' how it reflects back upon me.
SLIM What?!
KID Fer my whole entire life, I been deeply envious
 of cats.
SLIM G'dammit.
KID Y'know, the small, soft furred, four legged—
SLIM I know what g'damn cat is!
KID ... Would ya like to know why?
SLIM No, I would not!

KID It has to do with yer situation.

SLIM I don't give a good goddamn. This may come as a surprise to you, but I ain't in the least bit interested! What I am interested in, is you pickin' up my six gun an' endin' my misery! That's what I'm interested in!

KID They have nine lives.

SLIM ... what did I jus' say? Did I not jus' say to you that I didn't wanna know about it?

KID Think on it.

SLIM I ain't thinkin' on that er any other g'damn thing ya want me to think on! I want ya to shoot me! Plain an' simple!

KID Eight other lives.

SLIM G'dammit all to Hell.

KID Wouldn't that be somethin'? What would you give to have eight other lives?

SLIM Wouldn't I have to live 'em as a cat?

SLIM stares at KID.

KID All right. (*goes to the gun, picks it up*)

SLIM ... Partial to dogs m'self.

KID Dogs? Seven years to every one o' ours? Ya'd be here an' gone 'fore ya knew it.

SLIM They eat better.

KID They do, that.

SLIM Not so skittish, neither.

KID True.

SLIM An' I do believe a dog humps more often than a cat.

KID Where'd ya hear that?

SLIM Jus' know it.

KID Yeah, but from where?

SLIM I jus' know I know it, is all.

KID D'ya read it somewhere?

SLIM Mighta.

KID Maybe ya jus' overheard it.

SLIM Maybe, I did.

KID Er jus' maybe, yer makin' it up. Top o' yer head.