

FROM :ABOUTFACESMTM

FAX NO. :5045220850

JUL 01 2005 04:08PM P2

MM

FRANK
BOB FORD

"Sidekick"

Bob Ford SC 1/2 5.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DUSK

JESSE in the prairie wheat at dusk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sicknesses made him smell blood each morning, he visited rooms at night, he sometimes heard children in the fruit cellar, he waded into prairie wheat and stared at the horizon.

CLOSE ON JESSE

His eyes impossibly blue.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He had seen another summer under in Kansas City, Missouri, and on September 5, in the year 1881, he was thirty-four years old.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BLUE CUT (AS SEEN FROM THE SOUTHERN RIDGE) - DAY

Thirty feet below is a cinder roadbed, the sickle curve of rails, the grade that is hard work for a locomotive. Beyond that is the northern ridge -- a lower elevation -- rising ten feet above the cut.

EXT. SOUTHERN RIDGE - DAY

FRANK JAMES (stern, 38) stands back in the green darkness, studying the terrain. O.S. we hear the sound of some fool CRASHING THROUGH THE WEEDS to the rear of him. FRANK opens his coat and slides his hand over his revolver.

VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me, but I see I've sort of traipsed in and interrupted you.

START Here →

FRANK turns to see a boy in a stovepipe hat and an overlarge black coat that's cinched by a low-slung holster. His hands are overhead as if a gun is upon him.

FRANK

Which one are you?

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6.

CONTINUED:

BOB

Bob Ford.

FRANK

Ah, Charley's brother.

BOB receives this as an invitation to lower his hands. He hunkers down next to FRANK and takes off his hat. *

BOB

I was lying when I said I just happened down here. I've been looking for you. I feel lousy that I didn't say so at the outset.

FRANK digs in his pockets and extracts cigarette makings. He's not inclined to converse.

BOB

Folks sometimes take me for a nincompoop on account of the shabby first impression I make, whereas I've always thought of myself as being just a rung down from the James brothers. And, well, I was hoping if I ran into you aside from those peckerwoods, I could show you how special I am. I honestly believe I'm destined for great things, Mr. James. I've got qualities that don't come shining through right at the outset, but give me a chance and I'll get the job done -- I can guarantee you that.

FRANK slimes his cigarette and strikes a match off his boot sole.

FRANK

You're not so special, Mr. Ford. You're just like any other tyro who's prinked himself up for an escapade. You're hoping to be a gunslinger like those nickel books are about, but you may as well quench your mind of it. You don't have the ingredients.

BOB slaps a mosquito and looks at his blood-freckled palm.

(CONTINUED)

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7.

CONTINUED:

BOB

I'm sorry to hear you feel that way since I put such stock in your opinions.

He stands and rehats himself.

BOB

As for me being a gunslinger, I've just got this one granddaddy Patterson Colt and a borrowed belt to stick it in. But I've also got an appetite for greater things. I hoped joining up with you would put me that much closer to getting them. And that's the plain and simple truth of the matter.

FRANK

So what do you want me to say?

BOB

You'll let me be your sidekick tonight.

FRANK

Sidekick?

BOB

So you can examine my grit and intelligence.

FRANK examines his cigarette, sucks it once more, and flips it onto the roadbed.

FRANK

I don't know what it is about you, but the more you talk, the more you give me the willies. I don't believe I even want you as close as earshot this evening.

BOB

I'm sorry --

FRANK

(interrupting)

Why don't you go?

And, after a beat, BOB tramps up the hill, slapping weeds aside.

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