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Jesse James

By Nunnally Johnson

Now, listen, friend. The railroad's gonna come right smack through your land and there ain't a thing you can do to stop it. But, mister, a dollar an acre. I paid \$15 an acre for it. And then there's my home and the barn and the crop. Take it or leave it, friend. But if you won't sell, we'll call in the government. They'll confiscate your land and you'll get nothin'. But if that's the way you want it...

- What'll I do?
- I don't know.
- Mister. Mister!
- Here he comes.
- Mister...
- Well?

I reckon, if that's the way they're gonna do it... Now you're talkin' sense.

- Can you write?
- No, sir.

Here. Put your mark right there. I'm telling you, lady. If you won't sell, the government'll take it. You can save a lot of trouble by signing now. It's so little - \$2 an acre. But if that's the way it is. Don't sign it, Ma. Please don't. Let's see a lawyer first.

- You're wasting your time, son.
- Let's see one anyway, Ma.

We can go to town and see Judge Harvey. He'll tell you what to do.

- Wait till you see him. Please.
- Right here, ma'am.

I suppose it can't hurt to talk to somebody first. You don't mind waiting till tomorrow, do you? Well, it won't do you any good,

but whatever you say, ma'am.

No hard feelings, son.

Why, no, sir.

Tryin' to hold us up?

- Tryin' to jack up the price, are you?

- Leave him alone!

No, no, please!

Leave him alone! Don't hurt him!

- I'll sign. I will, right now.

- Don't sign it, Ma.

I will.

Right there, ma'am.

Howdy, bud.

Sir?

I just said howdy.

Howdy.

- What's your name?

- James. Jesse James.

- You own this farm?

- No, but my ma does.

- Where is she?

- Up at the house.

Thanks, bud.

Morning.

Good morning, ma'am.

- Are you the lady that owns this farm?

- Yes, I am.

My name's Barshee. I'm with the railroad.

We're comin' through this way, you know.

I heard so.

I wanna get this deed signed up.

If you'll just put your name right there.

- For nothing?

- No, no.

We're payin' \$1 an acre,

just like to everybody else.

Everybody's gettin' the same thing.

Seems mighty little, don't it?

I can't help that, lady. That's all you'll get,

so you might as well sign up now.

You mean right this minute?

Look, lady. We ain't got

all day to hang around here.

You either take what I'm offering or you'll

get nothing. We get your land just the same.
I wouldn't dream of signing a thing like that
without talking to some lawyer about it.
Are you gonna waste my time
with some jackleg lawyer?
Your land's the same as anybody else's.
Well, there's no use talking.
I'm not gonna sign that thing right now.
Lady, I don't wanna
have any trouble with you.
Didn't you hear her say no?
Said she wasn't gonna sign.
- Who are you?
- That's my son, Frank.
Well, you're so smart,
how would you like the government
to condemn this land and take it for nothing?
Wouldn't like it.
You better understand that I'm doing you
a favour when I offer a dollar an acre.
We don't want no favours.
- Maybe you'd like to go to court about it.
- Might at that.
Well, you folks have it your own way.
All right, son. No hard feelings.
Frank!
Kinda tricky, ain't you?
Yeah.
- Get him, boys.
- No, Frank! Frank!
I ain't a-scared.
You ain't gonna all jump on him, are you?
Back against the wall, you fellas.
Hands out of your pockets.
- Wanna fight him, Frank?
- Frank, don't.
- If you keep them others off my back.
- They won't do anything, will you, fellas?
- Jesse, stop him. Stop him.
- Sorry, Ma. He started it.
Please, Jesse. Don't let him.
Frank!
Jesse, stop 'em. Stop 'em!
He's gonna get hurt.

Looks to me like he's got enough.

- Who's next?

- Think you can lick 'em all, Frank?

I'll fight 'em or wrestle 'em one at a time
and pile 'em up under the tree.

You'll do nothing of the kind.

You men, get away from here!

Jess!

Well, if he ain't the tricky one.

Get off this land, all of you!

Move along.

And jump!

But we're still gonna get this land
just the same.

Jesse!

- I'm all right, son.

- What happened?

- I don't know. It went black...

- Come in the house.

- What happened?

- She fainted.

- I didn't. I just gotta lay down.

- You better get Doc Hall.

Pinkie!

- Pinkie!

- Yes, sir?

Get on your mule and go after Doc Hall.

- Yes, sir.

- And, Pinkie...

Then get to all the farmers

this side of Liberty -

Mr Crump, Mr Clayton, Mr Thompson -

all of them.

Tell 'em there's an important meeting
here tonight.

- Tell 'em to come without fail.

- Yes, sir.

And furthermore...

if the St Louis Midland

don't know the way its agents

are swindlin' the farmers,

it's high time they found out...

Comma.

...because it's the goldangedest,

dad-blastedest, con-sangedest outrage
ever perpetrated on a law-abiding citizenry
in the whole history of the world.

Paragraph.

Trouble, by gravy.

Uncle Rufe...

- You want me to take those cusswords out?

- I guess so.

You want to swear out warrants
for their arrest?

I'm charging Frank and Jesse James
with assault with attempt to murder.

- Too bad they didn't finish it.

- Jesse?

Yes. While my back was turned.

Nice shootin'.

If you'll swear in me and my men as deputies,
we won't bother you any more.

We'll bring in these buckaroos ourselves.

Tonight.

- It's Jesse. He's in trouble.

- No! What did he do?

Uncle Rufe!

You know them cusswords I told you
to take out? Put 'em back in.

Uncle Rufe! Uncle Rufe!

What we gotta do is chip in some money -
whatever we can afford -

and send down to St Louis for a lawyer.

We bought our land, built our homes
and raised our crops.

If we give 'em up,

we got a right to a fair price.

You're right.

- We don't want any trouble, Jesse.

- Not unless they start it, Ma.

We need somebody that knows the law
to tell us how to protect our rights.

- Jesse's right. We need a lawyer.

- Jesse! Frank!

Jesse! Frank!

Jesse! Frank!

You boys must get outta here. They got
a warrant and they're headed here now.

You got to skip out.

I told Pinkie to get your horses ready.

- Nobody going to arrest me.

- I ain't gonna run.

- Now, listen...

- Listen to the major, Frank.

You ain't got a chance. The St Louis Midland's got this whole state hogtied.

They got the police, the courts, everything.

A trial now would be ajoke.

The railroad has too much at stake to let two farmer boys bollix things up.

- We can defend ourselves.

- Jesse...

- Well, sure, Ma.

- Do what the major says. He's right.

You just gotta hide out till I can get the governor or somebody to give you a fair trial.

- If we run away...

- Jesse, please go like the major says.

If you don't, it'll mean trouble.

I couldn't stand it. I'm not well enough.

- Massa Frank.

- Please go.

The horses are ready at the back gate.

All right, Ma, if it makes you feel better.

- Be awful careful, son.

- Don't worry, Ma.

- Take care of him, Frank.

- Yes, Ma.

- Bye, Jesse.

- Bye, Frank.

- Goodbye, Ma.

- Pinkie'll know where we are.

Pinkie...

Yes, I knows where it is.

Be careful, boys. Be careful.

Now, ladies, you all go down the road a piece and wait.

There's apt to be a fracas here.

Just let us men handle it.

Step along. Just get right down there.

Now, men, listen to me.

Let me do all the talkin'.

Yes, Major.

Here they come.

Evening, gentlemen.

- Where's the James boys?

- We got a warrant.

They're gone. And if you want to know
who got 'em away, 'twas me!

- Easy, Major.

- Get out of the way.

Just a minute, Mr Barshee.

You have my word for it, the boys are gone.

Your word...

Come out, Frank and Jesse James,
or we'll pull you out.

Their mother's sick in bed and her heart
won't stand you mules in the house.

- Are you gonna let him make a fool of you?

- He says they ain't there.

- They ain't!

- I can find that out.

Lynch! Bring me that mushmelon.

Major!

He's tellin' the truth.

If you ain't out of there in one minute,
I'll blow you out.

Do you think I'm lyin'?

Major! They can come in. Let 'em...

- Look! There's somebody in there.

- It's their mother, I tell you.

There's no use. She's dead.

This is bad. Mighty bad.

I'm sure sorry.

Well, I'm sorry too.

I wasn't talkin' about her. She's gone.

It's you I'm sorry for.

Zee!

Frank!

- Frank!

- Yeah?

- It's Zee.

- Zee?

- I can hardly believe my eyes.

- Zee!

- Frank.

- How are you, Zee?
- I've worried so about you all.
- About us?
How's everybody?
How's everything at home? How's Ma?
Jesse...
Ma? What happened?
Barshee...
You mean she's dead?
Oh, Jesse...
Well, let's go.
Bye, honey.
- Jesse, don't you go.
- I've got to.
Oh, no, Jesse. Please.
I can't help it, Zee. I just got to.
- Let Frank.
- Sorry, honey.
Frank, make him.
- Take care of her.
- What about me?
I'm the one he did it to, cos I shot him.
Go ahead. If you don't get him, I will.
It might be a long time
before I see you, Zee.
I can wait.
- Goodbye, honey.
- Goodbye, Jesse.
Just keep anybody
from bothering me, that's all.
Boys, the dust speaks for itself.
I'm used to it.
Keep your hands in sight.
Bartender, count three and duck.
Yes, sir.
Wait a minute, Jesse.
It was an accident, I swear it was.
Count.
No, no. I can explain it.
I didn't know she was there, I swear it.
Keep your hands in sight. One.
No. No! Jesse!
Two.
Now stand still.

One, two, three, four, five.

- Thank you, gentlemen.

- All aboard!

All aboard!

Hands up!

Keep right on driving until I tell you to stop.

- What are you aiming to do, pardner?

- I ain't aiming to do nothin'.

- I'm doin' it. I'm holdin' up this train.

- The whole train?

Slack up at this next curve. Stop her just this side of that clump of trees around the bend.

It's your funeral, pardner.

Unhitch it.

If you don't know what this is, folks, it's a hold-up.

Stay in your seats!

Keep your hands in sight.

And the gent who threwed his pocketbook in the spittoon will kindly take it out and wipe it.

- No jewellery, folks. Just cash.

- That's every cent I've got.

You shouldn't ride on the St Louis Midland Railroad.

No jewellery, thank you just the same.

That's very nice, sir.

A fine-lookin' pocketbook.

Thank you, lady. Don't forget to sue the railroad for all you give us, cos it's responsible.

Thank you very kindly, sir.

Just drop it in the sack and nobody'll get hurt.

Thank you, brother.

Have your wallets ready.

Thank you, brother. Don't take all day.

- Sit down.

- Thank you, sir. Thank you kindly.

- You'll hear about this.

- No back talk. Thank you, brother.

Everybody sit quiet and nobody'll get hurt.

Let's go. Lights out.

Then he stuck a pistol

as big as a cannon right there

and says, "Brother, we want that mail safe."

Where was the protection we're entitled to?

Where was the law?

Just a minute, cap. I'm the law in Liberty.

I don't cover the whole United States.

- If you give me a description of these men...

- You know as well as I do who it was.

Jesse James. Who else picks on my road?

Who else would have the nerve?

Sure it was, but you don't

have to yell about it. I'm not deaf.

What's that?

Look! It's him!

- Well, you crazy son of a gun.

- How are you, Major?

You're asking to be caught.

They're looking all over the county for you.

How about a cup of coffee?

- The marshal's got 30 men looking for you.

- In all this rain, too. Poor boys.

- It's no joke, Jesse.

- It's all right, honey. I won't stay long.

The way I figure it out, as long as they're out there, in here's the safest place for me.

- Sit down. Leave the man alone.

- But he's taking chances.

If I could just think of some way to let you know how wrong you are.

It's no use, honey. It's like I always told you.

I hate the railroads.

And when I hate I have to do something.

That's the stuff.

People ain't hatin' now

like they used to. They're gettin' soft.

I gotta admit that I like a man

that hates good and hard.

It's the lawyers, goldang it,

a-messin' up the whole world.

Ten years ago here in Liberty, we didn't have no lawyers and we got along fine.

A man killed somebody, somebody killed him, the marshal shot 'em all. That was it.

But look at it today. Here in Liberty we got hundreds of lawyers, thousands of 'em.

As far as the eye can see,

nothin' but lawyers.

Uncle Rufe, there are only
two lawyers in Liberty.

Two? Is that all?

Then they run around too much.

Goldang it. I'm gonna write me
an editorial about that.

- Roy!

- Yes, sir.

Take an editorial on lawyers.

- Liars?

- That'll do. We'll begin easy.

Paragraph.

If we are ever to have
law and order in the West,
the first thing we got to do
is take out all the lawyers
and shoot 'em down like dogs.

Paragraph.

They're bound to get you some day, Jesse.

That's why I hate to see you
go out that door.

Because I keep thinking of you
all the time out there in the hills.

Just going on and on to nowhere.

Just trying to keep alive.

And everybody after you,
wanting to kill you to get that money.

And, Jesse, sometimes at night
when it's cold and raining,

I wake up crying,
because in a dream

I saw you lying dead in the mud.

Oh, Jesse, I'm so scared.

You're the only one that it matters to, Zee,
one way or the other,

You're the only one
that means anything to me.

I know it was a fool thing to come here, but...

I never knew how much I did want to see you
until I saw you.

...the dad-blamedest outrage ever...

How are you, Horace Greeley?

Hello, Will.

- I thought you was...
- I was.
- Is Zee inside?
- Well, she's...
- Evening, Zee.
- Evening, Will.
- I thought you went out with the posse.
- I did. I just got back.
Did you catch him?
This is Mr Howard, Will.
Mr Thomas Howard, an old friend of ours.
This is the US marshal, Mr Wright.
- How do you do, Mr Howard?
- How do you do?
- Mr Howard's from St Louis.
- Yes? I used to live in St Louis.
- What business are you in, Mr Howard?
- Guns. Guns and horses.
Guns and horses, eh?
No, we didn't catch him.
You couldn't find a white elephant tonight.
Zee used to know Jesse James.
She tell you? They kinda grew up together.
She's told me so much
I almost feel I know him myself.
You do?
Good biscuits. You make 'em, Zee?
Try one, Mr Howard.
I don't mean that we ain't after him.
I'm still a peace officer. If we ever
come on each other in the right place,
it's just gonna be me or him -
one or the other.
Yes, I understand.
I'm hoping he'll stop messing around
in my district or else keep out of my way,
cos it'll save Zee some hurt. Either way.
- You know your job, I guess.
- I know it and I'm good at it.
I'm just as good at my job as he is at his.
That's why I say the next time
I'll blow his head off or he'll blow mine.
I got some business up the road a piece.
Take me about an hour.

- Maybe I'll drop in later if your light's on.

- All right, Will.

- Good night, Horace Greeley.

- Good night, Will.

I don't expect I'll be seeing you again.

No, I don't expect so.

Take care of yourself.

- You got a better grade of law here now.

- Don't waste time, Jesse. Go now.

I think I'd better go that way.

- Blow out the light. I don't wanna be a target.

- Yes.

All clear.

Is that why you won't marry me?

I can't help it, Will.

Well, let's load him on a horse
and take him to town.

One of you fellas come and give me a hand.

Get back out of the way, you young ones.

Get over on the other side.

- Is that...

- No, ma'am.

We didn't get the jackpot this time.

They keep running up that price and one
of Jesse's own men will take a shot at him.

Some of them fellas would scalp
their own ma for a lot less than \$5,000.

Let him down on this side.

- Darling...

- Are you really as pretty as I think?

Jesse, read this. Read it.

Will arranged it. I asked him to.

- I can't do that, Zee.

- Why not?

I trust Will, but...

He's given his word, he's promised.

He'll see that it works out all right.

Jesse, listen.

It isn't only now, although that's bad enough.

It's what's going to happen to you.

Inside of you.

You understand?

I mean... Right now you're a hero to yourself
and a lot of other people too.

It's a fight you're in
and it's the railroad that started it.
But that's not going to last, Jesse.
The more luck you have, the worse you'll get.
Shooting and robbing -
it'll get in your blood, Jesse.
You'll get like a wolf.
Just doing it because it's your nature.
That'll be your appetite -
for shooting and robbing.
Until something happens to you.
And if anything ever happened to you, Jesse,
it'd be like it was happening to me too.
Oh, darling, there's only one way out.
Come in. Give up.
Let me draw a free breath again.
I can't, Zee. I'd go crazy in prison.
I couldn't do it.
But if we went away now...
That's all there is to it, Jesse.
Goodbye.
- But, Zee, please...
- Good luck.
Zee, you said you'd wait.
However long it took.
- Would you marry me now, before?
- Today, if you want me to.
- Then that's the way, I guess.
- The only way.
And then the prodigal son
come home to his ma and pa.
- Welcome, brothers and sister.
- Thank you, sir.
Sit down. Just find a seat anywhere.
Could we get hitched?
Married.
- You ain't eloping, are you?
- How's that?
- No, sir. I'm grown.
- We're in a hurry, if you don't mind.
Your brothers?
- I have no brothers.
- Sorry.
- What's your name, sister?

- Zerelda Cobb.

- And yours, son?

- Jesse Woodson James.

Jesse Wood... Jesse James?

- Thank the Lord.

- Sit down.

- Yes, sir. We don't want no trouble.

- Trouble?

Why, son, you're as welcome

as rain to the flowers.

Do you realise, boy, that I had
a farm giving 900 bushels of corn
until that railroad had taken it from me?

Why, I'd given up preaching and
was making an honest living off the land
until that dad-swinged railroad
swindled me out of my own home.

- That's true, Mr James.

- By golly, son!

Do you know, I had a big house,
two barns, three outhouses,
until that goldanged railroad
hornswoggled me?

- Amen.

- Amen.

All right. We're gathered here
to join Zerelda Cobb
and Jesse Woodson James
in the bonds of holy matrimony...

- Howdy, Jesse.

- Howdy, Will.

- I guess Zee explained things.

- She said they're willing to go light.

They're so glad to get rid of you, they're liable
to make you a conductor on the road.

- What do you think I'll get?

- Two, three years.

Maybe five. It won't be much.

All they're charging you with is that depot
at Pine Hills that you knocked over.

That one they got proof on.

I'm much obliged for all you've done, Will.

Don't mention it.

Shall we go?

Is it all right, Jesse?

- Howdy, Jesse.

- Howdy, Jesse.

- Howdy, Jesse.

- Howdy. Judge.

- Jesse.

- Major.

- You ain't got no more guns, have you?

- No.

All right.

- You're doing the wise thing, son.

- Am I?

Judge Mathews is gonna try your case, son.

You can trust him.

I'm aiming to go as light as the law allows.

When you come out, the slate will be clean.

The past will be forgotten.

- Thank you, Judge.

- Well, Jesse, if you're ready.

Well, I...

All right, Jesse. Go ahead.

- You ain't worried, are you, kid?

- I could do it on my head.

Good boy.

Oh, my darling. My wife.

My husband.

Oh, I'm proud of you, dear.

Proud of you.

Bye, Zee. Goodbye.

I'll be waiting.

Yes, sir. You can go right in.

Mr James?

- I'm Mr McCoy, president of the railroad.

- I know who you are, Mr McCoy.

I just want to welcome you and tell you how glad I am to see you here in jail.

- From here...

- What's all this soldier business?

This is Mr Wright, the peace officer here.

- Mr Clarke, the state prosecutor.

- How do you do? Well?

Well, we're gonna try to hang our lawless friend.

- Before or after the trial?

- The penalty for murder is death, isn't it?

- That wasn't the idea.

- The idea?

That wasn't the idea you gave me
or James or the girl.

Get this straight, Wright.

When you're dealing with a criminal,
anything goes. Anything to trap him.

James is a thief and a murderer.

The most notorious bandit
and outlaw in America.

He has burned my property, robbed my trains
and scared people out of riding in my cars.

Three years ago, I swore
he'd hang for what he'd done

and, by the Almighty, he is going to hang.

- That ain't the way things are done here.

- You're a peace officer, aren't you?

But not a skunk.

You told Judge Mathews?

It won't be necessary, my boy. He's been
superseded by Judge Rankin of St Louis
who's not so sentimental about train robbers.

He arrives tonight.

The trial's tomorrow morning.

Anything else?

A nice frame, eh?

And, Marshal, it might be better for you if you
dropped this role of attorney for the defence

- and confined yourself to your duties.

- Who? Me?

- Any interference...

- It ain't me you got to worry about.

What do you mean?

Suppose Jesse don't want to be hanged.

Roy! Stop the press!

- Take a new editorial on railroad presidents.

- Yes, sir.

Paragraph.

If we are ever to have
law and order in the West,
the first thing we gotta do is take out
all the railroad presidents
and shoot 'em down like dogs. Paragraph.

Where's Zee?

- Where you been?
- Up to Pine Ridge. Where's Zee?
- Zee? She's out.
- Out where?

Well, she set out at...

I wouldn't want this to go any further, you understand.

I understand.

- Well, she set out for the hills.
- Alone?

Not exactly alone.

She were being guided by a darkie named Pinkie on a mule named Stinkie.

I see.

Halt. Who goes there?

- It's me - Pinkie.
- All right, Pinkie. What do you want?
- I got a letter here for Mr McCoy.
- Gimme.

A letter for Mr McCoy.

- Is you sure he'll get it, sir?
- He'll get it.
- For Mr McCoy.
- Mr McCoy?

For Mr McCoy.

We want the trial to get started as early as possible.

Judge, read that.

Listen.

"Mr McCoy."

"If Jesse ain't out of jail by midnight, I'm a-comin' in and get him."

"Frank James."

- Well, that gives us an hour and a half.
- The nerve of him.
- What ails you?
- It's this note.
- What about it?
- I don't know if you gents know it or not, but, well, both these James boys does things.
- What are you driving at?
- I've known Frank James a long time and when he says he aims to do something

he's liable to do it.

Now, what on earth do you think he can do?

He says he's gonna take Jesse outta here.

- I wish he'd try it. We'd grab him too.

- Of course we would. You're crazy.

He's a mighty set man, Frank is.

Have you heard about this ridiculous note?

The word's got around.

- You mean everybody knows about it?

- Everybody I met.

They all regard it

as a very interesting situation.

Interesting? Why, it's preposterous.

What do they think

a few ragged-pants bandits can do?

Don't they know this is a brickjail

surrounded and guarded by US soldiers?

Don't they know we could hold this jail

against an army of outlaws?

They do. That's what makes it so interesting.

But they know too that both the James boys

are mighty set in their ways.

- Mighty set.

- That's what I said.

Didn't I tell you to shut up?

How many deputies have you got?

Six on call, but I could swear in

as many more as you want.

That's it. That's what we'll do.

We won't wait for the rascal.

- We'll go out and get him.

- We could try.

You think he'll really come?

- Don't you?

- Sure. He wouldn't fool around about this.

- He's probably on his way now.

- Well, let's not waste time.

Swear in some good men. Surround the town.

Tell them to take him dead or alive.

Tell them to shoot first

and ask questions later.

- Tell them...

- Am I telling you how to run your railroad?

- What do you mean?

- Don't try to tell me how to take a man.
Just a minute, Marshal.
Where are you going?
- To swear in some good men.
- Wait. I'll go with you.
I'm not a bad hand at picking men myself.
Whatever you say, cap,
is exactly what I'll do.
Turn out all your men. Cover the town.
It's an utterly ridiculous situation, but,
by cracky, I'm not going to take any chances.
Mighty, mighty set.
Five dollars - one to three, he will.
\$10, he won't.
\$12 - even money, either way.
I've got \$10 - one to five -
that Frank James
will bite Mr McCoy in the leg.
Bartender! Give me that mallet!
Gentlemen!
I want some deputies who've got to be able
to shoot straight the first time, or else.
- For Frank?
- For whoever I say.
But if anybody has a mercenary streak,
Mr McCoy is talking about doubling the pot
for whoever rings the bell.
\$10,000?
All right, boys. Line up at the bar
so we can look at you.
You and you. Ed, you're all right.
Bill, get over there.
You. You.
And you. You.
Charlie, you're good with a gun.
I don't like him.
What's wrong with the big fella?
- Nothing.
- Then him.
- All right. And you...
- And these two.
All right. You're the doctor.
All right, men. Face me,
raise your right hands and take the oath.

Up a little higher.
Wild-goose chase.
He won't be able to get into town,
much less this building.
- The whole thing's a bluff.
- Well, it's 12 o'clock. Nothing's happened.
You...
I couldn't help it.
I'm just nervous, that's all.
Frank said he'd give you till 12
to let Jesse out
and if he wasn't out by then...
- That's Jesse.
- Well, stop him.
I'll stop him, but it won't do no good.
It's dead certain Frank's comin' now.
And Jesse feels him.
That's the way them boys is.
No matter what happens tonight,
fire or flood,
I'm going to have that man fired tomorrow.
Major! Zee! They got him.
- Frank?
- Yeah. They jumped him in the woods.
- Who? Who got him?
- Two of them deputies.
Oh, them goldanged,
dad-blasted, golburned deputies!
- Roy!
- Yes, sir.
I just want to thank the young man for
simplifying one of our worst problems.
Take him in there.
- I sure am sorry, Frank. Any guns on you?
- I got it.
I sure wasn't lookin' for this.
Come on, son.
Frank.
- Sorry.
- It's all right, Marshal.
You understand, this ain't any of my doing.
I just want you and Jesse to know that...
all the honour and credit for this victory
of law and order goes to Mr McCoy.

We understand.

- Is that all, Marshal?

- That's all, thank you.

Then get outta here. Get out and stay out.

For a peace officer,

your attitude has been incredible.

And make no doubt,

it'll be reported to the governor tomorrow.

So you won't want me any more tonight?

Neither tonight, or any other day or night.

- Is that official?

- It is.

Sorry, Will. We didn't aim

to get you over a barrel.

Forget it, son.

I figure that barrel's gonna be

mighty crowded before this night's over.

Good night, everybody.

Good night, Marshal.

Pretty smart, aren't you?

- You ought not to have done this, Mr McCoy.

- No?

You ought not to have tried to trick Jesse

and me. You oughta have kept your word.

- The way you're gonna keep yours?

- Sir?

Well, you said you were

gonna take Jesse out of here.

But I am.

- Hey, Jesse?

- That you, Frank?

It's me. You all right?

- You're a cool one.

- Gettin' along just fine, Frank.

He'll be glad to see you too.

Lock the door, Tom.

- Soldiers!

- Take it easy, boys.

Now untie me.

No noise, understand?

We don't aim to kill a soul if we can help it,

but the first man that hollers...

All you gotta do is to keep your hands up

and your mouth shut.

Everything's gonna be all right.
You'll never get away with this in the world.
I knowed it and I told you.
Lay down.
Lay down or be shot down.
- What happened?
- Mr McCoy deputised Tom and Hank.
- On purpose?
- I guess he didn't have any better sense.
What is this? A game?
Grown men playing on the floor like children.
- Ain't it the truth?
- They wouldn't have it any other way.
Remember that?
Remember it?
Don't kill me.
I ain't. Not with a gun.
But, brother, I'm gonna worry you to death.
Now chew.
See how it tastes. And swallow.
Chew.
- You look like a man that's got good sense.
- Just name it, friend, and I'll do it.
- You'll do it if you don't want to get shot.
- All you gotta do is name it.
Give him a glass of water to wash it down.
Everybody set? Just throw that door open
when I say the word and then step back.
- You don't have to tell me to step back.
- Don't hurt nobody.
We'll throw a few rounds down the street
for the fun of it.
Ready? Open it.
Stop them! Stop them! Hurry!
Get after them!
Get after them! Everybody!
- Goodbye, Uncle Rufe.
- Goodbye, honey. I don't blame you.
Jesse played fair.
He did everything he promised.
So you gotta keep your part of the bargain
and stick to him, honey,
cos you're the only hope there is for him.
- I'll stick, all right.

- Miss Zee.

Is we got everything?

- I think so, Pinkie.

- Yes, ma'am.

- Goodbye, Uncle Rufe.

- Goodbye, honey.

Let's go.

Come on. Play pony express.

Well, I guess they'll be busy there for a while.

- Darling...

- Oh, Zee.

Oh, darling.

Darling.

Just let me look at you.

- You like the curtains?

- They're just as pretty as they can be.

I made them.

My goodness, Zee. I...

I never expected ever to have
a house as nice as this one.

I made that too.

"God bless our home." That's better
than you can get in a store, Zee.

- That's a mighty pretty frame too.

- Pinkie made that.

- Good work, Pinkie.

- Thank you, Mr Jesse.

It sure is fine, Zee. The whole place.

I'm just as proud of you as I can be.

Giddap.

Hello!

Hello!

- Evening, ma'am.

- Good evening.

Do you know where the Wilsons live?

- About a mile on up the road.

- Thank you, ma'am. Giddap.

- Pack.

- Yes, sir.

- Jesse...

- Pack. We're leaving.

- But it was only a farmer.

- How do you know?

- How is she, Doc?

- She's weak, of course, which is only...
- You're a friend of Mr Howard's, aren't you?
- You might say so.
- Have you any idea where he is?
- He travels a lot.
- Salesman?
- Something like that.

You can tell him from me, any husband who stays away from a wife at a time like this...

I can't say I've got any use for him.

- There's a lot in what you say.
- You can go up, but don't stay long.

Ain't he the dad-blamedest, cutest little cuss that ever...

Now, honey, you mustn't blame Jesse for not getting here.

Maybe he just couldn't get away and, uh...

- It doesn't matter.
- Honey, you shouldn't feel that way about it.

I can't help it. I'm too tired to care.

This is the way it always is.

We live like animals. Scared animals.

We move. We hide.

We don't dare go out.

All day and all night we just sit, scared of a shadow on a window.

Scared of a footstep on a porch.

Scared of a door opening.

And when he's away, it's worse.

All I can think of is, "Is he dead?"

"Is he lying dead in the mud in the woods?"

Maybe he's dead now.

Uncle Rufe, I wanna go home.

You're home, Zee.

This is your home - yours and Jesse's.

I mean home with you. Back to Liberty.

- Will you take me?
- But, honey...

Doggone it, I...

But Jesse promised...

Yes, I know.

And I used to believe him.

But he'd never change.

Jesse'll be an outlaw as long as he lives.

I know it now.
He's wild, Will.
He's like a horse you can't break.
He's crazy with wildness and there's nothing
you or me or him or anybody can do about it.
That's why all last night I wanted to die.
I prayed and prayed that I'd die.
And my baby...
I prayed that he'd die too and end it all.
My darling.
Mommy didn't mean that, honey.
My precious baby.
Mommy didn't mean that, honey.
That's all right, honey.
I'll take you home.
Hi, Pinkie. Zee!
- Mr Jesse.
- Yes?
She's gone.
- Gone? Gone where?
- Her and the baby...
- The baby?
- Yes, sir.
- Was she... Were they all right?
- Yes, sir. They's all right, both of 'em.
But she gone now. The major come
and took 'em away back to Liberty.
This here's a letter she give me
to give to you, sir.
Poor kid.
I tried to get here, Pinkie, but I just couldn't.
They got after me and...
Did you see him?
Mr Jesse, he's the cutest little old thing
I ever did see.
Just a-yellin' and a-hollerin'
so it nearly bust your ears.
I bet he's the loudest-yellin' baby
that ever was born.
- What colour eyes has he got, Pinkie?
- Blue.
Great big old blue eyes, big as a saucer,
lookin' right at you, sir.
- Does he look like Zee?

- Like you.
- No...
- He's the spittin' image of you, Mr Jesse.
- Well, I'll be doggone.
- 'Cepting he's bald.
He's bald as a peeled egg.
But, my goodness, Mr Jesse,
that sure is one cute little old baby.
I'll be doggone.
Just yell and wave his little old arms.
- Doggone.
- Yes, sir. We's all mighty proud of that baby.
Lord, Lord. I guess we'd better go after them,
Pinkie. When did they leave?
- They left Monday.
- On the train?
No, sir. In the major's buggy.
Oh. I don't like that. We'll have
some supper, then we'll go after them.
- But, Mr Jesse...
- Yes?
I don't know if I'd go after 'em right now.
No? Why not?
They got that Mr Wright with them.
- Wright?
- Yes, sir. The police marshal.
He come too.
I see.
Never mind the supper, Pinkie.
We'll start now.
You mean after 'em?
Yes, right now.
What did she say about being unhappy?
It's just like I told you, Mr Jesse.
She say she scared all the time
and I know she cried a lot.
She say she don't know
how she could stand it.
I see.
- I guess I can't blame her.
- That's just what she says.
I guess it was pretty bad for her.
Yes, sir, I guess it was.
Pinkie, I'm not going any further.

You mean you ain't goin' after 'em?
I've changed my mind. She's right.
There ain't any happiness
to be found with me.
If she can find it at all, it's without me.

- Yes, sir.

- Tell her that.

Tell her I won't bother her any more.

If she can be happy now, I'm glad.

Tell her that too.

Yes, sir.

And, Pinkie, tell her...

Yes, sir?

Tell her not to let the baby know
anything about me. I won't mind.

- Roy!

- Yes, sir.

- Take an editorial on dentists!

- Yes, sir.

Paragraph.

If we are ever to have
law and order in the West,
the first thing we got to do
- is take out all the dentists...

- Ding-a-ling! Choo-choo!

Ding-a-ling! Choo-choo!

Get out of the way. Choo-choo!

Help! Help! Save me.

Save my life.

And shoot 'em down like dogs.

Save me!

Stop it, both of you. Stop it!

- I...

- Stop it.

- He's worse than the child.

- But they're great fun.

- How old is he?

- Just five.

You don't say. Mine's going on three.

Wait a minute.

- Here. Can he have a piece?

- Yes.

Say, "Thank you, sir."

- Thank you, sir.

- You're welcome.
- Wonderful child.
- Thank you.
- Are you the editor, sir?
- I am, sir.
- What can I do for you, my friend?
- I want to run this card in your next issue.

"George Remington,
Remington Blueing Company, Philadelphia."

"Now at Dixie Belle Hotel." How much, sir?

I guess about a dollar'll cover it,

Mr Remington.

There you are.

- Thank you, sir.

- And thank you very much. Goodbye.

Goodbye. Roy! Set this...

By the way...

Didn't that fella Jesse James
come from somewheres around here?

He did. Why?

I suppose you're protesting against
this amnesty offer by the governor.

- What amnesty offer?

- Haven't you heard?

Well, sir, it's an outrage.

In Jefferson City a friend of mine -
a banker - told me about it.

The governor has promised amnesty, a clean
pardon, to any member of the James gang
that will kill Jesse.

And that's in addition to the reward.

- Are you sure of that?

- Positive, sir.

But that makes the state a party to murder.

- Exactly what I said.

- Why, the dirty rotten, filthy...

- Thank you, sir. Thank you for the news.

- Not at all, sir. Not at all.

I'll just get it into this week's edition.

- Zee...

- And an editorial!

Please. He might have got it all wrong.

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter to me.

That's all over now.

- Roy, you started that editorial on dentists?

- Yes, sir.

Change it from dentists to governors and finish it like last week's one on horse thieves, except this time it's governors.

Morning.

- Nice day, isn't it?

- I don't wanna buy nothin'.

I'm not selling anything.

You're Mrs Bob Ford, aren't you?

I'm Mrs Ford, but iffen it's about my husband

I don't know anything.

I ain't seed him in months.

He rid off with them James boys

and I ain't seed hair nor hide of him since.

It's not him I was looking for, Mrs Ford.

It's you.

I got this here Liberty paper yesterday and

it's got some news that might interest you.

And here's my card.

That's all.

- Here.

- What is it?

You know I can't read.

What's it say?

Well?

The bank of Northfield, Minnesota,
is the strongest bank in the Northwest.

It's wide open for us.

They've got \$50,000 in gold in the safe.

All we gotta do is walk in with a shovel
and help ourselves.

So that's what we're gonna do.

Well?

Well, as a matter of fact, Jesse...

- Well?

- Well...

What is this anyhow?

For more than a month there's been
something funny going on here. What is it?

Well, to tell you the truth, Jesse,

we don't exactly know

if we like this idea or not.

For one thing,

that's a mighty strong bank at Northfield
and it's a long ways away.

- And for another...

- Go on.

Well, I've been talkin' it over
with some of the boys and...

Well, you're taking chances, Jesse,
that we don't like.

I ain't no coward and you know it.

But some of the things you got us into,
it scared the livin' daylights out of me.

- You're takin' too many chances.

- Shut up! Go on.

- We all know you got your troubles...

- Forget that.

Maybe you don't care
if you get shot full of buckshot or not.
But the way we feel about it...

We got a lot of respect for you, Jesse,
and you know it.

But the way you're goin' on is just like
you was tryin' to commit suicide.

- Just who do you think you are?

- Listen, Jesse...

Go on. Reach.

So you talked things over, did you?

And who are you? The captain of this band?

Who's handling these jobs?

You, me or somebody else?

Well, I'll tell you if you don't know.

It's me. I'm doin' it, see?

And I'll ride up the Capitol steps
if I feel like it.

So you talked it over, huh? Without me.

Well, I don't like it.

And it ain't the way I aim to have things.

If that's the way you want it, I give you
leave now - all of you - to talk it over again.

Now... outside.

Go on. Get out!

- Now, listen here, Jesse.

- Yes, and you too.

You talked it over with them.

Think I need you? Any of you?

You think I can't get a thousand men
to come in with Jesse James?
Well, if you don't, you're crazy.
Now get out!
He acts like he's goin' crazy.
He gets worse every day.
I'll kill him for that if it's my last act.
Wait for me down at the creek.
I wanna talk to him.
Well?
First, Jesse, I want you to understand
I ain't a-scared of you or your guns.
So if you feel like shooting,
you just start drawing.
- I'll start drawing too.
- Is that what you came back to tell me?
No, that's to clear your conscience
if you get ornery.
I'll remember.
What I come back to tell you was,
you're a skunk.
Wanna draw?
Go on.
You're mean, Jesse.
You're gettin' meaner every day.
I don't know if you're goin' crazy,
but sometimes it looks like it.
Ever since you come back from St Joe
it's been lookin' like it.
There ain't enough money in the world
to take the chances you've made us take
the last year or two.
And you wouldn't be slappin' an old friend
like Tom, and him a slow draw,
if you was in your right mind.
So you're either crazy or you're a skunk.
Go on. Draw if you feel like it.
You go on.
You're my brother, Jesse, my kid brother,
and I reckon I love you.
But it ain't proving anything to let you
get my head blowed off - or your own.
I know how you feel about
what happened after the baby was born.

And I know you don't like
to get talked to this way.
But it's either this or see you
get blammed right outta your pants.
Somebody had to tell you
before it was too late.
So what do you figure
you wanna do about it?
I'm sorry, Frank.
Want me to fetch 'em back?
- Can you?
- Sure I can.
Frank...
Much obliged.
You're welcome, kid.
Jesse.
- Bob?
- It's me.
Come in.
- Where's everybody?
- They'll be back after a while.
- What's the matter with you?
- Nothing.
Sit down.
Nothing's the matter.
- I've been to see my wife.
- I know.
- Hi, Bob.
- Hi, fellas.
Hi, Bob.
- I'm sorry.
- It's all right, Jesse. I understand.
- Northfield's all right with us.
- Good. We'll get going at daylight.
Northfield's 450 miles from here.
We'll make it by Friday.
We'll hole up outside of town
and jump the bank about noon on Saturday.
If it's as rich as they say it is,
why, maybe we can all retire then.
Sound all right to everyone?
That's fine. Very fine.
- Thank you.
- You're welcome.

- Mr Layworth?

- Over there, sir.

Thank you.

Come in.

- Mr Layworth?

- Yes.

My card.

I'm glad to meet you, Mr Runyan.

- What can I do for you?

- First, read this.

- What does it mean?

- It's the James gang.

- They're on their way here.

- Here?

The James gang?

- The James gang! To rob my bank?

- That's it.

Great thunderin' hallelujah!

That's ruin. They'll take everything.

- I've got \$50,000.

- Easy, easy.

There's no danger. Don't you see?

- I'm here.

- But...

- Why, Cousin Bushrod.

- Well, if it ain't Cousin Beauregard.

- Howdy, Cousin. How are you?

- Well, I'll be doggone.

I ain't seen you in a coon's age.

Come in the bank. I gotta change some money. How's Aunt Mary Lou and the twins?

Change this for me, Colonel?

I'll get the money from the safe.

Will you wait, please?

- Holy smoke.

- Come on.

- Come on, Tom.

- It's no use.

Come on, Jesse.

We gotta keep goin', son. Hold on.

Hold tight, Jesse,

cos there's only one way outta here.

Are you holdin' on?

Giddap!

Jesse.

Jesse.

Hurry up, boys. Hurry up.

He's in here somewhere.

"Of the eight bandits who attempted the raid on the Northfield bank, two are dead and four are prisoners, but of the two leaders there is less definite news."

"Reports yesterday indicated that Frank James had made good his escape, but of Jesse James there is no news at all."

"The belief is that he was drowned, but if he escaped he is thought to be badly wounded and unable to travel far." The dad-blasted, goldinged city police.

- Roy!

- Yes, sir?

I'm gonna write me an editorial...

If he escaped...

- You got to stop it, Zee. You've got to.

- I know it.

He ain't the Jesse you knew and loved.

That fella's gone a long time ago.

I could have liked him too, but not this bad fella.

This one I could...

Well, if I ever come on him again...

If he escaped...

Can't you understand, Zee, he's no good?

It's like I told you.

Once you let yourself go, you can't stop.

He ain't a knight any more, fighting a bad railroad. He's a wild animal.

You can't love him. Nobody can.

Why, everybody that liked him, he's done wrong to.

And with his men gone, he hasn't a friend left.

Not a friend in the world.

That's right too, isn't it?

Not a friend in the world.

Hey, you.

You. We're here.

Thank you.

- Keep your mouth shut.
- Thank you very kindly.
- Do you think you can make it?
- Yeah.
- Do you need some help?
- No, I'm all right. You go ahead.

Giddap.

My poor, poor darling.

My poor, hurt darling.

Zee. Is it really you?

I knew if you could you'd come here.

That's why I came.

I knew you'd come.

What's left of me.

But I'll get you well.

Wait.

Jesse. Hurry, Pinkie, hurry.

Well, I'll be doggone.

It's Daddy, dear.

My son.

- Mommy.
- Daddy's been hurt, dear, but he'll be all right.

Well, I'll be doggone.

Doggone.

Don't you think he's big for five?

Does he know anything about me yet?

No. Not yet.

Oh, Zee...

Is it too late?

Could we still go away?

To California?

No, it isn't too late.

We'll go just as soon as you get well.

Pinkie's gone to get the doctor now.

Jesse, I do love you so.

Jesse. You mustn't do that.

- Go on, I'm all right.
- But Pinkie'll take care of all that, darling.

Oh, Zee.

- Kinda happy, ain't you?
- Aren't you?

Jesse, if we were just
leaving today, this very hour.

- Nothing's gonna stop us, honey.

- I hope not.

But I'm scared, Jesse. I'll be scared every second until we're on our way.

Maybe until we get to California.

Well, we won't have any money, remember.

- That money I hid in the hills...

- I don't want you to talk about that any more.

We'll make money.

Money we won't be ashamed of.

- Well, I wasn't ashamed...

- Now, stop it, I say.

Mr Howard.

- Yes?

- There's two gentlemen to see you, sir.

- What do they want?

- You knows them, sir.

All right.

He's human, ain't he?

- Well, sir. Hello, Bob. How are you?

- All right, I reckon. How are you, Jesse?

I'm toting some lead inside me, but it doesn't bother me any.

- This here's my brother, Charlie.

- Hello, Charlie.

- Pinkie. Some coffee.

- Yes, sir.

Sit down, Bob.

- You look like you've come a long way.

- It's hot.

I escaped. They couldn't hold me.

Me and two fellas you don't know jumped over a wall.

How'd you know where I was?

We seen Frank. He sent us.

That's what we come to see you about.

How's Frank? Where is he?

He's fine. He's up in the hills.

He's aiming to come down pretty soon.

That's what he wanted us to see you about.

Jesse!

- Are you going to be long?

- You remember Bob Ford, honey.

- That's his brother, Charlie.

- Howdy, Miss Zee.
- Are you going to be long?
- Stop your frettin'. I'll be up in just a minute.
Frank wanted us to tell you that if you feel strong enough he wants you to meet him.
It's the Platte bank.
No. I'm going to California.
Frank's mighty anxious.
- Sorry. My mind's made up.
- There ain't even a marshal in the town.
There's a farm payroll on the 7th.
Frank's got three men already.
He don't figure it'll be any trouble at all.
Just walk in and take it.
No.
If you got plenty of money to start in California, you don't need to think about it.
But if you was to need a bankroll, why...
I haven't got much money.
Hardly any money at all.
What else did Frank say?
He says it's the easiest job you ever seen.
He says it'll only take a day to look it over.
Then if you're set on going to the coast you got some money.
- Sure could use some money.
- This is just like picking it up off the ground.
- When did he want to meet me?
- Right away.
Daddy, Daddy! I wanna come in.
- I wanna come in.
- He can't go in. He'll spoil our game.
Come on in, but stop that hollering.
Frank figures we oughta clear about two thousand apiece.
Sure could use \$2,000.
Daddy, Daddy!
Those kids. Just a minute.
- Excuse me, Mr James.
- Howard.
Are you gonna walk around outside with them guns?
You're right.
- We didn't hurt him, Mr Howard.

- We just killed him. That's the game.
He's little. You shouldn't play so rough.

- But that's the way you play outlaw.

- Jesse James has got to die.
I'll die, but they stuck me with sticks.
Just shoot me, don't stick me.
Bang, bang, bang!

- You're Jesse James. You're dead.

- I'm dead.
Go home, boys.
Get him ready.
We're catching the afternoon train.
Pinkie can follow with
whatever we can't carry.
That suit you?
Oh, thank goodness, Jesse.
I'm sorry, Bob. Tell Frank
I'll write to him from California.

- You mean you ain't coming with us?

- That's it.
What'll Frank say?
Can't make much difference what he says.
I ain't going to him.
Goodbye, Charlie.
Goodbye, Bob. I'm sorry you came
all the way up here for nothing.

- What'll we tell Frank?

- Tell him to join me while the joining's good.
Oh, Mr Howard, we've got to run

- For we're going to California
- With a banjo on our knee
Oh, Zee.

- Honey, what can I do to help?

- Jesse, that.
You bet your life. Zee...
Cos we're going to California
on the train this afternoon
Jesse!
Pinkie!
Oh, Jesse...
Oh, Jesse...
There ain't no question about it.
Jesse was an outlaw. A bandit. A criminal.
Even those that loved him

ain't got no answer to that.
But we ain't ashamed of him.
I don't know why, but I don't think
even America is ashamed of Jesse James.
Maybe it's because he was bold and lawless,
like we all of us like to be sometimes.
Maybe it's because we understand a little
that he wasn't altogether to blame
for what his times made him.
Maybe it's because for ten years
he licked the tar out of five states.
Or maybe it's because he was so good
at what he was doin'. I don't know.
All I do know is he was one of
the doggonedest, goldingedest,
dad-blamedest buckaroos
that ever rode across
these United States of America.
"In loving remembrance, Jesse W James."
"Died April 3, 1882,
aged 34 years, 6 months, 28 days."
"Murdered by a traitor and coward
whose name is not worthy to appear here."