

Second Coming  
by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. MUDDY IMPLEMENT ROAD - NEAR DARK

A 30-something man (who we will come to know as JEFF) dressed in a white shirt, slacks and street shoes lies face up in a mud puddle, eyes closed.

It is raining lightly.

Slowly, he opens his eyes, wipes his face with his hand. He attempts to prop himself up on his elbow. It slips, he falls back in the puddle. Carefully, he struggles to his feet, looks about to get his bearings, hobbles up the dirt road.

EXT. RURAL AREA - DARK

Shaking with cold, the man stops, sees his own breath, and rubs himself vigorously up and down the arms.

He hobbles faster. It is raining harder now.

Hearing unintelligible VOICES ahead, he instinctively zeros in on the sound. Moments later the man nearly stumbles down an unseen creek bank. He catches himself, calls out.

JEFF

Hello?

(listens)

Hello? Anyone there?

A small dog GROWLS a warning. He peers into the darkness.

A voice (ARTY) calls back.

ARTY (O.S.)

Who's there? Show yourself. I've got a gun here and I'm not afraid to use it. Speak up now...you hear me?

The man calls back, peering intently toward the unseen voice.

JEFF

Don't shoot. I'm unarmed. Hurt...an accident. Up the road.

ARTY (O.S.)

Up the road? Hell, there ain't no road. Git over here and show yourself.

The man feels for the bank's edge, lowers himself, half-sliding down the wet embankment.

Through the rain he sees: a cave-like opening under the creek bank. A small fire sputters in the entrance. An elderly bearded man (ARTY) and his small terrier-type dog, FLINT, stare back.

INT. THE CAVE - SAME

Arty, straining to see beyond the firelight, studies the man shivering in the rain.

The man is conspicuously out-of-place by his clothing. He holds his hand above his brow, shading his eyes against the firelight.

ARTY

Alright son, crawl on in here before you collapse. I ain't got nothin' worth stealin' 'cept Flint here. And, he'd bite you anyway.

The man hobbles willingly toward the fire.

INT. CAVE - MINUTES LATER

Soaking wet and shivering the man crawls into the cave, inching past the fire and the wary dog. He turns to face Arty.

Arty (rascally, curmudgeon-type in well-worn coveralls) returns the man's gaze for several moments without speaking.

Suddenly, he CACKLES and shakes his head in disbelief.

ARTY

Road my ass. Are you looney or what? Ain't no road anywhere round here.

JEFF

Don't know.

(beat)

Don't remember...anything...nothing at all. Maybe an accident.

ARTY

Well now don't that beat all. You ain't bleedin'. Anything broke? Where's your car?

JEFF

I...I don't know. I mean I don't think so.

ARTY

Well, you're wet enough. What about a name? You got a name?

Arty looks searchingly at the man who slowly shakes his head.

JEFF

Sorry. No...No. Don't know.

ARTY

You got to have a name. If'en for no other reason... so's I can talk to you.

JEFF

I...I guess... just don't know.

Arty pokes the fire with a long stick.

ARTY

How about JEFF? That's my favorite president-Jefferson, Thomas Jefferson. You like Jeff?

JEFF

Ok. Sure, that's OK by me...I guess.

ARTY

Good. Now, Jeff, if you can remember whether you're hungry or not I've got some beans back there. Hand me one and I'll open it.

(beat)

You got to heat it up for yourself, though. This ain't no resort I'm runnin' here.

JEFF

(mumbles)

Thanks.

Jeff rummages around, finds a small cache of tin cans.

ARTY

I hear lots of folks don't care for beans.Imagine that.

JEFF

Umph.

ARTY

But you can live a long time on beans if you have to.

JEFF

(silence)

ARTY

Did you know most dogs won't eat beans? But don't tell Flint that. Here, hand me that can and get yourself warmed up.

Jeff hands Arty a can which he opens with his pocket knife.

ARTY (CONT'D)

Name's Arthur, by the way. Most of my friends, of which I ain't got none, call me Arty. Wife used to call me Art. but that's a whole 'nother story.

Jeff warms his hands over the little fire, rubbing his arms and coughing at the smoke.

JEFF

Thanks Arty. Hope I can... stop shaking long enough to... eat it.

ARTY

Don't have another spoon. Wasn't expectin' guests you know.

Jeff hungrily accepts the opened can and begins scooping out the contents with his fingers.

JEFF

That's OK. I'm very grateful. Believe me. Umm..thank you.

Jeff eats in silence while Arty studies him across the fire.

ARTY

Well, you ain't from around here. That's for sure.

JEFF

Why...why do you say that?

ARTY

Look at yer clothes, son. They ain't exactly farm duds.

Jeff looks down at his mud-covered white dress shirt, dress pants and street shoes.

JEFF

See what you mean.

Jeff continues eating, SLURPING the beans off his fingers.

ARTY

Now me and Flint here's a pair.  
After the wife died, I upped 'n  
sold my place. Yep. Socked a few  
bucks away and just started  
travelin' around. See myself some  
country.

As Arty reminisces, Jeff lies against the back of the  
cave, falls asleep.

Arty, sees Jeff's out like a light. He throws away the empty  
bean can and pulls a blanket over him. Jeff blinks once or  
twice and is gone.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - MORNING

The SHERIFF, hunched down at the cave entrance, sips coffee  
and talks to Arty.

ARTY

What's this guy done, anyway Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Can't say. We've just been told to  
keep a lookout for some city fellar  
that's gone missing. Little Rock  
authorities think he might be in  
this area.

The Sheriff tries to see back in the cave, but Arty blocks  
his view.