

UNDER THE WILLOW

by

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A true story.

EXT. ILLINOIS - WOODS - PATH - NIGHT (SUMMER 1861)

Pious D.L. MOODY swipes a whiskey bottle from drunken FRED, 21, and hands him a Bible. Fred juggles it like a hot potato.

D.L. MOODY
Open it now and then, cousin, you
just might hear the voice of God.

Fred stops. Opens the Bible. Cups his ear. Actual crickets.

EXT. WOODS - GROVE - DAY

REV. EDDY wipes his brow, looks out at a huge open-air stage.

EXT. WOODS - RIVERSIDE WILLOW TREE - DAY

A fly buzzes. Fred snorts awake. He almost falls from the high branch where he's sprawled. He holds his hungover head.

REV. EDDY (O.S.)
Listen to the voice of God.

Startled, Fred looks around.

REV. EDDY (O.S.)
Remove the blinders of your
youthful follies...

Through blurry eyes, Fred sees Rev. Eddy rehearse a sermon below. Fred sighs, puts his face in his hands. He's stuck.

LATER

Impassioned, Rev. Eddy wraps up his sermon, tears streaming.

REV. EDDY
May this day be the first day to
number you among God's children.

Above, Fred lifts his face... He wipes away genuine tears.

REV. EDDY
Who will be first to take the step?

Fred drops from the tree branches, lands behind the reverend.

FRED
I will. Number me among them.

Shocked, Rev. Eddy turns to face Fred. Seeing that Fred is sincere, he smiles and embraces the young man.

FADE OUT.