

# Part Two

In "Blood Meridian," Part Two begins by detailing the desolate and harsh existence of the protagonist, known as the kid. Days pass in a bleak routine of begging and theft, as he navigates an empty land that seems counterfeit and hostile. Leaving behind the pinewood country, he travels under a star-filled sky, feeling a cold wind that gnashes through the night. He keeps away from the king's road, anxious about encountering people. Among the prairie wolves' cries, he seeks respite in a grassy draw, where a hobbled mule stands watch.

As morning comes, the sun's steel hue casts a long shadow before the kid. His ragged attire, made from dried leaves, reflects a life spent in isolation. That evening, he spots smoke rising from the hills and approaches an old hermit living in a sod dwelling, who appears half-mad, with red-rimmed eyes. The kid asks for water, desperately hoping for some kindness. Inside, the hut is dark and earthy, featuring only a small fire and a bucket of water that turns out to be salty and sulfurous.

Attempts to obtain water for his mule lead to an uncomfortable exchange between the kid and the hermit. The hermit refuses to share any additional containers for watering the mule, which prompts the kid to leave in search of a well. Ultimately, he finds a makeshift well, draws water, and returns, thanking the hermit, who suggests he stay due to an approaching storm. The kid, though skeptical, complies, setting up for the night.

Through their conversation, the hermit reveals a sordid past as a slaver. He talks about violence and greed, expressing his disdain for humanity's darker sides, which the kid listens to with detached incredulity. As a storm approaches, they share a meager meal while reflecting on the world's inherent cruelty. Eventually, the kid falls asleep but awakens to find the hermit gone.

Continuing his journey, the kid notices a dust cloud approaching and eventually encounters a group of cattle herders traveling towards Louisiana. They share stories of hardships on the trail and the dangers they face, hinting at the lawlessness of the land. The kid, still reeling from his previous experiences, contemplates the possibility of traveling to Bexar, interacting with the rough-around-the-edges crowd, and grappling with his uncertain fate moving forward.