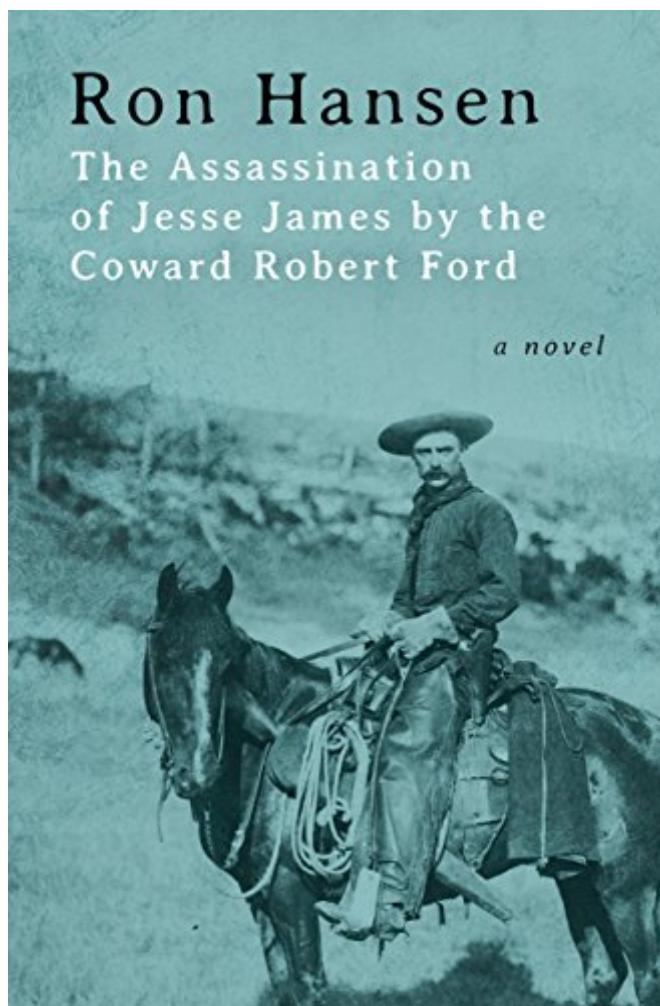


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The Assassination Of Jesse James By The Coward Robert Ford: A Novel (P.S.)



Synopsis

A powerful novel of the infamous Western outlaw and his killer: "The best blend of fiction and history I've read in a long while" (John Irving). By age thirty-four, Jesse James was already one of the most notorious and admired men in America. Bank robber, train bandit, gang leader, killer, and beloved son of Missouri, James' many epithets live on in newspapers and novels alike. As his celebrity was reaching its apex, James met Robert Ford, the brother of a James gang member, "an awkward, antihero-worshipping twenty-year-old with stars in his eyes. The young man's fascination with the legend borders on jealous obsession: While Ford wants to ride alongside James as his most-trusted confidant, sharing his spotlight is not enough. As a bond forms between the two men, Ford realizes that the only way he'll ever be as powerful as his idol is to become him; he must kill James and take his mantle." In the striking novel that inspired the film of the same name starring Brad Pitt and Casey Affleck, bestselling author Ron Hansen retells a classic Wild West story that has long captured the nation's imagination, and breathes new life into the final days and ignoble death of an iconic American man.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Hansen's research into Jesse James's last years and further into Robert Ford's last years after Jesse's assassination are (in my opinion) very realistic. It is written both as a history book and a novel. Where facts clearly play out in the actions of this closely knit group, since they are made up of cousins/long time friends, Mr. Hansen lays out the facts. At other times, when the facts aren't found in newsprint or journals, narration and possible actions on the part of the people involved are inserted to carry over to the next factual occurrence. This book was very enjoyable to read. Even though I knew the outcome, getting there was a non-stop read.

If you enjoy the tales of the Old West, this book is for you. The book is written in such a manner that you can feel the heat of the summer sun or the biting cold of the winter. I am not a fan of western lore, I do not even watch western movies, but I decided to take a chance on this book. I was richly rewarded for the hours that I spent reading the book. Highly recommend.

I'd anticipated reading Ron Hansen's book, *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* for a while before I took the plunge. I'd expected it to captivate me as I really enjoy a good western, but somehow I found myself in a reading bog with this and couldn't force myself to read more than a few pages a day. Hansen can certainly captivate the feel of the west and his language is authentic as shown by the following passage: "Then the gang was running and bounding and skidding down the embankments. Jesse watched as Bob Ford slid down like a debutante in petticoats, his left hand snatching at weeds and roots and his right unveiled his eyes enough to peek around at the commotion. Men were rushing alongside the train and levering their rifles and slouching about in a manner they fancied was ghoulish and frightening. Frank James was on the south side of the train with rifle slack in his arms, his cardigan sweater closed with a fist, instructing everybody. Steam trickled from the locomotive tracks and spirited in the breeze, and the engine huffed "church" and once again "church" and then sighed with embering fire as Jesse hiked onto a cab step and brandished his cocked revolver." One of my problems was in reading this book, I realized that while Jesse James may have been charismatic he was by no means a nice man. Why should this surprise me? He robbed and pillage people and was a known murderer. Jesse had become something of a folk hero with a kind of Western Robin Hood mythology. Hansen did well to demystify this and I genuinely appreciate that. I'm not one who believes in treating murderers as heroes. For those who enjoy westerns I recommend this book, I'm not sure of the appeal for others.

Certain parts of this book were very interesting -- I especially enjoyed learning a little about Jesse James and his band of cohorts in the James-Younger gang. Undoubtedly, he is a significant historical figure and this book will provide some groundwork for what made him a household name. The book did seem to drag at times though, and I did find myself losing some interest in Robert Ford's portrayal. Nonetheless, I think this book would be of interest to anyone interested in historical fiction.

The movie did this book some justice, but the read is undeniably better. Ron Hansen does such an amazing job at creating such deep development in this historical fiction piece. At times, the pace can be slow, but it is still hard to put the book down. This book gave me an all new perspective of not only Jesse James, but of Robert and Charlie Ford. This book is worth your time and money.

I found the story entertaining as their lives were not that much different from ours. Ford was a complex person. So was Jesse. The writing really gave a vivid portrayal of the events.

This is a great book, not just for the history buffs; but for anyone remotely interested in James. Details so much of the man down to his personality traits and for me it was a great read. Couldn't put it down. Anyone whose seen the Brad Pitt adaptation it is absolutely worth picking up the book.

One of my favorite books from a language/style perspective, though can, at times, move a little slowly. Other than that, highly recommended!

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