

Honey Island

written by

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TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY LOUISIANA:

EXT. BAYOU - DUSK

Dusk. Skeletal trees reach toward the sky from murky swamp water. Small clumps of land are stranded within. Natural sounds can be heard, as quiet ambience. A lone barge is moored beside one of islands.

GROUSE is groggily removing a bag from the barge. From the bag, he takes out a hip flask, taking a drink from it and letting out a low growl of satisfaction as he puts it back. He adjusts his hat and begins to trudge toward the treeline, with the light clink of his spurs breaking through the ambience.

GROUSE (V.O.)

Letiche. It was a name I'd never heard before, but surely is one I won't forget.

A branch snaps beneath Grouse's boot as he enters the treeline, alarming nearby birds which flee into the sky, squawking until their cries are out of earshot. Grouse pauses and glances up as this happens, but soon after lets out a perturbed grunt and continues.

GROUSE (V.O.)

I'd never paid much mind to what I'd heard about him. Sounded to me like a myth, a boogeyman the Indians had invented to scare their young 'uns into playing nice.

Grouse takes a large step over a puddle of swamp water. He takes a few steps before hearing a light rustle. His grip loosens on the bag as his hand darts toward his holster. He exhales sharply.

GROUSE (V.O.)

As far as I was concerned, all I'd find out here was that boy, or what was left of him in the jaws of a gator.

Grouse scans the area around him, looking for the source of the rustle. He is trying, but clearly failing, to keep his cool, as his eyes dart around, their vision clouded by darkness and aged tree trunks.

GROUSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All of this had been in my brain since I left.

(MORE)

GROUSE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So why was my heart chugging like
it was about stop in at St Tammany
station?

EXT. BAYOU CLEARING - NIGHT

A dark sky and darker swamp water surround a small, tree-encompassed clearing.

Grouse sits on a log, resting. His bag rests beside his leg. He is drinking from his hip flask.

His eyes are caught by movement in the treeline. He darts up into a crouch, his left hand still clutching his hip flask, his right clutching the grip of his revolver. His breathing slows and amplifies as nondescript rustling from the treeline gets louder and louder. Grouse slowly puts his flask back in the bag, eyes locked on the direction the rustling appears to be coming from the entire time.

A snuffle is heard as a dishevelled boar emerges from the trees, accompanied by slight rustling.

Grouse exhales, perturbed. He stands up straighter, eyeing the boar as he does. Slowly, he pulls his revolver from its holster and levels it at the boar's head, as if to execute it. The boar ignores him completely. Grouse slowly pushes down the hammer of his revolver, tracing the boar's brain with its barrel. After a few seconds of internal debate, he reservedly lowers his weapon, looking down to replace it in his holster.

As he looks back up, he catches sight of the boar again. In its mouth is what appears to part of a human hand, bloody and raw.

Grouse's eyes widen. He breathes sharply.

The boar nonchalantly wanders back into the tree, hand in mouth. Grouse's confounded gaze follows it, and lingers on the treeline for a few seconds after the boar has entered it.