

BLACK LUCK HOLLOW,
KENTUCKY, 1892.

I KNEW HOW
TO KILL BEFORE
I KNEW HOW
TO KISS.

I S'POSE THAT WAS
THE CASE FOR MOST
FOLKS GROWING UP
IN THE HOLLERS.

THE
ISOLATION
ALWAYS MADE
DEATH A
LITTLE MORE
LIKELY THAN
LOVE.

YIP
YIP
YIP

I WAS
SEVEN
WHEN HE
AND I
FIRST MET.



OUR
COONHOUND,
BESSIE, HAD
GOT KNOCKED
UP BY A
COVOTE. SIX
PUPS.

"GOT TOO
MANY MOUTHS
TO FEED AS IS.
CAN'T BE
MAKING ROOM
FOR MORE,"
WAS MY
FATHER'S FIRST
REACTION.



"SIDES, ONLY
THINGS COME FROM
A COVOTE AND A
DOG IS WILD AND
TROUBLE. AIN'T NO
ONE GOT USE FOR
NEITHER."



SO, HE SENT
ME TO THE
POND, DEATH
IN HAND.

"LISTEN UP GOOD,
IRIS GENTRY--"

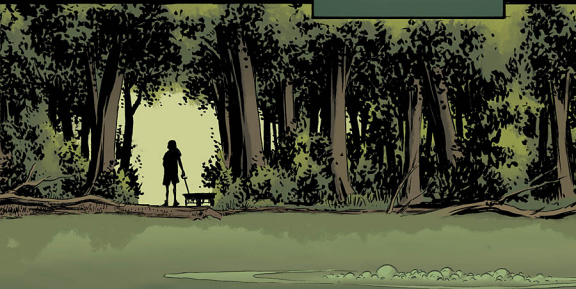


"DON'T LOOK IN
THE SACK. IT'LL
MAKE IT EASIER.

"THIS AIN'T ABOUT
CRUELTY--"



"...IT'S ABOUT
SURVIVAL."



AL ANBAR,
IRAQ,
2004.

THE DARK & BLOODY

PART ONE: DEATH AND THE SLOW BOOGIE

TWELVE YEARS LATER, IN A DESERT I CAN'T PRONOUNCE, IN A WAR WHERE THE ENEMY HAS NO UNIFORM, I UNDERSTAND IT MORE THAN I DID AT SEVEN--

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THE DARK & BLOODY CREATED BY ALDRIDGE & GODLEWSKI



--AS A GOSPEL TO
GET YOU THROUGH.



THREE
DEAD DUE
TO AN I.E.D.
FOUR CIVILIAN
CASUALTIES.

HOLD
POSITION.

UNDER-
STOOD.



WHY DO
YOU DO THAT,
GENTRY? DRAW
A CROSS?

THEY
AIN'T SOLDIERS,
JUST UNLUCKY.
THEY DESERVE
GOD'S GRACE AS
MUCH AS WE DO,
BANISTER.



AND THEY DID. MOST
OF THESE FOLKS DIDN'T
GIVE A DAMN ABOUT
HUSSEIN OR US.

YOU THINK THAT
HAJJI [REDACTED] GIVES
A [REDACTED] ABOUT YOUR GOD'S
GRACE, GENTRY?

HE WANTED
YOU DEAD, JUST LIKE ALL
THESE OTHER ALI BABA
[REDACTED]

HELL,
THEY DON'T EVEN
BELIEVE IN THE SAME
DAMN GOD AS YOU,
DUMBASS.

BUT IT'S A
GOD, AND THAT'S
CLOSER THAN MOST,
FOSTER.

WE WERE ALL THE SAME TO THEM--
JUST HANDS READY TO SCOOP THEM
UP AND TOSS THEM IN THE POND.

WELL, WHOEVER
THE [REDACTED] THEIR GOD IS
BETTER BE ON HIGH ALERT,
'CUZ A FEW OF THEM ARE
HEADIN' UP HIS WAY.



BLACK LICK HOLLOW,
KENTUCKY. THE HERE
AND NOW.

I'VE BEEN OUTTA
THE WAR FOR A
FEW YEARS.

THOUGH SOME OF
IT STILL SITS THERE,
IN MY HEAD.

FLICKERS AND
FLASHES.



SO I STILL THINK
ABOUT SURVIVING--

--ABOUT
DROWNING.

ABOUT KILLING
AND DEATH'S
SLOW BOOGIE.

G' DAMN,
IRIS,
HOW
LONG THIS
GONNA
TAKE?



DEPENDS,
YOU BOYS
WANNA **GET
DRUNK**
OR GO
BLIND?

I JUST
WANT TO GET
THE HELL OUT
OF HERE.

ONLY
TAKES EIGHTY
BUCKS.



■ FIRE, DISABILITY
AIN'T PAYING ENOUGH TO
KEEP LIVIN' LIKE THIS.

DAMN **DRY**
COUNTY.

STILL
CHEAPER
THAN OXY,
THOUGH.

AIN'T
THAT THE
LORD'S
TRUTH.

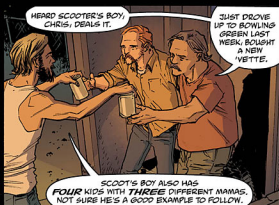


THAT'S
WHAT YOU
NEED TO
BE IN ON,
IRIS.

WHAT'S
THAT?

OXYCONTIN.
THAT'S WHERE THE
MONEY IS.

JUNE
BUG AIN'T
WRONG.



HEARD **SCOOTER'S** BOY,
CHRIS, DEALS IT.

JUST DROVE
UP TO BOWLING
GREEN LAST
WEEK, BOUGHT
A NEW 'VETTE.

SCOOTER'S BOY ALSO HAS
FOUR KIDS WITH **THREE** DIFFERENT MAMAS.
NOT SURE HE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW.



'SIDES, YOU BOYS
KNOW I HATE THAT
KINDA ■ METH,
OXY, ALL THAT
ARTIFICIAL
STUFF.

THAT
THERE IS
TRADITION.
IT'S THE
LAND, THE
PEOPLE.

SUMTHIN'
TO BE KEPT
ALIVE.



OXY'S
JUST
DEATH,
POISON
CREEPING
IN FROM THE
OUTSIDE,
CHIPPIN'
AWAY WHO
WE ARE.

DYNAMITE
TO OUR COAL.



AFTER THE WAR, I CAME BACK TO KENTUCKY.

JUST SAVIN', GOT A NEW BABY COMIN', MILKING ME AND BUS EVERY SUNDAY AIN'T GONNA STRETCH FAR.

WE'LL MAKE DO. ALWAYS HAVE.



I'M NOT SURE I WAS EVER MEANT FOR ANYWHERE ELSE. THE DESERT TAUGHT ME THAT. WAR.

THOSE FLICKERS AND FLASHES? THE RANDOM FIRECRACKER THAT MAKES YOU ALMOST PISS YOUR PANTS?

THE HILLS, THE WOODS, MAKE ALL THAT EASIER TO HIDE FROM.

LOVE DON'T HURT MUCH NEITHER.



THOSE GONE YET?