

DWELLING IN THE WOODS

Written by

Kat Pia Davila

EXT. WOODS - DAY

ROB WELLS (40's) dressed in camouflage and an orange vest, sits in a tree stand peering through a rangefinder.

He scans the horizon, spotting a FAMILY OF DEER grazing behind the thicket.

The herd moves quietly past slivers of trees and into a clearing, vulnerable now in the open space.

Rob exchanges his rangefinder for his rifle, careful not to make a sound.

He zeroes in on the large brown STAG through his scope, target locked, finger on the trigger.

The Stag perks its head, sensing a threat when -- CRACK. A BRANCH snaps in the distance, startling the herd.

Before Rob can process it, they're gone.

Flustered, he scans the ground below him for the disturbance.

Nothing.

He sweeps the tree line behind him, squinting, when he finally sees it--

THE WHITE DEER in the distance, standing alone and unmoved. There's something chilling about it. The way it watches Rob with its dark, unblinking eyes.

Another branch CRACKS, distorting his focus, but again its too late--

The deer disappears, a blur of white bounding deeper into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Rob follows a creature-made trail near a stream, his rifle at ready.

He notices a strange wooden barrier up ahead, some sort of fence warped from years of exposure.

Treading closer, Rob spots the HOOF-PRINTS in the muddy ground, bends down to examine them.

The prints are fresh, leading up to the barrier.

Rob notices the worn-out SIGN nailed onto a plank of wood reading: DANGER. PRIVATE PROPERTY.

A beat.

Rob glances beyond the barrier, sees the steep slope beyond it leading down to an even denser, darker woods.

Uneasy, he heads back.

EXT. WOODS - DIRT ROAD - LATER

Rob arrives at his truck empty handed.

He loads his gear into the bed, finally notices Arlee Moses (30's) stepping out his vehicle.

ARLEE

Hey Rob! Any luck today?

ROB

No sir. Dry as a bone. You?

Arlee approaches Rob.

ARLEE

Same. Saw a couple small bucks, nothin' worth it. Seems they've all moved East. It's strange really.

ROB

Yeah, I dunno.

A beat.

ROB (CONT'D)

I did see this doe, she was all white.

ARLEE

White? Was it a piebald?

ROB

No, she just had this pure white coat. Big for a female. She was gone before I could even get to my rifle --

Arlee pauses, a look of concern growing over his face.

ROB (CONT'D)
Figured I'd come back out tomorrow,
see if I can find her--

ARLEE
You know its bad luck to kill a
white deer right?

Rob chuckles, amused.

ROB
Or good luck. Depending on how you
look at it.

ARLEE
I've heard some pretty bad stories.

ROB
I'll take my chances.

ARLEE
Just be careful out there.
Specially round' these parts.

ROB
Always.

ARLEE
By the way, couple of us are goin'
to the pub tonight, grabbin' some
drinks if you wanna join.

ROB
No thanks, nothin' good for me in
the city.

ARLEE
Depends on how you look at it.

INT. CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rob sits in bed in the dark, staring at the DEER HEAD mounted
on the far wall.

A breeze grazes through the open window, bringing with it the
chirp of critters waking in the night.

Rob cant seem to break his gaze from the mount, the darkness
intensifying its deep BLACK EYES into dreadful pits.

Suddenly, the chirping stops, followed by a strange, hollow
quiet.

Uneasy, Rob gets out of bed and heads to the --

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

On the deck, Rob lights a cigarette, the amber porch light revealing a stretch of grass separating the home from the edge of the woods.

He scans the wall of trees and the darkness behind it, sensing something in the void.

Rob perks his ears at the sound of leaves crunching -- soft footsteps approaching closer and closer--

-- Rounding one side of the woods to the next in quick succession.

He squints for a closer look, at the small shadow of movement when -- HONK HONK!

A car horn blares from the front of the house, breaking his focus.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Rob!

EXT. CABIN - FRONT PORCH

A sleek SUV sits idled in the driveway.

LAUREN HOBBS (40'S), a modern woman contrasted by the rugged terrain, stands outside the vehicle, one arm at the horn.

NOLAN (6), her son, exits from the back seat.

LAUREN

Helloooo?

Another honk.

Rob appears on the driveway, still pulling over his coat.

NOLAN

Dad!

Nolan sprints to Rob, leaping in for a hug.

ROB

Hey kid! Do I know you?

NOLAN

I'm Nolan, your son remember?