

MOONSHINE

Written by

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EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A forest stretches through the 1920s rural, Georgia mountains. An occluded fire is barely visible on the hill.

Down the hill from the fire, JAKE SAWSBY, late teens, stands guard in a wooded area in the mountainous hills. He holds a shotgun and rubs his arms to ward off a chill.

JOSH, a moonshiner in his 40s, walks up to Jake from behind.

JOSH

Cold as a witch's titty, eh Jake?

Jake whips his head around to see who is behind him.

JAKE

Oh, yessir. It's not so bad, though. How is it at the still?

Josh grins and passes Jake a jar of moonshine.

JOSH

Good. We're finally distilling. In a few hours we'll have all that shine in jars for dis-trib-ution. Then we can move the still.

Jake takes a swig of the jar. He coughs and wipes his mouth.

JAKE

Move the still?

JOSH

Yeah, boss is worried. Seems bureau boys are in the hills. He wants to set up shop elsewhere until they wander away.

Josh takes the jar back from Jake and takes a quick drink before screwing the lid back on.

JOSH (CONT'D)

If that weren't bad enough, the varmints is pro-test-ing our in-cur-sion.

JAKE

Animal attacks?

JOSH

Yeah, couple guys turned up dead across the valley.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

The morning crew got there to relieve them and found blood and a blown still. Probably were doing something dumb like cooking meat. Animals get hungry in the cold and scents carry out here.

JAKE

The still blew?

JOSH

Yeah, if it gets too hot, the pressure builds and the whole thing pops like a fire cracker. If it's a second or third distillation, like we're doing, leaks will get the fire growing and can cause an explosion too.

Josh hands the jar back to Jake and turns to leave.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Anyway, keep your eyes peeled. A few hours till pay day.

Jake stands under the tree and tries to stay warm as Josh departs up the hill. Hours pass.

Jake fights to keep his eyes open but is failing when gunshots echo off the hills. Flashes of light from two guns reflect off the trees down the hill from Jake.

Jake snaps awake and crouches behind the tree and points his rifle down the hill.

SENTRY, another guard, limps out of the trees with a bloody splotch coming through his shirt. Jake starts to point his weapon.

SENTRY

Damnit, it's me. We have to tell Josh. That was the bureau's men.

Jake looks through the trees toward the valley behind Sentry. Jake grabs Sentry's arm, pulls it over his shoulder and helps Sentry climb the hill.

EXT. WHISKEY STILL - NIGHT

A massive still sits atop a fire partially obscured by metal plates. A copper coil coming from it drips moonshine into jars marked "XX".

Josh is keeping an eye on the still thermometer as he switches out jars.

Jake and Sentry walk into the circle of light. Josh sees them, juggles the jar to the ground and points the coil into a large, empty bucket.

Josh rushes to help carry Sentry.

JOSH
What the hell happened?

JAKE
Bureau men were coming up from the valley.

JOSH
Thought that was one of you morons shooting at a deer or something. How many?

SENTRY
Just two I saw. I got one for sure but I don't know about the other. We have to get out of here.

Josh looks down the mountain then at the jars.

JOSH
We can't, not yet. This batch is coming out now. It's worth thousands.

JAKE
Better than getting hemmed up.

Josh looks down the mountain again and hesitates before he speaks.

JOSH
No- No. You said two of them, right? Probably just two agents looking for medals. It'll be late tomorrow before they can get a posse in the hills. We'll be long gone.

A wolfish howl comes from down the hill and all three men turn to look.

SENTRY
What if they weren't alone? Or I didn't get the one? I'm telling you-

Josh lays the protesting Sentry against a fallen tree trunk near the fire.

JOSH

It'll be fine, you'll see.

Josh places a jar of shine in Sentry's hand and walks to Jake. He pulls Jake a few feet from the fire.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You alright? Look, here's the thing. We go back without this shine, no one gets paid. I know an industrious young man like you doesn't want that. The trucks will be here in 3 hours. I can get everything bottled before then. I just need you to make sure those agents don't come back.

Jake looks uneasily into the woods. Josh sighs and wraps two bottles with cloth and hands them to Jake.

JOSH (CONT'D)

These have meth-a-nol in them, wood alcohol. It'll blind you so don't drink it but you see bureau trucks, you light the rags and throw the jars. Kick off a warning shot and we'll all run into the woods. But we'll be fine, you'll see. They won't be back for days.

JAKE

I don't know. That batch can't be worth a stretch.

Josh visibly restrains himself from an angry outburst.

JOSH

It's worth a lot. Look, I wasn't kidding. This isn't the first time they've tried to raid me. That agent is going to limp down the hills. He'll be lucky to survive the walk back to town and he won't make it before morning. It'll be hours more before the cavalry comes to find us.

Jake is starting to come around but opens his mouth to make another argument.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You got a fiance, right? You want to buy her something nice when you get back. You take these jars, you watch the road, and you collect an extra fifty dollars. How does that sound?

Jake starts to move his hands to the jar but still hesitates.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Jake, no one is coming.

Jake nods, takes the jars and heads back into the woods.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

A small road cuts through the dense forest. It's just wide enough for one car or truck moving slowly.

Jake sits in a clump of bushes near the road. The jars are next to him.

Coughing engines are heard and headlights show up through the trees.

Jake hurriedly gets onto his knees and fishes a lighter from his pocket. He picks up one of the jars and faces the road.

The vehicles come into full view. Two sputtering cars escort a box truck up the dirt strip. Each cab has one driver and one passenger in it and they all have shotguns.

Jake uses the bush for cover as he struggles to get the rag lit. Both cars pass him before he gets it lit. He throws it as fast as he can and hits the truck as it passes him.

A massive fire bursts where the jar hit. Jake starts running as soon as he gets the jar out of his hands.

Jake stops to look over his shoulder for a second. Men have ran to the back of the burning truck. One of them wraps his coat around his hands and reaches through the fire.

Something is shuffling in the back of the truck, like a dog pacing in a kennel. Snuffling sounds and scratches can be heard.

AGENT (O.S.)

You smell it? You smell those bastards? Get 'em! Go on boy!

The truck cargo door opens and a MASSIVE SHADOW leaps from the back and into the woods. Jake sees it coming and gets the shotgun up just in time to fire both barrels.

The shadow leaps over Jake as the gun goes off and both shots scatter snow. An AGENT laughs from near the convoy.

AGENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Guns won't help you now! Better to
try and play fetch with it than try
shooting!

A howl splits the night. Jake looks up the hill in the direction the shadow ran.

JAKE
Shit. No, no, no-

Two gunshots come from up the hill and are followed by a scream. Jake sprints up the hillside as fast as he can, running to

EXT. WHISKEY STILL - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs into the still area. Crates and jars are shattered and are strewn about. A pool of blood sits where Sentry was before Jake went back down the mountain. Josh is sitting, clutching his side.

JAKE
The agents-

Josh cuts off Jake by shaking his head. He can barely speak but he manages to through clenched teeth.

JOSH
Not the agents. Animal.

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Fuck that. Monster. Got... other
guy.

Jake looks into the shadows in the trees as he speaks.

JAKE
We have to get out of here.

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH
I won't... make it.

A snarl comes from the darkness outside the fire. Josh gives a cry of fright and grabs a revolver from the ground. He whimpers as he points the barrel into the darkness.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I can't face him again. So fast, so brutal. I can't-

A branch breaks and a low growl comes from the forest.

Josh whimpers again and chokes back a sob. Jake faces fearfully into the woods as, behind him, Josh puts the barrel in his mouth and pulls the trigger.

Jake jumps at the sound of the shot, turns and sees Josh's body. He starts to cry.

JAKE

Fuck, fuck...

A throaty growl comes from the woods, this time it is directly in front of where Jake is standing. Jake jumps back and trips over Josh's body.

He stands back up with Josh's gun pointed at the trees. The silhouette and sounds seem to come from all around and Jake swings the barrel haphazardly at every noise.

The shadow leaps out of the trees at Jake. It's a werewolf.

Jake gets one useless shot out of the revolver as the werewolf knocks him down. Teeth pierce Jake's cheek before the wolf disappears into the darkness again.

Jake, whimpering, crawls toward the fallen gun. Before he can reach, the werewolf strikes him again with a flash of fur and a snarl before disappearing.

Jake is now openly crying as he crawls toward the gun only a few feet from the still. He reaches his hand for it as the werewolf strikes quickly again.

Jake is now covered in cuts. He finally has the gun and he rolls so he faces the still. Behind him, the shadow of the werewolf looms larger as it finally comes in to kill.

Jake shoots the bottom of the still, punching holes in it. Streams of moonshine shoot out and become lakes of fire under the still.

The gun clicks empty as the shadow reaches Jake. Jake keeps pulling the trigger.

The temperature gauge on the still is climbing higher.

The werewolf begins mauling Jake mercilessly.

The temp gauge reaches the end of its gauge/dial/space.

The wolf bites Jake's face and claws at his flesh like a wolf eating a moose.

The wolf raises one large claw into the sky and the sobbing Jake tries to cover his face in a futile gesture.

The still bursts open from the built-up pressure. Shrapnel and fire catches the exposed wolf and blow him into the snow.

The wolf is engulfed in flames and tries to put himself out by rolling in the dirt. The flames keep getting bigger and the woods begin catching on fire as the wolf spreads it.

Jake passes out.

Jake wakes up to find bureau agents walking through the site of the former still. Extremely injured, Jake tries to speak.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Wolf. There's a wolf.

Jake wallows on the ground a little as he tries to speak.

An AGENT sees him and walks over. He crouches over Jake.

AGENT

No, you killed our wolf.

The agent looks over his shoulder to where other men are wrapping a burnt corpse in blankets. Two men pick it up and throw it on the still burning ground where the still sat.

AGENT wipes a couple of fingers across Jake's cheek. The bite has become infected. It is edged with red, swollen flesh and has yellow pus emanating from it.

The agent looks at the pus he picked up from Josh's cheek. Behind him, another agent approaches with a large collar attached to a long chain.

AGENT (CONT'D)

It's OK though, we'll have a new one soon.