

End of the Line

written by

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EXT. DIRT LOT - NIGHT

The soft purr of a diesel engine and the methodic *clunks* of rounds being loaded into a magazine evade the abyssal night. TEX (33), bundled in hunter gear, blocks all view of the rifle.

The sharp, southern voice of JULIA (30) berates him from the confines of his phone.

JULIA (V.O.)

... did nothing but love you!  
Through everything. You're the one  
who never showed anything. Jesus,  
Tex.

(beat)

I want you to stop calling me.  
We're over. You can go hide in your  
little woods and hunt those stupid  
hogs or do whatever the fuck you  
want. Just leave me alone. I'm  
blocking your number. Don't put  
this on me. It's not me, you  
asshole. Remember, you--

Tex stops the voice message. He spits to the ground and slings the rifle over his shoulder.

TEX

My fault? Humph. Who needs her?

Tex shuts off his truck and heads into the dark woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The first light of dawn shimmers through the trees onto Tex. He listens to the sounds of the woods. A distant bird echoes its shrill voice, but other than that, it's complete and utter silence.

Tex's gaze falls to the ground. He brushes away fallen leaves and twigs.

Four small hooves have left their imprint in the dirt: a boar, a big one. Tex grins at his discovery. As he follows the trail of hooves, he spots--

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

--a pair of jeans. Next to the pair of jeans are stockings. A trail of clothes lead from the couch to the stairs: a blouse, a white tank top, male underwear, a bra. It all leads too--

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

--a separate set of hooves. Tex shakes his head, wiping clear the memory he wishes to forget. Tex unslings his rifle. He looks between the two set of hooves. He chooses the set that leads deeper into the woods.

EXT. BOG - DAY

Tex stomps through thick mud and muggy air. A dense fog permeates around him, evaporating all visibility. In a half-trance, Tex follows the trail of hooves.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

In a P.O.V. we follow the trail of clothes up the stairs.

EXT. BOG - DAY

The hoof trail suddenly ends. Tex lowers himself to the ground. It led into the shallow waters. He sighs.

TEX  
"Those stupid hogs". Who's the  
asshole now?

*Snap.*

Tex twirls, swinging the rifle before him as he faces the noise. Somewhere in the dense fog near him, the sound of breaking branches and splashing water linger out.

The sounds remind Tex of--

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

--the rumbling and clamor of a rustling bed. The soft moans of lovers at work.

EXT. BOG - DAY

Tex keeps the rifle pointed ahead of him as he marches through the fog and toward the noise.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway, lined with framed pictures of happier times, feels cold and hollow. The P.O.V. moves down it, toward the door at the far end.

EXT. BOG - DAY

Tex swipes away at the fog. A tree slowly comes into view. The ruffling of brambles and water disappears. Tex focuses on the tree. A giant scratch mark burrows through the trunk at the base.

Tex runs his fingers along the length of the scratch.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

The P.O.V. reaches the end of the hallway. The lovers have gone quiet. A hand reaches out and rights an askew picture frame. It's a picture of Tex and Julia, smiling on the beach.

EXT. BOG - DAY

Tex smiles. The world goes silent. His fingers gently caress the scratched up tree.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

No noise comes out as the hand reaches for the bedroom door and opens it.

EXT. BOG - DAY

An ALIGATOR leaps from the stagnant waters. Tex stumbles backward, barely avoiding the maw of the beast.

He cries out, and the gator hisses. Tex jumps to his feet and flies through the woods. The fog blocks his vision as he sprints as fast as he can.

A tree! Tex careens into it. Blood squirts out his nose as he crumbles to the ground. He rolls down a hill full of thorny bushes, until he collapses to a stop.

Tex moans in pain as he lies on the hard dirt.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex hobbles back through the woods. He lightly touches his crooked nose. He drags the rifle behind him. Tex has given up on his hunt. He plays the voicemail from his phone again. He mouths along with the message.

JULIA (V.O.)

You can go hide in your little woods and hunt those stupid hogs or do whatever the fuck you want. Just leave me alone...

Tex halts as he espies something ahead of him.

A boar. Its massive frame stomps through leaves just ahead of him. Its giant tusks stir the ground.

Tex quickly raises his rifle at it.

JULIA (V.O.)

I'm blocking your number. Don't put this on me.

Tex jumps from Julia's voice. He quickly fumbles for his phone to silence it.

Too late. The boar spins and spots Tex. It digs at the ground and charges. Tex reaches for his rifle.

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

It's not on me, you asshole.

Tex dives to the side, but the tusk of the boar digs into his leg. Skin breaks. Blood sprays out. Tex screams in excruciating pain as he spasms on the ground.

The boar rounds a tree and charges at him again.

Tex raises his rifle. The boar leaps. Tex fires.

EXT. DIRT LOT - DAY

Birds launch into the air as a loud squeal pierces the cold air.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex forces himself up. Blood squirts out of his injured calf as he does so. A few feet from him, the boar continues to squeal in pain. A bullet wound goes straight through the boar's hind legs.

Tex stumbles over to the suffering animal.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The sheets swell on the bed like the waves of the ocean, as two bodies make love under them. The P.O.V. moves closer to the action. Limbs reach up and scratch at the bed post.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex falls to his knees next to the boar. The big animal no longer seems ferocious and dangerous; rather, it glares up at Tex in fear and anguish. Its little legs kick at the air to no avail.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The hand reaches for the humping covers and throws them off.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex's nostrils flare as he bites down in anger. He takes a dagger from his belt and holds it above the animal.

JULIA (V.O.)  
Remember...

Tex fights back tears. The boar screams in agony.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The nude lovers topple off the bed in surprise.

JULIA (V.O.)  
... you were the one who cheated on  
me.

Tex and his MISTRESS scramble to the corner of the room. JULIA, just discovering the lovers in her bed, slams her fist down on Tex.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex stabs down at the boar. The animal spasms under his blow.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Julia slams her fists down onto Tex over and over again. The Mistress sprints out of the room.

Tex glares up at Julia as she punches down at him. He forcefully grips her wrists.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Tex punctures the boar again with his dagger. The animal is already dead. But he stabs it again, blowing steam out of his lungs.

INT. TEX'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Tex fights back against Julia. He looks aloof and indifferent, like this was a common occurrence.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Finally, Tex ceases his rage. He lowers his dagger to his side and bows his head over the deceased boar.

Tears flood from his eyes. Tex sobs an open, ugly cry. His body curls up into itself as he sheds tear after tear. His bloodied hands clutch at his torn shirt and scratch at his chest.

TEX

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

The apology goes unheard in the vacant woods. Not a sound drifts through those dense boughs but for his unanswered sobs.

Tex places his hand on the dead boar and cries some more.

THE END.