

# Heartbreak Hotel in Old Roswell

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The last few minutes of a man's life, and the first few minutes of eternity.



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Bullets waited patiently on the desk insofar an audience of contained explosions capsules of death lethal injections soon to be inner jewelry that has the propensity to decorate the wall with your splattered guts, and over by the door, a pile of nuts. It's sickening to think about. Don't miss if you try and kill yourself you could end up being worse off than dead and I mean that.

If I walked across the room, they rolled around and clashed annoyingly. But I hadn't reloaded my gun; it sat on the bed, curled lethally like a frisky woman, still smoking and hot to the touch. Blood thinly coated my coarse hands, and I desired to clean them, but it was too late. Bloody fingerprints were on everything, even the candle; although, the long burn of a dim night will melt it, so I wouldn't worry. For a moment I tried holding my breath in order to think without distractions. In such afflicted mental states I find the smallest things can tinker with your focus. Close your eyes. Hold your breath. Dull all sounds.

Deep inside, and randomly so, I wished a funny guy might burst through the door and see my shot glass half full and say, "I reckon it's either damn good whiskey, or piss." With each additional sip of the strong alcohol I purchased from the general store, I drifted away from reality; it was as if the world gradually transformed into a dream and none of it would matter the next day.

Golden buffalos, on the coins I examined in my tan fingers, leapt from the mint and roamed the walls of the room, stampeding freely like they may the endless meadows of the Great Plains. Faces in the black and white pictures, of the owner's deceased family, smiled cordially and waved, wordlessly urging me to transcend my sense of moderation. But, that, I had.

Eternal blackout: I rode down a black tunnel of flashbacks the trees grabbing at my shriveling flesh. A bumpy ride reminding me of the few triumphs in my life plagued by overwhelming failures that I never recovered from. My horse was black, with long, silent flames for hair. It guided me without remorse, without acknowledgement, for it was loyal to one and only horsemen. Journeying over lava seas, towering brimstone formations, we finally reached the intended destination.

No sign was posted. Rather, the welcoming was an implicit feeling of arrival a despairing notice of forsakenness that extracted any lingering vestiges of happiness. In words, I can only compare it to swimming in a boiling cauldron with no chance of escaping and drowning. Hope does not exist there. Love never was. Hate swells like eddies, coalescing with each doomed addition. Anger and hate are the fuel of the fires. Souls arrive incessantly some scared by fear some rejoicing and praising evil. In seconds, everyone is entranced in a horrifying mute a thoughtless hypnosis that awakes only for suggestions of evil for sinister ideas to be forwarded to the reclusive ruler.

I saw him once. For such a barbaric creature, it only seems fitting that he should eke out an existence in the Lying Caves, a grotto carved out of the brimstone. Fittingly, only a masterful liar knows a bluff when they hear one. Death, it turns out, is a carriage that shuttles souls from place to place a long ride is purgatory but you only ride a soul per fare if you dare. Light cannot survive around him, so its composition is absolute darkness, save but for the ruby red eyes perhaps crystalized or petrified, fossilized in some way, glimmers of hope it once possessed.

Wherever this thing ventures, it is always accompanied closely by two dark-haired dogs on leashes. You would expect the dogs to be vicious and aggressive. However, the dogs don't make sounds. Instead, they

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are trained to sniff out fear, doubt, greed— anything not admirable— and bite the subject, chewing on their morals and ethics like a withered bone. By savagely picking away the outer layers, all honorable mentalities dwindle and in flows sinful resolutions.

\* \* \*

— Life is fragile, precious like a family heirloom. If we, in misplaced gratitude, forget to be thankful for what we have achieved and choose to pursue unnecessary desires, the balance of life will inextricably tip and we shall crash and see the flames of our mistakes brightly before us, a fiery omen that wishes to pervade our minds, ingrain itself in the deepest chasm of our memory— where, in time, it shall not be forgotten.—

The Sheriff— s wrinkled eyes could barely read the letter once. To appease Ransol, the hotel owner, he spent a few extra seconds pretending to study the words while depressing images trotted through his seasoned mind. But, the task at hand was just another check on his list.

Ransol wheezed over the Sheriff— s shoulder, upset by the body lying on the floor, but more the pools of blood which had fortified in the creases of the floorboards.

— Left much of my heart in Ole Rosja, to a lady I barely knew,— the end of the letter read.

— It— s a shame. Been in the town for twenty years, and not a single person ever took their own life— till now,— the Sheriff said, placing the letter down. — Ole Rosja — ! the name rings a bell.—

— They closed the mine in Ole Rosja. Nobody lives there anymore,— Ransol said, burying his face in his hands. — What am I to do with this room? When word gets out that he killed himself in here, business will surely decline!— Ransol— s panicky tone was getting on the Sheriff— s nerves.

— Listen partner, and listen good — ! now I got four missing cattle cases to solve on top of this suicide— ya think I like dealing with this— mind your own and folks will stay here— ya hear!—

Ransol, of Spanish descent, nodded and didn— t know what English words to use in reply. The Sheriff recognized the face, and swiftly exited the room like it was a cue for him to depart.

— God rest his troubled soul,— the Sheriff mumbled.

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