

NOT IN MY NIGHTMARE

Written by

Heron Man
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First Draft

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INT. REMOTE CABIN IN REMOTE WOODS-MOONLESS NIGHT

Owl Man is holding forth to the Others—Heron Man, Russ, and Paco—on the topic of writing a “screenplay.” His delivery is owlish, stentorious. Says it’s urgent. Says they must all get to it right away. The Others are enthusiastic at first, but soon begin to resist—fuming, clearing their throats, and scuffing their boots on the floorboards dispiritedly.

OWL MAN

Now what’s the matter? Hop to it! You’re actors, sure; but you’re acting as if I’ve handed out failing grades on your elementary school report cards. Must be that old thing, you know? That old “works poorly with others” thing?

HERON MAN

Whoa, steady Big Fella, whooooo! Easy there, pardner. Don’t get yer bandana tied in a neck-knot!

PACO

Yeah, slow down, Owl. What’s the rush? Aren’t we supposed to be on a vacation?

RUSS

They’re right, Owl. What is the rush anyway?

(It’s unusual for Russ to participate in a petty squabble like this. If he does, some principle must be at stake—free trade, let’s say, or a Masonic secret handshake, or maybe even Les Droits

de l'Homme. One time he actually joined a debate over the Magna Carta. His side won, on three obscure points of Latin grammar! For now, though, and in a change of pace, Paco rips a big chunk of chewing tobacco off the wad in his pocket and, his mouth watering, he opens the cabin front door and sticks his neck out to launch a gob of t'backy juice into the bushes outside. Then he reels his head and neck back indoors and offers a "chaw" to the Others. They all decline politely.)

OWL MAN

When did you start chewing tobacco, Paco?

PACO

Say what? Oh, you mean the tobacco?

Owl Man

Mmmm-hmmmm. That's what I'm talking about.

PACO

Thought you'd figure it out, Owl. You of all varmints. This is fer my Stanislavski character. Ain't this the Wild West? We're s'posed to be cowboys, right? Says right here in the script, I'm s'posed to rip off a big honkin' chaw. Maybe I'll improvise a little: 'Yeeeeee-haawww!

OWL MAN

I don't know jest how wild it is out in

these-here woods, Paco, leastwise it wouldn't be if you'd just take a little better aim with yer chaw.

(A sudden, strange, keening sound rises from beyond the ground-fog drifting in toward the cabin from the shrouded lake.)

HERON MAN
What was that???

RUSS
What was what?

PACO
That screeching sound. Sound like it was alive to you, Owl Man?

RUSS (interrupting the Owl)
Sure sounded alive to me. Must have been something wild. Something r-e-a-l wild! Go take a look, wouldya, Paco?

PACO
Maybe I will, maybe I won't. Actually, I might, but only if you hand me that old Colt revolver ya got in yer dufflebag - and get out yer little chrome Derringer while yer at it. Got any bullets in 'em?

RUSS
'Course they got bullets in 'em. Not much use otherwise, are they?

(The screeching noise happens again. Everybody in the cabin jumps.)

PACO
The sound's gettin' closer! Gimme that Colt, Russ. I'll put a stop to it right quick! You keep the Derringer inside

here, fer self-defense.

(Wielding the ponderous Colt, Paco strides in a bow-legged gait to the front of the cabin, snatches the door open, and yells into the fog bank.)

PACO

Hey! Who goes there? Come on out. Git yer hands up, over yer head!

UNKNOWN VOICE

Mmphh, unnhhh.

(Scraping sound from the fog, metal against rocks. Gunshot sound from cabin door, reverberates and echoes through the remote valley.)

PACO

That's far enough, stranger. State yer name and business, 'fore I plug ya good!

UNKNOWN VOICE

Hold on now, dang it. Don't go shootin' away. Somebody gimme a hand with this dang canoe. This thing's gettin' heavy! And don't call me stranger. I live over t'other side of the lake. Come to warn you boys. It ain't safe here.

(The Heron and the Owl help the stranger haul his aluminum canoe ashore. The stranger looks like Walter Brennan—wiry, nervous, with a big beard, plaid flannel shirt, suspenders,

shifty eyes, etc. The usual cranky sidekick. Owl Man offers the stranger some hot tea.)

OWL MAN (standing now)
Now, what's this you're saying about danger? Not safe? What do you know and when did you know it?

UNKNOWN VOICE
First off, call me Charlie. Charlie Oglesby III, after my grampa. My first cousin, Renard, he-

RUSS
Yes, yes, Charlie, we're all interested in genealogies, at least I am. But what's this danger you've come announcing to us like an archangel sounding doom?

CHARLIE
Oh yes, it's real, alright. Ya see, this here cabin's been haunted fer years. Ever' body knows it. Ain't nobody come here. Too dangerous. Ghosts knock in' on the walls 'n' stuff. Some six Shriners come up here one time. Only three of 'em come back. Word got around it mighta been zombies. 'Course I don't believe in no zombies. Just wear this here good luck charm. Works for me. Ain't had me no trouble since they tried to make that-there movie a while back.

RUSS
Movie? You mean "Whatever You Do, Don't Go Down to The Basement"?

CHARLIE
That's it! That's the one all right. Ghosts gave them a helluva time.

RUSS
Did you say 'ghosts'? Plural? More than one?

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. 'Course, I don't rightly know how many, but there's a bunch of 'em. Mean buggers, too, I'll tell you that. Ghosts. Zombies. Revenants. Whatever. Don't mess with 'em.

RUSS

Well, we can't just sit here like sitting
—

CHARLIE

Ducks?

OWL MAN

Sounds like a job for Heron Man and me. Paco and Russ? You two stay here and write us up as fictional heroes. C'mon, Heron Man. Let's go check out the basement. I'll just take the loaded Colt, Russ, if you don't mind.