

Rockwell Inn

Despite the discouragement that I have been greeted with since the beginning, I have never lost hope. For the past thirty eight years, I have believed and known that it existed. This is the story of how it all began. This is the story of Rockwell Inn.

I was barely eight years old when we got the phone call. My great-uncle, whose existence I was unaware of, laid on his deathbed requesting to see me, the boy he never met. I was promptly shuttled off to St. Michael's General Hospital and led down the sterile halls by a stern faced nurse. A withered old man laid crumpled in the bed, various tubes and lines exiting and entering him to sustain life through machinery. Before I even set foot in the dingy room, the man's senses were alerted and life seemed to reenter him.

"Mason..." the old man said, gesturing with a gnarled hand for me to come closer. Obediently I shuffled closer to the stranger.

"So young and innocent. Now listen," he spoke slowly and struggled to get words out but was determined, "No one will believe the truth I am about to tell you. But you will. There is a place, that they call Rockwell Inn. A place that shouldn't exist, that can't exist. It connects us to unspeakable worlds. It exists here, at the same time it doesn't exist but exists in far off and unimaginable places. You must do what I have failed. You, Mason, must destroy Rockwell Inn. Now, can you promise an old, dying man his one last wish?"

I stared at the feeble man. I felt compelled to help the man, his weathered and rugged face telling a soon ending story of adventure and hope. The idea of Rockwell Inn appealed to me for a strange reason. It called out adventure to me. Feeling compelled for reasons I could not fully explain, I nodded my head slowly, as I watched the old man's eyes grow glazed and the machines stop beeping with his life.

For years after, I attempted to spread the word of Rockwell Inn. No one ever denied the existence of Rockwell Inn. However, no one believed the connections it held between the world we knew with others. I was shunned from society time after time. This was a journey I had to make on my own, if I expected the destruction of Rockwell Inn to occur.

Today, I am forty six years old. Never have I denied or stopped believing in Rockwell Inn. I am not the same man that I would have been had the old man not spoken to me thirty eight years ago. The search for Rockwell Inn has taken over my life. I have searched the globe for it's presence and have come out empty handed until February 10th, when I received the letter.

It exists, that it does. Heaven to many, Hell to one.

Rockwell Inn stands tall and mighty.

Come for a stay, at the base of Mount Claughtery.

Mount Claughtery was located a days travel from the small town that I recently have been calling home. The roads were untraveled and at times barely existed. The weather grew cold and harsh upon my leaving. I was cold, in pain but had been preparing for this day for the past thirty eight years. I climbed rocky slopes and traveled through fields of corpses of summer shrubbery and grasses. My feet ached from the vast amount of walking and because my shoes were half a size too small. The horizon seemed to stretch endlessly over hills, until an oddly shaped ramshackle building stood erect at the base of a rocky slope. My stomach tingled and flipped from what I anticipated as excitement mixed with hunger from travel. I was close to fulfilling my life's goal and the dream that my deceased great-uncle had never been able to accomplish. Many had denied that this day would come, and here I stand my hand about to graze the brass doorknob of Rockwell Inn.

The overly large grandfather clock read 8:03 when I walked into Rockwell Inn. Despite the abandoned area and the roads that appeared untraveled for years, the room was abuzz with men and women enjoying meals, drinks and shelter as one. The inn smelt strongly of alcohol, sweat and mould. A large person whose

gender I could not personally pinpoint stood behind the bar, polishing glasses that were stained with grime.

"Excuse me. I'd like a room for the night" I requested to the person,

"Nope. 'Re full tonight" they grunted back, glaring at me.

I took a seat at a rocky table on a chair that appeared to look like it would break under an average adults weight. I came all this was to destroy an inn, that was already half destroyed through age and overuse. Being refused a room was identical to being refused the right to live a meaningful life. I buried my aged face in my hands as the glass landed on the table.

"Have a drink. On me." a female said,

She was slender with porcelain skin, large hazel eyes with choppy short blonde hair. A red dress clung to her body enhancing her breasts and minimizing the size of her waist. She was beautiful. She was also the first woman who has taken interest in me since I was fourteen.

"I'm Cathleen. You're new here. What's your name?" she purred, sliding gracefully into the chair next to me.

"Mason" I grumbled taking a sip of the strong, foul alcohol she presented me with.

"What's brought you to Rockwell Inn? It's not a usual place for travelers to stumble upon, y'know." she whispered, moving her chair closer to mine.

"Erm... Searching for... heaven. Here and there, same ol'." I mumbled again, finishing the last of the strong alcohol.

"Sounds like you have a lot on your mind there, Mason", she said with a coy smile placing a hand on my knee.

More of the foul alcohol appeared in grimy glasses on our table and hours passed. Hands brushed and Colleen grew more playful with time and contact. Feeling the weight of fatigue on my eyes and the pull of alcohol on my senses, I realized my journey back to town would have to start soon.

"Spend the night. With me?" Colleen asked playfully, her lips pleading and eyes begging.

"Well..." I began, before I could finish her hand was in mine pulling me down the hall to her room.

It looked like any inn room. Slightly used, slightly out of date, some slight questionable stains covering common surfaces. I knew this was my second chance at being able to achieve the destruction of Rockwell Inn. That Colleen was my key to this dream, and could be the first to believe the truth of Rockwell Inn.

"What would you say... If I told you this place shouldn't exist? That it exists here and in unspeakable worlds simultaneously." I asked cautiously.

"I'd say, that you, have had too much to drink!" she laughed, as she pulled me into the room further.

"I really shouldn't stay. I really should be heading home now." I stuttered, trying to pull out of her grasp.

"Fine. Leave if you really want, like I care about a crazy fool like you." she said, turning her back to me.

I scrambled out of the room, anxious to escape from the uncomfortable situation with the unusual woman. I glanced at the grandfather clock as I crossed the entrance hall. 4:03. Six hours couldn't have passed. I checked my wrist watch quickly 11:03. Something wasn't right, something was off. The inn was eerily silent. I opened the door to leave and walked out into a world I didn't know. A barren wasteland. Corpses of knotted trees laid piled on each other at where the inn used to be. The ground was hard and cracked with dryness. It was gone. I was gone.

"Mason.", a female voice said

I snapped around and was faced with a beautiful blonde woman that I had a vague memory of. "You didn't think, I'd let you destroy my link to heaven. Did you?" she asked, furrowing her brow. "TAKE ME BACK!" I yelled, grabbing her shoulders, "I will..." she whispered with a smile.

Appearing from nowhere she drew a long, silver blade and plunged it deeply into my abdomen repeatedly. The pain was excruciating, but the truth was fulfilling. Rockwell Inn existed and it was true. Rockwell Inn was the inn between worlds. She caught me gently as I collapsed forward and the world went dark around me.

I awoke in the hospital after some amount of time elapsed. Tubes connected me to machines that were sustaining my life a little while longer. My body ached and my memory blurred. Someone was watching me, someone that shouldn't be watching me.

I snapped around to face a small eight year old boy with a similar face. I lifted a hand I would not call my own because of the liver spots, crooked fingers and wrinkles that graced it, and gestured for the boy to come closer.

"So young and innocent. Now listen" I whispered as pain ripped through my body.