
THE
WOODEN
TOKEN



A SOUTHERN GOTHIC
HISTORICAL FICTION NOVEL

J. LOCKWOOD

THE
WOODEN TOKEN

A Southern Gothic
Historical Fiction
Novel

By J. Lockwood

First Edition

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J. Lockwood is a storyteller, entrepreneur, musician, pitmaster, baker, and lifelong believer that great memories are built around good food, good music, and good people.

Over the course of his career, he has built and operated businesses ranging from athletic clubs and construction companies to craft spirits, food ventures, and music projects. A graduate of Recording Arts & Sciences, he has spent much of his life creating experiences that bring people together through food, music, business, and storytelling.

Today he is the founder of Doc Jaks LLC, home of Doc Jaks BBQ, Bakery & Distillery, where the guiding principles remain simple: Faith, Family, Friends, and Food. His work combines Louisiana culture, Southern hospitality, music, storytelling, and a passion for preserving traditions worth passing on.

The Wooden Token is the first novel in the Emberhold series, a Southern Gothic historical saga inspired by family stories, Louisiana history, folklore, music, food, and the belief that some places never truly disappear. Through generations of keepers, healers, musicians, and dreamers, Emberhold explores family, sacrifice, belonging, and the ties that connect one generation to the next.

When he isn't writing, J. Lockwood can usually be found creating music, developing new business ideas, working on recipes, smoking barbecue, baking bread, or building the next chapter of the Doc Jaks experience.

He lives in Slidell, Louisiana, with Robin, his greatest adventure and favorite traveling companion.

For more stories, music, recipes, and the continuing world of Emberhold, visit:

DocJaks.com

THE WOODEN TOKEN

A SOUTHERN GOTHIC
HISTORICAL FICTION NOVEL

J. LOCKWOOD



EMBERHOLD
STORIES PEOPLE PLACES
THAT STILL MATTER

*"Some places
find you...
when you need them most."
Doc Jak*

A NOTE ABOUT THIS PREVIEW

You're reading Chapter One from the upcoming
Collector's Edition of *The Wooden Token*.

This special edition includes enhanced artwork,
historical details, and other extras that are not included
in the current standard digital edition.

The standard digital edition contains the complete story,
but uses a simpler, reader-friendly format designed for
phones, tablets, and e-readers.

**The fully illustrated Collector's Edition is now in production
and will be available soon.**

Until then, enjoy this first glimpse into Emberhold.

*Same story. A whole different way
to experience Emberhold.*

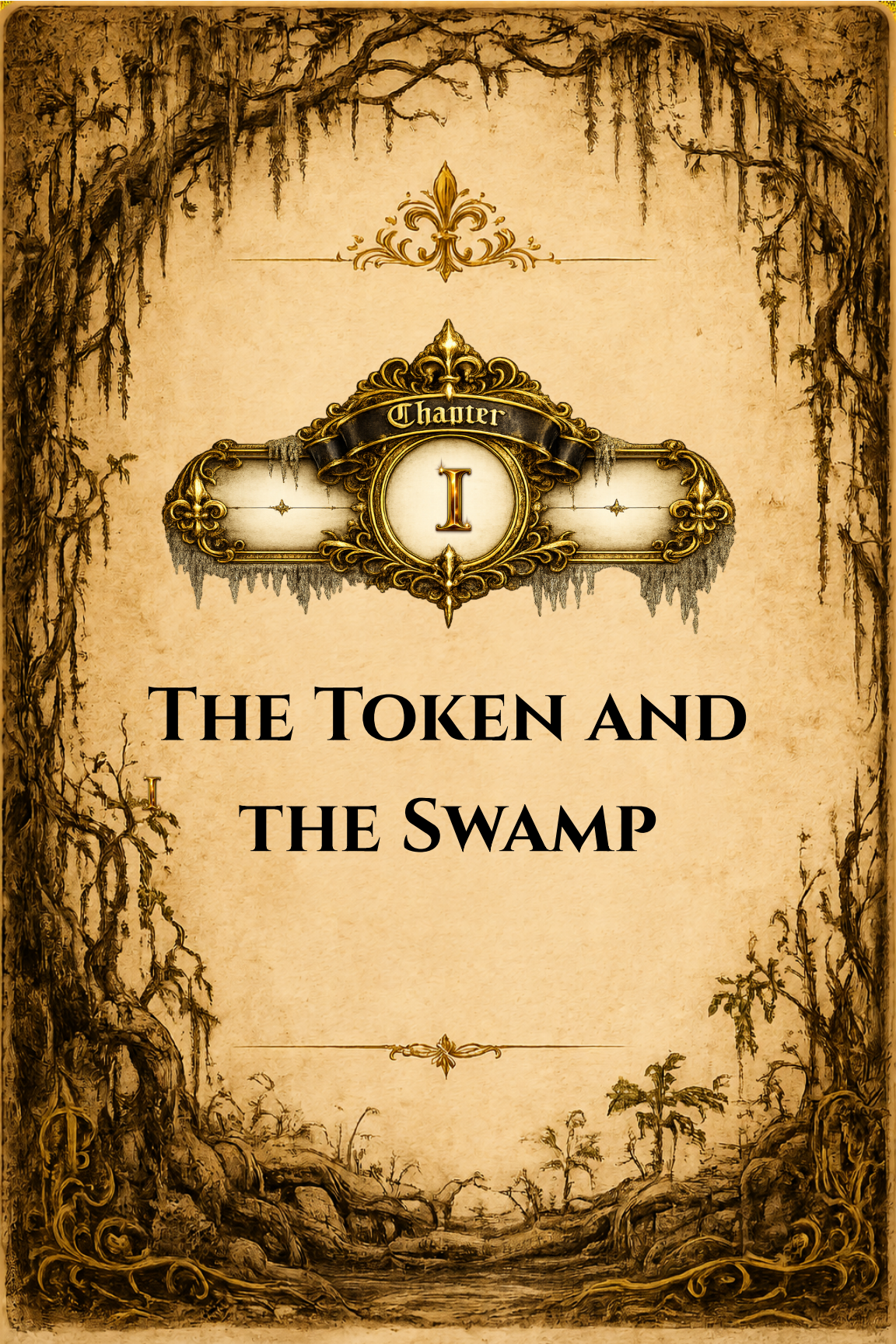
*Pull up a chair.
The story's just
getting started.
Doc Jak*

*Good Stories
Feed the Soul.
J. Lockwood*

MORE THAN A STORY...
A PLACE YOU BELONG.



THE TOKEN AND THE SWAMP





Twenty-Three Years



After twenty-three years of phone calls that stretched deep into the night... Plane tickets folded into glove boxes...

Facetime calls glowing softly in dark rooms thousands of miles apart...

And quick trips that never felt long enough... Jay finally packed up his life and moved back to Slidell with Robin. For twenty-three years they had found ways to stay connected. Sometimes through phone calls. Sometimes through weekend visits. Sometimes through nothing more than the promise that one day the distance would end.

Now it had. For the first time in years, they no longer had to say goodbye at airports. No more counting days until the next visit. No more watching taillights disappear. No more wondering when someday would finally arrive. Someday had arrived.

Now there were two pairs of muddy boots sitting outside the door at night. Two coffee cups steaming on the porch every morning while the Louisiana air slowly woke around them. No phone screens. No long distance. Just the sound of cicadas, old stories, and the woman he had spent twenty-three years finding his way back to.

And little by little... Jay settled into the Southern way of living. The pace slowed. People waved from passing trucks even if they didn't know you. Conversations lasted longer than they needed to. Food wasn't rushed.

Music drifted out of open windows at night. The smell of crawfish boils and oak smoke floated through neighborhoods on weekends. Neither of them realized it yet...

But the swamp had already started calling him home. And something buried deep inside Jay and the swamp had begun waking back up. Jay woke up that morning to rain hitting the roof, lightning flashing, and thunder rolling outside. It had been a while since he had heard rain like that. Robin was already in the kitchen making coffee and breakfast. He could smell the coffee and bacon before he even got there.

He walked in, wrapped her up in a big morning hug, and said, "Good morning."



She turned, kissed him, and smiled.

"Good morning."

After breakfast, Jay started unpacking boxes. Nothing exciting. Just life. The kind of things that get moved from one house to another and forgotten for years.

Then he found it. A small box. Watches. Rings. Cufflinks.

And sitting right on top... A small leather pouch. Worn. Soft. Darkened from years of being handled. Jay picked it up, turned it in his hand, then loosened the drawstring and tilted it into his palm.

The token. One side smooth from years of being handled. The other... A raised fleur-de-lis, worn but still standing from the surface, dirt packed into the edges. He turned it slowly.

And just like that... He was five again. His grandmother Gladys placing it in his hand.

"This is for you. Don't ever lose it. There will be a time when you will need it."

"When will I know?"

She smiled.

"You'll know when the time happens."

And that was all she ever said. Robin walked in.

"Still got it, huh?"

"Yeah... never knew why."

She leaned on the doorway.

"Now that you're living here... we need to go see if it's true or not."

"You really think any of that's still out there?"

"Only one way to find out."

Jay looked down at the token. Then back at Robin. A slow smile crossed his face.

"Alright."





The Family Stories

That evening they sat on the porch while rain dripped from the roof. The coffee was hot. The air smelled of wet earth and oak trees.

And like so many times before, the stories returned. Jay had grown up hearing about his great-great-grandfather. Doc Jak. Stories about how he could cook and smoke anything, catch anything, make the smoothest shine around, and cure anything anybody had. Mind. Soul. Spirit.

Some called him a gris-gris man. Some called him a Hoodoo man.

Some said shaman.

Others just smiled and said, "That's Doc."

But that wasn't all people remembered. Folks said Doc could play the baddest guitar anywhere along the Gulf Coast. On Saturday nights people came from miles around just to sit beneath the lanterns and listen. Some swore they'd seen grown men cry when Doc played. Others said strangers showed up angry and left laughing. Nobody could quite explain it.

Some called it talent. Some called it a gift.

The old-timers just smiled and said, "That's Doc."

Robin smiled.

"My grandmother used to tell stories about that."

"The guitar?"

"Yep."

Jay laughed.

"Everybody talks about the healing and the moonshine."

Robin nodded.

"But they always end up talking about the guitar."

The rain tapped softly against the porch roof. Then the conversation drifted further back. Jak Sr. Doc's father. Folks said Jak Sr. could build a house, track a deer, and outwork three men before breakfast. Some swore he'd cleared half of Emberhold himself.

Others said that was nonsense. Either way, everybody agreed on one thing. Jak Sr. was as stubborn as a cypress root. If he decided something was going to happen... it usually did.



Then there was Phina. Delphina Rousseau. People lowered their voices when they talked about her. Romani. From Europe. Folks said animals trusted her before they trusted anybody else.

They said she could look at you and know what was wrong before you spoke a word. Whether that was true or not depended on who was telling the story. But nobody ever doubted she was special.

And somewhere between all those stories... Emberhold had been born. The hidden place in the swamp. The family secret. The place nobody had seen in generations. The place nobody was even sure still existed.

The rain finally began to ease. Robin looked out into the darkness.

Then back at Jay.

"So..."

"So?"

"You still want to go?"

Jay looked toward the leather pouch sitting on the table. The token seemed almost alive in the lantern light.

He smiled.

"More than ever."

Robin laughed.

"Good."

Tomorrow they were going looking.



Into The Swamp

The next morning they packed the boat. Food. Drinks. Rain gear. A small cooler. Nothing fancy.

Just enough for a day on the water. Jay paused. Turned. Walked back inside.

Robin laughed.

"What'd you forget?"



Jay disappeared into the house. A few seconds later he came back carrying the old leather pouch. He slipped it into his pocket.

"For some reason..."

He shrugged.

"Felt like I should bring it."

Robin smiled.

"Yeah."

She nodded toward the pouch.

"Probably a good idea."

They pushed off from the dock and headed into Honey Island Swamp with nothing but stories guiding them. The morning air still carried traces of the previous night's rain. Water dripped from cypress branches. The swamp seemed to be waking up slowly. Birds called from somewhere deep in the trees. Turtles slipped from logs into the dark water.

The boat moved steadily forward. Neither spoke much. There was something peaceful about being there. The farther they traveled, the quieter the world became. The houses disappeared. Then the roads.

Then everything except water, trees, and sky. After a while the swamp opened into a broad stretch of water. Calm. Still. Almost glass-like.

Then they saw it. The Whiskey Tree. Standing alone near the edge of the water.

Robin leaned forward.

"Wait..."

She pointed.

"That's it, isn't it?"

Jay slowed the boat.

"The Whiskey Tree."

For a moment neither said anything. They simply looked at it. The old tree stood exactly where generations of stories said it would.

Robin shook her head.

"I've heard about that tree my whole life."

"Me too."

"Never thought I'd actually see it."

Jay smiled.

"Guess some stories are true."

Robin laughed.



"Both of us heard those stories growing up."

She looked around.

"That means we're close."

Jay nodded.

"Yeah."

He looked toward the trees ahead.

"We are."

They moved past the Whiskey Tree slowly. Neither wanted to rush through the moment. For the first time all day, the stories felt less like stories.

And more like directions. Almost another hour passed. Then Jay noticed something. Not clear.

Just different.

"Hold on..."

Robin looked up.

"What?"

Jay pointed toward a wall of trees.

"Right there."

"What am I looking at?"

"The branches."

Robin stared. At first she didn't see it. Then she did. The limbs were moving. Back and forth.

Back and forth.

"See it now?"

She nodded.

"Yeah."

Jay looked up.

"There's no wind."

Robin frowned.

"You're right."

The rest of the swamp sat perfectly still. Only those branches moved. Then Jay pointed lower.

"The water."

Robin followed his finger. A small current pushed outward from the trees. A place where no current should have existed.



For a long moment neither spoke. Then they saw it. A narrow opening. Hidden behind vines. Almost invisible. A small bayou cutting into the trees.

Robin stared at the opening.

"We really going there?"

Jay nodded.

"Yep."

She looked back toward the open water behind them. Then back toward the hidden bayou.

"After all these years..."

Jay smiled.

"After all these years."

Robin laughed.

"Well..."

She shook her head.

"I guess we're doing this."

Jay grabbed the machete. Branches scraped against the boat. Vines dragged across the bow. A few quick swings cleared just enough room to move forward. The opening swallowed them.

Slowly. Carefully. The farther they pushed in, the narrower the bayou became. Spanish moss brushed against their shoulders. The trees leaned closer. The sunlight faded.

Robin glanced behind them. The open water was already disappearing.

"You know..."

"What?"

"Most people would've turned around."

Jay pushed another branch aside.

"Yeah."

He smiled.

"Probably."

But neither suggested going back. Something about the place felt right. Not lucky. Not accidental. Not discovered. Waiting.

Like it had been sitting quietly for generations. Expecting them. Then suddenly...

The trees opened.





The Clearing

A small clearing. Still water.

Robin stared.

"This doesn't feel like the same place."

Jay stepped out of the boat.

"No..."

He looked around slowly.

"It doesn't."

The clearing was larger than it appeared from the water. Open. Wide. Quiet. No trees where there should have been trees. Just ground. Overgrown now. But different.

Not wild like the rest of the swamp.

"This was cleared."

Robin's voice was barely above a whisper.

"Yeah."

Jay nodded.

"It was."

Off to one side stood an old fig tree. Twisted. Ancient. Still alive.

Further back stood several nut trees. Spread apart. Deliberately planted. Near the edge of the clearing stood peach trees. Older now. Thinner.

But somehow still holding on.

"Those didn't just grow here."

Jay shook his head.

"No."

He looked around.

"Somebody planted all of this."

Then he noticed something else. Rows. Faint. Barely visible beneath years of growth.

But still there. A garden.

Or what remained of one.

"This was worked."



Robin nodded slowly.

"For years."

Jay turned in a slow circle. The trees. The garden. The fruit trees. The chimney. The water.

Everything suddenly made sense.

"This is why he picked this spot."

"The water?"

"That too."

Jay pointed toward the clearing.

"But this."

"The land."

"The garden."

"The fruit trees."

"Everything he needed was right here."

Robin looked around. The swamp hadn't given him a home. He had built one. The broken chimney leaned quietly beneath years of vines. The house itself was gone. Only open ground remained.

Then Jay noticed something stretching into the water. Posts. Half buried. Standing in a line.

"Dock."

Robin smiled.

"Yep."

The stories were becoming real. One piece at a time.



The Graves

Jay walked slowly across the clearing. Then he stopped. Near the far edge stood an enormous oak tree. Something about it pulled at him.

"Robin."

She walked over.

"What?"

He pointed.



"I don't know."

"But I think we need to go over there."

Together they moved toward the tree. The closer they got, the thicker the vines became. Brush covered everything. Spanish moss hung from the branches.

Then Jay stopped.

"Hold on."

"What?"

"I think I see stone."

He dropped to one knee and started pulling vines aside. Robin joined him. Dead vines snapped. Leaves scattered. Mud fell away.

Then a shape appeared. Stone. Then another. And another. And another. Four headstones.

The two of them stood quietly. The swamp suddenly felt very still. Together they cleared away the remaining brush.

Slowly revealing the small family burial ground hidden beneath decades of growth. Jak Thibodeaux Sr. Delphina Rousseau Thibodeaux. Doc Jak Thibodeaux. Evangeline Delacroix Thibodeaux. Near the edge of the graves, half buried beneath vines and fallen leaves, sat an old iron lantern.

Time and weather had darkened the metal. One side leaned into the dirt. Jay knelt and carefully lifted it free.

"Think that's one of theirs?"

Robin nodded.

"Could be."

The glass was cloudy. The metal worn. But somehow it was still standing. Jay brushed away the dirt and set it upright beside the graves.

"Wish we had something to light it with."

Robin looked at the lantern. Then at the four headstones.

"Maybe next time."

Jay nodded.

"Yeah."

Maybe next time. Robin walked away for a moment. She returned carrying wildflowers.

Without saying a word she placed them across the graves. Jay stepped forward.



"Hello..."

His voice sounded strange in the silence.

"My name's Jay Lockwood."

He looked from one headstone to the next.

"I guess..."

He smiled softly.

"I'm family."

He looked down at the token in his hand. Then back toward the graves.

"And I think..."

He paused. Looking around the clearing. The oak. The chimney. The garden. The graves.

Everything.

"I think I'm supposed to be here."

For a moment nothing happened. The swamp remained quiet. Still.

Then somewhere above the clearing, the clouds shifted. Not much. Just enough. A narrow shaft of sunlight slipped through the gray sky and settled across the old graves beneath the oak. Not bright. Not dramatic. Just warm.

The kind of sunlight that makes you stop and notice. Robin looked up.

Then back toward the graves.

"You see that?"

Jay nodded.

"Yeah."

The light lingered for only a few seconds before the clouds slowly began closing again. Then Robin's eyes shifted past the graves. Toward the trees. Something moved. Just for a second. A dark shape slipping behind a cypress.

Gone. Robin frowned.

"Jay..."

"What?"

She kept staring toward the trees.

"Thought I saw somebody."

Jay turned and looked. Nothing. Just moss. Shadows.

Trees.

"Out here?"

Robin nodded slowly.

"Yeah."

Silence. Then she shook her head.



"Probably nothing."

But even as she said it, she didn't believe it. And for the briefest moment... The clearing didn't feel abandoned anymore. It felt welcoming. Like something old had recognized them.

And approved.



The Discovery

Neither spoke for a while. The old oak creaked softly overhead. Then the two of them slowly walked back toward what remained of the house site, searching for anything that might still remain from Doc Jak and Evangeline. As they walked, Jay noticed pieces of dark wood scattered beneath the weeds. At first he thought they were fallen branches.

Then he picked one up. It wasn't a branch. It was a timber. Heavy. Blackened. One side still carried the deep scars of fire.

Robin knelt beside another. Then another. The deeper they looked, the more they found. Burned beams. Charred boards. Iron nails stained orange with rust.

The remains of a building. A large one. Jay slowly turned in a circle. The clearing suddenly looked different. Not empty.

Ruined.

"What do you think this was?" Robin asked.

Jay looked toward the old chimney. Then toward the garden.

Then toward the graves.

"I think this was Ember Hall."

For a moment neither spoke. The stories had talked about a gathering place. A long hall. Music. Food. Lanterns. Families. Travelers. Life.

Now all that remained were burned timbers slowly disappearing back into the swamp. Then Robin stopped.

"Jay."



He turned. A large beam lay half buried beneath years of leaves and mud. Unlike the others, it hadn't completely burned. The center section remained intact. Jay knelt and brushed away the dirt.

Slowly a carving emerged. Deep. Precise. Hand cut long ago. A fleur-de-lis. The same symbol carved into the token.

The same symbol carved into family stories. For a long moment neither spoke.

Then Jay smiled.

"We're taking this home."

Robin laughed.

"Yeah."

"We definitely aren't leaving that here."

Together they carefully lifted the old beam. It was heavier than it looked. But neither complained. Some things were worth carrying. As they walked, Jay noticed how soft the ground felt beneath his boots. Too soft.

Like the earth had swallowed the place slowly over time. Then— Robin stepped across the center of what once looked like a room. Thunk.

She stopped.

"That didn't sound right."

Jay turned.

"What?"

Robin stepped again. Thunk. Hard. Hollow. The two of them looked at each other. Jay immediately dropped to one knee and began brushing away leaves, mud, and years of debris.

More wood appeared beneath the dirt. Old flooring. Weathered. Darkened by time. But still solid.

Robin knelt beside him.

"What is it?"

"I don't know."

He kept clearing. Then slowly... a shape began appearing beneath the dirt. Curved. Deliberate. Familiar.

Robin sucked in a breath.

"No way."

Jay sat back. A large fleur-de-lis had been carved directly into the center of the floor. Deep. Precise. Intentional. The two of them stared at it.



Then almost without thinking, Jay reached into his pocket. The leather pouch. The token. He held it above the carving. Neither spoke.

Slowly he lowered it. Perfect fit. The raised edges of the token settled into the recessed carving like they had been made for each other.

Robin looked at him.

"This can't be it..."

Jay swallowed.

"There's only one way to find out."

He turned the token. Nothing. Then pressed. Click. Both of them froze. Click. The floor shifted.

Robin stepped back.

"Jay..."

Click. A hidden section of flooring lifted slightly. For a moment neither moved. They simply stared.

Then Jay carefully slid his fingers beneath the edge and slowly raised it. The old wood groaned. Mud fell away. And beneath it... was a compartment. Not a hole.

Not a hiding place. A compartment. Built. Planned. Protected. Waiting.

Robin shined her flashlight inside. The beam disappeared into darkness. Then shapes began emerging. Bundles of papers tied with faded cord. Rolled maps. Leather pouches. Wrapped packages. Small wooden boxes. Tin containers. Journals.

Lots of journals. Some stacked. Some bundled. Some wrapped in oilcloth. Names were written across old covers. Doc Jak. Evangeline. Jak Sr. Phina.

Robin slowly exhaled.

"Oh my God."

Jay didn't answer. He couldn't. Everything they had grown up hearing about. Every story. Every legend. Every family tale. Suddenly felt real.

Robin carefully lifted a large leather-bound Bible from the compartment. The cover was cracked. The corners worn smooth. It looked older than anything either of them had ever held. She turned it over in her hands.

"Jay..."

"What?"



She looked up.

"I think this belonged to Phina."

Jay stared at it for a moment. Not a copy. Not a replacement. Hers. The actual family Bible.

Somehow that felt impossible. Robin moved the flashlight deeper.

Then stopped.

"Jay."

"What?"

"There's more."

Toward the back of the compartment sat two larger objects wrapped carefully in oilcloth. Long. Protected. Preserved. Jay carefully brushed away decades of dust. The first shape appeared.

A violin case. Old. Weathered. But intact.

Robin stared.

"Evangeline."

Jay nodded. Then they uncovered the second. A guitar case. Larger. Heavier. Protected the same way.

Neither spoke. They didn't have to. Both knew exactly whose guitar it had to be. The stories. The music. The lantern nights.

The crowds that came from miles away. All of it suddenly felt a little more real. Then Robin's flashlight caught something else. Steel. Wrapped in leather. Jay carefully lifted it free.

He unrolled the leather. A knife. No. A Bowie knife. Big. Heavy. Built for work. Built to last.

The steel wasn't polished. But it was clean. Strong. Alive somehow. The handle was worn smooth from decades of use. Jay picked it up.

Balanced it. The weight settled naturally into his hand.

"Feels right."

Robin smiled.

"Yeah."

"It does."

Neither wanted to open everything there. Not yet. The sun was already dropping. The swamp was changing.

And there was too much. Far too much.

To understand in one afternoon.

"We need to get this home."



Robin nodded.

"Every bit of it."

Together they began carefully removing the contents. Box after box. Bundle after bundle. Journal after journal. Until the compartment was nearly empty.

Then Robin stopped.

"Jay."

"What?"

She pointed toward the bottom. Three words had been carved into the wood. Deep. Deliberate. Old. As if someone had wanted to make absolutely certain they survived.

Jay brushed away the last of the dirt. The words became clear. KEEP THE FIRE Neither spoke. Neither understood.

But somehow both knew it mattered. The swamp grew quieter around them. The shadows grew longer.

And for the first time all day... it felt like they weren't just finding Emberhold. It felt like Emberhold had been waiting for them.



Part Seven: The Watcher

The sun was dropping fast. The swamp was changing. The shadows stretched longer across the water. The sounds were changing too. Day creatures growing quiet. Night creatures beginning to wake.

Robin looked toward the sky.

"It's getting dark quick."

Jay nodded.

"Yeah."

He secured another box inside the boat.

"Swamp doesn't wait."



Together they loaded the last of the journals, maps, boxes, bundles, the violin case, guitar case, and Bowie knife. Neither wanted to leave. But neither wanted to be navigating unfamiliar swamp channels after dark either. Jay took one final look around the clearing. The chimney. The garden. The dock posts. The old oak. The graves.

Everything felt different now. Not abandoned. Not forgotten. Found. Robin stepped into the boat. Jay followed.

The motor turned over. The boat slowly drifted away from the shoreline. Neither spoke for a while.

There wasn't much to say. The clearing slowly began disappearing behind them.

Robin looked back.

"Feels like we weren't supposed to find this."

Jay watched the shoreline slipping away. Then he smiled.

"Or maybe we were."

For a few moments they sat quietly. Listening to the water. Listening to the swamp. Watching Emberhold disappear behind them.

Then something caught Robin's eye. Movement. Near the trees. She turned. A shape. Just for a second.

Dark. Tall. Standing near the edge of the clearing.

Then it moved. Slipping behind a cypress. Gone.

Robin sat up straighter.

"Jay..."

Before she could finish, Jay was already staring in the same direction. He had seen it too. And somehow... felt it. The same feeling he'd had ever since they entered the clearing. The same feeling he'd had standing beneath the oak.

The same feeling he'd had when the sunlight touched the graves. Like they weren't alone. Like somebody had been watching them all day. Not threatening. Not dangerous. Just watching. Waiting.

For the briefest moment Jay thought he saw a figure standing near the old oak. Still. Silent. Watching the boat pull away.

Then it stepped behind a cypress and disappeared. Gone.

"Did you see that?" Robin asked.

Jay nodded slowly.

"You saw it too?"

"Yeah."



Silence. The motor hummed softly. Water rolled away from the bow. The clearing grew smaller.

Then Robin finally asked the question neither of them could answer.

"What would somebody be doing way out here?"

Jay looked back toward the trees. Nothing. No movement. No figure. Only shadows. Only moss.

Only swamp.

"I don't know."

Neither spoke again. The boat drifted farther away. The opening grew harder to see. The trees slowly closed around it. The hidden bayou disappeared. The clearing vanished.

And before long there was nothing left behind them except water and cypress. As if Emberhold had never been there at all. Jay looked down at the token in his hand.

Then at everything they had loaded into the boat. The journals. The Bible. The boxes. The maps. The guitar case. The violin case. The Bowie knife.

A lifetime of stories sitting only a few feet away. Stories he had heard since he was a boy. Stories he had never completely believed. Until now.

For the first time in his life, the legends had weight. They had names. Graves. Journals.

And a place in the swamp called Emberhold. He looked back toward the place where the clearing had been. A place nobody had seen in generations. A place he somehow knew he would return to.

Behind them... the swamp closed.

June 18, 1815

Thunder. Not thunder from a storm. Thunder from cannon fire. The earth shook. Smoke rolled across the battlefield. Men screamed.

Horses crashed through the mud. Steel clashed against steel. The air smelled of rain, powder, blood, and death. A young soldier stumbled through the chaos. Mud covered his boots. Smoke burned his eyes.

The world had become noise. Cannons. Musket fire. Shouting. Prayers. Screams.



Everywhere he looked men were falling. Some would never stand again. He turned. A horse crashed past him. Close enough to feel the ground shake. Another cannon fired.

The blast hit like a fist. For a moment everything disappeared behind smoke. Then the wind shifted.

And through the haze he saw the battlefield stretching across the horizon. Waterloo. The greatest battle of his generation. The battle that would change the world.

And somewhere within that chaos stood a young man who had never heard of Louisiana. Never heard of Honey Island Swamp. Never heard of Emberhold. A young man who had no idea the path before him would one day lead across an ocean. Into a swamp. Toward a hidden place.

Toward a woman named Delphina. Toward a family not yet born. Toward a destiny he could not imagine. His name was...

Jak Thibodeaux.



SOME STORIES NEVER DIE

THE STORY HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.

Chapter One was only the beginning.

You already know Jay and Robin.

Now you've met a young soldier named
Jak Thibodeaux,
standing in the mud and cannon smoke of Waterloo.

You've heard the name **Delphina**.

You've heard whispers of a hidden place
somewhere deep in Honey Island Swamp.

But what could any of them possibly have to do
with Jay and Robin more than two centuries later?

That is where the story begins.

EMBERHOLD IS WAITING.

ENTER THE WORLD
OF EMBERHOLD

*Continue with
The Keepers of Emberhold: The Wooden Token*

HISTORY LIVES IN UNEXPECTED PLACES