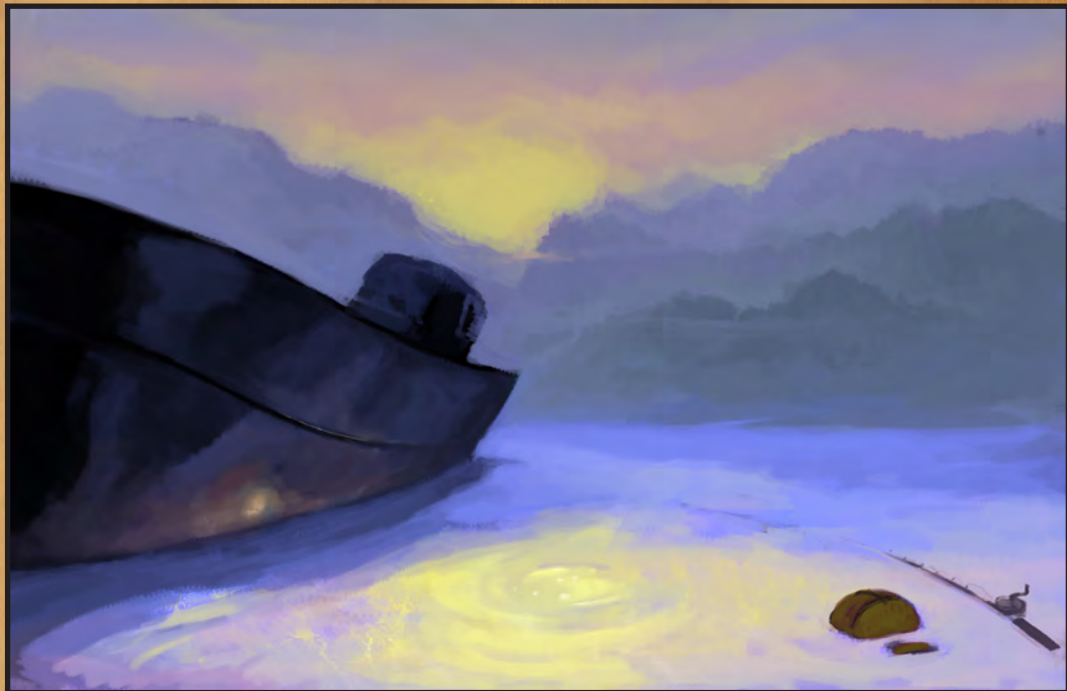


REALMS OF CTHULHU  
MYTHOS TALES  
NUMBER TWO



UNSTILL WATERS

BY

JOHN GOFF



# MYTHOS TALES

## NUMBER TWO

### UNSTILL WATERS

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# OVERVIEW

This adventure is set in the modern day and designed for 3-6 Novice investigators. While there is the possibility for a tough fight or two, investigators with investigative skills are a must for any party hoping to successfully complete this adventure. It can be used with any of the four play styles detailed in *Realms of Cthulhu*.

# INTRODUCTION

*Unstill Waters* is set in the modern era and begins in the default city of Charleston, South Carolina. While changing the era may prove problematic, with very little effort the opening scene can easily be transferred to another locale if you've chosen to base your own campaign elsewhere. The story then quickly leads the party to a small town nestled in the hills of western North Carolina where the real action gets underway.

This adventure is largely a mystery tale and, as such, focuses heavily on investigation and gathering information. The elements of the Cthulhu mythos, while present, are certainly down-played in the opening scenes. As a result, *Unstill Waters* can serve nicely as an introductory adventure for a group of investigators just beginning to scratch the surface of the depths of the Cthulhu mythos.

Unlike many adventures, *Unstill Waters* is designed to be played in a fairly non-linear fashion. While there are events that may be triggered by player actions, for the most part of the story, the party is free to investigate and follow leads as they see fit. The climax of the adventure occurs once the investigators have accumulated the necessary information to have an inkling—at least, hopefully—of what they are facing.





## TWEAKING THE ADVENTURE

With the exception of possibly changing the starting locale, *Unstill Waters* should require little work on your part to adapt it to your players. Other than the usual investigative skills (Notice, Investigation, Streetwise, and so on), no unique abilities or interests are necessary. Even then, you'll find that a single missed die roll seldom completely derails the players' investigation. There are usually multiple clues to point the party toward the next step of the adventure, often with no die rolls necessary.

In *Unstill Waters*, asking the right question or looking in the right place is at least as important as having a particular skill. Having a good die type in Investigation, Streetwise, and Persuasion is likely to result in the investigators obtaining *more* information, smart play may well be sufficient to allow a group to be successful.

## SYNOPSIS

The investigators are contacted by an old friend to help locate Tim Crocker, a college student at a nearby university who has apparently gone missing. A little legwork quickly uncovers that Tim had become interested in legends of a strange creature in a backwoods lake a few hours away. When the party follows up on their leads, they discover there's a lot more going on beneath the surface than they'd ever imagined.

## SUMMATION

James Crocker, an old friend or possibly a new client, approaches the investigators for help locating his son Tim. None of Tim's family or friends has heard from the young man in nearly two weeks and no one seems to have any idea where he may be, leaving James understandably concerned for his son's well-being. During a visit to Tim's apartment, the investigators discover he had more than a passing interest in the supernatural and, by all appearances, most likely traveled to Buckskin Lake in western North Carolina to follow up on a few obscure reports of a 'lake monster' said to lurk within its depths.

Traveling to Walton, the seat of Richland County and nearest town to Buckskin Lake, the party finds few people in the area have even heard of the supposed lake monster, much less seen it. They do discover leads on Tim's visit, however, and in doing so, more information on the history of the lake and a small town that was flooded during the creation of the lake during the Depression era. Further investigations lead them to a deserted fishing lodge, an abandoned mine, and eventually to Cicero Shortridge, a moonshine-addled old mountain man who claims to know the secrets of the lake.

Finally, the investigators learn a cult dedicated to Glaaki was behind the original creation of the lake. Worse, descendants of the original cultists are in the nearby mountain valleys where they continue to worship the Great Old One, and are preparing for a terrible ritual to open an enormous portal to release a flood of biblical proportions upon the Earth. Uncovering this last bit of information is the trigger point to the climax of *Unstill Waters*. Racing against time, they must stop the cultists not only to rescue the young man, but also stop a watery apocalypse!





## PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE OR A MYTHOS TALE?

*Unstill Waters* is intended as a stand-alone adventure, albeit a fairly lengthy one. You should be able to plug this into your own campaign with little preparation necessary. Once the players complete the adventure, there's no tie-in to other plots either. After all, defeating a Great Old One and saving the world from a watery death is pretty hard to top!

If you're already using Glaaki as a major plot point, and the events detailed here don't work with your own vision, feel free to change the Great Old One to another associated strongly with water, like Cthulhu. Don't forget to alter the minions as well: the Servants of Glaaki could become Deep One Hybrids, for example.

### HEY! THAT'S NOT ON THE MAP

If you go looking for many of the locations mentioned in *Unstill Waters*, you're not likely to have much luck finding them. Richland County, the town of Walton, Coleville, and Buckskin Lake are fictional locales set in the mountains of western North Carolina. That gives you some leeway as to where exactly you want to place them—even moving them to another state if you so desire.

In general terms, we envisioned Richland County as lying at least partially within the boundaries Nantahala National Forest, near the borders with Georgia, South Carolina, and/or Tennessee.

## BACKGROUND

In the early 20th century, Jebediah Cole arrived in Richland County, North Carolina. Cole, apparently a man of some means, spoke little of his background or source of his wealth. There was good reason for his silence, as Cole had emigrated from a tiny hamlet in the Severn Valley of England called Lake Terrace near Goatswood, home to the blasphemous cult of Glaaki.

Cole, an undead servant of Glaaki, wasted little time in founding his own town, Coleville, in the mountains of Richland County. There, he recruited new members for the cult through the guise of the Church of the Living Waters. Once he had built his local powerbase, Cole began a decades-long plan to fulfill Glaaki's ultimate goal of flooding the planet.

During the economic disaster of the Depression era, Cole had little difficulty selling the government and populace on the idea of a massive project like a hydroelectric dam. In 1936, he created the Buckskin Corporation to fund it, volunteering sizeable tracts of his own property (including Coleville) for flooding at little to no recompense, all "for the good of the community." And indeed, for several years, Richland County reaped the benefits of the construction of Buckskin Dam.

In reality, the cult used the dam to create a suitable habitat for their hideous god. The flooded village also serves as a portal to an alternate dimension, which Glaaki and his cult plan to open to unleash a deluge of biblical proportions upon the Earth. Many cult members voluntarily sacrificed themselves to the rising waters in order to open the original gate, allowing the Great Old One to travel between Goatswood and Buckskin Lake.

Cole's ultimate goal, however, would require many, many more such sacrifices.







## COLE VANISHES

Shortly after the completion of the dam, the Buckskin Corporation folded. Not long thereafter, Jebediah Cole simply disappeared. Most locals figured he'd gone broke on the venture and died old and penniless. Although no one knew his age, by appearances, he'd been well into his sixties when he arrived in the county years ago, after all.

Actually, everything was proceeding exactly as planned. Now that the dam was constructed, the Buckskin Corporation served no further purpose. The state and federal governments were forced to maintain the dam or risk flooding the Richland County seat downstream. Cole, beginning to suffer the effects of the Green Decay, had gone into hiding with the surviving members of his cult in the hills surrounding the dam.

## DISASTER STRIKES

In 1962, the C&P Mining Company opened an underground graphite mine in the mountains near Buckskin Lake. A little more than a year after opening, the mine flooded, trapping and drowning more than 30 miners. While everyone believed the miners had accidentally broken through into an underground connection to Buckskin Lake, in reality the Servants of Glaaki had engineered the disaster by digging a connecting tunnel themselves. The few miners that had not drowned outright were killed when the undead cultists swam through into the dark and isolated chambers of the flooded mine.

The miners' deaths provided the necessary sacrifices to crack the seal to between our world and the other, flooded world. Through the broken seal, water began to seep into Buckskin Lake from this otherworldly source. The sacrifices also opened a permanent gate allowing Glaaki to enter Buckskin Lake at will.

Late one night, shortly after the deaths of the miners, Glaaki traveled to Buckskin Lake for the first time. Three local men, Cicero Shortridge, Kerm Mullins, and Donald Cochran were fishing on the lake when Glaaki appeared. Cochran was thrown overboard and killed, while Cicero Shortridge was driven insane by what he witnessed. Kerm retained his sanity, but both men were quickly written off as drunks or crackpots when they tried to tell their story.



The C&P Mining Company was unable to drain the water from the mine and the entire concern closed shortly after the disaster. Richland County began to slowly decline into economic obscurity. In the late 1980s, there was a brief attempt to market Buckskin Lake as a destination for sportsmen, but there were surprisingly few fish in the lake and the venture failed. (Unknown to the locals, the unnatural water seeping into the lake was inimical to most species of fish.)

## THE CULT TODAY

Cole and his minions have continued to gather sacrificial victims over the decades, but were reduced to preying on the occasional hiker or hunter who wandered through the area. As all their captives are drowned at the bottom of the lake, none have yet been found. The authorities, although concerned by a higher incidence of disappearances in the area, never suspected the cult's existence, much less its involvement.

Not all of the cult's members have been converted to undead minions. A few descendants of the original Church of the Living Waters members (almost entirely of the Rasnick family lineage) remain in the hills. As these descendants prove their worth, they too are inducted into the ranks of Glaaki's undying servitors.

To provide income for worldly needs, in recent years the cult has taken to growing and selling marijuana, primarily to local distributors. The rugged valleys and hidden hollows provide numerous spots ideal for growing the plants away from prying eyes.





## TIM CROCKER

Tim Crocker is a liberal arts student at the College of Charleston. He is a very bright young man, if somewhat unfocused. As such, he hasn't settled on a major, much less a calling, but he is fascinated by the paranormal.

Tim has spent the better part of his college career first researching, then actually investigating paranormal phenomena. While none of his investigations has ever yielded so much as a shred of evidence of anything outside the realm of human experience, he continues to mine myths, legends, and Internet rumors in the hopes that one day he'll find incontrovertible truth that there is 'something' out there.

About a month ago, Tim stumbled across a reference to a relatively unknown lake monster in Buckskin Lake. Although his initial research turned up absolutely no other record of any legends or stories about the creature, he had a hunch he had discovered something. Two weeks ago, he loaded up his Subaru and headed off to Richland County to look for "Louie"—the name given by locals to the supposed lake monster—firsthand.

An experienced researcher, Tim immediately focused on the history of the lake, looking for the earliest references to the creature. He found very few, but he did uncover the story of Coleville, Jebediah Cole, and his unusual religion. Sensing a connection of some sort, he refocused his efforts on Cole and the flooded town.

He learned quickly that few people in Walton have any knowledge about Coleville. Even the oldest residents of the county were but small children when the dam was constructed. However, Terry Deel, owner of the one fishing marina on Buckskin Lake, proved to be a wealth of information on Coleville. What Tim didn't know was that Terry was also one of the primary dealers for the cult's marijuana network.

Terry has no idea of the true nature of the Rasnick clan. He only knows they sell him pot cheaply, and he makes enough profit to keep his little marina and bait shop afloat. Also, Terry is intensely paranoid. So, when Tim's questions turned to the Rasnicks, he immediately made the erroneous connection that the young man was trying to uncover the family's drug dealings.

He notified his primary contact, Elroy Rasnick. Rasnick reported back to Jebediah who recognized the danger Tim posed to his cult. Whether the student was interested in drugs or Coleville, he was a threat that had to be eliminated.

Jebediah soon realized that Tim's appearance may actually prove to be a tremendous boon. A lunar eclipse was rapidly approaching, and a sacrifice coinciding with it would be sufficient to fully open the seal and begin the deluge he had toiled nearly a century to bring about...

## DOUBTING THOMAS?

*Unstill Waters* is steeped heavily in investigation and most of it leads to tangible, real-world clues and mundane explanations. While the supernatural is present in this adventure, for much of the plot it remains deeply hidden in the background, with only hints of its presence. As a result, it's very possible for investigators with the Hindrance Doubting Thomas to rationalize away nearly everything that occurs in the course of this adventure (barring an encounter with a Great Old One or a Mossy Master).

Not only does this make the adventure an excellent starting point for your campaign, it is also easy to completely remove the Mythos elements from *Unstill Waters*. Doing so leaves a mystery with enough elements which may convince an experienced group of investigators of supernatural involvement, while the actual answer is entirely mundane. This can prove to be an interesting twist for a party that has become jaded, expecting cultists and Byakhee to be hiding in every dark corner.

If you choose to take that route, Jebediah Cole is no longer among the living. He died in the hills sometime in the mid-to-late 1940s. The Rasnicks are a mean-spirited—and possibly inbred—family of backwoods drug dealers, not undead minions. They killed Kerm Mullins when he discovered their pot fields and buried him somewhere in the trackless woods.

And finally, Cicero Shortridge is exactly what he appears to be: an aging alcoholic who's scrambled his brains with homemade liquor. Although he firmly believes there is a lake monster, there is no secret notebook from Mullins revealing any supernatural horror.





## THE CAST

Here's a list of all the NPCs and creatures the investigators are likely to encounter within the course of *Unstill Waters*. For the more important NPCs, you'll find more detailed descriptions and tips for running them as well as the basic game statistics.

### CITIZENS

These are the central NPCs—human or humanoid—that the investigators are likely to interact with during the adventure. Not all of them are Wild Cards, but all play a vital role in the story.

#### JEBEDIAH COLE, MOSSY MASTER

Cole is a true monster. Although he has been an undead servitor of Glaaki for more than a century now, time has ravaged his ancient and decaying flesh. His skin sags on his bones, distorting his facial features to the point where they are nearly unrecognizable. A black mass of rancid, damp hair or weeds hangs from his head, and maggots infest numerous gaping holes where his flesh has sloughed off. His voice, oddly, carries a deep and commanding timbre, with lingering undertones of a British accent.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d10

**Skills:** Boating d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Area Knowledge: Richland County) d6, Knowledge (Mythos) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d12, Taunt d10

**Charisma:** -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

**Terror:** -1; **Mental Anguish:** Spirit+d4

**Hindrances:** Mean, Overconfident

**Edges:** Command, Hold the Line!, Level Headed

**Gear:** Sickle (Damage: Str+d6; Reach 1; 2 hands).

**Special Abilities:**

**Spells:** *armor, boost/lower trait, contact Glaaki, create gate, fear, invisibility, shriveling.*

**Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head). No wound modifiers. Immune to disease and poison.

**Weakness (Green Decay):** Jebediah begins to rot away if exposed to direct sunlight, suffering an immediate wound for each hour of exposure. This damage cannot be restored except through magical means.

**Quotes:** *“All for our great lord!”*, *“Die!”*

**Background:** Cole was a founding member of the cult in Lake Terrace. He was already an undead minion of the Great Old One by the time he arrived in Richland County and took pains to hide his agelessness as long as possible. Shortly after the Buckskin Dam was completed, it became obvious that the progression of decay had reached the point he could no longer appear in public, and he has hidden amongst his followers and descendants ever since, emerging only to perform sacrifices and rituals at the lake long after dark.

**Keeper Tips:** Cole’s long association with the Great Old One and his undead nature have long since removed the last vestiges of humanity from him. He exists only to serve Glaaki and every action he takes is subservient to that cause. He cannot be reasoned with, sidetracked, or even delayed from his purpose. Cole is not a gloating arch-villain from a pulp novel; he is a tool of Glaaki and little more.





## TERRY DEEL

Terry is in his early 50s and wears his rapidly graying hair in a long ponytail. He's often dressed in jeans or cutoff khaki shorts and a tie-dyed t-shirt, an aging hippie trying to deny Father Time.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Driving d4, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Area Knowledge: Richland County) d6, Knowledge (Drug Culture) d6, Notice d4, Repair d6, Swimming d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Sanity:** 5; **Corruption:** 0

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major), Doubting Thomas

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Tie-dyed shirt, lighter, Swiss army knife.

**Quotes:** *"Hey man, it's all cool."* , *"I remember the good old days: free love, good drugs, and protests. Man, I miss those days."* , *"That'll be \$2...no \$2.50 with tax."*

**Background:** Terry was indeed a child of the '60s. He followed the Grateful Dead, attended Woodstock, burned his draft card, and did far too many drugs in his time. When a great-uncle died back in the mid-1990s, Terry, his only living relative, inherited the little marina on Buckskin Lake. Since then, he's become intensely aware of things like operating expenses, taxes, and net profits—mainly since the first two almost always outweigh the last.

He's been supplementing the paltry income from the marina through dealing marijuana for several years now, mostly to local teenagers. Terry's more than a little paranoid about "the Man" catching on to his side income, likely an after-effect of his heavy experimentation with hallucinogenic substances. Ironically, while he has witnessed the Great Old One rise in the lake on at least one occasion, he dismissed that as a flashback.

**Keeper Tips:** Terry is obsessed with money. The marina's income barely covers its own expenses and he watches every penny as a result. Although his affable demeanor and general appearance lead most to think of him as an easy-going guy, his greed underlies nearly every decision he makes. Any bribe of \$20 or more grants a +2 bonus to Persuasion and Streetwise rolls directed at him.

**SHERIFF RUTHERFORD "BUDDY" MULLINS**

Sheriff Mullins, or “Buddy” as he likes to be called, is a middle-aged, slightly overweight, and balding man. He stands just shy of 6’, but his paunch tends to make him look shorter. His uniform, while neatly maintained, is just a little small for him. These elements, combined with Buddy’s personality, tend to make him appear to be the negative stereotype of a backwoods law enforcement officer: slow-witted, incompetent, and likely corrupt.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d6, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Law) d8, Knowledge (Area Knowledge: Richland County) d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Streetwise d6

**Charisma: +2; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 6**

**Sanity: 5; Corruption: 0**

**Hindrances:** Code of Honor, Habit (Minor: Chewing Tobacco)

## Edges: Charismatic

**Gear:** S&W .38 revolver (Damage: 2d6; Range: 12/24/48; RoF: 1; Shots: 6; AP 1; Revolver), handcuffs, two speed-load cylinders.

**Quotes:** “Well, I don’t know about that...,” “You folks mind if I grab a bite before we go?,” “We’re just a simple office. We ain’t got none of that fancy stuff like on CSI, but we do what we can.”

**Background:** Buddy was born and raised in Richland County. Although he did not attend college, he has nearly two decades of experience in law enforcement, first as a deputy and over five years as sheriff. He's well-liked by most of the community, largely because he is polite, self-effacing, and respectful while still doing his job effectively.

**Keeper Tips:** Sheriff Buddy should come off at first like a redneck hick who's got little interest in Tim's disappearance. However, the sheriff is actually a competent and concerned law enforcement officer. As long as the investigators don't go out of their way to antagonize him, or go overboard with "outlandish tales" of lake monsters or undead cultists, Buddy may well become their strongest ally.







## ELROY RASNICK, FRESH DEAD

Elroy is the most normal appearing of the Servants of Glaaki and the current primary contact between his family and the outside world. He has a formidable presence, standing about 6'2" tall and weighing well over 250lbs. He keeps his telltale spine wound (on his abdomen) hidden. Unlike most Servants of Glaaki, Elroy favors a huge hunting knife that he carries in a belt sheath.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Drug Culture) d6, Knowledge (Area Knowledge: Richland County) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Streetwise d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

**Terror:** -1; **Mental Anguish:** Spirit+d4

**Hindrances:** Greedy (Major)

**Edges:** Brawny, Quick

**Gear:** Sheath knife (Damage: Str+d4), pump action 12 gauge shotgun (Damage: 1-3d6; Range: 12/24/48; RoF: 1; Shots: 6; Min Str: d6), box of shells (25).

### **Special Abilities:**

**Masked:** Unless he reveals his undead nature, Elroy easily passes as a normal human.

**Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from Shaken. Called shots do no additional damage (except to the head). No wound modifiers. Immune to disease and poison.

**Weakness (Head):** Shots to the head are at +2 damage.

**Quotes:** *"I don't care much for your looks;"*, *"This here's private property and yer tresspassin';"*, *"I'm gonna gut you like a mountain trout."*

**Background:** Elroy is a bad seed in a very bad family. A couple generations of inbreeding by members of the Church of Living Waters have warped his mind, if not his body. Prior to being made an undead servitor, Elroy had quite the reputation as a hellraiser and bully. However, while he maintains his contacts amongst the criminal element in Richland County, since being taken by Glaaki, he has avoided overt conflicts with the law almost religiously.

**Keeper Tips:** Elroy is cunning enough to use his size to his advantage in negotiations, which has made him very successful in managing

his small network of drug dealers. Threats and harassment are close to the limit of his social skills. He is not above, and actually prefers, using violence as a means to an end, but thanks to Glaaki's influence, won't risk exposing the cult by his actions.

## CICERO SHORTRIDGE

Cicero is a grizzled, mountain-dwelling recluse. He is invariably clothed in stained and heavily worn flannel shirts and work pants. He's nearly 70 (possibly older), carrying the weight of his years heavily on his shoulders.

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Boating d6, Fighting d4, Knowledge (Area Knowledge: Richland County) d10, Knowledge (Mythos) d4, Notice d4, Swimming d4

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Sanity:** 3; **Corruption:** 1

**Hindrances:** Habit (Major: Alcohol)

**Edges:** —

**Gear:** Double-barreled 12 gauge shotgun (Damage: 1-3d6; Range: 12/24/48; RoF: 1-2; Shots: 2; Min Str: d6), flask of strong moonshine.

**Quotes:** *"I just need to whet my whistle,"* , *"Ol' Kerm, he knew the score. He was always a smart 'un,"* , *"That lake ain't safe—there's things in there like you never seen..."*

**Background:** Cicero hasn't been quite right since the day Donald Cochran drowned. He got a good look at Glaaki and it was too much for his mind to bear. He still suffers from mild paranoia and delusions (per the *Realms of Cthulhu* core rulebook) from the event. Already fond of liquor, he started down a short road to alcoholism. Unfortunately, while he knows much of the truth of the secret of the lake, no one believes him as a result.

**Keeper Tips:** Cicero should be one of the—if not *the*—first leads that there is actually something unnatural in the lake. However, Cicero reeks of alcohol and is clearly not fully in possession of his faculties, so give the players plenty of reasons to doubt his word. Play him as obviously paranoid and delusional, but with just enough room for doubt that the investigators follow up on his story.



## DENIZENS

Here are the game statistics for any Extras and/or creatures the investigators may encounter during the course of the adventure.

### GUARD DOGS

**Attributes:** Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d10

**Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

**Special Abilities:**

**Bite:** Str+d4.

**Fleet-Footed:** Dogs roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

**Go for the Throat:** Dogs instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly-armored location.

**Size -1:** Even large dogs are relatively small.

**Keeper Tips:** These are aggressive animals that have been trained to attack and largely mistreated. They are treated as active guards at all times.

### POLICE OFFICER/DEPUTY

**Attributes:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

**Skills:** Driving d6, Fighting d4, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Shooting d6, Streetwise d4

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

**Sanity:** 5; **Corruption:** 0

**Hindrances:** Obligations (Major)

**Edges:** Connections (Police Department)

**Gear:** 9mm automatic (Damage: 2d6; Range: 12/24/48; RoF: 1; Shots: 17; AP 1; Semi-Auto), collapsible baton (Damage: Str+d4), badge, handcuffs, squad car.

**Keeper Tips:** Use this profile for any law enforcement officer (other than Sheriff Buddy) with whom the investigators may interact. The officer's demeanor varies according to the situation and whether or not the investigators are involved in any illegal or questionable acts at the time.

## SERVANTS OF GLAAKI, THE RIPE

Over the decades many of the Rasnick family have been changed by Glaaki into undead abominations dedicated to his service. Decay has begun to ravage their bodies, turning their flesh dry and pale with a tincture of greenish hue. An odd smell reminiscent of rotting bananas often accompanies them and a salty pus continually oozes from their death wound.

**Attributes:** Agility d4, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Skills:** Boating d4, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Shooting d6, Stealth d8

**Pace:** 6, **Parry:** 6, **Toughness:** 8

**Terror:** -1; **Mental Anguish:** Spirit+d4

**Gear:** Sickle (Damage: Str+d6, Reach 1, 2 Hands), double-barreled 12 gauge shotgun (Damage: 1-3d6; Range: 12/24/48; RoF: 1-2; Shots: 2; Min Str: d6), spare shells (6).

### Special Abilities:

**Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage (except to the head). Immune to disease and poison.

**Weakness (Head):** Shots to the head of The Ripe are +2 damage.

**Keeper Tips:** These creatures form the core of the Church of the Living Waters. They fight to the death and take captives only when Cole has specifically ordered them to collect victims for his sacrifices.





# THE ADVENTURE PROPER

## SCENE I: INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

The investigators are contacted by an old friend (or mutual acquaintance, new client, etc.) who lives out of state, James Crocker. He tells them he has been unable to reach his son, Tim, for over two weeks. Tim is a liberal arts student at the College of Charleston, in Charleston.

None of his relatives or Tim's friends has had any contact with his son in weeks. James has called both the local and campus police. Unfortunately, both informed him that since Tim is 22 years old and there is no evidence of any foul play, law enforcement has limited interest or authority in the case.

The last time James spoke to his son, Tim, was on Saturday, July 25th. Since then any calls to his cell phone go directly to voicemail. He has not responded to any emails, either. James asks the investigators to look into the situation. If any of the investigators are professional private investigators, James offers to pay the usual fee for such services.

### DATES

July 25<sup>th</sup> is the baseline date for the events of this adventure, but feel free to adjust that as needed to fit your own campaign. We do recommend keeping the same timeframes that we've established (i.e., two weeks from Tim's disappearance to the investigator's involvement, etc.), but even those can be altered with a little effort on your part if the need exists.

There is no seasonal or specific date requirement for this adventure. While the final scene does involve a lunar eclipse, it is entirely a fictional creation and can occur whenever the plot demands.

James Crocker also provides Tim's cell phone number, a copy of Tim's vehicle registration (a 1996 Subaru Outback), as well as all his vital statistics and Social Security number. In addition, he has sent along several recent photographs of Tim. James gladly answers any other questions the investigators may have as well, most of which is likely detailed under **Professional Background Check**, below.

## PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Should any of the investigators be a police officer or private investigators, they also have ready access to computerized background checks. However, even private citizens can access fairly accurate information through any number of online web brokers legally as well. The fees for such checks run approximately \$50.

Should the party choose to run such a background check, they unfortunately find that it contains little usable information. This is mainly due to his age and the fact that he's a student who's only recently moved out on his own. The information obtained includes his current employment (none), current address, past addresses (family residence), criminal charges (a speeding ticket in his freshman year in college), and likely relatives (Father: James C. Crocker; Mother: Denise Yates Crocker).

The investigators should quickly realize they must visit Tim's apartment to gather further information.

## GOING TO THE POLICE

Should the investigators approach either the campus or local police, they find them cooperative but of little assistance. The authorities recognize the Crockers' concern, but point out that Tim is an adult and it's certainly not unheard of for a student to not call his folks for a few weeks at a stretch. They have taken the Crockers' report, but note that it is a very peaceful town and that it's unlikely that anything has happened to Tim.





## INTERVIEWING NEIGHBORS

Tim Crocker's residence is a small, one-bedroom affair located on the upper floor of a two-story building in a large apartment complex. On the first floor, there is a laundry room and a bank of eight key-locked mailboxes. "Crocker" is written on number 203, which corresponds with his apartment.

Canvassing his neighbors is fairly simple. Anyone making a successful Streetwise roll quickly discovers only one of his neighbors had any regular contact with Tim. Sherrie Newsome, his next-door neighbor in apartment 204, knew him and occasionally played games (board and RPG) with him. She tells the investigators, *"I haven't seen him in, like, two weeks. I don't keep track of him, but he usually lets me know if he's going to be gone more than a few days so I can feed his fish."*

If asked, Sherrie admits she has a key to Tim's apartment, but it takes a successful Persuasion roll—and a reasonable explanation of why the party is looking for him—to convince her to let them use it. (Telling her that they are investigators hired by Tim's family to find him is certainly a reasonable explanation.)

## GETTING IN

The door is locked with a deadbolt, but there are several ways the investigators may gain entrance to the apartment. The party may have already convinced Sherrie Newsome to open the door for them. Similarly, the apartment complex manager—located in another, nearby building—lets them in if they explain who they are and make a successful Persuasion roll.

Simply picking the lock requires a successful Lockpicking roll (-2) due to the deadbolt. Since the apartment is on the second floor, there are no easily accessible windows, but there is a balcony reachable by a Climbing roll. The sliding door to it is unlocked, but anyone attempting to enter by this route must also make a successful Stealth roll or be mistaken for a burglar by a neighbor who quickly calls the police.



## SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

Inside, it's obvious that no one has been in the apartment for days, if not weeks. As soon as the investigators open the door, the smell of garbage and rotting food rolls onto the stairwell. An expensive tropical aquarium occupies a table near the door, but all the beautifully colored fish float lifelessly at the top. A thin layer of dust covers everything. While this is not necessarily unusual in a college student's apartment, nowhere is there any sign the dust has been disturbed.

In addition to the bedroom, there is a kitchen, bathroom, and a living room that doubles as an office for his "work." The entire apartment is a study in clutter: clothes in the bedroom, dirty plates in the kitchen, and piles of books and loose paper in the living room. The walls are covered in newspaper clippings detailing paranormal encounters, blurry photographs of supposed supernatural phenomenon, and an occasional movie poster from a B-grade horror or sci-fi movie.

Once the investigators start digging for clues, there are several to be found depending on the methods they use.





## BATHROOM

Anyone thinking to search the bathroom may make a Notice roll. With a success, the investigator realizes that several common toiletries, such as a razor, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant, and so forth, are missing—exactly the sort of thing one might take if leaving on a planned trip.

## BEDROOM

The room is a disheveled mess, but no more so than the rest of the apartment. The clutter appears to be the result of a college student's lifestyle with an unmade bed and dirty clothes thrown about the room in disarray. Even a thorough search of the room turns up no items of interest of clues to Tim's whereabouts.

## KITCHEN

Dirty dishes sit in the single sink and flies buzz around a three-quarters full garbage can. A half-loaf of bread has begun to succumb to mold and a quick check of the fridge reveals that the milk is about one week past its expiration date. Although not full, there is several days' worth of canned food in the cupboards.

It does not look to be the kitchen of someone who intended to be gone for more than a few days at most.

**Junk drawer.** One of the drawers near the sink is filled with a variety of odds and ends, from paper clips to junk mail to a mini-flashlight and a screwdriver. A successful Notice roll while digging through the junk uncovers a small key. A successful Smarts roll tells the investigator that it likely fits Tim's mailbox downstairs.

## LIVING ROOM

As noted above, there are newspaper clippings and photographs taped haphazardly to the walls. The investigators are welcome to review them, but the sheer number and diversity makes them useless as leads. It appears that Tim regularly purchases tabloids and clips every single story or photograph of a paranormal nature. Every single one of the articles cites “an expert in the field” or “unnamed witnesses,” and the photos range from semi-competent digital effects to what is obviously a man in gorilla suit and a lampshade suspended on fishing line.

**Books.** There is a plethora of books lying about the living room, most all of which deal in some fashion with paranormal events or creatures. There are literally too many to be of any use beyond confirming Tim’s obsession with the subject. However, a successful Notice roll (-2) identifies several as belonging to the university or local libraries. These books are focused entirely on either lake monsters or the history of eastern North Carolina.

**Computer.** There is a desktop computer set up in the living room with dual monitors. The computer is on, but in standby mode. It is not password protected and opens to the desktop immediately.

An investigator who examines the computer files can make a Knowledge (Computer) roll. If successful, she finds from his Internet cache that he had apparently been researching Buckskin Lake, a small manmade body of water in eastern North Carolina. According to one of the websites, Buckskin Lake is home to a monster of some sort, known to the locals as “Louie.”

Further searching on the hard disk finds a large number of digital photographs and short videos (no roll necessary). These have been accumulated over the last two years during Tim’s explorations and investigations. There is no information directly applicable to the party’s search, but their presence should clue in observant investigators that Tim uses photographic equipment extensively—and there is none to be found in the apartment.





**Email.** His email account is web-based and password protected. Unfortunately, if the party invests any time in searching through the stacks of paper for a password, they come up empty-handed. The password is fairly complex, employing both case changes and non-alphanumeric symbols, so no reasonable amount of effort can break the security, regardless of the result on a Knowledge (Computer) roll. Even if the investigators somehow gain access to his email, they find only several emails from his family, a couple of notifications from professors of missed assignments over the past few days, copies of comments on his blog (see below), and a ton of email spam.

**Website.** A successful Investigation roll while looking at the computer reveals that Tim has a blog that he maintains online called “*The Hidden & the Unknown*”. It is a running account of his research into matters of a paranormal or crypto-zoological nature. He’s followed up on everything from crop circles to a bat-human hybrid, but has so far found no hard evidence of anything supernatural, although he’s compiled lots of vague or incomplete leads he insists are the “tip of the iceberg.”

Each entry also has a *Comments* section where his readers post a variety of notes, ranging from skeptical questions to simple encouragement.

His last update, posted about two weeks prior, is a cryptic single line: “I’m onto something big!” There is no hint anywhere on the blog as to what this means. Following the link to the *Comments* section are several posts in the *Comments* section asking for more information. A careful reading finds an anonymous one that asks only, “Is this related to Coalville?” There is no reply and no search of the site reveals any further information on Coalville.

Although many of the posters on the *Comments* do so anonymously, the investigators can obtain a rather lengthy list of email addresses from those that do not. Pursuing contact with the posters reveals that all are apparently interested in the paranormal and follow Tim’s updates for that reason. None of them knows Tim personally or has any information on his whereabouts. (However, if the party gets stumped in the early stages of the investigation, feel free to use one or more of these individuals to help get them back on the right track.)

27



**Credit Card Statement.** Like the cell phone statement, the one for Tim's credit card is for charges that occurred over a month ago. The credit card, at that time, had no charges on it and an available balance of \$1000.

However, the investigators may contact the credit card company and attempt to obtain any recent charges by posing as Tim. To do so, they need to know the credit card number (on the statement), the last four numbers of his Social Security Number, and his mother's maiden name. The investigators should already have Tim's Social Security number from James Crocker, and if they did not run a computerized background check, they can also obtain his mother's name from James as well.

Assuming they do so, they find out two charges had been made since the end of the last billing period. One was for \$105 for a three-night stay at the Super 6 Motel in Walton, NC, dated July 26<sup>th</sup>. The other was for \$170 to a "Deel's Marina" and billed on July 27<sup>th</sup>. No address is listed for the marina nor is there any further explanation of the charge.

### YOU SAY "COALVILLE," I SAY "COLEVILLE"

Once the investigators identify the correct spelling of Coleville, one or more may realize that the anonymous poster who referenced Coleville likely heard Tim speak the name rather than read it anywhere on his blog. Going back over the old cell phone bill and interviewing the people at the numbers eventually identifies the poster as Will Dawson, a fellow student of Tim's who occasionally spoke with him about his extracurricular paranormal pursuits.

Dawson recalls that Tim once mentioned a flooded town in western North Carolina to Dawson that he thought might be the focus for some sort of paranormal activity, but never specified what. There isn't likely to be anything new in the information Dawson supplies, but give the clever player(s) who caught this lead a benny!







## "LOUIE"

There is precious little information available on the purported monster in Buckskin Lake. A successful Investigation roll finds only two references to it. The first is on a paranormal forum website—posted by Tim approximately three weeks ago. The second is from an article on a fishing webzine. The author notes:

*"Buckskin Lake unfortunately does not qualify as a hidden gem. Although there are few anglers at this isolated North Carolina spot, there are also apparently few fish to catch either. After two days on the water, I'd managed to snag one undersized smallmouth bass and a pair of crappies. The owner of the local marina, Leonard Smalls, jokingly attributed the sparse pickings to 'Louie,' the local equivalent of the Loch Ness monster.*

*"I never saw Louie myself, nor any fish worth bragging about either."*









the lodge owners defaulted on property taxes over a decade ago and the property has reverted to the county.

**Buckskin Corporation Filings.** There are precious few documents related to the Buckskin Corporation. The initial corporate filing lists Jebediah Cole as the president and Ellis Rasnick as the registered agent. It was privately held, so no information on stock ownership is available.

Checking on the Buckskin Corporation also reveals its land holdings (see **Coleville Land Records**), all of which, with the exception of the dam itself, now lie at the bottom of Buckskin Lake. The company stopped paying taxes in 1939, shortly after construction on the dam was completed. There are references to the company filed by the state reference upkeep of the dam beginning in 1940, but all are noted as failed to serve papers—indicating that none of the known officers or agents could be located.

**Location of Cicero Shortridge’s Property.** One way the investigators can locate Cicero Shortridge is through a search of the land records here. With a successful Investigation roll, they can pinpoint his house on a map.

**Location of Kerm Mullin’s Property.** A search of land records also reveals the location of Kerm Mullin’s former residence. It has since passed to Alfred Mullins, a nephew, who lives out of state.

**Marriage, Birth, and Death Records.** Several items of interest about Jebediah Cole can be learned by a successful Investigation roll while searching these records. There is neither a birth certificate nor death certificate for the founder of the Church of Living Waters. There is also no evidence that he was married (at least within Richland County) or that he had any children.

There are, however, several marriage certificates signed by him as minister of the Church of Living Waters. Virtually all of these involve members of one of the following families: Matney, Lester, and Rasnick. Often the marriages are between members of those families and in at least a few instances, appear to involve members of the same family, although the exact relationship of the involved parties is unclear.

Following up on any of the names of the married couples usually leads to dead ends. Many of the members of the church were drowned in the flooding of Coleville, but few of these deaths were officially reported. Instead, the victims simply disappeared. The investigators also quickly discover that Matney and Lester are both fairly common names in the area; members of the Rasnick family, however, seem to be almost entirely tied to Coleville and the Church.

**Property Tax Records.** All properties still in the name of Jebediah Cole have their taxes paid annually by a trust fund in his name. The administrator of the fund has varied over the years, but is invariably a Rasnick.





## RAINBOW DINER

Less than a block from the courthouse is the town's only restaurant. The Rainbow Diner sees a fair amount of business during weekdays, particularly at the lunch hour. The interior is somewhat dingy, but not to any extreme degree. The only seating available is in the six booths lining the large front windows or at the counter on aging round stools affixed to the floor. The menu is typical diner fare, with an emphasis on entrees such as fried chicken, chicken-fried steak, and roast beef and gravy over bread.

The only waitress, Mabel, services the entire dining room and counter. She immediately recognizes the investigators as out-of-towners and greets them with the stereotypical "Y'all ain't from around here, are you?" During peak lunch hours, she comes across as short and perhaps even a little rude, but once the rush dies down, Mabel is quite gregarious.

Asking Mabel or any of the other guests about Tim allows for a Streetwise roll. With a success, Mabel (or perhaps another guest) recalls speaking briefly to the "college boy" a couple weeks ago, but not the exact date. The witness remembers Tim asking about a monster up in the lake, but not much else.

If the investigators inquire about the lake monster, Mabel and most of the customers laugh it off. Only one or two have even heard of the myth and all dismiss it. One of the customers may even point out that "Buckskin's a man-made lake, so where's the thing going to come from?" However, with a successful Streetwise roll, another patron mentions that the whole thing probably started from the bottom of a jug filled with moonshine.







## SHERIFF

Walton itself isn't big enough to have a full-time police department. The Richland County Sheriff, Sheriff Robert "Buddy" Mullins, is based in town (Walton being the county seat of Richland County) and deputies handle law enforcement both in town and out.

The sheriff has no information on Tim. The party is the first contact he's had on it. However, he is both approachable and helpful, as long as the investigators work within the law. He can serve as a good contact for finding out about the local area and inhabitants. For example, he's probably the best source for information on how to reach Cicero Shortridge, able to provide fairly specific directions to his shack on the mountain.

A wall near the entrance to the office holds a bulletin board with a few missing persons posters on it. All of the individuals are listed as hiking or hunting in the area and some of the posters date back as far as five years. If asked, Sheriff Mullins says, "*Yeah, it sure does seem a fair number of folks get lost in the mountains 'round here.*"





## SUPER 6 MOTEL

The Super 6, the only motel in Walton, lies about two miles north of the town on Route 460. Although the Super 6 Motel's name may lead some to believe it is part of a national chain, a single visit is enough to realize it's not only a chain, but it's also likely been around for nearly half a century.

The office is a small building near the main road and the rooms are actually individual cabins, each with a bedroom and small bath. Years ago it was known as the Shady Pines Cabins, or just "Shady Pines"—and many locals still refer to it that way—but it was purchased by new owners in the mid-'90s who felt the new name might draw more customers.

The motel is owned by Fred and Martha McCoy, who also serve as office, maintenance, and cleaning staff as needed. Fred spends most of his time on handyman projects around the cabins and Martha runs the desk, gruffly greeting any visitors who enter the office. Not surprisingly given the out-of-the-way nature of Walton and the general lack of amenities the Super 6 offers, the Vacancy sign burns pretty much twenty-four hours a day.

If asked about Tim, Martha makes it quite clear she recalls the young man.

*"Yes sir, I remember him. He was that scrawny college kid stayed here two, three nights about two weeks ago. Said he was looking for the lake monster. I told him I've lived here my whole life and that lake monster ain't but some fool's idea of a way to draw tourists to that damn lake.*

*"Worked too—at least it got that kid to come here, didn't it?"*

*"He left without checking out. That don't bother me much as he'd already paid for the three nights he stayed, but that boy made off with a blanket and pillow. We get them special from a supplier—it's not like I can drive up to the Magic Mart in Baxter and pick up a replacement. That'll be \$42.50, if you're friends or family—and I reckon you are or you wouldn't be askin' now would you?"*

If the party pays the cost of the blanket and pillow, she checks her register and confirms that Tim checked in on Sunday night and was gone Wednesday at some point. He was in his own vehicle and she never saw him entertain any visitors. There was a single call made while he was at the motel and the number corresponds to Deel's Marina at Buckskin Lake.

Should the party specifically ask, Martha tells them no one has rented that particular room since Tim left. Not only are guests rare at the motel, but until just yesterday, the room was short a blanket and pillow. *"If you'd like to see it,"* she graciously offers, *"it's only \$35 a night—not counting taxes, of course."* Martha does not let the investigators view the room without renting it.

## TIM'S ROOM

Inside, the team finds the room has obviously been cleaned since Tim left. Martha says nothing was left in the room besides a few cans of soda and trash (which has long since gone to the county landfill). There are two double beds, an aging television, a chest of drawers, and a small table between the beds on which rests a telephone and small note pad with the motel's logo and address. There is also a small bathroom with a toilet, shower, and sink.

Inside the chest of drawers is a Gideon's Bible (King James Version). There is nothing on the note pad, but an investigator who makes a successful Notice roll can tell that at least one sheet has been torn off the pad. Lightly rubbing the top sheet with charcoal reveals the imprint of two scribbled notes: "Coleville" and "Job 38." Give the player who discovers this a benny for being clever!

Martha says she thinks Coleville used to be a town somewhere nearby, but she doesn't know where. Neither she nor Frank can shed any light on "Job 38"—which is actually a reference to a Bible verse (Job 3:8). See the sidebar on page 48 for details on this.





## WALTON MOUNTAINEER

*The Walton Mountaineer* is the only periodical located within the confines of the county. Once a daily paper, its circulation was cut back to once a week nearly 30 years ago. Typical articles consist of town council resolutions, high school sports, and the occasional craft or recipe.

A single full-time employee, Earl Haney, serves as both editor and primary reporter for the paper. He recalls Tim spending most of Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, in the paper's morgue. He adds Tim was interested in researching stories on the lake monster.

Earl has heard a few rumors about it, but discounts them as tall tales. After all, he points out with a chuckle, "*Buckskin Lake isn't a natural lake, so it's unlikely there are any prehistoric creatures living there.*" If pressed, he suggests that if there is anything in the lake, it's probably just a large catfish.

However, a successful Streetwise roll helps Earl remember that while Tim started out searching for information on the lake monster—mostly in the '50s and '60s—he ended up digging through the older papers, dating back to the '20s and '30s. He also recalls that Tim seemed interested in Coleville, the town that was flooded when the dam was built.

Although the paper maintains a morgue dating to its founding in 1925, due to low revenues, the *Mountaineer* hasn't modernized to the degree of larger publications. Only the last three decades worth of papers have been scanned and digitized. As a result, searching for older articles is a long, motion sickness-inducing process of scrolling through roll after roll of microfiche.

Below are listed specific topics on which the investigators can find information in the newspaper's morgue. As before, the investigators must have some idea what they're looking for, but you can be flexible in fitting their search criteria to the available information.

Each Investigation roll made on events prior to 1980 takes 2 hours per attempt. Any research into subjects from 1980 only requires 1 hour per attempt. With a successful Persuasion roll, the investigators can interest Earl in their search enough to get him to assist—in that case, each attempt takes only an hour and receives a +2 bonus to the roll.

## DIGGING UP DIRT

It is possible that the players may come up with additional subjects they want to research at the *Moutaineer*. If so, feel free to improvise their findings based on not only the information presented in this adventure, but keep in mind what a reporter is likely to uncover. For example, the meaning of “420” is reasonable, but the fact that the Rasnick clan is actually a family of undead cultists dedicated to a Great Old One is not.

**Buckskin Dam.** Construction began in 1936 and became a source of income for many who gained employment working on the dam. Jebediah Cole is noted as the president of the Buckskin Corporation, the company that secured the contract to build the dam. Further reading reveals that the entire idea of the dam originated with the Buckskin Corporation which cited similar projects in the Tennessee Valley.

Jebediah Cole was a vocal proponent of the project from start to finish. He repeatedly notes “the favorable impact the project will have in the region.” Apparently, he was fully in support of the placement of the dam—suggested by his own firm—citing the depressed economy in Coleville and “no foreseeable chance of recovery.”

**Coleville.** The small town was founded by Jebediah Cole in 1929, but no exact date is given. Its initial industry was timber, but later articles indicate that it failed after a few years when the loggers depleted the nearby old growth stands beyond their sustainable yield. There’s no record of what, if anything, replaced timber as a source of income for the area. Later articles only mention widespread poverty and unemployment in the small town and a religion called the Church of the Living Waters.







**Church of the Living Waters.** This eccentric splinter group seems to have been the main point of interest about Coleville. Jebediah Cole is listed as the minister for the church, with a Hiram Rasnick and Donald Lester named as elders.

Although the paper provides little actual information on the church, a few ‘letters to the editor’ from local citizens give some insight. One such letter references “peculiar beliefs on baptism,” while another speaks of “misinterpretations of Noah’s role in the Flood,” but neither elaborates further on exactly what these are. A third printed letter levels a thinly veiled accusation of incest at the church members, claiming “intermarriage is not only common amongst the followers of that blasphemy, but encouraged!”

**Jebediah Cole.** Cole is first mentioned as the father of Coleville. There is little backstory provided on him beyond the fact that he claimed he earned his wealth through archaeological findings in the Middle East prior to the Great War (WWI). However, an exposé published in the late 1940s revealed that Cole may have actually accumulated much of his money from an extensive moonshine operation during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

He is also noted as the founder and minister of the Church of the Living Waters. A single sentence in one of the articles on him states he claims to use a translation of the Scriptures that he feels is “more accurate than the King James Version based on my own background and experience with Middle Eastern cultures.”

**“Louie.”** The first article on the lake monster appeared in 1953. A pair of fishermen claimed to have had their boat overturned by some “huge fish”. A third fisherman died in the accident, which occurred after dark. The sheriff at the time, Marcus Woolridge, noted there appeared to be alcohol involved in the incident. The third fisherman’s body was not recovered, but the authorities noted that the body was likely trapped amidst tree trunks and debris on the bottom of the lake.

A few more recent puff pieces are present about the creature, but none treats it as anything other than a tourist attraction. One article dated in the late 1960s does include a blurry photograph of what may be a long gray mass in the water—or just a low wave. The article credits the photograph to a Cicero Shortridge who claims the gray mass is actually only the “tip of the monster.”

**Missing Persons:** Researching missing persons in the county turns up no information on Tim. It does reveal that the area has an unusually large number of people disappear over a period stretching back as far as the 1950s and earlier. The missing are often hunters, campers, and hikers, although every few years a fisherman disappears on the lake. Some are found by search parties, but about 1 or 2 folks every year vanishes into the wilderness in and around Richland County.

**Rising Water Levels.** The Buckskin River levels were first noted as rising in the early 1960s. If an investigator thinks to correlate this event with the C&P Mine flooding, he finds they occurred at approximately the same time. The common wisdom at the time was that the river's rise precipitated the accident. A second successful Investigation roll (no additional time required) tells him, however, that the river did not begin to noticeable rise until *after* the mine disaster.



### SCENE 3: BUCKSKIN LAKE

Buckskin Lake sits about three miles north of Walton, behind a massive earthen dam. Route 460 leaves the banks of the Buckskin River, zig-zagging up the mountainside to reach the top of the nearly 200' tall dam. There it crosses the dam and winds further into the surrounding hills on the eastern shore.

A single, gravel road diverges from Route 460 on the western side of the dam. A fading, hand-painted sign at the entrance to the road advertises "Deel's Marina" and offers bait, camping supplies, and boat rentals.

Unlike most manmade lakes from the same era, little prep work was performed on the landscape prior to its flooding. As a result, the bottom of Buckskin Lake is a tangled mass of debris, stumps, and rotting logs. This makes any attempts to drag the lake by search parties pointless.

#### "BLACK LAGOON"

Quaintly named by Terry Deel (no other locals actually refer to it by any name), the "Black Lagoon" is an inlet near the northern end of the lake where the water is noticeably darker than the rest of the lake. The discoloration comes from graphite washed into the lake from the tunnel leading to the C&P Mine shaft. While the tunnel is largely collapsed, there is still enough of a channel to allow the mineral to seep back into Buckskin Lake.

Diving in the area is nearly pointless as the lake's already low visibility is further complicated by the presence of the runoff from the mine. After an hour of determined searching, you can allow a Notice roll (-6!) to discover the collapsed entrance to the tunnel leading to the mine. However, it was long ago rendered impassable by the cultists after the mine flooding.

Investigators who land on the western shore of the inlet can make Notice or Tracking rolls. With a success, they discover a pair of camouflaged jon boats about 10' back from the edge of the water. Nearby is a small pile of cinderblocks.

A steep trail leads down to the boats' hiding place from the ridgeline to the west. Following this trail leads the investigators past to the C&P Mine. Along the way, the party runs the risk of tripping a booby trap or two as well as discovering one of the Rasnick marijuana fields (see **C&P Mine** on page 60).

This is where the cult brings any sacrificial victims. They launch from here, row to the middle of the lake, drop their captives overboard tied to a cinderblock to drown in the ruins of Coleville. A few of the undead Servants of Glaaki swim down to make sure the victims don't escape their watery deaths, securing the bodies under rocks or other debris so they don't rise to the surface later.

## **BUCKSKIN LODGE**

Built in the early 1980s in an attempt to bring tourism to the area, the Buckskin Resort was initially intended to cater to draw outdoorsmen to the lake. On the surface, it seemed like a great plan. After all, besides a single campground on the opposite shore, there were no other accommodations on the lake and only a single hotel in Walton.

Unfortunately, the shortage of fish in the lake, combined with no real game animals in the area outside of a sparse number of deer, forced the resort out of business after a few short years. A large, wood-framed building and a badly rotting dock is all that remains of the former Buckskin Resort now.

Originally, the hotel was appointed in standard rustic style, but decades of disrepair have taken their toll. The wood siding has turned gray and begun to pull away from the building. There are few remaining unbroken windows and large sections of the roof have rotted through.

Inside, the resort is in no better shape. Dirt and debris has blown in over the years through the open windows and doorways. Trash litters the floor in most rooms, with smashed furniture and broken glass scattered all about.

Spray-painted and carved graffiti adorn the wood-paneled walls of virtually every room, with the typical collections of initials and misspelled offensive rhymes interspersed by the ubiquitous "4:20".



Anyone closely studying the graffiti finds an additional piece of numerical graffiti carved into one of the walls. Initially, it appears to read “13:8”, but with a successful Notice roll, the viewer realizes it is actually “J3:8.”

This carving was left by Cicero Shortridge. It refers to a passage from the book of Job, but unless the players guess that for themselves, no Smarts or skill roll immediately reveals this bit of information to them.

At some point while they’re exploring the Buckskin Resort—preferably after they’ve found Tim’s belongings (below)—go to **Side Trek: The 4:20 Crowd** on page 51.

### DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS

The carvings left by Cicero Shortridge are references to Job 3:8. Even if the investigators decipher the crude annotation quickly, it’s unlikely to immediately point them toward the lake’s monster due to vastly different translations of the verse. In the King James Version, Job 3:8 is translated: *“Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.”*

However, most newer versions translate *“their mourning”* quite differently. In the New International Version, the same verse reads: *“May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.”*

The King James Version is one of the most common translations available (and also the one found in the Bibles in Super 6 hotel rooms), so feel free to provide that version should your players happen to guess the meaning of the carving too early in the adventure. Later, when they discover there is another, more revealing, translation for the verse, the impact may be much more disturbing to them!

## SOMEONE'S BEEN LIVING HERE!

Carefully searching the second floor allows the investigators to make a Tracking roll. With a success, they find that the ashes in one of the guestroom fireplaces are relatively fresh, perhaps no more than a couple of weeks old. The room faces the lake and is relatively free of trash and debris.

A successful Notice roll (-2) uncovers a section of the floor is loose in one corner. Lifting the boards there reveals a small cache of items. Wrapped in a blanket is a digital video camera, a few articles of loose clothing, a pillow, and a couple of cans of food. Tim used the small compartment to hide his belongings while he was in the field, where they've remained for the past two weeks.

If the investigators visited the Super 6 Motel, they immediately recognize the blanket and pillow as similar to those used by the hotel. The clothing is clean, neatly folded, consisting of a pair of jeans, a pair of socks, and a t-shirt with a blurry print of a UFO with the caption "I Want To Believe."

**Video Camera.** The camera is a middle-of-the-line model with 40X digital zoom and a "night vision" mode. The battery has about a third of a charge remaining on it, but there is a power cord in the case with the camera. There is also a lightweight tripod that telescopes to about 60" high.

If the investigators check, they find there is a memory card in the camera. On it is a single, large MPEG file recorded on July 29 at 12:30 a.m. Played back, the file turns out to be a video that appears to be shot from one of the windows in the room where the cache was found. It's shot at night and focuses on the lake below the old resort.

The video is nearly an hour long and, for the vast majority of the time, is a static shot of the surface of the lake. Once or twice the voice of a young man (Tim) can be heard mumbling in the background about mosquitos. At the fifty-eight minute mark, the voice can be heard again, this time in an excited whisper.





*"I think I just saw something...there! Holy crap!"*

The video image shakes violently as the camera is apparently picked up and pointed out across the lake. The scene blurs as the camera is zoomed in on a spot to the northwest near the far shore. For a moment, all that displays on the screen is indecipherable darkness, with the surface of the lake blending in with the shadows on the shoreline. Then, the 'night vision' mode is turned on, bathing the image in a pale green translucence.

A small wave—more a large ripple, really—rolls across the surface of the lake. Nothing too impressive, maybe size of one made by a small boat with an outboard motor, but no larger. The operator of the camera whispers again, "I hope I got that. I'll have to check the tape..."

The recording ends.









## SIDE TREK: ATTACK AT THE BUCKSKIN

Should the party decide to stake out the Buckskin Lodge overnight, nothing unusual occurs, *unless the cultists have been alerted to the investigators' investigation*. If word has reached the Rasnick clan that investigators have been asking questions about Tim, Coleville, or similar subjects, they take the opportunity to try to remove what is probably the last threat to the culmination of Cole's plan.

A small group of undead minions approach the lodge from the lake. As undead, they are able to move along the lake bottom without worrying about things like Swim rolls or breathing, so they're able to reach the woods near the abandoned building without any chance of being spotted. Once in the surrounding forest, they move up stealthily and ambush any investigators at the lodge. Allow the party to make Notice rolls opposed by a group Stealth roll for The Ripe.

If possible, they try to pick the investigators off individually. Once they've suffered more than half their number in casualties, they retreat through the woods back into the lake. If The Ripe are able, they cart any dead with them; none, however, are left alive for questioning.

Should the players attempt to bring in law enforcement at this time, they find their position less than ideal. At worst, they have nothing besides their own account of an attack by unknown assailants; at best, they have one or more bodies that any observer can tell have been dead for years. However, there are recent wounds on the body (from the party's fight) and possibly even a recently-fired shotgun with the cadaver's prints on it!

In either case, there are enough anomalies to the situation to prevent Sheriff Mullins from taking the investigators into custody. In fact, it makes him more amenable to later evidence the party may present as he has time to mull over the bizarre event.

**Servants of Glaaki, The Ripe (2, plus 1 per investigator):** See page 19. Armed only with pump shotguns.

## COLEVILLE

The sunken ruins of Coleville are located in the northern part of Buckskin Lake, approximately a mile northeast of the Black Lagoon. The ruins lie near the center of the lake at this point. The water over Coleville is about 50' deep, but cloudy with silt, virtually opaque with any disturbance of the lake bottom. Anyone diving in the area suffers a -2 penalty to Notice rolls as a result. Diving at night is virtually impossible with zero visibility.

The depth and silt reduce any sunlight from the surface to a faint luminescence. Little remains of the many of the buildings remain, as most were wood-frame constructions. A few walls stand scattered throughout the area, but the majority of the homes and businesses have been reduced to silt-covered skeletons of rotting wood and rusted nails.

Divers get the constant feeling they are not alone—because they're not. Some of The Ripe are in the lake at all times and shadow the investigators through the ruins, careful to remain out of sight. Allow a few Notice rolls just to keep the investigators nervous, though!

It's possible that at some point one or more adventurous investigators may decide to rent a boat and diving gear from Terry Deel (see page 14) and make a visit to the sunken town. A strong current emanates out of the area as a result of the gate the cultists have created. The current flows out of the ruins in all directions, so anyone attempting to enter Coleville must make a successful Swimming roll (-2) to overcome it.

An investigator swimming through the ruins may make a Notice roll (-2) to observe a few cinderblocks scattered along the lake floor in the area. Closer examination reveals that the blocks each have a piece of rope tied to them. (These are the anchors used by the cultists to drown their victims. The bodies are then removed and stashed in the remains of the church building.)

The gate itself opens only when Glaaki travels to Buckskin Lake, so it's unlikely (and lucky!) that any of the investigators are present to witness it.





## THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING WATERS

Although its roof has long since rotted away, the walls of the Church of the Living Waters, built from stone, remain standing. The interior is filled with an unusual amount of rocks, rotting logs, and even boards and other building materials that are obviously from some of the other sunken buildings in the town. A large number of cinderblocks (with attached ropes) are piled amidst the rubble as well.

Anyone digging through the wreckage for more than a minute or two may make a Notice roll (-2). With a success, the investigator uncovers an old mining helmet. If it's taken to the surface and carefully cleaned, the investigators can find the name "Robert Higgins" stenciled on the inside. A successful Investigation or Streetwise roll back in Walton tells the investigators that Robert Higgins was one of the miners lost in the C&P disaster.

The cultists use the ruin to stash the remains of their sacrifices, covering them with rocks and debris. Over the years, the area immediately around Coleville has been stripped of most of the natural rocks and other items small enough to carry back, so the Servants of Glaaki have begun using the cinderblocks to bury the remains as well.

## DEEL'S BAIT & TACKLE

This combination of a bait shop, marina, boat rental, and campground lies at the end of a mile-long, rutted gravel road. The road is unnamed but a weather-beaten, hand-painted sign advertising "Boat Rentals" and "Camping" sits at its entrance on the western side of the Buckskin Dam. The road is the only one on the western shore of the lake and ends at Deel's store.

Deel's Bait & Tackle, or Deel's Marina as the sign at the parking lot entrance claims, is a small shack built on a dock extending about 50' out into the lake. Crabgrass has begun to reclaim the parking lot, sprouting haphazardly through the gravel. A cracked concrete slab serves as a boat ramp, descending into the lake at the southern edge of the lot.

A battered and ancient Volkswagen Beetle is the only car in the parking lot in front of the dock. The remnants of several anti-war or pro-environment bumper stickers blanket the rear of the vehicle. Window decals of peace symbols and the Grateful Dead logo adorn the rear and side windows.

The bait shop/office has, like everything else in the vicinity, seen better days. Sky-blue paint has begun to peel and flake from the building, beginning near the waterline. The windows are filled with signs advertising snacks and drinks, boat rentals, and the like. What little space remains open is covered in dirt and mold that may well be older than some of the investigators.

Two boats are moored on the dock, both outfitted primarily as fishing vessels, complete with an angler's seat at the front, a small electric trolling motor, and a fish-finder among other things. Next to the boats is a small gas pump.

On the shore immediately north of the parking lot is an anemic collection of picnic tables and barbeque grills marking the edge of the marina's campground. It is unoccupied, and from the weeds growing throughout the area, has likely been so for months if not longer.

Any investigator who spends any time wandering the campground or dock may make a Notice roll. With a success, he spots a glint of light from the opposite shore to the northeast. With binoculars or similar vision enhancement (like a camera zoom lens), he can discern the outlines of a large building hidden amongst the trees there. Terry Deel readily identifies this as the former Buckskin Lodge and provides its background if asked (see **Buckskin Lodge** on page 48).





## MEETING DEEL

If the investigators don't enter the bait shop within five minutes of arriving at the marina, Deel comes out to greet them and invite them into his shop. He is friendly and polite, always looking to make a new customer. Once inside, he offers them cold drinks, which he kindly reminds them cost \$1—after they've taken a drink, of course.

The inside of the shop is cramped and filled with a mix of cheap fishing gear, a couple of racks filled with beef jerky and other salty snacks, and a cooler with soft drinks. Any investigator who makes a successful Notice roll while inside the shop sees a sign behind the counter advertising various fees and services. Camping is \$10 a night, dock and ramp privileges are \$5 a day, and boat rental \$35 a day. However, most notable is a smaller sign advertising scuba lessons and gear rental, each at \$50 a day.

If asked about the scuba lessons, Deel says he provides two hours of instruction for the fee. Although that's not a lot of training, he insists it suffices for the limited purposes anyone might need diving in the lake (and for the purposes of this adventure, he's correct!). He has two complete sets of gear available.

## TIM'S VISIT

Deel feigns ignorance about Tim unless the investigators have evidence placing him there, notably the charge receipts indicating he'd spent \$170 or they mention Louie. At that point, Deel "remembers" Tim as "Oh yeah! The college kid hunting sea monsters," claiming he sometimes forgets customers, since most of his business is from tourists and out-of-towners. If the party doesn't take either of the above tacks, you may also allow a successful Persuasion or Streetwise roll to get him talking.

Deel concedes that while Tim did pay for the rentals and lessons, he never returned to the marina the next day. He hastily adds that the amount is non-refundable though, as he reserved the boats and equipment for him, thus potentially losing sales. Given the near-deserted nature of the lake and bait shop, this is obviously unlikely, but Deel won't admit to it.







## THE DRUG CONNECTION

Deel is pretty close-mouthed about his drug dealings. If the party identifies themselves as either connected with law enforcement or as private investigators, he won't volunteer any information at all. On the other hand, if they have presented themselves as fairly relaxed and open, he does admit to having a small stash of pot he could part with—for a small fee of course—provided they specifically ask about it and make a successful Streetwise or Persuasion roll.

Should the party mention the Rasnick name to Deel, he says only that there are some people in the county by that name. He denies knowing them if confronted, unless the investigators have managed to identify them as his suppliers. However, he does contact Elroy Rasnick at the earliest possible time to alert him to the investigators' interest, which may trigger a confrontation (see **Side Trek: Attack at the Buckskin** on page 52).

### RATTING OUT THE RASNICKS

If the investigators confront Deel with evidence of likely foul play involving Tim—namely that his car was dumped in the C&P Mine shaft—he becomes visibly nervous. Linking the marijuana fields to the mine and, in turn, Deel to the marijuana-dealing Rasnicks persuades him to roll over on his suppliers and admit that he told them Tim was asking around about them.

Taking this evidence to the sheriff is enough to convince him to obtain search warrants for the Rasnick property. The Rasnicks, of course, resist this, leading to a gun battle with law enforcement at their home. The sheriff and deputies sustain severe casualties but eventually capture or kill the majority and rescue Tim.

This does end the threat of the cult opening the gate completely—for now. Cole and a few of his followers escape, however.

## SIDE TREK: ON THE LAKE

This is a completely optional scene that occurs only if the party decides to take a boat out on Buckskin Lake. If so, unless they're unusually well prepared, it's highly likely that they will be using one of Terry Deel's boats. If they decide to actual dive down to Coleville's ruins, see the section on **Coleville** (see page 53).

During daylight hours, nothing unusual occurs and it's actually a good way for the group to get a feel for the layout. If they didn't spot the Buckskin Lodge from the marina, allow them additional Notice checks to catch a glimpse of it.

Venturing out on the lake after dark is a different matter. As noted, both of Deel's boats are equipped with fish finders (basically small sonar devices that display readings of the lake bottom and any fish on a graphic display). If they should visit the area of the lake near Coleville, at some point during the voyage, the investigators notice that the "bottom" of the lake displayed on the fish seems unusually uniform and smooth—and somewhat shallower than they might expect.

This is actually the finder reading Glaaki, who's briefly gated into the lake. Fortunately, the Great Old One has minimal interest in the investigators and moves closer to the surface only briefly to verify they are not members of the Church of Living Waters. On the finder's screen, however, this appears as if the bottom is rapidly rising toward the investigators' boat.

As a side note, any investigator foolish enough to dive into the lake to see what is happening firsthand simply disappears if she is unlucky enough to actually encounter the Great Old One. Her body is never found—although you may have the investigator turn up later as an NPC Fresh Dead if you'd prefer!

Then, just as suddenly, the 'bottom' begins to descend again and suddenly disappears as Glaaki travels back through the gate. The readings of the lake bottom read normally again, displaying a random surface of mixed composition of rock, mud, and debris. The fish finder is, to all tests, performing completely normally and the party is left with nothing but questions about what just occurred.





## SCENE 4: THE BACK COUNTRY

### THE C&P MINE

The C&P Mine sits on the opposite side of a low ridge near the northwest corner of the lake. More than 40 years ago, the mine held the promise of an economic boom the area long needed. Geologists discovered a rich vein of coal running through the hills surrounding Buckskin Lake. A coal mining company from nearby Virginia sank a shaft and began pulling high-quality bituminous coal from the ground.

Unfortunately, in less than a year, one of the tunnels hit broke through into the water table which had been artificially elevated by Buckskin Lake. A torrent of water poured into the mine and before the miners even realized the danger, many were trapped below the surface. The rising flood prevented rescue of any of the trapped men save a bare handful, and in the end, more than 30 miners drowned or slowly suffocated in isolated air pockets.

The dirt road that leads to it has long since overgrown from lack of use. A chain lies across the entrance, attached to trees at either side, but cut in the middle. Any examination of the chain shows it was cut years ago.

The Rasnicks do travel the road occasionally, both to check on their nearby marijuana fields and to access the 'Black Lagoon' for their abominable rites. Most recently, members of the cult brought Tim's vehicle to the mine to hide it. A successful Tracking roll tells an investigator examining the dirt track that vehicles do use the road irregularly, but none have done so in at least the last week.

The road travels west into the mountains, winding its way up and over the ridgeline to the east, and then back into the valley on the other side. The road is narrow, in disrepair, and clings to the side of a very steep slope in places, with tight switchbacks and blind curves. Although the mine lies only about three miles from Route 460 as the crow flies, it is nearly twice that distance due to the twisting nature of the dirt road.

On a 1 on the Driving die (regardless of the Wild Die), the car slides off the narrow road and gotten stuck. Unless the vehicle is equipped with its own winch, it requires a tow truck, costing \$75, and 1d6 hours to free it.

The road ends at a large cleared area carved from the hillside. Brush and wild grass have overgrown most of the clearing, and little remains of the original mine facility. A few bare foundations and collapsed wooden sheds are scattered around the clearing. A pair of corrugated steel sheds well on their way to complete dilapidation are the only structures still standing.

Although padlocks are on the doors of both sheds, none of the windows remain unbroken and large sections of wall have fallen from both allowing easy egress into the buildings. Inside there is nothing of note except a few wall shelves and broken beer bottles. The remaining walls are peppered with gunshot holes and a few expended shotgun shells lay in the corners of the buildings.

Anyone going behind the southern shack discovers the concealed entrance to the trail leading up the mountainside to the east. The trail begins in a small thicket of thorn bushes which can be pulled across the entrance to hide it. The trail leads to the Rasnick's marijuana fields hidden on the mountain above the mine and then over to the Black Lagoon. This is the route the cultists use to reach the lake unseen on the nights they perform a sacrifice.



## THE MINE

At the back of the clearing stands the mine entrance. The exterior is framed in concrete and a large, locked metal gate seals the entrance. The gate is a row of thick metal bars overlaid with chain-link fence. Barring a cutting torch or similar tool, forcing the gate is out of the question. The bars are too close together for anyone to squeeze through, even if the chain-link fencing is removed.

The gate is locked with an ordinary padlock and can be picked with a successful Lockpicking roll. Anyone examining it may make a Notice roll. With a success, the investigator realizes that it is much newer than the gate. There is no rust or dirt on the lock. The latch is rusted, but it has been rubbed loose in the vicinity of the lock. Should an investigator search the area near the gate, allow him another Notice roll. If he succeeds, he finds an older, rusty lock that has been cut with bolt cutters.

If they manage to get past the gate, the mine opening is a little over 6' tall. A narrow set of cart rails runs back into the dark. A successful Tracking roll finds a single set of tire tracks in the dust leading deeper into the mine. With a raise on the roll, three sets of footprints are also visible leading out of the mine.

Investigators may be able to make these tracks out from the other side of the gate, but the roll is at -2 unless they actually enter the mine.



**The Shaft:** The tracks continue back into the mine. After about 50', the shaft drops away into darkness at an approximately 75° slope. Carts were pulled up and down the slope by a cable system. The foundation of the system remains near the top of the slope, but it was removed, along with the cables and carts, when the mine closed.

The tire tracks continue over the edge and into the depths.

The slope descends over 550', far beyond the range of any flashlight. Any attempt to descend the slope without adequate climbing gear is extremely dangerous. Ascending and descending the shaft requires 9 successful Climbing rolls. And, although it is not truly vertical, there are few handholds and limited lighting, so there are no modifiers to those rolls.

Beginning approximately 500' down, the shaft is filled with water. Tim's car is submerged at the bottom of the shaft. It is not visible from the surface of the water level.

**Tim's Car:** If party approaches the sheriff about the tire tracks leading into the mine, he takes interest. He contacts a nearby mining rescue team, but gathering the gear necessary to enter the flooded mine requires an additional day. The team does recover Tim's automobile after about half a day at the site.

The Subaru is in gear and the steering wheel has been tied in place with a rope connected to the brake pedal. The keys are in the ignition. The windows and most glass are broken on the car, likely from the descent into the shaft. While there are some personal effects in the vehicle, there is nothing of any value nor any clues to his whereabouts.

Should any investigator specifically ask, the ashtray (where Tim kept spare change) is missing. You can also reward the player with a benny for noting this, if you want.



## MARIJUANA FIELDS

Approximately halfway up the mountainside from the C&P Mine, smaller trails begin to diverge from the main route. There are a half-dozen such paths, each leading to one of the Rasnick clan's marijuana fields. The fields themselves are small, none more than a quarter-acre in size. Trees and bushes grow amongst the plants, hiding them from aerial observation.

The smaller trails and fields are booby-trapped. The trails are trapped with trip-wire activated shotguns and the fields have punji-spike pits throughout. Each trap can be spotted with a successful Notice roll (-2), but unless the investigator has the Danger Sense Edge, he must be actively searching for a trap to get a chance to make the roll.

There is nothing of interest in the marijuana fields, just random trash—food wrappers, empty chewing tobacco pouches, cigarette butts, crushed aluminum cans, etc. Following the main trail past the marijuana fields leads over the mountain top and down to the hidden boats at the “Black Lagoon.”

### IT'S A TRAP!

**Shotguns:** Each trail is trapped with a tripwire-activated shotgun set at approximately knee level. The first investigator traveling down a trail triggers the trap unless she spots it first (see above). The shotguns are single-barreled, one-shot models, doing 3d6 damage to anyone who trips the tripwire—no roll required to hit. The tripwires can be disarmed with a successful Lockpicking roll, at which point the shotguns can be safely removed.

**Punji-Stick Pits:** The fields are littered with these small pit traps, each no more than a foot deep. Sharpened stakes coated with a variety of toxic substances line the floor and sides. Every 10 rounds an investigator spends poking around one of the fields, he must make an Agility roll. If he fails, he steps in a trap and takes 1d6 damage. He must also make an immediate Vigor roll and if the roll is failed, suffer an automatic wound from the poisons.



## MULLINS HOMESTEAD

The ruins of Kerm Mullins' shack lie about 1½ miles south of Cicero Shortridge's home. The road leading is overgrown and not maintained, even by the questionable standard to which most of the other mountain roads in the area are held. Fortunately, it follows a ridgeline the entire way from the Shortridge homestead and, as a result, does not require any Driving rolls.

All that remains standing are two badly weathered walls and a collapsed roof. Rotting furniture and trash litter the interior, all having suffered years of exposure to the elements. Digging through the wreckage is fairly unpleasant, as all manner of mold and mildew has begun to grow on it due to dampness and filth.

There is little to find in the ruin. The Rasnicks tore the place apart the night they killed Kerm. However, if the investigators have obtained Kerm's notebook from Cicero, they can find the hidden compartment under the remains of a sofa. Inside is a single volume from the *Revelation of Glaaki* that he stole from the cult.

### THE TOME

The book is handwritten and belongs to a set of 12 original volumes Cole brought with him from England. As it is only part of the set, no spells can be learned from it (the Resknicks have the rest of the set). It is written in English and relatively short, so it can be read in a single day.

Any investigator reading the tome who has no dice in Knowledge (Mythos) immediately loses 1 Sanity Point and gains d4 in the skill. An investigator who already has any Knowledge (Mythos) neither loses Sanity nor gains any advance in the skill. The book contains enough lore to open a naïve investigator's eyes to the horrors of the Mythos, but not enough to benefit anyone who's already aware of them.

However, it does contain enough information to identify Kerm's Leviathan as Glaaki. An investigator with Knowledge (Mythos) can use the book for reference, but only with regards to Glaaki and his minions. Finally, if they study the *Revelations* after reading Kerm's notes, a successful Investigation roll identifies the phrase "...when Draco devours the day's reflection..." as referring to a lunar eclipse.







## RASNICK HOMESTEAD

It is possible that the investigators decide to visit or even directly confront the Rasnicks themselves. If so, they quickly discover the family isn't listed in any directory and no mailbox conveniently marks their house.

The party can learn the location of the Rasnick family's home from a variety of places. Cicero Shortridge knows its whereabouts, as does Sheriff Mullins. Terry Deel has also been to the house once or twice, but it is fairly unlikely he provides this to the investigators unless he's been convinced the investigators are about to link him to Tim's disappearance. Finally, researching land documents in the courthouse (see page 34) can also provide the location.

The Rasnick house lies several miles back in the mountains from Route 460. Unlike Cicero Shortridge, there is no mailbox marking the entrance to the dirt road leading to their home. As with many of the other dirt roads in the area, the one leading to the homestead is badly rutted and not maintained.

If the investigators choose to force a confrontation with the cultists at their home, they are likely to find a very tough fight—and one removed from any immediate rescue! The cultists at the Rasnick house aren't the only Servants of Glaaki in the area, but this is the largest concentration in one area.

### OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

The run-down, two-story house sits about 50 yards back in the woods from the dirt road, behind a rusted barbed wire fence posted with several fading "No Trespassing" signs. A short dirt road leads to the house, but is usually closed with a link of chain locked to trees on either side. Several battered and lightly rusted pickup trucks are parked in front of the house.

The house is covered in flaking paint that was once white but over the years has been covered with grime to the point it is now varying shades of gray. There are several windows on each side of the house—and more than a few are cracked or broken—but all are covered from the inside by heavy blankets, curtains, or even cardboard. A dilapidated front porch covers the front entrance and a screened rear porch allows access through the rear.

The Rasnicks have laid a fair number of bear traps in the woods around their property. Any investigator moving through the woods must make a successful Agility roll or step in one. The traps do 2d6 damage and an investigator caught by one cannot move until he gets a raise on a Strength roll to open the jaws; other investigators may assist in this roll as per the *Savage Worlds* core rules. The traps are well hidden and investigators are allowed Notice rolls to spot them only if they use an action to do so.

Two large guard dogs are chained in the front of the house, with approximately 50' of chain, giving them considerable range to threaten any trespassers. Not only do they attack on sight, but treat them as active guards. Should they detect any investigator approaching the house, they attack if possible or loudly bark if they cannot. The dogs' barking draws the attention of the house's inhabitants.

During the daytime, Elroy Rasnick appears armed with a shotgun and confronts anyone poking around the property. If the investigators have taken a direct approach, he is gruff and refuses to answer questions. If they are instead caught sneaking around, he orders them to leave his property. If the investigators refuse to comply, he releases the dogs and backs them up with his shotgun if necessary. Should the investigators fight back, other The Ripe open fire from within the house.

At night, the entire household, with the exception of Cole (who remains in the basement), turn out to attack any interlopers. The first action Elroy takes is to release the dogs.

**Guard Dogs (2):** See page 18.

### INSIDE THE HOUSE

The house was built by members of the cult back shortly after Coleville flooded without the benefit of formal blueprints. As it lacks any central hallways, moving through the house can be disorienting to anyone not familiar with it. Adding to the unusual layout, over seven decades of trash and debris has accumulated in virtually every room, often burying even the furniture. Undead minions tend to not be overly concerned with matters of hygiene and neatness.





Elroy Rasnick is always present on the first floor, except during rituals conducted at the lake or during an attack on investigators at the Buckskin Lodge. There are additional Servants of Glaaki in the house as noted below, evenly divided between the first and second floors. They are also absent at the same time.

Assuming the investigators either defeat the Rasnicks or otherwise gain the time to search the house, allow a Notice roll for every 5 minutes searching a room. With a success, the investigators find an item that can be linked to one of the individuals that has gone missing over the past years. With a raise, they find an object they can identify as belonging to Tim (perhaps the ashtray from his car if someone in the party noticed it was missing).

**Traps:** The cult members have placed booby traps in every room in the house as well as the cellar, making exploration dangerous even when the family is not present. The traps vary widely, from rusted scything blades to spring-loaded spears or sledgehammers. The first investigator to enter each room must make a successful Agility roll or trigger a trap and suffer 2d6 damage from it.

If an investigator specifically spends an action to look for a trap before entering, she may make a Notice roll to detect the trap. Once a trap has been triggered, the room is safe to enter. Members of the cult know where all the traps are and may move freely through the house with no chance to trigger them.

**Elroy Rasnick:** See page 16.

**Servants of Glaaki, The Ripe (2 per investigator):** See page 19. Half are armed with shotguns and half are armed with sickles.

## A DARKER RESOLUTION

Depending on the tone of your campaign, you can also choose to have the cultists to already have sacrificed or otherwise disposed of Tim. Or perhaps the investigators rescue Tim but don't succeed in destroying Cole. In either case, the investigators do not find him in the cellar, but should find obvious evidence that he has fallen victim to foul play. Simply replace Tim with Cicero or another NPC for the final scene of the adventure.

## SECRET ROOM

On the second floor there is a narrow secret room between two of the bedrooms (see the map on page 82). Entry is possible from either side via doors concealed in the back a large wardrobe in each room. Inside the room are numerous newspaper clippings from the Walton Mountaineer dating back to the mid-1930s, all dealing with the construction of the Buckskin Dam.

More importantly, there are 11 of 12 volumes of a handwritten edition of *The Revelations of Glaaki*; Kerm Mullins stole the missing book over two decades ago and the cult has yet to recover it. There are also yellowing and curled photographs of a group of men outside a stone building that appears to be a church. The photographs are of the original founders of the Church of Living Waters outside the church building. If the party has researched him or the cult at the newspaper, they can identify one of the men as Jebediah Cole.





## KERM'S NOTEBOOK

The notebook is decades old and somewhat water-damaged. Many of the pages are stuck together or even missing. However, the writing inside is neatly printed in ink and very legible on the intact pages.

The book is written more as individual notes than a coherent narrative. Furthermore, much of it is filled with abbreviations or strings of numbers apparently recording dates and measurements of some type, although this isn't clear. Pulling relevant information from the book requires 2 hours of study and an Investigation roll. With a success, the investigators identify the following passages (scattered throughout the notebook) as important.

*"After considerable research, I've discovered Cole's 'church' apparently taught baptism was a means of sacrifice, not salvation or rebirth. I think they've been drowning folks all along...even the mine might be their doing. He also preached that Noah's flood was actually a reward, rather than a punishment."*

*"According to one of the few sermons Cole gave that I found record of, he claims: 'when Draco devours the day's reflection' a final baptism will 'open the gates and flood the world.' Have no idea what that means, but it can't be good..."*

*"I crept into the Rasnick place while they were at the lake last night doing God know what. I stumbled on a secret room hidden behind a wardrobe on the second floor. I grabbed a strange book from there, before I fled. Cicero, if you ever need to find it, I'm hiding it under the floorboards in the northeast corner."*

A successful Knowledge (Occult) roll identifies Draco as a counterpart to Leviathan who dwelt in the sky. A raise on the roll tells the investigator that the passage likely refers to an eclipse (devours) of the moon (the day's reflection). Any investigator making a successful Common Knowledge roll recalls there is a lunar eclipse scheduled to occur the following night (after making this revelation) at approximately 1 a.m.

## THE CELLAR

The cellar is walled with wood, but dirt from the surrounding earth sifts through in several places. Several rows of freestanding shelves occupy much of the dark, musty area and others line the walls. Old canning jars, many cracked or even broken, occupy every open space on the shelves and the odor of rotting foodstuffs fills the dank space.

Tim is chained to an open space on the eastern wall, hidden from view of the steps by one of the shelves. He is gagged and barely conscious. The cult's ritual only requires the victim be alive, not comfortable, well-fed, or healthy.

Jebediah Cole awaits with one of . The two are always here, even if the other inhabitants of the house are out. Should the investigators reach the cellar, The Ripe cultist grabs a rusted scythe from one of the work tables and meets them at the bottom of the steps, attempting to prevent them from entering the room.

Cole remains in the shadows near the northern wall, supporting his servant with *armor* before going on the offensive with *shriveling* or *lower trait*. Should the group manage to overwhelm his servant, he attempts to flee through secret door, casting *fear* if time permits.

**Secret Door:** The secret door leads to an unlit, narrow tunnel dug by the cultists over the decades. The tunnel is quite long, nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile in length. There are three booby traps placed evenly along its length: a spring-loaded spear, a scything blade, and a spiked board.

The first investigator in line automatically triggers each trap, suffering 2d8 damage. Notice rolls to detect the traps are allowed only if the investigators are spending an action each round to specifically search for such surprises—don't forget any applicable lighting modifiers. Once the traps are detected, they can be bypassed or deactivated with a successful Lockpicking roll.

Cole has long ago committed the location of the traps to memory and avoids them with no roll necessary.

The tunnel exits into a heavily wooded section of forest some distance north of the Rasnick house. If the investigators manage to flush Cole during the daylight hours, the sunlight is sufficient to trigger the Green Decay. In that case, he attempts a last stand in the shadows of the exit rather than face certain destruction from the sun's rays.





## SHORTRIDGE SHACK

Cicero Shortridge lives atop a ridge a couple of valleys west of the Buckskin River and may prove difficult for the investigators to locate. He is not listed in the phone book, because he does not have a phone. His mail is delivered to a battered mailbox on a post with five others that lies off Route 460 at the entrance to the dirt road that eventually leads to his house. However, Cicero lives almost four miles from the mailbox and has no identifying signs at his house—other than “No Trespassing.”

His shack is bare wood, graying from exposure, with a tarpaper roof. The unkempt and overgrown yard is ringed in barbed wire and a rusting washer, dryer, and two ruined cars sit in it. A small, covered front porch holds a pair of white metal chairs, an old cable spool doubling as a table, and a weather-beaten refrigerator, unplugged, but filled with bottles of cheap beer and mason jars full of moonshine.

Knocking on the front door triggers a gruff “Get off my property!” If the investigators don’t immediately leave, Cicero appears at the door and asks what their business is, particularly suspicious of any “guv’ment-lookin’ types.” A successful Persuasion roll calms the old man down and he agrees to speak with them. A request to buy some moonshine does the same.

**Graffiti:** If asked about the cryptic numbers in the Buckskin Lodge, he admits to putting it there. He explains its meaning if the party hasn’t guessed it yet and says he put it there as a warning. In Cicero’s somewhat unstable mind, his message was crystal clear and he seems confused if the investigators didn’t immediately grasp it.

He also admits to running off kids at the Lodge, but never saw Tim there. Again, he says he does it to protect them. If asked from what, he says “the thing in the lake...and the Rasnicks.”



**Kerm Mullins:** At some point, it's likely that Kerm's name comes up while the investigators speak with Cicero. He tells them that Kerm had been his lifelong friend. Even though *"Kerm had him some college learnin', he weren't uppity at all."*

Kerm disappeared almost twenty years ago and Cicero believes the Rasnicks were responsible, although he has no proof. Kerm was convinced the Rasnicks were connected to the thing in the lake. He also has an old notebook of Kerm's the man left with him for safe-keeping, but Cicero has never been able to grasp most of what is in it.

The investigators can convince him to give it to them with a successful Persuasion roll.

**Lake Monster:** Cicero gladly tells the party about his encounter with the lake monster, which he calls 'Leviathan', years ago.

*"Me, Kerm, and Don Cochran was out fishin' one night. We was up near Coleville—you know where that is? Anyway, the boat started rockin' and at first I thought the lake was drainin', 'cause all the sudden I could see what looked like trees a'risin' out of the water. But them trees was pointy and straight, more like spikes than anythin'.*

*The thing bumped agin the bottom of the boat and threw us out of it. Me and Kerm swam towards the shore as quick as we could, but Don didn't make it. Whatever that thing was, it snatched him down into the lake. He screamed bloody murder until the water choked him off..."*

At that point, he pauses and his eyes take on a far-away, haunted look. He opens the fridge, pulls out a Mason jar and takes a long drink.

**Rasnicks Family:** All Cicero knows is what little he's managed to glean from what Kerm told him years ago. He believes they're part of some unholy church and that they worship the thing in the lake. He's also pretty sure they were responsible for Kerm's disappearance, but he has no proof. He doesn't know their true nature or that Cole is still alive.

**Tim:** Cicero says Terry Deel did mention to him a week or so ago that some kid was trying to get in touch with him. However, he never spoke with the boy.







## SCENE 5: THE SUMMONING

Once the investigators decipher the meaning of Draco and the rest of the phrase in Kerm's notebook, the climactic encounter of the adventure becomes inevitable. This is, of course, unless the investigators managed to destroy Jebediah Cole prior to this point. If they raided the Rasnick homestead but Cole escaped, he gathers other Servants of Glaaki hiding in the surrounding mountains and attempts to complete his final ritual.

With a successful Common Knowledge roll, the investigators realize there is a lunar eclipse due at approximately 1 a.m. on the night of the next day. Up until this time, the party has been able to poke around the lake and surrounding county at their leisure—whether they knew it or not. Now, they've only a little over a day to put the pieces together!

Hopefully, by this time, they've visited either the Black Lagoon or the C&P Mine and found the secret trail leading over the mountains. If not, a nudge in that direction from one of the NPCs might be in order. That is the route the cultists take to reach the lake and if the investigators haven't found it yet, they may be unable to stop the final ceremony.

The cult arrives at the C&P Mine in a procession of pickup trucks at approximately 10 p.m. to start the 2-hour trek over the mountains to the lake. Cole, Elroy Rasnick (assuming he's not been killed), and several of The Ripe are present. With them is the victim for their sacrifice, whether Tim or another NPC.

When they reach the lake shore, the cultists uncover the two boats and board them. The Ripe divide as evenly as possible, with Cole going in one boat and Elroy and the victim in the other. They row out on the lake to Coleville, taking approximately 30 minutes.

Once there, Cole conducts the final ritual which takes another 30 minutes, beginning it 20 minutes before the beginning of the eclipse. At the end of that ritual, the victim is tied to a cinderblock and cast over the side. The ritual must be completed during the eclipse to be effective and the eclipse lasts approximately 90 minutes.

## THWARTING THE CULT

Intercepting the cultists before they reach the lake is the best course of action. Prior to reaching the lake, there is only one of The Ripe for each investigator in addition to Elroy Rasnick and Jebediah Cole. All of the cultists with the exception of Cole are armed with shotguns.

Once the group reaches the lake, it is met by The Ripe who dwell in the ruins of Coleville. There is an additional The Ripe cultist for every investigator, but these are armed only with sickles. If the party waits until the Servants of Glaaki are actually on the surface of the water, The Ripe from Coleville attempt to grapple with the investigators, dragging them into the lake to drown them.

Should the investigators not discover the whereabouts of the cultists before they begin rowing to Coleville, any investigators on the lake shore, at Deel's Marina, or in the Buckskin Lodge may make a Notice roll (-2) each minute to see the two boats on the lake.

If Cole is slain or the investigators manage to prevent the cultists from sacrificing their victim before the end of the eclipse, they succeed in preventing the Servants of Glaaki from fully opening the gate—at least for now. As long as Cole exists, though, the threat of the gate remains.





## THE GATE OPENS

In the unfortunate event the investigators fail to stop the cultists, the Servants of Glaaki open the gate. Water begins pouring through the portal at a much greater rate and the flooding of the Earth begins. Exactly how much is up to your campaign.

On a Great Old One's scale, the end of the world doesn't necessarily have to happen overnight. Opening the gate may simply increase the current flow into the lake to a greater degree. Within a few weeks or months, the water overtops the dam and floods Walton, but it is years or even decades before humanity begins to notice the sea levels rising—and even then it may initially be attributed to something as mundane as global warming.

On the other hand, you may want to end the world with a bang. In that case, while the investigators watch, water begins to geyser a quarter-mile into the air as a torrent of unimaginable proportions begins. As the investigators watch, the fountain incredibly grows larger by the minute. The dam is overtopped in moments. The nearby mountains surrounding the lake began to crumble as their foundations are undermined. Within days, the planet is completely engulfed by the flood.



The investigators can take some small pride in being the first people to witness the beginning of the end of the world...



## HANDOUT I

After considerable research, I've discovered Cole's church. Apparently taught baptism was a means of sacrifice, not salvation or rebirth. I think they've been drowning folks all along. Even the mine might be their doing. He also preached that Noah's Flood was actually a reward, rather than a punishment.

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According to one of the few sermons Cole gave that I found record of, he claims: when Draco devours the day's reflection a final baptism will open the gates and flood the world. Have no idea what that means, but it can't be good.

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I crept into the Rasnick place while they were at the lake last night doing God know what. I stumbled on a secret room hidden behind a wardrobe on the second floor. I grabbed a strange book from there, before I fled. Cicero, if you ever need to find it, I'm hiding it under the floorboards in the northeast corner.



# Keeper's Map



Buckskin River

Route 460

Rasnik's House

C&P Mine  
(Abandoned)

Coleville

Buckskin Lodge

Cicero's Shack

Deel's Marina

Buckskin Dam

Ruins of  
Kerm's Shack

Super 6 Motel

Walton

Route 460



1 Mile



# Player's Map



Buckskin River

Route 460

Deel's Marina

Buckskin Dam

Super 6 Motel

Walton

Route 460



1 Mile

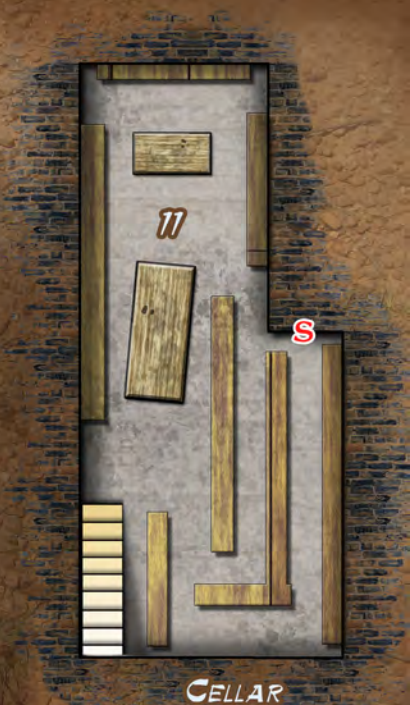


# CP Mine Site



Hidden Trail





# RASN I K HOUSE

1. LIVING ROOM
2. BEDROOM
3. SITTING ROOM
4. DINING ROOM
5. KITCHEN
6. PANTRY
7. SCREENED PORCH
- S. MASTER BEDROOM
9. STORAGE
10. NURSERY
11. BASEMENT