

Badwater: A Horror Story

***THE SHATTERED GOD MYTHOS***

By

Travis Liebert

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Chapter 1	3
Chapter 2	8
Chapter 3	13
Chapter 4	15
Chapter 5	23
Stay in Touch!	25

# Chapter 1

To whoever finds this letter, read my words carefully, for this is to be considered a warning. I assure you that everything I have written here is the truth. I wish things could be different, but this is the harsh reality, and you must learn of the terrible things that have happened here. I'm sorry, but I can't allow this knowledge to end with me.

My name is Joseph Albright, and I'm a search and rescue diver. I've been doing this for twelve years now, and I've seen a lot of upsetting, even unexplainable things in my time. However, even my worst experiences as a diver pale in comparison to recent events.

Water search and rescue is often a depressing job. When someone gets lost in a forest, they can still be found alive days later. But when we get a call, it's almost always body recovery. People don't last long in the water.

I can't tell you exactly where, as I don't want anyone visiting this place and potentially unleashing its horrors, but I live in a northern territory known for its water sports. Fishing, kayaking, diving - whatever it is, our waters probably have a solid reputation for it. Despite that, this area isn't a resort. The waters here are cold and oftentimes vicious. Search and rescue operations here can be grueling and not many stick with it. There are a few older guys who have been doing search and rescue longer than me, but I'm one of the most experienced around.

Like I said before, this job is more body recovery than anything, especially here. We save more live moose from the water than live humans. And when we get a call about a missing child...well, we'd be better off just giving our condolences to the parents. That's just how the waters are here. Our small town has one of the highest drowning rates in the country, but we look anyway, and we usually find a body.

I've considered quitting many times in my career. Most people quit after their first recovery. In training, we try to emphasize just how much water can distort a corpse, but nothing can prepare you for the harsh reality. It's not uncommon for us to find bodies bloated beyond recognition. Sometimes they barely even seem human – just disgusting, formless blobs floating like a nightmare among the weeds. A lot of divers don't last long after seeing something like that. But I continued to do it after all these years. I figured if I didn't then no one would.

This all began when I got a call about a missing boy. A man had taken his ten-year-old son fly fishing. At one point, the father managed to stab a hook through his finger, so he returned

to his truck to get a first-aid kit. The boy was gone when he came back to the river only a few minutes later, presumably having fallen in.

When I first heard the story, I hung my head in silence for a moment. It had been raining heavily for almost a month now, and the waters were running faster than ever. To make things worse, it was unusually cold for the season. Several people had gone missing in recent weeks, and many of them had yet to be found. I had little hope of finding the boy alive.

Several other divers and I were at the site where the boy went missing within an hour, and a larger search and rescue team located a few towns over was headed our way. We talked with the father and even searched the forest for a bit, hoping that he had just wandered off. But eventually, we realized that we would have to begin searching in the river. I stared down at the icy torrent and felt a sinking feeling in my chest.

I knew the boy was gone as soon as I got in the water. The current was worse than it had ever been, and even I had difficulty navigating the freezing depths. We looked for hours in the surrounding areas and even expanded our search once the larger team had arrived. The boy was nowhere to be found. It was as if he had just snapped out of existence.

I was surprised. I hadn't expected to find him alive, but I had at least anticipated finding a body. However, there was no trace of him. The sun got low and the air grew colder. We considered calling it off as nightfall approached and resuming the search the next day. But, just as I was about to return to basecamp and pack up my stuff, I discovered something.

There are a lot of creek beds and small tributaries around the river. Many of them have dried up as a result of encroaching vegetation or manmade efforts to divert the water. We usually don't pay any attention to them. However, with all the recent rain, I noticed that one of the larger creek beds had begun flowing again. A surprising amount of water crashed through it, easily enough to carry a young boy.

The creek ran directly across a bend in the river, connecting it at two points. I followed it and realized that the boy could be located outside of our initial search area. Hell, that was an understatement. If he had gotten caught up in the creek, he could be over a mile away from where we were searching. As I approached where the creek reconnected with the main river, I felt a sinking feeling in my gut.

There's a place in the river where not even search and rescue divers are supposed to go. It's known as Badwater. This area lies on one half of the river and runs for about a hundred yards.

It's near a densely vegetated area, so we don't often have to worry about people swimming there. But a lot of disappearances occur in the surrounding waters. Despite that, I've been warned not to dive there ever since I began doing search and rescue. Supposedly the undercurrent is so strong that even the most experienced swimmer would be swept away in an instant. "Don't go near Badwater." It was a mantra of the older divers.

The creek ended exactly in the center of the Badwater region. As I reached it, I stopped and chewed my lip thoughtfully. If I went back and reported this to the other divers, they would tell me to let it go. They wouldn't let me dive there. But deep down I felt like the kid's body must be tangled up in some weeds nearby. If only I could find it. I hated the idea of that boy being stuck down there, slowly bloating and rotting away while his parents sat at home wondering where their boy had gone.

Badwater didn't seem to be that bad. I'd seen rougher waters before, but I knew looks could be deceiving. Just below the surface it could be flowing faster than I ever imagined, and I'd be swept away in an instant. Besides, I wasn't supposed to dive alone. I almost turned back, but something made me stay. I stared into the river for a moment, thinking about the boy. Then I put on my gear and dropped into the icy waters.

The first thing I noticed was that the current actually seemed pretty weak. To my surprise, it felt weaker than the rest of the river. The water was extremely deep there, and I could see only blackness below as I dove. I kicked deeper and deeper, thinking that the current might pick up lower down, but the opposite seemed to be true. The water was almost completely still. I might as well have been diving in a pond.

I went even deeper and the water grew ice cold. Finally, green shapes materialized in front of me. I thought I'd finally reached a bed of weeds. But, as I kicked lower, the truth came into full view. I felt vomit come up at the sight, an odd and dangerous sensation when you're diving.

Countless seaweed-green arms stuck up from the ground below. I thought I had come upon a trove of bodies, but, moments later, I realized there was more to it. The arms grew directly into the ground, roots spreading out from their base and digging into the sediment. It was as if someone had cut off hundreds of arms at the shoulder and planted them there. I watched as they clutched at the water around them like predatory animals. They varied in size and seemingly

age. Grotesque baby hands sprouted near the bottom, and they opened and closed their fists hungrily.

It was then that I saw the boy. His eyes stared sightlessly ahead as those grotesque arms pulled his dead body downward. It seemed they had just gotten ahold of him. The arms yanked at him, burying him in the surrounding sediment. They pushed and writhed and squirmed until he was securely buried up to the chest. I stared in mesmerized horror.

That was when the other bodies came into focus. There must have been at least four more, all in varying stages of decay. Some were bloated beyond recognition, only bulky, white masses that protruded loosely from the riverbed. I once again felt vomit rising in my throat and swallowed it back down. The fucking hands were feeding off the bodies, using them like fertilizer.

The moment I clambered out of the water, I tore my mask and regulator off and retched. I couldn't stop thinking about those disgusting bodies, those grasping hands. They were like some sort of carnivorous plant, yet they were so humanoid. I vomited again at the thought.

I frantically ran back to basecamp. I wanted to shout what I'd seen at the top of my lungs. I felt that everyone should know about those awful things down there. However, I knew they would all think I was crazy. At the very least, I would be chided for going into Badwater, and it's not as if any of them would be willing to dive down there and corroborate my claims.

When I got back, I pulled aside one of the other divers. Moose was the most experienced person on our team. He'd been diving for over twenty years, ever since moving here. I told him about what I saw. When I finished, he stared at me in cold silence.

"I told you never to go near Badwater." His voice contained an iciness that even his thick Louisiana accent couldn't conceal.

"That's what you're concerned about?" I was incredulous.

He placed a hand on my shoulder and squeezed tightly. "Don't tell anyone else about this. If the others find out that you went into Badwater..." He trailed off and thought for a moment. "Well, it won't be good." He shook his head like a disappointed father.

"But what about those things?" I tried to keep my voice down, hoping no one would hear us. "How many people have died because of those fucking things?"

"Shut up," Moose said. "We have an agreement. There's a reason they only grow in Badwater. Don't fuck this up."

I started to say something, but the words caught in my throat. He was keeping something from me.

He sighed and I saw something like sadness behind his eyes. “Sometimes you have to decide between lesser and greater evils. Even the best possible decisions can still keep you up at night.” He went silent for a moment and only stared at me. “Don’t tell anyone about this. Maybe one day you’ll understand.”

He walked away after that and called off the day’s search. The next couple days passed in a strange haze for me. Despite knowing where the boy’s body was, Moose had the other divers continue the search until it was finally called off two days later.

It was during that time that Moose began to act differently toward me. Whenever we saw one another, he would give me a strange, knowing glance. There were two other older divers, Clyde and Ryan, with whom Moose often spoke. I began to notice how they spoke to each other in hushed tones, clustered in one corner or another, looking as if they were hiding something.

I wondered what he meant when he talked about the “agreement.” And what the fuck were those arm things I had seen? My blood ran cold when I thought about them, the way they moved, how they fed. I just couldn’t tear my mind away from them. However, I tried to ignore those thoughts and do what Moose had asked. Certainly, there had been a reason behind his actions. I had always known him to be a good man.

## Chapter 2

During those next few nights, I was plagued by nightmares unlike anything I had experienced before. They were always so vivid, so real. They were always the same. At first, I was asleep in my bed, then suddenly those arms rose from the darkness around me, pinning me down and covering my mouth. I struggled, but they were so strong. The smell was the worst part. It was like old grass clippings and rotten fish mixed together. The next thing I knew, I was awake, retching with tears streaming down my face, certain that somehow that smell still permeated my room. I've experienced that same dream every night since diving into Badwater.

About five days after that first call, I received another about a body that had been found in the river. I wasn't sure why they had called me. If the body had already been recovered, then there was no need for me to be there. However, the search and rescue worker on the phone was acting strangely and insisted that I come, so I headed to the river.

When I arrived there, I felt a chill run down my spine. The body was found almost exactly where the boy had disappeared. I approached the bank to see Moose and two others standing over a corpse. Their backs were to me, and I could hear one of them speaking angrily. He was practically shouting.

"Shit. Shit. Shit." It was Clyde, one of the other more experienced search and rescue divers. As I got closer, I saw that the third man was Ryan. I felt chills run down my spine. All three of the senior divers were in one place. I recalled the things Moose said to me last week as well as the knowing glances I'd seen those three share. Something was up. "Do you think it was him?" Clyde asked.

"Let's not jump to conclusions," Moose said.

"I heard voices by the river last night," Ryan said suddenly. The other two went silent and stared at him.

"The lures?" Clyde asked. His voice was hushed, and I could barely make it out.

Ryan nodded. "Almost definitely."

"That breaks the agreement, though," Clyde said. "He's not supposed to use those anymore."

"Well, he is, for whatever reason." Ryan turned to Moose. "Any idea what's going on?"



Moose started to respond when a twig snapped beneath my weight. The three older men whirled around to look at me. That iciness was still in Moose's gaze, but I also noted a twinge of fear.

"About time you got here," Clyde said from beside him, seemingly unaware that I had been standing there for a while. "We've got bad news." He stepped aside so I could see the body more clearly.

My blood ran cold the moment I laid my eyes on it. I was already reeling from the conversation I had just overheard, and the sight of the body only compounded that confusion. It was Michael, one of the new search and rescue divers. He laid on his back in full scuba gear minus a mask. I moved forward and knelt beside the body. Michael was new to search and rescue, and he had recently attended a few classes I taught. Tears stung my eyes as I stared down at him. What the fuck happened?

As if in response to my silent question, Moose spoke up. "For some reason, he was diving in the river. We think he got swept up in a strong current and hit his face on a rock, knocking his air regulator off and causing him to drown. We haven't found the regulator or his mask anywhere."

I continued to stare down at the dead man in front of me. "Why was he in the water?" I asked.

The three men exchanged glances. "We don't know," Clyde said. "We think he may have been looking for that boy we never recovered."

I knew they were lying. Michael was one of the most straight-edge divers I'd ever met. He would never break a minor safety regulation, let alone go diving alone in rough waters. It just didn't add up. Additionally, there was another reason their claim didn't make sense. Michael had been out of town visiting family on the day the boy went missing. Why would he come back if he wasn't even there for the initial search? He wouldn't even know where to look.

I refrained from arguing though. I didn't want them to know I suspected anything. Clyde and Ryan were unaware I'd been to Badwater, assuming Moose kept his secret. From what I could tell, he had. They acted as they always had toward me.

Just then an ambulance pulled up. The others left me alone with Michael's body while they talked to the driver. As I looked at the body, I realized something was off. There weren't

any contusions on his face. If the current had actually dashed him against a rock, there should at least be a bruise. But there was nothing. His face and head were completely unmarred.

At that moment, I noticed something else strange. A bruise peeked out from the neck of his dive suit. I pulled the rubber down to reveal a splotchy blue and black mark that circled his neck. It looked like he had been strangled. My thoughts immediately turned to those strange hand things I'd seen at Badwater. But if that's what killed him, then why did they let him go? Was it a warning?

A deep sense of dread settled into my stomach. Something terrible was happening, and the older divers were in on it. The ambulance took Michael's body away, and I returned home feeling drained. I couldn't bring myself to do anything that day and only sat in cold silence. I slept fitfully that night, plagued by the nightmares I mentioned earlier.

Most of the next day passed in the same cold silence as the one before. I felt numb. The conversation I had overheard between the older divers kept playing over and over in my head. What did they mean by lures? Who was this *him* that they kept referring to?

I recalled what Ryan had said about hearing voices near the river. That must be the lures they had been talking about. As I sat there, my numbness faded and was replaced with anger. Michael was dead, and it had something to do with Moose and his secrets. It probably had something to do with those lures too. I grabbed my coat and headed out the door. I was going to see what Ryan had meant when he said he heard voices.

I wandered the riverbank for thirty minutes, hearing nothing but the sounds of nocturnal animals. I had spent most of my life around the river, but it was still creepy at night. However, after recent events, it had taken on a different darkness that weighed down upon me, exhausting me. I was about to head back when I heard something just out of earshot. It sounded like someone's voice. The sound grew louder as I moved down the bank until I could finally make out what it was saying.

"Help! Please, I can't swim."

Instincts took over and I began to sprint in the direction of the voice. I eventually lost track of where I was and stumbled blindly through the underbrush, barely even using my flashlight and relying only on my hearing to guide me. Finally, the voice came from the water beside me. It sounded like a child. I was about to wade into the river when something stopped me in my tracks.

I listened to the voice carefully.

“Help! Please, I can’t swim.”

It was the exact same words, over and over again, like a record being played on loop. Even the tone was exactly the same every time. It didn’t sound right. They were yelling, but it wasn’t the cadence of someone who was scared. There was no urgency to their voice. While it was loud, bordering on a scream, the plea was almost monotone. Additionally, I couldn’t hear anyone splashing or struggling.

My heart pounding in my chest, I shined my flashlight along the river. That was when I saw it.

A face pressed out of the mud of the riverbank. Like the hands I’d seen, it was seaweed green and roots grew from its edges and into the surrounding earth. It was like someone had constructed a human head out of algae or moss. The mouth opened and closed, repeating the same call for help over and over again, while the rest of the face remained flat and emotionless.

My whole body shook as I stared at the thing. Just beyond it, in the water, two of those hands reached up from the shallows, grasping for anything and everything. A cold realization came upon me. Michael must have heard that thing’s calls for help and immediately dived in, only to find himself dragged under by those groping hands. This is what Ryan had meant by lures. I felt sick to my stomach as I watched the eerie face cry out for help.

The cries grew quieter and more spaced out until the face became completely silent. Then, without warning, it retreated back into the earth, burying itself in a thin layer of mud. I shuddered to think about that thing just beneath the surface. Then I realized that there could be more. Who knew how many of them were lurking just below me?

I sprinted back to my car, disgust driving me more than fear. When I got home, I sat up all night thinking about what I saw. I thought a lot about Michael and realized that things still didn’t make sense. If he had heard someone actively drowning and crying for help, he wouldn’t have had time to put a suit on and dive in. There’s no reason he would have had his gear in the first place. These thoughts churned within my mind for hours. I managed to get a little sleep just before sunrise but was woken by the nightmares once again.

That nightmare was the worst one yet. Just like last time, those hands reached up from the darkness and grabbed me, covering my mouth and pinning my arms to the bed. That sickening fishy smell turned my stomach, and my eyes began to water as I struggled against them. Then,

two more hands rose up and held my eyes open. I watched in horror as a face protruded from the ceiling above me. It was like the one I had seen at the water, all green and mossy. Tears streamed down my face as I recognized the features - It was Michael.

“Why did you do this?” He said, cold black fluid dripping from his mouth.

I tried to respond but couldn't past the hands that were clasped over my face.

“Why why why why...” Michael went on and on, his voice becoming raspier with every query. I laid there for what felt like an eternity while he stared down at me and asked why I'd done this to him.

I woke in a cold sweat, and, just like before, could have sworn that disgusting stench was still there. I began to think that it was all my fault. I should have heeded the warnings about Badwater. I don't think I was the first to go there, but I was the first to see the truth of it and come back alive.

That place wasn't just something spoken about amongst the divers. A number of local legends surrounded that part of the river. I believed one of them might have actually mentioned hands that dragged people to their demise. Growing up, kids would spread rumors and folk tales about Badwater and the river as a whole. As I got older, I assumed they were just stories that adults had made up to keep us away from the dangerous rapids. I now realized that wasn't the case.

## Chapter 3

The next morning, I began digging into the town's history. Legends went back as far as anyone could remember, and even the natives told stories about the river, treating it with a certain fear and reverence. I found an eerily familiar description of a Native myth about the river. It was in the library's archives and written by some Doctor Pengloss. It discussed mythology and folklore as a potential manifestation of something real.

The myth tells the tale of a young man who lived by the river. He had everything he ever wanted: a beautiful wife, a son, bountiful harvests, and a warm place to sleep. However, that all changed when he was overcome by a terrible sickness. That same sickness eventually spread to his wife and child. He recovered, but his family didn't, and he was left alone.

He still had a warm bed at night and healthy crops, but he fell into a deep depression. Unsure of what to do with himself, he would wander the river's edge for hours, silently hoping that one day he would fall in and be swept away from his troubles.

One evening, while pacing the riverbank, he heard his wife and child crying out for him. Frantic, he searched everywhere for the source of the voices. They began to tell him that they were living happily in the river now, enjoying life without him beneath the water's surface. His family urged him to dive in and join them so that he too could live happily. Without a second thought, he jumped in only to drown, cold and alone.

Through further digging, I discovered a vast collection of native lore about the river. Many stories were similar to the one about the man who lost his family, but there were others that made everything seem much more complex. Many of them referenced some kind of god or spirit that the natives worshipped. There were a few different translations, but the most common one I found was "King Moss." Some stories referred to him as a personification of the river itself, while others described him as a spirit with whom the people struggled.

However, one common theme was the existence of a sort of pact made between King Moss and the locals. Some stories made it sound like they sacrificed people to him in order to quell his rage, while others described a situation in which he was to be left alone in exchange for not actively hurting humans. A few even claimed that his "benevolence" towards humans was due to the fact that he was sleeping and would one day wake up and wreak havoc.

I couldn't help but be reminded of the agreement that Moose and the others mentioned. I wondered if they had been referring something like the pact in the myths. I was still unsure about the whole King Moss thing. It seemed a little farfetched. But after everything that had happened, I was almost willing to believe anything.

After that, I decided to plot out all the disappearances and deaths that had occurred in the past few decades. What I found was pretty typical. Most reports were evenly distributed around the most dangerous parts of the river as well as the areas where the most people tended to gather. However, I noticed an unnerving trend. Reports in which there was no body recovered occurred almost exclusively in the areas around Badwater. In those areas, a body was only recovered about fifteen percent of the time. This was commonly attributed to the strong current there which supposedly carried them too far to be found. But I knew the truth. The hands got those people and dragged them to a watery grave.

However, while studying the disappearances, I noticed something even more intriguing. I used several different maps to plot out the disappearances and began to find inconsistencies between the two. Curious, I looked at a few more maps and discovered a similar pattern. They were all practically identical aside from a few changes due to creeks drying up and urbanization. However, there was one area deep in the forest west of Badwater that didn't seem to match up on any of the maps. Some of them indicated nothing but forest there, while others showed a small lake. A few of the older maps even depicted a cave system.

I used Google Earth to examine the area, but something strange occurred. The picture was incredibly pixelated. Everything around it displayed clearly, but the image became blurry as soon as I toggled over the place where the maps were inconsistent. It was still somewhat visible, but I had difficulty discerning anything other than tree coverage and a strange dark mass that could have been anything.

I was surprised that I'd never been there before. I'd spent a lot of time wandering the forest, and I somehow never managed to stumble into that place. Oddly enough, it appeared to be in the dead center of those areas I frequented whilst out in the woods. Somehow, I had managed to circumvent it every time.

## Chapter 4

After a couple days of mulling over the strange mystery, I decided to go there. I packed everything I thought I'd need: hiking gear, a camera to record my findings, emergency flares, and a gun. I wasn't going to let myself get caught off-guard. By that point, I was determined to get to the bottom of the town's strange mystery.

In the two days prior, there had been several disappearances. I had no doubt that it was the work of those eerie faces. The other search and rescue divers searched relentlessly, but I called out sick every day, wanting nothing to do with Moose and his crew until I figured out what was going on. I felt a little guilty about it, but I hoped that my investigation would save more lives in the long run.

I headed out at about noon, deciding that it was best to do my exploring in broad daylight. I wanted nothing to do with those things that came out near the river at night - the lures as Clyde had called them. I trekked toward that strange area I had discovered, choosing to move through the densest part of the forest to avoid running into anyone. The hike was surprisingly long and arduous. I could hardly find my footing after all the rain we'd had. Within fifteen minutes, I was soaked to the bone, covered in mud, and had nearly broken my camera twice.

The trip took incredibly long, longer than I expected. It seemed as if I was circling around the area without ever getting closer. I scrutinized my phone closely. I had been using it to guide me, but somehow I kept getting off course. My destination should have been directly to my east, just over a mile away. I turned in that direction and headed straight, but, when I looked down at my phone, I realized that I had somehow veered north. I was a little closer to my destination but grew more distant with every step in the wrong direction. I don't know how to explain it. I just kept turning off course without intending to. It wasn't a technical error. Rather, it was as if I was subconsciously being pushed away from my goal.

This persisted for several hours, and I feared the sun would set before I even got there. But I grew closer, little by little, until I finally reached my destination. I froze as soon as I broke free of the tree coverage, standing bewildered and the incredible sight

A soaring rock structure stood in the center of a large clearing. The formation was like nothing I had ever seen. Imagine cutting off the top five-hundred feet of a mountain's peak and then just plopping it down in the center of a field. That's what it looked like, an unconnected

stone structure that rose to a jagged, pointy tip. It gave the distinct impression of a pyramid, though lacking the smoothness and straight angles that one would expect. A fissure in the front appeared to lead into a passageway.

Strangely, a small river ran out of the cave's mouth. It only appeared to be about 10 yards wide, and it meandered across the clearing until it diverged in the woods. The water was crystal clear and flowed faster than I would have expected from such a small body of water. I followed it until I reached the mouth of the cave.

I looked inside to find only darkness, the passage going back as far as I could see. It seemed to be relatively straight with no tunnels branching off. I entered the cave and noticed that the air immediately grew colder. It must have dropped at least ten degrees from the outside. I shivered and zipped up my jacket.

The river continued as far as the passage did, and I followed it as I delved deeper into the strange "mountain." I noted that there were no stalactites or stalagmites in the cave. While it lacked any smoothness or markings that would indicate a manmade tunnel, it also didn't seem to be natural. The whole place had a strange air about it.

I continued deeper until I was sure I must have been in the heart of the structure. At that moment, I noticed an eerie bluish light in the distance. It grew closer and brighter until I almost didn't need my flashlight. The passage narrowed until I just barely tip-toed around the edge of the river.

The light brightened, and I suddenly found myself in an enormous round cavern. The walls were covered in thousands upon thousands of small glowing green insects. Glow worms. I had heard of caves like this in New Zealand but didn't think they existed here.

However, what drew my attention sat at the center of the cavern. My breath caught in my throat when I saw it, and my hand immediately went to my gun. The river dwindled until it ended in a clear, shallow, circular pool. In the center of that pool rose an enormous stone throne that seemed carved directly from the floor of the cave. It was adorned with beads, reflective stones, and precious metals. Normally I would have found it beautiful, but that beauty was ruined by what sat atop it.

I can only describe it as a figure. It must have been at least fourteen feet tall and sat straight, almost regal, on top of the throne. Its hands rested on the arms of the seat and a stone crown sat atop its head. Dark green moss comprised the body, much like the face I had seen by



the river. Black stones sat where the eyes should have been, and they stared sightlessly down the length of the tunnel I had just come through. I shivered at the thought of that thing watching me the whole time I had been approaching it.

There was no doubt. That thing was what the natives had referred to as King Moss.

That's when the smell hit me. It was disgusting, and I couldn't believe I hadn't noticed it earlier. It was exactly like the smell in my dreams, a gut-wrenching combination of grass clippings and rotten fish. I nearly vomited and tried to focus on breathing through my mouth. That wasn't much better, though. I could taste it on the air. The stench coated my tongue and throat, making it impossible to ignore.

I moved toward the strange effigy and touched its enormous arm. My hand instantly recoiled, the way one does when they've touched a hot pan, without even thinking about it. The arm had been ice-cold, far colder than the surrounding air. It was like touching dry ice. Though that wasn't what caused me to draw my hand away. A heavy aura surrounded the thing, and simply touching it had made my stomach turn. I slowly backed away, each step becoming a little easier as I moved out from the weight which surrounded the figure.

I covered my mouth and nose with one hand and pulled out my camera with the other. This must be the source of all the weird shit going on. This was what the native myths had talked about, and I was going to make sure everyone knew about it.

I turned the camera on, pointed it at the green figure, and...nothing. The image was too blurry to discern anything. There was just a mess of black and green shapes smudged across the screen. I rubbed the lens on my shirt and turned it back to the throne only to find it the same as before. I couldn't get it to display properly.

I was moving to wipe the lens again when I heard a voice behind me.

"It won't work."

I whirled around to find Moose standing there. He glared at me with a weary look in his eyes.

"He has a way of staying hidden," Moose said, nodding to the enthroned figure.

"Cameras won't work, not even film. Hell, it's a miracle you even found this place. Most people would get lost."

I slowly began to reach for my gun. He noticed the motion and threw his hands up in surrender.

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

