

The Strange People of Blackwater

Beyond every map lies a town no one returns from

If you follow Route 666 far enough north, to where the road markings fade and the land dissolves into an endless, flat blur, you will eventually come upon a sign that is barely legible. Those who miss it keep driving until their fuel runs out. Inevitably. No town, no crossroads, no place of refuge. Only wind, swampy emptiness, and the feeling that you took a wrong turn long before the decision was ever made.

Those who get it “right,” however, reach their destination.

The town now known as Blackwater lies where maps cease to be precise. A stretch of coastline bordered by gray water beneath an even grayer sky. The sea does not look like water but like a spilled sky—heavy, cold, and motionless. The first settlers gave the place its name when the ocean began to lose its color. Neither blue nor green, but a dull black that blended with the fog and swallowed every sense of direction.

The founders abandoned their hometown of New Dover when the fish stocks collapsed without warning. Within a few months, the coast was economically dead. Houses were left behind, along with tools, boats, and half-set tables. Of those who left, none ever wished to return.

Then the second chapter of this small seaside town began.

At first there were isolated sightings. Figures were reported wandering the abandoned streets. Then there were more. They occupied the empty houses as though they had always belonged there. No one could say where they came from. Only that they were not from here.

The new inhabitants of Blackwater are difficult to classify. They possess human forms, yet their outlines seem subtly distorted. Skin that is too smooth or too rough. Movements that flow too easily. Eyes that linger with an unnatural glow. Some display amphibian traits, others seem fishlike, while a few appear to have abandoned the logic of biological categories altogether. No birth has ever been recorded. Neither has a natural death in the conventional sense.

They arrive with the tide and depart with it. At night they can be seen disappearing along the old pier, where the water strikes the pilings and the fog grows so dense that it muffles sound itself. By morning they are back again, as though nothing happened.

A portion of the original townspeople remained. For reasons never fully documented. Some adapted. Others became indispensable. For despite all their strangeness, the beings of Blackwater lack something essential: practical human skills. Repairs, organization, language in its old form, simple mechanics. Thus a fragile coexistence emerged—one based on dependence rather than trust.

Throughout the rest of the country, Blackwater quickly became a myth. Stories spread, contradictory yet persistent. A place of hidden wealth beneath the surface. A community with unknown economic structures. A town that offers more than it reveals. Such rumors attract seekers.

Adventurers, opportunists, and prostitutes. People convinced that behind the fog lies an opportunity difficult to reach, and therefore all the more valuable.

Yet the route there is not a road in the ordinary sense. It is a test. Finding it does not guarantee finding Blackwater. And finding Blackwater means finding no way out.

There are no confirmed returnees.

The police maintain files. Many files. Incomplete names, uncertain routes, last known sightings in places that no longer appear on any current map. Every trail leads in the same direction. None lead back.

Within this context, there exists a report that never appeared in the official archives but continues to circulate in unofficial circles. It was written by a man named Sam Manlowe—a detective who returned. Or at least claimed that he did.

His report begins where all other stories end.

To this introductory story belong the images of the entire series “The Strange People of Blackwater”, available in the web album at www.BioMechMaidens.com.

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