

# Devil's Pool

*An encounter for Pagan Publishing's **The Golden Dawn**  
by Steve Hatherley*

Research does not always bear instant fruit. Sometimes, long after investigations have been forgotten, new information sheds light on an old horror.

**Devil's Pool** describes the small moorland village of Garrow on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall. This encounter is parasitic; it is not a full-blown adventure. Instead, it rides on the back of other scenarios. During the course of other scenarios, the information below should be dropped into the investigation. Once the name Garrow has appeared three or four times, the investigators may be moved to investigate. If they do, the trap springs shut and the parasite feeds . . .

**Devil's Pool** is a supplementary encounter for Pagan Publishing's ***The Golden Dawn***. However, hooks for other adventures, published and home-grown, are included.

## **Directions to Garrow**

The information below should be included with the original scenarios, discovered by the investigators during the normal course of events. Eventually they should realise that something suspicious is happening on Bodmin Moor. There, tucked away in a remote part of a desolate

moor, is a miserable, decaying hamlet and an old and terrible lake.

## ***The Golden Dawn Scenarios***

*Hell Hath No Fury*: While the investigators are researching Black Annie's background in Helmsdon library, they discover in Samuel Jones' diary a note that she originally came from the village of Garrow in Cornwall.

The investigators may also discover another of Melinda Pryce's artworks. The Town Hall in Helmsdon contains a picture by Pryce, a lake shrouded in a mist upon a bleak moor. The mist seems to hide strange figures and shapes. The title of the painting is "The Lake of Mist", inspiration coming from dream-images influenced by Black Annie.

Freeman (the antiques shop proprietor) knows that the painting exists and can direct the investigators towards it. Given Pryce's predilection for Arthurian scenes, Freeman believes it is the lake into which Arthur consigned Excalibur. However, a word is written in ink on the rear of the frame: "Garrow." Jacob Black would be especially interested to learn of it, considering it a family heirloom. Should the investigators inform him he tries to

purchase it. Eventually (assuming he survives later events) he buys the painting.

*Sheela-na-gig*: There are no references to Garrow, although “The Lake of Mist” may resurface here.

## Other Scenarios

*The Masterwork of Nicholas Forby* (by Penelope Love, ***Sacraments of Evil***): Within the Folios of Nicholas Forby is a handful of sketches by someone with a quite different style – Lawrence Beard. Beard was a young artist (then in his early twenties) that Christopher Lemann was encouraging. He visited Forby on several occasions, leaving his sketches for Forby to add to the folio.

Beard, now in his eighties, lives in Garrow and is described below. He remembers little of Forby, although he remembers that Lehmann had a taste for debauchery. He has no idea what happened to Lehmann and will be appalled should the investigators tell him.

*The Beast in the Abbey* (by Kevin A Ross, ***The Unspeakable Oath #5***): While researching St Augustine’s visit to Lynwold, his letter to the Pope states, “Something from out there returned to these shores, and I have attended to it. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for madness at Garrow. That, I fear, is a lasting evil.”

## Other Hooks

If you are not using published adventures, the following may be useful hooks to lure investigators to Garrow:

*The dream*: It begins with bleak, desolate moorland. Then there are primitive buildings, stone or iron age. A quarry, a village, a church. The images are disjointed, confused and oddly disquieting. Finally there is a mist-covered lake, foreboding and menacing – hiding something within its black and fathomless depths.

Investigators often experience dreams and nightmares – one hazard of spending too much time with the Cthulhu Mythos. This dream is odd, but unremarkable. That is until the investigators come across Melinda Pryce’s painting “The Lake of Mist” (as above) which shows exactly the lake they dreamed about.

(Even if you are playing through ***The Golden Dawn*** you might want to foreshadow events with this dream.)

*Missing persons*: Three unmarked headstones record the deaths of strangers in Garrow. Three individuals whose curiosity killed them . . .

If the investigators are acquainted with the sort of fellow who might chase myths and legends (possibly an Arthurian scholar or ghost-hunter), he might uncover evidence of something odd in Garrow. And then he goes missing. Checking his accommodation reveals (among the clutter and junk) a map, a copy of a book on British Legends (as the handout below) and a reference to another book that says that the notorious witch Black Annie came from Garrow.

## Further Research

Once the investigators’ suspicions have been aroused, they may try learning more.

*The Golden Dawn:* Of the order, only Mathers has heard of Garrow and its lake. He knows there is evil and madness there, and knows enough never to set foot in Garrow.

An anonymous diary in the Golden Dawn's library discusses, briefly, Garrow. Written in the spring of 1874, the diary follows the unknown author's travels through Britain's folklore. In Bodmin Moor he finds a rich seam of legend, and a minute reference to "Devil's Pool" in Garrow. Following the trail to Garrow, he spends the night in St Breward – and there the diary ends.

*Other Libraries:* A successful Library Use roll at any library reveals the following excerpt from a book on British legends. This might also be found by investigators searching for information about Arthurian legends. Nothing further can be learned about Garrow except by visiting the site.

## The Garrow Papers #1

**Bodmin Moor.** The most famous of all the Bodmin Moor legends is that surrounding Dozmary Pool. Like Tintagel on the northern coastline, Dozmary Pool (near Jamaica Inn) has a strong Arthurian connection. It is widely believed that King Arthur's famous sword "Excalibur" was committed to these silent, brooding waters. Indeed, the sword has been known to reappear from time to time. The Pool is also known to be haunted by the ghost of John Tregeagle who, on stormy nights, is pursued across the moor by a pack of howling demons.

The Moor also has its share of stone circles. The Hurlers, a group of three circles, are said to be men turned to stone for playing the Cornish game of hurling on a Sunday. There are thirty or forty stones, but nobody knows for sure. Less famous are the Trippet Stones which lie beyond St Breward. Local superstition has it that walking around the circle nine times brings good luck.

On top of each of these, each village on Bodmin Moor has its own ghost or demon. Even the tiny hamlet of Garrow lives under the shadow of a terrible beast dwelling in Devil's Pool, a nearby lake. The south-western people are a superstitious group and their heritage dates back thousands of years. Bodmin Moor has a timeless quality that enables casual visitors to catch just a glimpse of the past and understand the centuries of myth and superstition governing this strange land.

### *What the Tarot Indicates*

Once the investigation into Garrow has begun in earnest, several cards repeatedly appear in successful readings. The Chariot is present in most readings, indicating adversity, turmoil, vengeance and so on. Other cards include the Ten of Swords (ruin, pain, desolation); the Four of Cups (disgust, disappointment, unhappiness) and The Moon (trickery, disillusion, danger). False readings typically include following cards: Justice (harmony, balance, virtue); Eight of Cups (shyness, modesty, abandoned success) and Strength (courage, fortitude, energy).

See *The Golden Dawn* for more information on using the Tarot during an investigation.

## The Moor

Bodmin Moor, like nearby Dartmoor and Exmoor, is an outcrop of granite in South-Western Britain. Encompassing little more than a hundred square miles, it is an area of solitude, majestic vistas and unrivalled beauty. Its enthusiasts consider it to be the most beautiful place in Britain. Bodmin Moor (once known more accurately as Fowey Moor, after the River Fowey) has a part in many Cornish legends: stone circles, granite tors, hut circles, Cheesewring Quarry, Dozmary Pool and Jamaica Inn.

Garrow is a tiny village sheltering beneath Garrow Tor. To reach Garrow the investigators must take the Penzance train from Paddington Station. They alight at Bodmin station, and can hire a carriage to St Breward, near Jamaica Inn. From there they head east, onto the moor along a rough track to Middle Candra (which is no more than a farm). The investigators are then directed along a path which passes a number of hut circles (the locals hold that this was once King Arthur's Hall) to Garrow. The journey, by horse, takes nearly three hours from St Breward.

Garrow is unmarked on most maps and consists of nine houses (two of which are derelict and uninhabited) and a small church. The buildings are made from moorland granite, quite capable of withstanding the sometimes savage weather. None of the villagers has any transport, their only contact with the

outside world being the occasional delivery of supplies from St Breward.

Nobody in Garrow is younger than sixty years of age – it seems to lure old folk.

### *Moorland Folk*

The people of Garrow are private individuals. Drawn inexplicably to the village by the lake, none of them actually go anywhere near it. Devil's Pool is too dangerous. Strangers in Garrow are often cause for concern – they are usually only interested in the lake, and too much interest is a bad thing. Interest may draw journalists and men of science wishing to probe and pry. The people of Garrow wish to escape all that – the lake is an ancient and terrible force. Best it is left undisturbed.

There is nowhere to stay in Garrow. The nearest accommodation is in St Breward.

The locals will generally avoid the investigators – except to suggest that they are not welcome in Garrow. All of them warn against visiting the lake – but none of them admit that they have been there at all. Nobody knows anything of Black Annie or any kind of witchcraft. Of the nine locals only two will talk for any length to the investigators: Lawrence Beard and Father McKenzie.

### *Lawrence Beard*

Lawrence David Beard is, at 81 years old, one of Garrow's older inhabitants, and is almost welcoming. Investigators succeeding a Know roll recognise his

name for being attached to a number of contemporary portraits some decades ago. This is indeed the same person, although he no longer paints. Beard invites the newcomers into his home, and offers them tea. He is always interested in news of the outside world. Garrow is a little cut off, he explains, so news is always valuable gossip.

He avoids talking about himself, except to mention that his reasons for living here stem from a summer's holiday many, many years ago. While exploring Bodmin Moor he stumbled across Garrow and was immediately taken by its isolation and peace. After the death of his wife seventeen years ago he stopped painting and grew restless. It was not until he remembered Garrow that he realised he needed to move here.

Beard warns the players to stay away from Devil's Pool. He believes that something ancient and evil lives in the lake, and does not want it disturbed.

Lawrence Beard, Age 81, Retired Artist

STR 8 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 14 POW 11  
DEX 13 APP 15 EDU 11 SAN 42 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none

Weapons: None

Skills: Art (Oil Painting) 65%, Bargain 45%, Fast Talk 55%, Mech. Repair 55%, Natural History 35%, Other Language (French) 50%, Photography 40%, Spot Hidden 50%

*Father McKenzie*

Father Donald McKenzie is well into his seventies, and regards the investigators with a degree of concern. He worries for their safety, especially if they insist on visiting the lake – which he calls Devil's Pool. If he discovers that the investigators are thinking of visiting the lake, he makes a point of showing them around his church. It is a small church, with a small graveyard. Although it has few records, McKenzie can name all of the graves, all of them villagers. All except three – three strangers, each found dead, near the lake.

Father McKenzie, Age 75, Priest

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 17 POW 13

DEX 12 APP 13 EDU 14 SAN 65 HP 14

Damage Bonus: none

Weapon: None

Skills: Biblical History 60%, Deliver Sermon 40%, Drive Carriage 45%, Persuade 50%

## **Devil's Pool**

Devil's Pool is about a mile out of Garrow, across some dangerously marshy ground. Perpetually covered in fine, swirling mists, the lake is an eerie sight. The lake itself is about 200 yards long, supplied at one end by a trickling stream. Stagnant pools surround the lake and fill the air with an unwholesome smell. Birds and animals shun the place, the plants are twisted and unhealthy; shrunken trees bare and draped with slime-like moss. The air is oddly still, and tainted with an atmosphere of almost tangible evil and malevolence.

While the investigators explore, their imaginations work overtime. The swirling

mist reveals glimpses of horrors and nightmares. The deformed trees seem to shudder and gyrate. Strange sounds carry through the mist, yet voices are quickly swallowed. As they wander, the lake starts its evil magic. Those failing to resist the lake's POW of 15 (roll this after inflicting the following horror on the investigators) suffer a horrific vision.

### *The Vision*

From across the moor, a wind picks up. It eddies and shifts, and abruptly grows stronger, tugging at the investigators. Waves ripple across the lake, leaves and small sticks are thrown into the air – and begin to form a hideous outline above Devil's Pool. The wind picks up, adding stones and large branches to the mass – and a ghastly form rises from the lake's watery depths. SAN loss 1/1D8.

The form looks vaguely like one of the investigators' recent encounters – probably one that was resolved unsuccessfully.

The thing is nearly 10 feet tall with gaping sockets for eyes and razor-sharp talons. It attacks mercilessly, lashing out and decapitating the nearest investigator. It turns on another, sinking its fingers into eye-sockets and killing him instantly. Then, lifting the dead investigator, it starts flailing at the others. SAN loss 1/1D6 for each grisly death – including the investigator's own.

Nothing the investigators do has any effect, the thing is immune to both physical and magical weapons.

The Lake-Thing, Evil Incarnate

STR 25 CON 18 SIZ 30 INT 14

POW N/A DEX 14 HP N/A Move 9

Damage Bonus: +2D6

Weapon: Razor talons 90%, damage 2D6 + db

Armour: None, but it is immune to physical and magical attacks

Sanity Loss: 1/1D8

The only escape is to run away, or "die." Those investigators that die feel themselves topple over into the abyss – then snap awake; their only lasting damage is to their sanity. Without assistance, those pushed over the brink of insanity by the visions risk dying from exposure on these bleak, windswept moors. Such was the fate of those unfortunates occupying the three unmarked graves in the graveyard.

### **Keeper's Notes**

Like Oak Wood in Beck Green (see Hell Hath No Fury), the lake at Garrow is one of Britain's special, hidden places. Unlike the wood (which, while protecting its secrets, is largely indifferent to strangers) Devil's Pool is undeniably malevolent. The visions it sends are deliberately malign. There is no way to "defeat" the lake. It is an ancient, evil place, and will stay that way.

Other scenarios: this incident does not have to be used in a Gaslight campaign. Garrow might be stumbled across by unwary investigators in the twenties or even today. Bodmin Moor has changed little in the past century, Garrow doubly so. Devil's Pool is eternally patient; it will wait.

(This scenario originally appeared in substantially different form as "*The Lake of Mist*" in ***Adventurer*** magazine, Issue 10, 1987.)

Steve Hatherley is also the creator of **Tales of Terror**, a collection of adventure seeds for *Call of Cthulhu* and other roleplaying games. For more details visit [www.talesofterror.net](http://www.talesofterror.net)

## The Garrow Papers Reprinted

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