

Untold Stories (of the Great Flood) – Will Power

by Delbert "Greentongue" Jackson

About the Adventure:

This Serial is designed for 4 novice player characters. 4 pre-generated characters are provided at the end of the Scene description. The first Scene takes place outside of Biscoe, Arkansas around the year 1927. It is a pulp adventure and while based on some facts, doesn't try to replicate what really happened during this time.



Introduction:

On a plantation outside of Biscoe, Arkansas the rising of the White River has surrounded the Manville estate, putting those within in dire straits.

Mr. Percy Manville was a wonderful man, most of the family agreed. He was also extremely rich, that everyone agreed on. The apparatus that kept him alive after the accident was just too bulky to move. Everyone agreed on that too. After all, that is why it had been built on the ground floor of his mansion.



At first the rising river had been an irritation but not a concern. The family could survive with the roads being impassable. The field hands had built a square dike around the house with sand bags and the water was being kept out, so far. But, the rain kept coming down and the river kept rising. Curtains and bed linens were being sewn into sand bags, dirt was being dug from the yard, the dike was being added to slowly. But, the river kept rising and more rain kept coming down.

The water would cover Mr. Manville if the dike broke. The Will said the family would get nothing if he died from neglect. They were caught. They could save themselves and yet lose everything. Everyone was tired, tempers were frayed, but they couldn't stop. The sewing skill of the women, the stamina of the men, was being sorely tested. Weary eyes had to remain sharp to spot any leaks. Weary fingers had to sow strong seams.

Whispers sprouted like weeds. Was this worth it? Should they just save themselves?

Opening Scene:

It was another in a string of dreary drizzly days. With water up to the hubcaps you had crossed the White River and almost made it to the small town of Biscoe when, as fate would have it, the truck up and sputtered to a halt. "Tinker" guessed that it was from that cracked distributor cap finally getting water in it. On a day like this it would be hard to keep it dry for long. You still had

some luck left though. Off to the south you could see the roof of a mansion. They might have some glue you could use to seal the cap. You pushed your truck to the side of the highway and unloaded your boat from the back. Then you headed south across the flooded plantation in it.

When you reached the mansion you are greeted at the dike around it. The people at the Manville Estate were surprisingly happy to see you. At first you suspected it was the idea of using your boat to make their escape. The foreman Mr. Robert Stout explained, that seeing your Game Warden's uniform, they had thought the group of you were from Forrest City. That you had come to take Mr. Manville to the hospital. Turns out that Mr. Manville is bed ridden and the White River is rising quickly to a height that will cover him.

Mr. Stout had been rallying the field hands and the dike was staying ahead of the flood crest, for now. The worry about how long they could keep it up was beginning to show on everyone's faces. They welcomed the extra hands in the struggle to hold back the river long enough for Mr. Percy Manville to be rescued. It was clear that the marathon couldn't go on forever. However, with the addition of your help, there was hope to last just long enough. As this was all made clear, the previous drizzle turned into a downpour.

There are six groups around the mansion. The dikes form a square with one group of men at each of the dikes. In the front and back of the house there are two separate groups of mostly women making sand bags.

Mr. Robert Stout and Mrs. Lilly Manville have been directing the groups until the characters arrived.

Mr. Percy Manville (Husband)

Is an invalid since his accident. He suspects his wife is unfaithful but has no proof. He has financed an illegal scheme to pay back gambling debts and his wife is the go between.

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

Skills: Guts d6, Gambling d10, Notice d6, Streetwise d8, Shooting d6, Persuasion d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 0; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Mrs. Lilly Manville (Wife)

She is having an affair with Rob Stout but, has no intention of losing (or sharing) even a penny of the family fortune. If her husband's scheme succeeds, they will be rich again. If her husband dies, she will lose everything.

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

Skills: Guts d4, Gambling d6, Investigation d6, Persuasion d8, Notice d6, Healing d8, Shooting d4, Swimming d4

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2;

Toughness: 5

Mr. Robert Stout (Foreman)

Is in love with Lilly Manville. He believes that Lilly would marry him if Mr. Manville had an "accident" but, he doesn't want to be "the man that murdered her husband."

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

Skills: Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Repair d6, Shooting d6, Swimming d6

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

Toughness: 5

Special Rules and other Details:

People along each dike are handled in groups. See the rule book on Group Rolls.

The GM makes an opposed Rain (1d6 and a 1d6 wild dice) versus Spirit check of the group (Highest Spirit and a 1d6 group wild dice). If the rain wins the dike springs a leak, on a raise the rain gets a +2 on the next roll. On a failure the rain slackens (-2 on the next roll) and on a result of 1 (snake eyes) the opposing group gets a +1 to their next Spirit roll (and the -2 to the rain's next roll). Should a Spirit check roll a 1, even if the wild dice was not, then the group is shaken, on snake eyes they flee over the dike towards Biscoe. Note: A Wild Card can use a benny to re-roll the group roll! A Wild Card can also use Persuasion or Intimidation to remove the shaken with a raise allowing them to do a group Notice roll as below.

Group Notice checks (highest Notice and a wild dice). Each group of unshaken people stationed along the dike need to make Notice checks to spot leaks near them. After a leak is spotted make a **Group Vigor check** (fatigue modifies the Vigor check). A success with a raise means they plug the leak with no additional fatigue, on a success they plug the leak but take a fatigue level (regained with an hours rest), on a failure they do not plug the leak and are fatigued, on snake eyes they fail to plug the leak and one person in the group is lost due to fatigue/exhaustion. If the leak is not plugged, on the next hour the leak becomes a break and requires a raise to plug, if that fails, the dike bursts and the first floor of the mansion is flooded. If the first floor of the mansion is flooded, and Mr. Percy is still there, he will die. A group trying to cover more than one dike does so at a -2 to their rolls.

Wading through the water reduces Pace by -1 for below waist, -2 for above.

The rescuers will arrive from Forrest City when at least four hours have past or when the GM feels it is dramatically appropriate. Should you want a random chance then each hour after three draw a card. On hour four an ace or joker will have the rescuers arrive, on hour five, a king+, on six a queen+, etc. until the proper card is pulled.

There are several options open to the players. One of which is to leave the estate to its fate. It is suggested that they lend a hand with the sand bagging crews. This is why a Heroic Hindrance is useful for a primary character.

A player with the Weird Science Edge is important for the entire Serial. Also that player can attempt to cobble together equipment upstairs so the Mr. Manville could be moved out of the danger of drowning. The life support equipment is approximately the size of another bed. This player can also try to rig their " Electromagnetic Heterodyne Apparatus" as a powerful radio and call for help. This will give a bonus to Spirit rolls if successful.

If things seem to be dragging, don't forget the Pulp Classic and have a fight breakout between the field hands. Not only does this add some excitement but, anyone disabled will leave their group short handed. Giving a -1 (or -2 if enough are disabled) to their rolls will certainly increase the stress level. A group that loses half its members has a -1 to rolls, with additional -1 for each further member loss over half.

Motorboat:

A basic rowboat with an outboard motor used for fishing or a ride on the river.

Acc/Top Speed: 2/8, **Toughness:** 8(2), **Crew:** 1+3

Costs: \$550

If things turn ugly, the phone service can be restored and a bonus applied to Spirit rolls due to it.

If Mr. Manville dies, Mrs. Manville may try to keep the players there to be a witness so she doesn't lose her inheritance. After all, the courts would not call it neglect if everyone stayed at the plantation until it flooded, especially with the characters as witnesses.

However, Mrs. Manville may not end up with anything if the gambling debt is collected and the illegal scheme doesn't pay off. She will be looking for someone competent but not law abiding to help her out with both of these problems as well. (The GM will need to create their own Serial if the characters go in that direction.)

*If they succeed in saving the estate, the truck can then be repaired and more importantly, the spare boat owned by Mr. Manville can be offered to them. (This will be a big help for the next Scene "**Burnt Bayou**".)*

Primary Characters:

Warden Daniel "Dan" DeSoto

A sturdy and reliable man, Daniel Desoto has been a Game Warden for many years. He enjoys his job and has seen the seasonal floods come and go. This is the worst in his memory and he is trying to do his best to help the unfortunate. He has found that wearing a uniform goes a long way towards having people respect him, even if he has little real authority. He has stood up to poachers and miscreants before and will do so again.

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

Skills: Boating d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Swimming d6, Tracking d4

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

Hindrances: Heroic, Vow (uphold the law), Habit (chewing tobacco)

Edges: Danger Sense

Gear:

- Double Barrel Shotgun (Damage: 3d6/2d6/1d6 Range:12/24/48, RoF: 1-2, Shots: 2)
- Old pick-up truck
- Motorboat (in the back of the truck)

Jimmy "Tinker" Johnson

An eternally curious man, he went to school with Daniel Desoto and has been a close friend for years. He often accompanies Dan on his trips around the area. It allows him to look for new parts for his gadgets in the towns they pass through. It also forces him to take a break from his constant tinkering with the gizmos that he creates. He takes his latest device, an "Electromagnetic Heterodyne Apparatus" with him everywhere and adjusts it constantly monitor stray radio signals.

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

Skills: Guts d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Science) d8, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Fighting d4, Swimming d4

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

Hindrances: Curious, Bad Eyes (requires glasses), Loyal

Edges: Arcane Background (Weird Science d8)

Powers: Bolt (Electromagnetic Heterodyne Apparatus), (Power Points: 10)

Gear:

- Electromagnetic Heterodyne Apparatus / Microwave Radio Gun (Bolt Power)
Organic armor has half effect, inorganic armor has double effect
- Pack with spare parts.

Additional Characters:

Iris "Iron Aunt" Horton

Though she presents a stern face to the world and accepts no disrespect from anyone, she has a deeply caring side. Many a night she has stayed at the bedside of a sick child or injured person. She is an easy mark for those with a story of misfortune or a missionary cause, giving them her last dime. However, she will quickly put a layabout in their place or run a confidence man out of town.

XP: 5

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

Skills: Persuasion d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Taunt d8, Streetwise d6, Investigation d4, Healing d8, Notice d6

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Elderly, Vow (Obey God), Poverty

Edges: Command (She can rally average townfolk that don't already have a leader.)

Gear:

- Well worn Bible
- Large sturdy purse with misc. healing items

Robert "Cowboy Bob" Williams

A dependable man. "Salt of the Earth" He has been known to have a rowdy time now and again but never intentionally causes trouble. Lives by the "Cowboy Code" and is a good man to have by your side. He has spent most of his time on the range and never completed school. He is the nephew of Iris Horton and she has been trying to make a "Good Christian" of him. While she has had an effect, a night with the boys is seldom refused. He has often crossed paths with Warden Dan and they are on excellent terms.

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

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Riding d6, Shooting d6, Throwing d6, Notice d6, Swimming d6

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

Hindrances: Clueless, Code of Honor

Edges: Brawny, Quick Draw

Gear:

- Pistol (S&W) (Damage: 2d6+1, Range: 12/24/48, RoF: 1, Shots: 6)
- Lasso 20' (Damage: Grapple, Range:5/10)

For related information I suggest checking out the following links:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/flood/> PBS: The Fatal Flood

And don't forget <http://www.peginc.com>, for more Savage Worlds.

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