

# PAIN'T CREEK BRANCH

## SOMETHING'S WRONG

The Paint Creek Mining District is owned, top to bottom, by one man – Brother Tabor Clifford. He's been pulling placer gold out of the creek for five years, and he's a wealthy man and Steward. He's also a Godly man, and he's shared what the King of Life has given him – the town of Paint Creek has been the beneficiary of his largesse. The Faithful men who work his claim have grown wealthy along with him.

East Paint Creek is still a green and lovely town with elegant, well-tended homes. West Paint Creek is a ramshackle, rough town filled with unbelievers, all drawn by the lure of gold. Many are prospecting and staking claims in surrounding creeks, without success. A good number are flat busted, despondent and hopeless, useless drunks and wastrels. Others are outlaws who prey on the prospectors and newcomers. The Faithful takes care of their own and spread the wealth around.

## THE SET UP

A wagon-load of mail and parcels needs delivering. A pianoforte, a set of fine china, a crate of wallpaper rolls, books, an indoor toilet, mining equipment, that sort of thing.

On the road to Paint Creek near a dry wash two horses are tied up, and their riders are in the sagebrush nearby fucking. They are the Salt-Lick Kid and Sister Shelley. The Kid has some snappy insult for the Dogs and wears a tin star - he's on the payroll of Tabor Clifford as a "peace officer".

## PRIDE

Counselor Paul thinks the Steward is too generous with the wealth the Faithful are pulling out of the creek. He thinks Steward Tabor shouldn't be buying stagecoach tickets for broken unbelievers to leave town, or feeding their families. He thinks he shouldn't be paying off outlaws for "protection", or paying for a doctor to tend their wounds. That's the T.A.'s job, and they only sent a tax collector, a useless catamite named Freeman Peachey, when Paint Creek started to boom.

Brother Tabor's taken a pair of wives, with the blessing of the far-off regional Steward, but he doesn't love them, just their bodies. They converted to marry him, after a fashion, and they are young and beautiful former whores. If he wasn't such a good man, it'd be more of a scandal than it already is.

## INJUSTICE

Counselor Paul is diverting alms to faithful families who need it less than the destitute unbelievers in town. He is enriching those who follow and obey him, without telling the Steward.

Brother Tabor is a poor Steward, using his wealth to solve the branch's problems instead of providing guidance. For example, when young Brother Judah and his wife came to him to seek advice over their constant arguments and passionless marriage, he built them a second home in East Paint Creek so they could "have some distance".

## **SINS**

Disunity, Apostasy, Blasphemy, Deceit. Counselor Paul. A bad man made worse by enormous wealth, Paul is a sorcerer now and honestly believes he's doing the will of the King of Life.

Worldliness, Faithlessness. Brother Tabor. He "converted" and married the harlots out of personal weakness, and they have taught him things no Faithful man should know. The branch, though prosperous, is spiritually adrift. He uses his wealth to paper over any problems.

## **DEMONIC ATTACKS**

Gold! Lots and lots of gold is being pulled from Paint Creek by Counselor Paul and his followers. Supporters of the Steward working the same beds are coming up dry and are getting concerned. Unbelievers have come to hate the "lucky" Faithful, but they have no power beyond their ability to do violence.

Counselor Paul uses his success as proof that the King's blessing is upon him.

## **FALSE DOCTRINE**

Who do we turn to in times of trouble? Who is our comfort in sorrow? Who provides for our children?  
GOLD IS THE BODY OF THE KING OF LIFE.

## **CORRUPT WORSHIP**

Gold plays a central role now – even the tithing plate is gold at Sabbath worship. The Faithful men of Paint Creek eat gold foil as a sacrament. Everybody - cult or not - wears one of Counselor Paul's beautiful and extravagant tree of life necklaces. They connect to the chain in a way that tends to make them flip inverted at the darndest moments.

## **FALSE PRIESTHOOD**

Others – almost everybody - have followed Counselor Paul's lead and see his point in worshipping the King of Life through the gift of his body. He's got a dozen or more Faithful men to back him up, and any number of unbeliever yeggs on the payroll, including the Salt-Lick Kid.

Possession: gold foil inverted tree-of-life on the forehead.

## **SORCERY**

Counselor Paul has a pair of "angels" he has fashioned out of Paint Creek gold, each eight inches high and very delicate and beautiful. These are his demonic attendants and do his bidding, flitting around like bats and observing the Steward.

## **HATE AND MURDER**

None yet. The Steward is first on the list.

## WHAT DO THE TOWNSPEOPLE WANT FROM THE DOGS?

Steward Tabor Clifford wants the Dogs to make everything simple again, like it was before he found gold in Paint Creek.

Sister Shelley doesn't understand the Dog's power and treats them like random strangers. She wants them to move along before they upset her sugar daddy. She especially doesn't want them to tell the Steward she's seeing the Salt-Lick Kid on the side.

Sister Dee wants the Dogs to sanctify her marriage – she entered it for the wrong reason but now, with Counselor Paul's help, she's seen the true path. Problem is her righteous husband disgusts her.

Counselor Paul Moore wants the Dogs to appreciate what he's trying to do, and to straighten out the Steward, who is throwing away good money on useless unbelievers. The King obviously smiles upon him and those who believe as he does. He's got three dozen of his gold tree-of-life necklaces, almost a pound in weight, for them to take back to Bridal Falls City.

Sister Maria, Paul's wife, wants the Dogs to save her once-beautiful little town from sinking into a swamp of depravity and lawlessness. She wants them to establish a vigilance committee of Faithful men to defend East Paint Creek, and to drive away thugs like the Salt-Lick Kid.

Brother Judah Downey wants the Dogs to make him Counselor and rebuke Paul. He loves the gentle and generous old Steward like a father. He's worried that unbelievers will riot and kill. He also wants them to explain to him how to have sex with his wife.

Sister Sarah Downey, his wife, wants the Dogs to fix her acrimonious and loveless marriage.

Duncan Hathaway, the Salt-Lick Kid, wants to kill him a Dog. He's fucking Sister Shelley and he don't care who knows it.

James Roe, tough-luck prospector, wants the Dogs to make the Steward shell out more cash to help the unbelievers, like he used to. Plus buy him a drink.

Freeman Peachey, tax collector, has no opinion on religious affairs but would like the Steward to cash out and parcel up Paint Creek. It only makes sense – people are angry and he's rich as Croesus.

## WHAT DO THE DEMONS WANT?

More money flowing, more injustice flaunted, more suffering inflicted.

## WHAT DO THE DEMONS WANT THE DOGS TO DO?

It'd be best if they moved along – the branch is prosperous, isn't it? Doesn't everybody have a nice house and clean, new things? What's the problem? If they must pass judgment, they should pass it on the worthless Steward and elevate the Counselor to his position.

## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE DOGS DIDN'T COME?

Chaos and murder are right around the corner. The Steward (and his wives) first. Then unbeliever vigilantes, with the Faithful responding in kind. Then everything goes to hell.

## WHO'S WHO

Steward Tabor Clifford. Richest man in Paint Creek, 55. Gentle, generous, out of his depth.

Sister Shelley Clifford. Senior wife, 22. Unrepentant whore. Lover of Duncan Hathaway. Lascivious, wanton, smart as a whip. Outside the cult.

Sister Dee Clifford. Junior wife, 20. Reformed whore. Deeply conflicted and ashamed. A cultist.

Counselor Paul Moore. Mining District administrator, 36. Sorcerer and jeweler. Wears a gold tree of life and kisses it constantly.

Sister Maria Moore. Paul's wife, 30. Civic booster with a mean and prideful streak.

Brother Judah Downey. Placer miner, 19. Young and loyal to the Steward. Fights with his wife and doesn't know how to have sex.

Sister Sarah Downey. Judah's wife, 18. Frustrated and angry. Hates the whore-wives and won't call them sister. Likes her roomy new house.

Duncan Hathaway. The Salt-Lick Kid. Peace officer, 24. Wants to kill him a Dog.

James Roe. Prospector, 48. Tough-luck prospector. Wants a drink.

Freeman Peachey. T.A. tax collector, 29. Catamite and grifter.