

The Last Light at Blackwater

A one-hour investigation for Call of Cthulhu 7th edition
Blackwater, Maine - October 1926

The lighthouse lamp was removed yesterday. Tonight, the light has come back. Every time it crosses the harbor, someone hears a voice they buried years ago.

Players: 2-4 investigators and one Keeper. **Length:** a target of 60 minutes of play, after characters and basic rules are ready. **Setting:** a fictional Maine harbor. **Edition:** Battleward release 1.0, 29 September 2026.

Keeper copy - contains the solution and all endings. Players should receive only their character card and the handouts on page 9. The solo browser adaptation is available at battleward.com/originals/last-light-at-blackwater/.

Before you start

Read pages 2-6. Choose the investigators on pages 7-8 or use existing characters. Have percentile dice, a six-sided die, and the handouts ready. Agree that the story includes supernatural horror, grief, drowning, and the possibility of character death. If personal grief would be unwelcome, have the voices imitate missing colleagues instead of loved ones.

The sixty-minute plan

Real play time	Scene and purpose
0-5 minutes	Pike shows the removed lamp; establish the missing keeper and apprentice.
5-15 minutes	Choose one town lead. Give its essential clue without a roll.
15-20 minutes	Boat crossing and arrival on the island.
20-35 minutes	Choose two island locations. Find Clara or the equipment and understand the invitation.
35-50 minutes	Enter the tower, confront Vane, and decide whether to rescue him first.
50-60 minutes	Resolve the closing attempt or escape; give a clear ending and survivor report.

These are table pacing targets, not a promise that every group will finish on the same minute. At 35 minutes, sound Pike's horn and bring attention to the tower. At 50 minutes, put the final choices in front of the players. Do not add a combat encounter simply to fill time.

What the players must know

The beam is sustained by a bell and bronze sounding plate, not a lamp. The opening signal is **3 / 1 / 2**. The closing answer is **2 / 1 / 3**, with a pause between groups. Hold the bell still until the last vibration dies. Essential clues are automatic when their source is examined. Skill rolls provide confidence, assistance, or a smaller cost; they never decide whether the adventure can proceed.

2. The truth behind the light

Keeper-only explanation

In 1891 a hydrographic survey station recovered a bronze sounding plate from the seabed. Ringing a bell through its frame produced answers in the voices of missing and dead people. Those answers belonged to an intelligence that could borrow names and expectations, but not independent human memories. The station closed after a surveyor walked into the water. The plate was meant to be broken. It was stored instead.

Keeper Thomas Vane found the plate a month ago. He has spent his nights telling the voice about his dead wife, Eleanor. Each story has helped the intelligence imitate her. Tonight he has chained himself to the apparatus's opening lever so he cannot flee before she returns. The lamp has been removed, but sound still fills the cracked glass with a false doorway.

The intelligence is called **the Listener** in these notes. That is a descriptive name, not an established Mythos identity. It cannot restore anyone. A repeated invitation allows it to send imitations ashore. It does not need a combat statistic block: its threat is the opening, the voices, and the choices people make in response.

Tonight's events

When	What happened
Yesterday	Pike removed the damaged lamp and issued a shipping notice.
This afternoon	Clara found Vane operating the plate. He struck her while she tried to free him; she retreated to the workshop with the latch.
8:41 p.m.	The telegraph instrument printed a warning without a sending station.
About 9 p.m.	The investigators arrive. Pike has prepared his service boat.
Midnight	Vane intends the last repeated 3 / 1 / 2 signal to complete the invitation. If no one stops it, the false passengers reach the harbor.

People to portray

Elias Pike, harbormaster: practical, frightened, dependable. His dead brother's voice apologized; the living brother never did. Pike operates the boat and refuses to leave living people behind without being told why. Pilot (Boat) 65, Listen 50, STR 65, DEX 45, HP 12. He does not follow the investigators into the tower.

Clara Marsh, apprentice: observant and shaken, with a scalp cut. She knows the latch and the closing instruction. She admits that her chalk line stopped nothing. Mechanical Repair 60, First Aid 40, DEX 60, HP 10. Once found, she helps willingly; a failed First Aid roll does not remove her assistance.

Thomas Vane, keeper: grieving, not a cultist. He wants one more ordinary morning with Eleanor. A question about a private memory can break the imitation's hold. Persuade 30, Fighting (Brawl) 35, STR 55, DEX 50, HP 10. Avoid a prolonged fight; treat the chain and frightened resistance as the obstacle.

Mrs. Harker: asks about the blue dog stitched on her son's school coat. **Ruth Bell:** the telegraph clerk, dry and decisive. Neither needs a roll to tell the truth.

3. Blackwater after closing

Opening scene: the harbor office

Pike's telegram reached you at breakfast: NEED SOMEONE WHO WILL LOOK BEFORE THEY LAUGH. BLACKWATER LIGHT SHOWING AGAIN. LAMP IS IN MY OFFICE. COME BEFORE NIGHT.

Pike shows the dry lamp, brass chimney, fuel cans, and signed maintenance receipt. Give the investigators the service key. The impossible light produces no shadows. Bell strokes follow its sweep. **Automatic clue:** the lamp is not the source. Pike names three leads; use one in a strict one-hour session and offer the others if the players are moving quickly.

A. The Anchor Inn

When she asked whether he remembered the blue dog she stitched onto his first school coat, it said, 'Tell me, Mother.' She shut the door then. She has been trying to decide whether that was an act of good sense or a terrible betrayal.

Mrs. Harker heard her drowned son at the kitchen door. The voice asked her to meet a boat at midnight. When asked about the stitched dog, it replied, "Tell me, Mother." **Automatic clue:** the imitation lacks ordinary memories. Psychology success also lets her recall the bell rhythm, 3 / 1 / 2. Failure leaves the memory clue intact. Asking her to warn neighbors automatically reduces the number of people gathering on the quay in the ending.

B. The telegraph office

THE LAMP IS NOT THE LIGHT.
KEEP THE BELL FROM ITS ANSWER.
THREE / ONE / TWO.
DO NOT GIVE THEM YOUR NAME.

Ruth received the message with the land line disconnected. Give Handout A. **Automatic clues:** the bell matters; the outgoing rhythm is 3 / 1 / 2; a sounding station operated here in 1891. Library Use success retrieves the reversal instruction from an old register. On failure, its page is damaged. Copies still exist in the cottage, boathouse, and tower.

C. The service shed

A survey diagram shows a bell over a bronze plate, and a heavy **restraining latch** beside the frame. The written warning says the latch must be held until all vibration stops. **Automatic clues and equipment:** this is not an electrical device; the bell can be held still; Pike supplies a rope and hand winch. Spot Hidden success reveals the closing instruction in the packet's seam. Failure costs time, not equipment or access.

Move the investigation forward

If the players ask good questions, answer them without calling for a roll merely to learn that someone has nothing further to say. At fifteen minutes of real play, Pike says the boat is ready. The voice on the water supplies the next event. If the group has skipped town research entirely, the tower still contains every essential instruction.

4. The island

The crossing: 5 minutes

Pike sets his jaw. 'Mine said it was sorry,' he tells you. 'My brother never apologized for anything in his life. That helped.'

An upside-down boat travels beneath Pike's hull. Its passengers look up through the water. Call for **SAN 0/1D3**. A Spot Hidden success identifies the real channel markers. Failure brings a scrape against a rock and a splinter cut for 1 HP; the crossing still succeeds. An investigator who deliberately looks away avoids the physical risk, but has already witnessed enough for the Sanity check.

Pike stays with the boat. Two horn blasts mean the tide is rising; three mean leave now. The landing leads to the cottage, workshop, boathouse, and tower. Select two locations for the one-hour plan.

The keeper's cottage

Two cups are set out; one contains rainwater. Vane's journal records how he supplied Eleanor's memories to the voice. Give Handout B. **Automatic clues:** he plans to repeat 3 / 1 / 2 at midnight; the lamp is only a vessel for sound; Vane is chained to the opening lever beneath the bell. Reading the survey fragment supplies the reversal instruction even if an Occult roll fails. A success identifies it as a closing procedure rather than an invocation.

The workshop: rescue Clara

The white line is chalk, not salt. 'It didn't stop anything,' she admits. 'But drawing it gave me something to do.' She tried to pull Vane from the tower. He struck her while insisting he was protecting his wife.

Clara asks the visitors for something the light could not know. Any ordinary, sincere answer reassures her; no social roll is required. She explains the false voice, the bell, and the closing instruction. **Automatic aid:** she provides the restraining latch and accompanies the group. First Aid success steadies her and stops the bleeding. Failure still gets her onto her feet. Use the white chalk line as evidence of fear, not as a magical protection.

The boathouse

The sounding station's record says there was no bottom beneath the plate. The surveyor refused to repeat the call after his assistant disappeared. **Automatic equipment:** a rope and hand winch are available even if the shed was skipped. Library Use success recovers the full procedure: restrain the bell, answer the groups in reverse on the plate with a hand hammer, wait for silence. On failure, the English reversal sentence survives. Give Handout C either way.

A short route remains playable

If the players go directly to the tower, they can read the closing instruction there and use their own strength to hold the latch. The route is riskier, but never impossible because of a missed roll. If they propose carrying or improvising ordinary rope, permit it when plausible. Preparation should help, not become a puzzle about the exact wording of the inventory.

5. The last signal

Enter the tower

At the top, the lantern room is empty where the lamp should stand. Cracked glass surrounds an unlit space that projects a beam. In that space something has arranged itself to resemble a doorway.

The cracked lantern glass projects a doorway from an empty lamp stand. The bell is above a bronze sounding plate. Vane is on a service platform below, chained to the opening lever. Seeing the doorway and its half-formed passenger calls for **SAN 1/1D4**. Use normal 7th edition rules for any insanity effects that arise; a Sanity loss never removes the written closing instruction.

Give the complete procedure

THREE / ONE / TWO.
ANSWER THE LAST FIRST; THE FIRST LAST.
KEEP THE MIDDLE WHERE IT STANDS.
RESTRAIN THE BELL UNTIL THE LAST VIBRATION HAS GONE.

The correct answer is **2 / 1 / 3**, with pauses between groups, struck on the sounding plate using the hand hammer. It is an interpretation, not a skill check. If the players struggle, Clara or the scratched diagram explains that the order of groups reverses. The number of strokes in each group does not change.

Free Vane first?

The key releases the shackle. Reaching him is the risk. Rope and a hand winch bring him up without a roll. Without them, use DEX: success rescues him; failure frees him from the lever but strands him on a ledge and costs the rescuer 2 HP. A well-explained alternative can work. A question about Eleanor's ordinary habits, followed by Persuade, gets Vane to cooperate on success. Failure never prevents physically freeing him.

Three final approaches

Close the signal: restrain the bell, strike 2 / 1 / 3, and hold until silence. With Clara assisting or the winch secured, this succeeds without another roll. Holding alone requires Hard STR. On failure, offer a stated choice: wedge a body into the frame and disappear as the opening shuts, or let go and escape while the signal remains open. Never select sacrifice for a player.

Break the plate: the scored seam is a clear target. One committed hammer strike destroys it. DEX decides whether the striker gets clear of falling metal. Failure costs 2 HP; it does not preserve the signal. An inventive safe setup may remove this risk.

Escape: Pike takes the living people within reach to the mainland. The invitation remains open. Their evidence enables an evacuation and a future return; this is a complete, costly ending, not an unfinished session.

An incorrect answer

Repeating 3 / 1 / 2 widens the opening. Any other wrong pattern produces feedback. Call for SAN 1/1D3 and allow one clearly signposted correction, destruction, or retreat. A second deliberate invitation opens the way. Telegraph the consequences before the player chooses. No roll is needed to refuse a bargain.

6. Afterward and Keeper notes

Resolve both the signal and the people

Choice	Ending
Correct answer; bell held	The doorway closes. Recover and break the bronze plate in daylight. Pike returns the survivors to town.
Plate destroyed	The signal ends abruptly. The tower is unsafe; remove the fragments later. The striker may need medical treatment.
Voluntary sacrifice	The signal closes, but the person bracing the frame disappears. Record their action as a choice, not an accident.
Retreat	The survivors reach shore. Warn and evacuate the waterfront. The island remains dangerous.
Invitation repeated or accepted	Imitations step into the beam. They know names but ask others to supply memories. The harbor faces a new threat.

Account for Vane and Clara separately. A rescued Vane reaches the boat alive. A Vane left on the platform after successful closure can be recovered in daylight if the structure allows; do not announce his death without cause. Clara leaves with the group if found. Otherwise record her workshop location for a rescue attempt. The browser adaptation records these same distinctions.

Island layout - relationships, not scale

Area	Connected route / contents
Service landing	Pike's boat; uphill path to all buildings.
Keeper's cottage	Off the main path; journal, photograph, survey fragment.
Workshop	Covered passage to the tower; Clara and the latch.
Boathouse	Beside the landing; survey records, rope, hand winch.
Tower lower door	Keyed service entrance; spiral stair to lantern room.
Lantern room	Empty lamp stand, glass, bell, plate, hand hammer.
Service platform	Iron ladder below the bell; Vane, shackle, opening lever.

Keep it to one hour

Use one town lead and two island locations. Give automatic clues promptly. Let discussion choose a course of action, then show its consequence. At fifty minutes, summarize the apparatus and put the options on the table. The question is what the investigators will do, not whether the Keeper can keep the answer hidden.

Rules and adaptation

Use the 7th edition rules for percentile checks, Hard tasks, pushed rolls, harm, and Sanity. State the additional danger before a pushed attempt. SAN 0/1D3 means no loss on success and 1D3 on failure; roll 1D6 and halve, rounding up, for 1D3. The online version automates a narrower set of rules for solo play and is not a complete implementation of the RPG.

7. Investigator cards

Nora Finch - reporter

Pike helped you expose a shipping fraud. You owe him a serious hearing, and you know when a frightened witness is telling the truth. Age 31.

Attributes	Derived values
STR 50, CON 50, SIZ 50, DEX 60 APP 60, INT 70, POW 60, EDU 70	HP 10; SAN 60; Luck 55 MP 12; MOV 8; DB 0; Build 0

Useful skills: Spot Hidden 60, Listen 40, Library Use 60, Psychology 50, Persuade 65, First Aid 30, Occult 10, Mechanical Repair 20, Electrical Repair 10, Dodge 30.

Equipment: Notebook, pencil, pocket camera, raincoat, flashlight, press identification.

Memory the imitation does not possess: Your late brother always stole the crust from your sandwiches and denied it while still chewing.

For unlisted skills, use the printed base chances in the 7th edition rules. These are compact ready-to-play investigator cards; a full character sheet can be used alongside them. Choose or change the personal memory before play. All four investigators can complete the mystery.

Arthur Reed - marine mechanic

You signed off the lamp removal. A light without your lamp is now your problem. Age 34.

Attributes	Derived values
STR 70, CON 60, SIZ 60, DEX 60 APP 40, INT 60, POW 60, EDU 60	HP 12; SAN 60; Luck 55 MP 12; MOV 8; DB +1D4; Build 1

Useful skills: Mechanical Repair 70, Electrical Repair 50, Spot Hidden 60, Listen 40, Persuade 35, First Aid 30, Library Use 20, Psychology 20, Occult 10, Dodge 30.

Equipment: Tool roll, work gloves, pocketknife, raincoat, inspection flashlight. A tool roll is not a rope and winch.

Memory the imitation does not possess: Your former mentor whistled the same wrong note every time he tightened a stubborn fitting.

For unlisted skills, use the printed base chances in the 7th edition rules. These are compact ready-to-play investigator cards; a full character sheet can be used alongside them. Choose or change the personal memory before play. All four investigators can complete the mystery.

8. Investigator cards

Dr. Evelyn Shaw - physician

Clara is your patient and your friend. She would not miss an appointment without sending word. Age 35.

Attributes	Derived values
STR 50, CON 50, SIZ 50, DEX 55 APP 60, INT 75, POW 65, EDU 80	HP 10; SAN 65; Luck 55 MP 13; MOV 8; DB 0; Build 0

Useful skills: First Aid 70, Medicine 70, Psychology 65, Persuade 50, Library Use 50, Spot Hidden 40, Listen 40, Occult 10, Mechanical Repair 20, Electrical Repair 10, Dodge 27.

Equipment: Medical bag, clean dressings, scissors, raincoat, flashlight. Dressings do not guarantee a First Aid success.

Memory the imitation does not possess: Your mother counted backward from ten when she was angry, then started again at twelve when it did not help.

For unlisted skills, use the printed base chances in the 7th edition rules. These are compact ready-to-play investigator cards; a full character sheet can be used alongside them. Choose or change the personal memory before play. All four investigators can complete the mystery.

Samuel Price - local historian

Your work on the abandoned sounding station turned up unanswered letters. Pike's telegram supplies a new question. Age 36.

Attributes	Derived values
STR 50, CON 50, SIZ 60, DEX 55 APP 50, INT 75, POW 55, EDU 75	HP 11; SAN 55; Luck 55 MP 11; MOV 7; DB 0; Build 0

Useful skills: Library Use 70, Occult 60, Spot Hidden 55, Listen 60, Persuade 45, Psychology 20, First Aid 30, Mechanical Repair 20, Electrical Repair 10, Dodge 27.

Equipment: Notes on the 1891 station, pencil, notebook, spectacles, raincoat, flashlight. The notes identify the station but do not contain the final answer.

Memory the imitation does not possess: Your aunt left corrections in the margins of library books, including books she agreed with.

For unlisted skills, use the printed base chances in the 7th edition rules. These are compact ready-to-play investigator cards; a full character sheet can be used alongside them. Choose or change the personal memory before play. All four investigators can complete the mystery.

Official reference: [Chaosium's free Quick-Start Rules](#); [skill-roll guidance](#). Scenario text, characters, handouts, and the Listener are original. Call of Cthulhu is a trademark of Chaosium Inc. This unofficial scenario is not affiliated with or endorsed by Chaosium.

9. Player handouts

Cut apart or show each handout only when its source is found. Do not hand players the Keeper pages.

Handout A - the unsent telegram

8:41 P.M. / NO SENDING STATION
THE LAMP IS NOT THE LIGHT.
KEEP THE BELL FROM ITS ANSWER.
THREE / ONE / TWO.
DO NOT GIVE THEM YOUR NAME.

Handout B - Thomas Vane's journal

October 12. She said my name.
October 14. I asked where we met. She said, Tell me, Thomas. Perhaps memory takes longer than a voice.
October 16. The lamp is only a cup. Sound is what fills it. I will ring the three groups at midnight. She will come through first.
I have fastened the chain. I must not flee merely because her return frightens me.

Handout C - the surveyor's instruction

Restrain the bell before you answer.
Answer the last first; the first last.
Keep the middle where it stands.
Sound the answer on the plate.
Hold the latch until the last vibration has gone.
Do not ask the water to remember anyone for you.

Handout D - Pike's maintenance receipt

BLACKWATER LIGHT / OCTOBER 15, 1926
Removed: lamp, brass chimney, two fuel cans.
Reason: damaged lantern glass; inspection pending.
Shipping notice issued. Tower to remain dark.
Signed: Elias Pike, Harbormaster.