

# Smoke-Clouded Transylvania

[\[The Day After Ragnarok\]](#)

In theory, the portions of Kentucky that were on the far side of the Appalachian mountain range should have come through the Serpentfall reasonably well, at least by post-apocalyptic standards. And, as far as anybody remembers, for the first three months or so people in Kentucky seemed to be more or less surviving about as well as anybody else. Then again, people weren't actually surviving that well in the Poisoned Lands; so it took a while for others to really notice that cities in Kentucky were disappearing from the radio waves, and that neither raiders nor traders were coming out of either the coalfields or the bluegrass. It took even longer for enough of the local Mayoralities to recover to the point where they could afford to pay for adventuring parties willing to survey the area.

The scouts that came back all reported the same thing: empty towns, abandoned mines, a continual haze from new, riotous plant growth, and few humans. The humans that they did find -- all of whom were farmers -- were mostly not immediately hostile, but there was something off about them; they were oddly passive and uninterested

in much beyond their local patch of farmland. A few of them didn't even really seem to understand that there was a Serpentfall, or that the eastern half of the country had drowned in a sea of venom and monsters. The only concession to modern events that all of them made was in calling their region 'Transylvania,' not 'Kentucky.' *It's the old name*, they explained. *We like it.*

The surviving scouts also reported that tobacco is growing ridiculously wild in Kentucky -- or Transylvania -- right now. This is unusual, given that the growing conditions for tobacco are horrible in North America right now, but the new growth is clearly a mutant strain of the old tobacco. And it kicks like a mule (or possibly bites like a rattlesnake), while keeping the user alert and calm afterwards. Even a small amount of Transylvanian greenleaf tobacco is worth increasing amounts of money in bazaar squares from Memphis to Athens; adventurers who bring out a truckload of the stuff will find buyers ready to pay a Mayor's ransom for it.

Not all adventurers that go to Transylvania come back, though. Then again, neither did all the original scouting parties. There are rumors of bad things in the interior, or deep inside the coal mines. But rumors are rumors, and guns and ammunition are guns and ammo. What is life

without a little risk? -- Or a whole lot of it, if the reward is worth pursuing.

- Moe Lane

- <http://www.moelane.com>