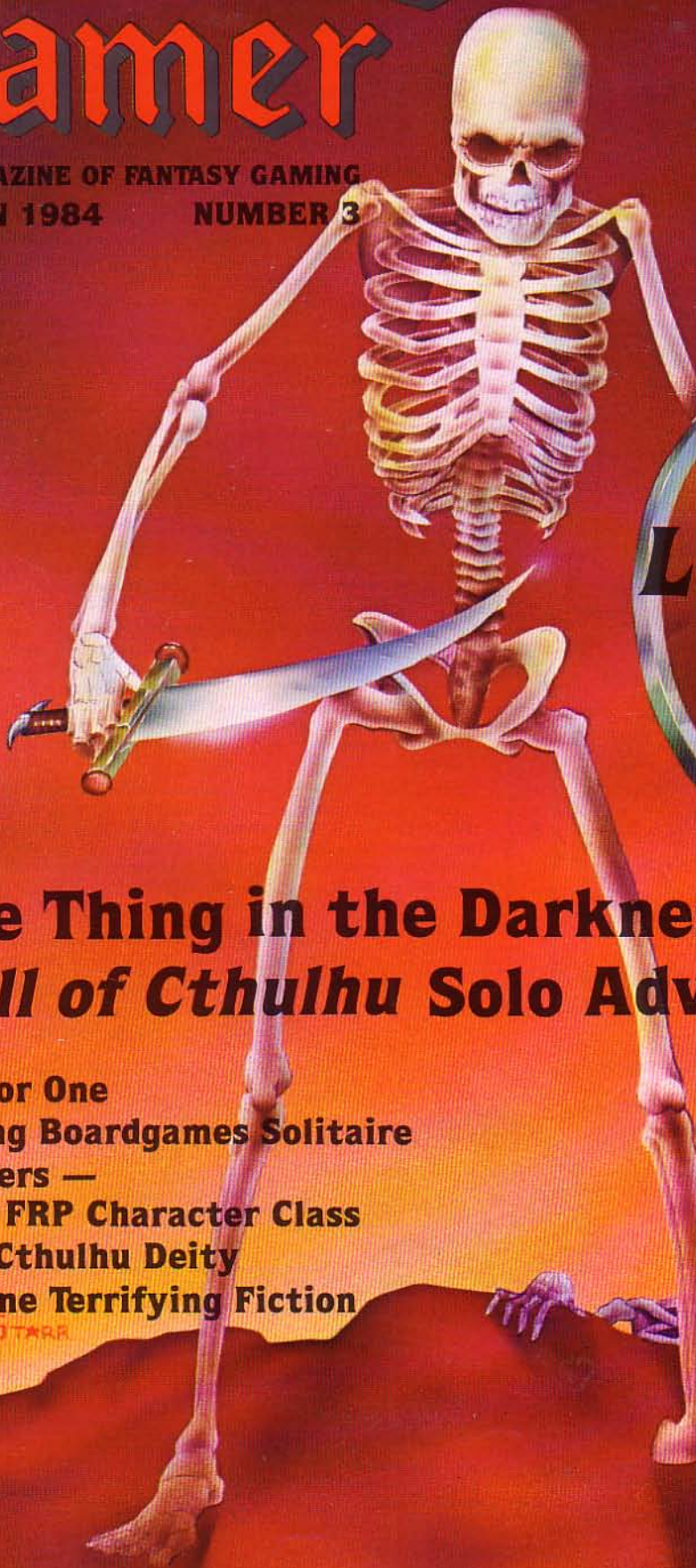


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Fantasy Gamer

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY GAMING
DEC/JAN 1984 NUMBER 3



**Lost Worlds
Featured
Review**

“The Thing in the Darkness” Call of Cthulhu Solo Adventure

**Three For One
Playing Boardgames Solitaire
Stranglers —
a new FRP Character Class
A New Cthulhu Deity
And Some Terrifying Fiction**

STARR

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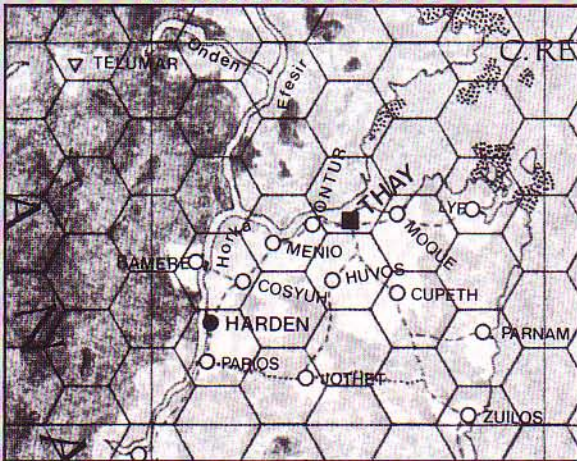
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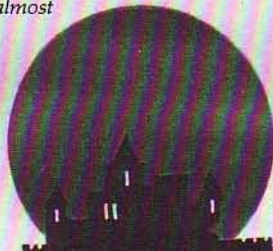
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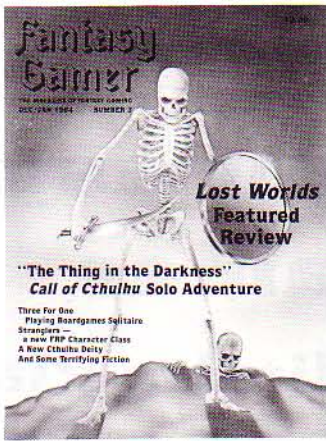
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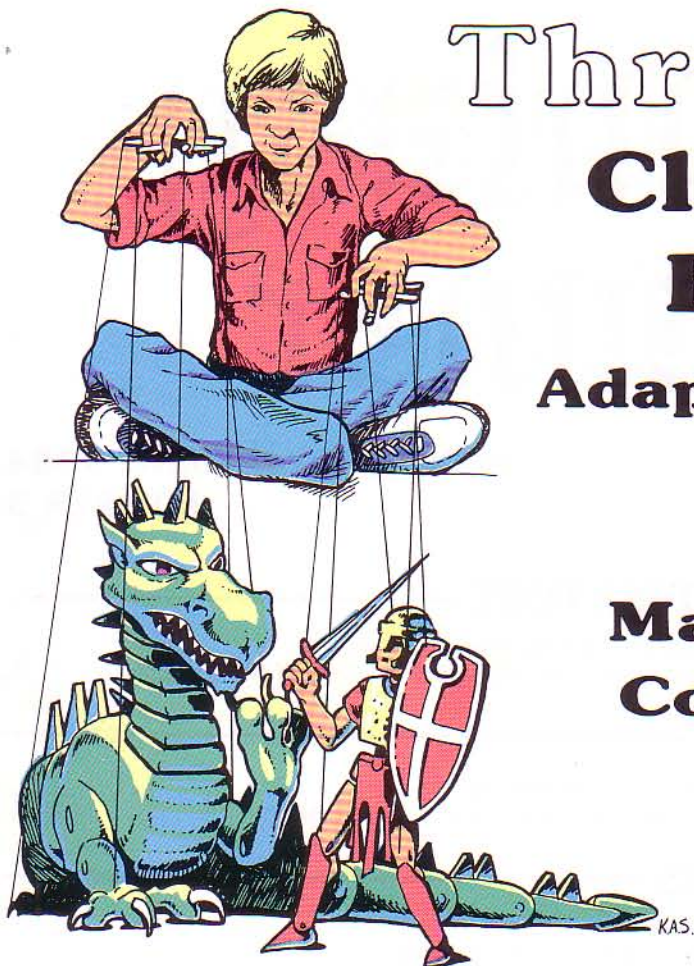
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Three For One Classic Fantasy Boardgames

Adapted for Solitaire Play

by
**Matthew
Costello**

On the back of the box it read, "For 1 to 3 players," and looking at the glorious mapboard and all those counters, I sure hoped the game could be played solo. So I picked a game hermetically sealed and shrink-wrapped (by a process once known only by the Ancient Egyptians) and carried it to the cashier.

I couldn't wait to get home and play *Dragon Pass*.

But when I got there and studied the rule book, I could see some problems. There were the Sartar forces, and there was the Lunar Empire. And then there were characters like Delecti and his Zombies, or the fleet-footed Dragonewts — independents who could only be acquired by the secret allocation of "Diplomacy Points." And the independents' special rules made up almost one-half of the rulebook. All of these pose problems for the solo player.

But where there's a will, there's a way. So, as examples of solving the solo problem, let's look at three fantasy games, but all superb solitaire games.

Dragon Rage

With Dwarfstar's demise, *Dragon Rage* may become increasingly difficult to locate, which is a pity. Lewis Pulsipher has designed a quick and exciting game that shouldn't be allowed to disappear.

The premise is "revenge." Unthinking folk from the fortress city of Esirien have

found the Dragon's lair and destroyed its eggs. Now the Dragon is back for revenge, accompanied by a variety of Orcs, Giants, Trolls, and Goblins. (No explanation why they're with the Dragon — probably just up for a good time.) They will smash the gates and scale the walls, trying to destroy the city.

Esirien probably should have left the eggs alone.

The game is played in fairly straightforward turns of spell-casting, movement, Dragonfire, and melee. The fortress city is tough to break into but, once inside, the invaders have the city dwellers scrambling.

What problems, then, does *Dragon Rage* pose to the solitaire gamer? Well, assuming that the player will give his/her best tactical thinking to both sides, there is only one small difficulty — the Set-Up.

The rules specify that the city dwellers set up first. The invaders arrive from the woods at the mapboard's edge. Now you could do just that: Set up the city's defenders as any good opponent would, look for weak links in the defense, and set up the invaders appropriately.

But there's a problem with that. As the invader you not only know the City's basic set-up, you also know any 'contingency' plans or moves in the back of the City player's mind — which is, of course, your mind. Now you can do that, and the game will probably play fine. But it is a bit of an unfair advantage to give the invaders.

After experimentation I've decided that both sides should set up "blind." After the city sets up, roll a die for the invaders. On a 1-2, they enter from the Western woods; a 3-4, from the North; 5-6, from the East. (The South is water — useless for attack unless you're the Sea Serpent.) The invaders are then set up in a line from one of the two map edges. (1-3 start the line from the left, 4-6, start the line from the right.)

Now both parties are on equal footing. The invader can start shaping his/her moves to the known placement of the city forces while the city dwellers can shift, if necessary, to meet the unexpected attack.

There is another problem that crops up with *any* multi-player game played solo. The solution is less mechanical and more a matter of mental discipline. The problem is the good player's tendency to look at the other side and forecast possible moves. This will, in a solo game, send the player back to his/her current side. The player starts thinking how to react to that possible development. And so on, and so on. The game is likely to swirl aimlessly about in a never-ending vortex of strategic possibilities.

The solution is almost zen-like in its elusiveness.

When you're playing one side, avoid "second guessing" the other side. Don't start thinking what the other side's best move will be on the *next* turn. Try to focus on the situation "as is" — imagine that the other side is capable of anything — and make the active side's best move.

It's hard; it runs against some strong principles of good gamesmanship, principles probably part of every strategic game from chess on. But you're playing a simulation, after all. The attackers are Orcs and Trolls — impulsive and erratic. The defenders are knights — perhaps scared, or drunk, or both. Let them respond to the situation "as is" and you've got yourself an exciting game.

Two rules, then, that are seemingly contradictory, but they help a solo game work:

- 1) Give both sides the opportunity of the best move.
- 2) Try *not* to think of what the inactive side will do in response.

Valley of the Four Winds

Valley of the Four Winds is an English game from Games Workshop. It, like *Dragon Rage*, was designed by Lewis Pulsipher. In fact, *Valley* appears to be a large scale campaign from the world of *Dragon Rage*. It has a detailed "plot" which can present some problems for solo play.

The plot involves the Kingdom of Farrondil, which is under siege by the skeletal slaves of The Bell. King Lodwick of Farrondil sends Hero Dragonslayer (some moniker, eh?) off to get help from the King of Gondemar (who has *his* hands full fighting the Forest Orcs and the Swamplords). Hero tells the King of Gondemar about "Fire Wheels" and their effect on the slimy Swamplords. In return, Gondemar gives Hero the magic swamp bones which can stop the tolling of The Bell and end the grisly attack by the skeletal infantry.

But there's a problem. In Farrondil rests the dormant Wind Demon awaiting a powerful magician to awaken it. Skeleton Monks have moved quickly into the mountains to look for Malig, an evil magician, who can control the Wind Demon and use it to destroy Farrondil. Malig also carries a gas that can send kindly King Lodwick wandering off to the Plains of Darkness.

So Hero must stop the Monks, try to find Verokin, the good magician, and then disperse the evil forces of The Bell.

Quite a little story (which is detailed in a supplied booklet) and the game, with its basic movement, magic and combat sequence, plays marvelously in solitaire form.

But there are difficulties that need resolving. So much is happening in different areas of the splendid mapboard that strategy becomes very important. Hero must go certain places; that is predetermined. Farrondil must withstand the siege of The Bell. But what do Gondemar, the forest orcs, or the Swamplords do? Should the Gondemar forces go in search of the Forest Pixies (don't bother) or perhaps The Hunter (bother!)? Should the Swamplords abandon the battle with Gondemar and slither their way upriver to Farrondil, the real prize?

These are only a few of the decisions which each side is faced with. The Bell slaves, for example, have various ways to cross over to Farrondil. Which way should they select?

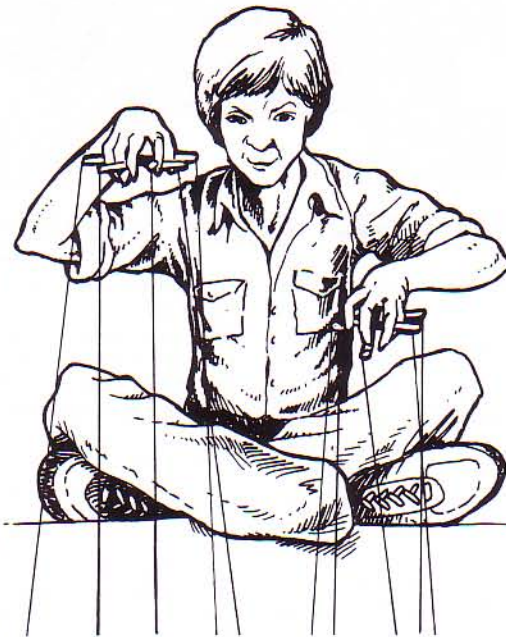
All these decisions must be made by looking at the situation as it is. Then ask yourself, what's the best move? A tricky move? A daring move? Try to get a feel for the pieces so that their personality helps decide the "right course." (You may even want to use the enclosed story of the Valley to predetermine each

group's basic reaction to different situations.)

Set-up of the game can be handled normally. The rules indicate that the "good" player sets up first. The "evil" player (hello there, that's you, too) sets up second. In this case you can let the evil side look for the weak point, the "hole" in the defense. This will cause some scrambling when the good side responds, but it gets the game off with a bang. Further, it doesn't seem to hurt either side's later positions.

Hero can do pretty much what the plot calls for. He has a script to follow which will be interrupted by surprise discoveries like the Forest Monster or the Giant Beetle. Once in the mountains, Hero will try to find Verokin, defeat Malig, then leave to stop the Bell slaves.

Played well, this is one of the best solitaire games ever.



Dragon Pass

Finally, we come to the biggie. And, lo and behold, it's not designed by Lewis Pulsipher. *Dragon Pass*, designed by Robert Corbet and Greg Stafford, is the game of the Lunar-Sartar wars in Glorantha, and is my favorite boardgame. The rulebook presents graduated scenarios so you can absorb the game step-by-step. On one side is the Lunar Empire and the Red Emperor; on the other is Prince Argrath, fighting fiercely for the kingship of Sartar.

But the independents are the fun part. Characters like Androgeus, male/female and one tough cookie, Cragspider and her Dark Trolls, Delecti and his Zombies, the Dinosaurs, the Dragonewts, Keener Than (Yes, Keener Than!), The Puppeteers, Hungry Jack, and on, and on. The list begins to sound like a compendium of '60s rock groups.

These independent characters, each with special abilities and rules, make *Dragon Pass* an exciting place to game. The

minor independents pose no problem to the solo player. Characters like Delecti are acquired by sending an emissary to the independent's home base. Once there, the side seeking the alliance rolls on an emissary table. The alliance is then granted, denied, or the emissary destroyed.

The major independents, though, are only acquired through what's called "Diplomacy." Each player allocates "diplomacy points" (which accumulate at the rate of 25 per turn) to an independent. When a player feels that she/he has the necessary points, the player can try for the independent. Each independent has a certain cost in diplomacy points. But if the other side allocated points to the *same* independent, the "shared" points are wiped out. A diplomacy point *advantage* must equal the major independent's cost in diplomacy points.

Whew! This was a tough one. And I came up with more than one solution, giving each a playtest. Of course there's a simple solution — each player selects an independent from a face-down pile. But that seemed too random and boring.

Instead I devised this method.

For each side I decided which independent they would try for first (usually dependent on proximity or special abilities). The cost for each major independent was raised to twice the points listed. There was no competition for the same independent and accumulated diplomacy points did not have to be allocated to a particular independent. With the increased costs, the independents enter the game at about the same point they would in a two-player game. But simply having the points did not guarantee that a side would get the independent.

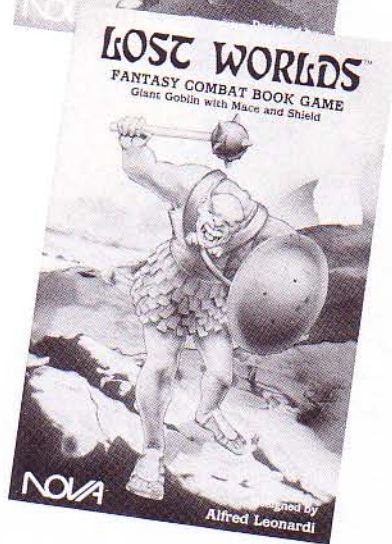
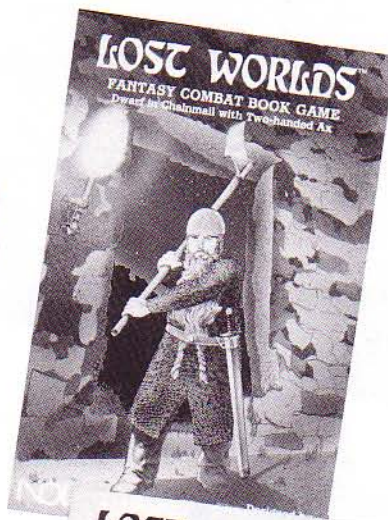
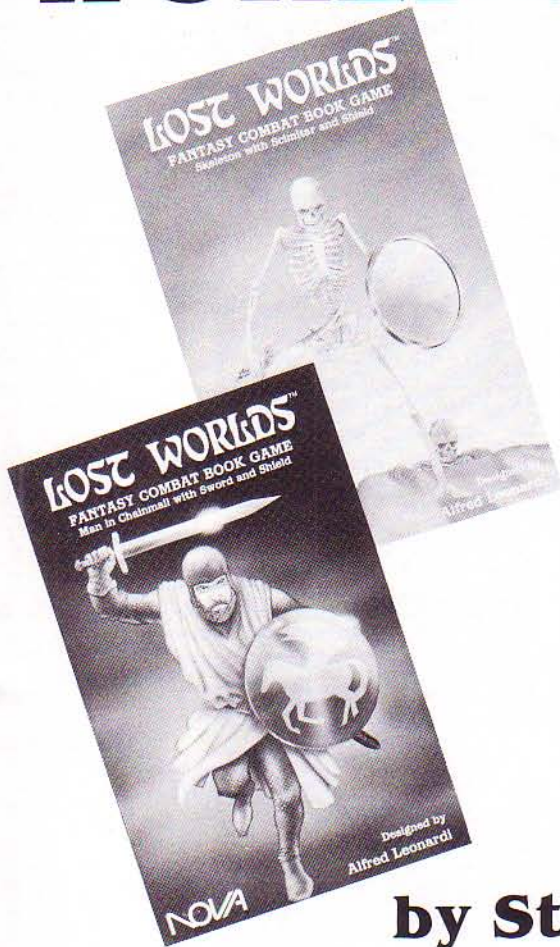
Each side must send an emissary to the capitol of the major independent. Then, the player rolls on the emissary table, just as if it was a roll for a minor. The emissary could succeed (independent allied), fail (independent open to "other offers" from the opposing side — no repeat tries), or the emissary could lose his/her head.

Failure to complete a successful alliance with a major results in a loss of one-half the diplomacy point cost. Not a total wipe-out, but a set-back nevertheless. If any fighting broke out in a still-independent area, the side that sent troops across the border first would be attacked by the independent. And the other side would gain an ally.

Not the cleanest system in the world, but it worked. Sartar and Lunar usually tried for the strongest nearby independent but fate would often cause the attempt to fail. There was just the right element of chance to spice the game.

These adapted games take a progressively larger view of a fantasy world. In fact, it's not too hard to imagine each solo game as a different scene, on a different scale, from the same fantasy universe originally created for several players. **FG**

Featured Review: **LOST WORLDS**



by **Steve Jackson**

A couple of years ago, a new company released a game like no one had ever seen before. The company was Nova; the game was *Ace of Aces*. It didn't use a board — just a pair of books. *Ace of Aces* was an instant hit, and gamers all over the country sat around, flipping through the pages, making remarks like “I'm sending you to 27. Drat! You're behind me.” Which was all very well for the WWI dogfight fans. But some of us wondered “Could they do a swordfighting game like that?”

They could. They did. It's called *Lost Worlds*.

Each *Lost Worlds* set includes two 32-page books, each depicting a different character. A card with each book shows the options permitted to that character. At the moment, there are four books available: a human fighter, a skeleton, a giant goblin, and a dwarf with a two-handed ax. Each book can be used to “fight” each of the others, so right now there are ten different one-on-one combats possible. (Yes, if you have — for in-

stance — two copies of the Skeleton book, you can fight skeleton vs. skeleton.)

The system is similar to the *Ace of Aces* game, but not identical; on the whole, it seems to be simpler. Players start by choosing their characters and exchanging books. That is, if you are playing the skeleton, you give your opponent the skeleton book, but keep the skeleton *card* yourself. You now have a card showing what you can do, and a book showing what your foe looks like. You each start at option 57, and see a picture of your foe standing there, ready to fight. Combat takes place in a series of turns; each player “moves” simultaneously in each turn, so the object of the game is to out-guess the foe. Sequence in a turn goes like this:

(1) Using the character card, choose your maneuver for the turn. This may be limited by what happened to you last turn, and these limitations are one of the most important parts of the game's realism. For instance, if you take an arm

wound, you will be told by your opponent (reading from the book he holds) to “Do no Red or Orange next turn.” “Red” and “Orange” moves, as shown on the card, are those involving overarm swings. Very neat!

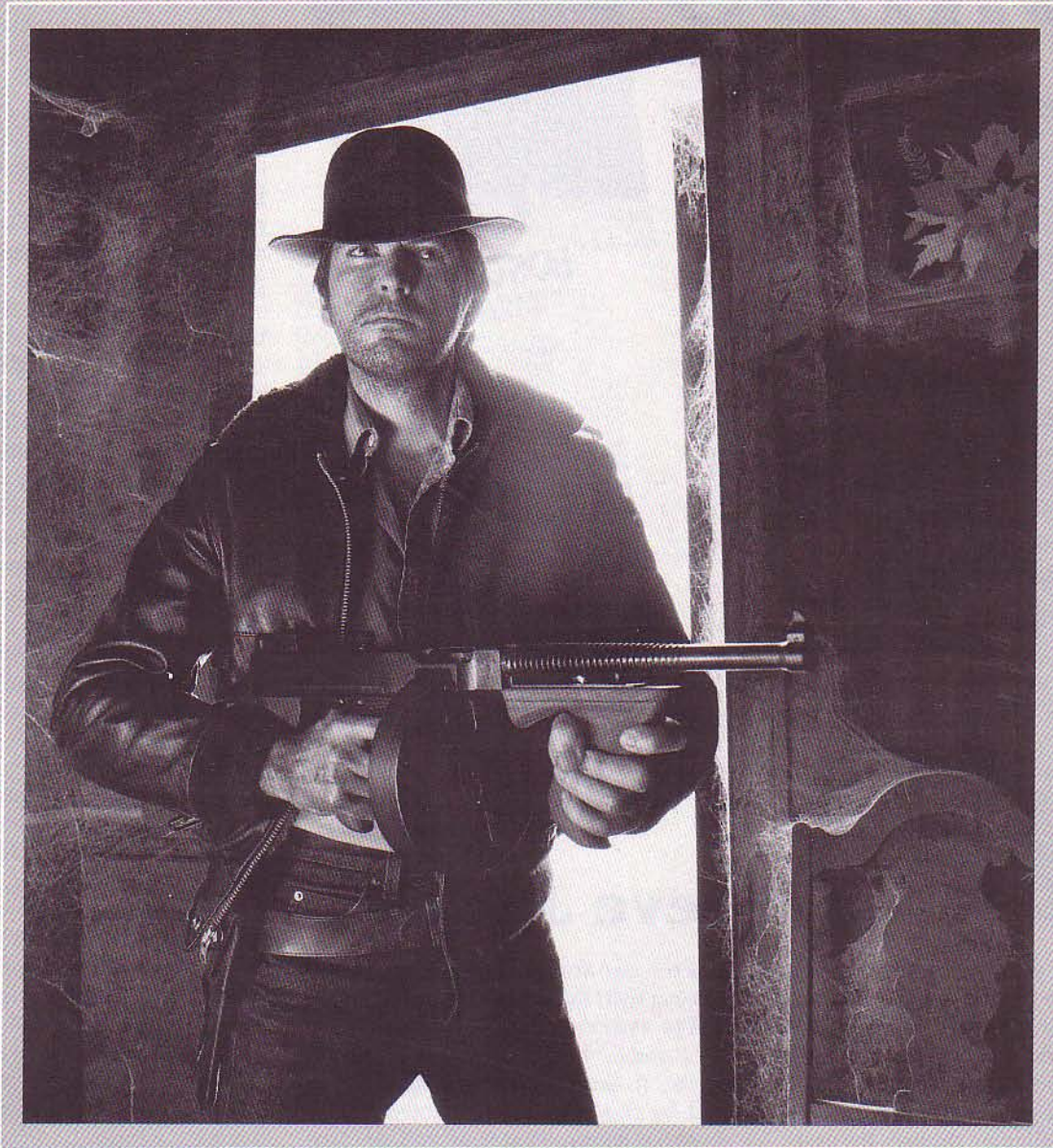
Options available include a variety of swings and thrusts; “fakes” that start one way and come in another; shield blocks (except for the Dwarf, who has no shield); jumps (to dodge an expected attack); tricks like a kick or an attempt to strike at the foe's weapon; and more. Some characters also have special options: The Dwarf can use his ax to try to hook your shield or leg, and the Skeleton can duck and pick up lost bones (regaining hit points!).

(2) When you pick a maneuver, you turn, in the book you are holding, to the numbered “movement parchment” at the bottom of the page corresponding to that maneuver's number. Tell your opponent this number. For instance, a “jump” is maneuver number 18 (for any character). When you jump, you tell your foe “18,” and turn to 18 in the book. This can be a problem with experienced players; you *must* agree to tell each other your moves at the same time. With a novice this is no big deal, but an experienced player will hear you say “18,” *know* that means a jump, and — unless he's very honest — immediately reply “24,” which is a down-swing that will probably kill you in one blow. I strongly recommend that, when you are ready, you just say “Ready.” When both players are ready, reveal your numbers simultaneously.

(3) At the bottom of the movement parchment you're on, there are columns of numbers. Take the number your opponent gave *you* as his maneuver. It will be paired with another number, representing a picture in the book you have. Turn to that picture. You now see your opponent . . . either executing a maneuver of some type, or wincing as your weapon strikes him! (There is a little problem with the pictures . . . for simplicity, the weapon striking the foe is always shown as a sword, but this is a little silly when you're using a club or ax.)

(4) If you hit the foe, the picture will also show “Score,” and a number. This number is the amount of damage you did your enemy. You add or subtract a modifier, shown on your character card, for the *blow* you used (strong blows like the Smash do extra damage, weak blows like fakes do less damage). In a continuing campaign, you may also get a damage bonus for an experienced character. Your enemy subtracts the total damage from his remaining “body points,” and either falls down (giving you the victory) or, if

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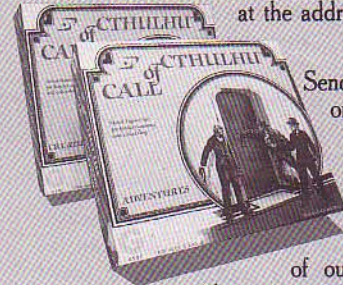


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he has body points left, continues fighting. Starting allotments of body points range from 7 for a skeleton to 14 for a dwarf.

(5) At the same time, your opponent is seeing your picture on the book he holds, and finding out what he did to *you*. Usually you will not hit each other at the same time — but it can happen.

(6) If you are both still able to fight, look below your foe's picture in the book you are holding. Read the instructions (if any) to him. These are his restrictions for the next turn. He will likewise read your restrictions to you. You can now pick your maneuver for the next turn.

Go Ahead — Crush That Dwarf!

The net effect is a game that really captures the “feel” of a quick combat. You win by guessing what your foe will do and countering it. No long-term planning is needed (or, really, even possible). You can set up an attack two turns in advance, but no further. But the tactics really work as they should. A strong overhand swing is deadly when it connects, but if it misses you may lose control and fall down. Shields really do help cover you — and you can *lose* your shield or weapon. And I was delighted to find that the dwarf's polearm really works. When I was a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, I often had occasion to fight with (or against) pole weapons. They're murder at long range . . . but if you can rush in past the point without getting skewered, you have the advantage. And that's the way it works here.

Another *Lost Worlds* strong point is the fantastic artwork. A couple of examples are shown here — and we liked the cover of the Skeleton book enough that we asked permission to use it as this month's magazine cover. It's remarkable. But you can't really appreciate the art until you actually look through the whole book, and see your foe in his whole range of poses: striking, blocking, jumping, falling back wounded, moving in for the kill. The artwork makes the game come alive. It also acts as an “error-trapping” system. If you make a mistake with the numbers, and go to the wrong page, you will see your foe doing something — but it won't seem right! Players quickly learn, for instance, that if they try a downswing and the foe does the same, they hit each other in the head. Any other result will “look wrong” and call for a double-check. Even in cases that you don't have memorized, the realism of the game and art is such that a mistake usually calls attention to itself!

Worms in the Apple

No game is perfect. *Lost Worlds* is a fantastic *tour de force*, but it has a few problems. Most of these can be worked around or lived with, once you know about them.

The game books are not without typos, that bane of programmed systems everywhere. The only serious one that wasn't covered by an errata note in the text occurs in the first printing of the Skeleton and Fighter books: on p. 28, in the first column, “2 . . . 4 . . . 8 . . . 6” should, of course, be “2 . . . 4 . . . 6 . . . 8.” 6 goes to 45, and 8 goes to 19, not the other way around.

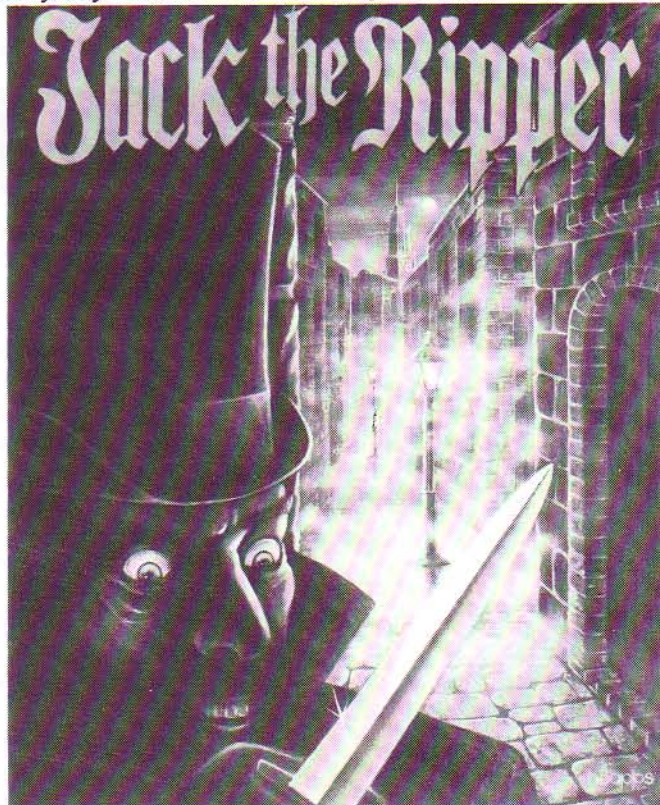
A more basic problem is the inequality of some of the characters. In our play-testing, for instance, it was a rare and lucky skeleton who ever beat the human fighter, let alone the other, stronger characters. The skeleton is just too weak, and his “pick up bones” option doesn't make enough difference. This kind of strength difference is good and realistic in a campaign game — different creatures *aren't* the same in all ways! But it makes one-on-one combats less interesting. In the advanced rules, you can make up for this by letting one experienced fighter take on two skeletons. That gets interesting! Or

you can give your skeleton an extra body point or two.

Finally, though the number of possible moves is large, it is finite. This means that any one pairing will eventually get old. You can only fight, for instance, dwarf vs. goblin so many times before you feel as though you know which one is “better,” and the optimum tactics for each to use against the other. Fortunately, there are two solutions for this. The first is to get a new opponent; I've found that different individuals will come to radically different ideas about the best way to play each character, and a new opponent can be a real change of pace. The second solution lies in the continuing nature of the series. If you're a fan of the series, you may feel you've played your books to death . . . but when a new and different book comes out (how about a Roman with net and trident?) then all your old books are rejuvenated. Wonder how a poleax will do against that net . . . ?

My last problem: given the nature of the system, I don't see how thrown or missile weapons can ever be worked in. And (to me, at least) no combat system can be comprehensive without them. But give Nova time; the system thus far is so ingenious, we may yet see crossbows and throwing stars!

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The price (\$6.00 per small book) will bother some people. In terms of physical material for the money, it's high — no question. In terms of development time and art costs, it seems fairer — and in terms of play value, I've seen *hundreds* of more expensive games, with fancy components, that offered less entertainment for the money.

Elaborations

Advanced *Lost Worlds* rules allow characters to improve (both in terms of body points and damage done by a successful blow) after a successful combat. Even a losing character is not necessarily dead; characters become unconscious (and lose the fight) at 0 body points, but are not dead until they reach -5. Since there is no provision for striking an unconscious character (it's not illegal, it's simply not possible under the rules structure) you can lose the fight, but return to try again another day.

Multiple combats are also possible, in a limited way. A true melee, with several characters hacking away indiscriminately, can't be played, but any number of characters can gang up on a single foe. Each member of the gang picks an option — the lone fighter picks one option which


counts against all his foes. It's not perfect, but it works.

On the whole, I am immensely impressed with *Lost Worlds*. It's fun, it's realistic, and it's easy. In fact, I could almost recommend reserving *Lost Worlds* for those situations where you *couldn't* play any other game! I've played on airplanes, over dinner in restaurants, and even while walking down the sidewalk. It's all in those two little books, a couple of cards — and your head.

Nova plans to continue producing *Lost Worlds* character books as long as the demand holds up . . . and I expect that will be quite a while. They are also working on a "programmed adventure" idea which will put characters into an adventure setting, in which they make decisions, move around, and occasionally meet a foe who must be fought using the *Lost Worlds* books. That should be interesting.

Keep an eye on Nova. You haven't heard the last from these guys.

LOST WORLDS (Nova Games); \$5.95 per booklet, or \$11.95 per set of 2. Designed by Al Leonardi; illustrated by Arne Starr. 32-page 8½" x 5½" booklet, 8½" x 5½" character card. Two players (more in advanced game); playing time 30 minutes or less. Published 1983. **FG**



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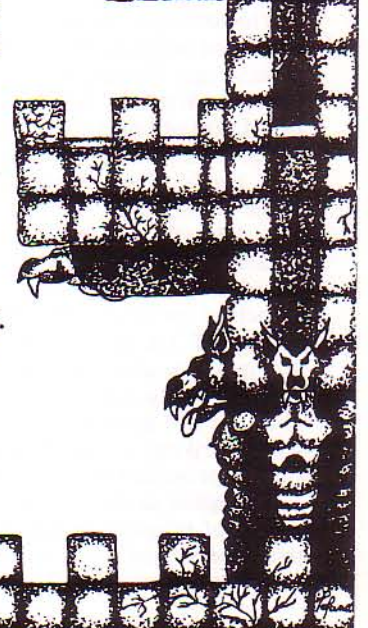
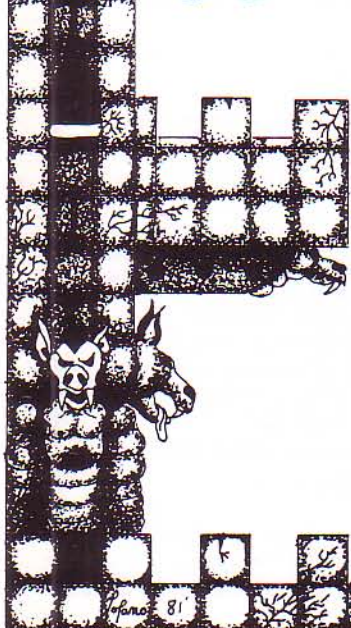
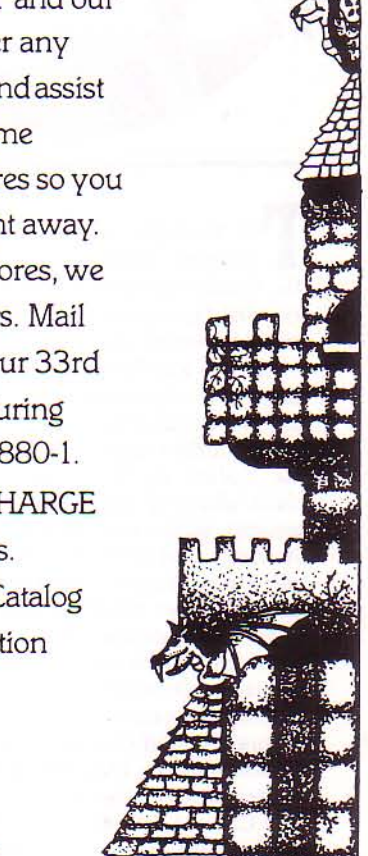
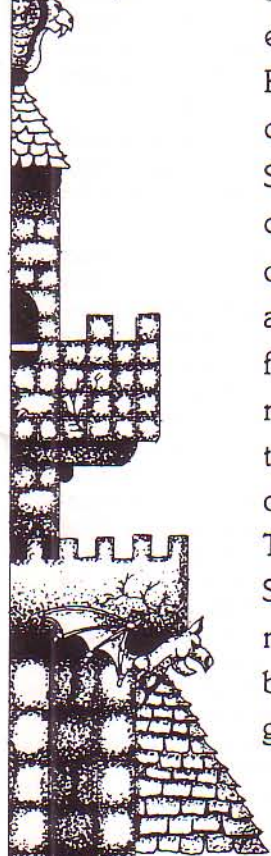
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THE STRANGLER



a character class for D&D

by Ronald Pehr

The Strangler is a combination Cleric/Assassin, based on the Thuggee of India. Unlike the wanton butchery practiced by most fantasy game characters — slaughtering innocent monsters to steal treasure — there is a definite purpose to the Stranglers' acts of murder. They worship dark and evil deities who demand Human sacrifices. Victims must be strangled by hand; the bodies are then incinerated on the black altars of the dread, evil gods. Possessions of the victims *may* be kept by a Strangler, but robbery is not a motive to kill. Strangling is a religious rite; the Strangler will never do it merely to obtain loot or for such purposes as torturing a prisoner to gain information. Victims will be Human or Demi-Humankind.

Only Humans or Half-Orcs may become Stranglers; Half-Orcs may not achieve the highest ranking, Holy Strangler (Level 11), as they lack the psychological capacity for true Clerical devoutness. Cult dogma forbids training women to be Stranglers.

The Strangler character is presumed to have been consecrated to the dark gods at an early age. Minimum statistics are 12 for Strength, Wisdom, and Dexterity. Stranglers faithfully practice secret exercises to develop their arm muscles and harden their hands. These exercises allow an increase in Strength by one point at the 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th levels. If Strength reaches 18, the Strangler may roll for extraordinary Strength, and may roll again at each of the levels where Strength would increase if his Strength has reached 18. Strength bonuses may be applied to a weapon, lifting, and knocking-open doors. They are not applied to strangling or unarmed striking — use of great strength is already presumed in these actions.

Stranglers shun armor of any type as a matter of religious principle. Each Strangler is permitted to own one weapon (appropriate for a Cleric) which has been

sanctified by a Holy Strangler or Evil High Priest. If the weapon is lost or broken, any replacement must be sanctified before it can be used. The Strangler's weapon is used only in defense, never in place of strangling a sacrifice. Torches or flaming oil may also be used to repel attackers or cover a getaway. No Strangler will ever use poison.

Although limited in weaponry, Stranglers' hard fists do awesome damage. The technique is similar to the martial arts used by Monks, but is more dependent on brute strength, so the Strangler does not get multiple attacks at higher levels as the Monk does.

Strangling is performed as any other melee attack; a strangle from behind is at +4 to hit. Strangling requires two hands. Once a hit is scored, damage is rolled automatically each melee round without having to check for a hit again unless the victim can escape. Escape is rolled as a normal hit, at -4. No damage is scored; an "escape-hit" is simply a chance for the victim to avoid further strangulation. The victim *may* strike to do damage, at normal chance to hit, but the Strangler will

continue to strangle the victim unless too seriously wounded. When taken from behind, a victim escapes on a hit -6, and strikes for damage on a hit -4.

Whether a Strangler can use this form of attack against monsters is for the referee to decide. Of course, the monster must have a neck small enough to be spanned by a person's hands, and remember that a Strangler will not be seeking out animals or monsters as sacrificial victims.

Stranglers are considered Clerics for purposes of hit dice, melee matrix, and saving throws. They may hide in shadows or move silently as Assassins of their own level. They may obtain the benefits of a Book, either as Cleric or Assassin. Upon reaching Holy Strangler, they do not gain additional levels; however, they receive the ability to employ magical objects usable by Clerics (exception: Scrolls, as they cannot actually cast Clerical spells).

Devotion to their evil deities confers ability for Stranglers to perform certain miraculous feats. These are detailed in the chart below.

Stranglers present a unique opportunity for role-playing. Not only may characters kill for a reason, but such killing can involve them in adventures limited only by the referee's imagination: How often must a Strangler make a sacrifice? Are there any special requirements as to type of victim? Does the Strangler owe the local cult anything for the training he receives? What penance must he perform to have a weapon sanctified — perhaps a quest of some sort? If each local cult has only one Holy Strangler, how does one proceed from the next lowest rank — duel the existing one, engage in some sort of contest, or a vote of the cult members? How does the Strangler evade the authorities? Even those who countenance a Thieves or Assassins Guild won't be too keen on a flourishing religion which kills off the local taxpayers.

The Strangler isn't for everyone. But for those who enjoy a hint of evildoing in their fantasy games, and who are willing to take the consequences when their characters are unmasked, the Strangler can be a lot of fun.

FG

Level	Points Needed	Punch Damage	Strangle Damage	Special Abilities
1) Novice	0	D3	D2	
2) Squeezer	1,500	D3	D3	
3) Stifler	3,000	D3	D4	Phantasmal Forces 3x/day*
4) Suffocator	6,000	D6	D6	Strangler against plate armor
5) Crusher	12,000	D6	D8	Cure D6-1 HTK/day
6) Constrictor	25,000	D6	D10	Spectral Forces once/day*
7) Garrotteer	50,000	2D6	2D6	Parry with hands as shield
8) Choker	100,000	2D6	3D6	Cure 2D6-1 HTK/day
9) Strangler	200,000	2D6	2D10	Fear Spell/day*
10) Master Str.	300,000	3D6	4D6	Strike creatures requiring magic to hit.
11) Holy Str.	500,000	3D6	3D10	

*As the Magic-User or Illusionist Spells. Used to distract, confuse victims.



The Thing in the Darkness

by Matthew J. Costello

Developed by

Warren Spector and Steve Jackson

Playtested by

Ann Costello, Christopher Frink,

Scott Haring, Steve Jackson,

Sandy Petersen, and Warren Spector.

Special thanks to Sandy Petersen and the folks at The
Chaosium for their help in producing this scenario.

Call of Cthulhu is a trademark of The Chaosium.

Playing "The Thing in the Darkness"

"The Thing in the Darkness" is a solo adventure for use with Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*, a fantasy role-playing game set in the nightmare world of H.P. Lovecraft. It is not absolutely necessary to have *CoC* in order to play the game, however. For those readers who don't own *CoC* we provide a brief outline of the rules you will need to know and brief descriptions of the Cthulhu mythos horrors with which you *may* have to deal.

Characteristics

If you have played *any* RPGs, the basic characteristics should hold few surprises. The character you play in "The Thing in the Darkness" is named B. Smith. Your primary characteristics (Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Constitution, Charisma, Power, Size, Education) are listed in a table included in the rules section of this scenario. All of B. Smith's primary characteristics were determined by rolling 3D6, so conversion to other game systems is simple.

A few of B. Smith's characteristics are unique to the *Call of Cthulhu* game system, however. SANity (Power x 5) is perhaps the most unusual of these. This is a measure of B. Smith's mental stability. At several points in the game you will be directed to make a SAN roll. This simply means you have encountered something so horrible you run the risk of going insane. You must roll your SAN or below on percentile dice (see Skill Rolls, below) in order to avoid this. (For a complete discussion of the effect of insanity on game play, see Section 3.6 of "The Thing in the Darkness" rules.)

Other characteristics which you won't find in other RPGs include IDEA, LUCK, and KNOWledge. At several points in the game, B. Smith's ability to come up with the right IDEA or piece of KNOWledge (or just his dumb LUCK) may determine whether he lives or dies. IDEA, LUCK, and KNOW rolls are resolved in the same manner as SAN.

As B. Smith, you have one other skill which is important to this adventure: you have some knowledge of the horrid CTHULHU MYTHOS. You begin the game with a score of 5% — you've had some experience with Cthulhoid horrors, but not much. At various points in the game, when you defeat (or sometimes just recognize) one of these creatures,

you will be instructed to add points to your MYTHOS score. Simply follow the directions in the event paragraphs. Going insane also increases your MYTHOS score — see Insanity, below.

The CTHULHU MYTHOS skill is only rarely used in "The Thing in the Darkness," but if B. Smith survives this scenario, MYTHOS knowledge will come in very handy for later adventures. Keep track of it as it grows.

One other point: as your MYTHOS skill grows, your maximum SAN drops. Your *current* SAN is unaffected by changes in your MYTHOS ability, however. For example, B. Smith's maximum SAN is 60 at the start of the game. If he (or she) were instructed to increase MYTHOS knowledge by 6, maximum SAN would drop to 54 — but current SAN would remain the same. Therefore, if Smith's SAN ever dropped below 60, he/she could not raise it again until it dropped below the maximum of 54. The message is simple: knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos goes hand in hand with madness.

No other game system features a characteristic or skill even remotely resembling CTHULHU MYTHOS knowledge. If you choose to play a character from another game system, assume that he or she begins with a 5% knowledge of the Mythos. Don't worry . . . you'll learn — if you survive.

Other Systems

If you choose to play "The Thing in the Darkness" using a character created in a game system other than *Call of Cthulhu*, you will have to come up with equivalents for these characteristics. The simplest way to do this is to find a similar characteristic and use that. For example, if you play *D&D*, you might substitute Wisdom for SAN; if you play *RuneQuest*, you might substitute Power for SAN; if you play *The Fantasy Trip*, you might use IQ for SAN; and so on. For KNOW, you could use *D&D*'s Wisdom, *RuneQuest*'s IQ or *MERC*'s Knowledge. For IDEA, you could use *Daredevils*' Wit, *James Bond 007*'s Perception, or *Tunnels & Trolls*' Intelligence. For LUCK, pick something along the lines of Wisdom, Power, Intuition, Dexterity, or Presence, depending upon the game system you want to use. Use your imagination.

Having found appropriate substitutes for these essential characteristics, you then have to decide whether to use the *Call of Cthulhu* game system itself. If you do decide to use *CoC* rules, you will have to deal almost exclusively with "percentile die rolls." (If your equivalent characteristics for LUCK, IDEA, KNOW, and SAN are based on 3D6 rolls, multiply these characteristics by five and then proceed with your percentile rolls.) Percentile rolls are explained in detail below.

If you want to use another game system, you will also have to convert the game mechanics of "The Thing in the Darkness" to match the system you want to use. Converting game mechanics will also be discussed below.

Skill Rolls

Nearly all skill rolls in *Call of Cthulhu* (and "The Thing in the Darkness") involve percentile dice. If you are called upon to make a particular skill roll (i.e., LUCK, IDEA, KNOW, SAN, MOVE QUIETLY, LIBRARY USE, HIDE, etc.) before moving to a new event paragraph, simply roll two ten- or twenty-sided dice. Select one of the dice as your "tens" die, and one as your "ones" die. For example: Your first die roll comes up a "7" and your second one comes up a "3." You have rolled a "73." You then check your percentile roll against the appropriate characteristic on B. Smith's chart. If your roll was equal to or less than B. Smith's ability at that skill, you succeeded in doing whatever it is you were directed to do. If your percentile roll was higher than B. Smith's skill level, you failed.

On some rare occasions you will be directed to roll DEX versus 3D6. In this case you must roll your DEX or less on 3D6.

On other rare occasions you will be directed to roll "STR versus STR" against an opponent. If both combatants are of equal strength, you have a 50% chance (rolled on percentile dice, as above) to succeed in whatever action you are attempting. For each point of STR your opponent is stronger than you, *subtract* 5% from your chance of success. Conversely, for each point of STR you are stronger than your opponent, *add* 5% to your chance of success. For example: You have a STR of 9. You are grabbed from behind by an assailant with a STR of 12. In order to break free, you must roll STR vs. STR.

Your opponent is 3 STR points stronger than you; you must, therefore, subtract 15% from your base chance to hit of 50%. If you roll 35% or less on percentile dice, you break free of your opponent's grasp.

If you choose to use a game system other than *Call of Cthulhu*, you will have to convert the instructions given in "The Thing in the Darkness" so they make sense in your game. If the game you're playing uses percentile rolls, and has equivalent skills and weaponry, you're all set. Go to it. If the game you play uses 1D20, 2D6, or 3D6 rolls in resolving combat and skill use, you will have to find equivalents of the percentile rolls required in the event paragraphs of "The Thing in the Darkness." To make this easier, we have included charts which list equivalent rolls for game systems using 1D20, 2D6, or 3D6 characters.

When you need to make a percentile roll, just check the percentage necessary in order to carry out a particular action successfully. Find this percentage (or get as close as you can) on the appropriate chart; find the number you have to roll on 1D20, 2D6, or 3D6 and you're ready to go.

Gun Combat

Gun combat, like most everything else in *Call of Cthulhu*, makes use of percentile rolls, and you will have to consult the conversion tables if you use a game system other than *CoC*. For attacks at "Normal" range, check B. Smith's proficiency with the weapon you wish to use and roll that number or less on percentile dice or equivalent. For attacks at "Point Blank Range," double B. Smith's base percent to hit and then roll percentile dice (or the equivalent number you've found on the conversion tables). Ranges will be specified in appropriate event paragraphs. NOTE: This is a slight modification of the *Call of Cthulhu* rules made for the sake of solo playability.

All firearm attacks take place *before* all melee weapon attacks regardless of the DEX of combatants (unless the wielder of a melee weapon has surprise). All firearm combat takes place in DEX order (highest DEX first) followed by all melee weapon combat (also in DEX order).

The number of shots/round for the various weapons and the damage system itself are explained in the rules section which follows.

Damage

When you are injured in combat, the number of "hits" you take is determined by a die roll (the appropriate die rolls are specified in the event paragraphs) and subtracted from your CON. When your CON has been reduced to one, you fall unconscious. Given the time limitations of "The Thing in the Darkness," this probably means you are as good as dead. (Of course, the downright nastiness of your adversaries could mean a fate worse than

death.) If your CON points reach zero or less, you are dead.

For the purposes of "The Thing in the Darkness," there is no way to regain lost CON points, nor is there any way to regain consciousness once your CON reaches one. (You *would* regain CON at the rate of one point per week — but you don't have a week. You *could* be roused into consciousness if there were someone to offer you first aid — but in this scenario, you're on your own.)

The message here is simple: be sneaky, avoid fights whenever possible (good luck) — running away from a fight is often a good idea. If all else fails, hurt your opponents worse than they hurt you (again, good luck).

Have fun, and sweet dreams . . . heh, heh, heh.

Cthulhu Mythos Horrors

BYAKHEE

The Byakhee are an interstellar race; not altogether crow, nor mole, nor buzzard, nor ant, nor decomposed human being, but some awful combination of all of these. They are capable of flying through space and carrying a rider (if the rider is properly protected). In size, they are a bit bigger than the average human and are covered with fur which acts as two-point armor. They have no permanent bases on Earth, but may be called upon by others to perform acts or to serve as steeds. Their primary weapons are their teeth and claws.

CTHONIANS

The Cthonians are a race of burrowing creatures, resembling immense squids with elongated worm-like bodies. They have a complex life cycle, lasting approximately a thousand years. Their size varies greatly as they mature, ranging from roughly human-size to approximately five times human-size. They have five points of skin armor. Their adult size makes them easy enough to hit; their armor makes them difficult to hurt. They communicate by telepathy. Cthonians attack primarily by crushing their victims with their body or tentacles. They also have the ability to create earth tremors.

DEEP ONES

The Deep Ones are an amphibious race with fish-like heads and gills. They have been described as "blasphemous fish-frogs." They are worshipped by humans and are capable of breeding with them. Hybrids begin as human-looking children and become uglier as time passes. Finally, they undergo a startling transformation and become Deep Ones. For unknown reasons (perhaps related to their life cycle), the Deep Ones have an overwhelming desire to mate with humans. They are a bit bigger than humans (though not much) and have one-point skin armor. Their primary weapons are their claws and a trident-like spear.

DHOLES

Dholes are huge, worm-like, burrowing

Conversion Tables

1D20		2D6		3D6	
Roll	% Equivalent	Roll	% Equivalent	Roll	% Equivalent
1 or more	100%	2 or more	100.00%	3	0.46%
2+	95%	3+	97.22%	4 or less	1.85%
3+	90%	4+	91.67%	5-	4.62%
4+	85%	5+	83.33%	6-	9.26%
5+	80%	6+	72.22%	7-	16.20%
6+	75%	7+	58.33%	8-	25.93%
7+	70%	8+	41.67%	9-	37.50%
8+	65%	9+	27.78%	10-	50.00%
9+	60%	10+	16.67%	11-	62.50%
10+	55%	11+	8.33%	12-	74.07%
11+	50%	12	2.78%	13-	83.80%
12+	45%			14-	90.74%
13+	40%			15-	95.37%
14+	35%			16-	98.15%
15+	30%			17-	99.54%
16+	25%			18-	100.00%
17+	20%				
18+	15%				
19+	10%				
20	05%				

EXAMPLE: A character with a Skill level of 25% at LISTENing would have to roll a 25 or less on percentile dice in order to listen successfully. In a game system which uses 2D6 as opposed to percentile rolls, you would have to roll a 9 or more on 2D6 to succeed. On 3D6, you would need an 8 or less to listen. If no percent equivalent exists that is *near* the percentile roll you need to make as B. Smith, round things off in *your favor*.

creatures. They dislike light, though it doesn't appear to harm them. They are 30 to 40 times human-size, average close to 20 points of skin armor, and are immune to impaling damage. Generally, they try to swallow their victims whole, crush them, or spit a viscous substance at them which traps anything it touches in a vise-like grip similar to quicksand.

GHOULS

Ghouls are rubbery, loathsome humanoids with hoof-like feet, canine features, and claws. They are often encrusted with

grave-mold. They live in tunnel systems beneath many cities. Ghouls have been known to attack people. It may even be possible for a human to be transformed into a ghoul over a prolonged period of time. The details of this process are not known. They are human-size and have no armor. They generally fight with teeth and claws.

MI-GO

The Mi-Go are an interstellar race with mining colonies on Earth. They seek rare ores found in the hills and mountains of

Earth but not on their home planet, Pluto. They can speak human tongues and have been known to use human agents to simplify their operations. The Mi-Go are able to fly through outer space but their wings allow them only clumsy maneuvering in Earth's atmosphere. They are a bit smaller than humans and have several sets of limbs. Mi-Go have three-point skin armor. Their primary weapons are 1D6 "nippers." They can attack with two nippers at once.

NYOGTHA

Nyogtha is a minor deity, reported to inhabit the underground caverns of Earth. It resembles a black blob which can throw out tentacles at will. Nyogtha is roughly four times human-size and has ten-point skin armor. It has few human worshippers. If confronted, Nyogtha will grab its victim and drag him or her off to its underground home. Its primary weapons are its tentacles.

SHOGGOTHS

Shoggoths are huge, black, column-shaped creatures living in underground lairs. They are amphibious. They communicate in whatever manner they choose, forming special organs for the purpose. They are roughly three times human-size and have no armor, but their size renders most weapons nearly useless. They generally try to crush their victims (and usually succeed).

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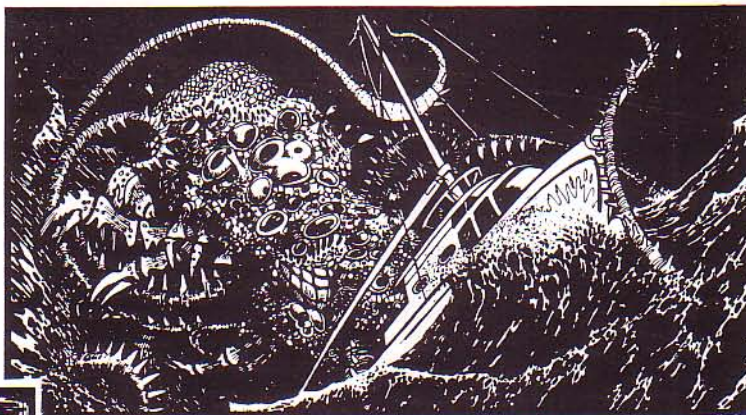
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The Thing in the Darkness

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A Note to Players: The "Event Paragraphs" give you the essential information needed for any characters (or beings) encountered. If you desire more information, roll the complete statistics as per the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook.

1.0 Introduction

It's a beautiful Thursday morning as midsummer approaches. You walk into the offices of the *Arkham Gazette*, expecting everyone to be relaxing with a cup of coffee.

How wrong you are. As soon as you walk in the door, Perry Sanford, your boss and Editor-in-Chief of the *Gazette*, points at you.

"Smith! Inside," he barks, indicating his office. You follow him, confused by his brusque manner. Sanford takes out a Havana cigar, lights it and begins talking quietly.

"Something happened last night," he says. "Howie called me from the police station. A local co-ed, Susan Hampshire, went to a tea party at Miskatonic University. Turns out she left early. Complained of a headache." Sanford puffed the cigar harshly. "Only trouble is . . . she never got home."

A disappearance . . . You lean forward. You think of last year, that terrible summer of 1923. There was an international conference to study the odd meteor that had fallen outside of town. Put Arkham right on the map. And then the deaths began. Arkham became a frightening place to be after sunset. Then Jansen Coates, world-renowned archaeologist, showed up. He came to Arkham to rid it of a horrible curse. Somehow you ended up helping him and learning more than you ever wanted to about the evil which stalked Arkham by night. But it was over; Coates had said so. This couldn't be the same thing. It had to be something different. It had to.

You look up to see Sanford glaring at you.

"That's not all, Smith," he says. "This came in the mail this morning. It's addressed to you."

You take the note out of the envelope. The stationery is from the Arkham Sanitorium. You notice the wild handwriting:

On midsummer's eve, the evil will stir.
— Marcus Flagg

"It's your story, Smith. Find the girl. Find out what this Flagg character knows. What's his connection with the whole affair, or is this just a nasty coincidence?"

You lick your lips nervously and ask, "When's midsummer's eve?"

"Saturday night," Sanford says, sliding a sheaf of papers towards you. "I spent most of the night digging through the files after I got that call from Howie. Couldn't sleep, not with what happened last year. There wasn't much in the morgue, but here's a list of places that look promising, along with what little I did find.

"Look, Smith, this could be just another college prank that got out of hand. You know, send some poor kid into the graveyard or the sewers to be scared out of her wits. But I've got a hunch there's more to this than meets the eye. Dig a little deeper than usual. I want background, history, the works. Find out what's going on here"

You leave Sanford's office, studying the clippings he gave you: an article about a bake sale Susan Hampshire organized to benefit St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church; an article about a scholarship Hampshire won after her freshman year. Her advisor, Professor Beardsley of the Psychology Department, was quoted, describing Susan Hampshire as one of his most promising students; and there was a photograph. Sweet-looking kid. She didn't look or sound like the kind to get involved in college hi-jinks.

You pick up the phone. The operator comes on and, after a moment's hesitation, you say, "New York," and give her the number, a number you thought you'd never have to use again.

It seems an eternity before Jansen Coates is on the line. He sounds harried, besieged. For a moment you wonder what is troubling him. But you have troubles of your own. He listens, and then you hear depression weighing on his voice. "I, I can't come, Smith, not now . . . not yet. If I could tell — no, you're on your own. But listen, take down these names. Call me when you know what, if anything, is involved. Then I'll tell you what must be done. I can do no more." And then he's reciting the names, uttering the incomprehensible sounds. He speaks hurriedly and you struggle to keep up, but you get them all down (see Table B).

"Be especially careful, Smith. Rash behavior will only get you noticed . . . or worse. Be careful, and follow my instructions *to the letter*," he says. "Call before midnight Saturday — three hours before, if you can." He hangs up and you're alone. No one else in whom you can confide. You walk out of the office into the balmy summer air, now suddenly clinging and fetid.

"Where should I begin?" you wonder.

2.0 Character Information

Your character, B. Smith, is a journalist. His (or her — B. Smith can be male or female, as you choose) statistics are listed below. Also included is a list of Smith's special skills and areas of knowledge. If you wish to roll your own character or change the statistics below, see 2.1.

B. Smith, Profession: *Journalist*, Education: *B.A., Boston University*, Age: 25, Residence: *Arkham*. STrength 10, DEXterity 12, INTelligence 11, IDEA 55, CONstitution 13, CHARisma 09, POWer 12, LUCK 60, SIZE 12, SANity 60, EDUcation 15, KNOWledge 75, Hit Points 13, POW points 12.

Read/Write English 75%, Read/Write Latin 20%, Read/Write German 20%, Read/Write French 05%, Listen 45%, Jump 45%, Dodge 60%, Climb 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 60%, Debate 30%, Fast Talk 30%, Oratory 30%, Move Quietly 25%, Hide 55%, Track 10%, Library Use 50%.

2.1 Other Characters

You can roll your own character as you normally would, or play an already existing low-level character from *Call of Cthulhu* or another game system. You also have the option of shifting 50 percentage points from any one or more of Smith's skills and knowledge areas to other skill and knowledge areas.

EXAMPLE: You *could* drop Smith's Latin and 30% of the Spot Hidden, and add it all to Make Maps or any other skill you choose. Bear in mind, however, that all of the skills B. Smith (or any existing character) will need to win "The Thing in the Darkness" are listed in 2.0 above. If it isn't listed, you won't need it.

2.2 Weapons

You own a .45 revolver. Since you've been through this sort of thing before, you always keep your .45 close at hand. You normally have five bullets ready (an empty chamber rests against the hammer) and you can fire two shots a round. Five extra bullets rattle reassuringly in your pocket. It takes one full round to reload. Should you desire another kind of pistol or rifle, you can go to the hardware store, which carries guns as well as kerosene, rope, dynamite, tools, axes, and most anything you'd expect a hardware store to carry. You are assumed to have enough money stashed away to purchase most items. It takes you one full hour to make a trip to the hardware store. All shotguns encountered, unless otherwise indicated or purchased at the hardware store, are double-barrel, 12-gauge. All handguns encountered, unless otherwise indicated or purchased at the hardware store, are .45 revolvers, just like your own.

.45 revolver: 20% at normal range, 2 shots/round, 1D10+2 damage

Shotgun: 30% at normal range, 2 shots/round, 2D6 damage

All combat takes place at "normal range" unless otherwise specified. At point blank range, all percentages — yours and your enemies' — are doubled. All of your opponents fire at the "base chance to hit" listed above — 20% at normal range for a .45 revolver, 30% at normal range with a shotgun. If an opponent has unusual combat skills, deviations from the norms listed above will be indicated in the appropriate event paragraph.

3.0 Sequence of Play

- Decide where to go and find that paragraph number. Record the number in case you reach an instruction (i.e., "Nothing happens") that sends you back.

EXAMPLE: You want to go to The Arkham Historical Society. That's number 7 (see Table A). Find number 7 in the Events and Places listing and read it.

- Mark off ONE HOUR on the time chart every time you go someplace. This includes preparation, note-taking and the actual travel time.
- Each EVENT will last one full hour unless otherwise specified. When the event concludes, mark off the amount of time spent.
- Go to the paragraph to which you have been directed. If the event paragraph at which you find yourself sends you to no new paragraph, return to Table A and continue your investigation somewhere else.

NOTE: Be sure to mark off both travel *and* event time.

3.1 Time

Eating: You must eat breakfast within two hours of 7 a.m., lunch within two hours of noon, and dinner within two hours of 6 p.m. Mark off an hour for each meal. This includes finding a place to eat, waiting at the Greasy Spoon, and actually eating. If you miss two meals (or more) within any 24-hour period, you lose one point of CON. No gorging later to catch up; that's not healthy.

Sleeping: You should sleep six hours a night, any time after 10 p.m. and before 9 a.m. You may do nothing while sleeping (except have nightmares). Mark off one hour on the time chart for each hour you sleep. Missing an hour's sleep leads to a one-point loss in CON. Also, make a SAN roll when you wake up or lose one point of SAN — your sleep is disturbed by unsettling dreams.

NOTE: If you sleep anywhere but your own home, you *can't* sleep more than four hours. Thus, you automatically lose *at least* two points of CON.

NOTE: For game purposes, "night" begins at 8 p.m. and ends at 7 a.m.

3.2 Other Places

You will begin your investigation with the places described in the packet given you by your editor. You will discover many oth-



er places to visit during the course of your investigation. Each trip to a new location costs one hour. Any paragraphs will list the time expended in the actual events described. If no time is mentioned, the event takes one hour.

3.3 Numeric Names

It is possible that you will discover something that has a number, say, *67*, instead of a name. That number refers to a creature on the list Jansen Coates read to you over the phone (see Table B). You can, using the procedure described on Table C, change each creature's name to a number. *Only* when you encounter a number or when you're ready to **End the Game** (see 3.4) should you convert the creature's name to a number. (See Table C and its instructions, below.)

3.4 Ending the Game

This adventure consists of three different levels that can be played. To start, you are only aware of the first level: You must find out what Cthulhu Mythos horror is responsible for Susan Hampshire's disappearance. When you think you know, based on the information you've managed to dig up during your investigation, the basic data on pages 13-14, and the "Beings and Mythos" section of the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook, consult Table C. If you are right, you "win" the first level and will be given instructions on playing and winning the next level. When you consult Table C (calling Jansen Coates) you expend one hour. In addition, a wrong answer could be extremely costly in terms of time . . . and other ways. **DO NOT GUESS.**

With the correct name of the Mythos Being responsible, you can begin level two, if you wish (or dare).

3.5 Insanity

Should you go temporarily insane (by losing five points of SAN at one time), roll 1D10 for the number of hours you are "out of touch." You will recover at the end of that time *if* you make a SAN roll. If not, you are insane for another 1D10 hours, and so on until you recover. The first time you go insane, add 5 to your MYTHOS score. Add one more point for each later episode of insanity.

NOTE: Be sure to subtract SAN points lost while sleeping (see Section 3.1).

If you kill a Cthulhoid horror, you can regain lost sanity and, in fact, increase your basic SAN to a maximum of 99 (minus your MYTHOS score). You increase your SAN by rolling a die or dice equal to the danger to SAN posed by the being you've killed. The normal danger will be listed in the event paragraphs.

3.6 Skill Rolls

If a skill is indicated - e.g., Psych (21), Spot Hidden (45) - a successful roll *must* be made to go to the number indicated.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, all skill rolls may be tried only *once*.

NOTE: When a "DEX Roll" is called for, you must roll your DEX or less on 3D6.

If you fail to make a Skill or DEX roll called for in a particular event paragraph, you must pick another skill option (if possible). If no other option is available, return to Table A and continue your investigation somewhere else.

4.0 Tables

The necessary tables - A, B, and C - are included here and are, in general, self-explanatory. It should be noted, however, that the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook is a primary source of information. Of particular interest are: the descriptions of Mythos creatures listed in Table B; the map of Arkham; Combat Mechanics descriptions; and the weapon/weapon damage charts.

Time Chart

	Thursday a.m.	Thursday p.m.	Friday a.m.	Friday p.m.	Saturday a.m.	Saturday p.m.	
X				☕		☕	12-1
X							1-2
X							2-3
X							3-4
X							4-5
X							5-6
X				☕		☕	6-7
X			☕		☕		7-8
X							8-9
	Start						9-10
							10-11
						End Level One	11-12

- Normal mealtime
 - Normal sleeping hours

Table A — Places to Investigate

Town Hall (open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)	150
The Hampshire Home	144
The Public Library (open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.)	145
The Arkham Historical Society	7
Miskatonic University (open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; closed Saturday and Sunday)	17
Susan Hampshire's Advisor's House	51
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church	55
Bad Water Sewers	77
The Police Station	146
Arkham Sanitorium	147
Aylesbury Hill Graveyard	70
B. Smith's Home	149
The Arkham Gazette Newspaper Office	85

Table B — The List from Jansen Coates

Byakhee	Cthonian	Deep One	Dhole
Ghoul	Mi-Go	Nyogtha	Shoggoth

Table C — Phoning Jansen Coates

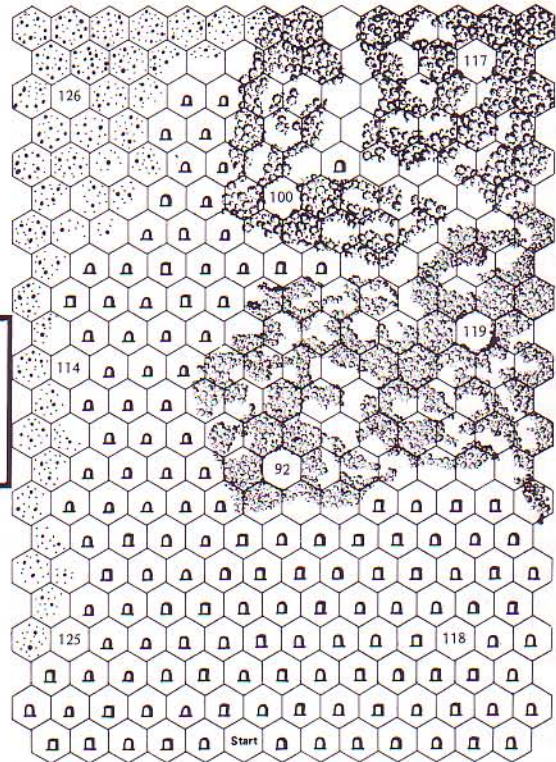
Mythos Creature's Number	Event Paragraph	Mythos Creature's Number	Event Paragraph
44	157	84	159
57	98	90	97
63	158	99	160
64	97	103	159
65	98	109	158
82	157	118	160
83	158		

How to use Table C:

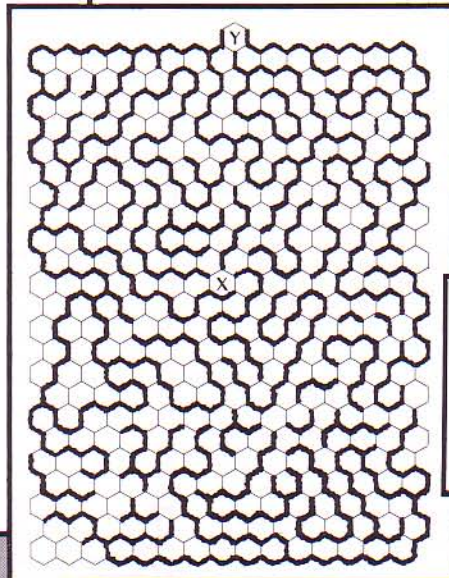
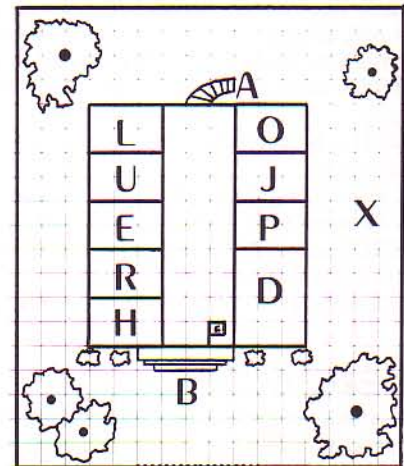
When you think you know the Cthulhu Mythos horror responsible for the events in Arkham, convert the creature's name (from Table B) into a number. This is done by assigning each letter a numerical value: A=1, B=2, C=3, etc. For example: Dog would equal 26 (D=4, O=15, G=7 . . . 4 + 15 + 7 = 26). When the Cthulhu Mythos creature's name, preferably in its singular form, has been changed to a number, use Table C to find the proper event paragraph to consult in order to "call" Jansen Coates. If you've won level one — found out what's responsible — you will also learn the requirements of the next level.

NOTE: You may, in the course of your adventures, come across a paragraph which says, "a *26* (or *32* or *295* or whatever) comes shambling toward you." If this happens, you can do one of several things: You can assume you have seen a truly horrible creature you don't recognize — and continue your investigation until you uncover enough clues to tell you what that horrible creature was (at which point you can consult Table C and solve the first mystery); or you can calculate which Cthulhu Mythos horror corresponds to the number of the creature you have run into, assuming that seeing the creature was the last bit of evidence you needed to solve the mystery of "The Thing in the Darkness," and consult Table C immediately.

Map of the Aylesbury Hill Graveyard



Map of the Arkham Sanitorium



Map of the Maze

Event Paragraphs

- 1 Notes from the old records. 1740, Severe earthquake rips houses apart in Arkham. Jacob Titus' daughter disappears.
- 2 If you asked about radio waves go to 36; blackouts, go to 27; the geology of Arkham, go to 37. If you asked about none of these, you may still pick up some odd bits of data; make a LUCK roll (103). If you asked about none of these, and your LUCK roll failed, you will learn nothing by asking questions here. If, however, you have something you'd like to have tested – an object, substance, etc – write it down and go to 69. If, later, you find something you'd like analyzed, you can come back to the Science Department without making a FAST TALK or ORATORY roll, since they know you now.
- 3 Nothing, save reddish stains at the base of the figure. You can move on.
- 4 Cooper sees you arrive, and he turns away, shovel in hand, up the hill. You call, but he doesn't stop. Then you see something glisten in the sun: a stone, small and crystalline, in his neck. You can confront him (87), or go back to town.
- 5 Arkham history is rife with stories – never substantiated – about formless black creatures living in caverns beneath the earth. Several “researchers” of dubious credibility claim to have found lumps of viscous black slime in the hills outside of town. Such tales are generally considered untrue.
- 6 Upon seeing Flagg, make a SAN roll or lose 1D4. Flagg is now almost mindless but when he sees you a glimmer comes into his eyes. “You must stop it,” he screams. If you want to know how, make a PSYCH roll to calm Flagg. If successful, go to 46. If not, Flagg fades into a stupor.
- 7 *The Arkham Historical Society*: The director, Helmut Walfe, greets you warmly. He shows you many books of local history which you may peruse . . . finding nothing of interest. You may leave, or try one or all of the activities below (each takes one hour): PSYCH (10), LISTEN (50), SPOT HIDDEN (26).
- 8 Arkham is the site of repeated earthquakes. It was once the scene of great ancient geological turmoil.
–*History of Arkham*, A. Mycroft
- 9 The desk sergeant eyes you warily. “Grave sniffing? We've got no news, Smith.” Okay, you say, but what about when the girl left? “No one went with her.” Did anyone see her? Make a successful ORATORY or LUCK roll (45); otherwise you leave.
- 10 He's growing nervous, hiding something. You can leave and return at night to spy (in which case go directly to 28 *when you return*), or you can confront him now with his sudden edginess (19).

- 11 Some crystals only recently discovered apparently emit low frequency waves capable of transmitting and receiving, without electricity.
- 12 The cave is filled with smoke and debris. You can go back to 31 or 134, or keep going to 136.
- 13 Notes from the records: 1898, strange lights on (illegible) Hill. 1913, earthquakes, young girl lost (presumed drowned). 1920, permission to rebuild the Cornwall House granted to Peter Beardsley. Return to 150.
- 14 They seem very busy, but ask what you want. If you have something specific you'd like to ask about, write it down. Then go to 2.
- 15 You argue that all information is vital and, just as they are on the verge of showing you the door, a young man, Dr. Dan Kramer, steps forward. “Her advisor . . . the old goat. He seemed unusually interested in her.” Everyone's eyes turn toward him as a strong arm escorts you out.
- 16 “Susan was an exemplary student,” the Dean says. “A psychology major, I believe.” IDEA roll (25); otherwise the Dean must get back to work.
- 17 *Miskatonic University*: You can visit one or all departments one hour each). You can try only one roll at a particular department on any one day. *Psychology Dept.*: FAST TALK (135), ORATORY (133), DEBATE (15). *Dean's Office*: FAST TALK (16), ORATORY (38), DEBATE (131). *Science Dept.*: FAST TALK (27), ORATORY (14). *Director of the Literary Society*: 86. If you fail a roll, today's visit to any given department is over. You'll have to try another day. However, you may try another department while you're there.
- 18 Try a MOVE QUIETLY roll. If you fail, try a HIDE roll. If you fail that, go to 19. If MOVING QUIETLY, you can go to the door. It's locked. You can leave, or use a wire to jiggle open the lock. Repeat first two rolls. If you succeed, go to 42. If you fail, add one hour. You may leave or try again.



19 He pulls out a gun and fires at point blank range (40%). You try to dodge, then fire a shot. You can shoot it out or you can attempt to jump out the window behind you (you will need *both* a successful JUMP and DODGE roll to pull this off). If you stay and fight, after four rounds, Walfe will attempt to run out the door. (You get a shot at him; he can't shoot at you.) If you shoot him as he runs, he'll fall. (You get another free shot at him.) If you kill Walfe, *or* he escapes, you can explore (42), or leave. Walfe is DEX 11, HP 10.

20 Go to 137.

21 Their age timeless, their wait endless. They seek to join with those who smile. They seek to escape their time.
—*De Vermitis Mysteriis*

22 The worried expression on Captain Clarke's face bodes ill. Something's very wrong. "Two more gone. We've got trouble, Smitty." Who? you ask. The Captain shakes his head. "Sorry. The lid's on. No publicity for the folks involved." Clarke goes back to his work.

23 Mr. Hampshire opens the door, a broad smile on his face. "She's back!" he tells you. Through the opening you see Susan . . . a glassy-eyed look on her face. "She's a little tired. Some sleep and she'll be fit as a fiddle." You try to ask some questions but Mr. Hampshire smiles and shuts the door.

24 Look at the Map of the Sanitorium. You are on the "X." You can try to enter through "A," at the back, (96), or "B," at the front (57). First, though, try a MOVE QUIETLY roll. Write down the result and then proceed to 96 or 57.

25 Her advisor? you ask quietly. Morrisey frowns. "Dr. Beardsley, trained in Europe with Jung. Now, if you'll excuse me."

26 There's a room he hasn't shown you. You ask to see it. He demurs, edgily. You can insist (19) or return to spy at night (28). If you decide to return later, make a note of paragraph 28 and go directly there when you return.

27 They were too occupied to listen to you and are put off by your manner.

28 You see Walfe open a door to what appears to be an altar. You see a statue of something worm-like, with strange appendages. He begins to chant. You can continue watching (40) (take an extra hour if you choose to watch), or you can leave.

29 Mr. and Mrs. Hampshire say that Susan was a good girl. Never any trouble. She was invited to a tea party . . . the Miskatonic Literary Society. She left early complaining of a headache. They begin to cry.

30 You grip him harder and slap his face. The girls, you shout, what about the girls? "Oh, they'll be the brides," he shrieks, "one for each adult, seven in all . . . And in nine months, a new creation . . . free of the millenium wait. Then they'll be ready to awaken their master." Flagg grabs you. His strength is 9. Roll STR vs. STR. If you don't free yourself immediately, lose 1D4 SAN. He finally lets go, screaming, "And the world will be his."

31 This leads to the sewers. You can continue (77), or go back (132).

Quest of the Great Jewels

The third War of the Great Jewels is over, having ended with the intervention of the Powers-That-Be, but not before most of Zorplia was laid waste and the greater part of its inhabitants destroyed. The Powers-That-Be have sealed the Great Jewels (talismans of immense power) and many of the lesser talismans in the Forbidden Cities and set enchanted armies to guard them. Only scattered remnants of the four peoples remain. Dragons and other terrors roam the land. Can you marshal your forces and come forth to be the sole ruler of Zorplia?

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32 You walk in. Police are standing around looking happy. "Want a scoop?" Captain Clarke calls to you. "The Hampshire girl is back. Some sort of blackout. Wandered around west of Boundary Street." You reply, "She's home, she's safe. Is there anything else? "What else do you want?" Clarke snaps. You can wait for an hour and try to talk to someone else when Clarke is busy elsewhere (9), or you can leave.

33 "Mr. Flagg," the doctor says, "is seriously disturbed." He leads you to Room E (Sanitorium map). Flagg sits at a table. His eyes are sunken, haunted, his complexion grayish. "Please try not to excite him," the doctor says. Flagg begins to mutter. "It's them, you know. I've seen them. Under the hill. Time's coming soon." Time for what? you ask. "For the wedding!" he shrieks. You grip his wrists, his arms squirming like snakes. The girls, you yell, what about the girls? Flagg starts to laugh maniacally. An attendant comes in. "How . . . hee . . . ha . . . ha . . . how should I know? I'm only a madman." This last is uttered with a clarity, a sanity that chills you to the bone as the attendant leads you out. You can try for more information only at night.

34 The children. All for the children. Their smiling faces the eon's dream. Awake, awake, the children. Awake, awake, the worm.

—*Unausprechlichen Kulten*

35 Go to 76.

36 They listen but are obviously preoccupied with something else.

37 There have been small tremors for the past two weeks. Minor stuff really. "No," they say, "there's no reason for it, at least geologically." If you want more information, try an IDEA roll (68); if not, you can leave.

38 Regretfully, they inform you that they are talking only to the police.

39 State Police and Detectives fill the Station. Clarke has been bumped out of his office. You look at him just as a big trooper heads your way. You see Clarke hold up four fingers and then mouth the words, "Four more."

40 You see him stand up, shaking, and turn toward the window. His face is glistening, octopoid. (SAN roll or lose 1D6. Lose a minimum of one even if you make SAN roll.) He slithers upstairs, a tail protruding from his rear. You can leave, or you can take another hour and break in (18).

41 The caverns of Aylesbury Hill were once sealed — in 1829, "Holy Avengers" used dynamite to close a cavern entrance on the hill and near the site of the planned Bad Water Sewers — but the caverns have since been reopened. Return to 150.

42 You find four ancient books. You can skim them here or you can take them home to read at your leisure. Whichever you choose, you must first make a MOVE QUIETLY roll. If you succeed you can do one of two things: You can leave with all four books (in which case write down this number and return to 42 whenever you are ready to read the books), or you can try to skim *one* book in Walfe's house. You must make a successful MOVE QUIETLY before you can attempt to read a book in Walfe's house. If you fail a MOVE QUIETLY, Walfe has heard you and will confront you if he's still alive (19). In order to read a book, you must spend one hour *and* make a successful roll

as indicated. *Cultes des Goules* (READ/KNOW FRENCH + CTHULHU MYTHOS) (75). *Unausprechlichen Kulten* (READ/KNOW GERMAN + CTHULHU MYTHOS) (34). *De Vermis Mysteriis* (READ/KNOW LATIN + CTHULHU MYTHOS) (21). *G'harne Fragments* (READ/KNOW ENGLISH + CTHULHU MYTHOS) (78). You may try more than once at the cost of one hour per attempt to read.

43 Father John seems nervous. If you're on level one, go to 143; otherwise see 142.

44 James Thompson, head of the Historical Society, died of a sudden and severe heart attack at the age of 38. He was found by his assistant, Helmut Walfe. Return to 150.

45 "Yeah . . . some lady on Church Street saw her heading west." West? you ask. "Yeah, towards the graveyard." Her name? "Get out of here, Smith. I got work to do."

46 "It's the stones," he laughs. "Find them. Destroy them and they'll lose control." He falls hopelessly asleep.

47 You find Flagg, lying on the floor. A quick examination reveals him to be dead . . . *exsanguinated* would be the medical term. SAN roll or lose 1D4. Make a SPOT HIDDEN (59).

48 Cooper is standing near a fresh grave, a shovel in his hand. You ask about the hill . . . ever see anything unusual? He says no, but you suspect he's lying. You say you're going to explore the hill. He says no. Private property. You start up anyway. He picks up his shovel. You can keep going (87), or you can think better of it and leave, perhaps to return at night.

49 Blackouts are often the result of telepathic commands. In an especially horrible experience, the mind is only too willing to cooperate.

50 Walfe sounds nervous. He's hiding something. His speech is garbled, almost liquid-like. You can confront him now with his nervous behavior (19), or you can leave and return at night. If you choose to return, go to 28 *when you come back*.

51 If it's between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m., Professor Beardsley and his wife are up and quite willing to talk to you (60). After 10 p.m., you may sneak in (62), or leave.

52 You see an odd statue in the dining room . . . some creature . . . a mythical creature? Poseidon or something. But no! There's no head! (SAN roll or 1D3 loss). Go to 58.

53 You see movement behind you. His wife fires at you and misses. The Professor also fires (point blank range) while you shoot at one or the other. You can escape after the first round, or stay and shoot it out. Beardsley: DEX=9, HP=9; Mrs. B: DEX=8, HP=8. If you win, go to 61.

54 You got to your gun first. At point blank range, you fire at 40%. Behind you, Mrs. Beardsley fires (normal range). If you make a DODGE roll, you can dodge the Professor's shot. If you make a LUCK roll as well, you noticed Mrs. Beardsley and can get first shot at her, too. If you decide to shoot it out, they will fight to the bitter end. If you escape (by making a DODGE roll), they will be gone when you return. If you kill them, you can explore after the fight. If you win, go to 61. Beardsley: DEX=9, HP=9; Mrs. B: DEX=8, HP=8.

55 Father John cannot offer you any help. He has no idea what's going on. Still for one hour each, you can try a LISTEN (74), PSYCH (43), SPOT HIDDEN (81). One try for each roll. You may also leave with the Father's blessing.

56 Beardsley fires at point blank range. Behind you, Mrs. Beardsley fires at normal range. If you're still alive, you can try shooting at one or the other. Escape's impossible. You're pinned down. It's a shoot-out. If you win, go to 61. Prof. Beardsley: DEX=9, HP=9; Mrs. B: DEX=8, HP=8.

57 If you made your MOVE QUIETLY roll, you spot an attendant keeping a watchful eye on the sanatorium. He doesn't hear you. You can go around and try entrance A (96). If you failed your MOVE QUIETLY, the attendant makes a move to grab you. Luckily, you are faster than he is and manage to escape. Perhaps tomorrow?

58 Beardsley senses you snooping. "Out, good sir. Please leave this instant." You can stay (73), or you can leave.

59 You see a note on the calendar: "Wedding, midnight Saturday." You think you know who the bride is, but who is the groom?

60 "Yes," Beardsley says, "it's strange what happened. Such a level-headed girl." You can try *one* of these rolls: LISTEN (58), PSYCH (72), SPOT HIDDEN (52), or you can ask advice (no roll necessary) (63).

61 You open a drawer and find a tiny satchel made out of . . . could it be? It is . . . skin! (SAN roll or lose 1D4.) Inside you find several stones. You may leave them, destroy them, take one, or take all of them. Make a SPOT HIDDEN (no extra time spent) (59).

62 You sneak nervously through the house. Where is Beardsley? you wonder. If you can make your LUCK roll, go to 167. If you miss, go to 73.

63 "You know," the Professor says, growing somber, "this is not the first time; check the records. There have been other disappearances, and always around the Bad Water Sewers, near Aylesbury Hill." He looks you in the eye. "The answers might be there . . ." You take your leave.

64 You see a lump in the water — a body? You can walk normally (76), or leave (79).

65 You keep pressing. Was there anything odd about her? The Director frowns and then her face lights up. "That jewel. Yes, a rough stone of some kind. I assumed it was part of a necklace. But it was there on the side of her neck. Of course, it wasn't my place to mention it. Girls these days are so careless. Why, when I was a girl . . ."

66 From 1880: a map of the outer caverns showing where they were sealed with dynamite. The tremors stopped, the report says. You can take the map and use it if you need to. If you are on level two or higher, you can try an IDEA roll (costs one hour). If it is successful, go to 91.



67 You see a set of keys at point C on the map. You can ignore the keys and try to find Flagg (and get in his room) without them (99), or you can try to reach the keys before the attendant gets back. Count the squares from point Y to point C and then from point C to the first room you'd like to try in your search for Flagg. Total the squares and then roll 1D20. If your roll is equal to or greater than the number of squares you wish to move, you reach your destination before the attendant comes back. You can try Room H (151), Room R (152), Room E (156), Room U (151), or Room S (153). If you rolled lower than the number of squares you moved, the attendant returned from his break. Go to 129.

68 "Yes, they've explored the area. Lost one of their people in the caverns in the hill. Some nasty spots in there . . . real mazes." You nod as you leave.

69 Calculate the numerical equivalent for the object you want tested (use the system in Section 3.3). Remember to use the singular form of the name. If it is a *55*, *73*, or *98*, go to 148. Otherwise, you learn nothing useful. Continue your investigation elsewhere.

70 *Aylesbury Hill Graveyard*: Between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., you see the man in charge, gravedigger John Cooper (48), or you can spend another hour in the car and make a SPOT HIDDEN (4). After 5 p.m., you are on the Hill (Map H). It takes one hour to move from one number to another, or ten hexes an hour. You start at the "X" at the lower edge of the map.

71 You dodge the Professor's shot while readying one of your own. Unfortunately, Mrs. Beardsley fires at you as well (.45 revolver at normal range). If you make a LUCK roll, you see Mrs. B and dodge her shot as well — she misses. If you fail to make your LUCK, she gets one shot (still at base chance to hit — 20%) before the firefight begins in earnest. After dodging (or being shot at), you are caught in a deadly crossfire. You are stuck for at least one round. After one round of firing, you can escape or you can stay and shoot it out to the finish. If you stay and win, go to 61. Beardsley: DEX=9, HP=9; Mrs. B: DEX=8, HP=8.

72 He's no slouch at "psyching" someone out either. Go to 58.

73 "Snooping into things that are none of your business, eh, Smith?" Beardsley pulls something out of his pocket. Select *one* of the following: LUCK (53), DODGE (71), DEX on 3D6 (54). If you miss, go to 56.

74 You hear nothing but the quiet rustle of the rosary beads of some aged parishioner in the front pew.

75 Make a SAN roll or lose 1D6. "The stones are their treasure; the creatures who laugh, their envy. They dream of joining with them . . ."

—*Cultes des Goules*

76 You see a lump in the water — a body? Then something slimy and octopoid rears up. It grabs you with its tentacles: 1D8 tentacles, 80% attack, 2D6 damage, 25 HP, two-point armor. If a tentacle hits, it begins to drain you of one STR point per round. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D10 SAN (lose one point anyway). A successful DODGE roll on the first or second round *with* a successful SAN roll, and you can escape. You may run back out of the sewers (return to Table A), or deeper, past the unholy guardian (31). If you don't escape on the first or second round, another creature arrives and no escape is possible. You die screaming.

77 *Bad Water Sewers* near Aylesbury Hill: If you do anything unusual before entering, please write it down. Once inside, you can walk normally (35), or stop and try any or all of the following (at a cost of one hour per roll): LISTEN (84), SPOT HIDDEN (64), MOVE QUIETLY (82), or HIDE (83).

78 Make a SAN roll or lose 1D4. "These creatures live in holes and worship the Burrower. Know them by their tentacles that give death."
—*G'harne Fragments*

79 You start to leave and walk into a slimy wall of flesh. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D10 SAN (lose one point anyway). Go to 76.

80 You see a lump in the water ahead. You can approach it (82), or you can make a HIDE roll. If the roll is successful, go to 83.

81 You see nothing unusual.

82 As you move through the sewer you see a shape ahead, lying in the water. You can continue toward it (76), or move quietly out the way you came in (79).

83 A thing stirs before you, like a large worm with tentacles! Make a SAN roll or lose 1D10. Lose one SAN point even if you make your SAN roll. If you become temporarily insane, you will stay in the sewers for 1D10 hours. The thing grunts and lies down again. If you are sane, you can move on (76), or leave the sewers entirely.

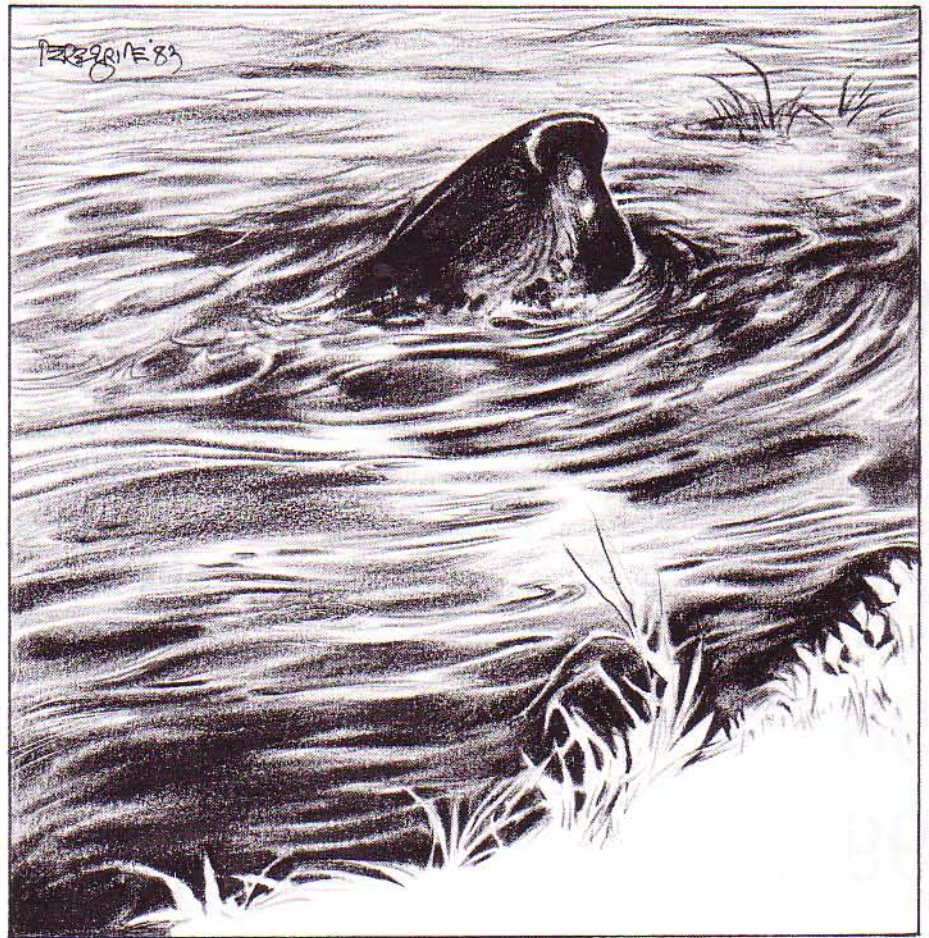
84 You hear nothing. You can HIDE for another hour. If HIDE roll is successful, go to 80, or you can walk normally (76).

85 *The Arkham Gazette*: If it's *Thursday*, go to 90; *Friday*, go to 89; *Saturday*, go to 94. If you'd rather go to the paper's morgue, add one hour and make a LUCK roll (66).

86 The Director of the Literary Society is so upset. "Such a lovely girl," she says, offering you tea and cake. You can spend another hour here (65), or you can leave.

87 Cooper will surprise you and swing that shovel (30%, 1D4 damage). You can run away (Table A), or fight. After one round, he'll drop the shovel and grab a shotgun from a weapons cache on the hill! It'll take him two rounds to get the gun and ready it — then he starts firing at point blank range. Cooper has DEX 11 and 10 HP. He won't run away, though you still can. If you get him down to one HP, you can try to make a PSYCH roll (140). Otherwise he fights on. If you beat Cooper, make a SPOT HIDDEN roll. If successful, read 121 and return here. Whether successful or not, you can go to 100, and then continue to explore the graveyard, using the Graveyard Map.

88 There is nothing of interest. You'll have to continue your investigation elsewhere in the cemetery. If you wish, you can leave the cemetery altogether and return to Table A.



89 "Two more girls gone! Damn it, Smith, aren't you covering this story?" Sanford roars. "One girl comes back and two more leave. Get on it! And no, I don't know who's missing now! The police are keeping the lid on tight."

90 Susan Hampshire has returned home! "Some story," Sanford mutters . . . "What's going on here, Smith? Have you followed up all those leads I gave you? Hop to it!" You dash out.

91 1879: Helga Walfe, missing for one night, returned in a stupor. She stated that she remembered nothing. Her happy parents planned a trip back to the homeland to celebrate. 1882: The bereaved Helga Walfe, whose parents and husband died in the tragic train accident outside of Salzberg, returned today to Arkham with her one-year-old son, Helmut.

92 You see a bush of tasty-looking raspberries. You may eat some (106), pick and save some, or you may ignore them. Spend an extra hour and you can try a SPOT HIDDEN roll. If successful, go to 141.

93 Try to make a successful LUCK and DODGE roll. If you made both, you fell into a black pit, but you just barely caught yourself. You're hanging by your fingernails (SAN roll or lose 1D4). A successful CLIMB roll gets you out. If you miss your CLIMB roll, you can try again at 10% less than your CLIMB skill. You can continue trying to climb out (losing 10% each time) until you succeed or your CLIMB skill reaches zero and you plunge screaming into the unending darkness below. If you failed your original LUCK or DODGE roll, you're long since gone. May Cthulhu have mercy on your soul. If you manage to climb out of the pit, you may go back the way you came (120) and select another route.

94 "You!" Sanford bellows. "Just what am I paying you for? The two girls are back, the police say. No names, of course. But now there's a rumor that more girls are missing. And the State Police are here in force. Don't you know anything? Some reporter." You look at your watch and dash out.

95 "Yes," Jansen Coates says. "Now you must find out what they are doing." Go to 161.

96 If you made your MOVE QUIETLY roll, you reach the back door without a problem. A night attendant sits at a desk (at point C on the map). Every ten minutes or so, he goes into Room D for a smoke. You can walk in as if you belong there (129), or you can wait until he leaves for a smoke and then enter (139). If your MOVE QUIETLY roll failed, the attendant hears you skulking about outside. He walks toward the rear entrance (A) and glances around outside. Luckily, he doesn't see you. You can wait an hour and then select 129 or 139 as above, or you can leave the Sanatorium grounds.

97 "FOOL!" he yells over the phone. "That's impossible. It's probably too late." If there's any time left, you can still try to solve the mystery. If not, the game is over.

98 Go to 157.

99 You have found Flagg's room (Room E), but the door is locked. The attendant is back. He sees you. You can face the attendant (129), or leave the building and the grounds. (Adrenaline should get you over the wall.)

100 A cache of weapons: two shotguns, a Colt .45, and a crate containing 30 sticks of dynamite. You can take one shotgun (with six shells) and the .45 (five shells), or you can take ten sticks of dynamite.

101 If it's between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m., you see Cooper entering by a secret side door. He leaves the same way. You can try to enter that door (124), or go straight in the front (107).

102 You hear a chant: "Y'glenn Flaryn Shudde M'ell!" A watery scream of a sound seems to come from the left. If you want to go to the left (128). Or you can clamber back out. Once outside, you can explore any other place in the graveyard or leave.

103 People on Bad Water Road and Boundary Street have complained of an odd fish-like smell. No, they haven't investigated it yet.

104 You see a carved figure — you may have seen it before — the creature is headless, worm-like, with tentacles. Roll SAN or lose 1D4. You can try a SPOT HIDDEN roll (3), or you can move on.

105 You ask if there's another entrance. He mumbles, "The Bad Water Sewers . . . they get out there, too. You can seal them off in there. If they find out I talked . . . If they —" His head wrenches back. He grimaces and dies. You see the stone in his neck.

106 They are a little sour but refreshing. (This does *not* count as a meal.)



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107 Make a LUCK roll. If you succeed, go to 116. If you fail, go to 170.

108 Jansen fires the questions quickly: What do the stones do? What do the creatures seek to escape? What do they want from humans? Unless you already know the answers, return to Table A and continue your investigation. When you are sure of the answers to all three questions, you may call Coates again by going to 169. Make a note of this number and use it when you are ready.

109 You open it carefully. When open, you see a black, pulsing form. It appears to be alive! It begins to expand, sending tendrils oozing over the edge of the chest. Your only thought is to kill this creature. Think of a way to do this without killing yourself as well. Your answer must consist of *two words only*. Write your solution down, then see 127.

110 It's very dark here. Even darker ahead. You can go on (93), or you can go back to 120 and try another route.

111 No tracks, but the slime trail leads left. You can follow it (128), or leave by way of the false grave. Return to the Graveyard Map; you're at 114.

112 Nothing on Friday. Return to 120.

113 Two (*84*) octopoid creatures shuffle forward. A successful DODGE roll and you can escape. Otherwise, lose 1D4 SAN and tentacles reach out and grab you. Each creature gets four attacks per round (75% attack, each doing 2D6 damage and costing you one point of STR). Each has 11 HP and skin worth one point of armor. They are young; if you get them down to 5 HPs each, they'll flee. If you choose to fight, write down what you wish to fight these creatures with, then go to 164. If you flee, go to 128.

114 An open grave. You can try a SPOT HIDDEN roll (123); take an extra hour.

115 You enter. The air is damp and disgusting. The floor is slimy. The bed is wet with . . . seaweed? (SAN roll or lose 1D4.) Nothing much else except a chest near the front door. You can check out the chest (109), or leave.

116 As you neared the front door, the ground began to give way. At the last instant, you spotted the shifting ground and managed to scramble to safety, clutching the door and pulling yourself into the shack. Go to 115.

117 You see a shack and a sign that says "No Trespassin!" Cooper's? you wonder. You can try a HIDE (101), go straight toward the front door (107), or move on. If one of the above fails, you can try another, but no repeat rolls.

118 It's a shovel, probably Cooper's. Roll 8 or less on 1D20 and Cooper shows up (87) (if he is alive). You can try a SPOT HIDDEN (88) at a cost of one extra hour. If everything fails, go elsewhere in the graveyard or return to Table A.

119 You see nothing except some dense ivy. You can try a LUCK roll (104), or move on.

120 You're in a narrow cavern. The walls are slimy, the smell abominable. You can try any or all of the following (at a cost of one hour per roll): SPOT HIDDEN (165), LISTEN (122), TRACK (111). Or you can move to the right (110) or to the left (128).

121 You see a glistening stone, small and crystalline, in his neck.

122 If it's Thursday – nothing. If it's Friday, go to 112. If it's Saturday, go to 102.

123 The open grave has a false bottom. You scrape at it and see a door – an opening – leading down. You can go down into it (120), or you can leave.

124 The door has a hidden catch. To spring it, make a successful LUCK roll (115). If you fail, you can take another hour and try again; you can go to 107 immediately, or you can leave.



125 An open gravesite; unoccupied. You can SPOT HIDDEN (88) at the cost of an additional hour, or you can move on.

126 You see an old fault line starting at the hill and running towards Arkham.

127 If you wrote "holy water," you're right! You pour it on the creature, which sizzles and slides back into the chest. (Add three to your MYTHOS score). If you did anything besides splash the monstrosity with holy water, you failed to repulse the beast. You run screaming from the shack, leaving by the nearest exit – the window. Regardless of the outcome of this little escapade, make a SAN roll. If you fail, lose 1D10 SAN (lose a minimum of two even if you make the roll). If you are still sane, you can continue to search the graveyard.

128 Bones, lots of them. Make a KNOW roll (168). You can go back to 120 if you wish, or continue on to 113.

129 "What do you think you're doing?" the man shouts. You hear a buzzer. You can try a PSYCH roll on him (154), try to knock him out (163), or you can escape (return to Table A).

130 The slimy creatures, with large soulless eyes, are ambling about. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D10 SAN (lose one point anyway). Try a HIDE roll. If you fail, go to 20. If you hid successfully, you can watch more (137), or take an extra hour and make a SPOT HIDDEN (138), or you can leave, if you're still sane.

131 The Dean is very busy, his secretary informs you. He'll be tied up until Monday. I bet, you mutter as you leave.

132 If you came back and threw dynamite, well done. You killed the pair. If you killed them by any other means, amazing. You can now enter the cave. It is expansive, and malodorous water drips from the roof. Through the gloom you see three passages on the other side of the cave. You can take the one on the left (31), the center one (134), or go to the right (12).

133 They are concerned too, but they direct all queries to the Dean's Office.

134 You're in the maze (see Map of the Maze), a diversion for young *103*. You are at "X." The way back is sealed. Each minute that it takes you to get out to "Y" equals one hour of game time. Time yourself. When out, you are at 12.

135 They escort you out the door and refer you to the Dean's office.

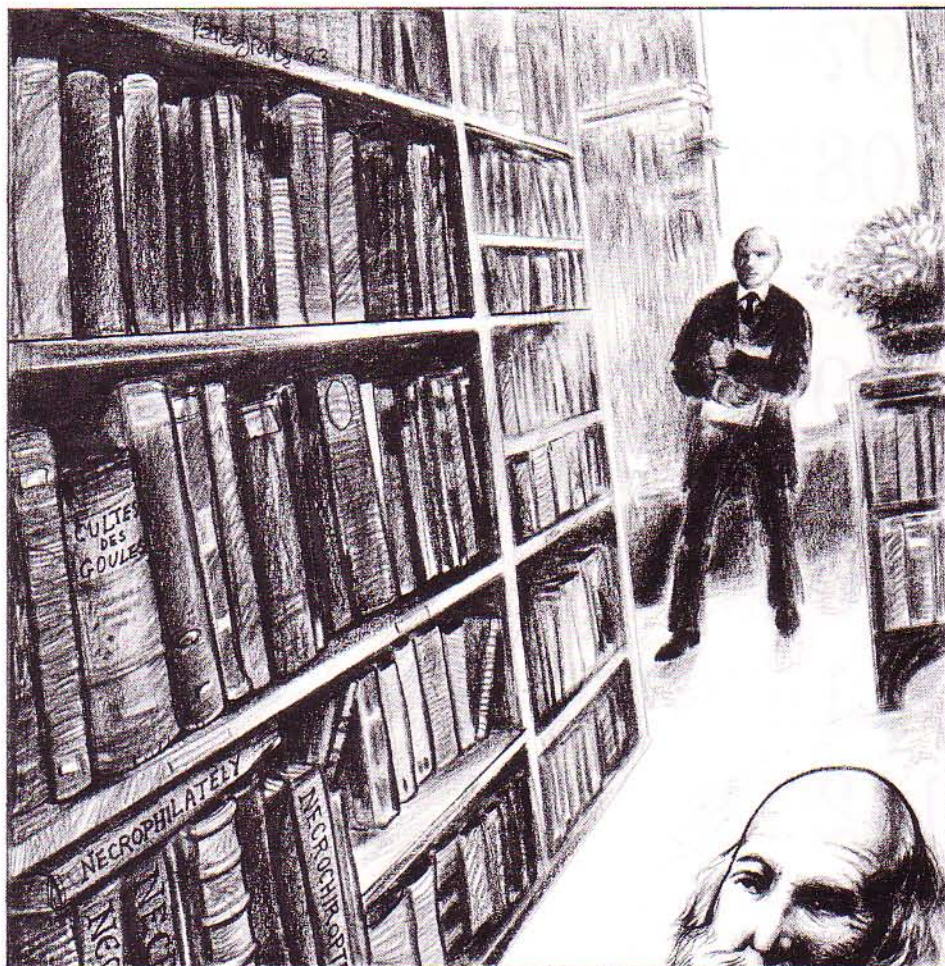
136 If it's before 6 p.m. on Saturday, go to 130. If it's after 6 p.m. on Saturday, go to 138.

137 You're spotted. They move toward you, a slithering mass of horror. Only a LUCK *and* a DODGE roll will get you out before five or six of them crush you. It is hopeless to fight back. If either the LUCK or the DODGE roll fails, you will lose 1D20 SAN. You will, in all probability, die insane before these horrors reach you.

138 You see seven young women and seven *103*, hand to appendage. The chanting grows louder and louder. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D10 SAN (lose one point anyway). Try a HIDE roll. If it fails, go to 137. If your HIDE roll was successful, you can leave the labyrinth and escape without being seen. If you stay and watch, go to 20.

139 You enter at point Y. Make a SPOT HIDDEN. If you fail, go to 99. If you succeed, go to 67.

140 He'll tell you where the cavern entrance is. You can believe him and go to 123. If you don't believe him, and/or you desire more information, try a PSYCH roll. If successful, go to 105. Or you can ignore everything he says and move on.



141 You see nothing unusual.

142 He turns to you, confused and upset. "They grow impatient. Oh, my God. A thousand years and they'd be strong enough anyway. But now they have another way!" He grabs you. "They seek to join with us, wait a few mortal years and then, with those strong adults, they'll call the Sleeping One!" He breaks down. "Oh, that I had not read those books!" Through his tears he hands you an ancient rosary. Stunned, you leave. Add two points to your MYTHOS score.

143 "There's evil afoot. A creature beyond sanity, beyond God. And its evil grows." He turns away, but not before pressing a vial of holy water into your hand. You leave quietly.

144 *The Hampshire Home:* If it's before noon *Thursday*, it will take a successful ORATORY roll to get in (29). If it's noon or after on *Thursday* but before *Saturday* noon, no roll needed (23). If it's *Saturday* noon or later, go to 38. Each visit lasts one hour.

145 *Public Library:* To get the librarian to help, either try a FAST TALK *or* roll your CHA or less on 3D6 (pick one). If you succeed, she helps you find two references which may help: go to 5 and 8, and return to this paragraph after reading them. If you fail, you may try a LIBRARY USE roll – one roll per hour. The first successful roll leads you to 5; the second, 8; the third, 11; the fourth, 49. Even if the librarian helped you with the first two references (5 and 8), you may try LIBRARY USE for 11 and 49. Each roll takes one hour; you may continue to roll until the library closes at 5 p.m. Once those four references are found, you've exhausted the library's resources.

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146 *Police Station:* For more information about the Hampshire disappearance, on *Thursday*, go to 32. On *Friday*, you can go to 22. On *Saturday*, go to 39. If you don't visit the police station on any given day, you can read (and follow up) all the paragraphs for Thursday on Friday, for Thursday *and* Friday on Saturday, and so on – just assume you're talking to your old friend Captain Clarke (or dropping his name around the police station) and getting "old news."

147 *Arkham Sanitorium:* If it's before 5 p.m., a successful FAST TALK roll will get you in. Go to 33. After 5 p.m., a CLIMB roll will get you over the wall – one hour per roll. Once you get over the wall, go to 24.

148 A stone with highly unusual properties. It emits radio waves that can be received by the brain. Absolutely incredible. They ask where you got it.

149 *Your home:* A three-room apartment. You can sleep, eat, or read. You didn't really expect to find Cthulhu here, did you?

150 *Town Hall:* Open only 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You find an old book; go to 1 and return here. Take an hour and make a LUCK roll (13). Make an IDEA roll and take another hour (41). Make a SPOT HIDDEN (no extra time) (44). Each roll may be attempted only once.

151 Some old folks snoring away. You can try another room. Roll 1D10. If the die roll is lower than the number of squares you were trying to move, go to 129. If you make it, go to 67.

152 Not Flagg, judging by the name card, at least. You can try another room. Roll 1D10. If the die roll is lower than the number of squares you were trying to move, go to 129. Otherwise, you can check the room as per 67.

153 No name on the door. You open it quickly. Somebody's inside . . . a big fellow. "Hello," he says. "I'm Paulus Tower." Oh, God, you groan. Paulus Tower, the axe murderer. He grabs you (his DEX is 5 and his fists are massive; 1D6 damage, 80% chance to hit). After two rounds, an attendant shows up and gets you out of the room (129).

154 If the roll is successful, he listens. He tells you to come back tomorrow, he'll try to get you in to see Flagg. You suspect he's lying through his teeth. If your roll is unsuccessful, go to 163.

155 He gives you instructions. "Here's what you must do: Thwart their plans. Trap them underground. Break their control over humans. You must not fail." You are now on level three. Resume your investigation. Act decisively. When you are sure the menace of the evil puppeteers is ended, go to 166.

156 If it's after 6 p.m. on Friday, go directly to 47 without reading the rest of this paragraph. If it's 6 p.m. Friday, or earlier, Flagg mutters, "It's them, yes, yes. I've seen them. Under the hill. The time, it's coming soon!" You grip his wrists. Time for what? you ask. "For the wedding," he shrieks. You can grab Flagg and try to shake more information out of him (30), or make a PSYCH roll (6). You can try both (30 first, then the PSYCH roll), but it takes an extra hour.

157 Go to 97.

158 Go to 98.

159 Go to 95.

160 Go to 97.

161 Give yourself four CTHULHU MYTHOS points for solving level one. For every hour left, you now have twelve hours to find the information Jansen needs. If no time remained, trade one MYTHOS point for twelve hours to a maximum of 36 hours. Go to 108 and Coates will tell you what you must do to solve level two.

162 Go to 182.

163 He grabs you; his STR is 13. Roll STR vs. STR to break free. If you succeed, you leave the Sanitorium and can only return at night in the future. If you do not succeed within 1D4 rounds, guards arrive and lock you up until Monday. You will be safe but out of the game unless you make a LUCK roll. If you make a LUCK roll, you escape but you will have lost 1D10 hours.

164 If you wrote "dynamite," go to 132. If you chose to fight with anything else, go back to 113 and fight to the finish. Should you win (good luck), give yourself 2D4 SAN and go to 132.

165 The walls . . . they seem to glisten. You touch a spot and feel a sticky slime. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D4. Go back to 120.

166 Are you satisfied that you have successfully dealt with the creatures? More than just your life depends on it. If you are sure the creatures are sealed off and their schemes thwarted, go to 177. If you have any doubts (and any time), you can continue your investigation.





167 Try a SPOT HIDDEN roll. If successful, go to 61. If you fail, you can chance snooping around for another hour. Try a LUCK roll. If you fail, go immediately to 73. If you succeed, you can try another SPOT HIDDEN. If you make it, go to 61.

168 These bones are not quite human! There is something subtly wrong about them! You've never seen anything quite like this before and hope you never see anything like it again. Make a SAN roll or lose 1D6. You can go back to 120 or continue on to 113.

169 If you are here, that means that you think you have the correct answers to the questions Coates asked in 108. The answer to the first question is "Extend their telepathic control." If you got this one right, give yourself 1D10 SAN and one CTHULHU MYTHOS point, then go to 172. If you answered incorrectly, go to 175.

170 As you neared the front door, the ground began giving way. You failed to spot the shifting ground and now find yourself in quicksand. You're sinking fast. A successful IDEA, LUCK, or KNOW roll will get you out (you know, or have figured out, how to "swim" in quicksand). You can try each roll *once*. For each failed roll, you must make a SAN roll or lose 1D6 SAN. If you go temporarily insane, you slither down and drown in the quicksand. If you miss *all three* of the rolls, you drown anyway! No one said this was going to be easy. If you manage to escape (by making a successful IDEA, LUCK, or KNOW), go to 115.

171 Go to 174.

172 The answer to the second question is "Time" — they want to do away with the limitations imposed on them by their slow rate of growth. If you got this one right, give yourself 1D10 SAN and one CTHULHU MYTHOS point, then go to 178. If you answered this question incorrectly, go to 175.

173 If you dynamited *two* cavern entrances — one in the sewers and one in the graveyard — go to 176. If you sealed off *only one* entrance, go to 181. If you molested neither, go to 180.

174 Some time has passed. You completed your assignment — though your editor refused to believe half of what you told him. The power of the *Arkham Gazette* was brought to bear on the police department; they're willing to overlook your various sorties on the wrong side of the law. In short, you did the best you could . . . or so you think.

You've been sleeping well at night, until one night, you feel a cold, slimy tentacle brush against your cheek. Your last thought, as you feel the breath crushed from your body by a great weight, as you gag on the fetid odor of sewers best left unexplored, is that you failed to seal up *all* of the entrances to the evil creatures' lair. The game is over.

175 "That just doesn't make sense," sighs Coates. "I'm afraid you missed something. But there's one thing left I can try. Wait for my call." Roll 1D10 and lose that many hours waiting by your phone. Finally, it rings. It's Coates, sounding very tired and drawn. "God, Smith — you're the lucky one," he says. "There are some things Man was not meant to know." Go to 155.

176 Some time has passed. You completed your assignment — though your editor refused to believe half of what you told him. The power of the *Arkham Gazette* was brought to bear on the police department; they're willing to overlook your various sorties on the wrong side of the law. In short, you did the best you could . . . or so you think. But your editor has been concerned about your health. You've been experiencing blackouts. A curious buzzing in your ears has grown steadily louder with each passing day. The jewel in your neck glows brightly. In your brief moments of coherence, you realize you missed some of the stones. You await your orders . . .

The game is over.

177 Very well. If you kept the pouch of crystals found in Professor Beardsley's house, go to 182. If you destroyed the crystals in the pouch, go to 162. If you left some of them, or took none at all, go to 173.

178 The answer to the third question is, of course, the missing girls. The creatures want to merge their race with ours, to interbreed. If you got this right, add one to your CTHULHU MYTHOS knowledge, but lose 1D6 SAN because the knowledge is so horrible. Still, you have successfully solved level two in its entirety. Go to 155. If you answered incorrectly, go to 175.

179 You call Coates with the news that you have sealed off all the entrances to the creatures' lair; you have in your possession or have destroyed all of the crystals. "You've done well," Coates says. "Now you'd better get out of Arkham as quickly as possible. From what you've told me, I suspect the police will be wanting to talk to you. If any slaves of the horror still survive, they'll have marked you for death . . . or worse. You've saved Arkham from a terrible fate, but the battle is just beginning. Join me in New York. Leave today, and together

we may yet be able to save all of humanity." You hop the next train to New York, wondering what adventures await you. You have solved the third and final level of "The Thing in the Darkness." You've won . . . this time.

180 Some time has passed. You completed your assignment — though your editor refused to believe half of what you told him. The power of the *Arkham Gazette* was brought to bear on the police department; they're willing to overlook your various sorties on the wrong side of the law. In short, you did the best you could . . . or so you think.

You're sleeping easily at night. Then, one night, several pairs of arms — supernally strong arms — grab you, rousing you screaming from slumber. You struggle in vain. Just before you are knocked unconscious, you notice the stoness in your assailants' necks.

You awaken in the dark. Stumbling about, you walk into rough stone walls. It doesn't seem to matter which direction you walk; you always seem to reach a dead end. Fear gnaws at your soul — you hear chanting in the distance. Suddenly you realize where you are . . . the maze . . . the maze where the young creatures play. A putrescent tentacle brushes your cheek and you scream, knowing that you failed to seal off the caverns and that some of the stoness remained. The creatures' plots continue unabated, and you . . . you can hope only for a quick death or merciful madness. The game is over.

181 Go to 180.

182 If you dynamited two cavern entrances — one in the sewers and one in the graveyard — go to 179. If you closed only one, go to 174. If you molested neither, go to 171.

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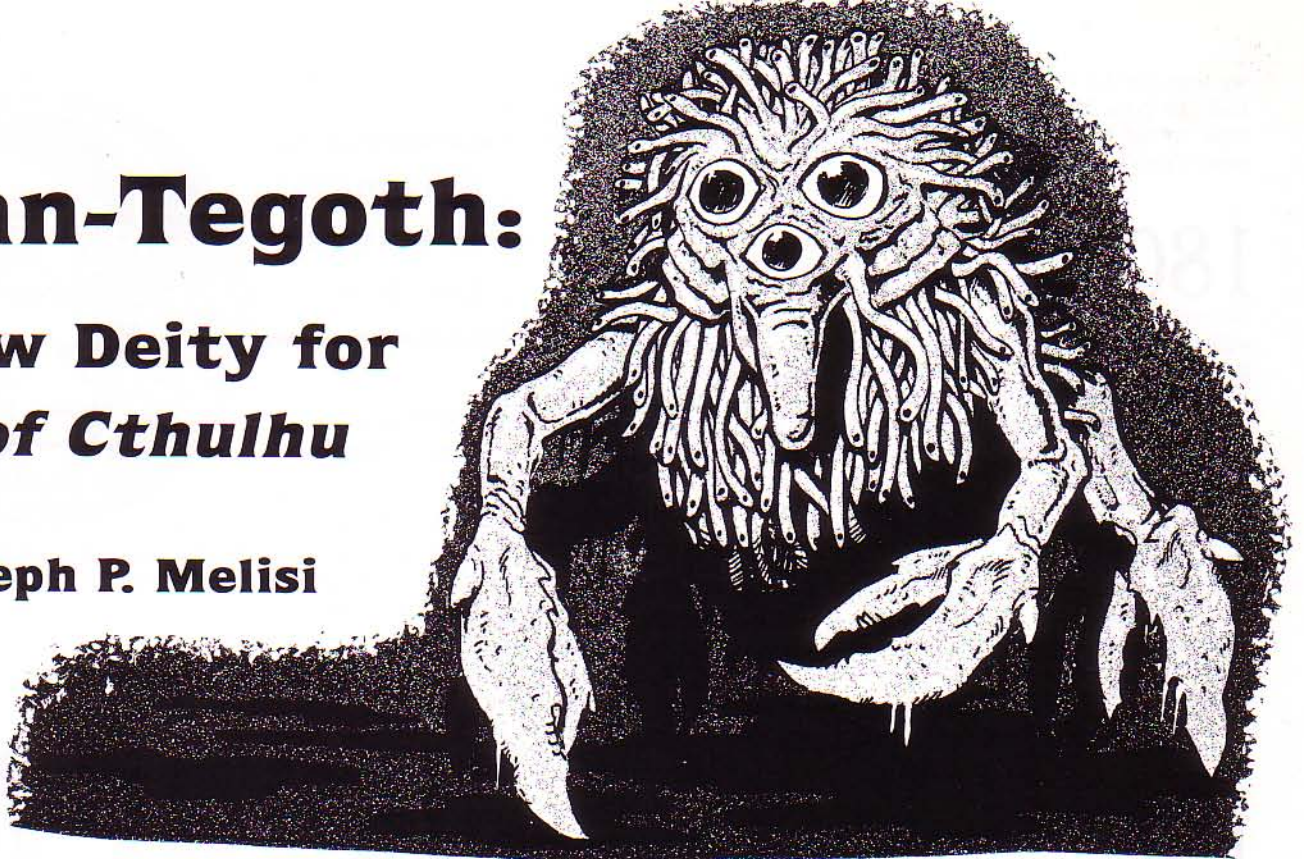
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Rhan-Tegoth:

A New Deity for *Call of Cthulhu*

by Joseph P. Melisi



In *SG 49*, William A. Barton presented a review of the Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*, in which he mentions the absence of some of the minor Lovecraftian deities. My personal favorite amongst these missing terrors is the horrific Rhan-Tegoth, who appears in the short story "The Horror in the Museum" by H. P. Lovecraft and Hazel Heald. This article is intended to rectify the omission.

Rhan-Tegoth is one of the less powerful of the Great Old Ones. He came from deep space about three million years ago, arriving in ancient Greenland after a brief stop on dark Yuggoth (Pluto). By the time of his arrival, most of the more powerful deities had been driven off the Earth, which left a power vacuum that Rhan-Tegoth was quick to exploit. Greenland became the seat of his power, and he ruled virtually unopposed. His prehuman subjects worshipped him as a god and presented him with sacrifices while he sat upon his ivory throne deep beneath the foundations of an elder city, perhaps one of the cities the Old Ones had been forced to abandon when the Mi-Go drove them from the land.

When man arose, Rhan-Tegoth's worshippers were displaced from power and the god lost the source of his sacrifices. Men feared him and kept their distance from his city. With his food supply cut off, he weakened. Finally he placed himself in a state of suspended animation, one that could only be lifted by special rites and sacrifices. In "The Horror in the Museum," Rhan-Tegoth was taken from Greenland by a mad artist who succeeded

in waking him. By the end of the story Rhan-Tegoth is dead — turned into a wax-covered exhibit (which may explain his exclusion from the *CoC* rules). But, let's sidestep that and say that he escaped the wax to continue terrorizing humanity.

In keeping with the *CoC* format, here is a description of him taken from the story:

"There was an almost globular torso, with six long, sinuous limbs terminating in crab-like claws. From the upper end a subsidiary globe bulged forward bubble-like; its triangle of three staring, fishy eyes, its foot-long proboscis, and a distended lateral system analogous to gills, suggesting that it was a head. Most of the body was covered with . . . a dense growth of dark, slender tentacles . . . each tipped with a mouth suggesting the head of an asp. On the head and below the proboscis the tentacles tended to be longer and thicker, marked with spiral stripes — suggesting the traditional locks of Medusa."

Rhan-Tegoth is over twelve feet tall, amphibious, and requires a large amount of water nearby at all times. He gives off a fetid odor that has been described as smelling almost (but not quite) like mammal cages. He is thoroughly evil, being full of the "hate, greed, and sheer

cruelty incomprehensible to mankind because it was mixed with emotions not of the world or this solar system." This tentacle-covered monster enjoys the suffering of his victims and will drag out their agony as long as possible. He never seems to have enough sacrifices and is probably the most murderous of the Old Ones with the exception of Great Cthulhu himself.

Currently, this deity has little following and no organized cult. He is worshipped almost exclusively by scattered individuals and very small groups. Not a few of his followers are quite insane and usually well read in some book of the Mythos. So he will have a ready supply of sacrifices again, Rhan-Tegoth actively seeks a larger following. However, he is very likely to kill his followers if they fail him in the slightest way. This god needs at least one sacrifice a month, either presented to him by his worshippers or personally obtained. Though fully capable of acquiring his own victims, he disdains such mundane pursuits. If Rhan-Tegoth receives less than 12 sacrifices a year he will be forced to drop into suspended animation. He can survive for millennia in this state if not attacked or exposed to the elements. The last time he slept for over a million years.

While suspended he will appear to be quite dead and mummified. He cannot bring himself out of it — only potent rituals found in the *Necronomicon*, the *Book of Eibon*, and the *Unausprechlichen Kulten* can awaken him. The required spell is called Awaken Rhan-Tegoth and requires the sacrifice of a liv-

ing, warm-blooded animal and an inscribed Elder Sign. The spell must be cast before his inert form. It requires the expenditure of POW at a rate of 1 point of POW per 5% chance of success. This loss is not permanent, and the spell requires 5 minutes to cast. If successful, Rhan-Tegoth will awaken and feed on the sacrifice. The sacrifice *must* be alive and the Elder Sign must be placed so the god can see it upon awakening. The Elder Sign will insure the right sacrifice is taken. When Rhan-Tegoth is hungry, he makes little distinction between sacrifice and sacrificer.

Rhan-Tegoth's characteristics list his CON as 40 and his POW as 20. In reality, when he is encountered, both will be reduced by 1D10 points. When he feeds, the blood drained in the form of STR points are added to his CON and POW until they reach their listed maximum. Even when these characteristics are at maximum, Rhan-Tegoth will continue to take victims, although his CON and POW do not increase beyond their maximum listed value. When Rhan-Tegoth is first brought out of suspended animation, his CON and POW will both be 1, and he will require a lot of sacrifices in a very short time. Rhan-Tegoth's characteristics and powers are listed below in standard CoC format.

Characteristics:

- STR: 55
- CON: 40
- SIZ: 30
- INT: 10
- POW: 20
- DEX: 20
- Move: 8/12 swimming

Weapon	Attack %	Damage
Claw*	45%	1D6+3D6

Sucking Tentacles — Special

**Rhan-Tegoth can make up to four attacks with his claws. When he successfully hits someone, he drags the victim to himself (STR vs. STR to avoid), where 1D10 of his sucking tentacles latch onto the victim and start draining blood in the form of 1D6 points of STR per tentacle per MR. Each turn, another STR vs. STR roll can be attempted to see if the victim can tear free. Each tentacle also does one point of damage per tentacle per turn due to the sucking mouths' saliva acids.*

Armor: All attacks against Rhan-Tegoth do minimum possible damage. He can be killed, but it is tough.

Spells: Brew Space Mead, Call Shub-Nigurath, All Summon and Bind Spells.

SAN: Seeing Rhan-Tegoth costs 1D8 points of SAN unless a successful SAN roll is made. In that case, only one point is lost.

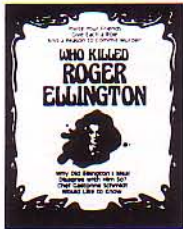

Rhan-Tegoth leaves a horrible mess after taking a victim. The corpse is crushed, riddled with tiny punctures, discolored by acid, and totally bloodless. It will hardly resemble the creature it had once been.

Rhan-Tegoth will give knowledge and spells to his worshippers, but only very rarely. He will usually be found in an ancient pre-human city such as those built by the Old Ones or the Spawn of Cthulhu. He will never be far from a ready source of sacrifices. Rhan-Tegoth was probably worshipped by the more degenerate Old Ones sometime before their Shoggoths killed them. He is almost certainly a deity of the Snake Men and the Mi-Go, so he may be found with these creatures, attempting to revive his worship amongst them.

Keepers who play Rhan-Tegoth should do so as viciously as possible. Most of the Old Ones, except Shub-Nigurath, are either neutral or hostile to Rhan-Tegoth, as they remember how he lorded it over their realm when they were forced to abandon the Earth.

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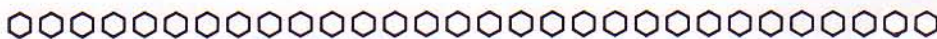
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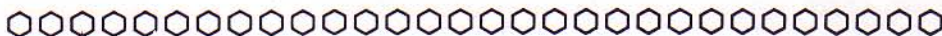
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Mirrors of the Soul

by C.J. Henderson

From time to time, I have found myself going back over the past few months. I've come to realize I'm not going to be able to forget, or even to rationalize, what happened in the Bronx in June, no matter what explanation I choose to accept, or how many Gilbey's bottles I clear away in the morning.

Something killed a woman I cared about. Somehow Lisa was taken, infested, and mangled in a way no sane person could ever recount with anything even approaching accuracy. Using words like horrific, or terrifying, or disgusting to describe the last night I saw her would be like calling Himmler a clever baker.

Of course, maybe it *was* just my imagination. Maybe the strain of what happened to Billy and Francis pushed me over the edge and I was only crazy, or maybe the gin had finally done its work.

Yeah, maybe — but I don't think so.

I remember it all started back in June; back in the hot part of June. I hung around the office past my regular hours, waiting for a client who had called earlier. She worked days, and couldn't make it until after 5:00. I'd told her I could cancel my ballet lesson. She hadn't laughed. That worried me — bad jokes get at least a giggle from people who need a detective. The more trouble they're in, the more they want to please you, the more they giggle. This girl didn't giggle.

Normally, I would have figured that meant that someone else was the one in trouble — but something in her voice told me she was the one who needed help. It didn't matter. I could wait until she came in to tell me what she wanted. It was too hot for second guessing.

She knocked around 6:00. I told her to come in. Her name was Lisa, Lisa Whateley. She walked through my outer office and sat down in the chair by my desk, staring at me as if I was what she was scared of. I asked her, "What's the problem?"

She continued to stare at me, her light green eyes growing larger. "I need a detective," she said.

"That much is easy," I assured her. "Now comes the tough part. Tell me *why* you need a detective."

"You're Mr. Hagee?"

"Yeah," I growled at her, "Jack Hagee, like it says on the door." Heat makes me impatient. "Now, I get the idea that something's bothering you. That's okay; that's why we're here, to find out what's bothering you. But I'm a detective, not a mystic. If you want help, talk. If you want your mind read, call a swami."

She snapped out of it. Her shoulders squared themselves while her hands rooted through her purse. She said, "I'm sorry; I'm sorry. It's just that I don't know where to begin."

Wondering why everyone seems to learn how to talk to detectives from the movies, I fed her the next line. "Start at the beginning."

She nodded. We must go to the same movies. "I . . . I think someone is trying to drive me crazy." With a little prodding, I got her to explain. "My family has had trouble with disturbances before. There have been stories, things whispered about us. I moved to New York to get away from it all and, for a while, everything seemed better." Her hands finally found what they were looking for. She pulled a photo out of her purse, school graduation size. As she handed it to me, she explained, "I know I'm not making any sense, but this . . . this might help."

I took the photo, looking it over. It was a picture of Lisa, two, maybe three years ago. College. She looked pretty much the same, and yet — something nagged at me. There was something different, something beyond the simple loss of the last baby fat and a different hair style. True, she looked a lot happier in the photo than she did in my office, but it was something more. I started looking closer.

I turned the small square back and forth, watching the light play on her hair. It didn't help. The layers of chestnut curls looked the same as the shortened, life-size version in front of me. That only left her eyes. The eyes which, if you looked at the photo close enough, you could see were blue. A joyful, summer sky blue. Not at all the color of the ones staring at me across my desk. These eyes were green, like the color of old money.

I looked into the green eyes, and I knew

Lisa was afraid of something she couldn't understand. If I'd had any sense, I'd have been afraid, too.

Listening to Lisa's story was like taking a day off to immerse oneself in old pulps. Hitchcock couldn't have orchestrated it any better. It had probably started with her family. She had been abused physically as a child. As she had grown older, she'd begun to sense the abuse would become sexual once she was "21 and a woman full," as her father had put it.

She had lied to her parents about her college schedules, managing to complete graduation requirements in three years instead of four. Waiting out the summer, she passed the months slowly, "lending" to a friend those things she wanted to take with her when she left town. On the first day of the new semester, the friend drove her to the train station and packed her off to New York.

Things had been all right for a few months, but then, suddenly, a flurry of bad dreams had begun to plague her. Some were the type that came when she was asleep; others played out before her eyes when she was awake. They were strange, meaningless collages of nightmare. The overpowering images were watery ones: webbed fingers and toes, fins sprouting from human faces, blue eyes hanging in skin-covered bunches like a rubber glove

filled with grapes, growing out of the sides of things that belonged on some other world's ocean bottom.

All in all, Lisa hadn't been getting much sleep.

After the dreams had started their constant roll, however, reality lent a hand. Lisa started spotting people, or, as she put it, what she "hoped" were people, watching her at home, on her way to work, coming out of movies, peeking at her from around corners, out of windows, from wherever an edge or a crack allowed someone to hide and stare.

What kept me listening was the fact I was sure Lisa could tell the difference between what was real and what wasn't. I'm not an expert, but I thought maybe her problem could be solved by someone who was. I got my biggest surprise when I asked her if she had considered psychiatric help. She told me she'd already done that, and her psychiatrist had sent her to me. That one, I told her, needed explaining.

"Actually, I've gone to more than one doctor since I came to town. At first I saw a specialist. She kept telling me that I wasn't crazy, and that all I wanted was attention. Since I wasn't home to get it from my mother, I'd come to her. That was before people had started following me, so I thought, you know, maybe she was right. But later, when things got worse, I . . . I didn't have the money to go back to her. I had to go to one of the free clinics. That's where I met Dr. Fredricks."

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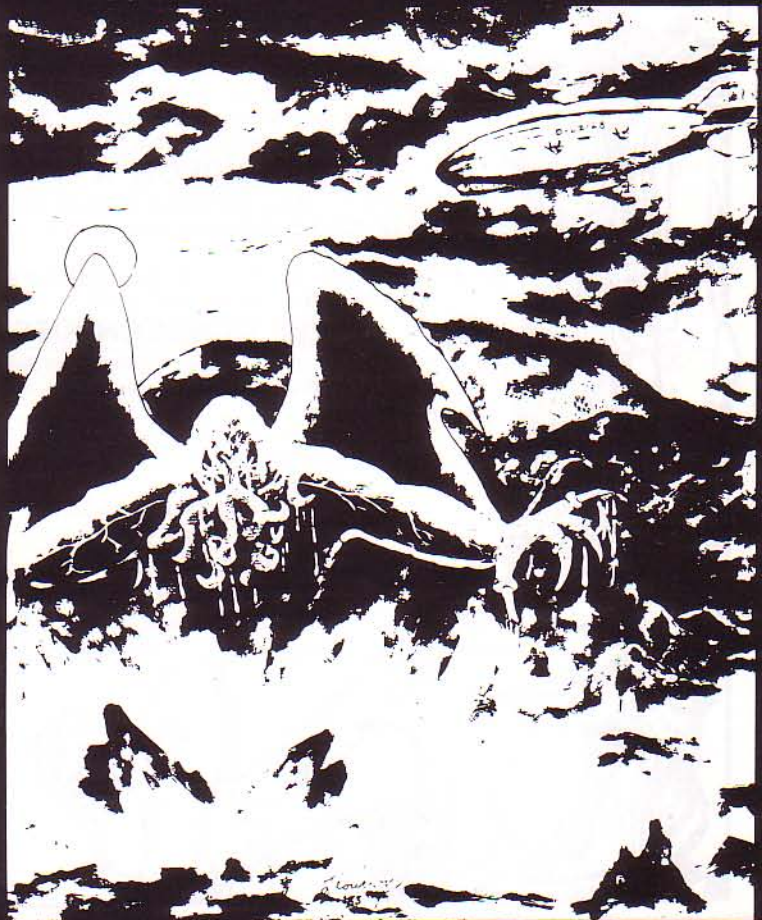
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All of a sudden, things got a lot clearer. She meant Billy. Billy ran a free mental health clinic in the Village, living off donations, contributions, and meals scrounged off an army of friends who didn't want to see him fail. He and I had spent more than a few nights together, pooling our change, trying to find a decent meal in it.

Billy was a good man; I knew he wouldn't have sent Lisa to me without a reason. I asked her if she minded my calling him later. She reached into her purse and, handing me a piece of paper, told me, "The doctor gave me this number. He said that if you wanted to call him tonight, not to wait until I was gone."

I took the number. I had a feeling it was wherever his current meal ticket was. I was right. A woman who sounded fat and Italian answered. She asked who I was, what I wanted, and if I could hold on. Billy was on the line a few seconds later. "Thought I'd be hearing from you, Jack."

Not wanting his dinner to get cold, I got straight down to the facts. "Is this on the level, Billy?"

"Yeah," he said, "I really think so. I thought so this morning when I told her to call you. I think so even more today."

"Why?"

"Keep a straight face. After the first few sessions with Lisa, I sent Francis up to look things over." Suddenly Billy got

very quiet: "He called me today, Jack. I'm not sure what he's found out; let's just say Massachusetts and the Whateleys have a 'disturbing' history."

When I asked him to elaborate, he answered, "Not now. Tomorrow. Francis will be back, and we'll be able to go over all the facts together." We said a couple of last pleasantries to each other, and then, just before I could hang up, Billy asked me, "Do me a favor, Jack?"

"Like what?"

"Just, well, watch out for Lisa, will you? She seems like a good kid. Maybe we're both getting caught up in something we should know better than to take seriously but, Christ — I . . . I believe her. I really do." Looking across my desk at Lisa, sitting there waiting for me to decide her fate, I knew what he meant. I believed her, too. I believed in her dreams, and I believed in her crazy family, and that someone or a bunch of someones were following her and slowly driving her crazy. "Yeah, Billy," I told him. "I'll do my best."

I cradled the phone, looking up at Lisa again. She whispered to me, "Don't turn around, Mr. Hagee. One of those *things* is at your window."

I thought, oh goody, just what I wanted to hear. I love having *things* turn up outside fourth story windows that don't have fire escapes. I told her quietly, "When I

turn around, you duck behind the desk." She nodded. Bracing myself, I spun around suddenly, catching sight of a blur in the corner of the window. Cursing the shock that held me in my chair for a second, I threw the window the rest of the way open, and risked sticking my head out to scan up and down the building, looking for anything that could explain what we both had seen.

Nothing met my eye, no shadow figures, no human flies, no vampires. Nothing but hot, dark air filled with the scent of garbage. The restaurant on the ground floor had rolled its dumpster out earlier — Tuesday night always meant the trash man — and the summer heat was helping nature along with its job.

I was sure I had seen a face at the window. But I knew that no matter how someone had reached it, they couldn't have gotten away as fast as they seemed to without leaving a fair-sized splatter on the sidewalk.


I was shutting the window to rid us of the smells invading from below when it dawned on me — our pal could have jumped into the dumpster.

I pulled my .38 from its drawer, grabbed Lisa's hand, and dragged her behind me as I headed for the door. "Stick close," I told her. We took the stairs two at a time, hitting the street only a minute or two after I shut the window. Leaving her in the doorway where I could watch her, but where she would still be safe, I crossed the sidewalk, approaching the dumpster. I moved forward cautiously, keeping my gun low and hidden, but aimed. Although the sun was still fairly high, it was low enough to allow the buildings around 14th Street to block it. Shadow draped the dumpster, masking it from me, forcing me closer.

For some reason the smell was more powerful than usual that Tuesday evening. The stench was like a physical force trying to hold me back. If my pal was still inside, he didn't have much of a sense of smell. Then I saw it: a foot poking out of the shadows. Taking a deep breath, I staggered forward. Thrusting my hand inside at the point where my playmate's chest should have been, I grabbed a handful of jacket and jerked him upward, or at least part of him.

Somehow the force of the fall had split him open like a rotting melon. As I pulled the jacket upward, his insides oozed out, dripping down the front of the can like warm gelatin. I dropped the jacket, backing away from it toward Lisa. I tried using the wall to clean my hand, not wanting to befoul my clothes further with whatever it was I had found. Hair and little fish bones scraped away as I rubbed my hand back and forth on the brick. Lisa asked, "What was it? What did you find?"

"We'll talk later," I told her. Taking her arm again — with my clean hand — I pulled her in the direction of the subway. She kept insisting all the way that she



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wanted to know what was going on. She wasn't the only one.

I took Lisa to my place for the night. I didn't want her going to her home, or to a hotel, or to any place she would be alone. Not only was I convinced that she wasn't going crazy, and that her story was true, I was also sure she didn't know half of what was going on. But then, that was why she'd come to me — to find out.

I showered as soon as we got to my place. Mostly I just lathered and rinsed my arm again and again, brushing free the green and black bits of gelatin which had formed a crust on it. The running water caused some of the hideous substance to dissolve. I tried not to watch.

After I dried off and dressed, I took the towel and the shirt I'd been wearing and used them to wipe down the tub. Then I threw them down the hall incinerator chute. I wasn't sure why; it just seemed like the best thing to do. Lisa took a shower after I did. With the scene at my office, and the subway ride, and the general mugginess of my un-airconditioned apartment, there was no doubt we both needed one.

After she came out, I told her, "Look, it's getting late; why don't you turn in? I think we should meet with Billy fairly early tomorrow."

"Okay," she told me. "What about you?"

"I'll be fine. I'm used to couches." I am, too. Most nights I never make it home. Between the couch and the hot-plate in my office, I sometimes wonder why I bother with an apartment at all. She nodded, and went into the bedroom, leaving me to watch the door and the windows, waiting for scratchings and knocks, and all of the other noises one hears when one doesn't want to hear anything.

I sat in my easy chair for a while, watching the moon. It was making a noble effort to send some light down through the smog enshrouding the city. It didn't seem to be making much headway. The way the street lights reflected from the dirt in the air, it was hard to tell whose light was whose. It didn't matter.

After about an hour, Lisa came out to the front room, complaining that she couldn't sleep. I knew the feeling. Apparently the same restless, despairing whispers that had kept my eyes going from corner to corner had been after her, too. I guess it was worse in the dark. We talked for a while, before she finally ended the charade and took my hand and gently led me to the bedroom. Deep down, we both felt something was watching, but we didn't say anything about it. It seemed better that way.

The next day, Lisa and I met Billy and Francis at Billy's clinic. Francis was a perpetual student who eked out a few dollars for himself by doing odd jobs for Billy. His latest assignment had been to go to Lisa's home town and check into her story. It had been his call to Billy the day before that had sent Lisa to me.

Lisa had called her office, saying she was sick. I wasn't sure I wanted her at the meeting, but I didn't want her out of my sight. Billy straightened out how much he and I and Lisa already knew, and then Francis told us what he had found.

"Here's the scoop," he began. "Everyone knows about Salem, and the witches, and all. But, what most people don't seem to know is that Salem isn't the only town in Massachusetts with a history. This town, Dunwich, that Lisa's from, and another one close by, Innsmouth . . . the fairy tales they tell about those places are not to be believed.

"First, I went to a bigger town which is close by — Arkham. Now, Arkham has a pretty unusual history itself, but I don't want to get too far afield." Francis paused for a moment, his eyes scanning everyone else's. He was taking a mental breath, seeing if he thought he could get his audience to believe something he wasn't sure of himself. Francis wasn't the skittish type,



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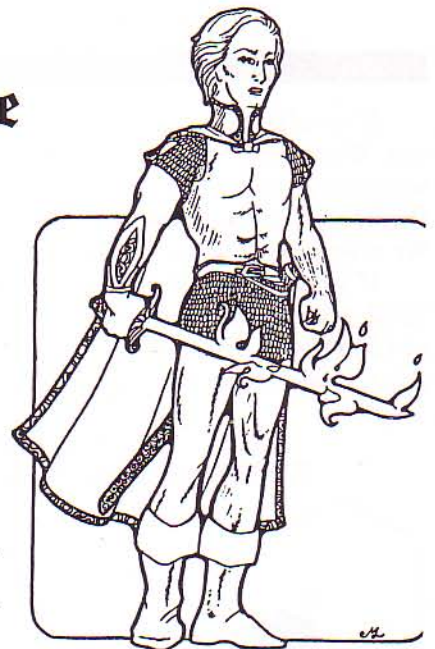
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but something about his trip had panicked him and was keeping him that way. He started again with a swallow.

"Strange stuff is supposed to have gone on in both towns back in the 20s. Christ, I know I'm going to sound like the *Enquirer* here, but — well, the stories go that in Dunwich, some kind of invisible monster tore around, wrecking buildings until some doctor found a way to stop it. Innsmouth's claim to fame is a race of fish people . . ." Francis read the look on my face. "Yeah, *fish people*; supposedly they're born human and change over the years. Anyway, they . . . it . . . *somebody*, was practicing some kind of weird rites that stirred up some trouble. The old records say the Navy actually sent a submarine to torpedo a reef off of Innsmouth, and that the F.B.I. destroyed a substantial part of the town's waterfront with dynamite.

"I checked with the Navy and the F.B.I. Both times I got someone who didn't know anything, but promised to check. I didn't mention monsters or anything. I gave them the old "article research" bit. Anyway, in both cases, when I got back to my contacts, I got this you're-wrong, we-don't-know-anything, it-never-happened, how-did-you-know, don't-repeat-this, there's-nothing-to-tell run-around. Now, I'm not saying there really was an invisible monster running around wrecking houses, or that a bunch of fishermen tried to call the devil down to Massachusetts and got blown

apart by the U.S. government, but *something* happened, and no one wants to talk about it."

"What happened to the monster?" I asked. "And to the fish people? Weren't there any bodies?"

"Sure, but they didn't last. When they died, they supposedly just, well, fell apart. Like they were made of jello or something. Nothing left except, like goo."

No one said anything. Francis flared, "Listen. I'm not making this stuff up. Maybe someone else is, but I'm just . . ." I cut him off with the story of the dumpster. Suddenly, nobody had anything to say. Since I didn't see much purpose in the four of us sitting around looking at each other, I asked, "Okay. Very interesting. But how does this stuff tie in with this case?"

Not looking at Lisa, he answered, "Well, apparently Ms. Whateley's grandfather on her father's side, Wilber Whateley, was some kind of key figure. No one liked him much. He made trouble for a lot of people in Dunwich. There was talk of him having kidnapped and killed children who were never found, but nothing was ever proved. But, ah . . ." Francis paused again. It was obvious he'd come to the hard part. "Ah, Christ, that doctor, the one who killed the monster, he told people that the monster was Wilber's half-brother."

The silence came back again, thicker than the summer heat around us. The rest of the story was pulled out in bits. Wil-

ber's half-brother was never seen again after the monster bubbled down into tapioca. Supposedly, Wilber himself had died the same way. Lisa quietly admitted that a lot of Whateleys got buried in closed-coffin ceremonies. She added that the ceremonies rarely had anything like a traditional minister or priest in attendance. The quiet deepened. While I tried to straighten out everything I'd been told, Francis finished off his report with one final bombshell.

"Jack, I got a lot of this stuff confirmed on the bus on the way back. You see, the bus I was on had some real old types on it, a bunch of them. Well, I thought, might as well ask. I started talking about this stuff as if I took it all for fact, like I was just from the next county.

"Well, they confirmed it, all right. Had a swell time yucking it up over the "good old days." Started breaking out the bottles of home brew on the bus; little "pre-festival celebration," they called it. I went along with it, you know, to keep them talking . . ." and then, suddenly, Francis' voice broke, his throat tightening to the point where every other word screeched. "Christ, Jack! They started talking about how we were all going to have a *good time*, a good time this year *for sure!*"

Billy reached out and took Francis' shoulder, trying to calm him. It didn't work. "Jack, they're coming to New York for a mass — they're planning to finish whatever they started in Innsmouth before the government got to them!"

It scared me that I wasn't surprised. Maybe it was the way my pal from the night before had splattered, or the ooze and the smell and the decaying tatters of rot he'd left behind instead of a corpse. Maybe the sweltering heat just made thinking so hard that acceptance was easier. Or maybe it was the look in Lisa's eyes and the green tinge they wore.

I kept after Francis, but he didn't have much more. The mass was supposedly set for something called Mid-Summer's Eve — only two days away, according to Francis.

Unfortunately, even though Francis had found out the when, he hadn't gotten the where. That would take some searching. Reaching for the phone, I called Hubert. Hubert is a leg-man; he deals in facts for the cops, the mob, anyone who needs information. He treads very carefully between his clients, trying not to get anyone *too* angry. With his looks, his stutter, and the limp he picked up in the war, he isn't left with much to turn over to those he might offend. He picked up after the third ring.

"Hey; w-who I got?"

"It's me, Hu."

"Hey-hey-Hagee. What's up, D-D-Dick Tracy?"

I gave him a quick run-down of the facts, holding back the stuff that sounded like a cheap horror movie. Getting to the point quickly, I asked him to try and find out where someone might hold an under-

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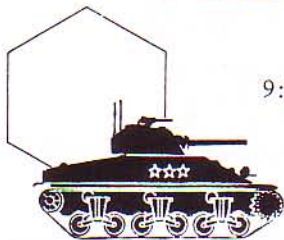
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the-table mid-summer's eve festival of the sort Francis had described. He laughed, "T-That *all* you want?"

"That should be enough for now."

"Okey-dokey. C-Call you at your place in a few hours. Go have d-d-dinner. B-But don't let your 'meat loaf.' " He laughed again. "Get it?"

"Right, Hu." I hung up in the middle of his second laugh. If I hadn't, the jokes would have continued in the same vein, and I was in no mood to fend off Hubert's version of wit. I also knew nothing more was going to be accomplished by the four of us where we were. Francis agreed with me and took off, glad to be out of the office. Billy nodded, saying he would do anything he could to help. He meant it, too.

Lisa and I left together. We had a lot of time to kill while I tried to figure out which answers went to which questions.

The rest of the day and all of the night passed without trouble. Hubert hadn't come up with anything, but promised an answer as soon as he could track down one last lead. I hadn't argued. I hadn't done any better. I told him Lisa and I would be at Billy's, for want of a better place to hide. He told me he'd get in touch there as soon as he knew something.

We spent most of the morning thumbing through magazines and moving from one spot to another to try and keep out

of Billy's way. Not content to stay outside, the summer heat wrenched its way past the sputting air conditioners, loosening ties and top buttons. The patients and staffers all reacted to the thick layers of toasted air around us, animating some, leadening others, leaving some pacing and prowling the rooms, the rest succumbing to the heat and melting into their chairs. The heat and humidity intensified throughout the day, turning thought into pain and comfort into a memory filed in the same drawer as gasoline that sold for 30¢ a gallon.

I looked across the room to the chair in which Lisa had fallen asleep. Sweat dripped down the wall where her head rested against it. As I stared at her, I wondered what was really going on. The longer it took Hubert to call, the more tales of monsters and fish people and black masses began to seem as silly as they're supposed to. Maybe we *were* all scaring ourselves, I thought. Maybe the Navy had a perfectly good reason for torpedoing civilians while the F.B.I. shot them down in the streets and hustled them off to who knows where. Maybe Lisa was crazy, and Francis took bus rides with nut cases, and people did split apart and dissolve when they fell four stories. Sure, maybe. Maybe the sun was coming up in the west the next morning, too, but I didn't think so.

Hubert's call did not improve my atti-

tude. He had gotten through to his source, but hadn't gotten an answer. He said he needed more time and started with the jokes. I hung up, tired of Hubert's jokes, tired of waiting, tired of the heat, and tired of not being able to do anything. Mopping the sweat from my brow, I crossed the room to wake Lisa. Billy was already in attendance, wanting to know what Hubert had told me. I told them both I still didn't know anything, but that I wanted to try and find something out.

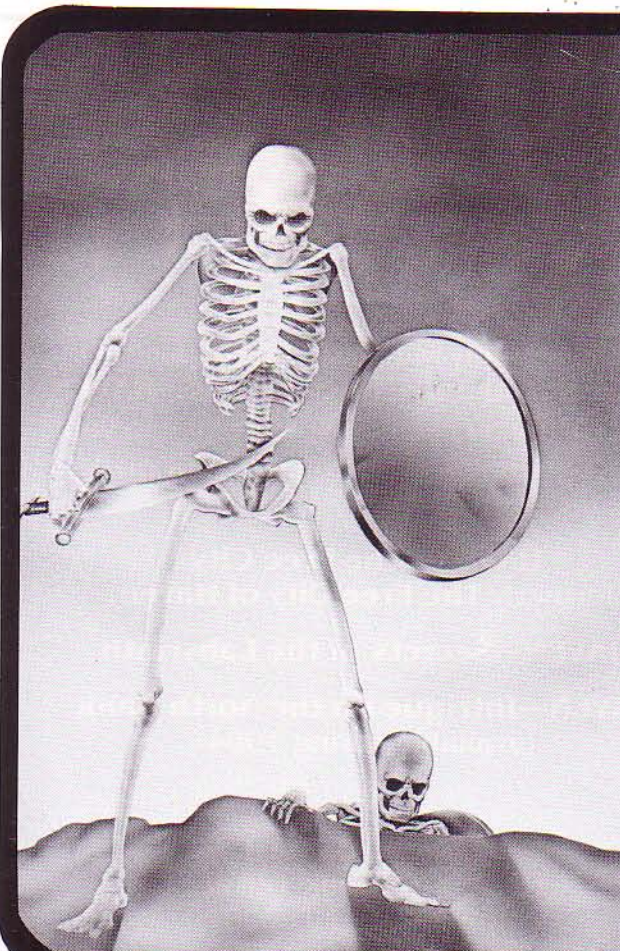
"If Francis is right about tomorrow, it isn't hard to figure that we have their guest of honor. Since Lisa's never been given a choice about R.S.V.P.ing, is there anyone who hasn't thought that the opposition might be considering force?" No one answered. "I didn't think so."

"What should we do, Jack?"

"Billy, I want you and Francis to go to my office tonight. Stay there. I'll go to Lisa's and wait for our pals. They haven't been watching so closely since their buddy bought it in the dumpster. If they see the lights on there, they'll probably make their move on me."

"Why take the chance, Jack? Why don't we all just hide?" Lisa asked.

It was a good question, one I'd asked myself a dozen times. Hoping the answer sounded better out loud, I said, "Who or whatever is behind this, whether they're 'agents of Satan,' or just a bunch of sick bastards who get off on bloody headlines



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— whoever they are, they seem determined. Making them miss their date isn't going to put them off. They've got to be stopped. If I can get ahold of them, shake up their party plans, maybe we can put them out of circulation. After all, even if we get them to leave Lisa alone, that doesn't mean they won't decide to crown someone else 'Queen-of-the-May,' or that they won't just postpone things until next year, or next week, or to whenever in hell it suits them to postpone things." I turned slightly, staring directly at Lisa. "You wanted me to find these people and stop them. Is that still what you want?"

She nodded, saying 'yes' firmly. Billy interrupted, "What do we do, Jack?"

"You and Francis take Lisa to my office tonight, and stay with her. Watch out for her." I flipped him a key. "You know what this opens. Open it when you get to my place, arm yourselves, and stay that way."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to Buddy Liquors on 18th Street, and then I'm going to Lisa's place to wait for our pals."

Billy called me when he and Francis had Lisa settled in. Opening the back compartment of my bottom desk drawer, they had both taken a weapon and settled themselves in as well. I've kept a number of the unregistered hand guns that have come my way over the years. Such things

come in handy sometimes; that night it had seemed handy.

I had set myself up at Lisa's about an hour earlier, waiting for something to happen. Pulling a chair around to face the door, I sat in semi-darkness, my own gun and a bottle of Gilbey's within easy reach. I figured that if they were going to make a grab for her, they'd have to try her place that night.

I'd figured right.

Several hours after Billy's call, the first scratchings came at the door. I watched the entrance, listening to the noise on the other side. It was shallow, a thin slitting sound, as if the door were being skimmed away, layer by layer. I continued to sit silently, watching the doorknob jiggle, listening to the continual scraping. Sweat rolled down my neck and face. Taking a last pull from the Gilbey's, I set the bottle next to my chair and waited.

A few seconds later, the waiting was over. The door swung open, letting grey light filter in from the hallway. The sounds I had been hearing pulled together into a voice, the way radio static solidifies into a message when you finally get the station tuned in. It was a dry sound, as if the speaker had gone years without drinking.

"*This is the time,*" it told me. "*Come to us now.*"

I sat. The scraping started again, this time at the windows. As I continued to watch the front door, I could hear the

same methodical scratchings, knowing that the layers of glass which separated me from the scrapers were being peeled away. I knew they were in the room behind me when the noise suddenly stopped. I stood and turned quickly, just as the first wave swarmed out of the bedroom, knives and bludgeons in hand. Taking a backward step, I raised my .38 and pulled the trigger, firing repeatedly into the horde. Four of them splattered, exploding through the room as if hit by a bazooka. As others poured in the front door, I grabbed one and spun him around, kicking him headlong into the others. As more came up behind me from the bedroom, I punched the first, my fist slamming through its head as its jaw shattered, teeth flying in my face.

As blades slashed for me through the darkness, I grabbed hold of one's hair, wrenching him around in front of me. I could feel parts of its flesh giving way as I pulled. Pressing my advantage, I yanked harder, splitting it in two. Ignoring the vulgar reek spilling from the screaming, thrashing torso, I grabbed it up in both hands and then used it as a club, smashing my way clear to the bedroom.

Slamming the door behind me, I shoved a chair under the knob and headed for the fire escape. Thuds and scrapings sounded behind me as I clambered out the window and headed for the street. Rusted sections of railing came loose in my hands as I

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took the narrow metal rungs two, three at a time. I reloaded when I hit the alley, watching for more of my playmates. Looking up, I saw they had already made it to the fire escape. Some had crawled out the windows, oozing their way down the side of the building toward me. I didn't wait for them to catch up.

Racing around the corner, I ran down one street and then another, twisting and turning, hoping to lose the things following me. Stopping at the first phone booth I spotted, I jammed the door closed behind me and fished in my pockets for change. As I dropped a dime in the slot, the smell of the fight began to cloud my head. The odors of the rotting flesh and thin, white blood which clung to me curdled upward, gagging me, making my hands shake as I tried to punch out my office number. I leaned backward into the booth's metal corner, watching for my playmates through the glass panels, listening to the unending buzz in the receiver.

I hung up after a dozen rings, wondering why no one had answered — praying I had only dialed the wrong number. Calming myself, forcing the white fingers of terror to back out of my mind, I reinserted the dime, carefully watching myself press out the same number again. I listened to the buzzes pile up one atop the other, looking around the booth, noting how much it looked like a coffin. Finally I hung up, backing out of the booth. It didn't seem as small from the outside.

I knew something had happened, something more than the three of them stepping out for a pizza. Stepping from the curb, I walked a few feet into the street, hailing each cab which passed. After an eternity, I finally got a driver who wasn't too bored to take a fare to 14th Street. I could hear the sirens as we got closer.

Stopping the cabbie short of my block, I crossed the street, going over to Freddie's. Freddie runs the newsstand across from my building. She watches the door, letting me know about anything interesting. I figured she might peg squad cars and ambulances sitting outside as interesting. She had.

She told me, "What goes on in that place of yours, Jack? You better low profile it. They're gonna want answers from you for sure. Musta been some kinda war in there. Bodies out the windows, shots, screams, the works." She smiled, "You sure can throw a party."

Freddie always smiles over details. Not much bothered her — reading too many New York headlines can insulate you from anything. "Lotta gaggin' cops over there. Could smell somethin' over here for 'while, but it blew off. Stunk bad in this heat, let me tell you. You don't smell so good yourself." She sniffed at me. "Woouuuch. What the hell is that?"

"Sink backed up; I had to wash in the toilet."

"Sure," she laughed, shaking her extra

85 pounds, "an' I'm Superman's mother." I sat down on a stack of *Daily News*, holding back the anger and tears. Freddie asked, "You need anything, Jack?" Her hand curled around the bottle she was working on that night. I took it, letting two fingers' worth burn the edges off my fears. I passed the bottle back, saying, "Thanks. How about your phone?"

"Same place as always. Don't be callin' France."

I used my dime again. While it rang, I asked Freddie how many bodies had been taken out. She waddled across the street to find out, leaving me to watch the shop, and talk to Hubert. He answered quicker than usual.

"Hey-hey, w-w-who I got?"

"You find that church yet?"

"Christ, Jack; w-w-what you got yourself m-mixed up in?"

I exploded. "Shut up, Hu. I don't have time for anything but answers. Can you understand that?"

"S-sure, Jack. Sure, I g-got it." He stammered out the address; his tone told me he had found out a few things about the parishioners as well as the church. As I scribbled down the address, I asked him, "What is it, Hu?"

"I, I don't know. Those Massachusetts boys, t-t-there's something wrong with that place. Lots of b-bad history. B-B-Bodies being found — sick stuff . . ."

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He filled me in on the details he had come across, none of them very pleasant, but I had guessed that much for myself. I told him I had to go as Freddie came back into the stand. Outside of assorted pieces of my splattering pals, they'd only found Billy and Francis. She didn't describe the remains, but the look in her eyes told me all I needed to know.

They'd gotten Lisa. Somehow I'd known they would all along.

I pulled up across the street from the address Hubert had given me. Freddie had lent me her car; we both knew mine was most likely staked out by a few of the boys in blue, waiting for me to come to them with an explanation as to what exactly they had found upstairs. That was something I didn't have time for.

I took in the building as I came to it. It had been a decent church at one time, the way Coney Island had once been a nice place. Now it was a shuddering hulk of splintered, forgotten wood, a slanted pile of sticks which no one had bothered to knock over. Probably because no one wanted to get close enough to do it.

It was strange to see a wooden structure in New York. Even in the Bronx, everything is made of stone and metal. Somehow, the First Congregational Church of the Elder Saints had managed to hold off the ravages of progress. The twin apartment buildings it was wedged between

were in less of a state of disrepair than the church itself, giving the appearance that the decay was spreading from the church itself. Appearances aren't always deceiving.

Figuring subtlety didn't impress the boys from Innsmouth much, I simply went up to the front door and walked in. That it wasn't locked didn't surprise me, just as the inner decor didn't. It was calm inside, calm the way a beach is in winter, the way graveyards are all year long.

Most of the main room was in shadow, the only light coming from a few lanterns. They burned thickly, giving off a filmy, yellow vapor which smelled like old wet sand. I walked down the main aisle past the rows of seats. The church was filled with seats — wooden ones, steel ones, leather ones — no two of them alike. I walked past recliners, park benches, wheel barrows, patio furniture, kitchen chairs, hassocks, three-legged stools, anything which could support a body.

I listened to the sound my shoes made as I walked, each step either cracking the mucus-like crust which washed over most of the floor, or sloshing where it hadn't yet hardened. I kept my eyes forward, staring at the altar, avoiding eye contact with the things perched off in the dusty fun-house gloom which surrounded me.

Finally, when I was halfway to the front of the church, one of the "altar boys" noticed me. It tapped the "priest" on the

shoulder. The cowed figure turned, making the knots in my stomach tighten. The pain forced my eyes closed. It was Lisa.

"We thought you might be here."

Lisa's mouth opened and closed, but it wasn't her voice I heard. The figure moved with a gait barely human. The only part of the thing before me which was still the woman I knew were the large, frightened, green eyes, pleading for help. The fear screaming out of them scrawled down my throat and touched my bones, chasing away the summer heat with the kind of chill that burns unwrapped meat in a freezer. I'd been trapped in a freezer once; I found myself wishing I had died in it.

"You can stop fighting us now. All is right."

"What's all right? Nothing's all right!"

"You have discovered so much, but you know so little. We ruled the world once. My Brothers, My Sisters, My Self. All the worlds you know of, all the stars you have seen — they were Our domain."

"Others came, though. Chaotic Ones. Pain givers. Demanding, stirring Ones. Young. They took Our ways of order and broke them the way any child will smash a barrier it does not understand. We were slow; We had no understanding of chaos. We were sealed away before We could prevent them from stealing you from Us. Now — it is Our night. We shall return, and you will be safe."

I stumbled away from Lisa's form, inching down the aisle. The voice continued, *"Tonight, I shall be born again. I grow here. I shall birth Myself. Soon, We shall all return and dispel the pain givers. Those Ones shall be locked away. You will all be safe again."*

Lisa's hands spread apart, beckoning me forward. Her cloak fell open. Her body seemed twisted now, like a lamp shade that had been kicked too many times. I watched as her skin shuddered, heaving up and down as something unimaginable moved beneath it. My thoughts ranged back to our first meeting, and then to our night at my place; my mind flashed further back and I remembered standing in the shower, washing away the slime of the thing I'd found in the dumpster. Somehow the images blended together as the thing before me continued to smile peacefully.

I knew what had happened. Lisa was gone; only the shape travelling within her remained. I looked up at the face that once was Lisa's, and said goodbye. It continued to smile. I smiled too, and then pulled my .38 free, leveled it, and fired point-blank until it was empty. The body jerked backward with each shot.

The "parishioners" came at me then, squalling in a tongue painful to hear. Using my revolver as a club, I swung at everything that moved, trying to reach the front door. As the howling continued, I threw myself bodily into the thinnest line of their ranks, breaking through into one corner of the dimly lit church. The congrega-

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tion surged toward me, but their numbers worked against them. I pulled one of the lanterns from the wall and smashed it in front of them. The oil within spilled out, igniting the still damp portions of the oily slime on the floor.

As those aflame ran shrieking through those who weren't, I took the opportunity to run from post to post, upsetting all the lamps I could. Before any of them could stop me, I had filled the church with sheets of flame, the blaze licking up the pillars and walls, eating away at the dried wood with a frenzy as unnatural as the calm it disturbed. Running toward the closest wall, I threw myself forward, through both the flames and the stained glass window beyond. I fell burning into the alley below, sliding down through the decades of slime which had built up between the church and the next apartment building. Thrashing about in the darkness, I desperately beat the flames clinging to me. Stumbling from the alley, I tried not to listen to the screams rolling out of the inferno behind me.

Finally, dragging myself across the street, I leaned against Freddie's car, pulling off my smouldering jacket, letting it drop in the gutter. Not many people gathered to watch the blaze. Most everyone in the Bronx is used to fires, and to minding their own business. Those who had gathered backed off quickly when the doors to the church began to open.

Wrapped in flames, Lisa's body shuffled toward me, leaving a thinning trail of sizzling blood behind it. I watched as it moved, not knowing what to do. I had no energy to run, and no place to run to. I could feel the .38 still in my hand, but didn't bother to reload it. I didn't see that six more bullets would do any good.

The thing stopped several feet from me, as I continued to cling to the car, unable to move. The voice came again. "*No order. No order now. Chaos swallows us again. We go - We go. Our mercy on you - you who worship falsely - you have forgotten Us, tool of Chaos; you realize not your actions.*"

The eyes of the thing looked inward, and then, raising its flaming arms upward, it looked at me again, saying, "*This one, at least, We will save.*"

And suddenly, Lisa was back from wherever she had been shoved when the thing had taken her over. I grabbed up my jacket, trying to beat out the flames, but finally stopped. There wasn't any point. Lisa's body was human again, but her mind, her spirit, her soul - whatever word you want to use for whatever it is that makes us people - was gone.

Even though I put out the flames, she still screamed, the same gurgling howl the things trapped in the church continued to screech. Fumbling through my jacket pockets, I found one last half-moon clip. Loading the shells into my revolver, I

searched Lisa's burnt, hanging face for any sign that could stay my hand. The opaqued green of her remaining eye told me no more than her foaming, blood-flecked lips.

Cursing every god I'd ever heard of, I stuck my gun to her temple and pulled the trigger. The screaming stopped everywhere except in my head.

Somehow I made my way back to Freddie's, delivering her car in better shape than I delivered myself. I drank a lot that night. I drank a lot the next night, too. I gave the police my story - letting them know that I didn't know anything, bawling them out for not keeping people and their property safe and unharmed. They weren't really out to blame the mess in my office on me, mainly because they didn't have much of an idea what the mess in my office even was. Truth to tell, neither did I.

I've rolled a lot of ideas around, but none of the answers I come up with make any sense, which is hardly surprising, considering the questions don't make any sense either.

I've found drinking to be a wonderful way to sleep without dreaming. Of course, someday I might be able to sleep without dreams, and not have to drink myself into a stupor first, but so far I haven't had the nerve to find out.

I'm not sure I ever will.

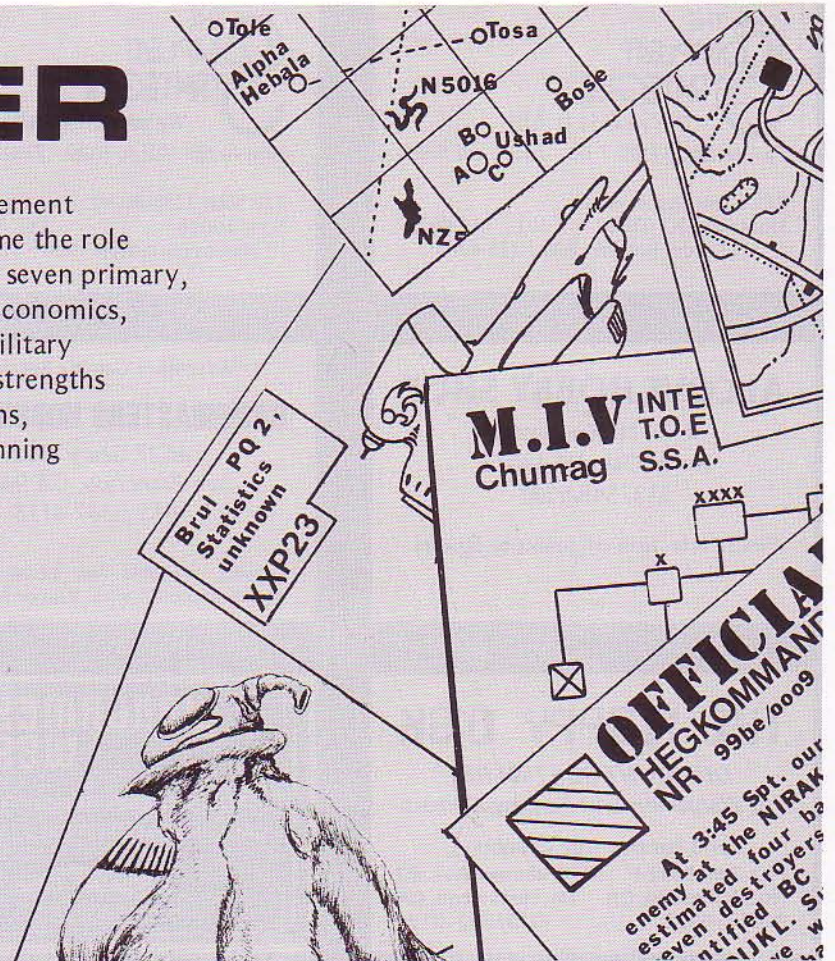
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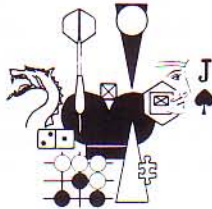
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Here There Be ????

by Christopher Frink

Say Hello, Chris

Last issue there wasn't room for an editorial column — we figured you'd rather read something more important. You also may have noticed there were two editors listed in the staff box; we really didn't mean to confuse you all. This month you've got one editor and one column. Longtime *Space Gamer*/*Fantasy Gamer* editor Aaron Allston is off pursuing a freelance writing/editing career. (Oh, for the independent life — no immediate bosses, just deadlines.) Aaron asked me to send along his best. You'll be hearing from him soon in these and other pages.

Contest, Contest

One of my first orders of business as editor was to come up with a new name for this column. I struck out so I copped out — I decided to let you come up with one. The best suggestion is worth two free issues of *FG*; the first runner-up gets one freebie. The second runner-up gets a hearty pat on the back. So, put on your weirdness caps, remember to keep it clean enough to print, and send in those cards and letters. I'll keep calling this "Here There Be ????" until we get in a winner.

This Issue

FG 3 has got a couple of good reviews and, most importantly, "The Thing In The Darkness." It's the first solo adventure *FG/SG* has published and the first *Call of Cthulhu* solo scenario on the market to date. "The Thing" has been sanctioned for use with *CoC* by designer Sandy Petersen. Here's the best part: You don't have to own or know *Call of Cthulhu* to play "The Thing." The introduction explains enough of the *Cthulhu* system to let you play. There is also a section on converting the scenario for play with any RPG on the market. Anybody can play this one!

Contributing Editor Matthew Costello conceived and nurtured "The Thing." He says he heaved a sigh of relief upon sending it to us. By the time Assistant Editor Warren Spector, Steve Jackson, and I sent it to typesetting we heaved that same sigh. A little advice about playing it: be sneaky and snoop; remember that you

can't be *too* careful (often, running away is a great idea); and don't play just before you go to sleep.

Horn Tootin'

You may have noticed that this *FG* is bigger than the first two — a whole eight pages bigger. And we weren't far from going up another eight to 60 pages. If things keep going like this *FG 4* should be a 60-pager!

There is a down side to all this: the more pages we print the more articles we need. So keep sending us those good sto-

ries and ideas so we'll have something to fill this growing magazine with besides ads.

Back Issues

The bottom line here is that we are no longer selling back issues of our magazines. Old issues of *Fantasy Gamer*, *Fire and Movement*, and *(The) Space Gamer* will be available at your local gaming/hobby store through The Armory distributors. Now you will be able to peruse back issues before you buy instead of taking our word on how good they are.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Fantasy Gamer

In Issue 4 (Feb./March 1984):

The Quest of Solimar, a multi-player fantasy adventure. It's tough and for high-level characters. The winner gets to be a god!

A combined review of the revised *Bushido* and *Chivalry & Sorcery*;

A review, with designers' notes, of an irreverent new boardgame, *Christians and Lions*;

"Vampire Trap," a new installment in Timothy Zahn's "Whehalken the Djinn Sword" series;

Plus our regular run of capsule reviews, columns, and Murphy's Rules.

Space Gamer

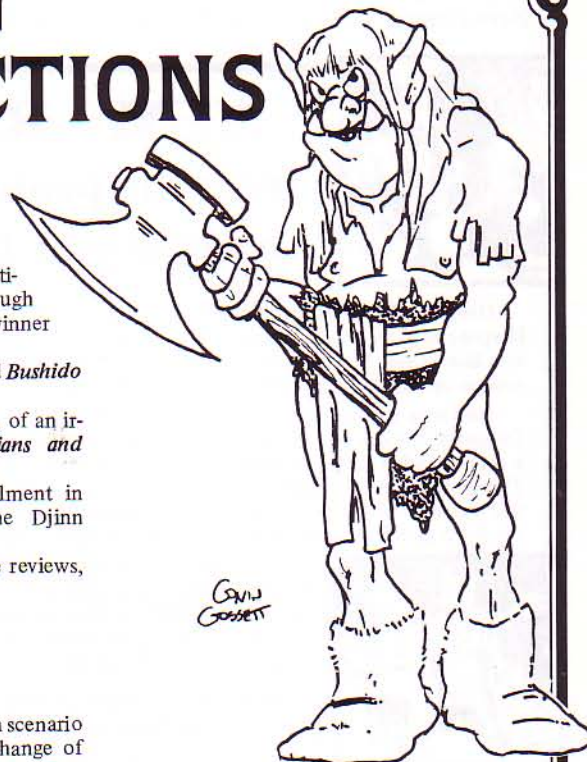
In Issue 67 (Jan./Feb. 1984):

Interdiction Station — a shortish scenario set on a small space station. A change of pace for some of you experienced gamers or a dandy introductory adventure.

Featured reviews of three new secret agent RPGs — *James Bond 007*, *Espionage!*, and *Mercenaries, Spies, and Private Eyes*;

Designer's notes and advanced rules for *Orbit War*;

Capsule reviews of *Silo 14*, *Knight Hawks*, and *Big Rubble*, among others.



Autoduel Quarterly

In Issue 4 (Winter 2033):

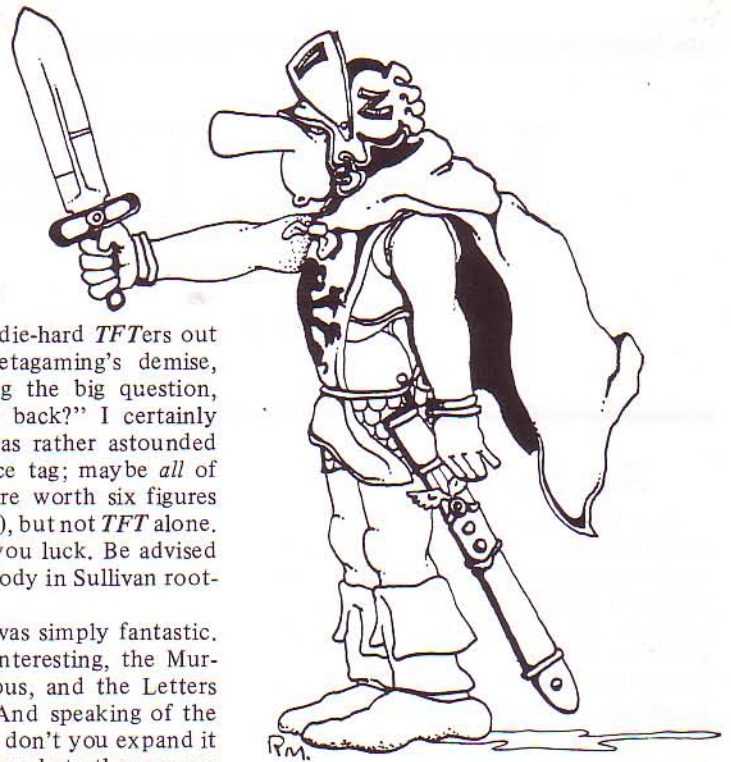
Maniac — autodueling in a shopping mall;

Anti-cyclist tactics;

Trucking economics;

New products from Uncle Albert.

Letters



So at last the long-awaited and much-touted *Fantasy Gamer* makes its historic debut! And the verdict is . . . nice.

I was never overly enthused with the idea of splitting *TSG* into two separate mags, but when it became apparent that you had your collective minds set on it, I decided to give it a try. As expected, *FG* I wasn't quite "up to par" with its sister magazine, but I imagine that's just because the new magazine hasn't quite "found itself" yet. It will, but it will take time.

The articles in *FG*'s premier issue were, for the most part, quite interesting. I was especially pleased with the "Useless Table Contest Results." The Telephone Answer Table had me rolling on the floor! I also rather liked *Slasher Flick* — John Carpenter should be proud.

I was very happy to see several columns make the transition from *SG* to *FG*. Murphy's Rules, of course, heads this list, which also includes PBM Update and your News column. Please keep them.

Steve Jackson's editorial was especially

interesting to all us die-hard *TFT*ers out here. Ever since Metagaming's demise, we've all been asking the big question, "Will Jackson get it back?" I certainly hope so, though I was rather astounded by the six-figure price tag; maybe *all* of Metagaming's titles are worth six figures (and that is debatable), but not *TFT* alone. At any rate, I wish you luck. Be advised that you have everybody in Sullivan rooting for you.

Space Gamer 64 was simply fantastic. The new Ogres are interesting, the Murphy's Rules uproarious, and the Letters column fascinating. And speaking of the Letters column, why don't you expand it to four pages? Reading what other gamers have to say is one of the best parts of *SG*.

Well, enough said for now. Keep up the good work, and before you know it both *SG* and *FG* will be going monthly . . .

Steve Woodcock
Sullivan, MO

P.S. If that demure little pretty bathing in

the pool on page 32 of *Fantasy Gamer* isn't a Naked Elf Woman, I'll eat my hat. Stop tantalizing us poor gamers! Give us the definitive Cardboard Heroes: Set XXX — Naked Elf Women!!

Thanks for the compliments, Steve. For those of you interested, there are more "Useless Tables" in SG 66. As for expanding the Letters column, often we don't have enough to fill what space we do have — hint, hint.

Naked Elf Woman, what Naked Elf Woman?

—CF

One night at the Gaming Club . . . Well, John runs an *AD&D* campaign, and Rick GMs a *Traveller* campaign, and Fred . . . well, Fred runs a combination of *Car Wars* and *Call of Cthulhu*.

I shuddered. That combination was . . . indescribably horrible.

After reading of SJ Games' intention to put out a supplement combining *Car Wars* and *Champions* (which my friends tell me works quite well), I started thinking about other combinations of dissimilar games. So I have come up with the following:

Cars of Cthulhu

A combination of *Car Wars* and *Call of Cthulhu*.

All right. You see a horrid monster in the armored van aiming a machine gun at you. What do you do?

I ready my Elder Sign launcher . . .

Or how about . . .

Trains of Cthulhu

A combination of *Call of Cthulhu* and *Rail Baron*.

Or even . . .



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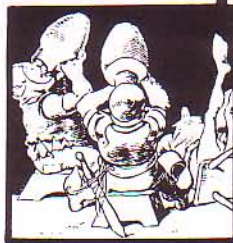
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Bunnies of Cthulhu

Call of Cthulhu meets Bunnies and Burrows.

We first suspected Fluffy of being a minion of Cthulhu when he started to grow the tentacles...

Along those lines...

Nuclear Bunnies and Burrows

Bunnies and Burrows crossed with Nuclear War.

O.K., I try to sneak into the opposing Burrow...

Oh, too bad! You get hit with a two-megaton warhead. Well, draw up new characters...

Cars and Bunnies

A combination of Car Wars and Bunnies and Burrows. Also known as Squash.

Cthulhuball

Cruz is going back, back... Oh, too bad! An indescribably horrible monster reaches out from the stands and devours Cruz. What a bad break for the Astros. The score is...

The Awful Green Things in the Stew

A combination of The Awful Green Things From Outer Space and Food Fight.

Snot Vampires of Venus

I have no idea what this is a combination of, but it has a good name.

Nuclear Kingmaker

Also known as the Slaughter of the Roses.

Cosmic Experience

Playing Cosmic Encounter while on LSD.

Stomp the Bunnies

A combination of Stomp and Bunnies and Burrows. A game for animal haters.

This is by no means the end of these combinations. Feel free to create your own.

But don't expect me to play them.

Lawrence Person

Austin, TX

Truly warped, Lawrence. Do you have any more? I'm sure other readers do.

-CF

We recently sat down to play your game Slasher Flick (FG 1) and were most disappointed. After several attempts, no player could even come close to winning

with the Bogeyman. Usually the Bogeyman player (with luck) would be more or less even after five turns, but from then on, all the remaining victims are armed and ready to do battle while few, if any, dummy counters remain. Thus, it is easy for them (especially with the help of ranged weapons and charmed lives) to kill the Bogeyman and perhaps lose at most one of their own number. This provides 17 points, while the Bogeyman gains only 10. Since the Bogeyman is now weak and easy to find, he can be killed (or forced to run away), each turn providing the victims with 17 (or at the minimum, 2) points, while the Bogeyman is unable to score any.

Slasher Flick is an intriguing concept. Unfortunately, it fails in the execution. Let's hope that future efforts demonstrate more intelligent playtesting and better attention to balance.

Rick Heli

Unfortunately, the counter mix didn't include nearly enough dummy counters. Make up some of your own - say twenty extra - for the Bogeyman to use; this should make things more difficult for the victims.

-CF

WHERE HE'S GOING by ALLEN VARNEY



Capsule Reviews

Fantasy Gamer reviews fantasy boardgames, role-playing games, computer games, play-by-mail games, and game supplements. We will review any fantasy game if the publisher sends us a copy. We do not guarantee reviews of historical games.

The staff will make reasonable efforts to check reviews for factual accuracy, but opinions expressed by reviewers are not necessarily those of the magazine.

Games and game items for which *Fantasy Gamer* is seeking reviews include *Alluring Alcoves*, *Ardor*, *Aztec*, *Bavenlon*, *Book of Treasure Maps III*, *Brotherhood*, *Brotherhood of the Bolt*, *Chilling Chambers*, *City of the Sacred Flame*, *Compleat Alchemist*, *Compleat Spell Caster*, *Complete Dungeon of the Bear*, *Corsairs of Tallibar*, *Curse of Zanathon*, *Death on the Docks*, *Demon Pit of Caeldo*, *Demons of Dundern*, *The DM's Book of Nasty Tricks*, *Druids of Doom*, *Dungeon Maps*, *Dungeonland*, *The Egyptian Trilogy*, *Elfquest* miniatures, *Endless Plans*, *Gamemaster*, *Gateway to Tekumel*, *Ghoulash*, *RAFM Gilla-worms*, *Harn*, *Haven: Secrets of the Labyrinth*, *Heart of Oak*, *Heroes and Villains*, *KABAL*, *KABAL Dungeon Floor Modules*, *Kamakura*, *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*, *Mines of Keridav*, *Monster Squashes*, *Necromancer*, *Northern Mirkwood*, *The Palladium Role-playing Game*, *Pavis*, *Pirates of Hagrost*, *Plague of Terror*, *Questers*, *Question of Gravity*, *Runes*, *Search for the Lost City*, *Shield Maidens of Sea Rune*, *Society of Sorcery*, *Street of Gems*, *Superior Models Dragon* releases, *Tarantis*, *The Tarot Quest*, *Village of Peddler's Ferry*, *Weapons & Assassins*, *Witches Court Marshes*, *Wizards & Lizards* new releases, *Wondrous Weapons*, *The World of Silverdawn*, *Ysgarth Adventure Pack #1*, *Ysgarth Adventure Pack #2*, *Ysgarth Player & GM Record Sheets*, *Ysgarth Supplement One: Drink the Wine of the Moon*, and *Ysgarth Supplement Two: Creatures Fair and Fell*.

Games and game items for which *Fantasy Gamer* has assigned and received reviews include *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons Monster Manual II*, *Agent of Death*, *Ascent to*

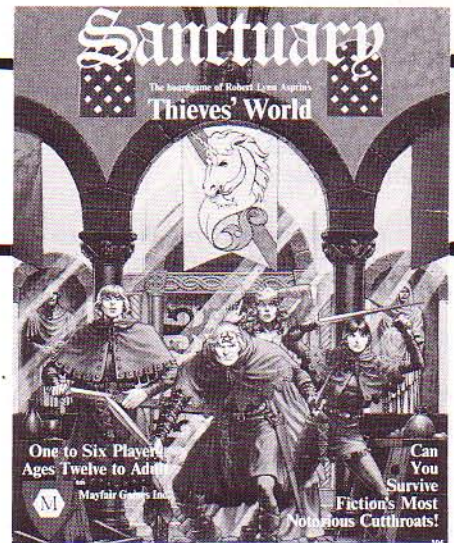
Hell, *Battlemats*, *Big Rubble*, *Broadsides*, revised *Bushido*, *Cards of Power*, revised *Chivalry & Sorcery*, *Christians and Lions*, *Dark Crystal* miniatures, *Dark Horse* miniatures, *Death To Sentanta*, *Endless Quests*, *Feudal Lords*, *The Glastonbury Labyrinth*, *Goblin*, *The Great Owl*, *Judge Dredd*, *Kingdom of the Sidhe*, *Lords of the Dark Horse*, *Masterpiece Miniatures*, *Maze of the Riddling Minotaur*, *Middle Passage*, *Modulettes of ECI*, *Newgrange Reactivated*, *RPG Association*, *Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective*, *Soldier King*, *Stalking the Night Fantastic*, *The Sunken Lands*, *Swordbearer*, *Sword Play!* miniatures, *Terra II*, *Through Dungeons Deep*, *Tome of Mighty Magic*, *Wizardry* (third scenario), and *Zork III*.

Games

SANCTUARY (Mayfair Games); \$17.50. Designed by Bill Fawcett. 20" x 25" full-color mapboard in six interlocking sections, 24-page rulebook, 112 event and rumor cards, 10 pawns, cardboard coins, one ten-sided die, two six-sided dice. One to six players; playing time one to four hours. Published 1982.

Sanctuary is a game of theft and escape based on the *Thieves' World* stories collected by Robert Lynn Asprin. Each player controls a thief who must get to a location in the wide-open city of Sanctuary. Once there, the thief can pull off the heist and return to the Maze and his hidden cache. There are five Hell Hounds, vigilant guardians of the empire, who prowl the streets seeking any ne'er-do-well to haul off to the dungeon. The first thief to get 300 silver pieces safely stashed away in his or her hidden cache wins the game.

On each turn the player rolls three dice (2D6 and 1D10). The thief is moved the total of any two dice and one Hell Hound must be moved the total of the remaining die - usually in the



direction of another player. The game becomes a balancing act between greed (getting back to the Maze with your loot as fast as you can) and spite (sending a Hell Hound to harass some other player). There are event cards, which provide magic items, added money, and other, less desirable occurrences; rumor cards tell where there is money to be scored.

In the advanced game, the players' thieves have different skills which determine success. Rumor cards only give the general vicinity of ill-gotten gains. Once at a location, players roll 1D10 and consult a chart which tells the type of crime required and the place it must be committed.

Sanctuary is a great boardgame. It lends itself superbly to backstabbing as players quickly become double-dealing thieves. Victory can seem very close and then slip through your fingers as you're hauled away to the dungeon. Rules are easily picked up - your non-gamer friends and relations will love this game.

There are only two things I can criticize, albeit mildly. This is not a solo game. The solo scenario (commit a crime and run from the Hell Hounds) is rather boring, especially after playing the regular version. While I applaud the inclusion of a solo scenario, in this case it just doesn't work. Also, place names on the street spaces are difficult to read. But the board as a whole is clean and colorful.

The only way I got my friends to leave late one night was by scheduling another game.

This one's a winner.

-Matthew J. Costello

Supplements

THE FOREST LORDS OF DIHAD (Game Lords, Ltd.); \$6.95. Designed by Richard Meyer. Campaign module for *The Fantasy Trip*. 32-page, 8½" x 11" book with 2-page fold-out color map of Dihad. For FM and one or more players. Playing time indefinite. Published 1982.

Before Metagaming's demise, there were plans to publish a series of campaign modules in conjunction with *Game Lords, Ltd.*, describing an area of Cidri known as the Land Beyond the Mountains. This was the only module released by *Game Lords*; whether or not there will be others in the series remains to be seen.

Like its companion volume, *Warrior Lords of Darok*, *Forest Lords of Dihad* describes in detail one of the four provinces comprising the Land Beyond the Mountains. Just about every-

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thing an FM needs to run a campaign in Dihad is provided. Detailed information regarding Dihad's political structure, history, and the chief economic endeavors of its people are given, along with a detailed description of one typical village that would be useful in almost any campaign. Little factual information is provided on Dihad's major cities per se; this was to have been covered in later modules. Much of Dihad's population consists of hunters and trappers, and fairly detailed rules for pursuing this line of work are given.

Only two formal scenarios are provided for the immediate use of the FM. One is a search for a bear menacing a logging camp, designed primarily for beginning characters; the other embroils the players in a power struggle within Dihad's Wizard's Guild. Several random encounter tables are provided and summarize 34 fighters, thieves, and wizards for the FM's use. Stats for several named NPCs are also given.

A lot of work went into this supplement, and it shows. The physical quality is excellent. The traps and scenarios are believable, as are the major personalities and their motives. The random encounters are generally fresh, intriguing, and good starting points for adventures in themselves. The rules for living in the woodlands of Dihad are the *best* such rules I've found in any FRPG. I haven't found a typo yet.

Glitches do exist. A major personality, Morkash the Desecrator, is mentioned often but never described in detail; presumably he was to be in one of the future releases. Some of the NPCs have spells and disabilities never mentioned in *In the Labyrinth* or *Advanced Wizard*, nor are they always explained within *Forest Lords of Dihad* (examples: the Rapid Growth spell and a curse that randomly teleports its victims).

The color map has no scale that I can find. The price, \$6.95 for 32 pages, seems a bit on the steep side to me. But these are minor irritations. *Forest Lords* is an excellent piece of work, as well as a perfect example of how a fantasy campaign should be set up. FM and players alike would have had a great time adventuring in the Land; only Gamelords knows what will become of it now.

Forest Lords of Dihad is a great background for a TFT campaign. Highly recommended for all TFT FMs (if you can still find it).

—Steve Woodcock

Miniatures

ELVES OF THE SILVAN BROTHERHOOD (Grenadier Models, P.O. Box 305, Springfield, PA 19604); \$9.95. Twelve 25mm-scale lead miniatures with foam-lined box. Sculpted by Andy Chernak. Released 1983.

This new set of fantasy miniatures is part of Grenadier's *Fantasy Lords* line (which replaced their old *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons* figures). This set is especially appreciated because the old *AD&D* line never had a set of elfen figures. Andy Chernak, sculptor of *Elves of the Silvan Brotherhood*, has set a new standard of excellence for Grenadier figures. The new *Fantasy Lords* are as good as any figures produced by any company.

Included in the set are a wizard, three different archers including one mounted on a unicorn, four different types of swordsman, two axemen, and a figure that could pass as an elfen lord or paladin. Since the figures are supposed to represent forest elves, armor is kept to a minimum.

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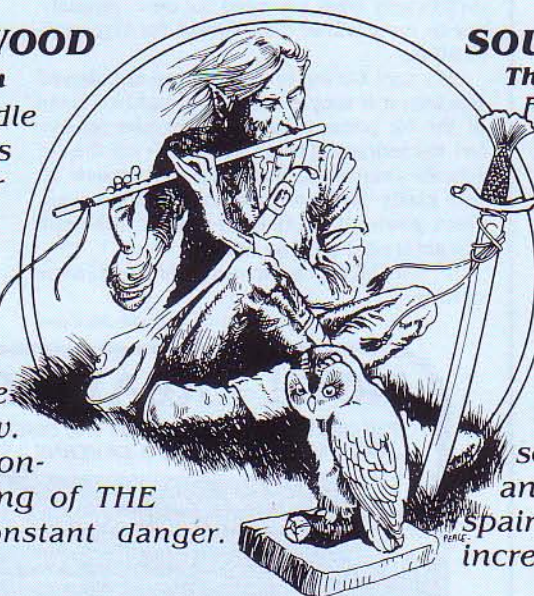
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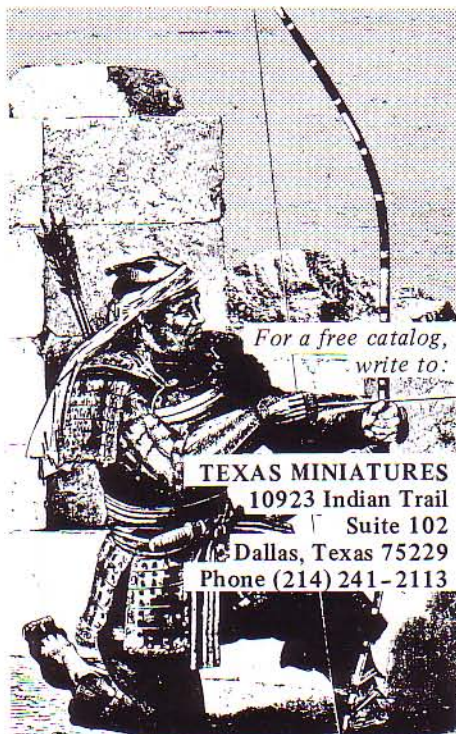
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Most of the figures wear chainmail shirts that are partially visible under their tunics. The paladin figure is armored in full chainmail with an elaborately crested helmet. The mounted archer comes in three parts, and is the only figure in the set that requires assembly. All the clothing and faces are highly detailed, always a Grenadier trademark. The only quailm I have with this set is that there are no figures with spears or some sort of pole-weapon. Most elves that I have seen are equipped with spears, bows, and swords, but Grenadier has thrown in some axemen for variety.

Also included in *Elves of the Silvan Brotherhood* is a scenario that can be adapted to any FRP system. I would have preferred a painting guide, but why criticize an added bonus? The figures are packed in a nice foam-lined box – another Grenadier trademark, one I wish all companies would adopt. This set comes highly recommended!

–Edwin J. Rotandaro

SIEGE EQUIPMENT AND SIEGE CREWS (Rafm Co.). Prices from \$2.50 to \$12.00 per package. 25mm metal miniatures. Released 1983.

Rafm's first set of siege equipment won the H.G. Wells Award for "Best Historical Figure Series." These new releases are every bit as good. From the simple "Greek Fire Projector" to the elaborate trebuchet, they are nicely designed, well detailed, and accurately cast. Almost no flash is visible anywhere, and pieces fit together well, even on the complex machines.

A very welcome addition to the line – answering my only serious criticism of the original releases – is the set of five "Siege Crew" packages. They are, respectively, Dwarves, Goblins, Medievals, Romans, and Greek Successors; each package includes five figures in assorted poses, plus one bit of "scenery" (stacked ammunition, etc.). The "scenery" is different in each set, and the figures themselves are distinct; they did *not*, for instance, put helmets on the Goblins and call them Romans. If one of these five packages isn't exactly what you need for crew, certainly one or more will be close enough for easy modification.

It's hard for me to find any real criticism of this line; it is simply the best of its kind. Some of the big pieces are a trifle expensive for any but the serious collector, but I can't say they're actually overpriced, not when they include all that costly cast lead, *plus* exploded drawings, *plus* a photo of the finished piece to make sure you get it right the first time.

If you like siege equipment, you'll want some of these.

–Steve Jackson

Publications

SHARED FANTASY: ROLE PLAYING GAMES AS SOCIAL WORLDS (The University of Chicago Press); \$22.50. By Gary A. Fine. 289-page book. Published November, 1983.

This is not . . . exactly . . . a book about fantasy gaming. It's a book about *gamers*. Nowhere in here will you find suggestions on how to play well – or how to play at all. *Shared Fantasy* is a study of how fantasy gamers behave in the mysterious microcosms of their gaming groups.

"Big deal," you say. "I've seen that already." Perhaps, but perhaps not. The author of *Shared Fantasy* started as an outsider – a sociologist watching fantasy gamers – and ended as an insider, a respected and expert member of his local gaming circle. The combination viewpoint – a professional people-watcher who became a knowledgeable gamer – has led to a highly informative piece of writing. I would venture to say that Mr. Fine really knows more about you, as a gamer and member of a gaming group, than you do yourself. Some of his observations will amuse you, some will bore you, and some will leave you frustrated.

How do groups acquire new members? How are obnoxious players curbed, reformed, or disposed of? What are the true roles of sex and violence in fantasy gaming, and why are so many gamers male? Are gamers really smarter than average? Do referees cheat? How common is true role-playing? Read and find out.

The book's faults are few. Chief among them is its datedness; Fine's research was done in 1978 and 1979, and (as the preface freely admits) no effort has been made to update it. Gamers in 1983 are pretty much the same as they were in '79, but the world of gaming is bigger and different. Any discussion of the social and economic impact of fantasy gaming from a 1979 viewpoint is nearly meaningless today. Another problem is the academic writing style; it will put some readers off, but this can't be helped.

Who should buy *Shared Fantasy*? Any fantasy game designer, game company executive, or (definitely!) game club officer. This is *the* text on the people you're dealing with. *Empire of the Petal Throne* fans may want it; one whole chapter is dedicated to *EPT* and its designer, M.A.R. Barker, with humorous anecdotes and genuine insights into Barker's own fantasy world. And, finally, any referee or gamer who likes to watch the *people* behind the characters will enjoy *Shared Fantasy*.

–Steve Jackson

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News Briefs

Adventure Gaming Ceases Publication

Manzakk Publishing's *Adventure Gaming* has ceased publication and will probably file for bankruptcy in the immediate future, according to its editor and publisher, Timothy J. Kask.

A completed issue — Vol. 3, No. 4 — was delivered to the magazine's regular printer, where it sat for a few weeks. Shortly before *Origins '83*, the printer informed Kask that it would not print the issue because of previous debts incurred by Manzakk Publishing.

Kask, who made an unsuccessful attempt to sell *Adventure Gaming* after the incident, was left with a backlog of articles. He is now managing a *National Survival Game* dealership in Ohio and plans to continue writing.

Fans of J. D. Webster's "Finieous Fingers," a popular comic strip which appeared in *Adventure Gaming*, will be saddened to learn that their hero is, for the moment, without a home. To be continued . . .

DungeonMaster — Interactive Theater

DungeonMaster is the latest entry in the growing field of interactive theater groups whose "performances" are closer to fantasy role-playing games than to traditional theater. The Chicago-based *DungeonMaster* offers participants a new twist on traditional RPGs, however. A party of adventurers is selected from the audience and then provided with costumes, weapons, spells, and a task to be performed. During the course of an evening's "performance," the players interact with professional actors who portray monsters and assorted "non-player characters." Sets and special effects enhance the mood. Audience members not selected as adventurers can root for the heroes or the monsters as they choose.

DungeonMaster performances feature

a new scenario each week with two shows weekly (Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. and Friday at 11:00 p.m.) at the Beacon St. Theater in Chicago, IL. For information or reservations call (312) 561-7300.

Nova Games Releases

New *Lost Worlds* Booklets

Nova Games, Ltd., which brought you *Ace of Aces* and the *Lost Worlds* series of game booklets (see the featured review starting on page 5 in this issue) has several new *Lost Worlds* offerings ready for shipment or in preparation.

The first of the new booklets depicts a Woman Fighter in scale armor with sword and shield. With ten body points and better speed and agility than previous offerings in the line, a Nova spokesperson reported that the new fighter "tends to rip apart anything slower than she is." Expect to find this one on the shelves in November.

Also ready for shipment in November will be a "very large" troll armed with a club. Despite wearing no armor (other than a cloth vest) this monstrosity is said to be an equal match for any *two* other characters . . . lots of body points.

Other character books in various stages of completion are a Man with a Two-handed Sword (December); a Fighter Mage — Nova Games' first attempt to add magic to the innovative *Lost Worlds* combat system (January); a Wraith — the first magic monster in the series (February); and a Woman with *two* swords (May).

Two-character boxed sets of *Lost Worlds* combatants should be available by the time you read this.

Third *Wizardry* Game Appears

Sir-Tech Software Inc. has introduced "Legacy of Llylgamyn," the third adventure in the *Wizardry* series of RPG-style

games for the Apple II computer. Like the first two installments in the *Wizardry* series, "Legacy of Llylgamyn" features 3-D maze graphics but with a new twist: Sir-Tech has incorporated a "window" system of graphic displays similar to the one used in Apple's new Lisa computer. This allows programmers to incorporate even more information on the CRT screen than *Wizardry* players are used to (which is to say, quite a bit). No hardware modifications are necessary in order to run "Legacy of Llylgamyn" with its "Windo-Wizardry" graphics.

Strategists Club Awards

Recipients of the 1982 Strategists Club Awards were announced at Gen Con 16 in August, 1983. The winners were:

Outstanding Boardgame

G.I. Anvil of Victory
(Avalon Hill Game Co.)

Outstanding Game (Open Category)
Jasmine: The Battle for the Mid-Realm
(Jasmine Publications)

Outstanding Role Playing Game
Star Frontiers
(TSR Inc.)

Outstanding Game Playing Aid
Champions II
(Hero Games)

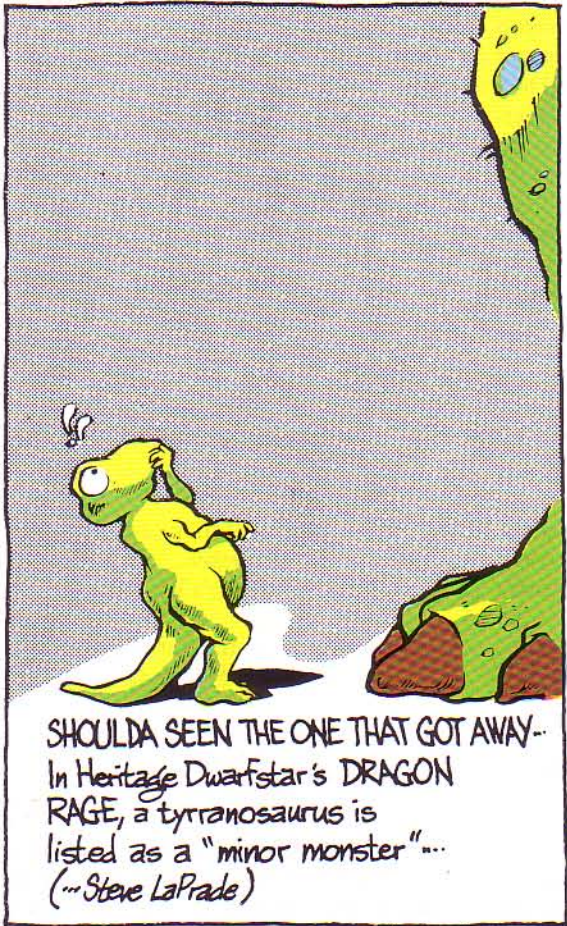
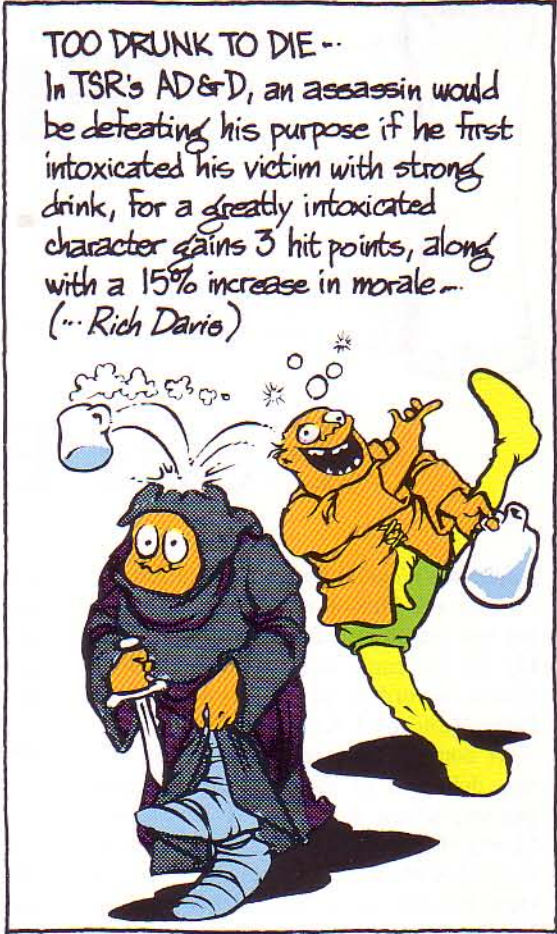
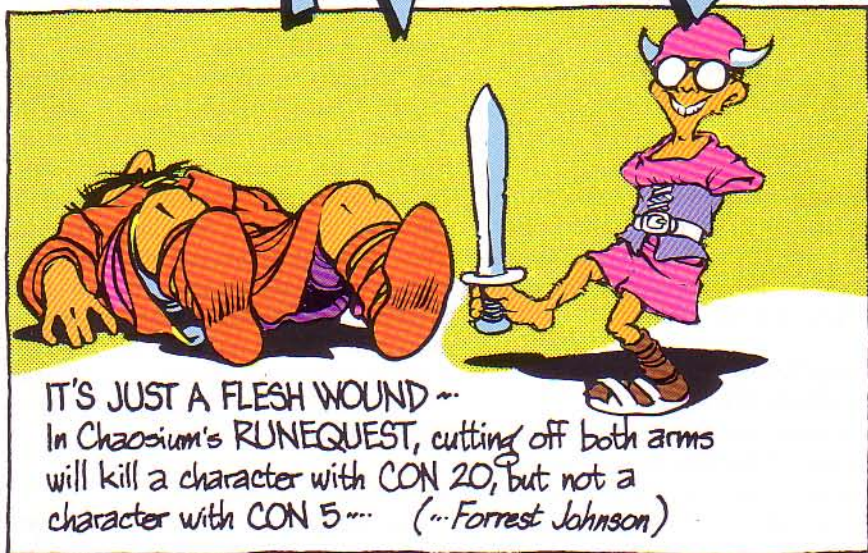
Outstanding Miniatures Rules
Striker
(Game Designer's Workshop)

Outstanding Miniature Figures
Grenadier Models Inc.


Outstanding Gaming Magazine
Dragon
(TSR Inc.)

The Special Service Award was given to Lou Zocchi of Gamescience Inc. for his outstanding support of Gen Con game conventions during the past years.

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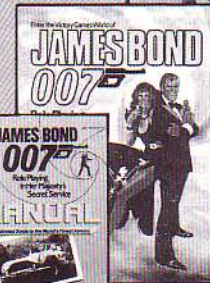
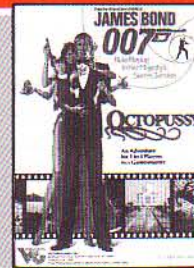
Q MANUAL — With over 150 illustrations, this supplement includes weapons, vehicles and covert devices, plus other items you can use on a mission.

GAMESMASTER PACK — This exciting package is designed expressly for the James Bond 007 Gamesmaster and brings the excitement of all the movies into the home — every day and any day! Characters like Jaws, Odd Job, Felix Leiter, Anya Amasova, and James Bond himself come to life in full-color figures that are used during play.

BASIC GAME — The Basic Game book includes all rules for the James Bond 007 Game. An introductory adventure teaches you the rules while getting right into the action.

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PBM Update:

or, why we're so short this time

PBM Update reports on professionally-moderated play-by-mail games. Notices are monthly. Copy deadline is 60 days previous to the first of the month for the issue in which the notice is to appear. (Deadline for the February issue is December 1.) All copy should be typed and double-spaced. Notices should not exceed 200 words in length. FG reserves the right to edit copy as necessary.

*PBM Update is a little short this issue. The problem is that Schubel & Son is the only company sending us update information on fantasy PBMs. We're well-stocked on modern-day and space-oriented play-by-mail game (check any issue of *Space Gamer* and you'll see what we mean), but when it comes to fantasy games . . . nothing.*

Here's what you can do to help: If you work for an outfit which runs fantasy-oriented play-by-mail games, send us periodic updates of events in your fantasy worlds. The format for submissions is described above. If you play a fantasy PBM, convince your gamemaster to send us update info . . . or write us yourself!

We want to fill this space as badly as you do, but we need your help. What do you say?

— Schubel & Son —

The Tribes of Crane

Crane I: The forces of the Dark Union, under the burden of fighting costly, large-scale campaigns at Trantor, the North Pole, the Blue Forest and around the city of Quid, appear to have collapsed. In addition, there appear to be major disputes within the Dark Union hierarchy that have factionalized the command structure. In fact, it appears that the entire Dark Union empire has collapsed and ceased to function as armies retreat or disband. With the collapse of the Dark Union, the forces loyal to the High Kinglord can concentrate on eliminating the rebel Blood Trust and the Cult (who recently appointed a new Viceroy).

Shortly after the capture of the city of Olla, First Empire forces, personally led by Khan Sigma Khan, attempted to enslave the city's entire population (over 3,500 people). Large-scale riots erupted and heavy street fighting ensued. The riots were ruthlessly crushed by the First Empire warriors of the 1st and 13th Fax Divisions and the entire city population was placed in chains and removed from the city. Their eventual fate is unknown.

Crane II: The war between the Halton Factor (with their Tatinn Alliance allies) against the Western Alliance of Tribes appears to be reaching a climax. After an extended blockade, a powerful Halton Factor army laid siege to the city of Yang while the Tatinn laid siege to the capitol city of the Western Alliance of Tribes — WAOT.

In the siege of Yang, the Halton Factor was able to breach the city walls, but powerful attacks by the defending forces and a relief column successfully drove them from the city. Much of the Halton Factor army was destroyed in a great victory for the Western Alliance of Tribes.

At the siege of WAOT, the Western Alliance was not so lucky, as a powerful Tatinn army rolled over the city's formidable defenses to capture the city. With the fall of WAOT, Tatinn forces are expected to reinforce the Halton Factor for a second siege of Yang.

In eastern Crane, the port city of Cas was the site of a widespread revolt and uprising that eventually overthrew the city leadership of Sea Shaman Edmond and Councilman Cybor. The revolts resulted from gross negligence on the part of the city leaders. For nearly two years, the city had been closed to trade, greatly angering the city merchants. In addition, vital city services were neglected and city defenses were not maintained despite a well-stocked city treasury. With the success of the revolt, Cas, one of the most important trade centers in the area, is once again open.

Convention Calendar

January 6-8: DRAGONCON. SF/F gaming con. Portland, ME. Contact Michael Ayotte, Dragon's Keep, 93 Ocean St., South Portland, ME 04106.

January 13-15: CRUSADER CON III. Gaming con. Contact The Auraria Gamer's Club, Metropolitan State College, 1006 11th St., Box 39, Denver, CO 80204.

January 13-15: ESOTERICON. A con of the Esoteric Arts. Contact Anne Pinzow, P.O. Box 290, Monsey, NY 10952-0290.

February 4: EMERALD CONQUEST '84. Board-games, miniatures, and role-playing. Contact EmCon '84, 2180 Ohio, Eugene, OR 97402.

*February 10-12: WARCON '84. Role-playing, boardgaming, miniatures. Contact Warcon '84, MSC-SPO, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77840.

February 17-19: BOSKONE XXI. SF con. Contact Boskone XXI, NESFA, P.O. Box G, MIT Branch Station, Cambridge, MA 02139.

February 17-20: DUNDRACON VIII. (Gee, we'd love to tell you what is going on at this con, but the sponsors forgot to tell us.) Contact DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

February 24-26: WISCON 8. SF con. Contact SF-3, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624.

February 25-26: GAME FAIRE '84. Gaming con. Contact Shannon Ahern, Book and Game Company, West 621 Mallon, Spokane, WA 99202, or call (509) 325-3358.

March 3-4: GOLD CON. Role-playing/wargaming con. Contact John Dunn, Gold Con, North Campus Library, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach, FL 33066.

*March 9-11: COASTCON '84. SF and gaming con. Contact CoastCon '84, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533.

March 16-18: LUNACON '84. SF con. Contact LUNACON '84, P.O. Box 779, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

March 16-18: TRI-CON II. SF and gaming con. Contact North Carolina State Gaming Society, P.O. Box 37122, Raleigh, NC 27627.

March 17-18: CENTCON 84. Gaming con. Contact Chairman Ronald E. Vincent, 471 Commonwealth Ave., New Britain, CT 06053.

*March 29-April 1: AGGIECON XV. SF con. Contact AggieCon XV, P.O. Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844.

SJ GAMES and FG will be attending the conventions marked above with asterisks.

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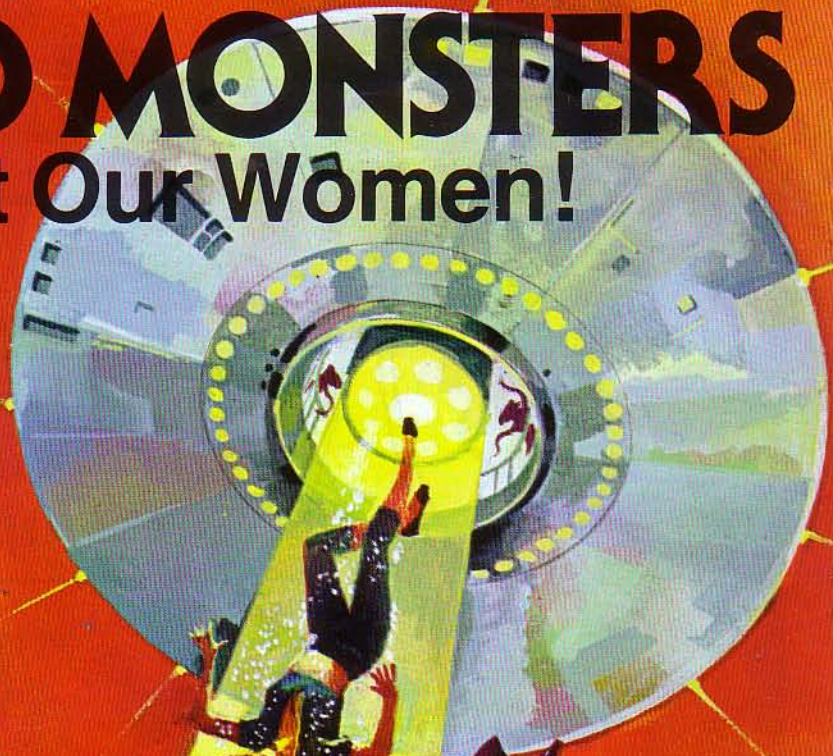
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