



# Lovecraftian Supers

## Using the Mythos to Power Your Metahumans

by Joshua Marquart & Chad Underkoffler

What unique benefit does combining the Cthulhu Mythos with the Supers genre grant?

Many gaming super-hero worlds have a common basis from which the majority of superpowers spring. *Aberrant* Novas have an M-R node, *Brave New World* Deltas survived trauma, Talents from *Godlike* alter reality by will alone, *GURPS Wild Cards* aces and jokers are affected by xenovirus Takis-A, heroes from the DC universe often have a metagene, and many folks from the Marvel world claim mutant DNA as their origin. A common basis serves as a single "point of departure" from the Real World, and helps make the existence of these strange abilities consistent. This article chooses to use the Cthulhu Mythos as the point of departure for superpowers; in a "Lovecraftian Supers" game, the possibilities for tying the abilities and motives of a character to the Mythos are endless.

Clearly, neither the Mythos nor the supers genre can survive unchanged when mixed; they must alloy into something new. With careful (and quiet) miscegenation between Lovecraft's ideas and common comic book tropes, only players well versed in the Mythos may twig to the inspiration. Of course, some players may want to know about this alloy up-front, so that they can embrace it. GMs should figure out whether or not their groups will appreciate or despise the concept before they decide about disclosure.

Rather than plunking the Mythos down into a super-hero campaign by having the PCs track down some cultists and slug it out, incorporation of Lovecraftian ideas should be subtle, insidious, corrupting, and at the core of the setting. Remember, it's a point of a departure, not an "Enemy of the Month." The squamous and rugose concepts of Lovecraft and his collaborators serve as an enabler for superpowers, not an obstacle.

A character need not be a full-fledged "Mythos beast," though this is not out of the question. An important concern is that most who gain strange powers in Lovecraft become

corrupted, or outright evil; to act otherwise would be a departure from the "accepted" Mythos norm. However, to become inherently evil would be against the super-hero norm and rightly terrify the humanity heroes are sworn to protect. Perhaps true heroism in such a setting is the PC's individual personal sacrifice: as a being of strong will and ideals, he suffers a slow decline for the good of all.

## Sanity Loss

When integrating the Mythos into a super-hero setting, the theme of insanity brought on through knowledge of -- and exposure to -- the Secret Truths of the Cosmos should be reduced. The incredulous sensation of seeing a flying man should (at the most) be a minor shock, especially if fly-bys happen daily. Furthermore, a reasonable response to the sight of a flying man could very well be wonder rather than terror. Considering that *being* the flying man would be even more detrimental to sanity, sanity loss from Mythos-derived power usage should be reduced, if not eliminated.

Loss of mental stability could become more situational, restricted to horrific/shocking encounters and revelations only, and the *Call of Cthulhu* rules for minor or no sanity loss on repeat encounters should be enforced. On the other hand, it might not be a bad idea to allow minor sanity loss for seeing superpowers in use, at least until it becomes commonplace. In this instance, a super would be forced to hide his ability, use it secretly, or not use it at all. This sort of covert super-humanity would be a great basis for a "crypto-super" campaign, along the lines of Warren Ellis' *Planetary* or even M. Night Shyamalan's *Unbreakable*.

A GM should select between different levels of sanity deterioration for super-abilities observed or utilized:

- *Mild*: While not raving loons, supers tend to be loopier than the average joe. After all, one has to be a little cracked to dress up like a creature of the night or a circus performer. A powered individual is more neurotic than the most folks: haunted by nightmares, susceptible to amnesia, or wracked by odd compulsions. In cases of mind control or severe head trauma, a super's mentality could regress to that of his empowering Mythos creature or master.
- *Medium*: The heroic will of the super keeps his dark side in check. However, he must be eternally vigilant, so as not to slip and fall from the moral high ground. His mantra is, "With great power comes great responsibility," for it would be *so* easy to let go and run amok among fragile humanity.
- *Mighty*: It's a losing battle. Constant use of superpowers pushes the hero to the brink of insanity, yet he must brave personal destruction for those who cannot protect themselves. Each day is a scrabbling slide into madness as the hero pursues his or her muscular altruism. The little victories keep him sane, but one significant

failure could send him over the edge.

Of course, system-specific solutions to sanity loss may already exist; *Aberrant's* "Taint" mechanic could easily reflect being co-opted by dark, nameless forces.

## Super-Normals and Gadgeteers

*December 19th, 2002 -- I had the dream again, in the place of the customary nightmares. Cyclopean buildings blocking out what little sky is visible, perception altered, twisted, not my own . . . looking down upon myself and I'm not me . . . Same details noted in previous entries. Also have discovered discrepancies in my youth, during my times abroad, unaccounted expenditures I don't recall making. And my manservant will not enter the "new" (to me, but obviously much used) chamber in the cave. He has expressed concern over my questions, explaining that I specifically requested secrecy and obedience regarding these matters when they were made. I have no recollection of these requests. Those missing days are haunting me. Meditation has been no help. It's beginning to affect my performance. Desperation may require regression aid from the Martian, an option I'm reluctant to pursue.*

A hero with no superpowers is similar to a typical *Call of Cthulhu* investigator, but usually rather more capable. They may (or may not) have encountered the Mythos through adventuring, investigation, supernatural encounters, possessed relatives, bestowal of estate, etc. All the cliché "PCs meet the Mythos" situations are applicable, but it's not every wealthy industrialist who can invent a flying suit of armor equipped with force-fields and repulsor rays, become the World's Greatest Detective, or accurately shoot (aerodynamically unsound) trick arrows. These heroes might rationalize their abilities as a result of hard work, dedication, and inspiration, when it's possible these talents come from far beyond mortal understanding.

## Yithians

The Great Race of Yith consists of mental time-travelers who hijack Earthly bodies for modern day excursions. Dwelling in the distant past, Yithians have the ability to contact and swap minds with beings in other times. They are particularly interested in human history. In most cases, the memories of the swapping experience are removed through mechanically aided mind erasure.

Years before a PC hero became "super," a member of the Great Race could have swapped

minds with him. Since Yithians value intelligence above all else, abducted heroes would have high intellects. While mentally trapped in the past, the PC might have learned alien technological secrets as he related world events to his cone-shaped captors. Meanwhile, his own body was possessed by the Yithians and used for exploring his world, unearthing things best left buried, or performing unspeakable deeds. Once the hero's mind returned to the present, memories of the erased interrogation may have eventually resurfaced on their own (or through hypnotic regression). The hero probably has confusing visions of his experience, which become confabulated with dreams, pre-abduction memories, and other mental debris. His abused mind produces weird blueprints, theories, concepts, and ideas he believes to be his own. His crime-fighting devices might be based on misremembered Yithian designs, such as powerful Lightning Guns and time-slowing Stasis Cubes -- super-technology easily recognized by Yithians, and strangely familiar to other abductees. Agents of the Great Race could eventually come calling to eliminate, recruit, or even repossess the faulty erasure.

A hero may be allowed to keep his memories if he becomes an agent for the Great Race. This job entails performing the occasional secret -- often illegal -- mission. The Great Race is also not above funding eccentric researchers (using the bodies and resources of the time-swapped) for justice or villainy . . . someone has to pay for henchmen salaries and 401k's. Airplanes that convert into submarines don't come cheap, either.

With such resources, the Great Race may attempt an experiment of their own: vigilantism. They desire experiences: what better way to learn about supers than to take their places, swapping minds with known heroes (and/or villains) or even inventing their own using a possessed body? Yithians using high technology or the occasional incantation can easily simulate superpowers. Characters with no prior motivation towards vigilantism or arch-criminality might unexpectedly reverse gears under mental possession. A hero's (possibly unknown to even him!) dark secret may come to light as psychics reveal him as a human possessed by an alien mind, or a character may awaken one day as a physically fit millionaire playboy with ownership of a fully equipped crime cave . . . and no memory of the last five years.

## Psychics

" . . . clawed at the steel walls as though I could tear them with my fingers, head pounding, body raked by my own nails, blood everywhere. Jean tried to stop me, but against my will I broadcasted to her what I heard: the horrible song, the terrible cry, the mocking chant, repeated over and over through that thrice-damned mutant detection machine! Tekeli-li! Tekeli-li!"

Psychic power is prevalent in the Mythos; legend has it that the secret to unlocking

telepathy is hidden in the *Necronomicon*. Psychic ability can be used to detect the alien mental patterns of Mythos entities. Psychics and non-psychics alike are subject to the telepathic influences of the Great Old Ones, especially Cthulhu, whose telepathy and dreams work to provide him with human worshippers. R'lyeh's -- and consequentially, Cthulhu's -- rising in the 1920s drove psychic sensitives insane and may have triggered latent powers in others; this event could be repeated when the stars are right and the waters recede, no longer blocking Cthulhu's dreaming. The deep-dwelling Cthonians are telepathic, and have controlled humans in the past. The lost underground Native American tribe known as the K'n'Yan are purported to own the secret of telepathy (as well as immortality and immaterialism, or the ability to pass through solid objects). Supers who are psychic could gain their abilities from any of these groups directly (by right of birth or gift) or indirectly (by theft or accident).

## Insects from Shaggai

Shan, the Insects from Shaggai, have been known to share visions of their history and technology with the human hosts they possess. The pigeon-sized Insects ethereally fly into human brains, where they can influence thoughts, plant impulses, and evoke visions; mostly, however, they crawl around in the victim's mind at night, savoring fears and neuroses. This process may trigger a host's latent psychic ability. Perhaps all telepaths are (or have previously been) possessed by Shan! An unsuspecting Shan overpowered by a powerful mind could provide the host with numerous abilities, including knowledge of their dark science and the other strange powers of the Shan, such as their neurowhips. The best-known remedy to rid oneself of a possessing Shan is exposing it to sunlight via trepanation, itself long recognized in some subcultures as a way to increase brain performance and open the third mystical eye.

## The Dreamlands

*The young boy descends warily into the darkness, all sounds of the subway station trailing off into the distance. He counts seventy steps until the flickering torchlight plays across his vision, revealing two harshly named men. They guide him, not towards the Steps of Deeper Slumber, but through the Cavern of Flame, past the prisons of the Great Old Ones, to the Rock of Eternity. High above the Great Abyss, wizened Nodens calls for an aide to his vigilance. Fate foretold that the child's dreaming essence would harbor the responsibility of the Outer Gods: vigor and fortitude harvested from **Shub-Niggurath**, with raw power and forgotten knowledge of the idiot god **Azathoth** bound by the Elder Signs of **Mnar**, all channeled through the secret name. Bathed in the crystallizing red-gold light of Hypnos himself, the young marvel swears to captain the fight against the machinations of the*

*Great Old Ones, thus forever altering his waking destiny.*

Certain psychically powerful sleepers can naturally access an alternate dimension of sleep known as the Earth's Dreamlands. The Dreamlands enforce a "medieval/renaissance" level of technology across the land: any invention not in existence and in general use for over 500 years in current planetary culture (each planet has its own Dreamlands) cannot exist. Dreamers may live in different circumstances in the Dreamlands than the waking world: a beggar's dream self may be a mighty king, while a CEO is a galley slave. Though the young always have special access to these fields beyond what we know, powerful narcotics, spells, and certain artifacts allow adult waking-worlders to enter the Dreamlands.

The Dreamlands are malleable; dreamers can alter their reality, creating weapons, castles . . . whatever they need through willpower alone. Though never noted in the Lovecraftian canon, a dreamer might even imbue his dream self with superpowers or produce potent mystic artifacts. But without the ability to transfer such things to the waking world, his empowered form and magical trinkets are stuck in the realm of sleep. An amazing ability would be to bring one's dream self into the waking world, or perhaps to harness the power to alter reality as if it were the Dreamlands! The Crystallizer of Dreams, an artifact guarded by the Elder God Hypnos, may permit this ability.

Peripherally, when a powerful dreamer dies, he may end up permanently in the Dreamlands. What better way to bring back a long dead adversary or noble hero than to have him reappear as a manifestation of pure dream? (Hector Hall, white courtesy phone . . . )

## **Elder Gods**

Interaction with Greek, Norse, and other pantheons is commonplace in super-hero comics. Demigods of these have even joined various super-teams. Why can't the divinities of the Cthulhu Mythos join the fun? Within the Mythos, the entities most benevolent towards humanity are known as the Elder Gods, who are best visited through the Dreamlands. Supplicated with rituals and sacrifice, they may provide favors such as the loan of a fantastic beast or a bestowal of mythical power.

The three most prominent Elder Gods of the Mythos are:

1. Nodens, the Great Lord of the Abyss and former head of the Celtic pantheon, who wields an oaken staff, rides in a seashell chariot drawn by fantasy beasts, and commands the nightgaunts.
2. Hypnos, the Greek god of sleep.
3. Bast, feline Egyptian goddess of pleasure and cats, who has mated with humans to

create demigods. Her worshippers can speak with cats, and she may allow the temporary transfer of a human soul to a feline body.

All could provide favors to humans in the form of appropriately themed superpowers.

## Spellcasters

"That is not dead which can eternal lie,  
And with strange eons even death may die.  
Yet ruthless Fate is forever new,  
Order's Lord, the Dread Na[indecipherable]"  
-- from the writings of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred

Witchcraft, demonology, voodoo, and alchemy are traditional and dangerous methods of spell casting in the Mythos. Sorcerers rely on musty tomes, cryptic incantations, and obscure rituals for their spells, with the inevitable corruption from continued exposure to Mythos magic. In addition to the erosion of sanity, the consequences of corruption are generally derived from the sorts of conjuring performed. While uncommon in modern times, true wizards safe from corruption are prevalent in both ancient Hyperborea (the age of Conan) and the future continent of Zothique. Spellcasting heroes could be time-tossed wizards from either period; scions of these incorruptible traditions, here to redeem a fallen magical world; or driven mystics, throwing themselves into the breach to fight fire with fire.

## Standard Horror Tropes

The more "humanoid" Mythos beings are likely candidates for super-heroism right out of the box. Witches, ghosts, vampires, werewolves, and even zombies can double as PCs. Each comes with a pre-selected suite of powers and weaknesses. Slap tights and a mask on a typical horror monster, and how many residents of a super-hero continuum could tell the difference? If creepy old Vlad dropped the formalwear and the Old Country accent, tossed on a slouch hat, covered his face with a scarf, broke out a pair of .45s, and went out to fight crime, few would realize his true nature.

## Mythos Ghouls

While similar to werewolves, the canine Mythos ghouls are quite different and powerful. They can burrow through earth, travel to and from the Dreamlands through hidden tunnels, and access the memories and assume the physical form of anyone whose brain they eat. Perhaps a villain's return from the grave is due to a ghoul chowing down on his tasty mad scientist mind and being overwhelmed by the villain's personality. With

exposure to the right (wrong?) artifacts or rituals, humans can even become ghouls. A hero thus exposed and unwillingly transformed could be a challenging character with interesting powers: strength, durability, tunneling, extra-dimensional travel, and a distasteful but rewarding dirty secret. A ghoul's only weakness is a quirky fear of the ankh, though many depend on the flesh of decomposing humans for survival.

## Mythos Zombies

Mythos zombies are usually not mindless flesh-eaters; they remember the past as it exists in what's left of their deteriorating brains, and are unable to feel much in the way of physical pain. The Great Old One known as Glaaki impales its potential servants with a spike, creating an undead being who must follow the beast's whim, but who shares Glaaki's expansive knowledge. Servants of Glaaki look normal except for a livid spot where they were speared. After 60 years, a Servant exposed to sunlight will be corrupted by the "green decay" and destroyed within hours. Zombies reanimated through scientific means are injected with special formulae and continue to "survive" even after "essential" parts, such as a head, are removed (the scientific reanimation injection might be derived from Glaaki's venom, or may be a totally different formulation with other vulnerabilities). A zombie hero with great willpower might be able to resist the commands of its master, Glaaki. Also, a cult in Temphill, England, attempted to reanimate the dead for mating purposes, in order to develop supernaturally-powered offspring; heroes or villains alike may hail from this bloodline.

## Our Solar System

*Analysis indicates fungal subject had potential for development into indistinguishable humanoid simulacrum. Though lacking chlorophyll, unknown process for hyper-photosynthesis is evident, theoretically granting advanced abilities far beyond mortal men. Subject reacts unfavorably to non-UV light and physically degrades upon exposure to radiation of unknown ore discovered near crash site. Subject capable of processing knowledge quickly. Cranial area aligned for possible receipt of telepathic commands. Recommendation: location of additional "birthing matrixes" high priority. Corporation retrieval teams sent to Colorado, Oklahoma, and Kansas.*

--LL

In the comics, interplanetary aliens are customarily humanoid. According to the Mythos, humans were actually a byproduct of Elder Thing experimentation, so human-like space aliens are generally out of bounds. This could foil most of standard star-born super-hero concepts. While non-humanoid super-heroes are not unknown, they are extraordinarily



rare, and could be more of a challenge as a PC than player or GM wishes to deal with.

Mythos Alien motives are unpredictable, but popular choices seem to be conquest, experimentation, exploration, and invasion. Many Mythos races have already conquered portions of the galaxy, including many parts of our solar system. Mi-Go invaders have taken over Pluto (a.k.a. Yuggoth) as well as areas of the dark side of the moon. Star-travelling pyramids carrying the Shan penetrated Uranus (L'gh'yx) before arriving on Earth. The Great Old Ones Atlach-Nacha and Tsathoggua originally hail from Saturn (Cykranosh). Even our asteroid belt was formed when a meteoric Seed of Azathoth burrowed into Thyoph and spawned, destroying the planet. Renegades or refugees from any of these conquered or destroyed worlds could make serviceable space-based super-hero concepts.

Floating deep in the reaches of space lies the Great Library of Celaeno, a repository of forbidden knowledge. It houses millions of alien documents of potentially limitless power, but is defended by a never-resting guardian who ensures no book is ever checked out. A person studying there could potentially emerge with limitless power (and a case of sanity loss).

## Mi-Go

Technologically advanced, emotionless, interstellar fungi, the Mi-Go have been visiting Earth to mine certain exotic minerals not found in other parts of the universe. Their mastery of eldritch alloys (to create their technology), and arcane mathematical equations (forming a representation for rituals), make the Mi-Go modern-day successors to the Elder Things. They continue their fell experiments, especially on humans that get in the way of their mining. Mi-Go equipment includes biotechnological armor that grafts itself to the user as an alien symbiote, freezing cloud projectors, jolting electric guns, and the notorious brain cylinders used for interstellar human transportation.

Made from the Tok'l metal of Yuggoth, brain cylinders/canisters contain certain liquids to allow the brain to function without a body. Mechanical hookups to the cylinder allow the brain to interact with its environment. What self-respecting robotic hero wouldn't go a little bonkers when he discovers his brain cylinder was designed by a space-faring race of quasi-dimensional mushrooms? Pagan Publishing's *Delta Green* sourcebooks provide an excellent modern day reinterpretation of Mi-Go and their abuse of biotechnology that would present a challenge to any super-hero.

## Serpent People

The race of serpent people has dwindled on Earth. They are reclusive, albeit powerful,

hermits. Talented scientists and sorcerers, they worship Yig, the Great Old One. They have often performed genetic experimentation, and have a talent for creating poisons and other alchemical serums. Clever at disguising themselves, they might easily walk among humans. An influential serpent person would make the perfect leader of a secret terrorist organization or the eccentric mentor for a world-changing super team. Or a particularly brash serpent person could duke it out in the front lines for justice or villainy, heir to a dying race.

## Deep Ones

*"By the hoary hosts of shoggoths!"*

The Deep Ones are amphibious marine humanoids, with super-strength and a minor communicative telepathic ability, devoted to the worship of Cthulhu. They crossbreed with humans to replenish their bloodline. Hybrids look normal, except for a goggle-eyed, fish-faced, in-bred "Innsmouth look" that they develop over time. Most eventually hear a calling to the sea, and (d)evolve into true Deep Ones. A rogue hybrid can make a convincing aquatic adventurer, so long as it has the will to fight the instinctive calling to serve Mother Hydra and Father Dagon.

Other submarine heroes and would-be heirs to Atlantis should take heed to avoid the cities of the violent Deep Ones, who have sunk mighty ships to defend their territory. They should also steer clear of other underwater locales like R'lyeh (where dwell Cthulhu and Zoth-Ommog) and Mu (the ruins of which trap Ghatanothoa). Squamous Rex!

## Shoggoth

Originally created as servitors for the Elder Things, the black protoplasmic shoggoths can be commanded by Deep One priests using specialized telepathic rituals. Rarely found abroad, most shoggoths guard hidden vaults, though one haunts the Sargasso Sea. Though normally brutal and idiotic, some shoggoths develop clever intelligence, and have mastered control of their bodies to take the form of men. These superior types may change their form as they please, though hiding their many maws presents a challenge. A heroic shoggoth of the intelligent sort, freed from Deep One command by a botched ritual, could be a challenging selection for a super-being PC.

## Independent Beings

Many independent beings of the Mythos are also excellent sources of super-ability. Mutation from a Colour out of Space could produce sentient plant-life, or the ability to drain life force. The worship of Yidhra and exposure to her presence can cause a human to

develop bestial traits. Exposure to the blue ichor from the Hounds of Tindalos could provide cross-dimensional movement through angles, much like a Hound itself, though this will likely draw attention from the soul-eating hunters.

## Great Old Ones

*Iä Nyarlothotep, Crawling Chaos, messenger of the Outer Gods.*

*Iä Nyarlothotep, the thousand formed, embodiment of power cosmic.*

*Iä Nyarlothotep, spawn of Xyen-La, world of seven suns.*

*Iä Nyarlothotep, Surfer in Silver, herald to Azathi Galactic.*

*Iä Nyarlothotep, the Blackened Racer, taker of souls.*

*Iä Nyarlothotep, Zhaq-Kyrvi ftagn.*

The Great Old Ones were once possibly Elder Gods, cast down for their dark magic practices by the Elder Gods themselves and imprisoned on Earth (and other planets). They will eventually awaken and free themselves to again challenge the Elder Gods when the stars are right. Entering the service of a Great Old One could result in the bestowal of unique traits and abilities, but at the cost of humanity. Normally favors are granted only to high priests or those with special devotion, but Great Old Ones can have their own motives for presenting any worshipper with a "gift," such as an attempt to weaken the walls of their prison.

Immortality is the usual gift, though abilities akin to those of the supplicated are not out of question . . . at a cost. The reptilian Yig may bestow poison resistance, serpentine qualities, and the ability to communicate with snakes to his followers, but will send his serpents to slay those who cross him. The Wendigo and others of Ithaqua's race can transform humans into servants who can generate and endure cold and fly through space, but this usually requires the practice of cannibalism. Though trapped by guardian spirits in western Germany, worshippers can perform rites to access the power and vitality of Cyaegha; however, these devotees will perish the day it is freed as it exacts vengeance for its entrapment. Appeals to Hastur could provide the caller a Byakhee, a clawed and winged interstellar-travelling beast, as a steed. Nyogtha has taught spells to his followers in exchange for sacrifices or contributions of personal mystical energies. The faithful who invoke Tsathoggua could also be given spells or even magical gates. A fire-casting super may be directly channeling his power from the flaming Cthugha itself.

Though not regarded as canon Mythos by many, a gift of superpowers could result from an encounter with Kthanid (the "reverse-Cthulhu") or Yad-Thaddag (the "good" Yog Sothoth). Faced with the choice between something sanity-strippingly evil and something mind-blastingly good, which would you choose?

## Outer Gods

The Outer Gods have been referred to as "cosmic forces personified." Azathoth, the Idiot Chaos, represents radiation; Shub Niggurth, the Black Goat with a Thousand Young, is the Outer God of fertility; Daoloth, the Render of the Veils, perception; and Yog Sothoth, the Lurker at the Threshold, commands time and space. Worshippers, even inadvertent ones, might be granted portions of an Outer God's power. For example, Azathoth insanity could produce a fever lending great strength and dedication; the milk of Shub Niggurth has been known to physically enhance endurance and mutate the body; Daoloth's favored are blessed with pre- and post-cognitive ability as well as cross-dimensional travel; harnessing the power of Yog Sothoth could allow one to warp space and travel through time. Of course, none of these abilities would be without their cost: with great power, comes great risk of insanity.

The Outer God Nyarlothotep is a being of a thousand forms. He is cosmically powerful, in a class with Darkseid, Mephisto, Loki, Thanatos, and other such four-color entities. The Mighty Messenger of Azathoth's court, he has been theorized as the personification of their telepathic influence on mankind.

While in theory all-powerful, Nyarlothotep is restricted based on the form in which he manifests, shaped by the beliefs of his worshippers, constrained by the manner in which he is summoned, and twisted by his own intended purpose. Two of the Crawling Chaos' more interesting aspects include Ahtu, who may be summoned through the use of a golden bracelet; and the Dark Lord of Koth, who will bestow wealth and a hundred year lifespan to those who beseech him (in exchange for the caller's soul upon death). Other forms include the horrifying Bloody Tongue, the bat-like Haunter of the Dark, and the proud and cunning Black Pharaoh. With so many forms and so many places to be all at once, it is a wonder "the beast" can keep track of his alter egos. Is a cosmically powerful hero or villain simply an aspect of Nyarlothotep gone rogue?

## Artifacts of the Mythos

*"Golly, that elasticity serum sure was tasty. Like mother's milk."*

Whether metallic wings forged from alien metal or cosmic rings of unbridled energy, many super-foci are external devices, found or fabricated rather than being innate. Numerous Mythos artifacts are receptacles that bestow power when used properly, or doom the wielder to damnation when used (im)properly. Reading mystic tomes can provide spells, unlock mental potentials, or even trigger physical alterations if certain formulae/concepts are comprehended.

It's current location a mystery, the Ring of the ancient wizard Eibon can release a demon who will answer any questions it is asked (and potentially more). The Ring of the Hyades, which can transport the wearer across the universe and protect from the Great Old Ones, is hidden to all but the greatest of sorcerers. The legendary Time Clock allows physical passage to other times and dimensions, while mental and spiritual time travel can be achieved through use of the Liao Drug.

While most star-faring Mythos beings such as Byakhee and Mi-Go can fly naked through space on cosmic winds, subsisting on their own power, only a draught of "space mead" can provide a human direct protection from the harsh conditions of vacuum and space and allow him to breathe the aether.

Nyarlothotep has been known to bestow incantations and machinery on his faithful, which generally lead their wielders to madness and self-destruction. Whether bequeathing a non-euclidean lantern or providing the final equation to a gamma bomb, the Crawling Chaos is always up to no good. Not to worry, the Haunter of the Dark aspect of Nyarlothotep can be controlled via the Shining Trapezohedron, which can also reveal visions of other spaces and times, and accelerate mutations to their final result, something any villain in a world of mutant-hating humans can appreciate.

## Adventure Seeds

- *The End of the World as We Know It:* A strange planet has been sighted moving to intersect Earth's orbit. Researchers discover that the "planet" is actually Ghroth, an Outer God believed to have caused the dinosaur extinction. Can the heroes stop it in time before it opens its cyclopean red eye and sets the stars right (or wrong, as the case may be)?
- *Family Resemblance:* The Formless Spawn of the Great Old One Tsathoggua, black tar-like entities of great strength, are rampaging through a small farming community. Captain Elastic is on the scene, but reports indicate that instead of fighting the Spawn, he has joined them!
- *If the City is a-Rockin' . . . :* Shudde-M'ell -- Great Old One leader of the Cthonians -- most powerful of its ilk, is free to roam the Earth, creating earthquakes. The downtown buildings of the PC's major metropolis cannot handle the continual stress, so they must stop, contain, or draw Shudde-M'ell away. Additionally, a number of buildings have collapsed already, and heroes might be needed to aid in rescue and relief efforts.
- *The Gotham City Syndrome:* The city has become infected with a never-ending series of crime sprees and corruption. No matter how many insane criminals are put away, nothing ceases this degradation into depravity. Turns out a lloigor has made it's nest underground and is mentally influencing the population with its trademark perpetual suicidal pessimism and gloom. Mass reports of headaches and

poor sleep can help clue researching PCs in to the immaterial dragon's feeding before the situation becomes psychokinetically explosive, literally.

- *Beyond the Fortress of Solitude*: The Elder Things (a.k.a. the Old Ones) came to Earth billions of years ago. After warring with various other alien races, they were driven to what is today known as Antarctica. There, they created Ubbo-Sathla, progenitor of the Shoggoths and all earthly life; then they died off. Their crystalline technology lies buried in the Antarctic, guarded by Shoggoths, rare Elder Things, and the dread Ubbo-Sathla itself, who flows over the Elder Keys -- tablets of forgotten Old One knowledge. Adventurers could discover Ubbo-Sathla's lonely Fortress, and be changed by the experience. A projection device, which opens a rift to the Great White Space (a dimension allowing transport across great distances; a phantom zone used and abused by the Elder Things) could serve as the catalyst for many mind-bending super-abilities. However, beware -- while it might be used somewhat safely as extra-dimensional storage, travel through this "Negative Zone" risks encountering minions left by the Old Ones.

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