

THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH™

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A DIGEST OF ARCANE LORE FOR CTHULHU MYTHOS ROLEPLAYING GAMES

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THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH™

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WRITERS: Richard Becker, Monte Cook, Adam Gauntlett, Nick Grant, Dan Harms, Pat Harrigan, James Haughton, George Holochwost, Shane Ivey, Matthew Pook, Brian Sammons, C.A. Suleiman and John Scott Tynes.

COVER ARTIST: Todd Shearer.

ILLUSTRATORS: Toren Atkinson and Dennis Detwiller.

PAGE DESIGNER: Jessica Hopkins.

ART DIRECTOR: Dennis Detwiller.

EDITORS: Adam Crossingham, Dan Harms, Shane Ivey and Greg Stolze, with copy editing by James Knevitt. *Founding editor:* John Scott Tynes. *Editor-in-chief:* Shane Ivey.

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Arc Dream Publishing
12215 Highway 11, Chelsea, AL 35043, USA
shane.ivey@gmail.com
www.theunspeakableoath.com

THE DREAD PAGE OF AZATHOTH

I first encountered *The Unspeakable Oath* in 1991. Issue 3 sat on a game store shelf in Birmingham, Alabama. It was an eye-catcher. Gorgeous black line art by Blair Reynolds, three cultists with bloody robes and knives staring thoughtfully out; goldenrod cardstock cover wrap, staple-bound, very do-it-yourself.

Those cultists amazed me. You could tell they weren't just anonymous mooks, easy pickings for heroic investigators; they had depth. They had names and ideas and plans.

Underneath them, the logotype: "... for the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game."

That cinched it.

I hadn't even opened the cover.



I had been a *Call of Cthulhu* fanatic since the game first appeared. A D&D buddy ran that first game and I was the sole player; I solved the case and then my character was betrayed and murdered.

I was 13 years old and I was hooked. Fantasy gaming never quite measured up again.

In high school my friends and I played a long campaign, taking the same core group of investigators, minus a casualty here and there, entirely through *Terror From the Stars* and *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*. Hardened veterans, we charged into *Masks of Nyarlathotep* and made it through two scenarios. Then came our private apocalypse: midnight on a cold little island, alien gods seeping down from the sky. Those long-running investigators died to a man. Only one newcomer escaped—and he had murdered one of the veterans.

It takes a certain kind of gamer to go through that kind of punishment and come out begging for more. Most shake their heads and ask when they can get back to the good, clean heroism of a game with affordable resurrection. But my friends and I loved it. The risk itself was a thrill.

And as for heroism—well. As Ken Hite has elsewhere observed, *Call of Cthulhu* is the most heroic roleplaying game ever played. It's heroic precisely because of the things that make it so horrifying. It's a game where ordinary men and

women see the worst that the universe has to offer, incarnated in mind-blasting alien flesh, and try to face it down.

That's heroism.

I've been playing it for nearly 30 years and it still gives me chills.

I could tell right off, the guys behind *The Unspeakable Oath* were my kind of gamers. They designed scenarios and adventure ingredients with rich details and well-researched backgrounds. They looked for villains with real character, whose motivations, even when insane and irredeemably evil, made a certain kind of pragmatic sense. They rejected the easy answers of the Cthulhu Mythos authors who provided benevolent, or at least accessible, alternate gods as foils to the awfulness of the Great Old Ones. And yet they had a wicked sense of humor.

They clearly adored the same mix of careful investigation and crazy, unpredictable action that so many of us loved in *Call of Cthulhu*—and in emphasizing meaningful characterization they explored the game's true depths.



By the time *The Unspeakable Oath* walked or stumbled to its long hiatus in 2000, I had been working with its publisher, Pagan Publishing, for a few years. I proofread and playtested some of their books and contributed a piece or two; I ran their Delta Green website.

It wasn't long before I partnered up with Dennis Detwiller, Pagan's art director, to form Arc Dream Publishing. Dennis and the Pagan crew had applied their unique sensibilities to World War II and superheroes for the roleplaying game *Godlike*, eventually published by Hobgoblynn Press. After Dennis and I secured *Godlike's* publishing rights and stock from Hobgoblynn it became Arc Dream's flagship property. Years trickled by; we made more games; we were nominated for awards despite barely making a ripple in the industry at large.

Everything Arc Dream did was informed at some level by *The Unspeakable Oath*. *Godlike* and *Wild Talents* are about the nature and risks of heroism, not just the glory of superpowers. *Monsters and Other Childish Things* features ordinary kids with ferocious, often downright Lovecraftian

monsters as their friends and protectors; monsters that give them power but put their friends and loved ones in danger. It's funny and horrific by turns. We never would have made those kinds of games if *The Unspeakable Oath* hadn't convinced us that kind of gaming were possible.

A few years ago Arc Dream got together with Pagan to resurrect another *Call of Cthulhu* property that had seemingly slipped off to the Dreamlands, one that had its roots in *The Unspeakable Oath: Delta Green*. Arc Dream put *Delta Green: Eyes Only* together and Pagan published it, and then we did the more ambitious *Delta Green: Targets of Opportunity*, which came out this year.

Somewhere in there, Dennis and I started talking about *The Unspeakable Oath*. After *Delta Green*, resurrecting the *Oath* didn't seem quite so daunting.

We talked about it with Scott Glancy at Pagan, and with John Scott Tynes who founded the *Oath*; they were pleased with the work we'd done for *Delta Green*; and then the deal was done.

At one point I remember it suddenly sinking in: *Holy shit. We're bringing back the Oath!*

I may be running the thing now, but I'll always be a giddy fan at heart.



December 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the first issue of *The Unspeakable Oath*. John Scott Tynes was a college student when he put that first issue together, writing most of it himself. He kept it going for seven years, then a break, then a last issue—and then a decade's silence until today. And after all this time, countless gamers still remember the *Oath* with love. John should be proud as hell.

Roleplaying games have seen a lot of changes in the 20 years since *The Unspeakable Oath* first appeared, and in the 10 since it last appeared. Several new games have covered the Cthulhu Mythos.

Ken Hite's *Trail of Cthulhu*, a licensed variant on *Call of Cthulhu*, moves the investigations at the heart of the game away from randomized skill rolls. Instead it uses pools of skill points under the player's control; spend the right kind

of point at the right time and gain the clue. In play it has a very different feel from *Call of Cthulhu*, heavily focused on detective work and careful discovery.

There's been *Realms of Cthulhu*, an alternate version of *Call of Cthulhu* for the pulp action game *Savage Worlds*; *CthulhuTech* with a science fiction take on the Mythos; *The Laundry*, adapting Charles Stross' excellent stories of espionage, bureaucracy and the Mythos; at Arc Dream we adapted the *Godlike* and *Wild Talents* rules to Mythos horror with the free game *Nemesis*.

And so in *The Unspeakable Oath* we'll provide resources for many Cthulhu Mythos roleplaying games. But the essence of the *Oath* will always be the game that inspired it.

It's true that games with more streamlined character generation and more tightly focused mechanics can make *Call of Cthulhu's* decades-old rules and endless list of skills feel a little fusty and crusty. But the game has been around this long because it works. It's not for everyone, but it's a game that does what it's trying to do.

In *Call of Cthulhu* there are no sure things. At best there's only a hint in a grimy old book that you might not even notice on the shelf. The spasmodic pull of an unfamiliar trigger. A stumbling flight from stinking shadows to the false light of day. More likely it's death that you never saw coming, or a realization that leaves you utterly, permanently unhinged.

There's no control to be had, narrative or otherwise. Success, when you manage it, is a thrill. Madness and mayhem are often much more fun.

Join us and see if you agree.

SHANE IVEY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Postscript: Longtime readers may notice there's a section missing in this issue: *Scream and Scream Again*, the letters column. With so many years gone by between issues it didn't seem feasible to collect comments on the last one to be published. We'll most likely see *Scream and Scream Again* in issue 19. See the masthead for our mailing and email addresses.

A TALE OF TERROR: MR. POPATOV

BY JOHN SCOTT TYNES

In the course of an adventure, the investigators interview a witness to some recent event. This witness is of negligible value to the adventure, offering only a few corroborating details. But the interview with the witness is a different matter.

The man's name is Josef Rebane. He is eighty years old and hard of hearing, but mentally and verbally sharp. Josef is Estonian and came to this country forty years ago. He is a puppeteer.

The interview is in his home, a run-down cottage. His home is crowded with old furniture, relics of larger homes now crammed into this little space. In the living room is his red-velvet puppet theatre and hanging on the wall behind it is his collection of marionettes.

One marionette, a goat named Mr. Popatov, is suspended



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from the top of the puppet theatre so that he dangles within the proscenium. Mr. Popatov is a black goat with a broad smile.

The interview goes uneventfully, with some light comedy provided by Josef's hearing problem. The investigators notice, however, that Mr. Popatov is never still. He rocks gently back and forth, somewhat irregularly, and several times he turns slightly as if facing one investigator or another or Josef himself.

Of course, it's a creaky, unsteady old house. Even shifting in your chair is enough to make the tea cups Josef serves rattle in their saucers. When the investigators get up to leave, their footsteps make Mr. Popatov jiggle.

That night, the investigator with the lowest Sanity has a vivid dream. He's back in Josef's house but now he realizes that Josef himself is a marionette being operated by slender black threads—threads that drape across the floor and terminate in a coil around Mr. Popatov's black cloven hoof.

POSSIBILITY 1: NOTHING SCARY HERE

If the investigators pay another visit, they find the house locked and dark. Neighbors report Josef hurriedly left with his puppet theatre. He does not return during the current scenario. Peering in the windows, the investigators can see Mr. Popatov sitting in Josef's chair. He does not move and should the investigators break in, Mr. Popatov is nothing but a puppet.

POSSIBILITY 2: THE RELIC

Mr. Popatov is a reliquary for the teeth of a powerful Estonian cultist of Shub-Niggurath. The spirit of the cultist can possess Josef whenever needed as long as he is physically present. Now that Josef is old, the spirit is looking for a new owner for Mr. Popatov. Scattering the teeth in barren soil will break the spirit's connection forever.

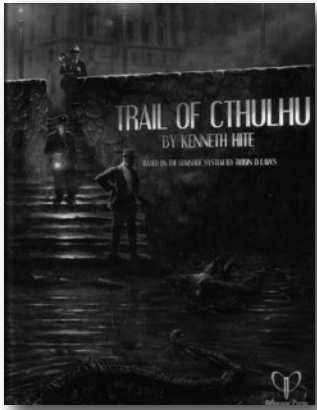
POSSIBILITY 3: ON THE ALTAR

Mr. Popatov is soon to be sacrificed by the rest of the puppets in Josef's theatre in a black mass to be held in some ominous outdoor spot. Josef will carry his theatre there, lay Mr. Popatov atop a stone, and then manipulate the other puppets as they enact the ritual and cut Mr. Popatov's strings. Josef's planning and field trips for this event will provide plenty of fodder for watchful investigators. Should he succeed in sacrificing Mr. Popatov, Josef will die and his soul transferred into the now liberated and living body of Mr. Popatov.

THE EYE OF LIGHT & DARKNESS

BY VARIOUS CULTISTS

Reviews are rated on a scale of one to ten phobias. Six or more means it's worth the money; at ten it's insanely terrific.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

PELGRANE PRESS, \$39.95

By KENNETH HITE

REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK

Call of Cthulhu is not perfect. It quantifies the Cthulhu Mythos, giving it numbers and making it knowable. Its skill system can result in the investigators missing clues and thus stalling a scenario. It can be difficult to explain character motivation for investigating the horrors of the Mythos.

Trail of Cthulhu is a licensed version of *Call of Cthulhu* from Pelgrane Press that addresses these issues. Written by Ken Hite (a member of the editorial board of *The Unspeakable Oath*), it uses that publisher's GUMSHOE System, Robin D. Laws' rules that shift the emphasis from finding clues to interpreting them. Hite adds Drives to explain investigator motivation. By discussing entities of the Mythos often in contradictory terms, not giving them stats beyond the Sanity loss they inflict, and by moving the game forward into the Desperate Decade of the 1930s, Hite makes Lovecraftian investigative horror unknown once again.

The first big difference between *Call* and *Trail* is that *Trail* asks which mode of play you prefer. It offers two, Purist or Pulp. Inspired by the majority of Lovecraft's stories, the Purist mode has players and Keeper play out tales of intellectual and philosophical horror, doomed to a searing understanding of the cosmos. The Robert E. Howard-inspired Pulp mode is more physical, its protagonists ready with two guns blazing. The modes show in the Occupations: Author and Antiquarian are Purist while Alienist and Private Investigator are Pulp. In the Drives, "Sense of Adventure" is Pulp, "Artistic Sensibility" is Purist. Pulp mode allows "Bullet Resistant Clothing" and Purist mode calls for Ability caps.

Rather than traditional attributes and skills, in the GUMSHOE System characters are defined by two Ability types: Investigative (divided into Academic, Interpersonal, and Technical) and General. Both Ability types are represented by pools of points. Investigative Ability points are spent to acquire clues while General Ability points are spent to modify the die rolls in actions such as Driving, Fleeing, and Scuffling. Notably, both Health and Stability are General Abilities, as is the signature Sanity Ability, their points spent to save against taking physical or mental damage respectively.

While the use of point pools adds a resource management aspect, it shifts the focus to understanding clues rather than obtaining them, because Ability points are spent to gain extra information about a clue. If an investigator has an appropriate Ability, then he always gets the basic clue itself.

Alongside a re-examination of the Mythos, its entities, and its tomes, Hite provides a good overview of the 1930s, complete with new cults, some of which have a political aspect. In addition to the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign and Yithian agents, he details Germany's Ahnenerbe and Japan's Black Dragon Society. Their inclusion nicely leads into the overview of the "Dirty Thirties," a decade of famine, poverty, racism, totalitarianism (described as mankind's own "Creeping Order"), and war.

Where in *Call of Cthulhu* an investigator simply loses Sanity, in *Trail* he can lose Sanity and Stability. Stability measures an investigator's immediate mental state and can be relatively easily recovered, while Sanity measures acceptance of the universe's true nature. Sanity is still lost for reading Mythos tomes, but is also lost for suffering a Mythos Shock (which occurs when a Mythos encounter drives an investigator's Stability below 0), and, more radically, for using the Cthulhu Mythos skill to understand reality. Thus not only is learning Mythos knowledge dangerous, but so is using it, making it a more active decision than merely rolling the dice as in *Call of Cthulhu*. Similarly, casting spells in *Trail* is more dangerous, incurring a Stability check, a potential Mythos Shock, and potential health loss, so even for an insane sorcerer spells are still perilous.

Besides excellent advice for the Keeper on creating and running a *Trail* game, "Campaign Frames" offer alternative approaches and themes that could be pitched as television series. There are three samples. Project Covenant's "The Untouchables meets Delta Green" or "The

X-Files versus Fu Manchu!” and Bookhounds of London’s “It’s James Ellroy’s *Ninth Gate*” are almost pitch perfect. The latter is currently being developed into an eponymous full-blown supplement.

Physically, *Trail of Cthulhu* is a well-presented book made all the better by the dark delight of Jérôme Huguenin’s photomontages that hint at something more. It’s arguably the best artwork to grace a Cthulhu book since Pagan Publishing’s *The Realm of Shadows*.

The publication of *Trail of Cthulhu* raises the question, “Why effectively rewrite *Call of Cthulhu*?” Well, the latter is almost 30 years old and for all its core elegance, its age shows. The presentation of stats for its Mythos menagerie is almost *Dungeons & Dragons*-like. And by modern gaming standards it fails to address fully the tasks of both players and Keeper. Both are issues that Hite has assuredly addressed in *Trail of Cthulhu*.

If ever there was a game writer spawned to author a Lovecraftian RPG, it is surely Kenneth Hite. *Trail of Cthulhu* is a harsher, grainier approach to Lovecraftian investigative horror. Fully supported by elegant mechanics, it opens up a whole new decade and restores the unknown of Lovecraft’s Mythos. Ten phobias.

But in some alternate universe, as you read this Sandy Petersen is working on a licensed version of *Trail of Cthulhu*, the classic horror RPG published back in 1981. Its title: *Call of Cthulhu*.



THE DAY AFTER RAGNAROK

**PUBLISHED BY ATOMIC
OVERMIND PRESS, \$29.95
BY KENNETH HITE
REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK**

The year is 1948 and we have Harry S. Truman to thank for blowing up the world.

Not that he had much choice. When Hitler threatens to unleash Götterdämmerung and you have the Trinity Device, what else do you do but order a B29 to fly into the brain of Jörmungandr, the Midgard Serpent, and destroy

it with the fires of the atom? So Ragnarok was averted, but on the downside, the serpent’s body and toxic blood fell to Earth, poisoning everywhere, dividing Europe with the Serpent Curtain, and causing a super tsunami that ravaged the U.S.A. as far as the Rockies.

Now much of a ravaged Europe and the Near East is held in Stalin’s red grip; the British Empire is based in Australia and South Africa under King Henry IX; Japan retained her Empire after the Allies were forced to sue for peace; and California is the home of the U.S.A. under President Earl Warren while east of the Rockies it has broken into various polities known as the Mayoralities.

Meanwhile, Professor Bernard Childermass builds rockets for the Royal Rocketry Air Force at Woomera, Djehuti-Yamun leads the Children of Set—the most malignant of the newly arisen snake cults—and who knows what loyalties and pay drive Otto Skorzeny’s adventures?

This is the setting for *The Day After Ragnarok*, Ken Hite’s post-WW2, post-apocalypse, post-Ragnarok setting for the pulpy *Savage Worlds* (also available for the HERO System Sixth Edition) that describes itself as “SMGs & Sorcery” and is easy to run under the system of your choice. Both magic and psionics are known. Speleo-herpetologists harvest Serpent parts and develop Ophi-Tech, advanced technology like Marconi guns, neural stimulators, Ophiline (refined serpent oil, better than gasoline!), and delta wing rocket planes. Stalin has his own arcane allies, including engineered man-apes used to infiltrate British Africa.

This post-apocalypse, post-WW2 mix allows numerous character options. An RCMP mountie patrolling the Canadian Poisoned Lands, a bush pilot supplying the Mayoralities, a Serpentfall-obsessed Rhodes Scholar, an Amish survivor turned gunfighting “holy roller” or a PBY-Catalina pilot running guns and news of democracy into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, all can be created with ease and the setting suggests numerous other possibilities.

Instead of a single Plot Point campaign as is usual with *Savage Worlds* settings, Hite offers four outlines that cast as the heroes as freelancers; as agents for the Crown, whichever power the Crown represents; rebuilding America after the tsunami; or local protectors. Alongside these are an adventure generator and the superb Top Five lists, of which Top Five Places To Stomp Nazis and Top Five Secret Bases are the obvious highlights. Hite’s own underlying inclination is towards running this as a Conan 1948 game set in Robert E. Howard’s own homeland, Texas, but swathes of detail and imagination range all over this fantastic pulp setting.

For the sheer bravura and frothy pulpiness of its setting,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 76

The voices in your head are saying you
want these . . . you really want these . . .



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ARCAINE ARTIFACT:

THE CHINAMAN'S SCREEN

By ADAM GAUNTLETT

“Scrap screens—all too rare nowadays—are simply ordinary wooden or canvas screens with coloured scraps cut out and pasted all over them in such a way as to make more or less coherent pictures. The best were made around 1880, but if you buy one at a junk shop it is sure to be defective, and the great charm in owning such a screen lies in patching it up yourself.”

—George Orwell, “Just Junk—But Who Could Resist It?”

It is a three-panel folding screen, a large piece of furniture made from canvas, paper and softwood, not unlike a Japanese Byōbu. Each panel is one meter tall and 75 centimeters wide. The hinges are made of leather, cracked with age, and the wood is beech, notoriously prone to damage. It probably came from England; most of the decorations are cut from Victorian English magazines such as *Harper's*, *The Field*, *The Graphic*, and *Punch*. It can be found in a junk shop or among the possessions left behind by a missing person.

The previous owner(s) delighted in creating slightly surreal collages from unusual source material. A fox flees through the House of Commons; a nursemaid wheels her pram through a starry sky. Moon imagery recurs frequently. The pictures are mostly whimsical and amusing, which makes it all the more odd that the screen has acquired a reputation among occultists.

Someone used pictures torn from occult manuscripts as part of the collage. It is said that some pictures were taken from the Bridewell *Unausprechlichen Kulte*n, or a modern copy of the pamphlet *On the Sending Out of the Soul*. Allegedly this was done by a scholar referred to as “the Chinaman.” These pictures concern astral travel, or passage to other realms of consciousness, and hint that the moon is somehow important to such travel.

The screen acts as a magic point store. Its capacity waxes and wanes with the moon, and are accessed at night when moonlight shines on it. A new moon grants no points, a quarter moon 3 magic points, and a full moon 6 points; the points are only available to someone who sleeps in the



same room as the screen. If not used within 24 hours, the points are lost. In addition, those who study the pictures, deciphering and visually separating the Mythos images from the rest of the design, can gain 1 point total Cthulhu Mythos. Those who sleep in the same room as the screen suffer nightmares in which a faceless man pursues them through a mansion with many chambers, catching them and suffocating them under mounds of paper. SAN 0/1D2 for the vivid dream (increasing to 1/1D3+1 on the full moon), and SAN 1D3 for deciphering the Mythos images.

The Chinaman still lives within the screen. This nameless wizard made a last-ditch escape from his enemies, and now, driven insane by his imprisonment, cannot leave it. If his haven is threatened or damaged, he may attack; he is a hungry ghost (a wraith) with INT 10 and POW 15, whose attacks drain STR. He looks like a haggard old man whose mouth is a mass of corruption, out of which gobbets of flesh and maggots fall. Destroying the screen does not harm the wraith, which then haunts the destroyer, harrying the wretch to his doom. But so long as the screen exists the wraith cannot move more than one meter from it.

TALES OF NEPHREN-KA

By JAMES HAUGHTON

With a final grinding push, the stone slab slid aside, and the entrance stood revealed in the flickering torchlight. "Behold, Mr Carter", said the Professor, and gestured at the revealed doorway, his voice crackling with some suppressed emotion, "the cartouche of Nephren-Ka, the Black Pharaoh! He whose sorcery summoned the demon of the Trapezohedron... He whose very name has been stricken from all records out of fear at his awful might! A Pharaoh only remembered by members of the darkest cults of Egypt lies ahead!"

"Reeaally", drawled Bob "Two-Gun" Carter. Despite his laconic air, the mysterious Professor's words had awakened his senses to a wolflike keenness. "It occurs to me to ask, 'Professor Phillips'," he continued, one hand gliding to the pistol at his belt, "that if only members of the darkest cults have even heard of your Pharaoh ... how do you know so much about him?"

To the gods of the Mythos all human lands and cultures are equally insignificant—yet they appear to have a fondness for Egypt. In Egypt, "nighted Khem", Nyarlathotep once took the form of a man, and from it he will come forth to blow Earth's dust away.

Why should Egypt be so blessed? It may be due to the actions of the man who first made worship of the thousand-faced one into a state religion—the enigmatic Black Pharaoh, Nephren-Ka.

"Of the Shining Trapezohedron he speaks often.... The Pharaoh Nephren-Ka built around it a temple with a windowless crypt, and did that which caused his name to be stricken from all monuments and records. Then it slept in the ruins of that evil fane which the priests and the new Pharaoh destroyed, till the delver's spade once more brought it forth to curse mankind." — H.P. LOVECRAFT, "THE HAUNTER OF THE DARK"

Lovecraft tells us frustratingly little of Nephren-Ka. In "The Haunter of the Dark" we learn of his worship of the Shining Trapezohedron and erasure from history, and in "The Outsider" we learn that ghouls play in his catacombs. That is all. Yet these enigmatic references inspired many others, notably Robert Bloch, whose story "Fane of the Black Pharaoh" made Ludwig Prinn a member of the Cult which carried on Nephren-Ka's legacy. This cult, the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh, appear as principal villains in the classic campaigns *Masks of Nyarlathotep* and *The Fungi from Yuggoth* (aka *Curse of Cthulhu* aka *Day of the Beast*). Chaosium's *The Nyarlathotep Cycle* collects many more stories about the sorcerer-pharaoh, his prophecies, and his legacy.

All these subsequent stories derive only from Lovecraft's hints. It did not occur to Bloch to inquire whether there was a "real" Nephren-Ka, assuming he was pure Lovecraftian invention. In fact, Lovecraft acquired the name from a genuine Egyptian manuscript, *The Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-unst*, which he only knew of through the summary presented in Lewis Spence's 1920 *Encyclopaedia of Occultism*. (See *The Nyarlathotep Cycle*, page 201.) The *Papyrus* itself reveals more about the Black Pharaoh than Lovecraft ever knew. It, and other genuine and mythical documents from Ancient Egypt, shed a new light on this mysterious Pharaoh.

THE PAPYRUS OF SETNA KHA-EM-UST

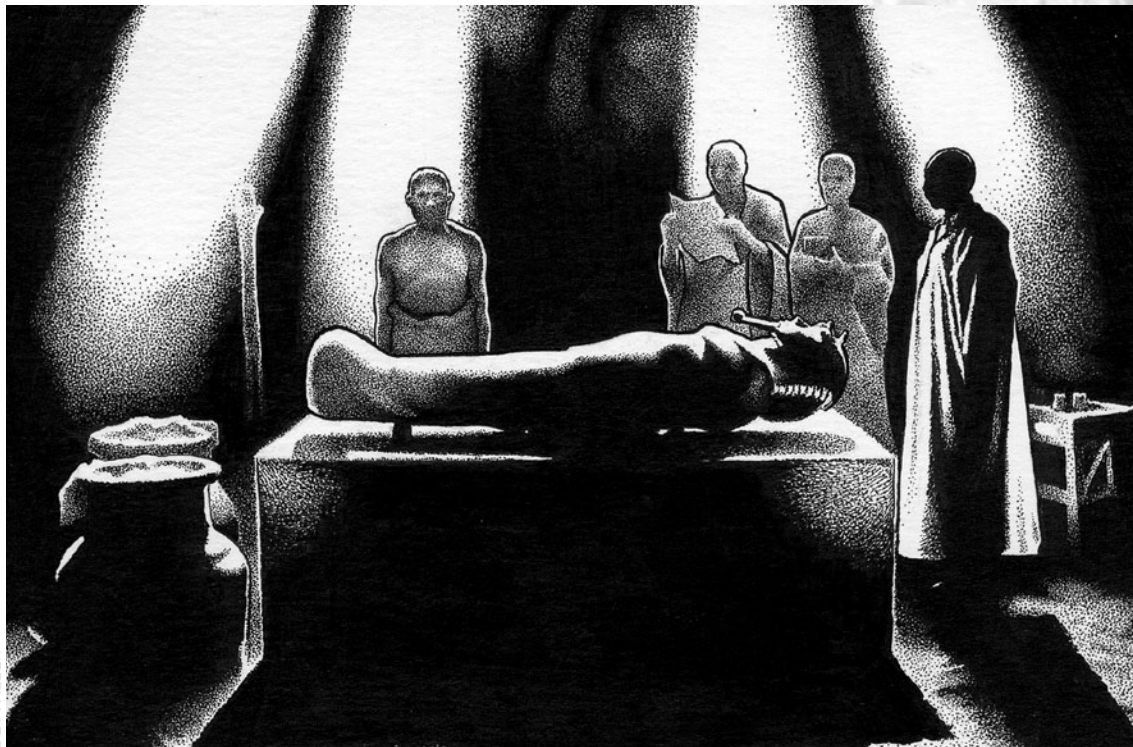
"Now, one day, when he was walking in the open court of the temple of Ptah, reading the inscriptions, behold, a man of noble bearing who was there began to laugh. Setna said to him, 'Wherefore dost thou laugh at me?' The noble said, 'I do not laugh at thee, but can I refrain from laughing when thou dost decipher the writings here which possess no power? If thou desirest truly to read an efficacious writing, come with me. I will bring you to the place where the book is which Thoth himself wrote with his own hand, and which will bring you to the gods.'"

The Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-ust is the only surviving Egyptian document to refer to the Pharaoh Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah, ("The perfect avatar of Ptah"), which Lovecraft shortened to Nephren-Ka ("perfect avatar of..." [unnameable?]). It was transcribed by the scribe Ziharpto in Ptolemaic times, possibly from older sources. It was first discovered in 1864 in the tomb of a Coptic Christian monk. Two copies are known to exist in the Cairo Museum, one well preserved but missing the first three pages, the other complete but badly damaged and fragmented.

The papyrus tells in four parts a story of Prince Setna Kha-em-unst ("Setna, the Glory of Thebes"), a son of Ramses II renowned for his learning and magic.

In the first part, Setna is reading the temple stelae in search of knowledge when he is mocked by a mysterious priest for lacking the magical learning found within the Book of Thoth. The priest informs him that the book can be found in the tomb of Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah. Setna, accompanied by his brother, obsessively searches for the tomb in the necropolis of Memphis. When he finds it and descends, the mummy of Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah, accompanied by the ghosts of his sister-wife Ahura and their child, confronts him.

In the second part, Ahura attempts to dissuade Setna by telling the story of her happy life with Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah, followed by the unhappy death of all of them after Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah, mocked by a mysterious priest (Nesi-Ptah), had sought out the *Book of Thoth* and offended the gods by stealing its secrets. Undaunted and aided by his magical Talisman of Ptah, Setna takes the book by force.



DETWILLER

In the third part, Setna is approached by a succubus in the form of a priestess of Bast. Besotted with lust, he gives over to her his wealth and inheritance and then kills his own children at her command. As they are about to consummate their lust, she vanishes, revealed as a phantasm conjured by Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah; Setna's children are alive and his wealth is intact. In the fourth part, a humbled Setna begs forgiveness of Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah. Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah demands that Setna return the book, unearthen and bring to him the mummies of his wife and child, and bury and hide his tomb, which Setna duly does.

It's worth noting that this ancient Egyptian story implies that Hollywood's various *Mummy* films are more historically faithful than one might think to Egyptian beliefs about mummies, their motivations and capabilities. Such historical accuracy is surely a sign of the End Times.

THE PAPYRUS OF SETNA KHA-EM-UNST—*Demotic Egyptian papyrus, circa 100 B.C. Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; Cthulhu Mythos +2 percentiles; grants skill checks in Archaeology (Egyptian), Occult and Read/Write Ancient Egyptian. Spells: Talisman of Ptah (Pnakotic Pentagram), Bast's Beauty, Keeness of Two Alike, Dismiss Yig.*

NEW SPELL

Bast's Beauty: The caster, working only by moonlight, must prepare in a silver bowl a mixture of virgin's blood (which can be from many virgins) and the saliva of cats and dogs, sufficient to cover their entire body. The spell is cast once the body is covered. It costs 6 magic points and 1D6 Sanity (plus the cost of collecting the ingredients). It raises the APP and DEX of the caster by 3 points until the next new moon. Casting the spell lowers the SIZ or STR of the caster by 1 point permanently, and requires a Luck roll to avoid being permanently transformed into an appropriately sized feline. Each subsequent casting cumulatively subtracts 10% from the Luck roll. Any insanity resulting from this spell causes the caster to believe that he or she is a cat.

WHO WAS NE-NEFER-KA-PTAH?

Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah is the son of the Pharaoh Mer-Neb-Ptah. The great archaeologist Flinders Petrie, who translated the *Papyrus*, argued that Mer-Neb-Ptah is a corruption of the coronation-name of Amenhotep III, Neb-maat-ra-mer-ptah. The historical son and successor of Amenhotep III was Amenhotep IV, better known as Akhenaten, coronation-name Nefer-khe-per-re Waen-re.

Akhenaten was a radical, a heretical Pharaoh who claimed to be the son of a new, mysterious god, the Aten from beyond space and time. He attempted to stamp out the worship of other gods, closing their temples and erasing their names from inscriptions. He was mysteriously deformed and reign was accompanied by plague, warfare and death. After his death he was expunged from the historical record. All hieroglyphs referring to Akhenaten and Aten were erased, and all his temples demolished. Could there be a more perfect historical candidate for Nephren-Ka? (Surviving records from Akhenaten's reign indicate that his was a religion of love, light and peace. Surviving records from Jonestown make similar claims.) Some truly alarming implications follow, because Akhenaten, the founder of monotheism, has been suggested as the best historical candidate for Moses. Could Judaism, Christianity and Islam really owe their foundation to Nephren-Ka? (The possibility is strengthened by the fact that other myths of Setna contain episodes of competition between magi that are very similar to the competition between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh described in Exodus.)

The mocking priest Nesi-Ptah is likely a manifestation of Nyarlathotep (a.k.a. Thoth), delighting in leading both Setna and Ne-Nefer-Ka-Ptah on to destruction through their lust for magical power. He reappears in *The Alciphron Letters* (page 14 of this issue).

THE BOOK OF THOTH

"When you read but two pages in this [The Book of Thoth] you will enchant the heaven, the earth, the abyss, the mountains, and the sea; you shall know what the birds of the sky and the crawling things are saying; you shall see the fishes of the deep, for a divine power is there to bring them up out of the depth. And when you read the second page, if you are in the world of ghosts, you will become again in the shape you were in on earth. You will see the sun shining in the sky, with all the gods, and the full moon." — The Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-unst


"While there are those who have dared to seek glimpses beyond the Veil, and accept HIM as a guide, they would have been more prudent had they avoided commerce with HIM; for it is written in the Book of Thoth how terrific is the price of a single glimpse." — THE NECRONOMICON

What of the legendary *Book of Thoth* itself? One of the most powerful grimoires in history, it is said to have been written by either directly by the god Thoth (Nyarlathotep) or by the legendary Stygian sorcerer Thoth-Amon, foe of Conan of Cimmeria. We learn in "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" that Alhazred drew upon it to write the *Al-Azif*. A copy appeared in the early 1900s in the hands of a London-based cult led by a revived Egyptian magus. (See *Brood of the Witch-Queen* by Sax Rohmer. Lovecraft thought this was Rohmer's finest work.) Another may exist in the hands of the Carter family of New England. Those who possess the *Book of Thoth* frequently fall under a curse or disappear into other realms. It is written in extremely archaic Egyptian, and thus even those fluent in Egyptian hieroglyphics will struggle to successfully translate it.

THE BOOK OF THOTH—*Archaic Egyptian Hieroglyphics on parchment, pressed between golden covers set with gems, circa 3000 B.C. or older. Sanity loss 1D10/2D10; Cthulhu Mythos +20 percentiles; average 72 weeks to study and comprehend.* Spells: Many Call/Dismiss Deity spells are given in an Egyptian form, including: Summon Aten (Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth), Summon Bast (Call/Dismiss Bast), Summon Ptah (Call/Dismiss 'Umr At-Tawil), Summon Ra (Call/Dismiss Cthugha), Summon Set (Call/Dismiss Hastur), Summon Thoth (Call/Dismiss Nyarlathotep, Black Pharaoh form) and Summon Sebek (Call/Dismiss Yig). Other spells likely to be found include Contact Cthonians, Contact Deep Ones, Create Dream-Realm, Create Gate, Elder Sign, Resurrection spells, and spells of Egyptian origin such as Augur, Baneful Dust of Hermes Trismegistus, Bring Haboob (Sandstorm), Chant of Thoth, Contact Sand-Dweller, Create Anubis (Plutonian/Liao) Drug, Dust of Suleiman, Enchant Brazier, Identify Spirit, Mirror of Tarkhun Atep, Parting Sands, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Seal of Isis, Talisman of Ptah (see above), Sekhmenkenhemp's Words and Voice of Ra. It might provide instructions to create valuable magical items such as the Quill of Thoth or the Flails of Khepri.

NEW SPELL

Create Dream-Realm: Ancient, seemingly immortal Egyptian and Arabic magi are often found in mystical retreats, hard-to-find tombs, and sorcerer's caves which tend to vanish with the deaths of their owners. This spell may explain why. It requires many months of exacting rituals to complete, with the expenditure of at least 12 MP per day, and the permanent sacrifice of POW by the caster, and a Sanity loss of 2D10. Upon completion, a realm or pocket of hyperspace about the size of a small palace is created, which is tied to a permanent Gate on earth. The caster may shape the contents and geography at will. Within the realm the caster does not age, and indeed time does not seem to pass in the usual fashion; furthermore, while within the realm the caster still has access to the POW expended in creating it (though if he expends that POW it will damage the realm). The realm lasts for 100 years per point of POW expended in its creation. It is possible to recast the spell and extend the realm's life, but each subsequent casting halves the years gained per POW point expended (50, 25, 12 and so on). If the caster is killed the Realm lasts for 1 day per remaining POW point (round down).



Lovecraft's use of ancient Egyptian sources was not confined to the *Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-unst*. In "The Nameless City" and "Beneath the Pyramids" he quotes extensively from Thomas Moore's *Alciphron*, itself alleged to be a translation of Egyptian texts from the Greek period. In fact, *Alciphron's* underground adventures (including the crocodiles) are precisely mirrored in "The Nameless City", which quotes *Alciphron* at length. Themes from *Alciphron* also dominate "Under the Pyramids". Together, they suggest that misunderstood myths of the Nameless City endured in Egypt well into the Christian era, until encountered by Abdul Alhazred when he visited "the subterranean secrets of Memphis" and subsequently set out on his own search for the Nameless City. The smiling, cynical priesthood once more recalls Nyarlathotep.

THE ALCIPHON LETTERS

*And who can say, among the written spells Of the Emerald Table called forth gold at will
From Hermes' hand that in these shrines and cells And quarries upon quarries heapt and hurled,
Have from the Flood lay hid there may not be To build them domes that might outstand the world—
Some secret clew to immortality, Who knows, but that the heavenlier art which shares
Some amulet whose spell can keep life's fire The life of Gods with man was also theirs —
Awake within us never to expire! That they themselves, triumphant o'er the power
Tis known that on the Emerald Table, hid Of fate and death, are living at this hour;
For ages in yon loftiest pyramid, And these, the giant homes they still possess.
The Thrice-Great did himself engrave of old Not tombs but everlasting palaces
The chymic mystery that gives endless gold. Within whose depths hid from the world above
And why may not this mightier secret dwell Even now they wander with the few they love,
Within the same dark chambers? who can tell Thro' subterranean gardens, by a light
But that those kings who by the written skill Unknown on earth which hath nor dawn nor night!*

The *Alciphron Letters* are a collection of texts in Attic and Koine Greek, dating to roughly 250 A.D., found in the detritus of an Egyptian Coptic monastery in the early 19th century by a friend of the poet Thomas Moore. They purport to be four letters from the young Epicurean philosopher Alciphron to a friend in Athens, describing his adventures in Egypt, and a letter from an Egyptian priest. Moore was quite taken with the letters and published a romantic and bowdlerized English translation, *Alciphron*, in 1840, which was admired by both Poe and Lovecraft. What became of the original letters is unknown.

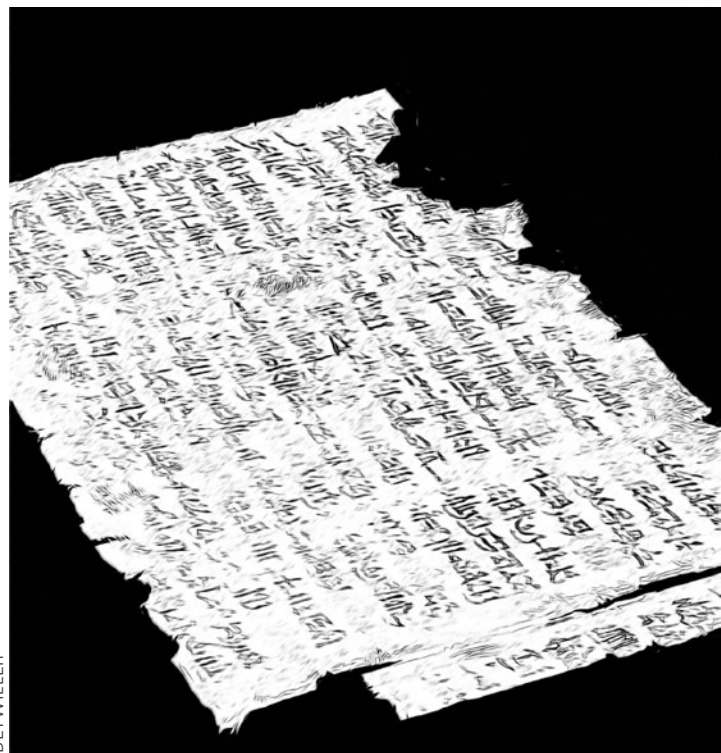
In the first letter, Alciphron dreams of a smiling priest who claims that he will find eternal life by the Nile, causing him to abandon Athens and travel to Egypt. In the second, Alciphron temporarily abandons his quest as the beauty of Egyptian women, in particular a temple maiden, seduces him. In the third, he discovers that the maiden serves a mysterious cult buried beneath the necropolis of Memphis. In the fourth, he descends into the catacombs to search for the Book of Hermes Trismegistus (the *Book of Thoth*), passing through challenges of Earth, Fire, Water and Air before having revealed to him the Mysteries of the initiatory religion. The fifth letter purports to be from a priest of the Initiates, gloating that Alciphron has been converted from his Epicurean skepticism into a worshipper of the Mysteries (including the sacred crocodiles), which, the priest gleefully concludes, are no mysteries at all but merely tricks by which his priestly caste maintains power.

It has been argued that Moore fabricated *The Alciphron Letters*, copying his “initiatory mysteries” from an earlier French novel, *The Romance of Sethos* (Sethos is the Greek form of Seti or Setna), published in 1731, which in turn copied them from Masonic rites—in other words, that there is nothing truly Egyptian about them. Flinders Petrie’s subsequent discovery of Pharaoh Seti I’s mysterious Osirion (a flooded underground temple, built in an extremely archaic style and dedicated to the death and rebirth of Osiris) and the later discovery of *The Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-unst* and *The Horsiesis Papyrus* (see page 16 of this issue), which describes initiatory rites performed in underground temples to Osiris, confirm that a similar underground Initiation ritual was indeed practiced.

(Seti I [Sethos I] was the father of Ramses II and the grandfather of Setni Kha-em-unst. The learning of one may have been attributed to the other. About the Osirion, Petrie states “...this was the building for the special worship of Osiris and the celebration of the Mysteries, and this appears to me to be the true explanation, for many reasons. Each reason may not be convincing in itself, but the accumulation of evidence goes to prove the case. There is no tomb even among the Tombs of the Kings that is like it in plan, none having the side chamber leading off the Great Hall. Then, again, no tomb has ever been found attached to a temple; the converse is often the case, I mean a temple attached to a tomb; but this, as far as we can judge, is a kind of extra chapel, a “hidden shrine” as the mythological texts express it, belonging to the temple.”)

The tradition that a man named Sethos/Seti/Sesostris was a great magician was handed on to the Jews, who claimed that Seth was the third son of Adam and Eve. He was the founder of the Kaballah, and was venerated by many heretical Gnostic cults. Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews* claims that Seth and his sons erected great stone and brick pillars inscribed with astronomical knowledge, so that knowledge of the stars might survive the Flood. This may be a reference to the temple stele mentioned in *The Papyrus of Setna Kha-em-unst*.

THE ALCIPHON LETTERS—five scrolls, Greek on papyrus, circa 250 A.D. English translation by Thomas Moore, hardback, 1840. *Sanity loss 1/1D3 in the English translation or 1D3/1D6 in the original Greek, Cthulhu Mythos +1 percentile, grants skill check in Occult.* The original Greek version has the spells Initiation, Contact Spawn of Sebek (Contact Serpent Man/Inhabitant of the Nameless City) and Bind Fire Vampire encoded within it, requiring a Cryptography roll to successfully decipher.



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NEW SPELL

Initiation—An initiation is a complex rite of symbolic death and rebirth, conducted by a Hierophant and designed to give an Initiate greater insight into himself or herself and the universe. It often involves a symbolic descent into the afterlife, and confrontation with elemental forces, evil entities, and guardians of knowledge. During the course of the rite 10 magic points must be spent, some of which must come from both the Hierophant and the Initiate. At the conclusion of the rite the Hierophant makes an Idea roll and the Initiate makes a Luck roll. If these are both successful the Initiate gains one point of POW and 1D6 percentiles of Occult skill. Initiation can be conducted only once in an Initiate's life. For best effect Initiation takes place in a structure especially built for the purpose, with all the dramatic trappings of a sacred space; outside such a dedicated environment the Luck and Idea rolls are halved.

The Initiation spell is, in truth, a degraded version of the true Resurrection spell concealed behind the myth of Isis and Osiris. If it could be restored and performed in an appropriate structure of magical power, such as the Osirion or the Nameless City, the Initiation rite might literally return a character from the dead.

THE HORSIESIS PAPYRUS

*The Guides introduce thee
into the most holy place.
Thou enterest the holy of holies
without thy steps being led astray.
To Maat (the Truth)
thou art initiated,
without being impeded:
thou givest the kiss
to Osiris (lying) in the great Hall,
(all resplendent) with gold,
(to the god) Khenty-Imentiou
(lying) in (his) sarcophagus.
Thou goest through the portal*

*of the gods of the infernal caverns.
Thou joinest the (deceased)
who (in this place) rest.
"Thou art welcome!
Thou art welcome!"
says the Master of the Throne;
and the Pure Archivist
smooths thy path.
The Guardians of the Portals
grasp thine arm.
Those who dwell at the Threshold
utter (their) call.*

THE HORSIESIS PAPYRUS—Late Hieratic Egyptian on papyrus, circa 50 A.D. Also known as *Leiden Papyrus T32*. Describes the initiation rites undergone by Horsiesis, priest of Amun-Ra and "Master of Secrets", which demonstrate his worthiness for the afterlife. *Grants skill checks in Occult and Read/Write Ancient Egyptian*. Spell: Initiation.

STORY SEEDS

- The “Initiation” rite might be used by any occult order that Investigators might join or infiltrate, for example, the Order of the Silver Twilight, the Church of Starry Wisdom or the Golden Dawn. They plan to use a more powerful version of the rite to return some ancient being (e.g. Kathulos) to life. To recover it, they need to go to the source: either the lost *Book of Thoth* or the Nameless City. Undoubtedly the cult leaders would that the Investigators did the hazardous leg-work.
- Ankenaten was the father of the famous Tutankhamen, who renounced the worship of Aten when the country rose against him. Perhaps the famous curse of Tutankhamen’s tomb was the revenge of Ankenaten against his unfaithful progeny. Perhaps, like Joseph Curwen, Akhenaten set forces working “outside the spheres of Time”, to cause himself to be reincarnated, and the “Tut mania” which sweeps the 1920s world following Tutankhamen’s discovery is the result of this spell, acting to prepare the world for its caster’s rebirth?
- The head of a fanatic monotheistic sect (Jewish, Christian or Muslim) suddenly proclaims himself to be the reincarnated Moses. Public derision changes to awe when he reveals the location of previously unknown relics of Egypt and the Exodus, and followers flock to him. In truth, he has been corrupted by the spirit of Nephren-Ka, the “true” Moses, and the corruption accelerates with each relic uncovered. What apocalyptic horror does he intend to unleash?
- The Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh, heirs of Nephren-Ka, intend to bring about his resurrection and rulership of the world. However, due to the abhorrence with which Akhenaten/Nephren-Ka was regarded after his death, his tomb was desecrated, his mummy evicted and his grave goods (notably, including the Canopic Jars containing his organs) scattered, taken by thieves, collectors and occultists, or reused in the graves of other Pharaohs (such as Tutankhamen, Akhenaten’s son). The Brotherhood needs to find all the original organs or they will only raise up “ye liveliest awefulness”. To this end they are robbing public and private antiquities collections all over the world, looking for the right jars, which may well possess magical powers of their own.

FURTHER READING

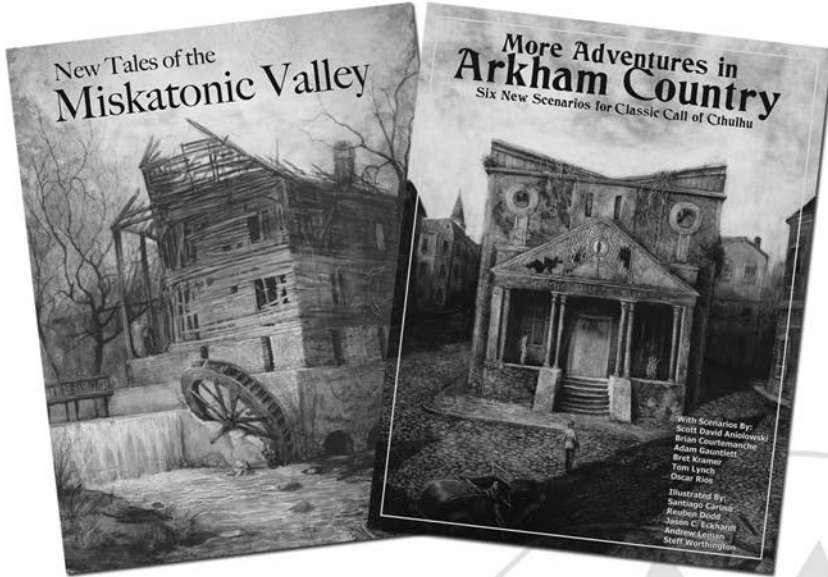
Tom Holland’s *The Sleeper in the Sands* is a good horror novel about the reign of Akhenaten, told after the fashion of *The Arabian Nights*. Mika Waltari’s *The Egyptian* is an outstanding social-realist treatment of the same era. Richard L. Tierney’s *The Winds of Zarr* and the various stories collected in *The Scroll of Thoth* place a Mythos spin on ancient Egypt, particularly the Exodus and the reign of Akhenaten. Various Nephren-Ka stories are collected in Chaosium’s Bloch collection, *Mysteries of the Worm*, and in *The Nyarlathotep Cycle*.



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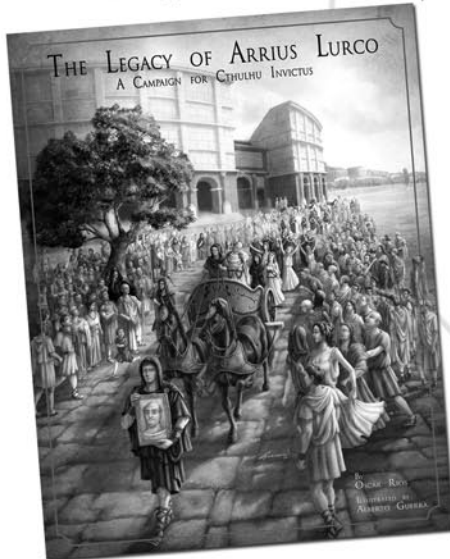
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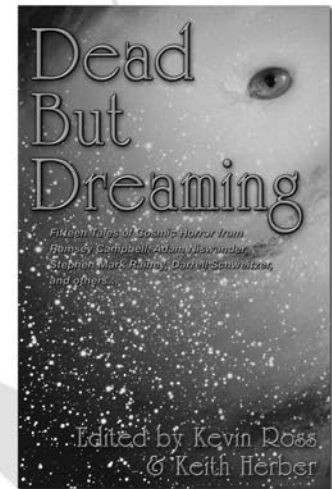
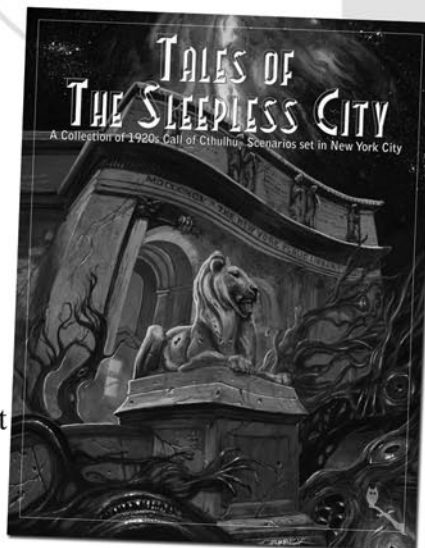
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ARCAIC ARTIFACT: THE FORGOTTEN

BY DAN HARMS

Countless interstellar civilizations across the universe have followed the same cycle: creation of a caste-based society, invention of science, increasing scientific curiosity, discovery of Mythos knowledge, corruption of the intelligentsia, and either destruction by or servitude of the dark forces they encountered. Somewhere in the depths of space, however, one species realized the danger they were facing and, before they could be overcome, deployed their ultimate weapon against the lords of the universe.

They won. Yet no one will ever know they did, as their weapon was the destruction of memory. They have left only one legacy: the Forgotten.

It appears to be a piece of grey, slightly shimmering cloth-like metal, about two feet on a side. Despite its flimsy appearance it cannot be cut, torn, scorched, or destroyed by any earthly force. Rolls in Chemistry or Geology will not identify its composition, and Cthulhu Mythos will not reveal anything about its nature.

The Forgotten has three effects. First, any attempt to obtain knowledge regarding the device, by feeling it, sampling it, or even picking it up, forces the person and anyone nearby to resist their POW against the Forgotten's value of 24. Those who fail forget what they had just learned about the item—and if it is not immediately before them, they forget that it even existed. Those who succeed may maintain the memory for five minutes before having to make another roll. A roll of 96-00 is a failure no matter what values are involved. (This means that anyone of a POW below 15 has no chance of retaining memory of the object, and that most nearby will forget about it in a very short period of time.)

Keepers may decide how they want this to play out. Some might simply assume certain actions on the part of the investigators, based on the players' choices. A character who seeks to burn the Forgotten with his new lighter might find it has gone empty and that three hours have passed. Groups with a good separation of player and character knowledge might play out the characters interacting with the Forgotten again and again, all to no effect. Those who remember what is occurring, or find themselves missing time, might be subject to a Sanity loss ranging from 0/1D2 to 1/1D4.

Second, the Forgotten drains knowledge from around it. Humans working within fifty feet of the Forgotten lose knowledge over time: 5% from Cthulhu Mythos and 1% from other knowledge skills each week. Books and electronic media undergo the same losses to any suggested skill gains that they impart, fading and becoming corrupted as they remain in proximity to the item. Characters realize that they are missing pieces of memory, but will likely not recognize the cause, and may not realize the extent until they attempt to use the damaged skill. (A generous Keeper might drop hints that investigators are losing facts and figures before hitting them with the skill loss. Then again, it's not all that hard to get lost skills back.)

Third, the Forgotten has the power to cause knowledge of itself to be forgotten, no matter how far away. Thus, any attempt to record its powers, or to recall its existence, is doomed to failure.

This object must have a fascinating history, but all of it has passed beyond memory. Indeed, when the characters are finally rid of it, they will soon forget that they ever encountered it.

MYSTERIOUS MANUSCRIPT

THE BRANCHLY NUMBERS EDIT

By PAT HARRIGAN

"...three...four...eight...one...one...six...nine..."

"Numbers stations" is the term given to the areas on a shortwave radio's dial where a listener can occasionally hear mysterious voices reciting a list of numbers, or sometimes nonsense words. The voices are male and female, old and young, sometimes in English, sometimes Russian or any other language.

Shortwave radio has been a communication tool for spies since before the Second World War, and these lists of numbers or words are obviously codes, intended to be deciphered by a spy's opposite number somewhere else in the world. But why have the number and frequency of the broadcasts not diminished since the end of the Cold War? Who is still sending? Who's listening?

"...plum...bell...landspeed...dram...buttonhole..."

In 1994, millionaire and shortwave enthusiast Philip Branchly, on a visit to Auckland, NZ, tuned in an androgynous voice reciting a seemingly endless series of seven-digit binary strings:

"...one-one-zero-one-zero-zero-zero, zero-one-one-zero-zero-one-zero, one-one-one-zero-one-zero-zero..."

The voice was half-drowned in static, but Branchly could still hear its distinctive clicks and buzzes, as if

the person were speaking through an electrolarynx. In the background he could dimly hear strange musical modulations, something like a theramin.

Over the summer and fall of 1994, Branchly sailed his yacht to dozens of small, uninhabited, usually volcanic islands in the Pacific. He puzzled his crew by pitching his tent on each new shore in turn and recording all the numbers broadcasts he could find. These tapes, running several hundred hours in length, formed the raw material for the Branchly Numbers Edit and, some would say, his madness.

Branchly recorded dozens of distinct voices, speaking in languages both recognizable and otherwise, though on only a few occasions did he rediscover the Auckland voice—or at least someone using the same electronic voice disguiser. On one occasion he heard a young woman reciting Branchly's own private fax number, over and over.

Back in San Francisco, Branchly found a strange, rather avant-garde pleasure in listening to the tapes in his office as he conducted business. The same could not be said for his business partners or his staff, who found the crackly, otherworldly voices intolerable. Branchly began to avoid his business concerns, preferring to stay at home listening to his tapes, and eventually editing them according to his own idiosyncratic system.

By June of 1995, Branchly was spending upwards of 90 hours a week in the editing room, compiling, condensing,

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cutting and recutting the tapes together on new, state-of-the-art equipment. On July 16, Branchly burned his final product onto 16 compact discs, and after mailing these to his son in Chicago, burned everything else in his mansion, including himself and his few remaining servants.

Philip Branchly, Jr., could make nothing of his father's bequest, but then he was never of a musical mind. As some of Phil's jazz club friends could tell him, and as the investigators will no doubt discover, the edited tapes follow an associative, almost symphonic, logic. To the right ears, the many voices and many languages seem to resolve into a single epic piece of art—but one with an elusive meaning, which no one can hope to communicate to another human being. Perhaps it is the product of an alien aesthetic, one mankind can only barely comprehend.

The Edit cannot be studied in the usual sense; rather, repeated attentive listenings gradually reveal details of an alien artistry, and spur the listener on to his or her own acts of musical or vocal creativity, many of which may have arcane effects. Desperate investigators seeking certain cosmic answers—say, how to travel to the great Library of Celaeno, or how to contact a friend lost in Carcosa—may find answers here, or they may find themselves permanently lost in the furthest wastelands of sound.

THE BRANCHLY NUMBERS EDIT—in English and Russian, compiled by Philip Branchly, Sr., 1995. The Edit is recorded on sixteen compact discs, each 70 to 76 minutes

long. One copy exists but it could be duplicated—and, perhaps more worryingly, posted on the Internet—without much trouble. *Sanity loss:* None on first listen. On the second and each subsequent listen the listener must make an Idea roll; success means a loss of 1D2 SAN. Thereafter the loss is automatically 1D3 for each listen. Also, after 3 points of SAN are lost, other aesthetic objects (music, books, film, etc.) begin to grow less and less satisfying. If 20% of SAN is lost from the tapes, all products of human creativity are found to be meaningless. The listener can still find pleasure in the products of nature (a mountain, the movement of the stars), but the artistic creations of man have grown permanently incomprehensible. *Cthulhu Mythos:* +1 percentile on the second or later listen when the Idea roll succeeds; +1D2 for each additional listen beyond that, to a maximum of 10 total points. *Time to study and comprehend:* About 20 hours per listen. *Spells:* Contact Mi-Go, Create Gate, Create Window, Summon/Bind Byakhee, others at the Keeper's discretion. The spell learned depends on what the listener hopes to find in the bizarre sounds. Successfully mastering it means the listener can create the appropriate spell in the form of an audio work of art (and with a successful Art roll, it's art that others find pleasing or compelling); failure might mean that the spell is inappropriate or flawed, again at the Keeper's discretion.

"...Carcosa...belly...shine...sunlight...hazelnut...delta..."

THE CHAPEL OF CONTEMPLATION

A Cult for Three Eras

By DAN HARMS

What follows “The Haunting”?

That scenario, formerly titled “The Haunted House,” is the first *Call of Cthulhu* scenario in the rulebook and has been the entry to our favorite game for thirty years. The Keeper is encouraged to create his own scenarios based on its sinister organization, the Chapel of Contemplation and Church of Our Lord Granter of Secrets. Yet in my experience, few Keepers have actually done so, as making the jump from running an introductory scenario to creating a full-fledged campaign is difficult.

Here you’ll find information on the Chapel of Contemplation useful for games in three different eras, to give those Keepers a start on their own campaigns.

EARLY HISTORY

The Chapel of Contemplation was an early offshoot of the Church of Starry Wisdom. Its founder, Orrin B. Eddy, was a family friend of Enoch Bowen, and was one of the first Starry Wisdom adepts.

Relations between Eddy and Bowen soured in 1846, when the death of Alice Eddy, Orrin’s wife, led him to reconsider his faith in the Haunter of the Dark. No matter how profound the mysteries of space and time might be, they could not replace his beloved. In October of the following year, Eddy made off with a good portion of the organization’s funds, plus an irreplaceable collection of notes dealing with Egyptian funerary customs. By this time, the Starry Wisdom was connected with many disappearances, prompting Eddy to leave New England for several years to avoid both the church and the authorities. Some travelers reported seeing him in Port Said, while others claimed he was present in Berlin when Johann Galle discovered the planet Neptune.

Eddy reappeared ten years later, setting up shop in an abandoned church in Boston’s North End with the financial assistance of one Walter Corbitt, owner of a successful local furniture shop. While the church still

paid lip service to the Haunter of the Dark and adopted an imitation of the being’s three-lobed eye as its symbol, Eddy had lost contact with both the Church’s doctrines and the Shining Trapezohedron, forcing him to create a belief system of his own. Seeking spiritual enlightenment and answers regarding the death of his wife, he fastened upon spiritualism.

The Fox sisters of Hydesville, New York had recently popularized spiritualism, the belief that mediums, or channelers, could make contact with the spirits and provide a means for them to manifest. To call the spirits, the medium would hold a séance, assembling a small group of people around a table in a darkened room. People would bring keepsakes belonging to their departed loved ones in order to focus the spirit’s appearance. During the séance, spirits would rap on tables, walls, and other surfaces, speak through the medium, or manifest in the form of glowing spirit tissue, or ectoplasm. In this way, they would answer questions and speak pronouncements to guide and comfort the living.

Overall, Eddy found little consolation in his search, and his grief soon turned to anger. He could respect the craftsmanship of the mediums, even the false ones, but he came to despise the attitude taken by many of the participants. Eddy adopted the Spiritualist doctrine and methods, working up a low-key yet impressive “séance” using sleight-of-hand and other trickery. His closest followers became the hub of a local information network of servants and criminals, assembled via trickery, bribery, and threats that was able to access intimate details of some of Boston’s most prominent families. He continued to investigate mediums, hoping to contact his wife again, but he was unsuccessful. That bitterness caused his methods to become even more insidious.

The Chapel taught this basic doctrine of spirituality to those in its outer circle. The consciousness of the dead lingers on for a length of time based on the strength of their personality. Such spirits, including many famous religious and political figures, could be contacted through the spirit medium. These spirits were sometimes hostile but usually desired to help their friends and family before passing on. Such mediumship could be aided through “He

Who Waits in the Dark,” a figure based on Nyarlathotep but more close in nature to such guides of the dead as Anubis and Hermes.

One’s soul, Eddy taught the inner circle, could survive the transition with death and remain in contact with the living for a long period. Two criteria were necessary for this to occur. First, the person’s will must be strong to maintain the necessary level of consciousness after death. This could be done through esoteric study and comprehensive knowledge of the boundaries between life and death. Second, a person’s life-force was often tied to their physical body and cherished items, and the dissolution of such items was a sure step toward dissolution of the consciousness. Eddy had perfected the mummification rituals through study of Bowen’s stolen notes, reconstructing the esoteric lore lost even to the Egyptian priests of the latter dynasties. As a result, many members (beginning with Walter Corbitt in 1866) were buried in specially-arranged vaults, or within secret rooms inside their own homes.

The Chapel grew slowly in its early years, feeding off of the public’s fascination with the spirit world. Eddy made a name for himself with his attacks on the Church of Starry Wisdom, representing himself as a man who had seen the light and repented of his evil ways. His descriptions of the invocation of “malevolent spirits” through a magic mirror, and their discussions with them in an “unholy tongue,” did much to damage the Church’s reputation and to enhance his own. Bowen dispatched sorcerous attacks against the Chapel, and Corbitt responded in kind, until a détente formed between the two groups.

In 1871, Orrin Eddy died. While a coffin went into a plot in Mount Auburn, his body rested in a small, secret chamber beneath the Chapel of Contemplation. Spiritual manifestations within the chapel picked up considerably, as Eddy’s spirit made itself manifest. Elisha Bishop, one of Eddy’s chief assistants, took over the Chapel, but he lacked the leadership skills of his predecessor, and the group slowly dwindled. The infusion of a few members of the disbanded Starry Wisdom church from Providence only led to more infighting within the group. Elisha’s megalomaniacal airs, not to mention the attentions he gave to young male members of the cult, led to more whispers.

Matters came to a head in 1876, when policemen showed up at the cult’s doorstep in search of a sacred golden box from Egypt which had vanished from the British Museum shortly after Bishop made an unsuccessful bid to purchase it. (This box would eventually show up in the hands of Rupert Merriweather, with whom it will be found at the start of the rulebook’s “The Edge of Darkness” scenario.) The authorities, upon searching the Chapel, found the false panels and secret doors used to stage séances and trick congregants. The box was not recovered, but the group’s faith in its minister was shaken. Shortly thereafter, the group’s Council of Elders voted Bishop out of his seat, replacing him with a young and untried yet zealous man named Michael Thomas.

At the time, only a dozen members remained of the church, mostly elderly. Having excavated a number of subterranean rooms beneath the church, Thomas recruited a new group of worshipers, including many criminals and individuals of dubious repute. Using his magical power to gain their loyalty, he obtained a network of local spies that could uncover information on anyone in the Boston area.



ATKINSON

Having obtained these insights, he could put on séances in which the spirits spoke with amazing accuracy. Those who thought themselves indebted to the cult found themselves in the grottoes beneath the church, engaged in ceremonies to aid the underground lord of the dead.

Through its campaign of extortion, the Chapel obtained all the money and power its leaders could want, and its network of contacts in all social strata of the Boston area was extensive. Though it was unable to control smuggling, the membership partook heavily of it, and could easily lay hands on any desired quantity of alcohol or narcotics.

Even with this power, Thomas knew that drastic measures were necessary to keep the Chapel as a viable institution so the criminals that served it would not be co-opted. Searching among Eddy's notes, he found references to the library of the Church of Starry Wisdom. Thomas visited Providence, only to find that expressing interest in the Church was not a safe course of action. Through his network of bibliophiles, librarians, and booksellers, he eventually found a badly damaged copy of *Liber Ivonis*, the last heirloom of a noble family from Averoine that fled their homeland during the Terror. It took Thomas two years to learn enough Latin to read it, and another two to reconstruct one of the spells, but he was ecstatic when he completed a spell he thought would bring back the One Who Waits in the Dark, Our Lord Granter of Secrets. The mist-shrouded, sleepy toad-like thing agreed to devotion and sacrifices, granted him the location of a rich silver mine, and fell asleep.

The god had demanded sacrifices, and Thomas sought them out. For lesser rites, the god only asked for a pet or farm animal. More important rituals, such as those at the solstices and equinoxes, required a human victim. These were often unwanted infants, but in some cases, criminal contacts would provide a particularly notorious debtor or other undesirable. The gangsters received credit for the disappearance, and Thomas had the sacrifice he needed. In most cases, Thomas let another member of the cult conduct the ritual. They still did not have his direct link to Tsathoggua, and it provided him with leverage in case they considered leaving.

This situation continued for decades, until Thomas grew greedy and asked for a new boon from Tsathoggua—opening a gate into N'kai from the grottoes. The necessary rites were carried out at the spring equinox in 1912. Five members died to power the gateway, but Thomas had his new source of energy. Some members blanched when they saw what came through the gateway, but Thomas' force of will and command over Tsathoggua's hideous spawn kept them coming back. Still, their visitors from the darkness required nourishment, often at short notice, and children from the neighborhood disappeared at an alarming rate.

On June 21, 1912, a police raid interrupted a ceremony at the Chapel of Contemplation. No one is sure what happened after the police entered. Later testimony at the trial of Michael Thomas claimed that he drew a gun, and that two worshipers waved torches at police on his orders. Whatever the case, shots were exchanged, the church burnt to the ground, and three policemen and seventeen cultists died in the chaos. Little of this reached the outside world, for the Chapel knew the secrets of half of Boston's politicians.

Thomas was quietly tried on four accounts of second-degree murder, and sentenced to life in prison. Five years after the murders, he vanished from his cell one night, leaving two guards torn apart and five prisoners insane. Clearly someone on the outside was involved, for Thomas slipped away without a trace. The surviving members believe that he returned to the Southwest, closer to the home of his god. The cult dissolved, the links to its god broken and Spiritualism faded in influence.

GASLIGHT HOOKS

In campaigns dealing with Nyarlathotep, the Chapel might be considered a friendly source due to their hostility to Starry Wisdom. The leaders familiar with Eddy's notes might be quite helpful with tips and information about the god and his ways, though they seek to make this serve their interests and reputations.

1920s HOOKS

Thomas made his way out to San Francisco, where he founded in 1922 a group called the Society of Rational Contemplation. Though he had few followers in his local area, he soon made his mark on the scene through the publication of a series of lightweight pamphlets dealing with root races, the power of faith, and other topics, borrowing liberally from Theosophy, Christian Science, and other contemporary movements. In these, Thomas hinted that he was a scion of the mystical order of seventeenth-century healing mystics known as the Rosicrucians, though the orders of H. Spencer Lewis and R. Swinburne Clymer condemned him vociferously. Those who considered themselves "devoted" could come to intensive seminars at the Chapel's headquarters, where they received special training leading to enlightenment. It was in this setting that they came into contact with the "Hidden Master" via seances. Thomas also perpetrated the same cycle of blackmail and occult fakery as he had in Boston to swell his coffers.

Thomas, presenting himself to the students as "The Exalted Key to the Masters Simon el-Hazzard," became



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a recluse and rarely ventured forth. Rumor has it that his long association with the energies of Tsathoggua had begun to warp his physiology and countenance.

Scenario Hooks: Investigators who have experienced the horrors of “The Haunting” might later encounter a photo of Michael Thomas in a West Coast newspaper. Alternatively, a reader of Corbitt’s diaries might notice similarities in phrasing to a pamphlet from the Society’s correspondence course, found in a local bookstore.

MODERN HOOKS

The Chapel reaped great financial benefits, the profits of which Thomas invested in a series of mining ventures that his subterranean lord recommended. The high priest passed away, being buried in secret beneath his ornate temple, in 1933, but his foundation continued its work. Some momentum was lost in the Sixties and Seventies, but a renovation of the publications to present more Eastern mysticism, sexuality, and implied drug use carried it through. In the Nineties, the group took the initiative to explore the Web as a new conduit for its wisdom.

The Chapel’s most recent project is the Committee for Spiritual Reflection, taking advantage of the most recent trends in paranormal investigation. Across the United States, a wide variety of local small-time researchers have become involved in investigating supposed hauntings, possessions, and cryptozoological sightings. The Committee can hardly control all of these individuals—nor would they want to—but they find them useful tools to employ to their own ends.

To further that goal, the CSR offers an annual series of prizes for excellence in paranormal research. Given the lack of funding available in the field, the purses of a few thousand dollars each are quite appetizing to the researchers. Each application must contain a detailed report of all aspects of the phenomena—history of the place, witness statements, readings from appropriate instruments, reports from any alleged psychics present, video and audio recordings, etc. The committee has faithfully returned such proofs to its applicants and respected their rights to publish their data. What this has done, in effect, is to allow the Committee to outsource much of its inquiry into other realms. When a promising site or individual is discovered, a team from the Committee moves in to silence the individual, usually in a seemingly unrelated incident, and confiscate any findings.

At the present time, the Committee is growing weary of its association with Tsathoggua. A new stage is under way: to complete the transformation of its undead members into the next stage of their development, in which the physical body dissolves and the spirit travels to far realms, the experiences taking them farther from their human natures.

Scenario Hooks: The CSR prizes can be an incentive for independent investigators to conduct and report on what they find in the field. Competing groups might lead to games of one-upmanship and dirty tricks. These shenanigans might turn deadly when a valuable piece of information comes available to the cult, with the presence of rival organizations and their machinations sowing confusion as the Chapel sends its operatives to “clean up.” Other organizations, such as Delta Green, might find their efforts helped or hindered by local monster-hunting teams in search of the prize.

A CHAPEL OF CONTEMPLATION

This particular chapel is appropriate for use in any era. It could be employed in place of the Chapel encounter described in the rulebook, or as a more intact sister sanctuary.

The chapel will be found in a formerly genteel neighborhood, now run down, in a large city. Though crime is higher here than elsewhere, the members of the church are unmolested. Speaking to the neighbors (Fast Talk or Psychology to keep them at the door, followed with a Persuade for them to give up information) reveals that the group is quiet, though some believe that Satanic services occur in the building. No specifics are given—it seems no one knows, in fact—nor have any of them attended any services.

City records (Law and Library Use to access) show no abnormalities—the building is well maintained, no zoning violations are noted, and their exemptions for property taxes are all in order.

Modern investigators will find an antiquated website for the church, built years ago by a member and never maintained. It provides only an address, some vague notes about church doctrine, and a guestbook which is never checked.

Friday evening meetings are witness to twenty to thirty congregants, with more appearing for the solstices and equinoxes. Both the cult leader and an assistant (see cult member statistics below) are present at odd hours of the day or night, often departing for hours at a time. They are polite but ask most visitors to return at the time of a service. Those with warrants will be given help initially, but any effort to enter the underground rooms will be met with magical attack.

For better armed or larger parties, the Keeper might include the following guardian: a tiger, one of the last of an honored bloodline kept in Tsathoggua's temples in Hyperborea. Under the god's influence, it will not attack any of the inner circle members. It occupies the basement during services, but it moves to intercept intruders if a break-in occurs.

TIGER

STR 19 CON 13 SIZ 17 DEX 19 POW 6

Move 10 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Bite 45%, damage 1D10.
Claw 70%, damage 1D8+db.
Rip 80%, damage 2D8+db.

Armor: 2 points skin and fur.

Skills: Hide 80%, Move Quietly 75%, Track 50%.

LOCATION KEY

1. Foyer: Behind the main double doors is a quiet, secluded area. Velvet hangings and a thick carpet absorb the sound of the outside world. A few chairs are scattered around the outside, and a large table includes bulletins and envelopes for gifts. A door to a small restroom lies to one side.

2. Sanctuary: The interior is gloomy, with only dull lights in a chandelier illuminating the interior in the earlier portions of a service. It is arranged in the round, with

circles of chairs surrounding a central pedestal painted a dull black. This, in turn, bears several chairs about a round oak table. During the service, senior members or those seeking special favors may be seated here.

At one side is an empty lectern which looks as if it could hold a large book, though none is present. Anyone who examines the pedestal may make a Spot Hidden roll. Success turns up a trapdoor in the floor before the lectern, leading to Area 3. The trapdoor might also be found by pouring water on the floor, dismantling or breaking the platform, or other types of investigator ingenuity. The door has no handle from this side and must be pried open.

When the lights are up, unintelligible words may be seen painted into the walls around the room. A Cthulhu Mythos roll identifies these as Aklo. Those with more than 1% in Aklo can recognize the tongue, while a roll in that language reveals them to be disjointed phrases relating to darkness, gloom, the underworld, etc. During the service, ushers are alert for those who take an interest in these words, marking them for special attention later.

3. Secret Passage: This passage leads from beneath the central stage in Area 2 to the secret stage effects in Room 5. Some of the controls leading to Area 5 are here, so that a person in the passage can manipulate them in the room above.

4. Vestry: A room, bare save for a large wardrobe with several black robes with blue velvet trim, and an oil portrait of Orrin Eddy. Behind the painting is a catch which allows the wall to pivot, revealing Room 5.

5. Stage Effects Room: This hidden room contains the controls to several machines capable of being triggered in the main room. Depending upon the era, these might include smoke machines, thunder-makers, tubes that create strange howling noises, projectors to create half-glimpsed visions, or any other such paraphernalia. If the leader knows intruders are in the building, he typically triggers one or more of these. Under a trapdoor are the stairs to the inner circle meeting room (Room 8).

6. Office: A fashionably furnished room with a large mahogany desk, Persian rug, leather upholstered chairs, small pieces of modern art, a large bookshelf, and other accoutrements speaking of taste and comfort. The leader uses this area for personal consultations.

In a file retrieval system of your choice (file cabinet, with Lockpick to open; or computer, with Computer Use to access) is an extensive set of notes on many prominent members of the community. An unscrupulous individual given to blackmail might live comfortably off the money of others for the rest of her life with this information. An Accounting roll turns up the organization's mundane

expenses, which are unremarkable save for a great deal of “donations” from unspecified sources, payments for a safe deposit box (where the leader keeps *On Resurrection*; see page 30) and a large butcher’s bill.

The bookshelf holds mostly works on theology, Middle Eastern and Egyptian archaeology, and spiritualism in various shades of disrepair. An Occult, Archaeology, or Theology (replace with an Idea roll by a clergyman if that skill is not relevant) establishes that the books on that particular topic are largely out of date. Those who go through the books systematically find the three volumes of Michael Thomas’ notes (see page 30) masquerading as copies of the Proceedings of the Society of Scholars of Biblical Rectitude.

Keepers seeking to tie the Chapel to other scenarios might insert hooks here as pertinent. References to the cult’s mine holdings in the Southwest—some of which might lead to N’kai—might be found here. Also, the current leader’s quest for Mythos knowledge and power continues, and cryptic messages from the dark god who serves as his oracle could be found here—a paper with the name “Rupert Merriweather, Arkham” (“Edge of Darkness”) or “Leroy Turner, musician, Chicago” (“Dead Man Stomp”). The god’s pronouncements are cryptic, and the leader might not have time to follow up on all of them.

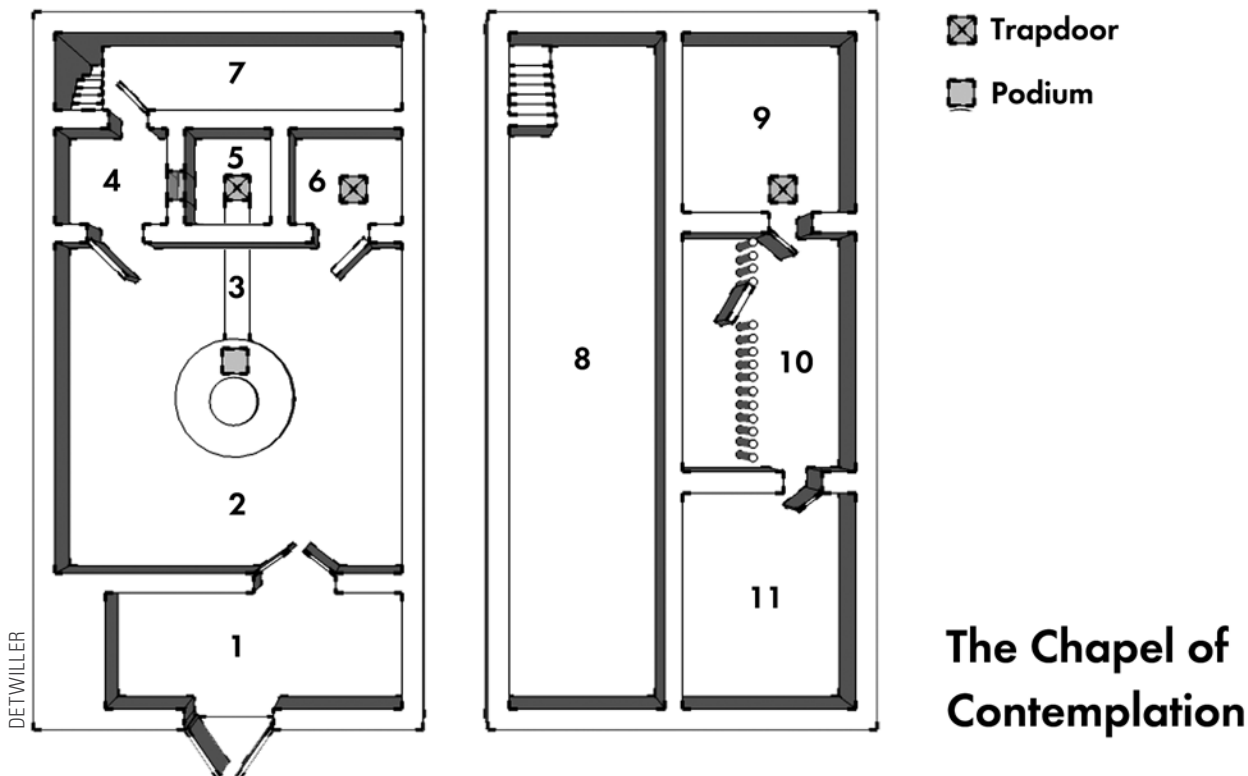
An end table on the rug appears to be askew. Looking beneath it turns up a trapdoor to areas 9 and 10.

7. Kitchen and Fellowship Hall: A long room with tables, used for board meetings and other mundane business. The kitchen is slightly outdated but nonetheless fairly modern. The icebox or refrigerator might contain a side of meat for the tiger. A stairway at one end leads down into area 8.

8. Basement: Scaled off from the rest of the underground areas, this area contains a furnace, a few pieces of broken furniture, and little else.

9. Inner Circle Meeting Room: This room mirrors the setup of the sanctuary above, though the only chairs are about the central table.

Chained to a pedestal at one side of this area is a large book. Examination proves it to be a Latin work, *Liber Ivonis*. It is the prize of those who can break the chain (STR 30) or carry the pedestal out of the building (characters’ STR versus 36 on the resistance table to lift up through the trapdoors, no more than 3 characters may work together). No lock is present; the chain is literally welded to the pedestal.



On the table, next to a silver candelabra, rests a cup carved from black onyx, alongside a six-inch, large-gauge needle. If someone drinks a cup of human cerebrospinal fluid from it (Sanity loss 0/1D3), the drinker gains 4 MP. These are spent before any other MP when casting spells, and those unspent vanish each day at dawn.

The walls are swathed in thick black velvet. At the Keeper's option, one such drapery might be a disguised Formless Spawn (cf. 6th edition rulebook, p. 159) which reveals itself when it is examined or the group seeks to leave. A steel door leads to Room 10.

10. Prison/Tiger Room: At one end of the room is the lair of the tiger—a large tub filled with water, a chewed piece of used firehose, a pile of hay, and a few well-gnawed bones. At the other is a locked cell, with floor-to-ceiling bars, in which any prisoners are kept. Keeper's discretion as to whether a weeping child being prepared for sacrifice is kept within, or if only a few small human bones (Sanity loss 0/1D2) and scratches on the walls remain.

11. The Tomb: A spiritual connection between this realm and the underground kingdom of N'kai has been created here. Anyone who enters the room sees lights, even electric ones, dim. For every few minutes spent in the room, a Sanity roll of 0/1 should be made.

A low stone slab occupies the center of this room, with a few small wooden tables around it. The walls are painted with Egyptian hieroglyphs; appropriate skill rolls (Hieroglyphs or halved Archaeology) establish that these are powerful curses typical to that period. The tables have small piles of dust, and the slab in the center has a long drift of yellow powder, the remnants of a previous occupant who has transcended this plane.

The powder contains the pollen of the yellow lotus, a blossom from Afghanistan that is key to the mummification process. Anyone who disturbs the dust sends the pollen into the air, causing hallucinations of other worlds if its POW of 15 is not resisted (25 for anyone who sniffs or tastes it directly). Those affected in this room will find their senses cast into N'kai, a lightless realm in which unseen beasts slop and slobber around them (Sanity loss 1D2/1D6). If temporary insanity results, the character will seek to run from or attack these creatures, possibly endangering themselves or their fellows. Removing those affected from the room will cause the hallucinogenic effects to recede into vague phantasms. These effects will last 1 minute for every 5% by which the resistance roll failed.

AFTERMATH

The cult tries to discover the identities of any who broke into the chapel, with recent visitors being prime suspects. They are warned off if they did not get far, but the Chapel's leadership does not scruple at kidnapping or murder if the intruders learned too much.

Destruction of the cult will be watched closely, as many blackmail victims might see this as the opportunity to get revenge or to retrieve incriminating material from the cult's holdings. The investigators might become involved in delicate situations as a result of this.

AVERAGE CHAPEL MEMBER

STR 9 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 14 POW 13
DEX 13 APP 14 EDU 12 SAN 25 HP 13

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, damage 1D3+db.
Grapple 40%, damage special.

Skills: Conceal 25%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 40%, Find Incriminating Information 25%, Listen 55%, Occult 30%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 35%.

Spells/Powers: Most members of the group depend on the group's leaders for esoteric knowledge. Some members of the temple, usually in the outer circle, might manifest various psychic abilities. Higher echelon adepts may know such spells as Dominate, Flesh Ward, and Telekinesis (page 31). Only the head of the temple knows other spells.

Note: A modern cult "special ops" team member should have STR 13, damage bonus of +1D4, 60% in handgun (1D10 damage), and Hide and Sneak of 60%.

MICHAEL THOMAS. AGE 46 IN 1890 OR 76 IN 1920

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 17 POW 18
DEX 15 APP 17 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 15

In modern times use the following stats for James Chambers, the current head of the cult (use the same weapons, skills, armor and spells for either one):

STR 10 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 17 POW 22
DEX 15 APP 11 EDU 17 SAN 0 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: Sacrificial Knife 60%, damage 1D4+2+db.
Derringer 45%, damage 1D6.

Skills: Bargain 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Fast Talk 70%, Occult 50%, Persuade 75%, Psychology 65%, Sleight of Hand 55%

Armor: Thomas has usually put three magic points into Flesh Ward for the day. In addition, each kinetic attack is reduced by three points due to the slightly plastic nature of his body after years of contact with Tsathoggua. Thomas usually keeps this skin well covered and wears an elaborate Egyptian headdress to cover up the toothless mouth on the back of his neck (loss of 1/1D4 to view), but seeing him shrug off a cut or stab costs 0/1D3 Sanity.

Spells: Contact Deity/Tsathoggua, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, Dominate, Ectoplasmic Manifestation of He Who Waits in Darkness, Flesh Ward, Summon/Bind Dimensional Shambler.

THE EMBALMING TECHNIQUE

This method of eternal life was created by Orrin B. Eddy via the notes of Enoch Bowen. A variant of the ritual to create mummies, it ensures the survival of a person's consciousness after death.

At the moment of death, the person's essence must be captured in a specially-prepared talisman (often a gem) prepared with a point of their POW through a variant of the Apportion Ka spell. No other person can touch this item without destroying themselves (and incidentally, providing the one touching it with the POW), so most recipients guarded these quite well. At a certain astronomical alignment (determined with an Astronomy roll), Egyptian prayers of protection and survival are recited as the corpse is anointed with special perfume and various organs

extracted. The perfume's exact ingredients can be found in *On Resurrection*, but investigators might have trouble tracking down the Glund fluid and the extract of yellow lotus. The prepared body is then placed within a "tomb," usually a secret room beneath the person's house.

The recipient of the technique exists in a state of half-life. Food must be taken in at rare intervals, but for the most part the undead sorcerer remains in a state of trance. Limited movement is possible, but costly in magical terms; 2 MP allow the person to move for five combat rounds. In most cases, the body does decay after some time, but its basic integrity remains intact.

The preparations do carry one distinct advantage. If the person was familiar with their surroundings in life, they may sense any sentient beings who enter it, as well as any major changes in its physical makeup (buildings torn down, fires, and the like). In addition, they may cast their spells anywhere within this area.

SACRED TEXTS

ON RESURRECTION—*in English*. Enoch Bowen's notes on mummification and the preservation of the soul allowed the cult to preserve many of its more powerful members in secret underground chambers, awaiting the return of the Old Ones. The techniques inside have been lost for millennia; if the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh ever found this book, it is likely that they could reconstruct the ceremonies used for their most potent mummifications. The cult leader keeps these in a safe-deposit box at a local bank. *Sanity loss 1D3/1D6; grants an Egyptian Hieroglyphs skill check; Cthulhu Mythos +3 percentiles; 8 weeks to study and comprehend/16 hours to skim*. Spells: Apportion Ka, Hardness of Flesh (Flesh Ward).

LIBER IVONIS—*in Latin*. This worm-eaten folio was copied imperfectly, and after further damage over the centuries is missing great portions of the text. *Sanity loss 1D2/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +5 percentiles; 18 weeks to study and comprehend/ 36 hours to skim*. No spells.

THOMAS' NOTEBOOKS—*in English*. These three volumes described Thomas' magical techniques and experiments. They were never found in the raid, and Thomas might have retrieved them before his disappearance in 1917. *Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +4 percentiles; Occult skill check; 10 weeks to study and comprehend/20 hours to skim*. Spells: Hardness of Flesh (Flesh Ward), various hypnotic techniques (Dominate), Contact Deity/Zhothaquah (Tsathoggua), Ectoplasmic Manifestation of He Who Waits in the Dark.

THE SOCIETY OF RATIONAL CONTEMPLATION COURSE IN SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY—*in English, French and Spanish editions*. Twenty-four cheap, paper-bound

volumes available as a correspondence course covering such topics as secret societies, telepathy, astral projection, yoga, and root races. Aspects of the Mythos are alluded to, but never fully revealed. The reading time given does not include the time for mailing and to finish the "examinations" and "exercises" that must be reported for the next section to be sent. *Sanity loss 0/1D4; Cthulhu Mythos +2 percentiles; two Occult skill checks, one halfway through reading; 12 weeks to study and comprehend/24 hours to skim.* No spells.

SPELLS

Ectoplasmic Manifestation of He Who Waits in the Dark: A modified version of the Contact Tsathoggua spell, this requires a group of five or more people, only one of whom needs to know the spell. The group must sit undisturbed for half an hour and concentrate on the purpose of contacting the spirit world, losing 1D6 Sanity each. A phantasmal form of the god appears in the center of the circle, costing an additional 0/1D10 Sanity.

There is no initial POW or MP cost for this spell. Rather, participants are encouraged to ask questions of He Who Waits.

Tsathoggua answers each question to the best of his ability, but he may drain 1 POW from the questioner at each opportunity. Canny participants have another member of the group ask questions for them.

Tsathoggua may be thanked and asked to leave at any time, at which time 1D6 is rolled. If the number rolled is higher than the POW expended, the god extracts the difference in POW from anyone of its choosing and departs.

The ceremony also calls for the blood of a child to be used to anoint the foreheads of the casters. This is not actually necessary for the spell to work, but the cult is unaware of this.

Telekinesis: Costs 1 MP (per SIZ of the object moved per round), 1 Sanity, and one round of concentration. Allows the movement of an object within sixty feet with which the caster is intimately familiar (ownership for at least two years). The caster may use the object to attack others at one-fifth the appropriate combat skill (Throw and Small Club are typical).

Walter Corbitt in "The Haunting" has a greater mastery of this power. Keepers may grant the same powers to any character who knows the spell and spends decades in an empty, locked room.



ATKINSON

A TALE OF TERROR FOR DELTA GREEN: SLIGHT RETURN

BY PAT HARRIGAN

While interrogating a low-level suspect, a Delta Green team is surprised to see the suspect's body abruptly warp and change, becoming the very image of a dead Delta Green agent—in life an ally of the player characters—down to the smallest detail, including voice. The dead agent recognizes the team and addresses them by name.

POSSIBILITY 1: A LIFE FOR A LIFE

The agent, desperate to retire from Delta Green, faked his own death and, through a secret murder and the Consume Likeness spell, began a new life. But the habits of a lifetime are hard to break. The former agent found himself keeping questionable company, and has now fallen into the hands of his former teammates. The stress of this has triggered biomagical changes in his body, resulting in the untimely rejection of his consumed likeness.

The team may not believe the “dead” agent's story, but no amount of testing or torture will disprove it. With the spell permanently broken, the agent cannot return to his new life and family; he will try to convince the team to let him go, intending to commit another murder and consume a new identity. The agent might have useful information to trade for his life, or just as likely, might need to rely on his former teammates for protection and help. Imprisoning the agent defers the problem, but word will get out about the resurrection and the agent's old enemies might resurface, or the team might find themselves at odds with Cell A, who no doubt want the agent more permanently retired.

POSSIBILITY 2: TIME AND AGAIN

Upon closer inspection, the formerly dead agent appears several months or years younger than he was when he died (evidenced by fewer scars, for example). It is in fact the real agent, carried forward in time through an exposure to Tillinghast radiation and temporarily replacing the body of the unfortunate suspect. It is only a matter of days or hours before the agent returns to his proper place in the past, as several pseudoscientific tests can indicate.

If they are familiar with the effects of T-radiation, the team can neutralize the charge, and so prevent further time dislocations. But doing so will trap the agent in the present day—with many retroactive ramifications, since in the new chronology the agent disappeared and was not present for several missions before the events that would have led to his death. Disagreements might arise between the agent, eager to save his life, and a rival Delta Green team or Cell A afraid of time-travel paradoxes. If the agent is saved, the Keeper should feel free to revise the team's personal history in drastic and dire ways.

If they do not neutralize the charge, the agent will soon be gone again, returned to the past. The team may have instructed the agent on how to neutralize the T-charge after his return, but if not, the agent may time travel again before his death, possibly creating additional paradoxes (and causing his eventual corpse to vanish after its burial and float forever in N-space). The team may be left wondering, after the agent returns to his own time, whether he remembered his trip to the future but never told them about it. If he remembered, does he resent the team for allowing his death? Will he take steps to try to prevent it?

Meanwhile the original suspect has traveled back in time, switching places with the dead agent, appearing in the dead agent's apartment and poking through his most personal secrets. What might he learn about Delta Green? A particularly industrious criminal, knowing he will be picked up for questioning before long, could set up any number of ways to get himself out of trouble in the future: from organizing a convenient rescue team or hit squad to planting a bomb, or making a point of finding out information that he could trade to the Delta Green team for his freedom or his life.

POSSIBILITY 3: THE BARGAIN

The dead agent made a secret deal with Stephen Alzis but died before fulfilling the bargain. Naturally Alzis wasn't willing to write off the account; the original suspect (a Network foot soldier) has been atomized and his life force used to resurrect the dead agent. Soon minions of the Fate

arrive, demanding that the team turn over the agent. The agent begs the team to protect him, and may even coerce or threaten them using strange new magical abilities—possibly he has been given these powers post-mortem by Yog-Sothoth, or even by Nyarlathotep himself, who plays his own unknowable game with the agents and his own avatar Alzis. Perhaps if the agents refuse to help, the returned agent insists to Alzis that he needs their help, and Alzis uses his considerable powers of persuasion to convince the team.

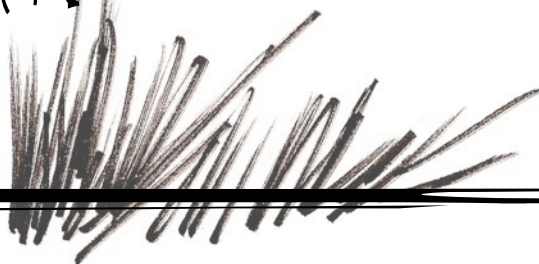
The details of the dead agent's deal with Alzis are left for the Keeper to determine, but it will certainly be illegal,

highly dangerous, and outside the bounds of Delta Green's usual remit. The newly resurrected and strangely powered agent will prove to be unpredictable and emotionally unstable, with low SAN and mental disorders appropriate to his previous experiences. If the agent dies over the course of the mission, Alzis will resurrect him as many times as it takes to get the job done. Each time this happens the agent will become more deranged, and his demands on the player characters will become more irrational.

If the mission is successfully completed, Alzis graciously allows the agent to return to death.



A TALE OF TERROR: HOUSE OF HUNGER



By MONTE COOK

The investigators read an all-too-common story in the newspaper regarding a fatal car accident at an intersection in a residential neighborhood. A drunk driver ran down an older man on a bicycle the evening previous. Tragic, but not particularly noteworthy.

Two days later, however, one investigator receives an anonymous envelope in the mail with the same newspaper story clipped to two others regarding mysterious deaths in the same location in the last few years. The first of the two takes place eight years ago and involves the death of a

young child living in one of the houses at that intersection. The child passed away of an unknown ailment at the age of 20 months. The second clipping is from two years ago and involves what appears to be a mugging gone wrong, with a young woman found dead on the same street corner with multiple stab wounds.

Included in the envelope is a handwritten note that states: "Professor Gehring needs their blood." A simple inquiry confirms that Doctor Paul Gehring lives in one of the houses in that intersection.

POSSIBILITY 1: THE RIVAL

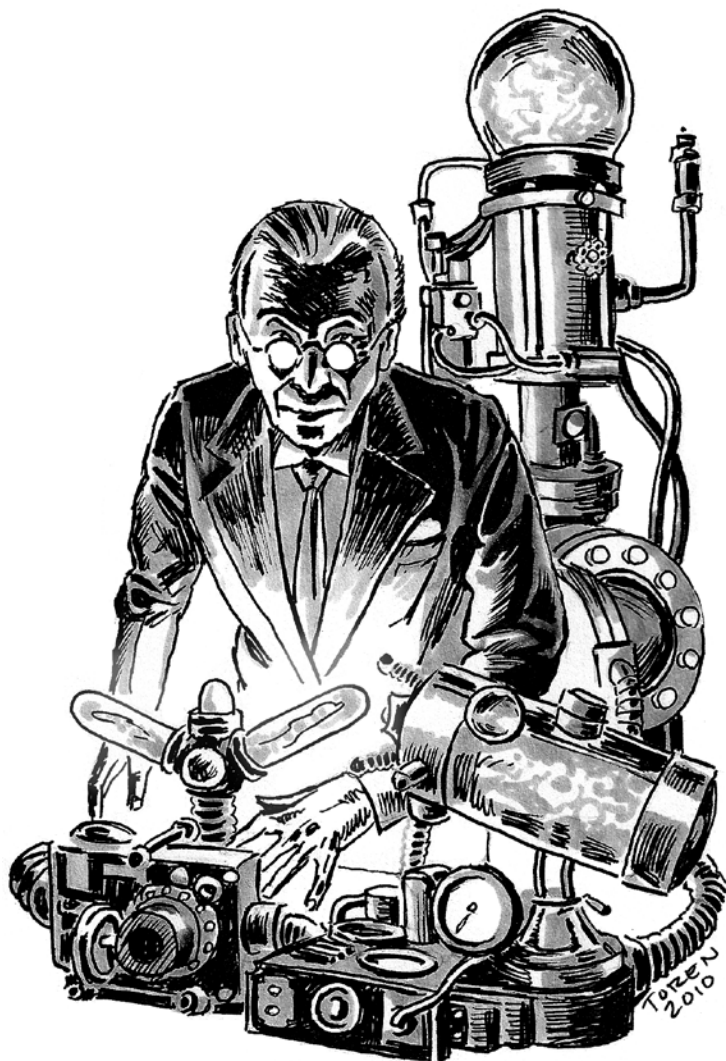
The first of the two incidents is a coincidence, and the second additional clipping is a fake. The message was sent by Doctor Niles Forbush, a professor who works at the same university as Gehring. Forbush's specialty is up to the Keeper, and should be keyed to something the investigators also focus upon. Forbush hates Gehring, who mocked his research and made Forbush look like a fool on more than one occasion.

Gehring is pompous and unsociable, but he's no murderer. Forbush knows the investigators are interested in the occult and supernatural and seeks to shine a poor light on Gehring and his studies. It's a foolish plan that will produce little but an annoyance for Gehring, but perhaps Forbush's own research into some of the university's stranger occult tomes have impaired his judgment.

If the investigators fail to help Forbush in his quest to sabotage Gehring, he may turn his obsessive, character-assassinating attentions to them. . . .

POSSIBILITY 2: HAUNTED

The note was a prank by neighborhood teenagers. Oh, there is indeed something afoot, but it has nothing to do with Dr. Gehring. The house across the street from his home is haunted by a vengeful and evil ghost. The



investigators discover that there were two other deaths near the same corner within the last five years, one a hit-and-run accident involving a transient man, and another with a young girl who fell out of a tree. The ghost can manipulate events within the area close to the house and feeds on the psychic trauma of the deaths its causes.

Despite all the tragedy, as well as some strange noises sometimes heard at night, the occupants of the house—an elderly couple named Thomas and Dolores Owens—refuse to believe that anything is going on. The ghost leaves them alone; they have accepted its actions, believing that what they have witnessed to be a part of their own growing dementia. The ghost feeds on this corruption of their minds as well as the deaths it causes. Investigators trying to pin down something unnatural in the Owens home anger the spirit, provoking it to more diabolical actions.

POSSIBILITY 3: THE MACHINE

After Dr. Gehring's research led him to a remote little town in the Appalachians where he found an isolated community with some . . . eccentric religious practices, he began experiencing horrific dreams. The mi-go contacted him across the gulfs of space in these dreams. Using unknowable technologies, they transmitted the plans for a machine that plagued Gehring night after night. Half-mad from the prolific dreams, Professor Gehring began to assemble the machine in an almost trance-like, sleepless state, hoping that if he did, he would somehow get some peace.

The machine, running now for years in Gehring's basement, is manipulating energies unknown to conventional science within a radius around his home, causing not only the events surrounding the mysterious deaths but all manner of strange occurrences. Investigators discover a neighborhood plagued with inexplicable accidents, power surges and outages, odd lights in the sky, objects moving by themselves, strange sounds and odors, and so on. And these events are increasing in frequency.

The long-term effect of the mi-go machine, however, likely holds a far more dire fate for those living in proximity to it than simple bumps in the night. If the investigators do not act and the machine is completed, Gehring will begin kidnapping children, removing their brains, and transmitting them to Yuggoth. The victims' grisly remains will be found not only with their skulls opened, but strange (mi-go) inscriptions scrawled upon them as well.

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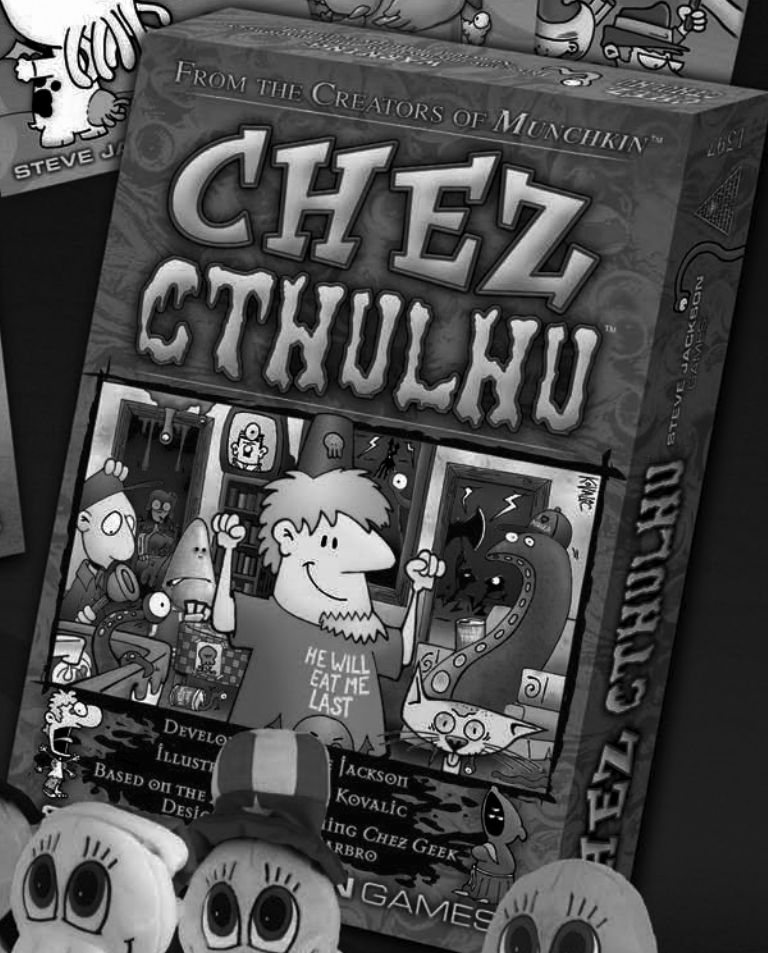
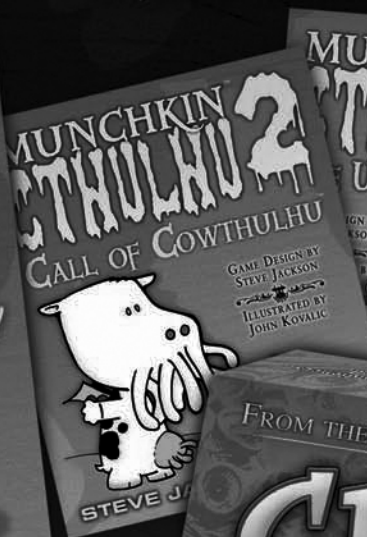
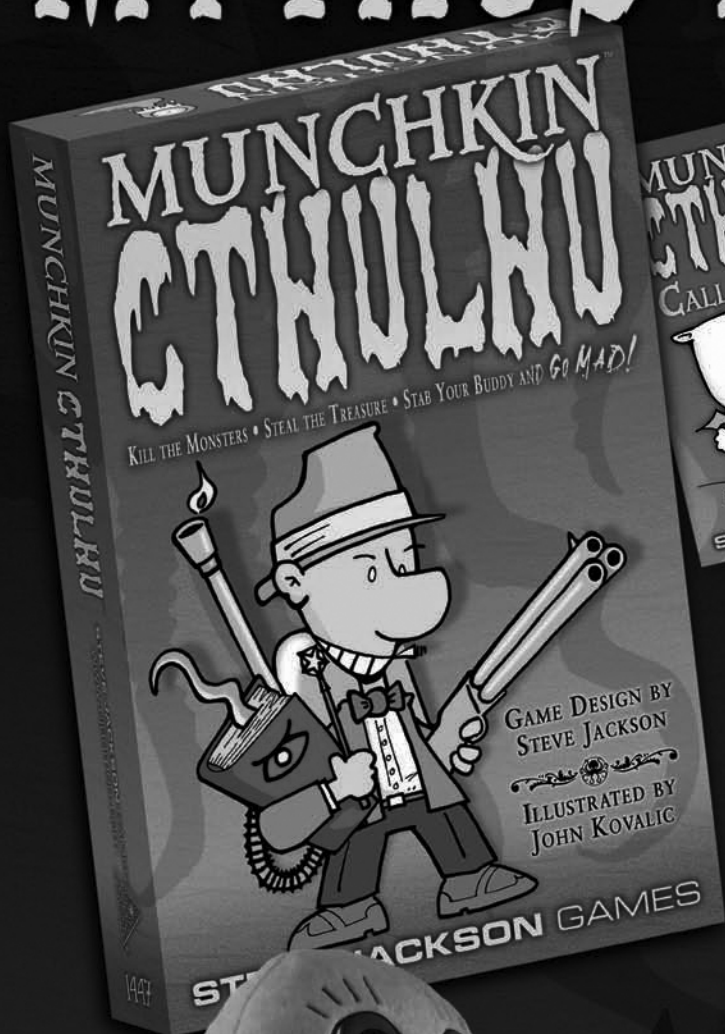
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DOG WILL HUNT

A 1920s Scenario for *Call of Cthulhu*

By **RICHARD A. BECKER**

Overconfidence and sloppiness are traditionally the bane of mad serial killers, and Eben Murrow, a lunatic Mythos sorcerer in the Louisiana bayous, is no exception. For some twenty years he has been content to capture strangers and ne'er-do-wells who would never be missed. But ignoring the growth and progress in his region, Murrow has carelessly begun taking people whose disappearance cannot go unnoticed, and has even extended his “hunting ground” to such areas as draw the notice of investigators.

His most brazen act is to kill Revenue Agent Lawrence Brody in broad daylight in the town of Montegut before a dozen witnesses, including the player characters. If he is not stopped, Murrow plans to use a woman (Eudora Cabe) he recently kidnapped from an outlying farm to breed infant sacrifices to his loathsome god, and then begin to prey on the citizens of small nearby towns.

A CHRONOLOGICAL NOTE

This scenario takes place 12-24 months after the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927, or any time from approximately April of 1928 through May of 1929. If a Keeper decides to set the scenario any later than that, they are cautioned to remember the stock market crash of October, 1929, and how much worse they would make the situation for the people of Louisiana despite the influx of oil money.

A WARNING

This scenario is more focused on field investigation than library research; player characters designed primarily for “desk work” may find themselves frustrated, bored, or entertainingly out of their element in this situation, depending on the players’ tastes and the Keeper’s approach to running the game.

INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

The investigators read, either in the New Orleans papers or in some newspaper which would also carry the story in its back pages, of complaints among the Cajuns about folks gone missing and strange lights in the swamps around Montegut, Louisiana. A reward is also posted. The investigators drive south to Louisiana to discover the fate of the missing people, possibly to write an article for a Fortean publication or to collect on the reward, whatever it may be.

There are other possible hooks to bring investigators to Montegut.

- The investigators are hired by an unknown employer with “deep pockets” to get the dirt on a wildcat oil operation in the area—smear the people involved in it by linking them to the disappearances, and thereby get the wildcatters out of the way so that some bigger oil company can grab their claim.
- The investigators are hired by a university to carry out an ethnological and anthropological study of the Louisiana Cajuns in the wake of the Great Mississippi Flood.



ATKINSON

- The investigators were sent to Montegut to help with the missing people by a charitable Catholic organization called upon by Father Babineaux, the priest at Montegut's Sacred Heart Church.

- The investigators are on assignment for a newspaper syndicate that has an interest in the new oil rush in Louisiana—missing Cajuns are a fine human interest story, and there may be other information to dig up.

THE UNSPEAKABLE OATH™

‘ODD LIGHTS’ NEAR MONTEGUT

Cajuns Post Reward for Missing Persons

Houma Star-Tribune — Cajun families around the Mangrove Trading Post off Point Farm Road in Terrebonne Parish have set out a reward of \$200 for information on the whereabouts of three missing persons who

have disappeared within the last seven months. The three — Sylvain LePargue, age 29, Phillippe Montelier, age 43, and Jeanne-Marie DeSalle, age 17 — were apparently lost in the bayous. The Cajuns, however, deny

this possibility and hint that “odd lights” near Montegut are the true cause. Anyone wishing to search the swampland for the missing persons should contact Sheriff Aaron Dundee in Houma or Montegut.

MONTEGUT, TERREBONNE PARISH, LOUISIANA

Montegut—pronounced like “Montague” (more or less “MONT-uh-GYOO”)—is located seven feet above sea level at the intersections of Highways 55 (Montegut Road) and 58 (Sarah Road), and the main street itself is only a few inches above water level. It is about six miles southeast of the parish seat (Houma) and many more miles west of New Orleans. It is bordered on the west by a canal, and adjacent on its eastern side to the swampland that the state of Louisiana eventually designates as the Point Aux Chenes Wildlife Management Area. (Whenever this scenario refers to “the bayou” or “the swamp,” it refers to that area near Montegut.) There is no place in Montegut that is more than a half-mile from the bayou, and in less than 100 years the town actually builds its middle school in the beautiful marshy area. The Dugas Cemetery is located less than half a mile south of Montegut, just off Montegut Road. There are many canals and drainage ditches in the area, and it rains a great deal.

GETTING AROUND

There is an airfield just outside the nearest major town, Houma, to the northwest. There is also a train station in Houma. Investigators not native to Louisiana would fly or take the train into Houma, where they can rent an automobile to drive southeast into Montegut. Motorcycles are not available to rent in Houma (or anywhere else nearby), and investigators interested in riding horses should have it gently explained to them that their characters live in the late 1920s rather than the 1880s. Speaking of which...

THE WELL-ARMED INVESTIGATOR

If investigators walk around Montegut openly carrying any firearm larger than a pistol, the townsfolk immediately summon Sheriff Dundee from Houma and arm themselves as well. They’ve heard about the gangsters operating in New Orleans for years now, and they are rural folk who don’t like mysterious visitors showing up with lots of guns. Sudden large purchases of explosives or corrosive chemicals at the hardware store, while legal, also attract

attention. Even investigators wearing pistols in concealed holsters may catch the eye of alert townspeople who become greatly concerned if the player characters are neither recognizable lawmen nor hunters and sportsmen. (Outdoorsmen do not normally venture into the bayous wearing suits, ties and city shoes and hats.) In this situation, Sheriff Dundee (see below) is keenly aware that he is outnumbered by armed strangers who look like they know what they're doing, and summons a posse and state troopers if resistance looks likely.

THE LAW

Sheriff Aaron Dundee is the chief law enforcement officer for Terrebonne Parish. His office is in Houma, six miles away, but he hails from, lives in and keeps a second office in Montegut. He has several deputies to help patrol the parish. He is as open-minded as the period and his environment allow. This does not mean that he treats female investigators or those of other races as his equals, but he does not countenance Klan-type prejudice in his parish.

Dundee hasn't heard about "witch-folk" in the swamp since he was a small boy and he doesn't believe in such things. He quietly discourages women and visibly less-rugged investigators, such as scholars, from venturing into the bayous to search. He strenuously resists bothering "poor strange folk" like Eben Murrow by subjecting them to questioning, especially since only the "ghost lights" connect Murrow with the disappearances. However, Dundee does know the way to the madman's homestead.

Dundee hasn't yet heard about Eudora Cabe's disappearance, since her frightened aunt and uncle haven't dared to come forward.

Like millions of Americans in the 1920s, Sheriff Dundee is a member of a benevolent but secretive fraternal order. His is a small outfit, similar to the Rotarians, called the Owl's Brotherhood Lodge. He wears a distinctive ring emblazoned with the "mystical" seal of the order, as do the town druggist and postal clerk, the hotelier, and the local banker. They meet at the local chapter in the nearest town up the road.

I HEARD THE OWL'S BROTHERHOOD LODGE CALL MY NAME

The Owl's Brotherhood Lodge is completely harmless, but its members spice up their everyday lives with hokum and nonsense as well as beer and poker at their lodge hall (nothing more than the large storage room of Jack Coley's hardware and lumber supply store on Louisiana Avenue). For this reason, their meetings on the street often involve a secret handshake and password ("Ayabo?" (Are

You A Brother Owl?) "Aoi." (An Owl Am I.) and their meetings begin with "mystic rituals." They spend much more of their time talking about civic matters, gossiping about townfolk, cooking good Louisiana barbecue and networking their businesses than they ever do on "weird stuff"—but with typical fictional logic, investigators tend to arrive just in time to see them all in their hooded cloaks, ringing a bell and waving "occult banners" in the air.

A few times a year they throw a "smoker" in which stag films are shown, but this is preceded by a solemn ritual that includes a "sacrifice" (actually a hired Bourbon Street hoochee-coochee dancer called Princess Salima (Miriam Gemp, age 22), lying semi-nude on a table with a skull on her chest—alert investigators may note that human sacrifices aren't usually wearing a flesh-colored body stocking when stretched out on an altar). They do have a big prop scimitar their fathers and uncles bought from a traveling group of actors in around 1898; it would be a better lightweight club than sword. Investigators should be encouraged, by injudicious use of Spot Hidden, Occult, and other applicable skills, to jump to cult-paranoid conclusions about the sheriff and the others.

FOREST RANGERS, PARK RANGERS & INVESTIGATORS

The bayou east of Montegut is not yet a wildlife preserve and therefore has no connection with the young Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fishing, or with the nascent National Forestry Service. It is not designated as a National Park in the 1920s or at any point in the future.

LOCAL AMENITIES

Montegut has electricity, indoor plumbing (in the town itself), gas, and telephone service. There is a brand-new motel and diner near the highway and another restaurant in town; both serve Southern cooking (not Cajun style—most of that won't be popular among non-Cajuns for some years to come—but hearty fare, from fried chicken to crawfish to hush puppies). They can get the local newspaper (the Houma Star-Tribune) here, mail a letter from the little post office (established 1899), and get many other minor services done as needed. It's all very simple and homespun, but it gets the job done.

THE TOWNSFOLK

The town is named for popular banker and plantation owner Colonel Gabriel Montegut, a French Creole who migrated to Houma-Terrebonne from New Orleans and served in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. The area is prone to flooding, and some of the

houses are built on stilts.

There are less than 1,000 residents in Montegut, Louisiana, most of which are Euro-Americans not of Cajun ancestry but rather of Creole heritage. (While many Creoles are of mixed racial background, not all are. The citizens of Montegut, at least in the 1920s, are assumed to be mostly Caucasian French Creoles.) There is a sprinkling of Native Americans and other ethnicities, but anyone of Asian or more “exotic” background would be considered extremely unusual in the late 1920s. The religious majority in Montegut is Catholic, with a Baptist minority. Most of the people of Montegut make their living from agriculture and shrimp fishing, but there is excitement afoot with the oil rush in the local area. Oil money is expected to expand Montegut, Houma and all the neighboring areas.

There is some friction between the people of Montegut and their “thieving, no-good” Cajun neighbors, partly because of the increase in Cajun numbers due to refugees from the spring flood of '27 that has destroyed Plaquemines Parish. If questioned, they yield the following information:

- Young Jeanne-Marie DeSalle is believed to have been cheating on her husband Jacques with a local boy more her age, Delbert Crosby (both were between 16 and 17 years old). Delbert's folks didn't approve, and if word had reached Jeanne-Marie's husband that would explain her disappearance. A successful Psychology roll yields the obvious questions: if Jacques killed Jeanne-Marie, why didn't he go after the boy as well? And what about the other victims?
- Sylvain LeParque had been thrown out of town by Sheriff Dundee on numerous occasions for drunken brawling and petty theft. He was a “troubled fella, that 'un” and much taken with brooding. (LeParque lost everything in the flood, and alienated his few surviving loved ones with emotional outbursts shortly afterward.)
- Phillippe Montelier was a solid citizen of the Parish, a “credit” to the Cajuns. He used to walk up the highway to Houma and work as a laborer in the railroad yards. They say he worked like a slave and that he prayed hard in Sacred Heart Church every Sunday, wearing his one and only good clean suit and shirt. Nobody would have a thing against the man.

(It should be noted that the local prejudice about Cajuns is entirely the result of tensions due to the recent influx; there is normally no widespread bigotry against Cajuns in the parish. In future generations, Montegut has a significant population that is of French and French-Canadian descent... but that is not the case in the late 1920s of our scenario.)

THE WITCH-FOLK

The Murrow family has lived in the swamps outside Montegut off the highway for as long as there's been a Montegut. Maybe longer. They seem to have always been trappers and extraordinarily good hunters. Stories say that they knew the land better than the animals and the birds, and they could move so quietly and so carefully that they might as well have turned invisible and floated on air.

Not many people under the age of 55 have ever seen a Murrow in town, and since old Eben never took a wife (“Lord knows who'd have been his bride”) he seems to be the last of the line. (Though some hint that not all of the Murrows ever bothered finding outside wives, “if you know what I mean.”) The Murrows were always considered “kinda quare” and given to odd fancies and strange behavior. Only the oldest citizens of Montegut lend credence to the stories about the family's witchcraft. It is difficult to find any citizen who actually knows the location of the Murrows' homestead, though some may think they do.

If the investigators ask around town about strange folk and weird legends, the Murrow name is bound to come up. If they ask the right people—old folk, nervous types, people with a little bit too much imagination—they might get the above details about the Murrow family.

THE CAJUNS

Cajuns are the descendants of French-speakers from Canada's Acadia (Nova Scotia) region who were pushed out by the British and settled in Louisiana in the 1760s-1780s. (“Acadian = 'Cajun.”) They mainly settled in the bayous west of New Orleans, where they absorbed the people and cultures of the Native Americans and African-Americans to create their own *mélange* culture. Until oil was discovered in their territory in the 1920s, the Cajuns were of little or no interest to the outside world. Like many fringe peoples of North America, they kept to themselves and chiefly subsisted on their own society's productivity. Where Cajun culture and outside culture coexisted, the Cajuns were seen as quaint, backward “swampers” with little to contribute—“hillbillies” of the deeper South. In the 1920s, most Cajuns speak the Cajun French patois as their primary language. (The main businesspeople at the Mangrove Trading Post speak English out of necessity; all other Cajuns mentioned in this scenario speak nothing but French—investigators who wish to communicate with them must either have a skill in French or hire someone to translate for them.)

A HISTORY OF SILENCE

The Cajuns have no written history in Montegut. They keep to themselves, for the most part, and they are well aware that the recent flood has caused their numbers to grow locally and that this bothers the non-Cajuns a lot. So the fact that generations of Murrows have sent their twisted dogs forth after Cajuns in the swamps is simply not on anyone's books. The nearest thing to long-term documentation of these crimes is the Cajun legend of the "rougarou." Non-Cajuns laugh at this, and when people point out that Cajuns sometimes disappear in the bayous they are told: "Well, when you're a damn fool wandering around in a bayou, that's the sort of thing that happens to you."

If investigators can befriend the Cajuns (or at least convince them that they wish to help them), they tell them whatever they know that might be helpful. It's more than the townsfolk can do: the oldest townsfolk have seen two of the Murrow family, a man and a woman, come into town decades ago, and a few years after that, Eben Murrow himself. People over 40 remember the rumors about the Murrows and their strange, inbred ways; nobody younger knows anything about them at all in Montegut.

THE SPINE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Regardless of why the investigators are looking into the missing Cajuns, the immediacy of the killing of Agent Brody is of chief importance. It may be a red herring of sorts, but it actually demonstrates for the investigators what happened to the vanished people (the males, anyway, since Jeanne-Marie was fed to the Thing in the Pool—see below) and players should be encouraged to reach the logical conclusion; three people that vanished and a fourth mauled to death by monster hounds can't be unconnected when they occur within less than 25 square miles' area. The question is less "where are the missing people" than "what happened to them"—or, after the attack, "what was that, where did it come from, and is someone directing it to happen?"

Possibly investigators may assume that it is nothing more than a "monster infestation." For these characters, the scenario is a very straightforward "bug hunt." They simply scour the countryside until they encounter the source of the problem, then they attempt to destroy it. Creepy and misleading descriptions of the Mangrove Trading Post could lead them to charge in and murder innocent Cajuns, destroying their homes, or they might make the mistake of assaulting the wildcatters' camp and face guns on the other side of the table. Unless they use some brains and craft, "bug hunts" generally end in Eben Murrow slipping past them in the bayou and his plans continuing unabated.

Other investigators may ignore the fact that the hounds came from the bayou and returned to it when they were done; they may assume that someone in town is responsible. If this is the case, the Owl Brotherhood Lodge is a perfect red herring for them, and the tensions between townsfolk and Cajuns can be built up and emphasized. Until the town is made aware of Eudora Cabe's disappearance (see below), investigators might waste a lot of time trying to figure out which person in Montegut is calling down this plague of evil on his or her neighbors.

Investigators who realize that they must search the bayous find the most accessible clues along the roads and byways, but eventually have no choice but to go searching through the deep swamps on foot and by boat. Once they are on the right track, a Keeper is free to spin out the journey through the bayou for dramatic effect, but ultimately they should find the Murrow homestead with just enough time to attempt to rescue Eudora Cabe and put an end to Eben Murrow's evil.

HITTING THE BOOKS

Passive methods of research are not very helpful in this situation. Montegut has no town library and no local newspaper. Sacred Heart Church just south of the intersection of the two highways has some local records of births and deaths, but these are highly informal and religious in nature. (Successful Library Use rolls do nothing more than ascertain that none of the non-Cajun locals have died under mysterious circumstances, though every so often someone vanishes into the bayou and is ruled to have died through natural causes when they are never seen again.) The Murrow family has never reported its births or deaths formally to Sacred Heart Church because they have never attended it.

The sheriff's office in Houma has only maintained modern-style police records since about 1907, and Sheriff Dundee would not permit any non-law enforcement personnel to search his one wooden filing cabinet half full of cases. If any investigator has (or can fake with Fast Talk) the appropriate credentials, they are readily granted access. On a successful Library Use skill roll, they find that in these past 20 years or so there have been no first-degree murders or mysterious deaths of any sort in or around Montegut, Louisiana. (There are, of course, the same number of bayou-related missing persons cases as in the church's records, though.) Sheriff Dundee has only ever heard rumors of Eben Murrow living in the bayou; no peacekeeping officer of Montegut has seen a member of the Murrow family in 42 years. Unless an investigator should bring Murrow's name up, Dundee has no reason to ever think of him at all. (If they do, Dundee assumes there is still a dwindling inbred Murrow family out there somewhere . . . not just one surviving member.)

THE MONTEGUT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Stafford Welgate, age 61, is the principal at the Montegut School (grades 1 through 9, after which kids go up the road to Houma for high school) and also the chief of the Montegut Volunteer Fire Department. In addition to being called out in the event of any sort of fire, explosion or similar emergency (which are not impossible in this scenario), Welgate is also one of the last people alive who ever saw Eben Murrow come into town from the bayou. He was young at the time, but he remembers Murrow well enough that if investigators spread it around town that they're looking for Murrow (or information on his family), Welgate can come forward and give a fairly accurate description of the man they're looking for. He would never believe that Murrow could be responsible for the death of Agent Brody or the vanished Cajuns, and would point out that Murrow struck him as being "inbred, filthy, with just an animal cunning and a whole lot of craziness." Welgate does not believe in the supernatural and regards the investigators as cranks and troublemakers if they start talking about the Mythos or any other occult things.

THE ESSO STATION

Not far from a large Rinso Soap billboard and right beside the highway (of course, nothing in Montegut is more than 2,000 feet off the highway) stands Montegut's only gas station, run by scruffy Millard Fawcett. If asked, Fawcett tells investigators that the victim they describe put in a half-tank of gas only a couple of hours ago.

VISITING THE SHERIFF

Regardless of how the investigators become involved with the situation, the sheriff is glad to meet with them on the morning of their arrival, whether they are officially law enforcement agents or are merely civilians volunteering to look for the missing persons. Sheriff Dundee, age 45, is a veteran of the Great War (he volunteered with the American Expeditionary Forces in 1916 and served in France) and is married (his wife's name is Claire) with two children (a boy named Charles, age 11, and a girl named Violet, age 7). An avid fisherman and builder of model boats, Dundee has an office wall in Houma decorated with mounted fish and photos and drawings of boats. He's about 5'9" tall, just a little soft in the gut, with thinning light brown hair, gray eyes, and a friendly, open face.

He has a modest desk overflowing with paperwork, crowned with framed pictures of his family and his late parents, and likes chicory in his coffee. (He still likes French cigarettes from his days in the Army, but you can't get those in his area unless you drive all the way to New

Orleans.) Sheriff Dundee is fluent in both English and French, and had a little college before his father died and he had to get a job with the Sheriff's Office. A few years later, he moved back to his hometown of Montegut and was eventually elected sheriff of the parish.

Most of the Cajuns living in the area only arrived here after the flood of '27, so they've been here less than two years. They have been extremely uncooperative in terms of documentation, up until now, and were never very well documented in their home parishes anyway. As a result, Dundee has very little in his slim files on any of the missing persons. From his interviews with the Cajuns, who do not trust any lawmen, he knows their names and general descriptions, a little about their backgrounds, and a little about the circumstances of their disappearances:

VICTIM 1: SYLVAIN LEPARQUE

- Age 29, male, Cajun, 5'11", 170 lbs., brown hair and eyes, beard, workman's clothing.
- Occupation: Unemployed, refugee from 1927 flood.
- Reported missing (33 days ago) by Mathieu Leveque, a friend and fellow migrant from his home parish (Plaquemines Parish)—also an unemployed refugee (whom Dundee accurately describes as "a useless layabout").
- He was last seen on his way home after buying some cigarettes at Martin's Tobacco and Notions in Montegut, and is believed to have taken a shortcut through the bayou.
- Considered a brooding fellow and a bit of a troublemaker.

VICTIM 2: PHILIPPE MONTELIER

- Age 43, Cajun, 5'8", 155 lbs., black hair and brown eyes, workman's clothing, thin and neatly trimmed mustache, very short hair.
- Occupation: Laborer at the Houma Railroad yards (he was part of a general work gang; his supervisor called him "Frenchy" and said he was "an okay fella").
- Reported missing (24 days ago) by a friend of his family, the elderly Widow Grandey (a townswoman, not a Cajun), who is a prominent member of the Sacred Heart Church and the widow of the late Doctor Grandey, a beloved local physician who died 11 years ago.

- He was last seen at Jack Coley's hardware and lumber supply store, buying a bag of ten-penny nails... the nails were later found, along with his left shoe, in the bayou.
- Regarded as a decent man and an asset to the community—the Widow Grandey, who is very sympathetic to all the newcomer Cajuns, knew him well from Sunday church services.

VICTIM 3: JEANNE-MARIE DESALLE

- Age 17, Cajun, 5'5", 116 lbs., brown hair and green eyes, simple green dress with apron and shoes, cherubic features.
- Occupation: Housewife in a Cajun refugee shack, married to Jacques DeSalle.
- Reported missing (18 days ago) by her husband, Jacques.
- She was last seen in the company of young Delbert Crosby, age 16, who her husband is certain was her lover—Crosby's parents deny everything, and the boy seems quite shaken. Her torn and bloody apron was later found hanging on a tree in the bayou.
- DeSalle was regarded by her own community as a disgraceful creature, and the non-Cajun townsfolk have eaten up the rumor about her "seducing one of their own good boys".

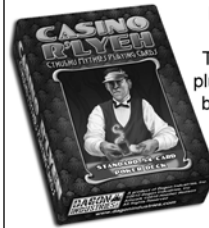
(The dates of the disappearances should be adjusted by the Keeper to match up with the time in which they set the scenario.)

Despite rumors around town, the sheriff seriously doubts Delbert Crosby could have done away with the much more mature Jeanne-Marie DeSalle. The boy is much too earnest and freshly scrubbed, despite the extreme likelihood that he was seeing a married woman. Crosby's father has stated that the boy is soon to be shipped off to a military school.

Dundee is now increasingly sure that all three have been murdered in violent fashion and their bodies dumped in the bayou, somewhere far enough away that currents and wild animals would not drag them back where they would be seen. He retains a professional air of calm, but is deeply anxious. The Louisiana State Troopers are spread very thin nowadays after the flood and the oil discovery, but he is considering contacting an old friend in the New Orleans Police Department for help.

He can't imagine anyone who would have a rational

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motive that linked all three of these people, so he speculates that they either all ran afoul of a criminal operation of some sort, or else were slain by a madman. And anyone could be the psychopath responsible.

(The third major possibility—that disgruntled locals might have killed them in an effort to drive the Cajuns away—is not something Dundee is ready to consider. He knows this town, and he doesn't believe that anyone here would form a hate group and kill innocent people simply for being intrusive.)

Sheriff Dundee is troubled by the disappearances on a human level and an official one. He is concerned that there may be some sort of banditry going on in the bayou, or perhaps a wild and marauding animal. He has heard rumors of a moonshine operation somewhere in his jurisdiction, and that might be a contributory factor. (Even if only because one or more of the missing people got drunk and lost in the bayou.) He does not believe there is any possibility that any of the missing people are still alive, unless they simply left the area to try their hand at a better life elsewhere. (This last is entirely possible, and in LeParque's case, quite likely.)

Dundee is not as hostile to the Cajuns as most of the townsfolk are, but he does express his wish that they would have migrated to the northern cities after the flood "the way the Negroes seem to have done." He's not a political man, but he does also note that it's funny how the flood seems to have been a powerful lot of good luck for future Louisiana Governor Huey "Kingfish" Long, and for U.S.

Secretary of the Interior Herbert Hoover, who was in charge of post-flood relief efforts.

By the time they finish talking with the sheriff and leave his office, it's just a few minutes before noon.

THE ATTACK

It is noon in Montegut, Louisiana. The locals sip “co-colas” in the shade of the porches and talk a little as the investigators meander down the street. Suddenly a horrific sound is heard: a howling cry that sounds like a wolf dragged by a burning hook in its belly, that fades into a stridulating noise like a gigantic cicada's call.

A paunchy, red-faced man in torn clothing stained with sweat and swamp-water is running up the muggy street, staggering and looking behind him. He is wild-eyed with terror. He yells out, “Oh, Lord! Somebody help me! Help me!”

Suddenly, two terrifying creatures lope into town with blazing speed: bony, four-legged things glistening with the froth from their fanged jaws, their eyes glazed with a sickly whitish film. Across the street, two farmers swear and a young woman shrieks.

The creatures run the stranger down in the steamy noonday sun and rip at his throat with their deformed maws. The man gives a long, whimpering scream as his arterial blood turns the whitish foam on their muzzles a bright pink. Sheriff Dundee opens fire on the creatures. The things growl as the bullets dig into their hides, then they race back into the treeline beyond town, toward the bayou. Everyone saw that the sheriff hit both monsters; everyone knows they weren't harmed. All witnessing this horrifying display must make a successful Sanity roll or lose 1D3 Sanity Points.

No one sees the hounds' master, nor is any human being capable of hearing the ultrasonic sound of the whistle he uses (see below). Only a full investigation can ultimately connect Eben Murrow with the deaths of Agent Brody and the missing Cajuns.

GETTING IN ON THE ACT

It is certainly possible that the investigators may leap into action to save Agent Brody from the two hellish hounds. This noble gesture should be played out as quickly as possible, for the hounds both flee immediately upon strong resistance. Brody's injuries should already be so great that no Medicine roll can rescue him (see below). However,

if either dog is engaged at close quarters and manages to bite an investigator prior to fleeing, there is an excellent chance they are infected with a hideous fungal growth. (See the entry below for Beau and Betsy, the hounds.) Only hospitalization (removing the character completely from the scenario) can completely prevent a terrible death; on-site medical care from another player character can slow the infection but does not stop it. (This requires a successful Medicine roll every three hours of game time, and the Keeper should explain that the infected investigator suffers from most of the symptoms of the disease but is “walking wounded.” The nearest hospital is Terrebonne General Medical Center in Houma, Louisiana. The hospital is 10 to 12 miles from Montegut, and should take speeding investigators under 15 minutes to get there—if there are no obstacles in their way.

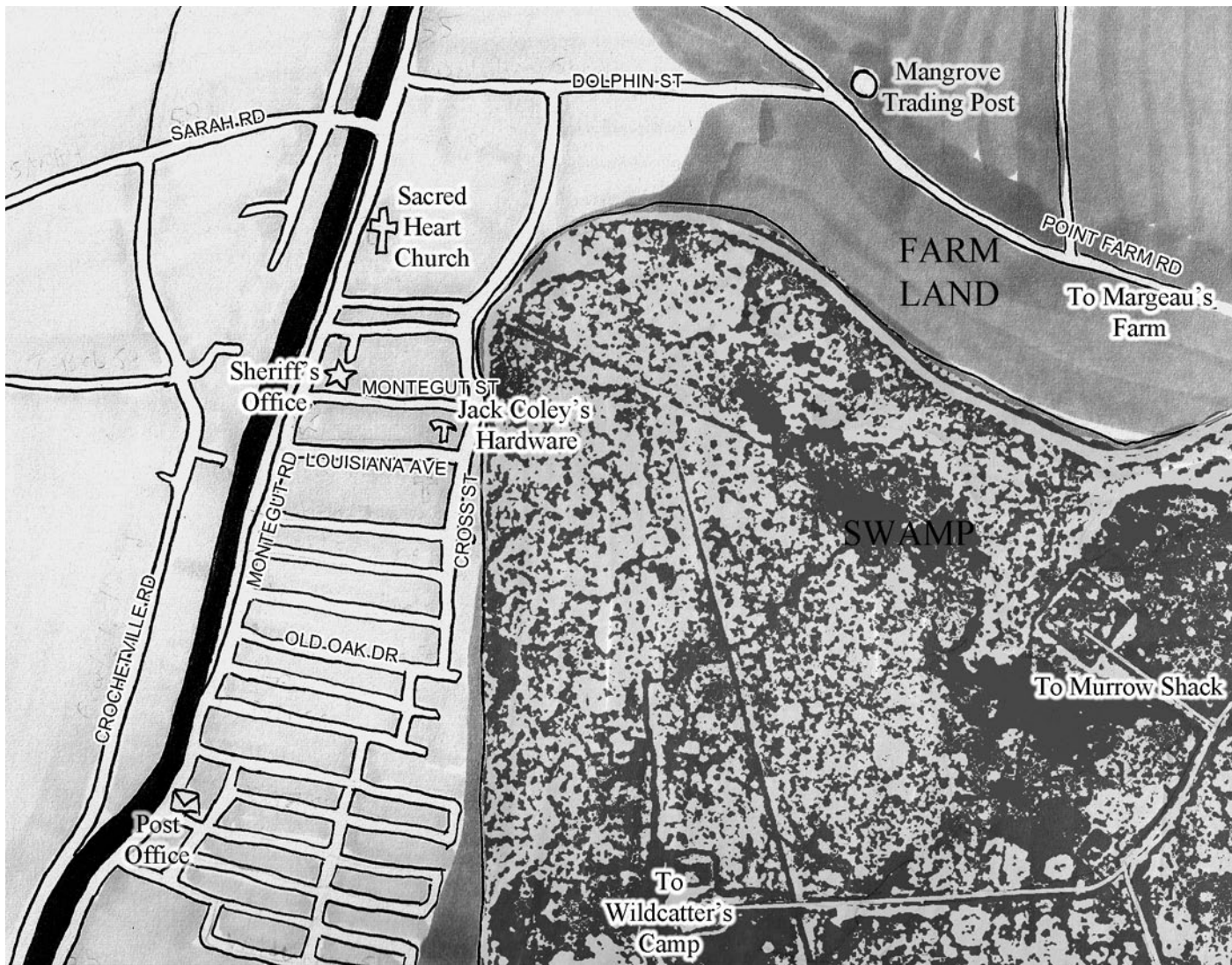
The hairy fungal growth spreads from the wound and must be painfully scraped away. If it is not, the character's skin is covered more and more with the sickening crud, which naturally seeks any warm, moist orifice (such as eyes, nose, etc.). The delirium mentioned in the disease description should be treated as temporary bouts of insanity (per the Sanity rules), which have an increasingly high chance of occurring (25% the first time, 50% the second time, etc.) each time the infected investigator becomes emotionally upset in any way (in *any* way, not merely SAN-roll situations).

... AND WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT THEM

Investigators unlucky enough to be bitten by Beau or Betsy while trying to save Agent Brody may be infected, but they cannot spread the disease to anyone else (per the description given below). Nevertheless, the Keeper is encouraged to have other investigators afflicted with sudden bouts of trench foot (from walking in the bayou), nervous itching, ringworm (from improperly cleaned hotel pillows) or other creeping signs that they, too, may be infected. And while it is true that the disease only kills its victims horribly, the bouts of delirium they suffer may easily be misinterpreted as being the ravings of minds being “transformed into weird alien thoughts.” (To say nothing of the possibility that a human being covered in a disgusting, choking, itching mold infection could certainly be imagined to be a shambling monster.) The Keeper should absolutely keep the players wondering if they have an enemy in their midst, or if they should put their friend out of his or her misery before it's too late.

THE VICTIM

The man who came running for the safety of town is dead, though not all at once. He struggles to breathe with his ruined windpipe for long seconds before



subsiding, but can say and write nothing at all in his last spasms. If investigators have a law enforcement background, they may be permitted to help the sheriff search the body. If not, they may watch the sheriff do so—the results are identical.

Investigators searching the body find that the victim's identification lists him as Lawrence Brody, special agent of the United States Treasury Department. He was armed with a standard-issue .38 caliber revolver, with all six shots recently fired.

A successful Track roll is easy to make (+20% to any attempt) and can easily follow Brody's footprints back out of town to his car.

If contact is made with Brody's agency superiors (either by the investigators or the sheriff), they indicate that the agent had been assigned to ferret out suspected moonshiners in the area. This is doubly an issue, due to both tax dodging and enforcement of Prohibition.

THE AGENT'S CAR

Half-mired in a muddy ditch on a side-road, the investigators find Agent Brody's abandoned automobile. It is stuck in the ditch with the driver's door open and numerous hideous clawmarks on its roof, the driver's side window rolled up but spiderwebbed with long cracks from numerous impacts. Otherwise, it has a fuel tank three-quarters full and is in perfect condition. The dead man abandoned the vehicle to escape the hounds, after they easily kept up with his car and leapt snarling toward the driver's side often enough to panic him into driving it off the road.

Note also that cars of this period used a starter switch, not a key-operated ignition, so anyone with an Automobile Driving skill who can free it from the ditch can drive the car away. However, as Brody found out, an automobile is no protection from the hounds—they can still attempt to break into it or chase it down.

Searching the car reveals Brody's hotel room key (marked JESSUP ARMS, HOUMA, LA, ROOM 104), a gas

station road map for the Montegut area (with circles around several homesteads on/near Point Farm Road—including the shack of Eben Murrow), spare ammunition, nickels for the pay phone, a small bottle of cheap cologne and a pack of cigarettes.

A successful Track skill roll shows the hounds' trail from Montegut to the road, but loses it once they pass the treeline and enter the edge of the bayou. An Idea roll leads to the chilling knowledge that the hounds let Brody stay just ahead of them as they chased him into town. They were enjoying the hunt.

A VISIT TO HOUMA

There is not sufficient space here to detail the town of Houma, Louisiana, but it is where Agent Brody was staying when he was killed. (He drove down into the Montegut area.) If investigators visit the Jessup Arms hotel, they must either present law enforcement credentials or Fast Talk their way into room 104 to search Agent Brody's belongings. (A bribe conducted with a successful Credit Rating roll can also succeed.)

Inside Agent Brody's room, they find his battered old suitcase, three suits hanging in a wardrobe, several sets of socks and undergarments (including some freshly washed ones hanging off the bathroom sink), toiletries, a small black book with phone numbers (his home office, his parents, his younger brother, his dentist) and a copy of the recent novel *Elmer Gantry* by Sinclair Lewis. He was on page 217 when he died.

The search for clues here is useless. Brody was looking for moonshiners, not a psychopathic occultist with real magical powers. He stumbled across Murrow's shack and was chased off by the monster hounds and died in the streets of Montegut. End of his story.

THE BAYOU

The humid bayou lands around Montegut, Louisiana, (in what is today the Point aux Chenes Wildlife Management Area) grow progressively thicker and more dangerous heading off the main highway. Side dirt roads cutting through the countryside are often muddy and flooded, and the swamps are the haunt of cottonmouth snakes, fever, and alligators. Investigators without a guide or a Navigate or Track skill very likely become lost (85% chance by day, 95% by night, 100% by night with fog).

The bayou is effectively right next to Montegut. If investigators would like a little exercise and don't care if they need to carry something heavy with them or back, they can simply hike directly into the bayou. It should take about 15 minutes to enter the denser part of the swampland from Highway 55 (Montegut Road). If they take an automobile (which is only be able to go where there is a road—no car can go further than 20-50 feet off-road in the bayou near Montegut), it takes about one minute to reach the edge of the bayou and five minutes to reach its thicker, deeper areas.

Traveling by day, the investigators stumble through the tangled roots of live oaks, spiky palmettos, and pale lavender carpets of water hyacinth amid the sounds of teeming life. The air is filled with the cries and songs of the banjo frog, the loon, the coot, and the duck. They slosh uncertainly through muddy streamlets and wetlands full of snapping turtles, catfish, crawfish, and stands of cypress and tupelo-gum trees. They unsuccessfully fend off the misery of mosquitoes and biting flies, as dragonflies dance in the hot sunlight. When they least expect it, a rushing flight of egrets or spoonbills gusts up through the moss-strewn branches with a jolt to their strained nerves.

Wandering by night, there is usually (75%) a claustrophobic blanket of fog and darkness that does nothing to reduce the frenzied insect assault on their skins and everything to muffle their vision. The investigators can barely see in the stifling dark—is that a log, or a 'gator? An evil shape in a tree stump may only be a sleepy kingfisher, a horrid bulge in a ridge only a thick growth of pitcher plants bloated with their insect prey. Or they may be something worse...

Without a guide, searching the bayou may take hours of game time. It is extremely easy for an unfamiliar people to become lost in the swampland, and even if this is not the case, the light and teeming life of the wetlands can play tricks on the senses. It would be quite possible to become lost for days, or to never return at all.

Even those with a guide must take care, because some guides are better than others: Cajuns know the bayou intimately but feel it is somehow "wrong" near Murrow's homestead, while Sheriff Dundee knows what roads to take to get to the homestead yet stands a decent chance of getting lost in the bayou himself. A guide from among the townsfolk is the least helpful option, as they not only probably get lost in the bayou but are pretty likely (60% chance) to get lost just trying to take the side-roads leading to the Murrow homestead.

Of course, no local in their right mind ever goes deep into the bayou at night. The sheriff and townsfolk say that going into the bayou fringes for nighttime frog-hunting is one thing, but plunging into the heart of the swamp

at night is plain crazy. And how would you search for anybody? And then again, the Cajuns simply refuse to go near the Murrow homestead at any time.

THE BAYOU WATERS

Investigators who take a boat into the swampy waters (there are boats for rent in Montegut for \$1 a day, with a \$5 deposit—a car trailer to haul your boat to the waters of the bayou cost the same, for a total of \$2/day and \$10 deposit) are in at least as much danger as those who walk into the bayou. Poisonous cottonmouths do not hesitate to slither aboard rafts or boats in the darkness, and 'gators snap their jaws on the limbs of incautious investigators who lean out too far with lanterns without looking around first.

But far more dangerous are the risks of the environment itself. Submerged roots and logs may very easily trap a boat and force investigators to climb into the chill waters to free it. Quicksands exist below the water as well as on land. The fog has as great a chance of turning both the land and the waters of the bayou into a deadly maze. And weirdest and most lethal of all is the nature of bayou currents, for the sluggish creeks' flow reverse themselves in a seemingly whimsical pattern that is tied closely to the water levels of nearby estuaries linked to the flooding and ebbing tides of the Gulf of Mexico.

Leeches infest the stagnant pools of these waters. Investigators wading through the murky brown ponds often (70%) emerge coated with a slight beard of pulsing purple leeches. The creatures' bite doesn't really hurt, but they are bloodsuckers and enough of them (dozens) could be a health threat. The greater risk of leech attacks is disease, which could afflict investigators (33% chance). Removing leeches is problematic: it must be done by carefully disengaging the creature's mouth and flicking it away. While salt, alcohol or fire cause leeches to release their grip on a victim, they also force the animal to vomit blood into the wound, which is a direct vector for infection.

SPECIAL LOCAL COLOR

At the Keeper's discretion, some of the dangerous fauna of the bayou may have been affected by proximity to Murrow's homestead and the slimy, radioactive pool inhabited by the Thing. If this option is exercised, take normal animals (or even plants) used in this scenario for a standard bayou encounter and give them bizarre and nauseating mutations. For example: a cottonmouth snake with a "bouquet" of dozens of heads of varying sizes, a frog with enormous pore-like orifices all over its body that constantly "mouth" open and shut, or a kingfisher bird casually eating a small muskrat with the arms and legs of a

human baby. (All of which have a radioactive aura for the Geiger counter from the wildcatters' camp, if it is used.)

THE MANGROVE TRADING POST

The Mangrove Trading Post is located in the bayou region around Point Farm Road, a very short distance (half a mile) northeast of Montegut. It is an old farm reclaimed by the Cajuns through hard work; a number of shacks have been built around it for the extended and intermarried families and cousins that have settled here. The parish electrical company has run out a line, as has the gas company, but there is no telephone and no indoor plumbing.

There are strings of colorful Christmas lights outside and plenty of advertising signs for Coca-Cola, Camels cigarettes, and other brand names. (Only some of which can actually be bought here.) There are buckets of live nightcrawlers, frogs, and prawns, for bait or cooking; an old wind-up phonograph and a newish radio set sit side-by-side on the porch. Hand-painted signs also abound: MANGROVE TRADING POST, HOT GUMBO, COFFEE, REPAIR DE VOITURE, etc.

(Of course, the United States is officially entirely dry in the 1920s, but the members of the Owl's Brotherhood lodge in Montegut (see below) buy their cases of beer from the Cajuns at the Mangrove Trading Post. The Trading Post has an illicit supply of beer, wine and brandy smuggled up through the Gulf of Mexico by cousins who are fishermen. Unfortunately, most of the good people of Montegut are teetotalers, and the Brotherhood just doesn't buy enough to keep the Trading Post in the black.)

If investigators choose to stop by this Cajun "roadhouse" they can enjoy some good file' gumbo and blackened fish while buying genuine Cajun crafts and listening to foot-stompin' zydeco music. While the Trading Post is presently losing money and the folk who run it are slightly ragged, they do their best to keep up their spirits for "the company." The people are friendly and outgoing, especially for the normally insular swamper, but at the mention of the missing people they become quite serious and business-like.

Sad, bearded men identifying themselves only as Jacques and Andre-Paul explain that even experienced swamp hands like the Cajuns do not know exactly what happened to Sylvaine LeParque, Phillippe Montelie, and Jeanne-Marie DeSalle. But they say that "ghost lights" near the hovel of "the witch-man" have been seen shortly after each disappearance. They do not expect to be taken seriously. Jacques is Jeanne-Marie DeSalle's husband and Andre-Paul is the adult son of Phillippe Montelie.

If the investigators seem to care (use of Fast Talk or Persuade skill applicable), they add that “the witch-man” is named Eben Murrow and is said to be a master of dead spirits and evil things “from over the moon.”

If they mention the incident with the hounds (Beau and Betsy) slaughtering the man (Agent Brody) in the streets of Montegut, the Cajuns relate that the man was killed by the “rougarou”—the terrible wolf-monster of the bayou. Every Cajun child is told that they had best behave, because “if you’re bad the rougarou is going to come from the bayou to get you.” The legend of the rougarou (loup garou) is a regional version of the werewolf myth; the Keeper should let the Cajuns embroider on the idea, pointing up the infectious nature of the werewolf bite/the infectious nature of the hound’s bite if anyone is already infected.

The Cajuns want to help deal with the mysterious disappearance of their loved ones, but they don’t really know how, and what they suspect is happening is very, very frightening to them. Jacques loves his missing wife, but does not trust outsiders; Andre-Paul revered his vanished father, but does not expect to be taken seriously when he says that a bogeyman of the swamp snatched him away. No one really cared about Sylvain LeParque as a human being, but the worry is that “if he can be made to vanish, perhaps so can I...”

Very convincing investigators may be able to get a guide to help them travel through the swampland (-20% to skill rolls), but under no circumstances are they offered lodging. The Cajuns won’t say so, but they’re afraid of reprisals from Eben Murrow. (And even if they were not, the Mangrove Trading Post is currently three or more people to a bed.) If the Cajuns act as guides to investigators, it considerably reduces both their personal danger in the bayou and the time it takes to track down Eben Murrow.

There is, as mentioned previously, a cluster of shacks next to the Trading Post that are occupied by Cajuns. The pertinent homes are listed below.

THE DESALLE SHACK

Jacques DeSalle (one of the two men who approach the investigators at the Trading Post) lived here with his teenage wife, Jeanne-Marie, up until her disappearance. DeSalle himself is about 22 years old, with large brown eyes and a full black beard. His two cousins, Paul and Claude, live here with him (and lived here at the time of his wife’s vanishing). They are a little shiftless, and don’t do much to discourage Jacques from drinking moonshine. (Agent Brody was right about moonshiners, but he was looking in the wrong place.) All three are itinerant laborers and sometime fishermen; all of them are halfway to being disowned by their families. Jacques DeSalle loved his

young wife, but she did not love him, and he was furiously jealous of her affair with young Delbert Crosby. The boy lives in town, and Jeanne-Marie spoke English—their love couldn’t have gone anywhere, but it is possible motive for Jacques to have killed her. (If asked, Paul and Claude honestly say that Jacques was with them when she disappeared... but investigators making a Psychology roll would realize that these young Cajun men would say that even if it weren’t true.) Paul believes that the rougarou got Jeanne-Marie, punishing her for her sins of the flesh.

THE MONTELIER SHACK

No one in town knows it, but Phillippe Monteliere lived in this ragtag hut with his extended family, for whom he provided as well as he could. There is his father Albert, his mother Charlotte, his aunt Madeleine, his cousin Phanette and his adult son, Andre-Paul (one of the two young men who approach the investigators at the Trading Post). It’s impossible for them to keep their crowded one-room house clean, and they barely have rags enough to cover themselves and stay warm in the winter, but they have self-worth and a family’s love. They don’t know how they can make it without Phillippe, but they must try. There’s no work for them in Montegut, but they hope that Andre-Paul and Phanette are able to find jobs in Houma. (Albert and Charlotte are both too sick and just can’t get the hang of English, while Madeleine suffers from debilitating mental illness—crippling depressions and periodic anxiety attacks.) They don’t know anything about Eben Murrow except that he is a warlock and that you had better stay away from his house if you know what’s good for you.

THE FOURNIER SHACK

Sylvain LeParque used to live here with his distant cousins, the Fourniers, who are currently fourteen in one single-room shack. It’s a nightmare of six screaming children, a wandering pig and her recently born piglets, three doddering seniors, and five adults who seem to do nothing but fight from dawn until dusk. The other Cajuns barely get along with the Fourniers, and no one envies Sylvain having had to flop down in a corner of the dirt here to have a roof over his head. Most of the Fourniers have little good to say about their missing cousin, whom they believe was killed by a “hoodoo” in the bayou. (“A hoodoo. You know, a goblin, a bad spirit. A hoodoo.”)

MARGEAU’S FARM

If investigators search east along Point Farm Road, they note that there are a few homesteads off the road. Most of these are simply quiet farms that grow blueberries, blackberries,

sugarcane, rice and vegetables, as well as keeping chickens, goats and pigs. The Keeper should improvise these peaceful, god-fearing households. All of them seem a bit rundown and ragged. But one farm is different.

This little farm (a few miles east of Montegut off Point Farm Road, approachable only by land), easily mistaken for Murrow's homestead, was the home of Eudora Cabe. When she was kidnapped she had been out doing chores in the early dawn for her aunt and uncle, Robert and Grace Margeau, with help from her little six-year-old cousin Taylor. Eudora had caught sight of Eben Murrow and his hounds trying to grab the screaming child, but without thought of her own safety she interfered. While Robert and Grace watched in horror from the porch, she was chased into the bayou.

(Murrow chose Taylor as food for the Thing in the Pool. It was only on spotting Eudora, and realizing that she could be impregnated to create many young for the Thing to eat, that he chose her. Apart feeding it his own adult family (see below), Murrow has always fed the Thing children and women. Men are for his dogs.)

Robert and Grace have seen the hounds and know that they must be the monsters from Cajun legend, the rougarou. They have seen Murrow control them, and know that he must be a warlock like the old stories say. They are petrified with fear. They have told no one.

Since that morning four days ago, Robert and Grace have fought and wept, not knowing what to do about the supernatural thing that has happened to their own flesh and blood. Robert wants to pack up and leave with their young son Taylor, while Grace urges going to the sheriff despite the risk of Murrow's witchcraft. Any of this might be overheard on investigators' approach, but they stifle themselves and try to present a united front to strangers. Only little Taylor freely tells the investigators what happened, though Robert and Grace try to shush their son.

Only very careful role-playing gets information from the fearful Margeaus themselves. They refuse go with the investigators into the bayou to find Murrow.

Investigators find that the child Taylor is the easiest one to question; he actively volunteers information. He tells them about his cousin Eudora saving him from the monsters and the bad man, and how the bad man dragged her screaming into the bayou with him. He tells them about the tales of the evil witch-man and his shack out in the swamp. The quiet little boy also wants to go with them, to try and rescue his brave cousin. His parents would never permit the investigators to indulge the child in this fatal journey, but the boy might try to run away with them.

If the investigators are irresponsible and thoughtless enough to actually bring little Taylor with them, the child is as courageous as any normal little boy could be, but he would almost certainly come to a cruel and horrible ending in Murrow's lair. He won't be much help, in any event.

No one at the Margeau farm knows where Murrow lives. Nobody in the Parish has even seen a member of that god-awful family in 40 years. They just lived somewhere out in the swamp... thataway. (They can point in the direction of Murrow's homestead, since they saw him go in that direction. This give investigators a general path, which they may then attempt to use Track to follow, or recruit the sheriff and some bloodhounds, or some Cajun guides to aid them.)

TAYLOR MARGEAU COMES TO TOWN

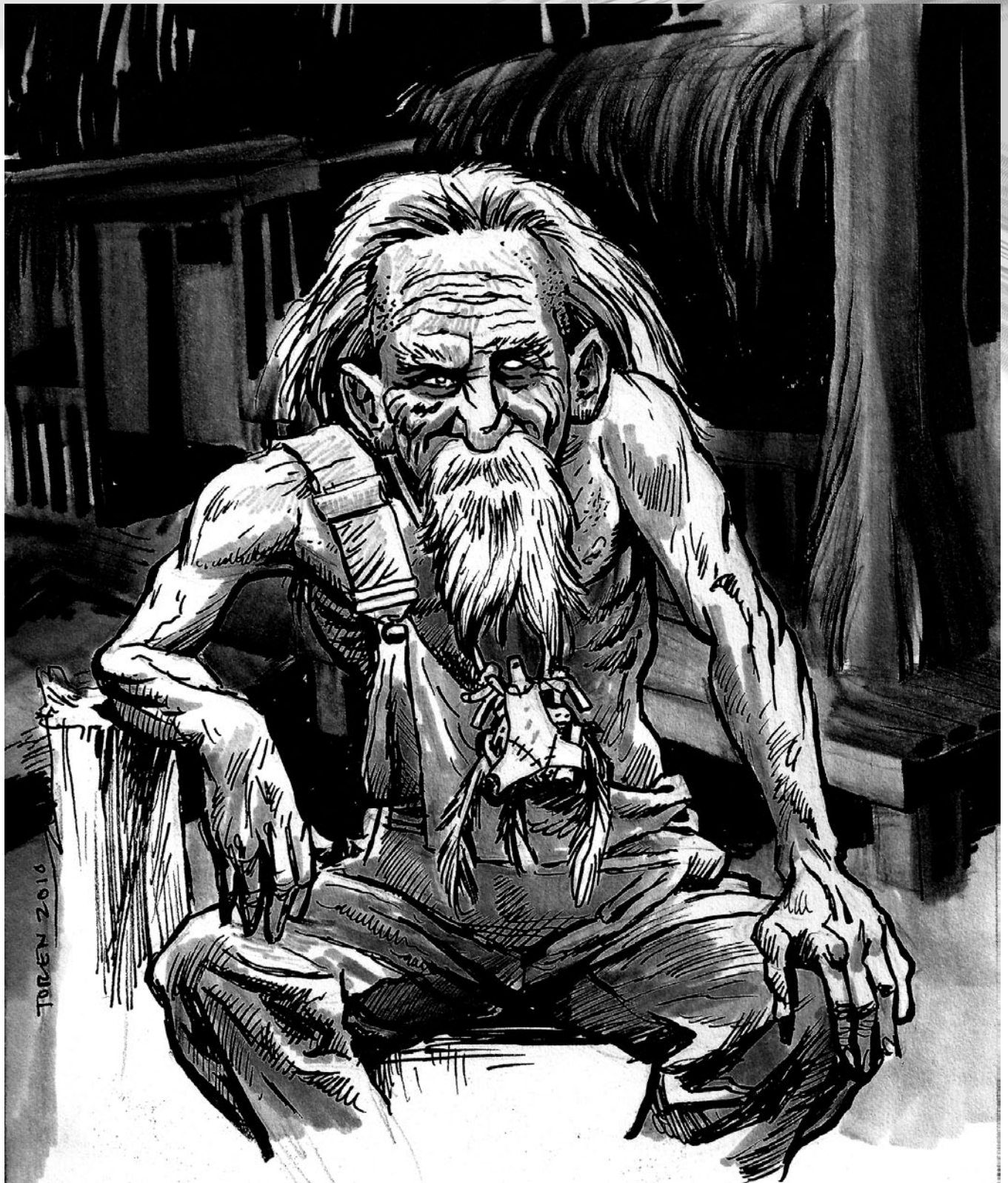
If the investigators never search along the roads in the bayou, or refuse to talk with the Margeaus for whatever reason, at some appropriate time little Taylor Margeau walks into town in search of the sheriff but encounter them first. He tells them everything he knows (see above). Horribly, if this occurs, it may already be too late for Eudora.

THE WILDCATTERS' CAMP

The camp is about a mile south of Montegut, half a mile east down Humble Canal Road, and just a short walk off the road (or the canal itself, if approached by boat).

With or without the aid of the locals, investigators may find the lights and sounds of a campsite a short distance into the bayou. They may even mistake the distant glows of an unauthorized campsite for the Ghost Lights of the bayou. (Alternatively, by day, they hear the noise of heavy equipment and loud, profane men.) Drawing closer, they find that several tents have been pitched near some trucks, a couple of cooking fires, and a nearby portable oil-drilling rig. The camp is occupied by roughly a dozen men—wildcatters.

The site is run by Louisiana Liberty Oil, a tiny latecomer outfit inspired by the jackpots had in Texas and Arkansas some years past. Two young partners, Peter Stoll and Mike Radcliffe, along with a few backers, have sunk the last of their lives' savings into this venture and so far have found nothing but air pockets, water, and methane. This is their last chance, after a failed hunt for silver in New Mexico. They've become desperate. Money is tight, and to avoid paying for drilling permits they've paid off men from



political boss (and soon-to-be state Governor) Huey Long to let them drill holes in the bayou. They have worn but high-quality tools, some knowledge of geology, and short supply of just about everything but mud and mosquitoes.

The wildcatters are squatting on public land while they hunt for oil, and have no intention of paying anyone for

their property if they don't have to. A Keeper who likes a more direct storyline might have the wildcatters find signs of a major oil strike available in the vicinity of Murrow's homestead (a short distance, albeit by water, from the wildcatters' camp). In that case, Stoll and Radcliffe may be only too happy to help the investigators deal with the loathsome Murrow and his witchcraft.

Stoll chain-smokes Chesterfields while he examines Louisiana Liberty's books and listens to tall, rangy Radcliffe harangue and cajole the unbathed men, all of whom are overdue to be paid. Both partners are certain that they're just about to hit oil, but they can't afford to have any outside interference just now. That's where the investigators come in.

Investigators who are not lost may very likely avoid the encampment, unless they are being chased by Murrow and his hounds. In that case, if the wildcatters are awake (they don't post guards) they may grab weapons and try to defend themselves and the investigators. A sleeping camp is thrown into total disarray, and the wildcatters would probably die in the jaws of the hounds whether or not they have guns.

If the investigators are lost or otherwise seek out the aid of the wildcatters, they find a cold reception. Woman investigators are poison, as far as the partners are concerned. The oilmen make passes at them and fight over them. The supplies are low, and no men can be spared to guide anyone back to town until the weekly supply run is made, which is to a different town every week to avoid drawing attention to themselves. And attention is the thing they want least. As a result, the wildcatters are inherently hostile to investigators.

The fact that the men have not yet been paid is certainly a possible advantage for the investigators, if Radcliffe and Stoll become overtly hostile toward them. If the investigators are in any sort of continued contact with the wildcatters, they see the situation go from bad to worse, and may use it for their own benefit.

Louisiana Liberty can't afford any competition just yet. If they suspect that investigators might be wildcatters or their agents, the partners may regretfully just try to kill them. And if the investigators seek refuge with the oilmen and men begin to disappear in the bayou, then the investigators are most likely forced out into the wetlands to fend for themselves, male or female.

If the game has been too quiet so far, the Keeper may choose to make Radcliffe and Stoll actively violent toward the investigators. If the players seem beleaguered and overwhelmed, the Keeper also has the option of toning down the hostility and letting the investigators win over the wildcatters for additional strength against Murrow and his monstrosities. The camp is a resource to be used at the Keeper's discretion.

If the investigators become involved with the wildcatters' camp, the Keeper should have Murrow take one of the laborers. (The man wandered out into the bayou for a smoke, day or night, and encountered Betsy and Beau. The monstrous howling sound should have

alerted the investigators.) If the investigators come to the dying man's rescue, the hounds withdraw but may be Tracked as far as the water's edge. The telltale signs of a human owner and his boat tell them that someone (Murrow, who is no longer in the vicinity) intentionally coordinated the attack. This killing would be even more effective if it occurs by night, of course. It would be very difficult, but not entirely impossible, to Track Murrow back to his homestead by water—the Keeper should make the Track rolls appropriately harder, unless clever investigators should use the camp's Geiger counter (which leads them unerringly to Murrow, the hounds, and the Thing in the Pool).

The investigators should know that the wildcatters would not be welcomed by the people of Montegut. These are rough men, many of them drifters and itinerant workers, who spend their money on illegal drink, gambling and prostitution. (For the record, there are no prostitutes in Montegut, though a few of the Cajun women might be persuaded out of poverty and desperation. The nearest brothel is just outside Houma.)

The camp has useful equipment, such as maps, food, a Geiger counter, electric torches, medicine, shovels, drinking water, rope, a small oared boat, dynamite, gasoline, matches, etc. There actually are petroleum deposits in this part of Louisiana; the company stands to make a fine profit, if they aren't annihilated by Murrow and his god first.

The Geiger counter should catch the attention of any investigator with a medical background or skill in chemistry, geology or physics. The partners brought it with them after their unsuccessful previous mining venture in New Mexico, where they used it to detect radioactive deposits of pitchblende. They don't have much use for it here in Louisiana, so they would be happy to sell it to investigators if they ask.

DYNAMITE AND GASOLINE

In the 1920s, it is not particularly difficult for American citizens with good business reasons to purchase and own dynamite. It must be stored and handled carefully, for obvious reasons, but could be quite useful to deal with certain threats in this scenario. Gasoline, if properly used, is actually a very powerful explosive and a useful flammable substance. The camp keeps its dynamite in a central storage tent in cool, locked steel trunks; the gasoline is stored in steel jerry cans nearby in another common dump. It would not be difficult for anyone to walk away with a box or jerry can if they weren't being watched. Per the basic rules of *Call of Cthulhu*, one stick of dynamite does 5D6 damage at 1-2 yards range, and lesser

amounts at further distances. A gasoline bomb would be roughly equivalent, but with 50% chance of additional burning damage. Given players' interests in improvised weaponry, please note that napalm (jellied gasoline) was not invented until 1942.

THE GEIGER COUNTER

Invented two decades earlier by German scientist Hans Geiger, this instrument is almost completely identical in shape and function to its later models. It is not very difficult for anyone to use a Geiger counter: The battery-operated device has an on-off switch, a "wand" (the Geiger tube) that is placed in proximity to a suspected source of hard radiation, and a meter dial which clicks audibly when in its presence (and offers a number value for the amount of radiation). Because most people do not understand the hazards of radiation in this period (despite the well-publicized recent triumphs of France's Madame Curie), it takes a successful Physics or Medicine roll to recognize danger in Geiger counter readouts for the first time. (After the initial realization, everyone knows "consistently high numbers/much clicking is bad.") For that matter, it would take a successful Geology, Chemistry, Physics or Medicine roll to recognize the Geiger counter itself (the device was not a "household name" until the late 1940s). A Geiger counter in the 1920s is bulky and heavy, however, as it is about the weight and size of a modern automobile battery. While there is only the thinnest thread here to lead the

investigators to assume they would need a Geiger counter, it is the sort of scientific tool players often enjoy adding to their characters' arsenal, and in this scenario it is actually quite useful.

THE MURROW HOMESTEAD

The Murrow homestead is not listed on any parish records (in the event investigators try to find it on tax assessor or other maps in Houma). The Murrows used to pick up their mail at the post office in Montegut—back in the late 1880s. Eben Murrow himself was last seen in town sometime in the 1890s or 1900s. They never had visitors. They had no adjacent neighbors. They had no utilities. It should not come as a great surprise that no one in Montegut or the surrounding area knows where this ramshackle patch of hell on Earth is, except for the Cajuns who also hunt and fish in the bayous.

Unfortunately, the Cajuns fear the Murrow property and its owner tremendously, and avoid it at all costs. They also have a growing dislike for the spiteful townsfolk, and it takes some roleplaying to convince a Cajun to help rescue Eudora Cabe. ("Why should we help her an' her folk? Who help us?!") Investigators who wish to save Eudora Cabe must find the homestead before it is too late. For all they know, it probably already is too late to save her.

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Though plentiful elsewhere in the bayou, few deer and rabbits are near this place—they have been hunted out of the area, and moreover can sense the unnatural evil of Murrow and his master. Contrary to expectations, the area is more noisy rather than less, for the animals of the vicinity are endlessly agitated by the presence of Murrow's vile magicks.

THE GHOST LIGHTS

The ghost lights mentioned in the scenario are the greenish-purple glowing plasma that floats above the pool near Eben Murrow's shack whenever the Thing in the Pool manifests itself. Anyone who has seen them has wandered near the shack and the pool. If asked, the wildcatters say they think the Ghost Lights are methane gas emissions in the swamp, which might indicate petroleum near the surface. They also advance the erroneous theory that it might also be naturally occurring radiation, but they have no interest in tramping around the swamp with their Geiger counter to find out.

EBEN MURROW'S SHACK

If the investigators arrive at the shack between 8 p.m. and 3 a.m., they do not catch Murrow by surprise. In those hours, he is outside the shack—stalking them. Should they arrive between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., that is Murrow's "morning" and he is in or near the shack, possibly terrorizing Eudora Cabe with his lunatic ravings. Between the hours of 3 a.m. and 10 a.m., that is Murrow's "evening" and the madman is also usually home, doing his "chores." He is most often asleep between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., but is a light sleeper.

Murrow takes one of two approaches to intruders:

- A solitary visitor other than the sheriff has the hounds sent after them. (If the sheriff arrived alone, Murrow would talk with him until it seemed he couldn't convince him to go away. Then he would unleash his hounds on the sheriff and sink the sheriff's patrol car in the bayou waters.)
- Two or more visitors are dealt with by quiet subterfuge—stalking, spying, sneak attacks, traps, etc. Murrow never stands to fight a group of investigators in a bloody standoff. If he is trapped inside the shack with Eudora and there is no possibility of his escape, he kills her and then kills himself.

The shack is located a few miles east and slightly south of Point Farm Road. It is directly located on a bayou waterway and may be approached by water as well as by

land. On land, it is necessary to park an automobile about 100 yards away from the homestead, then walk in. On water, a boat may be run right up the end of the waterway and beached on the clumped weeds and water flowers.

This grimy one-room ramshackle house is built around a stone-and-mortar fireplace. The windows are shabbily patched and the door is unlocked at all hours. All of its interior angles are slightly off-kilter, producing a strange sense of vertigo. A successful Cthulhu Mythos roll reveals that this was a conscious effort to duplicate certain strange geometries associated with a number of Mythos beings, including the city of R'lyeh.

The Keeper is encouraged to emphasize the nerve-racking possibility that Murrow may return at any moment and catch investigators rummaging around his home. There are many ways to do this without requiring much in terms of game mechanics: A sigh of wind that sounds like a breath, a creaking floorboard, an animal moving among the trees, etc. If any rolls are needed, they are dice rolls to realize that these things are merely natural phenomena and not the wizard sneaking up on them. (Perceiving the drop of a decaying branch or sudden jump of a frog in a pool, for example, require no rolls at all.)

The walls and ceiling of the house have dozens of peeling old shoes, ragged shirts, and other garments nailed to them. These items are Eben Murrow's trophies of his hunt victims, and the most recent of them can be positively identified as belonging to the three missing Cajuns.

A successful Occult roll identifies numerous scattered oddments in the room as being magical paraphernalia—with an Occult skill of 40% or better it is possible to recognize some of these things as being items used in some obscure methods to create zombies. Crumbling, stained handwritten pages scattered around the hovel may give some clue as to what Murrow can do; with a successful Library Use roll, investigators discover notes on "Ye Invitation and Leave-Taking of the Quiet One" (Call/Dismiss the Thing in the Pool) and "The Whistling of the Black Pursuers" (see page 61). These things are not hidden and are easily discoverable by any investigator ready to take the time and make the necessary rolls. A Keeper with particularly inattentive players may offer them Idea rolls to think of doing so, and another Idea roll to realize that if Murrow has extensive notes on how to summon and dismiss a sinister creature from beyond the stars, there is a chance he has already done so and that they may need to keep those notes handy to get rid of the thing.

A successful Spot Hidden roll during a search finds a family heirloom in an old cedar chest: an ancient, tattered copy of Dr. John Dee's pamphlet on the *Necronomicon*. (It is not, of course, the *Necronomicon* itself—rather, it is a commentary with useful notes.) Although there is

absolutely no way for investigators to ever learn how Murrow came into possession of this booklet, it is his most prized heirloom, passed down by Murrows since at least the 18th century. It is one of Murrow's most important sources of occult knowledge.

Also, a careful search of the shack detects a shred of blood-stained woman's clothing (from Eudora Cabe).

FUEL FOR THE FIRE

By night, the shack is lit by a flickering old yellow lantern—unless Eben Murrow is out hunting. But if Murrow never goes into town, how does he fuel the lantern? It burns animal and human fat. (His stove burns wood gathered in the bayou.) Murrow drinks water, or whatever is handy. He eats whatever he catches. He never bathes or grooms himself in any way. His needs are simple.

ALONG THE BACKWATER

A successful Spot Hidden roll with a modifier of -5% enables investigators to notice a few faint footprints of a barefoot man, wet with blackish fluid (rotten blood), leading toward the boat-shed. These are the tracks of Jebediah (see below).

THE BOAT SHED

On the edge of the backwater by Murrow's shack is a shed housing his raft and a pair of his victims' small boats that he hasn't yet used for kindling. If investigators sneak into this shed, they must make a successful Spot Hidden roll to notice Jebediah the zombie guard lying still underneath one of the overturned boats. Jebediah is a corpse whose skin is so rotten—and so completely covered in the fuzzy, musty infectious fungus that is associated with the hounds Betsy and Beau—that it is impossible to tell what he must have looked like in life, but he's definitely dead now. Even so, it is not immediately apparent that he is animate, being stacked under a boat like so much cordwood.

If spotted, Jebediah has standing orders to wait for his victims to come close to him (perhaps to see how such a rotten corpse can still be intact) and then throttle them. If unseen, he has standing orders to creep up on intruders and attempt to capture them with an axe-handle kept under a raft in the shed, so that Murrow may hunt and sacrifice his victims at leisure. Any melee breaking out in the boat-shed draws Murrow's attention.

When he was alive, Jebediah Murrow was Eben's developmentally disabled grand-uncle. Eben had argued

with his father that Jebediah should be fed to the Thing in the Pool when he died, but Eben's father used a clever charm in the John Dee pamphlet to restore animation to the corpse and make it a useful servant around the homestead.

THE WOODSHED

Not far from the shack, the woodshed is padlocked from the outside and piled high with kindling and chopped-up swamp-rafts and boats. Inside the shed is Eudora Cabe, a local farmer's niece grabbed by Murrow some days ago and terrified at the threats he has made to her—that she is to be raped and bear his children so that he can feed them to some horrible thing (his dogs, she thinks), and that he never, ever plans to let her go home. He has told her already that the dogs got the two Cajun men, and although he told her that “the Quiet One” got Jeanne-Marie (the Cajun woman), she doesn't realize that's not one of the dogs. She has already screamed herself into a cracked whisper, and beaten her fists bloody against the shed's door and walls.

If freed, she wishes to flee to the sheriff immediately. Miss Cabe has seen the weird ghost-lights beyond the trees, where the Thing in the Pool is. She does not know what causes the lights, but she knows where they originate, and she mentions that they terrified her. If the investigators are too fearful or lazy to go to the place she points out, then eventually Sheriff Dundee does (if she ever reaches him). Dundee is completely unprepared for the supernatural. If he brings Miss Cabe back with him to look over the scene of the crime, both are taken by the Thing in the Pool. (See below.)

Miss Cabe does not know that Eben Murrow and his forefathers are actual wizards and that magic works. Nor does she know that the pool is the home of Eben Murrow's patron god. As a result, she is deeply afraid of the vicious madman who kidnapped her (Murrow) and of his diseased inbred dogs (Beau and Betsy), but not of some sort of witchcraft nonsense—and while the pool makes her very uneasy, she has no reason to imagine that loathsome pseudopods could drag her down screaming into its depths.

THE POOL

Not far from Murrow's homestead is a stagnant pool sheened over with greasy, multicolored slime that looks unlike anything else in the swampland. All the plants around the pool are dead and rotten to the root, filled with strange decay and odd mealy grubs. No animal goes near this pool and its strange bitter smell. The rude pit of water predates the formation of the Lafourche Delta region of Louisiana some 3,500 years past.

Investigators who use the wildcatters' Geiger counter detect the presence of radiation around and within the pool. If they have Geology skill, a successful roll reveals that the rocks in the pool and around it are meteoritic in origin.

This is the source of the Cajuns' "ghost-lights," the home of the Thing in the Pool that has been worshipped by the Murrow family since the first English settlers came to this part of Louisiana. It is a seemingly bottomless pool, as well; investigators lowering a rope tied to a rock cannot find its depth, much less using a long stick.

Investigators would be wise not to taste or touch the waters of the pool. If they do, they are overcome with fever within minutes, a fever filled with nightmare dreams of the Mythos—a Sanity roll is required, and failure causes a loss of 1D4 Sanity points. There is also be an 85% chance of the fungal infection (the one carried by the hounds, Beau and Betsy) being contracted by the investigator, the nature of which is at the Keeper's discretion. And certainly any investigator rash enough to dive into the pool never resurfaces.

The Thing in the Pool arises at Eben Murrow's summoning ritual, which fills the air with sickly greenish-purple lights and a weird piping noise. It is an amorphous blob that is the brownish-gray color of the surrounding mud, with numerous pseudopods covered with slobbering mouths. The mindless Lesser Other God expects its sacrifices to be left for it bound hand and foot on a certain triangular rock at the pool's edge—anyone on that rock is considered prey to be dragged screaming into the pool's depths, including Eben Murrow. The rock is very distinct from everything around it: It is marked by a small quantity of blood and by weird snail trail-like streaks (residue from the Thing's tentacles), as well as odd little glyphs and formulae scratched into it by Murrow. Unless investigators are incredibly clumsy and oblivious, they cannot mistakenly put themselves into the position of a sacrifice.

Fortunately, the Thing cannot venture more than a dozen feet from the water's edge, nor does it normally ever appear by daylight.

THE MYSTERY'S SOLUTION

Of course, the investigators never find the missing Cajuns. All three were hunted down by Eben Murrow and his hounds, and one of them (Montelier) has been given to the Thing in the Pool as a sacrifice. Since Murrow keeps trophies of all his victims in his shack, though, proof of their deaths can be given to the authorities.

If the investigators are heartless enough to collect their reward, they are taking the pittance saved by a small community of poverty-stricken Cajuns, and richly deserve a surprise visit from the hounds as they drive out of the county.

On the other hand, Eudora Cabe can be saved if investigators don't dawdle. She is the next planned sacrifice to the Thing in the Pool, and is to be kept in this hellhole while Murrow's seed takes root in her womb, so she gladly helps the investigators fight to escape Murrow if given the opportunity. She is pragmatic and courageous, and fears only two things at the homestead: the hounds (it would be four, if she knew Jebediah or the Thing in the Pool existed). She considers Murrow a disgusting, evil, sick monster of a man, but he's only a frightening man—she has the spine to deal with him if she is freed. She never lapses into hysterics unless confronted by Jebediah or the Thing in the Pool. If the investigators have no other guide, she has a 40% chance of retracing her steps and getting them to safety the long way through the bayou. Miss Cabe needs medical attention very badly.

INTERACTING WITH EBEN MURROW

Some investigators may wish to attempt to "talk things out" with Murrow. While there are certainly numerous antagonists in other scenarios who are open to negotiations (if only to lure investigators into traps), Murrow really has nothing to say to interlopers. If the player characters wish to learn more about who he is and what he's doing, they might spy on him somehow. In that case, the Keeper should perform the character of Eben Murrow as a muttering psychopath who does not distinguish between his inner monologue and his daily speech except when stalking victims. His running commentary is disgusting, creepy, unintentionally funny and riddled with possibly useful information (at least insofar as talking about the Thing in the Pool, his servant Jebediah, or Beau and Betsy are concerned). But even if he is somehow overpowered, captured and questioned, Murrow says nothing coherent to the investigators.

DEFEATING EBEN MURROW

If the investigators free Eudora Cabe, take her back to town and fetch Sheriff Dundee, they can return to fight Murrow and his minions (Jebediah and the hounds). He does not fight them directly but instead attempts to pick them off or draw them into the bayou to trap them. Players interested in a straightforward firefight may be disappointed to find that Murrow is inbred but

not stupid, and that they are participating in a grim Lovecraftian horror RPG rather than in a gun-blazing fantasy adventure. Even if they should kill Murrow and his creatures, that still leaves the Thing in the Pool to wait for lost wayfarers in the swamp...

The mindless Thing cannot actually be destroyed by physical means, but it can be dismissed with the spell Call/Dismiss the Thing in the Pool (no one has ever dismissed it; it just returns to the bowels of the earth to await its worshippers' call). Alternatively, one could block off the pool with a suitably large concrete slab and the Elder Sign. Dynamiting the pool to seal it off with rock and mud is feasible, and investigators may attempt this—but it would bring them close to the Thing, and it would restrain it only until it digs its way free.

REWARDS

Investigators successfully completing the scenario get the following Sanity rewards:

RESCUING EUDORA CABE	1D6 POINTS
CAPTURING EBEN MURROW	1D6 POINTS
KILLING EBEN MURROW	1D3 POINTS
DESTROYING JEBEDIAH	1 POINT
DESTROYING THE HOUNDS	1D4 POINTS
DISMISSING THE THING IN THE POOL	2D4 POINTS
PERMANENTLY BANISHING THE THING IN THE POOL	3D4 POINTS

If investigators fail but survive the scenario, they may or may not be stalked by the hounds afterward at the Keeper's discretion. (It greatly depends on whether or not Murrow marked them for death. If he did, the hounds pursue the investigators until either they die or the investigators do. If he did not, they do not. The investigators' merit or demerit as human beings has nothing to do with the matter.)

Leaving Eudora Cabe and the inhabitants of Montegut to Murrow's tender mercies requires a Sanity roll with a loss of 1D3+1/1D6+3 Sanity Points.

THE NATURAL INHABITANTS OF THE BAYOU

CABE, EUDORA

A woman locked away in a shed for the Thing in the Pool, she was captured by Jebediah while trying to rescue a child from the sacrifice. If freed, she helps the investigators in any way she can.

EUDORA CABE, AGE 22, CAPTURED FARMGIRL

STR 11 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 9

DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 11 SAN 45 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none

Weapon: Pummel with fists 45%, damage 1D3.

Armor: None.

Skills: Climb 40%, Farming 80%, Medicine 25%, Swim 35%.

STOLL, PETER

Stoll is a hard-headed South Carolina man of medium height, with prematurely thinning hair and an edgy smile. He's worked a dozen jobs and nearly made his fortune a number of times; he'll not let another chance slip past him.

PETER STOLL, AGE 28, PARTNER IN LOUISIANA LIBERTY OIL

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 11 POW 8

DEX 14 APP 10 EDU 10 SAN 40 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Fist/punch 55%, damage 1D3+db.
Grapple 30%, damage special.
.45 revolver 25%, damage 1D10+2.
Head butt 15%, damage 1D4+db.

Armor: None.

Skills: Bargain 55%, Fast Talk 35%, Geology 20%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Operate Heavy Machine (Drilling Rig) 75%, Other Language: Cajun French 5%, Persuade 35%, Swim 55%.



ATKINSON

RADCLIFFE, MIKE

Radcliffe is a tall, sinewy man with a mustache and bandana who learned the oil trade wildcatting in his native Texas after the big strikes on the Red River. He is big and showy, and can easily turn from ingratiating to intimidating within seconds. He's just as desperate for success as his partner, Stoll.

Skills: Accounting 40%, Credit Rating 45%, Drive Automobile 30%, Geology 60%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Operate Heavy Machine (Drilling Rig) 50%, Other Language: Cajun French 45%, Swim 40%.

MIKE RADCLIFFE, AGE 26, PARTNER IN LOUISIANA LIBERTY OIL

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 13 POW 10

DEX 14 APP 11 EDU 9 SAN 50 HP 11

Damage Bonus: None.

Weapons: .32 revolver 20%, damage 1D8.

Armor: None.

WILDCATTERS

Most of the wildcatters working for Louisiana Liberty are men from the ages of 17 to 24, who've either worked in the mines of West Virginia or the oilfields of the Southwest. They number in their ranks a few drifters and petty criminals, but they are mostly honest, though desperate and rootless.

TYPICAL WILDCATTER, AGE 17 TO 24

STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 12 INT 9 POW 8

DEX 11 APP 9 EDU 6 SAN 40 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapon: Fist/punch 60%, damage 1D3+db.
Mining tool (pick, etc.) 20%, damage 1D8+db.
Double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun 30%,
damage 4D6/2D6/1D6.

Armor: none

Skills: Geology 10%, Mechanical Repair 25%,
Operate Heavy Machine (Drilling Rig) 33%,
Swim 40%

ALLIGATOR

STR 25 CON 18 SIZ 26 POW 10 DEX 8

Move 6/8 swimming HP 22

Damage Bonus: +2D6.

Weapon: Bite 50%, damage 1D10+2D6.
Tail 35%, damage 1D10+2D6.

Armor: 5-point hide.

Skills: Hide 60%, Sneak 50%.

COTTONMOUTH SNAKE

STR 1D6 (3)

CON 2D6 (7)

SIZ 1 (1)

POW 2D6 (7)

DEX 2D6+6(13)

Hit points avg.: 4

Move: 6/8 swimming.

Damage Bonus average: None.

Weapon: Bite 35%, no damage but poison POT
10, takes effect in 15-60 minutes, causes
vomiting, violent spasms, death.

Armor: None.

THE UNNATURAL INHABITANTS OF THE BAYOU

MURROW. EBEN

Last of a swamp-wizard clan in the Louisiana bayou, Murrow is a prime example of inbred degeneracy. He is tall and rangy, with grizzly whitish-brown hair and uneven grey eyes. His features are thick and slightly asymmetrical, like a clay bust not quite finished. He wears sodden overalls, boots, and similar bayou-dweller's garb, and speaks in a high scratchy drawl. The madman considers himself a farmer, a father, a "man what makes things grow."

Eben Murrow has learned of the Mythos at the knee of his fathers, and from an old text handed down to him, and most of all from the whispers of the Thing in the Pool that have filtered into his odious dreams. He worships the Thing in the Pool like his forefathers did before him, and it has granted him nearly all the knowledge he has. But there is more to be had, and it needs sacrifice before it enlightens him.

One of his most obvious features is a weirdly shaped amulet worn around his neck, made of cut leather, old feathers and an unidentifiable metal. (The metallic whistle portion of the amulet was given to Murrow's ancestor by the Thing in the Pool; intervening generations have added meaningless decorative touches to it.) The amulet has a whistle carved into it as well. It is with this amulet that Murrow summons and controls his hounds in accordance with the Allegiance (see Scenario Spells at the end of the adventure); they do not care who holds the amulet once summoned—its owner is automatically their ally and all others are prey. With the amulet he can convince the Hounds to hunt only those he wishes to go after, but without it even Murrow isn't safe.

Year after year, the Murrows have bred amongst themselves for two reasons. First, so that they could keep "the witch blood" strong; second, so that they could create life that they could feed to their god. Their taboo has always been the feeding of "grewed up" Murrows to the Thing in the Pool. "What can talk don't get fed to him."

Eben is the last of the Murrows because he wanted to be its favorite, "His special favorite in all the world, better'n all the rest." When he was a teenager, his mother and father and uncle were the only other Murrows left in Louisiana. They all sacrificed to it, but only he would go them one better. He gave the Thing his own adult kin in sacrifice, one by one. But when there weren't any more Murrows but himself, what then?

There would always be strangers to give over to the god in the pool, but Murrow needed to give freely of himself to please his master. So there could be only one answer: there would be more offspring. More kin to please the master! While Eben Murrow feeds men outright to the Thing in the Pool, for women there is a worse fate still. For them, there is Eben Murrow's bed, and then some months later the feast of the Thing. Sometimes the victims have birthed his child, sometimes not, "t'all depends on how hungry He is. . . ."

No matter when investigators catch up to Murrow, it is always on the night he plans to rape and impregnate Eudora. Female investigators, if captured, are added to his plans—he intends for them to share Eudora's fate, unless they somehow escape him. He babbles to one and all that he's only siring young'uns on them as "feed for the Master." Given half a chance, Eben Murrow gleefully summons the hounds and sets them to chase investigators through the bayou.

EBEN MURROW, AGE 55, LAST OF THE LOUISIANA MURROWS

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 15 INT 12 POW 15

DEX 13 APP 8 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Hunting knife 25%, damage 1D6+db.
Hatchet 25%, 1D6+db.
12-gauge double-barrel shotgun 30%,
damage 4D6/2D6/1D6.

Skills: Bargain 10%, Botany 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Hide 30%, Listen 30%, Occult 55%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 30%, Swim 30%, Track 40%, Zoology 10%.

Spells: Allegiance of the Pool*, Call/Dismiss the Thing in the Pool *, Create Zombie (book variant).

* New spells for this scenario.

BEAU AND BETSY. EBEN MURROW'S HOUNDS

Eben Murrow's pets are large, bony hounds with semi-exposed spinal columns and bones, heavy frothing jaws, filmy white eyes, leprous skins, mucoid nostrils and ears.

The Murrows have always bred their hunting-dogs specially, and with a very special diet. The hounds are in-bred with one another, and their whelps are allowed to reach maturity only once in a few litters. The less-fortunate pups are slain, and their bodies lightly buried at the edge of the pool-shrine of The Thing. When the fungus which grows there has sprouted itself in their flesh,

they are fed to their parents. Tainted with the corrupted flesh, the hounds become monstrous in aspect and intelligence. They are the servants of The Thing in the Pool, and though they hunt intruders at their "master's" call, their first priority is to stop enemies of The Thing.

Whenever the hounds are seriously injured, they retreat to heal their injuries and change their strategy. They cleverly stalk difficult prey and wear victims out, drive them into traps, and so forth. They do not act in any fashion to protect Eben Murrow, but they do relentlessly pursue anyone he has marked to them for death. A hideous intelligence shines in their eyes. No sane human being can or would recreate the breeding and dietary requirements to create these monsters. One hound is male ("Beau") and the other female ("Betsy").

STR 14 15

CON 26 28

SIZ 15 16

INT 12 14

POW 17 18

DEX 15 15

HP 20 22

Move 10/30 for short sprints

Damage Bonus: +1D4 for both.

Weapons: Bite 70%, damage 1D6+loathsome infection. (There is a 10% chance per bite that a victim becomes infected with an unknown disease coupled with a rhizomatic fungal growth. The infection can be arrested and reversed with hospital treatment, but the victim suffers fever, tender and swollen lymph glands and mucous membranes, fainting, and periodic attacks of homicidal mania (10% chance per hour, cumulative). The bitten area furs over with spore growth within 1-2 hours, and must be amputated to avoid blood poisoning. If no aid is given, the victim becomes completely covered with spore growth in 8-14 hours and dies from fever and blood poisoning within 11-16 more hours. The disease cannot be transmitted from human to human; it requires an animal carrier.)

Armor: 1 point hide. Regenerates 2 hit points/round.

Skills: Listen 75%, Track by Scent 80%.

Spells: None.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D3 Sanity points.

EBEN MURROW'S ZOMBIE SERVANT, DEAD SOME 27 YEARS

STR	17
CON	16
SIZ	11
POW	1
DEX	6
Move	6
HP	13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Maul 35%, damage 2D8+db.
Axe handle 30%, damage 1D8+db.

Armor: None, but impaling weapons do but one point of damage, and all others do half rolled damage.

THE THING IN THE POOL (LESSER OTHER GOD)

STR	40
CON	50
SIZ	60
INT	0
POW	60
DEX	6
Move	6
HP	55

Weapon: Mouth-laden tentacle 72%, 5D6 + 1D3 per turn from acid.

Armor: None, but reaching zero hit points merely dispels the Thing from Earth—it cannot be killed. However, whenever it suffers an attack that does 8 HP damage or more it retreats back into its pool, forcing investigators to carefully reconsider their approach. If investigators come too close to the pool after it has withdrawn it may make at least one last sneak attack before withdrawing deeper for a time.

Spells: Allegiance of the Pool, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods.

Sanity Loss: 1/1D20 Sanity Points to view the Thing in the Pool.

“The Whistling of the Black Pursuers” (The Allegiance of the Pool): This spell costs 6 Magic Points and 1D6 Sanity Points on its initial and final castings (the actual allegiance-bargain and the release from the bargain), and 2 Magic Points and 1 Sanity Point on all castings between (until the caster is at 0 Sanity Points, when there is of course no further Sanity cost). It requires the making of a twisted amulet with a whistle built into it, made of an unearthly meteoric metal (found in this scenario in certain stones scattered around the pool) with some organic materials woven in. It also requires a human sacrifice and the sacrifice by the caster of one point of POW to each hound.

Once cast, however, the bearer of the amulet may blow through the whistle and an unearthly note sounds, calling the hounds wherever they may be to arrive within 1D3 turns. The caster can give orders (strongly desired requests, really) to the hounds which they follow to the best of their ability. They never act independently to do the caster any harm while s/he wears the amulet, but they also do not act to defend him or her unless asked. (The hounds relish turning on their ally if s/he loses the amulet.) They do not fight to the death, and they can never display overt signs of anything resembling a human personality. Once the Allegiance is made, they can hear the whistle-amulet at any distance, throughout space and time. In the unlikely event that an investigator undertakes this pact with the hounds and takes Beau and Betsy with them, they instinctively know that the character has no allegiance to the Quiet One (the Thing in the Pool) and eventually devour him or her in his or her bed. If the investigator chooses to genuinely join the Thing in the Pool as a cultist, the hounds do faithfully serve that investigator, but the Keeper should carefully consider the effect this has on their ongoing game.

“Ye Invitation and Leave-Taking of the Quiet One” (Call/Dismiss the Thing in the Pool): The Thing in the Pool may be summoned only at night at the edge of a vile stagnant pond, with a specially consecrated triangular stone set in its edge to hold a needed human sacrifice. Greenish-purplish lights dance in the air as the Lesser Outer God approaches, accompanied by an ear-splitting piping sound. The Thing makes a home for itself in its summoning location until it is dismissed. The dismissal of the Thing in the Pool can be performed only at night, and requires the caster to expend 3 POW and 3 HP in the form of blood dripped into the pool, in addition to the other rules for dismissing a deity. Whether the Thing is actually banished from the Earth or is merely sent to slumber deeper in the shadowy depths of the pool is up to the Keeper’s discretion.



BLACK SUNDAY

BY C.A. SULEIMAN AND GEORGE HOLOCHWOST

“The nightmare is deepest during the storms. But on the occasional bright day and the usual gray day we cannot shake from it. We live with the dust, eat it, sleep with it, watch it strip us of possessions and the hope of possessions. It is becoming Real. The poetic uplift of spring fades into a phantom of the storied past. The nightmare is becoming life.”

—Avis D. Carlson, “Dust,” *The New Republic* (May 1935)

On a clear Sunday morning in April, 1935, the residents of Guymon, Oklahoma got together to ask their Lord and Savior for some rain—again. It was called a “rain service,” and such events were growing more and more common throughout the state, now in its fourth year of burning drought. For small town folks living in the Oklahoma Panhandle, the location of these rain services was the local Methodist Church. The sun was out that day, the temperature rising high into the eighties, and the wind, for once, was quiet. The churchgoers filed down the sunlit thoroughfare of their town, marveling in the divine grace of this pleasant change of weather. Some even talked openly about how the day’s mildness, falling as it did on this day, was a sign: An omen of things to come.

The minister spoke to his congregation that day of hope and prayer, and of his faith in the fact that rain would come to Guymon, and that there would be a harvest. “Within three weeks,” he said. “God rules all,” he said. Three hours later the mercury began to fall, and fast. Within an hour, the local temperature in Guymon had dropped from almost 90 degrees to around 65 degrees. When the temperature slipped down below 40 degrees an hour later, some

residents started to prepare, in sheer disbelief, for snow—ridiculous as the idea would have seemed just two hours earlier. Today was Easter Sunday, and something dark and terrible was headed straight for them.

It was like a rolling wall of black silt, and when it came for Guymon that Sunday afternoon, it came hard. With the falling heat came a rising darkness that swallowed the sun above the town and turned day to night for almost 45 minutes (and would leave the town in a darkness nearly as complete for a full three hours thereafter). The rising wind grew first to gale and then to hurricane-force, as the storm careened headlong into and through the Oklahoma Panhandle at over 70 miles per hour, riding a crest of black soil it had dragged from as far north as Canada. By the time this mother-of-all-dust-storms descended on Guymon, all birds had fled the area, visibility had dropped to zero, and the relative humidity percentage in and around the town had plummeted into the single digits.

When the storm hit, most of the Hooper community was gathered just outside of town for a rabbit drive cum picnic, one of many rabbit drives going on that day throughout the

Panhandle. (People were hungry, rabbits were plentiful, and rabbit meat canned relatively well.) The men were just building the fence into which the rabbits would be driven when the wide black line appeared over the horizon. With no time to prepare, the entire congregation was caught off-guard: Men clung to fence poles for dear life; women screamed for their children, some of whom were taken by the wind, lost to the dust. Men and women alike gasped and clutched their throats, as the storm's ferocity deprived the very air of its oxygen.

When the storm hit, one Guymon teenager was running for his life along a dirt road in an attempt to make it back home in time. He wasn't fast enough, and the storm caught him outside along the road. He survived by dropping to the ground, covering his head, and holding his breath as much as he could, but not before the dust got in under his eyelids, scouring his eyeballs. After the storm, his parents found him out along the road, his eyes caked shut from the dust. The boy would never see again.

When the storm hit, cattle had no idea what was going on or how to react to it, so they simply ran around in circles as the dust accumulated in their lungs. Roosters, confused by the swift descent of darkness over the town, thought that night had arrived and simply fell asleep. After the storm, farmers emerged to find all cattle and roosters dead, their lungs filled with mud.

That Easter Sunday in 1935 became known as "Black Sunday," for reasons that were all-too-apparent to those who lived in what the Soil Conservation Service came to define as the "Dust Bowl:" Oklahoma, southeastern Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, and north Texas. While Guymon received the lion's share of the national attention from Black Sunday, its story was just one of many, endemic to a region full of communities that had been suffering for years before that fateful day. The event not only encapsulated the fear and desperation of the region's drought-weary people, but also provided the rest of the country with a means by which it might understand how they lived. As journalist Robert Geiger wrote in his seminal piece on the event, "Three little words achingly familiar on a Western farmer's tongue rule life today in the dust bowl of the continent."

"If it rains..."

THE DIRTY THIRTY

Black Sunday helped the country define the broader depression that had swallowed it for half a decade, giving the American people a marker by which to know, and later remember, the times through which they struggled.

The pictorial records of journalists like Dorothea Lange continue to call the Dust Bowl to mind today, despite the fact that most of Lange's work covered migrant workers not in Oklahoma, Kansas, or Texas, but in California. After Black Sunday, the country had a tool with which it could pin down the images and ideas that had become the vocabulary of the Great Depression, and thus, to pin down all the symbolism and thematics that such a vocabulary allows.

Ultimately, these images and ideas are what lie at the heart of any game set in or incorporating the aesthetics of the Dust Bowl era. What follows is a list of 30 facts about the Dust Bowl, or about the depression's effect on the folks who lived there. These colorful and often chilling details should help contextualize your game's narrative.

1. The dust storms traveled faster than could any car, and their tornado winds swirled up to 10,000 feet in the air.

2. Those incapable of sufficiently masking their faces would develop sand pneumonia, which afflicted humans and animals alike, and was known throughout the region as the "burning lung disease."

3. Sometimes the storms hit so fast that they caught children at play in their yards. Unable to find their way inside, the children were found suffocated in the dust by those who emerged after the storm's passing.

4. Motorcyclists caught on the road during a dust storm were usually killed, save when tumbleweeds got caught in the cycle's spokes, forming a protective barrier that shielded the battered motorist enough for him to survive.

5. The dryness of the storms generated massive levels of static electricity, which sparked along fences and poles, killing nearby plants and infusing dangerous amounts of charge into nearby metal objects. Cars, for example.

6. For some areas, the storms' greatest peril was in their frequency. Roofs and stairways collapsed from the weight of accumulation, and the dust itself got into everything; even butter inside refrigerators was covered in it.

7. In an attempt to secure their homes farmers would glue shut windows and doorways, then drape sheets and blankets around the openings; to no avail, as the storms left thick blankets of dust over everything in their wake.

8. Many in the Dust Bowl ate their meals under the tablecloth, rather than using it to cover their tables, which were of course covered with dust.

9. The storms earned many nicknames over the course of a decade, but “roller” and “black blizzard” prevailed.

10. Many scientists still consider the Dust Bowl to be the largest natural disaster in American history.

11. The changing ecosystem brought about massive changes to the fauna of the region, as drought and hunger forced animals into heretofore unseen relationships with their human neighbors.

12. With no natural predators remaining to keep them in check, centipedes, crickets, grasshoppers, rabbits, and spiders flooded the area. Some farmers would fill multiple buckets just sweeping up centipedes.

13. The air was so dry that it would draw snakes to people’s homes, and it became common for folks to step out onto their porch in the morning only to find the porch floor crawling with serpents.

14. Because the surplus rabbits were killing off what little vegetation remained, Dust Bowl towns instituted a practice whereby rabbits were herded by the thousands into fenced-in pens, and then clubbed to death.

15. Crickets and grasshoppers ate everything in sight, including farm equipment; farmers often complained of all the wood on their shovels being eaten away, leaving just the metal heads.

16. The number of people who died from spider bites in the region skyrocketed between 1930 and 1935.

17. During the Dust Bowl, it was so dry for so long that even frogs could not learn how to swim and would drown when placed in water.

18. The cause of the Dust Bowl is attributed largely to Man, who farmed for decades without crop rotation (and other anti-erosion measures) and deep-plowed the plains whose grasses kept the soil and its moisture in place.

19. World War I had driven up the price of grain, which forced farmers to increase their yield, which in turn further hastened the depletion of natural foliage throughout the Great Plains.

20. The Homestead Act, which encouraged expansion into the Dust Bowl, caused people to settle in areas that were never meant for high-yield agriculture.

21. There were 38 major dust storms in the region in 1933 alone, destroying over 100 million acres of land.

22. The precursor to Black Sunday arrived on May 9th, 1934, carrying 350 million tons of dirt over 2,000 miles and depositing 4 million tons of “black snow” on Chicago alone. Tens of thousands of animals died as a result.

23. Between 1930 and 1935, over 750,000 farms were lost through bankruptcy or sheriff sales.

24. Distressed farms were occasionally sold at “Penny Auction” (i.e., forced auction), in which neighboring farmers would assure that their neighbor could buy back his farm by agreeing to hold bids down to pennies, nickels, and quarters, and would discourage higher bids (particularly from outsiders) by dangling nooses at the auction sites.

25. Californians tried to stop Dust Bowl migrants from moving into their state by setting up highway checkpoints, called “bum blockades,” and even passing an “anti-Okie” law, which made the act of bringing “indigents” into the state a crime punishable by jail time.

26. Throughout Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, Mexican-Americans were accused of taking jobs away from “real” Americans and many were “encouraged” to return home to Mexico.

27. One consequence of Roosevelt’s National Recovery Act involved government agents descending on Dust Bowl hog farms with orders in hand to butcher a percentage of a farmer’s hogs, in an attempt to stabilize the hog market in the face of a national oversupply. Farmers were compensated, but had precious little say in the matter.

28. The evacuation of the Dust Bowl remains the largest limited-term migration in American history, with over 2.5 million people abandoning the region by the end of the “Dirty Thirties.”

29. The term “Dust Bowl” was coined by Associated Press writer Robert Geiger, who used it in his piece for the Evening Star’s morning edition on April 15th—the day after Black Sunday.

30. The sheer misery of the Dust Bowl prompted its residents to adopt a wry brand of “tough times” humor, some of the more notable witticisms thereof being, “Oklahoma has four seasons, often within the same week;” “Dust settles, debts don’t” (from a Woody Guthrie song); and of course, “The wind blew the farm away, but we didn’t lose everything—we still got the mortgage.”

WHAT DO YOU FEAR?



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IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Telling just a single, self-contained story set within the Dust Bowl will doubtless provide at least one opportunity to pit the investigators against the setting's chief antagonist: the dust storm. While any number of methods exists for arbitrating in narrative terms the hows and wherefores of such an encounter, those wishing to transform the scene into a dynamic game sequence can avail themselves of the system offered here.

The average dust storm is a nasty piece of work. The force of wind passing over dead soil causes the latter to first vibrate, then "leap" (a process called saltation), which in turn loosens smaller particles, which themselves begin to travel in suspension. With a payload that moves through not one, but three different mechanisms (saltation, suspension, and creep), the wind becomes a juggernaut—a black wall with a mile-high face, howling forth at speeds faster than the cars of the day could travel in their highest gear. If you're in its path, and not somehow beneficially ensorcelled, trying to outrun one is doomed to failure.

Dust storms can last for hours, but for the purposes of crafting a thrilling game encounter the most lethal portion of a storm—starting the moment the damn thing crashes headlong into the investigators—lasts only one or two minutes (2D6+3 rounds). After this time those struck by that storm are considered to be in the storm's trail, which has its own game effects (see below). The following chart reflects the progression of an encounter with the average dust storm.

ROUND	D100 ROLL	DAMAGE	LUCK ROLL
1–2	N/A	0/1D4	—/D100 ROLL (CON x10)
3–4	CON x9	0/1D4	1 DAMAGE/1 DAMAGE AND STUNNED (1 ROUND)
5–6	CON x8	0/1D6	+1 CON VALUE/1 DAMAGE
7–8	CON x7	1/1D6	1 DAMAGE/1 DAMAGE AND –1 CON VALUE
9–10	CON x6	1/1D4	—/1D2 DAMAGE
11–12	CON x5	1/1D4	+1 CON VALUE/1D2 DAMAGE
13+	CON x6	0/1D4	+1 CON VALUE /1 DAMAGE

During the first two rounds the investigators are at their strongest, holding their breath and otherwise actively improving their situation as best they can. They must make two Luck rolls (one for each round) and as soon as an investigator fails one, he must begin making D100 rolls (i.e., failure on the first Luck roll means that character will have to make two D100 rolls in the first two rounds), suffering the damage listed above on a success/failure. Beginning in the third round every character must make both the CON-based D100 roll and an accompanying Luck roll, still rolling Luck first, with success/failure on the Luck roll resulting in the effect listed under Luck above. (A result of "x1 CON value" indicates a modifier to the character's D100 roll that turn only.)

Those inside total but permeable shelter (such as a wood plank shack) automatically succeed at their first D100 roll and never suffer damage on a successful D100 roll. Those with partial cover, such as a heavy blanket or nearby vehicle, gain only the automatic success on the first D100 roll. All characters caught in the dust storm's fury receive the "benefit" of concealment.

The Storm's Trail: After the initial wave has subsided, the average dust storm hangs around for 1D6 hours thereafter. Each hour, sheltered characters must make a D100 roll (CON x9) or take another point of damage, with unsheltered characters rolling CON x7 and taking 1D2 on a failure.

THE DEVILS IN THE DUST

The Dust Bowl is, of course, a terrific backdrop for Cthulhu Mythos games. Set as it is in the 1930s, and being awash with the images and themes of desperation, hunger, and madness, the Dust Bowl has much to offer those who would draw their investigators out of the cold “comfort” of New England and drop them into the largest real-life natural disaster in American history.

But what makes such a disaster so “natural” in a world where threats like Hastur, Nyarlathotep, and Shub-Niggurath are real? Well, nothing, necessarily. Black Sunday, and the broader conditions that gave the Dust Bowl its name, could just as easily stem from or give rise to something altogether unnatural, something Lovecraftian. What follows is a sampling of ways in which folks wanting to work the Dust Bowl into their games can twist those themes and events to suit their own nefarious purposes.

THE CURSE

Dryness and drought are the bane of most water-based life forms on Earth, but such things don’t impact all life in the same way. Consider snakes, for example. When the dust storms began to blow through the Oklahoma Panhandle in 1933, the indigenous populations of most animal species fell; but not so snakes. The numbers of snakes began to rise, and come Black Sunday, the region was literally crawling with them. Far from a purely natural phenomenon, this surge was begat of a powerful force from the time before civilized Man.

The Native American tribes of the Panhandle spoke in hushed tones of a powerful and capricious god they called “The Father of Serpents.” This deity, they said, whose name was Yig (though the natives were loathe to speak it aloud), brought suffering to those who butchered its “children,” the many breeds of snakes. Native folklore teemed with accounts (anecdotal though they were) of horrors being visited upon braves who took the life of a serpent, especially for those who did so for any reason other than self-defense; and even then, the man would be placing his life—or worse, his family’s lives—in the hands of a deity known for acting mainly on whim. In most cases, the offender would be found dead, usually from a virulent poison, despite there being no evidence of snake-bite on his person. In other cases, a fate far worse befell the transgressor and his kin, who found themselves subjected to painful physical transformations, swift descents into madness, or both.

Such colorful stories hadn’t been heard for decades by the time the Dust Bowl era arrived, of course. But throughout the Oklahoma Panhandle and beyond, something has stirred within the dust, and those who forget the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. As the numbers of snakes in the area rose, and with them the hunger of the human populace, more and more snakes were caught and killed, either for home security reasons or as food source. And the more snakes that died, the worse the storms grew, and according to those few Native Americans still around to tell the tale, the more enraged the Father of Serpents became. For each snake lost to the arrogance or desperation of man, they said, two more would rise to take its place, each one burning with the wrath of its father.

And the vicious circle swirled thus, culminating in the events of Black Sunday, when, if the “redskins” are to be believed, Yig the Serpent Father belched forth his vengeance, scouring the Dust Bowl with a black blizzard that made those of the previous two years seem nearly inconsequential. From that day on, the snakes grew not only even more numerous, but more emboldened; hundreds of them now converge, as though guided by a hive-mind, on solitary domiciles throughout the Dust Bowl, most often the residence of one who has made sport or habit of the hunting and killing of snakes. And it is said that no longer is the Serpent Father content to poison such blasphemers to death; that the god now seeks to perpetuate his cycle, by slithering inside the wombs of those who brought down his wrath; that even now, mothers all across the Dust Bowl wait to give birth not to healthy human babies, but to the grapes of their own wrath—the high toll exacted by the Curse of Yig, unleashed in full at last.

HOOKS

- While traveling through the Panhandle, the investigators are stopped by (or otherwise encounter) a desperate local man, his face awash with sweat and worry. If given time to explain, the man recounts how his pregnant wife has been laid low with a fever no local physician can explain, one that plagues her nighttime imaginings with crazed visions of feathered serpents. He goes on to say that she’s been waking him up in the middle of the night... by hissing in her sleep. With times being what they are, he hasn’t the money for a specialist and is now desperate for help.
- While in a neighboring area of the Dust Bowl, one of the investigators has occasion to encounter a single ordinary snake, perhaps slithering in through an open window in the dead of night. After dispatching or otherwise aggressively removing the serpentine threat,

that character begins to dream of a lonely house on a flat plain of dry, russet farmland; night after night, the dream recurs. After asking around, the investigator learns that such a location could be found only in the Oklahoma Panhandle, which is some hours' drive away. If he wants the dreams to end, he has little choice but to make the journey into the Panhandle, and into the unknown.

THE OFFERING

The degree to which something can be considered ancient is sometimes a matter of grim perspective. In the American West of the 1930s, the populations and cultures of Native Americans have been decimated and many of their legends lost to the annals of time. Nonetheless, there are some tales, and even places, that stretch back long before the plains people hunted the land, before the tales of the first ancestors. Such a history is had by a certain mound that stands amidst flat plains about a mile west of Binger, Oklahoma.

The mound itself is nondescript, and until Black Sunday, was free of any man-made structures. Before the drought, the mound was mostly avoided, considered cursed, haunted, and in some rumors, something far more unnatural. In the past, a headless ghost was seen

atop the mound, allegedly vanishing into the mound when approached. Other, more obscure reports attest to the mound casting an abnormal shadow, turning towards the sun and maintaining darkness despite the directness of light. Some eccentric local historians give witness to rarely-told tales of these shadows, recalling the old fables which claimed them to be shapeless guardians of what lies in the world beyond the mound. This could not be more literally true.

For thousands and thousands of years, the mound near Binger has served as a gateway to a place that is home to one of the most populous and extensive of pre-human civilizations. This realm, called K'n-yan, houses an antediluvian race of psychically prodigal humanoids, similar to humans in appearance but far more advanced, both technologically and genetically. Able to become immaterial through some unknown psychic technique, the beings of the mound use this gift to enter and leave K'n-yan, seeming as spirits upon the hill to the uninitiated.

Once beneath, the azure-lit depths of K'n-yan expand in all directions, playing host not only to the dominant psychic humanoid life forms, but also serpent folk, all loyal to the Lord of N'kai. Although the K'n-yani folk once attempted to drive out the horrid bat-frog and his kin, Tsathoggua's servants swarmed against the insurrection, reinstating his cruel rule with bloodshed

WELCOME TO THE WORLD AT THE END OF THE WORLD!

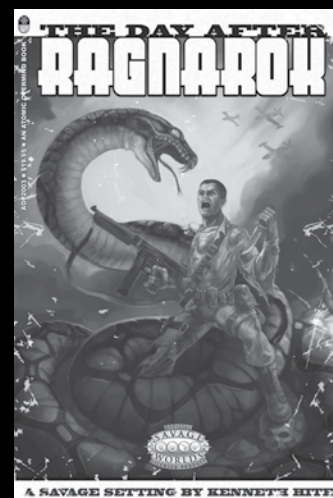
Mighty-thewed barbarians and grim mercenaries roam the desolate plains of Ohio. Giant snakes, and those who worship them, prowl the ruins of St. Louis. Pirates battle the Japanese invaders in the South China Sea. Bold British agents, equipped with experimental bio-technology, thwart the insidious infiltration of Stalin's humanzees. Sky-raiders strike from hidden bases in the Sahara, deros skull in South American caverns, and the Texas Rangers fight electrical death worms to save Los Alamos.

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and displays of his eldritch power. As such, blood-smeared bone shrines rise from the earthen circles of K'n-yan, marking preferred sites of sacrifice for paying homage to a full host of Great Old Ones. It is believed, however, that all manner of economies in the land beneath the mound rely on some form of sacrifice or another - for in the darkened temples of K'n-yan, vespers and jewels mean nothing and the red flesh of the unwitting is carved in devotion by the strange men of the mound.

Although a proper civilized world would be a hard place to conceal a cyclopean wonder the likes of K'n-yan, amidst the swirling storms of the Dust Bowl the old legends don't serve as sound a deterrent as they once did. Taking advantage of human trust and superstition, the mound is now the site of a flapping brown tent of modest size. Advertised on hand-painted signs that never seem to be posted at the same location more than once, the Miracle Tent of Mother White Elk is, in the broadest occult sense, a crossroads where man can traffic with the oldest things, paying with the one currency all gods desire. On dark, dusty nights, good men ashamed of what they are about to do can be seen leading fattened hogs or goats (or, in rare circumstances, a more precious life) to the mound, leaving a short while later with the lead coiled about their sweat-covered hands.

Upon entering the tent, the ignorant will find nothing to draw concern, merely the snake oil hut of an elderly native woman, playing up her cultural affect in order to convince tourists of her authenticity. For those who have learned their lore and know the woman to be "a herald from below," no words need be exchanged. The offering is handed over to the woman's bug-eyed son, who then takes it behind a crude screen hung with animal skins. The supplicant then leaves, knowing that the price has been paid and his woes will surely be eased. What visitors don't see are the formless black tendrils that surge from the ground, silently dragging the offering into the blue-lit world beneath.

HOOKS

- The woman on the hill has provided what's most needed to the nearby farms and communities from time immemorial. Although she's still taking her full complement of offerings from the desperate and forlorn, she's only doling out the grace of Tsathoggua in measured helpings. As the needy turn like laudanum addicts with empty bottles, the native woman turns the screw and makes such demands of blood and sacrifice to which no sane person would initially agree. Why? Something needs more beneath the mound, and it needs it wrapped in pain. Could it be that Tsathoggua has returned and his appetite is piqued? Or is it that the old woman has gone entirely insane—saturated, after all this time, with the dark energies of K'n-yan.

- With agricultural endeavors crippled by the coming of the dust, farms have been selling out to developers left and right. Whether it be drilling for oil or digging for ore, the land is being turned with reckless abandon. Not far from the mound, a new shaft is being dug and terrible things are starting to happen. Such a matter requires looking into.

THE ORCHARD

Farmland goes dead, then to dust, as the rains refuse to fall. The High Plains of America, once fertile, are now a barren womb, pumping dust in meaningless seizures, yielding nothing for their efforts. Countless families lose their homes, minds, and lives as the wind blows on and on, leaving nothing but absence and despair in its wake. Although prayer after prayer is uttered in the roadside chapels and shanty churches throughout the region, the right faiths of civilization remain silent, unwilling or unable to give respite from the drought. Some prayers, however, draw the attention of ancient gods, and it is their faithful that might eat at the table of plenty while others waste slowly away.

At the end of 22 miles of road leading into the heart of nothing, there stands a wooden sign that reads "Red Gables Collective." It is on the next mile of road that the desolation recedes, and the understated paradise cared for by the residents unfolds before the eyes of disbelieving visitors. Although isolated, the folk are welcoming and share in the fruits, vegetables, and meat of their labors with total generosity, creating a haven for the starving and lost. In fact, the intense, clannish warmth of the place is almost enough to overlook the fact that there is no natural way that the farm and its pleasures could possibly be real; especially as there is no recollection by any nearby townsfolk of such a place as Red Gables—at least not before the Black Sunday.

The first step to seeing the farm for what it truly is will happen when the sluggish, well-fed inhabitants are questioned about either key organizers or the actual leaders of the farm. The first question elicits only soft chuckles, a response sinister only in the purity of its nonchalance. The Red Gable residents have no remaining concept of hierarchy or organization, functioning more as a hive than as a team, incapable of the transgressions that would cause strife and reduced production. To go against the good of the farm is simply not reasonable. However, if hard pressed about the nature of the founder or leader of the Red Gables collective, the mood will quickly turn as the farm's "young" feel an unmistakable aggression towards their mother, their very heart.



Beneath the oldest barn among the farm's many barns runs a tunnel that resembles a mineshaft, spiraling down into the earth, the roots of old trees protruding from the walls like swollen veins. The shaft's depth is hard to determine, as the air itself seems to pacify and intoxicate any human who breathes it in. So it is in this dreamlike state that the visitor first sets his eyes upon the

monstrosity that is certainly the farm's most vital patron.

Either an avatar of Shub-Niggurath or some terrible unique variety of Dark Young, the Sow of Red Gables stretches nearly forty feet in length, a porcine behemoth with wriggling tentacle stubs where its legs and hooves should be. Its body, an undulating wall of dirt bristling with ichor-weeping teats, serves as the all-nourishing host to packs of its tumescent children. The creature's excreta is considered holy sacrament by the collective, generally referred to as "milk" by the members of the farm's deeply-addicted population. It is through the ingestion of this sacrament that the devotees of the sow-beast slowly mutate beyond the pale of mere humanity and into the blind, mewling drones that feed directly from their mother's breast.

On the surface, Red Gables' operation is plainly one of a participatory, non-hierarchical commune interested only in producing enough crops to sustain itself. Although the

masters of the farm do their best to remain isolated, Red Gables makes semi-regular treks to smaller nearby towns to unload their mutant goods. By taking these occasional risks of exposure, the bizarre farm community puts itself on the record as much as needed, paying local taxes and keeping up the thinnest of appearances to avoid awkward and potentially problematic repercussions resulting from blatant isolation. A resident might explain that these crops are nourished by a natural underground irrigation system, fed by unseen springs filled with mineral rich water—a hidden miracle. If pressed for technical detail, the response will be more chuckling and a dismissive admission of ignorance. But for the regular ingestion of the sow's black milk, the general Red Gables population seems fairly normal.

The most flagrant display of the farm's true function is during those Sabbath nights that are most sacred to the Black Goat herself. On those equinox and solstice nights, the farmers amass in the orchard and engage in degenerate rites of orgiastic abandon, twisted knots of flesh smeared with soil. At the apex of these celebrations, the land itself rises up, expressing its desire through the roots and runners of its bounty, the fruits cracking open to reveal glistening meat and the adherents erupting into blossoms of blood and tentacles of flesh. Under only the most perfect of witch's moons will the most mutated of the sow's spawn make its way from her subterranean nest to exalt among its lesser brethren. At the pinnacle of frenzy, the vestigial remains of human form are cast aside, and the lashing birth of a new Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath marks the ritual's climax. After taking a sampling of flesh, the newborn godling disappears into the dust, emerging only if called by the distress of the sow itself. The individuals chosen to become such creatures are selected upon the candidate's arrival, as such a being will surely bear marks of its chosen status immediately evident to the sow's cultists. This is because the mark could be literally anything as the folk of Red Gables—a strange synchronicity, a striking feature, or even a resemblance to one of the farms founders before their transformation. Individuals refusing the honor have caused trouble for the farm in the past, running to one of the nearby towns, recalling every gruesome detail in an unbelievable account of the horror of Red Gables. Although local authorities investigated the first few such claims, the complete lack of evidence and prepared counterclaims on the part of Red Gables' residents have reduced such frenzied pleas for help as merely crying wolf to feed a tired local myth.

HOOKS

- As agents of the IRS, the investigators are required to look into matters of payments in arrears. Although most cases of the day were a matter of blood from a stone, a local town council member in central Oklahoma

has written a letter to the central office with concerns about a nearby farming collective that, by his reckoning, is doing far too well to be playing it straight. Despite the religious superstition of this rural gent, the claims may prove profitable for the investigators' struggling office. When they finally arrive in the isolated town to perform a more detailed inquiry, the councilman has gone missing and locals say only that he must have gone to Red Gables. With the location of the farm their only lead, the investigators must get to work.

- After the funeral of a dear uncle (or friend, or spouse) and the settlement of his will, the investigators headed back to Kansas City in a droning, melancholic daze. While stopping for petrol, the investigators never saw that monstrous woman crawl from the dust, but took notice when she sprayed saliva from her knotted, hog-like mouth, only able to articulate a single audible word—"Gables." Although she died of convulsions before anything more could be learned, the doctor's dumfounded expression pushed your curiosity into the realm of obsession. What does "Gables" mean and what could do this to a human being?

THE REVIVAL

Desperation has a way of creating faith where there once was none. On that dreaded day when the sky turned black with storms of dust, the devout and perseverant brothers and sisters of the Pilgrimage of the Pale Cross began their sluggish, chanting procession through the dust in search of their Lord whom each member has fully accepted as the undifferentiated source of all salvation there is to be had. Past the broken fences of abandoned farms and the gas-split bowels of rotting cattle, the swaying devotees of the Pilgrimage make their way through the New Kingdom and carry with them the blessings of their unseen master, beyond time, beyond place.

Although the Pilgrimage of the Pale Cross understands and professes its origins as having begun on Black Sunday itself, the reality is far more unreal. For behind that cloud of dust, as Aldebaran shifts and the gaze of He Who is Not To Be Named turns to Earth, a gate between the world of death and the world of man comes into being over and over again, from which comes the exiles of Carcosa, reciting the same sorrowful words in different songs that all point to the same King and his eventual coming. Whether the ancient inhabitants of dozens of remote pasts or wearing the dusty Sunday clothes of Christian evangelists, these followers of the King in Yellow bring the promise of truth and revelation as they wander from one dying world to the next, gathering the faithful unto their fold of bleak oblivion. Whenever signs of the End Times emerge, the Pilgrimage is sure to follow.

The rituals of the Pilgrimage are primarily those commonly found in the revival tents and churches of the Pentecostal charismatic Christian cults of the time, with differences that readily give away the disturbing entropic message that lies beneath the lulling choruses of their primitive gospel. By dry river beds, the assembled can be encountered in the throes of their rite, speaking in tongues and immersing the newly converted in the remnants of Babylon, washing the newcomers clean of sin in handfuls of dust. It is not, however, dirt and debris that the adherents experience when the baptism takes place. To members and true aspirants of the Pilgrimage of the Pale Cross, what seems like dust is the blessed water of the lake of Hali, which stands between Carcosa and Cassilda's city, as witnessed in the cult's many scriptures. It is a nearly universal occurrence for those in close proximity to the Pilgrimage to experience dreams and even mirages wherein they see such a lake near their own residences.

Among the "teachings" of the Pilgrimage, a tattered collection of pages revealing the parable of the King in Yellow is the most important. Through an extremely minimalist drama built around the core themes of the better known play, Brother Avram ("Father of Many") and his inner circle weave nihilistic parodies of religious dogma around the central story and perform the passion play on the uncommon occasion that the cult settles in a town with a population large enough to merit such magical effort. As a result, the play has reached the ears of the most persistent of occult scholars and is thus



become a horrible grail that would affirm even the most neurotic of academic and esoteric pursuits. For to unravel the secret of this play would be to bear the black blaze of Hastur's gaze and its reality-melting gnosis, only to reveal a pure interpretation of that dread, doom-calling tale in which the city by the lake becomes one with the ruined realm of madness that is sung CARCOSA.

The performance of the play is nothing less than a powerful vigil of entropy, heralding the grand entrance of the play's final and most prominent character. The regular performance of this play is different from the traditional theatrical performance only in its addition of evangelical exposition, punctuating and emphasizing the three acts in an almost vaudevillian manner. As each act passes, a choir of the faithful wails a hymn that crescendos with the frenzied effigies of imps and devils, torches and ghouls, and the ragged lord, crowned and conquering, look down upon the bloodless faces of the shocked and terrified onlookers.

Regardless of its form or pageantry, the Pilgrimage of the Pale Cross is a sure sign of the exalted status of Hastur's influence during this strange aeon of famine and suffering.

HOOKS

- While traveling to the home of a sick friend, the investigators run their roadster into a levy in order to avoid a panicked young woman dressed in antiquated clothing, who quickly disappears into the underbrush. While taking a break from the toil of pulling the car from the ditch, one of the investigators notices a passing revival procession. If approached, the celebrants will nod and welcome the stranded investigators, promising them a solution to their problems... if they'll only come along.
- Mabel Wincott lost everything. Her first child passed two days after the first big storm and her daughters expired a week later. Promising a quick return, her husband drove the old pickup off into the swirl and never looked back. She watched from her dust-caked window as it all vanished behind the opaque winds, and her eyes quickly became as dry as the land. When it finally became too much, she took an old cow rope from a rusted hook on the barn door and tossed it high above the rafters while she prayed for the forgiveness she would soon need. It was when the stool was rattling beneath her bare feet that the man in the mask came with his wonderful truth and promises of a new beginning. Mabel left with her new family and never looked back. When they found that old rope with Mabel swinging bulge-tongued from its knotted end, it was the terrible, serene smile and that awful mark burned across her smock that begged the most dreadful sort of questions.

A TALE OF TERROR: THE ART SHOW



By **NICK GRANT**

A small-town sculptor has started receiving international renown for his depictions of, as one critic puts it, “the unsettling complexities behind rural life.” A touring show of his work has recently come to the investigators’ city and has attracted the attention of occult movers and shakers.

The show itself seems to be anything but the work of an esteemed artist. Sculptures depict the most heinous scenes of human horror, but with strange agricultural undertones. One man strangles another between three tall cornstalks; a robed figure kneels before a grain thresher, holding before the spinning blades a small child; a woman hangs from a tree, dead, in an otherwise stunningly beautiful pastoral scene.

As art connoisseurs and rich dilettantes roam among the pictures, quiet murmurs of shock slowly build to emphatic ravings about the work. Some of the people there mention to the investigators that they’ve been following the artist around the country, and that they can’t seem to get enough of his work, even though they feel a powerful, almost supernatural repulsion to it.

POSSIBILITY 1: HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER

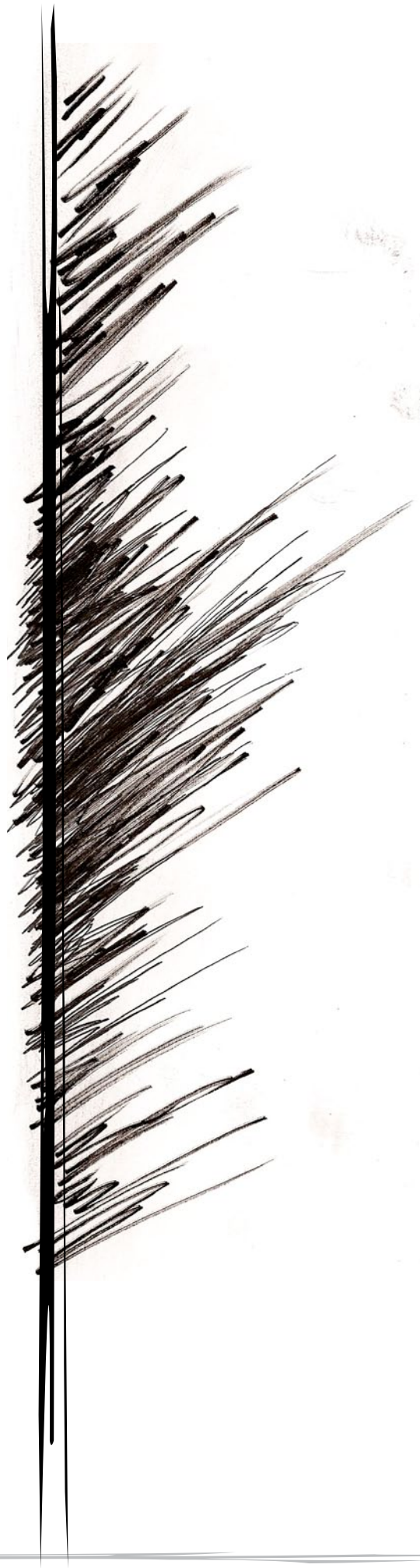
The young man should have been an overnight sensation: a novelty forgotten as soon as the highbrows found some new grotesquerie to latch onto. What no one has quite figured out is that it isn't the art that keeps them coming back. It's the punch. In some nondescript barn of the Iowan corn fields the artist's bookish brother developed a drug with insidious psychological effects. Drinking the punch at the gala openings (at which, by contract, the artist will allow no other drink to be offered) makes the event euphoric in the memory of its attendees. Chemical analysis of the punch reveals some surprising compounds, and one or two of those addicted fans might have a notion of what the real draw of the art show is. Side effects include physical dependence on the punch and slow neurological disintegration reminiscent of Alzheimer's disease. Both of these are of course most intense in those who followed the artist for the longest.

POSSIBILITY 2: THE PACT

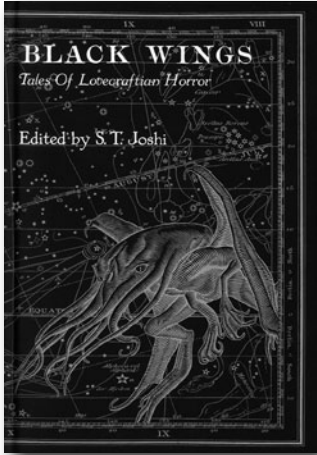
The sculptor was just an artist of moderate skill before he found the Cthulhu Mythos. By spending long days and nights in study he was eventually able to learn enough to contact Tsathoggua. The sculptor formed a pact with the Patron of Sorcerers, giving up his soul for fame. This soulless figure can now create spectacularly fascinating images, but is only fueled by his intense self-loathing and despair. The young man's entourage sometimes complain about the temperamental artiste he has become; he demands an hour of uninterrupted solitude before each public appearance. Little do they know what goes on in this hour.

POSSIBILITY 3: THE FEAST

The sculptor is a cultist who worships a lloigor which has been traveling with him. The genius of his sculptures is to induce a mental state akin to the fevered sleep of his patron's psychic victims. This channels the health of those entranced into the lloigor at a slow rate (one magic point per hour in the presence of the unveiled sculptures, then one hit point per hour if the victim is not removed), without the creature having to expend the energy to ensnare them itself. It leaves a hollow, obsessive feeling in the leeches. The recent success of his pupil means the lloigor has far more energy than it has had in ages. This may manifest in poltergeist-like telekinesis, epidemic nightmares or draconic materializations.



The Day After Ragnarok deserves ten phobias. Yet it loses a phobia for lack of a Plot Point campaign—and for suggesting that Ronald Reagan could star in the 1946 movie, *Conan of Cimmeria*—so I give it nine.



BLACK WINGS: NEW TALES OF LOVECRAFTIAN HORROR

PS PUBLISHING, \$40.00
EDITED BY S.T. JOSHI
REVIEWED BY BRIAN M.
SAMMONS

There is nothing more icky, awe-inspiring, mind-blowing or disturbing than a good Lovecraftian tale. Luckily for all of us Cthulhuheads, *Black Wings*, a collection of authors playing in the huge, lantern-jawed shadow cast by Uncle Howard, was headed up by S.T. Joshi, a man who has chronicled the life and works of HPL for years. If anyone knows what it takes to make a good Lovecraftian story, it's got to be Joshi, and he proves it with this anthology of twenty-one terror tales wrapped up in a beautiful, hefty tome with Big Daddy C proudly displayed on the front.

Black Wings runs the gamut from pastiches to “sort of” sequels of some of HPL’s stories, plus tales that use the feel and flavor of Lovecraft as seasoning for their own well-cooked nightmares. Oddly enough, whatever their take, all of these stories work, something I found as a delightful surprise. Even the couple of stories that mention H.P. Lovecraft as a character who wrote his weird tales from real life, as opposed to his own creative genius, I liked quite a lot, and usually I hate such things. No matter what kind of Lovecraft fan you are, there are going to be stories in this book that speak to you.

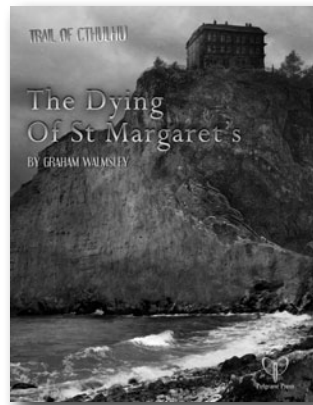
Do you love HPL’s flesh-eating ghouls? A number of tales here pick up where “Pickman’s Model” left off, most notably Caitlin R. Kiernan’s fantastic “Pickman’s Other Model (1929).” Another story I really dug, Nicholas Royle’s “Rotterdam,” uses Lovecraft’s lesser-known “The Hound” as a jumping off point.

David J. Schow has written many stories that I’ve loved, but his is not a name I would have thought of if someone came

up to me and said, “name some Mythos writers.” I’m going to have to rethink that. His “Denker’s Book” is a wonderful addition to the Lovecraft milieu, while it still sings with Schow’s very distinct voice. I adore all of Michael Shea’s Mythos tales, and his “Coping Squid” found here is no exception. Like Ramsey Campbell before him, Shea takes the Mythos out of the creepy countryside and firmly plops it down right in the middle of an urban nightmare.

Damn it all to R’lyeh, there are so many other great stories to highlight but I’m running out of space. “Lesser Demons” by Norman Partridge; Michael Marshall Smith’s “Substitutions”; “Engravings” by Joseph S. Pulver, Sr.; Jonathan Thomas’ “Tempting Providence”; and of course the always enlightening Ramsey Campbell with “The Correspondence of Cameron Thaddeus Nash.”

If you are a Lovecraft lover, a Mythos maven, or just an old Cthulhuhead like me, you’ll like each and every story found within *Black Wings*. I’ll even go so far as to say that you might love some. I know I did. Nine phobias.



THE DYING OF ST. MARGARET'S

PUBLISHED BY PELGRANE PRESS,
\$4.95
BY GRAHAM WALMSLEY, ART BY
JÉRÔME HUGUENIN
REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK

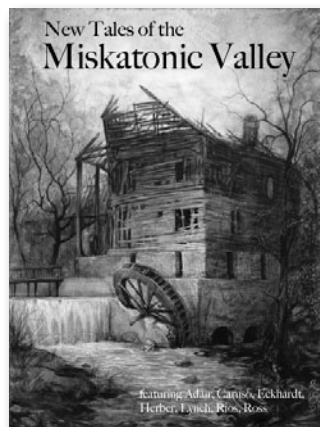
The Dying of St. Margaret's is a downloadable one-shot scenario for *Trail of Cthulhu*, Pelgrane Press’ RPG of Lovecraftian investigative horror set in the desperate decade of the 1930s. It is written for the game’s Purist style, wherein each Mythos entity is less quantifiable, the investigators cannot regain Sanity lost to a Mythos encounter, and any resort to the use of firearms is futile; it’s a combat-free affair. Its five pre-generated characters are amateur occultists, self-styled “Seekers of Truth” following fellow members who disappeared while investigating a mystery near a girls’ school on a remote Scottish island.

Mechanically, the author uses each character’s Drive (his Drive being the aspect of his personality that compels him to investigate the horrors of the Mythos) to pull him into the scenario through various scenes. One scene shows the Drive in action, another boosts it by having the investigator make successful discoveries, while the last undermines it in the scenario’s end confrontation with the Mythos.

Multiple avenues of investigation are presented, each based in social class (measured in game terms by an investigator's Credit Rating value). This effectively highlights the British class system of 1934 while enabling each investigator to shine as they interact with the staff and servants at St. Margaret's School, and with the island's local inhabitants. All of these NPCs are well drawn, each with useful portrayal tips.

The investigators join the school as new staff and servants and will be slowly drawn into its bleak and grey world, led by clues but pushed by their Drives. The final reveal and confrontation with a Mythos entity is anticlimactic, but the downbeat ending is suitably stark and Lovecraftian. The entity will be familiar to most players, but the author does much to render it unknowable.

Although notes are provided to run this in more traditional Pulp style and with ordinary investigators, they are superfluous for what is an unflinchingly grey and somber one-shot. With its strong sense of deterioration and dilapidation, *The Dying of St. Margaret's* is well deserving of eight phobias.



NEW TALES OF THE MISKATONIC VALLEY

**PUBLISHED BY MISKATONIC
RIVER PRESS, \$29.95**
**BY KEITH "DOC" HERBER, TOM
LYNCH, OSCAR RIOS, KEVIN
ROSS AND CHRISTOPHER SMITH
ADAIR**
REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK

New Tales of the Miskatonic Valley is special. The debut book from Miskatonic River Press, founded by the late Keith "Doc" Herber, it marked both his return to *Call of Cthulhu* and the first volume of all-new material for Lovecraft Country for over a decade. Its six new scenarios take you to Lovecraft Country's dark and moldering corners, but while those sourcebooks are unnecessary to play the six, their contents can add detail.

The anthology opens with two scenarios set in Arkham. Tom Lynch's "The Reeling Midnight" is set amidst the town's bohemian scene. Eugene Wilcox is infatuated with the Countess Ariadne Vargas and his parents are worried that she is a gold digger. Investigating this Hungarian exile involves attending a wild party or two and plenty

of detective work. The investigative process is perhaps more interesting than the final and unexpected sudden horrifying revelation.

Arkham is then beset by an unexplained outbreak of juvenile delinquency in "Wasted Youth," by Christopher Smith Adair—shop windows smashed, cars vandalized, and an old man run down by a boy in a speeding car. The victims soon include the investigators who find that the culprits are a group of very unpleasant children, the last of which leads the party on a grueling chase across the countryside set by the Boy Scout from hell.

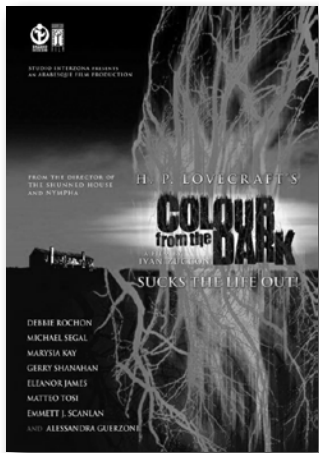
In "Spirit of Industry," Oscar Rios' first scenario in the collection, the investigators are sent to supposedly haunted Dunwich sawmill by the Arkham Advertiser's editor, who wants proof of the existence of ghosts. It is difficult to get the investigators involved, but once they are, the scenario is a solid tale of local color and twisted machinery.

Keith Herber's scenario is "Proof of Life," a mystery set in quiet Foxfield where the township's Supervisor, Henry Barnes, has received death threats. The solution lies in the town's politics, a logging contract dispute, and finally Henry Barnes' own odd behavior. Behind it, though, is a tragedy that exposes all involved to the utterly uncaring nature of the Mythos.

"Malice Everlasting" is the first of two scenarios set in Kingsport and is Oscar Rios' second contribution. Its inhabitants are beset by a rash of sudden and inexplicable blindness. Is it due to illness or something else? The scenario delivers a new twist to a familiar plot idea, that of revenge from beyond the grave, and experienced investigators and players alike will be surprised by the agents involved.

The second Kingsport scenario, "The Night War" by Kevin Ross, begins in media res. The investigators experience the horrors of trench warfare on the Western Front, perhaps again for veterans, probably for the first time for female investigators. Other horrors stalk No Man's Land though, and once the investigators realize that this is a shared dream, they need to work day and night to prevent the dream from spreading. This is a grueling affair that explores the hellish effects of modern warfare.

While the book's art is good and its layout clean and uncluttered, its maps could have been sharper. Though it's not necessarily easy to get the investigators involved in all of these scenarios, each is a deep affair with strong ties to the community in which it is set. Many also possess horribly memorable scenes that will linger in the minds of players and investigators alike. Providing plenty of investigation, interaction, and confrontation, *New Tales of the Miskatonic Valley* gets eight phobias for infusing new blood into New England's darkest corners.



COLOUR FROM THE DARK

STUDIO INTERZONA
DIRECTED BY IVAN ZUCCON
STARRING DEBBIE ROCHON,
MICHAEL SEGAL, MARYSIA KAY
REVIEWED BY BRIAN M.
SAMMONS

Italian horror is at its best when it's showing surreal, nightmarish images. Dario Argento, Mario Bava and Lucio Fulci were all masters of that art. Now you can add a new name to that list, a director who, while not yet as legendary as those masters, does show remarkable style and talent. Ivan Zuccon, a name some fans of Mythos cinema might recognize (*The Shunned House*, *Unknown Beyond*), gives us his latest love letter to Lovecraft with *Colour from the Dark*. From the deathly pallor people take on as the Colour slowly eats away at them, to the bright red splashes that accent the grey so vividly when bad stuff happens, to just how icky a slowly rotting corpse can be, this film is filled with striking imagery.

At its core this story is about an otherworldly, sentient thing, in this case a living spectrum of light barely perceivable and indescribable by man, slowly consuming all life around it. This film, despite being set in Italy in the 1940s, is nonetheless the most faithful adaptation yet of Lovecraft's "The Colour Out of Space."

With a few minor exceptions.

This horror doesn't come from outer space, but from the bottom of a well after someone pokes the water with a big stick. Yeah, I'm serious. While that's kind of silly, the director may have been trying to link the alien evil with the devil, as both come from out of the earth instead of the stars. Why would I make such an assumption? Because of the other thing that I really didn't like about this movie: its focus on Christianity's concept of evil rather than the cosmic evil that Lovecraft envisioned.

Take the always entertaining scream queen Debbie Rochon as the farmer's wife and the most afflicted victim of the Colour's influence. She doesn't so much go mad and wither away as she becomes possessed by Satan himself. Crucifixes melt into black sludge. Debbie gives hateful glances to any Christian iconography she spies, has sudden uncontrollable lustful appetites, and voices mocking rage at a priest who comes to bless the house once it's obviously infested with some sort of malignancy. At times this movie plays out more like *The Exorcist* than anything Lovecraft ever wrote.

If you can overlook those missteps, chalking them up perhaps to the director's personal views coming through the story he's trying to retell, then you'll still find a good, scary and rather faithful version of "The Colour Out of Space." The air of corruption, decay, and inescapable dread is palpable in this movie. All of the actors do a good job playing their parts, with Michael Segal, as the doomed farmer and husband, shining as a man coming to grips with a suddenly insane and murderous wife, a sister-in-law who inexplicably gets over one ailment only to all too soon fall victim to another, and a farm that flourishes and then quickly dies all in the span of a week. These, and other aspects of Lovecraft's original story that made it into the movie, were easily my favorite parts of the film.

Colour from the Dark is a good movie, horror or otherwise. It is directed well with plenty of style to spare, and the actors are fun to watch. But how Lovecraftian is it? At times it would definitely get the HPL Seal of Approval, but at other times it doesn't come remotely close. Take that as you will, but I happily give this movie two big tentacles up and seven phobias.



THE PRIMAL STATE

CHAOSIUM, INC., \$22
BY JEFF MOELLER
REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK

Since 2003, the Miskatonic University Library Association series of monographs has been Chaosium's way of making other works available to players of both *Call of Cthulhu* and Basic Roleplaying. Bar the printing, each monograph's author is responsible for the writing, the editing, and the layout, so the quality of the series varies widely. This has led to some dreadful releases. Fortunately, *The Primal State* is not among those.

Set in second half of the Twenties, this monograph is inspired by H.P. Lovecraft's own observations of the effects of mechanization and modernization upon the New England state of Vermont. In "Vermont—A First Impression," Lovecraft described these effects as ugly, tawdry, and commonplace, bemoaning the loss of the region's "pristine and ancestral beauty." While modernization makes the primarily rural and forested Green Mountain State increasingly accessible, it also has

an insidious effect that the investigators will discover over the course of five years.

The Primal State consists of three scenarios that will take the investigators into Vermont, the three being separated and bookended by parts of a fourth scenario, “The Sap Keeps Running.” This has the investigators stopping each time on the road to buy maple syrup and maple sugar candy from Miss Jeplin, an elderly shopkeeper and amateur expert on Vermont folklore. Each time they visit, Miss Jeplin is yet more unsettled, possibly from Sanity loss, but it could also be just old age and encroaching senility.

The first of the parts in between “The Sap Keeps Running” is “Invitation to the Dance.” In Bennington, several gravestones have been found to have swapped places in a churchyard. The police have it down to schoolboy pranks, but such an odd occurrence is sure to attract the investigators’ attention. With its “vivophilic” (quite literally the opposite of a necrophiliac) and “witch riding” encounters, the scenario has a strong sexual element that needs mature handling. Problematically, there are no notes on running the scenario without these elements, but nevertheless, given the conservative mores of the period, such elements should shock the investigators.

From Bennington, the campaign shifts to Burlington for “The Beast of Lake Champlain.” Are several deaths due to “Champ,” a serpent creature said to live in the lake? Or were the victims murdered by persons unknown? Other suggestions include a coven of cultists making regular sacrifices, a Colonial-era witch turned serpent, and a crazed serial killer. The Keeper is free to choose. Whatever the choice, the scenario should ideally end in a climax along the wooded shores of the lake as the investigators race to save the next victim.

The last scenario, “Home, Sweet Home,” is the weakest of the three. It ends with the investigators trapped by a curse at a dig site in the Vermont foothills, having gone in search of the site’s archaeological team. This scenario brings a radical change in terms of mood and tone to the campaign, threatening as it does to become a frustrating endurance test for the players as they try to lift the curse.

The Primal State comes to a close with the fourth and final part of “The Sap Keeps Running.” It ends in puzzling inconsistencies and a very nasty encounter in the woods, the groundwork having been laid in the previous parts.

Like any monograph, *The Primal State* needs a polish here and there, but it includes a wealth of period detail about Vermont, its history and folklore, plus suggested means of getting the investigators involved. While its chronological length allows innumerable scenarios to be run between the ones here, getting the full effect of gaining and then losing

Miss Jeplin’s friendship requires plenty of gaming time. Conversely, playing the campaign straight through would lose much of this impact.

Although not quite set there, *The Primal State* would be a worthy extension to a Lovecraft Country campaign, Arkham being not far away. Let down only by a difficult third scenario, *The Primal State* is strong in terms of period detail, structure, and theme, and deserves seven phobias as one of the best monographs released to date.



CTHULHU 101: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE DREAMER IN THE DEEP

**PUBLISHED BY ATOMIC
OVERMIND PRESS, \$8.95
BY KENNETH HITE
REVIEWED BY MATTHEW POOK**

As you can see in his *Trail of Cthulhu*, Ken Hite is *Call of Cthulhu*'s number one fan. He is more than qualified to write an initiate's guide to Cthulhu and the Cthulhu Mythos. *Cthulhu 101* is just that guide, a pocket-sized book from Atomic Overmind Press that explains who Cthulhu is, where he is from—both in and out of the fiction—and what he does and does not do.

It explores who H.P. Lovecraft was, what he wrote, and what were his inspirations. It discusses the good and the bad of August Derleth. (He kept Lovecraft's writings in print, but himself wrote bad stories and claimed too much when it came to copyrights.) And it suggests an awful lot of bests and not-so-bests—the best and not-so-best stories, comics, movies, television, music, games, and toys, all rounded out with suggested next steps.

In places it gets as basic as, “How do you pronounce Cthulhu, exactly?” In others it gets a little more complex, such as the discussions of Lovecraft's inspiration for his creation, and what exactly Cthulhu might symbolize. For the most part Hite gives us just the facts, but Derleth does come out of this in a wholly favorable light.

Much of *Cthulhu 101* will be familiar and too basic to the *Oath's* readers. Basic can still be useful, though, and this is a handy reference. It is easy to imagine Hite delivering *Cthulhu 101* as the PowerPoint presentation from R'lyeh, so it's worth six phobias.

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE: THE WORD



BY SHANE IVEY

Words! Words and intent, chemicals and salts overcoming all the decrepitude and desolation of flesh.

The words bring forth the energy of life, the light that has so many names. The spark, and the wire that carries the spark. The connection that applies the energy where it's needed, and the secret knowledge of how that energy can be applied. A current of power, hunger and intention running through reality, through the foamy depths where atoms are mere probabilities. The sudden inhalation of life, the crawling chaos of galaxies devouring each other over eons. The gate and the key to the gate. Power and hunger suffusing eternity.

So many meanings in a word—a name—a nonsensical chant over the ingredients of a recipe from a bloodstained old alchemical book. Ridiculous. Sublime.

You would never accept a moment of it, of course. You'd never be convinced, never in life. Oh, finding all the world's meaning and control from a book, that much we could agree on. But never the book's name. The Word of God, you called yours. Blind faith in the power of a desert spirit that wouldn't answer your pleas for wisdom, for righteousness, for the lives of the children that you so desperately desired, offspring to guide, to teach, to control. You were always desperate for creatures all your own, forever bringing forth a new one to squall and howl whenever my work claimed the one that came before. Not that I left signs for you to follow. If you wouldn't give up your god I can't imagine you'd have willingly parted with your offspring.

And those religious fancies always seemed to take deepest root when the diversions of domesticity palled. Pillars of fire and the looming cross. Vengeance with one hand and forgiveness with the other. Stark rejection, certainly, of all my own greatest work. As if the notion of blasphemy can have any possible meaning in the face of all that I learned, all that I tried to show you! Our own vows held all the meaning and permanence you always sought in scriptures. And why? Because we willed them so. I will them so, still.

Disagreements, subject like all things to reason, passion and will, cannot last. Did I not explain it again and again? I am nothing if not patient.

You will understand at last when you return to me, my beloved. Not the mewling, misshapen thing that arose tonight, glaring and bubbling; I'll return that to its essential salts. Nor the screaming simulacrum who took shape before that, begging and weeping to the end—but the one for whom I have waited. The one who will hear and comprehend. I am patient.

Tomorrow, again, the word. The name. The power. Everything in its proper proportions, and you'll return. This time you'll see the truth. This time, everything under the stars will be right.



Have you ever secretly wanted to be best friends with a magical unicorn? His name would be Dewdrop, and he would talk to you with his thoughts, and he would carry you on his back away from bullies and parents and kids who don't get you, and you'd have such wonderful adventures!

This game is pretty much like that. Except—well, Dewdrop is a little scary. In fact, if you drew what Dewdrop really looks like on your Trapper Keeper, they would send you to the principal's office, then to the school counselor, and then perhaps to a place with a name like Morning Meadows Home for Disturbed and Psychotic Youth.

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