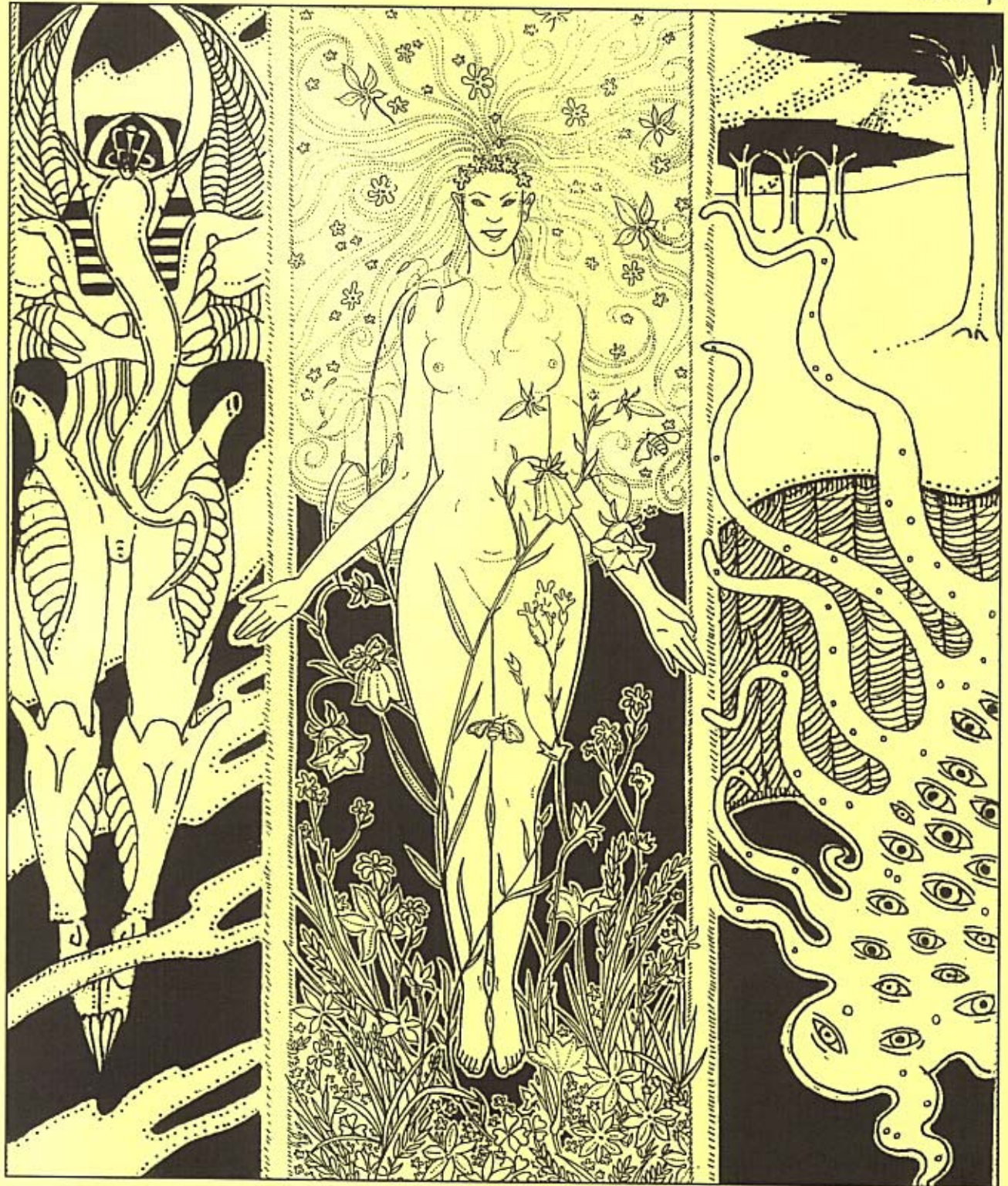


The WHISPERER

Devoted to Call of Cthulhu and Things Lovecraftian

Spring 2001

Issue FOUR



Dreamlands Special

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Opening the Way

Each night we go to bed to sleep. Whilst we slumber, who knows what our unconscious minds get up to? The nether regions of dream are as unexplained, dark and mysterious as ever they were. In truth, when we sleep what dreams may come?

The Dreamlands have, for me, always been a place of endless possibilities. Dreamers venture forth each night to explore, encounter bizarre creatures, seek adventure or fulfil an unexplainable longing. No two dreams or dreamers may dream alike. Indeed, each journey in to the Dreamlands can be entirely different to another. A dreamer may on one night dream of fabulous cities and strange-eyed merchants, yet in a subsequent dream that same dreamer could find themselves in the terrible bone-yards of the Ghouls and Dholes.

The style of play in each dream can also dramatically change; from the dark, brooding horror of Lovecraft to the high fantasy sword and sorcery of Lumely and Howard. After all, dreams are anything but consistent. There no rules. The magic of the Dreamlands is that it you can mould the style and setting to suit you and your player's needs. The possibilities are endless. Why not take some time to explore them for yourself?

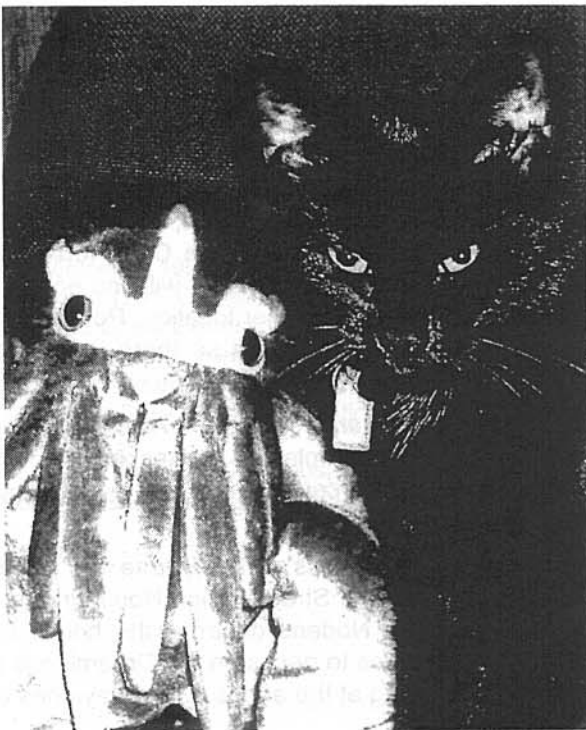
This issue embraces the concept of possibilities. Here you will find alternative dreamlands, new intriguing concepts, thought provoking scenarios and modern day updates that turn the world upside down. Hopefully you will find a few things to your liking, or at least a few ideas to set you thinking.

Some of you will detect a slight emphasis within this Dreamlands special. It cannot be denied that there is definitely something feline going on.

Don't forget to leave a saucer of milk out.....

Mike Mason

Editor



The Voice from the Well

From deep within the infernal well the unearthly voice called, I could not resist.....

2001 is the year that Chaosium celebrates 25 years in business. Now one of the oldest independent makers of role playing games, Chaosium will be running a number of special events at US conventions during the year. Keep your eyes posted on the Chaosium website at www.chaosium.com

Whilst in the UK, Eurolog, the independent gamers society, will again be running the UK *Call of Cthulhu* National tournament across Battlemasters (21&22nd April) and Gen Con UK later in the year. Players will have the chance to play in up to four specially written scenarios in order to win the fabled Golden Cthulhu trophy. More details on the Eurolog web site at www.eurolog.org

The Whisperer will be holding an informal 'party' to celebrate Chaosium's 25 years in the bar at Gen Con UK this year. Seek out the Eurolog area at the convention for more information!

If you own a copy of *Quake III*, you may be interested to seek out this web address www.turn.to/madness 'Loki', a HPL fan and player of *CoC*, and a bunch of other guys are currently hard at work on creating a *Quake III* mod which draws all its influences from Lovecraft's work and *CoC*. The plan is to design a total conversion for the PC game that aims to recreate an HPL inspired horror atmosphere in a 3D shooter. So armed with suitable weaponry, you will be able to 'frag' deep ones, Mi Go and other creations the team is working on. The web site certainly looks impressive. The initial version of the programme will be available to download in the near future. What's more, as long as you have a copy of *Quake III*, it'll be totally free.

Just in case you didn't know already, Chaosium has signed an agreement with Wizards of the Coast to allow the makers of Third Edition *Dungeons & Dragons* to write and publish a 320 page hardback *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook using the D20 mechanic. For an exclusive interview with the writer of the project, Monte Cook, see The Whisperer's interview on page 27.

The Shadows of Yog Sothoth was one of the first major campaigns published by Chaosium and it's currently getting a full rewrite and revision. The new edition won't be out for some time but it looks like it promises to be a dramatic updating and expansion – I for one can't wait!

2000AD comic is currently running a strip based on Lovecraft. Written by Gordon Rennie, the 'Necronauts' features the Dreamlands, Great Old Ones and other Lovecraftian favourites. Word has it that the imaginative stories would make great source material for scenarios.

A world of madness resides at
www.shoggoth.net

Check out the holiday snaps and *Delta Green* pages at
www.yog-sothoth.com

A very comprehensive site with multiple links to strange aeons can be witnessed at
www.netherreal.de/toc/index.htm

If you haven't already found out how useful the Byakhee Investigator Generator is, go check it out at
www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Haven/4173/byakhee.html

...my ears pounding, I stumbled away from the accursed well. Would I ever be free from the mocking whispers of that which dwelt within...?

A Rough Guide to the Dreamlands: The close long-haul destination

by Adam Crossingham

"Welcome to the Dreamlands Waking-Worlder. Sure things are different 'round here, but some of your people have scribed the wonders seen and lived. Take a look before y'go a-venturing. Their pearls of wisdom may save your life or your sanity..."

Published Guides

Chaosium have published four editions of H.P. Lovecraft's **Dreamlands** ^{1,4,8,14} in the last 15 years, and it remains the classic introduction and guide to the Dreamlands. The latest version is **The Complete Dreamlands** ¹⁴ published in 1997 and still in print. It's vastly expanded from the previous three editions, the background of which was largely Sandy Petersen's work. The reworking adds additional information from authors Lumley and Myers, as well as previous Chaosium publications, but as a consequence four scenarios have been cut from the book. Only **Lemon Sails** and **Pickman's Student** remain. Although the latest version is best for its comprehensive background information, keepers may want to pick up an earlier edition to get the missing scenarios. The third edition ⁶ with its terrible black *Scream*-like cover may be the cheapest and easier to find second-hand.

Another guide well worth mentioning is **Petersen's Field Guide to Creatures of the Dreamlands** ⁵, which is an excellent handbook for dreamers venturing outside the great cities of dream. Although dated, the Field Guide is indispensable because of its excellent colour map, life-saving monster quick reference chart and quality basic reference information.

Getting There

Jeff Okamoto's **To Sleep, Perchance To Dream** ^{1,4,8} starts with the suicide of an old friend, so perhaps was an obvious choice to be dropped in the more careful, thoughtful Nineties. However, all the leads required to get the players into Dream are here and the basics of the Steps of Deeper Slumber, the Enchanted Woods and Uthar are all introduced.

Doug Lyon's **The Pits of Bendal-Dolum** ^{3,6} is an adventure where investigators discover a physical gate to the Dreamlands in twenties British Honduras (present day Belize). The gate leads to the dark Side of the Moon. The owner of the gate, Haon-Dor, is known to be a potential threat to dreamers using this gate.

The Lurker in the Crypt ⁹ by Kurt Miller introduces a Gate of Dreams beneath New York; unlike other physical entrances to the Dreamlands, this portal kills physical bodies and only transfers the dream body and consciousness to the Underworld. Using the gate is dangerous because of access issues and its one-way mechanism. Not recommended for the squeamish or faint-hearted.

In **Lord of the Dance** ¹⁰ David Hallet suggests that the Sunken City of the Southern Sea may be accessible, by magic, from Southern England. Other less powerful magicians and dreamers will have to make do with a glimpse from the deck of a sailing vessel.

John H. Crowe's campaign **The Realm of Shadows** ¹⁶ postulates that the Temple of Mordiggan in French Guiana gates to the Zothique City of Zul-Bha-Sair in the Dreamlands. Crowe suggests that Zothique, which is one possible end for the future Earth, formed first in the Dreamlands.

Getting Around

In Sandy Petersen's **Captives of Two Worlds** ^{1,4,8} the Dreamlands become a way of escape, when the investiga-

tors become the prisoner of a cult leader who likes to spend quality-dreaming time in Celephaïs. The plot starts in Bensamin, Vermont and ends in King Kuran's court with the dreamers seeking justice.

Keith Herber's **Ulthar and Beyond** ² takes investigators from Ulthar through the Jungles of Kled into the presence of Yibb-Tstll to reveal information about the Waking World. In its partner scenario **The Eternal Quest** ² the players are dragged by Ghouls into the Liranian and Stony Deserts in order to meet a great sorcerer well past his best, ask questions on a mountainside of a wise man and rescue a Ghoul princess.

Kevin Ross's **The Dreaming Stone** ¹⁵ is an amusing if linear romp across the Dreamlands and the moon in pursuit of an old friend in danger from one of Nyarlathotep's infernal machinations. The plot needs work to run smoothly as most players will derail the plot, but it is fun. It's more Lumley in style than Dunsany but none the worse for that.

Eating Out

In **Pickman's Student** ^{1,4,8,14} by Keith Herber, the investigators attempt to discover what happened to an ill former-student of the artist Richard Pickman. The scenario involves travel through Dreamlands Underworld in order to find the Ghoul that was Pickman, and a quest to find an alien god in an attempt to save Pickman's protégé.

Places to See

The dreamers must save Arkham from a Dreamland threat in **Season of the Witch** ^{1,4,8} by Richard T. Launius. Hesper Payne, the infamous late Arkham witch, is threatening to destroy twenties' Arkham. A trip to dark Dylath-Leen is involved, and the Men from Leng and the Moonbeasts complicate the plot. A secret city on a lost island in the Southern Sea is discovered in the course of the adventure.

Lemon Sails ^{1,4,8,14} by Phil Frances is an evocative adventure set entirely in Dreamlands. The dreamers can accompany and assist a wandering sage in Dylath-Leen, leaving the Dreamlands in search of Sarrub and the planet of Yundu. The sage is attempting to locate the last survivors of his race.

The Land of Lost Dreams ^{1,4,8} by Mark Morrison is one of the more mature scenarios published by Chaosium. The quest is again to save a sick hospitalised acquaintance. The destination is Xura via Dylath-Leen, Zar, and Zak. The description of Xura is at odds with **The Complete Dreamlands** gazetteer, but a competent Keeper will find enough material here to easily adapt to another location. Powerful individuals can mould the lands of dream so there is no reason why Xura cannot change again.

The Whore of Baharna ¹³ by Scott Aniolowski starts on the Isle of Oriab, where the players are tasked to solve a series of murders and are forced to find a real world solution to the dream mysteries.

The plot of Kevin A. Ross's **The House on the Edge** ¹² is centred on Kingsport's Strange High House in the Mists, after its destruction. Nodens destroys the house in the real world but it continues to persist in the Dreamlands and other dimensions, existing at the edges as it always has done.

*Dreams & Fancies*¹² also by Kevin Ross, is a dreaming scenario set between sleep and the Dreamlands. Hypnos appears, as it is his domain, and the mystery is inspired by a book of dreams that the investigators discover.

Alternate Dreamlands

Other *Call of Cthulhu* scenarios have developed the concept of the alternate dreamscape in addition to the Dreamlands campaign setting. Those that have seen print are the Dreamtime and Dream Cities.

Alcheringa or the Dream Time

The *Terror Australis*⁵ supplement introduced the concept of alternate dreamlands. The scenarios *Pride of Yirrimburra*⁵ and *Old Fellow that Bunyip*⁵, both by Penelope Love and Mark Morrison, utilise concepts from Aboriginal Dreamtime and its creatures that are detailed within the supplement.

Alternate Dream Cities

The concept of alternate dream-zones was expanded in *Through the Alps*¹¹ and *Italy and Beyond*¹¹, chapters two and three respectively of *Horror On The Orient Express*¹¹. This campaign saw Dream Lausanne and Dream Zagreb introduced. These are separate dream worlds from Earth's Dreamlands and a dreamer cannot pass from one to another. Some dreamers have theorised that they are the seeds of new lands as yet not part of the Dreamlands or still undiscovered by dreamers. Other theories believe they are the result of powerful god-like dreamers trying to create worlds in their own images, or pocket universes. These dream worlds occur around places of long established settlement. Lord Dunsany recorded similar effects in London in some of his fiction.

False Leads

The scenarios *With Malice Aforethought*, *The Condemned* and *The City in the Sea* are mentioned in *The Complete Dreamlands* bibliography as being useful. Whilst they have the dreamlike elements of a dreaming scenario or references to Dreamlands, they are not proper Dreamlands scenarios.

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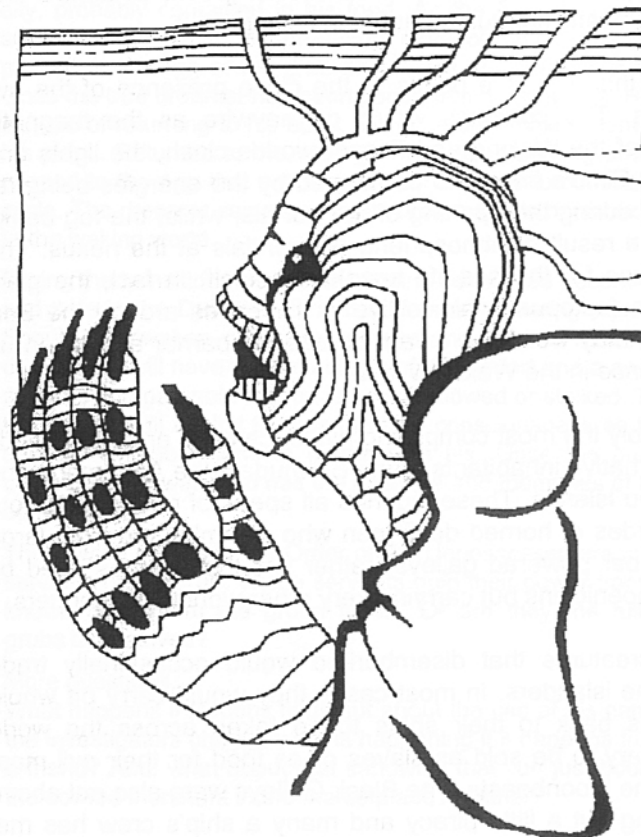
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The Sea of Dreams

by Rik Kershaw-Moore

It seems strange that of all the physical conduits between the Waking World and the Dreamlands, not one of these is at sea. Whilst it is true that the Captain of the White Ship will take dreamers into the Dreamlands from the Waking World, it appears that his ship will not enter the Waking World itself.

However, there is a fair amount of documentary evidence to support the idea that there are sea-borne locations where the interface between the Waking World and the Dreamlands has become blurred and, under certain circumstances, ships from both worlds can cross.

Probably the most famous of all these locations is the Bermuda Triangle which is a stretch of the Atlantic Ocean bordered by an imaginary line from Florida to the islands of Bermuda, to Puerto Rico and then back to Florida. Throughout history ships and aircraft have entered this zone never to return. Yet this is not the only interface between the Waking World and the Dreamlands for there are at least four other zones scattered around the globe.

The largest interface is the area off the east coast of Japan known by Japanese and Filipino seamen as the Devil's Sea. Then there is region of the Indian Ocean known only as the Triangle of Death. Finally we have the Pembrokeshire Triangle off the west coast of Wales and the Tasmanian Zone off Australia. If that is not enough, catastrophic events such as violent storms, seaquakes and volcanic eruptions anywhere in the world can also punch a hole in the walls that separate the Dreamlands from the Waking World

All of these areas share a number of strange similarities such as unexplained compass deviations, bizarre swirling lights in the sky, huge fog banks of iridescent green, St-Elmo's fire, and fantastic creatures caught in fishing lines.

All of this evidence points to the close presence of the two worlds. The compass would go haywire as the magnetic fields of the Waking and Dream worlds clash, the lights and the St-Elmo's fire could be caused by the energies being realised during the opening of the portals, whilst the fog banks are the result of atmospheric differentials at the nexus. The evidence for the sea-life speaks for itself. In fact, the giant Scuttle (octopus), said to live in the caves around the Bermuda, may well have swam across the barrier and taken up residence in the Waking World.

Probably the most compelling evidence of all are the legends of the native inhabitants of the Bermudas, the Andamans and Ryukyu Islands. These legends all speak of raids carried out by hordes of horned devil men who disembarked from large black oar powered galleys, rather like the triremes used by the Phoenicians but carrying very other worldly passengers.

The creatures that disembarked would occasionally trade with the islanders. In most cases they would carry off whole villages back to their ships to be taken across the world boundary to be sold as slaves or as food for their evil masters, the Moonbeasts. The Black Galleys were also not above carrying out a little piracy and many a ship's crew has met the same fate as those unlucky islanders.

Crossing the World Divide

In the days of sail those who crossed the interface would probably not have noticed the few changes that happened to their vessels since there were only minor technological differences between the Waking World and the Dreamlands. However, a crossing in a ship of modern design becomes a very unsettling experience for all concerned.

For the first 1d4 hours, the ship will retain its Waking World form but after that time the more powerful reality of the Dreamlands starts to assert itself. Then the ship will begin to morph into a copy of a Dreamlands vessel closest to it's present configuration. The change will be gradual at first, the bow of ship will be the first to go then changes will spread like a cancer rapidly backwards towards the stern. Modern technology such as radios will become low tech analogues such as boxes of carrier pigeons.

The strain of watching a ship apparently 'slipping' backwards in time will cause extreme mental distress (1d8/1d20 SAN) and it may be some time before the people on board realise their true position.

For aircraft or submarines the transformation is much more dangerous since neither type of craft exists in the reality of the Dreamlands. A pilot of a light aircraft may find himself sitting astride a mighty Shantak with no sanity or idea of how to control it. Submariners may find themselves inside the belly of a whale or other sea-monster.

As to the point at which the vessel enters the Dreamlands, this can be either a fixed area for each location or anywhere the Keeper wishes. For example a ship crossing in the Devil's Sea could end up in the Cerenarian Sea, whilst a ship crossing off Bermuda could emerge off Oriab.

Adventure Seed: Tsunami

This is a Dreamlands and *Cthulhu by Gaslight* fusion. The investigators are on board a ship travelling between Java and Krakatoa in August 1883. On the horizon the sky lights up as a noise louder than anything they have ever heard sweeps over them. The sea goes strangely calm then in the distance they spot it... Tsunami! The mammoth wave bears down on them, swamping their ship and carrying it along. The next thing they know, they are lying on a beach. Welcome to the Dreamlands. The investigators must then start to figure out where they are and how to get back into the Waking World.

Adventure Seed: The *Mary Celeste*

Set back in time, the investigators take the part of the crew of the *Mary Celeste*, serving under Captain Briggs, as they transport a cargo of wood grain alcohol from America to Portugal. They will never reach their destination since on the night of November 24th 1872 the ship is taken by Men of Leng from a Black Galley. Once onboard the investigators, Captain Briggs and his family are locked away in order to provide food for the evil Moonbeasts. What the investigators have to do is simple - survive.

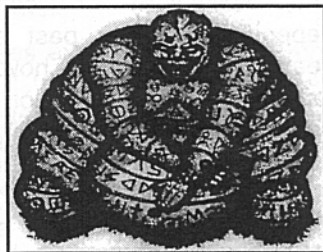
Adventure Seed - Captain Briggs's Raiders

Lying at anchor off the tiny fishing village of New Cornwall-by-the-Sea rides a most unusual ship. It looks for all the

world like a cross between a Phoenician galley and an English Man o' War. Just above the water line are a number of ports from which protrude the sharp points of a number of large wickedly spiked bolts meant to be fired from the huge crossbows the ship uses as its main armaments (4d10+40 Dmg). From atop the single mast flies a black skull and crossbones flag, for this is Captain Benjamin Briggs' ship the *Sarah's Revenge*.

Following the kidnap of his crew from the *Mary Celeste* by the Men of Leng, Briggs somehow managed to escape and kill one of kidnapers. The Captain then made a desperate attempt to find his wife and child, whilst evading capture by the remaining Men of Leng. However, the brave captain was unprepared for what he found below decks of the Black Galley. There in the midst of a heaving mass of evil creatures were the half-eaten remains of his family and the rest of the crew. In despair and rage Briggs set fire to the Galley and escaped in a small Yawl boat vowing revenge.

These days Captain Briggs often enters Celephaïs looking for a likely crew to man *Sarah's Revenge* as he continues to hunt down the Black Galleys. Sailing with Captain Briggs is a marvellous chance to explore and get involved in some seriously close in fighting with the evil Men of Leng and the Moonbeasts.



Captain Benjamin Spooner Briggs

Age: 56

Benjamin Spooner Briggs was born in Marion, Massachusetts. Like his parents before him he is a strict member of the Puritan faith and he doesn't smoke nor drink. In appearance, Briggs has a passing resemblance to Abraham Lincoln in that he is tall, gaunt and wears a full bushy black beard. Briggs has a sharp intellect, a fair demeanour and an eternal burning passion for revenge. Briggs is liked and respected by all who know him, and King Kuranes speaks especially highly of the sea-captain from Massachusetts.

Damage Bonus: +1d4

STR 16	CON 6	SIZ 15	INT 16	POW 9
DEX 12	APP 12	EDU 16	SAN 45	HP 11

Occupation: Master of the *Sarah's Revenge*

Skills: Anthropology 13%, Astronomy 47%, Bargain 32%, Climb 47%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Dreaming 43%, Dream Lore 31%, Fast Talk 26%, History 33%, Jump 35%, Listen 36%, Natural History 21%, Navigate 52%, Occult 21%, Pilot Boat 79%, Psychology 32%, Ride 36%

Languages: English 80%, Tchlo 11%

Attacks: Fist/Punch 61% (1d3+1d4)
Blackjack 52% (1d8+1d4)
Sabre 56% (1d8+1+1d4)

Spells: None

Mental Disorders: Obsessive Hatred of Moonbeasts and the Men of Leng.

The Unpossessed – a scenario seed for Dreamlands adventuring

by Keary Birch

It has been known for a person to die in their sleep, whilst they are dreaming/living in the Dreamlands, thus providing that person with an unusual form of immortality. Yet immortality within the unreality of the Dreamlands can eventually pale for some. For others, like the great dreamer Randolph Carter, the Dreamlands become reality as the Waking World turns in to a fading shadow, ultimately rejected.

Those whom death takes when they have not been in the Dreamlands for long, or those who are of the wrong ilk, become at first uncomfortable at being imprisoned in the shifting ethereal realm. With time, these individuals begin to hunger for the reality of the Waking World and they become willing to give up *anything* for the chance to return. When they reach this point they are approached by a strange cowed individual from the Order of the Unpossessed.

The Unpossessed are a group of dreamers who want to gain more power within the Dreamlands. They claim to have the power to help a restless dreamer return to the Waking World. All that is asked for in return is the dreamer's 'power of dreaming'. If a dreamer refuses he will be left alone for a week then, as the desire for the Waking World grows stronger, the dreamer is approached again. Eventually the most paranoid of dreamers will accept the offer made by the Unpossessed.

The dreamer is taken to Dylath Leen to the secret Temple of Sleeping Refused, where he or she will take part in a ceremony to return them to the waking world. Within the temple are ancient drawings of Nodens - a successful **Dreaming** role indicates that these have been created themselves by a dreamer as they have not been carved by hand. (Keepers note: Nodens is not aware of this place and might be very upset if he discovered his name was being employed in such a manner.)

The ceremony involves ingesting the eggs of a strange grub-like creature. The creature itself is passed to a true dreamer within the city, probably contained in his food. As the true dreamer is consumed from within, his dreaming essence (his dream self) is passed to the egg of the grub and hence to the eater of the egg. Once the true dreamer has been consumed he awakens. However, instead of returning to his body, the egg-consuming dreamer takes his place. Returned to the waking world, his dreaming powers are passed to the egg that hatches into a new grub to continue its life cycle. The dreamer can never again dream and is banished forever to the waking world.

During the transition, the dreamer being consumed becomes gaunt and pale in the Dreamlands and suffers from tearing pains within. Should he awaken during the process he will not remember his dreams but will have vague feelings of discomfort and a awareness approaching paranoia that he is being followed or stalked. Towards the end he will exhibit flashes of other consciousness as the possessor's essence starts to merge with his. Once the process is complete the awakened has the essence and memories of the egg-consumer.

The cowed figures of the Order of the Unpossessed are in fact the servants of the grub. These servants gain their power from the unknown god whom the grubs serve. Or are they the fully-grown grubs themselves?

More questions...

What happens if Nodens finds out about the use of his name? Can the investigators change what is happening if it happens to them or a friend? And, what about that sandwich that you just bought from the cowed merchant in the marketplace in Ulthar?

PROFESSIONAL DREAMING

by Davide Mana

INTRODUCING MODERN-DAY CONSPIRACY IN TO THE DREAMLANDS

Lovecraft did not write only cosmic horror stories. An estimator of the works of Lord Dunsany, he produced a number of highly atmospheric stories that are generally bundled under the collective label of "Dreamlands tales". While Lovecraft's everyday's world is a place of horror, his Dreamlands are a place of the wonderful - perceived as ideal, explored by a sensitive few that cannot but feel a kinship with it.

Often a GM is scared off from running a Dreamlands game as it can be difficult to create this sense of 'belonging' that Lovecraft creates within his characters, while at the same time preserving the horror that is at the core of the *Call of Cthulhu* game. It's too easy to slide into almost Burroughsian brawny fantasy, the kind of hack & slash gaming that is often so disruptive to the horror genre. Many Keepers are simply scared off. Yet, once in a while, most everyone likes a short jaunt down in 'Slumberland', as part of a larger Waking World campaign.

The main concern of this writer, while devising a modern-day conspiracy-oriented setting extending to the Dreamlands, was to get as far as possible from those elements that are often perceived by CoC Keepers as the hard-to-get-right parts of the Dreamlands setting.

I wanted to introduce a new rationalization for some of the old standards of the setting, for instance the use of technical jargon to further distance the players from the Dunsanian fantasy feel of the original and adding a 'serrated rhythm' which essentially aimed to overcome player indifference and served to integrate a grittier Dreamland into the gritty world of *Delta Green*.

What follows is a general description of 'The Outfit' for the benefit of Keepers interested in adding a *Delta Green* inspired twist to their Dreamlands campaigns.

The Outfit - a Conspiracy of Dreamers

"The daily routine is pretty basic. You wake up, you do your things (breakfast, shower etc.) and you call your reference number and post your availability. Very loose, very part-time, at least apparently. If the Big Shots have a deal, they call you back on a secure line. Arrange to drop a file by your door and you take it from there. Otherwise you are free to go on with your life, or lack thereof. Yeh, a lot of Dreamers I met were a bit scant in the social relations department. Not exactly Trekkies, but cruising damn close to the mark. The good ones usually get a file as soon as they report in. From the moment you pick up the file to the moment you solve it, screw it or get killed, you are on your own. That's why some of us work in pairs, I guess."

Need to know

The Outfit is not secret in the strict sense of the term; let's just say it is little-known out of certain specialist circles. It exists perfectly within the terms and limits of general laws and regulations, even if some of its activities can break some of those same laws and regulations. The Outfit has no national bias or ties, however, it is generally characterised as a mostly European organization, using a loose Control Committee/Chapterhouse structure.

Outfit operatives can be found in most European countries, and are sometimes deployed outside of their nation of origin

if the need arises. The Outfit has no direct official attachments. The structure acts as a consulting specialist dream-psychology research organisation on certain occasions, working in connection with the police, the Red Cross or other organizations. On these occasions, operatives are provided with official papers from the host organisation.

In general, the Outfit will provide the Dreamer(s) with files concerning the anomaly and the individuals involved, a minimum of logistical support and little else. The senior agent on the case has full responsibility and will be denied acknowledgement by the Outfit in case of mishaps.

Possibly for this reason, most Dreamers like to develop, through the years, their own private network of contacts, both 'Wakeside' and 'Dreamside' - people with specific know-how and capabilities, tied only to the agent and not to the overall organisation.

Operations are assigned on the basis of experience so that agents will operate in certain regional sectors (both Dreamlands and Wakeside) or jointly with certain organisations depending on their past experiences. Field Agents work in teams, usually in pairs, however, larger teams also hit Slumberland on some occasions. Operatives are assumed to be able to hold their own both on the Wakeside and the Dreamside - meaning a basic training in self-defence and tradecraft supplementing Dreamlands-related skills. Teams are assumed to be completely self-sufficient, and normally include individuals with complementary backgrounds.

The latter point introduces a very important facet of the organisation - professional as they are, Outfit Dreamers are still gifted individuals who uneasily fit into a structure. The penchant for personal initiative, disrespect for authority and flippancy are to be expected and are tempered only by the painful conscience of what is at stake during an operation and by the fact that fools do not live long in the field.

Long-standing Outfit Operations

Running of Listening Posts and Data Collection

In the early years of the Outfit, Waking Worlders visiting the Dreamlands, and who were aware of the Outfit's presence, were asked to keep their eyes and ears open and to report any unusual happenings to a Wakeworld referent. Thus a rudimentary but effective mutual information exchange network was established.

Subsequently, as Trade Dreamer activity increased, the network was further supplemented by enrolling the aid of trusted Dreamworlders as information gatherers. Addresses of convenience (incorrectly called 'Listening Posts' today after they assumed such a role during WW2) were therefore set up across the Dreamlands to enable natives (and an increasing number of Dreamers) to post messages and notes.

By the progressive addition of features (equipment depots, cash reserves, sanctuary functions) some of these finally evolved into full-blown Safe Houses.

Running of Safe Houses

A Safe House serves a number of purposes. The most basic of these is providing a secure resting place to travelling Dreamers. The dangers inherent in visiting the Dreamlands

cannot be stressed enough. Furthermore the House provides a handy equipment depot for special operations.

The best documented Safe House in the Dreamlands is located in the Merchant District of Hlanith, a large city at the mouth of the Oukranos river. The house takes up a whole apartment over the tavern known as the 'Stuffed Crocodilian' and can be accessed from the tavern's common room. The rooms are officially paid for by a commercial firm in Mnar, as a private resort for affiliate merchants passing through town. The apartment includes two bedrooms (with spare clothes and equipment stored in two locked wooden chests) and a large hall/dining quarter equipped with table and chairs and a map as detailed as possible of the 'lands in their present harmonics. Incoming communications (properly coded) can be dropped at the counter downstairs and are neatly piled on the table twice per day, care of the landlord.

The Crocodilian landlord grants catering and accessory services (hot water, laundry service, company for the night) for a standard flat rate of two crowns per day per person plus extras.

A modicum of lack of interest on the part of the Town Guard and Militia is granted by periodical gifts to chosen elements on the force who think that they are being bribed to ignore minor import tax frauds.

Similar safe houses exist in Celephaïs (King's Head tavern, in the Merchant District) and Kadatheron (At The Sign of the Red Queen, western ward), while two more are currently being set up in Andahad, Oriab Island (the Stuffed Mermaid Tavern in the Port District) and in Inquanock in the Northern Continent (the Orcinus Inn, Seaside District).

The Outfit Agency Template

- Date Founded: 1882, as a loose group of European Dreamers sharing information; massively redesigned in 1974 and again in 1987.
- Mission when Founded: support Dreamland exploration, collect a corpus of reliable information on the Dreamlands.
- Mission Today: monitor the Wakeworld/Dreamlands interface, support Law enforcement agencies in Dreamlands-related situations.
- Jurisdiction: anywhere in the Dreamlands, varies locally in the Wakeworld.
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland is home to the Control Committee; local chapter houses have a variable degree of free hand.
- # of Personnel: unknown.
- Annual Budget: unknown.

History/Profile

The Outfit was established as a mutual help organisation for Dreamland explorers in 1882, a natural consequence of the discovery, (Billingham & Hunziker, 1876), of the shared nature of the dream landscape.

The Great War, with its heavy toll of psychological devastation and related sleep/dream disfunctions caused the Outfit (still organised as a loose gentlemen's club) to exit its "Pundit Years" and take a more academical interest. New members began studying and dissecting the phenomena so far only recorded (Myers & Bloch, 1925), while at the same time brought some members in contact with the respective governments - some of which were extending probes of a sort into the unknown with research institutes.

Following a highly constructive decade between 1920s and 1930s (sometimes called the Trade Dreaming Years), the birth of the totalitarian states in Europe and the following Second World Conflict caused the Outfit to disperse. Always an individualistic bunch, most Dreamers reacted to the new situation by simply fleeing the premises, while single members tried to apply their knowledge and expertise to such diverse matters as espionage (chiefly in the UK), psychological warfare (USA) and prisoner relief (mostly in mainland Europe). Polish dreamer, Leon Zerkowitz, supposedly rescued some 250 children from various German Lagers, spiriting them to the Dreamlands through an Alazred Lamp-like device.

After WW2, the Outfit reorganised, establishing a Control Committee based in Geneva and adopting a loose chapter-house oriented structure, while connections with a number of organisations were maintained.

With the tragic backfire of the Outlook sponsored *Operation: BALLERINA* (1974), causing the loss of four dreamers and relevant damage to the Dreamlands structure, ties with the American Government were severed and the Outfit took an even stronger European bias. Further Outlook related troubles (the *Operation:INNERSPHERE* debacle in 1987) caused the Outfit to reorganise, turning into a more proactive, self-sufficient structure, concerned with the balance between Dreamlands and Wakeworld and consequences thereof.

The '80s also brought to the fore the matter of chemically-induced Dreamlands penetration (CDP) - a problem that turned from marginal into endemic over a handful of years with the spread of designer drugs and rave culture.

To this day the Outfit, normally described to outsiders as a "specialist dream-psychology research facility", routinely employs Dreamers (aka "Runners"), specialist researchers (aka "Labrats") and security guards (aka "Muscle") in its operations. Outfit operatives normally work in teams of two, either on the Outfit's own assignments or as consultants for local law enforcement organisations.

Occupation Templates

Outfit Dreamer: Dreaming, Dream Lore, Meditation, History, Fast talk, Psychology, Pistol (turns into Fencing in the Dreamlands), Spot Hidden, Philosophy, Martial Arts, Tradecraft, Occult.

Outfit Research Unit: Chemistry, Psychology, Psychoanalysts, Medicine, First Aid, Biology, Botantics, Computer Use, Library Use, Spot Hidden, Occult.

Outfit Security Unit: Martial Arts, Pistol, Knife, Drive Car, Spot Hidden.

The Dream Potential Scale

The Myers-Bloch test and scale were developed in 1925 (but adopted in 1948 by the Outfit) to measure and classify, in a coherent univocal way, the potential of known Dreamers.

Some debate is open about the actual relative positions of the Moore and Smith levels. As a rule of thumb, starting with the Smith Class, the dreamer normally dreams in colour. Dreamers above LK Level are said to be capable of moderate Dreaming expression in the Wakeworld too.

Class	Dreaming Skill	Frequency
Kuranes Class	Dreaming 90%+	"one in a generation"
Elton Class	Dreaming 80-90%	"one in a billion"
Luveh-keraph Class	Dreaming 65-85% (LK Level)	"one in 100 millions"
Moore Class	Dreaming 50-70%	"one in 10 millions"
Smith Class	Dreaming 40-60%	"one in a million"
Padget Class	Dreaming 30-40%	common
Phillips Class	Dreaming up to 20%	very common
D'Erlette Class	Dreaming below 20%	normal dreamer

New Skills

Fencing (05%) - is intended here as a cinematic variation on the normal Sword/Foil/Sabre skills. Fencing implies a stronger feel for the blade than the basic skill, and allows the character a number of stunts normally heavily penalized in standard *Call of Cthulhu* gaming - stuff involving curtains, chandeliers, more than one sword, cloaks, sword/knife combos etc.

Meditation (POW %) is the skill needed by the Dreamer to focus his thoughts in preparation for the Dreaming. It enables the experienced dreamer to select the destination of his dream (bypassing the Hall and the Stairs). The same skill is used to retrieve complex data committed to memory.

Dreaming, Weaving and Shaping

Characters in Professional Dreaming stories often refer to their spell-like activities as 'Shaping' and 'Weaving'. These are a different rationalisation than the one presented in *The Complete Dreamlands* for dreamer powers; there we are told that Alterations are cheaper than Creations in terms of the Magic Points involved. In this sub-setting, access to Alteration (Shaping) and Creation (Weaving) is determined by the actual level (Dreaming skill) achieved by the dreamer. Thus introducing a pseudo-scientific rationale that the Dreamlands setting is lacking. The 'fabric' of the Dreamlands

is resilient and opposes such open deviations as those introduced by radical Creation; therefore, only a highly skilled dreamer can successfully pull the Creation trick. Game-wise, the modification is subtle: a 50% skilled dreamer may have little hope of Creating from scratch an object, being or situation, but she can achieve an high degree of success in the field of Alteration - modifying the surrounding environment. The rule helps to avoid situations in which lucky low-level characters generate swords out of thin air or other such high-profile effects and is a tool for defusing power-players.

An example

John Smith, Padget Class Dreamer, is caught in a tight spot, facing a gang of thugs in a Hlanith backstreet. His Dreaming Skill is 39% and he has 25 Magic Points left. Under standard Dreamlands rules, he might be able to Dream (Create) himself up a weapon (a good sword costs around 10 points). Alternatively, he might decide to create a door to grant him an escape route (about 10 points). Under the modified rules, his skill is not enough to grant him the creation from scratch - he lacks the mental control for making substance out of nothing - he has therefore to look around, find a suitable 'something' to modify (Alteration). For instance, he can alter a lock (5 points or less) opening an otherwise blocked door and gaining a quick way out. The rest of the points he can use to alter his clothes as he mingles with the crowd in the market place, thus successfully giving his pursuers the slip.

The rules themselves are not changed, but their application is restricted, forcing the players to think harder before acting. As a rule of thumb, characters up to Padget Class (Dreaming 40%) cannot use the Creation (Weaving) skill, however, individual Keepers are advised to tailor this rule to specific needs (or to ignore it altogether).

The BALLERINA Drug Cocktail - Fourth Formulation

A drug cocktail first devised during the 1974 Outlook/Outfit collaboration to allow higher performance rates from Dreamers. The cocktail includes a narcotic to increase the sleeping time, a metabolic slow-down drug to alleviate distress caused by extended sleeping and a powerful painkiller to minimize transition traumas and take the edge off from sympathetic trauma. Striped Orchid pollen acts as a powerful hallucination-inducing element, deepening the lucid dreaming status and heightening the Dream potential. The BALLERINA drug causes the Dreamer to sleep longer with ease; experiencing longer REM phases while helping her to ignore traumas both in her Dream persona and in her Wakeworld body. On the down side the substance is highly addictive, can cause violent or erratic behavior and ultimately madness.

Gaming Notes: a Dreamside miracle drug with a stiff Wakeside price tag, a dose of the BALLERINA cocktail gives a temporary +2D10 bonus to the Dreaming skill and a 2 point increase of the Dreamers STR, DEX and APP, while causing the automatic loss of 3 Hit Points and the permanent loss of 1 CON point on a failed CONx3 roll to the Wakeworld body. At the same time, on a failed POWx3 roll, the subject suffers from massive (1D20) Sanity loss. As the effect wanes (after 24+1D8 hours), the character must make a Sanity check or lose 1D6 SAN upon waking up.

Acknowledgements

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SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT CATS

A Dreamlands interlude for one investigator by Andy Bennison

"What fully civilised soul but would eagerly serve as high-priest of Bast?"

Cats and Dogs, H P Lovecraft

Introduction

When the investigator is accidentally involved in the death of cat, a mysterious old man extracts a suitable revenge. This short scenario can take place as a diversion during an ongoing campaign or as break between adventures. It also serves as an introduction to the Dreamlands.

The character is driving down a busy street at high speed. They are late for an urgent appointment, when suddenly, out of nowhere a mangy alley cat darts across their path. They have three choices and five seconds (real time) to decide what to do. If the investigator cannot decide in time, then go straight to option three.

Option One: Slam on the breaks

Unfortunately, it is too late. The car was moving too fast and the cat is hit. It isn't dead, but it is in great pain. The vehicle behind comes crashing into the investigator's car. The investigator loses 1d6 Hit Points and the car suffers minor damage.

Option Two: Try to avoid the cat

The investigator must make a **Drive Automobile** roll to avoid missing the cat. Failure indicates the cat is hit as in option one.

Successful drivers must now make a second **Drive Automobile** roll to avoid crashing the car. Failure means that the car crashes into another vehicle or stationary object. The investigator loses 1d8 Hit Points and the car suffers major damage. If the cat avoids the investigator vehicle, it leaps straight into the path of a speeding truck and is killed instantly.

Option Three: Carry on

The oncoming vehicle flattens the cat. The investigator makes a **Drive Automobile** roll. Failure results in the driver losing control and crashing taking 1d6 damage. Success means that the investigator can speed past the accident. There are no police cars in the immediate vicinity.

The Old Man

If the car crashes or the investigator stops, a crowd will quickly form. A drunken old vagrant who witnessed the accident will accost the driver. His beard is grey and straggly. His breath stinks of cheap booze, but his anger is from the heart. He will blaspheme and rant, accusing the investigator of murder.

He will cradle the body of the cat and sing to it. If the cat is still alive, he will calm the creature and then break it's neck to end it's suffering. If provoked he will become violent, but for all his anger he is physically quite feeble. Eventually, the police will arrest him.

Should the investigator flee the scene of the accident they will catch a glimpse of the man chasing them on foot. The old vagrant is a priest of Bast.

THE OLD MAN, Age 82, Vagrant and Priest of Bast

STR 6 CON 7 SIZ 9 INT 15 POW 17
DEX 11 APP 4 EDU 5 SAN 40 HP 8

Damage Bonus: 1d4

Weapons: Old Walking Stick 30% (1d4)
Skills: Dreaming 99%, Dream Lore 85%,
Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Track 90%,
Hide 62%, Sneak 55%
Spells: Direct Dreams, Summon/Bind Cats,
Mesmerise, Extend, Contact Bast

New Spells

Direct Dreams: To cast this spell a minimum of 75% Dreaming and Dream Lore is required. It allows the caster to direct the dreams of another into the Dreamlands. The spell costs 1d6 Magic Points. To succeed, the caster must overcome his or her opponents Dreaming Skill or Power (whichever is greatest) on the Resistance Table. Failure costs the caster 1 Sanity point.

Summon/Bind Cats: This spell is unique to worshipers of Bast. For 3 Magic Points it allows the caster to summon and bind a number of domestic or wild cats equal to double the caster's Power for a day.

Returning Home

At home, everything will seem to be normal, but making a **Spot Hidden** roll, the investigator will notice subtle differences. Maybe there is a cushion on the floor that was on the chair when they left. Perhaps an ornament or a book has been pushed out of place. On entering the bedroom they will discover that the window is wide open. There is the overpowering odour of a tomcat in the room.

Whatever the character does to remove the smell, it will linger. As the investigator tries to get to sleep they will hear an awful racket below the window as two alley cats fight amongst the trashcans.

The Old Man has somehow tracked the investigator home. He will use his unique powers to steer the dreams of the investigator into the Dreamlands in order to teach them a lesson.

Waking in the Dreamlands

A small black Persian cat washing the investigator's face will wake the character. The investigator is in the middle of a field, dressed in their night clothes. It is still night. The stars are out, but the constellations are all wrong.

The cat will befriend the character and discretely follow the investigator around while they are in the valley. She is quite nervous of loud noises and not the most dextrous of felines. She has a habit of sleeping in high places and then falling off them. She craves attention and will be very persistent if she thinks that she's being ignored. To show her love she will bring gifts of dead birds, frogs, fish and spiders.

The investigator is in the meadow to the east of the ruins of Mav-Gyghone. The cat will lead the dreamer to her home.

The Valley

There is an unnamed valley in the Dreamlands where the sleeping consciousness' of earth borne cats run free, unmoled by danger. There are no predators, plenty of food and glorious sunshine. There is nothing to do but eat, sleep, play and pamper.

The valley is about three miles long and a mile and a half wide. High impenetrable cliffs surround it.

In the centre are the once proud towers of Mav-Gygozne; dozens of delicate ivory towers of varying heights, each topped with intricate silver and pearl adornments. There are no doors, only high windows. They have seen better days. Some are crumbling and many of them are covered in moss and trailing ivy. The cats have turned these towers into their homes. The more important the cat, the higher their family tower. At any one time there are about three hundred inhabitants.

To the east of the village is a meadow. It is full of long horned, shaggy-haired dwarf cows. The animals are obese. Their tiny legs can barely take their weight. The cows produce the thickest and creamiest of milk. Beyond the meadow is a clear lake stocked with fish.

To the west of Mav-Gygozne is an idyllic forest. The trees are always in bloom. Colourful and docile birds are in abundance. The sun always shines at the edge of the wood, but the further you go, the denser it becomes. Nettles and brambles grow in abundance until you abruptly reach the harsh and steep cliffs, built into the cliffs like a malignant black leech is a foreboding fortress.

The People of Mav-Gygozne

The cat's initial response will be directly affected by the investigator's reactions at the start of the scenario. A character that was genuinely sorry for what happened will be welcomed, whereas the cats will be openly hostile to anyone who showed no remorse for what they did.

The village is led by an old grey cat who sits on the top of the highest tower, rocking gently as if asleep, but always in charge. Like people, all the cats have distinct personalities. They include a rather solitary and bad tempered tortoise shell who prefers her own company, a over-weight, amiable but stupid ginger tom, a thin grey and white she cat who is both aloof and incredibly curious and finally, a tiny white and black kitten who just wants to play all day. Keepers should feel free to add other characters, including their own cats.

Eventually the cats will become bored with their visitor and start to ignore the investigator. They will become resentful if the investigator tries to eat their food. The tortoise shell will lead a group of cats that will try to chase the investigator out of the valley.

Their methods will become more and more vicious until the investigator gets the message that they have to leave. If the investigator is incredibly stubborn and refuses to go, the cats will attack. The investigator will wake back in the real world - go to the section at the end of the scenario.

Only the black Persian cat will remain friendly. She will still follow the character and guide them to the only safe way out of the valley, the Black Fortress. She will not enter the menacing walls but will sadly watch from a distance as her friend goes inside.

The Black Fortress

The fortress is grim and imposing. It looks like the haunted castle from the nastiest and scariest children's fantasy - only worse. Here are craggy faced gargoyles in abundance, perched on turrets, ledges and windowsills. The masonry is black and ancient. There are so many towers, balconies, ramparts, galleries, outcropping rooms and heavy battlements that the whole structure looks like its going to fall off the side of the cliff and into the woods. Dim lights flicker in many of the upper shuttered windows. There is just *too much*

architecture. Should the character stare at it for any long period or try to sketch it, they will realise that the shape of the fortress is constantly in a state of flux. A gargoyle will suddenly disappear, only to re-appear on a different wall. A tower will suddenly seem to shrink or a stretch of battlements will suddenly gain more ornate fortifications.

Trying to take in the enormity of the structure makes you giddy and gives you a headache. There is an all-consuming air of oppression.

A people who dedicated their lives to the pursuit of art and pleasure built the fortress many centuries ago. It is littered with examples of their work: exquisite cut glass, fine paintings, breath-taking scripture, perfect musical instruments of the purest pitch, plays and poems of the subtlest and most aesthetically pleasing rhythms and heavily stylised clothing, decorative weapons and furnishings.

The only entrance is a massive portcullis. The rusted gate is firmly held in place. A character of Size 11 or less will be able to squeeze between the bars. Anyone larger will have to dig beneath the gate and crawl underneath.

The Courtyard

The courtyard is desolate and choked with weeds and broken masonry. There is an unnatural silence. The smashed remains of three stone gargoyles litter the floor. There are two doors and three passageways that lead into the side of the mountain and the Fortress proper.

The doors are nearly twenty feet high, fashioned from solid copper. The elements have caused them to buckle and wedge forever closed. The passageways are eight feet wide by fifteen feet high and filled with cobwebs. There is the reek of age, decay and foul air.

Random Room Table

Roll a d20

1-2	Straight Corridor
3	Corridor Turns (Random Direction)
4	Corridor Curves (Random Direction)
5	Straight Corridor 1-2 doors
6	Corridor Slopes up
7	Corridor Slopes down
8	Small Chamber
9	Small Chamber 1-2 exits
10	Blocked/Locked Door
11- 12	Medium Chamber
13-14	Medium Chamber 1-4 exits
15	Large Chamber 1-2 exits
16	Large Chamber 1-4 exits
17	Large Chamber 1-6 exits
18	Huge Chamber 2-7 exits
19	Spiral Staircase (50/50 chance up or down)
20	Dead End

Exploring the Fortress

Concepts like time and distance do not exist within the fortress. Like the exterior, the interior is in a state of constant change. It is very easy to get lost. A grey mist hangs about the corridors. It seems to distort shapes and distances. Some of the doors will refuse to budge or will only open from one side. Roughly one door in six will not open. Use the Random Room Table to map the inner chambers or just make it up as you go along. Nothing is constant in the castle. Rooms and corridors once visited have a tendency to vanish. Doors that once led to great halls of light filled with breath-taking foun-

tains could later lead to a dank spiral staircase. In time however, all corridors lead to the Hall of Seeing.

The Hall of Seeing

A massive and intricate tapestry dominates this huge imposing circular gallery. It shows the original inhabitants building the fortress and indulging in their arts. The story goes on to show how a poet trekked in to caves deep beneath the earth and roused a colony of vicious Gugs.

The Gugs slaughtered the people until they grew bored with their sport. The remaining survivors devoted their entire existences to creating the tapestry to act as a warning to others.

The Gugs

Upon leaving the hall of seeing, the investigator will enter a garish chamber dominated by glass statues of unknown winged creatures. A large section of wall has collapsed and it is evident that something has burrowed into the castle. The tunnel leading into the room stinks like an elephant house. The character will then hear a roar. In the distant dark they will see piercing red eyes advancing.

At least one of the invading Gugs is still in the Fortress.

GUG, a monstrous wanderer

STR 45 CON 28 SIZ 56 INT 11
POW 9 DEX 13 HP 43

Damage Bonus: +5d6

Weapons: *Bite 60% (1d10)*
 Claws 40% (4d6 @ no db)
 Stomp 25% (1d6+db)

Spells: None

The Chase

The investigator has fifteen seconds to decide what to do as the Gug advances down the corridor. If the investigator sees the Gug, they must make a Sanity roll or lose 1d8 Sanity Points. If the investigator is still there after twelve seconds, the Gug will attack.

If the investigator has the sense to make a run for it, they must flee for their lives while the Gug follows their scent. Use the random table to guide the investigator through the increasingly confusing architecture. If the investigator manages to make ten rolls without reaching a dead end or locked door, they will escape the terror and the fate that awaits them. Being pursued through the nightmare fortress by a blood hungry Gug will cost 1d3/1d6 Sanity Points, dependant upon a successful Sanity roll. This is an excellent opportunity for the keeper to really scare the investigator as they are chased by a relentless terror.

If the Gug captures and kills the investigator, they will instantly wake.

Escape

The lucky dreamer will arrive in a side entrance to the castle; a chamber stocked with heavy teetering barrels and long lost crates. The only exit is a raised portcullis. A rainbow coloured waterfall washes over the exit. The investigator must walk (or more likely run) through the water to escape the monster.

As the character walks through the waterfall they will, for a moment, see where they are in the Dreamlands. They are overlooking the City of Thalarion, City of a Thousand Wonders (see *The Complete Dreamlands* sourcebook or HPL's *The White Ship*.)

The glimpse is tantalising and all too brief. The shock of touching the freezing water rouses the investigator from sleep.

Waking in the Real World

The character wakes up back home. They feel the breeze of the open window. Their bedroom is full of the local cats, all staring at the dreamer.

The cat's reaction will depend upon the investigator's conduct in the dream world. Should he or she have been violent towards any of the cats, they will attack en masse, biting, scratching and hissing. The character will take 1d6 damage and lose as many Appearance Points for as many days due to facial scratches.

As the cats flee the bedroom, the investigator will see the old tramp stood on the sidewalk, looking up and smiling. For the first time, the character will look into the tramp's yellow eyes. In a moment, he will be gone...

Any investigator who escapes the valley will now have the skill of Dreaming equal to their Power plus two.

Should the character lose more than 5 sanity Points or be killed by the people of Mav-Gyghone they will develop an unnatural fear of cats. Domestic cats will avoid them and become aggressive if approached.

Anyone who is killed in the dreamlands will never be able to visit the Dreamlands again. They will forever be haunted by the possibilities of what might have been and of what dreams they will now never have.



Dreamlands 2000

by Rik Kershaw-Moore

The following article is definitely non-canon and lays out an alternative 'future' Dreamlands that has formed the basis of a recent campaign.

Background

The Dreamlands, that fabulous and strange world conjured into reality by the dreams of men, have for centuries been a mostly peaceful place. True, there are plenty of nightmares lurking ready to take the sanity or soul of the unsuspecting dreamer but on the whole, the Dreamlands have mostly remained stable and inviolate. That is until the latter half of the 20th century. Following the carnal horrors of the holocaust, wars like Korea, Vietnam, the Iran / Iraq conflict, and events such as Bopal and Chernobyl have had a terrible effect on the land of Dreams.

The terror, greed and wholesale loss of life have, as these things are wont to do, passed into the Dreamlands. The Dreamlands that a modern dreamer enters today are a far cry from the Dreamlands that Randolph Carter explored.

Change has come and not for the better. The Moon of Dreams now eclipses the sun, reducing much of the land of dreams to a monochrome existence. No more does the sun shine on the golden towers of Celephaïs. Indeed the city is no longer the safe haven it once was. Time no longer stands still in the Valley of Ooth-Nargai. Now the bitter wind of entropy blows, tarnishing Celephaïs' golden domes and minarets.

What was perfumed air is now rank and bitter since the Ginko trees have been poisoned by acid rain from leprous bloated clouds. The same fate has also devastated the Enchanted Wood. The Zoogs have largely died out and those that are still alive are hungry and vicious. The mighty cloud city of Serannian has long since collapsed into the foul and pestilential Cerenarian Sea, its flotation essence neutralised by the polluted air.

The once glorious Zak also lies in ruins, brought low by a mighty earthquake that crushed the many-templed terraces and killed priests and supplicants alike. Earthquakes have also shattered for all time the high peaks of Throk, opening the way for the unseen Dholes to escape the ossified depths of Pnoth. The pleasure gardens of Sona-Nyl have collapsed into the Stygian depths, leaving only a chasm of nightmares behind. As for the fishing village of Hlanith, that was consumed in a mammoth pyroclastic flow following the eruption of Mount Hatheg-Kla. Of the local fishermen and their families, not a single soul escaped the burning flood of hot ash. The Towns of M'Fchnoo, N'Kraal and most of the Jungle of Kled were also obliterated in the same catastrophe. The violent eruptions left Hatheg-Kla nothing more than an abbreviated smoking stump.

Volcanic activity is also responsible for the destruction of the Plateau of Leng. This long shunned icy land is now shrouded in dense sulphurous clouds rising from the lava fields that have all but covered the tundra. Many Men of Leng villages were consumed in the fast moving lava which killed most of the vile half-men and drove the survivors into the ruins of Sarkomand.

Volcanic activity of a different kind was responsible for the inundation of Oriab; swamped by a tsunami that swept across the island, carrying away all life and leaving behind a barren and denuded island. Even the Night Gaunts in their roost on

Mount Ngranak were not safe from the roaring wall of water, and those few that survived have fled lifeless Oriab in search of new roosts.

In accursed Thalarion, the Eidolon Lathi's palace nest has been incinerated, one victim of the impact of a fifty tonne nickel iron meteorite that left Thalarion a wasted ruin and Lathi's Ter-Men burnt to a crisp. The Eidolon herself, although injured in the fire, has escaped and is attempting to rebuild her nest. Another important victim of the meteorite was the Great Tree, the shock wave from the impact did extensive damage to the Great Tree's root system, bringing the benign being crashing to the ground.

Beyond Thalarion, past the Charnel Garden of Zura, inconceivable changes have been wrought in the Nomad lands. Acting upon some half-seen trans-human dream, the barren steppes have been warped into a matt black landscape crossed by a geometrical grid of vivid green. This construct appears to have started in the Great Bleak Mountains and then spread like a cancer, sublimating all in its inexorable path. The cities of Myngar, Stethlos and Theelys have been assimilated and the blackness is spreading quickly towards Zais. Refugees of the digital doom have been flooding into the cities of Dothar, Thraa and Kadatheron. Those who had hoped to escape the construct by climbing across the Mountains of Noton have found themselves attacked by a peculiar kind of wasting disease that has literally melted the flesh from their bones, leaving nothing but tortured animated skeletons behind.

A different fate has befallen Ulthar, for the edict that 'no man may kill a cat' still holds strong. However, this is only because Ulthar now lies abandoned, totally over run by cats from the Waking World. Even the Temple of the Elder Ones has been abandoned to this feline invasion. These animals have crossed the world divide to escape the growing cruelty that waking worlders are showing towards their pets.

The Lords of the New Chaos

Strangely, amidst all this chaos there are areas that have remained largely untouched. Amongst these is Sarkomand, which has become home to thousands of displaced refugees who have been driven into the wilderness. Unfortunately Sarkomand is now controlled by three evil and enigmatic wizards, N'gddth Caelth, the Enchantress Lucia of Ishara and Zymote who are known collectively as the Lords of the New Chaos. These enchanters are attempting to turn these half-starved people into a tough band of savage fighters who will stop at nothing to conquer the Dreamlands.

The Lords of the New Chaos have let it be known that if these refugees want food then the only way to be fed is by joining the Army of the New Chaos. Once the refugees have signed up they will be given their first meal. This meal like all others is laced with a drug that makes the refugee's easier to control (POW is reduced by 1d8 each day until POW equals 4). After eating, the refugees are formed into cadres and platoons, each commanded by a Man of Leng. There is no segregation of the sexes since the drug also suppresses the 'useless' emotions of love, compassion and mercy as well as negating the sex drive.

Luckily waking world Dreamers are immune to the effects of the drug. Which is why any such Dreamer who is found within the walls of Sarkomand will be taken to the Lords of New Chaos. The Dreamers are either simply imprisoned before being executed or tortured for information before being executed.

N'gddth Caelth

The main Lord of the New Chaos is N'gddth Caelth. Tall and gaunt, like a walking skeleton with a head that seems oddly out of proportion to his thin body. Caelth entered Sarkomand only recently, he quickly joined with the other two sorcerers and has somehow become their leader. No one knows where Caelth came from, although it is rumoured he came from the now drowned city of Th'al on the island of Oriab. What is known is that Caelth is an evil black hearted man who is extremely adept in the sorcerers ways.

Damage Bonus: +1D6

STR	16	CON	15	SIZ	17	INT	19	POW	21
DEX	8	APP	16	EDU	19	SAN	32	HP	16

Armour: 3 point robe

Skills: Bargain 35%, Conceal 52%, Cthulhu Mythos 39%, Dream Lore 67%, Listen 51%, Occult 69%, Ride 61%, Spot Hidden 75%

Languages: Aklo 71%, English 90%, Ghoul 79%

Attacks: Dagger 62% (1D4+2+1D6)
Great Sword 51% (2D8+1D6)

Spells: Anathema, Awful Doom of Cerrit, Deflection, Dissolve Skeleton, Stupefying Blast, Vortex of Far Journeying, Wither Limb

Mental Disorders: Megalomania

The Enchantress Lucia of Ishara

Caelth's second in command is the Enchantress Lucia of Ishara. Once employed by the Dukes of Ishara, Lucia left shortly before the troubles began. Lucia is willow and graceful, with a divine beauty which covers a heart blacker than the darkest night, shot through with miscarried desires. She is able to capture the heart of anyone she desires and will often enthrall some unwilling victim simply so she can advance her dark ambitions.

STR	9	CON	14	SIZ	12	INT	19	POW	25
DEX	13	APP	19	EDU	19	SAN	21	HP	13

Damage Bonus: none

Armour: none

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 42%, Dream Lore 71%, Fast Talk 62%, Hide 41%, Legal Customs 58%, Medicine 68%, Natural History 41%, Occult 59%, Ride 48%, Spot Hidden 68%, Throw 33%

Languages: Aklo 52%, English 90%, Zoog 79%

Attacks: Blackjack 45% (1D8), Knife 52% (1D6)
Rapier 62% (1D6+1)

Spells: Deflection, Explode Heart, Halt of Eanora, Ironmind, Lassitude of Phein, Passing Unseen

Mental Disorders: Paranoid Psychotic

Lord Zymote

The third Lord of Chaos is known only as Zymote. He entered Sarkomand first, cowing the citizens with his necrotic amoral practices and then simply handed over power as if he was waiting for Lord N'gddth Caelth to arrive.

Zymote is a short figure, not more than four feet high, who goes around fully enrobed in cloth of imperial purple. It is a

robe that billows and moves in a manner most unnatural, as if the wearer was not in complete control of his morphology. No man has ever starred into Zymote's face and lived for beneath the cowl of his robe is a cellular mass of confused plastic flesh that is constantly putting out tiny cilia. Zymote is really a Servitor of the Other Gods who has been summoned to the Dreamlands by Nyarlathotep. Zymote's job is to aid these two foolish sorcerers until the time the Stars are Right.

STR	20	CON	16	SIZ	10	POW	35
DEX	14	APP	5	INT	26	HP	19

Move: 7

Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armour: None, no physical weapon can harm Zymote.

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 83%, Dream Lore 83%, Hide 52%, Listen 69%, Medicine 41%, Occult 79%, Sneak 31%, Spot Hidden 71%, Track 37%

Languages: Aklo 99%, English 99%,

Attacks: Tentacle 60% (1D6 tentacles) 1D6+2D6)
Short Sword 57% (1D6+1+1D6)

Spells: Anathema, Deflection, Devolution, Eviscerator, Maws of Pandemonium, Minim, Soul Stealer, Stability

San Loss: 1D10/1D20+10

Average Man of Leng Cadre Leader

STR	12	CON	13	SIZ	13	POW	7
DEX	15	APP	6	INT	10	HP	13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Armour: .5 point Ringmail

Attacks: Long Spear 45% (1D8+1+db), Whip 56% (1D3), Short Sword 27% (1D6+1+db)

Average Solider of the New Chaos

STR	10	CON	13	SIZ	10	POW	4
DEX	10	APP	10	INT	9	HP	11

Damage Bonus: 0

Armour: 2 point Stiff Leather

Attacks: Long Spear 35% (1D8+1+db), Short Sword 47% (1D6+1+db)

Kuranos and Carter have both vanished from the face of the Dreamlands. Kuranos is believed to have died when Seranian collapsed into the sea. Carter entered Sarkomand in disguise to try to discover as much as possible about the Lords of the New Chaos. He never returned. However followers of both men have not given up hope since neither body has turned up in the now teeming Charnel Gardens of Zura.

All this destruction has had the effect of helping to strengthen the Great Old Ones who were imprisoned in the Dreamlands by the Elder Gods. Whilst they are still caged, their powers are slowly growing and they are starting to pit their strength against the walls of their prisons. As a result, Great Old One cults have sprung up in many parts of the Dreamlands, and refugee caravans are now routinely attacked by such cults. The victims of these cults are often used in strange and unholy rites aimed at further strengthening the Great Old Ones.

Another side-effect of the chaos that has been wrought in the Dreamlands is that some of the negative psychic energy generated by this mass destruction is being channelled back into the Waking World, where it too is helping to strengthen the imprisoned Great Old Ones, such as Cthulhu and Shudde' M'ell, as well as driving 'Care in the Community' patients into acts of wanton destruction and chaos.

Yet all may not be lost. A small band of dedicated Dreamers, magicians, priests and knights have come together to attempt to stem the flow of chaos. This band (whose members

include Atal, The Captain of the White Ship, Haragrim the Brave, Nyass the Sorceress and Richard Upton Pickman) call themselves the Guardians of Peace and have established themselves in fabulous city of Ilek-Vad. Through magic, good deeds and prayer the Guardians of Peace are attempting to stabilise the Dreamlands by gathering as many Waking World Dreamers to their cause. Only time will tell if this will be successful.

Campaign Seeds

The War of New Chaos - Get Carter

Called to the dreamlands by the Guardians of Peace, the Dreamers must help to defeat the Lords of New Chaos in their attempt to conquer Ilek-Vad. Their first task is to penetrate the walls of Sarkomand to establish once and for all whether Randolph Carter is alive or dead. If Carter is alive they are to attempt to rescue him before returning to Ilek-Vad.

Arriving in Sarkomand the Dreamers discover the place to be teeming with the refugee conscripts of the Army of the New Chaos. According to rumours within the city, the Lords are holding a number of important enemies in the Temple of Oorn's dungeon.

The dungeon is a foul place that echoes to the tortured screams of those undergoing questioning and the howls of madmen who have looked into the face of Zymote. Amongst the prisoners is the Cat Patrician of Ulthar and Ward Phillips. According to Ward Phillips, Carter is still alive. After being captured by the Army of the New Chaos, Carter was first tortured in an attempt to learn the secrets of Ilek-Vad before being dispatched with a retinue of guards to Zais - close to the Construct that is devouring the Nomad lands. The Dreamers will also learn that the Lords of the New Chaos are building a massive invasion fleet with which to attack Ilek-Vad.

The War of New Chaos - Sea Battle

Following their return to Ilek-Vad, the Dreamers are asked by Atal to escort the Cat Patrician to Ulthar so that he can regiment the Dreamlands cats against the Army of the New Chaos.

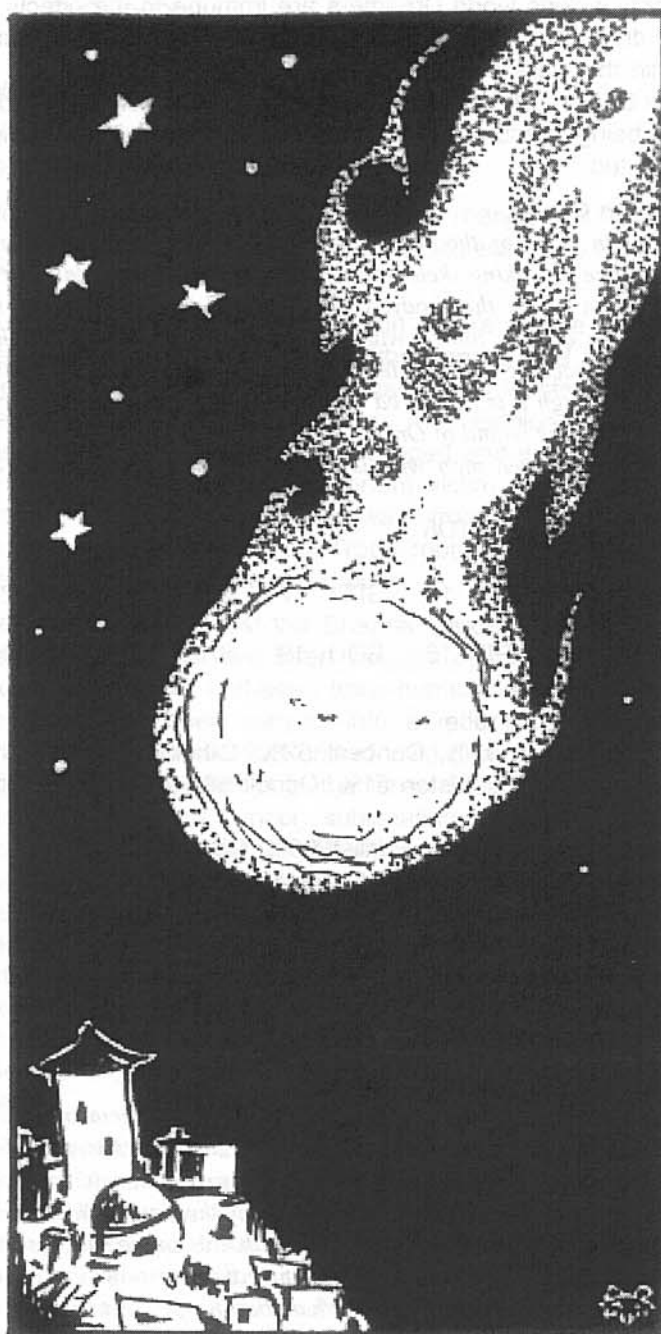
On route, a fleet of Moonbeast Black Galleys attacks the White Ship since the Moonbeasts have allied themselves with the Lords of the New Chaos. If the White Ship is captured, all on board will be taken back to Sarkomand to be questioned by the Lords of New Chaos. Here they can escape and cause havoc before returning to Ilek-Vad.

Should the Dreamers triumph by the time they arrive at their destination, they find the cats involved in a pitched battle with the Cats of Saturn who have allied themselves with the Army of the New Chaos.

The War of New Chaos - The Stabiliser of Dreams

With the Cats of Ulthar allied with the Guardians of Peace, the Dreamers are ordered by Richard Upton Pickman to find an Elder object called the Stabiliser of Dreams. According to the Scriptures of Klek, the Stabiliser of Dreams is capable of reversing the entropy field that has enfolded the Dreamlands. The Stabiliser is located in the tomb of the Dark Wanderers in the ruined city of Golthoth.

Unfortunately there is no such device. This whole mission is a trap designed to eliminate the Dreamers. By the time the Dreamers realise the extent of Pickman's treachery, the Army of the New Chaos will have sailed against Ilek-Vad. One useful piece of intelligence the Dreamers pick up is the



fact that Nyarlathotep is behind the Army of the New Chaos.

The War of New Chaos -The Siege of Ilek-Vad

By the time the Dreamers return to Ilek-Vad, the fabulous city is under siege. The Dreamers need to work out a means of breaking the siege so that they can warn the Guardians of Peace of Richard Upton Pickman 's treachery. One way would be to neutralise the mind control drugs fed to the Army, whilst another and more risky way would be to assassinate the Lords of the New Chaos.

The War of New Chaos - The Gateway of Chaos

With the siege lifted, the Army of the New Chaos in tatters, one or all of the Lords of New Chaos dead and the traitor unmasked it may seem that the Dreamlands have been saved. However, Nyarlathotep has one last ace up his sleeve. According to Richard Upton Pickman, the Other God has a fall back position following the defeat of the army.

Using his powers, Nyarlathotep intends to open a portal for Azathoth to enter the Dreamlands. In the ensuing nuclear chaos, Nyarlathotep will attempt to break the bonds that keep the Great Old Ones in their Elder prisons. It is imperative that the Dreamers stop him. That's if they can....?

"Save the last bullet for yourself!"

Far Flung Military Units for use with Dreamlands Call of Cthulhu

The Cat Army of Ulthar

by Adam Crossingham

"There broods a hint of outer space which cats do not like, and to which they are more sensitive than men", *H.P. Lovecraft*

'Save the Last Bullet for Yourself' is a series of articles dealing with military units that could be encountered during the course of a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure. These units have been chosen because of the places where they serve, the potential of a mythos encounter in the regions where they might be encountered, coupled together with the air of mystery and elitism that surround famous military units.

The second unit to be examined is the Cat Army of Ulthar. During its long and chequered history these fearsome martial cats have fought the Mythos in the Dreamlands, and may conceivably be encountered anywhere during the course of a dreaming *Call of Cthulhu* adventure.

Introduction

"The trouble with cats is that they've got no tact", P.G. Wodehouse

Ulthar is the most important city in the Six Kingdoms. The city of Ulthar is notable for its laws protecting cats. Ulthar boasts the only Temple of the Elder Ones in the Six Kingdoms and also an annex of the Great Library of Dream. Unsurprisingly for a town with a high regard for felines, there is also a Temple of the Cat.

Ulthar is one of the longest inhabited settlements in the Dreamlands and cats have been part of the community for as long as the people have. The Ulthan Cat Army is the largest and most important regiment in the Cat Army of the Dreamlands. It is also the oldest and the most valorous of all the cat clans. However, to call the Ulthan cats an Army assumes organisation, and 'army' is a term used by human observers – it's really just a very, very large pride of cats.

The burghers of Ulthar do not recognise the Cat Army as a legitimate military force, principally because the cats take pains to conceal their activities from Ulthar's inhabitants. Some of the cannier townfolk and farmers from outlying fields suspect something more, but when the Men of Leng threatened Ulthar, it was humans who served as the town's militia, not cats.

A Brief History of Ulthar's Cat Army

"He is the soul of antique Aegyptus, and bearer of tales from forgotten cities in Meroe and Ophir. He is the kin of the jungle's lords and heir to the secrets of hoary and sinister Africa. The Sphinx is his cousin, and he speaks her language; but he is more ancient than the Sphinx, and remembers that which she hath forgotten.", H.P. Lovecraft

Ulthar has provided cats with a comfortable environment for a very long time. The fields provide good hunting, as do the streets and properties of Ulthar. In return for their mousing skills, the cats have become an integral part of Ulthan life. There are rumours that cats first appeared and settled in Dreamlands around the settlements that became Ulthar and the Kingdom of Skai. This would make sense as the cat population density is highest in Ulthar and the Kingdom of Skai than anywhere else in Dreamlands, and is close to the Enchanted Woods where all dreamers first emerge from the Gate of Deep Slumber. Other than for a notable period, Ulthar has been a safe place for a cat to live, another reason perhaps for the large numbers of cats. No one remembers when the Cat Army was formed but it was a very long time ago. Some notable cats, such as the Patriarch of Celephaïs, have lived over 200 years, and they do not remember the formation of the Cat Army. Once established, Ulthar proved to be the ideal place to base the army. The townscape and the surrounding farmlands offer plenty of different terrain and training opportunities for the cats. With a strong population to recruit from, the army was always well manned when it went into the field.

The start of the enmity between Zoog and cat is also lost in the mists of time. However, it is probable that it started when the two races first met. The Zoogs are inquisitive creatures and may once have ventured further south than they currently do. The cats would have expanded their territory as the cat population of Ulthar grew – it was inevitable that the two would meet and clash. Unfor-

tunately the Zoogs like the taste of feline flesh, exacerbating the conflict. Cats consider themselves superior beings and it was a rude surprise to them to suffer losses to the avaricious and capricious Zoog. However, the cats' superior numbers and fieldcraft eventually forced an uneasy cease-fire between the Zoogs and the cats along the border of the Enchanted Forest and the plains of the Six Kingdoms where the Zoogs are disadvantaged, lacking their natural forest habitat. Over time this situation fossilised into accepted behaviour patterns: the cats ignored the interior of the Enchanted Forest; the Zoogs made opportunist attacks on care-less cats and individuals who strayed too close to the forest's edge. The Zoogs who ventured too far from the edge of the forest were caught, played with and then killed by the cats. The tit-for-tat war continued for centuries until Randolph Carter helped the cats decisively defeat the Zoogs.

The cats of Ulthar are on particularly good terms with the cats of Celephaïs. The cats of both cities have co-operated on more than one occasion and the cats of Ulthar appreciate the good works of King Kuranos. The most notable campaign, the two armies served together, was a short but successful campaign to rid the deserts to the east of Celephaïs of the Chimera danger that was causing significant losses to the cats of Celephaïs. Caravan travellers approaching Celephaïs can sometimes still see the bleached bones of the Chimeras killed in the campaign poking through the sands. The campaign was a success and forced the surviving Chimera to retreat deeper into the desert where they remain today.

Another duty that the cats of Ulthar took upon themselves in an earlier century was that of self-appointed bodyguards of the Keeper of Dreams. The Keeper lives in a pocket dimension reachable from Ulthar, selling unobtainable dreams to those desperate enough to want them in return for their souls. Cats are continuously in the vicinity of the Keeper's abode. The cat bodyguard is not for the safety of the Keeper, but for the safety of dreamers and inhabitants of Ulthar and the Dreamlands.

The three most significant events in the Cat Army of Ulthar's history are the execution of the Cottar and his wife, notorious cat murderers; the Carter rescue mission to the Moon; and the subjugation of the Zoogs. The execution of the cat murderers was decreed by Bast after a petition by Menes and the Dark Wanderers. The entire Ulthan Cat Army attended the execution. It is one of the most overt and blatant operations carried out by the cats in Ulthar. Significantly it led to judicial reforms by Ulthar's burghers. The mission to the Moon to rescue Randolph Carter was as part of the Cat Army of Dreamlands. The mission saw the rescue of the cat-friend and his safe return to Earth, and also saw the Army inflict significant casualties on the Moonbeasts. Finally, the subjugation of the Zoog has led to the first peace between the two races in centuries.

The Cat Army of Ulthar in the field

Campaigns

The subjugation of the Zoogs is the Cat Army of Ulthar's most famous campaign and it's most recent. It is the campaign during which the Cat Army finally stopped the Zoog threat to the cats of Ulthar. Ulthan cats, without the assistance of other Dreamlands' feline armies, solely executed the raids, so the glory is deservedly theirs.

Aided by intelligence brought to Ulthar's Chief of Cats by Randolph Carter, the Cat Army was able to launch surprise raids on the Zoog villages of the Enchanted Wood. All the targets were taken without loss of feline life, and from their position of supremacy, the Ulthan cats dictated to the Zoog Council of Sages the terms of the peace that has held to the present day.

The Cat Army of Ulthar contributes a significant portion of the warriors fighting in the Dreamlands' Cat Army. The Cat Army of Dream campaigns rarely, but when it does it can be found virtually anywhere in the lands of dream.

Patrols

The Ulthan Cat Army claims a territory roughly equivalent to the Kingdom of Skai, but scouting parties expand this area around the kingdom's boundaries according to perceived threats and intelligence received. The Army's territory is slowly growing with Ulthar's cat population.

The Cat Army has only three regular patrols. The first patrols to the north, up to the edge of the Enchanted Wood and the town of Nir. The second patrol reaches far to the west, officially halting in the mountains beyond Hatheg, usually on the slopes of Mount Hatheg-Kla in the Liranian Desert, for fear of encountering gods at play, but curious cats sometimes unofficially venture further up into the foothills, hoping for a glimpse of Bast. The third patrol is to the Dark Side of the Moon and regularly encounters Moonbeasts, their allies the terrifying Cats of Saturn and other threats. It is the most dangerous of the patrols, on which only experienced cats serve.

Small cat groups roam in the wastes to the east created by disappearing Thorabon, but stop short of dark Dyath-Leen to the south.

Outposts

The Cat Army regularly sends detachments the Dark Side of the Moon. A small outpost is maintained on the highest peak of the Lunar Mountains, west of the Grey City of the Moonbeasts and the Dark Lunar Sea. This acts as a watchtower against unexpected incursions by the Cats from Saturn or large forces of Moonbeasts. The outpost is only manned whilst cats are on the Moon investigating the ancient shadows and ruins to be found there.

Not even the cats are brave enough to man the outpost for the entirety of a Lunar month, which is why the Moonbeasts and their allies may have left it alone. Given the danger of the lunar opponents, only the more experienced warriors are officially permitted to make the tour. However, many daring kittens make their first lunar tour of duty informally, sneaking behind the main force; with the older cats often turning a blind but benevolent eye to such stragglers.

Whilst the Cat Army is on campaign or patrol, larger cats sometimes join for the duration. Whilst in Ulthar, the sight of pumas, lions, leopards, panthers or tigers would cause panic. In the field though, these large cats can be fearsome stormtroopers. The cats and the big cats don't always see eye to eye though. There is a strong contingent of Tsathoggua followers amongst the big cats – especially the sabre-tooth tigers. This can lead to disagreements and religious tension.

Intelligence Gathering

"For the cat is cryptic, and close to strange things which men cannot see.", *H.P. Lovecraft*

The Cat Army supports its regular patrolling with expeditionary missions and with intelligence gathering. The Army has a highly effective network of feline agents in all of the villages and towns of the Six Kingdoms. The network is cellular in nature, as the cats watch their owner's house, their personal territory and the beings passing through the area. The network starts in Ulthar where the cats pay close attention to those visiting the Temple of the Elder Ones and the travellers and merchants arriving in the city with the caravans.

Strong links are maintained with cat communities through the rest of Dreamlands, the strongest link being with the Cats of Celephaïs. The network is extensive and although not comprehensive, the intelligence is remarkably accurate, though sometimes dated. Cats are stealthy, silent and have good hearing. Intelligence is

passed by 'meow of mouth' to Ulthar within the Six Kingdoms and by couriers beyond the Kingdoms. Ships' cats are a vital part of the network.

The network's coverage is good in the eastern and western lands but fades away in the lands to the North. Surprisingly even news from Inquanok is sometimes received due to the human cat sympathisers in that benighted place. Human sympathisers are rewarded with the attention of a feline agent, who may stay for a few days. There is an intelligence black spot in Dylath-Leen where the activities of the Prince's Eyes and the Men of Leng badly affect the network.

The Cats' intelligence network extends beyond the Dreamlands out into the Waking World. Cats are dreamers as well, so a good turn done in the Waking World can have benefit in dreams as well. Randolph Carter's attitude to cats was well known to the Cats of Ulthar before Carter found the Dreamlands. Similar courtesies may be extended to cat-loving dreamers in the future.

Life with the Cat Army of Ulthar

"After dark all cats are leopards", *Zuni Native American Proverb*

Joining the Cat Army

All cats in Ulthar may serve in the Cat Army. The only exceptions are young kittens, pregnant queens, the injured and the infirm. The hearts of great cats, warriors and hunters, beat in the breasts of the cats that settle by the warmth of the hearth. Cats serving in the army are proud of their practical worship of Bast; every enemy smited is a dedication to the glory of Bast. It is an unusual cat in Ulthar that has not served for several campaigns with the Cat Army.

Basic Training

Cats learn how to fight with their siblings, how to hunt from their mothers, practising constantly through kittenhood into adult life. Army tactics emphasis 'en-masse' attacks: kittens and cats are taught to mob large enemies so that their numbers compensate for their size. Individual mêlée and hunting skills are reserved for smaller opponents like Zoog. At least six cats are needed to engage a human sized target, more if the individual opponents are larger than humans.

New recruits are trained by the cadre of retired warriors in the best way to tackle their usual opponents. This training takes place ad hoc through the gardens and fields of Ulthar, hiding in plain sight, and dismissed by the inhabitants as 'cats at play'. The older the kittens get, the more realistic the training becomes, culminating a rite of passage hunt of a Wamp or something similar.

Headquarters and Organisation

The Temple of the Cat is the headquarters of the Cat Army and the Ulthar clan, where its leading officers and warriors may be found passing the time of day. Ulthar's Cat Chieftain is more likely to be found in front of his favourite hearth in a baker's shop or at the Temple of the Elder Ones, as he prefers not to mix politics with war these days.

The Temple of the Cat also houses the hostages that the Zoog are obligated to send to the Cats. These youthful scions of the Zoog's noblest families are treated well and are afforded the run of the Temple in return for their word of honour that they will not break hospitality or attempt to leave the precincts without a feline escort. However, Zoog will be Zoog, and the cats mount a careful but unobtrusive watch on their charges at all times.

Over time, the Zoog have become better acquainted with the cats of Ulthar as neighbours, rather than just as a hostile and dangerous meal. Firm friendships have been known between young Zoog and their young cat guards. Whether these friendships would survive another war between the Zoog and the cats remains to be seen.

Individual prides of cats led by famous warriors often congregate in specific buildings in Ulthar. This is where the bulk of the dedicated Ulthan cat warriors may be found, preparing and training for the next campaign or patrol. The 'Inn of a Thousand Sleeping Cats', 'The Black Cat', 'The Cheddar Moon', 'The White Whale Inn', and the 'Sorcerer's Apprentice' are all inns where specific compa-

nies of cats can be found. The prides of cats form the basis of the Ulthar's cat regiment. There is a lot of inter-pride rivalry that finds form in late-night catfights, stand-offs, boasting, carousing and the wholesale destruction of gardens that the townsfolk put down to feline high-spirits.

Officers & NCOs

There are no non-commissioned officers in the Cat Army, only officers. However every warrior knows his or her place, and fights individually for the greater benefit of the Cat Army. NCOs are therefore unnecessary, as every cat knows what to do. In reality, sub-lieutenants fulfil the NCO role. Officers are required to direct the Cat Army's efforts at specific targets or opponents and to co-ordinate with other units in the Cat Army. Great fighters gain rank and prestige because of the example that they show to other cats, and the importance other cats accord them. Cats cannot be ordered around, instead they must be convinced that it's fun, their idea, interesting, comfortable or worth eating. Where a hero fights bravely, other cats follow.

An officer is often denoted by ornament. Generals and mid-ranking officers wear collars of ranks, the more valuable being the higher the rank, though lieutenants sometimes also wear collars. Lower-ranking officers tend to favour other ornaments such as earrings to denote their rank. Some officers prefer to let their battle scars mark their rank.

Cat Army Celebrations and Traditions

Bast's Judgement

Both the inhabitants and the cats celebrate the passing of Ulthar's Law forbidding the killing of cats in the city. The cats are, however, celebrating the death of the cat-hating couple. Much feasting takes place over a couple of days when Menes, his doomed kitten, and the Dark Wanderers are remembered and Bast is honoured.

Bast's High Holy Day

At the end of autumn, the Ulthar cats make a special observance on Bast's High Holy Day at the Temple of the Cat.

Zoog Victory Day

On this day the Cats and the Zoogs meet at the Sacred Stone Circle in the Enchanted Woods. The Zoog make their annual tribute of game birds to the representatives of the Cats. Zoog hostages are returned and new hostages join their feline guardians for a year. Further celebrations continue when the Army has returned from the Enchanted Wood to Ulthar safely, but all cats make sure to avoid Zoog wine.

Retiring from the Cat Army

Because the Ulthar Army is effectively the cat community of Ulthar there is no such thing as retirement for cats. Individuals may decline to respond to the caterwauling call to arms after good service with the Cat Army, old age or injury. If the cat's service has been honourable then their decision is respected. These cats retire gracefully from participation but may answer the call to arms in a dire emergency.

Cats injured in the course of duty are not expected to continue to serve, but many do so despite their wounds. Elderly cats, whose age may be a liability, serve until they no longer wish to do so. These cats are encouraged instead to train and encourage kittens and youthful cats. The Army considers that hard won experience is better used to produce better warriors than be wasted on the battlefield. The tales of battle-scarred old tomcats provide a fertile soil for the imaginations and dreams of brave kittens, as the feline elders of Ulthar well know.

Feline Combat Strategies in Dreamlands

"All were there in the fury of battle, and there hovered over them some trace of that profound and inviolate sanctity which made their goddess great in the temples of Bubastis", *H.P. Lovecraft*

Cats in the Dreamlands do not fight like cats in the Waking World. There, cats are mostly solitary, hunting alone and fighting territorial disputes alone. Only feral cat communities and large cat prides display pack-hunting techniques.

The Deadly Attack

Pack hunting involves one or more hunters tracking down prey

whilst other pride members cover flanks and escape routes. Cats in Dreamlands display similar techniques whilst hunting but in combat use a terrifying method of attack that any enemy will succumb to, if the Cat Army has enough warriors.

Dreaming cats attack individual targets en masse. For human sized targets like men, Moonbeasts and Saturnian cats, at least six cats attack at once, more if possible. Each cat claws and bites exposed and vulnerable areas like limbs, throats and eyes. Many of these attacks are diversionary in nature. A cat is unlikely to mortally injure the target by itself, but its attack can occupy or divert the target's attention from a series of attacks that will fatally incapacitate the target.

The aim of the massed attack is to halt and knock the target to the ground. This immobilises the target and allows more cats to attack. Whilst the target is attempting to defend itself from cats attacking its eyes and throat, the other cats attack the target's vulnerable, and now exposed, stomach. A number of cats will rip the target's stomach open and then enter the target's body cavity, causing massive internal damage and a quick but messy death. In game terms, massed attacks will 'soak up' the target's limited number of parries so the third or fourth attack onwards will be undefended. This allows the cats to grip with claws or teeth, which allows them to use the Rip attack in the next round. The target may also need to make a DEX Resistance roll against the combined SIZ of the attacking cats to avoid being forced to the ground. Once the cat has inflicted enough damage with a Rip attack, the cat attacks start to do automatic impaling damage, as the target has no defence against an attack within its own body. During mass combat the Keeper may want to simply multiply the attacks and damage inflicted by the number of cats involved. Human witnesses to a massed cat attack may need to make a Sanity roll if the victim was sentient.

Nine Lives

Unlike human dreamers, when a cat dies in Dreamlands in the service of Bast, it is not barred from ever returning to Dreamlands. It can return, though it will bear the mark of the wound that dispatched it from Dreamlands. This ability to return to Dreamlands might be the basis of the myth of the cat's nine lives and it is a closely guarded secret.

No cat knows if the number of times it can return to Dreamlands is in fact nine, as most cats learn from their mistakes and never let themselves die in the same manner twice. However, the feline ability to cheat Dreaming death in a limited form is a benefit to warriors serving with the Cat Armies – it means that at least once or twice warriors may be as fearless as they wish, as death is no longer a restraining consideration.

Knowledgeable philosophers have debated that the reason that cats have nine lives in the Dreamlands is that they have no soul and this is the reason that they make good familiars for sorcerers and witches, and the reason they act as the unofficial guardians of the Keeper of Dreams.

Notable Personalities of the Cat Army of Ulthar

"The cat always leaves a mark on his friend.", *Aesop*

Chief of Cats

Ulthar's Chief of Cats likes to spend his days at Woth's bakery. It is warm and the people are friendly. The bakery is also close to the alleyway that leads to the Keeper of Dreams. The Patriarch likes to keep a close eye on the coming and goings of the Keeper. He doesn't trust the younger cats to do their jobs competently and he isn't quite sure that cats are unaffected by the Keeper's attractions. (See p.75 of *The Complete Dreamlands* sourcebook for the Patriarch's statistics).

Macavity

Macavity is a legend, having started his career in the Cat Army of Ulthar. After serving for several years and gaining a reputation as a talented scavenger, he then took a leave of absence. Things started to go missing around Ulthar, and wise cats put two and two together. It is whispered that Macavity may actually be the Cat Army's Spymaster. But he's never there to answer the question.

Captain Midnight

The captain is a fine looking black cat and nephew of the Patriarch. He remembers meeting Randolph Carter as a kitten, and later helped him on the Moon. A seasoned campaigner, Captain Midnight leads special missions for the Cat Army and is respected for his prowess on the battlefield, his hunting skills in the woods and his servility in Ulthar. A finely wrought silver collar distinguishes him.

Randolph Carter

Carter is an honorary member of the Cat Army because of the assistance that he gave to the cats against the Zoogs, as well as the being a known Cat Friend in Dream, as well as the Waking World. (Carter's statistics can be found on p.187 of the latest *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook or p.74 of *The Complete Dreamlands* sourcebook).

Using Published Adventures

There are no adventures published specifically for use with the Cat Army of Ulthar. The scenario **Lemon Sails**, included in all editions of the Dreamlands sourcebooks, features a cat called Fortune.

The *Complete Mask of Nyarlathotep* features a red-herring scenario called **The Black Cat** set in Cairo, where investigators may meet a surviving priestess of the Bast cult and some of her feline attendants.

Garrie Hall's **Stray Cat Strut**, found in *Tales of Terror 1* and *Tales of Terror 2* (p.47 & p.61 respectively), is a good example of a Walking World to Dream scenario premise. Lynne Wilson's **Cats**, (p.25) in *Tales of Terror 2*, is also a crossover from Dream to Reality.

Cats and the Mythos

Cats are implacably opposed to Nyarlathotep and his machinations. Nyarlathotep is particularly active in the Dreamlands where his servants and agents are continually plotting to bring about a stronger influence of the Mythos on the development of the Dreamlands. Cats bear a grudge against Nyarlathotep for ancient interference with Bast.

The cats are continually fighting the Men of Leng, who are the servants of the Moonbeasts. The Moonbeasts are cruel masters, and take delight in increasing the pain and suffering they can inflict on the cats they capture. For cats, Moonbeasts are representatives of Nyarlathotep: easily frightened, pliable, utterly reprehensible with no moral backbone, and very few vertebrae. It is also a good thing that Moonbeasts taste all right.

Cats training to be sorcerers, or who have gone insane, sometimes take up the worship of **Tsathoggua**. The cats' traditional goddess **Bast** is not happy with dissident cats that follow other gods. Tsathoggua is indifferent to Bast, but welcomes any individual looking for the Greater Truth.

The **Cats from Saturn** are the worst foe a cat can face. They are large, ferocious and difficult to stop. They are completely alien and this is an advantage against Earth's cats that are easily put-off by emanations from outer space. Only the brave or the foolhardy cat can hold against the Saturn cats, although larger numbers of fellow cats reduces the effects of stellar interference. The Sanity loss for cat meeting a Cat from Saturn is 1/1D6 (unlike the 0/1D4 loss for humans).

Cats and the Keeper of Dreams

"...Only the graceful cats were there to see, and these would only sit and clean their whiskers unconcernedly, after the immemorial way of cats, that takes not into account the sad mutterings of disillusioned vendors of incense kept from sleep by thoughts not good to have.", *Gary Myers*

The Keeper of Dreams is a dirty little secret kept by the cats of Ulthar. The Keeper sits in another dimension accessed by an alleyway behind Woth's bakery. The Keeper offers unobtainable, sometimes unspeakable, dreams to humans in return for the dreamer's soul. Cats are immune to the Keeper's charms by virtue of their nine lives and can only see a dark intergalactic abyss through the window of the Keeper's shop; but they keep a constant watch on the alleyway, observing all those who enter and

leave. The cats do not stop dreamers entering the alleyway, as those who do so are always drawn to the outré promises that the Keeper offers. However, should a Cat-friend attempt to enter the Keeper's abode the cats would try to deter them.

Another reason for watching the Keeper of Dreams is that it is a powerful Mythos entity and as such needs careful guard, in case Nyarlathotep or another should try and exploit the Keeper for their own benefit. And, of course, the cats are curious: they do not understand the attractions of the Keeper of Dreams and want to know. The guard will stop any cat from entering the Keeper's shop without explicit orders from the Patriarch that they may let the cat pass freely.

Cats and Bast

"Thou art the Great Cat, the avenger of the Gods, and the judge of words, and the president of the sovereign chiefs and the governor of the holy Circle; thou art indeed...the Great Cat.", *Inscription on the Royal Tombs at Thebes*

In Atlantis and later Ancient Egypt, Bast was the goddess and protector of cats, as well as the goddess of family life. She later became associated with the moon and it's connotations of female fertility, as well being a goddess of music and joy. Cats were also associated with the utchat symbol – the all-seeing sacred eye that reputedly has magical powers – and Bast was an 'Eye of Ra' acting as a protector or avenger for the god. Bast's cult centre was at Bubastis in the Nile Delta where Herodotus described enthusiastic celebrations and archaeologists have found tomb-fields of mummified cats.

After time, cats became demigods, divinely appointed by Pharaoh to control vermin in his kingdom's grainhouses, as without wheat there would no bread. Bast gradually gained aspects of a family protectress, as a home needs to be vermin-free too. In the Egyptian temples, cats were depicted as slayers of the serpents attacking Ra and may have controlled the asp population as well.

Later in Egyptian history, Bast's clergy was corrupted by a heresy, attempting to model themselves after Bast by creating animal-human hybrids. The heretic movement was quickly eliminated but a small number of hybrids, priests and their followers escaped to the West. The aberration was suppressed and erased from history, but Nyarlathotep undoubtedly was involved, hence the cats' hostility to Azathoth's Messenger. Worship of Bast continued in the Dreamlands as it gradually died out in the Waking World. The damned western city of Golthoth had a strong Egyptian influence and Bast was heavily worshipped there until the city's ruin. The Dark Wanderers, who carried Bast's memory from Golthoth throughout the Dreamlands, also revere her.

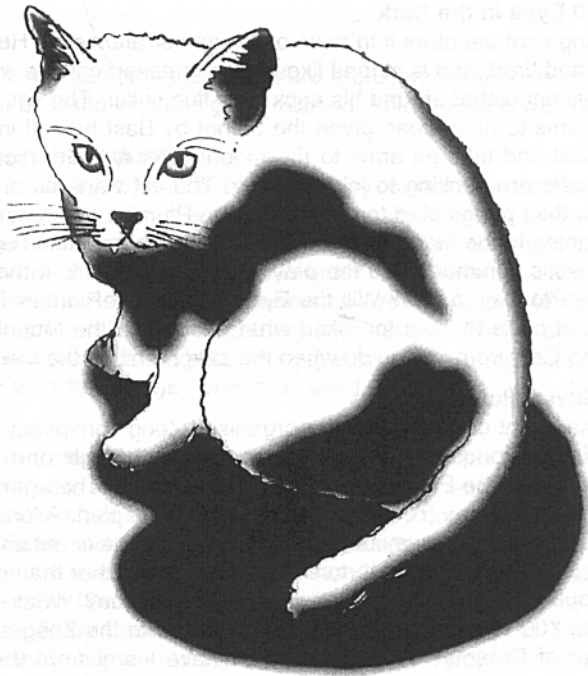
Cats and Magic

Cats have a latent magical ability whilst they are in Dreamlands, which is the ability to leap to the Moon from the Earth, and back again. Cats are able to decide where on the Earth they want to land and by leaping to the Moon and back down again cats can travel thousands of leagues extremely quickly. A cat army can carry travellers with them, the traveller kept from falling to Earth by the massed felines.

Cats are able to use magic spells and items in the Dreamlands like human dreamers and other inhabitants of Dream. Magic corrupts cats as well as humans – cats suffer the same SAN losses from using magic as humans, so the number of feline magicians is quite low. There are few magicians amongst the ranks of the Cat Army, but some adventurous cat sorcerers have been encountered.

Cats are limited to using magic that does not require components or equipment (like a wand) or need words to be spoken in a language other than Cat. Spells that use amulets could be used if worn on a collar. They cannot use spells that need specific gestures that cats are unable to make. For instance, the spell 'Deflection' can be used by cats because it only requires the movement or an arm (or foreleg and paw), but the spell 'Voorish Sign' cannot because it needs the fingers of the hand to held in a specific way.

Cats are also subject to the spell *The Petition of Menes*. Cast by a devotee of Bast, the spell is a variation of 'Summon/Call Cats',



which will call together a neighbourhood's cats. The assembled cats will then attack those who have displeased Bast. Cats cannot cast the spell themselves and find it hard to resist. It is thought that only the Dark Wanderers know the incantation.

Cats and Insanity

Cats are not immune to the horrors of the Mythos and can go insane. Their worship of Bast, an Elder Goddess, makes them part of the real universe rather than the shared delusions of humanity. Their hunting mentality also makes them more suited to survival as well. As a result of this point of view, cats only lose half the rolled Sanity loss.

Treat cat characters as human for the purposes of determining reactions, idea rolls, insane insights, and temporary and permanent insanity; use the full rolled Sanity loss for these reactions. Afterwards the cat characters only lose half the amount, rounded up, to a minimum of one Sanity point. Cats lose the full rolled SAN when encountering Cats from Saturn. Magic use costs the full SAN penalty. Similarly, cats only gain half the SAN gain, rounded up, for thwarting the forces of the Mythos, unless the enemies were Saturnian Cats where the gain is 1D6.

A cat that goes permanently insane may turn to the Dark Side, and willingly embrace the Mythos. Many insane cats become the legendary black cats of the witches' sabbats by taking up the worship of Tsathoggua, gaining sorcerous advantages through their devotion. Sabbat cats are larger than normal, become immune to fire, and can talk – though it is a language unknown to mankind. These sabbat cats are particularly infamous in the Averogne region of France.

Role-playing in the Cat Army of Ulthar

"Cats, as a class, have never completely got over the snootiness caused by the fact that in Ancient Egypt they were worshiped as gods. This makes them prone to set themselves up as critics and censors of the frail and erring human beings whose lot they share," P.G. Wodehouse

Roll statistics

Use the statistics presented on p.88 of *The Complete Dreamlands* sourcebook for feline characters. Some keepers may allow players to roll 6+4D6 for APP.

Occupation Templates

Spend 3D6 x 20% points on one of the cat character occupation templates below:

Adventurer:

An adventurer cat is one who has joined a band of adventurers 21

whether Dreamers or inhabitants of the Dreamlands. Some adventurers become thieves as a result of personal pride or desire of beauty. An adventuring cat may also become an apprentice or familiar to a magician or a scholar.

Skills: Climb, Dodge, Dreaming, Dream Lore, History, Legal Customs, Occult, 1 skill of player's choice (or spell if allowed by Keeper).

Sleuth:

Some felines like the challenge that a murder mystery presents. And cats are curious animals. Sleuths make good intelligence operators due to their curiosity regarding events happening around them.

Skills: Dream Lore, Legal Customs, Listen, Psychology, Smell, Sneak, Spot Hidden, Track

Wanderer:

A wandering cat is one that has decided to put aside the benefits of the cat clan and forge their own way in the Dreamlands. Independent and proud wanderers are the most aloof of all cats, as they know they are better than any other cat or person.

Skills: Climb, Dream Lore, Hide, Jump, Smell, Sneak, Swim, Track

Bravo:

A Bravo cat has decided to embrace the primeval roar that rages in its chest and devote its life to fighting the enemies of the Cat Army and seeking glory for themselves and Bast. Find the enemy! Defeat the enemy! Toy with the enemy! Eat the enemy!

Skills: Bite, Claw, Dodge, Hide, Jump, Martial Arts, Rip, Sneak

Base skills

The cat's base skills are:

Bite 30%, Claw 40%, Climb 50%, Dodge DEX x 2%, Hide 25%, Jump 40%, Listen 40%, Navigate 20%, Own Language: Cat 55%, Play with Prey 10%, Rip 75%, Smell 25%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 50%, Swim 5%, Track 20%.

Purchase Personal Skills

Spend INT x 10% points on any suitable skill on the Dreamlands character sheet or feline base skills. Of course, a cat cannot use a skill that needs hands.

Choose Spells (optional)

If the Keeper allows new characters to start with spells, these must be chosen and learnt. Each spell chosen costs POW x 5% to choose. These points are spent regardless of the learning roll result. Use the list in *The Complete Dreamlands* sourcebook bearing in mind physical restrictions. A chosen spell must be learnt to be usable. Successfully roll INT x 3 to learn a spell. Spells that are not learnt are unusable until the cat has successfully learnt the spell. This must be done during play or study between scenarios.

Choose the cat's names

A cat has three names. The first is what humans call him. The second is what other cats and friends call him. The cat's third name is only known by the cat, and by Bast. Write the first and second names on the character sheet. Tell the Keeper the cat's third name.

Feline minimum age

A cat's minimum age is the 3D6 result, rolled for the occupation points in section two, in months.

Cat Army of Ulthar Ranks (with equivalent UK ranks)

Assign an appropriate rank if necessary; or if the Keeper allows, base the rank on the cat's average combat skill (based on all applicable skills) divided by 25, rounding the results down.

	Ulthar Rank	Human Rank
N/A	Chieftain	Head of state
N/A	Field Marshall	Highest staff officer
N/A	General	General
6	Colonel	Colonel
5	Major	Major
4	Captain	Captain
3	Lieutenant	Lieutenant
2	Sub-Lieutenant	Sergeant/Warrant Officer
1	Warrior Private/minor	NCO

Feline Speech

In the 1890s and the 1920s only a few individuals had learnt to speak the Cat language, or had been entrusted with its secrets by the cat clans. Passionate cat lovers may have acquired a maximum of INT x 1% in the Cat Language by conversing with their pets, which to their surprise worked when they used the skill to talk to the cats in Dreamlands.

Non-Player Characters in the Cat Army of Ulthar

Officer: Major PRINCE or BIRD-FLIES-TO-MOUTH
Short-haired English Blue, Age 8

STR	3	CON	10	SIZ	2	INT	13	POW	11
DEX	26	APP	16	EDU	N/A	SAN	55	HP	7

Damage Bonus: -1d6.

Weapons: Bite 50%, damage 1D4-db
Claw 80%, damage 1D3-db
Rip 85%, damage 2D3-db

Skills: Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Dodge 60%, Dream Lore 15%, Hide 75%, Jump 90%, Listen 60%, Martial Arts 60%, Navigate 45%, Own Language: Cat 65%, Play with Prey 95%, Smell 60%, Sneak 90%, Spot Hidden 80%, Swim 40%, Track 70%.

Warrior: TOM or RUMP-TIGGER-PUMP
Silver Tabby, Age 5

STR	2	CON	7	SIZ	1	INT	11	POW	14
DEX	31	APP	11	EDU	N/A	SAN	70	HP	4

Damage Bonus: -1d6.

Weapons: Bite 40%, damage 1D4-db
Claw 60%, damage 1D3-db
Rip 80%, damage 2D3-db

Skills: Climb 65%, Dodge 65%, Hide 75%, Jump 80%, Listen 60%, Martial Arts 80%, Navigate 25%, Own Language: Cat 75%, Play with Prey 75%, Smell 45%, Sneak 90%, Spot Hidden 75%, Swim 20%, Track 75%.

Adventure Seeds

Bridge on the River Skai

The bridge across the River Skai, near the town of Nir, is the key strategic point to the west of the Kingdom of Skai. Any invader from the Enchanted Wood will need to use the bridge to attack Ulthar or swim across the Skai. Intelligence is received that a force is massing to attack the cats. The cats must mass along the river and at the bridge as soon as possible to thwart the invasion attempt. But what is the enemy? No one knows... yet.

Murder Most Feline

A cat is found slain in Ulthar. A hue and cry goes up around the town. The people are nervous, and the burghers anxious. The cat was a major in the Army. The players, as cats and cat-friends, are appointed by Ulthar's Patriarch to solve the mystery as soon as possible. It seems the late major was in charge of the Zoog hostages. Was it the Zoog? Was it the Men from Leng? Was it a cat? Was it an Ulthan citizen or a traveller passing through?

The Cat in the Sack

The law in Ulthar says no one may kill a cat. So instead someone is taking kittens to the bank of the River Skai and throwing them into the waters to drown. The players retrieve a wriggling bag that floats past on the fast-moving blue waters of the Skai. The kittens are grateful to be alive. They tell of a farm where odd, swarthy men work the fields, and receive visitors at odd-hours of the night. The kittens' mother is dead, killed by the dark farm hands – but the kittens are too young to know where the farm is. Is it time that Ulthar's laws are tested again?

The Dylath-Leen Job

Macavity has decided that the Men of Leng are far too wealthy for their own good. All those rubies are far too corrupting. By stealing them, the Cats could stem the tide of Nyarlathotep's predations on the Dreamlands for a period. Macavity has a cunning plan to infiltrate a team of cat burglars into Dylath-Leen to bring the city-port to a halt, have the Army enter the city, steal the rubies and escape in the confusion. The players, being a team of cats and cat-friends, are the advance guard working to locate and gain access to the rubies and confuse the Prince's Eyes. They may even meet 'Mr.

Big' himself, Macavity!

A 1000 Eyes in the Dark

A strange cat saunters into town one summer afternoon. He looks dusty and tired, and is striped like tiger or a desert cat. He wears a magnificent utchat around his neck on a fine collar. The cat, Ptomley, claims to have been given the utchat by Bast herself in order to recruit and take an army to the moon. After a while, more and more cats are flocking to join Ptomley. The cat warlords are worried as their prides start to diminish. Then Ptomley announces that he is going to the Moon on the darkest day of the month in order to fulfil Bast's command. Do the players follow? What is it that Bast wishes Ptomley to find? Will the Eye of Ra assist Ptomley in finding what he is looking for? And what exactly do the Moonbeasts and the Cats from Saturn do when the cats aren't on the Moon....

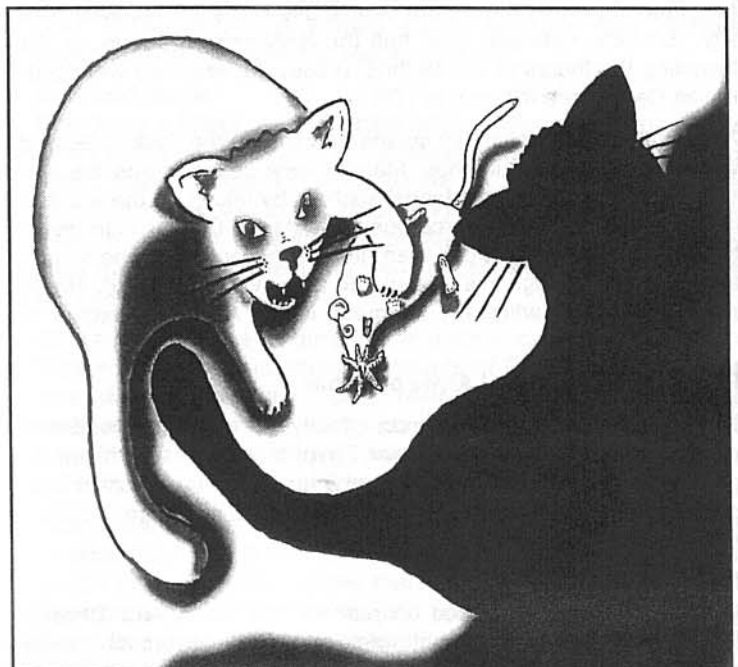
The Seven Hundred Steps

A feline agent discovers a large organised Zoog conspiracy that is planning a conquest of the Waking World through one of the places where the Enchanted Woods touch reality. The agent's dying word is that the '700 steps' are crucial to the plan. A lone Zoog is caught in the alleyway behind Woth's bakery: he is not an errant hostage and even under torture reveals nothing other than cursing the soulless cats. Can the cats stop the invasion? What exactly are the 700 steps? What is the connection with the Zoog and the Keeper of Dreams? The Zoog Elders have learnt from their last encounter with the Cats and have hidden their massing warriors from both the sight of humans and cats. Stopping the Zoog will need cunning as well as luck.

Many thanks to Steven Kaye and Daniel Harms for their excellent and timely research assistance.

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“WE MISSED YOU,” HISSED THE LOVE CATS

by Mike Mason

The investigators in this adventure are Dreamlands cats who are directed by the Cat Chieftain of Ulthar to seek the whereabouts of a cat known as Babe who has gone missing. This scenario was originally run at Convulsions and GenCon UK 1998 in a slightly modified format.

Keepers Introduction

Babe is not a cat. He is a Zoog, whose real name is 'Zee larr'. Zee larr underwent a long and extremely costly magical ceremony to change his form in to that of a cat. The Zoog Chieftain ordered Zee larr to undergo the change in order to infiltrate the Ulthan cats, ascertain their strength in numbers and report it back to the Zoog tribe in preparation for a lightning strike attack. The peace agreement reached following the 'Subjugation of the Zoog' has sat uneasily with the Zoogs, who now are looking at a way of getting even.

Zee larr (referred to as Babe from now on) arrived in Ulthar about a month ago, stating he had been travelling for some time and was now in search of a more permanent home. Accepted by the Ulthan cats, Babe soon began his mission; asking questions, snooping around and spying. However, this morning, he was overheard conversing with the Zoog prisoners in Zoog tongue by Ruby, a female Persian. Ruby tracked Babe to the vegetable patch of Timon the Merchant (a human resident of Ulthar) and confronted him. Realising he had been discovered fraternising with the enemy, Babe panicked and leapt upon Ruby, killing her and hiding her body amongst the cabbages. Babe decided his cover was blown and has subsequently fled from Ulthar, met up with a Zoog patrol, and is currently making his way back to the Enchanted Wood to the Zoog tribe.

Unfortunately for Babe, Ruby was not quite dead and was soon discovered by a cat named Rhemus. In her final moments, Ruby uttered the following words "Babe...attacked...Zoogs.." The Cat Chieftain has taken this to mean that Babe and Ruby discovered some Zoogs who had infiltrated Ulthar. Whilst Ruby was slain, the Zoogs may have captured Babe intending to take him back to the Enchanted Wood for interrogation. The Cat Chieftain has organised a search party to find Babe (and the Zoogs) and report back in case the Zoogs have broken the peace settlement.

A Note about Zoogs

Zoogs are small, rodent-like creatures, easily recognised by a clump of tentacles that protrude from their snouts. Zoogs live in burrows and tree trunks across the Enchanted Wood. Zoogs eat fungi, but prefer the taste of cat and human flesh.

Since the Subjugation, the Zoogs have been waiting for a chance to strike back. In preparation, the Zoogs have trained and organised their numbers and sought out allies. Happily for the Zoogs, there are others who share their hatred for the Ulthan cats. Indeed, links have been formed with the dreaded Cats from Saturn and even now a Saturnian Cat is dwelling in the Enchanted Wood in the hospitality of the Zoog Chieftain.

Fur and Purr – Player's Introduction

Read, or paraphrase the following:

All is not well in Ulthar. The Cat Chieftain has called you to an urgent secret meeting, which can only mean one thing – trouble. The Cat Chieftain paces back and forth as you arrive in Woth the Bakers back yard. Turning to face you, the Cat Chieftain sits back and begins:

"This morning, Ruby – a Persian, with whom some of you I believe were acquainted, was found murdered in the vegetable patch of Timon the Merchant. We do not believe that Timon, a known friend of cats, perpetrated the crime.

"Ruby was found by Rhemus, a Manx, whilst on standard patrol. Fortunately for us, Ruby had held on to life long enough to impart some vital information. Her dying words were, "Babe..attacked...Zoogs."

"You may remember Babe who arrived in Ulthar just under a month ago. Babe had asked to settle in Ulthar and is currently awaiting formal training to take up a post in the local regiment.

"There has been no sightings of Babe since this morning and it is my belief that he was been captured by a group of Zoogs, who somehow

infiltrated our defences, and taken back with them to the Enchanted Wood.

"Should these events prove to be true, I believe that we are facing a possible retaliation for our subjugation of the Zoogs. You and I alone are the only ones who know this. I do not want some over zealous pride of cats to take it upon themselves to charge in to the Enchanted Wood and start another war. Therefore, you will be my eyes and ears. I want you to find Babe and the Zoogs who killed Ruby, find out the reason behind the attack and report it back to me. Tell no one you meet about this mission. If you can rescue Babe without drawing attention to yourselves, so much the better. By my reckoning, I don't think that the Zoogs will have got far, you may be able to catch-up with them in the Enchanted Wood if you move quickly. Any questions?"

The players have a short time to ask questions before the Cat Chieftain orders them to move out. Additional information known by the Cat Chieftain includes:

- Before being found by Rhemus, Ruby was last seen this morning, just before dawn, near the Temple of the Cat.
- Babe was last seen near to the Temple of the Cat where the Zoog captives are held.
- The cats patrolling the land between the bridge over the river Skai and the edge of the Enchanted Wood have reported no sign of Babe or Zoog.
- Another cat, Slick, a striped ginger and white tomcat, went missing from Ulthar just over a month ago. The Cat General is worried at what looks to be the start of an alarming trend in disappearing cats.

What the Cats Know About Babe

The following can be learnt by asking around the Ulthan cats:

- Babe is striped ginger and white tomcat.
- Before arriving in Ulthar, Babe stated that he had been travelling in Celaphais and with merchant caravans around the Six Kingdoms.
- Babe was looking for a place to call home and had decided that Ulthar could offer this.
- Babe had happily agreed to join the Army and had been talking to a number of officers from different prides about the possibility of joining them.
- Babe appeared to a cautious, but curious cat.
- Babe seemed very interested in the Zoog captives in the Temple and has often been seen talking to the younger Zoogs there.

On to the Enchanted Wood

Following the Cat Chieftain's speech, the cats will probably want to move quickly in the hope of catching up with Zoogs and Babe before it's too late. The journey out of Ulthar, across the Skai and down through the fields to the Enchanted Wood is uneventful, however, the cats may come across a patrol of cats (**Spot Hidden** or **Smell**) who have discovered the tracks and scent of a cat leading in to the Enchanted Wood.

The patrol, led by Capt. Sylvester, is curious about the tracks and is currently debating whether to break with orders and follow the tracks in to the wood. If the players follow the Cat Chieftain's orders to the letter, they will stay quiet and **Persuade** the patrol to return to Ulthar and report their findings. The patrol will also be curious about the players too – they weren't aware of another patrol on duty in this area, and what exactly they are doing so close to the Enchanted Wood? Quick answers will be needed if the patrol is to be placated.

In the event of utter failure to draw the patrol away, Capt. Sylvester will demand to know just what the cats are up to. If they acquiesce, Capt. Sylvester will also demand to join the party in to the wood, directing the rest of the patrol to return to Ulthar and report in. In such a scenario, Capt. Sylvester can be a useful NPC

as he is an experienced warrior and has ventured in to the wood once before.

The tracks lead in to the wood and could be followed with a successful **Tracking** roll. Cats who make a successful **Idea** check, believe that whatever cat made the tracks must have taken a circuitous route from Ulthar.

In the Thick of It

By the time the cats reach the entrance to the Enchanted Wood, the sun is setting and air is getting damp and cool. The wood looks dark and foreboding. The trees and brambles are densely packed together; branches intertwine to form dark tunnels through the undergrowth. Here and there clusters of strange fungi provide pockets of illumination. Thoughts of warm fires, saucers of milk and the bright lights of home couldn't be further away.

In order to follow the cat tracks through the wood, a successful **Tracking** roll must be made after every encounter. Failure indicates that the tracks have been lost. The cats may be able to pick up the trail again (following another encounter) with a successful halved **Tracking** roll.

Cats who dare to enter the Enchanted Wood will face a number of encounters that are described here after. Certain encounters are marked with an asterisk (*) which denotes that the encounter is mandatory and cannot be avoided – Keepers should ensure that all encounters so marked are presented at some stage during the adventure.

Whilst the encounters that follow have been randomised, Keepers are welcome to ignore the dice rolling and choose the order and appropriateness of the encounters for themselves; perhaps even inventing additional puzzles or distractions of their own.

Random Encounters (1d8)

1	Zoog Hunting Party	5	Rudigan the Hunter
2	The Witch Tree	6	The Pit
3	The Wanderer	7	* The Dead Zoogs
4	The Flower Circle	8	* Babe

Zoog Hunting Party

Prior to encountering the Zoogs the Keeper should roll **Listen** or **Smell** checks for the cats; success means the cats are forewarned that Zoogs are close by. If aware of the Zoogs, the cats may make **Spot Hidden** checks in order to spot one or more of the hidden Zoogs. If the cats fail to notice the Zoogs they are caught unawares and will lose all their actions during the first round when the Zoogs leap out to attack.

1d10+5 Zoogs are hunting within the wood. Roll **Listen** and **Smell** checks for the Zoogs to see if they are aware of the cats. If forewarned, the Zoogs will lay a trap and pounce on the cats as soon as they are within a few feet. If the cats go undetected, the Zoogs may well become the hunted!

The Zoogs will be angry at the cat's intrusion in to the wood and fearful that the cats might be aware of the impending attack on Ulthar. The Zoogs will aim capture at least one of the cats for questioning, (escorting any captives to the Sacred Stone Circle), but if that proves too difficult they will settle for killing the cats.

Should any Zoogs be captured by the cats, no amount of questioning will get them to reveal that an attack on Ulthar is imminent. However, if asked about any other cats wandering around the woods, the Zoogs will gleefully state that they caught and ate a lone cat this morning (**Psychology** reveals that the Zoogs lie).

The Witch Tree

Within a moonlit glade stands a tall oak tree. The spot looks ideal for a quick rest after a long journey - perhaps the place to catch a breath. The tree could also provide an ideal vantage point to view the surrounding area. The oak tree sits alone in the glade, set apart from the other trees.

If the cats make a **Spot Hidden** they notice a variety of small pebbles and stones strewn around the base of the oak tree.

Should the cats choose to climb the tree or safely rest within its branches, they are in for a surprise. The tree is a Witch Tree, a sentient inhabitant of woods and jungles across the Dreamlands.

The tree has a limited form of mobility, able to move in order to slowly crawl over the land. Whilst not inherently evil, Witch Trees do not look favourably on being 'molested' by gangs of cats.

The Witch Tree is asleep 95% of the time; however, it will soon wake up if one or more cats begin to climb its branches. In this case, the tree will attempt to pluck the cats and toss them (as hard as possible) in to the wood. If already awake, the tree will try to warn the cats away by throwing the pebbles at its base at the bold cats.

The Wanderer

A human figure lies slumped against an old tree stump. The human is dressed in green and brown leathers and a long staff lies beside him on the ground.

This is none other than Donald Sump, a dreamer who, in the Waking World, is an insurance salesman with a very dreary life. In his dreams, Donald has found a way to escape mundane life and take on an alter ego – Vernanon the Wanderer. At present, Vernanon/Donald is resting after spending the day looking for a route to Ulthar, getting hopelessly lost in the Enchanted Wood in the process.

If awoken by the cats, Vernanon will scream loudly, grab his staff and, fearing he is under attack from some unspeakable foe (he has heard tales of small furry things that eat dreamers), will strike out at the nearest cat to him.

If Vernanon succeeds in an **Idea** check, he realises his attackers are cats and will try to pull back the attack and apologise for his unthinking actions. Cats succeeding in **Psychology** rolls can see that Vernanon is terribly nervous and genuinely apologetic for harming any cats. Vernanon has some cheese in his bag, which he will offer in order to smooth things over.

Vernanon could be a potential ally against the Zoogs, although he is next to hopeless with his staff. If Babe is now with the party, he will refuse any aid from Vernanon – he doesn't want some human to get in the way of the Zoog's plans.

Rudigan the Hunter

Rudigan the Hunter is loose in the wood, on the look out for food and pelts to sell at Dylath Leen's market. Rudigan never ventures to Ulthar, in fact he tries to give the town a wide berth because of his extreme hatred of small furry things (cats especially). When he does enter Ulthar, it is usually in disguise as he runs a lucrative trade in cat pelts with the wide-mouthed merchants of Dylath Leen.

Rudigan has laid a number of snares and traps in this part of the wood, in to which an unwary cat might tread. There is also a 25% chance that Rudigan will be encountered here disentangling a body (40% rabbit, 60% Zoog) from one of his traps.

Each cat must roll their **Luck** in order to avoid a trap, failure means they have sprung the trap and they now must roll **DEX** x 3 to jump away in time. Cats who become caught are held by strong twine around their (roll 1d6):

1 – neck	4 – tail
2 – rear left leg	5 – front left leg
3 – rear right leg	6 – front right leg

Entangled cats suffer damage of 1 HP immediately. Cats caught by the neck must roll under their **CON** x 5 as per the suffocation/drowning rules – failure means the cat has fallen unconscious and will die in 1d10 turns.

The twine can be bitten through by another cat, however, the cat who is held is unable to take any actions without losing a further 1 HP loss.

If Rudigan is present, the cats may notice him (**Spot Hidden/Smell**) before he notices them. If the cats are unaware of the hunter's presence, Rudigan will lie in wait and spring out at an appropriate moment. Rudigan will try to kill as many cats as possible, as he knows he will get a good price for their pelts.

The Flower Circle

Cats approaching this dark glade can see a strange luminescence coming from a ring of toadstools. The toadstools are 1foot high and give off a nauseating smell (all **Smell** rolls at half whilst near

to the fungi). Strange tentacles appear to grow out of the tops of the toadstools, each ending in a blood red flower.

The toadstools are perfectly harmless, although the cats won't know this unless they can make a successful **Dream Lore** roll, which tells them that the toadstools are in fact a very rare fungi called 'Bee-Lump' and are considered a delicacy by the Zoogs.

The Pit

Stretching across the path of the cats is a deep, dark pit. Easily seen (unless the cats are being chased) the pit can be avoided and skirted around.

The pit itself is very deep, descending in to total darkness. Cats trying to measure the depth by dropping a stone down must make a **Listen** roll to hear the stone hit the bottom after 1 minute. The pit looks old and grass and ferns grow around the circumference of the opening. Anyone falling in to the pit may make a DEX x 5 roll to cling to the edge, otherwise they take 6d6 damage (halved if the cat can make a successful **Jump** roll).

Those finding themselves alive after the fall find that they are in the underworld and effectively out of this adventure. The pit leads to the realm of the Ghouls and is one of their 'secret' routes in to the Enchanted Wood. The cats have a 30% chance that they will witness a lone Ghoul climb out and disappear in to the wood. The Ghoul will pay little attention to the cats unless they go out of their way to attract the Ghoul's interest.

The Dead Zoogs

Cats entering this area should make a **Smell** check to notice a faint smell of decay. Searching around (**Spot Hidden**) detects a small mound of earth next to the base of a Yew tree. The mound rises to about 3 inches above the ground level and has a circumference of 3 feet. The smell of decay is definitely coming from the mound.

Digging up the mound unearths the bodies of two Zoogs and the remains of a cat whose fur and skin have been removed in some strange fashion. The skinless cat bears no sign of damage – the skin appears to have just fallen away from the body. The two Zoogs have had their bellies cut open. The three bodies have been in the ground for about a month (**Idea** roll).

If the bodies are examined, **Spot Hidden** detects that both Zoogs have had their hearts removed. The hearts, like the cat's skin, are nowhere to be seen.

Keepers Note: The cat was Slick, captured by Zoogs from the outskirts of Ulthar for his skin, the Zoogs were sacrificed and their hearts used in the ritual performed by Zee Iarr to transform him into 'Babe'. Cats who make an **Occult** roll, can determine that the bodies appear to have been used in some foul ritual, the purpose of which is unknown.

Further searching of the area (**Spot Hidden**) reveals a partially destroyed pattern drawn in to the earth around the mound. The pattern is made up of unusual symbols and characters – an **Occult** roll suggests that this is a definite sign that dark magic has been wrought here.

Babe

As the cats make their way through the wood they become aware (**Listen/Spot Hidden/Smell**) of a group of Zoogs and a cat moving ahead of them. **Sneak** rolls will allow the cats to move up to a suitable vantage point to see a ginger and white striped cat (Babe) being 'escorted' through the undergrowth by a group of Zoogs. The Zoogs appear relaxed and certainly appear to be unconscious of their hidden cat observers. From time to time, the Zoog walking alongside Babe turns to the 'captive' cat and says something – **Listen** successes detect that the two are conversing in the Zoog tongue.

Following the group at a distance is relatively easy (**Tracking** and **Sneak** rolls) and within 1d3 hours the Zoogs and Babe will arrive at the Sacred Stone Circle at the centre of the Enchanted Wood. Allow the Zoogs **Listen** checks if the cats fail their **Sneak** rolls.

If the cats decide to confront the Zoogs at any time before they reach the Sacred Stone Circle, allow the Zoogs & Babe **Listen** checks if the cats fail their **Sneak** rolls – thus meaning the Zoogs

are prepared for the cats.

If Babe is aware of the cat's approach, he will pretend to be the Zoog's captive. If the attack goes badly for the Zoogs, Babe will attempt to run for it (away from the cats, into the wood) – cats nearby may make **Idea** rolls; suggesting that the Zoogs didn't even try to stop Babe escaping. The Zoogs will do all they can to capture or kill all of the cats, if however, they do badly, the Zoogs will simply attempt to cause enough confusion to allow Babe to escape in to the wood.

Should the cats pursue Babe, they must make a minimum of two successful **Tracking** rolls. Babe is fast and knows the wood well, he may even lure the cats into other dangers (such as the Rudigan the Hunter or the Witch Tree) in an attempt to lose them. If the cats keep on Babe's tail, eventually they will reach the Sacred Stone Circle and the waiting party gathered there. Naturally any Zoog escaping the cats will report their presence to the Zoog Chief.

If Babe is somehow 'caught' by the cats, he relays the following 'story':

"Am I relieved to see you. I thought I was a gonna when those Zoogs captured me. It all happened so fast; one moment I was talking to Ruby in old Timon's garden, when from out of nowhere comes these six Zoogs. There was just no time. Before I knew it, Ruby was dead and the Zoogs had surrounded me – leering at me with wicked knives in their hands.

"Then they dragged me here and have been taking me somewhere. I don't understand Zoog too much, but it seems they wanted me for some kind of deal - prisoner exchange or something. I think they were taking me to some kind of stone circle in the middle of the wood. We need to go there to find out what's going on."

Cats making **Psychology** checks detect that Babe really believes that they can find some answers if they go to the stone circle, but he is also holding something back.

If the cats agree to go with Babe to the stone circle they may still encounter any of the encounters described above except the Zoog Hunting Party. If the cats just want to leave the wood, Babe will follow but will, at the first opportunity, attempt to run off and head to the stone circle.

The Sacred Stone Circle

The Sacred Stone Circle is hidden at the centre of the Enchanted Wood and is now home to the Zoog Chieftain and his entourage. If pre-warned of the cat's approach, the Chief will have prepared a trap – the Zoogs will remain hidden until the cats enter the centre circle. The Chief wants to interrogate the cats to find out why they have come in to the wood and to judge whether Zee Iarrs' cover has really been blown.

Currently residing with the Zoog Chieftain, is a Cat from Saturn who has allied with the Zoogs in support of the planned attack on Ulthar. If forewarned, the Saturnian Cat will remain hidden until the Zoog trap is sprung.

On arriving at the stone circle, the cats are aware that Zoogs have made this place their home; mounds and burrow holes litter the area, the stink of Zoog is everywhere and their droppings and food scraps lie around the bases of the many huge stone obelisks. The cats will also detect that there is something not quite right about the place, but to which they cannot put a paw on – they are picking up on the Saturnian Cat's alien vibrations.

By a Whisker

Depending on how the cats come to approach the stone circle, different outcomes are suggested:

If the cats have followed Babe – the Zoogs are probably unaware of the cats, there is no trap. The cats (making successful **Hide/Sneak** and **Listen** rolls) will see Babe being welcomed by the Zoog Chieftain and the terrible Cat from Saturn (Sanity check) and overhear Babe conversing in fluent Zoog about the fact that his cover has been blown and that it would be prudent to move swiftly to attack Ulthar (**Speak Zoog** success required to understand the conversation).

If Babe has led the cats here – Babe will pretend to sneak up to the stone circle with the other cats. Just as they are at a good van-

tage point to spy on the Zoogs, Babe will leap out and call the Zoog's attention to the hidden cats – go to the **Trapped** section below.

Trapped

In this situation, the Zoogs have either been forewarned of the cat's approach or have been alerted to cats presence by Babe. In both cases the result is the same – 2d10 Zoogs appear from nowhere to surround and try to capture the cats. If caught, the cats will be subjected to interrogation by the Zoog Chieftain and the cruel Cat from Saturn. Following the interrogation the cats will be put in a burrow, the entrance guarded by up to three Zoogs. If the cats do not escape they will be sacrificed on the eve of the attack on Ulthar in a few days time.

If the cats have avoided capture, but have discovered Babe's double dealing and the Zoog's attack ambitions, they may elect to take on the Zoog Chief, his guards and the Cat from Saturn themselves. A high risk option to say the least. The cats may, however, choose to follow their orders and return to the Chief of Cats at the earliest opportunity to report on their findings.

Conclusions

If by some miracle the cats succeed in killing or capturing the Zoog Chief, Babe and the Cat from Saturn, they deserve high praise and 1d8 Sanity gains. It is more likely, however, that they return and forewarn the Chief of Cats (Sanity gain 1d4) who will immediately gather all the cats of Ulthar and lead them on a lightning strike attack of their own to crush the Zoogs once and for all. The Chief of Cats will look favourably on the cats and they might even be in line for promotion!

Keepers may wish to run the attack on the Enchanted Wood. Whilst it is outside the scope of this scenario, such an attack might make for an exciting one-night special or could be the start of an epic campaign that will lead the cats on new adventures across the Dreamlands. The choice is yours; let your imagination guide you...

Personalities and Denizens of the Enchanted Wood

Captain Sylvester

Short-haired English Blue, Age 7

STR	3	CON	10	SIZ	2	INT	13	POW	11
DEX	26	APP	13	SAN	55	HP	7	DB	-1d6

Combat Skills: Bite 50%, (1d4-db), Claw 80%, (1d3-db), Rip 85%, (2d3-db)
 Skills: Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Dodge 60%, Dream Lore 15%, Hide 75%, Jump 90%, Listen 60%, Martial Arts 60%, Navigate 45%, Own Language: Cat 65%, Play with Prey 95%, Smell 60%, Sneak 90%, Spot Hidden 80%, Swim 40%, Track 70%.

The Witch Tree

STR	21	CON	18	INT	3	POW	7
DEX	8	SIZ	60	HP	25	DB	+2d6

Move 1
 Combat Skills: Branch Club 40% (1d6+db), Throw Pebble 35% (1d4+ ½db)
 Grapple 35%
 Armour: 2 point bark
 Spells: None
 Sanity Loss: 1/1d4 (when animate)

Vernanon the Wanderer (Donald Sump)

STR	8	CON	10	SIZ	14	INT	10	POW	11
DEX	12	APP	11	SAN	39	HP	12	DB	0

Combat Skills: Staff 15% (1d6), Kick 25% (1d6), Grapple 30%
 Move 8
 Armour None
 Spells None
 Skills: Dodge 30%, Dream Lore 5%, Hide 20%, Sneak 30%, Track 10%, Craft (Wood) 50%, Dreaming 10%, Jump 25%, Navigate 5%, Persuade 45%.
 Possessions: staff, leather bag holding lump of cheese and half a loaf of bread.

Rudigan the Hunter

STR	14	CON	12	SIZ	7	INT	12	POW	6
DEX	15	APP	7	SAN	23	HP	10	DB	0

Combat Skills: Club 30% (1d6), Kick 40% (1d6), Grapple 48%
 Move 8
 Armour None
 Spells None
 Skills: Cruelty to Small Furry Animals 90%, Dodge 30%, Dream Lore 25%, Hide 60%, Listen 45%, Navigate 20%, Set Snare/Trap 50%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 30%, Track 60%
 Possessions: big stick (used as a club), wine skin, leather bag holding twine, knife, small wooden stakes, salt and 8 feet of silk rope.

Lonesome Ghoul

STR	16	CON	14	SIZ	14	INT	12
DEX	15	POW	11	HP	14	DB	+1d4

Combat Skills: Claw 40% (1d6+db), Bite 30% (1d6+automatic worry: +1d4 per round, STR vs. STR to break free)
 Move 8
 Armour None
 Spells None
 Skills: Burrow 70%, Dream Lore 35%, Hide 60%, Jump 75%, Listen 45%, Smell 37%, Sneak 80%, Spot Hidden 30%.
 San loss: 0/1d6 for human and cats

Five Typical Zoogs

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5
STR	3	2	5	4	3
INT	13	6	14	12	4
CON	8	6	9	10	8
DEX	20	15	17	12	21
SIZ	2	2	2	3	2
POW	10	6	8	10	14
HP	5	4	5	6	5
DB	-1d6	-1d6	-1d6	-1d6	-1d6

Combat Skills: Bite 35% (1d4-db), Claw 40% (1d4-db), Knife 25% (1d6-db), Dart 20% (1d4-½db)
 Armour: None
 Spells: Zoog #5 knows Wither Limb
 Skills: Burrow 45%, Climb 60%, Dodge 43%, Hide 70%, Psychology 30%, Smell 45%, Sneak 56%, Track 63%.
 Sanity Loss: 0/0 for cats, 0/1D3 for humans
 Possessions: Each Zoog is armed with either a knife or 1d4 darts.

Zoog Chieftain

STR	4	CON	8	SIZ	3	INT	14
DEX	18	POW	15	HP	5	DB	-1d6

Combat Skills: Claw 65% (1d6+db), Bite 70% (1d4-db)
 Move 8
 Armour None
 Spells Bloat
 Skills: Burrow 20%, Climb 30%, Dodge 45%, Dream Lore 40%, Hide 50%, Psychology 60%, Smell 45%, Sneak 30%, Track 10%.
 San loss: 0/0 for cats, 0/1d3 for humans.

The Cat from Saturn

STR	14	CON	8	SIZ	14	INT	16
DEX	18	POW	14	HP	12	DB	+1d4

Combat Skills: Claw 40% (1d4+db), Bite 70% (1d6+db)
Note: 1 Bite attack + 1d4 Claw attacks per round
 Move 9
 Armour None, but impaling weapons do minimum damage.
 Spells Charm Animal, Lassitude of Phein, Maws of Pandemonium
 Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 50%, Dream Lore 30%, Hide 30%, Jump 90%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 60%, Track 40%.
 San loss: 1d6 for cats, 1d4 for humans

Babe (aka Zee Iarr)

STR	3	CON	8	SIZ	3	INT	13	POW	8
DEX	19	APP	10	HP	12	DB	-1d6		

Combat Skills: Claw 35% (1d3-db), Bite 30% (1d4-db)
 Move 9
 Armour None
 Spells None
 Skills: Burrow 20%, Climb 60%, Dream Lore 65%, Dodge 45%, Hide 70%, Psychology 20%, Smell 15%, Sneak 70%, Track 35%.
 San loss: 0/0 for cats

Call of Cthulhu D20: An interview with Monte Cook

by Mike Mason

In October of 2000, Charlie Krank, President of Chaosium Inc., announced that following negotiations with Wizards of the Coast (WotC) an agreement had been reached to allow WotC to write and publish a stand-alone version of *Call of Cthulhu* based upon the D20 system currently used in *Dungeons and Dragons Third Edition*.

In this exclusive interview with Monte Cook, the lead writer and designer on this project, *The Whisperer* is able to bring you, dear reader, an insight into how Cthulhu D20 will look and work.

The Whisperer (TW): Can you describe why WotC approached Chaosium to produce a D20 Call of Cthulhu rulebook?

Monte Cook (MC): A number of reasons. In the first place, a lot of us are simply big *Call of Cthulhu* fans and we thought it would be fun. But secondly, we believe *Call of Cthulhu* is probably second only to D&D in respect and admiration among gamers. Doing a D20 *Call of Cthulhu* game is a great way to showcase the D20 system.

TW: How did you become involved in writing the new rules?

MC: I guess I have a bit of a *Call of Cthulhu* reputation. In my almost seven years with TSR/WotC, I've run two two-year campaigns of the game and numerous one-shot sessions. When people started talking about *Call of Cthulhu*, they came to me with questions about how to proceed. Having been one of the designers of the D20 system as well as a Cthulhu fanatic made them think I might have some answers. I've been involved ever since, I guess.

TW: Can you tell us a little about previous games/books you've worked on?

MC: I started in 1988 writing for ICE's *Rolemaster* line. In 1990, I wrote a *Spacemaster* book called *Dark Space*, which essentially melded somewhat traditional space opera with Lovecraftian-style horror. After that, I worked on *Champions* and *Rolemaster* for a few more years before coming to work for TSR. A great deal of my time working with D&D was with the *Planescape* line, which was great because it was so non-standard (and had plenty of room for tentacled horrors). I also co-wrote a book called *Dark Matter*, which was a modern horror/conspiracy setting for the *Alternity* game. I was really very happy with how that turned out. In 1998, Skip Williams, Rich Baker and I began working on 3rd Edition D&D. Later, we were joined by Jonathan Tweet (and Rich left). We created the new game, which gave rise to the "D20 system." I finished my stint with 3rd Edition by writing the new *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

TW: Do you have a vision or concept about how Cthulhu D20 will look?

MC: Well, currently it's planned to be a big hardcover. My hope is a sort of Giger-esque creepy/organic look for the inside. At this point, however, I really have no idea what will actually happen.

TW: Which bits of the existing mechanics do you intend to keep and which are modifying or throwing away?

MC: Well, keep in mind that this isn't a new edition of *Call of Cthulhu*, but 'D20 Call of Cthulhu'. That means that all of the skills will work like D20 skills, and there will be feats, attack rolls on a d20, etc. That said, *Call of Cthulhu* and the D20 system fit together really well. Both have ability scores in the same ranges, both have a fairly straightforward skill system, both have hit points, etc.

TW: Can you share with us how Sanity will work under D20?

MC: In the current draft of the rules, Sanity works almost exactly like it does in *Call of Cthulhu* now. Since there was nothing like it in the D20 System, I ported it over whole-cloth, and it fits really, really well. I'm planning on including rules and suggestions for using Sanity in D&D games as well (although growing up in a world with orcs and beholders makes one a little more resilient to horror).

TW: There has been a lot of talk about 9th level librarians and 3rd level Deep Ones, will the D&D concept of level advancement be incorporated in to the game?

MC: Yes. I know that sounds weird at first, but if you think about it, it's really not that weird. A lot of Lovecraft purists scoff at the idea that in *Call of Cthulhu*, characters can improve (you can regain Sanity, skill scores go up, etc.). What I noticed, however, is that it was really cool and effective that even though your Cthulhu investigator gets a better Library Use score, it just doesn't matter. Even if he gets really good with a gun - it just doesn't matter. The creatures of the Mythos are just so far beyond him that no matter how good he gets, he is insignificant. That's very Lovecraftian to me, and I think that levels just make that sort of horror clearer. As a high level character in D20 CoC, you can look back at how much better you are than you were, and yet you're still no closer to the power level of the horrors that you face. That, in my mind, is a Lovecraftian realisation. What the game won't have is classes. Although I gave the idea some thought early on, the idea of normal people in horrific situations does not lend itself to class differentiation.

TW: Will any of the D&D mechanics, such as Feats for example, be added to Cthulhu?

MC: Yes. In my current draft, there are even some psychic-style feats like 'sensative' that mean that you are more aware of the 'spaces in-between' and are more prone to having strange dreams, etc. The combat system, albeit simplified, will also be similar to D&D. Still; characters will be very fragile, like in *Call of Cthulhu*. There will never be a time when you, as a tough *Call of Cthulhu* character, won't be scared of the monsters because you're so tough. If you can stand toe-to-pseudopod with a shoggoth, that's just not horror anymore. And we wouldn't want that.

TW: Will you be incorporating support for different time periods, such as Gaslight and modern day? What about the Dreamlands?

MC: The plan is to handle pretty much any time in the 20th Century.

TW: Can you provide any insight in to the visual style of the rulebook? Have any particular artists been approached?

MC: I don't really know anything about this yet. Sorry.

TW: Who is the target market for the new rules? Are you expecting existing CoC players to 'convert'?

MC: The target market, primarily, is D&D players who otherwise wouldn't give *Call of Cthulhu* a try. I'm hoping some existing players give it a shot, but I'm not foolish enough to think that everyone's going to leave a system that they already understand and love. Some might like it better, though.

TW: Chaosium announced that WotC have a 'one book deal' and that scenario books will not be published/licensed solely for Cthulhu D20 - what's your thoughts on this?

MC: Right. The contract is for a single book. Chaosium's hope, obviously, is that the D20 version will expand the *Call of Cthulhu* audience and so they'll sell more supplements. More power to them (I like their supplements and would be thrilled if this means that they can put out even more). I'd like to write more adventures and sourcebooks for *Call of Cthulhu*, but consider myself fortunate to get at least this opportunity.

TW: When can we expect to see the D20 rules in the shops? How soon will we begin to see preview material and the like?

MC: It will be released sometime in early 2002, I think. I'm not sure when we'll put out previews or anything like that. Keep an eye on our website (wizards.com). They'll probably start having stuff in five to six months, I'd guess (but I really don't know).

TW: Anything else you'd like to say to all the Cthulhu cultists out there?



by Shaun Appleby

Azathoth's Keeper aims to help keepers make their scenarios more interesting, exciting and challenging.

The Stuff That Heroes Are Made Of

How many times have you watched your favourite hero (*Indiana Jones, James Bond to name but two*) escape certain death by cutting the right wire on the bomb, bending over just when the sniper pulls the trigger, diving out of the way of the way of the fiendish deathtrap etc. They seem to share an ability to perform the amazing and the miraculous. Fate & fortune smiles upon them, allowing them to risk their necks in countless desperate situations or make hairsbreadth escapes.

Some roleplaying games, like Victory Game's excellent *James Bond Role Playing Game*, use the game mechanic of Hero Points to recreate the heroic ability to dodge death and perform the amazing stuff that heroes are made of. Players within these games use Hero Points to save the necks of their characters by changing the outcome of important dice rolls during a game. *For example, a player rolls a miss when firing at an assassin. The player knows that the assassin will kill their character next turn so he decides to spend some of the character's Hero Points to alter the dice roll for the shot so that the miss becomes a hit and the assassin is blown away.*

A player gains Hero Points by good roleplaying - the excellent or heroic playing of their character. These points are awarded by the gamesmaster, however, they are not given out lightly as they can have significant effects on the outcome of a game. The desire for Hero Points can be a big incentive for players to really roleplay their characters and contribute to the game.

Hero Points work excellently in *Call of Cthulhu*. I like to think that investigators are the heroes of mankind whom fate has chosen to confront the horrors of the mythos. They give investigators a heroic chance to survive, by a hairsbreadth, the death or insanity caused by the Great Old Ones.

I introduced Hero Points into my *Masks of Nyarlathotep* campaign where they increased the drama of the game, the level of roleplaying and the survival rate of investigators (greatly needed for a dangerous campaign like *Masks*). It was not long before characters began behaving like *Indiana Jones* or *Duke de Richleau* and I was able to reward them accordingly. The more a player contributed to the game by really roleplaying their investigator, coming up with solutions to problems, or by performing daring actions; the more Hero Points they won. The more Hero Points a player won the more the player was encouraged to continue playing well. The players were also glad of their Hero Points when their much-loved investigator was faced with certain death or insanity.

Guidelines for Using Hero Points

- Players can use their investigator's Hero Points to effect any dice roll concerning their investigator including a keeper's roll or another player's roll. However, the keeper (who has the final say) must agree to their use.
- 1Hero Point = 5% or 1HP or 1 point of damage or 1 point of SAN or 1 Magic Point. *Example: A player is asked to make their investigator's Sanity roll of 62%. The player rolls 70% - a fail by 8%. The investigator has only a couple of SAN points left and will go insane if the player does not do something quick. The player announces that they are going to spend 2 of their investigator's Hero Points (equivalent of 10%) to alter the roll so that it becomes a success (70% - 10% = 60% = success).*
- Players must spend their Hero Points immediately after stating that they are going to do so. Players cannot change their mind when they have spent their Hero Points. A player must state that they are going to spend any Hero Points straight af-

ter the roll, which they wish to effect, has been made.

- Players can spend any number of their investigator's Hero Points at any one time. If the roll effects more than one investigator they can pool their Hero Points. *Example: Two investigators are dangling on the end of a very weak rope. Below them is a pit filled with poison-tipped spikes. The rope has a 50% chance of breaking. The keeper rolls 30% - snap! The investigators need to alter the roll by 20%, costing 4 Hero Points, or they will die an impaled death. Both investigators have 2 Hero Points each. They decide to pool their points to cover the cost. The keeper says, with a dramatic effect, that the rope breaks except for one last strand, which saves the necks of the two investigators.*
- Hero Points can be used for other rolls besides life and death situations. *Example: An investigator, with 4 Hero Points, desperately needs to read a clue written in Latin. The player's skill in Latin is 45%. The player rolls 58% - a fail by 13%. The player knows that they must read the clue so they elect to use 3 Hero Points (equivalent to 15%) to alter the roll to 43% - a success.*
- The investigator does not have to be conscious to spend Hero Points. *Example: The keeper rolls just enough damage to reduce an investigator's HPs to 2 - unconscious. The player of the investigator decides to spend a Hero Point to reduce the damage by one point, hence preventing the investigator becoming unconscious.*
- Hero Points can be used to effect hidden rolls made by the keeper. The keeper should tell the player how many Hero Points they need to spend to change the result, providing the disclosure does not have a disastrous effect on the game.
- The keeper always has the final say if a player can use their Hero Points to affect a roll as there will be times when it is detrimental to the game to use them.

Guidelines for Gaining Hero Points

- All new investigators start with 1 Hero Point; this represents the spark of the heroic in every investigator's soul. If the scenario requires experienced investigators increase the number of starting Hero Points to 3 or 6 for very experienced.
- Further Hero Points are gained during play. Hero Points should be awarded for solving a difficult puzzle, noticing an important clue, coming up with a bright idea, vanquishing a foe, saving another character's life, good roleplaying and characterisation.
- Keepers should read through their scenario making notes where Hero Points could be awarded. Do not award too many during a game as this will unbalance things.
- Players should be rewarded for successfully completing a scenario. They should be given enough Hero Points to replace any lost during the scenario plus a reward of 1 to 3 Hero Points, the amount depending upon how well the player contributed to the game. Overall the number awarded during or at the end of the game should match the number expended in order to keep things balanced and maintain a flow of usage and replenishment.
- Keepers may penalise poor play by taking Hero Points away from a player or not giving the player a reward at the end of the scenario. Keepers should be aware of players who try to gain Hero Points by dishonest, ruthless or time-wasting means. These players should be penalised for their poor play. Keepers should also beware of players who hoard their points while letting other players use theirs.
- **A word of warning for keepers:** Hero Points have a significant effect on the game. Awarding too many will swing the scenario in the favour of the players, reducing the tension of life and death situations. Players should always be left with the feeling that they have escaped their doom by a slender thread.

Villain Points

Like heroes, the arch-villain and sometimes the principal henchmen, often have the astonishing ability to escape their doom (e.g. *Fu Manchu, Professor Moriarty, the Master*). They often return for one last battle or appear later in another episode or film with a new

evil and cunning plan.

To represent this, and to ensure an element of balance, major villains are given Villain Points to help them survive or escape their deaths. Villain Points also help the keeper stage dramatic events and create intriguing plot lines. Villain Points also prevent investigators, with their Hero Points, wiping out the opposition.

Villain Points work exactly like Hero Points with the same game mechanics. However, Villain Points should never be used in an offensive way like effecting an attack role or damage roll made against an investigator. Nor should Villain Points be used in the casting of offensive spells.

Guidelines for Villain Points

- Principal monsters can have Villain Points just like human beings. When the title villain is used in this article it refers to both monsters and human beings.
- Minor principle henchmen and arch villains should have 1D6 Villain Points. Major principle henchmen and arch villains should have 2D6 Villain Points. A super villain should have 3D6.
- Keepers should not replenish a villain's Villain Points once they have been spent. This prevents the villain from escaping every time and gives the players a chance to vanquish their foe for good.
- A reoccurring enemy can really add to a campaign. Tension, fear and hatred can be built around the villain as he assumes the role of the investigator's nemesis.

Putting It All Together

The height of the scenario is in play. The investigators have cornered the game's arch villain, Thoth Amon, High Priest of Hastur, on the rooftop of a tall tower.

Bruno, one of the investigators (a towering hulk of a man) states that he wants to throw Thoth Amon off the top of the tower. The keeper likes the idea - this action makes a fitting and climatic end to the scenario.

The keeper informs the investigator that Bruno needs to make a successful grapple roll followed by his STR versus the SIZ of Thoth Amon (resistance roll) to perform the throw itself.

The investigator grins and confidently grabs his dice - Bruno is an ex wrestler with a grapple skill of 80%. Bruno makes his grapple roll and the player rolls the dice a second time for the throw. Bruno's STR is 18 (I said he was a towering hulk) versus Thoth Amon's meagre SIZ of 9. This gives Bruno a 95% chance of success - 'no problem' sniggers the player as he casts his dice. The dice roll and come up 98% - an unlucky failure!

The player cannot believe his bad luck. He broods for a moment, knowing that an epic moment is occurring. He decides to spend Bruno's last Hero Point to make the roll a success (98% - 5% = 93% = success).

The keeper dramatically narrates how Bruno grabs Thoth Amon and lifts the screaming High Priest above his head and throws him over the edge of the tower into the darkness. All the investigators whoop with joy. However, the keeper makes a secret roll. Thoth Amon calls upon Hastur to save him - he expends all his magic points bar one, giving him a 75% chance of contacting Hastur.

The keeper rolls 90% - a fail by 15%. As this is a roll to save Thoth Amon's life, the keeper decides to spend 3 of Thoth Amon's Villain Points to make the role a success (90% - 15% = 75% = success).

Hastur hears the call and, being in a unusually benevolent mood, snatches Thoth Amon out of thin air to live another day. Of course the keeper does not tell any of the investigators about Thoth Amon's narrow escape. Instead he chuckles to himself and smiles at the players as he contemplates Thoth Amon's revenge...

Note

Villain Points are just a tool to help the keeper. If the keeper wants a villain to escape there is no need to bother with escape rolls and Villain Points. The keeper simply states / records that the villain escaped. This is one of the golden rules of being a good keeper - be prepared to break the rules for the betterment of the scenario.

In the example above, if Thoth Amon is needed for a later scenario all that is necessary is for the keeper to describe how his screams fall silent in mid air and how his body is never found. This is a lot more atmospheric than secret dice rolls.

Addendum

Victory Game's *007 Roleplaying Game* has a superb games system and is an excellent resource for the 1990s (*007 vs. Cthulhu, now there's an idea! - my ££\$£'s on Cthulhu! - ed.*) The *Q Manual* is packed with info on weapons, equipment, and vehicles. No Cthulhu Now!/DG keeper should be without a copy. Sadly, the game is no longer available, however, it is worthwhile searching the second hand games section of your local games shop for a copy.

Win - The Keeper's Companion

This essential item for all Keepers has been kindly donated by Chaosium and all you have to do to win a copy is send your answer to the following question on a postcard marked "KC" to The Whisperer - see address at back.

Question - What is Ailurophobia?

- a) a fear of cheese b) a fear of cats c) a fear of pythons

C'THULHU: THE MUSICAL

Discovered by Andy Bennison

There are several films based on the stories of HP Lovecraft, however, few people realise that the first attempt at a film based on his work was in the early 1950's.

The three year old composer, Andrew Lloyd Webbed-Foot, submitted the script to MGM (Mi Go Movies) in 1951. Extensive cuts and rewriting were carried out when Gene Kelly was chosen to star in the film rather than the originally cast Boris Karloff, who proved to be unavailable. The film was released the following year. Deeply upset by the changes made, Lloyd Webbed-Foot burnt the original manuscript and went on to concentrate on a new musical, *Nahum and his Amazing Technicolour Out of Space*.

Fortunately for Lovecraftians, a small fragment of the original script has recently come to light and is presented here in full for your delectation.

SCENE 47: A STREET IN R'LYEH

A ragged man stands in a slanted corridor. He gazes at the strange carvings around him. He realises the truth of his existence and suddenly bursts into song.

RAGGED MAN: I'm singing in R'Lyeh!
Just singing in R'Lyeh!
What an oppressive feeling
I'm gibbering again,
Fhtagn la!
Is all I can say
My straight jacket's tight
and I scream through the night.

Let the Deep Ones all chase
Everyone from this place,
The stars are right!
I've got drool on face.
They try to restrain my Cthulthoid refrain,
But I'm singing and chanting in R'Lyeh!

A deep one guard watches as the man dances down the street. He splashes in the puddles until he accidentally steps on a submerged Shoggoth.

THE DREAM POLICE

by Brian M. Sammons

David Merning is dead. A middle-aged banker with no known enemies, he nonetheless went to sleep one night and never awoke. The next day he was found in his bed by his worried girlfriend, still dressed in his pyjamas, after he missed their date. A neat, nearly bloodless hole in the centre of his forehead the apparent cause of death. The police haven't said what kind of weapon could have caused the fatal wound, but they've ruled out firearms.

Investigators can be brought into this mystery either in an official investigative capacity or as a personal favour to David's family. Whatever the case, after a short inquiry the investigators uncover that David wasn't the first to die in this bizarre fashion. Lucy Paughton, a 62 year-old widow with no family, and Bernard Geddies, a highschool art teacher, have also been discovered murdered in their beds, dressed for sleep, all within a week. The press has yet to notice the connection; it is only a matter of time until they do and then things will really get complicated.

Once the identity of the other two victims are known, the investigators can continue their search for the murderer by interviewing the family, friends, and neighbours of the deceased. A neighbour of Lucy Paughton remembers that, on the night of Lucy's death, he saw four men dressed in long, black coats and wide-brimmed hats lurking around her house at night. He was about to call the police when the four figures got into their own police car and drove away. This strange tale is eerily echoed by Mr. Geddies eight-year-old daughter who claims that on the night of her daddy's death she had a nightmare about four "bad men" who said they were police men, but she knew they were lying.

Possibilities

1. The three victims are linked by their love of art. Geddies taught art, Paughton was an unpublished poet, and Merning carved wooden figures as a hobby. Lately, their art has been turning more and more disturbing. Lucy's poems have become obsessed with death. Bernard was taking some time off from teaching after having a breakdown when one of his students painted a picture of a violent sea storm at night. In David's workshop the investigators can find twisted, half-carved lumps of wood that at first glance look to be discarded mistakes, but upon closer inspection resemble a ball of tentacles, eyes, teeth, and other organic bits and pieces in a jumbled mess.

The truth of the matter is that the time for the stars to become 'right' is at hand and Cthulhu is soon to be freed from his watery prison! These three artistic people are more susceptible to the telepathic dreams of Cthulhu and were interpreting their nightmares subconsciously in their art. It is because of this that they were murdered. Killed by the world-wide cult of Cthulhu.

Not wanting a repeat of what happened in the 1920's, when observant investigators noticed a trend in disturbing art and thus were forewarned about the coming of Cthulhu and even attempted to stop the holy event, the Cthulhu cult is attempting to make it much

harder for would-be heroes to interfere this time. In effect, they are attempting to kill the messengers before their warnings can be heard. To do this, the cult has spread itself across the globe and have bolstered its thinned numbers with deep one hybrids, thus the need for concealing coats and hats. Also, to cover their tracks and avoid questions, the murderers are masquerading as police with fake mail-order badges and are even driving an older-model police car they bought at auction and repainted.

However, despite all their modern precautions, the cultists just can't help throwing in a little ceremony. Their method of murder is to use a sharp, stiletto-like dagger, forged to look like a writhing tentacle. The cultists believe that those outside of their cult that receive a dream from Cthulhu are unworthy and that the part of the body so touched by Cthulhu (the brain) should be cleansed. To accomplish this, the tentacle dagger is hollow and discharges an acidic saltwater mix which, when thrust into the brain of their victim, dissolves the brain tissue. This gruesome fact can be found in autopsy reports.

Future victims of the cult can be found out in advance by the investigators if they look for artistic people suffering from nightmares or depicting horrible things with their art. Additionally, this scenario could act as a springboard for an end of the world "R'lyeh rising" campaign.

2. The victims are not related in any way in the waking world, but they know each other well in the Dreamlands. There, they have formed a group to seek out evil and destroy it. So far, they've done well in their righteous crusade, too well in fact. They have now drawn the attention of Moonbeasts who tire of their meddling. Knowing that their Dreamland adversaries are very powerful, the Moonbeasts have created a magical gate to the Waking World and have sent Men from Leng assassins, led by a fellow Moonbeast, to dispose of them. After becoming acquainted with the rules of the Waking World, the Moonbeast dressed his assassins in concealing clothes, taught them rudimentary English, and has them masquerading as police officers whenever they are questioned.

The Moonbeast uses magic to track the Dreamland heroes and, while they're asleep, the Men from Leng use an enchanted knife-tube to draw out some of their victims still living brain. This has the effect of killing the person in the Waking World, as well as, reducing their dream persona into a mindless thing that the Moonbeast can control. The Moonbeasts' plan to do this to the remaining four interfering heroes, thereby gaining control of their enemies in the Dreamlands so that they can torture them for all eternity.

Investigators will be able to uncover some of this, as well as the identity of some of the other victims on the Moonbeasts' hit list, by reading the various diaries of the slain; or in Bernard Geddies case, by studying his art. While none of the dreamers know each other in the waking world, their vivid descriptions of each other in the Dreamlands could give enough clues for the investigators to follow. Additionally, one of the investigators could in fact be one of the Dreamland heroes and on the murder list too. In doing this, this scenario could act as a springboard for an extended Dreamland campaign.

Win - Spaceship Zero

the latest CD from the one and only 100% Cthulhoid band in the world:
The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets.

Von Scott Publishing have given us 5 copies of the CD to give away plus a rather fetching 'Thickets T-shirt. To win your copy of the CD just answer this question on a postcard marked "SZ" and mail it to The Whisperer.

Question - Complete this title of this HP Lovecraft story: "The Shunned _____"

- a) Cheese b) Python c) House

Von Scott Publishing has materialised in this dimension as purveyors of Lovecraftian lore. As well as being distributors for the Darkest of the Hillside Thickets and other sanity wrenching material, they will be publishing their own games in 2001. Visit them where the spheres meet at www.vonscott.co.uk

Send your answers by 30th June 2001 to:

The Whisperer, 18 Loughton Rd, Bradwell, Milton Keynes Mk13 9AA, England

Denizens of the Dreamtime

by Rik Kershaw-Moore

One of the most fascinating of all the products that Chaosium ever published was in my view *Terror Australis*. Now sadly out of print, the supplement can still be found in many second hand games shops. To some, this source book was merely an excuse to provide add-on adventures for the *Masks of Nyarlathotep* campaign, but to others, myself included, it had a splendid section on the 'Dreamlands' of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders called Alcheringa, or the Dreamtime.

The Dreamtime links both creation myths, rules of behaviour and beliefs about the world as it is, was and shall be. Within Alcheringa is the concept that the Dreamtime enfolds the Waking World and can be accessed through dreaming as well as along the Songlines.

The Land of Alcheringa is populated by many wonderful beings such as the Bunyip and the Nimi, however, the list presented by Morrison et al was less than complete. The purpose of this article is to provide Keepers with a few more beings and races of the Dreamtime.

Erathipa

Erathipa is a huge boulder in the shape of a pregnant woman. Erathipa has no fixed location and indeed appears to move around from place to place almost at will. Erathipa contains within her rocky womb the souls of all children who die violently. Erathipa tends these souls until a woman of childbearing age walks by, where upon Erathipa sends a soul into the woman's womb to be reborn. To do this successfully, Erathipa must match her POW again the POW of the woman on the Resistance Table. The children of Erathipa are often feared and revered for they have a terrible magical potential.

SIZ 34 INT 25 SAN N/A
APP 15 POW 48 HP 10

Armour: 300 point rock

Attacks: Spend Child Soul (see above)

Spells: Send Dreaming, Lassitude of Phein, Soul Stealer

Sanity Loss: None

Mamaragan

Mamaragan is a man of lightning who rides on a thundercloud and who throws bolts of lightning at men and trees. According to one myth, Mamaragan was once an aboriginal hunter who, in the early days, angered the Rainbow Serpent and was turned into a man of light. However, it could be that Mamaragan is some kind of manifestation of Ithaqua who has 'walked the winds' to Alcheringa. What is known is that Mamaragan is a very capricious spirit who will strike anyone he feels like simply because he can. It is said that in the dry times he lives in a puddle.

STR 50 CON 150 SIZ 16 POW 35
DEX 25 APP 19 INT 10 HP 83

Damage Bonus: +3D6

Armour: 10 point skin

Attacks: Lightning Bolt 100%, 7D10+10, Claw 80%, 3D6 + db.

Spells: All Call & Contact spells, Sundering Hurler, Vortex of Far Journeying, Whirligig

Sanity Loss: 1D8/1D20 Sanity points

Tjilpa

The Tjilpa are a race of cat-people that inhabit the Dreamtime. These beings are very similar to the goddess Bast in that they have human bodies, with cat like heads and paws instead of hands. The Tjilpa are an intensely proud and se-



cretive race, rarely seen in the Alcheringa daytime. The Aboriginal dreamers are intensely wary of the Tjilpa since it is widely known that if a Tjilpa is angered, the cat-man will hound the offender forever until the appropriate revenge has been exacted. Tjilpa are mostly ambivalent towards Waking World dreamers but their real enemies are the Wati-kutjara and those who help them.

Char.	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6+8	17 - 18
CON	3D6	10 - 11
SIZ	3D6+8	17
INT	2D6+6	13
POW	3D6	10 - 11
DEX	3D6	10 - 11
Move	16	HP 14

Av. Damage Bonus: +1D6

Armour: 3 point skin

Skills: Climb, Dodge, Dreaming, Dream Lore, Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot Hidden, Throw, Track

Attacks: claw 70%, 1D6+db, Rake 80%, 2D6+db

Spells: Send Dreaming, Lassitude of Phein, plus other spells at the Keeper's discretion.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points

Wati-kutjara

The Wati-kutjara are a race of lizard-like beings who descended from the mountains of Alcheringa to the plains below. They stand about five foot tall and resemble bipedal iguanas with thin bodies, large iguana style heads with eyes that constantly dart in different directions and splayed lizard-like fingers that allow them to scale sheer cliffs. The Wati-kutjara are highly intelligent beings who in the past have distributed new tools, ideas and ceremonial objects to those who worship their totem.

The Wati-kutjara have long been the mortal enemies of the Tjilpa after an incident when a young Tjilpa male attempted to rape the first woman. A Wati-kutjara clever-man threw a



IT's in the Cards

by Danny Bourne

boomerang that severed the rapist's genitals. The woman disappeared in the heavens and formed the constellation of the Pleiades. Wati-kutjara are rarely seen by Waking World dreamers and will only come if summoned with the appropriate calls. On the whole, the Wati-kutjara are a peaceful race who will not bother anyone unless they happen to be the friends of the Tjilpa. Those Waking World dreamers who help a Wati-kutjara will make a very powerful friend indeed.

Char.	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10 - 11
CON	3D6	10 - 11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6+4	12 - 16
POW	3D6	10 - 11
DEX	3D6+8	17 - 18
Move	10	HP 12

Av. Damage Bonus: 0

Armour: 6 point skin

Skills: Climb, Dodge, Dreaming, Dream Lore, Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot Hidden, Throw, Track

Attacks: Boomerang 70%, 1D8, Dagger 45%, 1D4+db, Spear (H1) 60%, 1D6+1+db, Club 45%, 1D6+db

Spells: Send Dreaming & Deflection, plus other spells at the Keeper's discretion.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points

Wendijar

The Wendijar are shadow beings of the Alcheringa who left their shadows on rock and cave walls in paintings and engravings. They are beings of the cloud and rain whose images are shaped as humans, with eyes and noses, but without any mouths. On the whole, Wendijar are friendly beings who can bring rain if the right blandishments are made.

Char.	Rolls	Averages
STR	3D6	10-11
CON	3D6	10-11
SIZ	2D6+6	13
INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6+8	18-19
DEX	3D6	10-11
Move	16	HP 12

Av. Damage Bonus: 0

Armour: Immune to all projectile & impact weapons

Skills: Climb, Dodge, Dreaming, Dream Lore, Hide, Jump, Listen, Spot Hidden, Throw, Track

Attacks: Boomerang 45%, 1D8, Spear (H1) 60%, 1D6+1+db, Club 50%, 1D6+db

Spells: Send Dreaming, plus other spells at the Keeper's discretion.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points

Dreamlands, released in 1997, was the first fully stand alone set for *Mythos*. Much has been said about the set, and much of it not very complimentary. It suffered from the same problem as the original *Mythos* releases in that you weren't guaranteed to have a playable deck in a starter (a problem fixed in New Aeon). One of the strengths of Dreamlands was also, ironically, its greatest weakness. The adventures in the set were extremely well balanced. Whilst this meant that Dreamlands-only tournaments were always going to be close run affairs, it also meant that any Dreamlands deck would find itself struggling against the older, faster Limited Edition decks. Another problem was of identification: even people who had read no H.P. Lovecraft (shame on them) could identify with the locations in the Limited Edition set. However, players who had not read any of Lovecraft's fantasy work found it difficult to 'understand' the stories and themes involved. Coupled with the fact that many of the strong cards in the set were dreamlands specific, the monsters were generally weak and very few of the generic cards offered anything new for the older tournament decks (*Downpour* and *Batophobia* being notable exceptions). Sales of Dreamlands were relatively poor and it has been murmured, in some darkened corners, that this may have been the cause of Chaosium's strained financial situation at the end of last century.

All that said, however, I must put my hand on my heart and say that I have an affection for the Dreamlands set. I found that Dreamlands only tournaments were not only balanced, but were also a nice change of pace from the old speed decks that had become so prevalent. Dreamlands also had innovative ideas, the *Great Library* that had locations in four different areas spanning two continents for instance. The other reason that people should ignore the Dreamlands set at their peril is that it provided the basis for the most evil *Mythos* deck ever begat to man. This multi-player deck, once it gets going, will force all its opponents to discard everything they have in play and, once it has 'locked' the opposition, cannot be broken.

The basis of the deck is simple, using the special ability of the *Castle of the Great Ones on Kadath*; a player can cast spells at that location for zero sanity loss. This means that all the spells that discard allies or locations and spells that gain you sanity suddenly become very effective. Couple this with adventures that need minimal or no locations and, once you have the Castle as your top location, it's party time. This deck is not fast, it doesn't need to be as it can quite easily take on two decks and grind them to a complete halt. So, for those of you who wish to inflict a little bit of Dreamlands pain on all those cheese players out there, I give you....

KING OF THE CASTLE (or the real Wamdue Project)

Investigator	Skeptical Pathologist
Adventures	A lender be, The Curious Parcel, The Interesting Shop, Seeking Everlasting Life I
Allies	Tukor x 3, Howard Lovecraft (Dreamlands) x 2, Ghost Being of Ib x 2, Haragrim
Artifacts	Zenig of Aphorat
Events	Algol x 3, Ship of Clouds x 4, Surprise Meeting x 3, Aldebaran Moves in the Sky
Locations	Castle of the Great Ones on Kadath x 4, Ruins of Ib x 2, The Temple of Loveliness at Kiran, Temple of the Elder Ones, Great Library of the Dreamlands (Ulthar), Great Library of the Dreamlands (Dylath-Leen), Great Library of the Dreamlands (Celephais), Great Library of the Dreamlands (Ilek-Vad)
Spells	Awful Doom of Cerrit x 3, Wave of Oblivion x 3, Resurrection x 2, Steal Life x 2, Blasphemous Obeisance, Call Power of Nyambe, Create Time Warp, Cloud Memory Monatomic Translocation x 2
Tomes	Zanthu Tablets x 2, Eltdown Shards (Glyphs), Livre D'Ivon, King in Yellow (French) x 3, Cultes des Goules.

Items of Mutual Interest

Ancient Exhumations

By Stanley C. Sargent
Published 1999 by Mythos Books
123pp. Softback. Price: \$12.95
ISBN: 0 - 9659433 - 5 - 6

Stanley Sargent's fiction has been appearing regularly in small press magazines, on-line and more recently, in Chaosium anthologies. *Ancient Exhumations* is his first book. It gathers together seven horror stories of a distinctively Lovecraftian flavour.

The collection kicks off with *The Tale of the Toad Loop*, which is dedicated to the memory of Robert Bloch. That's quite appropriate, as Sargent shares Bloch's punchy style and a love for puns as demonstrated in the decidedly Blochian *Dark Demonize*.

However, these stories are not mere pastiches. The author has a definite voice of his own. He develops a theme just to the point where the reader is settled as to where they think the tale is going and then turns it about in unexpected directions in the last two pages. Read *The Hopwood Tenant* and you'll see what I mean.

Ancient Exhumations is difficult to get hold of in this country, but it's well worth the effort. The book itself is well produced. A fine range of illustrations support the stories, with particularly evocative pieces from Daniel Alan Ross. The only valid criticism that you can make of this book is that it's too short. These are excellent tales that leaving you wanting more.

In his preface, Bob Price, who 'discovered' Stanley Sargent writes, "I have enthusiastically published just about every scarp of Stan's work he would let me use." Who can blame him?

Reviewed by Andy Bennison

All Flesh Must Be Eaten, rpg

Published 1999 by Eden Studios Inc.
234 pp. Hardback rpg. Price £18.95
ISBN: 1- 891153 - 80 -3

Welcome to the wonderful world of the walking dead.

One of the enduring themes of horror movies is the good old-fashioned zombie who just can't wait to sink his hands in to your skull and eat your brains out. Splatter fans this game is for you. From *D&D* to *Call of Cthulhu*, zombies are pretty much a staple of the 'core' monsters to be found in many roleplaying games, however, this is the first game system to be entirely based on the walking dead.

The first thing you notice is the quality of this hard-backed book. The cover art is surrounded by a background of what can only be described as 'gore' and sets the tone for the entire book. The interior pages are black and white and well laid-out. Many stills from famous zombie films are used throughout the book to enhance the mood and capture the spirit of the game. Each chapter begins with a short story of an individual's account of their life within a zombie infested nightmare.

The premise, if you hadn't guessed it already, is a world over-run by zombies. The players take the part of the surviving humans, who apart from trying to stay alive, are trying to come to terms with the fact that world as we know it has completely collapsed. Players can choose from three distinct character types; Norm – regular people, Survivor – tougher, smarter and stronger than everyday folk, and Inspired – those few who have been touched with supernatural power. Suggested archetypes include; biker, cheerleader, detective, scientist and my favourite, video store clerk. Characters are generated by a points based system with which you can purchase skills, qualities and drawbacks.

Magic is fairly low key, with only 'Inspired' characters able to access the powers of Metaphysics, such as Priests and 'Goth Chicks'. These characters are able to buy Miracles that can only be used in extreme circumstances. Characters who lose their 'faith' lose their ability to access Miracles, indeed the rules sug-

gest a number of possible moral dilemmas with which to tempt the player to fall from grace. The roleplaying considerations of this style of play can make AFMBE into an intense battle of ethics as opposed to just a battle against the undead. Again, this puts AFMBE above many 'genre' games of this type and it is to the rules credit that differing styles of play are catered for.

AFMBE uses the Unisystem of rules with D10's being used to roll much of the random elements such as task resolution. The system is simple, yet elegant. Any CoC Keeper would easily be able to convert the system.

Naturally with a game about zombies, there is a sizeable chapter dealing with zombie creation. Here the 'Zombie Master' can tailor zombies from a basic template, creating a variety that will horrify, baffle and/or amuse the players. A basic zombie template is provided for customising. Zombie Masters can elect to alter the fundamentals of the zombies, such as changing the method of attack that players have to employ when facing the undead hordes. A range of zombie weak points are described, ranging from the standard 'head shot' to death by fire, chemicals or severing the spinal cord. All out horror freaks might decide to give their zombies no weak spots, no matter how small the players might chop up the undead, they'll keep on coming. Key attributes like strength and senses are also covered in a fair amount of detail and special attention is given to unusual features like acid blood, spew flame or detachable body parts; all of which assist in the creation of pretty unique walking dead. The last key area covered by the chapter is how the zombies create more zombies, otherwise known as 'Spreading the Love'.

By far the best chapter has to be 'Worlds in Hell'. Here are described eleven campaign worlds, each has a different take on why and how the zombies have come to be. Each world utilises a unique story-line in which the zombies can be far more than just flesh eating creeps. 'Rise of the Walking Dead' is the classic George Romero scenario where the rise of the zombies is unexplained and virtually overnight. 'They Came from Beyond' is a world of paranoia, the zombies being the tools of a hidden alien invasion. 'Mein Zombie' pits the players into the middle of World War II, where Hitler's experiments to create the ultimate soldier have resulted in an unstoppable zombie army. There is even a world in which the players play the zombies. Each description is a joy to read and bursting with possibilities.

AFMBE doesn't take itself too seriously; games can be played for laughs as well as for screams. Eden Studios have produced a roleplaying game that can either be played in its own right, or can be used as material for other game systems. The information about zombie creation and motivation provides useful information for CoC Keepers – indeed, those of you owning copies of *Blood Brother I & II* will definitely find a use for this book.

I cannot recommend this game highly enough. Eden have produced a real blood-soaked, flesh-tearing winner.

Reviewed by Mike Mason

The Book of Dzyan

Edited and Introduced by Tim Maroney
Published February 2000 by Chaosium Inc.
270pp. Softback. Price \$13.95
ISBN: 1-56882-114-X

The Book of Dzyan marks a new departure in Chaosium's line of Lovecraft related titles, bearing as it does the words "Occult Non-Fiction" on the spine. First of a projected series of volumes, "Miskatonic University Archives", examining in depth the work of various occultists who, one way or another, influenced Lovecraft as he developed what has since come to be known as the Cthulhu Mythos. The Book of Dzyan takes a long look at the life and work of Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the 19th Century Ukrainian mystic who founded the Theosophical Society and transcribed excerpts from the mysterious Book of Dzyan as they were revealed to her by the equally mysterious secret Masters of the Order.

33 The book is divided into four parts: a lengthy preface and introduc-

tion by editor Tim Maroney, containing a biography of Blavatsky as well as a discussion of her thoughts and beliefs; a series of excerpts from the Book of Dzyan as set forth by Blavatsky; the Stanzas of Dzn, a continuation of Blavatsky's excerpts originating from an early 20th Century occult order based in California; and an 1885 report from the London-based Society for Psychical Research investigating supposed psychic phenomena taking place at the Theosophical Society's Madras HQ, concluding that Blavatsky was a fraud.

I didn't expect to enjoy this book, as in-depth discussions of even major religions generally leave me bored, never mind the kind of 'New Age' mysticism purveyed by the Theosophists. However, I actually found this book to be quite enjoyable. Despite the title of the book, the excerpts from the Book of Dzyan itself are mercifully brief, as are the even wackier Stanzas of Dzn, leaving most of the book free for the biographical information on Blavatsky and the SPR report on her more dubious activities. All of this is quite entertaining, the SPR report providing a sceptical antidote to the rather wide-eyed tone of much of the preceding chapters.

But how does all this tie in with *Call of Cthulhu*? The first thing to bear in mind is that this isn't fiction, at least not in the usual sense of the word. Keepers looking for a few creepy stories to fire the imagination, or even to rip off wholesale for a scenario are likely to be sorely disappointed. Likewise, the excerpts from the Book of Dzyan are mostly a bizarre mish-mash of pseudo-Hindu creation myths and the like, pretty tame compared with most excerpts from, say, the Necronomicon, and unlikely to provide any solid inspiration or scenario seeds. However, I found the remaining sections of the book to provide ample scenario ideas and background, particularly for *Gaslight* Keepers interested in the idea of a (fraudulent?) occult society. Indeed, Keepers running campaigns centred around 19th Century occult orders such as the Golden Dawn may well find it difficult to keep the Theosophical Society out of their game, considering how many people were members of both orders. Another possibility would be a campaign centred on the Society for Psychical Research, as suggested long ago in Games Workshop's *Green and Pleasant Land*. This would provide London based investigators with every excuse to go gallivanting off around the country (or world) in search of tentacled monstrosities; with the SPR report providing an excellent introduction to the sort of things that went on.

In summary, those looking for new Cthulhu Mythos fiction would be advised to look elsewhere; those looking for some entertaining background material for *Gaslight* in particular may want to take a look at this book.

Reviewed by Calum McDonald

Tales Out Of Innsmouth

Edited by Robert M Price.
Published 1999 by Chaosium Inc.
284pp. Softback. Price: £12.95 (\$13.95)
Product code: 6024. ISBN: 1-56882-127-1

The first *Call of Cthulhu* scenario I ever wrote was about Deep Ones. I'm sure that's true of many Keepers. Together with Cthulhu and The Necronomicon, Deep Ones are probably the most recognisable of Lovecraft's creations. Coming straight from playing other role-playing games, they seem to be the CoC equivalent of goblins in *D&D* or Imperial Storm Troopers in *Star Wars*. They are the quintessential nasties – evil minions – cannon fodder. As soon as you see someone who looks a bit fishy, you know you're in trouble.

Tales out of Innsmouth is *Chaosium's* second book of short stories about Deep Ones. No other member of the Lovecraft pantheon has been treated with the same honour. There seems to be no shortage of people wanting to write about them. Stephen Jones edited an Innsmouth anthology for *Fedogan and Bremer*. Richard Tierney's novel *The House of the Toad* also strongly features Deep Ones. There have been short stories recently by Brian Lumley and others too. Can we have too much of a good thing?

The most successful stories in this collection are those that take the story from a new slant. Straight pastiches no longer shock. We've seen too many of them before. The tales that work are those that assume the reader is already familiar with the concept of Deep Ones and their history and take that as the start of the tale rather than the conclusion.

Ann K. Shawder's *Mail Order Brides* illustrates this perfectly. She puts Deep Ones into a modern setting, brings the characters in the story to the point where they understand what's going on and then proceeds to take the story beyond that. Brian McNaughton's *The Doom that came to Innsmouth* succeeds because for a while he makes the central character very sympathetic and turns the government into the villains. You find yourself rooting for the hero, until.... well, that would be telling. Stan Sargent provides two slyly humorous stories; one of which is *Just a Tad beyond Innsmouth*, which was nominated for best game related short story at last year's Origins convention. There's also a reprint of Peter Cannon's satirical *It Was the Day of the Deep One*, which pokes fun at HPL fandom.

There are some interesting stories here, but there's also the feeling of re-treading familiar ground. For the moment I've heard enough *Tales from Innsmouth*. Let's travel somewhere else for a while at least.

Reviewed by Andy Bennison

The Dawning

By Hugh B. Cave
Published 2000 by Leisure Books
359pp. Softback. Price: \$5.50
ISBN: 0-8439-4739-X

Hugh B. Cave has been described as "one of the grandest of the Grandmasters of horror fiction." *The Dawning*, his latest book, is published in his ninetieth year.

Set in the near future, the world is on the point of anarchy. Gangs of drug crazed criminals rule the streets. There are food shortages, frequent power outages, disease and pollution. In the chaos a small group decide to leave the squalor and lawlessness behind and seek out a new life in the Canadian wilderness. *The Dawning* charts their flight and attempts to survive. It is only when the party finally reaches their destination that the horror really begins.

The Dawning is difficult to categorise; it's part horror, part science fiction and part adventure story. There are passing similarities to Terry Nation's television sci-fi series *Survivors*, particularly in the opening chapters. Men and women quickly fall into stereotypical roles. The men hunt. The women cook and look after the camp. The protagonists are mainly middle class, mainly professional, mainly white and exclusively heterosexual. There are also underlying assumptions about society – everyone wants a partner – everyone wants children. Only the character of Martha McNae seems to fight against the stereotyping as she proves to have excellent leadership and tracking skills. However, she only learnt these skills by 'assisting' her late husband.

In the best disaster movie tradition, it's fun to guess who'll survive, although a couple of the characters seem doomed from the outset. The nature of the horror is left oblique and this works to the book's advantage. Cave is a first class storyteller and *The Dawning* demonstrates his skill. It's fast paced and exciting – real pulp stuff – maybe that's where the dilemma lies.

Reviewed by Andy Bennison

Acknowledgements & Thanks

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Brains Wanted

Articles, scenarios, artwork (b/w preferred) submissions are welcomed – free copy of The Whisperer for submissions printed. Send or email submissions to the address below. MS Word, plain text, jpeg and bmp formats preferred.

Next Issue

Next issue (five) is planned for Autumn 2001 (in time for GenCon UK) and will be a grab-bag issue of all manner of Cthulhoid mayhem – all contributions welcomed. Deadline for submissions is end June 2001. Artwork always desired.

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The Whisperer is published twice a year and pre-orders may be made for the next issue. Send £3.99 + £0.52 (for postage & packing) (if you live in the UK) or £5.00 (if you live outside the UK) to the address below – please make cheques/international money orders payable to M.Mason. Special rates for retailers and distributors – contact the Editor. The Whisperer is available at all good games stores in the UK (via Esdevium Games) and from Wizard's Attic in the USA.

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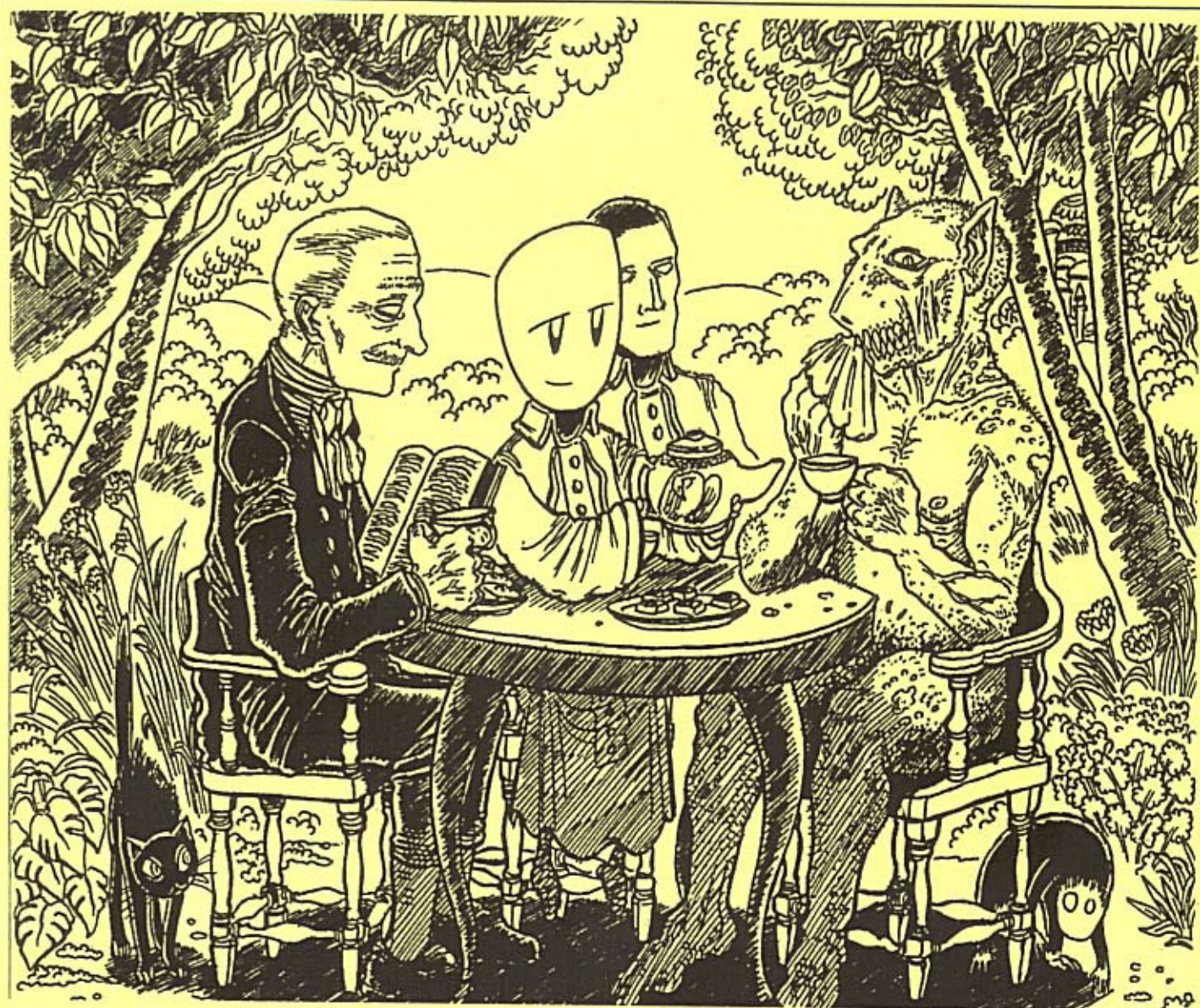
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The Whisperer's Web Site is here!

www.starrywisdom.co.uk

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*a rough guide to the Dreamlands
professional dreaming
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Call of Cthulhu d20 – exclusive interview
news, reviews, competitions
and much much more....*