

H. P. Lovecraft's

PEGASUS PRESS • FEBRUARY 2005 • ISSUE #2
ISBN 3-937826-24-4 • PGUWOC02 • PP00276



WORLDS of Cthulhu

The Magazine for
Call of Cthulhu

Issue 2



super 8

Delve into the bowels of New York's sex industry

The Scarus Project

Discover the Truth at the Center of the Universes

Dark Ages: Averaigne

Mapping Clark Ashton Smith's phantastic region

The Singer from Dhol

A classic-era scenario set in the Maine islands

In the Grip of Madness

Role-playing the consequences of a Mythos encounter too many

The Good, the Bad and the Utterly Insane

The Old West meets the Great Old Ones

Includes introductory scenario "The Hunt for Kid Richter"

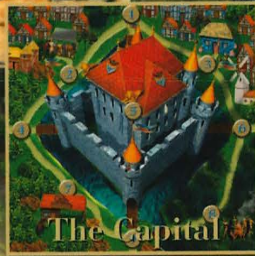
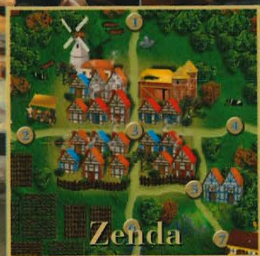
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Cthulhu D20, Professionally Speaking; the Flapper,
Unspeakable Vault (of Doom) ... and so much more.

CALL of CTHULHU

RETURN OF THE HEROES

Experience exciting adventures!



Return of the Heroes is your key to a fantastic world!

Return of the Heroes is more than a game, it is your tale! You play a talented but inexperienced character. This will change during the game.

Experience exciting adventures in the capital, barter on the markets of Zenda, fight against giants, trolls, or other dark enemies. Eventually you have to overcome the cruel

Nameless in his tower and you will return a hero! The challenges of the game are decided by strategy and a bit of luck with the dice. **Return of the Heroes** is a game for the whole family.

This is your portal to the fantastic world of elves, dwarves, mages, fighters, and clerics!

Game Contents

- 16 different region maps
- 5 double-sided character sheets
- 10 game figures
- 4 manor houses
- 60 wooden experience cubes in three colors
- 30 wooden gold pieces
- 5 six-sided dice
- glossary
- 23 hit points represented by red glass stones
- 4 semi-precious stones
- 8 cards with heroic deeds
- 6 cards of the Nameless
- 33 number chits
- 106 game counters
- 1 cloth bag
- rules + introductory game setup sheet



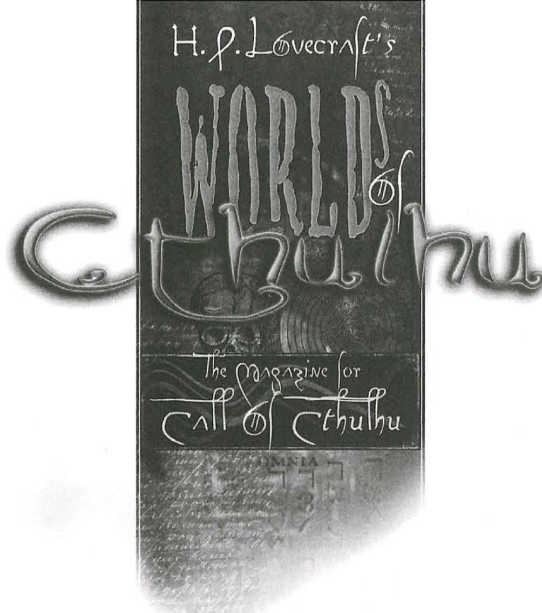
1 to 4 players Ages 10&Up ca. 90 min

Available at a store near you!
Infos at www.us.pegasus.de



Pegasus Press

Product Code: PGUWOC02
 Publisher: Pegasus Press, Strassheimer Str. 2, 61169 Friedberg, Germany
 Chief Editor: Keith Herber
 E-mail: keith.herber@worldsofcthulhu.com
 Editor: Adam Crossingham
 E-mail: adam.crossingham@worldsofcthulhu.com
 Publishing Director: Frank Heller
 E-mail: frank.heller@worldsofcthulhu.com
 Associate Editors: Daniel Harms & William Jones
 Authors: Anne Abelein, Adam Crossingham, Samar Ertsey, A. Scott Glancy, Joachim Hagen, Florian Hardt, Steven Marc Harris, Daniel Harms, Frank Heller, Steven Kaye, Christoph Maser, Mike Mearls, Andreas Melhorn, Matthias Oden, Tina Wessel
 Artists: Koen Goorickx, David Lee Ingersoll, François Launet, Natalie Sandells, Taschira
 Maps: Allyn Bowker (www.darkleagues.com), David Conyers, Kostja Kleye, Björn Lensig, Chris Schlicht
 Handouts: Adam Crossingham, Kostja Kleye, Chris Schlicht
 Character Sheets: Patrick Murphy (www.mad-irishman.net)
 Comic Strip: François Launet
 Translators: Robert Maier, Calum McDonald, Alexandra Velten, Hans-Christian Vortisch, Bill Walsh
 Cover Artist: François Launet
 Cover Conception & Design: Manfred Escher
 Graphic Design: Manfred Escher (www.manicor.de)
 Layout: Adam Crossingham
 Proofreading: Wood Ingham
 d20 Conversionist: Ken Finlayson. d20 Cthulhu stats can be downloaded from our home page
 Thanks to: Lorraine Crossingham
 Advertising: Pegasus Press, Strassheimer Str. 2, 61169 Friedberg, Germany. Tel: +49 6031 721730
 E-mail: verlag@pegasus.de
 Homepage: www.worldsofcthulhu.com
 Subscriptions: We do not offer subscriptions because of our cover price and publishing schedule.
 Copyright: Package © 2005 Pegasus Press; The copyright for all articles, illustrations, handouts, maps and photos remain with the respective creator. © 2005 the individual creators.
 Reproduction and/or duplication, in any part, is only allowed by permission of the publisher.
 Submissions: Submissions by e-mail are preferred. Please see our submissions guidelines on our web site. Please send Rich Text Files (.RTF) to submissions@worldsofcthulhu.com. Artists please send a link to your online portfolio, if you do not have one please contact the Editor above for alternative arrangements. The editorship reserves the right to edit and amend submitted manuscripts.



Issue Two Contents

CoC	Editorial	4
Gas	The Good, the Bad and the Utterly Insane	5
Gas	Wild West Cthulhu character sheet.....	20
Gas	The Hunt for Kid Richter	22
CoC	In the Grip of Madness	27
1920s	The Singer from Dhol	35
CDA	A Gazetteer of Averoigne.....	64
CDA	The Library of Averoigne	68
Now	Super 8.....	70
SA	The Icarus Project	88
1920s	Professionally Speaking: the Flapper	120
DG	Directives from A Cell.....	125
d20	The Twenty Sides of Terror.....	128
CoC	Unspeakable Vault (of Doom)	131

1920s: Classic period; CDA: Dark Ages; CoC: General;
 d20: d20 Cthulhu; DG: Delta Green; Gas: Gaslight;
 Now: Modern-day; SA: Strange Aeons

Handouts, maps and character sheets from this issue's scenarios and articles can be downloaded from *Worlds of Cthulhu's* web site at: <http://www.worldsofcthulhu.com>

Although the *Call of Cthulhu* game has always been centered in the 1920s, the temptation to explore other eras has been all too irresistible. Within a few months of its first release plans were already underway to expand the game with 1890s Gaslight and contemporary Cthulhu Now. In just the past year Chaosium released Cthulhu Dark Ages.

But it's nearly impossible for Chaosium to fully and actively support all the game eras players and Keepers might want to explore. Fortunately, *Worlds of Cthulhu* magazine offers a venue where different CoC eras can be developed and enjoyed.

Issue #2 offers material covering a broad range of playing eras. Although issue #1 lacked any Gaslight content, issue #2 offers plenty—albeit set in the American West—and includes both source material and a short scenario. A second installment of *Averoigne* provides background material for playing Dark Ages in the fantasy/historical world of Clark Ashton Smith. “Super 8” is a scenario designed for Cthulhu Now, featuring an all-time favorite Great Old One. “The Icarus Project” is set in the far future while “The Singer of Dhol” brings us back to 1920s New England and the game’s roots.

I hope to see more exploration of different eras in the pages of *Worlds of Cthulhu*. Writers should feel free to submit material for previously established eras, and they should feel encouraged to submit material exploring previously untapped eras.

Keith ‘Doc’ Herber, Chief Editor

I’ve been amazed by the quality and the quantity of genuinely good German *Call of Cthulhu* material there is since becoming Editor of *Worlds of Cthulhu*. What’s more the Germans aren’t constrained by the more popularly-held (or straitjacketed) conventions of *Call of Cthulhu*, they positively disregard them in pursuit of the story.

This issue presents three scenarios that would be uncommon in an English language magazine. I would term all of them “experimental” in one way or another, whether it’s the subject, the presentation or choice of protagonists.

Experimentation has always been part of *Call of Cthulhu*; from its original concept, the Sanity system or *Masks of Nyarlathotep*. Although all three scenarios are experimental, the common theme of them all is “story”.

And that’s where I see the future of *Worlds of Cthulhu* as well: in experimentation and story telling. *Call of Cthulhu* is almost 25 years old, and two of its advantages are the adaptability of its game system, and the flexibility of its presentation.

Famous games designers have made their first mark on the gaming world with *Call of Cthulhu*, and they did it by experimenting with the form of role-playing. Some readers may remember a short-lived journal called “*Interactive Fantasy*”, others may be aware of “*The Forge*” on the Internet. Whilst I don’t want to embrace all of the ideals of either of these think-tanks, I aim to present new ideas about *Call of Cthulhu*, its source material and its storytelling in future issues. Fellow travelers are always appreciated.

Adam Crossingham, Editor

Since WoC #1 appeared, we’ve repeatedly been asked several questions: Why only biannual issues? Why the relatively steep price for a magazine? Why can’t I subscribe to WoC?

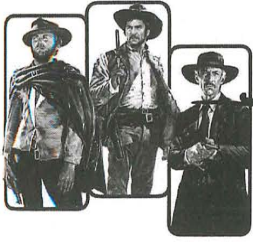
Well, the answer is the same to each: *Worlds of Cthulhu* isn’t really a magazine as you know it. It’s something between a magazine, a sourcebook, and an adventure book. *Worlds of Cthulhu* lets us provide all the varied *Call of Cthulhu* material we—and you—like, without having to provide an overarching theme or rationale. Cthulhu Dark Ages cheek by jowl with Cthulhu Now and Classic Twenties? No problem. That’s ultimately why we’re a magazine. You can expect variety from us.

On the other hand, quality is of surpassing importance to us. Sometimes you need space, which magazines normally lack, to allow for the depth and breadth that quality role-playing materials require. Instead, you get dozens of small articles, each lacking the detail necessary to really make something out of it. Not so in *Worlds of Cthulhu*. We try to offer gaming material that makes sense—and is deep enough that it could be found in a sourcebook.

We’re glad you’re back for *Worlds of Cthulhu* #2.

Also, we would love to see more contributions—from you. We know there are a lot of keepers out there who have written their own adventures or have gamemastering hints they want to share. We know there are artists in our readership whose talent deserves notice. We know there are potential handout designers and mapmakers out there. We are united by the one bond we share, our love for the great game *Call of Cthulhu*, and we would love for everyone to contribute. Because *Call of Cthulhu* is our game, a living game nearly 25 years of age, and we can all participate in designing and advancing our game. We, the *Worlds of Cthulhu* staff, are living proof. Come join us!

Frank Heller, Publishing Director



Gaslight:

The Good, the Bad, and the Utterly Insane

Call of Cthulhu in the Wild West

by Frank "Cthulhand Luke" Heller

translated from the German by "L'Bagh-Qÿyr'khi Bill" Walsh



Introduction

Welcome to *Call of Cthulhu* in the Wild West! This article aims to provide a little additional material to allow you to set *Call of Cthulhu* games in a cinematic “Wild West” setting, using just this article and the *Call of Cthulhu* rule book. We’ll leave it up to you whether to use this background to create classic Hollywood westerns, or create spaghetti westerns in the style of Sergio Leone and the *Fistful of Dollars* films, or dark gritty affairs like TV’s *Deadwood* for your players. And of course, the whole concept is to run up against Cthulhoid forces in the Old West.

Western role-playing games have, as a whole, been the hobby’s neglected stepchild. There aren’t many and there never have been. TSR’s *Boot Hill*, for example, never caught on. There’s *GURPS Old West*, which we recommend warmly as a supplement to this article. Anything you’d need to know to set a role-playing game in the Old West, even *Call of Cthulhu*, can be found in this terrific reference. If you don’t have a comprehensive library on the Old West, *GURPS Old West* is recommended unconditionally for information beyond the scope of this article. In it you’ll find, for example, a complete list of weapons with prices, suitable for role-playing.

Deadlands is also worth mentioning, a mixture of horror and Western role-playing. Anyone interested in horror in the Wild West whose interest isn’t limited to Lovecraftian horror should take a look at *Deadlands*. Anyone who doesn’t want to write his own adventures, for example, shouldn’t have much trouble in taking a *Deadlands* scenario and revamping it a bit. Unfortunately, the majority of *Deadlands* adventures are a bit simple by the standards of *Call of Cthulhu*. But *Perdition’s Daughter* is interesting and could almost be a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure by virtue of the appearance of an evil cult trying to arrange a summoning ceremony. *Bloody Ol’ Muddy* is an adventure on the Mississippi dealing with a degenerate Indian tribe. *Adios A-Mi-Go* goes as far as explicitly calling itself a *Call of Cthulhu-Deadlands* crossover adventure. That the machinations of the *Mi-Go* play a role will surprise no one. And *Skinner’s* is outstanding, an adventure concerning a set of horrific murders on a Mississippi riverboat, in which the victims are found without their skin. The rest of the adventures for *Deadlands* are either too deeply embedded in the

Deadlands setting or very simple and utterly unworthy of your hard-earned cash.

D20 *Cthulhu* keepers and players should look at Mongoose’s *OGL Wild West* and Green Ronin’s *Sidewinder Recoiled*. Both are full of genre specific rules and feats, and cover everything in this article.

The “Wild West” setting presented here is laden with clichés. Because clichés are fun. This setting is not intended as a historically accurate portrayal of the Old West, rather an evocation of the West of popular westerns, novels, and comics. The flavor of setting comes through particularly in the list of occupations, in which you’ll find every job that you could conceivably associate with the Wild West. There’s almost nothing left to be desired in terms of more occupations. Some may remark that the occupations sometimes reflect stereotypes. They are not meant to offend, but rather reflect the world of movies and books which often rely on shallow characterizations. We call this the Wild West, not the Old West, so that it’s not mistaken for a historical simulation. Feel free to adopt, discard, or amend anything for your own game.

The weapon list has also been compiled with great care and should contain something for everyone. Weapons are certainly not a central aspect of *Call of Cthulhu*, but the Wild West is enlivened by the occasional shoot-out, and it’s a lot nicer to have an “authentic” weapon in your holster. For more detailed descriptions of some weapons, the reader is once again referred to *GURPS Old West*. Also worth mentioning in this context is *The Knuckleduster Firearms Shop* by Forrest Harris which is, as its subtitle advertises, “A Compendium of Weapons for Western Role-Playing Games.” It is particularly fine in discussing some weapon oddities which might make distinctive arms for villains, cultists, or other eccentrics (the last group usually includes player characters in *Call of Cthulhu*).

Forrest Harris has also written the exceptional *Knuckleduster Cowtown Creator* which belongs on the bookshelf of any western-setting gamemaster. It’s an encyclopedic volume on the authentic details of town life in the Old West, along with a easy, comprehensive set of tools which allow the gamemaster to create and play entire towns of all sorts, from the most established and respectable to the newest and most “wide-open” to the tumble-down bust towns on their way to ghostliness. It goes from high-level overviews to minutiae (tables of hundreds of authentic western names) in a lucid, entertaining style.

New Skills

If you’ve looked at the character sheet, you will have noticed the new skills which are presented here in brief.

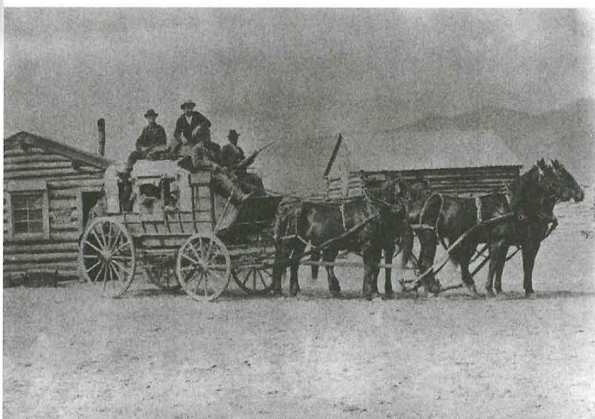
Black-Powder Guns (01%)

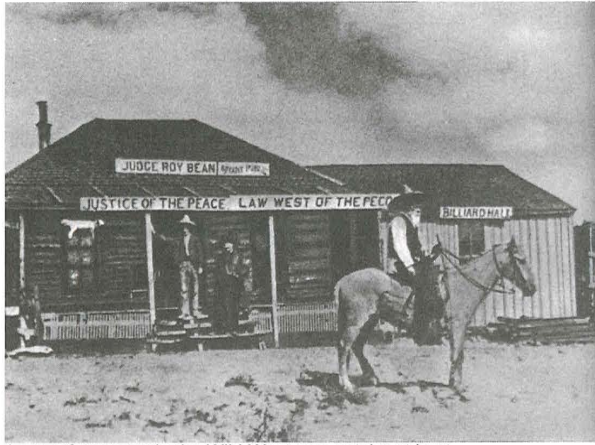
Necessary for the use of black-power weapons, guns which are not loaded with cartridges but loaded sequentially with percussion caps, balls, and powder. See the new combat rules below for more.

Demolition (01%)

Anyone can set off a stick of dynamite or a black-powder bomb, but to employ them properly you need this specialized skill. With this

Stagecoaches: lifeline of the West





Law enforcement in the Wild West was patchy at best....

skill, a character can estimate how much dynamite or nitro-glycerin is necessary to collapse a mine, take down a bridge, breach a jailhouse wall, or blow a safe. The character can also set the charges properly and calculate the correct length of fuse.

Forage (01%)

Knowledge of how to survive in the wilderness. Making fires, building lean-tos, locating edible plants, etc.

Gamble (01%)

Knowledge of all current games of chance and the skill to maximize one's success at them through skillful play. Also used for bluffing in poker, though a successful Insight roll may aid this, or to cheat or spot a cheat.

Grit (CONx2%)

Grit lets you do things you shouldn't be able to when you're seriously wounded. See the "I ain't dead yet..." section in the cinematic combat rules.

Homesteading (01%)

Knowledge of how to settle a plot of land and become self-sufficient. Covers choosing land, building accommodation, looking after livestock, etc.

Insight (10%)

Corresponds to and replaces the Psychology skill from the rule book.

Lasso (05%)

The use of a lasso to catch a horse, cow, other animal or indeed an object.

Legends & Lore (15%)

Knowledge of the legends and myths of the Old West - who discovered what, who killed who or what, the fiercest Indian tribes, the craziest prospector. Keepers can use this skill to feed players information.

Pick Pocket (05%)

A successful roll provides the character with the contents of a pants, overcoat, or vest pocket. Modifications may be made to the chance

of success depending on whether the intended victim is wary, in his cups, alone, in a crowd, etc.

Quick Draw (01%)

The skill of whipping a pistol out of a holster and bringing it to bear fast. For more, see the new combat rules.

Scripture (10%)

Knowledge of the sacred writings of the Holy Bible, and the Church's (your choice of church) teachings based on the Bible.

Seduce (01%)

Skillful flirtation to win over a member of the opposite sex. Keepers should modify the skill rolls relative to the APP of the seducer and the seduced. An ugly mug will have a harder time wooing an attractive woman, for example, than a broken-down old barfly.

Sixth Sense (05%)

A sense for danger, like the hairs on the back of the neck standing up, when an undetected threat lurks in the offing. A tightening of the joints, the feeling of being watched: if the roll succeeds, the character has the immediate feeling of danger. The Keeper should make these rolls in secret.

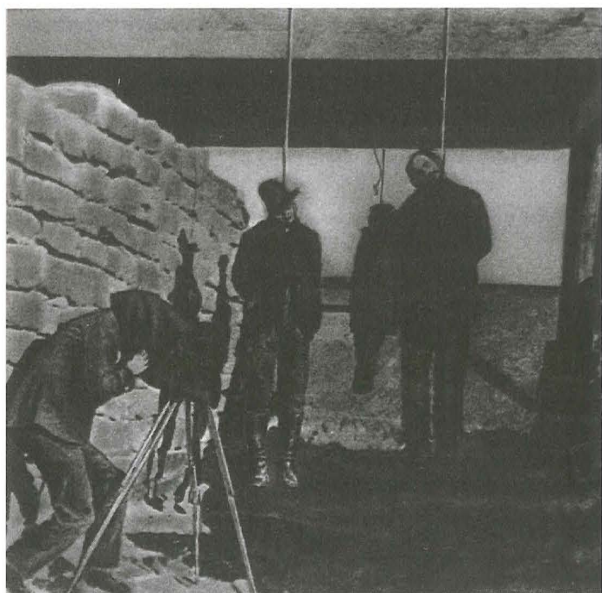
Spit (10%)

In every saloon, you'll find a row of spittoons into which the customers are constantly spewing brown gobbets of chewing-tobacco juice. It's always good to hit what you're aiming at, and that's what this skill is for. Moreover, in a good western, it's always helpful to be able to provoke your enemy with a well-aimed hock on his boots or elsewhere. This skill is suitable for that as well.

Teamster (20%)

Corresponds to and replaces the Drive Horses skill from the rule book.

...sometimes arbitrary....



Tether (01%)

Tying bonds that really hold (should be rolled by the Keeper in secret). Conversely, the ability to escape bonds.

Tipple (01%)

Represents the ability to put away large quantities of alcohol without sliding under the table.

Trap (01%)

This skill is the use or construction of traps to catch small or large animals. It could include snares, pits, bear traps, and so forth.

"Slap Leather, Law Dog!"
 "Slap Leather, Law Dog!"
 New Combat Rules

The combat rules for firearms in the *Call of Cthulhu* rule book are more than comprehensive enough for the normal course of a game in most settings. The Wild West, however, requires some additions and expansions.

The following rules are based on the ideas in the adventure "The Evil Gun" in *Blood Brothers 2* and the article on weapons in *Fatal Experiments*. They have been dramatically altered, however, because those rules were somewhat crude and insufficiently thought through. They've been further embellished by the introduction of new skills.

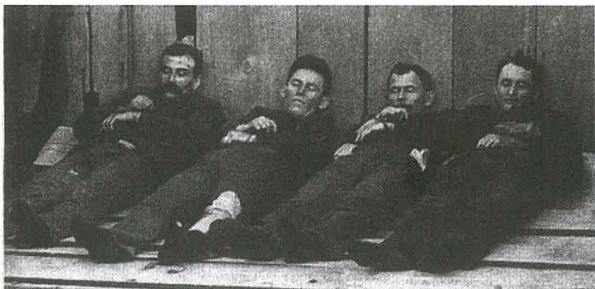
Draw!

The Quick Draw skill has been presented above, and here we'll explain what it entails.

In almost every good western, there's a pistol duel with the opponents staring each other down from beneath the brims of their hats, each with a hand twitching nervously inches from their Colt. Both draw in the blink of an eye and fire. One of them is usually faster. How would that work in *Call of Cthulhu*? Normally, the character with the higher DEX would simply shoot first, robbing the scene of all its drama. The inherent exercise of getting the gun out of the holster is simply not taken into account. These rules remedy that problem.

Each player rolls 1D10 and adds his DEX to the result. Then they divide their Pistol skills by 10, rounding up, and add the quotient to the sum of 1D10+DEX. Finally, they divide the Quick Draw skill by 10 and add it to the previous sum. This gives a Draw! value $(1D10+DEX+(Pistol/10)+(Quick\ Draw/10))$ which can be

...often brutal...



...and in some cases, justice was indeed rough.

compared to the other duelists' Draw! values. The character with the highest value shoots first, and the others in ascending order of their results. In subsequent rounds, characters fire in DEX order as usual.

Another consideration is that there were holsters designed specifically for drawing weapons rapidly as well as holsters from which one didn't even have to draw the weapon, but which were simply spun around to allow an immediate shot. In such cases, the Keeper will have to determine how they modify the value for drawing first.

Finally, there were also specific models of pistols designed to be drawn particularly quickly, usually by having shortened barrels. These weapons are so designated in the weapon list.

Fanning

In many westerns, even spaghetti westerns, gunfighters can be seen firing a revolver very quickly, apparently by hitting their off hands against the gun. This is called "fanning" and can only be done with single-action revolvers (see the Weapon Table). The shooter keeps the trigger pulled and rapidly slaps the hammer on the back of the gun, which turns the cylinder and fires another shot. In game terms, fanning allows a shooter to empty his revolver in a single round. Generally, that means six shots (or five if he's careful about keeping an empty cylinder under the firing pin). His accuracy is naturally compromised dramatically because of the difficulty in keeping the weapon steady. In game terms, each shot has a ¼-normal chance to hit.

Optional: Django gets 'em all

If a Keeper wishes to give the adventure an even more cinematic flavor, the fanning rule can be modified to make it more effective, as in the climax of *Django* (1966), where the eponymous gunfighter (with crushed hands, no less!) blows away a gang of villains in a frac-

tion of a second by fanning his guns. The cinematically-minded Keeper may only halve the chance to hit.

Two-Gun Shooting

Fat Mexicans don't just wear gigantic sombreros and cartridge belts crossed over their chests. They like to shoot two pistols at the same time. In game terms, blazing away with two guns incurs a -10% penalty on the gun in the shooter's good hand, and the off-hand gun suffers a penalty of -10%, plus an additional -5% for every point of DEX the character has below 16 (e.g., a character with DEX 13 is at a 25% disadvantage: $-10\% + ((16-13) \times 5\%)$).

Shooting from Horseback

A character's chance to hit from horseback can never be higher than his skill in Ride. So, even if the schoolmarm has a 70% Shotgun skill, if she's only got 55% Ride, she shoots from her horse at 55%.

Black-Powder Weapons

In the first half of the nineteenth century, and indeed well into the second, firearms of every sort were used which did not take cartridges in today's sense but which had to be laboriously loaded with black powder. The equivalent contents of a cartridge (primer, propellant, bullet) were individually loaded into black-powder weapons, as a percussion cap (usually placed manually under the hammer), black powder (often poured down the barrel or into a revolver's cylinder and tamped), and a lead ball (usually preceded by some sort of wadding). The well-known Colt Navy revolvers (as seen in the *Fistful of Dollars* movies) are black-powder pistols. Their owner has to load them somewhere during a quiet moment, because such weapons are exceedingly hard to reload in the heat of battle. Each of the cylinders is loaded with one bullet and a quantity of powder, and then six percussion caps are placed on the little nipples at the back of the chambers, a series of actions that can't easily be performed quickly. Given that it was hard to have a precisely measured quantity (or, indeed, uniform quality) of powder, unlike in modern ammu-

nition, the shooter himself couldn't always rely on the strength of his propellant. And because he might just as often have poured his lead bullets himself, his skills could have a tremendous influence on the accuracy of his shooting. Some of the gunmen of the Old West swore by their old black-powder guns even after modern, cartridge-loading revolvers were common.

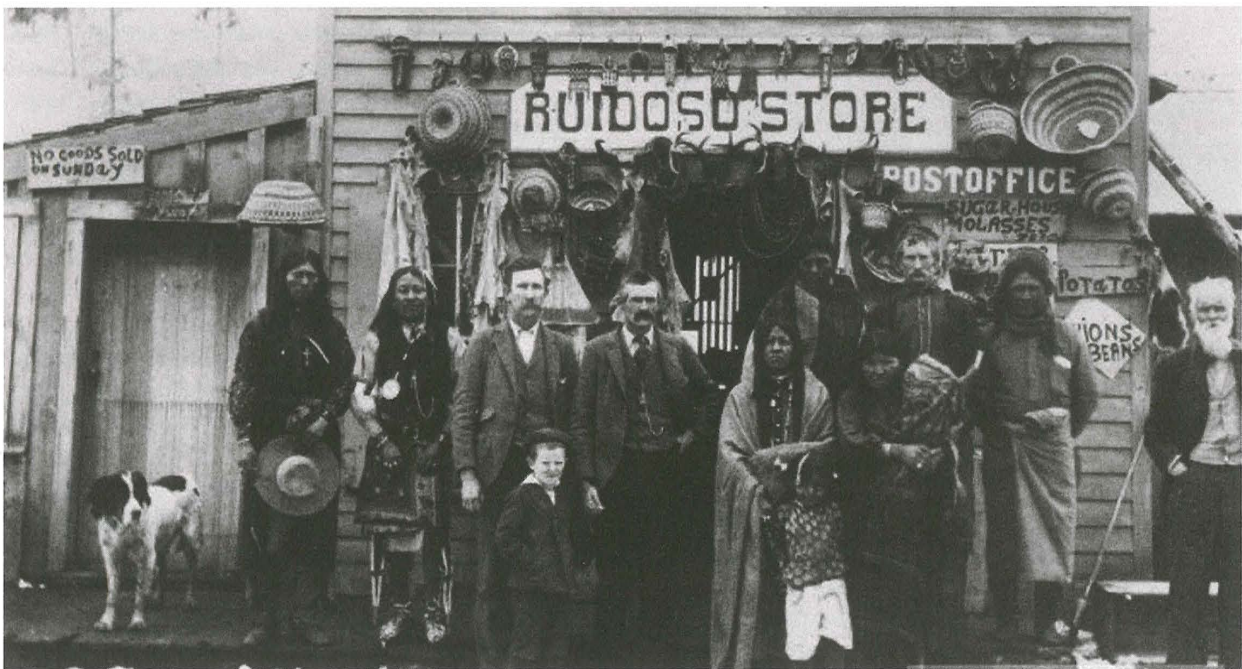
In any case, handling a black-powder weapon is significantly more difficult than handling a cartridge-loading gun. The new skill Black-Powder Weapons covers all these difficulties. It determines the ability of a shooter to handle all these aspects of his weapon.

Before a shooter makes his roll to hit (which is made with the standard Pistol, Rifle, or Shotgun skill), he rolls once against his skill with Black-Powder Weapons. If it succeeds, he's loaded and prepared his weapon correctly. If it fails, he rolls 1D10 on the following table.

Black-powder Weapons Failure Table

Die Roll	Effect
1-4	The weapon does not fire and must be reloaded.
5-6	The weapon hangs fire. It does not fire at first, but the shot then goes off 1D10 DEX ranks later. If the shooter handles the apparently non-functioning weapon incautiously, he can hit himself or someone else he wasn't aiming at. In ambiguous cases, a Luck roll can decide.
7-8	Too little powder. The shot doesn't reach a distant opponent, or the powder just hisses and the bullet leaves the barrel at a very low velocity.
9	Too much powder. The recoil is unexpectedly heavy, bruising the character's shoulder (if a rifle or shot gun) or strains a wrist (if a pistol). The recoil causes a 10% penalty to the character's chance to hit, but the bullet if it hits, inflicts 1D2 extra damage.
10	Way too much powder. The gun explodes! The shooter loses 1D10 hit points and possibly (if it's 8 HP or more), a finger, a hand, or even his eyesight.

Gearing up... Wild West style



If the character succeeds in his Black-Powder Weapons roll, he rolls his to-hit roll normally. No additional malfunction will occur, however high his to-hit roll.

Oldies But Goodies—Sense & Nonsense about Black-Powder Weapons

Some of the most accomplished shootists stuck by their older-model pistols like the Colt Navy or the similar Colt Army revolver even after much more modern revolvers were available. Some of the reasons why:

—The shootist can cast lead bullets with a relatively simple set of tools (dies, molds, tongs, etc.). If you're out of ammo, you can just make some more.

—The shootist can determine the strength of the propellant for each shot by determining the amount (and examining the quality) of the powder he fills the weapon with. If he chooses to "overcharge" his weapon with a particularly strong load, he can improve the range and impact of his shots, but runs the risk of his gun literally blowing up in his face, with the charge simply overpowering the gun's structural integrity.

In game terms:

Overcharging for:	Roll on Overcharging Danger Table With:
Range +10%	—
Damage +1, Range +20%	1D6
Damage +1D2, Range +30%	1D6+1
Damage +1D4, Range +40%	1D6+2

Overcharging Danger Table

Die Roll	Effect
1-5	The weapon functions as expected.
6	A Luck roll is required. If it succeeds, everything works fine. If it fails, the weapon fires with a boom and the barrel explodes. The shot may still hit, but the gun is destroyed.
7	A Luck roll is required. If it succeeds, everything works fine. If it fails, the gun disintegrates with a thud. The shooter receives a severe wound to his weapon hand. The shot automatically misses, and the gun is destroyed.
8	A Luck roll is required. If it succeeds, everything works fine. If it fails, the weapon explodes in the firer's hand. Shrapnel flies everywhere. The shooter receives a severe wound (see below) to his weapon hand, and an additional 3D6 points of damage (which leads to another severe wound if it reduces his hit points to zero). The shot automatically misses, and the gun is destroyed.

To reemphasize: these additional rules apply only to black-powder firearms. To "overcharge" a gun, the shooter must make a roll against his Black-Powder Weapons skill as described above.

"It's Only A Flesh Wound!"

Cinematic Combat Rules

"I ain't dead yet..."

If you prefer a more cinematic Wild West game drawing on various classic Westerns, rather than one in deadly earnest, the following rule may appeal. Normally, a character loses consciousness when he reaches two or fewer hit points, but if he makes a Grit roll (new skill, see above), he can act without impairment for one more round. In each succeeding round, he has to make another Grit roll to continue to be able to act. If he fails one of the rolls, he becomes unconscious according to the regular rules. Similarly, if his hit points fall below zero, he should already be dead but can keep going with Grit rolls. Just like unconsciousness in the previous example, death ensues immediately if he fails a single roll. The Keeper may consider adding modifiers to the Grit roll to allow a character who should already be dead to continue to be able to act. For example, he might impose a -10% modifier for every hit point below zero the character has reached, meaning a character at -3 HP would have to roll Grit -30% or die immediately.

"Hit me. I can take it."

Things in the Wild West aren't like in a normal *Call of Cthulhu* game. In the Old West, your shootin' iron was close at hand, and not just in the movies. It was a raw time in places dominated by rootless young men, often lacking manners, morals, and even law. A prime example was "Judge" Roy Bean, self-described "Law West of the Pecos." Operating out of a saloon in West Texas, his courtroom was outfitted solely with a revolver, a pet bear, and a single law book whose contents were generally unfamiliar to Bean. According to one story, when an Irish railroad worker was accused of having killed a Chinese coworker, Bean was said to have dug through his law book and released the Irishman, because he could find no law explicitly forbidding the killing of a Chinaman. (He did make the Irishman pay for the man's funeral.) In another story, he had to adjudicate the case of two men who had shot at each other, one with a pistol, and the other with a rifle. The man with the pistol had died. Bean's finding? "Death by suicide." Because in the opinion of the "court," if you only had a pistol, it was suicidal to shoot at a man with a rifle.

A player whose character is wandering the Wild West will take a hard look at his character sheet and, given his relatively few hit points, be anxious to avoid a shoot-out that will end in swift death. Not for nothing does the old *Call of Cthulhu* proverb state, "The most experienced investigators are those who run the fastest..." That's reasonable though counterproductive if you want to play an exciting western with wild shoot-outs climaxing in a confrontation with a Mythos horror. A "scaredy-cat western" isn't much fun. So what do you do to enable the characters to rush into the fray, guns ablazin'?

Very simple: if the character loses hit points without hitting zero HP total, they represent light, completely negligible injuries without any further effects ("It's just a flesh wound..."). If his hit points drop below zero, the character's not dead, but has suffered a nasty injury which we will call a severe wound hereafter. The injured body part can be determined with the table on page 13:

Firearms

Black Powder Weapons

Weapon	Year	Action	Damage	Range	RoF	Ammo	Malf.	Hit Points
4-Barrel "Pepperbox"	c. 1850	Single	1D10+4	15	1/2 (1)	4	BP	10
Colt Navy Pattern, .36 §	c. 1851	Single	1D8	15	1/2 (1)	6	BP	10
Colt Old Model Army, .44	c. 1850	Single	1D10+1	15	1/2 (1)	6	BP	10
Beaumont-Adams, .50	c. 1851		1D10+3	10	1 (3/2)	6	BP	10
Starr Double-Action Army .44	1860	Double	1D10+2	15	1 (3/2)	6	BP	10
Shotgun, double-barreled	c. 1855		2D6/1D6/1D3	10/20/40	1 or 2	2	BP	12
Springfield Musket	c. 1863		2D10+4	60	up to 1	1	BP	12

Cartridge Handguns

Weapon	Year	Action	Damage	Range	RoF	Ammo	Malf.	Hit Points
.40 Derringer, double-barreled ***	1866	Single	1D10	6	1 or 2	2	00	5
Colt First Model/Third Model, .41 ***	1875	Single	1D10	6	1	1	00	5
Remington Elliot, .22 ***	1863	Single	1D6	5	2(3)	5	00	5
Smith & Wesson Pocket, .38 **		Single	1D10	8	1 (3/2)	5	00	8
Smith & Wesson Pocket, .32 **		Double	1D8	8	2 (3)	5	00	8
Colt New Line Pocket, .41 **	c. 1878	Single	1D10+1	7	1 (1)	5	00	8
Colt Peacemaker, .45	1873	Single	1D10+2	15	1 (1)	6	00	10
Colt Peacemaker, Short-Barrel, .45 **	1873	Single	1D10+2	8	1 (1)	6	00	9
Colt Peacemaker, Sheriff's Model, .45 *	1873	Single	1D10+2	12	1 (1)	6	00	9
Remington New Model Army, .44	1866	Single	1D10+2	20	1 (1)	6	00	11
.22 Knuckle-Duster ***	c. 1870	Single	1D6	5	3 (3)	7	99	8
Smith & Wesson Model No.3, Schofield version, .45	1875	Single	1D10+2	15	1 (1)	6	00	10
Colt M1877 "Lightning", .38 Colt	1877	Double	1D10	15	3/2 (2)	6	00	10
Colt M1877 "Thunderer", .41 Colt	1877	Double	1D10+1	15	1 (3/2)	6	00	10
Smith & Wesson Hammerless, .38	1888	Double	1D10	15	3/2 (2)	5	00	10
.32 Palm Pistol ***	c. 1891	Double	1D8	10	2 (3)	7	98	7

Rifles

Weapon	Year	Action	Damage	Range	RoF	Ammo	Malf.	Hit Points
.52 Spencer Carbine	c. 1863	Lever	2D6+3	60	1 (3/2)	7	99	12
.52 Sharps Buffalo Rifle	c. 1863	Single	2D10+3	90	up to 1	1	99	12
.30-30 Remington Rolling Block	1867	Single	2D6+3	90	up to 1	1	99	12
.45 Martini-Henry	1871	Lever	1D8+1D6+3	80	1/3 (1/2)	1	99	12
.44 Henry Repeating	1860	Lever	1D8+1D6+2	80	1 (3/2)	16	98	12
.44 Winchester "Yellow Boy"	1866	Lever	2D6+3	100	1 (3/2)	15	98	12
.44-40 Winchester	1873	Lever	2D6+4	110	1 (3/2)	17	99	12

Shotguns

Weapon	Damage	Range	RoF	Ammo	Malf.	Hit Points
20-gauge double-barreled	2D6/1D6/1D3	10/20/50	1 or 2	2	00	12
16-gauge double-barreled	2D6+2/1D6+1/1D4	10/20/50	1 or 2	2	00	12
12-gauge double-barreled	4D6/2D6/1D6	10/20/50	1 or 2	2	00	12
10-gauge double-barreled	4D6+2/2D6+1/1D8	10/20/50	1 or 2	2	00	12
8-gauge double-barreled	4D6+6/2D6+4/1D10	10/20/50	1 or 2	2	00	12

Machine Gun

Weapon	Year	Damage	Range	RoF	Ammo	Malf.	Hit Points
Gatling Gun	1866	2D6+4	100	up to 20	200	96	20

Key: Range is given in yards.
 BP: As per black-powder-weapons rules above
 RoF: Rate of Fire. Parenthetical value applies with a skill of 75% or more

Single: Single-action. Allows fanning. (See new combat rules above.)
 Double: Double-action
 § Also available in cartridge firing format from the late 1860s

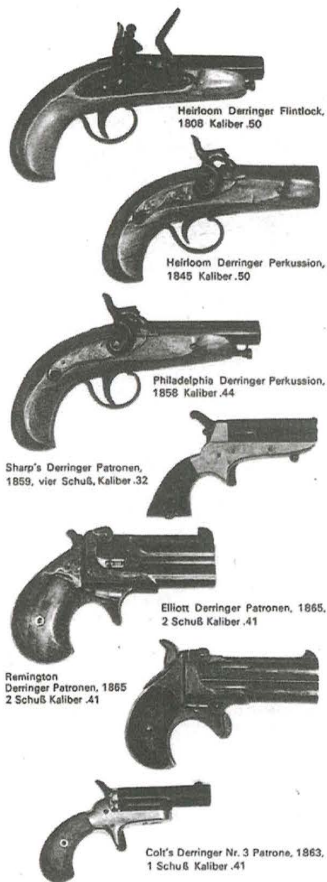
*** +20% to Quick Draw
 ** +15% to Quick Draw
 * +10% to Quick Draw

Melee Weapons

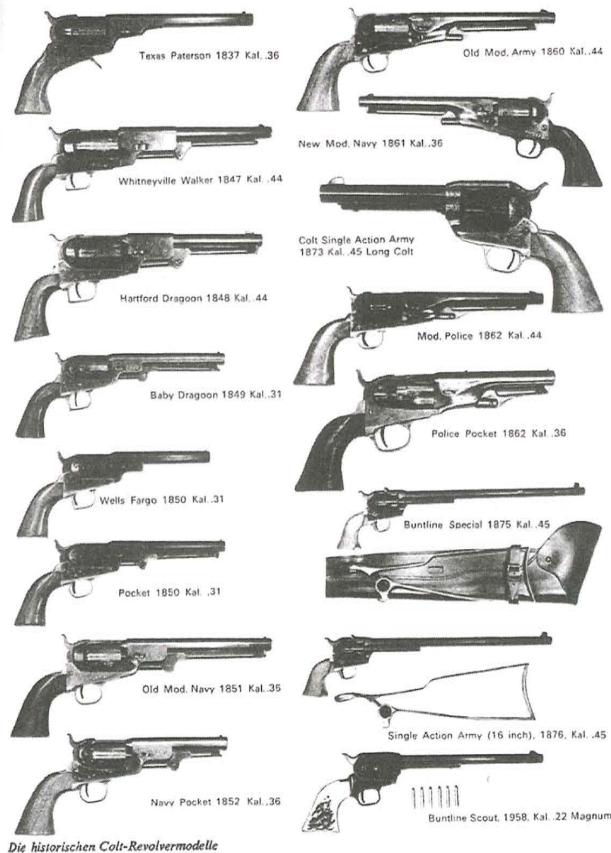
Weapon	Base	Damage	Range	Attacks	Malfunction	Hit points
Dagger*	20%	1D6+1+db	T	1	—	10
Rapier*	10%	1D6+1+db	T	1	—	15
Cavalry Saber	15%	1D8+1+db	T	1	—	20
Wood Ax	20%	1D8+2+db	T	1	—	15
Sickle/Cleaver	20%	1D6+1+db	T	1	—	12
Scythe/Threshing flail	15%	1D8+1+db	T	1	—	20
Fighting knife/Bowie Knife*	25%	1D4+2+db	T	1	—	15
Butcher's knife*	25%	1D6+db	T	1	—	12
Small knife (e.g., switchblade)*	25%	1D4+db	T	1	—	9
Large club/tomahawk/fireplace poker	25%	1D8+db	T	1	—	20
Small club/table leg/rod	25%	1D6+db	T	1	—	15
Whip	5%	1D3 or "Grapple"	T	1	—	4
Rock, thrown	Throw	1D4+? db	Throw	1	—	—
Spear, thrown	Throw	1D8+1+? db	Throw	1/2	—	15
Lasso	5%	"Grapple"	10	1/3	—	5
Bow*	5%	1D8	30	1/2	97	10
Dynamite, thrown	Throw	5D6 / 2 yds.	Throw	1/2	99	1
Tomahawk, thrown	Throw	1D8+? db	Throw	1/2	—	20

Key: Range is given in yards
 T = Touch
 * Can inflict critical hits
 db = Damage bonus

Derringers



Revolvers



Hit Location Table

d%	Where hit	Severe Wound Penalty
01–15	Right leg	-5% to skills, -3 to Move
16–30	Left leg	-5% to skills, -3 to Move
31–40	Right arm	-10% to skills
41–50	Left arm	-10% to skills
51–67	Gut	-20% to skills, -5 to Move
68–84	Chest	-15% to skills
85–87	Throat	-10% to skills, can't talk
88–00	Head	-20% to skills, CONx5 to remain conscious

The Keeper determines how, exactly, the severe wound has affected the body part in question and how it plays out in the game. A shot in the leg, for example, could be a through-and-through wound or the bullet could embed itself in the leg, shatter the bone, etc. In any case, the character is incapable of walking normally and can only keep himself on a horse with difficulty. A severe wound in the arm will, in general, have the consequence that the arm is no longer useable. The character can't handle a weapon with it. A severe head wound will presumably entail at least a several-minute loss of consciousness.

After the wound and its game effects have been determined, the character's hit points return to their original level. If they fall to zero or below again, the character suffers a second severe wound (location again determined by the table). And again, his hit points return to their maximum. But danger is slowly growing for the character, because the third time his hit points fall to or below zero, he finally bites the dust. Three chances will have to be enough. In any case, if the Keeper finds it dramatically appropriate, it's within game-masterly discretion to allow more severe wounds before the character dies, perhaps giving the cowpoke four or even five chances. Practically speaking, the three-wound standard has the goal of balancing the desirability of making wild shoot-outs possible without creating an aura of invincibility around the characters.

The Keeper must take care that the severe wounds are actually portrayed realistically. They should incur real in-game handicaps.

One question follows immediately: how can these wounds be healed?

—Lost hit points can be regained as usual according to the basic rule book

—First Aid and Medicine have no effects on severe wounds. A successful roll only indicates that the wound is properly cared for and does not become infected. If the roll fails, the Keeper can decide if the injury is made worse, i.e., the character continues to lose hit points every round possibly incurring another serious wound, or becomes infected. The character could be allowed to make a Luck roll to avert the failed roll's consequences.

—A severe wound can only be healed if the character convalesces for a long period of time, essentially checked into a hospital or a sanitarium. After a number of weeks, the body part is functional again. In general, this should only happen between adventures.

An Example:

Cowboy Jim is a tough guy with 15 hit points. In a shoot-out, he's hit and loses 7 HP. That has no further game effects, and with First Aid he can bandage himself up, regaining 1 HP (rolling on 1D3).

Now with 8 HP, he stumbles into another gunfight, getting hit once for 5 HP and again for 6 HP. Now he's at -3 HP, which inflicts a severe wound. He rolls a 56 on the hit-location table, indicating he's been gut-shot. Bad. His hit points are returned to their original 15. Jim successfully bandages his wound with First Aid which means it won't get worse. It impairs him, however, in that he almost always has to have a hand pressing against his side. The Keeper decides that it's so painful that he suffers a -20% penalty to all his actions. Somewhat later, Jim finds himself amid flying bullets yet again. He's hit with a rifle bullet with a critical success which inflicts 16 points of damage. His hit points are below zero again, and he suffers a second severe wound. Rolling a 03, it's taken out his right leg. His hit points return to 15. Jim fails his First Aid roll, and his Luck roll goes badly as well. He's mistreated the leg wound and now it's infected as well! Jim needs to see a sawbones right quick. If his hit points hit zero again, he's pushin' up the daisies.

And how does it work with NPCs? Do these new damage rules apply to them?

—Mythos beings are fought as usual.

—Human opponents may be divided into three categories: Desperadoes, Henchmen, and Villains. Desperadoes are everyday antagonists who can be blown away under the normal rules; the first time their hit points hit zero or less (and at one or two HP, they're unconscious). The Villain is the characters' principal enemy. He could be a criminal rich landowner or the head of a gang of bandits. Like the characters, he gets three chances before he dies. His hit points have to be brought to or below zero three times, and he suffers severe wounds like the characters. A tough customer. In between are the Henchmen, the Villain's subordinates, sort of his "non-commissioned officers." These guys die when their hit points hit zero a second time (and "in between" suffer one severe wound).

Backgrounds

Backgrounds are packages of skills and statistic modifiers that can be bought with Occupation or Personal skills points and further customize character generation. A player does not have to buy a Background if they do not want to. But some occupations can only be chosen if a specific background has been bought. The benefit of a Background is that the package gives skills boosts for a reduced cost, or releases more skills points to spend in character generation.

Chinaman - Cost: 35 points

A large number of Chinese immigrants wandered the Wild West. Their stereotypical occupations were laundrymen or railroad cooks. But the Chinese plied many other trades, if not as frequently. A "Chinaman" can theoretically practice any of the occupations given but will face discrimination in many.

Statistics: +1 to DEX, INT and POW.

Skills: Martial Arts +10%.

Languages: Own Language is Mandarin, Cantonese, Zhuang, Buyi, Mongolian, Miao, Tai, Uyгур, or Kazakh. Other Language (English) starts at EDUx1.

Special: Credit Rating -10%.

Freedman - Cost: 12 points

After the Civil War, a large number of freed slaves took up various occupations. Many of the "lowlier" occupations were filled by blacks. There were black bandits, cowboys, and even units of black soldiers (buffalo soldiers) in the U.S. Army.

Statistics: +1 to STR, CON and POW.

Skills: None.

Languages: None.

Special: Credit Rating -15%.

Granger - Cost: 48 points

Enormous herds of longhorn cattle were driven up out of Texas to Kansas City and beyond for slaughter or to be loaded onto trains. Farmers were regularly enraged when a cattle drive would trample their crops, destroying months of hard work. They banded together as "grangers" in desperate farmer militias. Well-armed, they managed to keep the cattle herds off their land. A granger can also have a regular occupation (rancher, doctor, etc.). It's not necessarily a full-time job. The granger's occupational skills are then added to those of the other occupation.

Statistics: None.

Skills: Forage +10%, Navigate +10%, Ride +10%, Spot Hidden +10%, Track +10%, one firearm skill +10%.

Languages: None.

Special: None.

Half-Breed - Cost: 26 points

He's half Indian, half white. Maybe his Indian mother was raped by whites. Or vice versa. Now he's doesn't belong in either world. No one wants him. He's an outcast, a loner.

Statistics: None.

Skills: Fist +10%, Forage +10%, Ride +10%, Sneak +10%, Track +10%.

Languages: Own Language is English or tribal language (player's choice). Other Language (English or Indian tribal) starts at EDUx3.

Special: -30% to Credit Rating, -2 to EDU.

Immigrant - Cost: 34 points

Fleeing the Old Country to avoid persecution or merely to find a better life, the Immigrant must quickly find his way on the unforgiving frontier of the Wild West.

Statistics: None.

Skills: Four skills of the player's choice reflecting character's previous occupation in the Old Country at +10%.

Languages: Own Language is an Old World language. Other Language (English) starts at EDUx2.

Special: -5% to Credit Rating, -1 to CON and SIZ.

The Wild West in 1874



Indian - Cost: 64 points

In general, Indian characters will be warriors from whatever tribe is appropriate. They can range from proud braves, mysterious medicine men to degenerate, alcoholic beggars.

Statistics: +1 to STR, DEX, POW, and CON.

Skills: Bow or Rifle +10%, Hide +10%, Forage +10%, Ride +10%, Sneak +10%, Track +10%.

Languages: Own Language is tribal language.

Special: -20% to Credit Rating.

Mexican - Cost: 12 points

A Mexican can pursue any of the occupations given here. But he's generally distinctively Mexican: somewhere on the continuum from: a poncho-clad, big sombrero wearing, sweaty, perennially unshaven Mexican peon with a big belly riding his donkey named "Burrito", to a cultured, upper-class, quasi-Spanish aristocrat who knows how to use a sword.

Statistics: +1 to POW and CON.

Skills: None.

Languages: Own Language is Spanish. Other Language (English) starts at EDUx1.

Special: -20% to Credit Rating.

Brave

A proud member of one of the remaining tribes of the Wild West. He must share his lands with the endless white men or die stopping them. Can only be picked by a character with the Indian background. The skills given approximate the stereotypical ideal of a noble Redskin:



Skills: Bow or Rifle, Dodge, Grit, Hide, Knife, Listen, Forage, Ride, Sixth Sense, Sneak, Swim, Track.

Businessman

A landholder, cattle baron, or maybe the proprietor of a successful saloon or the owner of a prosperous business. His business doesn't have to be legal, or he can have a sideline in smuggling guns or bootlegging. In smaller towns, he's the richest man. Frequently the "villain in the background" in westerns.

Skills: Accounting, Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, Pistol, Sixth Sense, Teamster.

Special: +40% to Credit Rating.

Cavalry Trooper

A veteran of the Civil War or even the Indian Wars, he may have some old injuries or old medals. He may have been thrown out of the Army. He wears his old uniform and Army weapons. He could be any rank from private to general.

Skills: Bayonet, all Firearms, all m  le skills, Martial Arts, Knife, Throw, Ride. Depending on branch of service: Artillery, First Aid, Machine Gun, Mechanical Repair, Teamster, Saber, Demolitions.

Special: +50% to be distributed among combat skills.

Occupations

Artist

Maybe a painter who wants to capture the beauty of the landscape, or perhaps a photographer dragging his huge trunk around, or a musician or whatever.

Skills: Art (whatever appropriate), Bargain, Insight, Persuade, possibly Photography.

Barber

The typical barber whose razor had better not slip while he shaves the bad guys.

Skills: Accounting, Bargain, Craft: Barber, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, Straight Razor.

Bartender

The man who slides the whisky across the bar and takes down the mirror when things get a mite rowdy in the saloon.

Skills: Accounting, Craft: Barkeep, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, Fist, Club, Tipple.

Special: -2 to EDU.

Bounty Hunter

Can be a filthy bruiser or almost a gentleman. Either way, he earns his keep by finding fugitives with outstanding warrants. ("Dead or alive, it said...")

Skills: Fast Talk, all Firearms, Fist, Grapple, Head butt, Hide, Kick, Insight, Law, Persuade, Ride, Sneak.

Special: +1 to STR and SIZ.



Cook

"Cookie" was the guy who could put together an edible if not necessarily palatable meal out of the often meager ingredients on hand. There were cooks in the larger saloons and in the dining cars of trains, but also in the cook wagons of settlers' wagon trains and rode with the cowboys and wranglers who were out with the herds for weeks at a time. Meat dishes, beans, bacon, and coffee are standard items in a cook's repertoire.

Skills: Craft: Cook, Dodge (especially lousy cooks), Fast Talk, Spit (in food?), Teamster ("traveling" cooks only), and two personal skills.

Cowboy

The "hired man" on a ranch. Mostly young, cool types, generally farm boys. Not necessarily bad and not professionals with weapons.

Skills: First Aid, Jump, Lasso, Natural History, Pistol, Ride, Rifle, Shotgun, Spit, Teamster, Whip.

Game Aids

In brief, the soundtracks to the films *For A Fistful of Dollars*, *For A Few Dollars More*, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, and *Once Upon A Time in the West*, are all by Ennio Morricone and are fantastically suited for acoustic accompaniment. There's a piece of music that will really get under your skin for every situation. A must for Wild West Keepers.

The book *A Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in the Wild West* by Candy Moulton (Writer's Digest Books) will also be of interest to Keepers. As the title promises, it contains lots of things worth knowing about the Wild West on which a Keeper can use to create a denser and more authentic atmosphere. It appears to be out of print at the moment and so may require a little more effort to find.



Dancing Girls

Saloons often have a little stage upon which at least three girls will get up and dance the can-can. They're "the entertainment."

Skills: Art: Dance, Bargain, Fast Talk, Insight, Seduce, any two skills as personal specialty.

Special: +1 to APP, -2 to EDU.

Skills: Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Grit, Persuade, Pistol, Seduce, Sixth Sense.

Special: +30% to Credit Rating.

Greenhorn

He comes from far away—Back East, or even Europe—and meets the Wild West. Back home he was sheltered, and here it's so brutal. He hasn't come to terms with that yet. Greenhorns are frequently butts of cowboys' jokes. They're frequently and avidly given a raw deal.

Skills: Credit Rating, any four skills as personal specialty.

Doctor

Can be the town's doctor, belonging to the upper class, dressing well, money in his pocket. Or could be like "Doc" Holliday, with questionable credentials, carrying a dusty bag full of tools, moving from town to town and bottle to bottle.

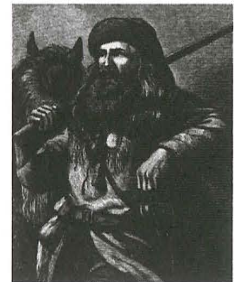
Skills: Bargain, Biology, Credit Rating, First Aid, Insight, Latin, Medicine (human or veterinary), Persuade.

Special: Possible +30% to Credit Rating.

Hunter/Trapper

The hunter can be a big-game hunter, going after bear, buffalo, or mountain lion. Or he could hunt smaller animals, whose hides he sells. He can also be the buckskin-clad trapper who lives in lonely places with just his buffalo rifle, bringing his hides into town twice a year, using his traps much more than his gun.

Skills: Bargain, Hide, Knife, Listen, Forage, Natural History, Rifle, Sneak, Track, Trap.



Explorer

So much of the land is still unexplored, perhaps concealing all sorts of mysteries. He's usually a rich man from Back East, and possibly an educated one to boot.

Skills: Climb, Dodge, First Aid, History, Jump, Legends & Lore, Navigation, Other Language, Photography, Swim. Possibly Archeology and/or Anthropology.

Special: +2 to EDU.

Inventor

The educated kook from the city who's knocking together inventions, like a top-hat gun, perhaps in a tumble-down barn on an abandoned farm.

Skills: Chemistry, Demolitions, Electrical Repair, Fast Talk, Mechanical Repair, Physics, Sixth Sense.

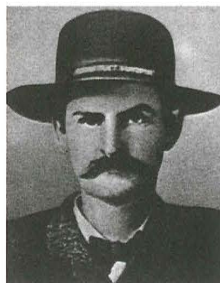
Special: +2 to EDU.

Gambler

He makes his living at the card table. Usually, he'll be turned out like a dandy, passing himself off as a gentleman. He knows all the games and all the cheats. (Think Bret Maverick.) The Derringer up his sleeve is as necessary to his survival as the aces up the other.

Skills: Bargain, Fast Talk, Gamble, Insight, Law, Listen, Persuade, Spot Hidden.

Special: +10% to Luck rolls.



Gentleman

The real dandified dude from the city, though there are small-town versions as well. Either he's the real thing with plenty of money, or he's a impostor, a con-man, a gigolo or similar.

Jayhawker

Jayhawkers also went after the herds of longhorns out of Texas, but they weren't interested in driving them off, rather they wanted to ambush the drivers and rustle the cattle. Sometimes they worked together with grangers. They were de facto bandits and rustlers who were always about in gangs. (The term, originally applied to ruffians of all sorts, eventually became associated with the free-state factions in the civil war in "Bleeding Kansas," hence its retention as the "Jayhawk" mascot of the University of Kansas today.)

Skills: Forage, Hide, Natural History, Navigate, Quick Draw, Ride, Sixth Sense, Sneak, Tipple, Track, and one firearm skill.

Special: +1 to CON.

Judge

He sentences criminals to their just punishment. Judges are usually among the most respectable citizens of a town, with expensive clothes, a nice house, family, etc. However, there are also “judges” like Roy Bean, who named himself justice of the peace after he’d found a law book somewhere and set up court in his saloon.

Skills: Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Insight, Law, Library Use, Own Language (English), Persuade.

Special: +40% to Credit Rating.

Law Dog

Sheriffs were responsible for a defined area. A town marshal was the law in larger municipalities, though subordinate to the sheriff. The deputy is the lowest rung on the law-enforcement ladder. They’re the sheriff or marshal’s flunkies. It’s easy to conceive of corresponding characters.

Skills: All Firearms, Fist, Grapple, Insight, Law, Persuade, Quick Draw, Ride, Tether, Track.

Lawyer

“A lawyer is a gentleman who rescues your estate from your enemies and keeps it himself.” Henry Peter, Baron Brougham & Vaux (1778–1868), Politician & Author

In small towns, there’s usually just one lawyer. Often, he was the Justice of the Peace as well. In the main, he was well-heeled but probably only moderately educated in the law. The smaller and more isolated the area, the less professional the attorney is likely to be. Some attorneys lived in tents, traveling from town to town offering their services.

Skills: Accounting, Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Insight, Law, Persuade, any one skill as a personal specialty.

Special: +20% to Credit Rating.

Lucky Lady

“The only way to leave a casino with a small fortune is to go in with a large one.” Unknown gambler

There were also a number of professional women gamblers in the Wild West who were fully the equal of their male peers. Madame Mustache, Minnie the Gambler, and Poker Alice were well-known figures. The lucky lady earns her keep at games of chance, and spends it extravagantly. If she wins large sums, she’ll deck herself out like a real dame, with expensive clothes and jewelry. Her love affairs are legion. In general, she’s armed, with a Derringer at least.

Skills: Bargain, Fast Talk, Gamble, Insight, Listen, Persuade, any two skills as personal specialty.

Medicine Man

A person believed by their tribe to have supernatural healing powers. Indians believed that illness was caused by supernatural powers and could be cured by them. As well as their connections to the supernatural world medicine men also knew herbal remedies. This occupation can only be picked by a character with the Indian background.

Skills: Forage, Insight, Listen, Natural History, Occult, Persuade, Pharmacy, Spot Hidden.

Special: A medicine man can have a special gift at the keeper’s discretion. The gift can be something like divination, walking without leaving track, becoming invisible, being bullet resistant, etc. A medicine man may also learn spells at the keeper’s discretion.

Should the keeper allow medicine men player characters, he is directed to consult the main rule book and *Cthulhu: Dark Ages* for suitable spells.

Piano Player

There’s always a piano somewhere in a corner of a saloon, usually near the stage. Sometimes it’s a player piano playing rolls of punched paper, but usually there’s a piano player. He’s employed by the saloon or is a member of a troupe of dancing girls who travel from place to place. In the latter case, he’s usually their “manager.”

The piano player in the West must have particularly steady nerves. He’s supposed to keep playing, even if bar fights or even shoot-outs break out around him. Hence the popular sign: “Please Don’t Shoot the Piano Player.”

Skills: Accounting, Art: Piano, Grit, Mechanical Repair, Sixth Sense, Tipple, any two skills as personal specialty.

Special: +20% to Art: Piano, +30% to Grit.

Pinkerton Detective

The Pinkerton Agency was a large detective agency that operated in many states. The employees all dressed the same, in neat dark suits. In the Wild West, they were often given assignments that were essentially bounty hunts.

Skills: Bargain, Fast Talk, Fist, Grapple, Insight, Law, Persuade, Pistol, Sneak, Track.

Special: No SAN loss for discovering corpses or suffering injuries.

Preacher

Doesn’t matter what sect or religion. Player characters are most likely to be wandering preachers or missionaries who wander through the wilderness armed only with the Good Book, bringing God’s Word to the Indians and the Godless.

Skills: Bargain, Fast Talk, Insight, Occult, Other Language, Own Language, Persuade, Scripture.

Prospector

All his money’s invested in prospecting equipment. His claim is his future: poverty or riches.

Skills: Climb, Demolition, Geology, Jump, Forage, Natural History, Navigate, Spot Hidden.

Railroad Worker

The Wild West had to be opened up to the Iron Horse. Various companies hired on men who could do the hard work. They laid the tracks with an enormous amount of physical effort.

Skills: Climb, Demolitions, Fast Talk, Insight, Mechanical Repair, Pick, Rifle, Spit.

Special: +1 to STR and CON.

Rancher/Farmer

He's gotten a piece of land and raises his animals or crops on it. He lives in a wooden farmhouse with his family, going into town to buy and sell.

Skills: Accounting, Bargain, Craft: Farmer, Credit Rating, Homesteading, Lasso, Ride, Rifle, Teamster.
Special: +1 to CON and STR.

Reporter

Sent by a great newspaper Back East into the Wild West or writing for a local single-sheet broadsheet that he sets and prints himself.

Skills: Bargain, Craft: Journalism, Craft: Printer, Fast Talk, Insight, Listen, Own Language (English), Persuade, Sneak, Spot Hidden.

Safecracker

You can clean out a bank one of two ways. You can hold it up, or you can sneak in at night and crack the safe. Ordinary businesses, hotels, and saloons keep their money in safes too. A safecracker is proud of his skill. He considers himself a professional who only takes what he "earns." He'll ignore valuables that aren't locked up. He'll crack a safe one of two ways, either with tools and dexterity (boring out the lock or listening to tumblers fall), or he'll use a simpler but more dangerous method: explosives. Not dynamite, like in the movies, but nitroglycerin, which can be measured and applied more exactly. A classic method is to hollow out a piece of soap, place it on the top side of the safe door, pour in the nitroglycerin, and add a detonator. If done correctly, only the safe door will blow, leaving the contents undamaged.

Skills: Chemistry, Demolitions, Electrical Repair, Listen, Locksmith, Mechanical Repair, Sixth Sense, Sneak.

Schoolmarm

The town has a one-room schoolhouse for the area's urchins. All the students are taught together, regardless of age. The teacher is usually a bony, stiff woman with a tight bun of hair and excellent diction.

Skills: Credit Rating, Own Language (English), Persuade, Rod (like small Club) or Cane, any three skills as personal specialty.
Special: +10% to Credit Rating, +2 to EDU.

Scout

Scouts lead wagon trains across the west, know the wilderness well, and presumably also have good relationships with the Indians there. Perhaps he's even an Indian himself, or a half-breed. A scout can also work for a railroad company that's laying track across the wilderness. He knows the best route and keeps the workers fed by shooting buffalo.

Skills: Hide, Knife, Forage, Legends & Lore, Natural History, Other Language (usually an Indian language), Pistol or Rifle, Ride, Spot Hidden, Track.



Shootist

"Shootist" was the contemporary term for what we call a gunfighter. He handles his weapon deftly, traveling around with only his horse and no fixed source of income. This character type can a "good guy" (like John Wayne or Alan Ladd in many movie), a radically disinterested type who only worries about himself (the protagonist in virtually all spaghetti westerns, especially Clint Eastwood's Man with No Name), or a classic "bad guy" gunman.

Skills: Dodge, all Firearms, First Aid, Grit, Jump, Quick Draw, Ride, Sixth Sense, Spit, Spot Hidden, Track.
Special: +70% to be divided among firearms skills.

Shopkeeper

He runs the local general store, grocery, feed store, gun shop, or whatever else is appropriate.

Skills: Accounting, Craft: Shopkeeper, Bargain, Credit Rating, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, any two skills as personal specialty.
Special: +20% to Credit Rating.

Soiled Dove

Saloons frequently house a bordello upstairs, or there are independent establishments, from the roughest to the most genteel ("High-class" "parlor girls" generally scorned the "crib girls" who worked out of tiny apartments, who in turn scorned the saloon girls, who scorned the streetwalkers at the bottom of the ladder.) A character can be a simple "dove" or a madam.



Skills: Art (Ars Amatoria), Bargain, Disguise, Fast Talk, Insight, Persuade, Pick Pocket, Seduce, Tipple.
Special: +1 to APP, -2 to EDU.

Stagecoach Driver

The largest stagecoach company was Wells Fargo & Co. Their stagecoaches carried passengers, mail, and valuables. As a result, they were a favorite target of bandits. A stage driver must be a robust fellow who both understands his job and is handy with a gun. Not for the faint of heart. In any case, a stage driver always has a whiff of the primitive about him.

Skills: Insight, Mechanical Repair, Navigate, Pistol or Rifle, Sixth Sense, Spot Hidden, Teamster, Whip.
Special: +1 to STR and CON, -2 to EDU.

Undertaker

The rougher the town, the better the business for the undertaker. The classical undertaker is either tall, pale, and emaciated, or an old codger with an enormous beard (as in *A Fistful of Dollars*).

Skills: Accounting, Craft: Undertaker, Bargain, Biology, Grit, Insight, Persuade, Spit. Undertakers in more civilized towns may also consider Art: Mortician.
Special: No SAN losses related to corpses or injuries.



The Wild West: where one way of life...

U.S. Marshal

Always “the good guy” carrying federal authority, and can act in any jurisdiction. The Marshal is especially respected or feared.

Skills: Credit Rating, Fast Talk, all Firearms, Fist, Grapple, Law, Quick Draw, Persuade, Ride, Sneak, Spot Hidden, Track.

Special: No SAN lost for seeing corpses or being injured. +20% to Credit Rating.

Writer

He travels around the Wild West trying to write an exciting book. He’ll have come from “civilization,” maybe even from abroad.

Skills: Art (Writing), Fast Talk, Insight, Library Use, Other Language, Own Language, Persuade, Spot Hidden.

Goin' Plum Loco

Insane *Call of Cthulhu* characters normally find themselves sooner or later in an asylum or in private psychotherapeutic care. At some point, they’re declared cured and let loose on humanity again. It’s hard to imagine a cowboy being admitted to an asylum, but it wouldn’t have been impossible. The first insane asylums were established astonishingly early (e.g., State Asylum for the Insane, Milledgeville, Georgia (1842); Illinois State Hospital for the Insane, Jacksonville, Illinois (1847); Texas State Lunatic Asylum, Austin, Texas (1857); Osawatomie State Hospital, Osawatomie, Kansas (1863); Bryce Hospital for the Insane, Tuscaloosa, Alabama (1864); Arizona State Hospital for the Insane, Phoenix, Arizona (1879); to name just a few).

For game purposes, the following solution offers itself: the insanity isn’t cured, but played out by the player. For some types of insanity, this presents no problems. The character is “just a little off.” It can be fun to play a character that’s a little loco. It fits in with the era as well, given that among the gunfighters of the Old West there were a striking number of disturbed individuals definitely in need of treatment. The character has a quirk from then on; he “just ain’t right,” without it keeping him from further adventures. Horrible disturbances would, of course, render a character unplayable. The Keeper and the affected character’s player should discuss the issue and decide how to go forward.

One possibility for healing insanity within a cinematic milieu has proved itself very atmospheric: calling on an Indian shaman. That can be an adventure in itself. The shaman can conduct a ritual leading the madman into the realm of spirits and give him the opportunity to defeat his own terrors. Details are outside the parameters of this article, but it shouldn’t be hard to find literature on the theme of dream journeys, etc. If the character wakes back up in the care of the shaman, then he’s truly healed. But this possibility shouldn’t be too easy, lest the magic lose its aura.

...was being replaced with another: settlers in 1887



PERSONAL INFORMATION.

Name _____ Player Name _____
Residence _____ Episodes of Insanity _____
Personal Description _____

Wounds & Injuries _____

Family & Friends _____

Marks & Scars _____

BACKGROUND & HISTORY.

INCOME & SAVINGS.

Income _____ Cash on Hand _____
Savings _____

Personal Property _____

Real Estate _____

EQUIPMENT & POSSESSIONS.

MYTHOS TOMES READ.

ARTIFACTS & JUJU KNOWN.

CRITTERS ENCOUNTERED.

The Hunt for Kid Richter

An Introductory Scenario for *Call of Cthulhu in the Wild West*

by Frank Heller, the Law West of the Oder

translated from the German by "Mysterious Bill Walsh"

Foreword

This scenario is an ideal entrée into a Wild West *Call of Cthulhu* campaign. A group is brought together and given a "common task" which will ensure that even the most wildly differing character types will remain together for a good period of time—long enough to live to see further adventures. Those seeking Cthulhoid horrors on the hunt for Kid Richter will do so in vain—and that is purely intentional. Supernatural terrors shouldn't show up until the follow-up adventures. More on this in the Afterword. Happy hunting!

Kid Richter

Frank "Kid" Richter is a nasty outlaw and drunkard who haunts a number of states in the Southwest with his gang. They've killed dozens of men for little or no reason, looted banks, and recently even raided a train. After such a sensational crime, things have gotten a little too hot even for the Kid, and he and his men have retreated to the mountains of New Mexico where they're hiding out, waiting for things to cool off. Setting out from Elbury Ridge, they went fairly deep into the mountains, and there they ran across Old Ben. The toothless and friendly geezer had been slogging away for many years looking for gold on his claim (utterly without success). The sheltered valley, the nearby creek, the shack and the stable caught the Kid's fancy so strongly that he decided to stay awhile. Old Ben wasn't happy about that and got himself shot dead. At the beginning of the adventure, the gang is holed up at Old Ben's claim, idly passing the time. They feel safe there.

The Characters Come Together

How do I get a preacher, a prostitute, an Indian scout, and a bounty hunter together to chase adventure? A tricky business, no? Don't worry. "The Hunt for Kid Richter" is designed for precisely that purpose. Although the characters aren't acquainted at the beginning of the adventure, they nevertheless share a common goal. They all want to find Kid Richter, preferably dead. The Keeper must work a little bit with the players to find suitable reasons. Some suggestions:

—It's very simple for lawmen (Sheriffs, U.S. Marshals, etc.). They're on the trail of Kid Richter and his gang in order to bring them to justice for their crimes.

—Bounty Hunters are naturally after the bounty on the Kid's head and those of his gang.

—Others could be following Kid Richter because he's robbed them. An Inventor, for example, is on the trail of a unique prototype of an invention that Kid Richter absconded with. A Prospector is chasing him because the Kid stole all the gold he'd panned in the last year. Without the gold, his life is ruined, he's busted. A Gambler might have been relieved of winnings accumulated on a hot streak. He can't let that go.

—Kid Richter is an indiscriminate killer. A person of any occupation would want to run him to ground and shoot him dead if he'd killed a close friend or relative of theirs. Maybe he and his gang raided a farm, killing everyone there. When a Cowboy returns home, his whole family is dead—parents, sister, wife. His motivation is simply vengeance. This is a classic motif in westerns. (See, for example, *The Searchers* or *Once Upon A Time in the West*.)

—A young Shootist might want to make a name for himself, and killing Kid Richter would be an awfully quick way to do it. So he's hunting the Kid.

—A Reporter always wants a hot story—like the Kid's. He wants to find the Kid, take his picture, ask him about his life story, and then write a long article or maybe even a book. If he sees the other characters smoke out the Kid, he'll help out and then sell the story—'How We Got "Kid" Richter', probably with no little success.

—A character might be hunting Kid Richter because his or her brother is a member of his gang. Their mother is deathly ill and wants to see her favorite son one last time. So that character will want to find the brother and take him home. It's up to the Keeper which member of the gang is the brother in question. Kid Richter won't let any one go, and since he's got an itchy trigger finger, a shoot-out is almost inevitable.

—Pure idealism might be a motive. A Preacher will want to convince Kid Richter and his cohorts to return to the path of righteousness, forswearing violence and plunder. The Kid, of course, will only answer such entreaties with hot lead.

The Beginning

Oppressive heat. Bare, reddish boulders everywhere. Lizards bask in the sun. A rattlesnake disappears beneath a dry bush. Sweat pours from the characters' brows, burns their eyes. Horses pant. The hoof



prints in the dusty ground are unambiguous: eight horses came through this canyon. Kid Richter and his gang must be back there somewhere. Their goal is almost at hand...

If the Keeper and players like spaghetti westerns, they'll know how to play the characters' meeting. They won't know each other, but without saying a word, they'll know why the others are there. It's clear that they all are after the same thing: Kid Richter. They've come from different directions, one of them might already be camped there, and now, slowly, they've all joined together without exchanging a single sign of greeting. They free up their weapons, riding wordlessly on—now together. The Keeper should describe this as vividly as possible, emphasizing the heat, dust, and sweat, ideally accompanied by a western soundtrack. (See the recommendations above.)

To really evoke the flair of a spaghetti western, the Keeper should keep the players from speaking with each other for a half hour, having them simply describe their actions to the Keeper. Ideally, the players would first speak to each other after the Kid and his gang are dead. Before that, hand gestures would be possible.

If the group is less fond of the taciturn spaghetti-western style, the coming together can play out normally, role-playing conversations between the characters who will likely want to tell why they're there. They will quickly realize that they have roughly the same goal and will want to proceed together, because the Kid's gang has at least five members and they're damned dangerous gunmen. If the group

of characters is not particularly skilled in combat, the Keeper should simply leave out one or two bandits. It shouldn't be too easy for the characters, but not extremely difficult either.



Old Ben's Claim

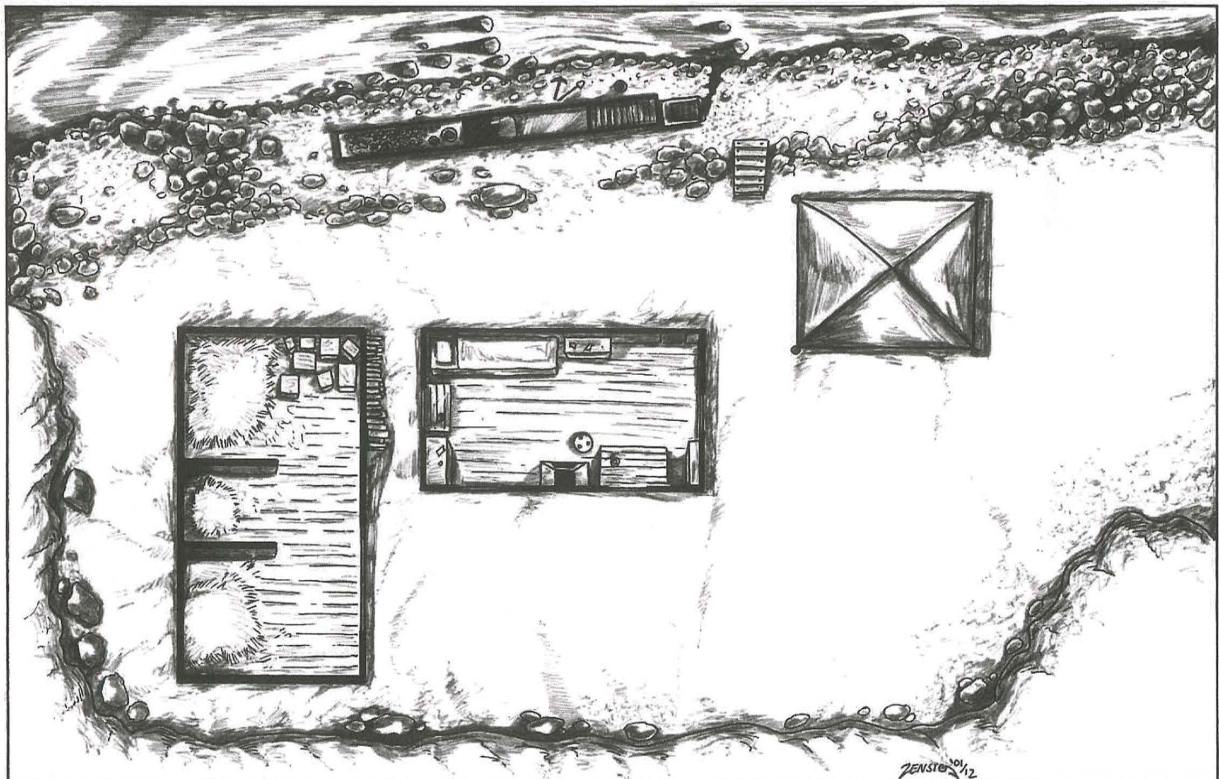
At the end of the canyon lies Old Ben's claim. It's a box canyon, with only one way in and out. Kid Richter and his gang are trapped. They've fatally underestimated their pursuers, believing they'd never be found here. But the characters have done it. And the following scene plays out:

A creek runs through the otherwise very bare canyon. On its banks, scrubby bushes grow here and there, but otherwise the canyon floor is covered with dusty earth and light gravel. The walls of the canyon are steep, too steep to be climbed. The canyon

ends in a narrow gully from which the creek flows. It's extremely narrow and the current is so strong that there's no way through. The valley is a dead-end.

On the bank where the creek flows a little more calmly stands an odd wooden structure: some angular boards over which the creek's waters flow, and some piles of gravel and stone. Here Old Ben panned for gold, with very modest success. The makeshift sluice diverts the water so that he could pan for gold in it. The piles of gravel have already been sifted. Alongside stands a tent, more like a

Old Ben's Claim



sunshade. Old Ben could keep working under it out of the hot midday sun.

The characters' attention will likely be held by the two buildings: a wooden shack and a shed. Both are rather tumble-down, nailed together amateurishly, bleached by the sun, their best days definitely behind them. The shack has five windows with shutters. They are all closed, but there are cruciform slits cut into the shutters which can be used as firing ports from within the shack. The shack has a door that can be barred from within (STR 15). Inside is a single room with a bed, table, stool, some cabinets, and a fireplace. The fireplace doubles as a stove. Old Ben lived here, and now Kid Richter and his men have made themselves at home. Kid sleeps in the bed, of course, and at least one of his men is always in the room as well, usually Texas Jim. They have part of their loot here, a small box full of gold under the bed (value: \$5,000). The second building is the stable. Firewood is piled up outside under a overhanging roof. A double door which cannot be barred leads to the interior. Three horses stand inside. There's a big pile of hay and some junk like old barrels and crates in a corner. At night, the rest of the gang stays here, sleeping in the hay. The rest of their loot is hidden in the hay: a sack of paper money (\$2,300). The gang has already blown the rest of the money elsewhere.

Five more horses are tied up behind the stable. The gang uses five of the horses for riding and three as packhorses.

Behind a boulder directly against the canyon wall, poor Old Ben's body has been hastily and poorly buried. All this once belonged to him, and Kid Richter shot him like a dog.

The Finale

The characters can sneak up to the gang's camp and reconnoiter unobserved. Not much is going on. The gang mostly keeps to the shack and stable, only occasionally emerging to tend to the horses, fetch water, or relieve themselves. At night, they all go to sleep save one, who stays awake, keeping a dozy watch through the cracked stable door.

Events will proceed almost inevitably: as soon as a character gets within ten yards of the shack, the Kid's sixth sense will tell him something's up. If he had been asleep, he'll immediately be wide awake, waking up the other man sleeping in the shack (presumably Texas Jim). During the day, he'll hurry to a window and peer out to see what he can see. Should he notice anyone, he'll try to shoot them dead. The shot will rouse the rest of the gang. A shoot-out is unavoidable. The Keeper can play it out however he likes, though it should come to a climax with the characters facing off against the Kid. Richter is a tough customer—a Villain—and can take a lot of damage.

With the Kid dying on the ground, if the characters search his body they'll find a portion of a map, slightly smeared with blood, in the breast pocket of his shirt. It is apparently a very old treasure map from the age of the conquistadors, annotated in Spanish. Unfortunately, two-thirds of the map is missing. You can't tell where to begin looking for the treasure. They've got to get the information out of the dying Kid. Half-delirious and spitting blood, he'll mumble two names. Then he dies.

The characters have succeeded in running down the Kid and his gang. A bounty hunter (or indeed any of them) can collect a handsome reward. Beyond that, they've probably found a lot of gold and

money. They have to decide whether to keep it or to return it. And they've found a treasure map—a spur for further adventures together.

The Treasure Map

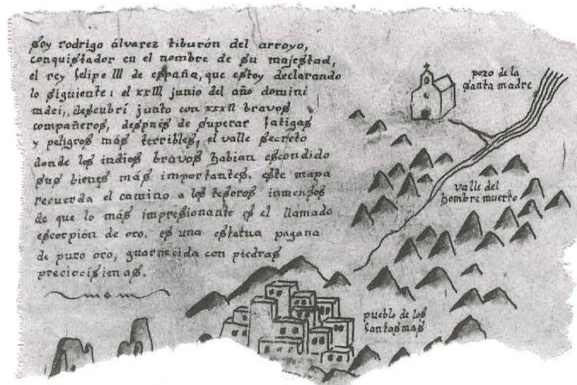
The treasure map can only be understood by someone who speaks (and can read) Spanish. The fragment in Kid Richter's possession is the top most, and speaks of a hidden valley where Indians stashed unspecified vast treasures, including a golden, bejeweled scorpion. Unfortunately, without the rest of the map, it's impossible to find. The text reads:

"My name is Rodrigo Álvarez Tibur—n del Arroyo, conquistador in the name of His Majesty, King Felipe III of Spain, and I declare the following: on the twenty-third of June of the year of our Lord 1601, along with thirty two stout companions and after overcoming the most horrible trials and dangers, I discovered the secret valley where the brave Indians have hidden their most important goods. This map recalls the way to the vast treasure, of which the most impressive is that called the Golden Scorpion. It is a pagan idol of pure gold, set with the most precious stones."

The labels on the map translate as (from top to bottom):

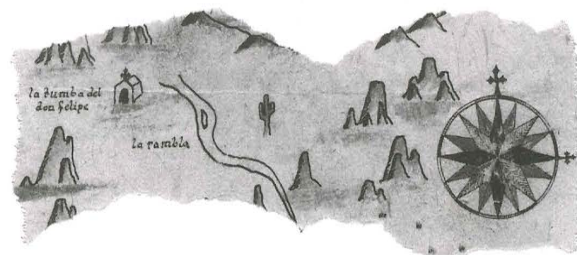
First Fragment:

Well of the Holy Mother, Dead Man's Valley, Pueblo of Ghosts



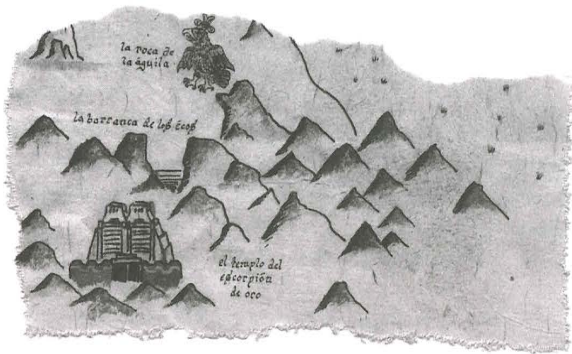
Second Fragment:

Don Felipe's Grave, Riverbed



Third Fragment:

Eagle Rock, Chasm of Echoes, Temple of the Golden Scorpion



A full-color version of the Spanish map may be downloaded from the Worlds of Cthulhu website at <http://www.worldsofcthulhu.com>.

Afterword

The Keeper can now take charge of a Wild West campaign. The obvious next task is to find the other pieces of the map in order to be able to use it to find the Golden Scorpion and the secret temple of the Aztecs. The missing pieces of the map can be stashed in unrelated published adventures (see recommendations above), or the Keeper can design adventures around them. The Keeper can have the last missing piece of the map appear when he's ready to begin the search for the Golden Scorpion. And, by the way, anyone who's missed the horror elements in this adventure can rest easy: supernatural phenomena aplenty await the characters in the valley of the lost Aztec temple. The search for the Golden Scorpion is the subject of an adventure too long to be included in this article. It will likely be published in a subsequent issue of Worlds of Cthulhu or as a separate special issue.



Kid Richter's Gang

Frank "Kid" Richter, vicious sociopath out of New Berlin, Texas				
Villain, 24 years old, dirty blond, full beard, cold gray eyes.				
Reward: \$1,000, dead or alive.				
STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 14	POW 14
DEX 17	APP 11	EDU 9	SAN 23	HP 13
Damage Bonus: +0				
Attacks: Two .44 Remington New Model Army pistols 70%, 1D10+2				

Bowie Knife 40%, 1D4+2
Skills: Quick Draw 70%, Ride 58%, Sixth Sense 91%, Sneak 56%, Spit 80%, Tether 74%, Tipple 63%

Description: Despite his nickname, "Kid" Richter is no kid. He's been dubbed that by his men, because he's their leader, despite being the youngest in the gang. To underline his maturity, he's grown something approximating a full beard. He doesn't talk much about where he came from. Anyone asking too many questions quickly finds himself under six feet of dirt. The Kid is a conscienceless killer and habitual criminal. Human life means nothing to him, nor does friendship. It's his brutality, unusual even by outlaw standards, which has made him the head of the gang. Kid Richter always shoots two-handed. (See above for the relevant combat rules.)



"Texas Jim" Grunion				
Henchman, 29 years old, dark hair, unshaven.				
Reward: \$200, dead or alive.				
STR 15	CON 12	SIZ 10	INT 8	POW 11
DEX 11	APP 9	EDU 7	SAN 32	HP 11

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Attacks: Two .44 Colt Navy revolvers 60% (Overcharged to +30% range and +1D4 damage, see above), 1D10+1+1D4.
 Bowie Knife 50%, 1D4+2+1D4
Skills: Black-Powder Weapons 50%, Curse 64%, Quick Draw 50%, Ride 55%, Sixth Sense 53%, Spit 73%, Stare Balefully 90%, Tipple 83%

Description: Texas Jim is a primitive thug who's absolutely loyal to the Kid. He's a real "sergeant" to his boss. He never knew his father and grew up with his mother in a whorehouse, running away at 13. Since then, he's made do with crimes small and large. Like the Kid, Texas Jim fires both his guns at once.



Emanuel Alonzo Sanchez				
Desperado, 32 years old, big gut, unshaven, walrus mustache.				
Reward: \$100, dead or alive.				
STR 12	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 9	POW 12
DEX 10	APP 9	EDU 8	SAN 35	HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Attacks: .52 Spencer Carbine 50%, 2D6+3
 .45 Colt Peacemaker 50%, 1D10+2
Skills: Curse 55%, Other Language (English) 50%, Ride 68%, Sixth Sense 52%, Spit 50%, Spot Hidden 68%, Tipple 80%, Wash Self 05%



Description: As one might expect from his name, Sanchez is a Mexican. He's a stereotypical bandito: unshaven, big mustache, light-colored but filthy clothes, cartridge belts crossed on his chest, wide sombrero, beer gut. He talks constantly, gesticulating wildly and cursing in Spanish (¡Ay caramba! ¡Mira! ¡Madre de Dios! etc., etc., etc.).

"Irish Bill" Malone
Desperado, 31 years old, dirty blond, unshaven, quiet.
Reward: \$300, dead or alive.

STR 13	CON 16	SIZ 10	INT 13	POW 13
DEX 12	APP 12	EDU 10	SAN 42	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: .44 Winchester rifle 55%, 2D6+3
.44 Colt Navy 45% (Overcharged to +10% range and +1 damage, see above), 1D10+1+1
Bowie Knife 40%, 1D4+2

Skills: Black-Powder Weapons 60%, Keep Quiet 90%, Quick Draw 60%, Ride 75%, Sixth Sense 70%, Spit 40%, Tipple 60%

Description: "Irish Bill" is the archetypal silent gunslinger. Consequently, he appears even more dangerous than he actually is.



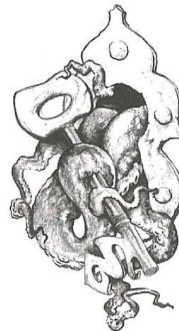
"The Preacher"
Henchman, 52 years old, dark hair, neatly groomed.
Reward: \$200, dead or alive.

STR 14	CON 13	SIZ 16	INT 11	POW 10
DEX 9	APP 10	EDU 13	SAN 28	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: 16-gauge double-barreled shotgun 45%, damage 2D6+2/1D6+1/1D4
.45 Colt Peacemaker 50%, damage 1D10+2
Skills: Fast Talk 60%, Follow Scripture 10%, Quick Draw 50%, Quote Scripture 75%, Ride 40%, Persuade 70%, Sixth Sense 70%

Description: No one knows his real name. He's called "Preacher" because he always dresses in black and quotes the Bible sarcastically. Maybe he once was a preacher. He's the oldest member of the gang.



The Gate & The Key
of Call of Cthulhu roleplay

Yog-Sothoth.com
Devoted to Call of Cthulhu

- News & Reviews
- Forums
- Interviews
- Players Directory
- Gaming Resources

Yog-Sothoth.com is an online resource for the Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game, featuring material for both Chaosium's BRP and Wizard of the Coast's d20 versions of the game.

www.yog-sothoth.com
Remember, a Healer is Cthulhu!

Open it if you dare.

BOOK OF DARK WISDOM

The Magazine of Dark Fiction & Lovecraftian Horror



Issue #5 now available!

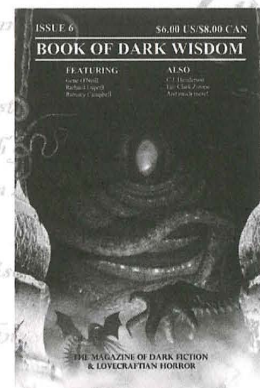
Featuring:
David Niall Wilson
Jack Fisher
Bruce Boston
Dan Harms

Coming in issue #6:

Richard A. Lupoff
Ramsey Campbell
Gene O'Neill
C.J. Henderson
Lee Clark Zumpe

Available via our website and from fine bookstores around the world.

WWW.DARKWISDOM.COM



Mental Disorders and their Role-playing Consequences:
In the Grip of Madness



by Joachim A. (Sylum Expert) Hagen
with Additional Material by Samyr Entsey, Psyt.
translated by Alex von Veten

“After I have achieved world domination, there will be whisky in buckets and marijuana for everyone... my adversaries and those who might one day oppose me will be crucified all along the Transamericana... from Alaska to Tierra Del Fuego... there’s room for everyone... ain’t that a great program for a party?”

Every investigator in Call of Cthulhu runs the risk of losing health or even life confronting the Horrors. But the Mythos, with its merciless and uncaring powers, presents a threat hanging above the investigator like the sword of Damocles, with consequences that reach far beyond mere physical dimensions, always threatening your character.

Contact with the Mythos and the horror it can evoke also gnaws at the investigators' mental health. At some point, fate will have its way with the unfortunate, and the investigator will suffer a blow that will unbalance his mental state. He will go insane. Unfortunately, the terms "insane," and "mad" – both taboo words in the medical profession – carry with them a luggage of clichés, such as:

- the classical babbling and giggling madman
- the stone cold charismatic psychopath (preferably a serial killer such as Dr. Hannibal Lecter)
- the delusional patient who thinks he's Napoleon Bonaparte or Julius Caesar
- the crazed cultist (only complete with dark robes and sacrificial knife!)

Normally, mentally disturbed people are presented in the media either as comic relief or evil incarnate. Such a presentation is neither subtle nor precise.

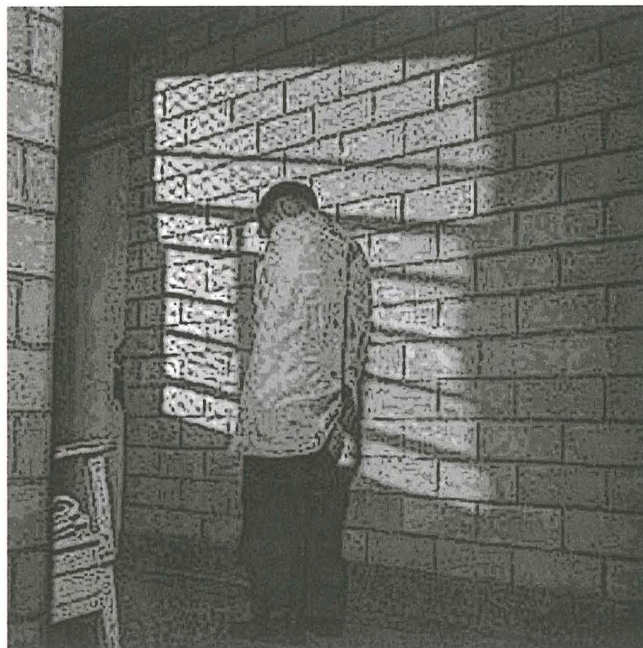
Thus, the keeper or the player are presented with the quandary as to how to portray a mentally disturbed character. How can you present madness in a way that both enriches the game's atmosphere as well as giving more depth to a character? And more importantly, what exactly happens in the mind of a madman? The following article will introduce some well-known symptoms of disorders and give some advice for their integration into play. As this is not a medical treatise, a concise and clear description of the various disorders and their symptoms is the main concern of this text.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is one of the most well-known mental disorders. It is also called "split personality." Nevertheless, it has nothing to do with a real split, dissociated, or multiple personality: The latter disorder causes the mind to split into several fully functional consciousnesses – multiple egos – that inhabit the same body. Multiple personalities often surface as a result of a repressed trauma during childhood. The wish that this "is happening to somebody else, but not to me" thus becomes real.

The term schizophrenia was coined at the beginning of the 20th century by the psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler and actually presents an umbrella term for several different disorders that share loss of the sense of reality, hallucinations or impaired consciousness. The obviously paradoxical behavior of some of the patients is their reaction to a distorted view of reality that the victim has of his environment.

The following symptoms can be found with schizophrenics:



One of the fates awaiting investigators...

Distortions of the Ego

The patient thinks his actions are governed or controlled from the outside. Moreover, he might get the impression that others read or steal his thoughts.

For keepers: The in-game presentation of this disturbance should, in general, be restricted to the keeper. It would be best if the player only knows that he is suffering from a disorder, but doesn't know what type it might be. This allows the keeper to intentionally create a surreal atmosphere: Your feet stride forward as if by their own account... you confusedly look at your hand, as it reaches out for the book... was it really you who has just said that? This kind of description of the player's action that can be used repeatedly during an adventure or campaign, serve to first evoke a feeling of irritation, then of curiosity with the affected player, finally leading to nagging doubt. Is he possessed? Is someone playing a vicious game with him?

For players: Of course, schizophrenia also presents a plentiful playground for the player. A player could jump up and shout "Thief! You are stealing my thoughts!" when a fellow player's character says what the schizophrenic actually wanted to say. This will create a nice little shock for everyone else. Then the schizophrenic character's player just has to keep coming back to the topic – "Why do you know what I intended to say? Is it a machine? A drug? Or that book that you've recently read! Yes, it's the book! What goddess?" – to create an atmosphere of uneasiness among his fellow players.

Remember: A madman is most dangerous when he behaves 99% normal and you never know when this might suddenly change!

Hallucinations

The victim of hallucinations experiences imaginary sensory impressions that may affect all senses – hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and even tasting things that are not there. One of the typical symptoms is hearing voices that either talk to or about the victim. The utterances of these voices may have a threatening or disturbing nature, e.g., when a character thinks some higher being is trying to

contact him. These voices seem to have their own distinct characters and appear to really belong to one or several distinct other people.

For keepers: Again, the keeper can create a disturbing atmosphere – he might want to make the character believe someone is standing behind him and whispering into his ear – in a conspicuous moment, of course.

Or he uses the classic “voice under the bed,” after someone has switched off the lights. Mocking comments from “off stage” can enrage a character no end and will quickly plant the illusion in his mind that an invisible being is with him in the same room. “Yes, you fool... try to find me... you’ll never get me. You’re far too stupid for that, you little tosser! Stupid, that’s it! I clearly remember when you tried to....”

The voices should not, of course, talk to the victim if other people are present.

For players: Talk to yourself in a low voice sometimes. Try to appear vacant from time to time, as if listening to some kind of music far away. Say something completely pointless to no one in particular when there is absolutely no need for it.

Mania

Mania relies on a false judgment of reality. Schizophrenics often suffer from paranoia, i.e., the impression that they are being watched or followed. The suspicion that feelings or thoughts are being controlled from the outside also belong to this category.

For keepers: “At the edge of your vision, you can see something moving... but when you try to look closer, you can’t see anything unusual.”

For players: When sitting down, always try to keep doors and windows in your view. Sort your papers according to a specific scheme, so that you instantly know when someone has tampered

with them. If you are in the same room with other people, never turn your back on them.

Create secret compartments where you can keep important documents, e.g. by sewing secret pockets into your clothes, or hiding them in a secret compartment in your briefcase or under loose floor boards. Always be alert!

From the secret cabinet of personal experience: Long ago, the author toyed around with the perverted idea to give one of his player characters a companion in the shape of a seven foot tall, white rabbit called Harvey – of course, this was an imaginary being. But Harvey was also supposed to be a meter of the character’s mental decay: with decreasing sanity, Harvey would turn more and more ruffled, his fur would become grayer, his eyes would seem bloodshot, and his teeth would turn yellow, and he would grow long claws. Furthermore, his behavior would become more and more aggressive: “Do you remember the little girl playing with a ball, the one you saw two days ago? You didn’t see her yesterday, did you? Nor today? And you know why? Because I bit her head off and played football with it, that’s why! The insolent little brat wouldn’t let me have her ball, but I had a ball with it! And if you turn me in, it’s your turn: I’ll wait until you’ve fallen asleep, and then I’ll tear out your throat! I’ll get you, I swear!”

Distorted Thinking Processes

The schizophrenic is confronted with either a sudden stop of his thinking process or with being flooded by a myriad of thoughts that are not under his control. His language also displays these disturbances: sentences become too complex and make sudden jumps, illogical connections are made, and absurd combinations of words may be uttered.

For keepers: From time to time, pour a flood of impressions onto your player. Talk in a stream-of-consciousness-way: “To your right

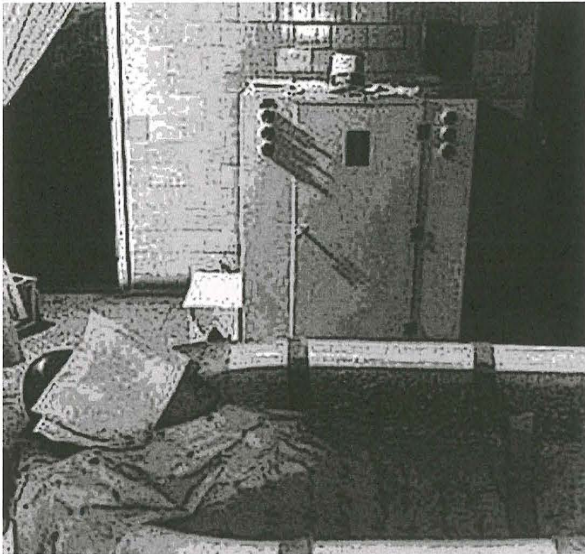
Atmosphere at the Gaming Table

Atmosphere at the gaming table is one of the biggest problems with playing a mentally disturbed person. Every little child can describe his character’s behavior as “mad,” but, unfortunately, this most often only serves to amuse the other players at the table – where we, instead, would wish for helplessness and uncomfortable silence...

Irrational behavior at the gaming table can be of enormous help here. Especially unmotivated behavior can drastically darken the mood. If a fellow player sits at the table, all the time seemingly bored and only disinterestedly playing out his actions and then suddenly ... he hears a completely unimportant description (“the wooden shutters are closed...”) and jumps up, triumphantly yelling (“Ha! Wood! I knew it! I knew it! Haven’t I told you so?”) – this should lead to all other players at the table reacting with irritation. It is of utmost importance not to overdo this, though – use this technique sparingly or it will lose its effects rather fast.

More severe is the problem of a player not being able to properly get into the right mood. He then has to rely on his keeper, who has to create the proper atmosphere with his descriptions. But a good gaming session has to include the efforts of everyone, and all the other players should find an opportunity here to support the atmosphere. It can be very helpful, from time to time, to eye the other player in a way as if he has just danced a naked limbo in the marketplace. Even when, or especially so, when the player hasn’t done anything weird at all. You can support madness in various forms! One example from play:

After the first session of playing a paranoid character, every player as well as the keeper of a gaming group were pretty sure that the player couldn’t cope with the role. The keeper talked to all of the other players on the phone and they decided to “help” the “paranoid” player a little. During the next session, the keeper gave the others a secret signal, as was agreed on the phone, and everyone started talking in numbers. As the player of the paranoid character didn’t know about this agreement, he suddenly thought something was very wrong there. Afterwards, the atmosphere was just perfect, especially because the other players just kept on playing as before and never told him what they had agreed earlier...



Early psychiatric treatment

is a door and the carpet looks pretty worn almost shabby the serving woman has a very buxom figure and the gas have you turned off the gas at home the door is made from dark wood the doorknob is made of brass polished by the touch of many hands how many hands have you shaken already shaken not stirred you felt stirred deeply when your aunt Martha gave you that present for your fifth birthday it was a wooden horse wooden like this door....”

Or describe to your player how the others perceive his character. For example, you could wait until he has just spoken in-character. Then add the following: “You notice that the words just stream out of him like gas from a carbonized water bottle that you shook and opened. It seems as if one word tries to catch up with the other. But you still understand what he wants to say.” Do not be worried about the confused looks of your player. His character is barking mad – he just doesn’t know it.

For players: Your character has lost the ability to think and speak coherently. Not always, but at least sometimes. The best way to show this is by changing your way of speaking: “There must be a simple illogical explanation for this. Yesterday cannot be larger from the inside than from the outside – except on Wednesdays. If you consider the quadrant of Planck, this contradicts all vegetarian research.”

This example, of course, is rather extreme. Your character is not supposed to become the group’s comic relief expert. But you should try to keep in mind saying something incomprehensible from time to time or to jump from one topic to the other during talking: “Maybe we should get weapons. The harvest this year will be good, if you look at the height of the corn. Preferably large caliber ones. Or shot-guns. Have you still got the book I gave you? Anyone got an idea where to get those?”

Mood Disorders

The victim shows emotions that do not fit the current situation. This can take the form of euphoria as well as depressive moods.

For keepers: Let the character experience feelings that do not fit the situation. Attending a funeral, he might feel very good or even exalted. His chuckles are like bubbling champagne. At a party, then, he suddenly sees how empty and hollow the mood is, and he can

see false happiness everywhere. But this act is so pointless! Is anything getting better by this? He is lonely, lonely amongst the masses and separated from his environment as if by a glass wall, and it seems he is the only one who actually notices this predicament. He is utterly alone.

For players: Your task is easy: the feelings of your character do not correspond to what the current situation would dictate. In the face of danger he is happy, having a date with an attractive member of the other sex makes him depressed, a wedding sad, and a funeral relaxed. But try not to overdo it. Your character will not stay calm and controlled in a situation where the imminent danger makes others run away screaming. His emotional reaction is just a little....unorthodox.

Movement Distortions

It might also happen that the victim will fall into a kind of catatonia or nervous hyperactivity. Sometimes we also find movement patterns that are repeated forcibly.

For keepers: Describe to the character what he is doing. “While you are talking, your arm moves up and down as if you want to hammer your words into somebody. You only notice this when your companions stare at you in surprise.” Or maybe: “You seem to have grown roots. At least you can’t move your legs. Or your arms, for that matter. It seems as if you have turned into a pillar of salt.” Or: “Nothing can keep you sitting down now. Agitatedly, you stride through the room; ten paces to the wall, ten back. And you stand again. Is your pants’ zipper done up? You confirm this with a furtive check. You sit down again. Maybe you should better get up again? Didn’t you want to get something done? Now would be the time. Or should you sit down...?”

For players: Get used to showing a tic of some kind. You might want to remember Superintendent Dreyfus from the Inspector Clouseau movies – he winked uncontrollably when his subordinate got on his nerves. Do not explain what your character does, just do it yourself. Twitch with the edge of your mouth. Move your hand absentmindedly over your chest. Play with a pen or lighter all the time. But do it in-character.

Phobias

Phobias are the classics mental disorders and might be easiest to show in play. Phobias are conditions of fear or anxiety that can be triggered by certain conditions and can turn into fully-fledged panic attacks. Phobias are named according to what triggers them, e.g., claustrophobia (fear of enclosed spaces), agoraphobia (fear of open spaces), arachnophobia (fear of spiders), spectrophobia (fear of mirrors), and so on.

The triggers of phobias can also be situations or objects that normally induce an amount of fear or uneasiness, for instance a fear of syringes or dentists. In a phobia victim, though, this fear is abnormally strong.

The origins of a phobia might be traumatic experiences. You might develop claustrophobia if you get buried under rubble for hours or days; or if, as a child, you were always locked in a dark closet as punishment. It is also quite understandable if you develop arachnophobia if you gazed into the “face” of the Great Old One Atlach-Nacha.

As the Call of Cthulhu rulebook lists an impressive array of phobias, you can find a phobia for virtually all situations where a character has lost enough sanity to account for a disorder. Food on your plate shows a disturbingly obscene vitality – fear of food (phagophobia). You were separated from your friends and walked, totally lost, through a system of caverns for days – fear of being alone (monophobia), fear of the dark (nyctophobia), and/or claustrophobia.

Phobias can also be caused by conditioning. If you repeatedly show a child the picture of a white rabbit and combine this with electric shock, the child will surely develop a fear of white rabbits that the rest of the world would find irrational, and you’ve earned yourself a jail cell. If you confront a phobia victim with the subject of his worst fears in order to cure him, he will, most often, experience a severe shock that can also lead to the worsening of his phobia.

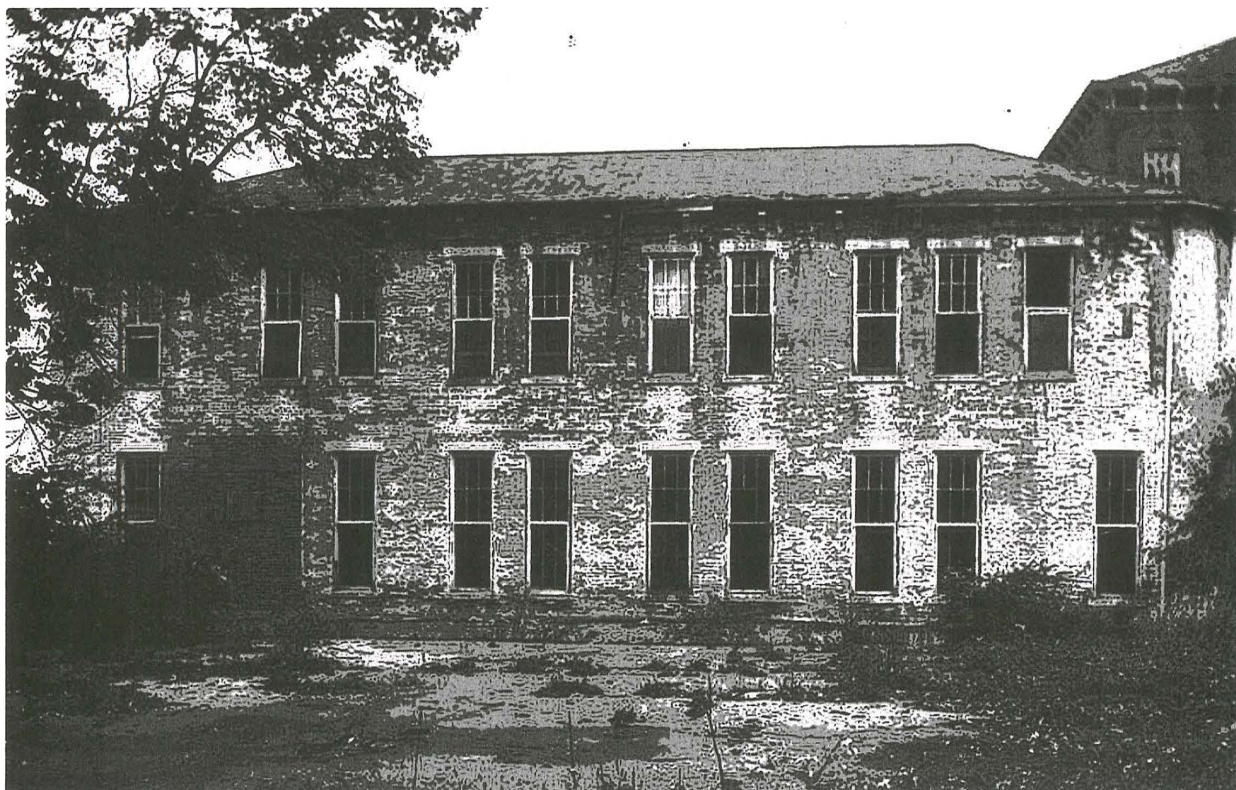
The bodily symptoms of a severe phobia might take the following form: at first, the heart rate will accelerate, then the victim will start perspiring heavily; strong trembling will then be followed by breathing problems that will become more severe every minute. He will get chest pains and feel dizzy, before, finally, he suffers death from acute fear.

For keepers: Of course you can describe claustrophobia. But can you inspire fear of white rabbits in a player? “It’s sitting there. Don’t look at it! Don’t look at it! Who are you trying to deceive? Of course

you’ll look, as you always do. Because you think it might not be that bad. Because it has to get better at one point. You utter idiot! You almost looked! The twitching, slimy nose, wet and soft, covered in a disgusting fuzz, almost like a moldy peach right before it bursts. Just don’t look at it! But no, you looked! Like always, you wuss! You! Should! Not! Have! Looked! My god, the way it’s twitching! It’s going to burst! Dear god, no! I feel sick. God help me! Make it look away. I want to look away. What if it’s contagious? God, I saw it. What if I close my eyes and they burst and start leaking when I try to open them again, just like IT? No, I can’t allow it near me! Go away go away goawaygoawaygoaway! <sob>

For players: Remember your own fears. Does darkness make you nervous? Just imagine it would envelop you like a viscous mass, gliding slimily over your skin, getting into your ears, your nose, and your mouth. Into every orifice, even through your skin’s pores. Darkness in your lungs, darkness in your blood, darkness in your bowels, creeping higher. Darkness in your... you guess it. You can’t breathe, you can’t scream, you are only fifteen endless feet away from the basement staircase, but you can’t move, you can only stand there shaking and helplessly feeling how the darkness creeps into your brain...

Have you enjoyed the above description? Are you now able to understand how someone might panic in darkness even without having a reason to? Use this experience to understand the phobia of your character. To be a phobia victim means to increasingly lose your self control to the phobia.



Houses of the insane

Personality Disorders

Paranoia

If you do not read any books anymore because you want to protect your sanity, you are paranoid. If you believe the fate of the world is decided by amoral alien entities you are paranoid. If you refuse to look for a friend who's disappeared because you're afraid of coming into contact with a cult that might want to use the missing person as a sacrifice for a ritual to destroy the world, you are definitely paranoid. These things don't happen, do they?

From a psychiatrist's point of view, such ideas would be seen as schizophrenic, as schizotypal psychoses are generally completely bizarre and can't be understood (see above under "mania"). Paranoid psychoses are, at least theoretically, possible: Your neighbor could be a terrorist, your wife could have a secret lover, the secret service could spy on the general public using chip cards. The movie *Conspiracy Theory* provides a good example of a paranoid character. While the term paranoia was previously used describing all kinds of psychotic disorders such as persecution mania, clinical cases of jealousy, or delusions of grandeur, it is, in general language, today only used for persecution mania.

Paranoid people also exhibit extreme sensitivity towards rejection. They are unforgiving, suspicious, and tend to interpret everything other people do as being negative and targeted against them: "Why is X so nice to me? He probably wants to gain my trust just to betray me afterwards... I don't trust that guy..."

Further symptoms of paranoia might also be heightened feelings of self-importance and self-consciousness.

For keepers: Make the affected player believe something is brewing. Let him roll on Spot Hidden to show that other people eye him suspiciously (Which is pure fabrication, of course). Call unimportant details to his attention, e.g., why is the light bulb broken only in his hotel, or why is there a banana skin in front of the door. Why is his meal always the longest to be prepared at a restaurant? Why has this wine got such a strange aftertaste? (Okay, it was just corked, but the player does not have to know that, does he?) Doesn't it strike you as odd that your comrades always seem to be better informed than you?

Always let the paranoid character's player roll on Spot Hidden before giving him a piece of information. This will make it easier for him to think that these impressions might have a deeper meaning for the plot.

For players: You can, as a player, just choose an *idée fixe*, imagining that something is brewing, and it's directed against you! Then let this become obsessive for your character. THEY are after you. The members of the latest cult that you had something to do with are following you. You didn't get rid of all of them, so go figure! Some always survive. And they hide well. That cripple at the end of the road, the one begging, that might be one of them! The fact that he only has one leg cannot deceive you. He probably only got it amputated to look more harmless! You know, these guys do not have any scruples, they are merciless fanatics! But you have reinforced your windows and doors and put bars in front of them. Three locks on every door, to hinder people silently breaking into your house. Spread cornflakes on the floor as they "crackle" when somebody steps on

them. Every object in your house has its specific exact place, right to the last fraction of an inch, so you instantly notice when something has been moved if someone actually happens to enter your place undetected! You check for this three times a day. Your neighbors and friends shake their heads, but you know you're right! Okay, maybe sometimes you forget whether you've actually checked twice already, but it doesn't hurt to check again, now does it? And some day, they will all be grateful for your vigilance...

Of course, the paranoia of your character can be played out differently: everyone is against you but they still need you. That's what happened back in school. Your teacher, who didn't want to approve of your sharp-witted answers. Your neighbor, who always copied your but never admitted it. And now, your colleagues – they think they can steal your ideas and present them as their own without you realizing! Your boss, who constantly ridicules you and never acknowledges your efforts. Yeah, you know the game....

Dissocial Disorders

Patients with dissocial (formerly "antisocial") disorders tend to be called psychopaths by the general public. This term is, unfortunately, rather imprecise, as there are about ten different psychopathic disorders that can be differentiated. The charming and manipulative character without any conscience and a tendency towards violence that you could probably call the model psychopath suffers from a dissocial disorder. He is not capable of creating an emotional bond with others or even seeing them as distinct personalities, which makes it impossible for him to respect others. Thus he does not feel any kind of guilt or responsibility towards his fellow human beings. The victim is always irritable, easily turns aggressive, gets frustrated very quickly and is, in general, incapable of learning from punishment or of adapting to current rules and regulations. This personality disorder often surfaces during adolescence. Thus it seems rather improbable that someone develops such a dissocial disorder through loss of sanity if he didn't already have a predisposition for it.

For keepers: Psychopathy is not a disorder that develops through loss of sanity. This very serious form of personality change is something that only NPCs should have – unless you want to destroy your group's integrity. Think of Hannibal Lecter, the epitome of the fictional psychopath – cunning, cultivated, and without any remorse. Only he himself is important, everyone else is just a pawn or potential victim, ingredient for the next lung stew. Psychopaths are often capable of sustaining their masks for a very long time. Only people who are in close contact with them get to know their true face: aggressive, ready to use psychological or bodily violence, and completely ruthless.

Permanent Post-Traumatic Personality Changes

A psychological trauma – such as torture, being a terrorist attack victim, being in danger of death for too long, or direct experience of natural catastrophes – can cause a permanent change of personality. The victim behaves in a suspicious or hostile way towards his environment or displays a strong feeling of emptiness or desperation. Furthermore, he withdraws more and more from other people and is chronically tense.

This personality disorder is among the most common for investigators of the Cthulhu Mythos. You can also count direct contact

with a completely alien consciousness – dream contact with Cthulhu – or the sudden destruction of someone’s world view as extreme psychological trauma. The realization that the human race only exists because someone didn’t clean a beaker properly and that we, not unlike ants, crawl under the menacing shadows of cosmic titans probably is not very helpful for one’s feeling of self-worth....

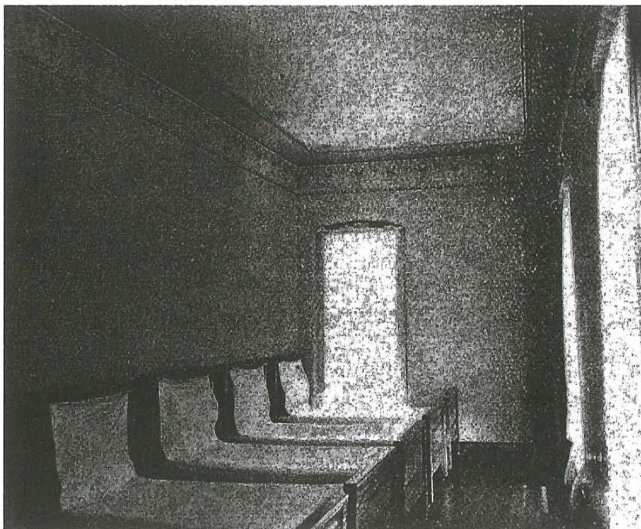
For keepers: The character has changed, and with him his perception of his environment. Maybe you want to remind him how bright, loud, and false everything has suddenly become around him. Or you describe his world as dull and oppressive. The food is bland, music is disturbed by sudden dissonance, and even the beauty of art has vanished and given way to a cheap imitation created by moronic ignoramuses. Everywhere, the character finds small irritations which spoil his life. Is it surprising that he is irritable and aggressive? Or apathetic? Even life’s small things are just like constant water dripping that will wear him away. And the emptiness inside himself is huge. Really huge.

Insomnia and nightmares often accompany this kind of disorder. This can best be conveyed through the usual secret notes with “prophetic” dream messages. If a player is assailed every night with these notes, he will soon realize there is no relaxation in sleep.

For players: You were witness to something absolutely horrendous that has shocked you to the core. Everything you had taken for granted, the foundations on which your life was built, suddenly came tumbling down. With disturbing clarity you have realized your life is like a tightrope walk without a net at great heights. Your next step might let you fall screaming into the abyss. It feels as if you only see your environment through a veil. All colors have darkened, and all sounds are dulled. Something has estranged you from your previous life and stands, like an invisible barrier, between you and the outside world. Your soul is cracked, and it can’t be fixed again. You react to everything with unusual ferocity, just like an evil dog snapping at the hand that reaches out for it. Maybe you feel sorry afterwards, but then again, maybe not. Who can comprehend what has happened to you anyway? Isn’t your behavior understandable when you consider the circumstances?

Maybe you retreat completely and barricade yourself in your house. The more distance you create between other human beings

Air, light and comfortable beds



and the world outside, the less they can hurt you. A shadow has darkened your mind. Everything is unimportant, and this lethargy controls all your actions. You can’t change anything anyway. Friends, family, this fuddy-duddy kind of happiness is only a very painful act of self delusion, an illusion. You know that now. Others might not be able to understand it, but that doesn’t matter now. Just like everything else.

Multiple Personalities

This disorder is not without its problems, as its complexity cannot be easily played without seeming shallow and catchy. The following should suffice for home use: with a multiple personality disorder, two or more fully functional personalities inhabit one and the same body. These different individuals do not have to have anything in common and sometimes do not even know that “their” body is also host to other minds. Multiple personalities are often caused by traumatic experiences in childhood, most often as a result of sexual abuse. The victim tries to distance him- or herself from the events, by saying “this doesn’t happen to me, it happens to someone else.” Of course, we cannot conclude that every case of sexual abuse leads to a multiple personality.

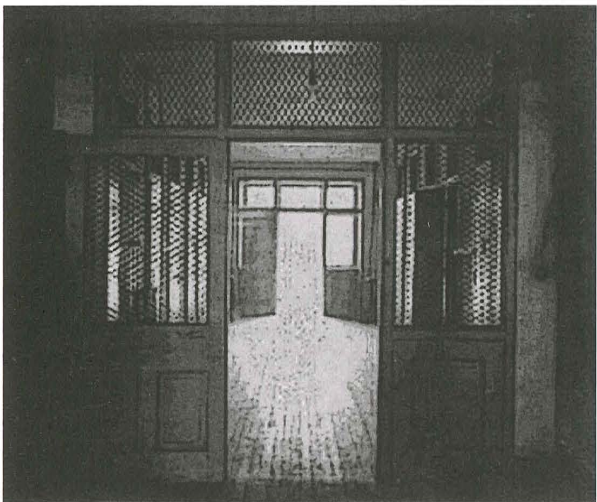
Back to *Call of Cthulhu*. It might be possible for a character to become a multiple personality as a result of a severe psychological trauma. This is probably very hard to include in a game, as the player has to portray not only one, but at least two characters. The choice of the “other” personality is also something that has to be well considered. Do you really want Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, or a constructive combination of personalities that like each other? It has to be made clear that personality B can only, at the most, have the same knowledge as personality A. A bookworm does not, all of a sudden, mutate into a fighting hunk that has taken part in five world wars. To simplify matters, just assume that all stats on the character sheet are the same with every personality. Only preferences, behavior, and memories will change. Personality A does not remember things that personality B has done or found out. Which might have fatal consequences in *Call of Cthulhu*.

For keepers: Treat this mental disorder with respect, as it might make future adventures rather more difficult than any easier. A character that makes an important discovery but forgets it because of a change of personalities and makes the adventure unsolvable will not be well liked and might be replaced soon. The supposed charm of the “in-my-other-identity-I’m-an-asshole” multiple personality does not last very long. Be subtle. Think of the adventure introductions that have something to do with characters losing their memories, only that here, it will be treated a little differently. Why do strange people suddenly greet you? Why does the bartender of your favorite pub suddenly present you with an unpaid tab and tells you not come back again? Since when do you smoke cigarettes or why is there a half-empty packet next to the ashtray that is already full with butt-ends?

Concern yourself with the other personality of the character. Which traits does it have, which hobbies will it like? Where could personality A be confronted with traces of personality B? What sort of traces? Make the character slowly aware of memory gaps. Send your player from the room in the middle of a scene and tell him afterwards that his character can’t remember anything of what has passed. Sooner or later, the player will believe in anything:

doppelgangers, possession, even being possessed by the Great Race of Yith – only, the truth is something different...

Another note on multiple personalities: During the 1920s, this disorder did not exist as a concept and thus there was no therapy for it. During the 1920s and any time previously, a patient with this condition who is not able to function properly during everyday life (or at least keep up the pretense) will probably spend the rest of his life in a sanitarium.



The light at the end of the tunnel

Another radical idea would be two players sharing a multiple personality. This is only recommended for groups where one player cannot attend regularly due to other commitments. With regular players, you run the risk of massive boredom – unless those two players also have a “main character,” and the multiple personality is just a “second skin” that both players use alternately. The players have to agree on this with the keeper.

For players: The keeper will, together with the player, decide on an alternative personality which might even display suppressed character traits of the original personality. At the beginning of a session, roll 1D4 to see how often during this session the personalities might change. Then roll 1D100. Keep that number in mind. After the beginning of every hour of gaming time, roll another D100. If the result is equal to or lower than what you had rolled in the beginning, the personality will change. You have to realize the following: each personality suddenly finds itself in a situation without knowing how it got there. How does it react? Will it become angry? Or will it stay calm and silent, trying to analyze the situation? What does the other personality do when it notices the memory gap?

Concluding remarks

No matter how weird the mind of a madman might seem from the outside, it is always, in itself, logical and cogent. The realization that “I am disturbed and need treatment” will not be easy for anyone to make. On the contrary, he or she will rather be convinced that everyone else is three fries short of a Happy Meal, but not the madman.

Of course, you have to think of the social consequences: Who wants to have a stay at a mental institution listed on their resume? Who wants to listen to neighbors chatting away about the “madman” among them behind their back? Or have their children face the fact that their dad was in the loony bin?

The social stigma of hospitalization – even if it was of one’s own accord – or a therapy cannot be dismissed. Who will gain a position of trust? The cured ex-kook or someone else? *Semper aliquid haeret* – something always sticks. Isn’t it, in these circumstances, indispensable, for reasons of self-respect and self-protection, to deny each and every doubt about one’s mental health – even if it means regarding everyone else as loony? It is immensely difficult to admit to yourself that you have a psychological problem. And therapies are tedious; a journey that leads, with little steps, back to a normal life – or that may end behind the locked doors of a mental institution, for ever.

In this spirit: Cthulhu fhtagn!

Editors’ remark: Considering the fact that Joachim A. Hagen is renowned for histrionics and mixing fact and fiction – and taking his current place of residence into account – we recommend that the reader treats the account above with a healthy dose of skepticism.

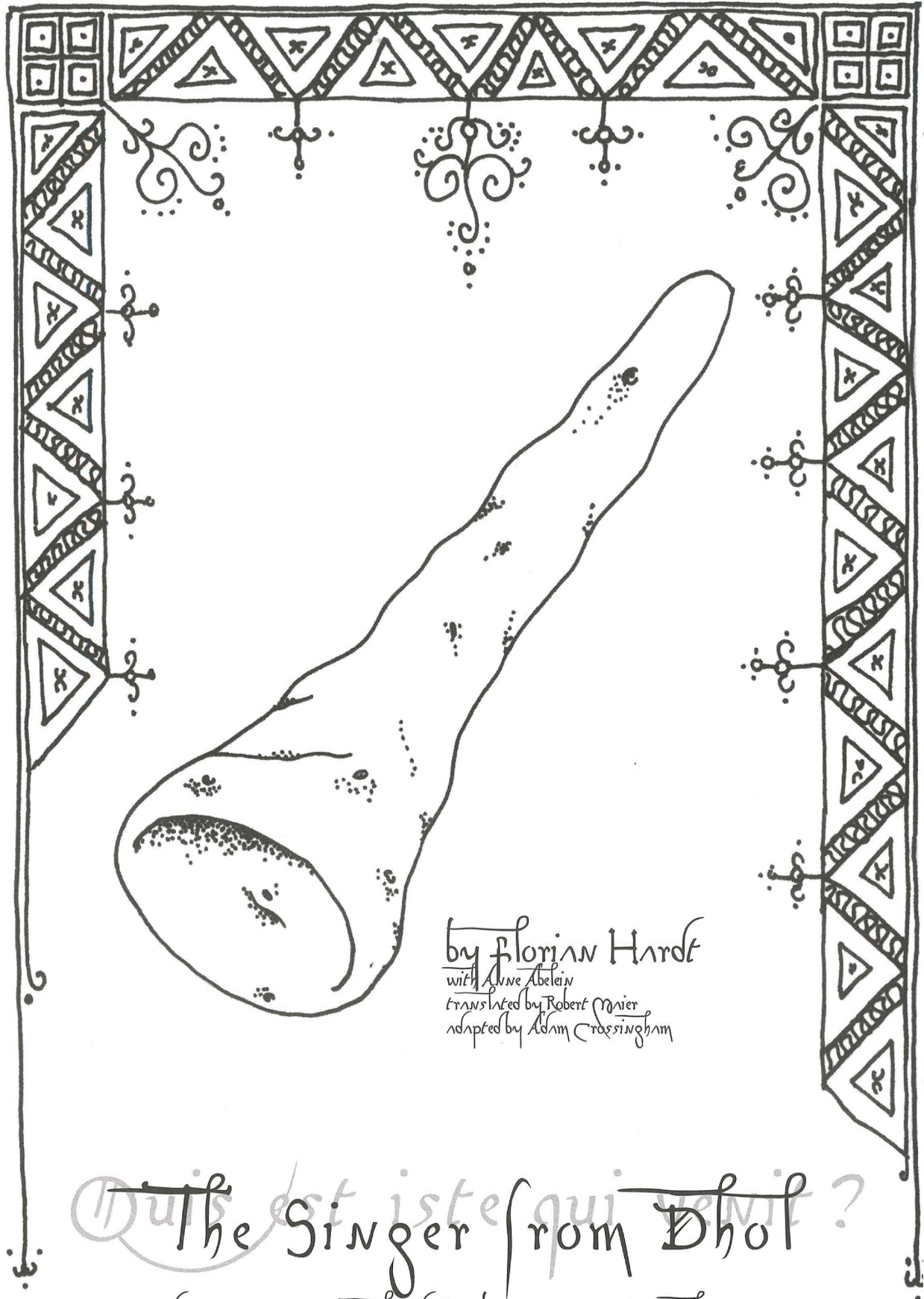
Resources

Internet

<http://www.historicasylums.com/> – A site on historical hospitals and mental asylums in the United States.
<http://www.mentalhealth.com>
<http://cms.psychologytoday.com/pto/home.php>
<http://www.psyweb.com/Mdisord/mental0.html>

Gaming

The volume *Taint of Madness* by Chaosium also treats mental disorders and is highly recommended.



by Florian Hardt
with Anne Abelein
translated by Robert Mrier
adapted by Adam Crossingham

Quis est iste qui venit? The Singer from Dhol

an adventure on Oyster Island, Penobscot Bay, Maine in the year 1920

The scenario "The Singer from Dhol" occurs in 1920, on the Maine island of Oyster Island. It is designed for a group of 4-5 players and should be run in one uninterrupted session. As a one-off adventure, it relies on pre-fabricated characters and hardly lends itself for adaptation into a running campaign. Keepers should take care to acquaint themselves well with its complex background. Mythos knowledge is not required, but an acting-happy group of experienced and/or talented players certainly is. The scenario is inspired by M. R. James' short story "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad".

Background

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, a foreign artifact found its way to Europe. Made from a porcelain-like substance, its surface shows numerous pore-like dimples, reminiscent of the skin of an organic creature. It almost looks like a cross between a flute and a trunk, and actually... that is precisely what it is! The "flute" is really a part of the body of an alien creature, not of this world – the legendary "Singer from Dhol", and allows communication with it. The "Singer" originates in a plane of existence that is unknown to mankind and allegedly in some way related to the idiot god Azathoth. Wherever the flute is played, the Singer is bound to appear in the same or following night, to search out the one who called him. Men and animals are driven insane by its voice, their souls are destroyed, and eventually even physical changes will become evident – all its victims, and all their descendants, are enslaved to the Singer and commit gruesome atrocities.

The flute was first investigated in an unknown monastery by an unnamed monk who would later become known only as "the Ghul". He tried to play a few melodies, and during the following night, the Singer visited the monastery. It was not long before the monks succumbed, one after the other, to its influence – and the monastery turned into a scene of dreadful atrocities, among which the cannibalism of lepers who had fled to its hospice was still a lesser one. The monks' reign of terror was eventually ended by force, but the "Ghul" himself managed to escape, together with a handful of followers. The flute proved to be indestructible, but was captured by a secret order of knights who guarded it for centuries to come. But in 1705 AD, the artifact fell into the hands of the buccaneer Cord Wainwright, who was setting up a hide-out on the Maine island of Oyster Island around that time. To avoid worse happening, the grandmaster of the order immediately sent out battle-hardened warriors to retrieve the artifact. Unfortunately, however, the outlandish looks of the flute had already enticed one of Wainwright's men to play it. When the knights of the order finally arrived on Oyster Island, stark madness was rampant. Even though the flute-player had been killed and buried by Wainwright himself, the gate to Dhol had been opened, paving a path to the island for the Singer. The descendants of the Ghul had heard the Singer's call, as well. Unnoticed by the knights, they also managed to return to Oyster Island – and night after night, they committed their bloody deeds again. Eventually the knights managed to close the gate by means of a stone circle, but the flute was never found and remained together with Wainwright's treasure wherever he had hidden them.

Some of the knights settled on Oyster Island to keep watch. Expecting their enemies' return, knowledge about the flute was passed down over many generations. The monk's descendants stayed on Oyster Island, too, and despite the evil that, as it were, courses through their veins, they were never found out, as the Singer's call was never heard again. Slowly but steadily, they forgot what had happened, and today, they are hardly any different from regular human beings (although extremely mean ones, at that). Only their last name reminds of the change caused by the Singer – they're all named Gullson.

The flute, though, still awaits discovery (together with a pirate treasure) under a memorial slab in Oyster Island's "Old Church", St. Savior.

A word of warning

Initially, this adventure resembles a mysterious whodunit, but it develops gradually into a grim gothic tale, culminating in an uncompromisingly cruel climax. Undoubtedly, it would be possible to tone down the events' atrocity, or at least their presentation, but just as certain, this would run at the cost of the scenario's general effectiveness, which is based on the unexpected swings between tension, uncertainty and horror.

The Gullson family

The descendants of the "Ghul" live on Frenchman's Plot Farm. Children of grandfather Henry (who died in 1908) and Ada Gullson (maiden name Winkler, died March 13, 1920) are brothers George, Thomas, and Robert, and their sister Sarah. In 1912, Sarah married Harry Holmes; their daughter Wilma is now eight years old.

Both George and Thomas were soldiers in the Great War, and George lost a leg during its last days; their brother Robert served in the navy. After the war, Thomas married their cousin Florence, and took over the running of the farm and supported George. Harry and Sarah are staying on the farm, as well; Robert, the sailor, is the only member of the family who has seen a larger slice of the world.

The fact that Harry and Florence are having an affair might be a bit of dynamite in family discussions – see the character descriptions for further details.

George, Thomas, Robert, Sarah, Florence, and Wilma all descend directly from the "Ghul", but not Ada and Harry. But the Singer's evil curse has left its marks on all of them, even though they are not aware of it – they all know about their own misdemeanors and evil traits, but consider themselves each to be an exception in the family.

The narrator should become familiar with the descriptions of the provided characters to understand the better the relations within the Gullson family.

Character information includes a number of rather unusual skills, which are more or less self-explanatory, e.g. Art (Flute) and Craft (Sheep Farmer). Wilma's Night Vision allows her to see even in pitch darkness (another side effect of her ancestry). Her Staring skill has no practical use, but whoever is successfully stared at will consider the stare to be uncanny, and prefers to avoid the girl.

Oyster Island

Oyster Island is an island of two faces: a summer face for the holiday guests, and a winter face for the lonely. Mists shroud the willows in the marshes and mud-flats like a mourning cape that is held up by the trees' web of bare branches. Bewitched copses and solitary trees duck under the force of the gale; only beach grass offers proud resistance to the fierce winds.

Seagulls calling, solitude.

The island's other face.

Oyster Island, the Penobscot Bay island “where the wind is always in your face”, has a shape that is unpleasantly reminiscent of a skull, and in its history, it has fulfilled this omen more than just occasionally.

The name “Oyster Island” refers to the vast mounds of discarded oyster shells that can be found all over the island. These are the remains of pre-Columbian Indians’ hunter-gatherer activities during the summer.

Oyster Island was first discovered by Europeans by French navigator Samuel de Champlain in 1605. The island was settled by French settlers in 1668, part of the Arcadia colony, and was known as “Île de Crâne”. The French settlers continued to share their island with the migrant local Abernaki Indians who summered on the island – the settlers kept to the interior and the Indians to the coastline.

The arrival of English privateer Cord Wainwright in 1705 changed everything. Wainwright and his men forced the settlers to flee, and set-up shop, using the island as a base of operations against French and Spanish shipping. The following spring, the Abernaki arrived and had a hostile confrontation with Wainwright. The Indians were forced to leave but as they were allied with the French they swore bloody revenge. Return they did five months later: on All Hallows Eve they landed on Oyster Island by night, sneaked into Wainwright’s camp, seized him and then beheaded him. They then ran rampage through the entire island. Wainwright’s head was chucked into the sea, and never found, and it is said that his ghost still haunts the island.

The island wasn’t resettled until 1715 when survivors of Wainwright’s fleet led a settlement company there. The defeat of the Abernaki with their French allies during the various Anglo-French wars in the region removed the possibility of another confrontation between Indians and settlers occurring.

The second tragedy in Oyster Island’s history occurred during the American War of Independence in 1780 when the British hanged every able-bodied man on the island, charging them (rightly) with piracy, and burnt every farm on the island.

Oyster Island has two villages, Tanner’s Town and Trenton, and a multitude of isolated farms. There is no electricity, apart from the lighthouse (120 feet high), which has been powered by diesel engines since 1907.

The island’s soil is well suited for grazing and crop farming, particularly potatoes. Apart from whaling and lobster fishing, trawler fishing was never among the island’s important industries, nor could it ever compete with wrecking (which was well-organized in the old days).

Tourists are Oyster Island’s most important industry in the summer but numbers aren’t as numerous as they could be – neighboring islands are far more popular as seaside resorts. The most prominent visitor to the island in recent years was David Schermerhorn, the famous nineteenth century society rake, who stayed on the island in 1882/3 and during this time started to write poetry, out of utter boredom. A number of clubs and associations provide some entertainment for Oyster Island locals, though – the oldest among being the Farmers’ Union, founded in 1855.

After the Great War, many young islanders were forced by poverty to emigrate to the mainland.

However, only those families with ancestors who lived on the island in the days of the second settlement are held to be true “Oyster Islanders” – everybody else is considered a stranger.

Note: every player should receive a copy of this text prior to play.

Assigning the roles

Players take the roles of George, Thomas, Robert, Florence, and Wilma. If there are less than five players, Wilma is the character that lends itself best to being run as a NPC. If one player is distinctly more assertive or active than the others, he should not receive George as a character. Otherwise, there would be some risk for George to keep the group away from the Old Church of St. Savior – where a crucial part of the adventure is bound to take place.

Harry's wife Sarah is played by the keeper. A slightly awkward woman of 27, she appears to be a little absent-minded – inconspicuous, always staying in the background, speaking in a soft voice, slowly but carefully carrying out the duties that are given to her. She takes care of her daughter Wilma dutifully, but without any apparent joy. On those rare occasions when she seems to be less absent-minded, her gaze rests mournfully on Wilma and Robert.

The keeper should make sure that Sarah is not simply ignored during the adventure – she is to play an important role in its second half. The scenario will gain a lot if Sarah can be introduced to the group as a friendly, pitiable person.

Recent Events

On March 13th 1920, Ada Gullson died in a hospital in Camden, Maine. Actually, her death was accelerated by a home-brewed poison that Florence had been administering to her for some time. The daughter-in-law's motive was base greed – she hoped that Ada's death would make her the only mistress of the farm; she felt that she and her husband Thomas would face hardly any difficulties to push through their claim to the inheritance.

Immediately after Ada's death, Florence rummaged through the room of the deceased, taking a document folder with her that she – being illiterate – presumed to be a will. She gave it to her lover Harry, who quickly discovered that these documents were quite unusual. Ada had not been a scholar, but certainly resourceful enough to research into the origins of her husband Henry. Item for item, she had collected clues that led her to a terrible, albeit not quite correct, suspicion: her husband, and thus also their children, might be descended from a union with a non-human creature. Hence, Harry held in his hands a collection of clues and various documents that Ada had secretly compiled in decades of research. When first leafing through them, he discovered a sketch that he considered to be (quite correctly) a treasure map of some kind. He rejoiced, for with hidden riches, he might be able to impress his moody lover and finally even win her all for himself. Not being a local, however, he could not assign the sketchy floor plan to any building. Reluctantly, he divulged the papers to George, who immediately recognized the church of St. Savior in the drawing. All family members being obliged to go to the mainland for the funeral of grandmother Ada on the following day, March 16th, the two men decided to maintain strictest silence about all this until they returned from the trip, to raise the treasure together afterwards. Greedy for gold, neither of them bothered to even have a look at the other documents.

However, both of them sneaked to the Old Church in that same night without knowing about the other – each eager to pinch the treasure for himself. Harry was the first to arrive at St. Savior, and found out after a very brief search that the indicated spot must be underneath the confessional – an odd piece of furniture in a thoroughly Protestant church anyway. Loosening its floorboards, he discovered a memorial slab in the floor that he laboriously managed to lift. The hole underneath was almost six foot deep, and hundreds of silver coins were scattered on its ground. Being busy in the hole over the loot, he completely missed out on the church door's creaking, the ensuing pause, and the stealthy steps of George. Only when George's shadow fell over the pit, Harry looked up from his newly-found riches. George's first angry strike with the spade hit him right between the eyes, and he fainted immediately. He did not even feel the subsequent blows.

For fear of being discovered, George took only those silver coins that had already been removed from the hole. Then he moved the memorial slab back into its initial position. Presuming Harry to be dead, he left him in the hole under the heavy slab.

On the next morning, all members of the Gullson family ferried to the mainland to pay their last respects to Ada, in a boat that Robert had borrowed. George told the unsuspecting family that Harry had gone to give some last instructions to the farm's day laborer, and would join them on the boat. Robert waited as long as he possibly could, but eventually had to cast off with the tide.

Apart from the family (minus Harry), only a priest was present at the funeral. None of the family members were in the mood for an unnecessary extension of this troubling visit to the mainland, so they crossed back to Oyster Island that same evening.

Meanwhile, Harry was still lying severely wounded in the foundations of the Old Church. He attempted to lift the slab several times, but to no avail. Eventually, he managed to light up Ada's rolled-up notes as a makeshift torch and started to look for some kind of tool to help him – discovering the Flute from Dhol. Intrigued by the strangely archaic shape of the semi-transparent relict, he cleaned it carefully and put it to his lips. Immediately, the Flute from Dhol awakened from its centuries of sleeping. Harry felt a testing touch deep in his throat, then growths sprouted from the Flute and connected themselves organically to his body. He panicked and tried to tear the flute from his face – but the instrument wound up from it like a trunk and transformed his breath into its call.

The flute's tone opened a gate not far from the church, allowing the Singer from Dhol to enter the world of humans, its voice sending the island's slumbering inhabitants nightmares and their livestock panicking. The Gullsons' sheep broke out of their fence and ravaged the farm grounds; the geese pecked each other wildly, and the watch dogs fearfully huddled together in their kennels.

Harry, being in the immediate proximity of the Singer, went stark insane. In the attempt to fend off the singing, he drove his fingers through the ears into his very brain, killing himself instantly.

At the same time, the boat with Sarah and the Gullson family was approaching the shores of Oyster Island. An experienced sailor, Robert was well-acquainted with currents and wind, but the Singer's arrival brought an unforeseen change in the weather. The howling wind increased to storm gusts, and the Gullsons were not unhappy when their boat ran onto an offshore sandbank, and came to a rest there. They hoped to get away with an unpleasant night on the boat,

to complete their trip on the following morning. Then, the Singer's Call reached them, and not only did the taint of their ancestry drive them insane, but it also awakened a cannibalistic lust for blood. The Ghul's descendants jumped into the waters, swam the slough that divided them from the island, and forced their way into the nearby lighthouse, where they assaulted Hugh Peterson, the lighthouse keeper. Leaving a trail of devastation, they raced towards the Old Church of St. Savior. All inhabitants of the church mound fell victim to their homicidal madness.

Sudden as the Singer had arrived, it disappeared again. Befuddled, the Gullsons swam back to their boat to expect the morning, soaked and shivering. The short stretch of swimming was enough to rinse away most traces of blood, and in the morning, no traces of the night were left on their clothing, excepting just a few unidentifiable spots. They returned to the harbor of Tanner's Town at sunrise on March 17th (Wednesday).

Tanner's Town is where the scenario begins. A considerable part of recent events is already described in the character sheets, with one crucial exception: none of the Gullsons remembers the deeds they committed under the Singer's spell!

At the beginning of the scenario, the family believes to have spent an uncomfortable night in a boat on a sandbank. Consequently, they will spend a large part of the scenario in the belief that they are the victims of heinous crimes – the perpetrators of which they are actually themselves.

Some essential pre-considerations

The roles of the characters in this scenario are rather unusual. Instead of thwarting the evil machinations of Cthuloid creatures as upright citizens, they are actually identical with them – without knowing. Still, some of the players may notice some hints about their characters' true nature: Wilma has night vision, each of them has a pertinent background history, and the name Gullson (literally "son of the Ghul") might create some suspicion, as well. In the course of

the adventure, the players will approach the truth ever closer, but they will only be able to draw the decisive conclusions at the very end – this, at least, is the sequence that the keeper should try to develop. It is part of the keeper's job to throw dust into the eyes of the particularly clever while stretching out a helping hand to the particularly clueless. This task will be easier to fulfill if all discussions outside of the game are stopped.

Characters are of course free to discuss the horror that has come over them. Players, in contrast, should be forbidden to talk about the game – questions or statements like the following are definitely not allowed: "Say, this name 'Gullson', that's weird, don't you think?" – "Erm, do you others have that skill Night Vision, as well?" – "Something makes me believe that we are the monsters...". Play tests have proved that these problems can be avoided if the players are advised to talk to each other only "in character", and to not show their character sheets to each other.

Northern winds

The omnipresence of the wind is one of the central themes of the scenario. Oyster Island, where the wind is said to be "always in your face", is subjected to increasingly fierce gales during the day. While initially being quite normal, the sounds of the wind develop a decidedly odd overtone as time passes. Disconcerting sounds mix with the raging gale, and in the end there is a whistling – or is it a voice? – that seems to sound from everywhere. Even if the text does not always state it explicitly, the keeper is strongly advised to mention the ever-increasing wind persistently throughout the scenario.

The beginning: Tanner's Town

The little village of Tanner's Town is the real center of Oyster Island's population. The fishing boats in its old harbor are moored to the jetty. Administrative offices for both the community and the health facilities are located here, but in the first few years after the war, visitors for health reasons are a rarity.



The Gullsons arriving home



The jetty at Tanner's Town harbor



Tanner's Town harbor

The Gullson family moor their boat in the harbor shortly after sunrise, although that is difficult to tell under the hazy sky. Most characters will probably want to get to Frenchman's Plot as soon as possible, to find out what happened to Harry. Robert does not usually live on the farm, but has come to stay with the family for a few days, to help with the sorting out of the inheritance. On their way through Tanner's Town, Florence will stop by at the general store to collect due payment for several lambs.

Traditionally, the inhabitants of Oyster Island treat the Gullson family with open hostility – the family has always been isolated from the other islanders, and are well known for their irritating demeanor.

The episode in Tanner's Town that we are about to describe is intended to show players that the characters cannot expect any help from this side. At a later point, it might even give them the idea that it is the islanders who are responsible for the killings.

The morning mist in streets and lanes muffles every sound. With a POWx5 roll (don't ask for a Luck roll), characters get the feeling that they are under observation (Spot Hidden discovers a pale face looking down from a high window). Most probably, the group will split up in front of Widow Bramwell's general store – some will accompany Florence, while others will continue to the farm. In a handcart, the family brings food that Florence has bought on the mainland.

In the general store

The shop is run by elderly widow Mrs. Bramwell. As is common practice among the sheep farmers of Oyster Island's remote farms, Florence has given her a dozen new-born lambs to sell on commission. She will attempt to be alone with the shop keeper when receiving the returns for the twelve head of sheep, to have a better chance to embezzle some of the money.

However, Widow Bramwell is (at least) as sly and greedy as Florence, and will try everything to cheat the Gullson family.

Despite the early hour, the air inside the shop is stale and stuffy. The shelves along the wall contain canned food, preserving jars, tools, sewing utensils, and many other things that are brought from the mainland. Huge flies buzz around lazily on the inside of the dull windows. This is the domain of Widow Bramwell, a portly woman in her early sixties, obsessed with the idea of gathering some wealth for her retirement. As Florence enters, the shopkeeper is animat-

edly gossiping with two elderly women, but she falls silent immediately when she sees the first Gullson family member enter. With fake friendliness, she welcomes Florence: "Ah, my dear Mrs. Gullson, what can I do for you?" When Florence asks for the moneys for the lambs, the widow puts on a sad face: "Oh, but I am so sorry, dear. Two of them died before I could sell them." – She gesticulates with her thumb towards a window that opens to the backyard, where two lambs' carcasses can be seen. As the lambs were to be sold on commission, the Gullsons have no claim to compensation. Only if the two carcasses are successfully examined with Craft (Sheep Farmer), it will become obvious that they are not the Gullsons' sheep. Bramwell refuses to give any compensation for the two dead lambs, and while her neighbors are

present, she will not become more cooperative, either: "Your animals have always been rather sickly, my dear Mrs. Gullson." One of the two other ladies mutters: "Oh, you know, they get a lot of sickly births out there." If Wilma is in the shop or in sight outside the window, this is accompanied by a meaningful glance in her direction. Only if Florence bargains very skillfully (and successfully), she will manage to get at least the equivalent of one of the dead lambs ("as a gesture of my goodwill"). When the family leaves the store, they will have the returns for only ten, possibly eleven, lambs in their pocket, and the clear impression that they have been cheated.

In the streets of Tanner's Town

Members of the family who wait outside the store, or have decided to carry on towards the farm, will get an even more drastic taste of the villagers' disapproval. They encounter a gang of young hooligans who are obviously out for a fight. Usually, the Gullsons have to suffer only verbal abuse, but today a violent argument is likely: the islanders slept badly last night and accordingly are in a bad mood.

The keeper should introduce a number of ruffians that is more or less equal to the number of family members that are outside the shop. Depending on where the encounter takes place, the ruffians block a lane, bump into people waiting outside the store or suddenly walk up very closely behind the characters. A short distance away, a man stands or sits hiding behind his newspaper, apparently without noticing what is going on. This is Frank Herbert, Tanner's Town's deputy, but he cannot be recognized behind the newspaper. The characters will have to think about a reaction to the youths' provocations – at the very latest when these start to allude to the Gullsons' sexual habits (allegedly involving sheep).

Faced with such impertinence, the Gullsons will initially probably hardly believe their ears – after all, they are mature citizens, married and have served in the Great War, and these hooligans are aren't older than 17. And yet, they really are out for a fight: one of them spits before the characters and hits somebody's shoe, another insults George, the war-disabled veteran, by calling him a cripple, and a third one rummages around impudently through their shopping in the handcart.

In this scene, neither a Gullson nor one of the ruffians should take serious damage. If the characters are losing the fight, the hooligans will quit the brawl at some point and move on triumphantly ("There, that'll teach you!").



Tanner's Town Main Street



Bramwell's General Store

More likely, though, it will be the ruffians' turn to collect some black eyes – if the fight escalates, however, deputy Herbert will intervene: stashing away his newspaper, he comes strolling and separates fighters in a vaguely arrogant manner (for example, he rudely pushes up the chin of a character with his nightstick and gives him a stern look, saying something like “That will be enough!”). Although Herbert brusquely drives away the hooligans, it is obvious that he takes the characters to be responsible for the fight (“And you scum, get outta my sight!”). Players should realize that it would hardly be advisable to pick a fight with this huge man – gnashing their teeth, they ought to continue their way home.

The deputy's behavior should also make it clear that the Gullsons cannot count on his support in the course of the adventure, either. If possible, the keeper should have all characters meet again at the end of Tanner's Town, whether they went to the store or were involved in the brawl, so that the group returns home to the farm together.

Frenchman's Plot Farm

The farm is located on a slight rise and has been kept by the Gullson family for over two hundred years. It is built from wood with a long wooden tiled roof, in the typical style of Oyster Island. A little birch copse is not far away. Directly adjacent to the farm building, there is a barn that was extended by grandfather Henry. Apart from several sheep, it houses plenty of chicken and geese.

Arriving on the farm

The last stretch of the path to the farm winds its way past some low trees and shrubbery. Listening, the Gullsons notice a rustling and cracking in the undergrowth, as if from a comparatively large creature. After a brief search, they discover a runaway sheep, apparently one of their own. Arriving at the farm, they find their suspicions confirmed – something must have happened: fences are trampled down, the sheep run free, and all windows on the ground floor are smashed. As the family returns, the two sheepdogs in the kennel on the other side of the house start to howl miserably. The kennel has very nearly been pushed in from the outside, and one of the two large dogs has an ugly bite. On closer inspection with successful First Aid, the wound appears to come from strong but blunt teeth that must have been rather chewing than tearing.

The ground floor rooms have been devastated, too – the floor is covered in clay, sheep dung, and shards. The chicken shed in the barn has been broken up, and only a few feathers remain of its inhabitants.

When the Singer's voice rang through the night, men and beasts suffered a severe temporary trauma. The villagers of Tanner's Town, living further away, got away relatively easy, merely affected by nightmares, but in the vicinity of the Old Church, the effect of the singing was far more severe. The sheep went berserk, trampled down the fences, and attacked poultry and dogs, who could only rage defenselessly in their cages and kennels. Peace only returned at dawn, when the Singer left. Similar scenes occurred on neighboring farms; their inhabitants caused devastation, too, but could not remember the previous night on the morning after.

Only Harold Newman has been spared from the Singer's influence. Frenchman's Plot's deaf and mute day laborer lives with his son Keith in a shabby cot not far away and is a known drunkard – which is why nobody believes the stories that he is telling with his hands and feet. His tales, interpreted by his son, about dancing sheep and a winged thing up in the air are simply too absurd by far.

Things to do:

The characters now face a number of tasks:

- Someone has to go looking for Harry.
- The sheep must be rounded up, the fences must be put up again.
- Someone should ask the day laborer about Harry, and hire him to help clear up.
- Three of the sheep are pregnant, and must be assisted when lambing.

A search for Harry on the farm and in its immediate environments remains unsuccessful. There is no clue to the whereabouts of Sarah's husband, and despite the cold treatment in Tanner's Town, it is far from unlikely that characters go to see deputy Herbert about Harry. But the deputy is nowhere to be found. At his house, characters have to knock for a long time before a window is opened on the upper floor. In a shrill voice, Mrs. Herbert informs them that her husband is patrolling, and that she does not know when he will return. To get rid of the Gullsons, she promises them to tell him about their request, but it is not hard to tell that the Gullson family is not welcome here.

The Gullsons will only encounter deputy Herbert again at the scenario's end.



Catching the sheep and cleaning up the farm grounds is a laborious task, but a necessary one. The sheep are a valuable possession, and Florence and Thomas will have to look after them. The family owns 72 Suffolk sheep, a race first bred in the 1850s. The average weight is about 240 pounds for rams (which have no horns), and 170 pounds for ewes.

The trained English Sheepdogs are usually quite handy to drive sheep, but today they are distraught and initially don't even dare to come close to them. Only after a Gullson proves successful Dog Training, they start to drive the flock together. But they do it so aggressively that characters will have to step in every now and then to protect a sheep from injury.

Sooner or later they will also go to see the day laborer, either to hire him for help with the clearing-up, or to ask him for the whereabouts of Harry (George had told them that Harry intended to give final instructions to the day laborer). They meet Harold Newman and his son Keith on the way from their cot to Frenchman's Plot (or, if the characters wait for too long, even on the farm itself).

Newman is deaf and mute and generally considered a simpleton. Malicious gossip claims that the Gullson family hired the only inhabitant of the island that even they could look down upon. After witnessing the family's crimes last night, he consumed considerable quantities of rum (without tea) and now appears to be even more distraught than usual. The son fearfully translates the father's gestures and facial expressions into incoherent sentences, and very slowly it becomes apparent that Newman has come to ask for the remainder of this week's pay, and has no intention whatsoever to continue his work for the Gullsons.

Through either patient questions or stern threats, the characters can extricate that Newman has not seen Harry for several days and does not know anything about his whereabouts. But not even Keith himself can find out what has inspired his father's sudden decision to quit the Gullson's service and emigrate to the mainland.

The birth of the lambs

"I haven't any courage at all. I even scare myself. Look at the circles under my eyes. I haven't slept in weeks." – *"Why don't you try counting sheep?"* – *"That doesn't do any good. I'm afraid of them."* – The Wizard of Oz

Later that same day, with the worst part of the work done, the Gullsons notice that three of the pregnant ewes are about to lamb. If necessary, the keeper should remind them (through Sarah) that it is imperative to assist the sheep as they give birth. For this reason, at least one of the characters should place the animals separately in the barn and mind them as the afternoon passes. At some point, it will be apparent that birth is immediate for all three of them. The keeper should do her best to gather all of the characters in the barn (maybe because it is a dear old family tradition?); after that, she should have Sarah leave them inconspicuously ("Sarah brings several blankets from the yard and goes back to the house to boil more water"). Then, the lambs are born in rapid succession – however, the influence of the Singer has mutated them all in terrible ways: to varying degrees, they all have taken on the shape of the Singer within only a few hours.

As the first lamb is born, it appears to be quite normal at first sight. Only after cutting the umbilical, while rubbing the animal dry, it becomes obvious that it has a winding trunk instead of a snout – moreover, the lamb has no eyes (sanity roll 0/1 SAN) and dies within a few hours.

The second lamb is absolutely tiny and still-born. Its body is hardly bigger than a cat, and its skin is transparent – inside it, gelatinous cartilage, inner organs, and veins are to be seen (sanity roll 0/1 SAN).

The third lamb has two big flaps of skin on its back that it beats weakly as if to spread wings. Its flanks are open wounds, and it is incapable of standing up. Whimpering, it collapses on the straw and dies only minutes later (sanity roll 0/1 SAN). Examination shows that it has strange bite marks. But before the family can achieve any clarity about these, the mother sheep of the third "lamb" collapses with a distressful sigh – the third birth had a twin, a fourth lamb. With incomprehensible rage, the fourth of the newly-born lambs burrows its ape-like head out of its mother's belly with a maw full of maiming teeth, attacking a member of the family. If Thomas is within reasonable range, the keeper should arrange things so that it sinks its teeth into his left thigh (damage 1D2; sanity roll for all characters to lose 1/1D4 SAN). Alternatively, the subsequent fight might offer a chance for a missing blow that hits Thomas's knee instead – the character will have to limp for the rest of the adventure. The player may arrive at the oppressive thought that fate is punishing him because he tried to kill his brother George in the war. The only weapons to hand that the characters will be able to reach are common farm implements like pitchforks, and a very well cleaned spade.

But during the fight, someone kicks over a wooden bucket that was standing in a corner – and hundreds of silver coins roll across the barn floor! This is a part of Wainwright's pirate treasure, found by Harry and robbed by George. George had hurried to

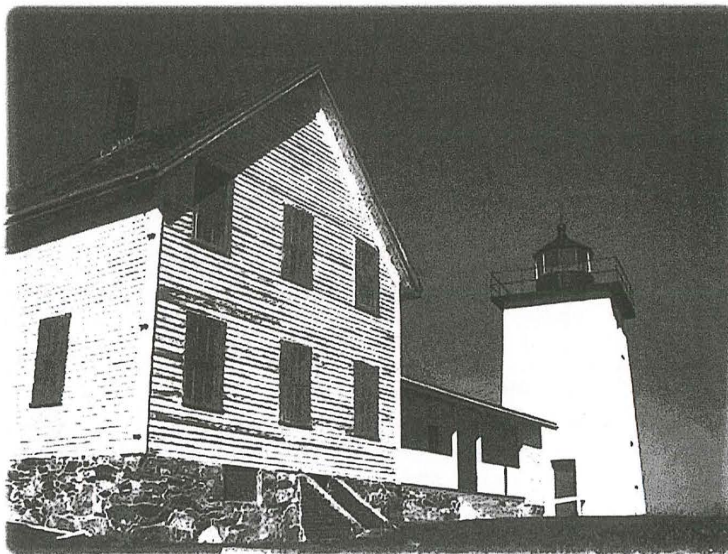
hide his booty in the bucket and has not had any chance to take it away (the keeper has to spoil his every attempt to do so, perhaps by having constantly somebody else busy in the barn). The coins are obviously very old (an idea notices that they are not minted with a date). None of the Gullsons is able to confidently estimate their value, but each and every one of them has a strong hunch that their value is likely to exceed that of the whole farm, fields and all.

The players now have quite a bit to think over – a missing brother-in-law (and respected father), a vandalized farm, terrible miscarriages, and a mysterious treasure. George will probably keep his secret to avoid incriminating himself. The keeper may leave some time at this point for the characters to discuss, but they should be confronted with the next event before they reach any conclusion.

While the other members of the Gullson family were in the barn, deputy postman William Mole arrived on bicycle with two letters for the family. He handed them over to Sarah – a bill from the hospital where grandmother Ada was treated, and a letter from Ada herself, addressed to Harry. Sarah, more and more worried about Harry, takes the mail to her room and opens the letter. First she reads it only superficially, but then she gives it a second, more thorough reading. Next thing, she slashes her wrists with the letter opener.

The other members of the family encounter Mole as he is just about to get onto his bicycle to leave again. The tall young New Englander offers a friendly greeting, hesitates, and gets off again. He introduces himself: he is currently deputizing for Howie Lincoln, who is the regular postman for Oyster Island and its neighbor Stretham Island of several years standing. Being a foreigner, Mole has no particular dislike of the Gullson family. That morning, he overheard talk in the village that Hugh Peterson, the lighthouse keeper, has been killed. ("A dog, they say, or maybe even a whole pack of them that must have attacked him... nobody wants to talk about it, it must have been truly horrible, the way he died.") William feels that he should warn the Gullson family about a ravenous beast that might roam Oyster Island, but he cannot support his tale with any facts. All he knows is that nobody in Tanner's Town wants to talk about it ("they're all afraid, that's for sure"). This might inspire players with the idea that the villagers themselves are somehow involved in the recent events. But Mole cannot stay for too long, and even-

The Light House



tually he bids the family farewell and cycles away along the muddy path through the copse.

Now it is really time for the family to realize that they haven't seen Sarah for some time. Once they look for her in the Holmes' room (actually just a part of the corridor, partitioned by a curtain), they will make a terrible discovery: Sarah is lying on her bed, all covered in blood. Her hand still grips the letter opener that she used to slash her wrists (not very professionally, by the way). Under her body, the opened letter from Ada can be found on the bed sheets – it has been splashed with blood and does not appear very legible anymore. This sight will cost Robert and Wilma 1/1D6 SAN, other family members only 0/1D3 SAN.

When grandmother Ada felt that she was about to die, she decided to warn Harry, her son-in-law: she knew that her daughter-in-law had poisoned her and was now convinced that her suspicions about her husband Henry and their children were actually true. In the letter, she explains the most important evidence and implores Harry to kill the other members of the family, who are all direct blood relatives of Henry. Moreover, she asks him to destroy the Old Church completely, so as to bury the Flute from Dhol at its hiding place forever – she was only guessing that it might be there, but of course she was right.

It is hard to tell how Harry would have reacted to this letter. For Sarah's unstable psyche, at least, it was totally devastating. All of a sudden, she remembered the events of the last night – she realized how she herself had fallen victim to the Singer's influence and brought carnage to Oyster Island: she, her family and her child – they were all monsters. Unable to bear the memory, she chose the only way out that could guarantee eternal forgetfulness. She drank what was left of Ada's medicine, which she knew contained poison from Ada's letter, and then took the letter opener to her wrists. When the others arrive, the poison has induced a deep coma, and even a thorough examination will consider her dead. Later, however, the effects of the poison will wear off, and she will regain consciousness.

For this reason, the keeper should have an eye on what the Gullson family do with this presumably dead family member.

The characters will probably be interested in the letter that drove Sarah to suicide, and parts of it can indeed still be read (handout #1).

The blood-smeared letter contains enough information to send the Gullsons on the tracks of the Singer's descendants. But its meaning is distorted: the legible parts will probably lead them to assume that Harry was told to take action with the family against the villagers of Tanner's Town – precisely the opposite of Ada's actual suggestions. Moreover, she signed with her maiden name "Winkler", a subtle hint that she did not want to be "Gullson" anymore.

If family members try to find the documents that are mentioned in the letter, this will lead them to Ada's room: a vase contains a key to open Ada's chest of drawers. The attempt to unlock the top drawer elicits a grinding noise – soon, one end of a broken hairpin comes to light. Eventually it turns out that the drawer was not locked anyway, just severely stuck.

But the drawer itself is empty: several days ago, Florence opened the lock with the pin and stole the documents that were in it – an unexpected sound had scared her into shutting the drawer so hurriedly that it got stuck. Being illiterate, she entrusted the papers to her lover Harry, and the adventure's events started to unfold.

A character searching the modest contents of Florence's jewelry box will discover the other half of the pin.

By now, it should be late in the afternoon. The family has found their farm devastated, their day laborer has quit, their sheep have given birth to abnormally misshapen lambs, and a silver hoard has turned up unexpectedly in their barn. Sarah has apparently committed suicide over a letter, Ada's notes have disappeared. There is still no trace of Harry, and the nearby village of Tanner's Town offers only open enmity.

In principle, this kind of outward pressure should forge a bond between the members of the family – if only there were not be suspicious circumstances indicating that one or the other from their own

The Flute from Dhol

The artifact that is known as "The Flute from Dhol" is about twenty inches in length and consists of a semi-transparent substance, porcelain-like and yet not quite unlike organic matter. Its unusual shape reminds of both a flute and a trunk; its surface is covered by pore-like dimples. Seemingly fragile beyond imagination, the flute can actually not be damaged by any physical force known to mankind.

The Flute from Dhol is really a living limb of the Singer. Wherever its sound is heard, a rent opens up in the fabric of space in every subsequent night, that allows the Singer from Dhol to pass into the realm of mankind. If played elsewhere, the rent closes, and a new one opens in the vicinity of the flute.

The flute can slowly draw magic points from people and store them. With the power that was stored within it at that time boosted by that gained from British soldiers, the flute began its own attempt to open a gate for the Singer from Dhol in 1780, but ultimately failed. An incomplete gate opened up in the middle of the old steeple and brought about the tower's collapse, along with considerable damage to the church from the debris. It took several years to clear up after that, and in the course of the clearing-up, a member of the guardians' order discovered the flute. Not daring to approach it or inform others, Brother Clarke hid the access to its hiding place under a confessional that he erected in 1791 solely for this purpose. He took the secret with him to his grave. Having used up all its magic points, the flute is currently inactive – Harry died too fast for it to steal any of his energy.

number was involved in the events. Depending on whether Florence or George confide in them or obstruct their investigations, the players will more or less be able to figure out some connections. But it is decisive for the scenario that they search the Old Church of St. Savior. A central clue being hidden in Ada's letter, the keeper should take care that this is not found by George alone – he, after all, has some interest that his victim Harry is not discovered. The sense of urgency in Ada's letter (“destroy the Old Church and God's Finger today”) should incite the family to take upon them this half-hour's walk on that same evening. Obviously, they don't have the means to destroy the church right away, but they will certainly want to find out what is going on there.

Sarah

At some time in the evening or at night, Sarah regains consciousness. The keeper should make sure that none of the characters is around. Sarah is now alarmingly close to madness, and if she comes to being dressed in a pall and laid out in state, this will hardly help to improve things. She does not attempt to complete her suicide, though, but climbs out of a window. Irresistibly, she is drawn to the Old Church. If she still had some doubts whether she really spent the last night in a cannibalistic killing frenzy, her findings in the church and the vicarage remove these instantly. She hesitates no longer. Too weak to face the Singer and her family alone, she faintly drags herself all the way to Tanner's Town, where she will warn the villagers and turn herself in at their mercy, for better or worse.

The Gullson family should discover Sarah's disappearance pretty fast: all of a sudden, wind gusts through the house, a shutter slams open and shut, and the draft extinguishes two candles. The window in Sarah's room is open, the curtains are fluttering in the wind, and the corpse has disappeared. The players' characters (if they are still on the farm) will now certainly arrive at some sinister suspicions. The print of a naked foot in the soft ground under the window allows at least to assume that the dead (?) woman was walking herself.

This scene is quite useful to draw characters to the Old Church, if they are not interested in St. Savior yet. If the group should have divided (for example, if George has sneaked off to the Old Church alone), it is possible to reunite it at this point. In this case, a human shape is seen outside darting away in the light of a candle that is standing close to a window. With some skill, the family will be able to follow it to the area of the Old Church, but there they inevitably lose track of Sarah – she gets away to Tanner's Town unnoticed. If they should happen to lose Sarah earlier (maybe because they are slow in the pursuit, or because they fail some skill rolls), they still can tell as much that the figure was headed towards the Old Church. In the worst case, one of the sheepdogs is able to follow her tracks into the proximity of the church, but invariably loses them there.

The way to the church leads first through the copse, then across muddy fields and fences. George will have to limp successfully (see character sheet) to keep up with the others.



St. Savior's Old Church

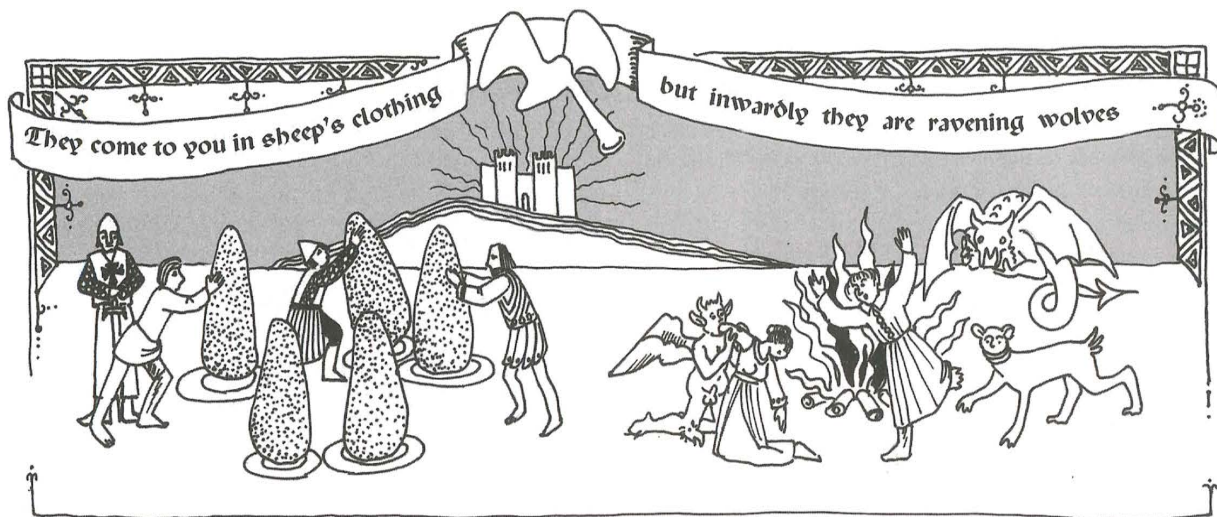
St. Savior

The Old Church is located in the westernmost part of Oyster Island and it is the oldest building on the island. St. Savior was originally “Sante-Saveur”, founded by French settlers in the 1690s. Cord Wainwright used the church as his headquarters during his occupation. The church is popularly believed to have been damaged by British troops in 1780, but this is untrue. As the oldest church of the western seaboard it is a symbol of man's struggle against the sea. Apart from St. Savior, the church grounds accommodates the vicarage and a little farm. All these are overlooked by the ruins of the church steeple, which collapsed in 1780. It is still an imposing 100 feet high, and some call it “God's index finger”. Between the church and the sea, there is the “cemetery of the homeless”, founded in 1895, where drowned strangers of unknown origins who are washed ashore on the island are buried. If characters are killed in the course of the adventure, this is where their fellow islanders will give them a shallow grave.

As the Gullson family arrives, the church grounds will probably lie in utter darkness. Once they come very close, however, it becomes obvious that this farm has been devastated, as well. Broken doors dangle in their hinges – there is no sign of the church's priest or of the other inhabitants of the mound. A search of the other buildings leads to no new insights.

The Old Church's main door is not locked and opens with a low creak. Inside, the church is dominated by a winged altar in a colonial Classical style from the early 1700s. The most important items in the church treasury are a brass font from the wreck of the Buphever (which sank in 1834) and the organ, built in 1731 by one Master Arp. Wood carvings of uncertain age were discovered in 1911 and carefully restored in 1913-14. Officially, they depict Judgment Day, but perceptive viewers might ask why the resurrected are laboriously busy to erect a stone circle – and why the demons do not drag the sinners to hell but devour them on the spot. Many might also wonder about the odd shape of the trumpet that is blown by the angel flying high above. A banner quotes the Sermon on the Mount: “They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

Most visitors will pay little attention to the confessional, according to one inscription put up in 1791 (when the church was already



The restored wood carvings in St. Savior's Old Church

Protestant for a long time) – until one of the characters spots hidden and notices the pick-ax that leans there. None of the Gullsons will have any difficulties to recognize it as property of the family. Even a superficial examination of the confessional shows that its wooden floor boards were broken out only recently and relocated in a mere makeshift manner. Underneath, a memorial slab is set into the church floor. A strong man will be able to lever it open laboriously with a spade or the pick-ax, revealing a pit that is about six foot deep (marked “here” on the floor plan of the church). The floor of the brick-walled pit is moist; silver coins are glistening here and there in the unsteady light. Harry sits crouched in one of its corners. His horrified gaze is directed to the center of the pit, his bloody hands are pressed to the ears. His body is covered in numerous wounds, and the left leg stands out in an unnatural angle. A semi-charred bundle of papers and a long, flute-like object lie in his lap. Harry is dead, but this can only be ascertained if somebody enters the pit. George is probably still afraid that his victim might suddenly regain consciousness and reveal him. He, at least, will be inwardly relieved by Harry’s death. But for Harry’s daughter Wilma and for Florence, who had an affair with him, this should be quite a shock. The keeper should have them make sanity rolls at this sight (0/1D3 SAN).

A thorough examination of the pit discovers the following:

- Harry’s body is covered in wounds from a massive sharp object. It should be made obvious to the players that he was attacked with inhumane cruelty. This will once more demonstrate to George the atrociousness of his deed.
- Bloody prints on the walls and at the bottom of the slab indicate that Harry tried to escape after the attack, but in vain.
- At first sight, both middle fingers on Harry’s hands seem to be missing, but closer inspection finds that they were pushed forcefully into his ear canals (by himself?), causing fatal injury.
- If the Gullson family are still interested in riches, they can collect in total a second bucketful of silver coins.
- The rolled-up bundle of papers is a torch, improvised from grandmother Ada’s notes. Most of them are burnt, but the remaining pieces may still be quite revealing (handout #2).

- Finally, the church’s floor plan is discovered (handout #3), with the hiding place of the Flute marked. It will not evade observing players that the recorded measures of the neighboring building do not match: one room is smaller than it should be – a secret seems to be hidden there. If this remains unnoticed, the narrator has an opportunity here to point out Wilma’s intelligence to the other players, by discretely passing a note to her player.

Most groups will be well on their guard against playing the flute without any further knowledge about it. The circumstances in which it was found will advise caution, as well. But it is still possible that a character puts the Flute to his or her mouth at some point. In this case, it will come alive instantaneously and possess the player. At first, the character feels a testing touch at the back of the throat, then the instrument starts to shift and move in his or her hands. Too fast for any reaction, the Flute grows into the character and roots itself deep in his or her throat. It turns into a trunk-like part of the character’s body, but acts completely independent of its victim, who loses 1D3/1D10 SAN. From now on, every breath calls forth the Singer. The mere sound of the Flute will cause the loss of 1/1D3 sanity points, the sight of the person playing it another 1/1D6 sanity points. The call accelerates the Singer’s approach, and thus the end of the adventure.

Being indestructible, the trunk cannot be removed or muffled. Only the character’s death will bring the dreadful sight to an end; the Flute stiffens and drops to the ground. The shrill and terrible whistling of the Flute is audible human ears in distances of over 300 feet.

The secret chamber of the guardians’ order

Ever since the Singer from Dhol was banished, centuries ago, there has always been a member of the guardians’ order living on Oyster Island. The priests of the Old Church traditionally initiate their successors before retiring, and these continue their work. With the approach of modern times, however, the order’s vigilance has slacked off considerably, and every new priest’s belief into the Singer’s reality became less. The last few representatives of the guardians’ order considered the study of the bequeathed scriptures as a mere historical oddity that was observed only to honor traditions. The reports

about the battle against the Singer and its servants are molding away in the secret sanctum of the guardians' order and are hardly read anymore, if ever. With the floor plan (handout #3), this secret room in the vicarage is easy to find. It is not shown on the map, thus it can be handed to the players without any problems. Close examination of the indicated dimensions of the rooms will make obvious both that there is a hidden room, and its likely location. If the Gullson family now manage to successfully Spot Hidden, the chimney's back wall (20 inches x 20 inches) will swing aside at the mere pressure of a hand. Alternatively, the characters can make their entrance with the pick-ax or similar tools. Successful tracking discovers deep scratch marks on the stone, as if from a recent attempt to force an entry. It takes some effort to crawl into the dark hole that lies behind, and the opening should be described as very narrow and oppressive – in particular on behalf of Robert.

The room on the other side has no windows and is sparse like a monk's cell. Its furniture consists of an old-fashioned writing desk, a bookshelf and an oil lamp. This room has obviously seen a fight not too long ago – hand-written tomes lie scattered all around, the desk is toppled over, and an open shaft gapes in the floor, its heavy wooden trapdoor shattered. Next to the entrance to the shaft, there is the corpse of Revd. Markham – identifiable only by the remnants of his clothing. The skin of St. Savior's rector has been flayed off, blunt teeth have torn through his flesh and devoured it (O1D4 SAN for this sight). Again, this crime was committed by the Gullson family themselves. Under the influence of the Singer, they sensed Markham last night in his hideaway, entered through the tunnel and slaughtered him.

The medieval writings in this room cannot be deciphered by the characters, but they do discover the priest's notebook, in which his knowledge about the Singer is noted down (handout #4).

The shaft in the floor of this room leads into a brick tunnel that runs straight through the church mound to the steeple ruin. A strange whistling wind blows from it, and the tunnel, only three foot high, is half flooded with ground water that has seeped in. Robert, a sufferer from extreme claustrophobia, will have to pass a sanity roll every other minute or so if he enters the tunnel. Failing the roll, he will panic and flee back to the surface. Shortly before the tunnel ends, the explorers find a recent opening to the surface, rain drizzling down from above. Successful tracking discovers that something or someone has dug out this new entrance to the caved-in tunnel not too long ago, thus gaining access to Markham's hiding place.

Climbing out of the tunnel, the family find that they are inside the ruined church tower. The northern, western and southern walls of the tower are still about 30 yards high, but the eastern wall, facing the Old Church, has come crumbling down but for a remnant of a mere five yards. Debris and rubble of the destroyed stairwell lie around inside the tower like a pile of children's building bricks. There are many pieces and projections on the wall that will allow a skilled climber to ascend the tower's top. A narrow, half overgrown passageway in the eastern wall leads out, only to be passed in a stoop; behind it, the dark bulk of the church rises. Wild and confused shouting can be heard outside, torches create bizarre patterns of light on the walls, and fierce gusts of wind are whistling through the narrow passageway and up the walls. Up high, close to the top of the tower, there is a kind of rent in the skies, shining dimly with an unearthly

light. Gazing at it for too long will cause dizziness, for strange stars are to be seen through it.

Meanwhile...

All inhabitants of Tanner's Town are appalled at the terrible murder of the lighthouse keeper, and more than just a few of them connect the crime to other events – Revd. Cromwell, rector of the New Church (St. Andrews) and deputy Herbert are busy all afternoon to discuss with several island dignitaries the possible connections between the devastation of farms and the numerous nightmares of islanders in the previous night, and the huge number of deformed animals born during the day. In the late afternoon, a deeply distraught Harold Newman reports (interpreted by his son) what he saw last night: strange lights near the Old Church, men and animals behaving like mad, and the Gullson family marching across the island to the church like a pack of wolves (being deaf and mute, Newman was the only one who could resist the Singer's voice and retain a conscious memory of the events of the previous night).

Finally, an incredibly weak Sarah comes staggering through the streets of Tanner's Town in the evening and reports what she has learned from Ada's letter; unconditionally, she delivers herself into their hands and implores Cromwell and the other citizens to capture her family – or better still, kill them.

Incredible though both these reports might be, they agree nevertheless with some ancient legends that Cromwell knows. Hence, an equally frightened and furious lynch mob leaves Tanner's Town for Frenchman's Plot later in the evening. The men wear thick oilskins, their faces hidden in their hoods. Armed with pitchforks and axes, they force the front door and search the farm for its inhabitants. The sheepdogs will start to bark early on, so family members who stayed at home will have a timely chance to run or hide – one view of the armed mob will make clear that any attempt to resist or negotiate will be futile. If the men still discover a Gullson family member, he or she will be attacked immediately. The attackers' will prefer to capture them alive, but they will take no risks if need arises. If characters offer stubborn resistance, the men will not hesitate to wound or kill. Neither will they talk to a member of the Gullson family, but only incite each other to seize them. Whoever is caught alive will be tied up and brought to the Old Church. As they leave, the attackers set the farm buildings on fire.

In the meantime, Cromwell has led another group of villagers to the Old Church, where they set about to erect a stone circle. The men first roam the island with teams of horses, seeking out appropriate boulders and breaking them from existing buildings where necessary. Recent wagon tracks and trails leading to the Old Church can be found all over the island, and the keeper can use them to lure a group that has scattered across the island to St. Savior nonetheless.

Whoever could be convinced by Cromwell that the Singer from Dhol presents a real threat is gathering on St. Savior's church mound. The Gullson family can easily observe the bizarre scenes around the steeple from the church or from the neighboring building; some bushes at the seaward rim of the mound provide good cover, too.



The gate to Dhol opens over St. Savior's Old Church

High above them, near the top of the ruin of the Old Church's tower, there is the gate to Dhol. As dawn falls, the rent in the skies begins to shimmer – initially only vague, it becomes more and more discernible and is reminiscent of St. Elmo's fire. At the same time, the wind around the church increases its intensity to a howling storm, sweeping towards the gate from all sides. Instructed by Cromwell, around thirty men and women are busy at the foot of the tower to construct a stone circle from the boulders that are brought. Drivers swear, horses neigh, and heavy rain beats down on the islanders who struggle in desperate haste to bring titanic boulders into their proper position in the ankle-deep mud. Others, with smoking torches and storm lanterns, have taken a stand on monoliths that are already in position and begin a strange chant that remains incomprehensible through the howling storm. Suddenly, the characters notice the ruffians from their morning encounter in the distance – they are working hard to push a cart with a boulder along a muddy track. Old Widow Bramwell is there, as well – she is circling the tower with a long rope and marks out with a stick a circle in the ground of about 100 feet diameter. Most certainly, however, the Gullson family will be shocked to see Sarah alive and staggering along before deputy

Herbert. The huge policeman pushes her towards the ruin of the steeple; some villagers throw stones at her.

At the south side of the tower, away from the church, there is a rope ladder dangling down (the staircase collapsed together with the upper part of the steeple in 1780). On the crumbling walls at the top of the tower, Cromwell directs the construction of the stone circle. At the same time, he tries to follow Sarah's instructions for the spell to close the gate. This is also the reason why deputy Herbert brings her up to the top of the tower, keeping her bound (nobody is quite certain whether she might not re-join the ranks of her family in the last possible moment).

The
THE END

The final outcome of this scenario depends largely on the characters' actions. In most cases, there will be a discussion among the members of the group whether or not they should disrupt the ceremony. The main alternatives are as follows:

- The group knows or figures out that the ceremony around the steeple is not intended to summon a creature, but to avert its appearance. Logically, they will stay away from the scene. In this case, it is up to the keeper to decide whether the islanders manage to close the gate in time or whether the Singer will just appear anyway.

But it is not unlikely, either, that the group decides to travel through the gate: all character descriptions contain hints about wanderlust or the feeling of "not being at home" on Oyster Island. In this case, the characters are likely to attempt either by force or by negotiations to make it to the top of the steeple in time. Clever players may also decide to leave the ceremony uninterrupted and simply open a new gate on the following day. It is up to the narrator whether she allows this elegant but unspectacular end of the scenario or not. When in doubt, just have the villagers' ceremony fail and the Singer appear.

- One or more family members are discovered by the villagers: aware that the characters present a tremendous danger, the islanders will do everything to put them out of the running before the Singer appears. They will not take their time to negotiate, but kill characters straight away.
- If one of the Gullsons decides to play the Flute from Dhol, it will connect to his or her body in the manner described previously. Distressed and in pain, the villagers drop to the ground at the sound of the trunk, and the Singer from Dhol appears shortly thereafter.

- The player characters may try to reach the gate, for example to jump through it or to throw the Flute from Dhol through it. The latter would not stop the Singer's appearance, but if one of the Gullsons should manage to pass through the gate with the Flute, he or she could play it on the other side. In this case, the gate on Oyster Island would close, and with the Flute not on Earth anymore, the gate could never be opened again – however, the character's return is blocked, as well. It is conceivable for Robert, who is dying anyway, will take that decision – but it might still be difficult to reach the steeple top in time.
- The players decide to disrupt the ritual. To this purpose, they can attempt to topple boulders that are already positioned, or to prevent their delivery. Alternatively, they may attempt to attack the villagers (about thirty in number) directly, or they may look for a more promising way to reach the steeple top.

There are two ways to scale the steeple ruin. Firstly, some characters may climb up the rope ladder on the outside wall of the tower while the others create a distraction or keep their backs clear. Secondly, the characters can reach the inside of the tower through the tunnel from the vicarage and climb up stealthily on its inside. While the outside of the steeple's walls can be scaled only by experienced free climbers (a sport that does not yet exist in 1920), the inside offers considerably more and better holds and even protruding ledges that allow a short rest. For every ten yards of ascent, characters will require one successful climb roll. Failure during the first ten yards will only mean that no height is gained. A failure in the middle part requires some luck to avoid attracting the attention of Cromwell or Frank Herbert on the steeple top. Failure during the last ten yards requires a character's luck to avoid plummeting down – and of course another successful Climb roll even if the plunge was avoided.

If Robert remembers that he once scaled the inside of the tower, he can lead the others on the best path (+10% to Climb for him and those who climb behind him). George, though, cannot remember the favorable spots anymore.

For purposes of the game, the keeper should not particularly discourage the players when they consider an ascent up the steeple ruin. It is not very exciting if all the characters simply plunge to their death, and thus the ascent must not be too difficult – on the other hand, it should at least appear to be a dangerous undertaking. Once the group is halfway up the steeple, the narrator need not hold back anymore in her descriptions of how “the wind pulls at your clothes”, that “the holds are hardly visible in the utter darkness of the freezing night”, and “how slippery the rocks are from the constant drizzle”.

At a height of twenty yards, there is an empty window niche in the south wall that allows characters not only to have a break during the ascent, but also to change over to the rope ladder on the outside of the steeple. A Gullson who is scaling the outside of the tower will certainly be noticed by the villagers, if unable to sneak successfully. If the rope ladder is cut or pulled up, this will be noticed no matter what.

Once a Gullson is discovered climbing, he or she will have to make a successful climb roll for every ten feet of ascent – after all, a missile might hit them any second now, and they need to be much more careful. Once the Gullson family is discovered, the faces of Revd.

Cromwell and deputy Herbert show naked horror. Cromwell recites the arcane incantations ever faster, and Herbert swearingly starts to search for missiles. Throwing stones and using his nightstick, he tries to keep the Gullsons away from the steeple top as best he can. As soon as the tied-up Sarah sees her relatives, she starts to yell for help (“Help! Help! Kill them, stop them!”) – the Gullsons will get the impression that she is afraid of the mob, but this mortal fear is of course due to her own family.

At the bottom of the steeple, villagers enter the tower through the narrow passageway and attack characters who might be waiting there. However, the attackers can only enter in single file, and the characters have a tactical advantage at this point.

The steeple top consists of three walls, apparently rather weathered and brittle. Each is about three foot wide, and they are arranged as three sides of a square, with a length of five yards each – the fourth side has collapsed. The gate to Dhol is at the height of the steeple top – at a distance of six feet from the middle (western) wall. The gale hisses fiercely into the opening. The characters' clothes flutter in its gusts, and whoever wants to stand securely will need to stand with a slight stoop to offer less surface to the wind. The rope ladder leads up the south wall, whereas Robert's path scales the north wall; actually, the easiest way up is along the edge of the steeple's northeastern corner, where the eastern wall has broken away.

Cromwell has taken a stand on the middle wall, Sarah is kneeling close to the rope ladder. Herbert will appear with his nightstick wherever he spots a Gullson's head.

The keeper is free to arrange the fight on the steeple ruin in whatever way she sees fit – it is not important here to apply the rules in a “fair” manner, but rather to provide a dramatic and exciting climax. If defeat appears to come too quickly to one side or the other, the keeper should not hesitate to fiddle with fate a little bit. For example, the plummeting priest might yet be able to grasp a Gullson's leg, or a character might get away by a courageous leap to the opposite wall. Occasionally, stones break away from the wall, and characters are only barely able to hold on as fragments crash down into the abyss below.

At any rate, the players should realize during the fight that Sarah is far from being on their side – this might be decisive for the development of the scene, and in particular for its end.

In most cases, the gate to Dhol will not be closed in time.

The fighters pause abruptly, as the rent in the sky flares up brightly to presage the Singer's appearance. Once more, the storm increases its force, only to subside then all of a sudden. The uneasy silence lasts only for a few moments.

The Singer from Dhol enters this world without a sound. It hovers motionless in the air next to the gate. Its semi-transparent figure writhes out a worm-like protrusion, an arm, no, a trunk, used by the eyeless creature to somehow perceive its surroundings. Strangest of all, however, is the Singer's appearance – it seems to be out of focus. However good an observer's eyesight is, however close they might be to the gate, the Singer's outline will always be hazy, as if the light itself was trying to avoid it. If one of the Gullsons is connected to the Flute at this moment, the Singer will settle on the character's shoulder, otherwise it will stay close to the gate. Its song is begun with a single clear note of incomprehensible beauty ... and with it, the madness of the Gullson family.

Driven by the Singer's voice, the family assaults every living being with a rage beyond all human comprehension. The keeper should briefly read through the following text, but then repeat it in her own words:

"The voice of the creature above you is more beautiful than anything that human ears have ever heard. All around you, the villagers drop to the ground, helplessly pressing their hands to their ears. You feel giddy, everything goes black... you come around again only at the break of dawn. Your clothes are torn, every single muscle in your body hurts. All around the ruins of the church steeple, you see your neighbors lying dead. Their bodies have been torn apart with a bestial force and cruelty, bite marks cover the corpses. In helpless dismay, you turn away, choking and retching. You feel the cramps of your stomach – it is as if you are drowning... and then you vomit a bloody jumble of human flesh and hair."

The scenario culminates with the players' realization that they themselves committed the murders. All of a sudden, they can remember the events of the previous night. They remember swimming to the island, there devouring the lighthouse keeper and the inhabitants of the church mound.

The scenario should now draw to an end quickly, as any continuation would weaken the intensity of the climax: the wind has subsided, the rain has stopped. The Singer has disappeared, but the gate is still there, noticeably getting smaller. Dawn breaks, but it cannot bring hope to the characters who now know that they alone are responsible for the atrocities that have been committed. The keeper can incite players to send their characters through the gate, or to have one of the Gullsons take the flute and jump through the rent in the skies, thus saving the world from further affliction by the Singer. If the keeper wants to incorporate one very last hurdle, this could be the moment for day laborer Newman to show up one last time. He survived the massacre – being deaf and mute, he was the only one to remain conscious, and now he comes forth from his hiding to attack one of the Gullsons. He might manage to kill one of the characters, or to keep him or her from reaching the gate. If Newman survives, he will inform the authorities about any Gullson who remains on Oyster Island – which will inevitably take the character(s) in question to spend the rest of their life in an asylum. But it is crucial to end the gaming session fast, not explicitly playing out of further events. It is consciously left open how those who dare to travel to Dhol will fare.

Appendices

Experiences from play tests

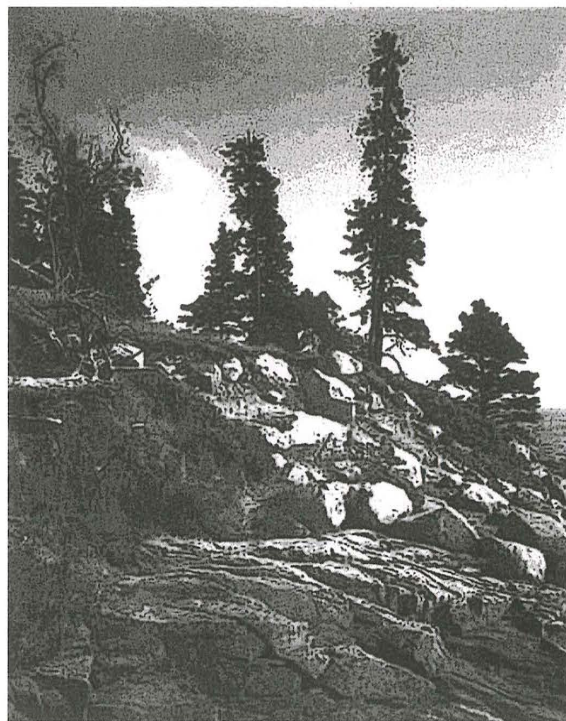
The first half of the scenario will pass in a rather predictable manner. The players will gradually acquaint themselves with their characters and observe how others react to them. Until Sarah's "death", events are sequenced fairly tightly, and the group can hardly do anything but react. Having read Ada's letter, they are given far more space. The keeper should be well prepared – some groups will not want to leave the house at night under any circumstances, while others divide or try to flee from the island. At the very least, the group should find the Flute and Ada's documents – otherwise, the finale will remain incomprehensible and unsatisfactory.

Every group at some point had the idea that there might be a "pirate curse" on the silver that can only be lifted by taking it back to where it was found. This lures characters to the church, but also poses a danger for players to get onto a wrong track with the idea.

Dynamics within the group varied widely in all games. Sometimes players would divulge all their secrets to each other, incriminatory as they might be ("I stole the documents and gave them to Harry", "Harry was about to steal the silver away from me, so I killed him", "I am tied to Sarah by more than just brotherly affection, and I don't want anyone to hit my daughter Wilma"), sometimes they would accuse each other.

Some of the skills on the character sheets appear to be confusing and superfluous, as the scenario involves e.g. neither firearms nor submarines, but they allow better improvisation of characters. The keeper should not allow firearms or other heavy weaponry in the scenario, as these might diminish the feeling of an omnipresent threat.

Indian Point, Oyster Island, ME



The Characters



Florence Gullson, farmer, age 30

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 12	INT 10	POW 8
DEX 12	APP 13	EDU 9	SAN 40	HP 14

Damage Bonus: 0

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3; .Handgun 45%, damage depends on handgun used

Skills: Accounting 15%, Bargain 65%, Conceal 35%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 35%, Craft (Spinning) 45%, Credit Rating 25%, Dog Training 60%, Fast Talk 45%, Locksmith 55%, Pharmacy 10%, Pilot (Boat) 15%, Prepare poison 35%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 55%, Swim 40%.

Languages: English (Own) [cannot read or write] 55%

Possessions:

- door key for the farm
- wallet
- dog whistle

Background:

You can neither read nor write. But you're really good at calculating. And money is very important. When your former fiancé, George, lost a leg, you had no difficulties to get his brother Thomas. And before anyone really noticed, you were the mistress of a whole farm. Only that the farm wasn't really worth a damn. And Ada, the nagging old hag, would not and would not leave it alone, either. But the special medicine that you had been administering to her for weeks has now finally had its effect. Well, it appears she wasn't all that demented – you'd bet that she found out in the end. But by that time, she was already too weak to offer any resistance. From now on, you are the only master of the farm, and if necessary, your slavishly subservient husband will undoubtedly make sure that you get your way. And

there are also your sheepdogs that follow your every command. But still you are not really certain whether you want to stay on Oyster Island for the rest of your life. It doesn't really feel like home, after all.

Harry is your lover. It is only because of you that he comes up with ever new excuses to stay on the farm for another year. You don't see any competition in Sarah – you know for sure that her marriage to Harry has never been consummated. For sure he is not the father of retarded little Wilma, who you'd love to be rid of as soon as possible.

You have found your mother-in-law's will (you had to ruin your best hairpin to pick the lock!), and immediately gave it to Harry to read it over. He only said that the two of you would be very rich, and very soon. The mere thought makes you tingle with pleasure. You're curious to hear his tale.

What you want to do in Tanner's Town:

Like most sheep farmers on Oyster Island, you have given lambs from your farm to the shopkeeper, old Widow Bramwell, commissioning her to sell them. You can hardly wait to get the money into your hands. And if you manage to have the others wait outside, you can keep a good part of it for yourself – and wouldn't that be a brilliant start for the first day of your new rule.

Your opinion about the others:

- George cannot accept that he is nothing but a useless mouth to feed. But if a man will not work, he will not have any rights, either.
- Thomas is a useful blockhead. Not once has he rebelled against you. He sleeps on the floor and looks the other way when you meet Harry.
- The nasty retard Wilma needs a strong hand. Occasionally, when you happen to be alone with her, you give her the good beating that she deserves even without any particular reason – it gives you a wonderful feeling of elation. The bruises and swellings might be ugly, but her parents complained not once. But those weird stares that Wilma occasionally throws at you, they give you an uncanny feeling... and so does the fact that she never cried.
- You respect Robert. He knows his job very well and keeps out of things that are none of his business.
- Sarah is a wretched creature, hardly better than dirt. Luckily she hardly ever says a word. But why does she keep sneaking away to Tanner's Town when she thinks nobody's looking?



George Gullson, disabled war veteran, age 32

STR 17	CON 17	SIZ 13	INT 8	POW 7
DEX 9	APP 7	EDU 11	SAN 35	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Move 4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db; grapple 55%, damage special; Rifle 45%, damage depends on rifle used

Skills: Angling 40%, Art (Flute) 15%, Bargain 25%, Craft (Animal handling) 35%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 55%, History 25%, Limp 60%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Pilot (Boat) 15%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 35%, Swim 35%, Throw 35%.

Languages: English (own) 85%, French 15%

Possessions:

- two crutches and a prosthetic leg
- pocket knife
- hipflask (full)

Background:

The horror! Chased, you flee through the undergrowth, thorns shred your skin – but your pursuer draws ever closer. Then, at last, the beast throws you down – you thrash about wildly but without any power, and the creature sinks its tearing teeth deep into your thigh. Bones crack, and you realize just who is that cannibal that devours your leg with a blood caked face – it is Thomas, your own brother!

You wake up screaming. Just a dream, you think with a sense of deep relief, just a dream! But your fingers grasp empty space. Where is your leg? Only now you recognize the dreadful nightmare that keeps returning ever since that night in Saint-Mihiel, when a bullet of the arch enemy tore away your leg, and only your brother saved you from bleeding to death amid the mud and entrails. Many months you cursed the fate that crippled you so shortly before the end of the war. This war – it destroyed your life. It took your leg away, and it took Florence away, the woman you had been engaged to. Now you are a cripple and a drunkard, your life was made a mess.

But the day before yesterday changed everything.

On the day before yesterday, Harry approached you with a pile of sketch papers that were full of strange signs that neither you nor he could read. He did not tell you where he had got them, but you could help him nevertheless: the floor plan with the big X in one corner was that of St. Savior, the Old Church. It could not be anything but a treasure map, and the two of you decided to go looking for the treasure on the day after the next.

But on that very same night, you went to the church on your own – the idiot must have believed you fool enough to content yourself only with a share. No doubt that the map was your mother’s, you could recognize her handwriting on all these papers. Which means that Harry doesn’t have any right to anything anyway. But there was a light in the church. Cautiously, you stole into it on all threes – Harry, that cheat, had levered open the floor of the confessional with a spade and had his unwashed hands on the silver that was yours! Surreptitiously you snatched the spade – Harry whirled around, but too late. You hit the thief right between the eyes – he simply passed out. You were sitting on the edge of the pit and hit him over and over again with the spade! You were a little afraid to be discovered, but your last visit to a church was such a long time ago that you said a short prayer anyway. Then you carefully covered the hole again with the heavy memorial slab and returned to the farm, your pockets full of silver coins. The spade went back into the barn, cleaned and polished, the silver could be hid in an unused bucket with some straw over it – and that was all it took! In the morning you told your sister Sarah, Harry’s wife, that her beloved bastard husband had just gone out again to the meadows to have a quick last word with Newman, the day laborer. Finally you get some luck up your road, too. You are going to return to the church soon to retrieve the remaining silver. But you are not in a hurry: by now, you are not all that certain anymore whether Harry was really dead when you left him there.

Your opinion about the others:

- Thomas is the only one that you can always rely on.
- Florence always wants to have things her way, and she usually gets them like that, too. But this will change soon.
- Robert is your little brother. You envy him for his good looks and for his job away from the farm. No doubt he’s having lots of women, whereas you never got a single one.
- Sarah is silent and depressive. Why did she have to marry that loser Harry Holmes, after all? Something makes you feel pretty certain that she and Robert are in on some secret.
- Wilma is your retarded niece. The way she is looks into your eyes sometimes is rather uncanny.
- Harry is a wretched loser who only got what he deserved anyway.

Note:

George lives in the terrible certainty that his life was over before it ever had a chance to begin. He tries desperately to appear strong and master of any situation, but his real helplessness turns these attempts into a ridiculous farce. If he were given a chance to start all over again, somewhere far away, he would be more than just glad to do so. Most of the time he stays on the farm, even though his prosthetic limb and the crutches would actually allow him to wander about more or less uninhibitedly. He avoids the villagers of Tanner’s Town as far as he possibly can; just for one example, he would not ever set a single foot into the general store of old Widow Bramwell for anything in the world. George hates most people, but most of all he hates the Germans, for shooting away his leg. One day he will take revenge.



Robert Gullson, Lobsterman, age 25

STR 13	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 12	POW 10
DEX 12	APP 14	EDU 14	SAN 50	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist 65%, 1D3+db

Skills: Art (Flute) 35%, Climb 70%, Craft (Fishing) 55%, First Aid 40%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Navigate 40%, Pilot (Boat) 55%, Pilot (Submarine) 05%, Swim 45%, Throw 35%.

Languages: English (own) 55%

Possessions:

- pocket watch
- windproof lighter
- tobacco
- toy first-aid kit (a present for Wilma)

Background:

During the last two years of the war, you have served your country in the Merchant Marine, running convoys to Europe.

If it comes to the worst, you'd do it again the way you did it then: sneak to the lifeboat, and then play the Samaritan fishing out the scalded comrades who survived the torpedo or boiler explosions.

But you still have that itch in your feet – you still dream of faraway countries.

Now that your mother died, the future looks bright – the immediate future, at least. If everything runs smoothly with the splitting of the inheritance, you won't have to meet your sister Sarah in your Tanner's Town home in secrecy anymore – you'll be able to spend every night together, the way it used to be. In this way, you'll also be in a better position to protect your common daughter Wilma – you're convinced that Florence is responsible for all her bruises and grazes.

You don't perceive your sister's husband Harry as a competition of any kind. He'll simply have to find another woman for his pleasures.

Anyway, you get along with Harry fairly well. Drinking late one night, not only have you sworn eternal brotherhood to each other, but you have also made a bizarre pact, just for the hell of it: whichever of you dies first will do his very best to visit the survivor or send him a message from the Hereafter. The mere thought makes you smile: that doctor in Boston hardly mentioned your clap at all, but he went on and on about something else. Harry and you might find out much sooner than either of you had expected whether your agreement can be fulfilled or not: according to the doctors, cancer leaves you only about six months to live.

Your opinion about the others:

- You have never met a greedier person than Florence, and you have been around quite a bit! She has probably long pocketed every bit of wealth on the farm. If she is doing business in Tanner's Town, you are going to watch her hands – or else she'll steal half of the money again.
- Wilma is your joy and pleasure. You are going to protect her and will never allow any harm to come to her. And for her age, she is really intelligent – very often, her ideas are dead on.
- George is a bitter man, railing against his fate. He used to be your great example, your best friend. Together you explored the island, and once you even climbed up inside the collapsed steeple tower of St. Savior – he showed you the best path to get up. But now his spirit of adventure appears to be lost for good. Today, George is hardly more than a shadow of his former self.
- It used to be that Thomas, one year younger than his brother, had to back down for George. Funny how things change.

Note:

Robert's player should help Wilma to participate actively in the adventure, even though eight-year old girls are usually hardly given any right to have their say. If other players decide to send the "brat" to bed or leave her at home alone, Robert should stand up for her.



Thomas Gullson, farmer, age 31

STR 14	CON 16	SIZ 13	INT 9	POW 11
DEX 7	APP 7	EDU 10	SAN 55	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db; Club 55%, 1D6+db; Rifle 55%, damage depending on rifle used

Skills: Angling 25%, Bargain 15%, Climb 60%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 45%, Craft (Sheep Molester) 60%, First Aid 50%, History 20%, Jump 35%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 35%, Throw 45%, Track 35%.

Languages: English (own) 50%

Possessions:

- pocket knife
- lighter

Background:

You are an extraordinarily happy man. You have your own farm, and you have a wonderful wife who really loves you. Florence is your life, and your love for her is inordinate. Whatever she tells you to do, you will do it gladly, because her love means everything to you. You have always loved your cousin, even when you both were but children.

When she got engaged to George, jealousy very nearly drove you mad. You always knew that Florence was your destiny – that knowledge alone helped you to win over madness and replace it with cold, clear rationality. Yes – Florence may have acted as if she was happy, but deep in your heart you knew who it was that she really loved. So you managed to save her, in the last days of the war. It was a clear shot to the knee, even though you had aimed for your brother's head. Nobody ever suspected a thing, and when Florence saw her mutilated fiancé, you knew that you had won.

It was you who led her to the altar two weeks later, and you still love her like on the very first day. And she loves you. She definitely does.

Even though she has made you sleep on the floor ever since the wedding night. She loves you nevertheless. And it would be wrong to call her stingy just because she is thrifty. It doesn't matter that she keeps all the money for herself – love is the only thing that matters. You love her, and she loves you.

You're very, very certain of that.

Your opinion about the others:

- George is a poor sod who has no clue that it was you who destroyed his life. He even believes that you saved it.
- Robert is young and good-looking – and he volunteered for the navy. It's obvious: something must be wrong with that boy.
- Your sister Sarah is quiet. Too quiet. You wonder whether she can really be that naive.
- Wilma is a retarded brat talking utter gibberish. You don't like the way she stares at you.
- Harry lives on the farm as a farmhand. He has been talking about emigrating to California for years. There is hardly any way that you could care less about California, but the idea to travel to somewhere else and start all over is quite fascinating nevertheless.

Note:

Thomas is unconditionally captivated by Florence. He hardly ever leaves her side and is keen to anticipate her every wish. The idea that Florence might not love him in the same way would be intolerable to him, and he would suppress it immediately. Or crack up...



Wilma Holmes, little girl, age 8

STR 8	CON 17	SIZ 6	INT 18	POW 18
DEX 15	APP 12	EDU 8	SAN 90	HP 12

Damage Bonus: -1D4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db

Skills: Art (Flute) 55%, Climb 60%, Dodge 70%, First Aid 10%, Hide 65%, Listen 60%, Night Vision 65%, Pharmacy 05%, Sneak 70%, Spot Hidden 60%, Stare 65%, Swim 50%.

Languages: English (own) 40%

Possessions:

- marbles
- rag doll of a musician (damaged)

Background:

You are a lonely child – on the farm, there are only your parents and Aunt Florence and Uncle George and Uncle Thomas. You have never played with other children, they all live somewhere else, and it’s probably better that way – they certainly wouldn’t like you.

Granny really liked you very much, and Mummy loves you, too. Dad and your uncles hardly seem to take any notice of you, and that’s okay with you. But Aunt Florence is a witch; she always hits you when nobody is looking.

One week ago, however, you stared in her eyes very, very firmly, with those eyes of yours that are so strange, according to just about everybody. Since that day, she hasn’t done anything to you. But still you might run away soon and go looking for another home, somewhere else. If only you knew where.

When you grow up you want to be a doctor. That’s probably going to be difficult, because you are a little dumb. Except for Grandma, everybody has always called you “retarded” – and you know that means “dumb”.

But if you keep up your diligent practicing, you’re certain to become a doctor eventually despite all that. You have a practice room

in your hideaway (a walled-up room under the barn roof that you can reach by climbing up the chimney).

The farm cats are your patients, and they like to come to you, because you always start by cuddling them. It’s so cute how they purr when you carry them to the water barrel. After that, you take the wet, limp bodies to your hideaway to dissect them carefully and fix the pieces on the wall with nails. And the chimney smoke preserves them.

Your opinion about the others:

- Robert is your best friend, he is cheerful and has taught you how to play the flute. And he brings great toys. With Grandma dead, Robert now is the only one you can always talk to – he really listens to what you are saying.
- Florence is a snake in the grass and keeps torturing you. You hate her.
- You are still a little sad that you didn’t get to see how they cut off George’s leg. Apart from that, you don’t care about him at all – and he stinks of booze.
- Thomas is afraid of everybody and everything. Afraid of Aunt Florence leaving him for your dad. Afraid of her staying with him and spending all his money. Afraid of you when you stare at him. And afraid of George, in case he ever finds out that it wasn’t the Germans who blew off his leg after all.
- Sarah is not quite as dumb as you, but very nearly. You really like her, but she speaks very little and cries a lot. In particular when uncle Robert is gone. But when he’s there, she cries even more.
- Harry doesn’t like you because you are simply so stupid.

Note:

Wilma is a goddam genius.

With an INT of 18, she is so extraordinarily superior to the other members of the family (who are close to mentally deficient) that nobody is able to understand her, and she believes herself to be incredibly stupid indeed. Whenever she has a brilliant idea, she can communicate it to Robert – this is how the character can influence the others.

However, Wilma does live in a sick dream world, and she does voice extremely weird thoughts (“I wonder whether the worms like Grandma as much as I do...”).

NPC's



Sarah Holmes, introvert, age 27
 STR 10 CON 17 SIZ 13 INT 10 POW 13
 DEX 12 APP 9 EDU 9 SAN 65 HP 15
Damage Bonus: 0
Skills: Climb 40%, Craft (Sheep Farmer) 45%, Craft (Spinning) 35%, Swim 35%

Sarah is the third child of Henry and Ada Gullson. Eight years ago, she married Harry Holmes, but this has done nothing to stop the incestuous affair that she is having with her brother Robert. Every other week or so, she meets Robert at his Tanner's Town house.

Sarah speaks very little, and if so, her voice is very flat. Few things can draw her attention – she lives in a dream world and perceives her surroundings only as if through a veil. Her daughter Wilma is hardly more than a pet to her. Her absent-mindedness appears to be continuous, and only her eyes show occasional signs of surprise or deep grief.

Tanner's Town youth, hooligans, age 14-16
 STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 13 INT 13 POW 12
 DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 11 SAN 60 HP 13
Damage Bonus: +1D4
Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db
Skills: Be Snotty 60%, Dodge 30%, Pilot (Boat) 30%, Scouting 70%, Spot Hidden 45%.

Their names are Dick, Dan, or Dave, and they are staying with their uncles in Tanner's Town. As far as the Gullsons can remember, only a few years ago these brats were still cheeky but normal children. In the meantime, however, they have turned into a secretive gang of hooligans. Now and then they earn a little money with casual work in the harbor to afford a summer camp or the latest gizmo. Resentful about not having had a chance to fight in the Great War, they vent their frustrations on the island's outsiders (like the Gullson family).

The number of hooligans getting involved in the argument in Tanner's Town equals the number of members of the Gullson family that are present.



Widow Bramwell, shopkeeper, age 62
 STR 12 CON 8 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 12
 DEX 12 APP 9 EDU 14 SAN 60 HP 11
Damage Bonus: +1D4
Skills: Bargain 55%, Hide 45%, Listen 50%, Psychology 30%, Scold 45%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Old Widow Bramwell is quite a character. After her husband's death, she runs the island's general store all on her own. Without real education, but considerable stubbornness and cunning, she has got it into her head to gather some wealth for her twilight years.

She is prone to underestimate others and thus liable to try and make some extra profit by cheating over the change.

Frank Herbert, deputy, age 46				
STR 16	CON 16	SIZ 16	INT 16	POW 16
DEX 16	APP 16	EDU 16	SAN 80	HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3+db; Grapple 60%, damage special; Nightstick 60%, 1D6+db

Skills: Climb 60%, Dodge 60%, Fast Talk 60%, Law 60%, Throw 60%, Track 60%.

Frank Herbert, a huge man in his forties, represents the executive arm of the law on Oyster Island. When he's not listening, this lover of mediocre Wild West novels is mockingly called the "Sheriff". But there is more to Herbert than would be expected from a mere village deputy: he has got what it takes to be a hero, and will rise above his usual self if necessary.

Mutated lamb, monster, age 1 minute			
STR 6	CON 12	SIZ 5	POW 3
DEX 12		HP 9	

Damage Bonus: 0

Attacks: Teeth 35%, 1D3

Skills: Dodge 65%.

Sullied by the Singer's voice shortly before its birth, this little lamb has mutated into a ferocious monster, and it killed its twin while still in the womb. Outwardly quite like a regular sheep, the malicious intellect that is sparkling in its eyes betrays its true nature.



Typical Tanner's Town villagers, mob				
STR 11	CON 11	SIZ 13	INT 13	POW 10
DEX 10	APP 10	EDU 13	SAN 50	HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Attacks: Fist 50%, 1D3; Club 30%, 1D6

Skills: Dodge 20%, Spot Hidden 20%.

Possessions: clubs, axes, lanterns, torches, ropes

The Tanner's Town mob consists of thoroughly regular people: youths and old people, brawny lobstermen and a spindly village teacher. The keeper is advised to adjust the given averages up or down, as need dictates and she sees fit.



Rev. James Cromwell, priest, age 55				
STR 10	CON 10	SIZ 13	INT 17	POW 13
DEX 12	APP 10	EDU 18	SAN 65	HP 12

Damage Bonus: 0

Skills: Bible Knowledge 65%, First Aid 50%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 40%, Throw 40%.

Rev. Cromwell is the Rector of St. Andrews, the New Church, in the village of Trenton, not far from Tanner's Town. He is a quiet, friendly person from a family that has been living on Oyster Island for a hundred years. His community hold him in high esteem, as he makes an unreserved effort for them. His mild-mannered looks hide an iron will: once Cromwell is convinced of something, nothing will dissuade him.

If the Gullson family should happen to encounter him in Tanner's Town, he acts friendly. Despite his personal loathing of them, he considers it his duty as a priest to communicate with them without prejudice. He is not a good actor, and the characters will easily see through him. A dissimulating priest, pretending to be friendly, is likely to further nourish the players' suspicion of the Tanner's Town villagers.

The Singer from Dhol

Any attempt to state attributes and skills for the Singer from Dhol would be daft – it is far more a natural force than a creature. The Singer can actually only take damage through magic ("wounds" would again be far too terrestrial a concept).

The Singer is attracted by the sounds of the Flute from Dhol. Indeed, the flute can be considered to be a part of the Singer, or a part of its body that can exist independently from it.

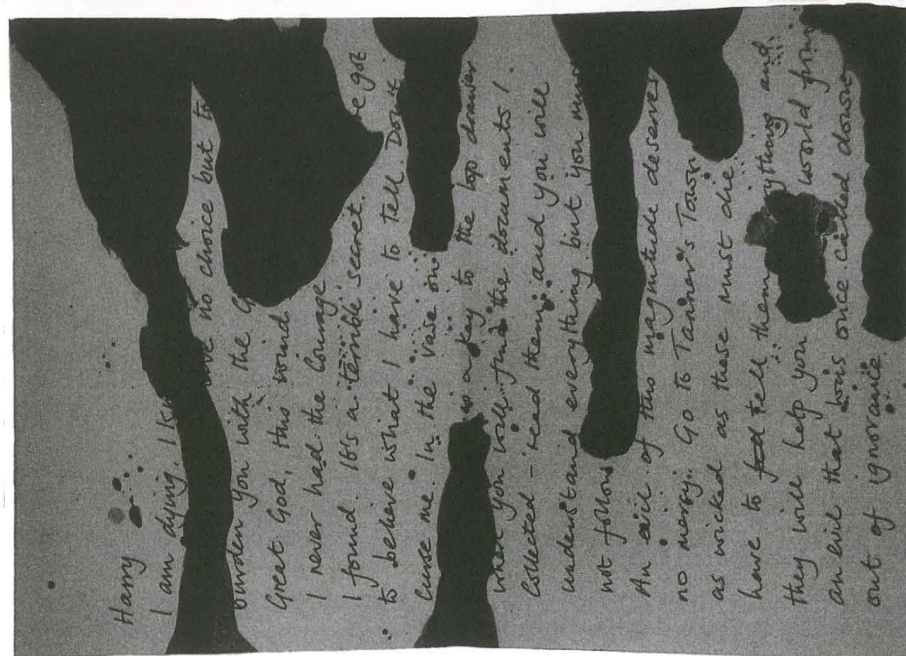
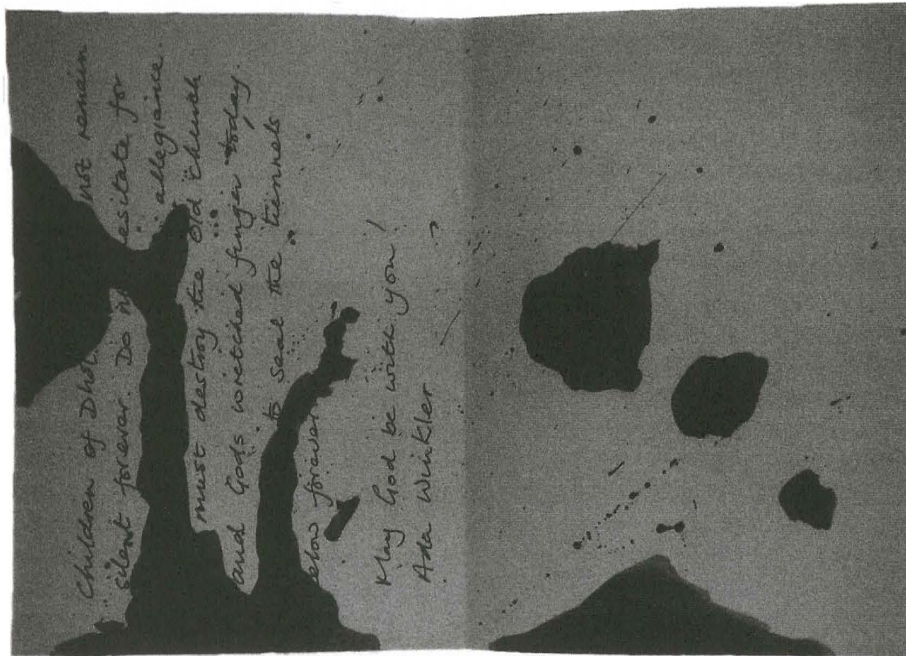
In a way that cannot quite be explained, the Singer appears to be out of focus, as if light could (or would) not touch it. Onlookers will always only see the blurred outline of a cat-sized creature that is apparently capable of seeing by means of its repulsive writhing trunk – the Singer has no eyes.

The Singer's voice drives men and beasts alike insane and has a particular power over unborn life. Creatures that are thus sullied by the Singer (and all their descendants) are drawn by its singing from afar, to pay their tribute to it in atrocious orgies of blood, and they feel a constant longing for a place that lies beyond all boundaries known to mankind – Dhol.

Handouts

Handout #1: Ada's Letter to Harry

The paper is stained with blood, the ink dissolved in many places, and only fragments of the text are still legible.



Handout #2: Ada's documents

1. A page with a sketch of a cave painting, torn from a book

The sketch shows a giant figure with something protruding from its mouth. A shape can be discerned next to its head, although it is not certain whether this is supposed to be a second head or another being sitting on the giant's shoulder. Several smaller human shapes appear to be dancing around the tall figure.



2. Newspaper clipping from the Boston Globe, 1907

[...] Consideration of static principles has now led the two archaeologists to conclude that the eroded nose of the Sphinx of Gizeh must actually have been a far longer piece of rock, "like a trunk". [...]

3. Hand-written notes

Among other material, the supplements to Gessner's tome include a woodcut entitled "Harpy", showing a cat-like creature with wings and an abnormally prolonged nose.

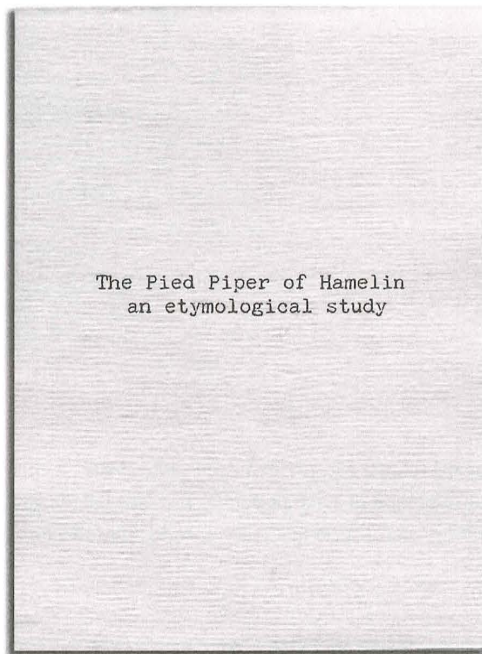


4. Page from 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica underlined in ink

...pulaniae) on way system. Pop. (1901), 24,620. A covering t
 ... along the large trade is conducted in native front of ca
 ... ad branched boats as far as the east coast of Africa. three or r
 ... according to the other a
 ... contingent to open at th
 ... it furnished windows a
 ... B.C. It of- characterized by a translucent body, also from rain.
 ... rance to Sul- the north c
 ... e; and from ware generally, popularly known as though in
 ... hich Strabo, china (see CERAMICS). The French stances (a
 ... 900. (v. 2, 6, porcelaine, from which the word where the
 ... beginning, h comes into English, is an adaptation Those of t
 ... ater Rutilius of the Italian porcellana, a cowrie- ally have
 ... t as in ruins. shell, the beautifully polished surface sometimes
 ... Deaths. In- of which caused the name to be than oute
 ... of some im- applied to the ware. The Italian word moulds to
 ... was still an is generally taken to be from porcel often richl
 ... 86 time of la, diminutive of porco, pig, from a Southwell
 ... supposed resemblance of the shell to Scotland, I
 ... a pigs back. have been
 ... es. Early F
 ... s, Cities and PORCH (through the Fr. pore/fe, longer, an
 ... a 115 FO from Lat. porticus; the Ital. equiva- quently ha
 ... sqq); I. Fal- lent is portico, corresponding to the bles are §
 ... legli Scavi

5. A thin typewriter manuscript.

No family member can make any sense of the text, satiated as it is with specialist lingo



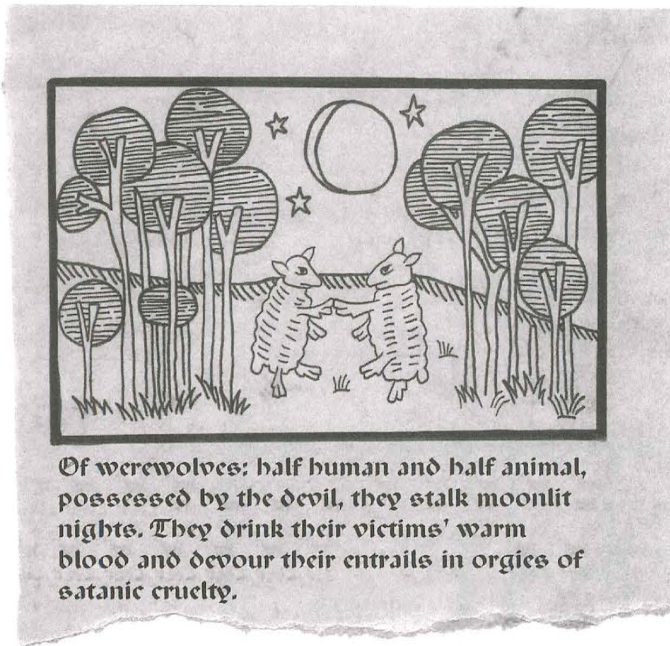
6. A page from an art-historical magazine.

With some effort, it is possible to get an idea of the text's content in spite of specialist terminology and stilted phrases.

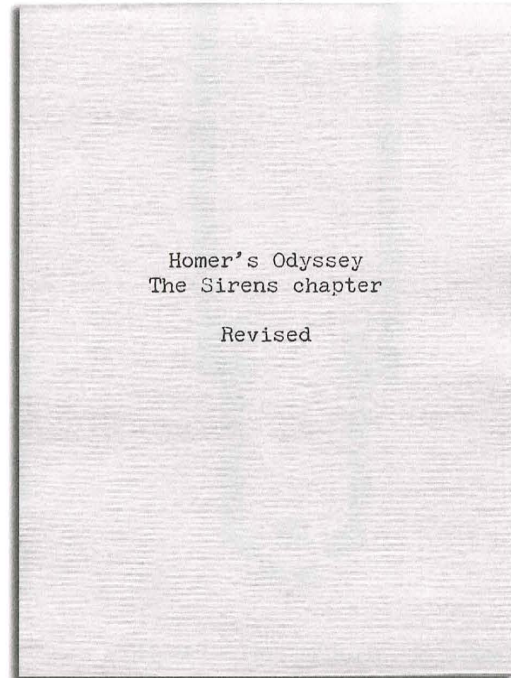
The author describes the art of Hieronymus Bosch, who always pieced together the demons in his visions of hell from body parts of real animals. Thus, the author concludes, a painting that is usually attributed to Bosch cannot actually be from his hand – a creature that is shown there sitting on the shoulder of a monk is a nightmare creature, liberally drawn from fantasy.

7. A woodcut from Malleus Maleficarum, the Hammer of Witches.

The moon shines onto a forest where sheep are dancing on their hind legs.

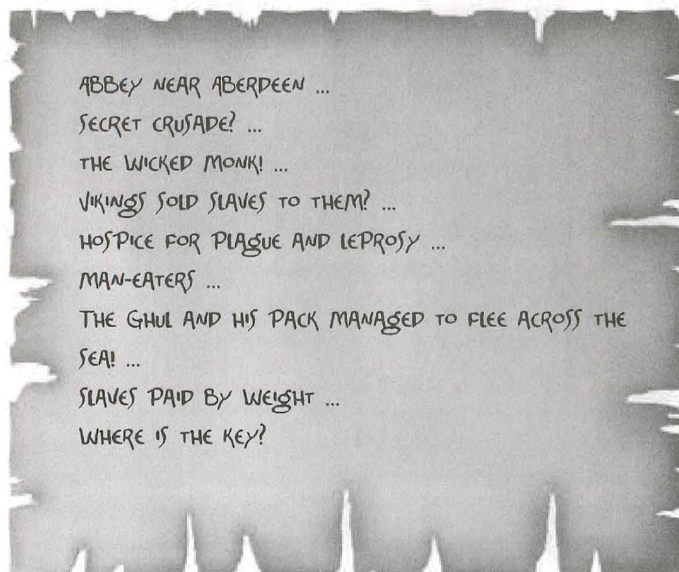


8. A type-written revision of the Odyssey; the sirens chapter.

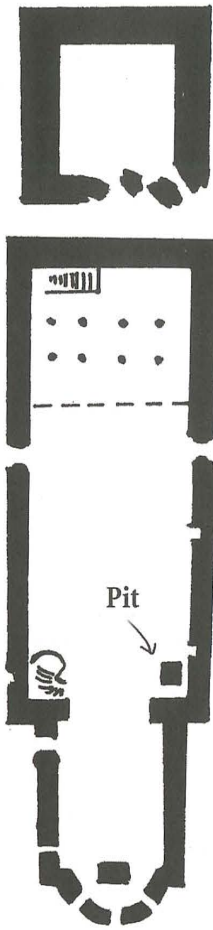


9. A copy of a letter of complaint from the French settlers of the Île de Crane, in French. The settlers ask the King of France, Louis XIV, to aid them against the buccaneer Cord Wainwright, who had set up the headquarters of his pirate fleet in the Sainte-Saveur church in 1705.

10. A text in Latin, with hand-written remarks in English

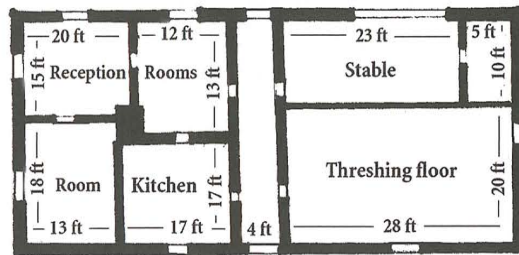


Handout #3: Floor plan of the church of St. Savior and the vicarage



St. Savior's
"Old Church"

Oyster Island, ME
Est. 1690s



Handout #4: The notebook of Revd. Markham

These are brief entries in Revd. Markham's scrawl. The notes follow no apparent sequence or order.

* The order assembled to close the way to Dhol forever. The events of that night in the abbey should never be repeated.

* The guardians' order originates in Britain.

* The twelfth grandmaster sent out the brethren to regain the key.

* One of the buccaneers turned flautist and pointed the way for the Singer from Dhol before he was slain by his fellows. And every night, the Singer came to the island, calling upon those that were his in the dark.

* The Teutonic Knights' Order was not able to stop the eaters of humans.

* Many of the brethren gave their life to fight the spawn of evil, for nothing will stop the idolaters when they are called by the

Singer. They come rushing from afar when the singing calls them to their bloody feast.

* put up a stone circle?

* Beware if the children of the Ghul should ever rise again!

* Brother Clarke found the key but didn't hand it over to the order? Quote: "I hid it where redemption and secretive silence are to be found."

* Some of the Ghul's wicked children managed to flee to their homeland in those days of terror. Others remained, and hidden, and had no power without the call.

* The sacrilegious monk is said to have fled to a land "Dhol". His book of blasphemous incantations has not been seen since that day.

AA

Clark Ashton Smith's

Dark Ages: Averroigne

by Daniel Harms, Adam Crossingham & Richard Becker

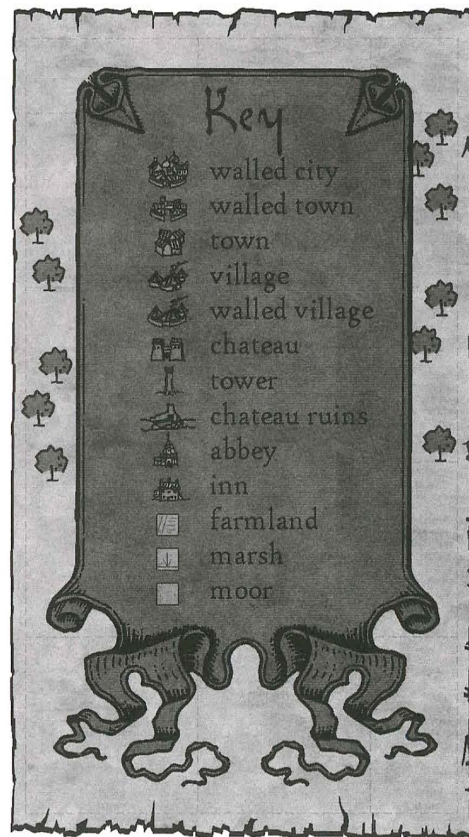


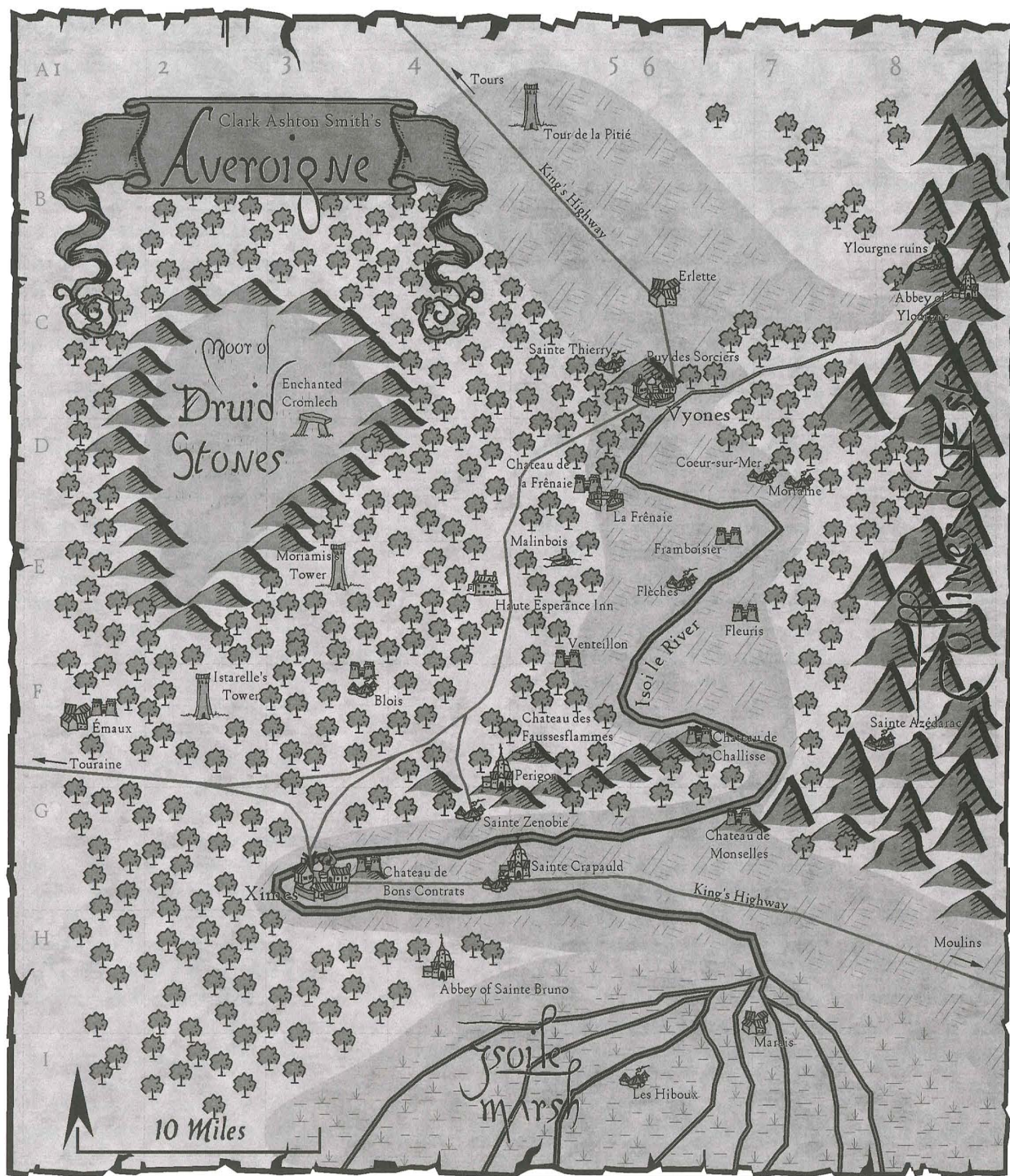
A Gazetteer of Averaigne

by Adam Crossingham and Dan Harms

cartography by Allyn Bowker

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Abbey of Sainte Bruno</p> <p>Abbey of Ylourgne</p> <p>Avernoigne Forest</p> <p>Blois</p> <p>Chateau de Bons Contrats</p> <p>Chateau de Challisse</p> | <p>(Map reference H4)
A Carthusian monastery.</p> <p>(Map reference B8)
A Cistercian monastery on a hill across the valley from the abandoned chateau of Ylourgne. Its monks work the fields surrounding the abbey.</p> <p>A vast forest of pine, oak, alder, larch and beech trees which runs through Averaigne in an arc from north to south. The oldest and wildest part of the forest is above Vyones. The edges of the forest are full of glades, sunlight and flowers but deeper into the forest the trees become more twisted and knotted, monstrous fungi appears, it becomes darker and dank stagnant water can be smelt.</p> <p>(Map reference F3)
A village and chateau deep in the Averaigne Forest. The Dame de Blois was rumoured to have the Evil Eye until she was found dead in the thawing snow, murdered. The Sieur de Blois also has not been seen since riding out from his castle after the discovery of her body. People of the name of 'Grenier' are not welcome in Blois as they are believed by the local populace to be werewolves.</p> <p>(Map reference G3)
The bishop of Ximes' largest estate sits on a hill overlooking the town. The secret alchemical library of Ste. Azédarac has remained undiscovered since his death. The pious discount rumours of Black Masses being held in the vaults below the chateau decades ago.</p> <p>(Map reference F6)
This forbidding castle is home to a distinguished line of comtes. Decades ago, it came under a horrid curse placed by the son of a slain warlock that all members of the line will die before the age of thirty-three. None has found a way to break the curse yet.</p> | <p>(Map reference D5)
The castle of the Comtes de la Frénaie sits on a hill on the edge of the forest, overlooking the walled town of La Frénaie and the forest. The first noble of the line was cursed with lycanthropy, and the lineage passed to a cousin. It is notable for the many fine tapestries, produced by the ladies of the castle, that adorn its walls and the fine hunting to be found in the surrounding woods.</p> <p>(Map reference G6)
A Templar castle and the commanderie of the region.</p> <p>(Map reference F5)
A ruined chateau, a mile away from the Abbey of Perigon. Long abandoned and rumoured to be the haunt of unholy spirits, witches, demons and indescrib-</p> |
|---|--|--|





- able festivals, a deadly secret lies below the courtyard for the curious and unwary.
- Coeur-sur-Mer** (Map reference D7)
The nearest village to Morraine, and its arch-rival.
- Collines d'Est** (Map reference E5)
The hills in the semi-mountainous region to the east of the Averroigne Forest are home to ore mines and shepherd's flocks. The villages in this area tend to be walled for defence.
- Emaux** (Map reference F1)
A village and chateau near Touraine.
- Enchanted Cromlech** (Map reference D3)
A massive structure consisting of two upright slabs and a lintel, the cromlech is the doorway to Sylaire.
- Erlette** (Map Reference C6)
Small town near Vyones. Its graveyard is often avoided due to the odd sights and sounds emanating from it at night.

Flèches	(Map reference E6) A village.		the fiery blood-red wine and fine furniture that it produces.
Fleuris	(Map reference E6) A château.	Les Hiboux	(Map reference I6) A largish village located in the Isoile Marshes. It is renowned for the owls that nest in the groves surrounding the village.
Framboisier	(Map reference D6) A chateau.		
Haute Esperance Inn	(Map reference E4) The largest tavern between Vyones and Ximes. Ale, wine, food and lodging can all be found here. Originally called the <i>Bonne Jouissance</i> , it has been the <i>Haute Esperance</i> since around 1200 A.D. Originally built on an ancient Druid altar; little remains of the altar, what there is can be found in the cellar.	Malinbois	(Map reference E5) The crumbling ruins of this castle overlook a calm but dark tarn. The castle reputedly contains the double tomb of Hugh du Malinbois and his chatelaine, but locals are so scared of Hugh's reputation for sorcery no-one ventures close enough to find out whether the tales of vampires are true. Malinbois is three miles from the <i>Chateau de la Frênaie</i> .
Isoile River	The River Isoile's fountainhead is to be found in the <i>Collines d'Est</i> of <i>Averoigne</i> . From there it winds through the forest until opening out into the Isoile Valley, a wide valley of dark loamy soil supporting vines, wheat and fruit trees, and populated by many prosperous villages and chateaus. In the south the river widens and slows before developing into a marsh. The marsh is populated by small villages like <i>Les Hiboux</i> which occupy the available high ground, and dominated by the town of <i>Marais</i> . Travel in this region is by boat or specially constructed walkways. Tributaries drain from the marsh to the River <i>Indres</i> , a tributary of the mighty River <i>Loire</i> . In hot summers the Isoile's flow can be reduced to a trickle below <i>Vyones</i> .	Marais	(Map reference H7) The only town in the Isoile Marsh. During the winter the only access to the town is by boat; during the summer the town can be accessed by foot and raised walkway. Because of its inaccessibility, the town has no defences.
		Moor of Druid Stones	(Map reference C/D2/3) An open brown moor stretching for several miles in every direction. On this moor are many cromlechs, some of which are doorways to other domains such as <i>Syldre</i> and the domain of <i>Klarkash-Ton</i> .
		Moriamis's Tower	(Map reference E3) Several miles from the <i>Haute Esperance Inn</i> are the tower and lands of the sorceress <i>Moriamis</i> . <i>Moriamis</i> was powerful back in the 400s A.D. Whether she is still alive in the 1270s is up to the keeper, as is the condition of her tower.
Istarelle's Tower	(Map reference F2) The residence of the sorceress <i>Istarelle</i> .	Morraine	(Map reference D7) A wealthy village in the Isoile Valley close to the edge of the <i>Averoigne</i> forest. Villagers from surrounding villages gossip that the village's reeve may be an ogre, but <i>Morrainers</i> just shrug their shoulders.
King's Highway	The main road of the region connecting <i>Vyones</i> and <i>Ximes</i> , which are a day and half's slow ride apart. From <i>Vyones</i> the road heads northwest to <i>Tours</i> . From <i>Ximes</i> the road heads southeast towards <i>Moulins</i> . The road crosses the Isoile River north of <i>Marais</i> .		
Klarkash-Ton's Domain	<i>Klarkash-Ton's Domain</i> is a pathless wood, in the centre of which is a time-blackened tower surrounded by fallen cromlechs. Is it through one of these cromlechs that unwary travellers may pass from the <i>Moor of Druid Stones</i> to <i>Klarkash-Ton's Domain</i> .	Oracle of Sadoqua	(Map reference unknown) Located somewhere in the depths of the <i>Averoigne Forest</i> , the entrance to the oracle can be found at the base of a cliff, hidden amongst boulders. The oracle is constantly guarded by large black sabbat cats and occasionally by descendants of the Druids. Here in a grotto, <i>Sadoqua's</i> oracle can be found, transfigured by the baleful fumes rising from the god slumbering below.
La Frênaie	(Map reference D5) A walled town, surrounded by vines and ash groves. <i>La Frênaie</i> is noted for		

Perigon	<p>(Map reference G4) A Benedictine abbey located in the Averoigne Forest. Originally built on the site of a Roman temple to Venus. The abbey is noted for the quality of its library.</p>	Venteillon	<p>(Map reference E5) A chateau.</p>
Puy des Sorciers	<p>(Map reference C6) The rocky hill behind Vyones. It is notorious for the mysterious lights to be seen at its summit, and the supposed sabbats that take place there. The remains of a Roman temple are also to be found on its summit.</p>	Vyones	<p>(Map reference C6) Founded by the Romans as Avionium, Vyones is the chief city of the province and home of the archbishopric. Vyones is known for its piety: as well as the cathedral there is a Franciscan abbey (Les Cordeliers) and two convents within the city. The early Gothic cathedral dominates the city, and is exceptional that it was raised and roofed in only three years, although work on stuary and additional work is still ongoing 140 years later. The cathedral is also famous for its Black Madonna, which attracts pilgrims. A market is held daily in the large square in front of the cathedral. Vyones has outgrown its late Roman walls, but this area is now the home of tradesmen and known as Les Ruelles.</p>
Sainte Azédarac	<p>(Map reference F8) A walled village in the Collines d'Est. Founded by the Templars after the death of Ste. Azédarac, its main business is ores and wool.</p>	Ximes	<p>(Map reference G3) The second city of the province, Ximes was founded by the Romans as Simaesis. The Shrine and Mausoleum of Ste. Azédarac can be found in Ximes' cathedral. It is reputed that the patron saint of Averoigne's mausoleum is actually empty, since the saint ascended to heaven after defeating the Devil. This doesn't prevent thousands of pilgrims from attending Ste. Azédarac's shrine every year. The money from these pilgrims has allowed the Bishop to begin construction on a new cathedral, said to be greater than the one in Vyones. Within the walls of Ximes a Benedictine convent can be found. Ximes is also the market town for the fine red wine made in the villages surrounding it.</p>
Sainte Crapauld	<p>(Map reference G5) An abbey and small village near Ximes. The monks are noted for their 'frugality' and little else, as they have completely secluded themselves from the outside world. On rare occasions the cracked bells of its chapel are rung. The villagers are insular and only bring meagre supplies to a small door in the closed gates. No one remembers who exactly Sainte Crapauld was, or when the monastery was built.</p>		
Sainte Thierry	<p>(Map reference C5) A small village outside Vyones. Although its inhabitants acknowledge Christianity in public, they follow the Averones' old gods in secret.</p>		
Sainte Zenobie	<p>(Map reference G4) A village near Perigon Abbey on the road to Vyones. It is notable for its fine church and several taverns of ill-repute.</p>		
Sylaire	<p>A land lying outside time and space accessed by the Enchanted Cromlech on the Moor of Druid Stones. Sylaire's seasons are different than Averoigne's, and it is a land of forest glades and bubbling brooks. Sylaire is ruled by Sephora, who lives in a crumbling castle staffed by vampire servants.</p>	Ylourgne	<p>(Map reference B8) Ylourgne was a castle built by evil robber barons to control travel over the Collines d'Est and to raid the valleys below. After a siege extinguished the robber barons' line, the castle fell into disrepair and ruin. Nonetheless, the dungeons below the castle are not as ruined as the walls above. Legends of the robber barons' ghosts keep the curious away.</p>
Tour de la Pitié	<p>(Map reference A5) A secluded tower half a day's ride from Vyones. Herein monks and priests who have become troublesome for the Archbishop are kept in "religious retreat."</p>		
Touraine	<p>A town lying in western Averoigne on the edge of the province, beyond the great forest.</p>		

The Library of Averaigne

by Dah Harms

with additional material by Steven Kaye and Steven Marc Harris

Aside from those books listed in *Cthulhu: Dark Ages*, the following from other sources are appropriate for the era of *Dark Ages: Averaigne*.

- *Call of Cthulhu* Rulebook: Book of Eibon - Livre d'Ivon (slightly after 1275), Necronomicon – Latin.
- *Complete Masks of Nyarlathotep* – Selections de Livre d'Ivon (slightly after 1275).
- *Keeper's Companion Volume 1* – Book of Eibon – Hyperborean.
- *Keeper's Companion Volume 2* – Testament of Carnamagos.

During this era, all books are copied by hand. It is recommended that the Keeper make liberal use of the suggestions in the *Keeper's Companion 1* for customizing Mythos books to reflect the peculiarities of particular editions.

Mythos Tomes

Annales

“Those who seek the ways/lore of old must travel to the deep caverns and high mountains, for this is where the knowledge of the sunken lands remains.”

In Latin, trans. Flavius Alesius, c. 300 AD. Stone tablets brought by the Averones from their dark land to the west contain hidden wisdom. They tell the story of Atlantis (though it is not given that name), its curious rites, and the travails of those forced to flee its destruction. Records of Hyborian times and rumours of Poseidonis are also discussed. Some passages in the older language may have been beyond the translator's ability, or perhaps considered too blasphemous. While none know where the tablets lie today, copies of this fragmentary translation lie in the archives of Vyones and Ximes.

Sanity loss 1D6/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +8 (+10 if a skill check in Other Language (Senzar) is made); 12 weeks to study and comprehend/24 hours to skim. Spells: (C:DA) Create Mystic Portal, Curse (Characteristic), Identify Spirit; (WoC#3) Exorcise; (rulebook) Contact Formless Spawn, Detect Enchantment, Evil Eye.

Compendium Daemonum

“Though the Quinotauri are sighted by sailors on occasion, the signs of their pact with the bishops of old have been forgotten save by a few of the Old Blood.”

In Latin, by Petrus Averonus, c. 760 AD. More properly, this compilation by the eighth-century monk at the monastery of St. Omer tells of pagan gods and ceremonies assembled from a variety of ancient authors. Brother Petrus also cites two men known to him, “the Arab”

and a mysterious monk supposedly of royal blood who lived with him for some time. The latter told him of supposed pagan survivals within the churches and the noble houses of Europe, accusations whose repetition led to the suppression of this book and the seclusion of the author.

Sanity loss 1D6/2D6, Cthulhu Mythos +5, skill check in Occult; 9 weeks to study and comprehend/18 hours to skim. Spells: (C:DA) Contact Quinotaur (Deep One), Contact Wolf of Romulus (Hound of Tindalos); (rulebook) Call the Temptress (Shub-Niggurath).

De Noctis Rebus (“On the World of Night”)

“NIGER.INFORMISQVE.VT.NVMEN.AVERONVM.SADOQVA.”

Black and unshap'd, as pestilent a Clod

As dread Sadoqua, Averonia's God. – translation by Theobald, 1727

In Latin, by Valerius Trevirus, ca. 400 AD. Valerius Trevirus wrote this poem as a response to Lucretius' *De Rerum Naturae*. Lucretius' poem is opposed to supernatural explanations for natural phenomena and urges the reader to cultivate tranquility – in contrast, Trevirus rips the veils away and reveals the existence of cults of dark gods that provide their worshipers with power in exchange for sacrifice. The rites of magicians, necromancers and other undesirables are also discussed, and the book touches on the rites of Tsathoggua.

Sanity loss 1D6/2D6; Cthulhu Mythos +6, 6 weeks to study and comprehend/12 hours to skim. Spells: (C:DA) Create Mystic Portal; (rulebook) Call/Dismiss Nyogtha, Command Ghost, Contact Ghoul, Journey to the Other Side.

Lucien Wycham His Boke of Magick

“That all that follows is true and effective, I can make personal attestation, having myself used them to escape all manner of mischief and ill-will from the villains that fill our land in these days.”

In Middle English, by Lucien Wycham, unknown date. Stories state that Lucien Wycham gained the patronage, or the title, of a comte of Averaigne in the past century through trickery and magic. Some information exists in his work as to the various cults of the area, though the scoundrel seems to have remained with none of them for any length of time.

Sanity loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +5; 6 weeks to study and comprehend/12 weeks to skim. Spells: (C:DA) To Aid the Nimbleness of the Fingers (Bless Manipulation), To Enchant the Scimitar of Barzai (Bless Blade, with a costly material component in place of the blood sacrifice), To Uncover Hidden Treasure (Find Gold); (WOC#3) Immolation of Aforgomon, To Evoke the Familiar of Erudition (Evoke Familiar of Erudition); (rulebook) To Animate the Shades of the Tomb (Command Ghost).

Occult Works

Though we have created some of the details, all of these are books that did exist, or might have existed, at the time of *Dark Ages: Averaigne*. Use them to fill out a sorcerer's library, or as a reward for characters.

Almadel

In Latin, Almadel the Magician (pseud.), unknown. This book describes the creation of a wax seal, candles, and gold plate for occult purposes. When incense is burned and the proper prayers are said at certain hours, these may be used to conjure angels. The book gives no explanation for what angels are good for what; a Religion or Occult roll must be used to extrapolate the proper information for a particular purpose.

No sanity loss; no skill checks; 2 weeks to read/4 hours to skim.

Spells: Evoke Familiar of Erudition.

Ars Notoria

In Latin, Solomon (pseud.), 13th century. One of the most popular magical books of this period, the Notary Art includes a number of incantations dedicated to helping a person learn theology, the liberal arts, and other areas of knowledge. Most of this should be useless, though a few pearls lie among the dross.

No sanity loss; skill check in Occult; 6 weeks to read/12 hours to skim. **Spells:** (C:DA) Bless Intelligence, Exaltation; (rulebook) Voice of Ra.

Book of Hermogones and Philetus, the Necromancers

In English, attributed to Hermogenes and Philetus, date unknown. This work is purportedly the magical lore of that Hermogenes who attempted unsuccessfully to overcome St. James the Greater with his pagan magics in the first century AD. Philetus was his disciple, who along with Hermogenes was ultimately converted to Christianity by St. James. According to legend, Hermogenes threw his books into the ocean – thus it is doubtful that this book was truly authored by the Judean magician. Spells are given including binding the will of victims so they cannot move, the location of treasure and the summoning of various demonic entities.

No Sanity loss; skill check in Occult; 5 weeks to read/10 hours to skim. **Spells:** Compel Spirit, Enthrall, Find (Gold), Levitate.

Ghayat al-Hakim

In Arabic, al-Majriti (pseud.), 11-12th century. Al-Majriti was an 11th century mathematician from Spain, but it is extremely unlikely that he had anything to do with this work. This book purports to be an ultimate compilation on the subject of natural magic, especially astrology. It contains a number of spells, mostly disguised as creation procedures for talismans and the like, as well as instructions for the creation of poisons and magical stories and accounts of rituals.

No sanity loss; skill checks in Astrology, Occult, and Potions; 15 weeks to read/30 hours to skim. **Spells:** (C:DA) astrological lore (Augur, using Astrology instead of POWx5%), various astrological talismans (Bless (Characteristic), Bless (Skill Class), and Heal, depending upon the effect).

Liber de umbris idearum (Book of the Shadows of Ideas, also De Quatuor Annulis, or The Four Rings)

In Latin, attributed to King Solomon, date unknown but no later than 1180 A.D. A cosmological construction of spirits and demons using the four natural elements (earth, water, air, fire) represented by four rings or spheres surrounding the physical world is this book's subject. Knowing the division of spiritual beings by their respective element, says the author, allows for an easier categorization of which spirits and demons are useful for the specific wants and needs of a sorcerer. He includes a variety of ancient legends and stories to authenticate the behavior of specific spiritual entities, such as which spirits can be contained within mirrors for use as an oracle and which can change the direction of winds. Most of this is highly speculative.

No Sanity loss; skill check in Occult; 3 weeks to read/6 hours to skim. No spells.

Picatrix (translation, Ghayat al-Hakim)

In Latin, trans. unknown, 1245. Translated at the court of Alphonse the Wise of Spain, several copies of this work have made their way across Europe.

No sanity loss; skill checks in Astrology and Occult; 12 weeks to read/24 hours to skim. **Spells:** (C:DA) astrological lore (Augur, using Astrology instead of POWx5%), various astrological talismans (Bless (Skill Class) and Heal, depending upon the effect).

Sefer ha-Bahir

In Hebrew (-20% to comprehend; or Hebrew and Aramaic, at Keeper's option), author unknown, 12th century. This rambling work of Jewish mysticism discusses the attributes of God and the virtues of divine names through parables, dialogues, and commentaries on Scripture.

No sanity loss; skill checks in Occult and Religion (Judaism); 8 weeks to read/16 hours to skim. No spells.

Sworn Book of Honorius

In Latin, by Honorius of Thebes, 13th century. Supposedly a work collecting the knowledge of a secret brotherhood of magicians persecuted by demon-obsessed factions in the Church. Most copies are incomplete, but contain as a centerpiece a ritual for a mystical vision of God. The owner of this work must have their copy buried with them after their death. Usually found only in England, a few copies of this book may have made their way to France.

No sanity loss; skill check in Occult; 12 weeks to read/24 hours to skim. **Spells:** The Vision of the Deity (Exaltation, but with a two and a half month casting time).

Testament of Solomon

In Hebrew, by Solomon (pseud.), 1st century. Supposedly a work by the Biblical king, this details his summoning of various demons and his eventual fall into idolatry. The work details a large number of demons and the means by which to drive them off. Occasionally a copy of the Testament of Carnamagos turns up with this title, as Solomon is the more famous of the two wizards.

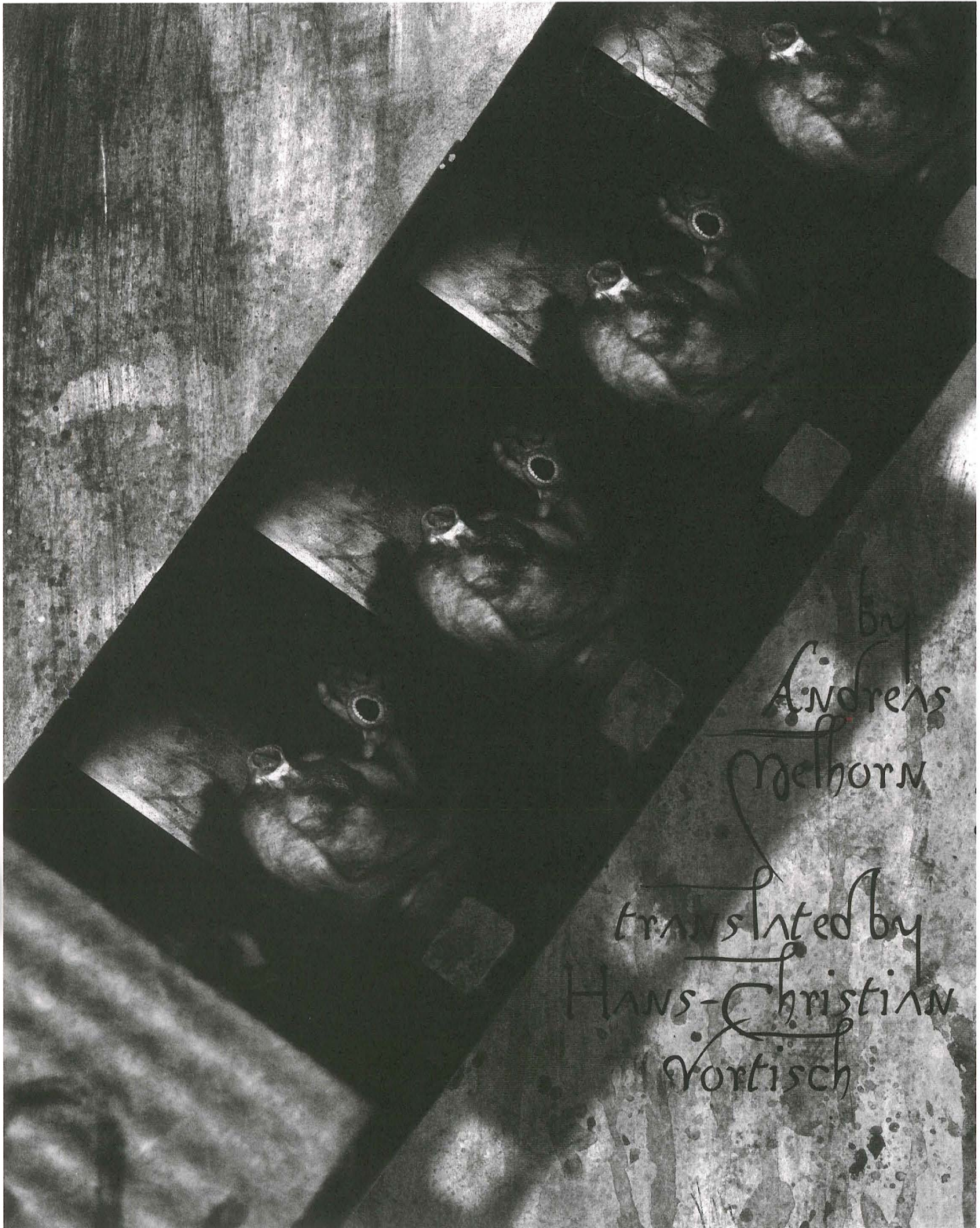
No sanity loss; skill check in Occult; 4 weeks to read/8 hours to skim. **Spell:** Evoke Familiar of Erudition.



Cthulhu Now:

super 8

Adventure



by
Andreas
Mehorn

translated by
Hans-Christiaan
Vortisch

Henry Martinsen didn't want to push the video cassette into the VCR.

He wasn't the only person in the bare room. The other people stood around, nervously shuffling their feet or displaying an apparent interest in their fingernails. The only sound aside of low breathing and squeaking shoe soles was the hum of the VCR as it finally sucked in the video cassette.

Initially the image was blurred, so that none of the people watching could discern any details. The rough handling of the tape a few days earlier had not improved the quality of the images, but eventually the distorted image cleared up. The scene unfolding before the eyes of the unwilling audience had apparently been captured with a handheld camera. The scene panned from a book to a bare room with concrete walls. One couldn't make out what the book said.

The walls were soiled and old. In the middle of the room stood a metal bedstead covered by an old and worn mattress. Lying on the mattress and tied to the bedstead was a young woman who stared with big and puffy eyes into the camera, which slowly zoomed in on her. The camera followed her naked body and zoomed out again. The built-in microphone captured the panicky panting of the girl.

The audience had gone totally quiet except for low breathing, while the sounds coming from the TV set had increased to real screams. The camera man had mounted the camera on a tripod and stepped into

the view of the observers. He approached the bed with waddling steps; a sexless, unbelievably fat mountain of a man, a headless monster of bloated, disgusting flesh. His stomach flapped down over his whitish hips, his arms trembled like jelly. His feet splashed on the floor with each step. Finally the headless, fat body reached the bed.

Martinsen turned disgusted and went to the door as the fearful screams turned into screams of pain, accompanied by the sounds of a noisy eater. He had watched the film several times already, he knew how it ended. Every detail had burnt itself into his brain and refused to disappear. He wasn't surprised any longer that the noises originated from the hands of the flesh mountain, which had mouths in the palms, with which he gradually consumed the girl.

In the moment he left the room, right before the noises became unbearable, he involuntarily saw the TV screen mirrored in the window beside the door: it showed the girl with part of her face lost. She should be grateful for having it all eaten, he thought. To survive this torture would have been even worse.

Perhaps this is the real price you pay when you get involved with things man was not meant to know, Martinsen reasoned. Not the nightmares and the permanent fear, but becoming cynical and losing any feeling for the life of others – and your own.



Super 8 is a scenario set today, taking place amongst New York's red light scene and video stores. At least one of the investigators should be a law enforcement officer – the agency doesn't matter and could be anything including the New York Police Department or the FBI. The important thing is that he has been professionally involved with closing down a racket trafficking in human beings. He doesn't even need to be a law enforcement officer if the Keeper finds a reason why a private citizen would be involved in such an investigation.

The scenario can also be used as part of a *Delta Green* campaign. Those books include additional background material on The Fate and Stephen Alzis.

The investigators are confronted with an urban legend: so-called Snuff movies. Also known as The Real Thing or White Heat, such videos supposedly show somebody being murdered for real while the camera is running, to satisfy a paying audience. Murder as entertainment. The legend puts up a brave fight, even if nobody so far has unearthed any proof for the existence of these films. Americans claim they exist in Britain, the British say something like this could

exist only in America. Movies like *8MM* or *Mute Witness* deal with snuff movies and keep the legend alive.

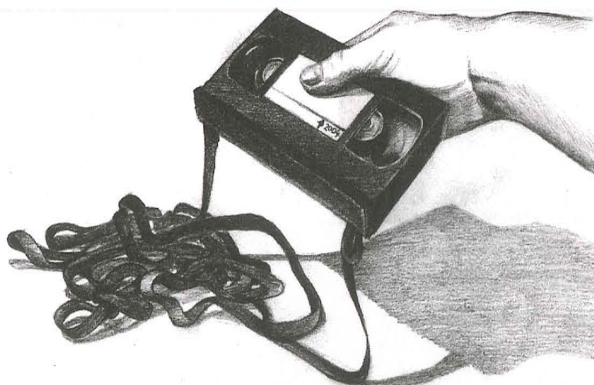
Even if snuff movies do not exist in our world they simply have to exist in the universe of the Great Old Ones.

Unfortunate Awakening

One fateful morning one of the investigators (henceforth called “the witness”) awakens in his New York lodgings, remembering nothing of the last day by except for a headache and a bad taste in his mouth, to find an unmarked video cassette on the floor of his bedroom. The tape has been partly pulled out of the cassette and ripped off. He wears clothing he does not remember having put on and his living room resembles a battle field. His pillow has a large wet spot, his eyes feel puffy and inflamed and his nose is filled with snot.

The witness has no recollection of getting in bed or indeed what he did in the hours before that. The alarm clock shows a later date than he would have expected. He is missing a complete day!

If he repairs the video with cellophane tape and watches it, he will see how a monster devours a young woman. Suddenly he can imagine why he could have cried a whole night. Watching the video costs 1/1D6 SAN. The witness loses the higher figure since he cannot remember having watched it before.



It seems best to consult some friends or colleagues (the other investigators). Together they can perhaps find out if the scene shown is real or just special effects.

Yesterday

Yesterday morning the witness was still occupied with an entirely different case. For several weeks he has been investigating New York’s red light scene (as part of his “normal” job as law enforcement officer with whatever agency he actually works). He had been working undercover to bring down a racket involved in trafficking in human beings, which his department had been observing for some time.

By mere chance he had come across a long-wanted suspect in his off-hours and had decided to follow him. Since he had no radio with him and his mobile phone’s battery was dead, he had to shadow the suspect without backup. The man, a certain Abenezzer Stanford, is deeply involved in the white slave trade. He kidnaps young girls or lures them under false promises to New York, where he sells them to brothels.

Stanford is not only a trafficker in humans, but also a man of exquisite taste himself, who likes to visit the establishments he supplies with girls. When the witness saw him he was on his way to a real snuff movie showing he had been invited to.

The witness followed Stanford to a derelict house with a broad shouldered guard at the door. Eavesdropping, he learned that a “special event” was taking place, and decided to try to enter. Luckily the man at the door could be bribed. What the witness then saw in the basement made him lose his temper. The film, projected by video projector on a white concrete wall, was the one described in the introduction. When the headless monster got to the face of the woman, he drew his backup gun (afterwards the surviving organizer has made a mental note make sure that all guests are searched for weapons) and started firing blindly. He had gone mad for the moment, he wanted to get out of the basement, wanted to destroy everybody down there, wanted the screams and the grunts to end.

A delicate matter

Some readers take offense at certain scenes or themes in *Call of Cthulhu* or other horror game scenarios. Opinions vary; some people are offended by things that don’t disturb others at all. Others are in-between. They consider the discussed scenes unpleasant enough to find them horrifying, but do not connect them with good or bad taste.

Exactly this is what horror is all about – at least partly. Things are described that shock and offend us. Clive Barker’s success as an author eventually hinges on the number of repulsive monsters he includes in his novels, and a film like *Seven* mainly builds on the audience’s curiosity as to which disgusting deed the murderer performs next.

The Keeper should therefore be cautious when running this scenario. Much can be alluded to without it actually being described. The players will probably know what happens without explicit descriptions. And many things can be simply left out, if the Keeper so wishes.

On the other hand, Super 8 allows the Mythos to appear in a different light. Humans are perfectly capable of hideous deeds without the Mythos as their inspiration.

Super 8 in the 1920s

This scenario as written is set today. However, it is relatively easily set back in the 1920s. The film becomes a silent picture, with bad lightning and primitive technique. It comes on a narrow movie roll. The scenario could be set in New York, but likewise in Berlin or London. It may sound wild but even back then there existed an unbelievable wave of porn movies, including utterly tasteless flicks catering for the most deplorable desires.

In his madness, his sanity managed to keep a small eye open, through which it watched what his body did and tried to prevent the worst. In the chaos he created, the witness took the tape from the video player and fled, not before wounding three men and killing one.

At home he tried to destroy the tape. After having trashed his rooms in his fury against those people, himself and the world in general, his body broke down. He dropped on his bed and fell into a restless sleep. The tears came as soon as he slept.

The small, bright part of his mind had done what it could. It was not much, but at least it had made him write down the names of two of the audience he had recognized. The two names and the undamaged part of the tape are the only clues that can be found the next day.

The Origin of the Video Tape

There is an organization in New York City that is so fear-inspiring that its name is never mentioned publicly. It is hushed up, it doesn't even seem to exist. Nevertheless it is there, spinning its webs, going about its own business unchallenged. It is called the Network and is not only a criminal syndicate but also a cult.

Behind the Scenes

The organization described here serves as a layer underneath the actual plot of the story, which the investigators have no access to. At the end of the scenario, they learn that there exists a criminal organization in New York City with considerable power and size, which it uses for unknown ends. This organization employs some knowledge of the Mythos. An organization capable of summoning dimensional shamblers to make witnesses disappear is not exactly good for the city. Believers in conspiracies the world around would just love this (*Delta Green* Keepers will of course recognize the organization).

If the Keeper plans to run *Super 8* as a one-shot scenario and dislikes to have unfinished business, he can easily rearrange things. Mainly twist Tony Castelo's motives a bit. Castelo could simply be a mad cultist of Y'gononac, who wants to summon his god to Earth. In this case he would face the investigators in a showdown and actively fight them rather than go into protective custody. The materials found in his house would be a written account of his research.

At the center of this cult is a man called Stephen Alzis. He is surrounded by a small circle of people who run the Network. They call themselves The Fate.

Nobody knows who or what Stephen Alzis really is. His small circle of followers worships him as an avatar of Nyarlathotep, who came to bring chaos and destruction in the name of the Old Ones. They lack any proof for this, however. He certainly appears to be the devil himself: friendly, courteous, always where you don't expect him – and very deadly.

However successful the Network may be, the organization eventually remains nothing more than a cult. Behind all the crimes, the drugs, the magic, and the money, stands a cult that has to attend to its deities just like any other religious cult. This is the reason for the snuff movie seen by the witness. Alzis had it made to seed the name of the Great Old One Y'gononac into the minds and hearts of corrupt men.

Y'gononac has been imprisoned in a labyrinth behind a wall of bricks for eons, waiting for his liberation. His blind children crawl over his body, deformed humanoid creatures that think his massive bulk is the whole world. When an evil man reads or hears the name of the Great Old One, his body can be overtaken by an avatar of Y'gononac, who can then move freely in the world. Even if Y'gononac decides not to possess him, he plants his seed into this human, causing nightmares, influencing his mind and eventually serving as an anchor to provide the headless Y'gononac the necessary support in this world to free him from his prison.

When watching the video the witness found in his apartment, the investigators see only part of the film. The beginning is missing, which the witness destroyed in his fit of madness. This shows a young man reading a book. Before panning to the girl, the camera lingers over the book: two pages are clearly visible, showing a passage from the Revelations of Glaaki, which mention the name of the Great Old One, amongst other things.

The investigators may have seen the video, but they are far from knowing the terrible truth. Why a video in this digital age? Or, even more interesting, what happened to the original? Alzis gave very clear instructions when he had the film made. It should have a strong link to our world, a link that digital data lacks. Light and tape, not bits and bytes. Therefore they produced a *Super 8* film, which was copied on video. Analogue is more direct than digital.

Y'gonolac

The mythos of Y'gonolac described here differs somewhat from the canonical description in the *Call of Cthulhu* rules. It says there that the Great Old One can free himself from his prison and possess evil men if they read or say his name. How difficult would it be for a cultist to let that happen? Especially in today's information age? "Not very" can be the only answer, as demonstrated in Ramsey Campbell's story "Cold Print". Material released for d20 *Call of Cthulhu* suggests that only avatars of the Great Old Ones are actually released, which makes more sense and is more exciting. For this scenario, the author has developed this idea further. It should be no problem to include this change into a running campaign, even if Y'gonolac already appeared at some point. The Keeper should not only accept but actually emphasize any possible contradictions. The Mythos breeds insanity, and by actively using contradictions in their reality the players may also understand better, why, the sanity of their investigators is in jeopardy all the time...

With the help of the original, a representative of the Network will try to liberate the Great Old One Y'gonolac from his prison and bring him to the Earth.

The Representative of the Network and his Plan

Tony Castelo is a so-called Neophyte. His rank is pretty low in the Network. The Fate, being the core and the most powerful unit in the Network, almost never appears in public. In its place operate the so-called Lords, people that get their instructions directly from the Fate and execute them. They in turn use the neophytes as cannon fodder. To prevent direct contact and to present the Network as frightening and intimidating as possible, the orders are transmitted in extraordinary fashion. Alem Keightly, Lord of Thoughts, employs a spell to send the neophytes mental instructions: like remote-controlled robots they write down their orders on paper.

Castelo's first order was the production of the film. He wrote down conjuring formulas and instructions how to act as Keightly controlled him for two entire nights.

His second order takes it two or three steps further. The final goal is to free Y'gonolac from his prison. For that a certain number of people need to carry the seed of Y'gonolac in their bodies (meaning they need to have watched the film. Once a big enough part of Y'gonolac is present in this world to serve him as an anchor he can be freed in a huge ritual.

To this end a group of evil men, who already know the film, have to watch the original Super 8 film. If the anchor for Y'gonolac is large enough, the camera's viewpoint pans from the bed to a doorway that cannot be seen in the video copies, and draws close to it. Behind the door, which slowly opens, is Y'gonolac's prison. As the camera zooms in on him, Y'gonolac will get up and slowly stumble towards the viewers, until he finally touches the screen from the inside of the projected image and steps through it into our world. His servants will drop from his body in large numbers and also come through the screen. Confused, they will cause chaos and wanton destruction

amongst the viewers and pave their lord's path with sorrow. He will eventually feast on the blood and flesh of the viewers to begin his new reign.

Castelo already tried once to perform the ritual. He had no clue how many people actually needed to see the film in order to employ the original – only one of many points of the plan irritating him. Apparently the Network assumes he will be able to solve the upcoming problems, and who is he to doubt such an organization's opinion? At any rate he showed the original ten days ago and realized that New York wasn't ready yet. The camera did not cross the border to the labyrinth, staying in the cellar where the avatar had massacred the girl. The gate was not yet fully open and the Great Old One could still not enter our world. However, some of his servants did make it. They dropped off the body of their lord, went through the gate and finally through the screen. After killing several viewers they fled, led by Castelo, into the sewers of New York.

Initial Investigation

The investigators have three main clues to get going: first and secondly, the two names on the note (Richard Bergman and Lloyd Stockwell), thirdly the video and the scenes it shows. The two names are probable easier to follow up, as their addresses should be relatively easy to find out. The film represents a trail that should be difficult to follow.

Richard Bergman – The First Name

Richard Bergman is the proprietor of a small kiosk in the not very homely boroughs of Queens. The witness will instantly be able to recognize him; Bergman had once witnessed a murder committed right in front of his kiosk. The witness had taken Bergman's statement and found out that Bergman's kiosk was a major source of underworld intelligence. The witness and Bergman quickly came to an arrangement, and Bergman irregularly supplied information in exchange for money or protection. After some time, however, the contact had lapsed into silence.

Consequences of the Video

The video not only affects the NPCs, but also the investigators. The Keeper thus has a tool to spread paranoia and fear among his players. All investigators that saw the video (and thus carry the seed of Y'gonac) will be haunted by nightmares and split-second visions. Their palms start to itch and they might wake up and find thin, slightly infected lines on the insides of their palms in the morning, which disappear during the day. These symptoms get worse as the investigations progress.

The witness knows Bergman as a quiet, somewhat obese man. Shy but with a vigilant eye. He is a bit strange – not the kind of guy the witness would have befriended – but inconspicuous.

Presumably everybody meeting him feels like that. Only his wife Lois knows him better. And only she knows his preferences – even if she almost never sees him, since the opening times of his shop reduce his time in his apartment two stair flights above to a minimum.

The Bergmans' sex life hasn't been much to talk about for quite some time. There isn't any, to be precise. Impotence. However, Bergman has finally found something that aroused him. First it wasn't much more than the dirty atmosphere of the clubs and strip joints (his preferences for forbidden lusts did not manifest themselves until later), and one night he had taken heart and asked his wife to join him. He would be able to show her what he wished her to do at home, but hadn't dared to ask before.

He was so stupid to ask and she was so stupid to say yes.

They went to the Red Rose. At the door they met a man who appeared to have a say in the place. The way the filthy guy ogled Lois from head to toe followed her into her nightmares, just like the fact that her husband must have been enough of a regular to convince the bouncer to let her in. Just to show her around. "Just this one time", he had said, "since it is you. She has to be out in half an hour."

Visiting Bergman

The investigators find Bergman's shop closed, regardless at which time they call. Peeking through the window they can see total chaos inside. Plastic packets, cartons, cans and bottles are scattered everywhere.

Nobody answers the door if the investigators ring the bell, but a punk passing them on the stairs to get to his flat on the fourth floor tells them that Mrs. Bergman hasn't left her apartment for at least two days. Her apartment door sticks; he is certain he would have heard it if she had tried to lock her door as usual by kicking it.

Knocking and rattling at the door doesn't help at first. However, if one of the investigators passes a successful Listen roll he can hear low sobbing from inside the apartment. If they don't want to break in and renew their calling or knocking, the door finally opens. Lois Bergman, with red eyes, shaking hands and a slowly healing head wound, lets the investigators in without saying a word.

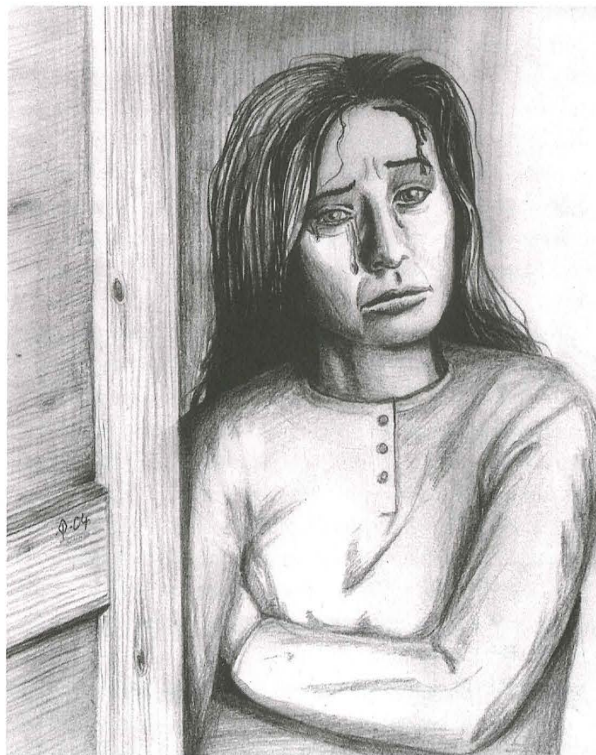
Bergman lies dead in the living room, surrounded by vomit and mounds of ripped-open food packets, half-empty bottles and cans.

The conversation with Lois proves difficult and should preferably take place with a doctor in attendance. She tells them that about a week ago this man from the Red Rose waited in front of the house. He talked to her husband while he opened up the kiosk. When she asked him, what the visitor had wanted, Bergman had become aggressive. "I was scared he'd smack me if I bugged him about it..."

With empty eyes Lois recounts how her husband left the night before yesterday. He went to the Red Rose, she is sure. She always knew when he went there, ever since the night he had taken her there. When he came back he appeared shocked. He had embraced her for the first time in weeks and fell asleep cuddling her. Early the next morning, he went down to the shop and fetched large amounts of food, which brought to the apartment. He sat down in the living room and started to eat. He didn't stop until he was sick (at least the first time he had puked into the toilet). When she tried to take the food from him he hit her and pushed her so hard that she fell with the head against a radiator. She passed out. When she came to he was dead, apparently suffocated from his own vomit.

Lois can only tell her how long she sat on the floor beside her dead husband when the investigators tell her the date.

Her description of the man from the Red Rose is not very useful. He looks thoroughly average. White. Brown medium length hair. Average build. Perhaps clean shaven. Lois doesn't know his name, either. The poor woman breaks down several times during the conversation, until the doctor finally forbids any further question. She won't go to the Red Rose unless pressed, and will suffer a nervous breakdown before even entering it. If the investigators can't get results with the scant description of the man, they may show her



Visiting Bergman

some photos; she will quickly recognize the man (Castelo). Lois Bergman can also help producing an identikit picture.

Lloyd Stockwell – The Second Name

The witness cannot immediately place the name Stockwell. However, looking it up in the telephone book he will remember one of the addresses of the four Lloyd or L. Stockwells listed. He remembers that Stockwell once was the a crime victim and he met him during the investigation. (The Keeper should adjust the type of crime to the investigator's job.)

The blond and somewhat spindly Stockwell looks a bit ruffled when he opens the door of his middle-class family home. He reacts shocked on recognizing the witness. "You?" He had expected the police to pay him a visit ever since he came back from the terrible video show and first tried to live his life as if nothing had happened. However, after a troubled night and the permanent fear of the police he found he was consumed by a special lust that had been implanted into him together with Y'gononac's seed.

And thus the investigators won't be able to talk very long with him until they hear noises from the basement that sound like cries for help. Stockwell will have to watch helplessly as they open the door to the basement and hear clear cries from one of the basement rooms. An investigation of the clean and tidy rooms unearths a slightly injured and very angry prostitute who attacks anyone who even remotely resembles Stockwell with her pepper spray.

The young woman's name is Evelyn – at least that's what she calls herself. She will reveal her real name – Anne Miller – only under certain circumstances. Despite knowing better she went home with Stockwell, when he picked her up in his car. She knew him from sight, and had seen him come out of a club called the Red Rose several times. The worst kind of place: you get everything there, no matter how sick. That should have been enough warning, but lack of money and Stockwell's very good offer (paid in full, in advance) had her ignore the risks which she usually considered very carefully. As soon as they were through the door he pushed her into the bedroom and tried to tie her to the bed. The leather strings had already been tied to the bedstead. When she fought back, he knocked her down. Only the ring of the door bell prevented worse. Stockwell had quickly pushed her down into the basement, locked the room and ran upstairs to answer the door. Luckily, Evelyn hadn't been totally knocked out by the blow so she recovered quickly and was able to scream for help.

However, before the investigators can listen to the end of the story, Stockwell is taken over by Y'gononac and transformed into his avatar: his body blows up, ripping his shirt and trousers. Sweat seems to be pouring from each of his pores. His head shrinks and vertical slits open up in the palms of his hands, revealing sharp teeth. This transformation takes 10 to 15 turns. One can only hope that the characters flee quickly, since his body becomes quickly immune to damage (by the third turn Stockwell has the 75 hit points of the Great Old One – see p. 198 in Call of Cthulhu 6th ed.). Sanity cost is 1/1D20 if the investigators watch until the change is completed, 1/1D4 if they flee earlier.

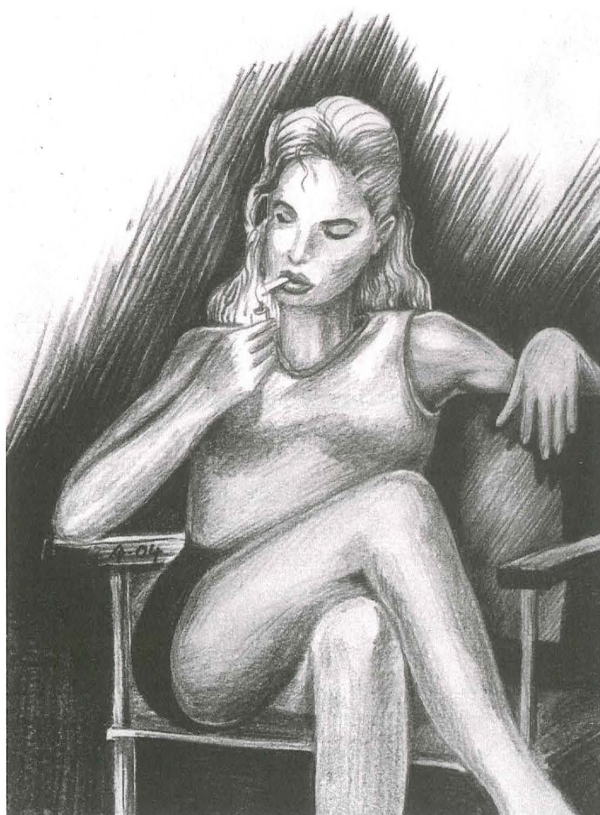
However, the Keeper should not push his players too much at this point. It would be a pity if one of the investigators died early in the game. He should allow the investigators to escape even if they react late to the danger. He should also be generous when rolling

for their sanity, which is probably more endangered than their lives. The encounter with the Mythos this early in the story should be surprising, shocking, and of course dangerous, but it should not yet remove the investigators from the game. The change is slow enough to allow them to flee the house. Hopefully they take Evelyn with them, since she will be able to assist them in their further investigations. Y'gononac's avatar won't pursue them.

After the escape (or a narrow victory) Evelyn is visibly shaken, but the red-headed girl isn't frightened so quickly. An investigator with Medicine skill can discern symptoms of an imminent breakdown, but these disappear quickly as she is brought to a quiet and safe environment. Evelyn will deny that she or the investigators saw the monster; she will ignore all questions concerning it or answer evasively. However, she is able to tell a few things about the Red Rose, if the investigators ask her.

The Red Rose is a club for special tastes. On the first floor the patrons receive what they usually expect from a "gentleman's club": a bit of table and pole dancing and the odd floor show (striptease, bondage, S&M, etc. but nothing illegal). There's absolutely no soliciting there. The second floor has rooms to which the patron can withdraw with a lady of his choosing for "private dances". "Special orders" are served in the basement. "There's loads of rumors. You can get anything you want, no matter how sick or whacked. If you know the right man and have enough cold hard cash, you just have to wait a bit. You'll get an appointment. Nothing is too gross or too kinky. If you want Siamese twins, you get nympho Siamese twins."

Evelyn has never been in there and knows only rumors. She always avoided the place, as she heard that the management takes too large a cut of the girls' earnings. She will direct the investiga-



Evelyn answers questions

tors to the club, but she will under no circumstances enter the club. Only threats might convince her, although the investigators have nothing to gain from her presence. If the investigators really force her to accompany them into the Red Rose she will refuse to help them any further.

Evelyn can't answer any questions about the snuff movie. She has certainly heard some rumors about snuff movies, but such rumors come and go. She doesn't believe that snuff movies exist. Recently somebody even told her there was supposed to be an even more terrible original, containing additional footage cut from the normal video. Scenes that snuff movie producers didn't dare to show. "I mighta have believed there was a snuff movie somewhere, but all that talk about an original is total bullshit!"

The Video

A detailed analysis of the video will reveal a number of relevant clues for the investigators, which will help them considerably in their investigation – more than the traces to "Bergman" and "Stockwell". However, to find them they have to carefully watch the video. Let's hope their sanity doesn't suffer too much. To see the film for the first time costs 1/1D6 SAN.

Investigators mending the tape can only do so much. Success is limited – in as much as the witness was successful in destroying it. The part he ripped off cannot be restored, so that the investigators can only see what has been described in the opening scene of this scenario. Careful examination will reveal that the image is strangely out of focus, and not because of bad camerawork. A colleague of the investigators from the agency's laboratories or some other video expert can solve the mystery. It appears the video is a recording of a film screening. This means there must be another version of the film.

This is not the only clue discernible from the video. A successful Listen roll will reveal sounds on the soundtrack that don't belong to the room or the it's occupants. A ship's horn indicates a nearby harbor. Even more important for the investigators should be parts of a conversation that was apparently held outside the window of the room visible behind a cloth hanger in the back.

At first this conversation can be barely made out, and only after a laborious digital reconditioning of the soundtrack can certain words be understood. Lacking that, the investigators can only hear a bang in the background (perhaps a shot or engine malfunction) followed by something that an imaginative person could recognize as loud roaring.

One of the investigators' contacts should be able to analyze the sounds after two days work, allowing at least some words to be understood. Depending on the Keeper, this could also take less time. The waiting period should allow the investigators to follow other clues, such as the two names on the paper. If they already did that, the Keeper can shorten the time required to digitize the tape and speed up the story.

The conversation in front of the window seems to start with an argument. A sound that might be a moving car stops outside the window. A door is closed and words are exchanged. Two men have an argument that gets louder and fiercer. Unfortunately they both talk simultaneously. Only at the end can individual words can be made out: "with your fucking taxi!" Then the shot occurs. Then an apparently very frightened man cries out quickly and loudly "Alright,

alright, I'm fucking gone, already!" Then the car sounds fade away with squealing tires.

Events behind the Sounds

The set was located in an abandoned warehouse in a rundown part of the Red Hook Container Terminals in Brooklyn. Erik Shorey, one of Castelo's minions, was late; and the camera was already running.

Shorey wanted the taxi to leave the scene as quickly as possible, but his violent temper resulted in an argument about the cabby's tip, which the cabby considered to be too small. Shorey finished the exchange by drawing his pistol and squeezing off a warning shot, which persuaded the taxi driver to bugger off as quickly as possible.

This occurred almost a month ago, making any investigations among the various taxi companies rather time-consuming. However, the investigators should get lucky in the end. Owen Pratt, a plump man with perfumed permanent wave, is quite willing to show the investigators where he was shot at in Red Hook Container Terminals. "I reported it to the damn cops already. Somebody got fucking iced in that warehouse. There was all that blood - I mean, shit! Jesus!" He is happy to have gotten away in time.

Research at the local police-station reveals that 29 days ago human blood was found in the warehouse. They found a bedstead and the mattress was drenched with over six pints of blood. A storeman had found the bed by accident in a small room of the warehouse and called the police.

Pratt had gone to the police only after hearing about this. He hadn't wanted to report the incident with his dangerous punter to the police, because of a bad experience with an police officer some years ago. Only when he read of the murder he reported what he had seen. The police interrogated him and prepared an identikit picture after his description.

All this information, including Pratt's name, the investigators could also get from the police ("among colleagues"). However, it requires several hours until a phone call or visit at the police station give the desired results. First, one or two successful Persuade rolls have to be made, in order to get some people talking and the files have to be dragged up – not all cops remember all the details.

Visiting the warehouse or a longer interview with Pratt won't yield much. Only one clue could be of value: this is a small booklet of matches (either stored at the police station or found be one of the investigators on their visit there). It touts a sex shop called Plastic Gifts, at an address in north Manhattan.

How the investigators get their hands on the match book and thus the address depends on their tactics. If they investigate the warehouse on their own, then they could find it hidden in a crack of the wall or under a stone. If they talk first with Pratt, he might have seen how the police found it and recognized it. If they use their connections with the police, they simply might see the file with the attached evidence – including the match book, found by the evidence team.

Plastic Gifts

Plastic Gifts is a regular sex shop with a large video department. A contact in the scene or Evelyn might be able to supply information

that you can also get uglier things there. The proprietor, Ron Jackson, has been careful enough so far to avoid attention of the authorities. His illegal side business hasn't been interesting enough for anybody to take a closer look. He produces and copies films, among other things.

One day, Jackson, a plump man with a baby face, received a most unwelcome visit. An inconspicuous but tall man (Castelo) accompanied by a brutal looking thug (Shorey) came into his shop and asked him to transfer a Super 8 film on to video without watching it. (Castelo couldn't tell from his hand-scribbled orders if someone other than the picked clients was to see the film or rather not, and decided that he would rather be safe than sorry when dealing with the Network.) This screamed trouble to Jackson, but the tall man was pretty insisting. The thug scarred Jackson and he didn't know why.

Jackson didn't know how to transfer the Super 8 film other than to video it from a projected picture. He pointed the video camera at the screen, started the camera and the projector and left the room. Soon afterwards Karl, a young man helping him out for several months now, came into the sales room. He was white as a sheet and

he is afraid. It won't be easy to overcome this fear. The best way might be to instill another, more direct fear into him. If the investigators can convince him that they are the only ones capable of saving him from prison, and that they can not do this if he doesn't cooperate, then he will tell them what he knows.

If the investigators come up with some other trick to convince Jackson to cooperate, the Keeper should allow it – but always keep in mind that the players should have to work a bit for their results. After all, there are other ways to solve the mystery.

Jackson can also supply the address of Karl's apartment; Karl has not shown up at work since.



Interrogating Ron Jackson

asked excitedly what freaky sick shit was running in the back room. Jackson was beside himself. The back room had been locked, damn it! They screamed at each other for a while: "How should I know what kind of shit this is? I wasn't supposed to see it!" – "And which fucking psycho gave you this filth?" After Jackson told Karl about the strange pair who had called that morning, and were responsible for it, he left the shop fuming with rage, to "talk with the guy". Karl must have known him, on that Jackson is certain.

The tall man and his thug have collected film and the video in the meantime. Jackson believes that the man knows that something went wrong, although Jackson naturally didn't mention any problems. His fear of the man increased and he has started to have nightmares about this (which are not the doing of the Mythos, for once).

Upon questioning, Jackson will initially deny everything. A Psychology roll reveals that he knows something and is quiet because

General Investigations

Hitting the streets to use their contacts or investigate on their own, the investigators will hear some rumors.

There is supposed to be a snuff movie. People have offered large sums of money to get it, but none of the people on the streets has actually seen it. Some do not believe in its existence, but most are certain that the rumors are true. These people also know about the supposed original. The video is rumored to be cut, the worst scenes having been removed. People say that a secret auction is going on and that only the highest bidder will see the original. But that all they know, man.

The police have also heard of these rumors and started investigations. They haven't turned anything up except the rumors, however. They are very skeptical about the story of the alleged original. Nobody produces a real snuff movie and then cuts half of it out.

At Karl's Home

Karl is not at home, when the investigators call at his place. If they call first his flatmates take a message and promise that he will call back, when he is home again. But nothing happens. Recently, Karl has been staying out for a few nights in a row. Pearlwind, a good-looking fellow flat-mate is his (now and then) girl friend. If the investigators want to talk to any of the four people sharing the apartment, they will be sent to her. She offers them a place on the spotty sofa and something to drink. "No, I haven't seen Karl for at least three days," she says, fretting with her wooden pearl necklace. "He's been acting a bit strange recently and only sleeps here, disappearing for days on end. He was like, erm, 'possessed' for like a month." "When he spoke to me he always appears to be somewhere else in his mind, as if he were looking for something else in the distance. But our sex

life has got way better,” she tells the investigators whether they want to hear it or not. “The few times he’s here, he always screws my brains out, he’s desperate to, and he’s got some mojo that he never had before. It’s almost as if this fuck is the last fuck.”

What happened to him? Pearlwind doesn’t know for sure. “It all started with that phone call. One day he came home from work, real disturbed like. He didn’t want to about it, he just went straight to the phone. He called somewhere and had his call patched through. He asked for a Tony and said he needed to talk to him. It seemed very important, as if Karl had some unfinished business with this Tony. He agreed to meet Tony in one hour at the Red Rose and said he would be there. He hung up, threw on his leather jacket and stormed from the apartment. No more words to me, no explanations, no nothing.”

Does she know who Tony is? No, no idea who he might be.

And the Red Rose? Never heard of it. And no, Karl never mentioned it again. Pearlwind has no idea what this is all about. “Luckily Karl is a reasonable man,” she says, she is certain “He won’t do anything stupid.”

Karl

Karl’s sanity has suffered somewhat since he unlocked the door to the room (wondering why his boss locked it in the first place) where the film was being copied and saw, what Y’gonac’s avatar did to the girl. He refused to accept what he saw. There are no ancient gods or monsters, the film is only a snuff movie, crazy sick shit that shouldn’t exist. Neither should you sell or copy it, even if you didn’t make it. How he knows for certain that the film is not a fake like the others he has seen before he does not know, and he doesn’t realize that he shouldn’t be able to tell, either. Seeing Y’gonac’s avatar disturbed him far too much to second-guess such logical deductions.

He knows Castelo; he worked in the Red Rose years ago before he was fired. That is where he first met Castelo. Months after being fired they met in a bar and became friends of sorts over a beer – at least that’s what Karl thought until recently. Now he knows that Castelo never took him seriously and that he only used him for cheap errands. He now remembers the rumors about Castelo that he had ignored then.

Since the day he saw the film he has been trying to contact Castelo. Castelo doesn’t think of him as a buddy but rather as some guy he used once. He completely ignores Karl’s rabid accusations. After Karl’s call he met him and then had him thrown out. Karl has since tried to talk to him several times, but without success. All his efforts were in vain. Castelo didn’t show up for agreed meets or told him to come back the next day.

Karl’s efforts to “do something” are as chaotic as he is himself. He has been running around the Lower East Side, spreading nonsensical rumors, asking stupid questions. He gets regularly kicked out of the various establishments in the area. Luckily for him, Castelo has other problems at the moment, otherwise he probably wouldn’t live any longer.

The Red Rose

Sooner or later the investigators will want to visit the Red Rose gentleman’s club. The key to all their investigations is Tony Castelo. Since almost all witness have heard of him, know him, or at least have seen him once, the investigators will probably be searching for him when they go to the club. Depending on the success of their investigations so far they might know his first name and may even have an identikit picture of him. Almost certainly they will have a description, although that won’t help much; brown-haired, tall men are not very scarce in the area.

Prior investigations about the Red Rose do not turn up much. The club is rumored to offer everything you can imagine (illegal lusts are serviced in the basement), and can be hired by specialist interest groups like swingers or BDSM fetishists. But the police have nothing on it. Three police raids yielded nothing. Either they knew the police was coming or there really isn’t anything to find.

The club occupies a two-story building with a large red neon rose over the otherwise unremarkable entrance. It is located on the Lower East Side of New York. There are three other lap dancing and strip clubs in the same block. If the investigators try to get information by questioning people in the surrounding establishments about the Red Rose, they will meet a rather unfriendly response. Karl has already been here and caused trouble. A police badge or similar identification will give some results, but not many. Nobody wants to get into trouble with the Red Rose. Castelo is a man you better not cross; there are even rumors about connections to organized crime.

A successful Psychology roll reveals that the club’s competitors are afraid of standing in Castelo’s way – more so than the hard sex business would make you expect. Even Rita, the sweet and normally very talkative receptionist at the Golden Palace lowers her voice when talking about this. The investigators will find out that there are very little concrete evidence for the origin of these rumors even if they come to the conclusion that finding out the root of it is important. There are some rumors about people that are said to have disappeared. Rita has “a friend” who once heard that somebody was almost beaten to death only because he worked in some other club and dared to want to amuse himself at the Rose. Supposedly he wanted to “spy,” but that was not true. His name? Rita would rather not disclose that. Indeed she rather rapidly changes topics and talks about a drunken guest who had to be kicked out yesterday. However, the investigators may have heard her say “the Network” before she notices that she became a bit too talkative. If they are very lucky, she might tell them that she heard that the Network is a terrible organized crime organization. Castelo is connected with it, she heard people say, and nobody dares to meddle with him. Who is Castelo? Why, Tony Castelo of course, the owner of the Red Rose.

Meeting Karl

The investigators won’t have many clues when they arrive at the Rose. Depending on when during their investigation they decide to pay

a visit to the Lower East Side they could even know nothing at all except the name of the club.

Karl is probably the best source of information the investigators could meet. The following situation can therefore be inserted at any stage during the scenario to give the investigators some help. If the Keeper prefers the investigators to follow some other clues first before they should enter the lion's den he should make it a bit more difficult for them. Depending on how much the investigators already know the encounter could even be left out.

If the investigators are near the club during the day or very late at night they see how two well-built men pull a young man with thin goatee down a side alley and thoroughly beat him up. They are able to hear some of the words spoken. "Don't ever fuckin' come back, y'understand? And shut your fuckin', goddamn mouth about them fuckin' videos! We catch you 'round here again, you're a fuckin' dead man!" This warning is followed by a kick in the kidneys.

If the investigators want to charge in and apprehend the ruffians and interrogate them, they maintain to have wanted to settle "an old beef." The beating was "purely personal," nothing more. Video? No way, the investigators must have misunderstood something.

Karl, who is obviously the victim of the beating, is thankful for any help. He will be more than happy to tell the investigators about the two guys and the video. If they have been to Plastic Gifts before they will already know his story or at least are able to guess it. However, Karl is unable to answer any questions about the contents of the video. He saw only a few seconds before his mind shut down and he stormed away from the room to bring righteous justice to those "guys doing all that fucked-up, kinky shit" (Karl's words). Any questions towards details result in a fit of rage, curses and insults aimed at Castelo, who is obviously party to the game.

Investigators who successfully use Psychology may find Karl a veritable fountain of information: A film has been copied showing despicable things, which obviously weren't supposed to be seen. Apparently a man called Tony Castelo is responsible, who owns the Red Rose night club and who is reputedly to be able to get you anything you want. Karl once worked at the place for three weeks, but got into an argument with Lisa, the bar supervisor, who made sure he was fired. During that time he didn't see anything illegal, that was later. However, he remembers seedy types that always talked to Castelo in low voices and afterwards disappeared down in the basement. At the time he had thought they were clients that were a bit shy.

Karl would like to take Castelo to task, he says, but he always pretends to be out. More than three weeks ago Karl went to a meeting that Castelo never kept. For several days now, he's haunted the area asking questions to find out anything. He doesn't really know what. There's got to be something. There's got to be people who know where Castelo hangs out or who have heard anything. The fact that Castelo's thugs wanted to beat him up is a positive sign for Karl. It shows he is onto something, right? Otherwise they wouldn't do that, eh? What he wants to do when he knows? Err, well, he'll see. Something's gonna come up. Castelo isn't at home, anyway, since Karl has already been there several times.

The Keeper can use Karl to steer the players in a certain direction of his choosing. If they continue to sniff around at the Rose, have them find out more about the enormity of Castelo's business

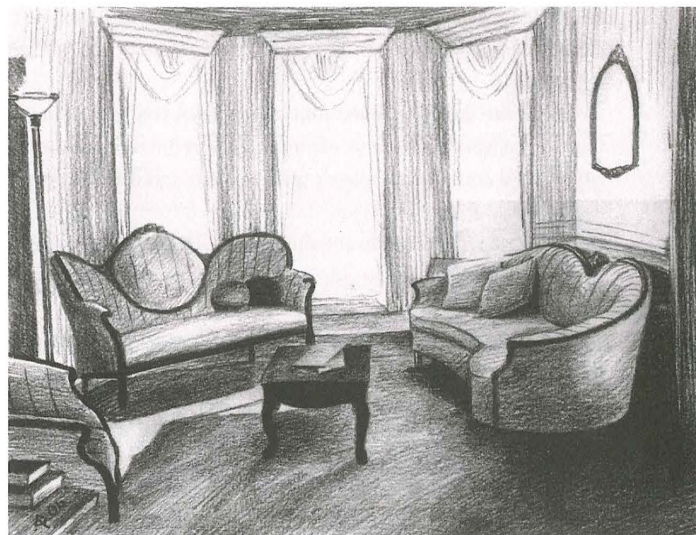
or that humans can be the more terrible monsters. Karl may point out people to them or tell them which doors to look behind or which people to talk to. Eventually the investigators need to burglar Castelo's house (or find some pretense for a legal search warrant) in order to find the final clues leading them to the showdown. If they don't get the idea themselves, Karl may again serve to point them in the right direction. "OK, I've had enough. I'll go back to Castelo's house to wait for him. He's gotta come back at some point. Or do you have a better plan?"

Investigations at the Red Rose

Whatever its reputation, there is nothing to see at first sight to back it up once you get inside the Rose. The club is decorated in a most luxurious way. Expensive wallpapers, comfortable sofas and a thick carpet create the illusion for the visitor of coming "home." There is none of the shabbiness you might expect. If it wasn't for the pounding techno music pounding out from the hidden speakers you could think you were in a British gentlemen's club. You almost expect Allan Quatermain or Sherlock Holmes to be sitting in one of the armchairs, recounting their life's story. That the gentlemen are served by scantily dressed girls would appear strange but not unfitting. There are many shabby corners in this club, but you can't even suspect them when you enter.

Lisa, one of the ladies behind the bar, likes to greet every visitor personally if time allows, and asks them for their orders. She explains where you can find things and orders suitable drinks and ladies. She doesn't fulfill "special orders," however. If the investigators ask for them, she refers them to Shorey. Normally that would be the boss's job, she tells them, but he's not in so they have to speak to his representative. It goes without saying that the investigators will meet a wall of silence if they barge in with drawn police badges.

Asked for special orders, Shorey will rattle out a list of every legal sexual practice: bondage, S&M, golden shower and similar games. It is all a matter of cost. He refuses requests for illegal practices,



Investigations at the Red Rose

New York Law and the Red Rose

Some of personal services offered by the Red Rose in addition to the lap dancing are illegal, and the Red Rose is serving as a brothel. Oral sex and sexual intercourse have been illegal in such clubs since 1985 under New York law. Other practices which do not involve either are technically in a legal gray area.

If the investigators want to shut down the Red Rose they will have a hard job of it. Castelo's connections with the Network has made sure that the club's liquor license, fire inspection and zoning compliances are all properly filled-in, correct and perfectly legitimate.

brutality leading to bloodshed, and kicks the punter out – except if he knows the punter from somewhere or they have been introduced by a trustworthy contact. In that case “things” can be arranged. The only information here is that you really can get everything at the Red Rose.

If the Keeper wants the investigators to penetrate the lower levels of the club he should think of fading out in time. Some things are best left unsaid. Of course, every Keeper knows where the boundaries of his players lie. A simple tactic to avoid finding out what your players can't tolerate is the time required to arrange for any “special orders” to be fulfilled. This might take some days to prepare, in which the scenario will be over...

However, if the investigators ask for snuff movies they will be immediately ejected, by force if necessary, and always with insults. Shorey has very clear instructions in this regard. The snuff movie is Castelo's own business and anybody asking for it will be refused and shown to the door. The official line is “Even we don't offer everything!”

Lisa can also be questioned. She doesn't know where Castelo is. She has wondered why he hasn't shown up for some time. Perhaps he is sick. Well, she doesn't really think so, she probably would know that. No, she doesn't have a photograph of him - she's an employee not his girlfriend. Castelo is friendly and open and knows pretty much everything about the goings-on in the club. However, if the investigators ask the wrong questions she will immediately tell Shorey.

Nobody will tell them the address of Castelo's home – but a simple look in the telephone book will solve that (ask for an Idea roll if the players really can't think of it).

Castelo's House

Castelo's house lies in Brooklyn, not too far from Red Hook – about 20 minutes on foot. The neighborhood is a bland middle-class enclave with small wooden single-family homes (basement, first floor, and attic) widely found in the United States. The front facade appears somewhat neglected and needs a coat of paint. The back alley is dark

and dirty, with trash bags waiting to be taken out, old cars parked there during the night and stinking drains leading directly into the sewers.

Castelo is not at home when the investigators arrive. He has abandoned his house and won't come back until he has shown the film for the last time.

The investigators can watch the house undisturbed. There are a few “Neighborhood Watch” signs to indicate vigilant neighbors, but the signs themselves already show signs of neglect. The neighbors around here want to be left alone.

If they took Karl along, he won't be very patient. During the second night watching the house will he at latest try to persuade the investigators to break in or try to get a search warrant (he has no idea how long organizing this may take). At any rate he doesn't want to continue sitting around doing nothing. Something has to be done. If they haven't taken him along he might even gone there on his own to break in.

However, Karl is not the only one stalking the house at night. The children of Y'golonac that came to New York during the first abortive attempt to free the God from his prison roam the sewers below the house and even the interior of the house. At first they fled to the sewers, led by Castelo. He was happy that he was able to get rid of them so easily. They were blind and he was certain that they wouldn't survive too long on their own, and he would never see them again.

He was wrong. One of the creatures was some kind of priest; somewhat brighter than the others and provided with special senses that allowed him to operate relatively confidently even in a foreign environment. The priest is the link of Y'golonac's Children to their “world” – Y'golonac himself. He feels this link, can follow it and even find it once he lost it. This allowed him to find Castelo as the connection to the prison of their God and to bring a group of outcasts to his home (they call themselves the outcasts, since they don't know what happened to them other than they apparently have been cast out of their world). He persuaded four of his “parish” to enter the house with him; the others stayed down in the sewers.

They came to the surface via the drains in the back alley and eventually entered Castelo's house. Castelo woke one night, heard noises downstairs and found himself facing five of Y'golonac's Children. His already over stressed nerves didn't allow any other reaction than flight. He now lives under a false alias in a hotel, preparing for the final (he hopes) showing of the film. Once that final important act has been concluded he can finally do other things again, find out about this labyrinth of magic and demons and try to get his house back.

If the investigators stake out the house they will sooner or later notice movement in and around the house, without being able to see who or what is moving. A successful Spot Hidden roll reveals that it is not the owner of the house; the movements are stealthy, as if the individual is trying not to be seen.

Breaking and Entering

Just sitting there and watching the house doesn't lead anywhere. The investigators will learn that someone seems to be in the house, but

they cannot find out who or what it is. Breaking and entering is the only solution – and the only solution to successfully complete the scenario. Castelo's written notes are in the house – the texts he wrote under the influence of Alem Keightly and told him what to do. A calendar contains the time and place of the final screening of the film.

In short, it is important for the investigators to get those documents, and the Keeper should gently push the players to have their investigators get near the house and eventually inside it. Karl can be used for the former. If they decide not to enter the house, the Keeper may have Y'gononac's Children kidnap a sewerage worker and bring him back to the house to divide him up under cover; the sewer worker will of course wake up in time and make enough noise for the investigators to hear him and, hopefully, rush to his help.

The investigators will find it difficult to avoid any noise upon entering the house. Y'gononac's Children have very good hearing and will definitely notice them. They will initially retreat and listen in hiding. Eventually they will come forward and try to ambush the intruders.

The house smells mildly of the sewers, a smell that grows stronger in the basement, where the Children usually reside. Other than that, the house appears perfectly normal: a small hall with coat hangers and two coats, a living room with leather couch and TV set, a bedroom with unmade bed, a study with chaotic desk and a computer, a medium-sized bathroom in need of cleaning. Everything appears ordinary – until the investigators notice the first broken item on the floor. They can rummage in the house for a while and will find ever more small clues that indicate that someone is in the house who is not supposed to be here. Items are strewn on the floor. Something gnawed at a door five feet from the floor – like a big rabbit. There are spots of a brownish substance on a sharp table corner (where a Child hurt itself). More spots are on the floor below it. They emit a strong smell.

Shortly before the investigators hear the first sound, they find some documents on the desk (or if they don't go there, the living room table). Almost covered by them, but still visible, is a small calendar. Tomorrow's date (possibly today's, see below) is circled in red. Somebody used a red marker to write the following beside it: "Final screening of original - rave at old Church, Red Hook"

The other documents include many pieces of writing paper covered in tidy, angular hand writing. The text includes many notes in the margins, written with the same red felt marker as the calendar entry. Several words are clearly marked (easily made out even with a cursory glance): "Y'gonona", "Screening" and "Snuff".

Once the investigators found the documents, they hear the first sounds from Y'gononac's Children, which sneak slowly near. In a matter of moments they are attacked by five eyeless creatures (see Appendix for stats).



Breaking and entering...

prison by showing the original copy. The calendar betrays the time and place for the final screening of the film. They now have to prevent the ritual.

When exactly the screening is intended to take place depends on the Keeper. The investigators should not have too much preparation time after having found the documents, but whether the film will be shown the same night or the following night is not relevant. The Keeper can move the time depending on how far the investigators are in their investigations.

The calendar mentions a rave and a church. It shouldn't be difficult for the investigators to find out exactly where in Red Hook the church is located that could house an illegal rave. Castelo organized the event to have suitable sacrifice victims for the Great Old One once he arrives. In addition, he hopes to distract any unwelcome observers from the real goings-on.

The church is an old brick building, which hasn't been used for service for a long time. When the investigators arrive the preparations for the rave have been almost finished. They can observe how the last power cables are checked and refreshments are carried into the church.

The screening of the film is to take place in a derelict office building nearby. The preparations for this have long been finished, and the investigators will have no chance to find the place before the rave begins. A medium-sized room has been furnished with folding chairs. There is a window set into a wall between this room and a small neighboring room where the projector and a safe are located. The safe holds the original of the film. Both rooms lack any windows except for the one connecting them.

The Final Screening

Castelo's documents reveal the real reason for spreading the video to the investigators: Castelo must try to plant Y'gononac's seed in as many people as possible and free the Great Old One from his

The Rave

The first ravers arrive around half past nine. The hall once used to serve the Christian God is gradually filled with people. Huge loud-speakers discharge music at such volume that it would be impossible to hear a shot. Around midnight the church is crammed full with sweating and twitching bodies.

Among them are a few that don't really belong there. They are not there to dance. They were told that they would receive a text message at around one o'clock in the night, telling them the exact location of the screening. After receiving the message they are to go there unseen and without arousing suspicion, enter the building through the unlocked main entrance and sit down in the show room on the ground floor.

The investigators will probably observe the event. The music is deafeningly loud, the people dance and drink and do all sorts of drugs. During the evening the audience gets stranger and stranger as more of the invited guests show up. The proximity of the Great Old One in the shape of the coming screening becomes noticeable in our world. Couples or small groups retreat into dark corners to kiss or fondle, quickly followed their sexual fantasies. At first this appears only odd because they obviously don't care about being watched, but it soon degenerates into outré sexual activities and even bloodshed. None of the guests seem to be bothered by this, in fact some of them join in. In the corner of their eyes the guests see things that are only illusions on second sight: sex and death at once, dead bodies locked in desire and decomposition.

The investigators will also suffer from this influence. The longer they stay in the church, the more often they have to make Sanity checks. Every time they fail they lose one Sanity Point. When they lose the first point, they feel a strange attraction to some of the dancers, the second fills them with strange desires, the third brings illusions. Once they have lost five points they will join the others and do whatever they please without thinking about the consequences. Only their friends can prevent them from doing so. A slap in the face should bring them to their senses. Hopefully they haven't hurt someone before that...

Shortly after one o'clock one of the investigators will note how two non-raver guests leave the church and go straight to a neighboring building (these two obviously mixed up "unseen" with "a bit later"). They enter the building through the front entrance.

Super 8

Castelo waits in the office building to finally finish his task. He is deadly afraid. The previous screening of the original was obviously premature. New York hadn't been ready then. The God didn't show, instead those small eyeless bastards appeared that now haunt his house. He doesn't even want to think about what happens if the God actually appears in person! Castelo would prefer to leave the whole mess alone.

But how do you resist orders you wrote down yourself, without being able to remember how? How do you resist them? Who made you write down those orders?

Accordingly, Castelo is extra careful in executing this, hopefully, final screening. He sends a text message to all the 15 invited guests and starts the film about ten minutes later, despite not all the guests having arrived yet. He sits behind armored glass in a room with armored doors. In that way he hopes to be protected from anything that might come. In addition, he carries a small pistol for self-protection.

The investigators probably arrive shortly after the latecomers. The film is already running, projected on the white concrete wall. The Great Old One's avatar has launched itself on the girl. There is loud screaming. Suddenly the camera pans to the side (unlike in the video they already know) and offers a view of a wooden door, which wasn't visible before. The wall around it has also changed: it is no longer a gray concrete wall, but a red brick wall. The door slowly opens; through it, the observer can see a huge, dark room, in which small creatures crawl over a trembling mountain. More details are not discernible because of the darkness. The camera zooms in on the door, when suddenly some of the small creatures drop off the mountain and run towards the camera. They are deformed children without eyes. When they reach out with their hands towards the camera, the investigators can see that they have maws with sharp teeth in their palms, dripping spittle. The creatures seem to claw for the camera, touch it and finally reach through the image into the audience room. They step through the image into the room, and start rampaging among the guests. The whole scene costs 1D3/1D8 SAN.

Naturally, Castelo noticed the investigators as soon as they came in, but he doesn't know what to do. He simply decides to wait. He cannot interrupt the screening – the Network's revenge would be terrible. What's more, he feels secure behind his armor glass – as secure as you can be in such a situation. Terrified, he observes how the camera pans and zooms through the door into the room behind, into Y'gononac's labyrinth. The colossus in the background, on which the smaller creatures climb about, starts to move and slowly comes towards the camera. Shortly after, Y'gononac can be seen in all his disgusting glory (don't forget to let everybody make their Sanity checks: 1/1D10+1 SAN). Then his hand reaches through the screen and kills the first guest (see p. 198 in *Call of Cthulhu* 6th ed. for his stats).

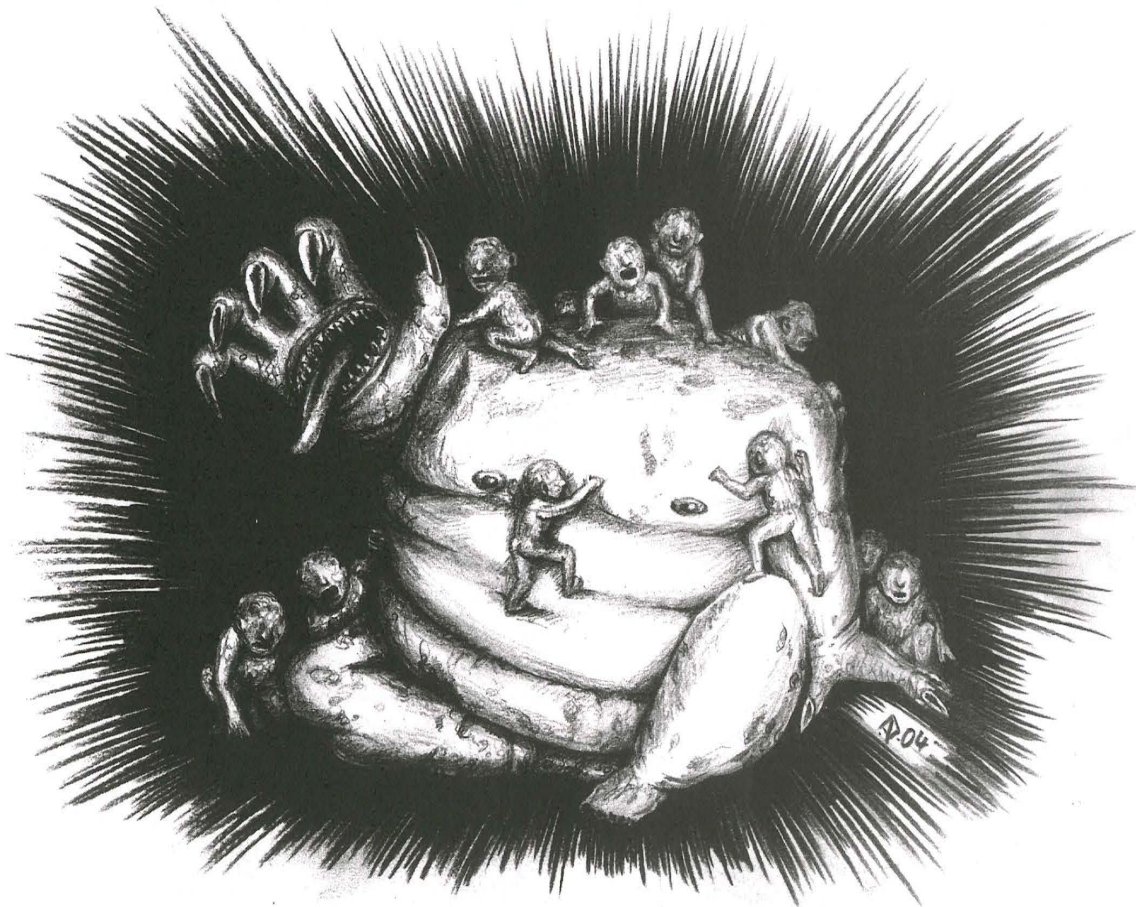
The armor glass Castelo is hiding behind will take a lot of damage before it breaks. Even high-powered rifles or a sledgehammer will only spiderweb it. This will fracture the image projected through the glass, but not prevent the Children to come through the fragmented images. If they cover up the window, the creatures come out of the image projected on this new surface, and then will rip it down as soon as they are in the room.

A better way to get into the room with the projector to shut it down are its two doors. The locks are good, but can be opened with a successful Locksmith roll or special equipment. If the investigator succeeds in rolling under half his skill, only 1D6+4 Children manage to come through the screen until the door is opened. If he only succeeds in a normal roll, Y'gononac is already half through the screen when the door opens. In that case, they have only three turns to destroy or stop the projector until the Great Old One is finally freed from his prison. And he won't quickly go away.

Castelo doesn't offer any resistance; he crouches in a corner and waits trembling from fear what happens. He will shoot any Children, however.

Special Effects

Y'gonolac is huge in his own world. His body offers enough space for a large number of his Children, who always crawl around on him – large enough at least for them to think he is the whole world. However, when he comes through the screen into the audience room, he is only as large as a very tall, unbelievably fat man. Like in a bad movie, where the big evil monster sometimes appears like a house and sometimes like a horse, the size relation between him and his Children changes once he leaves his home.



Super 8

While mood of the crowd in the church reaches its climax and nobody can resist their darkest desires any longer, the investigators hopefully destroy the projector in time to send back Y'gonolac to his prison. A few shots or a couple good kicks with the boot are enough to take it apart. Y'gonolac disappears together with the images, as if he had been switched off...

well; dozens of people suddenly find themselves in repellent and disturbing situations. Many are covered in blood, some in excrement. They flee the church in panic.

The investigators will probably try to destroy any Y'gonolac's Children that escaped. It doesn't matter if one or two get away. They flee in the back alleys of New York, commit a few murders and disappear one day – which means they don't differ all that much from certain other denizens of the Big Apple.

The police will show up shortly after and ask many questions. The final verdict will attribute the whole incident to drug abuse. The witnesses will be certain at some point that they imagined the whole thing – or their psychiatrist will convince them. Most of the invited guests are dead. Either they killed each other when one or two changed into avatars of Y'gonolac, or they were killed by the Chil-

The END

Chaos reigns outside. People scream and run away in mindless panic. With Y'gonolac's disappearance his unholy influence disappears as

dren or even by the Great Old One himself. It is quite possible that the investigators took care of the rest...

Among them is also the suspect whom the witness followed to the screening of the video. Once the witness sees the suspect he will remember much of what happened on the night he lost his memory.

Castelo will probably survive. He will beg for witness protection. Interrogated, he will spill everything he knows about the Network, but it isn't much. He will tell how and why he made the film and what the goals of the final screening were (in as far as he knows himself). In other words, he will say whatever the Keeper wants the players to know for any future adventures.

Soon this source of information will dry up. One day a prison guard will open Castelo's cell and find it empty except for a strange smell in the air. Castelo never appears again. The Network has no use for witnesses and knows how to get rid of people without any trace.

With Castelo's disappearance, the dust begins to settle. New York becomes quiet again. The people involved forget or repress the events, and the guilty are dead or have disappeared. The sewers claim some victims, but that they already did before Y'golonac's Children took up residence there. Eventually, the Children are killed by the Ghouls who live underneath the city, and have done so for a long time.

Appendix

1. Dramatis Personae

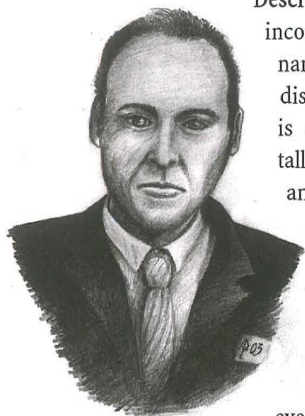
Tony Castelo, unwilling wire-puller, 35 years of age				
STR 12	CON 11	SIZ 14	INT 12	POW 12
DEX 10	APP 10	EDU 10	SAN 21	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Attacks: Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3+db

.380 AMT Backup pistol 50%, 1D10, 5-round magazine.

Skills: Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Drive (Auto) 50%, Forgery 40%, Law 35%.



Description: Some people are just inconspicuous. You forget their names, their faces. They simply disappear in a crowd. Tony Castelo is such a person. Despite being taller than average, he never draws any notice and is difficult to describe: "White, tall, short hair. No facial hair. Not fat or skinny. Nothing weird about him. Plain." This will be the kind of description the investigators will get from any possible eye witnesses.

No matter how difficult it is to describe Castelo, once you have had "business" with him you won't forget him. He never leaves any doubt about being willing to follow through his goals, no matter what the other side wants.

Castelo fought his way to the top of New York's red light industry. He started as errand boy in the brothel where his mother worked, later he was a bouncer and money collector, until he returned to the scene to become a pimp working his own prostitutes. He took over the Red Rose from its former owner and made it what it is now. One day he noticed that he had a secret ally; he was warned of raids in advance, competitors disappeared, business partners were suddenly much more willing to make concessions. The Network had its eye on him.

Later he received small tasks to fulfill. At first he hesitated, but after talking to some Network minions, who revealed a few details about his secret allies, he hesitated no longer but carried out all tasks as quickly as possible and to the letter.

The production of the film was the first big task he was to carry out for the Network and also the first for which he wrote down the orders under telepathic influence. Since those two nights, which he remembers only vaguely, he desperately thinks about how to get out of the net in which he has been caught. However, he is not so stupid as to refuse to carry out the orders.

Eric Shorey, thug and henchman, 27 years of age				
STR 16	CON 16	SIZ 14	INT 10	POW 5
DEX 11	APP 10	EDU 9	SAN 54	HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4

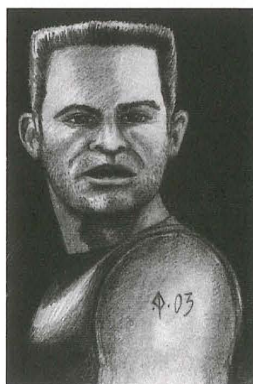
Attacks: Fist/Punch 75%, 1D3+db

Kick 50%, 1D6+db

9x19mm Glock 26 pistol 55%, 1D10, 10-round magazine

12-gauge Remington Model 870 shotgun 45%, 4D6/2D6/1D6, 5-round magazine.

Skills: Credit Rating 15%, Demolitions 45%, Dodge 35%, Drive (Auto) 55%, Law 10%, Locksmith 25%.



Description: Shorey's appearance is that of a typical bouncer: geometrical short hair cut, thick neck and upper arms that would pass for legs on ordinary people.

When he still was a member of some street gang he always was pretty high up – normally he was the right hand of the boss. However, despite that he knows what he wants and despite that he lets nothing get between him and his goals, he has never been on top. There has always

been someone who was smarter or a better leader. He often tried, but he was never number one. Nowadays he tries to make sure he at least is always number two, no matter where.

Shorey is Castelo's right hand. He represents him in the club and does all "muscle jobs" for him.

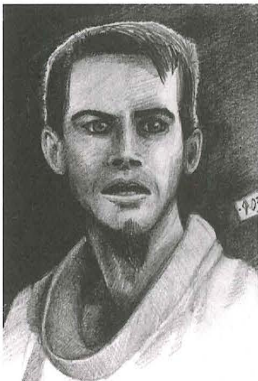
Karl Foresman, store clerk at Plastic Gifts, 23 years of age

STR 10	CON 11	SIZ 11	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 12	APP 10	EDU 14	SAN 55	HP 11

Damage Bonus: +0

Attacks: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3

Skills: Accounting 15%, History 30%, Library Use 50%, Other Language (French) 35%, Persuade 10%, Psychology 15%.

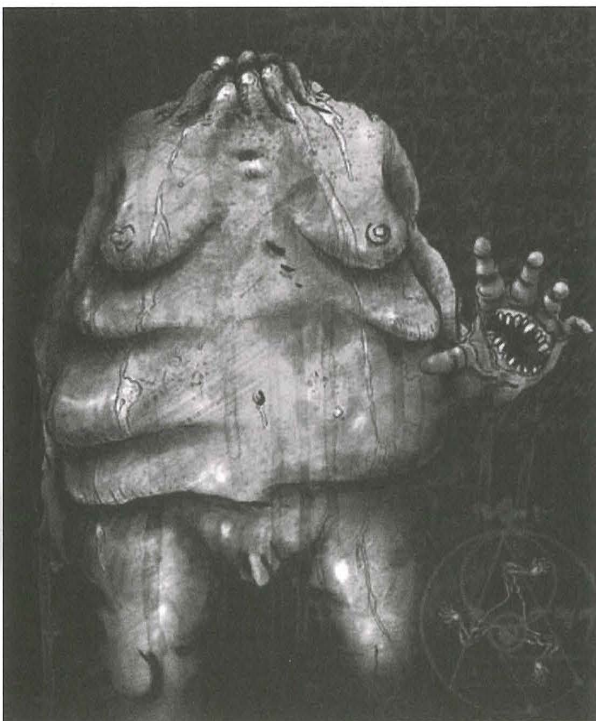


Description: Karl is a skinny young man with thin goatee and baggy clothes. He lives with "his part-time girlfriend" (as he likes to call her) in a shared apartment and tries to live his life convincing as many people as possible of his current political opinion (not very successfully). He went to college once, but didn't graduate when his parents stopped paying the bills. Since then he's held many different jobs. He has been working irregularly at Plastic Gifts for

almost a year now, while doing several other jobs as well.

2. Monsters

Y'gonolac and his Avatars



Y'gonolac is described in full in Call of Cthulhu 6th ed. rulebook. The Great Old One does has the same game stats as his avatars. However, the Keeper should make it clear when describing him that the creatures the investigators know from the video and Stockwell's house are different than the monster that tries to come through the screen. The avatars are former men with disgusting, bloated, sweaty

bodies, lacking heads and with maws in their palms. They are creatures of the Mythos, but they are definitely a different experience than the god himself.

The creature on the original Super 8 film is even more terrible and inhuman than the avatars. Y'gonolac is bigger, his flesh is discolored, spotty and covered in a rash from lying all the time. Fluid saps from his rash wounds, huge dark haematomae cover his legs and butt. When his hand reaches through the screen the stink of an open mass grave filled with pest victims spreads across the room.

The Children of Y'gonolac

In the dark, the Children of Y'gonolac could be mistaken for ordinary children with heavy skin problems and small deformations. Seen in light, one can see that their faces lack eyes and tongues, and the palms show maws with sharp teeth.

Most of the Children are stupid – practically total idiots. Outside their own world they react confused and attack every being they can get their hands on – literally. Some of them have a special link to their god – their world – and try to bring the others to safety and back to their world. These priests sensed the special connection between Castelo and their god and allowed him to lead them into the sewers of New York. The other Children follow them mindlessly, since they didn't know where to go.

These creatures might be stupid, but they have a good survival instinct, which helps them to adapt to our world. They might survive for a long time with the help of their priests, as long as they don't fall victim to the Ghouls.

Children of Y'gonolac

STR 7	CON 11	SIZ 5
INT 3 (6)	POW 9 (13)	DEX 11
Move: 10	Hit Points: 8	

Damage Bonus: -1D6

Attacks: Bite 30%, 1D2+db

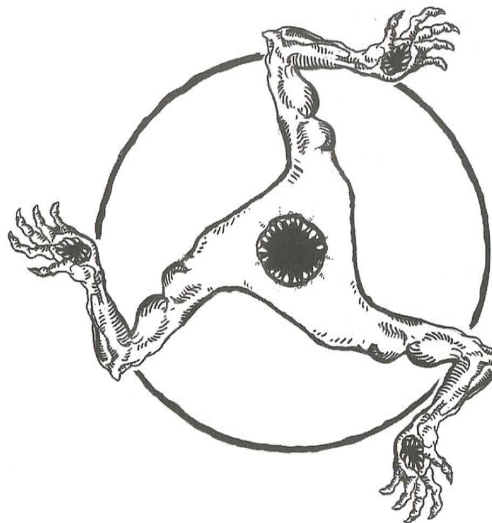
Armor: None.

Spells: None.

Skills: Listen 80%, Scent 80%

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 SAN.

(The values in parenthesis are for the priest)



3. Handouts
Calendar Entry

22	Friday
23	Saturday
24	Sunday
25	Monday
26	Tuesday
27	Wednesday
28	Thursday
29	Friday Final screening of original - rave at old church, Red Hook
30	Saturday
31	Sunday

Castelo's Notes

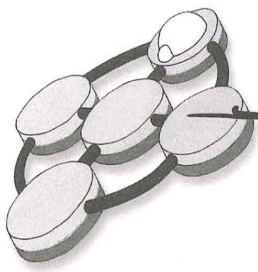
Y'golnasc, Lord of the Labyrinth, the headless God of a headless society, Lord of Lust and mindless devotion, sits in his prison and waits to be freed. The time has come to liberate him and you have been chosen to organize his liberation.

The film has to be filmed at a secret location. If you do everything right Y'golnasc will take over control of the man and express his message through him.

The copy must not be digitized, just like the original film is not to be recorded on a digital medium. Only a direct and analog copy guarantees that the film keeps its powers.

When a person watches the film, the seed of Y'golnasc is planted within him. Y'golnasc can then use him as an anchor in our world and we can pull him along this anchor into our world. Don't fear, he is our God and will be kind.

As soon as enough people carry the seed inside them, select 15 of them and show them the original film. Keep enough victims around, since even if the God is lenient towards us, he nevertheless needs many sacrifices or his rage will come to you and our city.



Strange Aeons:

The Zcarus Project

An Adventure in the Far Future



by Christoph Maser and Matthias Wden
translated by Calum McDonald

“Cryostasis terminated... 135 seconds until complete reanimation... Please wait for the reactivation process of all bodily functions to be completed...”

The shipboard Computer system’s message is in a synthetic female voice which penetrates unpleasantly loud through the audio chip into the inner ear. Eyes closed, engulfed in a gelatinous liquid, dressed in a skintight suit of heat-repellent silver material, a human form lies in a high-tech plastic coffin designed for cryogenic hibernation. Lying frozen for months – for years – until needed. A respirator tube as thick as a man’s thumb floods the lungs with a breathable mixture of gases. The lungs react by choking – they’ve not been used in a long time.

“...Please remember that your metabolism has been weakened by an extended stay in a cryostatic sleep chamber. Medical personnel will take care of you immediately the thawing process is completed...”

“...90 seconds until complete reanimation... The thawing process may exacerbate muscular atrophy. Please inform attending medical personnel for help... Drainage of cryostatic gel initiated. Please keep your eyes closed...”

It happens silently, like everything in this coffin. But the gel can be felt, slowly flowing down from around the body, as it drains from the chamber. It feels a little like the licking of an icy tongue. And it takes an eternity.

“...75 seconds until complete reanimation... Please keep your eyes closed. Premature removal of the artificial respirator can cause irreparable damage to the pulmonary system. Wait for the attending medical personnel...”

The last of the cryogenic gel drains from the chamber with a quiet gurgle. A light pressure is felt in the ears. Somewhere on the body the skin starts to itch.

“...65 seconds until complete reanimation. Test Phases I to III of the muscular system initiated...”

A slight spasm runs through the left leg, then the right. The contractions are soon repeated over the entire body, which immediately gives way to a strong, painful throbbing.

“Muscular restoration program initiated. Injecting...”

More light convulsions shake the body, like a wave of painful agitations. A slight stinging in the upper arm is felt. The canula remains in place for a moment.

“...47 seconds until complete reanimation. Please keep your eyes closed. Epidermal stimulation initiated...”

The substance injected through the thin needle into the upper arm seems to work slowly. The slight pain, the cramps and the feeling of weakness begin to subside. Another slight sound is heard, and it begins to rain inside the cryogenic coffin. A thin spray washes the last traces of the gel away. Warm waves course over the body, massaging life back into the dormant skin.

“...35 seconds until complete reanimation. Please keep your eyes closed. Disconnection of life support systems initiated...”

A metallic click is heard, followed by a faint humming. The tube of the artificial respirator retracts, and the lungs, now left on their own, panic and start hyperventilating. Once again a fluid streams through the needle inserted in the upper arm. It is cool and calming.

“...Cardiac and respiratory cycles restored to normal levels. 18 seconds until complete reanimation. Please wait for the medical person-

nel upon completion of reanimation. Premature exit from the cryostatic tank may result in circulatory failure. Please keep your eyes closed. Wait for the medical personnel. Reanimation complete in 10... 9... 8... 7... 6... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1 second. Reanimation complete...”

The vacuum seal breaks with a slight hiss, and air flows in through a small, still invisible gap. And then the screaming starts...

Starting the Adventure

This adventure takes the players into the infinite cold depths of space where the human race has never traveled before. The characters are initially part of a top-secret rescue mission – but they do not know who it is they must rescue, nor where they must be rescued from. In any case, as members of the backup team, they have spent the entire voyage deep in a cryogenic sleep, only to be re-awoken in the event of an emergency.

Which now seems to have occurred...

Without further knowledge, the characters are awakened from their deep sleep, only to find themselves on a completely unknown spaceship – the *Icarus*, one of the most modern, and most dangerous, spacecraft of the day. Soon it becomes apparent that they have been cast away in the depths of space in a spaceship that is not quite as empty and abandoned as it first appears to be.

The *Icarus* Project is a so-called one-shot scenario, an adventure separate from a normal campaign which is designed to be played with specially provided characters. These are presented in the appendix. Players and keepers are of course free to make up new characters of their own, but it should be noted that this scenario is completely unsuitable as the beginning of a ‘Cthulhu Sci-Fi’ campaign, as the characters’ chances of survival are almost nil.

This scenario takes its inspiration from films such as ‘*Event Horizon*’, ‘*Solaris*’ and of course the ‘*Alien*’ quartet, and takes the players into a thoroughly hostile environment billions of miles from home.

The adventure can be played through in one session, or alternatively in two shorter evenings.

The Course of Events

The adventure is plotted so that the characters only gradually come to realize what has befallen the *Icarus*. This knowledge leads them to the conclusion that the ship must be destroyed at any cost – and to act upon this realization.

The solution of the scenario lies in convincing the ship’s *Esper* (this term will be explained later) to alter the ship’s course by a tiny angle. Nearly all play-tests finished this way, but it may of course happen that your group will decide to pursue a different course of action. Don’t worry if this happens – the most important thing is

that the story develops in an entertaining way, rather than it should slavishly follow the plot as written.

The Player Characters

Five specially designed characters are presented in an appendix. Should there be fewer than five players, one of these characters can safely be dropped. The unused character can have failed to come through the reanimation process safely, and has been placed in the first-aid station for recovery. There, he or she is surprised by the Nanites, allowing the player characters to hear their unfortunate comrade's last moments over the ship's internal communications system.

The personalities of the characters allow several possible points of friction. Play-testing showed, however, that these conflicts usually fail to erupt – the characters are under too much pressure from external sources to do anything other than cooperate with one another. All characters are of equal rank, which also leaves plenty of scope for conflicts to arise as the group tries to establish who should be in charge.

Background Story

“Writhing and evil, an amorphous Chaos, perverted, meditating on its mindless existence, an incomprehensible lightless Radiance, Azathoth, the Daemon Sultan, a living Madness – in the Center of Infinity it floats, pulsating to the beat of a myriad of drums, surrounded by whining flutes – Azathoth, the Sultan, the Supreme, the Idiot...”
– Amadaeus Carson, Black God of Madness

And what would happen if the human race, in its infinite folly, were to travel to the center of the Universe – to the Court of Azathoth itself?

The Daedalus Jump

The year 2638.

The human race has colonized the solar system, and over a dozen rival noble houses attempt more or less peacefully to assert their own might within an intricate balance of power.

The House of Phaidon has succeeded in developing a new kind of propulsion unit, with the intent of markedly improving its position within this hierarchy. Put simply, this drive allows vessels to fold space, to create a small rip in reality, through which the ship can slip, to re-enter the material universe at almost any point.

The extremely high costs and the huge dimensions of the propulsion system prevent its use in the endless border skirmishes and guerrilla wars of the day, but in the field of research it opens up boundless possibilities. And it is for research that the jump-drive ship *Daedalus* was constructed: a ship, equipped with the most modern systems and the new jump-drive, ready to set course for the remotest depths of space.

The first test jumps, over comparatively short distances, went without a hitch, and so a destination was decided upon for the maiden voyage of the *Daedalus*, a destination which sounded at first like a joke, but with the new jump-drive the *Daedalus* would be capable of reaching within a year: the center of the universe!

For many years, data and information was processed, the crew was trained and flight paths computed – then it was time: on 24 April 2641 the launch window opened and from its launch station in the orbit of Phobos, one of the moons of Mars, the *Daedalus* braved the inter-dimensional jump. But events did not go according to plan – as the drive was building up the energy required to form the rip and preparing for launch, mission control realized that the amount of power needed to make the jump over such an extreme distance had not been calculated using any accurate simulation or prognosis – it had only really been estimated. The outer hull of the *Daedalus* started to sustain severe damage, but it was already too late to abort the mission: the ship made the jump, and vanished from the screens. Naked panic reigned in mission control after this catastrophe, but the ‘echo’ of the *Daedalus*, formed by the jump, was picked up, completely undistorted and intact, indicating that the *Daedalus* had managed to accurately follow its course and would re-enter the material universe on target, in the middle of the universe. But the condition of the ship remained unknown – the great distances involved made all contact with the *Daedalus* impossible, and in any case it would take decades for any messages transmitted by the ship to reach mission control. And so mission control was forced to rely upon the interpretation of the data collected during the jump, coming to the eventual conclusion that the damage sustained by the ship's outer hull would probably cause no more than minor impairment to the ship's research mission – but would prevent the *Daedalus* from surviving another jump.

In other words: the crew had successfully arrived at the middle of the universe – but would never return.

“Icarus, follow your father over the sea”

Phaidon scientists, attempting to learn from their mistakes, feverishly started research into the manufacture of an artificial substance capable of surviving the extreme requirements of such a long jump. As the *Daedalus* Project had already consumed such huge amounts of research funds, Phaidon was not prepared to countenance a further failure: the project had to successfully recoup its enormous investment and therefore the data gathered by the *Daedalus* must be recovered.

And so the construction of a second ship was decided upon the moment it became clear that the *Daedalus* would not be able to make it back alone. The implementation of the project, however, proved to be substantially more difficult than imagined. Every substance tested proved to be too weak to withstand the tremendous forces that the scientists had learned would be involved in making a second jump.

At this point, the House of Nakamura quietly made contact. This small, insignificant House had caught wind of the severe overheating of Phaidon's budget and its precarious financial position by means of espionage. And both Houses were fully aware of what going public with this information would mean. Quite apart from the loss of face associated with the threat of bankruptcy, Phaidon's share value would collapse, reducing its effective purchasing power to zero,

and having serious consequences for its political power base. Various reinsurance treaties would be revoked, making it only a matter of time before Phaidon's direct competitors launched an attack on the weakened House.

This left Phaidon little choice other than to accept Nakamura's offer. The Houses signed an alliance, with full partnership for Nakamura in the Daedalus Project, together with a share of the expected profits.

The alliance, which Phaidon was forced to accept through gritted teeth, nevertheless turned out to be advantageous in the long run. Nakamura technicians succeeded in developing an organic material that Phaidon believed would be capable of withstanding the stresses of the jump. The structure of the material was not only more stable than any other known, it was also extremely flexible and able to cope with immense workloads. But this material's most impressive feature was its ability to regenerate. Damaged cells could simply be excised and replaced with new cells, which would organically bond with the existing material. This repair work was carried out by microscopically small robots, known as nanites, instructed by a shared 'brain', a computer. The tests which followed gave impressive results. All damage inflicted on samples was repaired by nanites within hours, as they removed compromised surface areas and replaced them with fresh material cultivated in replacement tanks.

Finally, the construction of the rescue ship, the *Icarus*, could begin. But more problems arose when it was discovered that nanites could not be controlled by computer-generated impulses. This problem was solved by the use of so-called Espers. These were humans with a genetic mutation allowing them to control larger biological constructs than just their own body, and had already been used in laboratories for some time. After successful tests in which an esper, fused with an artificial body, proved to be capable of amazing achievements using modern technology, it was decided to place an esper on board the *Icarus*. Fused with the ship's organic fiber, it would become a part of the *Icarus*, and, supported by several massive computers, keep control of the nanites and issue them with the appropriate repair instructions.

This procedure only achieved success with the third implanted esper. The first esper proved to be too weak and was dismantled by nanites. The second one had the necessary abilities, but suffered irreparable brain damage as a result of a powerful energy pulse from the shipboard Computer. It was only the third esper, known as C-124, which managed to combine talent with technology and passed all tests to the satisfaction of the development team.

In order to prevent nanites from penetrating the hull, the ship was constructed with an additional second layer separating the organic outer skin from the ship's interior. This was designed to be impenetrable to the nanites. Biomechanical interfaces connected the outer shell with the nanite laboratories on the inside. This secured the bio-matter's supply of repair material while also ensuring a maximum of security.

And thus the *Icarus* was born – a ship with a living outer skin, with a human brain in a human body able to repair this outer skin if need be, equipped with more advanced technology than any ship ever built, and ready to make the jump out and then back again.

In order to minimize risk, each crew post was double-manned, so that immediate replacements would be available in the case of a

loss. And to prevent the risk of any information about the *Icarus* Project reaching any third party, only the staff officers of the *Icarus* were issued with exact instructions concerning the goal and detailed circumstances of their mission. All other crew members were informed only that they would be taking part in a rescue mission. Even the fact that they would be traveling in an ultra-modern, top-secret ship was concealed from them. The lower ranking officers and crew were placed in cryostasis (deep-freeze hibernation) before even being brought aboard the *Icarus*.

The Madness of the Daedalus

In October 2643 a favorable launch window opened, and the *Icarus* was sent out into the universe. The jump was successful, the ship broke through space and time, and re-entered after a year at a position only a few hundred meters from the *Daedalus*. But the sight greeting the crew was not the one expected – a still operational, albeit damaged ship, which had used the time at its disposal to collect huge amounts of scientific data according to its brief.

Instead the *Daedalus* floated dead in front of its sister ship. All systems were either switched off or running on minimum power, no communication channels were open, and all hailing signals remained unheeded in the blackness of space. Four rescue shuttles with salvage teams departed immediately from the *Icarus* to reconnoiter the *Daedalus*. But as soon as the airlock had engaged and the shuttle ports opened, the four teams entered a living tomb, inside which awaited sheer insanity.

During the interdimensional jump to the universe's center, the *Daedalus* had come into contact with SOMETHING, and had torn loose a fragment of it as it passed. This fragment was a part of one of the enormous pseudopods of the nuclear chaos that writhes oblivious to the incessant shrilling of a monotonous flute at the center of the universe. Nothing less than a fragment of Azathoth, the Daemon Sultan, was now on board the ship. Its presence infected the crew of the *Daedalus*, spreading a nameless insanity throughout the damaged ship.

And so the salvage teams of the *Icarus* encountered the remains of crew members who had been nailed to the walls, and tiny scraps of flesh – the remnants of those who had fallen victim to the tender mercies of their comrades' teeth. In the ships' corridors and cabins, walls blackened by explosions, they discovered incoherent characters daubed in blood. Ultra-modern probes had been adapted for fathomless uses and the mechanisms of entire research stations had been misused for obscene purposes. Entire departments had been given over to frenzied orgies of death where the rescue teams found their way blocked by inexplicable piles of putrid flesh.

In the sickbay of the *Daedalus* they found the sole survivor, a technician who had put himself into cryostasis before the insanity could kill him. He was transferred to the *Icarus* for further care in one of the shuttles. And with him, unnoticed by anyone, the Fragment of Azathoth went too...

Back on the *Daedalus*, the remaining rescue teams tried to get the ship's power running again, so they could access the ship's databases. These could supply no information about the cause of the disaster, but the teams guessed that the *Daedalus* had been struck by the madness immediately and had not collected so much as one scrap of data. System by system, the ship was restored to functionality and made ready for action.

Meanwhile, the technician awoke from his comatose condition during the flight back to the *Icarus*. Realizing that the presence was with him in the shuttle, he panicked, injuring two of the rescue team in his frenzy. As soon as the shuttle had docked with the *Icarus*, the injured rescue team members were attended to by an emergency medical team, while the madman from the *Daedalus* was sedated and put back into cryostasis. The remaining shuttles were ordered to return immediately. But back on board the *Daedalus* a further disaster was about to strike. The attempt to get the drive running again caused one of the reactors to overheat. This caused a chain reaction, the emergency cooling systems failed and the entire drive module of the *Daedalus* was finally jettisoned in order to prevent a total loss of the ship. The drive module itself shattered into several pieces of debris during the explosion, destroying two of the remain-

ing shuttles and leaving only one team able to follow the orders to return to ship.

The *Icarus*, much too ponderous to be able to take evasive action, was struck by the debris of the *Daedalus*' drive module before the last shuttle was able to dock with the mother ship. The *Icarus* sustained heavy damage from the impact: some of the connecting concourses between the individual ship modules were punctured, the outer skin was torn open and important parts of the shipboard Computer were paralyzed. Hordes of nanites swarmed through the ruptured protective second layer and, out of the crippled computer's control, started repairing the damaged outer skin using the nearest source of organic material to hand: the crew. Within a few hours, the entire crew of the *Icarus* had been dismantled and converted into new segments of the outer hull.

Atmosphere

It is important in this adventure that the characters only gradually come to realize the facts about their immediate environment, the ship. The realization of just what lies outside the ship should only start to dawn towards the end of the scenario. Ignorance with only a little clear information, inexorably rising uncertainty and a brutal time pressure, combined with the desperate hope of somehow still escaping, are important elements in the adventure. It is also crucial to the mood round the gaming table for the keeper to make clear to the players what kind of world their characters live in: the future, as presented in this scenario, does not have the least thing in common with the cosiness of a Star Trek universe, but is cold and cheerless. The human race is subservient to technology, and it is a subservience that has been willingly chosen. Human values and warmth no longer have any place in this world where efficiency is the only thing that matters. The characters are part of a system where terms such as 'ethics' or 'inalienable rights' have been abandoned long ago, a system which sees them as little more than resources to be exploited like any other.

But rather than simply telling the players all this, try to evoke this hopeless atmosphere piece by piece, through descriptions of the world as the characters encounter it: describe the clinical, sterile whiteness of the Cryostatics Hall, where the characters awaken alone, surrounded by hundreds of empty hibernation tanks. The bright metal of the gigantic ship's passages in which enormous bulkheads rear up and out of sight. Dark passageways, illuminated by the stroboscopic blinking of bright warning lights. Shripping alarm signals, warning of unknown dangers. Huge, barely concealed components of the onboard systems, whose exteriors hint of brutal power. Strange, dull, thumping engine noises, penetrating from the depths of the ship. The cold, emotionless voice of the Computer which is always present but never really helpful.

Avoid the impression that the *Icarus* is just a static piece of scenery: the ship is actively preparing for the jump, and the characters should be able to observe the ship's activities around them, activities which you can use to reinforce the impression of a living, breathing ship. Conveyor belts as thick as a man suddenly start running, in order to transport something out of the characters' sight. Shudders suddenly run through walls or decks as machinery starts somewhere. Interspersed with misleading moments of complete calm, this should help you create an environment in which the characters will feel alone, alienated and without friends: an environment which neither wants nor needs the characters, an environment which the characters cannot affect and which runs according to its own internal logic.

Special light and sound effects are recommended as technical aids.

Instead of the usual muted lighting, try keeping the play area as dark as possible, with two small flashlights provided for the players. Flashing hazard beacons can be used to simulate the ship's alarm lighting. Glow sticks, giving off a weak light, can also be effective.

Music can be used to very good effect in this adventure, particularly if monotonous. A simple trick can be used to stage the Voice from the Wall effectively. A radio in the play area, adjusted to pick up only white noise and static, can offer the perfect ambient soundscape for the man fused into the wall. Wrapping the antenna in tinfoil usually provides the necessary degree of interference.

For keepers who don't mind going to a little extra trouble, the authors recommend playing several completely different pieces of music – classical, metal, rap etc. – at the same time on different audio players and then vary this mixture of music during play. Adjust the volume of the individual pieces so that different pieces dominate at different times – this serves as the musical signature of the shipboard Computer.

And in this nightmare scenario, the Fragment of Azathoth merged with the largest organism it found on board – the organic outer skin of the *Icarus*.

The Fragment's next impulse was to return to the parent body of Azathoth, which lies somewhere beyond space and time at the center of the universe: the shipboard Computer was instructed over the biotechnological interfaces connecting outer hull and shipboard systems to initiate another jump – a jump retracing the outward flight to the hyperspatial court of Azathoth where the Fragment would once again be reunited with the nuclear chaos. But despite the efforts of the Nanites to repair the outer hull of the *Icarus* with the crew, the ship was still too badly damaged by the collision to be able to make another jump. With the help of the Fragment, the ship managed to regain control over the Nanites and systematically began the work of regenerating the damaged areas. But this was a lengthy process, and took years. The tanks in which the repair material was bred had been partially destroyed, so that its cellular structures grew uncontrollably over the decks, walls and everywhere else within the area and soon lost quality and stability. In order to rectify this, the computer began looking around for new, unused DNA within the ship, finally locating it within the reserve crew, still in cryostasis. At regular intervals, five unfortunate crew members were awakened from cryostasis and thawed out in order to be dismantled into their constituent cellular components by a wave of nanites. These would then be transferred to the flesh tanks to serve as fresh nutrients...

After almost 50 years, the *Icarus* has now been sufficiently repaired to allow it to follow the orders issued by the ship/Azathoth, to make the hyperspatial jump and return to the parent body. And it is at this moment that the characters awaken from their long hibernation...

Background Information

This chapter is provided as a play aid and is arranged as follows: first an Overview of Events is provided, which shows how the adventure will probably develop. After this, keepers will find important information on topics which are of importance to the adventure as a whole, but which are not specifically mentioned elsewhere. These are The Structure of the *Icarus*, The shipboard Computer, The Nanites, The Fragment of Azathoth, The Voice from the Wall, and The Esper's Son.

Overview of Events

The characters are suddenly re-awoken from cryostasis and thawed out – but all are members of the ship's replacement crew, and should have spent the entire mission deep in hibernation. The adventure therefore begins for the players with the knowledge that something on board has apparently gone wrong.

Hardly awakened, the characters discover that they are to all appearances completely alone on the ship, but find out the reason for their awakening: the shipboard Computer has erroneously registered the approach of another ship and activated the remaining crew in order to let them implement orders covering such a situation. This

means they must explore the ship themselves while preparing to contact the approaching vessel. After considering this initial information from the Computer, the characters' first destination will be the Bridge. Due to the heavy damage the ship has taken, there is only one way to get there. During their journey through the *Icarus*, they will gradually discover the background events that have resulted in the current situation and also become aware of the lethal danger in which they find themselves. The defective shipboard Computer and various other adversaries will make this no pleasant or easy task.

Discoveries in the Technical Module, the part of the ship in which the characters awaken, straight away pose a number of questions, and the next segment, the Drive Module, contains no answers to these. It is only in the following module that the pieces of the puzzle begin to fit together. An insane scientist among the rescue shuttles, who was re-awoken at the same time as the characters and who knows about the background to the insanity which overtook the ship, a shuttle which has waited half a century to dock, a deck which once held the DNA nourishment tanks and the cryptic announcement "60 seconds to jump" which gives the characters just less than an hour to solve the mystery of the *Icarus*.

More of the background is revealed in the next module of the ship. A survivor of the disaster, thawed out from cryostasis, video recording of the Sickbay, the personal logbooks of the Captain, the body belonging to the voice regularly heard over the intercom, a research laboratory and the discovery of the thing in the ventilation shafts all add up to form a picture of exactly what the *Icarus* is, what its mission was, what happened to it, and what is about to happen.

Armed with this knowledge (and perhaps a few remaining questions), the characters will reach the final module of the ship, where they meet the Esper and perhaps manage to convince it to slightly adjust the course of the jumping *Icarus* so as to destroy it and prevent its mindless passenger from reuniting with Azathoth. The characters can accept their voluntary deaths, or attempt to escape in the last shuttle over to the wreck of the *Daedalus*, there to await a presumed rescue. This is a false hope – but the characters will not realize this before they are almost dead.

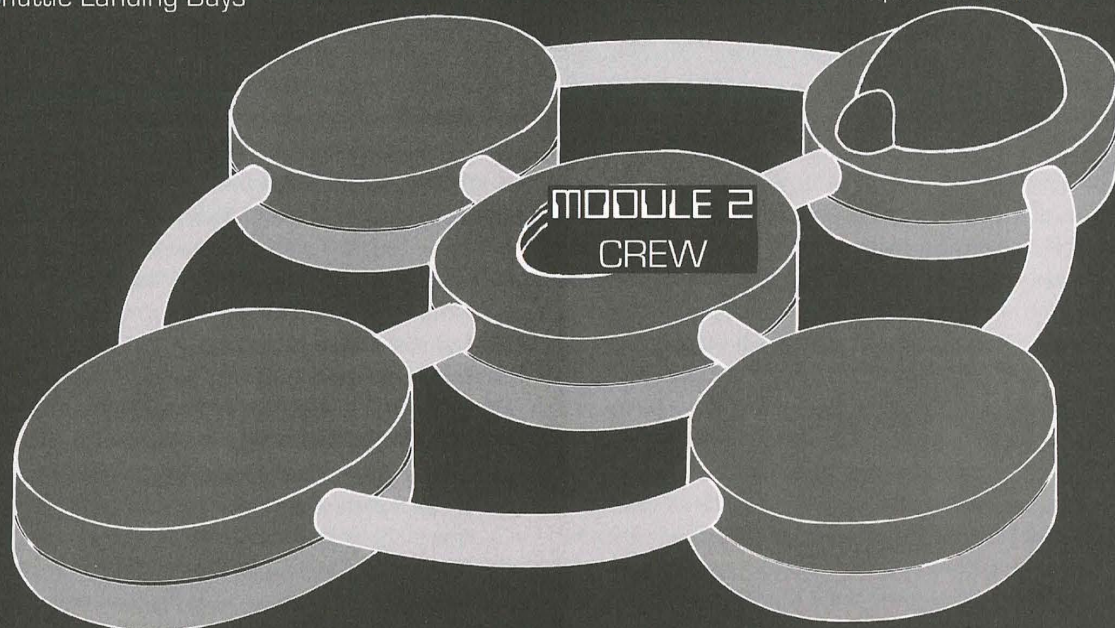
The Structure of the *Icarus*

*"Imagine a spaceship that is faster and better than any ever seen before. Imagine a spaceship that is so fast that it displaces matter before itself until it eventually breaks through it. Imagine a spaceship that no longer needs to travel in our space-time continuum, but can fold space and thereby cross immense distances in short periods of time. Lay a sheet of paper before yourself on the table. Draw a starting point at one side of the sheet and a finishing point at the other. Now specify the shortest distance between start and finish. Is it a straight line? For normal ships yes, but not for the ship that I have the honor to present to you today. Instead, fold the sheet so that starting and finishing point lie one above the other. And now puncture a hole between the points. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the shortest connection between the two points. And the *Daedalus* is capable of traveling in precisely this manner..."* – Prof. Paul Newman, leader, 'Daedalus Project', from his speech to the board of the House of Phaidon, 12.9.2638.

As the *Icarus* – and before it the *Daedalus* – uses a special kind of drive, their design is somewhat unorthodox: four round modules form a ring around a fifth, which forms the center of this circle. Each

MODULE 4
SHIP'S MODULE
 Shuttle Landing Bays

MODULE 1
COMMAND
 Esper Cathedral



MODULE 5
DRIVE
 Jump Generator, STL, Reactors

MODULE 3
TECHNICAL

of the individual modules serves a specific purpose, e.g., drive, life support etc.

These five major components are connected by tubular concourses. Each of these connecting concourses is designated after the number of the modules between which it lies, in ascending order: Connecting Concourse 2.3 therefore lies between Modules 2 and 3. However, at the time the adventure takes place, these have been partially destroyed by the collision with the jettisoned drive module of the *Daedalus*. The ship's emergency systems have sealed them off and they are impassable. In fact, only one route through the ship is open. This is the route the characters must take if they are to reach the Bridge, and the brain of the *Icarus*.

The characters awaken in Module 3, which accommodates most of the technology and the life support system. This is connected with Module 5, where the ship's drive is to be found, which leads to Module 4, the so-called Ship Module, where the rescue shuttles, the apparatus for the production and repair of the Nanites, and the DNA tanks lie. Next, Module 2 contains the crew quarters, the recreation lounges, and the large Panorama Lounge. This leads to Module 1, which contains the Bridge, the shipboard Computer and the Esper Cathedral.

Each ship's module has two decks – Level 1 (above) and Level 2 (below) – which always look alike: a circular passageway divides each level into an exterior and interior area. Doors branching from this corridor bear no names, but in most cases are only marked with numbers, so that the characters must open them to find out what lies behind.

The only exception to this is Module 1, which has three levels instead of two. Level 0, which is substantially smaller, is appropriately located above Level 1 and accommodates the Esper Cathedral (see below).

Two or more passages connect the upper circular passageway to the connecting concourses between the individual modules. A heavy bulkhead separates these two systems of corridors. In the lower deck these two passages end in elevators, which give access to the upper level, in front of the bulkhead.

The dominating element of the interior of the ship is steel. The Cryostatics Hall, sterile environments such as the hygiene cells, the Sickbay and the Nanite Production are clad in antibacterial, self-cleaning plastic components, and the lounges in the Crew Module are a bit more homely, but the remainder of the body of the ship is made up of cold black treated metal. The entire interior of the ship was originally hermetically sealed from the organic outer hull by a special interface. The shower of debris that damaged various inter-connecting passageways of the *Icarus* also destroyed this layer in certain areas. These points, where the organic hull material grows wildly inside the ship, now also provide the Nanites with permanent access to the interior of the *Icarus*.

Not all parts of the *Icarus* have metallic walls concealing the technical innards of the ship from view. In the system of connecting passages in particular as well as in the modules, whole corridor 'walls' consist only of bundles of pipes or cables. These are covered almost everywhere by steel lattices, under which ventilation systems, junction boxes and cables of various sizes can be seen.

This system of electronic ganglia can be entered via various hatches, which are positioned in walls, ceilings and decks at regular intervals, and which lead to maintenance and supply shafts. However, these do not form a continuous secondary corridor system. Even though it is possible to travel far into the interior of a module within them, it is not possible to completely explore a module nor to enter one of the two connecting concourses from the shafts. Beyond this, progressive movement within the shafts takes place by way of dead ends and a confusing multiplicity of branches – to both sides as well as above and below – and the extremely small dimensions of the shafts make travel even more complicated. Many are so narrow that progress can only be made by crawling. The maintenance shafts also have terminals at which – with authorization or a successful Computer Use roll – supply of air, power and heating to individual subunits can be adjusted or turned on or off.

The following encounters can occur anywhere in the entire ship at any point:

- Part of the Fragment of Azathoth: see below.
- Rampant growth of the organic outer hull: At these ruptures of the interface between the exterior and interior hulls, the outer hull's biological material has penetrated into the ship's interior and completely sealed the hole; therefore decreased pressure and vacuums do not occur at these points. When the biomass, which under normal conditions is an extremely resistant material, is exposed to the increased nitrogen concentration of the interior atmosphere of the *Icarus*, it loses most of its structural integrity and takes on a gelatinous consistency. This amorphous gray-white lumpy flesh carries a high population of nanites, and an investigation of the swollen, ulcerous mass with bare skin results in a nanite investigation of the incautious limb or member 75% of the time. The consequences of this contamination are described in the section covering the Nanites.
- Areas where heating and/or lighting has failed: these areas are either freezing cold, pitch dark, or both. Dim emergency lighting sporadically illuminates these areas. If the shipboard Computer is still active in these parts of the ship it will notice the presence of human life in areas without heating and draw the characters' attention with the message: "Warning: temperature below normal parameters. Danger of frostbite." It should be noted that the supply of air still functions throughout the entire ship (with the exception of the sealed areas around the breaches in the hull, which are in any case inaccessible to the characters). This is because the Nanites also need oxygen to function. While this is supplied by a special nutrient fluid within the outer hull, outside it must be derived from air. For this reason, the computer prioritized the repair of the air supply throughout the entire ship following the collision.
- Closed areas: As a result of computer malfunctions and the alarm states of some parts of the ship, access through some modules and areas has been blocked by locked doors and iridescent green force fields. Approaching a force field triggers a warning from the computer, but touching it is harmless. The computer will not allow the force fields to be disconnected, regardless of any successful Computer Use rolls. Locked doors which are also alarmed differ from those which are not alarmed by the presence of a small flashing red light. Attempting to open one of these

is responded to with an appropriate message from the computer. Unlike unalarmed locked doors, doors with alarms cannot be opened with a successful Computer Use. Locked doors and force fields provide keepers with a useful way to lead parties through the individual modules and directly to the information they need.

The circular form of the ship was deliberately chosen so that the characters would not be able to see the whole passageway in front of them during their journey through the Connecting Concourses. The curvature of these only allows characters to see a small area at any one time, allowing keepers to build tension by introducing ominous sounds from behind curves or disturbing shadowplay on the external walls.

The shipboard Computer

The actual brain of the ship is the gigantic shipboard Computer. As its technical hardware was not too badly damaged, it can be accessed almost everywhere on board and can supply the characters with certain information. No technical aids such as communicators or terminals are needed to make contact with it, as it simply responds when addressed.

However, various technical components of the gigantic Computer were badly damaged during the collision, in addition to which the presence of Azathoth also has a negative effect upon its capabilities: this means that it cannot access many of its files, frequently answers with obviously incorrect analyses, repeats itself again and again and supplies irrelevant or cryptic information without having actually been asked anything. If it is overloaded with questions from the characters (or just feels like it) it will start a system checking program or inform the characters that they lack the correct authorization. Rebooting further parts of the computer system would fix most of these problems, as the group will realize with a successful Computer Use or halved Know roll – but this can only be carried manually out from the Bridge, as the Computer itself can inform the characters. If asked, it can also explain to the characters that its capacities are currently close to being overloaded as it is busy calculating the course of a new jump.

Minor tasks such as opening locked doors can be performed with Computer Use, but it is impossible to exert a greater degree of control over the Computer from any other place than the Bridge.

The shipboard Computer represents an important source of information for the players, and one that they are certain to exploit. But the Computer does not really know much – most of its sensors have failed, much of its data is currently inaccessible, and the characters should be left with the feeling that the Computer is far from being completely reliable. They should start to receive obviously contradictory information from the Computer at quite an early stage. The meaningless phrases, counter-questions and requests for further information that the Computer constantly answers with should also get on the players' nerves:

Player: "Computer, how many life-forms are currently present aboard the *Icarus*?"

Computer: "Processing request. Indicate order of magnitude of life-form."

In addition to its role as source of information, the shipboard Computer should also exert pressure on the characters. Its system

is suffering from immense disturbances, leading it to occasionally make contact with the characters, completely unrequested, in order to answer questions they have yet to ask it, to bombard them with completely irrelevant phrases and repeatedly announce the forthcoming jump of the ship in order to emphasize the time pressure the characters are under.

Whenever the keeper is playing the part of the shipboard Computer, he or she should strive for an emotionless tone of voice with as little modulation as possible. Care should be taken to pronounce words correctly. A computer which speaks in slang or dialect is less than believable.

The Nanites

The Nanites are the now out of control maintenance and immune system of the organic outer hull. Their entry into the ship's interior had catastrophic consequences for the original crew, and they now form a lethal danger to the characters.

The Nanites' task is to repair damage sustained by the organic outer hull using specially bred biological material. The breeding tanks were substantially damaged when the *Icarus* was crippled at the same time as the need for new biological material increased drastically due to the heavy damage taken by the outer hull. The Nanites overcame the lack of suitable repair material by availing themselves first of the primary crew, then of the replacement crew as an additional source of the necessary biological material. The only crew members left are the characters, the crazed scientist Sergei Antonovitch and the remaining replacement crew member, who has been fused with her cryostatic tank. The remaining 65 crew were gradually used up by the Nanites in groups of five. As fertility in the nourishment used for the cultivation of the biological material dropped, the shipboard Computer opened the cryostatic tanks allowing the Nanites access to their victims.

Even though there is no acute need for biological material when the characters awaken, the Nanites are programmed to convert such material into reserves, and will take every opportunity to do so. This can occur as soon as the characters come into contact with the tumorous growths of the outer hull (see above), or if they stop moving for a longer period of time (about 10 minutes) to take a rest, for example. The Computer has a background program running which constantly scans the entire ship looking for dormant signs of life that the Nanites can make use of, and any discoveries are automatically passed on to them. The Nanites will become active within the space of a few minutes – a minor laceration in the skin is all that is needed for them to enter the organism and start work. The time needed for complete dissolution of a source of fresh organic material depends upon body mass and the number of nanites involved, but reckon on between 20 minutes for a baby and five hours for an adult human.

A single nanite is invisible to the naked human eye: they approximate 8.4 micrometers across, with a volume of about 85 cubic micrometers – about the same size as a red blood corpuscle. A group of several hundred thousand nanites can be discerned as a glossy, silvery film – if present within the skin, this takes on a silvery discoloration. There are a total of 73.2 billion nanites on board the *Icarus*, mostly within the outer hull.

As the outer hull of the *Icarus* contains a large amount of electronic equipment, the Nanites are also programmed to carry out a

Communicating with the Computer: Routine phrases

Would you like some music? (The Computer puts the entertainment network on-line.) In the case of an affirmative answer the keeper should have a couple of CDs ready with which to present a cacophonous mish-mash, including fragments of music played briefly, two clashing pieces of music mixed together, with changes in volume from too loud to very quiet etc. Be prepared to play this music even if the characters answer no. The trick here is getting the right amount of repetition: done properly, this technique can seriously unnerve players, but it quickly wears thin if used too often.

26,297,280 (The computer repeats the number of minutes which have elapsed since the jump.) Keepers should repeat this a couple of times. Bear in mind that you have only 60 minutes game time after Module 3 and that the timeframe of the adventure is very tight.

System analysis program initiated.

Time to completion of system analysis program: 346 seconds.

Warning: jump imminent. 50 minutes and counting until jump.

certain degree of technical repairs. However, their abilities within this field are quite limited.

The program which directs the Nanites was also affected by the damage taken by the shipboard Computer: the three individuals fused with the ship are seen as being part of the organic outer hull and are therefore not objects for conversion to biological raw material. However, the program responsible for the localization of individual persons (rather than biological raw material) still functions perfectly, and thus these three persons are included in the computer's report on the human life forms still present aboard ship.

The Esper is likewise recognized as an integral part of the ship by the Nanites, as is its Son. The Son's DNA is sufficiently similar to that of the father for the Nanites to identify it as a part of the ship's inventory, and as such leave it alone.

The characters will become familiar with the horrors of dissolution by nanites while they are still in the Cryostatics Hall. The constant fear of attack or infestation by nanites offers keepers an outstanding narrative device. Casually mentioning that a character has "pins and needles in the foot" can trigger enormous panic. A scan by the medical computer in the Sickbay or First Aid Station can detect "foreign organisms" in the body – and due to a malfunction leave it undetermined whether this means viruses and similar pathogens, or nanites.

Contamination by nanites in itself unnoticeable. It is only after about five minutes that a light feeling of formication (pins and needles) is felt in the stricken part of the body. Any accumulations of nanites under the skin are visible as silvery discolorations. Later

Communicating with the Computer II: Questions and Answers

The Computer can supply the following information on demand.

Number of human life signals on board? "11." (But no details).

Identification of life signals: "Authorization insufficient".

Location of life signals?

"Life Signals 1-5: Module X, Level Y, Area Z." (The player characters and their present position).

"Life Signal 6: Module 4, Level 2, Hangar Deck." (Sergei Antonovitch, the madman from the Cryostatics Hall. After leaving the group, he immediately sets out for the Hangar Deck, where he stays indefinitely. If the characters ask this question before it seems believable that Antonovitch could have already reached the Hangar Deck then the keeper should select a suitable part of the ship as a temporary location for him. It should be apparent from this that Antonovitch is probably on the move himself: his current location could be a corridor, an elevator or a connecting concourse.)

"Life Signal 7: Module 5, Level 1, Maintenance System" (The Esper's Son, scampering through the maintenance tunnels of the *Icarus*. As soon as it becomes aware of the characters, it starts to tail them, and thus its position may need to be altered accordingly.)

"Life Signal 8: Module 2, Level 1, Panorama Lounge." (The Voice in the Wall.)

"Life Signal 9: Module 1, Level 1, Bridge." (The woman on the Bridge.)

"Life Signal 10: Module 2, Level 2, Sickbay." (The frozen patient from the *Daedalus*.)

"Life Signal 11: Module 3, Level 2, Cryostatics Hall." (The mutilated human in the cryostasis chamber.)

The Esper is not recognized by the ship as a valid, individual person and therefore does not appear in the Computer's list.

Present position of ship? "Unknown. Recognized navigation points not present. Approximate position can be calculated." If this is requested, the computer will repeatedly encounter program errors, start the system analysis program, return impossible results ("Distance traveled: minus ten meters"), give completely irrelevant answers ("Oxygen content in crew quarters: 90% breathable"), or simply remain silent.

Course taken? The ship can inform the characters of the details of the ship's flight path to the jump corridor, exactly 743 minutes traveling time from the Earth, following which the jump took place.

What is a jump? "Authorization insufficient."

Destination of jump? "Authorization insufficient."

Time elapsed since jump? "438, 288 hours." (i.e. 26, 297, 280 minutes, or 50 years).

What has happened here? "Processing request."

Status of crew? "Primary crew failed. Emergency activation and reanimation of replacement crew caused by approach of ship."

How large was the replacement crew at the start of the mission? "The strength of the replacement crew corresponded 1:1 to the strength of the primary crew: 72."

What happened to the primary crew/the rest of the replacement crew? "Authorization insufficient."

Status of ship? "Severe structural damage, power supply intact, life support energy level 4%." (Sufficient to keep 10 humans alive, but not the entire crew.)

What do the ship's sensors say about conditions outside? "Sensor banks heavily damaged and extensive analysis impossible. Short-wave sensors detect activity outside known parameters." (Should the characters find a video screen and access the sensor images themselves, they will see an impossible number of rotating geometrical forms, clouds of inky mist and static signals which flit repeatedly across the screen.)

Request details of unknown ship approaching *Icarus*: "Sensor banks heavily damaged and exact data impossible to supply. Radio signals received. Ship approaches steadily, contact in 17, 054 hours."

What is the origin of the fleshy growths in the ship? "Breakdown of the organic outer hull of the *Icarus* into the ship's interior."

How did it get there? "Authorization insufficient."

What kind of material is it? "Authorization insufficient."

What does the silvery film in it consist of? "Nanites. Nanites are part of the maintenance system of the organic outer hull of the *Icarus*."

symptoms include stronger pains as the affected part of the body starts to change shape.

In one play-test, a character became infested in the thumb, which over time slowly started to turn silver and lose shape. He ended up amputating the thumb himself...

Due to the comparatively long time the dissolution takes, the Nanites will not have time to transform any of the characters into amorphous lumps by the end of the scenario. Any contamination that does occur will therefore not remove a character from play, but should rather be seen as being “merely” an extra source of additional horror.

The Fragment of Azathoth

The part of Azathoth which came aboard the *Daedalus* during its journey through hyperspace, and which entered the *Icarus* in the shuttle along with the last survivor, has mutated over the course of the last 50 years. It has divided into countless small globular forms, which drift freely throughout the entire ship.

These bubbles are between fist and head-sized and possess several strange characteristics:

- They look like negatives. The shifting, permutating colors of the iridescent surfaces seem somehow wrong. The eye constantly attempts to “rectify” this impression – and fails, leading to a feeling of dizziness in the viewer after longer periods.
- They glow – however it is not light they emit, but rather darkness. A tiny point shines within each one, and just as a rotating bull’s eye lantern sends out a moving ray of light, each of the floating blisters emits a searching, conical beam of total darkness. The edges of these “rays of darkness” are just as diffuse as normal beams of light and are seen most clearly in dusty atmospheres.
- Their form slowly shifts and changes, somewhat like the wax globules inside a warmed-up lava lamp. No obstacle halts their

aimless migrations through the ship – they simply drift through all walls and furnishings.

- At irregular intervals they give off a very high-pitched, hardly audible tone, slightly similar to the beating of a triangle. Any definite rhythm is hard to discern, particularly as different blister creatures seem to follow different tempos.
- They are faintly radioactive.

These spawn of the Fragment of Azathoth are usually encountered in small groups of three to seven. They are not recognized by the Computer, which only detects their background radiation. The characters may encounter these things all over the *Icarus*, particularly in direct proximity to the ship’s reactors – they are drawn here by the radioactivity – and in Connecting Concourse 4.5 (see above). As they are completely mindless, they take no action against the characters. Touching one of the things causes agonizing pain, but does not cost any hit points. The first sight of these parts of Azathoth costs 1/1D4 SAN.

The Voice from the Wall

As soon as the characters use the ship’s internal communications network in order to make contact with any surviving crew members, they will discover that there is at least one other survivor on board who is able to communicate with them. But it is not a particularly helpful contact: 50 years ago this poor man was fused into a wall by the Nanites. Through an unfortunate coincidence, he came into contact with the biological material of the outer hull, which had penetrated through a breach in the interface into the Panorama Lounge, and was immediately fused with the tumorous growth by the Nanites. In this way the body of the man became a part of the ship. Converted by the Nanites and attached to the nourishment system, he has survived 50 years and can be found in the wall of the Panorama Lounge in Module 2. Over the years, he has become completely insane.

The Man Fused into the Ship

The characters will hear the following fragments of sentences again and again:

“I am in the wall...”

“When will you finally come to kill me?”

“Paper – scissors – pen, paper – scissors – pen” (A reference to the only means of passing time left to him, an empty pen and a piece of paper on which he has painstakingly written a few lines. See *Icarus* Handout 7.)

“Like a planet around its sun... so many times... like a satellite...” (An astronaut who had gone outside the ship after the collision to examine the damage to the outer hull suffered a fatal accident. Held by the artificial gravity exerted by the *Icarus* he orbits the ship like a satellite. He can still be seen through the large transparent dome in the in the Panorama Lounge as his orbit slowly drags him past.)

“When will you finally come?”

“Kill me...”

“...please...”

If these fragmentary attempts at communication start to get on the characters’ nerves after a while, they may decide to order the shipboard Computer to block the transmissions. An Idea roll can help here if the players do not deduce this themselves. But this should not prevent the keeper from occasionally making use of the Voice anyway: the shipboard Computer is not functioning properly and it is quite possible that it will sometimes “forget” instructions when it suits the keeper.

The Nanites perceive him as a part of the ship, and have therefore directly connected him to the communication system of the *Icarus*. As a result, his sighing and breathing can be heard directly from the communications loudspeakers that are mounted all over the ship's walls. His thoroughly unbalanced state of mind no longer allows him to form coherent sentences. The Voice from the Wall sounds tormented and should if possible be presented by the keeper as high-pitched and screeching. Nothing can sound too disturbing for a human who has been fused halfway into a wall and left in full consciousness for 50 years, his head held immobile and staring at the same sight, unable to drink or eat, but nevertheless kept alive by the ship with all necessary nutrients.

The Esper's Son

An esper is needed to control the living ship; these are humans, generally considered to be lesser forms of life, whose genetic particularities enable them to control greater biomasses than just their own bodies. As the working results shown by the Esper of the *Icarus*, C-124, were so outstanding, the decision was made to also include his then seven-year old son on the expedition, so that a replacement for C-124 would be at hand if anything should go wrong. Due to his young age, the boy was submitted to a particularly detailed series of tests to guarantee his suitability as ship's Esper despite his youth, and he was not put into cryostasis like the rest of the substitute crew. The boy was almost alone in surviving the disaster – he was ignored by the Nanites due to his relationship with the Esper, but he was not left unchanged. In order to help him survive better on board, they inhibited his growth and changed his exterior appearance: his body became slimmer and slighter, his legs stronger and angled more closely to the body to allow him to move better in his preferred environment, the maintenance shafts. The hairless creature that he became has very little left in common with the terrified child of 50 years ago apart from a certain childishness and shyness. It is horrifically deformed, and moves in a half-hopping, half-crawling motion, although it is an extremely accomplished climber. It can

no longer speak, although it understands what is said to it in a basic way, and will shadow the characters once they enter Module 5. It will however be careful to remain in hiding, keeping to the maintenance shafts above and below the characters. Only the occasional scraping or scurrying sound will draw attention to it. If asked, the shipboard Computer will be able to inform the characters that, according to the internal scanners, "Object C-125" (the Son's official designation) is above or below them, but will refuse any further information: "Authorization insufficient."

The characters will not get a glimpse of the Esper's Son until they reach the Panorama Lounge. The gruesome alterations to its body will be fully visible as the Son is completely naked. This sight costs 0/1D4 SAN.

Care must be taken during the group's first encounter with C-125 to keep a combat situation from automatically developing. The characters need the goodwill of the Esper in order to destroy the *Icarus* and prevent the jump into Azathoth's hyperspatial reality.

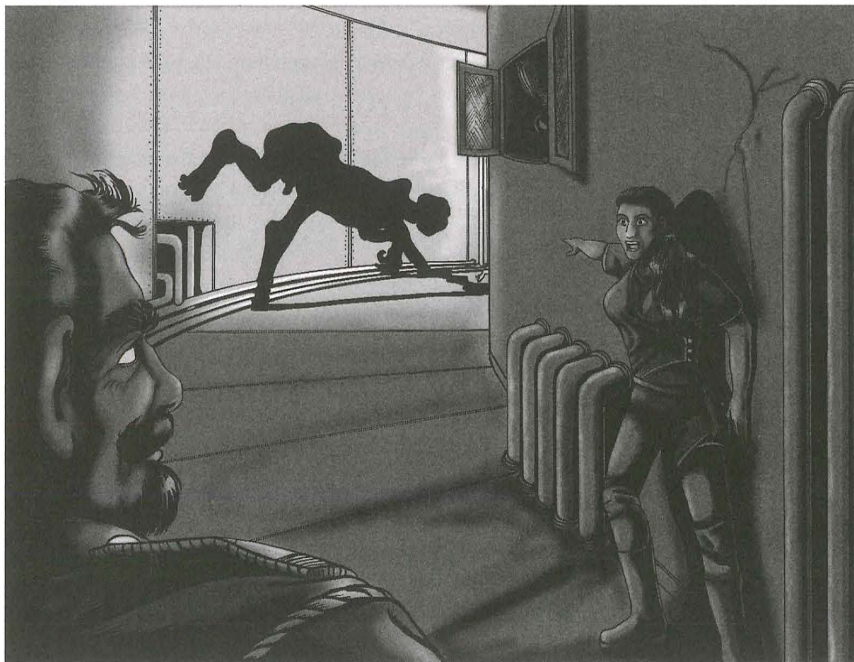
Describe the Esper's Son as having a horrific appearance, but one which also arouses compassion as it gazes at the characters with large, child-like eyes. Under no circumstances should its emergence provoke any acts of violence from the players' side.

Play Aboard the *Icarus*

This chapter contains descriptions of the individual modules and important areas within them. Details of specific events occurring in each area are also included. At the end of each module description there is a short, boxed summary of what the players should have discovered by the time they leave the module.

Traveling through the Ship

With the help of the Computer, the characters will soon discover that there is only one accessible route through the ship to the Bridge. For this reason, the following description of the ship is set out according to the route the characters must take. Taking a short cut outside the vessel or similar actions can more or less automatically be ruled out, as the characters have no reliable information (or any idea at all) of conditions outside the *Icarus*, the Computer will not supply them with any (citing "Authorization insufficient") and none of the characters have been trained in the necessary use of a space suit. Only those areas which are important for specific events or for the evocation of atmosphere are detailed in the following description of the various parts of the *Icarus*. These are listed in the order in which the characters will most likely visit them. Keepers are free to add further areas as they



see fit. Bear in mind that the characters do not possess authorization to enter every area, and many are alarm locked, as mentioned above.

In order to ascertain exactly what happened to the ship, the characters must search the modules and uncover the clues present there. If necessary, keepers can easily lead their players to these by use of intriguing hints and suggestive descriptions. Sometimes an invitingly open door can be all that is needed to lead players in the right direction.

Unless indicated otherwise in the following descriptions, no portholes, windows or any other kind of opening allowing a view outside are present. The characters aboard the *Icarus* are traveling blind and will only be able to catch occasional short glimpses of the exterior.

Module 3: Technical

This module contains all the systems vital to the functioning of the ship – and the replacement crew. Red alarm beacons are lit all over this module, casting a bloody, eerie glow over all areas and corridors.

Cryostatics Hall / First Aid Station (Internal area)

The Cryostatics Hall is situated on Level 2 of the Technical Module, and takes up almost all of the internal area together with the cryostatic equipment and First Aid Station. The coffin-like hibernation chambers are integrated into the walls – all 200 of them, rising in rows from deck to ceiling. This is enough to house not only the replacement crew of the *Icarus*, but also the complete crew of the *Daedalus*, who were to be shipped home deep in cryostatic hibernation. A robotic arm attached to the ceiling transfers the hibernation chambers into the reanimation modules situated in the center of the area. There are 10 of these. Yellow warning lights illuminate the reanimation process.

Each hibernation chamber possesses a transparent window placed above the occupant's face as well as a display at the foot and along one side that allows the life processes of the occupant to be monitored.

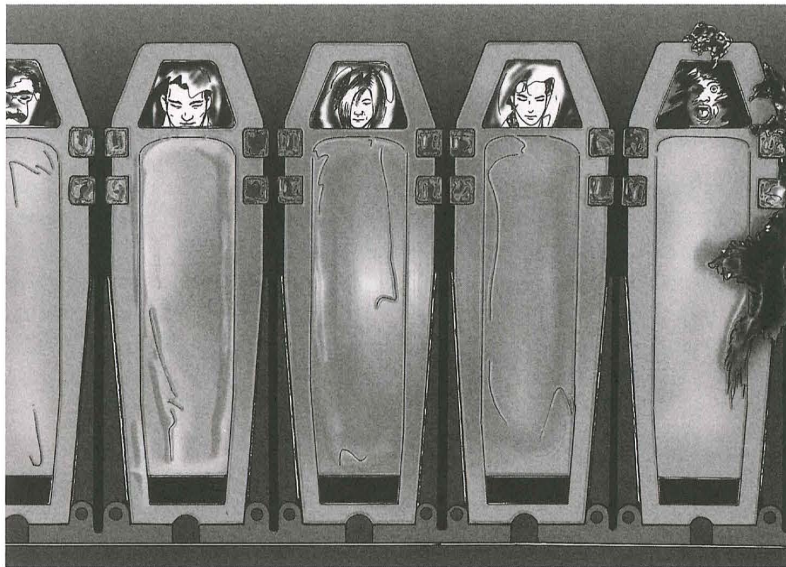
The only door in the Cryostatics Hall leads into the First Aid Station, and a large window allows sight between the two. A team consisting of a doctor and several medics should supervise all reanimations from the First Aid Station. Now, however, only various medical examination instruments and couches are to be seen here. Among the medications that can still be found here are hypodermic syringes containing a circulatory stabilizer, intended to be given to freshly reanimated subjects.

Both areas are walled with large octagonal beige tiles made of self-cleaning plastics and are brightly lit by ceiling lamps.

The adventure starts: after the vacuum seals hiss open and the blood-curdling scream is heard, silence prevails – all the characters can hear are their own hearts, beating loudly. The characters will soon realize that nobody is coming to help them out of the hibernation chambers, or to detach the many wires connecting their heat retardant suits with the chambers' support systems. The characters will eventually have to get out of the chambers themselves. It takes

a little while for their untrained and stiff muscles to start working properly again.

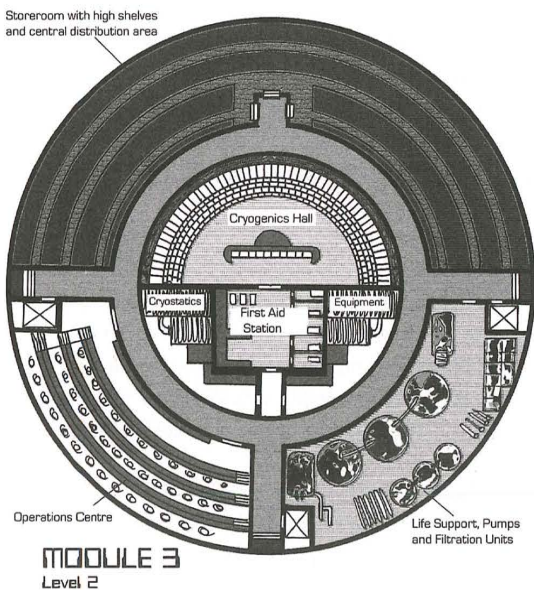
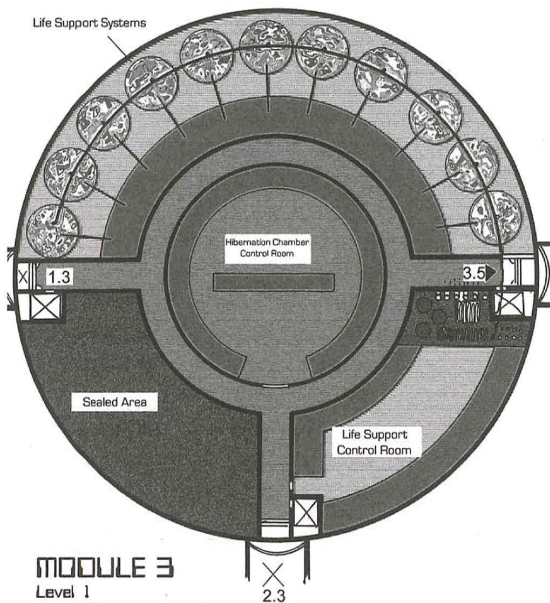
A total of seven chambers are present in the thawing modules. Only six of these have been opened: those belonging to the player characters and one belonging to an approximately 60-year-old man who is obviously suffering substantial problems recovering from the reanimation program. This man is Dr. Sergei Antonovitch (see box).



The seventh hibernation chamber is still occupied according to the display, which says the occupant is one "Elisabeth Lasalle, Phaidon, Bio-Reg. No.: 4-6950327-43". The window in the cover is covered with some kind of black matter, preventing any view of the interior. The medical data on the display are unusual, as the heart-beat varies wildly between too fast and too slow, while the brain activity does not follow any clear pattern. The oxygen content in the blood is unusually high.

The characters have no way of knowing that this chamber was damaged during the collision and is no longer 100% sealed. The Nanites were able to penetrate it and have altered the human occupant over the years, not caring whether this raw material was deep-frozen or body temperature. However, when Elisabeth Lasalle was reanimated along with the other characters a few minutes ago and regained consciousness, she realized what had happened to her and let cry the blood-curdling scream the characters just heard. Her reawakening metabolism spurred the Nanites on to further work, turning the woman's body into a steadily changing, expanding mass.

Opening the chamber is not easy (roll on the Resistance Table against STR 15; no more than two characters can combine their efforts). Brute force will eventually succeed in raising the cover – and in ripping apart those parts of Lasalle which the Nanites have fused with it. Her would-be rescuers will be greeted by the gruesome sight of a swollen lump of flesh, blood, heat-repellent fibers and water-filled buboes from which the remains of what were once human limbs thrust at unnatural angles. The head is partially fused with the shoulder, and only one eye is still visible – and as the characters stand watching, a scrap of raw meat slowly creeps over this, as though drawn by an invisible hand. Wires, designed to connect



a human with the life-support systems of the hibernation chamber, protrude from the cancerous mass. The artificial respirator tube could not be removed in time from the tumorous heap of flesh, and the automatic retraction motor, now working at full power, struggles in vain to withdraw the respirator – dragging parts of what was once Elisabeth Lasalle’s jaw and mouth with it. Again and again, momentary flashes of silvery discolorations can be seen gliding over the surface of the roiling, bubbling mass of flesh. From the gaping hole that may once have been a mouth, a hoarse rattle is heard. All witnesses lose 1/1D6 SAN.

Putting the poor woman out of her suffering will also be difficult: every gaping, normally fatal wound the characters manage to inflict will be immediately repaired by the Nanites. Even cutting off the oxygen tube will be useless, as the Nanites will start to supply the suffocating woman with replacement oxygen within moments.

The Scientist

Dr. Sergei Antonovitch is one of the most brilliant minds of his time, even if he is actually too old for space travel. With PhDs in both Physics and Astronavigation, he was one of the project leaders of the *Daedalus* and *Icarus* Projects and was included in the mission on his own request.

After the *Daedalus* disaster, Dr. Antonovitch coincidentally gained access to some special databanks from the year 2219 which contained the entire collection of the Pan-Eurasian General Library. In this he discovered books that taught him things about the universe that he hoped never to experience. While still far from being a great expert on the Cthulhu Mythos, he learned something of the presence of Azathoth in the center of the universe. Although not yet fully convinced of the accuracy of this information, he was nevertheless intelligent enough not to completely reject the idea out of hand, and decided to join the crew of the *Icarus* in order to either finally confirm or disprove his fears. But Dr. Antonovitch found himself unwillingly placed in the backup crew when a scion of the House of Nakamura pushed his way on to the primary crew list at the last minute. The agreement Dr. Antonovitch made to have himself removed from hibernation directly after the dimensional jump quickly came to naught once the ship reached its destination – not surprisingly, considering the circumstances.

As Dr. Antonovitch is terrified of what may be about to happen, and is furthermore not inclined to trust the characters too much, he doesn’t want the characters to know too much about him and therefore supplies them with largely false information:

- His name is Sergei Antonovitch, House of Nakamura, Bio-registration number: 9-5713544-84.
- He is a professor of Biology and wanted to carry out a series of experiments for cancer cell analysis using rats here.
- He is not feeling too well. His body is reacting against the reanimation. Why isn’t there anybody from Medical Personnel here? No, he has no idea what has happened.

While a successful Psychology roll can determine that Dr. Antonovitch is under extreme stress, it is however impossible to determine whether this is due to the reanimation process or some other reason. Dr. Antonovitch has not coped particularly well with the thawing process, he is very weak and feels a bit dizzy. Although not absolutely vital for the course of events, the scenario assumes that the doctor gives the characters the slip and disappears. As soon as they start exploring the ship, he takes the chance to slip away during an unobserved moment. His intention is to get to the Bridge as quickly as possible, but on the way he encounters the entities from the Fragment of Azathoth in Connecting Concourse 4.5, recognizes them for what they are, and only makes it as far as the Hangar Deck before his reason finally collapses.

Upon leaving the First Aid Station, the characters will be asked by the shipboard Computer to report to the Operations Center to receive their orders. The door leading from the First Aid Station to the corridor is locked, requiring a successful Electronics roll to open.

Passageway

This is lit by the dim glow of the emergency lighting, often accompanied by flashing red alarm lights. The bulkhead to Module 5 is active, those to Modules 1 and 2 are inactive, with warning lamps blinking: "Vacuum – Emergency Isolation". These seals cannot be opened, but the warnings should be enough to discourage the characters from trying.

Operations Center (External Area)

This is a large area with seating for over 40 people, arranged facing a podium. The entire wall behind this is taken up by a large viewing screen with a control panel. As the group will not meet anybody else here, they must find any information themselves. They may choose to start with the screen itself, which bears the text "Operational order – emergency activation of replacement crew". Activating this will supply further information on the reason for this: the approach of an unknown vessel. Members of the Command Staff must report to the Officers' Mess in Module 1 immediately.

The screen also offers a good chance to get the computer to display a plan of the ship, gaining an approximate overview. Detailed plans will be denied the characters: "Authorization insufficient".

Backup Crew Equipment Store (External Area)

This is a large room on Level 2, filled with meter-wide shelves stacked full of gear. The tops are lost in darkness.

Automatic robotic arms move along the shelves and bring the requested items to a delivery point surrounded by a cage. Entering the actual storage hall is therefore impossible. The delivery point is only open above.

With the correct authorization, requests for equipment can be ordered from a terminal. But one look at the storeroom shows that everything is not in order here. Several crates of equipment have fallen from the shelves and one of the robotic arms has come off its rail and blocked a whole shelf.

The characters can equip themselves to a certain extent from this store: as it is extremely cold in the heat-retardant suits they are extremely likely to want to get themselves some clothes (only stan-

dard issue uniforms are available). They can also get flashlights, light tools and mobile Multi-Function Scanners (MFSs). These are small, portable sensor systems with basic functions such as radiometer, life-form indicator, material analysis etc. Weapons are unavailable here – there are in fact none aboard the ship. A portable welding torch, hammer or hefty steel pipe are probably the heaviest armaments available.

Life Support (External Area)

This hall takes up no less than half the surface area of the upper level. Gigantic pipes, pumps, filtration systems and tanks fill the hall. Metal lattice gangways criss-cross above air-conditioning systems and over cables. The walkways between individual technical blocks are so narrow as to be almost inaccessible.

A display on the control unit shows that the life support system is running on minimum: all systems are working on 15% of capacity strength, as all extra energy is needed for the jump, and there are only a few passengers on the ship anyway.

Cryostatics Control Room (Internal Area)

Directly beneath the cooling mechanism on Level 1, this room is used to control and maintain the hibernation chambers. Several screens and terminals dominate the area.

The characters can use this equipment to make sure that they were the last people left in the hibernation chambers. Checking the records of the chamber will make this clear.

Connecting Concourse 3.5

On the other side of the easily-opened bulkhead lies an 80 meter long, four meter high and four meter long passageway, whose walls narrow as they rise and which curves its way onwards towards the next module of the ship. Again, the dominant impression here is that of cold steel plating. At regular intervals, viewing windows are placed in the walls – however, apart from a few exceptions, these are all covered with metallic outer covers.

The viewing windows can be opened by instructing the computer: a strange blue mist, which hardly moves at all, surrounds the ship on all sides. No stars are visible through this – the characters cannot begin to guess where they might be.

Summary of Events, Module 3

By the time the characters leave Module 3, the following events should have occurred:

- Dr. Sergei Antonovitch has absconded.
- The characters have had their first encounter(s) with the Fragments of Azathoth.
- They have discovered that they are the sole survivors of the back-up crew, and that no trace of either this or the primary crew can be found.
- They are aware that the *Icarus* is heavily damaged and that the shipboard Computer is only capable of limited functions.
- They know that there are dangerous organisms of some kind on board. They may also possibly have already found out that these are the ship's nanites.
- The characters have received their mobilization orders together with the information that a ship is approaching the *Icarus* and that they are to report to Module 1.

Module 5: Drive

Both the drive systems are to be found beside the main reactors in this module. One is a STL (Slower Than Light) drive, while the second is the considerably larger jump generator. Although the module is only lightly damaged, it is illuminated in a dim twilight in order to save energy. Sensor-activated lighting units also illuminate the small area in which the characters are situated. As the drive systems were the subject of constant maintenance and overhaul, this module to a large extent lacks the wall and deck covering found elsewhere. There is no general alarm status in this module, but isolated warning lamps continue to blink.

As soon as the characters enter the module, Object C-125, the Esper's Son, will become aware of them and begin to stalk them. The characters may notice this now and then by small, furtive sounds emanating from the maintenance shafts around them. Characters brave enough to lift the hatches and enter into the maintenance shaft system may catch a glimpse of a scurrying shape, but following it will be impossible – the Esper's Son is much too agile and knows these shafts far too well to let the characters catch up with it. Calling, making noises or striking against the walls from behind which the sounds come gets no reaction.

Walkway

A few individual working ramps and maintenance robots stand around the corridor. In a few places, cables hang from the ceiling. The bulkhead connecting with Connecting Concourse 2.5 is closed.

Reactor Room I Primary Pile (Internal Area)

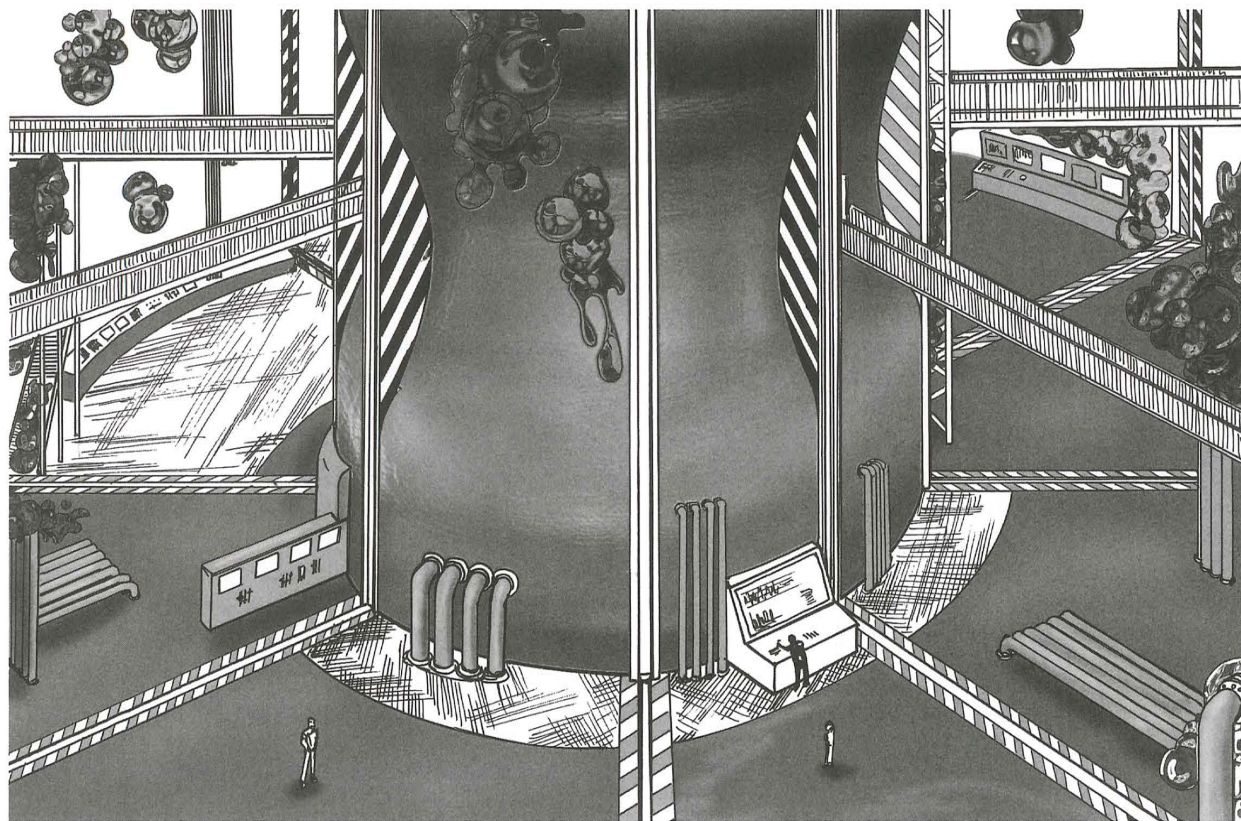
Reactor Room I covers the entire internal area of both levels. It can be entered from both Level 1 and Level 2. Thick bulkheads painted with black and yellow stripes and the warning text "REACTOR ROOM

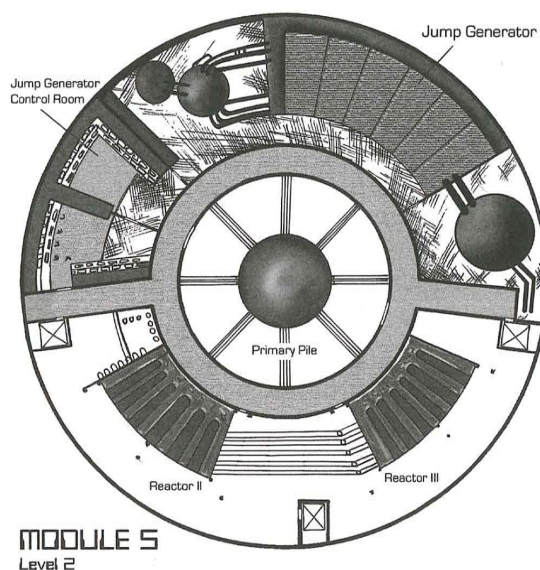
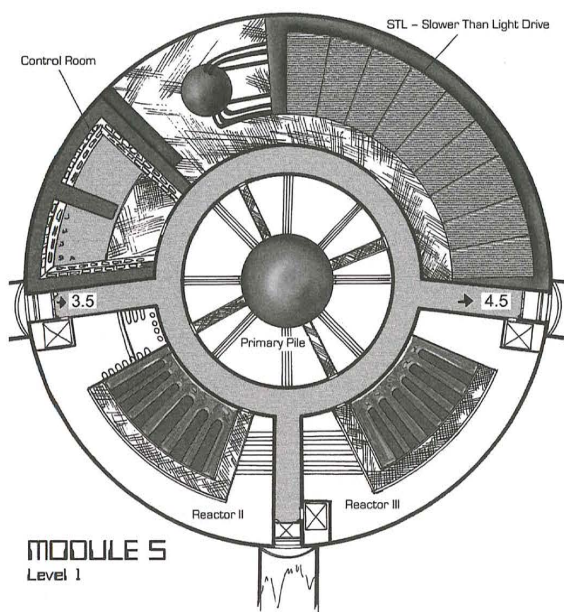
1 PRIMARY PILE DANGER ZONE" give egress. Stairs and elevators connect the levels within the enormous hall. In the center of the Reactor Room, the enormous reactor pile reaches up towards the ceiling – this contains the fusion blocks and is the heart of the drive of the *Icarus*. Around it, close to a hundred of the things spawned from the Fragment of Azathoth slowly circulate. Maintenance equipment and observation monitors are spread over the walls of both levels.

The deck of the hall has a special character: wide, flat bracings run from the wall of the fusion block like the spokes of a wheel to meet at the hub. These divide the steel deck into eight segments. Each eighth is divided by a thin line, on which the words "VENT BULKHEAD" are written on both sides, together with a number between I and VIII.

If the players do not realize this themselves, a halved Know roll or a roll against Craft (Drive Systems) will allow them to realize that this is an emergency system allowing the entire Reactor Room to be exposed to the vacuum of space by opening the vent bulkheads in the event of a cooling system failure or radiation leak. In this case the steel bracings would be able to bear the weight of the fusion blocks alone. In the case of a core meltdown, the fusion blocks can also be blasted free from their mountings and the ship saved from destruction. This was exactly what was attempted aboard the *Daedalus* – but a mistake made during the release explosion caused the entire drive module to break away, with disastrous consequences for the *Icarus*.

It is important that the characters discover this emergency system and understand how it functions. Even if at this point in time they cannot in their wildest dreams imagine opening the vent bulkheads, this is in fact the only way to make Connecting Concourse 4.5 passable (see below). In order to open the vent bulkheads it will





be necessary to either cause a radiation leakage in the fusion blocks by means of a successful Craft (Drive Systems) roll (a failure here may have catastrophic results) or – probably a safer method – simulate one by use of a successful Computer Use. Either approach will enable the bulkhead opening sequence in the Drive Computer. All that is then needed to open the bulkhead is verbal activation by an officer of the rank of second lieutenant or higher. After the procedure is enacted, there will be a ten-second warning before the vacuum of space rips the atmosphere out of the Reactor Room.

Checking the monitor screens will reveal that the Reactor is running on full energy. 4% of its output supplies Life Support, 8% goes to the Computer, 6% into Pump Output and 82% into “Shipboard Systems”. The Computer will not reveal exactly what is meant by “Shipboard Systems”: “Authorization insufficient”.

Reactor Room II (External Area)

The room housing the ship’s backup reactor lies in total darkness. Reactor Room II also extends through both Levels, but is otherwise more modestly dimensioned. It takes up a good quarter of the external area, and has no emergency vent system. The fusion blocks are noticeably smaller than those belonging to the Primary Pile, but otherwise this reactor room resembles its larger counterpart. Many parts of the Fragment of Azathoth can also be found swarming here.

Characters investigating the Reactor Room will notice that the Reactor is currently running on just under 53% of efficiency, with all of this energy going to the “Shipboard Systems”. A Know roll will reveal that this is very unusual. A backup reactor normally ticks over at less than 5% in order to save energy, but still be capable of achieving full power at a moment’s notice.

Jump Generator (External Area)

The door on Level Two does not lead directly into the Jump Generator Room, but rather into a small anteroom that contains four cubicles and four tubular force field cells. Four pairs of protective overalls hang in these. A round bulkhead of transparent high-safety plastic leads into a pressure lock, with a second bulkhead made of the same material. A disinfection device can be seen in the ceiling of the pres-

sure lock. The room beyond is completely bathed in a sterile white light. The first thing that greets the eye are two blocks of equipment – each one consisting of a series of innumerable rotating discs, cubes and other geometrical figures, forming a moving play of intermingling shapes, but which still seem to fit perfectly into one another and form something not entirely unlike a machine. Light blue electrical sparks crackle and run over the individual components of each block, which connect to each other via a permanent electrical arc. The impression of complicated technology prevails here, reinforced by the dozens of screens lining the walls, over which a constant stream of irrelevant data runs.

This is the part of the Drive that makes it possible to fold space in front of the *Icarus* and produce the dimensional rift through which the ship passes. Having reached its destination, the Jump Generator then opens another rift through which the ship passes, re-entering normal space again.

The characters are only able to enter this area at all because of a fault in the door’s locking mechanism. However, they will not be able to proceed any further: in order to enter the absolutely sterile, germfree room they must be wearing protective overalls and be authorized by the shipboard Computer. So if the characters should short-circuit the force field tubes by use of Electronics, for example, they will fail when they get to the retina scan needed to get through the pressure lock. Whether or not they let the scanner mounted beside the pressure lock read their retinas, the result will be a “Level 1 Security Alarm”, which the computer will react to by “dispatching a security team”.

This room will remain by and large a puzzle. Although the characters will know from the sign on the door that this is the Jump Generator, they will be unable to coax any further information out of the shipboard Computer as they do not have the sufficient authorization. And even if the player characters could understand it, the complex workings of the Jump Generator are of course beyond the understanding of either players or keepers, making this mystery one which is best left unexplained.

Incidentally, none of the characters have ever heard of a Jump Drive before – it must therefore be a new or experimental drive.

Reactor Room III (External Area)

This is another reactor – the room is exactly the same as the Backup Reactor. This reactor is running on almost 95% power, but the screens report that the energy is not being fed into the ship's network, but instead into two gigantic battery blocks. Any more than this cannot be discovered. Once again the characters will meet with a blank "authorization insufficient".

In order to produce a feasible rift, the Jump Generator needs to discharge enormous amounts of energy within the space of a few seconds. So before a jump, these two blocks are always fully loaded, so that they can supply their power in a flash when needed.

Normal STL Drive (External Area)

This room on level 1 can be identified by anybody with moderate technical skills as the center of the Slower-Than-Light Drive. It looks like the typical image of a spaceship's engine room, with monitors, engine blocks, lines and cables.

The STL Drive is obviously intact, but the characters cannot access it. The shipboard Computer has taken over control of the STL Drive in order to position the ship correctly for the jump.

Launch records, which can easily be found in the main terminal, indicate that the STL Drive has been used on a number of occasions over the last 50 years to stabilize the position of the *Icarus*. However, the last real work was carried out exactly 438,288 hours ago when the *Icarus* was moved to the position of the current jump window and accelerated to the necessary speed (just under the speed of light) for the Jump Generator to become active.

Control Room (External Area)

This is the room on Level 1 from which all of the module's technical mechanisms are supervised. Several monitors, instrument panels and terminals can be found here. Hanging from the middle of the room, directly over the terminals, but safely out of the way, is a meter-long faithful scale model of a spaceship from a well-known holovision sci-fi series. Two coffee cups lie broken on the deck.

The shelves belonging to the security teams, which usually contain emergency gear, oxygen tanks and first-aid equipment, are empty.

The characters can obtain more-or-less the same information here that they found in the other rooms. If the correct program can be found through a successful roll against Computer Use, the emergency venting of Reactor Room I can also be activated from here – at considerably less physical risk to the characters. The creation of an "emergency", whether genuine or not, must however be carried out at the Primary Pile.

Connecting Concourse 4.5

In front of the bulkhead leading to Connecting Concourse 4.5, the silhouette of a prone human is etched into the deck. This figure is best described as grossly malformed, and in fact only vaguely human: there is only a large smear where the legs should be, and the left hand seems somehow "stretched out".

This is where a crew member infested with nanites finally broke down, just after his legs were liquefied by the dissolution process. The silhouette was left behind as the person in question was a technician. Persons of this occupation usually have thousands of radiation-absorbing microspheres implanted beneath their skins. When the Nanites dismantle a technician these microspheres react with the Nanites' metabolic production. This reaction gives rise to the slightly corrosive substance that forms the silhouette.

The concourse behind the bulkhead is constructed exactly like Connecting Concourse 3.5. Much more striking however is the fact that the entire concourse – at least as far as the curvature of the passageway allows visibility – is filled with thousands of the floating blisters from the Fragment of Azathoth. The things slowly blink on and off, plunging the concourse into a flickering darkness. The ringing sound emitted by thousands of these creatures at once combines in a shrill cacophony, and the concourse looks bizarrely like an underwater area ringed off by naval mines. Each character loses 1/1D6+1 SAN.

The characters will quickly realize that this area is all but impassable – the blister things are in constant motion, their huge number makes the intensity of radiation dangerously high (as the MFS betrays by its panicked bleeping), and any physical contact with the blisters is extremely painful. Too painful to allow a passage to be forced, quite apart from the fact that anybody succeeding in this would be radioactively contaminated to a life-threatening degree by the time they reached the other end.

However, the shipboard Computer can reveal, if asked, that Dr. Antonovitch is currently in Module 4's Hangar Deck – but how he managed to get through remains a mystery.

The solution to passing is as follows: the bulkheads leading to both Connecting Concourse 4.5 and the nearest entrance bulkhead to Reactor Area I must be opened and then blocked. This can be done using steel girders, welded to the bulkheads, for example. Suitable material is available in both the Reactor Rooms and the Equipment Store. An "emergency" can then be created in the Primary Pile, leading to the venting of the Reactor Room. As the bulkhead is jammed open, the vacuum created will suck out not only the atmosphere from the Reactor Room, but also from the surrounding circular corridor and Connecting Concourse, including the blister things. The

Summary of Events, Module 5

After clearing out the blister things from the Connecting Concourse, the characters will be ready to leave the Module. By this point they should have gained the following information and reached the following conclusions:

- They are being followed by a creature that seems to live in the maintenance shafts surrounding them. The Computer calls this "Object C-125" – it must therefore once have been a member of the primary crew.
- The *Icarus* is fitted with a so-called "Jump Generator", which may lead to speculation over the present whereabouts of the ship.

keeper should patiently let the players sweat over this problem, and only grant an Idea roll if absolutely necessary.

The best place for the characters to wait is in the Control Room. They are as safe here as they are in any other room sealed before the decrease of pressure, but they can also close the venting bulkhead from this room too. One minute later, normal atmosphere is restored in all areas. At this point the advantage in a simulation of an emergency becomes apparent. If the characters have caused a real radiation leakage in the reactor piles, they will only have four minutes after the sealing of the bulkhead until a critical radiation threshold is reached. This gives them effectively only three minutes to unlock the bulkhead to Connecting Concourse 4.5 and be upon their way.

No matter how well or badly the group deals with this problem, the Esper's Son will not be affected by the sudden decrease of pressure – in an unobserved moment it slips through the bulkhead into the connecting concourse, and vanishes again into the maintenance shafts.

Module 4: Ship's Module

This module contains all mechanisms necessary for the activities of the ship which are not parts of the drive or life support systems. In addition to the Hangar Deck and the Sensor Banks, the most important of these are the Nanite factory and the tanks in which the replacement biomaterial is bred.

The moment the characters enter the module, the shipboard Computer will announce that a short ignition of the STL Drive is about to take place to "correct course". This should occur at the most inconvenient moment possible: as the inertia absorption fields which would normally compensate for such abrupt movements are out of commission, a powerful shudder will jerk the characters' legs from under them, possibly injuring them depending on the exact circumstances. Loose or loosely-fastened objects will be thrown across the room or passage – a swarm of nanites could even be hurled through the air as a silvery cloud.

At some point, after the characters have left the Hangar Deck, the Computer will start counting down for the Jump: "Warning: Jump

Sequence initiated. Ship jumps in T minus 60 minutes." From this point, the group has exactly one hour to solve the mystery and escape into (supposed) safety.

Corridors

These are as described before. The bulkhead to Connecting Concourse 1.4 is sealed. In front of the rooms belonging to the Control Center the characters will once again be able to make out the silhouette of a human being lying prone upon the deck.

Sensor Banks (External Area)

This room lies on Level 2 and is locked and alarmed.

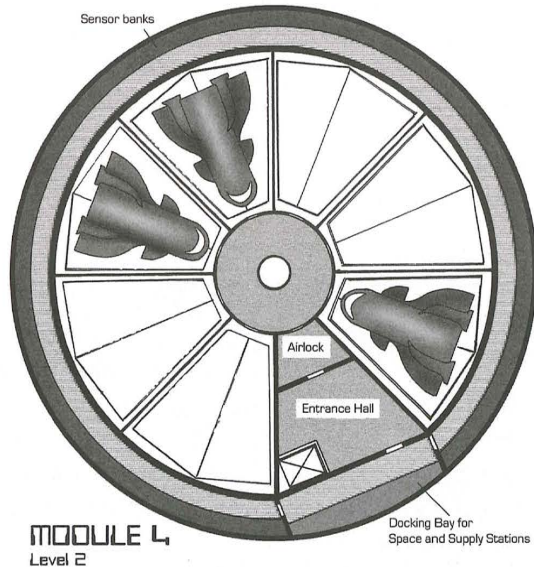
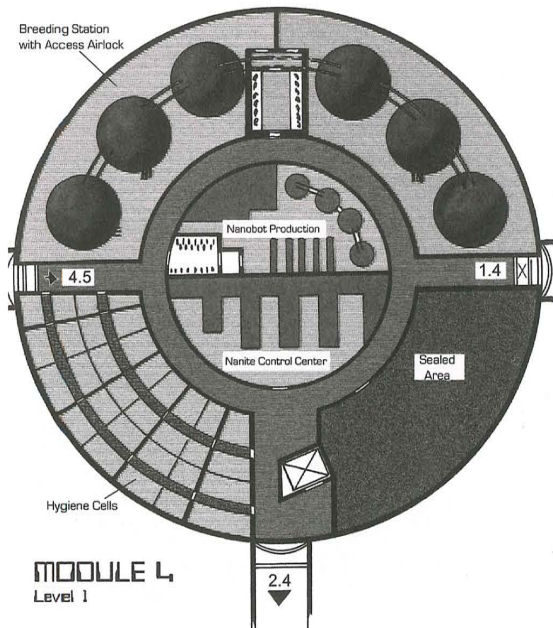
Entrance Hall (External Area)

This room is situated on Level 2 and represents the interface between the spaceship and the outside world: the external wall contains two large bulkheads designated A and B. Both bulkheads are fitted with pressure locks and can only be opened if the ship is attached to a suitable docking terminal.

Hangar Deck (External Area)

A large hall on Level 2 with docking stations for seven shuttles, each capable of carrying 10 crew members. Only four of these stations are occupied. A confusion of technology dominates the scene, which looks more like a huge repair shop than a landing area for small space ships. The interior walls bear the message: "WARNING: VARIABLE GRAVITY ZONE", while the external wall is made up of one enormous bulkhead. Directly in front of this, force-field cells can be made out set into the deck – these prevent a disastrous pressure venting in the hangar when the bulkhead is opened. The Hangar is crammed full with shuttles, work platforms, tanking devices and various maintenance robots. This makes it impossible to survey the entirety of the area at once – it must be gradually explored. Snatches of an incomprehensible sing-song can occasionally be heard.

Three of the shuttles are out of commission, but the fourth one is activated and ready for launch, as the status reports on its docking terminal indicate. The terminal by one of the empty docking



stations flashes: "Shuttle 08 requests landing permission. Initiating docking maneuver." This is a reference to the shuttle which was ordered to return to the *Icarus* 50 years ago, but which never made it due to the disaster on board the mother ship.

The group will certainly be interested in finding the source of the singing, and will be met by the following sight when they trace it to the other side of the Hangar Deck: Dr. Sergei Antonovitch, still dressed in his silver-gray thermal suit, sits hunched against the wall, staring straight ahead.

His aspect is horrifying – his clothing hangs in tatters, the skin beneath scattered with burns and blisters, his face little more than a knot of burned flesh. To all appearances, he simply forced his way through the blister-thing filled connecting concourse and has become thoroughly contaminated by the radiation they emit (a quick scan with the MFS confirms this from the high radiation level of the doctor). In a mixture of his own vomit, excrement and blood, he has written something on the wall: "What was so terribly torn asunder must put itself together again". By this he obviously means the Presence on board the ship, which he now recognizes as a part of Azathoth, meaning that this Presence has no greater desire than to become reunited with the Idiot God. This perfectly correct realization has cost him his sanity.

Stammering and shrieking, he will repeat the following litany over and over again:

"What was torn asunder, so terribly torn, must reunite itself. The shuttle wasn't empty! No! No! No! It's coming! No! It's already here! You must destroy everything... the whole damn ship... listen... me... you... it... us... everything... The ship, do you feel it breathing? ... it must put itself back together again. Listen! So terribly torn."

A little tip on building atmosphere: whisper the first part of the mad doctor's babbling, with suitable pauses to allow the mood music

free room to play, then suddenly scream wildly at the players. It's a cheap trick – but it works.

Sergei Antonovitch's sanity has been completely broken, and the characters will not be able to force anything further from him. He will not allow himself to be forced to accompany the characters and will refuse to set one foot in front of the other. If they attempt this, he will scream and strike wildly around himself so that the characters will most likely eventually leave him alone.

If the characters should decide to let the last shuttle land within the ship (requiring a successful roll against Computer Use), they will find within ten men in orange salvage suits, frozen stiff by the chill of space. Removing their helmets will cause their hair and perhaps one or both ears to snap off, as these have been frozen to the inside of the helmets by the many years of cold (0/1D3 SAN). One of the men has a small portable data unit, which allows data to be transferred to the mothership. The display reads "Transmission Debriefing Terminated". However, the battery is now too weak to be able to show this file. The characters should be able to upload the data to one of the terminals aboard the *Icarus* (see *Icarus* Handout 6), and the keeper can prompt them in this direction with an Idea roll if necessary.

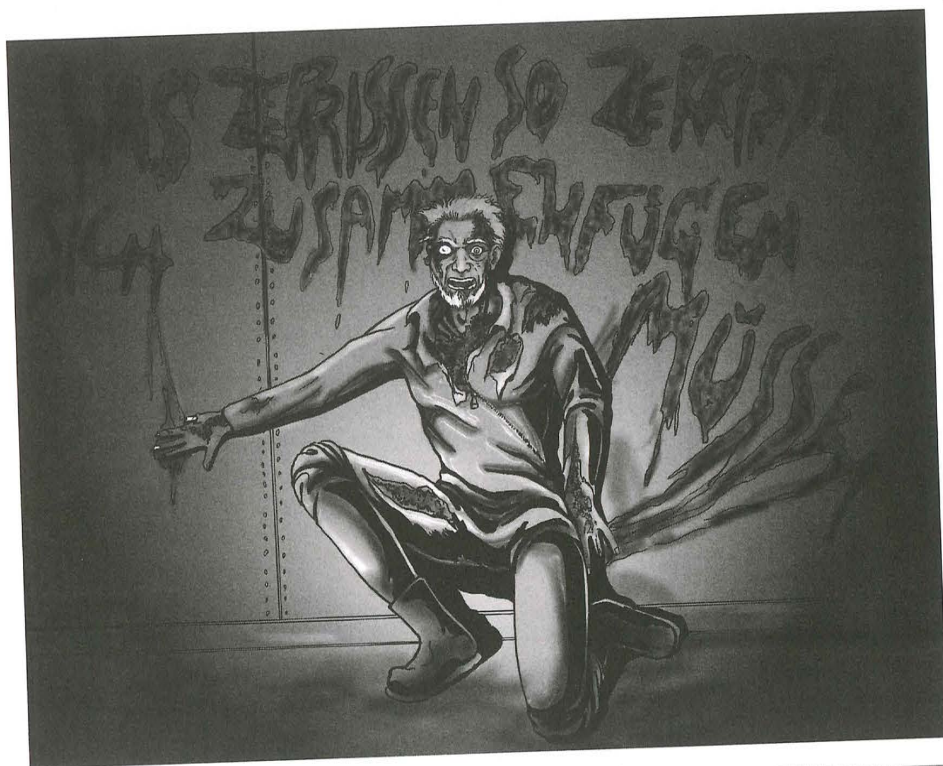
Control Center (Internal Area)

This room on Level 1 controls the deployment of the ship's nanites. It houses several computers that supervise the movements of the Nanites in the outer hull and within the ship. There is nothing here for the characters to learn: "Authorization insufficient".

Nanobot Production (Internal Area)

The door of this room on Level 1 bears a yellow warning sign: "Danger! Contamination". Behind a security lock lies the ship's nanite production area, where old nanites are recycled and new ones constructed. Enormous amounts of high-tech equipment, apparently used to manufacture something, line the walls of this room. These walls are coated with a special light blue magnetic material so that any escaped nanites can easily be returned into the system instead of finding their way any further into the ship. The finished nanites are then pumped to the outer hull via thick hoses. A wall-mounted cupboard marked "Emergency Kit" contains pressurized air syringes marked "Nan-Ex". Nothing else can be learned here, and the computer will refer to the characters' "Insufficient authorization" if asked, while also repeatedly warning them that they are in a restricted area.

The syringes contain a substance that disables nanites for approximately 30 minutes, preventing any activity on their



Summary of Events, Module 4

The following should have occurred by the time the characters leave the Module:

- Dr. Sergei Antonovitch has been found again, and has communicated his cryptic information to the characters: something on board the ship has been “torn asunder”, and desires only to make itself whole again. The characters must destroy the ship before this is allowed to happen.
- The salvage report of the crew of Shuttle 08 is discovered and read: the ship that the rescue crew were interrupted in the middle of exploring, is known as the *Daedalus*, and appears to have been completely devastated. An unknown disaster occurred on board – it seems as though the crew turned on one another.

part. This time interval is sufficient, under normal circumstances, for the medical officers in the Sickbay to remove the Nanites. The “antidote” has a side effect, however: brief but powerful, recurring stomach spasms.

Breeding Station (External Area)

This room on Level 1 is entered through a long corridor. An air lock must first be entered, which is kept sterile by ultra-violet light. After this lies an antechamber in which half a dozen pairs of protective overalls hang within switched off cylindrical force-fields. After passing through a second air lock made from transparent high-stress plastics, in which several disinfection devices can be seen, the actual breeding station can be entered.

All terminals in here are switched off, and the air is maddeningly hot and sticky. Only the controls for the heating (at present 45° Celsius) and humidity (95% air humidity) are intact and functioning. The second airlock can only be passed by personnel wearing the overalls – characters wishing to enter the Breeding Station must therefore change clothes. Only slow movements are possible in the overalls, and even small movements can be challenging for those unused to the suits. As soon as they have been sterilized and have passed the second airlock they may enter the Breeding Station: a long area in which 12 gigantic meter-thick glass columns are situ-

ated. However, seven of these cylinders were apparently ruptured during the collision, and have spilled their contents into the rest of the room. Covering the deck, walls and ceiling is a billowing, pulsating whitish mass, which extrudes slimy filaments, withdrawing and dissolving them to form obscure bulges and fissures again and again. An MFS scan reveals that this entire twitching mass is part of one gigantic life form. Witnessing this costs 0/1D4 SAN.

If the characters dare enter the slime, it oozes out from beneath their feet like phlegm. The mass of DNA will immediately begin to slowly push its way up the characters’ suits. Now would be a good time for the *Icarus* to ignite its STL engines: a powerful shudder runs through the ship, and some of the characters may lose their balance. The breeding mass may look revolting, but it is actually completely harmless.

Hygiene Cells (External Area)

Each module contains a hygiene unit with showers and toilets. The hygiene cells in Module 4 are particularly worth mentioning because the entire floor is covered with an unnatural, somewhat sweetish stinking slime – a scan with the MFS indicates that this is no longer alive, however. Air humidity here is at exactly the same level as in the Breeding Room, but the temperature lies well over 80° C. A broken ventilation shaft can be seen in the center of the ceiling.

This room was occasionally used as a second DNA breeding area. Material was brought into the room via the broken ventilation shafts. However, the project failed as too many germs and bacteria were present in the biomass. In order to kill the useless material and the germs, the computer briefly increased the interior temperature of the area to 100° C but since then only managed to partially restrict it, due to incorrect subroutines.

Connecting Concourse 2.4

Apart from being briefer and not curved, this concourse does not differ greatly from those already passed by the group. A bluer, more diffuse mist is visible out of the viewing ports, with the blackness of deep space being visible through it now and again. For the first time, the characters begin to imagine that they can just hear the arrhythmic beating of drums and the shrill whining of flutes.



Module 2: Crew

This module is dominated by light blue-gray wall panels. The deck no longer consists of metal, but of self-cleaning artificial elements. This module was however badly damaged during the collision, so that both rampant growths of biomass and alarm-locked doors and force-fields are frequent here. The entire module is illuminated by weak blue emergency lighting.

The characters will find the first answers to their questions here, and encounter further witnesses as well as Object C-125. When the characters reach the Panorama Lounge, the Computer will inform them that a shuttle has left the *Icarus*, and has set course for the *Daedalus*. If asked, the Computer can confirm that Dr. Antonovitch is on board the shuttle.

Passageways

The bulkheads to Connecting Concourses 2.5 and 2.3 are locked. Otherwise everything is as described above.

Cabins (Interior and Exterior Areas)

Level 2 contains a total of 45 of these rooms, both single and double cabins. They are not very large and all resemble one another, with bunks, tables and magnetic lockers.

The cabins contain working clothes and a few personal items such as pictures, private holographs, and keepsakes from home, back on Earth. In some of the cabins, the discolored silhouettes of prone humans can be made out.

Hygiene Cells (External Area)

These are the same as otherwise, although designed for more people. Warm mist hangs over the bath. One of the showers has been left running for 50 years.

Mess (Internal Area)

A large hall on Level 2 with enough tables and chairs for approximately 70 people. The chairs have been thrown into wild disarray, but the tables are bolted to the deck. Two dozen automatic meal dispensers hand upon a wall. Cutlery is scattered throughout the

entire room. A red alarm light throws its flickering warning over the scene.

The automatic dispensers offer 168 different choices of ready-to-eat meals, which warm up within seconds of light pressure being applied to the covers. No more can be learned here.

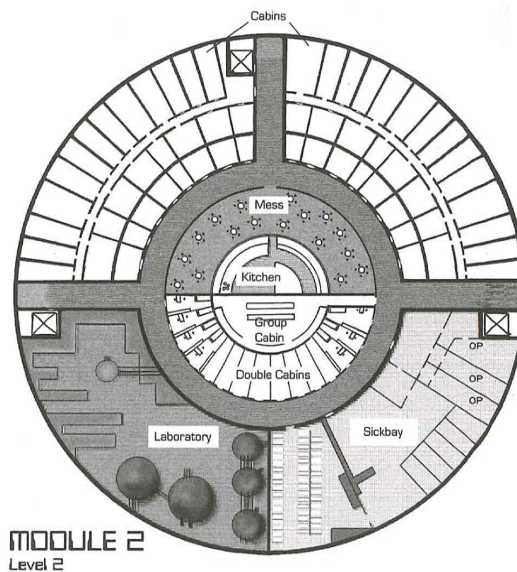
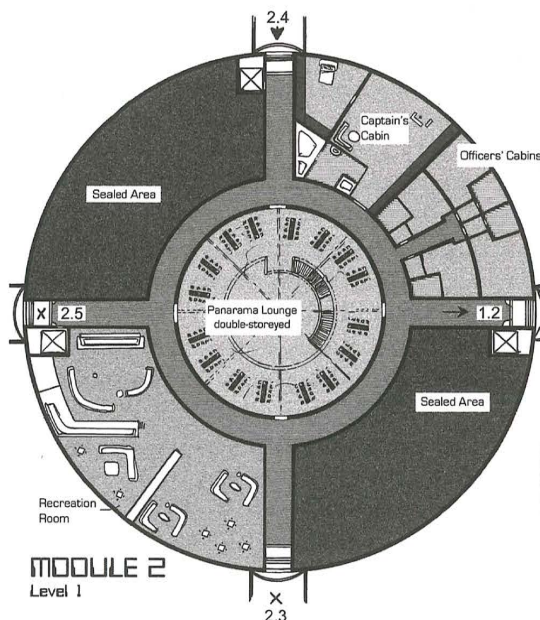
Sickbay (External Area)

The Sickbay is situated on Level 1. This area is constructed completely of high-grade steel and contains innumerable cabinets, machines and displays on the walls, with technology everywhere. Hospital beds stand within quarantine force-fields. An operating table stands in the center of the room. Used surgical instruments lie about, an overturned trolley beside the table has its contents – scalpels, syringes etc. – scattered over the deck. A medical cryostatic chamber is active and holds a patient. Surveillance cameras are installed at several points. According to the sign on it, a door leads into the “Laboratory”.

The patient within the hibernation chamber is the crew member from the *Daedalus* that the rescue party brought back to the *Icarus*. However, before the shuttle docked, he awoke in a state of violent insanity and injured two of the members of the rescue team. The man was transferred immediately to the Sickbay, immobilized and placed in cryostatic sleep, as the medical personnel were needed elsewhere due to the collision.

If the characters decide to initiate reanimation, a stretcher holding a naked middle-aged man slides out from the chamber as soon as the thawing procedure is finished. He has long, bloody scratches all over his body, which look as though they could have been caused by fingernails. His eyes suddenly snap open as he rears up against the restraints that hold him. He can only be slightly calmed down by the administration of a suitable sedative (First Aid or Medicine). Then he will break out into a hysterical fit, whispering through the tears, again and again: “Is it still there? Yes, it is still there!” – “It brought the madness with it!” – “It wants to go back!”

It is not possible to get any more out of the man.



The Video Recording in the Sickbay

A search of the recording files quickly turns up the right one. The quality is very poor due to data decay, but the following can be made out: two medics carry a stretcher into the Sickbay – this bears the man from the hibernation chamber, who is screaming and struggling against his restraints. The medics are wearing orange uniforms, exactly like the characters, whereas the man on the stretcher's uniform is blue.

Medical personnel try to calm the obviously injured patient. Suddenly the picture blurs and flickers, the alarm starts wailing, and explosions can be heard in the background. Equipment overturns, people fall over and cry out, and the picture is shaken again and again. Audible over all the noise is the calm, emotionless voice of the computer: "Warning: Collision with unknown object. Damage alert in all Modules. Connecting Concourses 1.2, 1.4, 2.3 and 2.5 sealed. Pressure in Modules 1 to 4 decreased. Security and Medical Emergency Teams report to stations." At this point, the majority of the medical personnel leave the station at a run, while the few remaining transfer the now comatose patient into the hibernation chamber. The Computer makes another announcement: "Warning: Entry of nanites into ship's body detected. All crew report to decontami- ... and the transmission breaks off.

If the characters request a close-up image of the blue uniform worn by the patient from the Computer, they will be able to make out a badge depicting a winged man on his chest. The emblem is the same as that of the *Icarus*, but there is a different name beneath it: *Daedalus*.

As the whole room is obviously under surveillance, the characters will be able to get the computer to show them the video recordings of the last events to take place there (see box).

Laboratory (External Area)

Situated directly beside the Sickbay, this laboratory was the workplace for a group of scientists and Object C-125. It can be entered from either the circular passageway or the Sickbay. The Laboratory is a sober place, lined with beige, antibacterial tiles. It is furnished with a few laboratory benches, a computer terminal, an examination chair (large enough for one approximately 120cm tall human to be strapped to), several cables and a kind of crown fitted with diodes. In a corner lies a storage cell, which can be secured with a force-field. Within this lie a couple of toys, a musical box and a pillow covered with washable fake fur. Hanging on one of the walls is a photograph of an intimidated-looking boy, clutching the fur cushion. Besides a set of scales lies an earless cloth rabbit, and next to this a set of syringes.

This room is cold (about 2° C).

All computers are secured by several passwords, but a successful roll against Computer Use can at least access two of the more interesting files (Icarus Handouts 3 and 4).

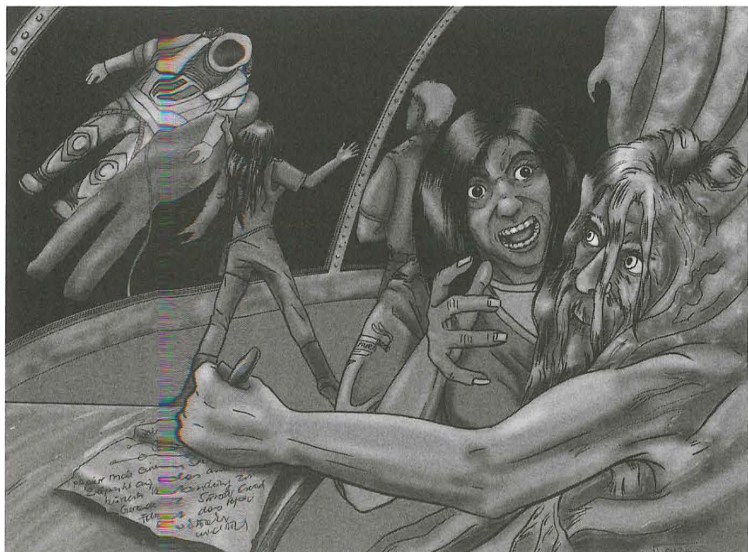
Panorama Lounge (Internal Area)

Situated in the middle of the ship, this area was intended as an oasis of quiet and a zone of recreation and recuperation. It fills up the entire internal area of Level 1 and is therefore circular in form. After all the cold steel and sterile plastic, this is an extremely pleasant environment: the deck is covered with soft carpeting, comfortable sofas scattered in groups and cozy reading corners dominate the enormous area. The presence of a well-stocked bar may tempt characters to stay awhile. However, signs of nanite attack are also evident here. Although there are none of the rampant growths of organic outer hull material, the Nanites have completely stripped the small ornamental park that once occupied the center of the area, leaving only empty holes that were once filled with soil and flowers. An arti-

ficial stream now splashes along a sterile, lifeless bed, and the recordings of bird calls which still play over and over again after 50 years now sound like nothing but empty mockery. A gigantic glass dome curves over it all, through which only the mysterious blue mist that surrounds the ship is visible. At regular intervals a man in a beige spacesuit appears and leisurely crosses the dome, endlessly circling like a satellite in a fixed orbit, held by the force of gravity exerted by the ship.

The Panorama Lounge holds a several things for the characters to discover. They will not only see the artificial "satellite" at least once, but they will also come across the man grown into the wall, already familiar to them as the "Voice from the Wall". In a niche of the wall there is a man, situated so that from the first view it is obvious that half of him is merged into the wall. In addition, his head is fused with his shoulder, his filthy hair and beard reach to the floor, and he stinks terribly. The accumulation of water has caused his legs and knees to swell to the thickness of footballs. His only pastime these last 50 years has been provided by a pen and a sheet of paper (see illustration and Icarus Handout 7). This appalling sight costs 1/1D4+1 SAN. He has little to say other than what he has already been saying over the ship's communications network, but his eyes light up strangely when he catches sight of the characters. If they seem likely to pass him by without releasing him, he will begin to wail, demanding that they kill him. But this is not easy to do: all wounds sustained are healed by the Nanites within seconds. The only possibility of ending his suffering is to inject him with a dose of NanEx before inflicting a mortal wound.

This area is also the first place the characters will get more than just a momentary glimpse of Object C-125. It sticks its flat nose out from a ventilation shaft and looks the characters over. Its gaze flickers again and again towards the bar. A vending machine with candy stands there, and it loves chocolate. This is the characters' chance to lure it out from cover. As long as the characters do not behave too stupidly, it will decide to trust them, but even so it will at first refuse to emerge from the safety of the maintenance shafts.



Recreation Room (External Area)

Overturnd armchairs, upset tables, scratch marks from fingernails, bloody hand prints on the walls, a large burned mark at the entrance – these are the dominant impressions of this room on Level 1. A discoloration in the form of a human silhouette is also visible on the deck. The HoloProjector, stuck on repeat, still shows the same 3D action film that the off-duty crew members were watching 50 years ago.

Captain's Cabin (External Area)

This room on Level 1 is larger than the single cabins allocated to the crew. It contains a bed, a desk, and apart from some books that have fallen to the floor, a clear and structured orderliness prevails here. The captain's dress uniform hangs neatly from a coat hanger on one wall. The Captain's computer contains some files of interest, including an academic thesis (Icarus Handout 2) and the orders for the mission (Icarus Handout 5). An electronic letter can also be found, and an image file attached to this is obviously a text passage from an old book (Icarus Handout 1).

Connecting Concourse 2.1

Nothing new is to be seen through the viewing windows of this concourse. The bulkhead at the other end is intact, but one of the energy cells has been burned through and needs to be replaced. The shipboard Computer provides a helpful error message as the characters approach the bulkhead. A suitable energy cell can be found within each MFS, and installing it requires knowledge of Electronics.

If the characters have won the trust of Object C-125, the little creature accompanies them openly, simply tagging along behind them.

From here, the characters will be able to hear the distant striking of drums and shrilling of flutes, which gradually become ever louder and eventually even painful.

Summary of Events Module 2

By this penultimate stage, the following should be clear to the characters:

- The reason why Dr. Antonovitch lost his mind: he became aware of the presence of a "writhing evil" outside the ship.
- Further information on the Nanites
- Background information on the Esper and his Son.
- Background information on the *Icarus*' mission.

Ship's Module 1: Command

This accommodates the brain of the ship: the Esper and the shipboard Computer. The scenario is now beginning to approach a climax, and Keepers should exploit this time pressure to the maximum. "20 minutes until Jump" announces the Computer as the characters enter the module.

The entire module is lit only by a faint, light-green light. Cameras are mounted throughout – these constantly follow the characters' movements.

The structure of this module differs from that seen so far. Beyond the main bulkhead is a single large area, from which several doors and the alarm-locked Connecting Concourses 1.3 and 1.4 lead. In the center of the area is a round elevator that leads up to Level 0 in the Esper Cathedral. Beside the lift are several hatches in the deck. These cover narrow shafts, which lead straight down and grant the only access to Level 2 of the module. This is totally comprised of maintenance shafts, memory units and various other electronic innards of the ship. However, it is not possible to open these hatches: attempting this will give the characters one last chance to hear the words "Authorization insufficient".

Door I: Officers' Mess

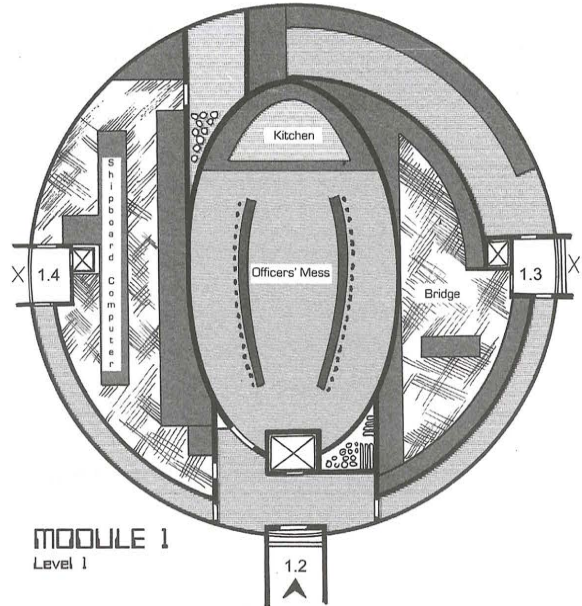
An elliptical room with a large conference table and various viewing screens on the walls. A few reading chips with readers lie scattered about. This is where the characters should report for duty according to their mobilization orders.

The energy cells of the readers are almost empty, but a power pack can be found if the characters look around. Loading takes approximately two minutes. If the characters take the time, they will be in for a disappointment: the chips contain various magazines such as "Deep Sea Angling" and "Subterranean Bivouacking".

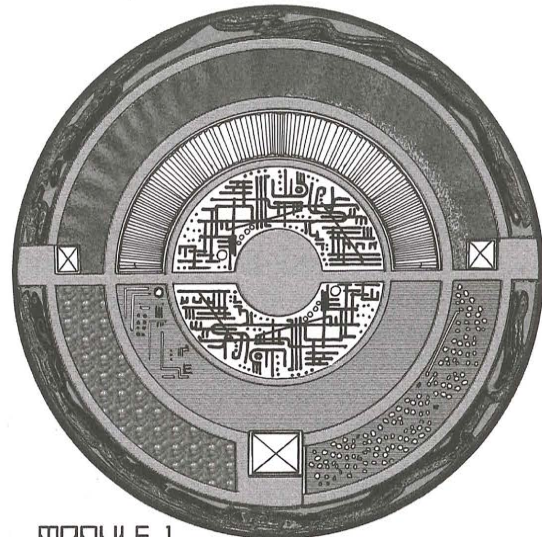
Door II: Bridge

Access to the Bridge of the *Icarus* is via a swinging double door. The room is shaped in a semicircle and descends gradually in steps. On each stage stand computer terminals, while the opposite wall is filled by an enormous panorama screen, which however shows only the cosmic blue mist, through which many geometrical figures endlessly form, turn and reflect. This sight costs 1D2/1D6 SAN. Seated at one of the terminals is a woman, wearing the uniform of a navigation officer.

Approaching, the characters will notice that her feet are fused with the deck, and her arms with the table. Just like the "Voice from



MODULE 1
Level 1



MODULE 1
Level 2

Module's Technical Area
Signal Lines, Cooling Equipment, Mainframe

the Wall", she has been artificially kept alive in this state for decades. She looks deformed, her uniform is threadbare and she smells dreadful. Her eyes were torn open decades ago, and the remains of these have dried out leaving her completely blind. Only the index finger of her right hand is not fused with the table. With it she endlessly, almost automatically taps out the same four letters on the computer keyboard in front of her: O-I-L-K-O-I-L-K-... The document is now almost 23,000 pages long. At the very most she can babble and perhaps mistype if she is addressed. She is incapable of any other actions. This sight costs 1/1D4+1 SAN.

Door III: Shipboard Computer

The gigantic shipboard Computer in this room is visibly damaged and only provisionally repaired in a few places. However, the steering units seem to be intact and repaired.

It would be possible to bring the Scanners back into service and carry out other important repairs here, but this would require several hours of work – time that the characters no longer have.

The Esper Cathedral

Taking the elevator upwards brings the characters into a security lock, where they are sprayed with disinfectants. They must then step into thin plastic protective overalls, handed to them by a robot arm, and put on face masks. No germs are permitted to enter the area and possibly infect the Esper. Only when the characters have all followed the instructions relayed by the Computer will the bulkhead open and allow entry into the Esper Cathedral.

The domed hall, 10 meters high and 20 meters wide appears in shimmering black-green, thousands of coffers forming the dome. It is pleasantly warm in here.

In the center of the area stands a throne-like chair, inhabited by a man of indeterminate age. He is naked and fused together with his surroundings. His skin stretches like a tent down to the floor. Pulsating hoses lead from his body to the complicated technological apparatus that surrounds him. Upon his grotesquely oversized, shapeless head sits a metal framework, bolted tight to his deformed skull. Innumerable thin black cables proceed from this crown, disap-

pearing into darkness towards the deck. Pulses of light chase one another along the cables, too weak to penetrate the oily darkness, but strong enough to be noticed. The mouth of the Esper is coarsely sewn shut, the eyes sealed with flaps of skin. The Esper is blind and mute, but can still hear. The idea was that he should concentrate solely on the running of the ship, and any other impulses would be merely distractions from this work – and thus he was surgically altered accordingly. He communicates with the outside world via a screen placed between his feet, on which his "words" appear. This sight costs 1/1D4 SAN.



acters' attention to the possibility of sustaining a breach to the shuttle's hull (this is to raise the tension further, there is no real danger). The characters will be unable to launch during the actual jump. Either they will have already escaped and be safely floating in space in their shuttle by the time the jump takes place or they will still be on board when the jump takes place, which will only be perceptible as a light queasiness in the pit of their stomachs. Launching the shuttle after the jump will propel it straight into the maw of Azathoth.

Luring the Esper's Son into the escape pod is not hugely difficult as long as the characters have not frightened him too much beforehand. The magic word here is 'chocolate'. If the characters previously attacked or terrorized Object C-125, they must now attempt to rebuild his trust in them in the few minutes they have left. The Esper will only keep his part of the deal once he knows his son is in safety. Fooling him is almost impossible: he has access to the shipboard Computer and knows exactly how many living creatures are aboard.

The END of the Icarus

If the characters succeed in abandoning the *Icarus* with the Esper's Son, they will soon – even if they failed to discover its exact position – come across the *Daedalus* and probably set course for it. After all, a newly arriving ship was announced by the shipboard Computer of the *Icarus*, and said to be approaching. The thrusters slowly bring the shuttle alongside the hulk.

Arriving at the *Daedalus* to wait out the five days until the new ship arrives, they will discover the mass insanity which overtook the *Daedalus* – and experience it personally: even though the Fragment of Azathoth was taken over to the *Icarus* 50 years ago, direct contact with the Idiot God in hyperspace has left more than enough of Azathoth's "psychic fallout". And so the characters will be left in the hell of the dead ship, waiting in vain for the supposedly approaching ship, slowly descending as they wait into madness and deranged self-mutilation.

And should the characters dare to take a look out into space at any time – through the side-windows of the shuttle, the hatches of the *Daedalus*, or from aboard the *Icarus* as it makes its jump – they will be met by an unforgettable sight. No matter whether the *Icarus* has jumped, thereby leaving behind a rift in the fabric of the universe that the characters can see right through, or whether the ship – by whatever means – was destroyed, allowing the characters to make out the Fragment of Azathoth, expanded to its full size, or even whether the characters only exited the ship after the jump and now find themselves right in the middle of IT – no matter how it happens, they will now be confronted by IT, the Daemon Sultan, enthroned in the center of the Universe, surrounded by its court of mindless flautists (1D10/1D100 SAN).

The finale

The characters should now have barely 15 minutes left before the *Icarus* jumps. It should also have become clear to them that they should prevent this. The key to doing this is the Esper.

The Esper is aware that there is something on board that feels "wrong". He also has knowledge of the imminent jump. He is therefore in a position to bring the ship off course by making a minimal alteration to its projected jump angle. The incorrect coordinates would result in the *Icarus* being torn asunder, and the living nightmare of the Esper's life would be over. But even though he longs for death, he will refuse to alter the jump coordinates until he becomes aware of the presence on board of his son. This is the only living being that the Esper has not yet become completely indifferent to. Therefore he will initially reject any and all requests from the characters, and will only start to cooperate with them if they offer to rescue his son from the ship. As soon as he knows that the characters have taken his son off the ship and are safely aboard a shuttle with him, he will change the coordinates, destroying himself, the ship and everything aboard. As the Son cannot read the messages or communicate with his father in any other way, the characters themselves must bring the Son aboard the shuttle. The Esper has nothing else to offer the characters.

If the characters strike a deal, they must now hurry. The Computer starts the jump countdown. The steering jets fire again and again, correcting the course. Three minutes before the jump all available energy is transferred to the STL Drives, which slowly bring the *Icarus* up to the required jump speed. The Computer will warn anyone attempting to launch a shuttle at this speed, calling the char-

Appendices

1. Characters

Kleoniki Marazelos – Pilot/Navigator



Kleoniki Marazelos, House of Phaidon, Bio-Registration Number: 4-2317084-57

Rank: Lieutenant

25 years of age, good-looking (not least due to a little cosmetic surgery) and really with no great desire to be here at all.

You are Kleoniki Marazelos! MARAZELOS! Your father is the Marazelos, who owns half of New Greece and the Hermes drive factory. He also sits on the board of the House of Phaidon, and a similar glittering political career awaits you. But first you must finish your five-year military service...

But at least you managed to get into this top-secret project, which will no doubt later come to be seen as particularly prestigious. Despite the secrecy, your father let you know that the project dealt with the maiden voyage of the *Icarus*, an ultramodern prototype spaceship. And the ship's destination is the center of the Universe! As if that were just a stroll around the block! At a normal cruising speed of two parsecs per day it would take about 50 years to get there, but according to your father, this voyage will only take about one year, due to the revolutionary new drive system installed in the ship.

But when they asked you whether you would prefer to belong to the primary or the back-up crew, you opted for the latter. Be a part of the project? Sure. Work? Not you. Of course, spending most of the long, slow journey sleeping like a baby will be much more comfortable than carrying out endless, tedious routine duties. Some people might call this laziness, but you have always known how to find the path of least resistance. Some might even call you a bit spoiled or pampered. So what? Anyway, the best part of the deal is that your father has apparently forgiven you – two years ago you had a huge fight after you drunkenly gave away a few details of a major deal of your father's to a casual social acquaintance. The deal fell through, and your father lost a huge sum of money and – even worse – some of his influence. The direct consequence of all this was that you were

forced to carry out your military service – an inconvenience that the rich and privileged like you normally manage to avoid. Since the incident, your father has hardly exchanged so much as a single word with you. Except for when, scarcely five months before the start of this mission, he called you into his presence to ask you if you wanted to be included. The discussion lasted less than ten minutes, and consisted mostly of his instructions to you, since which he has hardly said anything, but nonetheless, it was the start of a reconciliation. Nothing to lose, and a hero's welcome on your return – maybe then your relationship with your father will get back to normal, as he was actually your only close friend since the death of your mother. Up until now, you have pushed aside the nagging suspicion that your father might possibly be finally trying to get rid of you by sending you on this mission. Well, things may certainly get a little risky, but he would never do a thing like that!

Role-playing notes: You are by no means stupid, but you are bitchy and full of prejudices. You are doing this job because you have to, but you still might be able to get some advantage out of it. You are a bit of a smart-ass, but absolutely not a stupid little girl! NO WAY! You have a brain! And you take care never to overexert yourself.

Lt. Kleoniki Marazelos, age 25

STR 9	CON 14	SIZ 12	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 13	APP 17	EDU 15	SAN 75	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapons: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db

Skills: Art (Avoid Work) 85%, Art (Flirt) 60%, Astronomy 60%, Computer Use 70%, Credit Rating 70%, Dodge 45%, Electronics 60%, First Aid 30%, Listen 50%, Navigation 70%, Physics 40%, Pilot (Orbital Glider) 70%, Pilot (Spaceship) 65%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 55%.

The Others:

You know none of them particularly well personally, but these are the impressions you formed of them at the training camp on Phobos, which you all attended:

Tom Hatsuko – Security Officer

One of those pathetic Nakamura lackeys. No doubt he's utterly clueless, like they all are. You've never been able to understand why Phaidon ever allied itself with Nakamura, and why this upstart has to be included on board the *Icarus* is a complete mystery to you.

Dr. Rigo Sanchez – Science Officer

Some old Mexican. Phaidon, sure enough, and therefore a cut above average. But his breath still stinks.

Ioannis Müller – Technician

Despite his surname he is a native Greek and a cute one too! About the same age as you, you've noticed him checking you out. You feel like you can trust him – he is from Phaidon, after all. Plus he looks fantastic, and the girls in the camp had quite a bit of gossip about what he keeps in his pants. Don't let this guy get away!

Dr. Toshiko McCloud – Doctor

McCloud is another Nakamura. And she could certainly try being a little more cheerful! She seems to be perfectly competent in what she does, but she is still one of them. And so you'd prefer not to get hurt.

Tom Hatsuko – Security Officer



Tom Hatsuko, House of Nakamura, Bio-Registration Number: 9-8689528-06

Rank: Lieutenant

27 years of age, various artificial muscles bulge under his uniform, his restless gaze constantly shifts around.

You grew up in the slums of the Moon, and know just how tough life can be. At the age of 14 you enlisted as a Combat Engineer and have now served in five campaigns. And this mission is your big chance! Hopefully you will be awoken in order to carry out a task and gain positive attention.

Protecting these arrogant Phaidons really doesn't suit you, but you have your orders and have no option but to follow them. Don't mess up here and you'll probably be promoted. The only thing you know about your mission is that it is some kind of rescue operation. That's all. But you don't need to know any more to carry out your orders. Anyway, you'll probably be spending the entire mission in deep-freeze hibernation, unfortunately enough ...

Role-playing notes: You are the team member with the best training in security issues. In other words: security for all means security for you. You have been trained hard, and use military jargon. The word "can't" means nothing to you – it just means "don't want to" as far as you are concerned. You are the tough guy, determined to bring your people through the shit, no matter how deep it is, no matter how much it stinks.

Lt. Tom Hatsuko, age 27				
STR 24	CON 20	SIZ 12	INT 10	POW 12
DEX 16	APP 14	EDU 9	SAN 60	HP 16
Damage Bonus: +1D6				
Weapons: Fist/Punch 90%, 1D3+db; Kick 90%, 1D6+db				

Skills: Computer Use 50%, Conceal 50%, Craft (Emanate Authority) 65%, Craft (Improvise Weapon) 60%, Dodge 75%, Electrical Repair 60%, First Aid 40%, Listen 50%, Martial Arts (Kickboxing) 80%, Service Regulations 70%, Spot Hidden 70%, Throw 60%, All firearm skills at 70%.

The Others:

You know none of them particularly well personally, but these are the impressions you formed of them at the training camp on Phobos, which you all attended:

Kleoniki Marazelos – Pilot / Navigator

Not necessarily stupid, but an incredibly irritating young girl. And a Phaidon! Which is obvious from her name. She's the daughter of the stinking rich Marazelos, who owns half of New Greece. If she starts to get on your nerves, just ignore her – losing your temper could cost you your career.

Dr. Rigo Sanchez – Science Officer

Some old Mexican. And another Phaidon – and therefore another asshole. And his breath stinks.

Ioannis Müller – Technician

Yet another from that ridiculous House! And a pretty boy too. Enough said.

Dr. Toshiko McCloud – Doctor

Finally somebody from the same House as you! Phaidons are certainly easier to bear if there are two of you. Don't let anything happen to her!

Dr. Rigo Sanchez – Science Officer



Dr. Rigo Sanchez, House of Phaidon, Bio-Registration Number: 3400437-92

Rank: Lieutenant

50 years old, slightly disheveled and highly ambitious.

Even though you are 50 years old and no longer at the peak of fitness, you are still a good astronomer. And that is your job here. The mission concerns the rescue of another ship, but you don't know any more than that. What you do know, from a confidential source, is the fact that top-secret weapon prototypes are being carried on board the ship in which you are traveling. You have an accomplice in the primary crew, a medic called Dr. Mbene Tsuwaga, who will thaw you out as soon as he has any more detailed information. As these plans are certainly worth millions, you are sure you can find a good use for them. So keep your eyes open.

You couldn't give a damn about these oh-so-important House loyalties: your friend is anybody who can be of use to you. Otherwise, you have none.

Role-playing notes: In general, you are somewhat absent-minded, scatterbrained even, but capable of intense concentration when necessary. You happily insert foreign words into your everyday language, and when you get nervous your Mexican accent comes to the fore. Look for the super-weapon!

Dr. Rigo Sanchez, age 50				
STR 10	CON 13	SIZ 11	INT 17	POW 14
DEX 16	APP 11	EDU 24	SAN 70	HP 12

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Fist/Punch 50%, 1D3+db

Skills: Astronomy 80%, Astrophysics 70%, Computer Use 70%, Craft (Distrust others) 80%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 35%, Mathematics 80%, Navigation 65%, Psychology 60%, Spot Hidden 60%.

The Others:

You know none of them particularly well personally, but these are the impressions you formed of them at the training camp on Phobos, which you all attended:

Kleoniki Marazelos – Pilot / Navigator

Stupid girl! Thinks she's special, just because her father's the filthy rich Marazelos, owner of half New Greece. But how much does she know about the super-weapon? Keep an eye on her!

Tom Hatsuko – Security Officer

A Nakamura, not that it makes any difference to you. You do however respect his artificial muscles – this man is a killer! But perhaps he can be useful to you. He is certainly no shining intellect, so it should be easy enough to wrap him around your little finger.

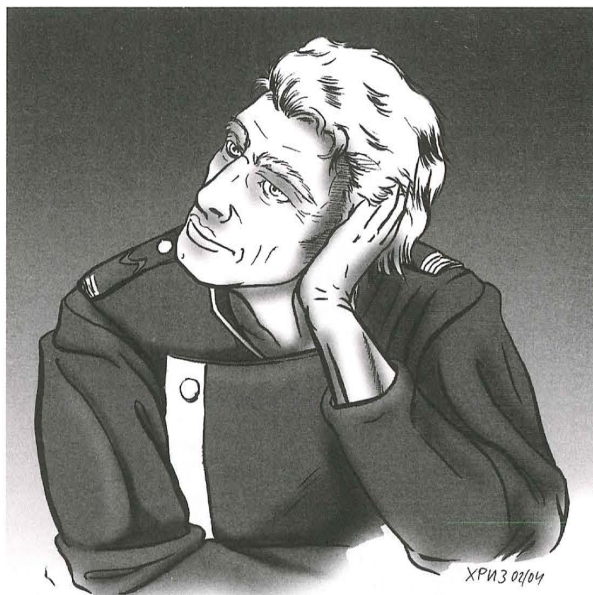
Ioannis Müller – Technician

A Phaidon technician. You don't know anything else about him. Suspicious.

Dr. Toshiko McCloud – Doctor

A Nakamura medic. Maybe it's a biological weapon? Better keep her under observation too!

Ioannis Müller – Technician



Ioannis Müller, House of Phaidon, Bio-Registration Number: 4-6258412-44

Rank: Lieutenant

37 years of age, extremely good-looking, and always on the lookout for a young piece of ass.

What a bunch of crap, damn it all! At first, the transfer to this project sounded like a promotion, despite the major shitstorm you caused at your last job (well, two crew members knocked up before you got caught with the Captain's wife). However, just before you were frozen you discovered, by pure chance, that you were to be placed aboard a prototype spaceship. Hopefully things will go better this time! You are otherwise responsible for the preparation of the oxygen and the pumping system.

Role-playing notes: You are a real Don Juan. The most awful thing you can imagine would be one of your ex-girlfriends turning up. You are actually an extremely superficial person, you always have a smart answer ready, and you also have a genuine problem with authority – too much authority just makes you feel like covering your own ass instead.

Lt. Ioannis Müller, age 37				
STR 13	CON 13	SIZ 12	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 14	APP 18	EDU 16	SAN 60	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3+db

Skills: Computer Use 80%, Craft (Drive Systems) 60%, Craft (Flirt) 70%, Electrical Repair 75%, Electronics 75%, First Aid 35%, Spot Hidden 40%.

The Others:

You know none of them particularly well personally, but these are the impressions you formed of them at the training camp on Phobos, which you all attended:

Kleoniki Marazelos – Pilot / Navigator

The daughter of the fabulously wealthy Marazelos, who owns half of New Greece. Looks very nice indeed, although a bit irritat-

ing – but perhaps worth adding to your list of conquests. Who knows, maybe you can find a use for all that money ... But what is she actually doing here on this ship? Kicked out by Daddy?

Tom Hatsuko – Security Officer

One of those Nakamura worms. Politics are meaningless to you, but even so, Nakamura are undeniably scum. And this alliance is an insane idea! That said, when the shit hits the fan, he's the guy you'll be hiding behind.

Rigo Sanchez – Science Officer

One of ours, even if he does have bad breath.

Dr. Toshiko McCloud – Doctor

A lady doctor from Nakamura. Classy! But not as good-looking. Still, who knows?

Dr. Toshiko McCloud – Doctor



Dr. Toshiko McCloud, House of Nakamura, Bio-Registration Number: 9-2063007-89

Rank: Lieutenant

42 years, studious and temperamental.

You are a medical doctor, and a very good one at that! You joined this mission after being transferred here by your superiors. The spaceship's mission is top-secret, so you have no idea what to expect. You don't like having to work together with Phaidon people, but if somebody needs your help as a physician you will not turn your back. However, you hope that you will not be thawed out: space journeys are always dreadfully boring, and the other people inevitably start to get on your nerves sooner or later.

Role-playing notes: There is a lot to be done before we are safe. Make that quite clear to the others.

Dr. Toshiko McCloud, age42				
STR 9	CON 16	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 17
DEX 13	APP 12	EDU 20	SAN 85	HP 13

Damage Bonus: +0

Weapon: Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3+db

Skills: Become Irritated 70%, Biology 70%, Chemistry 50%, Computer Use 50%, First Aid 80%, Medicine 85%, Pharmacy 55%, Spot Hidden 60%.

The Others:

You know none of them particularly well personally, but these are the impressions you formed of them at the training camp on Phobos, which you all attended:

Kleoniki Marazelos – Pilot / Navigator

An arrogant, brash Phaidon slut. Not only that, she is the daughter of the money-grubbing Marazelos, owner of half of New Greece. God, she gets on your nerves! It's already started!

Tom Hatsuko – Security Officer

A text-book example of a Nakamura: good-looking, strong, inspiring respect. You are very glad he is here.

Rigo Sanchez – Science Officer

Comes from Phaidon, suffers from severe halitosis, and is in all certainty completely useless in every respect.

Ioannis Müller – Technician

Yet another Phaidon oaf. A smug lout whose entire personality revolves around his appearance.

2. Handouts

Icarus Handout 1

My Dear Friend,

i came across the attached passage in an old file. Just for once, abandon all of your innate rationalism and try to imagine the boundless possibilities of what could have happened as a result of a ship jumping through space and time. Have we unwittingly done something not meant for the human race? Please consider it - i know you are an intelligent woman.

With my fondest regards,
Dr. Sergei Antonovitch

pps: The excerpt is from Black God of Madness by a certain Amadeus Carson.

pps: Against all the odds, they have approved my application. i will be traveling with you, among the back-up crew.

Writhing and evil, an amorphous Chaos
 perverted, meditating on its mindless
 existence
 an incomprehensible lightless Radiance
 AZATHOTH, the Daemon Sultan
 a living Madness - in the Center of Infinity
 it floats, pulsating to the beat of a myriad
 of drums
 surrounded by whining flutes
 AZATHOTH, the Sultan
 the Supreme

Icarus Handout 2

Imagine a spaceship that is faster and better than any ever seen before. Imagine a spaceship that is so fast that it displaces matter before itself until it eventually breaks through it. Imagine a spaceship that no longer needs to travel in our space-time continuum, but can fold space and thereby cross immense distances in short periods of time. Lay a sheet of paper before yourself on the table. Draw a starting point at one side of the sheet and a finishing point at the other. Now specify the shortest distance between start and finish. Is it a straight line? For normal ships yes, but not for the ship that I have the honor to present to you today. Instead, fold the sheet so that starting and finishing point lie one above the other. And now puncture a hole between the points. That, ladies and gentlemen, is the shortest connection between the two points. And the Daedalus is capable of traveling in precisely this manner..

Prof. Paul Newman, leader, 'Daedalus Project', from his speech to the board of the House of Phaidon, 12.9.2638.

Icarus Handout 3

Progress Report: Investigation of Esper C-125

22.g.1. Object C-125 exhibits the same psionic anomalies as its father. The series of tests on cerebral control of a complex object gave more than positive results. Considering the age of the research subject (at present writing, 7 years) at the time of this series of tests, this is an astonishing result. Unfortunately, the results of the genetic tests were negative. Object C-125 suffers from genetic defects and could not be included in the official series of tests. Tomorrow we begin measurement of cerebral wave activity from the opened cranium.

22.h.1. Cerebral wave activity measured successfully. We decided to install a surgical plate in order to remove the need for any further cranial surgery (relevant comment from Dr. Clara Hibbins: "Actually, despite everything, it still does very closely resemble a child!"). The subject responded well to the transplant.

44.a.34 It is amusing to realize that the genetic father of Object C-125 is the Esper of our ship! (Relevant comment from Dr. Clara Hibbins: "The father and the son, two objects, one ship, and each one serving in his own way!").

Icarus Handout 4

***** Introduction page: "Icarus Project" for quarterly review, 12.06.2639 *****

Excerpt: Esper lecture

Due to a genetic defect, Espers possess a very special gift. Please allow me to explain this to you in detail. Briefly: think of the psionic abilities of these organisms, familiar from the Holovision. These objects - they are only conditionally viable, and according to the definitions of the Geneva Resolution on Population Evaluation of 2510, Article 224, are considered as 86% abnormal - have the ability to control more complex procedures than humans with their cerebral impulses. Every normal human can control his or her own muscles, but these objects are able to control more than *one* body with their brains. And this is what makes them so useful to us. As you all know, the *Icarus* will be exposed to immense forces during the jump, and therefore needs to be constructed of a material able to withstand these. The Nakamura alliance has given us access to just such a material - and as you are already aware, it is organic in nature. And more importantly - it is regenerative. Damage sustained is repaired almost immediately! This is carried out by nanites. You are all familiar with these tiny aids from the hospital, where they course through our blood vessels and help make us healthy again. In order to control the living outer hull of the *Icarus* and direct the billions of nanites, we need an esper.

Icarus Handout 5

This data rated as Security Code Double Alpha. Classified Material!

+++Copy 3-45, transferred to personal computer: Captain Delaché+++

Security Rating: Classified

Re: Mission Orders

As you are aware from the report documents, the *Daedalus*, the carrier ship of the prototype jump generator with which the *Icarus* is also equipped, was lost on launch. Nevertheless, we were able to extract enough data following this failure to reach many important conclusions pertaining to an improved model of ship, the *Icarus*, which this order now places under your command. The scientific personnel on board are secondarily subordinate to your command, and primarily responsible to Dr. Niklos Spazegottos. We expect your fullest cooperation with the scientific personnel, who are carrying out research programs of immense importance. Dr. Spazegottos will supply you with further information during the course of the voyage.

Your team consists of 143 personnel, half as back-up crew in cryostasis, to be activated if necessary. You will find the emergency safety codes for the Computer in your Briefing Log. For reasons of security only the Command Staff have been issued details of the mission - lower officers and enlisted crew have not been informed.

Your orders:
 Set course for the absolute middle-point of the Universe. Find the missing *Daedalus*. Recover the ship's data archives. This is of *highest* priority. If possible, rescue the personnel of the *Daedalus*. Return to Phobos.

Confirmation of priority: All necessary expenditure of material and personnel is approved.

Icarus Handout 6

```

***Salvage protocol follows: Untitled-ISS-DA is received as
permanently updating signal, processed and stored***

1450:25: Docking secured with passive ship. Scan negative. No
signs of life***
Energy status: negative
***Life support systems: negative
***Structural analysis: Severe damage visible to hull, structure
inoperative, ship passive

1451:07: Port opened. Team enters object. Heavy damage already
identifiable in insertion area. Probable cause: fire. Team divides
and acts according to operational plan C. Erui and Niklos to
Engine Room, Team Leader and Glow to Bridge.
Further report from Team Leader.

1452:45: Heavily blocked hatches, structure inoperative, blasting
hammer used, negative reports from Team B. Destruction of
unimaginable extent. Unknown cause. Fatalities.
Note from Salvage Technician: Surprised by unknown technical
equipment aboard ship! Inquiry about [file sequence sealed and
deleted: Authorization: Captain].

1456:01: Bulkhead blown, passage too [speech transmission compro-
mised] dead found [speech transmission compromised] disfigured
faces [speech transmission compromised] medical opinion: traces
of teeth (human: cast taken for later identification) in [speech
transmission compromised] mutilated fingers, no eyes in sockets
[speech transmission compromised] have eaten themselves.

1457:38: ***EMERGENCY SIGNAL ACTIVATED BY TEAM B. LOCATION.
REACTOR ROOM ***
Team A responds.

1458:34: ***RADIO CONTACT BROKEN WITH BOTH TEAMS***

1459:57: *** RADIO CONTACT REESTABLISHED WITH TEAM A ***
*****EMERGENCY*****EMERGENCY*****EMERGENCY*****
COMPUTER: SHIP'S DEFENSES: ALERT
*** ORDER ICARUS TO TEAM LEADER: ABORT MISSION*** SHUTTLE 04
disengage from passivekskuejao Lazee
*** TRANSMISSION ENDS: RECORDING PROGRAMME TERMINATED DUE TO
ENERGY FAILURE *** FILE INCOMPLETE***
    
```

Icarus Handout 7

Lay a sheet of paper before yourself on the table.
A PAPER BEFORE YOURSELF ON THE TABLE!

Draw a starting point at one side of the sheet
 and a finishing point at the other.
 Now specify the shortest connection between
 start and finish.
 Is it a straight line?
 Lay! Straight line! Paper! Draw straight
 line paper!
 Draw straight line paper

Fold the sheet so that starting point and
 finishing point and starting point and finishing
 point
 lie above each other

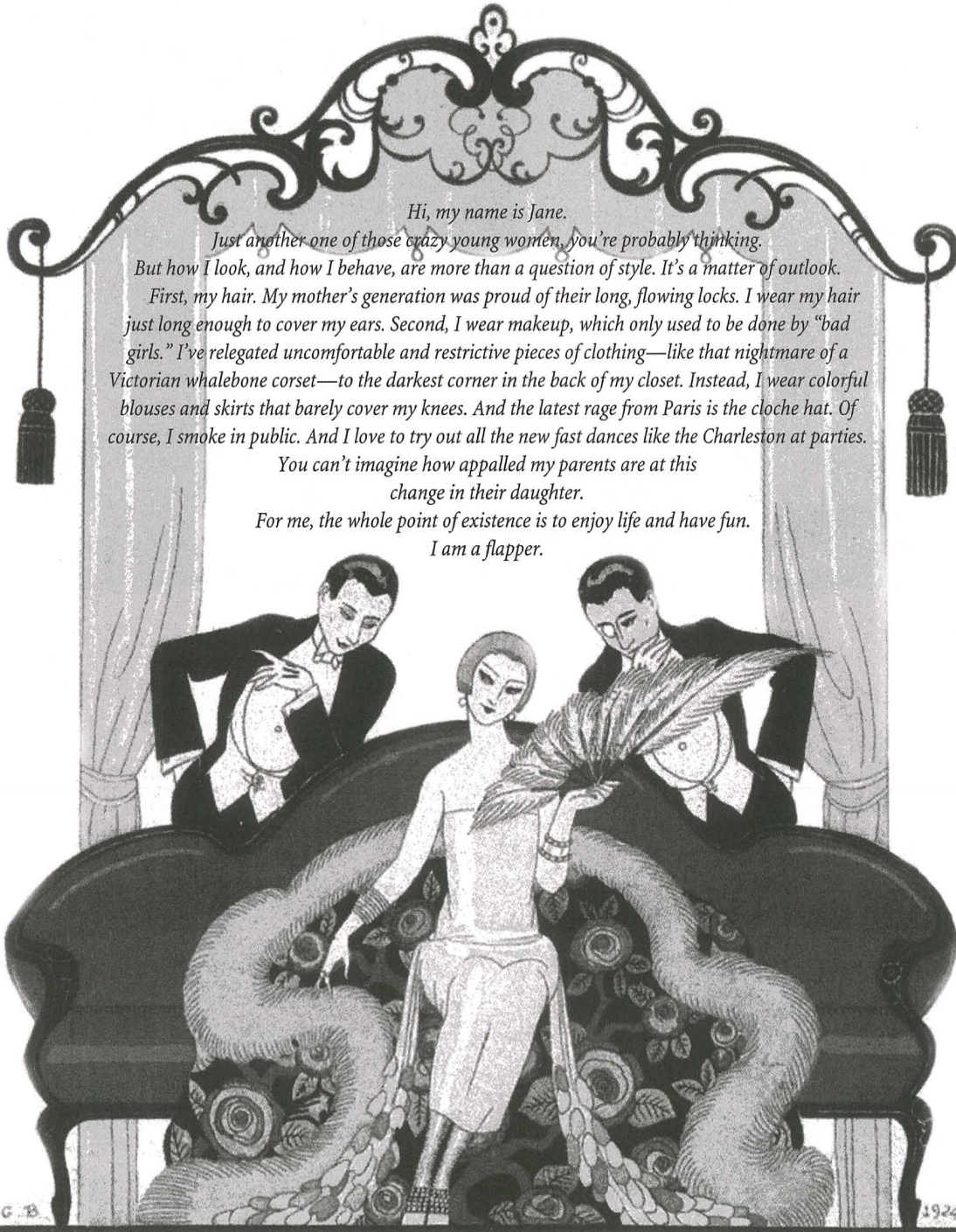
Draw straight line paper
 And now puncture a hole between the points. That
 is the shortest connection between the two points.
 Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole! Hole!
 Hole in my head!



Professionally Speaking...

The flapper

THE NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN OF THE 1920S



Hi, my name is Jane.

Just another one of those crazy young women, you're probably thinking.

But how I look, and how I behave, are more than a question of style. It's a matter of outlook.

First, my hair. My mother's generation was proud of their long, flowing locks. I wear my hair just long enough to cover my ears. Second, I wear makeup, which only used to be done by "bad girls." I've relegated uncomfortable and restrictive pieces of clothing—like that nightmare of a Victorian whalebone corset—to the darkest corner in the back of my closet. Instead, I wear colorful blouses and skirts that barely cover my knees. And the latest rage from Paris is the cloche hat. Of course, I smoke in public. And I love to try out all the new fast dances like the Charleston at parties.

You can't imagine how appalled my parents are at this change in their daughter.

For me, the whole point of existence is to enjoy life and have fun.

I am a flapper.

BY TINA WESSEL

TRANSLATED BY BILL WALSH

In this article, we want to depict flappers as a new occupation for *Call of Cthulhu*. Admittedly, flapper isn't an occupation in the formal sense; rather, to the contrary, it's a designation for women with particular style of behavior and appearance, as well as a certain outlook on life. In addition, flappers, as a rule, earned their keep in any of the professions open to working women at the time. So we'd like to suggest "flapper" only as a supplementary occupation during character creation. More on that later.

ORIGIN

"They're all desperadoes, these kids, all of them with any life in their veins; the girls as well as the boys; maybe more than the boys." - "Flaming Youth," by Warner Fabian

It's unclear where the term "flapper" comes from. It first appeared in Great Britain after the First World War. It was used there to describe young women who were on the verge of becoming fledglings, ready to leave the parental nest. In this context, the term "flapper" could have been an onomatopoeic device representing the sound of the wings of the young chick on her first flight. Later the term "flapper" was claimed to come from the sound that rubber overshoes, left open according to the style of the day, made while walking.



In the 1920s, flappers broke free of the Victorian image of women and created a new, modern model of woman. Before the First World War, women's ideal image of womanhood was "The Gibson Girl." Long hair, long, high-waisted skirts, and a pronounced femininity constituted the depicted ideal. During World War One, a change in social rules and roles took place. While young men were consumed as cannon fodder for the ideals of the older generation,

women had to care for their livelihood alone. After the war, in which almost an entire generation of men were killed, young women decided not to return to the old gender roles. Life was to be enjoyed—in the end, no one knew what tomorrow would bring. This also meant not waiting for marriage proposals from the thinned-out ranks of bachelors and even risking becoming an old maid. Why should the liberties that men had not apply to women?

The flappers' image stemmed from drastic changes in wardrobe and hair-dressing, which were perceived as nothing less than shocking. Whilst in 1920, skirts were still almost calf or ankle-length, in 1927 they barely covered the knee. Petti-

coats and corsets, which kept you from moving freely and eating when you felt like it, were "parked" in closets, because for the new "wild" dances like the Charleston, Shimmy, or Black Bottom (which older people derided as looking like the twitches and jerks of lame ducks or cripples), you needed a lot of freedom of movement. The "underneath" consisted of a short one-piece called a "step-in." "Rayons" represented a further innovation in fashion: transparent stockings of synthetic fiber, which replaced the silk stockings customary until then, and which were secured with garters

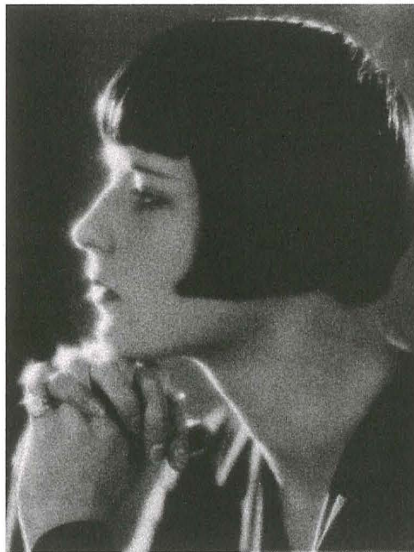
THE LOOK

"Beauty is the fashion in 1925. She is frankly, heavily made up, not to imitate nature, but for an altogether artificial effect - pallor mortis, poisonously scarlet lips, richly ringed eyes - the latter looking not so much debauched (which is the intention) as diabetic." - Bruce Bliven, "Flapper Jane"

Makeup like lipstick, eyeliner, rouge, and powder lost the taint of indecency. Flappers enthusiastically painted on Cupid's-bow lips and laid particular worth on dramatic eye makeup, which seems almost pathological to contemporary tastes and was, in any case, never intended to look natural. In addition, the "paint" was no longer applied secretly, but flaunted in public. In the late 1920s, on average, a woman went through a pound of face powder a year.

The famous short, "bob" haircut (1922) was also a symbol of freedom, with which women laid claims to the rights of men. The bob was replaced by an even shorter variant, "the shingle" (1924). In both variants that the hair was cut close to the head, fixed with "bobby pins," and they often featured locks curled forward over the cheekbones. The shortest cut was the so-called "Eton" (1927) in which the hair on the back of the head was cut above ear-height.

The complete look, called "Garçonne" (roughly, "boy-girl"), was fundamentally shaped by the famed couturière, Coco Chanel. It's interesting to note that, while on the one hand women wanted to emancipate themselves and to liberate their femininity (and sexuality) from Victorian bonds, on the other hand, they pursued a distinctly boyish ideal of beauty. So, for example, they wrapped their breasts and hips as tightly as possible in order to achieve the flat-



test possible look. Also, tanned skin was no longer considered unladylike, but was part of the youthful, tomboyish style. Not coincidentally, the first self-tanning lotions came on the market in the 1920s.

Beyond the superficial, cosmetic changes, flappers tossed moral norms overboard as unnecessary ballast. They smoked (most with cigarette holders), drank alcohol, and during Prohibition some even carried hip flasks. Most parents were beside themselves at the thought of the tipsy young women, shockingly made up, who hung around in jazz clubs.

The flappers took a further battlefield when it came to driving cars. The flapper outlook meant self-confidently taking the wheel, not daintily being driven. Speed was the embodiment of their lifestyle—move at a tear, go on the offensive! In general, flappers were open to innovations in everything—technology was a natural for them.

Flappers invented dating, a completely new phenomenon. It was a flexible way to meet young men without parental supervision. With the freedom to choose a boyfriend, it was possible to go out together without displaying the mandatory intention to marry. “Petting parties” enjoyed great popularity. Young women could engage in erotic activities, without risking the quandary of undesired, much less unwed, motherhood. The term petting may be fully understood in today’s sense; in this context, any conception of old-fashioned, blushing modesty should be abandoned.

Such relationships engendered an irreverent flapper slang: an engagement ring was dubbed a “handcuff,” being divorced was “dropping the pilot.” Hated acquaintances were addressed as “sweetie,” smug boys were “cake eaters,” while attractive men became “snugglepups.”

A song from the 1920s describes the flapper life to T:

*Flappers are we
Flappers are we
Flappers and fly and free.
Never too slow
All on the go
Petting parties with the smarties.
Dizzy with dangerous glee
Puritans knock us
Because the way we're clad.
Preachers all mock us
Because we're not bad
Most flippant young flappers are we!*

FLAPPER JANE

An article by Bruce Bliven appeared in the September 9th, 1925 issue of *The New Republic*, in which the author lamented the general decline of morals, with particular respect to the increasing paucity of fabric in contemporary fashion, which he called “the New Nakedness,” the “Great Disrobing Movement,” and the “Era of Undressing.” He ended the article with an interview with 19-year-old Jane, reproduced here:



“Jane,” say I, “I am a reporter representing American inquisitiveness. Why do all of you dress the way you do?”

“I don’t know,” says Jane. This reply means nothing; it is just the device by which the younger generation gains time to think. Almost at once she adds:

“The old girls are doing it because youth is. Everybody wants to be young, now—though they want all us young people to be something else. Funny, isn’t it??

“In a way,” says Jane, “it’s just honesty. Women have come down off the pedestal lately. They are tired of this mysterious-feminine-charm stuff. Maybe it goes with independence, earning your own living and voting and all that. There was always a bit of the harem in that coverup- your-arms-and-legs business, don’t you think?

“Women still want to be loved,” goes on Jane, warming to her theme, “but they want it on a 50-50 basis, which includes being admired for the qualities they really possess. Dragging in this strange-allurement stuff doesn’t seem sporting. It’s like cheating in games, or lying.”

“Ask me, did the War start all this?” says Jane helpfully.

“The answer is, how do I know? How does anybody know?”

“I read this book whaddaya-call-it by Rose Macaulay, and she showed where they’d been excited about wild youth for three generations anyhow—since 1870. I have a hunch maybe they’ve always been excited..

“Somebody wrote in a magazine how the War had upset the balance of the sexes in Europe and the girls over there were wearing

FAMOUS FLAPPERS

Real and Fictional

Tallulah Bankhead
 Clara Bow
 Louise Brooks
 Millie Dillmount
 Dixie Dugan
 Elinor Glyn
 Anita Loos
 Colleen Moore
 Penelope Pitstop

the new styles as part of the competition for husbands. Sounds like the bunk to me. If you wanted to nail a man for life I think you'd do better to go in for the old-fashioned line: 'March' me to the altar, esteemed sir, before you learn whether I have limbs or not.'

"Of course, not so many girls are

looking for a life mealticket nowadays. Lots of them prefer to earn their own living and omit the home-and-baby act. Well, anyhow, postpone it years and years. They think a bachelor girl can and should do everything a bachelor man does."

"It's funny," says Jane, "that just when women's clothes are getting scanty, men's should be going the other way. Look at the Oxford trousers!—as though a man had been caught by the ankles in a flannel quicksand."

Do the morals go with the clothes? Or the clothes with the morals? Or are they independent? These are questions I have not ventured to put to Jane, knowing that her answer would be "so's your old man." Generally speaking, however, it is safe to say that as regards the wildness of youth there is a good deal more smoke than fire.

WOMEN'S FASHION IN THE 1920S

"The skirt comes just an inch below her knees, overlapping by a faint fraction her rolled and twisted stockings. The idea is that when she walks in a bit of a breeze, you shall now and then observe the knee (which is not rouged - that's just newspaper talk) but always in an accidental, Venus-surprised-at-the-bath sort of way." - Bruce Bliven, "Flapper Jane"

In the early 1920s, a drastic metamorphosis in fashion took place. Hems of skirts and dresses, which previously had been almost floor-length, lifted as far as the calves. Tailoring changed from bouffant skirts and emphasizing the waistline to a slim, cylindrical silhouette. A multitude of variations of this long, straight style arose; the most famous of which was the "Robe de Style," which represented

a sort of compromise between the new, straight shape and the earlier bell-shaped skirts. The new, simpler dress cuts also allowed women to make themselves "one-hour dresses," that is, dresses which could be cut in under an hour because of their simplicity.

In the middle of the decade, hems crept ever higher. 1926 saw the discovery of the feminine knee, which continued until 1928. "Rayons" became indispensable accessories, flesh-colored or even sometimes patterned stockings of artificial fiber, before the advent of which many flappers had powdered their legs for the perfect finish, occasionally even rouging their knees. Until the end of the First World War, girls had still worn black wool stockings. Finally, arms were denuded, and not only in evening wear.

At the end of the 1920s, dresses became longer again and emphasized the figure more.

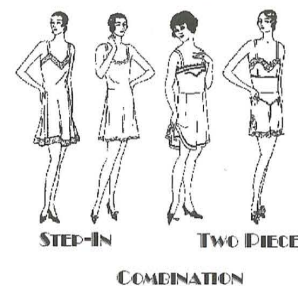
Silk, cotton, linen, and wool were used in various combinations to make the clothes of the 1920s, with the eventual addition of rayon. Bright green, red, and blue tones were stylish colors, but covered pastels were modish as well.

In the world of shoe styles, strapped or T-bar shoes with buckles or pumps with bows, cut below the ankle displaced the high, laced boots usual until then. The strapped shoes were known as "Mary Janes", and their buckles and bows made interesting fashion statements. Sequin or diamante trims were quite usual.

The French designer Reboux introduced the famous cloche hat, which could only be worn with short hair because of its narrow, bell (French: cloche) shape—there was no room under it to put up a bun of long hair. These hats were pulled down low over the eyebrows, so that women could only see what was going on in front of them, or even where they were going, by holding their heads at a particular angle.

The accessories of the time chiefly consisted of the indispensable long strings of pearls, but after the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, ancient Egyptian design became extremely popular in jewelry. In order to keep the necessities of life (like makeup and cigarettes) close at hand, flappers carried roomy handbags. Anyone wanting to be especially up-to-date borrowed a look from the pilots of the First World War and wore leather jackets and colorful scarves.

UNDERWEAR



FLAPPER FASHION AND THE RISING HELMINE



1921 1922 1923 1924 1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930

FLAPPERS IN CALL OF CTHULHU

“Flapper” is not an independent occupation or its own character class. It’s a way of life and a style, which goes hand-in-hand with a definite attitude. So women may be flappers in addition to their actual profession, which is taken as usual from the basic rulebook or from the comprehensive listing in *“The 1920s Investigator’s Companion.”* With respect to rules, this means that the occupational skills below are added to the occupational skills of her occupation proper and receive points from the pool of occupational skill points (EDUx20). Flappers don’t receive any extra occupational skill points, despite having two “occupations.” The two extra points of APP are, however, received in addition to whatever other bonus the actual occupation has provided.

With this article, Keepers and players should have all rule-related information and sufficient guidance to play a flapper character in *Call of Cthulhu*.

Income: Upper lower class to lower middle class

Contacts and connections: Varies

Skills: Art (Dance), Bargain, Drive Auto, Fast Talk, Persuade, Psychology, in addition to the skills of her actual occupation

Special: +2 to APP

THE FLAPPER

by Dorothy Parker

The Playful flapper here we see,
The fairest of the fair.
She’s not what Grandma used to be, —
You might say, au contraire.
Her girlish ways may make a stir,
Her manners cause a scene,
But there is no more harm in her
Than in a submarine.
She nightly knocks for many a goal
The usual dancing men.
Her speed is great, but her control
Is something else again.
All spotlights focus on her pranks.
All tongues her prowess herald.
For which she well may render thanks
To God and Scott Fitzgerald.
Her golden rule is plain enough -
Just get them young and treat them rough.



A FROG IS A GIRL’S BEST FRIEND — CONTRACEPTION AND PREGNANCY IN THE 1920S

In the wake of the liberalizing of sexual mores and the advent of “petting parties,” contraception became increasingly relevant. Before 1919 condoms were manufactured from rubber cement, and they aged quickly, smelt and were not very reliable. In 1919 Ohio condom manufacturer Frederick Killian started making latex condoms which aged slower, were thinner, odourless and more reliable. Latex condoms sold very well, and by the start of the 1930s, the 15 largest US manufacturers made 1.5 million condoms a day.

Advice about contraception and pregnancy, like childbirth and performing abortions, were traditionally the purview of midwives, and contraception and abortions were considered “women’s secrets.” In the 1920s, more newspaper ads for midwives appeared, offering “desperate women” their services.

In the 1920s, and as late as the 1940s, an early pregnancy test which appears very odd to modern eyes was used. A woman would take a urine sample to a druggist, who would inject the urine into a so-called “apothecary frog.” If the frog laid eggs within two days—being induced by the pregnancy hormones in the woman’s urine—the woman was pregnant.



Regular observations from the world of

Directives from A Cell

by A. Scott Glancy

Directive 102: Conspiracy with a little c

In an earlier directive I briefly discussed the appetite that *Delta Green's* foreign audience has for inventing *Delta Green*-style agencies for their home countries so that local players feel more at ease. I can certainly understand why foreign players intrigued by *Delta Green's* contemporary setting would prefer a government-sponsored Mythos investigation group set in their home country, but Pagan Publishing is not going to add dozens and dozens of Mythos-aware agencies to the canon of the *Delta Green* universe. Otherwise our secret world of conspiracy and supernatural horror would get a bit crowded, much like White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade*, where nearly every interesting figure in history turns out to be sporting a pair of fangs. Evil supernatural conspiracies and cults are going to be added to the canon all the time since the supply of villains will be thinned by the Investigators' successes. New allied organizations will be fewer and farther between. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean that there isn't room for a little expansion.

Over the years we've had a number of fans send us their own Mythos-aware government agencies in the hopes that they might find their way into the *Delta Green* canon. It should come as no great surprise that few of these were printable. What always surprises me was that nearly everyone simply took the blueprint of *Delta Green* and grafted it onto their own country, creating an independent multi-jurisdictional agency with deep resources, wide access to intelligence reports and a near perfect understanding of the Cthulhu Mythos. Why is it that when folks imagine a government agency that has contact with the Mythos it is always something big, well organized and knowledgeable? *Delta Green* only has two out of those three attributes, being well organized and (fairly) knowledgeable. Even the sinister *Majestic-12* agency lacks any real knowledge about the nature of the Mythos, no matter how large its pool of personnel or black budget may be.

Not every submission missed the mark. The one submitted agency which made the cut (and will join the canon) did so for several good reasons. First, the author began with Lovecraftian fiction as his starting point. He used the material from the stories of Lumley and Derleth as the pedigree to show the initial point contact between the Mythos and the particular government agency he was interested in. As he advanced his history forward to the present, the author incorporated the real history of his national counter intelligence service into the fiction. By the time he was done he had a small but well organized unit with a very limited understanding of a narrow aspect of the Mythos, but nevertheless positioned perfectly to learn more. While I do not want to give away anything prior to publication, let

me just say that anyone planning to send in a *Delta Green*-style government agency for Canada should probably pick a new country to write about.

There is plenty of room in the *Delta Green* universe for smaller conspiracies of Mythos-aware law enforcement and intelligence personnel. The idea that appeals to me the most is that of a modern *Call of Cthulhu* campaign where the Investigators are members of a police unit concerned with the kind of crimes that cultists are likely to commit, and through the campaign the Investigators become aware of the Mythos and bend the police unit towards a new mission – opposing the Mythos. In this way, the Investigators get to build their own database of Mythos knowledge and get to define their unit's mission, unburdened by any prior history or existing policy.

What I am suggesting here is a kind of conspiracy with a little 'c'. The setting for a government based Mythos-investigation could be as simple as one Mythos-aware municipal police commissioner putting together a group of four or five dedicated investigators who are willing to look beyond the expectations of the mundane world when the facts demand it. Such a unit could be a sort of Mythos version of the "Hat Squad," the unofficial police unit from post-WWII Los Angeles that dealt with organized crime with a campaign of brutality, intimidation and, according to some writers, murder. Certainly, when the criminals are using Mythos magic or are worshipping Great Old Ones, it may be more practical to ensure that they die in shoot-outs while "resisting arrest" or "attempting to escape," rather than imprison them. Lovecraft's stories are rife with examples of imprisoned sorcerers using mystical means of escaping their cells. Of course, it would be even more horrifying if the cultist escapes through that most vile of means, the court of appeals.

The main problem with a municipal police based campaign setting is coming up with an explanation as to why there is enough Mythos activity in the area to keep a dedicated police unit busy enough to entertain a group of *Call of Cthulhu* players. Having the city be home to a cult isn't sufficient since once the Investigators may be successful enough to completely eliminate the cult and thus the need for the special squad. That can be easily rectified with the inclusion of the *Call of Cthulhu* version of Sunnydale, California's Hell Mouth, some mystical lodestone that attracts the Mythos and its agents. It could be a Great Old One sealed beneath the city, or the ruins of some temple or gate to another dimension. Regardless it would be the kind of thing that couldn't be destroyed or moved, but would have to be sealed and guarded against.

Of course, some Investigators and Keepers won't be satisfied with a campaign that is set in one city and its close environs. They're going to want the opportunity to travel into new and unfamiliar places. That means, at the very least, a national police unit. A national Mythos-aware police agency could be modeled on something like the South African Police Service's Occult Related Crimes Unit. Witchcraft scares are quite common in South Africa, with as many as 500 persons being killed in the rural northern provinces between 1990 and 1995 by mob violence carried out against suspected witches. The mob violence was inspired by all the usual suspects: ignorance, bad luck, poverty and natural disasters, but also there were a number of well-publicized murders that were committed by practitioners of traditional African magic, sometimes called "Muti." The Muti homicides were committed to acquire the ingredients for potions to ensure financial and political success. Details are scant, but I suspect that if people were being killed to harvest the ingredients for tribal magic and medicine, then a fair number of the potions being brewed were quack cures for the AIDS virus. After all, South Africa was the same country that had an outbreak of child rape because a local myth said if you had sex with a virgin it would cure all venereal disease. In any case, the high number of these homicides prompted the South African police to create a unit dedicated to investigating crimes whose motives were occult-related. The Occult Related Crimes Unit got some big headlines when Scotland Yard consulted them about the limbless, headless torso of a five-year old Nigerian child found floating in the Thames River in 2001. Considering the cadaver's stomach contents included quartz pellets, ground animal bone and gold, the London police were right to suspect that such a murder could be related to tribal magic. Eventually the ritual was linked to Nigerian animist appeasement of a sea goddess. Mother Hydra, perhaps?

The far less sexy truth about the ORCU is that it was created by an officer named Kobus Jonker, following his conversion to fundamentalist Christianity. Jonker made sure to only permit officers with fundamentalist beliefs to serve in the unit and made numerous statements in the press that demonstrated his primary concern was not tribal magicians, but Satanists. These guys are more interested in looking for backwards-masked satanic rock and roll lyrics than understanding the purposes behind ritual murder in traditional African magic. Too often, when police agencies get involved with investigating occult related crimes on anything more than an ad-hoc basis, we end up with the same old conspiracy theories about a vast international network of satanic killers hunting for sacrifices, more informed by Hollywood horror movies than actual evidence.

Nevertheless a unit like the ORCU makes a good model for a national police unit that Investigators can model a campaign around. Here is a small unit of government-backed investigators dedicated to a category of crime that will give them access to a wide range of criminal cases. After all, there's no telling where signs of occult activity are going to turn up at a crime-scene, especially if you define "signs of occult activity" so broadly that it includes heavy metal albums and pornography. If the Investigators manage to keep their eyes open, maybe they will see that beneath the Satanism and tribal magic there is something else, something older. It warms this old Keeper's greasy black heart to imagine the Investigators finding signs of the Cthulhu Mythos and reporting them to their born-again superiors who ignore or reinterpret the Investigators' finding so that they

comport with traditional views of Satanism right out of the Salem Witch trials. The ORCU wouldn't get too far against an avatar of Nyarlathotep if they come armed with a bible, some holy water, and a bushel of crosses. Perhaps the survivors of such an encounter would be able to reorganize the unit into something that will be able to actually oppose the supernatural evil of the Mythos.

Of course, very specific circumstances lead to the creation of the ORCU. Witch scares, mob violence and murderous Muti practitioners are not likely to prompt the creation of such a unit in Europe or the developed countries of Asia. On the other hand, there are criminal phenomena that can send western populations into apoplexy in the same way that accusations of witchcraft banish all rational thought from an African village.

The ritual abuse/recovered memory scandals of the 1980s resulted in some of the most hysterical prosecutions the United States has ever seen. It was a period that saw the publication and circulation of guidebooks and training manuals for law enforcement agencies to combat the nation-wide and invisible Satanic child abuse conspiracy. Recently, Europe seems to have gone through a spasm of a similar kind. One of the first incidents was the astounding story of the Belgian serial killer Marc Dutroux who not only kidnapped young girls for rape and torture, but also murdered both them and one of his own accomplices. The case got entangled in astounding police incompetence, stories of recovered memories, dubious people claiming to be Dutroux victims, and wild tales that Dutroux was acting as a procurer for a Europe-wide ring of rich and powerful child-molesters. This caused an eight-year delay between the arrest and conviction of Dutroux and his co-defendants. The accusation that a wider conspiracy was covered up by the government gained a lot of cache in Belgium despite a complete lack of evidence.

France has just gone through a trial known as the Outreau Pedophile case where the four people who were definitely involved with child abuse and molestation managed to get other neighbors arrested by implicating them in their crimes. Before they were done one of the accused committed suicide, seven accused spent months in jail before being released for lack of evidence, and ten were convicted of child sex crimes despite the fact that their accusers retracted their statements and confessed to making up the story of a wider conspiracy. Then there was a 2002 case in France where convicted serial killer Patrice Alege managed to muddle his latest prosecution by circulating stories to the press that he committed some of his murders on behalf of rich and powerful French politicians and industrialists to protect their involvement in a secret sado-masochistic sex and drug club. Despite the fact that there is no proof for these accusations one French prosecutor resigned his positions after being accused.

So what has all this got to do with *Delta Green*? These cases indicate a willingness of the public to be swept up by accusations of conspiracies of sexual predators. Perhaps these sorts of witch-hunts could lead to the creation of a dedicated police unit to stem this sort of hysteria, much the same way the South African ORCU was created. Such a unit would give the Investigators access to cases that will lead to uncovering the involvement of the Mythos. A campaign set inside a single national law enforcement unit does have the limitation that the Investigator's authority ends at their nation's border. Keepers should not see this as a drawback since a scenario that forces a group of Investigators beyond their jurisdiction would provide more chal-

lenges. Imagine how frustrated the Investigators will be when they trace the agents of a Mythos cult to another country only to discover that local law enforcement is either bought off, intimidated or co-opted by the cult. At that point, the government Investigators are reduced to being vigilantes if they want to take direct action. They may even be accused of being terrorists.

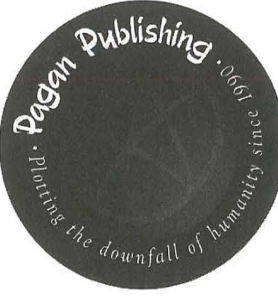
Although Investigators are going to want an agency with an international reach, organizations with international jurisdiction are few and far between. In almost every case, that jurisdiction is extremely limited. In most cases, international task forces are not permanent, but are ad-hoc creations designed to deal with a particular case of international crime and are dissolved as soon as the case is resolved. An exception to this is the newly created Europol agency. Designed as more than just a replacement for the Interpol information sharing system, Europol targets international smuggling and customs violations as their top priorities. Smuggling covers everything from illegal immigrants, white slavery, drugs, money, weapons, antiques, and a host of other items that cultists are going to have on their Solstice wish list. All it takes is one intercepted crate with a basalt idol of some squatting Great Old One to start the Investigators down the road to understanding.


A Europol-based campaign would give a small group of Investigators jurisdiction across the European Union, an entity that is expanding its geographic scope every year. They would begin as normal police officers from diverse backgrounds, but as more layers of the onion are peeled away, they come to understand the horrible truths that they must array themselves against. And that is the part that appeals to me the most about these 'small c' conspiracies. I really like the idea of the Investigators creating their agency as they play the campaign, setting their own rules and making their own plans. I think players appreciate being masters of their own fate, even if that fate is the kind most often encountered while playing *Call of Cthulhu*.

dennis detwiller's

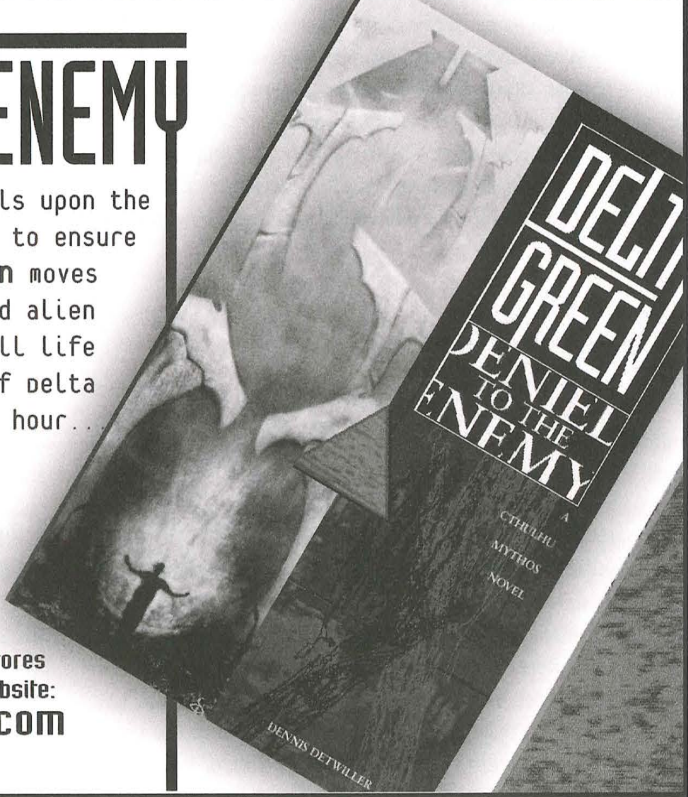
DENIED TO THE ENEMY

As WWII rages, the SS Karatechia calls upon the obscene powers of the Cthulhu Mythos to ensure a Nazi victory. Even as **Delta Green** moves against the Nazis' plans, an epeoc-old alien conspiracy threatens the future of all life on earth. These are the glory days of Delta Green. It is also humanity's darkest hour...





available in hobby stores
near you or at our website:
www.tccorp.com





A regular column for

The Twenty Sides of Terror

by Mike Mearls

Investigative Feats

Feats are an important part of the d20 system. They help create characters that stand out from the pack, as a feat can give you a unique ability with its own bundle of rules and capabilities. This feature is particularly important in the d20 version of *Call of Cthulhu*, as there are no classes to provide you with special abilities to distinguish you from everyone else.

The core d20 *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook provides a number of feats, but many of them focus on combat abilities. While this makes sense, since monsters and villains need feats they can use to stalk investigators, it short-changes player characters. This article expands on the offerings of feats in *Call of Cthulhu*. It also introduces some alternate rules for gaining feats that you can use to grant investigators more feats. Since game balance isn't much of an issue in *Call of Cthulhu* — Mythos creatures outgun the investigators at almost every turn — you can afford to give characters more options and abilities to reflect their backgrounds and training.

Stress feats allow you to find strength in the depths of mortal danger. Viewing a Mythos creature is a life-altering event, one that can trigger new talents and capabilities that you never knew you had.

Stress Feats

A beat reporter for a small town newspaper accidentally draws a cultist's attention while tailing him. The villain attacks him with a spell, but he draws on reserves of courage he never knew he had to shrug off the magical attack and escape. In a time of crisis, the journalist responded far better than anyone could have predicted.

Stress feats reflect the human capability to transcend the bounds of the typical or average in the face of great danger. These feats only work in situations that involve the loss of sanity or in times of great danger. At the Keeper's discretion, he can secretly assign these feats to the investigators, as they have little idea of the potential that lies within them. In this case, a player either tells the Keeper that he wants one of these feats and the Keeper selects it for him, or the Keeper can hand one out to each investigator as a bonus feat.

Each stress feat lists a trigger condition. When that condition is met, the feat activates and the investigator gains its benefits if he wants them. When the condition is gone or when the duration listed with the trigger elapses, the feat's abilities fade.

Adrenaline Rush [Stress Feat]

In times of great danger, you draw on hidden reserves of strength to boost your capabilities. You might suddenly lift a much greater weight than you can carry, or your mind lunges into overdrive to allow you to solve a puzzle much faster than usual.

Trigger: You or an ally must drop below half your maximum hit points. Alternatively, one of your allies suffers the effects of a temporary or permanent insanity. In either case, you gain this feat's benefits for one hour. You can use this feat once per day and may choose to refrain from using it when you meet the trigger conditions. If you meet them again, you can opt to use it.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to a single attribute. You must select this attribute when you take this feat. You gain all the benefits of the heightened attribute, including an improved bonus to skill checks, more hit points, a bonus to attacks and damage, bonus to saves, and so forth.

Special: You can select this feat more than once, taking a different ability score with it each time. If you suffer insanity of any form, you immediately lose this feat's benefits and do not regain them until you are cured or otherwise return to normal.

Heroic Sacrifice [Stress Feat]

Your impulse to help others is so strong that you willingly place your life in peril to save theirs.

Trigger: An attack or effect that targets or inflicts hit points of damage against a friend who stands next to you. You can use this feat once per day.

Benefit: If a friend of yours suffers damage from an attack, spell, or other effect, you can choose to swap places with him and face the full effect yourself. Your friend takes half damage and you suffer the other half, and the two of you swap places. Any additional effects that go with a successful attack, such as a nightgaunt's clutch ability, are resolved against you. You also physically change places with your friend.

If you and your ally are caught in an explosion or other attack that affects an area, determine if your ally would take damage after the two of you swapped positions. If so, you take normal damage for being in the area of effect plus half the damage that your ally would've suffered.

Special: If your character dies while using this ability, your allies gain +1D4 SAN as they are inspired by your selfless sacrifice. A single investigator can only gain this benefit once per day.

Last Gasp [Stress Feat]

Your iron will allows you to complete one last, important action before you fall unconscious or tumble into madness.

Trigger: Your hit points are reduced to below 0, subdual damage received is greater than your hit points, you fail a massive damage save, or you go insane. You can use this feat once per day.

Benefit: If you die because of hit point damage or a failed massive damage save, or you go insane, you do not suffer the effects of death, unconsciousness, or madness for one more action. You can take one more action, at the end of which you suffer whatever effect befell you. Note that an effect that kills you without inflicting hit points of damage, such as a spell that turns you into a stone statue, does not allow you to use this feat.

Special: You can choose this feat more than once. Each time you select it, you gain an additional daily use of it.

Panicked Reflex [Stress Feat]

Sometimes, your propensity to act without thinking proves useful. While a sudden event or horror may surprise others, you react to it before you even have a clear idea of what has happened.

Trigger: You may use this feat if you are flat-footed. You may use this feat a number of times per day equal to your Dexterity modifier + 1, minimum of 1 use.

Benefit: If you are flat-footed at the beginning of an encounter, make a Reflex save with a DC equal to each creature's initiative result. If you beat a creature's initiative, you are not flat-footed against it.

Panicked Rush [Stress Feat]

When things go terribly wrong, you have a talent for bolting to safety.

Trigger: You may use this feat when a fellow investigator, defined as a character run by another player, dies. You can gain this benefit an unlimited number of times per day, but only once per round. If three of your friends die, you do not get to immediately use it three times.

Benefit: You gain an additional move action on your next turn.

General Feats

The following feats have no special rules or restrictions placed on them.

Cultural Chameleon

You have lived an exciting life abroad in a variety of cultures. You understand the local dialect, traditions, and dress well enough to pass yourself off as a local with the help of a disguise.

Prerequisite: You must speak at least two languages and have 5+ ranks in Disguise.

Benefit: When you are in a culture whose native language you speak, you gain a +2 bonus to all Gather Information checks and a +4 bonus to Disguise checks if you do adopt the guise of a typical person, such as a laborer, a salesman, merchant, or office worker.

Linguist

You have studied a wide range of languages, perhaps because you grew up in a culture where multiple languages were used, you studied a variety of languages from a young age, or some other factor.

Benefit: Each time you select this feat you learn two additional languages.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times, gaining two additional languages each time you select it.

Madman's Insight

Your madness has give you strange insights into the world. Each time your mind breaks, it reforms itself in a slightly different, perhaps better, way.

Benefit: Each time you go temporarily or indefinitely insane, you gain a madness skill rank that you can add to any of your skills. Madness skill ranks can take your skill above their normal, level-regulated rank limit.

Master Translator

Your experience with a wide variety of languages allows you to translate the general content or gist of a message.

Prerequisite: You must know at least five different languages, each from a distinct culture or linguistic family. For example, if you speak English, Indian, Japanese, Russian, and Nahuatl, you would have a broad enough experience to take this feat.

Benefit: You can make an Intelligence check with a bonus equal to the number of languages you speak to translate writing of a human origin. If you have ranks Cthulhu Mythos, you can also translate non-human writings at a -10 penalty. Reduce the penalty by 1, to a minimum of zero, for every 2 ranks you have in that skill.

Use the Master Translator table to determine the Intelligence check DC. Each DC includes an example of the information you find. A single check takes one hour of study for every 2 pages in the document.

Master Translator table:

Translation	DC
Basic gist of a document.	15
<i>"This is a book of prayers and ceremonies to the Keeper in the Mist."</i>	
Summary of document, including all key points.	20
<i>"It details how to create a great storm cloud that creates a gate to the Keeper."</i>	
Detailed points and information.	25
<i>"I've translated the basic prayers and now have a grasp of the cult's rituals."</i>	
Complete information from the book.	30
<i>"I could pose as a high priest and lead ceremonies with this information."</i>	

Practiced Researcher

While you have little in-depth training in a subject, you are remarkably skilled at finding information on it.

Prerequisite: Research 8 ranks or Skill Focus (Research). In addition, you must have 4 or more ranks in two Knowledge skills.

Benefit: If you have access to a major library, you have ranks in two Knowledge skills of your choice equal to half your ranks in Research. The library in question must stock information regarding the two subjects for you to gain this benefit. You can change the two Knowledge skills by spending one month in a university-quality library doing research on the new areas.

Steel Will

You have such intense control over your mental faculties that even in the depths of madness, your personality sometimes shines through.

Prerequisite: Iron Will.

Benefit: While you suffer from a temporary insanity, there is a 50% chance per round that you can act as normal. You cannot act normal for more than 10 minutes total per day. If you suffer from indefinite insanity, there is a 25% chance per round that you can act normal. Again, you cannot act normal for more than 10 minutes total per day. You can choose if you want to check to see if you can act as normal each round until you exhaust this ability for the day.

Trembling Menace

Your brush with madness has left you with the unnerving ability to adopt a pose that suggests a unhealthy, perhaps psychotic, mental state.

Prerequisite: You must have gone temporarily or permanently insane at least once.

Benefit: You can adopt a glowering, trembling, vaguely disturbing stature and attitude that makes others nervous and fearful. You activate this ability as a standard action. While it operates, you gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate and Bluff checks. In addition, as a full-round action you can deliver a short monologue using either Intimidate or Bluff. You make ghastly threats or describe horrific images from a madman's imagination. One human target of your choice must make a Will save with your check's result as the DC. If this save fails, the target becomes shaken. He takes a -2 penalty to attacks and checks for 1 minute.

This ability works only against sane opponents. A madman may simply enjoy the banter.

You can use this feat equal to your Charisma bonus +1 times per day.

Increasing Investigator Feats

Sometimes, the players may feel that they don't have enough feats to build the investigators they want to play. This can be particularly important for players who want to depict a scholar or other academic who has a tremendous range of skills and abilities.

Most d20 games have classes or experience progression based on the idea of balance. The characters must be balanced against each other so that no one PC overshadows the rest, while the characters as a group must be a good match for the monsters and enemies they face.

Since d20 *Call of Cthulhu* presents a situation where combat is normally a bad idea, granting the PCs extra feats has a smaller effect on the game than you might anticipate. You can allow a PC to take an extra feat at 1st level and bonus feats at 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th levels without unbalancing things. Even combat-related feats are only useful against thugs and other manageable threats. Powerful Mythos entities are too tough for Weapon Focus or Power Attack to play a big role in combat.

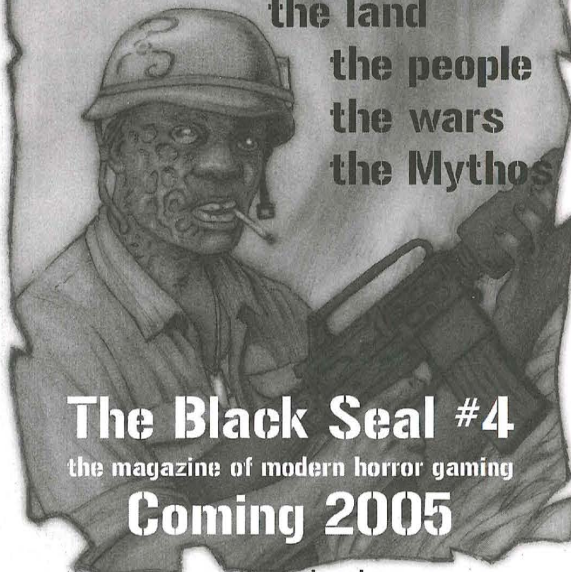
Theoretically, you could grant the PCs one feat per level, but this might prove daunting. While Cthulhu will happily eat investigators regardless of the total number of feats they have, that large a number can prove difficult to manage. Players may forget they have a feat, or they might find that they develop abilities that have little to do with their character concepts simply because they have so many feats available.

Alternatively, you can allow the players to exchange an ability score increase for an extra bonus feat. When a player gains 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, or 20th levels, they can opt for either a permanent +1 bonus to one ability score or another feat.

"Every minute the Great Old Ones squat in the bush they get stronger"

Vietnam...

**the land
the people
the wars
the Mythos**



The Black Seal #4

the magazine of modern horror gaming

Coming 2005

www.theblackseal.org

UNSPEAKABLE VAULT (OF DOOM)

or: Weird Tales from the Old Ones...

A LOVECRAFTIAN COMIC BY FRANCOIS LAUNET



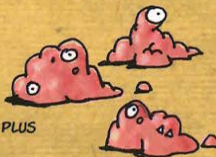
CTHULHOO

FREQ: UNIQUE
WEIGHT: TONS
GREAT, GREEN.
KNOWN HOBBIES: SLEEPING;
DREAMING; SNORKELING;
EATING CULTISTS.



DAGOON

FREQ: UNIQUE
WEIGHT: AT LEAST 5 TONS, PLUS
FISHBONES AND FISHEYES.
BLUE-GREEN, WET, SCALY, MUTE
AS A FISH, BUT NO FISH CARRIES
A FIVE TON MONOLITH.

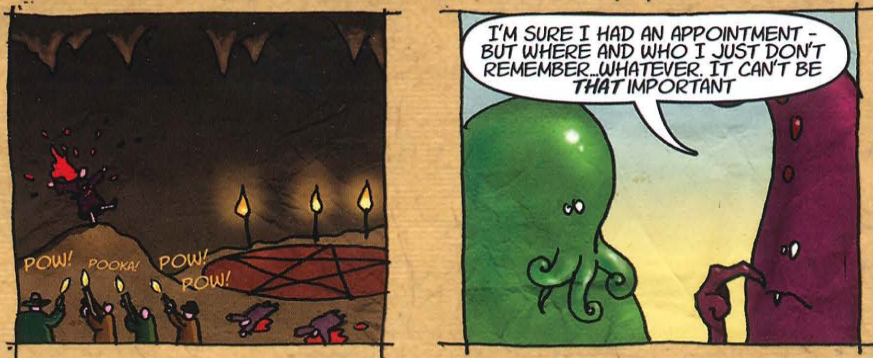
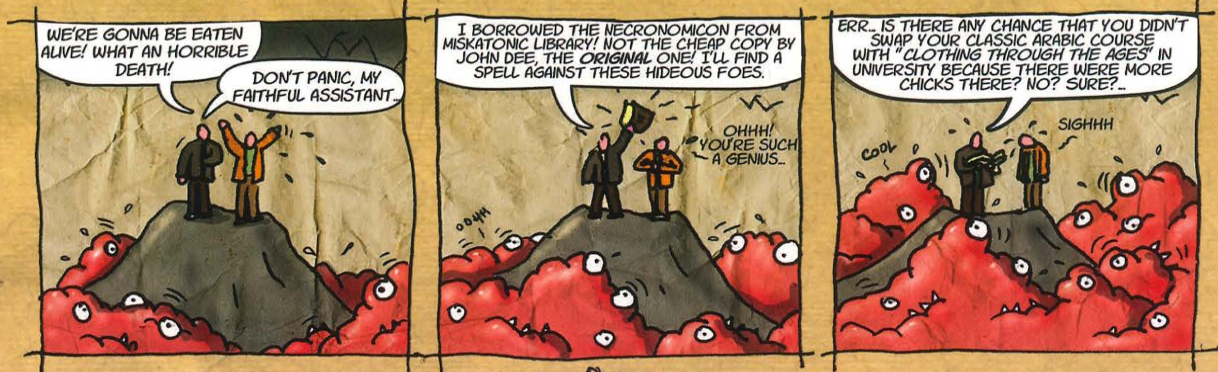


SHOGGIES:

FREQ: COMMON
WEIGHT: DEPENDS
PINK, SHAPELESS. LOTS OF EYES, TEETH AND
OTHER UNSPEAKABLE ORGANS, AND
REALLY DUMB. FORMERLY MADE TO BE
SLAVES (BUT IDIOT SLAVES ARE NOT
THAT USEFUL)

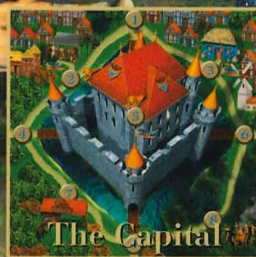
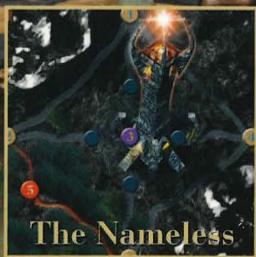
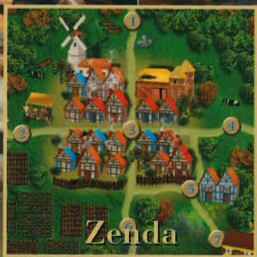
NYARLY

FREQ: UNIQUE, BUT HAS MANY LOOKS.
WEIGHT: UNKNOWN
NASTY, BLACK. CAN'T KEEP A SECRET
(ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S ABOUT ATOMIC
WEAPONRY). LURKS A LOT.



RETURN OF THE HEROES

Experience exciting adventures!



Return of the Heroes is your key to a fantastic world!

Return of the Heroes is more than a game, it is your tale! You play a talented but inexperienced character. This will change during the game.

Experience exciting adventures in the capital, barter on the markets of Zenda, fight against giants, trolls, or other dark enemies. Eventually you have to overcome the cruel

Nameless in his tower and you will return a hero! The challenges of the game are decided by strategy and a bit of luck with the dice.

Return of the Heroes is a game for the whole family.

This is your portal to the fantastic world of elves, dwarves, mages, fighters, and clerics!

Game Contents

- 16 different region maps
- 5 double-sided character sheets
- 10 game figures
- 4 manor houses
- 60 wooden experience cubes in three colors
- 30 wooden gold pieces
- 5 six-sided dice
- glossary
- 23 hit points represented by red glass stones
- 4 semi-precious stones
- 8 cards with heroic deeds
- 6 cards of the Nameless
- 33 number chits
- 106 game counters
- 1 cloth bag
- rules + introductory game setup sheet



1 to 4 players Ages 10 & Up ca. 90 min

Available at a store near you!

Infos at www.us.pegasus.de



Pegasus Press