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H. P. Lovecraft's

# Worlds of Cthulhu

## Brood of the Beetle

Entomological horror in the forests of Twenties Vermont

## The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man

Part One of Dennis Detwiler's masterful DREAMLANDS mini-campaign

## Sunset at Sandy Gulch

Posses and Indian shamans in a CTHULHU WILD WEST scenario

## Sword of Sneseru

Part Two of an ancient Mythos fighting conspiracy

## A Slothful God

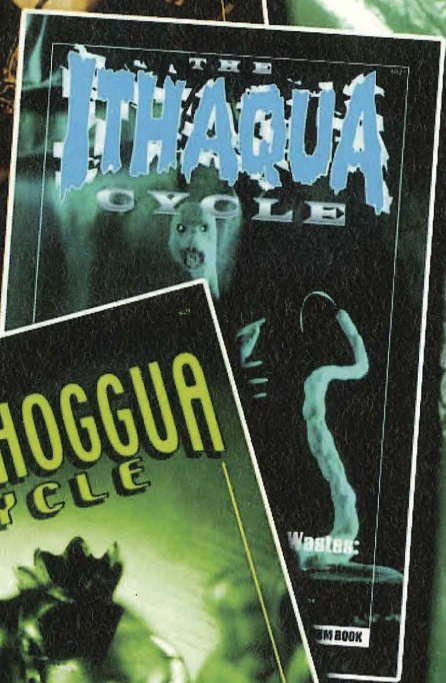
The worship of Tsathoggua through the centuries

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

'Directives from A-Cell'  
'Keeper's Corner' columns

CALL of  
CTHULHU

dangerous worlds,  
strange gods,  
dark horror.



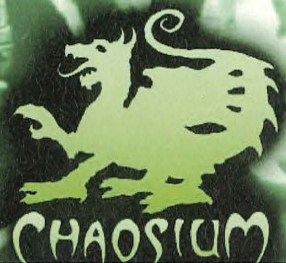
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**Call of Cthulhu® Fiction** focuses on single entities, concepts, or authors significant to readers and fans of H.P. Lovecraft.

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## Contents

Editorial .....	4
The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man .....	5
The Sword of Saferu .....	38
Sunset at Sandy Gulch .....	51
The Worship of Tsathoggua through the Centuries .....	68
Brood of the Beetle .....	78
The Perfect Non-Player Character .....	123
Directives from A-Cell .....	127
Unspeakable Vault (of Doom) .....	131

# Editorial

Welcome to issue six of Worlds of Cthulhu. This issue we have a new look courtesy of the fine graphic chaps at Pegasus studios. As usual we have an issue packed full of the finest Call of Cthulhu gaming material available. We have two masters of Call of Cthulhu's scenario form writing for us in this issue.

I'm proud to have part one of Dennis Detwiler's "The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man" campaign in this issue. Some of you will be aware of a Dreamlands opening sequence written by Dennis and available freely on the Internet. Well, this is the rest of the campaign. Dennis has brought to his treatment of the Dreamlands the same imagination and playfulness as he has with his Delta Green and Twenties material. Dennis's Dreamlands is fresh, exciting and horrifying. Even if you are a sworn critic of the Dreamlands setting I would advise that you give "The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man" a second chance, as there is much in this campaign that is simply stunning.

Frank Heller may be my boss, but he does write very good scenarios as well. "The Brood of the Beetle" is a good old classic whatdunit in the isolated surrounding of Twenties Vermont. It's a good starting scenario for inexperienced investigators as the opposition isn't too oppressive; and it's a good scenario to remind more seasoned but perhaps careless investigators the importance of prior preparation and planning. Long-time readers may remember the Cthulhu Matrix article about scenario design we published in the first issue of Worlds of Cthulhu. Well, "The Brood of the Beetle" is a scenario built on those design principles for those interested in emulating good scenario construction.

With Oscar Rios's "Sunset at Sandy Gulch" scenario we return to Cthulhu Wild West, rules for which we published in Worlds of Cthulhu #2. "Sunset at Sandy Gulch" may be a more conventional shoot 'em up scenario but there's plenty of thrills, frights and spills on the way. Yee haw!

Fans of Call of Cthulhu and Cthulhu gaming may well be wondering whether a renaissance or perhaps even a Bronze Age of Call of Cthulhu publishing may have started in 2008.

First of all, Pagan finally managed to reprint Delta Green last year, followed by a limited hardcover print run of "Delta Green: Eyes Only". As our back cover advert promises Pagan intend to publish the "Bumps in the Night" scenario collection, the "Final Flight" campaign and the mass market paperback printing of "Delta Green: Eyes Only" in 2008.

Then Pelgrane Press released "Trail of Cthulhu" in March 2008. "Trail of Cthulhu" is a fresh take by Ken Hite on the Cthulhu Mythos using Robin D. Laws's GUMSHOE system, and is supposedly compatible with Call of Cthulhu. "Trail of Cthulhu" was warmly welcomed by gamers on its releases and there are a slew of supplements and adventures promised for the game.

Chaosium's „Malleus Monstrorum“ sold well enough to be reprinted. "Secrets of Morocco" has appeared. Chaosium also have several as yet unnamed Call of Cthulhu projects which may appear in the second half of 2008. Chaosium's big news of course is the „Basic Role-playing“ rulebook. Whilst not strictly Call of Cthulhu the new BRP rulebook will be of interest to keepers and players wishing to run a customised Call of Cthulhu game.

Lastly as WOC6 was going to print Chaosium announced a slew of new licensees – Miskatonic River Press, Super Genius Games, Reality Deviant Publications, Sixtystone Press and Goodman Games. Supplements have already begun to appear.

Things are indeed looking good for Call of Cthulhu players and keepers.

Iä! Iä! Fhtagn until next time.

Adam Crossingham  
Chief Editor, Worlds of Cthulhu magazine



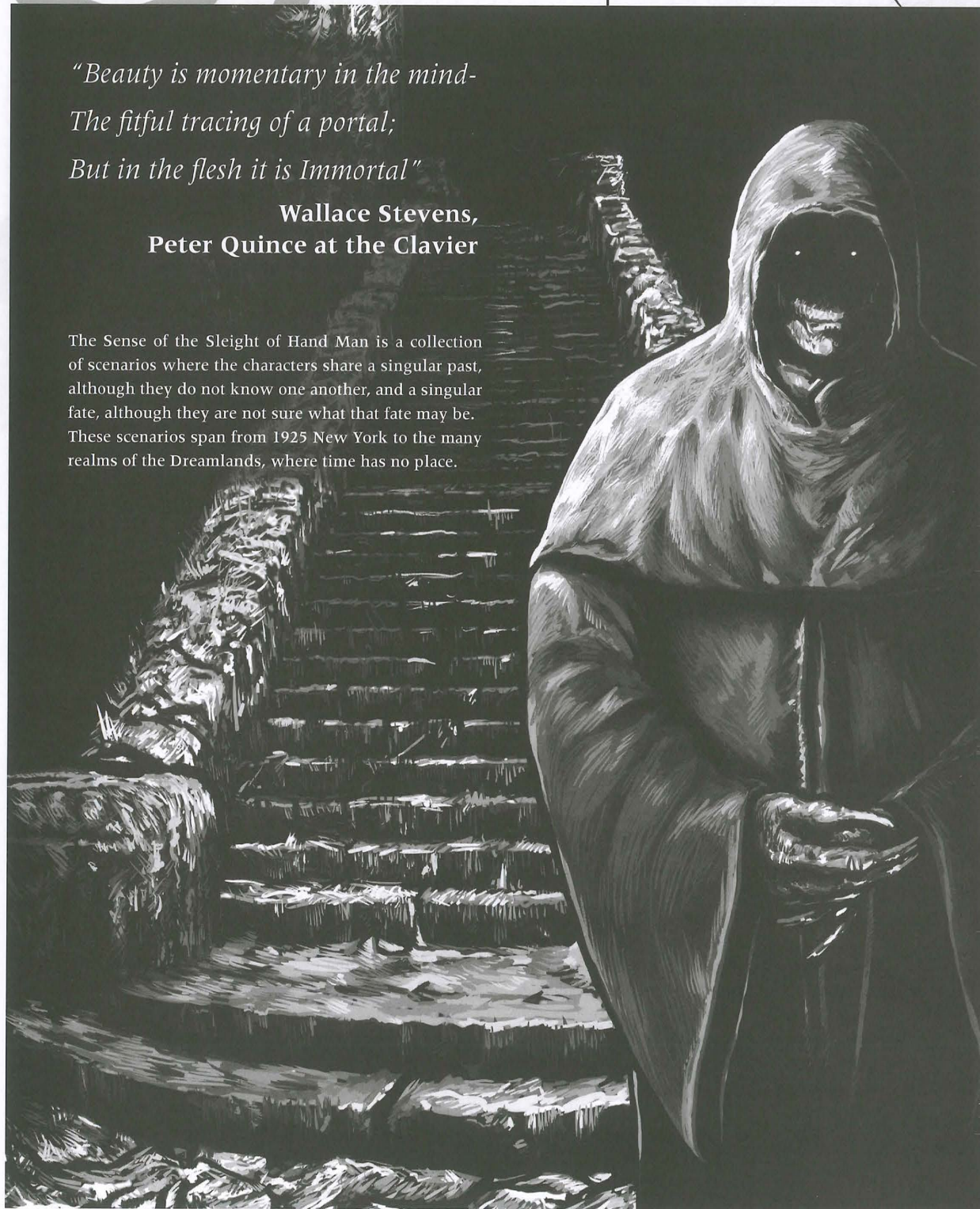
# The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man

By Dennis Detwiller

*"Beauty is momentary in the mind-  
The fitful tracing of a portal;  
But in the flesh it is Immortal"*

**Wallace Stevens,  
Peter Quince at the Clavier**

The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man is a collection of scenarios where the characters share a singular past, although they do not know one another, and a singular fate, although they are not sure what that fate may be. These scenarios span from 1925 New York to the many realms of the Dreamlands, where time has no place.



## About Character Creation

In this series of scenarios, both the Players' and the Keeper's creativity are put to the test. Each player takes the role of two physical characters: one on Earth, and one in the Dreamlands – two characters that share one mind.

The players create their 1925 Earth characters normally, with the exception that they all must be addicted to Opium. Be certain to make the players detail these characters lavishly. Imply that details – such as the character's back-story, their hopes, dreams and fears – matter. Of course, they have no idea what's coming, and it's best for the Keeper to keep the nature of the adventure a secret – after all, it will be far more startling and shocking if the players don't know they will be playing in the Dreamlands.

The Keeper creates their Dreamland surrogate bodies, normally, with the exception of their POW, INT and EDU scores and all related values such as Idea, Know and Luck, remaining constant between both characters (including skills). It is hoped this odd arrangement will provide both the Players and Keeper with a new and exciting experience.

Through the use of a special drug on Earth, the characters' minds and knowledge are moved to another, formerly soul-less body in the Dreamlands, from which the previous soul has been removed. See *Two: Life in a Dream – Like a New Knowledge of Reality* on page 10 for more details.

## An Overview

It is said New York City is a city of vices. The year is 1925 and it is the height of Prohibition, but the flow of drugs and liquor continues unhindered, through darker corridors, in darker hands. For the few who can afford it, opium is the drug of choice.

Very few can for very long.

The characters have fallen behind on their payments to their supplier of opiates, Mr. Lao. He has shown his displeasure with polite threats and demonstrations of what his men, the Tongs, will do if he does not receive his money. These demonstrations involved swords.

Dragged towards what each character is sure will be their turn under the swords of the Tongs, they instead find themselves face to face with each other and Mr. Lao. Lao offers them a last smoke; of a type of opium he calls *Bywandine* before his men complete their task.

The drug is smoked, and as they pass into the haze, prepared now for the knives and blood and death on a wave of opium, the characters realize they are somewhere else...

That they are someone else...

In truth, Mr. Lao is a trader of much more than drugs in the empty world of Earth, he trades in Kadath, in Celephaïs, in Leng. He trades souls.

Mr. Lao is a rarity; it is unusual to know oneself in both the waking and sleeping world. But Lao was born in Leng, conterminous on both Earth and the Dreamlands. He has used this talent to his advantage, teaching skills to his dream twin and vice versa. They have known each other in dreams for many years, Mr. Lao and Sa'n Seith, his Dreamlands counterpart, and have talked often with one another. They have also struck bargains.

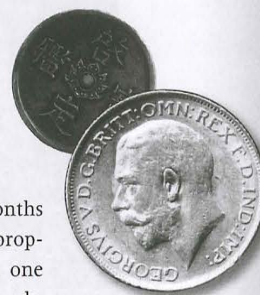
When Mr. Lao discovers a person of powerful spirit who has also aroused his displeasure, he sends them to Sa'n Seith, using the mixture of herbs called *Bywandine*. This exceedingly intricate mixture of rare plants, some of

which grow on the plains near Leng, takes many months to prepare. He has still to perfect the process. Mixed properly, it causes the imbiber to shift physically from one realm to another. Either from Earth to the Dreamlands, or vice versa.

A fresh human is of great value in the Dreamlands. Sa'n Seith is a man from Leng, a hunched pockmarked satyr who serves the faceless monstrosities from the dark side of the moon, the Moon-beasts. Long ago, the powerful moon-beasts subjugated the Men from Leng, and their race lives now only to serve them. Seith provides fresh humans of powerful soul, and in exchange as they have done for eons, the faceless ones produce the rare Blood Gems. It is unknown where they come from; even the Men from Leng have no idea. These gems are sought after prizes in the realms of the Dreamlands. Their value is immense.

In truth, the Moon-beasts do not mine the gems from secret places on the Moon; they torture them from the Humans provided by the Men from Leng. The gems are the souls of these victims, ripped free by magics just short of death. Souls traded with and bought and sold every day.

Mr. Lao is to send the characters over to the Dreamland city of Sarkomand, where they will be transported to the dark side of the moon, and the cities of the Moon-beasts by Sa'n Seith. In the past, his mix of the *Bywandine* has taken many days to work, slowly erasing the imbiber from the Earth, and re-coalescing them in physical form in the Dreamlands. But the last of Lao's *Bywandine* was imperfectly mixed. Instead of a gradual physical shift, the *Bywandine* causes only the character's *mind* to be flung over to the Dreamlands, their soul instantly disappearing from Earth, disintegrating their earthly physical forms with it. Their spirit inhabits the first and nearest form in the Dreamlands found without consciousness, the discarded bodies of soul-less prisoners, their essence squeezed into the Blood Gems.



# One: The Tongs, Mr. Lao, Bywantine = Came the Attendant Byzantines...

*Profound poetry of the poor and of the dead,  
As in the last drop of the deepest blood,  
As it falls from the heart and lies there to be seen,  
-Wallace Stevens, To an Old Philosopher in Rome*

The Tongs' threats have gone unanswered, the characters' debts have remained, and Lao has grown impatient. They have been watched, and their schedules have been noted, and when Lao feels it is time, they are all brought in.

At Lao's leisure, a gang of 12 tongs show up out of the blue to the character's place of employment, home, or favorite speakeasy and drag them out. If the character resists, the tongs manhandle him/her, grabbing arms and

legs and moving rapidly towards the exit. No matter how much the character makes a disturbance, no one does anything. Not even the police. The Tong is a wealthy and well-connected gang.

The leader, Tsing, encourages characters to come along quietly. If they are cooperative, they remain surrounded at all times by gang members but are not openly threatened. Any escape attempts will be frowned upon, and the gang will pursue any escapees, even to the death. Persistently foolish characters may get themselves seriously injured or killed.

The tongs' method of transport is two beat-up 1921 Packard Twin 6's, to which the characters are ushered if they are smart.

During the drive, if asked, the tongs simply state that Mr. Lao has invited them to Dinner. No other answers can be gleaned from the tongs no matter the method of inquiry.

### Tong Gang Members, Implacable Hired Hands

	STR	DEX	INT	CON	APP	POW	SIZ	EDU	HP	DB
#1	9	12	10	13	10	10	12	5	12	-
#2	11	9	12	11	11	9	9	7	8	-
#3	18	12	9	10	10	10	12	7	11	+1D4
#4	10	14	12	12	10	11	11	5	11	-
#5	11	11	13	10	12	10	13	7	11	-
#6	13	11	11	15	16	13	10	8	12	-
#7	17	11	11	10	9	11	15	9	12	+1D4
#8	10	10	9	9	11	11	9	5	9	-
#9	11	15	10	12	8	11	13	7	12	-
#10	9	11	17	15	10	12	11	5	11	-
#11	18	12	11	10	10	9	9	6	9	+1D4
#12	11	9	10	12	11	11	16	5	14	+1D4



*Lao's tongs: no questions, no resistance,  
no escape*

#### Attacks in Common:

- All - Punch 65%, damage 1D4+db
- All - Knife 48%, damage 1D4+2+db
- #3, 4, 9, 10, & 11 .38 Revolver 25%, damage 1D10

#### Skills in Common: Dodge (DEX×2)+10%,

- Hide 35%,
- Other Language (English) 23%,
- Own Language (Mandarin Chinese) 55%.

## The Peach Blossom Restaurant

This establishment is located in New York's Hell's Kitchen, a small area heavily populated by Italian, Chinese and Polish Immigrants. The restaurant does no business, except the illicit dealings of Mr. Lao, its owner.

The Tongs – Lao's servants – control the block, Yancey Street, and patrol it regularly in roving packs. Dozens of tongs lounge in front of the restaurant, playing dice or listening to scratchy records on a bright red phonograph,

glaring at passersby. Any number of them openly displays firearms, usually pistols, with indifference.

The Peach Blossom Restaurant was won in a turf war with the Cho Sai Gang in 1920. Its original owner is now a permanent fixture on the bottom of the Hudson River and his surviving men are now tongs.

Since that time, the restaurant has been Mr. Lao's place of business. In a somewhat unusual arrangement, Lao himself handles the sale of drugs from the establishment. He usually only makes the first sale to new customers,

doing so for many reasons. With his formidable library of spells he can tell many things about a person by magical observation. It is only those customers of strong soul (i.e. a high POW statistic) that he continues to sell to in person. He maintains a list of these people, and extensive files, in case he is called upon to send them to Sarkomand to serve his moon-beast masters.

The characters know the restaurant and neighborhood well, as they have been there many times to buy their opium from Lao before their money dried up.

The restaurant has a dingy, poorly kept front and everything in it is covered in a fine layer of dust. It is the classic Chinese restaurant, done up in old red velvet and gaudy gold paint, with tattered paintings and rotting felt tabletops.

Only the former kitchen and back rooms are kept in an orderly state. The kitchen is used to process the amber raw opium into opium paste, and 24 hours a day several men and women work processing the opium.

The office is Mr. Lao's domain. It is incredibly lavish, with fine rugs, large sitting pillows and silk hangings. A large silver and gold water pipe with seven stems is mounted in a finely cut rosewood table at the room's center. A small alcove to the rear conceals a small plain wood desk, chair and file-cabinets.

The characters are led together to the office to meet with Mr. Lao, perhaps for the last time.

### The Secrets of Mr. Lao's Office

Hidden among the many exotic objects in Mr. Lao's office are several more esoteric items from the Dreamlands. Some of these are Earthly tomes which deal with the fantastic world of Dreams. Many of these have been transported physically through Dreamland gates to the Waking World by ghouls in exchange for Earthly magical services. Still others have been dictated to him in dream by his counterpart, Sa'n Seith, and have been meticulously recorded in varying files and folios, too numerous to fully document.

On the plain wood desk in the alcove are two books:

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*"And yet within endless ecstasies I did begin to spy a pattern, a form of a world more complex and colourful than any I had known before. I longed to be there at any cost."*

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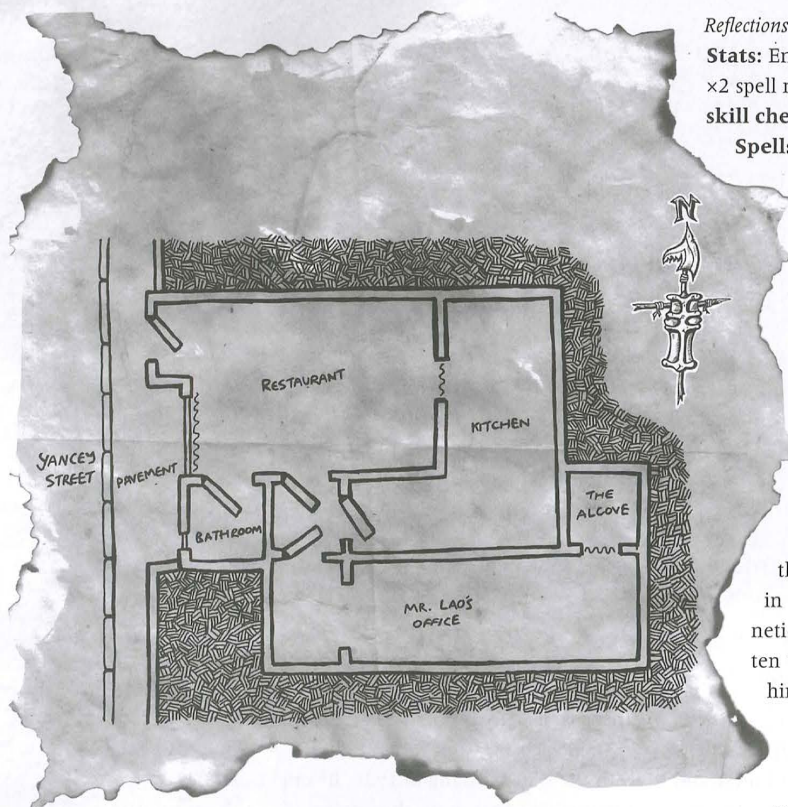
#### Reflections Upon the Other World.

**Stats:** English, +2% Cthulhu Mythos, 1/1D4-2 Sanity, ×2 spell modifier, study time: 5 weeks,  
**skill checks:** Pharmacy.

**Spells:** Create Bywandine, Transcendental Mind, The Measure of the Soul.

This book was published in a limited run for a small theosophical society that led a short but popular existence in 1890s London, known as the *Order of the Traveler*. The group's leader and book's author was one Arthur Emery Smythe, a failed poet and drunk, who late in life became involved in mysticism and drugs.

Beginning with a small congregation of many "upstanding" people, Smyth snowballed his organization into one of the more lucrative theosophical societies in London by 1899. Due in part to his magnetic personality, and his ability with the written word, Smyth rebuffed attempts to discredit him, invited members of the press to participate in "rituals", and drew more members, totaling 120 before the incident in 1899. Smyth actually managed to proselytize several journalists during a period when it was popular for the Press to discredit mediums and false prophets.



The Peach Blossom Restaurant, Yancey Street, Hell's Kitchen, NY



This book details Smyth's "discovery" of the World of Dreams, which he named the "World of Fancy", which was made possible by a special mixture of an opiate drug, called *Bywandine*. The mixture's recipe was given to him by an Indian fakir in Bombay on one of his many travels.

With this drug, one could travel for a time to the World of Fancy, mentally, leaving a sleeping form behind on Earth. It does warn however, that an improper mixture will cause deviations, although what they might be are not mentioned.

Smyth believed that this limited travel was incidental to a true spiritual transfer to the other realm, which he claims to have later perfected. This new mixture of the *Bywandine* drug causes a permanent transfer of mind and body to the other realm. For this, many varying and exceedingly rare chemicals and plants were required, some found only in the realm of dreams.

The book also details the town in the Dreamlands which Smyth frequented, that of Celephaïs, where he spends endless time composing poetry, and enjoying the haunting beauty of the city in which none may age. In fact he may still be found there along with all 120 members of the *Order of the Traveler*, as they all disappeared from Earth in 1899, after imbibing the new form of the more potent *Bywandine*.

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*"The abilities of those beyond, the Gods we consider immeasurable and immutable, are a careful interplay of powers we perceive as such simply because we cannot comprehend the vast and true glory of the universe."*

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*The Instruction of Tlane.*

**Stats:** Oeuth, +4% Cthulhu Mythos, 1/1D6 Sanity, ×3 spell modifier, study time: 10 Weeks, skill checks: Other Language (Oeuth)

**Spells:** Eye of True Sight, Soul Measure, Endless Rhyme, The Flutes of Nar-Haal, Word of Doubt, Morhala's Gate.

An ancient and battered folio, this tome is written in a language not native to Earth, and will stump even the best Earthly linguist. The characters used are tiny interconnected symbols, reminiscent of both Sanskrit and Chinese. In actuality, it is the language Oeuth, that of the Men from Leng. The paper is from a bizarre animal skin not identifiable by Earthly science. If found by the authorities, this tome may become the next Voynich Manuscript.

This book predates Earth itself, and is the grimoire of one of the greatest enchanters of all time, Tlane of Sarkomand. This wizard perished thousands of years before Sarkomand fell to the Moon-beasts and passed his Grimoire down through the hands of the powerful of his dwindling race, where it finally fell to Sa'n Seith, a lim-

ited but adept sorcerer, who in turn gave it to his Earthly counterpart Lao to study and learn from.

Most of the spells contained within the book are coded and have yet to be deciphered. So far only five out of the 30 plus spells known to be recorded in the book are understood.

The successfully deciphered spells each have notations in the column giving the proper translation method (into Oeuth, that is, not English). The others, although covered in hand written notes, offer no such solutions.

### A Final Smoke

Mr. Lao is polite to a fault, asking the characters to sit around the rosewood table. With a faint smile on his face, he recommends that the characters get to know each other, as they will be spending a length of time together, with this cryptic comment, he excuses himself into the alcove.

Any character attempting to observe what Lao does in the alcove behind the silks may make a halved Spot Hidden roll; or a Sneak roll if they wish to actually get up and move over towards the alcove. If either is attempted and successful, Lao is seen to remove a key from the base of a small Katchka doll, and with it, open a locked drawer on the desk. From it, he removes a small teak box.

If they fail at the roll or are caught in the act of spying, Lao smiles and suggests "keeping eyes to oneself can become doubly difficult with such behavior". Then going on to tell how many Medici courtiers ended up having their eyes put out due to their overly curious nature.

Lao carefully opens the teak box and removes a packet of dried yellowish powder: *Bywandine*. Anyone making a Spot Hidden roll notices that the powder is different than powdered opium, the coloring is slightly off.

If asked, Lao explains that it is a special opiate called *Bywandine*, and that it comes from his homeland of Leng in the Far East.

After igniting the burner, Lao invites the characters to smoke, and confesses that, even in his restaurant they cannot do with screaming.

Those characters that refuse find themselves at gunpoint, a polite, silver automatic, in the hands of Lao, revealed from the folds of his robe.

"Indulge yourselves, I insist."

Anyone refusing further finds themselves tied down on a butchers table in the kitchen instead, injected painfully in the thigh with prepared *Bywandine*. After the drug takes effect, they are returned to the office.



## Two: Life in a Dream Like a New Knowledge of Reality

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*It was not from the vast ventriloquism*

*Of sleep's faded papier-mâché...*

*The sun was coming from the outside.*

-Wallace Stevens,

Not Ideas About The Thing But The Thing Itself

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### Suggestions

Chaosium's wonderful supplement *H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* does much to outline the world of dream, as well as provide rules to handle the "dreaming" skill – the power to change the reality of the Dreamlands by will alone. We recommend finding a copy of *H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* – it will go a long way to supplementing the ideas presented here.

However, it is suggested that keepers of this scenario DO NOT permit the use of the rules for "dreaming" presented therein in this campaign.

The reasons are twofold: this scenario is about *lack of control* and *surprise*. Once the players establish a stable footing in the world of Dreams, it ceases to be the world of Dreams, and becomes yet another game system to exploit or abuse. When a player can predict with certainty the outcome of an action; it ceases being fun.

To this end, it is suggested that the Keeper ignore the first section of the Dreamlands book – *Entering the Dreamlands* – and instead utilize the rules found below.

### Life In A Dream

The world of Dreams – known to those with esoteric knowledge as the Dreamlands – is like a reflection of the minds of those who occupy the Waking World of Earth (as well as hundreds of other worlds). As those in the Waking World sleep, their alter egos populate the Dreamlands, and vice versa. Most denizens of Earth have no recollection of these nightly jaunts, but some dreamers consciously enter the realms of the Dreamlands by choice. Some creatures and beings however, exist solely in the Dreamlands; or transition there when their earthly form perishes.

Life in the Dreamlands is unusual. Though the basics of existence on Earth are mimicked, characters set loose in the dream realms quickly find that there are no hard and fast rules; even constants like the basic physical laws on Earth often have no application in the Dreamlands. Water can run uphill, time can stop, and inanimate objects can come to life and more.

Unlike Earth, the Dreamlands' reality is predicated on *belief* and *strength of that belief*. Nearly anything is possible, and though some ideas remain rock-solid (such as, say the existence of a city named Sarkomand) others come and go as dreamers exert their will on a situation. The smaller and less significant the change, and the stronger the power of the believer, the more likely a change will take place.

The most powerful dreamers are like gods of limited power and scope – people who can simply wish events to occur, however, this ability is not intrinsic to the denizens of the Dreamlands (some have it, most don't). Magic in the Dreamlands – something that is as accepted as science in our world – represents a way to exploit loopholes and powers of pre-existing belief upon the world of the Dreamlands: a kind of shortcut to this godlike power. But of course, one with a price.

The Dreamlands have a quality of life all its own. The regular pace of Earthly existence is not mimicked here – instead, the focus of attention and will warps and changes perception, time, needs and other constants that would *never* change on Earth. For example, people sleep and eat in the Dreamlands, as they do on Earth, but one might go days, or weeks or *years* without food and never starve to death. Similarly, if a task consumed the will of a being utterly, they might not sleep indefinitely. If the quest was enough to focus the dreamer's mind away from the smaller things (eating, sleeping) it's common for such needs to simply be put on hold.

### Perception and Direction

The very nature of the world of Dreams is change. Things are always subtly changing around the characters; for example, a character might look away from a statue of a satyr for a moment and look back to find it holding a flute. These changes are subtle and seamless, and always seem to occur when a character is not looking. The Keeper can do much to keep the players guessing when such changes occur.

Only when the players bring these changes up with the Keeper, do things become interesting. *Perception* is the key – players that simply plod onward without paying attention (or who pay attention but don't question the Keeper about it), gain nothing from such shifts. Those who notice and comment however have taken a step towards becoming a *Directed Dreamer* – one who can manipulate the world of Dreams in subtle ways.

Of course, this should never be told to the players. Clever keepers will keep a tally of such remarks as "wait, I thought you said the door was on the left side of the cavern?" indicating the player is noticing the changes.

Each of these "perceptions" grants the player a "notch" which the Keeper holds in secret (again the players should never know such a thing exists).

These notches represent that character's growing ability to exist and work within the odd reality of the Dreamlands.

**Changing Things**

Players who pay attention can *eventually* learn what is required to change certain, small things in the Dreamlands. However, there are some hurdles to overcome.

First of all, talking in detail (in character) to one another about these changes dilutes the experience. This is reflected by the loss of one "notch" per party involved. Dreams are personal and experiential things – even shared dreams. They lose their magic when subjected to multiple points of view.

Secondly, Directed Dreaming *never* leads to an exact outcome. The player might wish for rescue from an island, and suddenly find himself in the hold of a slave ship as fresh stock, or he might wish for fresh water in the desert and find himself suddenly washed away in a flood. The world has its own desires, needs and will; and while these notches might give the character a leg-up; they can be a double-edged sword.

If a player manages to become aware and reflective of the concept of change in the Dreamlands, they may attempt *Directed Dreaming*.

**Directed Dreaming**

Directed Dreaming is the act of *willing* something – usually a small, singular change – to occur in the Dreamlands. The notches gained above fuel this ability. Since the player never learns that notches exist, attempting

to direct the reality of the Dreamlands is *always* an act of faith.

The deeper the player's travel into the Dreamlands the more the possibility of exerting such a change should grow in their minds. The Keeper should never confirm such an outcome is possible – instead, the player should arrive at this conclusion and experiment with it. Even so, with a limited amount of "notches" as fuel (and the player have no idea how many notches exist – or even THAT they exist), such Directed Dreaming is limited.

When a player announces they hope to change something, there are several things a keeper should consider:

The cost of such an attempt is ALWAYS a minimum of one Notch – if a player has no Notches they can attempt a change, but nothing happens. When an attempt is made, the Keeper rolls against the POW of the player in question, keeping the results secret.

*Example:* Chet Ridgley hopes to bend the world of the Dreamlands to his will by finding a sword. He imagines a jewel-encrusted scimitar. Unknown to him, Chet has three Notches gained from careful game play. The scimitar is a Substantial outcome (+1 Notch) as well as the standard cost of one Notch – for a total cost of two Notches. Chet's POW is 12, and the Keeper rolls against POW×6 (72) to see if Chet succeeds.

The Keeper rolls a 16, succeeding, but he strings Chet along. After several fruitless minutes of searching his surroundings, Chet becomes frustrated and sits down on a rotted log. The log collapses, revealing the skeletal remains of a long-dead warrior inside, clutching the scimitar of Chet's dreams...

**Injury, Sickness and Death**

Injury, sickness and death in the Dreamlands bears a fundamental resemblance to their counterparts on Earth; but in the Dreamlands, absolutes like death and disfigurement are preventable, even permanently avoidable.

In addition to normal healing (1D4-2 Hit Points per day of rest), injured characters can "recover" hit points by spending Magic Points – each Magic Point spent heals one Hit Point of damage. This ability is natural to ALL inhabitants of the Dreamlands, and all characters have an intrinsic sense that such healing is possible. Still, it is amazing to see in action, particularly to those from Earth. Even disfiguring or crippling injuries can be restored in such a manner (1/1D4 Sanity points the first time more than four Hit Points is observed being "healed").

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Outcome	Type of Directed Dreaming Change	Cost	POW Roll
<b>Minimum</b>	Minimum Cost	1 Notch	--
<b>Cosmetic</b>	Is the outcome cosmetic? (appearance, clothing, etc...)	-1 Notch	POW×8
<b>Personal</b>	Is the change personal? (something which only matters to the character)	-1 Notch	POW×6
<b>Substantial</b>	Is the outcome substantial? (some physical gain, money, property, weapons, etc...)	+1 Notch	POW×6
<b>Large</b>	Is the change something large? (bigger than the character themselves)	+2 Notches	POW×5
<b>Vast</b>	Is the change something VAST? (bigger than a mansion)	+5 Notches	POW×5
Life or Death?	Is the outcome of the change a matter of life or death?	Target Loses All Notches	POW×8

---

Disease is more difficult to change, but can still be affected. A disease (or poison) should be assigned a Potency rating (POT) from 1 to 20. Each point of POT costs one Magic Point to "buy off" and negate.

Death in the Dreamlands is unusual – certain beings are effectively immortal. Others live centuries of Earth time, others still are somewhere between these two extremes, in a place where time means nothing. Players *could* reach such a level of enlightenment, but it's highly unlikely.

Chances are the players will search for a route back to Earth. Those who head upon the path to immortality (a path laden with danger) must look elsewhere than this campaign to find their direction.

### Sanity

Of course, in the world of Dreams, Sanity is much more malleable, resilient and changeable than in the real world. Because of this, at the beginning of each day, each character may make a Sanity roll. On a success, they gain back 1D6 Sanity points (if they fail, they gain nothing). All characters can regain up to their maximum Sanity in this manner.

Also, each time a monster is defeated or overcome, all involved (keeper's discretion) regain the creature's maximum SAN cost back. For example, if the group defeats a ghost whose Sanity Loss is 0/1D8; each character rolls 1D8 and gains the rolled result in Sanity points.

### Luck

In the Dreamlands, fortune can often turn in an instant – whether for the worse or for the better. When a group of players faces some sort of peril or change of luck; we'll call for a Luck roll. This is to determine the outcome of some binary element – for example, whether a cave-in lands on the characters or not, whether or not a book of ancient spells crumbles to dust when it's picked up, etc...

This consists of finding the character with the lowest Luck score, and rolling against that score in secret. Success and the outcome is positive; fail and suffer the consequences.

### Languages

Alien languages never heard before on Earth are the common parlance in many regions of the Dreamlands. However, thanks to the nightly visits of millions from Earth, in the main region of the Dreamlands, English (and other Earthly tongues) are common.

The more common native tongues of the Dreamlands are listed below, along with their region, and the race that speaks it:

Language	Description	Written	Race/Region
<b>Morga</b>	The language of the Underworld – unspeakable by humans	No	Ghouls, Gugs, Ghosts/Underworld
<b>Oeuth</b>	A brutal, feral language of sharp consonants and barks	Yes	The Men From Leng
<b>Talunen</b>	An Earthly-sounding language; much like Spanish	Yes	Human/Lhosk
<b>Skand</b>	An Earthly-sounding language – Scandinavian sounding	Yes	Human/Iquanok
<b>Pross</b>	An Earthly-sounding language; like Polish	Yes (Rare)	Human/Ilek-Vad
<b>Cum'teha</b>	An Earthly-sounding language; like a Polynesian tongue	Yes	Human/Baharna

### New World, New Bodies

When the characters wake in the Dreamlands, their minds will have been transplanted into the soul-less living cadavers of the human slaves. Needless to say, the shock of such transference will most likely be severe, especially if the new form is extremely different from their native body.

Upon discovery of their predicament, each character makes a Sanity roll; those failing lose one Sanity point, and those who succeed lose none.

Until the character becomes comfortable with his or her new form, this roll must be made each time this new fact of life is confronted (e.g. noticing increased or decreased physical strength, height or weight, or viewing a reflection of oneself in a mirror or pool of water). Until this roll is made three times successfully in a row, the SAN loss continues.

Some example new bodies are provided here. Keepers can create more if required.

### The Transition

Now, back to the matter at hand. When the euphoria of the *Bywandine* begins, the characters begin to notice a strange distortion in their sense of sight. Their peripheral vision is slowly disappearing, making anywhere the character looks seem like a dim tunnel opening into the world, which itself keeps getting smaller and smaller. The effect is much like slowly falling down a well.

The door on Earth closes suddenly, shutting out all sight, leaving the characters in the void, their body lost in empty space. With the euphorics of the drug at work, the fall feels delightful, leaving the characters giddy.

As suddenly as everything disappeared, they find themselves back. Through their closed eyelids they perceive bright light, and the pains of their new bodies. They awake in the ruins of Sarkomand.



New Body*	STR	CON	DEX	APP	SIZ	HP	DB	Distinctive Markings
Male, African	11	4	11	7	12	8	+0	Covered in complex rectilinear tattoos
Female, Caucasian	8	15	6	16	11	12	+0	None
Male, Asian	18	17	13	9	18	18	+1D6	Ritualistic piercings on face and arms
Male, Polynesian	15	17	7	5	17	16	+1D4	Covered in ritualistic scarring on back and face
Female, Indian	6	15	14	17	9	7	-1D4	None
Male, Spaniard	13	14	11	12	15	14	+0	Long hair
Male, Nordic	18	13	7	10	16	16	+1D6	Severe scarring on arms and back from some sort of long-healed weapon attack

\*Closest Earthly equivalent ethnicity given

Three: Sarkomand, the Collector, the Black Galleys - A Postcard from the Volcano...

*A dirty house in a gutted world,  
A tatter of shadows peaked to white,  
Smear'd with the gold of the opulent sun.*  
-Wallace Stevens, A Postcard From the Volcano

### Sarkomand

A truly ancient city, Sarkomand is older than humanity itself in both realms, and fell to ruin long before man's ancestors even began to live in caves. It was constructed eons ago by the Men from Leng, and was a point of trade with many of the more exotic races from beyond the West.

It was once a beautiful port, with six sphinx crowned gates that have now mostly fallen to ruin. Still standing however, in the center of the ruined city are the huge diorite lions that guard the entrance to the Underworld, flanking the basalt steps that descend into absolute darkness.

Dozens of large buildings still stand, as do hundreds of smaller ones, although no one lives in them. The Moon-beasts and Men from Leng make their home in the tunnels beneath Sarkomand.

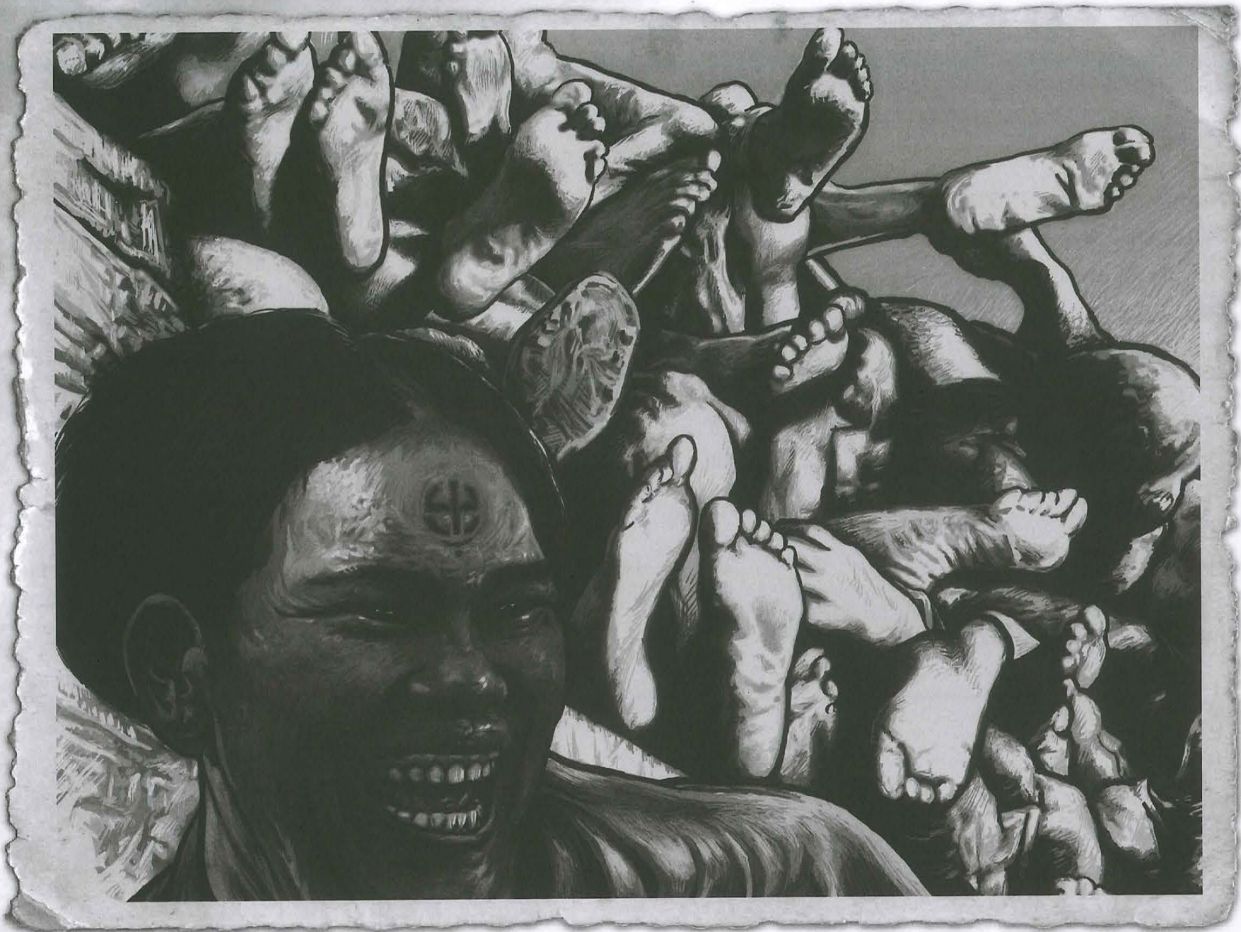
Sarkomand fell to the Moon-beasts and their magics in pre-history, and is now used as a camp for their folly, and for their servants trade with the outside societies of Humans and the stranger societies of the Underworld.

The ruins are populated with a few moon-beasts and overrun with men from Leng. Human and alien slaves, although rare, are found performing repetitive and disgusting tasks in service of their masters, such as sorting and disposing of bodies, cleaning up moon-beast feces, or performing in battle for the Men from Leng's entertainment.

Humans of strong soul are taken in black ships to the dark side of the moon, to the cities of the Moon-beasts, where their souls are ripped from them in torture to create the Blood Gems. Those still alive who suit the tastes of the Moon-beasts are consumed; the bodies without soul which disagree with the Moon-beasts are brought back to Sarkomand to be sold to the creatures of the Underworld, in exchange for exotic fungi and animals.

### The Collector

The characters awake to the smells of urine and feces, in bright sunlight. They are lying amidst a litter of human bodies; all are alive and breathing, but still somehow wrong. The bodies' eyes are blank and no expressions save stupefaction are to be seen, most sit in puddles of their own excrement.



*Waking in the Dreamlands can be a nightmare*

Heaps of these still breathing forms lie inert one on top of the other, most naked, some clad in ripped cloths or skins. Some show the signs of once possessing wealth, clean fingernails, an occasional ring or necklace. Others are covered in scars and welts, some of them quite recent. All show a peculiar mark on their backs (including the characters if they check). This odd wound is two quarter sized burns on the base of the back.

When awakened by the sunlight, it becomes immediately apparent that someone is moving among the living cadavers, singing in a cracked and off-key voice, some sort of song in a foreign language. This voice occasionally breaks off its singing, and after a small noise, continues again.

The Collector, as he is known, is a hunched human slave who sorts through the remaining living cadavers before they are sent into the Underworld. He collects any jewelry or valuables from them, shaves the hair from some for use in trade or the making of ropes, and occasionally removes certain organs for spells, such as eyes, fingers or testicles (0/1 Sanity point to witness).

He is the servant of the Men from Leng, who prefer the darkness of the tunnels beneath, and dislike dealing with the human empty vessels, which they cannot cajole or threaten. Every night that the dark ships come from the Moon, the next day is spent by the Collector sorting and sifting through the bodies, in the hopes of finding something of value, which he then turns over to his masters.

An absolute coward, the Collector is liable to run off at the first sign of a disturbance. If captured by someone larger than him, he is completely and pitifully subservient, and will remain so until he spies a chance for trickery or escape.



The Collector,  
Of Things And People

STR 8	CON 10	SIZ 15	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 13	APP 4	EDU 10	SAN 35	HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +0  
**Weapons:** No attacks of any consequence.  
**Skills:** Bargain 37%, Climb 49%, Conceal 62%, Fast Talk 51%, Hide 65%, Navigation 36%, Own Language (Talunen) 40%, Other Languages (English 39%, Oeuth 35%, Skand 13%), Persuade 43%, Spot Hidden 52%, Track 38%.



*The Collector*

The Collector

Sen Saot of the Family Tcha, Servant of the Men from Leng

**Age:** 41      **Height:** 5'      **Weight:** 201 lbs.  
**Race:** Human/Asiatic      **Build:** Overweight

**Description:** The Collector is a short, disfigured human with Asian features, yellowed rotting teeth and a slight hump. Although his speed remains unaffected by his disfigurements, he walks and runs with a pronounced limp on his right side. For his height, he is extremely overweight, and is covered in rolls of fat. His forehead is marked with the symbol of the Men from Leng.

He always wears rotting leather leggings, a cotton shirt and a large furred cloak made from the skin of a buopoth. He carries no weapons, relying instead on his knowledge of Sarkomand to keep him from danger.

He speaks many languages including English, Talunen, Oeuth, and Skand.

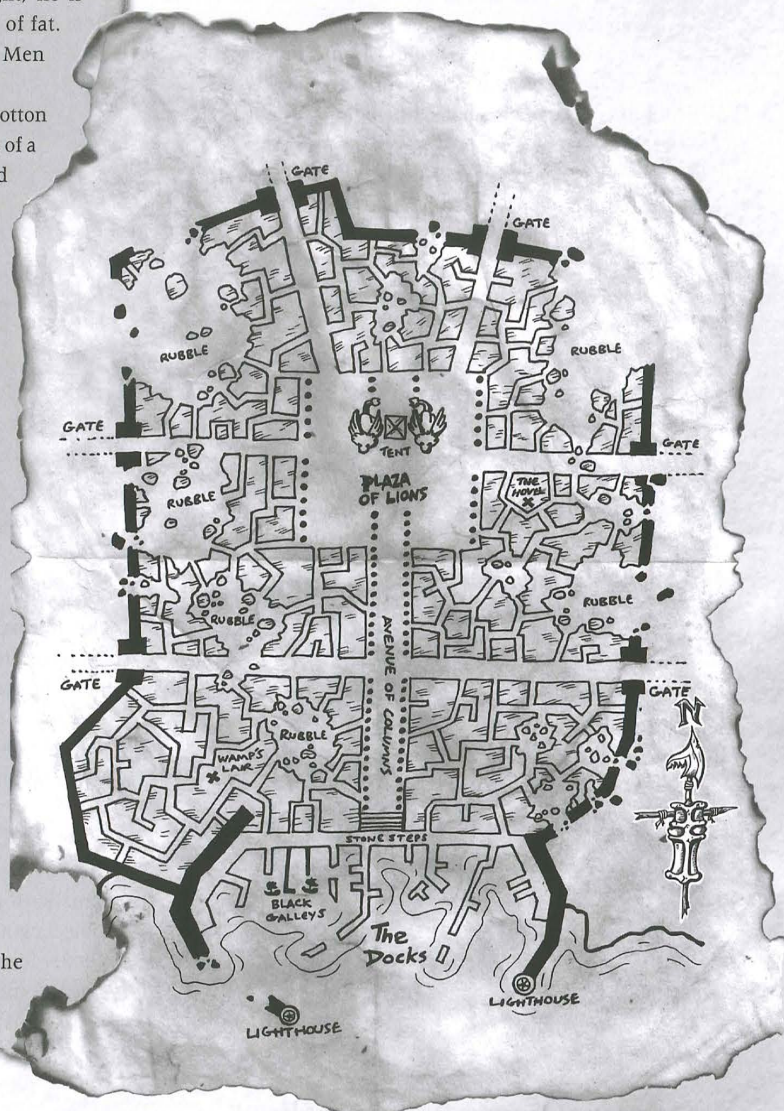
**History:** The Collector remembers little of his life before the age of 16, when he was sold into slavery to the Men from Leng. He was cast out of a family of some prominence in Lhosk, and soon found his way to the slave markets. The mysterious merchants from Le-lag-Leng purchased him and he was taken across the seas in the fabled Black Galleys. For the first time in his life, his deformities were an advantage. The Moon-beasts found him repugnant as food, and the Men from Leng treated him far more kindly than other slaves due to their physical similarities (i.e. he was not as disgusting as other humans). Instead of becoming a meal or a slave, he became an interpreter.

Over the years the Collector has learned many languages, and as a sign of favor has recently been put to the task of sorting bodies unattended.

**Goals:** To escape any danger, and, if possible, to exact some sort of revenge on those he pitifully serves.

buildings, and past that, huge mountains stretching off to the horizon. A Spot Hidden roll will reveal occasional movement by shadowy human-sized creatures in the plaza. To the south, ruined docks can be seen, with many submerged and half-submerged ancient ships, past that the gray-green of the ocean. A Spot Hidden roll will reveal several docks that have been restored, and moored at them, several large black ships, still afloat.

It is obvious to anyone who has taken sufficient time to examine their surroundings that this is not Earth.



Ancient Sarkomand and environs

### Looking Around

Most likely the first urge awaking characters will have is to get a good idea of their surroundings. This is a difficult task from ground level.

Characters who wish to get to high ground may climb on top of rubble heaps or up the remnants of buildings. A Luck or Climb roll (whichever is higher) must be made, if failed, bad footing, structural failure or clumsiness will cost the character 1D4 Hit Points.

Once at a sufficient height, the character can observe a large plaza to the north, nestled among many ruined

### The Hovel

If forced or followed, the Collector will lead the characters to his home, a patchwork shack made of old stained wood and pinkish furry skins (a Zoology or Biology roll will leave the character baffled as to the creature in question, if asked the Collector says that they are from a "Buopoth"). The ramshackle house lies in the huge courtyard of some desolate long forgotten building.

The building itself is fabulous, and the architectural style is fascinating to anyone from Earth, it is almost reminiscent of Indian temples, with smooth sinuous lines dictating space and form. Occasional rune-like carvings can be spied, but they are in no known Earthly language. Dozens of empty black windows look into the courtyard of the building, and anyone entering it is struck by an uncontrollable wave of paranoia as to what could be hiding up in all those rooms. In addition, stealthy sounds can often be heard in the buildings, structural creaks, the dripping of water, strong echoes and other less identifiable noises.

The Hovel is a lavish pit built from the remnants of a dead city. Dozens of out of place objects dot the one room abode, including several large broken sculptures of satyrs, a water pipe, an open box of huge red gems which appear real, dozens of piles of scrolls and rotting papers, and everyday clothing from Earth, belts, wallets, shoes etc...

The Collector gathers these artifacts from the remnants of the city, which during the day he has pretty much to himself. At night, he hides in the shack, in the safety of the courtyard. As most nocturnal predators in Sarkomand hunt by sound, they tend to steer clear of the courtyard due to its strange echoing effects (not that he will tell the characters this). Occasionally one of the strange creatures wanders in and gets disoriented, and the Collector beats it to death and eats it.



*Before The Fall*

#### About the Objects in the Collectors Hovel:

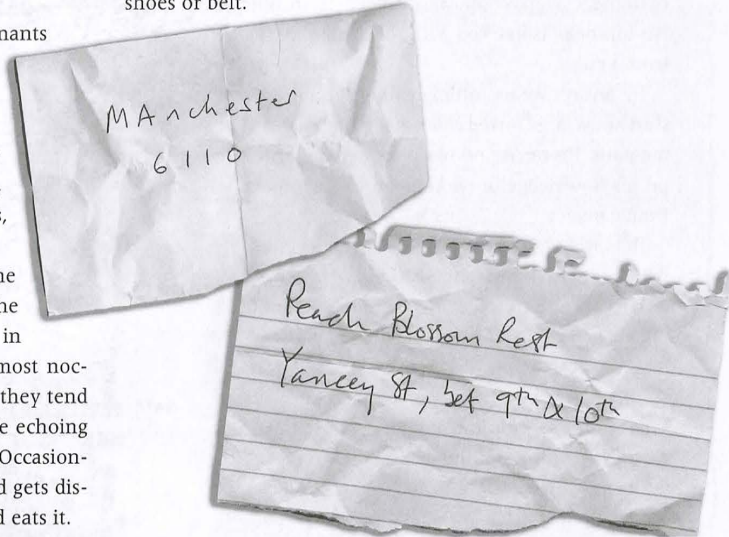
**The Statues:** These beautiful veined marble statues depict the Men from Leng before the arrival of the Moon-beasts. There are three statues, one of a satyr playing a bagpipe, one dancing, and another writing upon a rock. All of the statues are exquisitely made, but have various chips and cracks throughout due to age. Each weighs about 200 pounds.

**The Scrolls and Papers:** These conglomerations of papers are various extracts of ancient legal proceedings in Oeuth, the language of the Men from Leng. Along

with them however is a scroll of the spell "Eye of Inner Sight", again in Oeuth but of considerable value to those interested in such matters.

**The Earth Artifacts:** These items, a leather Sears belt, a pair of cheap suede shoes, and a leather wallet were recovered off the body of one of the living corpses some time ago, or so claims the Collector.

The wallet holds several scraps of paper. On one is a telephone number: Manchester-6110 (a New York number), on another is the address of the Peach Blossom Restaurant. There are no identifying marks on the wallet, shoes or belt.



**The Gemstones:** This chest of "small" blood gems are scrounged remnants found among the living corpses by the Collector. He is not supposed to have them, and will offer them to the characters without hesitation. In foreign lands this chest is worth a small estate, here it is worth nothing.

#### What the Collector has to Say

The Collector is the key to exposition at the start of this scenario; if at all possible he should be encountered for some length of time, in the hopes of giving the characters a better idea of where they are and how they got there.

This section is divided into general questions that might be asked of the Collector, and the sum of his knowledge on said subjects, what he reveals to the characters is of course, left up to the Keeper.

- 1) Where are we? Are we on Earth? How do we get back? The Collector calls Sarkomand "the greatest city of the ancient world", and will reveal only that he serves his masters here as a collector of items rightfully belonging to them. If asked at length about his masters, whom he calls "My Lords", he'll point towards one of the statues of the Satyrs, and tell the basic history of Sarkomand and its subjugation by the Moon-beasts, of whom he knows only a little (he has never seen one). The Collector is surprisingly well versed in the lore of the world of Dreams. He knows that the Dream-



lands are connected to the Earth at several points physically, but that the majority of travelers from Earth enter only mentally. If asked about the nearest physical exit to Earth he will confess that it lies somewhere deep beneath the city, although exactly where he does not know. Having been to the underground city of the Men from Leng several times he knows that the main entrance is in the city's plaza, but can offer little more in the way of directions. If dragged along to the underground city he will resist, finally admitting that it crawls with all manner of unwholesome creatures who consider humans a delicacy. Other exits he knows of are many miles away, and lie across the ocean. The closest of which he believes is in a forest near the town of Nir.

2) What will happen to the other humans?

The Collector will state that they are to be sold to the denizens of the Underworld who often use them for food or entertainment. In exchange the Men from Leng will receive balms of healing fungus called *Keim* with which they can trade in outside lands. If asked more about the denizens of the Underworld he will elaborate, telling often fanciful tales of gugs, ghosts and ghouls, all of whom he believes are huge, blind and mindlessly carnivorous (he has never seen any).

3) Where can we get supplies or weapons?

The Collector knows of many caches of artifacts and items among the rubble, kept mostly by the Wamps which hunt there at night and sleep in deep burrows during the day (if the characters pursue this avenue see *The Wamp's Lair*, next section).

If asked about wamps, he will show the characters a wamp skull, an ugly thing with no eyes, and give them a basic physical description.

The Collector has a great bit of jerked meat (from a voonith, whatever that is) which he stores in his home. It tastes horrible but is nourishing, and will last about two weeks of regular meals, he openly offers it to the characters in the hopes they will let him go.

4) Where can we find a ship?

He says that he is not allowed near the docks, but there are ships there that remain empty, as far as he knows, during the day.

5) What is the nearest and safest town?

The closest human town to Sarkomand is Inganok, although he knows little about it except that his masters do not like to trade there often.

6) Where is Leng? Do you know Mr. Lao?

Leng, he patiently and grovelingly explains, is where they are, that is Sarkomand is in Leng, although the plateau does not begin for another 50 miles inland. The Collector knows no one by the name of Mr. Lao, and pronounces Mr. as "Missed Her".

7) Where did you learn your English?

In the city of Lhosk he claims, as many dreamers from Earth go there. At any rate, it is a common language in many realms.

## The Wamp's Lair

The Collector will only lead the characters to the Wamp's Lair during the day. It is a short walk south towards the sea, through several avenues of ruined buildings. As the characters approach the lair, the smell becomes evident: a pungent odor of ammonia and rot.

What once would have been some sort of gatehouse in ancient times is now the lair of a wamp. Dozens of rotting bodies and bones lay about, all stripped of valuables and clothing. Several are noticeably human (1/1D3 Sanity points when the bones are recognized).

The Collector knows quite a bit about wamps, and has no wish of contracting diseases from an infected character, so he is quite up front with the facts.

He recommends that characters cover their mouths with a piece of cloth, and not breathe too deeply of the air inside. When it is daylight out, he assures the characters, they have nothing to fear.

Inside the lair careful collections of valuables lay about, along with several sorted piles of blood encrusted bones, still fresh. The room is otherwise empty. The smell climbs to new levels in the enclosed room, and those characters failing a CON×3 roll must leave or become violently ill for 1D6+2 rounds.

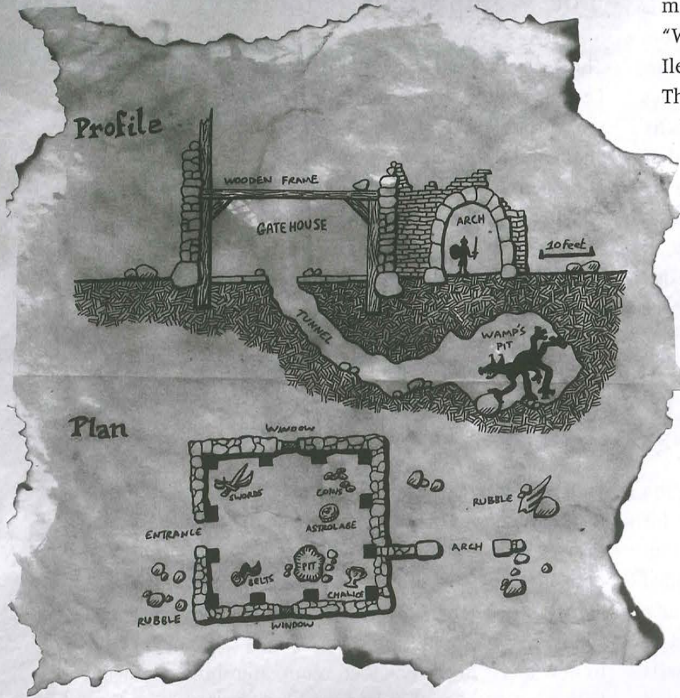
Dug through the flagstones on the floor is an open pit, smooth with age and wear. It recedes into the ground at a nearly 45° angle, and is the source of the horrible smell of ammonia. The Collector informs the characters that the Wamp sleeps at the base of the pit, and it is to be avoided.

Unless physically disturbed the Wamp will not wake.

### About the Objects in the Wamps Lair:

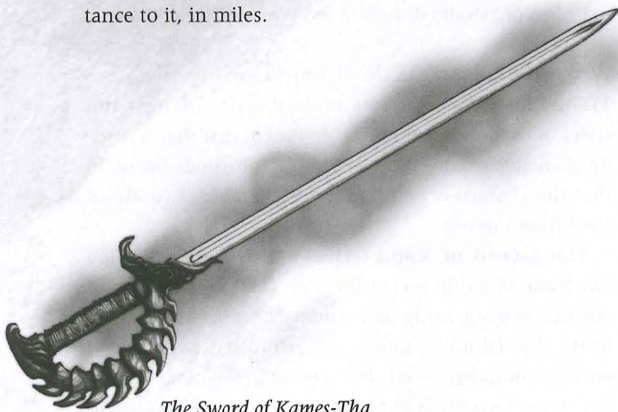
**1) The Pile of Swords:** 23 Swords of various designs and styles, most are covered in a thin film of rust that is readily cleanable. Many have markings and runes on them that the characters will find indecipherable. Two are of significant interest:

**The Sword of Kames-Tha.** This is a light fencing like blade of a thin greenish metal. Once cleaned it is of obvious craftsmanship and value. The prized belonging of the Tha family of Lhosk, the sword has been passed down from father to son for over 20 generations. It was last in the possession of Marek-Tha, who perished when moon-beasts raided his ship on the high seas due to political treachery. The Talunen writing on the hilt explains it belongs to the family Tha of the city Lhosk. If asked, the Collector can read it. If returned to the family in Lhosk the characters will receive a large reward and any assistance the family can muster, as the Lhoskian people are known for their retribution of debts (if the characters pursue this see *Tha of Lhosk* in *Worlds of Cthulhu* #7).



The Wamp's Lair

**An Enchanted Saber.** If placed upon a flat surface, the saber spins and points towards the closest safe port. It was a gift to a Baharnian sailor from a wizard he once gave safe passage to. If used, the character who last held the sword will know the name of the port and the distance to it, in miles.



The Sword of Kames-Tha

- 2) **The Pile of Coins:** These coins are of ancient Sarkomand, and although they are worth something as a collectible, they are worthless for their metal. They are little more than a thin layering of gold over a lead center.
- 3) **The Ships Astrolabe:** A workable, albeit rusted astrolabe, used for determining navigational distances by marking star movement. It is unusual however; as this astrolabe is haunted by the soul of the mariner it belonged to, Talmes Reesh of Rinari. Every week, on the same night, the character who has the astrolabe in their possession, will relive the last

moments of Reesh's life at the helm of his ship, the "White Palace" which was sunk by a Cloudbeast off Ilel-Vad.

These visions cost 1/1D4 Sanity points, and will continue until the astrolabe is left behind, or given a proper Rinarian burial. Researching and burying the astrolabe in line with Rinarian custom will grant a 1D4 Sanity point bonus to those who participate.



A Sarkomandian Chalice



Ancient Astrolabe

- 4) **The Silver Chalice:** This solid silver chalice is worth a great deal in any major port. It is of ancient Sarkomand design, and if sold to a collector will fetch a much greater price.
- 5) **The Rotted Belts:** An assortment of 39 belts of different styles (none of Earthly make), each worm eaten or rotting. An Idea roll will reveal what are bite marks in them, made by something with dozens of tiny needle like teeth (the Wamp).

		The Wamp			
STR 15	CON 29	SIZ 17	INT 10	POW 10	
DEX 12	MV 9	HP 23			
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>		+1D4			
<b>Weapons:</b> Bite 41%, 1D6+Infection.					
<b>Armor:</b> 2 Points of flabby hide.					
<b>Sanity Loss:</b> 0/1D8					
<b>Notes:</b> Unless physically disturbed, the Wamp will not move from its burrow. The bite of the Wamp is contaminated. Anyone bitten who fails a CON×5 roll will be infected with a random disfiguring illness, such as Bubonic Plague, Leprosy or Elephantitis (POT 15).					

Lethal if woken

## The Docks

On the southern tip of Sarkomand about a dozen miles of shoreline are taken up by the wood and stone deck ways of the ancient docks. The hand carved stone flagstones around the docks portray a happy face of a satyr, smiling, laughing, each expression slightly different. Covered in moss and worn smooth, these blocks are one of the few reminders that Sarkomand once was a happy city.

Most of the docks have fallen into ruin, some centuries before. Once beautiful, they are now little more than rotted wood planks suspended between shifting basalt stands, covered in a light mauve moss.

Anyone foolish enough to climb out on the docks must make a DEX×3 roll every minute or be tossed into the water. If they fall, an additional Luck roll must be made, if failed, they incur 1D10 Hit Points of damage as they strike underwater debris. Two Swim rolls are needed to get to shore.

Two docks stand out from the rest. If they are recent additions or resilient artifacts it is hard to tell. However they look nothing like the rest of the city's architecture. The entrance is an arched peak, and it, like the dock itself seems to be made out of a single chunk of cold black stone. There are no seams or rivets.

Tethered at each dock is a huge (150') galley, seamless and black (much like the dock). No windows, sails or apparent steering mechanism can be seen.



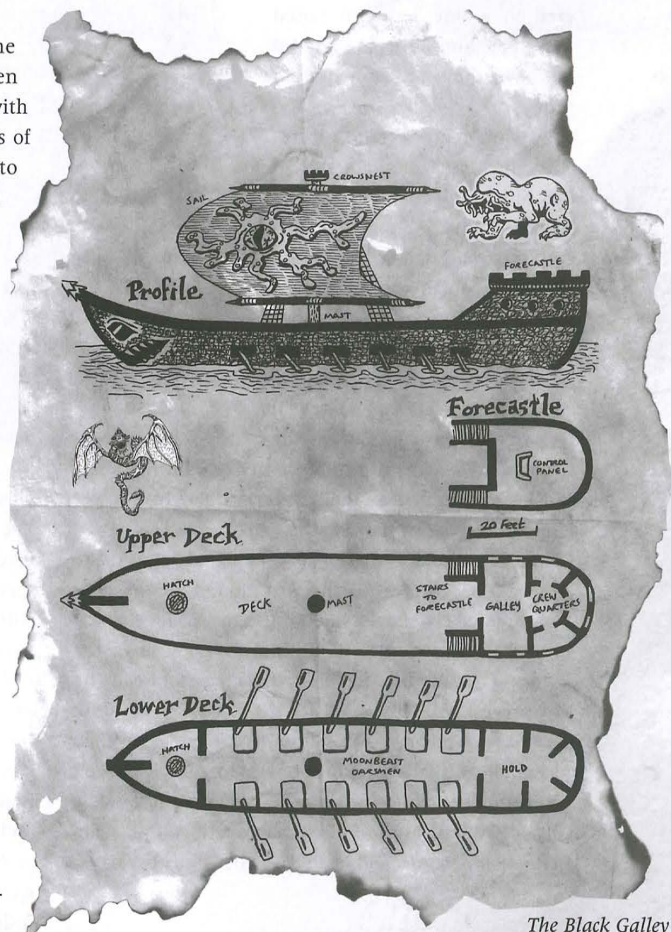
## The Black Gallies

These huge galleys are the Moon-beasts' vessels, the source of legend and intrigue in all lands of trade. When in foreign ports, only the Men from Leng interact with humans, and then as quickly as possible, as the ways of humans do not agree with the Satyrs. It is not known to the general public exactly where the men who pilot these ships come from, nor that they are satyrs at all, as they wear voluminous robes and turbans to cover their inhuman features.

The ships' rowers are the source of much speculation, as the tireless rapid movement of the oars is the envy of every sea captain. At full speed the Black Gallies can top 40 miles in an hour, faster than any other ship known. No one has ever seen whom or what powers the ships, but the oars move in an unnatural unison, as if one giant moved every oar at once.

In truth, convict moon-beasts row the ships. Torture machines force the convicts to row in unison, if they resist or tire or row out of order they are electrocuted; if they halt too many times in a single day, they are horribly and finally electrocuted. Many moon-beasts perish despite their exceptional strength and constitution, and the rowers only rest when in port, a rarity. They do not leave the ship ever, until dead, and are fed and excrete through tubes. Those characters foolish enough to go below deck, although physically safe, will suffer a loss of 1/1D8 Sanity points when confronted with the terrifying forms of the Moon-beasts trapped in their torturous prison. Such service is the penalty for the only moon-beast crime: the failure to worship Nyarlathotep as their lord and master. Even so many still choose to worship Azathoth.

A simple panel on deck controls the direction and speed of the rowers, besides that, there is only a single extremely large hatch leading below. Most of the interior of the ship is made up of storage space, cargo holds and slave galleys (where the human slaves bought at market are kept). The huge hold of the convict moon-beasts composes most of the lower decks.



The Black Galley

The crew quarters for the Lengian sailors are a room of strange hammock-like hanging bags (they sleep standing) with an adjoining galley. The ceilings on this level are low and difficult for humans to get used to.

Each ship is loaded down with supplies of food and fresh water enough for a journey of several months, and will leave three days after the characters awaken, for the dark side of the Moon.

At night the docks and galleys are crawling with men from Leng.

*About the items on board the Black Galleys:*

- 1) **The Double Pronged Spears:** 12 of these modified moon-beast spears are kept on board each ship in case of mutiny. They are considerably smaller than the original Moon-beast model, so that the Men from Leng can use them (humans also).

A careful winding of silver filigree runs to each tip from the handle. When attacking a target, the wielder loses a minimum of one and a maximum of four Magic Points upon contact with a living victim. Each point does an additional 1D4 Hit Points of stun damage; if the target's CON is overcome in stun damage, they remain unconscious for 1D6+2 hours.

- 2) **The Moon-beast Charts:** These huge silver discs expand and rotate mechanically, and are covered in a fine series of raised dots. Weighing in excess of 100 pounds, they are difficult to move.

They contain distances to various ports, including the dark side of the Moon, Celephaïs, Inganok, Hlanth, Lhosk, Aphorat, Thalarion, Rinar and Baharna.

This chart contains *only* distances, and not any geographical information.

At sea, the charts distances are constantly, magically updated. If one studies the chart while the ship is moving, the direction of any city on the chart can be determined as their distances slowly change. This can be very valuable at sea.

Characters studying these charts at length may make an Idea roll. If successful, the operation of the machine seems incredibly simple, and all the raised dots appear as tiny English words, or the native language of the character (even the Men from Leng cannot read the Moon-beast writing).

- 3) **Keim:** Four boxes of this odd moss are on board each vessel. It is a lumpy, phosphorescent grayish-green color. In most realms it is worth quite a bit of money. If used properly as a poultice on an open wound, Keim prevents infections and heals 1D4 Hit Points per day.

## The Plaza of the Lions

Once the heart of the city, it is now the only remnant of its former glory. The 200-foot diorite lions still stand, each in repose, around the onyx flagstone square (each flagstone once contained a gold coin which have long since been scraped out).

Near the center of the square, a large green tent has been erected, flying a red flag. This tent covers the huge trapdoor to the Underworld, and is always guarded by a man from Leng. If an alarm is raised (roll vs. a Listen of

10% the first round of fighting, 20% the second etc...) dozens of the Satyrs come up from below.

If the guard is taken quietly, and the characters have time to explore the room, they notice a smooth, greased three-foot wide hole which drops at a 45° angle. This is where the slaves are dropped down to the gate that leads across the Underground Sea to the Vaults of Zin.

If asked about it, the Collector says that the gate is lightly guarded, as the Ghouls do not like to come that close to the white fungus that grows there, and do so only to trade. The next shipment is not due for at least a week of time.


**The Men From Leng,  
Guardians of the Underworld**

	STR	DEX	POW	HP	DB
#1	12	13	11	12	+1D4
#2	15	13	12	13	+1D4
#3	9	9	11	7	-
#4	13	11	10	15	+1D4
#5	13	10	9	11	+1D4

**Weapons:**  
Punch 45%, damage 1D4+db, Sword 40%, damage 1D8+1+db

**Skills in Common:** Listen 33%, Other Languages (Oeuth 57%, Talunen 23%), Sneak 41%, Spot Hidden 43%, Track 49%.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6-1 Sanity points



*Guards! Guards!*

## The Entrance to the Underworld

The slide chute is a harrowing experience, and the ride takes more than a full minute of time, during which speeds of up to 20 miles an hour are experienced. Those failing a Luck roll take one Hit Point of damage from friction burns or bruised shoulders.

As the Collector said, there are no guards at the base of the ancient steps that lead up about a mile to the city of the Men from Leng.

Down below, save for the soft glow of the white fungus that grows everywhere, there is no light, and all attack and perception rolls are halved. It is obvious to the characters that they are in a huge underground passage, and a foul breeze can be detected from the south, besides that little can be seen.

If the Men from Leng have not detected the characters entry by now, those characters making a Listen roll can hear a great deal of noise echoing from above. If the characters persist here, in a matter of minutes a group of 50 men from Leng will descend from above to capture them. From here on out, only fleeing deeper into the Underworld represents a possibility of escape.

If the characters continue into the Underworld see Part Five *To Inhuman Depths* on page 26.

## Sarkomand at Night


At night, the city crawls with all manner of beasts. Those foolish enough to venture out as a group will most likely

encounter a wamp or men from Leng, or at worst a moon-beast.

Those venturing out alone are never seen again.

Moon-Beast,  
An Inhuman Hunter Cast Alone Upon the Night

STR 18    CON 10    SIZ 24    INT 13    POW 16    DEX 7    MV 7    HP 23



**Damage Bonus:** +2D6  
**Weapons:** Spear 41%, 1D8+1+db.  
**Armor:** None, although takes no impaling damage.  
**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8  
**Notes:** This moon-beast will cast Emerald Darts of Ptath spending 12 MPs on the first attack; doing 3D4 points damage which ignores all armor.

*Softly, silently, catchy monkey*

four: Escape, Shipboard Life, finding  
port - winding across wide water,  
without sound. edge of Reality

⊞⊞⊞

*Theatrical distances, bronze shadows heaped,  
On high horizons, mountainous atmospheres  
Of sky and sea.*

-Wallace Stevens, The Idea of Order in Key West.

⊞⊞⊞

city often trades with the Men from Leng, and is by no means considered friendly. Although quite beautiful, the city maintains a dark reputation, due to the lack of hospitality shown to travelers, and the odd habits of its inhabitants.

For more on Ilek-Vad see *Section Eight* in *Worlds of Cthulhu #7*.

## Method and Direction

The most likely method of escape for the characters is the daytime theft of a Black Galley from the docks at Sarkomand. Other methods are available, though not recommended. Foot travel up the rocky coast to the west is possible, and will eventually lead to a Human realm (Inganok), but the trail is beset by many dangerous obstacles, including the infamous Spiders of Leng.

For more on this possibility see *Section Six* in *Worlds of Cthulhu #7*.

A bit to the west on the same coast as Ilek-Vad is the friendly port city of Lhosk, former home of the Collector. If the characters land on the coast between Ilek-Vad and Lhosk, the Collector will be able to find his birthplace without difficulty.

For more on Lhosk see *Section Seven* in *Worlds of Cthulhu #7*.

Directly south across the sea is Ilek-Vad, a city of glassy turrets built atop the convoluted mazes of the Gnorri. This



## Travel Time

Time in the Dreamlands is an odd thing. Especially during long journeys, large sections of time can flash past, broken only by unorthodox encounters or other singularly strange events. The characters do not lose their ability to motivate themselves, but unimportant sections of routine seem to rush by, leaving the characters suddenly at their destination.

The Keeper may use this strange effect to his or her advantage by summing up what would have been weeks at sea in a single sentence, speeding game play, and reinforcing the feeling of the dream.

## Finding Port

Sailing south or following the coast west from Sarkomand are both valid methods for finding port. Utilizing the constantly updated moon-beast charts on board the Black Galley will give any character a method of finding any of the ports listed in them (this is the most effective method possible).

Blind sailing south will also work, but will take far more time, as the ship may find the coast at almost any point. The Keeper may elect to have the Collector knowledgeable of the sea-lanes, to speed time to port.

## Hazards of Sea Travel

The seas of the Dreamlands are a dangerous place. Malevolent and often intelligent creatures hunt both above and below the ocean, taking food wherever they can find it. Many ships leave port never to be seen or heard from again. Still others are found later wrecked upon foreign shores, or floating derelict, without crew.

Although certain areas of the seas are commonly sailed, no sailor will ever guarantee absolute safe passage, and those that do know nothing of sailing.

Still the seas call, and people continue to sail, despite the dangers. It has always been, and perhaps always will be this way.

Two options are offered to make the Campaign more difficult and entertaining. It is left to the Keeper to decide which are appropriate.

### The Cloudbeast

Huge beasts composed of cloud-like material, cloudbeasts often attack small ships, either picking them up and devouring humans on deck, or consuming the boat whole. Sometimes, when especially hungry or enraged, they will attack even a large target.

One day, this creature decides the characters' Black Galley looks like a promising meal. The Cloudbeast slowly descends above the ship and attempts to snatch any targets it deems tasty off the deck.

If characters have not expressly set watch, each character is allowed a Spot Hidden roll. If successful, the characters are alerted to the silent presence of the creature, as it slowly approaches. If not, the creature is allowed a free attack on a character, or if the Keeper is kind, a NPC. This will most likely give time for the crew to climb to the relative safety below deck.

When no targets are left on deck, the Cloudbeast will rock the Galley several times with its powerful tentacles and finally fly off, its hunger or territorial instinct satisfied.

Cloudbeast,  
Hungry Hunter of the Skies

STR n/a	CON 24	SIZ 48	INT 13	POW 13
DEX 12	MV 4	HP 36		

**Damage Bonus:** n/a

**Weapons:** Tentacle-paw 20%, damage special - increases bite damage by additional 1D6 next round  
Bite 35%, damage 1D3+5+paw bonus

**Armor:** None, although takes no impaling damage.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6

**Notes:** A cloudbeast can have as many tentacles as it like but each tentacle reduces its total HPs by 1D6. Re-absorbing a tentacle regains 1 HP. If a cloudbeast's bite damage beats the target's SIZ+POW on the resistance table, the target turns into mist and its SIZ is added to the Cloudbeast's SIZ.

### The Merhadeen Pirates

This crew of degenerates operates from a hidden cove at the Nameless Rock – a spiral-edifice of stone that juts from the ocean south of Sarkomand like a rotted tooth. They are cut-throat murderers who have given themselves over to the immoral worship of the soul of the Great Old Ones, the Black Man of the West, Nyarlathotep.

Like the Men from Leng they serve the Moon-beasts – giving over those they capture on the seas in exchange for tokens from the Moon and the Underworld. A lone moon-beast oversees the ceremonies at the Rock, as it is a chosen spot for the worship of Nyarlathotep; it is also the nursery for one of Nyarlathotep's many horrendous offspring.

Though the pirates leave the Black Galleys alone and prey only on human ships, they have been informed of the character's "liberation" of a galley; and the bounty for its return.

#### Pirate Attack!

The Pirates attack the galley at night. Their captain Seraj uses his spell *Jaunt* to move 14 of his men to the fast moving galley. They silently arrive on deck, weapons drawn ready to do battle. If they can, they will stalk the ship and attempt to overwhelm the players.

The pirates hope to capture the players alive so they can offer them to the Lurker in the Pit – a larval Great Old One.

The Pirates,  
Mythos Marauders on the Night-tide

	STR	DEX	INT	CON	APP	POW	SIZ	EDU	HP	DB
#1	5	7	16	12	7	8	9	5	9	-1D4
#2	14	14	8	16	13	15	13	4	15	+1D4
#3	16	11	13	7	14	5	18	5	12	+1D6
#4	10	5	9	6	3	13	12	6	8	-
#5	13	14	17	11	14	18	12	6	12	-
#6	5	17	10	12	8	14	11	6	9	-
#7	14	4	17	5	10	6	18	3	10	-
#8	7	14	14	14	11	10	10	5	11	-
#9	10	16	14	18	4	16	8	5	14	-
#10	13	5	11	6	7	18	15	4	10	+1D4
#11	13	9	8	14	4	17	10	3	14	-
#12	15	17	10	11	8	16	18	5	13	-
#13	14	12	14	9	16	14	15	5	12	+1D4



Pirates a-hoy!

**Weapons:** Punch 45%, damage 1D4+db, Knife 60%, damage 1D4+2+db, Sword 55%, damage 1D6+db  
**Skills in Common:** Dodge (DEX×2), Other Languages (English 12%, Talunen 25%, Skand 30%), Sail 35%, Sneak 40%.

Those that struggle too much, or who successfully kill more than two pirates will find the attack becoming far bloodier, and the pirates will keep up their attack until their leader Seraj is killed, or half of them fall in battle. If either of these events come to pass, they will retreat, defeated.

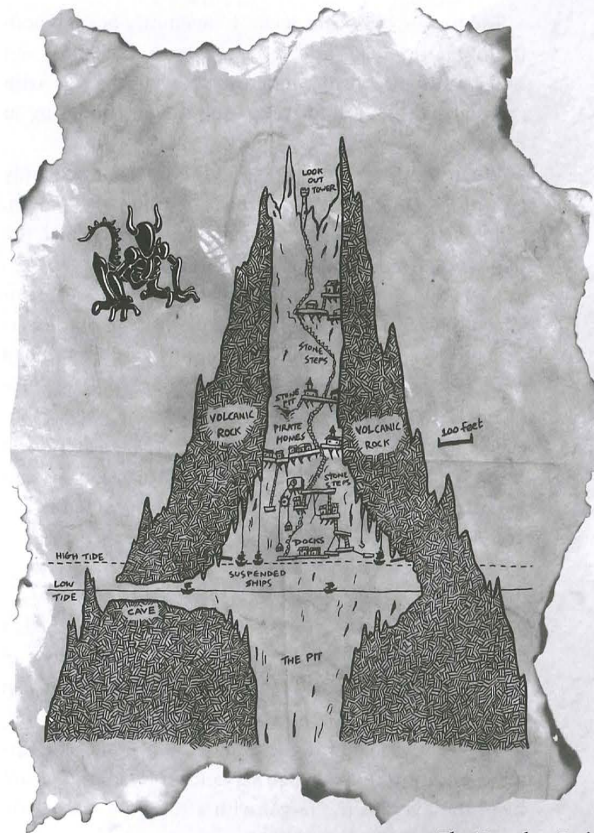
*The Nameless Rock*

This horrific rock rises from the Cerenarian Sea. There is no shore; instead the ocean beats relentlessly on the sheer faces of rock – long since rendered razor sharp from the surf. Any character unfortunate enough to find themselves in the ocean surrounding the mountain must make two Swim rolls every ten minutes, or face being smashed upon the rocks for 2D10+6 Hit Points of damage.

There are no exterior landings, there is simply a veiled cave that pierces to the heart of the mountain; visible and traversable only at low tide. This huge cavern grants access to the Pit – a vast interior lake – which makes it plain that the Nameless Rock is not a mountain, but was, instead, at some time a volcano.

It is here the Pirates have made their home. Rickety pilings and wooden shanties overhang the vast interior space, and wind their way up to the lip of the cone, nearly a 1000-feet above. When the Pirates put into “port” they enter through the cave, row their way in to the interior, and wait for the tide to rise, securing their ship in the center with ropes hurled down from above. (If the players’ galley was captured, they will bring it back to the Nameless Rock as well).

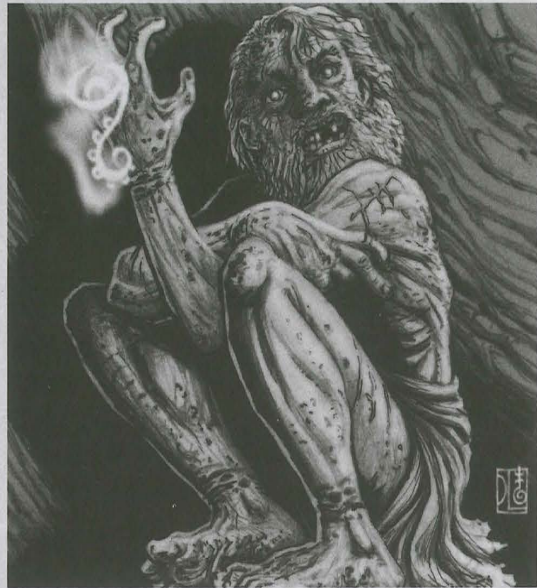
All told, 46 pirates make their home here, celebrating in horrific worship of Nyarlathotep. Nearly a decade before, their worship paid off, and in a terrible ceremony during an eclipse, the dark water of the ancient volcano became home to the Dark One’s nightmarish offspring; the Lurker in the Pit.



*The Nameless Rock*

*The Pit and the Prisoner*

Captured players will find themselves thrown first in a stone pit embedded in the sides of the mountain. In the pit they find a single, dying man – an odd looking man with greenish skin, yellow hair and white eyes. He looks as if he was subjected to years of systematic torture and starvation.



Nodens's Mark

The tongue he speaks seems to be mostly beyond both the human ear and mouth to reproduce. This does not stop him from focusing upon one player (the one with the highest POW), and waving him over, chattering in his strange tongue.

When the player comes close, the prisoner suddenly clutches them, erupting in a frenzy of inhuman strength. When he releases, he is dead, and where he touched, the player is marked with an odd, tattoo-like symbol – an eye.

The man is from the East, from another world's Dreamlands. He was a priest bent on the destruction of the Servants of Nyarlathotep, and was captured and imprisoned here long ago with two associates. Seraj has long since killed the other two. In his last throes of death, this servant called upon his God – Nodens the lord of the Abyss – for favor. Nodens heard his call, and sent him a vision. Strangers would come from Earth, and one of them would be the vessel to destroy the offspring of the Crawling Chaos.

The player is that vessel.

#### The Eye of Nodens

This enchantment grants the target with the Eye of Nodens – a sigil that grants supernatural power against the servants of Nyarlathotep. It never leaves the target, and is even visible in the Waking World, should the target ever return there. When servants of Nyarlathotep are near, the Eye fills the target with a certainty and peace, granting the following abilities:

- 1. Purpose:** No matter what disguises they may employ every servant of Nyarlathotep is clearly visible to the character. In addition, the moment the servant is seen, the character becomes aware of the other two abilities of the Eye: namely Smite and Clarity.
- 2. Smite:** Simply *touching* a servant of Nyarlathotep inflicts 3D20 Hit Points of damage. This effect permanently drains one POW point from the player.

- 3. Clarity:** Every roll to attack, injure or outperform a Servant of Nyarlathotep may be re-rolled *once* if it fails. Each re-roll costs one Sanity point.

#### The Ceremony

When the moon rises, the players will be chained and dragged up an endless series of catwalks to the top of the Volcano. There, surrounded by pirates, Seraj enacts ancient rites to Nyarlathotep.

The chant continues for an hour as the moon fills the sky. Finally, the Moon-beast Priest emerges from his cave and takes the dais. This terrifying creature begins a chant in its own alien tongue – a mewling, deep howl.

Soon a rumbling begins from below, ending with the horrific arrival of the Lurker in the Pit – a terrifying spray of blood red tentacles, eyes and maws erupting from the holes in the corona of the volcano.

#### The Moon-beast Priest

This Moon-beast lives in a cave on top of the Nameless Rock, emerging only to lead the ancient rites to Nyarlathotep and its offspring, the Lurker in the Pit.



#### Moon-beast Priest, Servant of the Crawling Chaos



STR 19    CON 12    SIZ 22    INT 13    POW 18

DEX 7    MV 7    HP 17

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6



Priest of the  
Crawling Chaos

**Weapons:** Ceremonial Spire  
51%, 1D6+1+db

**Armor:** None, although takes no impaling damage.

**Weakness:** When touched with the Eye of Nodens, the Moon-beast immediately suffers 3D20 points damage.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D8

**Notes:** If attacked, the Moon-beast will cast *Living X* on two players, hoping to immobilize them so they may be fed to the Lurker. This spell magically forces a character into a painful 'X' pose, frozen until they can successfully make a STR×1 roll.

#### Seraj, Leader of the Merhadeen Pirates, Servant of the Crawling Chaos

**Age:** 50

**Height:** 6'

**Weight:** 220 lbs.

**Race:** Human/Nordic    **Build:** Muscular

**Description:** Seraj is a huge, muscular man with pale blue eyes, hair so blonde it appears white, and thick yellow teeth. He is obviously mad.

His body is covered in scars, tattoos and symbols of his god. He speaks very little, and instead seems to dominate all who come in sight of him silently. His men follow his every gesture, terrified of his power.

**History:** Seraj, from Inganok was converted to worship of Nyarlathotep in his childhood. He was raised in an an-




cient monastery in the mountains of Leng, and later went abroad in search of his lord.

He has spent three decades hunting down the process of creating an offspring for his lord. The pirates are a means to that end, gaining a fresh source of POW and bodies for the prolonged process. Now, he sees himself as the guardian of the Lurker in the Pit.

**Goals:** Seraj will serve his lord Nyarlathotep to the death. He will willingly give his life to destroy anyone who opposes those goals.

Seraj, Piratical Cultist				
STR 15	CON 13	SIZ 16	INT 14	POW 16
DEX 16	APP 7	EDU 10	SAN 0	HP 14
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>		+1D4		




**Weapons:** Longsword 55%, damage 1D8+1+db  
 Knife 75%, damage 1D6+db  
 Punch 55%, damage 1D4+db  
 Bite 25%, damage 1D4

**Skills:** Climb 55%, Conceal 71%, Degenerate Prayer 35%, Dodge 35%, Hide 40%, Other Languages (English 29%, Oeuth 12%), Own Language (Skand) 70%, Sea Navigation 40%, Threaten 60%.

**Spells:** Jaunt, Summon Lurker in the Pit, Commune with Nyarlathotep, Drain Soul.

*Guardian of Chaos*

The Lurker In The Pit, Larval Great Old One				
STR 34	CON 24	SIZ 41	INT 9	POW 18
DEX 10	MV 5	HP 33		
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>		+4D6		



**Weapons:** Tentacle 61%, 1D8+1+db (1D8 attacks per round on a single target).  
 Maw 70%, 2D10+6 (can only use the maw attack when it hits one target with more than one tentacle attack in a round – the next round it can attempt a maw attack).

**Armor:** 3 points of gelatinous blubber; takes no impaling damage.

**Weakness:** When touched with the Eye of Nodens, the Lurker immediately suffers 3D20 points damage. If it is not slain by this attack, it immediately retreats.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D4/1D20

**Notes:** This being lives in the dark waters of the volcano, and winds its way up the cone amidst a 100 intertwining stone holes; squeezing its massive bulk through the tunnels like a giant slug. It treats the pirates – those who worship its father – with indifference, but will not hesitate to make a meal of them if they interfere with its feedings. It favors the Moon-beast Priest, and becomes incensed if this creature is attacked, protecting it with a child-like rage.

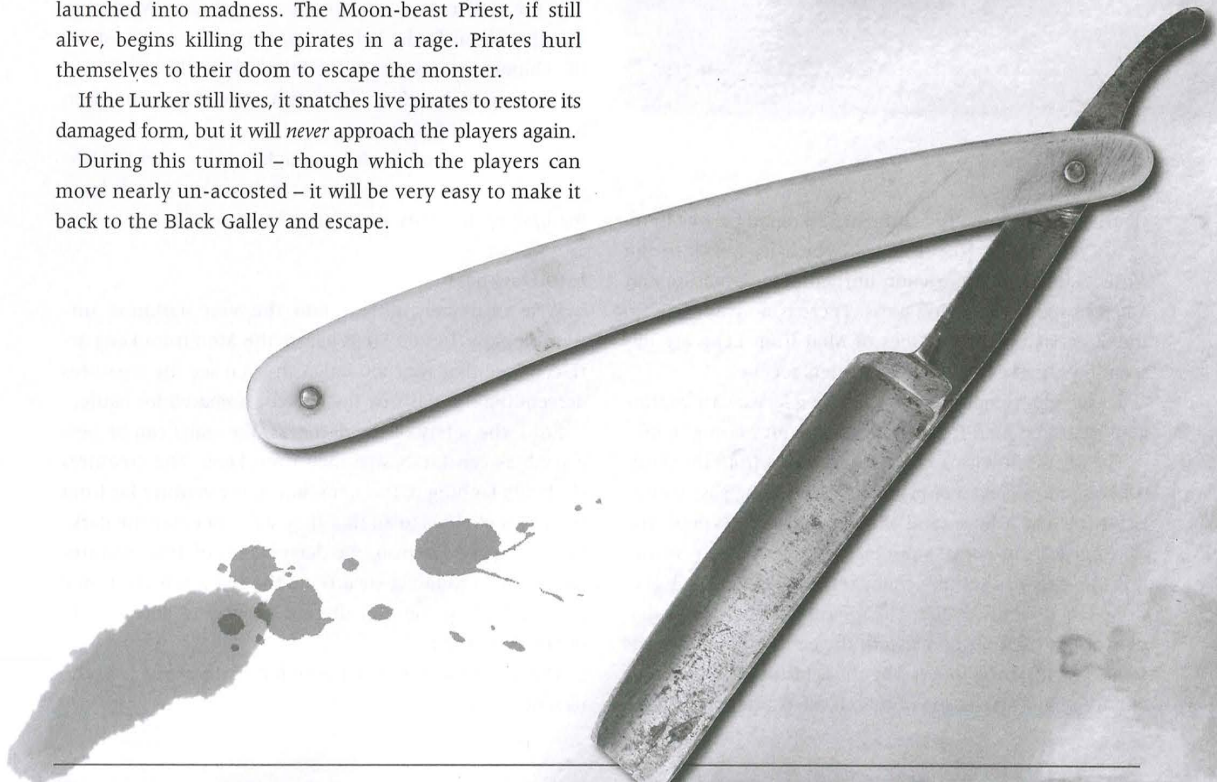
*Priest of the Crawling Chaos*

*Aftermath*

Once the Lurker is defeated, the Nameless Rock is launched into madness. The Moon-beast Priest, if still alive, begins killing the pirates in a rage. Pirates hurl themselves to their doom to escape the monster.

If the Lurker still lives, it snatches live pirates to restore its damaged form, but it will *never* approach the players again.

During this turmoil – though which the players can move nearly un-accosted – it will be very easy to make it back to the Black Galley and escape.



# Five: The Underworld, Party with the Ghouls, the Vaults of Sin, the Gug City - To Inhuman Depths...



*This bitter meat sustains us...*

*Who then are they, seated here?*

*Is the table a mirror in which they sit and look?*

*Are they men eating reflections of themselves?*

-Wallace Stevens, Cuisine Bourgeoise.



## At the Base of the 10,000 Steps



*Down the 10,000 Steps*

Characters fed down the chute in Sarkomand arrive here, at the foot of the 10,000 Steps (which lead back to the surface), bruised and friction-burned, sliding to a stop on a bed of spongy, glowing moss. There is no way back up the stairs as teeming hordes of Men from Leng are descending them even as the characters recover.

Those who remain here for too long face a vast contingent of armed men from Leng bent on murdering them.

The area is lit with a ghostly white light from the moss; otherwise it is barren of plant-life. Everything past 30-feet is lost in first a haze, and then complete blackness. The only vertical surface of substance is the staircase – within it is the greased shaft the characters rode down in. Everything else is relatively flat. The sensation of the area is that of a vast, terrifying gap beneath the earth whose ceiling is some vast distance above. The thought that the *entire* city of Sarkomand sits on top of this chasm is utterly terrifying

to most (0/1 Sanity point loss if the characters dwell too long on this fact).

Near the point where the shaft opens is a scattering of bones – human bones – leg bones and a skull or two. Those examining these bones closely (who make a Spot Hidden roll) realize they have been *gnawed clean* (0/1D4 Sanity points) and the skulls carefully split, as if they were some sort of fruit. In addition to these bones, there is a scattering of the crude equipment of the Men from Leng, including a backpack of leather, two cheap swords, some rotted shafts of wood which might have once been torches (but which are too wet to be of use) and some damp, rough cloth.

### Motivating the Players

Once in the Underworld, it's vitally important the characters move deeper into the darkness, as opposed to attempting to fight their way back up the stairs. Getting back out of the Underworld up the 10,000 Steps must be clearly portrayed as suicide.

This is easily achieved by illustrating the point; make it painfully obvious a *vast* number of Men from Leng are descending the staircase – describe the growing cacophony of terrifying sounds spilling down from above, growing closer and closer. If that fails, have the Collector insist that (though he's still horrified of the Underworld) waiting around means certain death.

If the Collector is not present, introducing Madaeker (see the Ghoul Trader below) early may be a way to draw the characters away from the Steps. Once the characters move several hundred yards from the stairs, the Men from Leng will not pursue.

Even they are not foolish enough to fully enter the Underworld – they never go more than a dozen yards from the base of the steps, no matter the reason.

### Into Darkness

Wise characters retreat into the vast darkness surrounding the 10,000 Steps before the Men from Leng arrive. Those that wait too long can even see the creatures descending the stairs by the dozens, prepared for battle.

From the safety of the darkness, the stairs can be perceived, as can the bestial men from Leng. The creatures circle the landing of the steps, but never venture far from them; it's obvious to all that they will not enter the darkness willingly. Even so, the detachment of 100 creatures fans out in a rough circle around the steps. It is clear they are not leaving and that there is no way to defeat them or sneak by them.

There is nowhere to go now but further out into the darkness.

## The Ghoul Trader

Breaking the silence of the darkness suddenly, a lilting, almost melodic voice emanates from the caverns of the Underworld. It speaks an odd, old-sounding English. It hesitantly circles the players, asking strange questions such as — “Are you of New Amsterdam?” and “How fares the port city?”

This odd being was born on Earth and through darker means than the characters, found his way to the Dreamlands: Madaeker, once Michael Daeker of New Amsterdam, left our world in the mid-Seventeenth century, never to return. He was once a man, but now is not human. He looks like a cross between an ape, dog and man (0/1D6 Sanity points), though his glowing, white eyes are filled with a coherence that clearly implies intelligence. He stands upright, but with a severe hunch, and though he wears no clothing except rags (he’s covered in thick, white fur) he carries a rucksack of ruined leather filled with various artifacts of the world of the Ghouls.

He’s hesitant; bookish and strange. He speaks like a human, but with a severe lisp. He trades with the Men from Leng that occasionally come down the steps, but is not part of the warren of ghouls who normally trade here. In fact, he’s a very anti-social ghoul.

Long since lost to the insanity of a ghoul’s mind, Madaeker will treat the characters with a reserved air, until he finds they are indeed from New York — “So, the King took New Amsterdam then?” He seems interested in the politics of what went on there, but has no idea of the amount of time that has passed since New Amsterdam became New York (1664 — nearly 300 years). He is far too fast, agile and at home in the darkness of the Underworld for the player’s to pose a significant threat. Even so, he will keep his distance until he learns he can trust the characters. Past that point, Madaeker, despite his hideous appearance, will be forthcoming and cooperative — even kind — something not all humans will be prepared for.

He is a clever fellow, but has forgotten most of his days on Earth. He understands such a place exists, and to him, it is the equivalent of the world of Dreams. He remembers dim snippets of what life was like above, as well as “Mina”, his “love” — but little else.

Madaeker will make a deal with willing humans, offering to guide them safely through the Underworld to another exit many miles away; in exchange, they must perform a task for him in the Waking World when (and if) they ever return (he seems to know that the characters are of the Waking World). He will not say what this task is until the journey is done, though the characters have little choice. If the Collector is present, he will urge the players not to trust the “terrible creature”, but wise characters will see that Madaeker is far more benign than the Collector will ever be.

If told to leave, he will do so willingly, but will watch the characters from a distance with his keen eyesight, shadowing them silently in the dark. After several hours to themselves in the Underworld, he will quietly announce “you’ve turned a circle in the black twice... Only I can show you the way.”

If pressed for details, Madaeker confirms the journey is far, and dangerous, but less dangerous — if they are careful — than attempting to journey back up the 10,000 Steps. It involves a secret exit to a secluded wood accessible underground only in a place called the Gug City. Upon hearing this, the Collector begins to weep and whimper uncontrollably.

To seal the deal, Madaeker insists on a handshake — something that requires a Sanity roll on the part of the human party (0/1 Sanity point lost if failed). When he shakes the character’s hand, he looks deeply in their eyes and says “I have friends in your world as well. You shall keep whatever bargain we strike.” He does not release the hand offered until the character agrees. His strength is astonishing.

If the characters have not gained a respect of Madaeker by now, by the end of their journey, they will. When the characters agree to do all he says upon completion of his bargain, Madaeker turns into the darkness and beckons once, “This way...”

*Madaeker (Michael Daeker), Lesser Ghoul*

**Age:** 352      **Height:** 5’9”      **Weight:** 320 lbs.

**Race:** Lesser Ghoul      **Build:** Lithe

**Description:** Madaeker looks like a cross between an ape, man and a dog, with legs ending in scabrous hooves. Despite this, his eyes are human, and retain some semblance of sanity.

**History:** Madaeker was born on Earth in New Amsterdam sometime in the early 1600’s. At some point in the distant past, he descended through the Ghoul warrens which connect the Waking World with the world of Dreams, and since, has never left.

**Goals:** Madaeker is an honest Ghoul; disinterested in communing with others of his kind, he scours the Underworld for news of the Waking World, which to him, has become the equivalent of the world of Dreams.



### Madaeker, Underground Guide

STR 19    CON 17    SIZ 12    INT 14    POW 14  
DEX 16    APP 1    SAN n/a    EDU 27    HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4



#### Weapons:

Claws 35%, damage 1D6+db  
Bite 31%, damage

1D6+db+automatic worry

**Armor:** Projectiles do half damage; round up.

**Skills:** Burrow 72%, Climb 70%, Dodge 70%, Hide 80%,

Jump 81%, Listen 61%, Other Languages (English 31%, Dutch

39%), Own Language (Morga) 55%, Sneak 85%, Underworld Navigation 30%.

**Spells:** *The Mark of Mordiggian, The Ghoul’s Bargain, Summon/Bind Nightgaunt.*

Unexpected Guide

### Journey into the Black

Madaeker will outfit each character properly for a journey through the Underworld. He will answer questions readily – disturbingly so – as he searches the characters. Those mistaking his probing for an attack or an attempt at robbery will find him far beyond their reach before they can react violently. He reassures them “I mean no harm; there are things in the dark that can smell a morsel at 500 paces, and hear a pin drop on a goose-down bed.”

He locates any food on the characters, discarding it, with or without the character’s permission. He refuses to begin the journey until all such food is removed. In fact, he discovers several pounds of food secreted about the person of the Collector, who weeps when it is removed and thrown off into the darkness.

He urges the characters to discard any unnecessary metal items before the journey begins, and when this is done he secures existing metal on their person with rotten ropes from his rucksack.

### Questions About the Underworld

Madaeker readily answering all questions put to him: all except one — he will not state the nature of the bargain struck by the characters for his assistance in the Underworld.

#### 1. How Far Must We Travel?

The journey, he says, can take as long as 50,000 paces. He confesses humans find keeping time in the dark difficult. Madaeker recalls clocks, and their basic use, but is honest; all time is measured underground in movement.

#### 2. What Dangers Will We Face?

Gugs, ghastrs, other ghouls not so behaved as himself. Madaeker clearly illustrates the situation – the Men from Leng were a dim shadow of the threat they now face; the only difference is that there are places to hide in the dark. Confronting the Men from Leng at the 10,000 Steps is certain death; traveling through the Underworld is only *probable* death.

#### 3. What We Will Eat and Drink?

Madaeker cements this point home – the characters **MUST NOT** eat or drink **ANYTHING** in the Underworld. He will not say *why*, but will instead say “it is forbidden”. He will not elaborate.

#### 4. What is a Gug or Ghastr? What are Ghouls?

A Gug is a blind giant, more than a match for all of them put together. Though intelligent, they are not clever, and hunt by sound and smell. Ghastrs are unintelligent wild beasts that haunt various portions of the Underworld – they are often used as a food source by the Gugs.

Ghouls are those like himself, creatures he claims, which were once men. They feed on the rotting flesh of the dead – they have no interest in live humans (the “unripened fruit” as he refers to them). Most Ghouls are in league with other forces in the dark, such as the Men from Leng or even the Gugs; Madaeker however, claims to be independent of such allegiances (this is truthful).

#### 5. What is the Gug City?

It is a huge and ancient edifice built long ago by the forebears of the Gugs, beasts too large and horrible to imagine that once haunted both the Upper World *and* the Underworld. It has long since fallen into decline, and is now occupied by the biggest, strongest and most terrible gugs who use it to worship their god Ummar – the Blind One. It is the only other exit from the Underworld he knows besides the 10,000 Steps.

#### 6. What is the Task We Have Agreed To In Exchange For Your Help?

Madaeker will say nothing of the bargain until the end of the journey.

### Eating and Drinking in the Underworld

Mortal dreamers are *forbidden* from eating or drinking *anything* in the Underworld; this is part of the curse inflicted on the Underworld denizens by the Great Ones in ancient times.

This does not mean the characters will perish from starvation or thirst; despite such feelings, no negative physical effects are *ever* felt from lack of food or water. This means a willful dreamer might exist in the Underworld *forever* without ever eating or drinking without dying.

Those foolish enough to tempt the curse of the Great Ones by eating or drinking are in for an unpleasant surprise when the end of the journey to the surface comes for their compatriots; but not for them. (See *Those Left Behind* on page 37 for more details).

### The Route

The journey is long and involves traveling through the most dangerous reaches of the Underworld. Since it is part of the bargain, Madaeker will not be forthcoming with the exact route or method he chooses to take; instead, he will generalize, and only share important information as it is needed along the way.

Madaeker plans to guide the characters first to the edge of the Underground Sea; a vast saline lake inhabited by horrible beasts; there he will parlay with Graal – a shy withdrawn creature not native to Earth’s Dreamlands who has fished the lake for centuries. If all goes well, Graal will bring them across the sea to the Vaults of Zin; the home of the Ghastrs.

The Vaults of Zin are almost an underworld unto themselves; a vast maze of crags, with winding paths filled with ghastrs that eventually bring travelers through the hunting grounds of the lesser gugs — those not strong enough to rule a portion of the Gug City.

This periphery between the Vaults of Zin and the hunting grounds are particularly dangerous. This open ground is littered with the bones of thousands of perished creatures, including gugs, ghastrs, ghouls and even humans. Those crossing this zone will find it impossible to move silently — something vital if one is being hunted by a creature that tracks by sound.



This zone eventually leads to the hunting ground known as the Forest of Monoliths; marked by huge conical stone shapes more than 30-feet high that dot an otherwise naked landscape leading up to the Gug City. In actuality, these shapes are the tombstones of the Gug forebears who perished long before the Great Ones cursed the Gugs to remain forever in the Underworld. Here sickly ghosts are hunted by juvenile gugs throughout the tombstones. When these smaller gugs come of age or size, they battle for entrance to the Gug City, or are forever banished to the Vaults of Zin...

Finally is the Gug City itself; series of smooth conical structures carved from stone, winding upwards to the Tower of Koth – a vast tower that spirals to the surface and the huge, stone gate that opens to the Enchanted Wood.

## The Underground Sea

The characters will smell the Underground Sea long before they approach it – the air is filled with a pungent, sharp aroma of salt water, along with the undercurrent of rot and moisture.

Moving through the dark, the character's eyes will grow somewhat used to what was once absolute blackness (all Spot Hidden rolls are halved). Madaeker will play shepherd, circling the group and making sure everyone is present and is keeping up.

Those who make two successful Spot Hidden rolls, can continue to see everything within 50-feet normally until they enter a new area; those who fail two in a row however, must make a Luck roll or accidentally wander off (only to be found and returned to the group by Madaeker).

Several times in the dark noises can be heard. Once what sounds like distant laughter, and another time, the sound of flapping wings lost somewhere high above in the dark. (If asked, Madaeker states the wings belong to a creature called a 'Nightgaunt').

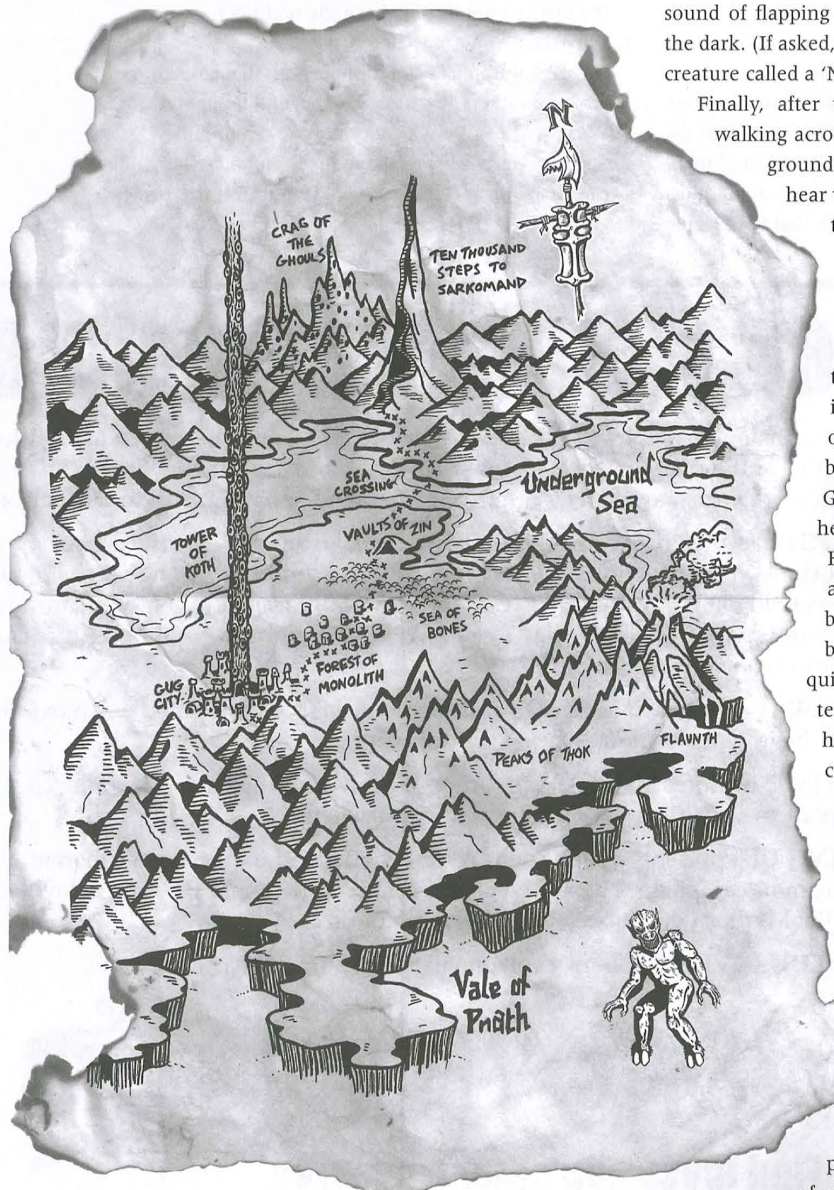
Finally, after what seems like countless hours of walking across smooth but undulating and uneven ground, characters that make a Listen roll can hear the sounds of waves falling on a beach: they have arrived unmolested at the Underground Sea.

### Graal the Old

Upon arriving at the pebbled shore of the Underground Sea, Madaeker will inform the characters of his intention of "buying passage" on the ship of a being known to him — Graal the old. Graal, he will state plainly, is like him; he holds no allegiances except his own. He's from another, distant dreamworld, and came here to the Underground Sea before Sarkomand fell to the Moonbeasts in antiquity. He has lived here quietly since, hunting terrible underwater beasts that haunt the sea. Madaeker has dealt with Graal many times, and is certain he poses no threat.

Madaeker will attempt to hold the characters back as he walks down to the shore himself; but insistent characters will find him pliable on the matter, as long as only one or two accompany him at first. More than that and he fears risking Graal's "hospitality".

Graal is a huge being, nearly 9-foot tall and weighing in excess of 750 lbs, basically human in appearance, but seemingly composed of a pale, translucent substance reminiscent of amber, which darkens to a honey color as the skin deepens. His eyes are simply blank sockets



Madaeker's route through the Underworld

with sparks of blue white light for pupils. He is otherwise a simplification of the human form; with no sex, three fingers and only the dimmest outlines of facial features.

At first, characters will find it difficult to read Graal's intentions. It is clear the characters are seen as they approach; and Madaeker does much bowing and scraping as they come upon his camp. Graal stands completely still, emitting his own ghostly light from both his skin and eyes, watching as they walk towards him. (a sight costing 0/1 Sanity point to see).

Graal speaks bluntly, and it becomes clear quickly that all subterfuge and subtlety is lost on this being. His statements are simple fact, emitted in a voice that sounds like air forced through a bellows. His breath is hot and reeks of sulfur. He wears no clothing and seems less to move his body as to retract and regrow his body to move – as if he was an ever-updating statue moving through space and time frame-by-frame.

He states plainly that he has dreamt of carrying a number of people and Madaeker across the sea, and that in exchange, they must grant him a portion of their "will" with which he will shape more weapons and expand upon his ship. Madaeker translates to characters that do not understand: Graal will take a "a tiny portion of their mote — the power which fuels their being – something not missed". Madaeker will make it plain that there is no

other way safely across the sea. He will also make it plain that *he too must offer such a thing to cross.*

Graal will speak plainly to any topic brought up; answering both truthfully and without any attempt at shading his statements in duplicitous answers.

1. Graal states that Madaeker has never betrayed him, and that the Ghoul is of a "higher order" than others of his kind. Madaeker – like all ghouls – eats only rotted flesh, something that Graal speaks about with some fascination (he has little concept of what "eating" is, but finds it interesting). As such, Madaeker poses no threat to the players.
2. What are your Intentions? Do you Mean Us Harm?  
Plainly put: No, as long as the bargain is kept.
3. What World are You From?  
Graal states he could not explain it clearly; that even the form they see is worn "like a suit of armor as to interact with this place". The place he comes from is past the furthest points of light in the night sky.
4. Why Have You Come Here?  
Graal is a "hunter" searching for a beast that has wronged him in another, distant world "beyond the moon".
5. What Will You Do with the 'Will' Taken From Us?  
Such power is used to shape his form and to generate the weapons and ship he uses to hunt on the Underground Sea.



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## 10. What Do you Hunt?

The creature he hunts is a huge, terrible being known here as a Bhole. He has twice encountered it here, and twice it has escaped. He will find it, slay it, and return its "will" to those it has stolen from.

## 11. How Far is the Journey Across the Sea?

Not far. Though it is sometimes dangerous.

## 12. Do you Know Any Other Exits to the Surface?

Besides the Gug City, only the 10,000 Steps — which they would surely not survive. For "fragile beings such as yourselves, the Gug City remains the only exit".

## Grael The Old (Real Name Unpronounceable)

Unknown Race

**Age:** Limitless    **Height:** 9'    **Weight:** 750 lbs.

**Race:** Unknown    **Build:** Gargantuan

**Description:** Grael appears to be a living statue of moving amber, lit from the inside by a flickering white light.

**History:** Grael is a hunter from a world somewhere beyond the Dreamlands of Earth. He came to the Dreamlands in antiquity to hunt a terrible creature which apparently tormented his kind. This beast, called a Bhole, apparently devours entire worlds.

**Goals:** Grael's sense of time is dilated to the point where the time spent in the Earth's Dreamlands seems to be nothing more than a short excursion, despite the fact that he's lived near the Underground Sea since before Sarkomand fell to the Moon-beasts in antiquity. Grael pursues the Bhole on the Underground Sea, occasionally killing its young before they can nest and breed. In all this time, he has only encountered the sire of the juvenile-bholes twice. The next time, he is certain, he shall kill it.

### Payment

Those agreeing to the terms will find themselves face to face (or face to abdomen) with Grael. The being will gently place a huge, warm hand on their chest and drain one point of POW from them in a painless manner. This point will regenerate over a period of time — returning to the player in ten days (but don't tell the player's this).

Those refusing the payment will be left behind on the rocky shore when the group boards Grael's ship. Grael is completely beyond the abilities of the characters (and even Madaeker) to affect — he is immortal, and more to the point immutable against his will. He will not hesitate to use force to protect his ship from unapproved entry, but will do his best not to kill: it is not his way.

### The Crossing

Grael's ship is an open-faced inverted tortoise shell approximately 30-feet in diameter, composed of the same material as Grael's skin. It sits upon the shore, dragged up out of the water despite its enormous weight. A series of

### Grael The Old, Hunter and Ferryman

STR 39    CON 40    SIZ 20    INT 17    POW 22  
DEX 13    MV 8    HP 30    MP 31

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6



Alien Ferryman

#### Weapons:

Punch 55%, damage 2D6+db  
Grown Spear 59%, damage 1D10+db (impales)

**Armor:** 10 points of stony hide.

**Skills:** Boating 51%, Empathy (Understand/Speak Any Language) 60%, Fashion Items from his Flesh 55%, Underground Sea Navigation 90%.

**Spells:** No Conventional Spells.

All the abilities Grael possesses are native to his kind.

footprints and drag marks inform those paying attention that Grael simply dragged the ship — which must weigh tons — ashore like it was a small rowboat.

He urges those who have paid to board the ship *first* before he drags it back into the water. Once they have embarked, he easily slides the ship into the water and leaps aboard as it slides rapidly away from shore. The ship rocks twice as Grael's vast weight lands upon it. Those watching him carefully will see that when his "flesh" intersects the ship, it *joins* with it, becoming one surface.

To move, Grael *grows* a vast spire-like staff from his hands — composed of the same material as his skin — and pushes off the distant bottom like a gondolier. The pole — glowing with a dim white-amber light, vanishes into the blackness of the sea after only a few feet.

This pace continues unimpeded for hours.

### Pale Beasts

After what seems like hours of movement over the Underground Sea, the characters are startled from the silence by the sound of splashing water. Those carefully peering ahead towards the sound will see brief flashes of movement. Grael seems undisturbed, and continues forward unmindful of the disturbance.

As the boat approaches the noise, the characters can spy huge, pale beasts — like the limbs of some giant squid — writhing and intertwined on the surface of the Underground Sea. They shake, twist and pull at one another. It's nearly impossible to tell if it is one creature or many, smaller creatures; but in either case, such beasts could easily tip the ship. (0/1D4 Sanity points if witnessed).

Grael says nothing unless asked. If questioned, he claims they are simply the offspring of the creature he hunts — tiny versions of the beast he seeks. They infest a planet like maggots, eating away its heart over tens of thousands of years. But when their sire dies, they too will perish.

As the ship approaches the disturbance, the creatures pull away from the light generated by Graal, withdrawing back into the depths without a sound. The journey then continues in silence.

#### *Illusions on the Underground Sea*

Cruel keepers may plot to complicate the lives of the characters by populating the Underground Sea with creatures, illusions or distractions more severe than a simple juvenile-bhole sighting.

Madaeker and Graal will warn wary travelers of the dangers of the Underground Sea — indicating that the sea itself is haunted, and can lure unwary adventurers into its black depths.

Some options are outlined below:

#### 1. Singing

Particular characters on the boat hear a dim, melodic singing coming from the dark; a woman's voice in a foreign tongue. Graal and Madaeker confess they hear no such noise. As the ship moves across the Underground Sea, this singing grows in volume until the characters are certain they certainly must be *right on top of the source*. But just as it builds to a crescendo, it begins to subside, and vanish (0/1 Sanity point).

#### 2. The Palace

A character peering into the black water notices tiny, yellow pin-points of light beneath the surface. For moments, it's impossible to determine what they are, but as the boat drifts towards them, it becomes clear they appear to be *fire*. Anyone directed to look can see them.

Despite this obvious impossibility, as the flickering lights grow closer two things become clear: first, they appear to be more than 200 yards or more underwater, and second, they appear to be *torches*.

As the ship slides over the point where these lights are closest an incredible event occurs. What appears to be a *moon* suddenly materializes in some infinite sky beneath the waves, as if some underwater clouds parted. The moon lights the spires of an ancient looking palace of cupolas and spires for a few seconds, and then vanishes. Anyone foolish enough to enter the water to see if they can reach the Palace is pulled under by an unknown current or force and never seen again (1/1D4 Sanity points).

#### 3. Hands

Characters who place anything in the water find it suddenly grasped by pale, water-logged hands of enormous strength. If an item is placed in the water, it is simply yanked out of the character's hands, however, if it is a limb, the character must beat a contest vs. STR 21 or be pulled in. (1/1D4 Sanity points)

Those who fall into the waters are rapidly yanked under by *hundreds* of such hands, never to be seen again (2/1D6 Sanity points).

## The Landing and the Far Side

The landing on the far side of the Underground Sea is much more rocky and dangerous than the one the characters embarked on. It is a series of jagged, salt-slicked rocks, meandering up into the black.

Graal puts the ship "down" at a single jutting shingle of stone, and as Madaeker bows and scrapes once more, encourages the characters to exit. Climbing the rocky slope requires a DEX×5 roll. Those failing slip and suffer 1D4 Hit Points of damage.

Those that fumble the roll plummet into the icy cold water and must make a Swim roll every minute or drown (suffering 1D4 Hit Points of damage per round of drowning - see 6e rulebook page 57). Rescuing such an ill-fated individual is difficult, and will require a group Luck roll. Failure at this roll indicates the character in the water must make another Swim roll or they are swept under. A fumble on this roll and *another* character falls in, subject to the same rolls!

Madaeker will do his best to help, but he cannot swim. Those successfully scaling the razor sharp rocks find themselves at the top of a huge rise that spills down into a maze of smooth, undulating passageways, which vanish into absolute blackness far below. As they stand overlooking the sloping, terrifying blackness that awaits them, Madaeker announces "The Vaults of Zin."

## Past the Point of No Return

Entering the Vaults of Zin is a point of no-return for the characters. There is effectively no way out back to the 10,000 Steps once the Vaults are entered.

This should also mark a sinister shift in the lethality of game play. The characters have enjoyed good luck in meeting a somewhat odd ghoul (Madaeker) and a harmless entity from beyond space and time (Graal). Past the Vaults, things become deadly serious.

There are two ways to communicate this:

- 1. A Change in Madaeker's Demeanor:** On the far side, Madaeker can become more gruff, evocative or illustrative as to why not following his instructions to a "T" might result in death or something worse. If the characters seem too light hearted, have Madaeker set them straight.
- 2. An Offering:** More cruel keepers might decide someone (or multiple "someones" in the group) will die along the way. Keepers who hope to give the characters a chance might kill the Collector as an object-lesson. Having the corpulent back-stabber eaten by ghosts or gugs in front of them is a nice way to make the players reconsider their cavalier ways.





## The Vaults of Zin

The Vaults of Zin seem vaguely familiar to all who see them – they represent in the Waking World the vast abyss of fear, anxiety and pain that dreamers from Earth often experience in sleep.

Located to the south of the 10,000 Steps across the Underground Sea, they are a huge maze of intertwining stone passageways — channels of paths carved through a plummeting field of lava stone. They are the only way deeper into the Underworld.

### Descent

The Vaults represent a treacherous abyss. Descending into the Vaults from the shoreline of the Underground Sea is equally dangerous. Doing so requires a DEX×3 roll; failure indicates a Luck roll is necessary. Those failing both fall and suffer 1D10 Hit Points of damage.

### The Tunnels

Once in the crags of the Vaults, the characters' eyes require more than a minute to adjust. Though it is darker in the Vault than on the Underground Sea, a strange irregular luminescence seems to float in the air, allowing areas of nearly normal vision.

These tunnels wind for hundreds of miles, crossing back on one-another, going underground in places; intertwined into a single, huge maze of darkness. Characters separated from the group down here are likely to get lost permanently. Only those wise enough to remain still and call for help have any hope of rescue by Madaeker; those foolish enough to plow ahead are likely to run into a ghost, or something worse.

### The Ghosts

The Ghosts are inhuman creatures that writhe, feed and mate in absolute darkness. They are the primary prey of the monstrous Gugs – terrifying giants who haunt the edges of the Vaults of Zin, emanating from the Tower of Koth, outwards, like a disease.

Despite a vaguely human-like silhouette, ghosts are wild beasts, as large as a small horse, they move upright on a pair of kangaroo-like legs ending in scabrous hooves. They are carnivorous and fearless in a way only an ignorant animal can be. They often work together in packs, like wolves, hunting prey in the winding dark of the Vaults of Zin. When no prey is to be found, they feed on one-another.

Ghosts despise *any* light (besides the odd glow of the Underworld) and will perish due to exposure if the light is strong or persistent enough; even something as bright as a torch will send any number of the most powerful Ghosts scrambling to safety.

In any case, after a few minutes of moving in the darkness of the Vault, it becomes clear the group is being followed by *something*. A persistent scabbling, sniffing noise can be heard. The distance to the noise is hard to approximate, but anyone who makes a Listen roll determines that, whatever it is, it is less than 50 paces away.

Numbers are also difficult to determine. Sometimes it sounds like a single creature, other times more than

### Hungry Ghosts, Tracking the Travelers

	STR	DEX	POW	CON	SIZ	HP	DB
#1	24	15	9	21	23	22	+2D6
#2	22	12	12	20	20	20	+2D6
#3	23	16	10	19	22	20	+2D6
#4	22	12	10	20	22	21	+2D6
#5	22	12	7	16	19	17	+2D6



Ravenous

#### Weapons:

Bite 40%,  
damage 1D10+db  
Kick 25%,  
damage 1D6+2D6+db

#### Armor:

3 points of skin.

#### Skills in Common:

Sneak 70%

#### Sanity Loss:

0/1D8 Sanity points

a dozen intertwined noises at once. Those peering into the darkness and making a successful halved Spot Hidden roll, or who suddenly ignite a light source, find themselves surrounded on all sides by a vast horde of ghosts (1/1D4 Sanity points for the frightening situation plus any Sanity loss for seeing the Ghosts).

### Hunted

Madaeker is a clever leader, and in the Vaults of Zin, does his best to hurry the characters along, rapidly circling the group three to four times every five minutes, to remain certain he has not lost anyone. Madaeker is quite familiar with the Ghosts and their methods, and has contingencies to deal with the threat.

Every 100-feet or so, Madaeker will pause and pulling something from the rags he wears, hurl it into the dark down a passage the group is not taking. Those who make an Idea roll come to the conclusion that Madaeker is throwing food into the dark. Those who peer closer (a halved Spot Hidden roll) see Madaeker removing bits of *rotting flesh* from a small pouch and throwing it into the dark (0/1 Sanity point). The Ghoul will be quite forthcoming (but impatient) to those who ask — yes, it is human flesh he will confirm, and then shove the character deeper into the darkness. Just seconds after the first piece is thrown, terrifying sounds of creatures fighting in the dark can be heard (0/1 Sanity point).

Those foolish enough to refuse to follow, or who purposely leave the group find themselves face to face with 1D4 ghosts, more than enough for anything smaller than a gug; barring some exceptional luck, or a light source, this can easily mark the end of a dreamer.

### Playing Up the Pursuit

Once the Ghosts are on the trail of the characters, clever keepers will not let up the pace. Having a slavering horde of unseen creatures — nothing more than glowing red-green eyes in the blackness — is the epitome of *Call of Cthulhu*. Here are some hints to keep it interesting.

#### 1. Falling Behind

With Madaeker's brisk pace, it is easy for a distracted character to fall behind. Anyone attempting to do *anything* besides move or communicate with Madaeker must make a Luck roll. Those failing lose their footing and fall, suffering 1D4-1 Hit Points of damage and are left momentarily behind by the group. (If the character holds still and waits for help, Madaeker arrives moments later, just as the noises following the characters seem to settle in around the fallen character).

Those foolish enough to shout for help, instead hear the shuffling sounds of something large moving towards them in the dark. Seconds before the creature comes into sight, the character is grabbed by strong arms from behind (0/1 Sanity point). Madaeker chides the character to keep up.

#### 2. Clutching

Have the character with the lowest Luck score roll; if they fail, they fall *slightly* behind the group. Suddenly, they are clutched in a violent, iron grip (1/1D4 Sanity points). Claws dig into their flesh (1D6 Hit Points of damage). They must resist a STR 22 on the resistance table or be yanked into the dark and immediately set upon by a dozen ghosts.

If the character successfully resists, they pull themselves free, and move closer to the group.

#### 3. Something Bigger In the Dark

Madaeker sniffs the air tentatively, and then in whispers urges the characters to get as low to the ground as they can. In the dimly lit passage ahead, a sound can be heard. The high-pitched squeal grows in volume and fervor. Characters making a halved Spot Hidden roll dimly perceive a pack of ghosts rush by the passage, fleeing from something.

Just as they pass, something HUGE moves past the passage, pursuing the Ghosts. It is there and gone so swiftly, that even characters who made their halved Spot Hidden roll don't get a good look at it. Whatever it is, it stands at least 20-feet tall.

Soon, it is gone. If asked, Madaeker reveals "Such is a gug. And a small one at that."

### The Cavern Opening

The characters come upon the end of the Vaults suddenly, spilling from the maze suddenly into open air. Here, the once winding passages open into a vast, open space covered in dirt, giant, discarded bones (0/1 Sanity point) and darkness. The feeling is similar to the area next to the 10,000 Steps; some enormous, open cavern. Noises, even quiet ones, reverberate off unseen cliffs, making sneaking all but impossible.

Madaeker has planned for this vast, open space. A straight run across it to the cavern that leads to the pla-

teau is certain death. Even as the characters wait for Madaeker to continue, the sounds of creatures circling them can be heard (0/1 Sanity point); but their locations cannot be pin-pointed due to the odd acoustics.

Madaeker removes a stump of rotted wood from the rags covering his body, covers them with a spongy green-white moss and then meticulously sets them alight with flint and steel. Immediately the area is engulfed in a wave of sound — the hoots, screams and shrieks of the inhuman Ghosts who were hoping to consume the characters. The torch reveals a veritable army of ghosts surrounding the characters (2/1D8 Sanity points), who immediately flee away from the light. Several too close to the light source immediately collapse and begin *smoking*, as if the dim torch was somehow cooking them at a distance of more than ten feet.

While this effect lasts, Madaeker rushes the characters forward into a gaping cavern in a huge, vertical cliff-face; which, upon closer inspection proves to be an *enormous structure* (0/1 Sanity point) on the scale of an Empire State Building constructed for beings 50-feet tall.

Madaeker herds the characters into the vast cavern to the remnants of a staircase with steps three and a half-feet tall, and says once "from here on, you shall not speak; we must be as silent as livestock outside the butcher's door". If asked why, Madaeker replies "if we are not silent, we become the meal". He discards the torch and continues; "Even a wild ghost is not foolish enough to travel where we plan to go." His smile is far from reassuring.

### The Giant Stair

Traveling the giant staircase upwards out of the Vaults of Zin is an exhausting process. Each step comes to the waist of an average man, and climbing each one requires a full minute for the entire group.

The farther up the stairs the characters travel, the worse the smell of feces and wet fur becomes. Finally, after hours of brutal climbing, the characters arrive at the top of the giant staircase, and find themselves on an enormous plateau stretching off into the black. Behind them, the stair descends into the stone, and a bit past that, a vertical drop descends nearly a half-mile down to the Vaults of Zin.

## In the Periphery and the Forest of Monoliths

Looking off the edge of the plateau is a sobering process. The vertical face descends into the winding Vaults of Zin. The edge is marked with the skulls of enormous beasts — those looking closely at the skulls realize they are of some sort of creature with a jaw hinged horizontally across the face (0/1 Sanity point). To the south of the drop, the plateau past the Giant Stair stretches off into the darkness.

Madaeker herds the characters deeper onto the plateau. Any who speak are immediately silenced by him. Those foolish enough to continue such frivolous behavior are *violently* silenced by Madaeker (the Ghoul knocks

them flat with incredible force, but no damage). It is clear Madaeker does not consider speech an option.

Madaeker leads the characters towards something which reeks horribly — like feces from the largest, most foul creature ever — which it indeed turns out to be!

This huge lump of feces is still warm, and is nearly 60 pounds. Madaeker places his hand *in* it, and wipes some of it on his chest (0/1 Sanity point). To make matters worse, he then tries to place some on the characters (1/1D4 Sanity points). Madaeker will pin the character down if necessary to get the job done.

Once all the characters are marked, Madaeker leads them deeper into the periphery.

About 20 minutes into the journey, the characters come upon their first Monolith. These vast conical stone towers stretch up into the black, and are nearly 30-feet tall. Each is roughly carved with hideous symbols and faces (those looking too closely find enough horror in their primitive craftsmanship to cost 0/1 Sanity point). As the group continues onwards, they soon find themselves in a forest of monoliths.

For an entire hour, the group travels silently through a winding maze of monoliths — all of similar size and appearance. They are, in actuality, the graves of the forebears of the Gugs, clever, dangerous creatures long ago banished to the Underworld by the Great Ones.

As the hour comes to an end, the characters begin to notice a scattering of bones among the Monoliths, and then fewer and fewer monoliths.

Some of the bones seem human, most, not. Some are enormous, and bear little resemblance to anything the characters have seen before. It soon becomes clear that the bones are becoming more and more populous as the characters move forward. Soon, the characters find themselves traversing entire *dunes* composed of bones without a Monolith in sight.

### The Sea of Bones

This vast area on the Periphery is filled with the bones of millions of creatures, humans, gugs, ghosts and worse. The entire area glows with a ghostly white-green phosphorescence — a vast landscape of undulating hills of skeletons, long gnawed clean — sweeping south into the black.

Moving on the Sea of Bones is troublesome. Those wishing to move full speed may do so, but they create such a ruckus that they are quickly silenced by Madaeker. Every fast step causes a rattling of such huge proportion that it must be audible from more than a mile.

Those imitating Madaeker's style of movement on the sea soon find their footing. The Ghoul follows the lowest points in the "dunes", moving slowly from peak to peak, spending as little time on the high points as possible. Noise is made, but it is far less than before.

#### *Speaking in the Realm of the Gugs*

Foolish characters who disobey Madaeker's orders once they are deeper into the sea of bones will find themselves rapidly out of luck. Here, juvenile gugs 25-feet tall hunt the scavengers found in the periphery.

Any *speech* draws immediate attention from juvenile gugs. Make the offending player roll a halved Luck roll. If they succeed, they spy a pair of distant, red eyes blinking in the darkness. If they remain silent, the eyes soon vanish. If, instead, they fail the Luck roll, the group is suddenly set-upon by a single juvenile gug; more than a match for all of the characters put together (1/1D8 Sanity points).

However, the creature focuses only on the offending party, not the group; leaping towards them with a monstrous shriek which is obviously hunger. A character pursued in such a manner is on their own — Madaeker will leave them for dead, rushing the group away before they can react with more *speaking*.

To survive such pursuit, the hunted character must make two Dodge rolls, two Run rolls and one Hide roll. If any are failed, the character suffers 1D8+2 Hit Points of damage and must continue forward in the sequence of rolls (if they survive the attacks) until all rolls are successful, or they are dead.

Those who do make it free are left wandering the sea of bones, lost and alone in the Underworld. It remains up to the Keeper whether escape is possible for such an individual.

#### *A Grotesque Escape*

Just at the point the Sea of Bones seems to be diminishing, Madaeker stops, sniffs the air twice and hunkers down with the group. He then does something that should terrify anyone with half a brain: he speaks.

"We are being hunted and they are on all sides; there is but one way out..." Madaeker explains his plan: he will distract the Gugs and while they pursue him, the characters must find their collection of dead prey, usually carried in a huge animal-skin sack — which the Gugs will place upon the ground while they hunt. When the characters find this sack, they must *get inside it*.

The Ghoul insists this is the only way into the Gug City. In a moment, he is up and over the dune of bones, shouting, gibbering and meeping, drawing a hunting party of gugs after him, away from the group.

Characters must now take the initiative. Those who hold still, speak or make too much noise will ruin Madaeker's plan. If the characters move away from the terrifying sound of the Gugs hunting the Ghoul, they will soon spy a huge object placed on the Sea of Bones.

Those approaching find a stench-laden sack made of some huge animal-hide (it is actually gug hide). It is wet, emitting an awful odor and dripping with black-red blood. It is roughly fashioned into a huge, primitive backpack. Inside are the corpses of mutilated ghosts. A group of up to five characters can easily fit inside it in addition to the Ghast-corpse. Crawling inside costs 1/1D6 Sanity points.

After an immeasurable period of time, movement on the Sea of Bones is heard, as the group of gugs returns to the sack. Suddenly, the pack is lifted *easily* and seems to float nearly 40-feet off the ground (0/1 Sanity point). From that point little is heard except the pace of the creature moving on the bones, and a huge, terrible breathing.

By this time, characters are covered in feces, urine, blood and worse in the sack. Some characters may be crushed by the weight (suffering one Hit Point of damage), others may have to make another Sanity roll to resist the urge to cry out or attempt escape.

Those who make a Luck roll are situated in a place in the sack where they can peer outwards. Those making a Spot Hidden roll are lucky enough to see a full-sized gug; one of the hunting party sent from the Gug City to the Vaults of Zin to hunt ghastrs. Congratulations, this loathsome sight costs 1/1D8 Sanity points.

## The Gug City

This terrifying edifice of stone buildings surrounding the Tower of Koth was constructed in antiquity by the forebears of the Gugs. Since then, it has fallen into ruin and various states of destruction. Wars, skirmishes, one on one combat and wholesale slaughter by 50-foot tall giants have taken their toll on the conical towers, leaving entire areas as little more than rubble.



*Hue and Cry!*

In the center, spiraling upwards into the dark is the vast tower leading to the surface of the Dreamlands — this tower, marked by the Symbol of Koth — was once used by the Gugs to gain entry to the Enchanted Wood above, where the wreaked havoc on dreamers at night.

Since the curse of the Great Ones, no gug may pass through the giant iron-runged wooden door to the surface.

### Into the Streets

Characters who have insinuated themselves into the Ghast-Corpse filled sack find themselves roughly dropped upon the ground in the Gug City for 1D4 Hit Points of damage. Around them, giants walk to and fro in absolute

silence. Finally, after a bit of time, the feeling of being surrounded subsides.

It remains up to the characters to decide how to proceed. Clever characters will carefully scout their surroundings before risking escape from the sack. A Spot Hidden roll is enough to register they are on an ancient stone street amidst gargantuan buildings, a Listen roll is enough to indicate that the immediate vicinity is abandoned.

Characters who simply rush out into the dark from here are likely to run into a gug. From there, it is a short step to the Alarm being raised. In either case, Madaecker — eager to keep his deal — is not far behind.

### Reunited

When Madaecker arrives, he renews his request of silence with a thin, clawed finger to his lips. He then leads the characters deeper into the city, carefully skirting the deep shadows at the base of the enormous conical towers.

Finally, arriving at the edge of some ancient plaza, Madaecker stabs a finger up into the dark, indicating the giant Tower of Koth.

### Inside the Blind God's Realm

The Gugs are primitive, religious creatures ruled by brute force, violence and bloodlust — but they pay homage to their own deity, the Blind God. It is he who enforces the laws of the Gugs. It is he who is offended by speech. Within the Gug City, the power and influence of this God is significant, and should not be underestimated.

The moment a character *speaks* the alarms are raised. From there, the characters will know only pursuit.

### Alarms

The moment the characters are spotted, or any in their party speaks, the air is filled with the terrifying sounds of the Gug alarms. Each giant bellows, filling the air with a sound like a freight-train, and as each gug hears the call, they too take it up.

By the time it reaches its crescendo, it is unbearable; all skill rolls are halved for as long as the alarm lasts. From this point onwards, Madaecker disposes of all subtlety. Instead, he rushes the characters towards the enormous tower in the center of the city.

### Up the Tower of Koth

This ENORMOUS conical tower spirals thousands of feet towards the surface. A large, low stepped staircase winds upwards from the City of the Gugs to the trapdoor at the top. On its base, the Tower is marked with the Symbol of Koth.

As the characters approach, Madaecker urges them to avert their eyes from the maddening symbol. Those foolish enough to look suffer 1D20 Sanity points dam-

age and freeze in their tracks; trying to puzzle out the intricacies and convolutions of the terrible symbol. Such characters can be lead by another, but until they successfully make a halved Luck roll, they otherwise continue in their stupor.

The staircase of the tower is ill-suited for human feet, but is much more manageable to climb than the Giant Stair, due to its low, long and flat steps, indicating that beings not unlike men once used them.

The Tower itself is featureless, and is nothing more than a blameless piece of rock surrounded by the spiraling stair.

Madaeker rushes the characters up the stairs, keeping the pace by staying behind them and goading the slowest characters along. "To the top! To the top!" he shouts as the terrifying Gug alarms begin to sound.

#### *The Sealed Gate*

The group arrives, hunted and exhausted at the top of the Tower of Koth — the place Madaeker has lead them through the horrors of the Underworld to — only to find a primitive but effective blockage.

A pile of huge, stone boulders have been placed in a tight pattern beneath the wooden trapdoor visible above. There is no passage to the door larger than a few inches, and no way to move the boulders, which weigh tons.

Madaeker confesses that this is the sole exit to the surface he knows of in the Gug City.

As the characters begin to panic, the noise of the Gug war-party below them begins to build, some might realize Madaeker is chanting. The Ghoul rushes to the edge of the spiraling tower and pulling something from his rotted garb, hurls it into the dark. He shouts something in English: "Nodens, Lord of the Abyss, answer our plea." Madaeker touches each character once and then lays prostrate on the floor in submission.

Finally, he slowly rises, looking drained and exhausted.

The Ghoul draws the characters to edge of the tower just as the first Gug arrives, it's a terrifying creature, easily 50-feet tall and carrying a primitive spear the size of a railway car. It slowly begins walking towards the characters, relishing the terror leading up to the kill. Madaeker shouts commands to it in an inhuman tongue (Morga), but it laughs horribly, and continues forward.

That's when the entire scene is suddenly engulfed in a sea of flapping, black, darkness.

#### *The Nightgaunts*

The characters are violently swept away from certain death by a vast horde of Nightgaunts. These beasts inflict 1D4 Hit Points of damage on each "passenger" with their talons, and the bumpy, terrifying transport is enough to cost anyone 1/1D6 Sanity points. No speech is possible during the flight; as the only noise is the screams of the characters, and the relentless flapping of wings.

Those struggling to gain a look at their "rescuer" is met with the seamless, black face of the Nightgaunt (1/1D6 Sanity points). Those foolish enough to *attack* the Nightgaunt carrying them are dropped, falling to their death in the rocky underworld below.

This flight lasts mere minutes but feels much, much longer. Finally, dimly in the distance, enormous snow covered peaks can be seen in the dark.

## The Peaks of Thok

The characters are dropped roughly and suddenly by the Nightgaunts onto the snow covered peaks of Thok. Each character should make a Luck roll. Those who fail suffer 1D6 Hit Points of damage from the rough fall. The flapping horde of beasts vanishes into silence as the characters lay, injured and prostrate on the steep incline of the mountains.

Madaeker, looking sickly and exhausted, rouses the characters. "If I had not been on the Tower, the minions of Nodens would not have heeded the call," he confesses. "Not far now."

#### The Exit

Madaeker's attitude seems to soften, indicating that the territory the characters are traversing is far safer than before. The Ghoul leads the group on a winding path through the highest passes of the mountains, slowly upwards towards the surface.

Finally, after several hours, with a path growing more and more narrow and treacherous, Madaeker turns towards the mountain and rolls back a small boulder, revealing a smooth, three-foot wide tunnel which seems to slope upwards. "The daylight awaits my friends."

#### Renewing the Bargain

Madaeker pulls aside one character as they move single-file into the tunnel. "Your part of the bargain shall be recalled when you return to New Amsterdam." The smile on Madaeker's face is horrific, something like fear, hunger and hatred all at once.

Until the character shakes his hand, the Ghoul does not release him or her.

#### Those Left Behind

Any foolish enough to eat or drink in the Underworld are pulled aside by Madaeker. Even if Madaeker was not aware of their eating or drinking, it is clear to him at the exit.

He tells the character very plainly "You may never return to the surface. The curse is now upon you. Do not worry; we shall pass the time as we do, here in the dark." If the character attempts to leave, they find themselves incapable of moving up the tunnel, and instead are frozen in their place until they decide to turn back. These are no cure for the curse. Such a character is lost forever.

#### The Surface

The daylight at the surface is blinding, but those who emerge from the tunnel find themselves in a bizarre city. *See Section Nine: Sarnath* in *Worlds of Cthulhu* #7 for more details.

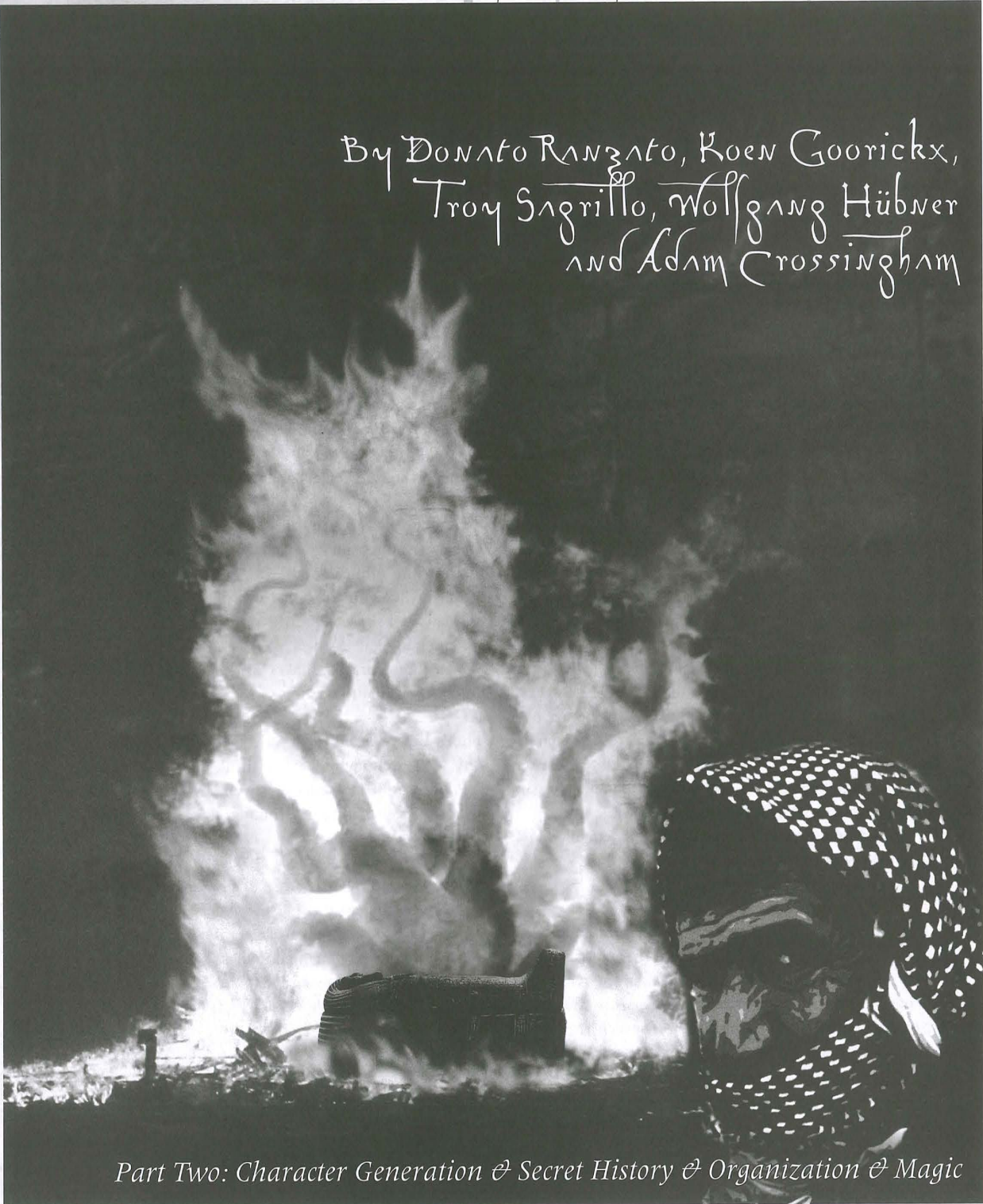
*The Sense of the Sleight of Hand Man* concludes with Part Two in *Worlds of Cthulhu* #7, published later this year.



Monster-hunters fighting a holy war?

# The Sword of Snesferu

By Donato Ranzato, Koen Goorickx,  
Troy Sagrillo, Wolfgang Hübner  
and Adam Crossingham



*Part Two: Character Generation & Secret History & Organization & Magic*

In this second part of 'The Sword of Sneferu' you will find rules on how to play members of the Sword of Sneferu so you can take up the fight against the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh. We describe the secret history of the order, give you descriptions

of all the Maq bid and the mysterious Sannan, tell you everything there is to know about the powerful magic the order wields, and reveal what horrible secrets lie below the Gayer-Anderson Museum. Inshallah!

# The Chain of Command



Mdjai: Sayyid Shawki



Nubi: Omar Khaled



Meti: Tarek Ebeid



Amahteankh:  
Dr. Hasan ibn Kafur

The Sword of Sneferu is organized like the weapon it takes its name from. The Sword consists of the wielder, the handle, and the blade. Below are explained what these various parts are and do.

## The Hand That Wields the Sword

There is only one true leader of the order, namely the Grand Master or Sannan (wielder of a sword). He (always a man) is advised by an inner circle of four Masters called the Maqābid (sword handles, singular *maqbid*). They are the only ones who have a complete overview of all the order's activities and have some knowledge about that which they are fighting. They are all experienced, magic-using priests of the ancient Egyptian religion (Sekhmet in particular, but also Isis and Bastet) but they also have some practical knowledge about the magic of the Mythos. The Sannan is always a male blood relative of Djadjaemankh, the beloved high-priest of Sneferu (see *Secrets of the Sword* section). This heritage is the only criterion to be accepted as the next Sannan.

The Masters of the order are all old, frail, bitter and not surprisingly slightly insane. Some even suffer from a mild form of dementia, slowly forgetting what they are fighting or the knowledge how to do this. Originally, the

## The handle of the sword

The Maqābid consisted of 20 to 30 members, but because they are paranoid and trust no-one, little new blood replenishes their ranks. If the four Masters die then the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh can reign once more over its ancient homeland.

The Maqābid watch any possible blood relatives of Djadjaemankh in Egypt. They maintain a very thorough genealogical database and whenever a new blood relative is born, they protect him and slowly move it towards a future initiation in the order.

Each of the four Masters of the order is also the head of a committee responsible for an important aspect of the order:

- ✦ The Military committee is responsible for training, weapons acquisition, and planning attacks.
- ✦ The Money/Business committee runs business operations. This committee provides air tickets and false passports, pays the *Ashfar*, and oversees money-making businesses.
- ✦ The Law committee reviews both Islamic law and Egyptian religious doctrines and decides if particular courses of action conform to the principles the order holds in high regard.
- ✦ The Study committee studies hyper-geometry and magic and distributes the artifacts, scrolls, relics and reliquaries.

## The Masters of the Order

### Sayyid Shawki (83) (codename Mdjai)

Born to a Coptic Orthodox family in 1924. Sayyid Shawki studied law before entering the Royal Military Academy from which he graduated as a second lieutenant, aged 19. Shortly after his graduation he was contacted by the order. Five years later he was initiated as a shafr.

Shawki was one of the young officers who founded the Free Officers Movement after the Palestine War. The group of young officers felt that they had been betrayed by their own government. On July 23rd 1952, the Free Officer Movement led by Gamal Abd El-Nasser seized power in a bloodless revolution which allowed King Farouk to leave the country with a full royal salute. On June 18th 1953, the monarchy ended and Egypt was declared a Republic and Mohammad Naguib named as the first President. In 1954 Nasser assumed control as the second president and, as a close friend of Nasser, Shawki became one of the most powerful men in Egypt. In 1980, aged 56, Shawki was initiated into the inner circle of the Maqābid and become responsible for the Military Committee of the order. At his initiation he took the name Mdjai (soldier). Shawki is a widower with three children (all three are initiated Brothers) and eight grandchildren.

### Omar Khaled (90) (codename Nubi)

Omar Khaled was—and is—a famous writer and thinker of the Arabian world. He was born near Cairo. At an early age Khaled was known for his wide interest in science and culture, as well as his firm belief in the human intellect as a guarantor of progress and prosperity. In 1934, he traveled to Europe, where he studied literature, philosophy, social and natural sciences. Khaled is known in the Arabic world for his uncompromising opposition to scientific and social reforms. Khaled made it his life's work to maintain the Arabian identity and distinguish it from the West.

Omar Khaled was not always able to maintain his position in Egypt—an Islamic-oriented country—because like his fellow maqbid Sayyid Shawki, he himself is a Copt—the Egyptian Christian minority. Khaled vehemently demands the simplification of the Arabic language and its grammar. This has inflamed the criticism of his conservative opponents. He ruthlessly criticizes not only the manifold dialects in all Arabian countries, but also standard Arabic. He proposes that a new Arabic language should be created based upon the grammar of the Ancient Egyptian language.

Khaled was initiated into the inner circle of Maqābid in 1967. He took the codename Nubi (Gold Worker). Khaled is responsible for the Business Committee of the order.

### Tarek Ebeid (93) (codename Meti)

Tarek Ebeid was born into a wealthy family in 1914. At a very young age Ebeid began preaching in mosques across Egypt and he quickly rose to fame. His lectures were—

and are—very popular. They are still being distributed throughout the Arabic world through books, the internet as well as on cassette tapes. Ebeid was a pupil of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and in 1928, at 14 years of age, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. Hassan al-Banna was an initiated shafr of the order and he recruited Ebeid to the cause shortly after Ebeid's 18th birthday.

During his time as a popular preacher Ebeid used the Muslim Brotherhood's approach to target university-student-aged Muslim Arab youth from the upper-middle class. Traditionalists from Al Azhar were uncomfortable with the rising popularity of Ebeid. The Egyptian authorities became alarmed that his followers were multiplying in numbers, even among the ranks of influential and wealthy families.

In 1944 Ebeid became a maqbid. At his initiation in the inner order he took the name Meti (Righteous).

The Muslim Brotherhood and Ebeid in particular, enjoyed a close relationship with the Free Officers Movement in the time leading up to and following the coup of June 1952. After the attempted assassination of Gamal Abd El-Nasser in 1954, the Egyptian government cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian authorities forced Ebeid into exile abroad but he returned 20 years later, more popular than ever.

Ebeid is responsible for the Law committee of the order. It was Ebeid who in 1980 proposed Shawki as the new maqbid when Shakwi's predecessor died.

### Hasan ibn Kafūr (75) (codename Amahteankh)

Kafūr was born in 1932 in Cairo. He received his Bachelor's degree from the Alexandria University, and his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Like his father before him, Dr. Hasan ibn Kafūr is the head conservator of the Cairo Museum of Antiquities, a powerful ceremonial magician, the protector of the Kitab al-Azif, the

#### Hasan ibn Kafūr

STR 8    CON 7    SIZ 9    INT 18    POW 20  
DEX 9    APP 11    EDU 20    SAN 35    HP 8

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Weapon Skills:** None (Sayyid Shawki has Handgun 55%, Rifle 45%, Knife 60% and Demolitions 60%).

**Languages:** Ancient Egyptian (Hieroglyphs) 90%, Arabic (own) 90%, Demotic Egyptian 65%, English 85%, Feline 45%, French 80%, Hebrew 60%, Latin 45%.

**Skills:** Anthropology 60%, Archaeology 95%, Astronomy 75%, Bargain 65%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Debate 50%, Drive Automobile 30%, Geology 50%, Egyptian History 95%, Law 50%, Library Use/Research 85%, Occult 70%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 50%, Theology 40%.

**Spells:** Blessing of Isis, Send Dreams, Speak with Cats.

**Tillasm:** Beloved of Sekhmet figurine (see *Magic of the Sword* section), Stone of Mnar, Elder Sign.



most senior maqbad of the Sword of Sneferu, and the personal assistant of the Sannan. When he was a mere 9 years old Kafūr was initiated by his father as a shafr. The senior Kafūr told his son the truth about the order and who its leaders were. In 1992 when his father died, Kafūr became his successor as the new maqābid. He took the name Amahteankh (To have power over life) and like his

father became the head of the Study Committee. Kafūr has a wife, a daughter and three grandchildren.

No stats have been give for the inner circle of maqābid, except for Dr. Kafūr (see Part I – *Worlds of Cthulhu* #5), as they are neither meant as playable PCs or NPCs. If the Keeper does need stats he can use the stats as a guideline for the three maqābid.

## The Blade of the Sword

The Maqābid oversee and control all the different aspects of the order. These are called Ashfār (sword blades) and these blades can be initiated brothers of the order, an organization, a group, individual persons or fields of expertise (e.g. Demolitions, Intelligence, Field Operations, Recruitment). Those in charge of these smaller, specialized organizations carry with them a stylized symbolic sword without a handle (only the blade-part). An initiated shafr (singular) act as liaison between his maqbid and the rest of the ashfār and they are the lowest rank of members aware of the order. The number of initiated brothers belonging to the organization is unknown.

The Sword's network structure, as opposed to a hierarchical structure is its primary strength. The decentralized structure enables the order to have a large distributed base whilst retaining a relatively small core. An estimated 10,000 Islamist militants are said to have received instruction from the order's ashfār since World War II, the order is believed to retain only a small number of dedicated members under direct orders. Estimates seldom put its manpower higher than 200 members.

For its most complex operations (such as the attack on the mountain Jebel Barkal) all participants, planning and funding are directly provided by the Maqābid. But in many attacks around the Middle East and worldwide where there appears to be a connection to the Sword of Sneferu, its precise role has been less easy to define. Rather than handling these operations from conception to delivery, the order often acts as a financial and logistical support-network, channeling income obtained from its network to provide training capital and coordination for local radical groups. In many cases it is these local groups, only loosely affiliated to the order's ashfār, which actually undertake the attacks on cults and their strongholds.

### Forging the Sword

For most of its early history the Swords recruited new brothers from amongst the priestly classes. After the coming of Christianity, and the arrival of Islamic rulers, they had to find different, more subtle ways to find suitable fighters. For a long time the Swords recruited worth-

while candidates whilst subverting the *Hashshashin* (the infamous Ismaili assassins' guild). The initiate thought he was joining the Assassins after receiving all the appropriate introductions and initiations but instead was recruited for the Sword. These brothers knew that there was no way out but death and the Sword could blame the Assassins for any high-profile assassinations.

After the destruction of the Assassins by the Mongol hordes, the Sword maintained the Assassins' methods for indoctrination and brainwashing. Potential new recruits are subtly maneuvered into study groups, called Assemblies of Wisdom, where they are told they will learn all the secrets of the True Faith. All lessons are carefully prepared, written down and submitted by the Maqābid and taught by initiated shafr

New recruits have to pass through seven degrees of initiation. In the first, the Shafr throws his pupils into a state of doubt about all conventional ideas, religious and political. He uses false analogy and every other device of argument to make the aspirant believe that what he had been taught by his previous mentors was prejudiced and capable of being challenged. The effect of this is to cause him to lean upon the personality of the Shafr, as the only possible source of the proper interpretation of facts. At the same time, the Shafr hints continually that formal knowledge is merely the cloak for a more hidden and powerful inner truth, whose secret will be imparted when the youth is ready to receive it. This 'confusion technique' is carried out until the student reaches the stage where he is prepared to swear a vow of blind allegiance to his teacher. This oath, together with certain secret signs, is administered in due course, and the candidate is awarded the first degree of initiation.

The second degree takes the form of initiation into the fact that the Shafr is the only legitimate representative of the Imams (successors of Mohammed) and that they are the true and only source of secret knowledge and power. Therefore the student is to acknowledge every saying and act of his appointed teacher as blessed and divinely inspired by the Imams. In this degree the aspirant is indoctrinated and brainwashed into following the Shafr without questioning.

In the third degree, the esoteric names of the Seven Imams are revealed, and the secret words by which they

can be conjured and by which the powers inherent in the very repetition of their names can be liberated and used for the individual, especially when in the service of the teacher. In this degree the Sword tests if the aspirant has any magical affinity.

To obtain the fourth degree involves instruction in the methods of analytical and destructive argument, in which the postulant has to pass a demanding examination. In this degree the Swords tests the willpower of the aspirant

The fifth degree brings revelation of the Great Secret: that all humanity and all creation are one and every single thing is a part of the whole, which includes the creative and destructive power. But, as a 'Sword of Truth' the pupil can make use of the power which is ready to be awakened within him, and overcome those who know nothing of the immense potential of the rest of humanity. This power comes through the aid of the mysterious power called the *Lord of Time*.

To qualify for the sixth degree, the aspirant has to believe that all religion, philosophy and the like are fraudulent. All that matters is the individual, who can attain fulfillment only through servitude to the greatest developed power—the Lord of Time.

The seventh and last degree brings the revelation of the secret that jinn exist and that they need to be destroyed. The lord of the Jinn is called Khadhulu (Arabic word meaning 'abandoner' or 'forsaker'). Khadhulu is a type of spiritual force that causes men to forsake Islam and its culture. The verse in the Qur'an: "For Mankind, Shaitan is al khadhulu" is important because it links the 'abandoner' Khadhulu with Shaitan the Old Dragon, Lord of the Abyss. The baraka (soul) of Khadhulu is called Nyarlat and he is the most powerful of the Jinn. Nyarlat has many human worshippers who are the enemy of Mankind. The Sword of Truth is the only group in the world that knows of the existence of jinn, their human servants and the ways to fight them.

When a pupil has passed through all seven degrees he is more than willing to sacrifice his life to protect mankind by fighting the Jinn. He sees the Sword of Truth as the protectors of mankind and the true representative of the most powerful imam, the Lord of Time.

The best, and most successful, of the initiated brothers are eligible to be selected for the position of maqbid when one of them dies.

## The Attack of the Sword

Because of the brainwashing in the seven degrees of initiation, brothers of the Swords feel that they are doing nothing wrong when they kill, torture and injure people or damage property combating the Jinn. The brothers have a very simplistic way of thinking in which "I am good and right. Every person and thing connected with the Jinn is bad and wrong." It is a very polarized thinking which allows them to distance themselves from opponents and makes it easier for them to kill people who are connected with their enemies, with apparently little or no sense of remorse or guilt. This philosophy is illustrated in the following quotes from captured brothers:



A typical initiated brother of the order



*Amahteankh: A loyal brother of the Sword*

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 12  
DEX 13 APP 12 SAN 65 EDU 14 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapon Skills:** Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1D3+db

Kick 44%, damage 1D4+db

Grapple 40%, damage special

Knife 60%, damage 1D4+2+db

Club 30%, damage 1D6+db

Scimitar 45%, damage 1D8+1+db

Handgun 45%, damage varies

Rifle 50%, damage varies

Submachine Gun 30%, damage varies

**Languages:** Arabic (own) 80%, Demotic Egyptian 05%, English 15%.

**Skills:** Bargain 65%, Cthulhu Mythos 10%, Demolitions 45%, Drive Automobile 30%, Egyptian History 12%, Law 20%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Theology 20%, Throw 35%, Occult 15%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 40%.

**Spells:** At the Keeper's discretion a brother can know one defensive spell like Elder Sign or Blessing of Isis.

**Possible mental aberrations:** sociopathy, amnesia, xenophobia, depression, insomnia

"Everybody hates death, fears death, but only those, the true believers who know the life after death and the reward after death, would be the ones who will be seeking death by destroying the worshippers of the blasphemous jinn."

"Check your weapon, say morning prayers together, and, if you make you way to the temple of the unholy gods, when you arrive, smile and rest assured, for Allah is with the true believers and the angels are protecting you."

Many brothers are following family tradition when they are recruited into the order. After they have been initiated through the seven degrees, the Sword (which they think is called the Sword of Truth) becomes the sole source of support and friendship. Their sense of belonging, sense of purpose, perhaps even their sense of identity, is derived from the relationships within the group and its common goal.



Very few brothers feel pity or empathy for the cultists or unbelievers they kill or maim. This psychopathic behaviour increases after surviving numerous encounters with the insane worshippers and monsters of the Mythos. This reaction to their mind-destroying experiences may be in the form of post traumatic stress. The common symptoms are intrusive thoughts, nightmares and sleep-

ing difficulties, anxiety or fear, alienation from people, 'jumpiness', emotional numbness and problems with social relationships. They vary in type and scope enormously from brother to brother though. Some brothers will need professional help after have encountered the Mythos one too many times. Others will get by with the support of their brothers.

## Secrets of the Sword



Swords leader:  
Djadjaemankh

Djadjaemankh,  
millennia-old insane order leader

STR 8 CON 7 SIZ 9 INT 20  
POW 30 (50 extra Magic Points)  
DEX 9 APP 11 EDU 30 SAN 0 HP 8  
**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Weapon Skills:** Scimitar (khepesh) 75%, Mace 45%, Bow 60%.

**Languages:** Ancient Egyptian (Hieroglyphs) 99%, Arabic (own) 90%, Demotic Egyptian 65%, English 85%, Feline 80%, French 40%, Hebrew 80%, Latin 15%.

**Skills:** Anthropology 60%, Archaeology 95%, Astronomy 75%, Bargain 65%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Debate 50%,

Drive Automobile 30%, Geology 50%, Egyptian History 99%, Egyptian Magic and Religion 99%, Knowledge: Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh 55%, R/W Egyptian Hieroglyphics 99%, Library Use/Research 85%, Occult 70%, Persuade 60%, Psychology 50%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 50%.

**Spells:** Chant of Thoth, Blessing of Isis, Apportion Ka, Parting Sands, Seal of Isis, Call Wind\*, Contact Bast\*, Cause disease, Command animal, Evil Eye, Dream Vision, Summon Plague, Call Forth Brood\*, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Curse of the stone, Death spell, Steal Life, Mind Transfer, Speak with Cats.

**Tillasm:** Beloved of Sekhmet figurine (see Magic of the Sword), Stone of Mnar, Elder Sign, Tillasm of Djadjaemankh (see Magic of the Sword).

The most carefully hidden secret of the order, not only from the lower brothers but also from the inner circle of maqābid is the fact that the current Sannan is still the original Sannan when the order was created thousands of years ago.

When the court magicians created the order around 2700 BC, they foresaw the decline and disappearance of their religion. To make sure that their powerful knowledge would continue throughout the aeons they decided that one of them should become immortal and thus safeguard the order's rituals and customs. The person chosen to become immortal was naturally the beloved high-priest of Sneferu, Djadjaemankh. The other priests sacrificed their lives to give Djadjaemankh a powerful *Tillasm* (see *Magic of the Sword* section) which contained both the collected knowledge and power of the sacrificed priests, together with a powerful spell with which Djad-

jaemankh could transfer his mind in a new body when he would feel the time of his death approaching.

After centuries of transferring his mind, Djadjaemankh has grown increasingly insane and unstable. That is one of the reasons why the order has become more paranoid and extreme in its activities in the present day.

Djadjaemankh is served by his personal servant Hasan ibn Kafūr, the most senior and powerful of the Maqābid. After the Brotherhood of the Beast's attack on the Ibn-Tulun-Mosque in 1925, Djadjaemankh never fully recovered. What was left of his millennium-old sanity was lost to him forever. Now Djadjaemankh lives in a state of dreams and premonitions, drifting in and out of consciousness. Kafūr has stepped in to oversee the activities of the Sword and he is now, in practice, the leader of the order. Kafūr is also the only maqbad who knows the horrible secret of the Sannan

### Blood Relative

It is no coincidence that the current Sannan must be a blood relative of the high priest Djadjaemankh. When the priests of Sneferu had to create their immortal protector millennia ago they searched through their tomes for a spell that could ensure this. In the *Pert em Hru* (with the Thebes Code) they found the Mind Transfer spell. This spell is a variant of the version found in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook (6e, page 239). The spell has the additional disadvantages that the mind of the sorcerer is destroyed when his original body is destroyed and that the sorcerer's mind can only be transferred to a blood relative. As the spell only works on blood relatives of the sorcerer the priests made a bargain with the goddess Sekhmet. As long as the Sword of Sneferu protects Egypt against the Mythos, she would show them which blood relative of Djadjaemankh is best suited to sacrifice his mind to Djadjaemankh so that his wisdom and knowledge is never lost. This "successor" is always

born in Egypt and the sign is a birthmark, called the *Sign of Sekhmet*, which looks like the stylized version of the handle of a sword. The Maqābid maintain a very thorough genealogical database and whenever a new blood relative of Djadjaemankh is born in Egypt the most senior maqbad is sent to investigate the baby for the Sign of Sekhmet. When he finds the Sign he announces to the other maqābid that the next Sannan is found. Ash-fār of the Swords then snatch the child from its family and bring the child to the mosque of Ibn-Tulun where the Maqābid train and prepare him to become the latest member of the circle of maqābid

When the current Sannan (Djadjaemankh) feels his death approaching he calls his maqābid to him and proclaims that he has selected a worthy successor (this is just a tradition as the Maqābid already know who this is). Under the cover that he must train and initiate his successor in private, he lures his victim to the secret location of his tomb, where he performs the horrible ritual unseen by the other maqābid.

Djadjaemankh's original body is buried within his sarcophagus deep down under the House of Kridliya inside the old temple of Bast. Only Kafūr, Djadjaemankh and the goddesses Isis, Bast and Sekhmet know the exact location of this tomb.

## A Secret Within A Secret

It is a desperate time for the group. The current body of Djadjaemankh is now 108 years old and the powerful Egyptian priest knows that his death is approaching fast. To prevent his Ka being eaten by Ammit, his successor must be found fast. But no successor has been born since 1925. The Sannan is becoming more and more mentally unstable, and in this power vacuum the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh is growing in power and boldness. The situation becomes more troublesome each day and the Sannan's second-in-

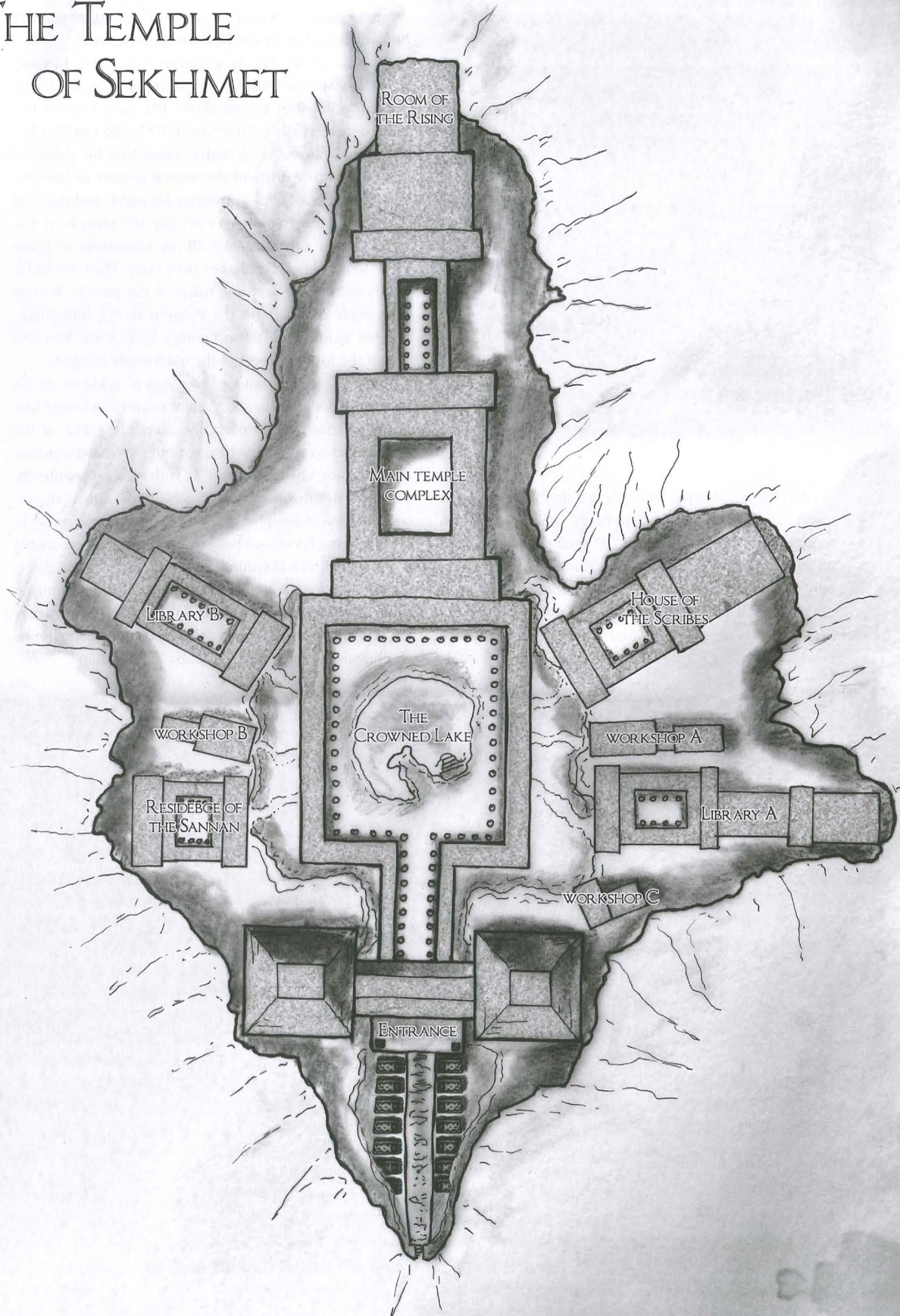
command, Kafūr fears that the Old Gods have abandoned the group. But Kafūr has a secret within a secret.

Kafūr belongs to the faction within the Sword that is more tolerant and open to the Western World and he wants to make contact to fight the Jinn together. Kafūr sees the silence of the Gods as a sign that the hostile, fundamentalist views of Djadjaemankh are wrong and that they go against the betterment of the order and therefore Egypt. Why else is Sekhmet breaking the agreement?



*Under the House of Kridliya: the avenue of sphinxes leading to the Temple of Sekhmet's first pylon*

# THE TEMPLE OF SEKHMET



### Which Cultural Influences Did The Order Embrace And Why?

The Sword of Sneferu has embraced foreign influence over the millennia as long as it fulfilled the following criteria:

- ☞ It must be free of Mythos taint. This is why the order rejected Christian Byzantine influence (see box).
- ☞ It must conform to the warrior ideal of the Swords, which is clearly the case with Alexander the Great, the Ptolemaic Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs.
- ☞ It must not suppress the Egyptian people. This is another reason for the exclusion of Byzantine and Persian influences by the Swords. The Persian Empire, which conquered Egypt about 600 BC, fell into the oppressor category and had to fight Egyptians, who rebelled against their foreign rulers frequently. During Ptolemaic and Roman rule on the other hand the Swords thrived. A climate of religious tolerance allowed them to operate safely.

From foreign brothers he has heard that there are other organizations in the world fighting the Jinn, and Kafūr is seeking ways to contact them. The senior maqbad is also hungry for power. Kafūr has an ambitious plan to not only find a successor for his Sannan, but also to take over the group and to regain the lost power of the order and Egypt at the same time; he wants to make his daughter the next Sannan. To ensure this he has the almost impossible

task to persuade the other (chauvinistic) maqābid that his daughter is the Chosen of the Gods. He also has to sacrifice his daughter to an insane Egyptian high priest.

Why his daughter? As a powerful magician himself, Kafūr has sensed that his daughter has a natural, untrained, super strong mind (POW 19). He is training her to become mentally even stronger. He is also teaching her the Mind Transfer spell. Kafūr hopes that his daughter will be able to withstand the mental powers of Djadjaemankh when his tries to transfer his mind, and that she will be powerful enough to reverse the process. If she succeeds, she can assimilate all the knowledge of Djadjaemankh, while keeping her own body. Then the Kafūr family will be the supreme rulers of the Swords. He can then make contact with the Western World, find a like-minded group who is also fighting against the Jinn and regain the former power of the old Swords in Egypt.

Kafūr has already tattooed the Sign of Sekhmet on his daughter's body. As the most senior maqbad he knows that the other maqābid will normally accept his "proof" of the Sign of Sekhmet on his word alone, but now that it concerns a girl he knows he has to come up with stronger arguments. He wants to show the other maqābid that a female successor is the will of Sekhmet as the goddess wants the group to become more liberal—to both women and the West. If only Kafūr could find a like-minded Western organization that is actively fighting the Jinn without any political affiliations. A group that wants to support his grab for power in exchange for mutual help and support. And he has to accomplish all this before the Sannan permanently loses his mind.

### The Great Library and the Swords

The founding of the Great Library was one of the legacy acts undertaken by Ptolemy I when he became ruler of Egypt. At the same time, a new god, Serapis, was introduced to Egypt; Serapis combined aspects of Osiris (god of the underworld) and Apis (bull god of Memphis, manifestation of Ptah the Creator). Late period Egypt featured a lot of revisions of gods and goddesses. It happened throughout Egyptian history as various foreigners held sway over the country. New pharaohs or kings brought their own ideas of godship. Likewise they undertook monumental construction to reinforce their right to the throne. Ptolemy I was keen to honor Alexander's memory and establish his own rule. For a time the Great Library made Egypt the centre of learning.

The Library contained valuable Mythos works and the Swords had a permanent representation within the Great Library in order to watch for people seeking forbidden knowledge and to divert any unusual works that may be found.

Because of the fluid nature of the state religions it was easy for the Swords to investigate and infiltrate the various cults during the Late and Ptolemaic periods of Egypt. Just as the goddess Bast was required to fight and defeat Apep every dawn to ensure that the sun would rise, the Swords had to diligently pursue their mission throughout Egypt to ensure

the defeat of the Mythos agitators. This was a time of great victories for the Swords, upsetting many Mythos cults and confiscating much Mythos lore.

Where did the confiscated Mythos works go to?

The wise high priest Menophar, sometime tutor of Simon of Gitta, was a priest from the temples of Ptah in Memphis. Menophar knew of the caverns beneath the Sphinx, and the secret of the Beast (the Great Sphinx). He had sworn to keep this knowledge buried and hidden from all who would attempt to use it.

Memphis was one of the places where the festivals of Bast were celebrated. By the time of Roman rule in Egypt, the Sword of Sneferu had moved its headquarters from al-Fustat to Memphis and was operating under the aegis of the priests of Ptah. During Ptolemaic times the order had found strong allies within the priesthood of Ptah and they had influence at the Temple of Serapis.

For a time the remaining Mythos works were safe, but within a 100 years the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh learned its location and after many struggles won the territory. The Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh studied the collection, destroyed anything that could seriously jeopardize them and left the rest to molder. Occasionally, in times of extreme emergencies, the Sword of Sneferu runs rescue missions to try to get their hands on the remaining texts and artifacts.

# Magic of the Swords

Since both the Sword of Sneferu and their foremost enemies descend from ancient Egyptian magicians, the magic they wield is very strong. Due to the organization of the Swords today, most members don't have access to the full potential of magic though.

As their fight forced them into ever changing faces and eventually going underground, the way the Swords view and use magic has changed as well. With the supremacy of Islam, the worship and the magic of the old gods became an underground matter. In more recent years the Swords have been using sharr (evil) magic more and more to accomplish their goals. Most of the Swords' magic is linked to their early patron goddess Sekhmet.

## Timing of Egyptian Rituals

The best time to perform a magical ritual may be astronomically determined. This does not mean that spells only work on certain times, but the chance of success may be dramatically increased when keeping in mind certain planetary and astrological constellations. However, as Egyptian religion was mainly solar-oriented, the spells can be cast at any time (midnight, dawn, midday and dusk are suggested though).

## Types of Magic

According to the masters of the Swords there are two levels of magic.

### 1) Magic usable by the Ashfār

This mostly reflects on talismans, enchanted weapons and such. The user of these items knows that when he performs a certain series of actions the item responds in a certain way. In most cases the user doesn't fully under-

stand the true powers and potential dangers of the item. This also covers certain spells in which the caster manipulates powers that go beyond his full comprehension without dealing with beings of higher power.

### 2) Magic usable by the Maqābid

This magic is very dangerous. Certain people (usually with low sanity, which is saying something...) know that by performing a series of actions (usually referred to as a spell or a ritual) they can get the attention of beings of superb powers from other dimensions.

In both cases the potential of anything magic related going horribly wrong is rather high. Thus following guidelines for items, spells and so on are nothing more than exactly that: guidelines.

### Egyptian Magic

Egyptian ritual magic requires one vital component for such things as mental domination. The caster must know the True Name (Ren) of the intended target. This refers to the True Name of any creature with language. Without knowledge of a True Name the spell caster cannot initiate any degree of mental control over a target; the magic would fail automatically.

Because of this the Sannan, all of the Maqābid and initiated brothers use codenames by which they identify themselves to other members of the order. The real name of an initiated brother is only known to the Maqbid that controls him. The real name of a maqbid is only known to the other maqābid and the Sannan. The real name of the Sannan is only known to him, if he can remember it.

For their codenames the Swords use ancient Egyptian names. For a list of authentic ancient Egyptian names visit the website: [www.geocities.com/wally\\_mo/names.html](http://www.geocities.com/wally_mo/names.html).

# ENCHANTED ITEMS

## The Negma pendant

This rather large pendant depicting a star-like Islamic sign (hence its name "star pendant") is forged in copper and has a small hole through which a string may be attached. When looking upon this pendant it seems to be ornamented with an Islamic sura. But when listening to a certain chant (the chant is called "the opening" and can be found in several tomes) while looking, a pattern seems to emerge in the Arabic words. Anyone with knowledge of Arabic (at least 50%) sees a new connection in the sign. The words give insight into the existence of a world of jinns.

The person seeing this makes an INT×2 check. If the roll succeeds, he understands the insight given. The cost is -1D6 Sanity points and 1 POW. This insight is not a gift but more of a curse, as this pendant does not open a one-way window but a two-way link. The jinn on the other side is looking back and more. After 1D4 days the victim wakes up in a room (preferably a room where he is alone) surrounded by scribbling and notes in Arabic in his own handwriting. Every time he sees his own notes or the original pendant (even without the chant) he takes another INT×2 check, when failed he loses 1D6 Sanity points as the Jinn talks to him directly. When the victim



*The Negma pendant*

goes temporarily or permanently insane, he is under the total control of the Jinn.

The Jinn in the Negma pendant is under the control of the Sannan of the Swords and therefore he controls the victim as well. Rumor has it this pendant was once a (failed) attempt to make a portal by Abdul Alhazred.

### The Beloved of Sekhmet



*A Beloved of Sekhmet figurine*

This is a small carved stone lion/cat figurine. When the appropriate ritual is spoken the figurine grows to become a magically animated lion (stats are the same as for the tiger in the *Call of Cthulhu* rulebook, 6e page 208-9) that acts as a protector/bodyguard. Each maqbid receives a Beloved of Sekhmet when he is accepted as maqbid.

### The Twin Swords of the Jinn Princes

These swords were once a pair but got separated somewhere during the Crusades. One of them resides in the hands of PISCES in London. (Delta Green: Countdown, page 38) The other is in possession of Master Shawki. It houses a jinni and grants certain powers to the wielder.

Both swords have the following attributes:

The steel for these swords was forged in a furnace heated by two fire vampires who were later sealed in the swords. It is a beautifully crafted pair of hiltless swords with slightly curved, single edged blades. The scabbards are crafted in ivory. Whoever picks up one of these weapons feels a burning pulse quicken his senses and muscles. If they maintain physical contact with a sword for a full day, they begin to sweat and then suddenly faint. After a few minutes of unconsciousness the sword bearer recovers but has permanently lost one point from his STR, CON, INT, POW, DEX and APP.



*Master Shawki's Twin Sword of the Jinn Princes*

The now anointed sword bearer is affected by all temperatures as if they are 20 degrees lower than the actual temperature (in Fahrenheit).

The following properties only function for anointed sword bearers:

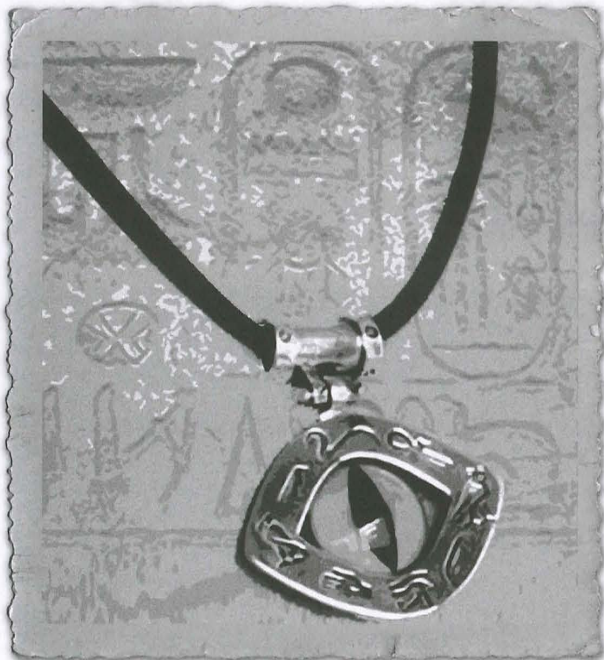
- ☞ It is an enchanted weapon doing 1D8+1+db damage. If the sword bearer expends one magic point, he can cause the blade to glow yellow hot for the next seven minutes. When activated in this way, the blade does 3D6+db damage. The handle of the weapon remains cool to the touch.
- ☞ Without spending any magic points, the sword bearer can ignite any flammable material or scorch non-flammable materials simply by touching the blade of the sword to an object.
- ☞ While holding the drawn sword, the sword bearer can summon, but not bind fire vampires at a cost of one magic point per fire vampire.



✦ While holding the drawn sword, the sword bearer can send telepathic messages to fire vampires within 100 yards. To command fire vampires the sword bearer must actually cast the Bind Fire Vampire Spell, an ability the sword does not provide.

Each time the sword bearer draws the sword he must make a Sanity roll or lose 1D3 Sanity points. When the sword bearer reaches zero SAN, he will be consumed with an overwhelming desire to immolate himself. If he succeeds, he turns into a fire vampire and will fly off to join his new lord and master Cthugha, orbiting the star Korvaz.

## Tillasm of Djadjaemankh



*Djadjaemankh's Tillasm*

This powerful artifact when hung around the neck of a (male) person gives the following abilities to its wearer:

Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Knowledge (Egyptian History) 99%, Knowledge (Egyptian Magic and Religion) 99%, Knowledge (Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh) 55%, and Other Language (Egyptian Hieroglyphics) 99%.

It gives the owner 50 extra magic points to cast spells with, which regenerate fully within 24 hours.

It also contains the spells: Chant of Thoth, Blessing of Isis, Apportion Ka, Parting Sands, seal of Isis, Call Wind\*, Contact Bast\*, Cause disease, Command animal, Evil Eye, Dream Vision, Summon Plague, Call Forth Brood\*, Prinn's Crux Ansata, Curse of the stone, Death spell, Send Dreams, Steal Life and Mind Transfer. (\* new spells)

This last spell is a different version from the rulebook with the added disadvantage that the mind of the sorcerer is lost if his original body is destroyed and that the mind can only be transferred to the body of a blood relative.

When a person first puts on the talisman he loses 1D10 Sanity points. Keep in mind that the wearer also immediately gains 45% in Cthulhu Mythos for as long as he wears it.

## Tomes of Dark Knowledge

The following tomes (among others) are to be found in the secret library of the Gayer Anderson house and were saved from the destruction of the Alexandrian Library.

### Key of Solomon

The Latin 14th century version. The original claimed authorship by King Solomon. Consists of two volumes written on parchment. Volume one discusses precautions to avoid mistakes when dealing with and summoning of jinns. Volume two handles about the magical arts in general.

There are magical rituals included in it, yet they are so complex and even slightly erroneous, so any attempts to perform them are bound to go wrong. No Sanity loss/ Occult +5%.

### Pert em Hru (also known as "Coming Forth By Day", "Egyptian Book of the Dead", "Book of Toth")

Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic version written on fragile papyri rolls (actually a copy of a pre-Thebes Code version, the only one known). French and English translations are known.

Other versions owned by the Swords include another Egyptian hieroglyphic version written on leather 'pages' with the Thebes Code included on cloth, and an English translation with some notes in it concerning the Thebes Code.

Only catalogued in 1842 by Richard Lepsius, there is no one true or complete version of these scrolls. They contain a large number of religious-magical spells. In everyday Ancient Egyptian life, there must have been a great number of "spells" from which the most appropriate ones for the occasion were selected. The main purpose was to grant the departed a good afterlife.

In 1550 BC the priests of Thebe rearranged the spells and catalogued them, often adding titles and such. Virtually all versions that are known are of this 'revised' version. An unknown fact is that the Theban priests rewrote the spells using a cipher to protect the vast amount of knowledge contained in these spells. Without this cipher the potent spells in the writings are worthless. The cipher is known to the Illuminated as the Thebes Code.

✦ Reading the *Pert em Hru* without the Thebes Code: no Sanity loss/ +3% Occult skill.

✦ Reading the *Pert em Hru* with the Thebes Code: -1D4/ 2D4 Sanity loss/+13% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

It would take about 40 weeks to decipher the spells once the code is understood.

The most complete version has 191 "spells" in it, most of which are actually nothing more than prayers.

Following actual spells are contained in it: Apportion

## Why Did The Sword Of Sneferu Not Embrace Christianity?

To answer the question the Keeper has two options:

### 1. The Mythos Approach

The order deeply distrusted Christianity because of the Christian dogma of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost too closely resemble Nyarlathotep's description as a god, the messenger and the soul of the gods; ergo trinity equals Nyarlathotep and Jesus Christ was just one of his 999 Masks. According to the Masters of the Sword, Christianity was just a ploy by Nyarlathotep to destroy the Roman Empire and the stability it brought to the world.

### 2. The Historic Approach

The Egyptians deeply resented the oppressive rule of the Byzantine Empire, which led to numerous uprisings and a constant state of rebellion. The Coptic Christians welcomed the Arab invaders in 639 AD as liberators. The Sword of Sneferu continued their old religious ways in secrecy during those 243 years, supporting the Egyptian resistance from the shadows and like everyone else welcomed the new Arab rulers.

Ka, Bind Soul, Black Binding, Call/Dismiss Cthugha, Cast Out Devil, Command Ghost, Contact Ghoul, Contact Spirits of the Dead, Contact Servitor of the Outer Gods, Create Gate, Deflect Harm, Extend, Heal, Healing, Identify Spirit, Soul Trap.

This is obviously a very potent book. The Masters of the Order may be the only ones who know of the existence of the Thebes Code and they will stop at nothing to keep this secret.

## Lesser Tomes

*"Black Rites"* written in Egyptian by Luveh-Keraphf (from the story *"Suicide in the Study"* by Bloch). 41 weeks study; 1D6/2D6 Sanity loss; +11% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

*"Mum Rath Papyri"* in Latin by Ibn Shoddathua (from *"The Fairground Horror"* by Brian Lumley). 10 weeks study; 1D3/1D6 Sanity loss; +4% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

*"Ilarnek Papyri"* in English by an unknown author (from *"The Doom That Came to Sarnath"* by Lovecraft). 15 weeks study; 1D4/1D8 Sanity loss; +6% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

*"Reflections"* in English by Ibn Schacabao (from *"The Festival"* by Lovecraft). 27 weeks study; 1D4/1D8 Sanity loss; +8% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

*"The Rituals"* in Ancient Egyptian Demotic by Niggoum-Zhog (from *"The Thing in the Pit"* by Carter). 14 weeks study; 1D4/1D8 Sanity loss; +9% Cthulhu Mythos skill.

## Egyptian Terminology

- "Khat": The physical body of the human
- "Ka": The spiritual being (independent of the body it controls and over whom it guards.) The Ka is a non-material duplicate. After death the Ka does not die. The body is conserved so that the Ka can visit it. The body and the grave serve as a 'house' for the Ka. Sacrifices are also required for the Ka in the form of food, drinks and clothing. These weren't really consumed in matter but in 'essence'. (For instance by illustrations of bread, water and cloth on the walls of a tomb that were turned into "essence" by prayer.)
- "Ba": Lives in the heart of a person and maybe the closest to a "soul". The Ba can take on any form it wants, it can live in any body and can visit the Khat and Ka any time it wants.
- "Khaibit": Means shadow. To resurrect the shadow of a body had to be preserved.
- "Khu": This is pretty much the spiritual soul; this part of a human is eternal. If the prayers that were said over the departed were good, his Khu went to the heavens to live with the Khu of the gods.
- "Sekhem": Vital power of the Khu, this comes pretty close to pure magical power. (Ra for instance gets called 'the great Sekhem, the Sekhem of all Sekhemu'.)
- "Sahu": This part went to the heavens to live with Osiris.





# Cthulhu Wild West

## Sunset at Sandy Gulch

By Oscar Rios



## Players' Introduction

Life isn't easy in the mining town of Rio Rosa, a cluster of buildings surrounded by sand, cactus and rocks. The only reason anyone would ever come here was the silver. Nearly all of the 250 men living in Rio Rosa work for the North Star Mining Company, coaxing the precious metal from the veins of ore running through the stone deep underground. It is hard, dangerous backbreaking work and the men who do it are quick tempered and hard drinking.

Rio Rosa offers little in the way of diversion. There is "Rusty's" the local watering hole where one can always find a poker game and a shot or two of whiskey. Then there is "Casa Bonita" the local brothel. While the bar was able to expand with the needs of the miners, the brothel was another matter. Senora Maria, madam of Casa Bonita, tries to keep everyone happy with little success. There is only so much four hard working women can do when they are outnumbered more than 60 to one!

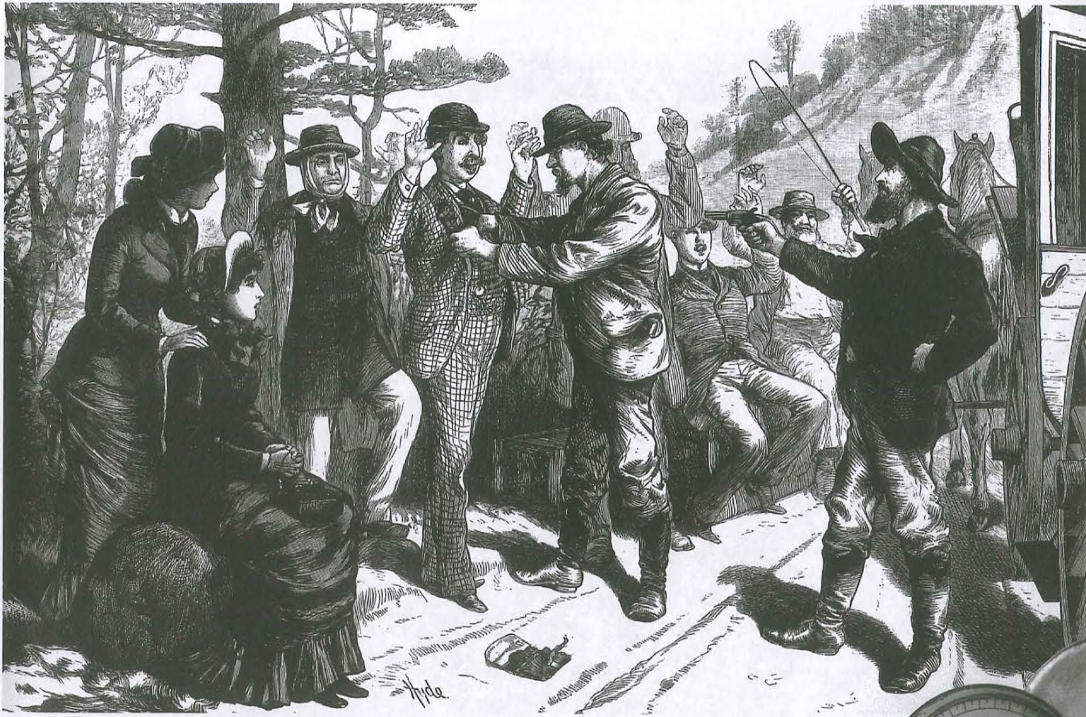
Yes, things are tough in Rio Rosa, but they are about to get a whole lot better. Today the stagecoach is due to arrive at noon with two much-needed items. One is the company payroll. By nightfall the town will be filled with miners flush with cash and eager to spend it on alcohol,

lose it at cards and trade it for female companionship. The other item is four new employees for Casa Bonita. Yes sir, tonight Rio Rosa will, for once, be a place of good times. As soon as the coach arrives, any time now, hey what time is it?

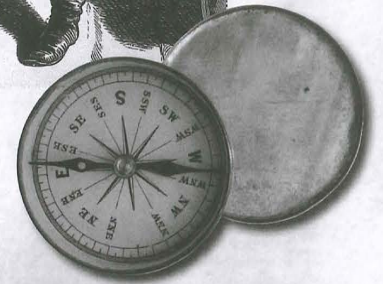
Noon passes with no stagecoach. Off-shift miners who had gathered to watch the stagecoach arrive start getting surly. The day is hot and tempers are short. The mining company manager sends out a rider, knowing things could get ugly. Half an hour passes as more and more miners gather looking for their wages. By now, a huge crowd of dirty, rough looking miners, some holding shovels and mining picks are milling about in the street. A small group of men flank the company manager, holding their shotguns as discreetly as possible. There's a tension in the air, one nobody wanted but here it is.

Suddenly the scout rides back into camp, a cloud of dust in his wake and a coat of foam on his hard ridden horse. He's riding clumsily holding his shoulder, blood running down his shirt. He's been shot! Suddenly he screams out, "Crazy-Eye Pete and his gang just hijacked the stagecoach!"





## Keeper's Information



About half a day's hard ride from Rio Rosa is a number of arid canyons where almost nothing grows. The most inhospitable one is called Sandy Gulch. For thousands of years that canyon and the one beyond it have been home to a community of Sand Dwellers. This particular group worships the Great Old One Arwassa and in the distant past abducted humans from the American Indian tribes living in the area. These captives were then taken to the Sand Dwellers' underground temple and sacrificed after the "The Silent Shouter of the Hill" was summoned. The local tribes launched a single attack against the inhuman creatures, sending a war party into their lair. Witnessing firsthand the horrors of The Great Old One the human tribes left the area and settled elsewhere after declaring the canyons taboo.

Several months ago Crazy-Eye Pete, a notorious bandit, was looking for a new hideout in the canyons around Rio Rosa. Instead he found the Sand Dwellers. The eldest of the Sand Dwellers saw this as an opportunity to make a contact among the humans who were returning to the area. Why sacrifice one human, when that one might be able to bring you many? Pete, already a desperate and depraved outlaw, became not only a willing ally but also a worshipper of Arwassa itself.

Tonight is the night of the new moon, a time when the Great Old One can be summoned. Pete rounded up his gang and hijacked the noon stagecoach to Rio Rosa. While Pete and his gang took the payroll and some valu-

ables his real targets were the passengers. He put three of his men on the empty stagecoach and ordered them to drive it off Cougar Ridge. The rest of the gang took the payroll and passengers on horseback and rode hard for Sandy Gulch.

The men on the stagecoach he sent off as a diversion. Entering the canyon Pete then placed the rest of his men in a position to deal with any pursuit. He cares nothing about his gang. Pete only wishes to see Arwassa with his own eyes. The investigators must get past Pete's gang, avoid or overcome a couple of traps and battle a number of sand dweller defenders to get to Crazy-Eye Pete. There, in the Temple of Arwassa, they must bring Pete to justice, defeat the Sand Dweller elders and priests, rescue the human sacrifices (four beautiful brothel girls) and ultimately confront the cosmic horror of the Great Old One Arwassa itself!

## Places to see in Rio Rosa

There isn't a lot for investigators to see in Rio Rosa. About half of the town is made of buildings owned by the North Star Mining Company (bunkhouses for the men, offices, processing buildings, employee mess hall, etc.). There are a few places investigators might end up in town, and these are listed below:



- 1) Rusty's Saloon—Rusty O'Shea, a red-haired Irish immigrant who is universally well liked in town, owns this well stocked tavern. Prices here are reasonable and the quality of the liquor acceptable. There is always a poker game going on, no matter the hour of the day or night. Stakes at the table are kept under five dollars by house orders, to keep things friendly. Rusty employs a trio of men to help him run the place, break up fights and run errands.
- 2) O'Shea's General Store—Kevin O'Shea, brother of Rusty O'Shea, owns and manages Rio Rosa's general store. It is well stocked with tools and items used in mining and prospecting, but for other supplies investigators will need to make a *Luck* roll. Prices will typically be 20% higher here than in larger towns, but a successful **Bargain** roll can drop this back down to normal level. If an item is not in stock Kevin offers to order it; this could take between two and three weeks and boosts the item's cost by 40%. While steep no one really complains, as he is literally the only store in town.
- 3) Appleton Hotel—this rooming house is owned and operated by Charlie Appleton, an older German immigrant whose real name is Günter Kessler. He speaks loud but is friendly and accommodating. The hotel has a dozen rooms, about half of which are available at any time, charging a dollar a day, which includes meals. Meals are served in the common room and non-guests can eat here for .50 cents a plate. Investigators can also get hot baths here for an additional charge of \$1.00.
- 4) Younger Stables—David Younger, a one-armed Civil War veteran, owns these public stables where horses are kept and cared for. He charges a dollar a day for care and feeding. There are always a few horses here for sale, and his prices are usually about 20% too high. A successful **Bargain** roll brings these prices back down to normal levels. David never talks about the war, other than that he fought and lost his arm in it. He won't even discuss which side he fought on but his thick Georgia accent leaves little doubt.
- 5) Casa Bonita—this well built, two-story house has recently been expanded. It now contains a sitting room, a small kitchen and dining area for the employees only and ten good-sized bedrooms with a bathtub in each. Currently there are only five women living and working here, four brothel doves and their manager Senora Maria. Two young (nine & ten years old) orphan boys work here as well, hauling water about, running errands and cleaning. Neither speaks anything but Spanish and both do a great job of staying out the way. No food or alcohol is served here and investigators must roll one third of their *Luck* roll to find an employee who isn't currently 'engaged'.



## Forming the Posse

Keepers may have their players use any of the six pre-generated characters provided at the end of this scenario. Within their background each has a good reason to ride out after Crazy-Eyed Pete and his gang, be that personal or monetary. However keepers may, of course, run the adventure with existing characters from their own campaigns. *Worlds of Cthulhu* #2 features extensive rules, character generation guidelines and weapons statistics for use in *Gaslight* Wild West campaigns. Below are several methods for involving the Investigators:

- 1) Meeting Someone—the investigators are meeting someone on the noon stagecoach. This could be a family member, an important scholar delivering some vital bit of information from an Eastern university or an old war buddy heading out west. Whether this person is abducted along with the brothel girls or killed by Crazy-Eyed Pete and his gang is up to the whim of the Keeper.
- 2) The Letter—investigators are waiting for an important letter, which is being delivered with the company payroll. It could be a deed, a will or the translation of the Muvian Naacal inscription on that undead Apache's rifle. Whatever it is, keepers should make it valuable enough to the Investigators that recovering it becomes their top priority.

- 3) Justice and/or a Payday—Crazy-Eyed Pete is not only a depraved desperado and wanted criminal; he's recently lost what little sanity he possessed. Now, completely insane, his crimes have taken on a particular vicious and illogical nature. Law enforcement officials for 500 miles in every direction want this man in a cell, on a noose or in a pine box. Half the bounty hunters in the area are already looking for him. If investigators are members of law enforcement, they may be ordered to Rio Rosa to try and pick up Crazy-Eyed Pete's trail or they could be just trying to earn the bounty.
- 4) Revenge—keepers can have a close friend or family member of the Investigator(s) be one of the recent victims of Crazy-Eyed Pete's crime wave. Rumors of Pete and his gang being spotted near Rio Rosa reach the Investigators who ride out with a bit of frontier justice on their minds.
- 5) Lucky Us...—The investigators might be in Rio Rosa for a quick drink at Rusty's before they continue on to somewhere else. When the angry crowd gathers waiting for the stagecoach and the scout returns with his gunshot wound investigators find themselves in the middle of it all. Most players will see this as a great way to earn a little extra money and maybe do some good. Some may finish their drink and mount up, wondering why things like this keep happening to them. Either way, inside of 20 minutes they are riding out after Crazy-Eyed Pete.

## Part One—The Chase.

Upon the scout's announcement the crowd erupts in outrage. There is no law in Rio Rosa, as the town is little more than a large mining camp and its support businesses. The most senior person in town is Martin Brewster, North Star's manager of the Rio Rosa silver mine. Mr. Brewster will stand up on a raised platform and try to scream out over the crowd, who are shouting questions at him ("When are we getting paid!" – "Why didn't the company hire guards!" – "Don't think I'm working another shift until I get my damn wages!"). Unless investigators do something, he'll signal one of his enforcers to fire a shotgun in the air for everyone's attention.

Mr. Brewster will then announce—"I need a group of volunteers to ride out after Pete and his gang. I'm offering \$300 for Pete and \$50 for anyone riding with him, dead or alive. There will be a \$200 bonus for recovering the payroll, twice that if these men can get the payroll back before dawn."

Before he finishes the local madame, Maria, pushes her way onto the platform and shouts out—"There were four girls on that stagecoach too! For each girl the riders return with alive, I'll give free visits to my place for a season to the hombres who ride out."

The local miners all start murmuring every wild story they've heard about Crazy-Eyed Pete—"Crazy-Eye Pete

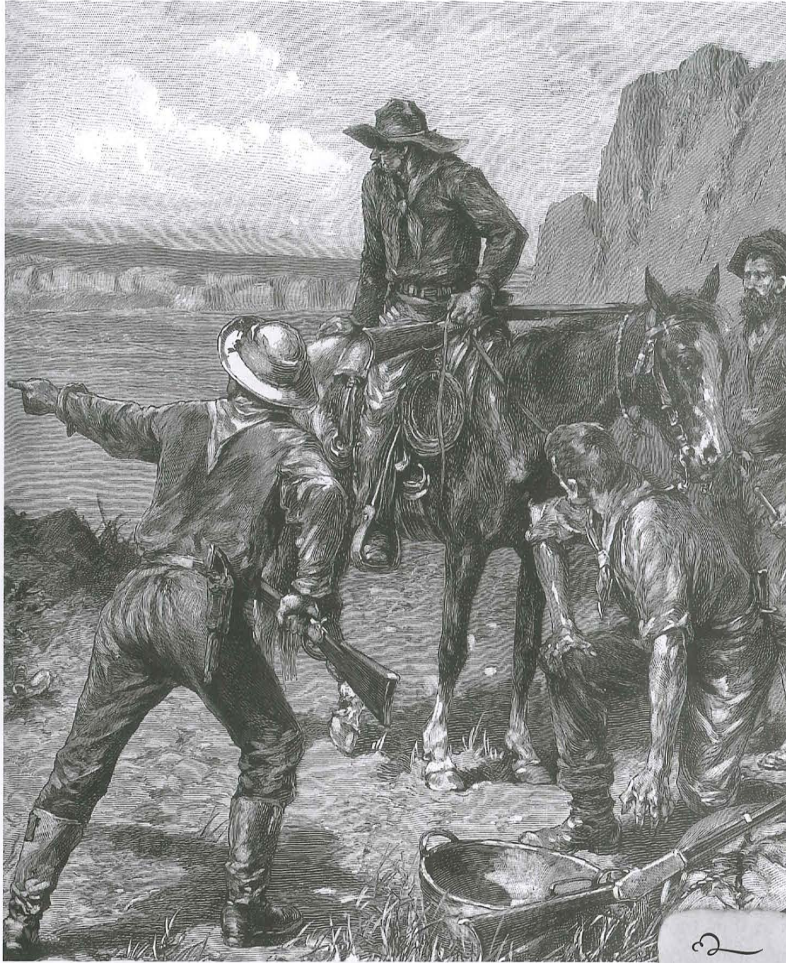
kilt himself 20 men they say..." and "How many boys in his gang anyhow, six? Seven?" "I heard it was ten fellers, when they burnt down that church in Montana." It quickly becomes clear that none of the miners has any intention of riding out after the outlaws.

The investigators should need no further encouragement. Neither the mine manager nor the madame will haggle, feeling that they have already offered a generous enough reward. The hosteller will quickly saddle the horses of those riding and provide mounts for those without their own (charging North Star Mining Co., of course). investigators will not be able to gather additional weapons. There is no one in Rio Rosa willing to give up either their arms or ammunition with a gang of dangerous bandits striking so close to town.

## Setting Out

Investigators should ride hard out along the road to pick up Crazy-Eyed Pete's trail. After riding about 30 minutes the Investigators come upon the scene of the hijacking. There will be three dead horses and four dead bodies here. Two of the horses were killed by shotgun. The third horse was one of the stagecoach team; it has four pistol





wounds in its body and a fifth in its head. The two dead men are Butch Dutchmen and Davie Elster, both long time employees of Webber & Scot Stagecoach Company. Each man has been shot multiple times. Any additional NPC passengers keepers wished to add to the body count will also be found at this time. There is no sign of the four missing women or the payroll. Buzzards are starting to gather in the skies above, slowly circling lower.

Investigators making successful **Track** rolls can determine many of the details of the attack. They will learn that eight riders came upon the stage. There was a chase and gun battle, resulting in the deaths of both drivers and one of the bandits. There are tracks of the stage being driven away (with a team of three, instead of the usual four) with seven horses riding out with it. The tracks lead to a little used side trail leading north.

## The Trail

After several miles following the trail the stagecoach leaves, allow the Investigators to attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll. Those successful will notice a trail of dust ahead of them to the West. Those making a **Navigate** or a **Know** roll will determine that direction leads to a set of cliffs called "Cougar Canyon". Investigators riding hard will be

able to catch up to the stage. About a mile from this point the tracks of the mounted horses leave the stagecoach and break off East. The riders took time to cover their tracks for about 30-feet after they left the trail. Investigators riding hard, especially if pursuing the trail of dust, will not be able to notice this.

There are three bandits driving the stagecoach. They've been ordered to send it over the side of the canyon and then go to a nearby hilltop to camp out until morning. The bandits have been told that the rest of the gang will join them there. Pete knows a posse will be following and has sent these three off as a decoy. As soon as riders get within range two of the bandits will start shooting, while the third drives. Investigators might realize that the horses are gone and see the stagecoach for the decoy it is. If so, they can turn back and start looking for the rider's trail and avoid this encounter. (Go to The Side Trail section.)

These men are all wanted and know that capture means a hang-

### Some of Crazy Eyed Pete's gang, the stagecoach crew

	#1	#2	#3
	Driver	"Shotgun"	Passenger
STR	14	15	14
CON	13	12	12
SIZ	14	15	14
INT	09	10	11
POW	10	11	12
DEX	14	13	12
HP	14	14	13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4      +1D4      +1D4

#### Weapons:

#1: Colt M1877 "Lightning" .38 revolvers (45%, 3/2 per round, damage 1D10, 6 rounds, 18 extra)

#2: 16-gauge double barrel shotgun (52%, 1 or 2 per round, damage 2D6+2/1D6+1/1D4, 2 rounds, 10 extra in vest)

Colt peacemaker (40%, 1 per round, damage 1D10+2, 6 rounds, 6 extra)

#3: .52 Sharps Carbine rifle (48%, 1 per round, damage 2D6+4, six rounds, six extra)

Colt peacemaker (40%, 1 per round, 1D10+2, 6 rounds, 6 extra)

**All:** Knife 50%, 1D4+db; Fist 65%, 1D3+db;

Head 30%, 1D4+db; Kick 35%, 1D6+db

**Armor:** None

man's noose. They will not willingly surrender. If they drive off the Investigators they'll dump the stagecoach over the side and go to the campsite to wait for Pete to arrive. If the Investigators kill all three men the panicked horses will continue running straight for the cliff. Investigators will have to make several successful **Ride** and **Teamster** rolls to regain control of the stagecoach.

If the investigators safely recover the stagecoach they find it to be empty. If the bandits are somehow taken prisoner, interrogating them proves pointless. They will give their names: Walter Ridge (#1 – the driver), Jonas Killburn (#2 – shotgun) and Santos Ruiz (#3 – passenger), but provide little else in the way of information. The three refuse to answer any questions, no matter what the Investigators attempt. They don't know where Pete went after the riders split off from the stagecoach. They'll keep their mouths shut, hoping that Pete and the others might try to spring them as long as they don't betray the gang.

The three are also terrified of what Pete might do to them if he discovered that they gave investigators any useful information.

## The Side Trail

Crazy Eyed Pete, the three remaining members of his gang and the four women split off from the stagecoach. They have seven horses: four horses carry riders; two horses carrying a pair of bound women each; one horse carries supplies and the saddlebags with the payroll.

This group broke away from the stagecoach trail and covered their tracks for about 30-feet. They then rode across the open desert towards a mountainous region full of cliffs and canyon. Their destination is Sandy Gulch; a mysterious canyon the Indians say is taboo. The gulch leads to the entrance of the hidden Valley of the Sand Dwellers.

# Part Two – Sandy Gulch

## Sandy Gulch

The area the gang's trail leads through is dry and desolate. Nobody lives out here, investigators should notice the bones of an old horse bleached by the sun and that buzzards are now following high above them as they travel. Once investigators get to the mountains the trail leading up to Sandy Gulch becomes steep, with many places where ambushers could be lurking. Once they get to the entrance investigators will immediately notice that the cliff walls surrounding the canyon entrance are covered with Indian pictographs and inscriptions (see below).

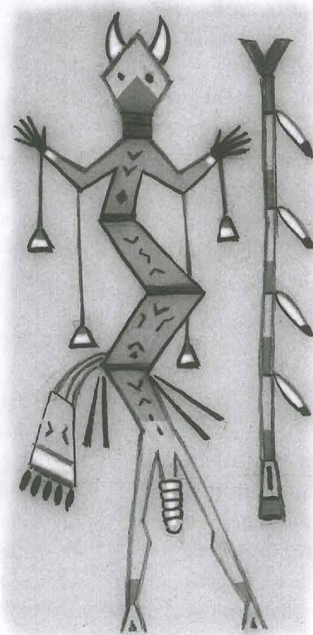
This canyon has a narrow entrance (12-feet wide) and runs for about 40-feet. Beyond that the Investigators enter Sandy Gulch. The place is aptly named as very little grows here beside a few bushes and cacti. Investigators making a successful **Track** roll detect the prints of seven horses, which passed this way earlier today.

## The Indian Markings

Investigators taking time to look over the markings find that they reach high up the canyon wall, to a height of 30-feet. They appear very old and most of them are rather faded. Investigators who look over the pictographs will find amid all these carvings depictions of Indian braves covering their ears while screaming; one brave appearing

to be stabbing himself with a dagger; pictographs looking like tentacles reaching for battling warriors; scattered depictions appear to show robed men with large round eyes and sharp curving claws instead of hands.

Investigators making a **Spot Hidden** roll while examining the pictographs will notice that one of the Indians depicted seems to be standing still, unarmed and with his arms spread wide. This brave is drawn surrounded by a sunburst of faded color and carvings. The figure also appears to have a large tentacle above it, drawn as if it were reaching out towards him.



## Diving Hawk and His Warning

If investigators linger by the pictographs for an extended period, an old Indian Shaman approaches them, from apparent concealment with no one noticing him until he begins speaking in perfect English. He seems ancient and weathered yet surprisingly fit. The man is colorfully dressed in ceremonial tribal costume and face paint but just which tribe cannot be identified by his appearance. The lone figure is armed with a bow and war club but makes no hostile gestures. He'll greet the Investigators introducing himself as Diving Hawk. If questioned as to just what he's doing out here he explains, "It is my duty to linger in this place and warn those seeking to enter."

He'll dissuade them against entering what he calls "The Valleys of Death and Madness". Diving Hawk will confirm a group of four men and four women entered some time earlier today, but that he didn't get a chance to speak to them. If given the chance he explains the following to investigators:

"The place beyond these markings is home to foul creatures that prey upon men. They are not like us, they are not men; they are an ancient people with eyes as the Owl and the claws of the Mountain Lion. They are the Slayers of the Desert and beyond these markings is their land. They worship a powerful dark spirit, older than the World and darker than the moonless night, that which sings the silent song of madness. You should all turn aside this path, especially on this night, for tonight the moon favors the enemies of mankind."

If asked to explain the pictographs drawn and carved here Diving Hawk offers the following story:

"This is the tale of the great battle, the first and last battle against the slayers of the desert. Fifty brave warriors of my people went into this place, long ago. The braves went to avenge their people, for the slayers were hunters of men. Into the Valley of Madness and Death they went with strong spirits, but what they faced tore apart their bodies and rotted their minds.

Fifty braves entered. The Slayers are deadly as bears yet silent as a serpent, but that was not the worst the warriors faced. The Slayers called upon the Dark Spirit of Madness to save them from the warriors and from the black nothingness beyond our world it came. Evil and hungry it came, many brave warriors went mad and were devoured. Only three braves returned.

When these three told their story their people knew it to be true. They knew what lie beyond these cliffs, what horrors lurk in the darkness every seeking to enter our world. They knew this land to be cursed. That is why men do not live here, for the people gathered what they owned and departed, forsaking this land forever.

If investigators insist on continuing on into the canyons the Shaman gives them the following advice and offer:

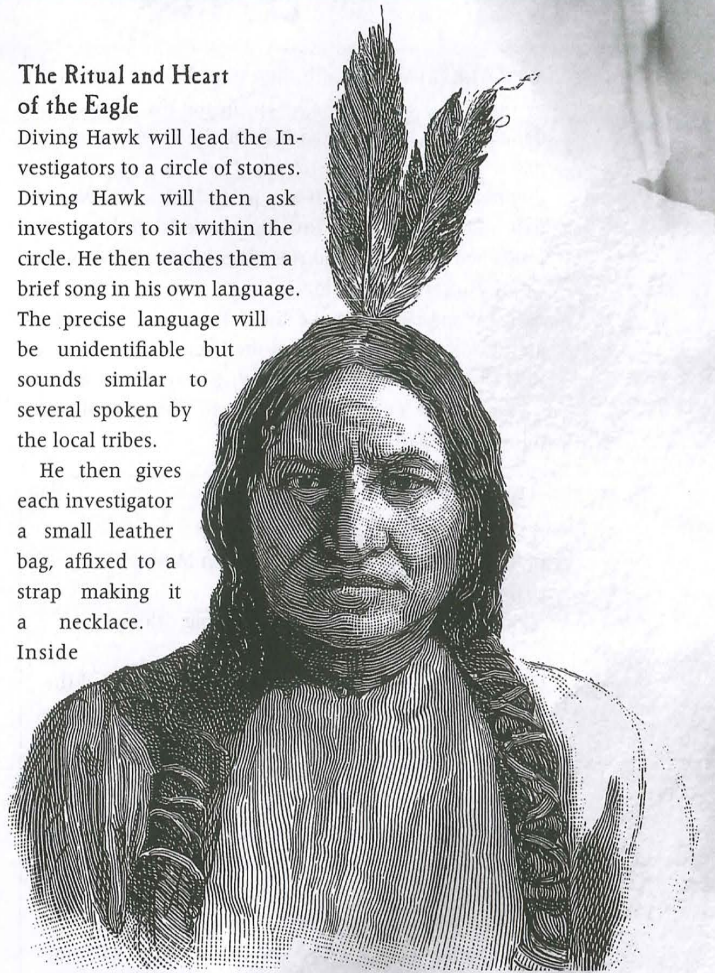
"I see that my words will not turn you aside. Good, your spirits are strong and brave, that will help you. You must move fast and fight like great heroes without fear. If you see the Dark Spirit of Madness you must destroy it. Otherwise it will haunt your minds until it rots them, like an eye left too long in the sun. As this is your path and your destiny I offer you my help. Will you linger a moment and learn the wisdom of an old man? There are powers beyond the arrow or rifle, powers the Dark Spirit of Madness control. These are powers men can also know, powers I am willing to share with you."

If investigators accept his offer, ask him to explain the powers he is offering to teach them or ask him to explain the unarmed pictograph figure surrounded by the sunburst he explains about a ritual he knows, one that will grant them the Heart of the Eagle.

### The Ritual and Heart of the Eagle

Diving Hawk will lead the Investigators to a circle of stones. Diving Hawk will then ask investigators to sit within the circle. He then teaches them a brief song in his own language. The precise language will be unidentifiable but sounds similar to several spoken by the local tribes.

He then gives each investigator a small leather bag, affixed to a strap making it a necklace. Inside



each bag is a tiny collection of herbs, seeds, feathers, stones, teeth and bones. Diving Hawk then explains that they must place something of their own into the bag, something that has meaning to them or that they have carried for a long time. He explains, "This way the bag becomes yours, and the spirits know who you are and who these bags belong to." When this is done he instructs them to put the necklaces on.

He will produce a skin of bison hide filled with a foul tasting, milky fermented potion and instructs each to drink. Diving Hawk will not explain what it is. The drink is gritty and makes investigators feel intoxicated, not matter how little they drink or what their **Tipple** score might be. If investigators refuse to drink, or fakes taking a drink, the ritual fails for that person.

After these steps are taken Diving Hawk sings the song, instructing investigators to join him. After the song he points to an investigator and says, "The spirits wish to know who you are and what brave deeds you have done. Stand warrior, stand and tell them." investigators must stand, identify themselves and proclaim an act of bravery they have performed. This is repeated for each investigator, with a round of singing between each. Like refusing the drink, if lies are spoken to the Spirits at this time the ritual fails for that person.

After this the ritual is nearly complete. Diving Hawk then dances around each investigator, shaking a gourd

filled with dried seeds. He then touches each softly, one by one, on the head. If all steps of the ritual have been done in correctly and in good faith, the Investigator must make a POW×4 roll, as they feel energy surge through them and into the bag. If any part of the ritual was not followed correctly the Investigator feels nothing. This touch ends the ritual and rids investigators of the intoxicating effects of the potion.

Investigators who make the POW×4 roll successfully are now able to cast "Heart of the Eagle". Those who fail the roll are passed over by the spirits and are not granted the spell. The entire ritual takes 20 minutes, plus ten minutes per participant.

#### *Heart of the Eagle*

Range: 0                      Duration: Ten Minutes  
 Cost: 10 MP  
 Sanity: 1D4                  Resistance Table: None

This spell requires a specially prepared bag and the caster to sing a trigger song to activate it. The song takes two minutes to sing, during which time the caster cannot be disturbed in any way. The song can be sung quietly or even whispered but must be sung aloud. Once completed the caster loses 10 MP and makes a **Sanity** Roll for 1D4. At this time an invisible energy field, fueled by their own life energy, surrounds them for the next ten minutes.

Should the caster be unlucky enough to come into physical contact with a Great Old One while this spell is active the energy field activates. It discharges the energy into the Great Old One, causing it to suffer 4D6+4 points of damage instantly. When discharged the energy becomes visible as a bright flash and is accompanied by the smell of ozone and the sound of thunder. The area where the contact occurred to the Great Old One will appear blackened and burned, but any regeneration the entity possessed works normal against this damage.

If the contact was the result of a physical attack the caster must make a **Luck** roll. A successful roll indicates the discharge of the energy repulsed the attack and the caster takes no damage from it. A failed **Luck** roll means that even though the spell discharged the caster still suffered the effects of the attack.

#### **An Option—A Request You Cannot Refuse.**

Keepers may wish Diving Hawk's help to come with a price. If so he will not explain this until after the ritual is completed. After the ritual Diving Hawk will explain:

"I have giving you something of great value, I have given you aid by sharing the ancient wisdom of my people. You must give something in return. One day one of my people will come to you. They will say "I was sent to you by Diving Hawk". You will listen to this person and you will help them. That is what the spirits demand."

Keepers can use this as a link to another scenario in the future. The person sent to the Investigators will say that an old wise man spoke to them in a dream, telling them where to find the Investigators. They will explain that they were told the Investigators were great warriors who were bound by the spirits to come to their aid. Should investigators refuse to help this person once they arrive keepers can inflict all sorts of consequences, such as a -1 to POW or CON per day, until they agree to help this person.

Once the Investigators turn to enter the canyon Diving Hawk vanishes. Investigators turning back will find him gone, leaving not a single track or trace that he was ever there and must make a **Sanity** Roll for 1/1D3 Sanity points. Diving Hawk is the ghost of an ancient Indian shaman who entered the Valley of Death and Madness. He was one of the fifty braves in the war party who battled the Sand Dwellers; he was not one of the three who returned. Diving Hawk is the warrior depicted unarmed surrounded by the sunburst, the figure using the Heart of the Eagle spell to battle Arwassa. His spirit lingers only to impart wisdom and protect mankind; it can cause no harm, even if attacked.

## Inside Sandy Gulch

Investigators easily find the trail of the outlaw's horses leading straight down the center of the gulch. Those making a **Track** or a **Spot Hidden** roll find a side trail leading to an abandoned shack. Investigators may follow the side trail, which appears to have not been used in over a year, to the shack. To otherwise find the shack investigators must make a successful **Spot Hidden** roll while in the center of the gulch, about where the rest of Pete's gang has set up an ambush. From this area investigators will just spot some metal hanging on the shack reflecting in the sunlight. The gulch itself is about two and a half miles long, curving right in a gentle crescent.



#### **The Ambush**

Halfway across Sandy Gulch the Investigators will be ambushed. The rest of Crazy Eyed Pete's gang is waiting here, well hidden (Hide 65%) behind cover. One is

behind a large rock, another behind a set of dead logs and the last up on a ridge overlooking the ambush area. Investigators will need to make **Spot Hidden** rolls to detect where the bandits are located once the shooting starts. By the time investigators arrive it should be sunset, the long shadows helping to conceal the bandit's position. They will not surrender nor will they take prisoners. Investigators who make a successful **Spot Hidden** roll to detect bandit #3 (the sniper on the ridge above them) also spot the abandoned miners' shack (see below).

Some of Crazy Eyed Pete's gang, the ambush team			
	#1 (behind rock)	#2 (behind dead logs)	#3 (up on ridge)
STR	12	14	12
CON	14	14	14
SIZ	13	14	12
INT	08	12	10
POW	12	10	12
DEX	13	12	10
HP	14	14	13
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>	+0	-1D4	+0
<b>Weapons:</b>			
#1: Smith & Wesson Hammerless .38 revolver (45%, 3/2 per round, damage 1D10, 5 rounds, 15 extra).			
#2: Colt peacemaker (40%, 1 per round, damage 1D10+2, 6 rounds, 6 extra).			
#3: .44 Winchester "Yellow Boy" rifle (48%, 3/2 per round, damage 2D6+3, 15 rounds, 15 extra).			
<b>All:</b> Knife 50%, damage 1D4+db; Fist 65%, damage 1D3+db; Head 30%, damage 1D4+db; Kick 35%, damage 1D6+db			
<b>Armor:</b> None.			

### The Abandoned Miner's Shack

The building is located up on a ridge 30-foot up overlooking the bottom of Sandy Gulch. It's a small, rough looking one-room shack. The shack appears to be a couple of years old and to have been abandoned for about half that. There are the remains of an ancient fire pit and some scattered cooking gear a few feet from the entrance.

Inside are a few shelves, a small table, a stool and a cot with some old blankets on it. There are some old mining tools here (on the shelf, table and hanging on hooks), scattered supplies (nearly all old and spoiled) and little else. There are three things of note inside this place.

One is the skeleton of the shack's owner, who has a pistol in his hand and a bullet hole in his temple (with the opposite side of his skull blown out). The skeleton is lying on the floor and appears to have committed suicide. The Investigators making an *Idea* roll followed by a *Know* roll will recognize the man's from his build, clothing and meager belongings. This was Chuck Mallard, an independent area miner who vanished about a year ago. He used to come into Rio

Rosa for supplies, cashing in small amounts of silver.

Another unusual thing about the shack is a section of the interior wall that faces the cliff face. That section appears covered with a rug, hanging on the wall from two iron spikes driven into the rock. This rug conceals the entrance to a small test mine. The mine only goes for about 25-feet before it ends, the shaft being only four-feet tall and wide. Anyone examining the inside of the test mine and making a successful **Geology** roll learn that there is a small vein of silver running through these cliffs.

The other requires a successful **Spot Hidden** roll while searching the shack. Under Chuck's bed and wrapped in burlap is a small box. The box has a handle and a lock, the key to which can be found in the pocket of the skeleton's pants. The lock only has a STR of 7 for resistance attempts to force the box open. Inside the box are the following items:

- 1) 30-minutes worth of fuse.
- 2) Ten sticks of dynamite.
- 3) A small leather bag of unprocessed silver ore, worth about \$60. To the untrained eye these appear to be nothing more than fist-sized rocks.

**Note:** Both the dynamite and fuse has been well stored and are in perfect working order. Each stick of dynamite will do 5D6 damage in a two-yard radius. Multiple sticks fused together will do cumulative damage. Investigators must make a successful **Demolitions** roll for each explosive charge they wish to create.

### Keeper's information

Chuck Mallard started mining silver in Sandy Gulch about two years ago, but kept this a secret. He didn't want anyone muscling in on his claim. Eventually his neighbors, the Sand Dwellers, conducted a ritual that summoned Arwassa. Unfortunately for Chuck his shack was within range of the soundless, sanity draining moans of the Great Old One. This drove the miner insane and he ended his life with a single pistol shot.

### The Horses and the Tunnel Entrance

At the end of Sandy Gulch are a group of seven horses. They are all hobbled and tied to a large dead log. Some hay has been spread around on the ground for them to feed on. None of the horses have saddlebags on and there is no sign of anyone here. A successful **Track** roll shows two sets of tracks leading away from here. One is of three men moving towards the opposite end of the canyon (the ambush party). The other trail is of four women walking up the slope with a man walking behind them. Following these tracks up the slope leads investigators around a large boulder. The boulder perfectly conceals the entrance to a passageway from view while standing below the slope. The tunnel leads directly into the cliff side.

# Part Three - Valley of the Sand Dwellers



## The Entrance Tunnel

The tunnel that leads through the mountain from Sandy Gulch to the Valley of the Sand Dwellers is about a mile long. In places the Investigators will have to duck low to avoid hitting their heads while in three sections the ceiling vaults high above them. The tunnel is pitch-black dark, about six-feet wide and looks to be a combination of natural and constructed sections. This underground passage seems at first glance to go east with no turn offs or side passages. The Sand Dwellers do, in fact, have several side passages and hidden chambers located above the main path, in the high vaulting sections of the tunnel. These are all filled with dark colored sand and are only accessible by those able to travel through soil.

On the three sections that vault above the floor of the passage allow investigators to make a **Listen** roll. If successful they can hear the sounds of movement high above them in the darkness. Investigators may examine the area above them, if they are using a suitable light source, and attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll. Investigators will see ledges high above them and just make out figures peering down at them, silently watching. These figures are a group of Sand Dweller sentinels standing watch and preparing to activate their trap. The watchers dart away from the edges as soon as investigators begin looking upward, vanishing into a sand-filled passage. The best they'll manage is seeing "something or someone" watching them. However, if the **Spot Hidden** roll is successful investigators get a better look at the figures. They will appear as large man-shaped beings, covered in pebbly hides (much liked horned-toads) with large round eyes and long curved claws. Those getting a clear look at the Sand Dwellers must make a **Sanity** Roll for 0/1D6 Sanity points.

## The Trap

After traveling about three-quarters of a mile the roof of the tunnel gets lower and lower, and when the passage is about four-feet high investigators notice that it appears to taper into a dead end. Just as the Investigators stop moving the ground below them suddenly drops, a 30-foot section of tunnel becomes a slope. Investigators suddenly find themselves standing on a 45° angle section of tunnel, quickly sliding towards an open pit. The sides of the tunnel here have been smoothed and all purchase has been removed, making stopping one's descent impossible. The pit is a 25-foot square cube, with smooth carved walls and a layer of loose sand to help cushion the Investigators' falls. It's obvious that this is a very well designed trap.

The pit is home to 12 rattlesnakes, which the Sand Dwellers diligently care for. Investigators landing in the pit must make a **Luck** roll; those who fail land upon one of the serpents and are instantly attacked. Otherwise the rattlers begin slithering towards the Investigators, attacking between 1-3 rounds later. Investigators attempting

to pick their way past the snakes, or who attack them, trigger an immediate attack by the rattlers en mass. This encounter has a high possibility of investigators injuring (or even killing) one another with friendly fire, especially if shotguns are employed. Keepers should keep track of just who is shooting at what, where targets are located and what weapons are employed.

## The Audience


During the Investigators' battle with the rattlesnakes a group of four sand dwellers **Sneak** (50%) up to the edge of the pit. Once there they'll **Hide** (60%) and watch the Investigators, enjoying the show. If any should fail either their **Sneak** or **Hide** rolls allow any investigators not involved in combat to attempt a **Spot Hidden** roll. Those who succeed spot one or more (depending on how many of the group failed their rolls) of the Sand Dwellers lurking along the eastern lip of the pit. This is also the only edge one can climb out of, as the western side is the smoothly carved slope. Investigators who spot their audience must immediately make a **Sanity** roll of 0/1D6 Sanity points for seeing the creatures. The Sand Dwellers dart away as soon as they are spotted.

If they are not spotted they'll watch until the last snake is dispatched or investigators begin climbing out of the pit (see below). At this point investigators will hear a long menacing hiss from above them. They will then see the group of Sand Dwellers moving out of hiding places leering down at them. The four will bare their claws and

Rattlesnakes (12)

STR 5    CON 7    SIZ 5    POW 5  
 DEX 11    Move 8    HP 6

**Damage Bonus:** N/A  
**Weapons:** Bite 50% damage 1D2, plus venom 10 POT.  
**Armor:** none.



hiss before quickly backing away from the edge of the pit. They move out of sight before action can be taken and escape down a sand filled tunnel in the floor. All investigators are able to see these creatures clearly and are required to make a **Sanity** roll. The Sand Dwellers then activate the second part of the tunnel trap (see below).

## Escaping the Pit

There is nothing to grab onto in the pit so **Climb** rolls instantly fail. There is nothing to hook a lasso onto either, so climbing out by rope is also not possible. The best way for investigators to reach the 25-foot edge of the eastern


Sand Dwellers, dangerous watchers				
	#1	#2	#3	#4
STR	10	10	14	12
CON	11	14	16	11
SIZ	16	16	20	18
INT	10	9	14	11
POW	8	10	11	11
DEX	14	16	14	13
Move	8	8	8	8
HP	14	15	18	15
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>	+0	+0	+1D4	+0
<b>Weapons:</b> Claws 30%, damage 1D6+db				
<b>Armor:</b> 3 points of rough hide.				
<b>Skills:</b> Hide 60%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 50%.				
<b>Sanity Loss:</b> 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a Sand Dweller.				

side of the pit is to form a human ladder. Two investigators standing with one on the shoulders of the other will allow a third to escape the pit with only a successful **Climb** roll. From there rope can be dropped down and the others can climb or be pulled up from the pit. Once out of the pit investigators can see the end of the tunnel, which opens into another canyon, just 30-feet ahead. This passage does however bring the Investigators face to face with the scorpions (see below).

### The Second Half of the Trap

As the Sand Dwellers leave the area to prepare an ambush (see below) they empty a large woven basket filled with 18 deadly desert scorpions. These arachnids are unusually aggressive and immediately attack, attempting to sting the hands and faces of those climbing out of the pit. They'll keep attempting to sting investigators until they are all killed or the Investigators rush out of the tunnel.

Scorpions (18)				
STR 2	CON 4	SIZ 1	INT 1	POW 10
DEX 13	Move 12	HP 3		
<b>Damage Bonus:</b> N/A				
<b>Weapons:</b> Sting 25%, damage 1 plus venom 9 POT.				
<b>Armor:</b> none.				



### Valley of the Sand Dwellers

If investigators have continued their pursuit, it should now be night. Once outside investigators can attempt a **Track** roll. They'll find the tracks of Crazy Eyed Pete and his four prisoners, which appear several hours old. Inves-

tigators also find four other sets of tracks that are quite recent. These second sets of tracks are all barefoot, large and clawed. All follow the same path, leading across the valley. As investigators begin to cross the valley they hear several loud hissing cries echo across the valley, the Sand Dwellers wish those entering their domain to know that they are being watched.

The valley itself is only about a quarter mile across. It is desolate, with only a scattering of cacti and scrub brush. There are NO animals of any sort living in the valley; it is devoid of natural life. Investigators find near the far end of the valley a set of strange standing stones. At the edge of the standing stones are piles of discarded female footwear and outer clothing. A set of saddlebags containing the North Star Mining Company payroll is also here. The tracks from here on seem to show the women being either dragged or carried as they resisted. A **Spot Hidden** roll detects signs of intense fear by the women (i.e. vomit and urine) partially covered by sand.

There are nine 12-foot tall stones erected here, eight of the stones are aligned opposite one another. These stones form a ten-foot wide, 40-foot long hall leading to an enormous and ornately carved arched doorway in another set of cliffs. The ninth stone caps the end of the hall opposite the archway, blocking it from view unless investigators stand between the stones. A dozen sand dwellers are lurking here, hidden under the sand. Keepers should adjust the number of ambushing sand dwellers depending on how many investigators survive to this point or to account for those who are already gravely injured.

Once investigators are in this area the Sand Dwellers will begin to close in on them. Using their superior abilities to **Sneak** and **Hide** they'll attempt to creep right up to the invaders before they attack. The Sand Dwellers attack in two waves. The second group remains hidden at first; hissing and gibbering in the darkness to both terrorize the Investigators and distract them whilst the first wave of attackers moves into position.

The first wave of sand dwellers must make successful **Hide** and **Sneak** rolls for three rounds to creep up on an investigator and gain total surprise. If any of the Dwellers fail their rolls allow investigators to make **Spot Hidden** rolls (for failed **Hide** attempts) and/or **Listen** rolls (for failed **Sneak** attempts) to detect the approaching attack. Either way, after three rounds (or sooner if investigators detect the Sand Dwellers and initiate combat) the first wave of Sand Dwellers attack. As soon as combat begins investigators must roll a **Sanity** Roll. The second wave of sand dwellers joins combat two combat rounds after the first. These creatures are the temple defenders and will not allow investigators to enter the arched doorway and the tunnels beyond so long as any of them live.

After the battle investigators may attempt to find Pete's tracks again. A successful **Track** roll shows that Pete and his prisoners met up with a group of Sand Dwellers here. All their tracks lead through the enormous arched doorway and into the caverns beyond. The tracks show Pete walking alongside the Sand Dwellers with the captives apparently being carried by the creatures (the tracks sud-

Sand Dwellers,  
faithful temple defenders (up to 12)

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
STR	9	15	11	12	14	9
CON	11	13	16	14	16	14
SIZ	13	19	16	15	15	13
INT	14	8	8	15	14	12
POW	12	10	7	11	12	6
DEX	14	13	15	16	16	16
Move	8	8	8	8	8	8
HP	12	16	16	15	16	14
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>	+0	+1D6	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+0
	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
STR	15	8	11	14	9	10
CON	10	11	11	14	14	13
SIZ	19	21	17	16	19	11
INT	11	7	11	9	10	14
POW	11	13	13	12	8	8
DEX	15	14	15	13	11	16
Move	8	8	8	8	8	8
HP	15	16	14	15	17	12
<b>Damage Bonus:</b>	+1D6	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+1D4	+0

**Weapons:** Claws 40%, damage 1D6+db

**Armor:** 3 points of rough hide and encrusted sand.

**Skills:** Hide 60%, Sneak 50%, and Spot Hidden 50%.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a sand-dweller.

denly appear about a hundred pounds deeper). Investigators will now have to make a choice, return to Rio Rosa with only the payroll or continue on after Crazy-Eyed Pete and his four unlucky captives.

## The Entrance

The archway leads to a large natural cavern 30-feet wide and 40-feet deep. A pale white glowing light, whose source investigators cannot determine, eerily illuminates the entire temple area. Here and there are large circular patches covered with intricate carvings and runes in an indecipherable language. At the far end of this chamber is a deep circular carved pit, 150-feet down and 100-feet across. A set of spiral stairs, six-feet wide and without a railing of any sort, are carved into the wall of the pit. There is little to affix a rope to here as the area near the pit is all smoothly carved. Half ways down the stairs keepers should allow investigators to attempt a **Listen** roll. If successful they'll begin to detect the sounds of strange inhuman chanting intermixed with the occasional woman's scream of terror or cry for help. Once the Investigators reach the bottom of the pit these sounds will be obvious.

At the bottom of the pit investigators find an enormous archway and tunnel. The passage is 60-feet high and equally wide. This passage is about 100-feet long and opens up into a much larger area. Here investigators find an immense chamber 100-feet wide and 200-feet across, the Temple of Arwassa.

# Part Four - The Temple of Arwassa

## The Temple Chamber

Investigators now come to the end of their pursuit, in the Sand Dweller Temple to Arwassa. This chamber is covered in slate tiles upon the floor, walls and ceiling. This gives the entire vast hall a dark appearance and has a slightly disorientating effect, almost as if one is standing in a void.

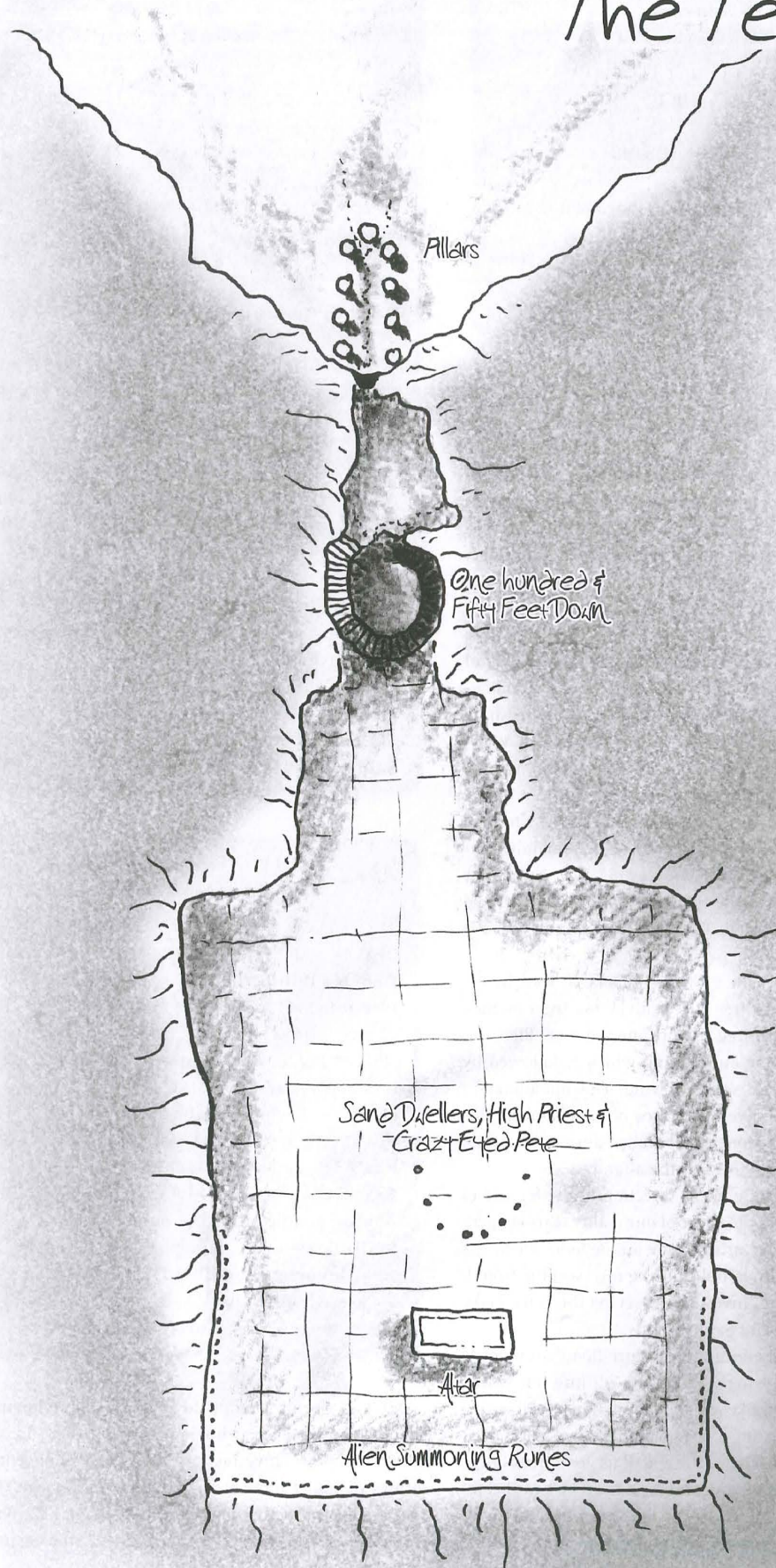
There is a large flat altar of smooth polished black stone here. This is where the four women captives have been placed, each blindfolded and well bound hand and foot. The women have not been gagged and their terrified screams fill the air. They are totally helpless, futilely thrashing about dressed only in their undergarments. The altar is near the center of the chamber.

The rear of the chamber is ornately carved with strange alien figures and indecipherable runes. These carvings have been filled with silver, which glitters as it reflects the mysterious, pale glowing light of the temple. These carvings form an intricate weave of patterns that seems to hang in the void of the black slate chamber. This is the summoning place of Arwassa.

Just before the altar and summoning chamber are a group of figures. They are busily chanting and completely focused on their prayers, swept up in the rapture of their worship. Unless investigators have taken provocative actions since entering the temple they should be undetected. The gathering contains a dozen Sand Dwellers like the ones encountered outside; a single robed Sand Dweller who is much larger than its brethren who appears to be leading the service; and a single human also wearing a robe similar to that of the larger Sand Dweller. The robes are pale blue and appear to glow with the same illumination that lights the temple area. The human is armed, wearing boots, with a hat held respectfully in his hands as he chants. He appears rough, weathered and has one lazy eye. This is Crazy-Eyed Pete, the notorious outlaw. The worshippers have gathered together about 50-feet from the altar where the offerings (the captive women) are placed. It is impossible to sneak past the worshippers to the prisoners, as their focus is the silver decorated area behind the altar.



# The Temple



Altars

One hundred & Fifty Feet Down

Sand Dwellers, High Priest & Crazy Eyed Pete

Altar

Alien Summoning Runes

Sand Dweller priest,  
inhuman leader

STR 11 CON 16 SIZ 18 INT 11 POW 16  
DEX 13 Move 8 HP 17

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Claws 80%, damage 1D6+db

**Armor:** 3 points of rough hide.

**Spells:** Call/Dismiss Arwassa, Shriveling, Wither Limb.

**Skills:** Hide 60%, Sneak 50%, and Spot Hidden 50%.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a Sand Dweller.

This puts them out of the range of thrown sticks of dynamite, should the Investigators at this time possess some. If investigators have combined sticks of dynamite the blast radius will be larger and could possibly include the prisoners. If this is the case keepers should allow investigators to make an *Idea* roll to realize this. Investigators must move closer to the group to get into range, which isn't difficult as Pete and the Sand Dwellers are totally absorbed in their ceremony.

Investigators will be able to initiate combat. Those worshippers who aren't killed outright in the opening of combat turn and attack the Investigators on the following round. Crazy-Eyed Pete begins shooting and rushing towards the altar (which takes him five rounds), wishing to use it as cover. The Sand Dwellers charge the Investigators filling the air with screaming calls and hisses, enraged at the desecration of their most sacred site. The Sand Dweller priest begins casting spells, remaining behind the line of warriors as long as possible. No matter the outcome of the battle the Investigators have arrived too late to stop the spell. The Great Old One Arwassa is already on his way.

Once the battle with the worshippers is over, investigators can move to free the captives. As soon as they arrive at the altar to free the prisoners the air fills with the sound of popping and ripping which is followed by a blast of cold, putrid smelling wind. This phenomenon originates from the silver-lined area of the chamber. This occurs even if the prisoners were killed during the rescue and/or no one moves towards the altar.

Investigators looking in the direction of the far end of the chamber witness the fabric of our reality tearing open. It appears as a rip hovering in the air, beyond which is a black void filled with a foul smelling mist seeping from it like a rotting wound. Investigators seeing this must make a **Sanity** roll for 0/1D2 Sanity points.

A round later an enormous creature floats soundlessly out of the void, moving through the rift into our world. The being is shaped like a gigantic misshapen ball with a trunk-like neck missing a head and four long, thick groping tentacles. The orifice at the end of its great neck opens and closes as if moaning yet no sound can be heard coming from it. This is the Great Old One Arwassa and investigators who witness its arrival must make **Sanity** rolls.

Sand Dwellers,  
the devout followers (12)

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
STR	11	13	11	11	11	8
CON	15	13	11	14	14	16
SIZ	17	15	21	18	16	15
INT	10	7	7	11	11	13
POW	9	11	17	12	15	10
DEX	16	14	17	12	15	11
Move	8	8	8	8	8	8
HP	16	14	16	16	15	16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 +1D4 +1D4 +1D4 +1D4 +0

	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
STR	17	8	10	17	10	14
CON	10	10	15	14	15	16
SIZ	16	14	19	17	18	21
INT	9	11	11	9	10	14
POW	13	10	8	8	11	12
DEX	18	15	17	12	16	14
Move	8	8	8	8	8	8
HP	13	12	17	16	17	19

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6 +0 +1D4 +1D6 +1D4 +1D6

**Weapons:** Claws 60%, damage 1D6+db

**Armor:** 3 points of rough hide.

**Spells:** Those of POW 14 or more may know 1D8 spells the Keeper thinks appropriate.

**Skills:** Hide 60%, Sneak 50%, and Spot Hidden 50%.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a Sand Dweller.

"Crazy Eyed Pete",  
wanted desperado & Arwassa worshipper

STR 16 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 13 POW 13  
DEX 14 APP 9 EDU 12 SAN 0 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** .44 Winchester "Yellow Boy" rifle 65%, damage 2D6+3

.45 Colt Peacemaker revolver 75%, damage 1D10+2

Knife 60%, damage 1D4+db

Fist 75%, damage 1D3+db

Head 40%, damage 1D4+db

Kick 45%, damage 1D6+db

**Extra Ammo:** 15x .44 Winchester, 6x .45 Colt

**Armor:** Leather Jacket (1 point)

**Skills:** Dodge 50%, Foraging 45%, Grit 40%, Hide 55%, Homesteading 50%, Listen 45%, Locksmith 50%, Ride 60%, Sneak 55%, Spit 45%, Spot Hidden 60%, Tether 50%, Throw 70%, Tipple 40%.

Arwassa begins floating towards the altar intent on sating its never-ending hunger, arriving there in three rounds. It ignores investigators unless they remove its offerings or inflict more than 20 points of damage. After that it will cast Death Spell (6e rule book, p. 232) on the Investigator who harmed it the greatest, Stop Heart (6e

rule book, p. 243) on a random investigator and Levitate (6e rule book, p. 238) to lift and hurl one investigator into another in that order for the next three rounds. After three rounds, less if investigators have advanced, Arwassa will be close enough to begin physically attack-

ing investigators with its tentacles. It will pause to devour the offerings on the altar, should any remain there by the time it arrives.

## Part Five - The Wrath of Arwassa

### If investigators Flee

If the Investigators flee they are pursued all the way up the spiral staircase. Arwassa enters the vast pit with the spiral staircase, hovering in its center attacking the Investigators until they reach the surface. If they do manage to escape the Great Old One and exit the underground temple they are safe, for the moment. Arwassa chooses not to leave its temple. It does, however, continue its constant moan, which causes the loss of one Sanity point every five minutes to all living things within a mile. The investigators don't get far.

As they cross the Valley of the Sand Dwellers they are already feeling their minds slipping away. Before investigators can travel through the tunnels, which connect the Valley of the Sand Dwellers to Sandy Gulch, they are driven insane. Investigators will begin shooting one another, as well as any liberated prisoners they might have with them, seeing themselves surrounded by the hideous inhuman Sand Dwellers. They recall the warnings of Diving Hawk too late and the adventure ends in failure. Merciful keepers are free to inflict other forms of insanity or allow *Idea* rolls to recall their earlier warnings.

### Success!

With sufficient firearms, possibly augmented by explosives and arcane enchantments, investigators have a fair chance of defeating Arwassa. Without armor and only (only?) 75 hit points Arwassa is among the weakest of the Great Old Ones. Once driven to zero hit points the Great Old One silently shimmers away, like a mirage in the desert, along with the dimensional rift hanging inside its temple. After sending the alien horror back to whence it came, the Investigators have a smooth trip back to Rio Rosa. The rescued prisoners are shaken but for the most part sane (so long as their blindfolds were mercifully left in place). Investigators are welcomed back to town and treated as heroes. Mr. Brewster quickly pays them the reward for returning the payroll.

Collecting the bounty on Crazy-Eyed Pete and his gang will require proof of the deed. If they have no proof of these dispatched bandits (e.g. dead bodies) a successful **Persuade** roll on Mr. Brewster settles the matter in their favor. Failing this testimony from any of those help captive by the outlaws is enough proof for payment to be made.

Arwassa,  
the Silent Shouter of the Hill

STR 50 CON 50 SIZ 100 INT 26 POW 35  
DEX 19 Move 12 flying HP 75

**Damage Bonus:** + 8D6

**Weapons:** Tentacles 100%, damage 4D6+db or hold for swallow.  
Swallow automatically when held, damage is completely dissolved.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** any the Keeper desires.

**Sanity Loss:** 1D10/1D100 Sanity points to see Arwassa, plus the automatic loss of one point of Sanity every five minutes to everyone within a mile or so of the Great Old One's inaudible howling. For further information see *Malleus Monstrorum*, page 126.

### Sanity Awards

For each member of Pete's Gang defeated: 1 Sanity point totaled and divided up by surviving investigators.

For each Sand Dweller defeated: 1 Sanity point totaled and divided up by surviving investigators

For defeating Crazy Eyed Pete: 1D4 Sanity points.

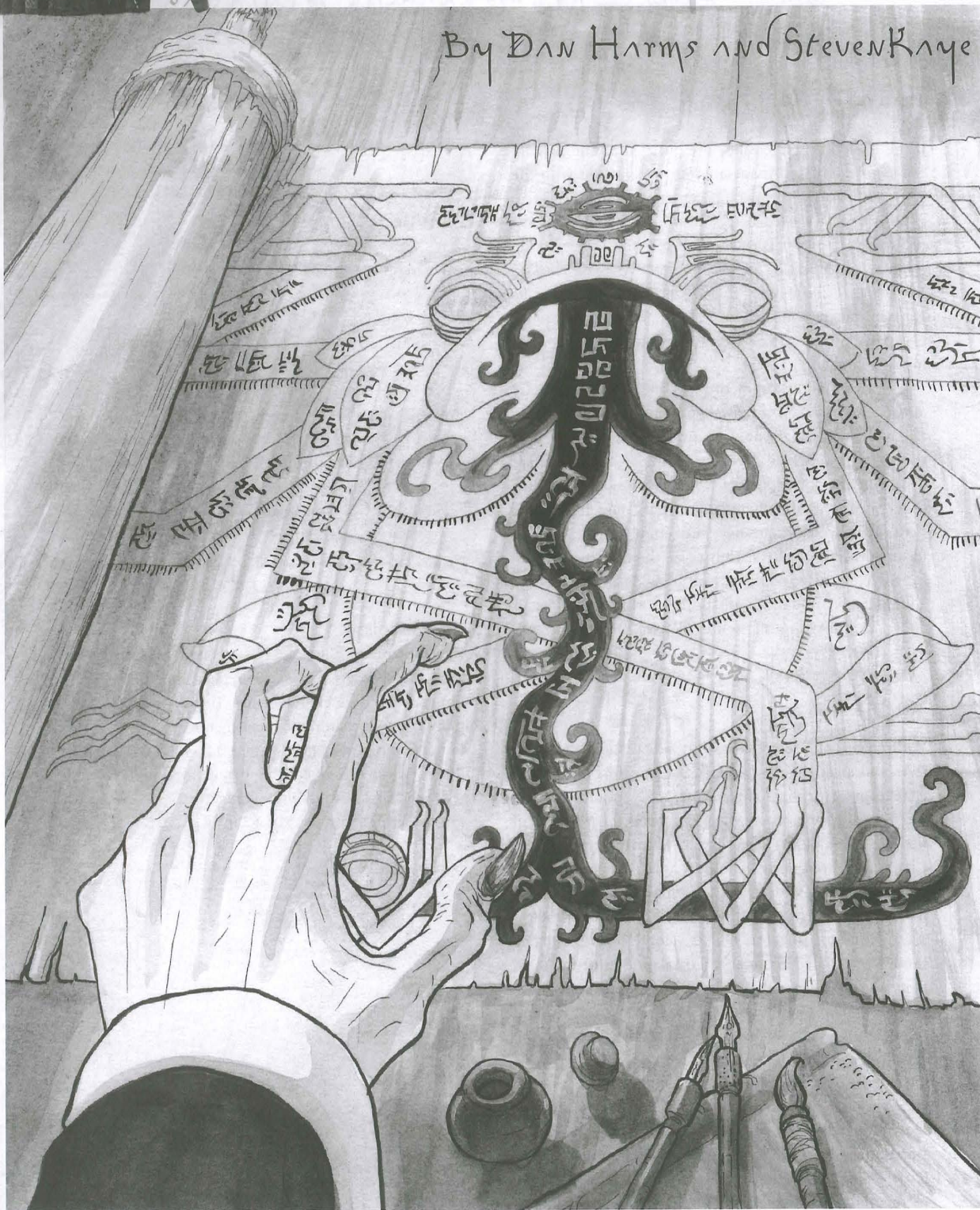
For each captive saved: 2 Sanity points point totaled and divided up by surviving investigators.

For defeating Arwassa: 5D12 Sanity points.

Cult Exposed: Chapter 5

# The Worship of Tsathoggua through the Centuries

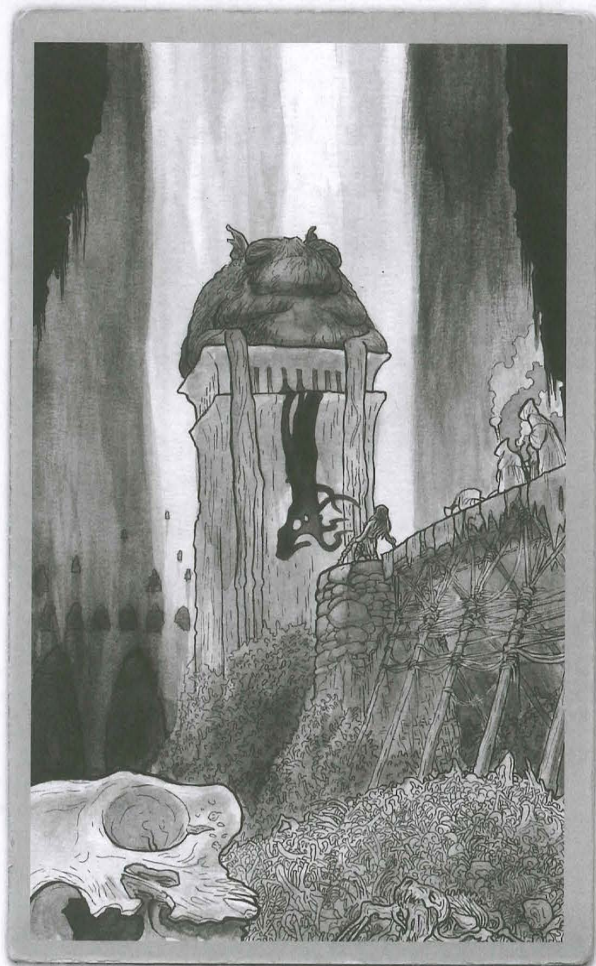
By Dan Harms and Steven Kaye



# History

Tsathoggua first appeared in our solar system on the planet Yuggoth. After some time on that world, he departed for Saturn, the planet with which he is most associated. Nonetheless, he is remembered in the liturgies of the mi-go, though his role in their religion is extremely minor.

Records are contradictory as to when the god Tsathoggua came to our planet from Saturn. The chapter of The Book of Eibon titled "The Devouring of S'lithik Hhai" claims that the voormis summoned Tsathoggua for the purpose of destroying the Serpent People civilization. Other sources claim that the god Yig destroyed many of the Serpent People for apostasy and that the voormis learnt to worship Tsathoggua or Zoth-Aqqua as they called him, from these heretics. No matter what the case, the voormis adopted Tsathoggua as their patron deity and their subterranean existence was either an attempt to emulate their god or a more pragmatic desire to be close to his protection – possibly both. His rites seem to have entailed blood sacrifice and frenzied drumming, but nothing more sophisticated.



*Hyperborea saw a brief resurgence of Tsathoggua worship*

**Deity:** Tsathoggua seeks benefits to himself first and foremost, though he seems not to begrudge rituals to his son Zvilpoggua and is on comfortable terms with Atlach-Nacha.

**Era:** The cult of Tsathoggua is most popular and therefore most powerful in Hyperborean times, falling into desuetude with the decline of that mighty civilization. Small groups have formed to worship the god and receive benefits from him throughout history, from the pre-human voormis, to the Serpent People, to the human civilization of lost K'n-Yan, to medieval Averroigne, to various American Indian tribes.

**Goals:** To provide sustenance to Tsathoggua, in return for various sorcerous and temporal benefits.

A combination of the voormis' warfare with the ascendant race of Hyperboreans and their own falling away from worship of the god in favor of Ithaqua led to a slackening in the offerings provided to Tsathoggua. Eventually they became extinct on Hyperborea, their last remnants hiding in the remote fastnesses of present-day Norway and the Himalayas. The one definitive narrative of an encounter with the conscious Tsathoggua in the Hyperborean era is that recorded by the Atlantean Klarkash-Ton as "*The Seven Geases*." For much of Hyperborean history, only brute animals such as the ape, the saber-toothed tiger and the sloth worshipped the god in his vine-covered shrines. There was a brief resurgence in Tsathoggua-worship following the disappearance of the wizard Eibon and Morghi, Inquisitor of Yhoundeh, an event attributed to the god. This led to several new shrines being constructed, including one in what would become north central Massachusetts. Rumor has it that winged beings from the double world of Kythamil that circles Arcturus joined in this worship, but little evidence of them remains. This resurgence was cut short by the coming of the glaciers and the fall of Hyperborean civilization.

Tsathoggua's Spawn, which had descended from the stars with him, continued to serve his will, building the idols of onyx and basalt found in the lightless gulf of N'Kai. During a period when the Spawn went into hibernation, the Yothic Serpent People civilization discovered these idols and were seduced to the worship of Tsathoggua, until Yig cursed them with devolution (hence the references to the reptilian quadrupeds of Yoth). In turn, the images and temples of Yoth would later be discovered by the inhabitants of K'n-Yan, who adopted the worship of Tsathoggua, placing his idols in places of honor and naming their greatest city after him. Later in their his-

## The Abbey of Saint-Crapauld

### (Dark Ages)

The Abbey of Saint-Crapauld squats above the valley like a somnolent lion awaiting its prey. Its high stone walls conceal all but a single, crumbling steeple and the hints of roofs beyond. The compound backs up against a hill covered with hemlock and yew, their greenery concealing whatever may lurk behind. Two overgrown ruts, scarcely visible at this distance, make their way up to the massive doors, worthy of a large fortress. The whole projects an image of age and disquietude.

Millennia ago, when the last idols of Tsathoggua in K'n-yan were destroyed, a small group of adherents made their way to the earth's surface. Finding a spot where the mystical energies were propitious, they set up an underground temple to their god. Today, that site is the ominous abbey of Saint-Crapauld. The monks possess wide lands about the monastery. Once a week, townsfolk bring offerings of food, clothing, and other goods to the gates, leaving them there for hooded and cloaked monks to remove later. An occasional child goes missing, but the people content themselves with the realization that other lords are more capricious and cruel.

Within the abbey's formidable walls, the monks, faces swathed in cloth and bodies covered in voluminous robes, carry out minor chores, eat in the refectory, or commune in utter silence. Questioning them would reveal little knowledge of Latin and only the bare rudiments of Church doctrine, but few would remain for a chat lengthy enough to determine this. Rarely are they seen in the disused chapel, and if observed, some would vanish for hours on end into the catacombs beneath.

No new monks have entered the group for millennia; all of these are the original refugees from K'n-yan. Long ages of

kneeling before their god have transmogrified the monks into the images of their god. Some among their number are actually y'm-bhi (use the 6e Rulebook stats for zombies, page 211), who perform the usual maintenance on the monastery.

#### Monk of Saint-Crapauld

	Statistic	Average
STR	3d6	10-11
DEX	3d6	10-11
CON	2d6+6	13
INT	2d6+9	16
POW	1D6+12	15-16
HP		12
DB		None
MV		8

Skills: Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Other Language (Latin) 10%, Other Religion (Catholicism) 15%, Remain Silent in Face of Persistent Questions 95%

Weapons: Short sword, 35%, damage 1D6+db

Spells: The monks have the ability to communicate telepathically and to walk through walls. Those who desire more information on these capabilities should consult the *Resection of Time* scenario book.

Roll once for other features (0/1D3 SAN to witness):

- 1 Bat head: Echolocation (sense surroundings in total darkness), Listen +30%, bite 1D4
- 2 Bat wings (vestigial): Glide from height (MV 12), +25% to Jump
- 3 Sloth body: SIZ +4, STR +4, move halved
- 4 Sloth claws: damage 1D8+db
- 5 Toad skin: Armor 3 points
- 6 Toad tongue: Grapple 50%, initiate from 10 feet away
- 7 Smilodon scent: Track 70%
- 8 Smilodon teeth: Bite 30%, damage 1D8+db



Caption: The Abbey of Saint-Crapauld overlooking the Averoigne valley

tory, an expedition rediscovered the entrance to N'kai and encountered the Spawn. Having made this horrific discovery, these people closed all the entrances to N'kai and destroyed the idols of the temples to Tsathoggua. The smallest statuette, however, had already made its way to the waking world land of Lomar.

There is some evidence of worship of Tsathoggua in the New World. Lomar is believed by most scholars to have been located somewhere in Canada. Various American Indian tribes (the Nansets, Wampanaug and Narragansetts) preserve memories of 'Lamah' and the worship of the entity Zvil-pogghua, called 'the Son of Tsathoggua.' If the Hoag manuscript is to be believed, worship of this entity continued into the 1930s. There are rumors of a cult to Tsathoggua in New Orleans beginning in the late 1890s, but this may be another legend created to add to the sinister atmosphere of New Orleans beloved by Anne Rice fans and other disreputable folk.

Similarly, there have been some efforts to link the Temple of the Toad in present-day Honduras, cited in von Junzt's *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, with the worship of Tsathoggua or his children. The same may also be true of the village of Stregocivar in Hungary; the evidence is unclear on this point.

After the fall of Hyperborea, secret cults dedicated to the transmission of the *Book of Eibon* and the *Pnakotic Manuscripts* conducted fragments of Tsathogguan lore to the empire of Atlantis. There the priest Klarkash-Ton led to the resurgence of the god's worship until his horrible fate. The faithful kept his beliefs in secret, bringing them along when they fled the destruction of the continent.

Only a fragmentary record of the spread of Tsathoggua worship from Atlantis to Europe has survived. Legend has it that, during the Hyborian Age, the Cimmerian chieftain Crom-Ya was a devotee of the Old One. In later periods, several manuscripts such as the *Codex Dagonensis* circulated in the Hanseatic League cities of Northern Europe. Tsathoggua's cult was to find its greatest stronghold in the central French province of Averroigne.

From the *Annales of Flavius Alesius* we learn that the Averones brought the tablets comprising the *Liber Ivonis* with them to Averroigne. Certainly Hecataeus' *Pari Hyperborea* confirms the influence of Hyperborean practice on the Gauls. The Druids seemed largely content to offer the occasional human sacrifice and more frequently, people to be made oracles of the god, allegedly transformed by his breath (see the spell, *Incarnate Oracle of Sodagui*). The usual practice was to condemn criminals or beggars to such a fate, but in cases of need strangers were abducted. The worship seems to have survived Caesar's campaigns against the Druids, as we have a reference to Tsathoggua as the spirit or tutelary deity (numen) of the Averones in Valerius Trevirus' poem *De Noctis Rebus*.

There is some evidence to suggest that Tsathoggua-worship retreated to Northern France for a time. The Merovingian king Clovis bore three black toads on his original coat of arms, and their royal residence of Stenay was known in popular legend for unexplained 'frog falls'

from the sky. It is interesting in this context to note the tradition that the founder of the Merovingian line was the offspring of some sort of aquatic creature – or perhaps an amphibious one? The only clear case of Tsathoggua worship during this period, however, were the secret rites held at the monastery of Saint-Crapauld.

The "Mad Arab," Abdul Alhazred, is known to have consulted the *Book of Eibon* during his arcane researches that culminated in his *Necronomicon*. One of his early experiments was the summoning of Tsathoggua in a vault beneath Memphis, Egypt. Alhazred sought to learn the Mao games (presumably the Voors also gained knowledge of these from Tsathoggua), the Uthgos chant and 'all the formulae between the Yr and the Nhhngr.' Interestingly while he was able to summon the god, he was not able to dismiss it.

A resurgence of the worship of Tsathoggua in Averroigne occurred beginning in the 12th Century. This was only exacerbated by the translation of the *Liber Ivonis* into Norman French by Gaspard du Nord in the 13th Century – while the manuscript is not known to have been formally published, manuscripts of du Nord's text circulated widely throughout Europe. Du Nord himself was rumored to be the major instigator behind this worship, abusing his exemption from ecclesiastical prosecution brought about when he destroyed the Colossus of Ylourgne.

Jehan d'Arbois in his *Roman des Sorciers* discusses the ceremonies interrupted by various ecclesiastical investigations. We know little of the worship ceremonies – references to bonfires, rituals at May Eve and All Hallows Eve, and rumors of human sacrifices. The stories of stealing babies for rituals and of familiars, often in the shapes of cats or toads, which fed on human blood (compare the name of one of these, 'Sack and Sugar,' with Tsathoggua), both point to links between Continental witch-cults and the wor-

ship of Tsathoggua. These ceremonies are said to survive today among a secretive cult known as the "Averones."

At the time of the Renaissance, Hermeticists such as Marsilio Ficino and Henry Cornelius Agrippa (see box) meditated on the significance of the planet Saturn. On one hand, Saturn was seen as a negative force in the heavens that brought old age, stagnation, and mental illness. Nonetheless, the black bile associated with the planet could be beneficial if balanced with other humors, and scholars and mystics gained their inner natures from the strong influence of Saturn. It might not be too far a stretch to even link this to the 'black-faced goddess of Melancholy' (most famously depicted by Durer), particu-



A curious symbol found in a medieval French manuscript



A strange Canadian tribal totem symbol

larly given the presence of a particularly famous Black Virgin in Auvergne, in the church of Notre-Dame-du-Puy. It is rumored that the current Virgin is a replacement of an older one – perhaps a well-weathered statue of the Old One himself?

Devotees of the dark god also inserted his symbolism into the alchemical texts of the same period. The Black Toad symbolized the beginning of the process of discovering the Philosopher's Stone, and the stone purported to be nestled into its head was said to show the end of the process. This stone may in fact be the legendary Eye of Tsathoggua, a sapphire in which can be seen the image of the god and which is reputed to have various magical qualities; some woodcuts include an image of the toad nestled into the bosom of a woman, implying the sexual nature of many of the god's rites.

The Scandinavian regions saw some persistence of Tsathoggua worship, driven by the survival of Hyperborean relics and of the occasional cultist from Hyperborean times (see the *Sleep of Ages* spell). Of note is the small cult which flourished in Greenland and the Fraternitas Saturni, a German magical order claiming its origins in the 16th century. Still, worship of the god was sporadic

for most of the early modern period, with individuals seeking power or wealth from the god in return for reestablishing his cult.

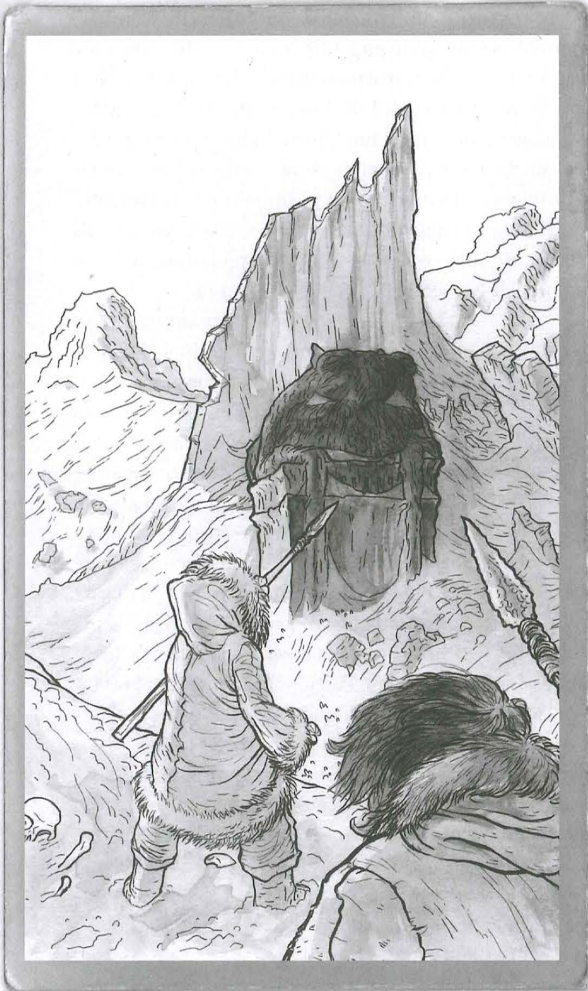
The first non-native worshippers of Tsathoggua in the West Coast were the Hak Fu, or Black Tiger, Tong. Based in Los Angeles' Chinatown, the Tong preyed on Chinese and white men alike in the 1910s and 1920s. They were active in extortion, gambling, prostitution and smuggling, and were known as the masters of the tunnel network under Chinatown.

The tong's success was due to their leader, Sin Feng Lam, who dedicated the tong to a peculiar representation of Choi San, the Chinese god of wealth. Lam fancied himself something of a mystic and a scholar in addition to his more mundane pursuits. The idol Lam established in the tong's headquarters after his experience had a sleepy, contented yet sinister look to it, and a grotesquely swollen belly. Lam claimed to be able to summon the god's companion, a black tiger, to slay his enemies, and it was this tiger which the Tong was named after. The other tongs soon learned not to travel in the tunnels of Chinatown without Lam's permission, lest they disappear, leaving behind only curious black smears and a vaguely reptilian musk.

Sin Feng Lam was regarded with almost religious awe by his hatchet men, who alleged he could not only converse with the god and summon the very darkness itself to attack the tong's enemies, but fly and turn aside bullets with merely a raise of his hand. Sin Feng Lam made many enemies, not only among rival tongs but also among the power brokers of Los Angeles. In 1923, under circumstances which still remain unclear, Lam disappeared and the tong headquarters was robbed of several magical artifacts. Without their leader, the tong members were nothing, and between the police and rival tongs they were slaughtered without mercy.

The 1920s saw a popular resurgence in occultism generally, spearheaded by the Surrealists. The writer and painter Henri Parnot, along with his associates Ginger Waltham-Smythe and Lydia Nash in London, had much to do with the revival of Tsathoggua-worship in modern times. And in the 'Crazy Years' of Paris, where orgies of one sort or another were commonplace and Man Ray would think nothing of looking after a girl William Seabrook had chained to a banister, much strangeness went unremarked upon. Pamela Hay-Lloyd, who adopted the magical name of Circe, translated the *Liber Ivonis* (apparently a printed version, rather than the original tablets) which she had found in Aleister Crowley's library in the Abbey of Thelema in Sicily.

A far cry from these cosmopolitan settings was the town of Dunwich in Massachusetts, where some of the inhabitants were rumored to have bred with Tsathoggua and other Great Old Ones. This has yet to be confirmed, due to the vast amount of genetic anomalies present in the area.



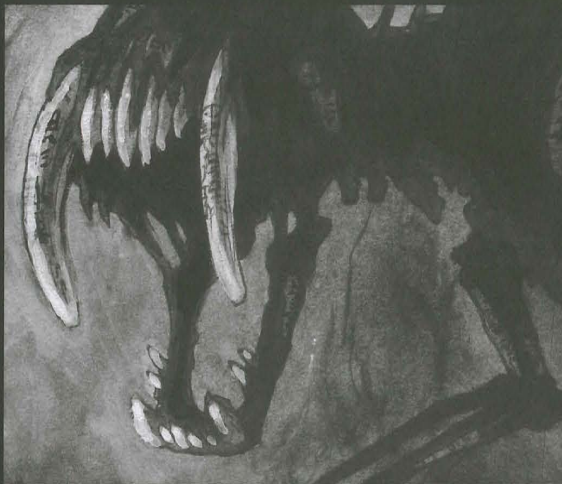
*Ancient Hyperborean relics are still revered by Inuit in Greenland in secret*



## The Beast of La Brea

The La Brea Tar Pits are located in the wealthy Hancock Park section of Los Angeles, and consist of asphalt from petroleum deposits seeping up to the surface. They first gained fame in the 1870s when Major Henry Hancock discovered fossils there. Only one human fossil has been discovered, the partial skeleton of an American Indian woman. Curiously, the fossils of predators greatly outnumber those of prey animals - including saber-toothed tigers, one of the animals known for worshipping Tsathoggua.

The spawn of Tsathoggua have longed used this area as a gateway to the upper world. In the Pleistocene era, animals who dimly recognized Tsathoggua's power brought sacrifices - sometimes the wounded, but at other times those who were chosen - to the toad-god. Later, the Los Angeles Tongs used the pits for a convenient dumping ground, thereby coming in touch with the god. Tsathoggua extended one of their Taoist sorcerers a boon, allowing him to fuse an immature formless spawn with the bones of a Smilodon, or saber-toothed tiger. Thus the Beast of La Brea was born.



*Sin Feng Lam's Beast*

In the present, the pattern of individual sorcerers worshipping Tsathoggua for power remains. Reports of sorcerers, called 'Tsathogens,' come from New Orleans, Atlanta, St. Louis, the Czech Republic, and even Thailand. A small group of worshipers has formed and reformed in London, centered at a cave beneath Blackheath.

Perhaps the most unusual development is the acceptance of Tsathoggua as his patron deity (or rather, Tsathoggua's deigning to accept him as a disciple) by the renowned and highly controversial sociobiologist Lemuel Hawkins. In return for continuing provender for the god, Hawkins has received much insight into the mechanisms of evolution, including the ability to reverse it.

While the worship of Tsathoggua is popularly thought to be limited to Averigne after the fall of Hyperborea, there is much evidence to suggest a wider worship of the

The Tong was eventually destroyed, but the Beast lives on, possibly being granted to another of the god's favorites. It appears to be an animated skeleton covered with a thin layer of tar. In the few spots where bones peek through, Chinese ideograms may be viewed. The beast is usually silent before making a kill, but the reek of asphalt precedes it.

**THE BEAST OF LA BREA, Spawn Animated Smilodon**

STR 23      CON N/A      SIZ 17      POW 12

DEX 19      Move 9      HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, damage 1D12

Claw 60%, damage 1D6+db

Rip 80%, damage 2D6+db

Whip tentacle 90%, damage 1D6+db or grapple 50%, range of 6 yards

**Armor:** Ignore melee impales and critical hits, and halve the chance to hit with impaling weapons (since the skeleton is mostly empty air). Missile weapons are even less effective, only hitting on a roll of 1/5 of normal weapon skill. The skeleton takes no damage and remains unaffected by attacks but there is a chance to shatter it. Any blow striking the skeleton has a chance of shattering it equal to (damage inflicted×2)%.

**Skills:** Lurk Menacingly but Unseen in Cover 80%, Move Closer Silently for the Kill 75%, & Track Hapless Victim Down 60%.

**Sanity Loss:** 1/1D8 Sanity points.

**Notes:** The saber-toothed tiger is about the size of a modern lion. It is not a fast runner, preferring to attack its prey from ambush. Paleontologists still speculate on the use of its fangs, with the leading theories being either that it attacked the throat and abdomen of its prey and waited for the prey to bleed to death, or that it attacked the neck with its fangs piercing the esophagus while its molars crushed the spinal cord as modern-day stalking cats do. If the latter, if in combat, the saber-toothed tiger skeleton hits with both bite and claw attacks; assume it is hanging on and trying to cut off the air supply.

god. Vedic astrology emphasizes the malefic nature of Saturn, the planet from which Tsathoggua came to earth. Plutarch mentions an island on which Cronos (the Greek equivalent of Saturn) is imprisoned or asleep - normally this is taken to refer to Cthulhu, but then how to account for Briareus watching over him? If we recall that Briareus is one of the Hecatoncheires, the 'hundred-handed' fifty-headed giants thrown into the Underworld (i.e., N'Kai), the picture becomes clearer. Briareus is clearly a reference to the Spawn, who could well have multiple heads, arms and other body parts as needed.



*An original Hyperborean votive object incorrectly identified as a Neolithic skeumorph by archeologists*

## forming the pact

A magician typically contacts Tsathoggua using the appropriate *Contact Deity* spell (6e rule book, page 227). Tsathoggua appears in a misty form. Oddly for a Great Old One, Tsathoggua converses directly with the caster in highly polite language, discourse that most contactees find unnerving. The initial round of negotiations can be quite tense, nonetheless; Tsathoggua considers leaving his presence alive to be the first favor granted to the petitioner. Nonetheless, some preparation and luck will combine to bring the magician a small reward – a few points of POW, a spell, or the like.

As contact continues, Tsathoggua is willing to grant the magician more favors, until years of devotion lead him to teaching the magician *Consecrate Profanery of N'kai* (see

'New Spells' box). If the magician can orchestrate the casting of this spell, provide a more or less steady stream of MP to Tsathoggua, and not end up killed by another wizard with the same spell, Tsathoggua will begin to give more powerful boons – a servant Child of Tsathoggua (see *Malleus Monstruorum*, pages 100-101), a mobile statue of the god, or a permanent gate to a mystical site.

It is possible for the magician to accumulate followers during this process, but this rarely equates to "worship" of the god. A popular decadent hangout, a fake Satanic coven, or other such facades are par for the course for the followers of Tsathoggua. As long as the god receives his due, he does not care.

## Resources

Dependent on Tsathoggua's worshippers, which could range from degenerate American Indian tribesmen to sophisticated medieval French bishops to Los Angeles oilmen. Tsathoggua has used his awareness of underground treasures to enrich his worshippers upon occasion.

### Rites/Ceremonies/Symbols

The major ceremonies of Tsathoggua's worship occur at May Eve and All Hallows' Eve, and involve both sado-masochistic rites and blood sacrifice.

A symbol of the god's worship in medieval Averroigne was a half-open eye. More recent cults have used a black octagon on a white background as their symbol.



*A sorcerer's paperweight recently sold at auction by Sotheby's to an unidentified buyer*

### Sacred Texts

The pre-eminent text is of course the *Book of Eibon*, and translations are much sought after by those seeking the patronage of the god.

#### Book of Eibon

Versions exist (or existed) in Hyperborean, Atlantean, Egyptian, Punic, Greek, Latin, French, and English. The Hyperborean, if it still exists, would be the most com-

plete. The Latin *Liber Ivonis* is the earliest version still known to be in existence.

#### Hyperborean:

Sanity Loss 1D10/1D20, Cthulhu Mythos +17%,  
50 weeks to study/100 hours to skim

#### Atlantean:

Sanity Loss 1D8/2D8, Cthulhu Mythos +16%,  
48 weeks to study/96 hours to skim

#### Egyptian:

Sanity Loss 1D8/2D8, Cthulhu Mythos +15%,  
43 weeks to study/86 hours to skim

#### Punic/Greek:

Sanity Loss 1D6/2D6, Cthulhu Mythos +14%,  
40 weeks to study/80 hours to skim

#### Latin:

Sanity Loss 1D4/2D4, Cthulhu Mythos +13%,  
36 weeks to study/72 hours to skim

#### French:

Sanity Loss 1D4/2D4, Cthulhu Mythos +12%,  
36 weeks to study/72 hours to skim

#### English:

Sanity Loss 1D4/2D4, Cthulhu Mythos +12%,  
36 weeks to study/72 hours to skim

The French, Greek and Latin versions contain the following spells: Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Call/Dismiss Rlim Shaikorth, Circle of Warding, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, Contact Deity/Cthulhu, Contact Deity/Yog-Sothoth, Contact Deity/Tsathoggua, Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Create Gate, Create Mist of Releh, Deflect Harm, Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Enchant Brazier, Enchant Knife, Green Decay, Levitate, Petrify, Voorish Sign, Wither Limb.

The English version omits Call/Dismiss Rlim Shaikorth, Create Barrier of Naach-Tith, Deflect Harm, and Voorish Sign.

The Punic and earlier versions are said to include Become Formless Spawn, Contact Child of Tsathoggua, Command Dhole, Command Ghost and Sleep of Ages.

Devolution is only granted by the god personally, and more often is inflicted on one who has angered him.

### On the World of Night

*Black and unshap'd, as pestilent a Clod  
As dread Sadoqua, Averonia's God.*

In English, by Lewis "Grandpa" Theobald. This eccentric eighteenth-century scholar was responsible for the translation of *De Noctis Rebus*. The translation is competent, but Theobald's sense of propriety led him to censor a number of passages, especially those relating to magical ceremonies. *On the World of Night* was privately published in 1711 and reissued with a few corrections in 1727. For game purposes, both editions are identical. A German bombing run destroyed the entire run of the Loeb Classical Library reissue, containing both the English and Latin texts, in 1941.

Sanity Loss 1D4/1D8; Cthulhu Mythos +4%, 4 weeks to study and comprehend/8 hours to skim. Spells: Command Ghost.

### Roman des Sorciers

*Spurring his steed, Sir Etienne rode into the  
milling crowd of blasphemers, as they scattered  
before him as a shower of sparks from  
a log kicked by a charcoal-burner.*

In French, by Jehan d'Arbois, 1588. This romance tells of a former Templar and his battles against the witch-cults of Averoine to save his damsel. The author delved into the Inquisition's records to give the work an air of verisimilitude, thereby coming across much material relating to the cult of Tsathoggua. The Church destroyed most copies of this work after publication, but a number of copies are scattered throughout French libraries and archives.

Sanity Loss 1/1D2; +2% Cthulhu Mythos; 3 weeks to read/6 hours to skim. Spells: None.

*Annales, De Noctis Rebus:* See "The Library of Averoine" in *Worlds of Cthulhu* #2.

### The Eye of Tsathoggua

The Eye of Tsathoggua is a sapphire offered to the god, before his worshippers found what offerings truly pleased him. By directing his gaze upon it for untold centuries, Tsathoggua imbued the jewel with various occult properties, chief among them the power to cast *Contact Deity (Tsathoggua)* and a compulsion upon those touching the gem to render sacrifice to the god. It was stolen by a New England occultist, and from there made its way to the ill-omened Sesqua Valley, where word of it has been lost. (from Lovecraft's letters and Wilum Pugmire's "The Baleful God")

Other works that deal with Tsathoggua's cult include the *Cthaat Aquadingen*, *Parchments of Pnom*, and *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New England Canaan*.

## Spells/Powers

Would-be servants of Tsathoggua tend to be limited in terms of magical might, with favors and knowledge metered out by the god in return for the material and psy-

### Lemuel Hawkins, Controversial Scientist

STR 13 CON 15 SIZ 14 INT 16 POW 22  
DEX 13 APP 12 EDU 14 SAN 0 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

#### Weapons:

Grapple 50%, special  
Hypodermic Syringe 50%,  
damage 1D2+special  
.38 Revolver 35%,  
damage 1D10

**Skills:** Biology 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Dodge 40%, Hide 45%, History 55%, Jump 50%, Listen 40%, Occult 25%, Persuade 80%, Other Language

(Tsath-Yo) 60%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 50%

**Spells:** Consecrate Profanery of N'kai (see box), Contact Tsathoggua, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua, Create Gate, Devolution.

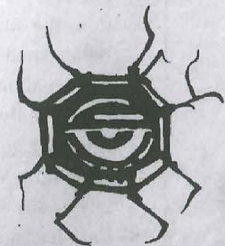
**Equipment:** Hawkins' syringe, dependent on his intentions, may include a portion of Formless Spawn or more mundane substances (he favors paralytic agents such as suxamethonium chloride, which both render his prey helpless and do not induce unconsciousness. The god prefers his victims living and conscious).

In a hidden room beneath a warehouse near his offices, Hawkins has reconsecrated an old profanery after killing its former owner. At this time, it grants him 50 MP on the premises.



chic sustenance he requires. Spells will always include *Contact Tsathoggua*, and depending on how much favor the servant is held in further spells may include *Consecrate Profanery of N'Kai*, *Contact Formless Spawn*, *Create Gate*, *Devolution*, and *Sleep of Ages*. See Box for details.

Servants of Tsathoggua may build a group around themselves, to hide evidence of the god and to provide sustenance (either directly or through acquiring victims), or they may jealously hoard their knowledge and power, only trusting a single favored disciple if that.



*Symbol recently found during renovation of medieval house in Averoine*

## New Spells

Ritual and group ritual spells may be supplemented with the rules in *Cthulhu Dark Ages*. Players of *Call of Cthulhu* can ignore the label if they so choose.

### Become Formless Spawn

**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Permanent  
**Cost:** 1 POW      **Sanity:** Special  
**Resistance Table:** Yes

Turns the target into a Formless Spawn. The spell requires the ingestion of a portion of a Formless Spawn by the recipient and the loss of all Sanity points by the target of the spell. If the caster is not also the recipient, he or she loses 3D6 Sanity points in performing the ritual.

### Devolution

Like the Dreamlands spell (see *H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands*, pages 150-151), except this works in the Waking World as well, and can be reversed to Evolution. Evolution increases the subject's INT by 1D10, and reduces SAN by twice the amount. It is believed this spell is how the voo-mis became intelligent, as well as how the Serpent People degenerated to the quadrupedal beasts of Yoth.

### Consecrate Profanery of N'kai (Ritual)

**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Permanent  
**Cost:** 5 POW plus variable MP  
**Sanity:** 1D10      **Resistance Table:** No

This week-long ritual is incredibly costly to the caster, but is also a route to incredible power. The caster must locate a large underground chamber and erect an altar and statue of Tsathoggua. A large basin or stone trough for visiting Formless Spawn is a common feature, but not necessary. The magician encloses a human sacrifice in the wall, douses the area with blood – the source is irrelevant – while chanting long Tsath-Yo orations to Tsathoggua. The ritual opens a gate for energy to flow to and from the darkness of N'kai. (Proximity to a naturally-occurring opening to N'kai may lower the cost, at the Keeper's option.)

A consecrated profanery provides the following benefits to the caster:

- ☞ For every 1 MP spent at the climax of the consecration, the site can hold 5 MP. These can be filled and replenished via ritual sacrifice (the victim's entire MP) or sexual acts (2 MP drained from each participant) conducted within 30 meters of the profanery. Half of these MP go to Tsathoggua; round up in his favor. The remaining MPs are invested in the profanery, and can power any spell the consecrator casts therein.
- ☞ Contact Tsathoggua can be cast within the profanery for 1 MP.
- ☞ Contact Formless Spawn can be cast within the profanery for 1 MP, with the spawn arriving in 1D10 minutes.
- ☞ The cost of the Voola Ritual (see below) is halved.

Although a caster may only be attuned to one profanery at a time, attuning oneself to an unoccupied profanery requires the same ritual but only 1 POW in cost. The potential for new rivals to easily obtain their profaneries causes many owners to seclude themselves within, sending minions and summoned beings to do their bidding and emerging only when necessary. (From *Cthulhu Live: Lost Souls*)

### Incarnate Oracle of Sodagui (Group Ritual)

**Range:** Touch      **Duration:** Permanent  
**Cost:** 50 MP      **Sanity:** 1D10  
**Resistance Table:** No

This group ritual requires a chosen victim, the sacrifice of half a dozen humans, and a day to cast. This spell transforms a person into a mouthpiece for the wisdom of Sodagui. A number of casters may meet at an underground gateway to Sodagui's realm that emits foul vapors. The casters contribute magic points in whatever number meets the spell's requirement, then extinguish any lights and leave the victim and the sacrifices to their fate.

Through the rite, the victim is transformed into a hideous amorphous monstrosity hideously similar to Sodagui (1/1D8 Sanity points to witness, or 1D3/1D10 Sanity points if the viewer knew the victim before). The monster is happy to answer any questions put to it, though it often hides its true knowledge through vagueness or irony. After several weeks or months, the creature degenerates into a pool of viscous slime.

Only the priests of Sodagui know this spell. In previous eras, the victim was released to the outside world after the spell's completion, living among the people for decades while taking an occasional victim. In later times, the priesthood considers such an arrangement to be unhealthy, and no oracle to the god exists in most periods. (From *Cthulhu Live: Lost Souls*)

### Sleep of Ages

**Range:** Caster only      **Duration:** See below  
**Cost:** 15 MP      **Sanity:** 1D10  
**Resistance table:** Yes, for second stage

Rumor has it that some of the Serpent People were granted this spell by Tsathoggua and used it to save themselves from the wrath of Yig, waiting out the centuries until they could rise again. When this spell is cast, the caster's metabolism slows down and his skin becomes rough and scaly. Over the course of several days, the caster is placed in a state of suspended animation. The caster does not need to breathe, nor does he need to eat or drink. He can still be affected by physical attacks as well as magic, which is why most users of this spell have a safe place prepared for them well in advance.

The caster remains in this state for a minimum of one century (if the Keeper wishes to roll randomly, 100 years+9D100), until a suitable target for the second phase of the spell is found as chosen by Tsathoggua - the caster trusts himself to the will of the Black Toad. Typical targets are possessed of great material and/or spiritual power, making them ideal for carrying out the will of the god. Over the course of several weeks, the target's physical appearance changes to resemble that of the caster, and the target gains more and more memories of the caster as well. At last, the caster has totally supplanted his target, assuming his original likeness and full memories and abilities.

The caster must pit his Magic Points against those of the target on the Resistance Table. If the caster succeeds, the victim loses 1D20 Sanity points. With each week, the victim loses another 1D20 Sanity points - once the victim

is reduced to 0 SAN or lower, his personality and physical appearance are completely replaced by those of the caster. If the caster fails, he must immediately cast the spell again (incurring additional loss of Magic Points and SAN) or his soul is devoured by the god.

#### Voola Ritual

**Range:** Sight      **Duration:** Special  
**Cost:** Variable      **Sanity:** 1D10  
**Resistance table:** No

Calls the deity to a location. The spell costs the caster and other participants a varying amount of magic points. The arrival of the deity will cost more Sanity points. The spell must be cast underground, preferably at an entrance to N'Kai. No Dismiss spell is known; let the caster beware.

#### Agrippa and Saturn

The magician Henry Cornelius Agrippa in his *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* (1531) notes that the following animals are associated with Saturn (emphasis added):

*"Also all creeping Animals, living apart, and solitary, nightly, sad, contemplative, dull, covetous, fearfull, melancholly, that take much pains, slow, that feed grossly, and such as eat their young. Of these kinds therefore are the Ape, the Cat, the Hog, the Mule, the Camel, the Bear, the Mole, the Asses, the Wolfe, the Hare, the Dragon, the Basilisk, the Toad, all Serpents, and creeping things, Scorpions, Pismires, and such things as proceed from putrefaction in the Earth, in Water, or in the ruins of houses, as Mice, and many sorts of Vermin."*

Given the following commentary, one may wonder just where his sympathies lay:

*"The humor melancholius, when it takes fire and glows, generates the frenzy (furor) which leads us to wisdom and revelation, especially when it is combined with a heavenly influence above all with that of Saturn ... Therefore Aristotle says in Problemata that through melancholy some men have become divine beings, foretelling the future like Sybils ... while others have become poets ... and he says further that all men who have been distinguished in any branch of knowledge have generally been melancholics."*

## Sources

Tsathoggua first appeared in print in H.P. Lovecraft's story *"The Whisperer in Darkness,"* but he was actually created by Clark Ashton Smith in *"The Tale of Satampra Zeiros."* He also appeared in various other Hyperborean and Averogian tales, most notably *"The Seven Geases"* and *"The Door to Saturn."* The K'n-Yan connection is from Lovecraft's *"The Mound."* His connection to the Serpent People was posited by Lin Carter in *"The Vengeance of Yig"* and further explored in John R. Fultz' *"The Devouring of S'lithik Hhai"*. Much useful information can be found in *The Book of Eibon*.

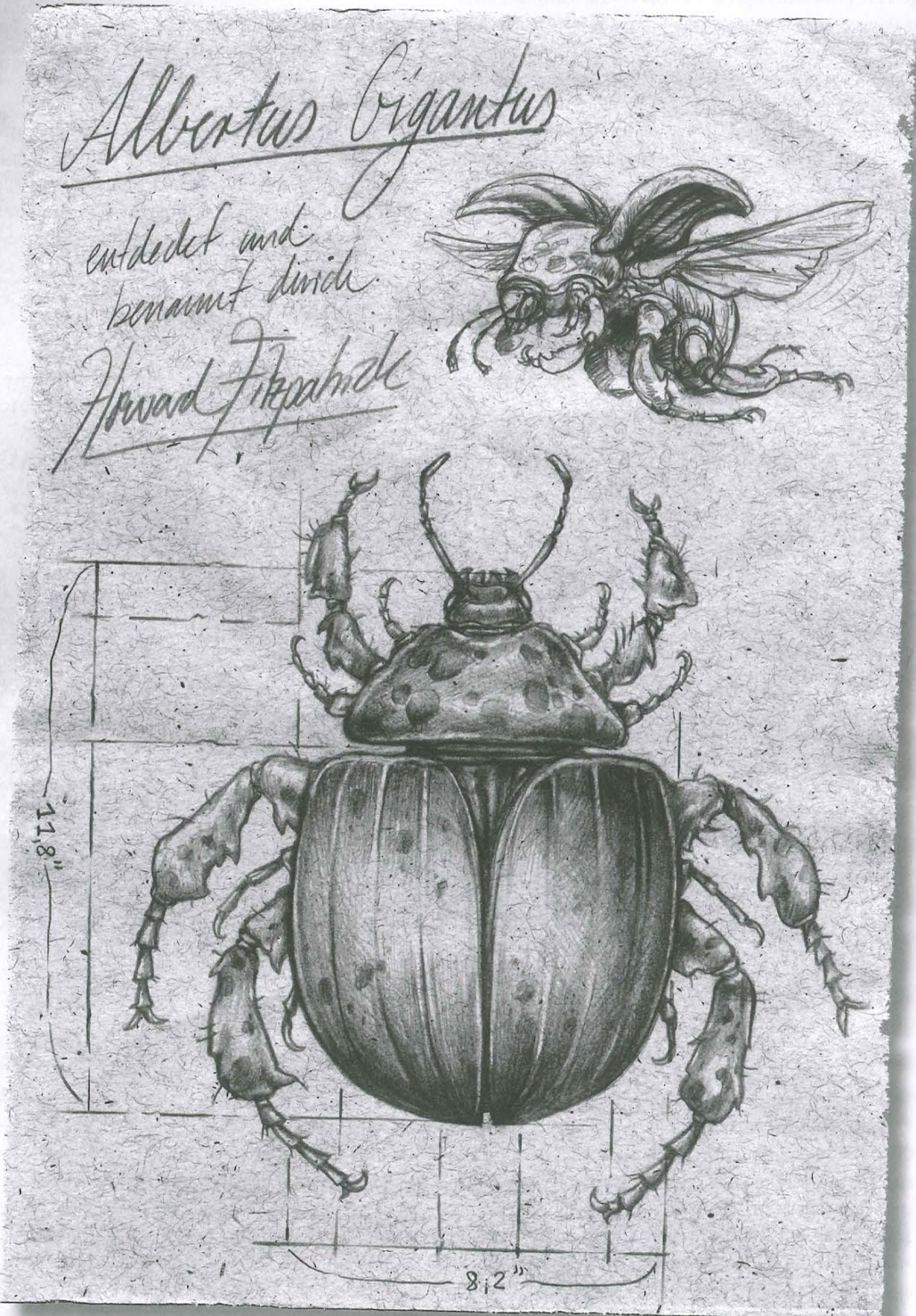
His son Zvilpogghua, aka Ossadagowah, is referenced by August Derleth in *The Lurker at the Threshold* as well as *"Strange Manuscript Found in the Vermont Woods"* by Lin Carter. The monks of Saint-Crapauld were inspired by Robert M. Price's *"The Round Tower."* The Averones and the Tsathoguen appear in the Cthulhu Live supplement *Lost Souls*.

Professor John Kirowan in Robert E. Howard's *"The Children of the Night"* claims Tsathoggua's worship is extinct in the present day, but this was clearly wishful thinking on his part.



# Brood of the Beetle

By Frank Heller  
Translated from the German  
by Bill Walsh



Howard's sketch of the giant beetle

## foreword

This *Call of Cthulhu* adventure is set in Boston and Vermont in the 1920s, though its location can be moved to wherever investigators in a continuing campaign are living and working. The exact year in which the scenario takes place is also left up to the discretion of the keeper, who can customize it to his individual game as well.

In the following, it is assumed that the investigators are already acquainted and allied. It's presumably not the first adventure that they've experienced together. If it is, then they should be at least friends of long standing, colleagues, or relatives. It'd be particularly fitting—though

hardly required—if the investigators had grown up on the same street in the same neighborhood of Boston, along with the unfortunate Howard Fitzpatrick. A common childhood friendship is an ideal tie between the investigators and Howard Fitzpatrick. In any case, at least one of the investigators should have been friends with him.

This adventure was deliberately built with an open structure, as a model for keepers who might wish to try their hand at designing their own adventures for the first time.

## Investigations in Boston

### Introduction

On a beautiful summer's day on an arbitrary date in the 1920s, one of the investigators receives an unexpected letter.

The sender has immortalized herself in a beautiful cursive on the envelope: *Mrs. Gerald L. Fitzpatrick*. Yes, the Investigator remembers. He recalls a round, maternal face with rosy cheeks. A friendly smile and the best doughnuts he ever had. Mrs. Fitzpatrick is the mother of a good childhood friend. The Fitzpatricks lived down the street in their quiet neighborhood of single-family houses, some with white picket fences. Their only child, *Howard*, played with the Investigator and the other neighborhood kids, romping through the yards, sneaking doughnuts from Mrs. Fitzpatrick and wolfing them down hot and fresh. Howard's father, whose name the Investigator had completely forgotten until seeing it on the envelope, was by contrast a bitter, angry man, who'd often yell so loud the whole street could hear. He went to France as a doughboy in 1917 and never came back from "over there." Soldiers in dashing uniforms brought Mrs. Fitzpatrick a flag and a French Croix de Guerre medal. She hung the medal under glass along with a picture of her husband on her living-room wall.

The carefree days of childhood fled all too quickly. After graduation from high school, the Investigator mostly lost touch with the Howard and Mrs. Fitzpatrick. Howard went to college, doing something with biology and botany. His specialty, the Investigator can recall, was entomology. Bug science, in other words. During occasional visits over the years, Howard showed the Investigator legions of bugs—beetles, flies, and more exotic specimens—pinned in glass display boxes. The only regular contact the Investigator has had with Howard is a yearly exchange of Christmas cards. So it's surprising to have received a letter from Mrs. Fitzpatrick in the middle of the summer. (It may be found as *Beetle Handout 1* in the appendix.)

### An Overview

The present scenario is in a certain sense a classic adventure, because it's based on the familiar research-investigation model. The finale, however, should be surprising and unusual. At first, it's a search for a missing friend. After investigations in his hometown, Boston, the investigators follow his tracks to the village of Stantonville in the lonely woods of Vermont. Until this point, the adventure is mostly linear but a build-up ensues, based on the building-blocks principle. First, all the relevant locations are described, followed by the back-story of the adventure. The background information is withheld until later in the scenario in order that the Keeper can get a first-hand idea as he reads of the questions and suspense that will arise for the players. Finally there is an overview of the events in Stantonville. The last section of the scenario then returns to a straight-line series of events. The investigators set off into the Black Hills Forest, where the Keeper has the opportunity to include some encounters with insects. Once they reach Carson's Creek, the action moves into the shipwreck where the finale takes place. The investigations in Stantonville may be difficult for a new keeper, because there are no instructions for where they should direct the investigators first. A good knowledge of the various individuals and locations, as well as the background of the adventure, will help the Keeper from losing the plot thread. With a solid overview, the Keeper can simply flip to the individual locations as the investigators visit them and role-play the encounters. In the appendix, the Keeper will find the statistics for all the non-player characters and monsters, as well as the handouts.

The content of the letter gives the receiver pause. It may be that the elderly lady is over anxious. But the Investigator also knows Howard to be quite conscientious and reliable. He *wouldn't* just disappear like that.

Soon the investigator has contacted other acquaintances whose experience he won't be able to do without on such a venture (read: the other investigators). Now the course of the game is in the players' hands.

Hereafter, it's assumed that the events described below take place in Massachusetts and Vermont. The Keeper can, however, change the names of the places involved and transport the adventure to any other area in the northeastern United States.

## A Visit in Boston



Alberta Fitzpatrick's Street

Before the investigators can plunge into Howard's disappearance, they will certainly contact Mrs. Fitzpatrick again. They can do this by telephone, but they might well want to visit the elderly lady in person. If the investigators plan on tracing Howard's steps from the beginning, they'll have to return to Boston to give his apartment the once-over anyway.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick still lives in that same small house on that same well-kept street. Where exactly (and if) the Fitzpatrick house is in Boston really doesn't matter and is left up to the keeper. In the following, it's assumed that both Howard and Mrs. Fitzpatrick live in Boston. If the investigator's parents still live in their old house, perhaps directly next door to Mrs. Fitzpatrick, it would surely be a good opportunity to stop in at home.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick greets the investigators affectionately, amiably, and maternally. Of course her legendary doughnuts are on hand. Unfortunately, she can contribute few details over and above the story in her letter. Howard had only told her that he was setting out on a trip with the

hope of finding a new variety of insect. He called once from Stantonville, Vermont, and gave her the telephone number of his hotel there. If the investigators would like, Mrs. Fitzpatrick can provide the number. She can also give them the number of the local police. What can be found there is described below.

Mrs. Fitzpatrick has an extra key to Howard's apartment here in the city. She's happy to loan the key to the investigators. Howard's friend will know that because Howard's never married (and isn't shackled up with a woman), his apartment should be undisturbed and they should be able to look around in peace. Mrs. Fitzpatrick can tell them that Howard was working at the *Boston Institute for Entomological Research*, where they might be able to learn something about his recent activities.

If asked, Mrs. Fitzpatrick can confirm for the investigators that Howard had just returned from a conference in Burlington, Vermont, a week before his excursion to Stantonville.

### Timeline

<sup>TM</sup><sub>25</sub> c. 27 years ago: A "landslide" causes a quake in Stantonville; a bang is heard

<sup>TM</sup><sub>24</sub> Over the next 27 years: The behavior of an ever-larger number of Stantonville's inhabitants changes completely

<sup>TM</sup><sub>23</sub> 26 days ago (a Thursday): Howard drives to a conference of entomologists in Burlington, Vermont

<sup>TM</sup><sub>22</sub> 19 days ago (a Thursday): While driving back to Boston from the conference, Howard has a car accident near Stantonville

<sup>TM</sup><sub>21</sub> 18 days ago (a Friday): Howard returns to Boston with his car, which he had repaired in Stantonville, and an interesting discovery

<sup>TM</sup><sub>20</sub> 12 days ago (a Thursday): Howard drives back up to Stantonville and checks into a hotel

<sup>TM</sup><sub>19</sub> 11 days ago (a Friday): Howard begins his search for *Albertus gigantus*

<sup>TM</sup><sub>18</sub> 8 days ago (a Monday): Howard fails to call his mother on her birthday

<sup>TM</sup><sub>17</sub> 7 days ago (a Tuesday): Alberta Fitzpatrick first calls Stantonville. According to Hugh Hornby, Howard checked out and drove away early that morning, without anyone's seeing him.

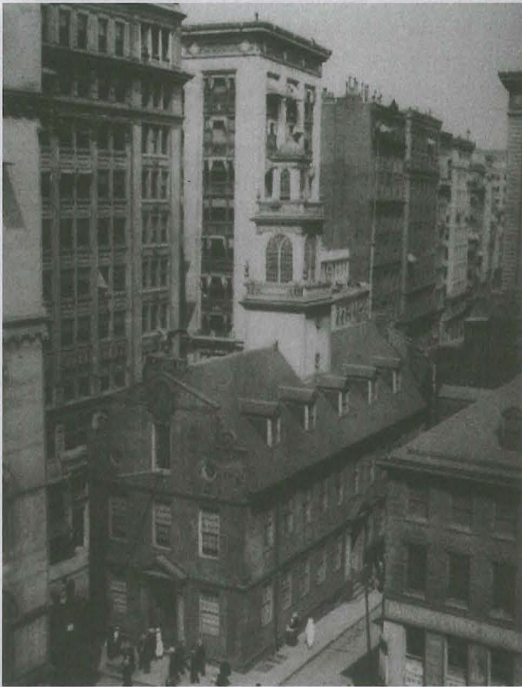
<sup>TM</sup><sub>16</sub> 5 days ago (a Thursday): Mrs. Fitzpatrick finally receives information from Stantonville that her son cannot be found.

<sup>TM</sup><sub>15</sub> Today (a Wednesday): Alberta Fitzpatrick's letter reaches an investigator.

<sup>TM</sup><sub>14</sub> Today + 1 (a Thursday): The investigation begins

<sup>TM</sup><sub>13</sub> Today + 2 (a Friday): The earliest the investigators can arrive in Stantonville, though in all likelihood it will be later





Howard Fitzpatrick's apartment

### Howard Fitzpatrick's Apartment

Armed with Mrs. Fitzgerald's copy of the key, the investigators will have no problem getting into the missing entomologist's small apartment. If the investigators don't have a key, they can try a *Locksmith* roll. Kicking down the door (STR 13) is of course possible, but the neighbors and the police will investigate.

Howard lives on the ninth floor of a Boston apartment block. There are three other apartments on the same floor. Howard's neighbors have never particularly paid attention to him. None of them has ever exchanged more than a greeting or remark about the weather with him, so nothing new can be learned from them.

Stuffy, stale air strikes the investigators as soon as they enter the apartment; all the curtains are closed so that twilight-filtered light barely illuminates the rooms. Dust dances in the few beams of light that have found their way through the folds of the draperies. Stillness and silence are the first impressions. Apparently no one has aired the place out for some time. Howard also seems to have been less than meticulous with his dishwashing. In the small kitchen, the remains of various foods glisten and mildew on crusted plates. In the refrigerator, mold is climbing out of different dairy products. The bed in the Bedroom is unmade; worn and unworn clothing lie strewn chaotically across the floor. The closet door is closed. And for a good reason: it's the home of *Tineola bisselliella*, the common clothes moth. The investigators can likely deduce that Howard enjoyed raising these wonderful moths and enjoyed observing them while they worked. And because the closet is now full of moth-food, it's entirely logical (at

least to Howard) to keep the rest of his clothing on the floor of the apartment.

Yes, it's true: the general impression may be a bit deceiving, but for Howard, the apartment's current condition is entirely normal. Neatness was never his strength, and cleaning and dusting not at all. If an investigator checks out the Bathroom, he will have to literally tear himself away from the washbasin to which he will stick (STR 2). A similar effect occurs to anyone sitting on the toilet seat. Mrs. Fitzpatrick will be very grateful if informed about the state of the apartment. As soon as her hip feels better, she will arrive; cleaning supplies in hand, and whips the place into shape.

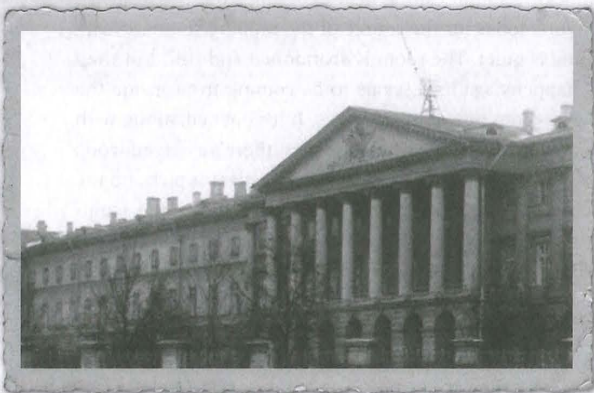
At some point during the investigators' visit in the apartment, something uncanny should transpire: a knocking sound can be heard coming from the Study. If anyone looks for the source of the rapping sound, everything is quiet. The room is abandoned and still. But then it happens again: it seems to be coming from inside the desk—from one of the drawers. If it's opened, along with some unremarkable office supplies, there's a carved wood sculpture of a beetle inside. If an investigator picks up the sculpture, the tapping will sound from within the sculpture, which vibrates slightly. A Sanity roll is necessary: 0/1D2 points if failed. The secret is revealed with either a difficult (halved) roll against *Biology* combined with an *Idea* roll, or by breaking the sculpture open. Inside are the larvae of a beetle. The sounds the investigators heard were the sounds of their eating the wood. These are the larvae of the common furniture beetle (*Anobium punctatum*), also called the death-watch beetle because its rapping sounds are popularly supposed to herald a death. Howard received this curiosity from his colleagues as a birthday present.

Once the investigators' nerves settle, a closer examination of the study will be worthwhile. Among other thing, Howard keeps his famous display boxes here, filled with incredible numbers of insects on pins. Tiny pasted cards label each specimen with its Latin name. Some of them the investigators may recognize: the black-and-gold-striped *Leptinotarsa decemlineata* (the Colorado potato beetle) or the *Calandra granaria* (grain weevil). The old-house borer (*Hylotrupes bajulus*), and in different glass case, the cabbage white butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*), are impressive. With a successful difficult (halved) *Biology* roll, an investigator will be able to show off to his astonished companions that he knows that this insect was originally introduced from Europe—it is not a native New World species.

The heavy desk sits in front of the study's sole window. The desk is piled high with papers, on the top of which is a map of New England. Anyone looking will find Stantonville in southern Vermont in an otherwise fairly deserted area. It's just off the direct road between Burlington (where Howard's conference took place) and Boston. Under the map is a receipt from *Jim's Garage & Handyman*. This firm is indeed in Stantonville, as the address on the receipt confirms. Apparently Howard had his radiator repaired there. The date on the bill is the same as his return from the conference in Burlington. Some-

where in the mountain of irrelevant papers and notes on the desk, the investigators will find a diary. From this, they'll learn that Howard stayed in Burlington for exactly one week at the conference from which he returned to Boston about three weeks ago. He drove there and back. He planned two days driving time on each leg, incorporating an overnight stay somewhere. Then he was apparently in Boston for a week. Following that, there's a thickly underlined entry: *Drive to Stantonville*, about two weeks ago. Mrs. Fitzpatrick's birthday is also entered in thick, red letters in Howard's diary. For more exact dates, the Keeper may cast an eye over the timeline above.

The investigators will find nothing more in Howard's apartment. They might now care to visit his place of work. Howard works at the *Boston Institute for Entomological Research*.



The Boston Institute for Entomological Research

search. He has his own office that his colleagues will happily unlock (after a successful *Persuade* roll). What do the investigators expect from an insect-researcher's office? Obviously, there's no Mythos library here. Instead, they'll find more boxes of insects, a lot of drawings and scientific literature, as well as a powerful microscope. At the very top of the desk, which is piled high with papers like the one in his apartment, sit some sketches of a beetle. A *Know* roll will suggest that it is something like a dung beetle, at least at first glance. A difficult (halved) *Biology* roll is necessary to make any more exact statements. With a success, that the specimen depicted in the drawing indeed appears to belong to the *Scarabaeidae* (*Coleoptera*) family, but shows it certain unusual variations, particularly in the mandibles which are not protruding, as in the *Ectognatha*, but sunken as in the "proto-insects." Also, the blade-like form of the mandibles is indicative of a very archaic insect. Both of these facts suggest that this is a fairly ancient beetle; and, moreover, a type of beetle of which even the most zoologically inclined of the investigators will have never heard. Apparently the insect depicted is also capable of flight, as further drawings with corresponding notations indicate. The small, stubby appendages between the six legs are conspicuously odd. They appear to have no function, but resemble legs. An expert will know that these appendages are just one more indication that they're dealing with a prehistoric beetle, presumably one that's long extinct.

The scientific explanation: insects developed (at least partially) from animals like millipedes or centipedes which gradually lost the majority of their body segments and reduced the number of legs. This gradual process explains the fact that some fossil insects have rudimentary additional pairs of legs on body segments that really shouldn't have legs any more. These vestigial legs are "souvenirs" of their heritage. The question of why insects ended up with exactly six legs is easily answered: six legs are the minimum which most insects need to support their body shape—three on the ground, three in forward motion.

If asked, other entomologists at the Institute can explain to the investigators anything that they haven't found out for themselves. The scientists will appear utterly shocked that Howard hadn't mentioned anything to them about discovering a new, hitherto unknown beetle. They have never seen his drawings before.

Apparently, Howard has already given the beetle a name: *Albertus gigantus* is written in cursive on his sketchpad—in honor of his mother, naturally. Whether Mrs. Fitzpatrick would be pleased by this dubious honor is a whole other story.

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**For Squirrels or Gophers.**—The dose of Bisulphide must be placed far down in one or two of the freshest holes, taking good care that all the holes are closed, to keep the vapor in.

**Rats, Ants, Yellow Jackets, etc.**—Place dose in the hole and cover it up.

**Moths, Weevils, Lice, etc.**—A cloth saturated with Bisulphide put into the place occupied by the insects will destroy them without injuring the contents. Keep place closed for an hour or longer.

Advantage may be taken from its properties to expel weevils from grain without injuring the cereal. For this purpose a small quantity of Bisulphide is enclosed in an air-tight chamber with the grain; in a few hours both the larva and eggs are killed without injury to the grain. It may be used, too, to expel ants from the foundations of houses.

**NOTICE**—Bisulphide of Carbon evaporates freely when in contact with the air, and it acts by its vapor, which, being heavier than air, will flow down the holes. Apply when ground is moist and cool, to avoid loss of the Bisulphide vapors through cracks, as it produces its effects only when confined in the space occupied by the animal or insect. When used on a hillside, dose upper hole.

To keep the Carbon Bisulphide from evaporating, cover it up by pouring water over it, which will not mix with the substance and stay on top of it. Cork it tight, and keep the liquid away from fire.

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If the investigators search the room further, they can get a real impression of the size of the animal. Some file folders stacked up in a dark corner of the office are concealing something covered with a towel. It is a large cheese dome under which sits (rather unusually) a squashed beetle of enormous dimensions. It is just under a foot long and consequently just barely fits under the glass dome. Alberta Fitzpatrick is already quite distressed that she can't find her nice server, which her son secretly "borrowed" during a visit in the week before his return to Stantonville. The beetle is jet-black, has a gleaming carapace, and is obviously identical with the specimen in the drawing. A difficult (halved) *Biology* roll will reveal to the investigators that this beetle is larger than any known species in North America. Otherwise, Howard's increasingly fascinated and stunned colleagues can relate this information. To the entomologists' dismay, the "squashed" creature apparently suffered a head-on collision with another object or was deliberately crushed.

If the investigators have found the receipt from the Stantonville auto-repair shop in Howard's apartment, they might slowly put together that Howard bore witness to an abrupt encounter between vehicle and fauna (read: the bug hit his radiator). And then the investigators will likely realize why Howard drove up to Stantonville again. He wants to capture and study an intact specimen of this undiscovered species.

Even tough questioning at the Institute will bring no further information to light. Howard's colleagues truly knew nothing about his discovery; he kept them completely in the dark. When the investigators leave the institute, the entomologists will fall over themselves in a professional frenzy, conducting closer examinations of the unknown specimen. They will not, it should be mentioned, allow the investigators to take the drawings—much less the beetle itself—with them. They will allow them to take photographs, if *Persuaded*. But the investigators should probably take off quickly after doing so, before the scientists change their minds.

### Libraries

Visiting Boston's libraries is not particularly productive. There nothing at all on the giant beetle. If the investigators haven't already learned its location, they can find Stantonville on a map. It's apparently quite a small town that's only mentioned because its founder, Jedediah Stanton, was a trapper and hunter of some reputation in the area. He distinguished himself in later years, some time after Stantonville's establishment, fighting at Washington's side in the War of Independence. The town was founded in 1767.

### Insects, Particularly Beetles

Three-quarters of the animals on the earth are insects. Researchers have identified at least 800,000 kinds, and presumably there are many more undiscovered. In tropical rain forests, the body-mass of insects comprises a third of the total animal biomass. They are simply everywhere; the only places they're not encountered are the poles and in the highest mountains. Nevertheless, there are varieties of insects that can survive at 20,000-foot elevations.

Insects are extremely rugged. Their exoskeletons provide effective armor. Because they breathe through tracheal tubes ending in spiracles, little air tubes in their armor; they are able to survive in the most hostile environments, like deserts. By closing these holes, they can minimize water loss. They can live off tiny amounts of water, like dew drops on the desert floor or even dew collected on their own armor. They're equally unconcerned by cold. Many insects can survive in temperatures down to 20°F without freezing. This is because the water in their bodies does not crystallize despite its temperature sinking below the freezing point of 32°F. Many of these animals produce their own "antifreeze" which prevents their freezing solid. These specimens can survive temperatures down to -5°F. In addition, during winter they seek out protected spaces: if they're covered in snow, there's almost no danger of their freezing.

Insects are one of Mother Nature's most successful inventions. They will exist long after humanity has dis-

appeared from the face of the earth. H.P. Lovecraft even postulates that an intelligent insect race will inherit the Earth. They were flying 150 million years before the first flying dinosaurs, and fossils of 400-million-year-old insects have been found.

Science has also identified tiny insects barely visible to the naked eye. The largest known insects are the extinct dragonfly species, *Meganeura monyi* and *Meganeuroopsis permiana*, with a wingspan of nearly 30 inches. Its body was about as long, which is probably close to the limit that a tracheal breathing system can support. The largest extant insect is the giant owl moth (*Erebus agrippina*) living in the Brazilian jungle, with a wingspan of 11 inches. The praying mantis (*Mantidae*) will capture small mammals or birds and consume them. Walking-stick insects (*Phasmodea*) can grow up to 14 inches long.

Beetles have the largest bodies. One of the largest living types of beetle is the Goliath Beetle (*Goliathus*) of Africa (4½-inch body length). *Megasoma elephas*, a Central American rhinoceros beetle, is even larger (over five inches). The largest of all is the South American rhinoceros beetle, *Dynastes hercules*, with a body length of up to 6½ inches. The beetle discovered by Howard Fitzpatrick is almost double its size: a sensational find! With over a half-million species, beetles have the greatest variety among insects.

# Stantonville



If the investigators leave Boston early in the morning, they'll reach Stantonville in late afternoon. Having a car is very advantageous, as there's no train line stopping anywhere near the little town. If they travel by train, they'll have to then transfer to a bus. In this case, they'll arrive in Stantonville in the early evening.



*On the way to Stantonville*

The small town of perhaps 800 inhabitants lays a little way off the main road to Burlington. An arrow-shaped road sign reading 'STANTONVILLE 3 MILES' serves to let people know when to turn off. The landscape around Stantonville is hilly, almost mountainous, and everything seems to be covered with thick, endless woods through which the roads cut narrow trails. There are very few clearings in the woods, but the views from the hills are often very good. When one happens on a more open area, like Stantonville, it offers the impressive sight of wooded slopes snuggling together all around, between sometimes gentle, sometimes deeply cut valleys through which narrow brooks rush. It's summery warm, with bees and other insects humming around everywhere. One gets an intense feeling of nature, which seems to be more strongly present here than elsewhere. Everything streams with a vitality that's been lost in big cities. The animals are big and well-nourished, the plants tall and intensely green. In Stantonville, the edge of the woods looks like a brown-green wall around the town. Along with the wooded hills all around, the investigators almost get the impression that nature is encroaching on the town.

As the sign indicates, Stantonville is three miles off the main road. It's in an enclosed hollow, surrounded by thick green woods that stretch out over the high hills that loom above the town and surround it. A little river flows through the town, which apparently makes its living from forestry. Slightly outside the town proper, directly along the river sits a sawmill, the largest building in town, with 'ATKINS LUMBER, STANTONVILLE, VT.' painted on its side.

Stantonville is a cul-de-sac: there's only the one street into the valley, and it ends in town.

The town's buildings are all wooden, whitewashed, and very old, most probably Colonial. Here in this isolated valley, surrounded by nature and old-fashioned buildings, far away from the din of the city, it feels like entering a whole different era, as if the march of time had been stopped some generations before. Unlike, say, Dunwich, an equally old town, the town is not given over to decay. It is a mixture of well-cared-for and less-well-cared-for houses and yards. And one will search in vain for signs of in-breeding in the features of the inhabitants.

The center of town is the center of life in Stantonville. There's a well-maintained square with a green lawn, benches, and a statue in the middle. The square is surrounded by the most important buildings in town. All of them are whitewashed and of the same Colonial style as the residences. The statue in the middle of the square is bronze. It depicts, larger than life, a man wearing leather clothing, a beaver-skin hat on his head, and a full beard, standing on the marble base with one foot resting higher on a stone. His left hand grips the barrel of a flintlock Pennsylvania Long rifle which rests with its butt on the ground. His right hand is raised to shade his eyes. A bronze plaque attached to the marble base reads 'JEBEDIAH STANTON'. He looks like a man in close touch with nature, staring off into the distance. The view into the distance is limited by the hills around Stantonville. The investigators will likely have guessed the identity of the man depicted here if they've done any research on Stantonville in a library in Boston.

The buildings which surround the town square include:

- ✦ The *Town Hall* (flying US and Vermont flags), which houses the mayor's office, the town library, and town clerk's office,
- ✦ The *Sheriff's Office* (the sheriff's old Model T sometimes is parked outside)
- ✦ The offices of *The Stantonville Gazette*, and
- ✦ The *General Store*.

A *church steeple* rises above one of the side streets. It's the only one visible here in the area. And the first commercial building at the entrance to town is *Jim's Garage*.

Not in view is the sole hostelry in town, the *Hornby Hotel*. Anyone in town can give the investigators directions. It's at the very back end of the valley at the edge of the woods. You just have to follow Main Street, which leads through Stantonville, past the town square with the statue of Jebediah Stanton, until it ends. That's where the hotel is

The Stantonville Area



Keepers' and Players' versions of this map are available for download from [www.worldsofctulhu.com](http://www.worldsofctulhu.com)

## Jim's Garage & Handyman

Right at the entrance to the town, the investigators will notice an auto-repair shop. A sign proclaims it to be *Jim's Garage & Handyman*. In addition to the garage, there's an Esso gas pump. The investigators might need to fill 'er up anyway and decide to stop here. A man of about 35 in oil-smeared blue overalls comes out of the garage and approaches the investigators. The patch on his chest, also smeared with oil, makes it clear that this is "Jim" himself. He wipes his black, sticky hands off on an oily rag, puts a friendly smile on his face, and says hello. Jim is as advertised: he's the town's jack of all trades, a real handyman. He not only repairs and maintains automobiles, but any machine at all. Because the sawmill's machines need regular maintenance, he doesn't have to complain about a lack of work. He loves his job and is a born "grease monkey."

Presumably, the investigators will ask Jim about Howard Fitzpatrick and the repair job Jim did on his auto. Jim reports that Howard rolled in around noon one day with his motor hissing and steaming. If it'd been much longer, the motor would have completely overheated. The radiator was dented and caved in, like from a collision. The grill was completely bent, and the coolant lines burst in places. Jim had to swap the whole thing out. Because the gentleman wanted to depart the next day, Jim put in an extra shift and had the car ready to go the next morning. Oh yeah, he remembers the job well. The gentleman said that a giant bug had flown into his radiator. A beetle, yeah, he said beetle. He asked if giant beetles were common around here. Because Jim had never seen a big beetle like that, he couldn't help the gentleman out. He did recommend the Hornby Hotel for an overnight stay (it's the only hotel in town anyway). The following morning, the car (a black 1923 Chevrolet Model M, by the way) was good as new, and Mr. Fitzpatrick left town.

A week later he was back, and filled up his car here. They chatted a bit, and the gentleman said he was looking for more of those giant beetles. Jim saw him a few times over the next two days. One morning, his Chevy was gone from in front of the hotel, and Jim assumed

he'd driven away. He hadn't filled up on his way out of town, but he wouldn't have needed to, since he'd tanked up right when he'd arrived.

## The Hornby Hotel

At the far end of town, right at the woods' edge, sits Stantonville's only hotel. It's a rather rundown, one-story house that was once painted white. The paint is cracked, peeling, and shows the pale, sickly-looking wood underneath like brittle skin exposing red flesh. The words "Hornby Hotel" are painted on it in blue, but equally chipped, paint. Howard Fitzpatrick stayed in this rather uninviting establishment during his two visits in Stantonville. (He, like the investigators, had no other options.) The main building sits on the street. Farther back into the woods are several small cottages along a footpath. Apparently these bungalows serve as hotel rooms.

The interior of the hotel is, alas, no improvement on the exterior. The air is musty and stale, with a penetrating smell of old sweat and food. The furniture could have been brought over by the first colonists and has seen much better days. The threadbare upholstery has exposed "wounds" of stuffing, and the curtains are yellowed. It seems like nothing's changed here in decades, not even the air, which, pregnant with dust, scratches in one's lungs. Once their eyes have adjusted to the prevailing dimness, the investigators can make out a large common room on the right, apparently conceived of as some kind of reading room. There's a boxy radio next to bookshelves stocked with some not-particularly-literary novels, and whole generations of tattered newspapers.

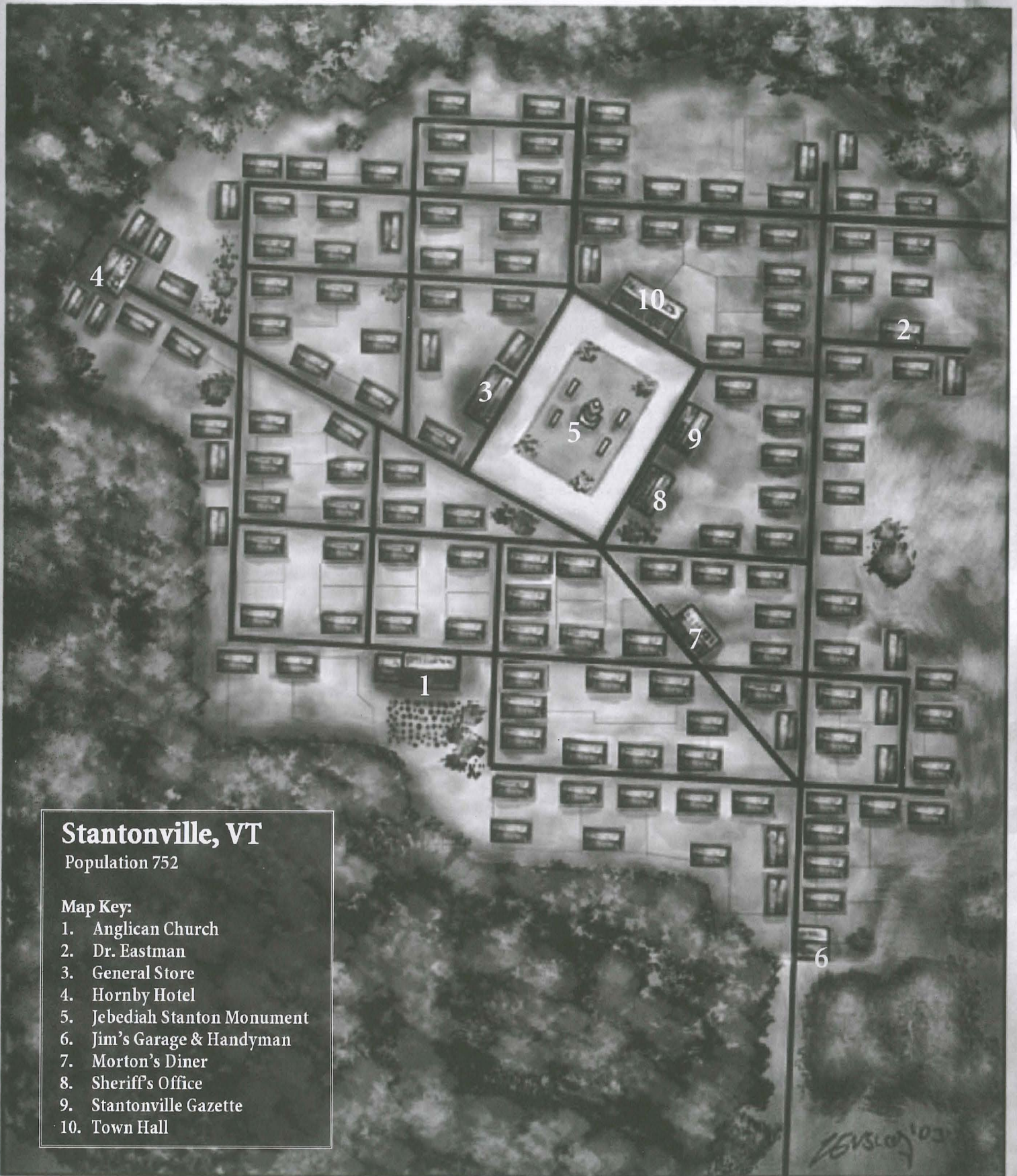
On the left, a greasy sign reading "Please Ring" and a desk call-bell sit on a dark counter. Behind the counter hangs a board of keys. All the hooks have their corresponding keys. A door apparently leads into the private quarters. It's open. Somewhere in the back of the house, a commotion can suddenly be heard. A man is shouting. He spews foul curses, of which "whore" is the kindest by a long shot. Shortly thereafter, there's a loud smack, followed by a woman's cry of pain. If the investigators ring the bell, the commotion will stop and a man will come out to the counter from the back rooms. Or the investigators could burst into the private rooms and seize the man as he's striking his wife who lies whimpering on the ground. However it transpires, the investigators are dealing with *Hugh Hornby*, who won't resist and will sullenly leave off his wife, who will flee out the back door of the house. She'll return in about an hour.

Hugh Hornby is the 45-ish proprietor of the hotel. He is unwashed and smells strongly. His unshaven face is shiny with sweat, his breath stinks foully, and his teeth are rotting. His eyes are slightly protruding and have huge bags beneath them. His thin, sparse hair is greasy and lank.

The Hornby family has owned the hotel ever since they've lived in Stantonville. Hugh took it over after the death of his parents, although he has no interest in living



*Jim's Garage & Handyman*



### Stantonville, VT

Population 752

**Map Key:**

- 1. Anglican Church
- 2. Dr. Eastman
- 3. General Store
- 4. Hornby Hotel
- 5. Jedediah Stanton Monument
- 6. Jim's Garage & Handyman
- 7. Morton's Diner
- 8. Sheriff's Office
- 9. Stantonville Gazette
- 10. Town Hall

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up to the responsibilities it entails. He lets his wife Martha do all the work. She's not originally from Stantonville but moved here from nearby Bloomsburg after marrying him. The once fun-loving woman has been broken by the work and her cruel, insufferable husband, and has more or less cut herself off from life. She only finds fulfillment and inner peace in her faith. She attends church daily.

Martha is friends with Edgar Hampton, publisher of *The Stantonville Gazette*. When she goes shopping, she occasionally stops in the *Gazette's* offices for a cup of coffee. Her husband doesn't care for this relationship, and of ten—like today—uses it as a pretext to hit Martha.

Hugh will not enter into any conversations about his conduct with his wife and will ignore any questions relating to it. He will quickly change topics to business. He will peevishly provide the investigators with keys to their rooms and take payment in advance for the night. Then he'll hand them the greasy guestbook which also contains the entries for Howard Fitzpatrick. They are all as expected. The date of departure is, in general, not filled out by the guest, but by Hugh. Hugh recorded Howard's second departure on Alberta's birthday (a Tuesday).

The investigators will surely pose some questions to Hugh Hornby about his former guest. The greasy hotelier will tell the following story: A few weeks ago, Mr. Fitzpatrick was here for one night. A week later, he showed up again and wanted a room for "a couple of days." He stayed in Room 3, if the investigators think to ask. And unless the investigators explicitly demand it, they have been assigned other rooms. Hugh will allow an examination of Room 3 only after a bribe of at least five dollars or a difficult (halved) roll against *Persuade*, *Law*, or *Credit Rating*. Apart from that, he will relate that he barely noticed Howard. Because the guests stay in the bungalows in the woods outside the main house, they can come and go as they like. Hugh doesn't care if they drop their key off at the desk and pick it up later, or if they take it with them. He's happiest when he doesn't have to expend any effort. The front door of the main house is never locked, so guests can come into the reading room at any time. The only explicitly stated house rule is that the radio must be turned off at nine at night.

On that Tuesday, the day Hornby entered as Howard's departure date, Alberta Fitzpatrick called, asking about the whereabouts of her son. Hugh looked and saw that his car was no longer in front of the house. Room 3 was empty, with the key and payment for the stay on the bed. It looked as if Mr. Fitzpatrick had just suddenly left without notice.

Hugh yawns cavalierly and widely, then announces that he's going to lie down (no matter what time of day it is). He's not in the mood for any

more conversation. If the investigators talk to him over the next few days, if there's something they want explained, Hugh will react with increasing indignation and his tongue will only be loosened by ever-larger bribes—if talking to Hornby is so important to the investigators that they feel the need to invest the cash.

The guests have to take all their meals in town, because there's no board at the hotel. *Morton's Diner* is the only restaurant in town, and is open all day.

At some point in the course of the adventure, the investigators will probably become interested in the massive collection of old newspapers in the common room, not least because the newspaper's own archive will prove to be missing issues relevant to their investigation. If they are specifically looking for information about the events of about 27 years ago, they can find the articles in the appendix as *Beetle Handout 2*.

### Martha Hornby

A conversation with Martha can only be had with some difficulty. She will only speak to the investigators when her husband is not around. Ideally, she can be approached in the town while shopping, or when she's having a cup of coffee with Edgar Hampton, the publisher of the newspaper. After a successful *Persuade* roll, she'll thaw enough that the investigators can ask her questions.

The hotel is so run down because her husband doesn't care about it and, moreover, forbids her to do anything more than the bare minimum. Why? He seems to like it that way. When Hugh was young, some 25 years ago, he was totally different. He was happy, friendly, and a very good husband. That's why she married him. But some years later, after they'd been living here in town, he suddenly changed. Since then, she's barely had a few good hours in her life, but she's resigned to her fate. Asked



One of the covered bridges typical of the area



about Howard Fitzpatrick, Martha will explain that she barely saw him. Her statements about the missing entomologist and his stay in the hotel gibe with her husband's. Asked about the other inhabitants of Stantonville, Martha will say that she's friendly with Edgar Hampton (of the *Gazette*) and the Episcopal priest, Rev. Mulbert. She thinks it may well be that her friendship with the two men stems from the fact that none of them—she nor the editor nor the pastor—come from Stantonville originally. The “natives” seem to be for the most part a strange group—taciturn, slow-moving, and with a tendency to unkemptness.

Martha & Hugh Hornby's statistics may be found in the appendix.

## At the Sheriff's Office

Sooner or later, the investigators will want to drop by the sheriff's office. He's around 80% of the time. An old Ford Model T, an official vehicle, usually sits outside the office. Sheriff *Curt Buckle* has (only) one deputy, *Bobby Humes*. If the sheriff isn't around, then the investigators will meet Humes in the office.

Sheriff Buckle is a disagreeable sight. Moreover, he's anything but friendly to the investigators. He'll want to dispatch them brusquely: the egghead from the city simply left town. He's not here in Stantonville in any case. After his mother called, Sheriff Buckle went out to Hornby's Hotel and spoke with Hugh. Based on what Hugh said, he had to assume that Fitzpatrick departed normally. Fitzpatrick's a grown man, and doesn't have to call in and tell his mother what he's doing all the time. Plus, he's a scientist. And everyone knows that that kind gets so wrapped up in their work that they lose track of the world around them. Short and sweet: the guy left town, and it makes no sense to look for him any more here in Stantonville. That covers it for Buckle.

In Sheriff Buckle's presence, Bobby Humes, the deputy, won't say a word unless addressed by his superior. If the investigators speak directly to the deputy, he'll first look to the sheriff and wait for his silent permission to speak before saying anything. In general, the sheriff will answer for him.

It's different if the investigators meet Bobby alone. He's still shy, but they can hold a conversation with him. Unfortunately, he can only reiterate what the sheriff said, albeit much more politely. One morning a little over a week ago, one Alberta Fitzpatrick called, completely hysterical, asking about her son who hadn't called her for her birthday. When Sheriff Buckle found out that she was talking about a grown man, and a scientist to boot, he was very annoyed and became short with her. Nevertheless, the sheriff himself looked into it, checking at the hotel. There, it appeared that Mr. Fitzpatrick had in fact left without anyone noticing. He called Mrs. Fitzpatrick back and gave his report. When she didn't seem satisfied, the sheriff got even less friendly and made it totally clear to her that he wasn't planning on investigating the case

any further. Her son would reappear. And for the files, he sent a written notice saying the same thing to Mrs. Fitzpatrick.

Statistics for the sheriff and the deputy are in the appendix.

After their questioning of Hugh Hornby and the authorities bears little fruit, the investigators may begin to believe that Alberta Fitzpatrick really is an overprotective mother and that her son hasn't vanished, but for once has grabbed the reins of life and done something on his own. On the other hand, there's Howard's nature. And not least: what does the giant beetle have to do with all this?

## The Stantonville Gazette

Every classic investigation brings the investigators to the local newspaper sooner or later. Consequently, it can be assumed that the investigators will pay the *Stantonville Gazette* a visit. The little local paper appears twice a week and is housed in a neat, whitewashed building on the town square. The door is open and one can just walk into the office. *Edgar Hampton* is the only employee of the newspaper and as a result, his own boss. This has many advantages, but also the disadvantage that he has to do everything himself (down to delivering the papers, of course). When the investigators walk in, they'll hear a printing press rattling loudly in a back room. Edgar's cranking out a test print run for the next edition. He'll only notice the investigators when they tap him on the shoulder, and he'll jump back in surprise. They'll have his complete attention. He'll pull up a couple of chairs and put coffee on. (Around town, the word is that he drinks so much coffee he might as well be printing the newspaper with it.) Edgar always has time for new faces. All too few strangers come to Stantonville. A stimulating conversation will ensue, in the course of which Edgar will try to learn as much as possible about the investigators. If anything newsworthy comes to light, they can be sure that they'll read about it in the next issue (along the lines of “World-Famous Archaeologist Visits Stantonville”). The investigators may learn that Edgar doesn't come from Stantonville originally, but nearby Bloomsburg, like Martha Hornby. About ten years ago, his local predecessor *James Arnsworth* advertised in the regional paper for a successor. Young Edgar thought this would be his big chance and replied immediately, which is how he got the job. Old Mr. Arnsworth, already a widower, died shortly thereafter. Since then, Edgar's been running the show alone.

The publisher barely noticed the missing Mr. Fitzpatrick. He knew about his stay in the town, but didn't see much of him. Edgar only knew something was wrong when he picked up some gossip about him at the general store. People were saying that the mother of this guy who'd allegedly disappeared was calling around Stantonville stirring up aggravation. The general opinion had the son putting the pedal to the metal and driving to sunny California; and who could blame him with a mother like

that? Some people, though, refused to take part in the gossip and just gave meaningful looks. But some of the inhabitants of Stantonville have always been more than a bit odd, in Edgar's opinion. He ascribes it to the isolation of the town; he's planning to get another job somewhere else in the next few years, in any case. Over time, Stantonville has gotten him down, particularly since he hasn't yet been able to find a nice woman to marry here. Some of the people here are nice, but a bit provincial. And a lot of them are decidedly lacking in the hygiene department. He recommends the investigators take a closer look at Arthur Morton, the proprietor of Morton's Diner. It baffles Edgar how anyone possessed of decent vision and a functioning sense of smell can eat there. (If it comes up in the course of the conversation that the investigators have no choice but to eat there, for good or, perhaps literally, ill, Edgar will recommend shopping at the general store and making their own sandwiches. That'd be far more appetizing.) Edgar Hampton's only friend in town is Martha Hornby, who comes from his hometown. He cares for Martha a lot and knows about her problems with her husband, whom he regards as a typical example of the "particular breed" of Stantonvillians because of whom he intends to leave the town sooner or later.

Edgar regrets very much that he can't help the investigators with their search for Howard. Of course, the newspaper's morgue is open to them. The paper's been publishing continuously since 1889 and the complete run is kept in the cellar. The investigators may look around any time.

If the investigators inquire whether anything really unusual has taken place during the ten years he's lived in Stantonville, he has to say no. (Or, on the other hand, he could tell the investigators some stories that have nothing to do with the adventure and send the investigators on various wild-goose chases or on a different adventure completely unrelated to "Brood of the Beetle.")

Presumably the investigators will want to look at old editions of the paper. Possibly they already know that something strange happened here about 27 years ago, or they might just want to dig through the papers looking for something suspicious. The old newspapers are stacked up chronologically in the basement. If the investigators look specifically for the edition of 27 years ago, they will quickly determine that the entire year's edition is completely missing. If they're just looking in general, an *Idea* roll will reveal this curious fact. If told, Edgar is horrified. He never noticed their absence and he can't explain it. In the remaining editions there are no clues that will help in the case of the missing entomologist. If the players don't

remember it themselves, the Keeper may allow an *Idea* roll to allow the investigators to recall that they saw a lot of old newspapers at the Hornby Hotel. Also, with a *Luck* roll and several hours of asking around town, they might find an older person who kept copies of the year in question. James Arnsworth, the former editor of the paper, was responsible for the removal of the newspapers from the morgue. He was one of the *Brood of the Beetle*.

If Edgar is informed that Howard Fitzpatrick was actually a fairly distinguished entomologist, he'll be professionally disappointed that he didn't seek him out for a profile. To be honest, when he heard there was a guy in town looking for bugs, he assumed it was some kook with a butterfly net.

Edgar Hampton's statistics may be found in the appendix.



Lumberjacks from Atkins Lumber

## The Mayor

The investigators could decide to pay a visit to the mayor for any number of reasons, even if it's just the centrality and obviousness of the town hall with its American and Vermont flags. The office of the mayor, Ethan Atkins, is appropriately furnished. The furniture is dignified and is clearly dates to Colonial times. Portraits of past mayors the past century and a half adorn the walls, and American and Vermont flags stand in the corners framing the massive desk carved of dark wood. The windows behind the desk look out on the town square and its bronze statue. Across from the desk hangs a large portrait of George Washington, a gift to the town of Stantonville from President Washington himself out of gratitude for Jedediah Stanton's service at his side in the Revolutionary War. The parquet floors creak under the investigators' shoes as they approach the desk, behind which sits a huge

armchair in which a man is barely discernible through a huge cloud of cigar smoke. With a dry smoker's cough, the mayor tries to rise with great effort, but quickly gives up the effort, falling heavily onto the protesting chair. A deep voice emerges from the cloud, "Pardon me for not standing," as a chubby mitt extends out over the desk. His handshake is cold and spongy, like grabbing a soft mushroom. He turns a humidor on the desk around to the investigator, never taking the fat cigar from his own mouth while mumbling, "Pleash, have a shigar!" The investigators get a view of an almost-empty humidor of large cigars of middling quality. It's not hard to deduce that Mayor Atkins is a passionate smoker. Because he's backlit by the windows, through which the sun is shining in the investigators' eyes, and the mayor's hidden by his cloud of smoke, the investigators can only establish what Mayor Atkins looks like with a *Spot Hidden* roll. Mayor Atkins is a small man with a hairline that's receded halfway back over his skull. He's extremely puffy-looking and seems to have a *triple* chin. His right hand is yellow with nicotine stains. There's no way to tell whether his eyes are naturally so watery and bulging or if the cigar smoke that's constantly circling his head is responsible. The suit that the mayor's wearing has seen better days and is clearly at least a size too small, adding to the "over-stuffed sausage" effect. At least the cigar smoke mostly covers up the fact that the mayor isn't particularly well acquainted with personal hygiene.



You can feed squirrels on the town square

Ethan Atkins indicates to the investigators that they can sit down on the upholstered chairs across his desk. Then he blows a smoke ring over the desktop and laughs boomingly. The investigators may now present their con-

cerns. The mayor listens while wheezing, coughing loudly and hoarsely at regular intervals, asking to be excused for the interruption, but not seeming to listening with any particular interest.

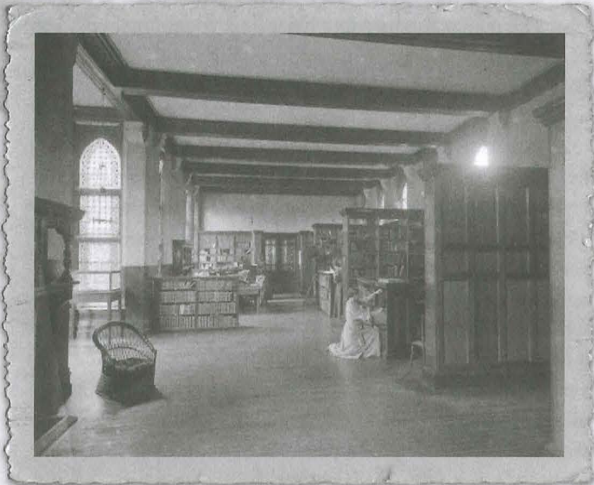
Yes, Mrs. Fitzpatrick called him too. More than once. The sheriff had already done everything possible; the mayor is sure of that. To all appearances, Howard Fitzpatrick left town unexpectedly without telling anyone. And everyone forgets a birthday now and then, no? The boy will turn up soon. Who knows, maybe he's sitting in his mother's parlor having a cup of tea with her right now, while the investigators are up here trying to get water from a dry well. As far as he's concerned, "you're on a wild-goose chase." "Head home and don't let it make you crazy," is his final word of advice. He can't and won't say anything more to the investigators.

Ethan Atkins has been mayor for over 30 years. He also owns the sawmill. He is by a wide margin the richest and most powerful man in town. His statistics may be found in the appendix.

## Library / Town Clerk

Also in the town hall is the town clerk's office along with the public library. From 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., anyone may have access to its holdings. Both are administered by the town clerk *Mary Whistle* who has held this office for almost 50 years. Although she's no longer young, she hasn't yet taken on a potential successor for training. With the backing of Mayor Atkins, Mary has been able to have her way in this regard, and is sole ruler of her domain. Because almost no citizen of Stantonville ever comes in here, she can sit the whole day undisturbed in the town offices and knit. She is no enthusiast of frequent airing or dusting, and the offices reflect it. If the investigators survived the smoky confines of the mayor's office, coughing and gasping, another assault on their lungs awaits here, as they'll have to contend with large quantities of dust in the air. In addition, it smells strongly of unwashed old people, covered but not concealed by an uncomfortably sweet smell of perfume. The total effect is a volatile olfactory mixture of stench and perfume. When the investigators enter, they will see an old woman sitting behind a desk at the window, absorbed in her knitting and humming children's songs. She is wearing a somewhat threadbare dress that's been patched and sewn any number of times. She seems to want to conceal her age behind makeup, but she hasn't succeeded very well. You could probably scratch the coat of paint off her face. Her hair is tied up in a knot and dotted with little white spots that, on closer inspection, are revealed to be dandruff. Miss Whistle is the source of the pungent odor in the room. But all the same, she's fairly friendly to the investigators. She eagerly helps them, whatever they may be looking for.

In the library they'll find the same information about Stantonville that was available in the library in Boston, somewhat more detailed and comprehensive, but without any significant new information.



At the Town Clerk's

The town records are more interesting. If anyone specifically looks for death records, or at least looks through the death records, a successful *Library Use* and an *Idea* roll will reveal that in the last few years there have been a striking number of citizens who were not buried. If the clerk's records are to be believed, they've all been cremated. In a couple cases, like James Arnsworth, the late publisher of the *Stantonville Gazette*, there's no indication what happened to the remains. Miss Whistle cannot help any further here. She claims to have no explanation for it, and attributes it to a general decline of interest in the church.

Anyone looking for it can find the official report of the investigation of the events on Carson's Creek 27 years ago. After a loud explosion and subsequent mild earthquake in the night, a search party was formed in the morning. It was comprised of Sheriff Amos Jenkins, Deputy Curt Buckle, Mayor Atkins, Mary Whistle, James Arnsworth, Arthur Morton, Dr. Gerald Eastman, and the lumberjacks Johnny Miller, Bob Martin, Bill Stokes, and Jack Legros. They found a massive landslide in Carson's Creek and concluded the entire area was in danger of an avalanche. The businesslike report contains no further information.

If Miss Whistle is asked about the episode and her role on the expedition, she can't add anything that's not in the report.

With a successful *Luck* roll, a player will happen upon a collection of thick files of letters that a certain "Meg" has been bombarding the town clerk with for years. At the very top is a filthy, crumpled note (*Beetle Handout 3*) written in a childish hand. It's a request from "Meg" asking if the town could obtain a dog leash for a large beetle. Like all her other requests, this petition has been placed in the file without a reply being sent. According to the filing date, this request is several months old.

Mary Whistle can explain to the investigators that this "Meg" is usually called "Mad Meg," because she's a lunatic who lives in the woods northwest of Stantonville. There's a path to her hut. Miss Whistle can also explain the meaning of the abbreviations at bottom to the investigators: D: For Disposition; F = File; SA = Set Aside.

## Morton's Diner

As the investigators will likely have been told by Hugh Hornby, they're on their own for food. The only place for a hot meal is Morton's Diner, which they'll seek out sooner or later. This "public house" is on Main Street shortly before the town square. From outside, it's unexceptional-looking. This impression changes quickly upon entering. Next to the front door is a large window on the street next to which are tables for customers. Then there's a long counter on the wall across from the window, in front of which sit a row of bar stools. Coffee is served all day. In the morning there are doughnuts, and afternoons and evening there's meat with beans and potatoes. Almost at random, either the meat isn't cooked through, tough, or extremely fatty, or the beans are still hard. Only very rarely is a complete meal really good. Not least, this is because there's a 20% chance of finding an inadvertent "side dish," usually in the form of a cooked-in cockroach.



The opening of Morton's Diner—In better days

Almost no one eats in Morton's Diner, because the locals know the cuisine and, especially, the sanitary conditions all too well. Consequently, *Arthur Morton*, the owner and proprietor, requires no additional staff. He does everything himself. This is the reason that a visit to Morton's Diner is so uncongenial.

Arthur Morton is constantly in a bad mood. He is never friendly to his customers. Anyone who complains gets chewed out. Moreover, Arthur isn't much for hygiene. He's unshaven and unwashed. His "restaurant" isn't much better: the floor is filthy and sticky from bits of food that fell to the floor at some point, never to be cleaned up. The tables and the counter are both greasy. Arthur occasionally wipes the tables with a rag which is not only filthy but also happens to be Arthur's implement for "cleaning" the bathroom. The rag is really only capable of smearing the filth around and, in that respect, is one of the main causes for the sticky film on the tables

and counter. The dishes don't look much better. Arthur doesn't use dish soap. He just drops the dirty items into a sink full of cold water, and then reuses them. The coffee cups are stained a deep brown on the inside.

If Arthur is annoyed with his customers (which can quickly become the case if anyone complains), he'll happily spit, blow his nose, or urinate in their food, or use some other bodily fluid as a seasoning. Of course he'll only take such "revenge" when no one is watching, probably in the kitchen, which is reached through an entrance behind the counter.

The repulsiveness of the dining room is only surpassed by the "facilities," a visit to which resembles a horror adventure in itself. Anyone doing their business there risks severe illness and parasitic infection. The Keeper should give the player the idea that he's preparing for a cuddle from Shub-Niggurath or a similarly pleasant experience.

The rest of the time, Arthur Morton is the single human, if not sole, occupant of Morton's Diner. Along with Arthur, whole legions of cockroaches, silverfish, and bed-bugs enjoy his lack of sanitation.

Anyone who chances a look into the kitchen will stagger back, appalled—slimy wood, greasy pots, filth everywhere. Vermin sit around blithely feasting on scraps of food



*Unwashed dishes everywhere*

A conversation with Arthur Morton is barely possible. If he answers at all, he speaks in surly monosyllables. With lots of patience and friendliness, the fact that Howard Fitzpatrick ate here a few times, can be gotten out of him. He was in the last time two days before his presumed departure from Stantonville.

Arthur Morton's statistics are found in the appendix.



*Wilma Barnes also employs a delivery boy*

## Barnes' General Store & Grocery

Also on the Stantonville town square sits the blindingly white-washed general store. It's run by *Wilma Barnes*, a widow approaching 70. She's the starting point for everyone in town who's looking for the essentials of daily life, unless they want to take on the more onerous task of driving into the big city. As the name implies, the store has everything one could need. And the store, which is not all that small to begin with, is packed to the rafters with supplies. Next to shelves of canned food are fishing equipment and camping supplies in the broadest sense. Next to them are racks of somewhat less fashionable women's and men's clothing. The clothes can be tried on in the one changing room which is hidden behind household goods (pots, pans, spatulas, silverware, and much more) and garden equipment.

Somewhere way back in the shop is the sales counter next to which are two little café tables and a clutch of chairs. This is a sensible arrangement, because the women of Stantonville not only shop here, but hang around to chat, gossip, and drink a cup of the coffee or tea that Wilma Barnes provides for free. In the afternoon, she provides homemade pastries, though she charges a nominal fee to cover the cost of the ingredients. Given the hideous quality of food at Morton's Diner, the investigators may resolve to live off coffee and cakes at Wilma Barnes' store for the rest of their stay—for a few days, they'll be just fine. In addition, Wilma stocks a large number of groceries—not just in cans, but fresh food as well. She sells the fresh wares from the counter.

When the investigators enter the general store, they'll receive the full attention of all the locals present. There are always 1D3-2 men here (in other words, usually none) and 1D6 women. Wilma Barnes will enthusiastically help the investigators out if they're looking for something specific. She is very friendly and, at first glance, seems like a very nice person. The only confusing thing is how at her age she manages to run such a big, comprehensive store

all alone, without a single other clerk. No one knows where she gets such vitality. Her sole employee is a delivery boy who carries orders to her customers.

Wilma Barnes can't answer any questions about Howard Kirkpatrick. She only saw the gentleman once (he was here the day of his arrival), when he bought some canned food, a field stove, some blankets, a large knife, and some camping equipment. Yes, you could almost imagine that the gentleman was planning a trip into the Great Outdoors. She only exchanged a few words with him, though she remembers that he asked about large beetles and where they might be found in the woods around Stantonville. Wilma couldn't help him.

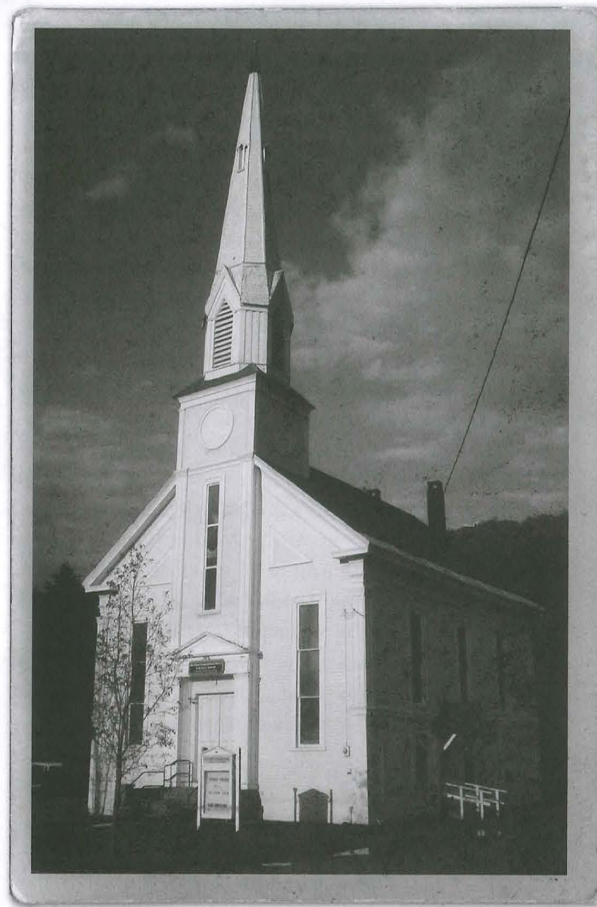
With a successful *Persuade* roll, one can initiate a private conversation about gossip in which the other customers present will join in. They will talk about anything and everything. The Keeper should let his imagination run free and think up all sorts of everyday stories from around Stantonville. Of course, all the named non-player characters in the adventure will come up. For example, if the investigators haven't yet been to Morton's Diner, they will be warned, with the locals describing the conditions there in the most hair-raising terms. What will not be spoken of is the strange concentration of extremely dirty individuals in the town. This topic seems to be an unspoken taboo. One or the other of Wilma Barnes' customers may have such an unkempt aspect. Not always, but frequently, such a person is actually a member of the *Brood of the Beetle*.

Wilma Barnes' statistics may be found in the appendix.

## The Episcopal Church

A single church steeple rises above Stantonville, that of St. Dominick of Silos Episcopal Church. Jedediah Stanton and all of the founding families of the town were high-church Anglicans and the church they built still stands. Other churches have never been built, because Stantonville never attracted many additional residents. Somewhere in the white-washed wooden church itself or in the neighboring rectory, can be found the pastor of Stantonville, the Reverend John Fox Mulbert. He's served the town for 30 years, although he is not originally from Stantonville, but Portsmouth, New Hampshire. After seminary, he was sent to this remote town, receiving his first and likely last position as pastor. In the last 30 years, he's had sufficient opportunity to observe and assess his congregation. He'd be an outstanding source of information if he weren't in general rather reserved, prickly, and taciturn. When dealing with people he knows and cares for, his demeanor softens somewhat, although he's incapable of ridding himself of a certain Old New England austerity and reserve. It's an open question whether or not the investigators will get along with the good vicar or not.

Questions about Howard Fitzpatrick yield nothing. The Rev. Mulbert never saw the gentleman. Everything he knows he's been told by Martha Hornby who comes to services regularly and has a friendly, almost warm, rela-



St. Dominic's Anglican Episcopal Church

tionship with the Rev. Mulbert. What may be more interesting is what Rev. Mulbert can relate about his congregation. Of course he is very brusque, austere, and reserved with strangers. Getting him to open up requires a *Persuade* roll, a persistent amiability, and at least 15 minutes of small talk. It is, of course, torture to conduct small talk with someone who tends to answer in monosyllables. No small talk is necessary if one of the investigators is a man of the cloth (regardless of denomination). Rev. Mulbert is profoundly hungry for conversations with other clerics about pastoral care, religious experience, scripture, theology, and the like. He has no opportunity for such conversations in Stantonville. He'll talk on such topics for at least 30 minutes (and conceivably longer), but then Rev. Mulbert is ready to chat about his congregation without any further prodding.

However it transpires: what Rev. Mulbert has to relate will likely be of extreme interest to the investigators, so that the hard work of cultivating his favor will pay off.

As far as he knows, there are large insects all over the woods. He was very surprised at the size of the bugs here around Stantonville. They're much larger than in his hometown. They're particularly numerous in the area of Carson's Creek, a narrow ravine that winds through the hills. It's said to be fairly dangerous out there, though. Many years ago, half a mountain broke away with a crash that was heard here in Stantonville. The earth even

shook a bit. After some consideration, Rev. Mulbert will estimate that it was between 25 and 28 years ago, just a few years after he took over here. The mayor took a handful of people out there to look over the area; when they returned, they reported that the whole area was quite unstable and dangerous, recommending that everyone avoid it.

If the priest is then asked if the large insects started appearing after this event, he'll think for a while and say that it's possible, but he can't say for sure.

If he's asked if the behavior of certain Stantonvillians changed after the event, he can confirm that. When he first arrived here, the people were all quite normal. After the event, however, a number of people changed quite dramatically, only coming to church on Christmas and Easter, for example. They let themselves go and became sloppy, or became excessively moody and emotional. He can name names: the mayor most of all, who had been a completely different person beforehand. But Mary Whistle, Sheriff Buckle, and Arthur Morton come to mind. Morton changed right away. His restaurant had just opened and was quite nice, and the food very agreeable. Suddenly, it became what it is today. However, it's not so that all of those whom he would describe as odd changed overnight. The change was subtle and happened over the course of years. The number of those "affected" got ever larger, and the attendance at Sunday Mass got ever smaller. As an example, Rev. Mulbert can name Hugh Hornby as one who changed some years after the landslide at Carson's Creek, becoming the insufferable being that he is today.

After some thinking, another characteristic of the "unusual" inhabitants of Stantonville comes to mind. Not only do they attend church very irregularly, but not one of them has been buried in the churchyard after their death. For example, James Arnsworth, the previous owner of the *Stantonville Gazette*, had no family in town, but he must have specified in his will that he didn't want a church burial. Rev. Mulbert doesn't know what happened to his remains. He assumes that his body was sent to a relative elsewhere. The same is true in a handful of other cases. And the nearest crematorium is in Brattleboro. Perhaps Dr. Eastman knows more. He's the only doctor in the area, and prepares all the death certificates. The investigators are of course free to ask the families of the deceased as well.

If they choose the latter course, they will quickly determine that either the next of kin will refuse to provide information or, as in the case of Arnsworth, it remains completely unclear who the next of kin are. With a significant amount of persuasiveness (and *Persuade* rolls), the investigators can learn from the families of the deceased that the departed were allegedly cremated. They might even allow the investigators a glimpse of the urn that they keep of their loved one, usually on the mantelpiece. In fact, the ashes contained there in are those of cremated animals, which is virtually impossible to determine any more.

Rev. Mulbert's statistics are found in the appendix.

## Dr. Eastman

Dr. Eastman is the only doctor in the area. He can tell the investigators about the disposal of the remains of those citizens who weren't given church funerals and buried. Another reason for contacting him might be the investigators' learning that he was in the search party to Carson's Creek 27 years ago, which returned with the news of the landslide.

Dr. Eastman, first name Gerald, is a 65-year-old gray-haired gentleman with an obvious penchant for respectability. The gravel walk to his front door is always freshly raked; his lawn is carefully trimmed and never has a single weed or fallen leaf on it. His hedges are trimmed to a millimeter's exactitude. His house is freshly painted and is blindingly white in the summer sun. His brass door-knocker was recently polished, as well as the brass hinges and doorknob.

Inside Dr. Eastman's house, which is both his residence and office, it smells strongly of camphor. The furnishings are well-kept, if a little old-fashioned. There's at least one crucifix in every room. This may strike the players as curious if they've learned from Rev. Mulbert that Dr. Eastman almost never attends church. (Like everything else, the crucifixes are just window-dressing, not a reflection of Dr. Eastman's inner convictions, as he's an original member of the *Brood of the Beetle*.)

Dr. Eastman will receive the investigators enthusiastically and always has time to talk. While talking to him, the investigators quickly realize that at least one source of the heavy disinfecting camphor odor is the doctor himself. He always wears a spotless white coat, white pants, white shoes, and a stethoscope hanging around his neck. Obviously, Dr. Eastman is extremely concerned with cleanliness and disinfecting.

He himself keeps up his yard and cleans and disinfects his house every day. His wife died ten years ago. She was never one of the *Brood of the Beetle* and died of grief because her husband no longer seemed interested in her in any way after he returned from Carson's Creek. Shortly before her death, she served as nourishment for the Mother-Being at Carson's Creek. Her alleged mortal remains rest in an urn on the mantelpiece in Dr. Eastman's living room.

Presumably the investigators will want to talk to Dr. Eastman about two things: his experiences at Carson's Creek 27 years ago and the strange deaths in which the deceased were not given any funerals.

He will report that there was in fact a landslide at Carson's Creek, either causing or caused by an earthquake. A whole cliff face slid into the valley, and the rest of the area's geology looks quite unstable. It is quite dangerous to go there. Like all the *Brood of the Beetle*, any lies he utters cannot be detected because the Insect controlling him simply lacks any emotions that would present themselves in the course of a lie.

If he's asked about the remains, the doctor will say that there was nothing out of the ordinary. The families of the deceased decided they'd rather have their loved ones close to them rather than in the cemetery. He himself has his Ruth, God rest her soul, in an urn on his mantel. Dr. Eastman's manner will suggest that this is simply a tradition in Stantonville and therefore unremarkable.

He hasn't heard anything about people disappearing. He's only heard of the uproar around Howard Fitzpatrick in passing. With a friendly smile will say that he never even saw the gentleman in question.

Visiting Dr. Eastman will be anything but productive for the investigators. The doctor could play a role later in the adventure. His statistics may be found in the appendix.

## What Really Happened

### The Events at Carson's Creek

It's not difficult to figure out that something unusual must have happened in the Stantonville area about 27 years ago. The investigators will likely not believe the story about a simple landslide or earthquake. And they're right to be dubious.

A spawn-ship of the Insects of Shaggai was fleeing from Ghroth, a Great Old One, caused a dreadful catastrophe on their home world. Ghroth inflicted a radical change in environmental conditions on Shaggai, rendering it lethal to the insects. They managed to flee in a great fleet of pyramidal spaceships, heading for other planets. The Insect race became dispersed, however, because the ships headed out in all directions.

The spawn-ship in question visited many planets over the centuries until its course was set towards Earth. The Insects' ships move by means of a sort of teleportation, and in this instance, something went wrong. The electromagnetic field of the Earth proved an unexpected trap for the ship's autonomous drive system. The teleportation system functions by means of a short trip through non-Euclidean space. When entering the Earth's magnetic field, this trip was abruptly halted, which the Insects from Shaggai hadn't anticipated and indeed couldn't foresee. None of the previous planets they'd visited had caused such a problem. In consequences, the ship materialized a mile and half above the Earth's surface and crashed. In the middle of the night, it sped at an enormous speed into the hillside at Carson's Creek, boring itself into the stone with its massive momentum and a deafening crash. The impact made the earth quake palpably in Stantonville. The collision dislodged huge masses of stone from the steep cliff walls above Carson's Creek, causing a landslide that buried the spawn-ship beneath tons of stone.

A search party was put together in nearby Stantonville and set out at first light to find the cause of the previous night's noise. Some hours later they arrived at the impact site at Carson's Creek. Without knowing it, the members of the expedition had placed themselves in great danger, less from the unstable mass of stone than from the Insects of Shaggai, some of whom had survived their spawn-ship's crash. Shortly after the Insects had reconnoitered their surroundings, the search party got near the ship. Because these life-forms appeared to

be at least half-intelligent to the Insects, they decided to take over the bipeds in order to find out more about the crash area. Their goal was to use the bipeds' technology to build a new spawn-ship. The unsuspecting members of the search party from Stantonville were still climbing over the fallen rock and unaware of their proximity to the ship's entrance. One after another was taken over by an insect nesting in his head. The Insects of Shaggai can easily enter human heads because they have the ability of Kirlian Phasing and can simply fly through bone and tissue, right into the brain.

Instantly, the Insects knew everything in the controlled humans' memories, simultaneously learning that the technology on this world was insufficient to help the Insects build a new ship. Consequently, they were faced with a great dilemma: their ship was completely unusable. Their precious cargo was defenseless and in danger. Yes, the cargo. These Insects' ship was no ordinary spaceship, but rather a spawn-ship, as said. In fleeing from Shaggai, the spawn-ships carried Mother-Beings, the Queens of Shaggai, huge, breeding entities—the most important hope for the insects' reproduction, indeed the sole means for ensuring that their kind would not die out. Indeed, each Insect is theoretically able to initiate breeding, but it requires developing an egg sac, which requires many centuries. So long, long ago, the Insect race decided to assign the propagation of the species to a specialized cadre. Thus arose the "Mother-Beings" which, over millions of years of evolution in their role as breeders, have changed shape and no longer resemble the "normal" Insects from Shaggai.

As far as the Insects from Shaggai in Vermont were concerned, consequently, their Mother-Being had to survive and be protected. The Insects realized that, first of all, they would have to conceal the presence of the spawn-ship. They used their host bodies for this purpose, returning to Stantonville and putting out the story that it was an earthquake. The entire valley was declared landslide danger zone, and everyone was advised to avoid Carson's Creek from then on. Because the search party was composed of a large part of the worthies of Stantonville, their report was taken as truth. Parents warned their children that playing there was dangerous.

The Insects remained in their host bodies. At first, the purpose was to ensure that no humans would find their



spaceship. But over time they came to enjoy their new bodies, the new brains with alien ideas and unknown emotions. They enjoyed the opportunities that their new form offered. Over nearly three decades they lost a bit of their independent identity and became quite entwined with the humans they controlled. The assimilation has proceeded so far that the Insects consider themselves to be the individual controlled, identifying strongly with them. It's no longer possible to discern which impulses stem from the Insect and which from the person. This is observable in those possessed by the Insects are inclined to extreme emotions. The reason for this is that the Insects from Shaggai themselves have no emotions and wallow in extreme forms of behavior. Insect-like behavior is not evident because the Insects strove from the beginning to act as human as possible, drawing on all the behavioral patterns they could discern from their hosts.

As a result, the Insects from Shaggai who are shipwrecked in Stantonville are very different from their brethren in, for example, Goatswood, England. They have become completely captivated by the world of human emotions and activities and no longer have any intention of leaving Earth or pursuing any higher goals. At least not yet.

While the Insects from Shaggai found themselves in the world of men and over time settled into it, the breeding Mother-Being resided in the hidden remains of the destroyed spawn-ship. She sits in the middle of the ship in a mass of reproductive liquid, an unknown and alien breeding slime that simultaneously serves as a breeding stimulant and a source of nutrition. It is the same type of slime that the Insects originally crawled out of on Shaggai. The Mother-Being is a fat matron, a swollen beetle, whitish and cheesy, sated, spawning, bestowing life. Occasionally a new egg is squeezed out of her body, sinking into the primeval fertility jelly and beginning the years of maturation until it becomes a larva. Because the maturation of the relatively few eggs and the larvae takes many long years, very few new Insects from Shaggai have matured. Consequently, there are only a few more Insects from Shaggai in Stantonville now than when the ship crashed 27 years ago. Unlike terrestrial insects, the Insects from Shaggai reproduce very slowly. Because they can live for 1,500 to 1,800 years, they don't require a rapid rate of replacement. Reproduction is left to the Mother-Beings who produce perhaps one egg a year from their egg sacs which then slowly matures in the nutrient-substance which is also produced by the Mother-Being. After many years, a larva hatches and feeds on the substance for many more years, eventually developing into a mature Insect.

The damage to the spawn-ship from the crash was far more extensive than the Insects from Shaggai first thought. Holes in the interior bulkheads and hull allowed the breeding-fluid to leak out of the Mother-Being's chamber, run down the cliff face, and seep into the ground and the water table of the entire valley, into Carson's Creek, and down in the direction of Stantonville. The effects of this alien substance on the local flora and fauna were

considerable. Plant life grew out of control and against its nature, living and thriving off the nutrient substance that was not intended for them. Larger animals have not come into contact with the jelly, as they instinctively avoid Carson's Creek since the crash. But many insects have taken to the alien mass enthusiastically, laying their eggs in the jelly. The effect was comprehensive. Normal life-forms no longer emerged from their eggs. Under the slime's influence, older, dormant genes re-emerged and the insects returned to prehistoric stages of evolution. In their larval stages, also spent in the slime, they mutated even further. The mutagenic effect of the nutrient substance further introduced the unusual effect that each insect looks somewhat different. Sometimes more, sometimes fewer archaic genes emerged, took over, and allowed the most unusual individual examples of various insect species emerge. "Devolution" set in. Along with the mutations, the nutrient substance caused the insects to reach unusual sizes. And their behavior began to express abnormalities as well. The valley of Carson's Creek has become a breeding ground for extremely unusual insects which have spread out through the woods as far as Stantonville and the highway. A horrific plague of these beings is only held back by a whim of nature that has rendered all these devolved insects inca-

#### More information about the Insects from Shaggai

More details on the Insects from Shaggai may be found in Chaosium's *Malleus Monstrorum* pages 79-80. Another Chaosium publication of interest is *Day of the Beast*, and its second scenario, "Black Hills, Blackest Secrets". This adventure in South Dakota features a crashed scout ship which the marooned Insects from Shaggai are attempting to refuel with uranium. There are some interesting rules and guidelines to Insect possession (page 29) not found anywhere else which keepers anticipating a lot of player possession may want to check out.

Another extremely comprehensive article on the Insects is in Pagan Publishing's *Delta Green: Countdown*.

One thing to keep in mind, however, is that all these materials except "Black Hills, Blackest Secrets", only describe the Insect colony in Goatswood (as does, of course, the out-of-print Chaosium supplement *Ramsey Campbell's Goatswood*). These differ substantially in certain respects from the Insects who landed near Stantonville. The Goatswood colony, for example, has no Mother-Being in their temple-ship and are thus forced to reproduce themselves. Other apparent differences between the two groups of Insects may also stem from the differentiation of the colonies during the long diaspora of the groups. The Goatswood and Stantonville colonies, incidentally, have no contact and are unaware of each other's existence.

pable of reproduction. The main reason for this may lie in the mutations which essentially create new and different species from each insect. There is only one, constant first-generation of these altered insects.

In the years following the spaceship's crash, some inhabitants of Stantonville nevertheless dared to venture to Carson's Creek, despite the warnings. Nothing happened to some of them, and at first glance, except for the extremely unusual ecosystem, the only thing to see is, in fact, the remains of a landslide. Occasionally one of them came across one of the few Insects from Shaggai hatched on Earth, which promptly took over the rare visitor as a host body. A person like that returned from Carson's Creek completely and suddenly changed. Hugh Hornby, the hotelier, is one of these; visiting Carson's Creek several years after the crash and was taken over by an insect. But, as previously said, not all of Carson's Creek few visitors suffered this unenviable fate.

Nutrient fluid continually flows from the destroyed spaceship. The Insects from Shaggai noticed this and had to act, lest the survival of the Mother-Being be endangered. The jelly could only be produced by the Mother-Being which, in turn, required it for stimulation and nutrition. The Insects found a simple solution: as they found out, their host bodies were subject to fluctuations in capacity, could sicken, and even lose their functionality altogether. They could die of old age. The Insects used this to their advantage. When they noticed that their own host body seemed to be reaching the end of its functionality, they simulated their own, premature death. With the assistance of other possessed humans, the apparently dead person would then be "cremated" but in reality brought to the spaceship-wreck. Then the insect would leave the body to serve for a while as nutrition and a

source of inspiration for the Mother-Being, because the Mother-Being could stimulate herself to reproduce by absorbing and luxuriating in the brainwaves of a human. The "liberated" Insects from Shaggai would immediately take over another human.

Occasionally strangers accidentally stray into Stantonville, and some of them even reach Carson's Creek. They're welcome additional nourishment for the Mother-Being, a fate that Howard Fitzpatrick has unfortunately suffered.

## Howard Fitzpatrick's Stays in Stantonville

At this point, the reader has likely pieced together what exactly happened to Howard. On his drive back from the conference in Burlington, one of the devolved primeval beetles wandered out of the woods into the country road and flew head-on into the radiator of his car. The radiator was damaged, so Howard stopped and got out to see how bad it was. That's when he discovered the beetle, examined it more closely, and his celebratory whoop could have been heard in Los Angeles. He carefully removed his prehistoric treasure, his previously undiscovered beetle, from his radiator. It would be his stepping-stone to world-wide scientific recognition. But getting his car fixed was more pressing. Howard had just passed a turn-off a little while before, and so turned around and took the road to Stantonville. He left his car with Jim to be repaired and, because the job would take a day, and checked into the Hornby Hotel. He spent an uneventful night there and drove his repaired car back to Boston the next day. There he researched the beetle



*Boston, Howard's Hometown*

further and quickly determined that he had to return to Stantonville to find an intact specimen of this unknown species. He told his colleagues nothing, lest one of them try and steal his scientific glory.

Back in Stantonville, Howard checked back into the Hornby Hotel, made some purchases at the General Store, and prepared for an expedition of some length in the woods. Which he then began. At Carson's Creek, he found the strangest alterations in nature and a huge number of unknown insects. It was a primeval microcosm—a miracle—and a paradise for any entomologist. Unfortunately, he couldn't have known that he was being watched. As he searched through the debris of the landslide, coming across some traces of the spawn-ship's wreck, it happened. An Insect from Shaggai took him over and he was forced to serve as nourishment for the

Mother-Being. Even now, he's vegetating apathetically, standing in the ur-soup, staring into space while greedy mouth-tentacles caress his brain.

Hugh Hornby, possessed by an Insect for a long time, collected all of Howard's possessions from his hotel room, packed it in Howard's car, drove into the woods and sunk the car and possessions in a pond—though not very well. Moreover, he made it look like Howard had driven off without notice. All the possessed inhabitants of Stantonville know what happened and will of course cover for the hotelier.

By the way: the humans taken over by the Insects from Shaggai have dubbed themselves the *Brood of the Beetle*. Of course, they only use this name between themselves, not say, in front of the investigators.

## The Plot Thickens

### At the Hornby Hotel

The investigators arrive in Stantonville and will call at the Hornby Hotel to find someplace to spend the night. Here they will encounter Hugh Hornby as is described above in the section on the hotel. Before they begin their investigations in town, they will presumably put their luggage in their rooms. Unless they have explicitly requested it, they will *not* be given Room 3, the room in which Howard Fitzpatrick stayed on both his visits.

### The Bungalows

As already indicated, the individual hotel rooms are actually separate bungalows behind the main hotel building. They are connected simply by paths; otherwise, they're separated by tall hedges which have grown somewhat wild. They are consequently not visible from each other. Each bungalow is a little wooden house with two rooms. Between these is a bathroom which is reachable from each room by a door. Rooms 1 and 2 are one bungalow; Rooms 3 and 4 another, etc. All the rooms are double rooms, but Hornby will rent them out as single rooms, if it's so desired. While the bungalow with Rooms 1 and 2 is quite close to the main building, the rest of the bungalows are further and further down the paths towards the thick, dark wood, and the last building, with Rooms 7 and 8, is actually being absorbed by the edge of the wood. The bungalows are as untended as the main house. The wood is exposed; the shingles on the roof are rotting. The undergrowth between the bungalows is overgrown, thorny branches even bar the narrow dirt paths between the houses, which barely assert themselves against the overpowering growth of nature.

Unless the investigators request otherwise, they'll be given Rooms 7 and 8, and if needed, 5 and 6, which is to say the rooms farthest out towards the woods. Hugh naturally doesn't help with carrying their bags and won't

accompany the investigators either. So they will have to force their way through at random between rampantly growing and sweetly-stinking hedges, their pants' legs tearing on thorny branches sticking out over the path, sometimes having to wrestle their bags from particularly persistent branches, until one of the run-down barracks emerges surprisingly before them (Rooms 1 and 2).

If the investigators have accepted Rooms 7 and 8, they have even more torture ahead through the ever-thicker and ever-higher bushes as they head towards the woods. The very last bungalow, Rooms 7 and 8, sits in the shadow of tall oaks that serve notice like guards that no little humans may enter the woods unannounced. The sagging shingled roof of the bungalow is covered with a layer of rotting leaves from last year, as is the path here. As the investigators approach, their feet rustling loudly, everything else is dead still. It almost seems as if nature is holding its breath while gauging these newcomers who have arrived unannounced in its domain. The door to Room 7 sticks and is warped. Once it's finally forced open, someone will be looking in astonishment at the age-worn doorknob in their hand which has broken off in the process. Neither room of the bungalow is in good condition. The roof is, you guessed it, leaky, as slimy dark flecks on the cheap rag rug covering the floorboards shows. The beds themselves are made, but haven't been covered in several weeks. Consequently, they're also clammy and musty. If the investigators fail to examine them more closely, they will receive a nocturnal visit from *Cimex lectularius* (bedbugs). Otherwise they may notice their fellow lodgers and return them to the outdoors or, depending on their temperament, assist them in achieving a more two-dimensional existence.



Along with the two single beds in each hotel room are two nightstands and a clothes cabinet. All of the furniture is warped and swollen from humidity. One cabinet might have a door that can barely be forced open, another might have a door that constantly swings open by itself and can't be properly shut. The beds all have spring frames that creak and squeak with a fair number of decibels every time someone turns over (or so it will seem to a sleeper or his roommate). Multiple mattresses, thin, musty, and internally quite moldy, sit atop the frames, covered in sheets and smelling peppery. In addition to the squeaking every time someone turns over, a musty-smelling cloud of dust will be pressed out of the mattresses and waft out from under the beds. The bedspreads are genuine down quilts, but the feathers have disintegrated over time into tiny shreds. The lodging, it must be said, is not particularly comfortable. Considering the summer temperatures, sleeping without the bedspread is probably more comfortable. There is a Bible in each of the nightstands. If they players now declare that they want to take a look at the shared bathroom between the bungalow's rooms, it's recommended that the Keeper make a dramatic pause and look over a table for mental illnesses, ostensibly looking for a fitting madness.

That said it's not nearly as bad as Morton's Diner. But the bathrooms can't be called inviting, either, even if Hornby, if asked, will assure his guests that they "are cleaned regularly." Once a year is regular in his book. Also, the hotel really doesn't have many guests, because so few people stray into Stantonville (and he's right on that count).

Each bathroom has indoor plumbing, including an old-fashioned bathtub with claw-feet, a toilet with a pull-chain flush, and a sink with a mirror above it. Each bathroom has two doors, each with a sliding bolt to ensure privacy. A keeper with a primitive sense of humor can have one or both of the bolts missing, ensuring that other investigators are constantly walking in at inopportune moments. As you'd expect, everything in the bathroom is slightly slimy and sticky. At least the toilet is halfway clean.

If the investigators have requested other rooms, they'll learn that they're all of comparable quality. But perhaps they'll have a better night if they don't have to sleep right up against the edge of the woods.

### Spending the Night Elsewhere

In playtesting, some of the investigators decided they didn't want to stay in the Hornby Hotel. They bought tents from Wilma Barnes at the General Store and asked her if they could sleep in her yard behind the store. Because they were away from the edge of the woods, these investigators remained unmolested by nocturnal insect visitors. It's probably less fun for the keeper, but he should allow the players to have their investigators overnight somewhere else if they insist. It is not important for the course of the scenario that the players stay at the Hornby Hotel.

### An Examination of Room 3

Sooner or later, a search of Room 3 will definitely be at the top of the Investigators' agenda—the room that Howard stayed in. If the investigators have specifically requested it, it's very easy to have them staying here themselves. But even if they haven't, it won't be very difficult for them to get a look in there. (They can take the key from the reception desk, pick the lock, or even force the door, which has a STR of 14.)

Room 3 doesn't look any different from any of the other bungalow rooms. Two beds, two nightstands, a clothes cabinet, a door to the bathroom, two windows (one on the back, one on the side). Everything is somewhat run-down and messy. The bed is made, and there are no obvious signs of Howard Fitzpatrick's presence, at first glance. A closer examination quickly reveals that on one of the unpainted board walls next to one bed, there is a palm-sized, dried bloodstain. The stain is barely visible on the dark wood, and if there's no systematic search, a *Spot Hidden* roll is necessary to discover it. A scientific analysis will reveal that it is in fact human blood. In the nightstands, as in the other rooms, are Bibles. The Bible in the nightstand next to the bed with the bloodstain nearby contains another discovery. An insect is squashed on the underside of the Bible. It is about as large as the Bible itself—extremely large for an insect—and appears to have been crushed with the book. A closer examination and a *Know* roll will suggest even to the non-specialist that the bug seems to be some sort of gigantic mosquito. Traces of blood can be found on the insect and Bible as well. With a roll against *Biology* or other specialized skill, this hypothesis will be confirmed, as well as the fact that such a creature should not be able to exist.

What happened here is that this insect, mutated by the nutrient soup of the Insects of Shaggai, made its way through the window into the room one night and sucked a considerable amount of blood out of Howard. The buzzing of the insect woke him up, though, and he grabbed at the first implement at hand and smashed the bloodsucker against the wall. In the morning, he was somewhat saddened to have destroyed such an interesting specimen. However, it only made him more sure that he would find more of these giant, undiscovered insects—and unfortunately, he was right. Otherwise the only sign of his occupation is a somewhat dried chunk of toothpaste on the edge of the sink. The investigators may be somewhat disappointed by the yield of the search, but Hugh Hornby took all of Howard's luggage and clothes out before he made the bed, and Howard himself took all of his most important equipment into the Black Hills Forest on his expedition.

### A Night in the Bungalow

At some point the sun will set over the forested green hills, sinking apparently immediately behind them as a red-golden ball. The sky overflows in evening reds, painting fascinating colors in the clouds. Darkness settles gradually over the Stantonville valley. Along with the darkness come the nocturnal insects, as if they were only now emerging from the woods as if ashamed to show

themselves by the light of day. It is a warm night, and its summer. It is sticky in the humid bungalows. Open windows might let in a cool breeze. But an open window also grants ingress to all sorts of critters. The investigators can find out what's lurking in the darkness by turning on a light with the windows closed. Then monstrously large moths will beat at the windows with a constant tattoo, drawn by the brightness. They're fist-sized insects, covered in fluffy white fur, of abnormal size and shape. The noise will stop only when the light source is extinguishes. If the window had been open, by contrast, a number of these gigantic moths will be swirling around the room, their wings beating deafeningly against walls and ceiling, occasionally landing on an investigator. The air from their wings is palpable. Other insects will come in with the moths. Like some of the enormous mosquitoes, as large as the palm of a man's hand. Their speedy flying creates a high, painful whine. A bite is extremely painful. Then there are the four-inch-long daddy-long-legs. With rasps and clacks they flit across the ceiling, but sometimes suddenly drop, hitting an investigator in the face. Then they set off in erratic and awkward panic, stumbling with a nerve-rattling clatter across the room. If crushed, they break into little pieces. Then a long, thin, hairless leg will be lying on the bedcovers, twitching several times, even though it's no longer connected to the body. The long, brown body will break open with goo shooting out. If the investigators try to slaughter the animals, they'll end up in a mountain of crushed cadavers, covered in various bodily fluids.

Repulsive.

Disgusting.

If the investigators, to the contrary, have been careful to keep the creatures out of their rooms, then they'll spend the night in oppressive heat and humidity. Sleep is all but out of the question. And then there are still the bedbugs, not to mention the squeaking beds, the moldy-smelling mattresses, and the noises from outside the bungalow.

At some point in the night, whether the window is open or not, a penetrating, deep drone will be heard and a shadow will briefly conceal the moon. The investigators won't be able to find out what flew over them, but the sheer size of the insect alone should unsettle them profoundly.

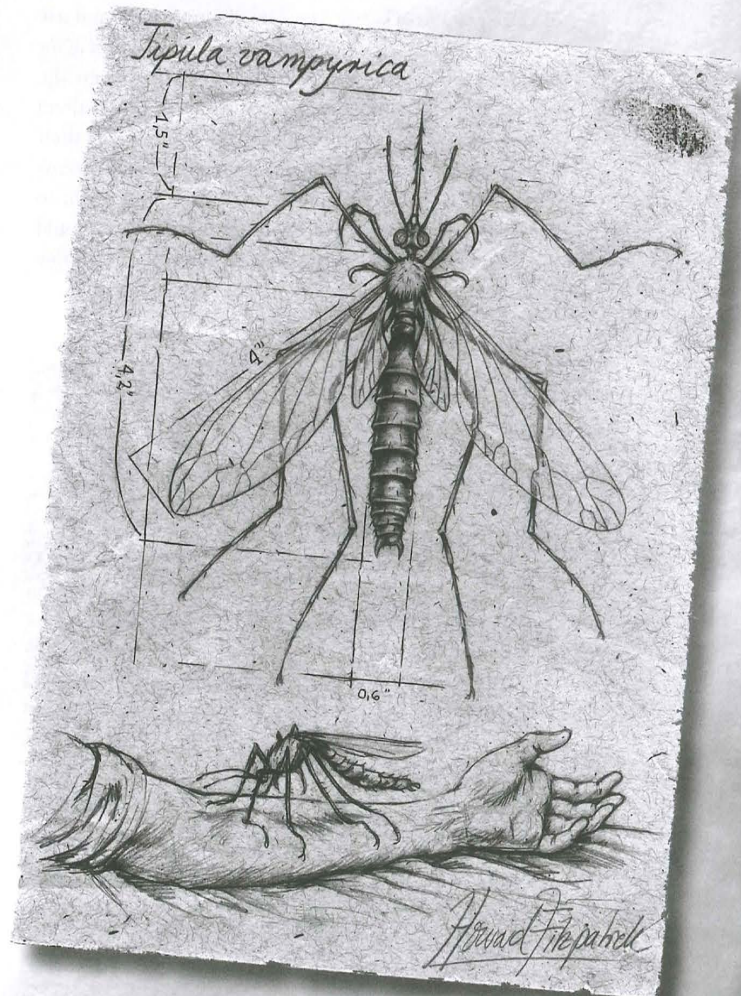
Another phenomenon in the night sky are fireflies. The investigators may notice these if they're staying somewhere besides the hotel, as well. Little lights blink in the black woods. First just one, then more and more. If they're not familiar with lightning bugs, the investigators may come up with all sorts of exotic, mysterious explanations for these lights: Will-o'-the-wisps! UFOs! Ghosts! Mi-Go communication systems! If this is the case, it's probably the most fun for the Keeper to let speculation run wild and keep the source of the lights hidden. It'll be another reason to go into the woods...

Normal lightning bugs grow to about an inch long (the wingless females are often called glowworms). The mutated versions that the investigators witness

are more like ten inches long. They have special light-emitting organs on their abdomen. The bioluminescence is created by the catalytic effect of the enzyme luciferase which helps oxidize the pigment luciferin with the oxygen breathed in through the tracheae ("breathing tubes"). The light signals are used to find mates. The males of this mutant version of *Photinus pyralis* fly around, blinking every five seconds. In answer, a female on the ground will blink back two seconds later. Because the females are sitting in little clearings in the woodland floor, the investigators cannot see them from town. They will only see the blinking lights in the night woods. The inhabitants of Stantonville are familiar with the phenomenon and will simply ascribe it to lightning bugs. Investigators with experience with fireflies will find that the lights are significantly larger and more intense, compared with any fireflies they've ever seen.

In the morning, the investigators will find some three-inch silverfish in their bathtub, which apparently climbed up through the drain.

Encounters with the world of mutant insects cost a total of 0/1D3 Sanity points, or in particularly nasty cases, 1/1D4. An example of the latter might be an investigator falling asleep and snoring with his mouth open, allowing



From Howard's Sketchbook: A mosquito

a not-particularly-small insect to climb into his mouth; he will awake coughing and spitting while it flaps around buzzing panicked in his mouth. Also, the bugs have a barely conceivable and apparently sadistic tendency to fly into ears and noses and hang around them, buzzing furiously, provoking hectic defensive reactions from the hated humans.

The Keeper can arrange his own further encounters with the mutant insect world as he likes. He will have done his job well when the investigators' experience of nature slowly turns into a nightmare.

If the investigators do not stay overnight in the bungalows, they will be less bothered by insects the further from the edge of the woods (and Carson's Creek) they are. The insects only come about 50 yards out of the woods and, in general, only at night; consequently, the inhabitants of Stantonville don't believe they have an insect problem, because they never run across them.

## Further Investigations in Stantonville

A number of starting points have been comprehensively described in the preceding text. The investigators can, of course, approach any Stantonville inhabitant and ask some questions. The ones who belong to the *Brood of the Beetle* are more unfriendly and brusque than even the famed Green Mountain State taciturnity. Many of them distinguish themselves by their slovenliness or their poorly-judged personal hygiene (an over-reliance on cosmetic products and perfumes, etc, even by the men, to compensate for the lack of washing). The Keeper should use his imagination enthusiastically and present some unforgettable non-player characters.



Not always so happy—the inhabitants of Stantonville

Here are some topics about which the investigators could make enquiries about:

### 1. *The Events of 27 Years Ago*

In general, all the inhabitants who are old enough to remember 27 years ago can recall the bang and the rumbling and quaking that accompanied it. They have to be asked specifically about it, though. They all believe it was created by a massive landslide at Carson's Creek. All Stantonvillians will, without exception, warn the investigators from going to Carson's Creek because of the continuing threat of rock falls.

### 2. *Insects, Particularly Beetles*

The woods around Stantonville are called the Black Hills Forest. The hills are, of course, the Black Hills. You find large insects and beetles there more often, it seems. But no one really thinks much about it. In the direction of Carson's Creek, it's worse, but no one really goes out there anyway. The lumberjacks for the sawmill cut down their wood in the other direction, downstream. There aren't so many bugs there. Maybe the investigators will ask about "Mad Meg," the crazy woman who lives in the woods towards Carson's Creek. She's not all there, but maybe she'd have seen a giant beetle. But concrete questions about beetles will mostly be met with shrugs in Stantonville. The *Brood of the Beetle* will limit themselves to warning the investigators about staying away from Carson's Creek. They will say nothing about insects, large or small.

### 3. *The Unburied Dead and Strangers Unaccounted For*

If the investigators address these topics directly with people from Stantonville (who aren't in the *Brood*) without anyone else present, while succeeding in a *Psychology* roll and a *Credit Rating* roll and either *Persuade* or *Fast Talk* roll, then the investigators will be informed in whispers from behind a raised hand that there are rumors around town because a number of people haven't been buried after they died. And no one knows where the bodies are. (The investigators will be given a significant look, straight in the eyes.) And the missing entomologist? He's not the first. In the last 20 years, it's happened repeatedly that newcomers who come to town alone just disappear without a trace. Every time, "They" say the person's "suddenly left town." (Another significant look.) Then the informant will look around nervously and leave hastily, as if he or she has said too much.

The last supposition can't be proved. All documents about the people who've disappeared have been systematically destroyed. Clues that might point to what happened have been cleaned up. The investigators might already have heard the rumors about the unaccounted for dead from Rev. Mulbert. *Dr. Eastman*, the sole doctor in the area (who is a member of the *Brood of the Beetle*) is of course involved in the business; he maintains that the deceased requested cremation. And, indeed, all of their families have received an urn full of ashes—just not the ashes of the deceased, of course, but the remains of

some incinerated animal. These ashes can't be tested at this point, and certainly the families have no interest in allowing anyone to do so.

4. *The Carson's Creek Search Party of 27 Years Ago*

The investigators may be able to learn who went on the search party by asking around. Anyone who's old enough will remember most or all of the people, and a complete list can be put together fairly quickly by asking a number of people. The search party was composed of: Sheriff Amos Jenkins (now dead), Deputy Curt Buckle (now sheriff), Mayor Atkins, Mary Whistle (who decided on short notice to take part, to her misfortune), James

Arnsworth (then publisher of the *Gazette*, now dead), Arthur Morton, Dr. Gerald Eastman, and the lumberjacks Johnny Miller, Bob Martin, Bill Stokes, and Jack Legros (all dead). Hugh Hornby only became a member of the *Brood* later.

## Into Black Hills forest

Because Howard Fitzpatrick went into the woods to look for *Albertus gigantus*, the investigators will surely attempt an expedition into Black Hills Forest, the thick and green mixed forest that covers the Black Hills around Stantonville. Even if they're not specifically searching for Howard, the investigators may decide to go find Mad Meg, a recluse who may be able to tell them a little more about the events or fauna, around Carson's Creek. And Mad Meg lives a fair way into the woods. Her cabin can be reached by a narrow path that leads between the closely packed trees.

The woods north of Stantonville, that is, towards Carson's Creek, are healthy and streaming with vitality. The vegetation is very robust, with plentiful green foliage. Birds can be heard, but there don't seem to be many other animals. However, there is a whole array of insects in the forest. None of them are abnormally altered and gigantic.



The woods north of Stantonville

### Hideously Mutated Insects

The situation changes the closer to Carson's Creek the investigators get. Then the insects become abnormally large and no other animals can be heard at all. Only the wrathful beating of insect wings fills the sticky air. The whole panoply of insects is mutated here, evolved backwards, enlarged, and alien. It is not dangerous; however, the Keeper is under no obligation to disclose that. Below follow descriptions of different locations in Black Hills Forest. There are no mutated insects around the *Pond* and *Mad Meg's cabin*, but there are plenty further along the way to Carson's Creek.

The Keeper can use the following scenes at his discretion from now on, and of course may invent more in a similar vein:

1. *Dragonflies*

The investigators will be frightened when they come to another pond somewhere near Carson's Creek and across the surface at an amazing speed comes an arm-long dragonfly, which hovers a few hands-breadth from their faces, its rapidly beating wings making a sound like a motorcycle idling. The monstrous winged beast quickly becomes uninterested in the investigators. Sanity point cost: 0/1.

2. *Beetles*

There are also huge beetles; similar to the one Howard sought, in the vicinity of Carson's Creek. Some are even larger than the specimen which hit Howard's car, rustling like hedgehogs through the underbrush and taking off into the air with some difficulty. The investigators will encounter an aggressive scarabaeid beetle in Howard's tent.

The Keeper can arrange another dangerous encounter, if he chooses. The investigators will then encounter an early ancestor of the contemporary tiger beetle. The tiger beetle is a predatory insect that can run quickly but also maneuver very deftly in the air. It possesses very powerful mandibles. The Keeper can arrange a scene in which a giant beetle, perhaps a foot and a half tall, slowly approaches the



From Howard's Sketchbook: Tiger Beetle

investigators from the far side of a clearing. It straightens out its long legs, as if observing the investigators. If an investigator moves somewhat away, the beetle moves on him with breathtaking speed and tries to knock him over and try and bite him to death with its mandibles. Presumably it will fail. The statistics for this early relative of the tiger beetle are found in the appendix. Sanity point cost: 0/1D2.

### 3. Horseflies

Horseflies can also make the investigators' life difficult. A mutated specimen can reach almost a foot long. If one lands on an investigator in order to bite him and drink his blood, it can of course be smashed, but not without inflicting a point of damage on the investigator. Shooting a horsefly, even a giant one, out of the air is extremely difficult. With a rifle or pistol, the shooter must achieve a critical hit, or the shot misses. One shot will, however, kill it. Shotguns hit at their normal percentage chance.

The Keeper may afflict the investigators with several such plagues of flies. Sanity point cost: 0/1.

### 4. Mosquitoes

Gigantic mosquitoes like the one squashed in the hotel will beset the investigators. Because they're so large (four inches long), you can't overlook them and they can be squashed before they drink blood. An encounter with one is mostly unappetizing, not dangerous. They do not appear in large swarms, like regular mosquitoes, because each mutated specimen is of a different "species."

### 5. Praying Mantis

The praying mantis is one of the most uncanny looking insects even in its un-mutated form. This insect is so named because of the position of its forward most pair of

legs, which recall hands folded at prayer. Actually, these legs are built in such a fashion as to be able to lash out lightning fast and seize prey. But praying mantises aren't hunters. In general, they wait motionless until prey comes by, then snatch them up in a fraction of a second and eat them. Even "normal, terrestrial" praying mantises sometimes prey on small birds. Anyone aware of that will hardly be amazed when the investigators witness the following scene: a rabbit, that's obviously not fled this part of the woods like all the other animals, sits placidly in a clearing, occasionally hopping around and enjoying the day. Low bushes surround the clearing. With a *Spot Hidden* roll, the investigators will spot that one of the plants is really a 16-inch praying mantis that's eyeing its furry victim. If the investigators do not make a commotion, the rabbit goes to its doom. As it unsuspectingly nears the praying mantis, the mantis's arms shoot out, grabbing the rabbit in a millisecond. The shocked rabbit can only squeak in terror as it's eaten. Sanity point cost: 0/1.

### 6. Wasps

There are parasites that use a host in order to live without killing the host. Then there are the so-called parasitoids which use a host, but kill it at the same time. The investigators can run across one of these dangerous parasitoids in Black Hills Forest: a perverted form of ichneumon wasp (also called "ichneumon fly"). They hunt much larger creatures, inject them with a strong paralytic poison and lay their eggs inside. This leads to blood poisoning, if the eggs aren't cut out quickly enough.

Whilst in the Black Hills Forest, the following encounter can occur. An approximately six-inch-long insect with thin limbs begins to buzz around the investigators, choosing one member of the group to attack. It lands on him and attempts to sink its stinger. If the victim is paralyzed, the wasp begins laying its eggs. At this point at the latest, hopefully, the other investigators will be able to drive the thing away or crush it. The wasp's statistics are found in the appendix.

## Prehistoric Plants

Even the flora, previously just healthy and dense, becomes overlarge, mutated, and of unhealthy vitality the nearer one gets to Carson's Creek. The varieties of plants are barely recognizable, even with *Biology* rolls; at least partially, they must be "devolved." The condition of extreme growth is inexplicable. Leaves are of an almost black-green color, gleaming like polished wax in the sunlight that drops sparsely through the branches. Comparative observations: while in the neighborhood of Stantonville, the woods—if omnipresent in a strangely intense way—are simply green and shot through with sunlight, but near Carson's Creek they're oppressive. Barely a single beam of light can penetrate the thick branches. The ground seems to be moist and a bit squishy. It smells strongly of earth, but also of something else that no one can place precisely. It's almost like prehistoric primeval rainforest.



## Important Places in Black Hills Forest



From Howard's Sketchbook: A Wasp

Some locales in the Black Hills Forest are described below; the Keeper may consult the map to see where they are relative to Stantonville and Carson's Creek and describe the surrounding flora and fauna appropriately. The path between the areas can be interrupted with the previously described encounters as the Keeper wishes. The most important thing is to clearly establish the gradual change in nature.

### The Pond

The investigators are following the path through the woods leading to Mad Meg's cabin. With a *Spot Hidden* roll, they'll notice that here and there twigs and branches have been broken off, as if something large and bulky had been moving down the path. With a roll against *Track*, the investigators can quickly find some skid marks in the dirt of the path. They're the tracks of a car, definitely more than a week old. They lead into the woods, but not back out. The tracks are from Howard's Chevrolet, which Hugh Hornby drove through the woods to the pond.

At some point, a dark water surface shimmers through the trees to the left of the path. The tire tracks in the dirt turn off the patch, heading towards the water. If they follow, the investigators will soon reach the swampy edge of a still pond. Such ponds are found here and there in the hollows of the Black Hills, idyllically framed by the green walls of the forest. It smells slightly rotten, with a bub-

bling sound heard periodically as an opalescent bubble of methane and carbon dioxide rises to the surface from the rotting vegetation below. Frogs and toads croak loudly.

In the squishy soil at the edge of the pond, the tire tracks are visible again, although someone's dragged some branches over it, apparently to conceal the tracks from casual view. Nevertheless, with an easy (doubled) *Spot Hidden* roll, it's possible to see the rear end of a car roof sticking out of the water surface like a foreign object.



Howard's 1923 Copper-Cooled Chevrolet Model M in better days

Quite obviously, the car has been pushed into the pond and got stuck, so that it wasn't entirely covered with water. A closer examination will necessitate that the investigators get themselves seriously filthy in the foul-smelling ooze. All the same, at the end of the unpleasant process, they will be able to confirm what they almost surely have guessed already: the sunken car is a black Chevrolet Model M. On the back seat sits a suitcase, swollen and soaked in the water. It can only be removed from the automobile with significant effort. It bears a brass name-



The investigators will visit the pond too

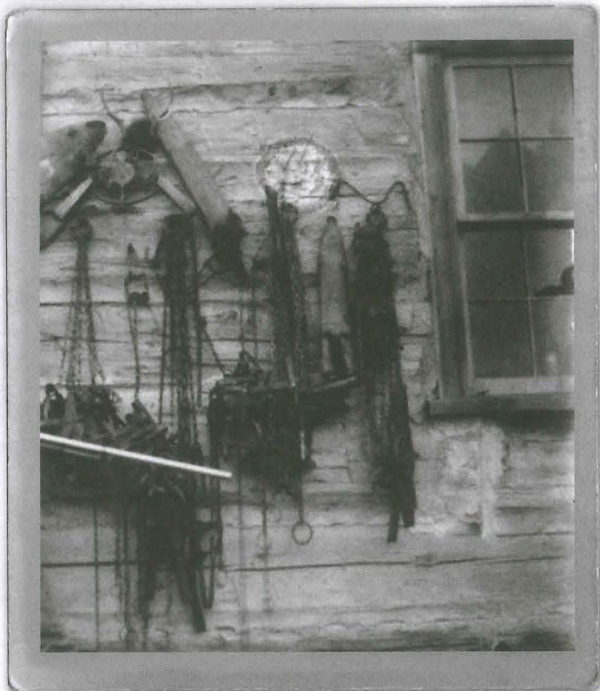
plate that reads H.P. FITZPATRICK and contains men's clothing. The investigators will now know for sure that Howard didn't "just" leave town.

There are no further tracks to be found here, just slimy holes full of water, likely footprints left by the man who dumped the car in the pond. There's no way to make out a shoeprint, even rudimentarily, and there are no further

clues. The trail disappears entirely when it reaches dry land. Because the investigators probably won't be able to figure anything else out here at the pond, they'll likely continue on towards Mad Meg's place. If they do inform the sheriff, he will oversee the salvage of the car, and then initiate a sporadic search for Howard in the area of the pond, which will lead to nothing. After two days at the latest, the search will be called off again. By that time, the investigators will likely have found Howard.

By the way, there are two other cars sunken in the pond that are completely covered by the slimy black water. They belonged to earlier victims and can only be found if someone goes diving in the pond, which wouldn't be enjoyable, because the visibility in the water is only about a foot. The investigators will have to be very persistent to find the other cars.

### Mad Meg's Cabin in the Woods



*The Cabin in the Woods*

A slight smell of smoke becomes stronger in the investigators' nostrils. Suddenly the old gnarled trees draw back a little and reveal a rickety cabin crouching between tall trees. A small garden seems to have been planted to the side, and smoke is rising from a metal chimney. The cabin is built from crude logs. It could have been a trapper's cabin 50 years earlier, or it might even be older. It certainly does not offer comfortable lodging, and the little house only has one room. Through the half-observed windows, one can catch a glimpse of the interior of the cabin, but nothing can be made out except dim shapes. If the investigators try to open the only door on the front wall, they'll hear the panicked scream of a woman. If they want to talk to her, they'll either have to return in a few hours when she's calmed down or break down the

door (STR 12). The door's bolted from inside, so a *Locksmith* roll will do no good. Mad Meg will not defend herself if they break in, but to be able to get her to speak at all will require a *Psychoanalysis* roll. If this doesn't work, Meg will simply sit catatonically in a corner of her hovel and say nothing.

On the other hand, if the investigators knock, then she will hear a creaky old woman's voice asking "Who is it?" through the door. If they don't answer "the Grim Reaper" or something similar, they'll hear a bolt being slid back. Shortly thereafter, the door will open a crack. The unwashed face of a woman of perhaps 65 years appears in the crack. She seems to be short, perhaps only five-foot-one or so. Deep wrinkles have carved themselves into her countenance, and thick black hair grows out of a large chin wart. She also has a fair bit of dark facial hair. Her eyes are light gray and watery, her teeth are just black stumps. Her head is covered with wild, yellowish-white hair. Mad Meg is in fact mentally disturbed, as her nickname advertises, and may justifiably be labeled insane. She is not, however, dangerous.

In the conversation that will ensue, Meg will act very fearful. She mistrusts all other people. Only a *Psychoanalysis* roll or a difficult (halved) *Persuade* roll will calm her down enough to have a fair conversation. She will let the investigators into her cabin. Inside it's almost dark. The barest light filters into the room through the few tiny and filthy windows. Something is sizzling in a pan on a cast-iron stove. The smoke is drawing through the chimney, but the cabin itself smells a bit smoked. An extremely dirty pile of blankets is heaped up in a corner: Meg's sleeping place. Dried herbs hang from the ceiling. Several empty shelves and cabinets stand along the walls. There's nothing more than battered pots and pans and a few other belongings in the cabin. A pump over a large basin provides Meg with water.

Mad Meg's statistics can be found in the appendix.

Meg takes a few not-very-clean plates out of a cabinet, and scrapes her food out of the pan with a wooden spoon. She then serves her guests, grinning somewhat moronically. She herself takes a portion. Each investigator now has something on his plate that at first glance resembles a broiled bird. Upon closer inspection, the investigators will be repulsed to learn that Meg has obviously caught and cooked some of the gigantic moths—the fist-sized insects that the investigators might have been bothered by during the night. Meg smacks her lips enthusiastically and stuffs one of the bugs into her mouth, chewing it up with a crackling sound, shoves a leg hanging out of her mouth back in, and then burps contentedly. She gestures dramatically for her guests to dig in as well.

At that point, Meg's pet comes crawling out from under the pile of blankets and wobbles over to the investigators. It is a huge jet-black beetle. This specimen is even larger than the one that flew into Howard's car—but with a *Spot Hidden* and an *Idea* roll it will become apparent that it's simply a similar-looking specimen, but not the same type of beetle. This black beetle is more than 20 inches long, making it really gigantic. Its mandibles seem to be

moving excitedly and making a quiet, clacking sound in the process. Meg bends over tenderly, strokes her darling's gleaming chitin, and reaches into a bag, pulling out some more dead giant moths. She sets them in front of the outlandish beetle which carves up and devours its meal. The Sanity loss for witnessing the beetle and the whole scene is 0/1D2 points. Smiling, Meg rolls up her sleeves and shows some serious wounds that the beetle gave her when she didn't feed it enough. The investigators can easily find out that she found the beetle farther north in the woods near where the cliffs draw together. She means these two large stone formations that tower above the woods. Up there, Meg tells the investigators with a happy smile, there are a lot more of these beetles and other big bugs.

Despite her mental state, the investigators can learn something from Meg: a long time ago there was a loud crash in the direction of Carson's Creek, followed by a sustained rumbling. The earth shook for a few seconds afterwards. Meg was curious. She found a landslide in Carson's Creek, and at the foot of the rubble were a bunch of people from town, with birds flying around their heads, right when she was standing on the edge of the cliff. She could see everything. The birds disappeared into the people, who then headed back to Stantonville. While telling this, Meg rolls her eyes madly. Shortly after that, the big bugs started appearing, and since then they've spread out a little bit. You can still find most of them up at Carson's Creek. But some of the animals up there are very naughty and nasty, not like her little Crabby (she pats the enormous beetle). Those bugs would hurt her if she stayed up there. Only Crabby is a good bug, sometimes he's a little moody, but he has a good heart. (She hugs the beetle, which thrashes a bit, pawing the ground.) The people from town are all nasty. Curse them. She has to spit if she looks into town. She doesn't like to go into town any more; she likes to stay here with her Crabby. Here, Meg says, she has everything she needs.

Meg will recognize Howard Fitzpatrick if she's shown a picture. Yes, she saw him. He was on foot. He was a giant hunchback, like a horrible monster. He knocked on the door, but Meg hid and didn't let him in. Then he walked off towards Carson's Creek and she never saw him again.

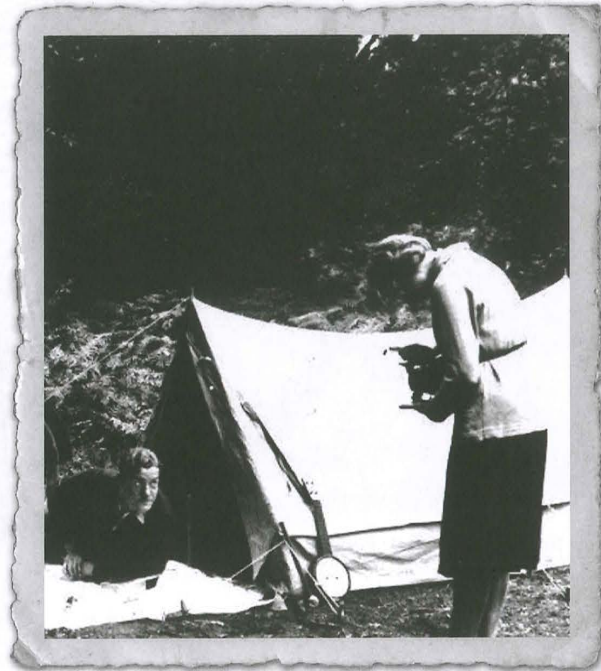
Of course Howard didn't have a hunchback, but a backpack on his back. The entomologist's "monstrousness" is entirely in Meg's disturbed mind.

The story with the birds which disappeared into the Stantonville search party is her description of the moment at which the Insects from Shaggai took over the search party members. Meg herself has never been possessed by the Insects because her disturbed mind is disagreeable and uninteresting to them.

Meg knows nothing about the Insects from Shaggai or anything about their spaceship. She has only noticed the change in the animal world. She also hasn't witnessed the cars' being sunk in the pond.

### An Abandoned Campsite

The investigators will be heading north up the path through the woods in the direction of Carson's Creek. A clearing will reveal two high stone crags that rise up over the treetops. They form sort of a natural entrance way. Mad Meg will have told them that more large insects, particularly beetles can be found up here. Howard was here as well, and set up a camp at the foot of one of the cliffs. The investigators can find it intact there. There's a green tent set up, just big enough for one person. In a ring of stones, someone set a campfire some time ago. It is very still in this part of the woods. Except for insects, there don't seem to be any other animals.



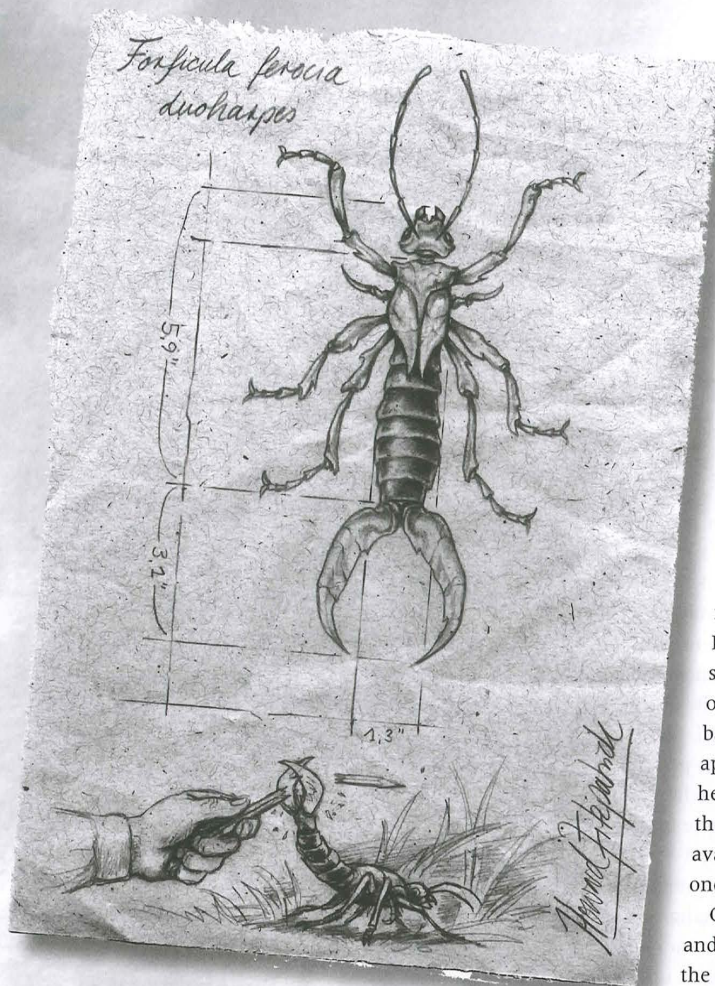
*The discovery of Howard's tent is documented*

With a *Spot Hidden* roll, the investigators will notice that something's moving in the tent. The flaps at the entrance are hanging in such a way that no one can look in. The tent will tremble again. If the investigators get close then a black monstrosity will burst out of the entrance without warning, and bear down on the nearest investigator, who's only steps away. It is an enormous black beetle with a plump body which has been digging around Howard's equipment looking for food. The investigators have disturbed it, and it wants to drive them off. The animal is three feet long, more gargantuan than anything they've yet encountered.

The beetle's statistics are in the appendix.

If the beetle's gotten out of the way, the investigators can search Howard's camp undisturbed. The campfire ashes are old, at least two weeks. In the tent itself, chaos reigns. In the intervening days, beetles and other bugs have helped themselves to his provisions. Even the canned food has partially been opened by deft mandibles.

After a bit of a search, the investigators will have found all of Howard's camping equipment, including the big



From Howard's Sketchbook: Earwig

backpack which Meg took for a hunchback. All of his entomological equipment is in the tent as well. It includes a *butterfly net* with which you can scoop bugs out of the air, a *sweeping net* which is similar but has a substantially larger diameter and is used for collecting bugs out of grass, a strong *magnifying glass*, a *hoe*, a *chisel* to dig bugs out of rotten wood, and a *pair of tweezers*. In addition, there's a large glass *trap* that can be set on the ground and baited with, for example, cheese. Of course, there has to be a *kill-jar* which is clearly labeled "Poison." This is a deep jar with potassium cyanide under a removable bottom. Potassium cyanide, also known as prussic acid, has a characteristic bitter-almond scent and is also extremely dangerous to humans. The investigators should be extremely careful not to come in contact with this substance.

The investigators may be able to guess where the entomologist could have disappeared to without all his equipment.

When Howard went up to explore Carson's Creek and was taken over by an Insect from Shaggai, he was simply hiking out from his camp with nothing but binoculars.

The most interesting discovery in the tent may be Howard's journal. The entries reveal what he did up until he left the camp. Everything about the accident, his return to Boston, and his coming back to Stantonville to

look for more beetles is in here. His second stay in Stantonville, and lastly his planning an expedition to Carson's Creek where apparently the beetles he was seeking are most likely to be found, is described. Even the episode about squashing the giant mosquito in his hotel room is included. The last entry may be found as *Beetle Handout 4* in the appendix.

Above all the investigators will discover Howard's sketchbook in which he's drawn insects he's observed. Pages from his sketchbook are found throughout this scenario and may be copied and distributed by the Keeper for the players' inspection. They are also available for download from [www.worldsofctulhu.com](http://www.worldsofctulhu.com).

### At Carson's Creek

The investigators are almost at their goal. They've reached Carson's Creek, a crevice cut into the Black Hills by a brook, with steep cliffs on the sides. The valley around the creek itself is washed out flat, covered with grass and bushes. Further back at the northern end of the ravine, it is clearly apparent that piece of a cliff has fallen off from a height of 300 feet or so and now stretches out from the cliff foot right to the creek in a sort of frozen avalanche of rubble. From above, from the cliffs, one can get a very good view of the valley.

Climbing the sheer cliffs which are between 30 and 120 feet high is not a wise idea. If someone tries, the Keeper should force a *Climb* roll for every six feet the Investigator climbs. The damage for falling is as in the rule book (6e, page 57).

Ideally, one would enter the valley from the northwest or southeast where you can simply walk along the creek. The rubble field can not be reached from above, however. Anyone who wants to explore it must first climb down into the valley and climb up the rubble field from there.

Carson's Creek is full of life. Unhealthy, unnatural life. The grass is thick and sharp-edged, even pant legs can be cut open at the seams. The investigators each will lose one hit point from cuts which are almost impossible to avoid, unless someone wraps a cloth or a blanket around their shins. The bushes are thick and robust, most with thorny branches. Everything radiates an impression of malevolence and watchfulness. Thousands and thousands of insects zip around the valley. There's every sort of fly and beetle, most of normal size but plenty of enormous, mutated examples as well. The investigators will have to protect themselves particularly against the stinging insects which, fortunately for them, aren't the majority of the insects present. It helps here as well to cover oneself with a blanket or tent tarp. The buzzing and whirring is deafening.

The ground in the valley next to the creek is soft and swampy. It stinks, although less of decomposition than of something rotting. A sweet stink fills the whole valley and seems to affect the senses. If anyone seeks the source of the smell, they'll quickly figure out that it emanates from the muddy meadow next the creek. They will be able to



*Stinking mud accumulates at Carson's Creek*

distinguish some sort of black, jellylike mass mixed in with the riverbank mud and drifting clotted clumps in standing water, a bit like oil washed up on land after a tanker accident. The substance has a tough and sticky consistency. And it stinks to high heaven. This is the nutrient slime that the Mother-Being exudes and that is leaking out of the wrecked spaceship into the valley. On closer examination, the investigators will discover that this slime is teeming with life. A fly is laying her eggs on one clump, while unbelievably fat, white maggots are crawling around in another. A little bit further off, one of the clumps burst open and a mature beetle of astonishing size crawls out. The investigators will now likely be able figure out where the giant insects are coming from and why the vegetation is mutated. Sanity loss is 0/1D3 points for the realization.

It is very difficult to make one's way down the valley floor, given the ubiquitous squishy, swampy ground, slimy pools, sharp grass, and rampant thorn bushes. The Keeper may repeatedly insist on rolls to avoid minor damage, e.g., *Jump* or *Dodge*. Possibly, he'll allow one of the

investigators to fall into a muddy pool. Until he can bathe, he will stink terribly and it's no fun to pick the squirming and slimy giant larvae off the hapless investigator.

There is no real reason why the investigators need to remain on the valley floor any longer than necessary. The landslide, that is, the field of rubble, is of preeminent interest.

The entire cliff wall collapsed near the northern entrance to the ravine, and an avalanche of rubble has covered half the valley. Plants have already grown up through the rubble. The collapse was obviously some time ago. If the investigators search the area, they can discover with a *Spot Hidden* roll that the slime is oozing out between the rocks at the foot of the landslide. The slime's source must be somewhere within the collapse. There's nothing left to do except climb around the rubble. As described, the rubble field can only be reached from the valley. The Keeper should require each investigator to make three *Climb* rolls. For every missed roll, the climber will lose one hit point from cuts, falling rocks, or the like. After 15 minutes of the search, every investigator may make a *Spot Hidden* roll. Success will reveal a shadowy opening quite high up on the rubble heap. The opening can be reached without further incident. The investigators' eyes will no doubt widen when they notices that the stones here have been arranged so that they form a sort of cave. And there's a slight glint of metal visible in the back of the cave. Its rear wall seems to be... metallic.

The investigators are now actually standing next to the outer hull of the spawn-ship, though they likely won't have an idea of exactly what it is. The metal is completely unknown, feels unsettlingly warm, and has a dull gray sheen. A round hatch about 30 inches in diameter admits entry into the metal wall which, of course, extends down below the rubble as well. The hatch is unadorned, made of the same metal as the hull, and is open. Inside is darkness. For further exploration, the investigators will need a light source.

## The Spawn-Ship

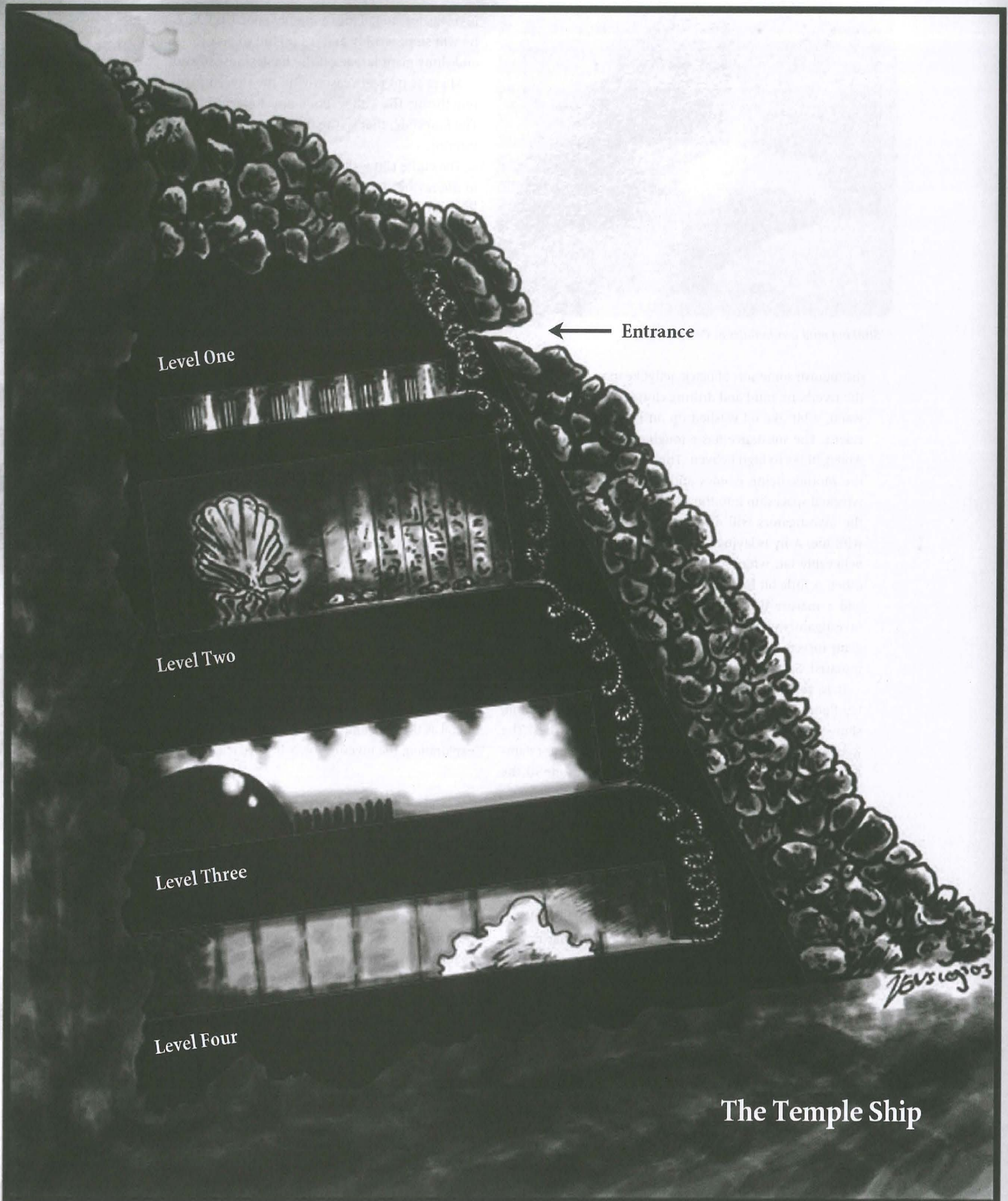
Once through the hatch, the investigators will find themselves in a tube-like hallway with a quite low clearance: about 5'7". It goes up and down.

If they follow the winding tube up, they will quickly arrive at a place where the metal of the hall has been crushed, as if by a giant fist. The metal tube of the tunnel is so crumpled, that it's completely impassable. This hall would have led to the quarters of the Insects from Shaggai, which were on the apex of the pyramidal spawn-ship but were crushed by tons of stone. This caused the majority of the fatalities among the Insects.

The investigators will have no choice but to follow the convoluted tube down into the depths of the ship. Because the Insects almost always fly, they do not have any steps. So occasionally, the angle of the tube is so steep a human might slide down it. The investigators will have to

proceed very carefully. Soon they reach a location where another tube at a more horizontal angle branches off. The main tube continues down into the depths of the ship.

At this point, it's useful to note something about the condition of the Insects from Shaggai's spaceship. In the collision, it collided with one of the cliff walls above Carson's Creek, which then collapsed and buried the ship underneath its rubble. The ship sits at a slight (8°) grade relative to the cliff wall. Consequently, the investigators will never find a room in which the floor is level. The ship looks like a metallic pyramid 30 feet high. The entire upper section, in which the Insects' quarters were found is crushed in and destroyed. Similarly, the bottom levels were torn open at impact and are damaged. The middle levels are largely intact. Everything in the ship seems to consist of the same gray metal, from walls to equipment.



### The Temple Ship

Keepers' and Players' versions of this map are available for download from [www.worldsofctulhu.com](http://www.worldsofctulhu.com)

## 1. The Slave Pens

The tube which branches off leads to an elongated great hall made of the same gray metal. It's deathly still here, pitch black, and the investigators' lights will only be able to illuminate portions of the room. The investigators' boots will clack lightly on the slightly off-kilter metal surface that serves as the floor (it's not level because the ship isn't; see above). This hall is almost as wide as the entire ship. Small alcoves around the walls have doors made of bars, like jail cells. If an investigator is brave enough to get near one of these doors, a tentacle will shoot out between the bars and try to seize him. Its chance to hit is 50%. Once the tentacle has grabbed its victim, more arms will wreath through the bars. Six tentacles in total will emerge over the next rounds, and as soon as two of them have grabbed the luckless investigator, they will tear him into pieces over the ensuing round. The individual pieces will be pulled through the bars where the Being from Xiclotl sitting in the cell will eat them. An investigator who's been grabbed can only free himself with a STR vs. STR test against the tentacle. Other investigators may help, adding their STR to that of the victim. On the other hand, every subsequent tentacle that grabs the victim adds its full strength to the Being's side.

Ideally, the players will illuminate a cell from a safe distance (at least ten feet). It will then become immediately clear what is dwelling within. Behind each cell door there is a cell, each housing a Being from Xiclotl. In total, there are at least 30 of these cells. There is no mechanism for opening the cells to be found, and the Beings cannot break out by their own strength. Luckily for the investigators.

The Beings from Xiclotl were kept by the Insects from Shaggai as a servitor race. They aren't very intelligent but terrifyingly strong. Ideal slaves. After the crash, which the Beings from Xiclotl all survived due to their incredibly robust bodies, they were abandoned here by the Insects. They don't starve to death without nourishment, but rather enter a state of hibernation, from which the investigators' arrival awakens them. Externally, at first glance the Beings from Xiclotl resemble a bare tree with thick branches (tentacles) and an oval mouth opening high up its body. (For more on the Beings, see the description in the main rule book, page 175 or *Malleus Monstrorum*, page 109-110.)

It is entirely possible that the investigators may lose one of their number to a Being from Xiclotl. The other investigators will then presumably be particularly careful not to get too close to any of the cell doors.

While the investigators are looking around the chamber of the Beings from Xiclotl, more bad news is brewing elsewhere. One of the Insects from Shaggai which doesn't use a host body and remains in the ship as a guard (the same one that took over Howard when he was searching the landslide) has been observing the investigators from the shadowy entrance of the ship since their arrival at Carson's Creek, and has telepathically warned the other Insects, that is, the possessed inhabitants of Stantonville.

The Brood of the Beetle immediately set out in great haste, though it will take them several hours before they can get to the area. However, another group has been following the investigators the whole time through the woods at some distance in case it became necessary to eliminate them. These possessed citizens of Stantonville have reached the southern entrance to Carson's Creek ravine *this very minute*. It will not take them long before they enter the spawn-ship. This advance party consists of Sheriff Buckle, Hugh Hornby, and Arthur Morton. If the investigators have left a guard above, he'll now see these three coming up Carson's Creek.

The Insect from Shaggai that remains in the ship is waiting for the investigators below in the winding hallway underneath the Temple Hall level. It will take over the first investigator coming down the tube and use him or her to stall the group as long as possible.

## 2. The Temple Hall

After a whole series of twists in the hall, the Investigator will reach the next branching off. The winding tube continues further down, but the investigators can also explore this level of the ship first.

The tube that branches off the descending tunnel is a short passage that ends in a large portal. The entire arch around the portal is decorated with intertwined maws, tentacles, and ugly heads, all of the same gray metal. Sanity loss is 0/1 points. In the middle of the door is a triangular slab of green stone, the borders of which are engraved with artistic carvings. They show an unknown species of insects (specifically Insects from Shaggai) flying along the sides of the slab in tiny, stylized form. If the smooth, polished middle of the slab is touched, the whole portal slides silently into the floor, opening the way to the Temple Hall.

The portal has opened. The investigators' lights illuminate the enormous hall behind it insufficiently. It must be at least 20 feet high. In the background, the metal wall is dented inward and ruptured, with some rocks lying on the smooth metal floor. But the investigators will be unable to look away from the statue which dominates the entire hall. It is an idol at least fifteen feet high that is supposed to represent Azathoth. It looks like a slightly-opened clam resting on countless elastic legs. Out of the opening, which is oriented towards the entrance, a cylinder of sorts protrudes, on the end of which is a cluster of polyps. It is made entirely of the previously-encountered gray metal. Deep inside the clam, if anyone shines a light inside, is a huge, mouth-less inhuman face with deep-set eyes and shining black hair. Sanity loss for the sight of this horribly realistic idol is 1/1D6 points. At the foot of the idol sit several pointed metal rods about a foot long. These are required to open the breeding chamber, and by using them, one can hold the Fragment of Azathoth at bay at least for a short time.

The walls are adorned with metal reliefs all around, apparently depicting the history of the Insects of Shag-

gai. At first they show Shaggai with its countless temple-pyramids, scenes of the Insects' existence there, and the enormous ocean of primordial slime in which they develop. There are bloated, beetle-like beings laying eggs in the slime. Then these images are interrupted by the appearance of Ghroth in the sky. The ocean of primordial slime begins to boil, and the Insects begin to die off. The Insects are forced to leave their uninhabitable home planet in their pyramids. Scenes of space follow, depicting the countless planets to which the Insects scattered and encounters with extremely strange alien beings. The next image in the series should be their crash on Earth, but the Insects no longer bother to continue the tradition.

### Place of Worship First, Transportation Second

At this point it should be noted what Insects' ship actually is. Fundamentally, it is less a ship than a temple first and foremost. The Insects worshipped in temples dedicated to the Demon Sultan Azathoth when they still lived on Shaggai. The temple-pyramids were simply used for their intended purposes: as temples. As already mentions, the Insects had to flee their home planet when it became uninhabitable. They were only able to do so in their temples, because the pyramid-shaped edifices could move through non-Euclidean space, apparently "teleporting" from place to place in our dimension. This movement is possible because there is a room in every temple containing a fragment of the essence of Azathoth. With the help of its inconceivable quantities of energy and certain rituals, the Insects from Shaggai can teleport the entire temple to another location—across the vastness of space, even to distant planets. Consequently, it's technically imprecise to call their temples spaceships. As Shaggai was destroyed, the entire race crowded into their temples and displaced them to other planets, scattering themselves across the galaxy. The temple-ship in which the investigators find themselves is of particular important, because it carries one of the very few Queens of Shaggai, the Mother-Beings who are able to bear new Insects. The previous world that this ship had visited proved tectonically unstable; at that point they decided to teleport to Earth.

## The Breeding Chamber

The tube continues winding downward. The first investigator comes around a corner and something about the size of a pigeon comes rushing towards him. He can only react, e.g., firing a weapon, if he succeeds with a DEX+1 roll. The Insect from Shaggai that's remained in the ship attempts to take an investigator over in order to prevent the interlopers from entering the breeding chamber. If

the investigators pull it off and are able to shoot at the insect, the Keeper should roll a few times as an alibi and then declare that the Insect wasn't hit. It automatically succeeds in taking over the investigator, in other words. For his companions, it seems as if some object came flying at the Investigator and simply disappeared into his head. Which is exactly what happened. The possessed investigator turns around and attempts to attack the other investigators with any means at hand. He will be disoriented and incapable of action for one round. Hopefully, the investigators will be able to overpower their companion at that point. If they're not successful, all the investigators are lost anyway, since the advance party of possessed Stantonvillians is entering the ship at this point.

With a *Spot Hidden* roll, the investigators could have gotten a better look at the pigeon-sized thing before it flew into their friend: it's an insect with pulsating feelers, ten tentacle-bedecked legs, scaly wings, and three mouths. Anyone who actually sees this loses 0/1D6 Sanity.

If the Investigator is overpowered, the other investigators can make *Listen* rolls to hear that there are voices above them—the advance party (the sheriff, Hugh, Arthur) is climbing down the winding tube. It's time to hurry. A few turns later, the investigators reach the breeding-chamber level. And the passageway keeps twisting down to the propulsion chamber. If the investigators want to fight immediately, a battle ensues. Their attackers' statistics are in the appendix.

The breeding-chamber level is sealed off by a round door in which there are four small openings. The rods found in the temple hall must be inserted into these holes simultaneously. Once all the rods are in place, the round door swings inward. Immediately the investigators are struck by a monstrous stench. It is the stink of the slime hunks intensified a thousand times over, penetrating their noses and fogging their senses. The room that the investigators now enter is the only one in the ship that's illuminated a little. The light emanates from reddish panels in the ceiling, which glow weakly and give the whole room a bloody complexion. Just a few steps into the room, the floor is covered with the blackish slime that the investigators will recognize from outside. It keeps getting deeper until the investigators are almost knee-deep in the disgusting broth. From the entrance, one can't see that there's something at the other end of the elongated, broad chamber. By crossing through the nauseating slime, it becomes clear that the rear wall of the chamber is buckled, torn open, and crushed inward. Bare earth is visible behind it. The stinking broth is now up to the investigators' waists. What they can't see, but what they can deduce, is that the slime is leaching out through the metallic outer hull and befouling Carson's Creek.

But the view of the rear wall is partially obscured by a gigantic Thing. A black, smooth pile, hemispherical, several yards long and high. And standing in a row in front of this black hill are ten people. There are more of them are collapsed, half-skeletonized, staring out of the nutrient liquid, in various stages of decomposition. These corpses are the burned-out victims of the Mother-Being





Drawing executed by Howard Fitzpatrick in a sanatorium two weeks after his rescue

which have ceased to function and are no longer of interest to the thing. The ten men of different ages, who stand before the black thing facing the investigators, are different. Some of them are wearing normal clothing. Some of them are wearing shrouds, which is extremely disturbing. And right in the middle stands Howard Fitzpatrick.

The men all have their eyes closed and are completely white and motionless. Their hair hangs flat and soaked with sweat over their heads. But, no, wait, that's not hair. They're glistening black bundles of tiny tentacles draped over their heads like hair, conducting their life force into the tentacle strands' source, the Mother-Being, this black hill, this gigantic malformed beetle which now becomes aware of the investigators and briefly breaks off its feeding. The men sink to their knees, unconscious, falling over into the nutrient liquid, in danger of drowning. But they don't rouse themselves; they seem incapable of preventing themselves from suffocating—if there is any life left in them at all. The tentacle strands are withdrawn back into the ten maw-like mouths which the beetle-thing has on its front side. With a giant slurp, the ancient Mother-Being monstrosity, rises from the nutrient broth, and the red light clearly illuminates the steady flow of nutrient liquid from the gaping pores in its armor and the egg sac through which a shimmering egg is visible, from which an Insect from Shaggai will develop. It has no recognizable head.

It is simply an armored mountain with tentacle-filled mouths and a reproductive apparatus. It's time for a Sanity roll: 1/1D4 points for the un-dead men and the scene in general and 1D3/1D10 points for the Mother-Being.

The Mother-Being has almost no sense organs with which it can perceive the investigators. It senses their presence instinctively, and strikes out with its tentacle bundles in their approximate direction. Its hard armor poses probably the biggest problem for the investigators, but if they're good shots or dare to get close, they can shoot into its mouths. Hits there do not have their damage reduced by the armor's rating. Shots into the mouth receive a -30% chance to hit. Misses that would have hit normally without the -30% penalty will hit the Mother-Being's armor instead.

The dead and living people here served the Mother-Being as sources of stimulation and food. They allowed it to produce its nutrient slime. It absorbs the brainwaves of its victims and conducts them into itself. The humans are either formerly possessed victims who were brought here after their faked deaths (and "didn't want a church burial"). Or they're unfortunates like Howard who fell into the clutches of the *Brood of the Beetle*. No one can actually drown in the slime, by the way. It's very oxygen-rich. After defeating the Mother-Being, all ten men can be saved.

The corpses here belong to those who died of old age during their "mind-touch."

The statistics for the Mother-Being (which can be taken as a typical Queen of Shaggai) can be found in the appendix.

The moment the Mother-Being is defeated, Sheriff Buckle, Hugh Hornby, and Arthur Morton will storm into the hall (unless they've previously been defeated, or a particularly nasty keeper wants them to arrive earlier, trapping the investigators between a rock and a hard place)—but it's too late. The Mother-Being is lying in its last death throes, thrashing around with its ten legs, spraying its slime wildly. But then it's finally over. The moment the Mother-Being breathes its last, all the possessed individuals, including the player character, collapse, screaming, pressing their hands to their ears. They scream and scream and simply won't stop. Their eyes roll back in their heads so that only the whites are visible, and then they lapse into unconsciousness. A semi-substantial, dead Insect from Shaggai emerges from each of their heads, falls out of him, twitches once and then doesn't move any more. The Mother-Being was telepathically connected with all the Insects from Shaggai. Its death agony was conveyed to the Insects, who could not bear it and that overpowered and killed them. The humans, now free of their parasites, come to in several minutes with horrible headaches that last several days. There is no lasting brain damage, fortunately, aside from the Sanity loss.

With the death of the Mother-Being, the investigators have eliminated the immediate danger to Stantonville. It will take a long time until normalcy returns to the area. And it will quickly become obvious that the formerly possessed people do not suddenly become lovable or lose their extreme tendencies. They've changed themselves

for the worst somehow. Hugh will keep hitting his wife. The food at Morton's Diner will never be good. It almost raises the question of how great the Insects' influence over the possessed was, as if perhaps they just awoke or intensified tendencies that were already dormant within their hosts. Because the Mother-Being will no longer produce slime, in a few years Carson's Creek will no longer be polluted, and there won't be any more enormous insects. The investigators could finally be at peace—if there weren't still the lowest level of the spawn-ship.

#### 4. The Propulsion Chamber

The tube that winds its way down ends in a hallway that goes about five yards before ending in a triangular door. The door apparently swings open into the hall, because there is a metal bar set on braces on this side, as if the door is barred from this side. A watery blubbering can be heard from the other side of the triangular door.

As was previously mentioned, the temple-ship's teleportation jumps were only possible due to magic and a massive energy source. The Insects from Shaggai derive their energy from a highly radioactive Fragment of Azathoth which is kept in the room behind the portal. The investigators can remove the metal bar from the door without difficulty. Suddenly the blubbering will stop, only to then start again more strongly. Then something is obviously pushing on the far side of the door. If the investigators think better of it, they have a last chance to put the bar back into the brackets. If they miss their chance, the door will slam outwards and the Fragment of Azathoth will burst through the entrance.

Shimmering a sickly sallow gray and green, it's a contracting and expanding mass, slimy and quaking like gelatin, from which component pieces drip off, filled with independent life and flowing behind the main body. The Sanity loss for seeing this Fragment of Azathoth is 1D6/1D20 points. The investigators have no means to kill it. They can't do anything but flee. All physical attacks cause the liquid-like mass to break apart temporarily, but the pieces then flow together again. Only the metal rods that can open the breeding chamber can hold the Fragment in check. If touched by one of the rods, the Fragment will briefly flinch backwards, but then immediately start moving forward again. Only ten successful rolls against DEX×5 will succeed in driving the Fragment back into the propulsion chamber and allow them to close the door again. Every roll represents one minute of poking at the

Fragment. Up to four investigators can wield four of the rods per minute (and therefore only a maximum of four rolls per minute may succeed). If every roll succeeds, they can therefore drive the Fragment of Azathoth back and close the door in 2½ minutes at the soonest.

Because of the fragment's strong radiation, the investigators are now contaminated. If they spend at most ten minutes in the presence of the Fragment, they will develop the first signs of radiation sickness, like headaches, nosebleeds, and nausea. A loss of 1 point of CON accompanies it, which will only be recovered after a year passes. Anyone who spends more than ten minutes in its presence (more exactly: in a radius of 50 feet around the Fragment) must make a resistance roll of their POW vs. the Fragment's POW of 15. If the roll succeeds, they merely suffer radiation sickness. If the roll fails, the Investigator begins to hallucinate. He sees alien stars, monstrosities, death, madness, and catches a glimpse of Azathoth itself, amidst his court at the center of the universe. The Investigator loses 2D6 Sanity points and gains 12 points of Cthulhu Mythos. He's simultaneously burnt by the dose of radiation. Within the next ten minutes he loses 2D6 hit points and permanently loses 1D6 CON. The radiation dose is so strong that the Investigator will die from it in 1D100 months, perhaps from leukemia or an aggressive cancer.

Anyone reckless enough to spend more than 30 minutes within a 50-foot radius of the Fragment of Azathoth dies immediately. Their skin begins to melt, sliding right off the skin. Their face begins to melt as well. Finally, their bones liquefy, and eventually there's nothing left of the Investigator than a puddle of liquid tissue. Witnesses to this lose 1/1D8 Sanity points.

Because of the particularly dangerous nature of the Fragment, the Keeper should make it clear that it's probably radioactive: the weird glow emanating from it and the significant rise in temperature around the Fragment should be clear indices. At the latest, when a nosebleed sets in, the investigators should realize that it's dangerous simply being in the vicinity of the Fragment.

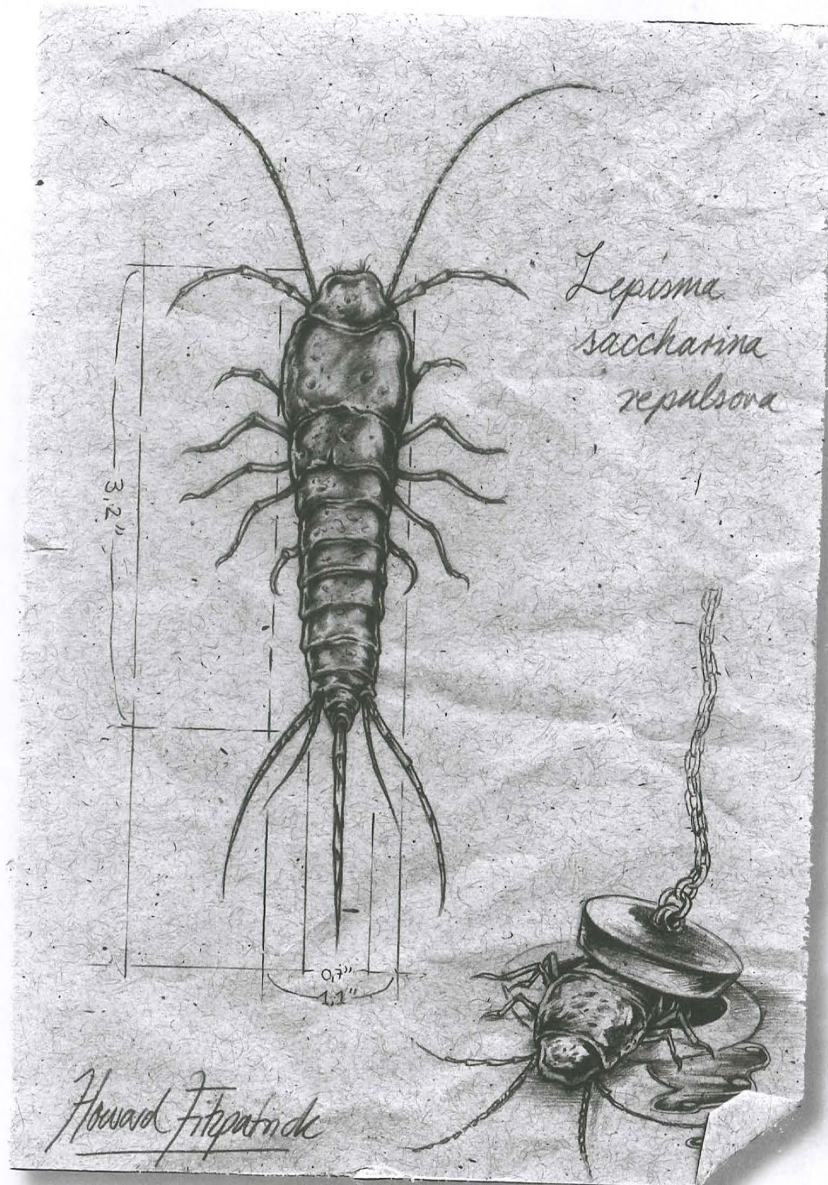
If the investigators can't stop the Fragment, perhaps because they don't have the rods or they have no idea how to use them, the Fragment crawls out of the ship at a movement rate of 2—heading directly and intentionally for the exit—and thereafter into the outdoors, down Carson's Creek and into the Black Hills. It will make its way through the woods and irradiate them. They will be tainted for years. Then the Fragment of Azathoth will create a gate back to Azathoth for itself and disappear to the sound of distant flutes piping madly.

## Afterword

An investigation that begins harmlessly, looking entirely like a classic adventure, takes a horrifying and oppressive turn. Still, if they're successful, the investigators can

liberate a whole town from a horrific curse, and Howard will be happily returned to his mother's arms.

For eliminating the Mother-Being and her brood, saving



From Howard's Sketchbook: Silverfish

her victims, including Howard, and killing the Insects from Shaggai, the investigators receive 2D10 Sanity points.

On the other hand, the victory will still entail a loss of Sanity. The Investigator who had the Insect from Shaggai fly into his head loses 1D3/1D8 Sanity points because of the experience.

If the investigators have explored the lowest level of spawn-ship and discovered the Fragment of Azathoth without setting it free, they lose 1D10 Sanity points knowing it's still lurking there. They can recover these points if they succeed in learning the spell Dismiss Azathoth and use it to banish the Fragment. If the investigators have freed the Fragment, they will lose 2D8 Sanity points as they watch it devastate a whole forest and poison a whole section of the country with radiation. And know that they're responsible for it.

If an investigator suffers a lasting insanity, entomophobia, the fear of insects, is extremely appropriate.

As already discussed, the Insects from Shaggai who are stranded with the spawn-ship near Stantonville are different in a whole array of details from the Insects from Shaggai that reside in Goatswood. These differences have to do with the whole race's dispersal. After the destruction of their home world, the insects set off in small communities across the galaxy, each of these groups gradually developing slightly different sensitivities and abilities.

Anyone interested further about the Insects from Shaggai in Goatswood should begin with Ramsey Campbell's 1964 short story, "The Insects from Shaggai," which has been published, among other places, in the Chaosium anthology "The Azathoth Cycle." You may experience a sense of *déjà vu* when it comes to the description of the Insects' ship.

#### One further note:

this adventure was originally a demonstration of the Cthulhu Matrix adventure system featured in *Worlds of Cthulhu* #1. Instead, it became an article in Issue #3 of *Cthuloide Welten*, the German-language *Call of Cthulhu* magazine from Pegasus. This scenario remains an example of how you can create an adventure with a modern plot structure without requiring a cult of some kind.

# Appendix

## I. Non-Player Characters and Monsters

In the Order of their Presumptive Appearance in the Scenario

Hugh Hornby,  
Substandard Hotelier

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 14 DEX 10 INT 10  
APP 7 EDU 7 POW 13 SAN 0 HP 12

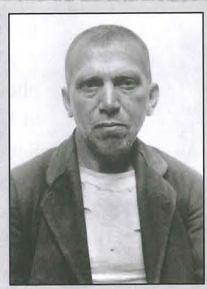
**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Fist 70%, damage 1D3+db;

Axe 40%, damage 1D8+1+db (under his bed)

**Skills:** Listen 60%, Wash Self 01%, Yell 70%.

**Description:** 45 years old, greasy, unkempt, stinky, rude, 5'11" tall. Because Hugh runs the only hotel in town, he doesn't even bother trying to be polite to his guests. The investigators will quickly become acquainted with his contemptuous, brutal mien. He is one of the *Brood of the Beetle*



Curt Buckle,  
Sheriff of Stantonville

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 14 DEX 11 INT 11  
APP 8 EDU 11 POW 10 SAN 0 HP 12

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Fist 60%, damage 1D3+db; .45 Revolver 50%, damage 1D10+2

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Bully 95%, Drive Auto 40%, Law 30%, Lecture the Public 90%, Make Self Important 75%, Spot Hidden 50%, Track: 35%.

**Description:** 53 years old, massive skull, small piggish eyes, sheen of perspiration on skin, poorly shaved, smells of stale sweat, 5'9" tall. A hard looking sheriff straight out of central casting. Has a small pot belly, sweat stains under his armpits, and a disheveled appearance. Little piggy eyes glint with hostility out of his large, crude skull. He is a member of the *Brood of the Beetle*.



Martha Hornby,  
Unfortunate Spouse

STR 8 CON 10 SIZ 10 DEX 12 INT 13  
APP 10 EDU 8 POW 11 SAN 32 HP 10

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Martha never resorts to force.

**Skills:** Run Household 20%, Prayer 70%, Suffer in Silence 80%.

**Description:** 42 years old, broken spirit, expressionless gaze, slumped shoulders, 5'6" tall. As said above, Martha's not originally from Stantonville, but Bloomsburg down the road. She is shy and reserved.



Bobby Humes,  
Unassuming Deputy

STR 10 CON 10 SIZ 13 DEX 13 INT 12  
APP 10 EDU 11 POW 12 SAN 55 HP 12

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Fist 50%, damage 1D3+db; .45 Revolver 40%, damage 1D10+2

**Skills:** Accounting 50%, Complain 75%, Law 25%, Obey the Sheriff 90%.

**Description:** 22 years old, slender face, pale, unsure, amusingly high voice, 5'11" tall.

Bobby is completely intimidated by Sheriff Buckle's aggressive demeanor. He doesn't appear to have much will of his own. He gives the impression of a little kid in a man's body.



Edgar Hampton,  
 Publisher, Editor, and Sole Employee  
 of The Stantonville Gazette

STR 11    CON 10    SIZ 14    DEX 14    INT 13  
 APP 16    EDU 14    POW 13    SAN 62    HP 12

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Fist 50%, damage 1D3+db; .38 Revolver 45%, damage 1D10

**Skills:** Accounting 35%, Fast Talk 50%, History 25%, Library Use 50%, Newspaper Production 90%, Own Language (English) 80%, Persuade 65%, Photography 65%, Psychology 55%.

**Description:** 34 years old, good-looking, beaming smile, thick blonde hair, mustachioed, 6'0" tall.

Edgar Hampton is perhaps the friendliest, most open, and most sympathetic person that the investigators will meet in Stantonville. Of course, that may strike them as suspicious. Edgar lives above the *Stantonville Gazette* offices.



Mary Whistle, Elderly Town Clerk

STR 6    CON 12    SIZ 9    DEX 12    INT 12  
 APP 9    EDU 14    POW 10    SAN 0    HP 11

**Damage bonus:** -1D4

**Attacks:** Fingernails 40%, damage 1D2-db; Knitting Needle 60%, damage 1D2-db

**Skills:** Apply Makeup 05%, History 60%, Knit 80%, Library Use 75%, Spot Hidden 50%.

**Description:** 71 years old, strong, poorly-applied makeup, severe dandruff, pungent smell, 5'1" tall. Mary belongs to the *Brood of the Beetle*.



Arthur Morton,  
 Proprietor of Morton's Diner

STR 14    CON 13    SIZ 13    DEX 11    INT 9  
 APP 9    EDU 10    POW 13    SAN 0    HP 13

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Attacks:** Knife 50%, damage 1D4+2+db; Cleaver 50%, damage 1D6+db

**Skills:** Brew Coffee 05%, Customer Service 01%, Gastronomy 10%, Kitchen Hygiene 02%.

**Description:** 52 years old, sullen, bad-tempered, unshaven, unwashed, 5'9" tall. Arthur Morton is repulsive-looking. He's always slightly hunched over and has a lower lip that hangs loose, offering a view of bad, blackened teeth with exposed roots. He is unshaven and unwashed. Greasy, uncombed, black hair hangs at random on his head. He frequently delves into his nose or ear with his finger, carefully examining the product before flicking it away.

Arthur belongs to the *Brood of the Beetle*. His disgusting restaurant is no longer a viable business concern. He's financially supported by other members of the *Brood*.



Ethan Atkins, Mayor

STR 9    CON 13    SIZ 15    DEX 9    INT 14  
 APP 7    EDU 13    POW 14    SAN 0    HP 14

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** .22 double-barreled derringers in vest pocket and both shirtsleeves 65%, damage 1D6

**Skills:** Accounting 40%, Blow Smoke Ring 80%, Credit Rating 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Law 20%, Psychology 40%, Persuade 40%, Survive Without Hourly Cigar 01%.

**Description:** 62 years old, bloated appearance, cigar in the corner of his mouth, mostly bald, watery eyes, poorly-fitting clothing, 5'5" tall.

Ethan Atkins is sort of the unofficial head of the *Brood of the Beetle* because of his powerful position in Stantonville



Wilma Barnes, Widow and Proprietress  
of the Sole Store in Stantonville

STR 11    CON 15    SIZ 13    DEX 11    INT 12  
APP 11    EDU 10    POW 16    SAN 80    HP 14

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Double-barreled 12-gauge shotgun 40%, damage 4D6/2D6/1D6  
**Skills:** Accounting 40%, Pick Up Gossip 80%, Psychology 50%.

**Description:** 67 years old, well-padded, good-humored, drowsy, slow, rosy red cheeks, 5'4" tall.

Wilma Barnes is a small woman who looks like a "kindly grandma," rounded and a bit chubby, with a round, red face with kind eyes and friendly wrinkles. She radiates peacefulness and a feeling of security. She is a woman whom children call "Grandma" and climb into her lap as soon as they meet her. Her husband Thomas died ten years before of natural causes



Dr. Gerald Eastman, Town Doctor

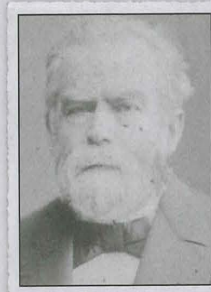
STR 10    CON 10    SIZ 11    DEX 13    INT 14  
APP 12    EDU 17    POW 10    SAN 0    HP 11

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Scalpel 60%, damage 1D4+db  
**Skills:** Apply Disinfectant 90%, Biology 50%, Chemistry 50%, Credit Rating 60%, Fast Talk 70%, Gardening 90%, Other Languages (Greek & Latin) each at 30%, Medicine 70%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 40%, Psychology 60%, Tidy Up 95%.

**Description:** 65 years old, slightly plump, light gray hair, gray goatee, 5'9" tall.

Dr. Eastman is always dressed entirely in white and smells strongly of disinfecting camphor. He's never to be seen without a stethoscope around his neck. The doctor belongs to the *Brood of the Beetle*, and indeed is one of those who were originally taken over by the Insects from Shaggai 27 years ago at Carson's Creek.



The Rev. John F. Mulbert, Episcopal Priest

STR 8    CON 12    SIZ 12    DEX 9    INT 13  
APP 10    EDU 15    POW 9    SAN 41    HP 12

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Preach 90%, damage: confusion for 1D3 rounds if *Idea* roll fails

**Skills:** Bible Knowledge 90%, Church Liturgy 80%, History 40%, Library Use 50%, Listen 50%, Occult 20%, Other Languages (Hebrew, Greek, & Latin) each at 60%, Psychology 60%, Persuade 70%, Proselytize 20%.

**Description:** 59 years old, slim, thick gray hair, strong hooked nose, piercing glance, ramrod posture, 5'11" tall. Rev. Mulbert has a bony, upright appearance. He emanates censure and wrath, underlined by his narrow hooked nose and piercing glance. Rev. Mulbert is very high-church Anglican; without some careful theological examination, one wouldn't know he's not a Catholic priest.



Mad Meg, Disturbed Woman  
with Unusual House pet

STR 8    CON 10    SIZ 10    DEX 11    INT 9  
APP 7    EDU 7    POW 15    SAN 17    HP 10

**Damage bonus:** +0

**Attacks:** Fist 50%, damage 1D3+db  
**Skills:** Camouflage 20%, Cook 10%, Cthulhu Mythos 05%, Dodge 60%, Giggle Insanely 95%, Grin Moronically 80%, Hide 20%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Natural History 35%, Occult 30%, Pharmacy 15%.

**Description:** 65 years old, wrinkled face, hairy chin wart, facial hair, watery grey eyes, bad teeth, wild yellowish-white hair, 5'1" tall. Despite her outlandish appearance, she is not one of the *Brood of the Beetle*.



## Prehistoric Tiger Beetle

**Movement rate:** 14/10 (flying)**Hit points:** 7**Attacks:** Mandibles 70%, damage 1D4+1**Armor:** 3 points of chitin**Skills:** Spot Prey 70%, Fly 25%**Sanity loss:** 0/1D2 Sanity points

## Prehistoric Ichneumon Wasp

**Movement rate:** 2/22 (flying)**Hit points:** 1**Attacks:** Sting 80%, damage 1+POT 10 paralytic poison**Armor:** 1 point of chitin**Skills:** Spot Prey 70%, Fly 75%

**Description:** The ichneumon wasp will first use its paralytic poison. If the poison overwhelms the investigator's constitution as described in the rule book, the Investigator will be completely paralyzed. He needs immediate attention at a hospital. If the wasp further succeeds in laying its eggs in the investigator, they must be removed within three hours before the larvae emerge to begin eating the Investigator from the inside out (which will take two days). The Investigator will develop a high fever within an hour and will die in two days from blood poisoning unless he undergoes surgery.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1 Sanity point

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**Sanity loss:** 0/1 Sanity point

## Imprisoned Slaves, Beings from Xiclotl

STR 45	CON 32	SIZ 40	INT 5	POW 10
DEX 13	Move 0	HP 36		

**Damage bonus:** +4D6

**Attacks:** Tentacle (up to six) 50%, damage: half of damage bonus + immobilize; Devour 100%, damage: 5D6 per round

**Armor:** 8 points of skin**Sanity loss:** 0/1D6 Sanity points.

## Giant Beetle in Howard's Tent

**Movement rate:** 6/10 (flying)**Hit points:** 8**Attacks:** Mandibles 40%, damage 2D4 + 1 point of poison per minute**Armor:** 3 points of chitin

**Description:** This giant beetle attacks the investigators when they disturb its search for food in Howard's abandoned tent. They will not be able to classify it specifically, but given its appearance, it seems to be an early relative of the *Scarabaeidae*, to which the scarab beetle also belongs, as the name says. This mutant specimen has strong mandibles with which it tries to cut its victims in order to then introduce some digestive fluid which acts like a poison. The poison inflicts one point of damage per minute. It can be washed or squeezed out of the wound and will cause no more damage thereafter. Otherwise, an examination will reveal that this is another primeval big. It's superficially similar to the *Albertus gigantus*, but as said, all the mutant insects in Carson's Creek are mutated differently and none is quite like the next.

**Sanity loss:** 0/1D2 Sanity points

## The Mother-being, Exiled Queen of Shaggai

STR 30	CON 40	SIZ 50	INT 10	POW 20
DEX 5	Move 0	HP 45		

**Damage bonus:** +4D6

**Attacks:** Tentacles (up to 5 attacks per round) 05%, damage: grasp 1D4+db

**Armor:** 10 points**Sanity loss:** 1D3/1D10 Sanity points.

## 2. Handouts

Copies of these handouts are also available to download from our website, [www.worldsofcthulhu.com](http://www.worldsofcthulhu.com)

**Beetle Handout 1:** Alberta Fitzpatrick's Letter, p.120**Beetle Handout 2:** Articles in The Stantonville Gazette,**Beetle Handout 3:** Request from Mad Meg, p. 121**Beetle Handout 4:** Howard Fitzpatrick's Last Diary Entry, p. 122

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I regret that I am writing to you under unfortunate circumstances. I no longer know if the police are able or, more to the point, willing to help me further, and I am alas somewhat incapacitated due to a recent operation on my hip. I am, however, completely unconcerned with my health; I am consumed with worry because Howard has disappeared!

He set off for a small town in Vermont named Stantonville almost two weeks ago, ostensibly in search of a new variety of insect in the area there. He telephoned me twice from Stantonville, but then a little more than a week ago, he failed to call me on my birthday. I realize I sound like a typical old woman, but you know Howard: he is reliable, almost to a fault. It's all but inconceivable that he would fail to call his mother on such an occasion. Consequently, I called his hotel in Stantonville the following day and was told that he had already checked out. The local police promised me that they would investigate, but they claim to have found nothing. They are reluctant even to designate him as a missing person. They insinuate rudely that he's likely off hunting butterflies and has simply forgotten to check in. I cannot believe that to be the case; indeed, I am all but certain that something awful has transpired. It may sound terribly old-fashioned to say so, but a mother knows these things.

I am completely desperate and know not to whom to turn. I cannot think of anyone else who might help me. As Howard's childhood friend, I hope you have the time and inclination to aid a terrified old woman who begs you from the bottom of her heart to please, please try and find her missing son.

I will not impose upon your friendship entirely; I will pay any and all expenses you incur.

Yours sincerely and in desperation,

Alberta Fitzpatrick



# The Stanton

## Landslide at Carson's Creel

by James Amsworth

JULY 20th - The mystery of the uproar of the night of July 18th and 19th has been solved. The search party, accompanied by this reporter of The Stantonville Gazette, discovered at the ravine at Carson's Creek the remains of an enormous avalanche which removed much of the face of one cliff. Large boulders were loosed from the cliffs and have made half of the valley impassable. The collapse was clearly responsible for the loud

the rubble in the area highly unstable, but the rest of the cliffs are pregnant with the mortal danger of future collapses. Mayor Atkins and the Stantonville Police Department therefore advise all residents to avoid the area entirely, to forbid children from playing in the area, and to ensure that pets or livestock do not escape into the woods in that direction. This reporter emphatically endorses this advisory based on his first-hand observation of the terrifying conditions

# The Stanton

## Earthquake In Stantonville

by James Amsworth

JULY 19th - Last night many residents of our town awoke in terror when a large report resounded through the night sky, followed by a prolonged rumbling accompanied by a slight tremor in the earth. Such phenomena are entirely unprecedented in the history of our town. Witnesses reported that the commotion came from the direction of Carson's Creek. Mayor Ethan Atkins has announced that this

morning a search party will be assembled to investigate what might have caused such an infernal din. The Stantonville Gazette will accompany the search party to convey to its readership immediately and at first hand the results of the search. Volunteers for the search may assemble at the Jedediah Stanton Monument at 9:00 a.m. Mayor Atkins, Sheriff Jennings, and Deputy Buckle shall lead the search party.

You Dam rich bastards from Stantonvil

I need a leesh for my beetel but I Dont have enuf muny

give me a leesh OR I will mak yur Bals DRI UP

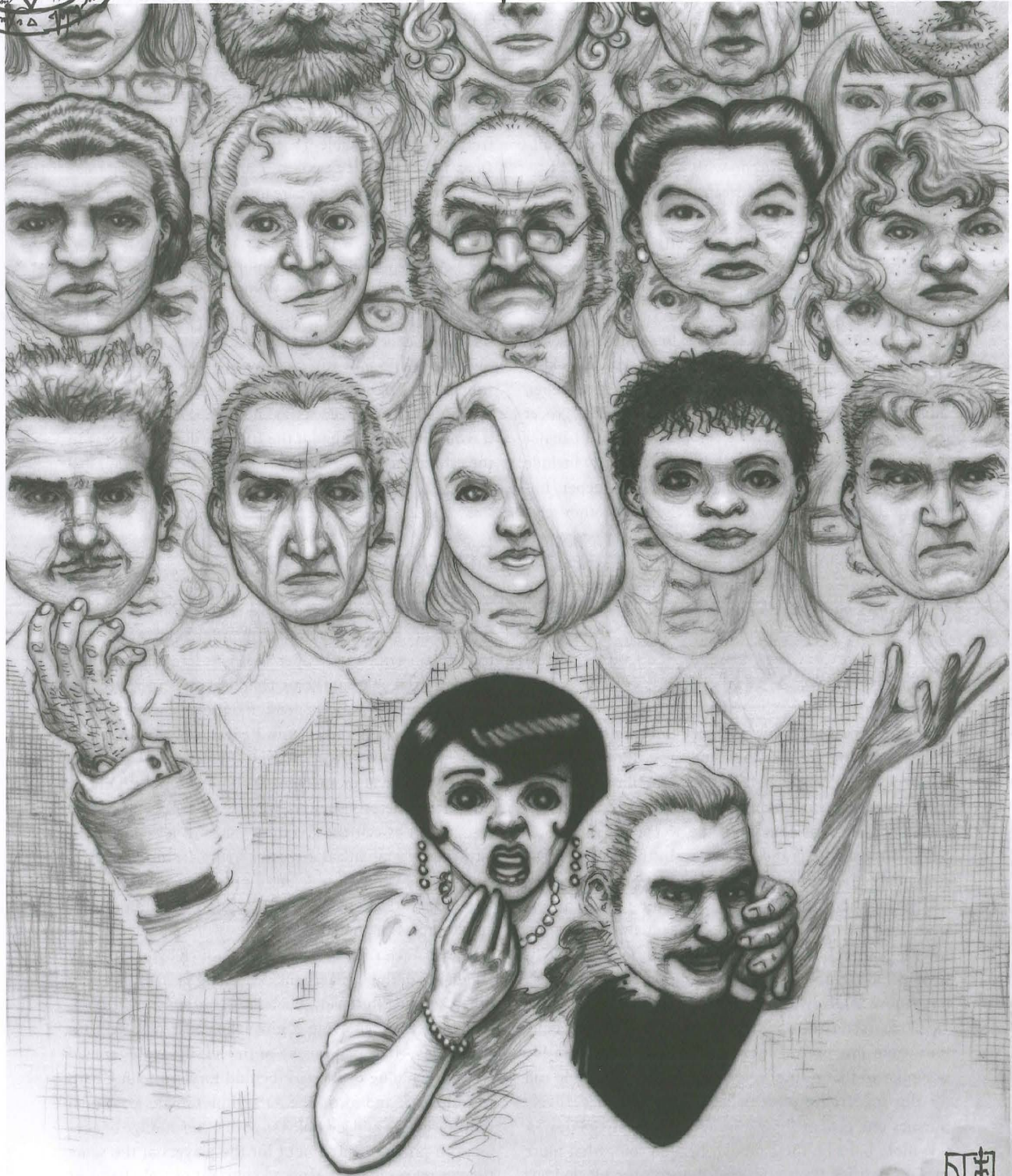
MEG

All nature in this part of the woods is clearly strange. Plants seem to grow rampant. And there are none of the normal mammals or birds one would expect. Instead there are a large number of unknown varieties of enormous insects. It seems as if I've stumbled into a world forgotten by time that's preserved these prehistoric creatures unto the present day. It is a miracle. This discovery will clearly make my name as an entomologist, even in Europe and Asia. I should be able to find more of the beetles that I've dubbed Albertus gigantus. Tomorrow I will investigate in ravine at Carson's Creek. I'm already excited at the prospect. This area is a treasure trove. The discoveries here will advance the field by decades. And no one in Stantonville has the slightest idea what entomological treasures are hidden here right in their backyard. But soon the world will know the name Stantonville. Every entomologist alive will savor the syllables and rhapsodize about it as the Egyptologists do about Tutankhamen.



A regular column for

# Keeper's Corner



# The Perfect Non-Player Character

## Making Supporting Characters Memorable

By Momo Evers

Player: "I'm finding out nix about this weird stuff, so I guess I'll try asking a librarian."

Keeper: "Sure. There's one sitting there."

Player (walking over): "Hello, excuse me; I'm looking for information on... Wait a second... on... Bm... B'moth. It's probably something to do with African culture."

Keeper (as librarian): "African Cultures are at the end of the last row on the left."

Player: "Thanks." (Goes to the shelf)

Characters are the Alpha and Omega of a good story. Novelists often hang entire plots on main characters. And as role-playing games are shared narratives, vivid characters are also a crucial factor for a successful and atmospheric evening's gaming. The mastermind behind all the group's stories, otherwise known as the Keeper, must play them all—from the murderer to the grocer to the charwoman. As far as the presentation of major characters goes, published adventures frequently include good, well-founded suggestions. But how do keepers improvise these supporting characters? How do they give non-player characters—both minor secondary characters and major leading characters—a 'soul'? All keepers develop their own tricks to help bring these characters to life. We present a selection here.

### Beg, Borrow, Steal?

One of the best ways for a keeper to bring a character to life is to visualize it in the mind's eye. If the character seems vivid to the Keeper, if its actions flow automatically from each particular game situation, if it develops a life of its own so that even the Keeper is capable of being surprised by it and its actions in the course of the story, then it can truly be said to be alive. Many keepers take inspiration from close at hand: they select people from their own personal circles of acquaintances, from the press, from books or the movies as models. Basically, people that the Keeper has already observed in "real life", but whose motives can then be slightly changed. These "real" characters can be integrated particularly speedily into game situations if their real or fictitious role in life is similar to that of the NPC needed. Does the game call for the appearance of a mad old man who obsessively pursues one goal as if possessed? How about Gollum? A few more hairs on the old boy's head, a somewhat more upright posture, a tatty tailcoat draped over his doddering body, and "my precious" replaced with some other verbal mannerism—and the NPC is ready. A more pow-

erful cultist, tired of life, with insanity gnawing eagerly at his soul? How about Dorian Gray? A caretaker with few brains, perhaps somewhat simpleminded, a bit of a laughing stock? Why not use an adaptation of Al Bundy from that unspeakable TV series *Married with Children*? Does the caretaker's wife also appear in a minor role? Excellent—as Al Bundy already has one who matches him perfectly.

Minor parts allow for more obvious thefts. If the players make the association, the appropriate character takes on a more solid form in their minds' eyes, thereby becoming easier to remember. With main characters however, it is better to depart somewhat further from the imagined 'template', and pick the most appropriate characteristics from a range of disparate role models. If the investigators are hunting a deranged serial killer who skins his victims, it would really be stupid if the friendly man they meet in the café starts spontaneously to remind them of Hannibal Lecter after a while.

### Speech and Body Language

One of the best ways to ensure a character remains fixed in players' memories (not to mention making it easy to remember for the Keeper too) is to provide it with a few unmistakable quirks or characteristics in speech or body language. Dialects lend themselves well to this, but unfortunately only if the Keeper can present them convincingly—otherwise it quickly gets embarrassing. Varying the level or speed of the voice can also be useful. Speech defects such as stutters or lisps can also aid recognition as can the frequent usage of foreign words, particular grammatical errors or 'extra features' such as constant hawking of phlegm, a persistent cough or irritating throat-clearing noises. Harrumph, harrumph, here comes Professor Umbridge...

The character can be given a final touch by use of body language—biting fingernails, checking a hairdo every other second, fluttering eyelashes, staring at the floor, twitching eyes, chewing a lower lip, nose-picking, gesticulations, continual raising of the left index finger as if lecturing, hiding of the face behind forward-falling hair, rocking back and forth like an asylum inmate, continual tooth-grinding and a whole range of other strange behaviors can provide amusement for the players at the same time as relieving the Keeper of constant out-of-character explanations as to which NPC is currently addressing the investigators.

## Just a Meaningless Label?

In addition to these exterior first impressions, characters' names should also be chosen with care. Few things are more tedious than when the players forget the name of an NPC after asking it for the fifth time and suddenly decide to start referring to the people around them as "our patron", "that girl from the train", or "the daughter of that guy with the dog". This can drive both players and keeper to distraction after a while. It can also lead to undesirable out-of-character situations (variations on the theme of "I can't remember the guy's name anymore, but my character sat at his table all evening, so he definitely still remembers").

One possibility for easy-to-remember names is to choose ones that imply something about the character, as JK Rowling does with increasing enthusiasm in her *Harry Potter* books. JK Rowling isn't the first author to use this trick; Charles Dickens used it in virtually all his novels. Ian Fleming is another author who uses names to good effect: Sir Hugo Drax, Count Lippe or Doctor Guntram Shatterhand as villains; Irma Bunt, Krebb or Oddjob as henchmen; or Honeychile Rider, Pussy Galore or Solange as heroines.

Alliterative names such as Woodrow Wilson or Harry Houdini also easily stick in the memory, but can be a little inelegant if used in large amounts.

## I Recognize That Name!

Of course, the easiest names to remember are those that you are already familiar with. Compared with other games, *Call of Cthulhu* has an unbeatable advantage, being (at least to a large extent) set in the past of our own reality: players have the opportunity to meet historical personalities, even if only in supporting roles or as small children. J. Edgar Hoover, Greta Garbo, Clark Gable, Marlene Dietrich (the last two certainly before the start of their careers), or WK Kellogg (inventor of the ubiquitous breakfast cereal, who started his first marketing campaign at about this time, and renamed the Kellogg Company in 1922)—all of these and many more are available to interact with the investigators. Investigators who happen to be in Munich in 1919 may run into a certain Heinrich Himmler, who completed a practical course in agriculture there following his rejection by the Reichswehr. Perhaps a slurry pit is nearby, allowing the investigators to submerge the young man with his budding interest in breeding programs long enough to change the course of history. Better than nothing, at any rate.

## Shades of Gray?

Many keepers tend to make their 'good' characters noble, beautiful and honorable and their 'evil' ones ugly, villainous and devious. Of course, this gets stale after a while. Does beautiful, rich, successful Claudia Schiffer make a

more interesting character than a down-and-out, scarred and careworn woman, who is kind-hearted but who finds herself on death row after a miscarriage of justice? Which villain is more fascinating: Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* (charming, brilliant, but nevertheless thoroughly twisted) or Sauron in the film version of *The Lord of the Rings* (evil, evil, powerful, and maybe just a bit more evil)? In most films, even the most monstrous creatures are given some 'human' attributes. Even Jason in *Friday the 13th*, with his stupid ice hockey mask, is able to suffer in certain ways.

To cut a long story short: even good characters need faults, mesmerizing abysses and dark sides. And evil characters need moments of light, in order to raise the players' hopes again and again that their enemy may yet turn to the good side. The NPC's failure or triumph, death or redemption can only really affect the players once they have become convinced that the fate of that character is really important to them.

## Playing the Character

Having successfully captured the players' imaginations with a character, the Keeper now carries a large responsibility. He or she is playing a character whose fate really matters to the players, whether as friend or foe. A relevant question is therefore: what do the players expect of this character, what do they hope of him or her? No cunning plot twist in the world is worth letting a carefully constructed character die (at least without good cause and massive preparation), or—even worse—acting implausibly. If you are having difficulty advancing one of the points of your plot, deciding "Then NPC XY just does it. It's not really logical, but it serves the plot" is completely unacceptable. Just leave it as a mystery instead.

## And Next Come The Statistics ...

Some keepers go to a lot of trouble to prepare characteristics and skill values for NPCs. This is often unnecessary, as most NPCs don't really need any game values. However, if one of them really needs some scores, it's usually enough just to ask: does the character have this particular skill at below average, average or above average level? In any case, it is often better to adjust NPCs' reactions or combat skills to the situation at hand rather than letting the dice alone decide.

When all is said and done, non-player characters are dramaturgic figures that should help present a story to the players in as atmospheric a manner as possible. Bearing this in mind, it does not hurt if an NPC that should have died, at least according to the rules, lives to fight on, or if a below-average fighter is allowed to suddenly improve in order to provide the group with a worthy opponent. The most important elements of any scene are not rules and dice so much as excitement and emotion.

## Pick and Mix

As much fun as it can be, not every non-player character needs to be described in excessive detail. It is often enough to present several possible lines of clues for the players and, after providing brief character descriptions, allow them to choose which of the available NPCs they would like to get to know better. In most cases, it will not harm the Keeper's plot in the least if the players decide

to turn to the schoolgirl (the young lady with the freckles and the eyes red with tears) instead of the NPC he had originally planned as patron (the old man in the green cap). An inventive keeper can simply make the pigtailed young lady into the granddaughter of the man in the cap—or even turn her into the patron herself—and be pleased with having (almost) instantly hooked the players' interest with this little bit of improvisation.

### Chance Encounters

**Lisa Miller:** Librarian—looks like Claudia Schiffer with a pigtail—is very shortsighted, but too vain to wear glasses (she hides hers in her handbag, and will only reluctantly retrieve them if nobody is looking)—speaks much too quietly and in a high-pitched squeak that most people only understand after she has had to repeat herself—loves detective stories—anybody who approaches her with an exciting "case" will awaken her longing for adventure; anybody then prepared to listen to her squeaky voice will be almost as surprised by her resourcefulness as she is herself

**Bill Belkin:** employee in a renowned casino—works at the roulette table—looks like Sean Connery when he was at his best—extremely polite, charming and courteous—a text-book example of a ladies' man—gamblers joking about his name are guaranteed to lose—always. Unfortunately he works in a casino, where name badges are common among the staff

**Rateater:** Beggar—looks like Klaus Kinski playing a lunatic (just like Klaus Kinski, in other words)—once he was a rich gambler, who lost all his money—speaks in a mumble; regularly wipes his nose on the palm of his hand, then runs his fingers through his hair—stinks to high heaven of moonshine as he spills so much of it on himself; in actual fact he is always sober and as cunning as a fox as he weighs up his adversaries from a position of safety, taking

the shirts from their backs if they're not careful—has kept a measure of self-respect and pride: anybody treating him humanely and with sympathetic respect will be helped rather than swindled

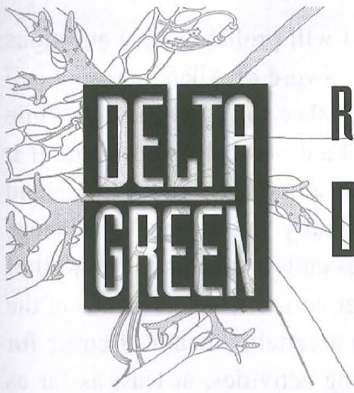
**Harry Hammer:** Policeman—looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger during the recent Californian governorship elections—constant wide grin—speaks in a strong European accent in sentences of three or fewer words—not particularly smart, but impressively strong—is afraid of the dark unless he has his dog with him

**An old lady in a misty night:** looks like Zsa Zsa Gabor—smells strongly of rosewater—runs limping through the streets calling "Margot! Margot!"—she is looking for her cat

**Two passers-by in a misty night:** a man and a woman in their mid-thirties—the man supports the woman—the woman groans with pain—the man becomes furious if addressed by the investigators—he marches off without saying a word, as the pair hurry on (he is taking his wife to the hospital; she is undergoing her first contractions)

**A child in a misty night, skipping in a walled garden:** looks like Wednesday Addams from *The Addams Family*, has a preoccupied, absorbed gaze—is not approachable—hums quietly while skipping (the child is sleepwalking; if the players speak loudly to her, she awakens, screams and is completely terrified).





## Regular Observations from the World of Delta Green Directives from A-Cell

By A. Scott Glancy

# Directive 106: Post 9/11 ... A Friendlier Delta Green

The 9/11 Terrorist Attack didn't just change our world. It also changed our fictional worlds. No fiction, set in the modern age, can be credible if it doesn't acknowledge the changes that have taken place since those attacks woke up America and the World to the threat of Jihadist terror. Luckily for those of us who wrote **Delta Green**, our fictional world is smack dab in the middle of this maelstrom. We've got a lot of catching up to do with history.

9/11 is a touchy subject, surrounded by tasteless and brainless conspiracy theories that we've chosen to steer clear of. This is not new for us. We steered away from a number of popular conspiracy theories and horrifying events so as not to demean the event or clutter our campaign world with endless Mythos collusion in world history. But even if events like Holocaust or President Kennedy's assassination weren't engineered by the Mythos and its agents those events still changed the world. That includes the invisible world of the Mythos. Keepers have to take those effects into account when planning scenarios in the **Delta Green** campaign setting.

Like the Indonesian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on 9/11 changed the physical and the political terrain in which **Delta Green** operates. The 9/11 attack had even farther reaching consequences

because it led to the invasion and occupation of both Afghanistan and Iraq, and accompanying changes in the US military, law enforcement and intelligence communities which continue to this day. Since those are the organs **Delta Green**'s membership is drawn from, it would be impossible for a keeper running a **Delta Green** campaign to credibly ignore all the changes that have taken place since the 9/11 attacks.

One of the first things to remember about **Delta Green** agents is that fighting against the Mythos is not their vocation. It's their avocation. **Delta Green** agents have 9-5 jobs somewhere in the US federal government; that's where their paychecks, benefits and retirement packages come from. Taking on the Mythos is something they do in their spare time. Fortunately they are part of a secret society whose members have access to enough resources and clout that they can get away from their government jobs, do their work for **Delta Green**, and get home before their spouses miss them. At least, that was how we imagined **Delta Green** working back in 1995 when we wrote it. Events following 9/11 dictate that at least for a couple of years, **Delta Green** will have to find a new way to operate.

In the months following 9/11, the US government's intelligence and law enforcement organizations were running

at double quick-time. Leave and vacation were cancelled. FBI special agents reported sleeping at the office for weeks. The Border Patrol agents were deployed in huge numbers. Customs agents worked feverishly to find that “dirty bomb” everyone was afraid would be delivered in a sea-borne cargo container. The same situation was reported across the breadth of the intelligence community, only more obliquely than it was with the overt law enforcement agencies. Obviously during this time, **Delta Green** agents would not be able to get away from their federal jobs to handle any kind of emerging Mythos or supernatural threat.

The only likely way that agents could get away to deal with a Mythos problem is if they found a way to disguise the threat as something more conventional, something that the Federal government would act against. The best term to describe this activity is “bad jacketing.” The original use of this term describes a technique where law enforcement would make members of a criminal organization appear to be police informants, thereby causing the organization to turn on, and often assassinate, otherwise loyal members. The threat of bad jacketing is frequently enough to convince the target to actually become an informer rather than be made to appear to be one to his compatriots.

When it comes to cults, at least, it’s really not too hard to paint them as organized crime or terrorists. Classic *Call of Cthulhu* cults act in many ways like terrorist cells. They recruit and indoctrinate new members, they smuggle old members in from outside the country, they gather resources (often illegally), and they engage in murder to further their agenda. Very often they commit very prosecutable crimes. The FBI will do **Delta Green**’s dirty work if the Cult of the Wailing Writhe can be bad-jacketed to look like a cell of Jihadist terrorists.

Individual sorcerers or mad scientist types can easily be bad-jacketed as serial killers. If their experiments call for blood that means nice prosecutable homicides—which can be easily understood by conventional law enforcement. It is not unusual for serial killers to have elaborate fantasies about their magical powers, their relationship to supernatural entities, or even the scientific value of their crimes. Most law enforcement agencies are going to be unimpressed with rants about bringing the dead back to life or calling down the horrors that stride from star to star. Bad jacketing individuals really mean that covering up their actual powers or abilities so that their case can be seen as nothing more than murderous madness and obsession.

On the other hand, the FBI will probably have questions when the members of the “Sword of Allah” terrorist cell turn out to be something other than advertised. While **Delta Green** can pull this kind of stunt on occasion, if it keeps happening someone in authority is going to demand an investigation into the faulty intelligence that keeps identifying strange religious cults as jihadists. The wall of secrecy that descended over anti-terrorist activities in the United States will provide a certain amount of cover for **Delta Green**’s bad-jacketing activities, at least as far as the press and public sources of information are concerned. But this will not prevent information about the conduct of these operations from leaking out among the staff of whichever agency did **Delta Green**’s dirty work.

Having more members of federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies become aware of the existence of the supernatural, or even the Cthulhu Mythos, is a double edged sword. The more men and women who encounter evidence of the Cthulhu Mythos means that there will be a wider pool of personnel for **Delta Green**’s recruiters to draw on to fill the ranks of the conspiracy. Of course any of these new recruits, especially during the first two years of the post 9/11 era, will be just as overwhelmed by their mundane work as the current members of **Delta Green**. It doesn’t do much good to recruit new members into the conspiracy if they are not able to participate in field operations. There is also the danger that as more people become aware of **Delta Green**’s activities, someone in a position of authority may try to shut down the operation. They might do this for any number of reasons; because they only see the crimes **Delta Green** commits in order to protect the world; because they do not believe in the supernatural and therefore see **Delta Green**’s mission as the product of unbalanced minds; because they support the goals of Majestic-12 and think that the power of the Mythos can be harnessed and should not be destroyed; or because they are a servant of some Mythos power and wish to protect their masters. Ultimately, spreading the word about what **Delta Green** is doing could be extremely dangerous to the organization and A-Cell may want to limit the number of people who are in the know.

Following the 9/11 attacks, **Delta Green**’s agents are going to be stretched extremely thin for close to two years, at a minimum. In order to continue performing field operations, **Delta Green** friendlies will have to take up much of the burden. During the 1990s, friendlies (people who work with the **Delta Green** conspiracy, but are not active members of a federal government agency) were often cast



in supporting roles. They were brought along for a Night at the Opera because they had specialized knowledge or were familiar with the area that the Agents would be operating in. Nevertheless it was the Agents who were expected to do the heavy lifting, particularly when it came to any wet work. With so many **Delta Green** agents tied up at their day jobs, the Friendlies will have to perform much of the field work, and even the dirty work, of **Delta Green**.

But friendlies are not just the bookish intellectuals and researchers who funnel new intelligence about Mythos-related activity to **Delta Green**. Neither are they just the experts in virology, forensics or even computer security that support **Delta Green** investigations. They also include downgraded **Delta Green** agents.

Not every agent who has been downgraded to Friendly status has also retired from the federal agency that employs them. Some friendlies are still active members of the FBI, DEA, CDC, etc. who no longer wish to participate in field operations, usually due to mental exhaustion. Others are **Delta Green** agents who were let go by their federal agency due to the kind of misconduct that is typical of participation in Nights at the Opera. Others may have been forced to retire from federal service due to crippling injuries, like the loss of an eye or an arm. When these agents lose their official standing in the federal government, they are often downgraded to Friendly status. Of course, that does not mean that they have lost their commitment to the cause. Some of the most dedicated members of the **Delta Green** conspiracy are those former agents, now friendlies, who have lost their careers or damaged their minds and bodies making a stand against the Mythos.

With the Agents in the cells too tied down by the demands of the War on Terror, these friendlies, downgraded agents, or even previously black-balled agents could be contacted again and brought in to perform missions. Agents will not be able to physically assist the Friendlies in their missions, but they will be able to assist with intelligence and materials. Groups of friendlies will be contacted by otherwise occupied agents, who will describe the mission or investigation that needs attention, and will provide whatever intelligence they have about the situation. Later, as the situation develops, the Friendlies may find that they need specialized materials and skills to continue the investigation. The agents could direct them to other friendlies with the right skill packages, or even

to specific Green Boxes, (clandestine caches of weapons and materials spread out across the US) in order to get the right gear.

**Delta Green** agents could also provide the Friendlies with official ID from various federal agencies in order to smooth their interactions with contacts or witnesses. These ID in no way allow the Friendlies to legally execute an arrest, or fire their weapons in public, or get out of jail free, but if you flash an ID from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention you'll be able to ask a lot of questions about people's health. If you have ID from the Department of Energy, you'll be able to ask around or even get into large areas of the nuclear power station. Most people will cooperate and answer questions when they see a badge from the US Marshal's Service, AFT or Secret Service. The ID would be genuine, but if anyone checked with the issuing agency, they would find that no such employee existed. Such IDs would only be for show and would have to be used wisely.

For the most part, friendlies have been led to believe that **Delta Green** is an official agency with offices and an appropriated although secret budget. When they end up committing crimes in order to accomplish investigations and missions, they are going to start to wonder about **Delta Green's** actual status. This could be a very great danger if the Friendlies feel betrayed when it turns out that the Agents have been lying to them. This could lead to a couple of different problems. For one, the Friendlies could decide that they want nothing more to do with **Delta Green**, especially if something happens where one of their number gets into trouble and **Delta Green** cannot or will not do anything to help them. Taking on more and more duties, while learning more and more about how isolated and unsupported they are, could cause a lot of friendlies to decide to head for the door.

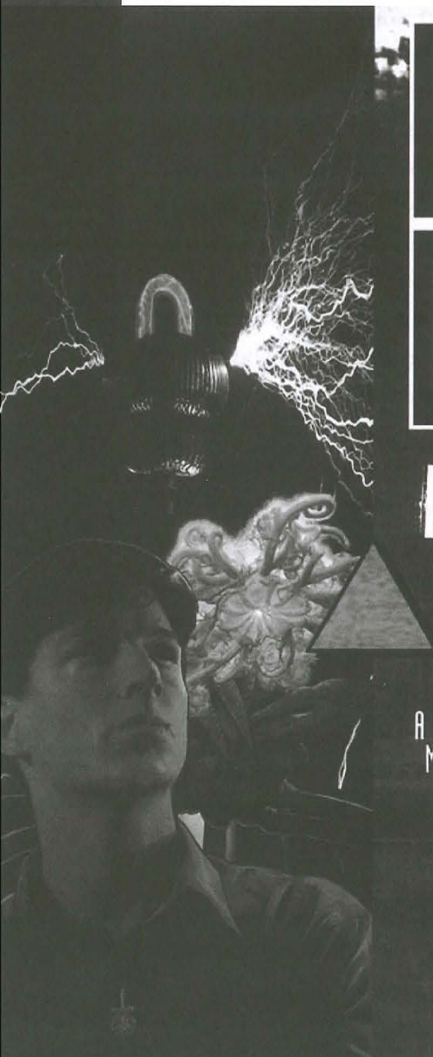
The other possibility is that as the Friendlies take on more work, they might begin to feel more confident. When they learn that they can't rely on **Delta Green** for the assistance they expect, they might instead decide that there's not much that **Delta Green** can do for them that they cannot do for themselves. Some groups of friendlies might band closer together and ultimately see themselves as a group separate from **Delta Green**. The next time a **Delta Green** agent calls them with an assignment, it might not be treated as an order, or even as a request. Agents might find themselves having to negotiate with friendlies in order to secure their services. Once the pace of the War on Terror

slows down following the fall of the Baathist regime in Iraq, **Delta Green** agents may find that their network of friendlies has been greatly depleted.

Some groups of friendlies may strike off on their own and form themselves into independent secret societies that refuse to place themselves under **Delta Green**'s control. Even if these new groups' overall goals remains opposing the Mythos and its servants, their methodology could differ widely. Some of these new groups could believe that Mythos magic should be widely employed to fight the Mythos. Other groups could be support the view that Mythos magic should be avoided at all costs, including Dismiss spells or the use of Elder Signs. Groups like this would destroy any Mythos tomes and artifacts without any thought to the potential consequences. Other groups might even be willing to cooperate with some Mythos groups who are not (in their opinions) posing an immediate threat to humanity. This could be anything from performing favors for Stephen Alziz and the Fate, or cooperating with the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign against the Mi-go. Groups of ex-friendlies might even find themselves falling prey to the lure of power offered by the

Mythos, and could even be viewed by **Delta Green** as enemies that should be eliminated.

The question then becomes, what will **Delta Green** do to bring these friendlies back into the conspiracy? Obviously, there will be a lot of interest in making sure **Delta Green** does not lose its access to the Friendlies' talents and resources. However, as mentioned in "*Directives From A-Cell #4*" (see *Worlds of Cthulhu #4*), **Delta Green** has a limited amount of power to coerce cooperation from its members, and frankly would be unable to rely on them if it did coerce them. Getting friendlies to return to the fold would be more a matter of persuasion than anything else. In order to bring friendlies back under the authority of the cell organization of **Delta Green**, the Agents are going to have to be a lot more candid with their friendlies. It is likely that any friendlies who participated in 'Operas' during the years just after 9/11 will have a far more cynical attitude towards **Delta Green** and its mission. They will have to be handled carefully, less like apprentices and more like independent allies.



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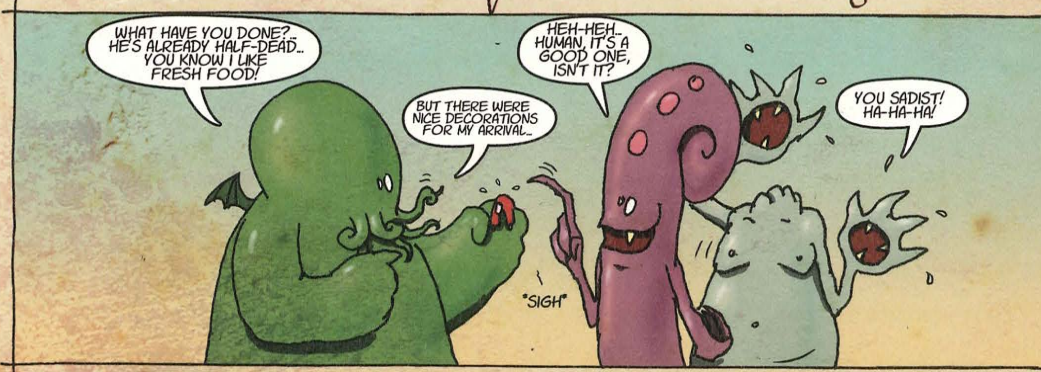
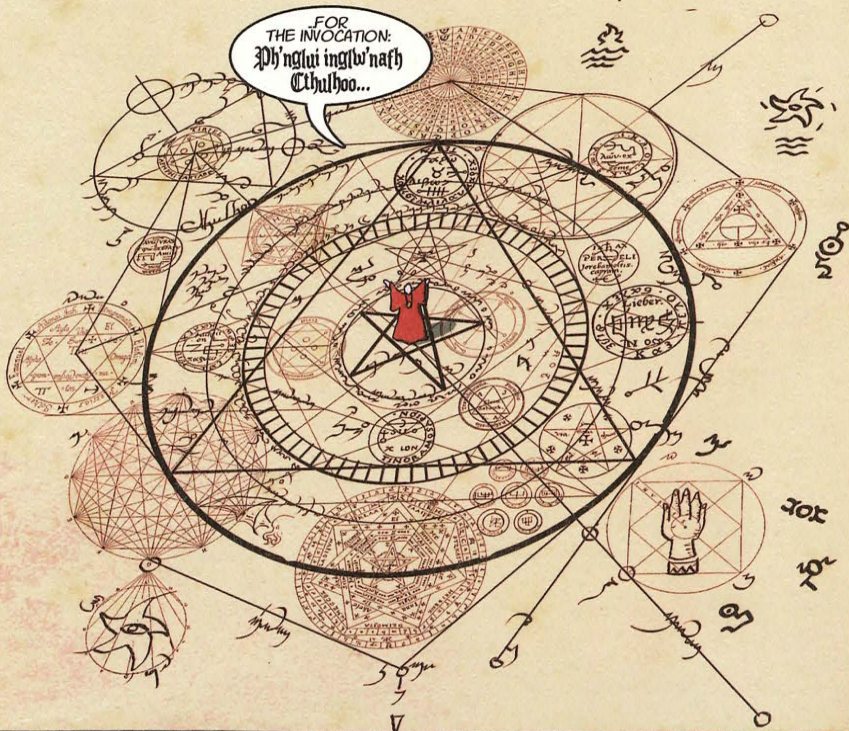
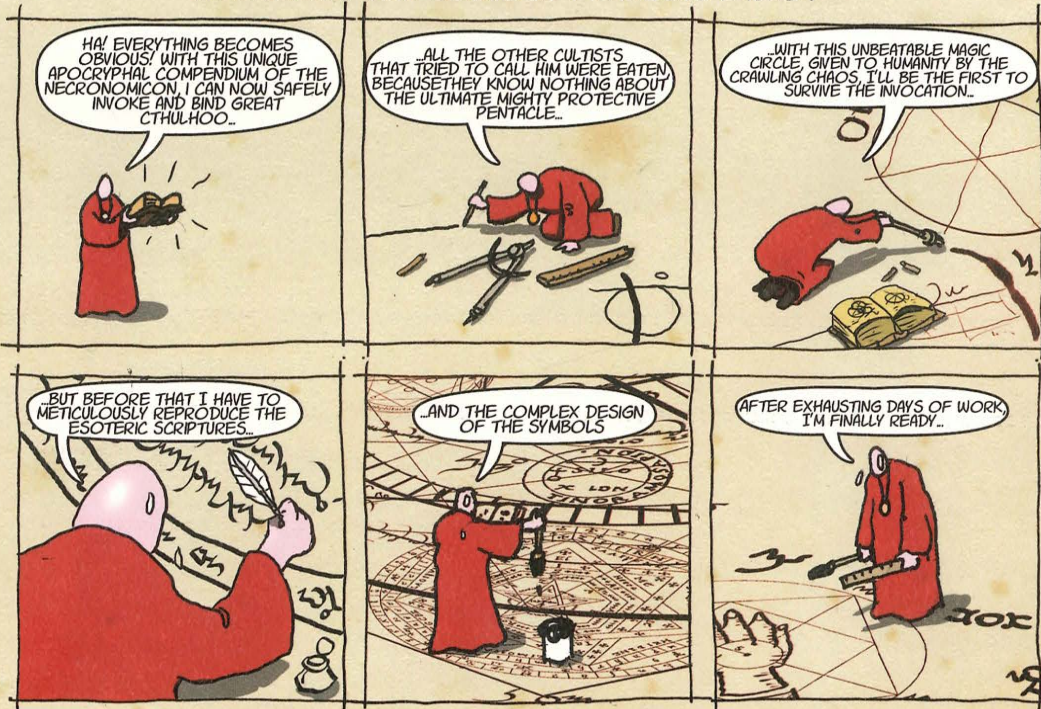
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