

"The Thing in the Park" ©1996
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An Opifex Phoenix Production

Introduction

This adventure is intended for a group of experienced Investigators and is set in the area where the French and Indian War took place (around modern Pennsylvania and the Ohio River). It is a 1990s adventure, but could be extensively modified for use in another time period.

The adventure begins with the mysterious death of a friend and pits the investigators against a horror that was spawned from the French and Indian War. Can the investigators defeat a accursed being that steals the faces of the living, or will they end up as moldering, faceless corpses?



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Keeper's Background

Keeper's History

The French and Indian War was fought over nearly a decade and ultimately resulted in English dominance in North America. There were many battles that were recorded in the history books and there are some that have been lost in the murk of the past. One such battle involved a small force of English soldiers who were brutally murdered by an obscure tribe who worshipped abhorrent beings. These people were hated and feared by the other Native Americans who lived in the area, so much so that when a reprisal force of English soldiers and Mohawk warriors came in search of this tribe the local inhabitants gave them directions. The battle was short and vicious and resulted in the almost complete extermination of the tribe. Unfortunately for the English officer, Daniel Tucker, one of the survivors was a particularly powerful and evil shaman. This shaman plotted his revenge for years and in 1766 he sent a small band of warriors to capture Daniel Tucker. Tucker was brought to the shaman who transformed him into a face stealer using dark and terrible magic. The evil shaman then used Tucker to kill the men who were under his command.

The evil shaman's revenge would have been completed except that one of the Mohawk warriors, "Growling Bear," who had befriended Tucker was not unskilled in the ways of magic. This warrior consulted his elders and shamen and learned much about the face stealer. Growling Bear went to Jonathan Tucker, Daniel's brother and an English officer, and told him what was happening. Jonathan Tucker, Growling Bear, and a small force of English soldiers and Mohawk warriors set out to kill the evil shaman.

The force arrived at the small fort Daniel Tucker had commanded only to find that all the men had been

killed and their faces removed. For the next two weeks the soldiers and warriors fought the shaman's warriors and tracked the face stealer. Finally, Growling Bear located the shaman's shelter and killed him. Growling Bear had expected the face stealer to perish upon the death of its creator, but his information turned out to be false. For the next three days the face stealer came and killed soldiers and warriors. During this time Growling Bear worked at a frenzied pace to construct a "tomb" in which to imprison the face stealer. When the "tomb" was complete, only Tucker, Growling Bear, one English soldier named John Trask and one Mohawk warrior remained alive. Guided by Growling Bear, the men tracked the face stealer and did battle with it. During the pursuit John Trask was shot in the chest with a musket and told the others to leave him under a tree. Certain he was dying, he wrote of the events that had taken place (see Handout #1). The others went on without him. In the final battle, the Mohawk warrior died first, followed by Jonathan Tucker. Fatally wounded, Growling Bear felled the face stealer with a final blow of his war tomahawk and shoved the body into the "tomb." With his dying breath he put the Elder Sign into the stone and spoke the spell sealing the "tomb."

John Trask crawled to the old fort and lapsed into unconsciousness for nearly two days, but he was lucky enough to be found by an English search party. He was carried back to civilization and eventually recovered enough to return and search for his friends. Because of the thickness of the woods and the presence of hostile natives, he was never able to find the bodies. His writings of the event were kept by his family and eventually loaned to a museum.

The face stealer that has once been Daniel Tucker lay for over two centuries in its "tomb", kept in suspension by the enchantment, until it was exposed by construction workers and the Elder Sign was removed. The face stealer regained consciousness and pushed its way out of the tomb, thus setting the stage for the adventure.

Adventure Timeline

This table shows the events which occur immediately prior to the start of the adventure. The "Days" column lists the number of days prior to the start of the adventure the events took place. The "Events" column lists what happened during those days.

Days	Events
14	Construction workers accidentally dig up the face stealer's "tomb" and expose a skeleton. The police are called and bring the skeleton to be examined. The Elder Sign imprisoning the face stealer is removed by one of the workers, allowing it to escape after dark.
13	The face stealer attacks and kills six teenagers in the park late at night. This occurs at area "A" on the park map. It drags five of the bodies to area "9" on the park map and uses their blood to begin the ritual to prepare the site, completing one pole. The face stealer eventually buries all the bodies in area "A."
12	The Medical Examiner determines that the skeleton is over 100 years old. The construction site is declared a potential archeological site and construction is stopped. The face stealer continues its ritual and completes the second pole. The parents of four of the missing teenagers report them missing while the parents of the other two assume they ran away from home and are glad to be rid of them.
11	David Brant and his graduate students arrive to begin their excavation. The face stealer completes the third pole.
10	Brant and his team continue their work. The face stealer completes the fourth and final pole.

9	The owner of the construction site, Jack West, threatens Brant and a fist fight breaks out. West is arrested, but Brant doesn't press charges. The face stealer finishes preparing its ritual site and kills a young woman, Carol Stenhegan, at site "B." It buries her body and takes her face to its ritual site to prepare it. The staff at the park finds a puddle of blood in the parking lot from the face stealer's ritual.
8-6	While waiting for the face preparation to end, the face stealer explores the area. Carol Stenhegan is reported missing by her roommate.
5	The face stealer's face is completed and it takes its second victim, Carl Porter, in area "C." It buries his body in area "C" and begins preparations on Porter's face. Tim Williams, who was running with Porter, sees Porter killed by the face stealer, but not before Porter tears its stolen face and reveals it for what it is. Terribly shaken by these events, Williams escapes the face stealer and runs aimlessly all night until he is picked up by the police and taken to the hospital.
4	The police finally get a semi-coherent story from Williams and begin their search. The face stealer decides to keep a low profile for a while. Based on Porter's story, the police believe the killer is Stenhegan.
3	The police search the park and find Porter's shoes hanging from a tree and his hand nearby. The police step up patrols of the park and urge people to not go into the park alone or at night.
2	The police find Porter's faceless body cleverly buried under a fallen tree. The police decide to keep the details about Porter's body from the public.
1	The investigator who knew Porter is called about his funeral and receives word about how Porter died.

Getting the Investigators Involved

At some point prior to running the adventure, the Keeper should establish Carl Porter as a friend of one of the investigators. The adventure will begin after the investigator who knew Porter is called and told of his death. Porter's sister, Elizabeth, is arranging the funeral and will expect the investigator to come. She will let the investigator know about the horrible nature of Porter's death and will say that the police are not doing a very good job finding his killer. Since she will know a little bit about the investigators brushes with the unknown from her conversations with Porter, she will hint that the investigator should bring any associates along with him and that she would like him to look into her brother's death.

Players' Information

Investigating Porter, Williams and Stenhegan

Carl Porter was an accountant in a modestly successful firm, single, very reliable and a well adjusted individual. He was in excellent health from running and working out in a health club on a regular basis. He had no known enemies and no one had any good reason to want to kill him. His friend, Tim Williams, works as a manager at a record store. Porter's past communications with the investigator suggested that Williams had suffered some sort of problem with drug addiction after having a nervous breakdown in college and that Porter was his mentor in a rehabilitation program.

The investigators have two primary sources of information about Porter's death: the police reports and Williams. If the investigators have access to the police reports or are able to win the confidence of some local police officers they will be able to learn some or all of the following:

- 1) Porter was killed in the park 5 days prior to the start of the adventure.
- 2) Porter's hand was found three days ago in the park.
- 3) Porter's body was found buried under a fallen tree in the park.
- 4) Porter's body was found missing a hand (which was recovered) and facial skin (which was not recovered).
- 5) The main suspect is Carol Stenhegan, who was reported missing 9 days prior to the start of the adventure.

If the investigators are able to get access to the coroner's report or win over someone who works in the coroner's office, they will be able to learn some or all of the following:

- 1) Porter was killed by a combination of blunt trauma to his chest and a stab wound in his abdomen.
- 2) The blunt trauma appears to be from a very powerful impact, perhaps from a baseball bat.
- 3) The stab wound is exceptionally deep and done with an unusual amount of skill.
- 4) The missing hand appears to have been pulled off by a great deal of force after the wrist was shattered.
- 5) Porter's face had been removed with surgical precision.

If the investigators check on Williams, they will learn that he is in a private hospital room undergoing treatment. If the investigators are able to convince the staff that they are friends of Williams, official investigators, medical personal or that they have a very good reason as to why they should be allowed to talk to Williams, they will allow one or two investigators to talk to him.

Williams will be sitting in a chair reading a magazine when the investigators walk in. He will have a haunted look in his eyes and will seem to be slightly on the edge. There are several prescription bottles on the nightstand, mostly tranquilizers. If the investigators ask about Porter, Williams will tell the following story:

Carl and I were out running at night. I know the park is supposed to be closed when its dark, but we both had been stuck at our jobs all day. We were in a wooded section when we saw a woman runner up ahead of us. She was very good looking and we saw her twist her ankle and fall. Carl is...was...much better with the ladies than me. He got up to her and was helping her stand up...I don't think she saw me...she attacked Carl. I saw her grab his throat and strike him...then she had a knife in her hand and stabbed him. I...could see blood all over him. I screamed and she looked up at me...Carl was still struggling for life and hit her in the face and then....God...and then...he pulled her face completely off...it was horrible...God it was horrible...horrible...horrible!

At this point Williams will start screaming and run towards the door. If he is shown a picture of Stenhegan he will immediately start screaming. Once he begins screaming, two nurses and an orderly will come into the room to calm Williams down. The investigators will be told to leave and will not be allowed to see Williams again. Williams will eventually recover but will be on medication for the rest of his life.

If the investigators decide to check on Carol Stenhegan, they will find two primary sources of information. The first is the police report and the second is Stenhegan's roommate Jenifer Stubbs. According to the police report, Stubbs reported Stenhegan missing 8 days prior to the start of the adventure and she is the only suspect in the murder of Porter. Given the damage Porter sustained, the police believe that if Stenhegan is involved then she must have had help.

The investigators will be able to learn her roommate's name and address from the police report. If they decide to talk to her, she will be willing to speak to them if they give her a good reason to do so. If the investigators are able to talk to her, she will tell them that Stenhegan went running in the park 9 days prior to the start of the adventure and that Stenhegan never came back. If the investigators suggest that Stenhegan was involved in Porter's death, she will vehemently deny it, saying that Stenhegan was a very kind person. Stenhegan was a nurse and the people she worked with will confirm this.

Investigating Missing Teenagers

If the investigators learn of the missing teenagers and are able to get access to the police reports, they will find that four teenagers have been reported missing by their parents on the same day. According to the reports, the teenagers were last known to have been in the park. If the investigators talk to the parents who reported their children missing and the teenagers' friends, they will learn that the teenagers often hung out in the park and that most of them had minor police records. They will also find out that the parents of two of the teenagers think that their kids ran away and are not worried about it. The other parents are worried about their kids and do not think that they ran away. If the investigators suggest that the teenagers might have been involved in Porter's death, they will be told that the teenagers were not angels but that no one thinks they would ever kill anyone. The teenagers' names were: Janet Anderson, Kevin Davis, Bert Trent, Ted Bunch, Keisha Lont, and Jim Boyd. The police have no leads on the disappearances, but some of the officers suspect that Porter's death and Stenhegan's disappearance are related to the disappearance of the teenagers.

The Blood in the Parking Lot

If the investigators go looking for reports of any other unusual events, they might be able to learn from the police or the park staff that a puddle of blood was found in the park 9 days prior to the start of the adventure. The blood tested as human, but the police have no leads in the case. The blood is the result of the face stealer's creation of its ritual site. The investigators might be able to learn about the significance of the blood from Brant's grandfather, namely that it is within 30 feet of the original face.

Talking to David Brant

The investigators should talk to Brant since he holds three keys to successfully defeating the face stealer, namely the missing Elder Sign, John Trask's writings, and his grandfather. Brant spends most of his days at the archeological site. Given the slow nature of archeology and the trouble caused by West's occasional interruptions, Brant and his team will be there for at least a month, possibly longer. Brant is staying at one of the hotels in town along with his graduate student team.

The investigators should have little trouble learning of Brant since his little expedition has made the local news a few times, primarily because of the controversy over the state moving in on West's land. Investigators who shun the local newspaper, TV and radio might run into him while he is at the site or while he is in the park, looking for signs that there might be additional sites worth digging up. Brant is a bit obsessive about his work, but will be approachable.

Brant is an expert on the original inhabitants of North America and is familiar with many of their myths, legends and histories. His special area of interest is the French and Indian War. He has a copy of Trask's manuscript, the Elder Sign taken from the "tomb" and his grandfather knows a great deal about ancient magic.

Brant will be willing to give the investigators a tour of the site, if they are willing to follow his rules about where they can step and what they can touch. He will also be willing to show them the Elder Sign, but will not part with it without an extremely good reason to do so. He does not believe that it is magical. He does, however, think that it is a very valuable historical artifact. If the investigators ask

if he knows anything about the "tomb" he will mention the Trask writings. He has text copies of the Trask writings on his PowerBook and will be willing to give away copies, if the investigators seem interested. Brant does not believe that anything supernatural happened in 1766. Instead, he believes that an unusual, but not supernatural, event happened in the area and that it was turned into a myth. He does give some credence to Trask's writings, but dismisses the more unusual parts as the product of a superstitious and unscientific mind. He will point to the fact that Trask admits that he was badly wounded and it is not uncommon for people to suffer lapses in rationality when they are badly injured. The Trask writings are as follows:

The year of our Lord 1766,

I write this knowing that it might well be the last thing that I pen for others to read. My friend Jonathan Tucker lost his brother to a most wicked savage who took him from the very midst of an armed camp. My friend Jonathan learned of his brother's fate from one noble savage who is called Growling Bear by his fellows.

This warrior told Jonathan that his brother had been taken by an evil shaman and turned against his fellows. We placed little stock in his words at first, but a dispatch from the fort confirmed that Daniel had been taken and that the men were being slain in the night. One soldier reported seeing Daniel striking down one of his own men and dragging him off to the woods. Growling Bear, myself and a band of stalwart Englishmen and Mohawks set out with Jonathan to set matters straight. We marched and marched to reach the fort quickly, but we came to late. I spilt the life blood of many a man in service to my King and Country and I have seen much horror in my time, but what we found chilled all our blood like the winter wind. The men at the fort had all been slain and their bodies left to feed the carrion birds. The true horror was that every man's face had been peeled from his skull. I have seen the savages take scalps, but this sort of wickedness was beyond even their heathen souls.

Growling Bear lead us to the hiding place of the shaman and after a stiff fight with his guards Growling Bear put his war hatchet through the man's head. We lost a few men in that battle, some we found had died from no apparent wound. The warriors whispered of witchery and although we brave Englishmen laughed at such things, I could not find a single mark on any of the bodies.

We had thought that the worse was over with the death of the shaman. Would that this had been the case. Over the next three days Daniel came and killed and killed. At least I think it was Daniel. It looked just like him and his own brother even said so. But the things he did were not like the Daniel Jonathan described in any manner. On one occasion, we fired four muskets into him. He staggered and fled, but returned the next day with no sign of injury. Growling Bear believed that Daniel's body was the possession of a spirit of darkness and evil and I am inclined to believe him.

With only four of us left, we almost lost hope. In desperation we followed Growling Bear's order to help him build a small structure of stone and wood. He danced about the thing chanting and calling out. I would have thought he was offering up to the Devil, if I didn't know it was out in the dark woods watching us.

The morning came with a bright sun that brought us no cheer. Quietly and grimly we went to hunt it rather than waiting for it to come to us. We managed to catch the cursed thing while it was doing something awful to a face it had taken and put some lead balls into it. The thing tore into us, felling me before I could do more than stick a knife in its arm. It ran from the others

who took off in pursuit. I can hear the musket fire always down the woods. I think I am dying now and I pray to God that they kill the thing.

If the investigators ask Brant what he thinks about the murders and missing people, he will say that he has not been following the news closely but he thinks that it is "yet another psychopath who has been created in our society like a timebomb and has gone off." He, and the general public, do not know that Porter's face was taken. If the investigators tell him this, he will be very surprised. He will suggest that it is either some sort of coincidence or that someone made the connection between the Trask writings and the "tomb" and was crazy enough to do the sort of things described in the writings. He will point out that the Trask writings can be found in many books and on the internet.

If Brant is exposed to evidence that indicates that something supernatural is involved or if the similarities between the events in the Trask writings and events in the park become too obvious to ignore, he will be willing to call his grandfather and ask for information. He will still insist that it is just a psycho doing the killings and will say that he thinks that his grandfather's knowledge of lore and mythology would be useful in catching the person.

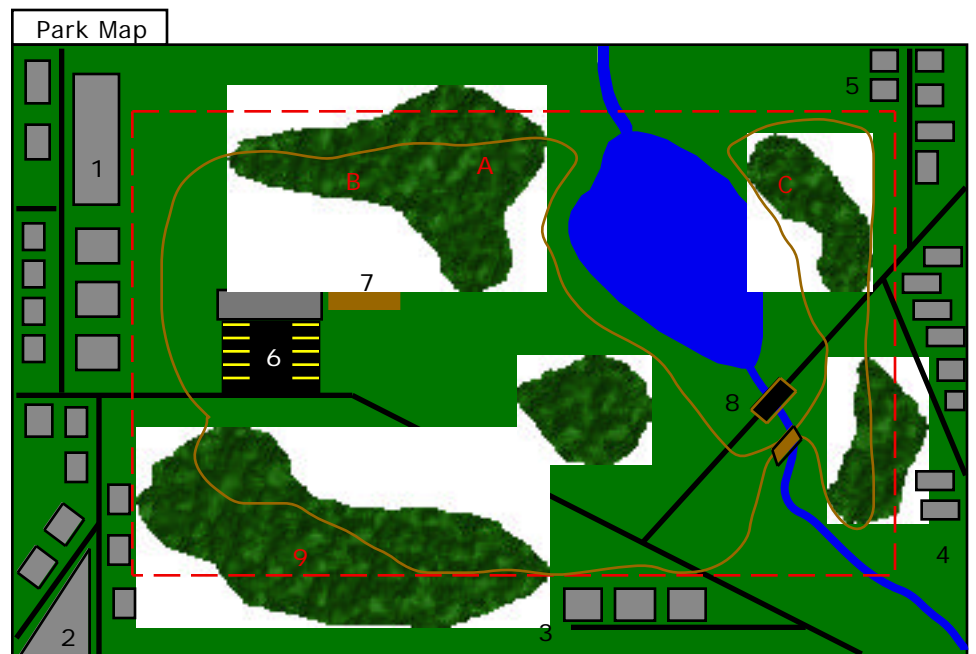
His grandfather, John Brant, is unable to travel but will be able to advise Brant over the phone. He will also be willing to talk to the investigators, especially if they take him seriously. John Brant knows a great deal of myth and lore (he has an Occult skill of 90% and a Cthulhu Mythos skill of 4%) and will be able to provide the investigators with information about what they might be facing. John Brant will say that they are either dealing with a crazy man, some sort of evil spirit, or a horrible being known as a "stealer of faces." He will say that if it is a crazy man, then the police will be able to settle the matter. If it is an evil spirit or a "stealer of faces" then the police will not be able to deal with the thing. He will give the investigators advice about how such beings are dealt with. A lot of the advice will either be completely based in myth or not relevant to dealing with a face stealer, but he will describe at least one correct way defeat the face stealer. He will also provide some incorrect information about "stealers of faces" but some of it will be accurate. It is left to the Keeper to decide what exactly John Brant tells the investigators.

Maps

Park Map

The park is a public park and requires no admission fee. It is reasonably well maintained and is visited irregularly by the local police, mostly to keep juvenile delinquents and the homeless from overrunning the park.

The park tends to be fairly empty during work hours, but there are almost always a few people walking dogs, biking or running in the park when it is open (the hours are from sunrise to sunset). After work and on weekends, the park tends to be heavily populated when the weather is nice. In bad weather there will still be a few die hard fitness buffs in the park. Even after



the first incident, park attendance will not drop significantly. After all, most American parks have suffered from violence and people still keep going. Naturally, the sensible people will be more cautious. As the situation worsens, the number of people going to the park will drop significantly. Unless the police actually close the park, some people will still keep going.

The park map shows the layout of the park as well as the area around it. The red dotted line shows the boundary of the park. The areas of the park near developed areas tend to have chain link fences. These fences were put up by the land owners to keep people from taking shortcuts through their land. Some people have even strung up barbed wire as a deterrent. There are some wooden fences beside the entrances to the park, but they are primarily for the sake of appearance.

Access to the park is via four entrances. Four roads run into the park and there are two main roads in the park. These paved, two lane roads run through the middle of the. While the posted speed limit is 10 mph, people often tear through the park at speeds in excess of fifty miles per hour.

There is a dirt running and biking trail in the park. The trail is marked with a thin brown line on the map. The trail is legally limited to bikes and pedestrians, but it is wide enough for a car. There are poles driven into the trail in several places as a deterrent to adventuresome motorists.

The small lake and stream are marked on the map in blue. There are fish in the water, but it is not really fit for humans to swim in.

The heavily wooded sections are marked on the map as textured green sections. There are trees and bushes scattered about the park, but these areas have enough vegetation to qualify as tiny forests.

Keepers who wish to set the adventure in a specific area can feel free to replace the park map with one of their own or perhaps even a map from their local park service.

1. Apartments, Houses and Stores: This area contains six houses, three apartment buildings and a "mini-mall." The houses and apartments are all perfectly normal. The "mini-mall" has a drug store, a convenience store, a book store, a record store and a laundromat. The "mini-mall" is the largest building and is the one marked with a "1."

2. Houses and Gas Station: This area contains eight houses and a convenience store/gas station. The gas station area is the triangle marked with a "2."

3. Construction/Archeological Site: There are three partially built townhouses in this area. On the side of the street opposite the town houses an archeological site has been set up. This is the area where the bones and artifacts were dug up by the construction workers. The archeological team has been meticulously marking the area in preparation for their digging. Naturally, they will not be inclined to tear the area apart and will resist (within limits) anyone who tries to interfere with the site. During the day the university team will be working away, with the occasional interruption from the owner of the land. The owner, David Riverstein, wants them to dig everything up and go away since he cannot resume construction until the area is properly surveyed and excavated. At night the city posts an old security guard. The guard spends most of his time sleeping in one of the shacks at the site.

The site contains three sets of human bones and associated artifacts. The first skeleton belonged to a 28 year old Native American male. The skeleton has a broken right arm and a shattered collarbone. This skeleton will be found directly in front of the "tomb." The remains of a bow, several arrowheads, and an iron tomahawk will be found. The second skeleton belonged to a 34 year old English soldier. The skeleton is ten yards from the tomb and has a crushed skull. The remains of a sword and musket are near the bones. The third skeleton belonged to a 19 year old Native American. The skeleton has a broken leg and a shattered rib cage. The remains of a iron tomahawk are near the bones.

The "tomb" consists of small chamber in a large pile of rocks. The chamber was created through the use of thick timbers. The timbers are engraved with strange symbols, many of which look very similar to the Elder Sign. One large stone (about 2.5 feet wide) was pulled from the pile when it was struck by a backhoe. The stone looks weirdly melted on one side and there is a star shaped impression on that side. The Elder Sign that fits the hole was found by the construction workers and given to the

archaeologists. Aside from the bones and the "tomb," there are no other remains or artifacts.

4. Apartments: This area contains eight apartment buildings. These are efficiency apartments which have two rooms: the kitchen-bedroom-living room and the bathroom. These apartments are used mostly by students and other people who have a small income.

5. Houses: This area contains six houses, four of which have been subdivided into apartments.

6. Parking Lot/Park Building: There is a paved parking lot and the park building in this area. The park building has a men's bathroom, a women's bathroom, a small office/break area for the park workers, and an equipment storage room. Behind the building are several picnic tables and grills. Buried fifteen feet beneath the parking lot, in the area where the blood will be found, is the face stealer's original face. It is sealed in a strangely marked clay pot which is full of thick oil. Near the pot is a badly rusted iron box. Inside the box is an enchanted knife (as per page 153 in the 5th edition rule book) which was wrapped in oiled leather to preserve it. There are also 76 gold coins from the early 1700s (French and English) in the box. These coins would be worth a great deal to a collector or museum. The box also holds an enchanted flute suitable for summoning/binding a Servitor of the Outer Gods (as per page 144 of the 5th edition rule book). These items belonged to the evil shaman who created the face stealer. They were kept in the iron box (which he stole from some Europeans he murdered) he hid in the woods to protect them while he was engaged in various activities.

7. Playset: A heavy duty playset for children has been set up here. It is typically swarming with small children on weekends and holidays.

8. Bridges: There are two bridges here. One (marked in black) is a concrete and steel bridge for cars. The other (marked in brown) is a wooden bridge for pedestrians and bikers. The bridges are sturdy but the wooden bridge gets very slick when it is wet.

9. Ritual Site: The face stealer has set up its "residence" in this area. The presence of this being will cause the area to deteriorate. Initially, the trees and vegetation will begin to look like they are suffering from some sort of mild disease. As time passes, the area will begin to worsen and the effect will spread. Animals will avoid this area as soon as the face stealer arrives. As the area of its foul influence increases more and more animals will flee. The ritual site has its own map, which is detailed below.

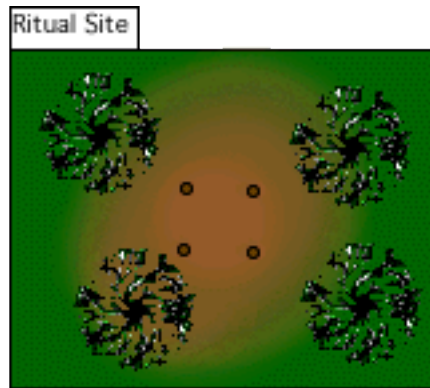
A. Site #1-Teenagers: This is the area where the face stealer killed the six teenagers. Their bodies are buried under fallen trees, thick piles of brush and other things that conceal the shallow graves. Because of the face stealer's efforts, the graves will be fairly hard to find. The teenagers were killed by crushing blows to their heads and bodies. Five of the bodies have been drained of blood and one has had its face carefully removed. Nothing has been taken from the bodies, so all the dead men have their wallets and IDs and the women have their purses. Their bodies are fairly well decomposed and insects have been working on them.

B. Site #2- Stenhegan: This is where the face stealer killed Stenhegan. Her body is buried under a thick pile of pine needles. Her body is fairly well decomposed and her face is missing. Her crushed Walkman is lying under some bushes near her body. The face stealer did not notice that she dropped the Walkman. Her body will be fairly difficult to find, given the care with which it was buried.

C. Site #3-Porter: This is where the face stealer killed Porter. Because Williams survived the encounter, the police knew where to look for the body and the police dogs were able to sniff it out.

Ritual Site Map

The ritual site is located in a thick and isolated section of trees. The face stealer selected this area precisely because it is unlikely that anyone would stumble across it by chance and it is within 2 miles of where its original face is located. There are four closely spaced trees in the area. In the center of the trees is a five foot square patch of ground that has been cleared of all grass and vegetation. At the corners of the square are carved wooden poles (stolen from the construction site) which are three feet high. They are stuck two feet into the ground and are bent slightly (using rope stolen from the construction site) towards the center of the square. The poles have been inscribed with many strange symbols



and they and the rope have been soaked in human blood. There is a small pit (two feet deep) dug in the center of the square. When the face stealer takes a face, it stretches it out over the pit using thin rope tied to each pole. The face stealer then builds a smoky fire in the pit using green wood sprinkled with human blood. Once the face is "smoked" it needs to dry further for a while, so the investigators might find a face should they enter this area. Seeing a drying face costs 0/1D6 Sanity Points.

The face stealer has invested a point of its POW in preparing this area, so it tends to stay nearby to prevent the ritual poles from being disturbed. Because of the nature of the site's creation, the face stealer has a link to it that will enable it to know if the site is disturbed.

Players' Map

The players' map is identical to the park map except that "9," "A," "B," and "C" have been left off. Refer to the park map section for the location descriptions and details. The players' map is the sort of map that can be acquired from the local park service, from the city, or by talking to locals and sketching out a map.

Action

The action begins when the investigators arrive in the area where the adventure takes place. The first part of the adventure will focus on investigation as the investigators try to find out what is going on. During the initial investigation the investigators should attend Porter's funeral and learn about what happened to him. After that, they will probably attempt to contact the police. If the investigators have acceptable credentials and seem willing to help, the police will be glad to bring them in as special consultants. If the investigators decide to go it on their own, the Keeper will have to find some other way to get them drawn deeper into the situation. The investigators should be given the opportunity to make contact with Brant at some point early on so that they will be able to earn his trust and gain his help.

Another Attack

The face stealer will claim another victim early in the adventure. This victim will be Sandra Jones who will be attacked while rollerblading during the day. A woman who stumbled onto the attack, Anne Smith, will survive the encounter with a broken arm and three broken ribs by fleeing as soon as she is attacked. The description she gives the police will closely match Porter's description. The investigators should learn of this information. One way is from access to the police reports. A more dramatic way is to have Anne come careening out of the woods on her bike, blood spilling from her

broken arm, to collapse in front of the investigators.

More Attacks

The face stealer will continue to take victims every few days and will prepare their faces for his use. In cases in which there are survivors, they will report that the attacker was some previous victim. If the investigator are unable to take effective action, the police will be forced to close the park. At that point, the face stealer will start attacking people outside of the park. The police will be hard pressed to defeat the face stealer on their own, but eventually someone from the government will be brought in who can handle the situation.

Stalking the Stealer

It is likely that the investigators will attempt to find the face stealer. If they learn about the ritual site from Brant's grandfather, they will probably look for that too. The face stealer will be difficult to find since it is adept at staying out of sight and will be able to assume the appearance of its victims. It is quite intelligent and is unlikely to fall for any crude traps or tricks, However, a well worked out plan could snare it. The face stealer is very protective of its ritual site and a stakeout there would be one way to be certain to encounter it.

Battling the Stealer

The face stealer is not afraid of direct combat, although it does prefer attacking at an advantage. If the investigators are able to engage it in combat, it will fight to kill as many people as possible. If things go bad for it, it will attempt to escape. It does know that it will reform after it is "killed" but it prefers to avoid expending its POW. It is likely that the investigators will "kill" it at some point and it will reform the next day. It will be enraged by this and will attempt to kill the investigators and take their faces. If the investigators prove to be exceptionally formidable, it will chose to lay low after its "death" for a while and then go back to killing. Because of its twisted nature, it cannot go for very long (about five days maximum) without killing and taking a face.

A Red Herring

Robert Chaplin, one of Brant's graduate students, will be recruited by West to sabotage the dig. Chaplin is addicted to drugs and always in need of money to support his habit. When West tries to bribe Brant, Chaplin will overhear the conversation. He will then contact West and offer to help him out in return for cash.

Chaplin will visit the site one night and start destroying things. He will be surprised by another graduate student, Mindy Carlitto. Chaplin will hit Mindy with a shovel, realize that he's killed her and try to bury her. While he is digging the grave he will be seen by Mindy's boyfriend, Juan Rodenburg who is returning from the nearby store with sodas and chips. Chaplin will escape, but will be seen by Juan. Juan will call the police and report the murder. He will be eager to help the police and the investigators track down Chaplin. Chaplin will go to a pawn shop, buy a gun and a tent and go into hiding in the park.

The Keeper should do his best to use Chaplin as a red herring. Chaplin will go over the edge after killing Mindy and will be suffering from terrible withdrawal symptoms, so he will look awful and behave like a madman. He will tend to shoot at people who discover him, although his main goal will be avoiding discovery.

If Chaplin is captured or killed, the local politicians will be eager to pin all of the murders on him. Most of the police will not be very happy about this, since it will be obvious that Chaplin did not have the strength to do the sort of damage that was inflicted on Porter's body.

Conclusion

The adventure continues until the face stealer is defeated, the investigators are killed, or the investigators give up and leave.

Defeating the Face Stealer

The face stealer can be defeated in four ways. The first is to find and destroy its original face. Destroying the face will cause the face stealer to deteriorate and eventually disintegrate completely. The face is buried beneath the parking lot in the park. The only real clue to its location is the puddle of blood that was found by the park staff and reported to the police. Getting permission to dig there will be difficult and if the investigators do it on their own they are likely to be arrested for destroying public property. The best chance of digging up the lot is to talk Brant into saying that he has solid evidence that there are artifacts buried under the parking lot. If Brant does this, he will be allowed to dig up the lot. The face stealer is aware of its vulnerability and will do its best to prevent the investigators from getting its face.

The second way to defeat the face stealer is to destroy the ritual site and then "kill" the face stealer repeatedly. The face stealer will have to expend 1 point of POW each time it reforms and will need to create another ritual site in order to regain lost POW. If the face stealer's POW is reduced to 0 it will dissolve into a puddle of fluid and never reform.

The third way to defeat the face stealer is to "kill" it and carefully collect all of the remains. If the remains are completely destroyed using fire, acid or some other extremely destructive means, the face stealer will be unable to reform and will perish. If even 10% of the face stealer's mass is left undestroyed, it will be able to reform the next day.

The fourth way to defeat the face stealer is to "kill" it and then put its body into the specially prepared "tomb" in the construction site and then seal it by pressing the Elder Sign into the depression on the sealing stone. The face stealer will lapse into a coma and be unable to take any action. If the "tomb" is left unguarded and exposed, it is likely that someone will take steal the Elder Sign and free it again. The best way to avoid this is to seal the whole thing under a lot of concrete, which is readily available on the site. West will be happy to pour it himself if it means he can go back to building.

Failing to Defeat the Face Stealer

If the investigators do not defeat the face stealer it will continue to kill until it is defeated. It will create trouble for an extended period of time but eventually another group of investigators or the government will manage to destroy it.

Sanity Point Awards

If the investigators destroy the face stealer they should receive a full 6 Sanity points. If they imprison it, they should receive a 1D6 Sanity point award. If the investigators flee without defeating the face stealer, they should each lose 1D4 Sanity points.

NPCS

Dr. David Brant, Archeologist

STR: 13 Con: 13 SIZ: 14 INT: 16 POW: 12 DEX: 13 APP: 13 EDU: 19 SAN: 70 HP: 14

Skills: Anthropology 40%, Archaeology 75%, Climb 50%, Computer Use 5%, Geology 30%, History 55%, Library Use 65%, Natural History 20%, Navigate 15%, Occult 30%, Spot Hidden 45%, Handgun 35%, Rifle 37%

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Magical Items: Elder Sign

Description: Brant is 37 years old, has black hair and dark skin. He is in excellent shape and works out on a regular basis to keep himself fit for his often strenuous expeditions. Brant sees himself as a "man of science" and does not believe in magic or the supernatural. He is somewhat dogmatic about these beliefs, but they can be eroded in the face of solid evidence.

As mentioned above, he is an expert on the original inhabitants of North America and is familiar with many of their myths, legends and histories. His main area of interest is the time period in which the French and Indian War took place as well as the time periods immediately before and after.

Brant is a brave individual and is concerned about people. Hence, he will be willing to help the investigators. If he survives the adventure, he can serve as an excellent contact for the investigators in later adventures.

Robert Chaplin, Drug Abusing Graduate Student

STR: 10 Con: 9 SIZ: 11 INT: 14 POW: 10 DEX: 11 APP: 12 EDU: 15 SAN: 47 HP: 10

Skills: Anthropology 15%, Archaeology 25%, Computer Use 25%, Geology 10%, History 35%, Library Use 45%, Sneak 19%

Damage Bonus: 0

Description: Chaplin is a tall, extremely thin man with long blond hair and blue eyes. He always seems nervous, as if he is hiding some secret and suspects people are on to him. Chaplin is quite intelligent and a fairly diligent worker. His main weakness is his addiction to various drugs which he uses to "relieve the stress of graduate school." His addiction also stems from the fact that he was terribly abused a child and escaped into drugs. It is this addiction that will lead him to become a dupe of West. Chaplin has a very quick temper and is prone to violent outbursts and threats. If severely pressed by the investigators he might resort to violence. If he feels threatened by them, he will buy a gun at a pawn shop and keep it near him. Chaplin is an extremely screwed up individual, but has become adept at hiding just how deranged he actually is under a veneer of carefully constructed semi-normalcy.

Jack West, Angry Developer

STR: 11 Con: 10 SIZ: 15 INT: 13 POW: 10 DEX: 11 APP: 12 EDU: 15 SAN: 50 HP: 13

Skills: Accounting 30%, Bargain 45%, Credit Rating 35%, Fast Talk 45%, Law 15%, Persuade 37%

Damage Bonus: 0

Description: West is 49 years old, in poor physical condition and overweight. What little hair he has left is brown. He is a fairly unethical land developer and has been involved in a variety of shady deals in the past. Although there has never been enough evidence to actually warrant charges being brought against him. West has sunk a large amount of money into the housing project that has been interrupted by the discovery of the "tomb" and bones. He will have several confrontations with Brant and the police over the digging. Finding that he cannot buy Brant or the state off, he will recruit Chaplin to sabotage the site so that he can get back to making money.

Typical Cop

STR: 13 Con: 12 SIZ: 13 INT: 12 POW: 10 DEX: 12 APP: 10 EDU: 12 SAN: 50 HP: 13

Fast Talk 20%, First Aid 35%, Hand Gun 65%, Martial Arts 15%, Night Stick 50%, Law 30%, Listen 35%, Drive Automobile 45%, Spot Hidden 35%, Shot Gun 45%

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Weapons: 12 Gauge Shotgun Damage: 4D6/2D6/1D6 Range: 10/20/50 Shots: 8,

9mm Semi-Automatic Damage: 1D10 Range: 20 Shots: 15

Night Stick: 1D8

Other Equipment: Radio, two 9mm clips, handcuffs.

Description: The local police officers are competent and most are honest. They generally patrol with two officers in each car or together on foot. There are also two person mountain bike patrols in the park.

Mythos Being

Face Stealer, Lesser Servitor Race

Description: A face stealer is created by dark and terrible magic from a human victim. A face stealer looks very much like a normal human, except its body is extremely pale and has a faint greenish tint to it (reminiscent of spoiled meat). The most horrible aspect of a face stealer's appearance is the absence of facial skin. Instead of being covered by skin, the muscles and bones are exposed and covered with a thick, mucous like substance. There are also thin, maggot-like tendrils growing from the muscle tissue. These tendrils are used to hold stolen faces in place.

Face stealers are created as servants by evil magicians, and are often used as guardians and assassins. However, they often outlive their creators and go on to trouble the world on their own.

Because of the horror of their creation and the nature of the magic used to create them, face stealers are, by human standards, completely insane and utterly evil. They do possess the intelligence they had as a human, as well as all of their original skills which can make them very dangerous opponents.

Face stealers derive a great deal of pleasure from killing people, stealing their faces and masquerading as a human. They also "feed" on the faces they steal, although they no longer consume normal food and drink. In order to prepare these faces, the face stealer must create a ritual site, which is described in the Prepare Face Stealing Ritual Site spell.

While face stealers are stronger than most humans, they have normal hands and teeth and only do normal damage in unarmed combat. Because of this, face stealers will generally rely on weapons in combat.

What makes face stealers particularly formidable is the fact that they are virtually indestructible. If a face stealer is "killed" its body will start to dissolve into a greenish liquid. This process takes one minute per SIZ point of the face stealer. This liquid will seep into the ground, run through cracks, evaporate and so forth. Twenty four hours later, the face stealer will reform completely at its ritual site at the cost of 1 point of POW.

There are three main ways to destroy a face stealer. The first is to find and destroy its original face. Destroying the face will cause the face stealer to deteriorate and eventually disintegrate completely. The second is to destroy the ritual site and "kill" the face stealer repeatedly. The face stealer will have to expend 1 point of POW each time it reforms and will need to create another ritual site in order to regain lost POW. If the face stealer's POW is reduced to 0 it will perish. The third way to destroy a face stealer is to "kill" it and carefully collect all of the remains. If the remains are completely destroyed using fire, acid or some other extremely destructive means, the face stealer will be unable to reform and will perish. Face stealers are also vulnerable to the Elder Sign and are repelled by it. A face stealer can be sealed in a specially prepared "tomb" that has been enchanted for that purpose and sealed with an Elder Sign.

A face stealer will have the same statistics it possessed as a human, except its STR and Con will be 1.5 times greater than they originally were. Naturally, the face stealer will have 0 Sanity Points. The Keeper can, of course, generate a face stealer's statistics randomly.

The face stealer in this adventure was an English soldier named Daniel Tucker. He fought in the French and Indian war and was with a unit that ran across a tribal cult in the woods of North America. The English soldiers and their Mohawk allies suffered heavy casualties but managed to kill almost all of the cult members. Years later one of the survivors, now a powerful evil shaman came back for revenge and transformed Tucker into a face stealer. Tucker's brother and a powerful Mohawk shaman eventually defeated the evil magician and imprisoned the face stealer, but at the cost of their own lives.

The face stealer in the adventure is ignorant of the modern world, but it does understand technology like firearms and anything else that has not changed incredibly from the late 1700s. It will be confused by things like cars and has no idea about phones, radios, aircraft and such. However, it is intelligent and

will learn quickly from what it sees and any mistakes it might make. It does know how it can be destroyed or defeated, so it will do its best to keep that from happening. Having been a soldier, it knows how to use weapons and will try to acquire them as soon as possible.

Face Stealer, Malign Thieves of Flesh

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages	Statistics
STR	3D6X1.5	15-17	20
CON	3D6X1.5	15-17	18
SIZ	3D6	10-11	13
INT	3D6	10-11	12
POW	3D6	10-11	12 (At start)
DEX	3D6	10-11	13
HP		13-14	16

Move: 8

Average Damage Bonus: +1D4, this face stealer has a +1D6 damage bonus.

Weapon: Punch 50%, Damage 1D3+db

Armor: None

Spells: A face stealer always knows Prepare Face Stealing Ritual Site and Steal Face. There is a 20% chance a face stealer will know 1D4 other spells.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D6 Sanity points to see a face stealer.

Skills: A face stealer retains the skills it possessed as a human and can learn new skills. The face stealer in this adventure has the following skills: Climb 45%, Dodge 47%, Hide 36%, Jump 34%, Ride 21%, Sneak 33%, Track 18%, Handgun 35%, Rifle 46%, Knife 55%, Sword 26%.

New Spells

Create Face Stealer

This spell turns the victim into a terrible monster. The spell requires 2 point of POW from the caster, a specially made pot, four poles and a human victim. Conducting the ritual involved in casting the spell costs 3D6 Sanity Points. The spell has a base chance to succeed equal to the casters POWX5. Using an enchanted knife in the ritual will increase the chance of success by 10%. The chance of the spell succeeding is reduced 1% for every point of POW the victim possesses, unless the victim is a willing participant. The roll is made at the end of the process. If the roll succeeds, the caster has a face stealer at his command. If the spell fails, the victim dies in the ground without being transformed.

The spell begins when the caster has staked the victim out on a flat surface, such as the ground or a table. The caster then uses a sharp knife to carve symbols into the victim's naked flesh while chanting. This process costs the victim 0/1D10 Sanity Points and 1D6 Hit Points. After preparing the torso and limbs, the caster must carefully remove the face of the victim intact. This process costs the victim 1/1D10 Sanity Points and 1D4 hit points. The spell helps with this removal, causing the face to peel away fairly easily once the required cuts are made. The caster puts 1 point of the POW he expends into the face and the other into the body of the face stealer. The victim must be bound and buried alive between four specially carved wooden poles. Each pole has to be soaked in the blood of a human being to be used in the ritual. The victim's face is stretched out between the pole and dried with a fire that is

made over the buried victim. During these five days the caster must tend the fire on a regular basis and sprinkle some of his own blood on it every day. The magic of the spell keeps the victim horribly alive for the whole process and the victim will lose 1D10 Sanity Points for each day he is buried. Five days after the victim is buried, the victim becomes a face stealer and the caster can dig it up. At this point the face must be sealed in a pot filled with a thick oil that has been created from human fat. The face stealer will faithfully serve its creator to the best of its abilities. The face stealer will survive as long as its original face is intact. The magic that is imbued in the pot will keep the face intact for one hundred years for every point of POW the caster possessed when the spell was cast. If the pot is broken and the face is destroyed, the spell is broken and the face stealer will die. If the face is not destroyed, the face will begin to slowly decay causing the face stealer to lose 1 point of POW each day until it perishes.

Prepare Face Stealing Ritual Site

This spell requires four specially carved poles and five human victims. Casting the spell costs the caster 1D4 Sanity Points and one point of POW. This spell may be cast by a being for its own use or for the use of another being.

The spell is cast over a period of five days. On each of the first four days of the casting, the caster must carve a wooden pole with the necessary ruins and soak the pole in human blood. The pole must then be driven in the ground. Each pole must be within ten feet of another pole and they must be positioned to form a square area. On the fifth day the caster must remove the face of a human (the person can be dead, but for no more than a week) and soak the ground with his blood. The face must then be taken to within 10 yards of the face stealer's original face. At that point the caster loses 1 point of POW which is imbued into the face. The face then must be taken and buried in the center of the ritual area.

Once the spell is complete, the face stealer whose original face was used in the ritual can use the area to prepare the faces it steals. The removal or destruction of the face or any of the poles breaks the enchantment and the ritual site can no longer be used. In order for the face stealer to steal and use more faces, another ritual site must be created.

The evil magic used in creating the ritual site corrupts the very ground. The vegetation in the area of the site will wither and become diseased and animals will flee the area. This effect will increase in intensity and area the longer the site is in use. The extent of the effect is 10 feet for every face stolen with a maximum area equal to 5 feet for every point of POW the face stealer currently possesses. 70% of the area will be slightly affected, 25% will be moderately affected, and 5% will be severely affected.

Steal Face

This spell requires a previously prepared ritual site and a freshly dead (within 7 days) victim. The spell begins with the removal of the victim's face. The removal part of the spell costs the caster 1D6 Sanity Points and 1 Magic Point. Once the face is removed it must be taken to the ritual area and hung over the fire to dry. The fire must burn for no less than two hours. During this time the caster must tend the fire and sprinkle blood into it while chanting the spell. This part of the spell costs 1D3 Sanity Points and 1 Magic Point. The face must dry for four days before it is ready for use.

Once a face is prepared, it will last 1 day for every point of POW the victim possessed, although it will gradually deteriorate during this time period. When the face stealer puts on a prepared face, it will be able to magically assume the likeness of the victim. To most observers, the face stealer will look, sound and smell like the victim. To determine if the disguise is effective, the Keeper matches the face stealer's POW against the observer(s) POW(s). The roll is modified by 5% for every day that has passed since the preparation of the face was completed and by an additional 5% for each day the victim was dead prior to the preparation of the face. If the face stealer succeeds, the observers see what appears to be the victim whose face was stolen and no Sanity roll is required. If the face stealer fails, the observer(s) see the face stealer for what it is and will have to make a Sanity roll. If the stolen

face is damaged while it is being worn (the face stealer takes damage to its head from the front) the face will be ruined and it will be exposed for what it is. The face stealer does not acquire any of the victim's memories or knowledge. However, if the face stealer consumes the face before it is completely deteriorated, it will gain some POW. For every 50 points of POW the victims possessed, the face stealer gains 1 point of POW, up to its maximum of 21.

The face stealer can only prepare one face at a time at the ritual site, but it can have many prepared faces on hand. It can only wear one face at a time, but can switch faces in about a minute (assuming the faces are on hand).

Players' Handouts

Players Handout #1

The year of our Lord 1766,

I write this knowing that it might well be the last thing that I pen for others to read. My friend Jonathan Tucker lost his brother to a most wicked savage who took him from the very midst of an armed camp. My friend Jonathan learned of his brother's fate from one noble savage who is called Growling Bear by his fellows.

This warrior told Jonathan that his brother had been taken by an evil shaman and turned against his fellows. We placed little stock in his words at first, but a dispatch from the fort confirmed that Daniel had been taken and that the men were being slain in the night. One soldier reported seeing Daniel striking down one of his own men and dragging him off to the woods.

Growling Bear, myself and a band of stalwart Englishmen and Mohawks set out with Jonathan to set matters straight. We marched and marched to reach the fort quickly, but we came to late. I spilt the life blood of many a man in service to my King and Country and I have seen much horror in my time, but what we found chilled all our blood like the winter wind. The men at the fort had all been slain and their bodies left to feed the carrion birds. The true horror was that every man's face had been peeled from his skull. I have seen the savages take scalps, but this sort of wickedness was beyond even their heathen souls.

Growling Bear lead us to the hiding place of the shaman and after a stiff fight with his guards Growling Bear put his war hatchet through the man's head. We lost a few men in that battle, some we found had died from no apparent wound. The warriors whispered of witchery and although we brave Englishmen laughed at such things, I could not find a single mark on any of the bodies.

We had thought that the worse was over with the death of the shaman. Would that this had been the case. Over the next three days Daniel came and killed and killed. At least I think it was Daniel. It looked just like him and his own brother even said so. But the things he did were not like the Daniel Jonathan described in any manner. On one occasion, we fired four muskets into him. He staggered and fled, but returned the next day with no sign of injury. Growling Bear believed that Daniel's body was the possession of a spirit of darkness and evil and I am inclined to believe him.

With only four of us left, we almost lost hope. In desperation we followed Growling Bear's order to help him build a small structure of stone and wood. He danced about the thing chanting and calling out. I would have thought he was offering up to the Devil, if I didn't know it was out in the dark woods watching us.

The morning came with a bright sun that brought us no cheer. Quietly and grimly we went to hunt it rather than waiting for it to come to us. We managed to catch the cursed thing while it was doing something awful to a face it had taken and put some lead balls into it. The thing tore into us, felling me before I could do more than stick a knife in its arm. It ran from the others who took off in pursuit. I can hear the musket fire always down the woods. I think I am dying now and I pray to God that they kill the thing.

