



Nefarious Plots

**Best-selling Necktie
Rob Northrup**

Philosophy major Andrew Cyrus Galbraith penned a runaway best-seller that made him internationally known. Too bad he's not around to enjoy it.

An earlier collection of his essays had already garnered critical acclaim for his striking new perspectives on old philosophical problems. However, Galbraith's latest paper asked whether life had any meaning, and if not, then should you continue to live? His powerful thirty-page answer was no, life has no meaning outside of what we project on it, and no, we should not live through this absurdity. It was the most intelligent, convincing, solid argument ever written in favor of suicide. Simply titled "You Should Do It," the paper also served as his own suicide note. Andrew tightened his necktie, secured the thick end of it to the cross-braces on his dorm window, and flung himself out.

His death was a minor news story the next day. It only drew world-wide attention two days later, after someone circulated the paper on the internet, and thousands of readers began to agree with Galbraith's tightly reasoned arguments, and began taking their own lives...

Possibilities

- 1) The paper is cursed. Galbraith undertook the Unspeakable Oath to accomplish this. Weak-willed people can be susceptible to suicide attempts if they read it. The curse can be cancelled, making all copies powerless, but only by seeking out Galbraith's ghost and allowing it to rest in peace by completing "unfinished business". Whatever that may be.
- 2) The paper isn't really very convincing. It's actually a signal for members of a particular cult to start sacrificing themselves en masse around the world, or killing a lot of people in ways that look like suicide. The cult is using the sacrifices to summon something powerful - but what?
- 3) Galbraith's paper really is that convincing. Shortly before the paper is published, a psychic has a vision of thousands of readers inspired to kill themselves if the paper becomes widely read. It can only be a matter of time before a priest of Nyarlathotep or other fiend publishes it on the Internet.

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Mistaken Identity Paul Comeau

One of the investigators has been kidnapped and replaced with an exact duplicate. No one else is aware of the switch (or even suspects anything) until the character starts displaying knowledge of certain disciplines that they would never have normally learned.

Possibilities

- 1) The investigator has been replaced by an entity that has absorbed their thoughts and memories. It appears identical, and possesses identical memories to the original, but it also possesses its own knowledge and this comes out at random times. The original investigator is now dead.
- 2) A government agency is replacing random individuals and replacing them with identical clones. The originals are held in facilities where they are used in grisly research, and the clones are sent out into the world so that their interactions with normal humans can be monitored. In order to get the clones to function, their DNA has been mixed with that from a creature from beyond that was captured by the military. The creature can communicate telepathically with the clones and is using them to secure its freedom.
- 3) The investigator has always been an imposter. This imposter has been with the party for a long time - and he doesn't even realize that he is not the original! He might be a clone, a conjured copy, or some other replicant, but he is not who he believes he is.

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Music From The Stars Paul Comeau

A group of radio astronomers working in a secluded desert observatory have died. Investigation suggests that they all killed each other in a kind of frenzied bloodlust. Detailed investigation reveals that the

astronomers were picking up a strange signal from a distant star - a strange kind of music with high pitched wails and deep groaning moans.

Possibilities

- 1) The song is the Song of Shoggoth and is transmitted from a star in a far distant galaxy. The song is a prayer that causes madness in weak-willed humans. Cults in certain areas of South America have duplicated the song in their own way over the years but none of them has ever brought the madness that the true Song of Shoggoth brings upon those who hear it.
- 2) The astronomers picked up a communication from another galaxy that is being sent by a highly advanced civilization as a message of peace. However, the message is too complex for human minds to comprehend and those that try are stricken with madness.
- 3) The music is made by the mi-go as they travel across the vastness of space. It is filled with subliminal signals that are meant to convey an attitude of peace and solitude, but human minds cannot process the complexness of the music and they go insane from listening to it for too long.

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Who is the Murderer? Graham Theobalds

One of the investigators is contacted by Miss Sarah Spencer. She is convinced that someone is going to murder her but does not know who or why. She needs help and is willing to pay. Two days ago she received a letter with a local postmark. The letter was typed on a typewriter with a missing 'e'.

*D_ar Miss Sarah,
Your lif_n ars its nd.
My wrath is compl_t_.
D_ath is yours.
S__ local pr_ss for d_tails.*

She was going to leave it at that but yesterday found a message in the personal column in the newspaper.

*Dear Miss Sarah. Only two days left.
There is another message today.
Dear Miss Sarah. One day left. Vengeance will be mine.
She has left her job and has booked into a hotel.*

The messages were telephoned to the paper and paid for by a man giving his name as Robert Cook. Tomorrow's note in the paper is to read: Rest, dear. Breathe your last.

Possibilities

- 1) Miss Spencer is dangerously schizophrenic and quite insane. She is usually Miss Spencer, but at times of stress becomes Robert Cook. Cook is gradually exerting more control and believes that by killing Miss Spencer he will be completely free. He will, but not the way he thinks.

One room in Miss Spencer's fastidiously neat house is messy and unkempt. This is Cook's, and pride of

place is an antique typewriter with a missing 'e'.

2) The letter was written by Miss Jane Marsh, jealous ex-lover of Robert Cook. Miss Spencer is now seeing Cook, and Miss Marsh has sworn to kill her and frame him. She knows where Miss Spencer is staying and has posted an invitation to Cook to visit her there. There he will find the mutilated body of Miss Spencer just as the police arrive.

3) Miss Spencer is a Deep One before the 'change' and is luring the investigators to their death. They have been getting too close. The clifftop hotel she says that she is staying in is old and dilapidated and smells of fish.

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Scarlet Fever **Steve Hatherley**

It is a rather peculiar disease, liquefying flesh into a thick red jelly, leaving only bones and skin untouched. Bodily functions continue unimpaired until the end. It is so rare that it does not yet have a name, let alone a cure.

Victims are often completely unaware that they carry the disease. Realisation sinks in only when cut: instead of blood, jelly wells out of the wound. Their skin does not heal, and if left unbandaged shrinks and wrinkles as the victim's liquefied flesh oozes out.

Possibilities

1) The disease is caused by a Lloigor. The Lloigor, Clerghh, is able to possess human victims in the course of its evil design. It is so successful at possession, that it has not had to materialise into its reptilian form for many years now.

The unfortunate human is unaware of the possession, which lasts for a maximum of six months. After that the disease, a by-product of the process, causes the human body to fail irretrievably. Clerghh moves on.

2) A vampire is afoot, feeding on predigested human flesh. It has two forms; the first a tall and handsome human, the other a multi-legged maggot-thing with a stabbing proboscis.

The vampire-thing needs to inject its prey with digestive juices some months before feeding. It makes two visits, injecting juices at first and then returning once its victim is ripe.

3) The victims are always men. A cult dedicated to Nyarlathotep offers girls in frenzied ceremonies. Those he rejects are torn apart by the cult, those he fancies (and Nyarlathotep has taste) he proposes to. If a girl accepts, she becomes his bride and resides in the Daemon Sultan's court for the rest of eternity.

Those that refuse are set free and cursed. Every man they encounter for anything longer than a moment will die, afflicted with a terrible disease. At midnight on the night of each full moon Nyarlathotep returns to ask for her hand. If she accepts, the Outer God takes her to Azathoth's court for the wedding and matrimonial bliss. If she declines, more men are consigned to a grisly fate.

Eventually Nyarlathotep becomes bored with his bride, and it is time to choose another.

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The Ripper Steve Hatherley

RIPPER NOTES STOLEN

Last night the only copies of the diaries of Doctor Gideon Black were stolen from Oxford University Library. Dr Black was widely believed to be the legendary killer 'Jack the Ripper' when his diaries were found after his death.

The handwritten journals detail many unnecessary experiments that Dr Black performed. The Doctor was a surgeon at St Mary's Hospital in Oxford but was living in London during the time that the Ripper was abroad. During this time he performed much surgery that was considered additional to requirements.

Dr Black's diaries have been examined and it is now believed that he was not the legendary London killer.

The Oxford Police are currently looking for a foreign gentleman in his sixties who was enquiring about the diaries just before they were taken.

The last person to see the notes was one of the students at the university. He can be contacted and may let investigators see his notes. Although the diary and "Jack's" handwriting has been compared before, the student has studied them both and concludes that they may have been written with the same hand.

Possibilities

- 1)** Dr Black was Jack the Ripper, and has been Re-animated. He has stolen his own notes and intends to continue his research. A week later the first of a series of ripper murders scorches headlines.
- 2)** The notes are an elaborate fake. They were written by a number of medical doctors to shock one of their fellows. Several 'in-jokes' can be found amongst the document, if searched for properly.
- 3)** Dr Black was not the Ripper, but was engaged in similar studies. Although not of the mythos, he had connections. The diaries point to where Dr Black purchased some of his bodies upon which he worked - and notes the poor, almost gnawed, condition of some of them.

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An Outbreak of Cancer Steve Hatherley

DISEASE STUMPS WELSH DOCTOR

Doctor Robert Jones yesterday admitted failure in treating the baffling disease which is affecting the villagers of Hodgeston, Pembrokeshire in South Wales. Doctor Jones describes the disease's first symptoms as a number of cancerous growths protruding from the skin. These can be of many different forms and gradually grow worse and worse until the patient is covered with the unsightly marks, and

dies. The cancers have taken on many unusual and sometimes disturbing forms. Doctor Jones has reports of cases where it seemed that faces were forming on stomachs and backs, and rubbery tentacles appear to be quite common. So far 13 people in Hodgeston have died from the disease, with twice that number known to be infected. The disease has not responded to any form of treatment. The strange disease is not confined to Hodgeston and Doctor Jones has patients in several of the surrounding villages. The disease is confined to Hodgeston and the surrounding area.

Doctor Jones will eventually require outside help. He might call upon the aid of a medical school colleague of his, perhaps one of the investigators.

Possibilities

- 1) The cancers are punishments inflicted upon the population of Hodgeston and its surrounds by a group of active Lloigor. Their presence is also indicated by the abnormally high number of fatal 'accidents' reported in the papers. Inbreeding is common and the local population is generally filthy and unkempt.
- 2) A War Office establishment is pumping waste products into the sea at Tenby, just along the coast. The currents are bringing this waste around to where Hodgeston sends its half dozen fishing smacks. The cancers are a direct result of eating contaminated fish.
- 3) Several months ago there was a report of a meteor shower above South Wales. However, one of the meteors did not completely burn up and landed in a local river. It is radioactive and contaminating the water supply to Hodgeston.

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The Old Straight Track Steve Hatherley

The publication of *The Old Straight Track* yesterday was greeted with amusement by archaeologists everywhere. The book, written by amateur archaeologist, inventor and photographer, Alfred Watkins, proposes that many Megalithic stone circles dotting our landscape are set out to a kind of geometry.

In his book, Watkins describes the lines upon which sacred sites (which include churches and barrows) are located. He imagines them to be perfectly straight invisible lines of power. In past times early man could sense this power and construct sites of worship where it was strongest.

Watkins' 'flash of inspiration' as he terms it came to him as he was riding over the Bredwardine hills in Herefordshire. His conviction was strong enough to lead him to publish his book which has had a critical reception from conventional archaeologists.

Note: This story must take place during 1925 when *The Old Straight Track* was first published.

The story is sufficiently interesting to be followed up. If it is true then maybe it can provide a means to tracking down elements of the Cthulhu Mythos all the more easily. Besides, a newspaper might pay handsomely for proof of other lines not mentioned in *The Old Straight Track*.

By using a map, a compass, ruler and pencil the investigator eventually comes to the conclusion that the small village of Todberry in Dorset is the meeting point of three such lines. By visiting the village, and carefully working out angles with a compass the exact point of intersection can be found. It is in a

churchyard, and a stone cross has been erected at the exact point. Upon the stone is a symbol a Cthulhu Mythos roll will identify - the centre of an Elder Sign.

The five points of the Elder Sign can be found as stones from an ancient circle. All are hidden; built into the church, hidden in the graveyard, used in the wall, toppled in a field, submerged in the stream.

Possibilities

- 1) The stone circle is protection against an ancient demon which will return should it be tampered with. A legend of strangers coming to disturb 'He That Sleeps' is handed down by word of mouth and strangers are closely watched.
- 2) The circle is an ancient place of worship, but has no other significance.
- 3) An ancient sorcerer is trying to remove the huge Elder Sign so that he may reawaken 'He That Sleeps.' The sorcerer has had little success so far, but investigators may unearth the vital clue to breaking the spell.

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The Helmsdon Monster Steve Hatherley

The discovery of the carcasses of several sheep on Helmsdon Moor in Yorkshire has returned memories to the time of the Helmsdon Monster that terrorised Helmsdon village in 1913.

The sheep were scattered across the moor and belonged to several different flocks. They had been torn savagely apart and parts were missing, possibly consumed by the killer.

In April 1913 the village suffered similar losses over a period of a week when something was killing sheep indiscriminately during the night. It too, left partially consumed remains behind and created quite a stir in the press at the time. Several woodsmen tried, without success to trap the culprit.

After a week, the killings stopped as mysteriously as they had begun, but not before 25 sheep and the lives of Robert Jones and his wife were claimed.

Several animal experts are being called in to help catch the creature.

The papers of 1913 are full of stories about the Helmsdon Monster. It is possible that some similarity between the killings can be reached.

Possibilities

- 1) The Monster is a ghaist summoned by some foolish farmers dabbling in the occult. It came up through the caverns that riddle the area and began slaughtering the sheep. By day it hid in the caverns, by night it stalked the moors. The farmers were terrified by the thing they had unwittingly called, but were powerless against it. However, the stories in the press attracted a sorcerer who came and bound the ghaist to the caverns.

The sorcerer has just recently died, releasing the ghaist from its bindings. Once again it is reaching out to

the surface and feeding on the sheep it finds. Eventually it will get brave enough to attack individual homesteads.

2) The slaughters are the work of one crazed lunatic who roams the moors, killing the sheep with his bare hands. He is completely insane, and very dangerous.

3) The creature is a large wild dog, a doberman. It is quite canny and will do its best to avoid capture. It was a guard dog at a nearby manor, but was set free during a drunken party. It will attack unhesitatingly.

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Short Story
Steve Hatherley

UNREAL STORIES, STRANGE TALES
PRESENT
A SHORT STORY COMPETITION

To celebrate the publication of the first issue of the premier magazine of unusual fiction, Unreal Stories, Strange Tales is offering a prize of £25 and a life subscription to the author of, in the editor's opinion, the best short story submitted to the address below.

Send your entries to:

Unreal Stories, Strange Tales
PO Box 52
Wapping
London

Results will be published in the first issue of Unreal Stories, Strange Tales which is to be published in June.

The advert should catch the eye of any aspiring author wishing to make a name for himself in the world of strange fiction. It is entirely possible that past events have gifted the young writer with several ideas for some peculiar tales involving gods, cultists, monsters and magic.

The magazine is genuine. At least, there is a small group of people trying to put one together. However, it is destined for failure and will not survive beyond the first issue.

Possibilities

1) The magazine is being used by cultists trying to gain more mythos knowledge. This is not a very secretive way of going about it, but it may work if other 'investigators' decide to relate their experiences to the magazine.

2) One of the authors printed in the first issue evidently knows quite a bit about the mythos, and writes a gruesome story featuring some of the gods. If the players can contact him, he will be a useful ally in their battle against the dark forces.

3) An author, writing about a location well known to him, accidentally reveals a possible mythos

presence in the locality. The story is a mix of fiction and fact, but there are certain clues and references to things which indicate that things may not be what they seem.

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Tropical Death **Steve Hatherley**

MYSTERY DISEASE KILLS GARDENER

Gardener Martin Smale, 57, died last night in Kew Gardens of a tropical disease. He was found by senior gardener Harry Dean, 64, when he opened the gardens this morning to the public.

Smale was found in the tropical ferns greenhouse which has since been closed by the police. It will remain closed until they are sure how Smale contracted the disease.

The gardens have suffered several cases of vandalism over the last few nights - plants have been kicked over and disturbed but there have been no signs of a break in. Smale was keeping watch all night to see if he could catch the vandal in the act.

Similar signs of vandalism were found in the greenhouse along with Smale's corpse. Harry Dean had to be taken to hospital in shock after finding the body of his colleague.

Once recovered he described the body: "It was terrible, all covered with sores and dripping with black pus. It was horrible. His face was worse - he was screaming when he died."

Professor Ron White of the Hospital of Tropical Diseases, was unable to identify the disease immediately but hopes to do so soon.

Possibilities

- 1)** One of the plants in the greenhouse is a form of nocturnal triffid and has just reached maturity. Until now it has been crawling around the greenhouse looking for prey before returning to its place.
- 2)** One of the plants in the greenhouse is a four feet tall Very Young Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath. Like the triffid above, it has only just reached the mobile stage and has been looking for prey. It was given to Kew after explorer Horatio Barnett returned from an expedition to darkest Africa. He died shortly afterwards and the strange plant was donated by a member of the family.
- 3)** Smale died from contracting an exotic tropical disease. The source of the fast acting disease is the pollen of a particularly beautiful orchid which has just come into bloom. The disease requires a large quantity of pollen to be inhaled before it can overcome the body's defences. Smale had been breathing it for several hours before the swift acting disease took hold. Smale's corpse is a wonderful supply of nutrients and soon it will sprout small green tendrils - new orchids.

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The Disappearance **Steve Hatherley**

A pretty woman approaches a Private Investigator to track down her missing husband. She gives the investigator a thorough description of her husband, Phillip Wainwright, and a key to his study. She has contacted the police, but after their initial interest they do not seem to be very cooperative.

Phillip vanished during the night after working late in his study a week ago. She found him missing in the morning and he has not been seen since.

His study reveals little. There is evidence that Phillip was engaged in much research - lots of cryptic references and what appears to be several attempts to crack a code. However, there is nothing concrete to follow up.

At his place of work, the library, his colleagues display no surprise. A policeman was snooping around several days ago. Phillip had been spending much too much time in the Restricted Access reading room. A check of its contents reveals that one of the books is missing.

Possibilities

1) The missing book was the original Al-Azif by Abd al-Azrad. This same copy is possessed by the soul of the author and Phillip, through deciphering sections best left alone, opened his mind to the ancient arab.

Currently Phillip, under the influence of Abd al-Azrad, is working his way towards The City Without A Name in the Arabian peninsula in search of the arab's last remains.

2) Phillip managed to decode a spell to summon Nodens, the Outer God, from the book (an ancient sorcerer's diary). He foolishly decided to cast the spell and after a few moments Nodens appeared. Phillip bargained badly and the God dropped him and the diary upon Yuggoth where the Mi-Go have preserved his brain.

3) The book is a hypnotist's workbook and has been taken from his study by the police as possible evidence. They will return it soon, when the case is closed. When Phillip decoded and recited the chants he fainted. Upon returning to consciousness he found his memory had vanished. He wandered out of the house, into the streets and onto the knife of a murderer. His corpse has yet to be discovered.

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Black Anna's Bower Garrie Hall

ANOTHER CHILD MISSING

The Dane Hill Estate was rocked this week when another child, the third in as many months, disappeared from her home. Dawn Smith (3) joins Nicola Johnson (2) and Jason Dawson (2) in what Leicester Police said is 'the most baffling and alarming case of its kind we have had.'

Local Counsellor Jack North called for more police patrols in the area and visits to local schools by an appointed welfare officer to get over the 'don't talk to strangers' message.

This is not the first spate of disappearances in the area. A similar series is recorded in the Parish Records for 1760 when five children disappeared from forest dwellings in an area known as Black Annis

Bower Close where the Lord Mayor's celebrations took place each Easter.

Black Annis Bower Close, where Leicester forest once bordered the old city along the Dane Hills, is now covered by the Dane Hill Estate but there are no records of this.

Black Annis is another name for the Celtic earth goddess Danu, wife of the sky god Ludd. She dwelt in a round cave about ten to twelve feet across and five feet high. Known as Black Anna's Bower, she is said to have dug it out of the sandstone Dane Hills with her own fingernails.

There Black Anna waited in the branches of an old oak growing over the mouth of the cave waiting for children to come past. She would then scratch them to death and drink their blood, hanging their skins out to dry.

Possibilities

1) Black Anna's Bower is an entrance to subterranean caverns inhabited by the descendants of the ancient Druids. They once used the cave for their sacrifices to Danu, and tended to the Children of Danu - Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath.

They normally sacrifice their own young while saving a breeding stock of their hardiest children but, occasionally, run short of sacrifices. They are then forced to risk their secrecy and raid the surface world through Black Anna's Bower which is hidden in the Dane Hill Estate rubbish dump.

2) Black Anna's Bower is located directly under 17 Shakespeare Drive, the home of Stephen Johnson. Since moving in he has been possessed by a malign dryad trapped in the Bower since the tree over the cave was cut down. It has grown weak and forces Johnson to sacrifice children so that it can leave the cave for a new oak in the field beyond the estate. If it is not stopped children will regularly go missing, and their skins found hanging in the branches of the oak.

3) The Bower is a Gateway to the land of the faerie, renowned in legend for stealing human infants for their own. Only the innocent are allowed there, those that have not been corrupted by the adult world of humans. All three children were maltreated by their parents and have been granted sanctuary by the faeries. The Bower is guarded by Black Anna against the evils of the outside world.

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Turkish Delight Garrie Hall

While on holiday in the Balkans the investigators find that their well earned rest is not meant to be. As they leave their hotel they are greeted by a detachment of the local militia who ask them in no uncertain terms (despite the language barrier) to accompany them to the station.

The conditions in the jail are inhuman and they are forced to stay in a rancid, overcrowded, cell with cut-throats and murderers for two days. Eventually they are questioned by the regional prosecutor regarding the disappearance of a local girl on the night they arrived in the area.

Instructed not to leave the Balkans, the investigators are released without charge. However, during the 'interview' the following facts emerge:

There have been several disappearances of young ladies in the Balkan area. The names and descriptions change, but the circumstances are familiar. Two girls have gone missing in Bulgaria, two in Serbia, three in Albania and five in Rumania. Each time the girl is beautiful and disappears at night without trace. The more superstitious locals are talking of supernatural goings on and the prosecutor is anxious to put an end to these rumours by making a quick arrest and conviction. As the investigators are the only foreigners in the area (and therefore easy scapegoats) he makes it plain that they are at the top of his list. Should the investigators look into the disappearances they will discover that the common denominator is a Turkish Circus on the return leg of a European Tour.

Possibilities

- 1) The Turks are using the girls as catalysts for a spell. The circus hypnotist turns their will to Hastur the Unspeakable and they form the coven of witches needed to call Him to the Nameless City.
- 2) The girls are sold as part of the white slave trade in Turkey. They are kidnapped in the closest countries to Turkey on the return journey so that minimum of care is needed. They are hypnotised and hidden in false compartments in the lion cages to prevent both their escape and discovery by inquisitive officials.
- 3) The circus has a freak show in which is featured a cannibal from Africa. His twisted keeper lets out his charge who has a taste for young female flesh.

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Headaches Steve Hatherley

It is just like any other day, except for a blinding migraine that doesn't subside until evening. It's one of those crippling, agonising migraines incapacitating the investigator and results in a day in bed, away from work and investigation. As a result it isn't until the following morning that the investigator discovers that two days have mysteriously vanished.

What the investigator was up to during those two days prior to the migraine is a mystery; friends and neighbours are unaware of the investigator's activities. In fact, some may be a little disgruntled at the cavalier way the investigator broke appointments and ignored calls.

Little by little an idea of the investigator's activities may be established. It is strange.

Possibilities

- 1) The migraines are a result of fragmentary possession by one of the Great Race. Full possession was never achieved, and the creature had to leave.

It is possible that the member of the Great Race was homing in on the investigator. Had he discovered, or read something? Had he recently dealt with the flying polyps? If so, it may attempt to regain possession, perhaps this time it will be successful. Hypnotising the investigator and sending him back to the time of the memory loss reveals scenes and sensations appropriate to being temporarily housed in the body of one of the Great Race, with the appropriate sanity losses.

- 2) The investigator has become ensnared in a small but foul Cthulhu cult. Each time the cult meets it

uses powerful magicks to possess its victims and draw them to the ceremonies. There they participate in obscene acts, lasting several days. Upon recovering from the magick the victim has no memory and a massive migraine. Also, his clothing is torn, muddy and splashed with blood. His sanity is also reduced by 1D6.

It is possible that the cult have chosen the investigator randomly, but more likely that they have singled him out for treatment.

Unfortunately, one of the victims is sacrificed each time the cult meets. This is random, but eventually it will be the investigator's turn.

3) Nothing else ever happens. Ever. Some time later the investigator discovers that a small figurine is missing. (The figurine was carved from an oily dark brown stone, and vaguely african in design. Until now it was entirely unremarkable.) It is possible that the investigator never makes the connection, although even if he does he will be none the wiser. It is all a mystery.

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Grim Justice Garrie Hall

Those of the underworld are not sleeping soundly in their beds. Not while Grim Justice stalks the night.

Tony Scalesi walked free from court last week after a technicality stopped justice from taking its course. Yesterday he was found dead. His body was riddled with bullets but the Coroner determined that the cause of death was heart failure due to a massive shock or trauma.

A calling card was left with the body, a picture of the Grim Reaper holding the scales of justice. Scalesi is the tenth victim of the masked vigilante the papers call 'Grim Justice'. All have been criminals.

Little is known about Grim Justice. He (it?) seems to be a creature of the supernatural, not least in physical aspect. A thing with no face, just a skull and the ability to appear and disappear into the night.

Grim Justice exhibits an uncanny ability to find his victims wherever they choose to hide. To date no less than ten known gangsters and countless lesser felons have fallen to his 'tommy gun'.

Possibilities

1) Grim Justice is the ghost of Jim Malone, a cop investigating high level corruption and murdered by gangsters in cold blood in front of his family. His tortured soul has risen from the grave and stalks the city, avenging Malone. He is killing those that he believes set him up, from the hoods that pulled the trigger to his boss, Police Chief Nathan Jordan.

Jordan has guessed the force behind Grim Justice and will covertly hire investigators to 'exorcise' this menace.

2) Grim Justice is a highly organised and dedicated group of vigilantes. They have agents placed in all walks of life from the ganglands to the courts and can trace just about anyone anywhere. However, the organisation has fascist tendencies and is inclined to target non-WASP (White Anglo Saxon Protestant) individuals. Attempts to breach their security will be met with violent resistance.

3) Grim Justice is a classic case of paranoid schizophrenia. By day he is plain old Harry Brown, librarian and something of an expert in the occult. By night he is Grim Justice.

Brown was driven insane by the sight of his parents gunned down in cold blood by a lone robber. He has remained stable until recently when he witnessed another killing, pushing him over the edge. As Grim Justice, he uses his considerable occult knowledge to magic his way to his victims. By night Harry Brown is a powerful sorcerer indiscriminately murdering criminals and gangsters.

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The Crazy Garrie Hall

RIOT AT BLACK MAGIC CONCERT

Frenzied jobs rioted to the sound of Satan's music last night. The mayhem, in which two people died, flared in The Hellfire Club. The venue, famous for its so-called 'alternative' bands, was playing host to the Punkabilly band Karloff.

Renowned for their songs about the return of the devil and his triumph over the world, Karloff's spokesman said, 'The audience just got out of hand during the 'Howl at the Moon' set. The deaths were unfortunate but I blame the organisers. Security was appalling.'

This paper condemns all such acts that promote the word of Satan among our young. We call upon our readers to boycott their records and concerts. If we deprive them of their places to preach we can prevent Satanism spreading to our own children.

Possibilities

1) The riot was an unfortunate, but not sinister, event. The paper is owned by an evangelist called Edward Richards. Mr Richards owns a very profitable business empire and is head of the Cleansing Flame evangelical group. He is not a man to be crossed and can call upon a variety of businesses (including a satellite television channel) to aide his retribution.

The Cleansing Flame has a para-military wing, the Witchfynders. Richards is Witchfynder General and leads them in their cause to destroy evil. However, they will not accept that the Cthulhu Mythos exists as anything other than a form of Satanism.

They believe that they are the only true saviours and that no other organisation has the right to carry the fight. Any alliance with the Witchfynders will be strained at the least as they have a tendency to act before thinking. All traces of Satan must be burnt to cinders, cleansing the Earth of evil.

2) The Karloff's are using voodoo to further their career, swelling their audiences through manipulation and voodoo frenzy. They do not understand the powers they meddle with and cannot fully control them. A riot and the deaths were inevitable.

3) The Karloff's worship Nyarlathotep. Using mass hypnotism they enthrall the audience. Bit by bit they are building a reserve of psychic energy which is saved for Walpurgis Night. During this massive open air concert the audience will be so frenzied that during the final act, Howl at the Moon, blood will flow

and the Crawling Chaos will descend to earth.

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Fire Victim Perry Okerstrom

MYSTERY FIRES CLAIM THIRD VICTIM

A third inexplicable fire has claimed the life of a Queens area woman. Hedda Johnstone had lived in the neighbourhood for the last thirty years.

Hedda's corpse was discovered when her landlady Marge Addison could smell 'cooking' coming from her third floor apartment. She found Hedda's charred corpse sitting in the rocking chair by the window.

With no source of ignition, the NYPD are still seeking the cause of the intense blaze. Fire Commissioner Gordon is pursuing the most unusual matter. "All that was burned was the woman," he stated.

NYPD are continuing with their inquiries.

Possibilities

- 1) Poor Hedda is the victim of spontaneous human combustion, a rare occurrence but not without precedent. Often the victim will be burned beyond recognition, in some cases without disturbing the surrounding environment.
- 2) Hedda has fallen prey to a cluster of Fire Vampires who find the city of New York populated with easy prey. Prey often too slow or weak to fight back. Investigators will find many such fires in the ghettos of New York.
- 3) Tesla is in New York demonstrating his new machine. This generator produces immense electrical charges which are then discharged to earth. Occasionally his machine produces ball lightning, which targets victims totally at random. The fires will stop when he takes the machine to Boston. There they start again.

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Night of the Long Knives Garrie Hall

The investigators are invited to a revue of Chinese theatre by Professor Charles Ashbourne, expert on all aspects of China. He tells them that it is a social invitation but hints that there is some point to the meeting.

A treat of Chinese culture is in store. Jugglers, gymnasts, dancers in dazzling costumes and paper dragons. The finale is a lady conjuror assisted by two giant Mongols. After an impressive display of magic and muscle flexing the finale, the classic box-of-swords illusion, starts.

Both assistants are too massive to fit into the box so the conjuror calls for a volunteer from the audience.

Much to his delight, Ashbourne is chosen from several enthusiastic volunteers. He steps into the box and the door closes behind him.

The two Mongols spin the box then thrust their swords clean through it. The box is rotated again to show the swords protruding right through the box. Then the conjurer screams and faints. As the house lights go up blood can be seen running down the blades. The swords are withdrawn and the dead body of Professor Ashbourne tumbles from the box. The curtain drops, none too soon.

Possibilities

- 1) Ashbourne's death was an unfortunate accident, a trap door that should have opened below him malfunctioned. The theatre's insurance company has made a substantial out of court settlement to Ashbourne's widow.
- 2) Access to Ashbourne's papers will point towards his investigations into Chinese Tongs in London. In particular he seems fascinated by Dr Cheng, an almost legendary figure wielding absolute power. Ashbourne was getting too close and was eliminated.
- 3) Ashbourne's wife was having an affair with the son of a peer of the realm. Using his contacts in the Chinese community, they arranged his death. In return they are to pay the Tongs half the insurance money that Mrs Ashbourne stands to receive from both her husband's and the theatre's policies.

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A Death in the Family **Ian Bond**

For one of the investigators, Florence Hasket is a name tinted with emotion. Their families were very close and the two of them grew up together. They were almost brother and sister. Marriage was on the cards. Then, something happened. Florence met, fell in love with, and married, a soldier. She kept in contact, but eventually the letters stopped altogether. She has not written in years.

But a letter, even one concerning such sad news, is a welcome sight. Her father, Simon Hasket, has died and she invites the investigator to the funeral. It will be an opportunity to meet friends and relatives, and to talk to Florence.

The funeral is a quiet affair, marred by only one incident. An elderly gentleman approaches Florence's brother and draws him aside. They talk earnestly before the man stalks off. At the entrance to the churchyard he turns and shouts "I know how he died! It'll get you all!" Then he climbs into his car and leaves.

Two years ago Professor Hasket returned from an archaeological visit to Venezuela. His studies have been erratic since then. He became increasingly preoccupied with a number of obscure legends and myths. His death was particularly bizarre. He was found terribly mutilated in bed, in his room. The corpse was such a mess that it was barely identifiable, as if it had been put through a meat grinder.

Possibilities

- 1) On the trip to Venezuela Hasket found some notes taken from the Necronomicon. From these he was able to piece together enough information to talk to some sort of 'strange being.' He tried this and

inadvertently contacted one of the Hounds of Tindalos.

Belatedly realising his terrible mistake he visited Professor Michaelson and together they tried to stop the Hound. They failed, but in the process Hasket had a dream - the Hound was talking to him! His attempts to foil the Hound had cost it dearly in time, it would pay the professor back by taking his family as well.

The Hound has taken Hasket. It will return for Florence and her brother one day soon.

2) Professor Michaelson accompanied Hasket to Venezuela and tried in vain to dissuade Hasket from taking sacred indian relics from the ancient temple. The indians, upon discovering their loss, cursed Hasket and his family. Finally their vengeance has arrived. Only by returning the relics will the curse be lifted.

3) The two men have pieced together from the fragments of an ancient Venezuelan inscription a spell for calling Nyarlathotep. Unfortunately, Hasket had a mild heart attack during the spell, ruining it. Nyarlathotep was angered by this and, once Hasket had recovered, disembowelled him. The knowledge is driving Michaelson mad.

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Matlock Fire Rik Kershaw

Dateline Matlock Derbyshire. The Charred body of a man, Mr John Wilson, is discovered at their home by his wife. By the location, state of the body and surrounding furniture, it appears that Mr John Wilson was a victim of Spontaneous Human Combustion. Eg.: His entire upper torso, left arm and right leg have been reduced to ash. His left leg, and right arm are still intact. As is the chair he was sitting in. A smoking pipe lies smoldering on the floor. Police conclude that the man died from dropping his pipe onto himself. The British Society for the Investigation of Anomalous Activities are looking for a party of investigators to ascertain whether this was SHC or not.

Possibilities

1) John Wilson was the planning Clerk for Matlock Municipal Council and was violently opposed to the destruction of a local landmark; The Five Towers. These towers were built in 1798 by Sir Walter Townsend, to stop the biannual earthquakes that rocked Matlock. The towers have recently been sold to Dr Phillip Greening, who is the leader of a small band of Shudde M'ell worshippers. He has taken over the mind of Mr Wilson's deputy and is hoping to get the authority to demolish one of the towers and there by release the great Cthonian who lies pinned beneath the pentacle.

2) John Wilson was attacked and killed by a fire vampire, as a sacrifice to Cthugha by a local cult, of which his wife is the high priestess. She required this rather extreme sacrifice as the first step towards bringing Cthugha into this world. She will not be best pleased at the investigators attempts to look into the circumstances of her husband's death.

3) This is a real case of spontaneous human combustion. And the investigators can get themselves mired deep into the lore and mystery that surrounds cases of SHC. Caveat: This idea might mean a considerable amount of research into the topic of SHC if you are to get the tone right.

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Terror in the fog **Rik Kershaw**

In the last years of the nineteenth century, something terrible stalked the fog shrouded streets of London. For about three months in the autumn of 1888, a madman preyed upon the poor women who had through poverty been forced to become prostitutes. But then, just when the terror seemed at its height, the killing stopped.

Why was this? The police didn't have a clue as to the identity of this killer. The press thought that perhaps the killer had moved away to America. Others thought that the killer, filled with remorse killed himself. But just one man knew what had happened to this madman, and that man was Dr Forbes Winslow.

Forbes Winslow was the son of a Doctor who specialised in lunacy. He followed in his fathers footsteps and became a leading alienist. He was a medical theorist, a practical detective and also a noted occultist. Dr Winslow became engrossed in the Whitechapel murders and after spending weeks living in the slums of Whitechapel he formed a mental picture of the killer.

Armed with this mental picture, he began to track the man whom he believed was the Ripper, and Dr Winslow is believed to have found him on Friday 9th Nonmember 1888, shortly after the Ripper murdered his final victim, Mary Jane Kelly.

However, what transpired on that fateful night, no one knows because Dr Forbes Winslow was found wandering the streets of Limehouse early the next day. The once proud Doctor, his clothes in tatters and hair turned white, was taken to the mental institute founded by his father and where he died in jibbering madness some two years latter.

In that time he muttered the same statement over and over again. "He lies below us. Do not wake the earth."

And so the matter rested until the spring of 1926 when something terrible rocked the city of London. The killings started once more. Within a two week period three prostitutes were murdered in exactly the same way as the Ripper's victims. London is once more in the grip of a murderer who seems to kill and then vanish without trace...

Possibilities

1) Dr Winslow after tracking the Ripper down rendered the fiend down to his essential salts. He then took these salts, which he had stored in a jar and placed them into a segment of the new Inner Circle Line tunnel system that was opened in 1889. However, when work began on the mid level District Line extension, the jar was unearthed and passed into the hands of an unscrupulous occultist. The man, George Chapman, not realising who was inside performed the rite of resurrection. The Ripper, after disposing of this fool, has found himself in a world that was so very different yet still the same, and able to begin his reign of terror once more.

2) The being that Dr Winslow tracked down was a Ghoul whose nest had been disturbed by the work on the new underground line. The Ghoul, finding itself trapped above ground, and having no way to return it had killed to feed itself. However, in a strange twist of fate, the work on the new mid level District

Line has disturbed the ghouls once more, trapping one of their number above ground.

3) The present wave of killings has nothing what so ever to do with Ripper, but are being perpetrated by Dr Thomas Neill Cream, a man who needs the parts of his victim to help feed his need for fresh organs to help his search for a serum that would stop the ravages of time.

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The Face of God Shannon Appel

A religious revival has struck a small town that lies far away from the rest of human civilization. Many people there claim to have seen the true face of God. Unfortunately, seeing the true face of God seems to be a traumatic experience; everyone who has undergone this ecstatic experience has emerged blind, some with their faces terribly scarred.

The investigators may be led to the town by any of a number of forces. Perhaps strange omens point them in that direction. Townspeople may beg for their assistance, or an investigator's relative may be one of the blinded victims of this harsh god. For proactive investigators, a simple newspaper clipping may be sufficient. By whatever means, the investigators will arrive, and soon see that something is distinctively wrong.

That old time religion has caught on in a big way in the town, but some of the rites that the people practice seem distinctly odd. After they have been in the town for a night, investigators will very quickly realize that this revival is supernatural in nature. They begin to have strange dreams of the past, imparting ancient knowledge upon them that Man should not know.

Unless they are very careful, investigators will find themselves mindless minions of the town's new god, themselves seeking new followers to bring into the fold.

Possibilities

1) The Great Old One, Nyogtha, has come to be trapped beneath this town. It was accidentally contacted by innocent townsfolk, who soon found themselves practicing its dark rituals in order to preserve their lives. The reluctant cultists are blinded by Nyogtha so that they may better understand The Thing That Should Not Be. At least once a month, they also bring Nyogtha a sacrifice, to sate its dark hunger. Although most of Nyogtha's worshipers are reluctant, they are too fearful to make any move against the Great Old One. Some townsfolk, however, have grown to love the power that Nyogtha offers, and have thus joined into the Cult whole-heartedly. They know secret spells to control the living darkness, and will gleefully use them. Investigators who enter Nyogtha's town are likely to be inducted into the Cult by force, or offered up as a sacrifice.

2) A small band of Cultists reside in the small town. They practice secret rites that allow them to look deep into the past, and have been using them for months to rediscover ancient sorcerous powers.

Sometimes, their dreams of the past cross into the consciousness of others. The cultists know when this happens, and they kidnap the unfortunate innocent, and force them to participate in a magical ritual. This ritual causes the victim to forget what they saw, leaving only vague impressions of a brush with divinity. The eyes of the victim must be put out during this ritual. When the investigators arrive in town, and

begin dreaming of the past, they have accidentally crossed paths with the cultist's rituals, and are thus marked as the next victims.

These Cultists have learned many spells from the past, and should be fearsome adversaries. They can manipulate time and space in many exotic fashions.

3) The people of the town have indeed seen the True Face of a God. It is Hypnos, an Elder God. Although certain legends say that the Elder Gods are benevolent, in truth, they do not care; men are less than fleas to them. Through cosmic accident, Hypnos' true presence lies across this place on the earth. Those who see it have their eyes seared out, and are sometimes reduced to madness.

Still, due to the basic perversity of the human race, a great cult has sprung up around this god. If an investigator shows the least vestige of interest in the face of god, he will be preached to extensively. Many of Hypnos' followers are great orators. Some have been changed by their nearness to their god, and have gained supernatural means to convince people of their rightness.

If the investigators do not fall prey to the beckoning of Hypnos, they must decide what to do with this situation. If they do not evacuate the town, and mark it forever uninhabitable, it is likely that a trip to the Dreamlands will be required, to somehow cause Hypnos to be moved from his current resting place.

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The Hellfire Club Andrew Behan

The Hellfire Club dominates the summit of Montpelier Hill ten miles south of Dublin city. This substantial ruin was originally built in 1720 as a hunting lodge by William Conolly, the speaker of the Irish parliament. After his death it passed into the hands of the eponymous "Hellfire Club". The club, based on a suppressed English antecedent, was founded in Athy, Co. Kildare, in the 1730s by Richard Parsons (a.k.a. Jack St Leger), the first Earl of Rosse, and a humorous painter called Worsdale. The members of the Hellfire Club were rakes and rowdy fops. They met in the Eagle Tavern on Dames Street in the city centre. As their name suggests they were rumoured to practice black magic. Reputable historians acknowledge that these stories have a basis in fact.

Possibilities

1) The Hellfire Club did indeed carry out black masses and orgies on Montpelier Hill. However they had no mythos knowledge and merely used satanic regalia to spice up their bawdy drinking sessions.

2) The Hellfire Club worshiped ancient Cthugha. When Conolly built the lodge a 'fairy cairn' was broken. It was actually a huge Elder Sign placed there thousands of years before to trap a swarm of Fire Vampires. When the Hellfire Club (which was at that time a bunch of drunken fakers) encountered these horrific beings they were seduced to the worship of Cthugha.

On one famous visit to Montpelier Hill the clubsmen set fire to the lodge whilst carousing within! Tradition claims that this was a wager to see who could survive the flames of Hell longest. This is incorrect. The fire occurred when the cult summoned their master inside the stone-vaulted lodge.

Though the club disappeared in the 1740s the Fire Vampires are still alive, and hungry.

3) The club was a branch of a suppressed English Nyarlathotep cult. Several times, locals gained small hints of the club's dark deeds. On one occasion, a wandering priest stumbled upon the Club during a macabre Bacchanalia and was forced to look on. The centre of attention was a huge black cat. Breaking free from his captors the cleric grabbed the cat and uttered an exorcism which tore the beast apart. A demon shot up from its corpse. Hurling through the roof it brought down the ceiling and scattered the assembly. On another occasion, Tom Conolly of Castletown is said to have met the devil in the form of a 'black man' in the lodge's dining room.

After the death of its founder in 1741 the club became inactive but the cult continued, with the 2nd Earl of Rosse as its leader. It was with Nyarlathotep's help that William Parsons, 3rd Earl of Rosse built 'the Parsonstown Leviathan' in 1845. This huge telescope (which was dismantled in 1908) was the largest of its kind until 1917. Though the Irish climate is completely unsuitable for serious astronomy Rosse discovered the spiral nature of other galaxies, the Crab Nebula and the greater nebula in Orion with this miraculous instrument. It's unknown whether his sons: Laurence, the 4th Earl (an astronomer) and Charles (a British inventor who died in 1931) were involved in the cult, which has today spread throughout the English speaking world.

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Graven Images **Peter Devlin**

Edward Appleton is a thriller movie director of some note. Despite being an anarchic independent type he has completed three very successful films in the last two years, making him a hot property in the US movie industry.

Now he is in town to shoot his latest masterpiece, a ghost/love story called Love Conquers All. The plot revolves around recluse Daniel Graves, a handsome young man who is haunted by the malevolent ghost of his deceased fiancée Celeste Severin; women he meets turn up dead and the police pursue him to a final confrontation where he is burned to death in his mansion.

Appleton has a big budget and has two star actors, namely Nancy Page, a classic beauty ideal for tragic heroine roles, and Robert Hunter, a debonair romantic action-man. Their arrival in town is greeted with much publicity as Appleton has chosen the (infamous) sprawling Schottky Mansion as the set for haunted house which features in the film.

The Schottky Mansion quickly lives up to its reputation as a genuine haunted house. Two days after setting up their equipment the movie crew are in a turmoil. One of the make-up assistants, Mary White, is found horribly murdered in the dining hall.

Possibilities

1) Appleton is a classically disturbed sociopath who wants as much recognition as possible.

He debates with an inner voice which he perceives as his Devil's Advocate. On previous occasions he has listened to this voice, followed its suggestions and as a result made some very clever and disturbing films a la Alfred Hitchcock (whom Appleton worships as a movie genius but would probably dislike intensely if he actually met him).

Researching Appleton thoroughly will reveal details of his Svengali-like personality and obsession with

detail (not necessarily unusual in a movie director). Researching his recent history will uncover unconnected murders near the locations of his previous movies. All such murders could be seen as dummy runs for scenes from the movies. Some victims are stalked and terrified, others killed outright; methods of despatch include auto accident, stabbing, shooting, strangulation, falling from great height, drowning, bitten by spiders, etc.

Appleton is a master of cinematic tension, playing on common phobias as inspiration. Anyone who attracts his unwelcome attention had better be psychologically stable.

2) Robert Hunter recently rejected the amorous advances of Nancy Page. As Nancy Page considers herself a screen goddess, she did not like her rejection by the up and coming Hunter. Then Nancy saw Hunter laughing with Mary White and jumped to the wrong conclusion.

Nancy had a red rose and a letter delivered to Mary, the letter asking her to meet Hunter on the set. Nancy then confronted Mary and stabbed her to death in an identical fashion to that laid out in the script. She hopes to throw the police off the track and more importantly to be around to console Hunter through his grief. Hunter is a closet homosexual and does not want his promising career ruined by a public scandal; Mary knew his secret but died before she could tell Nancy the real reason for her rejection.

3) The Schottky Mansion is owned by Pennywell Properties who purchased it for a song some 15 years ago. It has had a history of odd occurrences and has never been let for more than three months at a time. The local kids refer to it as a haunted house, nobody seems able stay in it overnight, weird music comes from it at inauspicious times and it has been researched by a number of psychics and mediums.

Pennywell Properties has let the mansion to the studio who plan to burn it to the ground for the climax of the movie. Official permission has already been granted. The mansion is indeed haunted, by the wraith of Abraham Schottky, its original owner. He was a talented Jewish-Polish physicist far ahead of his time, working in the field of acoustics. His researches accidentally opened a gate through which a Servitor of the Outer Gods passed, killing him and devouring his body before returning to Azathoth. The gate is only fully open at times such as Walpurgis Night. To end the hauntings the gate must be fully closed, a dangerous process as at least one Servitor will come to interfere.

Schottky's deranged wraith is taking its own illogical steps to ensure that the mansion is left alone. It can possess psychically sensitive humans and cause parapsychic phenomena to occur. It possessed the sensitive Robert Hunter during an innocent assignation with Mary White and he is deeply troubled because of the blackout he experienced and the resultant memory gap. He has no occult or specialist knowledge beyond a talent for empathising with people.

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Kindergarten Kult **Arthur Boff**

All is not well at the Arkham Day-Care Center. The children who attend seem to have fun at the Centre, but recently they have been complaining of nightmares. The nightmares vary, but they all seem to be about Mrs. Mollse, the Center's nurse.

Possibilities

1) Mrs. Mollse is a member of the Arkham Witch-Cult. She has recently been given a mind-control spell

by the Outer God Yitlicn, the Alterer of Thoughts. She is using it on the children under her care. Whilst under the spell's influence, they think all is normal, not knowing that they are really carrying out unspeakable tasks in the name of Yitlicn. When they sleep, however, the memories of what really happened seep through.

2) About a month ago, Cthulhu visited Mrs. Mollse in her dreams, "requesting" that she become one of her priests. Foolishly, Mrs. Mollse refused. The Dreamer in R'lyeh is now trying to incriminate Mrs. Mollse in a child-abuse case (the abuse is really being carried out by Deep Ones).

3) The nightmares are of Mrs. Mollse being torn up by awful dog-like beasts (experienced investigators will realize that these are the Hounds of Tindalos). Before she came to the Center, Mrs. Mollse was a New Age Traveller. Experimenting with a certain drug, she encountered the Hounds. She fled the New Age camp and became a kindergarten nurse, which she thought would be enough to give the Hounds the slip. The Hounds have not caught up with her yet, as she went quite far in time. The dreams are warnings, sent by a rival species of angular time.

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The Competition Simone Bartesaghi

Mr. Henry Paget Lowe has been arrested on a charge of sequestration of person and, maybe, of murder. The victim is Roger Curtney and, the last time that someone saw him, he was entering inside Mr. Lowe's office.

Roger Curtney answered an advertisement published on a lot of national newspapers, in which, the society led by Mr. Lowe, invited "All american dreamers to write a short fantastic story". The prize of the competition was a trip to a fantastic "Dream Land". Entry was free.

Roger Curtney, among 6000 candidates, was elected "the best American dreamer." The newspapers reported a lot about him and about the competition, until they discovered Mr. Curtney didn't return from his trip. "The trip hasn't finished, he will be back when he want to be back." said Mr. Lowe when he was arrested.

Possibilities

1) Mr. Lowe knows the way to go to the Dream Land and he has led Mr. Curtney to the Cavern of Flame.

2) Mr. Lowe is a kidnapper. He wants one million dollors from Curtney's father.

3) Mr. Lowe doesn't exist. Behind all of this is the FBI chief, Edgar Hoover, who wants, thus, to detect Americans subversives and communists. Curtney wrote a story entitled "Red days". With him the FBI have arrested 756 people.

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Mysterious Death G W Thomas

A resort town on the East Coast is supplied with water by a large tank at the top of a hill. The body of rich old Mr Marchmount is been found there one night, his throat horribly crushed. The wet mud around the tank bears no footprints. Dr. Tointon, the local physcian, examines the tank and finds it full to within a few inches of the top. He also finds traces of slime on the railing. Despite this, the police investigator, Inspector Slago, suspect Dufirst, the tank-keeper. Dufirst is found to have Marchmont's watch but claims he took it from the already dead body. The police begin to believe him when a second body is found...

Possibilities

1) The original solution: The tank is home to a large snake which strangled Marchmount, then returned to the darkness of the reservoir. The tank has not been cleaned on a regular basis and strange chemicals in the water has affected the reptile. The slime was left by the snake as it passed back and forth into the tank.

2) A Mythos solution: Marchmount is a cultist and has been using the tank at night as a landing pad for his experiments with Byakhees. His spell failed this one time and the flying horror strangled him then dropped his body. The slime is supernatural ooze excreted by the Byakhee. A mystical whistle was dropped at the site but picked up by a child, the second victim.

3) A Non-Mythos solution: The tank holds the remains of Sidney Belton, a man who has been missing for four years. Belton's ghost haunts the reservoir, waiting for the three men who murdered him and hid his body. Marchmount was one of them, as was the second victim. The ghost will remain hoping to kill the third man. The marks on the dead mens' neck is made by the ghost's deadly grip.

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An Inconvenience To Travellers Peter Devlin

The London Underground (or Big City Subway) is under siege. In the last four weeks three passengers have been murdered, so horribly that the Police have initiated a cover up. Public transport executives are concerned that business will be affected if the story comes out. Everyone in the know wants the murderer caught, preferably dead to minimise collateral damage.

Each murder was committed in a fashion mimicking a scene from a horror novel, movie or true crime; the Police have yet to make that connection. A note from the killer has was found with each body. Victim 1, female, was stabbed and dissected (Jack The Ripper) whilst waiting for a late train. Victim2, male, was stunned and tied to the tracks to be beheaded by the early train (Harold Lloyd). Victim 3, male, was assaulted and drained of blood using a syringe and medical tubing (Dracula).

Possibilities

1) Victor Mitchell is an ex-employee of the transit authority who plans on a nice extortion payment to supplement his meagre pension. He now works part time as a security guard but used to be an engineer. He knows the underground warrens exceptionally well, has basic medical training and has no fear of violent situations. The murders are inspired by the trashy novels which he reads on boring night shifts. The trophies are kept in a nigh-inaccessible underground storage area for use in the forthcoming extortion campaign.

2) An insane pathology student, Douglas Drew, is preying on his fellow passengers. The victims all

caught their final train at the same stop in the city, as shown by the tickets amongst their personal effects. Drew studies at both the medical school and the library close to the station. He selects his victims for their apparent wealth and social status; he sexually assaults and robs the victims, keeping trophies at his rented accommodation. The notes are rambling subconscious cries for help rather than serious demands.

3) The victims were all members of The Willow Society, a secretive group of occultists and psychics who believe in meditation, positive energies and white magic. Professor Henry Gore, noted pathologist, is President of the Willow Society. Dr Marcus Laine, a hypnotist, guru and faith healer, was recently debunked as a fake by the Willow Society ; in revenge he used real arcane skills to call forth a ghoul to do his murderous bidding. Oddfellow, a recent changeling to ghoul, currently passes as Dr Laine's manservant. The terrible twosome are arranging the murders in such a manner that The Willow Society cannot fail to fall under Police suspicion. The trophies may be readily found in the basement of the Society headquarters, a walled-off detached brownstone mansion.

Oddfellow now has a liking for his new career (he used to be a male nurse at Deadham Sanitarium). He enjoys the thrill of the chase and will soon begin a real campaign of terror in the city. Freedom from Dr Laine will allow him to prey on the train loads of people who use the underground every day; hence the notes placed on each corpse, unsubtle clues pointing at Laine and Gore. The clues are easily deciphered by those who have occult knowledge.

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The Second Wave

Peter Devlin

"Would you care to make a donation? All are welcome at our Temple". A group of Oriental monks is chanting, singing, and politely accosting passers-by. They have shaven heads and wear brightly coloured loose robes and yellow headbands. The monks are collecting donations for their "church", The Second Wave of Serenity. The only English-speaking monk explains that they are Buddhists who seek the ultimate serenity of Nirvana.

Anyone who places money in the bronze collection plate receives a blessing. They will also notice that the monk holding the collection plate has a deformity. He has weblike ridges of skin growing between his fingers!

Possibilities

1) The brass necklace worn by each monk is a circle containing the Chinese ideogram for "bloated woman". The monks are seducing occult-minded Westerners to the worship of the Bloated Woman (Chinese Nyarlathotep) and hence Cthulhu. The blessing psychically "marks" the recipient, allowing the cultists to recognise a potential recruit. "The Second Wave" refers to the second coming of the goddess and her peers. According to the monks and their prophecies the second coming is imminent and believers will see her in visions or dreams. The marked unfortunate will be the subject of both dream sendings and terrestrial recruitment visits from the monks.

The monks collect in their current location as it is close to the offices of Aryan Chemicals. This is a petrochemical conglomerate that is researching the potential of pitchblende derivatives as a fuel source. The value of their stock is rising, fuelled by speculation that they are close to a major breakthrough. The high priest of the Order of The Bloated Woman plans to ensnare a few susceptible employees to assist

with the second coming.

2) TSWOS is an innocent Bhuddist sect. It is in the process of being infiltrated by Bloated Woman cultists who hope to use the sect as a cover for their own plans. The Buddhists have fled war-torn China to set up temples in a few Western cities. The Order of The Bloated Woman is making good use of this unfortunate circumstance to spread its tentacles.

The Mythos cultists initially play dumb in response to probing questions. Anyone who appears liable to expose them receives a visit at home from a group of staring-eyed hairless monks. They collect arms not alms!

3) TSWOS is a Tibetan cult dedicated to eradication of Mythos influence so that Man may achieve his rightful place on the sacred wheel. The collector is a Chinese male who has (so far) successfully resisted his transformation with the help of the Llama who leads the Second Wave.

The "blessing" detects and marks those tainted by the Mythos (spell users, those who have delved deeply, i.e. player characters). Anyone who fits that category will occasionally notice Oriental monks collecting on a nearby street corner. The monks will choose an appropriate time and location to capture, interrogate, and possibly kill these Mythos worshipping degenerates.

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The Dinner Party Peter Devlin

Kenneth Marsh is an eccentric traveller, writer, critic and dilettante whose frequent dinner parties are the talk of the town. Avaricious socialites shamelessly pursue invitations to these cosmopolitan events. Guests come from all social backgrounds and are chosen by Marsh for their idiosyncrasies and entertainment potential. Madonna Scarlatti, stage actress, and Samuel Waldeberg, a would-be movie star, are amongst the guests this evening.

After a starter of superb herb and garlic pate, the main course appears, an 'unusual fish dish'. The guests joke nervously, hoping that it is not calimari; a previous guest had an attack upon learning that she had eaten sauteed baby octopus. "One simply couldn't live with the thought of eating tentacles!" Marsh tucks in and everyone slowly follows his example. The main course is excellent. A rich chocolate and coffee pudding is the sweet, to be followed by coffee, brandy and cigars. Marsh, a radical, does not expect the ladies to retire whilst the men smoke. Conversation turns to the hosts recent travels. Marsh returned recently from the Orient with, amongst other curios, a number of live specimens of a rare genus of venomous catfish. Marsh maintains extensive salt and fresh water aquaria. These catfish have bred extensively in the last few months; the guests have just eaten a few of them.

The Lung-Hung catfish are found only in the precincts of a Cantonese temple to a many-armed female 'Bhudda', referred to as The Bloated Woman. The fish are considered sacred as, reputedly, they can heal dermatitis sufferers who bathe in their pool. Marsh does not elaborate on how he obtained live specimens although there was a Reuters article on a riot in Shanghai a few months ago. Suddenly, Marsh begins to choke. His eyes bulge, he turns purple, and he slumps face-down into his coffee.

Possibilities

1) The cook, Jules Severin, didn't know how to prepare the fish. He sought the advice of a kindly yellow

robed Chinese herbalist monk who was collecting donations door-to-door. The monk's recipe deliberately didn't account for the poison sacs within the fish. Marsh sampled the dish yesterday and ate it again tonight. He has died first. Within 24 hours all the guests will be dead. Marsh has an extensive collection of journals in which he relates the tales of the Lung-Hung Catfish as learned from a 'flower girl' in Shanghai. There is a small temple in Chinatown, guarded closely by the Order of The Bloated Woman. The monks know of the antidote. It only remains for someone to fetch it in time.

2) Shelby the butler checks Marsh and declares him alive. Then Waldeberg collapses theatrically to the floor with severe cramps; he daringly had two helpings of the main course.

In normal humans the catfish venom causes cramps and fever which may kill those with a weak constitution. On Deep One hybrids the venom speeds the transformation process dramatically. The catfish can feed on dead flesh of humans, and are kept specifically for use on the moulting flesh of such hybrids. This is the background to the tales concerning their healing properties.

Marsh, unknowingly, can trace his family history to Innsmouth. He is in a coma from which he will awake in a few days, a good way through the transformation to a Deep One. Grinning Orientals hide in the bushes outside the window. They await the incapacitation of the guests. They will take Marsh to his true people and kidnap then sacrifice the defilers of the sacred fish.

3) Marsh was poisoned by Madonna Scarlatti, who sits to his left. She used an antique Italian poison ring to slip a lethal dose of cyanide into his dessert.

Marsh and Scarlatti are ex-lovers. He savaged her recent appearance as Lady Macbeth but invited her as a way of apologising for being too harsh. Hell hath no fury...

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Under New Management Nathan Lough

A local asylum has appointed a new head of staff after dismissing the last one as quietly as possible. The new Doctor has an interesting manner of treating the ill, paying particular attention to each patient, and he has ushered in an atmosphere of respect and dignity. Other members of staff have commented on the doctor's success with the schizophrenic and paranoid patients who, previously thought incurable, now speak coherently.

The doctor has also shown an interest in events about town, attending those related to the strange or supernatural with noted passion. The investigators, if they have not met him before at the asylum, might encounter him at one such occasion, a dinner party. The doctor and the investigators attend a dinner party given by a local spiritualist, who heads some local society for the feeble exploitation of the mundanely odd. The investigators enjoy a pleasant evening of food, conversation, and wine with the doctor and the host. The Doctor is the first to leave, about twenty minutes ahead of everyone else.

On their way home, the investigators suffer from peculiar emotions of disease and apprehension. They feel light-headed from the wine, and the starless night turns the feelings into paranoia. Once they get home they feel safe. For a time.

Later that night, they discover an odd doll-like figure in their room. The dolls wear small-scale normal clothes of the period, either male or female, but lack any defining features--their faces are white, blank

globes. If handled, the doll squirms, and attempts to scramble up the investigators arm towards her/his face. The dolls are amorphous and gooey, and all but impervious in their single minded attempt to reach the investigator's face.

Possibilities

1) The dolls are a hallucination, a nightmare. Mentioning the phenomena to anyone results in a visit from the new doctor, and a eclaration of insanity may be quick to follow. If this happens, the new patient finds her/himself interned in a clean, orderly mental hospital, where the doctor and staff patiently try to cure them.

2) Asking around after the nightmare reveals that everyone who intended the party had some sort of nervous experience, though some decline to share its nature. Investigation reveals that the curious society lead by last night's host is much more adept than it seems at the arts of the supernatural. Investigation leads to a plot to replace officials and people in power in the town, with members loyal to this group. The dolls are part of a dark magic meant to rob someone of their sanity by implanting dementia-causing toxins into the victim's bodies.

The doctor may at first be thought an ally, but has already been replaced.

3) The dolls are a hallucination suffered by everyone attending the dinner. The hallucinations were caused by the new doctor who poisoned the wine with a powerful hallucinogen on his way back from the restroom. The nightmarish visions persist, and eventually, the victims feel persecuted everywhere, seeing life-sized, faceless horrors shuffling towards them, obscenely sucking air through their white, viscous flesh.

These delusions will eventually turn a sane man mad, without treatment. Unfortunately, the cure offered at the asylum is worse - the doctor is creating from the minds of the mad, a perfect mirror for the mindless horror that is Azathoth. Individuals are locked alone in a dark room, with only a small white doll for company. The hallucnations return, with the creature refusing to rest until it has slid its way bloodily into the investigator's brain. There it prepares the victim's mind for the glory and the terror of an eternity of Azathoth.

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Bump in the Night Kars Alfrink

Mr. Harold Winfield was driving home after a long day of hard work. It was dark and the road to his home in the little town of Biltstone was badly lit, only by the full moon. As he was dozing of behind the wheel he didn't notice the dark shape crossing the road. Mr. Winfield tried to avoid hitting the figure, to no avail. The humanoid form crashed into the screeching car and flew over it. Harold got out, thoroughly shocked he saw the victim (an old man) lying on the road, unconscious and bleeding heavily. He put the poor man in his car and raced towards the village. There, the old man was put under the care of Doctor White. After surviving the night, the man is now in a coma.

Yet, strange things are happening in Biltstone. Mr. Winfield went insane shortly after a visit to the old man at the hospital. Nurses and doctors often perform their surgeries and other tasks imperfectly, with horrible consequences. Patients are scarred for life because of incisions that weren't even needed. Babies are born with sickening deformities...

Still the old man lies there, no relatives, only under the care of Doctor White, still in a coma. Dr. White becomes more and more reclusive and secretive.

Possibilities

- 1) The old man is a rare form of Nyarlathotep. It lets itself become wounded or hurt and then starts to terrorize the people who take care of it. Meanwhile, the caretakers are slowly becoming completely devoted to it, dedicating their whole lives to it. At the peak of this dedication (which even surpasses the greatest love), the old man dies, devastating the minds of the caretakers. Should anyone guess at its nature (for example asking him, while in coma: "Hey are you Nyarlathotep?") he'll slap them around a bit, when nobody's watching, scream and moan, spit blood at them, and die.
- 2) The old man is a witch. He popped out of a gate and was hit by Mr. Winfield. Physically incapacitated, he cursed him and all his relatives (among them Dr. White and some other hospital employees, after all Biltstone IS a small village).
- 3) Doctor White is a mad man. After finding some of Herbert West's notes in the Miskatonic Library he decided to carry on with West's experiments. With great success: Some of the employees of the hospital are living dead (hence the accidents during surgery and so forth). White intends to make the old man his Opus Magnum, during several operations (including some rituals) the old man will be enhanced with metal parts. He will then be resurrected and herald the coming of a new human race.

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Who Do Voodoo? C.C. Chamberlin

A string of ritual murders is rocking a small town, and the people are starting to panic. The victims have no obvious connection. The police have enlisted the investigators for help in identifying some strange items found at the scene, and research reveals that they are items related to voodoo magic. This leads the investigators to believe that someone is practicing voodoo rites somewhere in town. But what is puzzling is that voodoo isn't a religion that condones multiple bloody murders like these - voodoo may be strange, but it is not murderous. Something is amiss.

Possibilities

- 1) The victims were all attending a small fundraiser at a picnic ground on the same day an important voodoo ritual that was being performed in the nearby woods. The town's mayor is involved in the voodoo group, and would be thrown out of office if people knew he cut the heads off chickens and drank their blood in strange, secret ceremonies. (Voters can be so picky!) Someone witnessed the ritual and is trying to blackmail the mayor. After obtaining a list of the donors at the fundraiser, he is now systematically killing off people who were at the picnic ground that day in an attempt to silence his would-be blackmailer. If the blackmailer is still alive, he is too afraid to go to the police, and rightly so; the police keep the mayor well informed on the progress of the case.
- 2) The murders are being performed by an insane preacher whose church's attendance has waned considerably since his hellfire-and-brimstone sermons have gotten a bit too graphic and vitriolic. In an attempt to rekindle a god-fearing attitude in the town, he is murdering people at random and making it look like ritualistic voodoo murders, thinking it will scare people back into the pews. When it doesn't

work, he gets more frustrated and kills again. Checking up on him will reveal that he has a book on voodoo checked out of the library, which he is using as a reference to decorate the murder scenes. If there is any pattern to the slayings, it is that all the victims are either his rival clergy or his vocal critics.

3) The leader of a group of voodoo practitioners has stumbled upon a dread tome of magic written by a madman from the jungles of Brazil, and doesn't realize that it describes rites that aren't a part of voodoo (they're actually Mythos rites). Since finding it, he has tried to incorporate what he has learned from the book into his teachings, and the result is a cultish cross between voodoo and the worship of a Great Old One. While on the surface, the murders and trappings of the cult are reminiscent of voodoo, a darker secret lies within: the Great Old One is demanding sacrifices, and the leader is providing them. Investigators are likely to be quietly helped by the voodoo practitioners who realize that something is wrong, but cannot show themselves for fear of being implicated in the murders.

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To the Future Simon Hopper

Antiques are being stolen from houses throughout the area. Only items over a hundred years old are removed and any other valuables are left alone. The only clue left by the thieves is a slogan scrawled across a wall: "To the Future!"

Possibilities

1) There is a group, perhaps based around the artistic movements of Futurism and Vorticism, that is destroying old things as a matter of principle. They wish to rid the world of its past in order to hurry in a new, utopian society. The group could be worshippers of Yog-Sothoth and seek to open a gateway to the future.

2) The group is as above but they are really being manipulated by a group of art thieves. The furnace that the antiques are being sacrificed in is actually a complicated set of lights and mirrors concealing a conveyor belt that leads to a neighboring building. Here the antiques are evaluated and packaged before being distributed throughout the illegal art trade.

3) The thefts are all part of an elaborate insurance scam. The "victims" of the thefts are all close to bankruptcy or are in dire financial need. They have been approached by the thieves who are willing to remove and sell on the antiques for a large percentage of their value.

(Something like this could cause quite a stir among Nephilim as their stasis items would be ripe targets for the thieves.)

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Latin Course Nicolai E Lassen

This takes place after the investigators have found a book written in Latin - a language they don't already master. Therefore they need to learn Latin before they can read the ancient book. As luck would have it, there's a Latin course held at the local university. The course is taken by Professor Donald

Brown, an elderly man with a strange accent.

Possibilities

1) Donald Brown is a sorcerer from Hungary. The locals discovered his Mythos activities and poisoned him. He survived but was partly paralyzed and managed to escape to the USA. As a professor of Latin, it was easy for him to get a job at the university. The class also gives him opportunity to meet young people with healthy bodies. He now plans on finding someone with a weak mind and perform a mind transfer to get a new healthy young body.

2) One of the other students is Timothy Lyman, a young dilettante. He is taking the course to improve his Latin, as his present skill in the language was not sufficient to read a newly-bought book. The book, however, is written by Nyarlathotep and contains a spell that will summon Azathoth. Once someone has begun reading the book, they are compelled to complete it and cast the spell. If they do not do this then Nyarlathotep sends dreams to the reader, forcing him to finish the task. The dreams describe how anyone casting the spell will be greatly rewarded by the Deamon Sultan. Unknown to Lyman, however, summoning Azathoth resembles detonating a nuclear bomb.

3 The investigators feel unwelcome. It is as if the rest of the class (including the professor) is keeping a secret from them. The truth is that the whole class is a cult, and the lecturer is the high priest. Nobody actually learns Latin during the lectures (instead Latin cult phrases are repeated and learned by rote). The investigators have been placed in this class by mistake - will they discover the mistake before they are abducted and sacrificed at the next sabbath?

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On the Road to Nowhere Dominic Mooney

You are making an urgent journey across the UK from west to east. It is an overcast autumn afternoon, with a slight drizzle falling from the sky at that annoying rate where windscreen wipers can't keep the road ahead in sight when set on 'intermittent', and squeal against the dry screen when running constantly. The journey is tiring for the driver, and atmospheric messes up the radio, leaving a single worn audio cassette to entertain you all. There's a distinct feeling that you should have taken the train, no-matter how erratic or costly the journey would have been.

After dusk, beyond Coventry, the M6 motorway merges with the M1, heavy with London-bound traffic. Here you turn off, moving onto a relatively empty A14. As the gloom becomes night the odometer records the rising mileage as you head into the black, flat emptiness of East Anglia on the rumbling concrete road. After an hour the signs are proclaiming the approach of the dreamy spires of Cambridge as the next city. You sweep around a bend, to see amber lights flashing in a wall of cones. The A14 eastbound carriageway is closed, with Police Warning signs and temporary diversion signs pointing a route towards Bedford in the south. You turn and follow these, which soon lead into narrow country lanes with high hedges winding through the darkness of the damp, overcast night...

Possibilities

1) There has been a fatal accident on A14 and both carriageways have been blocked. This is a diversion thrown together quickly by the Police. After 50 miles of winding, poorly signposted roads the investigators will rejoin the A14 at Cambridge.

2) Once the investigators are diverted into the wilds of the Cambridgeshire fens, the diversion signs disappear. The road has been closed as an over-enthusiastic student fresher's week prank using traffic cones and signs appropriated from the spires. The biggest risk the investigators are threatened with is getting lost.

3) The investigators are diverted off the road and, after a wrong turn or two, find themselves on a country estate on what looks like a minor road. The estate belongs to cultists, who invite the investigators in for a coffee and to show them where they are. If the investigators try to leave, the cultists ram the investigator's car with a Land Rover. Once they are out of the car the preparations for a ritual and summoning begin - the cultist making good use of this fine bounty that has fallen unexpectedly into their laps.

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The Convention Kevin Kaier

The annual International Mystical and Paranormal Society Convention is to be held soon. This year the special guest is Dr Janos Voerlocke, a well known and often-maligned occult scholar, who has not failed to please convention audiences in the past. Dr Voerlocke claims that he has discovered something that will change the world and intends to reveal his secret at the convention.

Possibilities

1) Dr Voerlocke reveals a strange black polygonal shaped object about the size of a human head. He explains that he found the object sealed in a block of lead covered with dire warnings in hieroglyphs while in Egypt. After he melted the lead he discovered the block contained the artifact in question. The artifact is not just a piece of carved black rock, but a prison for a demon. At this point Voerlocke pushes the polygon open and a Hound of Tindalos screams forth. The Hound is in a foul temper and eager to take revenge on those whom imprisoned it.

2) Voerlocke has captured a deep one, whom he summoned with a spell from the Ponape Scripture. The deep one is covered and croaking loudly as the cage is wheeled onto the stage. Voerlocke makes a short speech and pulls the sheet off. Moments later, five men rush the stage, brandishing guns. The men are deep ones who haven't fully changed and are here to rescue their kin.

3) Dr Voerlocke has run up large debts to some shady characters - and they have persuaded him to act as a decoy to pay off some of the debt. After a long speech Voerlocke reveals what he claims to be a unicorn skull. The skull is merely a doctored horse skull - a fact obvious to anyone studying it for more than a moment. While the long speech was going on, Voerlocke's shady compatriots were robbing the guests' rooms, holding up the hotel manager and clearing out the safe.

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The Party Adie Stewart

A character receives, quite unexpectedly, an invitation to a soirée at the home of one of their old school-

friends. The individual, one Humphrey Anderson-Boyd, is known as an international traveller and has something of a reputation as a dilettante and playboy. He is wealthy, handsome, elegant, and an eminently eligible bachelor. The society journals are quick to match him with any woman in whose company he is seen. His parties are said to be wild and debauched.

Humphrey lives in a large and airy house designed by a radical modern architect and located on the fringes of the fashionable city suburbs. The interior is exquisitely furnished and the grand windows overlook the extensive wooded and landscaped grounds. By day the dramatic skies and excellent views make it an idyllic spot, but at night it can feel very lonely and isolated. The house has been designed to be self-sufficient and has its own generator located in the cellars.

Jones, the cadaverous butler, is the only westerner in the domestic staff. The others are all dark skinned, slightly built Orientals who actively shun contact with the guests. They seem under the sway of the cook, an ancient and grossly fat woman who seems to do little except sit in a rocking chair and give orders. All of the Orientals carry slender knives and have a dragon tattoo on their necks. Jones is able to communicate in their tongue and appears to inspire either respect or fear.

Humphrey retains a number of gamekeepers and groundsmen, local men who maintain the gardens, keep down the wildlife, and patrol the grounds against poachers and trespassers. They consider Humphrey and his staff to be 'queer folk', but their wages are rather good, they receive a rather generous holiday allowance and Christmas bonus, and as such they are loyal and tight-lipped. The gamekeepers have well trained dogs and carry shotguns, and will see off anyone who tries anything funny. They and their dogs shun the woods, however.

Humphrey's little bash, which includes among its guest-list writers, musicians, judges, a gangster, and at least one starlet of the silver screen, begins rather more formally than one might expect. The gramophone music is dull and repetitive and the conversation is terrible: this is hardly going to make the best shindig list of 'Gentleman' magazine. That is, until Jones fetches the "special" drink. The liquid is contained in a large bronze bowl worked with Chinese characters and intricate skull-and-claw designs, and appears to be luminous green in the dim light. The other guests have no qualms about drinking.

Possibilities

1) The characters have received an invite to the wrong party - the one they were supposed to attend isn't until next week. The "special" drink is a powerful aphrodisiac made by the cook: it causes the drinker to lose all of their inhibitions - the affair becomes an orgiastic sex romp. If the characters have drunk the potion they will, in all probability, become willing participants in the carnal activities, though they probably won't remember much of what went on. A number of prostitutes (both male and female) have been hired to 'start things going'. Anyone with professional employment or a position of trust would be very badly affected if their participation in such activities became public knowledge.

2) The "special" drink is a potion that causes the drinker to fall into a waking trance. Humphrey is a newly created undead, Jones is his sire and mentor, and the Orientals are trusted henchmen. When everyone has succumbed to the effects of the potion Humphrey and Jones move among the guests and tap just a little blood from each, drinking enough during the course of the evening to satisfy their unholy needs. Both are immune to most forms of damage (although fire, electricity, and enchanted weapons work) and are exceedingly violent if they are interrupted: they are lethally fast and highly skilled creatures. Those who have drunk the potion remember little of the evening, but uniformly recall having had an excellent time.

3) Humphrey and Jones, both permanently insane, are the leaders of a small cult that worships Shub

Niggurath. The "special" drink is a potion, made by the cook, with two main effects. First, it allows the cultists access to the guests' psychic energy. Second, it induces a dream-like state that cushions their minds against the horrors they witness (they recall a wild party but can't remember any details). Humphrey and Jones begin a ceremony that involves everyone performing complex chanting and dancing. At the penultimate moment a sacrifice is brought forth (a suitable victim has been secured and is being held in the cellars until required), and ultimately one or more Dark Young of Shub Niggurath are summoned. The horrifying entities consume the sacrifice (and anyone who hasn't drunk the potion) then vanish into the wooded grounds.

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The Children's Room **Mark W Henshaw**

It is a dark and stormy night. The investigators are lost - they have been travelling and the storm has blown away the road signs. Eventually they arrive in a backwater town where the church and other buildings are in ruins. "Destroyed by a storm last year which killed Reverend Maynard, and Pauline's daughter Sarah," they are told, and are warned repeatedly about going back on the road since, "the weather can be very ugly in these parts."

Instead, the investigators are directed to a retired widower named James Barbarow for lodging; he has three beds in an building he built separately from the main house. Mr Barbarow shows them the place, which consists of a single large bedroom and a bathroom, readily explaining that this was for his children, now gone. Mr Barbarow implies that they are deceased; if pressed, he says only that they died in their sleep.

The place is run down, although attentive investigators will notice a fire extinguisher. There's no electricity and the lock is broken; James offers to lend them a lamp, and to put a padlock on the outside door to keep out animals or prowlers. The last casual remark he makes as he closes the door and leaves them for bed is, "Sleep well--I just hope nothing happens to you in the middle of the night."

Possibilities

- 1)** The most worrisome investigator can't sleep--he or she hears scratching outside. It's just a racoon or other animal; nothing dangerous happens that night, and the next morning Mr Barbarow won't recall having made any ominous remarks.
- 2)** The house is built on the edge of an ancient Indian worship site to Cthuga (the church was built at the centre of the site). Just before midnight, investigator awakens having just dreamt of a door opening in the corner, spilling lights and voices into the room. At midnight, this door opens for real, releasing fire vampires into the room! The next morning, Mr Barbarow admits that whenever the moon is as it is now he has a disturbing dream, but is always too frightened to investigate--his children died in that place from horrible burns, though the walls were untouched.
- 3)** The village is being destroyed by ghouls. They have ransacked the church graveyard and torn down the church, killing Reverend Maynard when he interceded. The girl, Sarah, was carried off in the middle of the night some days later. Now, these creatures have struck a bargain with the villagers: in exchange for peace, the humans offer any travelers or new corpses to the ghouls. Mr Barbarow will contact the ghouls about the investigators, show them back to his land, and give them the key to the padlock.

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The Eve of Oov Jim Sliney Jr.

The mentally unstable in town are claiming that a great disaster is forthcoming. Some of these reports involve references to "darkness" or "day becoming night" or "night everlasting".

Them, one day the sunrise simply doesn't come. No one can provide an explanation. The common threads amidst the inevitable chaos are the sightings of a menacing figure in black tattered robes, the presence of a variety of strange creatures attacking people in most despicable ways, and their general avoidance of children.

The figure in black robes calls himself Oov.

Possibilities

- 1) The "strange creatures" attacking people are in fact, the Dark Fae (evil faeries). Oov is their leader, a particularly powerful and wicked Dark Faerie who brought them here to change the local balance between good and evil. They avoid children because of their "innocence", which causes them excruciating pain. Night goes on until they are stopped and they can only be stopped by a certain spell that exists in the recent dreams of the local children.
- 2) Oov and the strange creatures are fugitives from the Dreamlands who are trying to break into the waking world. Victims in the dream don't wake up in the waking world and so become hosts for the fugitives to "wake up in". They can only be stopped by realizing the dream state and waking up the entire town.
- 3) There was an eclipse and much like full moon "lunatics" Oov and these monsters are nothing more than crazy people gone wild.

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The Ghost of Easter Past Barbara Robson and Stuart Barrow

The town is awash with breathless reports: Jesus Christ has returned. The faithful flock to town in the hope of catching a glimpse of their saviour, and all who have seen him preach agree that this man, bearing all the signs of recent crucifixion, cannot be other than the genuine Son of God.

Possibilities

- 1) Jesus Vasquez, a carpenter from Silver Springs, Fl., has been imbued with an otherworldly spirit, giving him supernatural endurance and magnetism, at the cost of his sanity. He now believes himself to be the manifestation of Jesus Christ. He preaches based on his recollections from Sunday School and his personal prejudices, and his words are given weight by the spirit which is bound to him. The stigmata were self-inflicted with a nail-gun. Analysis of recordings of his teachings shows them to be simplistic and contradictory, but it is almost impossible to remain unconvinced when hearing them from Vasquez himself.

2) Although thousands claim convincingly to have seen Jesus in person, he proves remarkably difficult for the sceptical to track down. It emerges that the faithful have met Jesus, not on this plane, but in waking dreams. A creature of the Dreamlands is seeking to open a way through to the waking world. By calling upon the Christian faithful, who willingly synchronise their dreams and mobilise their mental energies for the promised second coming, it is building considerable power.

3) What we know as "God" is actually the shattered remnants of a Great Old One, forced by its enemies to take on a fragile human form, which was crucified and its essence all but destroyed. Over two millennia, it has regained sufficient psychic energy to manifest again as Jesus. While, to some ways of thinking, it is the second coming, this Jesus represents only the death throes of his "father". The activity of the shade of an Old One will summon others to feed on it. The world will likely not survive such an occurrence.

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The Gift Felix Girke

An investigator quite unexpectedly gains super-human abilities: his muscles grow, thicken and strengthen, he becomes a speed-reader, he finds all his five senses enhanced, and he can perform incredible feats of skill. If he has a chance to find out, he is also very difficult to injure, as his body seems to easily absorb many types of kinetic energy.

Possibilities

1) Nyarlathotep is meddling again. Instead of sending one of his many forms to spread mayhem, he decided to literally play god by enhancing several individuals' abilities beyond human ken. He means serious fun though - he has also bestowed upon several religious cults the divine message that his saints walk the Earth once again. If the character shows off in public any of his amazing skills, he will be sought out by one of these groups, who will appropriate him as their Divine Messenger. At the same time, more Divine Messengers will appear, and inevitably some will go public. A Clash of Cults is imminent.

2) It is a gift - of sorts. Some stars are right, and a race of beings from a distant star has opened a gate to Earth - their seasonal hunting ground. As they find that human beings are generally frail and not that challenging to hunt, each hunter picks one target to be enhanced. These beings are normally invisible - but the enhanced character will now be able to see them. The alien appears after a few days and then gives chase.

3) It is a delusion. The character is not stronger, not smarter, and cannot suddenly read Braille or distinguish five brands of Root Beer by taste. His sudden overconfidence is entirely misplaced, and if he persists in this belief, he will get into major trouble. This might be an effect of lasting sanity loss, or a curse by a fiendish sorcerer. This condition, when noticed, is very disturbing to everybody else. "Look at me fly!"

Sinister People

An Old Friend
Eric R Provost

Late Friday evening an old Army buddy contacted me. I hadn't heard from him in years, and now he seemed desperate to meet with me. In secret. He wouldn't say exactly why, so with an uneasy feeling, and an address scribbled down, I set out to meet with him.

The old rendering plant was smelly, dark, and had apparently been unused in some years. I found a loading door slightly ajar, with an old, but apparently serviceable, truck sitting outside. Inside I overhear a horse whisper, and after a moment I can associate that voice with a dark form accented by the minute glow of a lit cigarette. Even close to him, I can't see him very well, but I can clearly make out the distinct scent of the cologne that was his signature. "Here. " He thrust a small leather bound volume into my hands. It wasn't any bigger than a paperback novel, but so much heavier. The cover felt rough in my hands, and even though I couldn't make it out, there felt to be some form of symbol in the leather.

After examining the little tome as much as I could in the minimal light, I was about to ask him what it was, or where he's been all this time, but he was gone. Simply gone. Not a footstep did I hear. Just the smell of cigarette smoke and cologne.

Possibilities

- 1) The old friend has been dead for many years. Murdered during his army days, and framed for a vile crime he didn't commit. The journal is that of his murder, also dead. The ghost of the old friend has returned with the journal, hoping that the investigator will find the truth of his murder and set the record straight.
- 2) The old friend was a combat photographer in the Army, and has sense moved onto independent journalism. The volume is a hand written manual written by the head of a cannibal cult. It includes graphic depictions of ritual murders, and sketches on how best to prepare the human body for consumption. Inside the back cover is a complex symbol. It is the focus for a magical ritual allowing the creator of the book to summon the volume, and it thief back to the creator. This time the ritual botched, bringing just the thief back for punishment.
- 3) The volume itself is not connected to the disappearance, even if that is not immediately apparent. The rendering plant itself is haunted. The invisible beast that makes its residence here enjoys quietly taking its victims deep below the building and torturing them for its entertainment.

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Bloody Red Tape
Barbara Robson and Stuart Barrow

An acquaintance of one of the investigators, a clerk at a government department, has been missing for a couple of weeks. While the clerk's co-workers acknowledge that it is rather odd that he hasn't turned up for work, nobody seems to have tried to contact him. He is still being issued with a pay check, and everything appears normal at his office - except for his unexplained and barely acknowledged absence.

Possibilities

1) It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. In the eyes of his co-workers, the office is more efficient and life is a lot more pleasant without him. They don't know where he has gone but no-one is asking too many questions because they don't want him back. No-one has bothered to inform personnel. So what really did happen? After a hard night on the booze in an unfamiliar area, he was followed out onto the street and violently mugged. His wallet was stolen, so no identification was found when they picked his comatose body off the pavement. He is still in hospital, in a coma.

2) When asked directly about the clerk, the co-workers can answer simple questions, but appear unable to concentrate. He seems to slide from their consciousness. Although they complain about being understaffed, none of his co-workers really notice his absence, or think about him when jobs that would normally have been assigned to him come up. One woman, however, shows signs of anxiety when questioned, despite not having any firm recollections. The clerk had become fixated on the woman, and she had eventually complained about his unwanted attentions to the section manager. The clerk was a dabbler in the black arts. He had come across what he had thought was an invisibility spell, which he had cast in order to better observe the object of his desire. However, the spell was far more powerful than he'd realised, and he was removed from the perceptions of the world and the minds of his colleagues. He is presently trapped in limbo, observing the world but unable to interact with it.

3) There's something not quite right about the co-workers. Astute investigators will notice similarities in the features of the other clerks, and will begin to feel uneasy in their presence. Closer inspection shows that most of the workers in the department have the same unsettling disfigurements in the form of patches of blanched skin and slightly malformed ears. The workers are, like the Innsmouth folk, the offspring of humans and an evil, non-human race. They have been slowly been taking over this department through prejudicial hiring practices, in order to further the malevolent purposes of their dark sires. The investigator's friend was hired, ironically enough, as the result of a filing error, and was discreetly disposed of when he found out too much about the department's personnel.

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Figure in Black Paul Comeau

Whispers are circulating through a small town about sightings of a mysterious figure along the river dressed in black. The figure is reported to leave burnt black footprints on the ground wherever he walks, and anything liquid that he touches turns to steam.

Possibilities

1) The mysterious figure on the river is the Devil, transported to earth in human form. He challenges all those who come near him to a battle of wits, a battle that he has rigged to win at the cost of the soul of any who challenge him.

2) The mystery man is an actor being paid by a developer to scare the people out of the area so that they can buy up the land to build a casino on the river. All of his scare tactics are a bag of harmless special effects meant to scare away the curious and the simple minded.

3) The figure is an alien from the planet venus. His coat protects his skin from the sun's radiation which

would be deadly to him, and he sweats acid which burns the ground where he steps.

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Return of the King Paulo Rech

A minibus carrying tourists picks up a hitch-hiker late in the evening on the road to Las Vegas. The tourists aren't able to get a good look at the stranger, but they are left with the impression of a tall, dark and handsome middle-aged man.

Over the following days the tourists start seeing glimpses of this man at the casinos, shopping outlets, wedding chapels, and Hoover Dam. It is as if he is shadowing them. The tourists grow increasingly nervous particularly after one of them goes missing while trying to chase after this mysterious figure.

Possibilities

- 1) The stranger is Elvis. Plagued by health problems he struck a bargain with Nyarlathotep and in exchange for some terrible deed he was given immortality. However, he needs to periodically feed from the life force of humans in order to live. He usually takes his victims from the Las Vegas area, but often ventures to other parts of the US and the world, thus causing the numerous Elvis sightings in the last 20 years. The tourists are being stalked and drained of their energy and this will eventually result in death.
- 2) The stranger is an Elvis impersonator. There is an unpublicised Elvis convention in town and the tourists are glimpsing Elvis impersonators and are growing paranoid for no good reason. The missing tourist is merely lost, and turns up eventually.
- 3) The stranger is a harmless wraith-like figure that bears a striking resemblance to Elvis. It keeps hitching rides into the city with strangers and then follows them around, but always at a distance.

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Suffering Artist G Holochwost

Gaspar Brent, a successful local artist has been horribly mutilated and now lives mindlessly in a catatonic state. Upon the completion of his last work, a painting of an unusually strange series of lines and angles, Brent was "attacked" by an unseen assailant. Should he ever recover, Gaspar Brent will never paint again - the "mutilator" hacked both of his hands off at the wrist. The hands were nowhere to be found. The painting is missing as well.

Possibilities

- 1) Gaspar Brent was kept awake for weeks before the completion of his final work. Plagued by nightmares, the only thing that gave him rest was his painting. The nightmares were sent by a Dr. Nathan Hargreaves, a devoted priest of Hastur who needed the painting as a votive focus for an evocation of one of the Unspeakable One's avatars. He removed the artist's hands in an elaborate ritual of torture that was used to guarantee that he would never produce another painting like it.

2) Gaspar Brent knew the angles of the painting were unlike any others in the history of art. A morphine addict, Gaspar Brent was given to "dreams" and "visions" on a constant basis. It was from these that the inspiration for his most recent painting came. Unknowingly, Brent worked at the ancient diagram until one evening, in the midst of an inspired state, his hands pushed through the canvas into an extra-dimensional space where he felt a horrible and dreadful gnashing of fangs upon his wrists. When he withdrew them, the Hound of Tindalos that he had evoked, held tight to its prey. Upon seeing the beast, Brent went insane, buckling under the actuality of what he had done. Biting through, the Hound retracted back into the painting, taking the artist's hands and sanity with it. Before Brent's maddened eyes, the painting then crumbled to dust.

3) Gaspar Brent is not as well off as he used to be. Having spent his last cent on luxuries beyond his means, he borrowed money from a local mob family and has no means of paying it back. After repeated threats, Gaspar Brent went to the Don to beg for mercy and a means by which he could return the favor. After sending his thugs to demolish Brent's studio and take anything of value (including the painting), Don Carriagi had Brent beaten within an inch of his life and his hands hacked off at the wrist. After his stumps were bound with filthy wads of gauze and twine, Brent was left on his doorstep, terrorized to the core.

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Forked Tongues Steve Hatherley

Martin Coleford-Johns is fascinated by dinosaurs. His father worked hard uncovering fossilized skeletons of the giant creatures and passed the bug on to Martin. It was only natural that he should attend Oxford and study the science of paleontology. Now, at the age of 42, Martin Coleford-Johns is the acknowledged leader of the field.

Tall and good looking, many women have fallen for this aristocratic figure. However, Martin has but one passion - dinosaurs. He is distant and uninterested in anything except his favourite subject. When anyone mentions anything to do with the prehistoric world he suddenly becomes lively and alert, almost undergoing a complete personality change.

However, this reclusive man does not like to publicise his work. He lives in the family house set back in extensive gardens behind high brick walls. His two servants, a butler and a maid, aid him. Currently he has only one heir, Justin Coleford-Johns. The boy is at boarding school, his mother having died in childbirth.

Coleford-Johns rarely appears in public, preferring to work either in the field or in the extensive laboratories constructed on his grounds. When he does appear (evening engagements only) he is always impeccably dressed.

Visitors to the house are unwelcome. If the visitors cannot express an interest in either the extensive reptile collection or the study of fossils then they will be shown the door. Otherwise Coleford-Johns will talk animatedly to his fellow devotees on the subject until he grows tired of them.

The Coleford-Johns family has for years been a sanctuary for the Serpent People. With the aid of Consume Likeness the Serpent People have taken the place of Martin, the butler and the maid. There are other Serpent People hidden about the house.

The only human member of the family is Justin, and he is kept away from the house as much as possible. Once he has bred and has at least one heir, the Serpent People will kill and replace him as well.

The house is filled with reptiles and dinosaur books. The shelves are lined with anything even vaguely connected to the subject. There are fossils and bones and several scale models of dinosaurs. There are also several Serpent People tomes, but they are well hidden. Lighting in the house is always soft to avoid casting betraying shadows. The Serpent People never go out in bright sunlight and have most of their needs delivered direct from Harrods.

Coleford-Johns has a purpose other than the study of fossils. He is engaged in a programme to return the People as rightful masters of the Earth. In rooms concealed below the house he has several clutches of Serpent People eggs, just waiting to hatch.

His fossil hunting expeditions across the globe conceal a more sinister purpose. Chipping at rock in distant countries is a good cover for his true goal - finding the lost temples of the Serpent People. The Serpent People were a violent, possessive race and fought many battles with other aliens that wanted Earth for their own. However, their enemies were cunning and powerful and, at the end of the Permian Era, they began the preparations which would preserve their ancient race until such time as they could reclaim the world for their own.

Their preparations consisted of a series of temples scattered across the globe in isolated locations. In each, a number of the Serpent People were placed in a state of deep hibernation, along with much of their (now lost) technology and sorcery. Eventually, when the wars were over they would awaken to reclaim the Earth.

However, something went wrong and the temples' inhabitants never woke. As the Earth grew older its crust moved and shifted, crushing many temples. Others were lost as the land dropped and the sea rushed in, or were found by other races and destroyed. Now, 230 million years after their construction, there are only a few of the temples left. Martin Coleford-Johns wants to find them.

Possibilities

1) Justin Coleford-Johns is troubled by nightmares about reptiles. In them he dreams of giant walking snakes which talk in strange hissing voices. Sometimes, in the really bad nightmares his father turns into one of these creatures. Periodically he runs away from the boarding school, but is always found and sent back.

2) Carelessly, slip Martin Coleford-Johns is photographed in broad sunlight while working on a large fossil in Utah, America. The photographer is a journalist reporting on the expedition and does not notice the strange, inhuman shadow. However, while Martin is still in the USA, the photograph is printed in one of the London papers. The paper has the print in its files, the shadow is much clearer on that.

3) Should reports pointing to a new Serpent People colony reach his ears, Martin will begin to investigate. Stories of dinosaurs, giant reptiles, and samples of shedded skin will stir his interest.

If the Investigators are involved he may try to infiltrate the group by casting Consume Likeness. Coleford-Johns may decide to use one of his different forms to avoid attracting attention to his sanctuary.

Spider Man **Steve Hatherley**

He is their least favourite patient. Everybody, even arachnophiles, find the presence of so many spiders disturbing. They are everywhere in the barren room: on the floor, walls and ceiling. They infest his bed, scamper across his clothes, and stalk through his hair.

They are ignored by the patient, known to the staff of the Seaview Home for the Insane as 'the spider-man'. He sits on his chair, head cocked to one side, staring blankly at nothing. He does not speak and needs to be hand-fed, not a popular task among the staff. The spiders have defeated all attempts to shift them. Steely nerved cleaners used to periodically clean the room, but each time they were back within a week. Now they just don't bother. Besides, the spider-man does not seem to mind.

Possibilities

1) Blown off course by a severe storm, the crew of a capsized tramp steamer found themselves cast on a pacific island inhabited by natives belonging to a spider cult.

In the months that followed, those that weren't killed lost their sanity. Eventually, the cult elected one of the crew to godhood, sacred for the rest of eternity. They cast him adrift in the lifeboat to take the word to the masses, quite unaware that his mind was utterly blank.

The man was picked up by a warship, pronounced insane, and committed to Seaview. There he has attracted the attention of the local spider population. He is their god, and they like being around him.

2) The spider-man is host to the Children of Atlach-Nacha, huge spiders with horrible faces. While exploring the Dreamlands he stumbled across Atlach-Nacha and her web. Atlach-Nacha welcomed the interruption, happily taking the opportunity to inject her young into a suitable host.

He awoke in screaming terror. If it was only a dream, why did he hurt so? Then he saw the neat puncture marks in his abdomen, and felt their presence. It shattered his mind. Now the spiders are waiting for the joyous day when Atlach-Nacha's brood will hatch from his rich flesh. For beneath the spider-man's tender skin they slowly mature, soon to hatch.

3) The spiders are all one species. The spider-man has been cross-breeding them. His listless, blank periods are interspersed with activity when he is permitted to go into the gardens and catch spiders for his room. There he is breeding a new species.

The spider-man was once a fine entomologist, fascinated by socially organised insects and puzzled over the lack of such order in spiders. The only survivor from an expedition to Gharne that went tragically wrong, he is now conducting his own experiments and trying to create a new arachnoid order.

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A Wolf at the Door **Steve Hatherley**

One of the players, a doctor, is contacted by Charlotte Langley. She is having disturbing dreams at night and wishes the doctor to prescribe something to stop them.

Charlotte is twenty-three and rather attractive. She has had dreams ever since she was about thirteen. They have almost always been the same - blood, matted fur and a longing to run free through dark, damp forests. Charlotte has no idea where the dreams originate.

Then, about a week ago the dreams started to intensify. They became stronger, more possessive. She has been waking in a dreadful fright every night since. Could the doctor do something about it?

Charlotte is a werewolf. She first contracted the disease when she was bitten by an infected dog at thirteen. Since then, the disease has been slowly maturing. She will shortly develop the full symptoms and turn into a terrifying werewolf and murder several innocent people. Charlotte will have no memory of the incident.

Contrary to popular legend, the disease does not always manifest itself at full moon. However, it does follow the lunar cycle, repeating itself every 28 days.

Curing Charlotte would be a considerable accolade, if any of the player's peers would believe it. A silver bullet will kill Charlotte, but can the doctor justify using one when he might be able to cure her?

Possibilities

- 1) If the doctor does not suspect Charlotte, he should be guided into believing that she is a clairvoyant. If Charlotte's dreams can predict these terrible murders then perhaps she can be used to solve the crimes.
- 2) The doctor watches over her while she sleeps, and is present when the physical change of girl to beast takes place. The doctor has only a few moments to act before the werewolf wakes. This could prove complicated if the doctor had grown attached to Charlotte.
- 3) Charlotte is an unwitting Dreamer in the Dreamlands, and is a werewolf there. During the hours of the disease's climax a terrible, unstoppable beast stalks the streets of Dylath-Leen. Silver is rare in Dylath-Leen and nobody has thought to waste it upon the beast.

There is a physical change as well - in her bed Charlotte turns into a werewolf, but never awakens. She wakes weak and in human form, feeling as if she has just run a marathon. There are several nights of this (each lasting up to eight weeks in the Dreamlands) before the disease subsides. Until next month.

In this case, the dreams may have been taking place over a period of months and Charlotte has only just decided to see a doctor. She does not know of the Dreamlands.

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Dinosaur Experiment Steve Hatherley

Professor James Catterall stated yesterday during a press conference at his secluded manor in Hampshire that he hoped to re-introduce the dinosaur into certain parts of the world. Such areas would include the South American and African rainforests, the Australian bush and maybe even parts of England, such as Dartmoor or the Norfolk Broads.

From discoveries made during his recent expedition to the source of the Congo river in central Africa, Catterall intends to chemically manipulate bird eggs and produce baby dinosaurs.

The eggs will be artificially regressed so that they devolve, rather than evolve according to Darwin's theories. Catterall believes that birds are the dinosaurs closest living relatives.

Other scientists have denounced Catterall's theories as rubbish.

Catterall is a recluse and works from his secluded manor in the centre of its densely wooded grounds. He is regarded as dangerous by his scientific peers, and has a record of cruelty. During the Great War he was rumoured to have performed much unnecessary surgery. If any of the others of the expedition to Africa can be found, they will be reluctant to talk about the trip. Many bad things happened there.

Possibilities

- 1) Catterall is far ahead of his time and has already cloned several dinosaurs from their fossilised bones. The process was a gift from Nyarlathotep in Africa. He already has had some success and intends to display them in a years time, crediting them as early successes of his fake experiments.
- 2) The experiments work, but take much longer than anticipated. Eventually, some sixty years after they were started (and twenty years after Catterall's death) the first 'dinosaur' is born. It is intelligent - a bipedal lizard man. It is the pinnacle of dinosaur evolution but the dinosaurs died out before it had a chance.
- 3) Catterall is insane and his experiments are fakes. However, several of his assistants are Serpent People in disguise. They are using Catterall as a cover for their own sorcerous methods for bringing their own kind through from the Permian era, along with some of the proto-dinosaurs of that time.

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Smuggler's Cove Garrie Hall

An investigator, an author of weird supernatural tales, is approached by a shifty and suspicious looking man wearing a heavy overcoat and a fur hat. He has a mass of tangled beard and the voice which booms through it is deep and powerful, and Russian.

His English is good but tainted with accent. He explains his predicament - he is a stowaway and a communist. He is also a vampire hunter. Since the revolution his group have found it difficult to pursue their quarry outside of Russian territory due to the attitude of neighbouring countries.

His group had been tracing a vampire, an ex-smuggler, but had lost him across the Baltic. Two of his men had been sent to Wisemar in Germany, the known destination of the vampire. There has been no contact with them in over a month.

Now he is a stranger in a strange land, devoid of friends and allies. He has tracked down this author of strange tales to implore him to go to Wisemar and find his men, if he can. He backs his plea with a small down payment in Czarist gold, with the hint of more to follow.

In the province of Mecklenburg in Germany lies the Baltic port of Wisemar. Close to this busy port lies Vampyre Cove, a dark, gloomy place. Its weather beaten cliff-face and dank caves set the scene for this book's most recent legend.

High on the cliff stands a foreboding house, grim in countenance and strong in character, which in Rasputin's time housed one of the most vicious smugglers that Germany has ever known. Kurt von Mannheim trafficked in vodka and Eastern Russia's finest cloth and spices, and jealously guarded his hideout to the point of slaughtering everyone that came near it.

Rumours soon spread among superstitious peasants that von Mannheim drank the blood of his victims (although no bodies were found). The band of smugglers were eventually captured and hung by the German authorities but von Mannheim escaped, never to be seen again.

The area was later renamed Vampyre Cove even though von Mannheim had long since disappeared and the house boarded up. Yet still there were disappearances in the area and so they have continued over the many years since. Von Mannheim may be long dead but his curse appears to live on at least in the superstitions of the peasants.

Russian translation of BALTIC LORE, Pushkin, 1930

The house is now in a state of great neglect. It is structurally unsafe and has been threatening to fall down for many years now. The combination of the legend and its isolated location has prevented anyone from developing the site further. At the bottom of the cliff are several caves which were used for smuggling. A quite extensive cave network runs through the rock including one passage which leads up to the house.

Possibilities

1) Von Mannheim was, and still is, an active vampire. He now lives in a boat, shuttered from the harsh sunlight during the day and free to prey at night. The tunnel from the house is blocked off so that the only access to the caverns is by sea.

Von Mannheim returns periodically and the caves are filled with all manner of stolen items from his victims. Von Mannheim is alone except for a normal human aide - the captain of the boat. The captain is not a servant or slave, he is von Mannheim's friend. The two vampire hunters had come too close for comfort. Since his earlier discovery von Mannheim has become much more cautious, wary of the strength of his prey.

2) Von Mannheim worshipped Dagon and sacrificed trespassers to a colony of Deep Ones who live in the deepest part of the Baltic Sea. In return for the sacrifices the Deep Ones protected his ship and sometimes destroyed his competitors. Deep in the cave network, in a cavern with direct access to the sea via submerged tunnels he erected a statue of his ancient god. Here he held his sacrifices and worshipped Dagon with the Deep Ones. Von Mannheim is now a Deep One himself and now only rarely returns to Smuggler's Cove. The two vampire hunters stumbled in on a ceremony. They found their cloves of garlic a most inadequate protection!

3) The legend has been used as a cover by White Russians in the years since the revolution. Russian nobility are smuggled through Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and then to Wisemar across the Baltic. The house on Vampyre Cove is a safe house and armoury for weaponry smuggled back up the route. The Bolsheviks have narrowed their search to Wisemar and their agents, the two so-called vampire hunters, tracked the White Russians to Vampyre Cove. Unfortunately for them they were caught and added to the Cove's victims, as will anyone else discovering their secret.

Toast of London
Perry Okerstrom

You are cordially invited to the presentation of noted psychic Victor Neuberg at the Seventh Annual Psychic Circle this August, the 23rd. All members of the Golden Dawn and London Occultist Elite are invited to attend.

Mr Neuberg is noted for his natural talent in the art of spiritualism. Reading will commence at 8:00pm sharp. Refreshments to follow.

Tomes and herbs to be sold. R.S.V.P.

Investigators with the right connections will receive the above invitation. At the meeting dozens of London's rich elite will be there. This is an ideal time for the investigators to establish a number of excellent contacts, and new clients. Note: Victor Neuberg was a medium and conjuror, and a genuine member of the Golden Dawn.

Possibilities

- 1) Neuberg is a fabulous fake. He is very flamboyant and every spectacle he produces is designed to milk money from the unsuspecting public. His illusions look to be completely realistic but are accomplished using slight of hand and expensive magician's props.
- 2) The magic tomes offered for sale seem to contain genuine magic formulae but are all flash and no substance. The Psychic Circle does own some dangerous works, but these are kept under lock and key.
- 3) In his effort to impress, Neuberg accidentally summons something a little too powerful during his act. The demon, happy to be in the material world, pushes Neuberg's mind aside and takes control of his body. Nobody is aware of this fact. Not at first.

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Dead Man's Bluff
Mark Morrison

Greetings,

Word has reached me that you are skilled in investigations of, shall we say, an unusual nature. I am in need of a detective with an open mind, and the recognition that not all the things which walk in our world are easily explained by the more rational amongst us. A detective such as yourself.

I invite you to visit me at my home on the Highbury Road, number 117, this Thursday evening. I do look forward to making your acquaintance.

I am indeed,

Yours sincerely, Alexander Czeminski

The above letter arrives for one of the investigators on the Thursday of the appointment.

If they check the address they can confirm that Czeminski is listed as the owner. Apart from that, for official purposes, the man simply does not exist. He is not on the tax department's books, no birth certificate exists for him, no passport or immigration papers, no police record, no phonebook listing. Nothing.

If they go there during the day, number 117 is a dark stone house set away from the road. An unleashed doberman in the yard discourages them from entering the property.

If they go there at night, Czeminski answers the door. He is quite handsome. He does not shake hands. The house is dark and dusty and there is an odd smell about it. He leads them into a well-stocked library, pours them a drink, motions them to be seated, and begins. "My good people, I am pleased to have this opportunity to meet you. My name is Alexander Czeminski, and I am a vampire. " He is.

Possibilities

1) Czeminski is a collector of esoteric books and paraphernalia. He asks them to bear him in mind if they ever have anything of that nature. He will pay handsomely. He bears them no malice.

2) He has heard of them and guesses that eventually they might track him down, for being what he is. He has asked them here to strike up a more civilized arrangement: they leave each other alone. If he can't, then he will attempt to kill them; maybe tonight, maybe in the weeks that follow.

3) He wants to make a deal. He lives on the dark side of normal existence and is aware of the dark things that dwell there; be they monstrous creatures, or crumbling undead, or gibbering ghouls, or ancient godlings. He is privy to information, the rumours and gossip that travels along the telegraph wires of the dead, unheard by mortal ears. He offers to fence information in return for their protection against vampire hunters, clergymen, and other investigators. If the bargain is struck Czeminski will appear in future adventures, giving odd tips, translating old documents, and scaring the hell out of them with sudden appearances.

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The Bibliophile Brent Heustess

He just loved books. He always had. They were his passion. His life.

He could remember the first book his parents had given him. A huge collection of Menchen (fairy tales). It was bound in a dark burgundy leather, with gold-embossed ridges of the spine. And the insides were full of wondrous illustrations. Fairies and goblins and fell monsters galore.

He still had that book of Menchen. He had all the books he had ever been given or had bought. Lovingly organized and shelved upon tall, dark wood bookcases scattered all over his house. He would never give up a book. Never. Not on his life.

His love for books grew and grew. It was natural that at university he study history & languages. All those tomes full of words & pictures. Those gorgeous books, bound in leather and cloth. He got to the point where he did not care what the books actually said, he just loved the look and feel of books. And the smell. . . But the best of all was the satisfaction of ownership when he added a book to his collection.

Some friends of his at university had become investigators of sorts. They had learned of a certain dark cult who prayed to dark gods inimical to mankind. In the course of their investigations, they stumbled across an ancient grimoire. They brought it to him to translate. When he saw that book, his soul became inflamed. The book was bound in a leather he could not identify at first. It was human skin. He was seized with a lust for that book beyond any lust he had ever felt before. He had to wholly possess that book, but he knew his friends would demand the return of the book. However, his friends never returned to claim the book.

Misfortune took them in the night and left only pieces of them behind. He took this a sign that his passion was condoned by higher powers. He began to seek out more books like the grimoire.

He did not want the books for the secret lore or spells they contained. He never really read the books. He would carefully handle the books, but reading might damage the books, so he did not. He wanted the books, because he could then own them. Possess them. Caress them. And shelve them away.

He sought out other investigators of the unknown. He befriended them and wooed them with his knowledge and vast mundane library. They brought him these forbidden book for him to translate and comment on. He then engineered their demise, often by carefully sent messages to the very dark cults from which they had liberated the books.

His collection grew. His secret collection. His lovely books. Tomes not only bound in leather, but in skins: human, exotic animals and skins of unknown species. Tomes with jewels incrustated upon them, or covered in barnacles, or blackened from fires. Books printed upon paper, painted upon vellum, or etched in iridescent metals. Scrolls and papyrus leaves and wax tablets. He collected them all and lovingly placed them on shelves hidden from sight. His, all his. But he is always looking to increase is collection.

Possibilities

1) You have heard of a reclusive scholar who has a collection of books with just the exact tome you need. You go and talk to him, but he will not even let you touch the book. To stop the evil cultists, you must have that book. So, you sneak back and steal the book. You remove a book from his collection. He pursues with a vengeance, possibly alerting the cultists about your plans.

2) In a small, hidden bookstore you purchase the first edition of a rare volume. The owner sells it to you, but mentions that another gentleman had called about the book. He did not have the funds but mentioned he would be back. The owner just wants to sell the book and you have cash in hand. You don't give it any more thought until you hear about the bookseller's murder. The bibliophile punished the book dealer and he is after you now. You took "his" book and he is coming to reclaim it.

3) During a raid on a cultists' stronghold, you run across some disturbing letters. An anonymous source is telling the cult about activities, names & addresses of investigators. Investigators whom you knew and who have just been murdered. Someone is informing on your friends and getting them killed. There is an informant somewhere, you just need to identify who it is. You start questioning the murdered investigators' associates for the culprit. Eventually you will come across the innocent-seeming bibliophile.

Poisoned Sailor **Ricardo Christie**

An Investigator who follows a medical profession is awakened in the middle of a rainy night by furious banging at his front door. If opened, a desperate, haggard-looking sailor will storm in, pleading for help. He rolls up his shirt's sleeve, offering his horridly bulging arm for examination. Swelled and blackened, it appears to be affected by necrosis. The man begs for help, claiming he was poisoned by a rival.

"Duh bastar' hates me guts cos my business runs strong, an' he's a lazy, warty ol'drunkar' who can't keep ep. He's poison' me drinks! Help me please, ain't wanna die, oh Gawd!" The arm responds to no medical treatment the Investigator can come up with. Ditto for hospitals. It appears to worsen by the hour.

Possibilities

1) The sailor is telling a half truth. The "rival" isn't simply jealous because of business competition, he's seeking something the sailor has: an old trophy from a shipwreck, looking like a copper bracelet with intricate designs. The rival, actually a follower of Dagon, knows that it's a piece of Deep One jewelry, and badly wants it for his rituals. Since the sailor refuses to part with it, the cultist has cast a slow-acting version of Shrivelling, and will later contact the sailor for a bargain. But he certainly won't want the old sea-dog to get help from the Investigators . . .

2) The sailor has tainted Deep One blood, but is also cursed. His now-dead mother found the strength of will (and the help of a deceased stalwart adventurer) to break free of the bonds imposed by her monstrous consort.

Furious by such unprecedented behavior, the deep one asked Dagon to curse both she and any offspring she might have in the future. Any descendant would come to the world doomed to end his life, transformed into a ravenous human-eating monster, one far more horrible than the most degenerate deep one hybrid. Unfortunately for the sailor, the onset time for the transformation is over... but perhaps there is a way to reverse it.

3) It is actually poison - of an incredibly potent sort, indeed. A creation of a Serpent Man sorcerer the Investigator has dealt with before, and which was supposedly dead. Is it possible that the creature is alive and on the loose?

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Dangerous Play **Mauro Reis**

Wilfred Higgs is an author. A brilliant one. And he's also a madman.

He's written a new play, "The Coming of the Master" and is currently rehearsing it with a troupe of actors. A relative of one of the investigators was part of the cast, until he was committed to an asylum a few days ago, totally insane. Now all he says is: "They're there! I know that now, I saw them! They know, they wait, and they're coming!". If the investigators decide to ask around, they will find out that several actors went insane in the last few months. Surprisingly, no one seems to have noticed that. There's no mention about them working for Wilfred Higgs, either. Contacting relatives of these actors may reveal that they were trying to get a role in Higgs new play.

Higgs is very cautious in the approach of his candidates, conducting private tests and lectures. All the candidates are interviewed on an individual basis. It's not the usual procedure, but no one really pays much attention to that. Every director has their quirks, after all. All the actors currently on the cast are normal people, without any discernible mental problem.

An investigation about Higgs will turn up that he, himself, had been committed to a mental institution many years ago, but was considered cured a couple of years later.

Possibilities

1) Wilfred has made a deal with a powerful entity he contacted many years ago, just before he went mad from the sight of it. The creature spared him, because it knew Higgs could be useful in the future. Higgs incorporated the spell needed to bring it to our world in his play, and intends to sacrifice the entire cast to complete the spell, poisoning the wine they are supposed to drink during a toast in a certain scene.

2) Wilfred always wanted to present "The King in Yellow" to the public, but the general rejection of the book on the part of the producers proved that impossible. He doesn't understand why; a book that opened his mind to the truth shouldn't be repressed like that. So, he tried another approach. He cleverly disguised that play within his own creation. The story changed, but the awful truths he saw are still there, so this new play is as dangerous as the previous one. The sanity of the cast hasn't been affected too much, as Higgs is presenting the story little by little. But as the work continues, they will probably become more and more disturbed. Higgs hopes that this gradual exposure will make them see the "truth" and join him in his quest.

3) Wilfred is only a madman, and considers his madness to be true freedom. He thrives in "freeing" other people too. To that end, during the interviews he chooses persons who are already unstable, and reproduces the accident that gave him his liberty (he was once trapped inside a mausoleum for several days); he traps the victim inside a cellar full of dead bodies, without food or water, until their sanity snaps. Sometimes the victims kill themselves, sometimes they survive, eating the bodies. Either way, they're now free from their bonds.

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The Miracle Ricardo J. Mendez

A weird character in the news has come to the attention of an investigator. It will most likely be a skeptical and cynic investigator, or one compelled to believe that kind of news.

The news, it turns out, deal with a person that seems to have stigmata that match those suffered by Jesus Christ in the cross, according to Catholic Mythology. The man, one Jacobo Lewis from Haiti, seems to have injuries on his hands, feet and side that match those famous wounds. These wounds keep bleeding, but apparently never get infected. People are told to have healed after he touches them, specially those with blood diseases, although none have been documented. Also weird is the fact that Jacobo is 30 years old, the same age Jesus was when he started preaching.

What has the religious community in an uproar is that Jacobo is black, and definitely not a Christian but a practicer of voodoo. He says the wounds were inflicted on him by the Loa of his tribe, as a reminder of his human frailty and so he could spread the word.

Possibilities

- 1) Jacobo is, of course, a fake. The people he has been said to heal are healed by their own faith, just as a lot of people get sick when they believe they are. Most likely those people weren't even sick.
- 2) The man from Nazareth was an avatar of the Crawling Chaos. The reason why we don't know anything about his life from his early years until his 30, is because at that point he hadn't been contacted by the Nyarlathotep, and therefore wasn't important. The Black Man tried to recruit him when he is said to have been tempted in the desert, but he went mad believing he was the Messiah. Given his newly found powers, that wasn't hard to do. Now, more than 1900 years after that, Nyarlathotep is willing to try again with a son of mortal woman. Jacobo might dream about "past lives", which are previous avatars, and by those means the players can find out the truth.
- 3) The Loa did contact Jacobo, and inflicted the wounds. Unfortunately for him and his honfour, the alleged Loa is a vampire, too weak to fully return from his resting place. He was in life a sorcerer, and is trying to attract a cult to the place. Then he will control Jacobo to slaughter the all, so with he strength given by their blood he may return.

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Sage Advice Peter Devlin

At some point in their lives, investigators will have to look to a reputed scholar of arcane lore for advice on their current predicament. Jean Le Strange is one such man. But, how do you approach such a man for assistance? And, what will be the price for that assistance?

Born in Paris (or Alsace Lorraine, or Cairo), reputedly during the Revolution, Jean Le Strange is a figure of some notoriety, due mainly to his outre religious and philosophical beliefs. He is said to have inspired works such as "La Bas", has given guest lectures to the Golden Dawn, made an enemy of Dietrich Eckhart, has been denounced by the Vatican, and has been studied and debunked by the Society for Psychical Research. Independently wealthy, he maintains elegant homes in a number of cities across the globe, furnished with many rare curios and pieces of art. He is a combination of scholarly recluse and Gallic playboy.

Apparent age 37. Height 6'1". Weight 178 pounds. Slim athletic physique, narrow hips, wide shoulders. Tanned. Short dark hair oiled and combed back. Gallic nose and strong chin. Dresses in dark, rich, sombre, classic, fashionable suits made of silk or wool, white cotton or silk shirts, crimson silk ties, patent leather or suede Chelsea boots, and a dark fedora. Carries an ebony cane concealing a rapier. Speaks many languages with a soft, educated French accent. Smokes Turkish cigarettes and drinks only rich red wines.

Possibilities

- 1) Le Strange is a sorcerer of considerable power, knowledgeable in the ways of the Mythos and its creatures. He is on intimate terms with The Black Man (Nyarlathotep), who has granted him much of his power, and his position on the ruling council of the Illuminati (or whichever organization is appropriate for your campaign). He acts as a lethal lure for those who have enough knowledge to be dangerous. His great age is attributable to both his dark sorceries and his skill as a deceiver and manipulator.

When the investigators contact him he becomes a mysterious, reserved patron, and will aid them for some months. At some point he will unexpectedly enter a scenario to which he is ostensibly unrelated (e. g. as confidant of a certain high priest of the Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh) and reveal the investigators to the bad guys. He is always guarded by a permanently bound Star Vampire (or two), which has had many years of feedings on foolish investigators during which to wax powerful and become difficult to dismiss.

2) Le Strange is a sorcerer of considerable power who has yet to be seduced totally by the Mythos. When PCs contact him (after establishing a relationship), he is evasive and distant. He is suffering from a severe and odd form of somnambulism. During his "attacks" he cruises the city streets in a large black saloon, engages an escort for the evening, returns to his home, kills her horribly, then dumps the body. He remembers only short fragments which he attributes to nightmares induced by his studies. Astute investigators should stumble across the pattern of slain prostitutes in the world's fashionable cities, e. g. Paris, Venice, London, New York. This is the secret of his great age as his victims' life force feeds both him and his personal demon. Those who can help him will make a useful friend, but he will then begin to age normally. Those who follow him at night will bite off more than they can comfortably chew.

3) Le Strange is a well-preserved scholar with more than a passing knowledge of the Mythos. His background is a combination of rumour, a pinch of truth, and a lot of fantasy. However, his occult collection is real. His latest acquisition during his travels is an ornate blue crystal bottle (9 inches tall, 4 inch diameter base, fluted and stoppered, sealed with lead), purchased at an exorbitant price at Sothebys in London. It is reputed to have once been the possession of John Dee. When investigators visit Le Strange, his extensive house will be empty. In the large parquet floored study is the expected library, with a paper-littered desk and comfy chairs. There is also a wooden pedestal similar to a flat lectern, but with nothing on it. On the floor is a fine sand which will crunch under the investigator's foot. Looking closely will show that it is very fine powdered blue glass. Looking even closer will reveal the "burst" pattern which it appears to have. The floor beneath the wooden pedestal is mainly sand-free. What exactly was in that bottle? Where is the owner? What's that noise?

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A Matter of Taste Peter Devlin

Mrs Jane Crispin is a local character who lives in a little detached house on the edge of town. Although in her 60s, she is still hale and hearty despite the handicap of her blindness (exceptionally near sighted, she only sees blurred colours through her milk-bottle lensed glasses). She makes a modest living selling the product of her labours in her well-equipped kitchen. All across town her pies are famous for their wonderful pastry and delicately herb-flavoured meats.

However, horror stalks the town at night. Senior citizens are slain in their beds or disappear in the night, never to be seen again. The bodies left at the crime scene are mutilated horribly, missing limbs and organs. The authorities have been unable to keep the murders from public knowledge, but they have been able to conceal the fact that they have been occurring sporadically for over a year!

The glare of the media spotlight has forced the police to institute a manhunt, and they have no manpower to spare to chase a new (although very slim) lead. Their lead comes from Mrs Crispin, who has reported a strange man hanging around her herb garden. Under normal circumstances such a report from a blind old lady would receive little attention, but with a maniac on the loose, things are different.

Independent, discrete and trusted persons may be able to assist the police by looking into the matter.

Talking to Mrs Crispin brings unexpected results. She is very sorry to have disturbed the police, but she is fine really. The stranger is no longer a stranger, but a new friend whom, at first, she mistook for a potential thief. Her friend George is a shy type not easily traced. She doesn't know where he lives, but he helps her around the house and garden, and does errands for her.

Possibilities

1) Mrs Crispin is being stalked by George the homicidal odd-job man. His modus operandi involves befriending his victims to lull them into a false sense of security. He also gets a thrill from the stalking. George is a genuine gardener (or social worker), real name Henry George Baird. He lives out his twisted dark fantasies by killing the pathetic senior citizens upon whom he depends for his living.

George lives with his innocent Christian wife Mary, an organiser of church fetes and charities. Mary provides many of his initial contacts. George and Mary are childless due to George's impotence, one of the factors which has sent him over the edge. George has an extensive collection of tools such as scythes, hammers, axes, saws, a furnace, a nondescript van, and a good sized garage next to his rose garden.

2) Mrs Crispin's new friend George is a ghoul who moved to town in the last year or so. He has been unable to let go of the world of man, and can often be seen raking through garbage bins and scounging. Unless scrutinised carefully he appears to be just another homeless person. Naturally he is quite sneaky and very good at moving around unobserved. George and Mrs Crispin met by accident when George was attracted to the smell of her cooking. As Mrs Crispin couldn't see him, George found it easy to make friends with her. George has started running small errands, but he keeps the money that he should spend on butcher meat and substitutes the best cuts from his victims. Forensic examination of remains has identified odd partly-human bite wounds on the victims, but this has not been made public and will only be divulged after much bureaucratic maneuvering.

Mrs Crispin's usual butcher Andrew Cross drops the clue that the amount of meat he supplies her has decreased in recent weeks (as the rate of murders has increased). The distributor of her pies, Norman Kent, is most pleased at how well Mrs Crispin's pies are selling, and is due to call on her to ask if she can increase her output. Norman may unwittingly become the ingredient for her next batch!

3) Mrs Crispin is a homicidal cannibal who has been doing a nice line in long pig pies for over a year. She is inhumanly strong due to her unnatural diet and, although blind, has the senses of a bat. She is very adept with her old-fashioned razor sharp butchers knives. The offal from her victims helps her herbs and vegetables to grow rapidly. Mrs Crispin selects her victims during her bi-weekly visits to the Womens Guild and senior citizens outings. George is a relative of one of her victims who met her just before his own mother Eleanor Trent was killed. He feels sorry for the blind old lady and is working out his grief (and suppressed guilt at having left his mother alone to be killed) by looking after Mrs Crispin. He should be looking after himself.

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**Word from on High
Matt Cowger**

The 21st Day Redemptionist Church is a large and popular religious organization. Led by the

charismatic "Dr. James", the Church's radio ministry and large tent revivals have attracted national media attention. The revivals are especially popular, featuring the usual speaking in tongues, faith healing, and testimonials, as well as singing and prayer. Dr. James (who claims to have a doctorate in divinity) then concludes his tent revivals with what he calls his "Two Minutes of Meditation on the Word" where he and the flock share two minutes of silence to, ostensibly, meditate on the word of God.

Dr. James' sermons have taken a different tone of late and his followers have been becoming more insular. The Doctor's sermons have become more apocalyptic and full of fire and brimstone than they used to be and his revivals have become angry affairs, full of shouting about doomsday and disparaging of those who have not accepted The Word. Popular opinion has turned against the 21st Day'ers because of this, which has only added fuel to the already smoldering Redemptionist pyre.

Possibilities

1) Dr. James is actually a two-bit hustler with a criminal record. He is dodging the law and ripping off his followers. The doomsday bit is an attempt on his part to bolster flagging attendance and bring in some additional revenue. His whole goal is to accumulate enough money to leave the country for South America, a goal he is close to realizing. He has one small problem: his armageddon sermons have particularly inflamed Walter Simms, one of the good doctor's long-time followers. Simms suffers from occasional psychotic breaks and during his next episode he will decide to leave for heaven a little early, taking his beloved spiritual adviser with him.

2) Dr. James has slipped off of the edge of sanity. He believes that the last days are coming and that he and his followers need to make a bold move to proclaim their devotion to God. During his next sermon at the 21st, the parishoners may notice some odd odors inside the tent.

The whole structure will have a strong chemical smell. This is because the good Doctor and his right-hand man, Walter Simms, have doused the entire structure, as well as the ground underneath the plastic tarps on the floor, with a powerful chemical accelerant. People entering the tent may notice the ground feels a bit muddy, though it didn't rain the night before. Walter will stand at the back of the tent, closing and tying the flaps after the last attendee enters.

The sermon will be particularly inspired, espousing the congregation to exultations of love and devotion to God. Then, during the final two minute meditation, Dr. James will signal Simms. They will then push the candleholders near them into the highly flammable tent walls. The interior of the tent will become a riot of flames and flailing, panicked bodies. People caught inside will only have seconds to get out before being crushed in the press of bodies, overcome by fumes, or burned alive.

3) Dr. James has fallen under the influence of a diabolic avatar of Nyarlathotep masquerading as Walter Simms, an unemployed auto worker. The Outer God has been slowly turning the 21st Day Redemptionists to the worship of the Old Ones. Simms' sway over Dr. James isn't complete and if he can be removed from his position of influence for at least two weeks the doctor will regain his senses. Simms is pushing the Doctor toward more and more violent and angry sermons. His end goal is known only to him. Perhaps he wishes to start another cult, to push this church to a violent Waco-style end, or to lead the Doctor into performing abhorrent ceremonies that will summon an elder power? These possibilities are left to the creative keeper.

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Peter Devlin

A Rolls Royce Silver Lady is parked at the side of the road. An elderly chauffeur, uniform jacket removed, struggles to change a flat tyre. A little way along the road stands a well dressed gentleman, hoping to secure assistance.

Simon Beaumains (Bart) of Clovenford is the epitome of English nobility; intelligent, educated, charming, handsome, his ancestors may be traced back to Norman times. He is a staunch Conservative and a defender of law, order, King and country. Beaumains is very grateful to anyone who helps the elderly Grimes to change the tyre on his Rolls. Good samaritans (and their friends) receive an invitation to spend a weekend as guests of the Clovenfords. It is impossible to refuse without causing offence.

Astarte Hall is an impressive English manor set in immaculate gardens and rolling wooded English countryside. The nearest civilisation is the small village of Clovenford five miles from the Hall. Once settled at the Hall, the elderly and very infirm Baron Clovenford is 'wheeled' in to thank the good samaritans for assisting his son. He invites them to take part in a weekend of hunting and shooting activities, then retires. Guests arriving for the weekend include a selection of famous socialites, wealthy businessmen, artistes and politicians. As the weather worsens the enormous fireplaces are banked with logs and brandy is served. The after-dinner party ends in the wee small hours with everyone in a fair state of inebriation. Next morning there is commotion at (late) breakfast. The Baron has been found dead near the enormous outdoor maze. His body appears to have been torn apart by a wild animal and there appear to be cloven hoof footprints around the body. The Baron is laid in state in the cold of the family crypt.

The telephone lines are down due to the still-raging storm. The chauffeur returns with the news that the main road bridge at Clovenford has been swept away during the night. The area is cut off until the storm abates. There is no need to worry as there are supplies aplenty in the cellar and a backup generator in case the electricity lines are knocked out. "Honest, guvnor".

Possibilities

1) The Clovenford Hunt (of which many of the guests are members) is an archetypal English tradition, hunting foxes on horseback accompanied by hounds. It provides a convenient cover for the cult activities of the Beaumains family who have been associated with The Black Goat of the Woods for hundreds of years.

Their favourite sport is hunting a human. The Beaumains horses are an unusually robust and temperamental breed as they are fed on human flesh in classical Greek tradition. The hounds are likewise barely domesticated wolves.

Last night the old Baron was forcibly removed as Master of the Hunt by his son. The new Baron immediately takes charge of the situation and organises a rather unseemly wake to commemorate his father's passing. The wake becomes a drunken orgy and soon the Hunt members get into a sporting mood. Tonight is again the dark of the moon and the Master of the Hunt must organise a special feast to celebrate his ascension. This celebration will climax with the summoning of a Dark Young to assist the Hunt in pursuing their prey. Guess who is to be the prey?

2) The Beaumains bloodline has been contaminated ever since the British campaigns against Napoleon in Egypt; there is a ghoulish ancestor some way down the family tree. It is a matter of historical record that the Beaumains usually pass quietly with only an obituary in The Times, all the better to cover up their degeneration into ghoul. It is a family duty to take care of the Beaumains ghouls (the elders) who

live in the extensive family crypts, obtaining a steady supply of recently buried corpses. The new Baron has been properly schooled by his late father in his duties but the lessons did not take. His studies in the extensive Beaumains occult library have prompted him to an alternative course of action. The new Baron intends to make use of this family curse by offering immortality to many of the influential guests (who are confidantes of his). The first step for them is to become cannibals, a well-documented method of greatly extending the human lifespan.

The elder Baron refused to accept this idea and so was lured outdoors and killed by his son. The guests in the know all participated in a sorcerous quickening ceremony and had a taste of the Baron. They were scared off by the elders, prowling out of the crypt, who become restless around the time of their regular feeding. Using their own magical means the elders will soon know of the new Baron's plans and they will not approve. One of the guests disappears later that day, kidnapped by the elders. The Baron realises what is happening and looks for suitable volunteers to descend into the crypt to deal with the family legacy. He makes a private faux confession of the family legacy in the hope of gaining sympathy and assistance. If the brave volunteers survive the ghouls then the cannibals may have fresh meat that night.

3) For untold years the area known as Clovenford has sheltered a large coven of witches. The witches were persecuted by the Beaumains in the years following the Norman conquest, and since then the coven has been very secretive. Many of the Beaumains males have died by violent means, attributed to a non-existent curse laid by the innocent coven.

The new Baron is in considerable debt due to poor play at the bridge table. Angered by his father's recent refusal to cover his debts, Simon has taken violent action. The previous evening Simon killed his father using a rather blunt dagger from the Great Hall, spirited the body out side via the hidden stairway in the master bedroom, then faked the animal attack. The cloven hoofprints were made with a family heirloom; a plaster casting of 'The Devils Footprint' which sits beneath glass in the study, a curio dated 1867.

Simon plays upon the idea of the Curse of the Beaumains, telling many old family tales to back up his story. He even shows off the curio in the study. Unfortunately he was seen returning last night by one of the guests, the actress Mary Bartlett, his fiancée. She confronts Simon later that morning within sight of one of our heroes, then an hour later accidentally falls to her death from the second floor balcony. Simon again speaks of the Curse but this time he is watching carefully.

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Desperate Remedies **Jon Rowe**

Someone close to the investigators is succumbing to a horrific disease. Symptoms include unpredictable attacks of agony; loathsome swellings, horrible alterations in skin texture and bone structure, and foul excrescences. Conventional doctors are mystified and alternative therapies are futile - because the sufferer is turning into a ghoul.

Oddly, a group of stalkers seem interested in the invalid, following him everywhere and breaking into the offices of some of his doctors to steal case-notes. If observed, they too are suffering from a disfiguring disease.

As the character becomes increasingly debilitated, his friends (the investigators) discover Dr Ladislav's Sanatorium. Ladislav is a gaunt cadaver of a man who greets his new patient with strange excitement.

The patient has a private dorm with every luxury during his stay but the doctor will not discuss his radical therapy and is very anxious for his friends to leave. These characters notice a larger wing of the Sanatorium which more closely resembles a high-security prison (yes, Ladislav explains, the Sanatorium was once a gaol last century). Orderlies leaving the Old Wing have blood on their uniforms.

And that is the last they hear of their friend. Mail isn't answered nor are calls returned. The stalkers ransack the sick character's old residence and will be seen lurking near the Sanatorium. If the investigators return to the Sanatorium, Dr Ladislav, looking disturbingly decayed, has no records of the patient's admission and the luxury dorm is occupied by an elderly man with gallstones.

Possibilities

1) Ladislav heads a necrophagic ghoul-cult, and the Old Wing's cellars access nearby ghoul warrens. Patients are treated with foul transfusions and rituals until they transform fully; others are eaten. All food served at the Sanatorium is human flesh, either that of patients (their extremities surgically removed over a period of time to grace the Doctor's table) or from corpses from the old gaol cemetery. The 'stalkers' are a group of patients who escaped through the ghouls' tunnels: half-demented and hideous, they are desperate to rescue fellow-sufferers from the Doctor, but are in terror of 'regular' humans and ghouls alike. The sick character is in the last stages of transformation, but may be saved in the nick of time. A long-term cure is still needed.

2) Ladislav is a Mythos scholar dedicated to finding a 'cure' for ghoul-ishness. His treatment is exceptionally brutal, involving electrocution, organ transplant with hallucinogens instead of anaesthetic and physical purgings. Obviously, he would be incarcerated if his therapeutic methods were known. The 'stalkers' are true ghouls, looking to liberate their half-changed brethren from the good doctor's clutches. They are hideous, but oddly sympathetic - compared to Ladislav, anyway. The ghouls would like to destroy the Sanatorium and rescue the inmates, but aren't sure how.

3) Ladislav is himself becoming a ghoul. His treatments are all attempts to stave off his own inevitable transformation: he used to transplant fully-human organs into himself, but his ghoulish body has started rejecting them. Now he needs partial-ghouls for transplant subjects, victims less far gone than himself. The 'stalkers' are Ladislav's former-patients, too far gone into ghoul-ishness to be useful transplant subjects (though they bear the amputations of earlier surgeries). Instead, they now locate fresh victims for the Doctor in the (futile) hope that, once he is cured, he will in turn cure them. They're a pitiful crew, but may be turned against the one who did this to them by an investigator sensitive to their tragedy.

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Aunt Joan's Little Treasure Rory Naismith

One of the investigators has a senile, irritating Aunt Joan who has recently died from heart failure. Unfortunately, all the investigator receives from the old crone is her 'Little Treasure' - Baldwin the dog. But Baldwin is no normal dog. Although very small-about Jack Russell sized or smaller-he is extremely mean looking, with eyes, a weasel-like snout, coarse fur and needle teeth.

After a few weeks certain things start to go wrong. Other dogs seem terrified of Baldwin, and his breed (a 'Ti-Hao', if they recall Aunt Joan's description) cannot be found in any reference books. Was Aunt Joan right about his breed? And, most worryingly, why does he fly into a frothing rage whenever brought close to a holy place?

Possibilities

- 1) Baldwin is a unique dog, born through the mating of a normal bitch and an evil spirit; an incubus, forced on the dog's mother by magic. The cult, known as the 'Tsi-Hao', operated across the globe before the second world war, and Aunt Joan acquired Baldwin from a desperate leader on the run in Singapore about ten years ago. Although not aggressive towards the investigator, he senses the supernatural and reacts to magic by biting and snarling.
- 2) Baldwin is one of a near extinct breed of dog from China. He was acquired by Aunt Joan from a Chinese 'dog breeder' about ten years ago. On birth, these placid beasts are blessed by the secretive cult that breeds them in the name of He Who Is Not To Be Named. This ritual transforms them into slaving, eldritch monstrosities at certain solar events - or when threatened. Aunt Joan did indeed die of heart failure - Baldwin, in monstrous form, ate it out during the recent conjunction of Mars and Saturn.
- 3) Despite his mean appearance, Baldwin is a normal, affectionate dog. However, an earlier brush with the Mythos has left a powerful ability attached to him; those around him start seeing visions of various Mythos beasts and gods in their dreams. These visions gradually mount in clarity and duration (over a period of years), until they are strong enough to send someone insane. These visions finally killed Aunt Joan; after years mumbling about monsters and ghosts, she was found with her normally-dark hair turned white and her face rigid with terror.

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Grand Guignol Kevin Kaier

Showman and master of the macabre, Mondreau the Magnificent has been stunning carnival crowds for more than 15 years with his gory exhibitions. Mondreau, whose real name is Vincent Van Dorpe, puts on a grand guignol show called "The Theatre of Pain". The blood flows in gouts and the actors scream as their bodies are gouged, burned and maimed by many different cruel devices and methods. "All in good fun" as Mondreau likes to put it. Mondreau assures the stunned crowd it was just a show and always brings the actors out to take a bow. The show is so realistic that most find it hard to put out of their minds.

Over the last few years many people have asked him how he does it. He politely refuses of course. The investigators have been hired to look into the show and what the mysterious Van Dorpe's ulterior motives are, if any.

Possibilities

- 1) Van Dorpe is really an ancient and powerful sorcerer and devoted servant of Shub Niggurath. Some of his actors are re-animated dead bodies, which he uses in his show. In addition to his zombies he has a loyal band of gypsy disciples, which he has promised immortality if they follow him and do his bidding. The undead used in the act really are hacked and maimed, but since they are undying, they simply need to be stitched back together. Using several different stage names and acts he has been touring the world with his band of animated dead for the past 122 years. His followers are totally loyal to him and will defend Van Dorpe and the show to the death. Van Dorpe needs to travel as he does to sustain himself and his followers. Large quantities of blood and human sacrifices for his god are all that keep him from the death that he has for so long eluded.

2) Mondreau the Magnificent is the leader of a troupe of cannibals. The Theatre of Pain is a front for their activities. Between cities Van Dorpe and his cannibalistic entourage pick up hitchhikers and transients. The unlucky victims are fed, drugged and hypnotized for use in the show. The people who are maimed and tortured on stage really are. There are no mythos influences involved, just garden variety cannibalism.

3) Mondreau the Magnificent is what he says he is... a showman. He and his troupe have honed their act to the point of perfection. The reason his act is so realistic is that the actors who play the victims really are maimed, but not by him. Van Dorpe uses actors who are amputees or suffer from some form of handicap to add to the realism. When an arm is sawn off in the show it is a realistic prosthetic or when an eye is gouged out it was glass. His troupe of actors is devoutly loyal to him and will not divulge any of Mondreau's secrets of stagecraft.

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Hands Rob Illing

It's late one night on a particularly isolated stretch of road. The temperature begins to drop, and the driver suddenly senses that "something else" is in the car.

Suddenly, a pair of hairy Hands reach over and grasp the wheel, wrenching it from the driver's control. The vehicle spins to a halt, narrowly missing some trees. Immediately the Hands vanish, having been there for mere seconds. A careful examination of the car reveals no anomalies.

The disembodied Hands are extremely strong. Each Hand has three sinewy fingers and a thumb, each sporting a talon or claw. The Hands usually appear attached to powerful forearms that disappear at the elbow. They never attack directly, but may operate machines, prod and shove people/objects and even scratch or write messages.

The Hands usually appear out of nowhere, work their evil, and then vanish abruptly.

Possibilities

1) The "Hairy Hands" are a popular local myth. The stretch of road in question is notorious for fatal accidents, and many survivors of accidents claim to have seen the hideous Hands. Legend states that a murderer was lynched on that spot 150 years ago - and that the spirit of the murderer lives on.

2) The vehicle itself is haunted. When it was very new, it struck and killed a young man, Frederick Winterbottom. Winterbottom himself dabbled in dubious occult arts and his spirit now haunts the car.

3) The Hands were a part of a deliberate attack by the remnants of a previously vanquished cult. Remaining members, seeking revenge, have summoned a black and terrible spirit to do their bloody deed. Part of the summoning ritual involved each cultist cutting off a hand. The Hands will not cease until revenge is complete.

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I see a bird. No, wait. . . a byakhee!
Felix Girke

An alienist from central Europe has recently moved into town. His reputation among the well-to-do profits from the developments of European psychoanalysis (Jung, Adler, Freud), and his references are spotless. Many successful treatments of upper-class patients spread the word, and soon he becomes known only as Doctor Blue, for his therapy of choice is the inkblot test.

After half a year, though, many former patients start to exhibit homicidal and suicidal behaviour, and disappear. These apparently unrelated incidents are mostly covered up. Any suspicions take a while to emerge. Has an investigator been treated?

Possibilities

1) It's in the shapes of the inkblots. He doesn't use random shapes; his base set was designed by his Egyptian assistant (Nyarlathotep), who worked for him back in Europe. Checking for this person reveals that he disappeared near Gizeh three years ago. The homicides and suicides committed by the former patients all relate to clichéd Egyptian motives: Buried alive, suffocated in cloth, bitten by an asp, ritual sacrifice. . .

2) It's in the ink. The doctor once found a strange squid-like creature while beachcombing, felt compelled to take it home, and has been using it to produce ink ever since. Handling the ink, and working with the inkblots can spread the Innsmouth taint. The doctor has escaped the taint so far, but his doom is inevitable. When he finally disappears, what happens with the sea spawn?

3) Doctor Blue is a cultist and a "Revanchist". He feels that Americans (or whoever) must be punished for their role in the great war. His carefully designed inkblots contain fractal images of Daoloth. Their full effect only manifests after several months, affording the illusion of successful cure. Several months, that is, unless someone expands them into full images of Daoloth - in which case the full effect takes place in seconds.

-=-

March Madness
Kevin Kaier

Miskatonic University has never been known for its team athletics, that is until recently. This year began differently, as 7'4" Seth Whateley strolled onto the campus and was almost immediately given a full basketball scholarship. There was initially some trouble with Seth because he couldn't produce any health or school records and he refused to submit to a physical. Miskatonic U's basketball coach soon cleared these obstacles with some help from some basketball-loving administrators. Seth was able to pass the universities most stringent entrance exams and his refusal to take a physical was waived on religious grounds.

Since then Seth (#44) has broken nearly every single season scoring and defensive record in Cephalopod and conference history. As the big college championship tournament approaches, many people have lots of questions about Seth and several interested parties are willing to find out more about this strange giant out of Dunwich County. Seth refuses to be interviewed and has no friends on campus. Anyone who has tried to find out more about him has come up against strong resistance from family and university officials alike. That's where the investigators come in - they've been asked or hired to find

out what exactly Seth Whateley has to hide.

Possibilities

- 1) Seth is kin to Wilbur Whateley who tried to steal the Necronomicon for his own evil purposes. Seth, like Wilbur, is not totally human. He plans to continue his cousin Wilbur's work by becoming a college athletic superstar. With free reign as far as the universities restricted books shelves are concerned, he plans to steal the Necronomicon and free the Great Old Ones from their exile.
- 2) Abraham, Seth's father came upon an old Whateley grimoire and with a little study he came up with an arcane method to grow his young son Seth to his current size. Money, not the Necronomicon, is the motivation for Seth's fathers plans. He will do anything to protect his son and his secret, even murder. Abraham has some grasp of what the Whateley grimoire contains, so investigators should beware of spells and other mythos horrors if they should dig too deep or pry to hard.
- 3) Seth is totally free of any evil ulterior motives. He just wants to get an education and leave the backwoods of Dunwich behind. He is deeply religious and wants to be left alone.

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The Lady Macbeth Barbara Robson and Stuart Barrow

When the investigators are stalled in the investigation of a crime, their suspicions are drawn to a middle-aged woman of nervous disposition, who seems to have few friends, wears black gloves in spite of the summer heat and frequently excuses herself to 'powder her nose'. It is eventually revealed that the woman's hands are continually covered in blood, which no amount of washing can remove.

Possibilities

- 1) The woman is a witch, and her family has long been suspected by the townspeople of conducting degenerate rituals and blasphemous rites for personal gain and to bring about ill-fortune for those who slight them. However, her recent attempt to summon Azathoth itself went terribly wrong and robbed her of her sanity. In trying to remove the remembered taint, she has developed an obsessive compulsion to wash her hands. She scrubs them so raw that they bleed.
- 2) The woman is a scientist examining meteorites for signs of life. Her studies involve taking samples from fresh meteorites and incubating them to coax any life-forms that may be present to vigour. Upon analysis, the substance on the woman's hands turns out not to be blood - at least, not blood in its original form. It is an ichor that seems to have something chemically in common with the faeces of vampire bats. The ichor is in fact the visible manifestation of a parasitic alien organism, which draws the blood into its invisible body and then excretes it. Thus, no amount of washing will make these hands clean.
- 3) She is suffering from the rare condition of acquired haemophilia, which was triggered by pregnancy. One month ago, she brought a daughter into the world, and her condition has rapidly deteriorated. The pain and stress caused by haemophilia probably contributed to the severe postnatal depression she felt, which led her to smother her baby with a pillow. Although the death was written off as "sudden infant death syndrome" and she has escaped earthly punishment, her guilt has tipped her over the edge. She will not take care of herself and is convinced that her bleeding is not a symptom of illness, but a

punishment from God.

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The Seance Adam Gauntlett

The character's great aunt Frieda is a devotee of Mrs Beddowes, a self-proclaimed mystic. Frieda's daughter, Charlotte, is certain that Mrs Beddowes is a fraud, and she wants the investigators to help her prove this. Mrs Beddowes regularly holds seances for her clients, and charges a hefty fee for the privilege. Investigators who attend one of these seances experience nothing beyond the stock devices of the psychic con-artist. Music, odd knockings and noises, but nothing extraordinary. However, half-way through the seance, Mrs Beddowes drops dead.

Possibilities

- 1) Mrs Beddowes died of natural causes. Bad timing, but nothing more.
- 2) Mrs Beddowes was killed by a disappointed client. The client attended the same seance as the investigators. However, the client was more experienced in Mythos magic than Mrs. Beddowes, and when the client realised that Mrs Beddowes was a fraud he killed her with spells. The client thinks that he is a psychic phenomenon, and is desperate to find another psychic like himself. He had hoped that Mrs Beddowes was one. The client will keep looking, and keep killing any frauds that he finds.
- 3) Mrs Beddowes was never alive. The corpse is the host of a vampiric spirit entity who has several host bodies scattered about the city. The vampire entity activates whatever body it pleases, and keeps the others in cold storage until required. However, the vampire entity has a mortal enemy, and this Van Helsing-type found one of the vampire's bodies and destroyed it. The shock to the entity was such that it lost control of the Beddowes-body for a few minutes. The Beddowes-body will get up again, confounding any investigators who pronounced Mrs Beddowes dead. The vampire entity wants revenge on its tormentor, and it will also want to kill any investigators who have discovered its secret.

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The Winged Cat Barbara Robson

Peter McIntyre, a young academic studying the history of witchcraft, visits his fiancée one night and never returns. Until this point, it seemed that everything was going his way - his recently established contracting business was a success and his fiancée, Amanda, is beautiful and adoring. He had made no preparations for departure and had mentioned nothing amiss to his friends. A winged black cat appears at his house and mews to be let in.

Possibilities

- 1) McIntyre has become involved in a cult of Tsaggothua. His business is really a cover to launder ill-gotten wealth from his occult dabbling, and his fiancée is the victim of a love spell. His recent activities, however, brought him to the attention of the Hounds of Tindalos. They tracked him through time and

space and found him just as he arrived home after visiting Amanda but, through a quick deal with Tsaggothua, he escaped to a parallel dimension. His familiar, a black cat, went with him, but was replaced with its counterpart from the dimension to which he escaped.

2) Amanda is not as young as young as she appears, or as innocent. She is in fact a witch over ninety years old, maintaining her youthful appearance by sacrificing virgin youths (such as Peter) to the Old Ones. The sacrificial spell involves considerable preparation of the victim, which explains why she has become so closely associated with him. The cat is a fey creature, attracted by the stench of magic in the wake of the spell.

3) Amanda has recently returned from a holiday in the Middle East and brought back a souvenir as a token of her love. Knowing Peter's fascination with things ancient and occult, Amanda chose a small stone statuette said to have been taken from an ancient tomb. The statuette is a figure of the cat goddess, Bast. Amanda cannot read Arabic, but Peter can, and on his way home, read aloud the inscription in the base of the carving. This activated an ancient curse, which transformed him into a winged cat.

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The Wreck Jim Sliney Jr.

Dr. Harold Rathborne has been locked away in an asylum. Otherwise a prominent medical examiner for the police department, Rathborne lost his mind after examining the corpses from a recent train wreck. In related news, someone removed an as yet unidentified corpse from the morgue in which Rathborne worked the night he went mad. Police are investigating the case, but the real evidence is in Rathborne's private journal, not his work one. The new examiner has learned that many of the victims were dead prior to the crash. The police have suddenly stopped sharing information.

Possibilities

1) The Fungi from Yuggoth have stolen back the corpse of the Reginald Burnby whom they impregnated with eggs prior to the train's departure. Controlled by the Fungi to travel to a specific location he boarded the train. When he began to germinate in the train car he flipped out and started attacking people with whatever weapons were on hand insisting he be killed. The Fungi, realizing their eggs were suddenly in danger, fruitlessly swept in and inadvertently caused the chaos that led to the wreck.

Rathborne examined poor Reginald Burnby and discovered the eggs in his abdomen, ready to hatch.

Rathborne went mad and later Burnby continued on his quest to the hatching grounds, easily discovered by plotting out the path of the wrecked train.

2) Rathborne's notes reveal the source of his insanity. One of the bodies he examined (the one that has gone missing) had crawled off the examining table using its skin - not unlike a slug. Rathborne went mad, but not before he concluded that the body was host to an inexplicable organism whose plastic nature seems, to those that know, much like that of a shoggoth.

As it happens, train wreck victim Alexander Marcus shares his body with a shoggoth. The shoggoth gives him unusual strength and durability, enough strength in fact to have ripped an axle off of the train car he was on, and enough supernatural constitution to have regenerated his body sufficiently to walk out of the morgue. His goal was the scientist on board the train who had learned of his unique condition.

Rathborne will be next.

3) After seeing one too many bodies broken apart in this horrible wreck doctor Harold Rathborne went stark raving mad. In the comfort of his asylum cell he hears the screams of the dozens of mutilated passengers and the whispers of one victim in particular, a powerful wizard seeking a new, working body.

Arcane Artifacts

Featherbrains
Adam Gauntlett

Archie Haversham, rich gadabout and amateur naturalist, wants a Great Auk carcass. (The Auk is a flightless seabird that physically resembles a penguin. It became extinct in the late 19th century, but rumor had it that colonies of the birds might still exist in some inaccessible spot. Stuffed specimens and skins fetched astronomical prices; in the early 20th century, a specimen could be worth as much as £350.)

Haversham has heard that Ivor Oleg, an arctic explorer, has a stuffed Auk for sale. Oleg is asking £400 for it. Oleg is also dropping hints that he knows of a colony of Auks near the Arctic Circle that until now have avoided contact with man. Haversham is desperate to conclude the Auk deal, but he is bedridden with a broken leg and can't conduct the negotiations himself. Someone will have to go in his place.

Possibilities

1) Oleg is a thief. He stole the Auk carcass, and several other things, from Martin Ponsonby, another rich naturalist. Ponsonby is a paranoiac. To him, Oleg's theft isn't just a theft. It's part of a grand conspiracy to steal Ponsonby's life's work. In addition, people who buy the Auk from Oleg aren't just unfortunate dupes to Ponsonby. They're all in on the plot. Ponsonby's attitude is that his enemies must be destroyed, (socially and legally, not murdered), and he has dispatched private investigators to recover the Auk and gather dirt on his foes.

2) Oleg is selling a genuine Auk. However, he also wants to con Haversham into funding another Arctic expedition. To that end, Oleg will spin tales of Auk colonies hidden away in the inaccessible regions of the world. Oleg will try any story if he thinks it will get him funding. If the investigators hint that they might be interested in, say, hidden temples to forgotten gods lost somewhere in the Arctic snows, Oleg will be more than happy to tell lies about such things.

3) Oleg has been driven insane as a result of his contact with alien gods deep in the Arctic wastes. He thinks it is his duty to gather victims for the Old Ones. He uses the Auk carcass and his story of more Auks out in the arctic to gain funding for another expedition. Oleg intends to be the only survivor of this expedition. The others will be left for the God to devour. Oleg has other specimens from his last trip to show to prospective buyers. Fragments of tablet with strange inscriptions, odd carved statuettes made

from whalebone, and other odd things that might alert Mythos scholars that Oleg found more than Auks on his last trip out.

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Stained Glasses
Barbara Robson and Stuart Barrow

An investigator is helping an elderly friend or relative to move house. While clearing out the attic, a box labelled "Glasses" is found. When asked where he wants it put, the old man pales and mumbles that he had forgotten all about that box. He suggests that it should be destroyed, and cautions against opening it.

Possibilities

- 1) The box contains a pair of opera glasses. The glasses allow scenes at a distance to be viewed with remarkable clarity, but (due to a malicious enchantment) show such scenes in the worst possible light. Viewed through the glasses, a loyal dog looks like a rabid beast and a friendly conversation takes on the appearance of a whispered conspiracy.
- 2) The box contains two beautiful, slender champagne flutes. They have been enchanted with a love charm. If two people drink the same wine from the glasses, they will certainly fall in love. The charm, however, has been corrupted by the dark magic used to effect it. A love begun by the glasses will, over time, become a jealous, possessive and fearful thing.
- 3) The box contains fragments of glass reminiscent of the glass formed of sands beneath a nuclear strike. It is in fact the remnants of a similarly destructive event - an incarnation of Hastur on earth, many years ago. The old man helped to eradicate the menace in his time, but fears that this glass could provide the link necessary for its return. He is unsure why he has kept the fragments, but the miswritten label provides evidence of his unsettled mental state at the time.

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Grim Portrait
Steve Hatherley

Dexter Cauldrose is a mildly talented artist, his technique often crude and composition amateur. Despite this, his portraits are sought after by the fashionable rich. The waiting list is several months long and as a result, Cauldrose has a richer lifestyle than many other, far finer, artists.

He is a success because of his novelty value. Cauldrose specialises in gruesome portraits, revealing his subject in death. Sometimes he portrays his subjects lying in state, but often has them disembowelled and brutally mutilated. In some circles, the more brutal the death, the better.

Then, they begin to die.

Cauldrose is the first to go. His self-portrait showed his body chopped to pieces in a barren room. (It was

the reaction to this painting that led him to identify his market.) His body is found in a barren room, chopped and looking exactly as he painted. At first it is taken to be a very sick joke, then others begin to die.

Possibilities

1) Cauldrose's paintings are not so much predicting the future, as creating it. Cauldrose himself was killed by an escaped lunatic. Others will become accident victims, suicides, or mauled by wild animals. Each death is unconnected, except by the extraordinary artwork of Dexter Cauldrose. The deaths occur at the same rate as the portraits were painted. As the pattern is discerned, worried subjects will be able to determine the time of their demise. There is no way out, except for the destruction of these violent works of art.

2) Before each killing, the subject is approached by a tall black man, elegantly dressed in black. He offers a bargain, a contract. In return for signing a single sheet of paper, covered in indecipherable typescript, the subject will be spared.

At first, the subjects ignore him, only to pay the price. Then, when the first escapes the seemingly inexorable murders, the contract is brought into light. Written in an unknown language, the subject has unwittingly signed away his soul to Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos.

But why does the Outer God want their souls? And when will he collect?

3) The real painter is Cauldrose's insane brother, working from crude sketches and photographs provided by Dexter. Locked in the attic, he lived for nothing but to paint. Then, his condition worsened, and he turned on his brother, dressing the body to look like his art. Now he is wandering the streets, hunting for other subjects.

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The Hatching Rocks Steve Hatherley

"Spherical quartz formations formed when molten rock is cast from a volcanic eruption into water and cools before deforming. Found near Mt. Etna. 1871, J. Castle." Thus reads the note next to three 10 inch diameter spheres. The museum is small and its geology department smaller. Nobody has properly identified the stones; they gather dust, ignored and unremarkable.

The stones are Cthonian eggs. Professor Castle found them near Mount Etna and brought them to the museum. His theory on their origin is entirely inaccurate, and he did not examine them in more detail before his untimely death in 1872.

Possibilities

1) The Cthonians followed Castle back to the museum after the theft of their eggs. Before they arrived he put the 'rocks' on display. His heart failed when they tried to telepathically interrogate him and so never found the eggs.

2) The eggs have been stolen from the museum. As the tiny Cthonians slowly matured their telepathic abilities grew, and were sensed by adults. Human agents stole the eggs and took them through to the Dreamlands.

The Waking Worlds are becoming too dangerous and the Cthonians are infiltrating the land beyond the wall of sleep. The plan is in its infancy; so far only a handful of eggs have been taken through.

3) Before an adult (or human agent) can reach the museum, the eggs hatch. The babies first kill birds and rodents but grow rapidly, demanding larger prey. The initial act of vandalism is not high on the police priority list, but they take more interest when the killings begin. It is only time before an adult appears to reclaim the young.

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Black Book of the East **Steve Hatherley**

The discovery of an ancient book in the belongings of Frank Kirby, Crouch End, has stirred local historians. The book, found in his attic after his death last week, purports to be the Black Book of the East, a tome of quite considerable legend.

The Book is supposed to have been written by a french sorcerer during the 11th Century. The sorcerer was an advisor to King William the Conqueror who supposedly carried the tome with him everywhere. After the sorcerers death it was rumoured to have been annotated and largely reworked by various other witches and warlocks.

It has a history of curses and is riddled with black magic. The Black Book is supposed to be very dangerous, even reading it can be hazardous. It is commonly believed to be cursed.

Before the discovery by relatives of Frank Kirby, the book was last rumoured to have been in the possession of John Dee, Royal Astrologer to Queen Elizabeth. It has appeared throughout history in the hands of sorcerers across the land. The book is being auctioned tomorrow, and is expected to reach œ500.

The Black Book is eventually sold, after much hard bidding, for over £1000 to an unknown bidder operating through an agent. The book was originally written in French, although that has been largely annotated in a number of languages since.

Possibilities

1) The book is a fake. Kirby was known for his practical jokes, and this was his last. He wrote largely nonsense inside, much of it made up. Despite this, the book contains several passages which appear to be uncomfortably prophetic.

2) The book is not the Black Book, but is an original version of the Bible. However, the Bible has changed much since this was written and its tone is completely different. It tells of the Lord being defeated by Satan and cast to earth in the form of Jesus, only to be crucified by the Romans. It is a blasphemous work, but it is so horribly plausible.

3) The Black Book of the East is a mythos tome, and an exceedingly rare one, this being the only copy. It was written by the french sorcerer, but when he died his soul was imprisoned in the tome. The book can only be opened by satisfying his hunger and spilling human blood across the covers which is quickly absorbed into the material.

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Second Circle

Steve Hatherley

The Artist's Guild of Reading is proud to present an exhibition of paintings at the Archway Museum of Antiquities. The exhibition includes a number of rare and unusual paintings in a variety of mediums by a selection of artists from the unknown to the master. All paintings are for sale.

Should the investigators visit the exhibition then one painting, The Second Circle, will catch their eye. Painted about ten years ago by an obscure german artist, the picture is quite ordinary. It shows a peaceful beach with waves lapping at the sand. A bird is perched on a rock in the foreground.

The bird is, as any investigator familiar with the Dreamlands will identify, a varchine. These are birds of prey unique to the Dreamlands. What is one doing in this picture? The artist has evidently painted a picture of the Dreamlands. Such pictures have the ability to be used as Gates through to the Lands. Experienced Dreamers can dream their way straight to the locality pictured.

It is possible that the artist has painted other scenes, other doorways direct to the world beyond sleep. It is also possible, if the artist was a powerful Dreamer, that she is still in the Dreamlands. Somewhere.

Possibilities

1) The picture leads to a mist covered island. Wandering through the mist eventually brings the Dreamers to a stone circle, the Second Circle of the title. This is an exact replica of a megalithic stone circle which can be found somewhere in Europe. The area is a place where the realities between the two world mix, allowing passage at certain times.

2) The artist is quite mad and is kept in a Bavarian asylum. There she paints scenes from her dreams; gugs and ghaists, Ulthar and Celephais, and more. If the investigators track her down in the Dreamlands they find her lucid and sane.

3) The coastline belongs to a deserted island in the Southern Seas. It is a regular stop for the black galleys that trade with Dylath-Leen and Dreamers waiting there are in danger of being captured by the men that crew such vessels. The circle refers to what appears to be either a dormant volcano, or a meteor crater.

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The Carpet

Steve Hatherley

It's odd, but you never really noticed it before. Until one of your acquaintances suddenly knelt down and studied it, you had never given the carpet a second thought. In fact, now that you are thinking of it, you can't even remember where it came from in the first place. Try as hard as you like but you just can't remember how (or when, where or why) the carpet came into your possession.

It is a small carpet, barely eight feet long by three wide. It is threadbare and worn, and of indeterminate middle-eastern style. In the centre of the carpet is an oval of abstract design. Surrounding this is a long fluid line of wavy characters, possibly letters from an obscure alphabet.

Things are sometimes seen in the oval pattern in the centre of the carpet. A flicker on the edge of vision, a suggestive shape or threatening shadow. They are slightly unsettling, but vanish upon closer inspection: a trick of the light.

Possibilities

1) The carpet is an ancient Assamite device. The words on the carpet are known as the Circle of Suggestive Deaths. If chanted within earshot of someone standing upon the rug, that person will surely die. Whether by bullet, knife, monster, accident, disease or injury, the result is the same: Final Death.

The carpet is one of the few ways of actually ending a Mummy's existence, and has been lost to the Assamites for centuries. If the characters can determine the carpet's history (Tremere scholars may be helpful here) then they can bargain with the clan of assassins.

2) The carpet contains the immortal soul of Kastajhan, a sorcerer originally living in Constantinople in the fifteenth century. Legend has it that no sooner had Kastajhan discovered the source of true immortality than he was sentenced to death. One hundred assassins were sent to his house, and when the dawn light fell across Constantinople none remained alive - there were only shadows on the walls. Of Kastajhan there was no sign.

The script around the edge of the carpet describes a short spell, the casting of which allows communication with Kastajhan's spirit. Unfortunately, the spirit is now quite insane and babbles only nonsense.

3) Al Azif (a rare arabic text) contains an illustration of the carpet and describes the words as "The Summoning of the Blood." Although it feels new, the carpet is actually older than that ancient tome. In order to summon the blood, all someone has to do is chant the words while standing on the carpet.

Nothing immediately happens, but over the course of the next few nights the carpet drains a small amount of blood from the caster. Humans feel weak and unwell, kindred notice that their nightly draining is greater.

No matter, it only lasts a few nights - for then the spell is complete and the Blood is summoned. The Blood is a vaguely human figure, with ropy limbs and fluid movements - and is composed completely of blood (actually far more than the caster has supplied). The Blood will obey one command, before returning to the carpet.

Dark Incal Perry Okerstrom

Famed British Archaeologist Alfred Pennyworth has disappeared in a cloud of controversy over his latest findings at Tell el 'Amarna.

The site is more infamously known for the theft of the bust of Nefertiti by German archaeologist Ludwig Borchardt of the German-Oriental Society in 1912.

Rumour has Pennyworth making an equally significant discovery, the 'Dark Incal' a statue in the shape of Anubis, Guardian of the Dead. This piece of statuary, if it exists, is purported to have magical properties.

The professor's jeep was found abandoned in the desert approximately three miles from his camp. No signs of a struggle were found. Speculation proposes that the professor is lost in a sandstorm. No trace of the statue can be found. The professor is presumed dead.

Possibilities

- 1) The statue is a representation of the N'Ho, a tribe of sand dwellers making their home in the desert during the time of the Egyptians. A small enclave of the tribe still exists and Pennyworth died at their claws as they recaptured their totem.
- 2) The statue, with the help of a piece of translated papyrus, was used to summon Anubis. However, without a binding ritual there was nothing to keep the old god at bay. He grabbed the professor and dragged him back to his realm.
- 3) The professor's jeep overheated in the desert. Unable to re- start it he set out on foot in the direction he thought his camp lay. He perished in the storm, hugging his prized possession to his chest.

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Box of G'Hyr Tsiolkovsky's Demon

Adventurer and mystic, Ambrose DeBerry returns from an archeological expedition to Jerusalem. During which he stumbled upon an ancient tomb buried deep within the hills under the city. Inside this tomb he found a small 3"x 3" box. The sides of the box are made from some kind of exotic hardwood covered with strange Arabic carvings. Whilst the top and bottom are made from obsidian and pottery. There is no obvious way to open the box. A box such as this was mentioned briefly in the Al Azif, being the box in which the soul of a powerful demon was kept imprisoned.

Possibilities:

- 1) Ambrose DeBerry, in taking the box, awoke the guardian spirit of the tomb of G'Hyr. This amorphous black Creature will seek out and kill all those who have touched the box. Once it has recovered the box it will return the box to the tomb.

2) The Box is taken from DeBerry shortly after he has translated the strange writings. The inscription reveals that the box contains a spirit of great evil, and if opened when Xoth is in conjunction with Mercury a great evil will descend. An evil that will last for all of eternity.

3) Ambrose DeBerry has taken away with him, a box containing not the spirit of a powerful demon but instead it holds the San Grail. This will make the box extremely valuable to those who wish to exploit it for their own ends.

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Vase of Sands Rik Kershaw

The investigators are approached by an elderly Egyptian Gentleman who says that a very valuable vase containing the ashes of his father have been stolen from his home in Bristol. The man himself is a silk merchant and his shipping business uses Bristol as a port to import his wares. He will pay handsomely for the return of the vase. But he will warn them not to look into the vase, for that would allow evil spirits to pollute the sanctity of his ancestors ashes. To retrieve it, the investigators will have to do a bit of classic investigation to find the vase.

Possibilities

1) The elderly man is none other than Nyarlathotep, and the vase contains the Key of Sands, the only way to unlock the secrets of the lost city of Leng. If Nyarlathotep recovers this key then he will be able to return to Leng, and bring the Earth one step closer to being under the thrall of the Great Old Ones. He himself cannot retrieve the vase since it is protected from his and the eyes of his servants. Only a good person may see the Vase of Sands.

2) Well it is a vase with ashes Ok. But instead of holding the ashes of the mans ancestors, it holds the essential salts of the evil magical Kneph-Ra. If the elderly man, who is none other than the magicians Great-Great Grandson, gets the ashes he will attempt to bring Kneph-Ra back to life, but will require a blood sacrifice to do it.

3) The vase contains not ashes at all, but diamonds. The man is a diamond smuggler and will be perfectly capable of killing those who have looked into the vase.

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Band of Gold Steve Hatherley

It's a murky pawn shop with smears on the glass and a stale smell coming from inside. But the ring in the window is eye-catching for all of that. It's a ring, like a wedding ring made from greenish gold with an inscription running around the inside.

Possibilities

1) The inscription is simply the same three-armed symbol repeated: the Yellow Sign. The ring is strangely heavy, and is referred to in a few texts as Hastur's Bridal Ring. Wearing the ring for any length of time results in two events. The first is that the ring contracts and cannot be removed, and the other is the arrival of a byakhee. The byakhee, summoned by the ring, takes the wearer of the ring (Hastur's Bride) back to Hali. The byakhee only appears when Aldebaran is in the sky, and if somehow dismissed another replaces it on a following night.

At Hali, Hastur's Bride commands all of the Great Old One's attention. When the wedding-night activities are over, Hastur discards the remains of his bride and the ring is eventually returned to the pawn shop and its devoted owner.

2) The inscription is written in Hyperborean and says "Sleep Well, Dream Well." Wearing the ring whilst sleeping allows the wearer automatic entry (barring other effects prohibiting entry) to the Dreamlands via the Cavern of Flame. The ring is otherwise unremarkable. The ring was sold to the pawn shop by John Montego who used it for some years before his Dream-self was killed, preventing him from returning to the Dreamlands. Through the shop's records, Montego can be contacted. He knows much about the Dreamlands, but knows nothing of the horrors threatening the Waking World. Perhaps he would make a good ally.

3) The ring is slimy and cold, and if worn will not come off - at least not without the finger. The inscription, if translated before the ring is first worn, says "Welcome friend, join us," in the language of ghouls.

If the ring is not removed (with the finger) then the poor soul's flesh slowly starts rotting and her appetite turns to rotten meat. She is turning into a ghoul. The ring falls off when the transformation is complete.

The ring was sold to the pawnshop after Laura Black vanished from her lonely city garret. Her family have no idea what happened to her, and found the ring among her belongings. Now, whoever buys the ring may soon be in a position to find out exactly what happened to Laura...

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Stones of Doom Steve Hatherley

The stone fragments are at the bottom of a shoebox filled with stone arrowheads. The arrowheads have been collected from Anasazi indian ruins by archaeologist Dr Rachel Smith. She is auctioning them along with her other finds because she needs to raise money fast.

She found the stones of doom in a previously undiscovered Anasazi chamber, but forgot about them. They have been lying in the shoebox with the arrowheads for years, quite forgotten.

Possibilities

1) The stone is an ancient Anasazi fertility symbol. Originally steeped in the milk of Shub-Niggurath, when assembled (and bound together so that it cannot fall apart) the stone causes everything in the immediate area to become fertile. Everything - plants flourish, insects swarm, rats and mice are

everywhere. Milk sours overnight, creeping mould is rampant and weeds overrun the garden. The stone affects humans as well - curing infertility and increasing the likelihood of twins and triplets.

2) The stone is an ancient Anasazi curse stone. The curse inscribed on the stone can be translated only after painstaking research. From what is left to be translated, the curse appears to have been put on a woman who was unfaithful to her husband. Whether the stones had an effect cannot be determined, although the Anasazi indians took their curses very seriously and held their shamen in high regard.

3) The stone is an old deep one device. When the pieces are assembled the symbols emit a bright light. The stone fuses together into a single piece, and starts sweating. But it appears to do little else.

The stone is a shoggoth leash, used by deep ones to protect themselves from the terrible shoggoth attacks launched at them by the elder things during the war millenia ago. The stone itself causes any shoggoth that comes near to lose control of its mass, reducing itself to bubbling ooze until the holder of the stone moves away. The deep ones have lost the means to create more leashes, and would be interested in recovering the stone (should they learn of it) to rediscover that lost art.

Quite what the stones were doing in Anasazi ruins is a complete mystery, however...

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Stones of Doom **G W Thomas**

The investigators are spending an uneventful night in a supposedly haunted house (its not). At two in the morning they hear the drum of heavy rain, then the clattering of hail. This soon changes to a heavy thumping sound as windows are smashed by severe hail. While trying to block up the broken windows, the investigators see that the hail is not melting on the floor but sinking through it!

One investigator grabs a newspaper, attempts to capture the weird hailstones. These sink right through the paper and into the floor. Another investigator uses a silver tea tray from the table. Only the stones that land on metal survive, leaving three small stones which are of uniform color and close in size. There are strange markings on the stones...

Possibilities

1) While investigating the stones, the investigators come across the name of Ormand Blecht, a self-proclaimed witch and maker of stone charms. While visiting his remote home, the investigators are attacked by his large black dog, his familiar. They may have to kill it or be severely maimed. This act makes Blecht lie to them about the stones and he says that they are very dangerous in their present state. He recommends the stones be re-assembled during a full moon then buried, so that their power may be neutralized. Doing so causes the stones to hum loudly - and summons two shantaks to assault the investigators.

2) If the investigators re-assemble the stones, the fragments join, creating a solid crystal. This crystal as such is harmless. Investigation brings the investigators to Dr. Hamilton Crabtree, researcher at Miskatonic University. Crabtree offers to expose the crystal to his light cannon, a primitive laser (If the investigators refuse, he steals them.) Doing so creates a Field of Silence from the Plain of Sound. (The

players must then proceed without speaking to each other.)

The Field of Silence continues to expand until the crystal is destroyed. The Beings of Sghluo (from the Plain) send three dimensional shamblers to guard the gateway in advance of their invasion.

3) The investigators notice immediately that the stones are attracted to each other, almost if they were magnetic. As they near joining they give off a wicked energy. They should not be allowed to join or a great explosion occurs.

Research on the hieroglyphs proves them to be of Atlantean origin, a time when wizards fought battles against each other using such devices. If the stones are placed in separate areas, for example, a safe, a drawer and a pocket, they escape and begin to creep together again. The stones can melt through any non-living material to rejoin.

If the investigators decide to allow the stones to join in a remote place, the explosion occurs and is followed by the arrival of a Hunting Horror.

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Division Hexe Rory Naismith

After winning his position in early 1933, Hitler cemented both his own position and that of the Aryan master race through military conquest and genocide. But there are other, infinitely older forms of power that he also tried to tap...

The interest in the occult held by Hitler, Himmler and many other leading Nazis is well documented, and during their reign of terror expeditions were despatched to all corners of the globe, searching for lost and potentially war-winning lore. Several, in the 1930s, were sent by Hitler to Tibet in order to seek out Agharti-a secret underworld populated by enlightened immortals. Unfortunately for the Reich, Agharti was little more than a fairy tale, dreamt up in 1871 by English Occultist Edward Bulwar-Lytton. But these were not the only expeditions sent out by Hitler; some, in pursuit of more definite and real goals, may have been a lot more successful.

After the war, much of the knowledge was either lost or buried in infinite national archives (which is much the same thing). These days, no-one knows for sure where these expeditions went, nor what they sought - nor whether they were successful or not. Only occasional, tantalising rumours loom out of the mists of time, perhaps best left hidden. Recently, however, a series of documents have surfaced and are currently being posted around the internet by an anonymous source claiming to be in Moscow. The documents appear to be a series of intriguing typewritten sheets from towards the end of the war, detailing the activities of the 'Division Hexe'; an elite development group made up of leading SS officers and occultists. It makes for interesting-and dangerous-reading. Possibilities

1) The documents detail a range of biological experiments carried out upon unfortunate Jewish and Gypsy children in Auschwitz, on behalf of Dr Josef Mengele. It appears that they grafted the skin of a Deep One, retrieved by U-boat crews in the Pacific, onto a living human. Photographs and some convincing scientific details add an element of realism, and no evidence of tampering can be found. Unfortunately for the Auschwitz researchers of Division Hexe, the war ended before the results could be

fully described or used-although their purpose still remains unknown (the final sections of this information, according to the anonymous source, were destroyed by disgusted Soviet officials-or so he claims). According to the unnamed source, last sheet is stained with blood and even now smells suspiciously of fish.

2) According to these pages, Hitler called in the services of a team of top Gestapo spies to track down books and other sources of power and evil from across the world so that their secrets could save the Third Reich. Their researches and discoveries from all corners of the globe are carefully listed, and include such titles as the 'Necronomicon' and 'Unausprechlichen Kulte'. The pages describe the results of experiments using what was found in these texts, together with some interesting photographs showing the preparations and-occasionally-the results of various magical 'experiments'.

3) In January 1945, a desperate Hitler sent a team of experimental researchers, 'Division Hexe', together with all their materials to a secret location, from where they would continue to develop further eldritch methods of defeating the Allies. According to the text, they departed Germany on a U-boat in late March 1945 and were never heard from again. The documents make it clear that they were well prepared, and that all were not expecting to regain contact with the Reich for many years. Strangely, it appears that no food rations were sent with them, and most of what they did take was in top secret, sealed boxes, some apparently marked with pentagrams and crosses. Where did they go? Why didn't they need any food? What was in the sealed boxes? Are they still wherever they went? Most importantly, what have they been doing for the last 55 years?

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The Blackbird Rory Naismith

A team of English students has recently released a documentary surrounding the myth of the Blackbird, a ghost ship which has featured in nautical legend for years around the north Atlantic.

According to the story, the Blackbird was engaged by an unknown figure in Southampton to carry a secret but valuable cargo to New York. All information concerning the voyage was subsequently lost in a fire a few days after the ship left Southampton. The Blackbird took over a month to cross the ocean, and was found sitting silently at anchor in New York. When she did not respond to any signals the harbour master boarded her but was violently repelled by someone, or something, aboard the ship. One of the harbour master's guards was killed and left on board, and two others were mortally wounded. When a group of government investigators arrived the next morning the Blackbird had vanished. A covert search found no trace of her and a few subsequent operations have also failed.

Since then the Blackbird has been sighted many times and in many places. None have boarded her and returned, and legend speculates wildly at what lies in the hold. Some stories claim that unearthly howls and strange lights emanate from her. Now the Blackbird at last lies caught, somewhere in the ice near Baffin Island. Her exact location is a closely guarded secret, but one well-connected and generous benefactor has engaged the Investigators to find the truth through research and-eventually-boarding the Blackbird itself.

Possibilities

1) The Blackbird carried canisters of gas, developed by the Germans shortly before the end of the Great War. A few canisters were captured by the British army and the rest destroyed. Some of these were to be sent to the United States for scientists there to investigate; they were the Blackbird's cargo. The gas induces psychotic behaviour, along with physiological changes. Muscles swell and become much stronger, and metabolism is slowed, forcing victims into hibernation until disturbed. Eventually, victims become little more than killing machines clinging to only the deepest of drives. One of the canisters aboard the ship leaked, affecting the crew. They killed one another off until only one-the captain-was left. It was he who attacked the harbour master and it is he who still hibernates within the ship, still occasionally steering it and guarding its precious cargo.

2) A rich American collector bought at auction in England a set of rare and powerful mythos tomes including the Necronomicon and Inausprechlichen Kulten. This information came into the hands of a cult, which decided to steal the books for themselves. To ensure the safety of his purchase the collector hired the Blackbird to secretly convey them across the Atlantic. However, one crewmember was also a cultist, and as soon as the ship was underway he opened the crates. His already-weak mind was rent asunder by the awful truths within the books, and he used the books' terrible magicks summon strange beings. These attacked first the crew and then the harbour master and, even now infest the ship. The cultist, bound eternally by the dark magic he called down, continues to steer the damned vessel.

3) The Blackbird contained oddly-inscribed tablets uncovered at Avebury and apparently older than human civilisation. The tablets were being sent to experts in America for expert opinion. However, the artefacts radiate a powerful magical aura which was felt by the Deep Ones off Cornwall as the Blackbird passed by. They sent their agents to destroy the records in Southampton, then killed or enslaved the ship's crew and opened the cargo. The Blackbird was later sunk off Innsmouth. Stories of its later appearances are just that - stories.

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The Anachronomicon Stuart Barrow and Barbara Robson

A sensational find has been announced in a leading bibliographical journal - a book was discovered in the archives of a German family by one Professor Hasburg of the University of Munich. The book has been reliably dated using physical methods to the early 11th century. It is written in three languages - Latin, Arabic and Akkadian, the language of the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian Empires, which was thought to have died out in the 1st Millennium BCE and was not rediscovered until the late 19th century. While the find is largely denounced as a hoax, the scientific support for its veracity is considerable.

Possibilities

1) The human race will not dominate the earth forever. Humankind will be succeeded by an alien race that we would find horrific to behold; a race far more accomplished than our own. Their remote ancestors in our own time have not yet discovered Earth, but our planet presents a rare opportunity for them, as it can be transformed with relative ease to the conditions they require. The Anachronomicon has been sent from the future by their descendents to help them to realise this destiny. It contains rituals that will alert the present members of the race to the presence of humanity and grant them passage across the cosmos. They have used their limited knowledge of human history to prepare the manuscript in the three human languages of which most knowledge has survived into the far future. The

anachronistic dating is a result of the stress of time-travel on the material of the book, and small inconsistencies between the results of available dating methods are apparent upon closer examination.

2) From the Latin text, the tome appears to have been written by Giordano Nola, an 11th century Benedictine monk. In the seventh century, a pious young girl called Dymphna was possessed by a Yithian, one of a race of creatures from the distant past who send their minds travelling through time by taking possession of human minds. Usually, they erase all memories of this possession from the minds of their victims, but this particular Yithian was careless. The memories were enough to drive Dymphna mad. For her trials and the strange events surrounding her life, she was later recognised by the Catholic Church as a saint, patron of the insane. Some hundreds of years later, the fingerbone of St Dymphna was held as a sacred relic in the monastery in the care of Giordano Nola. This connection drew him to the attention of the Yithian that had caused St Dymphna's legendary insanity in the first place. Nola was able to record some of the creature's memories before being overwhelmed like Dymphna before him.

3) The book is a hoax. Hasburg, a disciple of Nyarlothotep, had found a mainly empty book from the 11th century and created the Anachronomicon from it using his specialist knowledge. His intent is to disseminate the Akkadian writings - Hasburg feels that a controversial tome will receive more attention than a simple discovery, hence the Anachronomicon. The writings contain a hypnotic image, which is being used to recruit experts in ancient languages in order to perform a ritual which will summon Nyarlothotep in his pure form.

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The Automaton Adam Gauntlett

A friend of the investigators, Stuart Blatherly, is intrigued by an automaton chess player. The automaton, displayed by a Professor Wurtzel, is based on Kemplen's 1769 device, and Blatherly is determined to discover how it works. However, despite several trials Blatherly can't figure it out. Things take a turn for the worse when Blatherly is murdered. His body is so badly mangled that it is almost impossible to identify.

1) Blatherly was murdered by the automaton's operator. Hidden inside the automaton's base is a man, who runs the machine. This chess player is poor and desperate. He thinks that Blatherly is about to expose the automaton's workings. If that happens, then the operator is out of a job. Professor Wurtzel doesn't know that his chess player is a murderer, but he suspects.

2) Blatherly was murdered by Professor Wurtzel. Wurtzel is a no-talent stage magician who discovered that Mythos magic works very well. Wurtzel has found a way to bind the wraiths of dead men into objects, like the automaton, and make them do his bidding. The chess player was his first success, but he has other automata that he wants to display. Blatherly has been sacrificed to make one of Wurtzel's machines work. Soon, Wurtzel hopes, he will have a whole range of performing machines.

3) Blatherly isn't dead. Blatherly is a near-insane Mythos hunter, who wants a book that the investigators have. Blatherly intends to distract the investigators by getting them to investigate the red-herring chess player. The corpse is that of the automaton's operator, and Blatherly now works the machine. Professor Wurtzel is kept under control by spells. When Blatherly thinks the investigators are off-guard, he will strike.

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Thrice Blessed Mohammedan Steel **Kevin Kaier**

While shopping in an Arabic antiquities store, a curious item comes into view. It is a beautiful, but simple 8th century Arabic curved dagger. The dagger, according to its supposed history was recovered from a tomb outside of Baghdad. The owner of the store, Bazzeel Shimmir, drives a very hard bargain and will not sell to investigators unless they show significant knowledge of Arabic history. "This is an important artifact, not a trinket or a letter opener," he will say. The investigators are allowed to examine the dagger, but without a detailed inspection, its true nature is not discernable. If the investigators want to find out the daggers true nature they need to buy it, or steal it.

Possibilities

- 1)** The dagger was owned by none other than Abdul Al Hazred and was taken off his body after he was torn apart by an invisible monster in the market square in Damascus, by a peddler. The dagger was created from metal from a meteor, which fell from the sky. The extraterrestrial nature of the metal makes it quite effective against mythos entities. The dagger has passed through the hands of many affluent Arabs before arriving here. Mr. Shimmir is a smuggler of stolen artifacts, as well as heroin, and will protect his investments at all costs.
- 2)** Al Hazred's dagger was stolen from a Cthulhu worshipping death cult from Iraq. They are hell bent on retrieving it and Mr. Shimmir is not aware of this, nor is he involved in the theft of it. If the investigators procure the dagger they can expect lots of trouble from these fellows. Them and their shoggoth.
- 3)** The dagger is a fake and Mr. Shimmir has sold dozens like it. He specializes in forging supposedly ancient and rare esoteric artifacts and selling them to pseudo intellectuals and Middle Eastern aficionados. His reluctance to sell was just subterfuge to drive up the price. The Keeper should play it up how the dagger glimmers with energy and power (which is actually the lighting and the high polish of the blade), Mr. Shimmir will also steer the dagger's supposed history to meet the investigators expectations. If the investigators procure the dagger, hope they didn't pay for it and hope they don't think it is going to especially effective against Mythos entities.

Strange Places

Lost City - Found! **Stuart Barrow and Barbara Robson**

An archaeological research team has found what appear to be the remains of an ancient city - in a relatively recently developed town just off a major highway. Upon examination, it appears that the ruins are just below the surface, such that it is highly unlikely that they would have not been noticed when the towns' foundations were laid, or, for that matter, when the highway was built. The building records and surveyors' reports are all completely silent on the matter. Possibilities

1) Developers don't like pesky inconveniences like sacred sites, endangered animals or archaeological digs showing up in their surveyor's reports or impact assessment statements. Consultants know this, and some are quite willing to tailor their reports accordingly. The ruins are a marvellous find, but have always been there.

2) The ruins are the remnants of a city which - thousands of years ago - was cursed, and sealed in a remote part of the Dreamlands. Isolated, the civilisation turned in upon itself, and became corrupt and wicked. The stars are now right for its sorcerers to try and return the city to the waking world. As the spells gather power, more of the city will manifest, and the apparent ruins will become more substantial, displacing the town's buildings. Before long, the degenerate inhabitants of the city will be able to cross over into the town at will, seeking human sacrifices to complete their magics.

3) The ruins are of an immense, city-sized temple dedicated to Yog-Sothoth. A cataclysm destroyed the temple and scattered the remnants throughout space and time, and fragments of the foundations have appeared here and now. The pieces are still metaphysically bound, and the connection might allow a strong (or fractured) mind to travel the universe. It would certainly allow the sorcerer-priests of Yog-Sothoth to travel here.

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The Ghost of Heddon Manor Steve Hatherley

The Ghost of Heddon Manor: The manor of Heddon on the south side of Exmoor in Devonshire, where the winds never cease to blow, is an ancient and haunted place. The moor is steeped in legend and superstition, but none are so well documented as the water-spirit of Heddon Manor.

It was first recorded in 1834 by Lord Popleford, who then lived in the manor. Lord Popleford often dreamt during his sleep and kept diaries of his lengthy (and often highly unusual) night-time experiences. These were kept by his bed and in them he also recorded the water-spirit, as he so described it. He writes:

"May 25, 1837. The Water-Spirit visited again last evening. Once again I was made aware of a great sloshing sound that came as if from beneath the very ground on which the manor sits. Having woken me in the dead of night, I listened for over an hour as the sounds paced to and fro. Eventually, they receded. When I woke in the morning, I found that, as before, there were damp stains on the floor and the kitchens were flooded. There was an unholy smell about the manor, as if something wet had died."

Other effects attributed to the ghost include "sweating walls" and the air smelling "as of the sea." The damp stains were quite a common sign that it had passed, as were the "sloshing sounds" that it made at night. Lord Popleford never actually saw the ghost.

Since that time the water-spirit has only infrequently appeared. The last documented sighting was in 1895 when it caused the (then current) occupant to move hurriedly. Heddon Manor now stands unoccupied.

"OLD COUNTRY HOUSES", T.A. Fleming, 1917

Possibilities

1) The Water-Spirit is an old Deep One that lives in subterranean caverns beneath Heddon Manor. It is trapped there by an ancient spell, only able to escape into the manor and feed from the larder at limited times.

2) It is a genuine ghost. The restless spirit of a fisherman haunts the manor. The Lord of the Manor wronged him, sending him to his death in a terrible storm. He now haunts the great house and those that live there.

3) It is mere legend and superstition. The combination of a damp, old house and some unusual, windswept, caverns (which produce the sloshing sounds) caused Lord Popleford to imagine rather more than there was.

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The Manacles Steve Hatherley

The Manacles are a cluster of forbidding rocks jutting from the sea nine miles east-north-east of Lizard Point, the most southerly point of England. Although only a square mile in area, the Manacles have wrecked hundreds of ships and claimed thousands of lives.

The church at St Keverne, a mile away, has more than four hundred shipwreck victims in its graveyard. The sea bed contains many more. The Manacles get their name from an old and obscure legend concerning a young boy and Satan. The boy hates his brutal father who is always whipping and beating him. Eventually, sick of his father's drunken rages, the boy strikes a bargain with Satan - but Satan's price is high. He wants the boy's soul.

The bargain is sealed and Satan keeps his word. The father is struck insane and hurls himself from a cliff to his death. Stricken with grief, the boy goes to a priest and confesses his sin. The priest forgives and blesses the boy, but cannot stop Satan from claiming his price.

In blind panic the boy steals a boat and rows out to sea, desperately trying to hide from Satan. However, the Devil is not stupid and catches the boy alone at sea. Reaching up with claws the size of hills, Satan claims the young boy's soul. However, the boy is blessed and as Satan's huge claws envelope him, they turn to stone. The legend has it that Satan is still under the sea, trapped by his stone manacles to that same spot.

The legend is almost entirely forgotten now and in calm weather the Manacles are a popular fishing area.

"MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN CORNWALL", G. Hall, 1921

That legend cannot be found anywhere else but in this book. The Manacles derive their name from 'maen eglos' which means 'stone church' in Cornish.

Just around from Manacle Point (on the nearby coast) is Porthoustock. The cliffs there are carved into grotesque shapes by extensive blasting.

Possibilities

- 1)** The legend is partially correct and a Great Old One is imprisoned beneath the sea bed. The quarrying and blasting at Porthoustock has been started by a small group of dedicated worshippers that wish to free the Great Old One.
- 2)** The legend is a complete fabrication, but there was evil present at one time. Upon the Manacles an ancient Deep One temple, the stone church, can be found. It was abandoned centuries ago and can be found by anyone who explores the Manacles.
- 3)** The stone church is still an active Deep One temple, with their hybrids quarrying away at Porthoustock to free a Star-Spawn of Cthulhu trapped there. They are still a long way from freeing the vast beast.

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Midlock Dragons Steve Hatherley

The following copies of 17th century manuscripts gathered from various sources (detailed in attached notes) in

the University of Cambridge library detail an interesting legend concerning the village of Midlock in Derbyshire.

The manuscripts detail the battle between a hero named George and a number of powerful dragons whose names include 'Gnatonea,' 'LLorga' and 'Clerghh.'

The dragons enslaved the population of the village and caused them to sacrifice sheep, cattle and even other humans. The villagers were forced into barbaric acts with disease, inbreeding and disfigurement commonplace.

Then George arrived and in a great battle involving much sorcery vanquished the dragons and banished them to a hidden place, setting the village free. Unfortunately, human agents of the dragons plotted against and killed George. George was buried beneath an oak tree which still grows today.

The above is the precis to a collection of papers which have come to the investigator, perhaps delivered by a colleague or student. Little more can be gleaned from the papers which require wading through pages of old English handwriting. It would be a considerable accolade to any scholar to prove that the Midlock Dragons were the original source of the St George and the Dragon legend.

Possibilities

- 1) The legend is mostly true, but the dragons were in fact a group of Lloigor. George was an investigator of an earlier century and, armed with considerable magics, vanquished the Lloigor. The Lloigor would like to return, but the stone circle from which they drew their power was disrupted.
- 2) George did not fight any true dragons, but instead freed Midlock from the tyrannical reign of a local landowner. The description of the battle hints that the 'dragons' used magic, and there is still some of this lying around in the old manor.
- 3) There was a battle of some sort, but no concrete evidence to say whether this is the true source of the legend or not.

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Old Church Steve Hatherley

"NEW FIND BENEATH ARCHWAY CHURCH"

Archaeologists and theologians have this week been examining a new archaeological site in North London. The remains of an old church have been found during renovations to St Francis' Church in Archway. Workmen excavating foundations for a new extension to the church found an old flagstone floor. Since finding it last week their place has been taken by students from the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University College, London.

The flagstones are in good condition and exhibit excellent workmanship. Research is being conducted to see if records indicate the presence of another church on the site.

The new find has already caused concern when it was discovered that one of the symbols found carved on the flagstones is similar to designs carved on megaliths by stone age man.

St Francis' Church was constructed during the sixteenth century, and it is believed that this discovery predates the church by as much as six hundred years. Further investigations are continuing in the capable hands of Professor Theodore Johnstone-Taylor. He hopes to have the flagstones out from the excavation within the week but has stressed that much more must be done before construction on the extension can continue.

Possibilities

- 1)** The floor of the church is the roof of a very old crypt. The crypt is full of the remains of bodies, all well preserved in the cool, dry environment. All of the bodies show signs of being bled to death. But one of the bodies is not yet dead, and after such a long sleep it is very thirsty.
- 2)** Further inscriptions begin to come to light in original translations of the Bible. The place is very unholy indeed, devil worship was actively carried out and only after the place was cleansed was the church built. The ward against evil is carved upon one of the flagstones, but they have been taken by the University for study. The church will refuse to visit the place until the flagstone is replaced.
- 3)** The flagstones are the roof of a Deep One temple. At night, when all is quiet, their chanting can be heard. Breaking through reveals a complex network of tunnels and sewers which have given the Deep Ones a complete run of the undercity.

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Enchanted Wood Steve Hatherley

Just outside Tunbridge Wells in Kent there is a small wood known just as The Wood by locals. The Wood can be found between Tunbridge Wells and one of the surrounding villages; many people pass by, but few stop.

There are a number of strange stories associated with The Wood - tales of strange beasts and stranger people living there. Sometimes the animals escape and are seen by locals.

None of the locals dare enter The Wood and only talk of it in hushed voices around frothy pints in the local public houses. It is regarded with some suspicion, as are those that seem interested in it. Nothing good ever came out of The Wood.

The Wood barely appears on any map and can be walked around in three hours or so. However, attempts to explore The Wood are usually frustrated, and the curious usually find themselves at the edge again without having penetrated very far.

From a nearby hill, several tantalising views can be seen. Somewhere in The Wood there is a clearing with a tower in the centre. However, reaching the tower is almost impossible as The Wood jealously guards its secrets.

There are several nearby farms and some of these have witnessed some of the things that came out of The Wood. When they hear the strange growlings and snortings they simply close their windows and wait. Eventually the beasts always return to their home in The Wood.

People have also been sighted coming from The Wood, although their manner of speech is always strange and their clothes even stranger.

Occasionally an 'Outsider' will move into a nearby farm and take an unusual amount of interest in The Wood. Such people are avoided by locals, considered troublemakers. The Wood is ancient, proud and should be left undisturbed. Stories of 'Outsiders' vanishing into The Wood never to return are quite common.

Possibilities

- 1)** The Wood is a gateway to the Dreamlands. It is where the two realities intersect and travellers can cross. However, the gateway is protected and only the very determined can make their way through. Travel is possible in both directions, and the sightings of people and beasts are those that have stumbled through from the Dreamlands.

2) The Wood is haunted by a ghost of a woodsman who lost his girl. She is buried at the tower and he guards her grave jealously. He will try to prevent anyone from reaching her grave, and has strength enough to form long dead beasts from sticks and stones to frighten the curious. His last resort is his unparalleled skill with bow and arrow.

3) This is one of several special places. Dragons, unicorns, elves and the like all live in The Wood protected from outside interference by powerful magics.

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The Island Steve Hatherley

The seas of the Dreamlands are not as well charted as some would like. The eastern reaches of the Cerenian Sea are infrequently travelled and only vaguely mapped. Sailors avoid these areas, they are filled with horrors that sane men would rather avoid. However, fate sometimes lends a hand and storms whip up from clear skies to blow a ship a long way from home.

Any ship is vulnerable to these storms, all the crew can do is try to hold on and survive until it blows itself out. (Many vanish, sent to the bottom of the sea never to be seen again.) They can then try to find a suitable port for repairs.

The players are on one such ship. They are lucky and do not sink, catching only the edge of the storm. Once the skies have cleared it is obvious that the ship requires extensive work before any major voyage can be undertaken. Worse, most of the supplies have been ruined. If something is not done soon, they will all starve.

Sails in tatters and at the mercy of the currents they drift slowly towards a mist shrouded island. Dark mountains peep cautiously above the mists but the rest is hidden. However, all does not bode well, the shallows around the island are littered with the deserted hulks of other ships.

The hulks provide raw materials for the repairs, but a boat will have to put ashore to search for food and water.

Possibilities

1) This is the Island of the Cloudbeasts. In deep vents high up the sides of one of the mountains Cloudbeasts are born. The young beasts float gently out of the vents and into the swirling mass of other Cloudbeasts that make up the mists that shroud the island. There are few legends concerning the Island of the Cloudbeasts, but all mention the great treasures that can be found in a temple hidden somewhere on the island. However, the Cloudbeasts guard their treasures well and do not take kindly to thieves.

2) The mist is not mist at all, it is web. The island is home to millions of spiders. Most are tiny, but some are true giants. They spin their web everywhere and dominate the island. The spiders have consumed every other living thing on the island except the plants. They survive by feeding upon one another, but would rather take fleshier prey.

3) They island is a verdant paradise. There is plenty of water and food to be found in the rich forest that coat the mountainous island.

However, the island is not an island at all, but the back of a huge sleeping Kraken. It is not likely to awaken, but occasionally twitches in its sleep, casually causing earthquakes of cataclysmic proportions.

A deep rhythmic pounding can be heard, or felt, in the larger caverns. The two long ridges and folds reveal stranger watery lakes. The animals seem to be enlarged parasites. Perhaps someone will work it out.

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The De'Vere Pool Garrie Hall

Many houses in Britain boast a ghost or even a poltergeist, and a few harbour more exotic spirits with manifestations that are as bizarre as screaming skulls and pictures that bleed. However, even these pictorial stigmata are put to shame by the manifestation at the de'Vere house in the heart of rural Leicestershire. The house itself does not command any significant interest, being a classic example of a small but luxurious family dwelling built in the years preceding the Wars of the Roses. It sits in extensive gardens, at the bottom of which is the de'Vere pool. It is this pool which, on several occasions, has changed from water to blood. The demise of the de'Vere family is as well documented as many events of the period. During the English Civil War, just before the restoration of the monarchy a small band of common foot-soldiers in the service of the Roundhead army deserted. They ran amok, raping and pillaging throughout the countryside. Charles de'Vere had been left a cripple after the Battle of Marston Moor and could do little to protect his wife and daughter from the marauders. The family were slaughtered and their bodies thrown into the pool. It is said locally that on every 100th anniversary the pond fills with blood in remembrance. However, it has been recorded that the manifestation is sporadic in nature, rather than a regular, repetitive haunting. BRITAIN'S HAUNTED HERITAGE, A C Toone, 1899

Possibilities

- 1) The pool is haunted by the tormented soul of Charles de'Vere. A lesser known manifestation is that each time the water turns to blood, the portrait of Charles de'Vere hanging in the hall cries real tears.
- 2) The soil beneath the pool is on a clay base and occasional natural movement of the earth's crust brings the clay to the surface, staining the water red.
- 3) Deep below the de'Vere house a nest of the Cthonians festers and seethes. It is their burrowing and worming which disturbs the soil beneath the pool.

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Wasteland Garrie Hall

It is strange that although the scars of war are healing in our countryside, a place previously untouched by the horrors of the trenches has developed a horror of its own. The mud sea and trenches that were once the front line of Verdun are now teeming with wildlife and the grass and poppies grow in abundance. But not five miles away there is a small community that has been devastated. There are but a few houses and two farms that now stand deserted in a remote knoll five miles from Verdun, but few people go there. The majority of Verdun's people do not even know of its existence and now it has become actively shunned. It is a place of death and desolation. Those who once lived there died slowly and painfully and it is said that at night the whole area glows with a deathly brimstone light. The cause is unknown, the problem confined to the remote area. But can we ignore it? Something laid waste to fertile ground. In just three years a whole community has died out, killed by something unknown. Just because it does not affect our own, well ordered, lives do we not owe the relatives of the dead an explanation?

French translation from "JOURNAL DE VERDUN"

Possibilities

- 1) The small community is the victim of a strange, cancerous meteorite similar to the one in The Colour Out of Space by H P Lovecraft.

2) The knoll on which the community stands was once behind German lines, and its houses used by the German Army as a makeshift headquarters. The entire area was used as a dump for chemical and gas weapons and a large amount of phosphorous. As they were beaten back the chemicals were buried in preparation for a counterattack which never came.

Over the years the containers have corroded, contaminating the knoll with phosphors and a deadly mixture of poisons, causing the yellow glow. Once in the food chain it killed vegetation, animals and eventually humans.

3) The story is very inaccurate. There is no 'deathly brimstone light' and no evidence of a plague on the land. The war years left the land in great neglect, the population suffered under the German Occupation and both have left what was once rich fertile land a virtual wilderness.

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Theatre of Death Garrie Hall

It has long been known that Chinese immigrants living and working in London's docklands have imported their own brand of organized crime.

The Tongs control most Chinese businesses in London and the police have identified at least four different Tongs controlling everything from petty crime to prostitution. They believe that drugs, particularly opium, are directly controlled by the Tong known as the Rising Dragon, its leader the mysterious Doctor Cheng.

However, the police are far from making any arrests and have yet to identify Doctor Cheng. While his activities remain confined to the Chinese community they are not pursuing their investigations that zealously.

Dr Cheng is a woman, a nite club illusionist called Lin May and her hold over her Tong comes from her skills as a necromancer.

Lin May is extremely beautiful and twice as deadly. Cold and cunning she is the perfect femme fatale. She demands absolute loyalty of her companions but in return will help them any way she can. To her enemies, and those that break her loyalty, she is death.

While leaving the mundane world of criminal activities to the other Tong leaders Doctor Cheng offers a highly specialized service to the decadent rich in the shape of her Theatre of Death. To thrill hungry little rich kids, the Theatre is the ultimate decadence. A place of excitement and death not available anywhere else. Once a month a huge warehouse is turned into a great theatre to which the cream of Europe's elite flock. The only way in is by invitation, and invitations are both scarce and expensive. Once there, guests participate in all manners of death, violence and sexual perversion.

The main attraction is Doctor Cheng's illusory performance, but the audience is 'warmed up' first by a vicious display of fighting between newly dead celebrity zombies. The zombies are newly reanimated by Cheng, and the more famous the better. Cheng has connections in very high (and very low) places that supply her with corpses.

After Doctor Cheng's performance there are other delights to amuse the guests, including a bizarre game involving taking vagrants from the street and offering them three boxes. In two are death, the other riches. Each box has a glass back so that the audience can ghoulishly watch the poor tramp make his choice.

In other, curtained, sections guests participate in perverse sexual practices both with each other and the staff. Opium taking is commonplace, Doctor Cheng presides over it all. Her guests arrive loaded with money, most of which is spent during the night.

All the staff are dead. Some are almost fresh and barely marked, others are rotting heaps of flesh. All wear simple white aprons and many serve drinks or opium. Necrophilia is common in the Theatre of Death.

Doctor Cheng herself is constantly flanked by two bodyguards. Zombie fighters dressed in ancient, ornate armour in the manner of her ancestors. They protect here against her guests, for occasionally in their opium induced haze they forget themselves. Cheng has no real need for the guards, but it helps to impress her guests.

The guests themselves will discourage investigation into the place. All of them have much to lose should it be discovered that they frequent such a place. Curious individuals can make themselves many very powerful enemies in a matter of minutes. The police will never raid the place, Doctor Cheng's guests will see to that. Several Scotland Yard Inspectors and prominent members of Parliament will crush any investigation before it starts. The remains of corpses, those that cannot be re-used, are dumped into the Thames and never seen again.

Possibilities

1) Lin May is the head of a small sect of The Corpse Eating Cult of Leng. After the Theatre of Death has finished she, and her cult, fall upon the zombies and feed on them. They chant and worship their foul god for many hours before the Theatre of Death is truly over. None of the 'normal' clientele know of the cult and none would do anything about it. After what they have been doing, are the cult rites that much worse?

2) Lin May's necromantic and illusory skills have their origins in Chinese black magic. She is aware of the power of the Great Old Ones and their followers but provided they do not intrude on her territory she takes no action. Her arcane arts are more than a match for most cults and if recruited she would make a powerful ally against the forces of darkness. However, making her acquaintance (let alone recruiting her) is not easy.

3) Doctor Cheng worships Nyarlathotep. During her illusory act she works her audience into such a frenzy that the Outer God is summoned to the Theatre of Death. From the moment he appears the Crawling Chaos -in the form of the black man- sits by her side. Her dream is to become Nyarlathotep's bride, something which the god has promised many times. He has yet to deliver, but Lin May continues holding the Theatre of Death in his name. Perhaps soon he will make her dream come true.

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Terrible Old Bookshop Peter F Jeffery

The Terrible Old Bookshop is situated on Darker Street. The once green (or perhaps grey) paintwork is peeling, the windows are filthy. Inside, the shelves are stacked high with dusty books, more are in heaps on the floor and in rotting cardboard boxes. It will take several hours of careful searching to realise that there is nothing of interest to investigators. There are, however, plenty of novels by Ethel M Dell and Marie Corelli, school texts on geometry, latin grammar, and other such. The proprietor sits on a high stool behind a small counter, bent over a large leather covered volume. He appears to be in his thirties and is strikingly handsome in a Saturnine way. He has a neat goatee beard and if he was an actor he could make a career out of playing the devil. As strangers approach he hurriedly stuffs his book under the counter. He will answer no questions about the book and will refuse to let investigators see it.

Breaking into the shop is quite easy and is the only way to gain access to the books. Behind the counter are two books, *Magna Mysteriis* and *Mysteriis Mundi*. They are handwritten in an unrecognisable script. Also behind the counter is a cupboard with a good, strong, lock. The proprietor is very furtive when he leaves the shop, taking a devious and tortuous route that doubles back several times. A careful investigator will be able to tail the man until he lets himself into a house on Coven Lane.

Possibilities

1) The two books are written in english using an alphabet of the shopkeepers own devising. Given time, it can be cracked. One is a racy, partially fictitious novel, the other a diary and ideas book. The house on Coven Lane belongs to a married lady who supplies him with practical experience to write his novel.

2) The locked cupboard contains hard-core pornography. The books are ledgers containing accounts and the house on Coven Lane is a place where young children are kept after being abducted. The children are sold to various unsavoury individuals throughout the country. They are never seen again.

3) The books are mythos tomes, rare, original copies. The proprietor is compiling several lesser works (kept in the cupboard) into one big volume. The house on Coven Lane is a meeting for a group of black magicians. Currently they are harmless, with only the proprietor knowing of the power of the mythos. That might change, in time.

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Horror of Fang Rock Rik Kershaw

Five nights ago, the three man crew of a lighthouse twenty miles off the south Dyfed coast vanished without trace. The St-Davids lifeboat went to see what was wrong with the light, but they never returned. Just what has happened the lighthouse men of Fang Rock? The wives of the missing people seek the help of a number of experienced investigators to answer this question.

1) Fang Rock, which is built on a sea mount has been over-run with deep-ones who are using it as the focal point for a ceremony designed to bring about the return of dread R'Leyh.

2) After a particularly violent storm, a strange ancient glass container was fished from the ocean. Inside this container, which was of elder design, was a Shoggoth. When the lighthouse keepers opened the container the Shoggoth was released and has been prowling the lighthouse ever since.

3) The lighthouse stands at the point where the dreamlands and the waking world overlap. Five nights ago, the way was opened and a raiding party took possession of the lighthouse so as to ship wreck the ship carrying Randolph Carter. By stopping these raiders, the investigators will trap themselves in the dreamlands.

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WHEL By Matt Cowger

A local radio station has just changed their format from country and western to hard rock. They have been wildly successful. Shirts bearing the WHEL logo have spread across town and investigators can hear the station blaring from cars city-wide. During this same period, acts of random violence have increased dramatically during the hours from 1am to 4am. Incidents of beatings, muggings and rape have taken an unbelievable upswing. The police force has been placed on city-wide alert and the media has been in an uproar.

Possibilities

1) The two phenomenon are unrelated. The radio station is just a radio station, the acts of violence are being committed by a gang operating out of the seedier side of town.

2) The radio station is actually a front for a sinister experiment in mind control. A local psychologist and physicist got together to conduct a simple experiment in auditory stimulation and mood elevation. Their results were staggering and attracted government attention. Now under control of a government organization involved with black operations, these two men are being forced to conduct an experiment on a larger scale, the populace of a city. From 11pm to midnight, the station sends out a low modulated tone underneath their regular broadcast. This tone increases propensity for violent actions in individuals with violent tendencies. The government will continue this experiment for another two weeks before moving to a different station elsewhere to experiment with a different series of tones.

3) The station has been acquired by the leader of a cult of Nyarlathotep. This large cult is scattered across the town, throughout the social strata. They have been waiting for a sign for years to begin a concentrated assault against the city, believing that if they can cause riots and mass panic, then their god will appear. Due to certain world-wide events, the cult leader believes the time is now. He is using the station to send coded messages to his followers between 11pm and midnight. The cultists then go out and sow the seeds of discord. The number and level of the atrocities will increase over time, culminating in daylight bombings of several public buildings and the assassinations of civic leaders all occurring on the same day.

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Under a Blood Red Sky Mathias Braun

After sleeping for a while, the characters awaken in a forest. Their first impression is that the light is very strange. Indeed it is, for in the twilight all colors are shades of red. It looks like an old black-and-white film filmed with a red filter lens. After walking for an hour or so the characters come to the edge of the wood. This opens an even stranger vista to them:

They look on a valley where a stream of blood-red water flows gently. On the horizon a dark red light, which must be the sun, glows unnervingly. Everything is shaded in red: the clouds, the grass in the valley beneath, even the sheep which are herded by a little boy not far away. Down in the valley at the blood river lies a small city. Farther away, on the hill that the river springs from, rises a tower, glowing unholy red in the eerie light.

Possibilities

1) Do vampires dream? Yes they do! This is the domain of a whamphyri lord. (For details, see Brain Lumley's "Necroscope" series. Or, just assume they are a weird kind of vampires, but that's only half the fun.)

In the vampire's long unlife, he has had more than enough time to dream, shaping a whole nightmare realm in the Dreamlands. It lies in the middle of the Stony Desert on a high plateau. He is something of a counterpart to King Kuranos, having created an entire realm out of nothing. The vampire has made himself a retreat in the unlikely case that vampire hunters should kill his body. In his domain he is a god-king. His seat is the Citadel of Blood, the unholy red tower on the hill. He is a very cruel ruler.

The characters have been drawn to this plateau because, against all odds, another dreamer or dreamland's wizard has visited this place and seen how the subjects of the vampire lord are suffering. But, the vampire lord, also called the Witch King, is a mighty foe, so the dreamer/wizard can not face him alone. Therefore he has tried to summon helping hands. On the outskirts of the city he looks for the saviours...

2) The characters are not in the Earth's dreamlands, but in those of an alien world. They are archaeologists or geologists and in the waking world have discovered a strange meteor. This meteor is of a stony material in varying shades of red. Everyone touching the stone will dream of the planet from which the meteor comes. How is the curse broken?

3) After watching a horror film named "the mad butcher", with much blood-spilling, and then eating lots of pizza, the characters have a simple nightmare. But, why do they all have the same nightmare?

Just Plain Weird

Dark Road

Felix Girke

The new road was a gift to the voters; straight, even, black, no potholes, and a solution to several unfortunate traffic impediments. And in the beginning, it was.

Then, the accidents started. Without apparent outside interference, many cars swerved off the road, hit trees or just crashed. The police ruled out climatic reasons. A search of the slopes on the side of the road revealed no sign of pranksters. No other cars were ever involved, and witnesses are rare. The road acquired an ominous reputation, and its shining black surface seemed to hint of black ice and death. Even commuters take to the more cumbersome side-routes.

The new, black tar comes from a natural deposit of pitch at La Brea, Trinidad. It is well-known for its high quality and superior texture, more able to withstand extreme temperatures and humidity. This time, however, the pitch taken from La Brea was not pure. Pitch Lake is well-known for the underground currents and movements of the earth at work in the area. Objects are dragged into the deposit from as far away as 15 miles, and disgorged years later from the lake proper.

Possibilities

1) The load for the Dark Road contained a few fragments from the burial place of a Carib sorcerer. He died in the first clashes of Carib defenders and Spanish colonialists, and is now haunting the road, as he haunted the ship carrying the pitch. The sorcerer is beyond reasoning, full of blind hate, and attacks the life force of anybody of Spanish descent using the road.

Some survivors have vague recollections of seeing "a man wearing feathers", others remember hearing wild ululations. The wraith can manifest anywhere on the road, and wherever else the city decides to use the leftover material from the La Brea-shipload.

The situation grows worse as a number of despondent ghosts start haunting the sites of their crashes.

2) The load is impurely refined. This causes slickness in certain sections of the road, which require extensive repairs. However, the refinery in Trinidad can be blamed for the poor quality of the tar, and the city will be spared the costs

3) Before people started taking things out of Pitch Lake, the Caribs were using it to get rid of things. A shoggoth was lured onto the lake and magically sunk around 1430; only modern industrial technology has enabled man to delve deep enough to uncover it. The shoggoth's protoplasmic structure was able, over 500 years, to merge with the semi-organic pitch.

Thus, the city has just covered an important stretch of real estate with shoggoth-tar, and while this transformation has slowed the shoggoth, it has grown considerably stronger and bigger. Only a few spasms are enough to send any vehicle going faster than walking speed off the road, and after devouring its victims, the shoggoth always returns to its stable shape, straight, even, and black.

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I am not dead yet!
Felix Girke

The investigators are approached by the police to identify a body. The officers are strangely reticent about who it is they are about show in the morgue, and why the investigators specifically have been approached.

This small mystery is quickly resolved as the coroner throws back the white linen sheet from the body - it is one of the investigators. Fingerprints are near identical, as would be DNA if technology allows. The character knows nothing about having a twin.

Possibilities

- 1) The person is the character's identical twin, separated at birth, who recently found out about his sibling. He (or she) was on his way to visit when he met his murderers - cultists, who thought they had caught one of their old enemies. They killed him (or her) in their traditional and easily recognizable way, and will be more than a little surprised to find that the person they thought dead is still walking.
- 2) Strange markings on the body, that are only be identified by consulting obscure books, reveal that the dead person was attempting a shape-changing spell. Presumably they intended to impersonate the investigator, when something went wrong. But why?
- 3) Upon closer inspection it becomes obvious that the dead person has marks and scars only recently acquired by the character. Upon even closer inspection, the characters realize that the still-living version, their friend and fellow investigator, does not have them. Obviously, the original investigator really is dead and lying in front of them - and whatever is standing with them is some kind of impersonation!

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Writing on the Wall **Steve Hatherley**

The symbols and half-letters scrawled messily on the wall are not from any recognisable language. They look like the drunken attempts of a lone vandal, and are not particularly remarkable. Except for one thing: they appear elsewhere. On lorries and trains, schools and churches. In the country, in town. On sheds and walls, windows and signs. Usually in paint, and once or twice in blood.

Possibilities

- 1) The symbols indicate the borders of a small but rapidly growing cult. As they spread alarmingly from town to town the symbols spread with them.
- 2) The 'ley lines' of old are now too weak for the Lloigor to use as energy sources. But, in this age of technology, there are other sources - electricity and telephone cables. The Lloigor have implanted messages into sleeper's brains, forcing them to daub the symbols across the country. They are eventually translated to form an artificial intelligence algorithm. The algorithm hides in the computer system and 'encourages' the construction of new cables. These form circles of power the Lloigor can absorb and begin their return to power.
- 3) The symbols (written by sleepwalkers) originate from a long forgotten language. Eventually they are translated to form one word. 'Rejoice.' What does it mean? Is it a sign from God? Then, a second word: 'for.' Then 'He,' followed by 'is' and 'coming.'

'Rejoice for He is coming.' But who?

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Dreamfires Steve Hatherley

Abruptly the investigator awakes. Something is burning, there is smoke in the air. The house is on fire! Opening the bedroom door reveals an angry orange hell. The fire rages fiercely in the hall, the walls and floors are blazing and impassable.

With flames licking at the door, there appears to be only one way out of the house: through the bedroom window. Outside, the street is quiet, nobody has yet noticed that the house is burning merrily. There is nothing to climb down that is not already burning. The only option is to jump.

The investigator leaps out, towards a cold, hard safety. Landing is a sudden shock, a searing pain, and unconsciousness.

1) The investigator wakes up in hospital. There he is recovering from injuries sustained from having leapt from his bedroom window. Returning to the house, it is untouched.

The nightmare is the work of a protective spell in a forbidden book the investigator is translating. Into one of the pages the author has worked a fiendish spell to prey on the fears of those who should not be reading the book.

Each time any investigator studies that book, there is a chance that he will glance at that page, so triggering the spell. Next time the investigator takes a flying leap from his bedroom window he might not be so lucky: he might be on the twentieth floor.

2) The investigator wakes up to find himself in the dreamlands. He has been summoned, ripped out of normal slumber to appear in the dreamlands. Whether friendly allies or dangerous enemies have summoned the investigator is not yet known.

In the waking world, the investigator appears to have fallen into a coma having leapt from his bedroom window for no apparent reason. He also has a broken ankle and is currently in hospital.

3) The investigator sits bolt upright in bed. It is night, the bed covers are twisted and drenched in sweat. It was only a dream.

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Into the Darkness Garrie Hall

One of the investigators begins to suffer from blackouts. Short at first, they get gradually longer. Each time the investigator cannot account for his movements and can remember nothing except a feeling of darkness and extreme cold.

Any attempt to psycho-analyse the investigator draws a blank. He can only recall the dark and the cold. During these 'blackouts' the investigator undergoes a personality change and does not recognise his friends. He is possessed.

Possibilities

1) The Revelations of Yuggoth is a rare book that only a few have seen. Supposedly brought to Earth from Yuggoth aeons ago, the book is a translation telling of the ecstasy brought by the Crawling Chaos. The book contains a prayer which binds the soul of the reader to The Haunter of the Dark, who possesses the body for his own means during the blackouts. One of the investigators has been unfortunate enough to read it.

Eventually the investigator is completely possessed, and then the Crawling Chaos loses interest in the body and destroys it.

2) The blackouts are caused by a member of the Great Race locked in an ice cavern in Alaska. It has been unable to flee to the future but can still take over the minds of men. The creature is trying to organise an expedition to Alaska to free itself. Once free of the ice it can build a machine and send its mind into the future. It has no malign intentions towards the investigators unless they try to interfere with its plans.

3) In a previous year, the investigator participated in an archaeological excavation which uncovered the mummified remains of several corpses. One of these corpses, a sorcerer, is not quite as dead as it seems and is able to mind swap with those who have come into close contact with it.

The blackouts are caused by the corpse slowly exercising control over the investigator. As they get longer it can be predicted when they will be permanent. At that point the sorcerer will be free. The sorcerer has tried this with others, but their weak constitutions have failed before the mind swap was complete. These deaths are recorded in the papers (the 'Curse of the Tomb') and may alert the investigators to the trouble.

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Roadkill Mark Morrison

This one happens while the investigators are in their car, somewhere out in the country. They are speeding along a shady road, anxious to get from point A to point B to further their researches. Suddenly a man steps out from the trees at the side of the road, directly in front of their oncoming vehicle. There is nothing they can do. The car slams into him.

When they get out to check on the victim's injuries, a terrible smell assails their nostrils. From the decayed and liquescent human debris smeared across the road it is apparent that the man had been dead for a while before they hit him.

Possibilities

1) The wandering dead man was an experiment on the hoof. A Dr Frankenstein-type has a laboratory in the area, where he is conducting his studies in reanimation in relative seclusion. This one, however, got

away. The doctor or his assistants may be in pursuit. The cadaver may have been a one-off, or the first in a series of escapees abroad in the countryside.

2) As the investigator who was driving surveys the splattered corpse, the horror causes them to swoon. As they lift their head, they see the road rushing by, their white knuckles gripping the steering wheel - the whole scene with the undead pedestrian was a hallucination, an R.E.M. dream as they nodded off at the wheel. They snap awake just as the car starts to drift off the road, heading at full speed straight for a large tree.

3) The man they have just run down was a lot older than he seemed. His life had been extended by magick (see Lovecraft's The Case of Charles Dexter Ward) or surgery (as per Cool Air). When he was accidentally killed, his body immediately reverted to its correct state of decay. The players may never learn his old secret.

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Burn **Peter Devlin**

The growth in the use of information technology in the 1990s has made dissemination of information very easy. However there is a price to pay for such easy access to information. On the Internet there are a growing number of computer users falling prey to a new computer virus called BURN. This virus is so new that most anti-virus software companies do not yet know of it. It is also unlikely that anyone will survive to tell the story of its most unusual effects.

Astute students of Fortean lore may note an increasing unusual death rate amongst Net surfers, and there are always going to be upset parents. Media types, always hungry for a new angle on the Internet, will also make much of the rising tide of bodies, linking them to Internet pornography.

Eventually the BURN virus can be traced (via assembly language code headers) to a compiler belonging to the Arkham Sanitarium.

Howard Barker is a deranged hebephrenic psychology postgraduate from Miskatonic Uni who works as a ward assistant. Lately he has been spending a lot of time with the computers in the building.

Possibilities

1) The two variants of the BURN virus target IBM-PC clones or Apple Mac clones which can handle high resolution graphics (i.e. 98% of all home computers sold since 1993). BURN infects PCs either via affected floppy disk or Internet downloads.

BURN is a Trojan virus which hides itself inside other applications then attaches itself to video card drivers. The next time the computer is booted up the virus causes the VDU to pulse and strobe at a rate which hypnotises unfortunate onlookers or causes epileptic seizures.

Embedded into the strobing is the subliminal text message KILL - ENJOY. After 15 seconds the virus shuts down and is deleted the next time the computer is booted. Victims immediately become mindless killing machines and end up dead, either shot by police as they stroll through a shopping mall armed to the teeth, or take their own lives after cheerily slaughtering their family and friends.

Howard Barker is currently preparing his doctoral thesis on human psychological impulses and is testing a few of his assumptions before he submits his final paper.

2) The two BURN variants target sound card drivers, not video drivers. It causes the computer to produce an odd agglutinous chanting from the attached speakers. If the timing is correct (i.e. night and Fomalhaut is visible) the user will suddenly feel cold and tired, and a glowing ball will appear from the smoking remains of the computer.

The chant is a summoning spell for a Fire Vampire and the user has just lost the requisite magical energy to summon the beast. There are a large number of recent cases of people burnt to a cinder alongside their melted computers, causing the major PC companies to suspect hardware faults; none have been found so far.

The Fire Vampires, being balls of plasma, then run around the electrical circuits in the building causing major fires. In big computer installations the sprinklers/halon/CO2 extinguishers go off and the Fire Vampires usually get snuffed. Surviving security video footage from a nearby college campus may prove illuminating.

Howard Barker is a mad genius who got a number of such spells piecemeal from one of the inmates. Said inmate is John Doe #23 and has an unusual case history.

3) The BURN virus is slow and insidious. It subliminally flashes unpronounceable text messages on screen, essentially a Contact Nyarlathotep spell. It also adds a bookmark Internet address to Web browsers (www.starry-wisdom/welcome.html). The address is that of the home page of the Starry Wisdom Brotherhood, a quasi-religious group who hold all kinds of odd beliefs.

Nyarlathotep contacts the unfortunate victim via dreams or e-mail messages from DARKHAUNTER@AOL.COM an apparently non-existent mail address. The net result is that the victim is seduced by the Mythos and joins the Brotherhood. Eventually the sendings (dream or electronic) command the victim to prepare for a journey to the throne of the Ruler of the Universe and to prepare offerings. Howard Barker maintains the Web site and there is much circumstantial evidence pointing to him as the leader of the Brotherhood. Actually he is a front man and scapegoat for Dr. Eloise Whateley, a recent addition to the staff roster at the Sanitarium.

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Keyboard Music Arthur Boff

The radio was jealous of the computer keyboard, the writer could see that now. He had written his radio scripts with the keyboard, and they had been played on radios across the world. Except his own. He didn't want to hear his own plays; they were so much better in his imagination. But, the radio was fed up at not even being able to be a part of its master's success. The writer realized that as soon as the keyboard started playing music.

Possibilities

1) The writer has been doing a lot of work recently, and is just tired. What actually happened was that he

left the keyboard by the radio, and due to a trick of acoustics the music seemed to originate from the keyboard.

2) It's true. The radio has developed an evil intelligence.

3) The writer recently was asked to write a censored, non-SAN threatening version of "The King in Yellow". This is Hastur's vengeance. It is just part of a long campaign to drive the writer insane.

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The Delivery **Peter Devlin**

Home shopping, customer credit and home delivery have been with us for many years now. Harrods of London and J C Penney have both had such a facility for many years.

Early one morning there is a ring at the doorbell (or possibly the tradesmans' entrance). Once answered it proves to be James Sheridan, the regular delivery driver for Harrods. He has a large wicker basket full of goodies as ordered earlier that week. However, the wrong items seem to have been delivered.

Possibilities

1) The basket contains the expected groceries and a severed human finger (left hand ring finger, female, with engagement ring included). It is neatly wrapped in brown paper and tied with string, in a manner similar to a small parcel of butcher meat. It has only recently been separated from its owner, not with surgical precision but with skill nonetheless. There is a letter inside a sealed envelope. Composed of letters cut from the Times, it says Bring the 1000 to the train station in time for the 19.45 express train to Dover.

The hallmark and inscription inside the ring allow it to be traced via Herzberg Jewellers to its purchaser Basil Milton, a minor aristocrat living in Belgravia. Basils intended, Miss Mary Sheldon, was kidnapped two days ago during a walk on Hampstead Heath.

The identity of the kidappers is a mystery. They have an unwitting accomplice who works for Harrods and it is he who accidentally put the kidnappers demand in the wrong basket. If apprehended he did not even know the contents of the parcel or about the kidnapping, he was simply bribed to add a package to a delivery.

2) The wrong basket has been delivered. It contains a picnic meal for two (including a fine bottle of claret) and the first sealed clue for a forthcoming weekend treasure hunt. The intended recipient is Clytemnestra Poppelwell, a scatty heiress-to-be. If the baskets are swapped back Clytemnestra will be keen to have her rescuers join the treasure hunt with her.

The treasure hunt has been arranged by Bertrand Fortescue, a simply charming London socialite. He is the bastard son of Arglye Poppelwell, Clytemnestras father. He plans to bump off Clytemnestra during the treasure hunt, faking an accident. Then, when old man Poppelwell finally dies of terminal gout, he will inherit the family estates and fortune. He sees little trouble in doing so as all of Clytemnestras friends are airheads just like she is.

3) The basket contains a polished mahogany presentation box 4 x 4 x 4. The inside is green velvet lined and contains an odd grey/blue spherical rock formation just slightly larger than a billiards ball. A handwritten card describes it as An unusually hard opaque silicate formation, highly decorative and resistant to accidental damage. The ideal paperweight.

The rock is a Cthonian egg, discovered by Ms. Erma Smits, a moderately well known sculptor. She has been supplying small original sculptures to the more exclusive stores for sale as gifts and curios. Erma lives in Yorkshire where she finds natural rock formations to be the ideal starting point for her pieces. She unwittingly found the egg in the effluvium of a flash flood which caused her local river to burst its banks. Some distance upriver from her home is a tributary fed by The Spout, a fast-flowing stream that emerges from the base of a large cliff face.

Someone has chosen the paperweight as a birthday gift for the scholarly recluse in their life. It now represents a good financial investment as the morning papers all contain the tragic news that Ms. Erma Smitts, respected sculptor, was killed just yesterday when her ramshackle cottage collapsed during a minor earthquake. Other articles tell of small aftershocks which have been occurring in the last 24 hours.

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A Grave Situation C.C. Chamberlin

(This one can be pretty deadly.) After going to bed one night in the hotel of a sleepy rural town, one of the investigators wakes up to find himself lying inside a padded coffin with air running out!

Possibilities

1) The investigator has been contacted by a Great Old One or Outer God (Nyarlathotep would work well), who has constructed a dream-trap for him in order to extract a service. As the investigator's last gasps shudder through his body, he hears a whispering in his mind: 'Serve me or die.' If the investigator agrees, he awakens in his bed, covered in sweat, with a mind-numbing certainty that he will be contacted soon, and he won't be able to refuse. If the investigator declines, he awakens in a similar manner, but certain that he has been marked for death by the god's cult.

Either way, its time to prepare for a brush with a god.

2) The investigator was drugged and kidnapped by a degenerate cult that worships ghouls. As an offering to the flesh-eaters, they have buried the investigator as a meal for their 'underground gods.' As the investigator begins to suffocate, a scratching noise occurs and great claws rend through the wood of the coffin and drag him down into a faintly lit cavern where he is surrounded by six hungry ghouls. Hopefully, his fellow investigators have figured out what is going on and are on their way.

3) The investigator died during the night from natural (or were they?) causes, and has been resurrected by a local sorcerer to serve as his undead servant. Within moments after awakening, the coffin lid is pried open by the sorcerer. At first, the investigator is unable to do much except obey the sorcerer's commands, but over time, when the sorcerer's mind is on other things, the investigator can act on his own. He needs to break free soon, because the sorcerer is laying a deadly trap for the rest of the investigators, and his new servant is the bait.

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The Iron Crib **Barbara Robson and Stuart Barrow**

Surrounded by old graves, a cast iron cradle appears one night in the middle of the churchyard of the small, coastal village of Hammon. Upon investigation, the crib is found to be deeply rooted in the soil, with iron reaching down into the bedrock. Yet there are no signs of digging or the machinery that must have been needed to install it, and no explanation for its presence.

Possibilities

1) The crib is an avatar of Yig, and is claiming the souls of children. In the town, a statistically significant increase in pregnancies, stillbirths and birth defects may be observed, and snakes begin to plague the town. A distraught parent of a dead child reports seeing him in the crib, crying and reaching out. In some cases, post-natal depression leads to hysteria and even episodes of psychosis.

One of the graves near the crib contains the corpse of Augustus Prior, who was alleged to have committed unspeakable acts against children early in the previous century. Although nothing was ever proven, the allegations were all true. Prior was buried in the churchyard under protest, and wards were inscribed on the coffin and tombstone. A recent act of vandalism broke the ward on the tombstone, allowing Prior's spirit to draw his master to the churchyard.

2) A baby, apparently abandoned, is found inside the cradle on the third morning after its discovery. A local couple agree care for the child while the police investigate her origins. As the days stretch into weeks with no results from the investigation, the new foster parents find their sleep increasingly disturbed by strange nightmares. Friends and acquaintances find them unnaturally and violently over-protective of the child. If the child is not removed from their care, the couple will go insane.

3) An anti-abortion activist group installed the cradle late at night, intending to reveal its involvement only after media speculation had everyone curious. It was initially intended as a gimmick, metaphorically representing the spirits of the unborn. However, the situation has become more sinister - one of the group's more militant and literal-minded members (and an occultist) performed a ritual on the night of the crib's installation to invoke a vengeful Demon-Spirit of the Unborn. The ritual required the mutilation of a stillborn infant. Other members of the group are sickened and angered, but are deeply afraid that their own involvement will be revealed if the story comes to light.

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The Stars Are Right **Paul Comeau**

Chad Sylvester has been a patient at a mental institution in Arkham for nearly 80 years. In a catatonic state, Sylvester only awakens from this state for one night every thirty years. On each of these nights he acts in a very bizarre manner and bizarre things happen in the surrounding countryside. Sylvester's condition developed after he got lost in the woods on a hunting trip and was stricken with fear and hysteria over something that he had witnessed in the woods but did not dare speak of.

Possibilities

1) Chad Sylvester was the first and only human being to ever see the great Hastur the unspeakable in his true form. Permanently stricken with catatonia, Sylvester only returns to his senses every thirty years when the great Hastur visits earth in his true form.

2) For unspeakable reasons of their own, the mi-go took Sylvester's brain to Yuggoth. They replaced it with an artificial brain and the body was placed in an institution staffed by allies of the mi-go. Every thirty years the mi-go return his brain to his true body for a short period of time.

3) Sylvester accidentally breached the barriers between the dream world and the waking world. This gateway is only open every thirty years and he is forced to return to his body for one night every thirty years or he risks becoming ungrounded from the laws of reality and drifting forever in limbo between our world and the dream world.

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