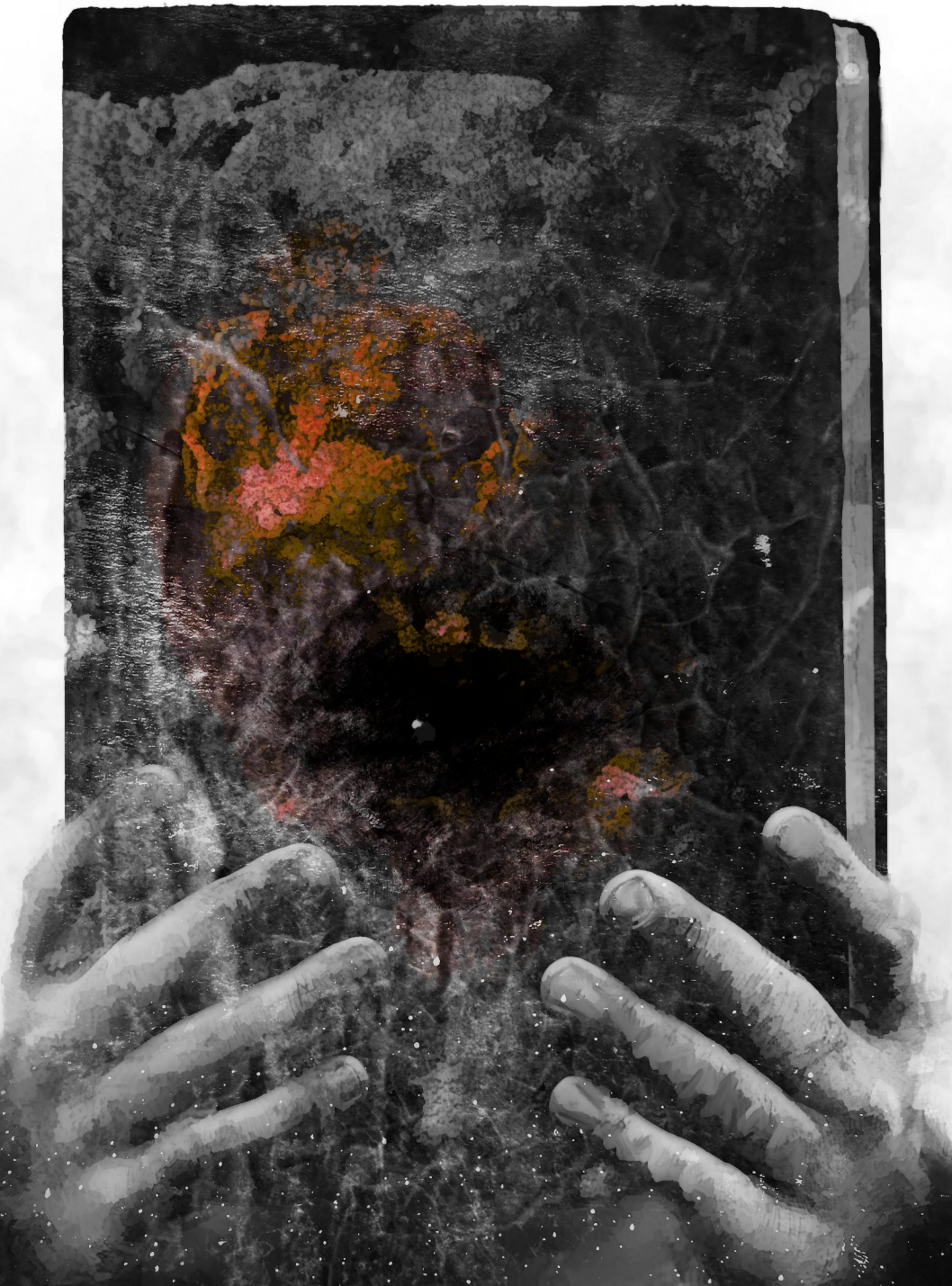


THE WORLD OF NECRONOMICON



A supplement for Call of Cthulhu 7th edition



Open the Book, Unleash the Horror!

The *Call of Cthulhu* supplement you're reading serves two purposes. First, it presents a way of creating story hooks and a common background for investigators. It uses ideas from Lovecraft's writing as well as the *Keeper's Rulebook* to create a group whose members have stumbled upon the legendary *Necronomicon* before the campaign begins and how it could have influenced their lives and worldviews. Second, *The World of Necronomicon* provides suggestions on how to run the game in accordance with this narrative premise. It proposes that investigators who already know of Abdul Alhazred's tome are losing their Sanity because they realize that the "absurd" and "mad" words that have read in this book are, in fact, the deepest truths about the world. It also presents various story hooks stemming from this idea.

Thus the supplement is divided into two parts. The first one - **Readers of the *Necronomicon*** - summarizes the most important facts about this legendary book and presents ideas about how the investigators may have come into contact with it. Because *The World of Necronomicon* was originally written in Polish, this section elaborates in particular on the backstories of investigators from countries that host no known copies of the tome. **Readers of the *Necronomicon*** is intended for both investigators and Keepers.

The second part - **Truths of the *Necronomicon*** - is a short manual on running games for investigators who are familiar with this book. It contains general advice on storytelling and communicating the mood of the game as well as story hooks. **Truths of the *Necronomicon*** should be read by the Keeper alone.

The World of Necronomicon is a part of the *Zgrozy* series. This series started in Poland and became surprisingly popular in our country, spawning a line of English translations and even a Spanish one by Enrique Camino. *The World of Necronomicon* was first released in Polish as *Świat Necronomiconu*. "Zgrozy" is a slightly archaic Polish word for "Horrors" or "Terrors". We decided to keep the original title for foreign releases since it sounds unspeakable and blasphemous to non-Polish ears. To find out more about *Zgrozy* please visit [our Facebook page](#), see our other [releases](#) or subscribe to [our newsletter](#).

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Readers of the Necronomicon

Lovecraft's protagonists are usually terrified not only of what they have seen or heard but also of the larger implications. In Lovecraft's universe of cosmic horror, mysterious vistas or esoteric names like Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, or Yog-Sothoth are the most terrifying to those who already grasp their connection to a greater, inhuman reality. Such people know or suspect that eldritch forces were here eons before humanity started and will still be here eons after we are gone - maybe because they'll destroy us themselves.

Many of Lovecraft's heroes gain this grim awareness from one special book - *Kitab Al Azif* by an Arab poet Abdul Alhazred, a tome better known under its translated title *Necronomicon*. The history and contents of this book are summarized in Lovecraft's *History of the Necronomicon* and in the *Keeper's Rulebook*, so here it suffices to remind that readers of this blasphemous tome begin to see the entire universe as "the world of *Necronomicon*" - what they learn learn their readings forever alters their perception of reality.

Alien it indeed was to all art and literature which sane and balanced readers know, but we recognised it as the thing hinted of in the forbidden Necronomicon of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred...

-H. P. Lovecraft, *The Hound*

At the moment I felt sorry that I had ever read the abhorred Necronomicon...

-H. P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness*

Truth be told, the *Necronomicon* isn't the only gateway to cosmic truths in Lovecraft's writings. The protagonists often mention it along with other tome such as *De Vermiis Mysteriis*, *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*, and other blasphemous tomes or simply learn about it directly from people who already know of it. And yet the *Necronomicon* remains the most important and oft-cited source of Mythical knowledge. That's why this supplement focuses on it, while its ideas can be easily used with investigator teams who have previous Mythos knowledge from other sources.

A Dreadful Confirmation

A typical Lovecraftian hero is an erudite outcast; a person predestined to grasp the dreadful truth about the cosmos thanks to their previous knowledge - knowledge often imparted by the *Necronomicon*. Their discoveries and adventures often resonate with this foreknowledge, and thus this knowledge develops into a more complete - and mind-shattering - understanding.

Call of Cthulhu RPG rules fit this narrative premise well - madness induced by Mythic encounters increases the Cthulhu Mythos rating, which in turn helps to understand any Mythos phenomena. The *Keeper's Rulebook* explains this by giving the Cthulhu Mythos knowledge an instinctual nature. I propose another explanation, one that fits Lovecraft's narrative habits just as well.

Namely, each encounter with the Cthulhu Mythos raises the investigators' overall knowledge of it because each encounter proves that hazy and abstract theses of the *Necronomicon* are true! Investigators who have read this book know the basics of the cosmos' true shape from the start, but only a direct encounter with its terrors allows them to understand their assumptions and to start using them. In the *Necronomicon*, after all, "allusions are definitions" - even Lovecraft's heroes won't usually understand things this book states right after reading it but only after discovering that what it describes is real.

Such an assumption seems to turn the *Call of Cthulhu* structure upside down. Normally, investigators start with no knowledge of the Mythos. Yet nothing really changes - investigators have some knowledge but are unable to correlate disjointed facts into anything coherent. Someone who has read the *Necronomicon* knows no more about Cthulhu Mythos than someone who would read, say, a non-believer's poems about the Hindu religion (and had no other contact with it) - they get only a murky, extremely fragmented perspective that might impress with its poetic vision but imparts little actual knowledge. This will change only when this poetic vision is confronted with other, more substantial evidence.

A Useful Reading

How can the assumption that every investigator has had contact with the *Necronomicon* benefit your campaign?

Narrative and Roleplaying

Games that use this assumption allow both players and the Keeper to experiment with narrative tropes common in Lovecraft's writings but less so in *Call of Cthulhu* games. The Keeper is free to describe how investigators' knowledge combines into a new, insane whole and how their experiences remind them of the *Necronomicon's* allusions. Players who enjoy narrating and roleplaying their investigators' thoughts and feelings can present a gradual collapse of their investigators' worldviews as the insane knowledge taken from the *Necronomicon* seems more and more real.

Investigator Backstories

How one has found and read the *Necronomicon* usually makes for a good story. Complete editions are rare, and stumbling upon some fragmentary notes usually happens under some terrifying circumstances. By musing on how an investigator found the *Necronomicon*, you get additional material for a fascinating backstory.

United by Isolation

The assumption that each investigator has read the *Necronomicon* has an important flipside - most of the people they meet haven't. It leads to protagonists being isolated from the world already at the start of a campaign - they're the only ones to sense something more profound in mysterious events and suspect eldritch revelations. It makes crucial facts of a scenario hard to communicate to NPCs and usually leaves investigators as the only ones able to stop something terrible. Keepers can heighten the isolation by describing how seemingly harmless symbols or names remind the investigators of facts from the *Necronomicon*.

Story Hooks

If investigators have read the *Necronomicon* it becomes much easier to create hooks that draw them into adventures. Each trace and mention of alien beings and eldritch secrets will be of great interest to an investigator who's already suspicious about such matters thanks to the *Necronomicon*. For somebody who has read this book the Cthulhu Mythos gets personal - such a person gains a hazy glimpse into a deeper truth and will probably follow any further traces leading to it. You can include elements of this thirst for truth in **Ideology/Beliefs** and **Traits** sections of the investigator sheet.

An Elusive Book

The uses of the *Necronomicon* in your campaign might at first seem limited because of how inaccessible this book is. According to the *Keeper's Rulebook* there are only five known copies of the Latin translation: in British Library in London, in Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and in three universities: Harvard, Buenos Aires, and of course, the Miskatonic University in Arkham. The earlier Greek translation, as well as the original Arab version, are considered lost, and two incomplete English versions are housed at Miskatonic. However, rumors of copies beyond those keep appearing around the world.

If you want an investigator to have had contact with the *Necronomicon* you'll need to decide how they came into contact with one of the known copies or to add a previously "unknown" copy to your campaign. Each "canonical" copy has an interesting past, and nothing stops you from adding new chapters to their stories. At the same time inventing new editions, copies, and translations of *Al Azif* is fun! You might need to indulge in this fun, especially when your campaign takes place far away from countries hosting the canonical copies. In such a setting, having an investigator or two stumble upon the *Necronomicon* in Arkham in London creates an interesting story, but repeating this narrative device for the entire party will feel contrived.

When deciding on an investigator's contact with the *Necronomicon*, you should also decide how deep their studies were. *The World of Necronomicon* assumes that those studies weren't exactly complete - the investigator was left with hazy allusions and loose associations and will piece them together during play. On the other hand, it must have been something more than a single brief reading. So we're in an interesting border territory of reading under time constraints, studying incomplete excerpts or abandoning studies due to the toll they take on the student.

First Contact

Below you'll find ideas for worldview-altering encounters with fragments of the *Necronomicon*. Some contain additional ideas about where else might other copies and excerpts of the book be.

Second-Hand Hunt

The investigator has friends at Miskatonic University. They have been helping those colleagues in a search for fragments of John Dee's English translation. This search included a hunt through secondhand bookshops on various continents. All the time the investigator was in touch with their Miskatonic colleagues, learning more about the worldview contained in original *Necronomicon* from their letters.

Worldwide Legacy

The traces of *Necronomicon*'s strange revelations can be found in occult traditions all around the world as they travelled from Arabia East and West, North and South. The investigator has found fragments of the book in a rarely-known version – maybe lost parts of original *Kitab Al-Azif*, maybe a translation unheard of at Miskatonic University. Wanting to learn more, they finally gained permission to compare those obscure fragments with the corresponding passages from one of the Latin versions. They had no chance, however, to read the entire tome.

Eldritch Dreams

A friend or relative of the investigator was obsessed with the idea of finding *Kitab Al Azif*. They swore they saw this book in their dreams, and they have lost their health and fortune over the years to fruitless searches. The investigator was tending to them during their last days, and while doing so, they also began dreaming of this blasphemous book, even hearing and intuitively understanding small excerpts of it despite not knowing Arabic.

A Simple Commission

An investigator who knows Latin, ancient Greek, or another language the *Necronomicon* was once translated into was commissioned to translate parts of the book into their native language. The tome was introduced to them as a gruesome ethnological curiosity, and they didn't consider any of its revelations seriously. Only during the campaign will they begin to see deeper meaning and a dreadful truth in what they translated.

Occult Rabbling

An investigator gained access to the *Necronomicon* in Harward, Buenos Aires, Miskatonic etc. and at first was impressed by this tome. After a few days, however, they decided it's below their standing as a serious researcher to put so much weight on some insane rabbling. So they stopped their studies, only now realizing that what they learned fits all too well with what are they experiencing...

As always, when creating investigator teams, it's a good idea to balance ties that bind and things that make each investigator distinctive. If the investigators lack a reason to work together, it might help that they have all stumbled upon the *Necronomicon* in the same way, maybe even first meeting each other in the process. On the other hand, if you already have ties that bind the investigators providing them each with a different way in which they discovered the *Necronomicon* can make the team interesting.

If the investigators have discovered the *Necronomicon* in different ways, do they know about each other's experiences? Both answers can lead to exciting results. An in-game scene when all the investigators suddenly realize they share the same terrible insight into the cosmos can be a great moment. Deciding that this scene has already happened helps establish more details around it and make it a building block of the investigators' backstory. You can even mash the two options together by deciding how it happened beforehand and then playing it out during the first session as a series of flashback scenes.

Necrotelecomicon, Necromnomnomicon...

Creating investigators' backstory is the last moment to ask an important question – how serious should *The World of Necronomicon*-inspired game be? By default, *Call of Cthulhu* is a pretty serious game, but actual sessions are often filled with comic elements. What's more, this comedy often comes precisely from direct callbacks to Lovecraft's narratives – it's harder to take them seriously in the time of plush Cthulhu mascots. Games using *The World of Necronomicon* can promote a serious study in cosmic horror, showing individuals burdened with forbidden lore that both enlightens and destroys. They can also be a pastiche ridiculing how everything in Lovecraft's universe has to have its roots in “the forbidden *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred.” The choice is yours.

Reading One's Wits Out

How does having read the *Necronomicon* influence investigator creation in *Call of Cthulhu*? You'll find a few ideas below. They don't make investigators powerful or weak enough to destroy the balance between investigators so feel free to use different variants even within the same team if it's appropriate to their background.

Nothing Yet

You can simply decide that reading the *Necronomicon* has had no impact on investigator's statistics... yet. They have only briefly read it or with such disbelief to allow this reading to change their knowledge or Sanity in any way.

I say "yet" because, in *The World of Necronomicon*, it's knowing this book that makes a investigator's Cthulhu Mythos rating go up because of Mythos-induced madness. Even a reader who seems to be completely unaltered by the *Necronomicon* will sooner or later discover that having read this book allows them to notice highly unsettling hints.

First Revelations

An investigator who has read the *Necronomicon* briefly but with interest can start a campaign with all the usual consequences of an initial reading - 2D10 less initial Sanity and a few points in Cthulhu Mythos (6 for *Al Azif*, 5 for translations). Results of short-term or long-term insanity that will probably occur as an effect of the Sanity roll happen before the campaign begins. Take a moment to briefly narrate them, play them out as a flashback, or decide they end during the first session and ask the player to roleplay his investigator as they gradually regain their senses.

The World of Necronomicon assumes that the investigators' knowledge of the tome is partial and hazy, they shouldn't be allowed to have completed a full reading of the *Necronomicon* before play. In particular, they shouldn't know any spells contained in the tome, but an exception can be made if the Keeper has interesting ideas about incorporating those spells into a campaign.

Ignoring the Truth

Losing 2D10 Sanity is quite harsh; players may decide that their investigator has disbelieved it as per **Becoming a believer** rule from the *Keeper's Rulebook*. Use standard rules for such a case - the Investigator has lost no Sanity during their reading, but the first time they encounter a Mythos entity, they lose a number of Sanity points equal to their current Cthulhu Mythos rating. This rating is likely to be 5 or 6 - far less than the average result of 2D10, but enough to fall into short-term madness at best! This option helps the Investigator's long-term Sanity but ensures that their first encounter with the Mythos will be an intense one.

Time for Healing

You can also take a different path: the investigator has lost 2D10 Sanity during the initial reading, but ever since, they have tried to regain their peace of mind. The *Keeper's Rulebook* provides numerous ways of regaining Sanity - maybe the investigator has taken a long holiday, started seeing a psychoanalyst, or even admitted themselves into a psychiatric clinic? Keepers can allow a limited number of healing rolls or let the investigator try for as long as they want. It's important to remember, however, that each attempt to heal one's Sanity has a risk of side effects and unintended consequences, such as straining family relationships. Each attempt should be resolved with a roll; update the investigator's backstory to make these experiences lasting and meaningful.

It might seem that this option allows an investigator to skip a huge Sanity loss without much effort, but it can actually have a lot of weight on the story. Choosing this option means creating an investigator with a long history of searching for peace of mind and likely sacrificing something to regain it. This history will surely be known by their friends and relatives and should be visible both in how the investigator is roleplayed and how Non-Player Characters interact with them.

Thus ends **Readers of the Necronomicon**, the player-oriented section of *The World of Necronomicon*. The second section is intended for Keepers only, reading it when you want to play as an investigator can spoil your fun.



Truths of the Necronomicon

Readers of the *Necronomicon* touches on many topics that directly concern the Keeper and that cannot be introduced without their permission. If you're running the game, it's up to you if you accept the players' ideas about their investigators' first contact with the *Necronomicon* and which ways of resolving this contact rules-wise you allow. Such topics belong in the players' section of this supplement because they influence their investigators directly. I also wanted as much of this supplement as possible readable by everyone. What you'll find on the following pages is advice aimed at the Keeper, as well as ideas that would be spoilers for players – advice on running a *World of Necronomicon* campaign and a few adventure seeds.

Most of these ideas are optional. *The World of Necronomicon* doesn't force you to alter your style of running *Call of Cthulhu* drastically and is fully compatible with published scenarios. The only thing each *World of Necronomicon* game needs is narrative elements described in **The Tome's Shadow** section. The sections **Deeper Truths** and **Adventure Seeds** may be of less use for one-shot games and may require Keepers to modify published scenarios. However, doing so will allow you to more deeply explore the possibilities that arise in a game where the investigators are versed in the *Necronomicon*.

Please remember that the ideas presented are concerned with adapting Lovecraft's literary devices to the roleplaying game medium and should be used differently depending on your players, in tune with their roleplaying habits. Some will find it fine if the Keeper describes how repulsed an investigator is after connecting a recently discovered fact with the truths of the *Necronomicon*. Others will prefer the Keeper to simply mention this connection, and after hearing it, they will describe their investigator's thoughts or reactions themselves. If you know your players, you probably know which modes of narration they prefer, if you don't – simply talk to them about it.

The Tome's Shadow

The World of Necronomicon is, at its most basic level, a "narrative hack" of *Call of Cthulhu Roleplaying Game*. It suggests narrating the game in a way slightly closer to the style of Lovecraft's literary narrative with his constant reminders of how the bits of the protagonist's lore slowly form a terrible revelation. When running games with investigators who have read the *Necronomicon*, mention this book in your narrative now and then, especially in scenes filled with mystery and dread. When the investigators meet a monster for the first time, you can mention that so far, such beings seemed to exist only in Alhazred's warped imagination. When they find another Mythos tome, stress how its content seems to confirm the revelations of *Al Azif* and how reading it makes them feel as if the time spent in the normal world since their contact with the *Necronomicon* was but a dream. During a bout of madness, mention that the investigator can't help connecting their maddening experiences to their prior readings and as their Sanity lowers, you can remind them more and more often how true the "insane" words of the *Necronomicon* are turning out to be.

Such narrative devices need not have any impact on the game rules save for those outlined in the **Reading One's Wits Out** section. You can, however, use an interesting trick – decide that investigators notice vague associations with the truths of the *Necronomicon* when making investigation-related rolls even on failures. So if an investigator finds traces of the Deep Ones, a successful **Track** roll allows them to find out how big must those creatures be and where they are headed. A failed roll can reveal no more than this: "it looks like a trace of one of those grotesqueries mentioned vaguely in the blasphemous *Necronomicon*." Similarly, an investigator looking for a piece of key information in a city library can find it with a **Library Use** roll while a failed roll will result in a mention of "you're afraid that such weird facts can be found only in the abhorrent *Necronomicon* and similar tomes."

You can also decide that the **INT** roll deciding if an investigator succumbs to temporary insanity checks if they were able to connect the nightmare they're experiencing right now with what they've learned from the *Necronomicon*. Passing this roll means an investigator becomes completely overwhelmed by the situation because it's not just a single shock but a confirmation of Alhazred's demonic revelations about the world at large.

Deeper Truths

The **United by Isolation** section explained how a group knowing about the truths of the *Necronomicon* becomes isolated from most of humanity. They sense a deeper, dangerous reality that's hard to explain to people with no prior contact with Alhazred's writings. You can use this fact to deepen the investigators' isolation and provide them with additional clues at the same time.

The vague knowledge gained from the *Necronomicon* works well as a story hook. Maybe a photo of a mysterious figurine stirs memories of Alhazred's wild visions? Maybe a visit to a rich collector's house reveals that she has a scroll containing a tiny fragment of *Al Azif* that other guests see as a mere ethnographical curio?

Knowing parts of the *Necronomicon* can provide additional clues during investigations – clues that Non-Player Characters won't notice and will have a hard time believing. A corrupted mayor can organize a parade with a route that follows a sigil often used by Alhazred; a deranged professor can shout seemingly random facts that fit descriptions of Alhazred's journeys.

Such details might seem no more than free clues the investigators get with no effort. They indeed show the investigators what's worth investigating, but there's a flipside as well – investigators recognize what's interesting based on clues from a book almost no one has read, and almost no reader has considered it to be true! Investigators will have a hard time convincing Non-Player Characters to believe in their "insane" insights, and so they'll be often forced to act on their own to save people who won't even believe them!

It's worth remembering that the clues investigators notice don't have to be very precise. They can notice various things are somehow connected to the *Necronomicon* but discovering how exactly would require a **Cthulhu Mythos** roll or long hours spent in a library.

You can radicalize this idea further by deciding that losing Sanity to any Mythos-related situation is a result of having read the *Necronomicon*. If this option appeals to you, feel free to decide that in Mythos-related situations, Non-Player Characters without any experience with this tome always lose Sanity as if they passed a roll.

Adventure Seeds

The World of Necronomicon ideas can be used with any *Call of Cthulhu* scenario. You can easily add useful but isolating clues to any released adventure. For example, in the classical scenario, *The Haunting* you can mention the *Necronomicon* when investigators see the Chapel of Contemplation symbol, meet the undead Corbitt, and of course, read one of the Mythos tomes – *Corbitt Diaries* or *Liber Ivonis*. To make investigators more curious at an earlier stage, the Keeper may decide that Mr. Knott shows them small parts of the *Diaries* copied by previous occupants or some strange drawings they made right at the beginning of the scenario.

You can also create new scenarios featuring knowledge of the *Necronomicon* as an important aspect of the story. In many respects, it's a process similar to writing scenarios for Mythos-experienced investigators and yet investigators created using *The World of Necronomicon* are far less prepared for some horrors. Part of their tragedy is that they already see the deeper reality but know little about it.

Here are some ideas for such scenarios:

Forbidden Files

Investigators find forgotten, bloodied police files pertaining to a local criminal, probably stolen from a police station. The files describe both brutal but human acts and strange habits and journeys of the criminal, uncannily fitting rituals and secret places described in the *Necronomicon*. Investigators have a unique chance to understand the criminal's true goals, but the police won't be happy with someone starting an informal investigation based on stolen files...

Signs of Doom

The leader of a local sect has recently started using a drug that gives them insight into the Mythos. Since then, they collect items and chants required to summon one of the cosmic gods. The leader has taught their minions an obscure code that's now used to write on city buildings, insinuating strange dreams and suggestions into the minds of the citizens. Most people find those signs vaguely disturbing, but only investigators know that they are based on parts of the *Necronomicon*...

The Shadow Over Us

A potent idea for a *World of Necronomicon* game is taking a cue from *The Shadow over Innsmouth* and creating a story where the investigators discover how their own ancestry is somehow connected to the blasphemies of the *Necronomicon*. Maybe they realize that their ancestors' portraits show an alien taint described by Abdul Alhazred, perhaps *Al Azif* contains a tale of a family of warlocks strangely similar to their own family legends? To create such a story for the entire party, you might need to make it a one-shot with pre-generated investigators but it will surely be a deeply personal, emotional, and fascinating story.

Mythos Masters

A funny thing about having read the *Necronomicon* is that investigators who have done so might know - or be perceived to know - more about the Mythos than some cultists! Followers of eldritch beings can thus try to get this knowledge out of them, for example, by kidnapping them. The cultists can also take a more subtle approach: pretend to be victims of some Mythical threat, hoping that while trying to save them, the investigators will show them facts and associations the cult couldn't have found on its own.

The Book Returns

Of course, using *The World of Necronomicon* lends itself to the idea that the book might return during the campaign. It can influence your game greatly even as a "gateway drug" into the Mythos mentioned only in memories and flashbacks, but it will be even more influential as an active presence. You can accomplish this by using any of these scenario seeds:

Curiosity Killed the Cat

One of the investigators receives a letter from an old acquaintance. It turns out they followed in investigator's footsteps by getting their hands on the *Necronomicon* and starting to research it. The letter describes this as a fascinating intellectual journey, but some passages suggest that the acquaintance isn't really coping well with their studies, occasionally mentioning a great load of nihilism and dread. They have to be dragged away from the book as soon as possible!

A Dusty Bookstore

Investigators who already know the *Necronomicon* a bit might get surprisingly strong chills in a classical situation: finding a lost copy of that tome in a dusty old bookstore or a long-forgotten library collection. In *Call of Cthulhu* such a surprise usually ends simply in getting and studying the book. Still, investigators who already know the *Necronomicon* and its threat can also start asking difficult questions - or have the answers to some of them come to them on their own. Where did the tome come from? Who else has read it already? What did those others try to do with the knowledge gained in the *Necronomicon*?

A variation of this idea: investigators are hired to retrieve a copy of the *Necronomicon* that's been recently stolen. The original owner, a wealthy collector, swears never to have read the tome thoroughly. Can they be trusted to have told the truth?

Back to the Book

An investigator wants to study again a copy of the *Necronomicon* they have read before. It turns out that right now, it's much harder to reach. People who have lent the book previously don't want to do it again or are no longer the custodians of the tome. As a side-story, it might simply require some formalities and/or persuasion, but you can also build an entire story around this event and decide there's a bigger and rather nefarious story happening around the sought-after copy.

The Tome's Intents

The *Keeper's Rulebook* suggests that Mythos tomes might seem self-aware: cause accidents, disappear suddenly and steer their fates in various other ways, often ones harmful to humanity. In *The World of Necronomicon* campaigns, Alhazred's tome might have such a malignant consciousness - maybe a separate one for each edition, maybe even a "hive mind" active in them all and wanting to share their secrets with people who by no means should learn them. You can even prepare an entire campaign with the *Necronomicon* not only as a knowledge source but also as the main antagonist, regularly trying to share its secrets with the wrong people. In a very daring version of this story, you might even decide that the consciousness of the *Necronomicon* is one of the Masks of Nyarlathotep!

When deciding to use this trope you might want to introduce some clues that the *Necronomicon* might be self-aware already in the investigators' first contact with this powerful book.

Translation note

Dear reader, the original Polish version of *The World of Necronomicon* included a few puns that I, unfortunately, can't translate into English. The only thing I can do is to explain why I cannot.

One of the funnier aspects of playing *Call of Cthulhu* in Polish is how we translate Sanity. The Polish word for this stat - *Poczytalność* - signifies sanity, but mostly in its legal meaning: being mentally fit enough to be held responsible for one's actions. The funny thing is, "czytać" means "to read" and thus "poczytalność" indicates one who is able to "read" themselves - although it stems directly not from "czytać" but "poczytać", a word that could be translated as "consider" or "interpret".

Imagine the number of jokes about forbidden tomes it generates! Just substitute Sanity in any *Call of Cthulhu* material about Mythos books with "self-readability" and see the effects: "an investigator has lost 7 Self-readability by reading the *Necronomicon* and is temporarily un-self-readable!" The **Reading One's Wits Out** section of this supplement was originally called **Czytanie a Poczytalność** - "How reading relates to Sanity/self-readability".

The funniest part is, however, that the Polish word for being widely read as an author is "poczytność"! So when an insane novelist risks their Sanity to create crazy captivating stories and attract a wide audience, they kinda sacrifice one syllable of their Sanity, gaining *Poczyt-ność* by losing *Poczyt-al-ność*. Sacrificing a single syllable of your wits in exchange for inspiration and fame sounds pretty Lovecraftian, right? Can "al" be the dreaded last syllable of Azathoth's name? It's almost "all", after all...

The World of Necronomicon

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