

# Dragon

Magazine

## R'Lyeh Issue



A collection of Articles from Dragons Past



# A Ghastly Grimoire

*New spells for  
the CALL OF CTHULHU® game*

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*No investigation into the unknown and the unspeakable would be complete without a few new and bizarre magical spells — many harmful, some helpful, and all of them carrying the risk of madness. These spells may be dropped into any CALL OF CTHULHU® game campaign setting, appearing in arcane books or forgotten papers. Many of them can have adventures designed around them with ease. Haunted houses will never be the same again. . . .*

**Activate Eidolon:** An eidolon is an enchanted statue that a Great Old One or (less often) an Outer God may animate for short periods. These statues can be small enough to fit on a bookshelf, or they can be as big as a Great Old One itself (though it is not recommended that an eidolon be more than 15' high, corresponding to a SIZ of about 35). A good CON for an eidolon is half that of the Great Old One represented; INT is (of course) the being's own; STR and DEX are whatever the Keeper thinks appropriate; and, POW depends on how many sacrifices the eidolon has had, up to the POW of the being the eidolon represents. A Great Old One or Outer God can cast spells through an active eidolon of itself if it wishes. When an eidolon is activated, it can only be harmed by magical weapons — meaning the

statue might be indestructible. An eidolon encounter makes a good climax to an introductory adventure, since it lets the investigators face the awesome power and hideous visage of a Great Old One without the slaughter that such contact usually produces — that is, if the PCs are lucky and fast.

This spell activates the latent magic of an inactive eidolon, thus giving the deity represented the ability to sense and act through the statue. At the moment the eidolon is animated, the deity is aware of the statue's existence. Activation costs 1 permanent point of POW and 2d4 SAN — assuming that the caster (who is probably some demented priest or evil sorcerer) has any SAN left. In addition to the usual chanting and visualization of bizarre geometric forms, the caster weaves a loop of silver wire and ties it into a complicated knot. The sacrifice of a sentient being is then performed in a fashion appropriate to the deity, and a bowl of "burning blood" is prepared by mixing the blood of a human with some flammable liquid. The blood-fire must be very hot. Finally, the knotted wire is thrown into the burning blood. When the blood is completely burned and the chant finished, the eidolon is fully activated. At this point, it has as many points of POW as the total number of victims sacrificed to it, up to the limit of the represented being's POW.

What matters for investigators is that a variation on the spell can be used to deac-

tivate an eidolon. The main difference is that instead of the sacrifice, an enchanted knife is driven through the center of the wire knot on the final word of the chant, thus severing the deity's link to the eidolon (that is, unless someone later reactivates it). A deactivated eidolon is vulnerable to normal damage and can thus be destroyed in this manner. Another notable difference is that the reversed spell actually *raises* the caster's SAN by 10% of the amount that would be gained by defeating the deity itself. This percentage is most definitely well-earned, since the deity animating the eidolon is aware of what the caster is trying to do, and it may use the eidolon to attack the caster in numerous ways.

**Blur Form:** This spell creates a light-distorting field around the caster, blurring his appearance. Anyone who hopes to identify someone who is using this spell must make "special" Spot Hidden or Idea rolls. (This "special" roll is the skill equivalent of the "impale" attack.) The spell costs three magic points and lasts one turn. The caster must make a SAN roll or lose 1-2 SAN points. The caster must wear a special ring carved of rock crystal; the band is triangular in cross-section at every point, like a long prism bent around into a torus, but given a 360° twist so each face of the prism has become a mobius strip. (Unlike material components in the AD&D® game, the ring may be used over and over again.)

**Brew Anagathic:** There is more than one form of this magical drug; it can be an ointment, a drinkable liquid, an injection, or whatever. Some of the ingredients will always be exotic, but in most versions all are natural. Typical examples of "active ingredients" are ginseng roots (the legendary longevity drug of the Orient) and glands from large, old carp (supposedly, carp can live forever; see the stories "Homunculus" or "The Digging Leviathan" by James I? Blaylock for further details). In the course of compounding the anagathic (any drug which slows or stops the aging process), the caster infuses it with two magic points, which costs no SAN. When used, the drug totally arrests aging within the user for one week.

The catch is that if one stops using the anagathic, the deferred aging returns; the longer aging has been prevented, the faster it comes back. The number of days it takes for aging effects to fully return equals seven divided by the number of weeks the anagathic has been used (extra hours and minutes can easily be calculated). Although the exotic ingredients are typically potent enough (small amounts suffice in making suitable doses-of anagathic), one can see that the anagathic is really nothing more than a trap — in time, maintaining one's supply slowly becomes a matter of life and death, rather than a matter of vanity. Clearly, aging return can be fatal; the chance of survival is  $CON \times 5\% \times (70/c)^3$ , where  $c$  represents the

recipient's chronological age, and 70 represents the classic "three-score and ten" limit of human life expectancy. When *c* is less than 50, survival is almost certain, even for modest constitutions. When *c* passes 70, the chance of survival drops rapidly. After *c* reaches 120 or so, having the inevitable death climax with the body withering to dust makes a nice touch.

When aging from anagathic withdrawal is obvious (following 10 years or more of continuous use), the anagathic should cause SAN loss — both in the person aging, and about half as much in acquaintances who see how the years have suddenly returned. The exact amount of SAN loss is left to the Keeper's judgment. Seeing someone die of anagathic withdrawal should be a major shock: 1d10 SAN lost for experiencing this "grisly, bizarre occurrence" is about right.

**Earthquake:** This spell enables the caster(s) to create a local earth tremor similar to those created by chthonians. As with chthonian earthquakes, the Richter-scale force depends on the number of magic points expended; however, the spell's force equals the magic points divided by 10 (instead of by 20, the chthonian ratio). The base diameter of the earthquake is still 100 yards. As with chthonian earthquakes, the diameter of the effect can be expanded by another 100 yards for every point taken off the tremor's Richter-scale force. A constraint on the spell is that for every desired point of force past five, the earthquake area must be expanded at least 100 yards. Thus, the smallest area in which a Richter-scale force 8 earthquake could be made is 400 yards in diameter, costing 110 magic points.

Of course, very few sorcerers have the magic-point reserves to use this spell to great effect. More often, a group of sorcerers will gather to cast it, pooling their magic points. They can be backed up by cultists who don't actually know the spell but chant along anyway, thus donating one additional magic point each. Up to 15 cultists per sorcerer can augment the spell's power in this manner.

The Earthquake spell is thus more powerful in some ways than the chthonian earthquake power; at least, it's more efficient in its use of magic points. This spell, however, also carries some restrictions absent from the chthonian power. The area restriction has already been described. The spell also requires about an hour to cast. While chthonians may well require as much time to create their tremors, they don't have to worry about being interrupted. What's more, the spell requires some rather awkward ritual paraphernalia. Each sorcerer casting the spell must carry a special enchanted rod while they chant, gesture, and carry on as they promenade around a megalith at least nine cubic yards in volume. The megalith must be previously consecrated by the

sacrifice of a mammal of SIZ 10 or greater, then smeared with a dab of each caster's own blood. The bones of the sacrifice are burned in a fire atop the megalith while the spell is being cast.

The people who cast an Earthquake are unaffected by the spell. The tremor rolls out from a circle 10' in radius, centered on the megalith. Within that circle, the ground remains unshaken.

**Horror Stench:** This spell creates one of those hideous, mind-blasting stenches Lovecraft enjoyed describing. The material component is a cone of special incense. Each batch of incense takes a Chemistry roll to successfully compound. Typically, no more than 10 cones of incense are made in a batch. Some of the ingredients are quite expensive, and the process requires precisely controlled temperatures and quick, uniform mixing — controls which are difficult to achieve in large batches.

The smoke from the incense smells quite foul by itself, but when the spell proper is cast on the incense, the odor becomes even more offensive. The spell takes only one combat round to cast, and costs 1d3 SAN points and up to 10 magic points. For each magic point put into the spell, the incense's stench has two points of poison POT. Within the first round of burning, the stench expands to fill an area 10 yards in radius. Anyone caught within this area must pit his CON against the smoke's POT in the usual manner. If the person fails the resistance roll, he has a (POT -CON) x 5% chance of passing out, and his STR, DEX, and all skills are cut in half. Even if he makes the resistance roll, nausea reduces all his skills and DEX to three-fourths their normal value. On top of all this, anyone who smells the full odor of a Horror Stench must make a successful SAN roll or lose 1d4 SAN points.

Lost skill, STR, DEX, or consciousness are regained 10-(CON/3) minutes after the spell ends or after the victim leaves the area of effect. A cone of incense burns for five minutes. Casting the spell more than once or burning more than one cone of incense extends the area of duration of the stench, but does not make the effect more severe. A moistened handkerchief held over the nose and mouth reduces the odor's effect to the reduction of skills and DEX to one-quarter normal levels if the resistance roll is failed, and no loss at all if the roll is made (but SAN loss remains). Only special air filters, such as those in gas masks, can fully block the hideous odor.

**Suspend Animation:** This spell magically reduces metabolic processes so the caster or a designated target is able to exist without food, water, or even air for great lengths of time. A drawback to this spell, however, is that a person using Suspend Animation is unable to move while under the spell's power. The caster

#### SAN Loss Table: Suspend Animation

Days duration of suspended animation	SAN loss
0-3	0
4-8	1
9-16	1d2
17-32	1d3
33-128	1d4
129-512	1d6
513-2,048	1d6
2,049-4,096	1d8
4,097-8,192	2d4
8,193-16,384	1d4 + 1d6
16,385-32,768	2d6
32,769-65,536	1d6 + 1d8
65,537-131,072	2d8
131,073+	2d10

or target retains a minimal level of consciousness through suspended animation, which is roughly equal to that of deep sleep — in other words, at a shallow enough level to allow the person to be roused to a greater consciousness if there is some change in their surroundings and the person makes a Luck roll. Thus, this state of alertness is similar to a meditative trance. From this state of mind, the person may awaken fully within 10-30 minutes, thus ending the spell.

Suspending animation for a day or less costs only two magic points and no SAN at all. Each additional magic point expended doubles the maximum length of time the person can stay in suspended animation: in other words, 2 days for 3 magic points, 4 days for 4 magic points, 8 days for 5 magic points, and so on. A caster who has 15 magic points to use could stay in suspended animation for over 22 years without any immediate loss to SAN. Over great lengths of time, however, loss of SAN becomes more of a possibility. Suggested SAN losses for various time spans are listed on the SAN Loss Table in this article. It is unlikely that investigators will ever have reason to use Suspended Animation for decades at a time, although the possibility nevertheless exists.

**Terror Wail:** All who hear this fearsome, magically enhanced ululation must make a SAN roll or lose 1d3 SAN and flee in blind panic for 2-5 rounds. Even those who make the SAN roll feel twinges of fear and if they don't know or suspect the source of the wail, they might decide they'd rather not find out. The spell requires a full round of concentration before uttering the wail, and costs three magic points and one SAN.

**Yellow Sign:** This notorious talisman of Hastur and the enigmatic King in Yellow

must always be drawn in something yellow, whether it be yellow chalk on the ground or yellow gold covered with black enamel outside the Sign's outline. Once the Sign is drawn, the caster invests it with one permanent point of POW and loses 1d6 SAN. Anyone who sees such an enchanted copy of the Sign for the first time even if he has seen other copies of the Sign before — must make a SAN roll or lose 1d2 SAN points. If he makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll at double normal chance of success, he recognizes the Yellow Sign for what it stands for, and will therefore lose 1d6 SAN instead, or one point of SAN even if he makes his SAN roll.

More importantly, anyone who knows this spell can cast five magic points into an "energized" Yellow Sign, losing 1d6 SAN in the process. Anyone who sees the resultant Sign on that round must make a SAN roll or lose 3d4 SAN (and 1d6 SAN even if the roll succeeds). Cthulhu Mythos knowledge does not affect this in any way.

A Yellow Sign remains energized for as long as it remains unmarred: a few scratches won't dispel its power. To dispel this item's power, the Yellow Sign must be defaced until its shape is no longer recognizable. Defacing an active Yellow Sign nets the defacer one SAN point if he fails an Idea roll. If the person makes the Idea roll, he realizes how futile his action is, and so does not receive the SAN point. ☹



(continued from page 3)

*Friday:* Bad luck continues when Jeff Grubb falls and dislocates his left shoulder on another escalator. On the good side, I find a copy of the "Ollie North Coloring Book" and some 15mm space marines. Six people come by the magazines booth looking for Bruce Heard. Robin Jenkins' brother agrees to send me a picture he took showing Robin riding a giant pig statue in a local restaurant. FASA and Twentieth Century Imports duel it out in a BATTLETECH® game in which the attacking players get to hit the miniature figures of their targets with a hammer; bits and pieces of lead are scattered everywhere, and the crowd loves it.

That evening, Barbara and I take DUNGEON Adventures authors Grant and David Boucher out for dinner at a nearby restaurant. During the meal, I manage to spill my glass of milk all over the table as well as over David Boucher. Everyone takes it well, though I consider entering a monastery to hide my shame. Later on, a friend tells me that a friend of his overheard a guy tell someone else that I must have really tied one on the night before. "What?" I ask. "Why did he say that?" "I dunno," says the friend. "Just thought you'd like to know."

*Saturday:* Escalators now scare me, but I ride them anyway. The superheroes seminar goes well, though Jeff Grubb could not attend. Warren Spector accidentally describes the Marvel Universe as the "real world," and lots of exciting ideas are exchanged, none of which I can remember right now. Nine people come by the magazines booth looking for Bruce Heard. While chatting with the people from STARDATE Magazine, I discover that their art director is just as bizarre as our own, and I offer to send Roger Raupp over as part of a cultural exchange on editor abuse. A lot of babies suddenly appear at the convention, among them my son John and Lorraine Williams' daughter Alexis, who tries to pull the buttons off John's suit. We start selling old DRAGON® Magazines for only \$1

each at the booth, and the sale turns into a feeding frenzy. When I get back to my hotel room, I lay out all the articles I have to read for the coming magazine deadline, then fall asleep for 11 hours straight.

*Sunday:* In order to spur sales, Roger Raupp draws a glowering caricature of my face on a helium balloon with the legend: "BUY OR DIE!!!" and flies it over the magazines booth. Either because of that or the continuation of our dollar-a-DRAGON Magazine sale, we sell a lot and even give away all the copies we have of AMAZING® Stories. I lose count of how many people are looking for Bruce Heard, but it's all irrelevant since he's already gone home. We have our DRAGON Magazine seminar and it's all over.

The convention ends at 4 P.M., and we tear down the magazines booth in one hour. Everyone leaves but me, since I have to haul some boxes out to my car, which I can't get into the loading dock until the current traffic jam dies down. When the jam ends, I run back to the parking garage to get my car — and discover that I'm \$3 short to get the car out. I run back to MECCA, borrow some money from Judy Gifford (TSR, computer department), and run back to the garage.

"Hey, man," the attendant says. "We made a mistake. Are you with the convention?" I say yes, and the attendant turns and yells, "I told you so!" at another attendant. "Yeah," he says when he turns back. "We charged you the wrong rate 'cause we thought you were being held in the drunk tank and your car was impounded." I realize that the city police station is directly above the (underground) parking garage, and sigh. I pay a much reduced parking fee and drive to MECCA, where I get my possessions, and I drive home.

The grass in the front yard needs to be mowed, I'm behind on deadline, and my attention span is about 60 seconds long. "Well," I tell myself, "at least that's over with." The next morning, I wake up with a head cold and discover the car is leaking brake fluid.

See you next year. . . .



by Craig Schaefer

# The Black Book and the Hunters

*New items for Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU<sup>®</sup> game*

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*Before his untimely death in 1934, the renowned professor and occultist, Howard Brimley, had consulted nearly every tome relevant to the Cthulhu Mythos in his search for a way to destroy the Elder Gods once and for all. Although he never found the solution to his quest, he compiled many notes dealing with nearly every facet of the mythos. Presented here is a portion of his recently rediscovered manuscripts — a fragment dealing with one of the lesser-known works of the mythos, *The Black Book of Shub-Niggurath*. It is hoped that this information will be of use to investigators everywhere.*

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MS: #02025 book catalog  
DT: 10/29/1925  
RE: *The Black Book of Shub-Niggurath*

I acquired *The Black Book* two years ago, purely by chance. Since then, I feel I have sufficiently analyzed it to give a proper description of its contents.

As every serious student of the occult knows, the deity Shub-Niggurath is a goddess concerned with fertility. *The Black Book* clarifies this, as it seems to be some kind of prayer book for her earthly priests. Not only is it full of prayers to this monstrous goddess, it also contains material relevant to Nyarlathotep. It is yet unknown what kind of connection the two gods have, or if there is any true connection between them at all.

*The Black Book* is a hardbound tome with a flat black cover; its dimensions are 8" x 11" x 1½". The copy I found is written in archaic Latin, comprising 368 pages and no illustrations of any sort. Nevertheless, this version of *The Black Book* has evidence of a color drawing on the very first page. When I received the volume, however, the page had been torn

out, leaving only the very edge of the picture. It remains to be seen what the picture was and what importance it had.

The first page past the torn sheet holds a popular prayer to Shub-Niggurath. It reads (when translated):

"O friend and companion of night,  
thou who rejoices in the baying of dogs  
and spilt blood, who wanderest in the  
midst of shades among the tombs, who  
longest for blood and bringest terror  
to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-  
faced moon, look favorably on our  
sacrifices!"

*The Black Book* is filled with doggerel such as this, as well as several sets of instruction for ceremonies to Shub-Niggurath. While the spell Call Shub-Niggurath is well known to many magicians and practitioners of the dark arts, the adaption in *The Black Book* is unusual in that it summons Shub-Niggurath, places her in a form of stasis, and forces her to answer any questions the caster of the spell asks. The spell is apparently used to force the goddess to appear at important cult ceremonies.

The book holds several other spells as well, only two of which are unusual. One of the magical formulas is for the creation of a Knife of Power, a potent weapon used most often by cult priests to slay sacrifices. According to *The Black Book*, the Knife (note that I am judging by extrapolation; I have not taken the time to create one of my own) stores the power of those slain with it. On command, a bolt of energy powered by the souls within the blade spring forth from the dagger's tip. The bolt itself is a very powerful weapon with apparently enough energy to blast a hole through a sheet of metal.

The other unusual spell is used to summon a creature not previously described in the other books of occult lore I have perused. Called the Hunter of Shub-Niggurath, this entity appears to belong to a powerful servitor race, not unlike the Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath. Recently, I set about to conjure and study one of those servitors, and I was able to learn something about it.

The Hunters of Shub-Niggurath are fortunately seldom encountered. Unlike their "brothers," the Dark Young, the Hunters are never called to preside over cult ceremonies or to perform similar functions. They are called into service and controlled only by high priests or by Shub-Niggurath herself.

The Hunters are called from their home world for one purpose only — to hunt. When summoned and given the description of a victim, a Hunter tracks down the target and will not stop until either it or the target is dead. The Hunter has a special sense which allows it to home in on a person when provided with something the person has recently touched (such as a nail clipping or a lock of hair).

The Hunter that I conjured was about 8' tall; it stood on two legs and walked erect. The Hunter was massive and vaguely humanoid in appearance, being covered in filthy brownish-gray fur. Its head was merged with its torso so that it had no neck whatsoever and no true face, except for its yellow, pupilless eyes and a mass of tentacles between and below them. Its hands were humanlike, except for the merging of two fingers and the presence of webbing between the other digits. Short, ironlike talons projected from each finger. Despite its bloated appearance, the Hunter seemed quite agile and restless, and paced back and forth on its rootlike feet, its facial tentacles writhing and curl-







ing like serpents. In certain ways, it resembled one of the Star-Spawn of Cthulhu, though it lacked wings.

The Hunter did not speak except in grunts and low squeals (perhaps its native language), though it is capable of a crude communication through a rough form of empathy, which transmits the Hunter's intentions and emotions to nearby beings. Apparently, Hunters are unable to control this ability; thus, they project their mental conditions (such as they are) constantly. From the one Hunter I summoned, I received very powerful feelings of impatience and anticipation; it doubtless desired to go on a hunt.

The Hunters' point of origin is as yet unknown. They could be from an entirely different dimension, or they could be the spawn from a nearby planet in our own solar system.

All in all, *The Black Book of Shub-Niggurath* is quite valuable, especially to devotees of that deity. Otherwise, its value depends on the individual investigator. Probably the best use of this tome is to study the spell knowledge it contains, though I have faithful copied the summoning ryal for Shub-Niggurath; if indeed this creature is summoned in a helpless condition, more the better to destroy it in a relatively safe fashion. One can only hope for the best. . . .

#### Game notes

For Keepers who wish to use *The Black Book*, the Hunters of Shub-Niggurath, and any of the new spells in this article, the following statistics are included.

*The Black Book of Shub-Niggurath* gives 5% Cthulhu Mythos knowledge, with a spell multiplier of 2. *The Black Book* may be found in several different languages, most commonly English or Spanish. The SAN loss for reading *The Black Book* is 1d6. Since this book is fairly low-powered (in terms of knowledge gained), it may be one of the first Mythos works the adven-

turers find. Consequently, nearly every powerful priest of Shub-Niggurath possesses a copy.

Spells are gained from *The Black Book* in the following order:

1. Summon Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath
2. Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath
3. Call Shub-Niggurath
4. Bind Shub-Niggurath (new spell)
5. Contact Nyarlathotep
6. Enchant Power Knife (new spell)
7. Summon Hunter of Shub-Niggurath (new spell)
8. Voorish Sign

The majority of these spells are described in the CALL OF CTHULHU game rule book. The three new spells follow:

**Bind Shub-Niggurath:** This powerful spell summons Shub-Niggurath, who appears at the caster's location in a form of stasis from which she cannot escape until the caster frees her, she makes a roll of 10 or less on 1d100 (made every minute), or she is attacked. In the case of being allowed to leave, there is a 20% chance Shub-Niggurath will kill the caster before she goes. In any other case, Shub-Niggurath automatically attacks anyone in sight before disappearing. This spell is commonly used by cultists to bring Shub-Niggurath to preside over certain special ceremonies. Her displeasure is hopefully eased by placing many sacrificial victims around her summoning point.

This spell has another use, however — one that is of potential interest to wizards. When Shub-Niggurath is held in stasis, the caster may ask any questions of the deity. Under the influence of the spell, Shub-Niggurath is compelled to answer them (unfortunately for the caster, she is under no obligation to answer truthfully). Also, every question asked adds 5% to Shub-Niggurath's chance of escape (calculated every minute). Of course, when freed, the deity will not hesitate in slaying the mage, even to the extent of sending a Dark Young or a Hunter if her prey escapes. Only the most powerful or foolish wizards use this spell for this purpose.

This spell costs three permanent POW points to cast, with another POW lost upon the word to release Shub-Niggurath from her prison. The spell requires special candles, a pentagram, and several other ceremonial items that cost at least \$200 to procure.

**Enchant Power Knife:** This is one of the Enchant Item spells described in the CALL OF CTHULHU game rule book, pages 76-77. To create a Power Knife requires a silver knife worth no less than \$350, a sacrifice to Shub-Niggurath of at least 10 SIZ worth of victims, the permanent loss of 3 POW, and a sanity loss of 1d10. It takes two days to cast this spell, and the result is a very formidable weapon.

When the Power Knife is completed and is used to kill a being while a prayer to Shub-Niggurath is spoken, the dagger literally absorbs the POW that the victim

had at the time of its death. That, however, is just half of the special power of the knife. Upon command, a beam of energy is emitted from the tip of the knife, automatically hitting the chosen target. Before firing, though, the user must specify how many POW points he is expending. The POW used in the attack is gone from the knife forever, having changed into energy to fuel the beam. The effective length of the energy beam is 10 meters per point of POW used.

Next, the victim matches his POW against the POW used in the beam's attack. If the beam is overcome by the victim's POW, the attack has no effect and the POW used by the knife is wasted. On the other hand, if the victim is overcome, he must roll the result of his CON x 3 or lower on 1d100. If the victim succeeds, he takes 1d10 damage from the beam. If he fails the roll, he is instantly blasted to ashes. Because of this weapon's evil nature, it is seldom used by investigators but can often be found in the hands of a high priest of Shub-Niggurath. The knife is only usable by its creator.

**Summon Hunter of Shub-Niggurath:** This spell is identical to the other Summon spells, and it requires an idol of either Shub-Niggurath or a Hunter to work. As described in the text given earlier, this spell summons a single Hunter.

#### Hunter of Shub-Niggurath (Greater Servitor Race)

**Description:** A full description of this creature is provided in the manuscript supplied by Howard Brimley, given earlier in this article.

**Notes:** A Hunter, as stated earlier, is only summoned to hunt down beings who have somehow offended Shub-Niggurath or her representatives. It has a sense that allows it to home in on its target. Once its mission is complete, it disintegrates automatically.

Characteristics		Average
STR	5D6 + 20	37 - 38
CON	5D6 + 10	27 - 28
SIZ	5D6	17 - 18
INT	2D6	7
POW	1D6	3 - 5
DEX	4D6	14
Hit points		30
Move		10

Weapon	Attk%	Damage
Claw (2)	60	2d6
Facial tentacles	90	5d6

**Armor:** A Hunter has thick hide worth 4 points.

**Spells:** A Hunter has no spells, but it has the homing ability described previously.

**Skills:** Sneak 95%, Hide 55%, Climb 80%, Swim 50%.

**SAN:** Seeing a Hunter of Shub-Niggurath costs 1d10 points of SAN. A successful SAN roll still costs 1d6 points of SAN. Ω

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# Speaking With the Spirits

The following article allows Investigators in Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® role-playing game to engage in the more "mundane" occult practices allowing exploration of the unknown (and permitting the Investigators to share in its dangers as well). This article was originally a part of the Spiritualist section of the *Cthulhu by Gaslight* boxed supplement; unfortunately, it had to be cut because of space limitations. Although Keepers running 1890s campaigns will find these guidelines of the most use in their games, primarily because of the growth of spiritualistic and mediumistic practices during that time period, those running CALL OF CTHULHU game campaigns set in the 1920s or later should have few problems incorporating these rules into their own games.



Illustration by Valeria Malusek

*Seances, possessions, and exorcisms in CALL OF CTHULHU® games*



## Seances

For reasons of their own during the course of an occult investigation, Investigators might think it desirable to attempt a seance, either by themselves or using the services of a spirit medium. A successful Occult or Knowledge roll indicates that an Investigator at least knows of such a medium. Whether the medium in question is a clever fraud or an actual medium with true psychic powers is up to the Keeper, who also determines an actual medium's chance of success in summoning spirits for the Investigators' purposes.

Should the Investigators themselves attempt a seance without an NPC medium, their chance of a successful summoning is a percentage equal to the POW of the character leading the seance and acting as medium, or the average POW of all the characters together (whichever is greater). Participants, including the impromptu medium, may increase their chance of success in the seance by contributing temporary Magic Points. Award a 1% increase to their chance of success for each Magic Point expended. However, such a contribution of Magic Points leaves characters more vulnerable to one of the dangers of a seance — possession by a malevolent spirit entity, should they actually manage to contact one. (A successful Occult roll by any Investigator reveals to him the effects of Magic-Point expenditure in a seance — both positive and negative.)

The chance for success in a seance is reduced by half (after Magic-Point addition) if the Investigators fail to set up the seance with the proper trappings — a dimly lit room, participants sitting around a table in a circle holding hands, a minimum of conversation, etc. After all these factors are taken into consideration, the 1d100 roll must be made in secret by the Keeper. If the roll is successful, the Investigators manage to contact a disembodied spirit. To determine the exact nature of the spirit contacted, the Keeper must make a second secret roll, based on the Luck score of the Investigator acting as medium or leading the seance.

If this second roll is one-fifth or less of the Investigator-medium's Luck, the Investigators have contacted either the specific spirit they were seeking or a benevolent "spirit guide" who can direct them to whom they desire, if no particular spirit was specified at the beginning. A "regular" success, between one-fifth and the Investigator's full Luck score, calls up a neutral spirit guide, who acts as the Investigator wishes if he succeeds in a POW vs. POW roll against the spirit to bind and control it. Failure in the POW struggle indicates that the spirit does not act as a guide for the Investigators and either leaves or pulls tricks on them — animating tables, knocking things off the wall, dematerializing small objects — depending on how badly this roll was missed.

If the Keeper's roll against the Investiga-

tor's Luck fails, the characters have contacted a malevolent spirit (a daimon) who attempts to possess the Investigator acting as the medium (or the Investigator with the lowest POW, if none of them were actually leading the seance). The daimon does this by matching its Magic Points vs. those of the Investigator it attempts to possess. If it fails in its possession attempt, the evil spirit may simply try to deceive the Investigators, leading them astray with misinformation while pretending to be the entity they seek. Alternately, the daimon may play tricks on them. These tricks will be similar to those of the neutral spirit — though of a nastier, more harmful nature. Before it leaves, the malevolent spirit makes a final attempt to possess the Investigator with the lowest Magic Points. If it fails in this, the spirit leaves, its passing marked by a blast of wind and an eerie howling.

If the Luck roll in summoning a spirit is a roll of 96-00, the Investigator/medium either finds himself placed in telepathic contact with a Cthulhoid entity — perhaps even Great Cthulhu himself — or inadvertently summons a Cthulhoid monster. Either of these eventualities has dire results. (The choice of deity contacted or monster summoned is up to the Keeper; the deity should, however, be appropriate to the situation or setting of the adventure in which the seance is attempted.)

## Possession

If an Investigator becomes possessed by a malevolent spirit, he remains so until the spirit decides to leave on its own or is exorcised. A neutral or benevolent spirit may possess a character in order to give information by speaking to or through the character, but does so only if invited to do so. The benevolent spirit leaves as soon as its task is finished or the Investigator asks it to leave. The neutral spirit acts in like manner unless the Investigator fails a POW x 5 roll. If this happens, the Investigator must drive it out with a POW vs. POW roll. Failing this, the spirit will have to be exorcised; the Investigator then has only one chance to drive it out himself.

A malevolent spirit, once in possession of an Investigator, attempts to conceal its presence as long as possible, making its host's companions believe the Investigator is quite normal. Even in cases when the spirit allows the Investigator some freedom, however, it is totally in control of him. The Investigator may not even realize it, but he soon finds himself compelled to say and do things he doesn't wish to do. He may attribute this to some other supernatural agency — a curse or mind-control spell of some sort — or may actually realize that he is possessed (either if the player figures it out or the Investigator succeeds in an Occult roll). Once the Investigator determines he is actually possessed, the spirit within him either takes total control of him immediately — effectively making the Investigator a Keeper

character until the spirit leaves — or it toys with him, taking total control only when the Investigator tries to seek help or tell someone of his plight. Of course, once the spirit within him starts to manifest itself, the Investigator's companions may quickly figure out that he's possessed, especially if the spirit is malevolent or strikingly different in personality from the Investigator.

Being possessed by a malevolent spirit requires a SAN roll to avoid the loss of 1d8 points of SAN; nonetheless, 1 point of SAN is lost even if the roll is successful. An Investigator need not roll until either he realizes he is possessed or until the spirit finally releases him if he has been under its total control all along.

When a spirit of any persuasion is in possession of a character (invited or otherwise), it can cause physical manifestations through the character's body. It can change the sound of his voice (so that a female Investigator speaks with a male voice, or vice versa); temporarily change his facial features or body shape within certain limits (a character cannot become so distorted that he no longer resembles a generally human shape); and cause ectoplasm to exude from his body to form ghostly shapes or images. Ectoplasm appears as a white, milky substance that glows in the dark. If touched, it feels cold, perhaps even slimy, then suddenly snaps back into the character's body, causing him 1d6 points of damage.

The evil spirit within can also cause a possessed character to float in the air, spin around, perform physically impossible contortions of his body, and resist sleep, hunger, pain, or injury without ill effect as long as it is within him. It can also cause wounds to open on his body and bleed, then make them heal over as it wills. Normally, only a malevolent spirit performs acts harmful to the body it possesses or to anyone else. Sometimes, however, a neutral spirit possessing a person indulges in the less-harmful acrobatics described above.

It is possible for more than one spirit to possess a single individual, though additional spirits must either be invited in by the spirit already inhabiting the body (or the dominant one, if more than one are already there), or win a POW vs. POW attack against the current possessor of the person. Multiple spirits cause the Investigator so possessed to appear to have multiple personalities, though only the most powerful spirit is in actual control (except when it allows the others to exert theirs, from time to time).

## Exorcism

Exorcising a spirit from a possessed individual can be considered a spell, and the ritual may be learned from any of a number of Cthulhu Mythos and ordinary occult books. It can also be performed by any clergyman with a Theology/Philosophy skill of at least 60%; others



must have a Theology skill of at least 80% to be able to attempt an exorcism, unless they've learned the ritual as a spell. A qualified clergyman can also teach exorcism to a layman, but the layman must spend a total of 20 hours over a period of no more than a week learning this ritual from the clergyman. If fewer than 20 hours are spent within a week, the learning period must start again. At the end of the period, the clergyman must make a successful roll on his Theology/Philosophy skill, and the layman must make a successful Idea roll. If both succeed, the layman knows enough to perform a single exorcism, and gains a +15% bonus to his Theology/Philosophy skill.

To perform an exorcism requires at least an hour's preparation on the part of the exorcist—lighting candles, meditating, praying, sprinkling holy water, or performing some similar ritual. The exact procedure depends on the exorcist's particular religion, as the ritual primarily serves to build his own belief to the point where he has full confidence in his ability to cast out the evil spirit. A clergyman or a character taught by one *must* indulge in these theological trappings in order to carry out his exorcism. A character who has learned the process as a spell from a book has more freedom (depending on the text), but he still must spend an hour preparing ("psyching himself up").

Once the time of preparation is over, the exorcist must then pit his POW against that of the spirit or spirits; if there are more than one, he must cast each out individually. If he is successful, the spirit must leave as he commands. If not, the spirit remains and probably manifests itself in some manner to mock or harm the exorcist. If the first attempt at exorcism is a failure, the exorcist may try again; he must then spend an additional hour in preparation above the first for each extra attempt at exorcising the same spirit (e.g., the third attempt requires three hours preparation).

There are various methods of increasing the chance of casting out possessing spirits

that are available both to clergymen and laymen. A character who is an actual clergyman may add one-fifth of his Theology/Philosophy to the percentage chance on the Resistance Table (as determined by matching his POW against that of the possessing spirit) before rolling his final chance for success. Thus, if the normal chance for success is only 30%, but the clergyman has a Theology/Philosophy skill of 80%, the chance is increased by 16% to 46%.

Additionally, any exorcist, clergyman or layman, can increase his chance of casting out a spirit by invoking the name of the deity he worships—even if it is a Cthulhoid deity such as Azathoth, Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, Hastur, or Nodens (though the great danger of this would be in the possibility of actually *summoning* one of these beings or its minions, which would be worse than the spirit itself). This invocation adds 1-20 additional percentage points to the roll for success, depending on the strength of the invoker's own belief in that deity and (in the Cthulhu Mythos only) on the relative strength of the deity called. Thus, a clergyman who invokes the name of his god in casting out a spirit (and *fully* believes in the power of his deity) could get up to an additional 20% added to his chance of casting out the spirit.

Using the same example cited heretofore, the chance of success in the exorcism is then raised to 66%. It is up to the Keeper to determine the exact number of extra points toward success that the invocation of a deity adds. He should make his decision based on the Investigator's past actions and statements about his religious beliefs, and thus determine the exorcist's conviction in the power of the deity whose name he has invoked. If there is any serious question as to the Investigator's sincerity in invoking the name of a deity, the Keeper may simply determine the additional chance of success randomly by rolling 1d20.

In the case of extremely powerful deities, the mere invocations of their names and the command to leave the possessed body may alone be enough to force the possessing spirit to do so, even if the exorcist is ignorant of the exorcism spell or ritual. In such cases, no POW vs. POW roll is necessary, but the chance of exorcising the spirit is equal to only half the normal percentage points that the deity's name usually adds to the chance of success. Thus, if the Keeper determines that invoking the name of Nodens normally adds 18% to the exorcist's chance of casting out a possessing spirit, the total chance of a character ignorant of the exorcism ritual is only 9% with the invocation of the name alone. Whether the exorcism succeeds or not, there is the same chance on a second roll that Nodens himself shows up (or sends several nightgaunts) to show his displeasure at the unauthorized use of his name.

It might also be possible to cast out a

possessing spirit by convincing a more powerful spirit to dislodge it in the same manner as that of multiple spirits attempting to possess a character. The danger in this is that the new, stronger spirit, once it has dislodged the other by defeating it in a POW vs. POW roll, might decide to stay and possess the individual itself. Because of this, Investigators attempting such feats should be as certain as possible that the spirit they've called up to help them is a benevolent (or, at worst, a neutral) spirit and not a deceiving evil one.

#### Daimon and daimonion

In the CALL OF CTHULHU game, malevolent spirits—as well as most neutral and some seemingly benevolent ones—are actually members of an extradimensional race of beings, vaguely similar in nature to the lloigor (see the CALL OF CTHULHU game rule book). These entities are far more ubiquitous, in fact, because they are not tied to certain areas as are the lloigor. They do tend to congregate by their own choice in certain locations—old houses, swamps, graveyards, etc.

These spirits are normally intangible and invisible but are capable of manifesting themselves on occasion as ugly, demonlike beings. They are, in fact, more properly known as *daimon* (pronounced DIE-moan) or *daimonion* (die-MOAN-ee-on)—Greek for devils or devil spirits. These are the same words that were transliterated into Latin as "daemon" and into English as "demon!" In Hebrew, they are called *dybbuka*—disembodied spirits. They are the possessing devils and demons of theology and mythology. They have been known throughout history, but they have been too quickly explained away by modern, "rational" science. Like the denizens of the Cthulhu Mythos, the daimon exist just beyond the human plane of reality. On the other hand, unlike many Cthulhoid beings, they are able to enter this dimension at will, making them in some ways even more dangerous than Cthulhu's cohorts.

Because they are invisible and intangible in our world (and because no mortal has ever visited their world and returned to tell of it), daimon have no physical characteristics, per se, except DEX. They have varying amounts of INT and POW, depending on their nature. The smaller daimonion are rather stupid, easily outsmarted, and of limited POW (human average). The larger daimon, on the other hand, can be wickedly intelligent, possessing great amounts of POW—as much or more than lloigor, though they are unable to drain Magic Points from surrounding humans as the lloigor can. When daimon or daimonion are in possession of a human (or an animal, which is also possible), they may add that individual's Magic-Point total to their own to use as they wish, as long as they continue to possess him.

Daimon and daimonion can cause telekinetic effects similar to those of lloigor, as explained in *The Cthulhu Companion*.



There is, however, no variation in the amount of Magic Points required to create a point of telekinetic STR, based on location, as is true with the Iloigor. Daimon and daimonion always create one telekinetic STR point for every Magic Point put into the effect. They can also cause physical damage to a character by "biting" him psychically. They do this by first overcoming an Investigator in a Magic Point duel (the points devoted to the duel are temporarily expended). Then every additional Magic Point put into an attack does 1d6 physical bite damage to the target on a hit. The chance of a successful hit equals the daimon's DEX x 3.

Once a daimon or daimonion is in possession of an individual, it can change the character's SIZ, APP or voice by expending Magic Points (its own or the possessed individual's) on a ratio of 1 Magic Point to 1 point of SIZ or APP changed. One Magic Point is all that's necessary to change the character's voice. The initial change of features or voice lasts for one hour unless the daimon allows them to return to normal sooner. Thereafter, it costs only a single Magic Point per hour to retain the entire change. If the daimon decides to change the character's features again without allowing them first to revert to their original appearance, it costs only half the normal Magic Points to effect another such change.

Daimon can also create ectoplasm from a possessed character's body (one Magic Point expended creating one SIZ point of ectoplasm). To do this, the possessing spirit must use the host's Magic Points rather than its own. When ectoplasm has been formed, the daimon may shape it at will. Ectoplasm lasts for 10 minutes unless renewed with more Magic Points — this time either the host's or the daimon's own. Once within a character's body, the daimon can cause it to levitate or move around in any way it pleases; it only costs 1 Magic Point per 5 SIZ points of possessed character for the daimon to do so.

When a daimon or daimonion has possessed a character, it can take total control of that character's thoughts, mind, actions, and feelings at will. Once the initial possession has occurred (described in the section above), nothing else is required to hold and control the person, either intermittently or full-time. The invading spirit has full access to that individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and it can cast any spell that that person knows, whether the daimon knew it prior to possessing him or not. If more than one daimonion is in possession of an individual, the one with the greatest POW is the dominant one, and the others are able to manifest themselves only when it so allows them. Usually no more than one daimon will be in possession of a single person, but it may share the individual with any number of daimonion over which it has command.

In spite of their seemingly immense power, daimon and daimonion are limited

in their abilities to affect humans. Except in cases of possession, daimon and daimonion cannot overtly affect mortals unless one of the following conditions is met:

1. The spirits have been called up in a seance.
2. The areas in which the spirits congregate are invaded or disturbed.
3. A person has invited the spirits into his life. This invitation can be made, consciously or not, by engaging in moral depravity, overindulging in drink or drugs, living a cruel and evil life, or even by delving too deeply into occult matters — e.g., studying old grimoires or magical texts, playing with ouija boards or similar divining aids such as tarot cards, or allowing oneself to be hypnotized or mesmerized repeatedly (especially for such purposes as discerning past lives, communing with higher powers, and so on).

On the surface, it appears that most CALL OF CTHULHU game Investigators fall into the category of having studied magical texts (if they've read or seriously examined any book of the Mythos). Oddly enough, that is not the case. The exact reason for this is not known; perhaps it is because the more powerful beings of the Mythos keep the daimon away from Investigators pursuing such studies by the beings' own insidious influence. Whatever the reason, the mere reading of Mythos books rarely opens one up for daimon infestation or possession unless other factors are involved.

Certain things that affect a person physically also affect a spirit possessing that person. For example, if a possessed individual is knocked unconscious, the daimon is also unconscious and unable to act unless it leaves the host's body. If it does leave, it can repossess the body at will until the character awakens. If it has failed to repossess the individual before he has awakened, the spirit must make another Magic-Point struggle to regain possession. Additionally, certain drugs that deaden parts of the possessed character's brain (where the spirit normally resides) incapacitate the spirit as well. In such a state, the spirit may defend itself against being exorcised but do nothing else. Naturally, killing the individual hosting a daimon or daimonion gets rid of the spirit once and for all — but the deceased will hardly be able to appreciate it.

Some daimon and daimonion also seem to have aversions to certain holy items. Holy water, crucifixes, and other religious symbols occasionally seem to be proof against possession by a daimon and may even drive one away. Unfortunately, just as many of these spirits seem to be immune to such protections. It is up to the Keeper whether or not such measures are effective against any particular daimon. Note that certain protections, such as Elder Signs or Starstones of Mnar, that are wards against Cthulhoid entities are just as effective against daimon. As a result, their employment is total proof

against possession by daimon or daimonion. Certain magical spells with nonphysical effects prove effective against these spiritual entities as well, though physical attacks affect only the hosts they possess.

In the characteristics for daimon and daimonion that follow, no scores have been given for STR, CON, or SIZ because of the nonmaterial nature of daimon and daimonion. Should these characteristics become necessary, as may occur in the case of a physical manifestation of a "devil spirit," the Keeper is advised to use the same value as listed for POW or handle the spirits as described below.

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### Daimon (Greater Independent Race)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Average</i>	
<b>INT</b>	4d6+6	20
<b>POW</b>	5d6+6	23-24
<b>DEX</b>	3d6	10-11
<b>Hit points</b>		Special
<b>Move</b>		Special
<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Attk%</b>	<b>Damage</b>
Telekinetic throw	DEX x 3	Variable*
Psychic bite	DEX x 3	1d6/MP**
Possession	MP vs. MP	Possession
Dematerialize	Special	Special

\* Depends on SIZ of object used.

\*\* Also MP vs. MP damage.

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### Daimonion (Lesser Independent Race)

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Average</i>	
<b>INT</b>	1 - 3d6	3-11
<b>POW</b>	2d6 + 6	13
<b>DEX</b>	3d6	10-11

Hit points, Move, Weapon, Attk%, and Damage are all as per the daimon.

**Armor:** In their natural, nonmaterial states, daimon and daimonion cannot be affected by any physical weapon. When one or more inhabit a host body, the host can be affected normally, but only the death of the host affects the spirit and then only to drive it away. Enchanted weapons damage these spirits normally but also damage their hosts.

**Spells:** A daimon or daimonion may know a number of spells equal to its INT.

**SAN:** In their normal states, daimon and daimonion are invisible; thus, no SAN loss for Investigators is possible. Seeing the various physical manifestations of one (similar to those of a poltergeist) costs 1d4 SAN points if a SAN roll is missed, or none if the roll is successful. Being possessed by one of these spirits costs 1d8 SAN points upon this realization if a SAN roll is missed, or 1 point even if the roll is made. A daimon or daimonion can temporarily

take on a physical form if it desires (such an appearance is normally that of an extremely hideous, demonic being, occasionally wreathed in fire and brimstone) if it expends eight Magic Points, plus two more for sounds and one for odor. Seeing a daimon's physical manifestation costs up to 1d20 SAN points if a SAN roll is missed, or 1d6 points even if it is made, as the forms these spirits take are usually extremely frightening (though the Keeper may decide the entity takes on a less SAN-blasting appearance for reasons of its own). Should an Investigator manage to see a daimon in its own, original dimension, the maximum SAN loss should be applied regardless of the SAN roll.

**Hit points:** If any magical spells that cause hit-point loss are used against one of these spirits, or if any attacks are made against it with enchanted weapons, use the daimon's or daimonion's POW for its hit points. If the spirit loses all its POW to damage, it has been destroyed. If a spirit's Magic-Point total falls to zero, it also disperses (at least temporarily), losing its possession of a host. If the host's Magic Point or POW totals fall to zero, the host dies, and the spirit is immediately cast loose. There is a 50% chance that *any* such magical anti-POW attacks against a possessing daimon affects the possessed host instead of the spirit. Enchanted weapons

harm both possessors and hosts.

**Move:** Daimon and daimonion are not bound by our laws of physics; therefore, they can teleport anywhere they wish around our planet (but *not* beyond the Earth, for reasons that are not totally clear, unless they are in possession of a character who himself leaves Earth). They can also move through physical barriers as though the barriers were not there. Strong magnetic fields or force fields seem to slow them down, perhaps due to the nature of the dimension from which they originate (which may in fact be why they cannot leave this planet, with its strong magnetic fields). Effectively, however, these spirits are as swift as thoughts and are nearly impossible to contain.

**Dematerialize:** Daimon and daimonion appear to have the ability to dematerialize objects of various sizes. In actuality, these spirits do this by telekinetically seizing the objects they wish to dematerialize, then teleporting themselves and the objects to other locations, where they can leave the objects and return instantly. Several of the entities can work together to teleport any object too big for only one of them. To thus "dematerialize" a living being in this manner, a daimon must win a Magic-Point struggle with its victim (unless the victim is an individual the spirit possesses, in

which case no such struggle is required).

**Detection:** Unless a character possesses psychic powers himself, the only way to detect the presence of a daimon or daimonion, either within an area or while possessing another character, is to succeed in a roll of POW x 1% upon first entering the area or encountering the possessed individual. If the roll is successful, the Investigator detects the presence of the spirit as a foul odor (it "stinks" spiritually). Unless the Investigator has detected such spirits before and knows what the odor indicates, he may then have to make an Occult roll to realize what it is he's actually detecting.

**Conclusion**

It should be kept in mind that, in the course of a CALL OF CTHULHU game campaign, it is quite possible that many of the so-called higher spiritual powers worshiped by various occult and spiritualist societies are actually very ancient, extremely wise, and cruelly cunning daimon, deceiving their followers for their own malevolent purposes. What purposes lie behind such deceptions, if they come up in play, are left to the Keeper's discretion and for the Investigators ability of discovery as they navigate the dark waters of the occult. Ω

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# Unspeakable Secrets Made Easy

Building your unspeakable library in  
Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game

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Sometime in the course of a campaign, CALL OF CTHULHU® game Keepers will find a need for new, exciting Mythos tomes. This article has some thoughts on how to create new tomes to surprise Investigators, with examples drawn from Mythos stories, the CALL OF CTHULHU

rules, and my own campaign.

The first and most important rule is to *not* make a random-number system for generating Mythos tomes. One of the CALL OF CTHULHU game's strengths is its emphasis on storytelling over complicated rules and numbers. No formulas or tables

will appear here, except for a summary of some sample tomes. No table or formula can do what the imaginative Keeper can when creating tomes that are memorable and integrated into the campaign.

Avoiding duplication is essential; in fact, it is at the heart of most of the suggestions that follow. These texts are supposed to be rare and exotic. Too much similarity among them tarnishes their mystique. For instance, there are already several massive compilations of "dark and baleful mythos, of liturgies, rituals, and incantations both evil and esoteric" like the *Book of Eibon*. A description of this book supplies the preceding quote, and the *Revelations of Glaaki* and the *Necronomicon* also fall into this category. There are also titles that are essentially collected descriptions of sinister cults; *Unausprechlichen Kulten* and *Cultes des Goules* spring to mind. One new book of each type could be rationalized on the grounds of novelty, but more would be excessive. After all, if a tome is going to be just like *Kulden* or *Eibon*, why not just use the original?

The more perceptive Mythos writers seem to have kept this in mind. In the CALL OF CTHULHU rules, *Eibon* and *De Vermis Mysteriis* seem much the same. Their knowledge ratings, spell multipliers, and sanity losses are nearly equal. *Vermis* is in Latin; so is one version of *Eibon*. If you read the stories in which they appear,



Illustration by Valerie Valusek

you find that both tomes were written by powerful sorcerers. One wizard, however, lived and wrote in medieval Europe, while the other lived millennia before in Hyperborea. Maybe these books aren't alike after all.

This illustrates one characteristic of a good Mythos tome: a sinister origin and history. Lovecraft went so far as to write an essay on the "History and Chronology of the *Necronomicon*," but you need not go to such lengths. In stories, Lovecraft and his compatriots settled for a paragraph or two on each book, which is enough. If the players want to know more about a book's history, it's easy to make up further details as needed. Of course, a good tome origin can also be used as a hook to draw Investigators into new adventures.

Your own Mythos books aren't the only ones that can benefit from added history and detail. Many of the works listed in the CALL OF CTHULHU rulebook have never, to the best of my knowledge, been given any history or description by Mythos authors. The *Book of Dzyan*, *Eldtdown Shards*, and others aren't much more than names. You can add as many details to them as you want.

One way that new tomes can differ from existing ones is in their origin. Approximately half the books listed in the CALL OF CTHULHU rules are of Western origin. The Middle East, India, and China have extensive written occult traditions; it seems logical that they would have Cthulhu Mythos writings. The Mythos activities of other regions could see print through visitors from literate areas. Drop a hint to your players that Sanskrit may be as useful to them as Latin.

Books are just one way of storing information. Although books dominate post-Classical Western cultures, there are also scrolls, tablets, wall inscriptions, and monuments. Smaller amounts of information—single spells or monster descriptions—might be revealed in tapestries, paintings, inscribed amulets, or even less likely objects. Modern-setting campaigns can add various kinds of audio and visual recordings, microformats, and computer files. Even if a "text" isn't encountered in its original book format, this can spice up its history and origin.

It's a good idea to check whether a format is appropriate for the tome's original culture. The Mesopotamian cultures, for instance, wrote on baked clay tablets, whereas the Egyptians used scrolls in addition to covering their monuments, temples, and tombs with carved or painted inscriptions. This research will probably give you lots of ideas for adventures, too.

Another useful trick is to tie a tome's origin to some preexisting bit of history or legend, whether real or Mythos. Every bit of verisimilitude helps in building atmosphere, and the surprise of recognition gives players the feeling of investigating a real mystery. On the other hand, such references may be in-jokes, as when Love-

craft interjected a straight-faced reference to the "Commorion myth-cycle preserved by the Atlantean high priest Klarkash-Ton." (Commorion was an ancient city prominently featured in stories by Lovecraft's friend Clark Ashton Smith.) In-jokes can be fun even if they don't contribute to your carefully crafted atmosphere of paranoia and horror.

The next step is deciding if the tome focuses on any particular part of the Mythos. Not only does a focused subject make a tome feel more like a real book instead of an ad-hoc plot device, it gives you a guide to selecting spells for the work. A tome could focus on the Great Old Ones or Outer Gods, entities of air and space dwellers underground, gods that appeal to lone sorcerers, gods served by frenzied cultists, or whatever other corner of the Mythos seems appropriate for the tome's origin and the adventure in which it will be encountered. The *R'lyeh Text*, for instance, obviously focuses on Cthulhu and related beings. It or any similar guide to oceanic powers probably will not emanate from cultists in the arid heart of Asia.

Conversely, if the purpose of a tome is to introduce a particular spell to the Investigators, the tome's origin and subject focus should be shaped with this in mind.

Another aspect of tome content is the relative proportion of lore to spells. Some works clearly emphasize lore. As a guide to Mythos cults, there is no reason why *Unausprechlichen Kulten* should have many spells. In my campaign, the *Kulten* can teach spells because of numerous luridly detailed descriptions of cult rituals rather than by any intent of its author. Other texts, in contrast, are meant to be spellbooks. Robert Bloch's story, "The Shambler from the Star," makes it quite clear that *De Vermis Mysteriis* is a grimoire loaded with summonings and other dire magic formulae. *True Magick* sounds like a less imposing grimoire. Some tomes might provide lore and magic more or less equally; *The Book of Eibon*, as mentioned above, contains both "rituals and incantations" and "dark and baleful myths."

The last stage of tome invention, and in many ways the least important, is assigning the tome's knowledge rating, spell multiplier, and sanity loss. The list of tomes in the CALL OF CTHULHU rulebook

shows that only the most important Mythos books like *Kulten* and *Vermis* get a knowledge rating of 12%-15%, while very minor lorebooks and grimoires like *People of the Monolith* and the *Zanthu Tablets* get ratings of 5% or less. Anything in between is a matter of the Keeper's taste. The maximum possible sanity loss is usually closely tied to the knowledge rating. For example, the *Celaeno Fragments* gets a knowledge rating of 9%, and can cause up to 8 points SAN loss. The major connection between knowledge rating and sanity loss is the level of danger posed by the tome's information. *Monstres and Their Kynde* and *The Golden Bough* both have a knowledge rating of 5%, for example, but *Monstres* causes 1d6 SAN loss, while *Bough* only does 1d2. *Bough*, however, deals with the Cthulhu Mythos only indirectly and accidentally through its analysis of ancient European myths and customs. Besides, *The Golden Bough* is a real book that has probably never driven a reader insane. In general, unless a tome is meant to be a major sanity-buster like *Vermis* or *Kulten*, 1d4 or 2d4 is a good rating for sanity losses from tome reading. Either roll has a 50% chance of forcing a check for temporary insanity but isn't likely to cause indefinite insanity.

Spell multipliers show how comparatively easy or hard it is to learn spells from a Mythos text. The most common multiplier is x 2; it gives Investigators a fair chance to learn a few spells without making it easy to learn any spell in particular. Second most common are the multipliers x 1 and x 3; x 4 and x 5 are appropriately rare, reserved for the *Necronomicon* and those few texts approaching it in virulence. Of course, minor lorebooks completely lacking spells have no spell multiplier. Aside from these broad categories, there is no intrinsic relation between a book's spell multiplier and its knowledge rating or SAN loss, or between the book's spell multipliers and whether that book is a grimoire for learning spells or not. As mentioned above in relation to *Kulten*, a lorebook author might clearly describe how to cast a spell even if he didn't consciously intend to; on the other hand, a sorcerer explaining a spell might cloak his instructions in obscure symbolism. Minor texts might present their few spells in a

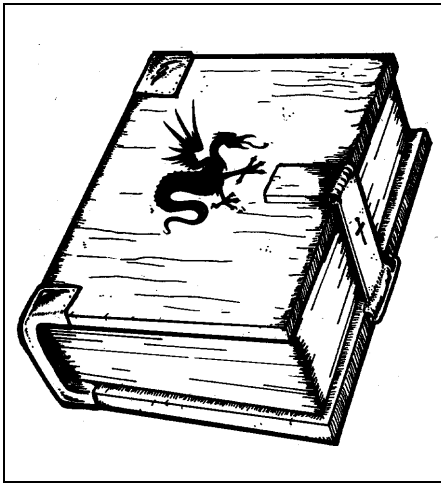
#### The Golden Goblin Mythos Library

Title	Language	Knowledge rating	Spell multiplier	SAN Loss
<i>Book of Elder Aeons</i>	English **	+ 10%	x 1	2d4
<i>El Codigo de Uxmal</i>	Spanish **	+8%	x 2	1d8
<i>The Uxmal Codex*</i>	English	+6%	x 2	1d8
<i>Demon Gods of Mu</i>	English	+6%	x 1	1d6
<i>Magic and Mystery of Mu</i>	English	+5%	x 3	1d6
<i>Mu: Lost Land of the Pacific</i>	English	+3%	-	1d3

\* Translation of *El Codigo de Uxmal*.

\*\* Work is chiefly available in this language but not originally in that tongue.





relatively straightforward manner, while a major tome could scatter spell instructions throughout pages of irrelevant information or outright nonsense. It depends on the Keeper's concept of the tome and the context of the adventure. If the adventure hinges on the Investigators learning Call Ithaqua, the text providing it should have a high spell multiplier. (This assumes you disapprove of fudging dice rolls to advance the plot.)

Mythos tome creation is not a systematic process. You probably will start at any of the above points and take the rest in any order as inspiration leads you. The only rule in tome creation that should be considered ironclad is that no tome has statistics surpassing or even equalling the *Necronomicon*.

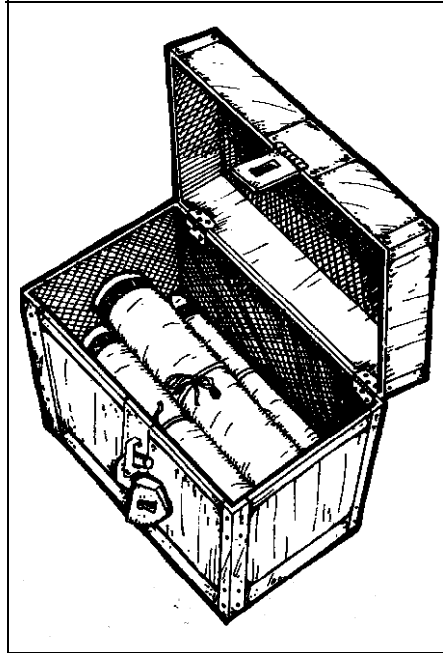
Since an example is worth a dozen rules, here is a selection of Mythos books from Golden Goblin Press, occult publishers extraordinaire in the CALL OF CTHULHU game world.

When the real worlds James Churchward began writing books of dubious scholarship about the lost continent of Mu, he didn't know that Golden Goblin's star researcher, Paul Dixon, had already written three books on the subject. The first was *Mu: Lost Land of the Pacific* (1896), in which Dixon marshalled a wide range of evidence for that ancient land's existence, from folklore to zoology. While no reputable scholar ever accepted Dixon's claims, a few might privately admit that Mu is both more plausible and more disturbing than other works of the "lost continent" school. Some of Dixon's revelations are quite sinister, especially those about Muvian religion, giving *Mu* a 3% knowledge rating and 1d3 SAN loss. It has no spells and is a typical, very minor lorebook.

In 1900, Dixon wrote a sequel: *Demon Gods of Mu*. Any hint of respect the academic community may have felt for Dixon vanished with this work, which was widely denounced as lurid, sensationalistic, and totally lacking in serious scholarship. In it, Dixon not only claimed that the gods of Mu were real, but he asserted that they still existed and were worshipped. His reliance on bizarre occult texts like

*The Ponape Scripture* and the *Necronomicon* offended scholars as much as his wild claim to have been "inspired" by Cthulhu, Shub-Niggurath, and other Muvian gods. His descriptions of Muvian rituals were as grotesque as they were detailed. Some of the rituals actually worked, a point Dixon's detractors missed. *Demon Gods of Mu* is a slightly more important lorebook, with +6% knowledge, spell multiplier of x 1, and 1d6 SAN loss. It contains four spells: Contact Cthulhu, Summon Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Contact Nyarlathotep, and Activate Eidolon (see "The Ghastly Grimoire," DRAGON Magazine issue #126, for details of this spell). If you want to use this or any other of these tomes in your campaign, you can give them any spells you deem necessary.

Dixon's final work was *Magic and Mystery of Mu* (1902). This minor grimoire describes Muvian sorcery; the preface



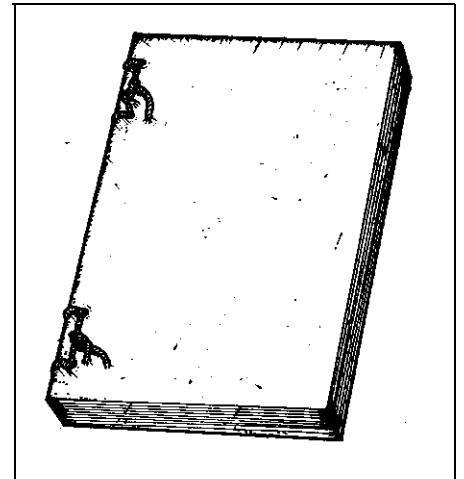
claims that it really works. (This is not true: half the spells are defective and won't work, as a Cthulhu Mythos roll will show in each case.) Dixon admitted that *Magic* only contained minor Muvian spells, but he promised to someday produce a more complete guide to Muvian wizardry. He never did. He disappeared in 1903 during an expedition to Nan Madol and was never seen again. *Magic* was, by the way, the worst seller of Dixon's books, probably because his "Muvian sorcery" bore no resemblance to what he called "the puerile fantasies of popular occultism." It has a +5% knowledge, spell multiplier of x 3, and causes 1d6 SAN loss. It contains Elder Sign, Enchant Brazier, Conjure Glass of Mortland, Enchant Blade, Chant of Thoth, Dread Curse of Azathoth, and Contact Lloigor.

In addition to its massively expurgated 1909 edition of *Nameless Cults*, Golden Goblin published one other major lorebook: the *Book of Elder Aeons* (1906), a

translation of a scroll found in the ruins of a heretical Tibetan lamasery. It purports to tell the history of the races that came before humanity on Earth. It uses the terms and mythological patterns of B'on, the animistic religion which preceded and heavily influenced Tibetan Buddhism.

*Elder Aeons'* cycles of race following race, mysteriously linked in some way to Earth's position among the stars, forms a pattern familiar to Theosophists. Indeed, the similarities to Theosophy are deliberately emphasized by translator Muriel Rasmussen. She argues in her introduction that *Elder Aeons* confirms Theosophy, although the book itself is partly in error. Muriel Rasmussen is still alive in campaigns set in the 1920s, but she will not help Investigators in any way. In 1911, she renounced Theosophy, burned her copy of the *Book of Elder Aeons*, and entered a convent where she lives under a vow of silence. The *Book of Elder Aeons* has these statistics: +10% knowledge, spell multiplier of x 1, and 2d4 SAN loss. Its six spells all deal with contacting various Elder Races. The original scroll is held by the British Museum.

Golden Goblin tried hard to produce books that went beyond the usual occult tripe. They tried too hard, some people said. A final example is its last publication, a Mayan grimoire found in the ruins of the city of Uxmal. In 1901, Dr. Miguel Arrosca of the Museo Nacional de Antropologia in Mexico City produced a translation based on notes in Spanish written above a few lines of Mayan text. Most archeologists and linguists think that the *The Uxmal Codex* is a magnificently detailed hoax to which Dr. Arrosca succumbed. If genuine, this collection of rituals and incantations supposedly compiled by an ancient Mayan sorcerer-priest would revolutionize theories about Mayan magic and religion. (For hints about the *Codex's* frightening revelations, see "The Cthulhu Mythos in Mesoamerican Religion" in Chaosium's *Cthulhu Companion*.) Subsequently, the Spanish *ElCodigo de Uxmal* was translated into English by Thad Chevaux, a Miskatonic University graduate, and published



Illustrations by David Zenz

by Golden Goblin in 1910.

Not surprisingly, Chevaux's translation is not as complete or accurate a source of Mythos information as Arroscas's text. The concepts of Mythos are especially difficult to translate, so errors tend to multiply. In practice, this means that the Golden Goblin edition of the *The Uxmal Codex* gives + 6% knowledge, while the Spanish version gives +8%. Both have a spell multiplier of x 2 and cause 1d8 SAN loss. The Spanish version contains Contact Yig, Summon Child of Yig, Contact Deep One, Contact Cthulhu, Contact Nyarlathotep, Summon Hunting Horror, Bind Hunting Horror, Dread Curse of Azathoth, Hands of Yig, Enchant Knife, and Summon Fire Vampire. The English version deletes Contact Cthulhu, Contact Nyarlathotep, and Bind Hunting Horror.

Following Dr. Arroscas's suicide in 1908, the original folded tree-bark edition of *The Uxmal Codex* has been kept in a temperature and humidity controlled vault by the Museo. Chevaux died shortly after the *Codex's* publication, in the fire that consumed Golden Goblin's office, editor, and supply of unsold volumes. No one knows why Chevaux and the editor were alone at the office in the middle of the night, or the unidentifiable bones found in addition to their charred remains.

I hope these examples will inspire you to think up your own new Mythos tomes for your campaign or create ways to add spice to the tomes listed in the CALL OF CTHULHU rulebook. Lovecraft himself encouraged his friends to make their own contributions to the Mythos and its grim bibliography; Mythos writers like Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, and Robert Bloch have given Keepers ample precedent. So get out there and knock 'em dead!

Er, that's just a figure of speech. Ω

## Computers

*Continued from page 73*

sageways. Have plenty of healing herbs.

8. The Pirate's Lair contains a sapphire coin and a jeweled crown..

9. You will eventually have to fight in the castle. When you have a lot of firebolts, go to a section of the castle, wipe out the guards, and open the chests.

10. The Temptress will offer you either Charm or Gold.

11. You must have four magic seeds to succeed on the second level. More magic seeds are found in the same place after you use the ones you have.

12. After you solve each dungeon, your strength will increase.

13. The turquoise coin is found on the second dungeon level.

14. Use the guardian exhibit to open the door across from the Spiral room.

15. The "distant healer" is in Eagle's Hollow. He will give you a ruby coin.

16. After you have the four guard

jewels, return to Eagle Hollow to be healed and to buy herbs. Magic does not work well in the fortress, so don't buy any!

17. Use healing herbs to free yourself from the spell's grip.

18. At the end of the game, after you return the scrolls, you get your own display. This was a nice reward for completing the game.

Scott Whittaker  
Lighthouse Point FL

### *Phantasie I* (SSI)

[Hints courtesy of SSI's product newsletter, Inside SSI.]

As you know, there are nine rings that must be found. Here are their locations: find two in the Temple of the Dosnebian Clerics; one in Phantasie's Armory; three in J. R. Trolkin's Castle; and three in Bleeb's Dungeon. To win this adventure, you must slay the Dark Lord and obtain the Divine Spell.

### *Phantasie II* (SSI)

[Hints courtesy of SSI's product newsletter, Inside SSI.]

You'll have to find the beasts in this game; beasts 1 and 2 are in the Material Plane and can show up anywhere, so be careful. While on the Material Plane, check out the desert island: you'll find Beasts 3 and 4 there. Beasts 5 and 6 are on the Astral Plane and can be summoned through use of spell #57. Pluto's Castle is the home of Beast 7 and in Pluto's Managery, yep, heeere's Beast 8.

### *Phantasie III* (SSI)

[Hints courtesy of SSI's product newsletter, Inside SSI.]

You eventually need to get to the Plane of Light. To accomplish this, while in the spirals of the Crystal Castle of Chronos, type "C2 +" and pull the lever, then get out of the dungeon. You must possess the Key of Light in order to get into the castle.

In order to get to the Dark Plane, follow the same instructions as above, except type in "C2-" then leave the dungeon.

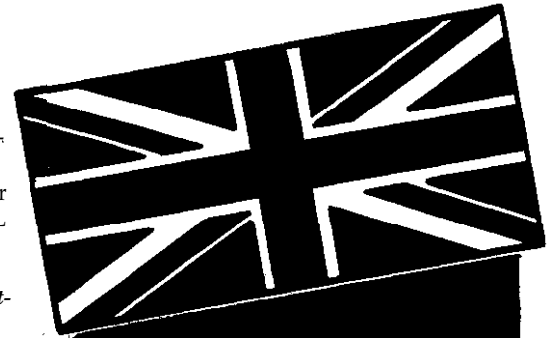
### *Star Command* (SSI)

[Hints courtesy of SSI's product newsletter, Inside SSI.]

The Princess Viselda is in one of the three black holes. The coordinates for each black hole are: 10,29; 28,14; 23,06.

You must enter each black hole and down scan' on every planet of each star in the black hole. The password found inside the Insect Missile Factory is THPI.

Coming next month: The Beastie Awards! Plus, new reviews and more news regarding new product announcements. Don't forget to send in your game hints. Mail them to us at 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583. While you help others, perhaps others will help you. Until next month, game on!



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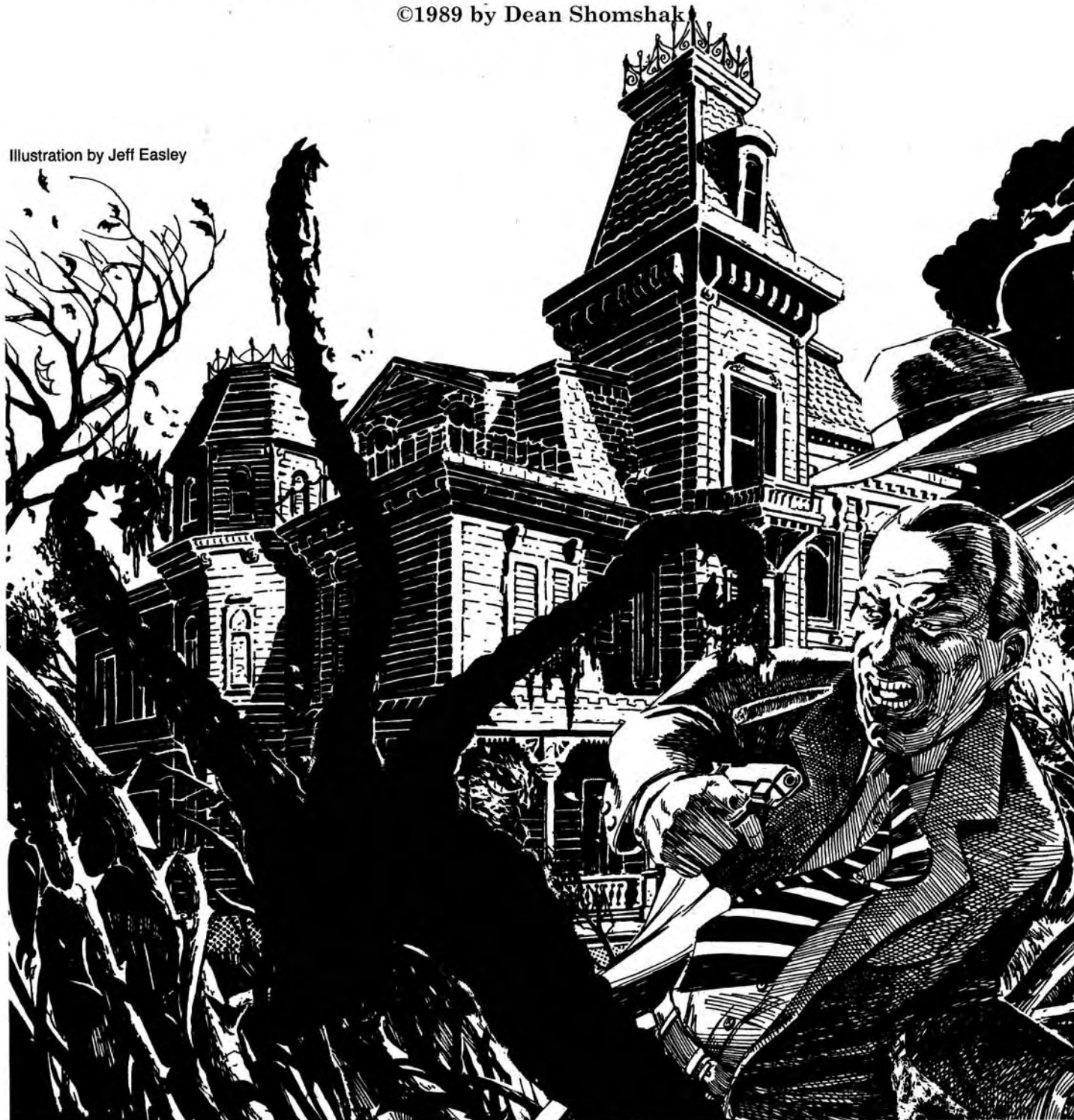
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# The Well-Rounded Monster Hunter

Investigators' skills in the CALL OF CTHULHU® game

©1989 by Dean Shomshak

Illustration by Jeff Easley





Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® rules provide a wide range of skills for Investigators, but many more skills are possible that could broaden the knowledge of player characters. For the benefit of Investigators and Keepers alike, some new skills for this game follow, as well as some thoughts on modifying skill rolls to reflect special circumstances.

A special note is needed concerning specialty skills. A skill called Egyptology has appeared in CALL OF CTHULHU modules from Chaosium. While this skill is obviously a specialized form of Archeology, no explanation is given as to the relationship of Egyptology and Archeology in terms of game mechanics. I have attempted to remedy this with rules that define specialized versions of a wide range of skills.

### Modifying skill rolls

Not all tasks that require skill rolls are equally difficult. For instance, it's possible to use the Anthropology skill for both the relatively easy task of identifying someone as an ethnic Korean and the more difficult problem of identifying a member of the obscure Ahapi tribe. Similarly, picking a cheaply produced padlock and a custom-built Swiss trick lock are both Locksmithing feats, but one is obviously more difficult than the other. Situations like these occur with new skills as well as with the old. A Keeper can handle them in one of three ways.

One way is to ask for multiple skill rolls, which is logical if a task is unusually difficult because of length or complexity. This has the net effect of multiplying the skill percentage by itself one or more times. With two skill rolls, for example, someone with a 50% skill rating has a 25% chance of success, a 70% rating has a 49% chance, and 90% has an 81% chance. Probabilities for other base ratings and numbers of rolls are easily worked out with a pocket calculator.

The simplest method of adjusting skill rolls is to reduce the chance of success by some fixed amount. The Swiss lock, for example, might carry an automatic -30% modifier on any attempt to pick it. Modifiers like this will be familiar to players of many other role-playing systems.

Finally, the Keeper can reduce the chance of success by some fixed proportion by multiplying the character's chance of success by some percentage. The CALL OF CTHULHU rules already have the impaling roll for melee and the analogous special roll for skills, set at one-fifth the character's normal chance of success. The skill descriptions in the rulebook also refer to situations in which characters have only one-half of their normal chance of success. Other percentages, such as four-fifths (80%), three-fifths (60%) or one-third (33%), could be used to reflect various levels of difficulty. A calculator is necessary to use this method comfortably.

All three methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Multiple rolls favor characters with very high skill ratings. Multiplying by a fraction slightly favors

less-skilled characters (they didn't have a great chance of success originally, so they aren't losing much). Both methods leave at least a small chance of success for less-skilled characters. In contrast, subtraction modifiers essentially rule that characters with skill ratings below a certain percentage have no chance at all. I use all three methods, depending on which I think is appropriate at the time. Note that modifying a roll to show a task as unusually easy can only be done by adding to the base chance or multiplying it by some amount greater than 100%. Perhaps that tacky padlock gives +15% or x120% to a lock-picker's skill.

### Specialty skills

A character may be an expert in a single facet of a skill, or he might apply a skill to just one field. The aforementioned Egyptology, for instance, is Archeology limited to the cultures of ancient Egypt. Analogous specialized forms of Archeology can be defined for other areas of the world: Assyriology (Mesopotamian cultures), Classical Archeology (Greece and Rome), Pre-Columbian Archeology (the New World), and so on.

Skills can have specialized forms. For example, an Anthropology specialist would be knowledgeable about the cultures of just one region of the modern world. Instead of general Mechanical Repair, a character might specialize in auto repair, gunsmithing, or setting traps. Paleontology could be a specialized version of either geology or zoology. The only limit here is the Keeper's judgment in determining what constitutes a meaningful specialty. For instance, although Paleontology would be a useful division of geology in the game, crystallography (the study of crystal shapes) or petrology (the study of rock composition, structure, and origins) probably would not. The first is too limited a part of geology, and the second is not versatile enough to be useful in the game.

Naturally, a character with a specialty skill is not totally ignorant of everything else in the "parent" skill; a master auto repairman, for instance, may never have fixed clocks or refrigerators, but he would probably do better than someone with no

experience at any sort of mechanical repair. A specialist can therefore use a specialty skill for nonspecialized tasks—but not very well. An Egyptologist who hasn't actually spent points on Archeology skill, for example, could try identifying a non-Egyptian artifact using his Egyptology skill but at a greatly reduced chance of success (say, at x25%). Of course, a character could buy both Egyptology and Archeology, but this would be rather wasteful. Specialty skills cost just as many points as regular skills, and there are no cost savings for buying multiple specialties. Certain specialty skills are meant for non-player characters, who don't need to be as versatile as Investigators.

### New Investigator skills

**Fine Arts Knowledge:** This measures a character's detailed knowledge of the history, techniques, and styles of the fine arts (painting, sculpture, music, architecture, literature, etc.). This skill can be taken more than once, since the full skill rating is only for one art form; e.g., a comprehensive knowledge of music does not give any greater skill at analyzing architecture. In some cases, the Keeper may relax this separation. A scholar of music might have knowledge of opera; since an opera contains both words and music, someone skilled at either art form could study an opera to learn who the unnamed author was, his mental state, what is obliquely referred to in the third act, and so on.

The most common application of this skill is in evaluating Mythos-related works of "fine" art, both ancient and modern. A character with Fine Art Knowledge could discover where and when an artifact or poem was created, what it symbolizes, the sophistication of the artist's culture, or even if the item is of "no Earthly style." Fine Art Knowledge is thus related to Archeology and Anthropology, and in some circumstances could substitute for them with a reduced chance of success. Keepers should remember that Fine Art Knowledge uses elements of an aesthetic as well as a technical perspective.

**Cryptography:** This skill measures the ability to create and break ciphers that conceal messages. This does not include codes, which are based on the arbitrary use of one word to mean another word or phrase; e.g., using "ham" to mean "arms shipment." Codes can be invented by anyone and are virtually unbreakable, but they have several disadvantages. Codes take a long time to construct, since so many substitutions are necessary. A need might arise for a word for which no code equivalent has been defined. Both sender and receiver must have code books giving the substitutions, and these books can be lost or stolen.

Ciphers, the true subject of cryptography, hide messages by rearranging or substituting words or characters according to a master plan understood by sender

and receiver. Thus, instead of several thousand code-words, sender and receiver only have to remember the plan—a much easier task. A simple example of a cipher is a sentence in which each letter is replaced by the one preceding it in the alphabet (“a” is replaced by “z”), and the result is then written in reverse. In such a cipher, “Cthulhu rises” becomes “Rdrhq tkgtsb.” The message is decoded by reversing the letters, then replacing each letter with the character that follows it in the alphabet. Although ciphers are easier to use than codes, their disadvantage is that what human ingenuity can hide, human ingenuity can locate.

The initial rating for Cryptography is INT%, because nearly everyone in the Western world has been exposed to ciphers at some time during their childhood. Anyone can produce an extremely simple cipher, but such ciphers can be broken by successive Idea and Know rolls, or by a Cryptography roll at double the chance of success. Producing a difficult cipher requires a Cryptography roll at a double-normal chance of success; it's easier to make ciphers than to break them. Such a cipher takes a normal Cryptography roll to solve. If the cipher-maker's roll failed, the cipher contains a flaw. This flaw would introduce an equal chance of making the cipher impossible to solve or making it very easy to solve, using Idea and Know, or Cryptography x 2.

A cipher can be designed to be difficult to crack, imposing a modifier on the Cryptography roll needed to solve it, by applying the same modifier to the creator's skill. Someone with 40% Cryptography skill who is trying to make a -15% cipher thus has a (40% - 15% =) 25% chance of success. The Keeper may still allow double the normal chance of success when creating ciphers. (Multiple rolls don't work well here.) If the creator's roll fails, the desired modifier is lost (but he won't know it).

Cracking a cipher or determining that it is beyond one's abilities normally takes several days (Keeper's discretion on exact number). Exceptionally easy ciphers take less than a day to solve, down to a few minutes for someone with a Cryptography rating of 50% or more. Once a cipher is broken, of course, all messages in it are easily understood.

**Drafting:** This measures a character's skill at producing useful, realistic drawings, whether of machine parts or landscapes. It includes perspective drawings. Simple tools like a compass and ruler are useful but not necessary. Drafting concentrates on static form and outline. Subtly curved surfaces, textures, and suggestions of life and motion are more in the province of Painting (q.v.).

**Impersonation:** This skill enables one to convincingly masquerade as someone else. This is not merely playing a character on stage; it can be used whenever an Investigator wants to hide his true identity, emotions, or intentions. Imperson-

ation is invaluable when attempting to infiltrate a select organization or gain an enemy's trust. This can be dangerous, especially when criminals or cultists are involved.

Impersonating someone from another culture well enough to fool someone familiar with that culture requires a successful Anthropology roll as well as an Impersonation roll. This can be avoided by intensive coaching from someone familiar with the culture in question (who makes the appropriate roll instead). This process takes many days, and ad-libbing is impossible. Impersonating someone who speaks a different language may require a Speak Language roll; impersonating an electrical engineer might require an Electrical Repair roll; and so on. In some cases, these extra rolls might be modified in the character's favor; in the latter case, for instance, the character may only have to *talk* like an electrical engineer, which is easier than actually rewiring a circuit board. The character might be given double the normal chance of success of the Electrical Repair roll if talking is all that's required.

This skill may also enable one character to see through deception by others. Even if a “performance” is good enough to fool a layman, (i.e., the deceiver made his Impersonation roll), it might not be good enough to fool a fellow professional (defined as a character with an Impersonation skill of 50% or more). In this case, a resistance roll can be used. The would-be deceiver would add his Impersonation percentage to 50%, and the target would subtract his skill from that total to determine the chance that he was really fooled. Someone with high Psychology skill might be allowed a similar roll.

Some impersonations can be carried out purely through voice, posture, and acting ability. Others may require makeup, special clothing, or accessories like wigs and false noses. Lack of such disguise elements need not destroy any chance at impersonation, but Keepers will probably want to impose negative modifiers or require the character to attempt a Fast Talk roll.

**Mathematics:** This skill has little in common with Accounting. Mathematics is a science and also a branch of logic. It deals with abstract quantities manipulated according to equally abstract rules in such a way that unknown quantities or information can be derived from known ones. Branches of mathematics include geometry, algebra, calculus, number theory, group theory, and mathematical logic. Higher skill ratings indicate more penetrating knowledge of mathematical principles and more ability to solve mathematical problems. Although rulers, protractors, or more sophisticated instruments may be needed to collect data for a problem, the actual mathematical work usually requires nothing more than lots of paper, a pencil, and maybe a slide rule (or a calculator for modern-day campaigns) to

speed calculations.

Mathematics is occasionally useful in investigations because so much of Mythos magic and lore involves bizarre geometry. While neither Mathematics nor any other skill is sufficient to let an Investigator learn a Mythos spell, it could make the learning easier in some cases. For instance, a character trying to learn the highly mathematical Gate spell from a tome might be given a +1 on the tome's spell multiplier if he successfully makes a Mathematics roll. Mathematics might reveal that wall markings or a mosaic design symbolize strange multidimensional or non-Euclidean structures and relationships, providing a warning to Investigators. Finally, at the Keeper's option, a successful Mathematics roll may give an Investigator a bonus on another skill roll, such as Astronomy, Physics (see Chaosium's *Cthulhu Now* supplement), or Cryptography.

**Painting:** This skill allows a character to produce pictures by applying paint, charcoal, crayons, etc. to a flat surface such as a canvas. Success at a Painting roll means production of a fairly accurate representation of what the artist was trying to show. Although one can represent abstractions such as emotions or the Decline of the West through painting, in game contexts this skill will be more often used to create pictures of landscapes, creatures, and artifacts. Memory fades with time, after all, and not all things encountered in a Mythos investigation can be photographed. Whether anyone else will believe the paintings are of real things and not, the product of a disordered imagination is another matter.

**Philosophy:** A character using this skill can argue, more or less intelligently, in the four main branches of philosophy: metaphysics (dealing with the ultimate nature of reality), epistemology (the nature and limits of knowledge), logic (the study and practice of valid reasoning), and ethics (the study of good and evil). Such a character will also be familiar with philosophical trends of the past and present. Using this skill, a character may guess at the beliefs of another person after several minutes of subtle questioning, assuming that the subject either doesn't know or doesn't care that the questioner is trying to learn something. This skill can also be used to disguise true beliefs, somewhat like Impersonation (q.v.). Philosophy can thus be used to gain the confidence of cultists, politicians, and other sinister folk, since people are more likely to trust those whom they think agree with them.

Finally, Philosophy can be used to increase SAN, although this is less effective and more dangerous than Psychoanalysis. In each week of intensive “philosophical analysis,” or month of less intensive analysis, the philosopher-analyst makes a skill roll and the subject makes an Idea roll. If both succeed, the subject gains 1 point of SAN and may roll for an increase in his



own Philosophy skill. If the analyst makes a "special roll," the SAN increase is 1D4 points—a breakthrough. If the analyst fails his roll, however, the subject is confused and disillusioned, losing 1D2 SAN. If the subject fails the Idea roll, no SAN is gained or lost. Like psychoanalysis, philosophical analysis cannot raise a subject's SAN higher than his Luck roll. It can, however, be practiced on oneself. This is one reason why sages (master philosophers all) have such high POW and SAN: Through years of continual self-analysis, they raise their SAN to the limit set by their Luck, then trade in SAN for POW, thus raising their Luck rolls and increasing SAN.

**Play Instrument:** This skill is analogous to Sing; the higher the rating, the better the performance. The character is also able to play more difficult musical works. Some spells may call for musical accompaniment, making a Play Instrument roll necessary. Note that characters must specify which instrument they are proficient with, and each distinctly different instrumental skill must be bought separately. If two instruments are very similar, however, such as violin and viola, skill with one instrument should certainly carry over to the other.

**Sculpture:** This measures the ability to make three-dimensional images in clay, stone, wood, or other media. If a Sculpture roll succeeds, the character has accurately, recognizably portrayed the subject. Like Painting (q.v.), this skill measures only technique; artistic vision is beyond quantification.

## New Skills for Investigators

Skill	Base
Fine Art Knowledge	05%
Cryptography	INT%
Drafting	05%
Impersonation	10%
Mathematics	00%
Painting	05%
Philosophy	05%
Play Instrument	00%
Sculpture	05%
Any specialty	As original

Ω



## Sage Continued from page 10

(such as a kusari-gama in *Oriental Adventures*), does the character automatically gain proficiency with the weapons that correspond with each function (in this case, with chain and kama)?

The situation is analogous to that of the bastard sword described previously. Knowledge of the combination weapon does not necessarily allow use of its component weapons. The techniques required to use each of the weapons you mentioned are different. The governing principle in both of these cases is the no-free-lunch rule: You can't get two or more proficiencies for the price of one simply by selecting a multipurpose weapon.

**When do charging characters attack? What are the effects of a charge?**

Charging monsters or characters may attack normally at the end of their charge; exactly when depends on the reach of the weapons being used (longer weapons attack first). The charge movement, initiative, and affects chance to hit. See the *DMG*, page 66, for more details on charging.

**How do high dexterity scores or a short sword of quickness affect initiative?**

High dexterity never affects initiative; it affects only surprise. A short *sword of quickness* allows the wielder to attack first. This is not the same as having the initiative; a thief-acrobat (for example) cannot automatically evade each round simply because he has a *short sword of quickness*. He must win the die roll before he can evade.

**Can missile weapons, other than hurled melee weapons, be used in melee?**

No, missiles cannot be fired or hurled when the firing character is in melee. Furthermore, bows and arrows are not melee weapons and cannot normally be used in hand-to-hand combat. A bow or crossbow could, however, be used for pummeling (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 107).

**Can a character fire a missile into a melee without hitting friendly characters? If not, what is the chance of hitting an ally?**

This depends on the situation. When firing into a melee, use the following procedure:

The character firing the missile declares which creature he is targeting. (Any of the character's allies who are fighting with the target creatures are potential targets for the missile.) Randomly determine which target will actually be in the path of the missile. If the figures in the melee are about the same size (e.g., human vs. human, elf vs. dwarf), there is an equal chance that either the enemy or an ally

could be the missile's actual target. If the die roll indicates that an ally will be the actual target and there are multiple allies fighting the intended target, randomly determine which ally is the actual target.

Roll the to-hit number. If the appropriate number for the target's armor class is rolled, then the target is hit whether or not the character firing the missile wanted to hit that target. If the creatures in the melee are of different sizes, the larger creatures are more likely to be hit. I suggest a two-thirds chance (1-4 on 1d6 to hit the larger target when the height difference is 2-3' (ignore height differences of less than 2'). If the height difference is more than 3', allow the missile to hit the larger target automatically if the firer wishes; otherwise, the chance to hit the larger target is 5 in 6.

Many campaigns exempt the *magic missiles* spell from this rule. *Magic missiles* are assumed to unerringly strike their targets.

**Is it possible to use an object for nonlethal combat? How much damage would a chair or bar stool do?**

Yes, you can use odd objects for nonlethal combat. The amount of damage such objects can do depends on their hardness and mass. See *Unearthed Arcana*, page 107.

**How far can objects be tossed or thrown?**

The maximum range for any tossed object is 5' (a stone) or 3' (a flask of oil or a vial of holy water), as long as the object is reasonably compact. Large, bulky objects have a maximum range of 2' or less, depending on the situation.

**How do you handle gaze attacks?**

A creature with a gaze weapon may use it on one opponent per round in addition to any physical attacks. If the creature is unintelligent, this will be a random opponent. Intelligent creatures may pick their victims. Any opponent who can see the creature can be subject to the attack. The opponent who is subjected to the gaze attack must save vs. petrification. Some campaigns allow opponents to avert their eyes and become immune to the gaze attack, but such opponents attack and defend at a -4 penalty, and the decision to avert the eyes must be made prior to both the initiative roll and anyone knowing where the gaze will be directed. Some DMs may rule that if an entire party is surprised, all must save against the gaze during the first surprise segment of the encounter (several party members could accidentally meet the creature's gaze during the confusion of the surprise segment).

**I seem to recall some rule about a penalty when a character makes more than one attack in a round. Is there such a rule?**

We can refer to page 70 of the *DMG* for this answer. The reference states that a



# Hammer and Stake

Let vampires put the bite on your Cthulhu investigators!

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Artwork by Thomas Baxa

Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game is sometimes referred to as a gothic horror role-playing game. However, in recreating the cosmic horrors of Lovecraft and his disciples, little space was devoted to the petty terrestrial horrors of man's imagination, the true gothic menaces. The scenario "The Rescue" in the first *Cthulhu Companion* (and the fourth-edition game rulebook) described one of the more traditional horrors, the werewolf, in great detail. This article expands the existing vampire rules so that an entire campaign can be based on the hunting and slaying of these legendary creatures. These rules can be used with RUNEQUEST® and other games based on Chaosium's BASIC ROLE-PLAYING system. The fourth-edition CALL

OF CTHULHU rulebook describes vampires briefly on page 131. Information from this source will be referenced herein but will not be repeated.

The vampires described here aren't taken verbatim from any single piece of literature. Instead, these rules reflect the aspects of vampirism most suitable for use in a role-playing game. In particular, this article attempts to recreate the flavor of the numerous vampire movies made by Hammer Films in the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, as many gamers are familiar with these celluloid undead.

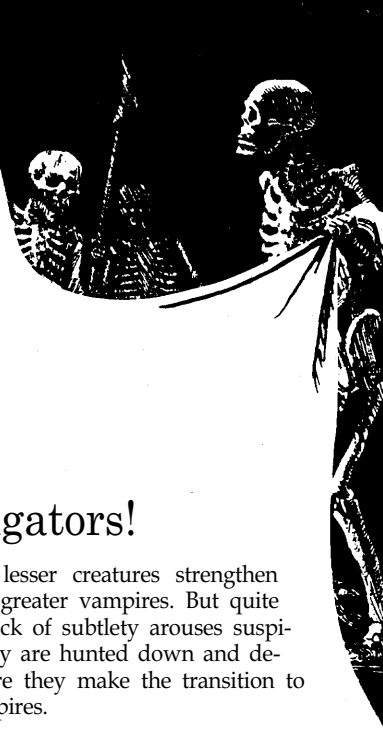
Two types of vampires are discussed in this article: the fledgling lesser vampires and their more experienced and much more powerful counterparts, the greater vampires. Lesser vampires are relatively weak, and their tactics reflect their inexperience and lack of finesse. After a few

years, these lesser creatures strengthen and become greater vampires. But quite often their lack of subtlety arouses suspicion, and they are hunted down and destroyed before they make the transition to greater vampires.

## Becoming a vampire

The most obvious way of becoming a vampire is to be bitten by one. In some legends, the mere bite of a vampire is *not* enough to infect the victim with the curse of blood-thirst, although some Game Masters (GMs might not let their players know that. The vampire must have killed the victim by completely draining all of his blood. If the proper steps are not taken, the corpse will rise within a week or two (for game purposes, 2d6 days) as a lesser vampire, which is described later.

Another way of becoming a vampire is



to be excommunicated by one's church. According to this belief, the body of the excommunicated person will never rest until it is accepted back into the church. In this case as well, the corpse arises as a lesser vampire within a few days of its burial.

The last method of becoming a vampire is one that should set any good CALL OF CTHULHU Keeper's creative gears in motion. The bodies of men and women who were purported to be sorcerers were said by legend to rise again to continue their evil doings. Needless to say, these creatures also need the blood of the living to continue this nefarious "afterlife." They, too, start off as lesser vampires.

### Vampiric disabilities

The two types of vampires have a number of things in common, one of which is their aversion to garlic. This aversion prevents them from approaching any closer than 6' from a person wearing or brandishing garlic. The vampires take no damage from this substance; it merely irritates them in a manner similar to a severe allergic reaction. Vampires can (and probably will) use their hypnotic gaze to force offenders to drop the garlic.

Both types are also damaged by contact with holy items, in particular the Christian cross, the Star of David, and holy water. The cross or the star does 1d6 points of damage to a vampire per touch, and the vampire will try to avoid contact at all costs, usually keeping about 10' between itself and the offending object. As with the garlic, a vampire will probably use its hypnotic gaze to make the holder drop the item. A splash with holy water also does 1d6 damage per hit to the undead. These weapons should be in the arsenal of every competent vampire-hunter.

Two of Nature's most common phenomena spell doom for the vampire: sunlight and running water. Immersion in running water (and this means *immersion*, not throwing a bucket of water over it) and direct sunlight each causes a vampire one point of damage per round of contact. A vampire reduced to zero hit points as a result is permanently destroyed. Neither vampire type is able to cross running water or open sunlight for this reason.

Obviously, vampire hunters can use the above vulnerabilities to limit the movements of vampires. Blocking their routes with crosses, smeared garlic, or water courses suggest themselves.

Lesser and greater vampires cast no reflections, whether in mirrors or other glass surfaces or on the surface of water. Neither variety casts a shadow. Extrapolating from these properties, it can be assumed that their images cannot be captured using normal photographic techniques. (Characters with the Photography skill should be allowed a roll to see if they can come up with a way of catching these creatures on film. Before allowing this roll,

the character should have made at least one previously unsuccessful attempt to photograph a vampire.) On a similar note, the voices of vampires cannot be recorded by normal means. These problems limit a vampire's ability to move among humans and appear to be human itself.

A vampire needs to rest during daylight hours in a coffin or crypt that contains soil from the country of its birth. If this is not done, it loses 1d6 hit points each day until it either perishes or has rested on its home soil. These losses are regained only after the creature has slept on home soil and has then fed on blood. Its hit points are then restored by an amount equal to the number of CON it drains during a feeding (see "The lesser vampire: Feeding"); this continues until the vampire's hit points are restored to their original level. This same deterioration occurs if the vampire is unable to get its quota of blood (see "Feeding" under "The lesser vampire" and "The greater vampire"). Failure to obtain blood results in a loss of 1-6 hit points per day, and this loss can be halted and reversed as noted previously. The POW that the vampire drains from its victim by touch is added to its own POW total (though a vampire still has a SAN of zero, like all monstrous creatures).

A wounded vampire regains all hit points lost from combat within 24 hours, provided it rests on home soil as detailed above. If damaged but not brought to zero hit points, it is quite able to defend itself during the daylight hours. Its only daytime supernatural powers, however, are its gaze attack and the related "blood slavery" telepathy, both of which are discussed later (the latter in the section "Victims of vampirism"). The vampire can still attack physically, of course. If brought to zero hit points, the vampire is completely helpless and must revert to a smoky, foggy, or misty incorporeal form, returning to its coffin until fully regenerated. Once inside the coffin, the vampire can only call its "blood slaves" or use its gaze to fend off vampire-hunters; otherwise, it is quite vulnerable to destruction.

One of the most dreadful abilities of both types of vampires is the power to hypnotize anyone catching their gaze. The vampire can use this ability on any one target of its choice that is able to see its eyes, and the undead must be successful in a POW vs. POW struggle against the target. Gaze attacks are resolved at the beginning of the round and if the vampire fails, it is still allowed another action besides a gaze (attack, short movement, etc.) at the very end of the round. The target can try to avert his eyes from the vampire's gaze by rolling his POW  $\times$  5 or less on 1d100 each time the vampire makes such an attempt. However, this allows any physical attacks made by the vampire on that character to be at +10% to the attack roll. If the victim is unable to avert his eyes in time and the vampire makes the

POW vs. POW roll, this victim has been hypnotized. This hypnotizing effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to the vampire's POW, or until the victim is physically disturbed in some way (such as being hit by a successful attack or being vigorously slapped, etc., but *not* by being bitten by the vampire). The effect allows the vampire to give the victim unspoken commands that he will then carry out. A command for overtly suicidal behavior breaks the spell, but a command for attacking one's colleagues does not. Only one victim at a time can be so held by the vampire; an attempt against someone else automatically frees the first. Most vampires use this ability to force their opponents to drop their guard (especially if that guard includes garlic or holy items).

### The lesser vampire

*Means of destruction:* The lesser vampire, in addition to the vulnerabilities discussed above, takes minimum damage from and cannot be impaled by normal weapons of any kind. However, if struck with an impaling roll in the chest by a wooden weapon such as a stake, sharpened staff, or the like, they are immediately destroyed. Also, if struck by an impaling roll to the head with a long-bladed weapon such as a sword, battle-axe, or similar weapon, they are immediately decapitated and destroyed. If you are not using the hit-location tables from the *Cthulhu Now* supplement, allow a 25% chance of striking the chest and a 5% chance for the head; you may double these percentages if the Investigators state they are aiming for these specific locations. Lesser vampires take normal damage from but are not impaled by silver or magic weapons. Fire affects them normally, but it does not destroy them.

To summarize methods for destruction: decapitation; wooden stake through the heart; exposure to sunlight; immersion in running water; prolonged failure to rest on home soil; prolonged failure to feed.

*Shapechanging:* Lesser vampires have only one form of this power, and it is assumed only involuntarily, when the creature is brought to zero hit points by nonfatal means. This is its smoky incorporeal form. The vampire is able to pass through very small cracks or openings to get to its coffin to rest and regenerate when in this form.

*Feeding:* A lesser vampire must feast on blood three times per week, or about every other day. A successful attack drains 1d4 each of CON and POW from its victim per round of feeding. This blood can be taken from the bodies of animals as well as humans, but this is only done in extreme emergencies as the vampire prefers humans. The lesser vampire will usually try to hypnotize its victims first; if this fails, it will batter them into unconsciousness or submission.

*Behavior and tactics:* Lesser vampires

might resort to drinking nonhuman blood, which would sicken greater vampires. For the most part, the lesser variety is driven by animal desires and is likely to make foolish mistakes in its lust for blood. The results of the lesser vampire's loss of humanity is its loss of APP, as illustrated in the Lesser and Greater Vampires' Statistics table. They are not totally stupid, however; lesser vampires often choose weak victims such as women and children to assure their own relative safety. The lesser vampire is more likely to create other vampires because of inexperience, eagerness, blood lust, etc., than the more reserved greater vampire, though they have less of a chance to control their victims (as noted later). They usually don't create other vampires willingly, of course, for this draws too much attention and "crowds the marketplace." If another vampire is inadvertently created, the original one may try to destroy it to keep the competition down.

**Skills:** For the most part, the lesser vampire's skills are the same as they were during the creature's life. As time passes, increases occur in the subject's Agility (Climb, Dodge, Jump), Stealth (Hide, Sneak), and Perception (Listen, Psychology, Spot Hidden, Track) skill areas. During its stint as a lesser vampire, Manipulation, Communication, and (to a lesser extent) Knowledge skills remain relatively constant. Some penalization in the Communication skills might not be a bad idea, due to the loss of APP ("Isn't that Yorga fella kinda creepy? I mean, he's so *pale*."). In combat, lesser vampires attack as per the details in the CALL OF CTHULHU game's fourth-edition rulebook, on page 131.

**The transition:** Add together the STR, CON, INT, POW, and DEX scores the vampire had when it was alive, then subtract the total from 100. This gives you the number of months the vampire must remain a lesser creature before becoming a greater vampire.

### The greater vampire

**Means of destruction:** In addition to the vulnerabilities discussed in the text on lesser vampires, greater vampires take no damage whatsoever from normal weapons (with the exception of impaling strikes to the chest with wooden weapons, as per lesser vampires above). They do take minimum damage and no impaling strikes from silver or magic weapons.

To summarize the ways of killing greater vampires: exposure to sunlight; immersion in running water; prolonged failure to rest on home soil; prolonged failure to feed; or a wooden stake through the heart *plus* either burning, decapitation, or exposure to sunlight or running water (the stake alone merely keeps it immobile, decomposes it to the bare bones, and holds it *completely* powerless until the stake is removed).

**Shapechanging and summoning:** The

gaseous incorporeal form discussed for lesser vampires must be assumed by a greater vampire when it is brought to zero hit points by nonfatal means; this form can also be taken at will by the greater vampire. This monster can also assume the form of a wolf or large bat at will. This process takes a round to complete. While in these forms, the vampire cannot use its gaze but retains its other immunities and vulnerabilities. While in mist form, the vampire is immune to all forms of damage except magical weapons and attacks until it changes form again. When in human or animal form, it can summon each of the following creature types once per 24-hour period: 2d6 large bats, 2d6 rat packs, or 1d3 wolves. These creatures are subject to availability in the area, rats or bats being usually much more accessible in most places than wolves. These animals usually arrive within 3d6 rounds and flee when they have lost more than 50% of their numbers.

**Feeding:** The greater vampire is able to control its urges for blood to some degree. It needs to feed only once per week, but the greater vampire absolutely will not drink the blood of anything less than a human. As it drains 1d6 + 1 POW and 1d6 + 1 CON from its victim, it must be relatively careful and in control of its urges or it will create new vampires every time it feeds. This draining effect makes the greater vampire more likely to be able to control its victims (see later), making for more frequent visits to these unfortunates. The vampire's feeding is often facilitated by hypnotizing or charming its victims or, failing that, by pummeling them into submission.

**Behavior and tactics:** Because it has a greater degree of control over its bloodlust, the greater vampire is a far more subtle opponent than its lesser counterpart. With a few exceptions, the greater vampire is infinitely more refined and graceful in its appearance, and definitely more attractive and charismatic; this behavioral refinement is illustrated by the greater vampire's increase in APP. Like the lesser creatures, the greater vampire usually refuses to make its victims into new vampires. If the vampire does, it will probably be for some perverse form of vengeance against said victim, and eventually the vampire will have one of its non-vampiric servants or victims destroy this unfortunate one. Those whom the greater vampire unwittingly infects with vampirism will also be dispatched by his servants.

Few opponents are more dangerous or more alluring than the greater vampire. If it feels that it is soon to be discovered, it will create several new vampires before making its escape to safer environs. This way it not only creates further menaces for its pursuers to deal with, it also leaves behind seeds that may grow into a powerful alliance as well as a bitter form of revenge.

**Skills:** As a rule, most of the Agility skills of a greater vampire should be at least doubled from its "living" scores to reflect its ability to scale steep inclines, make fantastic leaps, and perform other such feats. This does not extend to such skills as Swimming and Boating, for obvious reasons. Stealth and Perception skill areas should probably be doubled from previous "living" scores. Knowledge skills will probably increase considerably as well due to the additional EDU point (and the accompanying 15 skill points) it receives for every additional 10 years of its "life." A greater vampire may still be weak in Manipulation and Communication skills, and only one or two attack forms other than punching or grappling should have increased very much. Greater vampires attack as do lesser vampires but with a 15% bonus to all of their physical attack forms.

### Victims of vampirism

As we saw earlier, a vampire can create a new vampire by completely draining a victim of blood. But if the vampire is very careful or very lucky, it can make one of its victims a slave to its will, as if the creature's gaze attack were permanently in effect on that person.

For this reason, the losses of CON and POW must be carefully tracked for each of a vampire's victims. When a vampire successfully subdues a victim by gaze or by fist, it then bites that victim. The GM should roll one dice of the appropriate type (1d4 for lesser, 1d6 + 1 for greater) each round and subtract the result from both the CON and POW of the victim. As stated earlier, most vampires will not intentionally try to drain their victims completely. For a lesser vampire, the blood-draining process takes 1-3 rounds, depending on the victim's size. The greater vampire must be more careful to keep from killing too many of its victims and making them into vampires. For them, about 1-2 rounds should suffice. If a victim's POW or CON is ever brought to zero by a vampire's draining attack, that person dies and becomes a lesser vampire. If a vampire of either type drains a victim of more than half of that victim's original POW, then that person has become a blood slave to that vampire.

The characteristics losses of a victim are regenerated at a rate of one point to POW and CON per day, or 1d3 + 1

Luck rolls and (more importantly) hit points.





A blood slave is kept in mental contact with its vampiric master at all times. This mental contact merely allows the sending of messages between the two minds, not visual or auidial sensations. The victim will follow any command the vampire gives provided the order doesn't involve suicidal behavior as per a gaze attack. However, the blood-slave effect is permanent and is usable by the vampire during the day, usually to aid the vampire if its resting place has been found. This contact can be broken only by the destruction of the controlling vampire and is effective at any distance.

A victim slain by a vampire's blood draining (i.e., brought to zero POW or CON) arises within 2d6 game days as a lesser vampire, independent of the greater vampire's control. There are ways to avoid this, most notably the grisly method of staking the defenseless creature before it arises. Another successful method would be cremation, provided the undead victim has not yet initially risen from its grave. More subtle methods such as prayer vigils or the use of holy items or garlic might be successful, according to the GM's wishes, but this is not recommended. Vampire exterminating should be a dirty, gruesome business.

#### Sanity and vampires

The various aspects of vampirism can affect the SAN of the viewer. Seeing a lesser vampire and knowing it to be such costs 1d6 SAN unless a SAN roll is made, in which case there is no loss; a greater vampire requires a roll for a possible loss of 1d8 SAN (or 1 SAN if the roll is made). If the vampire was known in life to the witness, an additional loss of 1d4 (or 1) SAN is taken. Being bitten by a vampire (of either type) requires a SAN roll; 1d4 is lost, or 1 point is lost if the SAN roll is made. Seeing a vampire feed on another human being costs 1d3 SAN unless a SAN roll is made, in which case no SAN is lost.

Participating in the staking of a new vampire that has not yet risen also requires a SAN roll. If the roll is successful, the character loses only 1 SAN and can continue the procedure; if the roll fails, that character loses 1d4 SAN and cannot take part in the staking at that time. At least 1d10 x 5 minutes must pass before that character can get up the nerve to try again, at which time another SAN roll must be attempted; there is no loss for the

second and subsequent SAN rolls, but if they, too, fail, this weak-willed individual must wait another 1d10 x 5 minutes and then attempt yet another SAN roll, continuing this process until the SAN roll is made, someone else stakes the vampire-to-be, or the vampire-to-be wakes up!

Staking any already risen vampire (of either type) costs 1 SAN if the roll fails, but the character is still able to participate; if the roll is successful, there is no loss. Staking a vampire, risen or not, who was known in life to the one doing the staking requires a roll for a SAN loss of 1d6 (or 1), and if the roll fails the character cannot immediately take part in the act. A character with a failed roll must make SAN rolls every 1d10 x 5 minutes as before, but each failed roll still causes a loss of 1 SAN. Viewing the disintegration of a vampire due to most usual methods of vampire-killing costs 1d3 or zero SAN, depending on the success or failure of the SAN roll.

On the other hand, destroying a lesser vampire restores 2d4 SAN to those who took part in its execution, while the demise of a greater vampire gains 2d6 SAN for each of his killers. The Keeper may also wish to give an additional point of SAN for each nonplayer character blood slave freed by a vampire's death.

#### Vampires in campaigns

When using vampires in CALL OF CTHULHU adventures, note that these rules are by no means carved in stone. The Keeper can and should tinker with these ideas to create a few unique vampires to be encountered in addition to those described herein. Imagine, for instance, a vampire who is unaffected by the usual banes detailed above (sunlight, holy items, running water, etc.) until the night on which it must feed, at which time it becomes a sort of bestial "were-vampire." Or picture an atheistic vampire immune to religious trappings such as holy water and holy symbols, but otherwise like the undead described in this article. Or perhaps a vampire unaffected by sunlight and with no special powers during the day, but in all other respects like the vampires described above. Using this article as a guideline, the possibilities are virtually endless.

One of the most important jobs of the prospective vampire-hunter is cutting through all the myth and legendry surrounding these creatures and finding their true banes. Most methods for destroying

vampires are known to anyone with an Occult skill of 15% or more, while the more obscure means (such as the fact that greater vampires are not slain by staking alone) are known to those with an Occult skill of 30% or more. The methods for fending off vampires (garlic, cross, etc.) are known to anyone with a skill level better than 5%. (These figures may seem rather low to some, but remember that we in the 1990s have had 60 years of vampire films to "teach" us about the ecology of the vampire. Folk in the 1920s were limited to written sources of vampire lore. Keepers running campaigns set in the 1990s may wish to lower these minimum skill levels by 5% or so to reflect the Investigators' "education" via the cinematic vampire.) Most of this information can be found at a nearby library with a couple hours research and a few successful Library Use rolls.

It should be apparent that vampires need to change their feeding grounds every so often to avoid suspicion. Sometimes they may be forced to move because suspicion has already been aroused. Vampires almost always have some sort of human slave or contact to take care of major travel arrangements; this is especially true of movements across bodies of water. These slaves are usually victims of the vampire's POW-draining that have been promised eventual full vampirehood for their aid. These slaves often transport several coffins for their vampiric masters, as these monsters tend to have several spread about their hunting and haunting grounds.

A final note: When a vampire gets in a free-for-all with the PCs, if at all possible just knock them around until they're unconscious. Then have the vampire bite 'em. If it suits your needs, you should try to make one of your PCs (or at the very least an important or powerful NPC) into a slave of a vampire. This may involve fudging the die rolls during the vampire's blood-draining (it wouldn't do to kill the Investigator too quickly; just make him and his companions squirm). The characters will then have an even better reason to hunt down the nefarious bloodsucker, to free both their friend and the world of this menace. Then again, if the vampire does happen to kill one of the Investigators, the remainder of the party will have to deal with the victim in addition to the original horror. Imagine the horrible scene when the Investigators set out to stake their former colleague!

[O ther recent articles on vampires that have appeared in DRAGON® Magazine include: "Hearts of Darkness" and "A Touch of Evil," in issue #126 (on AD&D® game vampires); "The MARVEL®-Phile," in issue #126 and in this issue (on MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game vampires); and "Fangs A lot!" in issue #150 (on AD&D 2nd Edition game vampires).]

Lesser and Greater Vampires' CALL OF CTHULHU® Game Statistics

Characteristic	While living	As lesser	Lesser's average	As greater	Greater's average
STR	3d6	3d6 + d6	14	(3d6 + d6) x 2	28
CON	3d6	3d6 + d6	14	(3d6 + d6) x 2	28
SIZ	2d6+6	2d6+6	13	2d6+6	13
INT	2d6+6	2d6+6	13	2d6+6	13
POW	3d6	3d6	10-11	3d6 x 2	21
DEX	3d6	3d6	10-11	3d6 x 1.5	16
APP	3d6	3d6 - d3	8-9	3d6 - d3+d6	12-13
HP (average)	12	-	14	-	21

Meet Mr. Josh Wellmeat—  
the CALL OF CTHULHU\* game “dragon”

# The DRAGON PROJECT

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Artwork by Paul Daly

The supernatural worlds of horror created by H.P. Lovecraft again come to life (or unlife) in Chaosium’s CALL OF CTHULHU\* game. Players take the roles of human Investigators in the 1880s, 1920s, or present day. As they look into strange events and analyze unusual objects, they uncover evidence of monstrous plots to enslave or destroy humanity. Alien gods of insanity and darkness wish to take control of the Earth, and only the Investigators can delay their coming — though the Investigators risk madness and doom at every turn.

Deep in the heart of the Keeper’s favorite old city dwells Mr. Josh Wellmeat — or someone who claims to be him. The truth of the matter is stranger than any Investigator would ever imagine.

Millions of years ago, during the Permian age, Mr. Wellmeat was Ssvalpynos Skenanss, a typical Serpent Man, more sorcerous and ambitious than most, but nothing too exceptional for that primordial epoch. With the rise of the early mammal precursors, Ssvalpynos Skenanss foresaw the extinction of his own species, and he made preparations for his own survival, seeking out magicks of concealment, longevity, and protection.

During the Triassic, Ssvalpynos imitated the forms of the rulers of that age, the feared Great Race of Yith. He mastered their science and hid away some of their technology in time capsules. When the Great Race was wiped out, he lived on in a barbaric world thrilled with raging dinosaurs. To survive, he used the biological knowledge of the Great Race to perma-







nently change his own body, growing to immense size and strength. Soon, only the largest dinosaurs could threaten him, but his magical powers rendered him safe from even these.

From his readings among the Great Race, Ssvalpynos knew that eventually humanity would develop a complex civilization. In time, he took up residence among these detestable descendants of the apes and became known as Josh Wellmeat. Now that the humans have finally developed electrical technology, he can use their power sources to operate the devices contained within his time capsules.

Unfortunately, all of his capsules have been unearthed and carried off by inquisitive humans. The capsules were protected by the technology of the Great Race, so the "thieves," being mere humans, could not open the stolen capsules, but neither could Wellmeat easily recover his lost property.

Wellmeat grew to colossal size during the age of the dinosaurs, and he retains this immensity. He has grown too large to leave his house, which has been built specially around him to conceal his form from human eyes. To assist him, he has combined magical and biological lore to create artificial life—homunculi.

### The homunculi

Wellmeat has grown a number of humanoid creatures in vats. These beings, homunculi, are "built" on skeletons which Wellmeat imports from India, giving them human form. They have shiny pink plastic-like skin and smooth faces, lacking noses, external ears, and hair. Their eyes are lidless and round, they have only holes for ears, and their mouths are lipless, but they do have excellent vocal cords.

Homunculi have no minds of their own and are animated by Wellmeat himself, acting as extensions of his psyche. He uses them as his hands and eyes to interact with the outside world. He can also cast his spells through the homunculi.

To give the homunculi the semblance of humanity, Wellmeat uses a variation on the spell of Consume Likeness. He devours the flesh of a person whom he wishes to imitate, just as in the normal spell, but the person can be of any size, not just within 3 SIZ points of himself (more details follow). Wellmeat does not himself transform into the form of his victim. Instead, he projects the image of his victim over one of his homunculi. So long as that homunculus lives, it has the appearance of the selected victim. When the homunculus dies, Wellmeat loses the power to create that particular person's illusion ever again.

The homunculi's statistics are all 10, except for INT and POW (which are Wellmeat's), so they are easily killed. They live forever unless killed. They have simplified digestive tracts and can eat only mushy, easily digested food, such as prepared baby food. If questioned about this diet, the homunculi will claim to have an

### Josh Wellmeat (Ssvalpynos Skenanss)

#### CALL OF CTHULHU\* Game Statistics

STR 88	CON 56	SIZ 132	INT 22
POW 32	DEX 6	Move 10	HP 94
APP 10 (homunculus)			

**Weapon:** Bite attack 95%, damage 13d6; tongue attack 95%, damage 1d6, plus wraps around and grasps prey. Wellmeat cannot leave his house to deliver a bite attack unless he rises up, completely demolishing the house and leaving it a pile of rubble around his haunches. However, he can flick forth his tongue to attack foes up to 15 meters away from the house, so long as he or one of his homunculi can see the target. Anyone hit by Wellmeat's tongue is automatically grasped and pulled into the house to be attacked by the monster's Bite on the following round. Only a successful STR vs. STR roll against the tongue's STR of 22 will break the target free.

The tongue has 32 hit points of its own, but no armor, and can be attacked before it grabs someone. However, it flickers so fast that the chances of scoring a hit on it are halved. If it is reduced to zero hit points before it makes its attack, it is crippled; Wellmeat then withdraws it and will not use it anymore.

**Armor:** Wellmeat himself has 13 points of armored scales. Through occult means, he has made himself and his tongue completely immune to fire and heat damage. If sorely pressed, he may detonate the gasoline tanks he has stored in the basement of the house and issue forth, covered with towering flames to roast all those who torment him. If he does this, everyone within 6 meters of him while the fire burns takes 1d6 heat damage each round. Everyone within 3 meters of him takes 3d6 damage from the flames. This might make a good spectacular ending to a scenario involving Wellmeat.

**Spells:** Through his epochs of study, Wellmeat knows all the basic Mythos spells. In addition, he knows the following magicks from the Lesser Grimoire, found in the back of the fifth edition of the CALL OF CTHULHU game (pages 148-158): Bless Blade, Conjure Glass of Mortlan, Create Mist of Releh, Deflect Harm, Dominate, Fist of Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Mesmerize, Wither Limb, and Wellmeat's version of Consume Likeness.

**Skills:** Wellmeat knows all CALL OF CTHULHU knowledge-oriented skills (such as Occult, Zoology, Linguist, etc.) at 100. He knows all skills requiring a physical form at 25 (Wellmeat has huge, clumsy claws); the homunculi can use all the physical skills as well as Wellmeat himself.

**Sanity Loss:** 0/1d6 +2 Sanity points to see Wellmeat's full form (0/1d4 to see a small part of him in his home).



ulcer.

Unfortunately for Wellmeat, when one of his homunculi is killed, its human illusion fades within an hour. So far, he has always managed to regain or destroy the corpse of a dead homunculi before suspicions were aroused. He does not dare send a homunculus too far away from home, where its body would be inaccessible to his other homunculi were it to die.

For his Consume Likeness spell, Wellmeat has his homunculi search for adult male humans who will not be missed (e.g., vagrants, illegal immigrants, and petty criminals). Once these unfortunates are led to his home, he then devours them in order to gain the ability to project their likenesses onto his homunculi. He does not publicly use a free-roving homunculus based on a particular victim until at least a century has passed, so nobody living will recognize the shape and he can safely claim it as his own.

At the moment, he has four century-old "spares" available, plus three more that have not aged a century yet and must be kept indoors (they were created 70, 45, and 6 years ago, respectively). This gives him seven total homunculi which stay inside his house, along with one that travels freely, currently professing to be Mr. Josh Wellmeat and tending to the monster's business and social interactions.

When Wellmeat fears that the never-

aging form of a homunculus is getting too obvious, he loses a second homunculus and has it take up existence as an independent personality under a different name. After a few months, he has his first homunculus sell all his property at market prices to the second homunculus. Then the first homunculus pretends to move out of town (actually, Svalpynos eats it), and the second homunculus takes over as the new persona for the monster.

### The hollow house

Wellmeat's house is simply a hollow shell, containing his own true, grossly swollen form, along with his seven spare homunculi, which groom and clean the monstrous shape. There is also a vat containing a human skeleton, which Wellmeat will use to create a new homunculus if the need arises. Finally, in the basement of the house are some large covered vats of gasoline connected to an ignition system—a recent addition.

If an intruder enters Wellmeat's house and opens one of the inner doors, he is confronted by a pulsating mass of scaly flesh, possibly punctuated by a claw, an eye, or other organ. Wellmeat himself cannot be seen in full unless he destroys his house by leaving it. When fully manifested, Wellmeat is exceedingly hideous. He is basically an undulating lump of tissue, like an armored pudding. At one

end of the lump is a hemispheric structure containing eyes, nostrils, and a slaving mouth filled with fangs each .7 meters long. An immense tongue, even longer than the bulbous body, flickers out from the mouth and waves menacingly at the astonished passersby. Titanic claws protrude from the horror's form, but there are no true legs or even feet—Wellmeat moves by rocking his body from side to side, flopping along in a crippled-looking, almost pathetic manner. Still, the monster's vast size enables it to proceed by this means fairly quickly.

Perhaps the worst part of the horror is not the whole, but the details: the intelligent, sensitive eyes; the burnished scales, polished and tended with loving care by the homunculi over the decades; the sparks of alien energy leaping from the creature's body as it prepares a deadly spell. Even more dreadful, if he blows up his house (see "Armor" in the game statistics box), the monster is likely to be encased in a sheath of flames, burning but not consumed.

### Personality and goals

Wellmeat's main reason for interacting with any party of Investigators is to regain his lost time capsules. He should first appear to a party of Investigators as a friend. Obviously, he'll never let them come inside his house, but he is happy to meet them in fancy restaurants for meals (for which he foots the bill, being comfortably wealthy).

Wellmeat tells the Investigators that he is seeking certain ancient archeological discoveries (in reality the time capsules). He wishes to acquire them because of their occult significance. If their nature is evil, he naturally wishes to have them destroyed or rendered harmless. If they are beneficial, he wants to use them, and offers to share their lore with the Investigators. However, when any capsule is recovered, he claims in every case to have learned that it was malign and had to be destroyed—he never actually shares any information with the Investigators.

Wellmeat pays the Investigators handsomely for their assistance in recovering each "archeological discovery" (the exact number of time capsules being searched for is left for the Keeper to decide). Each capsule has occult defenses, and Wellmeat warns the Investigators that they are dangerous. Wellmeat has performed magical rituals to find the current location of each of the capsules, but has only been able to localize the capsules in a very general way (e.g., "somewhere in Baltimore" or "the Isle of Man"). The capsules were long ago enchanted to adopt shapes that would disguise their natures; such shape-changing has become rather chaotic over the eons, however, and they could look like anything from the size of a car down to a clothes chest.

Wellmeat offers to pay the Investigators' reasonable expenses on the search. He

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# A Monster in the



# CLASSICAL TRADITION

An untapped source of Mythos horror for Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU\* game is the myths and legends of ancient cultures. Described in stories and legends are terrible creatures, many of which need very little work to provide horrific foes to intrepid investigators.

Classical Greek mythology is perhaps the best known such culture. An imaginative Keeper can find a wealth of monsters to adapt to her campaign from the various Greek legends. Below is the example a description of one monster from the myths, the Echidna (whom the Greeks described as a half-woman, half-serpentine beast). I have included beyond the creature's statistics and portions of a journal written by one ill-fated professor that can be used in an adventure dealing with the echidna. More mention of campaign uses for the echidna can be found at the end of this piece.



# Add the Greek echidna to your CALL OF CTHULHU\* game's roster of horrors

by Steve Berman

Artwork by Jim Holloway

The journal excerpts below are offered as a springboard for adventures with the echidna. The journal may be found years they were written amid Professor Gohmier's effects. A reporter or writer PC may be asked by an academician NPC (or perhaps by one of the dear departed Professor's relatives) to compile, edit, and authenticate the writings. Or, the encounter with the Professor may be more recent, with the investigators being hired by the Professor's university (Keepers should choose an institution appropriate to their campaigns) to discover what has happened to a member of their staff.

The last entry of the journal is optional. Some Keepers may feel it reveals too much information, spoiling the horrific effect of first encountering the echidna. Feel free to omit it, leaving the fate of Professor Gohmier in doubt. How the journal finds its way to PCs is then more problematical, though. Perhaps the professor survived the experience and is now locked up in some Greek insane asylum, an unidentified madman.

*Excerpts from the Journal of Dr. Alexenor T. Gohmier Ph.D., Associate Professor of Classical Studies.*

*February 17th:* The university recently acquired the notes from the estate of Nikos Denopoli. While poring over the notes of the revolutionary that lived during the Ottomans' rule, I noticed mention of some sort of beast living in the hills of central Greece. What interests me so is that the creature is described as part woman, part serpent. One does not have to hold a graduate degree in the classics to realize what such a thing sounds like the echidna! Sure-

ly, the beast must be just a myth though. Still, my thoughts keep coming back to the detailed reports of the witnesses. This bears further study.

*June 6th:* I am now convinced after reading through so many pages that the echidna lives! Though my eyes are raw and my head aches, I feel flushed, near ecstatic. Oh, the creature is no mythological teratism, but rather some enormous serpent to be sure. The ancients must have confused the animal with something more sinister. I wonder how such a thing could remain obscure to this day. But I intend to find it nonetheless. I shall request my sabbatical, so more time can be devoted to this.

*October 27th:* I have done all the work possible in these hallowed halls. Thank God my sabbatical begins this winter. I have already planned my itinerary. The exact location of the village where the echidna was first mentioned must be found.

*January 14th:* The salt-laden Atlantic sea air is quite refreshing. Still, for all this cruise ship has to offer, I look forward to reaching Greece to once more begin the task of finding the echidna. The University of Athens should hold some accounts, perhaps even the report of a witness, if I may be so lucky.

*March 10th:* My second night in the village and still I feel uncomfortable among these folk. Though their outward treatment of me is without complaint, I seem to sense a hostility behind their simple faces. Is it directed at me, or my research—and why?

I must return to the village church. I noticed several odd woodcuts in the vestry. They portray some creature that looks like a cross between woman and

viper luring men into caves. The priest will not discuss the carvings with me. I shall try once more to pry forth some details.

*March 12th:* I have had enough of searching through manuscripts and papers. It is past time for me to bring a more personal element to my hunt for the echidna. Though I have some doubt about exploring the caves to the north, a grand discovery awaits me, I am sure. To find tangible proof of this serpent's existence would propel me to the zenith of my field. Schliemann beware! I shall soon surpass your beloved Troy!

*March 12th, later:* The villagers saw the spelunking equipment I bore and became most alarmed. Several tried to stop me, arguing most emphatically that the caves were not safe. I thought at one point to be physically prevented, but I managed to stare them down. The hike to the caves was mildly fatiguing, and I plan to rest for an hour and check all my equipment before entering the caves. My hand nearly trembles from the mounting excitement.

The caves have a damp atmosphere. I should have worn warmer clothing.

There's no sign of any life—odd glistening trails here and there. Is this some sort of mineral secretion?

The tunnels branch often. I shall mark the ones I enter with chalk.

I have stopped my gawking at the immense cave I entered not an hour ago. My colleagues back at the university would not be able to contain themselves. I myself, no archeologist, feel my breath catch. Pre-Hellenic ruins, to be sure! My lamp rests upon ruined marble, then finds a series of ancient columns—perhaps an entire city, beneath the earth. How did these ruins become mere earth and rubble? Did the earth open and engulf them? I feel like a protagonist in a Verne novel. I must explore further.

I hear odd sounds—sort of a slithering noise. Water perhaps?

Dear God, whoever carved the stone had abominable thoughts on his mind. Terrible bas-reliefs. My hands tremble at the sight.

Found a focal point to the ruins. A large statue set on a malachite dais. Bronze, yet showing no sign of verdigris. Figure is male and reclines, with one hand outstretched as if regarding the fingers. The face is twisted, laughter perhaps. Odd to find empty eye sockets. The craftsmanship is very good.

Hold! There is another visage on the rear of the head. With only my lamp's light, it is hard to see, but there it is. A smaller face scowling. Could this be a representation of Janus?

Have to sit down a moment and think. Why would a Roman deity be found here?! A few colleagues have often conjectured at what the worship of Janus offered. Remember reading in Frazier that "the true nature and functions of Janus the ancients themselves were puzzled; and where they hesitated, it is not for us confidently to

decide." Now I wonder what more did that man know and did not dare to say—

Odd sounds again. Much stronger and coming from behind. What in blazes—

*March 15th:* At last I can write again. Here I lay in a shepherds cottage. My fever has broken, my wounds tended to. I wonder—should I explain the lapse in entries? Though what sort of therapy would be gained by once more experiencing the horror? Yet, I know that I must for my own sanity, if not scholarship.

I was sitting down beside the statue. I heard those awful sounds. Turning my head, I began to scream my throat raw. For coming out of the ruined structures were these horrible things. Large pale slugs was my first thought, crawling toward me. Their front ends were reared up like cobras, but there was no fanged mouth, no face. Only a black pit set in the center of the things' quivering flesh. A mane of black quills were set around each creatures' heads, like some mockery of hair.

I could see now how ancient man might have caught a glimpse of the echidna—for I know without doubt, that is what I was faced with—and thought it a monstrous mix of woman and serpent. I ran from them, thankful for the slow, shuffling crawl of the creatures. I headed for the outskirts of the ruins and the tunnel that would lead me back to sanity and safety. As I passed the buildings, I saw within many recesses more of the hideous echidna sliding forth toward me. Thank God I had been content to walk past those ancient structures and not enter, else I would have been lost to them.

I had made the tunnel, trying to climb at a fast pace. I must have slipped on a trail of slime, nearly breaking my leg and leaving me helpless to the maws of the things below. But aside from scrapes and bruises, I pulled myself forth whole, my mind still reeling.

What are my intentions now? I cannot simply leave the area and arrive back at the university, and hope to return to safer studies. I feel my idle thoughts returning again and again to the horror I was witness to. A veil has been rent aside for me, and I shudder to think what other terrible truths there are to the myths of our ancestors! No, I must take action else I shall never rest. I seem to recall the library of Miskatonic University in Massachusetts has some esoteric tomes on such subjects—perhaps it's time for another journey.

## ECHIDNA

### Lesser Independent Race

These creatures resemble large pale worms. They possess no eyes, only a huge gaping maw filled with rasping teeth and file-like members. Around the bloated head is mane of long black or dun-colored

quills. Some of these creatures possess rudimentary arms, more like a frill of tendrils by which they can drag themselves more easily, otherwise they move about like slugs, leaving a glistening trail behind them.

The echidna (used both in the singular and plural) are a degenerate race worshipping the Outer Gods, usually Nyarlathotep. They dwell underground, often in weird Grecian-style ruins. Whether they once constructed such cities or have merely usurped the past builders is unknown. But those historians who have encountered the creatures often worry on the impact they might have had on the early Greeks. Echidna have been sighted in the Balkan countries, the mainland of China, and many parts of Greece.

The echidna are blind, but possess a highly developed sense of smell by which they track their prey. A sure sign of the presence of the echidna are trails of glistening slime. They use such trails and patches to mark their territory and common passages. For the most part, the creatures seem content to stay in their ruins and worship obscene gods. However, when presented with an opportunity, they have a voracious appetite for human blood.

Their bite attack is leech-like, with the maw holding on and draining one point of STR worth of blood each round. The victim must make a successful CON × 2 roll or a POW × 2 roll to be able to perform any action other than screaming in agony. Should the creature be torn away with a successful STR vs. STR roll, the drain will stop, but the individual suffers a further 1d4 hit point loss from the echidna being ripped from the wound. Lost STR returns at a rate of one point per day's rest. The beasts also have a tail attack that is used to knock opponents down, so that the echidna may more easily apprehend its prey. Note that stronger members of this race may possess a damage bonus.

Researchers still conjecture about the quills fringing the head of the echidna. It has been suggested they act in reproduction for a carcass of the creature revealed no sex organs. Further study might reveal more.

### ECHIDNA, Slug-like Cave Lurkers

Characteristics	Rolls	Averages
STR	2d6 +4	11
CON	3d6 +6	16-17
SIZ	2d6+6	13
INT	2d6	7
POW	3d6	10-11
DEX	2d6	7

Move: 6

Hit Points: 14-15

Average Damage Bonus: +0

### Weapon:

Bite	20%	1d4 + STR drain on following rounds
Tail	45%	1d6

**Armor:** 3 points of slime coated, gelatinous flesh

**Spells:** An echidna has a small chance of knowing magic. Roll percentile dice, and if the result is lower than the creature's INT + POW, it knows 1d4 spells. Usually such incantations deal with Nyarlathotep or some other Outer God. Suggestions include Consume Likeness, Contact Janus (Nyarlathotep), Dread Curse of Azathoth, and Nightmare.

**Sanity:** It costs 1d8 to behold an echidna, but a successful SAN roll lessens the mental blow to the loss of only 1 point.

### Adventure ideas

Beyond the method described by the journal, there are many other ways for a keeper to use the echidna in a campaign. A lair of echidna may have been uncovered through a mining accident or during an archaeological dig. Slowly the miners or researchers disappear, and the investigators are called in.

Should a Keeper not wish to build an entire scenario around the echidna, she may use them simply as opponents summoned by the principal threat in the adventure to slay the meddling humans. Later on, the investigators might wish to learn more about such things, and this

may lead to further adventures with the horrid race.

If the Keeper feels very creative, he might design a long-running campaign, based on the notion that Nyarlathotep is awakening various Mythos creatures once thought to exist in legends and mythology. The echidna would only be one foe fought, a small scenario along the way to defeating the Crawling Chaos. Other such legendary monsters that might be expanded upon by the Keeper are the hydra (perhaps really a cthonian?), huge sea serpents, and the heraldic yale (tentacles instead of horns would be apropos).

### New spell

**Contact Echidna:** This spell takes two magic points to cast. It must be intoned at a site that the echidna are known to dwell. The wilds of Greece and some of the Balkan countries are the most well-known enclaves. Such creatures often will arrive in a band of 1d3 members. The caster suffers a loss of 1d3 SAN.

Finally, in the narrative was mentioned Janus (or Ianus). What more sinister nature could be revealed than have this god turn out to be another of Nyarlathotep's avatars. Once he was worshiped secretly, his rituals too blasphemous to be revealed. But many of the cults were routed out into the open and destroyed. What was once

part of the services to the god became common knowledge. Folk began to invoke Janus on their doors and gates to keep him out of their homes and cities. Time eroded much of the horror, leaving modern researchers only whispers of the truth.

But in certain tomes, the real nature of Janus is mentioned and revered. Besides in ancient Greece and Rome, Janus was worshiped in such countries as Surinam and the Plateau of Leng, as evident by the preponderance of two-headed artwork at those locales.

These days, the cult of Janus is few and small, scattered around the globe. Many of the cultists have the Mark of Janus, a second set of facial features. Such freaks are quickly indoctrinated into the cult, whether through other members or strange dreams.

### Notes

1. Sir James George Frazier, *The Golden Bough*, volume 1, abridged ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1951) page 191.

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# A Slither in The Naga in the Cthulhu Mythos the Dark

September 9, 1885

Private Journal of Maj General Jared Pembroke-Smythe



by Gregory W. Detwiler  
Artwork by John Dollar

*From the private memoirs of Major General (Ret.) Jared Pembroke-Smythe:*

The Burmese War of 1885 was a ghastly show all around, God knows. The swamps and fever, along with the crocodiles, pythons, leopards, and tigers our troops encountered were trouble enough, even without the human dacoits that were our nominal enemy. But the most hellish opposition our troops ever faced was what

we encountered in the very center of that damnable swamp country. I dared not reveal it to the world at large, or even my superiors, for fear of speedy placement in an insane asylum.

I was only a subaltern then, leading a squad of infantry on a routine patrol near the banks of the Irrawaddy, in search of fleeing bandits. Our battalion had just stormed one of their stockades the day before, with heavy casualties. As a result,

we were two men short and had to make do with nine men instead of 11. Not a pleasant prospect, especially since the tall marsh grass around us could hide anything from a horde of swordsmen to a war elephant with swivel-mounted cannons on its back.

Still, my men were all veterans, and Lance Corporal Tompkins, the only surviving non-commissioned officer, had spent years chasing lesser bandit bands before

the war broke out. "Know the swamps like the back'o me 'and, I do," he said. I was glad *someone* did.

We had encountered nothing on our patrol, and were about to return to camp when we heard a loud thrashing several hundred feet away from us. We took up firing positions within a small grove of trees, anticipating an attack by one or more war elephants. But no attack came, nor were there any sounds that could definitely be ascribed to an elephant.

The noise coming from the tall grass sounded like a large animal thrashing about, but it could just as easily have been a water buffalo or a rhinoceros. However, we heard no sounds such as any of those animals commonly give voice to, or any other cries, for that matter. The noise finally died down, and after a hasty consultation with Tompkins, I decided to investigate.

You must understand that the swamp country along the Irrawaddy was totally without rock formations of any sort. There was only water-saturated soil beneath our feet. How, then, can anyone explain what we found? Next to a quarter-acre of ground in which the high grass was smashed flat there stood a tunnel or cavern of solid rock, its mouth gaping wide like a cellar door 10' across.

In the muddy ground beside that cave mouth lay a curious track, like that of an enormous serpent's belly, yet with small footprints right beside them. These prints were not unlike the hands and feet of a human being. It was as if a python had grown limbs with grotesquely elongated hands and feet. I shuddered inwardly at the thought.

With this mystery before us, there was, of course, no thought of turning back. We were able to find some branches and lengths of grass dry enough to burn, and we fashioned them into makeshift torches. Tompkins and I held them, of course, as our privates had to keep both hands free to use their rifles. Due to the constant possibility of ambush in the tall grass, their bayonets were already fixed. Once the torches were lit, we proceeded down the gently sloping tunnel that lay before us.

Inside, the rock construction of the tunnel was quite solid. Although it was surrounded by a swamp, not so much as one drop of water dripped from the roof. There *was* moisture on the floor, but this was obviously tracked in by whatever had entered a short time ago. There was a wretched musky odor that we all recognized as being similar to that of snakes, and this stench grew stronger the farther we progressed.

I was rather glad that I had drawn my sword, rather than the revolver, for my free hand. Such a weapon would be more useful if it came to fighting a writhing, coiling serpent in the semidarkness of the cavern. Tompkins was not so lucky, but then, he had already proven himself to be a better shot than I.

We must have gone at least 100' before we found the first object, barely glinting in the light of our torches. It was a short curved sword, or *dha*, such as the local natives used. Part of it seemed to be stained with something that proved to be dried blood, yet the odor it gave off was not familiar, not like that of a human being, or indeed, any ordinary animal.

As we advanced farther, we found more sword blades, as well as spearheads, daggers, and several badly corroded muskets. There were even several spiked helmets such as Burmese troops wear, but no uniforms or other clothing. Nor were there any bones or other remains of men or animals, and we had yet to find any other clues as to just what sort of creature had entered this impossible cavern.

We must have traveled over 1,000 yards down that single, sloping tunnel before we heard the sound. At first it sounded like the distant chant of a group of tribesmen at one of their heathen rituals, but the closer we got to the source, the less human it sounded. Indeed, the sound was not made by a human voice but seemed to be a type of *hissing* that occurred in rhythmic intervals like those of human chants.

As we made our way past more discarded equipment, one of the privates accidentally kicked a spiked helmet, sending it clattering off into the darkness ahead of us. Almost immediately, the rhythmic hissing stopped, with an abruptness that could only be described as sinister.

We stood still in shocked silence, not knowing whether to go on or retreat. Then we heard the scraping sound of claws on rock, and a rustling sound indicated that some heavy body was laboriously hitching its way up the tunnel in our direction. The tunnel was still wide enough for the men in my squad to form a double firing line-front rank kneeling, rear rank standing-so we took up our positions in haste. This done, we waited anxiously, peering vainly at the darkness beyond our little ring of torchlight.

When the thing finally appeared, it took all our self-control to avoid bolting for the cavern mouth; would that we had. It was a writhing, twisting, coiling mass over 20' in length, covered with rough gray scales. The great head, larger than that of a horse, was mostly serpentine in shape, but the elongated cranium in back was horribly like a distorted human skull. As it came nearer, we could see that it had hands and feet. There were no limbs per se, just a pair of long-fingered hands up front and equally misshapen feet behind, all growing directly from that snakelike torso. The creature regarded us with glittering yellow eyes for a moment, then gave voice to a hissing roar that was only partially drowned out when I gave the command for a volley.

Now, a Martini-Henry rifle fires a sizeable bullet of soft lead that is quite capable of tearing a man open, and we had eight of them firing at once, but this thing just seemed to shrug off the rounds.

Indeed, I hesitate to repeat this, but it seemed as though the creature actually took several wounds, but healed them up within moments. Then the thing was upon us, actually hurling itself on the bayonets set to receive it. I got in one good blow with my sabre before a lashing tail stroke sent me reeling back.

I landed hard, on my back, and by the time I was standing again, the battle was over. The men screamed in agony as they were slowly crushed or clawed to death. The cries of two of them ceased abruptly when the monster sank its fangs into them. Tompkins was the last to die, trying to use his torch to force the creature back far enough for him to squeeze past it. The beast simply snatched him up in its jaws and *swallowed him whole, torch and all!* I staggered to my feet, shaken by the annihilation of my entire command. My torch, now lying on the cavern floor, was about to go out. Taking advantage of its remaining light, I sheathed my sword, pointed myself toward the exit, and ran for my life. If I had lost my footing even once, it would have been my-end, for I could hear that

#### **Naga: Serpentine Human Degenerates**

Character	Rolls	Averages
STR	4d6 + 12	25
CON	3d6	11
SIZ	4d6+24	35
INT	1d6+12	10
POW	6d6	22
DEX	3d6+4	13
Weapon	Chance	Damage
Bite	70%	3d6 + poison, equal to the naga's CON
Claw	30%	2d6+1d6
Coils	60%	3d6+4
Tail	45%	3d6+3

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 23

**Average Damage Bonus:** +3d6

**Armor:** 3 points of scales, in addition to the naga's ability to regenerate 3 points of damage per round.

**Spells:** Some nagas know 1d3 spells, particularly Contact Chthonian, Contact Flying Polyp, Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathogghua, Call Nyogtha, Contact Tsathogghua, and Contact Yig. Most, however, have mentally degenerated too much to use conventional magic and are quite content with their formidable physical abilities in combat.

**Sanity:** It costs 1d10 Sanity points to see a naga (1d3 with a successful Sanity roll). This is because the clear degeneration of the human form is so horrible. Anyone who fails a Sanity roll around a naga is a prime candidate for ophiophobia (fear of snakes).

ghastly rustling sound behind me all during my flight. At last I made it out, bending my head as I emerged to spare my eyes the worst of the tropical sunlight that greeted me so abruptly, and I ran for the edge of the trampled space.

On the very edge of the jungle, I stopped to catch my breath, drawing my revolver as I did so. And as I rested, the thing loomed up out of the darkness, framed in the very mouth of the cavern, blinking in the harsh sunlight. I raised my pistol, but instead of firing, I began to tremble.

Now that the thing was standing still in broad daylight as its eyes adjusted to the sun, I was able to study it in some detail. The scales did not greatly resemble those on pythons or other snakes, or on any of the many other reptiles I had seen in years of service in Asia and Australia. In fact, they reminded me of nothing so much as the scales I had seen on a type of opossum that lived in Australia. The implication, therefore, was that this great monster might not be a reptile, but rather a mammal.

My roving eyes discerned other details. The creature's hands and feet obviously provided little or no aid to movement, though the hands were furnished with great hooked claws for tearing prey. They looked so damnably like distorted human extremities that I looked away from them.

That was a mistake, for my attention was now centered on the monster's head. Its eyes narrowed to mere yellow slits as it peered at me in the sunlight. It was all too plainly displaying an intelligent interest in me, precisely as a hostile human opponent might have done. When my gaze centered on the shape of its skull again, it no longer seemed distorted; rather, its lengthening seemed to be the result of a natural process. My blood turned cold as I realized the truth: *the monster's ancestors had once been men!*

Whisperings from my subconscious seemed to echo in my ears, half-forgotten snippets of native lore I had overheard since coming to Burma. The savages spoke in hushed tones of the *naga*, half-man and half-serpent, a great being of powerful magic. My heart sank as I realized how accurate the old legends had been, the legends my brother officers and I had laughed off with the arrogant folly of which only civilized man is capable. Far beyond fear for myself was a deeper terror for the fate of my entire race. If man could fall so low from his high estate once, why may he not do so again, or sink even deeper in the future?

The gorged creature evidently decided that further pursuit of me would not be worth the trouble, and after regarding me with what can only be described as contempt, it gave a hissing wheeze and turned back into the darkness.

Thoroughly demoralized, I staggered back to camp. I was no longer able to hold in my heart any emotion but bleakest despair for the fate of the human race.

## Naga: Lesser Independent Race

The nagas are the degenerate descendants of a humanoid race, possibly akin to the serpent people, who live in underground caverns ranging from Great Britain to the American West, and who are variously referred to as "fairies" "the people of the dark," and "the worms of the earth." These hideous folk were once surface-dwellers, but they retreated underground after losing a series of wars against more normal humans (Indians in America and Picts in Britain). The stunted folk dwelt in the narrowest caverns, the better to evade pursuit, and as the millennia went by, they evolved more and more in keeping with their chosen environment.

Living the life of a serpent, these descendants of the original refugees developed scaly skin and fangs to resist the rigors of the environment and help them catch prey. At first, they maintained a semblance of their old civilization underground. Some still do, but as time went by, more and more of them completely reverted to a purely animal way of life.

Shunned by their former kin, they competed with them for limited resources, gradually developing adaptations that gave them an advantage. Whereas their ancestors and competitors were small, they grew large. They eventually saw their limbs atrophy, with only the hands and feet remaining. Growing narrower so as to better fit in the slender tunnels, they took the form of true serpents at last. Now they inhabit cavern complexes the world over, though they are generally known only by their Asian name: nagas.

The size of the largest anaconda or python, a naga is a formidable opponent in combat. It has powerful jaws with great curving fangs, from which drip a lethal poison. Though its feet are more or less useless, its hands have developed huge hooked claws with which it can hold and tear prey. As a result of millennia of competition with its poisonous kin, it is now immune to all poisons. It can twine itself around an opponent and truly crush him to death—not merely suffocating him-in an instant, and its tail is a lethal whip.

As a final defense, it has modified the race's innate magic ability to give itself the power to regenerate all battle damage at the rate of three points per round. This includes damage from fire as well as normal weapons. However, electricity, magic, and acid all do normal damage, which must be healed at normal rates.

Although nagas have kept their eyes—no one knows why—they rely on other senses in darkness or underground. Having evolved a regular telepathic sense after living so long in the dark, they can unerringly find prey under any conditions. Darkness, fog, smoke, and even magical illusions are totally useless as protection from a naga on the hunt.

Because they are larger than their ancestors, nagas are more likely to travel

to the surface in search of food, and their rampages in Europe have given rise to legends of legless dragons such as the *guivre*. They are not restricted to areas where caverns lead to the earth's surface, for another innate magic ability enables a naga to construct its own tunnel of stone to the surface whenever it wishes to hunt in an area where no connecting caverns exist.

Depending on how long the naga wishes to hunt, such tunnels stay in place for anywhere from a single hour to a week. If a party of investigators follows a naga down a tunnel thus created, and the beast then dispels it (as it may well do to trap the party), they will be stranded in the caverns of the inner earth. They must either find a surface-leading passage or wait for a naga or other being to create a tunnel or other magical means of travel. Most likely, however, they will simply die.

### Adventure Ideas

Despite its purely Asian name, the serpentine naga is found around world, and as such, can be a recurring menace for an investigating party that wishes to explore the darkest caverns of the earth. Many serpentine monsters of legend, such as the legless wyrms of Europe, the *amphisbaenae* of ancient Greece, and the *arkaroo* of Australia may all be explained by the presence of nagas.

As a candidate for a "monster on the rampage," a naga is better than most, as any investigators who pursue it down a tunnel of its own making may promptly find themselves cut off from the surface and all human aid. This, in turn, can lead to a fascinating adventure of cavern exploration, as the investigators try to reach the surface before they run out of food, ammunition, and other essentials.

If you like nagas but don't want them to be star performers, you can throw them at the party in a recurring role as lesser monsters. The investigators can constantly stumble upon them while exploring various underground regions such as blue-litten K'n-Yan and black-litten N'Kai beneath it, a possible underground temple dedicated to the likes of Nyogtha or Tsathogghua, or a passage leading to one of the last strongholds of the flying polyps.

### New Spell

**Contact Naga:** This spell must be cast at the mouth of a cavern where one or more nagas live. The artificial tunnels created by the strange beings themselves are ideal (if they are still standing when the spell is cast). Due to the race's hatred of light, the spell must be used on an overcast day or (preferably) at night. One naga will come in response to the summons. The spell costs three magic points and 1d3 Sanity points to cast.

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# Matching Monsters and Scenarios in Call of Cthulhu

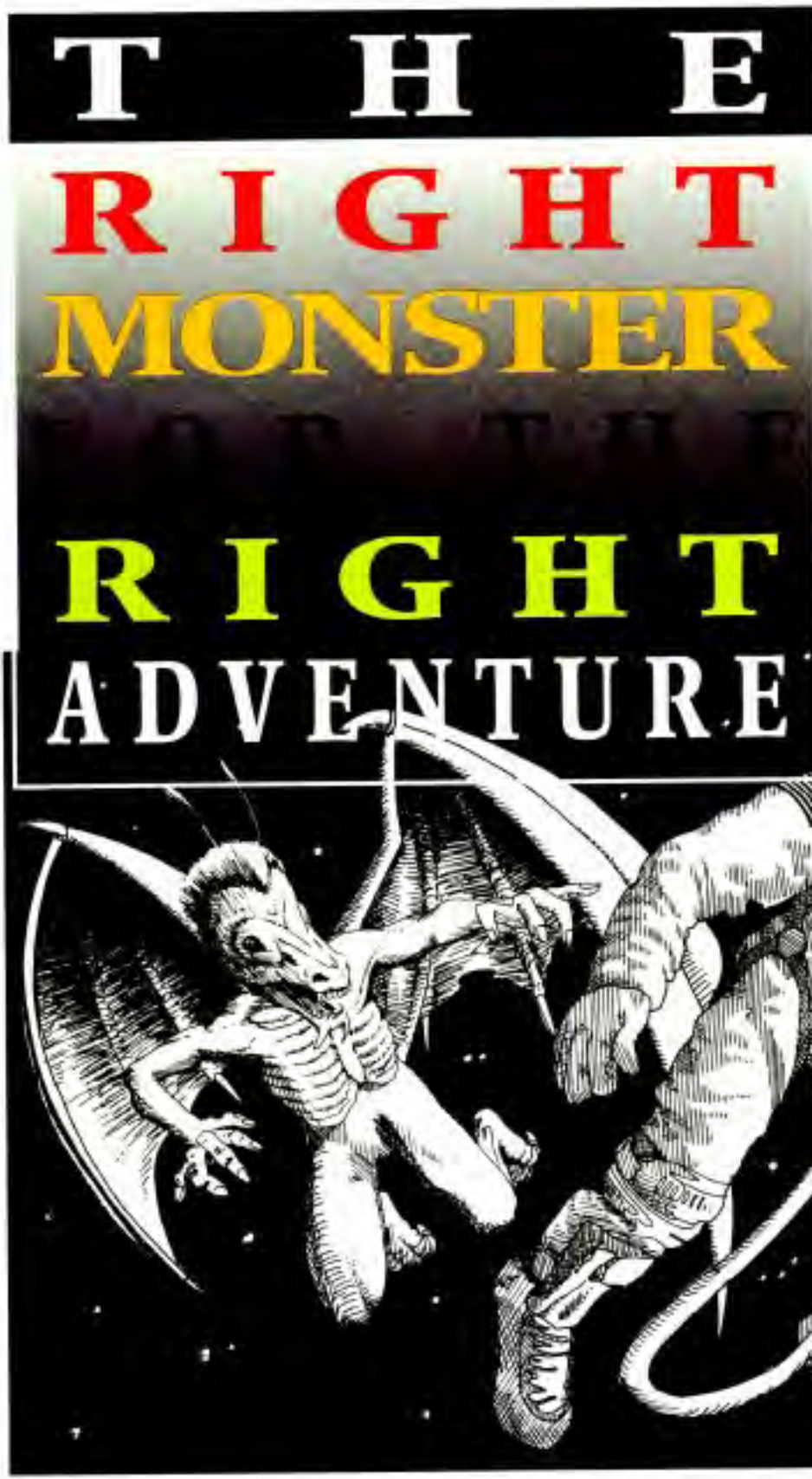
by Gregory W. Detwiler

Artwork by Jim Holloway and Michael Scott

Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* \* game is replete with the monsters of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, with more being created all the time in both game supplements and literature by would-be "new Lovecrafts." This article gives examples of just how the monsters that already exist can best fit into scenarios. We're not dealing with the massive Great Old Ones and Outer Gods here, but with the "lesser" creatures that are far more common in a campaign. This list of ideas is not inclusive, of course; feel free to come up with your own. The list is restricted to creatures in the normal waking world.

## The Creatures

**Byakhee:** Given the resemblance of these things to the gargoyles of the Middle Ages, the best place to start here is at an old haunted castle of that period. Perhaps the castle's main claim to fame is that it is not only decorated with "gargoyles" (*à la* Notre Dame Cathedral), but that at regular intervals, one or more of these ugly but innocent-seeming "statues" may wind up missing, and always when a horrible murder or mysterious disappearance takes place in the region. This is a good way to introduce into a campaign; the shock of the "gargoyles" actions won't be as great if the investigators have seen byakhee before. Perhaps in the depths of



the castle is a gate leading to the great Library of Celaeno, which is guarded by hordes of these things.

Given the fact that byakhee are able to fly through the vacuum of space-sometimes with a suitably protected rider-this is a great monster to spring on astronaut PCs in the *Chulhu Now* supplement. If the investigators are at all connected with the government, they may be called upon to investigate the losses of orbiting satellites and spacecraft, and perhaps even deaths and sabotage at a top-secret lunar colony. The fact that byakhee are vulnerable to ordinary weapons will not eliminate terror here; how many astronauts carry guns? And unless they have recoilless arms, a shootout in a zero-gravity environment can be hazardous. Investigators will have to rely on improvised weapons, mostly melee arms, as in *Alien 3*. Of course, Ripley didn't have spells like *shriveling* at her disposal.

**Chthonians:** Read Brian Lumley's novel *The Burrowers Beneath* for inspiration. The quickest and most blatant explanation for their introduction could be a massive earthquake, either caused by them or a natural one that happens to expose a path to their underground cities. On a less apocalyptic scale-at least at first-is the "missing miner" adventure, where workers in a deep mine are disappearing or dying horribly. This works particularly

well if previous work crews have uncovered any spherical mineral formations and brought them to the surface.

(Trekkies have noted by now the resemblance to the adventure with the burrowing Horta in the old *Star Trek* episode, "Devil in the Dark.") And if the PCs *break* any of those formations, we now have a vendetta that will last until (and probably bring about) the end of the campaign.

Chthonians are also good for a phony "vampire" scenario, as they drain blood from their victims. A party of investigators could hear of hapless locals being drained of blood in the vicinity of an old monastery (which is in turn near an abandoned mine) and hear local legends of how the monks-whose Gregorian chanting can still be heard from time to time-strayed from the path of righteousness and were turned into vampires as punishment. Any PCs who draw obvious, but quite erroneous, conclusions from this and show up with garlic and wooden stakes will soon wish they'd brought along heavy artillery instead. Similar legends could arise around an old abandoned mission in Africa, say, near a certain deserted city...

**Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath:** If you want to adventure in a forested area, you've got to include at least one of these things. There's nothing better for turning a "haunted forest" into the real thing. Aside

from the standard scenario of racing to prevent "evil druids" from sacrificing innocent victims to the Dark Young and commanding them to attack the locals, we have some great surprise scenarios.

Imagine going for an innocent walk in the woods, or having a picnic there, and running into a Dark Young. Less innocently, at certain times of the year, a hunting party can run into one instead of its usual prey. At least the PCs already have their guns handy (for all the good they'll do). In the modern era, biologists can be conducting a wildlife survey, to discover a more varied fauna than they counted on.

Here's an idea for you: Assume the party discovers that there is a gate leading back to medieval Scotland and Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* was based on a more horrid event than history records. Maybe the party will discover that Macduff lost something of his purity in preparing for vengeance against his enemy. Does everyone remember the line "till Birnam Wood do come to Dunsinane"? Now what kind of "trees" could possibly walk up to a castle and attack, hmm? Between Macbeth's crimes and the monsters of the Mythos, investigators could well be hard-pressed to decide which side they would fight on, if either. Lay on, Randolph Carter!

**Deep Ones:** The standard adventure here is "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," in which the investigators blunder into a town of weirdos, all of whom have the "Innsmouth look." This is a highly dangerous scenario, not least because your players may turn on you for running such a derivative adventure. Try small-scale raids for an opening adventure, where deep ones in a coastal area are kidnapping locals for their own nefarious purposes, and the investigators must rescue them before it is too late. Alternately, the party could try and capture a deep one for experimental purposes, to determine the secret of immortality.

Underwater exploration is one of the best ways to encounter deep ones, particularly as the human PCs have a built-in handicap called "air supply," which is guaranteed to increase tension in any encounter. While diving suits exist in the original game, diving is far more common in the modern world of *Chulhu Now*, a supplement which has a complete listing of scuba gear and-in the first adventure-stats for underwater weaponry such as spearguns and bang-sticks. The odds would certainly be improved in combat, though the outcome of the fighting would by no means be a foregone conclusion.

Perhaps a local island or cove is the scene for legends about merfolk, with disappearances of fishermen and beachcombers being attributed to beautiful mermaids luring them away. Embracing a "mermaid" that turns out to be a deep one cloaked with a magical illusion would



certainly run up the SAN loss.

Illusions work for totally human forms as well; vacationing investigators who want to flirt with the local beach bunnies may get more than they bargained for. For that matter, deep ones who can pass as humans (perhaps due to a magical "cultural exchange" with the serpent people) could infiltrate coastal communities without fear of an impending "Innsmouth look" blowing their cover. Hybrids in the early stages of this condition should be far more common, however, and would make equally good spies.

**Dholes:** Aside from the physical appearance on the scene of a Great Old One like Cthulhu, this is CoC's best candidate for a Godzilla-style scenario. Take a look at the comparative size listings for humans and Mythos monsters, and pay particular attention to the greater and lesser dholes. The greater dholes are too big to fit on a two-page spread. Magical gates are a vital necessity if the scenario is to have a dhole, whether to bring one to Earth, or to cause the party to travel to a world inhabited by them. Without massive firepower, however, investigators will be able to do little other than run around screaming in terror.

**Dimensional Shambler:** These ape/insects deserve more attention than they've gotten in literature. Their only appearance so far has been in the H.P. Lovecraft/Hazel Heald collaboration, "The Horror in the Museum." Still, a creature that can pop in and out of various dimensions at will is not an opponent to be ignored. Although they have middling armor protection at best (as Mythos monsters go), their ability to simply leave a combat zone for another universe is a far better defense than a thick hide.

They are also thieves and kidnapers *par excellence*, and a rash of unexplained disappearances and robberies is the best way to introduce them into a campaign. A war with them could be the ultimate guerrilla conflict.

**Fire Vampires:** These creatures generally appear only as summoned attackers, whether the one who called them forth is an evil occultist or the Great Old One Cthugha himself. Thus, unless the party blunders into a gate leading to the fire vampire's point of origin, they will only face them in the standard "summoned monsters attack locals" scenario.

**Flying Polyps:** These are ideal inhabitants of lonely valleys and canyons where the wind blows frequently and no humans live (at least for long). Any mysterious windstorm, particularly one that destroys out-of-the-way communities, has the potential for being an eruption of flying polyps.

Remember that these creatures are a dying race. Imagine the trouble a party of

investigators can run into if they take a gate back to prehistoric times, when the polyps strove with the Great Race of Yith for dominance, or worse yet, when they were the sole rulers of the world c. 600 million BC.

For that matter, time travel can land the party in trouble with a wide variety of the alien races of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Because the polyps currently dwell underground, they-like the chthonians—may be discovered by hapless miners or spelunkers, or an earthquake may give them access to the outer world. In fact, a chthonian-induced earthquake may have two objectives: to damage the community itself, and to create a passageway that will allow subterranean monsters like the polyps or the formless spawn (see below) to come to the surface and wreak their own havoc.

**Formless Spawn of Tsothogghua:** These monsters are more cave-dwellers that come to the surface as a result of mining operations or earthquakes. The spawn provide the keeper with a bit more variety than other monsters, because of their many attack forms. Indeed, there is no reason the Keeper should restrict himself to the whip, tentacle, bite, and bludgeon attacks in the rulebook; the shapechanging nature of the spawn means that any

other physical attack he can think of could be introduced. Consider them the ultimate dungeon monsters.

**Ghoul:** In Lovecraft's short story "Pickman's Model," the author said ghouls live in sizeable tunnel complexes beneath many cities, with easy access to graveyards; but this is not the only place one can encounter them. The story itself shows the possibility of their appearing in anyone's basement or cellar. Pickman's painting, "Subway Accident," even displays them attacking people on a subway platform. It takes little imagination to come up with a series of hit-and-run attacks all over town, with entire families disappearing from their homes overnight, or the residents of apartment buildings suffering the same fate, with only a hole in the basement to show where they went. Eventually, the investigators will have to make their way through the narrow, cramped tunnels to confront the raiders.

For *Cthulhu Now* enthusiasts who favor a secret government war against the beings of the Mythos, imagine the trouble that could arise from ghouls breaking into bomb shelters, underground military or presidential command posts, etc. A nuclear crisis would certainly be more interesting if accompanied by a coincidental(?) ghoulish invasion of NORAD headquar-





ters at Cheyenne Mountain. With natural or magical earthquakes, of course, the same invasion could be attempted by any of the other underground races of the Mythos.

**Gnoph-Keh:** Due to their choice of habitat, these creatures should only be found in an arctic or antarctic adventure. Aside from guardians of ancient ruins, these creatures serve best in the "Mythos monster attacks isolated human settlements" scenario. Given their freezing and blizzard powers, there is a good chance that the first attacks will be written off as hostile acts of nature. Thus, if the party is cut off from civilization by one of those attacks—say, the personnel at an isolated railway depot are frozen to death—outside help could be a long time in coming.

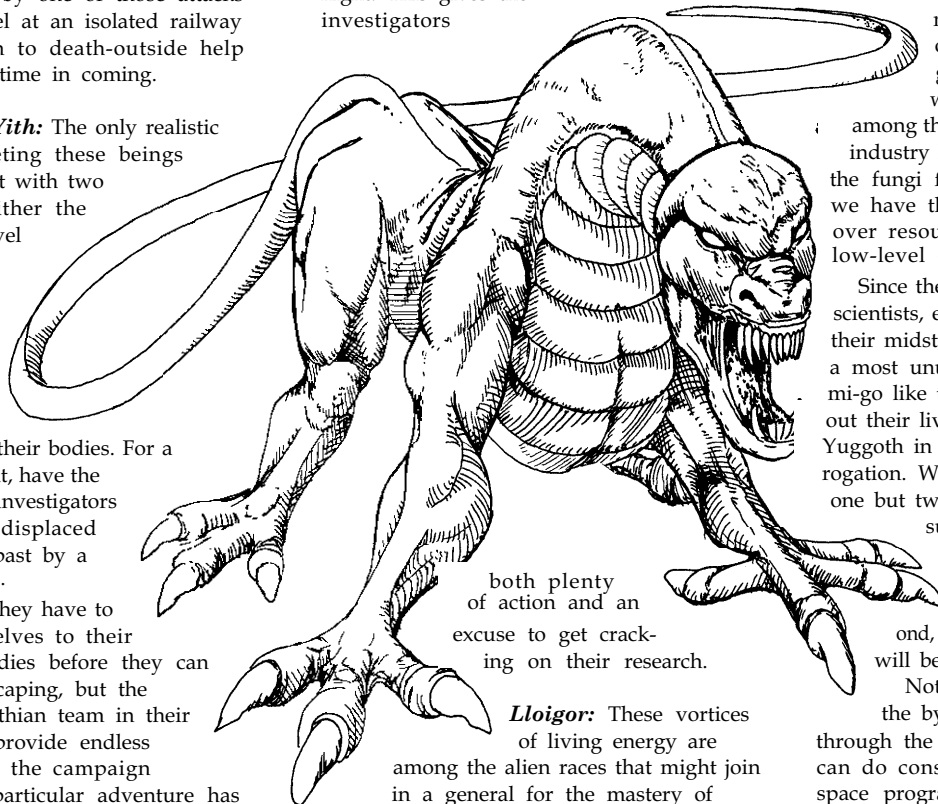
**Great Race of Yith:** The only realistic scenario for meeting these beings is time travel, but with two subcategories. Either the investigators travel back in time to encounter them, or they must deal with one or more "possessed"

humans with Yithian minds in their bodies. For a *really* nasty variant, have the entire party of investigators get their minds displaced into the distant past by a team of Yithians.

Not only will they have to accustom themselves to their new conelike bodies before they can even think of escaping, but the actions of the Yithian team in their old bodies can provide endless complications in the campaign long after that particular adventure has ended. With all that weird research that the studious Yithians engage in, who knows what the investigators might wind up in the middle of when they return to their original bodies?

**Hounds of Tindalos:** As with the great race, the hounds will only be encountered when one side or the other is engaged in time travel. If the party doesn't encounter them on their home territory, then escaping the hounds it might seem to be a simple matter of waiting out in a room with no corners (every party should have a room in their headquarters prepared for this purpose); but as stated in the original Frank Belknap Long story, "The Hounds of Tindalos," they can get help to break through (in the form of earthquakes and the like) from fellow Mythos monsters such as the chthonians. Wealthy dilettantes might consider funding the construction of a room-sized spherical chamber of steel, which can take a great deal of external abuse without changing its shape.

**Hunting Horrors:** Like fire vampires, these creatures generally appear only when someone or something has summoned them. In that case, the party's mission might be to defend their designated target; or they may be the target themselves. A scenario that combines action with detective work can pit the party against an occultist that keeps sending hunting horrors or other summoned monsters against them, to keep them from finding him. Only by slaying him can the party bring the attacks to an end, and for every day of sloppy detective work, there is an attack by some horror the following night. This gives the investigators



both plenty of action and an excuse to get cracking on their research.

**Lloigor:** These vortices of living energy are among the alien races that might join in a general for the mastery of Earth. Granted, their eternal pessimism may combine with the might of the opposition to make them doubt victory, but even many humans who despair of victory in war have fought to the bitter end. Since they can drain magic points from human victims and use that power to create telekinetic effects and destructive implosions—to say nothing of being able to pass through walls in their natural state—their pessimistic doubts of victory may well be unwarranted.

In their natural form, lloigor are excellent occupants of "haunted houses." Poltergeist effects and frequent illness among human residents can be easily explained by their powers. Their more spectacular appearance is as giant mutant reptiles resembling dinosaurs and dragons. Any number of "sea serpent" reports can be explained by the lloigor, and such reports can be bait to draw in innocent investigators.

The "lost world" scenario, in which explorers investigate rumors of an isolated

prehistoric fauna somewhere in the tropics, only to discover a major outpost of these monsters, is also viable. This last, incidentally, best works in the Victorian Era supplement, *Cthulhu By Gaslight\**, when there were still plenty of blank spaces on the map. At any rate, an opponent who can draw off your own magic points to destroy you with is not to be sneezed at.

**W-Go:** We've covered a number of monsters that might be uncovered by human miners; now we come to beings that maintain mining colonies of their own on Earth. Because these are organized beings like the deep ones, they are particularly dangerous to intruders; especially when they have cultists as agents among the local population. If human industry has uses for the same minerals the fungi from Yuggoth are mining, then we have the potential for a full-scale war over resources, not just the standard low-level conflict.

Since the party is likely to know a few scientists, even if they don't have any in their midst, we also have the potential for a most unusual kidnapping scenario. The mi-go like to kidnap men of learning, cut out their living brains, and ship them to Yuggoth in metal cylinders for later interrogation. Would-be rescuers now have not one but two deadlines to beat: the brain surgery as well as the actual transport of the victim to Yuggoth. If they miss the first deadline but not the second, the kidnap victim's ultimate fate will be very interesting.

Note that the mi-go share with the byakhee the ability to fly through the vacuum of space, so they, too, can do considerable damage to human space programs in *Cthulhu Now*.

Since the fungi from Yuggoth can form organized armies and there is high-tech equipment to arm them with, apocalyptic Keepers may consider them the likeliest candidates for a Mythos version of the *War of the Worlds*. Imagine the confusion when alien armies drop in from space without any spacecraft being sighted, even assuming ghouls or other creatures aren't attacking those same headquarters simultaneously. Wells' Martians had more common courtesy than that.

**Nightgaunts:** These mysterious beings are mainly encountered in lonely areas such as caverns, deep forest, and old ruins. Aside from the obvious action involved in fighting off an attack, consider the "occult detective" scenario, in which the party must discover the location of a previous victim (either a party member or an NPC) and rescue him.

**Old Ones:** Here's yet another race best suited to a time-travel adventure, though the Old Ones may still have colonies in the depths of the ocean. Unless the party is involved in a SeaQuest-style oceanic colony or survey ship, there's not much chance of investigators running into these things in a modern scenario. Unless... We keep reading in Lovecraft about how all these alien races came to Earth, but, save for the Great Race of Yith, it was never specifically stated that *all* the aliens left their home planet or system to come here. Earth might just be a colony to the Old Ones, mi-go, star-spawn, etc.; possibly one of many. After so many millions of years, even the most insensitive aliens might send a military team to investigate the lack of contact with the colony and find out where everyone's gone.

We have here a true apocalyptic scenario: a colonial war between at the very least the Old Ones, mi-go, star-spawn of Cthulhu, and possibly the flying polyps. Other Mythos races, of course, can get involved in the fighting, while mankind would be in the dubious position of the American Indians when the English, French, Spanish, and Dutch came to the New World.

Even if human vermin are deemed too lowly to serve as allies in battle, a lot of innocent bystanders are certain to get caught up in the fighting. Investigators

could be reporters or government agents sent in to monitor the fighting, watching out not only for the combatants, but also for cultists and Yithian military historians who like tidy records. Between the alien anatomy of the star-spawn and polyps, the high-tech weaponry of the mi-go, and the genetic engineering skill of the Old Ones (remember, these are the guys who gave us the shoggoths), it's anyone's guess who would win in the end.

**Sand-Dwellers:** These monsters may generally be used only as desert marauders and as guardians of sacred sites in the arid regions of the world. Irem, the City of Pillars in the Arabian Desert, would seem to be the best candidate for such guardianship. Any archaeological expedition seeking ancient relics may face far more trouble than the curse of some dead pharaoh. Oil companies planting rigs all over the Sahara are also potential targets. For a modern Them scenario, try using nuclear radiation in places like the Negev, Los Alamos, Outer Mongolia, and China's Sinkiang province to beef up the critters in *Cthulhu Now*.

**Serpent People:** Thanks to the writings of Lovecraft's pen pal Robert E. Howard, this is *the* race for the "aliens among us" adventure. Before creating Conan, Howard wrote about the adventures of Conan's ancestor, Kull of Atlantis, king of

the Pre-Cataclysmic kingdom of Valusia. In the short story, "The Shadow Kingdom," Howard vividly describes a kingdom riddled with agents of the serpent people, who use their illusory magic to appear as human beings and infiltrate the highest positions of power. Paranoia should reign supreme among the investigators once it has been established that serpent people are about.

With their history of empires in the Permian Period, they are among the likeliest of other races to join the warfare mentioned in the Old Ones section. Curiously, both they and the flying polyps build cities of black basalt; did one race usurp the cities of the other? We may have here a grudge among the polyps second only to that against the Great Race of Yith.

**Servitors of the Outer Gods:** These horrors are rarely found alone, at least for long, being often in the company of the Outer Gods themselves or various creatures they have "whistled up" using their own magic. They may also provide musical accompaniment to groups of insane cultists, as in Lovecraft's short story, "The Festival." With their ability to get help by summoning other monsters, they also make good sentries at sacred sites and the like. If a party encounters one acting in this capacity, they would be well-advised to kill it quickly, before it can summon reinforcements. One Mythos monster is bad enough.

**Shans:** The insects from Shaggai are refugees from their home planet, which is slowly being eaten by what is apparently the granddaddy of all dholes. With their ability to fly into human brains and take control of men's minds, shans are among the most insidious of the Mythos threats to Earth. An adventure featuring them almost invariably concerns itself with PC attempts to both resist possession themselves and keep the shans from controlling anyone else. If someone's mind *does* get grabbed, it'll take some pretty powerful magic to throw the thing out again. Note that infiltration by agents who are already possessed will be a major threat.

**Shantaks:** These horse-headed, slimy flying things share with the byakhee and the mi-go the ability to fly through the vacuum of space, possibly with a rider, and are thus good encounters for space travelers in *Cthulhu Now*. They are, however, among the least likely of Mythos monsters to be encountered on their own, as their *raison d'être* is to serve as steeds for others. If PCs in the standard or modern campaigns can get their hands on one or more military aircraft, we have the potential for a rather bizarre dogfight.

**Shoggoths:** Originally created as servants of the Old Ones, the shoggoths rebelled



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