

A LETTER FROM YUGGOTH

LOVECRAFTIAN ROLE-PLAYING ZINE, ISSUE 2 - APRIL 2016



WORDS & ART BY
NICOLÒ MAIOLI
EDITING BY
FORREST AGUIRRE

NPC Names Male

Lawrence Cook
Walter Phillips
Eric Wright
Jack Garcia
Raymond Jones
Victor Reynolds
Nicolas Santiago
Jon Mccoy
Antone Switzer
Deon Seymore

Female

Joanne Banks
Brittany Bryan
Anna Cook
Harriet Schwartz
Rebecca Barker
Tammy Fuller
Thelma Elliott
Debbie Barnett
Marian Garcia
Eileen White



EDITORIAL

Iä! Iä!

Welcome to the second issue of A Letter From Yuggoth, a system-agnostic fanzine dedicated to Lovecraftian role-playing inspired by Christian Walker's "Shudde M'ell Confidential" and other One Page Zines. It wasn't easy to make everything fit this time, and a paragraph had to be cut: you can still read it over at my blog <http://satanisjoy.wordpress.com/> if you feel so inclined.

As always, please feel free to get in touch for comments, suggestions, and other inquiries at nicolomaioli@gmail.com.

Until next time!

NM

THE DRIFTING HOUSE

A short scenario for one Investigator designed as a one-shot, a filler, or to explore the dimension of one-to-one gaming. Inspired by H.P. Lovecraft's short story "The Dreams in the Witch House", it deals with two of Lovecraft's most iconic tropes: the confrontation with a cosmic reality which humans can't comprehend, and fate as an unavoidable force.

The adventure is set in Lovecraft's fictional town of Arkham, Massachusetts. I don't own any of the role-playing aids published on the subject, so instead I went back to those stories of H.P. Lovecraft that seemed to better evoke the themes and times I was going for, and filled the gaps by myself. An amazing reproduction of H.P. Lovecraft original map of Arkham can be found over at <https://cthulhufiles.com/arkham.htm>.

The Plot

In December 1926 the Investigator has bought a Victorian house on the corner between Lich and Sentinel St. in Arkham, Massachusetts. The peculiar architecture stands out among the other, Colonial style houses on French Hill - which is perhaps why he chose it in the first place.

The house was built by the deceased Randal Ackerman, an English Professor of Architecture at Miskatonic University and a powerful Dreamer. During his voyages to the Dreamworld, Professor Ackerman had become acquainted with a pack of Ghouls he often visited at the cemetery on Hangman Hill. Together they devised a plan: to create a device which would allow him to drift into the lands beyond sleep, and avoid death forever. He designed the house for this specific purpose, with help from the Ghouls, in order to complete the machinery, which existed simultaneously in this world and the other. The house was designed with strange corners to amplify its effects and bend the fragile balance of space and time. Unfortunately, Professor Ackerman suddenly died of a heart condition before he could deactivate the device, which is now tuned on the brain-wave of the Investigator (see "The Device"). She is now slowly fading away from our world, and only has a limited time to figure things out before her fate is sealed.

The Device

The device built by Professor Ackerman and the Ghouls is hidden in the strange corners of the basement. It looks like a perfect, shiny metal cube about a foot long on each side, and can be easily dismissed as part of the electronic circuits of the house. It vibrates gently and is incredibly cold to touch. The visible part is only a fraction of its mechanics, and as the investigation proceeds and the Investigator slips into the Dreamworld she might be able to catch a glimpse of its disturbing design: a chaotic mass of cables, circuits and valves, of equal parts metal and organic. Seeing the device in its entirety for the first time will require a check for the Investigator to keep her sanity together.

The device has been designed to attune on the brain-waves of the first person sleeping in the house. Once it has set on a target, it starts bending reality around that one person and slowly erasing her and the house from everyone's memory, in order to transport that information back to the Dreamworld.

Slipping Away

As the scenario unfolds, the Investigator starts to disappear at an increasingly fast pace following the rhythm of the investigation. At first, the Investigator's acquaintances seem to have trouble recognising her, which becomes increasingly frustrating as time goes by. Eventually, they can't remember ever meeting her before, until she simply becomes invisible to all.

CLUE: As the Investigator starts to fade into the Dreamworld, people occasionally confuse her with Randal Ackerman and call her with his name (whether they actually knew the deceased Professor or not). Some of them will occasionally go as far as to remind her of his "meeting on Hangman Hill, in the moonlight when the Third Hour strikes." This reference in particular will become more and more pressing as the investigation unfolds, as if some mysterious forces were drawing the Investigator there.

CLUE: As the link between our world and the Investigator grows fragile, time and space begin to act strangely around her. Relatively long distances can be covered instantly, and time travels back and forth in apparently random patterns. As things progress, the Investigator may find herself teleported to different places at different times, in the timeframe of a week (future or past), and within Arkham.

The House

Professor Ackerman had resorted to a loan from the private Boston based firm Wells & Co. to fund the construction of his house. When he suddenly died, leaving no will nor heirs, the firm hastened to sell the property to try and regain their investment: as a result of this, no one has yet claimed Ackerman's possessions left in the house.

CLUE: The Investigator will know that the house was purchased from the estate of the late Professor Randal Ackerman, which property had passed over to Wells & Co. The Investigator has likely heard from the real estate agent of the untimely demise of Professor Ackerman.

CLUE: Soon after moving in, the Investigator starts noticing that some of the corners of the house are strange. A few degrees too much or too little make the place feel eerie, and occasionally give her mild migraines. An Investigator with a background in architecture will notice that this has been done on purpose, as there is a sort of strange balance in the structure. Alternatively, the Investigator might refer to a consultant to discover this information.

CLUE: As the Investigator disappears, the house starts to fade away too. It begins with a small crack on the walls, then some of her prized small possessions disappear, then a family photo album or personal diary, until entire rooms and stories vanish without a trace. The disappearance of the house follows the rhythm of the investigation much like the slipping away of the Investigator herself.

CLUE: Among the possessions of late Professor Ackerman is a collection of his personal diaries. The entries date as far back as 1881, when young Randal was a student at Oxford and just starting to delve in the lands beyond sleep. Reading the diaries will reveal that Professor Ackerman moved to Arkham with the specific goal of working at the Miskatonic University, in order to gain unlimited access to its rich occult library. The last entry is dated November 3rd, 1925, and mentions the Professor's first meeting with the Ghouls in the Dreamworld. The entry concludes with a cryptic reference to a meeting on Hangman Hill, scheduled for three in the

morning. It's clear that the last volume of his diaries can be located elsewhere. Skimming through the diaries is likely to enhance the Investigator's understanding of the Cthulhu Mythos, and will require an Sanity check.

Professor Ackerman's Office

Randal Ackerman had only been dead a few weeks when the scenario begins, and most of his belongings are still sitting in his office and are now part of the University estate. As he fades away, it shouldn't be hard for the Investigator to gain access to the belongings of Professor Ackerman.

CLUE: Professor Ackerman's personal library is full of a number of books that don't really fit into his field, with an especially large section dedicated to neuroscience (and neurology in particular). If closely examined, the Investigator will find that every single one of these have at least a chapter discussing the science of sleep. Basic volumes on astronomy also find their place in Ackerman's collection, as well as a copy of "The Dreamers In The Stars", an English translation of an original sixth century Arabic astrological text by an unknown author. The book deals with the art of dreaming, and especially how astrological patterns can influence one's ability to travel the Dreamworld.

CLUE: The Professor's personal organizer is filled with cryptic references to a certain appointment on specific days of the month. An Investigator with a decent comprehension of astronomy will notice that these roughly follow the lunar cycle. All the appointments are scheduled for three in the morning, with no indication of where or with whom the meeting is supposed to be held.

CLUE: Professor Ackerman most recent diary can be found hidden in a drawer of his desk. Most of the entries detail his dealings with the Ghouls, and refer to some sort of plan to escape reality before his ultimate demise. The House seems to be a focal part of this machination, though it's hard to understand exactly how.

The Dweller On Hangman's Hill

The cemetery on Hangman's Hill is the focal location of the scenario. The Ghouls show up at three o'clock in the morning on the night of a new moon: the keeper can take advantage of time moving seemingly randomly (cfr. "The Device") to better underline the drama. While the rest of the pack communicates in Pnathic, their leader will do the talking with the Investigator. Its voice sounds like that of a normal person, if strange and alienating at times.

During their conversation the Ghouls will fill the gaps of the narrative and explain how they first met with Professor Ackerman and his plans to live forever in the Dreamworld. Their goal is to convince her to follow Ackerman's path, and leave the device to run its course. They will go as far as to offer the Investigator to follow them through the Underworld, and show her the way to the Vale of Pnath. By doing so, she would forever leave our world for the Dreamlands.

If the Investigator opposes to the Ghouls' rhetoric strongly enough, they will reticently offer to turn off the device and let her go free, but they will ask for her dreams in exchange: past, present and future. The ghouls will then remove the device from the basement, time will revert to the day the Investigator first moved into the house, and everything will be as nothing ever happened in the first place. This alone should be reason enough for a final test of the Investigator's Sanity.