

Tickets-of-Leave are small self-contained additions to the **Convicts & Cthulhu** setting for Lovecraftian roleplaying in the early penal colonies of Australia. Each includes a selection of game elements which can either be used collectively as a thumbnail sketch of a mini-scenario, or can be used in isolation to provide pieces that enhance a scenario of your own invention.



Convicts & CTHULHU

TICKET of LEAVE #10

The Doom That Came To Five Dock

CREDITS

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Introduction

When Europeans first settled the Australian continent in 1788 one of the things they found most disconcerting about their new home was the sheer unfamiliarity – alienness – of the landscape. Everything from the types of trees, through to the varieties of fauna that lived around New South Wales was new and unknown. To a handful of men of a scientific persuasion this range of new species was a source of much wonder and excitement. To most other Europeans, the strangeness of the surroundings was more disconcerting than exciting – after all, who really knew what types of beasts might lurk just beyond the fringes of the established settlements, just waiting for lone travellers to venture into the wrong place? This natural unease was compounded among the many superstitious men and women of the colonies (convicts, guards, and free settlers alike). Tales spun by such people describing the weird and unknown animals that they encountered in remote places frequently extended to lurid tales of fantastical monstrosities and fearful dangers.

Of course, in a setting in which the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos are visited upon the Earth, not all of those terrifying tales are necessarily exaggerations.

This Ticket of Leave leverages the superstitious fearfulness of the European colonists, and the shocking remoteness of some of their places of settlement, to posit a scenario in which the investigators must investigate an apparently impossible story of large-scale devastation with no natural cause. But while the terrifying force responsible for flattening buildings and slaying a dozen people might be something from beyond, perhaps the motivations leading up to this horrible act might just have been all too human ...?



"I do not scruple to pronounce that in the whole world there is not a worse country than what we have yet seen of this. All that is contiguous to us is so very barren and forbidding that it may with truth be said, here Nature is reversed."

— Major Robert Ross (Officer of Marines and Lieutenant Governor under Arthur Phillip, 1788)

Scenario Seed: The Doom That Came To Five Dock

This adventure seed revolves around reports of a most peculiar incident involving a monstrous creature wreaking havoc on a small outpost on the Parramatta River. Five Dock Bay is one of the staging places commonly visited by ferries travelling between Sydney and Parramatta, and is also on the direct southern roadway that joins the two settlements. There is no permanent population at Five Dock, but the place is visited often enough that there is a well-apportioned set of wooden wharves, as well as a handful of wattle and daub buildings. The latter are primarily places for storing cargo that is being shipped up or down the river, but a couple also include cots where weary ferryboat men can sleep for the night or bunker down in poor weather.

Recently tales have reached the Governor's officers in both Sydney and Parramatta that some terrible event has occurred at Five Dock, and that perhaps the place has been destroyed utterly. The same tales speak of many casualties and scenes reminiscent of a battlefield. Although vague and imprecise, these wild tales clearly bear investigation. Two men that are most eager to establish the truth behind the stories are colonial surgeons Matthew Toomey and John Harris – co-owners of Five Dock Farm, which lies just beyond the site of the purported tragedy. It is their vocal concern that convinces the Governor to assign a team – the investigators – to accompany the two surgeons to Five Dock to get to the bottom of the lurid story.

This scenario seed is only loosely tied to historical events and can be played at any time during the standard Convicts & Cthulhu era. (Real sticklers for historical accuracy might wish to set it after 1806, the year when John Harris was historically given the grant on the land that became Five Dock Farm.)

Keeper's Introduction

The wild tales of death and destruction at Five Dock are all quite true. To make matters worse, the horrible and tragic episode was not the result of a natural disaster, attack by Aboriginal warriors, or even an animal attack. Rather it was a powerful

Ferries on the Parramatta River

Ferry services began between Sydney and Parramatta in 1793 with a cost of 1 shilling per person or per hundredweight of cargo, or 6 shillings for the whole boat.

extra-dimensional horror from the Cthulhu Mythos that brought doom to the quiet spot on the Parramatta River. The force in question was an obscure Great Old One which takes on the material form of a massive insectoid terror. Some tomes call this obscure god simply “The Matriarch of the Swarms”; a few attribute it an unpronounceable name, Zstylzhemgni.

The circumstances and motives that led up to the insect god being summoned to destroy Five Dock will depend on which of the three Mythos Options the Keeper has elected to use – see “The True Nature of the Threat” on page 4.

THE INSECT HORROR

Regardless of the cause of the Great Old One's manifestation, its sudden appearance was both unexpected and hugely destructive. Arriving without warning across the Parramatta River from Five Dock Bay, the enormous insect – a misshapen monstrosity loosely resembling a locust or cicada, with a wingspan of at least 10 yards – quickly crossed the waters. Its rapidly beating membranous wings whipped the river up into a storm-like fury, causing most of the ferry boats berthed at the wharves to capsize or founder.

But the purpose of the great insect was not apparently to damage the boats, for it quickly descended upon the crowd of people looking on in horror. That group was made up of a mix of ferrymen and a dozen female convicts (who were chaperoned by a chaplain). The enormous insect thing attacked all men and women assembled by the Five Dock Wharves, although its attentions seemed particularly drawn to the convict group and especially the priest. Dozens of people were stung with the foul creature's stinger, and many were crushed between its mighty mandibles.



THE SHRIEK OF DOOM

The final doom came, however, when the Matriarch of Swarms gave out her terrifying sonic attack, a calumny of shrieks and whistles which was issued with such force that the sturdy wharf moorings shattered into fragments and the numerous flimsy warehouse buildings were flattened to the ground. So powerful was this awful call that more than one of the surviving ferrymen had their eyeballs burst from the pressure of the sound.

When the short but terrifying attack was over, nothing remained of Five Dock – each one of its structures had been levelled completely. Bodies were strewn all about. [And while it looked to all intents and purposes as though every man and woman present at the scene had been slain, a great many were actually left alive but paralysed by the sting of the Matriarch. Into these living hosts the Great Old One injected her eggs.]

Hours passed before anyone noticed the devastation. A ferry boat bound for Sydney passed the place and pulled to the southern bank of the river, horrified by the scene of devastation they witnessed. Initially it appeared that there were no survivors, and that some of the bodies had been crudely interfered with – most notably the body of the churchman. But eventually the group chanced upon one survivor, a boathand named McGrath who had been rendered blind during the attack.

Rescuing the unseeing man, the crew of the Sydney-bound ferry continued their journey to its destination. Upon arrival they notified the Colonial authorities of all that they had witnessed at Five Dock. News of their shocking find – soon elaborated upon and exaggerated – began to spread.

THE OWNERS OF FIVE DOCK FARM

Nobody was more alarmed by the vague tales of destruction at Five Dock than the owners of the farmstead that verges upon that remote place. Five Dock Farm is a property co-owned by two of the colony's upstanding medical men – surgeons John Harris and Matthew Toomey. Both men quickly volunteered to treat the wounded McGrath, and to extract more of his sketchy tale. What they heard concerned them greatly. Particularly worried by the details of the attack on Five Dock, and the rather impossibly large insect creature that had caused it, was the younger surgeon, Toomey. In addition to his accomplishments as a medical man he is also a member of an occult society with some knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos; and to him the wild tale of a great misshapen horror seems all too plausible.

Both surgeons were concerned enough by the tale of McGrath – not to mention the several other corroborating stories told by ferry crews arriving later in the day – that they proposed swift investigation. Realising the uncertain dangers of venturing out alone, the influential Harris was able to petition the Governor to supply a small contingent to act as protection for his journey.

Involving the Investigators

The investigators become involved in the scenario when they are attached to the hastily-assembled expedition to investigate the rumours about Five Dock. There are two primary reasons that could lead to their involvement.

Firstly, investigators of high standing and with a track record at investigating weird events around the colony could potentially be approached directly by Harris to act as consultants to the group. This might also occur if the individuals have previously helped Harris or one of the many establishments where he has connections (for example the Sydney Hospital, or the Female Orphan School described in *Ticket of Leave* #9).

The second way that investigators may become involved is by order of the Colonial Secretary. Harris and Toomey's expedition has been granted an allocation of convicts and NSW Corps soldiers to act as muscle to carry items and protect the expedition principles in the event that danger still exists at Five Dock. This number could be made up of investigators, augmented by NPCs as needed.

The True Nature of the Threat

The motivations that ultimately led to the Mythos-fuelled devastation of Five Dock depends on which of the options the Keeper has chosen (see Mythos Options on page 12).

- **Option A – The Long-Suffering Shackle:** In this version, the summoning of the Matriarch of Swarms was an impulsive and foolish act perpetrated by one of the female convicts, Eliza Petty, present at Five Dock. Eliza has only a minor grasp of Mythos sorcery, but is capable enough to be dangerous. When threatened with shocking physical punishment after spurning the lecherous demands of the group’s “chaperone” (the disgusting Reverend George Fenby) she snapped and brought forth the horror from beyond. Petrified by her own actions, the convict woman fled the scene before the worst of the carnage began.
- **Option B – The Blackest Mail:** In this version, the summoning of the Matriarch of Swarms was a cold and calculated act perpetrated by the convict woman Eliza Petty as a show of force to underscore her blackmailing of junior surgeon (and part-time cultist) Matthew Toomey. Petty has been anonymously threatening Toomey for weeks with no result; she has decided to up the ante by proving to the recalcitrant young man that she really can wreak havoc on him and all he owns, should he refuse to accede to her blackmail demands. Unfortunately, the creature summoned forth was far more powerful than the amateur sorceress could imagine, which has left her struggling to survive her own actions.
- **Option C – The Egg That Doth Not Hatch:** In this version, the manifestation of the Matriarch of Swarms was the result of the Great Old One finally tracking down one of the (many) human cultists that has abused her offspring for personal power. If using this option, two of the principal NPCs – junior surgeon Matthew Toomey, and deceased priest George Fenby – are members of an obscure cult known as the Knights of Asclepius (see nearby box). Fenby



Dr. John Harris, NSW Corps Surgeon 1754-1838

John Harris was born in Londonderry, Ireland. He trained as a surgeon in Edinburgh and served as a naval surgeon in Indian waters. He transferred to the NSW Corps in 1789 and arrived in Sydney in 1790, serving first as surgeon’s mate then as surgeon. He was stationed in Parramatta where Harris accepted a 100-acre grant and began his side career as a farmer, establishing several farms around Parramatta and Sydney. He held many important roles in the colony, including magistrate in 1800, in charge of the police the same year, and was appointed Naval Officer in Sydney in 1801 and Deputy Judge Advocate in 1803. He was also an explorer, charting the Hunter River in 1801. He was also on the committees for Orphans and the Gaol committee.

Harris was trusted by Governor King but his duties caused conflict with his fellow officers, especially the monopolists. He fell afoul of King’s enemies and was disbarred from civil office in 1802 when he was accused of ‘ungentlemanlike conduct’ (basically meaning his revealing to King what some officers said about the Governor). Harris was reinstated in 1804. He had a famous house in Ultimo in Sydney. In 1807 Bligh dismissed Harris from his civil positions and thereby incurred Harris’ enmity. From then on the farmer-surgeon was a key opponent of Bligh and fell in with the NSW Corps in the Rum Rebellion. In 1808 he was reinstated to the magistrate’s bench by the Rebel Administration but that same year fell out with John Macarthur and was for a time (once more) dismissed from the bench. In 1809 he sailed for England where he gave evidence at Johnston’s court martial for the Rum Rebellion. Harris returned as a free settler with his wife Eliza in 1814. For the rest of his life he remained in the colony, prospering as a farmer and supporting many public causes, including the establishment of a Bank of New South Wales. He died in 1838.

Knights of Asclepius

The Knights of Asclepius are a small and largely obscure society made up exclusively of medical men with surgical experience. The order claims to have a rich and storied history, stretching all the way back to classical Greek times and involving some of the earliest writers of anatomy and medicine teachings, such as Hippocrates. There is not much evidence to back up this long history, however it does possess a secret tome which describes a detailed school of surgery-based magickal practice. At some point in history, one of its scholars experimented with the attainment of personal power via the implantation of pieces of alien or extra-terrestrial beings beneath their skin. Over time this bizarre yet effective practice became the core secret that binds the Knights of Asclepius together.

In the *Convicts & Cthulhu* era setting the group is very modest – it is entirely possible that the NPCs presented here are its only members in the colony. However, throughout the British Empire there are scores if not hundreds of surgeons that have been initiated into its secretive practices. Chief amongst their mission is the identification of Cthulhu Mythos manifestations, and the obtainment of samples which may be preserved in spirits for later implantation into Knights or their experimental subjects.

One of the favourite types of samples for Mythos-ritual-implantation are the immature eggs left behind by the Great Old One Zstylzhemgni when she manifests. Although being an incredibly obscure entity, appearances by this god – also known as the Matriarch of Swarms – is a blessed event for the Knights. The eggs injected beneath the skin imbue the host with magickal power (at least until such time as they hatch, something the Knights can arrest indefinitely via other spells). For obvious reasons, this practice makes the Matriarch of Swarms especially hostile to the Knights of Asclepius.

In this scenario seed, junior surgeon Matthew Toomey is a high-standing member of the Knights. If Option C is being employed by the Keeper Toomey has been actively experimenting after hours at the Sydney Hospital, implanting several of Zstylzhemgni's eggs into prison chaplain George Fenby.

Whether senior surgeon John Harris is a member of the Knights of Asclepius, or entirely ignorant of his subordinate's extracurricular activities, is entirely at the discretion of the Keeper. Some gamers enjoy stories which add hidden and fantastical layers to historical persons like John Harris; others prefer to avoid fictionalizing historical people. In this case the story works either way (but the Keeper should decide ahead of time, since it may significantly alter the interactions with one or both of these key NPCs).

had the rare “honour”, some months prior, of having several extra-terrestrial insectoid eggs implanted beneath his skin by Toomey. This is a standard technique used by the cult to obtain magickal potency. The Matriarch of Swarms – the Great Old One whose spawn has been thus subverted – scours ceaselessly through eternity to locate such malefactors, but her efforts are usually defeated by spells of masking cast during the cult's implantation ritual. Unfortunately for Fenby, his disciplining of the female convict Eliza Petty as she refused his disgusting advances at Five Dock, brought him into contact with an Elder Sign woven into a family heirloom worn by the girl. This warding temporarily interfered with this cult's spells of obscuring... and the manifestation of an angry extra-dimensional Great Old One soon followed. Ironically the same Elder Sign also protected Eliza Petty from the attacks by the Matriarch, making her the only unscathed survivor of the attack.

Getting Started

The scenario begins with an initial briefing by Drs Harris and Toomey. John Harris is a very powerful figure in Sydney, being both its chief medical authority as well as a high-ranking officer in the New South Wales Corps and magistrate. His imposing presence will dominate the proceedings.

Harris, with occasional assistance from the nervous Toomey, will outline the basics of what the investigators are expected to do. The pair are proposing to mount a group expedition to the site of the purported massacre at Five Dock, tales of which the investigators may well already have heard earlier the day. To set the scene, the pair will provide a brief capsule summary of the facts as reported by the rescued “survivor” McGrath – the Keeper should paraphrase the material appearing in “The Insect Horror” on page 2 and “The Shriek of Doom” on page 3, but omitting any mention of material enclosed in square brackets ([]).

Toomey and Harris will state that they have a personal reason for being interested in this wild story, since they own the land adjoining the Five Dock Wharf, and jointly run a farm there. They

Junior Surgeon, Matthew Toomey

Toomey is a young and very ambitious surgeon, hailing from a wealthy Bristol family. He studied as a surgeon in London before taking up a commission aboard a succession of naval vessels starting with the *Kinnear*, service which stationed him mostly in India and other eastern ports. It was during this time that he was initiated into the Knights of Asclepius, rising rapidly in the order thanks largely to a combination of deft surgical skill and fearlessness in the face of alien horrors. During his meteoric rise he was responsible for a number of particularly shocking surgical rituals performed on Indian men and women placed under his care. Eventually his hubris caught up with him. In 1794 several scandalous discoveries were made by port authorities in Calcutta when a storeroom was raided during an unrelated hunt for an escaped work gang. The searchers found "things" that were once human, but were now something ... else. These were Toomey's secret experiments, and their discovery led swiftly to his court martial.

The court was willing to accept his plea that leniency should be granted since his tests were all in the name of furthering scientific knowledge, and that he had been most careful to only use brown-skinned subjects. Even with such justification the authorities were not willing to allow him to continue to serve in his role in India – a posting to the new penal colony in New South Wales was seen as both expedient and sufficiently pejorative. Fortunately for Toomey, the authorities considered it unnecessary to notify his new superiors of his misdemeanours.

Toomey has been in New South Wales since 1796, and has been welcomed by chief surgeon John Harris, who immediately recognized the younger man's superior surgical technique.

propose that the group leave at first light tomorrow. If asked why the group cannot leave earlier (since the journey is likely to take only a few hours), Toomey responds that he has preparations he wants to make. Plus, there are still medical treatments that need to be applied to the rescued man McGrath. Both of these statements are misleading half-truths: in fact, Toomey has a second plan – to obtain samples of the alien creature, whose eggs he has already discovered beneath the skin of the survivor. The extra time is needed to arrange for a large number of rum-filled jars to be loaded onto the expedition ferry and carry out one last surgical excision from McGrath.

Asking Around Sydney

The delayed departure gives the investigators some time in Sydney which they can use to delve into the strange stories about death and destruction at Five Dock. There are a number of avenues they could pursue; the information each is likely to yield is described in bullet points below. The investigators will need to propose the methods by which they are investigating (e.g., consulting colonial records, speaking with knowledgeable authorities or convict groups around Sydney town). If the Keeper thinks the approach sounds reasonable, the information can be discovered with a relevant skill roll (investigative or social). Items marked [HARD] will require a particularly successful result.

ASKING ABOUT TALES OF STRANGE FLYING CREATURES AND MASS DESTRUCTION

- The huge flying bug in the stories matches no known species of bird or animal that has been encountered in New South Wales, but it's equally true that there are also many different species about which little is known.
- Given the ferryboat men's usual propensity for exaggeration, authorities are more likely to believe that some mundane catastrophe (say, a freak wind or unusual tide) has destroyed the wharves at Five Dock and the rest is fiction.

QUESTIONING THE BLINDED FERRYMAN

The ferryman McGrath is very weak but still alive and in the Sydney Hospital; he has been operated on by Toomey and is still recovering.

- No additional information can be learned from speaking with the ferryboat man.
- [HARD] However, anyone who can inspect his body (something Toomey will try to prevent) can see that the man's torso has two strangely-glowing surgical scars and a third place on his torso which has a strangely glowing bruise surrounding a puncture wound.
 - Anyone with medical training can tell that these are dissimilar to symptoms caused by any known form of injury or disease.



QUESTIONING THE FERRY CREW THAT RESCUED McGRATH

(OR ANY OF THE OTHERS THAT HAVE PASSED FIVE DOCK)

- It's not possible to track down anyone from the crew that rescued McGrath, since they have all now left to return to ferrying goods and passengers back up Sydney Harbour to Parramatta.
- Other crews corroborate the basic story of destruction of buildings and wharves, although none of them can agree with reports of a "battlefield" of carnage.
 - One ferryman thinks perhaps he saw a corpse hanging from the fractured branch of a great gum tree.

ASKING ABOUT A GROUP OF "CONVICT GIRLS" EN ROUTE TO PARRAMATTA

McGrath's story particularly mentions a large group of female convicts present at Five Dock and apparently the centre of the flying creature's attacks. Investigators can readily verify details about these women:

- There was a group of women travelling today from Sydney to take up work at the new Parramatta Female Factory – that must be the group mentioned in the ferryman's tale.

- The group was chaperoned by gaol chaplain, Reverend George Fenby.
- This group of convict girls included "known firebrands", particularly hard cases who had caused much trouble before.
 - The most rebellious of the group of women was a young "hellcat" called Eliza Petty.
- Because this group included such troublemakers, the party was supposed to have been accompanied by an armed NSW Corps escort but that man did not arrive in time to join the group.
 - [HARD] (in fact, the NSW Corps guard was so hung-over that he failed to wake until many hours after the ferry left Circular Quay).

ASKING ABOUT ELIZA PETTY

- Eliza was always in trouble, even during the several years she spent at the Female Orphan School.
- [HARD] Some of the other convict girls believe Eliza is a "witch" on account of special "tricks" that she performs sometimes – like spontaneously starting fires in the palm of her hand.

ASKING ABOUT REV GEORGE FENBY

- Fenby has a reputation as a fairly degenerate sort of individual.
- He had a history with Eliza Petty, having delivered “extreme justice” upon her (by flogging her) as recently as yesterday, as punishment for misdemeanours. In response, the young girl had planted a firm kick upon his “principal root” which had left the priest winded for some time.
- There are rumours that he “took liberties” with some of the girls to which he ministered.
- [HARD] Someone who had occasion to see Fenby without his shirt on noticed that he had a collection of strange bruises on his abdomen, some of which faintly glowed at night.

ABOUT DR MATTHEW TOOMEY AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE TRIP TO FIVE DOCK

- There are rumours that some months ago Dr Toomey had secretly been asking around for “paid volunteers” to take part in medical experiments of his own design.
- Snooping around Toomey’s home in Ultimo will find a jar filled with rum, in which floats two egg-sized masses each of which glows faintly. [These are eggs of the Great Old One, but inactive while in alcohol]
- Snooping around the ferry that is being prepared to take the group out to Five Dock tomorrow shows a cache of three-dozen similar rum-filled jars have been loaded onto the boat, along with a full set of surgeon’s tools.

Devastation at the Docks

The ferry, carrying the investigators, Harris and Toomey, a ferry captain, and possibly an additional NSW Corps soldier as NPC (if there are no military investigators), departs Sydney shortly after dawn. It takes a little over three hours to reach Five Dock. When they arrive, the scene is largely as described – every single wooden structure has been flattened and there are signs of a violent affray having occurred. There are, however, no bodies strewn across the

ground as described by McGrath. In fact, the investigators will find only one corpse – the mangled body of Reverend George Fenby skewered on a tree branch, some thirty feet above ground-level.

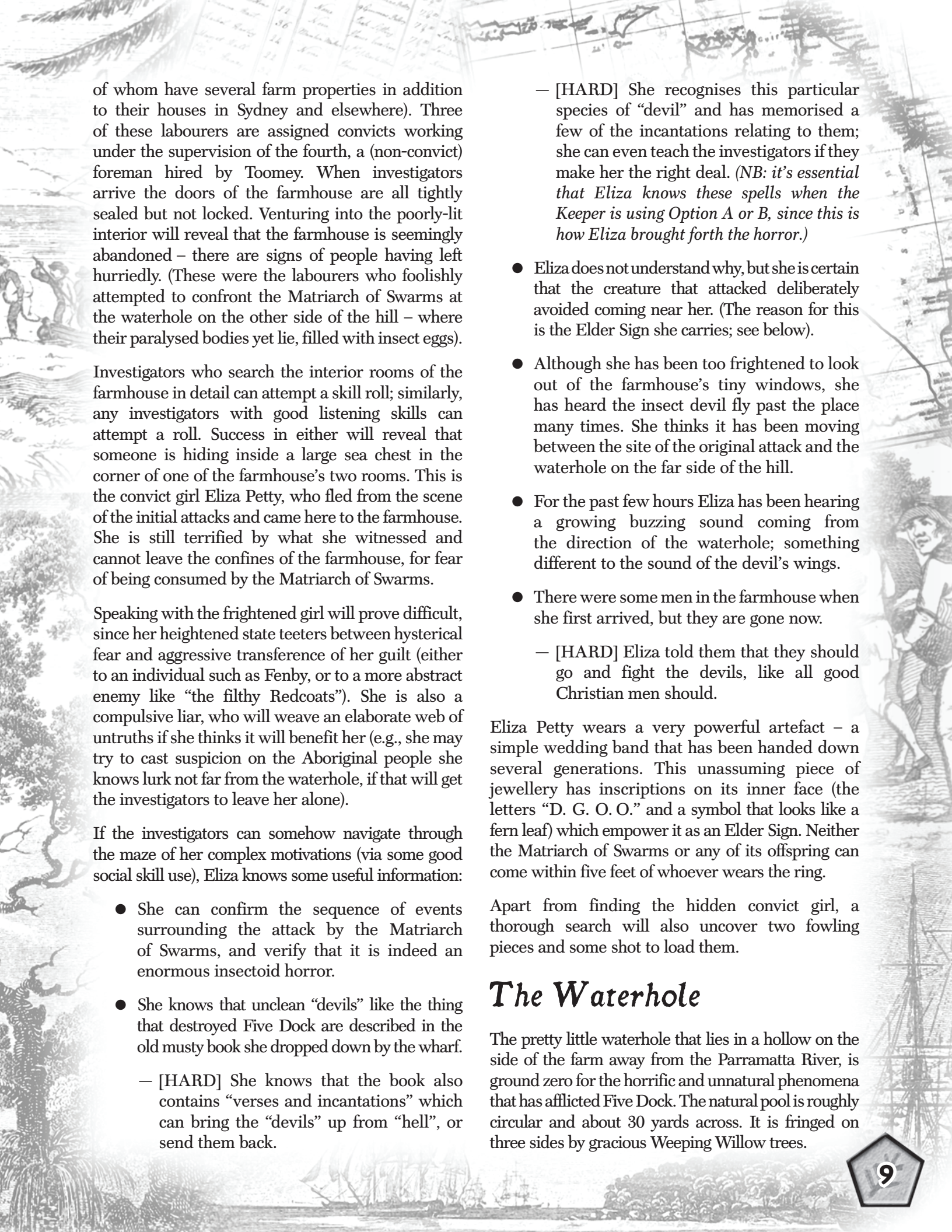
The reason for this discrepancy is simple: some hours after the destructive attack by the Matriarch of Swarms, the alien god returned to implant yet more of her eggs into the paralysed and dead. She then proceeded to pick up each corpse and carry it airborne across the adjunct hill to a small waterhole. The Matriarch instinctively wants its new brood to hatch in a secluded place, away from the steady traffic of ferries and watchful men. The corpse of Fenby was left as a warning to the cultists that had implanted alien eggs into the priest (all such eggs have now been removed, messily).

Searching the grassy slope behind the place where the wharves and buildings once stood, investigators can find plenty of bloodstains and other signs that many people died here. They will also easily spot the path that runs up the gentle hillside towards a modest stone farmhouse on the crest. Investigators who can apply skills at interpreting tracks can easily see that while few people managed to flee the scene of the massacre, one lone set of tracks show someone frantically ran up this trail.

Investigators who search for hidden objects (and succeed with a standard skill check) will find something more: not far from the tree where Fenby has been skewered there is a small mound of leaves. Clearing them aside reveals a thick and ancient book, a Mythos Tome (the Keeper can choose whichever best fits the current campaign). Although there is no way of easily telling, this book was once the possession of the convict girl Eliza Petty – and if the Keeper is using Option A or Option B, this book was used by Petty to summon the Matriarch of Swarms. It was left discarded here when the young sorceress fled in panic. The Tome contains a number of spells of the Keeper’s choosing, plus Call/Dismiss Zstylzhemgni (see page 15) – this last pair of incantations has obviously been much-referenced since the book always falls open to that page.

At Five Dock Farm

The stone farmhouse at the top of the hill is very small and mostly used by the four labourers who run the farm day-to-day for Harris and Toomey (both



of whom have several farm properties in addition to their houses in Sydney and elsewhere). Three of these labourers are assigned convicts working under the supervision of the fourth, a (non-convict) foreman hired by Toomey. When investigators arrive the doors of the farmhouse are all tightly sealed but not locked. Venturing into the poorly-lit interior will reveal that the farmhouse is seemingly abandoned – there are signs of people having left hurriedly. (These were the labourers who foolishly attempted to confront the Matriarch of Swarms at the waterhole on the other side of the hill – where their paralysed bodies yet lie, filled with insect eggs).

Investigators who search the interior rooms of the farmhouse in detail can attempt a skill roll; similarly, any investigators with good listening skills can attempt a roll. Success in either will reveal that someone is hiding inside a large sea chest in the corner of one of the farmhouse's two rooms. This is the convict girl Eliza Petty, who fled from the scene of the initial attacks and came here to the farmhouse. She is still terrified by what she witnessed and cannot leave the confines of the farmhouse, for fear of being consumed by the Matriarch of Swarms.

Speaking with the frightened girl will prove difficult, since her heightened state teeters between hysterical fear and aggressive transference of her guilt (either to an individual such as Fenby, or to a more abstract enemy like “the filthy Redcoats”). She is also a compulsive liar, who will weave an elaborate web of untruths if she thinks it will benefit her (e.g., she may try to cast suspicion on the Aboriginal people she knows lurk not far from the waterhole, if that will get the investigators to leave her alone).

If the investigators can somehow navigate through the maze of her complex motivations (via some good social skill use), Eliza knows some useful information:

- She can confirm the sequence of events surrounding the attack by the Matriarch of Swarms, and verify that it is indeed an enormous insectoid horror.
- She knows that unclean “devils” like the thing that destroyed Five Dock are described in the old musty book she dropped down by the wharf.
 - [HARD] She knows that the book also contains “verses and incantations” which can bring the “devils” up from “hell”, or send them back.

– [HARD] She recognises this particular species of “devil” and has memorised a few of the incantations relating to them; she can even teach the investigators if they make her the right deal. (NB: it's essential that Eliza knows these spells when the Keeper is using Option A or B, since this is how Eliza brought forth the horror.)


- Eliza does not understand why, but she is certain that the creature that attacked deliberately avoided coming near her. (The reason for this is the Elder Sign she carries; see below).
- Although she has been too frightened to look out of the farmhouse's tiny windows, she has heard the insect devil fly past the place many times. She thinks it has been moving between the site of the original attack and the waterhole on the far side of the hill.
- For the past few hours Eliza has been hearing a growing buzzing sound coming from the direction of the waterhole; something different to the sound of the devil's wings.
- There were some men in the farmhouse when she first arrived, but they are gone now.
 - [HARD] Eliza told them that they should go and fight the devils, like all good Christian men should.

Eliza Petty wears a very powerful artefact – a simple wedding band that has been handed down several generations. This unassuming piece of jewellery has inscriptions on its inner face (the letters “D. G. O. O.” and a symbol that looks like a fern leaf) which empower it as an Elder Sign. Neither the Matriarch of Swarms or any of its offspring can come within five feet of whoever wears the ring.

Apart from finding the hidden convict girl, a thorough search will also uncover two fowling pieces and some shot to load them.

The Waterhole

The pretty little waterhole that lies in a hollow on the side of the farm away from the Parramatta River, is ground zero for the horrific and unnatural phenomena that has afflicted Five Dock. The natural pool is roughly circular and about 30 yards across. It is fringed on three sides by gracious Weeping Willow trees.



The foreshore adjacent to the shaded sides of the waterhole resembles a battlefield. More than forty bodies – including convict women, numerous ferryboat men, and the four labourers from the Five Dock Farm – all lie motionless, some in a pool of dried blood. There is a terrible stench. About half of the bodies are clearly dead, showing obvious characteristics of rigor mortis. The other half appear to simply be motionless, perhaps sleeping (although most have their eyes open). In truth, this second group are alive but paralysed by the sting of the Matriarch of Swarms, a poison that she readministers from time to time to ensure that none of these victims awakes.

Across the entire waterhole a constant background noise – a peculiar kind of unfamiliar buzzing – pervades. This is caused by the first swarm of offspring that have burst forth from victims in the waterhole. Each human body, whether alive or dead, has been injected with several of the Matriarch's eggs. Each hour, more of these hatch. At present the resulting swarms are content to mass in the upper reaches of the willow trees, where they are largely invisible to observers. Unless the investigators have been especially slow, the group are likely to arrive not long after the first swarm has hatched: there are perhaps 20 of Zstylzhemgni's fist-sized brood lurking around the waterhole. Every two hours another 10+1D20 offspring hatch forth. If left unchecked, this will continue for the next five days. When the swarms become large enough (say 100 insects) they will leave the safety of the waterhole looking for food.

Witnessing the scene at the waterhole costs 1D3/2D4 Sanity Points.

MOTHER'S WATCH

Depending on the time of day they arrive, the Matriarch of Swarms might or might not be present herself at the waterhole. While the summons to this dimension has opened the door for her to travel to this dimension as she pleases, the conditions in this part of reality are not conducive to her existing here for periods longer than about 90 minutes at a time. After each manifestation, she must wait at least 3 hours before returning. Accordingly, the Matriarch has been appearing and disappearing on a kind of timetable. When she is present in this reality, she currently spends all her time at the waterhole: initially spending hours transporting all the dead and paralysed bodies here, and then many more

hours pumping those bodies full of eggs. This is as far as the Matriarch's plans extend at present.

If the Matriarch detects any humans who are not paralysed, she will hastily attack them with the goal of firstly protecting her eggs, and secondly creating new hosts (paralysed or dead) into which more eggs can be placed. The Great Old One is a formidable opponent, so Keepers should avoid investigator groups rushing headlong into combat with her (it will be a short combat).

The other major trigger that will prompt the Matriarch into action is her detection of one of her eggs having had its natural progression interfered with (e.g., by having been preserved in a jar of rum, or been implanted under the auspices of Enchant Wound spell – see page 15). Such tampering with her unborn offspring especially offends the Matriarch of Swarms: if she believes an individual has been the agent of such tampering she will attack that person mercilessly and follow them wherever they go. Note that eggs that remain under a coating of rum, or whose implantation is still masked by a functioning (not Elder Sign corrupted) spell of obscuring, remain invisible to the Matriarch.

Neither the Matriarch nor her spawn can attack anyone wearing Eliza Petty's Elder Sign.

Toomey's Dream Haul

When Dr Matthew Toomey set out on this expedition, he hoped against hope that he might encounter more of the alien insect eggs that he extracted from the ferryboat man McGrath. Accordingly, he arranged for some three-dozen rum-filled jars to be secretly loaded aboard the investigators' ferry. When he arrives at the waterhole he will quickly realise that there are likely hundreds of the precious eggs incubating in bodies alive and dead. How he reacts to this unexpected boon will ultimately depend on how the scenario has unfolded – and is a decision for the Keeper. Does he choose to keep his true mission a secret yet aim to secretly collect samples while others are investigating elsewhere? Does he abandon all pretence and try to recruit the investigators to instead help him quickly gather as many eggs as possible, perhaps offering them rum as an incentive? Is his dangerous ambition cruelly cut short when one of the eggs he is extracting hatches and a hungry insect spawn emerges?

The Wangal Community

The bushland surrounding the back of Five Dock Farm and its waterhole is home to a small group of Aboriginal people. These are members of the Wangal people, who are part of the Eora language group. Until the arrival of the Europeans this land was their traditional hunting ground, and the farm's waterhole was a sacred site central to their daily life. As such, they are particularly saddened by the events that have transpired, all of which they have watched from afar.

If the investigators think to seek these Aboriginal people out they are easy to find; left to their own devices they will lurk hidden among the trees (perhaps visible to an investigator who succeeds in a perception check).

The Wangal people are a proud group, but fundamentally all they want is to be left alone. As such any approach by a group of investigators will initially be met with apprehension – these people have witnessed premeditated violence from Europeans before and are cautious. However, if the investigators can overcome their distrust, they will find the Aboriginal people to be a goldmine of helpful information:

- The Wangal people can describe exactly how the attack by the river unfolded, including the actions of Eliza Petty and McGrath.
- The Wangal have been closely watching the unfolding scene at the waterhole.
 - To them, the appearance of strange misshapen beasts is just another manifestation of one of the ancient spirits from the Dreaming, but this one looks like a bad one.
 - They have seen the great insect laying its eggs in every available body, and also have seen a few of the eggs recently hatching.
- If investigators ask whether the Wangal know of a way to defeat the great insect spirit, they will consult with one of their elders before responding.
 - Eventually they return saying that perhaps the spirit might be defeated if it were possible to draw it to an exposed place – like the top of the hill, or a mountain –

and then call upon the Wangal's sacred Dreaming spirits to whip up the Eastern Wind to disperse the swarm or blow it out into Sydney Harbour.

- If asked how likely such a plan would be to succeed, they merely shrug – “never seen this bad spirit or her babies before. Who can say?”

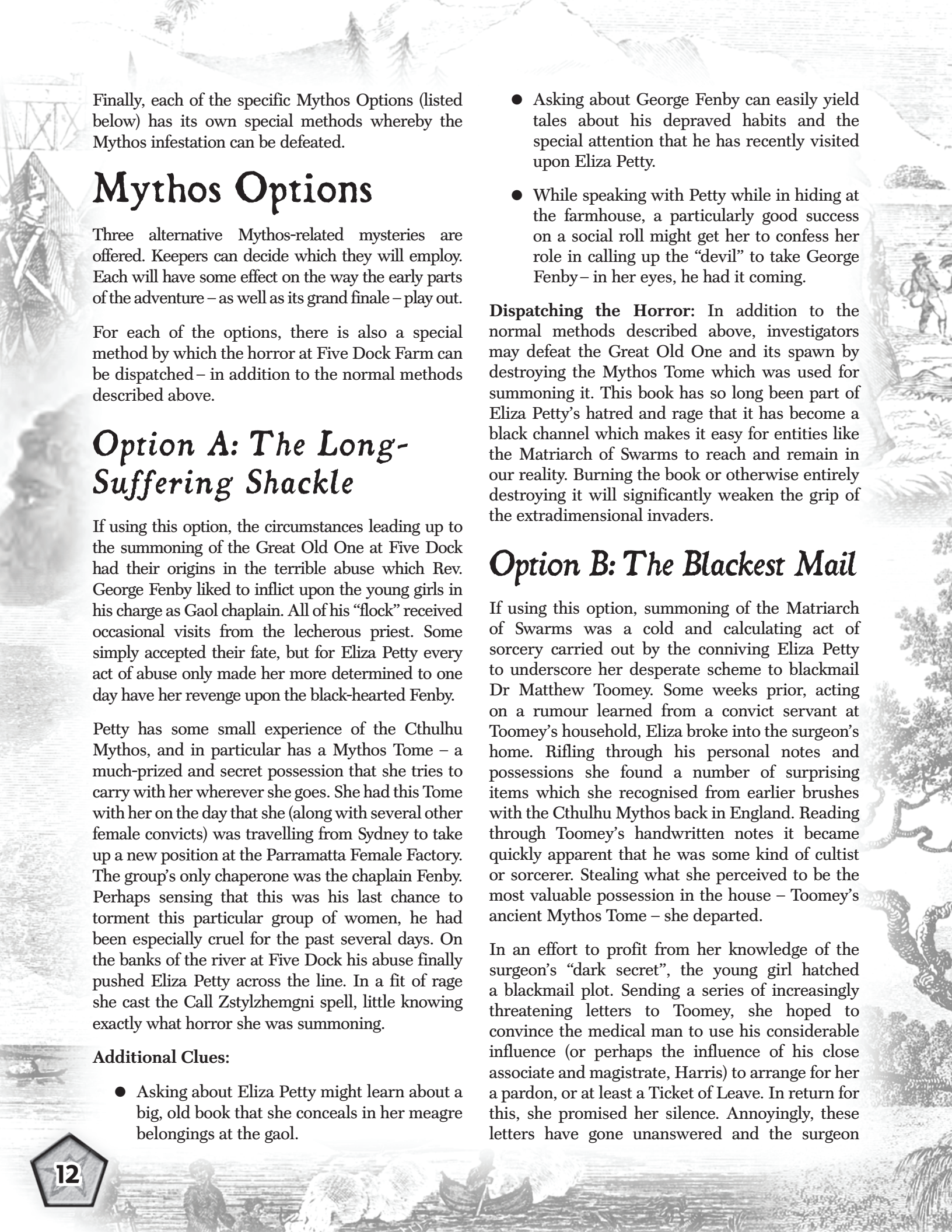
Defeating the Matriarch and her Swarms

Investigators have a number of options for attempting to rid the Five Dock region of its alien insect infestation.

The most direct methods – simply attacking the Matriarch and its offspring with muskets and the like – is very unlikely to put much of a dent into the creatures. Zstylzhemgni's hard body armour will deflect most such attacks outright. A more concerted approach that uses fire or black powder explosives might fare better, but will certainly run the risk of setting the whole bushland alight and perhaps wiping out a vast swathe of land.

Another option available to dealing with the problem is the use of Mythos magic, in particular the Dismiss spell for the Great Old One. This is present in the Mythos Tome and known to Eliza Petty. The latter might even suggest this course of action if sufficiently trusting of the investigators. The details of using this method are described on page 15.

Investigators who have spoken with the Aboriginal people of the region may decide to pursue the option of engaging the local Wangal community to try to defeat the alien “spirit” via traditional sorcery. This will involve convening a large number of local Aboriginal people into an emergency “corroboree” – a lengthy ritual of song, dance, and ceremonial storytelling. While the Wangal are willing to do this, the investigators will be given the responsibility of arranging for the Matriarch of Swarms to be drawn to the ceremony site at just the right moment as the ritual reaches its climax. If somehow they achieve that, the Aboriginal ritual will summon up an almighty gust of wind that rips through the Great Old One and her offspring. The Keeper will need to decide whether this supernatural blast is enough to dismiss the Mythos creatures, or merely weaken them.



Finally, each of the specific Mythos Options (listed below) has its own special methods whereby the Mythos infestation can be defeated.

Mythos Options

Three alternative Mythos-related mysteries are offered. Keepers can decide which they will employ. Each will have some effect on the way the early parts of the adventure – as well as its grand finale – play out.

For each of the options, there is also a special method by which the horror at Five Dock Farm can be dispatched – in addition to the normal methods described above.

Option A: The Long-Suffering Shackle

If using this option, the circumstances leading up to the summoning of the Great Old One at Five Dock had their origins in the terrible abuse which Rev. George Fenby liked to inflict upon the young girls in his charge as Gaol chaplain. All of his “flock” received occasional visits from the lecherous priest. Some simply accepted their fate, but for Eliza Petty every act of abuse only made her more determined to one day have her revenge upon the black-hearted Fenby.

Petty has some small experience of the Cthulhu Mythos, and in particular has a Mythos Tome – a much-prized and secret possession that she tries to carry with her wherever she goes. She had this Tome with her on the day that she (along with several other female convicts) was travelling from Sydney to take up a new position at the Parramatta Female Factory. The group’s only chaperone was the chaplain Fenby. Perhaps sensing that this was his last chance to torment this particular group of women, he had been especially cruel for the past several days. On the banks of the river at Five Dock his abuse finally pushed Eliza Petty across the line. In a fit of rage she cast the Call Zstylzhemgni spell, little knowing exactly what horror she was summoning.

Additional Clues:

- Asking about Eliza Petty might learn about a big, old book that she conceals in her meagre belongings at the gaol.

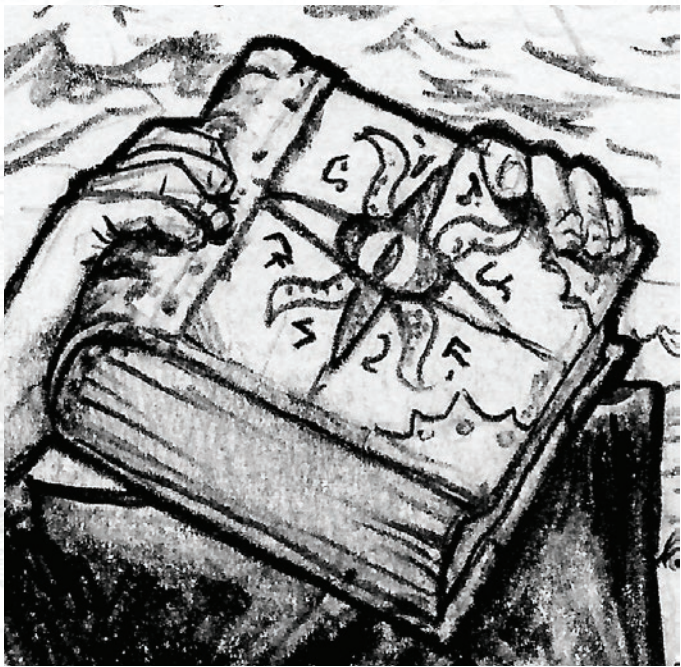
- Asking about George Fenby can easily yield tales about his depraved habits and the special attention that he has recently visited upon Eliza Petty.
- While speaking with Petty while in hiding at the farmhouse, a particularly good success on a social roll might get her to confess her role in calling up the “devil” to take George Fenby – in her eyes, he had it coming.

Dispatching the Horror: In addition to the normal methods described above, investigators may defeat the Great Old One and its spawn by destroying the Mythos Tome which was used for summoning it. This book has so long been part of Eliza Petty’s hatred and rage that it has become a black channel which makes it easy for entities like the Matriarch of Swarms to reach and remain in our reality. Burning the book or otherwise entirely destroying it will significantly weaken the grip of the extradimensional invaders.

Option B: The Blackest Mail

If using this option, summoning of the Matriarch of Swarms was a cold and calculating act of sorcery carried out by the conniving Eliza Petty to underscore her desperate scheme to blackmail Dr Matthew Toomey. Some weeks prior, acting on a rumour learned from a convict servant at Toomey’s household, Eliza broke into the surgeon’s home. Rifling through his personal notes and possessions she found a number of surprising items which she recognised from earlier brushes with the Cthulhu Mythos back in England. Reading through Toomey’s handwritten notes it became quickly apparent that he was some kind of cultist or sorcerer. Stealing what she perceived to be the most valuable possession in the house – Toomey’s ancient Mythos Tome – she departed.

In an effort to profit from her knowledge of the surgeon’s “dark secret”, the young girl hatched a blackmail plot. Sending a series of increasingly threatening letters to Toomey, she hoped to convince the medical man to use his considerable influence (or perhaps the influence of his close associate and magistrate, Harris) to arrange for her a pardon, or at least a Ticket of Leave. In return for this, she promised her silence. Annoyingly, these letters have gone unanswered and the surgeon



Option C: The Egg That Doth Not Hatch

If using this option, the “summoning” of Zstylzhemgni at Five Dock was not a deliberate act, but a kind of unfortunate accident. Dr Matthew Toomey, in addition to being a most talented surgeon, is also a member of an obscure cult known as the Knights of Asclepius. This order derives its power from its ability to obtain pieces of Mythos creatures and gods and literally implant them into the bodies of willing human hosts. A favourite target for this unusual practice is the immature extra-dimensional eggs of the Matriarch of Swarms. Whenever the group finds a clutch of these most rare items it collects them and pickles them for later implantation. Toomey has recently been performing surgical ritual experiments with a volunteer, the degenerate priest Rev. George Fenby. But, as always with the surgeries performed by the Knights, Toomey has been very careful to always cast the appropriate spells to ensure that the forces of the Cthulhu Mythos never become cognizant of this abuse of their flesh.

has shown no inclination to take any of the threats seriously. Figuring that she needed to prove that her threats were not hollow, she wrote one last letter alluding to her ability to rain destruction upon Toomey’s possessions ... and then she set about summoning the foul Matriarch of Swarms upon Toomey’s property at Five Dock (using a spell from the Doctor’s own Mythos Tome). The true horror of the Insect God was far more than she had ever expected, however, and the blackmailer soon found herself fleeing the scene of her own destruction.

Additional Clues:

- Searching through Toomey’s possessions will uncover the set of blackmail letters sent by Petty.
- Searching Toomey’s house might uncover his journal or other papers which mention the Knights of Asclepius, either of which will imply his membership in that order.
- Watching Toomey during the expedition to Five Dock will reveal that he is strangely nervous, and seems to have a hidden agenda.

Dispatching the Horror: In addition to the normal methods described above, investigators may defeat the Great Old One and its spawn by convincing Eliza Petty to abandon her spiteful plan to blackmail Toomey. The act of summoning was fuelled largely by the hatred in her heart, and if somehow that black pit of hate can be negated then most of what is sustaining the Matriarch’s link with our reality will weaken.

In the case of Fenby, those protections have failed. While in the midst of “disciplining” one of the young convict girls in his charge, the disgusting chaplain had this misfortune to come into contact with an Elder Sign. Unfortunately, this interaction briefly interrupted the spells which masked his implanted secret ... and from her home in some unimaginable other dimension, the Matriarch spied him. Spurred on by rage, the Great Old One manifested at Five Dock and unleashed terrifying retribution upon Fenby and anyone else nearby.

Additional Clues:

- Asking about Eliza Petty unearths a tale about an old gold ring that she treats as a prized possession; her mother told her that it would protect her against all the demons of Hell.
- Convict workers at the Sydney Hospital have noticed that Matthew Toomey often stays back late to “practice his art” late into the night; one of them may even have discovered him performing a surgery by lantern-light in the middle of the night.
- Rev. George Fenby has recently been boasting that he has a “particular vitality” thanks to special treatment that he has been receiving

from his good friend Dr Toomey. He hopes to use his renewed vigour to redouble his efforts to “flog the devil out of the girls in his charge.”

Dispatching the Horror: In addition to the normal methods described above, investigators may defeat the Great Old One and its spawn by offering up every last alien egg that has been surgically implanted into Fenby, or which still sits in a rum bottle in Toomey’s storeroom back in Sydney. The Insect God wants nothing more than reclaiming what is hers, and once she has the last stolen egg, she and her swarm will fly off into the ether.

Rewards and Penalties

Investigators dismissing the Matriarch of Swarms from our reality earn +1D20 Sanity Points. Successfully dispatching all of the swarms of hatched offspring is worth an additional +1D6 Sanity Points, while removing and neutralising (or destroying) all of the implanted eggs at the waterhole is worth a further +1D4 Sanity.

If the investigators have solved the crisis in a way which allows the reputations of Drs Harris and Toomey to be preserved, both will be grateful. This will translate into a boost in Credit Rating of +1D8 percentiles.

Should the investigators simply walk away from the infestation at Five Dock, they will hear increasing reports of malevolent insect swarms striking around Parramatta River. Each attack will be more destructive than the last, as the swarm sizes get larger and larger. Each tale of death and destruction that reaches them will occasion a loss of 0/1D3 Sanity Points.

Statistics

Game statistics for *Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition* are shown below.

Dr. Matthew Toomey

JUNIOR SURGEON AND CULTIST, AGE 34

STR 70	CON 65	SIZ 55	DEX 80	INT 65
APP 45	POW 75	EDU 70	SAN 15	Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: +1D4 Build:1 Move: 9 Magic Points: 15				

Brawl	45% (22/9), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Scalpel	45% (22/9), damage 1D4+3 + Damage Bonus
Flintlock Pistol(2)	55% (27/11), damage 1D6+1 [Range 10 yard; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills: Craft (Taxidermy) 55%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Insight 40%, First Aid 60%, History 40%, Language (English) 75%, Library Use 60%, Medicine 75%, Natural World 45%, Occult 35%, R/W (English) 75%, R/W (Latin) 45%, Science (Biology) 55%, Spot Hidden 45%.

Spells: Contact Chthonian, Contact Formless Spawn, Contact Sand Dweller, Enchant Wound, Summon Byakhee, Summon Nightgaunt.

Dr. John Harris

COLONIAL SURGEON AND NAVAL MAN,
AGE ~50 (BORN 1754)

STR 50	CON 55	SIZ 70	DEX 85	INT 80
APP 70	POW 55	EDU 80	SAN 55	Hit Points: 12
Damage Bonus: none Build:0 Move: 6 Magic Points: 11				

Brawl	55% (27/11), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Scalpel	55% (27/11), damage 1D4+3 + Damage Bonus
Carbine	40% (20/8), damage 1D10+4 [Range 100 yard; 1 shot per 4 rounds; Malfunction 95+]
Dodge	45% (22/9)

Skills: Credit Rating Accounting 65%, Credit Rating 90%, Fast Talk 40%, First Aid 85%, History 50%, Insight 60%, Library Use 35%, Law 70%, Medicine 85%, Navigate 35%, Persuade 60%, Pilot Ship 50%, Religion 50%, R/W (English) 85%, R/W (French) 35%, R/W (Latin) 55%, Spot Hidden 60%.

Eliza Petty

FEMALE CONVICT, AGE 19

Eliza is a feisty hothead who hails from Birmingham. Already an accomplished thief by the age of 12, Eliza (along with her mother who also thieved routinely from the more ‘well-to-do’ members of society) was apprehended for stealing a silver candlestick. She and her mother were each sentenced to seven years’ transportation, and allowed to accompany one another on the same convict vessel (“to preserve the young girl’s innocence”). Petty’s mother, however, did not survive the voyage out. Her dying wish was

New Spells

Call/Dismiss Zstylzhemgni

The calling part of this spell functions identically to normal Call Deity spell as described on page 248 of the Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition rules. A group can cast the spell as a ritual, chanting the incantation over and over in unison (and expending Magic Points). For each Magic Point expended the chant will extend another minute. Once the group has invested the pool of Magic Points they are willing to commit, a roll is made – each Magic Point grants a 1% cumulative chance that the Mythos God in question is summoned to Earth.

The dismiss part of the spell involves creating a smoky fire by burning green branches. Over the billowing plumes of white smoke, a group of casters intones the call incantation in reverse, each committing 10 Magic Points. At the end of the fifth cycle of incantation, a roll is made – for each person involved in the spell, there is a cumulative 5% change that the god has been expelled from our reality. In this case, the smoke plumes take on a life of their own, twisting into ropy coils that strangle the giant insectoid form and crush the life from it.

that Eliza should have the simple gold band that has been a heirloom in the family for at least seven generations. This gold ring bears an inscription on the inner face which renders it as an Elder Sign.

Prior to her conviction in England, Petty had some occasional involvement with a circle of “witches” that (among considerable meaningless nonsense) practiced certain rites of significance to creatures of the Cthulhu Mythos. If the Keeper is using Option A, this is the source of the Mythos Tome she came to possess.

STR 35 CON 40 SIZ 40 DEX 85 INT 60
APP 50 POW 60 EDU 15 SAN 42 Hit Points: 8
Damage Bonus: -1 Build: -1 Move: 8 Magic Points: 12

Brawl 40% (20/8), damage 1D3 + Damage Bonus
Kitchen Knife 40% (20/8), damage 1D6+1 + Damage Bonus
Dodge 50% (25/10)

Skills: Charm/Bootlick 35%, Credit Rating 5%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Insight 80%, Gambling 25%, Language (English) 50%, Locksmith 25%, Persuade 40%, R/W (English) 50%, Sleight of Hand 75%, Stealth 65%, Spot Hidden 70%, Throw 45%.

Spells: Call/Dismiss Zstylzhemgni, Contact Rat-Thing, Evil Eye.

Zstylzhemgni departs when her avatar’s carapace pops in a gooey spray of insect innards. All involved in casting the spell lose 1D4 Sanity Points. Note that dismissing the Matriarch of Swarms does not cause her Swarm or unhatched eggs to be dispelled: there is no known spell for removing either.

Enchant Wound

One of the principal discoveries of the Knights of Asclepius (see page 5) is this spell, which literally allows for a portion of a Mythos creature to be sewn into an open wound – usually on a human torso – in a way which inhibits the natural rejection of such alien matter. Implanted Mythos matter is also rendered invisible to magical detection, although it is common for such implants to sometimes glow unnaturally beneath the host body’s skin. The spell costs 14 Magic Points and 1D6 Sanity Points to cast. To succeed, the caster also requires a Hard success on a Medicine roll: if this fails, the Magic Points and Sanity is still lost, but the host body is wracked by pain from the natural reaction – instantly taking 2D6 Hit Points in damage.

The Matriarch of Swarms (AKA ZSTYLZHEMGNI)

Zstylzhemgni is an obscure Great Old One, mentioned only in a handful of Mythos Tomes. She is also called The Matriarch of Swarms, and apparently has particular affinity to all species of insects that swarm or sting. The Matriarch has no known cult, unless one considers the Knights of Asclepius (see page 5) who have developed rituals to manipulate the eggs laid by Zstylzhemgni (as well as matter from other Mythos gods and creatures) for their own magickal aggrandizement.

When summoned to Earth, the Matriarch of Swarms appears as an enormous insectoid horror – something like a cross between a massive cicada and a carrion beetle. Her form has a wingspan of about 35 feet, and is covered in a hard carapace which glistens with an oily sheen that seems unlike any naturally-occurring colour.

Zstylzhemgni is principally mentioned in a poem by Richard L. Tierney (“The Minions of Zstylzhemgni”) which is reprinted in Chaosium’s fiction anthology “*The Book of Eibon*” (CHA6026) – the short poem might make a suitable incantation for her summoning ritual.

STR 125 CON 335 SIZ 185 DEX 105 INT 90
 POW 150 Hit Points: 52 Magic Points: 30
 Damage Bonus: +3D6 Build: 4 Move: 15/21 flying

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: 1

- Bite 80% (40/16), damage 1D6 + Damage Bonus
 Sting 80% (40/16), damage 1D6+2 + Poison
 Sonic Screech 60% (30/12), see below for damage. This affects a cone-shaped area [costs 15 Magic Points]
 Inject Eggs 100% (50/20), see below (requires victim to already be paralysed or incapacitated)
 Dodge 70% (35/14)

Armour: 15 points of hard chitinous shell.

Spells: as desired by the Keeper.

Sanity Loss: 1D6/1D20 Sanity Points to see the giant insect form of Zstylzhemgni.

SPECIAL POWERS

Poison Sting: Any human stung with the insect god's baleful stinger is automatically injected with an alien poison which inflicts 3D10 Hit Points of additional damage, spread over 1D6 rounds. If the victim makes a successful Extreme CON roll, the amount of damage is halved. Even those who survive this damage are still adversely affected by the extra-terrestrial toxin, being paralysed for 24 hours minus 1 hour for each 5 points of CON. Providing medical treatment to a paralysed individual (via a successful First Aid or Medicine skill roll) will also end the effect.

Sonic Screech: The Insect God can rapidly rub its hind legs together to produce a mighty and insanely loud screeching sound. This attack affects a cone-shaped volume starting at the Matriarch's body and extending 20 yards in a straight line; at the furthest point the cone-volume is 10 yards in diameter. Achieving this effect requires the sacrifice of 15 Magic Points. The attack roll is made to determine whether the direction of the cone is where the Matriarch intended. A "miss" means that the sonic attack still happens, but affects an area wayward from the target point by 1D10 yards in a direction of the Keeper's choosing. Everyone caught in the cone-shaped volume suffers damage, as per the table below:



Distance from Source	Damage
0-5 yards	2D10 Hit Points; victim must make a Hard CON roll or either have eyeballs burst or eardrums permanently blown from the sonic pressure.
6-10 yards	1D10+5 Hit Points; victims must make a CON roll or receive a broken bone or similar injury from the sonic assault
11-20 yards	1D6 Hit Points

Inject Eggs: If a victim is fully paralysed or incapacitated, the Insect God can forfeit a round of attacks to instead inject that individual with 1D6 eggs for its offspring (see below). These are injected several inches into the victim's flesh; while this attack only causes the victim 1 Hit Point of damage, he or she will carry the creature's eggs. Unless somehow removed, these will hatch in 1D6 days and burrow their way out of the victim's flesh - an unpleasant process which causes the host 1D3 Hit Points of damage per newly hatched insect horror. Before that happens, however, the implanted eggs actually provide a benefit to the host in the form of extra POW and magic points. For every egg the host has within his or her body, this involves a gain of +30 points of POW and +6 Magic Points (until the egg hatches).

Remain in this Reality: The nature of our mundane reality is not conducive to foul monstrosities like Zstylzhemgni. To remain manifested, the Great Old One must spend 1 Magic Points per 3 minutes. This places an upper limit on the amount of continuous time the god may spend on Earth. When not manifested the Insect God regains 10 Magic Points for each hour that passes on Earth.

Spawn of the Cicada (ZSTYLZHEMGNI'S HATCHLING OFFSPRING)

Hatchlings of Zstylzhemgni appear as strangely-glowing insects, each about the size of a man's fist. They fly around rapidly, collecting into great swarms. The statistics below describe a swarm rather than an individual insect (since that is how they would participate in combat). A swarm's hit points and damage depends on its size – for each 20 insects, both increase. Swarms can split into multiple sub-swarms; when this happens, the game stats for each resulting swarm (and the level of damage accumulated) should be split proportional to the relative sizes of the sub-swarms.

Inflicting damage to a swarm reduces the overall swarm's hit points – when these are reduced to zero, all individual insects are either dead or dispersed.

STR N/A CON N/A SIZ N/A DEX 90 INT 0
POW 30 Hit Points: 10 per 20 insects in swarm
Damage Bonus: N/A Build: — Move: 6 fly Magic Points: 6

ATTACKS

Attacks per round: see below

Swarm 100% (50/20), damage 1D6 per 20 insects in swarm (also see below)

Dodge 70% (35/14)

Armour: None. However, an insect swarm takes only 1 Hit Point of damage per successful physical attack. Fire, explosions, and chemical attacks will cause their normal amount of damage.

Sanity Loss: 0/1D4 Sanity Points to see a swarm of alien cicada offspring. If one of the spawn burrows out of a victim after having previously been injected and allowed to mature, that host individual suffers 1D3/2D4 Sanity Points.

SPECIAL POWERS

Swarm: The spawn of the cicada can only attack by assembling into a swarm surrounding an individual and repeatedly stinging and biting in a concerted effort to damage. The area that can be affected by a swarm depends on the number of insects it contains – Keepers should assume that for each 20 insects that join a swarm it can effectively cover an area of 1 square yard (contiguous with the rest of the swarm). If there are multiple victims within that area, all will be attacked. The swarm's attack is accompanied by a deafening and blinding fury of action: all victims within the area suffer a penalty die to any sight- or hearing-related skill rolls.

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