

THE UNBOUND BOOK

Complete Issue Two - 2005

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The Unbound Book is an irregular magazine publishing free adventures for Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu roleplaying game in the Roaring Twenties.

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SPECIAL TRIBUTE

This Issue is dedicated to one of UBB's fine artists - *Rebecca Smith-Cruz!*

Beckie was kind enough volunteer to attend GenCon as our representative this past year, and while there handed out copies Unbound Book. In addition, she be attended the Call of Cthulhu rallies during the Con and, with the help of her fantastically designed flyer, assisted us in raising our profile amongst the CoC community.

All of us here at The Unbound Book have an undying gratitude for Beckie and the lengths she has gone to, not only with her art, but also with the dedication and time she has devoted to this 'fan' magazine!

Please see our special Tribute to Rebecca's work later in this issue - we hope it goes some way to making up for all the work she has given us!

PAGES FROM AN UNBOUND BOOK

Welcome to our second issue of the Unbound Book! Originally this issue of the magazine was due to hit the net in October 2004, but due to a number of unforeseen circumstances (which include the loss of my day job and the arrival of Chaosium's monograph series) it was not forthcoming.

Why is this issue special? Well for one it is highly likely to be the last issue of the magazine, but more importantly it is a showcase of 'what should have been' The Unbound Book (UBB).

As some of you reading this might be aware, The Unbound Book is a small adventures magazine dedicated to Call of Cthulhu. Focusing on what we like to call the 'The Roaring Twenties', UBB is produced on a irregular basis in .PDF format and is available for FREE download on our website - www.unboundbook.org. As a fanzine, UBB relies on submissions from its readers, with all art and layout undertaken by a small group of dedicated volunteers.

Although The Unbound Book is indeed small scale amateur press, that is not to say we aren't trying to present a quality product with new new issue. While UBB may not be professional in production (although I like to think that some of our artists are as good as, if not better than many freelancers), we continually strive to attain a professional attitude in our approach to publishing, hopefully gaining in quality and quantity with each issue produced.

In this issue we have attempted to show you what it means to download a copy of The Unbound Book - what types of adventures you would expected to find and how we go about giving you, what we think is, the best free Call of Cthulhu resource anywhere on the net.

Thanks for taking the time to read the fruits of our labours and I hope you all the best now and in the future.

May the Stars be right for you!

Marcus D. Bone - Editor

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RESOURCES

Due to size constraints The Unbound Book is unable to hold all extras we would like to bring our readers. But don't fret, on our website www.unboundbook.org, we have placed all those documents we weren't able to fit in this issue. These include:

d20/BRP Conversion Notes - All the statistics and rules required for running all the adventures in this issue using the alternate Call of Cthulhu system, including NPC stats, difficulties levels, experience rewards and much more.

Maps - Full scale maps in a print friendly format. All hand drawn by David Conyers, these maps bring something special back to the Call of Cthulhu gaming experience.

SPECIAL NOTE -

With the release of this special issue of UBB, our magazine's website will be going through a number of changes. Please visit www.unboundbook.org to see how we continue to grow in our support of Cthulhu!



'Crown of Dagon I' 2004 Don Fougere

Dark Dreams of Innsmouth

by Brian Courtemanche

This adventure involves an imperilled friend of the Investigators, sanity-shattering dreams, a cursed artefact and shadowy, sea-haunted Innsmouth. A desperate friend has mailed the artefact to the Investigators, the result of which leads the players into direct conflict with Deep Ones of Innsmouth and their hybrid allies.

KEEPER'S BACKGROUND & ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Dr. Swanson Ames, professor of English at Salem's Normal School for Teachers and friend or associate of the Investigators has recently fished up a golden crown of fabulously alien design while fishing off the coast of Gloucester, Massachusetts. Unfortunately for Ames, the crown is a relic of the Deep Ones that inhabit the cold grey Atlantic waters and is used to conduct alien rites and grisly sacrifices on Devil's Reef. As a result, should the crown come into the possession of an innocent human, such as poor Ames, the effects can be disastrous.

Professor Ames, reeling in the Crown of Dagon, was awed and baffled by his find, an exquisite headdress made entirely of gold and crafted with fabulous and disturbing designs. The astute scholar recalled that he had once viewed illustrations of similar craftsmanship in a book he had once read on the town of Innsmouth and its curious maritime lore. Ames promptly visited the decadent settlement to learn what he could of his find, ending up at the Marsh Gold Refinery. Ames called upon the plant manager Jacob Marsh, a slimy character with a 'too-wide' a smile and a disturbing gaze. The refinery man slyly tried to purchase the crown from its new owner without divulging anything of the crown's sinister origin. Repulsed by Marsh's evasive, slick ways and seeming over-eagerness to buy, Professor Ames left Innsmouth with the Crown.

However with the knowledge of the crown's whereabouts, Marsh set into motion a plan to retrieve the relic and silence the one and only person who might know of its power. As a result, since his trip to the refinery some three weeks ago, Ames' life has become increasingly unpleasant and on several occasions he has been visited by sinister folk. To begin with, these strangers claim to be 'jewellers' wanting to buy the crown, but with Ames' continued reticence to sell, the visits have become more and more threatening.

Simultaneous with the appearance of the unwholesome visitors, Ames began having feverish and disturbing dreams. In these nightmares Ames visits cyclopean undersea cities, communes with monstrous fish-like "men", and partakes in unspeakable rituals. Worse still, the professor began waking from these terrifying dreams to find that he had been sleepwalking. More disturbingly, one night he awoke to find himself behind the wheel of his Packard, halfway to Innsmouth, the crown sitting on the seat next to him.

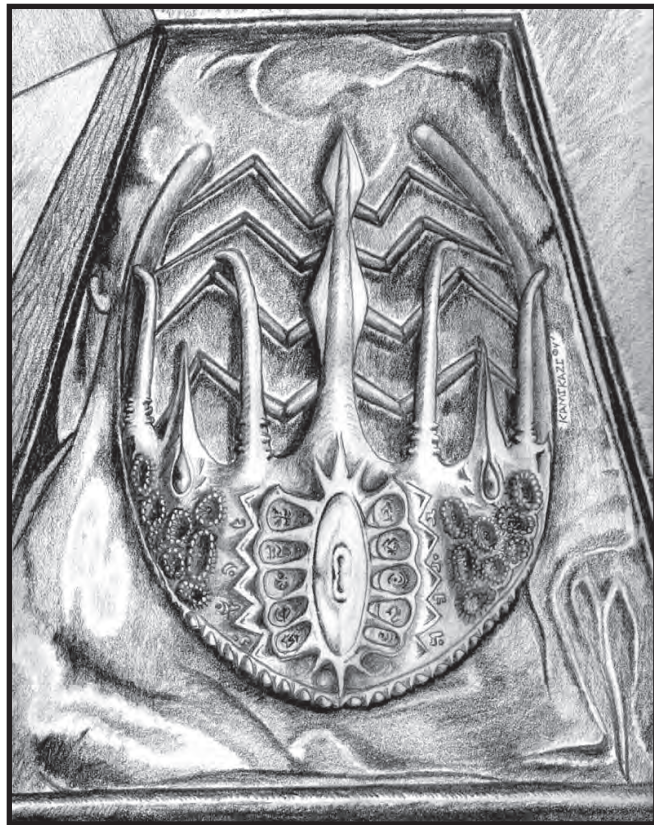
With his sanity dwindling from the damning dreams and damnable visitors, Ames, in wild belt of desperation, mailed the Crown of Dagon to his friend, one of the Investigators, knowing that they took an interest in matters strange and occult.

WHAT THE INVESTIGATORS CAN DO TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT

After reading the letter, the Investigators learn that Ames has gone crazy and has been committed to the Danvers State Hospital for the Insane. It seems that the crew of a Gloucester fishing boat hauled the good professor out of the Atlantic early one morning. Brine-sodden and chilled to the bone, the man babbled incessantly about monstrous fish-beings and inhuman cities beneath the waves. Unable to locate any immediate family, the authorities have little choice but to commit the poor man to the care of an insane asylum.

Now it is the turn of the Investigators to find out what power the crown holds, as they too become victims of disturbing dreams and are paid sinister visits by the hybrids of Innsmouth. As the story progresses, the desperate Innsmouthers become an increasing menace to the Investigators, the horrible sea-dreams become more regular and eventually the players will find themselves waking from dreams in their automobiles, on the lonely roads to Innsmouth.

The Investigators are bound to suffer the same miserable fate as their friend unless they can break the curse of the crown. Of course, should they decide to simply throw away the crown or perhaps even sell it to some other



unsuspecting fool, even to Marsh, the Keeper should call for Idea rolls. Successes recall that Ames continued to go insane after he had mailed the crown to his friend and it is likely the same fate awaits the Investigators.

Eventually however, the dream-burdened, hybrid harassed Investigators should come across a reference to the crown in a book on maritime folklore. This text makes special reference to the Ponape Scripture and focuses on the peculiar Innsmouth jewellery and its relevance to odd superstitious practices.

As the Investigators discover, this weird Ponape Scripture reveals the horrible truth about the Crown of Dagon and the grim fate that awaits those who come to possess it. However all is not without hope, as the book also tells of a midnight ritual to disenchant the crown, thus ending the cursed dreams. The catch being the banishing ritual must be conducted on the shorefront and unfortunately acts as a beacon, drawing nearby Deep Ones and hybrid humans to the proceedings. Nevertheless this book and its odd ritual are the Investigators' only hope if they are to live through the Dark Dreams of Innsmouth.

INVOLVING THE INVESTIGATORS

The story begins when one of the Investigators receives a package from their old friend/colleague/mentor, Professor Swanson Ames. Keepers should convey to the player concerned that Ames is someone who is counted on as a friend and a decent person who knows something of the Investigator's involvement in matters arcane and occult. The package contains two items, a letter from Ames (see Innsmouth Paper 1) and a heavy object imperfectly wrapped in old newspaper. Peeling away the paper reveals a heavy headdress, crafted entirely of gold. Strange sigils of unknowable import are worked into the artefact.

Shortly after the package arrives and the letter is read, hand one of the Investigators Innsmouth Paper 2, an article from the Arkham Advertiser, the Kingsport Chronicle, Boston Globe or other newspaper of the Keeper's choosing. How this is done is left to the Keeper's own devices, but the act of receiving the article should be enough to prompt the Investigators to discover more of what has befallen their friend.

The Investigators now have a number of choices open to them; they can go directly to Danvers State Hospital for the Insane and try to speak with Ames; visit Gloucester Harbour and interview the crew of the lobster boat, Divine, or travel to Innsmouth and meet with Jacob Marsh.



Furthermore the Investigators might opt to conduct some research by either visiting Ames' home in Danvers to locate his book on maritime folklore, or prowl established libraries for said text. Of course those versed in the Mythos might simply wish to make a Cthulhu Mythos roll, or consult a selected mythos tome as reference regarding the Crown of Dagon. If Investigators have access to such texts, the Keeper should insist that the tome fit the subject matter of Deep Ones. Good choices for this would be the Ponape Scripture, the R'lyeh Text, Unausprechlichen Kulten, Invocations to Dagon, or the Necronomicon. If these books are not available or the relevant Cthulhu Mythos rolls fail, Investigators may still learn about the Crown of Dagon by the more arduous routes previously detailed. In any event, Investigators will face dangers to their physical and mental well being as evil dreams invade their sleep, Innsmouth thugs drop in for visits, and the ritual to break the curse of the crown is learned.

THE DANVERS STATE HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE

A winding drive up a quiet wooded hillside and on through a set of tall iron gates leads to the sprawling complex known as Danvers State Hospital for the Insane. Brooding over the multi-acre property is an inter-connected series of towering red brick, slate roofed wards erected in arresting neo-gothic style. Even the completely sane are unnerved when first gazing upon the compound's disturbingly angular, oversized buildings. Numerous wooden outbuildings and small copses of elm, maple and pine trees dot the property's vast acreage, although they fail to soften the hospital's cold, formal and gothic facade. Arriving at the Kirkbride administration building, an orderly leads the Investigators to the ward where Ames is being held for observation. Ames is currently under the care of a Dr. Wade Holt, who will be summoned at the parties' arrival. The interior of the hospital is reasonably well lit and smells strongly of antiseptic. Inmates lounge listlessly in hallway chairs or are locked away behind stout metal doors with small, thick-paned windows. An occasional shout or bark of giddy laughter echoes from a distant hallway, punctuating the general lassitude and silence that surrounds the hospital.

MEETING DOCTOR HOLT

Dr. Holt is a large, kindly man in his early fifties with chestnut coloured hair which is turning slightly grey at the temples and who sports an enormous moustache of the type regarded as fashionable by an earlier generation. Holt is naturally courteous to the friends of the stricken

man and relates to the Investigators that while Ames is in good physical shape, he is still vacillating between states of delusion and lucidity. As the party is brought to Ames' room, the doctor comments that they are, in fact, the second group of friends to visit the poor man. If asked, Holt explains that the first group was a "rather shifty looking lot", who claimed to be old friends of Ames. Holt almost refused them access to his patient, but relented, hoping that a familiar face might help restore his patient. He says that the group was alone with Ames only a short while before the patient became agitated, his shouts bringing both himself, and orderlies from the nurses' station. Unfortunately, nothing intelligible could be discerned from the patient, save that he seemed to be hostile toward his visitors, who were hurriedly escorted from the patient's room. Thinking something "just wasn't right" about the odd visitors, Holt states he called for the police, but by the time they arrived, however, Ames' 'friends' had left.

For the most part, Dr. Holt is very well disposed towards well-intentioned Investigators and is a good contact to cultivate for future investigations. He will not initially believe in supernatural powers, Deep Ones, hybrids, and the like, however if he becomes an associate of the Investigators he might alter his perspective.

TAKING TO AMES

At Ames' bedside - this time with Dr. Holt just outside the door - the Investigators find their friend in a delusional state. Normally a fat, jovial fellow, Ames has become alarmingly emaciated since the Investigator(s) last saw him. His face is thin and sunken, drawn with deep lines of worry and restlessness. Unaware of his visitors, Ames shifts uneasily in his bed, as if in the throes of a nightmare. Face half-pressed into a sterile white hospital pillow, he utters:

"the reef...sunken city... town...no, out of ...the water... never...crown...ceremony...dead...waves".

Ames will continue to babble the same phrases for a minute or two before gradually waking to behold his newest visitors. At first Ames recoils in fear; then, recognizing a familiar face or two, noticeably relaxes. Though very weak, Ames appears pleased to see his friend(s), greeting them by name. In a wheezy voice, he asks why they are in his bedroom, and why they've brought a doctor to his house. If the Investigators mention the letter, the crown, or any other aspect of the mystery, Ames becomes lucid and grim. He apologizes for having involved them in all this, but says that he knew of no others that could help him.

He also warns them of Jacob Marsh: "he's a dangerous man, with sinister connections", before breaking down, sobbing that, afraid for his life, he gave "Marsh's hideous thugs" the name of the Investigator to whom he mailed the crown. Finally he urges the Investigators to visit his home, where they can find the book on Innsmouth lore in his study. Then, with a coughing gasp, Ames falls back into a glassy-eyed stupor and can answer no further questions, seemingly lost in another world. Dr. Holt soon ushers the party out of the room, but thanks the Investigators for visiting their friend and suggests that perhaps they contact Detective Russell Pierce of the Gloucester Police, the officer handling Ames' case.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A DETECTIVE

Detective Russell Pierce is a plain spoken, simple thinking man with few interests other than his job and his family. He is tall and lantern-jawed, with a slight paunch and wispy hairs combed over his balding pate with generous applications of hair gel. He has recently been promoted to the rank of detective after putting in years as a patrolman, and now solidly into middle age, cares little for stories of supernatural menaces or far-reaching conspiracies. He believes that Professor Ames suffered an accident on his boat, which has scattered his wits, a conclusion he intends to file in a few days. As a result, any inconvenient Investigator assertions of monsters or cults will be steadfastly ignored.

AT AMES' HOME

Located within walking distance of Salem Normal school, Ames' domicile is a small, unobtrusive, two-storied affair, nestled in a small yard shaded by oaks and a stand of pine trees. A weather-worn but sturdy three-foot picket fence with a latched (but unlocked) front gate surrounds the premises, while a slightly rusted mailbox on a leaning wooden post displays Ames' name painted imperfectly on its side. The front door to the house is locked. The back door, though shut, has been forced. The wood around the small deadbolt has been split asunder. Inside the house has been ransacked, with the plush furniture toppled and sliced open, cabinets and drawers flung wide and their contents strewn everywhere. Though it may at first look like a typical robbery, keen Investigators will, with an Idea roll, discern that nothing of any real value has been taken. Should the police be summoned, the break-in will receive front-page coverage in the Salem Evening News. 'Home of Hospitalized Educator Vandalized!' and 'Stricken Professor's Home Burgled!' blare the headers; the

articles express disgust that malcontents would ravage the property of a respectable citizen fallen on distressing personal circumstances. The police will rule the break-in as just that, stating publicly that the vandals were obviously scared off by a passing car or a noise outside before anything of value could be taken.

Should Investigators take too long to visit Ames' home, the break-in is instead discovered by a visiting neighbour, with much the same result as those set out above. If this is the case, the Investigators can either ask the police for permission to enter Ames' home or take the riskier approach of entering without permission.

Sneaking into the house simply requires the nerve to approach and enter the house. The front door is locked and the back door now sports a stout new padlock, courtesy of the Salem police. All the windows have been locked from within, and the cellar bulkhead is also secure. Getting past either the front or back door requires a successful Mechanical Repair roll on the lock or brute force (versus a STR 13). Keepers may also call for Sneak rolls, as the Salem police and nearby neighbours have increased their vigilance since the break-in. There is a 20% chance that at any time of the day the Investigators' approach to the Ames property will be noticed by a neighbour, who promptly phones the police. These events can prompt any number of Sneak, Hide, Luck, or Fast Talk rolls, depending on how the Keeper wishes to handle the situation.

Ames's house, though ransacked, otherwise appears quite ordinary. A small study off the front parlour is cluttered with hundreds of books, papers and personal effects (souvenir paperweights, brass letter-opener, small globes, etc.). If the books are examined, a Spot Hidden roll will locate a small book entitled Innsmouth: Superstition and the Sea, by Michael Peabody (see Innsmouth Paper 3), buried in a heap of books from an overturned bookshelf. Reading the slim volume costs the Investigator 1d4 Sanity but grants 1d2 points of Cthulhu Mythos. The book details the strange customs and quaint folk practices of small Yankee seacoast towns with Innsmouth, Massachusetts as its focal piece. One old Innsmouth native is quoted in the book as he speaks vaguely of a curse that lies upon his home, stating, "that the old town has lost more than its share of sons and daughters to the sea." Peabody concludes his treatise with the assertion that Innsmouth's loss of maritime trade in the 19th century caused its insular populace to resort to superstition to restore its prosperity, forsaking healthier routes of alternate industry. In this bizarre effort, the town failed, though has yet to, and may never, emerge from its intense insularity. A brief endnote to

the book by the publisher states that author Michael Peabody drowned just before the publication of this, his only book.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIVINE

Travelling to Gloucester from Arkham or Danvers takes less than an hour. Gloucester is the archetypical New England fishing town, tucked into the northern shoreline of Massachusetts. Checking in at any of the local spots (the diner, post office, police office or fishermen's wharves), can lead to the Investigator's being informed that Captain Joshua Briggs' fishing boat, the 'Divine', heads out to sea just before sunrise and returns late each afternoon. Depending on when Investigators arrive in Gloucester, they may have many hours to wait before the Divine returns to the harbour. Even then there will be the need to wait as the crew pulls up to the dock, hauls the daily catch onto waiting trucks, payments are to be tallied, and the boats rigged for the next morning. These working folk are very busy and will have no time or patience for 'well-dressed city types' interrupting their business. Finally, after all the hubbub of business has ceased, the Investigators may approach the crew of the Divine and speak with Captain Briggs. The Captain is hungry and tired from a hard day's labour and offering him a meal at the local diner will be gladly received (+10% to Persuade rolls, Credit Rating rolls, etc.).

Captain Joshua S. Briggs is a lanky, rough-looking man, his features hardened and leathery from innumerable hours spent at sea in all sort of weather. His hands are gnarled but very strong, attached to arms of corded muscle. His hair is a thick shock of peppery grey, turning white at the sideburns. Despite his 'severe' appearance, Captain Briggs is a kindly man commanding discipline on his boat by mutual respect rather than fear. He is very open and matter-of-fact if asked to recount how he and his crew rescued Dr. Ames.

"The Divine was about a half hour out of harbor, when I myself noticed what I thought was a large seal or big fish or god knows what, in trouble. As we got closer, I realized that 'twas a man, all alone, way out here, kickin' and a-wavin' his arms around. Looked like he was tryin' to duck under but kept bobbing up. The boys used boathooks and we managed to hook 'im with a bit of trouble. Was like he didn't want to be saved. He was a big feller, so it took a bit of doin', but we managed to get him on board after a bit of a fuss. The man seemed delirious - kept yapping that he had to get to "Yannalay", whoever or wherever the devil that is."

"I had the man brought below deck and warmed with

blankets and broth. I radioed back to the Harbormaster, and, since me and the boys weren't that far out, brought the sad feller back to land, to the authorities. Then we headed back out."

(Keeper's note: "Yannalay" is actually "Y'ha-nthlei", the great underwater city of the Deep Ones).

A TRIP TO INNSMOUTH

Investigators wishing to travel to Innsmouth to interview Jacob Marsh, of the Marsh Refining Company, might find this is a difficult and dangerous task. The Marsh clan controls much of Innsmouth and anyone poking around on Marsh soil had best beware. Rash Investigators may find themselves beaten, harassed or run out of town. Furthermore, the Innsmouthers may well be aware that the Investigators now hold the Crown of Dagon, in which case this could prove to be the most hazardous episode of the whole scenario.

Innsmouth is just a short automobile ride from any Massachusetts town and about an hour from Boston. A daily bus service makes a route between Arkham and Innsmouth, and costs 40 cents. The surly, taciturn driver and his ramshackle bus leave Arkham daily at 8 a.m. and 9 p.m., depositing wayfarers at Innsmouth Town Square, directly in front of the Gilman House hotel.

Arriving in Innsmouth, the Investigators are impressed with the atmosphere of decay that pervades the neglected town, perhaps only in the hills of Dunwich and its environs is degeneracy so physically palpable. The Gilman House is the Square's most impressive building, a teetering five-story structure of rotting clapboard and peeling yellow paint. It is the town's only hotel. If Investigators staying here prove to be a real threat to the powerful Marsh clan, the hotel is likely to be the last place on earth they'll see. Out of town guests are conveniently quartered in the upper stories of the building, preventing easy flight; there are no fire escapes. Rooms are \$2 a night and are in ill repair (rusted bed frames, peeling wallpaper, water stained walls and ceilings, bare light bulbs, uniformly inoperative locks on doors). The day manager is an oldster named George Habbit, a functional yet quiet man, he is utterly insane due to regular contact with Innsmouth's loathsome populace. The night manager is the surly Charles Gilman, son of the owner. The Town Square is also home to the First National grocery store, the Innsmouth Cafe, a drugstore, a seafood distribution company, Waite's Variety Store, the First Unitarian Church of Innsmouth, a small gas station and the offices of the Marsh Refining Company. All of these buildings are in dire need of repair.

In Innsmouth, the locals keep their secrets well and will rebuff any attempts by the Investigators to glean information from them. It is not a friendly place!

TALKING WITH JACOB MARSH

The office of the Marsh Refining company can be found on the northern side of the Innsmouth Town Square and is normally open during business hours. However, before getting to speak with Marsh, the Investigators must first make their way past company receptionist, Lucy James, an untainted but very blunt and unattractive young woman. Assuming the Investigators convince the receptionist of their need to see her employer, Jacob Marsh admits the visitors to his office. The well-dressed man oozes a sickly sort of charm as he continually slicks back his dark and thinning hair. He is every bit of the 'greasy character' Ames spoke of, as he smiles at Investigators with his "over-wide" grin, his bulging eyes alight with unwholesome mischief.

If Investigators ask Marsh about the dealings he may have had with Professor Ames, he confirms that the professor did indeed come to his office several weeks ago, bearing with him an unusual item, a crown of solid gold. The professor, it transpired, wanted to know if the company had ever crafted such an item, a question to which Marsh sadly said no. Marsh says he then offered to buy the unusual item from Ames, but the man seemed not to be in a selling mood. The professor left the refinery offices and Marsh has given him no further thought. If pressed, Marsh indignantly denies knowledge of any underhanded attempts to wrest the crown from the professor.

Of course, Marsh is a liar. He is indeed the figure behind Dr. Ames' threatening callers, being the individual tasked with recovering the crown for the Deep Ones. As such, during the course of the interview, Marsh will attempt to discover if any of the Investigators have the crown in their possession or if they know of its whereabouts. Hopefully the players will be bright enough to not reveal such information.

After the interview, Marsh will work with zeal to discover the addresses of the Investigators and will dispatch a handful of his hybrid flunkies to scour neighbouring communities, businesses, hotels, college campuses, etc. to discover their whereabouts.

A CHANGE IN THE WEATHER

The Innsmouthers campaign to terrorize Investigators into relinquishing the Crown of Dagon should be paced by the Keeper according to how quickly the group is

progressing through the adventure. Of course, if the Investigators fail to visit Marsh, it is feasible that the hybrids manage to get their names and addresses from a fearful and bed ridden Dr. Ames.

Incidents begin with the hybrids' attempts to shadow Investigators to discover just who has the artefact and determine when best to strike. Next come visits in the night from small groups of sinister men who demand the crown. If met with resolute resistance, break-ins follow. Finally physical assaults and kidnapping may occur, but the Keeper must be careful not to overwhelm the Investigators. Instead, players should sense that they are at the centre of a web of occult danger. Investigator violence as a first response to the hybrid goon squad is a bad idea. The Innsmouthers can call in any number of replacements, summon their Deep One kindred for aid and have an entire town in which to gain refuge from retribution. The Deep Ones, immortal as they are, have plenty of time to recover their crown and will continue to make the Investigators' lives a living hell until the artefact is in their clammy claws.

INVESTIGATIONS AND RESOURCES

THE LORE OF THE CROWN

Investigators will likely wish to delve into the foul pages of the Ponape Scripture after learning of its usefulness in Peabody's Superstition and the Sea. Lore on the Crown of Dagon can also be found in other mythos tomes: the Cthaat Aquadingen, Dr. Laban Shrewsbury's Cthulhu in the Ponape Scripture, or perhaps chapter eight of Von Junzt's Unausprechlichen Kulten ("Nameless Cults"). Of course the Keeper may place information about the Crown of Dagon in any appropriate Mythos tome to aid Investigators in concluding this adventure.

THE CROWN OF DAGON

This dreadful ceremonial headpiece is worn by the Deep Ones as they perform bizarre and terrible rites devoted to their alien gods. Human sacrifice is common; victims are gathered in stormy night raids on coastal communities, kidnapping sailors and other seafarers, or relying on degenerate human allies to provide suitable sacrificial victims. The metaphysical energies (POW) generated by the sacrificial rites flow into the Crown of Dagon, enabling communion between the wearer of the crown and the alien minds of the Deep Ones' dread gods. A new sacrificial rite must be undertaken for each communion and no more than one deity may be contacted at a time. Spells and other knowledge may be imparted via the

crown but the sanity cost to contact these alien intellects is terrible: 1d10/1d100. Just as awful, psychically sensitive persons (those with high POW ratings) who come into contact with the crown often trigger residual psychic energy gathered in the headpiece, causing terrifying nightmares. Sanity loss for these dreams is comparatively low, but they are chronic; the mind being gradually lost to terrifying visions.

There is however hope for those unfortunate enough to have come into contact with the Crown of Dagon. The terrible books that detail the purpose and function of this horrid artefact also detail a rite for dispelling the latent energy in the crown. The texts describe a pre-dawn ceremony, performed where the land meets the sea. Celebrants sing complex chants to the god Nodens before a small driftwood bonfire and implore his aid. At the height of the ritual the appropriate verse is sung and the crown is cast into the flames. Vulnerable to the flames, the crown writhes like a living beast in the fire, blackening and withering into ropy strands of charred seaweed as its noxious fumes mix with the smoke and rise high into the sky overhead. Thus ends the crown's power over the minds it has infected.

Danger courts those who perform this rite. The dispelling ceremony also acts as a telepathic beacon to the Deep Ones and their hybrid allies. Enraged at the assault on their revered artefact, it is unlikely that they will leave the spell singers unmolested to complete the proceedings.

THE DREAMS

The dreams that have been haunting Dr. Ames - and likely some Investigators - throughout this scenario can be described to the players in vivid detail. Dreams work to best effect when the Investigator does not realize he or she has gone to sleep. Keepers can simply describe an ongoing scene, such as the Investigator having just arrived home for the evening, and segue right into the dream sequence. At a critical moment, describe to the Investigator the sensation of waking up in bed. Only then does the dream become apparent. Or do the reverse: tell the Investigator something has woken him up from a sound sleep and then move seamlessly into a dream sequence. At a chosen moment, have the Investigator wake up again, and realize the first waking was but a dream. Flitting in and out of dream narratives should keep the Investigators on edge and give them a sense of their slipping grasp on reality. Sanity losses for these dreams are just 0/1d2. Despite the low cost the dreams are repetitive, occurring again and again over many nights, and no Investigator no matter how strong of mind can hold out forever. The dreams originate with

the Crown of Dagon, containing imagery of the sea and of horrific secrets concealed by the endless waves. What follows are some sample dream sequences that can be tailored by the Keeper to best suit his players.

DREAM ONE - THE UNDERSEA CITY

You wake from slumber and your room is unusually dark. There is a thickness in the air that causes your feet to drag and blurs vision. Your body feels cool. Shockingly, you find yourself not in your bedroom but on a bare slab in a drab, near lightless cell. Have you been drugged and thrown in some sort of prison? There is one triangular window across the small room, unbarred, just large enough for a man to squeeze through. Moving to the window, you look down upon a vast, lightless city, dark towers rising in the gloom, much like the one you must be in. There is an impression of movement down below and among the towers, but it is too dark to make out any details. After a minute or two you suddenly feel movement nearby and then something huge rises to fill your field of vision. A massive shark, razor-toothed mouth agape, rushes in for the kill. Your scream is somehow muted, a torrent of bubbles rising from your throat. You are underwater! The shark slams into the wall, snout first; it cannot breach the window. It makes several ramming attempts at the opening, probing with its snout and dead black eyes. You are trapped while the shark circles without and noses at the window opening. There is another sound, an odd songlike vibration, and the shark half turns. The massive fish retreats from the window. You get the merest glimpse of that which called the shark. The vision is too much. You throw your hands up to cover your eyes and wake up screaming in your own bedroom, bedclothes soaked with sweat.

DREAM TWO - THE TROUBLE WITH FRIENDS

You are just finishing up some mundane work when a friend drops by for a visit. After a little while spent chatting, you notice that the other person looks feverish and is sweating profusely. Your friend denies that anything is wrong. Soon damp patches begin to soak through the clothing, and skin starts to peel and dribble away in large flakes. Still the friend denies any problem, wondering aloud if you yourself feel all right. The friend's voice becomes watery and choked with phlegm; eyes grow impossibly large from a swell of fluid. Hair and skin ooze away, revealing a glistening, greenish-black lump where a head once was. Hands become more like sickly black-green scaly claws, while legs become mucus-covered, scaly tentacles. Eyes finally burst from fluid, running down green-black cheeks. Black, glistening orbs now stare out of a once-human face. Shocked and sickened,

you flee. Behind you, that-which-was-your-friend shouts garbled, drooling inhuman sounds, grabbing for you with a webbed claw. The sharpness of the talons shock you awake, panting and awash in a sheen of fear.

DREAM THREE - TOUGH SACRIFICES

A sound wakes you from your slumber. Reaching for the bedside light, you're stunned to realize you've been manacled hand and foot to a slab of cold rock. The ceiling is gone, replaced by a dark, overcast night sky. It is cold and wet, and the wind smells of brine. The surf pounds nearby, though you cannot rise to see its source. There is another sound, an eerie droning chant. Dark figures shuffle and waver rhythmically nearby, just tantalizingly out of your vision. It is from them that the chanting comes. It is a terrible sound, a buzzing, gurgling, choking sort of sound, full of harsh consonants and alien cadences. A dark, hooded form looms before your captive body, features shrouded, its bulk blocking out the inky clouds overhead. It raises its arms to the moonless night, something long and wicked held in its hands. With a final, gurgling chant, the hooded one violently thrusts its arms downwards. You wake breathless with sharp stomach pains. The following morning an ugly bruise spreads itself across your lower torso.

DREAM FOUR - IT TAKES A VILLAGE

A splash of water across your face brings you alert. You are prone, face down in shallow, choppy surf. The water is salty and warm, the night is dark. Sand wriggles between your fingers as the surf rhythmically churns the beach. Ahead, beyond the surf line, beyond the beach, is a large cluster of huts. All is dark there, the sound of the surf the only sound. To either side of you, and behind you, there is a rush of movement. Figures, prone as yourself, rise up out of the choppy surf and shamble quickly toward the



huts. You are borne up and keep pace with the others, your heavy feet pounding the sand. You reach the huts. Your companions throw aside grass mat doors and enter the little dwellings. Screams of terror and the sounds of fighting fill the sultry night air. You half-lurch, half are pushed into a hut where a small group, a family, are just scrambling to their feet. A small child, no more than four years old, turns to you as you stumble through the doorway. Her mouth goes wide as her scream pierces the walls of the little hut. A warped, hulking figure staggers past from behind you to meet the girl's father in a death struggle. Outside, in the night, your fellow raiders are shambling back to the sea, writhing burdens slung across their wide, glistening shoulders. Reaching out to silence the little girl's unending scream, your own gurgling scream commingles with that of the others: your arm is glistening, scaly, black, and sinewy with ropy muscles. Bits of seaweed cling to your wrist, and your hand is a large, webbed, claw-fingered horror. You wake in your own bed screaming.

DREAM FIVE - NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

It's an unusually sunny morning as you rise for the

day. In fact, you wince - the sunlight seems so bright in your room. But what is that terrible smell? Did the icebox give out sometime during the night, spoiling your food? Rising from your bed, you are shocked to observe that your bed is a mass of ropy, half-damp seaweed slowly baking in the sun. The walls of your room have disappeared; instead, all around lies a vast expanse of muck, strewn with drying seaweed and decomposing fish. Directly above, the sun gleams blindingly white, baking the air into a rotting miasma of organic putrescence. It is deathly quiet; there is no wind, no sound of surf. You wander for what seems hours. The sun gradually sinks until it is a dull red disk absorbed into the barren, featureless horizon of half-baked muck. The moon rises full, white, and cold, like a blind and pitiless eye on the desolation below. Its pale light reveals a great chasm stretched out before you, so wide and so deep that it blocks your path. Far down, a silvery river of water ribbons its way along the bottom of the canyon. Beside the river rises a stone obelisk half buried in the ages-old silt at the bottom of the canyon, nearly concealed in shadow. That you can just perceive by moonlight bas-relief carvings covering the obelisk is a testament



to the monument's immense size, far and below as it is. As you struggle to discern the nature of the distant carvings, there is a sudden disturbance on the surface of the river. A scaly humanoid, a great blasphemous anthropomorphic form, rises from the water to throw its great, flabby arms around the obelisk in some form of obscene worship. That you can see the creature so clearly from your distance is an indication of its great size. You grow dizzy from the thought, lose your footing, and pitch forward over the rim of the canyon! Screaming, you wake up in your own bed, your sheets soaked in sweat. The memory of a foul miasma hangs in the air, as if something vile had just left the room.

CONCLUDING THE SCENARIO

The only effective way to successfully conclude this scenario is by performing the magical ritual to destroy the Crown of Dagon. If the crown is destroyed sans the ritual, the horrific dreams will continue - and sanity points lost - until the dispelling ceremony is performed or the Investigators go insane. If the players seem at a loss how to proceed at any point during the scenario, they can be guided by Dr. Ames during his rare lucid moments. Events are likely to get violent during the dispelling ritual as Deep Ones and their hybrid allies close in to recover the crown.

Keepers can adjust the level of resistance offered by the Deep Ones as they see fit, from a couple of angry Deep Ones shambling out of the waves to hordes of Fishmen rising up from the sea and carloads of Innsmouth hybrids roaring up to the beachfront.

The Crown of Dagon being a powerful artefact, it's possible that destroying it draws the attention of Nodens himself, who might aid Investigators; a longshot, but not out of the range of Keeper options.

SANITY AWARDS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

Dispelling the Crown of Dagon nets each participating Investigator 1d10+4 Sanity. Defeating the intervening Deep Ones nets Investigators an additional 1d6 points (awarding the maximum, 6, if a group of Deep Ones are defeated). With the breaking of the crown, Professor Ames and any other unfortunates beholden to the crown's power will gradually recover. If he survived, Ames can become a staunch ally of the Investigators and in the future may be able to help in conducting research etc. in the areas that befits a man of his education.

Destroying this artefact, so revered by the Deep Ones and their allies, also earns the Investigators the eternal

enmity of these foul beings. Effectively immortal, the Deep Ones have a lifetime to plot revenge and the Keeper should rejoice in the possibilities.

NPCs STATISTICS

SAMPLE INNSMOUTH HYBRIDS

These hybrids can be reused as many times as the Keeper requires.

STR: 13 9 13 9 12 12
 DEX: 12 10 13 7 14 13
 CON: 12 10 13 7 14 13
 SIZ: 14 14 14 13 12 13
 INT: 12 13 14 14 13 11
 POW: 11 8 14 15 7 7
 DEX: 12 14 8 9 11 9
 APP: 5 7 10 12 9 10
 HP: 13 12 14 10 13 13
 Db: +1d4 - +1d4 - - +1d4

Weapons:

Fist: 60 55 55 50 60 55
 Grap: 35 35 40 30 25 35
 Kick: 30 25 30 30 40 30
 Club: 25 - 25 - 40 -
 Pistol: - 35 - 35 - 30
 Club: 1d6 + db
 Pistol: 1d10, can impale.

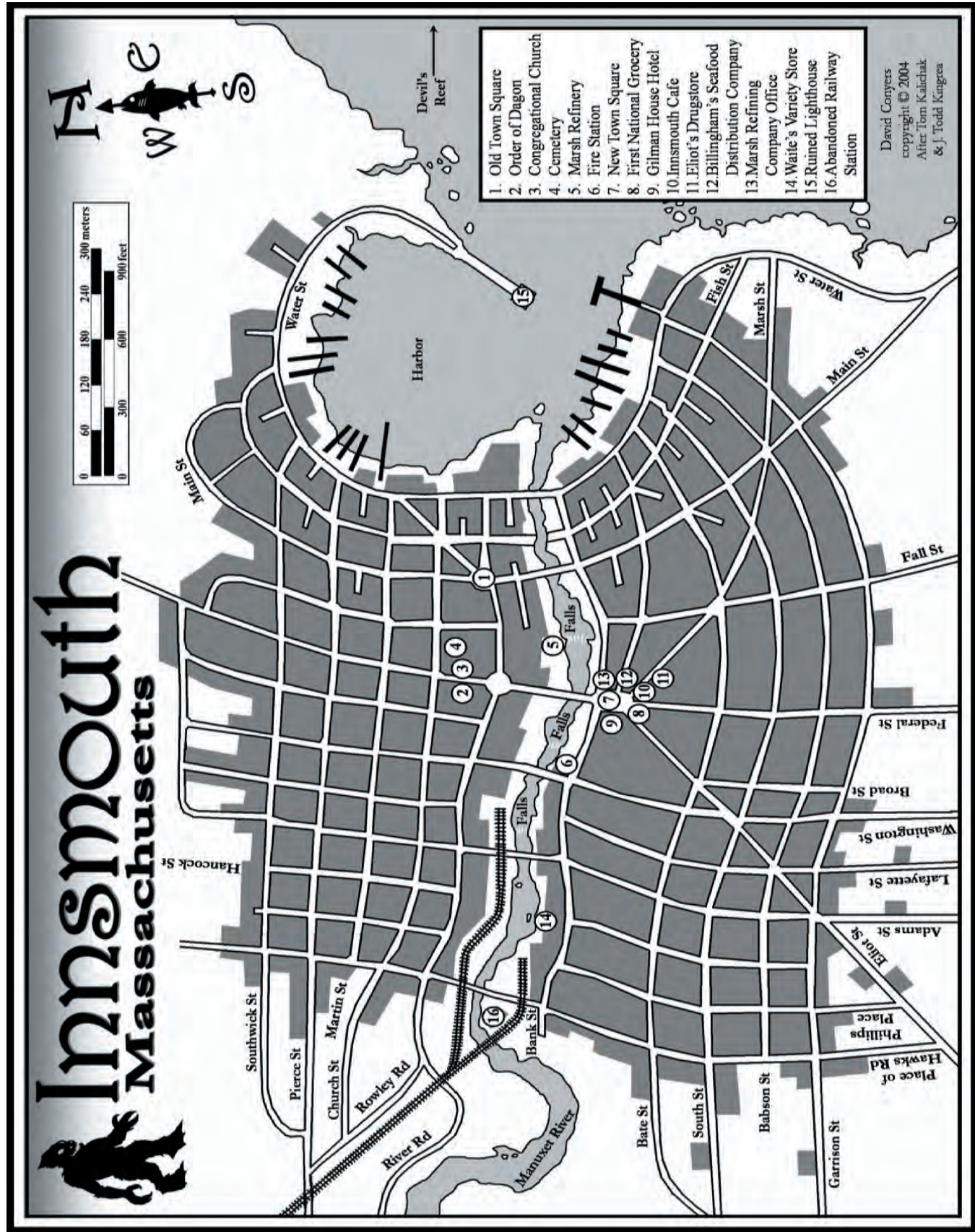
SAMPLE DEEP ONES

These Deep Ones can be reused as many times as the Keeper requires.

STR: 14 10 13 22 12 12
 CON: 13 11 12 10 15 12
 SIZ: 18 14 12 18 13 13
 INT: 18 18 16 10 13 12
 POW: 15 8 6 4 8 10
 DEX: 12 10 10 11 10 14
 HP: 16 13 12 14 14 13
 Db: +1d4 - +1d4 +1d6 +1d4 +1d4

Weapons:

Claw 30 30 40 50 35 40
 Spear - 30 - 30 - -
 Claw: 1d6 + db
 Spear: 1d6 + db, can impale.



Armor: 1-point skin and scales

Spells: none

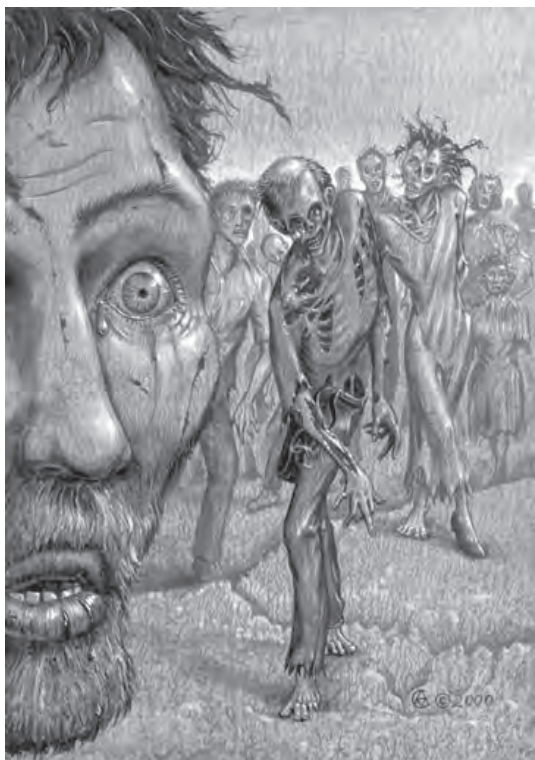
Sanity Loss: 0/1d6 Sanity points to see a deep one. 

ON THE UNBOUND BOOK WEBSITE
Dark Dreams of Innsmouth

- D20 Stats for Dak Dreams of Innsmouth
- Large print friendly maps by David Conyers

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'Dead Like Me' 2003 Alan M. Clark

Land of the Rising Dead

A FRAGMENT OF FEAR

by Matt & Debbie Cowens

EDITOR'S NOTE

This adventure was originally run at KapCon, New Zealand's largest and most popular roleplaying convention, and is The Unbound Book's first 'Fragment of Fear' (see What are Fragments of Fear on the next page for an explanation of this type of adventure),

Land of the Rising Dead is a perfect adventure for a night when the Keeper or their players are looking for something 'a little different'. The player characters created for this adventure are found on the Unbound Book website in both 'Byakhee' and 'jpeg' format.

KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

Seth Acres, a rich ex-patriot Britain, has recently died in Japan. During his life, Acres was the head of a Japanese Cthulhu cult, and has made preparations in his will for his resurrection as a powerful undead creature. Unfortunately for the players, a part of these preparations involve the untimely death of their Characters!

In this "Fragment of Fear" adventure (see the page opposite for further details on running The Unbound Book's Fragments of Fear), the players take the roles of characters somehow connected to recently deceased Acres, either as one of his relatives or as the result of some past interaction. As our story opens all of the Characters have been invited (all expenses paid of course) to Japan to collect their inheritance. However if all goes to plan for Acres and his servants, once in Japan our heroes will be used in a ritual which will resurrect their leader and allow his eternal life, that is unless the players are able to unmask the deceit and defeat their crafty enemies. In addition to the cult, a group of Japanese Priests are also attempting to prevent the ritual. Unfortunately their plans call for the characters to be 'scared' out of Japan prior to their attempts at destroying the cultists and the zombie Seth. It looks as if the players are between a rock and a hard place!

ADVENTURE TIMELINE

The following timeline outlines the general progress of the adventure.

1907 to 1918 - Seth Acres moves to Japan and begins his worship of Cthulhu.

1921 August - Seth learns of the blood ritual that will grant him eternal life.

1922 December - The law firm of Speegle and Sayo receive detailed instructions from Acres regarding the recipients of his will and the circumstances surrounding its reading.

1923 - A secret Shinto organisation learns of Acres' cult, and reopens the ancient temple on Kuroiyama. Shortly afterwards they discover the identities of the Acres' heirs and begin planning how to stop them ever reaching Kuroiyama.

February 19th - Seth's followers drain the blood from his body

WHAT ARE FRAGMENTS OF FEAR?

One-Shot Adventures for Call of Cthulhu

FRAGMENTS

Imagine if you wish, the session when key players can't make it, but the rest of your Investigators are still itching to face the Mythos or when a couple of old roleplaying buddies unexpectedly turn up at your door and demand a session of their favourite RPG. Better yet, think of the time you didn't get a chance to organise the next session of your latest campaign. Now think back in hindsight of what you could have done if you had something 'different' prepared or one-shot adventure ready to go?

We've all had those experiences before, when players have decided that role-playing would be a great idea, but you, as the Keeper, haven't got the slightest idea of what to run.

I know sometimes we think all we really need is to prepare a simple one-off adventure – a 'just in case' scenario - but even then this can be a hit and miss affair. Writing a good Call of Cthulhu adventure takes time and there is never any guarantee that what you have written will work as planned. Worse still, you have to create Investigators, handouts, etc., and in the end organising and running a one-off adventure is just as time consuming as it would have been to arrange a regular session. All that, without even guaranteeing a satisfying gaming experience.

FRAGMENTS OF FEAR are The Unbound Book's attempt to alleviate the problems of running a quick and simple adventure. You've encountered this sort of scenario before, at your local Convention, or in publications like Chaosium's Blood Brothers 1 and 2, or Pagan Publishing's highly acclaimed 'Grace Under Pressure'. In a nut shell, Fragments of Fear are short self-contained stories which supply the Keeper with all the handouts, Investigator stats and plots-twists they need to run a successful one-off adventure!

VITAL STATISTICS

Fragments of Fear adventures include all the tools needed to run a one-off session, and usually cater for between 2 and 6 Investigators.

Setting: When it comes to Fragments of Fear, the author's imagination is free to run wild, with strange locations and odd encounters being the norm. In fact,

apart from the requirement to set the story during the 'Classic Era' of CoC, these short adventures are perfect chances to explore ideas of horror and gaming which could never fit a normal campaign.

Style of Play: Most Fragments of Fear will be based in situations where it would be difficult to place a regular group of Investigators (e.g. The Western Front in WW1, a group of young students at high school or as advisors to a British politician on the campaign trail). All in all each adventure is not only meant to be a fun and exciting experience, but also allows a change of pace from a regular Call of Cthulhu session.

Length of Adventure: All Fragments of Fear games should only take one session to complete. In play testing this will be 4 to 6 hours (depending of course on the decisions made by each group's players).

Game Difficulty and Style of Play: No Fragment of Fear will be too difficult to complete, in fact the requirement of the adventure to be completed in such a short period of time, is that it does limit the amount of investigation and detective work required for a successful conclusion. By extension, these adventures are usually 'pulp action' in style, as opposed to the traditional horror stylings of regular Call of Cthulhu stories.

Rewards: One of the limitations of one-off adventures is the lack of character development. However, as the players will hopefully discover, the true reward for a good one-off game is the actual game play as opposed to the potential investigative gains. As a result, the point of Fragments of Fear is to enjoy the roleplaying, ham up the acting and get a buzz out of our hobby, rather than look to any 'on paper' gains.

Death: If there is one thing that immediately becomes apparent with one-off adventures, it is the way in which players are more willing to risk their Investigators in the hope of achieving the adventure's objectives. In this type of adventure, character death can occur without fear of future repercussions, and in the experience of the editor allows players to act more heroically than in regular game-play.

SUMMING UP

We hope our Fragments of Fear are here to stay, and although we realise that not all of these adventures are going to appeal to every Keeper or their players, we do believe that they are a vital part of keeping Call of Cthulhu fun and vibrant.

in the preservation ritual, resulting in Acres death like stasis.

March 1st - Speegle and Sayo learn of Acres' 'death', and dispatch letters to the recipients of the will (the Characters).

May 3rd - The tramp steamer 'Kipper Maru' leaves London bound for Tokyo with the Characters on board.

June 5th - The 'Kipper Maru' arrives in Tokyo, the Characters stay at the Scherer Pension. That night, the Shinto Priests' contacts in Tokyo summon a yuurei (ghost) in an attempt to frighten off Acres' heirs.

June 6th - The Characters travel by boat to the island of Kuroiyama. The Shinto Priests on Kuroiyama dispatch a pair of Kappa (turtle creatures) to stop them reaching the island. The Characters stay in Kuroiyama village.

June 7th/8th - A Confrontation occurs between the Priests and Cultists, resulting in all Priests being killed - except the aged leader, who remained at the temple. The Characters reach Seth's mansion and his spirit begins to torment them.

June 8th/9th/10th - The Cultists attempt Acres' resurrection, using the PCs as sacrifices.

September 1st - The Great Kanto Earthquake destroys huge sections of Tokyo, Yokohama, and the surrounding plains. Kuroiyama itself slowly sinks beneath the waves. Most of the fishing community survive, but there are many casualties. The island is lost and forgotten by history.

STARTING THE SESSION

The year is 1923 and prior to the start of the game, each of the player's Characters has received a visit, either at their home or place of work, by a small oriental man (who it seems had very limited English skills). He approached each character by name, confirming their identity by the simple method of asking their name in a questioning manner (e.g. "Mista Johna Sumisu?"), before handing each of them a letter, its envelop bearing the character's name on the front, and the name of "Speegle and Sayo" on the reverse (see *Land Handout 1*).

ABOARD THE SHIP – THE KIPPER MARU

The adventure itself begins with a dinner table conversation on board the Tramp Steam 'Kipper Maru'

THE OTHER PASSENGERS

There are only three other paying passengers onboard the ship during the current voyage (although there are a number of sailors, of British, Japanese and South American origin who are of no interest to the characters).

Mike Vincenzi – an Italian-American, he has a broad New York accent, and is always impeccably attired in a pin striped suit and fedora. He habitually rolls a coin over his knuckles, and chews a matchstick, spending most of his time playing cards with the two other Japanese passengers. If questioned why he is on his way to Tokyo, he simply says that he is on 'business', and refuses to disclose any more. He is something of a ladies man.

Hiro and Yuusuke Fukushima – Japanese brothers, heavily tattooed and wearing wooden sandals and loose fitting robes. These two are very serious, and seem to speak no English although they will not answer to anyone in any language. They spend most of their time playing cards with Mike Vincenzi.

It is probably impossible to tell, but Vincenzi and the Fukushima brothers are actually working together, their card games an elaborate system of code used to arrange a deal to smuggle liquor to New York.

lately of London, now bound for Tokyo, where the Characters have all been invited to dine at the captain's table. The 'Maru's' Captain is John MacWhirter, a solidly built, heavily whiskered Englishman. He will loudly ask each of the characters whether they are enjoying the trip and why they are travelling to Japan. Furthermore he will ask what they have been doing to keep themselves occupied on the voyage so far.

As an answer to this final question, it is up the players to decide what their characters have been up to while at sea. There are a number of possibilities, including - reading, playing cards, strolling on deck, studying the Japanese language, studying Japanese geography and so on. The ship has only one text on the Japanese language; therefore anyone opting to do so will have already become better acquainted any other player 'students'. Likewise, any characters who decided to gamble or play cards will also be able to know each other better.

This option for introduction is a good opportunity for the players to describe what their characters look like, how they usually behave and any interesting bits of

personal information that may have come to light on the voyage so far.

The trip to Tokyo from London takes about 4 weeks by steamer and the characters arrive in early June, at the start of summer. Tokyo is a little hot, and very humid at the moment and as the rainy season is about to begin, the air hangs moist, thick and heavy with the anticipation of rain.

THE DOCK

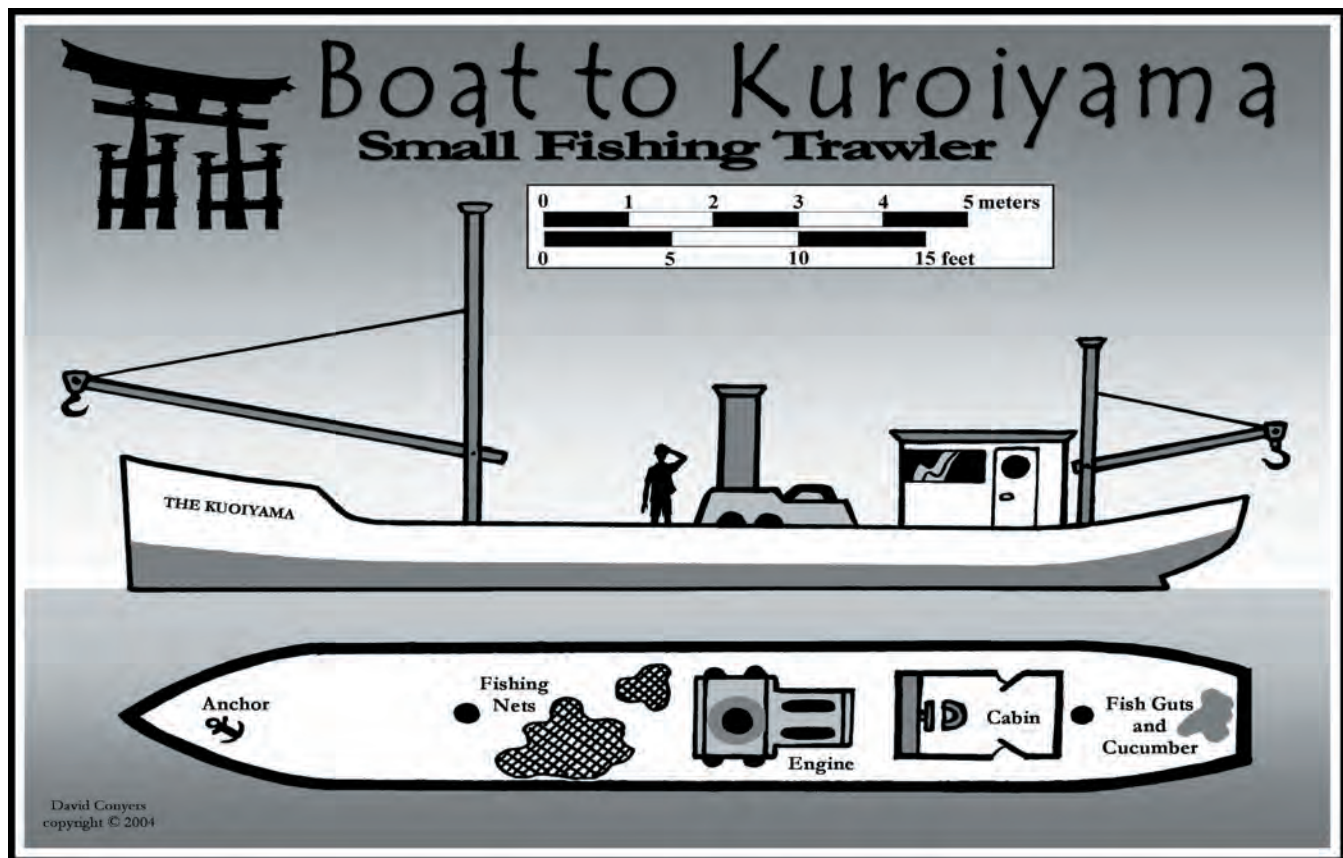
Tokyo bay is bustling with activity - seaweed dries on large bamboo boards, fishermen go about their work, and bentoo (or boxed lunch) salesmen scream for sales at the top of their lungs. On the docks, most people are dressed in semi-traditional clothing - large baggy pants, boots with the big toe separate and loose jackets adorned with strange writing. Everywhere is a strong smell of fish, and a sweaty aroma that seems to hang over the dock. Hundreds of wooden buildings can be seen around the waterfront - most of Tokyo's buildings are wooden.

Once the characters have had a chance to take in the sights they are met by a very polite Japanese man named Takayuki Nakagawa, a representative of Speegle and Sayo. He is dressed in a Western style suit and hat and

as he has spent several years studying at Oxford, speaks very good English. Takayuki explains that he will be escorting them to the reading of the Will, but for tonight they will be taken to a nearby Pension (hotel) to rest and recover from their voyage.

The streets near the docks are very narrow, especially travelling in Takayuki's seven seater Mercedes, and the multi-story wooden buildings lining each side of the lanes are built so close to one another that they touch. Telegraph lines drape overhead, as do the innumerable signs and paper lanterns, which are covered with indecipherable characters. Progress is slow, as every cart or car they meet must find a side road to allow the Mercedes past. Here and there, the locals stare intently at the car and its passengers, their faces blank slates. Only the children in the streets seem curious, while the older citizens look mostly scornful.

As the car moves further away from the docks the roads grow broader, and at last the Characters begin to see Japanese people dressed in Western style clothing - suits and hats for the most part. Now, all around, there is the proliferation of bicycles and rickshaws, trams which run up and down the streets and large brick buildings of false European design.



THE PENSION

A pension is a kind of Japanese hotel, a little similar to a European Bed and Breakfast. The Pension at which the characters are to stay is a small 1 level wooden house, which is nestled between 2 much taller office buildings. Inside their accommodation, the floors are tatami - a woven straw mat. It is forbidden to wear shoes or even slippers on this kind of flooring and the characters are instructed to remove their shoes in the entrance hall (genkan).

The Pension itself has a central bathroom, used by all guests, which includes a deep (though not wide) tub, and a small 3 legged stool. Most rooms are separated by thin walls, and allow for easy eavesdropping. While 2 pairs of rooms are separated only by sliding paper doors. When there is strong light behind these doors it is possible to view the movement and position of the silhouetted figures in the next room. The Pension is only large enough for 8 guests, so the characters are the only people staying here this night. The owners of the Pension are Anton and Misako Scherer.

Dinner with the hosts, which consists of raw fish, seaweed, a soup that smells of old socks, and giant crabs eaten from the shell, is a light hearted and jovial affair and allows the players to experience a little of the Japanese culture.

Anton and Misako (Pension Owners): Anton is originally from Belgium and was a champion Judo player. He came to Japan 13 years ago for an international tournament, met his wife, and has lived here ever since. He has not heard of Kuroiyama Island or the law firm (or Seth Acres for that matter), but will direct any enquiries about such to his wife. If so asked, he can direct PCs to the nearby libraries, local government offices, izakaya (pubs) and so on. He is a loud jovial Belgian, with a great love for Japan.

Misako is native Japanese, with very little ability to speak English. She is short (a little over 5 feet) and very pretty with shoulder length black hair. Her age is very hard to guess - she looks anywhere between 15 and 40. If the Characters talk to her, she will say "Velly nice customer san. Barseloom velly kureen. Eigo o sukoshi wakarimasen (I understand only a little English)". If any mention of Kuroiyama is made, she looks very concerned, and will say "Abunai desu yo! Abunai! Ikanai de kudasai! Ikanai no ho ga ii desu," which roughly means "It's dangerous! Dangerous! Please don't go! It's better not to go". She however lacks the ability to explain her concerns further. If the smart thinking characters ask Anton what she said, he'll chuckle and tell them it's

some kind of old wives tale, which makes no sense to him. But, he continues, that isn't uncommon, even after all his years here in Tokyo.

The Ghost in the Pension

That night, around 1 in the morning, any character making a successful listen roll is oddly awoken, although by what they are unsure. Anyone succeeding the roll by 20 or more will remember hearing the faint sound of a woman laughing. The sound, which continues now that some of the group is awake, seems to be coming from the roof of a random character's room. If anyone present in the room makes a successful Spot Hidden roll, they will see the translucent hem of a white Kimono coming down through the roof.

As the characters watch, read the following -

A Japanese woman, ghostly pale and shimmering, descends into the centre of the room. Her eyes are wide and staring, without pupils. Her mouth is split from ear to ear in a huge grin - her teeth small but incredibly sharp. She wears a triangle of cloth on her forehead. Waves of anger and malice roll out from her as she floats slowly, eerily toward you.

This is the ghost sent by the allies of the Shinto Priests in an attempt to scare the characters away.

As the group watches, she tilts her head to one side and stares menacingly at the closest character, before drifting into the next room. She continues to drift through the rooms of all the characters, her eyes glowing ever redder, and then, as suddenly as she appeared, she vanishes. All witnesses of this event must make a San roll (0/3). The woman is most definitely a ghost, and nothing the characters can do will affect her.

If the group decides to wake Anton, he doesn't believe their story, though his wife will appear terrified. While characters searching the pension for secret doors find only cobwebs, spiders, and an occasional grain of rice. The crawlspace above the ceiling (below the sloped roof) is particularly creepy, though it contains nothing of note.

TRAVELLING TO KUROIYAMA ISLAND

In the morning the group is again met by Mr Takayuki, who is still driving his very large Mercedes. Once all is ready, he drives them back to the port, explaining that he has arranged passage to Acres' home on Kuroiyama onboard a small fishing vessel.

At the docks two hardy looking Japanese men invite the

THE KAPPA

Kappa are mythical Japanese water creatures. They resemble four foot high humanoid turtles and although not evil creatures are known to attack humans. Kappa are very strong, and have some gruesome habits, although they are also rumoured to be very skilled healers, and are said to have taught humans how to bind broken bones. They have sharp beaks, webbed claws, and hard shells and have a bone-like crown atop their heads, which they must keep filled with water if they want to move about on land. Their favourite food is cucumber and are very fond of tradition – it is said that if you meet a Kappa on land the best thing to do is to bow to it. It will bow back, thus spilling the water from its crown, forcing it to flee back to a river, lake or sea.

group (including Takayuki) onto their vessel and into its single cabin (although as the morning is fine, they have no issue at all with characters remaining on the deck). The fishermen do not speak to the group, but instead gaze nervously up at the sky as they prepare to leave port.

Gwillam (the player character and fisherman) soon notices that other sailors in the harbour are tying up their boats, as if a storm were coming, although pointing out this fact has no effect on the preparations to the two men. Soon enough the boat sails out through the harbour and into the sea, just as above the skies darken and the wind increases. The fishermen nervously drape bits of dead fish (mixed with cucumber) over the back of the boat and soon a few heavy drops of rain begin to fall.

The rain quickly grows into a deluge and about half an hour later, anyone who succeeds in a Spot Hidden or Boating roll notices the ship list in the water, as something heavy is at one end of the fishing vessel. Although the characters might believe that the boat is taking on water, what has in fact come aboard are 2 Kappa (5 foot tall turtle monsters – see the sidebar nearby), sent by the Shinto priests to stop the boat.

These creatures immediately attack the Captain and his mate, and unless the characters get involved, will injure them badly. If the Kappa succeed in mauling the crew, they take the bits of fish and cucumber, and disappear back into the sea, leaving the characters to sail the boat. On the other hand, if the Kappa are driven off, the fishermen are very grateful, and once on Kuroiyama will take the group to the Inn and introduce them to the

locals.

Mr Takayuki doesn't offer much assistance during the skirmish, as he is in a state of shocked disbelief. "But they're just fairy stories!" he insists, refusing to believe what he has seen. The fishermen, on the other hand, are a superstitious pair, and while scared by the attack are aware of such things' existence.

The remainder of the trip is without incident, and the boat arrives at the island of Kuroiyama late in the afternoon. Seeing the lateness of the day and the continuing bad weather, Takayuki insists they stay in the village overnight, before travelling to Seth's mansion the next morning.

KUROIYAMA ISLAND

At sea level the island is a very green and lush forest, but as the viewer's gaze looks steadily upwards the forested slope of Kuroiyama gives way to the black and barren landscape of the mountain, rising up over the island like a dark shadow. The island itself has several important locations which the characters are likely to visit - The Village, The Old Temple, Seth's Mansion, and The Mountaintop.

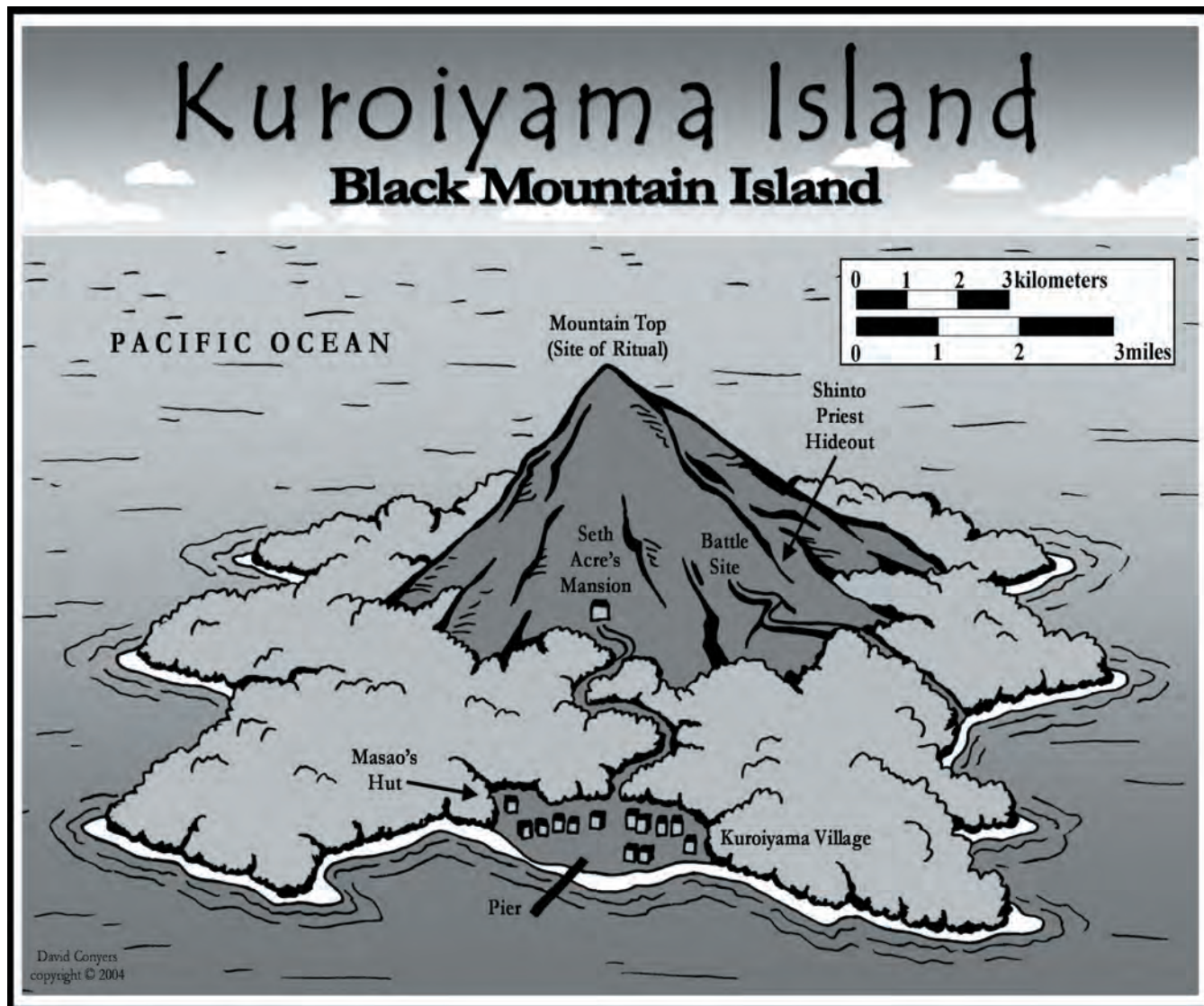
As the evening wears on, the weather gets worse, as a typhoon passes near the Island and the characters are encouraged to seek shelter in the Inn (which is the only place in the village to eat anyway!).

THE VILLAGE

The characters eventually arrive in the small fishing village of Kuroiyama-machi (Black Mountain Town). There are about a dozen fishing boats moored just off the beach, plus a few others in the harbour. At its centre, the village has 4 large buildings - the Inn of the Pierced Fish, the Police Station, The Post Office, and The Library. In addition several smallish houses are scattered about the bay and the entire village is surrounded by a number of farms, consisting mainly of rice paddies and vegetable gardens.

The Post Office

The single staff member gives his name as 'Bob'. He is a very enthusiastic, fat little man who has spent the last few years studying English. Originally from Tokyo, he was transferred to the Kuroiyama post office after he hit a young boy whilst on his delivery rounds. He is a Christian (as he will loudly tell the PCs) and is eager to tell them anything he can:



Kuroiyama Island: *"Every Spring and Fall there are huge storms that sweep over the island, causing much devastation. This building is very strong, so I don't have to worry. The locals are very superstitious - they are not Christian like me!"*

Speegle and Sayo: *"A lot of mail from them to Mr Acres, and from Mr Acres to them, passed through this office. All confidential of course!"*

Seth Acres: *"He was a very good man - I met him only twice, but he was a Christian, and his English was very good. He said I spoke English very well. I took his picture."*

The Kuroiyama Library

This is little more than a small shack, installed with a couple of shelves of books, and an incomplete collection

of Tokyo newspapers, including some issues of 'The Japan Times', an English language paper. Investigative characters may find the following information:

Kuroiyama Island - a few miles south of the Southern tip of Chiba prefecture, this small island is home to an insular fishing community. They speak a dialect of Japanese unlike any other. Though trade with mainland Japan has increased this century, there is still no electricity or gas on the island, nor any schools. In addition there is reference to 'The Legend of the Black Mountain', a story involving the drinking of blood and the secret to eternal life.

Speegle and Sayo - a respectable law firm, with a long tradition of practice. Bilingual since 1885.

Seth Acres - he appears in island censuses from the late 1800s. He has donated a dozen or so books to the

library, including a complete set of encyclopaedias.

The Police Station

PCs may speak to Shinji, the island's only police officer. He is from Osaka, here on assignment for a 2 year term. He does not speak any English, but is happy to use Mr Takayuki as an interpreter.

Shinji investigated the death of Mr Acres and will tell the characters that Mr Acres' body had seemed very pale when he last saw it. Mr Acres' personal physician, Kentaro Yakimoto, examined the body and pronounced the cause of death as 'heart failure'. If anyone asks to see the doctor's report, Shinji will explain that it has been sent to the record archives in Tokyo.

The Inn of the Pierced Fish

Takayuki will arrange the party's rooms for the evening at the Inn of the Pierced Fish, the characters placed in the long building adjacent to the Inn. As with the Pension, all of the rooms have tatami floors and sliding rice paper doors.

In the Inn there are some quiet fishermen, and some very quiet, eerily fishy fishermen. The innkeeper will serve the characters fish, seaweed and rice with cold noodles, and then converses with Takayuki in Japanese for a short while. If the players ask Takayuki what the innkeeper was talking about, he says he was asking about the history of the island:

"This is an old folk tale of this island. Once there was a powerful Samurai who wanted to live forever. He came to this island, and learnt how to steal the power of the forest. It seems that he lived on the blood of this village for decades, until finally one of his great grandchildren decided to cut his head off. How very quaint."

Throughout the night one particular fisherman seems to be watching the group, although he might just be drunk pretending to be drunk (a Spot Hidden roll is required to notice this man watching the characters). If questioned, he speaks little English, and claims to be a simple fisherman.

The seemingly drunk fisherman is in fact Masao, a cultist associated with the followers of Seth Acres and watches to ensure the characters arrive at safely at the island. He leaves the inn at around 9pm and heads out into the wild weather, leading any character following him to his odd dwelling. Here, observant characters notice huge weblike tracks (belonging to Deep Ones) beneath one the buildings' windows, which, with a successful Track roll, track directly to the nearby beach.

On the outside Masao's house looks very much like any other in the village, but within there is considerable difference. As part of Masao's cult worship, his house has become home to a shrine and sacrificial dagger dedicated to the entity 'Dagon'. Furthermore, it seems from the evidence strewn around the house - clothing that clearly doesn't belong to the fisherman (including items of women's apparel), strange stains etc., that he has been kidnapping people (obviously from the mainland) and sacrificing them to his gods. If the cultist is confronted, he will attempt to flee if at all possible. Masao uses the same statistics as the rest of Seth's followers (see NPC statistics at the end of this adventure).

If the PCs do not follow Masao, he will return in the middle of the night and will linger outside their rooms spying on them. In this event all characters should receive a chance to hear him prowling around and anyone who succeeds a Listen roll by 20 or more will be woken by the cultist's movements. Again if he is seen he will attempt to flee back to his shack.

THE TREK TO THE MANSION

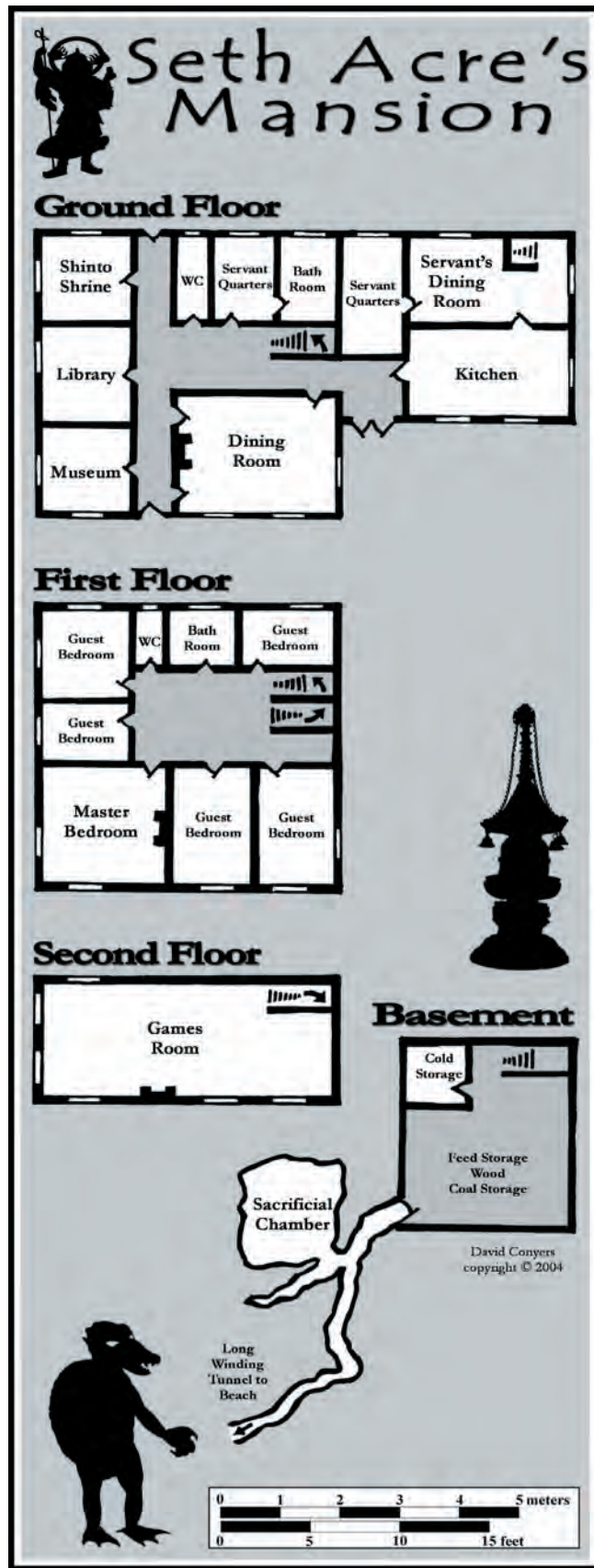
The next morning the group, with Takayuki leading way, must travel through thick forests and climb high up the 'green' portion of the mountain. The path is not easy, and it is hot and sticky.

After a couple of hours of travelling the hindmost person in the group hears tittering noises, and the sound of small creatures moving about in the trees, although nothing can be seen. About the same moment the party comes across a teapot in the middle of the path. It is large and brown - and for all intents and purposes a fairly standard teapot.

Of course the teapot is more than it first seems and in fact is a Tanuki, a kind of magical mischievous racoon that can change its shape at will. The Tanuki has been sent by the Shinto monks to keep an eye on the party. If the characters decide to pick up the pot, it indeed seems to be a typical example of Japanese tea pot and the Tanuki will happily travel along with the party.

If nobody picks up the teapot, about 100 metres further up the track they will come across it again, laying on the path in front of them. This will happen again and again until taking the hint the Tanuki scampers off ahead (and will be waiting in one of the bedrooms of Seth's mansion. If the PCs try to damage the teapot, it will yelp and scamper away (though how it runs without legs the characters are unable to figure out).

As time and pacing allow, the Keeper may also want to



include the following events:

One of the characters catches a glimpse of a 3 foot tall cyclops in the woods, which then quickly disappears (another Tanuki). Seeing this costs (0/1) San.

A small girl walks by the group ignoring them, and then as she moves away her neck begins to grow and stretch, until her head is swaying about atop a huge, snakelike appendage. She too runs into the trees and disappears (these are common Tanuki tricks). 0/1 San loss.

If any of the group ask Takayuki about these strange 'visitations', he is just as confused as the rest of the party and unable to provide an explanation.

MONKS AND CULTISTS BATTLE

Once again the weather deteriorates as the party continues its climb, and soon thunder crashes and lightning flashes overhead. Eventually the group reaches the eastern bank of a river, along which the path follows for a mile or so, before they see it crosses the water by means of a small wooden bridge. On the far bank the path doubles back to almost where the characters now stand.

As they begin the long trip to travel, what should have really been, a short distance across the river, they suddenly make out the sounds of clashing steel and the dim distant cries of men in battle across the other side of the tumultuous river.

It takes the characters a good half hour to reach the bridge, cross over it and cover the mile or so back to the battle site. Here, there are many footprints but surprisingly few bodies, all of which are priests dressed in Shinto garb. Amongst the debris of the fight, there is a large book, written in Chinese. Within it also contains illustrations of Deep Ones, Byakhee, Kappa, and many other Mythos monsters, costing the reader one point of SAN just looking at the pictures. If the party lingers, Takayuki urges them to press on, stating that once they reach the safety of Acres' mansion word can be sent back to the police of the tragedy here.

Although there is little the characters can surmise from the scene, it is here, in a desperate attempt to stop Seth's plans, that the Priests battled a number of Acre's followers.

The Shinto Priests' Hideout

If any of the characters think to ask a number of tracks lead off into the forest at a tangent to the path they were to follow. A successful Track roll will allow the group to

follow the trail, and after a half hour's march through the forest (there is no real path to speak of) they lead to what appears to be an abandoned Shinto shrine.

Here there are 2 buildings, both made entirely of wood built using an interlocking pattern (there are no nails). The roofs of both structures are sloped and intricately carved with dragon head designs.

In front of the shrine, an old man dressed in white and cream robes can be seen kneeling before a carved wooden statue of a many armed woman. This is the only remaining Shinto priest, the headman of the sect - a gnarled figure, his long thin hair and beard drooping, his eyes completely white and unseeing.

Immediately aware of the character's presence, he will tell them that "Your coming is as the spark to the tinder, you will burn us all!", before lapsing into silence and refusing to speak any further. If the characters search the shrine (the head priest will not try and stop them) they find a list of all their names, along with a photographs of Anita and Gwillam.

SETH'S MANSION

Seth's Mansion, a 3 level, Western style home, sits at the edge of the forest, where the mountain begins its final drive to the barren black peak.

Reaching the front door, the party is welcomed by 2 servants, and offered refreshments after their long journey. Once they have recovered from the day's exertions the 2 servants, Jim and Frank (Ryuji and Yoto) - the only two in the house - will give the group a tour of the grounds.

After this introduction to the estate, they will be shown to their individual rooms, and find that their baggage has already been delivered. If nobody picked up the teapot (Tanuki) on trip to the mansion, it will now be sitting amongst one of the character's luggage, where it will remain until it is required.

Shortly afterwards, Takayuki informs the group that they will have the afternoon to rest - lunch will be brought up to them - and that dinner will be at 6pm. He asks them to dress appropriately.

Exploring the Mansion

Guest Bedrooms - For all practical purposes identical, the guest rooms are well furnished with beds and dressing tables. The windows at the front of the house look out onto the forest, at those to the rear onto the steep slopes of black and brown rock.

Master Bedroom - The door to Seth's room is locked, although within there is a large 4 poster bed, a bookshelf, and a large chest of drawers. The bookshelf contains several occult tomes, including the parchments Father Patrick is looking for. In addition, there is an enormous sacrificial dagger displayed on top of the chest of drawers, and a pair of ornate, but working, shotguns hung on one of the walls. Despite the fact that Seth died more than a month ago, the room still feels occupied.

The Dining Room - This is an opulently decorated room, dominated by a long polished wood table. A portrait of Seth dressed in a kimono hangs over the fireplace.

Museum - Housing Seth's collection of artefacts collected on his many travels, it displays items of mainly Eastern origin. Included in these are some fantastic (and valuable) pieces - an Oni (demon) mask, oddly decadent Thai statues, and old parchments covered in Eastern writings and pictures.

Library - Seth's library contains many classic works of English fiction - in one corner, beside a very comfortable looking armchair, a small side table can be seen, upon which sits the collected works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Seth also stored a few occult tomes, and a small collection of Japanese books here. Each of the Japanese books accompanied by a notebook, detailing Seth's rough translations. For most part these books deal with Shinto and Buddhist religions, as well as local folk lore, mythology and magic. There is also a complete account of the legend of Kuroiyama (see *Land Handout 2*).

Shrine - This room contains a 4 foot high Shinto shrine, complete with incense and a bell suspended from the roof on a long rope. This room is scrupulously clean. Perceptive characters may note that the floor here shows no signs of wear - as if no one has ever used the Shrine. (Seth was briefly taken with Japanese religion, before converting to the dark path of Cthulhu worship)

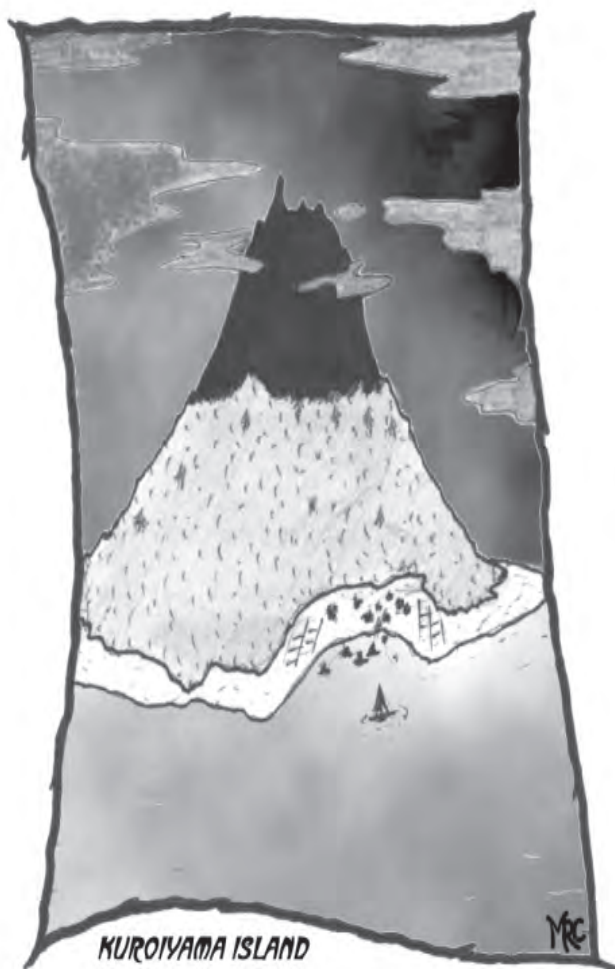
Servant's Quarters - Obviously the servants will try to stop the group entering their rooms, locking the doors if necessary. The quarters are sparsely furnished, without beds, instead with futon mattresses rolled up in the cupboards, along with their clothes. In the top of the cupboards there are several weapons, including several vicious looking knives, swords, guns and clubs.

Kitchen - A well stocked and fairly typical 1920's kitchen.

Games Room - A billiards table, card table, and a telescope are to be found here. The stairs to this room are easy to barricade, and due to the shape of the house, it is relatively easy to jump from the windows to the roof

of the first floor, then down to the ground (if a hasty escape is required).

Basement – The door to the basement is locked and constantly under watch. Although generally used for storage - here there are 6 extra futon sets and a large quantity of various foods - the basement is also the current resting place of Acres. Laid out on a makeshift table in the Cold Store, the body of Seth is wrapped in a white sheet. If the characters get the chance to inspect the corpse closely, he has needle marks in his arms and thighs, where his blood was ritually drained. He does not move, or breathe, but the characters get the eerie feeling that he is somehow aware of them. There is also a locked door in one corner of the basement which leads into the mountain itself, through a series of caves and a long winding tunnel that leads (eventually) back to the beach. Inside the cave there are also manacles, bloodstains, robes, and all the accoutrements of ritual sacrifice.



The Shared Dream

The following sequence occurs as a result of Seth's presence in the house and it advised to not let the players know that this is a dream. Instead ask them how they are dressed for dinner, then describe the dining room and meal:

"The long polished wood table is adorned with succulent meats, potatoes, grilled fish, fresh vegetables, and crystal glasses filled with wine. Soft candlelight fills the room with a warm glow, as you sit down and feel the stress of your journey melt away."

Allow the players to make conversation amongst themselves if they wish. But then notify them that they suddenly realise that they have not seen any servants (the meal was waiting when they arrived), and that Takayuki is missing. Immediately, before anyone can do anything to investigate the situation, they hear heavy footfalls in the hall outside. Moments later the door near the library swings open, and Seth Acres walks in, smiling - those who have met him before will recognise him instantly, while the others take a few seconds to match him to the portrait over the fireplace. Seth is incredibly pale, but his eyes are bright in the candlelight. He smiles at the characters and talks with them quite casually.

"Thank you for coming - it's a great pleasure to see you all here. I'm so looking forward to eating all of you, especially..." his gaze lingers long on his blood relatives Anita and Gwillam.

If asked whether he is alive, he will reply *"Alive? Difficult to say. My body lies still, yet here I am. I shall be wearing my old flesh soon enough, but stronger than ever. Whatever I am, I have most definitely not passed into the great beyond."*

Seth is quite happy to make polite conversation, recommending dishes from the table, and talking about the weather on the island. As he points to the various dishes on the table, they rot and putrefy instantly. After about 10 minutes of Seth's company, the doors again swing silently open, and the 2 servants, accompanied by 6 more Japanese cultists, enter the room bearing weapons. They encircle the characters and attempt to tie them up. As soon as anyone reacts with any sort of violence or all the characters allow themselves to be bound, the dream ends.

Instantaneously all the party wakes, dressed in their finest dinner clothes, they lay on their beds. Outside it is dark and all available time pieces say that it is in the early hours of the morning. They have no memory of the real dinner, or how they got into these clothes or into bed.

The Empty House

When the characters emerge from their bedrooms, the house is eerily silent - the cultists have taken Seth's body up to the mountaintop to prepare for the ritual & Takayuki has gone back down to the village to tell the police about the dead priests. If the players decide to flee at this point, they will have to stumble through the dark house, out into the unfamiliar forest, and down the mountain. If they do this, the teapot Tanuki will help them, moving ahead of them as a dim light on the path, unable to be identified but providing enough illumination to help them stay on the path.

The Reading of the Will

If the players stay in the house, Takayuki returns in the early morning. He has been talking to the police about the dead priests and knows nothing of the shared dream. Rightfully worried at the events of the previous days and now for the sanity of his charges, he will gather the group in one of the mansion's rooms as soon as he is able. He performs a head count, and once satisfied that all are present, he opens the sealed will. At the same moment, there is a rush of a cold breeze through the room and the faintest hint of laughter carries on the air.

The will reads as follows:

My dear relatives and associates,

I am so pleased that you could all be here, to take part in my legacy. Long ago I learned of the secret of Kuroiyama, the black mountain. I learned how a man might devour the spirit of the mountain god, then survive on the blood of mortals. Sadly, the first taste of blood I took needed to be blood of my blood...my family. For this I had my men drain the blood from my body, my corpse placed in storage, and stage my funeral. Yes, all that simply to get you here, and now, in turn, devour your essence. I must thank you for travelling so far. Of course, you who are not my family, you will be a most delicious second course, allowing my palate to become accustomed to a cosmopolitan diet. I thank you all, and look forward to eating you atop Kuroiyama, the Black Mountain.

Seth Acres

Immediately upon the will being read 8 Servants (cultists) enter the room. The cultists do not want to kill the characters, as they need them for the ritual, but they menace them, tie them and Takayuki up and drag them up to the top of the mountain.

As they are leaving the house, the character that has the teapot (either as a result of picking it up or by virtue of it choosing their room to hide in) realises that it is now

clinging onto their belt, trying to look like it is tied on.

THE RITUAL AT THE TOP OF KUROIYAMA

The climax of this adventure is a good old fight to the death (or in Seth's case re-death). The players should be able to free themselves and fight the cultists, though their chances of surviving the fight are not good. Stats for Seth and the cultists can be found at the end of the adventure.

Upon the top of the mountain stands a circle of white sand, and now that all is in readiness, in the centre of the circle lies Seth Acres' body. The group is thrown to the ground outside the circle and immediately the cultists begin to chant - throwing powders and oils onto the corpse of their master, and generally working themselves into a frenzy.

As the ritual reaches its peak the body of Seth begins to move, and the cultists pour blood from glass jars into the undead's mouth. This horrible site requires a San check from all present (1/1d6).

With all the distraction going on it is a good time for the party members to try and escape. Each may try to escape their bonds (STR 18 rope) or the teapot Tanuki will attempt to free the players.

As the ceremony concludes, the body of Seth Acres is once again reunited with its life blood, and then rises to begin the last act of its resurrection - draining the blood from the characters. To being with Seth will focus on Gwillam and Anita at which the cultists get very excited and start to cut themselves, offering their blood to Acres.

To give the characters more time a Keeper could have Seth kill 1 or 2 of his own cultists in his weakened state (in an attempt to gain strength for the attacks on his 'guests'). But eventually the battle will come down to whether or not the party (and Takayuki) can wear down Seth before they are all consumed!

RESOLUTION

Depending on what the PCs choose to do after the dream, the game can have a few different endings. If they fled, they can eventually find a fishing boat to take them back to Tokyo, where they are able to book tickets for home. The law firm Sayo and Speegle will be curious as to why they are leaving, but will help them if they insist. The night before the PCs are scheduled to leave the cultists attempt to drug them and take them back to the Island, where they are used as fuel in the ritual to resurrect Seth.

If they stayed and Takayuki read the will they may have possibly escape and overcome Seth, or they may be killed. If the PCs succeed in defeating Seth, they regain 1d8 Sanity.

If they kill the servants and Takayuki, they will be able to escape back to Tokyo, and onto a ship. Although it is highly likely that if they ever return to Japan, they will be arrested for murder.

No matter what the outcome of the adventure is, three months after the conclusion of the events of this story Japan is hit by a massive earthquake (The Great Kanto Earthquake, 1st September 1923) which destroys huge sections of Tokyo, Yokohama and the surrounding plains. As a result of the earthquake the island of Kuroiyama sinks beneath the waves, and is lost forever to Japanese history.

NPC STATISTICS

THE KAPPA

Four foot tall turtle-like water creatures, currently in the employ of the Shinto Priests.

STR: 16 DEX: 15 APP: 2 CON: 16
SIZ: 9 INT: 4 POW: 16 EDU: 4
HP: 12

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Skills: Claw/Punch 45% (2d4 Damage), Bite 45%, (1d6 Damage)

Armour: 2 point shell (reduces all damage by 2).

SETH ACRES

Recently deceased Cult leader. He will rise from the dead in the final scene to confront the characters. He is a well educated man, with a keen interest in the occult practices of the Orient. His personality (and ghost) permeates his Mansion (the site of the reading of the will).

STR: 17 DEX: 15 APP: 2 CON: 16
SIZ: 12 INT: 17 POW: 16 EDU: 19
HP: 12

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Skills: Punch 75% (1d4 Damage).

Spells -

Choke Victim - (holds one hand up in a choking shape, 1 chosen humanoid in sight begins to choke, losing 1d6 hit points per round). Costs 1 magic point per turn.

Telekinesis - (exaggerated gestures with both hands, can move a full grown man or similar weight at walking

pace). Costs 2 magic points per turn.

SETH ACRES' FANATIC FOLLOWERS.

The following is a typical exmple of one of Seth's dedicated servants.

STR: 12 DEX: 10 APP: 9 CON: 12
SIZ: 10 INT: 10 POW: 8 EDU: 9
HP: 11

Damage Bonus: nil


Skills: Punch 50% (1d4 Damage), .32 Pistol 30% (1d8 Damage), Sword 35%, (1d8 Damage).

TAKAYUKI NAKAGAWA

An employee of Speegle & Sayo, Takayuki is tasked with taking the group to the reading of Seth Acre's will. Highly sceptical of all 'paranormal' activity, he will soon wonder why he was chosen to escort 'such a group'.

STR: 14 DEX: 10 APP: 10 CON: 12
SIZ: 10 INT: 13 POW: 8 EDU: 18
HP: 12

Damage Bonus: nil

Skills: Punch 50% (1d4 Damage), Act cool calm and collected in all situations (95%) 

ON THE UNBOUND BOOK WEBSITE

The Land of The Rising Dead

- D20 Stats for The Land of the Rising Dead
- Large print friendly maps by David Conyers
- All the pre-generated characters required to run this adventure

VISIT THE UNBOUND BOOK WEBSITE @

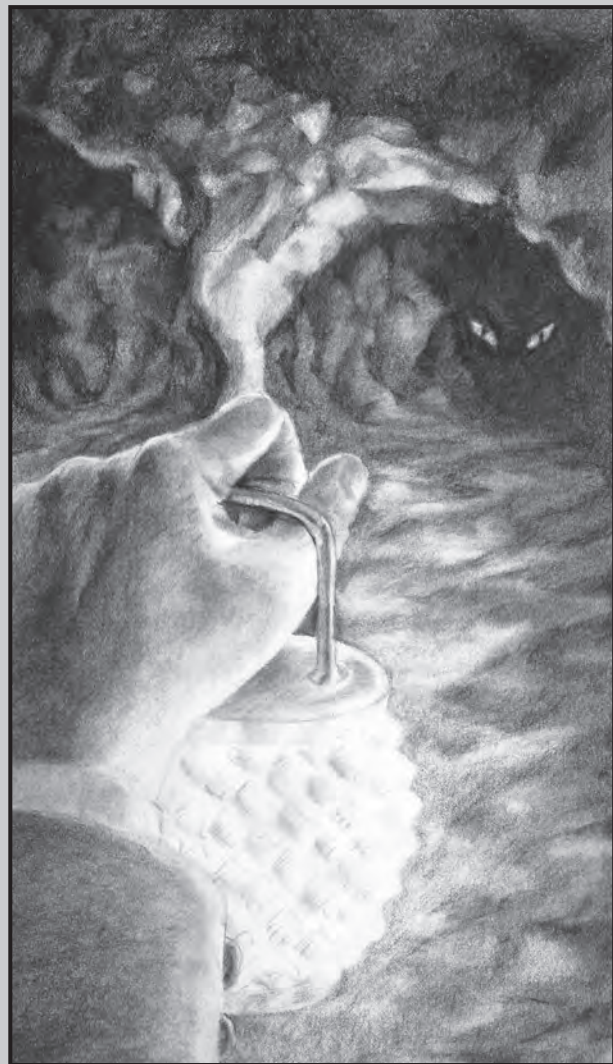
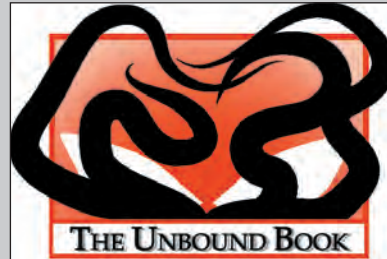
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THE ART OF REBECCA SMITH-CRUZ - A SPECIAL TRIBUTE

Rebecca is one of our regular volunteer artists here at The Unbound Book. She is responsible for the magazine's great logo and has contributed to both 'full' issues published so far.

By day Beckie is the Creative Director at MSDatastep (www.msdatastep.com) where her responsibilities include developing the look and feel of client web sites, and refining the company's own corporate identity.

Her own website (www.cruzspace.com) has many examples of her art and sketches, but we here at The Unbound Book thought that if she going to so much trouble for us then it was only right that we show you some of the outstanding work she has completed for our next issue.





'Halloween Man' 2004 Alan M. Clark

Horror on the Mesa

(A D20 ADVENTURE)

By Michael Mahony

INTRODUCTION

This is a short, one or two session, adventure for D20 Call of Cthulhu. Designed for two to five novice Investigators, it is set in Texas anytime during the 1920s, but can be adapted to any other time or setting with relative ease.

The Investigators are hired to escort a released military prisoner from his prison in Texas to New York. However, during his release, the prisoner went crazy and has shot his way into Mexico, seemingly intent on returning to the dread temple he discovered years earlier.

KEEPER'S BACKGROUND

During his service in Mexico, Private Peter Hancock and the fellows of his company discovered a mysterious and primitive village in the desert, set atop a massive plateau. Camping on the mesa at their Sergeant's whim, the inquisitive Hancock discovered a secret temple from an earlier age, dedicated to Yog-Sothoth. Inside, Hancock discovered an esoteric book written in Spanish "El Libro de Puertas" or in English "The Book of Gates". With discovery in hand, he returned to the camp and searched out one of his fellow soldiers to translate it, eventually discovering Private White could read its contents. What occurred during the next few hours, Hancock could never really explain, but by morning White was dead and Hancock had wandered out into the desert night. In a crazed state, his sanity barely intact, he staggered through the sand parched wilderness for days until, more by luck than design, a patrol from a nearby US encampment discovered the sun fried deserter. In the court-martial that followed, Hancock gained a stay of execution. His condition seen as extenuating circumstances, he was confined to the stockades in Fort Partch, an obscure prison camp on the Texas/Mexico border.

For nine long years Hancock has rotted in his prison, his obsession with the temple and its power growing each and every day.

Involving the Investigators

The investigators should be brought into the adventure via an appropriate contact, someone who's good at finding the group odd jobs and the like. In this case the Investigator's contact has been asked to find someone who can escort a particularly unstable prisoner back East, although (s)he merely informs the investigators that the job is 'simply an escort for a former prisoner'.

If the Investigators seem interested they can be told the following:

The convict's name is Peter Hancock. He was incarcerated for desertion while doing service in Mexico a few years ago. The task simply involves escorting him to New York safely.

The army is offering \$75 for each escort and the job should take four or five days at most.

They are required to leave next Saturday. Travel will be by train, with tickets paid both ways.

If the players agree, the contact gives them the train tickets and forwards each Investigator ten dollars. The rest of the week is the party's own to do as they wish and prepare for the trip south.

ON TO TEXAS

The train ride to Texas is uneventful and the Investigators arrive in the small town of Partch at around 9AM. Partch is a tiny settlement, little more than a main street and a few houses in the middle of the desert. It's hot, sun-scorched and miserable. At the train station the group is greeted by Captain Welcome Harris, a genial Texas man who prefers to be called by his first name. Welcome introduces himself and says that he is here to take the group to the prison, Fort Partch, and explain the 'unfortunate' situation that has arisen.

"Hancock has escaped! Yep, gone and busted himself out of Partch jus'n two days afore he was goin' to be released. Lookin like he got himself a gun and shot his way into the desert. And the damn fool is on foot. Look, we when a tracking him but he made his way into Mexico before we could catch 'im, and the Army can't just go marching into another country unless we're invited." He pauses allowing you to take in what he has been saying "See here, invites take a while and who knows where the crazy Fella'll be by the time we all mount up? So... we're a wondering if you all'd go after him for us... we'll make it worth your while".

Welcome is authorised to pay what it takes to get the party to accept the task of crossing over into Mexico and tracking down Hancock, but he won't tell the Investigators that, of course. If the group is reluctant he will state that they are on Army territory now and they have ways in which to 'encourage' cooperation.

Once the group agrees (and they really don't have an option not to), Harris states that the government wants Hancock back alive... otherwise he doesn't care what condition he's in, saying that his men have 'business' with him once he is back in custody.

FORT PARTCH

A satellite settlement near to the town of the same name, Fort Partch is a fairly lackluster military prison. The base contains the normal prison arrangements (prisoner barracks, warden's quarters, stockades, etc.) as well as an uninspiring staff bar.

Upon their arrival, Captain Harris shows the Investigators where the shoot out took place (near the gates), and shows them Hancock's only remaining personal effects - A journal (See Mesa Handout 1) and a map of Las Portos (A Spanish check (DC 10) will note that the name of the town means 'The Town of Gates'), a tiny settlement in Mexico a few days south. On the map an unexplained red 'X' can be seen on top of a massive plateau to the south to the town proper. Naturally Harris assumes that's where Hancock is going and suggests that the party stops by the Supply Depot before heading out after the prisoner, as 'he wouldn't want 'em dying out in the desert'.

In any of the Investigators decided to visit the staff bar to discuss the missing man, they find that they aren't particularly welcome - the wretched heat makes people fairly unfriendly. Although the guards don't talk much, they will say Hancock ranted a lot, mainly about a 'Gate and a Key'.

Anyone in the camp can give the group a generic description of Hancock, which in hindsight is pretty useless, "About six feet tall, pretty thin and very pale with long, dirty black hair and beard".

The officer in charge of the Supply Depot is much more helpful. Informed ahead of time to outfit the Investigators for the rough journey across the desert, he will supply them with horses and enough food and water for all (including Hancock once he is captured) to last the two days journey to Las Portos. He is also able to supply the Investigators with whatever additional supplies they may require (at the GMs discretion of course), including guns and ammunition, desert survival equipment, etc.

TRAVELLING SOUTH

Travelling to the location shown on the map is simple enough in theory; just two hard days ride south of Fort Partch until one reaches Las Portos. However, while the journey may be uneventful, it's an arduous trip on both horse and rider. The days are dreadfully hot and the nights uncomfortably cold. While there's actually little to do on the ride, GMs may wish to draw the journey out to make the players feel how wretched the trip really is.

ODD CACTI

As the party makes camp at the end of the first day of travel, one of the investigators notices a strange brown and misshapen cactus a little ways off their camp. On closer examination the succulent seems oddly deformed but in every other way normal from the outside. Should

anyone decide to cut it open, however, it is found to be teeming with hordes of spiders. These range in size from a tiny half inch through to a massive 6 inches. Once exposed to the elements, the spiders scurry off in all directions, including all over the poor Investigator who attacked the cactus. Although harmless, the experience costs the character 0/1d2 San loss.

A SIGN OF HANCOCK

As the party is starting out on the second day of travel, a successful Spot check (DC 15) spies a goat carcass off to one side of their route. On closer examination it is clear that the goat has been cut up with a knife for its meat, although now more than 24 hours later the body is filled with beetles. A sequential Spot check (DC 20) will allow any of the Investigators to see the remains of a fire pit. Built with strips of wood placed under rocks, to provide heat for cooking and reduce smoke, it is obvious to any Investigator with the appropriate skills that the fire is about a day old. It would appear that Hancock was definitely travelling this way.

LAS PORTOS

The investigators arrive at Las Portos late on the second afternoon. The village is a fairly typical example of Mexican architecture, with many small adobe homes clustered together, most, if not all older than any of the residents. All show signs of wear expressed by dilapidation caused by the sun's rays and sweltering heat. The locals are surprisingly disinterested at the arrival of the Investigators, and won't even bother to acknowledge them unless they're directly approached.

To begin with the group will be hard pressed to find anyone who speaks English, but with perseverance (the use of signs etc.), any of them will direct the Investigators to the hotel in the center of town.

ALASANDRO

Before the group reaches the hotel, or if they are having a particularly difficult time communicating with the locals, they are stopped by a teenage Mexican, carrying an old Thompson SMG. The boy explains in broken English that his name is Alasandro and solicits himself to the party as a guide. He will ask for payment for his services, but will take whatever the Investigators offer, even if the offer is next to nothing - he really just wants to tag along.

Whether accepting Alasandro's services is a positive or not is left up to the individual, although the young man

has an overblown image of all Americans being cowboys and will pester the group as to why they're not "being cowboy enough". Alasandro knows the best way to get to the mesa and knows enough about both locations to act as a decent, if over excited, guide.

THE HOTEL

If the party goes to the hotel where Hancock was staying, there is a 25% chance he will be at the bar. Otherwise he's in hiding in his room, paranoid that everyone knows of his secrets.

The bar patrons don't have much information to supply the group with, not even the woman who stands behind the bar. What they can say is -

A man matching Hancock's description is indeed staying at the hotel (or if he is in the bar they will point him out!)

He is horribly sun-burned, as if he hasn't even tried to protect himself out in the sun.

He is always armed, with a couple of pistols and came in carrying an automatic rifle.

Finally, he is roughly dressed, wearing a tattered prison uniform sporting the signs of long term wear and tear.

DEALING WITH HANCOCK

Hancock isn't overly aggressive, just insane; he won't even suspect that the Investigators are after him, the thought never crosses his deluded mind. If one of the group decides to hold a conversation with him, he just babbles about "the mesa" or "the keeper of the key who holds the gate". His speech is a little incoherent, and slightly distant, and if the Investigators bother him for too long, he retreats back to his room in a fit of paranoia.

His room is mostly empty, with just his stolen Browning standing out. However anyone making even a cursory search of the room soon sees that Hancock has stuffed a few pages of paper under the bed. These pages are a fairly inaccurate handwritten copy of the spell 'Open the Deceased Gate' from the book 'Liber de Portos'.

Anyone reading the spell (at the cost of 1 point of Sanity) notices that the pages describe a ceremony involving the spilling of a considerable quantity of blood over a strange symbol (which some may be able to identify as the sign of Yog-Sothoth), and something called "a piece of the Key". Any investigator who is aware of or knows the spell 'Call Yog-Sothoth' will recognize this ceremony, although will be able to tell that it is different in many

ways to the ceremony they have knowledge of (although why it is so different is not immediately obvious).

If Hancock is left unmolested by the group he soon leaves for the Mesa. However, if the investigators decide to take a direct approach to capturing their man they will discover that this is much more difficult proposition than they are expecting from a crazy man.

Hancock is ruthlessly devoted to completing his objectives and will NOT allow himself to be taken alive. He is heavily armed, especially if he can again access to the Browning in his room. Also unlike the characters, he has no compunction about killing his attackers. In addition Hancock has a strange ability to avoid being trapped and will at the soonest possibility make for the mesa.

WASTING TIME

If the Investigators spend too much time getting to and/or staying in Los Portos, Hancock still makes his way to the temple as scripted and conducts the ritual, with the same horrible result. The village on the Mesa (see below) is now empty however, save for the Elder's mummy and the Servitors are no longer in the temple. Likewise the Liber de Portos and the Piece of Yog-Sothoth are now gone and it is pretty obvious that the Investigators have blown their mission.

THE MESA

Hancock's goal is to reach the mesa, about a mile south of Las Portos. The sun-blazed route to the plateau is extremely inhospitable and offers any number of opportunities to Hancock to evade capture. The mesa itself is several hundred feet high and extremely difficult to scale; the best way up being via the carved path at the rear of the mesa (i.e. the side furthest from Las Portos).

Once atop the mesa the Investigators immediately notice a small gathering of huts scattered around roughly the location Hancock marked on his map.

THE NAMELESS VILLAGE

The tiny village on top of the mesa has no name, at least none known to Alasandro or any of the Las Portos locals. All anyone can say about it is that it has been at least as long as Las Portos (and in all likelihood much longer), and its native Mexican Indian residents have very little to do the Spanish Mexicans of the town (although on a the rare occasion they are seen along the main street, conducting some personal affair or another).

The village itself is little more than a collection of

adobe buildings, all of a very similar age and showing much wear and tear. Once the party gets closer they do indeed see that the settlement is inhabited, although its inhabitants move silently around the town, doing the very same primitive day-to-day tasks that their ancestors were completing a thousand years ago. None of the villagers seem to want to speak to the Investigators, although they do give the group disapproving glares if they interrupt them or disturb the focus of their current task. Alasandro recommends the group goes to see the Elder, as he is the native seen most often in Las Portos and speaks some Spanish.

THE ELDER

The Elder's home is located on the outskirts of town and is a building no different than any of the others. The Elder himself is an ancient, pencil thin man, his appearance telling a story of a long, hard life. He will reluctantly converse with either the investigators or if none speak Spanish through Alasandro. He is unaware if Hancock's is nearby, although he does remember the company of soldiers who stayed here ten years earlier.

If asked about a temple he will simply state that they have none as nobody in the village believes in anything they can't see.

HANCOCK'S MOVE

While the Investigators talk with the Elder, Hancock makes his move. Finding his way to the home in which the entrance of the Temple lies (and where he was billeted all those years ago), he attacks and kills the buildings residents.

The attacks are not silent however, and although the Indian family is quickly overwhelmed by the crazed man, the sounds of his gun firing echoes eerily off the adobe walls of the town. Immediately alerted that something is wrong, the characters, with the village Elder in tow, soon discover that a crowd of the strangely silent Indians have gathered about the house in which Hancock has enter, although none have ventured into the building.

Any Investigator making their way inside the single room dwelling, immediately notices five mortally wounded Indians lying about the floor, although their attention is soon directed to the part of the stone floor that sits at an odd angle - the unmarked door to the Temple of Yog-Sothoth.

THE TEMPLE

The temple below is a peculiar anomaly in the desolate

depths of Mexico. It is roughly three hundred years old and was built by wealthy, but psychotic, Spanish followers of Yog-Sothoth. The temple at the time was known as "The Tomb of Yog-Sothoth" and although its claim is obviously not true, it does hold a piece of that Great Old one severed during a failed ceremony many centuries previous. The plight of those first worshippers is lost in time, but the village now above the temple was obviously built here by the ancestors of its current inhabitants, in an attempt to ensure others did not stumble onto the terror below.

THE ENTRANCE CHAMBER

The trap door leads to the Entrance Chamber, some 12 feet below the stone floor of the adobe house. This ten-by-ten foot room below is shrouded in darkness lit only by what light make its way through the trapdoor. Once inside, the Investigators can easy to make out the fabulous scroll work carvings that mark the marble tiles on the floor, walls and ceiling. These designs show vines, thorns and a peculiar-looking flower (which is not identifiable).

The threshold to the Hallway lies on the southern wall, and about it a golden plaque marks the temple's name in Latin. A Latin check (DC 10) or a Spanish/Italian check (DC 15) deciphers the words to read "The Tomb of Yog-Sothoth".

THE HALLWAY

The hallway is about twenty five feet long and is similarly decorated to the Entrance Chamber. Although the walls tilt inward at a slightly unnerving angle, there is nothing else of interest here.

THE CEREMONY ROOM

This huge room is completely circular. Although it is likely that Hancock is here (in which case see the Conclusion below), there are a number of things that immediately jump out at the group as they enter the Ceremony chamber -

Lying against the right wall is the mummified skeleton of Hancock's 'once friend', White, his skull caved in.

Against the far wall is a raised platform. Once covered in a red cloth, the trappings have now decayed into a pile of stinking rags. In the middle of the platform rests a rune covered pedestal, on which rests the Liber de Portos (see below).

Judging from the path left by shreds of the material,

ITEMS IN THE CEREMONY ROOM

The Liber de Portos

Written in Latin, with Spanish footnotes. The Liber de Portos is a well-written, albeit confusing book of Yog-Sothoth. It is bound in thick leather and bears a metal clasp. It refers to the "Keeper of the Key", the "Keeper of the Gate" and the "Keeper of Key who Keeps the Gate". It was written by the Spanish cultists who founded the temple and is the only copy in existence. Handling the book for more than a few minutes in the Tomb will cause the offending Investigator to hear a distant, eerie chanting (SAN loss 0/1 the first time this occurs). Examination Period - 1d10 +2 weeks (DC 20). Contains 1d6 spells in addition to Hail to the Deceased Gate (Contact Yog-Sothoth), Open the Deceased Gate (Call Yog-Sothoth). Sanity Loss 1d4 initial and 2d4 upon completion. Cthulhu Mythos: +2 ranks.

The Piece of Yog-Sothoth

A dried and somewhat fragile piece of Yog-Sothoth, severed in a failed summoning. It's not particularly unnatural looking, but if kept in one's possession for more than 1d4 days will begin to impart onto the holder disturbing dreams of fantastic dimensions. It is required to cast Open the Deceased Gate.

the pedestal used to rest against the wall. Moving the pedestal elicits a deep rumbling at its base, as if something is being dragged along inside its hollow stand. Lifting the base reveals a small obsidian box underneath, shut with a rusty brass lock. Breaking the lock is easy and nestled inside is what vaguely looks like a half eaten cob of corn. Worse still this 'cob' looks as if it has been dried in the sun and then dyed with a purplish tint. Of course this is in fact a piece of Yog-Sothoth and a Cthulhu Mythos check will readily identify it as such.

CONCLUSION

Hancock has entered the temple for the first time in almost ten years. Immediately he goes straight to work consecrating the sign of Yog-Sothoth in the temple room and spends a few minutes preparing for the ritual. Then he begins the ritual, and shortly after, a heavy rain rolls over the desert.

The Investigators should arrive in the Ceremony room just in time to witness Hancock disembowel himself to complete the bloodletting part of his ritual. As his blood pours everywhere, the ritual is complete and a vortex of fantastic colours, which emits cries of terrible piping opens in the middle of the room, quickly encompassing the circle and swallowing Hancock's body (a 1/1d4 San loss is needed for viewing this upsetting scene).

But at this point it become obvious that Hancock has performed the ritual incorrectly (not having the Key, the piece of Yog-Sothoth required to call the Great Old One), as the portal grows no further than this circle. The piping grows louder for two rounds, at which point a protoplasmic tentacle reaches out from the void and the formless shape of a Servitor of the Outer God lumbers into the chamber (two if there are more than three investigators).

Naturally the Servitors will attack those who have desecrated their lord's temple. The portal itself will close naturally in ten rounds, although the Servitors will remain. Running away might be an advisable tactic

at his moment, but a few well placed grenades or sticks of dynamite could well be sufficient in destroying the Servitors (and, if the Keeper is feeling vindictive, perhaps collapse the temple as well).

The Servitors themselves cannot leave the temple, but their horrible piping is still enough to drive those nearby insane (and God help any investigator who goes into the portal).

Outside of the temple, the rain has built into a wild pelting storm and the village itself seems totally void of life. In addition, and most oddly, the adobe buildings are collapsing, as though in only a few moments the village is suffered through a thousand years of aging. Nobody can be found in the town, and if the Investigators decide to check on the Elder, there's nothing him but a heavily decayed and mummified corpse. Once the portal closes, and regardless of what has become of the Servitors, the rain stops and the sun returns bright and hot. The Investigators have either stopped or at least borne witness to the Horror on the Mesa, and now there's little left to do except return home (and maybe read their new book!)

AFTERMATH & SANITY REWARDS

The GameMaster should decide whether or not the players get paid for their exploits. Obviously nobody in Parth would believe the story of the Temple, although they might be able to convince the Captain that Hancock died resisting arrest or some such.

If the party employed Alasandro, he will want to return with the Investigators and join them on their further investigations, although this is a decision for the Keeper and their players. If they decide that he can't come along, he'll sadly return to Las Portos, but at least he has a great story to tell his grandchildren one day.

As for Sanity gains:

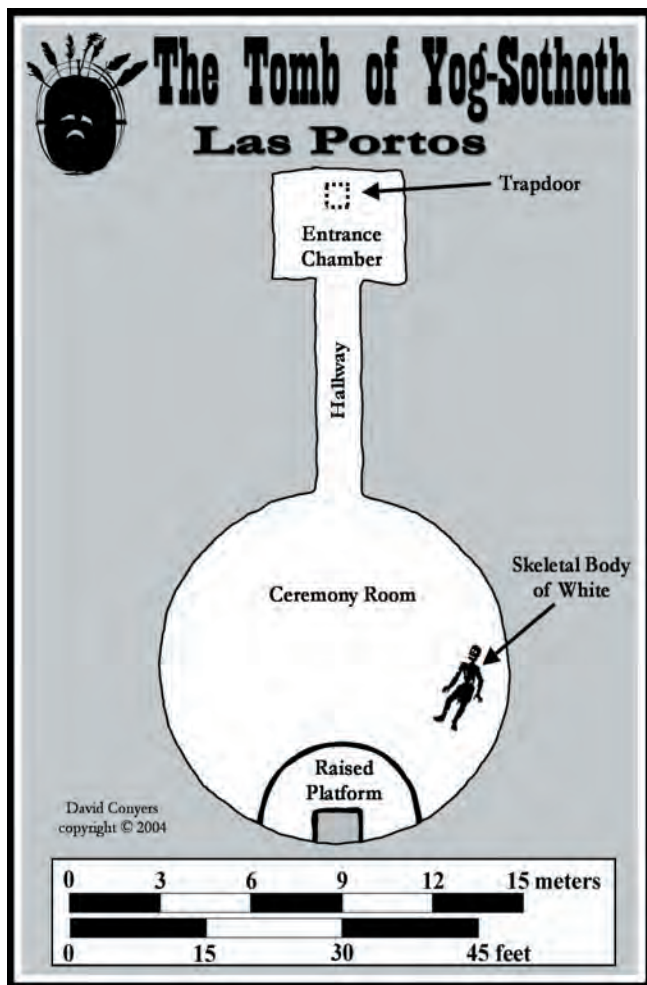
The Investigators regain 1 point of Sanity each if they killed or captured Hancock before he revealed the location of the temple - it's nice to know he's not out there anymore.

If the Investigators killed Hancock after he revealed the temple, they receive 1d3 SAN - maybe there was some truth to the journal?

If the Investigators somehow stopped Hancock during the ritual, they receive 1d4 SAN.

If the Investigators failed to stop Hancock, but survive, they receive 1d3 SAN.

In addition -



For each Servitor of the Outer Gods they defeated, award 1d2 SAN.

For each Servitor that survived (and still remains in the Temple), the Investigators lose 1 Sanity point - what if someone finds them?

NPC STATISTICS

ALASANDRO

Male 2nd level soldier, offensive option; HD 2d6+2; hp 10; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +3 melee, +3 ranged (+4 at point blank); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1, Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills – Bluff +3, Climb +4, Concentration +2, Hide +4 Jump +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Ride +5, Search +3, Spot +3, Speak English +2

Feats- Alertness, Point Blank Shot

Possessions- Thompson Barrel SMG, Knife, Horse

SAN- 60

PETER HANCOCK

Drifter with a Purpose: Male 4th level soldier, offensive option; HD 4d6+3; hp 21; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +5 melee, +5 ranged (+6 at point blank); SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1, Str 14, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12

Skills – Balance +3, Bluff +2, Climb +5, Concentration +5, Craft (Gunsmith)+6, Demolitions +2, Hide +5, Intimidate +2, Jump +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Ride +4, Search +5, Spot +3, Swim +2

Feats- Alertness, Ambidexterity, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot

Possessions- 2 Colt 1911s, M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle, Combat Knife, 6 Grenade Traps, 10 Sticks of Dynamite, Bedroll, Survival Blanket, 10 Days Rations

Spells- Hail to the Deceased Gate (Contact Yog-Sothoth), Open the Deceased Gate (Incorrect version of Call Yog-Sothoth)

SAN- 21 

ON THE UNBOUND BOOK WEBSITE

Horror on the Mesa

- BRP Stats for Horror on the Mesa
- Large print friendly maps by David Conyers

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Handouts for Dark Dreams of Innsmouth

Innsmouth Paper 1

Dear Friend,

I wish I were writing to you under pleasant circumstances. Sadly, nothing could be further from that truth. I'm in trouble, of a sort I don't understand. Only someone such as yourself - someone who has been involved in so-called occult matters - might comprehend. My time grows short and you must be informed of all I can volunteer before it is too late.

Some weeks ago while fishing off the Gloucester coast, I hauled up an artifact, a crown - that's the item I sent along with this letter. I remembered reading about such odd items once before, in a book I own on that old, depressed fishing town called Innsmouth, here in Massachusetts. They do some gold refining there, and, as I was intrigued by my strange catch, I promptly motored to Innsmouth and spoke to a man named Jacob Marsh, of the Marsh Refining Company. I didn't like that fellow at all, so I left his office with my prize, though not before making the mistake of giving that Marsh devil my name and address. Soon after I began receiving unwelcome callers at my home in Danvers. They wanted to purchase my artifact. I must have something Marsh desperately wants. I refuse to sell, but they've become more persistent - and more threatening. Last week I came home to find my house broken into; nothing stolen, though by that time I had hidden the crown out of the house until I could learn just what I had on my hands.

At the same time that the visitors began arriving, I started to have awful, vivid dreams - visions of undersea cities, peopled with disgusting fish-like men. Many times I have awoken in the middle of the night, drenched in sweat. On several occasions I think I've heard people in the yard, though I've not ventured out in the dark to look. But even these things have not been the worst of it. For the last few nights I've awoken from my disturbing dreams not in bed, but in my Packard, halfway down the route to Innsmouth! I'm scared. Events are happening in my life that I do not understand. Only someone with your experience might comprehend these things and help me.

Your friend,

Swanson Ames

Innsmouth Paper 2

Man Saved Off Massachusetts Coast

Gloucester - Local lobster fishermen rescued a man who was struggling for survival in the coastal waters off Gloucester early this morning. The man, chilled and delirious but suffering no serious bodily harm, has been identified as Swanson Ames, a local teacher. Ames was delivered by the crew of the lobster boat Divine to local authorities. Ames's car was later found parked near the waterfront. In shock and incoherent from his ordeal at sea, Ames has been transferred to the Danvers State Mental Hospital for treatment and observation. Ames is without immediate family.

Innsmouth Paper 3

An excerpt from Peabody's Superstition and the Sea:

"...perhaps nowhere else have declining maritime fortunes had such an adverse social and economic effect than in Innsmouth, Massachusetts, a once thriving seaport now reduced to a depressed hamlet. Education and other social services are all but unknown, leading to a rapid decline in cultural mores, despite the town's close physical proximity to Arkham, home of the prestigious Miskatonic University. Arkham for its part ignores any responsibility it might feel it has as a community to its backwater neighbor. As a result, the residents of Innsmouth have combined elder sea lore, religion, and cultural ways into an odd mix of superstition and secretive ritual practices unique in New England. Samples of Innsmouth superstition include rituals to reap better lobster harvests, spells to attract and control sharks, and charms wrought to invoke a watery doom on the unwary. Perhaps most curious are some of the genuine golden ornaments that are incorporated into many of the rituals and charms. Locals insist these are locally crafted; nonetheless they possess a disturbing, otherworldly quality that this author struggles to convey in words. I have examined only two such ornaments, and this under circumstances that would draw the ire of many locals, should they know of my trespass into their affairs. The ornaments most greatly resemble similar pieces described in ancient occult tomes such as the obscure Ponape Scripture, a copy of which resides in special collections at nearby Miskatonic University Library. There have been rumors circulating in academic circles for years of similar objects and practices common to the geographically and socially isolated peoples of the Louisiana bayou country. If proven, this could prove a fascinating link between the cultural, moral, and religious decline of the two separate, isolated communities...."

Land of the Rising Dead

Land Handout Paper 1

Dear Sir/Madam

It is our sad duty to inform you that Mr Seth Acres, British citizen has recently passed away. We know this must come as a great shock to you, and we offer our deepest condolences. As executors of the late Mr Acres' estate, we invite you to attend the reading of his will at his former residence on Kuroiyama Island, Tokyo, Japan.

While we cannot as yet disclose the details of the will, Mr Acres was quite insistent that your attendance at the reading would be highly rewarding. The late Mr Acres left meticulous instructions on the execution of his affairs and following the terms of his will, should you not attend his estate in person, your inheritance shall be distributed among the remaining benefactors. Your passage to Japan and accommodation prior to reaching the Acres estate has already been arranged. Please embark the Steamer 'Kipper Maru', from pier 14 on Monday, May the 3rd, at 8 am.

A car will be in attendance at your home promptly at 6am of the day of departure.

We look forward to meeting you.

Yours Faithfully,

Willhelm Speegle

Speegle and Sayo

1-3-7 Shinjuku, Tokyo

Land Handout Paper 2

The Legend of KuroiYama Island

Many years ago during the time of Ashikaga, a great and terrible Samurai called Takahiro waged war on a neighbouring Samurai. As their armies were massed for battle, in the mountains between their homes, the deceitful Takahiro and his 12 faithful retinue set out one dark moonless night to attack his enemy's home, murder his wife and shame his children. The fisherman whose boat Takahiro had seized was angry at the Samurai and his men for involving him in such a deed and he called upon the kami of his ancestors to avenge the theft of his property and livelihood. He prayed that, although it meant the ruination of his own family and the destruction of his father's only ship, the kami would bring a terrible storm and thus ensure Takahiro would not profit from his dishonourable task.

A great roar welled up from deep beneath the ocean and a huge tsunami was brought down on Takahiro and his company. The ship was shattered to pieces by the mighty blow of the sea kami and Takahiro's men were dragged down beneath the crashing waves.

But not Takahiro, for he was a strong swimmer and even the biggest of waves could not pull him down. For hours he swam and until finally, at dawn, he washed up on the shore of a strange island. The people of the island found him unconscious on the beach that morning, his great clothes mauled by the sea but his marvellous sword still hanging from his strong belt. Knowing him then to be a man of power, they took the Samurai to their village and he quickly recovered. Takahiro married the local lord's beautiful daughter, Akiko, and he sired many strong children. In time he came to rule the peaceful village and was blessed with such happiness that he seldom missed his former days of battle and glory on the mainland.

Thus for many years he ruled and until he reached a very great age indeed, old enough to watch his children's children grow and begin again their own families. But Takahiro refused to accept the destiny of all who live to grow old. Surely he, the great Takahiro, who had survived the terrible wrath of the kami of the sea, who had won so many battles, surely he could cheat old age and even death itself. So determined, he left the village and set out into the wild forest on the black mountain to seek out the great Boar spirit, warrior king of the forest. After seven nights he returned, a terrible light in his eyes. He would not speak and sat alone in his private quarters for many days. Eventually his son, Hiroyuki, went in to see him, and never returned.

There were rumours among the people of the village - someone claimed to have seen Hiroyuki's hewn head on a pike in the forest, another claimed to have seen Takahiro's great sword soaked in blood resting against a tree, and one even said they had seen Takahiro himself, his face and hands covered in blood with a wild fire gleaming in his eyes. It is said that he lived on for many years, never growing old on the blood of his village. A terrible plague befell his family, for his sons and daughters and grandchildren, once so strong and long lived began to die. How many years he continued unnatural life it is not known. But stories speak of a great warrior or priest, reputedly one of his own great grandchildren, who finally put an end to his evil unlife.

But that is only rumour and heresay, so even today the legend of Takahiro and the Kuroi Yama remains nothing but mystery.

Handouts for Horror on the Mesa

Mesa Handout 1

June 5th, 1915

Darndest thing today I woke up this morning to hear Sergeant Munday screaming at the top of his lungs I went outside to see what the commotion was about and there was Jefferson, marching out into the sunrise barefoot and barebacked Munday was screaming himself red in the face at Jefferson to get his ass back here, but Jefferson didn't so much as look back. Munday even fired off in Jefferson's direction and he didn't even seem to notice. Sent White and Griffin out to get him when he went down a hill and out of sight, but they came back saying they couldn't find even a trace of him this footprints just vanished. What the hell is going on?

June 4th, 1915

We marched through the night, and Winterston became quite ill along the way. Sergeant Munday says it's most likely exhaustion. This morning we came upon the weirdest village - about three hundred square yards of clay huts, just out in the middle of nowhere. Our translator, White, said he couldn't much understand what any of them were saying. More European Spanish than anything he'd know anyone to be speaking in Mexico. Munday said we were to camp here for a couple of days, although I'll be damned if I know why all the locals look like hell, more so than the people in the city, and they've got shifty eyes that I don't much care for. Jefferson and I are sharing a tent and we both agreed that we'd take turns watching over our things

Mesa Handout 1, Continued

June 7th, 1915

I killed White as one will know I left him in the temple the way he looked at me when he read that book. He would've killed me first I got him I can read the book now, anyhow I read almost the entire thing before I realized how worthless it is, but it compels me beyond beyond understanding that is why I must get away from it. I'll risk desertion I'll mark my map, should I ever want to return, but I hope I never do.

December 12th 1924

Free Again

THEY LET ME GO NOW I GO BACK THE WAY IS USELESS NOW I CAN SEE IT INTEN I CLOSE MY EYES

June 6th, 1915

Walked around town today Mundack still insists we're not going anywhere and I don't know why the hell not stayed there're no merchants around here, no churches either. Locals seem to keep an eye on me when I get near certain buildings they're really starting to bother me.

June 7th, 1915

Now I see why they were nervous. That temple I nearly went hysterical when I found the entrance the unbelievable moral of such a fund! and that book it's in Latin I must take White with me to see it tonight